

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: Typically, 7-1 or better. A typical Court Head Coach is a collegiate head or assistant coach and the Court Assistant Coach is often a veteran collegiate player or high school coach. We also have a Camp Lead Coach who oversees all the courts and roams from court to court to lead or assist. There are usually one or more additional roving coaches to assist 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. To the best of our abilities, we will attempt to place your daughter on a court with comparable skilled campers. Players are usually beginners for a few years before they become Intermediate. Rare exceptions are older players who are physically gifted. Usually they are hitters who will never play back row (although a good opposing coach will find a way to exploit her passing weakness). 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: First of all, be as objective as possible when you decide to register for a specific camp, because this is a much more complex question than it initially appears. There are several things to consider, including her age. If she is very good player on a truly elite 14's or 15's team and she is physically mature enough to compete with an all-conference incoming senior with 2 years of varsity experience or a just-graduated senior who will be a scholarship athlete in college, then yes. Is her club team 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? Another factor, and one which is difficult for parents and players to objectively analyze (but not good coaches), is knowing which players make the team elite, because there are usually weak links on every team. Here is one example. Good hitters make the best play possible on nearly every set even if they do not get a 'kill.' Those hitters are easy for a good coach to spot. Average hitters should be able to make a great play on a great set, but have difficulty with other sets. If an average hitter gets consistently great sets, then the average hitter may *look* great, but she may indeed be average. That is why it is something that requires considerable, objective thought. It obviously 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 good player up to a higher court, but not her JO club or high school teammate. Our camp coaches strive to have players of equal skill on each court.

Q: [I want my daughter to be on a court where the other players challenge her.](#)

A: We have found that campers have the best experience if the players are of roughly comparable ability. About 40% of the 'challenge' should be provided by the coach by hitting harder or tossing the ball a little lower, faster, or farther according to the camper's ability. Another 60% should be your daughter's self-motivation to make the best play possible on every ball. 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. When asked, the court coach is usually quite surprised to hear that and replies, "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, of course every hitter wants to play on the court with the best libero and the best setter so the hitter has a better chance of getting a great set. But hitters have to learn to make the best play possible on every set. Those are the players that impress coaches, because they challenge themselves.

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. 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 weakest link.

Q: Can you provide examples of what you call ‘advanced’?

A: Our advanced campers should *typically* be incoming juniors, seniors, or just-graduated seniors who believe they could play in college, should they choose to do so. Some of our campers have already received offers from colleges and some are there to be ‘seen’ by collegiate coaches. 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. While it may be a lot of fun for her to work with the top players, if her skill level is not comparable, it is not fair to the top players who come to camp to work with other top players. However, we fairly often run various kinds of snake-seed mini-competitions in which the coaches have been known to 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 3rd 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 1st day of camp was not as good as the 2nd or 3rd.

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 2nd (and 3rd) 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 1st 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.

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 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.