

Adversity-Wisconsin VBC Practice Player Option

Adversity Wisconsin VBC – “Developing Athletes with Character”

Almost 15 years ago when I was coaching for another club (before **Adversity-Wisconsin VBC** was made official) we had quite a few players that tried out for 11 positions on various team rosters. After the try-out process was over, there were still players with excellent talent or great attitudes that came up empty handed and did not receive offers (there are a lot more than you think).

Over the years some clubs have added 2's, 3's, 4's and even 5's teams at particular age groups so those kids not receiving offers had a place to play. Other clubs form teams at times after try-outs are over due to the large numbers of kids that are still unsigned (giving them an “opportunity” to play).

In our inaugural season, the 15-2's team carried the club's 1st ever practice player. I was the coach of this team that placed 3rd in the region and qualified for the junior national championships in Reno.

Practice players are usually kids that have not received an offer to play anywhere else OR they are not happy with the coach or team as they relate to improvement, experience, skill development, etc.

As a club director, my 1st goal is to ensure that kids are playing (even if it's a 2's offer elsewhere for the simple fact that playing experience is really important in the game of volleyball). We have had some kids that do not feel their offers elsewhere will give them sufficient playing time, lack an experienced coach or feels the overall team strength will not push them to succeed. We also have some kids and families that because of the age group definitions fall into an older club age group than their peer group at school (8th graders that have to play 15's club). It is for these reasons that we will offer the practice player position again this year (not to mention, we have already had interested parents and players that fall into one of these situations amongst our various age group teams).

Below is basically a list that defines our practice players:

- Practice players are limited to 1-2 per team (filled on a 1st come 1st serve basis)
- Practice players attend and actively participate in as many practices as possible
- Practice players are invited to team activities that are above & beyond the normal practices
- Practice players are encouraged to attend scrimmages (playing time based on team attendance)
- Practice players allow 12 kids to be on the court during practice (which promotes the coach coaching)
- Practice players cannot play in tournaments (they can be invited to observe & support others)
- Practice players do not take any playing time away from “rostered” players

Put yourself in these situations: You try out and have no offers at the end of the try-out period, you try-out and get an offer on a 2's team with a coach you think won't make you better, you get an offer on an age group older than your peer group at school due to the age definitions set by the region (8th grader that has to play 15's club), etc. If you put yourself in their shoes, I am sure you would want an OPPORTUNITY to practice your skills in preparation for high school, the next level, etc.

At **Adversity-Wisconsin VBC** we recognize and help those that are in those situations. We should all be supportive and encouraging to those that need our help, assistance & support. If your coach decides to allow a practice player, please understand that they are trying to provide someone with an opportunity based on their personal situation & please welcome that person when at practice.