

## 2024-2025 Volleyball Alberta Signing and Tryout Process (updated June 28, 2024)

### Primary Objectives

1. To align with our values of transparency, integrity, and fairness.
2. To create a process aligning with long-term development considerations with a clear distinction of the dates of the Volleyball Alberta indoor club season, prioritizing rest periods over June-August.
3. To utilize club governance best practices by aligning with Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Alberta membership year, policies, and processes, while also providing early season options for clubs to begin organizing their teams.
4. Ensure athlete-club agreements are entered into with more complete information, including costs, coaches, tournament schedules, and competition rules.

### Definitions

- **LOI-** Volleyball Alberta (VA) Letter of Intent (LOI) is the formal recruitment process utilized by VA clubs.
- **Signing-** The act of offering and signing a VA LOI to commit to a team for the current membership year.
- **Re-Signing-** The act of offering and signing a VA LOI to commit to a team for the current membership year with the club that the athlete was registered with the club in the previous membership year. Re-Signing must occur within the prescribed time windows for the applicable age groups.
- **Fall/Winter Tryout-** The prescribed time windows where clubs are permitted to host tryouts for the purpose of selecting athletes to teams and clubs. VA LOI's can only be offered during these tryout periods.
- **Open Gym-** Clubs may offer these sessions as an opportunity to see prospective athletes for future selection.

### Best Practices Recommendations

- To enable athletes to attend more than one tryout in a day (should they wish) we suggest clubs pick from the following tryout timeslots: 9-11 am, 12-2 pm, 3-5 pm, 7-9 pm (weekend); 4:30-6:30pm, 7:00-9:00pm (weekday).
  - **Clubs may consider working with other club(s) in the area to host a group tryout. The benefits of a group tryout:**
    - Collaboration and shared resources including facilities.
    - More coaches may be present, providing an appropriate coach to athlete ratio. This allows athletes to be appropriately evaluated.
    - Improve athlete performance as athletes attend fewer sessions during the tryout process.
  - **Training Volumes:** We encourage all families to read the [Long-Term Development Resources](#). There are developmentally appropriate training recommendations for the Train to Train and Learn to Compete stages that outline appropriate season lengths, training volumes, and offseason recovery.
    - Any Indoor Programming offered outside of the Fall and Winter Tryout periods should align with Long-Term Development principles, prioritize multi-sport opportunities, and provide appropriate rest.
    - The 2023-2024 Indoor Club Season ends May 31, 2024, and the 2024-2025 Indoor Club Season starts November 24, 2024. VA recommends clubs and athletes follow a Yearly Training Plan that allows for periods of rest from volume, intensity, and competitive pursuits.
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## Letter of Intent (LOI)

- The only form VA will recognize is the 2024-2025 VA LOI for signing to a club.
- The maximum number of LOI offers that can be distributed at any given time is equal to the number of athletes a team is committing to carry.
- It is recommended to deliver LOI's via email the day following the tryout to reduce time pressure on athletes and allow coaches time to reflect to make informed decisions.
- All LOI offers must be honoured for a minimum of 48 hours. Athletes can request an extension to any deadline, but that would be at the discretion of the club and must be documented.
- Financial commitments can be made upon signing with a non-refundable amount that is clearly defined on the LOI.
- Athletes register to their club as a Youth Competitive Player upon signing an LOI.
- Clubs and families are responsible for maintaining copies of all signed letters of intent.
- Athletes sign the LOI with their LOI club and not with a particular individual. They agree to remain bound to the terms except due to extenuating circumstances.
- Volleyball Alberta will post an updated LOI registry on our website for the Re-Signing Periods.
- VA LOI's can NOT be offered to club athletes from June 1, 2024 until the start of the Re-Signing and Tryout Periods as listed below.

**Note: Clubs are not obligated to run tryouts or re-sign athletes.**

## Re-Signing & Club Approval Process

**August 1-23:** Clubs Register in Sportlomo. Clubs must register by Aug 23 to Re-Sign athletes from the prior season and/or to participate in the Fall Tryout Period.

**September 3-5 (Updated June 28): Opportunity to Re-Sign 17U-18U aged athletes only** to your club from last season using a VA Letter of Intent (LOI) Form. Upon receipt of LOI's, athletes must register in the Club's portal as a Youth Competitive Player by Friday, September 6 at noon– to be posted on Club websites for Saturday, September 7.

**September 8:** Club Open House (Information Day). Facilitated in one large space separately in Calgary & Edmonton, and by request/need in other regions (Lethbridge/GP). VA to arrange and pay for the facility. Attendance at this event is optional, and a minimum number of clubs must register. Clubs may also choose to host their own open houses (this would not be arranged or paid by VA).

**September 8-11: Opportunity to Re-Sign 15U-16U aged athletes only** to your club from last season using a VA Letter of Intent (LOI) Form. Upon receipt of LOI's, athletes must register in the Club's portal as a Youth Competitive Player by Friday, September 13 at noon– to be posted on Club websites for Saturday, September 14.

**October 6-9: Opportunity to Re-Sign 13U-14U aged athletes** to your club from last season. Upon receipt of LOI's, athletes must register in the Club's portal as a Youth Competitive Player by Friday, October 11 at noon– to be posted on Club websites for Saturday, October 12.

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## Fall Tryout Process

Sundays are the recommended tryout day for the Fall Tryout Process due to potential conflicts with school volleyball seasons. The Group Tryout process is an option for clubs with limited access to facilities during this timeframe. **\*As of June 28, the 15U-18U Fall tryouts were shifted one week earlier. [Please refer to ASAA and VA's Joint Memo.](#)**

- Athletes must have the minimum membership requirement, Youth Development Player-Tryout role for the 2024-2025 season and complete the Volleyball Alberta membership consent package prior to tryouts.

**18U Tryouts** (all signings are to the club's age group and team): Tryouts may be held **starting on Sunday September 8 and ending September 15**. Athletes register to their club as a Youth Competitive Player by September 22. **\*Updated June 28**

**17U Tryouts** (all signings are to the club's age group and team): Tryouts may be held **starting on Sunday September 15 and ending September 22**. Athletes register to their club as a Youth Competitive Player by September 29. **\*Updated June 28**

**16U Tryouts** (all signings are to the club's age group and team): Tryouts may be held **starting on Sunday September 22 and ending September 29**. Athletes register to their club as a Youth Competitive Player by October 6. **\*Updated June 28**

**15U Tryouts** (all signings are to the club's age group and team): Tryouts may be held **starting on Sunday September 29 and ending October 6**. Athletes register to their club as a Youth Competitive Player by October 13. **\*Updated June 28**

**14U Tryouts** (all signings are to the club's age group and team): Tryouts may be held **starting on Sunday October 20 and ending October 27**. Athletes register to their club as a Youth Competitive Player by November 3.

**13U Tryouts** (all signings are to the club's age group and team): Tryouts may be held **starting on Sunday October 27 and ending November 3**. Athletes register to their club as a Youth Competitive Player by November 10.

**12U Tryouts** (all signings are to the club's age group and team): Tryouts may be held **starting on Sunday November 3 and ending November 10**. Athletes register to their club as a Youth Competitive Player by November 17.

## Winter Tryout Process

- Clubs are not obligated to offer Winter Tryouts. Teams may be fully selected by Re-Signing and Fall Tryout period.
  - Clubs must register and be approved prior to the Winter Tryout Process, in accordance with VA Guidelines.
  - Athletes must have the minimum membership requirement, Youth Development Player-Tryout role for the 2024-2025 season and complete the Volleyball Alberta membership consent package prior to tryouts.
  - 12U-18U Tryouts can all begin on Sunday, November 24, 2024.
  - All offers must be honoured for a minimum of 48 hours. Athletes can request an extension to any deadline, but that would be at the discretion of the club and must be documented. The maximum number of offers that can be distributed at any given time is equal to the number of athletes a team is committing to carry. Financial commitments can be made upon signing with a non-refundable amount that is clearly defined on the LOI.
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## Penalty for Breach

- Clubs are independent organizations, however when a club applies annually for membership with Volleyball Alberta, they accept all policies, processes, and procedures.
- The LOI is subject to Volleyball Alberta regulations and failure to abide by its terms by any parties (clubs, athletes and their guardians) could result in a review by Volleyball Alberta through the [Discipline and Complaints Process](#).

## FAQ- Athletes & Families

### **1. Why did Volleyball Alberta change the re-signing dates to September?**

- a. Rest: rest is critical to recovery, and often can provide us with more perspective on appropriate next steps.
- b. Academic requirements: June means final exams for many athletes, and we want our athletes to be students first and focus on their studies.
- c. Long-term development studies show that athletes benefit from playing multiple sports; many spring/summer sports are starting to complement indoor volleyball. This is also the start of [Beach Volleyball](#) season and a chance for athletes to develop their skills in different ways.
- d. Youth athletes are still developing – a lot of changes can take place over the summer months. These development changes may mean a shift in what team may be the best fit – from both the club and the athlete perspective.
- e. Interests and realities change. For example: if an athlete does not make their school team, they may lose interest in pursuing the sport as seriously.
- f. Coaches: the coach/athlete relationship is a special one. We know how impactful a coach is - both from a performance perspective and psychological well-being. Providing clubs with more time to secure coaches helps ensure coaches can be part of team selections and hopefully results in a better fit for all parties.
- g. While VA would love to be able to have details on the 2025 season ready in June, we simply have not secured enough facilities to be able to share the details on tournament weekends, locations, etc. We are also still working on analyzing our budgets as we pass our Draft budget at our June SAGM. Without a budget, we can't pass along tournament or memberships costs.
- h. We are trying to improve our governance – which means ensuring we are doing our best to have everyone registered prior to participating in their role. For clubs & leaders, this means completing appropriate checks, training, and accepting policies. For athletes, this means understanding our code of conduct and associated policies.

### **2. Our current club/team has offered the opportunity to re-sign before the Fall re-signing date. Could there be a consequence if I sign to a club that isn't following the VA Guidelines?**

Clubs/Teams that are found in violation of Volleyball Alberta's Tryout and Signing Processes may be subject to review, which may include sanctions, disqualification from future Volleyball Alberta events and/or membership as outlined in our [Discipline and Complaints Policy](#). The outcomes of this review are not pre-determined and would depend on the specific circumstances of the reported violation.

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If an athlete/family chooses to make a financial commitment to a club/team, whether or not it aligns with VA Signing and Tryout process, Volleyball Alberta will not be able to offer support for financial disputes. Volleyball Alberta does not have jurisdiction over a club's financial or refund policies as they are separate and independent organizations; financial disputes must be resolved between the parties involved. We recommend asking for more information before making any financial commitments.

Volleyball Alberta only recognizes the VA LOI, signed at an appropriate time per the Signing and Tryout policy. Making an agreement with a club/team outside of the VA Signing and Tryout process would not impact an athlete's ability to be a VA member.

### **3. Can I make a verbal commitment to a club?**

The Fall re-signing date gives the time and opportunity for athletes and their families to reflect on the past season and make an informed decision on any future seasons. We encourage coaches and clubs to have a post-season debrief with individual athletes to provide feedback and indication on a future role with the club or team.

Any verbal commitment would not be recognized by Volleyball Alberta. The only agreement recognized is the VA LOI in the appropriate signing period.

### **4. What should I expect at an Open House and Group Tryout?**

Club Open Houses will be available in Edmonton, Calgary, and other cities upon request, should there be sufficient interest from clubs to participate. The Open House format would allow athletes and families to see the prospective clubs in their area and learn more about what each may offer. A club may also choose to offer their own Open House night. These occur before any tryouts begin for information sharing.

The Group Tryout process is optional and encouraged in regions where multiple clubs may be offering tryouts on the same day. At a group tryout, VA recommends 2 to 3 clubs work together to deliver the tryout. This process encourages collaboration and cooperation between clubs offering programs in the same region. Athletes could be considered for more than one team while attending a single tryout.

### **5. Won't Fall Tryout Dates conflict with School Season?**

Each tryout window is only 1 week in duration to reduce training load on athletes during their school seasons. Athletes also may be re-signed and would not be required to tryout.

Clubs are not obligated to run Fall tryouts and may choose to participate in the Winter tryout period alternatively.

### **6. My child did not make a club team, what are other options?**

We are actively working to offer more programming outside of Club – and some of our clubs and facilities in Alberta are also improving programming levels.

Please check back on our website for updates on Fall programming. We also encourage you to reach out to the club in your area about alternative program options.

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## FAQ- Clubs

### **1. Why did Volleyball Alberta change the re-signing dates to September?**

- a. Survey respondents (coaches, club leaders, athletes, parents) overwhelmingly requested it. We received our largest response to a VA survey reflecting the concern that June was too soon after the previous season and disruptive to academics. Selections during the summer months can be disruptive to summer activities. September gives clubs the option to start early should they wish to do so, while also honouring the requests to avoid June through August.
- b. We are trying to improve governance in the Association. We can open Club Approval and Registration in August, which means all clubs signing athletes in September have been approved, Person In Authority checks completed, and policies can be accepted.
- c. While VA would love to be able to have details on the 2025 season ready in June, we simply have not secured enough facilities to be able to share the details on tournament weekends, locations, etc. We are also still working on analyzing our budgets as we pass our Draft budget at our June SAGM. Without a budget, we can't pass along tournament or memberships costs. Clubs will have more information in September to set fees appropriately and plan for their seasons.

### **2. What activities are permitted outside of the Club Indoor Season of Play?**

Clubs are encouraged to refer to athlete development principles and be very deliberate with any indoor volleyball programming offered during the summer and fall. School volleyball places large demands on athletes and additional training places athletes in a position to develop overuse injuries and burnout.

Any open gyms or programming offered should be optional and not a condition for selection to a future team.

[Beach Volleyball](#) is an excellent option to get out with athletes and train in a new environment. The variations in skill execution, physical demands and mental break are a great way for athletes to stay connected with teammates while also broadening their abilities.

Any club that holds tryouts outside of the Fall and Winter Tryout dates will be subject to the [Discipline and Complaints Policy](#), and any subsequent sanctions resulting from that process.

Clubs that are in violation of Volleyball Alberta and Volleyball Canada policies may also lose their standing to compete in [International Events](#).

### **3. Our club would like to offer as many teams for as many athletes as possible and we need more time to plan. How do we meet the needs of the athletes who are interested but can't accommodate them on our teams?**

Having high interest in your club tryouts can be challenging as many clubs do not have sufficient resources (facilities, coaches) to meet the high demand for volleyball. We encourage clubs to offer House League and Skill-based training programs to supplement their club development as a lower cost and commitment option to athletes entering volleyball, should your club have the capacity to do so.

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4. **I am starting a new club for the 2024-2025 season, how does the Signing and Tryout Process work for new clubs?**  
New clubs can apply for approval starting August 1, 2024 when club registration opens. Approved clubs would be eligible to participate in the Fall and Winter Tryout periods. New clubs are not able to utilize the re-signing period, as that is only for clubs that were active in the previous season (2023-2024).