

# 2026

## AVCA Thirty Under 30 Club



### **Payton Northington**

Southside High School/Fort Smith Juniors  
Asst. High School Coach/Head Club Coach

#### **Career Accomplishments to Date:**

2018: State Finals Appearance/ Conference Champs  
2019: State Finals Appearance/ Conference Champs  
2020: State Finals Appearance/Co-Conference Champs  
2021: State Semi-Finals Appearance  
2022: State Semi-Final Appearance  
2023: State Semi-Final Appearance  
2024: State Semi-Final Appearance and Conference Champs  
2025: State Semi-Final Appearance  
2024 (Club): Delta Region Bid Winner/USAV Nationals  
2025 (Club): Delta Region Bid Winner/USAV Nationals

#### **Coaching Roles:**

Southside High School- Fort Smith, AR  
Assistant Varsity Coach  
2018-Present  
Fort Smith Juniors  
Head Coach 2019-Present  
VP of Player and Coach Development 2025-present

#### **What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?**

I wanted to make a lifetime impact on young girls just as my coaches in my life had done for me. There is something special about coaching volleyball, but having the ability to teach girls so much more beyond the sport. I wanted to be able to teach my athletes life skills such as accountability, respect for themselves and others, confidence, how to

be a leader and so much more through playing the sport of volleyball. It truly is an honor to do so.

**What are your career goals in the sport?**

My career goals for volleyball would include continuing to have an impact in the club scene. Continually taking teams from our small town to nationals each year. To grow the sport of volleyball in our region and in our state.



**Which coaches have influenced you the most?**

Natalie Throneberry is currently my head coach at our high school. I have learned so much from her on how to be a leader and teach girls the importance of hard work and determination.

Jonny Neeley coached me in college before going to BYU. I often think of how smart he was in the game of volleyball and how great he was at teaching fine skills.

Jane Sargent is my college coach at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith. She taught me to never give up and to always work hard for what you want.

**What do you enjoy most about your coaching job?**

The lasting relationships you form with players and other colleagues. I love to win, but that obviously isn't the main goal. Creating relationships that last is the most important. Being able to be a mentor to young girls and maybe be the reason they become a coach themselves one day.