



South Dakota  
Volleyball Club  
Parent/Player Handbook  
2017-2018

**Disclaimer:** This handbook has been considered thoroughly by the SDVC Director and all board members. Items within this handbook are expected to be enforced by all parties involved. We reserve the right to contact families regarding updated policies and additions as necessary that may need to be added to this handbook at a later time.

## **SDVC Executive Board**

*Please remember, the SDVC Board is made up of parents and staff volunteers. We have primary jobs, families, and other commitments. We ask that you contact any board member only by the contact information listed in this handbook. Any complaints will be heard only in a scheduled appointment, whether in person or on the phone. Board members have the right to refuse an unscheduled visit.*

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
SDVC Director	Camrin Vaux	<a href="mailto:SDVCDirector@gmail.com">SDVCDirector@gmail.com</a>
Scheduling	JoLynn Robotham	<a href="mailto:SDVCSchedule@gmail.com">SDVCSchedule@gmail.com</a>
Web Master & Coaching Rep	Kris Seas	<a href="mailto:SDVCWebmaster@gmail.com">SDVCWebmaster@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Callie Molengraaf	<a href="mailto:SDVCTreasurer@gmail.com">SDVCTreasurer@gmail.com</a>
Apparel & Jerseys	Sharon James	<a href="mailto:SDVCApparel@gmail.com">SDVCApparel@gmail.com</a>
Fundraising	Crystal Sik	<a href="mailto:SDVCFundraising@gmail.com">SDVCFundraising@gmail.com</a>

## **SDVC Contact Information**

*Email:*

[SDVCDirector@gmail.com](mailto:SDVCDirector@gmail.com)

*Address:*

South Dakota Volleyball Club  
PO Box 8068  
Brookings, SD 57006

*Website:*

[www.southdakotavolleyballclub.com](http://www.southdakotavolleyballclub.com)

*Like us on Facebook:* South Dakota Volleyball Club

# SOUTH DAKOTA VOLLEYBALL CLUB

Welcome to South Dakota Volleyball Club!

## Introduction:

The South Dakota Junior Olympic Volleyball Club was created over 16 years ago by former South Dakota State University head volleyball coach, Andrew Palileo, and was formerly called Club SoDa. SDVC was then renamed and created with the intention to give interested volleyball athletes an opportunity to play volleyball at a high level outside of the school year seasons. Over the years, our program has helped in the development of hundreds of athletes, ranging from 50-75 athletes per season.

SDVC is a developmental program designed for high school and middle school athletes. Our purpose is to improve the volleyball skills of all athletes through participation in structured practices and competitive tournaments. SDVC will attempt to field at least one team in each age classification sanctioned by USA Volleyball with respect to the commitment availability of qualified coaches. The South Dakota Volleyball Club is a member of North Country Region and USA Volleyball.

The purpose of this publication is to inform all prospective members and parents or guardians of the services, guidelines, regulations, requirements, and expectations of SDVC. **It is required that all ATHLETES and PARENTS/GUARDIANS read this publication in its entirety. Please sign the waiver at the end and give to your team coach to show your understanding of the material presented in this handbook.**

## SDVC GOALS

1. To help each athlete reach her goals to becoming a better volleyball player.
2. To help each athlete become a better team player.
3. To help each athlete approach the game of volleyball with good sportsmanship and high motivation.
4. To have fun and successfully work with great teammates, coaches, and all involved.

## USAV Junior Olympic Volleyball Age Division Requirement Definitions for 2017-2018

	18 & Under	18 & Under	17 & Under	16 & Under	15 & Under	14 & Under	13 & Under	12 & Under	11 & Under	10 & Under	9 & Under	8 & Under
September	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
October	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
November	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
December	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
January	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
February	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
March	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
April	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
May	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
June	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
July	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
August	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010

Players who were born on or after September 1, 1998 OR players who were born on or after September 1, 1997 and a high school student in the twelfth (12th) grade or below during some part of the current academic year.

Grassroots Program for ages 11 & Under

### **\*North Country Region Team Transfer Rule:**

Once a player has committed to a team and has played in a USA Volleyball sanctioned event, they are not allowed to transfer teams. All transfers must be done before the first sanctioned event. SDVC, through this handbook, notifies you of this rule as required by North Country Region USA Volleyball.

## **SOUTH DAKOTA VOLLEYBALL CLUB TEAM PHILOSOPHY**

Volleyball played well is a thing of beauty. Few athletic endeavors require as much teamwork; rarely does a sport reward hard work so completely. Athletes who study the game and apply the lessons learned relish every opportunity to practice and play. Spectators who watch competitive volleyball for the first time are easily hooked.

Your SDVC coaches love volleyball. They are committed to you as students, as athletes and as young women. It is their goal to provide every opportunity for you to become as good as you want to be. More important, they strive to help you and your teammates become the best team you can be.

### **The team comes first...**

As a SDVC volleyball player, you agree that the team is paramount. Your individual goals and your team's goals do not necessarily conflict, but when they do, you accept that decisions are made for the good of the team. Successes are sweeter – setbacks sting less – when they are shared.

### **Rules help our team run smoothly...**

Each player must decide if she buys into our system and is willing to commit to this team. Every rule is for the benefit of the team, and you have to decide, in advance, whether you want to follow them. If not, you should not be part of the team.

### **Our team thrives on trust and respect...**

You must trust your coach and your teammates, and behave in a way that earns their respect. You must do everything reasonably necessary to make yourself and your team better.

### **Our athletes learn to be coachable...**

There is often more than one way to do things correctly. In some cases, however, your coaches will select a specific strategy for the benefit of the entire team, even if it may not seem to benefit a particular individual. You must be willing to make changes according to your coaches' suggestions. If coaches seem to be 'riding' you, it is usually because they think you are capable of a higher level of performance.

### **Our team works hard...**

Everyone wants to win, but few make the sacrifices to do it. No one will give you anything in life, you must earn it. You cannot cut corners. If, for example, you don't have a consistent, killer serve, you should work long and hard to get one.

### **Our team has balance...**

To balance academics, athletics, work and family, you must plan ahead and make difficult choices. The choices you make will affect your future opportunities. Choose wisely.

### **On our team, bench time is playing time...**

As a SDVC volleyball player, you maintain the same focus and enthusiasm whether you are between the lines or on the bench. You accept that playing time is decided by the coach for the good of the team in the circumstances of the moment. You know that our bench is its secret weapon: every player has her head in the game at every moment, and is ready to come in at any opportunity.

### **Our team can be successful...**

Your coaches want you to know that almost any obstacle can be overcome with hard work. Commitment, perseverance and responsibility will be rewarded.

### **Our team has fun...**

Volleyball is one of the most fun sports in the world. You know you've chosen the right sport if you simply can't wait to get back in the gym, and absolutely love stepping on the court with your friends and teammates every chance you get.

## **How to Impress the Coaches**

1. Be among the first to arrive in the gym and among the first to help set up nets and equipment.
2. Be among the first to line up for drills.
3. Look the coach in the eye when she/he speaks to you or the team.
4. Set a positive tone by being a leader and encouraging your teammates.
5. Be among the first to help take down the nets and put away the equipment.
6. Represent SDVC at every chance you get.

## **Time Commitment for Volleyball**

Like all worthwhile extra-curricular activities, club sports require a substantial commitment. Volleyball – an ultimate TEAM sport – demands that diverse individuals work as one, in a fast-paced test of coordination, concentration and – above all – cooperation. Building a team requires a commitment of everyone's TIME.

Our season is short... Focus during the brief period is incredibly important.

## **OUR TRAINING PROGRAM**

The SDVC training program will be developed and conducted by SDVC staff members led by Camrin Vaux. We feel that this program will best suit those who have participated in our program in the past, as well as those joining the program for the first time at any age. With consistency in practice and tournament attendance, we feel we can enhance the performance level of each athlete.

### **11s, 12s, 13s, and some 14s Teams – Developmental Program**

Emphasis is on fundamentals. Staff members will focus attention on skill development. Staff members will develop a training program for the season based on the assessments of each player. Team rotations, formations, and individual skills will advance throughout the season to prepare for high caliber competition at the conclusion of the season.

### **Some 14s, 15s, and 16s Teams --- Intermediate Developmental Program**

Emphasis will be on refining skill development and begin to train advanced skills. Following tryouts, staff members will develop a training program for the season based on assessments of each player. Our intention is to get these teams playing against elite competition as the season advances. Offensive and defensive team systems will be introduced based on team capabilities and consistently worked on as the season continues. By the end of the season, these athletes should be prepared for our advanced developmental program.

### **Some 16, 17s, and 18s Teams – Advanced Developmental Program**

Emphasis will be on refining skill development and implementation of advanced skills. Staff members will break down techniques of players with the intention to improve their individual abilities. Offensive and defensive team systems will be expected within team capabilities and consistently worked on as the season continues.

Once tryouts are finished and teams are selected, the SDVC coaching will analyze the abilities of each player and develop a schedule based upon projected level of play. These teams will play competition based upon the assessments of the SDVC coaching staff and tournament availability.

# ~ABC's of our SDVC Program~

## ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

Attendance will be taken by the coaches at each practice and tournament for record keeping purposes. It is the sole responsibility of the athlete and/or parents to notify the coach concerning an illness, upcoming absence, or if the athlete will be late to practice. As mentioned prior, what you want to get out of this program may also depend on your attendance. Remember, your absence not only affect your, but also your team and both of your development. *Attendance will play a role in the playing time an athlete receives. This can be up to Board and Coach discretion based on the individual teams and circumstances.*

## COMMUNICATION

SDVC understands the importance of communication. In our efforts to provide constant communication, our website is the primary source of club information, weather announcements, team listings, practice schedules, and tournament information. Please save our website in your favorites and refer to it as necessary. Our Facebook page will also be a reliable source of information.

Our SDVC Club Director will email pertinent information as necessary to communicate with you. In addition, anytime that there are practice schedule changes, cancellations, or other team updates, SDVC coaches may contact you by email as well.

Pre-tournament information is often delayed and vague. The SDVC Club Director will release the information to the coaches and team tournament coordinators as soon as it becomes available. As a parent/guardian, please familiarize yourself with any information that comes home with your athlete. Please ask your daughter/s on a continual basis if they brought any information home with them. As you know, sometimes you may not see it unless you ask. Your patience and cooperation is appreciated. If you have any questions, don't refrain from asking at any time. Typically, local tournament information is available between Monday-Wednesday the week of the tournament. Regional tournament information is usually available seven days prior to the tournament.

## DRUG-ALCOHOL-SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY\*

SDVC promotes that our student athletes act in a manner that is according to law. No player shall knowingly possess, use or distribute a controlled drug, substance, or alcohol related beverage. Student possession, use or distribution of the abovementioned shall be viewed as an act of misconduct and shall be subject to disciplinary action whether law enforcement is involved or not. Should an SDVC player receive a misdemeanor during our season (tryouts to final tournament) or other offense as determined by the law, the player would receive disciplinary action as follows.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Athletes will be expected to attend all practices but will be benched for one tournament.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Athlete will be expected to attend all practices and will lose the opportunity to compete in another tournament. SDVC will work with families to support the intervention of receiving help as necessary.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Athlete will be expected to meet with the SDVC board to determine whether they will remain in our program.

\*This is a PROGRAM policy and will be enforced as continuing through the program each year. Players will not start back at 1<sup>st</sup> offense should they make this choice in more than one season with the SDVC program.

\*It is up to a parent and the player to notify either the Director or their Head Coach immediately if an offense occurs.

## **FINANCIAL OBLIGATION**

A payment schedule is set at the start of each season. Statements are mailed out to each player. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to insure that payments are received on time. This is not a 'pay as you go' program. Payments (down payment and postdated checks) are expected to be paid by **December 8** otherwise the athlete will be removed from the roster. All payments must be submitted in the form of a check or money order payable to SDVC.

Payments should be mailed directly to:  
South Dakota Volleyball Club  
ATTN: Treasurer  
PO BOX 8068  
Brookings, SD 57006

## **FUNDRAISING**

SDVC will provide a variety of fundraising opportunities for players to participate in. Some opportunities will be mandatory to be completed as a team and others will be individual based and optional. Fundraising opportunities are put in place in order to decrease the costs for the families of SDVC players or to raise additional funds for the program (i.e. practice volleyballs). We encourage participation in all fundraising opportunities!

## **INJURY POLICY**

All injuries must be reported immediately to the coach and/or the club director. In the event of an injury, the athlete will not be permitted to participate unless written clearance is obtained from the athlete's physician.

Payments made to SDVC are NOT refundable except in the case of an injury or illness that concludes an athlete's ability to participate for the remainder of the season. The amount to be refunded is prorated based upon the amount of participation and other budgetary items directly used by the individual. Parents must require a refund in writing and attach a statement from the athlete's physician.

## **INSURANCE**

USA Volleyball Insurance covers practices, sanctioned events, competitions and travel to and from such events. It is a supplemental insurance policy. A medical release form is included in the participant forms and will be required for participation in SDVC. Please completely fill out all the information requested. The insurance company requires this form to be in the possession of a staff member (coaches) at all practices and events.

### *State Eligibility & NCAA Eligibility*

SDVC structures itself to be in full compliance with the South Dakota State High School Sports Associations and with the NCAA's rules and regulations. Some high school coaches will be directly involved with this program. **HOWEVER, AT NO TIME WILL THE EFFORTS OF OUR STAFF BE USED TO FAVOR ANY ATHLETE ON OUR TEAM/S.**

## **SEXUAL AND NON-SEXUAL HARASSMENT, VIOLENCE & ABUSE**

### **General Statement of Policy**

Harassment, violence and assault either sexual or non-sexual are violations of South Dakota and Federal laws. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination. Men and women may be victims or offenders. It is the policy of SDVC to maintain learning and working environment that is free from all harassment and violence.

SDVC prohibits any form of harassment, abuse, and/or violence. It shall be a violation of this policy for any SDVC player, parent, director, board member, coach or employee of SDVC to harass or be violent in any

manner to a club member, parent, director, board member, coach, or employee through conduct or communication as defined by this policy.

SDVC will investigate all complains, formal or informal, verbal or written of harassment, violence or abuse either sexual or non-sexual and to discipline any club member, club parents, director, board member, coach or employee who violates this policy.

This policy also covers any extension of the SDVC environment; i.e. club-sponsored events. Members, parents, directors, board members, coaches or employees are prohibited from engaging in any form of harassment, violence or abuse at any of these events.

### **Reporting Procedure**

Victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse in either a sexual or non-sexual form or third person/observers with knowledge or belief of conduct constituting such acts should report the alleged act immediately to the SDVC Director or an Executive Board member, as designed herein. Cases of harassment may be turned over to the Brookings Police Department or other delegated organizations.

### **TOURNAMENTS**

The SDVC Volleyball Executive Board will develop a proposed tournament schedule for each team. This schedule may change, depending on the evaluation of teams at tryouts, finances, and availability to enter specific designated tournaments. Our goal in schedule development is to find competitive tournaments, while keeping the opportunity for success in mind. At times, SDVC teams may play in older age divisions. Many times locations put together 13/14s, 15/16s, and 17/18s in a single tournament based on registrations. It is an expectation of each SDVC player to try their best to attend each day of each tournament. A tournament schedule will be completed in January and out to families as soon as possible.

Travel for tournaments: Travel to all tournaments will be at the responsibility of the parents. Athletes cannot drive themselves to tournaments as this may lead to situation like getting lost, fatigue after playing, or other circumstances. Athletes may not have their boyfriends or friends drive them to tournaments, but it is recommended that the parent/guardian, an adult (23+ years) family member or relative, or another SDVC parent drive to the hotel and tournament site. SDVC coaching staff and advisory board members will be keeping a close eye on this activity. SDVC will not give or be expected to provide any athletes a ride to tournament sites or hotels. If there is a unique situation, the coach must be notified and given written permission from the athlete's parent/guardian, releasing the coach of ALL LIABILITY. Players will be given information about the tournament location and what time to arrive prior to each tournament.

Hotel Stays: SDVC tournament schedules require our athletes to travel outside our area for tournaments. It is an expectation of SDVC that families book their own hotels as needed. Sometimes teams do coordinate and create a block of rooms. Teams will communicate this information as necessary.

### **WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

South Dakota is known for great winter weather. In the event of severe weather or heavy fog, practice will be cancelled. If your school has been closed or if you hear that the Brookings School District has been closed for the day we will not hold practice. Announcements will typically be emailed out to all teams and posted on Facebook.

**DO NOT TRAVEL IF YOU DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE DRIVING TO PRACTICE. JUST NOTIFY YOUR COACH!!!**



## SDVC Players: General Expectations, Rules, Responsibilities, & Code of Conduct

### General:

- When a **coach is talking**, nobody else should be talking so everyone can listen.
- In between drills, **hold the volleyball** while a coach is talking.
- **Be on time** because tardiness affects the whole team and we need to make the most of every practice, meeting, or game.
- **Lying** will not be tolerated and there will be consequences to be determined by your coach.
- Whining, whispering or complaining does not enhance team building. If you have a concern or question, you need to visit with the coaching staff immediately. Spreading rumors and gossip is not a way to validate your concerns or questions.
- Be willing to go to your **team captain**. Look up to your captain, trust in her/them and use them to talk to if you feel you cannot come to a coach. Strive to be the team captain!

### Practice & Tournaments:

- Warm ups are to be used for warming up, be serious. If you lose a ball, run after it **with** your partner.
- In order for a safe and productive practice, the balls should be picked up and put in the carts so people do not get hurt. Also, if you are currently not involved in a drill then you need to be shagging balls as fast as you can.
- **Hustle** in practice: Walking or sitting down during practice is unacceptable.
- If you have wet and sweaty hair, put on a hood or a hat before going outside. Do not leave a tournament or practice without a coat or pants on. We cannot afford to have people gone due to illness!
- **Respect** the equipment: don't pull on the nets, kick or shoot the volleyballs.
- Visible **body markings** such as body paint, glitter, temporary tattoos, notes, etc. will not be tolerated.
- Realize that if you miss practice, you miss the information presented that day. If you are going to miss practice, you must communicate this to your coach before practice or it is considered unexcused. You need to call a coach if you are sick and can't make it to practice so we do not worry about you.
  - The consequences of **unexcused absences** are as follows:
    - 1<sup>st</sup>: You will not start or you will have adjusted playing time
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> or more: You will sit out a match or more if designated by your coach.
- Avoid other conflicts
  - There are often different types of activities that take place during the club volleyball season. Before you plan anything outside volleyball, please check with your coach for any VB obligation that you may be interfering with. Try to avoid conflicts.
- Attend every tournament.
- On tournament days, **notify the coach** if you are unable to play in a game as soon as you know.
- **Match Uniforms** will consist of jersey top, black spandex, knee pads, socks, and court shoes. You will also be expected to have a whistle for officiating.
- **Cell phones** should never be seen or heard. If you have your cell phone with you at practice leave it in your bag, turned off or on silent. Practices do not need to be interrupted by ringing phones. Should your phone need to be on, please talk with your coach regarding this matter. At tournaments, between matches, spend limited time on your phone. Interact with your teammates and be invested in your day of Volleyball!
- It is recommended that you are at your own home by 9:00 and in bed by 10:00pm nights before tournaments.
- **We are a team** and we will act as one.

## SDVC PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Parents have long been central to the success of the SDVC program. We enjoy a high level of encouragement and sportsmanship from members of their extended family, including parents, teachers, families, and fans. We welcome the chance to continue that tradition of support.

### Communicating with coaches

SDVC coaches understand the parenting joys and frustrations that can accompany athletics. We are glad to speak with you about your daughter, but ask that you:

- Insist that your daughter try to work out volleyball-related issues directly with her coach before enlisting your assistance. Learning to deal with authority figures is one of the supreme benefits of participation in organized sports. If you wish to meet with the coach please call or email them to request a meeting. Practice time or tournament days are not acceptable times to meet with coaches.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions. Remember that some pre-teens and teenagers tend to exaggerate both when praised and criticized, and that decisions about complicated issues like playing time are usually the product of many factors. The only athlete that you are allowed to talk about is your own. The results are never good if a parent starts comparing their athlete to the others.

**Chain of Command** in dealing with any matter:

- a. Player to Coach
- b. Parent to Coach
- c. Coach to Director
- d. Director to SDVC Board

### **24 Hour Rule**

If you are concerned about a volleyball-related issue that requires you to speak directly with a coach, we ask that you wait at least 24 hours after the triggering event. Cooler heads are inevitably more productive. We always enjoy chatting with parents at the conclusion of tournaments, but cannot address non-emergency issues at that time. We also cannot interrupt practice sessions.

### **Sportsmanship**

All parents (and players) are expected to demonstrate the highest level of sportsmanship while representing SDVC Volleyball. Please cheer for our team's efforts and successes. Parents and other fans should never celebrate our opponents' mistakes.

- While in the gymnasium, keep all comments positive – remember, you are sitting among parents from the other programs. Please do not compare the skill or attitude of your daughter out loud with other members of the team.
- Volleyball officials are off-limits for parents. Refrain from yelling at the referees – before, during and after the match – no matter what the perceived error or injustice. Remember that these are other peoples daughters involved in the reffing experience. You would not want your daughter to feel inferior, please don't do this to others daughters out of respect, and remember they are all learning. SDVC coaches believe players must learn to perform under adversity, and to not waste emotion or effort on things not within their control.
- Take the time to learn more about volleyball rules and strategy. What sometimes seems like a blown call or a poor coaching decision often looks much different if you have a more detailed appreciation for the nuances of this sometimes – complicated sport.

## **Playing time**

For coaches, delegating playing time is a zero-sum exercise; the decision to give one player more time on the court means another player will get less. As such, all good coaches know that with each decision, however well-considered, comes the likelihood that someone will be disappointed.

- Strong teams have strong benches. Players who keep focused on the match while not on the court greatly increase their chances of success once they enter the game. Spirited bench players almost always infect their teammates with optimism and extra energy.
- Lineup decisions are primarily the result of careful consideration about our own team's chemistry, and our opponent's strengths and weaknesses. Playing time is earned by hard work, proven performance and an occasional hunch. Coaches take a long view about each player's time on the court.
- Volleyball is a unique sport. Playing time will be determined based on athlete talents, work ethic, and the need of the team. Volleyball is not a sport of "equal" playing time. The line up on the court is the team that the coach feels best works for the team they are coaching and/or the competition across the court.

Parents should resist measuring their daughter's volleyball experience solely by the amount of her playing time. We strive to inject each player with a love for the sport, teaching her to value the opportunity to be strong and confident, whether in practice or a game.

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your athlete's program.

### **Communications you should expect from your child's coach:**

- a. Philosophy of the coach
- b. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad
- c. Location and times of all practices and contests
- d. Discipline or consequences that results in the restriction or denial of your child's participation

### **Communications coaches expect from parents:**

- a. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- b. Notification of any schedule conflicts as soon as possible
- c. Specific concern in regard to the coach's philosophy and /or expectations.

## PRIDE, PASSION, AND PERSISTENCE



"Looking through the net, the sound around me begins to fade. As the first whistle blows, my purpose in life is altered. My existence here on Earth is now being evaluated through a single struggle: Staying between the ball and the floor. Though a constant struggle, it is a struggle I love to win, and will win. I achieve this through stealing victories from a floor that doesn't know limits to greed. In a game of anticipation and quick reactions, I cannot allow the ball to hit the floor. I drum up all of my will and energy to get to every ball, remembering that saving a ball is like keeping a dream alive. I push my body to reach as far as it can reach, jump as high as it can jump, dive as far as it can dive, reminding myself that this is a small price to pay for a game that has given me so much. And when my body hits the floor so the ball does not, I realize I have won the battle. As the last whistle blows and the game has ended, I glare back at the lonely ball, grateful that it will soon join me again in my *Dreams on the Court.*"