

Shawnee Mission Northwest Volleyball

Handbook of Principles and Expectations: Establishing Excellence

Positive talk

“Train your mind to see good in every situation.”

Positivity goes a long way. We strive to eliminate all negative attitudes and self-talk. We want to encourage ourselves in our head and encourage our teammates. We will refuse to use the word “can’t” and believe that nothing is impossible with hard work and an attitude of belief. You got to believe to achieve. In our locker room, we discuss how we WILL beat our next opponent. Always remember, the body can hear what the mind is saying; so make it positive!

No Self Pity

“Don’t be a victim”

In our program, we are constantly striving to be the best. Overcoming obstacles and challenges is the only route to becoming to your best. We take this statement “Don’t be a victim” as a message to never place blame on anyone. We don’t make excuses or have any self-pity. We create an atmosphere where we refuse to justify doing the wrong things or taking shortcuts. And we never feel sorry for ourselves after a tough practice or a tough loss. We do not complain whine about things that seem tough and times that are difficult to get through.

Take and accept criticism with a willing attitude

“A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor.”

All of us are working together for the same goal. In order to reach that goal, we must hold each other accountable to do things the right way on and off the volleyball court. If a teammate is going through the motions, not communicating, not working as hard as they can, or doing a fundamental skill incorrectly, we expect our teammates to remind us what we need to do. When our teammates do remind us and critique us on what we were doing wrong, we do not take it as a personal attack. We realize and accept it as something that will help us and the team. We act in a mature manner when this situation arises and let our teammate’s criticism help, not hinder or upset us.

Communication never stops

“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”

Volleyball is a game of communication. On and off the court the communication should never stop. From calling the ball three times before playing it, discussing game tactics, our opponent’s tendencies, and encouraging teammates, there is a wide range of communication that needs to occur for us to be successful. When we get information from the coach or another teammate, we must make sure it is shared consistently through the group. For example, on a road trip, Coach instructs us to leave our phones on the bus... you are passing that information along until the entire bus knows to leave their phone on the bus. The same tactic is used for situations on the court.

Hold yourself and the team to the highest expectations

“Excellence is a habit, not an act”

High expectations lead to achieving the most success possible. If you don’t expect anything from yourself and the team, how do you plan on achieving it? Every time we step on the court, we play with a purpose and conduct ourselves in a manner that shows we are proud to be playing SMNW volleyball. When we are running sprints, we touch the line every single time, while we are playing defense, we freeze down on all medium to high intensity balls. Commitment to excellence in the first step in achieving excellence. Trust the coaches, teammates, and system “If at first you don’t succeed, try doing what coach told you the first time.” We have created an atmosphere in which all of us, coaches and teammates alike, believe in one another’s abilities and want to see the other succeed. So the trust and honesty shared between each other is of high importance. We trust our coaches and all their decisions, even

though we may disagree, we trust that they know what is best for the team. We trust the system and these principals we have established in order to create the foundation the hold system is based upon.

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Passion carries you through

“Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.”

“No alarm clock necessary, my passion wakes me.”

As volleyball athletes, we pride ourselves on being passionate and loving the game. This passion is ultimately the reason why we step on the court, in the weight room each and every day. The heart and determination of a champion is why they are so successful. There will be times in your career when you question your own ability and your teammates dedication, there will be times when you want to sleep in instead of go to morning weights, times when you want to quit when the block seems 4 feet tall, times when you want to give in when you can’t pass a three to save your life but passion and heart will carry you through. You will remember to suffer now to live the rest of your life a champion. Passion and love of the game is the backbone of all athletic successes.

Recovery

“No rest is worth anything, except the rest that is earned.”

Volleyball is fast-paced game with little time to recover from a mistake made the previous play. Thus, we value the ability to recover very greatly. We mentally recover after a bad play or missed opportunity. By doing so, we are committed and determined to make the next play better. We have short term memory on the volleyball court and put ALL of our focus on the play that is happening. We cannot let mistakes affect our future performance, so we established a 3 second recovery rule. Good or bad play, we have three seconds to get over it and put our focus on the next point.

Utmost commitment to the team and the game

“My favorite part of the game... the opportunity to play.”

Being an athlete is an opportunity that not a lot of people are blessed with. We realize this and because of this, we are committed. Every single player’s full commitment is necessary for our team to be successful. We are committed to one another and to the game. We work as hard as we can day in and day out but we are internally driven to be the best. We value this commitment to excellence and carry it with us on the court, in the weight room, in the classroom, and in society. We are committed to bettering ourselves and our teammates by building up and improving all aspects of the game.

Respect

“The true measure of a man is how he treats you when others are not looking.”

Respect is a factor that SMNW volleyball cannot thrive without. We all show the utmost respect for each other every single day. Even when things get heated, attitudes flare up, situations intensify and we may disagree or dislike something someone has done, we treat them with respect. We show respect to officials, opponents, opposing coaches and fans, our teammates, our coaches, and everyone involved.

Learn every day

“Be a student of the game.”

Volleyball is not only a game of speed, power, and agility; it is a game of intelligence. At Northwest, a phrase you may hear often is “Work smarter.” We pride ourselves in being students of the game by studying the game, knowing when and why we do all the different things we do on the court, and knowing what to expect from our opponents by studying their tendencies as well. Never stop learning, absorbing, and listening; all of these are opportunities to better yourself as a volleyball athlete.

Always support teammates

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

We are committed to one another so supporting one another MUST happen. We strive to build each other up and create an encouraging atmosphere with the entire team. We never lose belief in one another and always voice and show that support we have for each other. An encouraging word can go a very long way, when a teammate is struggling so we look to one another and let them know that we believe in them and their ability.

Confidence is Key (in each other and yourself)

“I may not be the best, but no one is better than me.”

Confidence is a way to achieve great success. Positive talk leads to a growth in confidence. In female athletics, many girls lack confidence and in turn, do not trust their skills but we, SMNW volleyball strive to always be confident and give confidence to each other. When on the court, we trust our abilities and our teammates to get the job done. Confidence is built by hard work and mental strength. Even if it takes you telling yourself over and over again, “I can do it” we strive to never lose our confidence and stay determined to play fearlessly.

Do it the right way, even if it's the long way

“Success isn't given, it's earned. On the track, on the field, in the gym. With blood, sweat, and the occasional tear.”

NO SHORTCUTS! Every rep on the volleyball court and in the weight room is done to the best of your ability. We do not take the easy way out and refuse to do the “easy” thing. Champions are built from a committed attitude to do everything the right way. This also coincides with our lives off the volleyball court. On campus and in society, we do the right things and make the right decisions.

Embrace failures, strive to better yourself everyday

“It's difficult to be someone who never gives up”

“Fail harder”

The only to move forward is to overcome our setbacks. We strive to push ourselves to the limit and in doing, we will fail. We embrace that failure because we did our best and gave our best effort. We fail harder now so it will be easier to succeed in the future. Each and every day is a day to battle and to put in good work to make ourselves better athletes and people. Focusing on improvement each and every day is also a key part of the foundation Drury volleyball is built upon.

Set the example; LEAD

“Your greatness is not what you have, but what you give.”

Leading by example is a powerful form of leadership because it lets others know what the culture of SMNW volleyball is. Because of the high standards we hold and expectations we have, we constantly have the opportunity to lead others by our work ethic, commitment, and discipline we have to the game. This is crucial to letting the new teammates how we operate in this system. We consistently do the right things and make the right decisions, all while showing other how it should be done, being a role model to each other to encourage them to do that same thing.

Take care of your body, mind, and spirit

“The body achieves what the mind believes.”

As an athlete, your body should be treated kindly because it does so much for your ability and ultimately, your success. We take care of our body but putting good things in it, making sure we have a healthy, balanced diet, we do not drink alcohol or smoke, or do anything else that could harm our body. We also believe our mental health is of high importance, we believe in order to perform at your best you need to be focused and fully engaged at the task at hand, so we strive to resolve all issues outside of volleyball that could put additional stress on the athlete in healthy way.

Perfect practice

“To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift”

“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.”

Fundamentals and repetition is the foundation upon all of our volleyball skills are built. We work each day to do all the small things correctly and do those things repetitively because practice is the way we become successful. Each time we step on the floor, we perform in a consistent way with our coaches' instruction and hold our teammates accountable to be doing the same thing. We train our bodies in the right way so when competition comes; the movement and skills we must perform under game time pressure are ingrained in our mind and body can do them without having to think about it, leading us to better and more confident performance.

Build relationships with all teammates

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”

The relationships between teammates have a direct correlation on how they interact together when on the court. We value team chemistry and all benefits of strong, open relationships between teammates. When you have new teammates reach out to them and get to know them, teach about our traditions and principles we have here so they will feel more comfortable and excited to step on the court with you.

Responsibility

“The price of greatness is responsibility.”

Not only on the volleyball court or in the classroom, but in our lives we take responsibility for our actions. We know that we have a lack of control when it comes the issues and experiences we have in our life, we also cannot control others around us, but we do have control on how we react to everything and how we can take responsibility to be the best person and athlete we can be. We are responsible for all of our actions, words, and ourselves.

Refuse to Lose

“Every champion was once a contender that refused to give up.”

We have established the culture and expectation of doing all we can and being completely committed to the team's success. We carry the attitude of refusal to lose and we know that in order to see this success, we must prepare our bodies and minds. As John Wooden says, “Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.” When we share this mindset of refusing to lose, we share the same standard of never, EVER giving up. Never giving up on ball during practice/games, giving up in the weight room, and never giving up on each other. Losing is not acceptable in this program so we always play with toughness and grit, and never give in.

Mental strength

“Willpower knows no obstacles.”

“Champions believe in themselves, even when no one else does.”

Similar to confidence, our mental confidence is very important when it comes to our physical performance. Mental strength is just as important, if not more important than our physical strength. When you consistently push yourself past your “limits” and break down your walls, you will build your mental strength and be more consistent in your mental game. In the weight room and on the court, our mental strength is tested every day, when we don't back down and refuse to give in, we become a little bit more mentally stronger.

Strength comes from the struggle

“The pain you suffer today, will be the strength you feel tomorrow.”

Playing volleyball for Shawnee Mission Northwest is not easy. And we as athletes welcome that challenge and all the difficulties we will have to overcome but we believe it will make us better. If everything was always easy, we wouldn't learn how to fight or dig deep or persevere when the going gets tough. After a mistake, we learn from it and we make the next play better. After a loss, we learn from it and win the next one. The only way to grow stronger and improve as a team is to be put in uncomfortable situations and then fight through them. Every day is a day we can get stronger, mentally and physically.

Team over Me

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”

We have all heard the old saying “there's no i in team, except in the a-hole.” Maybe that last part isn't necessary but the “WE not me” mentality is. Volleyball is a team sport and an individual cannot be successful in volleyball without those surrounding her. Drury volleyball understands that it takes a team to win a championship and we put the team's goals above our individual intentions and desires.

Leave it better than when you came

“Greatness has no peak.”

At Northwest, we are striving to create a culture, an atmosphere, and a program that strives for excellence. All of the work and time we put into this program is to maintain that high expectation of being great. When you leave, you should be leaving a program that is better than when you first arrived. Through discipline, dedication, hard work, and sacrifice from each person involved in our program, volleyball will have an established foundation of being champions in all we do and what we continue to do in our lives.