

Becky Hudson

From: Kathy DeBoer, AVCA
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To: office@azregionvolleyball.org
Subject: Our Game: COVID-19



Last week, AVCA High School Board Representative Nancy Dorsey told me her family was scheduled to go to Disney World during their spring break. The theme park had just been closed due to the COVID-19 emergency: "My seven-year-old doesn't agree, but this is a first-world crisis," she said to me. "We are safe, and we are healthy. Not being able to go to Disney World is disappointing, not a catastrophe."

I needed to hear her perspective. The men's season, the beach season, the girls' club season, and the boys' high school seasons had all been suspended or cancelled. I'm not equating the loss of a volleyball season with a trip to Disney World, but I am saying disappointment and catastrophe are not the same when the world is facing a pandemic.

Are these suspensions and cancellations an over-reaction? We will only know in hindsight. Are young, fit, healthy people i.e. those playing men's, beach, club, and high school volleyball at serious risk even if they get COVID-19? We don't know for sure, but they all have grandparents, know someone with cancer, diabetes or heart disease, or have a family member who works in healthcare.

As this health crisis unfolds, I'd rather be surrounded by volleyball coaches than anyone else. We practice adapting for a living, whether that's a mid-match injury, the loss of a top prospect, an unexpected transfer, a key staff departure, or administrative leadership change; all of these are not "if's" but "when's."

Beyond that, our competitiveness fuels our creativity – we'll find ways to stay connected to our teams and keep them motivated, we'll somehow continue engaging with prospects and evaluating their skills, we'll discover new methods to coach and keep improving our craft.

The main reason, though, is because ours is a sport of interconnectedness and interdependence. We can show our workplaces, our communities, our neighborhoods what this looks like: what it means to be family with those unrelated to us, why supporting weaker teammates makes us stronger, when to sacrifice for the good of the group, and how stress gives us the opportunity to be our best selves.

We practice and teach this every day, now it's GAME ON!

- Kathy DeBoer, AVCA Executive Director