

# Valerie Martinez Mora

## Coaching & Playing Experience

I have 25 years of coaching experience that started in Jacksonville, FL, giving private lessons, and coaching at small schools in Jacksonville and Quincy, FL. In South Florida, I've coached at South Plantation High School, Killian High School, Gulliver Prep, North Miami High School, and now Miami Country Day since 2014. I also coached for Wildfire, Miami Select, and UPPS clubs until I opened NMB Volleyball in 2015 with Jose Padilla (Chema).

I played for Southside and Boomers Volleyball Clubs, received a full scholarship to play at the University of North Florida, where I was the starting setter all 4 years, receiving All-American and Conference MVP awards. I was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2013. I played professional volleyball in different towns in Puerto Rico and was part of the 1st pro-team in Florida called Wave. I continued playing for fun in beach and indoor tournaments until my knees and achilles tendon said, Please Stop!

## Why do you coach?

I loved to play all sports when I was a kid. My first love was basketball until I moved to the United States back in 1995, when my middle school PE teacher asked me to set a ball. She said I had good hands (I didn't know what that meant; I barely spoke English). I made the volleyball team, and started to like it more and more. I went to South Plantation High School, where Coach Bill Littel, rest in peace, taught me how to be a setter. I spent countless hours on 1,000's of repetitions until it became second nature. He was a huge mentor in my life taking a chance on me that changed my life. I received a full scholarship to UNF in Jacksonville.

When I started coaching during my time at UNF, I realized I enjoyed teaching and hoped to make a difference in kids' lives like Coach Littel did for me.

### **Fun facts about you**

I was born in Mexico City, raised in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

I have a 19-year-old son, Xavier, and a 12-year-old daughter, Alexandra.

I like to eat pizza with cocktail sauce.

When I was little I wanted to become a singer, a dancer, a mechanic, a boxer, and a carpenter

### **Coaching Philosophy or Style?**

I believe in discipline and respect. I show my kids that I care. I learn from them. It's important for me to build chemistry and culture. I'm very structured, technical and fun during practices. I always try to challenge my players. I want them to think for themselves and be competitive. I want them to become leaders and feel part of something that's bigger than them. I want them to feel safe.