

Story of a VYI Volleyball Spring Season Coach - Season 1 (2009)

Last Spring (2009), I received an email that VYI was starting up a Volleyball League. My 13 year old daughter had participated in some volleyball clinics at Madison HS and was excited at the opportunity to play on a team. There was one caveat - she wanted me to coach. Although my kids have participated in sports for several years, I managed to avoid being a head coach. I was happy to act as an "assistant coach" for my kids' soccer teams from time to time since I had played VYS as a teenager eons ago. However, I never wanted to be a head coach mostly out of a lack of confidence that I knew enough about the sport and because of the time involved. I work full-time (and more) and have 3 young children. But who isn't busy in No. Va?

I figured if my 13 year old daughter wanted me to coach her team, I should. I was predicting she would want nothing to do with me in the Fall when she started high school so I should make the most of this. Plus this would be an opportunity to get to know the girls she was hanging out with, all of whom wanted to play and ended up on my team.

At the introductory meeting, the head coaches were asked to talk about what, if any, volleyball experience they had. I had only played on an intramural team at my law school and on a Reston league. No one ever showed me any technical skills when I played on those teams. Some of the other coaches only had experience playing in pick-up games at picnics etc...and just a few had played in high school. They really needed volunteers and Bob Bell, the commish, was very appreciative of our willingness to help out. There were no expectations that we had to have any knowledge or a certain experience level. They would train us. Bob showed us some great drills to run at that meeting. He also gave us handouts with drills and instructions on proper techniques for serving, passing, setting and hitting. We were invited to instructional clinics offered to the kids before the season started. Plus the other coaches were super friendly and we all had a feeling of being in it together so everyone was happy to help one another.

I was nervous about the first practice. Bob had given us a good handout with a breakdown on running a 1.5 hour practice but I was still worried about not being able to fill up the time. My assistant coach suggested we have them exercise the whole time since leg strength and quick reaction time are important but I was worried how that would go over. I went on-line and purchased a Volleyball Playbook that had probably a 100+ drills which were age specific. I didn't end up using it too much but it gave me peace of mind and was useful when my planned drills went much faster than I thought they would. Of course, playing games was the best practice and easy to do. Being able to help a player go from serving the ball under the net, into the net, or sideways, to making it over the net was rewarding.

A couple weeks before our first game, Bob gave us the rules of the game. If I ever had a question, he was very responsive. There weren't that many rules and they aren't complicated. If I had any question at the game, I asked the other coach and/or the referees who were patient and helpful. It was actually pretty hard to goof up as a volleyball coach!

The girls had a lot of fun and I may have even had more fun than they did! Their skills improved greatly over the season. Everyone gets pretty much equal play time because we would rotate players in on our serve. I didn't have to worry about doing subs or anything like that. My assistant coach and I just had to work out the line-up - i.e., who should start off in the back row and who should start in the front row. It was easy!

I am so happy I decided to coach. 3 of the girls on my team played for the Madison JV team and 5 played on Madison's Freshman team. They all love the sport and it made a huge difference in their first year of High School to be part of a team and become close friends with their teammates. It was a truly rewarding experience for me.

I am looking forward to coaching my 4th grade daughter's team. It will be very different from coaching 8th graders but I know I will have the support of Bob and the other coaches along the way. We only play during the week so the time factor is minimal. We practice one night for 1-1.5 hours and we play games one night which usually runs an hour.

Coach Allison Noll

2009 – VYI Volleyball Middle School Division – “Blue Smurfs” (Finished 1st Place)

2010 – VYI Volleyball Elementary School - Lower Division – “Blue Smurfs (Finished 1st Place)”