

## Playing Time Guidelines for Carolina One Volleyball

This information is intended to communicate how the club handles the sensitive subject of playing time at tournaments. The following guidelines are intended to help players and parents acknowledge and appreciate the complexities of playing time and what development means at the competitive club level.

First and foremost, parents should recognize that playing time is not guaranteed and that going to coaches directly on behalf of your daughter about playing time is not a preferred approach. Many teams experience difficulties as the season progresses due to the issue of playing time. Parents sometimes feel that the coach should be playing their daughter more; many times, this translates to pressure on their daughter. The end result is often a player attitude problem that affects the entire team, creates tension, and inhibits success. We encourage parents not to initiate playing time discussions with their daughter for this reason. How to improve individual skills, court movement, and knowledge of the game are more productive topics and will ultimately lead to more success.

We want your experience with Carolina One to be positive, so we feel setting clear expectations is important. If you would like to discuss any aspect of these policies, please contact our club director.

### **We need and appreciate parental support in working towards and achieving our club goals:**

- Improving player skills over time
- Instilling a winning mental attitude (not a win-at-all-costs attitude)
- Creating positive team cultures
- Teaching players to take responsibility for their own actions and to be invested in their own improvements as athletes
- Teaching more than volleyball skills – concepts such as teamwork, leadership, overcoming adversity, and perseverance can be just as valuable as skills like serving, setting, or passing

### **We also encourage players, parents, and coaches to abide by our core values in all interactions:**

- **ONE-ness** – We seek to support each other and make choices that enable team and individual success.
- **Respect** – We treat each other as individuals whose value goes beyond our position on the court.
- **Accountability** – We hold ourselves accountable for our actions and do our best to represent our team and club in a positive manner.
- **Fun** – We love what we do and aspire to celebrate our members' successes.

### **Please keep these important concepts in mind this club season:**

1. **Equal playing time is not a guarantee simply because club fees are paid.** The fee structure provides a learning experience and a host of other benefits (practice time, individual instruction, uniforms, gym rental, etc.). Carolina One is a competitive club program. Positive attitude, teamwork, team chemistry, skill level, position, attendance, and hard work at practices are all key factors for playing time. Coaches often try to play every player during pool play matches, which make up the majority of tournament matches. However, during playoffs, all games are a critical part of the single elimination bracket and playing time may be limited for some players. Equal playing time is more likely for the 13 and under age groups and for players on State and Regional level teams.
2. **Being part of the club is intended to provide each player with improvement opportunities** through structured practices that focus on skill development, team play, and mental toughness. We also believe players must show every effort to improve and work through the challenges of improving. This process can be frustrating, but a player's work ethic and mental focus are key to becoming a better volleyball

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player, as well as conquering challenges outside of volleyball. We believe improvement is first demonstrated at practice. Court sense, maturity, attitude, and abilities shown at practices will influence tournament playing time.

- 3. Absences at practices or tournaments can affect playing time.** Since volleyball is a team sport, being at practice and working closely with teammates in offense and defensive systems is critical to team success. Players may have excused absences for practice due to one of the following reasons: school issues, conflict with school sports, illness, family emergency, and religious activities. **Players** need to call, text, or email their coach at least 24 hours in advance in order to have an excused absence from practices. All other absences will be considered unexcused. Players are expected to arrive early to practices and tournaments to ensure they are fully ready to participate. **Arriving late to events will affect playing time.**
- 4. Excellence is an important part of the club performance.** While Carolina One does not believe in winning at all costs, we do believe that players and teams who strive for excellence will experience more success in matches. If players do not show respect for winning and the desire to win by improving and working hard at practices, and ensuring a positive attitude toward the game, their coach and teammates, then the team's ability to win is lessened. Playing time is likely to be adjusted based on skills performance and mental attitude at practices and at games.
- 5. Players and parents should understand volleyball rules and systems that affect playing time.** Not every player has the skills to play key positions such as the setter, who is the "quarterback" of the team. If a team has only one or two setters, they may be playing all the time. Also, some players are better back row or front row than others, and may be substituted in and out to maximize team performance. Additionally, coaches are restricted by USA Volleyball rules regarding number of substitutions and which players can substitute in which position. If you would like clarification on rules, please ask!
- 6. Playing time will not be addressed at tournaments.** Parents and players should NOT attempt to discuss playing time directly with a coach at a tournament. Being confronted about playing time during a tournament is very disruptive for a coach, and is one of the biggest issues leading to coach burnout and resignations. At tournaments, coaches are concentrating on team strategy and team success and it is unfair to ask them to justify decisions made during competitive tournament play. Also consider that coaches are balancing the personalities, performance, and needs of 10-12 players, while oftentimes, parents are concentrating on their child only.
- 7. Players should make the first effort to discuss playing time directly with the coach.** Rather than complain to teammates or parents, players should attempt to understand what they can do to improve their performance and skills to give them more game time. We believe this can be a very healthy experience for the player to get feedback from the coach, as well as for the player to discuss improvement opportunities. All coaches know their players' strengths and weaknesses, and are more than willing to discuss them individually with that player. However, players who miss a lot of practices or who do not work hard in practice should not expect to see a lot of tournament playing time.
- 8. Coaches, particularly for Select level teams, are asked to "coach to win" and develop a strong team.** That includes playing the best players at each tournament and in particular during the playoff period of a tournament. Fundamentally club volleyball is about getting better, but that philosophy does not guarantee equal game court time. **Practice time is equal for all players** and that is where improvement is first achieved. Coaches want all of their players to improve so they can enjoy and excel in volleyball and ultimately improve the team's performance.