



Special Olympics

VOLLEYBALL COACHING GUIDE



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Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

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Special Olympics

VOLLEYBALL COACHING GUIDE

Planning a Volleyball Training & Competition Season



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Setting Goals

Realistic yet challenging goals for each athlete are important to the motivation of the athlete both at training and during competition. Goals establish and drive the action of both training and competition plans. Sport confidence in athletes helps to make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation. Please see Principles of Coaching Section for additional information and exercises on goal setting.

The first thing in setting goals is to understand the individual athlete's limitations. Beginning coaches who write a goal statement before establishing what that athlete is capable of will only undermine the validity of the goals.

1. Determine the intellectual, physical and social strengths and weaknesses of the athlete.
2. Define three to five small measurable goals that the athlete should realistically be able to achieve over the course of a single season. These goals can be skill-based (e.g., learning to consistently serve in), social-based (e.g., avoiding any angry outbursts or sulking at practices) or physical (e.g., performing a drill in a faster time).
3. Remember to phrase your goals in a positive way.
4. Define one or two goals in which the athlete will need to truly apply him/herself to accomplish– “stretch goals.”
5. Identify how the athlete's strengths and weaknesses will affect these goals and devise a plan to address any potential problems.
6. Meet with the athlete and appropriate caregiver to explain the goals and gain their understanding and buy-in. The degree of support you can expect from the caregiver may limit some of the goals you would otherwise want to set.
7. Avoid goals that are outside of the athlete's direct control (the team winning a match or tournament).
8. Determine if there are any non-skill based goals the athlete/caregiver is interested in setting, such as becoming an assistant coach for a lower level team, a Global Messenger and/or a SOOPA Official.
9. Identify whether there is anything you (the coach) will need to learn or accomplish to support these goals. What is your plan?
10. Identify motivating rewards or recognition you can offer the athletes as they achieve each goal. These should NOT be in the form of bribery or substantial material rewards.

Sample Volleyball Goals

- Learn to consistently serve overhand, measured as getting eight out of 10 in bounds from the regulation service line;
- Lead the team in warm-up and cool-down stretching using the correct sequence of stretches;
- Give a speech at the annual volleyball awards banquet;
- Score four out of five in the Individual Volleyball Skills Competition Event #3, forearm passing;
- Learn to help set up and take down the nets at practice each week;
- Assist with an outreach presentation at a nearby residential home to help recruit new athletes.

Benefits of Goal Setting

- ♦ Increases athlete's level of physical fitness
- ♦ Teaches self-discipline
- ♦ Teaches the athlete sports skills that are essential to a variety of other activities
- ♦ Provides the athlete with a means for self-expression and social interaction



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Planning a Volleyball Training & Competition Season

There will be many different skills to teach players during the course of a season. A season-long training plan will help coaches present skills in a systematic and effective way. The sessions in the plan below are organized in atwice-a-week format.

Sample Training Plan

Preseason	
Week #1	Assessment Fitness Assessment Rules Basic skill drills
Week #2	Serving skills Fitness Passing skills Setting up the offense and defense Hitting/Receiving
Competition Season	
Week #3	Setting up the offense Setting up the defense Rules/Restarts Hitting/Receiving
Week #4	Control Team play/Positions Control Team play/Positions
Week #5	Passing Team play/Support Passing Team play/Support
Week #6	Passing Team play Passing Team play/Support
Week #7	Team play Team play/Defending
Week #8	Team skill drills Tournament prep



Essential Components of Planning a Volleyball Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program. Please refer to the noted sections in each area for more in-depth information and guidance on these topics.

- Warm-ups
- Previously taught skills
- New skills
- Competition experience
- Feedback on performance

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember: when creating a training session using the key components, the progression through the session allows for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

1. Easy to difficult
2. Slow to fast
3. Known to unknown
4. General to specific
5. Start to finish



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Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep all athletes active	Athlete needs to be an active listener
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun – help keep it this way for you and your athletes
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully• Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it• General to specific – this is why I am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities



Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions

- Assign assistant coaches their roles and responsibilities in accordance to your training plan.
- When possible, have all equipment and stations prepared before the athletes arrive.
- Introduce and acknowledge coaches and athletes.
- Review intended program with everyone. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
- Alter the plan according to the facility and in order to accommodate the needs of the athletes.
- During each practice, have small group games over a net or rope.
- Keep drills and activities brief and game-like so athletes do not get bored. Keep everyone busy with an activity even if it is rest.
- Devote the end of the practice to a group activity that can incorporate challenge and fun, always giving the athletes something to look forward to at the end of practice.
- If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
- Summarize the session and announce arrangements for next session.
- Keep the **fun** in fundamentals.



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Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of volleyball. The safety and well-being of athletes are the coaches' primary concerns. Volleyball is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

- At the first practice, establish clear rules for behavior and enforce them:
 - Keep your hands to yourself.
 - Listen to the coaches.
 - When you hear the whistle – Stop Look and Listen.
 - Ask the coach before you leave the court or gym.
- Make sure athletes bring water to every practice, especially in hotter environments.
- Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
- Ensure that the coach has a copy of current medical form for each athlete.
- Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
- Walk the court area before each practice or competition to check for any unsafe conditions. Remove anything on or near the court that a player might run into (such as chairs or boxes) or slip on (such as clothing, clipboards or spills).
- Ensure that equipment is as safe as possible, e.g., tape or remove any loose wires from net, pad net standard and/or firmly secure antennae to net.
- Review your first aid and emergency procedures. Have someone who is trained in first aid and CPR either on or very near the field during practice and games.
- Warm up and stretch properly at the beginning and/or end of each practice or competition to prevent muscle injuries.
- Train to improve the general fitness level of your players. Physically fit players are less likely to get injured. Make your practices active.
- Match players according to ability in drills where players are working as a team or in small groups.
- Encourage all your players to wear knee pads at practices and games.



Volleyball Practice Competitions

The more we compete, the better we get. Part of the strategic plan for Special Olympics volleyball is to drive more sport development at the local levels. Competition motivates athletes, coaches and the entire sport management team. Expand or add to your schedule as many competition opportunities as possible. We have provided a few suggestions below.

1. Host a Special Olympics area or regional volleyball tournament.
2. Host and/or participate in practice scrimmages against other local Special Olympics volleyball teams, outside of competitions if possible.
3. Ask a nearby school/club team if your athletes can practice with them or even compete against them in a controlled scrimmage.
4. Contact your National Governing Body and, where available, obtain information on coaches' certification opportunities.
5. Take the team to see a local university or club volleyball competition or, if possible, watch a televised match. Discuss the fundamentals the players are performing and reinforce the importance of executing the skills they learn at practice each week.
6. Incorporate competition components at the end of every training session.



Selecting Team Members

The key to the successful development of a traditional Special Olympics or Special Olympics Unified Sports® team is the proper selection of team members. We have provided some primary considerations below for you.

Gender Grouping

Whenever possible, teams should be grouped by gender. While there is no prohibition against coed teams, whenever possible female athletes should have the option of playing in a female-only division if they so desire. Not all programs will offer female divisions; please consult your local program.

Age Grouping

All team members should be as closely matched in age as possible:

- Within 3-5 years of age for athletes 21 years of age and under
- Within 10-15 years for athletes 22 years of age and over

Ability Grouping

Unified Sports teams work best when all team members have similar sports skills. Partners with abilities that are far superior to other teammates will either control competition or accommodate others by not competing to their potential. In both situations, the goals of interaction and teamwork are diminished and a true competitive experience is not achieved.

There is also an increased chance for injury when lower level athletes are trying to play defense against hard driven balls hit by substantially higher level opposing partners. Even when no injury occurs, these athletes may play “intimidated” and thereby be robbed of their enjoyment of the game.



Creating Meaningful Involvement in Unified Sports®

Unified Sports embraces the philosophy and principles of Special Olympics. When selecting your Unified Sports team, you want to achieve meaningful involvement at the beginning, during and at the end of your sport season. Unified Sports teams are organized to provide meaningful involvement for all athletes and partners. Every teammate should play a role and have the opportunity to contribute to the team. Meaningful involvement also refers to the quality of interaction and competition within a Unified Sports team. Achieving meaningful involvement by all teammates on the team ensures a positive and rewarding experience for everyone.

Indicators of Meaningful Involvement

- Teammates compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others.
- Teammates compete according to the rules of competition.
- Teammates have the ability and opportunity to contribute to the performance of the team.
- Teammates understand how to blend their skills with those of other athletes, resulting in improved performance by athletes with lesser ability.

Meaningful Involvement Is Not Achieved When Team Members

- Have superior sports skills in comparison to their fellow team members.
- Act as on-field coaches, rather than teammates.
- Control most aspects of the competition during critical periods of the game.
- Do not train or practice regularly, and only show up on the day of competition.
- Lower their level of ability dramatically, so that they do not hurt others or control the entire game.



Volleyball Skills Assessment Card

The sport skills assessment card is a systematic method useful to determine the skill ability of an athlete. The sport skills assessment card is designed to assist coaches in determining athletes' ability level in a sport before they begin participation. Coaches will find this assessment a useful tool for several reasons:

1. Helps coach and athlete determine which positions the athlete is best suited to play, e.g., setter, hitter, Libero (defensive specialist) etc.
2. Establishes the baseline training areas of athlete
3. Assists coaches to group athletes of similar ability in training teams
4. Measures the athlete's progression
5. Helps determine the athlete's daily training schedule

Before administering the assessment, coaches need to perform the following analysis when observing the athlete.

- Become familiar with each of the tasks listed under the major skills
- Have an accurate visual picture of each task
- Have observed a skilled performer executing the skill

When administering the assessment, coaches will have a better opportunity to get the best possible analysis of their athletes. Always begin by explaining the skill you would like to observe. When possible, demonstrate the skill.



Special Olympics - Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals

Name: _____ Athlete Partner
 Jersey Number: _____ Coach's Name: _____
 Team Name: _____ Evaluator's Name: _____
 Delegation: _____ Date of Evaluation: _____ / ____ / ____
 _____ **CHECK HERE** if using "Modified Rules" for this assessment

Individual Assessment for Team Play

<p>A. Serving (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)</p> <p>Difficulty tossing/contacting ball (1) Sometimes serves underhand legally over the net (2) Legally serves underhand consistently and effectively (3) Legally serves both underhand and overhand over the net (4) Consistently serves overhand over the net (5) Often serves overhand over the net, such that the opposing team cannot return (8) NOTE: The Evaluator must consider skill level of opposing team when considering Value (8)</p>	<p>SCORE:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
<p>B. Passing (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)</p> <p>Difficulty completing a forearm pass to teammate (1) Sometimes completes a pass to teammate (2) Only completes passes that come directly to him/her (3) Usually completes passes received in general area of his/her position (4) Chooses best type of pass (overhead/ set/ forearm) for the situation (5) Completes passes accurately to the setter to run an offense (6) Controls the offense with ability to complete an advanced pass, overhead set and forearm pass (8)</p>	<p>SCORE:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
<p>C. Blocking (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)</p> <p>Does not block at all, regardless of the situation (1) Makes little to no effort to block and often is out of position for the block (2) Blocks only when the ball is hit directly in front of him/her (3) Goes after attacks that are within 1-2 steps (4) Aggressively attempts blocks 3-4 steps away, makes many successful blocks (6) Exceptional ability to stop opponent's attacks all along the net with good body control (8)</p>	<p>SCORE:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
<p>D. Attacking/Hitting (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)</p> <p>Does not demonstrate knowledge of basic mechanics of front row play (1) Periodically makes an uncontested attack over the net (2) Hits the ball over the net when it comes directly to him/her (3) Hits the ball over the net when it is set to him/her, occasionally moving to a set 1-2 steps away (4) Consistently hits the ball over the net into the opposite court (5) Consistently hits the ball over the net that the opposing team cannot return (6) NOTE: The Evaluator must consider skill level of opposing team when considering Value (6) Demonstrates ability to jump and attack the ball downward (8)</p>	<p>SCORE:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>



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Special Olympics - Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals

<p>E. Communication (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)</p> <p>Does not communicate with teammates or coaches; does not make any motion toward the ball (1)</p> <p>Does not communicate with teammates or coaches; often runs into other players and takes balls called by teammates (2)</p> <p>Responds to communications from teammates and coaches by changing the way he/she plays on the court (4)</p> <p>Calls for and aggressively pursues balls near his/her position and backs away from teammates who call for a ball (5)</p> <p>Encourages teammates to communicate; helps guide teammates on the court (6)</p> <p>Strongly communicates with teammates and coaches during play (8)</p>	SCORE:	<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
<p>F. Game Awareness (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)</p> <p>Sometimes confused on offense and defense; does not transition; stays in one place (1)</p> <p>Can play a fixed position as instructed by coach; may go after an occasional loose ball (2)</p> <p>Limited understanding of the game; performs basic skills and will run occasional plays if coach prompts (4)</p> <p>Moderate understanding of the game; some offensive plays and solid defensive skills (6)</p> <p>Advanced understanding of the game and mastery of volleyball fundamentals (8)</p>	SCORE:	<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
<p>G. Movement (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)</p> <p>Maintains a stationary position; does not move to or away from the ball as necessary (1)</p> <p>Moves only 1-2 steps toward the ball (2)</p> <p>Moves toward the ball, but reaction time is slow and has intermittent transition from offense to defense (4)</p> <p>Movement permits adequate court coverage (5)</p> <p>Good court coverage, reasonably aggressive; good transition from offense to defense (6)</p> <p>Exceptional court coverage, aggressive anticipation; great transition from offense to defense (8)</p>	SCORE:	<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Total Score:		<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
(Maximum Score = 56)		

Divide TOTAL SCORE by 7 to determine OVERALL RATING
 [Round off to the nearest tenth, e.g. 4.97 = 5.0 or 3.53 = 3.5; Maximum Rating = 8]

OVERALL RATING: _____

Signature of Coach/ Evaluator: _____



Volleyball Attire

Appropriate volleyball attire is required for all competitors. As coach, discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, long pants (non-athletic) are not proper volleyball attire for any event. Explain that athletes cannot perform their best while wearing non-athletic pants that restrict their movement. Take athletes to school or university competitions while training or during competitions, and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions. The correct volleyball attire is a shirt (jersey), shorts, socks and shoes.

It is forbidden to wear any object that may cause injury or give an artificial advantage to the player. For safety reasons, it is recommended that a player not wear a hat or jewelry. If worn, religious or medical medallions shall be removed from chains and taped or sewn under the uniform. If a ring, other than a flat band, cannot be removed, it should be taped in a manner as not to create a safety hazard.

Players may wear glasses or lenses at their own risk. Products may be available to aid in the prevention of injuries specifically to the eyes, ankles and knees.

Shirt

During practice, athletes should wear a shirt that is comfortable and allows freedom of movement in the shoulder area. Long sleeves can reduce the impact of the ball on the forearms during passing and are therefore an acceptable option. Make sure the length of the shirt is long enough to tuck into a pair of shorts or warm-up pants.

During competition, player jerseys must be numbered from 1 to 99, no duplicates allowed. The number must be clearly visible and of a contrasting color to the jersey and placed at the center of the front (minimum 15 cm [6 inches]) and the center of the back of the jersey (minimum 20 cm [8 inches]); the stripe forming the numbers shall be a minimum of 2 cm (¾ inches) in width. The color and design of the jerseys and shorts must be the same for the entire team. A player who plays as a Libero must wear the same number as displayed on his or her non-Libero jersey. The competition manager may make discretionary exceptions for specific match (es). These specifications are included to guide the coach when uniforms are being ordered or otherwise procured.





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Shorts

During practice, athletes should wear gym shorts or their uniform shorts. Shorts should provide the athlete with comfort and good appearance.

During competition, all players should wear shorts that are similar in appearance; this includes striping, color and logos.



Socks

It is recommended that athletes wear socks to help absorb the foot moisture during activity. Because of the continuous stop-and-go action in volleyball, socks may help to prevent blisters.

Shoes

It is recommended that athletes wear shoes that are specifically designed for volleyball. It is important to have shoes with cushioned insoles, arch support and heel support. High tops are acceptable.



Warm-up Suits

It is recommended that athletes wear a warm-up suit prior to and after a volleyball game or practice in cooler environments. A medium weight cotton sweatshirt and sweatpants are excellent inexpensive warm-ups.



Knee Pads

Knee pads are highly recommended to help protect the knees from bruises and floor burns.





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Volleyball Equipment

The sport of volleyball requires the type of sporting equipment below. Products may be available to aid in the instruction of volleyball skills.

Volleyball

The size of the ball should be no larger than 81 centimeters (32 inches) in circumference and weigh no more than 226 grams (8 ounces). It should be as close as possible to the regulation-size volleyball. The ball shall be spherical in shape and made of flexible leather or synthetic leather with a bladder inside made of rubber or a similar material. Its color may be a uniform light color, or a combination of colors. The inside pressure shall be 0.30- 0.32 kg/cm² (4.26 to 4.61 psi). In Modified Team Competition a lighter weight, leather or synthetic leather, modified volleyball may be used.



Court

While it is recommended that a regulation 9 meter x 18 meter (29 feet 6 inches x59 feet) court be used, the Special Olympics modification allows for the service line to be moved closer to the net, but no closer than 4.5 meters (14 feet 9 inches). If a regulation size court is unavailable, then modifications may be made to allow for play in a safe manner.

Nets

Used to separate the teams during play, men's net height of 2.43 meters (7 feet 11 5/8 inches) is used for regular and Unified Sports. Women's net height of 2.24 meters (7 feet 4 1/8 inches) is used for Women's and Modified Team Competition. The official net is 1 meter (39 inches) wide and 9.5 to 10 meters (31 feet 6 inches to 33 feet) long (with 25 to 50 cm [10 inches to 19 ½ inches] on each side of the side bands), made of 10 cm (4 inch) square black mesh. At its top a horizontal band, 7 cm (2 ¾ inches) wide and made of two-fold white canvas, is sewn along its full length.





Antennae

These are vertical flexible rods attached to the opposite sides of the net at the points the net crosses the sidelines. An antenna is 1.80 meters (5 feet 11 inches) in length, and the top 80 cm (32 inches) extends above the net and is marked with 10 cm (4 inch) stripes of contrasting color, preferably red and white.



Net Standards

The posts supporting the net which are placed at a distance of .50 to 1.0 meters (20 inches to 39 inches) outside the sidelines, they are 2.55 meters (8 feet 4 inches) high and preferably adjustable. When available, pads for the posts should be used.

Ball Cart/ Ball Bag

A device used to carry or hold volleyballs during practice or competition.



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Teaching Volleyball Skills



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Warm-Up

A warm-up period is the first part of every training session or preparation for competition. The warm-up starts slowly and gradually involves all muscles and body parts. The warm-up is also a good time for the coach and athletes to talk about the objectives of the upcoming practice. In addition to preparing the athlete mentally, warming up also has several physiological benefits.

The importance of a warm-up prior to exercise cannot be overemphasized. Warming up raises the body temperature and prepares the muscles, nervous system, tendons, ligaments and cardiovascular system for upcoming stretches and exercises. The chances of injury are greatly reduced by increasing muscle elasticity.

Warming Up:

- ♦ Raises body temperature
- ♦ Increases metabolic rate
- ♦ Increases heart and respiratory rate
- ♦ Prepares the muscles and nervous system for exercise

The warm-up is tailored for the activity to follow. Warm-ups consist of active motion leading up to more vigorous motion to elevate heart, respiratory and metabolic rates. The total warm-up period takes at least 25 minutes and immediately precedes the training or competition. A warm-up period will include the following basic sequence and components.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic walk/ fast walk/ run	Warms muscles	3 minutes
Stretching	Increases range of movement	5 minutes
Event Specific Drills	Coordination preparation for training/competition	10 minutes

Aerobic Warm-Up

Activities such as walking, light jogging, walking while doing arm circles, jumping jacks.

Walking/ Running

The first activity in an athlete's training routine should be to warm the muscles. Based on your athletes' ability levels, this may be: walking briskly, jogging slowly or running for 3-5 minutes. As a coach, you should be aware of individual athletes' needs regarding the warm-up walk or run. This activity circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching.

For those athletes capable of running, they should start out slowly and gradually increase speed; however, the athletes should never reach even 50 percent of their maximum effort by the end of the run. Remember, the sole objective of this phase of the warm-up is circulating the blood and warming the muscles in preparation for more strenuous activity.

Stretching

Stretching is one of the most critical parts of the warm-up and an athlete's performance. A more flexible muscle is a stronger and healthier muscle. A stronger and healthier muscle responds better to exercise and activities and helps prevent injury.



Event Specific Drills

Drills are activities designed to teach sport skills. Progressions of learning start at a low ability level, advance to an intermediate level, and finally, reach a high ability level. Encourage each athlete to advance to his/her highest possible level. Drills can be combined with the warm-up and lead into specific skill development.

Skills are taught and reinforced through repetition of a small segment of the skill to be performed. Many times, the actions are exaggerated in order to strengthen the muscles that perform the skill. Each coaching session should take the athlete through the entire progression so that he/she is exposed to all of the skills that make up an event.

Specific Warm-up Activities

- ◆ Swing arms back and forth simulating the pendulum swing.
- ◆ Move quickly through the techniques without the ball.
- ◆ Use a 10- to 15-minute warm-up period on court, with drills that involve movement and the ball.



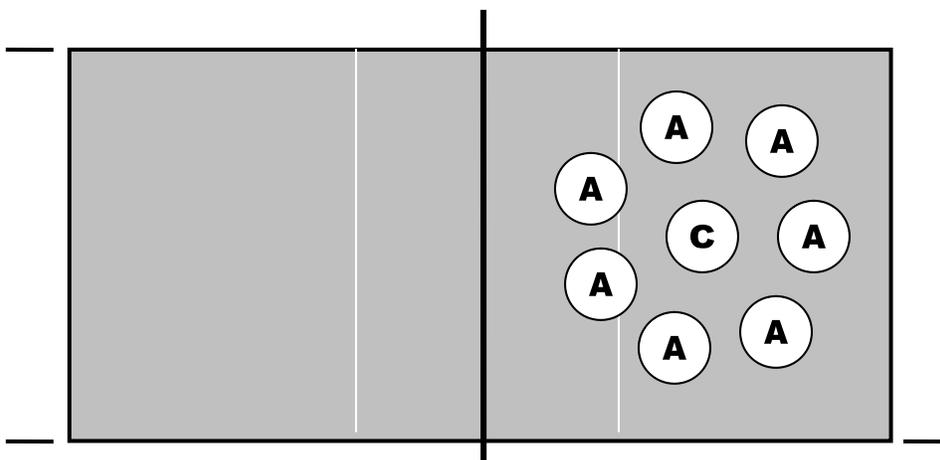
Warm-Up Drills

The best warm-up drills are based on skills scheduled to be covered in that practice and that the athletes have some level of confidence doing already. Warm-up is a low impact exercise, and the intent is to get the blood flowing at the same time the athletes are re-engaging their volleyball brains since the last practice or competition.

Circle Passing Drill

Description

The athletes (A) will form a rough circle on one side of the net. The coach (C) will stand in the middle of the circle and initiate the drill by tossing the ball to one of the athletes, who will pass the ball back to the coach. The coach in turn will pass (or toss) the ball to a different athlete, who will pass it back to the coach, and so on.



This low level non-impact drill is an opportunity for the coach to discuss the goals of the rest of the practice session, reinforce general goals the team should be focused on or discuss upcoming competitions, or just allow the team to bond in a cooperative drill.

The drill can be made more complex by having the athletes set or overhead pass the ball in a controlled fashion. At the highest levels, the coach can hit the ball (25% effort) at athletes to warm up their passing/digging skills.







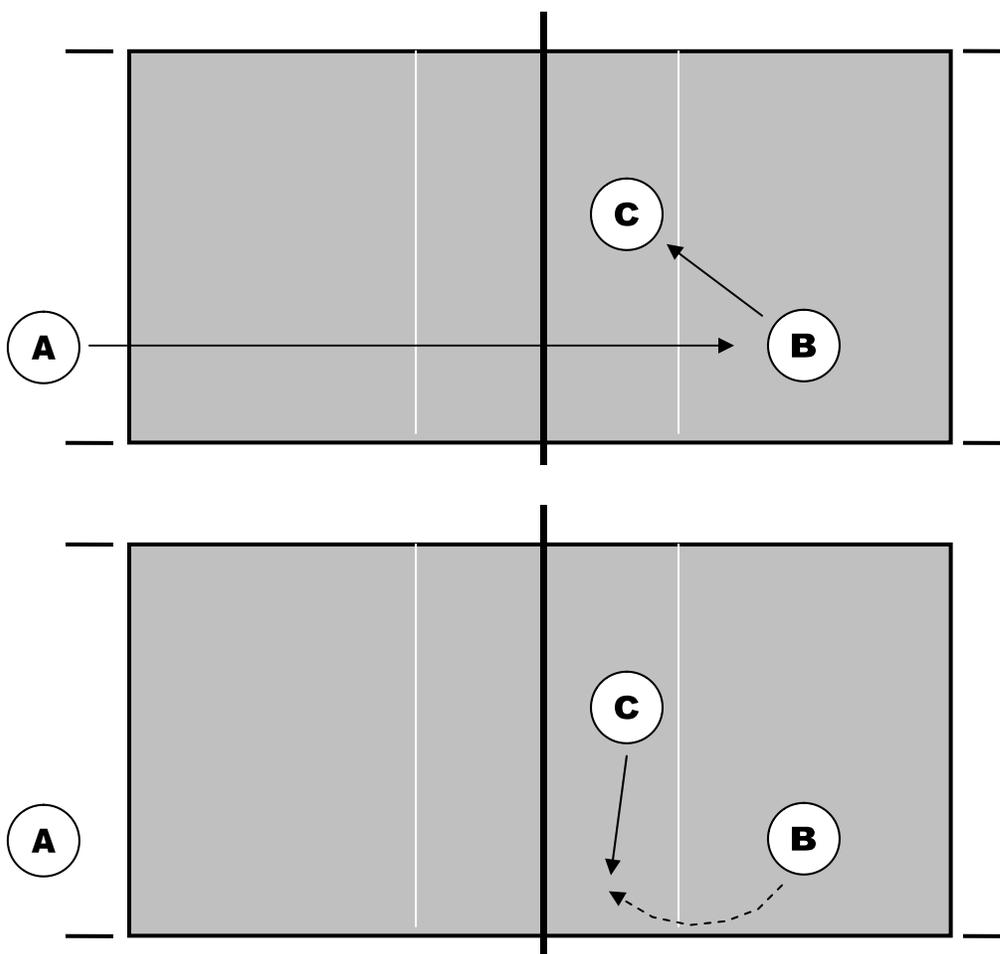
BASE Drill (Build All Skills Efficiently)

The basic passing drill below is designed to be easily adaptable to all levels of ability. It also allows athletes of differing ability levels to participate in the same drill while each is improving his/her specific skill needs.

Description

One player will be stationed at each position A, B and C. The remaining players will form a line off the court behind position A.

1. The ball is tossed over the net from Player A to Player B. (Since every ball comes from over the net, the sooner you begin teaching this drill, the sooner your athletes will develop the correct habits.)
2. Player B passes the ball to Player C with either an overhead or a forearm pass, and then approaches the net.
3. Player C bump sets the ball to Player B, who is standing 2 meters (6 feet) from the net. Player B catches the ball and rolls it under the net to the next Player A in line.
4. When the drill has been executed and the next player in line moves to position A, the player previously in position A moves to position B, the player previously in position B moves to position C, and the player previously in position C moves to the last position in line behind position A.





Variations

Using the variations below, you can build ever increasing challenges into the core drill, keeping it as game-like as possible. This drill should be run from the right side as frequently as it is run from the left side.

Before beginning the drill, you must determine how long each player is in this position. It can be for:

- ♦ Just one rotation, then each player “follows the ball,” jogging to the new spot.
- ♦ A certain number of attempts, then the group rotates.
- ♦ A certain number of successes, then the group rotates.
- ♦ A certain amount of time, then the group rotates.

This drill can be enhanced by varying the difficulty of the task each player performs (listed in order of increasing complexity):

Player A:

- ♦ Tosses the ball over the net underhand.
- ♦ Tosses the ball over the net overhand.
- ♦ Tosses the ball over the net flat and hard overhead.
- ♦ Hits the ball over the net underhand.
- ♦ Hits the ball over the net overhand.

Player B:

- ♦ Catches the ball any way possible.
- ♦ Catches the ball in a “basket catch,” cradling the ball between the forearms and upper arms.
- ♦ Passes the ball to the setter with a forearm pass.
- ♦ Passes the ball to the setter with an overhead pass.

Player C:

- ♦ Catches the ball any way possible.
- ♦ Catches the ball in a “basket catch,” cradling the ball with the elbows bent.
- ♦ Catches the ball in a hand setting position.
- ♦ Bump sets the ball to Player B.
- ♦ Hand sets the ball to Player B.

This drill can be further varied by adjusting other factors, including:

Distance

- ♦ Player A can vary his/her distance from the net when initiating the drill. At the most basic level, Player A may only be 2 meters (6 feet) from the net, while advanced players will begin behind the endline, as if serving.
- ♦ Player A can send the ball directly to Player B or to an area nearby, forcing Player B to move his/her feet to execute the pass. At the most basic level, Player B may not need to move at all, while advanced players may be expected to run a short distance or even dive/roll to get balls more than 3 meters (10 feet) away.
- ♦ Player A can vary the height of the ball that is sent to Player B. At the most basic level, Player A may send the ball over very gently, while advanced players should expect to see balls coming from 10 meters (30 feet) high or very flat and sharply hit.



Court Position

- ♦ Player A can initiate the drill from anywhere on his/her side of the court, including from behind the service line.
- ♦ Player B can be positioned in a variety of positions on his/her side of the court to simulate a specific spot in the rotation.

Introduce Scoring

- ♦ Player B must accurately catch or pass the ball X number of times in a row.
- ♦ Player B must accurately pass the ball to the setter X out of Y times.

Accuracy

- ♦ The pass from Player B must land within 1 meter (3 feet) of Player C to be considered “accurate.”
- ♦ The pass from Player B must be high enough that the setter can easily hand set the ball.
- ♦ The set from Player C must land within 1 meter (3 feet) in front of Player B at the end of the approach to be considered “accurate.”

Conclusion

This drill is flexible enough that all three players could be working at the same ability level in the drill or each athlete could be working at a different level. An example would be: Player A is performing a very basic underhand toss while Player B is performing a more complex overhand pass away from the body at the same time Player C is practicing getting his/her feet to the right position to hand set the ball.

As a coach, you should work to have the players themselves run this drill as soon as possible. You can be more effective as a coach when you can move independently of the drill, offering corrective suggestions and encouragement.

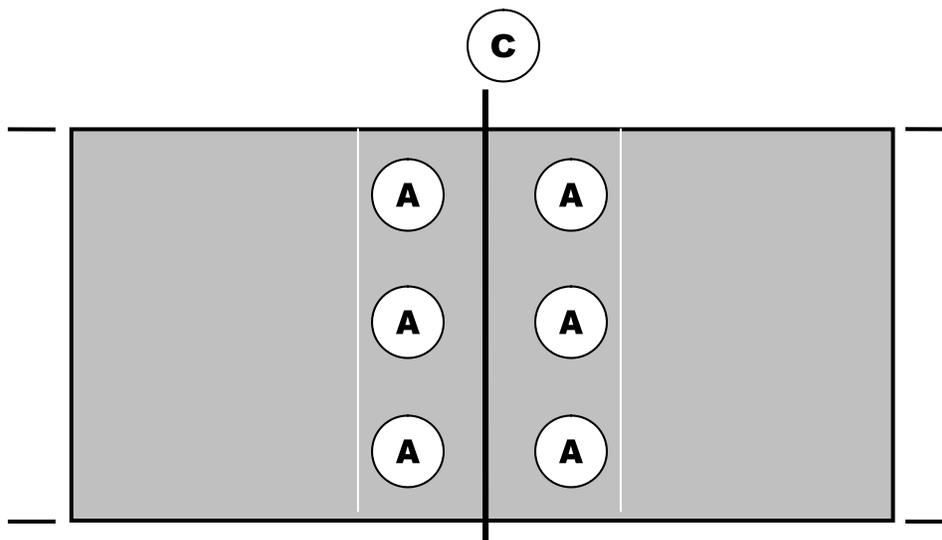


3 on 3 in 3 Drill

Description

Six athletes will play a shortened game of three-hit volleyball to 5 rally points. Three athletes will line up on each side of the net inside the 3-meter (10-foot) line, facing the net.

The drill begins each time with the coach (C) tossing the ball from off the court to an athlete (A) on one of the teams. That athlete will need to pass the ball in a controlled fashion to the athlete next to him/her, who will set the ball back to the first athlete, who will then attack the ball over the net to the opposing team. The ball must be played entirely within the first 3 meters (10 feet) of the net on each side to be legal.



A team scores a point only when they use three hits and the ball lands within the opposing team's legal area (inside the 3-meter/10-foot line), or the opposing team is unable to legally return the ball using three hits. Once a team has scored 5 rally points, a new team of three athletes can be rotated in to play the winners or the existing teams can be mixed to form new teams.

This drill reinforces the idea that volleyball is a three-hit game, and is intended to solve two main problems: reducing the tendency to "one over" every ball, and encouraging athletes to understand their responsibilities to play defense by shrinking the court to more manageable proportions.





Stretching

Flexibility is critical to an athlete's optimal performance in both training and competition. Flexibility is achieved through stretching. Stretching follows an easy aerobic jog at the start of or the end of a training session or competition.

Begin with an easy stretch to the point of tension, and hold this position for 15-30 seconds until the pull lessens. When the tension eases, slowly move further into the stretch until tension is again felt. Hold this new position for an additional 15 seconds. Each stretch should be repeated 4-5 times on each side of the body.

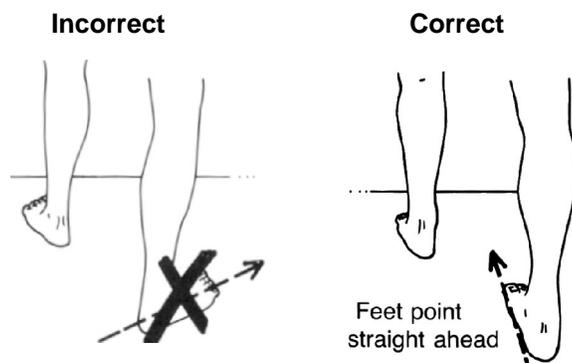
It is important to continue to breathe while stretching. As you lean into the stretch, exhale. Once the stretching point is reached, keep inhaling and exhaling while holding the stretch. Stretching should be a part of everyone's daily life. Regular, daily stretching has been demonstrated to have the following effects:

1. Increase the length of the muscle-tendon unit
2. Increase joint range of motion
3. Reduce muscle tension
4. Develop body awareness
5. Promote increased circulation
6. Make you feel good

Some athletes, such as those with Down Syndrome, may have low muscle tone that makes them appear more flexible. Be careful to not allow these athletes to stretch beyond a normal, safe range. Several stretches are dangerous to perform for all athletes, and should never be part of a safe stretching program. Unsafe stretches include the following:

- Neck Backward Bending
- Trunk Backward Bending

Stretching is effective only if the stretch is performed accurately. Athletes need to focus on correct body positioning and alignment. Take the calf stretch, for example. Many athletes do not keep the feet forward, in the direction that they are running.





Another common fault in stretching is bending the back in an attempt to get a better stretch from the hips. An example is a simple sitting forward leg stretch.

Incorrect



Correct



In this guide, we will focus on some basic stretches for major muscle groups. Along the way we will also point out some common faults, illustrate corrections and identify stretches that are more event specific. We will start at the top of the body and work our way to the legs and feet.



Upper Body

Chest Opener



Clasp hands behind back
Palms facing in
Push hands toward sky

Side Stretch



Raise arms over head
Clasp forearms
Bend to one side

Side Arm Stretch



Raise arms over head
Clasp hands, palms up
Push hands toward sky

If the athlete is unable to clasp the hands, he/she can still get a good stretch by pushing the hands to the sky, like the athlete above

Trunk Twist



Stand with back to wall
Turn, reach palms to wall



Triceps Stretch



Raise both arms over head
Bend right arm, bring hand to back
Grasp elbow of bent arm and pull gently toward
the middle of the back
Repeat with other arm

Shoulder Stretch



Take elbow into hand
Pull to opposite shoulder
Arm may be straight or bent



Chest Stretch



Clasp hands behind neck
Push elbows back
Keep the back straight and tall



This is a simple stretch that the athletes may not feel a lot when stretching. However, it opens up the chest and inner shoulder areas, preparing the chest and arms for the workout.



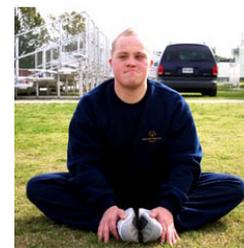
Low Back & Glutes

Crossed Ankle Stretch



Sit, legs outstretched and crossed at ankles
Reach extended arms in front of body

Groin Stretch



Sit, bottoms of feet touching
Hold feet/ankles
Bend forward from hips
Ensure that the athlete is pulling up in his lower back

Here, the back and shoulders are rounded. The athlete is not bending from his hips and is not getting the maximum benefit of the stretch.

Here, the athlete is correctly bringing his chest to his feet and not pulling his toes toward his body

Hip Rolls



Lie on back, arms outstretched
Bring knees to chest
Slowly drop knees to left (exhale)
Bring knees back to chest (inhale)
Slowly drop knees to right (exhale)

Work on keeping the knees together to get the full stretch through the buttocks



Supine Hamstring Stretch



Lie on back, legs outstretched
Alternating legs, bring legs to chest
Bring both legs to chest at the same time

Downward Facing Dog -Toes



Kneel, hands directly under shoulders, knees under hips
Lift heels until standing on toes
Slowly lower heels to ground
Continue alternating up and down slowly

Downward Facing Dog – Flat Footed



Drop heels to ground
Excellent stretch for the lower back

Downward Facing Dog – Alternating Legs



Alternate raising to toes with one leg up, while keeping the other foot flat on ground
Excellent stretch to prevent and help shin splints



Lower Body

Calf Stretch



Stand facing wall/fence
Bend forward leg slightly
Bend ankle of back leg

Calf Stretch w/Bent Knee



Bend both knees to ease strain

Hamstring Stretch



Legs straight out and together
Legs are not locked
Bend at hips, reach toward ankles
As flexibility increases, reach for feet
Push out through the heels, forcing toes to the sky



Seated Straddle Stretch



Legs straddled, bend at hips
Reach out toward the middle
Keep the back straight

Hurdle Stretch - Correct



Correct alignment of the lead leg is important in a hurdle stretch. The foot must be aligned in the forward direction of running.

Sit with legs outstretched, bend one knee, touch bottom of foot to opposite thigh
Toes of the straight leg are flexed toward sky
Push out through the heel, forcing toes to the sky
Bend at hips in nice easy stretch, reaching toward the feet or ankles
Bring chest to knee



Quad Stretch



Take a hurdle stretch position
Turn and lean back in the opposite direction of the bent leg
Hold for 15 seconds and assume the start position
Repeat 3-5 times

If the athlete feels pain in the knee during this stretch and foot is pointing out to the side, point foot back to relieve stress.

If the athlete feels pain in the knee during this stretch, bring the knee in toward the body to relieve stress.

Forward Bend



Stand, arms outstretched overhead
Slowly bend at waist
Bring hands to ankle or shin level without strain
Point fingers toward feet



Stretching - Quick Reference Guidelines

Start Relaxed

Do not begin until athletes are relaxed and muscles are warm

Be Systematic

Start at the top of body and work your way down

Progress from General to Specific

Start general, then move into event specific exercises

Easy Stretching before Developmental

Make slow, progressive stretches

Do not bounce or jerk to stretch farther

Use Variety

Make it fun, use different exercises to work the same muscles

Breathe Naturally

Do not hold your breath, stay calm and relaxed

Allow for Individual Differences

Athletes start and progress at different levels

Stretch Regularly

Always include time for warm-up and cool-down

Stretch at home



Serving

Teaching the athletes a repeatable routine to use each time they approach the service line is the most critical factor for a successful serve. The athletes either are coming off the bench to serve or have just been involved in a strenuous play on the court; in either case, having a steady routine for them to fall back on will give them the confidence to serve their team to a point.

Underhand Serve

Description – Underhand Serve

The athlete should position the feet behind the service line, shoulder width apart and facing perpendicular to the endline (as if planning to hit a golf ball or softball over the net). The athlete will do the following: Hold the ball in the off hand in front of the body, palm up. With the off hand, toss the ball approximately .3 meters (1 foot) straight up in the air. As the ball is coming down, swing the dominant hand with a closed fist across the body in a natural motion into the bottom third of the ball, toward the net. The amount of force the athlete needs to apply is determined by how far into the opposing court the serve is intended to land.





Skill Progression – Underhand Serve

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Accurately toss the ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make contact with the ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strike the ball with a rigid, consistent contact point	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get a legal underhand serve over the net	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get a legal underhand serve over the net and inbounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately place the ball to a designated place on the court	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Teaching Points

- Many athletes will not be strong enough initially to get the ball over the net from the regulation endline. If Modified competition is offered in your program, an accommodation can be made to allow these athletes to move closer to the net when they serve. These athletes should be encouraged at practices to slowly move back toward the legal service line as their strength and confidence increases, eventually serving from the regulation endline.
- Some athletes may have a physical limitation with their off hand such that they cannot toss the ball accurately with that hand. It is legal to both toss and hit the ball using only the dominant hand. Athletes can even toss the ball with both hands if that will help produce a more consistently accurate toss.
- Practicing with a whistle to initiate the serve is helpful so that athletes are practicing under the same conditions they will experience at competitions.





Faults & Fixes – Underhand Serve

Error	Correction	Drill Reference
Athlete executes an inaccurate toss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice tossing the ball with the off hand. Have the athlete use the dominant hand to toss the ball. Have the athlete use a two-handed toss. 	Ball Toss drill
Athlete misses hitting the correct spot on the ball (despite a good toss)	Have the athlete practice hitting the ball with the dominant hand directly out of the off hand – no toss. Once the athlete has improved the arm swing motion, slowly reintroduce the toss.	Serve to Target
Athlete consistently serves short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure the athlete understands to use the entire upper body for power, and not just the elbow. Teach the athlete to strike the ball with a rigid striking surface such as a closed fist. Have the athlete focus on swinging through the ball, rather than stopping at the point of contact. 	Serve to Target
Athlete consistently serves into the net hard	The athlete is strong enough; he or she needs to hit slightly under the ball to give it more arc.	Serve to Target
Athlete consistently serves left or right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The athlete may be twisting the body in one direction or the other with the arm swing. The athlete may be curling the dominant arm inward with the elbow rather than swinging the entire arm as one unit. <p>In either case, the correction is to minimize body movement during the arm swing.</p>	Serve to Target
Athlete serves the ball long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach the athlete to swing the arm slower. Have athlete move back farther if space allows. 	Serve to Target



Overhand Serve

The athlete's position is behind the service line, facing the net, with the feet slightly staggered shoulder width apart. The foot opposite the dominant hand should be slightly forward (left forward for a right handed athlete), toes pointing at the spot the server is aiming at, with his/her body weight resting primarily on the back foot. The athlete should hold the ball in the off hand at arm's length in front of the body, palm up. The dominant arm should be held above the shoulder, with the elbow at the same height as the ear and pointing backward, and the hand pointing forward ("thumb in the ear" or "drawing the bowstring").

The athlete will do the following: Softly toss the ball 1 meter (3 feet) in the air so that it passes in front of the dominant shoulder. Shift the weight from the back foot to the front foot by leaning forward, and rotate the dominant arm high and into the path of the ball. Sharply strike the ball with an open hand, aiming at a point slightly above the height of the net. Follow through on the arm swing, rotating the upper body for more power.

A "roundhouse" service style also works for many athletes. The athlete is positioned in the same fashion as the traditional underhand service style described in the previous section. Instead of holding the ball waist high and swinging the arm at that height across the body, the athlete will hold the ball at shoulder height, toss the ball above the head and swing the arm to contact the ball above the head in one "roundhouse" motion.





Skill Progression – Overhand Serve

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Accurately toss the ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make contact with the ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strike the ball with a rigid, consistent contact point	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get a legal overhand serve over the net	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get a legal overhand serve over the net and inbounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately place the ball to a designated place on the court	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Teaching Points

The most common problem in an overhand serve is a bad toss. Many Special Olympics athletes lack the coordination with one hand to make a consistent toss. A solution that can work for some of these athletes is to have them use two hands on their toss. Everything mechanically remains the same except that the athlete uses both hands for the toss instead of one, and the ball needs to be tossed higher than normal to give the athlete time to raise the arm and swing.

The second most common problem is poor mechanics in the arm swing. Often, Special Olympics athletes have never been taught the correct way to throw a ball, which exactly translates into the overhead hitting motion used in volleyball. The correction for this problem in hitting a volleyball is to replace the volleyball with a tennis ball or other small round ball, and simply practice an overhead throwing motion correctly. The athletes should continue to use the underhand serve until they can effectively throw any ball overhead, at which time they can begin practicing an overhead serve.



Faults & Fixes – Overhand Serve

Error	Correction	Drill Reference
Athlete executes an inaccurate toss	Practice an accurate toss.	Ball Toss Drill
Athlete misses the ball	Practice an accurate toss	Ball Toss Drill
Athlete consistently serves into the net hard	Have the athlete toss the ball slightly higher and focus on hitting the ball “up” rather than straight ahead, aiming for an imaginary spot higher than the net.	Serve To Target Drill
Athlete consistently serves into the net short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the athlete to swing the arm faster. • Teach the athlete to strike the ball with a rigid striking surface instead of a loose hand. • Make sure the athlete’s arm is fully extended above the head when making contact with the ball. 	Serve To Target Drill
Athlete consistently serves left or right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the accuracy of the toss; if the ball is tossed anywhere except in front of the dominant shoulder, the serve will tend to go out of bounds. • Adjust how the athlete is positioned at the service line; toes should point toward the target, avoiding excessive upper body movement. 	Ball Toss Drill/ Serve To Target Drill
Athlete serves the ball long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the athlete to swing the arm slower. 	Serve To Target Drill



Serve Drills (Underhand and Overhand)

The drills listed here can be used for both Underhand and Overhand Serving.

Ball Toss Drill

Drill Description

Have the athlete assume the correct serving position (perpendicular to the endline, feet shoulder width apart, off hand holding the ball in front, palm up). The athlete will repeatedly toss the ball straight up and back down into the same hand. The height of the toss will initially be very low, perhaps only a few centimeters (2 inches). Once the athlete has gained confidence with a very low toss, slowly increase the height of the toss until the athlete can consistently toss the ball straight up and down 0.3 meters (1 foot).

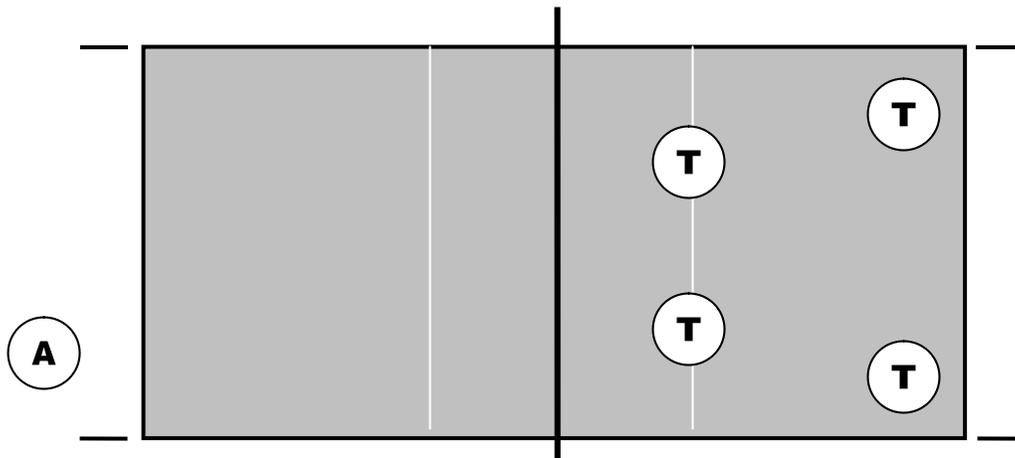


Serve to Target Drill

Drill Description

Have the athlete assume the correct serving position. The coach will place targets on the opposite side of the net—two targets 3 meters (10 feet) from the net and 2 meters (6 feet) from each sideline; two targets 2 meters (6 feet) from the back line and 1 meter (3 feet) from each sideline. The targets can be folding chairs laid flat, open newspapers, chalk outlines, or even teammates sitting or lying on the floor. The targets should all be horizontal to better train the servers to serve into the court but away from the opposing players who will be standing (vertical).





Each athlete will serve 10 balls to these targets as verbally and visually identified by the coach (deep right, short left, etc.). Immediately following each serve, the athlete will run to a prescribed defensive position on the court, mimicking game conditions, and then run back to the service line for the next serve. For each target the athlete can hit, one point is awarded. As an example, each athlete can have personal performance goals to raise their score of 3 points at the first practice to 6 points by the end of the season.

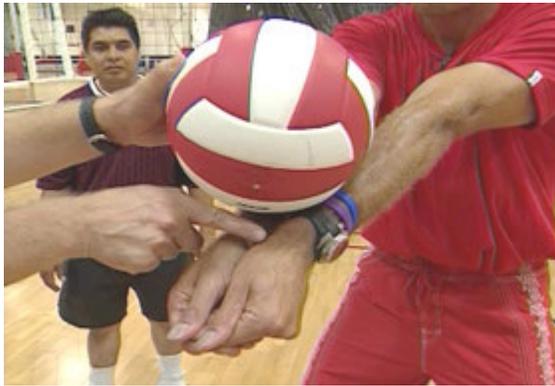
A variation for athletes who lack the strength to get the ball over the net from the regulation endline is to position them at the 3-meter (10-foot) line for the drill. This will allow them to practice their basic mechanics while gaining the strength they will need to eventually serve from behind the endline. Slowly moving these athletes away from the net will increase their confidence as they get stronger.



Passing

The athlete should assume an athletic position— face the direction the ball will come from, feet slightly staggered and shoulder width apart, knees bent, upper body slightly leaning forward, hands held loosely in front of the body. Once the athlete decides to forearm pass the ball (as opposed to overhead passing), the athlete will clasp the hands together in whatever fashion feels comfortable as long as the thumbs are exactly even. The elbows should be locked straight, and the thumbs should be pointed toward the floor 1 meter (3 feet) in front of the athlete.

The athlete should watch the flight of the ball and move the feet so that the ball will contact a point on the forearms above the wrist, between the outstretched arms, while still crouched in the athletic position without having to reach off-balance in any direction.





Skill Progression – Forearm Passing

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Create a consistent platform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate a stable, staggered stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate proper athletic stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forearm pass a ball tossed directly to them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forearm pass a ball tossed 1 meter (3 feet) from the athlete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forearm pass the tossed ball to the setter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forearm pass a ball served directly to them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forearm pass a ball served in their area of responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forearm pass the served ball to the setter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Teaching Points

At lower levels, the most common problem athletes have is movement to the ball. For many it is the fear of misjudging the ball and being hit or injured. For others it is an inability to stay focused on the ball as it passes high in the air toward them. Volleyball requires strong depth perception as well as considerable eye-hand coordination. Patiently executing drills in a progressive fashion can improve lower level athletes’ confidence in their ability to pass a ball in a game-like situation. An example would be practicing for several weeks to pass a ball tossed from 1 meter (3 feet) away and 2 meters (6 feet) high, then slowly increasing the height and distance of the toss until the athlete eventually feels comfortable receiving a serve in a match.

At intermediate levels the most common problem is the desire to immediately hit the ball back over the net (“one over”) rather than to the team setter so that an attack can be performed. While this can be effective in the short term, it removes the element of team play that is so important to the true enjoyment of the sport. “Three hit” drills run under game-like conditions can address this problem.

The common complaint of bruised/sore forearms can be eliminated with a combination of proper technique and the use of softer volleyballs and long sleeves. Athletes often pass the ball in the wrong place on their arms– using the wrists rather than the fleshy part of the forearm.





Faults & Fixes – Forearm Passing

Error	Correction	Drill Reference
The athlete doesn't move to the ball	Have the athlete practice shuffling the feet to a ball tossed slight away (left/right/in front/behind). Verbally coax the athlete to move during the drill.	Compass Drill
Sending the ball back over the net immediately ("one over")	Reinforce changing the direction of the ball to a target on the athlete's side of the net.	BASE Drill
Hitting the ball on the wrists/thumbs	Have the athlete practice catching the ball in a cradle between the forearms and upper arms.	Basket Catch Drill
Passing the ball off one arm	Have the athlete practice catching the ball in a cradle between the forearms and upper arms.	Basket Catch Drill
Wild arm swings when contacting the ball	Have the athlete focus on passing the ball at the correct angle over a very short distance to a designated target without swinging the arms.	BASE Drill
Passing the ball too high on the arms (elbows or biceps)	Have the athlete practice catching the ball in a cradle between the forearms and upper arms.	Basket Catch Drill



Skill Progression – Overhead Passing

The athlete should assume an athletic position – face the direction the ball will come from, feet slightly staggered and shoulder width apart, knees bent, upper body slightly leaning forward, hands held loosely in front of the body.

The athlete should watch the flight of the ball and move the feet so he/she will contact the ball just above and in front of the head with both hands, as if setting the ball. The hands of the athlete will need to be much stronger since the ball will be coming faster and higher. The ball should be directed in a controlled fashion to the setter rather than simply “slapped” back over the net.



Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Create a consistent overhead hand position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate a stable, staggered stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate proper athletic stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overhead pass a ball tossed directly to them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overhead pass a ball tossed 1 meter (3 feet) from the athlete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overhead pass the tossed ball to the setter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overhead pass a ball served directly to them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overhead pass a ball served in their area of responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overhead pass the served ball to the setter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Teaching Points

A common problem with overhead passing is the tendency to send the ball immediately back over the net— a “one over.” This can be minimized with drills that emphasize changing the angle of the ball toward the setter rather than straight back toward the attacker and over the net. In those drills that keep score, the team can score a point only when they use three hits before sending the ball back over the net.

Some athletes will not have the hand/wrist strength to pass balls using the correct overhead passing mechanics. An option for them is to lock their wrists together and reverse forearm pass the ball over the head using the bottom of their fists (sometimes called the Tomahawk). This is very inaccurate and should be used only when the athlete simply cannot pass the ball using the proper technique described above.





Faults & Fixes – Overhead Passing

Error	Correction	Drill Reference
Misjudging when to overhead pass versus when to forearm pass	Have the coach run drills and call out “hands” or “arms” while the ball is in the air to prompt the athlete to take the ball overhead or with his/her forearms, respectively.	BASE Drill
Sending the ball back over the net immediately (“one over”)	Allow the team to score points in a drill only when they use three hits to return the ball.	3 on 3 in 3 Drill
Having the ball slip through the passer’s hands in overhead passing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice catching the ball overhead firmly and accurately. • Use a reverse forearm pass (called the Tomahawk) for those athletes that lack hand strength. 	3 on 3 in 3 Drill



Passing Drills (Forearm and Overhead)

The drills listed here can be used for both Forearm and Overhead Passing.

BASE Drill (Build All Skills Efficiently)

The BASE Drill is described in the Warm-up section of this book.

3 on 3 in 3 Drill

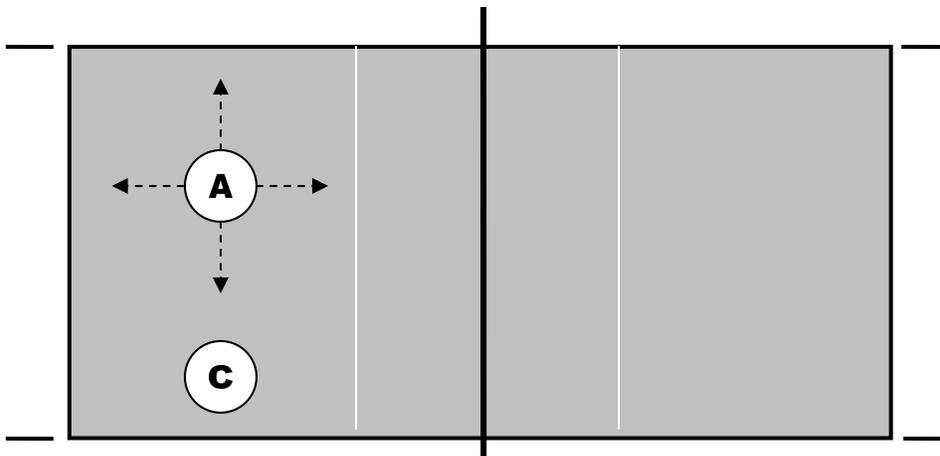
The 3 on 3 in 3 Drill is described in the Warm-up section of this book.

Compass Drill

Description

The athlete (A) will assume the correct passing position facing the coach (C) approximately 3 meters (10 feet) away. The coach will initiate the drill by tossing the ball directly in front of the athlete, who will pass the ball back to the coach. The coach will then toss the ball 1 meter (3 feet) to the left of the athlete, who will pass it back to the coach, who will toss the ball 1 meter (3 feet) behind the athlete, who will pass it back to the coach, who will toss the ball 1 meter (3 feet) to the right of the athlete, who will pass it back to the coach, who will toss the ball 1 meter (3 feet) in front of the athlete. The drill then repeats 4 more times.

Each time the athlete moves the feet to the ball, he/she must return to the original ready position to await the next toss—the athlete should not anticipate the next toss and run to that position ahead of time.





This drill is intended to force the athlete to move his/her feet to the ball. The coach should give continuous verbal reinforcement during the drill – where the ball is going, move the feet quickly, use proper form, etc.

Variations

For more advanced athletes, the coach can vary the location each time without warning, rather than following a predictable pattern. The coach can also introduce spin to the toss so the athlete can practice passing a ball in more game-like situations.

Basket Catch Drill

Description

The purpose of this drill is to allow athletes to become comfortable judging where the ball should be contacted on their forearms. It is designed for very beginning athletes, or athletes who are struggling to make contact with the ball at the correct point on their arms or judging when to move their feet to get in proper position.

The athlete will face the coach 1 meter (3 feet) away in the proper passing position. The coach will gently toss the ball to the athlete at a height of 2 meters (6 feet) off the ground. The athlete will “catch” the ball by curling his/her arms into a basket while keeping the hands locked.



Variations

The drill can be increased in complexity by having the coach toss the ball from farther away, toss the ball higher, toss the ball over the net, or toss the ball slightly away from the athlete so he/she must move the feet to make the catch.

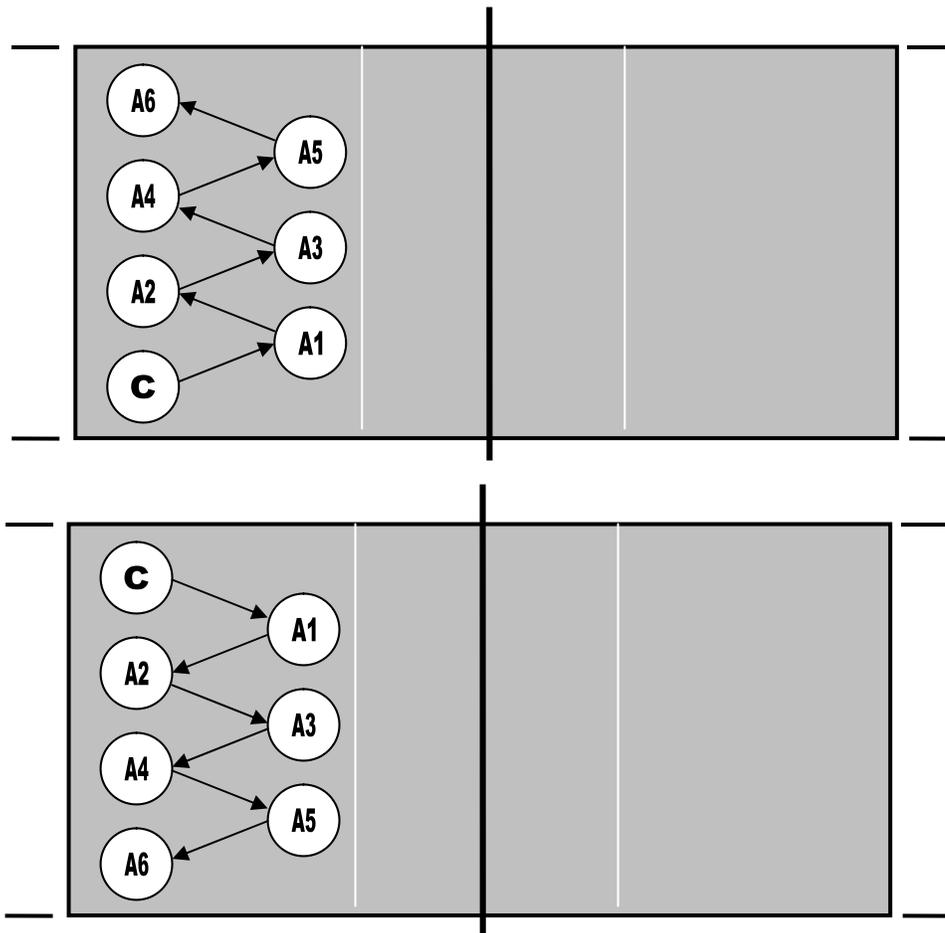
Once the athlete has demonstrated the ability to consistently catch the ball at the correct point on the arms, he/she will repeat the drill described above while bumping the ball back to the coach instead of catching it.

Zig Zag Drill

Description

The purpose of this drill is to teach accurate ball control to beginning athletes while changing the direction of the ball, encouraging three hits during competition.

The athletes (A) line up in two rows approximately 3-4 meters apart (10– 13 feet) while facing each other on the same side of the net. The drill begins with the coach tossing the ball to the athlete in position A1, who passes to the athlete in position A2, who passes to the athlete in position A3, and so on until the ball reaches the last athlete in line, who reverses the order. The drill will continue as long as the athletes are able to keep the ball in the air using proper technique. It can be done with an unlimited number of athletes, as space allows.



Variations

The drill can be made more difficult by varying the distance between the athletes; the farther away from each other, the more difficult the drill.



Hand Setting

The athlete should face the target of the set (not the source of the pass), standing with the feet shoulder width apart, left foot slightly in front of the right foot (regardless of the dominant hand), hands slightly above and in front of the forehead as if cradling the ball, with thumbs pointing at the forehead and fingers pointing skyward.

The setter needs to wait for the ball to make the initial contact with both hands at the same time. The setter then changes the direction of the ball toward the target by pushing with both arms outward toward the target, ending with arms fully extended and fingers pointing at the ball as it arcs toward the target.



Skill Progression – Hand Setting

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Create a consistent overhead hand position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate a stable, staggered stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate proper athletic stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate follow-through with full arm extension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front set a ball tossed directly to them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front set a ball tossed 1 meter (3 feet) from the athlete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front set the passed ball to the hitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back set a ball tossed directly to them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back set a ball tossed 1 meter (3 feet) from the athlete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back set the passed ball to the hitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Totals

Teaching Points

Hand setting is the most difficult skill for any volleyball player to learn to do well. It requires considerable eye-hand coordination as well as quick feet to get under the ball during competition. The quality of the setting directly determines how effective the hitters on a team will be.



Many teams will identify potential setters and have them train almost exclusively on developing those skills necessary to directing the offense. A dedicated setter should be your most mobile and athletic athlete. Setters will need to practice their specialized skills separate from the rest of the team as well as with the team.

Faults & Fixes – Hand Setting

Error	Correction	Drill Reference
Hitting the ball with both hands rather than controlling the contact	Have the athlete practice catching and then releasing the ball to develop timing when contacting the ball.	Flick Drill
Double contacting the ball – hitting the ball	Get the hands up as early as possible in the correct position while facing the target.	Flick Drill
Inconsistent location of the set (too far off the net, too close, etc.)	Face the target rather than the source of the pass.	Run Down Drill



Hand Setting Drills

Flick Drill

Description

In this drill the athlete will stand in the correct setting position facing the coach 1 meter (3 feet) away. The coach will gently toss the ball into the hands of the athlete, who will “flick” or snap the ball as quickly as possible directly back to the coach in a straight line. The coach’s hands should be held in front of his/her face as the target for the athlete to aim for. As the athlete gains confidence the coach should slowly move his/her hands higher above the head and make the toss from farther away so that the athlete can begin putting arc on the set rather than a straight line.

The purpose of this drill is to allow the athlete to practice: (1) getting the hands up in the proper position early, (2) waiting for the ball to contact the hands before setting it, and (3) flicking the ball rather than hitting it with the hands.



Variations

As the athlete gains confidence, the coach can increase the height of the toss, make the toss from an angle rather than directly in front or even add spin to the toss.

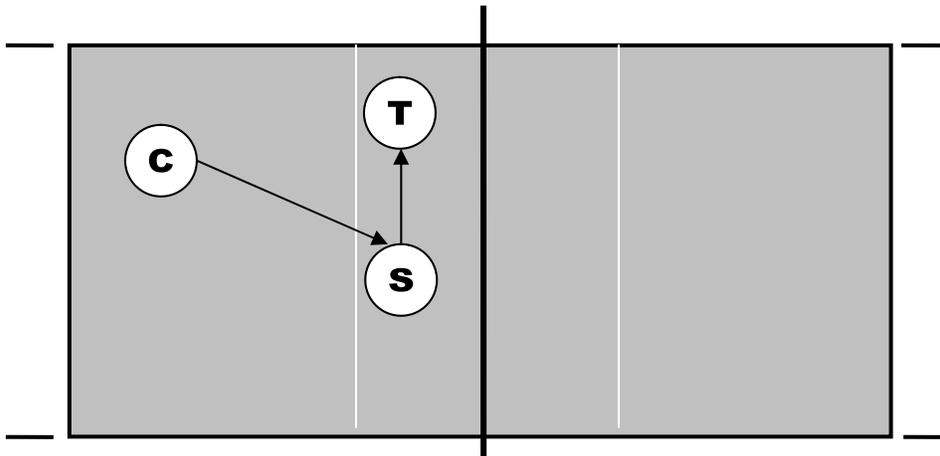


Run Down Drill

Description

In this drill the setter (S) will begin in the front right position. The coach (C) will initiate the drill by tossing the ball to the setter, who will hand set the ball to a stationary target (T).

The focus of the drill is for the setter to move the feet to the ball as quickly as possible to allow time to stop, face the target, set the hands and body in the proper position, and deliver the ball accurately. The tosses from the coach should correspond to the ability level of the setter involved in the drill – low, gentle tosses for a beginning setter trying to gain confidence, and high spinning tosses off the net for more experienced setters.





Variations

The value of this drill is that the coach can mimic specific game conditions by varying the location of the toss(away from the setter – hence the name of the drill), the height of the toss, and the amount of spin on the toss. The starting location of the setter as well as the coach can be varied to provide an easier or harder challenge for the setter. The drill can also require the setter to periodically backset, increasing the difficulty.

While having a net is the best (most game-like) situation, this drill can also be run beside a wall. This variation has the added benefit of allowing the setter(s) and an assistant coach to practice their skills at the side of the gym while the rest of the team is using the court to work on any other skill development.





Attacking/ Hitting

Standing Attack

The athlete should stand facing the direction the ball is intended to travel (most often at an angle from the set), with the feet slightly staggered shoulder width apart. The foot opposite the dominant hand should be slightly forward (left foot forward for a right-handed athlete) with the body weight primarily on the back foot. The athlete's dominant arm should be held above the shoulder with the elbow pointing backward and held at the same height as the ear, and the hand pointing forward ("thumb in the ear"). The off arm should point in the direction the ball is intended to travel.



Once the athlete is ready to swing, the off arm will begin to drop as the dominant arm reaches high toward the ball. The athlete's weight will shift from the back foot to the front foot, and the arm will swing into and through the ball, snapping the wrist to give the ball topspin.





Jumping Attack

The mechanics are the same as a standing attack with the addition of a jump. The athlete will need to be a short distance behind where the set will land. He/she will take a 3- or 4step approach to the ball, with the last two steps as the jump. The second to last step is the longest. The last step just closes the feet together (step-close). A strong upward arm swing helps generate extra vertical height. The athlete should take the last step on the foot opposite the dominant arm (left foot for right handed athletes).





Skill Progression – Attacking/ Hitting

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Demonstrate proper arm position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate fully extended arm swing with follow-through	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standing, spike the ball over the net from a toss or set	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standing, spike the ball over the net using a short approach from a toss or set	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately hit the ball to a designated place on the court from a toss or set	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately hit a variety of tosses or sets from a variety of heights from a standing position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time their jump to spike the ball over the net using a short approach from a toss or set	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time their jump to accurately hit the ball to a designated place on the court from a toss or set	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time their jump to accurately hit a toss or set from a variety of heights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



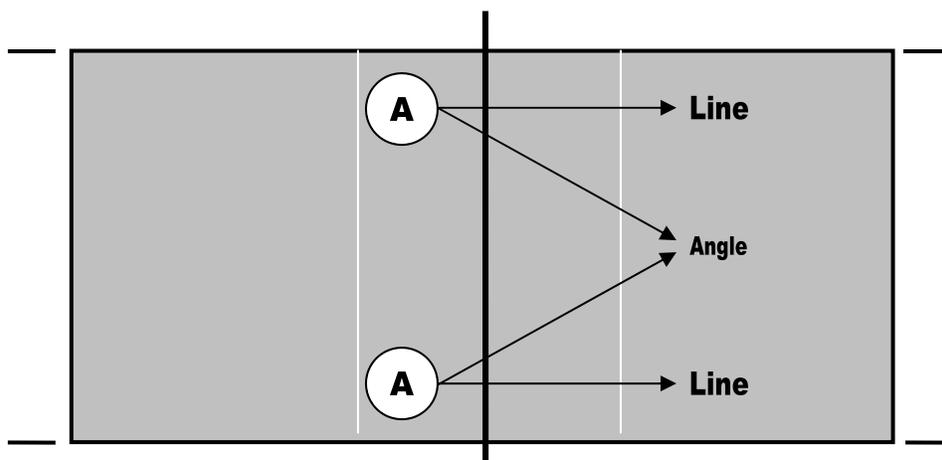
Teaching Points

The mechanics for an overhead attack are very similar to throwing any ball overhead– softball, tennis ball, etc. Using physical analogies to teach the volleyball hitting mechanics may help some athletes to understand better.

At the lowest level of ability, athletes often do not have the arm strength or coordination to attack the ball with one arm while jumping in the air. These athletes can be successful by locking their hands together and striking the ball on the bottom of their fists with both arms locked overhead while standing on the ground.

Most Special Olympics athletes (at all levels of ability) cannot jump to reach above the height of the net to spike the ball downward. Drills that focus on having these athletes hit upward, rather than downward, are more appropriate for them. Reaching high, snapping the wrist, and practicing the accurate placement of their shots into the opposing court will allow them to be successful attackers regardless of their height or jumping ability.

The two primary hitting directions are “line” and “angle.” In the diagram below, the attackers (A) can choose to send the ball over the net in one of two primary directions. The easiest direction for beginning hitters to learn is angle, since it provides the most amount of court for the athlete to hit into. As the athletes gain confidence with their hitting mechanics, they can be encouraged to attack the ball into different areas of the opposing court with verbal prompts from the coach or setter.





Faults & Fixes – Attacking/ Hitting

Error	Correction	Drill Reference
Consistently mistiming the approach (running past the ball or not coming in quickly enough)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice waiting until the coach/setter gives a verbal command to start the approach (after the ball has been set or tossed). • Adjust the distance from the net at which the athlete waits before the approach (farther for an athlete who overruns, closer if the athlete is too slow). 	Target Practice Drill
Consistently hitting the ball into the net	<p>The athlete may be hitting the ball harder than the level at which he/she is are capable of being accurate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If hitting from the ground, aim at a spot slightly above the net. • If hitting while jumping, stop trying to hit straight down and instead focus on hitting the ball at 50% strength while snapping the wrist to send the ball up and over the net with topspin. 	Target Practice Drill
Consistently hitting the ball out of bounds (too deep)	<p>The athlete is hitting the ball too hard and needs to swing at 50% strength while snapping the wrist to send the ball up and over the net with topspin.</p>	Target Practice Drill
The athlete’s hand/wrist isn’t strong enough to snap the ball over the net	<p>The athlete can swing at the ball with both hands locked together (reverse underhand passing – [called a tomahawk] hit that ball on the bottoms of the hands).</p>	Target Practice Drill

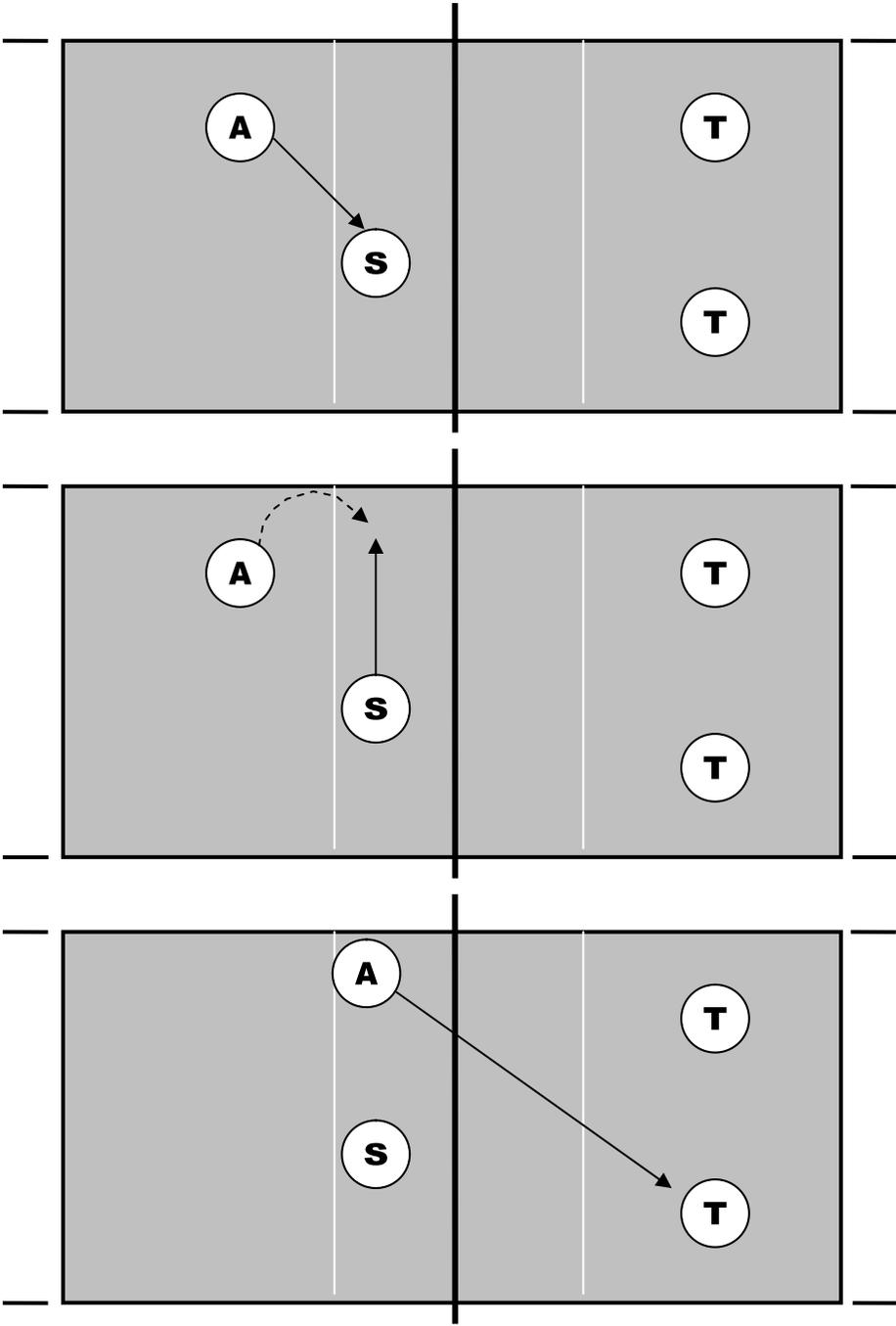


Attacking/ Hitting Drills

Target Practice Drill

Description

A coach or setter (S) will stand on the same side of the net as the attacker (A). The attacker initiates the drill by tossing the ball to the setter, who will set the ball to the outside for the attacker to approach and hit. The attacker will aim for one of the targets (T) on the opposite side of the net.





Variations

This drill can be run with the athlete attacking the ball from the ground or in the air, close to the net or 3-4 meters (10-13 feet) off the net, or with a high or low set. At a lower level of ability the attacker can be verbally told what set to expect before the drill begins (“this will be off the net”); at higher levels the attacker will have to adjust the approach without any verbal prompts.

The drill should also be run from the right side by reversing the angles.





Blocking

Blocking is an advanced skill that requires physical height, jumping ability and good judgment to time the jump against the attacker. While most Special Olympics athletes will not (and should not) try to block, those who are able can change the energy of a game with a well-executed stuff block.

The athlete should stand squarely facing the net, approximately 15-20 centimeters away (6-8 inches), feet even and slightly less than shoulder width apart, hands close to the body in front of the chest with the palms facing the net. The athlete will bend deeply with the knees and then explode straight upward, reaching with both hands as high as possible. The athlete should attempt to reach over the net, with both arms straight, as far as he/she can without touching the net.

The outside blocker is positioned to be lined up on the inside shoulder of the attacker at the point where he/she will swing at the ball. A blocker on the right side of the court will put his/her right arm on the ball. A blocker on the left side of the court will put his/her left arm on the ball. This will give the best chance of blocking an “angle” or cross-court attack.



Skill Progression – Blocking

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Demonstrate proper blocking stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate proper jumping technique while reaching as high as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate proper arm position above the net	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Position themselves in front of the hitters' approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time the jump correctly with the hitters' attack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate proper landing technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Teaching Points

A common problem is athletes who confuse blocking a tight set with a chance to reach over and attack the ball before the opponent can attack it. This usually results in a net violation on the blocker.

The athlete can reach to his/her left or right if necessary to block a ball, but this reaching should be done with both arms and not a sideways jump. Sideways jumping creates awkward landings and increases the chance of injury or collision with teammates. The blocker should jump straight up and down, always landing evenly on both feet, exactly where they took off from.



The athlete should focus on reaching to a specific point above the net rather than wildly flailing the arms hoping to make contact. The primary purpose of the block is to take away a specific portion of the court and force the attacker to hit either into the block or into the arms of the defenders covering the rest of the court. Blockers will decide to cover the “line” or the “angle” before jumping, and the rest of the team will arrange themselves to cover the rest of the court as defenders.



Faults & Fixes – Blocking

Error	Correction	Drill Reference
Misjudging the timing of the jump	Wait for the hitter to leave the feet and then jump.	Right Place, Right Time Drill
Jumping sideways to block rather than straight up and down	Have the athlete practice moving the feet early – and landing exactly where they take off from No drifting in the air.	Right Place, Right Time Drill
Not getting enough height on the jump	The athlete may be bending at the waist instead of at the knees.	Over and Back Drill
Consistently touching the net on the way up	Minimize arm movement until after the athlete has left his/her feet.	Over and Back Drill
Consistently touching the net on the way down	Focus on reaching over the net and then pulling the hands back overhead, rather than dropping them down in front (should land with hands high).	Over and Back Drill

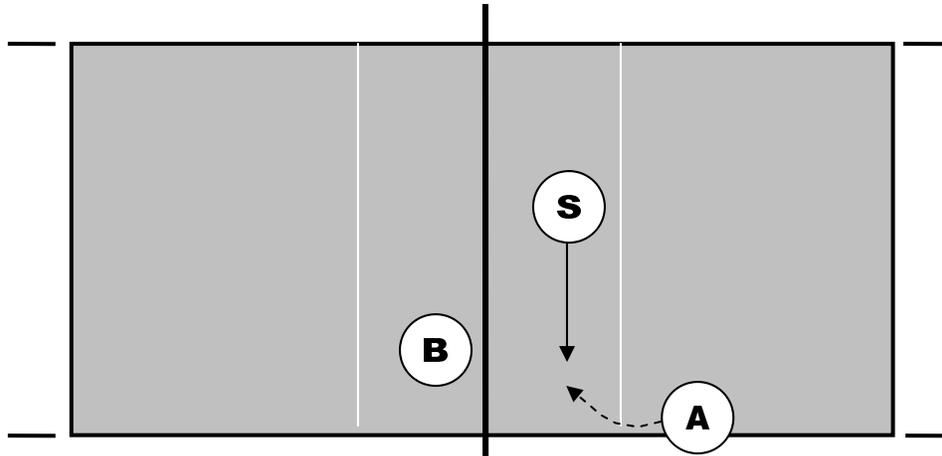


Blocking Drills

Right Place, Right Time Drill

Description

A coach or setter (S) will stand on the opposite side of the net from the blocker (B) and initiate the drill by accurately tossing the ball out to a fixed spot where an attacker (A) will hit at an angle. The blocker practices timing the block jump against the jump of the attacker.



Variations

Once the blocker is able to correctly time the block, the coach/setter can vary the location of the toss: farther outside, closer to the middle, lowers, higher, etc. This forces the blocker to move his/her feet to a new position and still time the jump against the hitter.

The blocker will move the feet as either a quick left-right (or right-left) shuffle step (2-step move) if he/she needs to move 1 meter (3 feet) or less. If the blocker needs to move more than 1 meter (3 feet), he/she will turn and quickly step over to the correct location and then jump straight up and down, this is called a 3-step cross over.

Over and Back Drill

Description

A coach will stand on one side of the net holding a ball 5 centimeters (2 inches) above the net, with one-half of the ball on each side of the net. The athlete will assume the correct blocking position on the opposite side of the net from the coach. At the signal from the coach (a slap of the ball), the athlete will jump up, place his/her hands around the ball without touching the net and land correctly holding the ball.

Variations

This drill will be modified to challenge each athlete based on their physical ability. Moving the ball higher above the net, further over the net on the opposing court, and/or to the left or right of the athlete are all excellent ways to challenge more athletic players.



Cool-Down

The cool-down is as important as the warm-up; however, it is often ignored. Stopping an activity abruptly may cause pooling of the blood and slow the removal of waste products in the athlete's body. It may also cause cramps, soreness, and other problems for Special Olympics athletes. The cool-down gradually reduces the body temperature and heart rate and speeds the recovery process before the next training session or competitive experience. The cool-down is also a good time for the coach and athlete to talk about the session or competition. Note that cool-down is also a good time to do stretching. Muscles are warm and receptive to stretching movements.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic jog	Lowers body temperature Gradually lowers heart rate	2 minutes
Stretching	Removes waste from muscles	5 minutes



Sample Workouts

Beginner Team

Warm-up (10-15 minutes)

- Jogging: 3 minutes around court
- Stretching: Chest, shoulders and arms, hamstrings, quads, groin and calves
- Team warm-up: Pepper, setting and hitting, passing and serving to warm up the body

Skill Work (45 minutes)

Introduction to Passing

- After the coach demonstrates the proper form, the athletes will practice assuming the correct passing platform without the ball.
- Athletes form two lines facing each other 2 meters (6 feet) apart and practice passing the ball back and forth between them.

Introduction to Serving

- Demonstrate underhand serve.
- Athletes form two lines facing each other 2 meters (6 feet) apart on the same side of the net and practice serving the ball to each other, focusing on correct mechanics rather than distance or height.
- Once the athletes become more confident, they should move farther apart and onto opposite sides of the net.

Introduction to Hitting

- Demonstrate correct hitting mechanics
- Athletes form one line facing the net 2 meters (6 feet) away and practice hitting a ball over the net. The ball comes from a coach who stands 1 meter (3 feet) away and very gently tosses the ball to the athletes.

Team Concept (15 minutes)

- Practice ready positions with six players on the court.
- Explain the standard rotation (clockwise) and how substitutions will be made.
- Discuss the offensive and defensive responsibilities of each position (who passes, who sets, who hits, etc.).

Cool-down (10 minutes)

- Bring the team together for cool-down stretching.
- The coach will make one positive comment about each athlete within a “winners circle.”



Intermediate Team

Warm-up (10- 15 minutes)

- Jogging: 5 minutes around court
- Stretching: Chest, shoulders and arms, hamstrings, quads, groin and calves
- Team warm-up: Pepper, setting and hitting, passing and serving to warm up the body

Skill Work (15 minutes)

BASE Drill

- Focus on accurately passing the ball to the setter.

Team Concept (15 minutes)

Service Reception

- Set up the team to receive serve and practice passing the serve to the setter.
- The coach or assistant coach should lead the drill by serving to every part of the court, allowing the team to practice their passing and communication skills.
- For each settable pass, the team receives one point; the drill can end when a total number of settable passes have occurred or when a specific number have occurred in a row.

Scrimmage (30 minutes)

Divide the team into two equal groups of six, and play using competition rules.

- Ideally this will be a six on six game. Coaches, volunteers or family members can be recruited to fill out one team.
- Whenever possible, have an official who uses whistles and hand signals to train the team on what to expect in competition.

Cool-down (10 minutes)

- Bring the team together for cool-down stretching.
- The coach will make one positive comment about each athlete within a “winners circle”



Advanced Team

Warm-up (10- 15 minutes)

- Jogging: 5 minutes. around court with slow giant arm swings
- Stretching: Chest, shoulders and arms, hamstrings, quads, groin and calves
- Team warm-up: Pepper, setting and hitting, passing and serving to warm up the body

Skill Work (15 minutes)

BASE Drill

- Focus on accurately passing the ball to the setter.

Team Concept (15 minutes)

Transition Scoring

- Set up the team to receive serve.
- The coach or assistant coach should lead the drill by serving; the team will pass, set and attack the ball over the net.
- As soon as the ball clears the net (and before the team is ready), the coach will toss a second ball into the court, forcing the team to scramble to play defense immediately.
- If the team is able to pass, set and attack the second ball back over the net during transition, they will get one point.
- If the team uses fewer than three hits or fails to return either ball back over the net, no point is scored and the drill begins again.
- Once the team has scored 5 points, the drill ends.

Scrimmage (30 minutes)

Divide the team into two equal groups of six, and play using competition rules.

- Ideally this will be a six on six game; however, for advanced players the scrimmage can be four on four, three on three, or even two on two.
- Whenever possible, have an official who uses whistles and hand signals to train the team on what to expect in competition.

Cool-down (10 minutes)

- Bring the team together for cool-down stretching.
- The coach will make one positive comment about each athlete within a “winners circle.”



Modifications

In competition, it is important that the rules not be changed to suit athletes' special needs or even preferences. There are, however, a limited number of approved modifications to the volleyball rules that do accommodate the needs of Special Olympics athletes. Coaches can modify the training exercises, their coaching style and even the sports equipment to assist athletes in achieving success as long as the modification meets the guidelines set forth in the *Special Olympics Volleyball Rules*.

For lower ability athletes, there are two approved alternatives in sanctioned competitions: modified competition and Individual Skills Competition. Details are provided in the *Special Olympics Volleyball Rules*.

Accommodating an Athlete's Special Needs

Some Special Olympics athletes have limited use of one arm. This creates difficulties in serving, passing and setting. Through practice the athlete may be able to learn how to toss and serve one-handed. This athlete may have trouble playing in the back row where passing is the primary function. In those programs that offer the libero rule, the athlete can be substituted out an unlimited number of times for the back row specialist, allowing the athlete with limited use of an arm to play front row only.



Some athletes have hearing impairments that can be addressed by reminding everyone that all referee signals include a whistle as well as a hand gesture. By using the same gestures in practice, all of the athletes will learn to pay attention visually.

Modifying Your Communication Method

Different athletes require different communications systems. For example, some athletes learn and respond better to demonstrated exercises, whereas others require greater verbal communication. Some athletes may need a combination— to see, hear and even read a description of the exercise or skill before being able to master the skill.



Cross Training in Volleyball

Cross training is a modern-day term which refers to the substitution of skills other than the skills directly involved in the performance of an event. Cross training came about as a result of injury rehabilitation and is now also used in injury prevention.

There is a limited value and crossover to the specific exercise. A reason to "cross train" is to avoid injury and maintain muscular balance during a period of intense sport specific training. One of the keys to success in sport is staying healthy and training over the long haul. Cross training allows athletes to do event specific training workouts with greater enthusiasm and intensity, or less risk of injury.

Basketball, tennis and swimming are Special Olympics sports that can provide excellent cross-training opportunities, where available. Basketball reinforces jumping skills, tennis teaches good footwork and depth perception, and swimming strengthens the shoulder joint and improves overall cardiovascular conditioning.

While sanctioned Special Olympics volleyball competitions are commonly defined as "indoor" six on six competitions, there is considerable value in encouraging athletes to play on a variety of surfaces and with fewer team members. Playing the sport on grass or sand allows athletes to play more aggressive defense while lowering the risk of injury in diving or rolling. Engaging in games of four on four, three on three or even two on two forces athletes to cover more of the court and apply all of their skills on every point, accelerating their skill development.

NOTE: As always, coaches should take into account the physical abilities and limitations of their athletes when playing variations of the sport.



Special Olympics

VOLLEYBALL COACHING GUIDE

Volleyball Rules, Protocol & Etiquette



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Teaching Volleyball Rules

The best time to teach the rules of volleyball is during practice. For example, when during a practice game a player makes contact with the net, this would be a good time to stop the game and explain that you cannot contact the net while trying to make a play on the ball. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has both adopted and modified Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) Rules. Please refer to the official *Special Olympics Sports Rules*, which can be found at www.specialolympics.org for the complete listing of volleyball rules as modified and approved by Special Olympics Inc. As coach, it is your responsibility to know and understand the rules of the game and to teach these rules to your players and other coaches. To assist you with this responsibility, listed below are selected rules that govern the sport of volleyball.

Occasionally, the situation will occur where a properly registered team with at least six players on the roster is unable to field six players at any point during a competition due to injury or other problems. Below national level, the Competition Manager **may** allow that team to continue at their discretion as long as that team would not receive a competitive advantage. Special Olympics Unified Sports® teams may never have more partners than athletes on the floor at the same time.

Court

It is recommended that a regulation-size court be used. However, the Special Olympics modification allows for the service line to be moved closer to the net, but no closer than 4.5 meters (14 feet 9 inches). If a regulation-size court (18 meters by 9 meters, surrounded by a free zone of a minimum of 3 meters wide on all sides) is unavailable, then modifications may be made to allow for play in a safe manner. In Modified Team Competition the court may be reduced in size to 7.62 meters (25 feet) wide and 15.24 meters (50 feet) long. The height of the net should be:

- ♦ Men's and coed competition—2.43 meters (7 feet 11 5/8 inches)
- ♦ Women's competition—2.24 meters (7 feet 4 1/8 inches)
- ♦ Unified Sports competition—2.43 meters (7 feet 11 5/8 inches) for men and coed, and 2.24 meters (7 feet 4 1/8 inches) for women

Officials

In competition, teams may be required to furnish one or more officials to function as described below.

1st Referee (R1)

The 1st referee is in charge of the match and has the final authority on all matters. The R1 will be on the stand opposite the scorekeeper and will make decisions involving ball handling, lifts, throws, etc. The referee will give decisions with whistle and hand signals. These signals can be found in the FIVB Rulebook. All judgment decisions by the R1 are final.

2nd Referee (R2)

The 2nd referee is located on the floor, opposite the R1 and near the team benches and the scorekeeper. The R2 is mainly responsible for control of the net, watching for infractions. The R2 may also assist the R1 on ball handling calls by giving a discreet signal if the R1 is screened or blocked on the play. The R2 may not blow the whistle in this case, but should assist the R1 as needed. The R2 is also responsible for oversight of the scorekeeper and for administering all substitution requests.

Scorekeeper

The scorekeeper is responsible for keeping the score sheet according to the rules of the game or other such duties as authorized. It is the duty of the scorekeeper to ensure that the visual scoreboard is accurate.

Libero Tracker

For those programs using the Libero provision in the rules, a minor official may be required to track Libero replacements.



Line Judges (LJ)

Line judges are an important part of the officiating team. They stand in the left corners (behind the left back position) of the court and assist the R1 with calling the ball in, the ball out and touches as instructed by the R1.

SOOPA

The Special Olympics Officials' Program for Athletes (SOOPA) is designed to assist with the development of Special Olympics athletes to be trained in skills necessary to officiate at variable levels of responsibility, consistent with the ability of the athlete. In volleyball, the local Special Olympics affiliate should work closely with the National Governing Body affiliate to encourage a SOOPA official to become certified through the NGB.

Pre-match Meeting

During the pre-match meeting, the R1 will meet with representatives from each team to:

1. Clarify warm-up procedures
2. Explain event/tournament/match rules and facility ground rules
3. Determine which team serves first and from which side of the court they will serve

Start of the Match

When ready, the R1 will instruct the players to line up on the end line. On a signal from the R1, the players will move onto the court and line up in the proper rotation while the R2 verifies their position on the court.

Start of the Set

When all players are in the proper position and both teams are ready to play, the R1 will beckon for the server to serve the ball. The serve beckon will be done with both a whistle and arm motion. Please refer to the FIVB rulebook for details on all the signals used by both officials.

Service Rotation

When the receiving team has gained the right to serve, the players rotate one position clockwise. There are two exceptions to this:

1. In Unified Sports Volleyball, when the serving team has scored three consecutive points they shall rotate one position clockwise and maintain service. The receiving team will NOT rotate.
2. In Modified Team Competition volleyball, a three-point or five-point serving rule will be used. Once a player has scored the three or five points, there will be an automatic loss of possession with the opponent getting ball and service but no point.

Ball In/Ball Out

A ball that lands inside the court or on any part of the line is considered good. A ball that lands outside of the court and completely outside of the line is considered out.

Method of Scoring

Volleyball is played using the Rally Scoring method. Each time a ball is put in play, a point will be awarded. The exception is if the referee directs a replay (a ball from another court comes onto the court, etc.). You do not need to be serving for your team to earn a point.

Time-Outs

Each team may call two time-outs per set, each lasting 30 seconds in duration.



To Win a Set/Match

Teams need to earn 25 points to win the set (the deciding set is played to 15 points). You must win by at least two points. Matches are played either best two out of three sets or best three out of five sets. Please be sure to check with your competition manager for the format of each competition. Some matches may be either shortened or lengthened due to time and/or space considerations.

Sanctions

Yellow Card

A warning against a player or coach that results in the opposing team getting a point.

Red Card

A sanction against a player or coach that results in an expulsion from the set.

Red/Yellow Card Held Together

A sanction against a player or coach that results in a disqualification from the match. The competition manager will decide if the incident requires the player or coach to be out of the tournament.

Common Violations

- Lift
- Throw
- Double hit
- More than three hits
- Touching the net while playing the ball
- Center line violation (under the net)
- Out of rotation
- Wrong server
- Back row attack
- Service foot fault



Special Olympics Unified Sports® Rules

There are a few differences in the rules for Special Olympics Unified Sports® competition as stipulated in the official *Special Olympics Sports Rules*. The differences are highlighted below:

1. A roster consists of a proportionate number of athletes and partners. Although the exact distribution of roster spots is not specified, a volleyball roster containing eight athletes and two partners does not meet the goals of the Unified Sports Program.
2. A lineup during the competition consists of half athletes and half partners. Unified Sports Volleyball will consist of three athletes and three partners. They will alternate on the lineup sheet (ex: one partner, one athlete, etc.). In extenuating circumstances, a competition manager may allow more athletes than partners if he/she deems that it is still in the spirit of Unified Sports.
3. In team sports, division assignment is based on the best players on the roster, not the average ability of all players.
4. Team sports must have an adult, non-playing coach. Player-coaches are not allowed in team sports.

Unified Sports Volleyball is designed to contribute further to the mainstreaming of individuals with intellectual disabilities by bringing together individuals with intellectual disabilities and those without on the same team as equal partners. The equality among all teammates is enhanced when the teammates are of roughly the same age and ability. The selection of athletes and partners of similar age and ability is essential for Unified Sports Volleyball training and competition.

It is very important that the Unified Sports partners know their role on the team and in Special Olympics in general. Player dominance by Unified Sports partners does not meet the intent and goals of the program and does not allow the athletes to showcase their talents. A good partner is one who plays right alongside the athlete and has a similar ability. In a perfect world, it would be impossible to differentiate between the contributions of an athlete and a Unified Sports partner.



Protest Procedures

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition. The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As coach, your duty to your athletes and team is to protest any action or events that occur while your athletes are competing that you think violated the Official Volleyball Rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome. Protests are serious matters that impact a competition's schedule. Check with the competition manager prior to competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.

There are generally two types of protests: Eligibility and Rules of the Game.

Eligibility

Protests regarding eligibility shall be filed according to the procedures approved by the competition management team.

Rules of the Game

Protests must be made by the playing captain prior to the next serve. Judgment is not a protestable situation. A valid protest would be a rule that the coach and playing captain feel the official has misapplied. An example would be an erroneous number of partners on the court or the official failing to enforce the number of substitutions in a particular game.

If a valid protest has been made and accepted by the first referee (R1), the referee will get off the stand and consult the rulebook. If, after consulting the rulebook, the playing captain still wants to protest, the R1 will send a suitable representative to locate the competition manager. At this time, the scorekeeper should record all pertinent facts for the match (score, time of protest, substitutions used, time-outs taken, etc.). The competition manager and/or Chief Referee will make a ruling on the protest. If denied, play will begin immediately. If the protest is upheld, the play in question will be played over and the problem corrected. These decisions are final. There is no appeal. The set will proceed immediately upon conclusion of a decision being made.



Volleyball Protocol & Etiquette

During Practice

Good volleyball etiquette and protocol start at practice. Teaching your team good sportsmanship and respect for officials, teammates, opponents and volunteers will carry over to when an actual competition takes place. Your role as coach sets the standard that your team will follow. Always strive to set a good example.

When practicing, make sure your team is following the rules they will expect to have enforced in competition. The better your athletes understand the rules, the better equipped they will be to understand why a given call was made. Many volleyball calls are subjective, and being consistent in applying calls in practice will reduce confusion and frustration in competitions. Teaching respect for both officials and playing opponents begins in practice. The coach needs to set a high standard of sportsmanship.

During Competition

Volleyball is a highly competitive sport that is best played with lots of positive emotion. Keeping this emotion under control and channeled into good sportsmanship can be a challenge to the coach.

During warm-ups, be sure all players and balls stay on the proper side of the net. A common issue during warm-ups is a loose ball going onto the other side of the net where someone may be jumping and may land on the ball. It is good etiquette to yell “ball” or “stop” if a player or coach notices a loose ball heading to the opposing side, especially if a potential injury could occur. Good sportsmanship is to thank the team who prevented a possible injury.

Only the playing captain may speak to the referees. This player will represent the team at the captains’ meeting with the referees. He/she should inform both the coach and fellow players of the ground rules and any special items that the referee mentioned. Knowledge of the rules by all players, not just the captain or coach, is expected and helps to make the game run smoother.

When the R1 indicates for the team to line up, the six starters plus the Libero will line up on the end line. When the referee signals, the teams will go counterclockwise to the net to shake hands with their opponents. Some teams will have small gifts to give to the other team (e.g., pins or something from their region or area). This is done mainly at the national or World Games level, but it’s always a nice gesture.

During the set, players will treat referees, opponents and teammates with respect. Yelling through the net at an opponent will not be tolerated and is cause for the player to get a yellow card (warning) or a red card (ejected). Arguing with an official could result in the same sanctions being given.

After the last set, the referee will direct the teams to the end line and then will instruct the teams to meet at the net to shake hands and congratulate their opponents on a well-played match.

Be aware that there may be a match scheduled directly after your match, so please collect your belongings and vacate the court so the next teams may begin their warm-ups.

In general, volleyball has a great reputation for good sportsmanship and respect among players, coaches and officials. As a coach, please be sure to stress this to your team and set a good example yourself. Your athletes will follow the example set by the coach. If a coach yells at the officials, his or her players will do the same. A coach who respects the officials, the other players and the other coach, and who can remain positive, will have a positive influence on his/her team and their behavior. If a player does behave badly on the court or during warm-ups, it is the responsibility of the coach to talk to that athlete and let him or her know that good sportsmanship is expected and poor behavior will not be tolerated.



Sportsmanship

“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

Good sportsmanship is the coaches’ and athletes’ commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Lead by example. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event.
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition.
- Always finish the match - Never quit.

Fair Play at All Times

- Always comply with the rules.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- Respect decisions of the officials at all times.

Expectations of Coaches

1. Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow.
2. In every match, there will be a winning team and a losing team. Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities, and demand that they make sportsmanship and ethics their top priority.
3. Give positive reinforcement of athlete performance.
4. Respect the judgment of match officials, abide by rules of the event and display no behavior that could incite fans.
5. Treat all participants and fans with respect.
6. Shake hands with officials and the opposing coach in public, both before and after a match.
7. Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

Expectations of Athletes & Partners in Special Olympics Unified Sports®

1. Treat teammates with respect.
2. Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
3. Treat opponents with respect: shake hands prior to and after contests.
4. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the contest and display no behavior that could incite fans.
5. Cooperate with officials, coaches or directors and fellow participants to conduct a fair contest.
6. Do not retaliate (verbally or physically) if the other team demonstrates poor behavior.
7. Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing Special Olympics.
8. Define winning as doing your personal best.
9. Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coach.

Coaching Tips

- Teach your players to respect the officials and their decisions.
- Teach players to play hard within the rules.
- Teach the general rules of volleyball to the players.
- Give sportsmanship awards or recognition after each match or practice.
- Always commend the athletes when they demonstrate sportsmanship.



Remember

- ◆ Sportsmanship is an attitude that is shown by the way you and your athletes act on and off the field of play.
- ◆ Be positive about competing.
- ◆ Respect your opponents and yourself.
- ◆ Always stay under control, even if you are feeling mad or angry.



Volleyball Glossary

Term	Definition
Antenna	A flexible pole extended up from the net, attached as part of the net extension to designate the outside boundaries of the court
Attack Line	The line across the court at 3 meters from the center. Back row players may not attack a ball on or in front of this line
Back Row Attack	When a back row player attacks the ball on or in front of the attack line
Back Row Block	When a back row player blocks a ball at the net
Ball In	Ball which lands on the court, on or inside of the boundary line
Ball Out	Ball which lands outside of the court
Base Position	The designated position of an athlete at the time of the service
Block	The skill of jumping at the net to stop a ball from entering your court
Center Line	The line directly under the net
Contact, Double	A violation in which a player hits the ball twice in succession or the ball contacts various parts of his/her body in succession
Contact, Successive	A legal play that occurs during the team's first hit, when successive contacts with various parts of the player's body are permitted in a single action of playing the ball
Contacts, Consecutive	A violation in which a player hits the ball two times consecutively (Exception Rules 9.2.3, 14.2 & 14.4.2)
Dead Ball	The ball is out of play, called by the officials
Deciding Set	The final (3 rd or 5 th) set to be played if the match is tied
Dig	Usually the first reception by the team after an unblocked spike
Divisioning	A process to evaluate teams in an effort to achieve parity in competitive brackets or pools
Foot Fault	The server touches the end line at the same time as contacting the ball when serving
Held Ball	A ball that is caught or thrown and not played cleanly
Hitter/Spiker	A player who attacks the ball with force to the opponent's court
Knee Pads	Optional protective equipment to protect the knees of a player
Libero	A defensive specialist who only plays in a back row position; this player wears a contrasting colored uniform and has several other restrictions
Match	Predetermined number of sets
Officials	1 st Referee: on the stand (R1); 2 nd Referee: on the floor near the score table (R2); scorekeeper; Libero tracker; line judges
Overlap	A foul that occurs when players are in the incorrect rotation at the precise moment of the serve
Pancake	A play where a defensive player will put his/her hand palm down on the floor to prevent the ball from hitting the floor



Special Olympics Volleyball Coaching Guide Volleyball Rules, Protocol & Etiquette

Term	Definition
Pass	Usually the first contact by a teammate to the setter
Player Replacement	Act of the Libero either coming into or leaving the game
Playing Captain	The player on the court who represents his/ her team and is the only team member who can talk to the referee
Points to Win	15 or 25 points is required to win a set; in order to win, a team must be at least 2 points ahead (Competition management may determine other limits in certain situations)
Rally	The act of playing the ball back and forth over the net
Rally Scoring	Each play results in a point unless a replay is directed
Red Card	A sanction resulting in the ejection of a player/coach from the set for rude or unacceptable behavior with no point being awarded
Replay	When an official instructs the team to play over the previous point due to an error or other reasons
Serve	The technique of putting the ball into play
Setter	A player (usually the second team contact) who delivers the ball to a hitter
Side Out/Rotate	When the team wins the serve from the opposing team, the team will rotate one position clockwise, often referred to as a Side Out
Spike	A hard driven ball into the opponent's court, usually accomplished by hitting the ball with an overhead arm swing
Substitution	The act by which a player enters a set to occupy the position of another player who must leave the set
Time-Out	A suspension of play requested by the playing captain or coach and granted by the R1; the length of the time-out is governed by rule
Touch	A ball that is touched by a player either intentionally or accidentally; both count as a touch
Yellow Card	A warning to a player/coach for unacceptable behavior that results in a point for the other team