



Keith Suckling

**Player, Level 2 Candidate Coach, Nat AAA Referee,
Life Member NSWVRA, Volleyball Groupie**

To those who don't know me... Hi.

You may have seen me running around on court with the UTSSU AVL/V-League team as their setter, or with UTS Honours men at SVL or one of the State Cups. You may have seen me on the stand as a referee during AVL/SVL or some other competition. You may even know my name from me being the Chairman of the NSW Volleyball Referees Association. You may even have seen me around the UTS Division 1 women's team which my partner Jo plays in, probably running after an adorable little redhead – her name is Emma.

I'm originally from WA, from the town of Collie (pop. 12,000 - 1 set of traffic lights, no McDonalds – until recently anyway). I first learnt my volleyball at age 17, from a school teacher, who thankfully knew their volleyball. I moved to Perth to go to university playing with Southern Cross Volleyball Club, being a member of their Board and coaching staff after I did my Level 1. I moved across to Sydney some 14 years ago now, and have played with 4 clubs over that time. Most of my time though has been spent with UTS Volleyball club where I am a player, coach and Board member.

When I joined the NSW Volleyball Referee's Association Board, some 6yrs ago, I did it because I thought I could improve the state of refereeing in NSW. Hopefully I helped do that. There are certainly some initiatives that we (because this stuff only happens with the help of many people who give their time) were able to implement.

- Most SVL teams now have a qualified referee in their midst, which can only benefit the game.
- In 2005, my first year on the Board there were 66 referees on the books. This grew as high as 132 in 2007, before being at to 122 when I left at the end of 2011. SVNSW members declined during this time.

I nominated for the position of SVNSW Board member because I thought I could help to improve the state of volleyball in NSW. I have been elected to the Board for the last 2 years now. Holding the position of Secretary during 2012/13, and Vice President during 2013/14.

I look at my 2 years on the Board as being hard work, but with worthwhile gains. Many of the processes that are now in place provide the sort of controls I would want to see as a player, as a coach, as a referee, and (for later years most likely) as a parent of a player. The focus of the organisation is now broader than its bank account, with the brand of SVNSW is in much better shape now than what it was 2 years ago. We have had to make some tough financial choices to make these gains though.

While some progress has been made in moving SVNSW forward, for me we are still a long way from where we want to be; Board meetings do not regularly feature updates on the range of key metrics which show our progress; information is regularly provided in heresay rather than as structured evidence; the smartest and brightest parts of our community are not being used to drive specific areas forward. These are things which I believe will help our sport and our community grow across the board into the future.

To sum me up, I would want everyone just to know this about me...

I don't take statements people make as being true without understanding the evidence behind them. Some find this digging into things that I do confronting. Those who know me well though, know that I am actually just interested in making sure that the information we have is understood so that we make the best decision for everyone. This is the skill that defines me...at work, at play, everywhere.

I hope this is a skill you want building your sport.

Yours in volleyball

Keith