

2025 RVA Beach Information Sheet

Overview: We want to provide a program that works for all types of junior beach volleyball players and families—serious beach players who want to compete on a Regional or National level; recreational beach players who just want to get better on the sand; indoor players who want to improve on all their skills; or high school players who are really too busy to go to practice very often but want an opportunity to get play some beach matches.

Practices: We will be having 15 practices from Monday, May 5, to Sunday, June 29. We have learned from past experience that interest in beach really wanes after the Fourth of July, when kids start focusing more on vacations, indoor tryouts, indoor Nationals, and school volleyball. Also, it gets really hot! So, we’re trying to take advantage of the not-as-busy May and June, and we want to prepare the kids for the National Qualifying Tournaments at the end of July, if they are interested in pursuing that. See attached schedule for practice and league times.

Cost: To allow for maximum flexibility for families, we are offering several practice packages, which will allow us to pay for coaching and court time as needed.

1. 13-practice package: $360. This package is highly recommended for our younger players, as it will provide a maximum level of coaching. Also for high school players who are very serious about beach volleyball!
2. 8-practice package: $260. Recommended for players who want a lot of good practices before high school indoor season workouts start, or for those who can only practice once a week.
3. 4-practice package: $160. Recommended for those who want a good refresher on beach and some touches before starting tournament/league season.

It would be helpful if you can let Ryan Murphy know approximately which practices you plan to attend. You won’t necessarily be held to that, but we want to make sure we have the right number of coaches at our practices! You can always add more practices on an a la carte basis if necessary.

Location: All practices (and league matches, unless otherwise notified) will be held at The Sands, 6214 Grand Ave., Des Moines.

Partners: You are welcome to sign up with a partner, and also OK to come on your own! Most drills in practices will not be partner-dependent, but we will do a lot of scrimmaging and game-like drills, and players can play with partners at least part of the time!

Coaches: All of our coaches have extensive experience coaching (and playing) beach volleyball, and share the same philosophy of how we want to teach the game. The two lead coaches will be Ryan Murphy (program director) and Katie Walker (coaching director). Katie is a former college Division I head coach for both indoor volleyball and beach volleyball, so we are thrilled to have her on board. Other coaches will be John Timmerman and Amie Berndt, both of whom are former collegiate indoor players and the current coaches of our RVA 15U Naples team, and Haylee Kent, a recent Drake middle hitter and long-time beach volleyball player from the West Coast.

Coaching Philosophy: Here are some principles that will guide our program.

1. We love the game of beach volleyball, as an entirely separate sport from indoor volleyball! Although they share similarities, we want to give the players a thorough understanding of beach volleyball as its own entity.
2. Coaching is very limited, by rule, during beach matches, so we want to teach players how to strategize, make adjustments, and communicate well during the match. We want them to learn to think about the game on a deeper level, so they can recognize opponents’ weaknesses or open spots on the court.
3. We just do not have the time in the summer to teach the game of volleyball. It is highly recommended that players have some experience in the indoor game, so will already know the basic fundamentals of hitting, serving, and passing.
4. We will, however, build on those fundamentals and apply them to skills that are relevant to beach:
   1. Serving—hitting spots, hitting seams and lines, targeting certain opponents, using the wind.
   2. Hitting: variety of shots (roll shots, pokies, cut shots, line shots, hard swings), targeting zones or opponents.
   3. Blocking: if applicable. Blocking line or cross, how to play defense behind a block, when to stay down and retreat to play defense instead.
   4. Setting: Bump setting is a lot more common beach, because hand sets have to be extremely “clean”. We’ll work on both. Getting to the net early. We don’t have a designated setter—whoever is not passing is setting!
   5. Defense: Serve receive. Serve receive. Covering hitters, reading hitters, covering zones. More serve receive. Passing technique.
   6. Scrambling: sometimes the first contact isn’t good. How do we regain the offensive, or at least get back to neutral?
   7. Strategizing mid-match, as mentioned previously.

**Power League!**  We are so excited to offer a league that will give a lot of playing opportunities for our players, as well as to players from other clubs (or no club). We have one other club already partnering with us. The plan is to have the league four times over the summer, either on Sunday afternoon or Friday evening. Some details:

1. There will be no pre-determined schedule, so no having to reschedule matches or trying to find an available opponent.
2. Just show up, pay $32 at the door, and play 3-4 matches over about 2.5 hours. Schedule determined based on who shows up, and we will ask the kids to play with a couple different partners throughout the night (but we will give preference if they have a requested partner.)
3. Spectators welcome and encouraged!
4. We will be playing by tournament rules (to prepare kids for playing in tournaments), so coaching will be very limited. We can, however, coach them in between matches.
5. Spectators during tournaments are very restricted in their comments to players, but we will try to be a little more lenient (but not much—we are trying to create a tournament-like experience!)
6. Prizes awarded at the end of each session.

Tournaments: There are several tournament options within 3 hours of Des Moines, at many different levels of intensity! Your participation in these is completely up to you—we will provide information about these tournaments, but you will have to sign up and find partners on your own. We coaches will be quite willing to go to some of these tournaments (especially the local ones), but will probably charge a small extra fee to cover our time since that is not part of the club dues. As previously mentioned, however, the amount of allowable coaching at tournaments is severely restricted, but we are happy to help out if the kids would feel more comfortable with us there and if we’re available.

We hope you all find that the beach vibe is completely different than indoor.  It’s supposed to be laid-back, friendly competition, where the kids all hang out together afterwards.  A ton of adults in the Des Moines area play, from advanced (Open) levels down to C-league recreation levels, and it truly is a lifetime sport.  The coaching as well is laidback.  We don’t control your playing time, the kids don’t have to try to impress us—it truly is about helping them become better volleyball players and to have fun, and for the serious ones, helping them to become great *beach* volleyball players!

**Schedule** (subject to change): (court set-up and warmups 15 minutes prior to start time)

Mon. May 5: Practice 4:00 – 5:50 (court set-up and warmups at 3:45)

Wed. May 7: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Mon. May 12: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Thurs. May 15: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Sun. May 18: Practice 1:25 – 2:25

Sun. May 18: LEAGUE 2:30 – 5:00

Wed. May 21: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Tue. May 27: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Fri. May 30: LEAGUE 6:20 – 8:50

Mon. June 2: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Thurs. June 5: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Sun. June 8: Practice 1:25 – 2:25

Sun. June 8: LEAGUE 2:30 – 5:00

Wed. June 11: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Sat. June 14: Midwest Open Beach National Qualifier

Mon. June 16: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Thurs. June 19: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Mon. June 23: Practice 4:00 – 5:50

Wed. June 25: Nothing scheduled, but possible make-up practice

Thurs. June 26: Nothing scheduled, but possible make-up practice

Sun. June 29: Practice 1:25 – 2:25

Sun. June 29: LEAGUE 2:30 – 5:00

Sun. July 6: Iowa Open Beach Regional Qualifier

July 16-21: USA Beach Volleyball National Championships, Virginia Beach

Sat. July 26: Hawkeye Open