

2019 VbDC AAU Tour Prospectus

The annual Amateur Athletic Union's Volleyball Nationals is a major volleyball tournament in the US sports calendar. Volleyball Development Camps has been invited to form a team to compete in the international division of the tournament. Two years ago, VbDC submitted a request to participate, as a team sponsor for enabling advanced volleyball athletes wishing to take part in a US national tournament – but whose residence outside the US made it impossible for them to participate in the national club structure – to experience this type of event. The request was approved by the AAU Executive Committee at the end of February and an organizing group was formed on 13 March.

The following material constitutes the information available, and planning made since receipt of the AAU Executive Committee's invitation. It is not complete, and persons interested in participating will be able to sign up for a weekly progress report on the organization of the tour by e-mailing VbDC at: vbdc.volley@gmail.com

The information on the following pages is current as of 20 March, 2019:

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Overview of Tour

The AAU, formed in 1888, is one of the oldest sports organizations in the United States. Its volleyball nationals series is the largest volleyball competition in the world, with more than 2,700 teams taking part. The AAU Girl's Nationals is one of the earliest major juniors tournaments of the summer season, taking place approximately one month after most US high schools close for the summer break.

For European athletes, the scale of the event is breathtaking: 150 courts. For US athletes it is one of several national events for which they spend their entire club season in training and preparing. The tournament is attended by university coaches and scouts (more than 600 attended last year) who are there to assess the performance of athletes as potential future members of their interscholastic teams.

Most European volleyball athletes have no idea how to obtain a sports scholarship to a US university. Tens of thousands of American junior players begin looking for volleyball scholarship opportunities several years before their graduation from secondary school. Membership in local clubs, participation in high school interscholastic competition, attendance at US camps, correspondence and personal meetings with coaches (which are regulated by the university sports conferences), submission of videos, and good performance in academics are all part of the process of vying for the limited number of funds and places available. Top teams choose their scholarship recipients as soon as regulations allow, and team rosters at the top schools are frequently identified up to two years before the athletes are legally allowed to join as members of the team. Participation in a series of national tournaments, including the AAU Nationals, is an important part of the process in competing for selection to a university team.

The AAU Nationals is not only an event that provides athletes an opportunity to perform in front of some of the top university representatives in the US and Canada. Playing in the company of volleyball players from some of the leading clubs in North America as well as a select number of leading teams from around the world can be a significant contributor to the development of an athlete's court knowledge, playing skills, teamwork and competitive experience.

Perhaps most important of all, the tournament is fun. No athlete will give their best to a sport if they do not enjoy it. The AAU national competition presents a challenge to the athlete's ability, the off-court activities create a special mood, and the socializing at both offers countless opportunities to make new volleyball acquaintances from around the world. It can be the experience of a lifetime.

Team Formation and Itinerary

It is VbDC's responsibility to form a team that will have the highest visibility for university coaches and scouts, and which will achieve that purpose by performing well at the tournament. VbDC will abide strictly by the AAU's directives for overseas teams, and will cooperate fully with the organization to establish a means for deserving athletes who are not directly involved in the US club and school volleyball structure, to have the opportunity to participate in a major US national tournament.

The time in which to achieve this is very brief, compared to that available to established clubs in the US, and the limited number of clubs and national organizations from outside the US which are permitted to take part. From the date of the AAU Executive Committee's approval of the VbDC request to the start of the tournament is less than 90 days. Persons interested in taking part will need to be quick to make their interest be known. The preparations will involve training sessions, selection of a tournament team from the participants, and an intensive training session just before departing for the tournament. In order to expedite the process, VbDC reserves the right to select up to four athletes for the team in advance, based on its prior knowledge of those athletes' ability to contribute to the success of the tour.

Administration of the process of forming a team and leading the tour will be conducted by Volleyball Development Camps, from its UK offices. Ms. Rachel Hynes will be responsible for the administrative process, and Mr. Babis Mamas, Athletic Director at ACS International School in Cobham, Surrey, will be head coach, assisted by Ms. Hynes. Other members of VbDC will provide administrative and coaching support.

Applications to take part in the training sessions must be received by 6 April, 2019. First training sessions will take place 15-18 April, 2019, at the ACS Cobham International School Sports Arena.

Training sessions will last for one full day. The sessions will cost £30 per day, to include lunch, and will be scheduled to take place as frequently as possible. They will be held at multiple locations in the London vicinity, and all efforts will be made to include locations at gymnasiums in continental Europe, if there is sufficient demand and facilities in appropriate locations are available.

A final try-out session will be held on a date closer to the tournament, and those athletes chosen for the team will then be expected to take part in a longer training session just prior to departure for the tournament. It is anticipated that between 10 and 12 athletes will be chosen for the team.

Tournament Entry, Player Eligibility, and Schedule

The 46th AAU National Volleyball Championships takes place at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex and the Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida, from Sunday 16 – Friday 28 June, 2019. There are eight divisions, which are defined by teams' seasonal performance and seeding, spanning numerous age brackets.

VbDC has been invited to enter a team in the open International Division and will compete with both clubs and national teams from around the globe. The International Division competes on the following dates:

Thursday, 20 June	Team Check-in
Friday, 21 June	Competition – Pool play, AM or PM wave
Saturday, 22 June	Competition – Pool play, AM or PM wave
Sunday, 23 June	Competition – Pool play, AM or PM wave
Monday, 24 June	Competition – Brackets and finals

The team is expected to travel to Florida together on Wednesday 19 June, following a final training and preparation session, to be held in London. Once in the US, athletes will be chaperoned 24/7 for the duration of their stay at the tournament venue and travel. VbDC takes the subject of safeguarding and protecting children seriously. All VbDC coaches and chaperones are DBS cleared (UK security checked) and tournament coaches have attended safeguarding training.

Athletes will be provided with a team playing kit for the tournament including shirt and shorts, but will be expected to bring other suitable kit as necessary for competing over four days, such as sports shoes, knee pads, accessories including injury or injury prevention appliances, and training kit to wear off court.

The AAU offers participants specially discounted tickets to the Walt Disney World theme park. Given the proximity to the resort, we want to take full advantage of this opportunity to provide our athletes with some fun off the court, to relax and to enjoy Orlando's most famous tourist attraction. Return to the UK is 26 June.

Pre-tournament timeline

7 May: Tournament entry deadline. Teams may file prior to this deadline. VbDC Club membership is required before registering as membership is not granted instantly upon request.

31 May: Online completion of team roster for college recruiters – ages 14-18, including shirt numbers, photos, and recruiting information.

7 June: Online completion of hotel and onsite contact information. It is also the last day for any online roster changes, changes after this date can be made at the team check-in.

Team eligibility

All athletes, coaches, chaperones (max 2) and clubs must be current members of the AAU.

International teams must be AAU clubs, and provide a letter of authorization from their national volleyball federation.

Team check-in

A team representative must check-in their team during the designated hours. Necessary documentation at check-in: proof of age for each athlete such as copies of birth certificates, driver's licenses or passports.

Cost

The costs of organizing a tournament team, hiring venues for training sessions, providing playing kit and equipment, transporting the team to and from Florida, and housing, feeding, transporting and chaperoning the team members while at the tournament are still being calculated, and the final cost will be largely dependent on the response to the opportunity.

Sponsorship will be sought for the tour to help defray costs, but as this is a fast track effort, there can be no assurance that sponsorship funding will be available.

For expediency, the budget will be done in British sterling. The final cost for the tour itself is estimated to be in the range of £3,000 to £3,500. Athletes who wish to become involved must pay an initial deposit. The deposit will be applied to the tour cost for those athletes selected for the team, and returned to those who are not selected.

Athletes will be responsible for their transport to the location of training, and all accommodation and board during the training sessions, apart from the lunch provided by VbDC during the day of training. Daily rate for the training sessions, to cover coaching costs, venue hire and lunch, will be £30 per day.

A basic breakdown of the per-individual costs, which will be refined to a final amount as soon as possible and which is dependent on the response, includes:

Return flights to Florida	£ 750
Accommodation and board	£1,000
Team entry fee	£ 100
Administration, supervision, uniform, coaching and insurance	£ 900
Contingencies and emergency fund	£ 250
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Total	£3,000

Personal spending money, not to exceed \$250 in cash, may be brought by the individual athletes.

Athletes who attend a training session, including those who are not selected for the tournament team, will qualify for a 33 percent, non-transferable reduction in the tuition of a scheduled VbDC camp appropriate to their level of skill, provided registration is made within 12 months of the final day of the 2019 tour.

About Volleyball Development Camps

VbDC, the initials by which the company is most widely known, is the marketing name of Volleyball Developments Ltd. a registered UK company. The organization was founded in 2005 as a training club, which held one week-long summer camp a year. It continued for several seasons as a volunteer sports activity run by its three principals, until athletes and parents began asking for additional camps, and for some of those camps to provide training at different levels. Eventually VbDC became a registered limited liability company, and has run as many as 11 camps a year, some of them residential.

It currently attracts athletes from around the globe, many who come to take part in the sports and English language tutoring that is offered. Much of the current focus is on the development of summer camps in and outside the UK, but the organization is also widening its range of activities to include sports scholarship search assistance – for which it has already obtained nearly a half million dollars in financial aid for athletes attending US universities – and in organizing tours for top performing athletes.

Volleyball Development Camps welcomes enquiries about the AAU tour and any other of its activities, and can be contacted a number of ways:

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