

2025

AVCA Thirty Under 30 Club



Cristian Arellano

South Texas Volleyball Academy (STVA)
Director of Recruiting, Head Coach

Career Accomplishments to Date:

- Two top-10 finishes at USAV nationals
- 20+ multi day tournament wins (including qualifiers & national championships)
- Back to back auto invite finish (2024 - 15 Mizuno, 2025 - 17 Mizuno) at Triple Crown in STVA's first two years attending
- Current season record of 49-14 including two top 10 finishes in Open at National Qualifiers
- First top 5 finish at an Open qualifier in club history (2025 - 17 Mizuno)
- Built recruiting pipeline from the ground up with our first commitment in 2021 to having 16 athletes in 2024 go on to play in college

Coaching Roles:

- 2016-2018: Volunteer/Undergrad Assistant - Texas Tech University
- 2019-Current: National Team Head Coach, Director of Recruiting - South Texas Volleyball Academy (STVA)

What made you decide to get into coaching volleyball?

When I started playing volleyball at 14, I never could have imagined what it would lead to. From building life long relationships, to experiencing training at the Olympic Training Center. I chose, and continue to choose to coach not only because of the passion I have for the game, but to make an impact on as many athletes as I can. Volleyball has opened so many doors in my life, coaching allows me to pass that forward in the most productive way.

What are your career goals in the sport?

As a lifelong competitor, my ultimate goal is helping STVA consistently compete on the national scale. Significant strides have been made over the last 4 years. Growing from 15 to 45 teams, winning a national championship, top 10 finishes in Open qualifiers, and finally cracking the top 100 club rankings in the 2024 season. We have continued to trend in the right direction, and as long as I am apart of STVA, my goal will be to reach the pinnacle of club volleyball. Open bids, national championships, consistent college placement, and positively impacting as many lives as we can.

Which coaches have influenced you the most?

- Morgan Thomas (TCU) - As a 20-year old undergrad assistant at Texas Tech, Morgan helped lay the foundation for many of the coaching principles I still use. From drills, to relationship building, to preparation; lessons learned from my time at Tech have molded me into the coach I am today.
- Eddie Dahl (STVA Exec Director) - As my first true volleyball coach, many of my early volleyball memories and positive experiences are directly attributable to playing for Eddie and STVA. Going full circle and now getting to learn from him has helped me grow as a coach and a person.

What do you enjoy most about your coaching job?

Sharing my passion and knowledge of the game with as many athletes as I can reach. Volleyball has given me so much over the last 15 years, I am grateful to have a platform in which I can pour my love for the game into each athlete that walks into our gym.

