

Omaha Lightning

Volleyball

Handbook

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Section I – Purpose, Mission & Vision

A. Purpose

Omaha Lightning Volleyball (OLV) exists to provide home educated students the opportunity to participate in an organized competitive volleyball program that has a distinctly Christian character.

B. Mission

Provide an enriching environment that challenges players to mature physically, emotionally, and spiritually, thereby growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

C. Vision

That students develop into mature Christian adults who serve their families, churches, and communities according to the ideals espoused in Colossians 3:17; “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Section II – General Information

A. Foreword

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with the OLV program and outline the benefits, guidelines, requirements, policies, and procedures thereof. As such, players and parents are expected to be familiar and comply with the provisions contained herein.

The OLV Board of Directors reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any portion of this handbook as necessary. In such cases, players and parents will be notified once a new handbook is published and required to acknowledge changes.

B. Communication

The primary means of communication is email. All official communications between players, parents, coaches, the athletic director, and board members will occur via this medium. As such, players and parents are encouraged to check their email regularly. This is especially important during the fall season since changes and/or cancellations due to weather can happen. Families that do not have email must contact the athletic director to establish an alternative form of communication.

During the fall season, a smart phone application (i.e., Slack) will also be used as an additional form of communication. While primarily a collaboration tool, the app can also be used to disseminate real-time information when necessary (i.e., where the team is meeting for dinner after a game).

Players and parents are responsible for ensuring OLV has their most up-to-date contact information. After the registration window closes, players and parents must contact the registrar directly to update phone number, email address, and/or physical address information that has changed.

C. Financial Accountability

All OLV financial business is maintained at the highest level of Christian character and respect. The board of directors develops a Proposed Budget at the beginning of each season and maintains a detailed Income & Expense report throughout the year. Since OLV is an all-volunteer organization, all funds are dedicated to athlete involvement, development, and play. Specifically, all player fees are used to fund gym/court rentals, referee expenses, tournament fees, equipment expenses, travel costs for our coaches, and operating expenses. Financial information is available to participating families and will be provided upon request.

D. Coaching Philosophy

The OLV coaching philosophy is designed to maximize each player's physical, emotional and spiritual development. Since player needs will vary according to age, skill level, and team level of play, coaching techniques will also vary as each coach harnesses their skills and experience in pursuit of this goal.

For younger age groups and skill levels, coaching will be primarily focused on basic skill development for all players. During games, athletes can expect to receive similar playing time and will regularly rotate in and out. Although winning games is certainly desired, player development is the primary focus for JH and JV teams.

At the varsity level, coaching will focus on perfecting each player's skill. During games, coaches will play the athletes who put the team in the best position to win. As such, players are not guaranteed equal playing time. This decision rests solely with the coaches and is based on several factors including, but not limited to, attitude, effort, attendance, leadership, cohesiveness with teammates, athletic ability, skill level, and opposing team dynamics. Players and parents should address concerns (i.e., playing time) in accordance with the conflict resolution policy in Section V of this handbook.

E. Team Assignment

Players are assigned to teams by coaches based on age, ability, and player/parent preference. This assignment continues at each coach's discretion throughout the season. Should the need arise and/or a coach recommends a change during the season, no such adjustment will be made until the issue is discussed with all affected parents and coaches. If all parties agree, the player will be asked to comply. In no case will Varsity starters displace JV starters, but they may fill-in for absences as player numbers required.

F. Team Travel

Out-of-town travel is a normal part of homeschool sports and required throughout the OLV season. While travel at the JH level is limited, it is an essential component at the senior high level. All travel expenses to-from games/tournaments are the responsibility of individual players and their parents. Travel costs are in addition to registration fees and include hotel, food, and transportation. Carpooling is encouraged.

While travelling, players will be under the direct authority of their parent(s) or a duly designated representative (i.e., another parent). Players who travel without a parent(s) must remain with the team at all times. Players are not permitted to drive themselves to out-of-town events. If a player is unable to travel for any reason, parents must coordinate the absence with the affected coach(es) as soon as possible.

Normally, a hotel room block will be reserved by the OLV travel coordinator for each out-of-town event. Hotels are selected based on safety, price, and location. While it is highly

encouraged, families are not required to house at the same hotel with the rest of the team. In these cases, the player is still responsible to be present at all team functions.

Section III – Guidelines for Players

A. Participation

Player participation at all practices and games is expected. Players should come prepared to give their best, receive instruction from coaches, and develop and improve their skills. Players will also arrive with all personal equipment required to participate (uniform, knee pads, gym shoes, etc.). From time-to-time, excused absences are understandable (i.e., illness) and should be coordinated with coaches as soon as practical.

Player involvement in other teams/sports during the OLV season is not allowed unless recommended by the coach(es) and approved by the board of directors.

B. Conduct

Players are expected to abide by the following standards:

1. Attend and be on time for all practices, games, and mandatory team functions. Contact your coach and obtain an excused absence if/when unable to attend.
2. Listen to instructions and follow team rules as set out by this handbook and the coaches.
3. Show respect for and loyalty to coaches, players, parents, officials, opponents, and other authority figures associated with the OLV program.
4. Be coachable, that is, willing to receive direction, instruction, and discipline.
5. Demonstrate enthusiasm and an encouraging demeanor during practices and games.
6. Strive for excellence as a player, merit as a student, and humility as a leader.
7. Maintain and return all uniforms and/or equipment issued to you.
8. Do not use any abusive, foul, degrading, disruptive, or complaining language/gestures.
9. Report all injuries to the coaching staff immediately.
10. At all times, refrain from misconduct that reflects poorly or casts discredit upon the OLV program, reputation, or image. This includes public displays of affection and other inappropriate contact during practices, games, and other mandatory team activities.

C. Dress Code

OLV desires to be a good witness to all players, families, coaches, event sponsors, and spectators. As such, players are expected to follow this dress code during all team functions, both on and off the court. All clothing should be modest, appropriate for the moment and reflect well on the Lord, participating families, and OLV. When necessary, coaches may make limited exceptions to this policy.

Game uniforms are purchased by the player. Uniforms are meant to create a team environment and be worn as directed. During practice, players may wear suitable athletic attire that conforms to the same standards as game uniforms. Spandex and other similar items should be covered with complementary loose fitting attire. At all other times (team building events, in hotels, etc.), clothing should be in good taste and appropriate for the moment. In every case, undergarments will be covered at all times.

Players will not wear jewelry during practices or games. Taping earrings and other jewelry is not permitted. All items should be removed and safely stored prior to beginning any activity. Medical bracelets are permitted if securely taped to a player's wrist/arm. Exceptions, if any, will be made on a case-by-case basis at the coach's discretion.

Section IV – Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

A. Participation

OLV is an all-volunteer program and cannot exist without parent and family participation. As such, each family is expected to partner with OLV in a meaningful way throughout the season. Most volunteer opportunities can be selected during your player's registration process. However, OLV also usually hosts a regional tournament during the season which requires additional volunteer help.

Volunteers are expected to arrive on time for their scheduled event and are responsible for finding a suitable replacement should they become sick or unable to attend for another reason. Volunteers should also notify the athletic director and/or a board member if they are unable to fulfill their commitment.

B. Conduct

Parents are expected to abide by the following standards:

1. Encourage and support the authority of the coaching staff, athletic director, and OLV board of directors.
2. Make every reasonable effort to ensure your player arrives on time for all practices, games, and mandatory functions.
3. Treat all players, parents, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect. Ensure all family members and invited guests understand these expectations and do the same.
4. Contact the board of directors with any problems, concerns, or comments involving the OLV program.
5. Make the coaches, athletic director, and/or board of directors aware of any physical, mental, or emotional program your player may experience.
6. Abide by the Team Travel guidelines set forth in Section II of this handbook.
7. Support the OLV program by volunteering to help with the various functions required to operate the program.
8. Pay any/all required fees by the scheduled due date.
9. Acknowledge their student has met the eligibility requirements set for by the OLV program in this handbook.
10. Provide accurate contact information and make timely updates if/when changes occur.

C. Financial Responsibility

Parents are expected to fulfill their financial responsibilities according to the same high standards of OLV Financial Accountability outlined in Section I of this handbook. All player fees should be paid in full by the scheduled due date. Fundraising opportunities are available.

Section V – Policies & Procedures

A. Eligibility

Players must meet the following eligibility requirements to participate in the OLV program:

1. Be home educated during the current season of play.
2. Have not participated in a high school graduation ceremony prior to the last game of the current season.
3. No older than 19 years of age on September 1st of the current season.

These requirements do not prohibit players from taking classes at a local community college or other accredited schools as part of their home education. However, players taking classes at an accredited high school (public or private) must not be more than half-time.

Students who attend private Christian schools that do not offer volleyball as a sport of interest may petition the OLV board of directors for approval to participate. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and approval is not guaranteed.

B. Fees & Miscellaneous Expenses

Annual fee costs and schedules are clearly outlined during the application process. Additional expenses may be incurred as outlined in the Team Travel guidelines set forth in Section II of this handbook. Player fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

C. Inclement Weather

Practices, games, and other team events hosted at the UBT Sports Complex will be cancelled when the Elkhorn School District cancels school due to inclement weather. When a late start or early release is ordered, the athletic director will decide whether to hold, change, or cancel events after consulting with UBT representatives and coaches.

Practices, games, and other team events hosted elsewhere will be changed/cancelled based on school and business closings in that local area at the time of the event. Likewise, the athletic director will decide if changes/cancellation are required after consulting with event organizers, coaches, and facility managers. For out-of-town games, road conditions will also weigh heavily in the decision-making process.

In every case, families should not travel when they feel it is unsafe to do so. Should this be the case, simply notify a coach and an excused absence will be entered for the affected player.

When a change or cancellation is required, OLV will normally send out an email notification. Should a last-minute situation arise, a telephone call will be made to each family in addition to the standard email.

D. Release of Liability

All players are expected to carry personal insurance providing coverage should injury occur during practices, games, and other mandatory team activities. Parents, guardians, and players acknowledge they have properly considered the risks associated with playing volleyball, including, but not limited to, illness, injury, sickness, disability, death, and/or property loss, and do hereby voluntarily participate in volleyball and assume all related risks of participation, both known and unknown.

Furthermore, parents, guardians, and players agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the OLV organization against any and all claims, suits, or actions of any kind with regard to liability, damages, compensation or associated fees and related costs.

E. Drug, Alcohol & Tobacco Use

OLV maintains an environment free of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Therefore, the use of these substances while participating in practices, games, and other mandatory team events (to include travel to and from away games) is strictly prohibited. The legal use of prescription drugs is permitted, but players must make coaches and chaperones aware of any medications being taken.

F. Conflict Resolution Policy

The preferred conflict resolution process is the Biblical model outlined in Matthew 18. When at all possible, conflict should be resolved at the lowest level possible and involving the fewest people possible. The highest levels of humility, discretion, and forgiveness are requested.

When an issue arises directly related to team issues (i.e., playing time), players, parents, and/or guardians should normally approach coaches first. If the issue cannot be resolved at that level, the issue should be brought to the attention of the athletic director. As a final level of appeal, the issue can be brought before the board of directors for consideration.

In the unlikely case where a player and/or parent/guardian doesn't feel comfortable discussing the issue with the coach, or it is of such a serious nature that it warrants immediate consideration by the board of directors, they may come directly and immediately to privately discuss their concern.

G. Discipline

Disciplinary Action Schedule:

VW = Verbal warning , WW = Written warning , S = Suspension , D = Dismissal from the program

ATTENDANCE:

	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Absence (unexcused)	VW	WW	S	D
Tardiness	VW	WW	S	D
Leaving without permission	VW	WW	S	D

PRACTICE/GAME BEHAVIOR:

	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Failure to obey the coaches instructions	VW	WW	S	D
Use, possession, or selling of drugs, alcohol or tobacco	WW	D		
Fighting	VW	WW	S	D
Violation of dress/ uniform code	VW	WW	S	D
Intimidating or interfering with coach or other players	WW	D		
Use of foul/abusive/ degrading language	VW	S	D	

H. Child Protection Policy TBD

Section VI – Player & Parent Acknowledgement

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Omaha Lightning Volleyball Handbook. I understand the contents are for information and guidance and subject to change at any time. I fully understand the Release of Liability and agree to follow OLV’s code of conduct. I realize any player violations can result in loss of privilege, suspension, and/or dismissal from the Lightning Volleyball program and/or loss of privilege to attend games, practices or other OLV program events for parent violations.

Player Signature / Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

* This acknowledgment must be signed by each player and parent/guardian and returned to the athletic director before a player can participate in any team practice, game, or other activity.

Note: This handbook was updated June 2021 by the OLV Board.