

Dear Fairfax Volleyball Club Members,

If you participate or have recently participated in any Fairfax Volleyball Club (FVC) activity (including leagues, tournaments, clinics, open play, etc.) then you are considered a member of our club. Feedback from our members continues to be a key component in the operations and decision making process for us. In the past, feedback has been obtained through conversations, then emails and most recently through electronic surveys. In addition to surveys, there is the realization that our members vote with their feet, for better or worse. At the end of 2013 we conducted a member survey regarding the benefits versus the costs of having paid USA Volleyball (USAV) certified referees for league play. This was one element of several that we have been considering in an effort to control our league costs. In addition to specific questions, we used this opportunity to gather open-ended comments. We would like to take this opportunity to not only to share the results of the survey, but also address some of the comments we received. Perhaps the best way to do this is to provide a brief history of the Fairfax Volleyball Club which will give you, the member, a better understanding of how we got to where we are today. It will also familiarize you with some of the challenges we have overcome and some that we are still facing.

Since Fairfax Volleyball Club's founding in 1979, our organization's purpose has remained the same; the promotion of the sport of volleyball in Northern Virginia. There are several means in which we accomplish this. The largest by far and the one you are most likely familiar with is the facilitation of adult league play. A vast majority of our resources are dedicated to constantly maintaining and when possible, improving our member's league experience. Over the past ten years this has been increasingly difficult with two areas in particular, court space and referees.

Until 2005, all court space consisted of school gyms acquired through Fairfax County. Each year there are an increasing number of organizations competing for a dwindling amount of available gym space. This is particularly problematic for a volleyball organization since there are only a handful of available gyms in the county suitable for playing volleyball. For these select gyms we have made investments by installing floor sleeves and net systems which we store at schools but own and are responsible for the up keep of. For those who participate in leagues utilizing the county school gyms, you know firsthand how difficult it is to obtain consistent gym times. It is important to understand that we do not receive all of the gym space we apply for and we do not always receive the gyms we request. We are at the mercy of the county. Some gyms are not available for most of December and some leagues we cannot offer in the spring because the gyms are used for SOL testing. Add unplanned gym/school closings into the mix and you end up with varied start dates, inconsistent finish dates and erratic week to week play dates that are beyond our control.

Early in the 2000's we realized we had reached max capacity based on Fairfax County school gym availability and searched Northern Virginia for alternative gym sources. In 2005, we signed a five-year contract with Dulles Sportsplex in Sterling, Virginia. With the inauguration of the new space, we saw a rapid increase in the number of teams that we were servicing and very quickly reached max capacity in this facility as well. With this in mind, in 2008 we signed a contract with Virginia Volleyball Center (VVC), also in Sterling, Virginia to keep up with league demand and planning for additional growth. These were expensive and risky investments since we were obligated to purchase the contracted court hours in advance. We reached our peak number of teams in 2010 without reaching max capacity. Since then, we have seen a steady decline in the number of teams signing up for leagues. So in late 2013 it was decided to let our contract with Dulles Sportplex lapse and consolidate all of the Fairfax West leagues to the VVC. Court rental continues to be our largest expense. But without it, we would not be able to support our leagues, especially with the decreasing availability of county gym space.

We have always felt that providing USAV certified referees is a key element that separates our leagues from most other leagues in the region. However, certified referees are our second largest expense. In the past year we have taken a particularly hard look at whether the value of paying for certified referees is worth the additional cost of the league. Last year we started a reverse coed fours league and used this as an opportunity to test our first self-ref league. Although not without issue, we feel it was successful. When looking at the paid official versus self-ref across the broader spectrum of leagues, we thought a member survey would be a great starting point. The results of the survey are included below. As you can see, the results do not tilt the scale in one direction or the other. Based on this, we have decided to table the decision for the time being and continue the leagues with paid officials. As part of these discussions, we were successful in negotiating a reduction in the referee fees.

While court rental and referee fees are our top two expenses, we do have others. Most are the typical expenses you would associate with running a business or in this case a non-profit organization. We have little or no control over many of these expenses which include county fees, business license fees, storage rental and insurance. In the past year we have reduced costs in the expenses we have control over such as our website, registration system, advertising and equipment/merchandise inventory.


Throughout this letter the terms 'we' and 'organization' have been used, but we have not really explained who exactly that is. Fairfax Volleyball Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer organization. We consist of a Council with ten unpaid

volunteers and one paid, very part time Administrator. If you are interested in joining the Council, please let us know. We are always looking for new people with a fresh perspective. Regardless, we appreciate your participation in our leagues and we would like to encourage you to continue to provide us feedback. As we mentioned earlier, we realize our members vote with their feet. We are always interested in why people play or have stopped playing in our leagues.

Sincerely,



The Fairfax Volleyball Club Council

Do you think it's important to always have a USA Volleyball referee?
 1 = Not Important, 2 = Somewhat Unimportant, 3 = Neither Important nor Unimportant, 4 = Somewhat Important, 5 = Very Important


	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
						110	3.6

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

Would you be willing to pay a higher league fee to ensure that there is a USA Volleyball referee at each match you play?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			51	45.9 %
No			60	54.0 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
Totals			111	100%

Would you be willing to have your peers/fellow players facilitate matches in lieu of having USA Volleyball referees if it meant not having to pay higher league fees?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			59	53.1 %
No			52	46.8 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
Totals			111	100%