



USA Volleyball Officials Academy Financial Planning Clinic

Ameriprise Financial Services has kindly offered a clinic to all referees, "Financial Planning Playbook for volleyball referees." Dig deep, block debt, set goals, bump savings and win financial freedom!

The clinic will take place Wednesday, August 7 at 6 p.m. MDT on Zoom.

[Register Now](#)

Thank you for working at our USA Volleyball National Championships

For anyone who meets the criteria below for the \$500 bonus, we will be processing this payment for you in August.

\$500 Bonus Criteria:

- \$500 bonus for officials who work at a minimum of three 2024 USA Volleyball nationally owned events.
- One event must be either GJNC 11-13s, GJNC 14-17s, or BJNC.
- Officials must work the entire event/session(s) WITHOUT conflict to qualify as working the event.
- Working more than one weekend/session of the same event is counted as one event (this includes multiple weekends of an event).

Thank you for all your hard work at the championships over the summer. We have received positive feedback from these events. Your dedication to the players, coaches and clubs did not go unnoticed. We look forward to seeing you at next year's USA Volleyball events.

2024 Successful National Referee Candidates

We had 51 successful Regional Referees who received their Junior National Referee patch at Girls Junior National Championship 14-17s in Vegas. Please congratulate our new Junior National Referees!

Amy Abbot (NT)

Jamie Abbot (GP)

Cherlie Adorno De Jesus (SO)

Shereen Bailey (BY)

De Batchelor (CR)
John Birdwell (HA)
Gina Bissmeyer (OD)
Antonio Branham (CH)
Antony Chan (BG)
Giuvanna Corona (FL)
Tara Dye (IA)
Kaitlyn Eilenfeld (OV)
Helen Ekadeli (LS)
Jeff Evans (XL)
Jason Fields (GL)
Tremayne Gamble (GC)
Melissa Gordon (NO)
Clifton Greer (SU)
Richard Gunselman (DE)
Todd Hatcher (NT)
William Headrick (SO)
Michael Holder (CR)
Carl Horrocks (IM)
Jeffery Hutcherson (CR)
Mitchel Lauer (GL)
James Lenderman (KE)
Brian Libby (HO)
Greg Linder (GL)
Elaine Lopez (LS)
Jennie Maikui (MK)
Kimberleigh Matabire (SO)
Carlos Matos (LS)
Loren Mauch (IA)
Gabriel Mercado Rivera (FL)
Michael Migliaro (DE)
Lauren Millen (NO)
Shannon Minear (RM)
Justin Miranda (SC)
Mike Mon (GE)
Jenny Morgison (HA)
Jessica O'Donnell (OV)
Fernando Ortiz Boria (FL)
Jill Peterzalek (IA)
Steven Rasmussen (SO)
Wade (Dusty) Rhodes (CR)

Mineily Rivera Nieves (FL)

Robin Sparks (NE)

Melinda Steadman (LS)

Jason Stelly (BY)

Thelander Tillman (BY)

Kent Tse (GE)

2024 USA Volleyball Cup

In July, the U.S. Women's National Team took on the Netherlands in Long Beach, Calif., in a final tune-up event before heading off to the Olympics. This event was a wonderful opportunity to showcase our Olympic team on home soil. Thank you to the officials who worked this event and made it a success.



From left to right: Lara Janjic, Matthew Levoe, Rene Simon, Lena Gustafson, Myles Furuya, Zitlalli Martinez, Heather Pickett. Not Pictured: Patrick Bradley, Torand Cheltenham, Jane Dong, Magda Gleaves, Troy Gravett, Rachel Jensen, Katy Meyer, John Park, and Deana Schneyer.

Footprints in the Sand by Rene Marcellus

Being the fabulous procrastinator that I am, completing Christmas errands late in December, I looked down at my phone and saw, "Pati Rolf" on caller ID.

That could mean one of two things; I've messed something up terribly and she's setting me straight, or, well, I guess anything else. Think positive. I answered, "Hello?" she jumped right in, "Hey Rene, hope all is well, are you

sitting down?" I said, "Well, I'm driving right now, so, technically yes." I thought, "Oh man, is it that serious that I need to be sitting down?"

She replied in her signature all-in-one-breath-straight-to-the-point-matter-of-fact-kind-of-way: "I realize this is short notice, but, I've got some news for you. You've been selected as a candidate to represent USA Volleyball as a NORCECA/FIVB Beach Volleyball Official. The course is next month in Puerto Rico. There's a lot to be done from here to then, if you're in, I'll email you the particulars.

Congratulations. Are you in?"

I tried my best to let her finish asking the question before I answered it, like a good R2, avoiding interrupting her or slipping in any expletives when responding, "I'm in!" She said, "Great. There's heaps to cover and ..." Well, I kind of blacked out after that. No worries, I'd get it in her email. I started crying. This was a sidelined dream of mine now becoming reality.

After processing, I was caught between the mental state of, "it's just volleyball, you're fine" and, "holy bananas, this is a big deal." Let's be real though, is it ever just volleyball?

With my fellow candidates identified, Kaylene Cragun and Deanna Schneyer, we got to work on Pati's email that included a laundry list of to-do's. We had some wonderfully down and dirty Zoom calls with Magdalena Gleaves, who was a step ahead of us in this process, and with Suzanne Lowry, who was able to provide additional insight into our now greater expectations.

Kaylene, Deanna and I landed in Puerto Rico within a few hours of each other. We coordinated a rental car together since the training venue (classroom sessions and residence) was over an hour away from the airport, and the practical (on court) another hour further from that. We made a shopping pit-stop to get bed sheets, shower towels, bug spray and snacks in preparation for our stay. Our accommodations were similar to a summer camp dorm, with metal lockers separating bunk beds, and a locker room type dual shower bathroom situation. We were lucky enough to be sharing the dorm with three fellow Americans who were going through their [indoor] volleyball course simultaneously: Breanna Spain, Nikki Kathol, and Lena Gustafson.

We were immersed in foreign customs and languages all day from all over the world; what a treat it was to come 'home' to an English speaking 'household' where we could compare notes, and share our experiences with compadres.

During our course, we benefited from the expertise of instructors whose resumes are as impressive as they are extensive. Andre Trottier, Guy Bradbury, both from Canada, and Lemuel Torres from Puerto Rico guided us through every next step of our journey. Our day to day itinerary was quite fluid, teaching us adaptability. Federación Puertorriqueña de Voleibol, the host governing body, took every measure to make this course a hospitable event. After days filled with learning, we were offered curated outings to

experience the local culture, as well as brought to a professional women's [indoor] volleyball match in an arena filled with history.

Throughout the course, I felt unparalleled support from USA Volleyball. Exemplifying unwavering support, whether guiding us through application submission, answering every little question at all hours, or sourcing fresh gear to send with us at a moment's notice, they had our backs. I am humbled with gratitude to have gone through this experience. I truly believe that the relationships cultivated during our course with fellow candidates from all around the world will last a lifetime.

Some people would say that laying a foundation on sand is a terrible idea, but, for me, it's where my feet are planted most firmly and I stand strong, surrounded by support. With groundwork laid by Steve Owen and Steve Kenyon, and by following in the footsteps of the Suzanne Lowry's, the Katy Meyer's, the Pati Rolf's, the Pati Salvatore's, the Devonie McLarty's, the Brig Beatie's, the Keith Murless', and, the Dan Apol (the Dude abides). Now, I am overwhelmed with appreciation to have the opportunity to forge my own path - leaving behind footprints in the sand for many more to follow.

See you on the court.

Power League Article by Breanna Spain

Groundbreaking, extraordinary and exhilarating are some of the first words that come to mind when I sit back and reflect on this past season with the Professional Volleyball Federation (PVF). Being a part of the PVF's inaugural season was such an honor, and it has undoubtedly been the most exciting highlight of my officiating career thus far.

Day after day, I got to work alongside some of the most incredible individuals within this sport – the most talented players and coaches with countless years of experience at the highest level (both nationally and internationally/professionally), as well as some of the best USA Volleyball International/National Referees within our cadre. I think it's absolutely amazing that these brilliant players and coaches can be a part of a premier, professional volleyball league right here on their home soil (and it's pretty darn cool for the referees in the league, too). A successful inaugural season would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication from the league's spectacular challenge referees, scorers and staff at each arena, as well. We were all in this together, we worked day in and day out to make this league thrive, and the family/community that we created with one another was truly like no other.

After completing the NORCECA Continental Referee Course in Puerto Rico back in January, I was excited to have the opportunity to implement the international rules, techniques and protocols that I learned at the course right away, as the league played by modified FIVB rules, and the season began in January shortly after I completed the course. As with any new endeavor, there were some learning curves along the way – especially when working with this new ruleset in such a huge, important capacity for the first

time (yes... if you were wondering... I was pretty anxious lol). The league was something new to all of us who were a part of it, so we were all figuring it out together – one day at a time.

From a referee standpoint, one of the biggest differences for me that required some adjusting was the modification of our work team. We did not work with line judges and used the video review system known as “Bolt6” to make electronic, automated in/out calls for any ball that landed within 12 inches of any sideline or endline.

Notably, something else that was new to me was the positioning of the team benches in the arenas, which just so happened to be on the first referee’s side of the court. I ended up really enjoying this component of the court setup, and I wanted to mention it here because it allowed for more conversations with the teams that were professional, mature, friendly and just... human.

The level of respect and maturity that the players, coaches and referees all shared with one another embodied a degree of camaraderie that I have always longed for more of in this sport. We all knew how hard each of us had to work within our different roles/professions to reach this pinnacle point in our career, whether that be as a player, a coach, or a referee. We all knew that we were a part of this league because of our dedication to the game and how much we love the sport of volleyball.

We developed such a sincere level of appreciation and admiration for our PVF family because we knew that without one another, this league would have never been possible. We strived to make the league better every day and worked wholeheartedly toward a common goal that was bigger and better than ourselves – growing the game.

The outpouring of support and excitement for the league was truly out of this world. Thousands and thousands of fans showed up and showed out to cheer on their favorite teams, players and coaches at each match. I worked at all seven of the arenas in Atlanta, Columbus, Grand Rapids, Las Vegas, Omaha, Orlando and San Diego, and the atmosphere was electrifying and sensational at each and every one of them.

It did not matter how many times I worked at a certain arena – I still got goosebumps and thought to myself, “Wow, is this real life?” every time that I walked into that arena again knowing that I was about to be a small part of yet another thrilling professional volleyball match. This is only the beginning for the PVF. I am so excited to see this league continue to grow, evolve and make history in the sport of volleyball.



Whistle, Wisdom and Waves: Coaching International Referees in Puerto Rico by Julie Voeck

I recently returned from the NORCECA U19 boys volleyball competition in Ponce, Puerto Rico, where I served as a referee coach. My mission: to elevate the skills and understanding of volleyball officiating at the event.

Gathered from different countries throughout North America and the Caribbean, international referees with diverse backgrounds and experiences were selected to officiate under the guidance of the referee coach. Each country that participates in the event is requested to send a referee to officiate at the competition. If a country is not able to send a referee, either

the host country provides a referee or a neutral referee from another country may be selected to officiate.

International referees and referee candidates are eligible to officiate at NORCECA events. At this event there were referees from all participating countries: United States, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Puerto Rico and Suriname, There were also three international referee candidates participating, including Lena Gustafson from the USA. This was the first international volleyball event for these candidates as volleyball referees.

As a referee coach, I use my experience and knowledge to provide guidance and training for the referees. The referee coach leads discussions and provides presentations, delving into the intricacies of officiating at the highest level. The referee coach, along with the referees, dissect the rules, analyze game scenarios, and emphasize the importance of consistency and fairness in every call. A referee coach imparts wisdom accumulated from years of experience on the court, teaches the nuances of the game, the art of making split-second decisions, and the role of the referee.

While English is the official language of international volleyball, English is not the native language for many of the referees participating in international volleyball events. The most prevalent language spoken at NORCECA events is Spanish. There are more countries within NORCECA where Spanish is the native language than English. Referee coaches and participating referees need to focus on the language of the rules, which are in English. The referee coach needs to speak at a pace that allows for understanding and provides opportunities for translation to ensure key points and concepts are understood by all.

Coaching referees is not limited to the rules and mechanics. The referee coach instills a deeper understanding of the game's spirit, the values of integrity and respect that are fundamental to officiating. An experienced coach shares anecdotes and insight gained from a lifetime dedicated to volleyball, inspiring the referees to uphold the highest standards.

As the tournament unfolds, the referees put their newfound knowledge and skills to the test, navigating the fast-paced action with confidence and poise. And though the matches may be fierce and the stakes high, the referees stand firm, their decisions guided by a shared commitment to excellence and fairness.

But it's not all work and no play. In the midst of a highly competitive international volleyball competition, the referee team finds themselves immersed in the vibrant culture of Puerto Rico. Between sessions, the referees were able to explore the island. My personal favorite was navigating the city of Ponce where I was able to view local art, listen to local music and enjoy delicious Puerto Rican coffee.

In the end, as the final whistle blows and champions are crowned, I looked upon the referees and newfound colleagues with pride, knowing that they have not only elevated their craft but also left a lasting legacy of integrity

and professionalism on the international stage. I have gained a deeper appreciation for the universal language of volleyball. As we bid farewell to Puerto Rico, we leave behind a legacy of camaraderie and excellence that will endure long after the final whistle blows.

Olympic Updates

Now that the competition has started, we'll be sending out daily updates via email about all USA Volleyball's Olympic teams with information about where to watch, results, feature stories and more. Please subscribe using the button below.

Go USA!

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