

Tournament Tips

The following is some general information for all the new players of the Cascade Volleyball Club regarding volleyball tournaments. For those of us used to quick in-and-out local community center games, the tournaments come as a bit of a shock. Here are our tips.

Tournaments are LONG!

Tournaments often start at 8 or 9 AM and can last until 5 or later (groan...) in the afternoon. Remember, that we may also have an hour drive or more to get to the tournament site. We often play for an hour and then may have to sit or referee another game for up to two hours until it's our turn to play again. After a few tournaments, the kids quickly get used to this routine, while the parents seldom ever do. Here are our survival strategies.

KIDS: Eat or pack a good breakfast to eat on the drive there. Bring Frisbees, CD players, cards, books, magazines to read, Homework, food and drink for lunch and lots of snacks. You'll feel and play better if you bring something a tad healthier than a Costco sized bag of M&Ms. In general avoid high sugar foods. Bring a water bottle (label it and any other personal items - a phone number will help in getting things returned). Definitely, bring warm sweats, training pants or a fleece blanket and maybe a pillow. When we're not playing, we mostly have to sit on the linoleum floor of a hall or classroom and it gets cold.

PARENTS: Think about carpooling (See more on Carpooling below). Believe us -- 8 or 9 hours can seem like eternity if you haven't brought something to do. Parents should bring your laptop, books, sketch books, bills to pay, photo albums anything to chew up the time. Some schools are pretty close to coffee houses and places to buy foods. Others can be out in the woods. When the weather gets nice, throw a tennis racket in your car, some of the schools had decent courts. Or bring running gear.

Adult Comfort

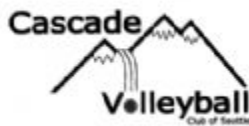
Bring one of those fold-up chairs you use at soccer games. Some gyms will have bleachers, but many will have the bleachers closed up and parents fight for limited space along the walls. The chairs are great for holding a spot and are also great when the sun comes out and you can go outside and catch some rays at lunch. Tie something (bandanna, yarn, ribbon) onto your chair to distinguish it from all the other Costco chairs.

Adults Can Volunteer to Help

Help is always appreciated. Just ask the coach. Some possibilities include keeping track of our balls and gear, taking stats (ask coaches what they want tracked), taking pictures, organizing carpools or snacks. If you went to the Scorekeeping/Referee Clinics and signed up as an Adult Chaperone, help with refereeing, scorekeeping or calling lines if we are short on girls or if they need some rest.

Tournaments are mostly run by amateurs

Because different clubs sponsor tournaments, you will find tremendous variation in how they are run. Some are setup with great little snack bars where you can buy snacks, pop and coffee. Some tournaments run like clockwork -- everything starting when it should. However, most tournaments have a few glitches. They might not be able to get the nets set-up on a court or the refereeing team may be delayed, which can delay games on that court for an hour or more. Be prepared for things not to run well, and be thrilled when they do. Referees are usually just coaches/parents like us, so don't get too upset when a referee makes a mistake on a call.



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Tournament scheduling

Usually, we don't know our game schedule for the day until we get to the tournament. Therefore, it's very hard to time it if you want to just come watch an hour or two. Sometimes the girls will have access to a pay or cell phone. If you want them to call you with the game schedule, let them know ahead of time. There are two types of tournaments - Independent and Power League. There are usually two rounds to an independent tournament. In the morning, each team will be in a pool of 3 to 5 teams and we play each of the teams in our pool one match (2 games or best 2 out of 3 games). Then after all the morning games are done (note that the "morning" round robin matches are often not over until 2 PM), the win-loss rankings are posted and they set up several ladders for the afternoon. This can be single or double elimination. Power League tournaments, on the other hand, are part of a series of tournaments where teams earn a ranking and are sorted into pools by that rank, with some crossing over between pools. In Power League tournaments, matches earlier in a tournament day and in the series often influence a team's final ranking more than those later in the day or series. A tournament may be spread around a set of schools within a half mile or so of each other, so when you find the tournament schedule, make sure to notice the location.

Level of Play

Be prepared to see some awesome volleyball. Cascade Volleyball Club is a competitive athletic program but is not a win-at-all-cost program (see Positive Coaching Alliance's Double Goal approach). Coaches will balance giving everyone game time experience with making decisions to field a competitive team. Our girls will improve a lot through the year, and remember that every game they play gives them the experience it takes to become stronger players. Don't get too caught up in the win-loss record, but try to notice how many good passes we're making, how many good sets, or how many successful serves. Focusing on their little successes each week will help the girls notice their own improvement over the season. Encourage your girls to spend some of their "down time" at the tournament watching other teams play. This is an excellent way to learn new skills and to aspire to a higher level of play.

Refereeing

When our team is not playing, we often have to referee another game. This is part of our responsibility at each tournament. It's especially difficult when it's 6 PM at night, we're already out of the tournament, and we all really want to go home. Usually the "loser" of the last match refs the next match. Try to let the coaches know at the beginning of the day, if you have evening plans that require you and/or your child to leave at a certain time. We try to let some of the girls out of these late refereeing gigs, but we like to do it fairly, or arrange it by carpool.

Print out directions

We often are playing at schools quite far from Seattle. The map page on our web site has links to tournament directions. Plan extra time if you're driving somewhere you are not familiar with.

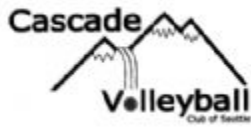
Carpools

You can still be an involved parent without coming to every tournament. It's worth the effort to develop carpools. One parent can drop off, watch a bit of the morning, and then take off. The other parent can come mid-afternoon, watch a bit of the tournament and drive the crew home. Note that the afternoon shift can vary a lot in length, since it's harder to predict the ending time of our tournament play or refereeing.

Playing time during tournaments

Coaches will balance giving everyone game time experience with making decisions to field a competitive team. Starting positions and playing time are earned and will be based on:

- Practice attendance and work ethic.



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- Physical execution of skills (as seen by the coach).
- Ability to accept and adapt to your given role on the team.
- Overall support for the team and positive attitude.
- Points earned in practice drills. (Note that you cannot earn points if you miss the practice).

Communication is key: if the player has concerns about playing time or wants to know how they can earn more playing time, it is essential that the player talk with the coach. The coach and **the player** (not the parent) can then discuss what the player can work on.

Telephone

425-312-3313. Please call it for emergencies (voice mail send an email and text to several of us immediately). Coaches and some of the girls also have cell phones –just ask and check the roster.