PILLAGER HUSKIES JO VOLLEYBALL

TRYOUT EVALUATION PROCESS

2026–27 Season · 10U–12U · 13U–14U · 15U–17U

This page explains how Pillager JO Volleyball will evaluate athletes and form teams for the 2026–27 season. Please read it together, parent and player, before you submit your tryout application.

Key Dates

Nov 1	Registration and tryout application open
Sundays, Nov–Jan	Open gym, 6:00–7:30 PM at Pillager School (not required, but highly recommended)
Sun, Nov 15	Pre-tryout open gym, 4:30–6:00 PM
Wed, Nov 18	Application deadline. Please submit your application by this date.
Sat, Nov 21	Tryout Day 1 — 13U–17U
Sun, Nov 22	Tryout Day 2 — 13U–17U, and the 10U–12U evaluation
After tryouts	Families notified of team placements by email once rosters are final; practice times and tournament calendar follow
1 week after placement	Remaining season fee due for athletes placed on a team
Late February	Team practices begin, after the basketball season ends

Before Tryouts: Your Application

Every athlete must complete the online tryout application. Tryouts are open to Pillager athletes only. On the application you will:

- Choose your tryout group: 10U–12U, 13U–14U or 15U–17U. 10U–12U athletes also select Local only or Local and Travel.
- Upload a current photo so evaluators can match names to faces.
- Choose your top two positions: DS, Libero, Setter or Hitter.
- Tell us if you play any other club sports, and which one(s). Please send us your club schedule as soon as you have it. We use it when choosing tournaments.
- Read and acknowledge this Evaluation Process, the Skill Ladder, and the Player & Parent Handbook.

Play Up Guidelines for Families

At Pillager JO Volleyball, athletes are placed in age-appropriate divisions to support healthy development, confidence, and long-term success. In some cases, an athlete may be considered to “play up” in a higher age division(s). This decision is based on team need and athlete readiness, not preference or convenience.

How Play-Up Decisions are Made

1. **Team Need.** A play-up evaluation only occurs if the older team has a roster or positional need, or if the younger team has an excess of players.
2. **Skill Level.** The athlete must demonstrate skills above their current age group and comparable to the older group.
3. **Developmental Fit.** Playing up must benefit the athlete socially, emotionally and developmentally.

Important Notes for Families

- Playing up is not guaranteed, even for highly skilled athletes.
- Evaluations are based on objective criteria, not parent request.
- Pillager JO may revoke play-up status if development or team fit changes.
- Athletes who remain in their age group are still fully supported and valued.

Who Evaluates

- Two outside evaluators recruited from outside the Pillager community lead the 13U–17U tryouts.
- Established JO coaches take part in the evaluation and share input with the evaluators. Board members may be present to help the evaluators with the flow of the evaluation and take notes on their behalf; however, board members will not be actively evaluating players.
- Coaches do not evaluate their own children.
- Pillager School volleyball coaches are not able to be a part of the team selection process for 13U–17U level teams.
- Every athlete is scored on the same rating form. Teams are not based on friendships, parent requests or prior team experience.

Tryout Groups and Schedule

On day one, please arrive 30 minutes early to check in, establish a size for uniform and ask any questions prior to tryouts. Athletes should be dressed and ready to be on the court at the start time. Each session runs about two hours.

On day two, please arrive 15 minutes early, dressed and ready to be on the court at the start time.

10U · 11U · 12U: One-day evaluation

Sun, Nov 22 · 1:00–3:00 PM
Pillager Middle School gym

- Evaluated by JO board members and coaches, with Pillager senior players helping record data.
- No cuts at these levels.
- We expect two teams at each level: a Travel team and a Local team.
- Parents: please be back by 2:30 PM for pickup in case the session ends early.

13U · 14U: Two-day tryout

Sat, Nov 21 · 1:00–3:00 PM
Sun, Nov 22 · 1:00–3:00 PM
Pillager High School gym

- 13U and 14U athletes try out together as one group.
- Both days combine skill stations and scrimmage play.
- **Cuts are possible.** It is anticipated one team per age level, with rosters capped at about 10. Should the number of athletes in attendance warrant a second team at an age level, the evaluators and board of directors reserve the right to add additional teams.

15U · 16U · 17U: Two-day tryout

Sat, Nov 21 · 3:30–5:30 PM
Sun, Nov 22 · 3:30–5:30 PM
Pillager High School gym

- 15U, 16U and 17U athletes try out together as one group.
- Both days combine skill stations and scrimmage play.
- **Cuts are possible.** It is anticipated one team per age level, with rosters capped at about 10. Should the number of athletes in attendance warrant a second team at an age level, the evaluators and board of directors reserve the right to add additional teams.
- Placement into 15U, 16U or 17U is based on evaluations, with moves up decided case by case.

10U–12U: Travel and Local Tracks

Track	What it means
Travel	A more competitive team that travels farther for tournaments. Roster spots and playing time are based on skill level, and the team faces higher competition.
Local	Plays in tournaments closer to Pillager. Local teams may carry larger rosters so more athletes get to play.

On the application, choose Local only or Local and Travel. Playing up follows the Play Up Guidelines above. Athletes may not play down.

What Evaluators Look For

Athletes are evaluated on both days, and each day includes both skill work and scrimmage play, so one tough day does not decide a placement. Day 2 is when evaluators begin placing athletes and identifying anyone who should move up. Expect a fast-paced, challenging tryout — evaluators will push athletes so everyone leaves knowing what to work on.

Station	What is evaluated
Warm-up & ball control	Arm swing, passing platform, footwork, and setting hand skills
Blocking	Height above the net, footwork, hand press and aggressiveness; setters run the clock drill to show decision making
Serve & pass	Game of 10/4; feet beating the ball, being vocal and calling the ball, and passion for the game
Hitting lines	Calling the set, an aggressive approach, control and decision making, hitting deep, swinging high and hitting off the blockers' fingers
Play sixes	How relentless athletes are, how they recover from mistakes, how positive they are toward themselves and others, anticipation and maturity
Scrimmage	Putting it all together in live game play

Coachability and attitude are part of every station. See the Tryout Skill Ladder for what evaluators expect to see at each age level.

Tryout Attendance

Athletes are expected to attend every session for their tryout group. If an athlete must miss because of illness and can provide medical documentation, the board will work with the family to arrange an evaluation. Absences for other reasons will be considered as part of an athlete's commitment to the team.

After Tryouts

- Evaluators, coaches and the board use the rating forms together to place athletes on teams.
- Feedback is provided upon request of the parent or player. If you request feedback, we will share the evaluators' notes along with clinic options your athlete can attend to keep improving.
- Families will be notified of team placements by email once rosters are final.
- If you are placed on a team, the remaining season fee is due within one week after you are notified of your placement.

Questions? Email the board at pillagerjovolleyball@gmail.com.