

## FAQ/Q & A

**If there is anything else you think we should add to our FAQ, please email us.**

**Q: What is the camper-to-coach ratio at your camps?**

A: Usually 7-1 or better, with a maximum of 14 per court. However, once camp begins, we occasionally must make court adjustments to ensure each player received maximum benefit. The most common reason is when the observed skill level of a camper differs from the skill level she stated on her registration. For example, an 'advanced' player in one state or community may not be considered advanced in another state of community. Regardless, the overall ratio is usually better than 7-1 when the Camp Lead Coach and floating coach is factored in.

**Q: What is the hierarchy of coaches at your camps?**

A: On-court training begins with a Camp Lead Coach who plans the general structure of the daily training, ensures that all courts are on schedule, and supervises all the coaches. Each court is assigned a Court Head Coach and a Court Assistant Coach. The Court Head Coaches are usually collegiate coaches, experienced professional player/coaches, or in special cases a exceptional high school coach. The Court Assistant Coaches are generally collegiate players with club coaching experience, high school or club coaches. We also typically have at least one additional 'floating' coach available to offer additional assistance where needed.

**Q: Most camps now claim to have 'elite' sessions. What is the difference between elite and advanced camps?**

A: The names 'elite' and 'advanced' are deceiving. The true measure of a camp is not the name, but its reputation and that of its coaches. Calling a camp 'elite' is a growing trend that helps fill camps and makes campers feel good to say they went to an elite camp. Collegiate coaches say an elite high school athlete should become an immediate starter on a high level DI or DII team (Note that high level DII teams are better than the lower 50% or more of the DI schools.)

**Q: Can my daughter attend the full week of camp?**

A: Yes. It is relatively common for a camper to do All Skills the first days and then a specialty skills camp immediately afterwards. It is especially common for out-of-state campers to double up. The additional benefit is that the initial muscle soreness from camp is gone by the second day of the second camp.

**Q: My daughter has played volleyball at her school for two years. Should I register her for Intermediate?**

A: In most cases, All Skills would be better. Two years is not very long and we believe that it would be better to work on all skills rather than specialize too early. We have multiple courts of All Skills attempt to place campers on courts with comparable skilled campers. Players are usually beginners for a few years before they become Intermediate. Exceptions are older players who are exceptional athletes or younger players who have been playing nearly year-round, years longer than their peers, and have also had excellent coaching. Skill level and physical maturity are the two main factors, not age. When registering, please include as much information as possible to assist us with her initial court assignment. If you have any questions prior to registering, please email us and we will offer our best opinion.

**Q: Should my daughter register for the advanced session? She plays for an elite club.**

A: That is a much more complex question than it initially appears. There are several things to consider, the most important of which are skill level, athletic ability, and physical maturity. If she is a younger player, is she good for her age or is she good compared to all older high school players in the state? As for her club team, is it one of the top teams in the region or country, keeping in mind that high club fees or prestigious club names do not necessarily mean the team is elite? Using hitters as an example, advanced hitters find a way to make good plays on good AND bad sets. Intermediate and high beginner hitters should be able to make a great play on a great set, but have difficulty with average or poor sets. If a hitter gets consistently great sets, she may *look* good, but good coaches can tell the difference. It's the first thing coaches look for and take seriously. This ongoing debate has the potential to create hard feelings by parents and players who do not see the same things the coaches do, especially when camp coaches move a player to a higher or lower court, but not her JO club or high school teammate.

**Q: I want my daughter to be on a court where the other players challenge her.**

A: We have found that campers make the most progress when the other players on her court are of roughly comparable ability. 60% or more of the challenge should be your daughter's self-motivation to make the best play possible on every ball. About 40% of the 'challenge' should be provided by the coach hitting harder or tossing the ball a little lower, faster, or farther according to the camper's ability. *[Hint for campers: Coaches LOVE players who are highly motivated to succeed and encourage their teammates.]* A couple times or so every summer we hear players say they weren't pushed hard enough or the other players on the court were not as skilled. We always ask the court coaches about this and the most common reply is, "She doesn't perform like she should be on a higher court." The question about whether a player on an elite club should register for 'advanced' goes into more detail on this. Using hitters as an example, coaches look for players who are clearly trying to make the best play possible on every set. Coaches can see them reflecting after each hit on better ways to handle poor sets, rather than complaining to the setter, or better yet, asking the coach for advice on how to handle various sets. While an individual may not be working on her base court with girls who are significantly better than her they will at times play with or against stronger players.

We think it best to be on a base court with players at or near your skill level in order to work on the techniques necessary for the most rapid advancement to take place.

If she is looking for tough competition, our camp structure has competition segments when all players are get to play nearly all others in 3's, 4's, 5's, and 6's. These spirited competitions allow players to meet and compete with nearly all levels of talent and experience. They can then practice their new skill in these competitions. It is during these segments that the real competitors shine. [Coaches are always amused to see that the players who consider themselves the most talented are not the ones who win the competitions.]

**Q: Wouldn't it be good for my daughter to be the lowest skill player on a court so she rises to the challenge?**

A: Some players do rise to the occasion. But if she does not, it can be very emotionally challenging and detrimental to her skill development. If your daughter is in a session that is too advanced for her skill level, she may be the 'drill killer' who routinely stops a drill with an error. That is initially very distressing to that player and not fair to the other players on the court. Not too long after that, the other players may become unhappy. If a player is just learning a certain skill, but the others on the court merely want to fine-tune that skill or focus more on advanced strategy, the coach does not want to and should not change the teaching plan to accommodate the weaker player.

**Q: Can you provide examples of what you call 'advanced'?**

A: Our advanced players are on track to play in college and are typically juniors and seniors or they have just graduated from high school. Some of these campers have already received offers from colleges and some are there to be *seen* by collegiate coaches. The advanced players can handle high speed balls and control them with accuracy. They are comfortable in a multi-tempo attack offense and react without hesitation to very quick actions by the opponents or coaches. They have enough experience to handle most situations at an advanced level without confusion or hesitation. In general, more campers or parents over-estimate their daughters' abilities than underestimate. Our coaches can tell fairly quickly and may move players around if there is room on the court that is more appropriate for her skill level.

**Q: Will my daughter be able to work with the advanced players?**

A: Yes, provided she registers for an advanced session and her skill level is appropriate. If your daughter is not able to play at the level of the more advanced athletes it will not be fair to the top players who come to camp expecting to work with other top players. It can also be embarrassing to her if she is unable to keep the ball in play. However, we sometimes run various kinds of mini-competitions in which the coaches mix everything up to see how the younger players respond to the challenge and to test the leadership abilities of the older players.

**Q: I am interested in playing volleyball in college. Will I have an opportunity to meet college coaches and how should I do it?**

A: If you are 'shopping' for a college/university, first contact the coaches at potential colleges on your own to express interest. It's inadvisable to rely solely on a coach 'discovering' you at a camp. Next would be to go where you can be seen by coaches from as many schools as possible. Since we are not affiliated with a specific school, we have coaches from many colleges/universities at every camp. Coaches are always looking for players and that is one of the reasons they like to work premier camps. Camps allow a coach to get an extended look at you. Some campers at our camps do receive offers from our camp coaches. Note that there are many restrictions that the NCAA or NAIA places on a coach when dealing with potential recruits and the restrictions vary depending on the age of the player. This is an oversimplification, but it is okay for a camper to initiate a conversation with a coach, but a coach may have rules to follow if she/he has interest in talking to you. You must be assertive at camp and approach coaches before camp, during breaks, and after camp each day. Coaches like assertiveness and will be happy to talk to you. If they do not have time at the moment, they will suggest a time. When you talk, ask for the coach's email address and follow up with a thank you note after camp.

**Q: Do I really need that many t-shirts every day (and socks, etc.)?**

A: YES! One of the advanced players in 2007 said she was on her 3<sup>rd</sup> shirt by 2pm. This is a rigorous camp. Sweating is a body's natural cooling mechanism. The better your condition, the more you perspire. Young campers don't seem to perspire as much, but they still do.

**Q: Are the facilities air-conditioned?**

A: As with the vast majority of high school and collegiate gyms, Monticello High School and Mounds Park Academy are not air-conditioned. If it is warm, we do everything reasonable to keep the athletes hydrated and make the venue as comfortable as possible. Warm weather is not a bad thing in itself for properly conditioned athletes. (It's better than being outside in the sun like soccer and football players who often are in camp at the same time.) While not the norm, the National Volleyball Center (NVC) in Rochester is air-conditioned. Only one of all the coaches at our camp had an air-conditioned gym at her university.

**Q: My daughter does not have a friend to room with. How do you handle room assignments?**

A: This is a common situation. First, you have a choice of a double (2 per room) or quad (4 per room). All rooms have queen beds. We have chosen to use one of the nicest hotels at both venues in order to have nice rooms with 2 queens vs. 2 doubles. Then we do our best to match campers up by age. We also consider proximity. If two campers are close in age and come from the same city (or nearby towns), we also consider that. It is

time consuming and not an easy process, but we do our best. (That is why late changes are difficult, because it has a domino effect on other campers.)

Q: How do you assign roommates?

A: If you are not rooming with a friend, we assign roommates based on double/quad preference first. Then we match you with a camper who is as close to your age as possible.

Q: My daughter said the 1<sup>st</sup> day of camp was not as good as the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>.

A: Even our most veteran coaches aren't certain why. It may take a day before the campers burn off their excess energy so they can better focus. It may also be because Ball Control is a big part of our philosophy, so we have hitters and setters spend more time on Ball Control skills the first day than most other camps. While this may seem puzzling to some campers (especially hitters), it pays big dividends on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (and 3<sup>rd</sup>) day of camp as campers are able to run more complex drills when they can better ball control.

Q: This is my daughter's first overnight camp. Any advice?

A: If your daughter is young, make sure she is okay with staying overnight and don't push her. This is not like staying overnight at a friend's house or at Grandma's. She'll most likely be at camp with a friend and will also make new friends; nevertheless, we still have homesick campers at every camp.

Q: I want to have Oreo cookies for every meal.

A: An actual request! Sorry, but no. Especially not for breakfast!

Q: Can we have boys at camp, too?

A: Another actual request. Absolutely NOT!

Q: I've been disappointed with some major university camps because the top players get most of the attention from coaches.

A: We've heard the same thing. That goes against our camp philosophy. We would not have such a high camper return rate if we played favorites.

Q: Where is 'Check-In' and 'Check-out' for camp?

A: At the training facility, whether you are a Day (commuter) or resident camper. Day campers MUST check in every day.

Q: I will be coming to camp the night before (or staying an extra night). Can I stay in the camp hotel? Can I get the camp room rate?

A: Yes and Yes. This is VERY common. We have a limited number of rooms reserved for this. Please email us for information on how to reserve a room.

Q: Will I have to check out of the hotel and check back in if I arrive the day before camp?

A: Yes, unfortunately. It is inconvenient, but the simplest way to do it considering the number of campers we are dealing with.

Q: If I arrive the day before, can I leave my luggage at the hotel rather than bring it to the training facility on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of camp?

A: Yes, but you must work it out with the hotel staff. We can assist you, if needed.

Q: What about safety?

A: Safety is our biggest priority. EVERYTHING else is secondary. Campers may find some of our many safety rules 'inconvenient,' but we insist on them. Please contact us with any concerns you have. Click [www.spikecamps.com/overnightFacilities.html](http://www.spikecamps.com/overnightFacilities.html).

Q: I am flying in from out-of-state. How do I get back and forth to the airport?

A: Rochester: the LaQuinta Hotel does not have a regular shuttle to the Rochester airport, but we may be able to have a hotel staff member pick you up if we know far enough in advance when you will arrive. There are also multiple daily buses from the Mpls./St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and the Mall of America to Rochester. Monticello: there is a shuttle that makes a few daily stops at the Best Western Chelsea Inn in Monticello and then continues on to St. Cloud. Please email us if you need more information on any of these options. Click [www.spikecamps.com/register.html#checkin](http://www.spikecamps.com/register.html#checkin) for more information on Rochester and Monticello transportation. If you are attending our Mounds Park Academy camp in the eastern Twin Cities metro area and want information on shuttles, please contact us.

Q: I am arriving the night before camp/staying the night after camp. How do I get back and forth to the training facility/hotel?

A: Let us know as far in advance as possible and we will arrange for you to ride with one of the camp staff/coaches. There is usually plenty of room.

Q: Is there shopping nearby?

A: Rochester has great shopping. There is daily bus service from the Rochester area to the Mall of America. Monticello is minutes away from one of Minnesota's largest outlet

malls and one hour away (during non-rush hour times) from the Mall of America. Email us if you want us to check on transportation.

**Q: How much cash/money should I bring?**

A: Even though we feed you well at Rochester and in Monticello, it seems that a pizza or vending machine visit is not unusual. While we don't encourage vending machine purchases because there is rarely anything there appropriate for an athlete (older athletes seem to be more conscious of this), you may want to have some extra money for things like that. Also, we usually have a camp store with t-shirts and other merchandise. The t-shirts are usually around \$10 each.

**Q: Are there T-shirts for sale at camp?**

A: You get a camp shirt at check-in. There are also additional camp shirts and shirts that some coaches bring from their respective schools to sell. Cost is usually around \$10. You can also pre-order additional camp shirts to pick up at check-in when you register for camp.