



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below we've addressed the most commonly asked questions about VA Elite. Since it is impossible to cover them all please feel free to contact us if you need additional information. You can reach us by e-mail at info@vaelite.com and we will be happy to assist you.

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CLUB VOLLEYBALL BASICS

What is junior club volleyball?

Junior girls' volleyball or club volleyball is a nationwide junior volleyball system comprised of individual clubs organized under one of several parent organizations (USA Volleyball, AAU, JVA, etc.) for the primary purpose of growing and supporting the sport. Generally, club volleyball offers participants the opportunity to continue to compete and develop skills well beyond the relatively short middle school and high school seasons.

Club volleyball programs, literally and figuratively, come in many different shapes and sizes in terms of programming, administration, benefits provided, etc. Some organizations serve a small niche (e.g. low commitment developmental, high commitment competitive, and everything in-between). Some organizations, like Elite, commit to providing a wide-range of opportunities for its participants.

Virginia Elite Volleyball club is a member of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), Chesapeake Region of USA Volleyball (USAV), American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA), and Junior Volleyball Association (JVA).

When does club volleyball take place?

Again, there is some variation between clubs. VA Elite teams begin training in late November/early December. Elite teams begin tournament competition in January and compete through the AAU National Championships (Orlando, FL) in mid/late June and/or USAV Junior National Volleyball Championships (location TBD annually) in late June/early July, if qualified.

What factors (other than cost) should one consider when selecting a club volleyball program?

The two primary factors to consider are: training and competition. Elite's formula for success on the court is the direct result of a consistent, comprehensive, and progressive training program led by talented and experienced coaches. Through appropriate competition we challenge and test our teams. The history of our competition schedule (location, difficulty of field, quality) indicates that commitment to seek the highest level of competition.

How do you determine the age-eligibility of a student-athlete for the purposes of team placement?

Eligibility/age level is determined by our governing body, USAV, and simply stated it is based on the age your child will be on September 1, 2016.

Age Division	Age	School Grade
13 and Under	Players born on or after Sept. 1, 2003	7th Grade
14 and Under	Players born on or after Sept. 1, 2002	8th Grade
15 and Under	Players born on or after Sept. 1, 2001	9th Grade
16 and Under	Players born on or after Sept. 1, 2000	10th Grade
17 and Under	Players born on or after Sept. 1, 1999	11th Grade
18 and Under	Players born on or after Sept. 1, 1998	12th Grade

Are Athletes required to play in the age-level specified by the USAV eligibility standards?

While student-athletes may not play at a lower age level than their eligibility they may be able to play at an older age level. VA Elite takes very seriously keeping student-athletes at their age level, however, we will consider peer group issues (i.e. a 9th grader whose USAV age level is 14's) and advanced skill when making final team placements. "Playing up" is NOT a common practice at VA Elite.



My daughter is only 10 or 11, can she play in the 13's division?

It depends. We make every attempt to have our 13's teams true 7th grade teams, however, athlete turnout and skill are determining factors. We encourage you to speak with our Technical Director and 13's Head Coaches who will be able to outline the intention for the season.

VA ELITE GENERAL INFORMATION

What is VA Elite's Vision?

Our vision is to provide the premier club volleyball experience by emphasizing hard work, discipline, sportsmanship, competition and opportunity. Our focus is on providing an intensified program of individual player development in order to produce players able to compete successfully at the collegiate level and to develop nationally competitive teams.

We also recognize that the sport of volleyball reaches beyond the record established by each team. We seek to provide a positive environment, which will emphasize sportsmanship, camaraderie, and dedication within a team framework, while improving each individual's self-esteem and self-confidence.

We will provide:

- Individual, position-specific training
- Team and system-specific training
- Positive learning experiences on and off the court
- College recruiting assistance for interested players

Can you help me to better understand how Elite is organized and its operating practices?

Virginia Elite is a recognized non-profit organization in full compliance with all federal, state, and local laws. We take seriously our non-profit status and recognize that, while it engenders the kind of community support and shared vision we desire in our club, it also requires us to demonstrate a level of excellence in our financial operations. We are governed by an esteemed Board of Directors who hold regular meetings to address both long-term strategy and financial operations. Fiscal responsibility and transparency are highly regarded and demonstrated by both the Board of Directors and club administration. We file annually all required tax documents, withholding information, and maintain all Department of Revenue licensures and registrations.

What makes VA Elite different from other clubs?

Quite a bit! Since club volleyball is a commitment of both time and money for the student-athlete and their family it is important to learn as much as possible about club opportunities prior to making a decision. To assist you in this process we encourage you to take advantage of our Fall programming to get to know our style and our staff.

Mission

Our mission is to deliver a club volleyball experience where knowledgeable and motivated coaching, as well as, supportive and involved parents, can enable the most talented, dedicated and focused athletes to attain their maximum potential in the sport of volleyball.

Club Leadership

Virginia Elite Volleyball Club was founded in 2005 and our Management Team of Jason Kozak, Lexi Patton and Joseph Ziegler have assembled and lead a team of competent volleyball professionals. The Management Team is charged with the day-to-day management of club activities and work to actively engage with members, families and guests.

An esteemed Board of Directors is comprised of volleyball and business professionals from within the Elite community and beyond. The Board of Directors is charged with ensuring organizational and financial stability, sustainability and continuity of mission and operations.



Staff

The continuing fulfillment of our mission is due, in large part, to our recruitment, retention and development of experienced, well-trained coaches, who embody the core values that Elite has built itself upon and an atmosphere of support and collaboration among all of our coaches, student-athletes and families. You won't find a better collection of volleyball educators anywhere in Virginia!

History

VA Elite is one of the most successful club in the Chesapeake region and is emerging as a national brand. In the past 11 years, Virginia Elite Volleyball Club has realized much success both on and off the court. Elite has time and again set the bar for the Chesapeake Region with multiple regional championships, sending many teams to USAV Nationals and having the first team in the region qualify for an open bid at a qualifier. We also have staff that is consistently requested to speak on the national stage at the AVCA Convention or to other regions. Our alumni are, in-part, a testament to our success as well. They are currently competing at colleges and universities around the country and have proven themselves well prepared to achieve next-level success.

Programs

We offer consistent coaching and a club-wide training curriculum that helps to ensure Elite student-athletes continue to develop and progress in skill level throughout their years of competitive volleyball. VA Elite's comprehensive training program includes a compilation of educational initiatives, which take place outside the skill and team-based training that occurs on court for our student athletes. Our athletes are exposed to experts in the fields of health, nutrition, injury prevention, mental toughness, effective recruiting, parent involvement, and leadership to address the myriad of factors that affect overall athletic performance.

Elite offers additional training opportunities through skills-based and topic-based programs such as position academies, private lessons and our off-season camps and clinic series.

VA ELITE STAFF, COACHING PHILOSOPHY, AND TRAINING

Who coaches at Virginia Elite Volleyball Club?

Virginia Elite Volleyball Club seeks quality people who share a passion for our mission and a true care and concern for their colleagues and our student-athletes. With that in mind we recruit, hire, train, and retain the most experienced and committed coaches available. We offer training and mentorship for all coaches.

A truly talented, knowledgeable and dedicated staff is responsible for the guidance and our student-athletes. Elite continues to be fortunate to have a coaching staff that rivals the staff of any other club in the nation. Please visit our website for more information on our 2017 coaching staff.

Is there a coach development program?

Elite takes seriously the professional development of its coaching staff. We support advanced certification and training for our coaches and provide substantial mentoring and training opportunities. Beyond IMPACT certification our coaches receive training on skill development, game strategy, leadership development and much more. Elite regularly brings in nationally recognized speakers and researchers to stay on the cutting edge of coaches development and training. We are also proud to offer our coaches development opportunities to other area club and high school coaches.



Does Elite have a playing time philosophy?

Our experience has shows that the concept of 'fair' playing time has a different meaning for coaches, parents and athletes. We also recognize that disparate views on what constitutes 'fair' playing time are the most common source of athlete and/or frustration in youth sports.

At Elite, the playing time philosophy employed by our coaching staff is 'we win AND everyone contributes.' The idea behind this philosophy is that we always play to win and all athletes contribute. The only exception to this rule is that during a qualifier, playing time may vary, and the coach can put whatever lineup they deem appropriate. Once a team is mathematically out of the gold bracket the above philosophy goes back into effect. How coaches employ that philosophy may look different at every team and we encourage you to read each coach's playing time philosophy to fully understand how that coach will manage playing time.

Will my child have more than one coach?

YES! Every team has a head coach and two assistant coaches assigned specifically to that team. In addition, we have floater coaches who contribute to the training of all teams allowing every athlete to interact with and benefit from the collective experience of our coaching staff.

I understand you have an "Academy Night". Can you tell me what that is?

Academy nights give every athlete opportunity to train with our specific skill, position coaches, master trainers in a high repetition and high intensity setting. The Academy Nights focus on skill development and training to ensure consistency across the club while also providing athletes the opportunity to cross train in the same position or a different position with their club mates. Academy Night finishes each practice with an intense round robin scrimmage session. This session is used to increase the players VbIQ and expose the teams to different tactics and game techniques and team system training.

Do teams practice together and/or compete against one another?

Our gym practice schedule is designed to take superior advantage of our training opportunities, the expertise of our staff, and the depth of talent on our teams. Intra-club competition is an essential element of team training allowing coaches to focus on specific aspects and strategies of the game.

What does the 2 Phase Training Program Mean?

At the end of the 2014-2015 season, we reviewed our club wide stats and noticed an emerging trend that our athletes were making skill-based errors on game or match deciding points. In order to combat this growing issue the Management Team implemented a 2 phase training approach for the 2015-2016 season. The first phase consists of 7-weeks of 3:1 Academy to Team practices focused on giving all VAE athletes consistent fundamentals on how to perform each skill. We want all of our athletes and coaches to speak the same language when it comes to technique. Phase I also includes dedicated scrimmage time at the end of each academy practice where the team staff will work with the athletes on team system training and identify areas to work on during the team practice during phase I.

Once we return from our first tournament, we switch to Phase II of our training, which consists of 2:1 Team to Academy practices. The expectation for each team is that the staff carries the fundamentals developed in Phase I into their team practices where they focus on the specific needs of each team. We will also continue the academy training one night per week to provide position specific training to all athletes, as well as, cross-training opportunities for athletes that wish to train in different positions or hone specific skills.

Throughout both phases our setters are expected to attend additional setters academy training for 1-2 hours per week for additional work as the setter position often demands a more refined technique.



What is VbIQ (Volleyball IQ)?

VbIQ is training that most often takes place by position during normal practice times. Our coaches are exceptionally trained and knowledgeable and committed to increasing the volleyball IQ of all of our players in order to create a well-rounded volleyball player. With multiple teams in the gym, position training gives cross team training and allows student-athletes to work with other athletes who also share their position and to learn and train with each other as well as with their specific teams.

VA ELITE TEAM INFORMATION

How many teams with VA Elite Volleyball Club field this year?

The number of teams that Elite fields is mission-driven meaning that we will only field the number of teams that we can fully support. For the 2017 club season, we have the facilities, administrative support, and staff in place to field 6 teams.

How many players will be on each team?

The majority of teams will have 11 players per team as determined by our Board of Directors. Our Board has approved for the club to increase to 12 players for the 13's and 18's teams only.

How often do teams practice?

All teams will have 2 academy team practices and 1 team practice per week in Phase I and 2 team practices and 1 academy team practice per week in Phase II.

Please check our team pages on our website for more specific information.

Do teams have a fixed practice schedule?

Yes, with rare exceptions. Additionally, you are guaranteed your practices and events will all be held at the Madeira School. All team schedules are outlined on our team pages on the website and calendar (on website).

Where do teams practice?

All Elite teams practice in The Hurd Gym on The Madeira School campus. Our members enjoy a consistent, safe, and centrally located practice facility. On site we have fitness training support equipment, first aid and injury treatment supplies, restrooms, team room and office space for club administration and coaches.

What do 'open' level teams mean?

An open level team is composed of the more talented players who wish to play at a higher competition level and offers the greatest exposure for college recruiting for our athletes.

Will you field as many teams as you have players (i.e. do you form teams from all players attending tryouts)?

We are a mission-driven organization and believe it imperative that our efforts be directed at fulfilling all aspects of our mission. With this in mind, we field as many complete teams as gym space and staff capabilities allow.

Can the multi-sport athlete play at Elite?

Yes, many Elite student-athletes participate in more than one sport (or other activity), especially in the younger age divisions. We ask that athletes are as up front about potential conflicts with their coach as possible and offer many opportunities for multi-sport student athletes to make up missed practices with other teams.



TOURNAMENT INFORMATION AND TRAVEL

What tournaments do Elite teams play in?

There are two basic types of tournaments, regional and travel. Regional tournaments can occur in the Chesapeake Region (Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, DC) and are against other Chesapeake region teams. Travel tournaments are those events, for the most part, located outside of the Chesapeake Region and are against a broader field of competition including teams from other regions.

Virginia Elite typically participates in the following types of travel tournaments:

1. Inter Regional Tournaments (2 and 3-day events) such as Northern Virginia Power League (NVPL) and Capitol Hill Classic in Washington DC.
2. Mid-Atlantic Power League (MAPL) events (2-day events against elite competition along the eastern seaboard)
 - a. VA Elite is a member of the MAPL consortium of clubs who organize MAPL events for elite level teams along the eastern seaboard.
3. National Qualifiers or Comparable – These are two-day or three-day USAV or JVA events located throughout the country at which teams can earn bids to the Junior National Championships or free entry into AAU National Championships.
4. National Championships – Every VA Elite team will attend a national championship event (with the exception of 13s) It will either be the AAU Jr. Nationals in Orlando or the USAV Volleyball Junior National Championships (held at a different site each year). Entry into USAV Junior Nationals requires teams to earn a bid to qualify (VA Elite teams will only attend USAV Nationals if an Open level bid is earned through a qualifier).

What is your policy for choosing tournaments?

We have a board approval process for both fees and tournaments. Our Technical Director, Executive Director and President put together tentative schedules to present to the board. When the club leadership are selecting tournaments they look at a few things; the cost it would be to attend these tournaments, the ease of transportation and also the quality of the tournament. We are proud to say that we have given every Senior who has graduated from our club the opportunity to go on and play collegiate level volleyball. That being said we look at the number of college coaches at each tournament along with the colleges that attend and make a decision if that tournament would be a good fit in helping our athletes reach their recruiting goals.

We also try to maintain a balanced schedule. Due to the fact that we do not control the tournament dates, that is not always possible but we do try not to have more than two tournament weekends in a row.

How often are tournaments?

The Chesapeake Region schedules regional tournaments basically every other weekend from January until late-March/early-April.

Travel tournaments outside the Chesapeake region, are an essential component of our teams' competitive experience. Scheduling for travel tournaments can vary year to year and is done by independent organizations-we have no control over the travel schedule and must simply select the best tournaments to attend by team based on schedule, anticipated costs and competitiveness.

For an "out-of state" tournament, how far do you travel?

Most of our teams will travel mostly in the Southeast and Midwest (with a few exceptions). For example, in 2016 our teams attended tournaments in such cities as Atlanta, Hampton Roads, VA, Orlando, Salt Lake City, Raleigh, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Cleveland.



School schedule impact: Teams which travel to National Qualifying events and other 3-day events can expect to miss up to 1-1 ½ days of school for each of these events (most teams will only travel to two or three such events).

Although our daughter is able to travel on weekends our family situation will not allow for me to accompany her, can my daughter still play on a club team at Elite?

Yes! Elite Travel Services and overall travel program provides the supervision and all services (transportation, lodging and chaperone) required by our student-athletes and coaches attending travel tournaments. While parents and families are welcome to attend travel trips we recognize that family obligations, work schedules, and financial considerations can often times make this impossible. For these reasons, Elite provides a travel program that is comprehensive and affords families a choice as to whether they attend travel tournaments or not.

What if we have schedule conflicts during the club volleyball season (i.e., vacations, junior/senior prom, etc.)?

We strongly believe in the concept of TEAM....all team members have a role to play on the team and therefore the team is strongest only when all members are present. That being said, our philosophy is achieving an appropriate balance between family, academic, and athletic activities. Unavoidable scheduling conflicts are addressed on a case-by-case basis. It is imperative that student-athletes inform the Club of such conflicts well in advance if alternative arrangements are to be made.

TRYOUT INFORMATION

Are we able to watch the tryout process?

You are welcome to watch tryouts but we ask that you not distract student-athletes or coaching staff. Note that seating is limited but you are welcome to bring your own folding chair. As a reminder, only participants are allowed on the playing surface at any time.

My daughter will be trying out for other clubs after the Elite tryouts, if she's offered a spot with Elite will she have to accept it or risk losing her spot before she hears from the other clubs she's trying out for?

Unfortunately, this pressure tactic is often used by volleyball programs to secure student-athlete commitments. At Elite, we place no higher priority than the well-being of the student-athlete and strictly adhere to the tryout guidelines set forth by the CHRVA Region. We promise to conduct our tryouts with the utmost integrity. When you receive an offer from Elite, that offer stands and is available until the student-athlete and her family have taken sufficient time and opportunity to weigh all factors. We do request that families respond to their Elite offers as soon as they know of their decision to expedite the team selection process.

Note: we will NOT offer more positions than exist on our teams

What is the Elite tryout process?

Our process is very different than other area clubs and we don't only rely on a 2 hour block of time to evaluate athletes. We encourage families to start talking to us as soon as they know they are interested in possibly playing for Elite. At that time, we ask families to request an evaluation from us (typically easiest by attending one of our preview clinics since most coaches are already there). We will let you know where you stand in comparison to the other talent in the age group interested in Elite. We find that to be the best way to be as open and honest as possible and not be disingenuous during the tryout process. Offers are never made until the official open tryout period begins as set forth by the Chesapeake Region.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT AT ELITE

What is the role of the parents at Virginia Elite Volleyball Club?

As coaches, administrators, and parents, we are committed to the creation of a positive athletic experience for all members of our Club. Virginia Elite recognizes the vital role that parents play in the daughter's growth as a student-athlete. Elite cannot be successful without the support of our student-athletes' families. Parents actively support our mission and contribute to our success in roles as chaperones and volunteers.

Do parents stay with the athletes/team for travel trips?

Whether or not a parent(s) attends a travel trip is their own decision, which considers their schedules, other responsibilities and finances. Elite Travel Services often times helps to facilitate parent travel on these trips. **Note, with the exception of the 13's and 14's teams, student-athletes share a room with their teammates on travel trips and NOT with their parent(s). Also, 14's teams will share a room with teammates when attending AAU Nationals or USAV Nationals.**

Other than volunteer opportunities, how does Elite include parents in the Elite club experience?

Parents play an important role in many club events. We offer a Parent's workshop at the club kick-off to help better understand and help navigate their athletes through club volleyball. Parents attend and are included in our Season Kick-off, philanthropic activities and End of Season Celebration. We also host social events when possible on the road and parent informational sessions on recruiting etc.

ELITE FEES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULES

What does it cost to play on an Elite team?

There are two cost components to playing club volleyball at Elite:

1. Overhead is a fixed cost (established in the Fall) and covers all costs associated with team training, member services, and tournament entries for your team. Costs covered by overhead include but are not limited to coach stipends, court time, uniforms, tournament entry fees, administrative costs, etc.
2. Travel costs are inclusive of airfare, motor coach and hotel accommodations. Every effort is made to secure a parent block at the team hotel but all travel arrangements (minus meals) are secured through VA Elite for 15's-18's teams.

How much are uniforms?

The cost of uniforms is included in the dues. Uniform items include jerseys, warm-up pants, warm-up jacket, backpack or duffle, 3 practice T-shirts, 1 Dig Pink T-shirt, 1 pair of spandex and 1 pair of socks. We specify certain color/style of shoe to be worn with the uniform (Brand is not specified). We offer a Team Store online where SpiritWear can be purchased below MSRP. SpiritWear is VA Elite logo merchandise for players and their families. The purchase of SpiritWear is strictly optional.

How do I pay for club?

Our payment plan allows families to spread costs over the length of the season. Payment plan information will be available prior to the beginning of tryouts. Club membership fees may be paid using cash, check or credit card.

Why are fees in this area more than other regions of the country?

It is a well-known fact that volleyball on the East Coast is still emerging and evolving. That being said we are very proud to be a premier club on the east coast with a presence on the national stage emerging. While it is awesome that we have cultivated a great reputation, this means that in order to play high level competition and in high-level tournaments we need to travel to good volleyball. Most of the cost of our club is due to the travel expense.



How do you compare with other clubs in the region?

VA Elite is very competitive with clubs in our region. We are an all inclusive club (with the exception of meals). Travel, hotel, practice times, uniforms etc. are all covered by the club fees. Other clubs in the area operate under a pay by tournament policy, where the teams choose the tournaments as they go, running the risk of not being able to get into tournaments or not having all the girls on board with every tournament. Another option in the region is just posting fees for the season but not including post-season play, therefore, asking parents for more money at the end of the season. Once you add together the money spent both of these ways, it all turns out to be very close in cost.

Does Elite offer scholarships for student-athletes?

Elite's ability to provide financial assistance to athletes is limited and is only awarded in cases where financial need is demonstrated. Most typically, scholarship aid is awarded to athletes with previous membership in the club and is never used as a 'recruiting' tool. If an athlete requires financial assistance it is imperative that this be discussed with club administration prior to tryouts so as not to impair the tryout and team selection process.

COLLEGIATE RECRUITING AT ELITE

Does Elite expect all its student-athletes to play in college?

Playing collegiately is a serious commitment to be evaluated on an individual basis by the student-athlete and their family. Elite very actively and personally supports the recruiting effort of every student-athlete that is committed to playing in college.

What is Elite's recruiting program?

The recruiting process varies with age, skill level and the aspirations of the student-athlete. Initially this effort involves, recruiting seminars, homework for the athlete and panel discussions. Some of these sessions are for parents, others for student-athletes. NCAA regulations, appropriate and effective communication strategies and the development of a recruiting strategy are all spoken about at length by our coaches, Recruiting Director and Technical Director throughout the season. As the recruiting process progresses there are meetings with athletes and their families where coaches will discuss the recruiting process and progress of each athlete individually. Elite has established and maintains strong relationships with collegiate recruiters and actively utilizes their nationwide network to the benefit of every student-athlete throughout their entire recruiting process.

Does every Elite alumnae play in college?

Not every Elite student-athlete chooses to play in college for a wide-variety of reasons. Elite is proud to claim that, since its founding, every single Elite alumnae has been given the opportunity to play in college.

Do most Elite student-athletes receive scholarships?

Elite student-athletes have been awarded millions of dollars in scholarship monies. For some athletes this is a combination of both athletic and academic awards. Each situation is unique and depends on the particular university or college and the student-athletes athletic and academic performance.