

2023 AVCA Club Awards



Gabe Aramian

A5 Volleyball

Club Director of the Year

Team name: A5 16-Gabe

How long have you been at your club? 17 years

Team record in 2023-2023:

- #1 Ranked Club in the Nation (Triple Crown)
- 5 Gold Medals USAV and AAU National Championships
- 15 Medals USAV and AAU National Championships
- 30 Qualifier Medals (11 Gold)
- 25 Teams Qualified

Other places you have coached:

- Auburn 2010-2011
- Coastal Carolina 2011-2013



What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

Obsession. Obsession with a complex sport. Obsession with building a volleyball empire. Obsession with being the best. Obsession with doing what everyone said can't be done - "Georgia compete with SoCal, the Mid West, and Texas? HA!." Obsession with developing every player in the city of Atlanta. Obsession with changing the landscape and perception of women's sports in the south. Obsession with creating a unique product. At the crossroads of life, I had many paths, but for some reason the whims of the great magnet pulled me towards volleyball, and I became obsessed.

Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

Bob Westbrook is at the top of the list. Celebrating his 50th year of coaching, Bob brought me under his wing and led me to this improbable place in life. Also, Jozsef Forman, in my opinion one of the great tacticians of training and systems modeling - whose roots go back to the legendary Sun De Lee. Other coaches of influence include Mike Lingenfelter and Craig Skinner.

What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

My favorite part about my job is that it isn't a real job - a common quip in our industry. It isn't a 9-5, it isn't in a cubicle, it isn't bureaucratic or corporatized, and it isn't a job that sucks the life out of you day in and day out. It's the flexibility that is my favorite part, the flexibility to be me, to strive, to lead, to succeed, and to fail, without overarching industry constraints, all while being with the people whose company I enjoy most.

Additional comments:

Thanks, to the AVCA committee for this prestigious reward. Thank you to everyone who helped me along this path: coworkers, friends, and family.



Kim Benka

MN Select

Boys Club Director of the Year

How long have you been at your club? 10 yrs on and off

Team record in 2023-2023:

- 15 National 2nd place at Boys Winter Championship
- 18 National 5th at Dennis Lafata
- 15 Regional Black 3rd at AAU Nationals
- 16 National 1st at Molten Wisconsin Festival
- 17 National 7th in Open at Dennis Lafata
- 16 Regional Black 1st NCR Winter Warmup
- 17 Regional Maroon 2nd NCR Boys Battle Royale

Other places you have coached:

- MN Select 2003-2007, 2010-11, 2018-current
- St. Catherines University 2011-2015
- M1 2014-2018
- Minnehaha Academy 2017-current

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

I started coaching because of my love for the game. Volleyball has been a major part of my life for 32 years. I got a coaching minor while playing in college and knew I wanted to stay involved with volleyball in some capacity. I love the relationships you build with players and watching their growth whether they are a beginner or an experienced player, it is so wonderful.

Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

My 18's JO coach Dan; we had a wonderful season and he truly grew the teams passion for volleyball. I am surrounded by great coaches in MN that I learn from daily and look to for advice; Scott Jackson (MN Select Owner/Director), Marci Taumalolo, also the coaches from other MN colleges Hugh McCutcheon, Brady Starkey & Beth Wilmeth.



What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

Interacting with the players and building a relationship with them. Seeing when the skill they have been working on finally clicks and they find success.

Additional comments:

It has been an amazing experience being a part of the growth of boys volleyball in MN. I was helping coach at MN Select in 2018 and we had 4 teams. In 4 years we added 16 competitive teams and put forward 20 teams in 2022. We will continue to add teams in 2023 now that Minnesota has added boys volleyball to the MSHSL. The sky is the limit for boys volleyball coming out of Minnesota., the future is bright.



Bryan Jones

S3 Volleyball

Beach Club Director of the Year

How long have you been at your club? Entering 10th season

Team record in 2023-2023:

- Added two new locations inside the city limits of Atlanta- now training out of four sets of beach courts around the metro area. Including offering beach volleyball training at the Georgia State Beach Complex right in the heart of downtown Atlanta.
- Hosted the first ever JVA Beach Summit- we had 10 beach volleyball club coaches/directors meet up for a two day event where we shared some great time together off the court, but then also were able to share our ideas (drills and skills) on the court.
- Train over 260 beach athletes, many of which specialize only in beach and do not play indoor club.
- Introduced a youth program for rising 4th, 5th and 6th graders who want to learn the game of beach volleyball.
- Took 24 players out to California to compete in AVP and BVCA Nationals
- Have numerous 1st, 2nd and 3rd place doubles tournament finished around the southeast.
- Competed in 6 BVCA Club Vs Club Challenges- which mirror the collegiate competition model- winning the Club Challenges at Hyden Beach and Clearwater Beach.
- Growing the beach game in and around the Atlanta area as a whole.

Other places you have coached:

- 14-1 Assistant- North Atlanta Volleyball Club: 1995
- 14-1 HC- Volleyball Atlanta/Atlanta Juniors 1998-1999
- 16-1 Asst- Atlanta Juniors- 2000
- Assistant Coach Pope High School, Marietta GA- 1998-2000
- Head Coach Pope High School, Marietta GA- 2001- 2017. 8 Time Region Champs & 3 Time State Champs
- S3 Volleyball Founder/Director 2014 to present



What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

I began playing volleyball competitively in my later years of high school. Around the same time I got a summer job helping to run summer sports camps. I really enjoyed being around the kids and teaching them how to play various games. I also started to help out on any volleyball training I could find. I just wanted to learn the game. I went on to The University of Georgia and majored in Health & Phys Ed. Ever since I have graduated I have been coaching volleyball in some fashion, whether in or outdoors.



Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

I've been very privileged to work with some great coaches in the beginning of my coaching career: Rex Welch, the director of Atlanta Juniors from 1999-2002; Medra Ashmore, the Head Coach that retired from Pope High School in 2000. These two were crucial in the fact that they really made me feel welcome in the world of coaching.

Ever since then I have really enjoyed the picking many coaches brains and watching how other coaches run drills and interact with their teams.

What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

Getting to support the youth athlete. It's a privilege to get to work with such a wonderful group of athletes. I enjoy seeing the growth from year to year and being able to keep up with these athletes down the road in their playing careers....and when some of them become coaches themselves, it's awesome.

Additional comments:

I feel so very proud to lead our incredible staff of 15+ beach only volleyball coaches, and to see the impact and growth specifically in the beach game around the Atlanta area and even through the southeast. I attribute S3's success to the dedication of our staff and to the work ethic of our athletes.



Kourtney Crawford

Team Pineapple
18's Coach of the Year



How long have you been at your club? 4 years

Team record in 2023-2023: 50-18

Other places you have coached:

- 2017 Bishop Chatard High School
- 2017-2019 University of Indianapolis
- 2017-2019 The Academy Volleyball Club
- 2019-2023 Goshen College
- 2019- Present Team Pineapple

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

My mom. I was in college and I was a broke, student-athlete who needed to find an easy way to make money but also something I was going to enjoy. She told me to coach club volleyball and I told her no. I loved teaching, that was part of my minor, and I knew I loved volleyball. But was I good enough to coach? She told me to just try it for a year and make the decision then. I ended up falling in love with it! I was able to combine my love of teaching and volleyball into one.

Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

My college coach, Jody Rogers has influenced me the most. I find a lot of what I do in volleyball is something that I learned from her. She taught us valuable life lessons through the game of volleyball. The life lesson I took away the most was to always be a strong, independent woman!

What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

I have two practice drills that are my favorite! The first one would have to be Dig or Die. 6v6. You play a regular set and if there is a ball that doesn't get touched by the other team you scream DIE and they go back to 0 no matter how many points they had. The object of the game is to touch as many balls as possible.

The next one is Hand to Hand Combat. 6v6. It can be off of serve or freeballs; if you use your hands you have 3 contacts. If you use your platform, you only have 2 contacts. It emphasizes using your hands, communication, as well as listening.

**What is your favorite part of your coaching job?**

My favorite part of the job is the relationships I make. There's always going to be people that don't like you or like your coaching style but then there are athletes that think you're the best. Those are the relationships that make doing what we do worth it. When I have previous players calling me to tell something exciting is happening in their lives, or even the opposite. Or even that they are getting into coaching. The best is when I see previous players coaching at tournaments. It's such a full circle moment!

Additional comments:

I'm so blessed to be here and even being thought of for this award! In February of 2020, I was diagnosed with heart disease; which at some point will require a heart transplant along the way. It came as a complete shock. There were no previous symptoms or anything like that. I thought my life as I knew it was over. I had surgery in March of 2020 to implant a defibrillator and a pacemaker in my chest. My Cardiologist told me I was no longer allowed to play volleyball, which was devastating. But he has allowed me to coach, and that's the biggest blessing of it all! I take every practice, every tournament, and every match like it could be my last, because I truly never know if it will be.



Rosie Wettstein
Fox Cities Elite
17's Coach of the Year

Team name: Rosie Wettstein

How long have you been at your club? 4 years

Team record in 2023-2023: I believe it was about 68-22, roughly

Other places you have coached:

- Fox Cities Elite 2019 - Present
- Appleton North High School 2018-present
- Kimberly High school 2011-2018
- FVP Coach and tournament director 2018-2019
- Wisconsin Volleyball Academy 2013-2018.

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

I have always enjoyed coaching youth growing up, helping with the younger in all the sports I played. I was given an opportunity shortly after I graduated to come back and coach. My love and passion for the game just continued to grow from there. Being able to see the impact and changes in young athletes lives will always be the greatest kind of win for me.

Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

I have learned many things from all the coaches I have coach with/along side at FC Elite. Amy Daley has been a huge role in my coaching career with Elite as well as my personal life. She has been a big motivator for myself and continues to push me to get better. Brett ,Jeff VL , and Steve have helped me expand my coaching knowledge and find myself as a coach. My assistants I have had my last couple years, I couldn't have done my seasons without, Jess or Amanda. Both were not afraid to challenge things I would say and in the end it made myself and the team better. I am extremely thankful for all coaches at FC Elite and appreciate all the opportunities they continue to give me.



What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

This season we did a lot of Wisconsin passing as well as a serving/endurance drill. If my girls could pick, it would be hitting lines vs 6 or any type of fast competitive game we have learned over the years or one we made up.

What is your favorite part of your coaching job?

Getting to know each and every athlete. I am a big family first person, so my goal for the beginning of every season is to try and create that atmosphere for the girls. I feel like that has helped my teams be successful and the girls wanting to continue to come to practice every week.



Dave Bayer

**Milwaukee Sting
16's Coach of the Year**

Team name: Sting 16 Gold (girls), Sting 16-1 (boys)

How long have you been at your club? 7 years

Team record in 2023-2023:

- 16-Gold = 61 wins 23 losses
- 16-1 = 59 wins 7 losses

Other places you have coached:

- Milwaukee Sting: 2017-present
- Georgia Juniors / Prolink: 2013-2016
- Capital Volleyball Academy: 2007-2012
- Wisconsin Power: 2005-2007
- Sports Performance: 1997-2005
- Milwaukee Sting: 1995-1997
- Munciana: 1991-1995

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

It was my passion to give back to the sport of volleyball which has been so good to me throughout my lifetime.

Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

- Don Shondell
- Wes Lyon
- Craig Skinner
- John Cook
- Joe Lynch
- Arie Sellinger
- Pete Waite



What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

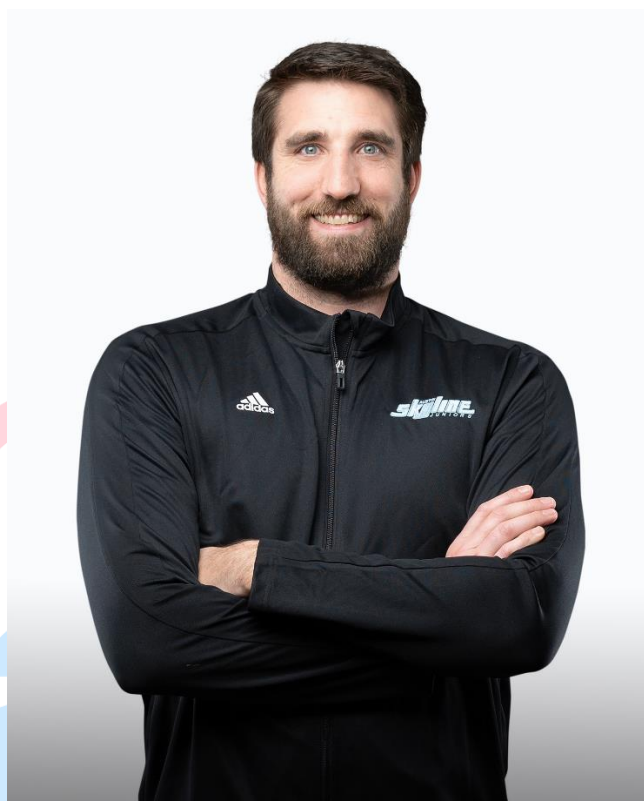
I enjoy training all areas of the game and putting teams in challenging drills to help them learn how to compete outside their comfort zone.

What is your favorite part of your coaching job?

Working alongside players and coaches who have the same passion for the game as I do.

Additional comments:

I am incredibly grateful to do a job that I love alongside some amazing people I work with here at Sting.



Joe Sunder

Austin Skyline Juniors

15's Coach of the Year

Team name: 15 Royal

How long have you been at your club? 7 Years

Team record in 2023-2023: 71-19

Other places you have coached: I started my coaching career at Austin Skyline

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

I really started to get involved with coaching when I saw a strong desire for technical improvement in the Austin area, and I felt that I had a wealth of knowledge from my past playing experience that I could share to help meet that need. Playing at the highest level, I felt a desire to pass on the knowledge I have learned from others to the next generation and continue to grow the game.

Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

My coaching style has been shaped mostly by high school basketball coach Bill Swan who brought a balance of intensity for the game and care for the athletes. He knew how to hold his athletes accountable and push them to play at their highest level, all while supporting them on and off the court.



What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

A drill called "Bank" that challenges the girls to strategize their serve receive rotations and string together as many consecutive side outs as possible. They play for a set time, and as long as you are siding out, you get to keep receiving and adding up points. At any point on your sideout run, you can choose to bank (or keep) your points that you have earned. If you lose a sideout without banking, you lose all points you earned in that round. It is fun to see the wheels spinning as they strategize with each other on a running clock.

What is your favorite part of your coaching job?

Watching players work on and improve specific skills, especially ones they did not know they were capable of. Then seeing those players apply those skills in matches which leads to improved individual performance and ultimately generates team success.

Additional comments:

Thank you for this award. I appreciate the recognition and am honored to received it among the amount of great coaches there were in this age group this season.



AMERICAN VOLLEYBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION

Joe Banske
Motion Volleyball Players
14's Coach of the Year

Team name: 14 Blue

How long have you been at your club? 2 seasons

Team record in 2023-2023:

- Champions, Badger Region, Open Gold
- 2nd- Cream City Challenge 15s Division
- 2nd - Deer District Block Party 15s Division
- 3rd- Queen of Quad City
- 26- JVA World Classic
- Overall 41-51

Other places you have coached:

- Milwaukee Sting 2018-2021
- Waukesha South High School 1995-2004, 2018-present

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

I am a passionately competitive lover of this game. While I originally started coaching with an emphasis on sport, I found the truest love was how I learned about life through the sport and that I could help my players grow in that way too. I have been so blessed to have former players come back and share stories about their time with our teams and how it helped shape their lives. To have parents describe the change in the child's confidence or life focus as a result of them being coached by me. I must admit that I don't really recall many wins on the court, but I surely recall the many wins off the court and it's those wins that matter to me the most...but I still enjoy a championship win here and there and my teams have a few of those as well. My girls this year will always be BADGER REGION CHAMPIONS!



Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

Richard Griesheim was my coach back in 1985 and 1986. I love the fire he helped put in my body for the game and the value in teaching the next generation to learn and love the game. Currently, I am so thankful to Kelly Sheffield from Wisconsin for sharing wisdom, and opportunity for continued knowledge and inspiration.

What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

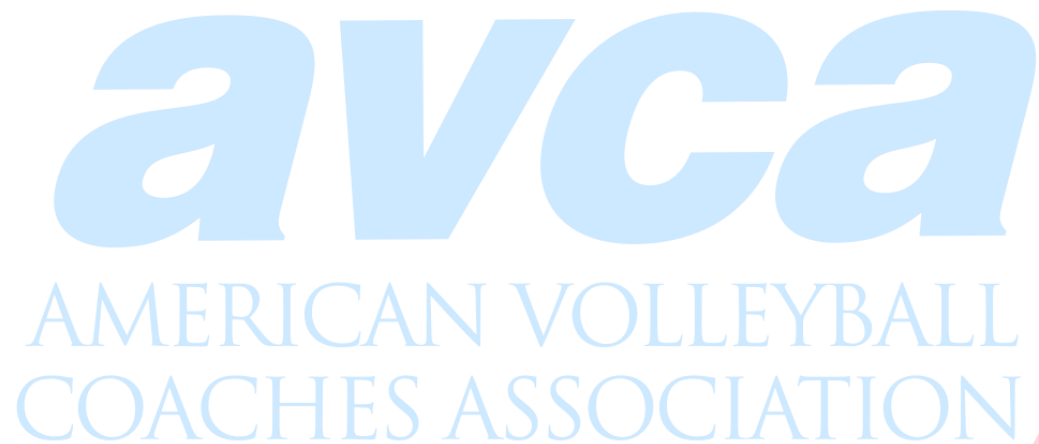
+5/-5 hitter vs defense. The set up is a free all handled by libero with a setter and attacker. The attacker needs to get to +5 by getting kills on full court defense. Anytime defense wins the attacker score is reduced by 1. So if hitter gets 1 kill but then defense digs and successfully attacks the attacker loses a point. This is usually a timed drill- but you could play until the attacker either gets to +5 or fails at -5. This drill helps us focus on competing and isolates the attacker to be coached on footwork and ball attack execution

What is your favorite part of your coaching job?

I love teaching. I love teaching players about tools and strategies of the game. I love teaching players to grow mentally, socially and emotionally. I love when my team over achieves their preconceived expectations. I love teaching players to identify their personal and team values and how to pursue those values. My coaching motto for my teams - PURSUING, ATTACKING, DEFENDING, COMMUNICATING ...ITS NOT JUST HOW WE PLAY- ITS WHO WE ARE

Additional comments:

This is an amazing moment in my life. That someone saw my passion for our sport and our players in such a way that they were moved to share their experiences with AVCA. I recently posted that some people desire extravagant vacations to great destinations but for me..well just get me to the University of Wisconsin, Madison Fieldhouse and let me coach some players. This game is in my very soul. If I win that power all you can bet all you have there is a new gym focused on volleyball breaking ground asap. Heck even my dog is named...PEPPER :)





Daniele Moura

Elite Volleyball Academy 13's Coach of the Year

Team name: EVA 13 National

How long have you been at your club? 6 years

Team record in 2023-2023: EVA 13 national finished the 2022-23 season being ranked 46th in the nation. 71-8 Record

Other places you have coached:

I have been coaching at Eva for 6 years since its first season in 2018 in Little Rock, Arkansas. I am also a high school head coach at Pulaski Academy in Little Rock. I am going into my 2nd season as a high school head coach. I was also their 9th grade head coach in 2019.

In my first season was high school head coach, we won our conference tournament. It was a huge accomplishment as building a new program.



What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

I grew up watching my sister playing volleyball. I fell in love with the sport. I decided to get into coaching because I love to teach the skills and watching my players getting better is what drives me to keep it going. It's so fun to coach and watch players develop their skills. I have so much passion for the game of VOLLEYBALL. It's the most fun sport ever.

Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

All my coaches were important to me. They all played a significant part in my life. The most influential coach/person and mentor is coach Tanja Eckart Eva's club director. She has taught me so much and guided me to be the best I can be.

All my coaches back home in Brazil. Jose Carlos Zanolo, Bethania Melo, Irma Conrado (Osasco Bradesco), Helio Almeida (Biro), Junior Costa, and my college coach Van Compton at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. They all played a role in the coach who I am today.



What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

I like Speedball drill, as everyone is involved and getting a lot of touches , and over the net hits and serve receive.

What is your favorite part of your coaching job?

My favorite part of coaching is when my players listen and apply what I am teaching.

Additional comments:

I was born and raised in Brazil. I started playing when I was 11 years old. Played in Brazil for 7 years and I was recruited to come and play for the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 2009. I have been coaching since when I was in college helping my coach with her JO'S teams.

I have always like to teach fundamentals and I have attended so many clinics and I enjoy learning from successful coaches.



Julio Arnaiz

**Miami Volleyball Academy
12's Coach of the Year**

Team name: MVA 12 Julio

From Julio's nomination:

“Julio Arnaiz has led this team to play at a very high level this season. Playing in Open divisions in every tournament this year and have been placing in the top three of the Gold Bracket every time. Several players have developed into very consistent and solid players under Julio's guidance... In addition to this, Julio also coaches a team in 15u age group and they have also been playing Open and USA in every tournament this season. They were in the Gold Bracket in the Sunshine State Qualifier and the Big South Qualifier as well.”



Kevin Pond

River City Volleyball Academy
Boys Coach of the Year



How long have you been at your club? 1 year

Team record in 2023-2023: 47-12

Other places you have coached:

- Old Dominion Volleyball Academy 2019-2022
- Richmond Volleyball Club 1999-2018
- Ashland Revolution Volleyball Club 1997-1998
- Patrick Henry High School 1996-2005
- Deep Run High School 2006-current

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

So I could get off the Farm. Actually not too far from the truth. I loved playing in high school and on the beach and thought it would be great to help my High School alma mater continue to build a program. An added bonus was it got me off the Farm where I work everyday! Additionally my younger brother was starting High School and I thought this would be a great way to spend time with him. 27 years later I am still getting off the Farm to coach!



Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

I know this may be the easy answer but all of them. I feel I have taken a little something from every coach I have had the opportunity to be around. My Wife Elizabeth is an amazing coach and I have learned the most about myself through her.

Tony Steiner who has been my assistant throughout over half of these years is an amazing technical coach who is always pushing me to continue learning.

Other great coaches in our area over the years such as Skip Weston and Joe Sullivan have been great mentors.

More notably to rest of the volleyball world I have always enjoyed through videos, books etc, learning from great coaches like John Dunning, Terry Liskevych and the late Dr. James Coleman to name a few.



What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

I love any drill that gets lot's of athletes involved and learning to play multiple positions especially for the younger athletes. "Snake" as we call it in the gym has the athletes snake their way from serving and playing right back, through every position on the defensive side of the net, crossing the net and then playing all offensive positions. No excuses from the middles that they can't pass or the Pins that they can't set. Everyone gets a shot at all the skills. Of course everyone get's the most excited when the small Libero blocks the middle!

What is your favorite part of your coaching job?

Teaching. I can run clinics all day and not get bored for a second! The best is the "ah ha" moment when a young athlete understands what it is you are asking them to do and they start to build confidence in the skill they are working on. Also the relationships. So many good people, from coaches, athletes. parents, tournament staff and even refs. Getting to know all these people over the years is truly a blessing.



Pri Piantadosi-Lima

Optimum Beach

Beach Coach of the Year

Team name: Optimum Beach

How long have you been at your club? 10 years

Team record in 2022-2023:

- In 2022 we were AVP West Coast and East Coast Champions in 18U.
- 2022 We were awarded USAV Club of the year and i was USAV Jrs Female Beach Coach of the Year.
- 2023 - AAU National Champions, AVP Jrs National Runner-up
- USAV National Team Players Ashley Pater and Kennedy Coakley's coach
- USAV National Team U23 Head Coach
- USAV NTDP Boys U19 Head Coach

Other places you have coached:

- Eckerd College 2013-2016 until Optimum Beach took off and took more of my time.
- USAV NTDP - 2019-Present
- I have trained many international teams and delegations 2014-Present: Trinidad & Tobago Federation, Aruba Federation, Colombia, Scotland, Slovenia, UK, Brazil
- 2013 AVP Pro Players Kim Hildreth and Teegan VanGunst coach - 5th in AVP Miami, 7th in New Orleans
- My Juniors Ashley Pater and Kennedy Coakley qualified for teh AVP Pro Tour Miami



What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

As a junior player in my club in Brazil I got called to coach the younger age kids. Once I came to America, I started coaching club and HS and never stopped since then. Even during my professional career, I still coached many upcoming pros and juniors. Coaching has always been part of my life since I was 18 years old. I just didn't know later on that I would find my true gift to the world. At first I wanted to help people play better, then I realized how I could impact lives and help players beyond volleyball.

Which coach(es) have influenced you the most?

All coaches have taught me so much. Most taught me what to do, some what NOT to do lol. I'd say Julio Kunz, my indoor club coach in Brazil has a huge part in the type of coach I am today.

Ursula Quoyeser, my first boss in the USA, has molded me and taught me a level of professionalism that I wouldn't have found anywhere else. She coaches from love, with high standards and always keeping the big picture in mind. She teaches them life lessons and never, never takes anything personal from the players. Best mentor I have ever had that I can call a friend now.

Misty May-Treanor has been an incredible supporter from the day I met her. Whether that was taking me in and having me be her plus 1 at practices and genuinely helping me be my best, or being an Ambassador for BVWCA. Her passion and constant effort to give back to the sport is unmatched! So many other coaches have left a great mark on who I am and how I coach, but these three are pretty special to me.



What is your favorite practice drill or activity?

Drills are hard to pick. There are many that I love.

But I do love putting them through our physical technical conditioning drills. The confidence that is built through those is amazing! They learn to push through conditioning by doing LOTS of hard volleyball movements!

What is your favorite part of your coaching job?

I get to help young males and females to shift into their new and better selves.

Beach Volleyball is a channel that I can use to teach them life lessons. To help them understand the ups and downs of life.

My favorite part is watching them, from VIP seats, grow and become stronger within and more ready for life.

Additional comments:

I'm one of the founders of BVWCA - Beach Volleyball Women's Coaches Alliance

Our goal is to provide support to female beach volleyball coaches across the nation and the world.

We have had zoom calls with specific topics and gatherings so everyone gets to network and help each other out.

