

Looking To Get Started in Junior Girls Volleyball?

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If you find volleyball interesting and are thinking about playing, there are several avenues of opportunity to learn the game and develop skills. In general, the recommendation is to start playing as soon as possible. The more you touch the ball, the better you will become.

Recreation Programs

There are many recreation programs at the local level. Most Parks and Recreation Departments sponsor leagues year round. Other recreation programs are sponsored by CYO, WMCA, or YMCA organizations. While some leagues are instructional in nature, most are oriented toward simply playing. Though starting in an instructional setting is best, just going out and playing will benefit you.

High School Team

Many junior girls start playing volleyball in or before their freshman year in high school. While the school programs are generally instructional in nature, the season is short, and the teams are often large. Most teams have a competitive selection process.

USAV Volleyball

The Chesapeake Region (CHRVA) of USA Volleyball (USAV) provides support to clubs, officials, and tournament play in Delaware, Maryland, Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia. USAV has players competing in local and national tournaments in the USAV categories for Junior, Adult, and Masters categories for both genders. The USAV juniors organization consists of the Youth Division (YJOV), teams below age 14, and the Junior Division (JOV), teams 14-18 years of age.

At the juniors girls level, the Region has approximately 35 clubs and 225 teams for ages 10 to 18. The season for most USAV junior teams runs from about Thanksgiving to May. The CHRVA junior girls webpage, www.chrvajuniors.com, contains a variety of useful information about the program.

USAV and CHRVA do offer growing opportunities for boys as well. To get more information on the boys program in the Region, contact Shang Hsiung at shang.hsiung@chrva.org for a list of boys programs.

USA Volleyball is a "club" program that requires travel to tournaments to play other teams. The practices, coaching, and play are at a higher level of competition than recreational leagues. The amount of commitment, practices, and number of tournaments entered vary from team to team and club to club. Teams range from developmental status to those very experienced hoping to go to USAV Nationals.

In the Chesapeake Region, teams are formed and run by the clubs. Each club has a different style with different numbers of teams, practice schedules, cost, and tournaments. They also provide the support activities necessary for running a quality

sports organization. The Juniors Web Page contains more information about clubs and provides a list of clubs in the Region.

Most clubs run an information session for parents and players in the Fall. It is a good opportunity to hear their philosophy and expectations for the next season. If you have the opportunity, attend the information session for more than one club. It is a good idea to contact each club in your area to find out their schedule.

Most clubs have a selection process. The processes range from pro forma skills clinics designed to introduce new players to the club to serious try-outs depending on the number of players they are looking for. Many athletes participate in post season high school volleyball tournaments. In these cases, Region guidelines strongly recommend that the selection process for those athletes not start until after their Fall public high school season's state finals. These are normally over by November 15, and most clubs start their selection processes the weekend before or after Thanksgiving.

Other Options

Most opportunities to learn volleyball require joining a league or program. There are few, if any, camps or introductory clinics offered during the school year. The school year is mostly occupied by school programs, local leagues, and USAV travel teams.

There are, however, a large number of volleyball camps held each summer. Some are challenging and oriented toward experienced players. If this is your first time playing volleyball, make sure the camp offers a session for the novice. Camps will start advertising in the Spring. Most but not all post information on the web and are held at a college (because the availability of facilities).

It is also possible to start a single team club. If you are interested in that option, as well as other informational items, please check out the CHRVA Juniors website for more details.