

Please bring pages 5-6 filled out with you to tryouts.

Athena

Our goal as a club is to provide an environment where girls can train to be the best volleyball player that they can possibly be. We truly desire to positively affect each member of our club in multiple ways. We have very caring and knowledgeable coaches and want the best for your daughter. In addition to improving our volleyball skills, inevitably we will encounter situations along the way. We choose to play sports to develop strengths and character on the court so that we can be stronger people off the court. These characteristics include respect, discipline, integrity, self-confidence, determination, and humility. In order to achieve our goal of developing character it is imperative that we have 1) commitment from the athlete and 2) support from the parents.

ATHENA MAY NOT BE THE RIGHT CLUB FOR EVERYONE. THIS IS TRUE FOR ALL CLUBS AS WE ALL HAVE A COACHING PHILOSOPHY, BUT NOT ALL CLUBS MAY COME RIGHT OUT AND STATE THAT. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR PLAYERS AND PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE ATHENA PHILOSOPHY IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE. ATHENA'S STRENGTH IS THAT WE FOCUS ESPECIALLY ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECT OF VOLLEYBALL. WE INSTRUCT SKILLS IN A SYSTEM THAT WE HAVE FOUND TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN "YELLING" AT PLAYERS TO MAKE THEM SUCCESSFUL, AS THEY NEED TO FIND INNER MOTIVATION. AT THE SAME TIME WE WILL HOLD A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPECTATIONS THAT EACH PLAYER WILL NEED TO BE HELD TO. WE BELIEVE IN POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT, AND THAT PLAYERS ULTIMATELY COMPETE BEST WHEN THEY DESIRE WHAT'S BEST FOR THE TEAM, AND NOT OUT OF FEAR. OVERALL, WE WOULD LIKE TO BUILD PLAYER-LED TEAMS THAT "THINK" VOLLEYBALL.

Athena is for specific athletes that are looking to gain life experiences from athletics. We understand that parents need to be a strong advocate for their daughter, support them through the good and bad situations, and advocate for the success of the team over the individual. WE ASK PARENTS TO EQUIP NOT ENABLE.

One very important concept for parents, players, and coaches to understand is that Athena wants to provide the most "positive" experience for our athletes. "Positive" does not always mean "happy". When you choose to play a team sport you will have times of disappointment, discouragement, and conflict along with the successes and encouragement. At Athena we try to minimize the tough times, but the reality of team sports is that these situations will arise. Why would we voluntarily put ourselves into these situations? Because that is the reality of life and in order to successfully navigate society, we need to learn how to react to these scenarios. Sometimes we will be successful, sometimes we will not, but we will be stronger relational individuals because of it. We want to provide a foundation to equip your daughter for life on and off the court.

"Life is 10% what you make it and 90% how you take it."-Irving Berlin

Train for excellence.

It is also important to understand that we are training the whole athlete and the body in addition to volleyball skills. A typical practice would start with 30 minutes of individual skills training led by Wendy Stammer, Lena Chan, and David Glass. Skills training is followed by an hour of team practice to cover the team system and concepts. Practice usually is concluded with a 20 minute session of SAQ training - speed, agility and quickness training that improves movement on court. Last year, on average, we increased each athlete's jump by two inches. The 16's and 18's team will be asked to lift weights twice a week 30 minutes before their practices. Please note that the 12s and 13s team will not participate in SAQ training as their bodies are not fully developed to handle plyometric training yet.

WHY DOES ATHENA TRAVEL TO REGIONAL AND/OR NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS?: While there are additional costs incurred with travel, etc...the benefits are clear. The primary goal of attending a national tournament is to be exposed to a higher level of volleyball, compete against the best and return to our region with higher standards and higher level of play. Our goal is always to win, but what our focus must be is to improve.

Secondly, for interested players, assisting in the college recruiting process is a key service that Athena provides. Attending national tournaments is an important venue for exposure to college coaches and recruiters.

RECRUITING: For athletes that seek to continue to play at a collegiate level, Athena helps prepare athletes to navigate through the recruiting process. Our goal is to help place your daughter at a school that fits both their academic and athletic desires. Our coaches and staff have collegiate experience and will make connections for our Athena athletes. Based on your needs, we can help connect our athletes to school programs, make introductions, post a skills video on line and compose interest letters to college coaches. (Please note that making a video is an additional charge. David Glass has provided this service in the past with many of our athletes who have gone on to play in college.)

OSAA Activities- Athena encourages athletes to be well-rounded and involve themselves in a variety of activities if they can juggle everything and do them to the best of their abilities. Athletes are "excused" from practice if they are participating in an OSAA activity at the exact time that practice or a tournament is in session. Each athlete has a different threshold on what they can be committed to. We support multi-sport athletes as long as they can still give 100% when they are at club practice.

Respect for coaches, teammates, and parents.

We will require eye contact when the coach or player is speaking. We will require a verbal response from athletes and will expect the same from coaches. Foul language, bullying, and or negative body language will not be accepted. Parents will be held to the same standard as it is often we hear one parent talking poorly of another athlete or the coach. We need to function as a unit. Parents will also be asked not to coach their daughter. You are entrusting their volleyball experience to the expertise that Athena provides. The girls feel the need to listen to their parent over the coach which does not help the team function as a unit. We will ask that the only thing coming from the stands is positive encouragement. Please no coaching statements as it confuses your daughter.

PLAYING TIME : We recognize that you know your daughter best, that you will continue to be her best advocate and more than likely, probably feel that she deserves to play most of the time. Please understand that there are 12 other parents that feel the exact same way, and that there are only 6 spots on the court! There is never any perfect equity of playing time

when it comes to team sports. While playing time is not equitable, the level of instruction is. Please trust that we are doing our best to evaluate each player fairly. We take into consideration many things: attitude, attendance, work ethic, communication, support of teammates, and skill level. Line-ups change from game to game so please keep that in mind. And then even then, playing time still won't be fair. Again, our goal is to make each player better and Darron Thomas, QB of the #1 University of Oregon Ducks, credits his growth this year due to training and learning on the sidelines as the second string QB last year. Lack of playing time doesn't mean lack of learning. Equip your child to place the team first, learn in every circumstance and see the positive.

PROTOCOL FOR PARENTAL CONCERNS : If parents or players are concerned with something that the club or coach is doing, we seek your comments and welcome your questions, as long as they are handled in a specific way. 95% of concerns are about playing time and we know that most of these conversations will start out with "my daughter would be so embarrassed if she knew I was talking to you". The way we will handle these concerns is the following protocol.

First: We ask the player to approach the coach outside of practice or tournaments. You can set up a time. Please do not just walk up to a coach and expect that they can have a productive conversation when they are probably consumed with something else. We want to hear you, so let's set up an appropriate time. Also know that your coach cares about you and your success so approach the conversation as if the coach is on your side and that they have a good reason for what is going on. Use this discussion as an opportunity to work with the coach on how the athlete can continue to improve.

Second: For a parent to discuss any issues, we ask the parent to sit through at least 3 practices, so you have a good feel for the team, and are familiar with what is actually going on, rather than basing it solely on the emotions of the athlete. If you still have a concern after the fact, please set up a time to meet with the coach to discuss the "issue". Again, please go in to the meeting realizing that the coach has to balance the athlete and the team's best interests.

Third: Parents can contact Lena Chan, the director, and I will step in to see what we can do to resolve the issue.

PLAYERS/PARENTS:

Just as you expect the best from us we will ask the same of all our parents and players. Teams work when coaches work to improve each player and parents/players support their coach and fellow teammates.

When we practice, play, and travel each athlete is expected to be a good ambassador of the program by following the rules set forth by the coach and team parent.

If any of the athletes make poor choices we will handle it in the following manner:

First offense: Coach will talk to the player or parent individually about the situation.

Second offense: Player will be put on "probation" for a week. They will be allowed to practice, but not compete. If they are on a trip they will be asked to leave the tournament.

Third offense: Player will be asked to leave the club.

QUESTIONNAIRE: In order to help determine if an alpha or beta team best suits your daughter's needs, we ask you to complete the following questions. Proper placement is not only determined by athletic skill, but commitment level, competitiveness, and financial considerations.

Again, we will strive to do the best that we can by looking at individual needs and balancing that with the needs of each team. One way to do this is to make sure parents, players, and coaches have a similar goal in mind for each athlete. When goals and expectations do not match up, this is where possible problems arise.

Please read the descriptions below to help us match your club expectations and reason why you are playing club volleyball. You will then be asked at the end to choose which team and position fits your needs.

“BETA” PLAYER -You would like to be part of a team where individual skills are worked on at each practice. You prefer a situation where playing time is somewhat equitable. The focus of the season is improvement rather than wins and losses. You're preparing for HS season. These teams compete locally and regionally instead of nationally. These teams may practice a little less often than “alpha” teams, but you are coached the exact same fundamentals of technique and teachings that all Athena teams are exposed to. Volleyball is an important facet of your life, but it's not your top priority. We feel that Athena has the best benefit/cost ratio clubs in Portland and Beta teams are less expensive than Alpha teams. Being a beta player is not a “bad” thing.

Thoughts of a typical “Beta” Parent :

- “I am verbally supportive of my daughter's teammates and coaching staff no matter if my daughter is playing or not.”
- “I would prefer my daughter playing on a team where playing time is more equitable.”
- “I want my daughter to enjoy the experience of playing volleyball and feel that sports provides important life lessons”
- “I want my daughter to play to improve her volleyball skills and compete at the high school level.”

“ALPHA” PLAYER -You would like to be part of a team that can compete at the national level. You are willing to put yourself out there to train to be the best. Playing time is decided upon by which line-up provides the best chance for the team to win and equal playing time is not a consideration. You are willing to practice more, possibly do community service outside the gym, and are expected to eat and train a specific way. If you desire to be part of an “alpha” team, you have placed volleyball as a higher priority in life, and understand that there cannot be conflicts with practices and tournaments. Family and school are very important parts of our lives, but planning is critical. You are expected to work items such as homework, appointments, etc...around volleyball commitments. This team is designed to push each athlete to be the best they can be. Your desired playing position may take second place to the needs of the team. Again, this may not mean “happy”, it means “positive”. The financial commitment is higher here due to travel expenses.

Thoughts of a typical “Alpha” Parent:

- “When my daughter is improving and competing on the highest level team, I am satisfied whether she is a “starter” or not.”
- “I am verbally supportive of my daughter's teammates and coaching staff no matter if my daughter is playing or not.”
- “My daughter is talented enough to play in college so the time, sacrifice, and financial commitment are worth it.”
- “I want the coach to push my daughter to a higher level, even though it may take her out of her comfort zone.”

NAME : _____

CURRENT GRADE: _____

STEP 1: Please have the athlete complete the following questionnaire.

All answers are acceptable, just be honest.

PLAYER QUESTIONS:

1. Rate your work-ethic on a scale of 1-10: _____ (even when you are tired or uncomfortable)

2. Rate how important winning is to you on a scale of 1-10: _____

3. Mark which statement best describes you:

_____ I want to play club volleyball for the fun!

_____ I want to play club volleyball because I want to improve my volleyball skills.

_____ I want to play club volleyball because I want to play/play for my high school team, and want to improve for HS.

_____ I want to play club volleyball because I plan to play volleyball in college.

3. Please list all other activities you will be involved in over the duration of the club season. (December-May)

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4. My ideal position: _____ Second ideal position: _____

5. Placing an athlete on the appropriate team is not just about talent or athletic ability. A lot of the decision should be affected by the desires of the athlete, parent, and what they are willing to do to achieve their goals. Know that at Athena we encourage coaches to focus both on training individual technique as well as the importance of team work. We try to coach by getting the athlete to believe in themselves and by positive reinforcement. We want them to know that we believe in them, because we do. Our coaching philosophy is the same at both the "alpha" and "beta" level, but knowing the goal of the athletes at each level our approach may differ.

CIRCLE ONE

• **I PREFER TO BE AN "ALPHA" PLAYER.**

– **I PREFER TO BE A "BETA" PLAYER.**

Financial Commitment

When we calculate our club dues we include EVERYTHING. We do not have a base price and then each month ask for additional money for travel, etc. Included in our dues are the following: Uniforms, court rental, coaching, speed & agility training, tournament entry fees, travel costs, cooler food at traveling tournaments, and equipment. It is important when evaluating whether a club is financially comfortable for you is to make sure you understand what other expenses will arise. We try our best to minimize any extra expenses and include even the smallest of costs down to parking.

There will be a deposit of \$350 at the time the team is announced in order to hold that spot for your daughter. From December through May there will be a monthly charge that you can send in or pay by credit card online. (12s will be December through April) Payments are due at the first of each month. Players will not be allowed to participate after the first week if payments are not made. We are committed to doing the best job we can for your daughter for the entire season. When you commit, Athena commits a roster spot for your daughter and you understand that you are financially committed for the entire season regardless of injury or any other unforeseen circumstance.

STEP 2:

Please sign below which signifies that you have read the above information and understand the mission of Athena Volleyball Academy.

Parent printed name _____

Parent signature _____

Date _____

Player printed name _____

Player signature _____

Date _____