

# Questions for College Coach Panel

## *at Niagara Frontier Spring Invitational Clinic*

**Date:** Saturday, April 1, 2017

**Time:** 12:30-1:30pm

**Moderator:** Rocco Lucci

**Question format:** We will try to keep time per question limited to 5-6 minutes. Not every school will need to comment on every question. We will try to maintain the order of questions below and allow additional questions at the end if time permits.

Q1. How do you feel about player position specialization versus developing 6 rotation players that can play multiple positions? At what age (or none) do you think a prospective student athlete should choose a specialized position?

A1. Interested in athletes that are well rounded players. Train a DS that can hit from the back row. Middles that can pass a free ball and play defense (if they were to serve in a game). Train athletes in all skills.

Q2. Top traits you look for when watching players during competition. (What makes you stop to watch as you're walking by a court? What about warm-ups?)

A2. There are two things that you look for in an athlete – the attributes that you can't train for and attributes that you can train for. Athletes with a physical gift. Setters that can locate. Players that are great teammates, athletes that rebound from mistakes, players with heart. Coaches value the attributes that you can't train for over an athlete that is talented without the intangibles.

Q3. Top things you look for when watching club coaches. (Do you or have you judged a team by the demeanor or choices made by the coaches on the bench?)

A3. What is your club known for? Training good techniques, playing hard – fighter mentality. Each coach has their own system, own philosophy – what they value and how they handle specific situations. Typically not judgmental due to fact of not being in the gym training the athletes.

Q4. What are some important roles of your assistant coaches during practice, training sessions and competition, and do you think assistant club coach roles should be similar or different? (Regarding levels of engagement with athletes, practice plans, game management)

A4. Each assistant coach role and responsibilities are different based on experience, strength in coaching different aspects of the game, relationships with players etc. Head coach knows future aspirations of the assistants and mentors them to meet their goals. Gives them responsibilities with practice planning.

Q5. How much focus is on developing the individual skill of your own players/team on your side of the court versus training your players to react to opponents? (Do you train based on scouting reports or just focus on your team's skill?)

A5. Focus on strengths of own team, strategically what team needs to do against their opponent – hit line/sharp cross/blocking cross-line. Do not overload athletes with too much information can't process it all, gets athletes overwhelmed versus just focusing on playing. Coaches control the match and focus on what changes need to be made throughout the match strategy wise not the athletes. There is a balance – have athletes focus on execution.

Q6. What do junior clubs/coaches need to do in order to prepare PSA's for the next level?

A6. Train them mentally and physically in the game. Develop the player's volleyball IQ – why they should do certain things on the court. Understanding the game, teach them to see the court, be a fighter and to let go of errors focusing on the next play not living in the past and watching film to see the game and teach them what they need to do and why. In practice do you have "fighter" drills? What do you do to train them mentally?

Q7. What are your thoughts on multi-sport athletes in high school? Do you feel that high school players should focus only on volleyball once they make a verbal commitment? (Are kids better at volleyball if they only play volleyball? Physicality/fitness/strength vs. volleyball skills)

A7. Coaches think multi-sport athletes are best. Focus on the physical fitness training and healthy eating to fuel their performance.

Q8. What are your feelings regarding junior club organizations in general? (USAV, JVA, participation at Qualifiers, seeking competition)

Did not discuss

Q9. What are your thoughts on letters of recommendation and video? What do you look at and look for?

- a. Percentage of skills versus live game footage
- b. Unedited video versus edited video
- c. What makes you want to continue watching a video past the first minute

Did not discuss

Q10. Additional topics from coaches:

T1. Recruiting process – college coaches' look for timely responses from club coaches in regards to athletes, knowledge about academic performance (GPA, SAT scores). Communicated to college coaches that families, club coaches, players would appreciate honesty in their communication to the athlete – are they a fit for your system, type of athlete you look for, would they be able to play at your school, where they "fit" on your team based on what you see – so they can determine if it meets their objectives.

- a. Are they the type of player that strives on competition and will fight to earn a spot (preference to not be the best player on the team) or a type of player that wants to be the best player on the team playing all the time and making an immediate contribution to the program?

b. College coaches do not want club coaches to “sell” the athlete to them – want honesty as well. Does the coach know the program before saying “They would be a great fit for your program” or “They are the type of athlete you are looking for” or similar statements IF you have not seen them play or ask what do you look for in an athlete etc.

T2. Coaches willing to do a “train the coaches” clinic in the future – January or May would be best for that to occur to meet their schedules. WEVA will look into offering clinic for coaches in WEVA region (high school and club).

T3. Do you think it is best to place athletes on teams by talent or age? By talent. USA Nationals for the 18’s season ending earlier creates a challenge in doing so. Mixing talent over grade causes a potential issue with underclassmen finishing earlier if on 18’s. If talent based on 17’s then causes issue the following year if 18’s are best to have only seniors. Coaches communicated that 18’s ending early and having their own qualifiers complicates it for them as well.