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## **East Valley Juniors Volleyball Club and Arizona Primitive Volleyball Club announce strategic merger**

*Long-time organizations join youth volleyball operations*

**Phoenix, AZ** – Two local non-profit youth volleyball clubs, East Valley Juniors Volleyball Club, (EVJ), a girls' volleyball club, and Arizona Primitive Volleyball Club (AZP), a club for boys and girls, announced a strategic merger of their operations. The union will affect programs in the East Valley beginning November 1, at the start of the club season.

The combined organization will operate as East Valley Juniors Volleyball Club and will include both girls and boys volleyball programs. The girls program will merge into operations this coming club season while the AZP boys program will begin operations under EVJ sometime next year. Teams will train at the Court One Athletic Complex in Tempe.

Jen Leo, a 20-year veteran of club volleyball, will continue as president and club director of the combined organization. Already one of the largest clubs in AZ, EVJ makes the move to expand its girls' program offerings, while adding boys' volleyball program to the mix.

One of the first clubs on the volleyball scene in AZ, starting in 1990, EVJ is entering its 23<sup>rd</sup> season. Last year, EVJ housed more than 230 athletes across 21 teams and represented 98 different schools throughout the Phoenix area.

AZP, led by Fred Mann, has entered its 16<sup>th</sup> year and is currently operating five boys' teams. Coach Mann continues to lead the boys and girls volleyball programs at Mountain Pointe High School in Ahwatukee, where he won eight state championships (7-boys, 1-girls) during his 20-year volleyball-coaching career.

As friendly competitors, Leo and Mann developed a friendship that started in the 90's. "My brother played for Fred's 1999 boys' state championship team. Fred runs a top notch organization at AZP and after 10 years of nudging him to join me at EVJ, I couldn't be more thrilled to finally be working with him; he simply makes our story and our program stronger," Ms. Leo explained.

"The chance to bring the clubs together arrives at an opportune time. It was an easy choice as the clubs' cultures and values are extremely compatible," said Ms. Leo. "We have capacity for expansion at Court One and we are pleased to add the boys program. Boys' volleyball is a vastly underserved sport in the state."

“My concern is that there is some saturation at the girls-club level in Arizona. As the club youth volleyball industry continues to mature, the demand continues to grow for higher quality programs with a strong track record of success. We are proud of our rich tradition and history. We are excited to add Coach Mann and continue the mission of EVJ & AZP together,” added Ms. Leo.

“Joining forces with EVJ simplifies the decision making for families seeking a place for their kids to play volleyball in the East Valley,” Coach Mann said. “It adds to both clubs’ strong tradition of community service and search for excellence. I appreciate the EVJ mission and their desire to give back to the community where they operate.”

Mann will coach in the girls’ program at EVJ in the 16’s age group and will continue a very strong leadership role in the boys’ program. “We have several strategic growth ideas that will impact the volleyball community in a positive way. We look forward to rolling the concepts out over the next year or two,” stated Ms. Leo.

Youth volleyball as a sport continues to grow explosively in Arizona and nationally. The continued demand for high-quality volleyball training and competition is the driver behind this partnership. With the two organizations combined, EVJ can house nearly 25 girls’ volleyball teams and five boys’ teams this next club season. Altogether, the two clubs have been operating for more than 39 years. While the new partnership will operate under the name of East Valley Juniors Volleyball Club, Inc., the organization will maintain the Arizona Primitive business model by incorporating its brand into its service offerings. Families have an additional program/pricing option under EVJ’s umbrella.

#### **ABOUT EVJ**

EVJ provides opportunities for girls and boys ages 9-18 (4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) to play competitive and recreational volleyball on local and national levels, with travel, non-travel, and training teams. Through its affiliates, EVJ also offers a variety of training opportunities (indoor, sand and athletic performance) for both club and non-club players who are looking to expand and perfect their game.

#### **ABOUT COURT ONE**

EVJ operates at the Court One Athletic Complex in Tempe. Court One offers more than 45,000 square-feet with nine indoor volleyball courts, two sand courts and 11 high definition web cameras used as recruiting tools by college coaches around the nation to view practices. In addition, the facility boasts one of the best flooring systems in the country, made of solid maple, complete with a one-inch foam subfloor. The facility is located at 9100 S. McKemy Street, Tempe, AZ 85284.

To learn more about EVJ or Court One please contact Rich Leo at (480) 220-9313 or visit the website at [www.evjvolleyball.com](http://www.evjvolleyball.com).