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2024 Season Launched at NorCal Winter Classic & Power League Qualifiers

All Squads Take the Courts to Start the 2024 Season

Xceleration kick-started the 2024 season at the WCVBA's NorCal Winter Classic and the NCVA's Power League in January and February with promising results and outstanding play from our squads.

"We certainly do not expect our teams to take top spots against the competition at this point in the season, but we look forward to seeing each player develop and improve their skills over the course of the season," said Xceleration owner **Jeremy Swann**. "Standing on the medals podium is just icing on the cake; we are placing more emphasis on growth and skill development from our players."

While some teams found success this early in the season, others expectedly are finding a bumpy road ahead. The challenges that we have encountered and that we will undoubtedly face throughout the season are common, and our strength lies in how each of us responds to meet and overcome them.

There are more games to play and more peaks to climb during this competitive season. We just want to remind you that hard work, patience, and perseverance are keys to making your time with the club a worthwhile experience. From all of us at Xceleration, have an awesome season!



BLUE

12

HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Blue posted their first win of the season at the NorCal Winter Classic. The team hung tough and extended their matches to three sets in 3 of their 8 games against the competition.
- At the Power League Qualifiers (PLQs), the 12 Blue continued to improve and learn the game. The team will start league competition in the Aqua Division and will look to move up along the way.

13

HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Blue started slowly at the NorCal Classic but was up to the task, managing to win three straight games in the process.
- 13 Blue continued to show signs of improvement at PLQs. The team won 4 of the last 5 matches, including a satisfying win to end the Qualifier and start in a strong position at PL1.

WHITE

14

HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 White showed plenty of grit and promise at the NorCal Winter Classic, as 4 of their 7 matches were extended to three sets each. Their first victory of the season was a lopsided win in the third set against a worthy opponent.
- 14 White got sidetracked at the Power League Qualifiers but showed heart in all their matches. The team got back on track by splitting their six matches at PL1. The team posted two victories in three matches that went the distance.



14

HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 Blue had a strong start at the NorCal Winter Classic by posting seven straight victories to open the 2024 season. The team reached the quarterfinals and ended the tournament with a 5th Place finish in the Gold bracket, cropping only two sets during the weekend.
- At Power League Qualifiers (PLQs), 14 Blue bookended their 6 matches with two inspiring wins. The team then turned the tide at PL1, winning 3 of 4 matches to show their resiliency.

15

HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 Blue sprinted out of the gates with three straight victories to open the season at the NorCal Winter Classic. The road got steeper, but the team managed to finish as a finalist in the Bronze B bracket.
- After an opening day defeat at PLQs, 15 Blue came back with a vengeance by rattling off five consecutive victories. The team showed that it can hang tough, splitting two of their four matches that went to three sets in PL1 competition.



14 Blue photos courtesy of Courtney Manton.

BLUE / WHITE

16

HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 Blue started the 2024 season in strong fashion at the NorCal Winter Classic by going 6-2 in the tournament, including three straight wins to open the season. The team ended the Classic as Silver Bracket A winners, or a 17th Place finish in a field of 64 teams.
- 16 Blue started strongly in the opening matches at Power League Qualifiers (PLQs) but then ran into a buzzsaw in the later rounds and at PL1. The team will look to rebound in their upcoming league matches.

18

HIGHLIGHTS

- 18 Blue steamrolled the competition with a 6-1 record at Power League Qualifiers, including strong wins against tough competition.
- The team struggled a bit at PL1 but has rebounded with three consecutive wins against perennially strong squads in PL2, including Encore, Vision, and Red Rock.

17

HIGHLIGHTS

- 17 Blue finished the NorCal Winter Classic in the top half of the field and came away with a Bronze bracket finals meeting against a tough opponent. The weekend was highlighted by a four-game win streak all the way to the Bronze finals and finishing at 5-3.
- 17 Blue will look to find consistency in league matches. At PLQs, PL1 and PL2 the team squeezed out three-set victories in 3 of 4 matches.

18

HIGHLIGHTS

- 18 White was hit with an injury bug and the undermanned team is making do in Power League matches.
- The team will persevere and continue their uphill battle in their next tournaments.



GOOD LUCK to our 18s teams at the Salt Lake City Showdown National Qualifiers





Warm Up and Maturity Are Keys for Evaluating a Player's Potential

A coach can tell a lot about a player just in the five-minute warm up at a tournament. What coaches are looking for is the player who prepares mentally and physically to win the set. Oftentimes the team does a few common things to warm up. They start with passing and progress into setting and eventually a full pepper with some type of variation or progression. After a couple of minutes, team captains are asked by the referee to join them in preparation for the match. During this time college coaches will stand courtside or one court over to see what a player is doing in the warm-up. Is he/she casually warming up or taking the warm-up seriously to prepare to compete? What coaches need on every team is the player that competes to win and uses every opportunity to prepare for a win.

I'll give you a true example. Nine months ago, a player came to me about the recruiting process. After evaluating her, I immediately called a long-time friend and NCAA Division I coach that I knew needed a middle blocker for the 2010 season. Over the phone we discussed the player, and the coach arranged to fly to Texas to watch this senior play in a home game during the high school season. Within 5-6 minutes

of warm up the coach leaned to me and said this trip was worth it, and we are going to make an offer. The coach had not even seen the middle play and only had time to watch the player warm up and go through six or seven swings at the net. She could see the work ethic and potential in the warm-up and that scholarship offer was accepted after an official visit was made by the player.

Coaches are looking for the players who communicate and drive to make those around her better. We all know the importance of leadership and the ability to communicate on the court in relationship to winning. Communication is key even in warm up. Coaches are also looking for ball control, mechanics, and movement. When it comes to ball control, are they passing with intention or going through the motions? Is the player balanced when they set and are they quick to move to the ball? Do they hustle after the ball that is set five feet further, or do they just let it drop and pick back up again? In hitting lines, is the player quick to swing and taking the ball at a high point and hitting angles? Is the setter quick to think about the next play and having a consistent location on the ball? Is the libero hustling after the ball with intention to play the ball?

(Continued on the next page)





It can all be seen in the small things, so warm up with intention and always take the high road when faced with a challenge. It can make a difference in the recruiting process.

~ Jenny Krueger, Austin Performance.



sitting the bench or a change in pattern. Is the player on the sideline talking and engaged with the team or arms folded and not vocal? Does the player hustle in at a timeout and engage with the coach or does he/she walk slowly to the huddle to hear what the coach says. Is the player engaging with team members and telling them what shots are open, or has the change in play time gotten the player down? This is a crucial side to teamwork that often fails when players think their value to the team no longer exist. It really is never the case until a player allows the playtime to become personal and negative. As a coach, I have never looked down the bench of players and put someone back in the game who is not engaged for the success of the team. If I have a player that I pull for some reason and they are at the bench with their hands on their knees encouraging the team and communicating during and between plays, then my confidence in that player stays extremely high and the chance of the player returning to the game stays high. If the player becomes selfish and takes it personal and is quiet, there is absolutely zero chance he/she will see the floor the rest of the day.

Coaches can see so much in a player during warm up and intense play situations. They want the player who drives to compete, prepares mentally and physically with one thing in mind, and that is to win. Anyone can pass a ball, set a ball, or attack the ball. Coaches are looking for the maturity level and the drive to win on every touch of the ball.

WARM-UP EXERCISES



Work ethic and potential can all be seen in a warm-up. There are several times that college coaches might be going to a specific court to watch a player but see something that really catches their eye in a warm-up, and they will literally stop and see what a player has to offer. Coaches are always on the lookout for that player that is the difference maker, leader, and one who desires to win.

Usually after a warm-up, a team gathers on its side to listen to the lineup and what the coaches have to offer in terms of strategy. This is the time college coaches are looking to see if a player is engaged with the team and looking in the eyes of the coach while he or she is communicating. Being engaged is extremely important for the success of the team, and it also shows the maturity level of a player who has intent of winning. During a set, there are oftentimes a player who is in the recruiting process will have to sit out for several points or even an entire set. This doesn't mean that the college coach is no longer going to be recruiting that player. Parents oftentimes panic if things aren't perfect or playing time is altered in some form or fashion. This is a natural reaction for most players and parents. The absolute worst thing a parent or player can do is start worrying during a set about the recruiting side of the game. All things turn out usually for the best in most cases and just because a player sits out doesn't mean they lost their chance, or a coach won't evaluate the player. The coaches will also see how a player reacts to situations, such as



Keys to Volleyball Greatness

With help from some of the sharpest minds in the game, VolleyballUSA has assembled a collection of wise words to guide you through the club season. XCELlentNews will share them with you in future issues.



“Erase the last play from your mind, whether it was good or bad. It does you no good to dwell on a mistake or continue relishing a great kill or block you just made. Reset your focus and look ahead to the next play.”

– Volleyball USA staff



USAVolleyball

“The most important contact in the game is the one you are making or about to make. Once you make it, it immediately becomes the least important, and all your attention needs to be directed at your next contact.”

– Doug Beal, coach of 1984 men’s Olympic gold-medal team



“Learn to read the game: By watching not just the ball but the people acting on it as well, the game will become easier and you will improve more quickly.”

– Hugh McCutcheon, University of Minnesota women’s coach, former coach of U.S. Men’s and Women’s National Teams



“Tackle the stuff you’re not so good at. There’s nothing wrong with practicing a skill you do well, but don’t shy away from putting in extra time on something that you struggle with. Initially, it’s an uncomfortable feeling because you’re working on something that doesn’t come naturally to you, but in the long run it will boost your confidence to conquer the tough stuff – and it will make you a better volleyball player.”

– Volleyball USA staff

“Be a competitor. Do everything you can physically, mentally, and emotionally to beat your opponent on the next play as often as you possibly can.”

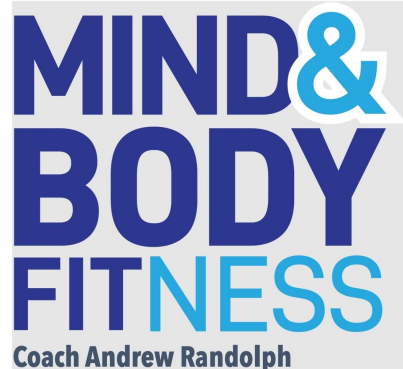
– John Dunning, former women’s coach at Stanford



Mindset Motivated Fitness

With Coach Andrew Randolph

One of the key components for peak performance is to supplement volleyball training with a strength and conditioning program. Xceleration is proud to partner with Mindset Motivated Fitness and Coach Andrew to provide this critical component to your growth.



Hello Xcel players, families & the volleyball community!

In partnership with Xceleration Volleyball Club, I am excited to offer another vital component of your volleyball training to complement and elevate your game — physical training/conditioning and motivation/workout fitness — through my **Mindset Motivated Fitness** program. I have heard great things from each of the coaches about progress being made, results at the tournaments so far, and/or continued growth and a desire to learn. At the end of the day, that is what we strive for the most. At Xceleration, we want to focus on the overall experience, including personal growth, skill enhancement, game knowledge and understanding, team cohesion, and a passion to work to be your absolute best. As you all know, one of the ways in which we have adapted to this way of thinking is through our mindset training sessions for the older age groups. I am a Mental Performance Coach with a master's from California Baptist University and has been working with our players through mindset training for the past three years. Training is typically offered only to our high school age athletes. Younger teams are optional at coach or parent request.

Aside from the mental game, the club and I also realize how important it is for athletes to have a productive physical training program outside of practice. Through **Mindset Motivated Fitness**, I am offering services to help our athletes grow both mentally and physically to best reach their goals. I am currently a Certified Personal Trainer through ISSA, with a focus in Sports Conditioning for athletes. In the past 6 months alone, I have designed and ran programs for the Core Boys' Elite team and the Pacific Union College Men's Volleyball team. My desire and focus is on high school and college athletes looking to better their physical conditioning for their respective sport.

Even starting with our youngest athletes, physical training is vital not only for strength and skill improvement, but also life habits and growth. Having a workout routine helps with organization, lessening stress, improved cardiovascular health, strengthened muscles and bones, reduced risk of disease, increased cognitive functions, increased immune functions, longevity, increased self-esteem, better sleep, and improved energy and focus. The benefits far outweigh the push to get started.

For our Xceleration athletes, I have designed plans targeted for each position based on age and skill level. The basic plans are all bodyweight plans, with the option to adapt if equipment is available to the athlete. The workout programs are further broken up by team, with 12s and 13s focused on fundamental movement skills, 13s and 14s focused on skill enhancement, and the older

teams focused on conditioning and strength training. Each plan can be altered based on any specific needs of the athlete; each plan is automatically adjusted to be personalized for each individual player to meet them where they're at and help them advance accordingly.

The following price break down is every itemized service offered by Mindset Motivated Fitness. Every service provided is optional at the additional cost listed below. Starting value of personalized workout programs is \$75/athlete, with optional additional services. **Xcel athletes will receive any workout plan at 50% off!** For longer-term plans, there will be an added 10% Pay in Full (PIF) discount.

Individual daily workout plans: \$75/workout

Optional added services:

- Weekly/Monthly workout schedule
- WhatsApp fitness group
- Basic macro nutrition plan breakdown
- 24/7 access to coach for advice, concerns
- Weekly or biweekly zoom meetings to discuss progress and change course early, if necessary
- Workout assessment
- Daily encouragement and reminders scheduled at your selected time of workout
- Goal setting breakdown and scheduling organization
- In-person or zoom whole workout demonstration (with coach)
- Access to Everfit training app (organizes workouts, video instructions)
- **In-person only:** Client will pay for any extra cost to meet at their own gym or home (gas, gym rental, extra equipment requested) (does not apply to Xcel athletes)

Couples/Family Discounts, Military Discounts or Student Discounts: 10% off indefinitely.

If any players or Xceleration families would like to exercise the pay in full option for any of the offered length of terms for **Mindset Motivated Fitness**, services will be offered at 35% off total, but only during the volleyball season (November through May). Non-athletes also have the option of purchasing just the singular workout plan as a stand-alone for 25% off/plan.

If interested, please contact me and fill out the following **INTAKE FORM**.

Questions and inquiries about the program can be addressed to me at **atrandolph.pt.spp@gmail.com**.

Note: This pricing is not included in the club dues as it is on an individual basis.

Thank you! GO XCEL!

Coach Andrew Randolph



Goal Setting

By Coach Andrew Randolph

*In upcoming issues of **XCELLent News** we will feature articles from 17 White coach Andrew Randolph that leverages his expertise in the world of sports psychology and will supplement his discussions with the 15-18 teams. 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.*



If you have ever considered doing goal setting before or looked into it in any capacity, you have probably heard of **SMART** goals. **S-Specific, M-Measurable, A-Achievable, R-Relevant, T-Time Bound.**

Creating a task, or multiple, for one to accomplish in a designated amount of time is the most basic way to describe goal setting. Goal setting can come in many forms. Just like most topics on mental performance, the different ones apply to each individual athlete uniquely. The purpose of goal setting is to challenge athletes/people to get a little bit better every day, in order to meet an agreed upon state of accomplishment, usually with oneself.

To start with setting goals, you must first decide what you are trying to accomplish, or where you want to end up. It is almost pointless to start working towards something with little to no plan of a final destination.

Wherever your goal ranges between 'getting a serve over the net' to 'being the top recruit in the nation', your end goal must be solidified in your mind. Until this happens, it's difficult to measure your success leading up to what you want to happen. Achieving one's end goal consists of making habits out of mini successes along the way. This can look like making lists or mental notes about what you want to happen. No matter what your goal is, you cannot expect it to come true randomly one day; it must be worked for, starting at the very beginning.

If your goal is to be the top recruit, then small things leading up to this possibility are what you can focus on daily. Think of things a top recruit would have to know or be able to do in order to be considered for this honor. Talk to coaches or reach out to players you know who have experienced something like this success before or know enough about the process. Be diligent in your own work ethic and consistency of the game. If you do all these things over the course of a week, a month, or even a season they get to be noted as goals you have accomplished. One of the most common mistakes people make, and the main reason for giving up on goals, is they do not take time to celebrate the mini successes. No, simply talking to someone about your goal is not going to automatically make it happen. However, if that is the first step you need to take to work towards it, be satisfied and celebrate the fact that you did what you set out to do. You set a goal with a purpose and did exactly what you set out to do. Now, the next phase is coming up with a new goal, with your newfound knowledge, that gets you one step closer to where you want to be or the person you wish to be.

SPECIFIC

Who and what?

MEASURABLE

By how much?

ACHIEVABLE

How?

RELEVANT

Why?

TIME-BOUND

When?



S - The most common mistake people make when choosing a goal is not making it specific. If you leave too much room for error then you won't get exactly where you wish to go. Making a serve over the net is a good start goal, but what happens when you finally get the ball over the net, but have no control of where it goes? That was a goal, but maybe not a SMART one. Think what do I want to accomplish, or why is this goal important? Be as specific as you can when first establishing your goal.

M - You want to be able to see your accomplishment and "measure" it, so you will be able to track your progress in real time. Pick a specific number or know exactly what the task is, so you will know the feeling of success when you've done exactly whatever it is.

A - Other words that can be substituted here include attainable or realistic. The whole point of setting goals is for you to imagine things that seem out of reach for you to achieve. You don't want something easy to do, or else you will not feel any satisfaction whatsoever when you accomplish it. On the other hand, choosing a real goal for yourself means knowing your limits, and accepting them. No one can fly on their own accord, so it would be a pointless and unachievable goal to say you wanted to learn how to fly.

R - What does your goal have to do with your desired success and/or task at hand? There is no point in having a goal that does not apply to what you are trying to accomplish in the long run. Make sure you really ponder what you are trying to maintain or work towards and tell yourself honestly if this new goal actually has something to do with what your end goal is.

T - Give yourself an end date to accomplish your goals by. It becomes so easy to give up or put off making the difficult decisions if you say you can "just do it whenever" or "do it some time in the near future". Those give way to slacking off and can cause problems down the road that continue to keep you from your desired outcomes. The more specific you are about the timing of your goal, the more motivated you are to complete it diligently. Know what you want and why you want to accomplish it. Once you have that in mind and have narrowed down your SMART goals, you can have a system of mini successes that lead you to doing the thing you set out to do.

"Focus, discipline, hard work, goal setting and, of course, the thrill of finally achieving your goals. These are all lessons in life." – Kristi Yamaguchi





5 Essential Nutrition Tips for Volleyball Players

1. Eat throughout the day.

Athletes need fuel all day. Clark says it's a good idea for players to eat every two to three hours. "Every time we eat, we're bringing nutrients and energy into the bloodstream," she says. "That influences our ability to think because our brain uses glucose, and it's also the primary fuel for any muscle group." A common problem for student/athletes is going too long between meals or snacks, Clark says. By eating more frequently, you give your body the sustenance it needs to perform well.

2. Eat immediately after waking up in the morning.

Each day, you are creating a foundation for building your energy stores back up to where they were the day before, Clark says. So don't skip breakfast. A lot of teenagers and college students do, but it's a bad habit, especially for athletes. "Skipping breakfast puts you in a serious deficit and you can't catch up," Clark says. "If athletes go to practice at 3 o'clock – even though they've had lunch – they are falsely operating on the idea that their energy levels are high. (If they skip breakfast), their energy levels are actually very low."

3. Timing is everything.

Clark says that athletes need to pay close attention to how their day is going to unfold. "You've got to look at your day as if it matters that calories are available to you," she says. "You have to eat before a workout. You *have* to. (When you eat before a workout), you'll get more out of the workout because you'll

have available energy. We want there to be energy in the bloodstream. If you're working out, you don't want to go into your bank account and dredge out the energy. You want to have high energy in the first part of your workout, and that means having good sugar or carbohydrates in your blood."

Clark recommends eating one hour before a workout, and she says that what you eat should be heavy on carbohydrates. Some options: fruit and half of a bagel, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, yogurt and fruit, dry cereal or trail mix.

Keep in mind, the first half of a student/athlete's day is usually filled with classes, so eating an hour before practice or a workout means planning ahead. "You need to know where you're going to be, and you need to carry the snack with you," Clark says.

4. Drink before you're thirsty. "This is something I've had to implore my athletes at Penn State to be mindful of," Clark says. "They know they should drink more, but it's not on their minds because they're not stimulated to drink if they're not thirsty."

Clark recommends drinking 32 ounces of water before noon every day and 32 ounces of water before practice. Penn State athletes carry a 32-ounce water bottle with them to class so they're never without access to water.

5. Eat a balance of carbs and proteins after your workout

Muscle-cell repair occurs at

the fastest rate within the first two hours after a workout, Clark says. She advises her athletes to eat as soon after exercise as possible to facilitate maximum muscle-cell repair.

"We want players to be eating a meal within an hour after exercise," Clark says. "If that can't happen, then a snack is appropriate until they can eat a meal. And the snack needs protein. This is where protein is most important for athletes. Fifty percent of what they eat should be protein, and 50 percent of what they eat should be carbohydrate."

At Penn State, we give the players protein-carb shakes. But (the snack) could be anything from nuts to trail mix, a sandwich, a protein bar. It could be a glass of chocolate milk – things that are easy to prepare in advance and don't require refrigeration."

Clark says that it's best if players start the recovery process while they're still in uniform. Ideally, they will be eating just a few minutes after they walk off the court.

"So many athletes don't understand that their muscle cells have undergone some microscopic damage during an intense practice," Clark says. "There are hormones, one of which is cortisol, that are elevated with intense exercise. The minute you bring protein into the diet, it suppresses that cortisol production, so it really helps prevent soreness and muscle-cell damage. That's part of the recovery process."

A big part of getting players to perform their best is making sure they're eating the right things at the right time.

Experts will tell you that eating and drinking is as much a part of playing good volleyball as fitness training and practicing skills. Not surprisingly, Penn State, which has won several NCAA volleyball championships, pays close attention to nutrition.

We thought it would be a good idea to pass along some information on how players can improve their play by improving their diet. So, we went right to the top and got five tips from Dr. Kristine Clark, who is Penn State's director of sports nutrition.

**Reprinted from
StudentSports.com by
Don Patterson**



Quinoa



Berries



Salmon



Beans and Legumes



Pasta



Bananas



Cruciferous Veggies



Nuts and Nut Butter



Chocolate Milk

Sure, carbo-loading's important—but for top-notch performance, it's just part of the story. Supplement your training with these healthy eats that will help you build strength, sustain energy, and recover faster.

Eating for athletic performance shouldn't just take place after the gym or right before a big event. It's something you should be conscious of at every meal and every snack, say sports nutritionists Barbara Lewin and Jill Pluhar, and your strategy should involve more whole foods and natural nutrition than the factory-manufactured kind. Here, 9 of their favorite eats for athletes, and tips on how to make the most of their nutritional benefits.

Reprinted from Outside Online
by Amanda MacMillan

Nine Best Foods for Athletes

Quinoa – Considered a “super” whole grain, having twice as much protein as other grains, and it's one of the only foods to contain all nine essential amino acids our bodies need to build lean muscle and recover from tough workouts.

Berries – Helps protect against oxidative stress and free radicals that form in the body during strenuous physical activity.

Salmon – Good source of lean protein and omega-3 fatty acids, which help reduce inflammation that can hamper athletic performance and contribute to chronic conditions like heart disease.

Beans and Legumes – For vegetarian athletes (or those who just want to go meatless once and a while), plant-based sources of protein are a must. Unlike animal protein, beans have no saturated fat and are also a good source of fiber, which can help keep you feeling fuller for longer.

Pasta – Carbohydrates are still the single most important component of an athlete's diet. Whole-grain varieties are best. They have more fiber and, usually, less added sugar than their refined white counterparts. The night before a big competition, though, switch to the simple stuff—plain pasta with red sauce, for example.

Bananas – Great source of easy-to-digest sugar and natural electrolytes. A favorite post-event recovery food, containing potassium to regulate fluids and prevent muscle cramps and spasms. You sweat out potassium during physical activity, so it's important to replenish as soon as possible afterward.

Cruciferous Veggies – Dark, leafy greens and members of the cruciferous family (like broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts and kale) have higher concentrations of antioxidants, fiber, and other important nutrients.

Nuts and Nut Butter – A natural combination of protein and healthy fats, nuts (and nut products) are a staple in many athletes' diets. Easy to digest and can help balance your blood sugar when paired with carbs.

Chocolate Milk – Simple carbs with a little bit of protein for recovery could be found in some store-bought drinks like low-fat chocolate milk. Plus, the caffeine in chocolate dilates and relaxes blood vessels, helping oxygen-rich blood reach your muscles more quickly and easily. Another favorite recovery drink is tart cherry juice to help prevent inflammation and reduce muscle soreness.

Nine Foods to Avoid

Diet Soda – Increases your risk for health problems and weight gain; they trick the body into thinking it's consuming real food, and because they're over a hundred times sweeter than the real thing, your body starts producing insulin (the fat storage hormone).

Canned Soup – It's more convenient, but their long shelf life should tip you off. Some soups are so processed and high in sodium that it trumps over the health benefits.

Rice Cakes – This staple diet snack is practically empty—nutritionally speaking. They do boast a low-calorie count, but athletes need calories to keep their energy levels up. Not to mention these crunchy little snacks will send your blood sugar soaring.

Sugary Cereal – Artificial sugar is a definite no but eating too much of the real thing is just as bad. Too much sugar also causes a spike in insulin, priming your body to store more fat.

White Bread – White pastas, rice, and breads are OK, (but not ideal) because they are stripped of their nutrients and fiber, what is left is a highly processed food product, and when consumed, raises insulin levels and

contributes to dips in energy and weight gain. Stick to whole-grain products.

Microwave Popcorn – Saturated with unhealthy fats, unearthly levels of sodium, and in some cases, laced with chemicals, popcorn does not fuel an athlete's body for a strenuous training session, nor does it encourage recovery after a long workout. There is a flip side, however. If you air pop the corn or pop it on the stove with a small amount of coconut oil, it turns into somewhat of a superfood, boasting high levels of antioxidants and a hearty dose of satiating fiber.

Granola – Might seem healthy, with fibrous oats as the base, but it's not exactly all it's cracked up to be. Most versions of the cereal come stacked with high amounts of sugar, unnecessary fat, and an excess amount of calories.

Alcohol – Slows muscle recovery, impairs motor skills, and decreases strength and sprint performance. Duh!

A meal without protein – Protein is important for repairing and strengthening muscle tissue and maintains adequacy, balance, and variety, while also helping lower blood sugar levels.

Top performing athletes know that nutrition is king when it comes to gaining an edge over their competitors. However, no matter what your goal is, the gateway to success lies on your plate. An athlete's diet is more than just calories in and calories out—it's fuel. The right foods increase your energy, promote muscle growth, and aid in muscle repair. The wrong ones set you back. When it comes to chowing down, there are certain eats a serious athlete just won't touch. Top athletes wouldn't dare devour these diet disasters—and neither should you.

Reprinted from Men's Fitness by Tiffany Gagnon



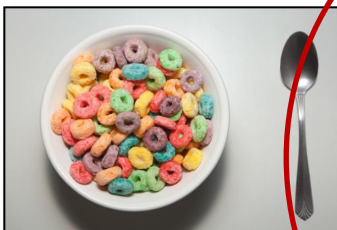
Diet Soda



Canned Soup



Rice Cakes



Sugary Cereal



White Bread



Microwave Popcorn



Granola



Alcohol



A meal without Protein

College Recruiting



How to Tell If a College Coach is Recruiting You

By Matt Sonnichsen

It can be tricky for a volleyball athlete to understand if and when he/she is being recruited by a college coach. Do recruiting questionnaires count? How about camp invites? A phone call? Not every coach is going to show interest the same way, and interest will mean something different for every program. Here's what you should look out for.

Haven't heard anything from the coach or school? The coach isn't interested yet.

Even if the [NCAA volleyball contact rules](#) mandate that coaches cannot start communicating with you yet, athletes can still receive recruiting questionnaires, camp invites, NCAA materials and non-athletic publications. If you haven't received any of these, you will have to get proactive and reach out to the coach, while following up with schools that are showing interest.

Received questionnaires in the mail? You may be on the coach's radar.

Coaches will send questionnaires out to a large number of freshmen and sophomores to gauge their interest in the program. Make sure you respond to the questionnaires as soon as possible so they know you are interested. You should also send the coach a follow-up email with your key information and highlight or skills video so they can make their

initial evaluation. If you're a junior or senior who's still only receiving questionnaires, you need to immediately reach out to the coaches at programs you're interested in to claim a spot on their list of recruits.

Camp invites filling up your inbox? The coach may want to evaluate you in person. Camp invites can be somewhat tricky. At camps, coaches usually have a set [list of athletes who they are interested in evaluating](#), and they will spend most of their time watching those athletes compete. If the coach mentions specifically that they know who you are or that they have watched your [highlight video](#), that's a good indication you are on their list of recruits to watch. If your invitation is generic, you may be in the larger pool of athletes who aren't really on their radar yet. Before you go to an event, reach out to the coach, sending them your highlight or skills video, key stats and a short introduction.

Fielding emails from the coaching staff? You're probably on their list of recruits.

Email is an easy way for coaches to communicate with athletes who are on their list of recruits. They

(Continued on the next page)



Initial Letters and Recruiting Questionnaires

Preliminary Evaluations

Visits, Calls and In Person Evaluations

Extend Verbal Offers

Sign Athletes

College Recruiting

may ask you for more information about your athletics, academics and character. Make sure you respond promptly, and you proofread your emails for any grammar or spelling errors. At this stage, you still need to show the coach that you're interested.

The coach has been calling, texting or DMing you? You're definitely a prospect.

The coach is likely very interested if you're receiving calls, texts or direct messages through social media. If the coach has given you their personal contact information, you can feel confident that you are relatively high up on their list of recruits. However, just because you're on their list of recruits, doesn't mean that you've secured your spot on the team yet. You need to keep putting in the work to get an offer.

Invited on an official or unofficial visit? You're an important recruit.

Visiting a school is an important step in your [recruiting process](#), especially if the coach personally invited you.

Official visits, or campus visits in which any part is paid for by the school, indicate the strongest interest from college coaches. They are using their budget to show off their school and create an impressive experience for you as a recruit. However, being personally invited for an unofficial visit also indicates clear interest from the coach. Not all coaches and

programs have a huge budget, and some simply don't have the ability to conduct official visits. Make the most of this trip by being polite and attentive, answering the coach's questions appropriately and preparing your own questions. Campus visits are a popular time for coaches to extend an offer to athletes, so make sure you're prepared if that conversation comes up.

Received an offer? Congratulations, you're a top recruit.

If a coach extends an offer to you, remember that you can ask what their deadline is for your response so you have time to think about it and determine any questions you have. Since verbal offers are not legally binding, keep in touch with the coach up until Signing Day to ensure that you will sure be a part of the team.

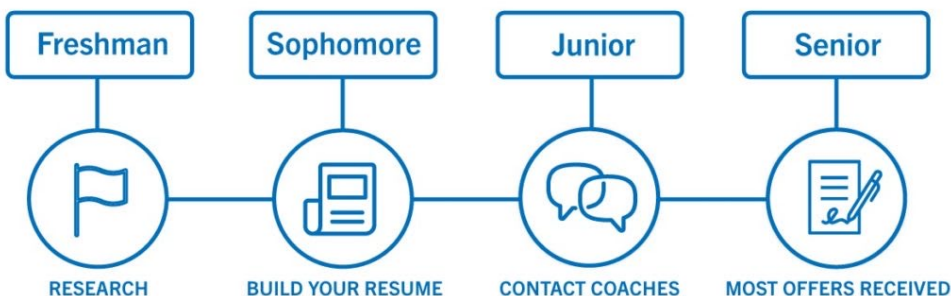
For related reading on the volleyball recruiting process click [HERE](#). For more education on the volleyball recruiting process click [HERE](#).

To give your club athletes the tools to compete at the collegiate level, [click HERE to learn more](#).



About the Author

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





Xcel Alumni on the Move



HANNAH HETRICK:

Congratulations to 18 Blue Hannah Hetrick for her commitment to join the reigning 3C2A state champions San Diego Mesa College Olympians in the Fall!



ASHA JOHNSON:

She's smart, she's athletic, she's Xceleration! The Head-Royce and Xcel alum is majoring in Computer Science/Neurocognitive Science (B.S.)/Management Science and Engineering (M.S.) at Stanford University after spending a few years at Howard University. [CLICK](#) to read her bio at Stanford Beach.



MARINA MILLER:

Congratulations to 18 Blue Marina Miller who will head east to play for the Owls of Keene State College in New Hampshire in the Fall!





**XCEL ACADEMY
TRAINING CAMPS:
NOW IN SESSION
THROUGH MAY 2024**

Back by popular demand, we have re-opened Xcel Academy's Training Camps for all GIRLS and BOYS, ages 8-14. Training camps are held on Mondays and Wednesdays each week from 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm, starting now through May 29, 2024. [Read more.](#)

Registration for Indoor Summer Camps is also open! [Read more.](#)

For all camps, no refunds will be issued for player absences or cancellations, but we will gladly offer credits to future indoor or beach camps.



UPCOMING/RISING 5th-8th GRADERS

All weeks are Monday/Tuesday/Thursday (17 sessions), from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

- Week 1 I58: June 24, 25 & 27, 2024
- Week 2 I58: July 1 & 2, 2024
- Week 3 I58 July 8, 9 & 11, 2024
- Week 4 I58: July 15, 16 & 18, 2024
- Week 5 I58: July 22, 23 & 25, 2024
- Week 6 I58: July 29, 30 & Aug 1, 2024

Costs:

- \$55/drop-in
- \$140/week; \$95 for Week 2, July 4th week
- \$760 discounted for all 6 weeks

Remit online payment [HERE](#) and register [HERE](#).

UPCOMING HIGH SCHOOL/RISING 9th GRADERS+

All weeks are Monday/Tuesday/Thursday (11 sessions), from 7:45 PM - 9:45 PM

- Week 1 HS: July 1 & 2, 2024 (No camp on July 4)
- Week 2 HS: July 8, 9 & 11, 2024
- Week 3 HS: July 15, 16 & 18, 2024
- Week 4 HS: July 22, 23 & 25, 2024

Costs:

- \$70/drop-in
- \$185/week; \$125 for Week 1, July 4th week
- \$680 discounted for all 4 weeks

Remit online payment [HERE](#) and register [HERE](#).



Important: Please Read the Xceleration VBC Handbook

As previously announced to all players, parents, and coaches, please be reminded to review the the Club Handbook for future reference use. Please click [**XCELERATION VOLLEYBALL CLUB HANDBOOK**](#) to read about each of the topics shown below.

- Club Mission Statement
- How do we support and achieve our mission?
- Why play junior volleyball?
- Xceleration Volleyball Club training program
- What can you expect from playing at Xceleration Volleyball Club ?
 - Quality instruction
 - “Transfer” and “Competition”
 - Extended training schedule
 - Increased discipline
 - Education
 - College development
 - Weekend lessons
 - Fun
- Our expectations for Xceleration players
 - Commitment
 - Regular attendance
 - Respect for the rules of the club
 - Cooperation
 - Image presentation
 - Maintaining good grades
- Xceleration volleyball club code of conduct
 - Substance policy
 - Conduct during competition
 - Social media policy
 - Rules and regulations
- Club injury policy
- Grievance procedures
- Multi-sport athletes
- Playing time
- Practice attendance
- What we expect from parents
- Team parent liaisons and responsibilities
- Team travel
- Chaperones (if needed) and responsibilities



[**Photo Galleries**](#)

If you would like to share your pictures during the season, please post them on our Facebook group page, and they may work their way into future issues of XCELLent News.



Instagram

[**Instagram: XcelerationVBC**](#)

Xceleration has an Instagram presence where you can view our posts throughout the season.



[**Facebook Group Page**](#)

Xceleration has a group page! Join our Facebook fan page and participate in the discussion forum where you'll hear about our athletes and various ongoing events. Search for “Xceleration Volleyball Club” and ask to join. Or scan the QR code with your mobile device.

