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*Relentless Pursuit of Excellence*

## **2019/2020 Club Volleyball Guide**

### Houston Stars Volleyball Staff

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## **A UNIQUE CLUB EXPERIENCE**

Many will wonder how we will be similar or how we will be different from other club organizations in the area. When you consider what every club claims to offer, it all comes across the same. Everyone claims to have the best training, best coaches, best records, etc. So how will Houston Stars be the same? How will it be different?

We will be similar to the top tier clubs in how we train our athletes. Our director, Leon Blazer spent time at a large club as a program director for 3 years. He also coached at the college level and trained with Olympic coaches and brings that expertise to our gym. His 4 years directing his own club in Houston has produced one of the fastest growing clubs in the city while maintaining the highest standard of excellence.

Coach Kayle Ray returns for another season as our Volleyball Director. She brings almost 30 years of coaching experience to the gym and helped coach our 16 National team (2018) to our club's first ever Junior National tournament appearance. Her three daughters all played college volleyball. Coach Kayle also works as our recruiting coordinator.

Coach Aric Anderson spent 7 years as a consultant coach with the Men's USA Olympic Team and brings to us many years of coaching experience at all levels. He has worked both on the boys and girls side and currently directs training for our boys program. Coach Aric is active as a lead camp coach for Gold Medal Squared and leads summer camps and clinics all over the world. He is dedicated to high level training and making sure technique is done right.

This we were excited at the hiring of coach Andrii Diachkov. He spent 15 years as a professional volleyball player on the European circuit and played with the Ukraine Men's national team. His level of playing is unmatched and he brings his long resume of high level playing and coaching techniques to our gym. He has been working with countless athletes around the city of Houston and will be coaching for us on the girls and boys side.

We also employ great coaches with many years of experience coaching and place them in positions to benefit all our athletes. We will have quality coaching for all our teams and give all our teams the same opportunities to compete at a level that suits them. We believe in training our coaches. We invest in them so they can pass that knowledge onto our athletes.

We will be different in that we are concerned about all aspects of your daughter's experience. We don't just want to develop great athletes. We want players to develop great character, be great teammates, great competitors, and learn how to overcome adversity.

We believe that there is a need in Houston to not just be another club, but a club that parents want their daughters to be a part of. We want to be a place where players can't wait to get in the gym and get better. We believe there needs to be a place where every athlete is looked out for. Jesus lived his life with utmost integrity, a fiery passion for what he thought was right, and a keen sense for the needs of those around Him. This is how we will model the way we coach, train and compete.

## COACH'S CODE OF CONDUCT

We have a rigorous policy for how we select coaches. We want to ensure that our coaches follow guidelines set forth by the club to ensure consistency in training and character. Here are some of the qualifications that all of our coaches must meet:

- I will strive to adhere to the Christian worldview approach where my decisions line up with the moral standard set forth in God's Word.
- I will conduct myself, at all times, in a manner that represents and upholds the values of Houston Stars.
- I will mentor the members of my team and assist players in mentoring others.
- I will ensure that my player interaction is above reproach
- I will not use profane or vulgar language.
- I will not humiliate, degrade or threaten any other coach, parent, player, official or fan.
- I will treat any coach, player, parent, official, and any other person with respect regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or ability.
- I will not use any illegal substances at any time.
- I will arrive at trainings, practices and games on-time, and be prepared to do my job.
- I will not use my cell phone during practices or games.
- I agree to the Confidentiality Agreement.

We believe that if our coaches are on the same page, then we will ultimately be able to provide a consistent and safe environment for everyone to train and compete.

## **FACILITIES**

### **Houston's First Baptist Church (7401 Katy Freeway)**

Gym entrance is off the South end off Memorial Woods Dr.  
We will have 3 courts on well-maintained hardwood floors.

There is ample parking across from the gym. Attached to the gym are 3 racquetball courts, a second story running track as well as fitness room and full weight facility. Parents are welcome to join the gym so they have something they can do during practices.

### **Star Sports Center (13225 FM 529 Suite Q – Houston TX 77041)**

This facility is our new HOME and will be the primary location for scrimmages, National team training and our Cypress local and regional teams. We have 2 primary courts but will use 3 courts at times for training. We have a lobby with amenities as are under construction on our 1800 sq ft. sports performance area of the gym. This will be a great training facility for all our athletes.

### **St. Mark Lutheran (1515 Hillendahl Blvd)**

We look forward to our continued partnership with St. Mark Lutheran as a great 2-court facility in the Memorial area.

## **PRACTICE DATES & TIMES**

Our teams will practice two days per week for 2 hours per day. Our National teams will have additional training opportunities built in and some Regional and local teams will have the option for additional training for a fee.

Our practice days will be Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and/or Thursday. It will be a combination of two days with most teams having a Sunday practice. Your team's schedule will be posted to our League Apps site once teams are created. If once you accept your team placement you cannot access your League Apps account, please contact us ASAP as this is our lifeline to our teams and club.

We will do our best to have a calendar of all practices available in advance, but we ask for flexibility as gym availability can change last minute. We will always do our best to limit the number of changes, but some will occur over the course of the season. Here is our priority on changing and adjusting practice schedules:

1. Change time at same location
2. Change location but keep time/day
3. Change day of practice
4. Cancel practice

The number of practices will be between 40 and 45 for the season. We frontload many practices during the season so we have flexibility during tournament season as teams may lose a Sunday practice due to in or out of town tournaments. A missed practice because of a tournament will not always be made up that same week, but it will be made up at some point in the season as we count our practices toward a total number.

## LEVELS OF TEAMS

We have 3 designations of team levels: **National**, **Regional**, and **Local**. The levels vary depending on age and ability of our teams. The National and Regional divisions have 2 levels per division and will be broken down by age group below.

- **National Division Teams (Level 1 and 2) (14U-18U)** - This is our top level of teams. A high commitment to training & tournament attendance is required. In addition to 4 hours of practice per week, additional workouts & position trainings will be involved. This division's season runs into June because of post-season play at Nationals (either USAV or AAU).
- **Regional Division Teams (Level 1 and 2) (12U-16U)** - A high commitment to training & tournament attendance is required. This level is designed for players that have some experience with volleyball or those with advanced athletic development.
- **Local Division Teams (12U-13U)** - This level is designed for players that desire to improve their skills. They would like to continue their involvement in the sport, but have other priorities that would preclude them from a high level of commitment. A high level of commitment to training & tournaments is expected, but the season involves less tournaments and are all in the Houston area.

At Tryouts, you will be given the opportunity to specify the highest level you would like your daughter to be considered for.

## **PLAYING TIME POLICY FOR UPWARD STARS HOUSTON**

Houston Stars believes that fees paid are for practice time. We strive to ensure that all players receive equal practice time experience. Fees do not guarantee playing time. We adjust our requirements to our coaches based on the level of team but give our coaches freedom within that structure to be as competitive as possible. We work hard to train our coaches to utilize each player on the team and give them a purpose. We want you to know our expectations for these teams prior to going into tryouts so that you can make an educated decision on which team you would want your daughter to play on.

**National teams** - These teams are our highest level teams and most competitive. Our hope is that these teams will compete against the top teams for other clubs in the area and beyond. There can be no expectation that a player will play for any given number of matches. A coach has the freedom to have a player sit for an entire weekend of matches if that is what gives the team the best chance to win their games. We are strict with this policy and will have no discussions regarding play time. Players are always welcome to initiate conversations with their coach regarding their status and what they can do to improve their situation.

**Regional Teams** - These teams compete at a high level. We still do not guarantee any playing time, but we will have a policy outlined to our coaches where they must find ways to get a player on the court. The details for this are between the club administration and the coaches but we want players to have a role and be able to see the court at given intervals. A player is guaranteed that they will not go to a weekend tournament and never step on the court.

**Local Teams** - These teams are mostly for development of skills. We will base our number of local teams on strength at tryouts, and we won't offer a local team at all age levels. These teams guarantee that players will play. Play time is not guaranteed to be equal, but will be close. Players at this level need to experience the pressures of playing in a game and will be given those experiences under the direction of the coach and club administration. Local teams will only attend tournaments within the Houston area.

**Note on Playing Time** - Volleyball playing time is unlike any other sport. It is not measured in minutes. It is measured by "Rotation" and "Position." A Middle Blocker is usually a 3 rotation player. A Setter can be anywhere from a 3 to 6 rotation player. Some outside hitters are 6 Rotation players

and some are 3 rotation players. It is up to the coach to decide who goes in and for how many rotations. If a player is a 3 rotation player and another player is a 6 rotation player, their playing time is considered equal. Some positions cannot be more than a certain number due to the rules of volleyball, so if your player rotates to the sideline, many times it is because their rotation is off the court, not because they did something wrong. There are many other parents on the sideline who understand the rotation concepts of volleyball and can highlight the way the rules work.

Another situation that can arise is when the teams rotate. If your player is a 3 rotation player, her 3 rotations can pass in as few as 6 serves if the teams side out on the first ball each time. The next 3 rotation player can enter the court and each team serves 5 balls per rotation. This would be 30 serves. So, one player plays 6 serves and the other plays 30. This is still considered EQUAL. We cannot dictate the flow of the game and how quickly or slowly teams will rotate.

Playing time is not solely based on SKILL. It is based on: ability, attendance, attitude, effort, and game-time situations/strategies. If you are only seeing one of these factors (only seeing tournaments and not practice), you only see a small window of what goes into a play-time decision.

## **POLICY FOR ISSUING A GRIEVANCE**

We know at times that parents will want to address issues with the club director about their daughter's experience. We want everyone to have a great experience, but we cannot entertain individual conversations with parents every time an issue arises. We have adopted these grievance policies and have instructed our coaches to adhere to them, as well. This is in the best interest of the players, coaches, parents, and directors. We also believe that great life lessons can be taught in how players deal with adversity and take ownership of situations they face.

We have a 48 hour window from the end of practice or tournament before an issue can be addressed with a coach/director. We also have an order of events that must be followed. The only exception would be if a child's safety is of concern. Parents can initiate conversations on behalf of their player at the 12s and 13s level, but must include the player.

- A player must make a minimum of two direct communications with the coach. These cannot be within the 48 hour window. They should schedule with the coach a time to meet. These two meetings have to have a minimum spacing of two weeks.
- If the player interactions don't resolve the issue, we will set up a meeting with the parent, player, coach and a director to figure out a best path forward to address any concerns.

### **Included with fees:**

- A "head-to-toe" uniform package including shoes, kneepads, warmup jacket and pants, socks, spandex, cover shorts, practice t-shirts, a backpack and a ball.
- Players are expected to bring their ball to every practice as well as to tournaments. It is their responsibility to keep track of their volleyball. A replacement volleyball runs \$45 for a composite, and \$65 for a leather.



**Sample Practice Calendar.** (Based on 26 team scenario. This practice plan can and will change once we know how many teams we make for next season.) We will generally follow these rules:

17 and 18 National Teams – These teams will use both facilities. We will not be making Regional or Local 17s and 18s teams. Generally the 2<sup>nd</sup> 18s will have some 17U players playing up who might not make the other two 17U teams. We will not make more than two teams and these age levels.

15U and 16U – We will have one National team at each age group. These two National teams will practice at both locations. Each location will also have a Regional 15U and 16U team. We expect a max of 3 teams at each the 15U and 16U level.

14U – We will have a National level team at each location. We will have up to one regional level team at each location.

12U and 13U – We plan on a Regional and Local level team at each location.

Houston Stars Practice Schedule:

Max 26 Teams – (B) – Both Locations | (N) – Cypress Location only | (M) – Memorial Location Only

Teams

(Both) 18 Adidas

(B) 18 Black

(B) 17 Adidas

(B) 17 Black

(B) 16 Adidas

(Memorial) 16 Black

(North) 16 Red

(B) 15 Adidas

(M) 15 Black

(N) 15 Red

(M) 14 Adidas

(N) 14 Adidas - N

(M) 14 Black

(N) 14 Red

(M) 13 Adidas

(B) 13 Adidas – N

(M) 13 Black

(N) 13 Red

(M) 12 Adidas

(N) 12 Adidas – N

(M) 12 Black

(N) 12 Red

Boys:

(B) 18 Adidas

(B) 16 Adidas

(M) 14 Adidas

(N) 14 Adidas - N

Sunday

Star Sports Center

11-1 – 17 Black, 18 Black (Conditioning) – 1-2pm

1-3 – 16 Red, 15 Red, (C) – 3-4pm

3-5 – 16 Adidas, 15 Adidas (C) – 2-3pm

5-7 – 17 Adidas, 18 Adidas – (C) – 4-5pm

7-9 – B16 Adidas, B18 Adidas, B14 Adidas – N – (C) – 6-7pm

HFBC

1-3 – 12 Adidas , 12 Black, 13 Black

3-5 – 13 Adidas , 14 Adidas, 14 Black

St. Mark

2-4 – B14 Adidas

4-6 – 16 Black, 15 Black

Monday

Star Sports Center

3-6 – Lessons

6-8 – 14 Adidas - N, 14 Red, 13 Adidas - N

8-10 - Lessons

Tuesday

Star Sports Center

3-5 – Lessons

5-7 – 12 Adidas - N , 12 Red, 13 Red

7-9 – B14 Adidas - N

7-10 – 1 court lessons

St. Mark

10

6-8 – 14 Black,

HFBC

6-8 – 12 Adidas , 12 Black, 13 Black

7:30-9:30 – 18 Adidas, 17 Black, 17 Adidas

Wednesday

Star Sports Center

3-5 – Lessons

5-7 – 14 Adidas - N, 14 Red, 13 Adidas - N

7-9 – 16 Red, 15 Red,

St. Mark

6-8 – 13 Adidas , 14 Adidas

7:30-9:30 – 15 Adidas, 16 Adidas

Thursday

Star Sports Center

3-5 – Lessons

5-7 – 12 Adidas - N , 12 Red, 13 Red

7-10 – Positional (All National Teams)

HFBC

6-8 – 15 Black, 16 Black, 18 Black

7:30-9:30 – B16 Adidas, B18 Adidas, B14 Adidas,

**Team Designations/ Pricing** – We will be sponsored by Adidas. We will call our top teams Adidas. The Adidas designation does not necessarily signify a “National” level team as our 12 and 13 Adidas teams will be Regional level teams. Below is a “MAX” number of teams and where we expect those age levels to fall.

We will have 5 Levels of Pricing Structure. There will be a \$500 deposit taken at Tryouts. It will be deposited upon team acceptance. We will have multiple payment plans available.

- Level 1 - \$4490 – National team with 3 Qualifiers + post season
- Level 2 - \$4105 – National team with 2 Qualifiers + post season
- Level 3 - \$3790 – Regional team with 1 Qualifier (Lone Star Classic (Dallas))
- Level 4 - \$3580 – Regional team with Texas Fest (Boys 16/18 National, Girls 18 National)
- Level 5 - \$2775 – Local team (6 tournaments) (Boys 14 National, Girls 18 Black (#2 team))

### **Level 1 - \$4490**

16 Adidas (B), 17 Adidas (B)

### **Level 2 - \$4105**

14 Adidas (M), 14 Adidas – N (N), 15 Adidas (B), 17 Black(B)

### **Level 3 - \$3790**

13 Adidas(M), 13 Adidas – N (N), 15 Black(M), 15 Red(N), 16 Black(M), 16 Red(N),

### **Level 4 - \$3580**

12 Adidas(M), 12 Adidas – N (N), 14 Black(M), 14 Red(N), 18 Adidas(B), 18 Black(B), Boys (16/18 Adidas)(B)

### **Level 5 - \$2775**

12 Black(M), 12 Red(N), 13 Black(M), 13 Red(N), Boys 14 Adidas(M), Boys 14 Adidas – N (N)

**POST-SEASON** – Teams which are listed for post-season play are required to attend whichever post season tournament we qualify for or enter in. We expect that athletes are dedicated to the team from the beginning of the season all the way through the last point. Please do not accept placement on a National level team unless you are committed to the season which can run through the end of June or early July.

#### **End of Season Options:**

All-State Sugar Bowl – This mid-May tournament will be the end of season tournament for all our National level 2 teams. All National level 1 teams will attend this tournament.

AAU Nationals – This Mid-June tournament will be the end of season tournament for all our National 1 teams who do not qualify for USAV.

USAV National – This late June, early July tournament will be for ANY national level team who qualifies.

Puerto Rico – This is a special trip that we are planning for all boys teams and we will do a special try-out for our girls teams to send 3-4 teams to Puerto Rico. This will be a planned mission trip in conjunction with the 4 day volleyball event. More details will come out about this trip once our season stars.