



ARAA Volleyball Handbook

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Program Philosophy

ARAA Volleyball is a program that provides volleyball opportunities for youth in the Anoka/Ramsey community area to participate in different levels of commitment and competition for 3rd graders through 12th graders. Through volleyball, our youth will be given the opportunity to learn teamwork, self-confidence, good sportsmanship, honesty and respect.

Umbrella Organization

ARAA Volleyball is part of the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association (hereinafter “ARAA”), a non-profit, volunteer based organization which provides athletic programs to children in and around the cities of Anoka and Ramsey. Each year our program continues to look for more opportunities for the youth in this area.

Handbook Changes

This Handbook may be changed at any regular meeting by a majority vote. The proposed change should be submitted in writing to the Secretary for addition to the agenda. The title page of the Handbook will give the most recent revision date. The proposed change shall be discussed, and appropriate action taken, a majority vote is required by eligible voting members present at the meeting.

Website

ARAA Volleyball maintains a website at www.arsports.org. The league uses this website to keep a calendar of games and practices and inform the public about upcoming events. Viewers can also find contact information for the Volleyball Board, register for volleyball, download forms, and view team information once loaded. The website is considered the main method of dissemination of information regarding the volleyball program.

Registration

Announcements about upcoming registrations are posted on www.arsports.org and social media outlets, flyers are sent to area schools and email blasts are sent to families who have previously registered their children for ARAA sports. Online registration and payment through Sportsengine is the only registration option available.

House Volleyball- Eligibility for a player is determined by the school they attend (or would attend if they are home schooled or attending a private school). Only players that attend school in the Anoka High School attendance area are eligible to play in the ARAA Volleyball House Program.

Junior Olympic Volleyball- Eligibility for a player is determined by the school they attend (or would attend if they are home schooled or attending a private school). Players that attend school in the Anoka High School attendance area as well as neighboring communities are eligible to play in the ARAA Junior Olympic Volleyball program. However, registrants outside of the ARAA boundaries or Anoka High School attendance areas are not eligible for ARAA's Grant-in-Aid program.

Registration Deadlines

- Registration opens in May and closes in August for House volleyball
- Registration opens in October and closes in December for Junior Olympic volleyball

Players who miss the registration deadline cannot be guaranteed a spot on any team. If teams are in need of additional players, late registrants will be considered. Players will not be added to any roster after the conclusion of the second week of the season.

Sportsengine

ARAA Volleyball uses an electronic registration system called Sportsengine. You will create an account the first time you are registering for any ARAA sport. Sportsengine will store your information for easy registration of any ARAA sport in the future. Please remember to keep your user name and password information as we cannot retrieve your password for you. Using an email address that you check regularly will help us keep you informed of any volleyball related information in a timely manner through email blasts.

Financial Aid

Grant-in-Aid funds are donated by our community and are used to assist families in paying a portion of the registration fees for sports. Applications for Grant-in-Aid can be found at www.arsports.org under the registration page. Applications are reviewed by the ARAA Grant-in-Aid Committee. Recipients may receive up to half of the registration fee waived if approved. Recipients of grant money will be asked to provide volunteer hours in lieu of registration fees. Registrants outside of the ARAA boundaries or Anoka High School attendance areas are not eligible for ARAA's Grant-in-Aid program.

Refunds

If a player must withdraw from the program prior to the start of the season a partial refund may be granted. If the uniform has already been ordered, the uniform will be delivered to the player and the cost will be deducted from the portion of fees being returned. If the uniform has not been ordered, or can be used by another player, the cost will not be deducted and the registration fee will be reimbursed less any administrative costs. Refunds for registration after the season starts are considered on a case-by-case basis. Refunds may be pro-rated or denied depending on time spent in the program. Please contact the Treasurer for more information.

House Volleyball Season Requirements

Our house league is designed for children in grades 3rd through 12th. The ARAA house volleyball program's goal is to provide an opportunity for players to learn the fundamentals of playing volleyball, while increasing their self-esteem, in a positive and non-competitive environment. The reason this developmental volleyball program focuses on skill development, as opposed to winning games, is that this encourages girls to use the skills they are learning in practice, such as serving overhand, hitting a ball three times per side, and to attempt to make plays, rather than just getting the ball over the net in order to score. The ARAA volleyball program's coaches will teach fundamental skills in a structured, fun and positive environment. Our goal is to prepare each player for competitive or recreational volleyball while promoting teamwork, self-confidence, good sportsmanship, honesty and respect.

Everyone who registers to play by the registration deadline will be placed on a team. If the registration deadline is missed, players will only be placed on a team if spots are available.

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arsports.org/volleyball

Fees

The Anoka Ramsey Volleyball program is a non-profit organization. All registration fees that are paid are used to cover gym fees for practices and games, league shirts, equipment, insurance, and other miscellaneous expenses. A player will not be eligible to practice or play any games until fees have been paid or arrangements have been made with the Commissioner and Treasurer for payment.

Uniforms

Registration fees include a league shirt. Only uniforms provided and/or approved by ARAA Volleyball will be allowed during games.

Required Equipment

Equipment/Uniform items needed for play and are not provided through registration fees and are an additional expense;

- Athletic shoes or volleyball shoes
- Knee pads
- Spandex shorts/athletic shorts/pants

Coach Selection

All Volunteer Head and Assistant Coaches must have a background check completed through ARAA's Trusted Coaches program every year based on ARAA requirements. House coaches are selected and assigned based on parents having children on the team. If there are not enough coaches for teams at a particular grade level, team formation will not be completed until additional coaches can be found through emails to parents. If there are more coaches than spots available, coaches with more experience will be given the position. ARAA Volleyball will have a coaching clinic along with equipment hand-out prior to season start.

House Teams

House Teams are formed by grade level. Depending on registration numbers, there may be times where grade levels may need to be combined.

House Team Formation and Assignments

There are no try-outs for our House Volleyball League. ARAA Volleyball will do our best to accommodate player and/or coaching requests. Though 9 players per team is ideal, team size will be determined by registration numbers and amount of coaches. Once a player is placed on a team the roster will be final and changes will not be made.

House Playing Time

All players in this league can expect equal playing time.

Playing Up

If there are enough registrants to support teams at a specific age level, playing up is not an option.

Fundraising Requirements

There are currently no fundraising requirements for ARAA House Volleyball.

Volunteer Requirements

As of the 2024 House Volleyball season, we have a set dibs requirement of 2 hours per athlete. This number will increase to 4 hours per athlete for the 2025 season. Currently, there are no dibs requirements for JO.

Junior Olympic Volleyball Season Requirements

The Junior Olympic Volleyball program is for players in 4th through 12th grade and requires a larger time commitment from both players and their parents. Focus is on player development, having fun and putting the most competitive team on the court. Registration and participation in try-outs are MANDATORY for a position on a team. Special circumstances may apply but must be discussed before try-outs with the Junior Olympic Volleyball Director. Players that miss try-outs are not guaranteed a spot on a team and participation must be approved by the ARAA Volleyball Board. Although ARAA Volleyball's goal is to find a team for every player that registered, cuts may occur.

Our program is open to volleyball players in the Anoka High School attendance area. Players outside of this attendance area are welcome to try-out, but priority will be given to athletes living in the Anoka attendance area.

Fees

The Anoka Ramsey Volleyball program is a non-profit organization. All registration fees that are paid are used to cover coaching, gym fees for practices, tournaments, player uniforms, equipment, insurance, and other miscellaneous expenses. A player will not be eligible to practice or play any games until fees have been paid or arrangements have been made with the Commissioner and Treasurer for payment.

Uniforms

Registration fees include a player apparel package; jersey(s), spandex shorts, practice shirt and sweatshirt. Only uniforms provided and/or approved by ARAA Volleyball will be allowed during games and/or tournaments.

Required Equipment

Equipment/uniform items needed for play and are not provided through registration fees and are an additional expense;

- Athletic shoes or volleyball shoes
- Volleyball knee pads
- Athletic shorts/pants- if a player chooses not to wear the provided spandex shorts. Must be the same color as the official uniform bottoms.

Membership

ARAA Junior Olympic Volleyball is part of the Junior Volleyball Association (JVA) under USA Volleyball. All players must be registered with and complete officiating courses through JVA and USA Volleyball.

Coach Selection

All Compensated Head and Assistant Coaches must complete the ARAA Junior Olympic Volleyball Coaching Application, a background check and coaching courses completed through JVA and USA Volleyball. Coaches will be chosen based on the information provided in their application as well as interviews completed by our Junior Olympic Volleyball Director. If there are more coaches than spots available, coaches with more experience will be given the position. ARAA Volleyball has a mandatory meeting with equipment hand out prior to season start.

Junior Olympic Teams

Junior Olympic Volleyball teams are formed by age level, not grade level, and are based on the July 1st age definition rule.

Junior Olympic Team Formation and Assignments

Players are placed on a team based on their individual try-out results. Though 9 players per team is ideal, team size will be determined by registration numbers and amount of coaches. Once a player is placed on a team the roster will be final and changes will not be made.

Junior Olympic Playing Time

Equal playing time is not guaranteed. Playing time may be adjusted depending on the attendance of and participation in, scheduled games and practices. ARAA Volleyball realizes that all team participants share the same expenses as part of the program. The ability to pay does not guarantee the ability to play.

1. Coaches shall have the flexibility on playing time based on, but not limited to, the following considerations: ability, situation, attitude, sportsmanship, ability to apply coach's instruction, practice attendance, etc.
2. Parents or guardians that feel that their player is not receiving adequate playing time should first speak with the coach, away from the tournament on another day, as opposed to immediately addressing the issue with the coach during the heat of emotions. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the parent should then contact the Junior Olympic Volleyball Director for mediation.

Tournaments

Weekend tournaments will be chosen by the coach and the amount and type of tournaments will vary between age groups.

Away Tournaments

Coaches may select out of town tournaments that are further away. These tournaments may require an overnight hotel stay. Hotel accommodations and traveling expenses are not covered by registration fees and are an additional expense.

Playing Up

A player may play up depending on skill, maturity and spots available.

Fundraising Requirements

There are currently no fundraising requirements for ARAA Junior Olympic Volleyball.

Volunteer Requirements

There are currently no volunteer requirements for ARAA Junior Olympic Volleyball unless Grant-in-Aid is utilized.

Grievances

A grievance is a dispute or complaint involving a coach, player or an Anoka Ramsey Volleyball Board member. Grievances must be submitted in writing to the Volleyball Commissioner within five (5) days of incident, stating the time, place, and specifics of the incident. This can be submitted through an email or letter to the Commissioner. The Commissioner and another board member will meet with the parties to discuss the incident. Any punishments will be communicated verbally and a recap letter will be sent to the parties involved.

ARAA Code of Conduct

In an effort to insure a fun yet competitive atmosphere for ARAA Youth Sports, we are asking all families to read and abide by the following guidelines: Participants term = coaches, players, parents, and guests

1. Good sportsmanship must be maintained before, during, and after games and practices by participants. Parents and guardians will be responsible for the actions of themselves, their guests, and their players.
2. Participants will refrain from castigating, denigrating, or providing any other non-constructive feedback to players, coaches, officials, and spectators. The offense may result in a warning and a code of conduct violation.
3. Participants will refrain from using profanity toward any other person in attendance. The offense may result in a code of conduct violation. For these purposes, "profanity" is defined as commonly known "swear" or "curse" words, and does not include words that would be considered profane due to religious connotations.
4. Any threats or violent physical contact by Participants against other Participants or officials will result in an immediate code of conduct violation. Such actions will also result in immediate suspension from all subsequent ARAA activities until such time as the Board of Directors can convene to review the incident. Such actions can also be deemed to be criminal and dealt with accordingly.

5. Participants will refrain from posting content on any social media that would harm ARAA or damage ARAA's reputation. This includes anything negative towards any Participants. Posting anything with profanity, antagonistic, or degrading comments is a code of conduct violation.

6. Participants who attempt to attend games during a suspension will be issued one warning to leave, after which their team will be considered to have forfeited the game. If a participant attends a practice or a game local law enforcement may be contacted to deal with the issue.

7. Officials and board members may rule a game in forfeit if, in their judgment, conditions are out of control.

8. Participants must follow the 24-hour rule before engaging about a grievance with one another. The 24-hour rule means no communication of any kind regarding the subject at hand between any of the participants involved. This allows time for all parties to cool off and have constructive conversation.

Any Participants of a player receiving sportsmanship-related violation (as defined above) and/or ejections during the season, will be required to abide by the consequences as laid out below. Parents shall ultimately be responsible for the conduct of any invited family members and/or guests of the player.

Consequences for Violating the ARAA Code of Conduct

1. Physical abuse violations will result in immediate and permanent dismissal from all ARAA events and programs.

2. A first violation, other than physical abuse, will be a written warning handed down by the commissioner of that sport or ARAA Board of Directors member.

3. A second violation, other than physical abuse, will be a suspension handed down by the commissioner of that sport or ARAA Board of Directors member. Violators will be suspended from all activities until a full the ARAA Board has reviewed the infraction. This 2nd violation will not have time limitations on the prior infraction. Infractions are cumulative and life long.

4. A 3rd violation will result in the immediate dismissal from all ARAA. programs for 12 months subject to review by the ARAA Board. This 3rd violation will not have time limitations on the prior infraction. Infractions are cumulative and life long. 5. A 4th violation will result in the dismissal of all players within the family in

violation being dismissed from all ARAA activities permanently subject to a review by the ARAA Board. This 4th violation will not have time limitations on the prior infraction. Infractions are cumulative and life long.

Any infraction/violation may be cause for immediate removal from the playing facility/area. Refusal to leave may result in law enforcement being contacted to have an individual removed from the facility/area.

* All infractions must be submitted, by that program's sports commissioner, to the ARAA Board of Directors within 96 hours of the incident. The ARAA Board of Directors will review the infraction and determine any and all consequences.

* Any fan, regardless whether they have signed the Code of Conduct Contract or not will fall under these Violation consequences.

Volleyball Board

Rules & Regulations of the Anoka Ramsey Volleyball Association

ARTICLE I - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Board shall be as follows:

- A. To provide guidance and equipment for youth, to allow them to gain a better understanding of, improve their skills in, and satisfy their desire to compete in the sport of volleyball.
- B. To promote sportsmanship and health, competitive attitudes in youth, regardless of sex, race, religion, athletic ability or financial status, and by so doing, to promote improved social welfare through the character development resulting from such efforts.

ARTICLE II - THE GENERAL PLAN

A Board of Directors, hereinafter called "the Board", shall manage the affairs and business of the volleyball program of ARAA. Members of the Board will be those holding the offices of:

- Commissioner
- Treasurer
- Communications & Equipment and Uniform CoordinatorHouse Volleyball Director
- Junior Olympic Volleyball Director
- Volunteering & Events Director

The formulation of business activity shall occur at meetings of the Board to be called on a monthly basis or more frequently as required by the Commissioner or Board, or as authorized by these Policies and Procedures.

Election of the board will be by vote of the membership at the April annual meeting (or as positions expire), all as detailed in these Policies and Procedures. Presentation of the "Annual Activity Report" shall occur at the April annual meeting. Newly elected directors and coordinators shall assume their position as outlined. Installation of the elected Board shall occur as outlined in Article V, Section 1. This will include the sign over of all books of office to the newly elected board members. The fiscal year of operations shall be from April 1 through March 31. Books shall close as of March 31. Prior to the start of each year, the Equipment Director, or their designated Coordinator(s), shall take an equipment inventory and provide written results of the same to the Treasurer.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

To assure a non-partisan board, all elected board members shall not run for or assume a position where there will be a conflict of interest. Should any conflicts arise, they will be presented to the board for further determination. Any individual that is 18 years of age or older and a resident of either the Cities of Anoka or Ramsey and/or has a family member participating in at least one of ARAA's sports activities, or with Board approval is eligible for membership.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Section 1. Board Meetings

The members of the Board shall hold a minimum of (10) ten monthly meetings annually. These meetings shall be of an "open" nature and any member of the volleyball community is entitled to attend. Special meetings of the Board may be requested by the Commissioner or any (3) members of the Board.

Section 2. Quorum

A simple majority of members of the Board must be present before a meeting can be called to order, or any official business of the board can be conducted.

Section 3. Purpose

The eleven (11) monthly meetings of the Board shall be for the purpose of:

- A. To provide communication, coordination, and an exchange of ideas between coaches, committees, directors and any members present.
- B. To permit any member to advise the Board on any organizational administrative or operational matter or on any matters of duties, responsibilities, or business that may be conducted by the Board as defined in these Policies and Procedures.
- C. To approve all official rules and regulations of the volleyball program that may be necessary.

- D. To approve all registration fees, official's fees, change in fees or expenditures that may be necessary. The Board will approve and/or reject budget items for volleyball.
- E. To conduct any other business as the Board deems necessary to promote the overall purpose of the board.

Section 4. Expenditures

All expenditures of monies in excess of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) must be approved, in advance, by a simple majority of Board Members present at any meeting, with the following exception:
The Commissioner has the authority to order and/or purchase equipment for the volleyball program to best facilitate the program within its approved seasonal budget.

Section 5. Annual Meeting

The April Annual Meeting will be designated as the Annual Membership Meeting. The primary purpose of this meeting shall be for the election of directors. Each Board position is responsible for providing a brief recap on any and all business conducted. Each Director should provide a brief recap of the season and the budget for that season as well as any proposed changes that are recommended.

Section 6. Notification

Notice of all meetings shall be published a minimum of 30 days in advance, on the Anoka/Ramsey Volleyball website.

Section 7. Order

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct and procedure of all meetings of the volleyball board.

Section 8. Voting

A simple majority of Board Members present at a general meeting shall carry the act.

ARTICLE V. BOARD MEMBERS

Section 1. Election and Term of Office

The Board shall be those as defined in Article II of the Policies and Procedures, each of whom shall be elected at the Annual Membership Meeting in April by ballot. The term of their office shall be for two (2) years commencing on the first day of May for all offices. There will be a 2 month overlap between exiting Officers and newly elected Officers to provide assistance, training and work with the incoming officer for a short period of time. The offices of Commissioner, Communications and Equipment and Uniform Coordinator

Communications Director shall be filled in even number years. The offices of Treasurer, House Director, and Junior Olympic Volleyball Director shall be filled in odd numbered years. Newly created Board positions shall

be filled for the two (2) years following their inception with the provision that an equal or nearly equal number of overall Board positions are available in any given even or odd year. This may necessitate a new position be filled for only one (1) year following its inception. Vacant offices, which become filled by vote of the Board, shall be for partial terms until the even or odd year as described above. When a board member wishes to fill another open position on the Board, the office that is vacated is treated as above. Board members shall make an effort to find or otherwise suggest a replacement when unable to fulfill a term of office.

Section 2. Compensation of Directors and Officers

Board Members will not receive any salary for services rendered to the Anoka/Ramsey Volleyball Association as a board member. However, allowances can be made to reduce the volleyball registration fee up to 100 percent dependent on the role of the board member for one child from each family of the Board. If a board member has more than one child, a second child may be discounted up to 50 percent dependent on the role of the board member. If a board member coaches for ARAA Volleyball, the remaining 50 percent of the registration fee will be waived, no other compensation will occur. The cost of such action will come from the General Fund as part of the budgetary process.

Roles of the Board of Directors

Commissioner

Volleyball Commissioner will attend ARAA Board of Directors meetings, supervise all business and affairs of the organization; preside at all meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors; sign all official documents of the organization; appoint committees as needed; serve as ex-official member of any committees; and co-approve all expenditures prior to funds being issued. The commissioner will also act as the liaison between ARAA Volleyball and Anoka High School's Volleyball program.

Treasurer

Treasurer will work with quickbooks, verify and organize ARAA Volleyball's expenditures to the ARAA Treasurer, shall have charge and custody of, and responsibility for, all funds of the Volleyball organization; receive and give receipts and/or invoices for money due and payable to the organization from any source. All monies in the name of the organization shall be deposited into the ARAA Volleyball bank account. The treasurer shall

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co-approve all expenditures prior to funds being issued; shall maintain all appropriate books and reports; and shall, upon completion of duties, deliver all receipts, books, and reports to the newly elected Treasurer. The out-going Treasurer will conduct, with the ARAA Executive Board Treasurer, a financial audit of the Volleyball account. This role is set at 100 percent registration discount for one child, and 50 percent discount for a second child.

Communications/Secretary

Communications will prepare the agenda for monthly meetings, take the minutes of full board meetings and maintain a list of attendees and provide a copy via email of the minutes to the Officers before the next board meeting. Meeting minutes should be sent to the Commissioner to be added to the Volleyball webpage. Communications will manage social media posts, email blasts and submit the monthly ARAA newsletter submission. This role has been combine with the treasurer role, the combination of these two roles allows this board member a discount of 100 percent for one child and 50 percent for a second child.

House Volleyball Director

The House Director will oversee all aspects of the House program and its participants. They will report directly to the Commissioner and the Commissioner will be available where needed.

The House Director is responsible for finding coaches, scheduling all gyms and locations and creating and managing the schedule. They communicate with all facilities we use for practices and events or gym time needed. The House Director will communicate and work with neighboring associations. The House Director will work with the Equipment/Uniform coordinator for equipment and apparel assistance and photo day. This role is designated 100 percent discount for one child, and 50 percent discount for a second child.

Junior Olympic Volleyball Director(s)

The Junior Olympic Volleyball Director(s) will oversee all aspects of the Junior Olympic program and its participants. They will report directly to the Commissioner and the Commissioner will be available where needed. The Junior Olympic Volleyball Director is responsible for finding coaches, registering and rostering coaches and players, signing up for tournaments, scheduling all gyms and locations and creating and managing the schedule. They communicate with all facilities we use for practices and events or gym time needed. The Junior Olympic Volleyball Director will be the liaison between NCR/USAV/AES/JVA/Tournament hosts and the teams. The Junior Olympic Volleyball Director will work with the Equipment/Uniform coordinator for

equipment and apparel assistance and photo day. This role is designated 100 percent discount for one child, and 50 percent discount for a second child.

Volunteering and Event Coordinator

The volunteering and event coordinator is responsible for creating and managing all volunteer needs, hours, sign ups and tasks necessary for the dibs (volunteering) program management. They are also responsible for assessing opportunities to advertise, engage with the community, research and implement fundraising requirements, as well as run and organize tournaments or playdates. They communicate with all families regarding dibs and fundraising opportunities, as well as with any facilities needed for events relating to their role. This role is designated at 100 percent discount for one child and 50 percent discount for a second child.

Equipment and Uniform Coordinator

The Equipment and Uniform coordinator shall ensure that the program has the necessary equipment to support the program. The Equipment and Uniform Coordinator shall be responsible for distributing and collecting equipment from coaches each year; maintaining an inventory of equipment and soliciting bids when necessary to replace equipment. They work with the House Director and Junior Olympic Volleyball Director for apparel and any trophies or medals or equipment needed as well as working with our vendor to request, schedule and be present at photo day. The Equipment and Uniform Coordinator is responsible for setting up team stores, uniform selection and fittings if necessary, placing orders, and distributing items. This board member is designated 100 percent discount on one child, and 50 percent discount on a second child.

Committees

The Commissioner may appoint committees as deemed necessary. Committee members do not need to be Officers of the Volleyball program. Each committee shall have a chairperson to report activities to the Board as required.

Voting Rights

Each member of the Board of Directors has one vote. All votes to elect or remove Officers shall be made by ballot. The Commissioner, as a member of the Board, has the same voting rights as Officers.

Resignation of a Board Member

To resign, an Officer shall submit their resignation in writing to Communications who shall present it to the Board for action. Vacancies will be filled by the verbal recommendation of one Officer, seconded by another Officer, and a majority vote of the Board. Resignation outside of term limits will result in forfeiture of any discounts their role may have warranted for registration.

Removal of a Board Member

An Officer may be removed from the Board of Directors and forfeit their position for failing to carry out expected duties, or conduct detrimental to ARAA and/or the ARAA Volleyball Program. To remove an Officer, a written complaint must be presented to the Board. The complaint will be reviewed and investigated by the Officers. If sufficient justification exists, a hearing before the full Board will be held. A vote of a majority of all Officers is required for dismissal of an Officer. Three consecutive absences from scheduled Board Meetings will result in an inquiry which could result in removal from the Board.

Meetings

The Volleyball Board meets once a month with no less than 10 meetings per year. Times may be adjusted to accommodate officers as needed. The time and date will be communicated via email to all members and posted on the ARAA Volleyball website for the public. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Board Members and is required to bring a meeting to order. Board members are expected to attend 75% of all scheduled board meetings, if more than 25% of board meetings are missed, this will be considered a voluntary resignation. All Board Meetings shall be open to the public.

