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Xceleration  
Volleyball Club

John B. David, Editor

## The End of the Beginning

### Xceleration closes out the 2022 season at Far Westerns, JVA West Coast Cup and AAU, builds a solid foundation

Nearly 10 months ago, we welcomed new players to the club – some were just getting their feet wet, most were still working on their game, and there were several that were highly skilled at their positions and continued to grind it out for the love of the game.

As Xceleration ends its 17th club season at Far Westerns, JVA West Coast Cup, and AAU, no one knows what our athletes will experience in their journey through volleyball and life – all places they will go, what they will do, and the people they will meet – but at Xceleration we know that we did our very best to build strong foundations for all our players to continue their journey with confidence and desire, as we all learned valuable life lessons to prepare us for a bright future.

Our season was filled with many ups and downs, challenges and triumphs, successes and failures – these are all acceptable and we embraced each one and learned from them. The thrill of sports at any level is the chance for either team to win or lose. Without the heartbreak of unexpected losses

we could never experience the exhilaration of an underdog win.

As successful or tough the season may have been for our teams this year, it's not the wins and tournament appearances that matter most to us.

What matters are the qualities that the players and coaches are demonstrating on and off the field. We are proud to say that through the leadership of our coaches, our athletes ended the year with a stronger base than they had before joining Xceleration. That is what we are most proud of.

We are already looking forward to starting the next season and will continue to make improvements to the club. We will continue to develop more innovative ways to deepen the club experience at Xceleration and ground it further in the development of our athletes' mind, body and spirit.

For most coaches and players, they were happy to just have a more normal playing season after 18 months of working around a global pandemic. But we now must take this opportunity to reach new heights in our upcoming 18<sup>th</sup> season. We invite you to join us at summer camps and at tryouts to get a glimpse of what else is in store.

BLUE

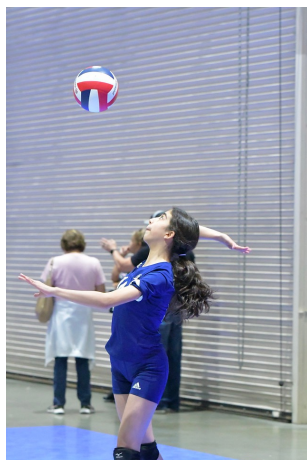


2



12

13



*Shoutout to 12Blue and 13Blue!!! It was great getting to watch you grow together during the season.*

*Thank you to the coaches for caring for and for working with the athletes, thank you to the families for supporting the teams.*

*Most of all thank you to our athletes for being great teammates and for supporting each other as you worked together to better your game.*

*See you all soon!*  
**Tomas Pineda**

[2022 Season Photo Galleries](#)  
Courtesy of Tomas Pineda



BLUE



3

*A good weekend at Far Westerns for the 13B Knuckleheads. Finished in the Silver division with solid volleyball against some tough teams. They keep learning the game, which is very satisfying. Proud of their efforts and looking forward to the league championship this weekend. Go 13B!!!*

**Coach Greg Ginsburg**





# BLUE



4

14



Tomas Pineda

Yesterday at 4:28 PM · 🌐

She broke into a riverdance after a close win



You and 22 others

4 Comments





BLUE

5



14

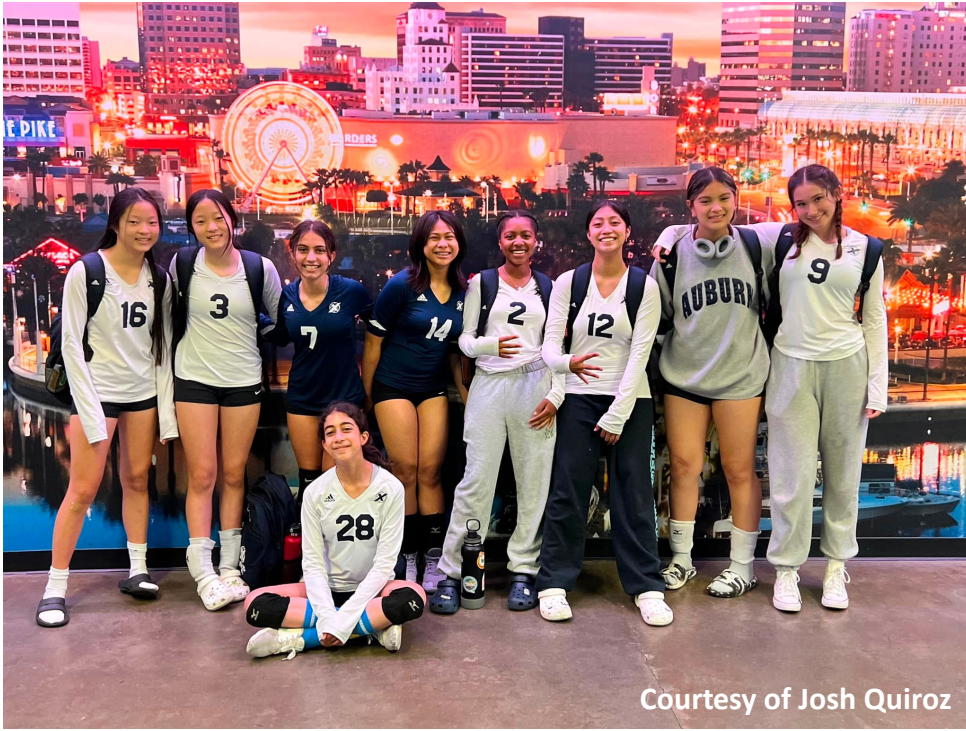




# WHITE



# 14



Courtesy of Josh Quiroz

If there is one thing we will take from the season, we can do anything we set our mind to. It has been a blast to coach our 14 white team this season. We learned a lot but we had a blast doing it. Can't wait to see what the future holds for my Queens.

A team that builds confidence together grows together.

**Coach Leslie Ray**





# WHITE



# 14





BLUE



15

*Started the weekend with only 10 players, day two down to 9, and today (day three) ended with only 8 healthy players...still we persevered and got a win in a tough open division today. Great job this season ladies. Finished our WCVBA league in the gold division and got a win on our final day today. Definitely had some good times this year. Good luck to you all in your future seasons!*

**Coach Lucas Abbott**





BLUE



15





# WHITE



# 15





# WHITE



# 15





BLUE



16





BLUE

13



16





# WHITE





# WHITE



# 16





# BLUE

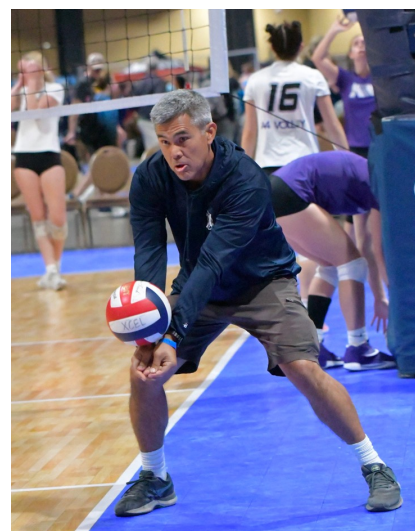


# 17

*I'm truly proud of the 17 blue team. We competed hard this weekend. Although we were pushed we stood our ground and took home 1st place in the silver division. I watched these girls grow and play with passion.*

*I'm truly blessed to be a part of the process. Nothing would be possible without the parent support and my amazing coaching partner **Todd Ajari**. No better way of finishing up the season. Go Xcel!!!*

**Coach Leslie Ray**





BLUE



17





BLUE/WHITE



18



*I enjoyed watching this group it was nice to see the hard work you all put in this season. What I enjoyed most was the parent support and the players laying it all out on the floor.*

**Coach Leslie Ray**



*Two things I will always remember about her [Laila Briscoe].... always celebrating with her teammates ... always celebrating her teammates.*

**Tomas Pineda**





# 18



**2022 Season Photo Galleries**  
Courtesy of Tomas Pineda



# Say Hello to Grandpa Norm, Xcel's No. 1 Super Fan



For the last several years, you may or may not have run across **Norm Haraguchi** roaming the sidelines or cheering from the bleachers in numerous club and high school games and tournaments. Affectionately called Grandpa Norm by many, he is Xceleration's No. 1 Super Fan!

Grandpa Norm's steadfast show of support stems from his love of sports since his childhood. As an avid basketball junkie, Grandpa Norm played High School Basketball, Club Basketball and Statewide Asian Basketball... Go Warriors! In fact, the young sprite, while not totally divulging his true age, said that his last official basketball game was at the age of 60 at an Old Timer's Asian basketball tournament.

The life-long Bay Area native, currently residing in Walnut Creek, is none other than the grandfather of Northgate HS and Xcel graduate **Paris Haraguchi** from the Class of 2021.

Rain or shine, you can always count on Grandpa Norm to show his undying support to Paris and to all the girls on her current and past teams. In Early March this year, we found Grandpa Norm in full Xceleration regalia, cheering for Xcel at the 18s Sierra National Qualifier in Reno to support long-time friends from Northgate and fellow Xcel 18Blue families of **Reagan Richardson** and **Tui Saluni**, among others.

We were not surprised seeing Grandpa Norm in Reno, said **Dee Richardson**. "I remember when Grandpa had his hip replacement surgery a few years back during high school volleyball season. Imagine my shock when one week after surgery, he was back at the

games and sitting at the top of the bleachers where he always sat prior to hip surgery. Now, that's a hardcore fan!"

With tremendous excitement, Grandpa Norm said, "It was a joy seeing them win crucial games the last day and make the Nationals." He followed, "I had planned to see them at other tournaments but missed the games because of the COVID-19 situation."

The pandemic notwithstanding, Grandpa Norm has always watched his two sons and five grandkids play soccer, track and basketball, but it was his granddaughter Paris that got him into volleyball. Paris started playing competitive volleyball at the tender age of 12 and has played club ball up to the age of 17 when she graduated from Northgate.

Grandpa Norm said, "I saw just about every volleyball game she played in since she was 12 years young. I fell in love with girls' volleyball because of the sheer energy, emotion, and desire the girls showed in the game."



## Reserved VIP Seating for Grandpa Norm

Pictured above with Grandpa Norm is granddaughter Paris in the middle after a blowout win by the Northgate Broncos against league competition.

In the top photo, you can always find Grandpa Norm in the top row of the Bronco Bleachers at Northgate HS in Walnut Creek.





### Spotted in Phoenix!

Grandpa Norm is fueling up and ready to cheer on 18Blue, playing in the USA Division at 18s National Championship!



### Frequent Flier

Grandpa Norm has traveled coast to coast with Xceleration – whether it was slogging through the humid conditions in Orlando for AAU, braving the freezing temperatures in Kansas City for Triple Crown, surviving the bomb cyclones in Denver at the Colorado Crossroads, or enjoying the sinful nightlife in Las Vegas for the SoCal Qualifier – he has certainly racked up the miles to show his support.

He said about the Xceleration program, “It was a real joy to travel to all these places and see the caliber of teams competing in Girls Volleyball. I recall that Paris also had an opportunity to play in Puerto Rico, and oh those “Texas Teams”!

## Say Hello to Grandpa Norm, Xceleration’s No. 1 Super Fan (continued)

He continued, “Following Paris, I saw the improvement in her game every year. She played the last four years for Xcel and was proud that she was selected to play for Xcel every year.”

Since that first time when Paris took the club volleyball stage, Grandpa Norm recalls that he was awed at the young age that the girls started playing in competitive programs. He said, “The pressure they faced playing top-flight teams while they were just starting to learn and develop their volleyball game was impressive. Yet, they always maintained their joy and enthusiasm at just playing.” His biggest memory of this is when at the age of 13/14 Paris and the team flew to Kansas City to play in their National Tournament.

“What a sight! Grandpa Norm gushed. “When we walked into the convention center it was bedlam. Hundreds of games were going on side-by-side and banners were flying at the top of the convention center of college teams that were scouting. Yet, the team showed no nervousness or awe. They acted like it was another day at the office.”



Grandpa Norm also learned something new about club volleyball while at Xcel. “I didn’t realize that once the girls were selected for an Xcel team they would have to tryout the next year to play in the next age group.” So, with his grandfatherly instinct, he would also attend every tryout after that to see Paris and the others on her team compete for the next age group.

At tryouts he said, “I was impressed by Xcel coaches in managing the hundreds of applicants and the selection process for each year’s team. I even tried to see who would be joining the team and who not. I would think along with the coaches and select who I would want to join the team. I was happy to see my favorites be selected for the team and sad for who would not.”

Fast-forward to this day, Grandpa Norm is as enthusiastic and engaged as ever, saying what he enjoys most of all is “the competitiveness that the girls display each and every game – the ‘never-give-up’ attitude of the girls – the travel, and the improvement that they show year after year.” He credits the caliber of competition that Xcel teams play at all the tournaments in the national and regional tournaments and the Xcel philosophy of going all the way!

### Ready, Set, Let’s Go!

Grandpa Norm is always on the go with Paris, who is seen here setting the ball to her 16Blue teammate at the AAU tournament in Florida during the 2020 season. She played for Xceleration for four years until her senior year with the 17Blue.



## Say Hello to Grandpa Norm, Xceleration's No. 1 Super Fan (continued)



### Happy Haraguchis

The Haraguchis are all smiles after Paris led the Northgate Broncos to a solid victory in one of her high school games.

Another person that Grandpa Norm has followed to show support is club director, **Leslie Ray**, in her role as the head coach of the Miramonte HS volleyball team, and the Xcel players that she had on her team.

He said, "I loved the battles that Leslie and her Mats teams had with Northgate and the many games that were decided in 5 sets."

Grandpa Norm can be feisty as well when it comes to who he chooses to watch. At one time time when he followed Miramonte as they were going through the North Coast Section playoffs, Grandpa Norm was on hand to see the game, and while sitting with the Miramonte parents, one of them came up to him and asked what he was doing there. His terse reply was, "I was invited by your coach, ask her if you have any problems."

It remains to be seen whether we will continue to see Grandpa Norm in future matches next season but don't count it out or bet against it. He confesses that he misses seeing the girls that he watched grow in the game and as individuals. While Paris is away for college at UC Irvine to pursue a major in Computer Science, with a minor in Chinese, he will enjoy watching many of the girls that she played with the last several years and still playing while he can. "I have followed their careers too at both High School Varsity and Xcel volleyball. They have all made me proud to see them play on the court."

In the meantime, while Paris is obtaining a college education and focusing to discipline her life to handle the computer science workload, there's always the



### Dominguez Hills or Bust!

Pictured above with Grandpa Norm is 18Blue's **Tui Saluni** at the Sierra National Qualifier in Reno, where the team earned a bid to the 18s Junior Nationals in Phoenix. Grandpa Norm said, "I wouldn't miss seeing the team there as well."

Don't be surprised to run into Grandpa Norm on the Cal State Dominguez Hills (CSDH) campus next season to sneak in a few games to watch Tui and the Toros, while visiting his granddaughter Paris at UC Irvine.

When the club announced the news that Tui had committed to play at CSDH, Grandpa Norm was ecstatic, "I was the one who coined the phrase **Tui Time!** Dominguez Hills, get ready for 'Tui Time.' You got a winner!"



## Say Hello to Grandpa Norm, Xcel's No. 1 Super Fan (continued)

possibility of her playing volleyball again through club. Grandpa Norm is realizing that college club is very competitive as well. "Imagine a league where you are playing against UCLA, USC, San Diego State, so that is on the back burner for now, but I would enjoy going to Southern California to see those games."

On the other hand, Paris has shown the interest in coaching volleyball. She helped Northgate's coaching staff and its conditioning program last summer and will also be in touch with 18Blue **Lauren Whyte** and 18White **Bella de Leon** who will be playing in Southern California next fall. "I am fans of those girls as well," he said.

To close our discussion with Grandpa Norm, we asked him to give all of us some words of wisdom or messages to convey...

- **To Xcel Parents** – your support matters and the players feel that support in the tough games.
- **To Players** – never give up and keep attacking. You never know when the momentum shifts and you take control of the game.
- **To Xceleration** – I like the fact that you always seek the tough tournaments and the support you give the teams through **Tomas Pineda's** pictures and **John David's**

articles on how the girls can improve and develop their mental and physical game.

In return from Xceleration, we say thank you so much for your presence over the years Grandpa Norm, you are always welcome to watch our games in the future, and we would love to see Paris back into the fold to rejoin the Xcel family! You are truly an inspiration and a shining example of what it means to be a No. 1 Super Fan!



### 17Blue at AAU

Paris dishing it up for the 17Blue in her last season with Xceleration in 2021 at the AAU Championships in Orlando, FL.



### SoCal Reunions

In addition to having her former Bronco teammate Tui nearby in the Southern California area, Paris will also be keeping in touch with her former Xcel teammates **Bella de Leon** (19) and **Lauren Whyte** (5) who will be entering their freshman year at Providence Christian College and Cal State Dominguez Hills, respectively.

Photos courtesy of Norm Haraguchi, Tomas Pineda, and Dee Richardson.



## Say Hello to Grandpa Norm... Xcel's No. 1 Super Fan (continued)



*I just thought of something. Lauren, Rebekah, Tui, Bella, Paris and Rochelle are all down South next fall. This is a well-balanced team, every position is filled. Maybe Xceleration can form an Xcel South and join the Southern Universities Club League.....just a thought. (LOL).*

**Norm Haraguchi**



## Calling all Xcel Fans... Get Your Xcel Gear Now!



Xceleration Hoody



Xceleration Tee



Xceleration Long Sleeve Tee



Xceleration 1/2-Zip Pullover



Xceleration Sweatpant with Pockets

**Deadline to order apparel is June 19!**  
Click here to [Order](#).



# RESET THE RIGHT WAY

By Coach Andrew Randolph

*We hope you enjoyed these features in **XCELLent News** from 16 White coach Andrew Randolph that leverages his expertise in the world of sports psychology. Coach Andrew graduated from California Baptist University (CBU) in Riverside, CA. After receiving his Bachelor's degree in Psychology, with a Minor in Coaching, he then remained at CBU for the 2018-2019 school year and earned his Master's degree in Sports and Performance Psychology.*



Athletes always have to deal with some sort of adversity or challenge during competition, even in the form of practice. If you want to improve at your sport, you will have to learn how to accept those challenges, and then to respond the right way. The athlete who refuses, or is afraid, to adapt and work to become better is going to be stuck in his or her own way (see *Attacking Failure: E.G.O.*). However, as we have addressed in the previous *Finding Your Why* newsletter section, this may not apply to everyone. Each athlete responds differently and wants different things out of the experience of sport. If you would like to challenge yourself and hope to gain more out of your sports experience, the following are ways to help you do just that. If you are content with your current athletic ability and position, the following strategies can help in other terms of progress and success.

Having the proper mindset in any situation is an everyday necessity, not necessarily an athletic one. The techniques described here are meant to be used by anyone in any situation in order to better individuals and provide methods for such thoughts and behaviors. To use these methods properly, my advice would be for the athlete to incorporate them into his/her daily life first, and then find a

way to translate that strategy onto the court. The purpose here is to notice negativity, and shape it in a way that we can benefit from, instead of tearing us down. Let's learn to replace negative thoughts with positive ones, and create an environment where this becomes more habit than happening.

Unfortunately, it has become all too natural for people to think negatively in most situations. It usually takes time and practice to change these thoughts to positive ones, and even longer to break the habit of negative thinking altogether. Psychologists have studied what is known as the negativity bias among humans. The negativity bias explains reasons for thinking naturally towards bad news or experiences. Past traumas have a more significant effect on people than do positive experiences. Humans tend to remember traumatic experiences over positive ones, recall insults better than praise, react more strongly to negative stimuli, think negative thoughts more often than positive ones, and respond more strongly to negative events than to equally positive ones.

During a practice in which a player made all her serves, hit everything

*(Continued on the next page)*





into the court, and played every ball up on defense, yet came up short in a Serve Receive drill and had one too many blocking errors on the day will automatically think of that practice as bad. She will naturally associate herself with her poor performance on the day rather than what she did right. The same psychologists have deduced that this behavior, while overall hurtful, can have benefits of its own. Studies show that people are generally more motivated to avoid punishment or the loss of something than they are to gain a reward. A player who understands that she might not see the court if she cannot get a serve in might be more inclined to work at it than another player who knows she has a starting spot regardless. A player on the court is going to be more afraid to pass a ball on defense when her first thoughts involve what might happen if she messes up (embarrassment, ridicule, self-doubt, getting pulled, not playing anymore) rather than the praise she would receive for great effort and a decent pass. This, of course, is all subjective and applies to each individual (and team) differently.

There are many things that go wrong in sports all the time; that is just a part of the game. How a player chooses to react and respond to these events will show how they are able to come back and keep pushing towards success. Negative events are going to occur more often than we may care to admit, but that does not mean they always have to define us or slow us down. Learning to replace these negative thoughts with positive ones is the goal here. Recognizing the negative thoughts that come to mind when we play is the first step. The mind on its own is a dangerous thing, and surprisingly not a very intelligent one. Many strategies exist that involve a player resetting and refocusing their minds towards more

positive reactions. The reason for this is because of how important and powerful positive thoughts can be in a person's life.

### *Trigger Words*

Think of something that makes you happy, something that puts you in a good mood no matter what is going on in your life. For some, this could be a fun childhood memory or a unique thing between you and your best friend. Next, come up with a singular word or phrase that helps you to remember that moment. This word/phrase should be said over and over again each time you feel yourself getting in your head or playing below your average skill level. If you want, you can also share your trigger word with a friend or teammate, so she can help remind you as well when it looks like you may need it.

### *Visual Cues*

Visual cues have the same purpose as trigger words, but this must be something you see on a regular basis. Visual cues may only be good for game or practice scenarios, as having the same thing with you all the time might not be realistic in every situation. Choose something that you can look at, something of value to you or not, whenever you need a reset during a game or practice. This could be something detailed like a logo or a specific marking somewhere on the wall. It could also be something generic like a color or the floor. In a lot of cases, athletes will choose something they take with them to every game/tournament and practice, such as a shoe.

Look at whatever your visual cue is over and over again to get your mind in the right place for performing in the here and now.

*(Continued on the next page)*





## Action Cues

Action cues require a physical movement by you. If you are the type of person who needs to see something and feel a change in order to recognize the need to reset and move on to the next play, an action cue may benefit you. Because the action cue forces you to physically do something, it can be done almost anywhere in any circumstance.

Certain ones you may have seen different athletes do include tightening a hair tie, untucking and re-tucking a shirt, hitting their legs, tapping their foot, clenching a fist, etc. Whatever your action cue ends up being should, again, be something that allows you to own the mistakes that have been made and then adjust to a better performance in the same moment.

## Negative Thought Tracking/ Replacement

Earlier, I made the note that your mind on its own is not very intelligent. We try to view the mind and brain as two separate entities. The reason you yourself are so intelligent is because you have learned a lot of thing, in school or otherwise. Logically, you know the right and wrong answers to many questions and situations. However, your mind on its own does not. While your brain can discern a double negative comment or instruction, your mind cannot. The reason double negatives are allowed to exist in our daily lives is because we have learned what they are and how to deal with them consciously. A coach saying “Don’t serve into the net” has put two negative thoughts in your mind without realizing it: Don’t and Net. “You shouldn’t break a platform when passing” = Shouldn’t and Break. “Don’t let a ball drop” = Don’t and Drop. Having to constantly think about the logical way to process

these things can take extra time that an athlete might not have. Instead, coaches should work at telling their athletes exactly what to do, rather than what not to do. “Make good contact on your serve, and follow through to spot 1”, Keep your platform together and hold the angle on every pass”, “Stay in position and keep every ball up for your team”.

Negative thought tracking is something that is very difficult to actually do in the moment. Unless you have experienced the same negative thoughts over and over, and now know how to deal with them, this method is only going to be helpful in certain situations. I will have athletes check in a few times a day and try to remember any negative thoughts they may have had. Write out exactly what the situation was and what their negative thought was right after. Next, to alter that frame of mind, they must come up with at least two positive lessons, feelings, or responses to that seemingly negative situation. This way, we begin to see things for what they really are (opportunities) and not what they shouldn’t be (hindrances).

## Swipe

The swipe method should be utilized strictly by those individuals who respond well to visualization work. Visualization is simply the ability to picture a moment or series of events and create what success would actually look like in one's own mind. Basically, see yourself being successful before you do it, that way you will know what to expect when it comes time to perform. With the swipe method, a player must be able to recognize her mistake right away and also know what to do next time without hesitation. If it is something a coach has to take a second to explain, she may not be able to properly use this method. The mistakes that



players are going to make are most likely repetitive things, such as passing, serving, hitting, transitioning, blocking, etc. The first thing I always ask a player who keeps making mistakes is if she has ever done it correctly before. Most, if not all, of the time they will say yes. The follow up question is if they remember doing it right, which again most agree to. When we can recognize that we have actually done something before and can picture ourselves actually doing it properly, it becomes so much easier to admit that we are capable of doing it again.

Swipe involves, first, owning the mistake. See exactly what happened and everything you did wrong, no matter how hard it is to experience again. Next, think back to a situation where you knew exactly what to do and you performed how you should have and had an amazing play. Once you have that image in your head and can supplement the correct action into your current scenario, then you may (externally or internally) replace the picture of the mistake with the picture of your success. When this moment comes up again during play, you have trained your mind to see success and what you should be doing rather than allowing the mistakes to weigh too heavily on you.



# The Role of College Volleyball Camps in the Recruiting Process

*Xceleration is often asked about college volleyball camps and their role in how they can help their daughters get into the school of their choice and be able to play at the college level. Below is an article reprinted from JVA Volleyball that might shed some light on this often-daunting process.*

*In the end, attending these camps do not necessarily mean that you have to be a college prospect. Participate in them to meet new people, learn new skills, or just to have fun in a college environment.*

College volleyball camps are a great opportunity to get evaluated by college coaches and show off your skillset against elite competition. With thousands of college volleyball camps across the country, how do you decide which one to attend?

First, consider camps at schools you're interested in attending. These camps are an opportunity for you to get a better feel for the school. During your stay, walk around campus, get to know the coaching staff, tour the dorms and consider talking to an academic advisor.

In addition, it can benefit your [recruiting process](#) to attend camps based on the coaches in attendance. It is common for Division II, Division III and NAIA coaches to coach at major Division I camps. If you are interested in a specific program, these large camps can be an opportunity to get in front of the coach.

## 4 types of camps

In general, there are four types of college volleyball camps. **Elite camps** (Prospect/ID) typically give volleyball recruits the best chance of catching the attention of a college program. Be advised — if you're hoping to get discovered, it is best to establish contact with a program before the camp. **Position-specific camps** focus on developing skills for your particular position. Whether you're a libero or an outside hitter, position-specific camps offer in-depth training.

**All-skills camps** provide general skills development and are usually geared toward younger athletes, while **team camps** are a great opportunity for programs to develop their team chemistry. All-skills camps and team camps are usually less recruiting-focused, but both offer campers a chance to improve their skills and have fun.





## The Role of College Volleyball Camps in the Recruiting Process (continued)

### Know what to expect before you arrive

College volleyball camps can be a great experience for volleyball players who want to play at the next level — as long as you go into it with the right expectations. Got your heart set on a specific volleyball program? Attending the program's camp can be a good way to catch their attention. However, if you are seriously considering a school, try to establish contact to get on the coach's radar before camp season.

At the camp, keep in mind that coaches are evaluating more than your athletic ability. Coaches want to see how you compete against top competition and how you react to success and failure. They are evaluating your body language and how you interact with your teammates.

During volleyball camps, you can expect to receive instruction from coaches and college athletes. You'll participate in drills to sharpen your skills and positioning. Many volleyball camps also include tournament play and personal evaluation.

### How should you respond to a volleyball camp invite?

Always get back to the coach promptly—no matter who the invite is from. Even if you can't make the camp or aren't interested in the volleyball program, a respectful decline is a much smarter recruiting play than no response. College volleyball coaches may move to another school. You never want to burn any bridges.

### Email the coach before camp

Once you register for a 2019 college volleyball camp, reach out to the coach to let them know. If it is a large camp, tell them your schedule and which court you'll be on to help them find you during the camp. Also include your highlight video, verified measurables, academic info and social media handles. Keep it short and sweet!

### Remember to follow up after camp

Ride the momentum of your 2019 college volleyball camp. After the camp ends and you go home, follow up with the coach and send over any new verified stats. Thank them for the opportunity and ask for feedback on which skills you need to improve. Keep the conversation going by letting them know about your athletic progress and any upcoming volleyball tournaments or showcases.

Looking for more recruiting answers? Make sure to check out [NCSA's College Recruiting Guide](#) before setting up your online recruiting profile.

For related reading on the volleyball recruiting process click [HERE](#). For more volleyball education for athletes, coaches and parents click [HERE](#).



### About the Author

Matt Sonnichsen is the former Director of Volleyball and National Speaker for Next College Student Athlete (NCSA), the Official Recruiting Services provider of the JVA. Matt has over 20 years of experience coaching volleyball at the collegiate level.





## 3 Fun Ways to Improve Your Beach Game

*Xceleration's indoor season may have concluded but it's time to try something new! Our beach camps still have openings and we invite you to take this opportunity to continue to work on your game... on sand! Whether you are new to beach or an experienced sand player, Coach Rob Browning and the St. Mary's College coaching staff will work with all players with varying skill levels.*

*The next two articles are reprinted from **JVA Volleyball** and provide excellent introductions to the game.*

Technique and skill in any sport will only get you so far. To be at your best as a [beach volleyball](#) athlete or coach, it is essential to also enjoy your experience and have fun. That is usually the reason every athlete starts their beach volleyball journey, so why should it be any different when you are a veteran athlete or coach?

Todd Rogers, Founding Beach Nation Coach, Olympic Gold Medalist and now the Head Beach Coach at Cal Poly emphasizes the importance of having fun by saying

*"This puts into perspective what we all did at an earlier age. The why is because we loved the game and enjoyed challenging ourselves with what are kind of random touches, but what made us all better players. I still sometimes go outside in the yard and set the ball up and down to myself just because I enjoy challenging myself to see if I can still set a spinning ball cleanly.*

*It's not about competing with someone else...just competing with myself. It's not about working towards the Olympics.... but just because I can and because I enjoy it. At the heart of it is the pure essence of the game OR WHAT SHOULD BE THE REASON WHY ANYONE PLAYS."*

**Beach Nation shares 3 ways to improve your beach game while also having fun:**

### 1. Play as often as you can

Play with people older, younger better and not quite as good, every opportunity to play is an opportunity to improve your game. What is important is that you always stay focused, and when playing with players who are better than you, use the opportunity to learn and improve. When you are playing with players that are below your level it creates a fantastic opportunity for you to add more control to the game for them. Make sure your serves are placed where you want them to go.





### 3 Fun Ways to Improve Your Beach Game (continued)

Give your partner a better set to make it easier for him/her to place the ball. Help create a level of consistency that allows you to work hard and raise the level of the game on your side of the net. Every time you play you don't need a coach, you don't need to be seen, but you do need to play with focus, practice using your best technique and have some fun too.

## 2. Maximum touches

Bump and / or set the ball to yourself 50 times in a row. If you cannot do 50 yet, you will be surprised how quickly you will get better by doing this drill.

**Drill #1:** This is a drill that creates a lot of touches and helps you to develop a feel for the ball. Sitting on the floor (or a chair) get your platform out away from your body and keep bumping the ball. As you get better at this you can start to lift the ball higher or lower and work on that "feel" of the ball against your forearms. When you are done bumping work on your hands by hand setting. Keep your hands high and keep your wrists back. You want to keep your hands as soft as possible so that you never hear or feel a slap as your hands touch the ball.

As you get better with hand setting try and lift the ball higher and closer to the ceiling. Then when all this is done work on passing from one arm to the other, back and forth, left arm to right arm and then back again.

**Drill #2:** Putting a piece of tape up against a wall at 7'4 or at 8' and passing against it for 10- 15 minutes a few times a day is a lot of fun and will help you to develop a 'feel' for the ball coming off your forearms. This drill should always be led by moving your feet behind the ball, bending those knees and really working your platform so you eliminate arm swing (left with your legs not swing your arms).

Patty Dodd is now the Founder of MB Sand Volleyball club but before that she played professionally on the sand and before that she was an indoor player for UCLA. At 5'8 she an undersized outside hitter, but she worked hard and utilized the wall to get more touches.

As she says *"the wall shags for you and never yells at you!"*

As a way to advance the wall drill you can pass the ball off the wall and then bump the ball to yourself, set the ball to yourself and then bump it again off the wall. You can also work on setting balls off the wall and then progress that drill by setting it to yourself so you bump it back to yourself and then set it again against the wall (set, bump to your hand and set against wall).

You will get more touches in 20-30 minutes doing these two drills alone than most players get in two hours of practice.





### 3 Fun Ways to Improve Your Beach Game (continued)

#### 3. Take it outside!

Take the two drills above outside so that you can really work on getting your feet under the ball and then executing the skill. You can even do 10 minutes of these skill before you have a practice or incorporate some of these skills into your warm-up routine as well.

Beth Van Fleet is the Head Beach Volleyball Coach at Georgia State University. One of her favorite alone drills is the solo serve and pass-set progression. Using the same 7'4 or 8' line you marked on the wall for passing, you can work on serving. Take 6-12 steps from the wall and practice serving just above the line you drew. You can stand directly in front of the line or to either side to work on serving different angles. Serve a few sets of 10 and keep track of how many times your serve hits the wall just above the line. As you become more consistent, take a step back.

If you want to challenge yourself a little more (and have access to a slanted one-story roof – preferably with no windows below it), consider serving the ball onto the roof then running up to platform pass it when it rolls off the roof. You can pass to yourself, set to yourself, catch it and return to a serving distance to repeat.

Practice good technique in these drills every time you warm up and every time you play. Your game will improve because most good athletes are limited by bad technique. So, fix it here, fix that technique now, go have a ton of fun playing when and where you can, and get those alone touches. We play because it's fun, go be great and go have fun!

For more beach coaching education click [HERE](#). For related reading on beach volleyball click [HERE](#).



#### About the Author

[Beach Nation](#) is the beach education partner of the JVA. The world class coaching staff has unparalleled experience ranging from teaching the youngest athletes in club volleyball to winning the FIVB World Championships, winning an Olympic Gold Medal, and every level in between. At Beach Nation, you'll be coached by the top beach players, Olympic gold medalists, USA Beach National Team members, USA National Team Coaches and every level in between.





# 7 Keys to Blocking in Beach Volleyball

*Xceleration's indoor season may have concluded but it's time to try something new! Our beach camps still have openings and we invite you to take this opportunity to continue to work on your game... on sand! Whether you are new to beach or an experienced sand player, Coach Rob Browning and the St. Mary's College coaching staff will work with all players with varying skill levels.*

The blocker has a strategic role in beach that can be broken up into a few different segments. Think of playing defense as having two defenders, a front defender and a back defender. When the other team can play the ball in system one of the defenders plays at the net (front defender) while the other defender (rear defender) stays deep and works to play any ball that goes above or around the front defender. So the job of a front defender is still being a defender, but a defender who is positioned at the net.

The front defender changes the way the attacker makes the ball cross the net either by blocking the ball or by eliminating angles and locations where the attacker can make the ball cross the net. Both results are good in that if the ball is blocked the point is won.

- If the front defender makes it more difficult for the attacker to make a good attack then it gets easier for the back defender to make a good play.
- If the front defender takes away a strong angle that the attacker wants to hit the attacker may make a hitting error.

These are all good outcomes helped by the front defender.

The front defender can force the attacker to make a more obvious attack, and it gives the back defender an advantage. Also when the set is too far off the net for the attacker to attack aggressively, the front defender will pull away from the net and become another back defender.

**Here are seven key strategies for blocking at the net from 3 time Olympian and Olympic Gold Medalist Phil Dalhausser:**

## #1 ATHLETIC STANCE

The first thing I do when I am at the net is make sure I am always in an athletic position. I am never standing straight up.





## 7 Keys to Blocking in Beach Volleyball (continued)

### #2 POSITIONING:

I like to line up with my head on the ball. What do I mean in regards to “head on the ball?” When the set is at it’s peak or apex, I want my head lined up on the ball directly across the net from where I think the hitter is going to contact the ball when it comes back in to play.

### #3 WATCH THE HITTER:

Once I am in a good position, I take my eyes off of the ball and watch the hitter. I am looking for any tells in his approach. For example, if he is coming full speed ahead chances are he is hitting the ball VERSUS SHOOTING THE BALL.

### #4 THE MOVE:

Now it is time to make my move. I take a mini step in the direction that I am blocking angle (cross court) or line. I try to time it and get as low as my 6’9 frame will allow so the hitter doesn’t see the move.

### #5 PENETRATION:

Next, I jump and with strong hands I reach over the net rather than putting them straight up. Reaching over the net is really important because it cuts off angles for the hitter. I am also trying to keep my eyes open as long as possible before the hitter hits the ball. This allows me to see and react to the last second changes a hitter will make often times based upon my block.

### #6 DISTANCE:

Another tip is don’t jump too close to the net because it is harder to penetrate over the net. Plus you have a better chance of touching the net. I like to be about 3/4 of an arm length away from the net. Play with that distance to see where you are comfortable.

### #7 LANDING:

Lastly, land in an athletic position in case your partner gets a dig. If you do this you will always be in a good position to make a move towards the ball.

Beach Nation is the official beach education partner of the JVA and is dedicated to raising the bar on teaching the game of beach volleyball to players and coaches. This is the first in our forthcoming series in improving your beach skills as a player and as a thinker. Beach Nation has assembled a team of volleyball coaches and elite players to use their knowledge of the game to help you, the player / coach to be better. Visit Beach Nation to see when we are coming to a location near you and to learn more about why you should choose Beach Nation as a resource to help you improve your game.

Photo credit: Craig Maccubbin Album



### About the Author

Phil Dalhausser is a 3 time Olympian and Olympic Gold Medalist (with Todd Rogers). He is considered one of the best blockers in the world today. Phil has 96 career wins with 56 AVP 1st places and 38 1st places on the FIVB Tour. He has been named as the best blocker in the world (FIVB) 7 times.





**To our Xceleration Families...  
Thank You for Your Support!**



**2022 Season Photo Galleries**

**Courtesy of Tomas Pineda**





*Just wanted to formally say  
Thank You to everyone at  
Xceleration.*

*From the first time we  
stepped into this Club  
Madelyn's had a wonderful  
experience.*

*There's no doubt that she  
won the Athletic Boosters  
Scholarship at College Park  
last night with the help of an  
incredible recommendation  
letter from her coach at this  
club.*

*A coach that knows each of  
his players and recognized  
her work ethic, potential,  
athleticism and leadership.  
She was given the  
opportunity to let those skills  
really develop here.*

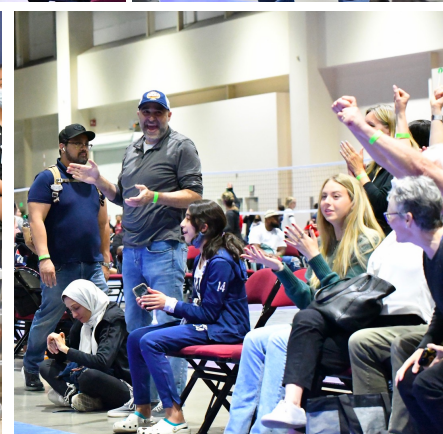
*We're so very fortunate to  
have been a part of the Xcel  
Family even for a short time.  
It's made a positive impact  
on our daughter's future.*

*Definitely wasn't enough  
time here! We will miss it so  
much! Congratulations to all  
the graduating 18's.*

**Melaine Irene**







Thank You  
and Have  
an XCEllent  
Summer!





## 2022 Summer Indoor & Beach Camps!

Enjoy the summer while working on your game and sharpening your skills indoors or outdoors! Our summer programs are open to all players and incredible opportunities to elevate their game in a fun way!

Practice plans are well thought out... Our players come with a lot of energy every night... Skill development and repetition are all transferable to matches... Lots of life lessons through the game... Our coaching staff is highly experienced at the club, college, and professional levels, helping more than 150 players to get to the college or professional level... and many more! Come out and join us!

### INDOOR CAMPS

**Xceleration Sports Facility at NorCal Courts**  
**360 Ferry St., Martinez, CA**

#### UPCOMING 5th-8th GRADERS: June 27 – August 4

All 6 weeks of camp are Monday/Tuesday/Thursday sessions

No camp on July 4

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

#### Costs:

\$55/drop-in; \$140/week; \$95 for Week 2 (July 4th week)

\$760 for all 6 weeks

Online Payment [Here](#) and Register [Here](#).

*(Continued on next page)*





## UPCOMING HIGH SCHOOL: July 5 – July 28\*

All 4 weeks are Monday/Tuesday/Thursday sessions  
7:45 PM - 9:45 PM

### Costs:

\$70/drop-in

\$185/week; \$125 for Week 1, July 4th week

\$680 for all 4 weeks

Online Payment [Here](#) and Register [Here](#).

\* First day of practice for high school is August 8.

## BEACH CAMPS

Moraga Commons Park

1425 St. Mary's Road, Moraga, CA

## UPCOMING 5th-8th GRADERS/HIGH SCHOOL: June 6 – July 27

All 8 weeks of camp are Monday/Wednesday sessions  
(15 sessions, off Monday, July 4)

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM or

**Month #1 (8 sessions): June 6 – June 29**

**Month #2 (7 sessions): July 6 – July 27**

No camp on July 4

**Costs:** \$465/month or \$900 for Full Season (15 sessions)

There will be no drop-ins for Beach due to limited enrollment.

Online Payment [Here](#) and Register [Here](#).

No refunds will be issued for player absences or cancellations for all camps, but we will gladly offer credits to future remittances.

## SAVE THE DATES! TRYOUTS FOR 2023 SEASON

Signups to try-out will open soon but save the dates to join one of our teams next season. More information to come.

**15s-16s-17s-18s Age Groups:** Fri, Sat or Sun - July 29-31, 2022

Signing Night - August 3, 2022

**12s-13s-14s Age Groups:** Fri, Sat or Sun - October 21-23, 2022

Signing Night - October 26, 2022

