

VOLLEYCART

VolleyCART Coaching Tip Compilation
Book

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Team Building

HOST A PARENT'S CLINIC Tip by Richard Moyers, BelAir, MD.

Early in the season, but after the team has started actually performing with one another, dedicate a practice to hosting a parent clinic. At the clinic, coaching staff will teach the basic mechanics but the athletes will take over coaching their parents.

After a while, open a couple of nets up to actually play some games. Parents will now learn about how much work their kids have gone through as well as have a better understanding of rules before barking at officials during matches...kids will have to sharpen up their understanding in order to instruct their parents...most importantly: it's another moment in the 'yearbook memories' for kids and parents to share with one another. In but a few months to a couple of years, the kids will off to college, the workforce, etc.

Parents will miss that dearly while kids will not really understand how important those moments are until distant. So, have volleyball be a shared moment.

LOSING TEAM CONSEQUENCES

Tip by Jessie Uribe, Vancouver, WA.

When giving a losing team a consequence for games in practice, use the difference in score to dictate the penalty. For instance, if the final score is 25-20, then a consequence can be 5 tuck jumps. If the final score is 25-10, then 15 pushups. This teaches players to fight to the end.

POST GAME MEETINGS

COACH SPEASL

After the game when I have my post game meetings, or during practice when I call a quick team meeting to work on skills or issues, I've trained my teams to give me their undivided attention. When season starts I explain to them that when we have a meeting I want eye contact with all of them for the entire meeting. Too often players will have their eyes down, tying their shoe, will be taking off their knee pads, etc. I explain to them that when they come to my office I give them my undivided attention, I do not do paperwork, talk on the phone, and other office chores. This system helps me make sure that everyone is on the same page, and it saves a lot of miscommunication because someone didn't hear information correctly. As a coach there are times when you have to remind them to look at you while you are speaking by mid-season this becomes their habit and it seems that everyone absorbs material.

TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE

COACH SPEASL

In the first few days of fall practice it is kind of a fun thing to explain how important it is to be a team. A fun way to do it is to buy a bundle of pencils, chopsticks, craft dowels, 10 inch long sticks, etc. Give each player two sticks and have them write their names on both sticks with a sharp felt tip. Have each player take one of their sticks in their hands

and hold it out in front of them and break it. Then you take all the remaining sticks and put them together with rubber bands and have each team member attempt to hold the bundle of sticks out in front of them and break the bundle. Basically it can't be done (be sure to use strong enough sticks).

The lesson is that as an individual a person can be broken or defeated and as a team that bands together it is very difficult to break them. Remind your team all season long of how important it is to band together and be a team. Keep the bundle in your volleyball equipment locker, take it out occasionally as a reminder. At the end of the season at your awards ceremony when you hand out team awards and news clippings, etc, include the unbroken stick with their name on it from the banded bundle. This will be an important keepsake and the kids will be keep with their volleyball memorabilia.

AFFIRMATIONS

COACH SPEASL

I believe strongly in affirmations as they are a part of the positive thought process that we need to inject into our team consciousness. I truly believe you can set yourself up for success by predetermining how you want an event to turn out. There are many ways you can incorporate this into the practice, one of my favorite ways was preparation for serving.

Early in the season the team and I would go over what is considered cardinal sins of serving. Once we identified our objective I would write it out on a white board and keep it in a volleyball cabinet. Then in the practice time we served we would start by meeting at the volleyball cabinet and saying our affirmations. The affirmations would be written in sentence form. All of them would start by saying, "I always serve in..." An example would be, "I always serve in on first serve," or "I always serve in after a time out." So what I would do as the coach

is to read just the action and the team would say out loud the whole sentence. After everyone said the affirmations out loud the team would disperse to the courts to practice serving.

Remember to always pose it in a positive fashion so that their mind's eye sees them doing it successfully. Encourage your team to have a half a dozen or more of their own affirmations with positive outcomes. You can adapt this to almost any part of the game and after they have done it hundreds of times it helps them to achieve a successful result. For you education majors remember Bloom's Taxonomy and stating desired outcomes in the form of behavioral objectives that state "the student will..." It is kind of all the same thing, using positive thoughts for positive results. I like affirmations, the kids like affirmations and I think it helps. Have fun with it next season.

PLAYERS PRAISE AND DISCIPLINE

COACH SPEASL

One way to improve motivation and attitude of players is to recognize their positive contributions and their good play. I learned a long time ago that it works much better to give praise in front of the team or in front of another player. Calling a player into your office or seeing her in the hall and having a brief word with her doesn't have the same impact on her as praising her in front of her peers.

Being very vocal and generous with positive feedback can lift spirits and make someone's day.

Really, this principle will also apply to other people that you deal with, such as assistant coaches, AD's, vendors, service providers etc, etc.

On the other hand we have all had to be the coach and straighten things out. If I was dealing with a playing problem I always liked to be in close proximity of the person that I am talking to and have my back to the rest of the team and explain what she did wrong and what my

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expectations of her are. It is a proven fact that all people move in the direction of their expectations or in the direction of the expectations of the person that they are attempting to please or perform for. I never had a player that made a playing mistake intentionally, I always had to remember that.

I was never a yeller or a screamer, no one likes it and it gives me a headache. But if I ever did raise my voice the team knew that something was way wrong and it was going to be dealt with. In an article about a Soccer coach from Eugene, OR I picked up something I really liked. He said that he never yells at his girls when they come off the field, because by the time they got to him on the sideline they had already yelled at themselves enough, and now it was time to fix the problem not re-live it.

Now if the problem was a team rule, the issue was dealt with according to the predetermined team rules and sanctions. When handing out the sanction I liked to do it in my office with an assistant present. There will almost always be backlash from a parent and you need to have someone that was a witness to your disciplinary meeting.

If the sanction was that the player had to leave the team I always felt that it was them deciding to quit the team as opposed to me kicking them off. My explanation was that they knew the rule and they made a choice not to follow the team rule.

Players that are rule breakers have a way to divide the team (usually their friends are ok with what they did). I have always felt that it is hard enough to coach one team and dividing them into two groups makes it nearly impossible to be successful and sustain that success. So I have no problems parting ways with chronic rule breakers.

TEAM CHEMISTRY

Tip by Tami Thomas, Rocky Ford, CO.

During practice have players warm up with someone different each

day. This allows the upperclassmen to get to know incoming freshman and helps team bonding. Maybe throw in some trivia on what each player learned about their partners that week.

POSITIVE SPEAK COACH SPEASL

Always use positive speak when coaching: When processing human speech we see mental pictures of the main topics. Therefore as a coach we need to state our coaching in a positive manner. Example: If I say, “Elephant” you develop a picture in your mind of an elephant. It’s impossible not to do so. The problem is that there is no mental picture of the word don’t. What happens is that the the coach who says, “Don’t miss the next serve” has their statement work against them, because is no mental picture of the word “Don’t.” So what the athlete is left with is “miss the next serve.” They all have missed a serve in their life and they can easily visualize missing a serve.

The fact is, that we all move in the direction of our most dominant thoughts. Serving is only one example of this phenomenon. It’s harder as a coach to state everything in a positive way, however using the word “Don’t” reinforces the action that you are attempting to eliminate. So the coaching point should change to something such as, “Serve this next one in, make the next serve, serve to a particular spot or player, etc.”

MID-SEASON TEAM BUILDING/PICK_ME UP

Tip by Susie Johnson, Crofton, NE.

Coaching kids can be very entertaining! But midway through the

season when everyone is feeling exhausted, teammates can become a little irritable with each other.

For a pick-me up activity get a blank piece of paper for each teammate, manager, and coach. Each teammate will need a pen for the project. Sit in a big circle. Everyone needs to write their name on the paper and pass it to the right. They need to write something positive, appropriate and encouraging about the person whose paper they are writing on.

After one minute they pass the paper to the right and repeat until the papers have gone full circle and they have their own paper again. They should turn their paper over when they get it. I like to collect them and read them to make sure the comments appropriate before the athletes read them.

Since this activity is very time consuming you may want to look at your schedule and pick a practice where it will not impact your game performance. These are keepers! The girls love them and talk about them forever. It keeps positive team relations. I do not do this every year but plan on doing it this year and this time I am going to laminate them for the girls.

GREAT TEAM BUILDING IDEAS

Tip by Amy Fonnesbeck, Kenowa Hills, MI.

We focus so much on skills that sometimes we forget that by getting to know our players through team building activities can be one of the biggest motivators for our players. If we build great relationships with kids then try to coach them it is a completely different dynamic when practicing. These are the things I do with my team throughout the season. This, also, eliminates trouble with parents because they know you care about their child. If their kid sits the bench, yet still loves volleyball and is having fun, it is a win, win! These are the things I typically do with my team. I try to do something fun once a week or every other week.

Overnight at cottage tubing/boating

Beach day-beach volleyball

Corn maze

Tie Dye

Pumpkin Carving

Water balloon fights

Team Board Games

Movie night

Beauty Day for Homecoming

Scavenger Hunts

Mini Golf

Ice Cream Social

I try to find things the kids are into. The parents love it because the kids love it. The kids build great relationships and a better team. When you have the relationship they want to hustle more at practice, listen to feedback and apply it, cheer for their teammates louder from the bench, talk on the court, and push each other to win. It sometimes takes time away from learning skills, but makes the time you are in the gym and on the court more valuable overall.

HOSTING A PARENT'S CLINIC

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Early in the season, but after the team has started actually performing with one another, dedicate a practice to hosting a parent clinic. At the clinic, coaching staff will teach the basic mechanics but the athletes will take over coaching their parents.

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kids will off to college, the workforce, etc.

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General Practice

HUSTLE: “SHAG A BALL OR GRAB A WALL”
Tip by Bill Reynolds, Bryan, TX.

When balls are all over the court & it’s time to shag, you either shag balls or go touch the furthest wall from the ball cart(s). We get balls picked up quicker.

PRACTICE TIP

Tip by George LeVasseur, Melrose, MA.

Practice Tip: Never let a touch at practice be wasted again! Even when someone is a target for a drill, make them push the ball up as if they were setting. After all, there’s no need to teach our kids to catch!

DO NOT PRACTICE TO PERFECTION!

Tip by Greg Smith, Spokane, WA.

Used timed drills instead of outcome based drills (10 perfect passes). Avoid, “we will keep doing this until you get it right!!” I feel during the 20 or so minutes trying to get it perfect we do more imperfection versus

GENERAL PRACTICE

perfection and reinforce bad habits. If players are truly struggling during a skill based drill, then it is our responsibility to break it down into smaller pieces or teach it a different way! One other option is to use a results based outcome, but within a certain time limit. This will increase urgency and intensity and I can see progress in the skill based on “beating the time” by more and more as we practice! Remember, Rome was not built in just one practice!

P.S. Coach Speasl also says, “Practice doesn’t make perfect, practice makes permanent.”

WARM-UP DRILL

Coach Lottie, Kentucky.

Start with 3 players on the court in zone 1, 6, & 5, with the coach in the zone 3. Coach tosses the ball to any of the 3 players. The player must play the ball back to the coach each time. Once that is done player in zone 1 moves to zone 5 and the other 2 players shuffles to the right to constantly switching zones while playing out the ball with the coach. Once the ball drops. Next 3 players move in. Very fast pace drill but it is a favorite warm up drill for players and coaches.

PLAYERS THAT GET HIT IN THE FACE

COACH SPEASL

It never fails someone is going to get hit in the face with a ball during practice. There is nothing like getting hit in the face, whether by a ball or person or something else, that will automatically change your attitude (to being bummed) instantly. The face is different than being hit anywhere else on your body.

Usually what happens is that someone is hitting or serving and someone else is focused on another part of the gym or practice. Then the hitter/server sends one (not attempting to hit anyone) and it hits

the unsuspecting player right in the face.

What I have my players do is, the hitter (not someone else) sprints to the player that got faced and grabs her (both hands on each side of her head), looks her in the eye and says something like “Oh my gosh I’m so sorry, are you alright?” and maybe also gives her a little hug or something. Most of the time the wounded player will start laughing and say “I’m ok” “thank you” or something like that.

It only takes a minute or so but it is time well spent. In my experience it seemed to take a player a long time to brush off being hit in the face and get back in the groove of practice. After I initiated this action to our practice it was like a miracle drug for attitude. A kid would be smiling and mentally back in the practice in seconds.

When introducing this action I literally have a player stand on the other side of the net, we simulate her being hit in the face I run over and grab her by the head and go through the routine. If you just tell them about it some of them will just stand where they are and yell across saying “I’m sorry are you OK ?” That doesn’t work like getting over there and being face to face with your teammate. Give it a whirl, see what you think, I believe it works wonders.

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF DRILLS

Tip by Kelly Weiler, Hatch, NM.

We often don’t have extra bodies around to shag balls so we deplete our 2 carts full of balls when doing repetitive drills, taking extra care that no balls are rolling onto playable area of the court (helps with peripheral vision). Then when the carts are empty coach yells, “pick up all the balls” and the countdown begins. Players then have to work together to shag all of the balls in 5-10 seconds and get back into drill positions. It has become a fun team-building element to our practices with lots of laughing and screaming and LOUD communication. It also helps to time drills, allowing to rotation after one or two cart-fulls,

instead of counting balls or watching the clock.

1:2:1 DRILL

Tip by Tim Eyre, Ogden, Utah.

We do a drill called 1:2:1 to help teach mental toughness in stringing points together. Team A serves to team B. If team A wins the rally they are given a free ball. If team A wins that rally they are given another free ball to play out, again if they win that rally they now have the chance to serve for a point. if at any time team B wins any of the rallies, the ball switches sides and team B becomes the serving team. One team must score four times in a row to win a point.

We will usually stay in each rotation for 1-3 points depending on how much work that rotation needs.

This is a great drill for teaching mental toughness, making smart shots and teaching your team to string points together.

SECRET GOALS IN A 6X6 DRILL

Tip by Terri Neujhar from Waverly, NE.

Playing 6x6 and finding different ways to score it/win it in practice is something we like to do to keep it fresh for the team. We like to play a take-off of the game Xontro, where a team needs to have so many of "X" things to happen to "win".

You can run this out of rotations and S/R, or just out of Freeballs introduced to each side. We also keep regular score in this game as a motivator to not lose track of the score just because you are working on executing a skill. As we are preparing for an opponent (or just working something we need to do for our team), we give each side 2-4 things on a note card they have to accomplish (secretly) from the other side. It may be execute so many short serves to a spot, hit so many slides line, setter dump to a spot, hit so many back row attacks, perfect pass so many balls, do many digs in system, attack so many out

of system balls, etc...WHATEVER it is you need to work on for your team.

It doesn't mean you HAVE to kill them, just execute them. We can also give bonus points for "killing" one of their goals. Say your goal was 5 Slides and you kill one. Then that counts for 2, so now you only need 3 to accomplish that goal. First team to get all the goals done is the winner. After a winner is declared the kids try and guess what it was the opponent was trying to accomplish - this makes them more observant, as well, and transfers to matches. This is one of my teams' favorite 6x6 games to play!

GENERAL PRACTICE

Tip by Thom Frock, Carroll County, Maryland.

We love playing SEVEN. It emphasizes finishing, reading, and our "nothing-hits-the-floor" mindset. The game is best played 5v5 without a MH on either side, but can be played 6v6 or even 4v4. Coach initiates each rally with a toss or down ball to the team that lost the previous rally. Scoring is simple: first team to 7 wins (win by 1), and if the ball hits your court untouched your score reverts back to zero.

More often than you might think, the score will flip from 6-0 to 0-1, as the trailing team gets an untouched kill. Any touch of the ball counts as a touch, including a block touch. This game is always one of our players' favorites.

BLANKET DRILL

Tip by Susan Kentner, Bismarck Henning HS, Bismarck, IL

This is a super fun competitive drill and the girls love it!

Blanket Drill:

Put a tarp or several blankets over the net so neither team can see the other court, play 6 on 6 and coaches take turns throwing any kind

of ball across the net at one of the 6-member teams, they play it out and we keep score....when that rally is finished another coach throws the ball to the other side and we continue to play. The girls have to really watch the ball to see where it is going and it really promotes communication. They love it, and some try to peek under to see where the ball is going but if they do, they have to run....really competitive and fun!

PERFECTION DRILL

Tip by Kristina Gafford, Midland College in Midland, TX.

One drill we use on a daily basis is “The Perfection Drill”. It is a great warm-up drill that works on all aspects of volleyball: passing, setting, hitting, control, communication, pressure, etc.

Rules...

Groups of 3-4 players (typically have 3 groups). Each group needs one passer/hitter and one setter on each side of the net (If there are only 3 players in a group, the setter will set on both sides). Within the group, initiate play by serve or toss. Passer/hitter passes to setter and transitions out to hit, setter sets the ball, passer/hitter tips over to the passer on other side, same sequence on other side. Trying to get 10-12 pass, set, tip over and in a row. Once the group gets 10 in a row, switch setter to passer/hitter and passer/hitter to setter.

Modifying the drill...

You can increase difficulty by making players hit a down-ball and then jump and swing. Also, adding the setter to block when the opposing hitter is hitting helps the passer work on staying outside the block, and the hitter hitting around a block.

USING PENALTIES

Tip by Giff Hancock, from Camas, WA.

We all incorporate some sort of penalty in practice for numerous

reasons. Using drills for penalties that incorporate volleyball skills instead of just doing sets of lines, while considered a penalty, it is improving a part of their game in addition to their conditioning.

One we use is a blocking footwork drill incorporating middle transitions:

Players fill the front row positions on both sides of the court with the balance of the team is waiting near left front to transition in as the drill progresses.

Blocking sequence: Middle, Transition Left, Middle, Right then Middle They then rotate one position CCW, one right side crosses the net and other goes to the back of the line with the line filling the empty LF spot.

The drill terminates after the entire team has rotated through both sides. This is timed and the team must better their time.

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

Tip by Mary Franke from Fort Wayne, IN.

On Monday, pair off your kids into accountability partners. Give each kid a goal (set more quicks, be more vocal, meet a weightlifting goal, etc.) or allow them to pick their own goal. For the rest of the week, each kid needs to observe their partner and prepare to give them encouragement/feedback. On Friday, pair off and have them talk about their progress. It can be done in 5 minutes at the beginning/end of practice. You can change it up to where the partners reconnect daily for 2 minutes or just expect them to speak up during practice to keep their partner on track. Kind of little a mini coach.

I think pairing off helps athletes to see one another from a coach's eyes. It also encourages accountability to your teammates. Kids get used to hearing the same phrases over and over again from their

coaches, but to get pressure from a peer is totally different.

POP FLY DRILL

Tip By Dennis Piechowski from Hutchinson, MN.

My drill is fashioned after the old fashion baseball pop fly game of 500. I played this as a kid during baseball season and now have transformed it into a volleyball serve receive passing drill. The drill consists of 1 server and 3 passers on the court (you can have extra replacement passers in a single file line behind the end line). The coach can be the target and “point awarder”.

Select one person to serve. They continue to serve until one passer is able to score 500 points. Serve receive passers accumulate scoring in this fashion. For a perfect “3” pass, that is worth 100 points. If they pass a “2” pass it’s worth 75 points, and if they pass a “1” it is only worth 50 points. If the passer passes a “0” or an over pass, the passer then loses 100 points. The passer can never go below 0 points.

The server is constantly working on hard aggressive serves, thus improving their serving skill. They want to serve as long as possible. Passers (3 on the court at a time) are working on being aggressive and calling the ball early and scoring points. If they score a “3” pass or 100 points, they stay on the floor. If they pass a “2” or “1”, they leave the floor and replaced with a passer waiting on the endline. First passer to score 500 points now becomes the next server.

Tic-Tac-Toe

by Mary Franke Fort Wayne, IN.

Always have a dry erase board courtside for impromptu illustrations of concepts. Many of our young people are visual learners who benefit from the occasional chart/drawing. It can help with keeping score, too.

My Favorite use? Make a tic-tac-toe board and challenge two teams in a drill. Each time a side/team wins or meets a goal, they put their X or O on the board. They battle out until they win the tic-tac-toe game. The tic-tac-toe idea I got from another coach— possibly Bill Neville?

KNOCKOUT DRILL

Tip by Paul Oakes from Akron, Ohio.

This drill is used to work on keeping serves in, especially at critical moments at the end of a game/match.

2 teams. There will be a “serving team” and a “target team”(this can be done dividing the team by grade levels, or Varsity and J.V., or however you want them divided.

Serving team only serves(one ball at a time). Players alternate through their selected rotation. Next serve cannot be contacted until the last serve is completed on opponents side.

Non-servers(targets) stand on the other side of the net, between the 3-meter line and the end line(anywhere inside the court) with their backs to the serving team. They cannot be within 12” of the sidelines. It’s recommended that they place their hands with fingers interlocked behind their head(protection).

Objective: The serving team must hit the all of the targets within a certain time period(we use 2 minutes). As a target gets hit, she comes off of the court. The serving team receives 10 points if they knock out all of the targets. If they don’t knock them all out, the number of targets left is deducted from 10 and that’s their score for that round. Teams switch roles. Play as many rounds as desired. Losers have an

“athletic challenge” to accomplish after drill is completed.

Notes: If a target tries to move to avoid being hit, or “peeks” at the serving team, they are automatically considered hit and must come off of the floor. If the serving team misses a serve, a target that has been hit and is off the floor, comes back onto the court. Finally, the serving team must retrieve served balls in order to have enough balls to keep the drill going, and not run out of time(don’t forget—service order must be maintained).

Hope you enjoy it as much as our players do!

1st Ball Side Out

Tip by Taylor Stallman from Phoenix, AZ.

A drill to emphasize 1st Ball Side Out (FBSO), and minimizing errors. One side serves 5 balls in each rotation. The other side receives the entire drill (or you can modify to alternate who serves and receives), and are the only team scoring. So if you go through all 6 rotations, there are a total of 30 balls served. After those 6 rotations you should have a point total, which the other team then tries to beat.

The scoring works this way:

3 points- First Ball Side Out

2 points- Missed Serve by opponent

1 point- Any other point the receive team earns (usually in transition, block, or opponent attack error)

Bonus Point (at any time)- Run a Middle or Back-Row Set, depending on what you emphasize that day in practice.

-1- Swing in the net. Errors out-of-bounds are preferred on aggressive swings.

-2- Aced by opponent.

We use this drill every practice because it gets a lot of slower serving and passing reps. If you want to keep it fast, you can give the serving team 7-10 seconds to get back and grab another ball, that way they keep moving quickly.

Ace and Replace

Tip by Heidi Brady from North Brunswick, NJ.

One of my teams favorite drill is called ace and replace. They are the most competitive ever in practice during this drill which is why I like it so much.

On one side of the court three passers are on and the coach is the target. The rest of the team serves. If a server gets an ace they replace the passer they aced and that passer becomes a server (they must sprint to switch).

Passers can only continue passing until they get aced. The winner is the player who teaches 21 points first.

Points are given by the coach each ball and players track their own points:

2 for an ace

-1 for a missed serve

2 for an in system pass

1 for a decent pass

0 points for an out of system playable pass

We usually play to 21

5 Keys to Give your team balance and Advantage: Coach Speas

K EY #1- POSITIVE SELF TALK

The human mind can process 400 plus words a minute, it becomes imperative to have most of that self-talk be positive. We are constantly talking, evaluating, criticizing, and judging ourselves. The little voice inside our head is always talking (if you are asking what little voice, that's it), we can learn to control it and we must keep it in check. Many of us grow up with negative guidance from parents and coaches therefore we've learned many things through negative feedback.

As a player you must approach the game in a positive fashion. We need to remember that we are in control of our self-talk and that we can make a conscious effort to think positively. The will to succeed starts with a positive attitude that you can achieve your goals. Positive self-talk is a choice and you must impress on your players that we are all free choosers in an unlimited field of choices. If you think you can achieve you are right, if you think you can't achieve you are right. Positive self-talk will drive the next four Keys to balance and an advantage.

KEY #2- GOAL SETTING

Can you get there if you don't know where you are going? There are basically two types of goals. Dream goals and wish goals.

A dream goal is a goal that you want deeply and long for it to happen, and spend a great deal of time each day thinking about and working toward accomplishing it. A realist knows hard work will get them to their goal eventually.

A wish goal is one that you wish could happen to you without very much personal investment of time or work. The idealist wants someone else to make it happen for them.

From this point on when I use the word goal I'm referring to dream goals. One of the best things you can do is to write down your goals, and rewrite them often. Goals tend to pull us in a certain direction, maintaining focus is very important, revisit your goals. There are many subcategories of goals.

Long range goals—i.e. Final outcome for the week, the month, the season.

Short range goals— i.e For the practice, next couple days.

Training goals—i.e Based on improvements.

Mini-goals — These are right now goals that keep you focused on the task at hand and you could have hundreds of them during the game. I.E. I'm going to pass this next serve right to the setter. As a coach I love mini-goals. They keep the athlete thinking positively and preparing themselves for the next series that are seconds away and only last for seconds.

All aspects of the game can be incorporated in some type of goal setting which guide the athlete in the areas of effort, attitude, support, and team spirit.

KEY #3 — VISUALIZATION (Creative Synthetic Visualization-CSV)

The formula for CSV is “imagination times the vividness will become reality in the subconscious mind.” Have your team members get into a

relaxed state with their eyes closed and picture in their mind's eye the skill or situation that they wish to improve. Be sure to emphasize that they always visualize in the first person. When they visualize have them be precise and meticulous in the body motions and outcomes. It is imperative that they visualize doing the skill correctly and successfully. You can start with simple skills then move to more complex skills as you become better at visualization.

There is a part of the brain that is called the Reticular Activating System. You can think of this system as your mind's eye. When you visualize, your brain accepts your visualization as a real physical action. Therefore letting you improve at a physical skill through mental practice.

As a practice session with your team, have them sit eyes closed and relaxed. Then have them visualize being in their kitchen at home taking a lemon out of the refrigerator, taking the lemon to a cutting board, cutting it in half, taking one half of the lemon, putting it in their mouth squeezing and biting down at the same time. As you watch them go through this exercise, you will see some of them wrinkle their nose, wince and make a funny face, and other various physical reactions. What you have just taught them is that they can become a visualizer very quickly. Often people struggle and claim that it is hard to visualize. This exercise usually lets them know that they can do it.

Visualization is just one more way to practice and you don't need a court, nets or balls and the athletes will benefit and become better players.

There have been many studies done that have shown that people can improve physical skills with mental practice.

There have been many books written about CSV and I recommend that you find one or more and read them in order to teach your team about this skill.

KEY #4 — STAY IN THE HERE AND NOW

Can you go back in time? NO! This is where the Woulda', Coulda', Shoulda's start to show up in people's minds. Can you accelerate time? NO! This is where the, I can't wait until... starts to displace the time of now. The fact is that the only time that you have is right now. This is very important in practice and in competition. Players need to prioritize the time of now, doing this will help them define their concentration. It makes NOW the most important time of all. The past is gone and the future will still be important when you get there.

Staying focused on the now can have an effect on your play during competition also. We have all seen players that make a mistake and start to go in the tank when the mistake starts to dominate their mental game. Recovery is the main part of letting mistakes go. The fact is that if you can get over an error in a day, you can get over it in an hour, and if you can do that you can get over it in a minute, and if you can do that you can get over it in milliseconds.

Fast recovery is a skill and can be improved. The quicker that a player can let a mistake go the better they will be on the next play.

Once a player learns that a mis-hit, a shank, a double hit, that just happened is as far in the past and can't be changed as one that happened last year. They can let it go faster and play the game in the time of NOW, if they work on letting mistakes go as soon as it happens. Learning to stay in the here and now can keep players focused and "in" the game at all times.

A couple of things that I did with my team to work on NOW. 1) I purchased the book "The Precious Present" by Spencer Johnson and made each player read it. During practice I would have #1 take the book and go in the equipment room and read it. When she came out I would have #2 take the book in and read it and so on until the whole team had read it. It is a quick read, but very profound. 2) I would have the players physically brush off a mistake by reaching up with one hand and brushing it off of their shoulder. (just like dusting off their shirt) I had them do this just to emphasize how quickly a mistake can be cast off.

A player can learn this skill and become a more consistent and stronger competitor in a very short time if they will buy in and work in a positive direction.

KEY #5 — BE A SELF STARTER

As a player you must be able to say, “I am willing to start myself.” Too many people are always waiting for someone else to get them going, as in please motivate me. You must motivate yourself, we can be inspired by others, but you will choose to be motivated. Players need to realize that they have the power to energize themselves. Energy is a choice as well as a skill that can be practiced. In order to get better at being a self-starter you need to remember positive self-talk and staying in the here and now. A player that thinks they are too tired to do the next drill effectively can change that thought process by telling themselves to be energized and to do this next drill with a high level of enthusiasm.

The fact is that energy is a choice in over 95% of your life, if you just crossed the desert with no water or sleep for days you may in fact be out of energy. Seldom has a coach ever seen a player practice or play so hard that they literally have no energy. As a coach you can explain this theory to your athletes and when they seem to be absolutely worn out you (and they) will be amazed the amount of effort that they can still produce.

Self-starters spend time in the weight room, get as many reps in drills as possible, come early to practice, help put up the nets, sweep the gym floor, all without being asked to do so by the coach. The players that aren’t self-starters sit leaned against the wall tying their shoes, pulling up their knee pads, fiddling with ankle braces, etc. People that are learning to be self-starters know to work hard in drills and put meaning to quality practice.

There is such a thing as muscle memory that is complimented by rhythm and speed. So when a player learns to practice/play at a particular level of intensity it becomes their pace. Players that are

self-motivated to practice hard and fast will tend to perform at a higher level because it is well within their comfort zone.

Being a self-starter is important for success in all aspects of life, not only in the sports arena.

Fundraisers

GREAT FUNDRAISING IDEA- COACH SPEASL

I have used adopt-a-player programs for years as a fundraiser. The best way I've found to do it is, gather your team in a classroom and have them bring a list of aunts, uncles, friends, youth pastors, dentists, etc, etc. Prior to the meeting, they should talk with mom and dad to make sure the list includes all of these peoples' addresses. Now in the meeting handout a sheet of paper for them to write a note on, the note they write will be what you have written on the chalkboard/white board for them to copy.

It should say something like, "Dear Aunt Betty, (Or name of other friends or family) and then copy the short paragraph that says something like, "I'm on the volleyball team and we are doing an adopt-a-player fundraiser and I would like for you to adopt me for the season. We are expecting to have a good season and have a fun team to watch. Please give us your support this year. My coach has arranged to have team t-shirts printed and they will be mailed or presented to you as soon as she/he gets the teams order completed. (Use any type of note that you would like, the previous note is just an example.)

Then you as a coach collect all of the envelopes with the notes inside (I have let the teams send the envelopes and it always seems to work better if I collect them and send them myself.) and add a form that

you have created with shirt size, season schedule, team roster, etc. (My recommendation is to have a light colored t-shirt with dark printing, you can get it the cheapest. XXL and XXXL will cost a couple dollars more each.) On the order form that you include, be sure that you explain that their adoption will cost them \$50.

Enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope back to you so that you can get their shirt size form and address. I always gave the adoptive parents two t-shirts for their \$50 support check.

If you provide the artwork your local screen printer, they should be able to give you a deal between, \$5-7 dollars for a one color ink design. Encourage adoptive parents to wear these shirts to games.

Encourage each girl to send as many as possible. One thing to watch out for is to make sure that one person doesn't get barraged by the whole team. For instance, if every girl on the team sends one to the athletic director or the school cook, you probably won't get support there, but they all have out of town relatives and friends that would only get letters from them. Grandmas and Grandpas and Aunts and Uncles are almost a sure bet, also remember there are people in your community that have made lots of money providing services for these kids and their families, so there are lots of potential donors.

This fundraiser formula generated 2,000 to 3,000 dollars every year.

Remember you as the coach need to meet the deadline to send out the shirts before home games start or the donors get grouchy.

Good luck and have fun with it.

Theory and Strategy

L EARNING TO LEARN Tip by Nabil Mardini, Los Angeles, CA.

The three main reasons, a student or athlete fail to learn and comprehend certain material is because of the following: (1) Everything must be cleared. From a skill, to a key word, to a concept, etc. Once cleared, one's memory doesn't serve you well. You must write everything down and use in sentences (at least three times) until it becomes entrenched and ingrained in the long term memory of the brain; (2) While we have a small percentage of people who learn by listening, the majority of people are visual learners. As a matter of fact, all human beings are visual learners. Words on paper or spoken don't mean much unless you use diagrams and schematics to assist in describing or understanding the concept; and (3) Information Overload (IO) – The brain can only handle a very small amount of information at a time.

Some of the concepts/principles/methods, we culture in our gym: (1) Simple Concepts are difficult to master. (2) We need lots of deliberate practice. (3) Know what you're working on. Deliberate, Mindful, Purposeful. (4) Monitor your focus, behavior, attention to results. (5) Great teams / players get good results when situations are less than perfect. (6) Things are less than perfect all the time!! (7) Great hitters hit with range on all different sets. (8) Great hitters get their feet to

the ball, every time. (9) Run what you call; Feedback loop w/ setter. Need to hit all sets to different areas with different speeds. (10) See the street they're giving you and take it. This requires great vision and great mechanics.

COACHING TO LEARNING STYLES: COACH SPEASL

To improve your coaching make an effort to learn your players learning style. Pay close attention to their speaking patterns and you will pick up on clues that will help you understand them.

For instance, if your player is talking to a friend and says something like "I see what you're saying", she is probably a visual learner and as a coach you will need to show her the way you want things done.

If she says something like "I feel like doing something...", she is probably a kinetic learner and you will have to be sure that you get her to go through the motions slowly and as she masters them, she can speed up until she is practicing at full speed.

If she says something like "I hear what you mean", she is probably an auditory learner and you will have to explain actions in great detail.

It's amazing how different people learn and you as a coach may have several learning styles on your team and until you can teach to each style, you may be frustrated when players don't pick things up at the same rate as others. To some people this is a new challenge, but is very interesting and puts you in tune with your players at a higher level.

Forearm Passing

BACK ROW DEFEENSE Tip by Russell McElroy, Hondo, TX.

Typically a person's head and their vision does not transfer quick enough to see the hit and then follow the ball to the point of block and find that they are ready to dig up the blocked ball.

So when training players to cover a back row attacking hitter, I have the coverage players watching the attacker to the point of being able to communicate that they are clearly jumping from behind the 10' attack line.

Then, at the moment of the jump, the covering players must be in a low ready defensive body position with their platform extended, and at the same moment, train their eyes on the blockers at the net instead of watching and following the ball.

PASSING

Tip by Brian Filibeck, Wheatland, WY.

We work on a technique called, step and close. It can be used to the right, left, front and back. A player steps in the direction they want to go and closes with the opposite foot, this way a player can cover a

good radius of the court and keep their body in balance. It also helps them play the ball in their core area and make a more consistent pass to target.

DS REACTION TIME DRILL

Tip by Lisa Manis, Dickinson, TX.

When working with the DS, I have my girls face away from the net in a defensive position. As they have their backs to me, I slap the ball or have them turn to face me with any command.

As they turn and face me, I serve the ball to them. I usually use our ball machine and the ball is served quickly. Your DS players must react fast to the ball movement and have a good platform as they turn. I have used this with our younger kids and the ball being served is slower to them. On our varsity team the ball is served as they are turning.

The faster the ball is served the faster they must react. Since playing a DS position requires athletes to react and adjust with little or no time. At first the drill was not very successful but I continued, forcing them to play the ball. They soon loved the drill because it was a fast paced drill and as they became successful they wanted the ball served faster. You are able to adjust this drill by having them turn and run to the ball, etc. I found that doing this improved their reaction time to the ball. Hope this helps.

Tip by Daniel Hart, Pulse Athletics VBC in Yorba Linda, CA.

When coaching athletes on passing I use 3 basic questions to get them to understand what they are doing!

Questions 1: Did the ball hit your “sweet spot”?

The “sweet spot” is when the ball hits both of your arms evenly at the proper place. Most athletes tend to have the ball only hit one arm,

hit their thumbs, or the ball hits the arm too high. We encourage the athletes to track the ball to their platform and this will help with having the ball consistently hitting the sweet spot.

If the athlete can say yes to question one but the pass still wasn't good we will ask question 2!

Question 2: Was your sweet spot directed at target BEFORE the ball hit your platform?

Once athletes understand sweet spot then we can start talking about angles. What athletes really need to understand is that the angle in the platform must be presented BEFORE the ball hits the "sweet spot". Most athletes will pass the ball and then create the angle. This is why the ball is not going to its proper location.

If we can say yes to questions 1 & 2 then we can ask question 3 if the pass was not good.

Question 3: Did you add or remove power into the ball to get it to target?

If the ball hit the sweet spot, the angle was directed at target BEFORE the ball hit the platform then the only problem would be power (height and distance). If the athlete had an over pass they need to remove power. If the ball didn't make it all the way to the target they need to add power by creating a small swing.

I can guarantee if a passer has a good pass its because they said yes to all 3 questions!

Tip by Bill McKee from Columbia, IL.

The drill is called PIE. I stand in the middle of a circle (a PIE if you will) of my players. They are about 5 feet from me (diameter of the circle).

I toss/tip the ball in any direction at them and they must pass the ball back to me. If the ball is hit back to me I tip it back at them. If not,

then someone must go in and get the ball back to me.

The other rules that I forgot to mention is that as I am standing in the center, each girl has a 'slice of pie' that is their coverage area, so DO NOT step in front of your neighbor to get the ball. If you do, I yell "get outta their pie."

I may also opt not to tip if the pass is over my head so I fully expect the player(s) behind me to cover behind me. Again, the 'slice of pie' rule applies there also!

We do this warm-*up at most practices. It reinforces several vb fundamentals such as cover your own area and cover the player in front of you.

How many times has a hitter taken a swing at a ball that was over their head, missed, and the ball hits the floor?

And in games when a player DOES step in front of another I yell the same "get outta their pie" and they get the point and sometimes the other team is standing there trying to figure out what I just said; kinda funny!

Tip by John Howell
Hempfield HS, Greensburg, PA.

To get your players to pass and transition better and quicker, I like to use this drill.

Put your players in a group of 4. Position 2 of them on the end sideline of the volleyball court. The first players tosses the ball just

FOREARM PASSING

past midcourt and the player from the other side runs in...makes a pass then transitions back to the sideline. The player on the other sideline runs in and does the same. The players make this a continuous passing drill. Usually for a timed amount of time. Can be done once with forearm passing only and then all setting.

Options to the drill. 1. Work for the sidelines of the basketball court into the volleyball court.

2. Require certain height in the passes.

3. Work in groups of 3 instead of 4 in a group. Do the drill the same way but the side with 1 passer is now working twice as hard. Run for 1 minutes then change the single side passer.

Demand a good pass first then hustle to get back off the floor. You will see a much-improved development in footwork and ball control.

Serving

T EACHING YOUNG PLAYERS TO FLOAT SERVE Tip by Julie Filippo, Gurnee, IL.

When teaching the float serve, I have my players stand about 1 foot away from the curtain that divides the gyms. I have them toss the ball up and contact through the ball, with the goal to trap the ball with their hand on the curtain.

Next progression is to move to a wall. Players will stand about 3 feet from the wall. They will toss, contact and step toward the wall. Their partner will stand about 10 feet behind them to catch the ball. This is a great way to watch if their elbows are dropping and to see the contact area. When hit correctly, the ball will sail right to their partner. I have them contact 5 and then switch.

SERVING TIP **COACH SPEASL**

Sometimes it is nice to mix it up and what I mean is, several players have the knack or ability to serve unique serves. As a coach I think you should exploit these talents. Many coaches work on a particular style or type of serving and encourage their whole team to use that method.

I think it is best to experiment in practice and find out who can do what. Obviously everyone wants their kid to serve the floater that flies like a dart, but there are many other serves that can be productive. For years everyone felt that a topspin serve would basically pass itself if you got your platform there. That's not always the case. The setter from Penn State had the awesome topspin going to the far corner. That serve made me nervous and I was in the nosebleed section of the arena!

Some kids serve the same style that they did in junior high because they were successful with it. If you get them to try something new they may find that they have a real gift for a different serve. Some kids are not comfortable changing their style, but it is good to see what they can do. Some of the things that I have had kids experiment with are things like a deep, deep hard floater from as far back as the basketball baseline on the court. Some of the kids that master this serve have so much pace on the ball that by the time it crosses the net it has created a great deal of friction in the air and really skids side to side dramatically. I like topspin serves, your kids that also play on the tennis team will be really good at these. If you can find someone who is comfortable hitting a slice it can cause a lot of confusion for the receiving team. Of course jump servers can cause issues as well. Finding someone who is consistent serving short and deep is valuable too.

Once you find who is strong at different serves I recommend not having three or four servers of the same style in a row. One year I had two players, one served right slice, and the other served left slice, so (I was lucky enough that the positions that they played made it possible) I put them close to each other in the lineup so the receivers had two extremes to deal with. If you get six players on the court that all have a unique serve it would be advantageous. I haven't had that yet, but came close a few times.

Of course the goal of consistency has to be met and the serves must be tough. So for a kid to focus in practice on upping their serving game is what needs to happen. Too often coaches say, "Okay serve for ten minutes" or "Serve fifty in serves" but are they really getting the max

out of that practice time?

Try it if you like, experiment, and hope you and your team have fun with it.

SERVING

COACH SPEASL

Serving: If the player is hitting the ball off either side of, or top of, or the heel of the hitting hand, they may be losing eye contact with the ball when the hit is made. Sometimes the player starts to look at the serve target during the serve.

The thing to emphasize to the player is that the most important time during the serve, is the time that the ball leaves the tossing hand until the time the hitting hand touches the ball. They must keep eye contact with the ball until the serve is struck.

SERVING

Rosie Wegrich, Pomona, CA.

Serving through the seams with velocity resulting in the middle back (aka prime court area) will create indecision (yours/mine), or create an inconsistent platform angle (angle of deflection), or draw the outside hitter into the seam at LB.

This single feature has turned our team into serving aces or one option passes. We also finished second in block assists through our serving and blocking plans infirmity. Good luck.

SERVING

Tip by Jen Ebright, Volborg, MT.

Serving: I put old jersey's on the other side of the court to represent the other teams serve receive. I tell my players to NOT hit the jerseys.

SERVING

Aim for the seams.

SERVING

Tip by Karan Price, Altoona Area, PA.

To help players who struggle serving right after a timeout in a match, we have now started randomly picking players to go to the service line after a drink break at practice.

We put a “consequence” on the line for the entire team if they error. In our recent winter junior high league playoffs, we had two players go to the line after timeouts and serve with confidence because they had already felt the pressure and been successful in practice.

Tip by Jean Hagler, from Savage, MT.

A fun serving drill is called Serving Bunco (after the dice game popular in our area - pronounced “bonko” - don’t ask me why)

Two teams are scrimmaging - live ball. If the server, serves an ace - they wear the Bunco hat (you can use any hat you like) until another server gets an ace - then they get to wear the hat and so on. This continues as long as you set the game - first to 25 etc. At the end of the game, the player wearing the hat gets to decide what the others’ punishment is.

I promise they get super competitive about keeping the hat. :)

Tip by Scott Reslow, Providence, RI.

One of the top drills we do is one that incorporates serving and passing. We call it, serve, sprint, and pass. Coach is in the setter box as the target. Three passers on the floor with one guy slightly off in the queue. The rest of the team is serving with the intent to cause a bad pass or an ace. Ten minutes on the board.

Rules...

If the server misses the serve, he then sprints the full length of the court and back. If the server's serve is passed perfectly, he then sprints the length of the court and back. If the passer passes a perfect ball, he then stays on the court. If he passes a poor ball (2, 1 or X), he then sprints the full length of the court and joins the servers. The server who caused the bad pass goes to the the queue, and the guy who was in the queue is now one of the passers on the floor.

We require the team to get 40 perfect in 10 minutes or we're running. The drill covers a lot of bases...conditioning, serve toughness, passing, precision, pressure, etc.

Blocking

JOUSTING: COACH SPEASL

I would always schedule a 5-8 minute time for my middles to joust. This should be short and sweet, the goal is not to jump their legs off. (Maybe not every practice but most). Most teams will have 2 or 3 middles if you have more, great. Have two of them face off at the net, the third one can be the tosser, (or asst, student asst, mgr, etc).

The toss should be a foot or two over the net. The tosser should only be 4-5 feet from the middles and right by the net. A good toss will have half the ball on each side of the net. For some a two handed toss swinging the ball from the waist is most accurate and consistent.

The tosser should have a small cart of balls or handers with balls ready. This should be a relatively fast moving drill. After 8/10 jousts rotate new players in or take a short break if you only have two middles. Make sure that the middles get their hands on the ball and press (sweep is ok but always press) and remind them that the key to winning the joust is that the player that keeps her hands on the ball longest usually wins.

Being good at the joust gives middles a strong sense of “owning” the net. Great middles do own the net and the other middles that she faces.

MIDDLE BLOCKERS

Tip by Frank Largusa, of Hayward, CA.

Middle blockers: Look at the direction that the opposing middle hitters toes are pointing to indicate the direction of your opponents middle attack.

To predetermine the direction of your opponents middle attack, look at the direction of the middles feet are pointed. Right means back one side, straight is front one, left is gap or three.

Tip from Keith Blackledge, Heath, Ohio.

The best blocking drill for kids that are learning to block is to start at the net in the proper blocking position. Have coach hold a ball slightly above net line and back. Have the kid jump and reach over the net (Penetration at the net line), grab the ball (both hands to go after the ball), and as she starts to come down, throw the ball behind their head and to the ground. The next step to the drill is to jump up to grab the ball and hold onto the ball as they land. Then immediately jump back up with the ball in their hand and place the ball back into the coaches hand and land again. The next part of the drill would be to introduce footwork from the middle blocker prior to jumping. I would have each kid do the drill at least 5 to 7 times then switch.

Serve Receive

SERVE
Tip by Jessie Scribe, Vancouver, WA.

We all do tri-line serve receive in practice. If you add a setter and hitter and have everyone set and hit, it teaches teams to play out all aspects even if you're focus is serve receive.

SERVE RECEIVE
Tip by PJ Gildernew, Ontario, CA.

No matter where the server serves from, all passers must face the server (so two of the passers will always be angled and one passer will be straight on with server). If the passer, who is straight on is left or right, then the outside leg should be up so the hips are turned toward the setter target area and the ball only needs to be deflected in the right direction)...it makes the determination of who is getting the ball quicker and places the passer in line with the ball (whether you pass mid line or over one knee) the middle passer needs to be in charge of most communication simply saying "yours / mine" to one of the passers on the left or right of them. Practicing the angle of deflection or elevation of the platform is also very important as you want very

little movement in the platform at point of contact with the serve since it has tons of energy already we DO NOT WANT TO ADD TO IT.

Other skills that need to be trained will be “reading” the server...just like “reading” an attacker the passers must “pick up” key information about servers before they actually have to pass the ball in relationship to arm speed at ball contact, type of serve, etc, the other skill that must be trained is how to move the feet/platform as the serve is on its way and still maintain balance (shuffle steps).

I generally like my passers to be closer to the 10 ft line as they seem to be able to not only shuffle quicker back to the end line but control the ball better going back or sideways rather than running forward for the short ball. Last, communication should always take place before the ball crosses the net.

5-Minute Serve Receive Drill with Middles

Tip by Sue Leonard, Fort Defiance, VA.

One side of the net has 3 passers, 1 setter and 1 middle. The other side has servers. In five minutes the team needs (depends on the level of your team) anywhere between 35-50 good passes. The middles are set off of every pass.

We alternate middles and setters after 5 swings each. Team rotates from servers to passers. Passers rotates from position 5 to 6 to 1 and to server. Great drill for endurance, especially working the middle hitters. There is always some kind of penalty for not making your goal number of passes.

Tip by Lori Aleshire from Waynesboro, VA.

Serve-Serve Receive Drill

* Team Play- Score starts at 18-15. Team with 15 is on Serve Receive (SR) all the time. Serving team can rotate every 3 serves. Receiving team does not rotate since they are working on a particular SR rotation. Game to 25, -1 for any unforced error (UE). Winning team gets a Big

SERVE RECEIVE

Point. Once the game is over the receiving team will now serve in the new game. When the team receives for a second time they should move to a new rotation. 1st team to get 6 Big Points win the game.

Orginzation

PRACTICE PLANS COACH SPEASL

Something I started doing years ago is to write out my practice plan on a 5×9 spiral notebook. I get a new one for the start of each season. I start the season with plans for our first team meeting and end the season with notes of individual meetings with the team members.

I've felt for a long time that we as coaches need to do a great deal of preparation for practices. Using the spiral notebook helped me incredibly with organization. Each page of the notebook is dated, practice is planned by the 5, 10, 15 minute segments. Early in practice I would always make announcements of upcoming events or team commitments and then I would revisit the announcements at the end of practice.

This little book would stay in my hand or close by every practice. If one drill happened to go long and we didn't have time for the next drill or portion of practice, I would circle it, that way I could spot it easily and move it to a future date. I would keep track of who was ill and why, if someone had an injury and had to leave practice for the day, I would put a star by segments that went well and that the team responded well to. I would always double space my practice session so I would have room for notes and comments to myself on the page

ORGINZATION

under the drill. Sometimes I would use a second page to diagram drills for future reference.

This becomes a team diary as well as a practice planning tool and a great reference for the coach as many times throughout the season you must be able to recall specific events that took place in practice.

I firmly believe that a coach owes it to his/her team to be very organized and address the needs of the team during the practice sessions. Too often coaches come to practice with a single sheet practice plan that gets lost or never seen again, or even worse, shoots from the hip and runs practice off the top of their head.

Before you know it you will have a dozen or more spiral notebooks on your book shelf that will represent years of high quality practice and very efficient team organization.

ORGANIZATION

Tip by Jaimie Tiblier, Biloxi, MS.

I create a practice plan and post it for our players. This plan helps with smooth transitions from drill to drill because our players know what to expect. Also, I post jobs daily for specific players, so there is never a question about setting up or picking up equipment. These simple tasks help maintain the tempo at our practices.

General Offense

OUT OF SYSTEM ATTACKING GAME

Tip by Howard Wallace, Kerrville, TX.

This is a 2 on 2 or 3 on 3, back row attack game. The coach initiates play by tossing in a free ball (or hitting in a controlled down ball) to one side. Each side is only allowed 2 hits to get the ball over.

The idea is that a player must dig/pass the ball with the intent of making it “hitable” for a teammate. Winner of the rally gets a point. Coach enters the next ball to the losing side. You determine how you want to score it. It can be small -score games.

You can award bonus points for attacking vs. sending over free-balls or other scoring scenarios you think will be helpful for your group. For bigger teams, you can rotate players in on each rally one at a time - into right back, to middle back to left back to “off”. Or you can switch out whoever digs. Or, maybe you have another way you’d like to rotate/switch players?

Freeball

E GGS IN ONE BASKET

Tip by Michelle Adamson, Shreveport, LA.

This is a free ball drill, with the coach tossing in the balls. This full court drill has a team on each side, coach plays a ball in, teams play out the point. The team that wins a point sends the Right front player who runs outside the court to a basket with 5 balls in it that is located behind the service line of the opposing team and takes one ball back to her teams basket. Each team starts with 5 balls in their basket. Play continues even with the player running to collect a ball(her team plays shorthanded until she gets back). The team that gets all 10 balls in their basket wins. Rotate as needed.

CHAOS DRILL

Tip by Mike Brandon, Gretna, NE.

We do a drill called “Chaos” that encourages winning points in a row / stopping an opponent’s run. It is a 6 on 6 drill that starts with a free ball initiated by Team B to Team A. Having the players initiate the free ball encourages them to learn how to send difficult free balls. If Team A wins the free ball rally, a down ball is initiated by Team B, again with

the intent that the players will learn to “better the ball” while giving the opponent a difficult ball to play. Should Team A win the down ball, they are given a “Chaos ball” which is initiated by the coach. This can take many forms, a ball in the net, off a wall, high into the rafters, or a bounced ball that indicates the team only has 2 contacts remaining. If at any time Team A’s streak is broken, the sequence is restarted with Team B receiving the free ball. We typically count every “Chaos” win as a big point and go to 3 big points.

FREEBALL

Tip by Lesli Hiller, St. Paul HS in St. Paul, Oregon

Capture the Flag drill. This is a great drill for hitters to be aware of targeting their hits and the team to be vocal on holes they may see. 6 vs 6 with 6 “flags” behind and off the court(when traveling we use their water bottles). Play is initiated with a free ball and continues with free ball to the loser. If there is no kill free balls continue to losing side. First team to get a kill, the passer of the kill runs to behind the other team’s court to steal a flag.

At the same time the losing team gets a free ball while calling out the area on the opponent’s court where the passer is missing as the target for the hitter. This is very fast paced and I always yell passer go after the kill, as I toss to the losing side. The goal is for one team to capture all twelve flags so with even teams it can go on for a while, with the flag count going up and down, but it is my player’s favorite. Every 3-5 minutes we rotate or just flip front and back rows since it is free balls.

PURPLE BALL WASH: conditioning and concentration

Tip by Flo Valdez, Franklin HS in El Paso, TX.

Teams are in starting rotation on each side of the net. Team A serves to Team B and the ball is played out; the team that won the point gets a free ball. Free balls are sent out continuously to the team winning

FREEBALL

the free ball this continues for 90 seconds at which time the next free ball sent out is a PURPLE BALL, this is the only one that counts for a point.

The team that wins the PURPLE BALL wins the serve and gets to rotate. The team that makes a full rotation is the team that wins the game. Obviously the PURPLE BALL may be any color you would like for it to be and usually is one of your school colors. This drill forces concentration and works on conditioning! and lots of FUN!!

Coverage

ALL COVER DRILL Tip by Kathy Barker, Paris, TX.

To simulate block recovery and coverage, we run the following drill:

We will set up normal offense on 1 side of the floor. I will place 3 girls directly in front of each hitter, with a ball in their hand, on the opposite side of the net. I will have a cart in the middle, with 2 extra girls to supply the 3 on the front. I will also add 1 girl with a ball in a short back position.

If the hitter attacks the ball, the girl in front of her with the extra ball will toss one over the net, as if it was blocked. As the year progresses, I have the tossers look for the girl late, or not covering. If it is a free ball or back row attack, the girl in the short back position will throw a free ball or down ball.

HITTER COVERAGE **COACH SPEASL**

In order to improve hitter-coverage I use a drill that incorporates the full offense and use the drill at least one or two days prior to each match. You may want to use the drill more often until the team perfects it.

I use three block-its and have team members hold them, and move

to be in front of the set if necessary. Then I stand in the middle back of the court and toss balls for the setter who sets outside, back and middle. The setter can already be released or release on the slap of the ball before I toss.

The hitters must not hit the ball as hard as possible but tap the ball into the block-it. By tapping it into the block-it as opposed to hitting it hard you have a more realistic rebound. When the ball is dug by a cover player the setter sets again choosing her hitter. With good hitter coverage one ball can be in play for several sets. Sometimes players don't know exactly where to cover from their position to the hitter, but the rule of thumb will come into play and that is to be as close to the hit and as low as possible.

This is intended to be a very fast paced drill. If a ball goes dead, hits the net, or goes out of play in any way, bat the ball off the court sideways and have other players shag the ball because the next ball will always be coming very quickly. After every 8 or 10 tosses into the setter we rotate players from the back row to the front row in their offensive positions.

Rotate the libero and DS as appropriate. It is imperative for this to be a fast moving and unpredictable drill. I feel the block-it is a very important training aid and I started my career with one and found that having at least three is imperative. It is also fun for the coach to be very vocal and encouraging in the drill.

Physical Skills

EXPLOSIVE JUMPING Tip by Jean Lojko, Greensboro, NC.

Point of Emphasis: To have athletes learn to focus on bending their knees while approaching and use their speed and arms to help them have an explosive jump.

Drill: Have a Coach or manager stand approximately eight to ten feet off the net holding a swimming noodle parallel to the ground. The height of the noodle and how far from the net you stand will depend on each individual player. You want the athlete to approach the noodle. Using a four step approach, the athlete would step right, then left (going under the noodle) then the right/left plant steps would put them in the optimal position to jump explosively.

Variations: Have an AcuSpike so they have a ball to hit. This helps the athlete have a visual and reach for the ball at a designated height of the coaches choosing.

Dig to Self Triples

Tip by Paul Dill, MIT in Cambridge, MA.

This is done in a Queen of the Court style with a coach feeding in a down ball to the winning side and losing team shagging and getting

back in line. Coach feeds in down ball and a player must dig the ball to her/himself and then set a teammate either front or back row. The rally continues with the same dig to self rule in effect throughout. This teaches players to be accountable for a quality first touch since they must set the second touch. They also learn how to put up hittable out of system balls for their teammates. Hitters learn how to create attack lanes and hit out of system sets aggressively.

General Defense

Tip by Craig Cummings in Jonesboro, AR.

A 6v6 team defense drill I like to use early in our season to reinforce positive performance execution is Nev's for Points: The defensive side is in a specific rotation, and their goal is to earn 15 points from 20 balls. The offense side must run basic 4-1-c attack for the first 10 balls, after that they can run anything. Coach tosses to any of the five players on the offense side (setter has released). The defense can score a point from a: block, dig that the setter can use their hands on, big step and press by the blockers, all three hitters transitioning behind the 10 ft line, and a kill. After 5 tosses the offensive sides quickly waves to get new players on the court. The early part of the season I wash any attack errors by the offense, so the defense has to work to earn their points.

Practice Planner

On the next page is an example of Coach Speas's practice planner.

VOLLEYCART COACHING TIP COMPILATION BOOK

DATE 5/19/2017

LATE-TIME ARRIVED

ABSENT

SUSIE 3:25 PM

KATY

(THIS IS IMPORTANT SO YOU CAN UPDATE LATE PLAYERS AND
ABSENT PLAYERS ON WHAT THEY MISSED)

TIME:

3 PM ANOUNCEMENTS

3:05 WARM-UP INDIVIDUAL

3:10 WARM-UP PARTNERS (PASSING AND PEPPER)

1. FOREARM
2. OVERHEAD
3. FACE SHOTS
4. PEPPER
5. 5 PERSON PASSING OR PEPPER

3:20 SERVING
COACH DECIDES WHERE

3:30 HITTING
(ALTERNATE R, M, L) ALTERNATE SETTERS

3:40 SPLIT UP TEAM

PASSERS - PASSING DRILLS 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

SETTERS- DIFFERENT SETS 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

BLOCKERS- FOOTWORK- JOUST, ETC. 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4:00 BREAK

4:05 TEAM DRILL 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4:20 NEW PLAYS

4:35 SCRIMMAGE

4:55 CONDITIONING

5:00 POST PRACTICE MEETING + AFFIRMATIONS

The VolleyCART Story

VolleyCART was formed in 2011. Our patented carts, The Big Cart and The Go Cart preceded the company and were invented by co-founder Dave Gregory. Dave teamed up with Coach Speas who coached volleyball at Southwestern Oregon Community College for 32 years.

The foundation of VolleyCART was built on providing quality, innovative carts and great customer service to back up the carts. We are only a phone call or an email away. With the foundation of the Big Cart and Go Cart, we added the Top Cart/Drill Cart in 2015. The new cart stacked on top of the Big Cart and gave coaches an elevated cart for doing box drills. Adding to the versatility of the Top Cart/Drill Cart, it can be used as a drill cart too!

In 2018 we developed another exciting product, the CourtBOARD. It is a whiteboard that attaches to the Big Cart. It gives coaches a whiteboard on the court that is sturdy and mobile. The CourtBOARD can fold down and out of the way and also can fold down and rest on top of the cart, giving people a standing desk.



For more information you can visit, VolleyCART.com.