

Open Gyms – BEFORE Tryouts

Over the past few years several clubs have held “Open Gyms” in the weeks before the official starting date of tryouts. Questions have been raised as to the moral and ethical legitimacy of these open gyms. Some of the questions have been whether this is just a pre-tryout or do these sessions actually benefit the players. My answer to these questions is ‘Yes’.

An open gym definitely gives clubs an advance opportunity to look at players. Some of these open gyms are by invitation only; coaches can get to see specific players in a more relaxed environment before the actual tryout. Some of the open gyms are for anyone who wants to show up and some are held by clubs just for their previous players to get a chance to touch a ball.

Some may ask if there is any harm in allowing open gyms, I guess that depends on your point of view. This is mine and that of the Gateway Region. I feel it is unfair for clubs to hold “pre-tryouts”. It gives coaches an unfair advantage of looking at players before the official tryouts. They now have two opportunities to see and evaluate the skills of the players. For those clubs who offer a gym for players to come and practice; it does allow players an opportunity to brush up on skills or an opportunity to touch the ball before the actual tryout.

How do you tell the difference? In fairness to everyone, I will have to allow each parent and player to determine this for themselves.

The parents of the players and the players attending Open Gyms need to understand that Open Gyms are not sanctioned by the Gateway Region and therefore are not covered under the insurance that USA Volleyball provides to the regions. However, clubs sponsoring Open Gyms may purchase their own insurance through an independent insurance carrier. It is important for the parents and players to be informed as to whether the open gym you are attending is covered by insurance. USA Volleyball will not participate in any claims filed for any injury or occurrence at an Open Gym.

Parents also need to be aware that it is against the rules of the Gateway Region for a club/team to ask or pressure a player to commit to any team before 7pm on the Monday following the official start of tryouts for that particular age group. Any violations should be reported immediately.

Any questions or concerns regarding tryouts or Gateway Junior Volleyball can be referred to Chris Clauss at cmwarner24@aol.com or 636-343-4029.

PLEASE NOTE: A player cannot participate in an “Open Gym” if they are currently participating in their school program. Participating in an “Open Gym” during their high school season will jeopardize their high school eligibility.