Letter from Pittsburgh Elite Volleyball Association

To All Parents, Guardians, and Role Models:

When kids are surveyed about the reasons why they play sports, the #1 response consistently reported is to have fun. In addition to fun, sports also provide an avenue for physical, cognitive, and emotional growth and development. Unfortunately, all of these great things do not automatically happen just because an athlete steps foot into a gym. They are the direct result of your positive efforts as a parent.

Pittsburgh Elite needs your help to foster a safe and positive environment in which all athletes can grow physically, cognitively, and emotionally this season. For this reason, we’ve adopted the Parent Contract. We ask that you please take the time to read and understand the information in this Contract. Then, sign and return the signature page at our annual kick-off meeting in December. If you have questions, please ask.

All in,
The Pittsburgh Elite Staff
Parent Code of Conduct

Relationships
All adults involved in youth sports are role models for our athletes. Yes, this includes parents. Whether you are aware or not, your daughters internalize what you shout from the sidelines, the feedback you give after a tough match, and what you say about their teammates and coaches on the way home from the game. Be a positive role model for your daughter. Provide her with the encouragement and support she needs before, during, and after practices and tournaments, including in the car on the way home.

It is vital that you help your child to embrace her role, no matter what it may be and even if you do not wholeheartedly agree with where she plays. In order for her to have the best possible experience, she will need encouragement to embrace and master her team role. This sets a solid foundation upon which she can begin to expand her contribution to her team.

Winning is important, but so is promoting an environment that enables growth and learning. Your daughter’s team will win. They will also lose. They will certainly make many mistakes. Your unwavering support and encouragement for your daughter and her teammates will teach the most important lesson and allow all athletes to learn from both success and failure.

Your daughter’s coach
When you attended tryouts, you made it known that you were looking to hire a professional to coach your daughter. Show that you were wise with your investment and choice; let the coaches coach. By doing so you will be respecting the daily challenges coaches face and the time commitment and emotional investment they make in your daughter and Pittsburgh Elite.

Help alleviate undue stress on your daughter by supporting her coach’s message. Imagine an athlete’s confusion when her coaching staff and teammates have been practicing strategy A for weeks and are finally seeing success with it when her mother tells her that the whole idea of strategy A is ridiculous, her coach knows nothing, and they’ve been wasting time learning it in the first place. Who does the athlete believe? How does she continue to respect both the coach and her mother? What happens to her enthusiasm for practice and for performing her best at games with her mother looking on?

You may not always agree with your daughter’s coach, but please do not contradict the coach’s message or make public complaints about your daughter’s coach. Support the message. Become familiar with Pittsburgh Elite’s culture and reinforce those expectations with your child. Under no circumstances should you “coach” your daughter, her teammates, or other athletes from the sidelines.
Parent Code of Conduct Continued

Playing Time and Team Composition
Team and age-group placement is at the discretion of Pittsburgh Elite. Pittsburgh Elite does not guarantee equal playing time on any team. Coaches are entrusted to make decisions regarding playing time and team strategies. These decisions, as well as team composition and age-group placement, are non-negotiable with parents, guardians, family friends, and fans. The Athlete Contract outlines a number of factors that influence playing time and team roles. Athletes uncertain about their role on their team or with questions concerning their performance are encouraged to speak directly to their coach. Coaches are available to their athletes and will embrace all conversations as a means by which to help athletes learn, grow, and mature.

Conflict Resolution
If a situation should arise where you or your daughter feels it necessary to have a discussion with your daughter’s coach, please encourage your daughter to do so. Instead of complaining publicly, work to become part of the solution. No parent or family member may approach any Pittsburgh Elite coach at any tournament, scrimmage, or practice regarding any issue pertaining to coaching decisions, teams, performance of athletes, or playing time.

Courtesy is required in all verbal and written communication. Do not criticize, harass, or verbally attack any coaches, staff members, board members, players, parents, opponents, opposing team coaches and staff, athletes and coaches refereeing matches, USAV/JVA/AAU staff, or officials.

If you encounter an uncomfortable situation involving inappropriate behavior from players, coaches, parents, fans, or anyone involved in our volleyball community, please contact Jen Flynn Oldenburg, Associate Director immediately.

The following is our conflict resolution procedure:

1. Athlete and Coach - Athletes are to first approach their coach directly
2. Athlete and Parent with Coach - If the athlete’s concern was not answered to her satisfaction, the athlete and her parent may meet with their coach to discuss the issue.
3. Athlete and Parent with Coach and Mediator - For items requiring further discussion and clarification, the athlete, her parent, and the coach will meet with the Pittsburgh Elite mediator.
4. Athlete and Parent with Coach, Mediator, and Administrator - If the item has not been satisfactorily resolved through any prior steps, the athlete, her parent, the coach, the Pittsburgh Elite mediator, and a Pittsburgh Elite administrator will meet and bring the issue to resolution. Any decision made by the administrator will be final.
Parent Code of Conduct Continued

Tournament Hotels
Pittsburgh Elite teams may compete in Stay to Play tournaments. These are excellent tournaments are typically National Qualifier event competitions or larger events in major urban locations. What makes them Stay to Play is that room rates are pre-negotiated with area hotels and all participants are obligated to stay at one of the tournament’s approved hotels.

The advantage of Stay to Play events is that hotel rates are locked in at lower prices. At large events where all hotels within a few miles are expected to be completely sold out and teams have limited choices without electing to drive in from a half hour away each day, the pre-negotiated rates and early reservations the tournament personnel make help ensure that hotel rates nearest to the tournament venue(s) aren’t raised to unacceptable levels and that room blocks remain available for teams throughout the tournament selection and registration process.

Pittsburgh Elite will provide you information regarding which tournaments require participation in a Stay to Play hotel. In most instances, you will still be able to book a rewards night room and/or use your points to book your stay even at a Stay to Play event.

By joining Pittsburgh Elite, you agree to utilize the approved hotels for Stay to Play events. If a team fails to meet the minimum hotel requirements for a Stay to Play tournament they can be barred from competing at the event without refund. If you have any questions regarding Stay to Play events, how they are administered, why they are beneficial, etc. please ask your Pittsburgh Elite staff.

Tournament and Practice Schedule
Pittsburgh Elite shares each team’s practice and travel schedule as soon as possible each season. There are many variables that influence your daughter’s team’s schedule including coach availability, court availability, holiday schedules, training patterns, rest periods, standardized testing, and tournament availability, to name a few.

As Pittsburgh Elite works to provide each team with the most competitive, consistent, and balanced schedule possible, please refrain from asking for changes to your daughter’s team’s schedule. We will not alter your daughter’s practice time or your tournament schedule. Please do not contact Tournament Directors, other coaches, or administrators to advocate on behalf of your team without prior consent of Pittsburgh Elite. Be aware that the changes you request may benefit your daughter’s team in your eyes but they will also impact many other teams in our program and influence our community’s perception of Pittsburgh Elite.
Parent Code of Conduct Continued

**Sportsmanship**
Your behavior is a model for your daughter and her teammates and should serve as a positive role model at all practices, scrimmages, and tournaments. Behave in a way that exudes sportsmanship, respect, and grace. Parents and guardians are expected to represent the best of Pittsburgh Elite by conducting themselves in an appropriate and respectful manner toward all coaches, staff members, board members, players, parents, opponents, opposing team coaches and staff, athletes and coaches refereeing matches, USAV/JVA/AAU staff, and all officials at all times.

You are responsible for your own behavior and that of your family members and friends at games and practices. Please help us foster a positive community where our athletes are encouraged to work hard, learn from mistakes, and strive for excellence. Our practices and tournaments are open for you to watch, but players are expected to be committed, focused, and attentive to their team and coaches. No one is permitted to “coach” athletes from the sidelines, ever.
Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the Pittsburgh Elite Parent Contract. I agree to follow these rules and policies and I will do everything within my control to make this a positive experience for my daughter, other athletes, families, and coaches.

Athlete’s Name: ________________________________________________________________________________________________

(Last)                                             (First)

Parent’s/Guardian’s Signature:_________________________________________________________________________________

Parent’s/Guardian’s Signature:_________________________________________________________________________________

Date: ________________

Please sign and return only this page to Pittsburgh Elite at the annual kick-off meeting. Retain a copy of the Athlete Contract for your records.