



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

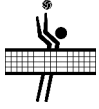


Planning a Volleyball Training & Competition Season

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 a twice-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



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.



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®

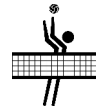
Unified Sports embraces the philosophy and principles of Special Olympics. When selecting your UnifiedSports team, you want to achieve meaningful involvement at the beginning, during and at the end of your sport season. Unified Sports teams are organized to provide meaningful involvement for all athletes 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.



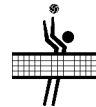
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Special Olympics - Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals

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>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
SCORE:	
<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>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
SCORE:	
<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>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
SCORE:	
<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>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
SCORE:	



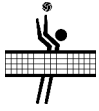
Special Olympics - Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals

<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>	<p>SCORE:</p> <input style="width: 50px; 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 bosc 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>	<p>SCORE:</p> <input style="width: 50px; 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>	<p>SCORE:</p> <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
<p>Total Score:</p> <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> <p>(Maximum Score = 56)</p>	

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.





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.

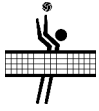
Shoes

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.





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 x 59 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 1/2 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 3/4 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.