

MacKenzie Upchurch 13U Gold Head Coach

In a conversation with my daughter, my mother (Becca's grandma) recently explained, "All adults are just big kids at heart. Look at your mom, all she wants to do is go to school and play volleyball." While not entirely untrue, I have dedicated myself to playing, teaching and coaching the sport of volleyball for over half my life.

I started playing volleyball in 7th grade for both my middle school and club. I grew up in the Ohana Volleyball Club system in Forest Grove and graduated from Forest Grove High School. Although a smaller program, I was afforded experiences such as playing high level volleyball with a core group of girls I grew up with, traveling and participating in the Volleyball Festival at UC Davis for 3 years. I understand what it means to be the "utility player" and what an awesome skill set and sometimes frustrating position that can be. I was trained as a 5-1 setter and right side player but have also played middle blocker or outside all around as needed. As a senior, I knew my abilities better led me to teaching and not playing in college so I started coaching club my senior year of high school. The majority of my time has been spent with 14-16U teams and I am comfortable at all skill levels and abilities.

Coaching experience includes:

- 4 years at Ohana with 14-16U teams
- 1 year JV coach Gaston High School
- 4 years Head Varsity Coach Newberg High School
 - 2013 Pacific Conference League Champions
 - 2 years 3rd in league ranking, 1 year 2nd in league ranking
 - 2 time PAC 10 high school coach of the year nominee
 - Dairy Farmers of Oregon Academic All-State, 6A Top 10 in student GPA for 3 years
- 8 years with Newberg Tigers/Willamette Valley Volleyball Club various 14-16U teams
 - 2011-2012 14's Gold ranked 11th in CEVA
 - 17th (1st in Bronze) at Spokane National Qualifier
 - 17th (1st in Bronze) at Seattle President's Day Tournament

I have adopted a simple coaching philosophy over the last several years, which continues to change as I gain more experience. In general, these are life lessons we all can apply on a daily basis which is why I feel youth athletics are so important during adolescence in particular.

Play with passion
Work to win
Be an ideal teammate
Act on opportunities
Anticipate challenges
Do exceptional work

Be egoless
Embrace change
Be drama-free
Have fun and give good high-fives