

Carolina Recruiting Policy

Scenario 3: Affiliation with a club ends at the conclusion of USAV season (typically after JOs). Establish a "recruiting period" between the end of USAV JOs and the beginning of the tryout period, during which time clubs or coaches can actively contact players and families to discuss their program. Offers can be extended at any time, and acceptances allowed any time during the tryout period. No acceptances may be required until Signing Date. Clubs cannot offer the same position to more than one player.

The general framework is as follows.

- 1) Recruiting is allowed during the approximately 4-month period between the end of JOs and the beginning of the tryout period. Clubs can actively contact players and families during this time, regardless of where the player played the previous season. Unethical behavior such as making negative comments about other clubs/coaches is subject to investigation and sanction according to the policy. Affiliation with a club ends at the conclusion of USAV JOs, but affiliation with another club cannot be established until the tryout period.
- 2) Establish a "Signing Date" approach. There should be a Tryout Period of approximately three weeks, starting from the Sunday after the HS championships and running until the third Saturday following the championships. During this time clubs can conduct tryouts and issue offers. Players can accept or reject offers at any time during this period. Clubs can rescind offers that have not been accepted by the Signing Date. Offers are accepted by signing a standardized Letter of Commitment, to be held on file by clubs. Embedded in the Letter of Commitment are some strong penalties for players who sign a commitment and then renege.
- 3) During tryouts all clubs are required to distribute an "Athlete and Club Bill of Rights for Tryouts". The distributed version would be a one-page document with bullet list of rights statements. It would reference a more detailed version on the website, presumably with each bullet hot-linked to a description. There are two "club rights" listed -- clubs are entitled to a timely, unambiguous decision and clubs are entitled to protection from "club-hoppers" who have not fulfilled financial obligations to other clubs.
- 4) Anyone can report violations to the recruiting policy or the tryout bill of rights – not just parents or athletes who can officially report violations, but also clubs or coaches.
- 5) A standing subcommittee of the junior advisory board should be established (policy assumes such an entity) and charged with responsibility for investigating any accusations. Presumably a single subcommittee could serve for both boys and girls divisions. The relevant division's Board Representative and the Region's Director of Operations would also participate in any investigation. The division's Board Representative, presumably with counsel from the Director of Operations and the Board of Directors, would be charged with determining appropriate sanctions.
- 6) First offense carries a two-year "probation", with room for stronger sanction as deemed appropriate by the Board Representative. Second and subsequent offense results in ineligibility for BOTH the Bid Tournament and the Regional Championship tournament. Penalties accrue to the entire club, not just the coach or representative who was directly involved. The logic here is that a second-offense penalty needs to be severe so clubs will be intolerant of coaches who are pushing the limits.

Scenario 3: Recruiting allowed.

Problem Statement

As the popularity of and participation in juniors volleyball across the Carolina Region has grown, competition among clubs for players has intensified. This has led to an increasing number of reports (formal and anecdotal) of violations of the current CR tryout and recruiting guidelines.

Current Guidelines:

1. <http://www.carolinaregionvb.org/Juniors/recruiting.html>
2. <http://www.carolinaregionvb.org/Juniors/tryoutguidelines.html>

The region faces the problem that these guidelines, while well intentioned, provide no mechanism to sanction or otherwise enforce penalties on clubs, coaches, or other parties when violations occur. Therefore, a more explicit policy should be developed. Said policy should include definitions of terms, procedures for reporting, investigating, and, if necessary, penalizing violations, and recommended sanctions depending on the instance (e.g. first offense, repeat offender) and severity of the infraction.

Carolina Region Recruiting Policy

1. Definitions of terms used within this policy:

Club Representative – Any coach, administrator, player, or parent affiliated with a particular club.

Parent or Player Affiliated with a Club – Any parent or player who is under contract with a club during that team's club season or in a leadership position with that club (club administrator, registrar, etc.). Affiliation with a club terminates upon the end of the contract period.

Promoting – general communication about a club or team, not specifically directed to an individual or group of individuals. Promoting may take the form of information meetings, newspaper ads, flyers, brochures, websites, or broadly-disseminated emails. Promoting may also include hosting of open gym or volleyball clinic sessions.

Recruitment – any action or statement, made by any team/club official, player, or parent, either verbally or in writing, that encourages or entices a player to commit to play with a particular coach, team, or club.

Illegal recruitment – any effort to induce a player or family already affiliated with another USAV-sanctioned club or team to transfer or otherwise change affiliation to a new club or team. Any recruitment contact during times other than the open recruiting period is considered illegal recruitment. Promises of playing time, guaranteed positions,

negative comments about other clubs or coaches, or similar conveyances are considered illegal recruitment methods at any time.

Tryout period – the period of time between the day following the NC High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) state volleyball championships and the beginning of the contract period.

Contract period – the period of time typically beginning when a player or parent officially accepts (via signed Letter of Commitment) an offer to play with a club, and ending with the conclusion of the USAV Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships (typically the first week in July).

Recruiting period – the period of time between the end of the contract period and the date of the NCHSAA state volleyball championships, during which time club representatives can legally conduct recruitment efforts.

Signing date – the earliest date by which a club may require a player/family to accept or reject a club's offer. While club offers may be extended at any time during or after the tryout period, offers must remain open until the signing date. The recommended signing date each season is the third Saturday following the NC High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) state volleyball championships.

2. Terms of the Policy

- A. Clubs have the right to promote their club and provide tryout information at any time. They may do this in a variety of ways including but not limited to newspaper ads, flyers, brochures, and websites. Clubs may distribute (by mail, email, or any other means) general information promoting their club or tryouts to anyone, so long as said promoting does not cross the line into recruitment.
- B. No club representative may contact any player or parent/guardian affiliated with another club for purposes of recruitment. Club affiliation ends upon the completion of the contract period.
- C. Clubs may legally conduct recruitment activities during the recruiting period and the tryout period. Once a player or parent communicates their acceptance of an offer from a club (through a signed Letter of Commitment), all other clubs should consider that player to have entered into the contract period.
- D. Any recruitment activities conducted during the contract period are considered illegal recruitment, and are subject to sanctions as provided for in this policy.
- E. Clubs may conduct tryouts at any time during the tryout period.
- F. Clubs must adhere to the Carolina Region Athlete and Club Bill of Rights for Tryouts, and distribute copies of the Bill of Rights to all tryout participants. Violations of the Bill of Rights for Tryouts are subject to sanctions as provided for in this policy.

3. Reporting and Investigation of Policy Violations

- A. Claims of recruiting violations, or violations of the Bill of Rights for Tryouts, should be submitted in writing or email to the Carolina Region office. Claims can be filed by clubs, players, or parents/guardians of players. Before a written complaint is filed, a phone call should be made to the Carolina Region Director of Operations for an initial determination of whether or not the claim is valid.
 - B. Within three (3) business days, the CR office will notify (by phone and in writing) the accused club or coach of the violation claim, and provide supporting details including names of the involved player(s).
 - C. The accused shall be given three (3) business days following receipt of notification to respond in writing to the accusation, and provide their perspective of the situation.
 - D. Upon receipt of the written response from the accused, the matter will be reviewed within ten (10) business days by the appropriate Board Representative of the affected division (girls, boys, adults), the Carolina Region Director of Operations, and an established subcommittee from the relevant division's Advisory Board. This review may involve contact with any and all of the involved parties, including the player/parents.
 - E. If a violation appears to have taken place, the Board Representative of the affected division (or the Director of Operations if the Board Representative wishes to be recused due to a conflict of interest) will make a determination of whether or not sanctions are warranted.
 - F. Decisions regarding the matter may be appealed in accordance with the Carolina Region's Due Process policy.
4. Sanctions for Demonstrated Policy Violations
- A. Violations of this policy shall result in sanctions as determined appropriate by the Carolina Region Board Representative of the affected division (girls, boys, adults) and members of the division's Advisory Board.
 - B. Sanctions accrue to clubs, as well as individuals. That is, violations by any club representative result in penalties to the entire club, as well as to that individual regardless of future club affiliation.
 - C. In the case of a first offense, the Board Representative may choose among several courses of action, including:
 - a. Acknowledge review of the incident with no further action.
 - b. Issue a formal notice of reprimand to the director of the violating club (cc to the filer of the complaint) establishing a two-year probationary status.
 - c. Denial of club entry into the Carolina Region championship tournament and/or the region's Bid Tournament.
 - d. Other penalty deemed appropriate by the applicable division's Advisory Council.
 - D. For second and subsequent violations the recommended sanction is a one (1) season suspension from participation in any Carolina Region sanctioned activity for the individual(s) involved in the violation and club ineligibility to participate in both the Carolina Region championship tournament and the region's Bid Tournament. Other penalties deemed appropriate by the applicable division's Advisory Board may also be considered.

Carolina Region Letter of Commitment (2007-2008)

1. **Basic penalty:** I understand that by signing this letter I am committed to joining the club named within this document for the entire 2007-2008 season. If I compete with another club, I will be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season.
 - a. **Early Signing Penalty.** A player who signs a Letter of Commitment before the established Carolina Region tryout period <<insert date>> is subject to suspension for the entire season. While offers to play may be extended at any time during the tryout period , a club representative may not require a player to sign before the established Carolina Region signing date.
2. **Recruiting Ban After Signing.** I understand that all other clubs are obligated to respect my signing and shall cease to contact me once they know I have signed a Letter of Commitment. I shall notify any club representative who contacts me that I have signed a "letter of commitment" and have committed to a club. I shall not attend any other club's tryouts once I have signed a Letter of Commitment.
3. **Club Signatures Required Prior to Submission.** This document must be signed and dated by the Club director or representative before submission to my parents/guardians and me for our signatures.
4. **Parent/Guardian Signature Required.** My parent or legal guardian is required to sign this Letter of Commitment if I am less than 18 years of age at the time of signing.
5. **Falsification of Letter of Commitment.** If I falsify any part of this Letter of Commitment, including the date, I understand that I am subject to suspension for the entire 2007-2008 season.
6. **Nullification of Other Agreements.** My signature of this Letter of Commitment nullifies any agreements, verbal or otherwise, which would release me from the condition stated within this document.
7. **Binding Agreement.** I understand that I have signed this Letter of Commitment with the club and not with a particular individual. If the coach or any player(s) leaves the team, I remain bound by the provisions of this document.
8. **Release from Commitment.** I understand that I may request release from this commitment. I further understand that the club named herein is under no obligation to release me, even if I do not sign a contract to play with that club. I understand I cannot commit to, or play with, another club unless and until I have received a commitment release in writing from the club named below
9. **Appeals.** Terms of this Letter of Commitment may be appealed through the Carolina Region appeals process.
10. **Certification.** By my signature, I certify that I have read all terms and conditions in this document. I have discussed them with the club representative named within, and fully understand, accept, and agree to be bound by them.

This is to certify my decision to join (name of club): _____

Player's Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address/City/State/Zip: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Club Representative: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Scenario 3: Recruiting allowed.

Guiding Principle (from CR website):

Clubs/Teams/Coaches need to understand that they do not own the rights to players. Players (with help from their parents/guardians) have the right to choose where they want to get their club volleyball experience. Each membership year, each family (which includes the individual player and his/her parents/guardians) has the right to choose to play for a different club/team than the year before without repercussions from their previous club. [Affiliation with a club concludes at the end of the USAV season \(typically following JOs in July\) – affiliation does not continue until the end of the USAV membership year.](#)

Carolina Region, USAV
Athlete and Club Bill of Rights for Tryouts

The purpose of this document is to assist athletes and their parents/guardians during the Carolina Region club volleyball tryout process. It is the club's responsibility to provide the athlete's family with all information currently available about their program. It is the responsibility of each athlete and her/his family to become educated about the program they are considering joining. It is the responsibility of both parties – club and athlete – to honor every commitment!

Athletes and families have a right to full information from the club about the tryout process. Different clubs conduct different types of tryouts. Be aware of the type you are attending and ask lots of questions. Are the tryouts targeted for a specific team, or for any team in the club for which the athlete is age eligible? Has the club already "promised" positions to certain athletes, or is it an "open competition" for all positions? Are you being considered for any team in the club, including the "top" team in your age group, or have some teams already been filled? Are the tryouts open to anyone regardless of prior affiliation, or are club members from the prior season given first priority?

Athletes and families have a right to attend any sanctioned club tryout in the Carolina Region. Tryouts can be limited to one session, or they can be conducted over several sessions on different days. Tryouts, including any "call back" session, should be limited to one session per day, and generally no more than 3 hours in duration. Clubs have a right to charge a tryout fee, and multi-session tryouts may be more expensive than single-session tryouts. Open gym sessions or instructional clinics are not considered to be part of the tryout process and clubs cannot require athletes to attend these pre-tryout events in order to attend their tryouts. Clubs can advertise and/or promote tryouts and pre-tryout clinics and open gym sessions as long as the communications are in conformance with the Carolina Region recruiting policy.

[<<insert recruiting link here>>](#)

It is the Carolina Region's policy that no tryouts, regardless of age group, should be held until after the North Carolina State Championships for public high schools. Athletes and families should be aware that any tryout conducted prior to the official Carolina Region

tryout date of <<< insert date here >>> is considered “unsanctioned” by the region, and clubs that violate the region’s policy will be considered ineligible to participate in both the Carolina Region championship tournament and the region’s Bid Tournament. **NOTE:** We may want to give consideration to allowing earlier tryouts for 14-and-under or younger teams for any athletes who are in 8th grade or lower (ie. No “young” high school students should be eligible for early tryouts). If we were to go this direction, there should be a “no earlier than XXX” date established – we don’t want tryouts interfering with middle school seasons. The advantage of moving the early ages up in the schedule would be to allow for more club and facility bandwidth during the 3-week tryout period.

Athletes and families have the right to select any club without the risk of consequences or repercussions for school team participation. Many club coaches are also middle school or high school coaches, and the potential exists for conflict-of-interest situations to arise. Communications by coaches or clubs (direct or implied) that accepting or refusing an offer, or attending another club’s tryout, will impact (positively or negatively) school volleyball participation are forbidden, and violations should be reported to the Carolina Region office and the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

Athletes have a right to attend multiple club tryouts without pressure or risk of an offered position “expiring”. Clubs should not make offers to multiple athletes for the same position or spot on a team. Acceptance or rejection of an offer cannot be required by a club until the Carolina Region signing date (typically three weeks after the beginning of the tryout period). Athletes can attend multiple clubs’ tryouts if they so choose without risk of “losing” an offer prior to the establish Carolina Region signing date. Clubs that pressure athletes or families to make a decision prior to the signing date are in violation of this Bill of Rights.

Athletes and families have a right to be notified of their status as soon as possible once the club has reached a decision regarding the athlete. The club must contact the athlete within 72 hours of a tryout session to inform them of their status. Contact may be by e-mail, web site, phone call, or other form of communication. Athletes should be informed that they are accepted, on a callback list, refused acceptance, or placed on a waiting list. In the case of multi-session tryouts, the 72-hour notification window begins after the *final* tryout session. Waiting list candidates should be notified of their status within 72 hours after the signing date.

Clubs have a right to a timely, unambiguous decision regarding an offered position. Athletes and families that are extended an offer are strongly encouraged to notify clubs as soon as possible of their decision. This is for the benefit of other athletes who may be on a club’s waiting list. Acceptance of an offer may be communicated verbally, but this is a non-binding commitment until official acceptance is documented in writing via the Carolina Region Letter of Commitment. Athletes and families who accept a club’s offer are strongly encouraged to cease attending other clubs’ tryouts and notify other clubs of their intent to accept an offer with another club. Once a Carolina Region Letter of Commitment is signed, the athlete may not try out for, or accept an offer from, any other club.

Clubs have a right to avoid families who have not honored prior club contracts. Unfortunately, all USAV regions include a few “club-hoppers” – families and athletes that

accept an offer from a club, sign a contract, play during the season, and then leave the club without honoring their financial obligations. This behavior does financial harm to clubs, thereby undermining the continued growth and success of volleyball in the Carolina Region. Clubs that experience problems of this nature have the right to notify the region office. Players with outstanding club balances from the prior season will be restricted from achieving final USAV registration until terms are reached to the satisfaction of the previous club.

We hope the above information is helpful to you during the tryout process. Remember that you are purchasing a product! It is your responsibility to know what you are buying: there are many quality programs offered throughout our region. Our desire is for every athlete, family, and club to be 100% satisfied with the decisions they make during tryouts.

An athlete, parent of athlete, or club who believes they were not afforded their rights during the tryout process should contact the Carolina Region at (336) 766-3581 or Office@CarolinaRegionVB.org

Bullet version for distribution at tryouts

Carolina Region, USAV
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- **Athletes and families have a right to full information from the club about the tryout process.**
- **Athletes and families have a right to attend any sanctioned club tryout in the Carolina Region.**
- **Athletes and families have the right to select any club without the risk of consequences or repercussions for school team participation.**
- **Athletes have a right to attend multiple club tryouts without pressure or risk of an offered position “expiring”.**
- **Athletes and families have a right to be notified of their status as soon as possible once the club has reached a decision regarding the athlete.**
- **Clubs have a right to a timely, unambiguous decision regarding an offered position.**
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