ART OF COACHING VOLLEYBALL

VOLLEYBALL COACHES HANDBOOK

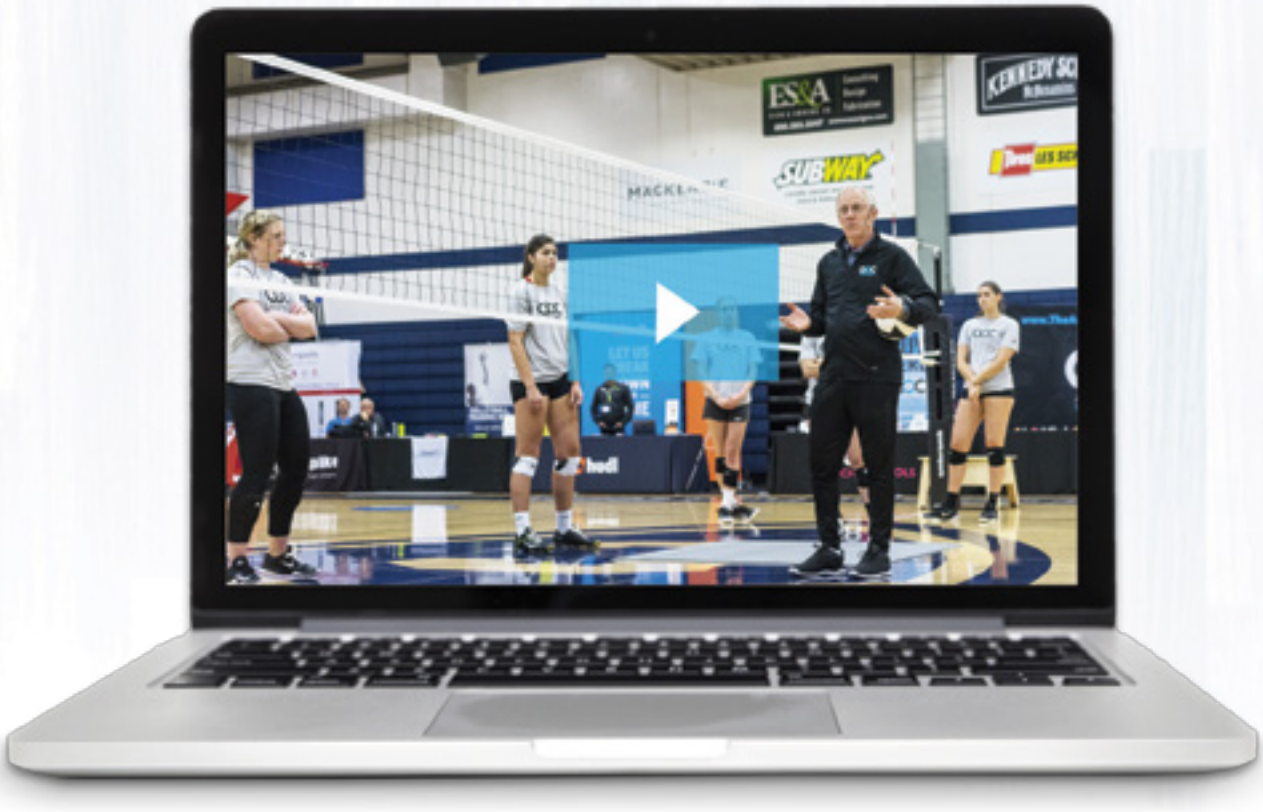
VOLUME 2

A LIBRARY OF DETAILED COACHING NOTES, PRACTICE PLANS, TECHNICAL TIPS, DRILLS AND STRATEGIES FROM THE TOP COACHES IN THE GAME



THEARTOFCOACHINGVOLLEYBALL.COM

Watch every session online!



Watch corresponding videos for handbook notes:

www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/hb2

Some videos require you to be a Premium member to watch

VOLLEYBALL COACHES HANDBOOK

VOLUME 2



Copyright © 2021 Total Sports, LLC

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2021

ISBN: 978-1-7347652-3-6

Edited by Don Patterson

Published by Total Sports, LLC
322 Encinitas Blvd, Suite 280
Encinitas, CA 92024

www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com

INTRODUCTION

Volume 2 of the Volleyball Coaches Handbook is a deep dive into the teaching and training methods of 40 top club, high school, college and national team coaches.

Inside you'll find guidance on improving players' skills, running effective drills, planning practices, designing offenses and defenses, boosting your team's out-of-system play, communicating with players and parents and much more.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Pick a subject: Volume 2 of the Volleyball Coaches Handbook is designed to be a comprehensive resource where coaches can reference specific aspects of the game and get a variety of viewpoints on how to teach and train them. If you want help with blocking, the blocking section covers everything from basic concepts to specific techniques and strategies. If you're looking to go beyond fundamentals, you might choose Team Offense or Team Defense, where you'll get advice on how to most effectively use your players, or Out-of-System Training, which tells you how to score the tough points. Looking for fun, effective drills? You'll find those too. Just flip to "Favorite Drills."

Read, then watch: Once you've covered the written info, you can go to corresponding videos on the Art of Coaching Volleyball website and watch live demonstrations and presentations of the handbook material. Just follow the link at the bottom of every page.*

Go beyond the X's and O's: As you know, being a great coach is more than just teaching skills and strategies, so we've stocked the handbook with plenty of "big picture" tips. They start with John Dunning's "29 Keys to Being a Great Coach" and continue with advice on a broad range of subjects: motor learning, error correction, practice planning, setting goals, scouting, using video, analyzing statistics, staying healthy, building a positive team culture and a whole lot more.

Check out the 4-week practice plan: To help you get the most out of a month, we asked World Champion coach Jim Stone to draw up a 4-week practice blueprint. Jim is the former head women's coach at Ohio State and a longtime juniors coach. He guides you through each activity and drill – practice by practice, day by day, week by week. There's a QR code on each page that links you to the corresponding videos for the planned teachings and drills. To get started, just use your phone's camera to scan the QR code.

Build *your* identity: Our hope is that you'll soak up the expertise of our knowledgeable handbook contributors, then shape a coaching philosophy that's right for you and right for your team. Best of luck!

The online table of contents can be found here: **www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/hb2**

*Some videos require you to be a Premium member to watch.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ESSENTIAL COACHING SKILLS

2	29 Keys to Being a Great Coach	John Dunning

WARMUP

4	Dynamic Warmup	Dave Rubio
6	Warmup Goals and Drills	Michelle Collier

ATTACKING

8	Key Attacking Concepts	John Dunning
12	Basic Components of Attacking	Russ Rose
14	Developing Attackers at the Highest Level	Karch Kiraly
15	Attacking Fundamentals	Mark Rosen
16	Hitting Approach	Mike Sealy
18	Arm Swing	Terry Liskevych
19	Arm Swing	Jim Stone
20	Drills to Train Attackers	Cassidy Lichtman
21	Attacking Fundamentals	Kerry MacDonald
22	Attack Drill	Jen Flynn Oldenburg
23	Teaching Attacking to Younger Players	Ron Kordes
26	Attack Schemes	Nabil Mardini

BLOCKING

30	Basic Blocking Concepts	Beth Launiere
31	All About Blocking	Joe Sagula
33	Basic Blocking Concepts	Jim Stone
35	Blocking	Nabil Mardini
39	5 R's of Blocking	Jill Kramer
41	Blocking Fundamentals	Mark Barnard
44	Training Swing and Combination Blocking	Mike Sealy

SETTING

46	Basic Setting Concepts	Nabil Mardini
47	Set Descriptions	John Dunning
51	Setting Fundamentals and Advanced Setter Training	Mike Sealy
55	Offense From the Setter's Point of View	Lindsey Berg
58	Training the Setter's Brain	Salima Rockwell
61	Training a Raw Athlete to Be a Setter	Jen Flynn Oldenburg

SERVING

63	Serve or Be Served	Russ Rose
64	Serving Fundamentals	John Dunning
65	Serving Philosophy	Ron Kordes
68	Serving Fundamentals and Strategies	Kirsten Bernthal Booth
70	Serve and Pass Drills	Mike Sealy
71	Serving to Earn Points	Kerry MacDonald
73	Serve Training and Drills	Tod Mattox

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PASSING

76	Passing Fundamentals	Dave Rubio
77	Passing Basics	Joe Sagula
79	Basic Passing Concepts and Drills	Tod Mattox
83	Fundamentals of Passing	John Dunning
86	Passing Fundamentals	Ray Bechard
87	Passing Fundamentals and Drills	Christy Johnson-Lynch
88	Passing Fundamentals and Drills	Ron Kordes
93	Passing Technique	Moira Long
94	Emergency Passing	Jen Flynn Oldenburg
95	Passing Technique and Common Errors	Debbie Brown

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

99	Training Scrappy Defenders	Russ Rose
100	Basic Defense Concepts	Cathy George
101	Thoughts on Defense	Ray Bechard
102	Basic Defense	Diane Flick-Williams
103	Emergency Moves	Jen Flynn Oldenburg

READING THE GAME

105	Keys to Reading	John Dunning
107	Training Reading	Debbie Brown
109	Vision Training and Drills	Moira Long

MOTOR LEARNING AND ERROR CORRECTION

112	Motor Learning	Jim Stone
113	Correcting Common Errors	John Dunning

LIBERO TRAINING

116	Libero Training	Debbie Brown
118	Libero Training	Kirsten Bernthal Booth
119	Libero Training	Moira Long

MIDDLE BLOCKER TRAINING

122	Middle Blocker Training	Christa Harmotto Dietzen
125	Middle Blocker Training	Russ Rose

TEAM DEFENSE

128	My Defensive Philosophy: Block-Oriented Defense	Nabil Mardini
130	Block System vs. Specific Offenses	Jim Stone
132	Defending With a Single Block	Debbie Brown
134	Blocking Strategy	Russ Rose
135	17 Keys to the Read Defense	John Dunning
137	Designing a Defensive System for Your Level	Ray Bechard
138	Defensive Systems	Cathy George
139	Team Defense Overview and Drills	Joe Sagula

TABLE OF CONTENTS

144	Keys to Team Defense	Mark Rosen
145	Team Defense Drill	Kimi Olson
146	Team Defense	Mike Sealy
	TEAM OFFENSE	
149	Winning the Serve and Receive Battle	Nabil Mardini
151	Drill for First Ball Side Out	Jen Flynn Oldenburg
152	Choosing a Serve Receive Pattern	Cindy Fredrick
153	Developing an Offensive Strategy	Mark Barnard
154	Explaining Rotation Overlap Rules	Terry Liskevych & Mark Barnard
	TRANSITION	
157	Spiker Coverage and Transition	Russ Rose
158	Basics of Transition and Drills	Joe Sagula
162	Transition Footwork and Strategy	Nabil Mardini
163	Cover Progression Drill	Jen Flynn Oldenburg
	OUT-OF-SYSTEM	
166	Tips for Improving Out-of-System Play	Russ Rose
167	Out-of-System Training and Drills	Dave Rubio
169	Out-of-System Concepts	Jill Kramer
171	Risk Management in Out-of-System Scenarios	Michelle Collier
172	Drills for Training Out-of-System Offense	Christy Johnson-Lynch
174	Out-of-System Concept	Nabil Mardini
175	Drill for Out-of-System Training	Ryan Theis
176	Drill for Out-of-System Training	Cassidy Lichtman
	PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING	
178	Planning for Season and Practice	Christy Johnson-Lynch
180	Planning Concepts	Dave Rubio
182	Practice Planning Keys and Drills Throughout Season	Russ Rose
184	Practice Planning	Mark Rosen
185	Considerations When Planning Practice	Diane Flick-Williams
187	Keys to Running a Great Practice	Ray Bechard
188	Practice Planning as the Season Progresses	Joe Sagula
191	10 Keys to Effective Practice Planning	Mark Barnard
	GAME DAY	
193	Game Day Notes for Players	John Dunning
194	Game Day Logistics	Russ Rose
196	Game Day Goals	Kirsten Bernthal Booth
	SCOUTING	
198	Looking for Advantages	Kevin Hambly
201	Video Scouting	Terry Liskevych
202	Training Players to Watch the Game	Ray Bechard

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VIDEO AND STATS

204	Using Video	Mark Barnard
205	Considerations When Using Video	Mike Houlihan
206	The Importance of Video in Practice and Scouting	Jim Stone
209	Necessary Statistics for Practices and Matches	Terry Liskevych
212	Statistical Analysis	Mike Houlihan
213	Statistics	Mark Barnard

HEALTH AND INJURY PREVENTION

215	Player Physical and Mental Health	Kirsten Bernthal Booth
216	Injury Prevention	Cathy George

PERFORMANCE TRAINING

218	Performance Training for Youth Volleyball Athletes	Marie Zidek
220	Sample Workouts	Marie Zidek

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

224	Key Considerations for Your Coaching Philosophy	Beth Launiere
225	Creating Your Coaching Philosophy	Mike Sealy

TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

227	Building a Positive Team Culture	Jill Kramer
229	Keys to Creating a Culture	Mike Sealy
231	Keys to Training Leaders and Building a Strong Culture	Cathy George
233	Keys to Developing Leaders	John Dunning
234	Keys to Developing Leaders	Kirsten Bernthal Booth
235	Developing Leaders in Your Program	Tammy Leibl
236	Team Captain and Leadership Guidelines	Debbie Brown

TRAINING YOUR TEAM TO COMPETE

240	Ways to Make Drills Competitive	Russ Rose
241	Competitive Drills	Cassidy Lichtman
242	Competitive Drill	Tammy Leibl

COMMUNICATION

244	Communication in All Aspects of Your Program	John Dunning
246	Communication On and Off the Court	Cathy George
247	Team Communication	Diane Flick-Williams
251	Conducting Team Meetings	Ray Bechard
252	Tips for Better Communication in Your Program	Ron Kordes
254	Communicating with Players and Parents	Kirsten Bernthal Booth

MANAGING A COACHING STAFF

257	Keys to Leading Your Staff Effectively	Terry Liskevych
258	Staff Roles	Joe Sagula

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COACHING HIGH SCHOOL

261 4-Step Roadmap to Successful High School Coaching — Tod Mattox
264 Running a High School Practice — Tod Mattox
266 The 5 Most Undertaught Skills in High School — Tod Mattox

COLLEGE RECRUITING

270 Guidelines for College Recruits — Kirsten Bernthal Booth
273 10 Steps of the College Recruiting Process — Dianne DeNecochea
275 How to Email College Coaches — Dianne DeNecochea

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

279 What Textbooks Don't Teach You About Coaching — Kirsten Bernthal Booth
282 Coaching Female Athletes — Terry Liskevych
284 Coaching Female Athletes — Russ Rose
285 5 Things I Changed About My Coaching — John Dunning
286 3 Coaching Laws to Live By — Tammy Leibl
287 Connecting With Today's Players — Jill Kramer

291 **4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN** — Jim Stone

DESIGNING DRILLS

311 Making Drills Fun — Debbie Brown
312 Drills to Fit Individual and Team Needs — John Dunning
314 Designing Drills to Increase Player Competence — Mike Sealy
315 Ways to Make Drills Competitive — Ron Kordes
317 Ways to Make Drills Competitive — Moira Long

FAVORITE DRILLS

319 Competitive Team Drills — Mike Sealy
320 Team Drills and Pepper Series — Kirsten Bernthal Booth
322 What to Do Instead of Deep Court — Tod Mattox
324 Small Group Drills — Marie Zidek
327 Side Out Drills — Craig Skinner
328 Competitive Drills — Mark Rosen
330 Pendulum Drill and Hitters vs. the World — Moira Long
331 Pressure Passing Drill — Jen Greeny
332 0 vs. 18 and Best of 10 Drill — Caitie Ratkowski
333 Skill Drills for Younger Players — Ron Kordes

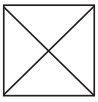
336 **Index**

DRILL KEY

- Player
- Player on opposing team
- C — Coach
- LB — Left Back
- S — Setter
- LF — Left Front
- D — Defender
- MB — Middle Back
- P — Passer
- MF — Middle Front
- L — Libero
- RB — Right Back
- H — Hitter
- RF — Right Front


Path of Person


Path of Ball


Box

Elastic


Volleyball

Target Area

ESSENTIAL COACHING SKILLS

ESSENTIAL COACHING SKILLS

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

29 KEYS TO BEING A GREAT COACH

To get us started, we asked Hall of Fame coach John Dunning and a founding member of Art of Coaching to list the qualities he thinks are important for volleyball coaches at all levels of the game. John won five NCAA championships in his 32-year career at Stanford and University of the Pacific, so he knows a bit about building a strong program and producing a great team. Here's his list:

1. A person of integrity
2. Knowledge of individual skills
3. Knowledge of team skills
4. Strategy-reactive/insightful game coach
5. Strategy-plan and practice adjustments
6. Understanding the way people learn
7. Electronic expertise/use of technology
8. Establishing and maintaining team culture
9. Visionary leader
10. The bigger picture/coaching for life skills
11. Developing competitiveness
12. Developing leadership
13. Performance skills (mental training)
14. Managing health
15. Organizational skills
16. Managing the growth of the program
17. Connecting with players
18. Love of "The Game"
19. Ability to teach
20. Drive to improve yourself
21. Innovator
22. Ability to coach/manage great players
23. Practice and season planning
24. A role model
25. Recruiting/evaluating talent
26. Motivation/inspiration
27. Maintaining life balance
28. Communication
29. Be a listener

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WARMUP

WARMUP

DAVE RUBIO (UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DYNAMIC WARMUP

My general philosophy is that warmups should consist of dynamic stretching related to some aspect of training. My players often request time to static stretch before practice. My rule is if they need to stretch, they should do it on their own before we start practice. I would avoid jogging and stretching. As far as I'm concerned, it's a waste of time.

This can also be a time to work on aspects of training you don't want to spend a lot of time on during practice.

SPECIFIC VOLLEYBALL FOOTWORK

Footwork patterns

- Block – Base position, hands up with elbows tight. Step right, feet come together, jump, hold. Land with arms extended. Then step left, feet come together, jump, hold – arms extended. Next, same progression with two initial steps instead of one. And finally, the four-step progression: right, left, jump, hop and then left, right, jump, hop.
- Block to attack
- Base release
- Shuffle step forward, backward and side to side

Shoulder and arm warmup

- Toss and run
- Serve and run
- Break into groups of threes and fours and play off speed games

Middle blockers setting or playing balls out of the net

- Footwork off and on the net
- Hand position when blocking
- Eye sequencing
- Block to attack footwork

Outside hitter

- Attacking footwork
- Dig to attack footwork
- Block to attack
- Serve receive to attack footwork
- Fine tuning arm swing

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Libero

- Dig to set
- Posture (drop and catch drill)
- Platform work (corner drill)
- Serve (skinny-court serving)

Setters

- Hand position (wall sets)
- Footwork off the net (catch, square and set)

Progression team warmup

- Introducing coverage
- Continuous defense with off speed only

WARMUP

MICHELLE COLLIER (GEORGIA TECH UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WARMUP GOALS AND DRILLS

Goals

- Increase body temperature, blood flow
- Mental and vocal engagement
- Maximize routine touches
- Introduce small game concepts

Progression: Simple to complex. Be creative, keep it engaging, mix it up.

Partner Warmup Drills

- Arm warmup over the net
  - Introduce high release to maximize height contact on attack
  - Two-hand toss to emulate arm lift during takeoff
- Pass – roll, set – catch
- 1 x 1 pepper with end-line touch
- 4 touches: Pass – Set, Over-Set – Attack
  - Add communication, skill control and movement
  - Emphasize importance of each contact putting the next contact in a better situation (bettering the ball)

Groups of 3 Drills

- 3 on none
  - Focus on **movement** and isolate a skill per player
- Dig – Set – Attack – Cover – Attack
  - Communication: Only 1 contact per person on phase 1; clarify attacker on phase 2
  - Emphasize importance of each contact putting the next contact in a better situation (bettering the ball)

Groups of 4+ Drills

- 100 Touches
  - Communication, movement, skill training
- Cross-court Pepper
  - Communication, movement, skill training

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

ATTACKING

ATTACKING

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

KEY ATTACKING CONCEPTS

Questions to consider with your players

- **What position do you play?**
- **How can you improve your volleyball IQ?** Help players understand the game better and help them improve their vision. Kids go with the flow. They do what they do and aren't sure how to do more. Coaches need to put players in situations where they have to think, "What do I do?" For instance, let's say the team is out-of-system. If you're an outside hitter, what are you going to do with a good set? What are you going to do with a bad set? To grow as attackers, players need to figure these things out.
- **What kind of hitter are you?** Very few great hitters are only one kind of hitter. Most start out that way, then develop variety with help from coaches. Let's say a player is a line, high, flat tool hitter. The higher the level, the more teams are going to take that away, so they need to develop different shots and become multi-dimensional. Here are some factors involved with varying an attacker's repertoire:
    - Power
    - Altitude
    - Off speed
    - Tool
    - Location
    - Off line
    - High flat
    - Slide

Arm swing

- **Developing good arm-swing technique will give you more velocity and help you stay healthy.** Players have to learn how to rotate their body for power. If they set up with their shoulders square to the line of their approach, all they're going to do is arch their back and snap high. That leaves them with less heat and makes them more prone to injury. To be a high-level hitter, your motion should be a lot like a tennis serve. Here are some keys:
    - **Feet:** In volleyball, many athletes – especially female athletes – point their toes in the direction of their approach. This makes it really hard to open up your body in a way that gives you more range and power and is safer for your shoulder. Players hitting cross court, for instance, need to learn how to plant their feet across the line of their approach – facing area 5 or the 5-6 seam rather than middle back – so they can rotate their body to hit cross court. Their toes should almost be pointing to the right sideline, nearly parallel to the net.
        - A good way to help players learn this is to put a series of lines on the floor (with tape) at the typical attack point for left-side hitters. **Line approach** is tape that is parallel to the sideline. Seam approach is tape that points toward middle back. Two more lines represent **cross-court attacks** – one pointing toward Area 5, and the other pointing toward 4-5 (for a sharper angle). This gives players a frame of reference that allows them to learn what to do with their bodies so they can plant their feet across the line they want to hit at.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- **Hips and shoulders:** Like with a tennis serve, power is generated with hip and shoulder rotation as the hitter swings.
- **Whip:** You set up in a bow-and-arrow position with your elbow behind you. Next, your hips start the action, then your body and that pulls your elbow forward. When your elbow pulls forward, your hand trails your elbow and you bend at the elbow. This causes your forearm to be a whip. To better understand the mechanics, get a two-foot section of a 2 x 4 board. That represents your upper arm. Get another 2-foot board to represent your forearm (elbow to wrist). Then get a half- or one-foot board. That's your hand. Next, use a leather strap to attach each piece. Grab the first board, which is your shoulder, and let the other two pieces hang down behind it. When you snap the first board, the other two boards will automatically follow and snap. That's how the whip happens! If you don't get your elbow back and then pull it forward, it never flips the board over. The "board flip" is what creates extraordinary velocity.
- **Finish:** You should learn to finish two ways:
    1. For accuracy (not full power), high snap.
    2. For full power, your hitting shoulder goes past your other shoulder. For years, people have taught kids to follow through on the same side of their bodies as their hitting shoulder, which means you're decelerating before contacting the ball. To hit the ball really hard, your hitting shoulder has to go past your non-hitting shoulder.

- **Develop an arm swing that allows for many options.** A lot of hitters can only hit one way because of how they swing. If you don't open your shoulders very much, you're just going to hit along the line of your approach. You might cut it or turn it with your hand – but with less speed. To be a power hitter at a high level, you have to learn to open up your shoulders and let it rip. And you need to develop more than one hit.
    - Contacting the ball in more ways than just straight over the top: If you're going to rip it hard, your hand is going to go straight through the ball. But if that's all you have, it's predictable and defenders can line up on it. So great hitters learn to hit off their line. To do that, you have to let your hand NOT go through the center of the ball but skim the ball on one side or the other. Then you can turn it or cut it. By switching it up, you can miss the blockers/defenders when they line up on you.
    - Ball speed on off-line vs. health: This is just like pitching. When pitchers start to put spin on the ball, they put their body in funny positions. And if you haven't learned how to use your body with proper technique but still try for high velocity, you'll end up getting injured.

ATTACKING

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

Approach technique

- **4 keys to good approach technique**
  - **Length and number of steps:** If you're a middle, almost all of your transition attacks (and a lot of your non-transition attacks) are only going to be two-step approaches – maybe three – because you can't be very deep in the court. At Stanford, we would teach our middles and all of our hitters that the locator/timing step that you put down right before your last two steps (left foot for right-handers, right foot for left-handers) needs to be somewhere near the 10-foot line. It varies a little depending on your speed and the length of your limbs, but that's about where it should be located. That left step (for right-handers) is very important for location and timing because it allows you to go to the ball quickly but keep the ball in front of you and get it above your shoulder. Those are the key steps, whether you're deep in the court as a passer or close to the net as a middle.
  - **Posture and the arm swing to jump – natural rhythm:** I think the best way to teach players how to use their arms for hitting is to have them watch someone who is good at it and copy them. The less talk from the coach, the better. Just watch and copy. Here are the basic keys: As you take the location step, your arms go back really quickly so they can then swing forward and you can use their force during your plant. When great hitters load, their shoulders are forward and their arms are back parallel to the floor or higher so they can generate a lot of force as they drive into their plant. Hitters should work on getting the timing right so they can be in good rhythm with their setter. For instance, when a middle hitter is about to launch out of their plant to hit a first-tempo "One" set, we teach them to swing their arms forward and parallel to the floor at the moment the setter touches the ball. This gives the middle a consistent guideline to follow. The "One" is probably the easiest to teach because setters don't vary it very much. Outside sets are more challenging, but the teaching principle is the same. It just takes experimentation until the hitters can sync up with the setter.
  - **Compression, plant and lift:** Compression should happen as you're touching the floor and going into your plant, not after you put your foot down. This allows you to get off the floor as quickly as possible.
  - **Landing:** When hitters rotate their shoulders before contacting the ball, there's a shoulder tilt that happens; their hitting shoulder goes above their non-hitting shoulder. Doing this causes the hip that's on the side of your hitting shoulder to raise up along with your shoulder. That means the first foot that's going to hit the ground is the left foot, which puts extra strain on the left leg. With that in mind, it's important for coaches to teach hitters how to come out of the jump after the attack so they land on BOTH FEET as often as possible – or land with good technique on one leg when necessary. Hitters should land like an accordion, bending their legs – or their single leg – on impact to cushion their bodies. Landing with straight legs sends shockwaves throughout the body and makes players much more susceptible to stress or ACL injuries.

Location

- **Altitude and contact point:** Many hitters adjust to different set locations by moving their shoulders, but this puts you at greater risk for injuries and also leads to more attacking errors. Learning how to locate the ball so you can plant at the right spot and contact the ball directly over your hitting shoulder is one of the key skills of attacking. Location also impacts the altitude a player hits at. If a hitter has to reach

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

outside the body one way or the other or reach in front of us, the contact point goes down a lot. That's the result of poor plant location. From an early age, athletes should be taught to see the set and go to it rather than just taking a generic approach. You can reinforce this with drills by building in incentives to locate the ball – for instance, a bonus point for locating well and a minus point for not locating well.

- **Attack options:** If hitters approach to a bad spot, they usually have just one attack option, and it's very readable. For instance, if the ball is behind you, you won't see the block or defense, so you're going to hit on the line of your approach 90 percent of the time. If you approach and the ball is way inside, you can't hit line – you're cutting it and everybody can read it. If the ball is outside, you're hitting line because you have no choice. Locating at the right spot gives you more options and makes it much harder for the defense to know where you're going.
- **Vision:** When volleyball offenses were mostly high balls, hitters had to tilt their heads up to see the ball. That often meant they were early and would get the ball behind them, which took away their vision. As offenses have lowered sets, the ball hangs out in front of the hitters better, so it's easier now to teach hitters to see what's in front of them and adjust. Again, location is important. If you locate to a good point with a lower set, you'll have good vision, and that will improve your attacking.

ATTACKING

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BASIC COMPONENTS OF ATTACKING

Approach

- Out to In or In to Out (dictated by system): It is often set dependent. If the set is farther to the outside, you may have to go inside out. If the set is farther inside, you may have to go outside in.
- Transfer of Horizontal to Vertical Momentum: Generate speed (small to big, slow to quick)
- Footwork: Right, Left, Right, Left (R, L, R, L). Number of steps may change, but takeoff has to be consistent. Two- to five-step approaches all need to end the same, with feet under the hips.
- I prefer a four-step approach for outside hitters and undersized middles. For taller middles, a two- or three-step approach is usually fine, but for an undersized middle, four steps gives them more momentum to get up higher. Some outside hitters have good verticals with fewer steps, but in general, a four-step approach is better because it gives the player more time to accelerate and get up higher off the floor.

Takeoff and jump

- Emphasis on arm swing. Both arms back and then down and up. Keep the arms straight until they cross your face.
- Explode and transfer momentum from your heels to the balls of your feet as your arms travel upward in a double arm lift.
- Allow the natural broad-jump effect by taking off 8-9 feet from the net.
- Non-hitting arm is closest to net at top of jump and hitting arm is up and back. Rotate on contact. The hitting arm should now be closest to the net.

Contact

- Hit the ball at your highest point.
- Contact the ball in front of you and snap as you rotate or unload your upper body into the ball. Start the rotation from your hips, then unload at the shoulder. (Some people don't care about the snap. I like topspin and the control it offers.)

Slide or one-foot attack

- Four-step approach (R, L, R, L). Steps are slow to fast, small to big.
- Maintain an angle in the approach and have the ability to hit from multiple zones behind the setter.
- Keep the ball in front of you and chase the set.
- Force the right knee up and rotate onto the ball (round vs. flat approach).

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

ATTACKING

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

General cues

- Expect every set and always be asking for the ball (green light vs. red light).
- Be able to keep every set in play and be willing and able to mix it up.
- Swing to score on point-scoring opportunities, but be alert to first-swing errors. Make the opponent play the ball!
- The goal is to score. No bonus points for warmups or power. Attack the seam and edges of the block and know the opponent's defense.
- Middles need to be up quick and available. That means in a position to attack.

DEVELOPING ATTACKERS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

- Job description (Passing, Attacking, Serving, Defense, Blocking, Setting): Each position on the court has a definitive set of responsibilities. For outside hitters, those responsibilities include passing, covering tips, being able to hit a variety of sets as a strong attacker with an arsenal of shots.
- Fundamentally sound movements (progressions in teaching): Train your hitters progressively by incorporating different approach angles, footwork patterns and more challenging scenarios as your hitters become more capable.
    - **Footwork:** Develop each player's approach footwork so it's consistent every time. This could be a 3- or 4-step approach.
    - **Arm swing:** Develop a high arm swing, wrist snap and power.
    - **Landing:** Train hitters to land with both feet and land balanced.
    - **Approach-angle:** Teach attackers to adjust their approach-angle based on the pass and set.
- Pass first, then attack: A hitter's first and most important job is pulling back to pass the serve. Once the ball has been passed, the hitter can transition to the attacking position.
- Skills needed for a successful attacker:
    - **Max power:** Hitters need both core and shoulder strength in order to create the torque needed for a powerful attacker.
    - **Hit high off the hands:** Hitters should be able to hit above and off the blocker's hands. This requires a high elbow.
    - **Range:** A hitter must learn to hit high off the block, develop the hardest swing possible, and learn to hit different angles into the court to challenge the opposing team's defense.
- **Train both first ball and transition:** A hitter's adaptability will depend on how the coaches train during practice. It's critical to practice both first-ball scenarios and transition scenarios during hitting practice. This gets your hitters comfortable with dynamically adjusting to plays.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

ATTACKING FUNDAMENTALS

Footwork

- **Number of steps:** The number of steps in a player's approach will depend on her training; what's important is how she coordinates the footwork and arm swing to attack the ball.
- **Length of steps:** The first step is to gain length. The second and third steps are shorter – to load for the jump.
- **Speed of steps:** The proper tempo of steps will depend on the set and the attacker's approach, but the more explosive the approach, the better.

Arm Swing

- **During approach phase:** Arms begin in front of the body, then swing back to prepare for the jump.
- **During jump phase:** Generate power by drawing the arms back.
- **Initial attack phase:** Arms quickly power forward to aid with the jump, and the dominant hand and elbow prepare for the swing.
- **Finish attack phase:** The follow-through of the arm swing depends on the timing of the attack.

Timing

- **1st step tempo:** The first step determines the angle of the approach and is the "locator step."
- **2nd step tempo:** The second step is a quick, low step.
- **3rd step tempo:** The third and last step is parallel to your second step and helps load for the jump.

ATTACKING

MIKE SEALY (UCLA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HITTING APPROACH

Explosive, efficient, adjustable

Components

- Step close (better termed “drive close”) and the prowl step.

Progressions

- Forward lean on one foot into step close off toss.
- Forward lean on one foot into directional step close off toss.
- Forward lean on one foot into a low toss “flash hit” off toss. Middles can hit 1’s and 3’s also.
- Forward lean on one foot into a step close off toss to the pins (left and right).
- Define and add prowl step for above progressions.

TRAINING MIDDLES TO HIT QUICK TEMPO SETS AND THE SLIDE

General mechanics for middle hitting off two feet

- 2-step “step close” is the most important (“drive close”). Prowl step/adjustment step to initiate.
- Slotting to approach to a consistent drive close finish vs. running a different approach based on distance and location to setter.

General mechanics for middle hitting off one foot

- Slot/readjust to keep consistent relationship to setter location.
- Slot to keep consistent relationship to fixed set location (may vary from hitter to hitter).
- Running mechanics left, right, left. Arms in running motion to clean draw (vs. low/long draw).
- Right knee drive-up.
- Run to pole on slide to keep ball in front.
- Finish neutral to give more opportunity for range (vs. rounding off).

Set options

- **1:** A slower set can result in more range (Hang one vs. 0 temp).
- **Push:** Adds subtle variation and space from blocker. Forces blocker to read longer and process more information.
- **Gap vs. 3:** Spot on floor or distance from setter?
- **Pop/float:** Like the push, adds space and more to process.
- **Mid:** Always in the middle of the court. Direction of approach is straight vs. angled.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Behind setter options:

- **Tight:** A, blue, any name. Tight to setter.
- **Push:** Drift, fade, etc. Looks like tight but is 2-3 feet extended behind.
- **Half:** Set location on net. Looks like a Slide in trajectory but is 5-8 feet inside.
- **Slide:** Wide set to pin. Can vary in height, speed, end location (to pin, slightly inside, etc.).

Height vs. speed

- Is your hitter physical enough to generate kills on her own, or do you need to create seams and holes in the block?
- Angle of approach will add horizontal deception yet will increase need for set location consistency.
- When can you get full approach vs. needing to get up?

ATTACKING

TERRY LISKEVYCH (3-TIME USA OLYMPIC COACH)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARM SWING

- Get elbow back and above ear – “throwing motion” – rotation of shoulder.
- Follow through into the body.
- Extend hitting arm in front of your head to the right of your ear (extend & reach).
- Shoulder arc (sweet spot of your shoulders).
- Left shoulder on the net.
- End product – *“Line of Force”* – extended hitting arm that forms a straight line through opposite leg.
- Critical to proper mechanics: In your approach: WAIT and ACCELERATE. *“Once you start, do not stop until you contact the ball.”*

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

ARM SWING

Goals

- To produce an attack that exhibits power and accuracy.
- To create a powerful attack without inducing injury.

Two general techniques:

1. High elbow
2. Low elbows

High elbow

- Coaches teach to jump using arms, so both arms tend to reach high.
- With both arms up, there isn't a lot of time to do much with hitting arm.
- Since this is a simple movement, it becomes an easier movement.
- Contact point: A high elbow makes it easier to contact the ball.

Low elbow

- Needs to be taught as it contrasts with the easier high elbow technique.
- Since hand is traveling a greater distance, there is potential for increased velocity of hand into the ball.
- Low elbow brings in additional support joints to create more hand velocity with less stress on the shoulder/elbow.

Takeaway

- The low elbow technique has the potential to produce faster hand speed into the ball producing a more powerful attack.
- Since there are more body parts involved in the swing, the attacker should produce a more powerful attack with lessened demands on the shoulder.

ATTACKING

CASSIDY LICHTMAN (USA WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM, 2011-2016)

DRILLS TO TRAIN ATTACKERS

Follow the Leader

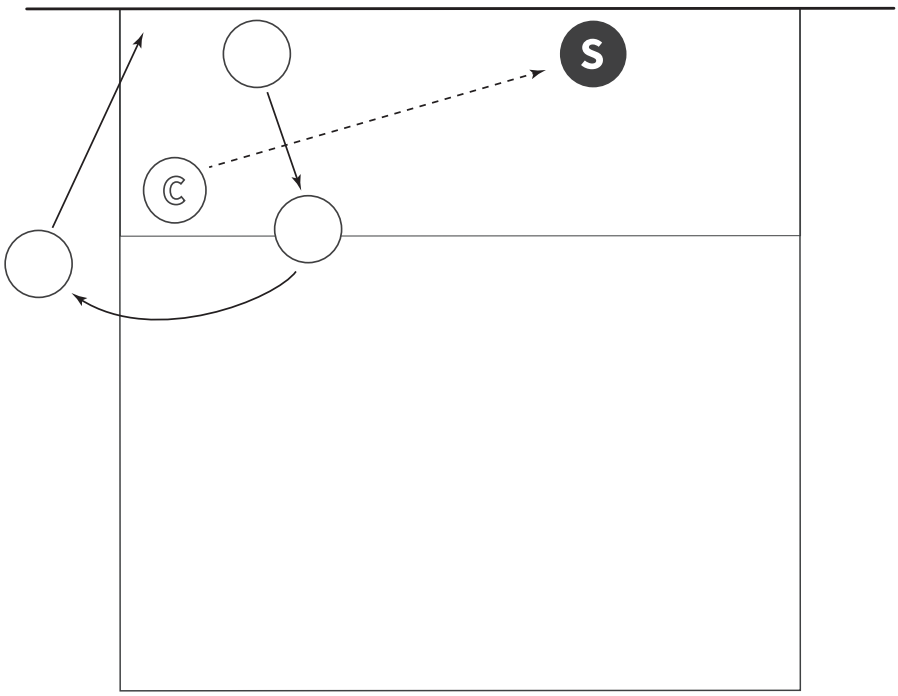
A great drill for extending range and working on accuracy.

- All hitters in a given position are in a hitting line. The first picks a shot to hit, and the others try to get as close as possible to that spot. Players take turns picking the shot. This drill can be played competitively by giving a point to the player who gets closest each time.

Around the Horn ▼

Another good attacking drill. It focuses on outside hitter footwork to get off the net and play defense, then transitioning to hit outside.

- A coach stands in left front around the 10-foot line and near the sideline. Outside hitter starts at the net, then makes a move off as if playing defense against the opposing outside. They then transition outside to hit, having to go around the coach, who is tossing a ball to the setter. Variations: You can run from the left or the right side.



©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

ATTACKING FUNDAMENTALS

Key components

- I'm a big fan of starting with the arm mechanics first and adding the approach.
- Encourage arm warmup work that is very technique focused and over the net.
- Have athletes initiate drills with down ball reps.

Arm swing

- Greatest deficiency in youth is a lack of trunk rotation while attacking and excessive trunk extension (leaning back).
    - Often caused by athletes being early and ahead of the ball.
- Want athletes to have hips and shoulders "open" at takeoff (left foot forward for right-handed hitter).
- As they jump, attacking elbow pulls back: "Loading the rotational spring"
- Rotation of the shoulder generates a large amount of the power, swinging of the arm is the other component.
- Elbow passes over top of shoulder, hand trails behind elbow.
- Wrist relaxed, fingers are comfortably spread.

Feet/approach

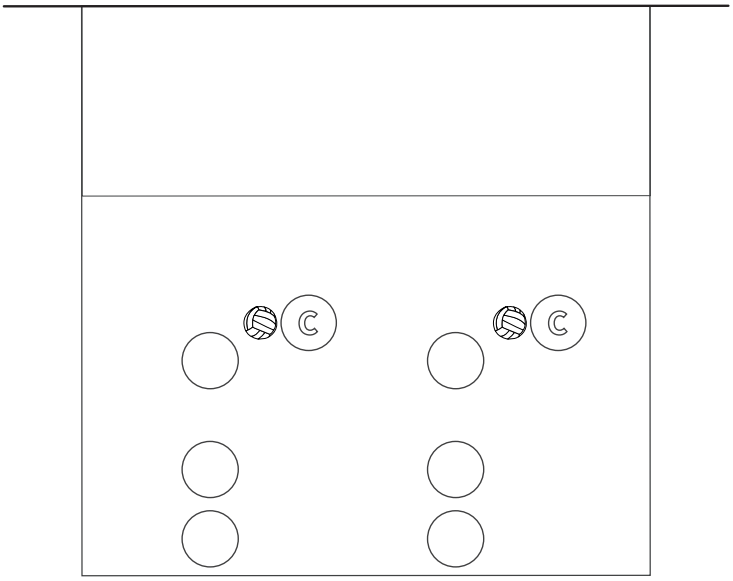
- Far more common for an athlete to approach early than late.
- Slow to fast approach: Should see a noticeable increase in speed throughout the approach.
- Big, bigger, biggest – then close step in a 4-step approach. Each successful step within the approach should be larger than the previous (with the exception of the final close step).
- Double arm lift and forward flexion at waist. Arms should both be back and chest forward as our heel strikes on the second-to-last step. Arms initiate our vertical jump.
- Close step across. This opens hips and promotes full-body swing mechanics.

ATTACKING

JEN FLYNN OLDENBURG (OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY)

ATTACK DRILL

Attack Progression from Toss ▶



This drill reinforces proper mechanics and proper contact point. Players must read the set and get their feet behind the ball. Work on back-row attacks, both from the ground and jumping.

For this drill, everyone throws/hits the same direction. Shag your own ball. Two lines: Left Back and Right Back. Coaches are tossing from about 15 feet, parallel to the athlete.

- 5 minutes: Eagle up catch, eye contact, throw (torque!)
- 5 minutes: Standing down ball (loose arms/ torque!) FOCUS on keeping feet behind the ball. Shoulders should NOT be facing the net.
- 5 minutes: "GATHER" move (not a full approach). FOCUS on keeping feet behind ball. Wait to GATHER. Don't just let players take off.
- 5 minutes: Full approach = PROPEL. BLOCK/POP. FOCUS on waiting to see where toss is, then get your feet in a good spot to jump and swing. Continue to work on last two "steps" to jump; cadence should be similar to the GATHER move, but now we are getting lower in the last two "steps" and jumping a little more forward in the full approach.

Variations

- Add a line for the "pipe."
- Add a live block vs. full approach back-row attacks.
- As players start to understand the GATHER (or "Step/Close") cadence, vary the toss to make it more random.
- Toss over the shoulders so they have to get around it.
- Toss right at them or a little behind them so they have to move backwards but still create power to jump and swing.
- Add location goals to the swing (deep corners, roll shot to the middle, etc.)
- Add goals for individuals or group to move on to the next phase of the drill.
- Team progression or individual progression.
- Players toss instead of coach. (This will certainly lead to varied tosses!) This helps with "tosser awareness" – understanding how high the toss ("the set") needs to be.
- If contact point is/continues to be a struggle, toss from BEHIND the athlete.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEACHING ATTACKING TO YOUNGER PLAYERS

Progression

- Tennis ball and partner working with swing from the ground, no jumping
- Progress to a volleyball from the ground
- Put player on a box with tennis balls or smashed cups
- Coach tosses ball to player on the box
- Player broad jumps to attack (don't worry about result)
- Player takes the last two steps of the approach
- Full approach off of a toss
- Full approach off a setter
- Coach tosses vs. a block
- Live attack vs. a block

Keywords

- Big drive step
- Left, right, left
- Load hips
- Elbow high
- Hip to elbow: Open hips
- Snap and follow through
- Left hand high
- Get the ball high

Ready position list

- Shoulders over toes
- Arms dangling
- Eyes on the ball

Movement to ball

- Big drive step to the ball
- Find the peak of the ball
- Hips to your setter
- Explode as you slant

ATTACKING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RON KORDES (ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL, KIVA SPORTS)

At contact

- Left arm is high
- Right arm is high and back
- Right hip is loaded
- Elbow first
- Snap (like snapping a towel)
- Finish with natural motion

Drill

- Self-toss and hit
- Attack to target boxes
- Left to left attacking (right to right, left to right, right to left) pepper exchange
- Box swings
- Thumb up and thumb down progression

ATTACKING PRACTICE PLAN

10 minutes – Hand contact

- Discuss importance of hand contact
- Bounce and snap
- Wall work: Attacking with no bend in the elbow; emphasize snap

15 minutes – Shot maker

- Down balls first (no jumping)
- Approach and jump

10 minutes – Technique footwork and drive step

- Feet to the ball – not having long approach
- Drive step with feet together
- Position of feet when planting
- Use of arms in approach

15 minutes – Attacking drills

- Approach and hit ball over with head – Flamingo (3 minutes)
- Flamingo attacking (4 minutes)
- Full approach and attack (4 minutes)

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

15 minutes – Transition attacking

- Discuss footwork from block to transition
- Drill: Transition footwork attacking lines

WATER BREAK

15 minutes – Controlled OOS drill

- Setters in right back digging down ball (coach initiated down ball)
- Liberos coming from left back setting OOS to pins
- Other liberos digging the other side
- GOAL: Plus 25 swings to deep corners

ATTACKING

NABIL MARDINI (LOS ANGELES VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY)

ATTACK SCHEMES

Symmetrical Offense

Zone 1 – We run sets to the hitting window (53 Ball or High Ball or Go) or to the middle of Z1 (Flare or 31) or to the borders of Z1/Z2 (X1 or Gap).

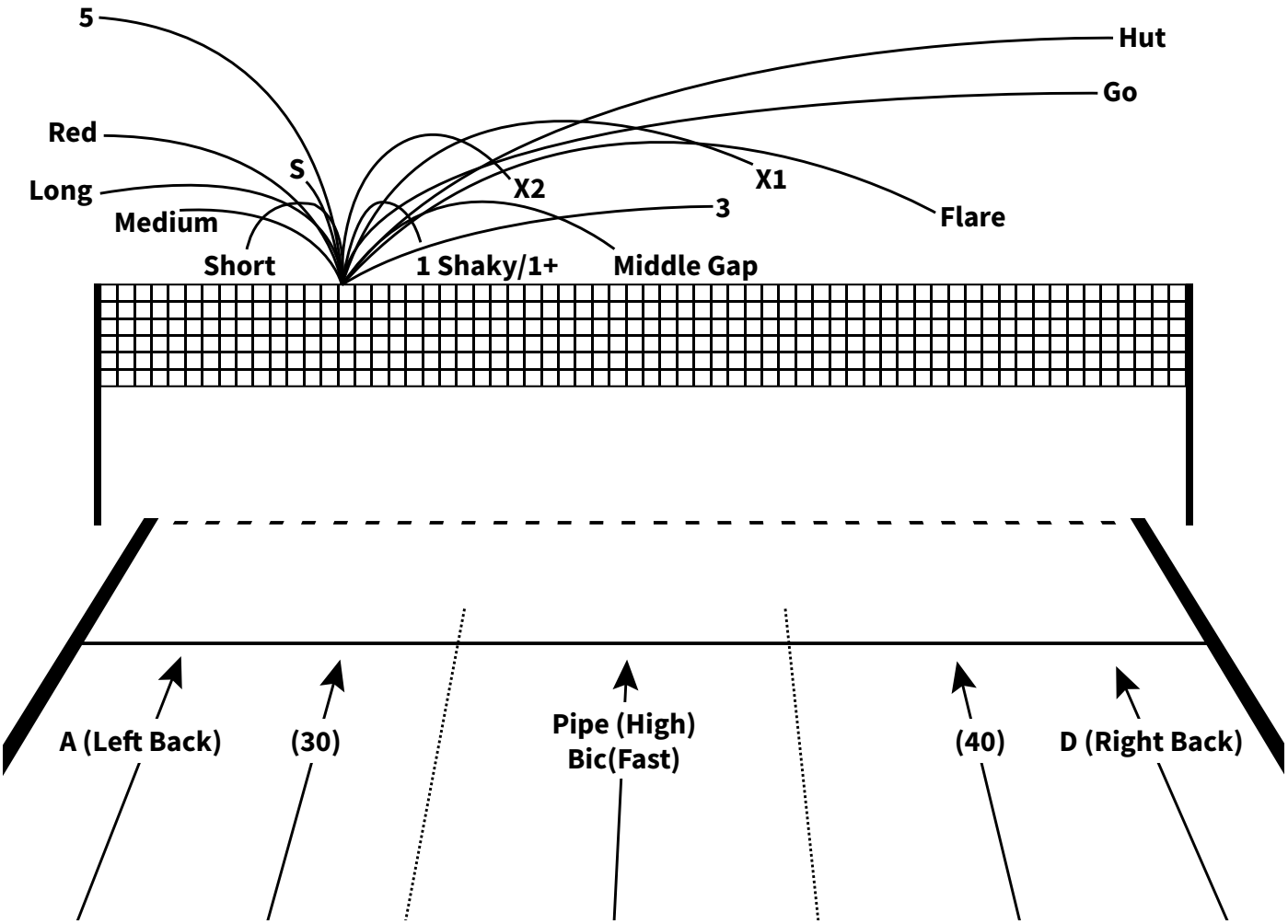
Zone 2 – We run sets to the borders of Z1/Z2 (Gap or X1) or to the borders of Z2/Z3 (Short) or to the middle of Z2 (1s, Shaky or 1+, X2, 2). The 1 and the 1+ are the only two sets that are run toward the setter either inside the middle's arms triangle (1) or outside of it (1+).

Zone 3 – We run sets to the hitting window (5 or Red or Long or Slide) or to the middle of Z3 (Medium).

Back-row attacks – Pipe/BIC/30/40

Blocking the zones – BLACK = Double "COMMIT"; (2) WHITE = Single "COMMIT"; (3) YELLOW = TRIPLE "COMMIT"

Beginner and intermediate levels – Setters call the sets (hand signals)



©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Advanced level – Hitters are audible

Zero-step set: 53 (High ball)

First-step set: Hut and 5

Second-step set: Go/Flare/X1/X2

Four-step set or negative-step set: 1/1+ or Shaky/Gap/3

Back-row attack: A/Pipe/D are 1st Step-Sets and the BIC/30/40 are 2nd Step-Sets

Slide sets: Middle/Short/Medium/Long

General hitting philosophy: The more time I spend coaching volleyball, the more I become convinced that hitting is what wins games, matches and championships, so it makes sense to spend a lot of time in practice to become better at hitting. The formula is simple. If you outhit the other team, you will most likely win the match regardless of how well you passed. Having said that, it is critical to improve blocking because the better you block, the lower the hitting percentage of your opponent. In other words, even if your hitters had a bad hitting night that leads to a low hitting percentage, you can still win the match if you outhit the other team because you had more blocks.

I am constantly looking for ways to improve **Team Hitting Percentage.** However, it is critical to look at the game of volleyball from a strategic point of view in order to have a better plan for training. In my opinion, the most important skills in volleyball are in this order:

- Serving and passing
- Setting and hitting (hand control)
- Digging (ball control)
- Blocking

Strategies

- What should the setter and hitter think about? Is there a setting location that's important? What's most important for hitters to think about? (Hitting Window = six squares of net from the pin.)
- Once you are at a certain level with the training regimen of your teams, establishing the speed of the offense and maintaining that speed in out-of-system situations is critical to any offense. Most teams only go fast on perfect passes or within the 3-meter line.
- Can we get lots and lots of good swings?
- How fast can we go? (Speed kills)
- How often can we do it? (Speed kills, even when everyone knows where it's going.)
- Read the play and react accordingly. When a setter is calling the offense in serve receive, it's more like "recommended plays," but the truth of the matter is that all hitters should be AUDIBLE to be safe.

ATTACKING

NABIL MARDINI (LOS ANGELES VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY)

- The farther the pass is off the net, the more OUTSIDE the court a hitter needs to be and NOT farther off the net.
- Don’t play “Hero Ball.” Better the set. Better the ball.
- Attack the corners of the block. Don’t try to avoid the block.
- If you miss, miss LONG and not WIDE.
- Challenge the block. In other words, we want our players to not be afraid to be blocked.
- The worst play in volleyball is to hit a ball while standing on your feet. Jump and hit even if it is a mini jump. The second you jump, you put pressure on the opponent.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

BLOCKING

BLOCKING

BETH LAUNIERE (UNIVERSITY OF UTAH)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BASIC BLOCKING CONCEPTS

Blocking system questions

- Swing block vs. no swing block? The swing block is a powerful tool when players are able to coordinate their movements with one another.
- When should you swing block? Only swing block when the blocker has time to complete the swing block footwork.
- What offensive system is the opponent running? It's critical to adapt to the other team's attacking strengths when deciding on a blocking strategy.
- How good are your blockers and defenders? The skill level of your team will determine what blocking system to use.
- Read vs. commit, or combination? Train the eyes to take in as much information as possible to adjust the block properly.
- Block an area or block the ball? Track the eyes in the following pattern to predict the trajectory: Ball-setter, ball-hitter.

Blocking footwork patterns available for your system

- Learn the footwork patterns that are most conducive to effectively blocking your opponent.

Blocking vs. different offensive scenarios

- Tempo: Blockers must be quick to adapt with both hands and feet to an offensive team that runs tempo plays.
- Opponent attack zones: Learn the opponent's attacking patterns in order to designate a zone of responsibility for each blocker.
- Passing location: Train blockers to follow the location of the pass with their eyes so they can read where the setter will likely send the ball.
- Opponent player tendencies: Every hitter has their favorite locations to hit. Know those tendencies in order to prep your blockers for effective blocking.

Commit system

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

BLOCKING

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

ALL ABOUT BLOCKING

The function of blocking

- The first line of defense, must coordinate with your defensive system
- Objective is to score a point or channel the ball to your defense
- Control block, or positive touches
- Stuff block, kill block for points
- Transition: Defense-to-offense system
- Beginners: Keep it simple

Blocking position and posture

- Medium posture, knees flexed, back straight, shoulders slightly forward
- Feet shoulder-width, weight balanced on feet
- Elbows bent – shoulder height / hands just above eyes
- Drop into your jump (1/2 squat, especially for smaller blockers)
- Fingers spread wide, relaxed hands, hands do not go below shoulders
- Penetrate the net – reach with hands over plane of net
- Tall blockers who can penetrate the plane of the net (stuff block) start slightly off the net (15-18 inches). Kill blocks for athletic blockers/MB – “reach for the backline”
- Smaller blockers – control/soft block. They should start close to the net (6-12 inches). Their job is to prevent the hitter from hitting down.
- General positioning tendencies. If a set is tight to the net, the hitter typically will hit LINE or off the block. If the ball is off the net, they typically attack ANGLE (cross court).

Footwork

- **Shuffle step:** Quick and efficient. Keep feet, hips, shoulders, parallel to the net.
- **Step-close:** Move a short distance, or to close the block. First step is with the foot in the direction you are moving.
- **Crossover step:** Used when the blocker needs to cover more distance (middle blockers) along the net. Open hips and take first step in the direction, then crossover with the opposite foot. Last steps hop into position with hips parallel to net (used in swing blocking).

Blocking concepts

- Playing the percentages: Understanding the percentages in the game help determine your philosophy and the defensive systems you will use with your teams.

BLOCKING

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

- Train your players to do what they are capable of doing. Are they small blockers? Tall blockers? Create a system that works with your personnel. By keeping it simple, you give them a chance to succeed.
- Train your pin players both to block OUTSIDE to defend in-system and out-of-system attacking and also to block INSIDE to help on quick attack (advanced levels).
- Train your middle blockers' footwork to move laterally and be in a balanced position for a stuff/attack block, or to zone/area block (channel the ball to the defense).

Simple blocking: Eye sequence

- Know where the setter is located.
- PIN BLOCKERS watch the BALL as it comes into their zone.
- POSITION the PIN BLOCKER to block the ball in the hitter's zone.
- Put your HANDS in front of the ball.

Advanced blocking: BALL / SETTER / BALL / HITTER

- Watch the **BALL,** first contact – serve receive or free ball or dig. Once the blocker recognizes the pass will not be an overpass, then they need to determine if the pass is in-system (good pass) or out-of-system (pass off the net).
- Watch the **SETTER.** Where is the ball being set? Left? Middle? Right?
- Watch the **BALL.** How and where is the ball being delivered? Inside? Outside? Off the net? Tight? Speed? Etc.
- Watch the **HITTER.** What is the approach angle of the attacker? How fast, slow? **"Front the Hitter."**
- Determine how your defense will be positioned around your blockers and decide on a defensive philosophy. Back-row players need to be able to see the attackers and read the hitter.
- Transition to offense.

Advanced blocking concepts

- Spacing and base position of middle and pin blockers
- Single block vs. double block, single commit, double commit
- Swing blocking – when to use it? Hybrid (static and swing).
- Bunch block vs. spread block
- Read block vs. commit block
- Reading the play so you know when to block and when NOT to block. (For instance, don't block in a down ball situation.)

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

BASIC BLOCKING CONCEPTS

Goals of blocking

- Stuff ball
- Control touch
- Direct ball to best defender

Bad things that can happen

- Net
- Center line
- Deflect attack out of bounds

No block is better than a bad block

- What is a good block?
  - Stuff block for a point.
  - Deflecting the ball in the air so it can be played by defenders.
  - Operates vertically and over the net so defenders can line up around the hands and defend the open court.
- What is a bad block?
  - Drifts laterally and creates a problem for the defenders to line up around the hands.
  - Allows the attack to deflect off the hands to an unplayable area of the court.
  - Commits a net or center-line violation.
- What should you do with a poor blocker?
  - First, let's define "poor blocker." A poor blocker is not necessarily a small blocker. A poor blocker commits the errors listed in the "bad block" description.
  - A poor blocker should either:
    - Be placed in front of the hitter least likely to receive the set.
    - Block a small area of the court (example, an outside block taking the line away and having the middle blocker and defenders take responsibility for most of the court.)
    - Stay down and cover off-speed attacks.
    - And finally, if the offensive contributions do not compensate for the blocking liabilities, the poor blocker should be replaced.

BLOCKING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

Basic blocking concepts

- What am I seeing?
  - Is the opponent's first contact coming over the net?
  - Where is my hitter? Is my hitter leaving the zone in front of the blocker?
  - Where is the ball being set? Focus on the ball out of the setter's hands.
  - Direction of approach: Most hitters will hit with their approach, so the block should, in many circumstances, be placed in line with the approach of the attacker.
  - Helping with other hitters? A good blocker should make the effort to assist teammates in blocking their attacker.

Moving along the net

- Blocking is a dynamic, aggressive, confrontational activity. Is this what we teach?
- Movement in the air: Much of the game is played with feet off the ground. How do we get players comfortable moving in the air? Lots of repetition moving the hands in the air, with a focus on maintaining balance and core stability.
- How do we move from Point A to Point B? Situational movements. Blockers should be comfortable with a variety of footwork patterns so they can navigate along the net and get to their attacker.

Where do we put the best blocker?

- It's a good strategy to put your best blocker in front of the best attacker.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

BLOCKING

It's important to understand the percentages of the game and tendencies of volleyball players:

- In women's volleyball, good teams will pass somewhere between 2.2 to 2.6 (3-point scale in passing). In other words, good teams will pass around 70% perfect or good passes. Therefore, it's vital that you train your wings (outsides and opposites) to be inside so they can help out on the quick attack.
- If a set to the pins is too tight to the net, the hitter will most likely hit a LINE shot. If the set is off the net, the hitter will most likely hit ANGLE.

Serving has a lot to do with blocking percentage. If you succeed in taking the opponent out-of-system, you take a lot of pressure off your blockers and most likely will stuff a lot more balls. **I do not** like to teach my players that the object of serving is to ace the opponent (100% Principle). My philosophy is that the object of serving is to prevent the opponent from making a perfect/good pass (80% Principle). Aces are gravy.

Eyework

Ball/Ball/Ball/SETTER/SETTER/SETTER/SETTER/Ball/Ball/Ball/HITTER/HITTER/HITTER/HITTER. (3-4-3-4).

- **Perceive the pass:** Once a blocker recognizes that the pass or dig is not an overpass, eyes should be focused on setter and everything else should be in the peripheral vision. This will allow blockers to react very quickly and release when necessary.
- **Perceive the set:** How fast is the set? Where is the set taking the hitter? Determine speed/direction/depth of set.
- **Perceive the hitter:** Where is the approach and what kind of approach (full-speed or half-speed)? Where is the hitting shoulder? Is the hitter closing the body too early or staying opened up?
- **Play team defense:** Play according to what's happening, not according to what you thought might happen.

Blocking strategies

- Bunch vs. tight bunch vs. spread
- Read block vs. commit block
- Single commit vs. double commit
- Let the offense of the opponent react to your blocking schemes rather than your block reacting to the offense of the opponent.
- We ONLY tell our blockers to go HEAD UP. Once in a while, if a hitter is lethal putting balls away hitting wrist away, I will tell the blockers to go with the head on the HITTING SHOULDER.
- Helping out in the middle (Zone 2)

BLOCKING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NABIL MARDINI (LOS ANGELES VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY)

Fundamentals

Coil: Shoulders at the same level of the bottom tape. Smaller middle blockers don't have the ability to have hands higher/better pass because they're not big enough to reach the hitting zone without jumping. This causes players to get "stretched out" and then wastes time reloading to jump.

Blocking zones (1, 2, & 3): Each blocker is responsible for a quick attack zone, the middle blocker only fronts the middle hitter until that hitter leaves the zone of responsibility. Then that hitter becomes the responsibility of whichever outside blocker that hitter goes to.

Seal and shoot hands across the net: A blocker's hands should remain on the opponent's side of the net for as long as possible (in opponent's airspace as long as possible) – small/small/small/BIG.

Two blocking strategies:

- **Head up (POWER HITTER) -** If a hitter is capable of hitting angle or line.
- **Hitting shoulder (ANGLE HITTER) -** If a hitter is capable of hitting wrist away.

Shrug shoulders forward - DO NOT put shoulders to ears. This is a common theme taught that causes the blockers to drop their head and make the press with their abs.

Footwork

- **Pin Blockers -** Start with the feet parallel and even to allow movement to the pin and help out on the QUICK sets.
    - **1st step –** Take a small push-off/jab step with the outside leg.
    - **2nd and 3rd steps –** Crossover move with the inside leg and with the toes at a 45-degree angle with the centerline and into the line of approach.
    - Cross over into the belly button or between the feet of the hitter (POWER HITTER) or cross over into the inside hip or inside foot of the hitter (SHARP ANGLE HITTER).
- **Middle Blockers –** Start in a NEUTRAL base (feet parallel and even). Same 3-step move as the wings, except:
    - **1st step –** Should be like a runner's 1st step, big enough that you don't lose your balance. The weight of your body should be on the ball of your foot (load up).
    - **2nd and 3rd steps –** Upper body should be at a 45-degree angle with the net and then back to parallel with the net when going into the "Terminal Position."
- **Triple Block –** Inside wing makes a 5-step move that begins with a 2-Step shuffle, and then a regular 3-step move.

Arms/Hands Work (Small/Small/Small/BIG)

Shoot arms across the net when wrists clear the tape. Arms swing in front of your body, then "straight-up, straight over."

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PET PEEVE! A weak block makes for an easy tool shot. If you're the blocker and you're out of position, don't reach toward the hitter. Instead, stop and get over the net. This creates three positives out of bad situation:

1. You're pressing over the net, and even though you won't be fronting the hitter, the hitter may hit into you.
2. Your defenders will have a clear view of the attack, which will give them a better chance to make the dig.
3. You won't get tooled.

Putting up a stable, well-formed block is always a better option than making radical moves one way or another to compensate for being out of position.

DRILLS TO TRAIN BLOCKERS

Hut/Five/Pipe

One of my favorite drills for teaching eye-work. A coach begins it by sending a spin ball to the team on offense. The first ball sent by the coach has to be a Hut, Five or a Pipe. Anything goes after that. Score is +4/-4 for a Big Point.

6 vs. 6 Team Blocking and Go for the Kill (15 vs. 8)

Rally is initiated with a serve. If the serve is missed, the coach tosses in a like-a-serve ball.

DEFENSE – On the first ball ONLY, if (+) Touch and they convert, they score 1/2 a point. Stuff or hitting error equals 1 point. The Defense needs a total of 8.

OFFENSE – If there's a kill off the block ANY TIME (negative touch), then you score 2 points. Offense needs a total of 15.

+3 Blocking

Play 6 vs. 6 and coach bounces the ball to the side that loses the rally and must send over the next on one contact. In the entire drill, the setters can only be set a Go/1/Red or Hut/1/5. You can only score a point by getting a negative touch (a tool) off the block. If you win the rally any other way, they will get a chance to be on offense (as the losing team gets the bounce to be sent over the net) and therefore a chance to tool the block and score a point. Play mini games to +3 points and then switch FR and BR or go to the next rotation. Play 2 out of 3 games.

D vs. 3

This drill prepares the defense to defend the Quick, Left-side and Right-side attacks. Set up in 6 vs. 6 and start each rally with the coach tossing to the setter directly. The setter hand signals the middles' sets before the toss. The QUICKS cannot be the same 3 times in a row. We will play it out. Rally score games to 5 points. Play a 2-out-of-3 match.

Swing blocking myths

- "Girls aren't athletic enough to swing block, or swing blocking is extremely hard for women." No, it isn't. Not if you teach them. Women can do anything men can do, maybe just not as powerfully.
- "Blockers float too much when swing blocking." This is a technical issue. Teach them how to do it right and they won't float.
- "Too much movement of the blockers disrupts reading for the defenders and causes deflections." No, it doesn't. In 2005, Washington Huskies libero Candace Lee dug more balls than anyone in the PAC-10, and her team was the best defensive team in the conference.

We teach our players to take an approach to attack the ball, so why not teach them to take an approach to attack a hitter? Being DYNAMIC is a lot more athletic than being STATIC in any sport.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

5 R'S OF BLOCKING

FIVE R'S OF BLOCKING: READY, RECOGNIZE, READ, REACT/RESPOND, REMEMBER

Ready

- Be in an ENGAGED posture and be balanced.
- Measure your distance off the net. Standard is elbow-to-finger-tip distance from the net.
- Feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent.
- Legs loaded and ready to move laterally or block jump.

Recognize

- Which rotation are they in?
- Is the setter in the front row or back row?
- Communicate what you recognize.

Read

- **Eye sequence**
- **Ball-Hitter-Setter-Ball-Hitter**
- **Ball:** Watch pass to its apex (evaluate its speed, direction, trajectory; will it be an overpass?)
- **Hitter:** Take a quick initial scan of the offensive field for oncoming attack patterns.
    - What is the hitter in your zone doing?
- **Setter:** Identify posture, release point, the hands' angle and speed of release.
- **Ball:** Make quick initial identification of direction, speed and trajectory of set.
- **Hitter:** Identify approach angle (depth from net and lateral distance from setter, zones, pins) and focus on direction of shoulders and arm-swing.

React/respond

- How you respond to the set. Be dynamic and force the hitter to change.
- Figure out what needs to change and how to change.
- NO GUESSING!

Remember

- Does the setter dump when in the front row?
- Who gets the most sets?
- Who hits cross?

- Who hits line?
- Which plays do they run in each rotation?
- Are there crossing patterns?

Blocking skills

No time and no distance

- Hand(s) across

Short time and short distance

- Quick 2
- Quick 3

Short time and long distance

- Crossover 2

Enough time and long distance

- Crossover
- Shuffle crossover

Problem solve

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

BLOCKING

MARK BARNARD (OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY)

BLOCKING FUNDAMENTALS

1. Where and how do you start on the net?

- These can be many and varied. What does the opposition do in attack, what are your blockers capable of, do you have a blocking system? Regardless of where you start on the net you need to be prepared.

2. What do you watch?

- Volleyball happens close to you and is fast, you need to be watching the correct thing at the right time. You need to READ, not GUESS!
- Only stay on the pass long enough to determine that it is not coming over the net – if it is then do something about it! Otherwise get to the setter and read what they are about to do.
- After the ball is set, watch it long enough to determine who is getting it, then switch to the hitter.

3. When do you do or don't block?

- Does your outside help on the middle attack?
- Do you block back row?

4. How do you move?

- As efficiently as possible, small directional step to start and then crossover movement to get to the outside.
- 3 steps preferred or shuffle and three steps.
- Keep arms relatively straight when making the blocking "approach."

5. Where do your arms and hands go?

- For OH's, reach inside your body.
- For MB's, go straight over – could consider reaching a bit to slow a hitter down.
- Hands rigid and pointing to where you want the ball to go.
- You will block with one hand – two ball blocking drill.



Reaching out on block



Reaching in on the block (outside blocker)

6. How do you land?

- Land on two feet
- Avoid drifting and landing on one leg as much as possible
- Be prepared to turn and find the ball/get off the net quickly

7. Blocking systems

- Your call as a coach: Bunched, spread, stacked, commit, etc.

BLOCKING TRAINING FOR MIDDLES

It's the eyes – what to watch and when?

- You need to assume the ball is going to be overpassed – be ready for that. As soon as you realize it isn't coming over the net, you have to get eyes on the setter.
- The focus on the setter is paramount because setters will "tell" you what they're doing.
- The farther the pass ends up off the net, the less you will have to worry about.
- Take care of what happens first – the opposition quick attack.

The hitter will go to where the ball is

- You need to move toward the direction of the attack judging where the hitter will intercept the ball. The narrower the set, the more likely the hitter will hit cross court. The wider the set (but still inside the antenna), the more likely the hitter will hit more of a line or seam shot.
- Variety of steps can be used (depending on distance and athleticism of the middle) to get to the correct position. First step is taken in the direction of the ball (not a big step). The second step is the more dynamic (faster and longer). The second step is a cross-over step. The third step closes. Preference for this method.



Poor pass, hands drop and ready to move.



Small step with left foot.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.



Larger crossover step, arms straight.



Finish with feet at 45 degrees to the net. A lot of use of the arms to jump.



Shoulders parallel to the net. Reaching over with hands.

TRAINING SWING & COMBINATION BLOCKING

1. Should you swing block or shuffle block or some hybrid version? Yes.
2. What is your philosophy on blocking? Is it to score a point, slow down the attack, channel the attack?
3. Your priority should be to put the blocker in the right position to block the ball.
4. Where do you plan on starting your blockers when the opposition has the ball? Do you need to worry about their middle attack?
    - Do you want your outside blockers to help on the middle attack?
    - Is their middle attack really only one particular type, meaning that only your LF blocker really needs to help out?
    - Where on the net is a majority of the attack coming from on the other side?
5. How quickly do your blockers move from their starting positions to the point of attack?
6. Teach your blockers the importance of getting over the net. An inch over equals square feet taken away!
7. Various situations in the game will demand some versatility in the way you block or the way you move to block.
8. Have your blockers practice blocking movement from various parts of the court. Longer distances will require a crossover step, maybe even a shuffle then crossover. Short distances might be better served by a single shuffle step.
9. Where do you start with your hands?
10. There are so many faults in blocking: not being over the net, reaching to the outside, drifting, timing and positioning relative to the attacker. What method of blocking reduces these for your athletes?

BLOCKING

MIKE SEALY (UCLA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRAINING SWING AND COMBINATION BLOCKING

Speed of offense and blocking responsibilities will dictate footwork patterns.

General

- **Loaded posture:** Legs should be loaded as you prepare to jump.
- **Base arm/hand location:** Keep hands close together in front of the body.
- **Elbows up the front of body:** The elbows travel up the front of the body, not along the sides.

New eye sequence

- **Ball, hitter, setter, ball, ball, ball, ball, ball, ball, hitter:** This sequence focuses on ball location and helps the blocker prepare for the attack.

Upper body options

- **Head on ball:** Line up straight in front of the ball.
- **Inside hand on ball:** The inside hand drops to contact the ball.
- **Outside hand on ball:** The outside hand moves out to capture the ball.
- **Straight over/channel vs. making moves** (leave seams vs. close seams): Choosing which seams to close and which to leave vulnerable also depends on your defense.
- **Shape blocking** (evolution of swing blocking catching up with speed of offense and inability to front hitter exactly every time): Blocking is all about adapting quickly and calmly to offensive scenarios.

Footwork options (based on distance and responsibilities)

- **No step:** Best for situations when the attacker approaches directly in front of the blocker.
- **Shuffle/side step:** Used to cover short distances.
- **Parallel crossover (2 and 3 step):** Best when distance must be covered to reach the block.
- **Swing block:** A dynamic block used at advanced levels to gain distance and height.
    - 45-degree
    - Arm drive/up front
    - Strong core/no “c” move
    - 2-step swing/drive step
    - In-system vs. out-of-system
    - How do you defend with seams?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

SETTING

SETTING

NABIL MARDINI (LOS ANGELES VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BASIC SETTING CONCEPTS

- The number one question you ask yourself: “Can I go against the flow?” In other words, get your feet to the ball.
- Short and quick sets are found to be more effective than long sets. Less time in the air.
- You HAVE to know what the hitters are calling. Make sure they are assertive in calling their sets.
- Number one priority as a setter: Give the hitters a HITTABLE ball. Deception is not that important.
- If the setter digs the ball, make sure they are name-specific on who sets the second ball: Libero, middle front, etc.
- Libero tells the setter if they should release from the back to the front on the EASY PLAYS (free ball, down ball, touch off the block, etc.). Otherwise, they stay and play defense. When in doubt, stay and play defense.

Setting fundamentals

- Spin off the left. (I like this one to set the quick when out-of-system.)
- Spin off the right.
- Spin off the left with a jump.
- Spin off the right with a jump.
- Sets should be 4 feet off the net (second step sets and faster) and 3-feet off the net (slower and higher sets). The faster the set, the more off you want to set it.
- Sets to the pins should START dying and NOT peaking in the “Hitting Window.” In other words, an inside set is what we consider good location for a PIN HITTER.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

SET DESCRIPTIONS

"Fast 1" – Location is in relation to the setter, not a spot on the court

Strategy	Holds Middle Blocker much better than slow 1 or Push 1. Must run very fast; hit this as soon as it clears the net. Only run this on a pass close to the net.
Setter	Jump set, high hands. Set must travel a very short distance. Too low is an error. Help the hitter use their approach angle. See the blocker location.
Hitter	Stay off the net, set up left step of approach on the 10-foot line. Stay close to the setter by tracking the pass to its peak. Must have hitting hand above head when setter touches the ball. Vary approach angle to get openings. Fast snap hit or throw tip.

"Push" – Location is in relation to the setter, not a spot on the court

Strategy	Hitter sets up and approaches just like a 1, but it's slower. Get the blockers to line up on them. Turn the attack to area 1 or 2.
Setter	Find/feel the hitter and push the set past their plant.
Hitter	Approach just like a 1 but slower. Plant as the setter sets the ball, turn or cross body attack as the set goes just past your plant location.

"3 slide right" – Location is in relation to the setter, not a spot on the court

Strategy	A Push with a deceptive move to help get an opening.
Setter	Same set as a Push. Find the hitter and push the set past them.
Hitter	Plant fake with your left foot just before the setter touches the ball. Use a right, left slide approach to hit a Push.

SETTING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

"A" – Location is in relation to the setter, not a spot on the court

Strategy	Fastest possible attack will beat the block, unless they commit. A gap set, in between set up position for middle and left-front blockers.
Setter	Contact high, set travels straight up behind head. Don't push back too far (2-3 feet off net). Should be hit right above the top of the back of your head.
Hitter	Plant with left foot just even with the setter. Jump up, not out. Plant on left foot to take off as setter touches the ball. Hand must be above head. Must hit set as it appears above net. Audible to a B/C or a Push 1 when setter goes off net.

"Blue" – Location is in relation to the setter, not a spot on the court

Strategy	A gap set. Meant to pressure the left side blocker. A back-row attack, 8 feet in from the right sideline, primarily for the Middle Back attacker but can be for Right Back attacker.
Setter	In or out-of-system, 2nd tempo.
Hitter	On 2nd step of approach, same as a rip. Hit high flat at the block.

"Go" – Location is to a spot just inside the right antenna (even if the setter moves)

Strategy	A fast wide set just inside the antenna.
Setter	A very fast back 3, 2-3 feet off net, 2-3 feet inside the antenna. Square to the 4 and set over shoulder.
Slide Hitter	Always set up approach in relation to home base, not the setter. Left locator step is at 10-foot line, even with home base, just before setter touch. Get way ahead of the set, let the set catch up to you. Stay off net, locate so that you can reach into the set.
Non-Slide Hitter	Time the set the same as a 3.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

"2" – Location is in relation to the setter, not a spot on the court

Strategy	The attacker will win if we can isolate them on one blocker. Use with a C or a Red, movement from one zone to another.
Setter	2nd tempo just higher than the antenna. 3 feet off the net, 3-4 feet in front of the setter
Hitter	Begin locator step as setter touches the ball, vary approach angles. Primary attack will be to the corners with power.

"Bic" – Location is a spot on the court just to the left of center

Strategy	This set is too fast for the block to form.
Setter	Set this just higher than a 1, just left of center, at 8-foot line.
Hitter	The timing is the same as a 3 plant, just after the setter contacts the ball. This set will be most effective if hit to corners.

"D" – Location is to a spot on the court not in relation to the setter

Strategy	Add a hitter to the offense, and always have a hitter at each pin. Another attack targeting the opponent's right-side defense.
Setter	Face the 4 for deception, 3-5 feet inside the antenna. Same height as a 5, hittable at the 8-foot line.
Hitter	Transition is important to set up a repeating approach. Begin approach as setter touches the ball.

"Rip" – Location is to a spot on the court not in relation to the setter

Strategy	A gap set for outside hitter. Primary attack is sharp cross court or cross body line.
Setter	2nd tempo set, peak just above top of antenna, same location as 3. Do not set too tight.
Hitter	Vary approach angle, begin approach on setter contact. Must work to set approach up to be consistent. Approach between ball and net to allow sharp cross-court angle. Sharp is first option; cross body line is 2nd option.

SETTING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

"Hut" – Location is at the left antenna

Strategy	The speed of the set makes block hard to locate, form and close. Do not set this outside the antenna. Set to window or just inside.
Setter	Second tempo set to peak just above the top of the antenna. Keep the timing of the set the same as you move away from home base.
Hitter	Time locator step at or just behind 10-foot line on setter contact.

"5" – Location is to a spot just inside the antenna, not in relation to the setter

Strategy	A set at the right antenna, 2-3 feet above the antenna. Should be run with a 3 as often as possible.
Setter	Set to the antenna, 2-3 feet above top of antenna. As setter moves away from home base, square to the 4. This is a great change of direction set as you move forward
Hitter	Vary approach angle to set up different primary attacks. Approach outside ball to set up cross court, inside ball for line. See set, then go, vision!

"4" – Location is to a spot just inside the antenna, not in relation to the setter

Strategy	A set at the left side antenna, height 3-4 feet above the antenna. When set from off the net, it can be a bit higher, but not much.
Setter	Always square to this set, peak 3-4 feet above top of antenna. Same air time unless beyond the 10-foot line when setting. 2-5 feet off the net. You must repeat this set!
Hitter	1st step of four on the setter's touch. Plant steps: right foot long, fast step, left fast and close to right foot. Vary approach angle and set up plant to allow the shots you want to hit.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TRAINING SETTING FUNDAMENTALS

Hand position/touch

- Variations: Some players have a softer touch, whereas others have a firmer touch.
- Develop individual/natural relationship to the ball: Work with the technique your setter has already learned.
- Hands to target and hands mirror each other: Hands should always face in the direction of the target.

How to train

- Wall touches
- One-hand touches
- Side touches
- Underhand touches
- Directional touches

POSTURE/FOOTWORK/FOLLOW THROUGH

Biomechanical non-negotiables vs. absolutes

- Cradle: Each setter will have a slightly different cradle, but the most important part is a strong wrist motion.
- Ready position: Keep the hands ready to set in a slight cradle.
- First step out/hips: Train squaring the hips to the target – an unconscious, muscle-memory movement.
- Hands to target: Don't give the ball a choice. Hands finish the same distance apart as the target.
- Touch stays constant: The arms and body add distance. Avoid deceleration during the setting motion.

How to train

- Reps from specific distance and locations, progress into footwork to those locations.
- Short to longer: Working on engaging the wrists and activating hip power to push the ball farther to the pins.

How to train footwork

- Jump rope: Helps increase footwork control and speed.
- Small-toss reps: Great for practicing footwork with limited space.
- One-foot tap jump setting: Right foot forward, left foot back.

SETTING

MIKE SEALY (UCLA)

Rhythm/cadence

- Consistency of set location: Practice specific plays, tempos and runs during practice so the setter nails down location consistency.
- Consistency of team offensive timing: Timing between the setter and attacker is critical to offensive success.

Rules of engagement

- Hittable ball: The setter's sole goal is to make the best of the pass and enable an attack.
- The right hitter at the right time: As a setter, know which hitters are reliable and can earn the team a point. Adapt to each play and spread out the offense.
- Deception/flow/creating scenarios: The setter must always be a strategist by deceiving the other team's blockers, making smart decisions and creating attacks.

ADVANCED SETTER TRAINING

Coaching, communication, establishing performance levels for setting

- Coaching vs. criticism
- How accurate can we be?
- Keep it simple
- Explain it: Understanding aids disciplined training
- Techniques must add to athleticism
- Cycles/periodization for learning transfer: At different times during the week, month or year, you will be working on different phases of a skill
- Single-item focus while doing the whole skill
- Basic skills are the foundation for advanced skills

Understanding offense

- Phases of the offense
  - Serve receive and transition
  - In-system and out-of-system
- Factors of the offense
  - Tempo
  - Location
  - Depth
  - Movement

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

    - Combination
    - Pass and dig quality
    - Set distribution
    - Opponents
    - Predictability
    - Deception
- Knowledge of the offense
- Our set list
    - Strategy behind each set
    - The setter's job on each set
    - The hitter's job on each set
- Our hitters (understand each set for each person)
    - Work with your trust level
    - The way to communicate for each person
- In-system/out-of-system
- Our team goals
- Understanding the game through statistics
    - Our offense
    - Our opponent
    - The game in general
- Decision-making and communication

What other setting skills does a setter need?

- Back setting
- Jump set (technique and location)
- One leg jump set
- Bump set
- Tilt sets
- Spin and jump spin sets
- Net skills (one hand sets, jousts, dumps and tools)
- Fitting your hands into the space you have
- Vision

SETTING

MIKE SEALY (UCLA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Advanced setter and hitter connection

There must be a collective understanding of purpose of offense/sets and a dedication to perfect the execution.

Who is responsible for what?

Setter

- Consistent speed and location of set
- Consistent rhythm and cadence
- Consistent set up and spacing
- Awareness of any adjustments that must happen on the fly (location of pass affecting choices/altering set). For instance, if you're a left pin attacker, you might be attacking farther inside than usual if the pass and set pull the play in that direction.
- Fine tune your offense to specific hitters. (Not all Go sets are the same.)

Hitter

- Efficient approach (prowl, step/close 2 step)
- Timing based on setter rhythm
- Committed and flexible

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

OFFENSE FROM THE SETTER'S POINT OF VIEW

Know all of your hitters

- Recognize their speed and rhythm. Not everyone can be their best hitting the same exact set as everyone else.
- Not every hitter will be on time all the time. Setters need to figure out when their hitters are normally late, then decide what kind of ball to set to give them the best opportunity for a good swing.
- Know everything. What kinds of sets do your hitters like? When are they most effective? Can you rely on them in crunch time? What more do they need from you?

Know your job

- Understand the difference between setting a ball that sits and setting a ball that goes through
- Work on reading the defense and holding the blockers
- Eye patterns – when to look, when not to look
- Changing body position
- Changing tempo

Know the opponent

- Who are the weakest blockers to attack, what is their normal?
- How do you want to run your offense to stress their block-defense system?

Know yourself

- How would you scout yourself? What are your tendencies?
- How can you go away from your tendencies when the other team is catching on?

Develop strategic weapons

- If they front the middle, send the middle in one direction and set away.
- If wing blockers are bunched, you can overload that side and set over, or away.

SETTING FUNDAMENTALS

Hands

- "W" hand position (my preference)
- Triangle hand position
- Soft in, firm out. Learning to catch and feel the ball, holding the ball longer at times.

SETTING

LINDSEY BERG (3-TIME USA OLYMPIAN)

Body positioning and footwork

- Follow through is like Superman or Superwoman
- Face where the ball is coming from
    - Reading the pass: Platform and body position recognition
- Left, right, set rhythm
- Footwork: Just get to the ball. There are many different ways to move.
- Core: If your core is tight, you are able to take the ball from many different positions even if you can't get your feet to the perfect spot.
- Track to center of your head/face: Many setters take the ball off their left eye, which doesn't ultimately allow them to see the block in their peripheral vision.

Jump setting off of 2 feet or 1 foot

- Start by becoming good at jump setting off of two feet because it's a less advanced skill. Jump setting in general takes a while to learn because the timing can be tricky, so be sure you are very solid with your ability to set on the ground before you begin regular jump setting off of two feet.
- Jump setting off one foot is more advanced and more dynamic; it gets the setter to the ball quicker. Later in my career, I used it almost exclusively because I liked it so much, but it takes a while to get the feel of it, so be patient as you work on it.

SETTING DRILLS

Setter vs. Defense (Run it)

Work on the setter running plays, watching the block and deception in live action. Send a free ball to one side, where the setter calls the play. Decide on a certain number of free balls before setters switch.

Scoring:

- 1 point for a kill with 2 blockers
- 2 points for a 1-on-1 kill
- 3 points for a kill with no blockers up
- -1 for an error

If the defense digs it and can return the ball back, you have another opportunity.

Variation: Full 6 vs. 6 and the opposing team serves. You go back and forth until one team reaches 25.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Wash – Pay Attention

Focus on the setter being fully aware of every situation and communicating who might be getting set. Set up in 6 vs. 6. Send four free balls to one side, where the setter has to set a different person every time. Each play is worth 1 point. If the setter sets the same hitter twice: -1 point. After 4 balls, switch teams. Play to 25 points.

Variation: Serve receive rather than free balls.

SETTING

SALIMA ROCKWELL (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, 2015-2017)

TRAINING THE SETTER'S BRAIN

Difference between setting and running/understanding an offense

- Technical training is crucial, so it is one less thing for them to think about.
- Train every day early or after practice with assistant coach/other team members.
- Quality feedback is extremely important.
- Create good habits for setter's muscle memory so they can advance their mental game.

What are you trying to accomplish?

- Depends on level, depends on game, depends on personnel
- Setting best player/hot hitter
    - This can be a personnel component
    - This can also be the flow of the game decision
- Isolating attackers
    - How can we get them one on one?
    - Against the flow
    - Overloading
- Match up scenarios?
    - Is this a lineup issue/decision?
        - Is it by rotation and a spur of the moment in match decision
- How do we get them to think on their own about it in the moment?
    - Create drills that challenge them to think.
    - Start basic with simple concepts.

THINKING DRILLS FOR SETTERS

Against the Flow

Concept for setter: The middle blocker flows with the ball and holds on a perfect pass. We can get our hitters one-on-one based on the pass.

- Setter is at the net or penetrating from the back row.
- Toss balls far in front of them and have them set behind.
- Toss balls behind them for the long front set OR the "Pipe."
- Toss perfect pass and have them jump set either in front or behind.
- You can have a middle at the net flowing with the ball to help with peripheral vision as well.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Outside vs. Outside

Concept for setter: One specific attacker is your best scorer

- Ball is initiated with a down ball from one side.
- Setter must set the outside hitter on first ball.
- During the rally, setter can set anyone – but no point is scored.
- The only way to score a point is when the outside hitter gets a kill.
- Play out rally and alternate down balls.
- Games to 5 or 7, win by 2.

2 Fer

Concept for setter: Need to be able to set a certain position/run a certain play.

- Drill is initiated by down ball or free ball.
- 2 points are awarded for a kill by the back row or middle (2 different drills, not within the same).
- Any other way of scoring will be worth 1 point (kill, block).
- Setters need to be aware of score at all times. It will help them know who to set, how to score and win at crucial times.
- Higher point-scoring game to 12 or 15.

Set that Set

Concept for setter: Need to have the ability to know what's going on in the moment – who they are setting, who they need to set.

- On a white board, write down different sets vertically. For example:
  - 4
  - Go
  - 1
  - 31
  - Slide
  - Pipe
- Alternating down balls or free balls.
- When a certain set on your side converts into a kill you can check it off the list.
- The side that gets through all the sets first (in any order) wins.
- Everyone on the team needs to be aware of what's left, who to set and should also be involved in talking throughout the drill.

SETTING

SALIMA ROCKWELL (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, 2015-2017)

Attack vs. Defense

Concept for setter: Block scheme on the other side of the net. They need to run their offense accordingly.

- This is a one-sided drill that is not played out.
- Ball is entered to the offense side with someone handling the first down ball or free ball.
- Second side is in a defensive scheme or blocking position at the net:
  - Bunch read
  - Spread
  - Commit
  - Follow
- Setter must determine best play to run and whom to set to score.
- Offensive side scores point with a kill.
- Defense with a block or dig.
- Score to either 15, 20 or 25 (based on level of team).

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TRAINING A RAW ATHLETE TO BE A SETTER

Look for their touch on the ball first. If that's not where it needs to be, you may not have the time or resources to develop every raw athlete.

- Work from the ground up
    - Feet/rhythm first: Footwork
        - Two feet first to develop fundamental skill
        - Advanced footwork when deemed ready
- Jump setting
- Spin setting
- Athletic moves
- Posture
    - Knees/ankles relaxed
    - Neutral posture – avoid leaning either direction
    - Consistent contact point
- Hands
    - Form/shape
    - Style
        - "Catch & Throw" vs. Rigid Wrists
    - Importance of the finish
        - Develop the consistency to the desired location.
    - Speed of offense

- Setting progression – putting all the pieces together
    - Static
    - Patterns
    - Add additional movements
        - Release from base
        - Blocking move then transition to set

SERVING

SERVE OR BE SERVED

7 thoughts on the whys and hows of great serving

1. At the lower level, serving can be one of the best indicators of success. At higher levels, you try to have an effect on your opponent. At higher levels, you may get three errors to one ace. At the collegiate level, it's more like 1.5 errors to 1 ace.
2. Players need to have control as demonstrated by serving the zones on request.
3. Tactical application is the idea that a short, crosscourt serve may limit the opponent's ability to attack quick or run a slide.
4. Serve at the setter in hopes of interfering with his or her pathway to the target.
5. Serve tough all of the time but recognize that you shouldn't turn around and get mad if your players miss their serves. If you seek a high percentage of aces, the tradeoff is normally a high percentage of service errors. You must decide if you want to serve in or try to score a point off the effect of the serve.
6. Decide on specific patterns, or the coach can give a zone to try to impose a tactical effect. I try not to get involved because I want to win more than I want perfect control on the serve.
7. Develop a specific list of times when the player needs to keep their serve in play. Decide when it's acceptable to risk an error.

SERVING

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SERVING FUNDAMENTALS

Keys to becoming a great server

- Practice your routine (breathing) and use it to be focused and relaxed.
- Starting position (location on the court).
- Develop a great toss.
- Use your body, not just your arm.
- Short contact with the ball.
- Repeat your finish form.
- Practice until you are great.

Goal: Be the best serving team in the country

- Serve 90% in (always!). Never back off at key moments.
- Serve low and fast serves.
- Be great at serving sidelines and corners.
- Serve short inside the 8-foot line in Zones 2 and 4.
- Serve away from where you face.
- Know your opponent's strengths and weaknesses.
- Understand serving strategies and apply them.

Be mindful of these situations and know that you have to work to focus!

- After a timeout
- Set or match point
- 2 in a row by your team
- 2 in a row by you
- First serve of any set
- After "huge or long" points
- Opponent on a bad streak

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

SERVING

RON KORDES (ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL, KIVA SPORTS)

SERVING PHILOSOPHY

- The serve, at the high school level, can be a major offensive weapon. However, it can also be an Achilles heel for many teams. Therefore, your serving philosophy should complement the competitive and skill level of the team you are coaching.
- When adopting a serving philosophy, I suggest a 1-10 scale with conservative being a 1 and aggressive being a 10. So obviously, moving up and down the scale, there are degrees of a conservative or aggressive attitude.

COMPETITIVE LEVELS

ADVANCED (High level high school or collegiate)

- Aggressive and accurate serving is a must
- Measure effectiveness by Ace vs. Error ratio
- Try to eliminate or reduce missed serves in net
- Accuracy: Team must be able to hit target at a high percentage

INTERMEDIATE

- Accuracy becomes more essential in that your opponent is likely to have fewer competent serve receivers (less experienced).
- Will probably not be as competent with aggressive serves, although it's important to stress good pace.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT

- Emphasis on reducing serving errors and making opponents pass the ball.
- Accurate = In the court
- Stats = Percentage of successful serves

MY SERVING PHILOSOPHY

On my teams, we strive to serve aggressively and find a weakness to attack. Before we break our pre-match huddle, I usually remind the team to concentrate on getting into their serving and passing game. It seems that when we are doing that, our offense takes care of itself.

By serving tough and aggressive, we:

- Keep opponent out of serve receive offense. Fewer side outs.
- Allows us to get a ball we can convert for a point in our transition offense.

SERVING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RON KORDES (ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL, KIVA SPORTS)

Team must adopt attitude that good, aggressive serving will ultimately win out if they stick with the plan and execute. A good, aggressive missed serve cannot be perceived as a letdown, only a missed opportunity that will be corrected with a side out and the next server.

Aggressive serving philosophy

- Make sure your player understands your definition of a good, aggressive serve.
- Be consistent. You can't express displeasure in a missed serve as a coach if you are asking for aggressiveness.
- Eliminate net errors as much as possible.
- Force opponent to make a decision.
- Not trying to better a perfect serve. Establish a rhythm. Back one off, if necessary.
- Mix up serve selection: deep and hard to short serve.
- Understand when to abandon aggressiveness and move towards conservative. Situations where aggressive is good include:
    - Beginning of the game
    - When your team is way ahead or way behind
- When my team is behind, the first thing I do is analyze our serving aggressiveness. It can change momentum immediately.

Accurate serving philosophy

- Weak serve receiver
    - Determined by scouting or previous knowledge
    - Do not assume a good defensive player is a good serve receiver
- Serve receiver who just committed an error, either passing or attacking
    - Be relentless
- Substitute (particularly a late-game entry)
- Short or deep serve
    - Based on serve receive alignment
- Seams
    - Requires decision, communication and movement – a problem for most teams
- Zone that the setter is transitioning from
    - Distraction & confusion
- Zone 1
    - Creates tougher pass for setter to handle

Important serving situations

- Match or game point
- After timeout

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- After substitution
- Following missed serves by teammates
- After winning long rally or great play (momentum!)
- First serve of the match or game

Serving signals

- Can players hit zones?
- Makes server concentrate more
- Without signals, player must decide (good training)
- Reduce the number of zones if servers are having trouble (deep or short)

Tendencies to look for

- Server missing first serve
- Server hitting first or second serve but missing consistently after that
- Bring these issues to player's attention. Sometimes they don't realize they have created a mental barrier. Set a goal to erase the barrier.

Game strategy and lineup considerations

- Do you consider service strength when developing a starting lineup of rotation?
- The weaker the skill level, the more important it is to get good servers early in rotation. Serving may be 70 percent of your offense.

STATISTICS

Point system

5 = Ace
4 = If serve causes opponent to overpass
3 = If opponent's setter has only one setting option
2 = If opponent's setter has two setting options
1 = If opponent's setter has three options
0 = Service error

Percentage system

- Percentage of successful serves vs. the number of attempts
- Ace-to-error ratio

SERVING

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SERVING FUNDAMENTALS AND STRATEGIES

Basic float keys

- Keep form simple
  - Present, elbow back, lift, contact
- Teach little kids the correct form – start close and move back
  - Shotput
  - Benefits of underhand serving (weight shift, coaching)

Other serves

- Jump Float
  - Simple form
  - Remind players to keep arms up and toss low
  - Use approach for power and flatter trajectory
  - Contact is the most critical part – must create float
  - Use with tall players
- Jump Topspin
  - Must be powerful to be worthwhile
  - Should have momentum to land into the court
- Bomber
  - Higher trajectory
  - More float and movement because longer distance
- Hybrid
  - Middle height toss; make sure there is some spin and pace on the ball

Beyond the fundamentals

- Location
  - Serve gaps, short, deep.
  - Make players move.
- Equalizer
  - Greatest equalizer to beat a team that is more talented than your team.
- It's not a free throw
  - You must free players to take risks and go for it. (Educate your parents too!)

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- What area of the court should you serve from?
  - Shortest distance?
  - Can you take a player off the court?
- Disrupt a team's offense
  - Serve a top hitter short to take away their transition to attack.
  - If players are running past each other, serve the ball there to disrupt their pattern.
  - Is there a way to make the ball get in the way of the setter?
- Where does a passer struggle?
  - Some players are much better out of one zone than another.
  - Does a passer break down as she gets tired?

SERVING

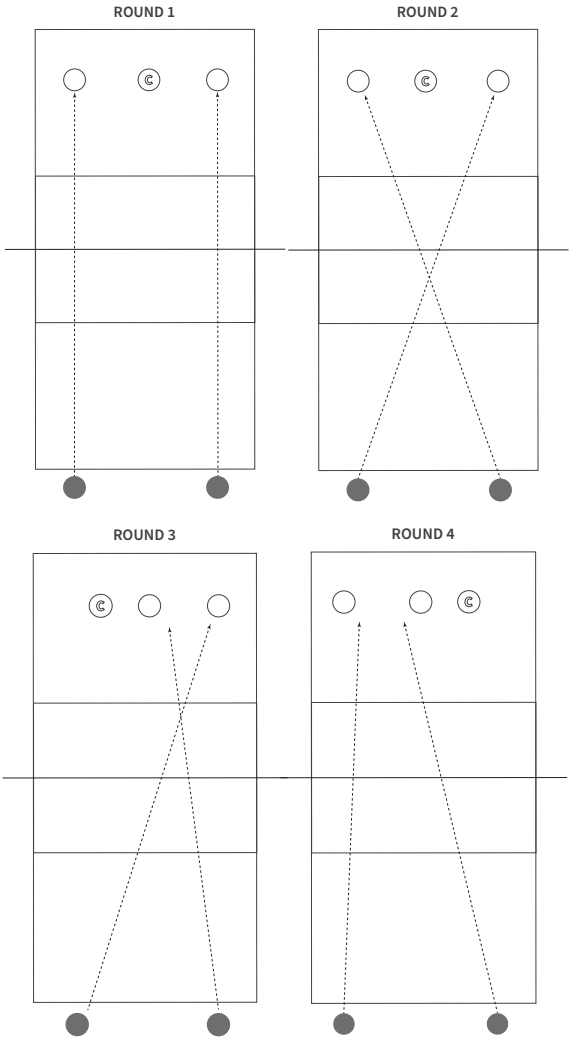
MIKE SEALY (UCLA)

SERVE AND PASS DRILLS

You Shall Not Pass ▶

A realistic and competitive serve and pass drill. One team is receiving. Two live passers are on the wings and a coach is in the middle. The coach doesn't move feet but tries to knock down every ball served to passers. Goal is for the serving team to score as low as possible. (2 or 4 rounds based on what you want).

- Round 1: Serve line to line with a coach in middle.
- Round 2: Serve cross court with a coach in middle.
- Round 3: Serve half court area 5/6 with a coach in Area 1 seam.
- Round 4: Serve half court area 1/6 with a coach in Area 5 seam.



Each player serves 4-5 balls. (Adjust based on your timing.) Team adds up points for Round 1. (See scoring below.) Teams switch.

Proceed to next rounds and serve/pass scenarios. Play for some form of stakes to provide more pressure. The losing team can run/pay debt after each round or after all scores of rounds are added up.

Scoring:

- 4 points = missed serve
- 3 points = coach touches ball or passer passes a "3" pass
- 2 points = passer passes a "2" pass
- 1 point = passer passes a "1" pass
- 0 points = ace

Scripted Mini Games

Good for training specific areas where your team needs improvement. I advise player initiated down balls vs. coach initiated.

Start score at 16-16 and play to 25. Put teams in a rotation and they stay in that rotation until game is over.

Script the series of input balls. (Use 3 or 4 balls.) Example: Serve (enter a spinning ball on a miss but point for missed serve as well). Player down ball from serving team, toss to player on receiving team and set high ball left. Next, same input but set high ball right. Then alternate serve/receive teams.

Script the drill to scenarios your team needs: cover balls, in-system balls to back row, one-on-one blocking, etc. You can adjust scoring based on needs: 15-18, 14-14, 19-19, etc.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

SERVING TO EARN POINTS

Key Messaging

- All athletes should have at least one great serve
  - This serve should be consistent in:
    - Tempo of approach
    - Height of toss
    - Velocity off hand
    - Contact on ball
  - This serve should be variable in:
    - Where it comes from (along baseline)
    - Where it goes to (can serve either seem at minimum)
- Place little consequences on errors when developing a great serve
- Train velocity and accuracy at the same time
- Aim small – very small – and almost always aim into space between players
- Breathe and visualize
- Treat each serve as an independent event. Hit the best serve to score a point in this rotation (remove external distractions: score, previous serve, timeout, etc.).
- Have no regrets!

Key Components

- Float serves should float
  - Great float servers are good at many velocities
  - Bad float servers need velocity to be effective
- Jump float servers should jump
  - The jump is intended to increase the height of contact, and angles matter
    - A serve that crosses the net low is best
    - The serve can be short or long with minimal changes in velocity
    - It allows for higher velocity serves, which means less reaction time for the receiving team
- The best serves are floating, flat (high contact) and hard (sometimes soft)

SERVING

KERRY MACDONALD (VOLLEYBALL CANADA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Serving Tactics

- Target the weakest seam
- Target a player's weak side
- Challenge a player with depth (deep and short) at them
    - The short deep serves are the one time we don't serve to space
- Challenge the setter's ability to get to the pass
    - A pass is more likely to end up closer to the passer than farther away
        - Serve to Position 1 will result in more passes being close to Position 1
- This works well when the setter is coming from 4
- Disrupt an attacker's approach
    - Serve an outside attacker's inside seam
    - Serve into approach lanes
    - Serve a back-row attacker short

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

SERVE TRAINING AND DRILLS

Teaching keywords

- Ready
- Lift (rather than "toss")
- Step – swing

Favorite feedback (in order)

- "Lift in front"
- Tempo: "Quiet feet" (on lift) – The ideal timing is to contact the ball immediately after the front foot hits the ground. If players step as they toss, the time gap interrupts the smooth transfer of force.
- "Heal contact" – Hollow sound rather than cracking sound of spike
- "Electrocute hand" – Tensing the hand creates more stability.
- For power: Pike vs. Torque – "Stay tall," "Step and snap" (hips). Torqueing (twisting of the hips) is recommended since it allows the server to stay level. Avoid piking (arching the back, bending at the waist) since it creates an inconsistent contact point.
- "Level," "Front foot anchor"
- "Left eye lift" – Because servers are generally facing more sideways to begin at the start of the service motion, the most common tossing error (for right-handers) is too far right.
- Power 2: Punch vs. Hammer – "Elbow Lead" I used to use the word "punch" as a key, but I replaced it with "hammer." The elbow is the critical lever, and it's important for the elbow to lead the wrist, just as it does when someone hammers a nail.

Jump float

- Ready (1 or 2 hand lift)
- Left–lift / right–left / jump and swing
- Broad jump in court, 60 percent jump
- Favorite Feedback: "Low lift," (hit it on the) "Way up," not on the way down

Other serves

- **2nd Tempo or 2 Bounce:** Low trajectory serve that lands at 12 feet
- **Short Serve:** Contact closer to forehead
- **Spike Serve:** Right, toss, left–right–left, jump and swing
- **Side Spiker:** This is a standing topspin curveball. A right-hander tosses to 8 to 10 feet, bends knees, lifts and swings up into the ball, contacting the ball right of center with a big, ball-shaped hand. The ball should arc up and curve to the left.
- **Bomber:** Serve from 15-25 feet back. No space in club volleyball, so passers don't practice it.

SERVING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOD MATTOX (THE BISHOP'S SCHOOL)

Strategy

- Straight lines (1 to 5, 5 to 1): Shorter distance arrives faster. Make passers change angle.
- Right tilt target: Most passers are better on their left, so we serve their right side.
- Corner to corner: More speed possible because you can hit it harder.
- Heat in seams: "Choose a seam and attack it."
- Formation serving: Make MB pass in RF, short/deep the go-to left-side attacker, serve short to pipe attacker.
- Good errors vs. bad errors: Since low trajectory is important, the worst errors are those that are high and far out of bounds. Normally, we want errors over the net, not in the net. However, a "good" error might include balls that hit the top of the tape and bounce back.

DRILLS AND STATS

Clippers

Pairs warmup. 15 feet, 25 feet, 30 feet. (Clippers are serves that clip the top of the net and go over.) Sprint, switch on bad error.

Stanford Challenge Ladder

Groups of 3 on ½ long court: Server, Passer, Target. Play best 2 of 3. Target has choice to become Server or Passer. Loser to Target. (3 minutes, winner moves up, low score moves down.) Two groups per court is comfortable; 3 is a bit tight.

Aces and Nails

Best with 7-9 players. 2-3 servers vs. 3 out passing with any extras rotating in on right sideline. Server point for ace/overpass; passer point for perfect pass. On ace, server and passer switch places. Passers rotate every in-serve. Play to 7 points. This one encourages servers to serve tough to weakest passers.

Self-stat rules

On whiteboard. Point for ace and point for 3 in a row. -1 for bad error. Any error and player loses turn.

Match stats

5 for ace, 3 for tough, 2 for in, 0 for error

- Goals: 2.80 at 92%, with 2/1 ace to error ratio (over 2.5 is acceptable)
  - Our best server on 223 attempts: 2.67, 91%, with 30 aces / 21 errors
  - Our worst server on 198 attempts: 2.38, 87% with 19 aces / 25 errors

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PASSING

PASSING

DAVE RUBIO (UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PASSING FUNDAMENTALS

Priorities

- Keep the serve in front of you.
- Hips and shoulders should stay parallel to the net even if the serve forces the passer to drop step back to pass.
- Arms are straight when they come together and at the angle the passer wants the ball to travel to the target. Contact the sweet spot of the platform.
- Be as astute with platform angle on both sides of body (right and left).
- Feet should stay straight, and toes should be slightly turned inward toward the body midline.
- Start in posture, move in posture and stay in posture when making contact with the ball. And finish in posture too. (Feet wide, strong legs and strong core. Hips back and shoulders down.)

Goals

- Movement to the serve should be done in a shuffle-step fashion without the feet crossing each other.
- Strong base with feet wide (just wider than shoulder width) at the point of contact. (Strong legs and strong core to keep passer in correct posture.)
- Keep outside foot slightly ahead of inside foot if you're moving toward the sideline. For example, if moving toward Zone 5 sideline, your left foot should be slightly ahead of your right foot and your left knee should be bent at the point of contact.
- Pass with a long platform (arms away from body). Contact sweet spot on platform.
- Learn to side pass (drop step back, both left and right foot).
- In most cases, pass travels in the opposite direction passer is moving.
- Keep the hips back and shoulders forward at the point of contact.
- Recognize depth, width and speed of serve.
- Be committed to making the pass. Hesitation kills.

Common mistakes

- Crossing the feet
- Hips coming forward and shoulders coming up at point of contact
- Over striding on shorter serves
- Point of contact on the platform is too high or low (elbows, biceps, wrist or thumbs)
- Pass travels in the same direction passer is moving
- Hips and shoulders open up when side passing (drop step)
- Late recognition of speed, depth and width of serve
- Too passive and weak platform angle

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PASSING

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

PASSING BASICS

As we know, PASSING is one of the most important skills in volleyball. It's used in serve reception, free ball passing, down ball, defense, etc. Because of the significance of passing in everything we do, it should be incorporated into every drill and every practice.

Passing posture

A passer should be in a comfortable, MEDIUM posture before the ball arrives (and before the server makes contact).

The MEDIUM posture can be described as follows:

- Feet spread slightly wider than shoulder width, toes pointing straight ahead.
- Right foot forward (slightly in front of the left foot).
- Weight balanced and leaning slightly forward.
- Knees are slightly bent so they are in front of the toes.
- Back is relaxed with a lean forward so that shoulders are in front of the knees.
- Arms relaxed to the side and in front of the body, parallel to the upper leg.
- Palms facing up.

The upper body must be relaxed when preparing to move and pass. The footwork must be quick, and the passer has to be able to move into a balanced receive position.

Move to the ball

The ability to pass consistently and efficiently is a matter of getting both feet behind the ball.

When receiving, the passer should usually be able to:

- Get to the ball by using 1 to 3 steps in a shuffle/slide movement. **"Feet to the Ball!"**
- Step and be balanced. This means taking a step towards the direction of the ball and spreading both feet into a balanced posture with a weight transfer forward.
- As the passer moves to the ball, the passer's head and hips stay at the same level.
- The goal is to beat the ball to the spot while maintaining a balanced position.

Create a platform

Face the server (or the direction the ball is coming from) while maintaining the MEDIUM posture and balanced movement.

- Create an angle first with the shoulders and then the arms towards the target.
- Bring heels of the hands together and make contact.
- Thumbs pointed downward with wrists extended.
- Elbows straight and flat but not tense.

PASSING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

Tracking the ball

Follow the ball from the server (face the direction the ball is coming from) to your arms.

- Arms away from the body.
- Angle shoulders (tilt), then arms to the target. Drop the lead shoulder to create the necessary angle.
- Shift your weight forward and low.
- No extra movement of the arms.
- Finish to target, follow the ball to the target while holding your arms/platform position.
- Perception – depth, acuity, peripheral.

Ball trajectory

- Horizontal vs. vertical
- Passing high left and low right

Tactical

- Communication – keep it simple: “Mine,” “In,” “Out,” call the name of the setter/target.
- Establish criteria and standards for target area.
- “Simple is better than complex.” Use four cues (KEYWORDS).

Drills

- Individual and two-player drills
- Three or more player drills (remember the angles)
- Multiple contact drills and game-like angles

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

BASIC PASSING CONCEPTS AND DRILLS

Principles

- Simple is better than complex.
- Train for serve receive rather than free ball. (We require players to be balanced on two feet and to never take a step forward when passing even the easiest balls.)
- You set standards for passing keys.
- It's easier to establish a good habit than break a bad one.

Passing keys: Posture, Platform, One, Freeze

- **Posture**
  - "2 feet" – catching (body to ball relationship)
  - 2-footed shuffle – forward, back, left, and right – with platform out. (Movement with the platform out is important. Often players move first, stop their feet, then present their platforms. If they are not comfortable shuffling with their platforms out, they cannot adjust to a floating serve.)
  - Face the ball, not the target
- **Platform**
  - Simple. "Hang," "together" (wrists and elbows simultaneously)
  - Muscles "tight" in arms, thumbs down to "lock" elbows
  - Pressure on top (thumb line) and bottom of wrist when pressing hands together
  - Tilt – from hips/shoulders, not arms/wrists
- **One (The platform should make only one simple movement forward)**
  - From shoulders – hips, knees stay in posture
  - Single motion – avoid "wind up," "recoil"
- **Freeze (Stimulate self-correction)**
  - Posture
  - Platform angle
  - "Before, during, after"

Movement

- Shuffle
- Drop Step: Arms and feet together. Avoid "swiveling back."
- Run + Down/Up: Short serve. Passing the short ball is the one time we want passers to use their legs to lift their platforms. The platform should be 90 degrees, parallel to the ground.

PASSING

TOD MATTOX (THE BISHOP'S SCHOOL)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Favorite feedback

- "Eyes" – Are they picking up cues from the server, both direction and speed?
- "First step" – Standing behind passers, does the first step go in the direction of the serve?
- "Core behind ball" – The easiest angle to create is behind the ball at knee-waist level.
- "Feet, not arms" – Many players will stop their feet too early.
- "Two feet" – Balance!
- "Tilt" – Does the passer present the proper angle?
- Hands down – This is probably my favorite. Most novice passers are "early." That is, they lift their platforms up to the ball rather than letting the ball come down to the platform.

PASSING DRILLS

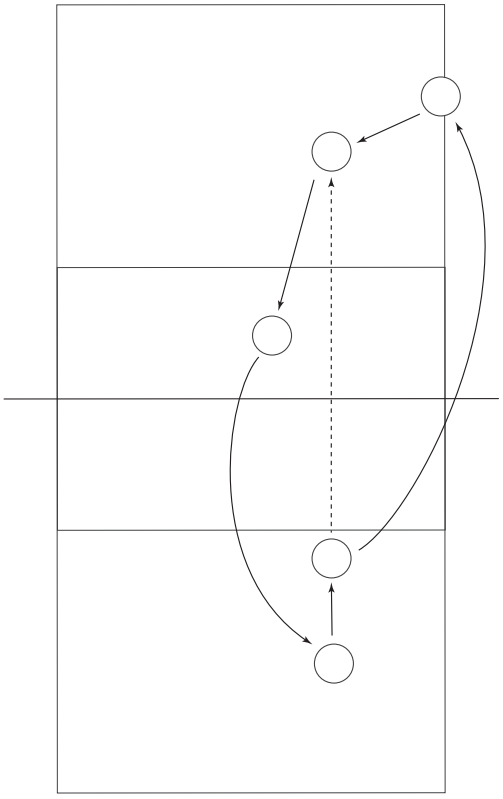
Here are a few of my favorite passing drills. I begin with the most basic and then proceed to the more challenging. With the exception of Stanford Shuffle, all of the drills are player-initiated.

Pairs Rotation

Teaches the fundamentals of passing to less experienced players.

You need an even number of players and one ball per pair. We usually put 3 pairs on each half court, with the ball traveling perpendicular to the net. One player begins on the 10-foot line, and the partner begins on the end-line.

We begin with catch–catch and progress to catch–pass (one is catching, one passing) and finish with pass–pass. Go for 35 seconds, then rotate partners.



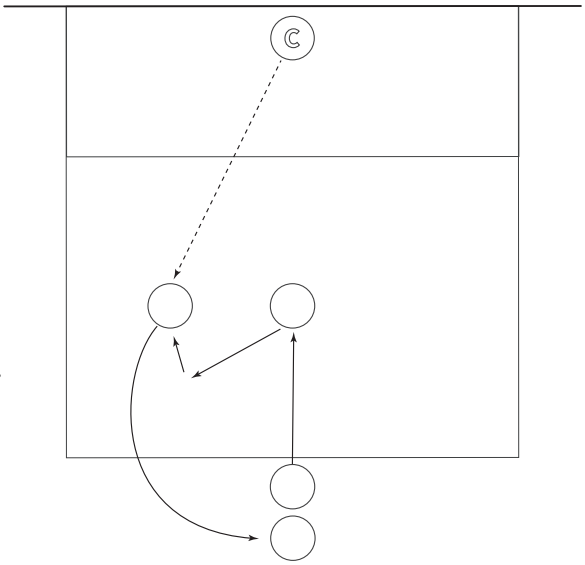
Revolver 5's (bowl, throw, serve) ▶

Provides players with a fun way to get game-like passing reps. Have two separate groups of 5-6 players, with two balls for each group. Each group begins with two players initiating from RB, the passer at LB and a player in the setter target area.

Players initiate, going over the net – two throwers, two passers, one target. Thrower to passer, passer to target, target to thrower. You can run two groups of 5-6 on one court. Our simple-to-complex progression begins with an underhand bowl over the net, progresses to an overhand throw, and finishes with a serve (from 20 feet or 30 feet).

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Stanford Shuffle ▶

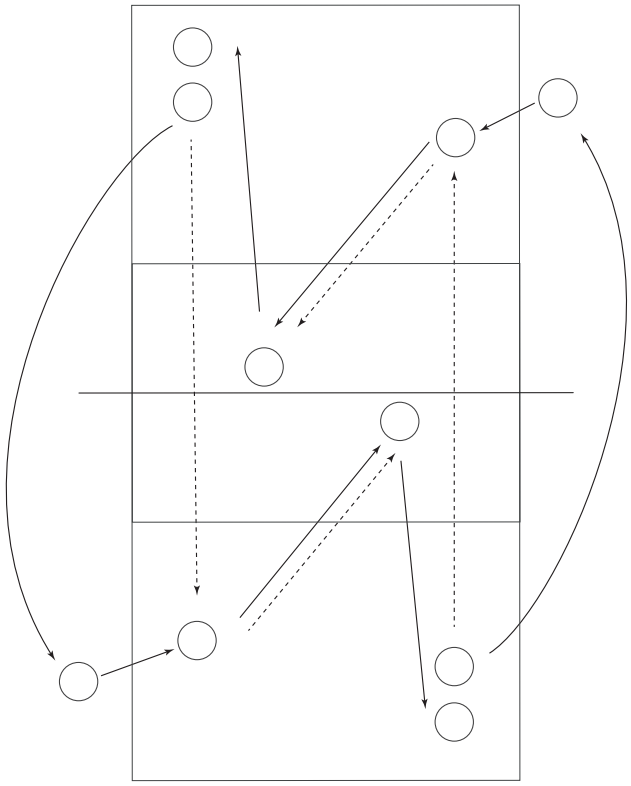


A technique-focused drill that reinforces shuffling footwork with the platform already presented.

Players feed the coach from a bucket of balls. This is a "half and half" drill. Half the team (5-6 players) is passing, and the other half is shagging and feeding. After one minute, switch groups.

This drill is rapid-fire with a coach initiating to two passers: MB (mid-back) and LB are on the court and the line is in middle back. Every ball goes to LB. MB must shuffle behind the LB passer, then take LB's place and receive the next ball. Focus for the MB is shuffling with platform out. LB passes and returns to end of the MB line. After both groups finish, switch to RB.

Butterfly ▶



Serving and passing for the entire team. It's often used as a warmup drill.

Begin with two players (throwing/serving) on each side of the net in RB, two more on each side in LB (passing) and one in the target area on each side.

Servers serve and follow the ball to the other side of the net in LB. The LB passers follow their pass to the target position. Targets rotate to serve on the same side.

I like two modifications to the standard butterfly drill. Rather than one person passing, there are always two (LB/MB). Now they have a responsibility to communicate. The "setters" should always square to target and set a "One" to themselves. This adds setter training for every player.

PASSING

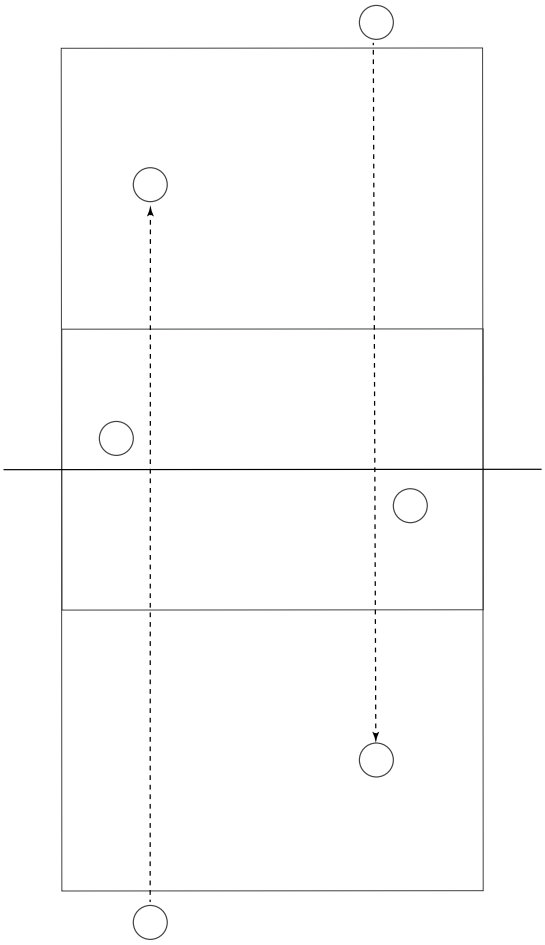
TOD MATTOX (THE BISHOP'S SCHOOL)

3's Challenge ▶

A game-like, competitive server vs. passer drill.

Divides into groups of three players with two balls. We usually run two groups per court, but it's possible (though a bit crowded) to have three groups of 3.

This drill has 1 server, 1 passer, 1 target. Server vs. Passer: best of 3. Passer scores on missed serve and a good pass. Server scores on any bad pass. After someone wins, the loser becomes the target. Target chooses to either serve or pass vs. the winner. Play for 3 minutes, then put winners together.



©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

FUNDAMENTALS OF PASSING

5 Fundamentals

1. Know where the serve is going before it's served.
2. Move your feet to the line and depth of the serve.
3. Form your platform before your feet are there.
4. Calculate the best angles to direct the ball to the target.
5. Your belief will make the contact a simple, calm contact.

Ready position

- The body
  - Relaxed and ready for quick movement
  - Feet – slightly wider than shoulders
  - Weight – slightly forward
  - Knees slightly bent
  - Keep your back straight
  - Reach your arms out in front of you, palms up and in
  - On serve contact, balance with no hop, read, ready to move
- The brain and eyes
  - Use prior information
  - See the server's setup and alignment (line, middle, or cross-court)
  - See the location of the toss in relation to the setup of the shoulders
  - See how hard the server swings
  - See the trajectory (use the net as a reference)
  - Read, focus and relax
  - Use your routine to focus and control your thoughts

The platform

- Form your platform at end of the adjustment move to the ball but as soon as possible without inhibiting movement to the ball.
- Reach out in front of you to make your shoulders come forward.
- Hands come together as you put your platform on the line of the serve.
- The platform angle and tilt angle are set as your hands come together.
- The best angles are out in front of you.

- If your posture changes, adjust your platform angles.
- Do not move your platform across the line of the serve.
- Confidence in your skill shows up as a calm contact with the ball.

Alignment with the serve

- Face the server straight-on from most court positions.
- Shoulder line should be perpendicular to flight of the ball.
- A server in Zone 1 and passing from Zone 5 is an extreme angle, so you may want to face a little more to the middle of the court (Zone 3).

Footwork to the ball

- Short, smooth steps, keep your head level, posture, shuffle steps.
- Try to get a knee outside of the ball before contact.

Passing action

- Platform angle and tilt angle must be set before contact. In most situations, the ball will rebound to target without moving the arms.
- If you must add momentum to the ball to get it to target, use a slight action with your legs instead of swinging your platform forward.
- If your body is moving back away from your target at contact, a slight forward motion of the platform will help.
- On a hard-driven jump serve, it may be necessary to cushion the ball in some way. Feel the play.

Passing situations

- Chest-high balls
  - Shuffle back with both feet
  - Maintain rebound angle during movement, if possible
  - Keep shoulders in front of hips at contact
  - If necessary, elevate one leg
- Balls over your head
  - Keep your feet moving, pass overhand
- Fast, medium high balls to either side
  - Step with foot on the side of the balls flight
  - Crossover and square off contact and continue
  - The best option – get behind the ball, pass overhand

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Fast, low ball in front
  - Maintain the proper rebound angle with your platform
  - Long step forward with lead foot
  - Lower the hips and passing platform
  - Drag the back foot behind in a forward knee drop
  - If necessary, push through into an extension roll
- Short balls in front of the 10-foot line
  - If you do not have your feet stopped and hands in position, do not overhand pass the serve
  - Extend your platform so that is becomes parallel to the floor as you cross the 10-foot line

PASSING

RAY BECHARD (UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PASSING FUNDAMENTALS

Passing technique

- Posture
  - Posture that enables consistent vision and maximum range
- Pursuit
  - Footwork that allows for maximum range (controlled)
  - Box footwork: shuffle, drop–hop, lead–brake
- Platform
  - Minimize movement
  - Hips to the action – shoulders square to the path of the ball
  - Create platform angle to target (tilt)
  - Hold (2-count)
- Weight transfer
- Special considerations
  - Passing tempos
    - Using hands (overhead passing)
  - Communication considerations
    - Timing – inflection
- Passing systems
  - 3-person
    - Shared responsibilities
    - 80-20
- Lanes and seams
  - 2-person
    - Zones 2-3-4

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PASSING FUNDAMENTALS AND DRILLS

Keys

- Ready position
- Wrists and hands together
- Straight and Simple arms
  - Arms stay straight making a simple move
  - Arms need to be out early, parallel to quads
- Face ball and angle arms
  - Avoid trying to turn hips or body while passing
  - Key is creating a good angle to target
  - Freeze arms on contact
- Shuffle steps
  - Generally, shuffle to the ball, keep head and shoulders level
- Pass over lead foot
  - Keep the foot that is closest to target in front (this is your lead foot)
- Drop step
  - When ball is served high at the passer, drop one foot back and pass to the side

PASSING DRILLS

Partner Toss – Pass – Catch

A simple but effective drill for working on passing. Work on going both side to side with shuffle steps and back and forth to cover deep and short tosses. Have players focus on “straight and simple” arms and good shuffle steps.

3’s Triangle Passing

Three players form a triangle, then pass to the right and then to the left. Focus are on facing the ball, angling the arms and passing over the lead foot.

Partner Drop Step Passing

Two players face each other and take turns tossing hard-driven throws over their partner’s right shoulder, then over their partner’s left shoulder. Focuses: Passing outside midline, angling arms, passing over lead foot.

PASSING

RON KORDES (ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL, KIVA SPORTS)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PASSING FUNDAMENTALS AND DRILLS

Teaching Progression

- One knee passing with weight shift
- Move target to the left, passing with angle
- Move target to the left, passing with angle and finish on your feet
- Move target to the right, passing with angle
- Move target to the right, passing with angle and finish on your feet
- Switch knees, same progression
- Partner on a box working all 4 points of passer's body
- Live serve

Keywords

- Ready
- Early angle
- Wrist down
- Elbows locked
- Head down
- Shoulders over toes
- Finish to target

Ready position list

- Square to server
- See the ball in server's hand
- Balance at contact

Movement to ball

- Start with lead foot
- Shuffle steps
- Determine ball flight early
- Center of gravity

Contact

- Thumbs together, elbows locked, wrist down
- Contact at waist line
- Open up on deep balls
- Early angle

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Platform to target
- Transfer weight forward
- Pass and stick

Serve receive overview

- Mental toughness
  - Time between the whistle, the serve, and then the pass
  - Wanting to pass/confident
  - Forgets mistakes
- Good passing skills
  - Touch on the ball
  - Smooth platform
- Three-option pass as compared to one-option pass
  - Chances are higher for hitters to go against one blocker
  - Helps limited setter in running offense
  - Limits runs
- Basic technique for receiving the serve
  - See the ball out of server's hand
  - Communicate
  - Get both feet to the ball
  - Passing position; wide base, knees slightly bent
  - Platform extended
  - Angle platform to the target: TILT, NO TWIST!
- Define responsibilities
  - Appoint primary passers in each rotation
  - Seams
  - Short serves (making sure middles can pass the short ball), practice entry moves
  - Calling in or out
  - Calling short serves (player at the net)
  - Know your weaknesses
- Define seams/ options in serve receive
  - Passing lanes
    - Serve from Zone 1
    - Serve from Zone 5
    - Serve from Zone 6

PASSING

RON KORDES (ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL, KIVA SPORTS)

PASSING DRILLS

Short–Deep Passing and Setting

Start with partners. One player will be at the net with the ball, the other will be on the end-line. The player with the ball will toss the ball all the way to the end-line and that player will pass. Make sure the passers are not swinging their arms and that there is a weight shift in order to get the ball to the net.

After passing the ball back to their partner, that player runs up to the net and gets another toss from their partner. Make sure this toss is straight in the air. Passers need to make sure they get their butts down low and don't swing when they pass the ball.

After passing the ball, they run back to the end-line but keep their head turned towards the net and repeat. Do this for 30 seconds, then switch. (Make sure they switch quickly!)

Side to Side Short

A partner drill with one player at the net with the ball and the other one step behind the 10-foot line. Tossers are important in this drill; they don't just stand there and toss. They move with the passer as well and communicate to their partner.

Start by going to the passer's right. The tosser will toss the ball just outside of the passer's right leg, and the passer will pass this short toss right back to their partner. Next, they do the same thing with a shuffle to the left. Do this for 30 seconds, then switch. Make sure that the passer is taking 2 steps after passing the ball and not swinging their arms to target, but they are getting their hip around to the target.

Side to Side Long

Continue with the same partner. One player is at the net with the ball, the other is about 20 feet from the net. Tossers are important in this drill too; like with "Side to Side Long," they don't just stand there and toss. They move with the passer as well and communicate to their partner.

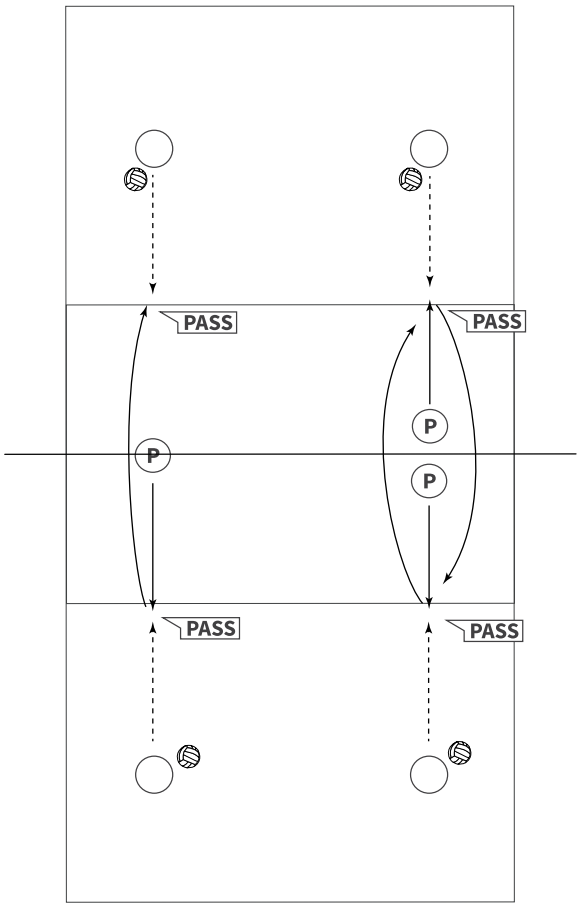
Start by going to the passer's right. The tosser will toss the ball just outside of the passer's right leg, and the passer will pass this short toss right back to their partner. Next, they do the same thing with a shuffle to the left. Do this for 30 seconds, then switch. Make sure that the passer is taking 2 steps after passing the ball and not swinging their arms to target, but they are getting their hip around to the target.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Under the Net Passing ▶

Can be done in groups of 3 or 4, depending on the number of players you have in the gym. One player will be 20 feet from the net on one side with a ball, and another player will be in the same spot on the opposite side of the net with a ball. The player(s) without a ball will be under the net to start the drill. They will start this drill at the same time with one player going one direction and, if you have a fourth, that player going in the opposite direction.

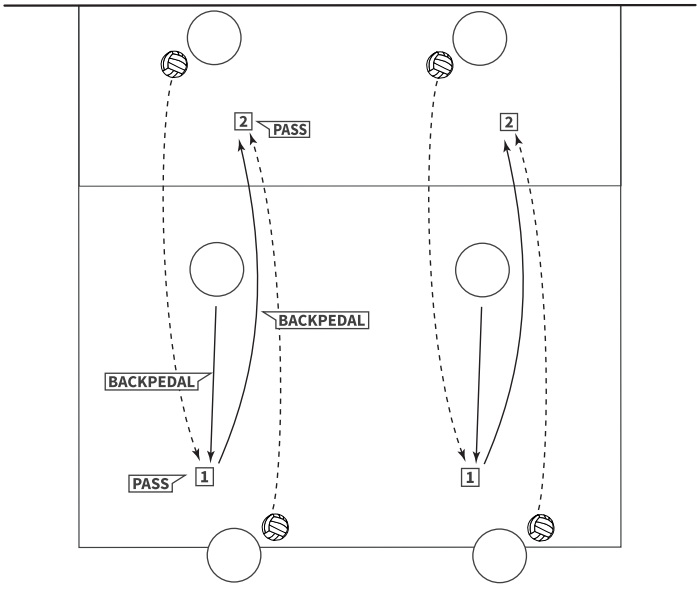
Players with the ball will toss it just over the 10-foot line so the passer has to pass the ball back to them. Make sure they are not swinging their arms and are using their bodies to pass the ball to their target. After they pass, they will turn and run under the net – they shouldn't have to duck – and then pass a ball from that partner. Go for 30 seconds, then switch.



Russian Drill ▶

Set up with groups of 3. One player with a ball will be at the net, another player with a ball will be on the end-line. The player without a ball will be in the middle facing the player at the net.

The player in the middle starts to backpedal and the player at the net will try to lob the ball on their chest. (Not too fast but not a high arc.) The goal is for the player in the middle to NEVER use their hands. They need to work on getting behind the ball and hollowing out to make sure they get the ball on their platform. After they pass the ball back to where it came from, they will turn and face the other partner and start to backpedal again. Then they'll get the same toss again. This goes back and forth for 30 seconds. Make sure that your players are limiting their swinging when passing.



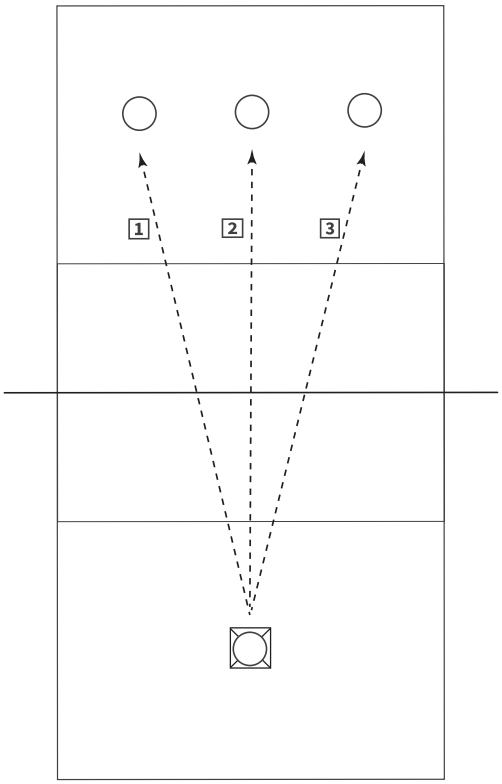
PASSING

RON KORDES (ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL, KIVA SPORTS)

2 Person Passing with Server on a Box ▶

Servers will be on a box for the drill. This creates a tougher serve and a more direct serve to the target that you are looking to hit. Most teams serve receive with 3 players, but there is always a connection with 2 of those players, and that is the relationship that we are looking to train.

Have the servers serve to spot 1. The passers must pass 5 to target, then move to spot 2, then to spot 3. You can also flip this and do it on the right side of the court so the players are getting balls from all directions. Another variation is serving from the other box so they see a cross-court ball. Make sure both players are always moving to the ball on every serve.



©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PASSING TECHNIQUE

- **Eye-work:** To improve, players must visually see the accuracy of their passes.
- **Take cues from the server:** Each server provides clues through body movements about the location, speed and spin of the serve.
- **Talk about seams**
- **Communicate three times:** Passers should consistently talk with each other before, during and after the pass has been completed.
- **Ready position:** Passers stay low, loaded and quick on their feet so they can move in any direction.
- **Palms up:** This helps lessen the amount of time it takes for a passer to adjust to the serve.
- **Minimize movement:** Stay low and use big shuffles to move to the ball.
- **Platform:** Create the platform angle early.
- **Finish your pass:** Keep the angle of the platform for a count of three after contacting the ball.

DRILLS FOR TRAINING PASSERS

Bounce

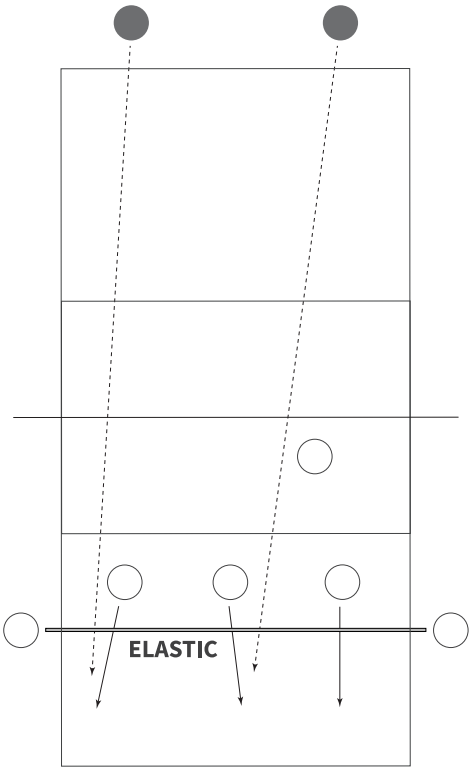
A great drill for teaching passers to work hard with their feet to stay low and get in a proper passing position. It works like this: Three lines of passers, three tossers. Toss the ball over the net. The player must first catch the ball out in front and between the knees. In the second phase, players get in a position that allows the ball to bounce between their legs.

Rolling Chair

Teach players to create angles early and hold their platforms. Each player sits on a rolling chair. Down balls are sent to them from over the net so they can roll into position and pass. To make it more challenging, serve the ball to the left or right. To succeed in this drill, it's important to get the platform angle out early.

Elastic Passing ▶

A good drill for passing movement; it trains players to stay level and move quickly and efficiently backwards. There are three passers, a target and servers. The players start in front of the elastic and then stay low to move under the elastic backwards.



PASSING

JEN FLYNN OLDENBURG (OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY)

EMERGENCY PASSING

Basics of emergency passing

- Low, loose and relaxed posture
- Fall to both knees when possible to keep hips squared to target
- Be ready to move laterally, forward, and prepared for an overhead pass

Always get the hips around the ball

- Always train players to get the center of the body (belly button) under the ball and the hips facing towards the court action.
- Train players to get comfortable with different types of emergency digging moves that take them to the floor.

Digging drill sequence

- **Low balls:** Players drop to both knees and try to catch the ball in front of the belly button.
- **Balls outside of the body:** Players must get their feet around the ball by shuffling with the feet and going to the ground if necessary. Turn the hips to face the action.
- **Balls in front of the body:** Drop down to one knee and slide the forearms along the floor to scoop the ball up.
- **Half roll:** When moving laterally to dig, performing a half roll can help the player get lower and rise more quickly.
- **Side slide:** Used for lateral digs to cushion the landing and get more length.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PASSING TECHNIQUE AND COMMON ERRORS

Ready Position

- Wide base
- Bent at ankles, knees and waist
- Relaxed arms
- Hips face server **(NOT TARGET)**

Movement to Ball

- Shuffle with lead foot
- Run to short balls
- Drop step and shuffle back to deep balls (no back-pedaling)
- Stay level in movement

Platform

- Solid (hands together tightly)
- Elbows locked when hands come together
- Keep away from body
- HOLD platform steady (no movement after contact)

Platform Angles

- Drop inside shoulder when passing sidelines
- Drop outside shoulder when moving to inside of court
- Pass on lower SIDES of the ball (not always in the middle)
- Angle almost parallel to ground when passing short (under the ball)
- Angle closer to 45 degrees when passing deep (more behind the ball)

Hips

- Always under the ball
- Always face the direction from which the ball is coming

Movement Progression

- Star drill – no ball
- Lay the egg
- Lay the egg; pass second ball
- Star drill with ball

PASSING

DEBBIE BROWN (UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, 1991-2014)

Training Progression

- Receive two balls in a row (topspin)
- Receive two balls in a row (topspin, then float)
- Receive two floats
- Receive serve from three basic positions on end-line

Common Errors

- Inefficient movement to ball (false steps or no steps)
- First move is up
- Too much up and down movement
- Improper or no shoulder tilt
- Slicing (turning hips to target on contact)
- Hips too high
- Not watching ball to arms (looking at target)
- Platform too tight to body
- Too much movement in platform
- Base is too narrow
- Platform is formed too late

Team Serve Receive Formations

- Three across (with or without help on short serves)
- Four (leaving short middle open)
- Two (splitting the court)
- Five (old-fashioned W or other arrangements)

Developing a System to Meet Your Needs

- Equal thirds
- Shade left
- Shade right
- Deep six
- Middles in or out in helping with short serves

Areas of Responsibility

- Serve coming from Zone 1 or 6
- Serve coming from Zone 5
- Communication with front row non-PRIMARY passers

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Passing Drills

- L–M–L–M–R–M–R
- Deep and short in each position
- Server, passer, catcher
- Server, passer, catcher scored competitively
- 2 passers vs. 2 servers (game to 21)
- 7 before 3
- Passing by rotation (6 out of 10 good)

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

TRAINING SCRAPPY DEFENDERS

Individual defense is an attitude as well as a skill, and you can train it. Or, if you're a club or college coach, you may be able to recruit it.

Defensive position (and awareness of the skills necessary to play the position)

- Base position – face the attacker
- Postural considerations
- Digging with either forearms or using hands or other overhead techniques
- Pursuit if necessary; movement patterns – shuffle/crossover
- Playing multiple positions in back row

Floor skills

- Lateral extension
- Sprawl
- Rolls – shoulder and barrel
- Pancakes
- Diving

Reading and reacting – a key skill

- I prefer that our players are still when the ball is hit. For me, it's better to be in the wrong place and still than moving to your base. It's also better to be on your feet than on the floor.
- Knowledge of both teams' systems
- Ball, setter, ball, hitter

Reinforcement is the best teaching aid when it comes to defense

- Players have to go for every ball
- The goal is to touch every ball at the onset
- Perfect pass should be the ultimate goal
- Be realistic and game-like as much as possible
- Developing players' range is key to team defense

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

CATHY GEORGE (MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BASIC DEFENSE CONCEPTS

Defense is an attitude!

- **Develop competitive attitudes:** Train diggers to be competitive about going after digs. Foster this attitude during practice and in games.
- **Challenge defensive range:** Clarify each defensive position's range of responsibilities, and encourage players to communicate seams.
- **Deny opponents easy points:** Constant communication, aggression and proper positioning in digging can help eliminate unnecessary digging mistakes.

Goals of the first-ball contact

- **Gain advantage:** The goal is to put the other team in a defensive or scrambling position.
- **Better the ball:** The first-ball contact should always set up for a successful set and attack.
- **Touch:** Develop ability to slow or speed up contact.

Perfect your skill

- **Ready position:** Stay low, loaded and relaxed.
- **Center line – creating angles:** No matter the location of the attack, players should work to finish the dig with the hips squared to the action.
- **Base to push back:** Learn to dynamically prepare and shift location for attacks.
- **Pursuit:** This is where a player's work ethic and heart pay off. Encourage players to make an attempt at every ball.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

RAY BECHARD (UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS)

THOUGHTS ON DEFENSE

- If you are moving somewhere, you can't go everywhere!
- Create a defensive posture that allows for optimum range.
- Overhead digging (hands) will increase range (floor coverage).
- READ: Pick up cues prior to attacker contact that will influence your movement. Factors include:
  - Spacing of the set to the net
  - Is the set in the attackers' body line?
  - Is the elbow low? (If so, look for the tip)

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

DIANE FLICK-WILLIAMS (WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BASIC DEFENSE

4 keys to individual defense

1. Stop & split
    - Feet on the ground before contact
    - Balanced
    - Split is slightly wider than shoulder width
2. Triple threat posture
    - Prepared for: hard-driven ball, tip, overhead dig
    - Feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width
        - Uses bigger muscles for movement
    - Hands in front of shins
    - Play from the ground up
3. Palms up
    - Platform is created simply with palms up
4. J-Stroke
    - Debatable skill
    - Goal is to create backspin to keep ball on your side
    - Scoop under the ball by bending elbows; wrists and thumbs go to forehead
    - Important to maintain posture with J-Stroke

CONCEPTS

- **Stopped on contact**
    - For pursuit, you don't want to have to stop momentum one way to get it going towards a ball.
- **Eyes on the hitter**
    - Should follow the same Ball–Setter–Ball–Hitter as blockers.
    - Eyes should be on the hitter earlier as they will give you more information than the ball will.
- **Can you see the ball and hitter's hand?**
    - Be in a position to see the whole ball and the hitter's hand around the block.
    - If the block is in the way, the ball can't get to you.
- **Defense is intense, but not tense**
    - Need to be loose to move.
    - A car traveling 40 mph towards another car going 40 mph creates a bigger impact than if the other car is either stationary or going 5 mph the same direction.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

EMERGENCY MOVES

"Center" based moves

- **GO posture** – Balanced, able to move in any direction.
- **Face the action** – Inexperienced defenders often play defense with their toes facing the net. To be in the best position to make digs, the toes should face the attacker.
- **"Center" (belly button) to and under the ball as much as possible**
    - Understand the difference between moving your feet to every ball that you can vs. an emergency move that may require the taboo technique of going to your knees.
    - "Attack the attacker!"

2 EMERGENCY MOVES

1. **Double knee down**
    - From GO posture, natural, controlled move to block the ball with body, getting belly button under the ball to pop the ball UP.
    - "Patient attack"
        - See the attacker/ball, make move to get center under the ball.
    - This move is used when ball is aggressively attacked in front of defender lower than waist, but not far enough in front for a "traditional" floor move.
2. **"Shin dig" (to either side)**
    - From GO posture, natural, controlled movement at an angle (in the pie) while facing the attacker to either side, sliding one shin on the floor while the other knee touches down.
        - Should finish in a "Double knee down" position, facing the attacker.
        - Frame of reference: catcher in baseball protecting a wild pitch in the dirt – with the difference being that the defender is attacking the ball instead of waiting for the bounce.
    - Used when ball is aggressively attacked to left or right side of defender but not far enough away for "traditional" floor move.

READING THE GAME

READING THE GAME

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

KEYS TO READING

Seeing things does not always mean we are reading

- Most of us walk into a room, walk out and don't remember anything that we saw.
- Some of us might think about what to look for before we walk into the room.
- Using our vision and reading situations are amazing skills we all can use to excel.
- Like all other skills, we need to train these skills before we can expect performance.

Digging is a very vision- and read-based part of the game

- Digger read situation drills
- Two diggers read situation drills
- 3-person dig drills
- Position digging drills
- Game situation digging drills
- Buddy digging drills

Passer vision and reading

- Who is the server and what is the serving call?
- Where is the server facing?
- Where is the server tossing?
- How is the server swinging – what velocity and trajectory?
- What is the angle to take to get the pass to target?
- See the line of the serve, get your platform to that line
- See the people around you, be aware of how you affect them
- 1-passer drills
- 2-passer drills
- Team passing drills

Setter vision/reading

- Vision training
  - Close eyes
  - Look away
  - Look at your thumb
  - Look at the ceiling

    - See blockers
    - See hitters
- Reading passers and diggers
- Reading before the play starts

Attacker vision/reading

- See the block
- See diggers
- See movement

Blocker vision/reads

- Before the play
- Watch your hitter see the other hitters
- Look at the setter when they are setting and see the hitters
- Moving to block, seeing your blocking partner and the hitter

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TRAINING READING

Passing

- Reading the server
  - Eyes
  - Distance from the end-line
  - Toss
  - Jump or standing
  - Top spin, float, or hybrid
  - Last rotation
  - Drills
    - Passer communication
    - Deep, short, line, cross

Digging

- Reading the hitter
  - Angle of approach
  - Depth of set
  - Relationship of hitter to ball
  - Arm swing
    - Drills
- Digger communication
- Hitting line to defense
- Hitting to defense with block

Hitting

- Reading/seeing the block – knowing the scheme
  - Line
  - Angle
  - Seam
    - Drills
- Hitting against stationary block (on boxes)
- Hitting against live block

READING THE GAME

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEBBIE BROWN (UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, 1991-2014)

Setting

- Reading/seeing the block
    - Release or hold
    - Knowing the schemes
        - Setter choice drills

Blocking

- Reading the setter
    - Body position
    - Relationship to the ball
    - Jumping or staying on the ground
        - Drills
- Middle blocker vs. setter and attackers
- blockers vs. setter and attackers

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

VISION TRAINING AND DRILLS

Training players' eyes is one of the most challenging parts of our game. Often, I want our team to see the game through my eyes. Players often spend their time watching the ball, which is not going to give them any type of advantage. The player controls the ball, not the other way around.

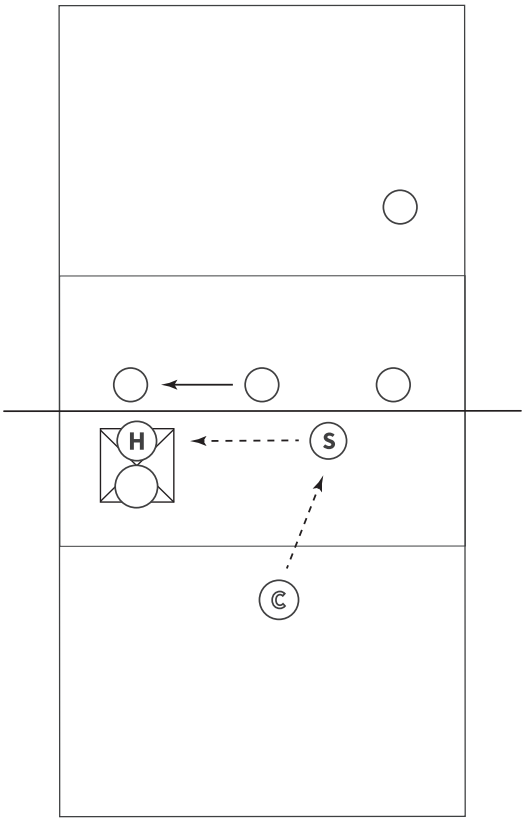
Key techniques for training eyes of blockers and defenders:

- Stay level
- Minimize head movement
- Eye sequence: Ball, setter's wrist, hitter
- Train the peripheral vision
- Be creative in how you get players to see what you want them to see
- Use technology
- If you don't have technology, use a baseball hat
- Use colors and numbers
- Arts and crafts – make pinnies

DRILLS FOR TRAINING READING

Color by Number ▶

Focus the blockers' eyes on the sequence of Ball, Setter, Hitter's shoulder. Use two boxes and have 2 players on each box. Have a stationary setter, 2 targets, index cards and colored cards, and 3 blockers. Ball is tossed to the setter, who sets behind the box to a target. Players behind the attacker hold up a card. Blockers must find the shoulder of the hitter and call out the color or number or both. As a variation, add a defender who must also call out the color and number.



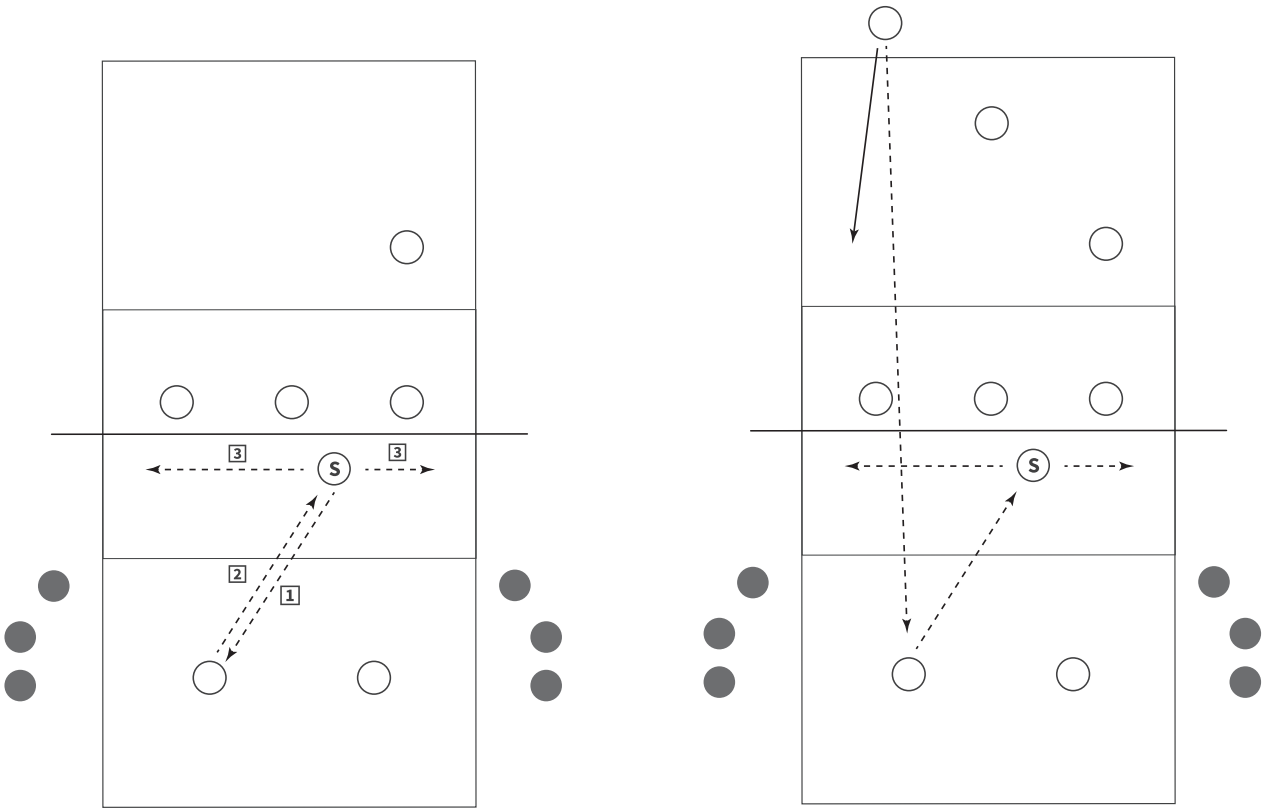
READING THE GAME

MOIRA LONG (SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE)

Pinnie Blocking ▼

Train players' eyes in live action to find the attacker's shoulder. This drill has 2 lines of attackers, 2 passers, 1 setter with pre-made pinnies with Velcro and numbers vs. 3 blockers and 1 defender. The drill starts with the setter hitting a down ball to the passer. The setter can set left or right side and blockers must call out the number or color on the pinnie.

Variation: Servers on the side of 6 can serve to passers, who serve receive and the setter transitions from Zone 1 to set left side or right side.



©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

MOTOR LEARNING AND ERROR CORRECTION

MOTOR LEARNING AND ERROR CORRECTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

MOTOR LEARNING

- Motor skills usually refer to those skills in which both the movement and the outcome of action are emphasized.
- There are a number of different types of skills:
    - **Cognitive (or intellectual skills) –** require thought processes
    - **Perceptual –** interpretation of presented information
    - **Motor –** movement and muscle control
    - **Perceptual motor –** involve the thought, interpretation and movement skills
- Skill acquisition
    - Carl McGowan (coach of two NCAA championship teams at BYU)
        - Visual – Show skill
        - Opportunity to Repeat (OTR) – "Lots of reps"
        - Feedback – Visual, verbal, statistical
        - OTR
        - Success
- Block vs. Random Learning
    - It isn't black and white.
    - As soon as somebody can execute rudimentary skill, mix in movement and variables.
    - Game-related? What becomes game-related?
- Skills required in volleyball: Are we teaching these movements or making assumptions?
    - Run, shuffle, directions of movement
    - Stop
    - Jump
    - Land
    - Movements in air
    - Throw
    - Tracking
    - Samantha Bricio video demonstrating hitting technique – approach, jump, attack

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

MOTOR LEARNING AND ERROR CORRECTION

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

CORRECTING COMMON ERRORS

Serving

- **Inconsistent trajectory**
  - **Correction 1:** Toss ball lower and further in front.
  - **Correction 2:** Hold finish (palm to target).
- **Back or shoulder pain**
  - **Correction 1:** Plant feet open and allow shoulders to open.
  - **Correction 2:** Use body for power, not your shoulder.

Passing

- **Serves are not judged correctly (attack the passer high or low)**
  - **Correction 1:** Passer needs to read the serve with more detail.
  - **Correction 2:** Passer needs to move the feet more to get ball in strike zone.
  - **Correction 3:** Passer may be using arms to move and their platform is not ready, so they need to get platform ready sooner.
- **Pass contact is not consistent or toward the target**
  - **Correction 1:** Passer needs to get platform to the line of the serve.
  - **Correction 2:** Passers may not be aware of where their platform is facing, so they need to pay attention more attention to platform angle.

Setting

- **There are always two blockers where the set goes**
  - **Correction 1:** Move feet and locate so more than one set is possible.
  - **Correction 2:** Develop an understanding of what blockers see.
  - **Correction 3:** Think about how you affect blockers.
- **Middles can't seem to hit around blockers**
  - **Correction 1:** Be aware of the distance middles are off the net.
  - **Correction 2:** Be aware of how far the set is off the net. (Sets may be too close.)

Left-side attackers

- **Attacker has limited range (can attack only a small part of court)**
  - **Correction 1:** Adjust the distance off the net to allow different angles.
  - **Correction 2:** Adjust angle of approach.
  - **Correction 3:** Be aware of plant according to each approach angle.
- **Attacker is always early and lets ball get behind them**
  - **Correction 1:** Begin with exact timing on OOS sets.
  - **Correction 2:** Establish discipline in approach timing.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

LIBERO TRAINING

LIBERO TRAINING

DEBBIE BROWN (UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, 1991-2014)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIBERO TRAINING

Mental and physical abilities of the libero:

- Competitive drive
- Vocal leader
- Passing skills
- Digging range
- Ability to score points with serve or to control to zone
- Ability to handle second ball and put up a ball that can be scored
- Gamesmanship
- Understanding of the whole game and responsibilities for each position

Player initiated passing drills for 3-4 players

- Bowling
  - Deep right and left
  - Outside in and inside out
  - Short right and left
- From box
- Passer, catcher, server
- Three servers, three passers

Coach initiated passing drills

- Coaches in corners and alternately serve to 3 passers
- Corner passing on both sides of net with setter
- L-M-L-M-R-M-R

Developing defensive skills

- Position digging
- Pepper drills
- Triangle position pepper
- Over-the-net pepper LF-Libero – setter (all attacks cross court)
- 5 vs. 5 with no middle blocker – setter right back

Setter and libero drills

- Setter dig – libero set
- Libero dig – setter set

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Coverage reps

- Coach initiated into block
- Off live attacks

Serving

- Point scoring
- To zones
- Serve to dig

LIBERO TRAINING

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIBERO TRAINING

Passing is King

- How much space can my Libero take effectively?

Where should I play my libero?

- Is she better with hard hit balls (left back)
- Is she better with range and chasing down balls (middle back)
- What defense are we playing to use our libero the most if she is our best defender?

Important skills beyond passing for a libero

- Defense range
  - Often shorter players, so they need to be able to play well outside their body
- Hit/tip reaction
- Does she read well? Can you give her a bigger area?
- Leadership – she needs to run the back court
- Don’t forget the serve

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

LIBERO TRAINING

Technique

- Eye work
- Ready position – palms up
- Platform
- Work outside-in
- Consistency

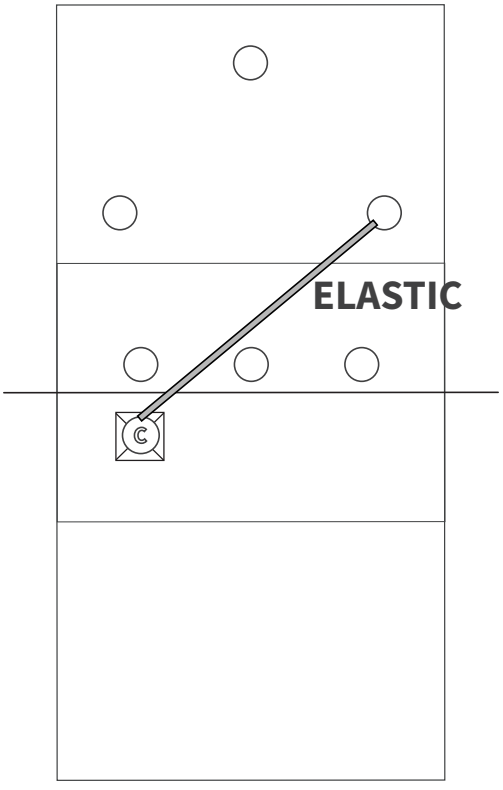
Tactics

- What do you expect from your libero?
- Leadership
- Communication
- Always train to expand their range
- Where is your perfect pass?
- 2nd ball
- Free balls
- All defensive positions

DRILLS FOR LIBERO TRAINING

Defensive Positioning ▶

A good drill to show players the different paths a ball can take off the attack. Set up 3 blockers and 3 defenders on the defense side. On the offense side, coach is on a box holding an elastic to indicate ball flight. Coach holds one end of the elastic and defenders hold the other end. Where can the ball go? Demonstrate different situations with the attacker and blockers – single block, double block, gap in the block, hitter inside, hitter outside the antenna, etc. and use the elastic to allow defenders to visualize where the ball can travel based on hitter and blocker positioning.



LIBERO TRAINING

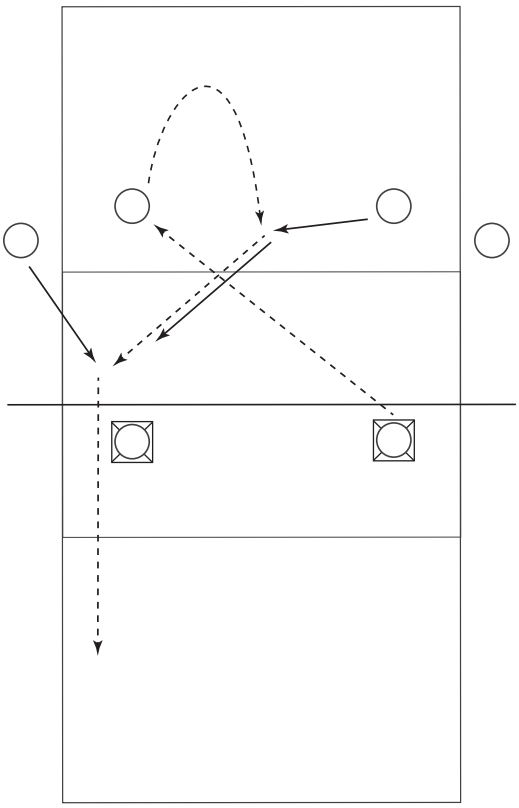
MOIRA LONG (SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE)

Box Serve Receive

Set up 3 boxes and put 3 players on each box and 3 passers on the other side of the net. Have 2 targets at the net. Use ball carts. Each player on a box serves a ball to the passer and repeats. Passers need 4 of 6 perfect passes to rotate. Variation: Earn 1 point for each 4/6.

Sit and Lift ▶

A good out-of-system transition drill. Use 2 boxes with a player on each box on one side of the net and pin hitters, a setter and a libero on the other side. Ball is attacked to right back by box player. Setter digs high to middle of the court. The libero faces the net and executes a sit-and-lift bump set to the pin hitter; leave the set inside the pin. ("Sit and lift" emphasizes using the legs for the set, so players go down in a sitting position, then raise up to meet the ball with a table top platform.) Libero goes to cover and tells attacker where to swing while the box hitter blocks either angle or line. The 2 box hitters rotate with the pin hitters on the other side. The liberos and setters rotate in and out every 6 hits.



©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

MIDDLE BLOCKER TRAINING

MIDDLE BLOCKER TRAINING

Keys for Offense/Attacking

High School Level

- **Be an available target in position** – If the setter can't "see you," she guesses if you're there and whether or not you're ready.
  - Call what you want. Be loud!
  - On time – in the air before the setter has the ball
  - Hips open, elbow back
- **Hips pull the wrist through the ball** – Rollercoaster analogy (tennis ball drill for repetition)
  - Hips come through
  - Elbow comes through
  - Wrist snaps over the ball
- **Contact**
  - Snapping over the ball

College Level

- **Shots**
  - Wrist away/ cross body/ off the hands
- **Scouting blocker tendencies**
  - Figuring out what you can use against various blockers
  - Do they show and take?
  - Be willing to be flexible and hit various shots
- **31/Gap and A/Back 1**
  - Beating the block
  - These are speed-focused attacks

USA National Team Level

- **Beating with speed if you can't go over or around the block**
  - Who are you playing? Japan or Russia?
- **Transition after a block move to the opponent's left-side attacker**
  - Rolling off your RSB's left shoulder and spinning to prepare for a Back 1 or a Slide if setter is front row.
  - Even if you RARELY get set, you are holding a block.
  - BE LOUD! Sometimes the play happens so fast, and perhaps you aren't ready.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- **Learning to hit off speed**
  - After my shoulder surgery in 2012, I couldn't muscle around people as much as I did earlier in my career. I also couldn't out jump as many opponents because of my knees/age. I had to learn to hit more deep off-speed shots, tips, etc.

Keys for Defense/Blocking

High School

- **Big hands**
  - Take up space
- **Hands over the net**
  - Get in their airspace for as long as possible
- **Line up in front of attacker arm**
  - Don't compound a bad set-up by your wing blocker

College

- **Learning setter tendencies**
  - Do they arch?
  - Do they favor a specific attacker on a big point?
  - Who's their favorite in each rotation?
- **Communication to your front line and backline**
  - You're in charge as the MB. You should know the plays/tendencies for EVERY rotation and remind your wings and back row before the ball is served.
  - It's especially important to communicate to your libero with an active setter.
- **Ability to adjust to what is coming at you**
  - Has the offense adjusted, or is it doing something different? You're responsible for communicating that.

USA National Team Level

- **Reading setters**
  - Have a snapshot of the setter's elbows to wrists.
  - Watch video. Identify "tells."
- **Going with your gut**

- If you decide to commit on a perfect pass, and it ends up being a perfect pass, don't second guess yourself. A committed call is better than no block because it causes the opponent to honor your decision.
- If you sense a play coming (for instance, an inside set to an outside), communicate quickly to your wings.

- **Upgrades**
  - **Stopping short.** For example, Russia's attackers love to go inside the block, so I learned to stop an entire body short of where they took off. It was often shorter than where my wing blockers set up.
  - **Show and take –** Especially with middles coming around from Zone 2.
  - Hands work together, yet independently. Learn to drop one hand.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

MIDDLE BLOCKER TRAINING

General Thoughts

- Passing and setting are going to have a far greater impact on attacking than blocking, but players have to learn the importance of their position to the team's success.
- Sometimes your goal is to score, and sometimes the goal is to hold the block and set up another attacker who may have a better matchup.
- I have had blocking specialists who we rarely set. I've had hitting specialists who struggled with blocking. I've had players who could do both, as well as some players who were better off two feet and scored better in front of the setter, and players who attacked better off one foot and specialized on hitting slides.

Middle Hitter Attacking

- Understand the concept of being available. See the serve/pass, open up and shuffle to get good spacing. You can use either a 3-4 step approach.
- Talk to the setter and be loud. This is a habit worth learning. The setter needs to know where you are.
- Goal is to hit high and quick and be able to attack in multiple zones. See the opponent's defense and attack into a seam. If you can hit over the block, do it.
- Accelerate into the attack and be in the air with your elbow back and hips open – minimum of 5-6 feet so you can see the block.
- Landing mechanics matter. Eyes need to be open so you can see the play.

Different Attacks for Middles

- **1 / Quick / Push / Back 1:** Attacker is in the air before/when the setter gets the ball. This forces a blocker to make a decision.
- **Gap/31:** Attacker is in the air before/when the setter gets the ball between the opponent's Right Front and Middle Front Blockers.
- **Slides:** Locations and speeds are determined by the skill and talents of the players.

Transition Concerns

- The key is to work to be available. Again, being loud allows the setter to know where you are and if they can use you as a hitter or decoy.
- Getting back to the 10-foot line vs. back sets and attacking in front with a three-step approach or even a step close.
- Pulling back vs. left-side attacks and being able to get around the setter to attack off one foot.

MIDDLE BLOCKER TRAINING

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Blocking

- Middle Blockers should start every play pointing out the hitters and making sure the other front-line players are aware of what the opponents are planning. Also, when possible, they should point out the front-row setter.
- Ball–setter–ball–hitter is a skill for all players to process, but it's critical that the Middle Blocker focuses on the play as it evolves.
- Know your blocking system, and don't compound an error by going to a pin blocker that is in the wrong location.
- Lead with your hands and get over the net. Be square and strong and understand the value of dropping your inside hand into the seam on outside attacks.
- Shuffle, shuffle to a crossover with a swing, turn and run are all methods to get a blocker into play against a hitter. The higher the set, the more time you have to close.
- No block is better than a bad block.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEAM DEFENSE

TEAM DEFENSE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NABIL MARDINI (LOS ANGELES VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY)

MY DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY: BLOCK-ORIENTED DEFENSE

I created the defense described below because I truly believe that formation defenses (i.e. rotation defense, perimeter, etc.) are inefficient; they teach players to react to spots on the floor rather than where the ball can go in relation to the block. The Block-Oriented Defense (BOD) teaches players to read the block, the ball, and the hitter which will eventually determine where the ball can go and where each defensive assignment should be.

The formula is the concept of "where the ball can go" in relation to the block and how we assign who is responsible for "where the ball can go." There are four scenarios where the ball can go: around (or past) the left side of the block, around (or past) the right side of the block, through the block, or over the block in the form of a tip or roll shot.

Guidelines & Assignments (6 players, each with one assignment)

- **Left Digger (LD)** – Left back is responsible for the ball that goes outside the left side of the block.
- **Right Digger (RD)** – Right back is responsible for the ball that goes outside the right side of the block.
- **Seam Digger (SD)** – The middle back is responsible for the ball that goes in the seam.
- **Fronting Blocker (FB)** – The pin blockers set the block by going into the line of approach (hips).
- **Closing Blocker (CB)** – The middle blocker closes the block.
- **Off Blocker (OB)** – The off blocker goes at a 45-degree angle into the court so they are in a potion to see the hitter. They look for deflections, tips and off speed, and hard-driven balls. In that order.

These are the primary reads of the players. After the players find their assignment, they begin to look for their secondary read: Hitter. This is where READING becomes the single most important skill in volleyball. The Block-Oriented Defense gives you the VISION that allows you to see and read.

I tell players that SEEING is one thing and OBSERVING is another. I call this OBNOSIS: The art of observing. It's like going to an art museum. If you're not into art, you can see a painting and detect one or two details. But if you observe the painting, then you see more details. Same thing with volleyball. We don't want to look at the hitter; we want to look at a specific area on the body. When someone is playing defense against a hitter, that means looking at the shoulder, the wrist, the elbow, facial expressions, etc.

Summary of Block-Oriented Defense (BOD)

- Where to play defense is dependent on the block.
- **1st assignment:** Find the ball (see the ball); **2nd assignment:** Find the hitter (see the hitter).
- Always ask yourself: What did you see? Am I behind the block?
- You need to be able to see the ball and the hitter on defense and be **Stopped, Balanced, Forward (SBF)** before the hitter is in throwing position.
- Play defense THROUGH the NET, not above the net.
- Play defense AROUND and UNDER the hands of the block, not OVER the hands of the block.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEAM DEFENSE

NABIL MARDINI (LOS ANGELES VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY)

Defense

- Stopped, Balanced, Forward (SBF)
- Under and through the ball
- Move your feet (tempo 2 and 3 balls) OR simply shoot platform under the ball and angle
- Step and cut, sprawl, judo roll, ½ roll

Blocking & Defense

- Call UP every time you dig and be EXCITED!
- Back row calls the ball before it crosses the plane on EASY PLAYS.
- Differentiation between the two types of digs: a pass-like dig and a standard dig. I teach them as the two E's: "Emergency and Execution." Here's the difference:
    - **EMERGENCY:** This is like when a player is pursuing a ball off the court and all we care about is keeping the ball alive because this is all we can do. This involves running, sprawling, diving. It's usually about 20 percent of normal defense. Emotional and physical EFFORT is critical. "GET THE BALL UP!"
    - **EXECUTION:** Is more like an easy spin, a hard-driven ball that turns into a slow ball as a result of deflecting off the block. These are non-emergency situations where we think of initiating a counter-attack. BALL CONTROL and DECISION-MAKING are critical. "GET THE BALL TO TARGET." Make it perfect!
- Off Blocker (OB) understanding that the OFF SPEED is their No. 2 responsibility and also the back row must understand that 80 percent of the time, we would like them to take the EASY balls. (You see them, and they can't see you.)
- We must go HEAD UP, FRONT better and CLOSE the seams especially, when the other team is Out-of-System (OOS).
- Recognizing the different sets when blocking (1st step set, second step set, high ball, etc.). What kind of swing move (fast-faster or slow-explosive), or do I just go static block?
- Knowing when to block and not to block is a skill we all need to get better at, and it requires players to make swift and quick decisions as they process information about the set and the approach of the hitter.

TEAM DEFENSE

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

BLOCK SYSTEM VS. SPECIFIC OFFENSES

Types of blocking system

- **Spread** – Outside blockers start wide at the antenna in anticipation of an outside attack.
- **Pinch** – Outside blockers start more in the middle of the court to assist in any middle attack.
- **1 vs. 1** – Blockers start wherever the attacker in front of them starts their approach.
- **3-2-1-person block systems** – This refers to the number of blockers in a blocking system.

Types of movement

- Shuffle
- Crossover
- Turn and run

Types of block

- **Zone** – Block will take out a specific area or zone of the court; backcourt defenders will defend the area outside the zone.
- **Approach** – The blockers will block the direction of the attacker's approach; backcourt defenders will see or "read" the blockers' movements and go to the open areas of the court.
- **Soft block** – The hands of the blocker are under the ball when attacked with the hope of deflecting the attack up in the air so it can be successfully defended.

Movements above net

- **Straight over** – Blockers should reach straight over the net as much as possible.
- **Hands move independently** – The hands of the blockers can reach independently to the area of the attack
- **Shape ball into opponent's court** – The blocker should make the effort to direct the attack towards the middle of the opponent's court by "shaping" their hands, shoulders and hips towards the area where they'd like to see the ball land.

No block vs. bad block

- What is a bad block?
    - Not over the net
    - Lateral drift (not always bad)
    - Block that makes it hard for back-row defenders to do their job

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Importance of what you see

Concepts

- Combative skill
- Good blockers like to block
- Not practiced enough

Using the block as first line of defense vs. various offenses

- Vs. 5-1 with front-row setter
  - Release block – Middle blocker releases before the ball is set to assist the outside blocker.
  - Back row covers the setter – If a front-row setter is not a threat to attack, the block will release to a prospective attacker.
  - Is the setter an attacker based on pass?
- Vs. fast offense to the outside
- Vs. combo plays
- Vs. back-row attack

Activities and drills to work on blocking systems

- **Eyes tracking hitters** – The eyes of the blockers should watch both the ball and the hitter. Sequentially, they should see the ball being passed, find their attacker, watch the ball being set, locate the approach of the attack, see the shoulder direction and arm swing to anticipate the direction of the attack.
- **Movements and rhythm** – The blocking footwork should be specific to the situation and rhythmical in nature.
- Movements on the floor and in the air.
- Aggressive approach to the skill.

TEAM DEFENSE

DEBBIE BROWN (UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, 1991-2014)

DEFENDING WITH A SINGLE BLOCK

When does this happen?

- When we have committed with the middle and either pin is set.
- When we have released to one pin and the other pin is set.
- Only on an in-system pass. (Once a pass is out-of-system, we revert to reading.)
- Typically, more often on a Slide attack.
- When our setter who isn't a great blocker is in the front row and we want to make sure she is never left alone. (Will create single block defending against a right-side attack.)
- When we have a very strong pin blocker who we don't mind leaving to block solo.

Why does this happen?

- Blocking systems involve risks and sometimes the risks end up with a single block.
- Rarely do we call it and the single block occurs. We are calling it because we think it is highly likely the other person will be set.
- Offenses are increasingly faster, and it's difficult for middles to cover pin to pin on a perfect pass.
- When opponents' middles are exceptionally strong.

Defending the left-side attack

- Specific block moves. Start on the line and make a quick, strong move inside with perfect timing. Feet and hands must be active, and there is a SLIGHT drift into the court.
- Middle blockers pick up tips.
- Right back MUST drop back and dig the line.
- Middle back shades toward the line. (This is counterintuitive and won't work unless the block makes the proper move.)
- Left back (if it's the libero) takes primary angle against left-side attack.
- Left front drops to at least 10 feet to dig sharp angle.

Defending the right-side attack

- May be slightly different, depending on whether the set is a Slide or a straight-in approach.
- Same block move (slight drift into the court).
- Left back digs line.
- Middle back stays in angle and moves up in the court against a slide.
- Right back stays in sharp angle closer to the sideline. (Middle back would cross in front of right back.)
- Right front gets a one-step drop off the net.
- Middle blocker picks up tips.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEAM DEFENSE

DEBBIE BROWN (UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, 1991-2014)

Lead up and full team drills

- Middles picking up tips.
- Pin blockers practicing exact moves and timing.
- Line diggers dropping to dig line.
- RB/MB work crossing patterns to defend against right-side attack.
- 5 on 5 with no tips allowed.
- Blocking 5s and 9s with double and single block on both pins.
- Initiate start of 6 on 6 drill by defending with a single block.

Other considerations

- Hand signals AND verbal communication.
- Getting your team to understand and buy into the fact that it doesn't mean it's an automatic kill for your opponent when you have to defend with only one blocker.
- It's a huge momentum burst for your team when you execute it properly, and it's a deflator for the opponent when they don't get a kill.
- By preparing for it, the team remains calm when it happens.

TEAM DEFENSE

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

BLOCKING STRATEGY

Blocking strategy may be as simple as trying to get two blockers in front of the hitter, or it might be more intricate – like having a specific plan for each of the opponent's attackers.

All blocking plans require a good awareness of reading the play, and this is a difficult skill for some players to master; they might do everything as directed and not experience great results.

A more complicated plan may be rotation specific and incorporate a serving plan that will lead the opponent to attack quick, allowing you to commit your blockers on perfect-pass opportunities. This might mean you serve easier rather than tough and play the percentages that you have identified. Here are some examples of blocking strategy:

- Commit blocking
- Stack blocking
- Double and triple block opportunities
- Ignoring some attackers because they are easier to dig than block

Specific questions that you need to consider with your team

- Placement of your libero and subs
- The decision to block or give line on the pins
- Block or no block vs. back-row attack
- Where does the setter pass the ball on first contact?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

17 KEYS TO THE READ DEFENSE

1. Remember that defense is an ATTITUDE! Defense is relentless pursuit!
2. Design your defense to require the least movement possible from base to your read position. (More movement causes less reading and more imbalance.)
3. Defensive effort, attitude and communication are ways to give to your team.
4. Defense is the key to success! Be the example every day!
5. If your range on defense is small someone will have to help you! Work on fundamentals to expand your range.
6. Team defense improves with:
    - Consistent reading and communication of the read
    - Consistent balance (movement ruins balance, minimize movement)
    - Consistently being ready to do more than one thing (Run, help, talk…)
7. Layers will change depending 1, 2, or 3 blockers.
8. Sharp cross-court diggers and line diggers need to work together to make sure shots are covered. (Which one is the help digger and who is the primary digger?)
9. Dump Recovery – Right Back and/or Middle Back are assigned the setter dump. Left Back is freed up to dig the quick attacks and be deeper and wider.
10. Block needs to help with the setter dump by keeping hands high and trying to react and touch, deflect, stuff any dump.
11. Blockers when late will stop and get straight over the net or will try to fill the seams. Soft block the ball into our court area when necessary.
12. Blockers are assigned the very short tips.
13. Defense will be keyed off of the opponent being in a 2-hitter or 3-hitter situation.
14. Wide Set Defense / Inside Set Defense / 1 Blocker Defense all overrule our standard defense versus 4's and 5's. Communication is needed between the block and the defense.
15. Wide Set Defense – Line / Middle Back are vocal; they trigger the defensive change.
16. Inside Set Defense – Line / Middle Back are vocal; they trigger the defensive change.
17. One Blocker Defense – All defenders need to have Middle Blocker in their vision to know if they are late.

TEAM DEFENSE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

Build a defense

- Base defense
  - Non-attacking court coverage
  - Transition
  - Defend the setter
  - Defend very fast tempo sets
  - Defense vs. sets to the pins
- Defense vs. sets to the middle of the court
- Defense with only 1 blocker, 2 blockers, 3 blockers
- Channel as much as you can to your best diggers

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEAM DEFENSE

RAY BECHARD (UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS)

DESIGNING A DEFENSIVE SYSTEM FOR YOUR LEVEL

What will we have to defend at our level to be successful?

- **Novice (beginning levels, junior high, club):** More time spent defending last 20 feet of the court, and one or two defensive systems may be enough.
- **Intermediate (high school, club teams):** The net to attack-line area becomes relevant, and layering starts to become important.
- **Advanced (collegiate teams, high-level high school, club):** Coordinating initial line and secondary line of defense becomes critical as well as knowing how to adapt to the opponent's strengths and power hitters.

Defending first contact

- **First pass (on-off-over):** "On" means the pass is a perfect set-up for the set and attack – defenders cinch in to cover tight angles. "Off" means it's a pass that's settable and your team adjusts to a more perimeter defense. "Over" means your attackers should take a few steps off the net in order to attack the overpass.

Defending second contact

- **Setter live:** Prepare for the setter dump or tip if she's a legitimate scoring threat. Commit someone to defending it.
- **Setter down:** Is the second contact going to be a joust, an attack or a free ball? Adjust accordingly.

Defending third contact

- This is where your defensive system comes into full fruition. Defenders move from their base position to the open seams to dig the ball.

Special considerations

- **Systems (perimeter-rotation-hybrid):** Analyze how each defense system would serve the skills and strengths of your team.
- **Positioning your libero:** You want to funnel most of the attacks to the libero, who is usually in left back.
- **Serve tough to take pressure off your defense:** Putting the other team out-of-system will ease the responsibilities of blockers.

TEAM DEFENSE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CATHY GEORGE (MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY)

DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS

Begin with the basics

- **Individual skill work:** Know your defenders and what they need to have specialized reps in. Every digger has different strengths and weaknesses.
- **Base defense:** Nail down the base locations for each digger and make locational responsibilities clear.
- **Purpose:** The defense system you use will determine the ability to create successful transition attacks.
- **Adjustment:** Adjusting to an opponent's strengths is a critical part of adapting your defensive systems throughout the season.

Perimeter

- **Basic positioning:** Cover the corners of the court and trust the blockers to funnel the ball into your strongest defensive areas.
- **Gray areas:** Overlap and cover the floor.
- **Layering:** Designate which digger gets the short ball and which digger gets the deep ball at the same angle.
- **Develop trust:** Foster trust between diggers with communication and clear direction.
- **Collaborative work ethic:** When digger responsibilities are clear, a team's defense is successful.
- Adjustments based on personnel
    - **Lateral speed:** Digging responsibilities will depend on who your slow and fast diggers are.
    - **Transition:** A player's ability to transition to her digging spot and read the attack.
    - **Tip recovery and blocking assignments:** Who's responsible for covering tips? Can your attackers cover the tips, or do your defenders take on tips? Make this clear.
    - **Who gets the hole?** Some choose middle back, some left back.

Blocking

- **Role of block in your defense:** Your blocking strategy determines your defensive strategy, and their job is to funnel attacks into your strongest defenders.
- **Assess your blocking strengths/weaknesses:** Where are your blockers the weakest, and how can you adjust your defense to pick up the slack?
- **Potential point scoring by your opponent:** Know your opponent's offensive inclinations and adjust your defense and blocking to minimize those strengths.
- **Connecting your block with your defense:** Communication is key. You want to foster a team that can switch defensive systems smoothly during games.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEAM DEFENSE OVERVIEW AND DRILLS

Definitions of Defense

- You are on defense once the ball crosses the plane of the net to the opponent's side of the net – after your serve, after your attack, after your "down ball" or "free ball."
- Defense is made up of both blocking and backcourt digging/contacting the ball.
- Defense is all about **READING skills** and reacting to the opponent's offense. Vision in defense is a skill that needs to be trained.
- Defense prevents the other team from scoring (either from serve receive or transition).
- Attitude ("Go for the Ball!") is the foundation for defense both as an individual and in team play.

Designing a Defense:

Here are two important questions you should ask yourself:

1. **"What are you trying to defend?"**
2. **"What are you giving up?"**

As you answer these questions, you will determine what zone of the net or area of the court you are willing to give up or defend.

You must consider not only the **opponent's strengths and weaknesses** but also **what your team is capable of doing.** How good is your team's backcourt defense? How good is your block? After you answer these questions, design your defense with the following points in mind:

- Strengths of your players.
- Areas where your opponents are most apt to attack – along the net and in your backcourt.
- Weaknesses of your players. (Where can you "hide" a weak blocker or a weak back-court defender?)
- You must teach your team – where do most players hit? Every attacker has a tendency (e.g. cross court or line).
- Your six players on defense must respond as a **UNIT**, even though there is a separate coordination required among the first line of defense (the blockers) and the second line of defense (the back-row diggers).
- The block is the foundation of your defensive formation. Back-row adjustments will be made based on the blocking actions and principles.
- Blocking considerations: Numbers of players blocking: one, two or three.
- Positioning of your blocker (s) – Angle (cross court), line or straight on (blocking the ball) blocking.

TEAM DEFENSE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

Once you determine your blocking system, you must then teach the on-court defense starting positions and sequencing. Here are some concepts that are important to establish and teach as you work on back-court and front-court movement and sequencing:

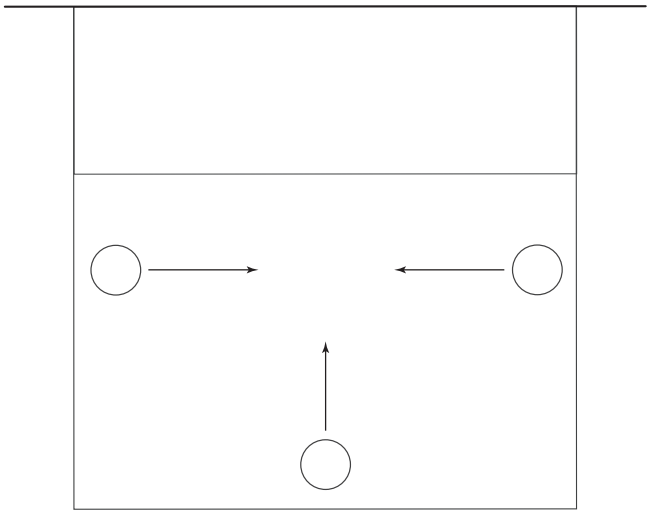
As mentioned above, the most important aspect of defense is **"reading"** the play correctly. Positioning on the court involves a series of adjustments that are both mental and physical. No matter what defense you're playing, you should begin by teaching your team the **FOUR SEQUENCES** of defense.

1. **BASE position** – This position determines the defender's starting **area of responsibility**. The defender must follow the ball from the moment it crosses the net to the opponent's side (**starting position**) to the opponent's first, second and third contact. The defender's focus is on **what is happening to the ball**.
2. **READ position** – The following is a sequence of possible actions that require reading and reacting from the defense:
    - **Overpass** – The opponent returns the ball right back to your court on the serve receive (pass) or dig.
    - **Setter Attack** – Tip or hit on the second contact.
    - **Set Direction** – In a normal three contact sequence, the set direction is essential to determining the defender's area of responsibility. Once the ball has left the setter's hands, the defender knows whether it's going to go forward or back, high or low, tight or deep.
    - **Set Placement/Position** – height, depth, zone of the net.
    - **Attacker Approach** – angle or straight, early or late.
3. **ADJUST position** – This position locates the location where the defender needs to be to intercept the ball. The defender moves **before** the attacker contacts the ball – they can move (**adjust**) within a range of a few feet. The most important part of this phase is the defender must be **STOPPED** before the attacker makes contact in order to be balanced and react to play the ball.
4. **Emergency skills** – This is the **pursuit phase** where you must move outside your range to intercept a ball that has changed direction after a block deflection, an errant dig or a mis-hit by the attacker.

Team defense systems/patterns

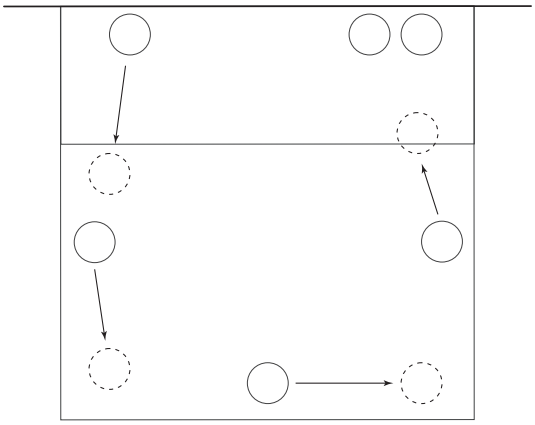
There are a variety of defensive systems that can be utilized. They can be put into four categories:

- **PERIMETER** – Defense where at least three defenders are wide (close to sidelines and end-line). Commonly called **middle back, middle back-back, 6 back.**

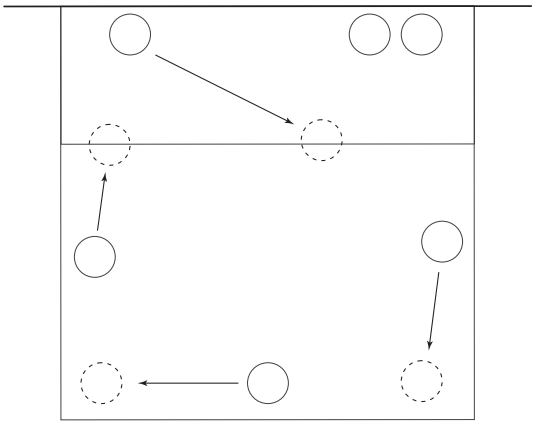


©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- **ROTATION** – Defense where there is a pre-defined rotation (movement) of players during the read position based on set direction. There have been many variations through the years. Two of the variations are **strong rotation and counter rotation.**



STRONG ROTATION



COUNTER ROTATION

- **MIDDLE UP** – Defense where one defender – usually the middle back or the setter – go to the 10-foot line behind the block, and the wing defenders start farther back (20 feet). Commonly called **middle up** or **middle back-up.**
- **MIDDLE-MIDDLE** – Defense where the three back-court defenders begin their base positions the same distance from the net (approximately 15 feet across). The objective of this defense is to maintain a balanced position and limit movement to defend an area.

Many defenses use one or two elements of the above systems/patterns.

MINDSET

The most important part of learning how to play defense is the ability to "READ" the situation on the other side of the net. Players need to put themselves in the right position, so defense has to be played **before** your opponent contacts the ball.

Practicing all the situations that your opponent might put you in is the best way to improve your defense. The combination of these concepts with good individual defensive skills and the proper teaching transition movement will determine your level of defensive success.

Your team defense is the summation of all of your players' abilities – along with good volleyball skills.

TEAM DEFENSE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

Perhaps the most important aspect in defense is **ATTITUDE** and **EFFORT** – the desire and passion to go and get the ball. Attitude is so important at all levels. It is the most difficult part of the game to teach because it involves so many intangibles. These include hard work, discipline, single focus (concentration), perseverance and desire. As a defender, you want to have the mentality that **nothing will hit the floor at any time.**

DRILLS FOR TRAINING DEFENSE

Train your team in: **COMMUNICATION, VISION and MOVEMENT PATTERNS**

Repeat drills to get the necessary reps and corrections to define relationships on the court.

3-Player

Back-court digging and movement (coach initiated). Players work from base position and movement patterns, crossing, defining areas of responsibility, playing the ball back to the coach, who is located in the target area.

Dig/Set

Coach-initiated or player initiated. This drill can have many variations and can have 2 players on defense, 3 players starting in base position and up to 6 players. The ball is initiated and played out as IN-SYSTEM or OUT-OF-SYSTEM defensive transition to attack.

Hitters vs. Team Defense

This starts with a free ball pass to a setter on the hitter's side. The hitter is attacking against a full team in defense. The team gets repetitions defending one type of attack (i.e. the left-side attacker, then the right-side attacker). Next, move to where the defense needs to read different options by the offense and defend. Set a goal of trying to stop the hitter with a block or number of "good" digs or transition swings, etc.

Triple Block Drill

Drill can start with a coach on a box or with live hitters. The team defends an attack (i.e. left-side) with 1 blocker, then 2 blockers, then 3 blockers. Next, the same sequence vs. middle hitters, then right-side hitters. Then rotate players. The team doesn't move on to the next sequence until they are successful in defense with either a block or dig or transition swing. You can set the criteria based on your level and specific defensive goals.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

5 vs. 5 Reverse Scoring

In this drill, play without a middle blocker to encourage the defense to read and defend with only 1 blocker. The defense scores points by recording the number of digs earned (not by the kill). If the play results in a kill or the play ends, then the opposite side gets the next ball so your team has the first opportunity to get a "dig point." Play mini games of 5 or 7 points, then rotate/switch players.

More learning and transfer will occur when providing game-like opportunities for all hitters and defenders to refine their skills and play successful defense.

TEAM DEFENSE

MARK ROSEN (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEYS TO TEAM DEFENSE

Choosing the right defense for your athletes

- **Your players' abilities/skills:** Choose a defense that's appropriate for your team's skill level.
- **Your opponent's tendencies:** Adapt to the strengths of the opposing team. If they have a strong outside hitter, consider blocking that hitter's line so the hits are funneled cross court to your strongest digger.
- **Multiple defenses or just one?** At a higher level, your team should be prepared to execute more than one type of defense. If you have a less experienced team, you may stick with one.

Training amount/method

- **How often, how long in practice:** Practice a combination of individual digging fragments such as footwork, body posture and movement as well as more complete drills that work on the entire digging motion.
- **Coach initiated vs. player initiated**
- **Where to place your libero:** Where is your libero most needed? Your libero's positioning will depend on their strengths as well as the location of the defensive gaps in your defensive system.
- **Repetitions vs. competition:** Practices should include controlled repetition drills and also drills that encourage competition and emulate games.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEAM DEFENSE DRILL

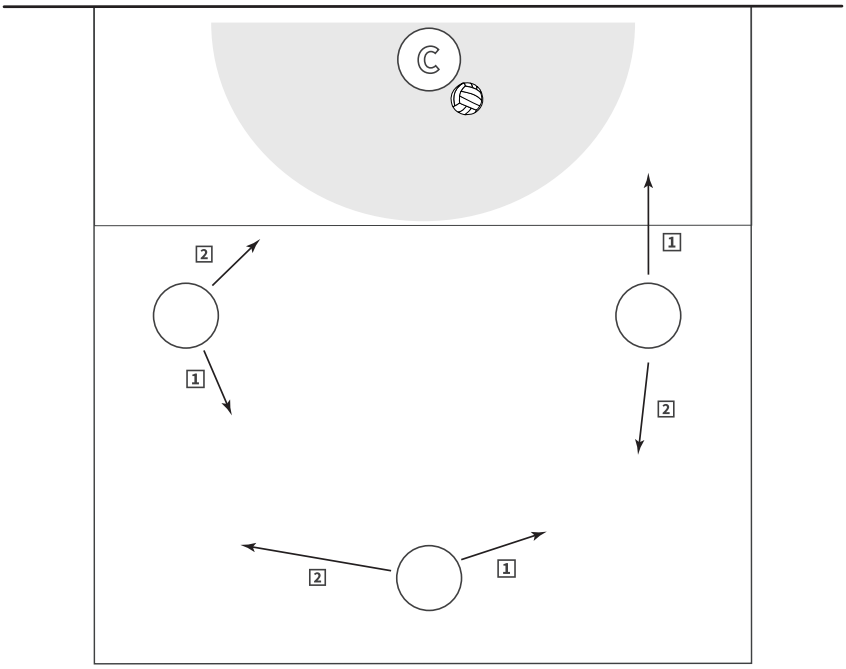
3-Player Balance ▼

A drill that teaches the team to cover all parts of the court and be stopped before contact in defensive posture before the next contact.

The drill is executed with 3 players back row and one coach in the middle at the net. It is best if there are subs to relieve players as the drill progresses. Coach inputs the ball to a player as a free ball, down ball, tipped ball or a pursuit ball, and the player returns the ball to the coach. If the ball is not inside the coach circle, a teammate needs to get a second contact–or third contact, if necessary–to get the ball to the coach. As a player moves to play a ball on or off the court, the teammates need to cover the court as if linked by a rope and balancing out the court. Before the coach's next contact, the goal for the 3 players is to cover all parts of the court and be stopped in a defensive posture. The coach needs to set the goal number, and the team needs to get the ball inside the circle in the first contact to count the rep. If there are multiple contacts, that results in a wash and the drill scores continue with next ball inside the court. If there is no effort, the team goes back to zero.

Tips for drill success:

- Finish first contact to target.
- Control the speed of the game with height of the ball played.
- Put players balanced on court to make the next play.
- Allow subs to relieve players to continue play.



TEAM DEFENSE

MIKE SEALY (UCLA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEAM DEFENSE

Factors to Consider

- Rigid system for simplicity or adjust to your personnel? How many variables can you manage?
- What are your strengths? Team and individual.
- What are your weaknesses? Team and individual.
- If you have great defenders, work on channeling balls to those defenders.
- Can you front the opposing middle blocker and block one-on-one in other areas?
- Are your base positions realistic for defending all three opposing offensive options? (3/Go?)
- A rigid system is repeatable and you can get great at executing those assignments, but some flexibility can help adjust to a specific opponent. Will too much flexibility affect execution?

Blocking

- Channel
- Bunch read
- Loosen
- Commit
- Trap
- 2/1
- 1/2

Defense

- Perimeter
- Line up
- Rotation
- Specific to hitter/rotation
- Off-blocker tip
- Double under

Walk-through scenarios

- Small pin blockers
    - Position defense around this “liability.” Line digger off the line? OT rarely goes OT line.
    - Scheme blockers by switches, middle “trap,” inside hand on ball to limit window.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Tall end blockers
  - Block line, defender off line to seam or up for tip
  - Front and dive, defender stay on line
  - Block one-on-one and allow middle to scheme elsewhere
- Middle who is slower laterally
  - Commit on perfect passes
  - Don't try to close but instead create large seams. Play defense in seams.
  - Trap/scheme
- Small blockers in general
  - Defenders play middle of their 1/3 as opposed to playing "around" block.
  - You assess where balls land vs. your block and play defense there.
- Slow defender/defender without much range
  - Do they play tip coverage only?
- Team tips often
  - Line up
  - Rotation: blocking line or leaving line
  - Off-blocker tip
- Give more area to great defenders and let them freelance vs. packing the box.
- Play your defense specifically to where a certain attacker hits.
  - Vs. player X on the left, we play rotation defense
  - Vs. player Y on the left, we play perimeter

Alter scheme on occasion just to make hitter think about it a bit more.

TEAM OFFENSE

WINNING THE SERVE AND RECEIVE BATTLE

In 2004, a guy by the name of Gil Fellingham was an assistant at BYU who got paid $20,000 by the USA men's national team before the 2004 Olympics to do a complete study on the most productive and least productive skills in volleyball. He found the following:

1. The worst thing you could do was miss a serve.
2. The second worst thing was serving a ball that the opponent could pass perfectly.
3. The third worst thing was serving a ball the opponent passed OK.
4. The fourth worst thing was hitting a ball out of bounds or into the net.

What do we take from this? Serving TOUGH and IN is the most important skill in volleyball.

Serving and passing are clearly more important than hitting. We know hitting is directly controlled by our ability to control the ball, so clearly passing has to be more important than hitting.

A team that can serve and pass but not hit can stay in the game with anyone. A team that can't serve and pass but can hit will lose a lot of games to teams they appear to be more talented than. Having said that, we'd better make sure we rank the six skills of volleyball correctly because how we spend our practice time is our responsibility.

- Importance of serving and passing. Serve TOUGH and IN. Not only do we want our teams to serve receive well, but our goal is to prevent our opponents from doing it well.
- How should we train? Law of harvest. Human targets better than mats. Serving to Chairs (STC).
- The question of transfer. What practice activities transfer the most? Whole vs. part training. If a drill is not game-like, it's not transferring – or it's transferring to a very small degree.
- Training vs. Competing. Balancing the two concepts. Repetition, feedback, competition. Tutor the task. Evaluate the task. Test the task.
- Monitor progress. The concept of quality control.

The most important ratio within the Serve Receive battle

Without boring you with numbers, the only ratio you want to concern yourself with is the mother ratio of them all: Aces vs. Serve Receive Errors (SRE). The number must be higher than 1.35 for it to be a factor in winning.

Controlling serve receive errors on our side of the net and the number of aces we score against the opponent gives you the best chance of winning because it improves your overall opportunity to reduce the number of errors (< than 7) and create more opportunities to get kills (14-15 kills minimum).

On the other hand, a low number of SEs/set ratio is not a strong indicator of winning or losing and Ace/SE ratio is somewhat an indicator if it is at least equal to 1.

More thoughts on serving and passing

- Master serving to areas 1 and 5/6. Oblique vs. acute angles.
- Adopt the "80% Golf Concept" mentality with serving. Goal is to take a team out-of-system. Aces are gravy.
- Pass over the left knee and over the right knee. This is midline in our gym.
- Fundamentals of passing – I have 5 keyword phrases that I teach, and then I spend most of my time working on system passing:

    1. See the server, see the spin OR see the toss, see the hand
    2. Load up the platform
    3. Face the server (ball), angle the arms (angles are reflection and elevation)
    4. Shuffle in the same plane (no bobbing)
    5. Pass 12 and 3 to the middle-right

- Feet are overrated. Track the serve with platform.
- Pass the ball to the middle right. Borders of Zone 3 and Zone 2. (These are hitting/blocking zones.)
- Once we introduce the skill and tutor each player, our serving and passing game is 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4. We almost NEVER play deep court games. We always hit at the net. This is good for setters and good for hitters.

4 vs. 4 (or 3 vs. 3)

- You can play this on 1, 2, or 3 courts.
- In drills where we don't have a set or original rotation, setters ALWAYS work on serve receive entries from RO1/RO3/RO4/RO2 and middles ALWAYS work on RO3/RO1/RO2/RO5.
- Setters and middles work in tandem according to each rotation.
- You lose, you serve. Early stages of the season, we put in a chip for each missed serve. A chip can be an easy spin or overhand toss from behind the service line.

There are many variations to the game noted above:

- We like to play Opposite Volleyball. You win, you receive. Game to 15 points with a +1/-1 scoring format (serving or hitting error).
- Three in-a-row (IAR) for the offense vs. 2 in-a-row (IAR) for the defense. Start at 19-19/25.
- Two and Two – Every team serves TWO balls no matter what (same server) and then the serving switches to the other team.
- Nine and Nine – Every team serves NINE balls no matter what (same server) and then the serving switches to the other team.
- Later in the season, I add the following criteria: If there is an OVERPASS or OVERDIG, then it is an automatic negative 1 on your score.
- Opposite Volleyball with a chip by coach.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

DRILL FOR FIRST BALL SIDE OUT

FBSO + Free Ball

This drill gives you a chance to evaluate all six rotations. It awards first ball side out points, emphasizing winning the point in serve receive without giving the serving team a chance to transition and score. The free ball adds a sense of urgency to both sides. The receiving team must have a scoring mentality on every free ball. (Should be "IN-SYSTEM" every time.) The defending team needs to get back to base quickly to defend/stop the free ball play.

Players initiate with a serve. (First missed serve DOES NOT count – we want aggressive serves; 2nd miss in a row = point.)

SIDE A receives 6 serves. Play it out (one serve in each rotation). At the end of the rally, Free Ball IMMEDIATELY is entered to SIDE A. Play it out. Both sides rotate to next rotation, no matter the result.

SIDE B receives 6 serves. Play it out (one serve in each rotation). At end of rally, Free Ball IMMEDIATELY entered to SIDE B. Play it out. Both sides rotate to next rotation, no matter the result.

Scoring: Receiving side has chance for 2 POINTS if they get a FBSO (First Ball Side Out). Immediate point off of serve receive pass, set, swing. Point per play if FBSO doesn't happen, including points on Free Balls. BOTH SIDES ARE LIVE! Rotate/change personnel and play again. Keep track of total points for time or play to a certain number.

Variation: All missed serves count as a point for receiving team.

TEAM OFFENSE

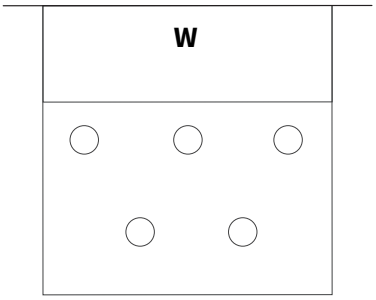
CINDY FREDRICK (UNLV, 2011-2017)

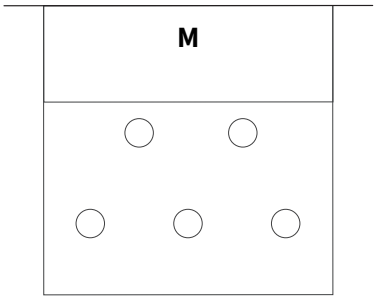
CHOOSING A SERVE RECEIVE PATTERN

Deciding on a serve receive pattern has a lot to do with your team's level of play. In general, less experienced teams use more passers (five or four) so they don't have as much court to cover. More advanced teams often use three passers, and some high-level teams may even use two. Here's an overview of the different options:

Five Person - Beginner

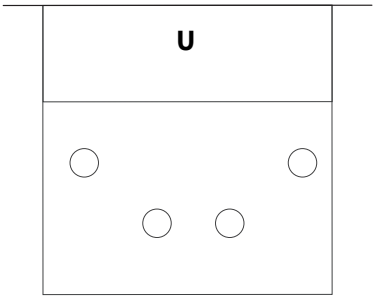
- Easy to learn
- Each player has a small area to cover
- Less movement
- Disadvantage: Not many teams have five good passers

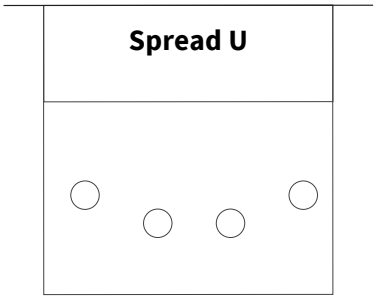




Four Person - Intermediate

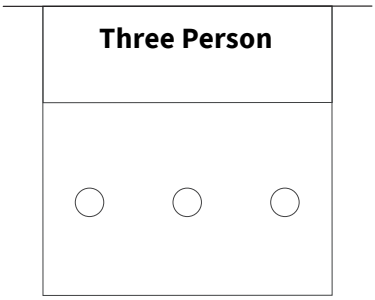
- Hide a weak passer
- Have a hitter available
- More SR patters
- Disadvantage: short seves and deep corners

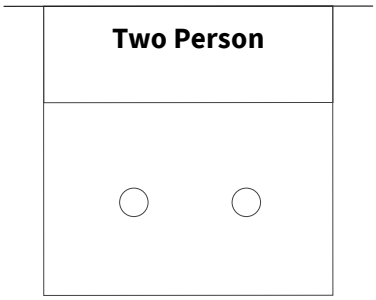




Three Person - Most Common

- Less seams to cover
- Teams have three good passers (hopefully)
- Run more plays - hitters available
- Disadvantage: Must cover more court





©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

DEVELOPING AN OFFENSIVE STRATEGY

What are you technically capable of?

- Setter's quality (physical/mental)
- Passing quality
- Hitters' ability (best shots, under pressure, left side, right side, etc.)

What system do you want to run?

- What are your players capable of doing? Strengths and weaknesses.
- 5-1
- 6-2
- 4-2
- Some other variation
- Lineup formations
- Ability of players to play 6 rotations. (if not, what do we have for subs?)

Philosophy

- Hold the block. Tempo of the quick set, establishing the middle attacker, what percentage of balls to the middle, setting them on 3 pass or 2 pass?
- Beat the block, fast tempo to the outside.
- Overload the block, running multiple hitters into one zone with small time differential.
- Confuse the block, lots of crossing plays, fakes, etc.
- Hitter versatility. Keep it simple or use hitters for a multitude of set types?

The Setter

- **Location, Selection, Deception** (in that order).
- Understanding who to set and when.
- Ability to be a good psychologist.
- On the same page with the coach in regard to philosophy.
- What percentage of the ball do you want to the Middle, Left Side, Right Side, Back Row?

TEAM OFFENSE

TERRY LISKEVYCH & MARK BARNARD (OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY)

EXPLAINING ROTATION OVERLAP RULES

For many players, overlap rules can be difficult to grasp. Before and during each season, it's a good idea to explain them – and, if necessary, re-explain them – so your players aren't confused by where to be before the serve.

Rotation order

- Rotation order as determined by the starting lineup must be maintained throughout the set.

Number of players

- To begin a rally, six players per team must be on court. Three players are front-row players and occupy position Nos. 4 (left player), 3 (center player) and 2 (right player). The other three are back-row players, occupying position Nos. 5 (left player, 6 (center player) and 1 (right player).

Rotation

- When the receiving team gains the right to serve by winning a rally, its players must rotate one position clockwise (player in position No. 2 rotates to position No. 1 to serve; player in position No. 1 rotates to position No. 6, etc.)

Player positioning

- At the time the ball is contacted for the serve, each team must be completely within its own team court in two rows of three players (except the server in position No. 1 on the serving team). The placement of players – with the exception of the server, who is exempt – must conform to the serve order recorded on the scoresheet as follows:
    - In the front or back row, the right-side player must have at least part of one foot closer to the right sideline than the feet of the center player in the corresponding row, and the left-side player must have at least part of one foot closer to the left sideline than the feet of the center player in the corresponding row. Each front-row player must have at least part of one foot closer to the center line than the feet of the corresponding back-row player.

How the position of players is judged

- Player positioning is determined by the location of their feet on the court at the time the ball is contacted for service. An airborne player is considered to retain the status or position of the foot last in contact with the floor. The service zone is not considered to be part of the court.
- After the ball is contacted for service, players may move from their respective positions.

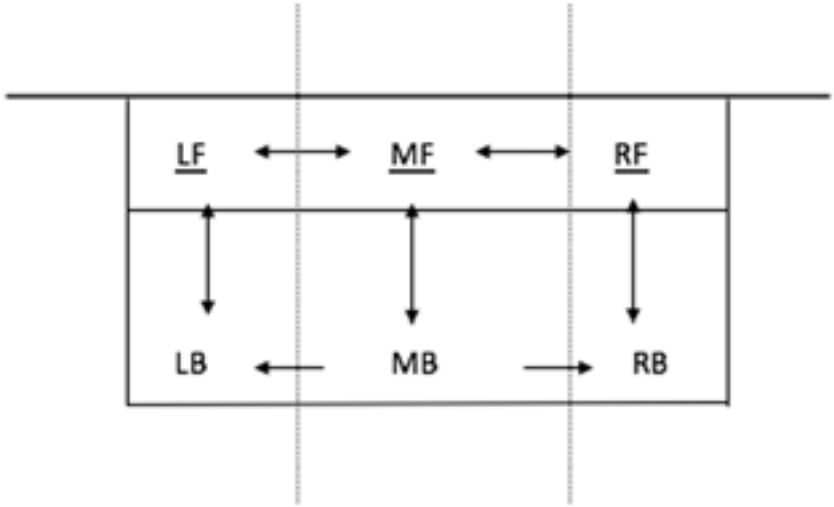
Lineup sheet

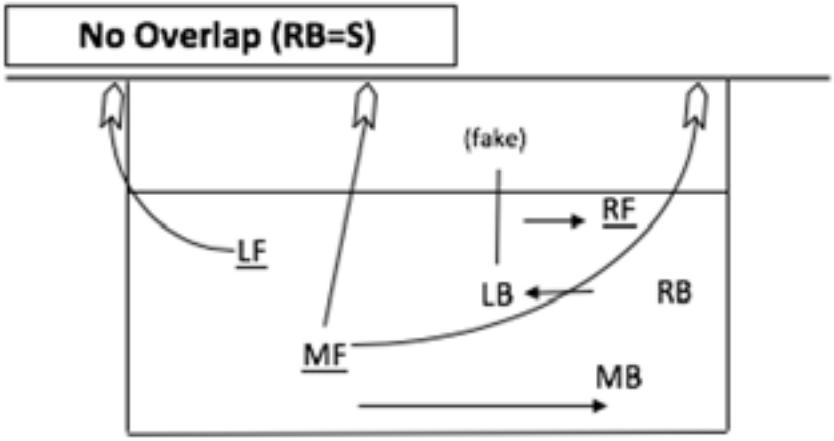
- On the lineup sheet for each subsequent set, the serving order may be changed. Those changes are recorded on the score-sheet

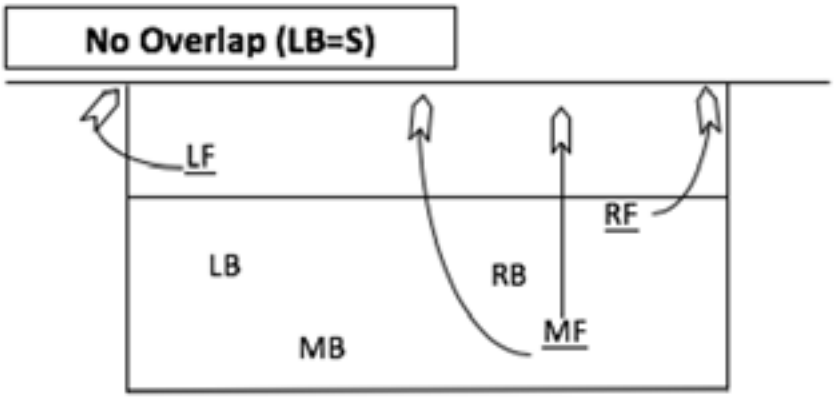
©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Position faults

- The players of a team commit a position fault if they are not in their correct positions at the moment the ball is contacted by the server, including a player found to be illegally on the court (for example, excessive team entry) or entered in the wrong position in the service order.







TRANSITION

SPIKER COVERAGE AND TRANSITION

It is my opinion that spiker coverage is the most important team skill, and it takes a full commitment from the squad to remained focus. It's way too common for a player to not get the set and then choose to watch the rest of the play.

Spiker coverage to defensive transition

- Quick attack
  - Back row players tight – mid-range with setter alive. (Setters sometimes look like a golfer after hitting the shot – watching. But setters need to be "alive," which means they need to cover and fill the gap.
  - Outside hitters will remain deeper.
  - Responsibility rests with the quick hitter to find a seam.
- Outside attack
  - Three-person cup tight: Body position needs to be low to mid-range, meaning you start in a low position and come up to mid-range position.
  - Two-person cup: In the backcourt behind the 3-person cup.
- Back-row attack: After an attack, back-row players need to be "alive," which means they are facing the action and ready to make a play.
- Communication issues: Players need to call shots.

Transition from defense to offense

- **Block** every ball or **channel** balls to your best digger.
- Pass to establish the tempo that you desire.
- Setter location: Front-row/back row – release to the net quick on down/free balls and balls attacked away from you. Only set the hitters that are calling for the ball.
- Adjustments with setter on first contact – Right Front / Middle Front / Libero
- Quick hitters understanding the concept of being available and getting depth to generate an approach.
  - When blocking to your left (opposite attacking), turn over your right shoulder.
  - When blocking to your right (left-side attacker), delay and back off in Zone 2-3 to allow setter release and time to find the ball.
  - Attack the designated areas along the net as well as back row.
- Outside blockers work to generate a big approach and be quick to try to stay in rhythm for a faster tempo set. Try to turn, retreat, run to your maximum approach location and be loud in asking for the ball. Then, fly into the attack. The faster you cross over and get back, the better.
- The tougher the dig, the more important it is to pass off the net.

TRANSITION

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BASICS OF TRANSITION AND DRILLS

Transition is best described as the movement of players from one phase of the game to another. Every time the ball crosses the net, transition occurs on each side. Watching teams execute transition effectively is like watching a well-choreographed synchronized movement on each side of the court.

Concepts

Transition skills can be broken down into individual skills and team-related skills. Here are factors that affect efficient transition for both team and individuals:

- Ball control – Ability to pass (dig or overhead set) the ball effectively and get the ball to the setter.
- Reading and anticipation – Being in the right place at the right time.
- Positioning and team formations – Knowing the formations and getting into position quickly.

Base position (or starting position)

Base position is the location from where all movement/transition begins. These positions can change over the course of a match based on strength of the opponent and location of the setter. Here are the keys:

- Each time the ball is sent over the net, players return to base position.
- Base positions vary depending on the opponent.
- Front-row players need to verbalize the location of the opponent's setter (back-row or front row).
- Back-row wing players (left back/right back) have responsibility for setter attack/dumps.
- Train efficient and quick movement routes from base to adjusted base positions.

Cues in transition

- Establish cues for eye sequencing
    - Watch the pass and evaluate (read) it quickly as to the possible outcomes.
    - Find the hitters. After the ball is passed, blockers and defense should check the hitters' routes.
    - Watch the setter and the release of the ball.
    - Watch the flight of the set (vertical or horizontal) as well as its location along the net and depth from the net.
    - Find the hitter being set and note the angle of their approach.
    - Hitter's jump, timing and arm-swing. Blockers generally jump a split-second after the hitter jumps.
- Footwork skills in blocking and backcourt depending on the situations. (Quick attack, out-of-system, etc.)
- Posture – high, medium, low.
- Focus on timing and movement routes for each individual transition.
- Do more system reps than individual reps to train movement patterns.
- "Ball, Setter, Ball, Hitter"

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

System transition

These areas need to be covered for each rotation:

- Base positions for defense
- Transition defense to offense
- Hitter coverage
- Free ball transition to offense
- Down ball transition to offense
- Dig-to-attack transition offense

Core drills

- Talk, Transition, and Terminate: Servers initiate; serve between two passers; passers call and pass, then transition to hitting areas; setter sets either hitter.
- Hitter vs. hitter: Serve initiated or coach initiated – down ball, free ball, out-of-system ball.
- Eye sequencing: Ball, Setter, Ball, Hitter (two ball wash drill), serve initiated.
- Reading and recognition of out-of-system vs. in-system: Dig/set

Team transition drills

Use a variety of scoring concepts for team drills

- Fast score – rally score drills
- Handicaps – one team starts with a greater number of points
- Consequence points – a team must score two or more points in a row to get credit for one point
- Wash drills – big points and little points are used
- Timed drills – execute specific tactics/goals for a specific amount of time

DRILLS FOR TRAINING TRANSITION

Simple Footwork Transition

Reinforces proper footwork coming off a block and transitioning to offense. It's good as a warmup on a defensive practice day. Have your players block, land and transition without a ball. This would be the time to address footwork. You can then add a ball driven into a DS so all attackers must look at the ball while moving into attack positions.

TRANSITION

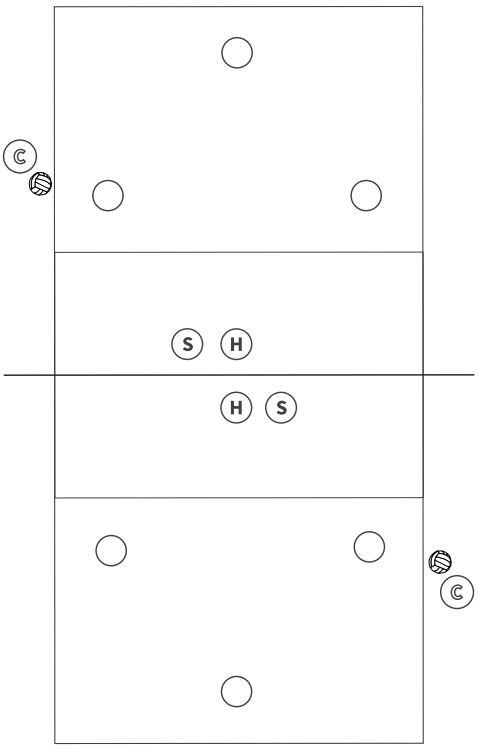
JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

3-2-1 OOS

Prioritizes first-ball side outs and stuff blocks that end the rally. This drill simulates an out-of-system play with a non-setter setting your outside hitter. Play begins when a ball is delivered to a player on one side of the net, who takes a swing at the defense. Any point resulting in that first swing counts as 3 points, rewarding the first swing vs. the defense. This drill also rewards a well-formed block – the defense receives 3 points for a point-ending block. The next swing back on either side is worth 2 points. Finally, if the rally continues, it's worth 1 point.

MH vs. MH (4 or 5 players) ▶

This drill has two setters, one on each side of the net (can be front row or back row). Coach tosses over the net to a back-row player, who passes to the setter. The setter then sets the middle a "1" or "3". The opposing middle attempts to block. Once they land, the coach tosses to the other side so the blocker must transition and attack a "1" back at the other middle. Coaches control the pace of the drill to either speed up or slow down. Move your setters along the net to force the opposing middle to 'front' the other middle before her block attempt.



Positional Battles (6 vs. 6)

MB/RS vs. MB/RS or any combination. Only allow for point-scoring opportunities with kills or blocks as a result of any particular position you designate. You can custom-make your match-ups based on your talent or opponent.

Is your team good at transitioning from defense or offense?

Evaluate your team and how you can score points.

- Free ball passing
- Down ball passing
- Dig to attack
- Serve receive to attack

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TRANSITION

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

Once you establish the level and quality needed, you must spend a significant amount of time training both your strengths and weaknesses. Focusing and providing feedback in those areas will help your players improve their transition play. All teams need to understand that almost every ball that the team sends back to the opponent can be attacked, even when passing or setting a ball over the net. The point is that you always have an opportunity to make it difficult for your opponent to run an effective offense.

Final thought: It's a good idea to practice repetitions of each transition that occurs within the game of volleyball. Some drills focus on team transition – for instance, a team on offense with good hitter coverage that transitions to team defense with everyone moving to their base position and back to offense. You'll also find that focused transition work improves the running of multiplayer and team drills.

Teams with a great championship history excel in transition work. They have flow and often find ways to be successful, even if they're not as skilled as their opponent. Transition can win matches.

TRANSITION

NABIL MARDINI (LOS ANGELES VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRANSITION FOOTWORK AND STRATEGY

Transition footwork off the block and dig

- COME DOWN RUNNING (off the block). Start transitioning once you know where ball is going on your side of the net.
- Open to ball, NOT to the court.
- Get outside the court before you get back behind the 10-foot line.
- Keep your eyes on ball.
- Eyes are bulging out and cheeks are red.
- Hitters are AUDIBLE. (Middles are always available. If the middle isn't available, he/she should communicate to the setter – "I'm out!"

Transition strategy

- Step close is a LOT more important than a FULL approach. Maintain speed of the offense.
- Hitters HAVE TO call the appropriate sets by reading the play as it develops. Otherwise, the setter will start setting HIGH balls and the integrity of the offense is out the window.
- On a free ball, I like my players to take two steps off the net and open up to where the ball is coming from. We do NOT go or transition until we KNOW what is happening with the ball. This allows the players to:
    - Attack a free ball if it's too tight to the net.
    - Pass the short balls.
    - Play the junk off the top of the tape.

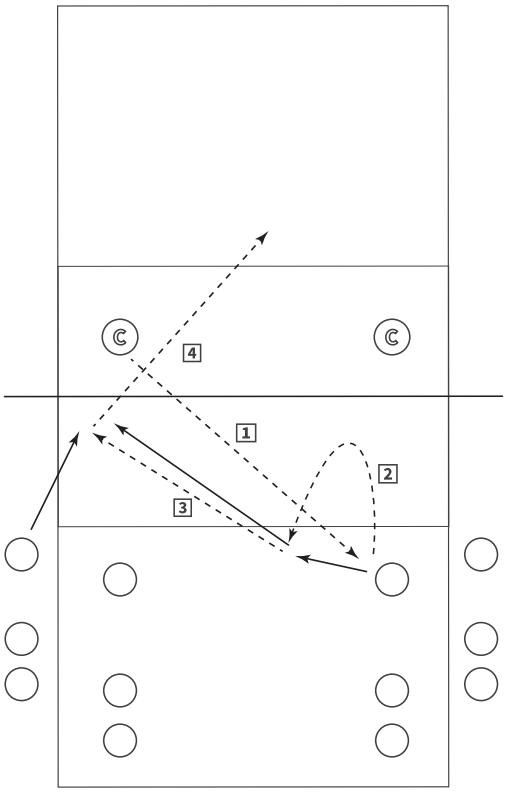
  (Once the ball is going over their head, the transition process begins.)
- On a free ball, back row players can see the front row players but NOT vice versa. Communication is key here.
- Reading the play so you know when to block and NOT to block is something you have to spend time at training. The number one question that must be asked is: "Is the hitter a threat to score a point?"
- Non-setters setting HIGH Balls. A lost art in volleyball as we tend to specialize too much and not give every player enough reps to set.
- When non-setters are setting, hitters must understand that their chances of getting a kill decrease drastically.
- If set is not hittable, teach them to put pressure on the opponent by sending the ball to the setter, or have the middle handle the first ball, etc.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

COVER PROGRESSION DRILL

Dig, Set, Cover ▶

This drill gives ball control touches to defenders, who have to control the first contact, then create a swing on the second contact. It also gives out-of-system setting reps for both setters and non-setters. Everyone on the team should be able to set a hittable ball. Generally, this drill promotes body awareness, court awareness and communication.



Set up lines in Left Back and Right Back. Coaches stand in Right Front and Left Front (can be on boxes) and ALTERNATE hitting at defensive players.

- Defender – Digs to self, sets long distance to target, then follows to cover.
- Targets are ATTACKERS working on seeing the right things: getting feet to/behind ball to hit down ball, "GATHER," or attack.
- FOCUS = GO POSTURE, controlling the dig, setting a hittable ball to target, attackers creating pressure on the other team.

5 min – Coaches ALTERNATE hitting cross court to defenders (wait for player covering).

- TARGET = "Black" or "Gold" – back-row attack points.
- ATTACKER should be open to where the ball is coming from to get in good position to hit a down ball.

5 min – Coaches ALTERNATE hitting down the line to defenders.

- TARGET = "Black" or "Gold" – back-row attack points.
- ATTACKER should be open to where the ball is coming from to get in good position to hit a down ball.

5 min – Coaches ALTERNATE hitting cross court to defenders (wait for player covering).

- TARGET = "5 & 5" to the 4 or to the 5.
- ATTACKER is now jumping and swinging. (Either the "GATHER" move or FULL APPROACH.)

5 min – Coaches ALTERNATE hitting down the line to defenders.

TRANSITION

JEN FLYNN OLDENBURG (OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY)

- TARGET = “5 & 5” to the 4 or to the 5.
- ATTACKER is now jumping and swinging.

Variations:

- Add a live block
- Initiation of first ball
    - Coaches on same side to hit to defenders
    - Coaches enter down balls or free balls (younger age groups and/or beginning of season)
- Athletes enter the ball to defenders
- Add goals to drill
    - Set a standard for how many good out-of-system sets the group needs to move on.
    - Set a standard for how many good out-of-system sets + solid attacks the group needs to move on.
        - You define what a solid attack is; might be good swings or might be location based.
- +/- system for attackers

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

OUT-OF-SYSTEM

OUT-OF-SYSTEM

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TIPS FOR IMPROVING OUT-OF-SYSTEM PLAY

- Pass to the middle of the court to facilitate options.
- Create and convert is the goal.
- Outside attackers adjust their approach to accommodate location of the pass and setter's first step.
- Middles work to find a seam and ability to be available – if not in the play, cover.
- Attackers work on going deep and attacking the edges of the block – tactics vs. power.
- Force the opponent out-of-system ball on the setter, tip on back row threat.
- Remember that the other team will be in a good defensive position.
- Block with three when possible, especially to the left.
- Same timing and rhythm for blockers – go into bunch, then move as one.
- Relax – Out-of-system doesn't mean go faster; it means slower and then speed up.
- Setters should place ball inside and off the net.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

OUT-OF-SYSTEM TRAINING AND DRILLS

In-System

- First contact allows setter to set each hitter equally. (Level of setter will also determine if a team is in- or out-of-system).

Out-of-System (college level)

- First contact eliminates two front row hitters.
- Setter and level of hitters will also determine if team is Out-of-System.

Out-of-System (high school and club)

- First contact eliminates middle/quick attacker.
- There will be smaller margin for error on first contact pass that will determine if team Out-of-System.

Out-of-System (college, high school and club)

- Setter bump sets
- Non-setter sets
- Location of first contact

Out-of-System Offense

- Front row hitter vs. back row attacker
  - Which hitter has the best approach
  - Kill %?
- Front row attacker – what to expect:
  - Less than perfect set
  - Solid double block
- Out-of-System Approach

Definition of a good set is NOT determined by the set location but by the attacker's ability to take a scoring-type approach with a scoring-type swing.

- Width and depth of approach will be determined by location of first contact and angle the set will be coming from.
- Assume attacker will face a double block.
- Vision of the block will potentially change depending on angle and height of set.
- Set will be less than perfect.
- Choosing correct attack line will be critical in regard to consistent execution.

Out-of-system Defense

- Immediate recognition by the front row blockers and back row defense that first contact will take opposing team Out-of-System.

OUT-OF-SYSTEM

DAVE RUBIO (UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA)

- Recognition by pin blocker of width and depth of set. This will determine where pin blocker sets block.
- Swing block vs. traditional block.
- Down ball efficiency. Defense to offense.

Training philosophy

Training philosophy should be determined by the percentage that the team is out-of-system. In college, approximately 40 percent of Serve Receive and Transition is out-of-system. In high school and club, the number is much higher. The amount of time you spend training Out-of-system should reflect that.

OUT-OF-SYSTEM DRILLS

Hitter vs. Blocker

One hitter vs. blocker(s) on each side, 1 coach on each side. Hitter transitions off, attack against 1 or 2 blockers. +1 for attack that clears the block (no tape) or off the block. First hitter to +5 wins.

3 IAR

A group of hitters compete against each other, each receiving three balls in a row. Hitter, DS and setter vs. blocker(s) and defense. Free/down ball to DS, transition and attack. Immediately have attacker go from base to release, dig and attack again. Third ball throw an out-of-system ball to the DS. +1 for every kill.

Team Transition vs. Coach

Six out on one side. Coach attacks from opposite side, keeping it controlled in order to work on transition. +5 successful transitions to rotate. Players need lots of reps and need to get used to how they will transition out of every type of attack.

Transition Wash Drill

6 on 6. Coach hits/throws ball over as opposing side blocks and transitions. Need 2 little points in a row for 1 big point. Flip back to front every big point.

Setter Dig First Ball

6 on 6. Coach hits at setter to start; play out the rally. Next, the coach hits at setter on other side; play out the rally. Wash or rally scoring.

Live Hitter vs. Live Hitter

6 on 6. Assign either one live hitter the whole time or just for 1st ball only. Live hitters can attack, everyone else either has to tip/roll or can't attack at all. Rally score.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

OUT-OF-SYSTEM CONCEPTS

Chaos Theory

- Patterns will appear out of the chaos, finding order in chaos.

Cause & Effect

- What patterns ACTUALLY cause your team to be Out-of-System?
- What can you do to reduce the amount of time your team is Out-of-System?

Out-of-System Situations

- First-ball contact by setter
- First-ball contact by non-setter = errant 1st contact
    - Important considerations
        - Besides your setter, who is/are the most consistent ball control player(s) on your team?
        - Who is/are the most consistent attacker(s) on your team?
        - Train & trust your setter to run the offense, even when he/she is not contacting the second ball.
        - Make certain your players learn to communicate/solve to work through out-of-system play "on the fly."

Selection of Out-of-System System

- Libero vs. non-libero second-ball contact.
- What are the strengths of your players? What are the strengths of your team? Who keeps the ball in play? Who terminates?
- Theory of simple is better: Is it better to have simple out-of-system plays (play your percentages and keep the ball in play) than to have a more complex system with multiple choices for players to make?

Responsibilities in Out-of-System Play

- Communication – All roads lead to the setter first.
- Preparation – Everyone must do work when off the ball.
- Trust – Attackers need to trust that the second ball will be hittable, no matter who is playing the second ball.

Small Group Drills to Develop Out-of-System Ball Control

- 2's => 3's => 4's
- OoS Shuttle
- 4 vs. 6: Dig Set w/ Attack

OUT-OF-SYSTEM

JILL KRAMER (TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Team Drills to Develop Out-of-System Ball Control

- Setter Dig Warmup
- 4 vs. 6: Dig Set OoS
- Chaos

Concepts to consider

- Tempo of your Out-of-System Offense
    - Run same tempo as in-system on setter-dig
        - Run high ball following an errant play
- Where do you attack to terminate when Out-of-System? Does the opponent run a different OoS defense?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

RISK MANAGEMENT IN OUT-OF-SYSTEM SCENARIOS

One of the key concepts when approaching an out-of-system scenario is risk management. Risk management is about choosing the action that maximizes the degree of difficulty for the opponent and at the same time minimizes the chance of failure (giving up an easy point) by your team.

"What level of risk (making a mistake that leads to a point for the opponent) needs to be factored into the equation as I choose a particular action?"

Factors to consider when HITTING

- Am I in good position to execute my shot? Or is my body-ball relationship poor?
- How about my timing? Am I early or late? Can I contact the set with maximum reach, or am I confined to hit low to the tape?
- Can I see the block well? What shots are taken away or available? Where is their setter?
- I need to be able to put all of these variables into an equation and instantaneously select the proper shot as dictated by the situation.

Factors to consider when SETTING

- Who are my options? What does the opposing blockers look like?
- How can I put the next contact in a position to be aggressive?

Control your game

- It is one thing to analyze the risk-reward potential for each action choice a player will make. But if a player cannot control her skills enough to execute the action, then the concept of risk management breaks down.
- A player must have both:
    - Risk analysis and selection skills
    - Enough game control to execute her selection

Drills

- O/S Progression
- VIRUS: Coach is the first contact
    - In a side out situation or in a transition situation (make setter play the 1st ball)

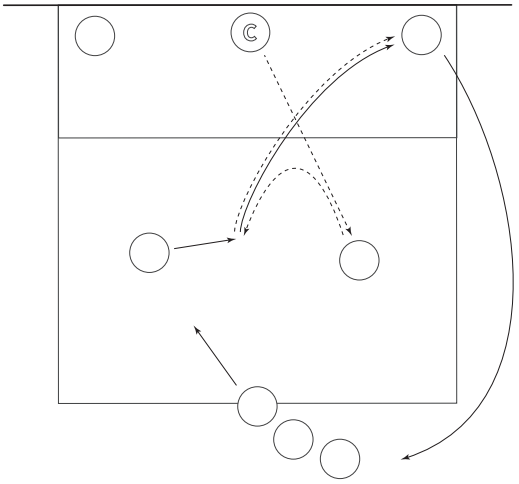
OUT-OF-SYSTEM

CHRISTY JOHNSON-LYNCH (IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DRILLS FOR TRAINING OUT-OF-SYSTEM OFFENSE

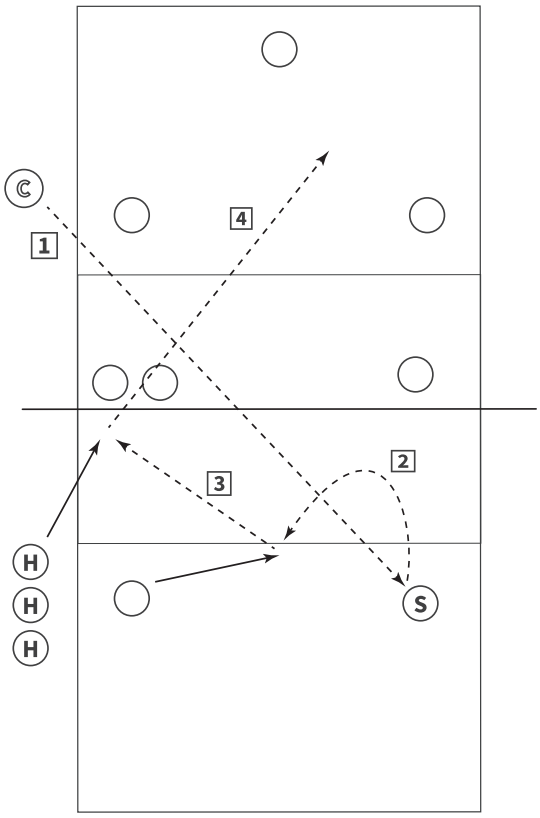
Dig-Set ▶



1. Target at left front and right front, rest of players in line behind diggers splitting the court.
2. Coach attack, diggers dig to partner, they step in and set either target.
3. Stay until they set, then follow ball to the target.
4. Can also have lines at middle back/right back, left back/right back, etc., to release from defensive spots.
5. Go for 20-30 good sets.

Focus: Setting 2nd ball.

Out-of-System Competition ▶



1. Full group of 6 on defense.
2. Setter, libero plus 2-3 pin hitters competing against each other.
3. Input ball to setter across the net, libero then sets pin hitter.
4. Hitter scoring:

   Kill = 2 points

   Good attack = 1 point (forces opponent out-of-system)

   Neutral (opponent controls dig) = 0

   Error = -1
5. Setter and libero can cover hitter so hitter gets another swing.
6. Hit and rotate, 8-10 swings per hitter. Can also attack right side.
7. Most points each round is the winner.

Focus: Libero setting out-of-system. Attackers hitting out-of-system. Defense vs. out-of-system attack.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

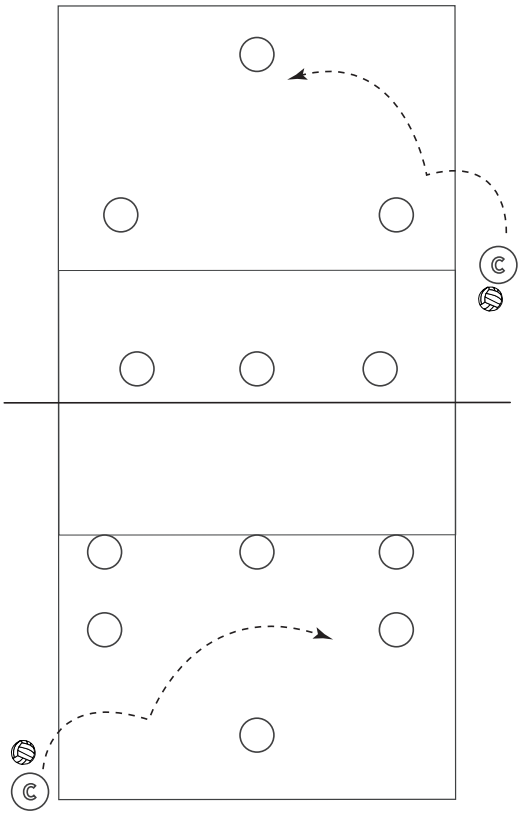
OUT-OF-SYSTEM

CHRISTY JOHNSON-LYNCH (IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY)

Virus ▶

1. Play starts with coach bouncing ball from the end-line/ sideline into the court creating an out-of-system ball.
2. Team has 2 contacts to get ball over and play out rally.
3. Rally score to 5 points and winner gets big point on scoreboard, then rotate in new players.

Focus: Out-of-system setting and attack.



OUT-OF-SYSTEM

NABIL MARDINI (LOS ANGELES VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUT-OF-SYSTEM CONCEPT

OUT-OF-SYSTEM OFFENSE: Medium to poor passes in transition or serve receive.

Depending on how good your setter is, you can easily be IN-SYSTEM in transition if the quality of the digs and passes is good. Per my system and my definition, and since our digging target is 8-10 feet off, we're going to be OUT-OF-SYSTEM most of the time.

Some schools choose to dig tight, but math dictates that tight digs create overpasses, and multiple studies show overpasses to be profoundly negative. Of course, we want "perfect" digs, but the most important thing is to get more digs than your opponent and convert them into good swings. If my "perfect dig" percentage is higher than yours but you out-dig me by 30 balls, wouldn't you rather be you than me?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

DRILLS FOR OUT-OF-SYSTEM TRAINING

My Coach Stinks

A simple 6 on 6 drill that trains players to react to good vs. bad passes and generate quality swings. We typically set a score of 15-15, line our team up in a rotation and a ball is lightly served or rolled to a coach in the passing pattern. Coach has the option of passing good or bad, and it's played out from there.

Take the Setter Out

Forces more libero or secondary setting. This is particularly useful if you run a 6-2. This drill is also 6 on 6. We play a serve receive ball and play it out. Then we hit a ball at the setter and play it out. We typically set a score at 15-15, put a team in a rotation and play to 25 points. Balls typically go in one direction (always to the same team).

Variation: Leave out the serve receive ball and just alternate balls at each team's setter.

OUT-OF-SYSTEM

CASSIDY LICHTMAN (USA WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM, 2011-2016)

DRILL FOR OUT-OF-SYSTEM TRAINING

Two Step

This drill helps hitters learn to wait on out-of-system sets and get a strong plant off the last 2 steps. It's also a good drill to help setters work on accurate out-of-system setting.

Set up 5 on 5 with 3 in the back row and hitters in left front and right front. The hitters stand with their left foot forward (right foot for lefties) on or near the 10-foot line. Coach inputs ball to either side, back row digs it off the net and sets an out-of-system ball to either hitter. Hitters are only allowed to take the last two steps of their approach. This drill can play be played cooperatively or competitively.

Variation: Have a front-row setter and only a hitter in left front.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHRISTY JOHNSON-LYNCH (IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY)

PLANNING FOR SEASON AND PRACTICE

Planning for the season

- Start with the end in mind. Who do you want to be at the end of your season? If you're looking ahead, it may mean that you start the season in a 5-1 with the idea that you'll switch to 6-2 mid-season after working on it in practice.
- Green, Yellow, Red Days. How much recovery is needed? We decide at the beginning of the week what we want to prioritize and assign a color for each practice.
    - Green = We're going full-out that day. (120-150 jumps per player)
    - Yellow = Halfway between full-out and light. (100 jumps per player)
    - Red = Light practice – leading into a match or recovering after a match/tournament. (50-80 jumps per player)

I learned from experience that an over-trained team isn't fresh at the end of the season – tired legs, sore shoulders, etc., don't help you win matches.

- Weekly overviews – Get feedback from your athletes on how they're feeling physically. This helps you adjust practices accordingly.
- Communicate with your strength coach and training staff. They can give you an informed perspective on whether your athletes need more rest.
- Be aware of your players' academic responsibilities. When are midterms? When is their school load heavier?
- Load – As the season goes on, practices should be shorter and more focused. At the end of the season, we have really short practices – an hour and a half at the most. This helps keep players fresh and enjoying the game.
- Do you have a day or two built in for physical/mental breaks?

Planning for practice

- How long and what's the load that day? With experience, you will have a good understanding of how much load a given practice will put on your players.
- How many courts?
- How many coaches?
- Number of players/status and health of players?
- Can someone else introduce the ball/keep score/shag? This frees up the head coach to watch the practice more closely and offer feedback.
- Start slow and build up or start with a competition? Some coaches start right off with competitive drills. In our program, we tend to start with single-contact drills and work toward team play.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Planning Drills

- Name your drills.
- Focus for each drill. Very important! Don't give your players too much to think about in one drill. This is overwhelming and frustrating for them. If you focus on a couple of things, the drill will be much more productive.
- Same drill, different focus, modify scoring. Maybe you run the same drill on consecutive days in practice but change the focus and scoring so you are accomplishing something different and keeping it fresh.
- Learning a new skill: If you have less experienced players who are learning a new skill, I suggest you don't have them compete right away. Give them some reps to figure out what they're doing and gain some confidence.
- Can you make it game-like? Does it transfer? This has been talked about a lot among coaches. It's important to think about how much a drill is going to help each athlete become a better volleyball player. Sometimes, we do things that don't have a lot of transfer to the actual game.
    - Figure out where on the spectrum you are between everything being coach controlled and everything being game-like.
- Create pressure: In-a-rows, competing, pressure for a player to perform. Forcing players to come through for their team is an important part of preparing for matches.
- Practice so the game feels easy. If you can make practices a bit chaotic and challenging, players are likely to feel less pressure in matches.

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DAVE RUBIO (UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA)

PLANNING CONCEPTS

Warmup philosophy

- Avoid straight jogging and stretching.
- Your goal is to integrate some type of volleyball activity or skills work into your warmup.
    - Foot work from base to release
    - Spike approach footwork, block-to-attack footwork
    - Blocking footwork
    - Arm swing
- Players are allowed to stretch on an individual basis if and when needed.

Practice planning considerations

- Have a timed, written practice plan
- What players are available to practice?
- Equipment and facilities. How many balls/carts and number of courts?
- Assistant coaches and managers

What is your vision of your team? How do you move toward this every day in practice?

- List strengths and weakness of each player.
- List specific position strengths and weaknesses of the team.
- List the type of defensive and offensive system you want your team to run. This should be based on your personnel.
- List the top three areas that will determine your team's ability to win.

Writing out daily practice

- Your emphasis in practice should reflect that vision, but in small pieces.
- On the right side of your practice plan, list what drills you want to run. On the left side of your practice plan, list the time segments, order of priority for drills and the emphasis.
- Each player should be listed on your practice plan.
- Don't be married to the drill. Be prepared to change or tweak it if it isn't providing the results you want.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Other considerations

- How much time to spend on skill development vs. system vs. playing.
- In my opinion, if your goal is to win, your practices need to emphasize playing. If your goal is to teach the skills and system correctly, your practices need to reflect that.
- When you do drills, I recommend that you already have your players organized in groups of three or four.
- Required equipment for the coach is a whistle and white board.
- Coach-initiated drills vs. player-initiated. You will be a better teacher if you don't have to run the drill.
- Are you initiating with the proper degree of difficulty? Success rate needs to be at 50%.
- Teach your kids how to properly hand a ball to a coach when running a drill.
- Which stats are important?
- Teach your players to take stats.
- List the stats on the white board in descending order by position.

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRACTICE PLANNING KEYS AND DRILLS THROUGHOUT SEASON

- Have a plan for daily, weekly and seasonal goals
- Use the court for all possible activities
- Warmup game or activity (over the net is best)
- Stretch and work on specific and basic movement patterns
- Ball-handling drills with goal of proper game-like sequencing
- Serve/pass needs to be part of every practice
- Dig/pass to set and attack drills
- Have a “Focus of the Day”
- Specific game situations and rotation emphasis
- Competition
- Cool down and feedback

DRILLS TO USE AS THE SEASON PROGRESSES

First, every team should have standard drills to use THROUGHOUT the competitive season that focus on maintaining proper game-like sequencing:

- Serving and passing
- Positioning, digging and pursuit

Early season drills

Concentrate on basic ball-handling while staying aware of proper alignment of players within your team’s system. Be sure to assess the premier skills of serving, passing, reading the play and keeping the ball in play.

- Serving
  - Serving targets
  - Serving with elastic
  - Assessment of velocity
- Passing
  - Passing with a partner
  - Passing a serve from half court
  - Passing a serve from the end-line

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Over-the-net
  - Over-the-net pepper in small groups
  - Collaborative 6-6 ball control over the net
  - 4-4, 4-5, 2-2, 2-1 ball control and shot development
- Serve receive / transition
  - Team serve reception by rotation with an emphasis on good passing, court spacing and communication.
  - Team switching on serve receive and defense to get to proper positions and awareness of following the ball and the play.
  - Transition from defense to offense for both in- and out-of-system scenarios.

Mid-season drills

Emphasize refinement of skills in team serve-reception and transition, and work on maximizing the strengths of the team.

- Team serve receive emphasis by rotation as needed by stats generated in performance.
- Defensive plan review and awareness of where the opponents are scoring.
- Out-of-system refinement – balls hit at setter, tips over the block at a passer-hitter, balls passed off the net.

End-of-season drills

The biggest area of focus may be the balance of rest vs. practice and the need to get a key player some rest so you can save that player for key moments. Keep the team confident!

- Train without jumping.
- Box work – passing of a serve, hitting, blocking.
- Special preparation for a specific opponent.

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MARK ROSEN (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN)

PRACTICE PLANNING

Daily process

- Get it on paper or your preferred electronic device
- Work out the details
- Set daily goals, weekly goals, season segment goals

Pre-practice

- Purpose
- Goals
- Warmup

Ball control work

- Things we do EVERY day!
- Partners/groups – who decides those?

Skill work

- Split training when possible
- Use video
- Game-like as possible

Competition

- Keep a visible score at all times
- Starters vs. non-starters or even teams?
- Consequence or pride?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

DIANE FLICK-WILLIAMS (WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY)

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PLANNING PRACTICE

What's your goal?

- Players can only assimilate 1-2 concepts at a practice.
  - Let them know the purpose before practice so they can mentally prepare.
- Shoot for 3 percent better. It adds up!
- Purpose identifies the point of assessment.

Do your drills give quality reps in those concepts?

- Quality vs. quantity
- Motor learning principles
- Do the drills incorporate the mental side of development?

Where are your feedback opportunities?

- Are you spending most of your time initiating?
- Is the scoring so complicated that you spend more time with the scoreboard than your athletes?
- Are you stating or coaching?

What is the mental/physical state of your players?

- What time of the season is it?
  - Preseason
  - Midseason (the blues)
  - Postseason
  - Off-season
- What time of the year is it?
  - Midterms
  - Finals
  - Prom/Homecoming

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

DIANE FLICK-WILLIAMS (WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY)

How flexible is your plan?

- Plan for 12 players and 6 show up
- Injuries happen
- Are YOU your backup plan?
    - Who initiates?
    - Who scores?
    - Who coaches?

How do you evaluate if it is a good one?

- Did it keep you on your 1-2 concepts?
- Were you able to give feedback?
- Did they enjoy it?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

RAY BECHARD (UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS)

KEYS TO RUNNING A GREAT PRACTICE

Be organized as a staff – make time daily to plan

- Be flexible in practice application

Know your clients and their needs – plan appropriately

- Do not attempt to do tactically what you cannot do technically

Each drill has a name and an outcomes goal

- Spatially appropriate

Quality over quantity

- Create opportunity for a level of mastery

Drills fall into two categories

- Cooperative
  - Timed
  - In-a-row
- Competitive
  - Scored (winner and loser)

Practice = Match

- Design desired drill outcomes that are consistent with match goals.
  - Passing drill 6/10 perfect = 60% perfect pass
  - Jayhawk standard (60% perfect, 2.3 average)

Pass and serve daily (or perish!)

Rest and recovery allow for peak performance

As a coach, you should model a consistent level of self-presentation

- Consistent energy level
- Consistent communication style

PRACTICE AND SEASON PLANNING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

PRACTICE PLANNING AS THE SEASON PROGRESSES

The basics

- Preseason, mid-season and post-season practice planning
- Number of courts available
- Amount of court time
- Equipment available: volleyballs, boxes, carts, CLOCK, scoreboard, etc.
- Staff, managers, court assistants

Using your available space

- Think about how many courts you can use, how many players you have and how many coaches are able to help you run drills.
- If you have more than one court, it's good to take advantage of splitting groups to get more reps in for specific skills that need to be targeted.

PURPOSE OF PRACTICE

- Think about what skills, situations or concepts your team needs to work on and plan the drills around those skills and team concepts.
- Have a goal, objectives for each drill. It helps players focus on accomplishing something.
- Post the practice plan on a whiteboard (or something similar). This lets players know what they are going to be focusing on each day.
- When planning drills for various skills, think about which players you are grouping together. As an example, if you're working on serve receive (2-3 person passing), think about having your primary passers grouped together for reps. If you're working on hitting, pair the setters with the hitters they will most often be with on the court.
    - 6 vs. 6 think – Work on reps for your rotations, OR for having even teams on each side.
    - Competition between players – Balance your groups. Separate players who could be a distraction.
    - Position training – Group players by skills development for specific position work.

PRE-PRACTICE

- **Warmup:** Think about getting their bodies ready to play, with a goal/purpose.
    - Daily individual skills routines. Players know what to do when they arrive to the court as part of their warmup.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- **Functional warmup drill:** After the pre-practice is complete, do a team drill to get their focus for the rest of practice. These can be either cooperative or competitive drills with a goal.

DRILLS AND PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

"Do not attempt to do tactically what you cannot do technically!"

Design drills & tactics to fit your team

- Drills should match the skills your team needs. Each drill should have a purpose.
- Build from simple to complex. Progress through the drills in a way that makes sense instead of randomly jumping from one skill to the next.

Tutoring sessions

- **Break down into position training** for short teaching segments (5-10 minutes) with a single focus.
  - Combination drills to work on multiple skills at the same time.
  - 6 vs. 6 drills used to teach the game, concepts, tactics.
- **Name your drills** so players can quickly identify how to do the drills and can quickly focus on the goals of the drill.
- **Create cue words** / key phrases for each volleyball skill.
- **Limit your drills** as the season progresses. (Keep it simple.)
- **Talk less** – Have the players do more reps.
- **Keep a record** of each practice and categorize your drills (offense, defense, side out, transition, etc.) This will help with finding drills to match the skills or situations you need throughout the season and with your staff planning.
- **Debrief:** Post practice meeting with staff, team, etc., to evaluate practice pros and cons.
- **Keep players active and engaged:** Make sure everyone has a job or is doing something during a drill. You don't want too much standing around/watching.

Season's development

- As the season progresses, increase the objectives and goals for drills.
- Always serve & serve receive at EVERY PRACTICE.
- Throughout the season, keep a list of things you see during games that need to be worked on – use these notes to guide practice planning.
- Split your team into two even groups at the beginning of the season: you can have these teams ready for cooperative or competitive drills.
- Records: Keep a season-long competition, track points for drill they compete in for their teams. Develop competitive goals for each day, week, month, etc.

- Feedback: How to make it meaningful, relevant to each skill and drill development.
- Use video in practice.
- Dealing with setbacks and errors. “Failure is the opportunity to learn.” Growth mindset.

Be adaptable

- Be ready to change things.
- Constantly evaluate how your team is progressing, and if changes are needed during a practice, a certain week, or training segment, etc.

Remember REST

- The most important aspect of peaking is rest.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

10 KEYS TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE PLANNING

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."
— Abraham Lincoln

"Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."
— Warren Buffett

1. Have a plan: yearly (season), 10-day, weekly, individual session, whatever. JUST HAVE ONE!
2. If you have assistants, involve them. Let them know what their tasks are, have them participate in planning.
3. Is it coach-centered or player-centered? Ever considered letting the players plan a practice?
4. Pay attention to "Time on Task." The athletes don't have to be actively doing something every minute to learn, but the more time they spend watching others the less time they are actively learning. Show and talk less, let the players do more.
5. Feedback – it's on you!
6. How long does practice run? When is the point of diminishing returns for your team?
7. What is your "style" of practice? Is it usually X followed by Y followed by Z? Mix it up every now and then.
8. How are the players getting better in practice? How do you measure them being successful in a drill?
9. Use stats and video in practice. It helps!
10. Do your players use a notebook? Do they have practice homework? These are both useful.

GAME DAY

GAME DAY NOTES FOR PLAYERS

This is an example of notes John would provide for his team on match day. It includes some scouting information on the opponent – in this example, the Texas Longhorns – but also addresses the mental approach he wants players to bring to the court.

1. Be the relaxed team, everyone must be on board with this, no stress.
2. Compete: Let the last play go, be ahead of the next play.
3. Believe: Everything we have gone through should make us believe. We cannot let anything shake us. We are good. We are the best team!
4. What we do will get to them; it will wear them down. Just keep doing it!
5. Serve the longest serve, even if it is to the Libero. Force them to pass fast serves and force them to go deep and wide to pass.
6. Read and talk on serve receive. Talk from before the whistle until the passer passes.
7. They tip a lot; they don't want to take chances when they are out-of-system. They tip to holes. (Lots of the tips are short.) We must take chances when they might tip and not just save it. We must be ready and transition middle when they go to safe. Make them pay when they are safe and get kills!
8. #19 is an emotional key for them, a senior All-American who has been playing great. We must take chances early and stop her best shot. TAKE AWAY SHARP CROSS COURT HUTS! Set the block up normal and go in and get her, even if she gets kills in other ways. We are going to stop her favorite, STUFF HER!
9. No aces for #1. She can make errors, be on your game, give her nothing in her rotation. Make her feel pressure to serve extra tough!
10. Take advantage of their right-side defense. Make them move to play. Make them play defense when we are out-of-system. They will transition safe.
11. Set middle! We can hurt them in the middle. Hit the cutback!

GAME DAY

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GAME DAY LOGISTICS

The goal of every coach and staff should be to best prepare their team for the upcoming match.
Question for each staff deals with what type of information is available and how do you process it and transfer it to the players.

Time impacts preparation on whether you have a 5-6 days to prepare for a Regional or Final Four match in college volleyball or just a few days in a high school environment or even a few hours in club volleyball.

There are a number of coaches that feel that once the game starts that they have done all their work and the rest is in the players' hands. Some coaches salivate at this thought.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

- Live or video
- Stat analysis

TEAM AND SYSTEM BREAKDOWN

- Serve receive patterns
- Offensive system
- Transitional patterns
- Defensive systems
- Serving

PLAYER ASSESSMENT AND TENDENCIES

- Position
- Size
- Skill analysis

PRE-GAME MEETING

- Player identification
- Serve receive patterns
- Transitional deviations
- Team defense
- Special concerns
- Rotational options
- Sub patterns

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

GAME DAY

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

ON-COURT PREPARATION

- General spatial orientation
- Serve/Pass
- Serve receive reps
- Offense/transitional reps

STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

- Head coach
- Assistant coach
- Manager or players

WARMUP INFORMATION – BOTH TEAMS

- Serve analysis
- Set tempo

SUBSTITUTION PATTERNS

- Opponents
- Your team

FINAL TEAM MEETING PRIOR TO MATCH

- Serving targets
- Matchup options
- Relax and have fun

ONCE THE MATCH BEGINS

- What are we doing well?
- What do we need to do to adjust?
- Matchup considerations
- Time out assignments – who talks to who?
- Between game adjustments

GAME DAY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

GAME DAY GOALS

Number One Goal: Get them in a good frame of mind

- Connect with them personally (serving, stretching, arm warmup)
    - Office visit
        - One-on-one
- Relax them – something fun in warmup/locker room (dancing, triples, etc.)
- Let them be involved with their warmup design

Number Two Goal: Fuel properly

- Help them eat the right things at the right time
- Food during the match?

Number Three Goal: Scout

- Give them a couple key things – even by looking at stats
- Who to serve, their primary hitter, is their setter active? 5-1 or 6-2, best blocker(s)

Number Four Goal: Goals for match

Objective goals: Passing numbers, holding the opponent below a certain passing number, hitting percentage, opponent hitting percentage, UFE – whatever you need to work on. (I don't like to lock into aces or ace blocks.)

Subjective goals: Huddling between each point, eye contact, engaged and rowdy bench.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

SCOUTING

SCOUTING

KEVIN HAMBLY (STANFORD UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LOOKING FOR ADVANTAGES

"I'm fanatical about scouting. It's important to look for any advantage that will get us one point here and one point there."

Find two or three important things that will help you beat an opponent

- Understand the team's concepts/identity
- What are the opponent's strengths and weaknesses?
- How will they adjust? For example, if one of their top left-side hitters is struggling, what will they do? Different set location? Set the quick hitters more? Substitutions?

Watching match videos

- Look at the rotations
    - What do their serve receive patterns look like?
    - What combinations do they run?
    - Are their certain patterns to the types of sets or to the setter's decisions?
    - Are they looking for a certain match up, or do they always start a certain way?
    - How does the set vary depending on the quality of the pass?
    - Does the setter like to set with the flow or against the flow?
- Look at defense
    - What is their blocking system?
        - What do they do vs. three hitters?
        - What do they do vs. two hitters?
        - Do they change during the match?
    - Who are their weak blockers?
    - How does each blocker respond to different combinations?
    - What is their base system?
    - What is their defensive system?
        - Does it change during the match?
        - Is it different when the setter is front row or back row?
        - How do they defend the outside?
        - How do they defend the right side?
        - How do they defend quicks?
        - How do they defend Slides?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Look at transition offense
  - Where do they set on a good dig?
  - Where do they set when they're out-of-system?
- Look at their passing
  - Who are their best passers?
  - Who are their weak passers?
  - What is their passing system?
    - Against floaters?
    - Against jump serves?
    - Against deep floater?
    - Against short serve?
    - Against jump floater?
  - How do they respond to different types of serves?
  - How do they respond to serves in different locations?
  - Is there a passer we can wear down over time?
- Look at their serving
  - What is their team serving philosophy?
  - What types of servers do they have?
- Look at "Red Zone" (after the score hits 20)
  - How do the sets change?
  - How do they serve?
  - What do they do blocking?
- Look at how teams handle the setter dig

What we show our team/individuals

- Team
  - Most important things for the match
  - Our plan against those things
- Setters
  - Identify plan for attack in First Ball Side Out (FBSO)
  - Identify our plan for attack in transition
  - Identify priorities
- Passers
  - Identify their team serving strategy
  - Identify each individual's serving style/strategy

- Middle blockers
    - Identify opponent's offensive system
    - What blocking systems we will use
    - Possible adjustments

How we present information to players

- Read the book "Make It Stick" by Peter C. Brown. This changed a lot of my teaching methods. The concept of this book is to quiz people on what they know. For example, I may stop practice and ask the team, "Why are we in a bunch-read?"
- Treat scouting like a class in school
    - Send the players video in advance.
    - Present the game plan, then quiz them.
        - "How would you play defense against No. 5?"
    - Find out what they retained, then reteach the stuff they didn't know.
    - Quiz again. (These are short quizzes, not big tests. We do this entire scouting session in less than an hour, usually the day of the match.)
    - Our final quiz is the walk through.
    - The MATCH is the TEST.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

VIDEO SCOUTING

Team video meeting

- Have a specific plan of what you want to accomplish
  - Are you watching your team?
  - Are you watching opponent?
  - Specific player?
  - What technique or tactic?
- At most, pick 3-5 things to emphasize.
- Meeting should be no longer than 18-20 minutes. If it is, players may lose focus.
- Ask questions so you know that your players are absorbing the material!
- Have a player/players summarize the 3-5 main points at the end of the session.

Individual/group video meetings by positions

- Setters
- Middle blockers
- Outside hitters
- Libero/defensive specialists

Create "To Watch" & "To-Do" sheets so players can watch video on their own

Teach players to focus on more than just themselves

- When players first begin to watch video, they usually just watch themselves and often watch only their outward appearance and emotions. You need to get them past this phase ASAP!

SCOUTING

RAY BECHARD (UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRAINING PLAYERS TO WATCH THE GAME

How much information do they need?

What are your players' learning styles?

- Visual – See it!
- Auditory – Subject matter reinforced by sound.
- Kinesthetic – Experience it, doing it.
- Reading/Writing learners – prefer to learn through written words.

Recognizing opponent tendencies

- What is your opponent's serving philosophy?
    - Do they have jump-spin servers?
    - Do they serve short?
- Scouting the opponent's setter
    - Does she stay neutral on all sets?
    - Is she equal opportunity or does she repeat?
    - Does she set first-tempo attacker on perfect pass?
    - Does she set middles out-of-system?
    - Is she a threat to attack?
- Scouting the opponent's attackers
    - What is her range?
    - Does she tip or roll shot?
    - What does she do when she's uncomfortable?
- Scouting an opponent's defense
    - Perimeter – Rotation – Hybrid
    - Blocking tendencies
        - Read or Commit?

Recognizing when "our good is good enough"

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

VIDEO AND STATS

VIDEO AND STATS

MARK BARNARD (OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

USING VIDEO

No excuse in this day and age not to have some type of video available. The availability of inexpensive and quality video tools makes it much more viable than it was even 10 years ago.

Does not have to be complex/expensive. You can do so much for so little these days.

- Video has never been better quality or cheaper.
- Some great apps like HUDL enable you to do it all in the palm of your hand.

It provides immediate feedback. It can be used later but will have a bigger effect when used straight after the skill has been performed.

- It's worth a million words. Let them see rather than you talking/telling them what you see.

There is only one of me. What can I do?

- Record practice to analyze and watch later.
- Set up a time delay system and leave it running. For example: Tivo/ BAM Video Delay
- Put some parents to work.

Players need to watch video; they will be surprised with what they see.

- Know their attention span – an hour of video will probably be lost on them. Make it both educational and fun. (We have a Good/Bad/Ugly and WTF session.)
- Let them watch themselves play. Everyone has a computer/iPad/iPhone, etc. these days.
- They will see what you see. This is often different to the picture they have in their mind. The most common question you will get is, "Do I really look like that/do that?"
- Watch it before you meet with players.
- Some coaches prefer only to show positive actions by the player. Be careful that everything you show is not negative.
- Know what you want to talk to them about. For instance, if you want your setter to take the ball in a better position, then show them that!
- Prepare a worksheet. Have them do a video assignment.

Have them watch other matches – International or College – and watch the good players and what they do.

- The internet has opened up a plethora of viewing options (loala1.tv and YouTube.)

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

VIDEO AND STATS

MIKE HOULIHAN (UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON)

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING VIDEO

Activity

1. What are some uses for video analysis? Which aspects do you use regularly?
2. What limitations does your program have that doesn't allow you to do more with video analysis?
3. Which aspects of video analysis do you find to be the most effective in your program and why?

Pre-Game/Scouting

- Coaches: Can use video to determine patterns and tendencies to help develop a game plan and game strategies.
- Players: Can use the video to view the patterns and tendencies and learn ways to help predict situations and eliminate the other team's options.

Post-Game/Post-Practice (Conversational Method)

- Watching film together will allow you to have conversations on why decisions were made and what other potential options did they have?
- Opportunity to provide technical feedback for skills? Did this technical success or issues help or hinder their options or decisions?
- This conversational method allows you to learn what your player perspective is while trying to open them up to your perspective as a coach as well.

Real-Time in Practice

- Coaches and players can use this to provide feedback in an environment that allows for players to make real-time adjustments on the fly.
- This is very effective for technical skills training and feedback.
- Real-time video analysis in technical training helps bridge the gap between what players think they are doing and what they are actually doing.

VIDEO AND STATS

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM) AND TERRY LISKEVYCH (3-TIME OLYMPIC COACH)

THE IMPORTANCE OF VIDEO IN PRACTICE AND SCOUTING

Video is the most underutilized method of providing feedback. Coaches tend to rely heavily on verbal feedback, but in the food chain of feedback, verbal should be toward the bottom because it's subject to interpretation. What you say is not necessarily what the athlete hears. But if you use video, you don't have to say much. The athlete can see what points you're trying to make.

The coach has to help the athlete focus on the key aspects of the skill. It's not enough to just show them the video; you have to give them a specific component of the skill to focus on, whether it's footwork, arm positioning or another aspect of technique.

When viewing video, it's more valuable for athletes if the coach asks them questions like: "What are you seeing here with your defensive core position?" This requires athletes to engage and think, and that helps them learn what you're trying to teach.

Terry Liskevych: "A picture is worth a thousand words; a video is worth a million."

Modeling

Showing video of a top-level player's technique in a certain skill is helpful for players learning the skill. Even better, show video of the top-level player side by side with a video of your own player performing the same skill. The comparison will emphasize the different aspects of the skill that your player can improve on.

Video homework

Assigning video "homework" is a good way to encourage players to take responsibility for their own improvement. You can put video up on the cloud and have them write what they see. It saves time when you review it in practice if the player has already watched it at home.

Graphics

It's a good idea to use graphics to highlight things you want to emphasize, including:

- Areas of responsibility.
- Player positioning in certain defenses.
- An individual player on your side or the opponent's side.
- Set trajectory.

The easier you can make it for athletes to focus on exactly what you want to teach, the more productive the video session will be.

Body Language

Along with tactics and technique, video is also a good way to highlight body language, good and bad. You can even film the bench to see how players who aren't in the match are engaging with players on the court.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

USING VIDEO IN PRACTICE

Terry Liskevych: “Although video analysis is often used for match preparation and scouting, coaches should spend much more time using it in practice. The skills of your players will improve more quickly, and you will have a permanent record of the improvement.”

Video a small group of players doing a certain skill 3 to 5 times, then have them view it immediately on a nearby monitor. Give feedback, then have the players go right back and perform the skill 3 to 5 more times and watch again. Do this a minimum of 3 times.

Consider using a self-evaluation checklist where players can look for 3-5 criteria/cues in skill execution. An outside hitter, for instance, might look at: What’s my approach angle? Where is my body leaning? Is my arm back? Make players responsible for checking these off as they view video of themselves.

One way to get video if you don’t have someone who can help film is to attach a camera to the wall with a suction cup. It’s a great way to document practices from different angles.

USING VIDEO FOR SCOUTING

Preparing for your level of play

When coaching a young, inexperienced team, the level of your scouting isn’t likely to determine the outcome, but it’s good to introduce the players to some basic scouting. It will help them understand the game better at the next level.

- Keep it simple to things like serving the right area of the court.

As your team gets to the higher levels, a key to successful scouting is watching video to identify the following:

- Opponent offense
  - Who are their main attackers? Are they right- or left-handed?
  - What are their attack tendencies? Where do they hit consistently and what areas do they ignore?
  - What do attackers do in pressure situations?
  - What type of offense do they run? 5-1? 6-2?
  - Setter tendencies. Does the setter tip? Who are preferred hitters? Does hand position change for different types of sets?
  - Who are the best and worst blockers?

- Opponent defense
  - What defensive system are they using?
  - What area of the court do they give up?
  - Who are the best and worst defenders? Who are the slow defenders?
- Opponent serve-receive
  - Who are the strong passers? Who are the weak ones?
- Opponent serving
  - Who are their strong servers? What types of serves do the starters have? Do any of the players serve short? If so, what zone do they serve to?

FUN USES OF VIDEO

Boost a player's confidence with a highlight video

- 2-3 minutes
- Include plays where they execute a skill/technique/tactic correctly in a match or in practice
- Have a soundtrack with music of their choice

Include film clips

Editing in scenes from well-known films makes players laugh and look forward to watching video.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

NECESSARY STATISTICS FOR PRACTICES AND MATCHES

ATTACK STATISTICS: Hitting statistics are kept for every attempt.

- Kill (+) The attack leads directly to a point for the hitting team.
- Zero (0) The attacked ball is kept in play.
- Error (-) The attack leads to a point for opposing team by a hitting error.
- Block (B) The attack leads directly to a point for opposing team by a stuff block.

$$\text{Hitting Efficiency} = \frac{(\text{Kills}) - (\text{Errors} + \text{Blocks})}{\text{Total Attempts}}$$

$$\text{Kill Percentage} = \frac{\text{Kills}}{\text{Total Attempts}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Error Percentage} = \frac{\text{Errors}}{\text{Total Attempts}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Block Percentage} = \frac{\text{Blocks}}{\text{Total Attempts}} \times 100$$

PASSING STATISTICS: Passing Attempts are rated on a 0-, 1-, 2-, 3-point system.

- 0 A service ace against the passer (may be touched)
- 1 Setter has only one option or position to set
- 2 Pass gives setter two options to set
- 3 Pass gives setter option to set complete offense

$$\text{Passing Average} = \frac{\text{Total Points}}{\text{Total Attempts}}$$

$$\text{Percentage 3's} = \frac{\text{Total 3 Passes}}{\text{Total Attempts}} \times 100$$

SERVING STATISTICS: Serving attempts are rated on a 0-, 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-point system.

- 0 Missed serve
- 1 Serve resulting in a 3 pass by opponent
- 2 Serve resulting in a 2 pass by opponent
- 3 Serve resulting in a 1 pass by opponent
- 4 Ace serve

$$\text{Serving Average} = \frac{\text{Total Points}}{\text{Total Attempts}}$$

OUR GOALS

Attack

Outsides above .220 (22%)

Middles above .300 (30%)

<10% error

Passing

Team above 2.2

60% Perfect

<5% error

Serving

Team 1.8

Ace/error 0.6

Speed 40mph +

VIDEO AND STATS

TERRY LISKEVYCH (3-TIME USA OLYMPIC COACH)

$$\text{Aces / Errors} = \frac{\text{Aces}}{\text{Errors}}$$

BLOCKING STATISTICS: Statistics are kept for balls touched by blocks

- 1 Stuff Block
- c Control Block, ball is controlled on our side of the net.

SETTING STATISTICS: + 0 -

+ = perfect set 0 = hittable set - = bad set (can circle officiating call)

$$\text{Setting efficiency} = \frac{\text{Perfect Sets - Bad Sets}}{\text{Total Sets}} \times 100$$

Example: Jill sets 50 balls. +'s = 20 –'s = 10 0's = 20 **2 + 10 + 20 = 50**

$$\text{Setting efficiency} = \frac{20 - 10}{50} \times 100 = .20$$

$$\text{Perfect set \%} = \frac{20}{50} = .40$$

SIDE OUT % = Percentage of attempts to "side out" that are successful.

$$\text{Side out \%} = \frac{\text{\# OSU Side Outs}}{\text{\# Opponent's Serves}} \times 100$$

Example: OSU receives 12 serves, side outs 8 times

$$\text{Side out \%} = \frac{\text{8 OSU Side Outs}}{\text{12 Opponent's Serves}} \times 100 = 67\%$$

SCORING % = Percentage of attempts to score that are successful.

$$\text{Scoring \%} = \frac{\text{\# OSU Points Scored}}{\text{\# OSU Serves}} \times 100$$

Example: OSU serves 12 times, scores 5 points

$$\text{Scoring \%} = \frac{\text{5 OSU Points Scored}}{\text{12 OSU Serves}} \times 100 = 42\%$$

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

CRITERIA

USA National Team – 1995-1996

Hitting

	Outside	Middle	Team
Efficiency	.30	.40	.33
Kill%	.45	.55	.48

Serving

Average	1.70
Aces	10% (1 out of 10)
Errors	10% (1 out of 10)

Passing

Average	2.30
Percent 3's	60%

Side Out %

Side out %	67%

Scoring %

Scoring %	40%

2005-2006 OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Att. Eff%	Kill%	Err%	Err Blk%	O Err%	Serving	S.A./E	Passing	%Perf	%Err
28%	38%	5%	5%	10%	1.8	.5	2.2	60%	8%

BLKRation OSU/Opp	Ace Ration OSU/Opp
1	1

VIDEO AND STATS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MIKE HOULIHAN (UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON)

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Activity

1. List out the 3-5 statistics that are most important to your team/program/level. Rank those skills from most important to least important.
2. What are some examples of important statistics from different levels? (i.e. DI, DII, DIII, high school, middle school)
3. Will the rankings change based on when you are looking at them? What will help determine the ranking?

Things to consider as a coach:

Pre-game

- Evaluate your team's strengths and weaknesses.
- Evaluate your competition's strengths and weaknesses.
- Interpret and look for patterns in the data.
- Use this information to determine your strategy.

Matches

- What are the most important factors to win?
- What are your capabilities during matches?
- What are you able to use to make adjustments in matches?
- Use this information to adjust your game strategy.

Post-game

- What did we do well? What did we do poorly?
- What did the other team do well? What did the other team do poorly?
- Did we affect this or did the other team affect us?
- What determined the game? How can we use this to get better?

Out-of-season statistics project

Look at statistics from X amount of years to see if you can find categories that correlate year to year and between wins and losses. You may find numbers that can help provide information on what is needed to win. (NOTE: Be skeptical of averages because they might not tell the whole picture. Minimums may be better after eliminating outliers.)

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

VIDEO AND STATS

MARK BARNARD (OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY)

STATISTICS

Statistics are one measure of how well a player is performing; these alone will not always tell you everything you need to know.

- Selection of teams cannot be based on statistics only, there are many components to be a very good player, this is just one of them.

You need to look at what statistics are relevant for your team. It will vary as the team gets older and what becomes relevant for them winning.

- What stat correlates most with you winning, is it serving, passing or hitting?

Is an effective way to measure the improvement of your team when wins are not happening?

- On any given volleyball night in America, 50% of all teams in the country lose.
- You may play in a very difficult league or have an inexperienced/young team. How do you show your players you are improving or maybe convince yourself of this?

You need to be careful how you use statistics. They will mean different things to different players. They can create an individual performance that does not benefit the team.

- You don't want stats to become the motivating factor for players playing well.
- They don't need to be "playing for stats".

How much statistical analysis do you need? Avoid paralysis by analysis.

- Many people are not "numbers people." Stats can be daunting/intimidating.
- Some programs produce masses of numbers, sift through what is relevant.

What can you feasibly do in practice and a match?

- Coaching still has to be a priority, to do stats on all players all the time will distract you from your main job – coaching your team!
- Use players on the bench (if you really must), use reliable parents.

What can you afford to purchase as far as systems go?

- So many platforms these days, there are some very good reasonably priced programs that will do all the stats you need.

Sometimes you will be surprised just how effective a hitter is/passer is/blocker is.

- What has your outside hitter done to help you, she may have killed a lot of balls but is this really helping your team. How is she playing on the last 10 ball contacts?

Review of statistics can give you things to work on in practice.

- For example, an analysis of how well you side out may prompt you to spend more time on teaching your team this phase of play instead of other areas that you may already be performing at a high level.

HEALTH AND INJURY PREVENTION

PLAYER PHYSICAL HEALTH

Social media/phone usage

- Limit their usage.
    - Ideas include: No phones during team meals (leave table if on), pre-team meetings, part/all of bus trips, once in locker room. Most parents WANT to have parameters on their kids – as long as they still have some accessibility to them.
- Educate your players on how social media is affecting them. Give them suggestion on how to limit usage.
- Involve parents in this info.
- Watch the video "The Millenial Question" by Simon Sinek on YouTube

Where do you send kids with mental health issues?

- School counselor
- Other resources?
- Need to think about this before a crisis.

Do the little things to let them know you care about them beyond the court

- Check in with them personally at practice
- Can you text to check in? (Must be appropriate)
- Motivational Mondays
- Random days off or short days (I like to surprise them!)
- Fun days
- Accountability buddies
- Tell them they are awesome!
- Educate on self-talk

PLAYER PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Work with ATC. Can you do preventative care? (Shoulder work, knee, core)
- Must be cognizant of bodies, reps, other activities they are in.
- "Best practice of the year is the one you take off."

HEALTH AND INJURY PREVENTION

CATHY GEORGE (MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INJURY PREVENTION

Are we seeing more overuse with today's athletes?

- Club experience
  - Multi-day tournaments
  - Longer club seasons
  - Concrete and sport court
  - Waves and divisions
- Lack of rest
  - Volleyball to volleyball
  - Transitioning to volleyball and other sports

Thoughts on health and the current Student-Athlete

- Women's basketball – ACL Prevention (our basketball program had 14 ACL injuries in 14 years).
- Proprioception and balance. Example: Improving balance by standing on one leg with eyes closed – first on the floor, then on a Bosu.
- Rehabilitation
- Areas of concern for volleyball athletes
  - Landing
  - Core strength
  - Arm mechanics
  - Balance
- Developing a pre-hab circuit
  - Bosu Balls
  - Bands
- Technical skills
  - Landing after jumping
  - Arm swing issues and common flaws
  - Playing a ball to the floor – Knees, hips, etc.

Mental Health, Nutrition, and Sleep

- Sports psych
- How do you eat (fuel)?
- "Sleep to Win" by Dr. James B. Maas and Haley A. Davis

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

PERFORMANCE TRAINING

PERFORMANCE TRAINING

MARIE ZIDEK (DEPAUL UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERFORMANCE TRAINING FOR YOUTH VOLLEYBALL ATHLETES

Philosophy

- Reduce likelihood of injury.
- Increase "training age" of an athlete using pre- and post-practice workouts done in proper loads and periodization. This allows the athlete's body to absorb and recover more quickly from training loads.
- Use appropriate exercises that mimic and protect common over-use sites and injury sites in volleyball players
    - Ankle, shoulder, knee; AB/spine ("ACL industry" alone is worth $646 million annually)
- Increase sport performance markers
    - Vertical jump
    - Attacking speed
    - Lower body strength and stability

Building Your Program

- Every coach should attend a KIPP training and, at minimum, apply these trainings at the start of practices.
- Teach stability, mobility and power development through basic athletic movements.
- Programs should never discriminate on the basis of equipment, time and/or personnel.
- EVERY coach, no matter the experience and/or competitive level, has the ability to:
    - Be committed to implementing strength & conditioning into weekly/monthly/yearly schedule.
    - Teach basic moves first, using body weight – progress from simple to complex.
    - Train the correct ENERGY system – short & explosive repeated exercises.
    - Seek out books, advice and other resources regarding training from credible sources. ("Functional Training for Sports" by Michael Boyle, National Strength & Conditioning Association, KIPP Program Training)

Methods

- Progression
    - 4-6 week training blocks (adjust volume by reps, sets, weights or level of difficulty)
- Training program modalities:
    - Dynamic mobility/ dynamic warmup pre-practice
    - Body weight
    - Plate circuits
    - Landing mechanics
    - Shoulder bands and hip bands

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Medicine balls & OH throwing
- Weights (Olympic bar, free weights, kettlebells)
- Conditioning
  - Plyometrics (upper and lower body)
  - Agility (ladders, cones, tennis balls)
  - Speed development (inclines, bleachers, over-running, resistive running, sprints)
- Static stretching

- Building your program
  - Organize – How much space do you have? Will your group do the same exercises or do you have to split it up into groups of 3-4 and each have them do something different? This will depend on the equipment you have available.
  - Shoulder band pre-practice and hip band pre-practice
  - Dynamic warmup pre-practice and pre-strength workout
  - Speed and agility (cones or floor markers)
  - Strength – CORE – Power (weights, med-balls, plate circuits, body weight)
  - Jump and landing mechanics
    - Teach your athletes to land first
    - Countermovement training
    - Single leg landing
    - Single leg countermovement training
  - One day of active rest (yoga, 30 minutes easy cardio, etc.)

PERFORMANCE TRAINING

MARIE ZIDEK (DEPAUL UNIVERSITY)

SAMPLE WORKOUTS

WHOLE GROUP (45-60 MINUTES)

Warmup/Dynamic: Mark off 10 yards of space and line your group up in 2 straight lines. Have them do the exercise, then jog back to start. (If you're confused, see Injury Prevention for Club Athletes video on Art of Coaching website.)

- Heel-to-toe walks
- High knees with slight lean forward
- Butt kickers with slight lean forward
- Sumo Squats
- Side to side hop and hold
- Two-legged bounding
- Spiderman
- Partner reverse sit ups 2 x 10
- Lateral band walks 2 x 10 (each direction)
- Lean and runs over 30 feet x 4
- Shuffle to run over 30 feet x 4 (2 each side)

Landing Mechanics + CORE

- 2-foot landing off box – make sure the athletes switch feet they are stepping off with.
    - Group 2 is doing plank or some type of low-impact core work like lateral band walks.
- 2-foot landing off box to bound over hurdle.
    - Group 2 is static defensive position holds or some type of low-level strength work like lateral band walks.
- Two-foot landing off box to bound over side hurdle and land on one foot.
    - Group 2 is doing eye coordination or some type of low-level reaction work.
- Single leg hops over a cone and stick landing. (Once they are comfortable sticking landing, you can change for speed.)
- Single leg hops lateral over cone and stick landing. (Once they are comfortable sticking landing, you can change for speed.)

Med Ball Circuit (can also be done with plate)

- Giant circle with a squat 10 right / 10 left
- Lunge and Twist 10 right / 10 left
- Woodchoppers 10 right / 10 left

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Reverse lunge with diagonal press 10 right / 10 left
- Squat Jumps x 10 (hold plate at chest)
- Bridge ups x 10
- Stork stance x 1 min each leg – eyes closed

Med Ball Circuit x 2

- V slams x 10 right / 10 left
- Overhead slam to underhand toss x 8
- Partner chest throws x 10 each
- Partner lateral throws x 10 each
- Walk-overs x 10

Weights

- Front squats 3 x 8 paired with lateral-front-butterfly raises
- DB single leg squat 3 x 6 right / 6 left paired with negative pull ups 3 x 5
- Dumbbell jerks 3 x 6 paired with single arm DB rows

Stretch

SPLIT GROUP (30-40 MINUTES)

Warmup/Dynamic: mark off 10 yards of space and line your group up in 2 straight lines. Have them do the exercise, then jog back to start. (If you're confused, check out the Injury Prevention for Club Athletes video on the Art of Coaching website). You can also use a speed latter.

- Heel to toe walks
- High knees with slight lean forward
- Butt Kickers with slight lean forward
- Lateral Lunge
- Sumo Squats
- Side to side hop and hold
- Lateral band walks x 10 each direction
- Spiderman
- Partner reverse sit ups 2 x 10
- Box landings x 10

PERFORMANCE TRAINING

MARIE ZIDEK (DEPAUL UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Circuit 1 – split your team into 3 smaller group depending on equipment you have available.

- Exercise 1 – Giant circles with squat 10 right / 10 left
- Exercise 2 – Holds plank x 1 min
- Exercise 3 – Resisted meter step block jumps in partners in 20 second intervals

Circuit 2

- Exercise 1 – Med ball pick up to OH press
- Exercise 2 – Scissor jumps
- Exercise 3 – Eccentric push-ups

Circuit 3

- Exercise 1 – Med ball pick up to OH press
- Exercise 2 – Side to side hop and hold
- Exercise 3 – Lateral shuffles

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

BETH LAUNIERE (UNIVERSITY OF UTAH)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- What are your core values?
- Strive for honesty and authenticity
- Rank your core values
- Make decisions based on your core values
- Decide how to handle conflicting core values
- Integrate your core values with your staff's core values
- Decisions, decisions, decisions
    - Time management
    - Academics
    - Commitment to team
    - Work ethic
    - Playing time
    - Role development
    - Hate losing or love of winning
    - How do you respond?
    - Scarcity vs. abundance
    - Balance
    - Team dynamics
    - Life lessons
    - Control vs. choice (Do you tell your athletes what to do every step of the way, or do you give them some guidance and allow them to figure things out?)
    - Process vs. results
    - Winning
    - Sportsmanship

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

CREATING YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY

There is something much bigger than X's and O's and wins and losses.

Use volleyball as a vehicle to teach bigger life lessons and instill characteristics that will help the athletes in life.

Identify those characteristics and make them cornerstones of the program. (UCLA = Grit, Gratitude and Respect).

Keep it simple. Be mindful and thorough in a few areas instead of touching on a variety of topics.

Find opportunities to speak about/create exercises that allow sharing between athletes and coaches about the topics. You can control the "news cycle" and dictate what people talk about. Example: Today's exercise is find a photo that exemplifies grit to you.

Reframe challenges as opportunities to practice the cornerstones. A poor execution day in practice is an amazing opportunity to practice grit or be grateful for things in the face of challenge.

TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

JILL KRAMER (TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY)

BUILDING A POSITIVE TEAM CULTURE

"Everyone wants to be a part of something bigger than themselves."

TRUST

Three constructs of trust

- Capacity for trusting: Make your players feel important and special by being present and excited about every single practice and game. Teach them to trust in you.
- Perception of competence: Show your players with your body language and words that you have a clear picture of where you want the team to be throughout the season.
- Perception of intentions: Allow yourself to show empathy, care and interest with your players. When players know their coach cares about them, they learn to trust in the coach's intentions and plans.

Mike Hebert and the Triangle of Doom

- Coach Hebert's "Triangle" consists of three negative behaviors (listed below) that are detrimental to athletes and a team. These behaviors can be monitored and discouraged by the coaching staff and by instilling a program culture that holds players accountable for their actions.
    - Whining and complaining
    - Drama
    - Lying

Questions for coaches to ask themselves

- What was the previous culture?
- What is the present culture?
- What is the preferred culture? How do we get there?

Create a standard of how you communicate/engage

- In team meetings: Create clear expectations of communication standards in meetings so everyone feels they have a say and will be listened to.
- In practice: Player communication must be fostered and encouraged by coaches.
- Off the court and in the community: Expand your program's voice by getting involved with the community but also set social media boundaries and clear instruction about what's appropriate.

TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

JILL KRAMER (TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Build your house

- Create a clear and compelling vision
- Establish core values
    - Make them visible: Write them down on the practice board. Send them in group messages to the team. Put banners in the lock room. Visual repetition matters!
    - Meet as a team about them regularly: The program and individual players should never lose sight of the team's vision.
    - Figure out what is essential for optimum buy-in: What motivates your players to stay engaged and enthusiastic?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

KEYS TO CREATING A CULTURE

Keep it simple

- Culture is your lighthouse and your anchor.
- It is not an ideology but a manner in which we behave consistently.
- You cannot do it all – the more you do, the more that gets left undone.

What/Why/How

What is going to give us the best opportunity to be successful on the court and on this mission? What do I want players to leave this program with? Who do I want them to become? In general, I want the volleyball lessons to be life lessons that help them in the future both on and off the court.

What

- I want them to be able to handle adversity.
- I want them to be able to work through difficult situations.
- I want them to be able to not only SURVIVE in uncomfortable scenarios but to THRIVE.
- I can call this **Grit, Resilience, Toughness**. Choose one for simplicity.

Why

- This is going to help them in all facets of life. We cannot avoid unpleasant/difficult happenings in life, so we'd better learn to navigate them. "It's not about avoiding the storm but learning to dance in the rain."

How

- Consistent reframing of tough situations into opportunities for growth.
- Exercises that help self-reflect our own grittiness and that of our teammates.
- Weekly grit award.
- Value and affirm situations that showed grittiness instead of just execution.
- Train grittiness purposefully in practice. "Grit" drill of the day.

A slogan/colorful saying can provide more meaning and depth. For example, saying "we are tough" can be pretty generic vs. **"dance in the rain."** It makes me think that we are enjoying things that others run from. Reminding a struggling player to keep dancing in the rain might help them continue to work while avoiding the possible judgement that could pop up.

TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MIKE SEALY (UCLA)

What

- I want players to appreciate the opportunities they have being an athlete here.
- I want players to not lose sight of the fact that this was a choice they made. (Making the choice is about all the things that come with it, both good and bad.)
- I want players to avoid being entitled by any extra attention/special treatment they may get by being athletes.
- I want players to not lose sight of the simple things that can bring joy and to not always need more and more to feel good.
- Gratitude.

Why

As a generation, I believe we are always striving for more. I believe that we associate "more" with happiness. I think student athletes are given a lot and, at some point in life, they will see that it is not the norm or an entitled right. Being happy with "enough" gives more opportunities for happiness in the future.

"He who knows that enough is enough will always have enough."

How

- Gratitude check-ins before practice.
- Weekly letter to someone on the team they are grateful for.
- Find something you use/see every day. Slow down, experience it deeply, connect to pleasure it brings.

We are gritty: "We dance in the rain."

We are grateful: "We have enough."

When your thoughts, words and actions embrace and live those two thoughts on a consistent basis, your culture is on the way to becoming a reality.

Standards

- If not already engrained in a culture, try to implement them after you have worked together and choose things that really matter.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

CATHY GEORGE (MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY)

KEYS TO TRAINING LEADERS AND BUILDING A STRONG CULTURE

Why do we coach?

Roadblocks to athlete's success

- **Parents**
  - Allow and encourage athletes to take responsibility for their own problems and create coping mechanisms.
  - Perfectionism: Athletes struggle with concerns of social status, academic perfectionism and sport perfectionism. Teach your players that failure is a critical part of the learning process.
  - Fear of failure: Players must embrace failure because it allows for growth, but sometimes parents can instill the fear of failure and that must be unlearned by college athletes.
- **Comparisons**
  - Teammates: Compete with your teammates but also with yourself. Always try to be the best version of yourself because that's the only thing you can control.
  - Competitors: Encourage players to pick a competitor who they aspire to be like.
  - Attack the hard questions: When teams are struggling, it's easy to brush off problems and conflicts. Instead, unearth those discomforts so they can be fixed and so the team can reach its potential.
- **Process vs. Outcome**
  - Outcome doesn't exist without process: Focusing on the process and learning relieves pressure from players.
  - Pay attention to the process: The scoreboard is irrelevant – focus on the process of teaching, growing and adapting. There are always teachable moments.

Creating culture and leadership

- Teams must be led by players, so find the natural leaders and natural followers.
  - Understand teammate roles: there are different types of team roles that players fulfill (DISC).
    - **D** (charismatic, energetic risk-takers)
    - **I** (emotional and can get distracted)
    - **S** (love structure)
    - **C** (organized and asking the question, "Why?")
- Investment in leadership

    - Investment leadership: It's not the coach that makes a team win, it's the players. Instill the ability in leaders to help their teammates be better by communicating, asking questions and listening.
    - Building relationships: Good leaders develop relationships with every player on the team to develop trust and order, no matter if they're close off the court or not.
    - Roles defined: When it's clear who's a leader and who's a follower and how each contributes, a symbiotic ecosystem emerges over the season.
    - Everybody matters: A team's success depends on the importance of every single player, from the most skilled to the least skilled. Make players feel needed.
- Leaders and followers are both important to the team dynamic. Some are meant to lead, while others are at their best when they're in supportive roles as followers. Leaders and followers can both be incredible players.
- Holding yourself and others accountable
    - Confrontation: This doesn't have to be aggressive. When accountability must be addressed, frame it in terms of betterment rather than punishment.
    - Standards: When clear standards are created for a team, the preparation and effort fall into place.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

KEYS TO DEVELOPING LEADERS

Why do we need to develop leadership?

- Asking this question is a good place to start with any group.
- Part of any team process is learning about how groups function.
- It's important to understand the leadership needs of a particular group.
- Organizing, inspiring and demanding greatness is part of the process.

Where will leadership come from? What is the makeup of the group?

- Coach centered
  - Coach dictates that this is how it works.
  - The make-up of the group necessitates this leadership style.
- Coach and player centered
  - Using the abilities of both groups to maximize.
  - In a process from one type to another.
- Player centered

Developing leadership

- Vehicle used for education
- Discussion
- The focus for the group
- Commitment
- Feeling the growth, building momentum

TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

KEYS TO DEVELOPING LEADERS

Who can be leaders?

- Some do it naturally. Innately, they know to:
  - Build trust with their teammates.
  - Address tough issues in a respectful way.
  - Model the right behaviors on and off the court.
  - Communicate/support their coaches AND teammates

Can you teach leadership?

- Go through scenarios and how to respond.
- Build a positive culture so they see good leadership as they grow through the program.
- Empower them on the importance of being a leader.
- Train them how to react to different situations.
- People can lead in different ways. (Rarely do players encompass all traits.)
  - In practice energy/accountability
  - By example

Leadership book I recommend

- “Team Captain’s Leadership Manual” by Jeff Janssen

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

DEVELOPING LEADERS IN YOUR PROGRAM

What makes a good leader?

- Lead by example
- Hard worker
- Confidence
- Respect/trust in your teammates
- Respect/trust from your teammates
- Competitive spirit
- Communication with coaches and teammates

Nature vs. Nurture

- Natural leaders
- Learned leaders

How to nurture leaders

- Teach them the importance of TEAM
- Teach them the value of everyone's role on the team
- Teach through mistakes
- Anyone can learn to become a better leader

TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEBBIE BROWN (UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, 1991-2014)

TEAM CAPTAIN AND LEADERSHIP GUIDELINES

As a player:

The team captain does not necessarily have to be the best player but one who gives it their all during every practice, workout and match. Good team captains have strong mental attitudes on and off the court – they are fearless, intense, confident, responsible and competitive. A captain must have a tireless work ethic – always on time to practice, showing up to all team activities, knowing when and where and what's going on at all times. They must be gracious in both victory and defeat. The team captain should always be a calming influence on the court and keep their cool under pressure; the team will be looking to the captain when games are stressful. Finally, as a player, a team captain must be passionate – about volleyball, about their team, about their university.

As a person:

A strong team captain earns the respect of her teammates not only for her on-court play but also for how she conducts herself off the court. Players want a team captain who is trustworthy, compassionate and responsible. A captain should treat all teammates equally, be approachable and be encouraging. She will always put the team first.

As a leader:

First, and foremost, a team captain must lead by example. Team captains are looked up to by their teammates as a model of the kind of student-athlete they strive to be.

A passionate, committed and positive team captain will motivate teammates – not only during games but in practices and training. Strong team captains use their experience to show incoming players how the team dynamic works and steer younger players in the right direction. They should strive to get to know each teammate individually and understand how each player responds to different things. Based on that knowledge, the team captain is able to encourage their teammates to be the best they can be.

During rough times, a team captain's communication skills are at the forefront. Captains must be good communicators and mediators. They should not be afraid to approach teammates and coaches about an issue.

They must be able to calmly and objectively confront a teammate if there is a problem and hold that teammate accountable, always being constructive with their criticism. Their goal is to always make the team stronger.

LEADERSHIP GUIDELINES

What would we like our leaders to do?

- Be consistent in preparation, attitude and skill
- Model positive behaviors

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Set the standard high
- Have self-accountability and hold others accountable as well
- Show intensity with hustle, body language and eye contact
- Keep the locker room talk positive and/or constructive
- Receive and extend feedback in a positive way

What would we like our feedback model to encompass?

- Give eye contact when talking to or listening to each other.
- Give a verbal acknowledgement or nod of the head for the feedback.
- Accept the feedback as a means to make the team better and to keep the standard high.
- Ideally, tone of the voice will be even and constructive in tone and nature.
- Encourage and praise when feedback has been accepted and change has been made.

In continuing to develop leaders on the team we will establish a leadership core with the following guidelines:

- Meet once every two weeks to discuss progress of the team and to identify areas of concern.
- Make up of core is best at no more than 5 individuals. (Underclassmen and non-starters should be represented.)
- All things discussed in meeting are confidential and not to be repeated unless specifically stated.
- Those serving must be unwavering in their commitment to the team.
- The core must have a good awareness of situations both on and off the court.
- Develop and assign a list of books/articles to read and discuss.
    - Team Captain's Manual
    - Wooden on Leadership
    - Current magazine and newspaper articles profiling strong leadership examples.
- Assign particular leadership roles to individuals to perform (i.e. who says something in the huddle before we start practice; between drills, etc.).
- Assign individual tasks for the leaders to develop relationships outside the gym with their teammates (i.e. Eat lunch or breakfast with a different player … eat training table with a different player … send a text or email to one of the players they don't know as well or don't feel as comfortable with.)
- Exchange ideas with other sports leaders on campus.

We encourage leadership by all with the following guidelines:

- All members of the team should understand that each of their voices and opinions matter – freshman or a senior, starter or sub, walk-on or scholarship player.
- The team will develop guidelines and responsibilities for captains through individual written input.
- Each player will explain to the head coach who they think should be the captain and why.

- Freshmen do not have a voice in the captain decision during their freshman year. It will be decided before they begin.
- Upper classmen are matched with lower classmen for preseason training and for the first part of the travel season.
- Upper classmen are paired with lower classmen in partner drills for most practices.

The staff with input from the leadership core will:

- Identify underclassmen for consideration in future leadership roles on the team and within the department (SAAC).
- Nominate future potential leaders for athletic department leadership retreats.

FINAL THOUGHT

A team captain's job is to strive to make everyone around them better. A strong captain knows that theirs is not a position of power; it is a position of support. They are the foundation of the team.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TRAINING YOUR TEAM TO COMPETE

TRAINING YOUR TEAM TO COMPETE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

WAYS TO MAKE DRILLS COMPETITIVE

Ways to make drills and games competitive:

- Separate the best players and have them battle across the net.
- Handicap one team vs. the other with execution options.
- Bonus points for special emphasis of the day.
- Best attackers vs. the best defenders.

Back row continuous to 50 to warmup. Start with collaborative effort, then transition to competition.

5 FAVORITE COMPETITIVE DRILLS

1. **5 vs. 5:** Forces players to learn how to read and allows for continuous one-on-one match-ups (play with a wash format to 3-5).
2. **1 vs. 1:** Forces players to compete and push at all times because they are involved with every play at the net (all of the primary net players).
3. **Front Row vs. Front Row:** Forces the top 6 players to compete against the other starters (wash to 3, then rotate as you would normally).
4. **Initiate Drill** with a maximum effort from back-row defender on a dig or pursuit or joust.
5. **Rally Score Games** from 9, 11, 13 (need to win all 3).

Keep in mind, some teams need to master the fundamentals before they test the competitive waters.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

COMPETITIVE DRILLS

Tip, Chip and Roll

Works on scoring with different shots and defending on the other side. 6 on 6. Coach inputs balls alternating sides. Regular volleyball but no full swings allowed. Game to 15 or 25. Variations: Could play off a serve and/or play a full game. Can play Columbus style with all players rotating to all spots.

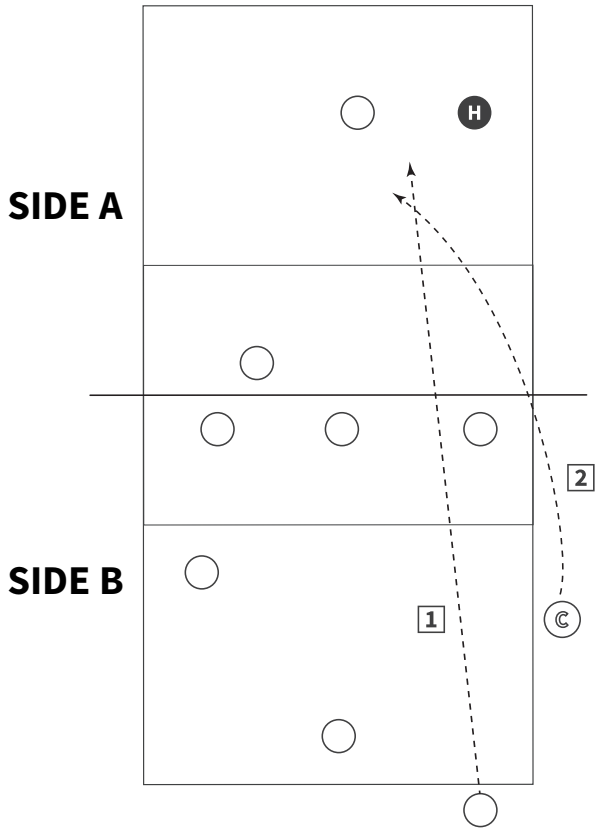
Blind Woman's Bluff

Emphasizes playing each point like game point. 6 on 6 game to 25 but nobody on the court knows what the score starts at. It could be 20-20, 24-23, etc. Play it out to 25.

Outside Hitter Tournament ▼

Focuses on terminating from the outside. Players competing against the 6 on the other side but also others in their position.

- Side A has an outside hitter, a Libero and a setter. Side B has a full defense. Side B serves to the 2 passers on Side A and they set the outside, then both sides play it out. Side A then gets a free ball, which both sides play out. The outside hitter counts how many points they win through 5 pairs (serve + free ball). Then a new hitter comes in. The outside with the most points wins.
- Variations: Can also do with middles and right sides. You can put an extra passer on their side if you'd like.



TRAINING YOUR TEAM TO COMPETE

TAMMY LEIBL (WAVE VOLLEYBALL CLUB)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMPETITIVE DRILL

Tug of War

A controlled 6 vs. 6 competitive drill that emphasizes two things: not allowing streaks of points and fighting to come back when you get down. This can be a great conditioning drill as well. The score starts at 5. One team tries to get to 0 and the other team tries to get to 10, so there's just 1 score going up and down. The coach initiates with a down ball to one side. Whichever team wins the point continues to receive down balls until they reach their goal.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNICATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR PROGRAM

General communication

- Coach is responsible for framing discussions, drills, meetings.
- All logistics need to be communicated clearly and in a timely manner.
- Everyone has a role in communication, everyone has a responsibility.
- Communication affects our culture, off the court and on the court.
- Team notebook, team rules, team boundaries.
- Tone, body language, facial expression, words, energy – all matter.
- Communication in the locker room
- Our style of play is all about communication.
- Journal writing
- Schedules, changes in plans

System communication

- Serve Receive
  - Before every play, the passing team physically touches.
  - Before every serve, coach communicates information on opponent.
  - Setter and coach communicate the offensive play to everyone.
  - Passers communicate server's tendencies or what they see.
  - During toss, passers talk about where the serve is going.
  - After serve, passers communicate the serve depth.
  - Non-attacker communicates the block situation.
  - Primary cover communicates with coverage team.
- Serving, Initial Defense, Transition
  - Before serve, coach communicates with server about opponent.
  - Before serve, coach communicates information on their offense.
  - Before serve, middle blocker communicates initial blocking plan.
  - Before play, defender assigned to dump communicates.
  - During pass defense/block communicate where hitters are setting up.
  - During the play, defense/block communicate set location and depth.
  - During the play, defense/block communicate where attack is going.
  - During the dig, diggers communicate with each other.
  - After the dig, digger communicates to the setter.
  - After the dig, setter communicates if she needs help.
  - During the set, the setter communicates the set location.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Match situation communication

- Pre-game
- During timeouts, breaks in the game, between plays
  - Players who are watching communicate with those in the game
  - Coaches communicate with each other
  - Coaches communicate with players about plan
  - Prior to any start players touch and talk with each other
- Post-match

Practice

- Gathering everyone's focus to start practice, weights
- Framing each activity, drill
- Feedback (private/general, positive/negative)
- Motivation
- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Evaluation
- Logistics

COMMUNICATION

CATHY GEORGE (MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNICATION ON AND OFF THE COURT

Definition of Communication: A two-way process of reaching mutual understanding in which participants not only exchange (encode/decode) information, new ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. In general, communication is a means of connecting people.

Communication is a Skill

- Needs to be valued
- Needs to be developed
- Needs to be the standard
- Includes verbal and nonverbal interactions

Communication for OFF the Court

- Building team chemistry and trust
- DISC
- Barbeques
- With coaches

Communication for ON the Court

- Be open
- Information or noise?
- Concise and efficient
- Clogged arteries – Pulling away
- Eye contact and acknowledgement
- Energy givers and takers
- Too much or too little?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

TEAM COMMUNICATION

Commonly Heard Questions

- "Why is she so mad?"
- "Why doesn't she show any emotion?"
- "We're losing; why is she still smiling?"
- "Why is she not doing anything?"
- "What's wrong with kids today?"

Team Communication

- We often think that younger people are communicating less with all the access to electronics. There is more interaction with a device than there is with people.
- While true on one hand, it is not that they are communicating less. They are communicating way more now about things in their life than we ever did.
    - Pictures had to be developed.
    - Secrets were easier to keep.
    - Talk to parents about life and body changes? Uh, no!
- What is lacking today is the **Art of the Reaction.**
    - Things are said (texted/tweeted/posted) are done unilaterally.
    - Responses are truly a response. More likely, they are the start of another communication.
    - Today's communication excludes 70% of intent – tone and body language.
    - Seeing someone's expression after making a statement is now the lost art.
    - Most interpretations of what someone's tone or intent is solely based on the receiver's experiences and point of view.
- **In athletics, you can't hide behind a device to say what you want to say**
    - It exposes the tone and body language that is lacking in social media so, in theory, more information about what is being intended should be more apparent.
    - So why still doesn't it go very well?
    - The Art of the Reaction is the issue.
        - Only know to interpret through their own experiences.
        - Why don't they respond like I respond? They are wrong for feeling or acting that way, and my way is the right way?

COMMUNICATION

DIANE FLICK-WILLIAMS (WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Different Ways to Communicate

- Important to understand that people are different based on experiences: Family, friends, socio-economic surroundings, schools, etc.
- Not asking for them to change who they are or how they communicate.
    - Rather, asking them to understand that there are different ways to communicate and be flexible about working with others.
- Best skill to come out of college with is the ability to effectively work with people.
    - The degree is good too.
    - Wisdom over knowledge will apply to any job opportunity.
- The skill of communicating effectively should be worked on just as much as the skill of passing.
    - Do it early and reference it throughout the season.

DISC Assessment

- This particular leadership/communication assessment is one that resonated with me the most.
- Before beginning, take a second to write down all the names on your team including yourself.
    - You are not exempt. Knowing yourself will help you figure out how to be more effective!
    - Make some kind of connection arrows between those who get along well and those who struggle.
    - As we go through the different styles, see if these connections make more sense. – not only in why, but also in what can be done to improve it.
- Different styles of personality
    - D = Dominant
        - Quick decision makers – Immediate results
        - Focus is on the goal
        - Risk seeker
        - Competitive
        - Blunt / Candid / Honest
        - Doer
    - I = Influential
        - Quick decision makers – Impulsive
        - Focus on people
        - Optimistic
        - Enthusiastic
        - Impatient
        - Trusting of others

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

    - S = Steadiness
        - Methodical decision maker – Status quo
        - Focus on people
        - Low key
        - Patient
        - Steady
        - Avoids risks
    - C = Conscientious
        - Methodical decision maker – Process
        - Focus on the goal
        - Detail oriented
        - Accurate
        - Always right
        - Observant
- Which style are you as a coach?
    - Not what you want to be … what you are.
    - Context is important. You may be different in your family or at work.
- What the different personality styles have in common
    - D & C – Focus on the Goal
    - I & S – Focus on People
    - D & I – Quick Decision Makers
    - S & C – Methodical Decision Maker
- Which personalities have nothing in common:
    - D & S
        - D – Quick & Goal
        - S – Methodical & People
    - I & C
        - I – Quick & People
        - C – Methodical & Goal
- Descriptive statements
- First emotions
- Biggest fears

- Why they play?
- What motivates them?
- What they/you should do in times of stress?
- What do you do in a timeout?

Examples

- Weather Report
- Conference Challenge

Flexing

- Not trying to change them.
- An understanding creates a baseline talking point for action.
- Communicating in a way that is most effective for the receiver, will create a more effective/efficient learning environment.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

CONDUCTING TEAM MEETINGS

Team meetings

- Have an agenda.
- Start and end on time.
- Establish and review ground rules.
    - Cell phones
    - Eye contact
    - Listen (don't load up)
- Emphasize healthy dialogue.
    - Cognitive friction needed
    - Recognize "Organizational Silence"
- Summarize dialogue and decisions.
- Assign action items if needed.

When do we need team meetings?

- Meetings can be used to share important Information.
    - Program goals
    - On-court and off-court expectations
    - Non-negotiable behaviors
- Meetings (timely in nature) could be necessary to reestablish goals and culture expectations.
    - As the season moves forward, refresher course might be needed.
- Meetings might be needed to deal with perceived crisis or actual crisis.
    - Does this situation warrant a team meeting?
        - Team failure
        - Culture crisis
        - The Disease of Me
    - Player-only meeting (OK?)
        - Player calling the meeting needs to take the first level of responsibility

COMMUNICATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RON KORDES (ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL, KIVA SPORTS)

TIPS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION IN YOUR PROGAM

- Explain the playing rules, substitution rules
  - Many complaints come from parents who are uninformed about how rotations, substitutions, and front- and back-row players work.
  - If you plan on using a 6-2, explain how it works, including the fact that a 6-2 actually has eight starters instead of six.
  - Starters: If you like to start in a certain rotation because of strategy, it's important to explain this strategy because the kids who don't start, yet sub in, will take it personally that they don't start. If they realize it's because you want to start in a specific rotation, they will understand that it's not personal.
  - If you have two or three liberos but you want to hold one libero out and use her as the DS because she could also hit, explain this to her parents. Parents get emotional about the libero uniform.
  - How many subs you have to work with and that you can run out.
  - That a subbed player can only return to the match for the player they subbed out for.
- At KIVA we are pay to play, which does not mean equal play.
- When there is a schedule change, notify the parents immediately. They appreciate the communication as they have schedules they will have to rearrange as well.
- Institute a 24-HOUR RULE. If a parent wants to approach a coach regarding playing time, a full 24 hours needs to have passed before the meeting can take place. This includes sending an email.
- Go over the Team Rules and schedule with the parents, which include dates you will be playing.
- Go over recruiting with the parents and give them an idea when it starts and how you will help. Explain that taller players and attackers usually go first in the recruiting process. Setters are next. Liberos are always last.

Players

- At KIVA we are pay to play, which does not mean equal play.
- Team rules, practice rules, expectations, schedules
- Elect or choose a captain or captains. Must be someone with good communication skill.
- Create a work schedule that rotates, so there's no complaining about who has to line judge, do boon or down ref at tournaments.
- Create a ball schedule to determine who is responsible for taking and bringing home the balls on each trip.
- Create a GROUP ME or Group Text to alert players to changes in schedules. Only use it for volleyball-related messages.
- Institute a 24-HOUR RULE. If a player wants to approach a coach regarding playing time, a full 24 hours needs to have passed before the meeting can take place. This includes sending an email.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Go over recruiting with the players and give them an idea when it starts and how you will help. Explain that taller players and attackers usually go first in the recruiting process. Setters are next. Liberos are always last.
- Create individual one-on-one time where you can take 5 to 10 minutes to connect with your players. This gives you an opportunity to let your players know you care.

COMMUNICATION

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNICATING WITH PLAYERS AND PARENTS

Communicating with players

- Over-communicate
  - You think they know, but they don't!
  - Don't sugarcoat information. Be compassionate, but honest.
  - If a player is going to have a tough role (bench), be forthright. You will thank yourself later.
- Individual meetings
  - Preseason, midseason, postseason
  - Consider more often as needed
  - Home visits?
  - Meet in a non-threatening place
- Connecting with players
  - Personally connect daily – stretching?
  - Designate staff to connect if necessary
  - Use technology (but keep appropriate boundaries)
- Lay out expectations at the beginning of the season/and potentially mid-season
- Communicate with your leadership
  - Earn their trust and don't betray it
  - Empower them to handle situations
  - Don't go searching for gossip/issues
- Problems
  - Document all meetings with issues
  - Be careful meeting with players alone – at least be in a visible area if you are alone

Communicating with parents

- What level are you?
  - College – Minimal parental involvement when there are problems.
  - High school – Kids should be in all meetings and the first to approach with issues, but parents will play a role. Meetings should be with parent AND player.
  - Junior high and younger – Really support a player who is brave enough to talk with you. Parents need to be guided what is appropriate to talk with you about, and what their kid should talk to you about. Work together a little more at this age.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Proactively communicate with parents
  - High school should have written guidelines. Seriously consider a meeting on these “rules.”
  - Get your administration on board with guidelines
- Watch your boundaries with parents
  - Be careful to not be too friendly
  - Don’t become friends
  - Set boundaries if you are prior friends

MANAGING A COACHING STAFF

KEYS TO LEADING YOUR STAFF EFFECTIVELY

- "The Buck Stops Here!" - Understand that you are the ultimate decision-maker.
  - Making the "right decision"
  - Leadership
  - Mentoring
  - You set the tone
  - Role model – "They will do as you do, not as you say."
  - "When all is said and done, more is done than said."
- Be honest
- Create a personal philosophy that includes a written "Philosophy Statement" (Note: Your assistants/ staff must be in agreement with you on philosophy, teaching methods, etc.)
- Have specific job descriptions for each staff member
- Have "To-Do" lists for each staff member
- Understand staff skill set
  - Complementary skill sets
  - Maximize strengths & minimize weaknesses
  - No "Bobble Heads" – If they always agree with you, why are they there?
    - You want to be challenged, but in the appropriate environment. Not in front of the team.
- Staff meetings
  - Consistency in day/time/length
  - Always an agenda
  - Get input and then make a decision, but be careful of "group think." Here is a passage from "Finding the Winning Edge" by Bill Walsh:
    "There is a tendency to believe that group decision-making is superior because 'all of us know more than any one of us knows.' This situation is frequently not the case. For example, a small cohesive group, such as a coaching staff, naturally tends to maintain an 'esprit de corps' by unconsciously developing a number of shared thoughts that may interfere with critical decision making."
  - Concrete outcomes are important
    - Action plans, to-do lists, timelines, etc.
- Your door is always open to discuss any issue
- There will be ups and downs – stick together, resolve issues immediately and, most important, learn from mistakes and failures
- You will help them in their next career move

MANAGING A COACHING STAFF

JOE SAGULA (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STAFF ROLES

There are many people who contribute to your team's success. The selection and the roles of your staff are significant in determining the standards for your team culture. They will serve as role models for your team.

Who you work with and the roles established depend on your coaching situation: whether you are a coach in college, high school, junior high, club, head or assistant. Even though these roles may vary, it will take a variety of personnel from coaches, assistants, managers, administrators to create the team you want. Most of these people, in some way, will fill the many different needs in creating the team's success.

COACHING STAFF

"One of me is plenty for any staff. I've tried to always have a diverse coaching staff, with perspectives coming from a variety of directions." – LaVell Edwards, former BYU football coach.

Finding coaches that can complement each other in a working relationship is and art and a skill that needs to be developed. Coaches should understand that they are role models. Their actions will have more effect than words on your players.

Qualities needed for a life in coaching:

- Passion for the game
- Love for teaching
- Care deeply about the players and make them the first consideration
- Fully committed to the team/program in any roles

STAFF ORGANIZATION

Selecting a staff that can work together toward a common goal is clearly one of the most important tasks for the head coach. Determine qualities that complement and contrast with others on your staff. Regardless of the situation, here are some important qualities for any coaching staff member:

- Loyalty
- Creativity
- Integrity
- Enthusiasm
- Good communication skills

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Ability to motivate individuals
- Knowledge of the sport
- Self-motivated, hard-worker
- Organized, goal-oriented

Once you have determined your staff, here are some key things to consider:

- Outline their responsibilities. They need to know what you expect of them.
- Write out your job descriptions.
- Delegate and then "get out of the way." Let them do it their way with some guidance.
- Include them in decision-making.
- Be organized.
- Encourage communication. Ask for suggestions.
- Help them continue their education. Support them going to clinics and classes and teaching at clinics. This allows them to learn and prepare for their future.
- Praise them. Acknowledge their accomplishments, contributions and strengths. Make them feel significant, and they will be!

Additional thoughts

- Review, review, review. ("Death by meeting.")
- Plan: Pre-season, in-season, practice planning, matches, team meetings, scouting, postseason, administrative roles.
- Pay attention to your equipment, facilities.
- Set performance goals.
- Set challenges for the head coach and their staff.

COACHING HIGH SCHOOL

4-STEP ROADMAP TO SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL COACHING

1. Define success and/or purpose

- Success – how do YOU define it?
  - **Example: "Relishing the joy** as we grow together into the best players, the best teammates, and the best people we can become." Or: "Have fun together becoming our best."

2: Identify Values (Example: Effort, Teamness, Attitude (ETA) – reinforced daily)

- **Effort**
  - We fight – to keep the ball off the floor, to transition at full speed, to attack aggressively.
  - We are great learners. We value eye contact and embrace discomfort. We are curious (ask questions) and persistent.
  - We communicate with intent. This is the simplest measurement for effort.
- **Teamness**
  - We are selfless. The team interests take priority over our own interests.
  - We remember every action, either positive or negative, ripples through our team.
  - We believe in synergy, bringing out the best in each other.
- **Attitude**
  - We focus on the present. We have a next-point mentality.
  - We are competitive. We compete to win, yet we respond with humility & grace whatever the result.
  - Our love of the game and our teammates is obvious to everyone.

3. Establish your Priorities for Play at your level

- **Defense**
  - We serve low trajectory floaters with pace at 90% success rate. (Daily "Clipper Drill" that rewards clipping the net with a serve.)
  - Defenders are disciplined with their eyes, feet, platforms and hands.
  - We make a move.
- **Offense**
  - Ace prevention is critical; it is everyone's responsibility. Examples: Overpass, shank left.
  - We approach slow to fast, hit hard and challenge the block.
  - We value the ball and manage risk. Careless errors (non-killable sets) are addressed.

4. Apply our Values to our Priorities of Play (align systems and routines to reinforce high standards)

- Example: We emphasize making a move for EVERY ball, and we have systems in place to reinforce that goal. Let's say we're running a Butterfly drill. A lot of times in this drill, the setter just stands in the target area, but we want our setters to read the angle as the serve comes off the passer's platform and go toward shanked passes. Don't let the ball hit the ground! In Pepper, if one of the partners hits a bad ball, we still want the other player to GO FOR IT!
- Practice Planning: We deliberately craft daily opportunities that challenge our best defenders and give them opportunities to shine.
- Pregame: A lot of coaches won't stand on the same side of the net and hit hard-driven balls at their defenders during warmups because they don't think it's game-like if it doesn't come from over the net. Brent Hilliard, head coach at San Diego State and former Associate head coach at University of San Diego, doesn't agree. He'll hit a million balls at his defenders so they get rep after rep of high-speed attacks. I can tell you, those players are some of the best defenders in the game. My point: Digging hard-driven balls over and over is good preparation for defense in volleyball.
- Feedback – Stopping game-like drills is never fun, but we must be disciplined.
    - The game doesn't teach the game if players don't know when they make errors.
    - Have a sharp eye. Example: If the LB tries to dig high heat overhand and it goes behind her, a lot of coaches will give feedback to that player. My feedback will likely be to the middle back. Something like: "You had time to flow behind her and make that play!"
    - Catch them making a max effort, even when the outcome isn't perfect. Ex: Blocker lands, ball falls on same side, and scoop attempt fails.
- Vocabulary
    - Fight – Single word that chunks information, describes a culture. Players with HEART are the ones who habitually FIGHT.
    - 2nd Ball Defense: Mid trans, shank-left, go-behinds
    - Play Your own Deflection (PYD)
- System to improve player accountability after an effort error
    - Sprints?
    - Our system – Player's recognition vs. Coach's recognition. Players have to be accountable for their effort. If a player doesn't make a move toward a ball, then someone on the team has to acknowledge it. If they recognized it, we'll reinforce the habit with the entire team doing a full-speed floor move. If nobody speaks up and I catch it, the team does more – maybe three or four (that includes the setters on Court 2).

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

DRILL DEVELOPMENT

Culture to emphasize for practices and drills

- Player responsibility: Make the TEAM better. What are those behaviors?
- Coach responsibility: What is important? My behaviors?
- Communication: Simplest way to judge engagement and effort. Consequence?

Drill Qualities

- Clear focus: Players should be clear about exactly what they are trying to accomplish in a drill.
- Transfer: As game-like as possible.
- Efficient: Number of meaningful opportunities, start and end (time + reps, combo, etc.).
- Player driven: If possible, players should initiate so the coach can coach. This allows coaches to focus on observing and take in the action from multiple vantage points.
- Challenging / competitive
- Flexibility: Can the drill be easily altered to change focus or layer additional focus?

Examples

- Platform Series (technique focus): Shuffle, tilt, freeze (½ and ½ timed)
- Possible new takes on Pepper, Butterfly, Deep Court
- OOS or Lolo's drills: Begin one-sided, add hitter transition + coverage, add defensive layer
- 2's Transition: Cooperative to start, add kill off block
- Speedball mutations
- Kamikaze: 4 vs. 4 mutations
- 6 vs. 6 no "scrimmaging"

RUNNING A HIGH SCHOOL PRACTICE

5 phases for a high school season:

1. Pre-season
2. Pre-league
3. League 1
4. League 2
5. Postseason

COACHING HIGH SCHOOL

TOD MATTOX (THE BISHOP'S SCHOOL)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RUNNING A HIGH SCHOOL PRACTICE

Pre-practice + Meeting

- Gym set up. Arms elastic.
- Setters warmup; Others in over-the-net competition, focus on fun. Individual meeting/tutorial?
- Quote + plan and focus for practice.
- Culture: Developing leaders. "Play everything!" Explain "acceptable errors."

Warmup: Keep it short. Focus on injury prevention. Do it right!

- Movements: Transfer – strength, game footwork
- Blocking, defensive floor moves
- Arms series

Ball Control: Alternate days – Pairs rep days OR group over-the-net days

- 35-second pairs rotation: Technique focus
- Over the net: Side by side pairs (doghouse for error), Group race

Water: SERVING

Tutorial to Serve-Pass

- Serving: Lift technique, MPH, trajectory over net, target in court, 2 bounce, short, etc.
- Serve Receive: Angle, communication, 2 feet, early read, sweet spot, forward move, drop step, ace prevention, right-left, short, overhead?
- Serve-Pass: Double-sided, Challenge 3's, Aces and Nails

Offensive and/or Defensive Tutorials

- Offense: Transition footwork, first-step timing and speed, double arm lift, jump hard and hit off speed, lift tip, tool block, etc.
- Blocking: Eye-work, footwork, handwork
- Digging: Eye-work, footwork, platform, overhead, responsibilities/coordination

Small-sided Games: Scoring is based on tutorial

- Speedball: Bonus for sideline serve
- Cross-court pepper: LF prep to stay on, 3 crossings before kill
- Kamikaze: 4 vs. 4

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

6 vs. 6: Scoring is based on tutorial

- Outside antenna
- Middle activation
- Off-block

Core/Back/Stretch

- Closing routine? Culture? Variety?

THE 5 MOST UNDERTAUGHT SKILLS IN HIGH SCHOOL

I have always been captivated by teams that make a habit of getting "lucky." That is, after a win, the opponent, the opponents' coaches and the opponents' parents lament that the winning team's talent isn't that great, but they just got every "lucky break." After finding myself on the wrong end of these matches, I started to ask some questions. Why do certain teams appear to have cornered the market on luck? Is it really luck, or is it residue of design? If it is design, what is "lucky" coach doing that I'm not? And finally, can I learn to teach like this so my team can get lucky too?

The list below is the result of my continuing quest to become a bit luckier:

1. READING

Define

- Eyes off the ball to pick up clues of coming events.
- What can you rule out? For example, can the ball be struck with heat?

Beginners

- Newcombe to one-contact passing and setting

Expectations: All pairs work, including pepper. Opportunities abound to teach reading.

Sequence for teaching reading on defense

- 100%: Antenna.
- Depth of set: Tipping. Who has the best view of depth? Often, it's the off-blocker.
- Attacker timing: Being early, then descending is common.
- Attacker spacing: Under the ball is common.
- Attacker history: For instance, how do they react after getting stuffed?
- Common techniques:
    - LF who is goofy foot or who "squares-up." Line to 1 seam.
    - LF who runs under the ball and cannot hit line.
- Other positions (besides defenders): Serve reception, setting, attacking.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

2. ARM SWING MECHANICS – SHAPE AND SPIN

- Topspin defined
- Stop hitting the ball into the ground
- The danger of "reach and snap"
- Bent elbow contact
- Throw hand up into the ball

3. ATTACKING OFFSPEED WITH DRAWN ARM

- Roll shots: Less is more.
- Lift tips
  - Outlawed on the beach, so maybe we should use it!
  - Hand contact must be practiced. One-handed set.
  - Elbow back – lift short. Elbow straight up (show early) – tip deep.
  - Setter: Great with both hands.

4. SECOND-BALL DEFENSE

- Backcourt flow
- Frontcourt – MB
- Shank left
- Include PYD (Play Your Own Deflection)

5. MANAGING RISK

- Attackers
  - No errors on sets that cannot be attacked for a kill (set location, balance, etc.)
  - Other unacceptable errors
    - In the net
    - "Playing with the sideline"
    - Hitting out to avoid the block

    - Positive errors
        - Getting blocked (can stuff errors = hitting out, net errors?)
        - Hitting with heat, but ball is just long
        - Attempting to tool and missing the block
    - Use the middle (or middle-right) of the court
- Servers – Bad toss
- Passers – Ace prevention
- Blockers
    - Stay down on balls that can be easily dug
    - Be late, never early, on balls attacked from off the net
- Defenders
    - Tougher the attack, the higher the dig
    - Russ Rose: Two hands
    - Pancake or "fisty"?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

COLLEGE RECRUITING

COLLEGE RECRUITING

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE RECRUITS

How to pick a college

Academics

- Does the college offer my area of interest? Recognize most people change jobs at least once in their career unless they have a narrow field they are determined to study.
    - Does the college offer a wide range of majors if I don't know what I want to major in?
    - Does the college fit my academic ability?

Location: Do you want to stay close to home or go away for college?

Size: What size of college are you going to excel at?

Volleyball: What are you looking for in a volleyball program?

- What level of competition can you play at?
    - Junior College
    - NAIA
    - NCAA – Division III
    - NCAA – Division II
    - NCAA – Division I
- Other considerations:
    - Do you want to play as a freshman or can you wait a couple of years?
    - What type of scholarship are you looking for? (Four year, full, partial, dependent on performance.)
    - What type of coaching staff do you want to play for? Which coach coaches my position? Is the head coach going to be there during my career? Will the assistants be leaving?

How a school picks you

Academics: Can you be successful academically at this college?

Athletics: Do you play a position that the college is recruiting that year?

- Athletic ability vs. skill
- Attitude & work ethic
- Character

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

COLLEGE RECRUITING

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

How do you get noticed (beyond making plays on the court)

- Develop a list of colleges that fit your criteria.
- What should you do and when do you start?
    - For the current recruiting guidelines on what you can and can't do during your freshman, sophomore, junior and senior years of high school, visit NCAA.org and view their latest "Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete."

What about video?

- Voice introduction: Name, year you graduate, position, where you are from, major, interest, where you are located on the video.
- Short skills session: 5 minutes (attacking, serve receive, defense, etc.)
- Show an entire match that was competitive and that you played well in (it doesn't need to be a match you won).
- Include a profile sheet and short note when you email the video.

Checklist to help you in the recruiting process

- Be organized. Start a filing system for each school. This will help you keep track of what you sent to each college and what you receive from each college.
- Be sure to have email so coaches can contact you during your junior year.
- Make sure club coach is on board with helping communicate until direct communication can take place.
- Check your email on a regular basis and return coach's emails ASAP.
- Learn and be willing to have phone conversations with the coaches. They need to get to know your personality.
- Fill out and return all information requested by schools ASAP.
- If you have received information or emails from a school you are definitely not interested in, send the coach a short email to let them know they are not on your list.
- Highlight your strengths: Approach touch 9' 11", 4.0 student, etc.
- Send the coach a copy of newspaper article if you make All-State.

Questions to ask college coaches:

- How many scholarships do you have available?
- Are you recruiting more than one player for my position?
- How many players are returning at my position?
- If I get injured, would the school honor my scholarship?
- Who covers medical expenses if I'm injured?
- What are your goals/vision for your program?
- What type of coach are you?

- Are their commitments off the court? (Community service, etc.)
- What is the time commitment during the off-season?
- What are your long-term goals in coaching? (Are you looking to move?)
- How will you help me be successful academically?
- Will a scholarship include summer school or a fifth year?
- What is the average attendance of a home match?
- How does your team travel, and how much class time is missed?
- Does the scholarship cover off campus housing?
- Where are the majority of players from? In-state, national or international?
- What are the team rules, expectations, etc.?
- What is campus and team life like? (Commuter campus?)
- How many players have transferred under you and why?
- What are practices like?

Questions to ask college players from schools you are looking at:

- What type of coach is she/he? (Is it the same answer the coach gave?)
- If you could start the recruiting over, would you choose this school again?
- Does the coach care about you as a person?
- What are your goals as a player for this program?
- What does the team do away from volleyball?
- What do you like least about the coach?
- What do you like most about the coach?
- What do you like least about the school?
- What do you like most about the school?
- What are practices like?
- What all does a year of training at your school involve?
- How is the academic support for you?

In the end, ask yourself this question: “Would you still be happy at this university if you didn’t play volleyball?”

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

10 STEPS OF THE COLLEGE RECRUITING PROCESS

For many volleyball players and parents, the college volleyball recruiting process seems like a mystical thing out there in the universe that's untouchable and unknown.

I often get asked these questions:

1. "What is the recruiting process?"
2. "How does it work?"
3. "When should a player start the recruiting process?"

It's important to understand the answers to these questions, so here they are:

First, the **college volleyball recruiting process is just that – a "process."** It includes steps that players and coaches take to move from initial communication to a verbal commitment. During a player's senior year, signing a National Letter of Intent or accepting an invitation or admittance into the school solidifies their roster spot.

Second, the **recruiting process works through steps** that make up the process as a whole. **To make these steps clearer for you,** I have outlined them below based on my experience as the parent of a D1 college player and as a recruiting advisor.

Third, it's best to **start the process as a freshman or sophomore** … at the latest. This sets you up for a smoother, less stressful journey to a verbal commitment, which you'll make as a junior or early in your senior year.

Here are the 10 steps **THE PLAYER** should take during the recruiting process:

Step 1: Create your college volleyball **TARGET LIST** (20-40 schools).

Step 2: Create your **HIGHLIGHT VIDEO** (2-3 minutes).

Step 3: Send **INTRO EMAILS** to your target list. (Include your highlight video link and ask this question: *"Do you need my position in (your grad year)?"*)

Step 4: Depends on **RESPONSE OR NON-RESPONSE** from each school. From this point on, each school on your target list is its own mini-recruiting process within the process, meaning schools move through the recruiting process on their timeline depending on their response or non-response to your Intro Email. (I know, it sounds confusing, but it's true!).

- **Step 4-A:** If a school responds: "**No.** Done recruiting your class, don't need your position in your grad year, going in another direction, etc.," then move it to what I call your Secondary List.

- **Step 4-B:** If a school responds "**Yes,** we need your position and we like your video, etc.," respond within 24 hours and move to **Step 5**!
- **Step 4-C: NON-RESPONSE.** If the coaches from a school do not answer your email, send a Check-In Email every 2 weeks. After getting no response 5 times (arbitrary number I like), move the school to your **Secondary List**. The coach may later respond apologetically with a **"Yes,"** so then you can go to **Step 5**.

Step 5: Work to set up a **PHONE CALL** with the college coach. (Provide days and times when you are available.)

Step 6*: They **WATCH YOU PLAY** LIVE at a tournament. (During a **dead period** this means on live video or on unedited video provided by you.)

Step 7: ASSESSMENT and **COMMUNICATION CONTINUES**. (You have to be proactive and keep this going.)

- Step 7-A: Send emails thanking coaches for phone calls. Set up phone calls to get feedback after they watch you play live or virtually. Ask where you are on their list/interest level. Ask about their timing for making a decision and if they have another offer out. If it's all good, go to Step 8.
- Step 7-B: Tactfully, find out the offer on the table (walk-on, full or partial scholarship, etc.). If this works for your family, go to Step 8.
- Step 7-C: At this point, if they take another player or decide to go in another direction, move to the Secondary List. Note: Always send thank you emails for their time and wish them the best.

Step 8*: Work to set up an **UNOFFICIAL CAMPUS VISIT**. Meet the coaches and players, watch practice and see weight room, tour the campus, etc. During a Dead Period, this can be a formal "virtual meeting" with coaches, staff, you and your parents. You and your parents can also drive around the campus and town.

Step 9*: COMMUNICATION CONTINUES WITH STRONG INTEREST between you and the coaches.

- **Step 9-A*: Talk to the players** virtually, by phone or message through Instagram during a Dead Period. Ask questions and get to know them like "Why do they like playing volleyball for this program? What do they like about the school?".
- **Step 9-B:** Assess the status and **what needs to happen for you to receive an offer**. For example, they may need to watch you play live after Dead Period ends or see if you get into the school.
- **Step 9-C: Complete the tasks or steps** in Step 9-B as soon as possible.

Step 10*: OFFER TO BE A STUDENT-ATHLETE at their school. This comes after the coach verbally (over the phone during a Dead Period) offers you a roster spot and possibly some type of scholarship (whatever was on the table in Step 7-B) and you accept the offer and verbally commit to play volleyball and attend this school.

These steps are affected by "Dead Periods" (when college coaches **cannot have face-to-face interaction with players or parents and **cannot** watch players compete in person).*

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

HOW TO EMAIL COLLEGE COACHES

Emailing college volleyball coaches can be daunting and scary for high school volleyball players. My daughter went through the recruiting process, and emailing coaches was a huge struggle for us.

One night after club practice I said to her, "You have 17 emails to get out tonight before we leave for the Spokane qualifier." She said, "And I have to pack and do homework and…" We had not planned well, so it was a hectic and late night!

As you can imagine, emailing coaches is time-consuming and stressful when you also have homework, club practice, weight lifting, studying ... whatever! It's one of the hardest things about the recruiting process. If you can manage it, it's a good sign that you can handle playing volleyball in college. Being a high school student-athlete and going through the recruiting process is like a mini-prep class for being a collegiate student-athlete.

Here are 3 reasons why it's so important to email college coaches:

1. They NEED to know WHO YOU ARE, and they NEED to know that you have strong interest in their school and understand why you want to go there and play for their program. If coaches don't have this information, you're just a needle in a haystack waiting to be found.
2. Sending an email is HOW YOU START THE RECRUITING PROCESS WITH A SCHOOL and the best and easiest way to communicate with college coaches. You need to find out as soon as you can ... **do they need your position in your grad year?** If they respond, you can move forward in the recruiting process with a YES from them or a NO.
3. Emailing is the best way TO SEND VIDEO and KEEP CHECKING IN. Division 1 college coaches cannot respond to athletes directly until Sept. 1 of their junior year in high school. You can still begin emailing coaches as a freshman and sophomore, so they know who you are and can mark you down in their database to watch you play. Your club or high school coach can serve as your "go-between" because college coaches can't email, call or text you back except through your coach or a third party who is NOT your parent. Division 2 coaches can return your call or email after June 15th before your junior year, a little earlier than Division 1 coaches. Division 3 coaches can return your emails and phone calls anytime.

Now that I've talked about why it's important to email coaches, I'll provide some tips on HOW to do it.

1. **Always have a professional, polite and excited tone in your emails, while letting your personality shine through.** I suggest starting with "Dear Coach XXX and Coach YYY" to the head coach and associate head coach or assistant coach.
2. **Look up the coaches' email addresses and research the program by searching/Googling.** For example, "Tennessee volleyball," then go to the volleyball website. Read about the program record, rank in their conference/in the country, accomplishments, roster. Watch video, go to the main academic website and make sure they have your major/area of study. You'll find the coaches' emails under the "Inside Athletics"

tab and the "Staff Directory" in the drop-down menu. Scroll down to "Volleyball." Or you can search/ Google "Tennessee Volleyball Staff Directory" to go straight to the emails.

3. Send the "Intro Email with Video" to the head coach and assistant coach and CC the 3rd coach, if there is one. When one of the coaches responds, reply back to that coach and "CC" the other coaches. You always want the head coach to know your name, know about you and to know about communication that is going on between you and the coaching staff.
4. The **"Intro Email with Video"** will be the longest email you send because you are introducing yourself to the coaches. I like the emails to be organized by paragraphs like this:
    - Express your interest in their school and playing for their volleyball program. "I'm contacting you to let you know I'm very interested in attending (name of school) and playing volleyball for your program."
    - Describe yourself, grad year, position, height, etc. Include the name of your club team and where you are from. List your high school volleyball accomplishments and awards, if applicable.
    - Talk about your academics, GPA, class ranking, student council (other notable activities), major or area you want to study. (Make sure the school has what you want to study!)
    - Explain why you want to attend that specific college and why you want to play volleyball for that specific program. (You should have good reasons or the school would not be on your list! This is where you have to do a little research, if you don't know specifics about the school and the program.)
    - Let the coaches know where you will be competing. I like a short sentence and then a bullet-pointed schedule within the body of the email. You can add a personal sentence like, "I would love if you can watch my team and I play!"
    - Thank them for their time and say something like, "Please provide me with any information you may have concerning your needs for a (your grad year) (your position) and if you think I would be a possible fit for your program. I look forward to hearing from you and learning more about your program!"
    - Sign off with "Sincerely" or "Thank you," your first and last name with contact information below. Then, under your name, list your club coach and his/her contact information.

5. **The subject line should look like this:** DIANNE DENECOCHEA 2020 6'4" 6-Rotation Pin Hitter, GPA 3.8. The key is to highlight your strengths! If your approach jump touch is 10 feet or more, put that in the subject line along with your GPA (if it's around 3.5 and up). If you're about to compete at a qualifier, add that at the end of the subject line for **"Check-In/Update Emails."** Here's a good format to follow: YOUR NAME, GRAD YEAR, POSITION, HEIGHT (if helpful), GPA (if 3.5 and above), (NOTABLES - jump touch 10 ft. and up, etc.) - Competing at XXX Qualifier/JO's/AAUs, etc. (if applicable)
6. Send **"Check-In/Update Emails"** leading up to tournaments/qualifiers/JOs/AAUs – anywhere that coaches will possibly be and could watch you play – if they need your position in your grad year or they haven't

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

responded yet that they do or don't. Every batch of emails you send throughout your season (and even during high school season) after your **"Intro Email with Video"** is to ask them to watch you play at your next tournament, update them with new video, update them on a recent tournament, thank them for watching you play, etc. These are shorter emails that serve as reminders and reasons to email them and keep in touch. I like these emails to express your continued interest in their school and have you taking action or asking the coach to take action to move the recruiting process forward towards a call, visit, clinic…what's happening next.

7. **If you receive an email from a college coach, always respond either the same day or the next day.** Thank them for the email and, after you have done your research on the school and are interested in continuing the recruiting process with them, send an **"Intro email with video"** that is tailored as a thank you response to them for contacting you.
8. **If you receive a generic, standard email or camp invite from a school that looks like it was sent to a lot of players, you should still respond right away – if you are interested in the school.** Thank them the same way I described in #6. If the coach asks you to fill out the **Recruit Questionnaire,** do it and send a separate email thanking them and letting them know you completed the questionnaire.
9. **Rule of thumb: always be the last one to make contact.** Never have the college coach be the last one to send you an email to which you never responded. Even if you are NOT interested in the school, thank them for reaching out and let them know you are pursuing other opportunities.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

WHAT TEXTBOOKS DON'T TEACH YOU ABOUT COACHING

Coaching isn't about X's and O's. *You can learn the X's and O's. The bigger question is, "Do you have the leadership skills to have a great program?" Here are the keys that extend beyond volleyball:*

How do you inspire people?

- Players: Do you know which buttons to push and when? (Pull back vs. pushing them.)
    - Each player is different. Treat them as such.

How often and how well do you communicate?

- **Over communicate:** Don't assume they know what you think they do. For instance, if you sit a kid with a knee injury vs. a bad team, make sure it's clear to them why they are not playing.
    - Anything out of the norm must be fully communicated because players won't ask you.
    - Playtime is huge. Explain why they are being pulled.
    - Explain why you are or are not taking a day off, etc.

Are you STABLE?

- Players should know who is coming to practice each day.
- Trying to inspire shouldn't come off as "mental games."
- If you are losing control of yourself in anger, you need to do some self-reflection.

Develop standard procedures for complaints/problems

- Will vary depending on the level of your team.
- Ask other successful coaches at your level what they do.
    - "Steal" their ideas.
        - For example: "Parent meeting must take place with player there."

Document

- Inevitably there will be issues
    - Document anything controversial. Date and what happened.
    - If having meetings, ideally have an additional person with you.
    - Keep your boss/administrator in the know. Again, over-communicate. (Player will be benched, someone is upset, someone got in trouble, etc.)

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

How do you handle crisis?

- They follow your lead. You must fake confidence even if you're not confident.
  - Injury to a star player? Food poisoning? Global pandemic?
  - What if you hit traffic and you are 30 minutes late for arrival? How do you respond?
  - Learn to watch your body language. Have someone watch you and give feedback. Ask your team.

How do you manage/retain your staff?

- Empower them.
  - Delegate important jobs.
  - Praise in public.
  - Give them a voice.
  - Control a rogue assistant coach.
  - Inspire loyalty.
  - Sometimes go with their idea even when you think another option might be best – and praise them if their idea ends up being better.
- Russ Rose: "I've seen great coaches fail with bad staffs, and good coaches have great success with great staffs."

Be receptive to player and assistant coaches' ideas/feedback?

1. If a player has the guts to talk with you, be receptive. If you're not receptive, they will tell teammates (and potentially parents).
2. Can your assistant disagree with you? (Must be done privately.)

How organized are you?

- This can get great X and O's coaches in trouble. Some just don't think it's a big deal. Why does it matter if I adjust a practice time at the last minute? It does matter to many, so it should also matter to you!
- If you aren't organized, get someone with you who is. You can still be highly successful.

Can you recognize what you do well and what you don't?

- Hard to look at yourself and ask others for honest feedback.
- Hire people that help you with your deficiencies. At the college level, I have seen people hire friends/alums because it is comfortable. Is this really going to make you great?
- Assess what you are great at. Process what you don't do as well.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

Can you make lemons out of lemonade?

- Someone always has more than you do (or less).
- Develop youth in your area.
- Volunteers (gear, praise, title, reference, food, etc.)
- Find ways to get uniforms – fundraise. ASK PEOPLE FOR HELP!
- Don't be one of those coaches who focus on what they DON'T have compared with what they DO have.
- Do the legwork (with the help of your staff/volunteers) to get fans in the stands.

Are you someone that you'd send your daughter/son to play for?

- Are you looking out for your player's best interests as PEOPLE?
    - Not playing doesn't mean you shouldn't care about them as a person.
- Are you teaching them to be better people and better athletes?
- Do you role model this behavior?
- What are you willing to do to win championships?

Be true to yourself

- Lots of "right" ways to coach. Find what is true to who you are and be GREAT at being you!

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

TERRY LISKEVYCH (3-TIME USA OLYMPIC COACH)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COACHING FEMALE ATHLETES

1. Men are hierarchical (top to bottom leadership); women rely on connectedness–their network. Female leaders bring the group together.
2. Men admire leadership that exhibits a powerful presence. They are led by the will of the leader. Women would like their leader (coach) to value them as a person. Quote from Anson Dorrance, University of North Carolina women's soccer coach (22 national championships): "They could care less how much you know until they know how much you care."
3. Women need additional incentives beyond winning. You as a coach should emphasize process vs. outcome. As per psychologist Carol Dweck: As a coach you should emphasize a "growth mindset" – praise hard work and effort, do not praise ability and talent.
4. Good team chemistry is critical to the success of female teams. Thus, emphasize:
    - Team culture
    - Team building
    - Mutual respect and trust – If mutual respect is established coach to player, then you as a coach can much more easily push a player and give them corrective feedback.) Respect needs to be a two-way street for all on the team:
        - Players to players
        - Coach to players
        - Players to coach
        - A good idea is to give your team 8-10 minutes to chat/talk/socialize at the beginning of practice. You can insert this as part of your warmup.

5. Cliques: Forming cliques is natural for any team, but particularly with female teams – especially at young ages. Some ideas how to disarm cliques:
    - Assign partners and groups in practice. You can also count off "1-2-3, 1-2-3."
    - Outside of practice (at team functions/meal/etc.) organize seating charts/groupings. Intermingle ages, classes.

6. Communication: You cannot over-communicate. Make sure that you as the coach:
    - Make the communication two-way.
    - Listen more (or at least as much) as you talk.
    - Check in with your players regularly (even it is for only a few minutes – during warmup, outside of practice, etc.)
    - Example of retired Stanford head coach John Dunning checking in with his All-American setter Madi Bugg. "How is the purchase of your new car going?" Nothing to do with volleyball but showing player that you care about them outside of the game.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

7. “Catch them being good.” This is a quote from the late Tony DiCicco, head coach of the 1999 USA Women’s Soccer World Cup Champions. Tony and team psychologist Dr. Colleen Hacker emphasized that coaches of female teams must give recognition and praise to players as they correctly execute a skill, a technique, and/or any desired behavior.
    - Recognize a player’s improvement and hard work.
    - Recognize effort vs. outcome

8. Confidence is critical with female teams, especially young players.
    - Build their self-esteem. It’s important to how they think about themselves.
    - My former assistant coach, the late Greg Giovanazzi, would have USA players put this quote on their bedroom mirrors: “I am a great athlete. I am a great volleyball player. I am a great person.”

9. Leadership - Team Captains
    - Until they reach ages 17-18, rotate your captains – every week, every month, every match.
    - Have your seniors be the captains, no vote.
    - As per Kathy DeBoer, Executive Director of AVCA, in choosing a captain instead of a straight vote – prepare a questionnaire to find the best leader or most reliable player.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

RUSS ROSE (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COACHING FEMALE ATHLETES

Observations

- I coached both genders the same but did notice some differences over the years and have spent a majority of my life working at the collegiate level with females. In general, guys felt they should be playing and they held a key role in the success of the team while I had a number of female players over the years that were looking for any way that they could contribute to the success of the team.
- I have conducted camps that were primarily for females for 40-plus years and talked about competition and what it takes to excel but taught skills and the benefits of team play.
- In the early years after TITLE IX was established in 1972, I think the players were more appreciative of an opportunity to have coaching and the things that their mothers and older siblings didn't have available.
- Female teams were more likely to establish cliques. At times these cliques were natural, and at other times they were political and detrimental. I always talk to my older players about trying to show the younger players the right way and not the shorTexas Christian Universityts.
- I think both genders have examples of individuals that are very competitive. Some of our best teams had more players that embraced that mentality, but I don't necessarily feel that they were like that all the time.
- It's my experience that female players would prefer to talk things out in more situations; guys might resort to some physical confrontations or just go get drunk. Not to say that I haven't had some female players with that thought process.
- I felt the girls were more emotional and quicker to cry and yet less likely to ignore something that a teammate may have said or done to them in the past.

General keys to success coaching female athletes

- Coaches need to listen and have the ability to communicate with their players, which is easier at the college level if you have a staff, sports psychologist, etc.
- Captains make a difference and can really guide the growth set of a season. It's tough when leadership is lacking. High school and college teams might be able to use alumni to assist in this area.
- Coaches need to be consistent. Not everyone will be treated the same, but everyone should be treated fairly.
- I try to have an open-door policy and a no-judgement position on choices. But ultimately, I am responsible for the team.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

5 THINGS I CHANGED ABOUT MY COACHING

1. My coaching style changed as I aged. Players saw/heard/reacted to me differently than they did in earlier stages of my coaching life. I had to always be myself, but I calculated how I would do things because I was different than I used to be.
2. I came to realize later in my coaching career that much more of our time in the gym had to be centered around competing.
3. Things became a matter of fact. The boundaries of team culture need to be very clear, and the coach is the person who has to enforce the rules. It was much easier to do this later in my career because I didn't get as caught up in feelings, etc. I was just matter of fact in how I dealt with things.
4. I also became more open to change and open to hearing the thoughts of others because the game was evolving quickly. I don't like changing things because of what other teams are doing, but if the sets are faster, then we have to react differently in some way to stop our opponents. Change is forced on us. My way was no longer the highway; it was a well-thought-out road that might be rerouted if necessary.
5. I became more balanced. I have always cared deeply about family and friends, but I just wanted to work harder than others. I eventually realize that I could be dedicated, efficient, have others know how committed I was, but still share my life with family and friends more and more and still be good at coaching my team.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

TAMMY LEIBL (WAVE VOLLEYBALL CLUB)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 COACHING LAWS TO LIVE BY

1. Practice the way you want to play
    - Really work on having a purpose and not just going through the motions. From the way you pepper to a competitive drill, be disciplined in all your skills. You can always be improving.
2. Compliment more than you critique
    - I give a lot of constructive criticism, but players really need and want to hear the good things they are trying to do.
3. Over-communicate
    - Players want to hear from you. It solves a lot of problems if you talk to them about things like why they are not playing as much or why they were taken out of a game. More is better in these situations.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

JILL KRAMER (TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY)

CONNECTING WITH TODAY'S PLAYERS

"The more we change, the more things stay the same."

Know your role

- Empower young athletes
  - Communicate clearly
  - Be attentive
  - Be consistent
  - Be compassionate
  - Motivate
- Why do players want to be around you?
  - Love life
  - Put a 10 on everyone's head
  - Give them hope
  - Share yourself – "Othermindedness"

Communicate

- Individuals
  - Meetings: No agenda. No volleyball unless they bring it up
  - Text them to check in – be yourself
    - Big tests, projects, birthdays, etc.
  - Goal-setting sessions
  - Mid-season volleyball chat
  - End-of-season volleyball chat
- Team
  - Culture meetings
  - Community service
  - Team meals
  - Team retreats
- Parents
  - Expectations letter
  - Concerns

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JILL KRAMER (TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY)

Attentive

- Listen in meetings/conversations . . . REALLY listen.
- Give players all of your attention when you are with them.
- Don't ignore their cries for attention.
- Allow yourself to learn from your players.

Be consistent from …

- Day to day
- Player to player
- Drill to drill

Give social time

Stay team-focused

Be compassionate

- Lead by example
  - Always see the good in your players
  - Be curious, not judgmental
  - Where is your focus? Relationships = Results
  - Care about your players more than you care about winning
- Realize your impact
  - When they do something good, tell them

Motivate

- Find out what "lights their fire"
- Teach them to be generous
  - Inspire one another
- Give them "ownership" of the team
- Help players thrive

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

JILL KRAMER (TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY)

Jill's Do's

- Spend extra time with players (i.e. eat meals with the team)
- Give them room to be themselves
- Help them understand that every "ripple" matters
- Teach them to take care of details
- Learn about "their world"
    - Get in touch with technology – learn how they like to communicate
    - Find out what it's like to grow up in today's world

Jill's Don'ts

- Assume anything
    - For example, don't assume that they understand what it's like to be a part of a team or that they are self-disciplined
- Over manage
- Break trust
- Make it about you
- Use sarcasm

Game management / post-game management

- Directly correlates to how you manage your players outside of competition
- When things are tough is when they need you the most – when real relationships are built

Helpful tools

- Your players (past & present)
- Social media
- "Emotional Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman
- "Social Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

This is a written plan (with accompanying video available online) to help you organize the first four weeks of the season. On each page of the practice plan you'll find a QR code. Scan the QR code with your phone's camera to view the practice plan and accompanying videos online.

Watch Practice Videos

Level: Mid-level high school or club program

Time: 120 minutes per session

Number of practices: 5 sessions per week for Weeks 1 & 2; 4 sessions per week for Weeks 3 & 4 (allowing for competition)

PRACTICE OUTLINE

Skill Priorities – in order of importance to daily plan

1. Movements of the game: Run, shuffle, jump, land, movement in the air
2. General ball control skills (forearm, overhead, hand/ball contact when attacking)
3. Attack/side out offense
4. Serve
5. Pass
6. Setting
7. Defense
8. Block

Team Building

Fitness

Volleyball School – terminology, system, key aspects of skill development

General Practice Philosophy

- Focus on repetition of skill or game-related situations
- Focus on movements of the game
- Focus on skill-specific contacts
- Focus on game-related drills with feedback

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 1

Watch Practice Videos

Focus of the five sessions:

1. Movement skills
2. Skill introduction
3. Ball control activities
4. Attack priority
5. Small group game-related activities

WEEK 1, DAY 1

Coach Education

- Use of Keywords
- Russ Rose on Team Strengths

Practice Plan

- Warmup
  - Warmup with Catching – Mark Rosen
  - Pass/Switch (A) Set; B) Pass; C) Set/pass) – Mark Rosen
  - 3-Touch Pepper – Jim Stone
- Defense
  - Training Defense (Instructional) – Russ Rose
  - Toss/Collapse – Lizzy Stemke
  - Parallel lines – Lizzy Stemke
- Serve/Pass
  - Float Serve (Instructional) – Terry Liskevych
  - Serve/Pass from Different Angles – Mark Barnard
- Attack
  - Instructional – Kevin Hambly
  - Back Row Attack – Jen DeJarld
    - Note: I tend to begin the attack phase with back-row attack repetitions. Attack from off the net encourages better arm swing mechanics, forcing the player to reach high to the ball.
- Team Play
  - 5 vs. 5 Dig with one block – Russ Rose
- Practice Review

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WEEK 1, DAY 2

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

1. Block Footwork
2. Attack Footwork
3. Setter Fundamentals

Focus

1. Footwork
2. Setter training
3. Skill development
4. Incorporate blocking into defensive drills
5. Transition footwork – block to attack
6. Serve/pass contacts

Practice Plan

- Warmup
  - Block Warmup Without Ball
  - Attack Arm Swing – Mike Sealy
    - Encourage players to hit the ball to partner so the ball is caught by partner. Discourage hitting the ball into the floor.
  - Attack Footwork – John Dunning
- Ball Control
  - Triangle Setting – Lizzy Stemke
  - Triangle Pepper – Debbie Brown
  - Setter Training
- Skill Work
  - Block Transition 2 Ball – Ben Josephson
  - Pass (World Series) – Mike Sealy
  - Hitter vs. Blocker (modify, will play from serve, no triple block) – Mark Barnard
- Teamwork
  - Pass to Attack (work both left-side and right-side attackers) – Russ Rose
  - Bingo (focus on serve, attack or defensive items) – Karch Kiraly
- Review Practice – Focus on blocking footwork and transition and the Bingo game activities.

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 1, DAY 3

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Dealing with Failure

Focus

1. Footwork
2. Setter training
3. Skill development
4. Begin middle attack work
5. Transition footwork – block to attack
6. Serve/Pass Contacts

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Movement
  - Northwestern 3-step Warmup – Shane Davis
  - Defense – Debbie Brown
- Skill Work
  - Setter (Footwork) – Lauren Carlini
  - Setter (Triangles) – Lauren Carlini
  - Setter-Middle Connection – Gretchen Hunt
  - While setters and middles work together, outsides and back row passers work on serve receive
  - Pass and Cover – Mike Sealy
- Team Work
  - Pass to Attack (focus on outside attack vs. block) – Glenn Hoag
  - Middle Hitter Transition – John Dunning
  - Competition (5 vs. 5 LF vs. LF) – Jim Stone
  - 3 before 5 (from serve) – Christy Johnson-Lynch
- Practice Review

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

WEEK 1, DAY 4

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Passing from John Dunning

Focus

1. Serve/pass
2. Transition attack
3. Build on middle attack
4. Side out offense

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - Butterfly Pass to Attack – Dave Shoji
  - Dig/Cover – Debbie Brown
- Skill Work
  - Serve – Tod Mattox
  - Rapid Passing – Debbie Brown
  - Serve/Pass (10 before 4) – Doug Reimer
- Team Work
  - Side Out Offense – Emphasis on Perfect Pass – Tom Hilbert
  - Pendulum Drill (focus on consecutive positive contacts) – Moira Long
- Practice Review

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 1, DAY 5

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Serve Ritual – Russ Rose

Focus

1. Begin to place priority on quality, consecutive contacts
2. Skill Work – priority on side out offense
3. Lots of 6 vs. 6 – evaluate skills to help plan for next training session

Practice Plan

- Warmup
  - 1 vs. 1 – Tod Mattox
  - Over the Net Pepper – Debbie Brown
- Skill Work
  - Serve/Pass 5 before 3 – Kelly Sheffield
- Team Work
  - First Ball Side Out (FBSO) – Mark Barnard
  - End of Game 11-11 – Russ Rose
- Practice Review
  - Focus: FBSO percentage. This early in the season, a reasonable goal might be over 50%.
  - How are Serve/Pass skills?
  - Set distribution – Are your middles getting sufficient swings?

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WEEK 2

Watch Practice Videos

WEEK 2, DAY 1

Coach Education

- Getting Your Team to Buy In – Terry Liskevych

Focus for the Week

- Competition coming close, so side out offense is a focus
- Skill work, with focus on serve receive and serve, setter consistency
- Team building
- Consistency of execution
- Team building: body language – Diane Flick-Williams

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - Shuttle Warmup – Bill Neville
  - Neville Pepper – Kevin Hambly
- Skill Work
  - For the Setter: Footwork – Audrey Flaugh
  - Wave Serve Receive – Karin Keeney
  - 3x3 Hitting with Setter – Debbie Brown
- Team Work
  - Side Out Team Drill – Kevin Hambly
  - Side Out Drill with Focus on S/R (identify the targeted passer) – Glenn Hoag
- End of Practice Drill
  - Box Serve Drill (target number of successful contacts) – Joy Tietz
- Evaluate Practice

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 2, DAY 2

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

1. Organizing Serve Receive Formations – Tim Embaugh
2. Attacking – Mark Barnard / Ben Josephson

Focus

- Continue work on side out offense and organizing reception pattern
- Some block and transition work
  - Out-of-system offense
- Continue focus on skill development – block and out-of-system attack

Practice Plan

- Warmup
  - Foot Movement – Cary Wendell Wallin
  - One Arm Ball Control – Tod Mattox
  - 21 Down Serve Receive Drill – Mark Barnard
- Skill Work
  - 1 vs. 1 Hit/Block Transition – Cathy George
  - Out-of-System Attacking – Beth Launiere
  - Out-of-System Drill – Jim Stone
- Team
  - Side out 3 before 2 Drill – Debbie Brown
- End of Practice
  - Serve Under Elastic – Paco Labrador

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WEEK 2, DAY 3

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Communicating with Athletes

Focus

1. Defense and blocking
2. Transition offense

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - 20 Dynamic Exercises – Marie Zidek
  - Zone Serve – Mike Talamantes
  - Pin to Pin Pepper – Jess Mahoney
- Skill Work
  - Player Education: Elastic Blocking – Dan Meske
  - 2 Ball Blocking Drill – Kirsten Bernthal Booth
  - Block and Coverage Reps – Debbie Brown
  - 3 vs. 6 Block – Tom Hilbert
- Team Work
  - Error Correction – Russ Rose
  - Decommissioned Setter – Marie Zidek
  - 3.0 Team Drill – Mark Rosen

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 2, DAY 4

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Team/Individual Goals – Kirsten Bernthal Booth
- Serve Receive – Andrew Clifton

Focus

1. Individual defense/ ball control in skill work
2. Serve/pass
3. Team play (emphasis on transition and competition)

Practice Plan

- Warmup
  - 20 Dynamic Exercises (pick 5) – Marie Zidek
  - 4 Corner Serve/Pass – Joe Sagula
  - Pepper Series – Kirsten Bernthal Booth
- Defensive Drills
  - Dig and Rotate – Dani Busboom Kelly
  - Positional Digging – Russ Rose
  - Defend the Middle Attack – Brent Hilliard
- Team Drills
  - USA Transition Drill – Sean Byron
  - Head to Head Competition (keep track of winners/losers) – Mark Rosen
- End of Practice Competition
  - Serve/Pass Competition – Mark Rosen

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WEEK 2, DAY 5

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Attack Improvement – Karch Kiraly

Focus

1. With competition starting next week, practice game warmup
2. End of practice week, lots of game-play working with different lineups

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - Game warmup
  - Ball Control Drill – Russ Rose
  - Sideline Serve – John Dunning
- Team Drills
  - Scavenger Hunt – Cathy George
  - 3 Sets to 25
    - Monitor serve, pass, attack statistics to begin to put together roles and systems for first match.
    - Priority on side out percentage, serve effectiveness and serve receive errors.
    - What are strengths and weaknesses of the team? Plan upcoming practices that will focus on how we can develop strengths to a greater level.

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 3

Watch Practice Videos

Focus for the Week

1. First match in 5 days
2. Focus on skill work with continued emphasis on team offensive and defensive system
3. Begin to assign roles and positions on serve receive, defense and side out offense
4. Reviewing team goals for the competitive season with an emphasis on the importance of the continued development of individual skills is critical to team development

WEEK 3, DAY 1

Coach Education

- Match Preparation – Glenn Hoag

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - Arm swing progression (repeat) – Dave Shondell
  - Ball Control Drills – Dave Shondell
- Skill Development
  - 2.4 Passing Drill – Kevin Hambly
  - Middle Hitter Transition – Karch Kiraly
  - +7 – Mark Barnard
- Team/System
  - Game Situation Wash Drill – John Dunning
  - Transition Drill – Glenn Hoag

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WEEK 3, DAY 2

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Technical Analysis of Serve Receive – John Dunning

Focus

1. Serve receive patterns and areas of responsibility
2. Side out offense
3. Out-of-system offense

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - Warmup Matters – Joe Virga
  - 3-Person Setting – Jim Stone
  - Warmup Drill for Serve and Pass – Debbie Brown
- Skill Work
  - Reading the Serve – Diane Flick-Williams
  - Passing Fundamentals – Mick Haley
  - Attack Footwork – Mike Sealy
- Team
  - 6 vs. 6 Warmup – Russ Rose
  - First Ball Side Out – Mark Barnard
  - Drills to Improve Out-of-System Play – Michael Seemann
- Practice Review
  - What was side out percentage? What was First Ball Side Out Percentage?
  - What was the quality of swings in out-of-system plays?
  - Are we improving our communication in the serve receive patterns?

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 3, DAY 3

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

1. Squeezing More Points Out of Your Lineup – Marie Zidek
2. Game Planning – Russ Rose

Focus

1. First match in two days
2. Work on both offensive and defensive systems
3. Serve and pass contacts

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - China Ball Control – Dani Busboom Kelly
  - Box Drill – Terry Liskevych
- Skill Work
  - Passing Ladder – Christy Johnson-Lynch
- Team/System
  - Bingo – Karch Kiraly
    - Think of the items you want on your list; focus on weak areas or strengths
  - Refuse to Lose – Mark Rosen
  - One set to 25 points with starting unit, one set to 15
- Serve
  - Tarp Drill

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WEEK 3, DAY 4

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

1. Game Plan – Russ Rose

Focus

1. Day before first match
2. Shorter session, high-intensity reps, toss in free balls, down balls
3. Finish with serve/pass

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - Brazilian Ball Control – Cathy George
  - Two-Contact Pepper – Jesse Mahoney
- Team/System Work
  - First Team Challenge – Jim Stone
  - Avalanche Drill – Ray Bechard
  - 23-23 Competition Drill – Russ Rose
- Serve /Pass
  - Competitive Pass Drill – Mike Sealy
- Review
  - Organize for first match: warmup, captains, goals
  - Lineup, roles for subs
  - Focus will be on how we play, not so much the opponent.
  - Skill goals: Side out percentage, unforced errors, etc., avoid consecutive point runs by opponent

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 4, DAY 1

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Evaluation of Play – Joe Trinsey
- Defensive Posture – Ben Josephson

Focus for the Week

1. Evaluate first match. What were the positives? What needs to be worked on?
2. Review individual performances, establish improvement plan
3. Skill work, first two days; team focus second two day

Practice Plan

- Warmup
  - 4 vs. 4 Cooperative – John Dunning
  - Serve Progression Drill – Craig Skinner
- Skill Work
  - Defense Dig and Sprawl – Dani Busboom Kelly
  - Individual Defense – Debbie Brown
  - Attack over the Elastic – Mark Rosen
  - 5-3-5-3 Passing – Terry Liskevych
- Team/System
  - 1 vs. 1 Variations – Russ Rose
    - Various positions attacking, incorporate back-row attack?
- Final Drill: Precision Serving – Terry Liskevych

***Note:** Limited team play today, mostly skill development. Team play will come later in the week.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WEEK 4, DAY 2

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

1. The Liskevych 5 – Terry Liskevych
2. Communicating the Game Plan – Mike Sealy / Christy Johnson-Lynch
3. Setter Fundamentals – Mark Barnard / Ben Josephson

Focus

1. Multi-player drills that focus on transition from defense to offense
2. Serve and pass contacts
3. Setter work during warmup on different court

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control/Setter Training
- Setter Training
  - Improve the Setter's Speed to the Ball – Gina Schmidt
  - Setting the Almost Perfect Pass – Sean Byron
  - Game-Like Setting – Christy Johnson-Lynch
- Team Warmup
  - Ball Control – Mike Sealy
  - Half-court to full-court warmup – Mike Sealy
  - Dig, Set, Cover Drill – Debbie Brown
  - Overhead Digging – Dani Busboom Kelly
- Skill Work
  - Dig, Set, Hit – Terry Liskevych
  - Defense using BOSU Ball – Mark Barnard
  - Serve Receive Ladder – Christy Johnson-Lynch
- Team/System Drills (fast pace drills)
  - Speed Demon Rally Drills – Mark Barnard
  - Outside Hitter vs. Defense – Russ Rose
  - FBSO Drill – Mark Barnard
- End of Practice
  - Serve Drill – Mark Barnard

4-WEEK PRACTICE PLAN

JIM STONE (USA YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM, 2007-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 4, DAY 3

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

- Leadership – Debbie Brown

Focus

1. Team play with focus on side out offense repetitions for 1st unit

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - One, Two, Three Passing – Tod Mattox
  - Clump in Serve Receive – Mark Rosen
  - Defensive Drill to Create Competitive Mindset – David Beach
- Skill Development
  - Defensive Work: Coach on Box – Doug Reimer
  - Blocking the Slide – John Dunning
- Team Play
  - 6 v. 6 with Score that Values Serve/Pass – Doug Reimer
  - Side Out/Multi-Ball Drill – Kevin Hambly
- Practice Review
  - Discuss upcoming competition, establish performance goals.
  - Speak with individuals about performance goals for the weekend.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WEEK 4, DAY 4

Watch Practice Videos

Coach Education

1. Building Confidence – John Dunning
2. Redefine Perfection – Andrea Becker

Focus

1. Shorter practice, lots of reps, fast-tempo drills
2. Serve/Pass
3. End-of-set situations

Practice Plan

- Warmup/Ball Control
  - Small Group-Dig, Set, Hit – Terry Liskevych
  - Two-Contact Pepper – Jesse Mahoney
- Skill Work
  - 21 Down Serve Receive – Terry Liskevych
- Team Play
  - Middle Hitter Transition – Doug Reimer
  - FBSO Drill – Lizzy Stemke
  - 23-23 Competition Drill – Russ Rose
- Review
  - Match tomorrow
  - Scout Report
  - Goals

DESIGNING DRILLS

MAKING DRILLS FUN

Identify what makes it fun for your team

- Specialization or no specialization
- Competitive or cooperative
- New or tried and true
- Pace

Identify when it's best to use

- Start of practice
- When practice is dragging
- End of practice
- Randomly

Identify what might challenge the fun factor

- Practicing too long
- Staying with one drill for too long
- Academic pressures (mid-terms)
- Losing
- Not enough variety
- Not improving

Solicit feedback

- From current players
- From past players
- From other coaches

Set behavior expectations

- Consistency of mood coming into practice for players and coaches
- Sharing at beginning of practice
- Non-volleyball talk allowed or not allowed past a certain time of practice

DESIGNING DRILLS

JOHN DUNNING (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2001-2016)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DRILLS TO FIT INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM NEEDS

Warmup drills

- Health needs
- Level of play (age, skill)

Focused single skill drills building to higher level drills

- Passing drills
  - Passing movement in steps
  - Passing movement with setters
  - Passing movement with setters and blockers reading
  - Passing movement in 6 vs. 6 setting
- Serving drills
  - Serving with specific focus Zone 1 to Zone 5 (5 by 5)
  - Same but must get 5 in a row in the area
  - Change serving zones and target zones
  - Same idea with passers
  - Same idea in rotation
  - Same idea 6 vs. 6
- Blocking drills
  - Right front blocker training – coach hitting, hop only
  - Same – coach hitting, slide step/hop
  - Same – Coach hitting, swing block move
  - Block 1 hand left hand, I hand right hand
  - Block 3 or hut with coaches hitting
  - Block Hut only with setter setting and coach hitting
  - Block with rotation offense on other side
  - Block in 6 vs. 6 situation
  - Attacking
  - Setting
  - Reading
  - Individual defense
  - Transition

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- System drills
  - Team serve receive drills
  - Team defense drills
  - Team transition drills
- Competitive/Pressure drills

DESIGNING DRILLS

MIKE SEALY (UCLA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DESIGNING DRILLS TO INCREASE PLAYER COMPETENCE

Drills should give players opportunities to become unconsciously competent. Once a player is unconsciously competent, it's vital to take the next step and progress into going live. You should be training to fail 40%.

Drills with proper contextual interference:

- Over the net half-court pepper (Pass, Pass, Pass (PPP); Pass, Set, Pass (PSP); Set, Set, Set (SSS); Pass, Set, Tip (PST); Pass, Set, Hit (PSH)
- Cross-court pepper
- Positional pepper weave
- Setter weave vs. standing reps

Addition of second contact/movement to make move more complex and game-like:

- Serve and dig reps (via coach)
- Serve, pass, set, hit, dig as team
- Set to bump or set to cover
- Block to transition hit
- Pass to cover, pass to hit
- Block vs. eye sequence setting only
- Block vs. eye sequence vs. live attackers

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WAYS TO MAKE DRILLS COMPETITIVE

1. Have a winner and a loser
    - Games to a set score: Play to 10
    - Side A has to get 8 before Side B gets 6.
        - It's good when one side has a scoring advantage in the wash drill. For example, Side A gets all the free balls, so it's easier for them to score.
        - It's also good when Side A is stronger than Side B, which is common when practicing with one Varsity team or if playing your club 15's against your club 16's team.
2. Set a goal and give them a set number of opportunities to achieve it.
    - We need to pass 15 perfect passes out of 30 balls entered.
3. Set a goal and make them hit their goal before moving to the next drill. (Be mindful that you could be in this drill the entire practice.)
    - We need to hit Zone 1 six times in a row before one mistake.
4. Set a goal and give them a specific amount of time to achieve it.
    - You have 2 minutes to side out 4 times in each rotation. This puts a lot of pressure on the serve receive.
5. Set a goal for individuals to get out of the drill.
    - After 5 good digs, you can get out of the drill.
6. Institute Big Point and Little Points in scoring
    - Both sides trade off evenly on serve receive.
    - A kill by the outside is a little point.
    - A kill by the middle is a little point.
    - A kill by the opposite is a little point.
    - Must get 3 little points to get a big point and rotate.
7. Institute bonus ball
    - Both sides must run a set play. For example: 5, 31, 8. If either side scores on the first ball, the second ball is a bonus and they can run anything they want.
    - Sometimes allow either team to score on the bonus or only allow the team that earned the bonus opportunity to score while the other team can only STOP for the win.
8. Institute Serving Zones on wash play
    - When playing a wash drill where one side is serving, call a zone. If they don't hit the zone but win the point, don't let them have a point. They get the ball back, but they don't win a point.

9. Have consequences:
    - For not achieving the goal
    - For losers
    - No effort
    - No communication
10. Have rewards:
    - For achieving the goal
    - For winners
    - For great effort
    - For great communication
11. When there is lack of effort, make them do the drill over again (consequence).
12. When there is great effort, allow them to skip the next tough drill (reward).

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

WAYS TO MAKE DRILLS COMPETITIVE

1. Every drill can be either self-competition, position competition, or team competition.
2. Add a scoreboard.
3. White board in the gym. Those who are not playing are taking stats or keeping a score/tally.
4. Challenge the player/team. Example: Need 3 to earn 1.
5. Offense vs. defense.
6. Servers vs. passers.

FAVORITE DRILLS

Waves ▼

This drill is a chance for the team to play together vs. starters/non-starters.

- Serve/down ball (or whatever type of situation you want to work on).
- If you win both, stay on offense. If not, wave through.
- Play 21 balls total. Setters/liberos switch halfway.
- Next round: Switch teammates (diagonal down grid).
- When done with three waves, there will be a setter winner, an outside hitter winner, a middle winner, an opposite winner and a libero winner.

TEMPLATE

S	OH	MB	OP	L

SAMPLE

S	OH	MB	OP	L
RC	RB	JF	HL	TF
KM	JA	CF	KR	TS
	SS	MG	ZM	

Validation Wash

A drill that targets areas that players/the team need to work on. Play a normal volleyball point. Winner receives a validation ball that mimics an area of the game needing work. For example: a certain play (3/go overload, slide/x), a type of swing (out-of-system, first-ball kill, in-system from off net). If team wins validation ball, they get a point on the board. (They validated the original play by winning the next). Rotate based on result of first ball, not validation result. If team loses validation rally, they do not get a point. Rotate based on first ball, not validation result. Play to X points.

3-2-1 Drill

A good drill for helping players develop a "scoring mentality." Play a normal game with 3 points awarded for a first ball kill on the initial side out, 2 points for the initial transition to kill by the defense, and 1 point for anything after that. Blocks are just one point. If the scoring team blocks a ball back to the offense, the offense can only get one point, but the defense is still available to transition kill for 2 points if they dig to transition.

Variation: Whistle it dead after the 3-2-1 chance. This will limit the length of the rally if you want to manage swings and limit the intensity of drill.

Recycle-Recycle-Score

Focuses on transition offense. Play normal game. Receiving team must tip/roll (recycle) to serving team. Serving team must recycle back to offense. Offense now tries to score from a recycle situation. Play out rally. 65% of volleyball is played in transition. Your ability to score from transition and recycle strategically to get a controlled ball back is very important.

FAVORITE DRILLS

KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

6 VS. 6 DRILL

Streak

Works on free ball attacking, among other things. You need two BIG points to win the drill. A hitter earns a point for their team by getting three kills before making an error OR before the other team wins the point off a kill. The team that wins the rally gets a free ball. Along with free ball attacking, this drill works on setter decision-making, blocking decision-making and players dealing with pressure. If possible, use a dry erase board to keep track of players' "streaks."

NON-6 VS. 6 DRILLS – PEPPER SERIES

2-person

High-Low Pepper

Regular pepper, but the hitter sometimes hits toward the knees and other times hits at the player's head. Works on reacting with your hands.

Hit-Tip Pepper

Regular pepper, but the hitter sometimes hits and sometimes tips. This works on the defender reacting to the ball and the hitter "selling" the tip.

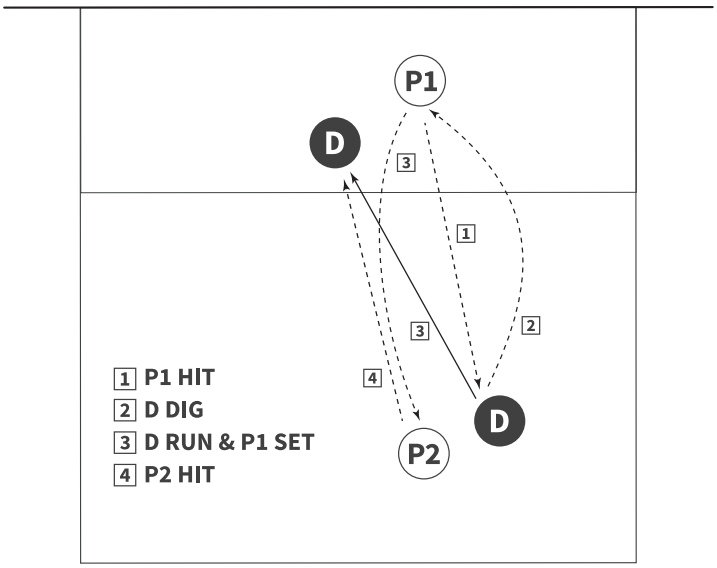
3-person

Deflection Pepper

Traditional 3-person pepper, but the person in the middle (in addition to setting) stands with their arms raised and sometimes deflects the ball. The defender has to react. It simulates the ball hitting the block and having to play off of it.

Defender Movement Pepper ▶

Traditional 2-person pepper, except instead of hitting to your partner, you are hitting at a defender who is running back and forth. Can be a conditioning drill, and also allows hitters to hit at angles rather than straight ahead.



©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

2 Contacts

Play Queen of the Court in pairs (or however many you'd like), and you can only have two contacts. For a warmup game, the players can only pass or set. Works on communication, vision, reading. Once they're warm, you can allow them to swing. This works on OOS hitting too.

NO MORE DEEP COURT! WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:

Deep Court Evolution

- Enter to challenger, must be hit over to start rally (-1 for first-ball error)
- Setter defense (add -1 scoring)
- Defenders release move (on out-of-system pass, not set)
- Attacking prep tape
- Bonus for off-speed (disguise) kills, minus for attacks to left back on lost point.
- Coverage
- "Open the net" vs. down / free balls
- Persian Rules: Enter to set, individual scoring (+ for dig, kill, - for hitting error, 0 for "No Go")

Kamikaze

- 4 v. 4 "box" configuration
- 2 blockers, 2 back row defenders
- Back-row setting
- Designate line, cross court, or both (no middle)
- Rotate after each winning point
- "Doghouse" with small team (10)
- Multiple teams with big teams (12+)

Advantages (game-like)

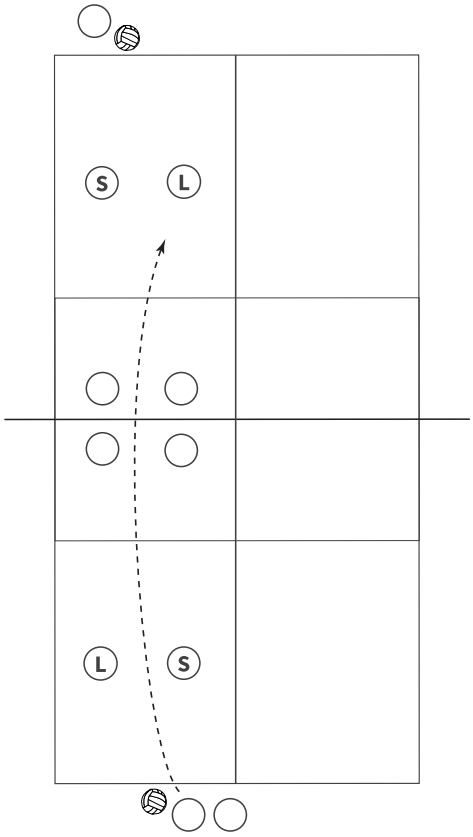
- Defend FR hitter behind block
- Blockers setting block
- Blockers make down ball decision
- Hitter transition
- Off blocker defense
- Dig high and off the net
- Out-of-system setting
- Out-of-system attacking
- Coverage
- Attackers 2nd ball defense
- Perfect complement for 6-2

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Variations

- Setter stays RB, bonus for in-system kill that setter sets
- Bonus for kill to RB
- Specialize RF and LF
- Libero stays LB
- Bonus for tooling the block
- Bonus for coverage transition
- Bonus for deflection dig
- Stanford combo scoring – USA to 21-19. Add serving/SR
- No blocker defense – FR off the net

4 vs. 4 Half Court ▶



Nice to use if you want to teach your players how to use blockers to score in FBSO situations as well as reinforce your block to have a primary and secondary focus on the opponent's offense. It also reinforces good ball control since it's a competitive drill in a finite amount of space. You can use it primarily to work on first-ball side out (FBSO), or you can use it to play normal and rally.

- Move the antenna into half of the court and put tape down to mark the new boundary.
- Have your setter and libero in the back row on each side. (There can also be progressions where you place your setter front row with 1 attacker and then use a back-row outside and DS/L as the other back-row player).
- Players who are off game-serve on each side.
- Play rally score to 3 points. (If you win the point, you earn the right to receive).
- Opponent serves the ball to the receiving side, who runs a play and attempts to terminate on first-ball contact. If the ball is hit into the block and returns to the receiving side, it can be played on.
- Once the ball is scored for the receiving side or crosses the plane of the net, it's either a point or a wash.
- The only way you can earn points in this game is by blocking the FBSO for a stuff block or by scoring on your FBSO. The rally doesn't continue beyond this FBSO attempt UNLESS the ball is blocked and covered by the attacking side.

Variations:

- Progression 2 – Exact same setup, only you can play on through the rally with normal scoring.
- Progression 3 – Same setup, but you try to earn points on service (meaning you score a point if you dig up the opponent's FBSO contact).

3 before 2

A competitive offense vs. defense hitting game that ramps up your offensive play calling and defensive shifting based on reading and execution of offense and defense in a 'controlled/live' setting. It also reinforces playing the non-stated play. Plus, it's a competitive and fun way to ramp up that adds a layer of game play beyond just doing boring hitting lines!

- Six players are live on defense in a spot they would normally play with a back row setter, libero and 3 attackers on the opposite-side offense.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

- Coach feeds in a ball either from the sideline or end-line for the offensive side to play and attack.
- The offense is free to run whatever attack patterns they wish vs. a defense that is only allowed to place the ball over with their forearms or as a free ball set. This gives the offense minimal time to reset. Ideally, it's done with 2 contacts or even one. If the attack is VERY easy, the defensive side may 'shoot it over' on one.
- The offense must get 3 IN A ROW scores before the defense gets 2 IN A ROW scores.
- Once one side wins, everybody on that winning side counts 1 point for themselves. The game is played until one player reaches 10 total points. Players switch sides and spots on the court every round on both offense and defense (within reason to where they'd play in a match).

Variations: You can make this whatever mix of setters and hitters you wish. You can also have 1 blocker, 2 blockers, or no block up on the defensive side as well. Sometimes, to limit jumps, we use blocking pads in practice.

Here are some examples of the set-up for the offensive side:

- Offensive side = 2 front-row attackers (any mixture) + 1 back-row setter + libero
- Offensive side = 1 front-row attacker + 1 front row setter + 1 back row attacker + libero
- Offensive side + 3 front-row attackers + 1 back-row setter + 1 libero

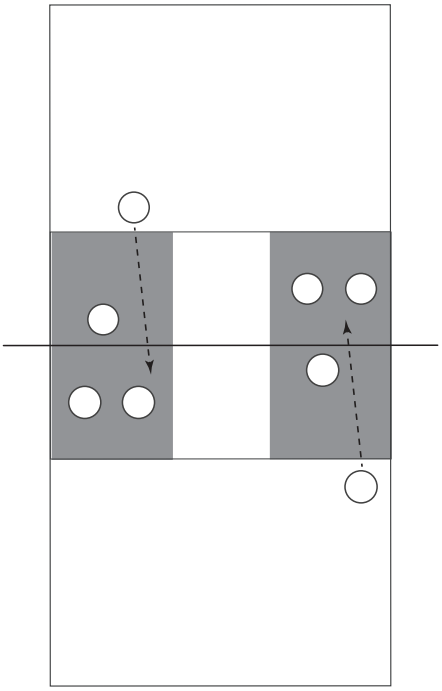
Out-of-System (OOS) Drill

Good for training out-of-system attacking. OOS attacking isn't just for your attackers to learn timing and arm swing through high-ball situations; it's for the entire cycle of play. It works on setters' defensive skills, second ball setting from your non-setters, and also your opposing block and defensive units.

The simplest form of this drill has the attacker making just one contact against a small pad up that seals the line (only 3 on defense behind). The most complex form of this drill has pin hitters in the left and right front where the libero can go either way with the second-ball set vs. a full team of 6. Scoring is 2 chances to score 1 ball with a competitive dig-set.

- Progression 1: Coach is on same side as the setter. The OOS attacker is the outside on the left side of the court that just starts off the court ready for the OOS ball. We have a libero or a back row outside start in the middle or left back. (Just pick one that you want to work on depending on your system). Hit the first ball at the setter from a line-line direction. The second ball setter comes in and uses hands or platform to play the ball toward the front-row outside. Back-court defense on the opponent side shifts and attempts to dig the ball. Hitter switches out every rep with a line of 4 hitters total. (Less than 3 hitters is a lot of jumping, so try to keep your out-of-system group 3 attackers or more.)
- Progression 2: Exact same work up and start but done from the opposite pin (setter digs from cross court or from middle, coach attack on same side). You can also progress to adding a blocking unit in front of the attacker that is OOS.

- Progression 3 – Exact same work up but you make it 2 chances to score one ball for the out-of-system attacker. For this drill, the 1st ball is played at the setter who digs it up to the 2nd ball setter. The hitter hits into the defense, but this time, the defense sends the ball back over in a dig-set or dig-dig fashion. (Basically, they send it over as a cooperative free ball.) This puts the hitter in-system for the 2nd contact, so the player gets to layer in an OOS swing with an in-system swing. Player hitter vs. hitter up to 3 points.
- Progression 3 – Exact same drill, only add a pin hitter in the left AND right front spots, so the 2nd ball setter has to work on going both directions (short and long distance). Keep it the same OOS + one in-system ball. Play attacker vs. attacker to 3 points, then switch in 2 new attackers.
- Progression 4 – Two OOS attackers vs. a team of 6 on D. (Full block and full D.)

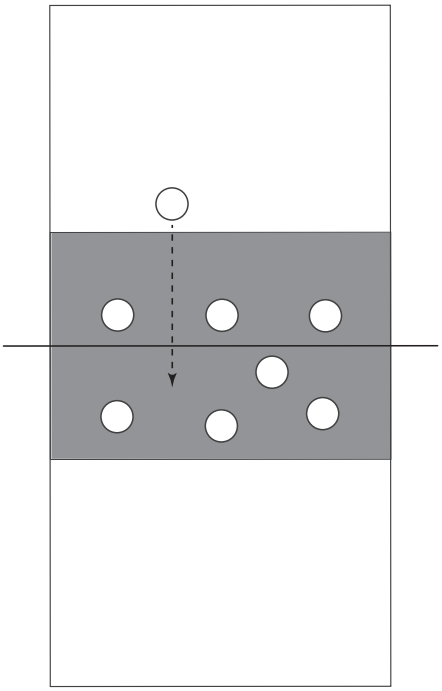


Short Court Warmup Games ▶

These games have multiple purposes:

- Teach players how to maintain body control with tight balls near the net.
- Teach players how to effectively use their open-handed tips and swipes.
- Teach players how to use the block to score or extend the play.
- Teach players to operate around one another in small spaces to promote ball control.

Use antennas to split the court into thirds that end at the attack line (diagram 1). In a 2 vs. 2 format, the ball is initiated with a set from beyond the attack line. Note that this game is to get players to "think outside the box" as well as learn body control and ball control within a small space of court, so blocking the "serve" is allowed. All of the same volleyball rules apply with regard to maximum contacts per side, lift, double hits and nets. Games are played to 7 or 10 points. Winners move up, losers move down.



Variations: If you have an odd number of players, you can make 3-person teams with the odd person switching in every dead ball. Another variation is to make this a total quadrant (diagram 2) short-court game with 4 vs. 4 or 5 vs. 5. This promotes blockers tracking their hitter directly in front of them as well as the non-blocker playing off-blocker defense and short dig to transition attack patterns. This is also a fun game for the beginning of practice because it promotes competition and mental engagement, which keeps players excited to practice late in the season when drills get monotonous.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Big Blue Drill

Focuses on siding out and, more important, killing the first ball on serve receive. The secondary focus is to avoid making unforced errors and extend rallies if killing the ball is not an option.

Twelve players total and a coach to start/stop play. Scoring begins with the Receiving side (A) at 19 points and the Serving side (B) at 15 points. Play to 25 and win by 1 point.

B side serves the whole time and scores any time they win the rally. A side scores any time they get a First Ball Kill. (They rotate after each FBK.) If it's not an FBK, then it becomes a Wash if the A side wins the rally. A side rotates each time they FBK. If A Side makes an unforced error, they go back to 19 but stay in the same rotation. If A Side is aced, they lose 1 point.

Unforced errors (including missed serves): A side goes back to 19. B Side loses 1 point.

Variations: No minus for A Side being aced. Gauge your B Side and start their score accordingly.

Wave Drill

Combines siding out and then scoring with your serve immediately. It also applies pressure to your servers during practice so they serve tough and try to get the other team out-of-system.

Six players on a side. Play starts with either a serve or a bowled ball by the coach. Receiving side (A) begins with a 7-0 lead over the Serving side (B). Play to 15 points, win by 1. B serves to A and scores every time they win a rally. A Side scores after the following 2 things happen:

1. They side out on the serve or side out on a bowled ball if there is a missed serve.
2. They then serve in the same rotation and get B Side to not pass perfect and then go on to win the rally.

If the B Side passes a 3 or wins the rally, then it's a wash. A Side rotates if they score a point by meeting the above conditions. If there is a wash, then B Side serves again.

Variations: Starting score for A Side is flexible. You can also eliminate the 3-point pass condition.

FAVORITE DRILLS

MARK ROSEN (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN)

Servers vs. Passers

Use this drill to provide realistic, game-like serving and passing repetition in a training environment.

Set up a group of 3-4 servers vs. a group of 3-4 passers. Servers get 3 "opportunities" to serve. If they get the passers out-of-system, they get a point and get to serve again. Their goal is to build as long of a serving streak as possible. If the pass is in-system, then that server's "opportunity" is done and it moves to the next server. If the server misses the serve, it moves to the next server.

You can score as a team or as an individual. The drill creates a competitive situation where passers are working to get "side outs" with ideal passes and servers are trying to score points by getting the passers out-of-system. After each server goes through their 3 opportunities, the servers and passers switch roles.

"Oh Shoot!" Attacking Drill

Put pressure on your attackers to get kills, limit errors and react in a productive way when things don't go as planned.

Two attackers work alternately from an in-system transition situation against a full defense on the opposing side. They will attack the first ball with the intent of getting a First Ball Kill (FBK). The defensive side will work to get a "stop" on the attacker with a transition attack back to the offensive side.

Each attacker is working independently to get 5 kills before the defense gets 2 stops. If the defense gets 2 stops, the attacker goes back to zero. (Oh Shoot!) Once one attacker gets 5 kills, that player is out of the drill and a new attacker joins and alternates with the attacker who is still in. Often, the stops are not the attacker's "fault," so they must be resilient when things don't go their way and keep aggressively approaching the drill to get out.

Dig to Kill

A 6 vs. 6 drill that creates a mentality in training that we need to dig balls that allow us to get aggressive swings rather than ones that only allow us to just keep the ball in play.

Balls are initiated either from coach's down balls or from opponent's served balls. This drill is normal, rally-scoring format, except there's a "bonus" of 2 extra points (3 total) for any ball that is "Dug" and then converted into a "Kill." In addition to the bonus points, the person who made the dig gets recognition on the board for the end of the drill. We give bonus points and recognition for stuff blocks as well. This format also creates a mentality (and pressure) for our attackers to reward the digger with a kill.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Refuse to Lose

A 6 vs. 6 drill that creates some very competitive situations and works on attackers having a terminal mentality at the end of the game.

The score starts at 20-20. Play is normal, rally scoring until there is a "winner" by a 2-point advantage. The coach will then bounce a ball to the losing team, which will send over a "free ball." The team must score a First Ball Kill off the free ball to actually get the "Win." If they are successful, we recognize the player who got the kill on the board for everyone to see. If the "losing" team is able to stop the offensive side (just need to get 2 touches on the ball to avoid a kill), then the winning team loses 2 points and the game resumes with them serving the next point. The game continues until one team seals the win with a First Ball Kill.

This drill creates some great "Sudden Change" moments – like when one team "wins" 25-23, doesn't get the kill and resets at 23-23, then gets sided out on the next serve and is now down 24-23. The game can flip quickly, and the players need to be able to react. We have had games get up into the 40s and be crazy competitive!

Variation: You can also change the "refuse to lose" action. For instance, require that you must pass one serve in-system to seal the game. Or you must serve the opponent out-of-system to win it. Any action you want to work on can be placed into the parameters of the drill.

Dig to Catch/Set Drill

Have defenders dig balls that they are able to catch or set on a second contact. We require them to catch or set the ball with at least one foot in front of the 10-foot attack line. This drill requires the digger to dig the ball forward, but high enough and off the net enough to allow them to get to it and catch or set. This drill also gets the players to focus on staying on their feet as long as possible, rather than going to the floor when it's unnecessary. If they do go to the floor, it requires them to get up quickly and re-engage in the drill.

FAVORITE DRILLS

MOIRA LONG (SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE)

Pendulum

A good momentum scoring drill that forces players to earn multiple points in a row. 6 vs. 6, regular game play. A set of 3 cones are stacked and placed outside the court beside the net. The objective of the game is to get all 3 cones on your side of the court. If Team A earns a point, the cone goes to Team A side. Next point is played. If Team A wins, it gets another cone. If Team B wins, the cone on Team A side goes back to stack. You can initiate play with a serve, or from a free ball or down ball.

Hitters vs. the World

Forces hitters to beat the defense with variety of shots. Line of outside hitters vs. 6 defenders. Ball is chipped in play for OH to play off blocker defense and transition to attack. If OH scores a point, that player stays on the court and continues to accumulate points. Once the player makes an error or is stopped, that player rotates off and the next player enters.

Scoring: OH stays and accumulates points, keeps track of own score. Each OH competes against the other. Each OH goes through the drill 3-5 times depending on time and number of players.

Variations: All outside hitter scores can be cumulative. With each kill, they receive 2 points. For every dig, the defense gets 1 point. Instead of a chipped ball in for off blocker, ball can be served.

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Pressure Passing

A good way to training passers in a game-like drill. 3 passers compete with an additional server or two (middles or setters) on two courts. You can also have passers in each zone or on opposite sides if you don't have more than one court. One point for a perfect pass. If it's a "wash" pass, the passer can stay in. Two washes in a row and the passers must rotate. If the passer gets aced, rotate immediately. Keep track of your perfect passes. 5 minutes from Zone 1 and 5 minutes from Zone 5. Keep separate points in each zone. Can put dots or tape down to make the size of the zone consistent.

FAVORITE DRILLS

CAITIE RATKOWSKI (DIVINE SAVIOR HOLY ANGELS HIGH SCHOOL)

0 vs. 18

Work on minimizing unforced errors during play. This is a 6 vs. 6 drill. One side starts with 0, one side starts with 18. Free ball entry to begin the drill. “Make it, take it!” (Side that scores the point gets the free back.)

Scoring: the side with 18 only gets points on the other team’s unforced errors. (Out of bounds, net violation, etc.). The side with 0 can score on all normal rally scoring points (kills, blocks, opponent errors, etc.) - the side starting with 0 wants to get to 25 before the team that starts with 18. After a game to 25, switch front row with back row and run again.

Variations: Start 18 side at a different score if needed; have specific errors that score the points for the side of 18 (rather than just unforced errors). Side starting with 0 can only score on earned points (no points for opponent errors)

Best of 10

Focus on serve receive accuracy with an effective attack. Divide the team into 2 evenly split groups. One team is serving, the other has 6 in serve receive. The serving team serves 10 total balls – each is played out by the receiving team. To score a point, the receiving team must have an aggressive attack on the received ball – hard-driven kill, no tape. Keep track of how many points they have (out of 10) and that is their score. Switch sides and do the same thing again. Winner is the team with most. Losing team has a consequence.

Variations:

- Instead of 2 even teams, have starting group and 2nd group.
- Allow serving side to add blockers. When blockers are added, the receiving side can earn points for covering and attacking a ball dug from coverage.
- Best of 5 format – 5 total rounds. First team to win 3 rounds is the winner.

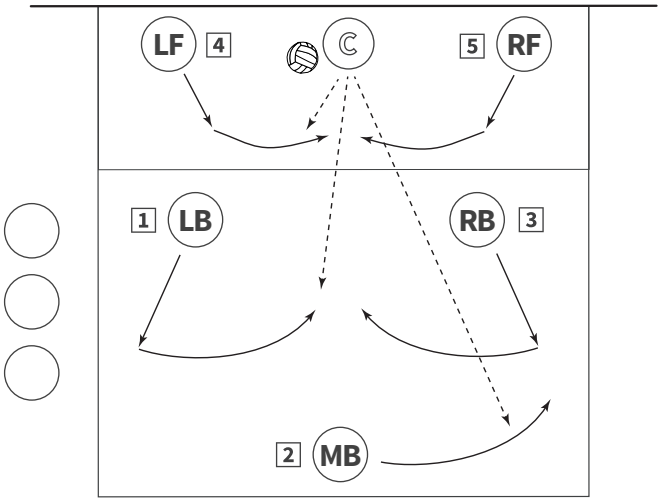
©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Shotmaker

A drill that focuses on approach, hand contact, wrist snap and a deep shot to the corner. 5-7 players form a hitting line and self-toss to attack deep corners. As a variation, you can add in defensive players to dig to target.

Run Thru Sequence: 5 Positions ▶

Works on technique for a run-through, base to read footwork, using the correct first step (start over for false steps). 3 to 4 players start in left back base. The first player makes a base-to-read move in left back and runs through the ball and finishes in middle back. The first player then makes a run-through from middle back to the right-back corner and finishes in right-back base.



Next, the player first in line makes a base-to-read move in right back and runs through the ball and finishes in left-front base. The next player goes and this continues until all players are in left-front base.

Next, the player first in line makes a move to left-front read or off-blocker defense and makes a run-through and finishes in right-front base. The next player goes and this continues until all the players are in right front.

Next, the player first in line makes a move to right-front read or off-blocker defense and makes a run-through and finishes in left-back base. The next player goes and this continues until all the players are in left back again.

Repeat until all players go through 3 times. Focus on technique. Start over for wrong technique/ swinging, etc.

Variations: You can run the drill out of left or right front and make it a 4-position run-through.

Serve and Run

Requires players to run and get their heartbeat going and then be able to slow everything down to serve the ball to a zone. You can have certain objects out on the floor for the players to aim at so they have a target. Boxes, chairs on boxes, floor tape, etc. After each serve they chase their ball and reset on the side of the court where they picked up the ball. The teaching point is it to make sure they are in a routine and clear their mind before they serve. Have them hit the target 3-6 times and then switch the target. Or go for time. Or make it a competition: 1st to hit all 3 targets wins.

Defense Drills

- One-Knee Sequence (catch and cradle; dig)
  - Hip
  - Hip-to-knee
  - Hip-to-knee-to-feet

    - Outside of midline, hip around to feet
    - Cross-over moves
- Catch-Cradle/Dig Series
- 3-Line Digging (run-throughs, dig/roll, turn-chase, run-and-roll, down-Up)
- Run-Through Sequence: 5 spots
- Rapid Fire High-Low
- Two-Ball Dig: Cross-over, then down-up the tip
- Dig-Set-Weave
- 5-Person Cross-Court Rotating Pepper
- Coach-on-3: Out-In
- Dig-Set-Cover
- Under the Net Digging (hit, tip or throw)
- Off-the-Wall Corner (cover)
- Against the Wall (cover)
- Ball Control Drills

Serving Drills

- Partner Serve
- Serve and Run
- 4-point Partner
- +/ - Drill to Targets
- 30 Points Drill
- Short Serving
- Elastic Serve (5 consecutive under the elastic in the zone)
- Radar Guns (37 mph)

Attacking Drills

- Self-Toss and Hit
- Attack to Target Boxes
- Left to Left Attacking
- Box Swings
- Thumb Up and Thumb Down Progression

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

FAVORITE DRILLS

RON KORDES (ASSUMPTION HIGH SCHOOL, KIVA SPORTS)

Passing Drills

- 25-15-10
- Butterfly Passing
- Short and Deep
- Side to Side Short
- Side to Side Long
- Under-the-Net Passing
- Russian Drill
- 2-Person Passing with Server on Box
- 25 in the Catch Net

Setting Drills

- Setting Progression Without Ball (Footwork)
- +/- 25 to each pin
- 6 sets of 50 against a wall
- 4-Corner Setting

B

Barnard, Mark

Blocking Fundamentals, 41
Developing an Offensive Strategy, 153
Explaining Rotation Overlap Rules, 154
10 Keys to Effective Practice Planning, 191
Using Video, 204
Statistics, 213

Bechard, Ray

Passing Fundamentals, 86
Thoughts on Defense, 101
Designing a Defensive System for Your Level, 137
Keys to Running a Great Practice, 187
Training Players to Watch the Game, 202
Conducting Team Meetings, 251

Berg, Lindsey

Offense From the Setter's Point of View, 55

Bernthal Booth, Kirsten

Serving Fundamentals and Strategies, 68
Libero Training, 118
Game Day Goals, 196
Player Physical and Mental Health, 215
Keys to Developing Leaders, 234
Communicating with Players and Parents, 254
Guidelines for College Recruits, 270
What Textbooks Don't Teach You About Coaching, 279
Team Drills and Pepper Series, 320

Brown, Debbie

Passing Technique and Common Errors, 95
Training Reading, 107
Libero Training, 116
Defending With a Single Block, 132
Team Captain and Leadership Guidelines, 236
Making Drills Fun, 311

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

C

Collier, Michelle

Warmup Goals and Drills, 6
Risk Management in Out-of-System Scenarios, 171

D

DeNecochea, Dianne

10 Steps of the College Recruiting Process, 273
How to Email College Coaches, 275

Dunning, John

29 Keys to Being a Great Coach, 2
Key Attacking Concepts, 8
Set Descriptions, 47
Serving Fundamentals, 64
Fundamentals of Passing, 83
Keys to Reading, 105
Correcting Common Errors, 113
17 Keys to the Read Defense, 135
Game Day Notes for Players, 193
Keys to Developing Leaders, 233
Communication in All Aspects of Your Program, 244
5 Things I Changed About My Coaching, 285
Drills to Fit Individual and Team Needs, 312

F

Flick-Williams, Diane

Basic Defense, 102
Considerations When Planning Practice, 185
Team Communication, 247

Flynn Oldenburg, Jen

Attack Drill, 22
Training a Raw Athlete to Be a Setter, 61
Emergency Passing, 94
Emergency Moves, 103
Drill for First Ball Side Out, 151
Cover Progression Drill, 163

Fredrick, Cindy

Choosing a Serve Receive Pattern, 152

G

George, Cathy

Basic Defense Concepts, 100
Defensive Systems, 138
Injury Prevention, 216
Keys to Training Leaders and Building a Strong Culture, 231
Communication On and Off the Court, 246

Greeny, Jen

Pressure Passing Drill, 331

H

Hambly, Kevin

Looking for Advantages, 198

Harmotto Dietzen, Christa

Middle Blocker Training, 122

Houlihan, Mike

Considerations When Using Video, 205
Statistical Analysis, 212

J

Johnson-Lynch, Christy

Passing Fundamentals and Drills, 87
Drills for Training Out-of-System Offense, 172
Planning for Season and Practice, 178

K

Kiraly, Karch

Developing Attackers at the Highest Level, 14

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Kordes, Ron

Teaching Attacking to Younger Players, 23
Serving Philosophy, 65
Passing Fundamentals and Drills, 88
Tips for Better Communication in Your Program, 252
Ways to Make Drills Competitive, 315
Skill Drills for Younger Players, 333

Kramer, Jill

5 R's of Blocking, 39
Out-of-System Concepts, 169
Building a Positive Team Culture, 227
Connecting With Today's Players, 287

L

Launiere, Beth

Basic Blocking Concepts, 30
Key Considerations for Your Coaching Philosophy, 224

Leibl, Tammy

Developing Leaders in Your Program, 235
Competitive Drill, 242
3 Coaching Laws to Live By, 286

Lichtman, Cassidy

Drills to Train Attackers, 20
Drill for Out-of-System Training, 176
Competitive Drills, 241

Liskevych, Terry

Arm Swing, 18
Explaining Rotation Overlap Rules, 154
Video Scouting, 201
Necessary Statistics for Practices and Matches, 209
Keys to Leading Your Staff Effectively, 257
Coaching Female Athletes, 282

Long, Moira

Passing Technique, 93
Vision Training and Drills, 109
Libero Training , 119
Ways to Make Drills Competitive, 317
Pendulum Drill and Hitters vs. the World, 330

M

MacDonald, Kerry

Attacking Fundamentals, 21
Serving to Earn Points, 71

Mardini, Nabil

Attack Schemes, 26
Blocking, 35
Basic Setting Concepts, 46
My Defensive Philosophy: Block-Oriented Defense, 128
Winning the Serve and Receive Battle, 149
Transition Footwork and Strategy, 162
Out-of-System Concept, 174

Mattox, Tod

Serve Training and Drills, 73
Basic Passing Concepts and Drills, 79
4-Step Roadmap to Successful High School Coaching, 261
Running a High School Practice, 264
The 5 Most Undertaught Skills in High School, 266
What to Do Instead of Deep Court, 322

O

Olson, Kimi

Team Defense Drill, 145

R

Ratkowski, Caitie

0 vs. 18 and Best of 10 Drill, 332

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

Rockwell, Salima

Training the Setter's Brain, 58

Rose, Russ

Basic Components of Attacking, 12
Serve or Be Served, 63
Training Scrappy Defenders, 99
Middle Blocker Training, 125
Blocking Strategy, 134
Spiker Coverage and Transition, 157
Tips for Improving Out-of-System Play, 166
Practice Planning Keys and Drills Throughout Season, 182
Game Day Logistics, 194
Ways to Make Drills Competitive, 240
Coaching Female Athletes, 284

Rosen, Mark

Attacking Fundamentals, 15
Keys to Team Defense, 144
Practice Planning, 184
Competitive Drills, 328

Rubio, Dave

Dynamic Warmup, 4
Passing Fundamentals, 76
Out-of-System Training and Drills, 167
Planning Concepts, 180

S

Sagula, Joe

All About Blocking, 31
Passing Basics, 77
Team Defense Overview and Drills, 139
Basics of Transition and Drills, 158
Practice Planning as the Season Progresses, 188
Staff Roles, 258

Sealy, Mike

Hitting Approach, 16
Training Swing and Combination Blocking, 44
Setting Fundamentals and Advanced Setter Training, 51
Serve and Pass Drills, 70
Team Defense, 146
Creating Your Coaching Philosophy, 225
Keys to Creating a Culture, 229
Designing Drills to Increase Player Competence, 314
Competitive Team Drills, 319

Skinner, Craig

Side Out Drills, 327

Stone, Jim

Arm Swing, 19
Basic Blocking Concepts, 33
Motor Learning, 112
Block System vs. Specific Offenses, 130
The Importance of Video in Practice and Scouting, 206
4-Week Practice Plan, 291

T

Theis, Ryan

Drill for Out-of-System Training, 175

Z

Zidek, Marie

Performance Training for Youth Volleyball Athletes, 218
Sample Workouts, 220
Small Group Drills, 324

©2021 The Art of Coaching, LLC. All rights reserved.

ART OF COACHING VOLLEYBALL

AOC Premium

Plan faster | Train smarter | Play harder

FOR INDIVIDUAL COACHES & GROUPS!

MONTH & YEAR PLANS AVAILABLE

Access to Over 3,000 Videos

Organized Video Series

Clinic and Product Discounts

Video of 50+ Coaching Clinics

Printable Coaching Resources



WWW.THEARTOFCOACHINGVOLLEYBALL.COM/JOIN-US/

ART OF COACHING VOLLEYBALL

Explore helpful coaching strategies from all of these coaches!

MARK BARNARD (Oregon State University)
RAY BECHARD (University of Kansas)
LINDSEY BERG (3-time USA Olympian)
KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH (Creighton University)
DEBBIE BROWN (University of Notre Dame, 1991-2014)
MICHELLE COLLIER (Georgia Tech University)
DIANNE DENECOCHEA (Recruiting Advisor)
JOHN DUNNING (Stanford University, 2001-2016)
DIANE FLICK-WILLIAMS (Western Washington University)
JEN FLYNN OLDENBURG (Ohio State University)
CINDY FREDRICK (UNLV, 2011-2017)
CATHY GEORGE (Michigan State University)
JEN GREENY (Washington State University)
KEVIN HAMBLY (Stanford University)
CHRISTA HARMOTTO DIETZEN (2-time USA Olympian)
MIKE HOULIHAN (University of Massachusetts Boston)
CHRISTY JOHNSON-LYNCH (Iowa State University)
KARCH KIRALY (USA Women's National Team)
RON KORDES (Assumption High School, KIVA Sports)
JILL KRAMER (Texas Christian University)
BETH LAUNIERE (University of Utah)
TAMMY LEIBL (Wave Volleyball Club)
CASSIDY LICHTMAN (USA Women's National Team, 2011-2016)
TERRY LISKEVYCH (3-time USA Olympic Coach)
MOIRA LONG (Springfield College)
KERRY MACDONALD (Volleyball Canada)
NABIL MARDINI (Los Angeles Volleyball Academy)
TOD MATTOX (The Bishop's School)
KIMI OLSON (Michigan State University)
CAITIE RATKOWSKI (Divine Savior Holy Angels High School)
SALIMA ROCKWELL (Penn State University, 2015-2017)
RUSS ROSE (Penn State University)
MARK ROSEN (University of Michigan)
DAVE RUBIO (University of Arizona)
JOE SAGULA (University of North Carolina)
MIKE SEALY (UCLA)
CRAIG SKINNER (University of Kentucky)
JIM STONE (USA Youth National Team, 2007-2020)
RYAN THEIS (Marquette University)
MARIE ZIDEK (DePaul University)

Don't forget to follow along with the corresponding videos online!
Go to **www.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/hb2** to get started.

*Some videos require you to be a Premium member to watch
*Coach organizations listed above are current as of first publication in March 2021