

A Guide to Club Volleyball

For Players & Families

What Is Club Volleyball?

- Club volleyball provides opportunities for players to train and compete in club teams that cater to various levels of play. There are over 80 clubs located throughout BC. To find a Volleyball BC-approved club in your region, visit volleyballbc.org/play/youth/indoor/club-volleyball (Club Contacts section).
- The club volleyball season runs from January to May with many clubs hosting tryouts in November to December. Throughout the season, club teams compete in tournaments which culminate in Provincial Championships in April/May. More information about key dates and the schedule can be found at volleyballbc.org/club-volleyball.
- Club volleyball is available from 12U–18U for boys and girls. Not every club will have a team in every age group. Ensure that you understand the age class regulations as there are different game types, developmental substitution rules, and positional requirements depending on the age of the athlete. Volleyball BC sets these annually and you can find them in the Club Handbook which is issued each season.
- Volleyball BC is the provincial governing body that oversees club volleyball in British Columbia. Any club, player, coach, or referee wishing to participate in club volleyball must be a member of Volleyball BC, meet certain requirements, and abide by the policies and practices of Volleyball BC.
- Volleyball clubs are independent organizations. However, clubs that participate in the club volleyball season apply annually for Volleyball BC membership. To be approved for membership, a club must meet certain criteria and agree to accept and abide by all Volleyball BC policies, processes, and procedures. Clubs must sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Volleyball BC and submit certain operating requirements such as a refund policy, conflict of interest policy, complaint procedure with point of contact, and codes of conduct for athletes, coaches and parents.
- Volleyball BC will also indicate the organizational status of a club (e.g. non-profit, unincorporated, business, etc.) on the club listing (volleyballbc.org/play/youth/indoor/club-volleyball).
- **SPECIAL NOTE:** Outside of club volleyball, other activities undertaken by a club (e.g. camps, clinics, private training) may NOT be sanctioned or insured by Volleyball BC. Please ask the club about these activities and how they ensure the safety of participants.
- Each membership year, every athlete may pursue a club or team that best fits their development and goals.

- It is the responsibility of all parties – club, athletes and families – to honour any commitments outlined in Volleyball BC policies and processes, and club-specific policies and processes.

What Should I Consider When Selecting a Club?

There are over 80 volleyball clubs in British Columbia, each with a unique organization and culture. You should consider the best fit for you when you are looking for a volleyball club. Remember that you are the consumer, and you are purchasing a product – it is your responsibility to know what you are buying and to ensure that you are happy being part of the club.

Athletes and families have the right to learn about the clubs they are interested in and contact the appropriate club member if they have any questions about the program. Here are some important questions or considerations when looking for a new club:

Culture

- What are the club's values? What are the values you are looking for in a club? Different clubs and teams have different focuses and overarching goals behind their values. Take the time to reflect on what your athlete hopes to get out of the club experience before making a final decision.
- Consider if the club's stated values match their actions. We enroll kids in sport to help instill character and need sport leaders to demonstrate the same principles we hope our children will learn and embrace.

Organization

- How long has the club been established? How is the club structured? Are they a registered business or a non-profit? Does the club have a Board of Directors? Are the Board members also involved in the club in secondary roles? There is not a singular 'right' way to operate; however, you should do your research and understand the advantages/disadvantages of the various models when selecting your club. You are spending your money and need to be an informed consumer.
- Does the club have established processes and procedures that are clearly posted on their website? Are club operations aligned with Volleyball BC policies, processes, and procedures? You can refer to the VBC website for a comprehensive list of these.
- Is there a clear complaints process? This should include a 3rd party liaison, who is not a direct relation to the Board of Directors, main contact or head coach. This could be a school principal, lawyer, board member, team manager, etc. The process should include a person or organization to act as the direct contact for participants in case of dispute resolution.
- What level of parental involvement is required? This may include fundraising requirements, scorekeeping, or other volunteer assignments.

Training

- Who are the coaches? What is the coaching philosophy? Do the actions taken by the coach align with the stated philosophy?
- Have you spoken with previous club athletes? What was their experience? How many athletes do you see returning to the club year after year? Make sure you consider the role the previous athlete had on the team as it may alter the feedback they provide. Your club experience is unique to you, but inquiring about previous experiences can often shed light on things you 'wish you knew' prior to learning first-hand.
- Do practice and training times work with our family schedule and/or participation in other activities or sports? Does the club support multi-sport athletes and participation in school-based sports? Each athlete has their own context in how they participate in club volleyball. If you have other pursuits that are also important to you, you should find a club/coach/team that will support your outside interests.

Fees & Financial Obligations

- What is included in the club fees? Below are some examples of items to ask about that may be part of club fees. It is up to each athlete and family to determine what items are important to them.
 - Are hotels included? If not included, is there an expectation to stay at a particular hotel or with team members?
 - Is any team transportation included?
 - How many practices per week will be included? What is the number of courts per team for practices? How long are the practices? Are they regularly scheduled?
 - Is sport science included such as strength and conditioning, nutrition, or sport psychology?
 - Are there other items like team pictures or activities?
 - Are there exhibition tournaments or other travel included?
 - Are team gear and uniforms included?
- What is the club's refund or financial policy? Clubs have a right to have all financial obligations honoured. Athletes that commit to a club for the season are committing to meet all financial responsibilities required by the club. Families should not commit to a club if they are unable to meet those obligations. VBC does not get involved in financial matters between clubs and athletes. A club's financial and refund policy will always take precedence.

What Safety Considerations Should I Be Aware Of?

Safety is of the utmost importance to Volleyball BC, and we strive to ensure that all participants receive a safe and positive volleyball experience in British Columbia. Abuse, maltreatment, and unsafe practices have no place in our volleyball community.

Volleyball BC is dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming sport environment. To support this, all clubs and participants in club volleyball must uphold and fulfil these requirements:

- Agree to uphold the Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- Follow “Open and Observable Environments” to ensure that an athlete is never alone with a person in authority like a coach.
- Understand appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour in volleyball.
- Ensure that all club leaders are screened and approved members of Volleyball BC prior to taking part in any club activities with athletes: coaches, staff, volunteers, and referees are required to complete a Criminal Record Check every 3 years, complete a Screening Disclosure Form annually, and complete Safe Sport training.
- Report any abuse or maltreatment to ITP Sport (integritycounts.ca), an independent third party that handles complaints related to harassment, discrimination, and abuse.

For more information about Volleyball BC’s work on keeping volleyball safe, visit our safe sport webpage (volleyballbc.org/safe-sport).

Parents and caregivers play an important role in protecting their children from maltreatment and in holding sport organizations accountable. As a parent/caregiver, you have the right to ask questions about what steps a club takes to create a safe environment for youth:

Step 1: Get to Know the Organization

- What do you know about the organization’s history, goals for youth and philosophy?
- Have you toured the organization?
- What impression were you left with?
- Is the organization transparent around questions about safe sport?
- Does the organization have an open-door policy for addressing concerns?

Step 2: Ask Questions

- What is your screening process, beyond criminal record checks, for hiring staff and/or volunteers?
- What type of training do your staff and/or volunteers receive on safe sport?
- Do you have a staff/volunteer code of conduct that outlines the expectation of boundaries between youth and adults?
- What are your policies and procedures for reporting concerns or misconduct?
- How does your organization handle staff or volunteer misconduct?

Step 3: Explore How Risk Is Managed

Ask specific questions about how risk is managed for activities that may include:

- Transportation of youth

- One-on-one time with youth
- Changing and showering needs
- Overnight trips
- Communication with youth outside of program activities (e.g. texting, emailing, social networking sites)
- Inquire about how the organization communicates issues or concerns to parents when an incident or situation takes place

Step 4: Stay Involved

- Teach your child about personal safety.
- Be present and involved in your child's activities. Pay attention to interactions with leaders.
- Check in with your child and create opportunities for them to share their feelings, stories, opinions, and perspective about experiences.
- Pay close attention to changes in behaviour. Model appropriate boundaries between adults and youth. Develop your child's sense of healthy boundaries by respecting their boundaries, stopping others who try to disrespect their boundaries, and correcting your child when they begin to disrespect others.
- Get to know friends and other parents from the organization.
- Pay attention and question inappropriate interactions between adults and youth. Let the organization know about your concerns by reporting to them.

What Behaviour Should I Be Concerned About?

- Communication with your child that is outside of the adult's role and is not occurring within the context of the sport experience. E.g. making personal phone calls to your child.
- Inappropriate interactions with your child that go beyond their role in volleyball. E.g. offering unauthorized personal rides to your child.
- Behaviour that would be concerning to anyone who witnessed it.
- Behaviour that embarrasses, humiliates, or shames your child.
- Physical contact with your child that makes her/him feel uncomfortable, violates reasonable boundaries, or is not appropriate for the context of the situation.
- Inappropriate boundaries with your child, sexualized behaviours (e.g. sexual talk, leering, flirting) or touching that make the child and/or others feel uncomfortable.

If you have concerns, talk to your volleyball club or program organizer.

What Should I Do If I Have a Concern About the Behaviour of Someone in a Club?

If the concern is related to Volleyball BC bylaws, rules, policies, and/or procedures, please contact: reporting@volleyballbc.org.

If the concern relates to club-specific policies or procedures, contact your club and follow their established policies for conflict resolution.

If the complaint/inquiry is related to maltreatment, misconduct, discrimination, violence, bullying or harassment, contact ITP Sport (integritycounts.ca), an independent third party that handles complaints related to safe sport.

What Is Early Signing?

To accommodate and promote loyalty between athletes and clubs, returning athletes are permitted to re-sign with their previous year's indoor club during the Early Signing Period. Early Signing is only permitted for 15–18U athletes. Not every club decides to take advantage of this.

The Early Signing Period is set by Volleyball BC each year and typically takes place mid-September to the start of November.

Clubs report all the athletes that they have early signed to Volleyball BC and a list is published on the VBC website once the Early Signing Period has concluded.

Athletes that early sign with their club do not need to attend tryouts for the club. In addition, they cannot attend tryouts for other clubs.

Athletes that utilize Early Signing are not guaranteed:

- To be placed on a specific team (unless identified by the club).
- Playing time.

Athletes and clubs that utilize the Early Signing Period are committing to each other for a minimum of one season:

- Athletes who do not honour their commitment will be ineligible to compete for the remainder of the season.
- Clubs that do not honour their commitment will be sanctioned by Volleyball BC.

What Should I Expect During Tryouts?

Clubs typically hold tryouts for places on their teams. The dates of these tryouts vary depending on age category and club but typically take place from mid/end of November to mid-December. Club tryouts must fall during the times indicated by Volleyball BC for the current membership year.

Clubs cannot require athletes to attend tryouts outside of the published tryout dates as a condition of their selection to a club or team.

Registration for tryouts is done individually through the clubs and not through Volleyball BC. Please refer to the Club Contacts page (volleyballbc.org/play/youth/indoor/club-volleyball) to find the websites of the clubs you are interested in and contact the clubs directly for more information.

Some clubs may choose not to run tryouts. If you have questions about roster spots or team availability, please reach out to the clubs directly.

Clubs typically charge fees to attend tryouts. Tryout fees are not part of the athlete's club fees.

Attending a club's tryouts is not considered as playing for the club and does not establish a commitment to do so.

Athletes and families have a right to full information from a club about the tryout process.

Athletes and families have a right to attend any club tryout. Athletes can attend multiple tryouts if they wish.

Tryouts may be one session, or they may be conducted over several sessions on different days. Clubs have a right to charge a tryout fee, and multi-session tryouts may be more expensive than single.

Tryouts should not be contingent on attending optional training opportunities in the off season.

Different clubs conduct different types of tryouts. Become educated about the type of tryout you are attending and the team details by asking questions:

- How long or how many days is the tryout?
- Is the athlete being pursued for a specific team or for any team in the club for which the athlete is age eligible?
- Has the club already re-signed certain athletes, or is it a blank slate and open to all positions?
- Is the athlete being considered for any team in the club, including the "top" team in her/his age group, or have some teams already been filled?

If you are not comfortable with any of the answers provided by the club, it may be a sign to keep looking. If a club is acting in a way that appears to not have your best interests in mind, then you should consider that in your decisions. There are many quality programs offered throughout our province. Our desire is for every athlete, family, and club to be satisfied with the decisions they make during tryouts.

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. For multiple day tryouts, athletes have the right to know their status as soon as possible. Athletes should not be required to attend additional days of a tryout if they are not a developmental fit for the team. Athletes have the right to have this information communicated confidentially considering the sensitive nature of the information.

Athletes who have accepted a club offer **MUST** cease attending other clubs' tryouts and notify other clubs of their intent.

What Should I Expect When It Comes to Offers from Clubs?

During or after tryouts, a club may provide you with an offer for a place on a team.

Volleyball BC annually sets the Offer Signing Date, by which athletes can formally accept a position with a club. These dates vary by age group but are typically at the end of November to mid-December. A club can offer athletes a position with the club at any time after the start of the club's tryouts and before the Offer Signing Date. A club can only make offers to athletes that are registered for their club's tryout.

All offers to athletes must use the standard VBC Club Athlete Offer Letter. An athlete is considered to have accepted an offer upon signing the VBC Club Athlete Offer Letter or by paying a portion of their club fees.

If you receive an offer from a club, the club cannot rescind that offer until after 6pm on the Offer Signing Date.

If you receive an offer from a club and choose to accept it, once you sign the form it is a binding contract for both you and the club to commit to each other for the entirety of one season.

Here are some considerations for offers:

- Athletes and families have the right to select any club without receiving pressure from the club representatives or risk of consequences or repercussions. Unless the athlete has accepted an offer to join their club, club/team representatives may only contact athletes between 4:00pm–9:00pm on weekdays and between 8:00am–9:00pm on weekends. Club/team representatives may contact parents/guardians at any time. Clubs should not pressure athletes to accept any offers or commitments. If a club is pressuring you to accept an offer, this may be a sign that this is not the right club for you.
- It is best practice for athletes to know the coach, team, and age category they are committing to. Athletes also have the right to ask questions regarding any offer they receive to further educate themselves on the commitment they are making. If this information is not provided at the time of the signing, the athlete has the right to withdraw from the commitment when the information becomes available.
- An athlete's questions about their offer should not be based on potential playing time or position as these factors are fluid during the season and cannot be predicted. Teams and athletes evolve over time and growth and change is inevitable.
- Clubs have the right to know the status of their offer as soon as you know if you will accept it. This affects their planning and whether they need to offer a position to any additional athletes. Hoarding offers is not fair to anyone.
- Athletes and families who accept a club's offer **MUST** cease attending other clubs' tryouts and notify other clubs (in whose tryouts they participated or that have already offered them a position) of their intent to accept an offer with another club.

What Does “Recruiting” Mean?

Volleyball BC has a zero tolerance recruiting policy (volleyballbc.org/play/youth/indoor/club-volleyball) to ensure that all participants have a positive experience. This means club representatives – such as coaches, administrators, team staff, parents and guardians – are not allowed to contact athletes from a club other than their own at any time for the purpose of recruitment.

Club representatives are only allowed to send direct communication to an athlete if the athlete played for the club the previous season, the athlete is registered for their club’s tryout, or if the athlete was not registered with a club for the previous season.

“Direct Communication” refers to a personalized, individual and/or directed message from a club representative to a specific athlete or group of athletes. At no time is Direct Communication permitted with athletes from another club. “Indirect Communication” is allowed – this refers to a non-personalized message from a club representative that is either available to the general public, or is a response to a query that provides no more information than is available to all athletes.

Athletes and their families are encouraged to aid the recruitment process by ensuring that the recruiting policy and guidelines are followed, and where possible, by resolving minor (unintentional and intentional) violations. All members of Volleyball BC should be vigilant of violations that place athletes in uncomfortable circumstances or threaten their health/safety, or that provide a competitive advantage for one club versus another.

If you have any questions about the recruiting policy, contact dcaughran@volleyballbc.org.

What Happens If I Do Not Receive an Offer?

Unfortunately not everyone will get an offer to play club volleyball. It is highly competitive and most clubs run only 1 or 2 teams in an age group.

Volleyball BC does not have any say in who clubs decide to make offers to, where clubs operate, which age groups clubs offer, or how many teams they choose to run. These are all at the discretion of the club.

If you did not receive an offer but would like to continue playing volleyball, consider:

- Visiting our Youth Programs page on our website (volleyballbc.org/play/youth/indoor/youth-programs) to see what programs Volleyball BC might offer.
- Asking your local clubs if they run clinics and camps throughout the year.
- Contacting your local recreation provider to see if there are volleyball programs.

Useful Links

Resource	Web address
Volleyball BC – Club Volleyball web pages	volleyballbc.org/club-volleyball
Volleyball BC – List of Approved Clubs	volleyballbc.org/play/youth/indoor/club-volleyball (Club Contacts section)
Volleyball BC – Provincial Championships	volleyballbc.org/club-volleyball/provincial-championships
Volleyball Canada – National Championships	volleyball.ca/en/volleyball-canada-domestic-events
Volleyball BC – Safety in volleyball	volleyballbc.org/safe-sport

Key Contacts

Region or topic	Email
Lower Mainland region	lm@volleyballbc.org
Fraser Valley	fv@volleyballbc.org
Okanagan	okanagan@volleyballbc.org
Vancouver Island	island@volleyballbc.org
North	north@volleyballbc.org
Kootenays	kootenays@volleyballbc.org
Membership	members@volleyballbc.org

www.volleyballbc.org