

Season Plan for 10 to 11-Year-Olds

Players continue to work on the tactics and skills they developed as 8 to 9-year-olds, but the tactics become a little more complex as they delve deeper into learning new pass patterns, new methods of blocking, and new defenses. (New tactics, skills, and rules are bolded.) The following outline provides an overview of each component of practice from Week 1 through Week 12. We based the plans on two practices per week for the first two weeks, and then one practice per week once the regular season starts.

Overview of the Season Plan

The Season Plan on the next page provides a weekly guide and addresses tactical and skill components, and other activities fully detailed in the Practice Plans document. The Season Plan has five components:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the practice is your main focus.
- **Tactics and Skills:** Tactics are knowing what to do during the game (and when to do it), and they require an understanding of the problems faced by each team during the game and how those problems can be solved. Ways to maintain possession of the ball would be tactics. Skills are the physical skills traditionally taught, such as controlling the ball during play.
- **Rules and Traditions:** You will teach the rules of the sport to young children gradually, as part of playing games and learning skills. Traditions are those unwritten rules that players follow to be courteous and safe, such as raising your hand when you foul someone or playing cooperatively with the others on your team.
- **Fitness Concepts:** Even young children can understand some simple concepts about health and fitness, such as the idea that exercise strengthens your heart, so some of these are suggested as the focus for brief discussions during practice.
- **Character Development Concepts:** The four core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility—can all be related to many situations arising while playing team sports. For example, playing cooperatively with teammates shows that you care about them. Again, we'll suggest some specific ideas for briefly discussing character development values.

Note that the YMCA does not teach or use roundhouse serving.

YMCA Winners Volleyball Season Plan

10- to 11-Year-Olds

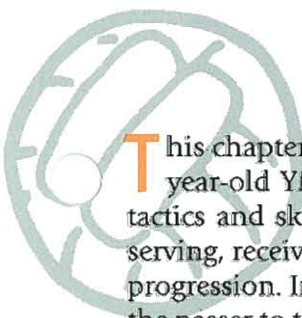
Week	Purpose	Tactics and skills	Rules and traditions	Fitness concepts	Character development concepts
1A	To set up to attack and win the point	Spiking; overhead passing	Boundaries; calling "Serve" before your serve; rolling ball under net between points; serve rotation; free-ball toss serve; line rules	General fitness The difference between physical fitness and physical activity.	Four core values We'll stress caring, honesty, respect, responsibility.
1B	To set up to attack	Forearm passing	Can't touch net; raise your hand if you touch the net	General fitness It's important to warm up before physical activity.	Caring Always help both teammates and opponents if they are hurt.
2A	To win the point	Hitting (down-the-line and cross-court)	Call "Ball!" if ball is rolling in path of game play.	Cardiorespiratory fitness The heart transports oxygen through the body.	Responsibility It's responsible to be ready for practice and games.
2B	To set up to attack	Forearm passing; transitioning to attack	High-five ritual—celebrate success, dismiss errors; shake-hand line at end of contest	Cardiorespiratory fitness Cardiorespiratory fitness is improved by running.	Respect Always show respect for your opponents as well as your teammates.
3	To set up to attack	Setting (high-outside sets)	Setter's word is "Help!"	General fitness You need to exercise every day, not just the days you have practice.	Respect Respect officials, and thank them at the ends of games.
4	To set up to attack	Set-hit combinations; opening up	Call your own illegal hits.	Muscular strength and endurance Different muscles perform different activities.	Honesty Strive to be honest and avoid dishonesty.
5	To win the point	Overhand serving	If you have a bad toss, let it bounce—catching it means loss of serve.	Flexibility Stretching improves flexibility and helps prevent injury.	Responsibility It's every player's responsibility to try to get into position to help teammates.
6	To set up to attack	Three-player serve-receiving	Whole gym is in play until ball lands out of bounds; unwritten rule—players support teammates by calling balls "out."	Safety It's important to use safety equipment to prevent injury.	Caring Compliment your teammates and opponents when they make good plays.

10- to 11-Year-Olds (continued)

Week	Purpose	Tactics and skills	Rules and traditions	Fitness concepts	Character development concepts
7	To win the point	Overhand serving		Training and conditioning If you work your body a little harder than last time, it will adapt and become stronger.	Respect It's important to respect yourself and your teammates by always playing safely.
8	To defend space on your own court	Free-ball defense; opening up	Call score out loud—your score and opponents' score	Flexibility You should feel a slight pull but no pain when stretching.	Caring It's important to behave in ways that show you care about your teammates.
9	To defend space against an attack	Digging; forearm passing		Training and conditioning An emphasis on training the specific muscles you use for your sport is called "specificity training."	Responsibility Work to improve your skills.
10	To defend space	Digging; passing to the setter		Healthy habits Try to choose meals from the bottom of the food pyramid.	Honesty Good players look honestly at themselves and think of ways to improve.
11	To set up to attack	Pass-set-hit combinations		Healthy habits Daily habits should be healthy habits.	Responsibility We win as a team and we lose as a team.
12	To defend as a team	Digging		Training and conditioning Stay in shape after the season's over.	Caring It's important to forgive people for their mistakes.

Note that the YMCA does not teach or use roundhouse serving.

Practice Plans for 10- to 11- Year-Olds



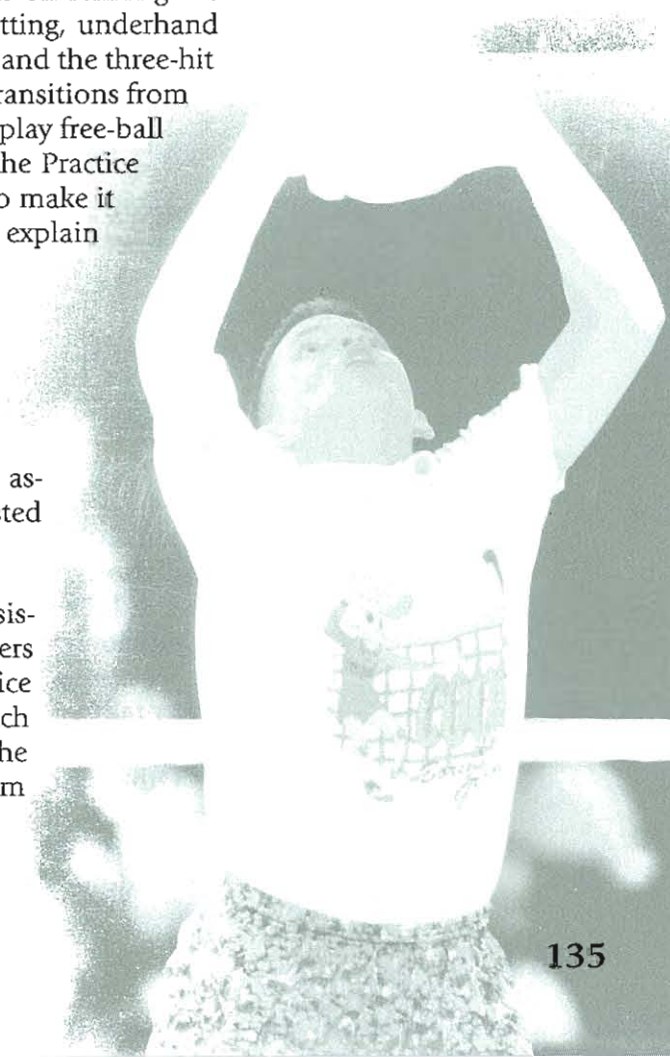
This chapter contains the 14 Practice Plans you'll use with your 10- to 11-year-old YMCA Winners volleyball players. The focus is on refining the tactics and skills learned at the 8- to 9-year-old level—hitting, underhand serving, receiving the serve, overhead and forearm passing, and the three-hit progression. In addition, players learn how to make good transitions from the passer to the hitter, hit cross-court and down-the-lines, play free-ball defense, save balls, and serve overhead. Before we get to the Practice Plans themselves, we'll guide you in modifying the sport to make it more appropriate for 10- and 11-year-olds, and then we'll explain how the Practice Plans are structured.



Organizing Your Team

We recommend your YMCA uses one of three options in assigning coaches and players to teams. Our preferences are listed in order.

1. Ten players will be assigned to a head coach and an assistant coach. These players will form two teams of five players each for competition. In practice, all ten players will practice together as one team. In competition, the head coach will coach one team and the assistant coach will coach the other. The five players assigned to each team should remain on that team throughout the season.



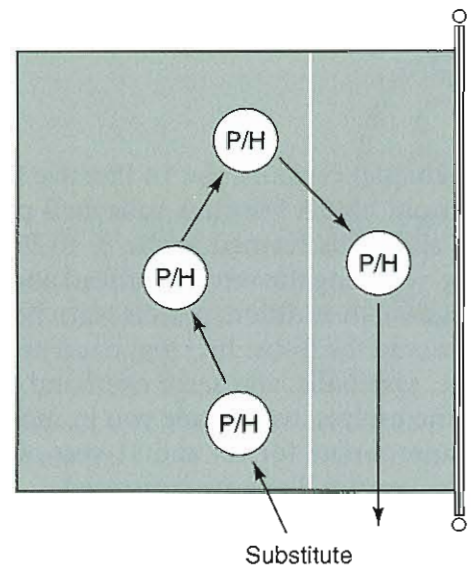
2. Ten players will be assigned to one coach. Again, these players will form two teams of five players each for competition, and will practice together and remain on their assigned team throughout the season. In competition, the head coach will coach both teams. It would be optimal for a coach's two teams to not play each other during the season and to have their competitions scheduled back-to-back if possible.

3. Seven players will be assigned to one coach. The seven players will practice and compete together as one team.

The advantage with the first two options is that in 4 v 4 competitions, all players are assured of a great number of touches per game and season – thus increasing their chances for fun and improvement.

On a five-player team, the player on the bench will automatically rotate in. Whenever a team wins the serve, a new player for each team rotates into the game. Figure 11.1 demonstrates how players are rotated in during a 4 v 4 game when five players are on each team.

Figure 11.1 Four-on-four rotation with five players on each team.



Game Modifications

Modifying the game takes into account the developmental levels of your players and allows them to better learn the tactics and skills necessary. We recommend the modifications in table 11.1 for your practices; we show the adult regulation rules for the sake of comparison.

We also recommend you use only rally scoring (when a point is scored on every rally, regardless of which team served). This makes the sport more exciting for the kids and will enable you to complete games and matches on schedule.

Other considerations in conducting your practices include

- ⊙ varying tasks, depending on the developmental needs of the player (e.g., adding a bounce in between hits);

TABLE 11.1

Practice Modifications for 10- to 11-Year-Olds

Factors	Regulation	Modifications
Ball size and weight	25.5" to 27" in circumference; 9 to 10 oz.	Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls
Court size	30' × 30'	20' × 20'
Net height	Men—7'11-5/8" Women—7'4-1/8"	6' 6" (Use volleyball nets, ropes, or badminton nets.)
Number of players	6 v 6	3 v 3, 4 v 4
Serving area	Anywhere behind the endline; must complete the serve before stepping or landing inside the court	Behind endline or stepping into the court as needed for player success
Serving technique	Must "bat" the ball; can't toss it over the net	Use a free-ball toss serve (tossing the ball over the net) before moving to an underhand serve and roundhouse serve and then an overhad serve.
Serving limit per player	No limit	If a server scores five points in a row, the serving team continues to serve but rotates one position to the next server.
Illegal double contacts	Not allowed	Allow some.
Ball visibly coming to rest	Not allowed	Allow some.

- ⊙ mixing teams so that players play with and against various teammates;
- ⊙ allowing players to decide on some parameters (e.g., letting the ball bounce to gain control); and
- ⊙ encouraging "positive" errors (e.g., hitting long rather than into the net forcing the opponent to decide whether to play the ball.

Finally, consider incorporating "sitting volleyball" in one or more practices. Have players sit on the floor and play over a net that is two to three feet above the floor. Use a beach ball or another type of light ball. This helps kids develop an appreciation for the difficulties experienced by athletes with disabilities.

All these suggested modifications will help your players develop skills quicker—and have more fun doing so—than if they were forced to play the adult version of the game. As they progress through YMCA Winners, game rules will become more and more like those of the adult version of the game. YMCA Winners practices will give your players a good foundation to build on as they grow.



Practice Plan Organization

Each plan contains the following sections:

- ⊙ Purpose
- ⊙ Equipment
- ⊙ Practice Plan

“Purpose” sections focus on what you want to teach your players during that practice; it is your main “theme” for that day. “Equipment” sections note what you’ll need on hand for that practice. “Practice Plan” sections outline what you will do during each practice session. Each consists of these elements:

- ⊙ Warm-Up
- ⊙ Fitness Circle
- ⊙ Games
- ⊙ Skill Practices
- ⊙ Team Circle and Wrap-Up
- ⊙ Variations

You’ll begin each session with about 10 minutes of warm-up activities. This will be followed by 5 minutes of a Fitness Circle, during which you lead players through an activity and discussion that relate to their fitness. Then you’ll have your players play a modified volleyball game. You’ll look for your cue to interrupt that game—when players are having problems with carrying out the basic goal or aim of the game. At this point you’ll “freeze” the action, keeping the players where they are, and ask brief questions about the tactical problems the players encountered and what skills they need to “solve” those problems. (Review chapter 8 for more on interrupting a game and holding a question-and-answer session.) We provide discussion questions in each Practice Plan. In addition, we provide coaching points, when appropriate, with Game and Skill Practice sections to help you conduct each practice most effectively.

Then you’ll teach the skill that the players need to acquire to successfully execute the tactic. Chapter 13 contains descriptions of all the skills, so a page reference will be given to guide you to the appropriate description. During this skill practice session, you’ll use the IDEA approach:roduce the skill.roduce the skill.

- I** Introduce the skill.
- D** Demonstrate the skill.
- E** Explain the skill.
- A** Attend to players practicing the skill.

Your introduction, demonstration, and explanation of a skill should take no more than 2 to 3 minutes; then you'll attend to players and provide teaching cues or further demonstration as necessary as they practice the skill according to the Practice Plan.

After the Skill Practices, you will usually have the players play another game or two to let them use the skills they just learned and to understand them in the context of a game.

The Practice Plan section continues with a Team Circle that focuses on character development. You will lead players through an activity and discussion about some aspect of volleyball that relates to one of the four core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Following this, you'll wrap up the practice with a few summary comments and remind them of the next practice or game day.

















Most Practice Plans conclude with a Variations section to help you modify the Game and Skill Practice sections. These suggestions will help you keep practices fun and provide for players with varying skill levels.

A note about Fitness and Team Circles: These times are meant to be true discussions—not lectures where you're doing all the talking and your players are doing all the listening. Ask the questions provided, then wait for your players to respond. Don't immediately feed them the answers we provide. These answers are meant simply to help you guide the discussion. Your role in Team Circles is as much to ask questions and get players to think and respond as it is to dole out information.







Following are Practice Plans for the 2 weeks of your preseason and then for the 10 weeks of your competitive season.


Key to Diagrams

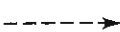
Player roles

	=	Passer
	=	Setter
	=	Hitter
	=	Server
	=	Digger
	=	Blocker
	=	Serve-receiver
	=	Tosser
	=	Target
	=	Retriever
	=	Attacker
	=	Hitter/setter
	=	Passer/tosser
	=	Passer/hitter
	=	Tosser/setter
	=	Digger/hitter

Player positions

	=	Right back
	=	Middle back
	=	Left back
	=	Right front
	=	Middle front
	=	Left front

 = Path of player

 = Path of ball

Note: We'll number the arrows for player and ball movement to show the play sequence.

Week 1, Practice 1

PURPOSE

To set up to attack and win the point, focusing on spiking and overhead passing.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players
- Four cones

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Begin each practice with 10 minutes of warm-up activities to get players loosened up and ready to go.

In threes, practice continuous overhead passing (volleying; see figure on page 84). Each player should be able to volley a ball so that the ball stays within reach of his or her partners. Work toward control so players don't have to run after the ball to retrieve it after each volley. Have players count how many good volleys they hit in a row.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Following the warm-up, gather the players and demonstrate the stretching protocol (see chapter 15 for stretches for the major muscle groups). Ask a team leader to lead stretches in subsequent practices.

After the team is finished stretching, lead the activity and discussion on the fitness concept for that practice. In this first practice your fitness topic will be more general, but in future practices you'll often discuss more specific concepts and issues such as safety, flexibility, healthy habits, and more.

Key Idea: General fitness

Gather the team into a group between two cones about 20 feet apart. "Do you think there's a difference between physical activity and physical fitness?" Listen to their responses. "Physical *activity* is any body movement you use while performing a skill or task. Physical *fitness* is a condition of the body. The more fit your body is, the better you can perform some skills and tasks. I will give you some activities. Run to this cone if you think it is regular physical activity. Run to the cone other if you think it is an activity done for fitness."

Examples of physical activity are walking to school and walking stairs to bed. Examples of activities done for physical fitness are fitness walking to school for exercise, jogging to improve sport performance, or walking stairs to strengthen leg muscles. "All season we will talk and learn about the different areas of fitness during our fitness circles. We'll also work on improving your body's fitness for volleyball."

Week 1, Practice 1

Game 1 (10 minutes)

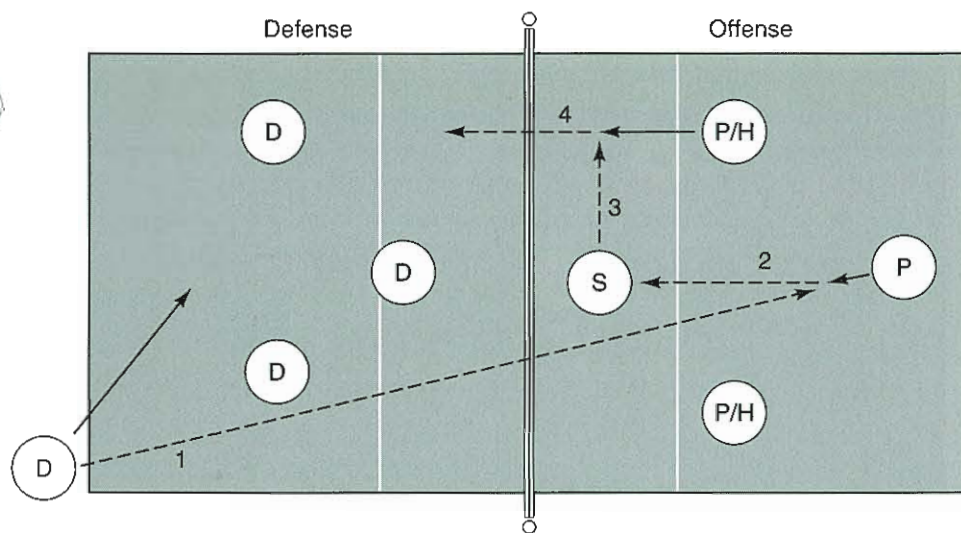
Following the Fitness Circle, get the kids to play a game. Follow most games with a time of questions and answers—with you asking the questions and your players providing the answers (about what the goal of the game was and what skills and tactics they needed to perform to succeed in the game). For many games, we provide diagrams or figures showing how the game is begun. We also often provide “coach’s points” for you to pass along to your players during the games.

Goal

To win the point, using a spike.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Players start in base position. Players use *free-ball toss serves* (see page 267). Alternate serves and rotate after each rally. Points won on a spike are worth two points.



Coach: What is the goal of this game?

Players: To win the point with a spike.

Coach: What has to happen on your side of the net before you can spike?

Players: The ball has to be set to the spiker.



Skill Practice

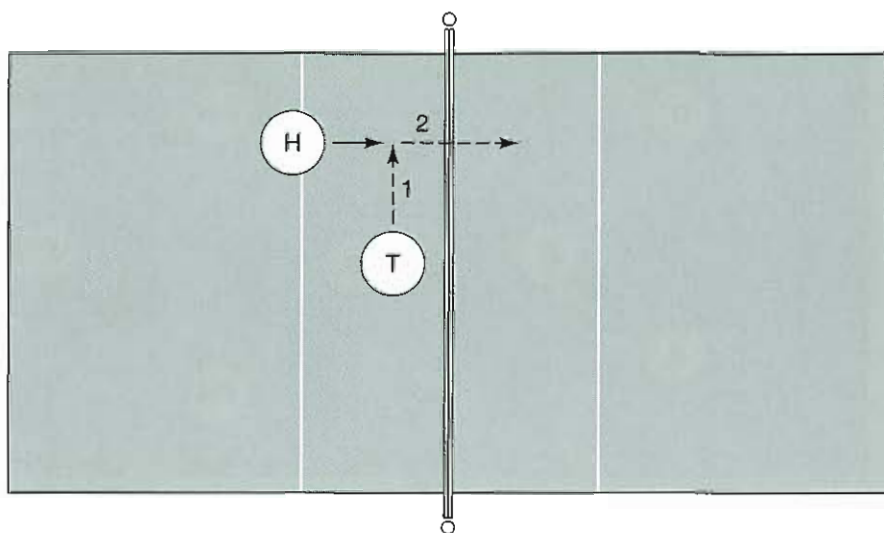
Follow Game 1 with a Skill Practice. Use the IDEA approach: introduce, demonstrate, and explain a skill or tactic, then attend to your players as they practice that tactic. The question-and-answer session, in which your *players* tell you what skills and tactics they needed to be successful in the game, leads directly to the Skill Practice. We often provide coaching points with the Skill Practices; pass these points along to your players. We also provide “coach’s cues”—phrases to help your players focus on the task at hand—during many Skill Practices and Games.

Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *spike* (see page 260).
2. Practice spiking from partner tosses.

Description

In partners, a tosser tosses a high ball for a hitter to spike the ball over the net. Allow players three trials, then switch roles.



COACH'S cues



Spike

- “Feet to ball!”
- “Face the net!”
- “Jump off both feet!” (if doing jump spike)
- “Throw hands high!”
- “Swing fast!”



Teach spiking 6 to 10 feet off the net, so the players can focus on the ball and their technique without worrying about the net.

Week 1, Practice 1

Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *overhead-pass* (see page 263).
2. Practice overhead passing from tosses.

Description

In groups of three, a tosser tosses a high toss to a passer, who overhead passes the ball to a target player (see figure on page 108). The passer should pass from both sides of the court. Allow players three trials, then rotate roles.

COACH'S cues



- “Fingerpads to contact!”
- “Volleyball-shaped hands!”
- “Bend legs!”
- “Extend arms and legs—fly like a superhero!”

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To win the point with a spike.

Description

Same as Game 1.



- ☞ Teach players rules regarding boundaries, net play, and serve rotation; see chapter 14.
- ☞ A free ball is any ball that the opponent is in position to return easily.
- ☞ Encourage players to set up and use more than one hit on a side.
- ☞ When teaching spiking, introduce the *standing spike*, which is a spike with no jump (see page 262). If players are ready, they can jump and swing. It is important at this stage to encourage them to swing at the ball and not settle for sending over a free ball.
- ☞ Kids love to spike!
- ☞ Have your players call “Serve” before serving and roll the ball under the net between points.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Conclude practice by gathering your players and leading them through the same stretches you led them through in the Fitness Circle. After stretching, form a Team Circle, and lead an activity and discussion that involves character development. These should not be lectures—you want your players' active participation in these discussions. Following the discussion, wrap up the practice with a few comments (see Wrap-Up next).

Key Idea: The four core values: caring, honesty, respect, responsibility
Gather the team into a group near four cones about five feet apart. "We're going to talk about four main values or qualities that good players include in their games and practices. What are the four?" Have players stand at a cone when they provide a value. Have another player provide an example of the value, then have that player join the other player at the cone. Assist players if they cannot think of all four. "We'll work to improve our volleyball skills and physical fitness, but these four values are just as important to learn and practice to help you become good players. We'll learn about these values during our team circles."



Variations

To simplify

- Games—use a beach ball.
- Skill Practice—place the tosser on the same side of the net.

To challenge

Game 2—keep score.

Week 1, Practice 2

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Spiking in partners—Players toss to themselves, then move to the ball, facing the net, and either swing or jump and swing, spiking the ball over the net (see figure on page 87). Partners retrieve the ball and repeat the activity.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness

Gather the team into a group. “Who can tell me what ‘warm up’ means?” Listen to their responses. They might mention getting the body ready to do more strenuous activity, increasing blood circulation, and moving muscles so they are more flexible and will help prevent injuries. Discuss their responses and other possible responses. “Raise your hand if you think the muscles actually get warmer during warm-up activities?” Listen to their responses. “They do get warmer from the blood circulating and your moving. Give me some examples of good warm-up activities.” Choose one for the team to try. “The warm-up is an important part of a good fitness program. We will do a warm-up activity every practice.”

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To pass waist-high or lower balls to setters.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Players start in base position and use free-ball toss serves; alternate serves and rotate after each rally. No overhead passes are allowed on the first hit.

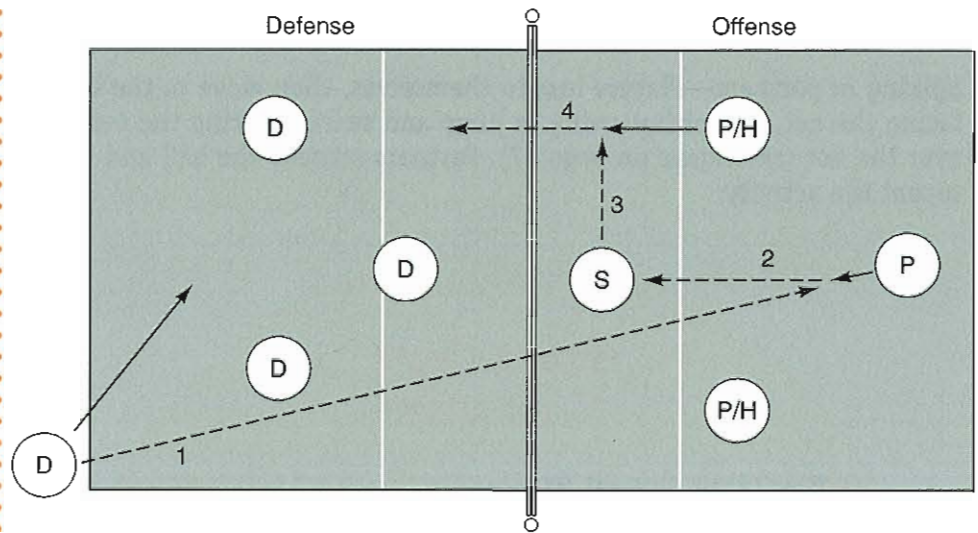
 **PURPOSE**

To set up to attack, focusing on forearm passing.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players
- Two cones

Week 1, Practice 2 (cont'd)



Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To pass low balls to the setter.

Coach: How do you do that?

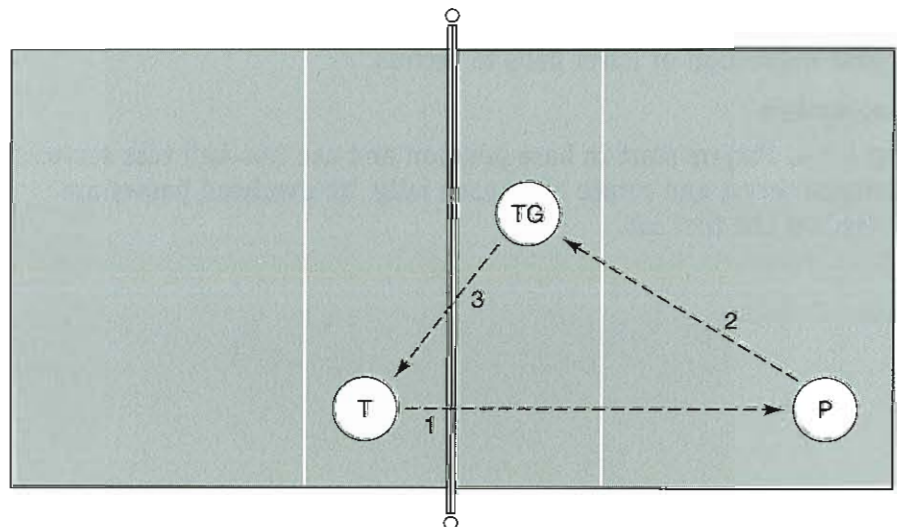
Players: By using a forearm pass.

Skill Practice (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *forearm-pass* (see page 265).
2. Practice overhead passing from partner tosses.

Description

In teams of three, a tosser tosses the ball to a passer, who forearm-passes to a target player. The target player feeds balls to the tosser. Allow players three to five trials, then rotate roles.



Week 1, Practice 2

COACH'S cues



- “Medium posture!”
- “Feet to the ball!”
- “Flat platform!”
- “Belly button to the target!”

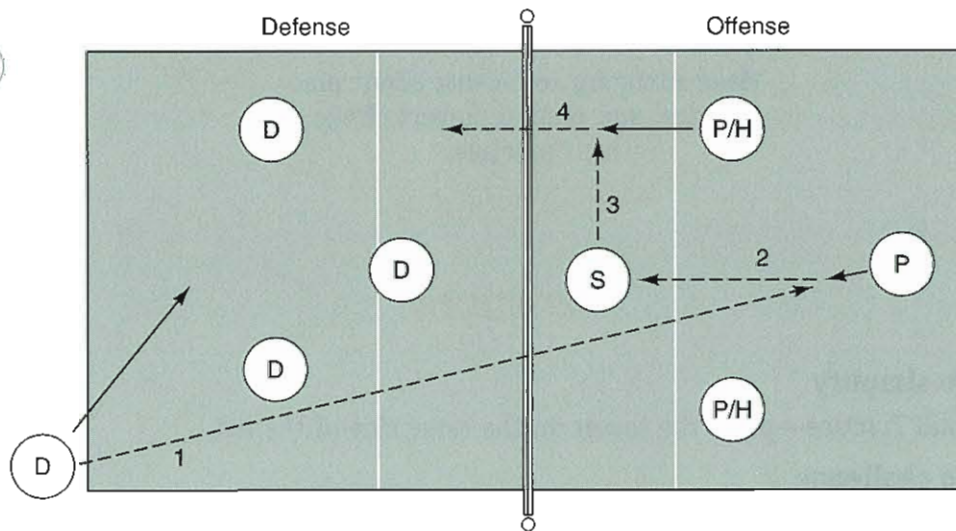
Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

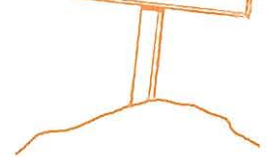
To use forearm passes as the first pass in game play.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Players start in base position and use free-ball toss serves; alternate serves and rotate after each rally. Teams earn a bonus point when the first hit is a forearm pass.



COACH'S point



- You can use two passers in positions to speed up the pace of the Skill Practice.
- The forearm pass is one of the six basic volleyball skills (the others are the serve, set, spike, block, and dig).
- The forearm pass is used in serve reception, passing free balls or standing spikes, setting, and floor defense.
- The forearm pass is unique to volleyball. Most athletes are trained to handle balls with their hands and/or feet.
- Players can't touch the net—instruct them to raise their hand if they do.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team into a circle near two cones about 10 feet apart. Ask one player to demonstrate with you. Have the player accidentally bump into you. Fall down as if you are hurt. "Anna accidentally bumped me. What should she do? If you think she should apologize and help me up, stand at this cone. If you think she should keep playing and hope no one notices, stand at this cone." Encourage all players to vote. Discuss why they voted the way they did. Tactfully explain the "caring action" so players don't feel foolish for not realizing they should help. "When you accidentally hurt other players—teammates *or* opponents—it's important to help them up to see if they are okay. That shows that you care about other players."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next practice.



Variations

To simplify

Skill Practice—place the tosser on the same side of the net.

To challenge

Skill Practice—vary the free-ball toss by moving the tosser to different spots on the court.

Week 2, Practice 1

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In teams of three, a tosser tosses the ball to a passer, who forearm-passes to a target player. The target player feeds balls to the tosser (see figure at bottom of page 146). Allow players three trials, then rotate roles.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory fitness

Gather the team into a group. "Who can tell me what *cardiorespiratory fitness* is?" When you have good cardiorespiratory fitness, your heart picks up oxygen from your lungs and takes it all over your body. Ask four players to demonstrate. Have one ball ready. The players should be spread out in a zigzag pattern down the court. The ball is passed across to each player, one side then the other side, in the line. "Let's set up our own blood vessels to carry oxygen to the muscles." Set up and perform the activity, with player 1 being the heart, player 2 the lungs, player 3 the legs, and then back to player 1. "We need to run more to improve our body's ability to get oxygen to our muscles. That is improving our cardiorespiratory fitness."

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To hit to open court using spikes.

Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure at top of page 146). Players start in base position and use free-ball toss serves. Give a bonus point for spikes that hit the floor before being touched by the defending team.

PURPOSE

To win the point, focusing on hitting down-the-line and cross-court.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players
- Clipboard

Week 2, Practice 1 (cont'd)



Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To hit to the open court using spikes.

Coach: What different angles must you be able to hit to reach open court?

Players: Cross-court and down-the-line.

Coach: What do you need to do to hit good down-the-line or cross-court spikes?

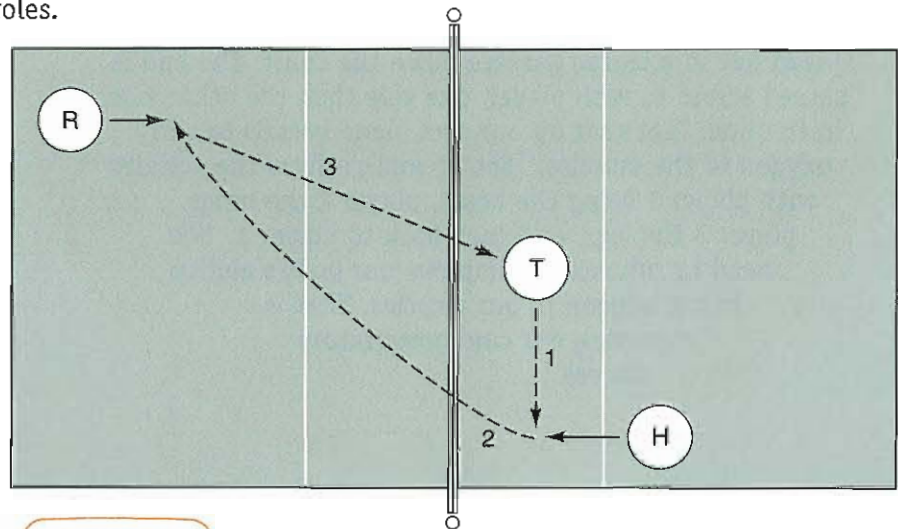
Players: Good technique, quick decision making.

Skill Practice (20 minutes)

Practice spiking down-the-line and cross-court.

Description

In teams of three, a tosser tosses a high-outside ball for a hitter to spike cross-court. One player retrieves the balls and feeds them to the tosser. Allow players three trials, then rotate roles. Repeat the practice, hitting down-the-line. Allow players three to five trials, then rotate roles.



Hand icon: Be sure the toss is off the net; hitters will be much more successful.

Hand icon: A cross-court shot is directed at an angle from one end of the offensive team's side of the net to the opposite sideline of the defensive team's court.

Hand icon: A line shot is a ball hit down the opponent's line on the side of the court from which the spiker is attacking.

Hand icon: Shot selection (standing spike, spike, or tip) and shot placement (cross-court or line shot) are important strategies for hitters to understand and practice.

Hand icon: Call "Ball!" if a ball is rolling into the path of game play.

COACH'S cues



"Feet to the ball!" (Or, "Run—accelerate to the jump!")

"Jump off both feet!"

"Throw your hands high!"

"Swing fast!" (Contact ball at a point high and in front.)

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use all cross-court spikes and then all down-the-line spikes during game play.

Week 2, Practice 1

Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure at top of page 146). Players start in base position and use free-ball toss serves. One team must hit all cross-court spikes and the other team all down-the-line spikes in order to win points. Rotate serves after each point. Switch after five minutes.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the players into a group. Have a clipboard and act as if you are writing or working. Don't pay attention to the group. Continue for one minute. "Hello, everybody. Now I am ready to talk about our team circle for today. How did you feel having to wait for me to get ready to talk to you?" Listen to responses. "Waiting for someone to be ready during practice wastes time. Even if it is a coach. I demonstrated how time is wasted if someone isn't prepared for practice. I read and prepare before practice so I am ready. I want you to do the same. You have a responsibility to the team to be ready when it is time for every practice to start. What do you do at home to get ready for practice?" Discuss responses.

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next practice.



Variations

To simplify

Skill Practice—focus only on cross-court.

Week 2, Practice 2

PURPOSE

To set up to attack, focusing on forearm passing and transitioning to attack.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players
- Two cones

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In teams of three, a tosser tosses a high-outside ball to a hitter, who attempts to spike the ball cross-court. One player retrieves the balls and feeds the balls to the tosser (see figure on page 150). Repeat the practice, attempting to hit down-the-line. Allow players three to five trials, then rotate roles.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory fitness

Gather the team into a circle. “What fitness area improves when we run more and strengthen our heart and lungs? *Cardiorespiratory fitness*. When we move more during practice to improve our cardiorespiratory fitness, what will start to happen?” Listen to their responses. Discuss getting fatigued if they run too fast early in the practice. “If you don’t want to tire early in the practice, we can use a special test to help you judge how fast to run. It’s called a talk test. A talk test can tell you if you’re running too fast for your body and need to slow down. Everyone jog around the court, and while you’re running say, ‘There’s no game like volleyball. You shouldn’t be out of breath while you’re talking—if you are, slow down!’”

Game 1 (10 minutes)

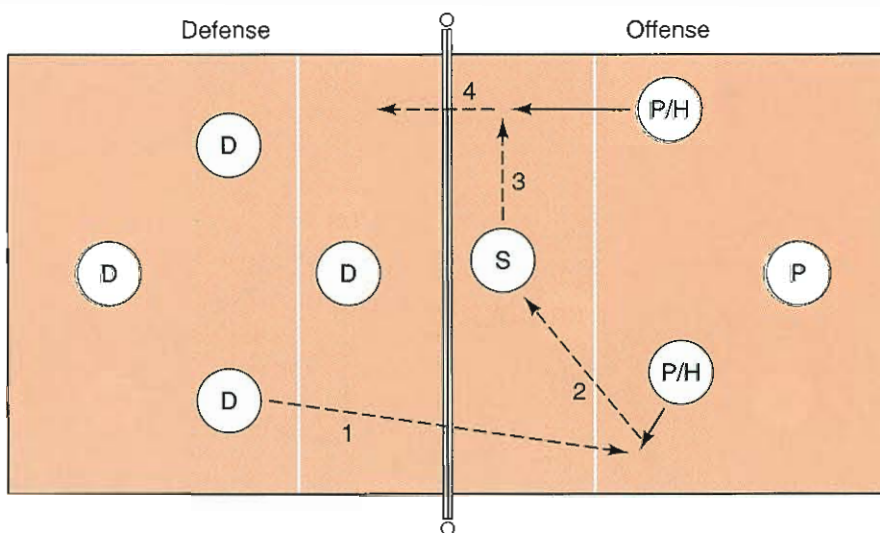
Goal

To transition to attack using cross-court or down-the-line spiking during game play.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Players start in base position with one player starting the rally by tossing the ball to him- or herself and hitting a standing spike either cross-court or down-the-line to open court.

Week 2, Practice 2



Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To transition to attack.

Coach: What do you need to do first to have the best chance for an attack?

Players: Have a good first pass—a forearm pass.

Coach: How do you do that?

Players: Medium posture, feet to the ball, flat platform, belly button to target.



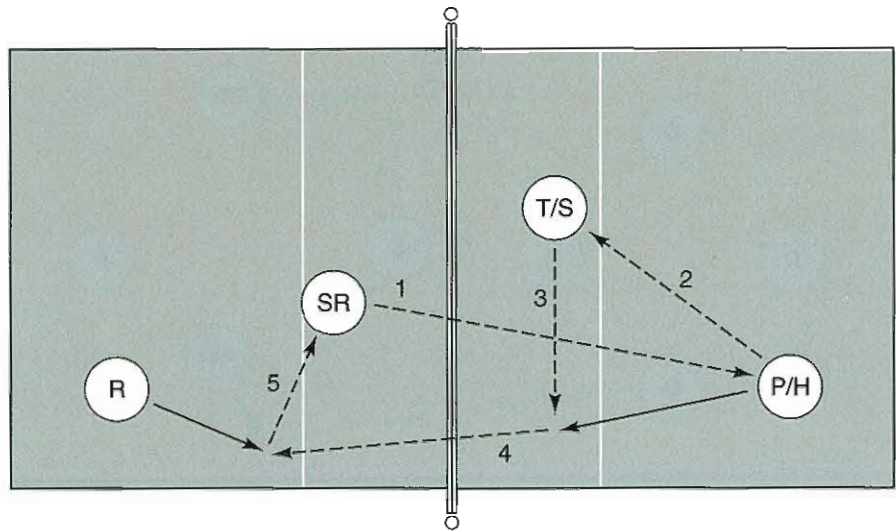
Skill Practice (20 minutes)

Practice forearm passing and transitioning to attack.

Description

In teams of four, a server hits a modified underhand serve to a passer/hitter, who forearm passes to a tosser/setter, who catches the ball and tosses a high-outside set to the passer/hitter, who attacks cross-court or down-the-line. One player retrieves balls. Allow players three trials, then rotate roles.

Week 2, Practice 2 (cont'd)



COACH'S cues



Forearm pass

- "Medium posture!"
- "Feet to ball!"
- "Flat platform!"
- "Belly button to the target!"

Spike

- "Feet to ball!"
- "Face the net!"
- "Jump off both feet!"
- "Throw hands high!"
- "Swing fast!"

COACH'S point

☞ Add a passer/hitter to quicken the pace of the skill practice.

☞ Teach players how to transition (establish a new position) in an efficient manner.

☞ Teach players to use "high-fives" or some other method to celebrate success and to regroup and encourage each other after an error.

☞ Teach players to form a line at the end of contests to shake hands with opponents.

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To focus on forearm passing in transitioning to attack.

Description

Same as Game 1 except players use an underhand or a roundhouse serve to begin play.

Week 2, Practice 2

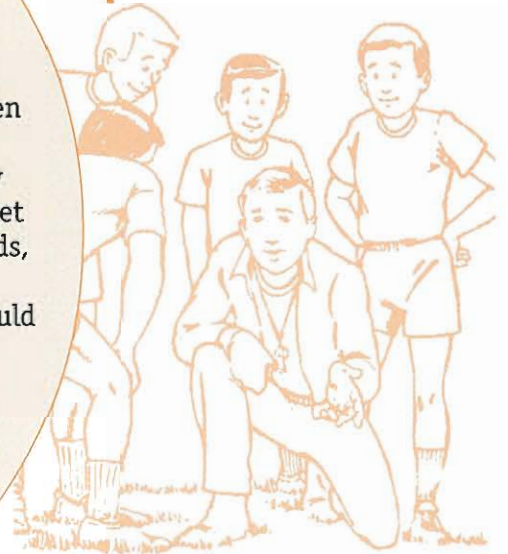
Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. "What is one important thing you can do at the end of every game to show you have respect for your opponent?" Listen to responses—discuss shaking or slapping hands, saying 'good game.' "Let's say some kids on the other team start walking away following a game. What should you do? If you think you should let them walk away without saying anything or trying to shake hands, stand at this cone. If you think you should say 'good game' and hold your hand out anyway, stand at this cone." All players should choose. Ask why they chose as they did. "You should shake hands or say 'good game' after every game—it shows respect for your opponent. If the other team turns away and doesn't participate, you shouldn't change your behavior."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next practice.



Variations

To simplify

- Games—move the server into the court if needed or use a second-chance rule on serves.
- Skill Practice—use a free-ball toss serve instead of a harder serve.

Week 3

PURPOSE

To set up to attack, focusing on setting high-outside sets.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players
- Two cones

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In teams of four, one player hits a modified underhand serve to a passer/hitter, who forearm-passes to a tosser/setter, who catches the ball and tosses a high-outside set to the passer/hitter, who attacks cross-court or down-the-line. Another player retrieves the balls (see figure on page 154). Allow players three trials, then rotate roles.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness

Gather the team into a group. "If you participate in volleyball practice every week, do you think that's enough to keep your body's fitness to play volleyball? Do you think you'll improve your body's fitness in the different areas?" Listen to their responses. "You need to be active outside volleyball practice to keep your overall fitness at a level that helps your volleyball. What are some activities you could do outside of practice?" Listen to their responses. Discuss activities, such as jogging, bicycling, and playing other sports.

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To transition to attack using three contacts.

Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure on page 147). Players start in base position and use an underhand or a roundhouse serve. Each team must have three contacts to be eligible to win a point. Award a bonus point to teams when they successfully execute a pass-set-hit combination.

Week 3

Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To transition to attack.

Coach: What's the next hit after the forearm pass?

Players: Set.

Coach: What is the role of the setter in the game?

Players: To set the ball to the hitter.



Skill Practice (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *set* (see page 263).
2. Practice setting high-outside sets.

Description

In teams of three, a tosser tosses a high ball for a setter to set the ball high and outside to a target player, who catches the ball and bounce-passes it back to the tosser (see figure on page 121). Allow each player three to five trials, then rotate roles.

COACH'S cues



"Hands high at your forehead!"

"Volleyball-shaped hands!"

"Square to target!"

"Finish like a superhero—extend arms and legs!"

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use high-outside set-hit combinations.

Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure on page 147). Players start in base position and use an underhand or a roundhouse serve. Award a bonus point for high-outside set-hit combinations.

COACH'S point



☞ The setter is the quarterback of the team. The second ball is always the setter's ball. If the setter cannot play that ball, he or she should call "Help!"

☞ The setter should keep the ball off the net.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team into a group near two cones 10 feet apart. "What are some of the official's duties during a game?" Listen to and discuss responses. "Who makes the calls during the game? Can you disagree if you think an official's call is not right or do you accept the official's call even if you think it is wrong? If you think you can discuss the call with the official, stand at this cone. If you think the official makes the call and you accept it, stand at this cone." All players should vote. "You need to have respect for the officials at all times. They are in charge on the court during a game. Don't argue with them; accept their calls and decisions. But, if you have a question, ask the official or me during a break."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the first game.



Variations

To simplify

Games—move the server into the court if needed or use a second-chance rule on serves.

To challenge

Skill Practice—vary the toss so that the setter has to move one or two steps.

Week 4

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In teams of four, one player hits a modified underhand serve to a passer/hitter, who forearm-passes to a tosser/setter, who catches the ball and tosses a high-outside set to the passer/hitter, who attacks cross-court or down-the-line. Another player retrieves the balls (see figure on page 154). Allow players three trials, then rotate roles.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Muscular strength and endurance

Gather the players into a group in a small area. "I want everyone to find a partner and balance back to back while sitting like a chair. I'll time you for one minute." Model action for the group. "What muscles did you use to hold yourselves up?" Touch the different areas with your hand to show players the muscle groups of their legs, front and back. "You use different muscles to perform different activities. Practicing using specific muscles improves your muscular strength and endurance—that is, how hard you can hit and how long you can play in a game before your muscles get tired."

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To win the point with cross-court spikes.


Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure on page 147). Players start in base position and use an underhand or a roundhouse serve. Give two points for a point won with a cross-court spike.

PURPOSE

To set up to attack, focusing on set-hit combinations.

Equipment

-  Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players



Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To win the point with a cross-court spike.

Coach: What kind of set does it take to hit a cross-court spike?

Players: High-outside set.

Coach: What do setters need to do to set high-outside sets?

Players: Turn and face the side they will be setting to when the ball comes over the net.

Coach: How does the setter do that?

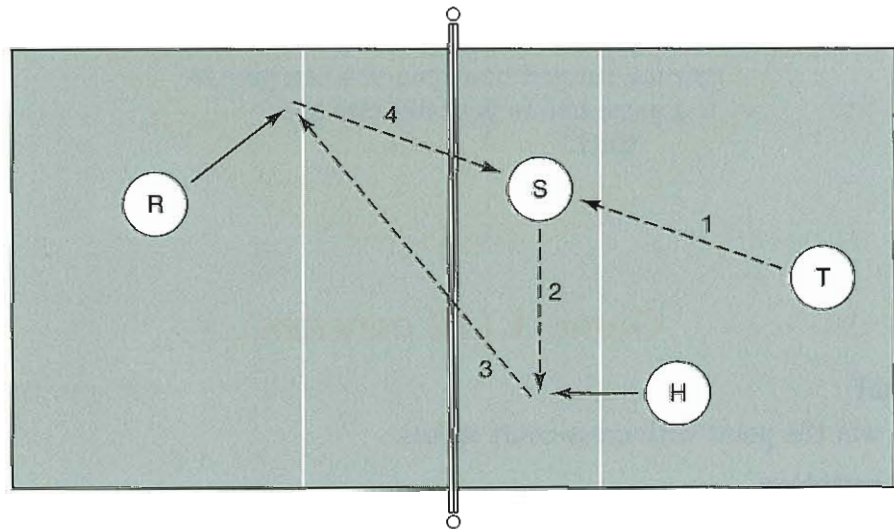
Players: Pivot, turn, and call "Here!"

Skill Practice (20 minutes)

Practice setting high-outside sets.

Description

In teams of four, a tosser slaps the side of the ball, prompting a setter to open up and call "Here!" The tosser then tosses a high ball (perfect pass) to the setter, who sets the ball high-outside to a hitter, who spikes the ball. Another player retrieves the balls. Allow players three to five trials, then rotate roles.



Week 4

COACH'S cues



Open up

- “Turn to the side!”
- “Call ‘Here!’”
- “See the passer play the ball!”
- “Happy feet!” (Adjust to set the ball.)

Set

- “Hands high at your forehead!”
- “Volleyball-shaped hands!”
- “Square to target!”
- “Finish like a superhero—extend arms and legs!”

Spike

- “Feet to ball!”
- “Face the net!”
- “Jump off both feet!”
- “Throw hands high!”
- “Swing fast!”

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To win the point with high-outside set-hit combinations.

Description

Same as Game 1, except award two points for high-outside set-hit combinations.



- Setters should make every effort to play the second ball; if they cannot, they call the “setter’s word”: *help*.
- Players should call their own illegal hits.



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Honesty

Gather the team into a group. "Give me some examples of being dishonest in practices and games." Listen to responses. After each response, have the players change the examples into acts of honesty. Take three examples. "Honesty is an important value that all players should be practicing every practice and game, especially if a coach isn't there to help you make the right decision, or if an official doesn't see the play."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next game.

Variations

To simplify

Games—move the server into the court if needed or use a second-chance rule on serves.

To challenge

Skill Practice—vary the toss so that the setter has to move one or two steps.

Week 5

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In teams of four, a tosser slaps the side of the ball, prompting a setter to open up and call "Here!" The tosser then tosses a high ball (perfect pass) to the setter, who sets the ball high-outside to a hitter, who attacks the ball. Another player retrieves the balls (see figure on page 160). Have players attack from both the left and right sides of the court. Allow players three to five trials, then rotate roles.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Flexibility

Gather the team into a circle. "Is there such a thing as stretching your muscles too far, or should you stretch as far as you can to improve your flexibility?" Listen to their responses. "Muscles should stretch only until you feel a slight pulling. You should never feel pain while stretching. If you do, you're stretching too far." Choose a stretch for the team to try. "I want you to stretch until you feel the slight pulling. Everyone will have different levels of flexibility, but all of you need to stretch properly to stay flexible and prevent injuries."

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To gain the advantage over the receiving team through the serve.


Description

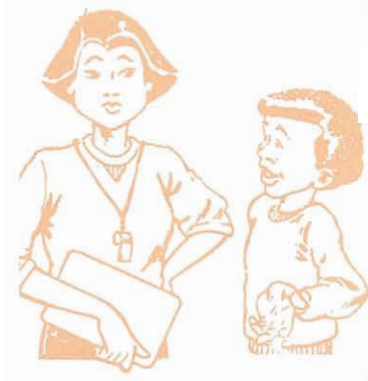
Play 4 v 4 (see figure on page 147). Players start in base position and initiate plays with an overhand serve. Award two points for points earned directly off the overhand serve.

PURPOSE

To win the point, focusing on overhand serving.

Equipment

 Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players



Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To get in a good overhand serve to begin a point.

Coach: Why should you learn an overhand serve?

Players: It's harder to receive than an underhand or a roundhouse serve.



☞ Encourage players to move forward following their serves and assume a defensive position.



☞ Players need to develop a serve routine (focus time) similar to a free-throw shooter in basketball.

☞ If players are going to err, it's best to err on the side of getting the ball over the net but headed out of bounds. This way the opponent has to make a decision whether to play it or not.

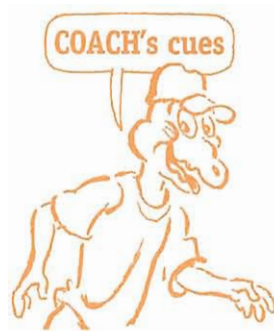
☞ On a serve, if the toss is bad, let it bounce—catching it means loss of serve.

Skill Practice (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *overhand serve* (see page 269).
2. Practice serving overhand.

Description

In partners, players start close to the net, attempting the overhand serve (see figure on page 111). When players are successful, they gradually move back toward the endline. Challenge players to get two serves in a row over the net and within court boundaries before moving backward.



“Tee up the ball!”

“Lift the ball!”

“Firm contact!”

“Finish toward the top of the net!”

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use the overhand serve to gain an advantage.

Description

Same as Game 1.

Week 5

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team into a group. Choose two players to demonstrate with you. Have one player run across the court as fast as he or she can. Have the second player run across the court lazily, without trying hard. "What was I working on during this drill?" Listen to responses. "It's your responsibility to work hard at all times, during games and practices. When you do that, you're being responsible to your team."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next game.



Variations

To simplify

Games—move the server into the court if needed or use a second-chance rule on serves.

Week 6

PURPOSE

To set up to attack, focusing on the three-player serve-receive.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players
- Two cones

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In partners, players start close to the net, attempting the overhand serve (see figure on page 111). When players are successful, they gradually move back toward the endline. Challenge players to get two serves in a row over the net and within court boundaries before taking another step back. Encourage players to move forward following their serves.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Safety

Gather the team into a group. “Is everyone remembering to wear their knee pads?” Gently tap your knee with your fist. “Is my knee hard or soft? Right—it’s hard because my knee bone is hard. Raise your hand if you think bones can break. Right—we all know that bones can break. Your knee pads give extra protection and keep you safe playing volleyball.”

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To cover the court on serve reception.

Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure on page 147). Use overhand serves. The receiving team earns a bonus point for avoiding a service “ace” (unreturnable serve) and passing successfully to their teammates.

Week 6

Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To cover the court on the serve reception.

Coach: How should you cover the court so you don't let any balls get past you?

Players: Spread three players out in the court and put the setter up by the net.

Coach: What do you do when a serve comes over the net?

Players: Forearm-pass to the setter.

Coach: What do you do when two players go for the same serve?

Players: Call "Ball!," help each other out, communicate.

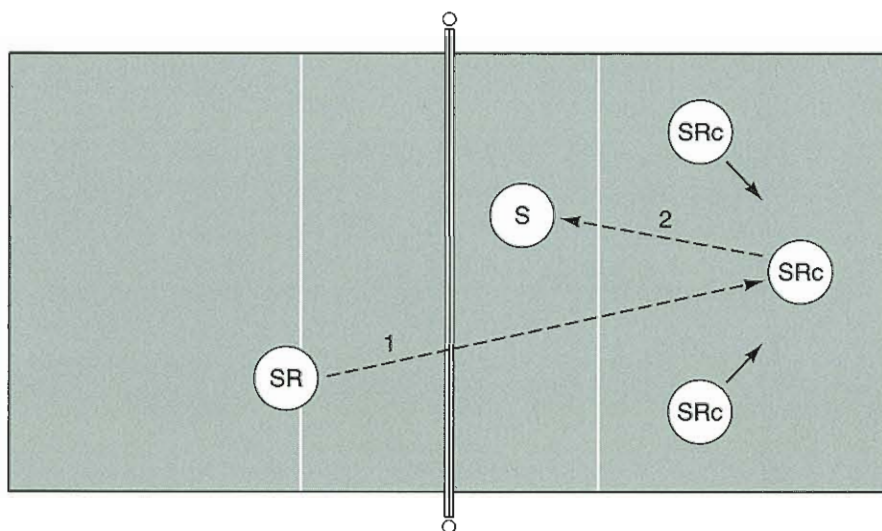


Skill Practice (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to use a *three-player serve-receive* (see page 250).
2. Practice three-player serve-receives.

Description

In groups of five, a server hits a modified overhand serve to one of the three serve-receivers. One of the serve-receivers receives the serve by forearm-passing to the setter, who opens up and calls "Here!" Allow four to six trials, then rotate roles. The serve-receivers that do not play the ball should make a two-step movement toward the ball and be ready to call the ball out if necessary. Have servers serve out of bounds occasionally so players can practice calling "Out!"



COACH'S cues



Forearm pass

- "Medium posture!"
- "Feet to ball!"
- "Flat platform!"
- "Belly button to the target!"
- "Call 'Mine!'"

Off-the-ball

- "Call ball 'good' or 'out.'"
- "Open up!"
- "Support!"

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use a three-player serve-receive in game play.

Description

Same as Game 1.



☞ Reinforce the three-contact concept (pass-set-hit).

☞ Modify serves during the Skill Practice (with servers standing a few steps into the court) because the focus is not on serving but on serve-receiving. Players usually become proficient at the serve before they do at receiving the serve.

☞ Remind players the whole gym is in play until the ball lands out of bounds.

☞ Have teammates call the ball "Good!" or "Out!" for players going for the ball.

Week 6

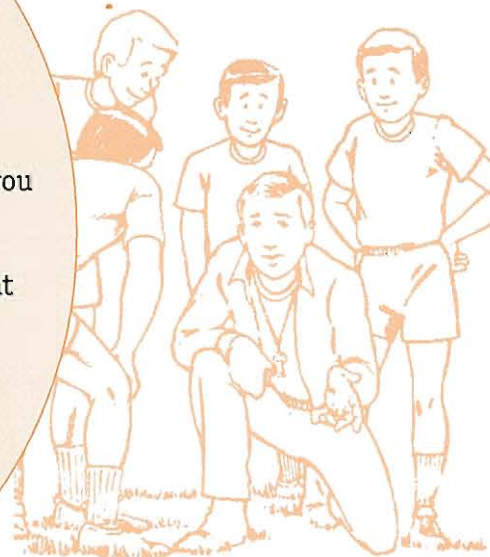
Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team into a group near two cones 10 feet apart. Discuss examples of good play during a game. Have players assist in providing examples. "We talked about some examples of good plays. Raise your hand if you think it's a good idea to tell other players they made a good play. It is a good idea. Do you think it's a good idea to tell opponents they have made a good play? If you think it is, stand at this cone. If you think you should tell just your teammates they made a good play, stand at this cone." All players should vote. Ask why players voted the way they did. "Telling other players, both teammates and opponents, that they have made a good play shows you care. It is an important value to show others."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next game.



Variations

To simplify

- Games—move the server into the court if needed or use a second-chance rule on serves.
- Skill Practice—start with a free-ball toss or an underhand serve, then move to an overhand serve.

To challenge


Skill Practice—let the setter set the ball and the hitter catch it and then repeat the serve-receive.

Week 7

PURPOSE

To win the point, focusing on overhand serving.

Equipment

-  Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In teams of four, a tosser slaps the side of the ball, prompting a setter to open up and call “Here!” The tosser then tosses a high ball (perfect pass) to the setter, who sets the ball high-outside to a hitter, who attacks the ball. Another player retrieves the balls (see figure on page 160). Have players attack from both the left and right sides of the court. Allow players three to five trials, then rotate roles.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Training and conditioning

Gather the team into a single-file line. Players will run two distances, one longer than the other. Have the team run the shorter distance first and come back to the starting spot. Then have the team run the longer distance. “Do your muscles feel tired? Running farther, especially if you’re a little bit tired is called *overloading* the muscles. Running a longer distance adds more for the muscles to do. It’s training the muscles to make them stronger and able to move longer before getting tired the next time you play. You’ll get stronger and have more endurance every time you overload the muscles.”

Game 1 (10 minutes)

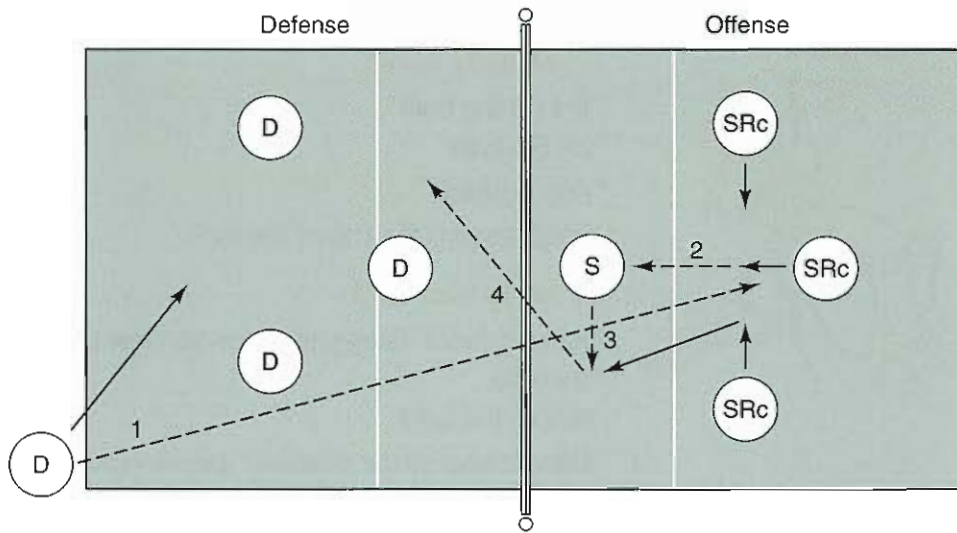
Goal

To set up the point by serving overhand.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Players start in base position and use a three-player serve-receive formation. Initiate play with an overhand serve. Give two points for an “ace” serve to open court.

Week 7



Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To get in a good overhand serve to begin a point.

Coach: Where on the court should you aim your overhand serve?

Players: Open court—cross-court or down-the-line.

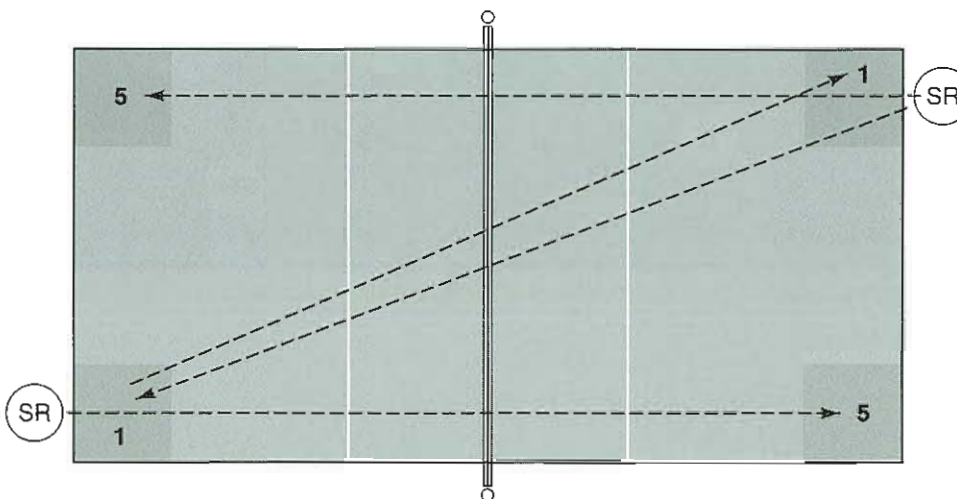


Skill Practice (20 minutes)

Practice overhand serving to targets.

Description

In partners, players practice overhand serve placement from the traditional serving area. Players serve cross-court and down-the-line. Challenge players to get two serves in a row cross-court or down-the-line. Players should attempt to serve to areas 1 and 5 and move into the court following their serves.



COACH'S cues



Overhand serve

- "Tee up the ball!"
- "Lift the ball!"
- "Firm contact!"
- "Finish toward the top of the net!"

Serve placement

- "Feet position!" (staggered, nondominant foot forward)
- "Follow through!"
- "Stand closer to the sideline!" (serving cross-court)
- "Stand away from the sideline!" (serving down-the-line)

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

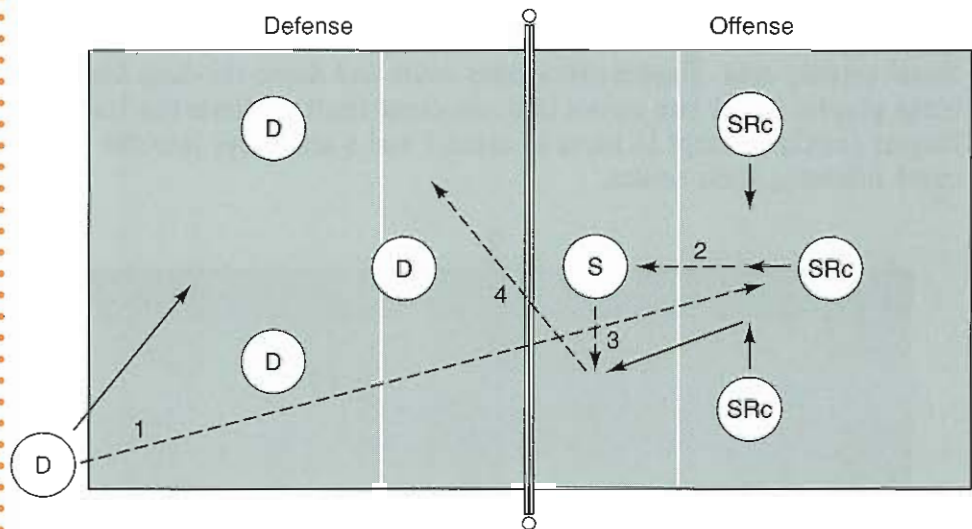
To focus on serving overhand and serve placement.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Players start in base position and use a three-player serve-receive. Initiate play with an overhand serve, calling out a target. Give a bonus point for serves that go to the named target.



☞ "Freeze" play and review players positions and actions when this is helpful in teaching certain points.



Week 7

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team into a group. "What are some examples of dangerous play for yourself or teammates during a practice or game?" Listen to their responses and identify whether they are dangerous. Discuss their responses. Ask players to agree or disagree with responses—are they a good practice or not? They can raise their hand to agree. Discuss three examples. "It's important to have respect for your body and your teammates' bodies. Practicing safe play is a way to do that."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next game.



Variations

To simplify

- Games—use a second-chance rule on serves.
- Skill Practice—start with a free-ball toss or an underhand serve, then move to an overhand serve.

To challenge

Skill Practice—place chairs or some visual target (pizza boxes, you as the coach, or the like) as targets for players to aim for—it makes a great incentive!

Week 8

PURPOSE

To defend space on your own court, focusing on free-ball defense.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In partners, players practice overhead serving from the endline. Players work at serving cross-court and down-the-line. Challenge players to get two serves in a row cross-court or down-the-line (see figure at bottom of page 171). Players should attempt to serve to areas 1 and 5 and move into the court following their serves.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Flexibility

Gather the team into a circle and choose a stretch for them to try. “When we’re stretching, should we feel anything?” Listen to their responses. “When I feel the slight pulling, what should I do? Bounce or hold the stretch? Raise your hand if you think bounce. Now raise your hand if you think hold. To get a good stretch, you should hold the stretch for 10 counts, then relax. If you feel the slight pulling go away, you can stretch a bit further. That tells you your muscles are getting more flexible. Be sure to practice proper stretching to improve your flexibility.”

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To take advantage of free-ball situations.

Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure on page 147). Players start in base position and initiate plays with a high underhand free-ball toss. Give a bonus point for the receiving team who attacks off the free ball.

Week 8

Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To play good free-ball defense and transition to attack.

Coach: What do you do when a free ball comes over the net?

Players: Move to play the ball in my area, go to base position.

Coach: What do setters do when the ball is on their side of the court?

Players: Open up.

Coach: What do setters do if they can't get to the ball?

Players: Call "Help!"

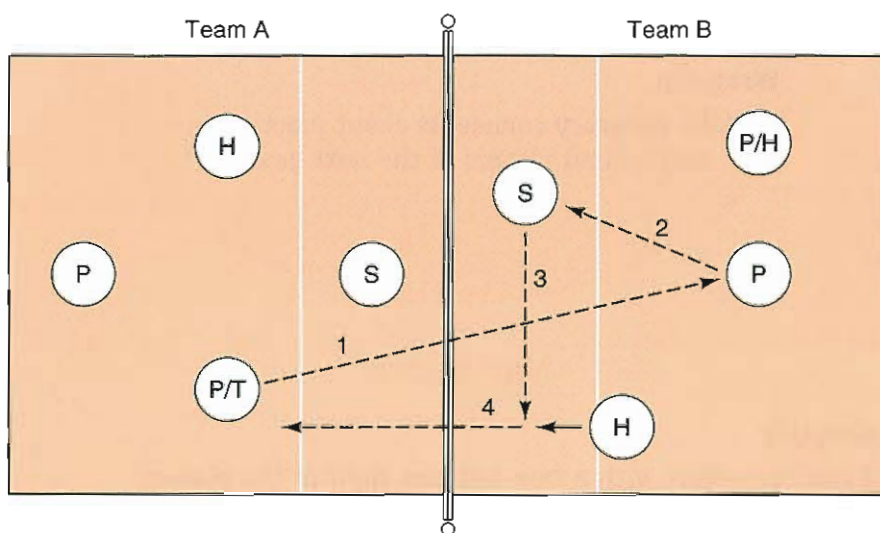


Skill Practice (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to use a *free-ball alignment* to defend against a free ball (see page 255).
2. Practice free-ball alignment.

Description

Play a 4 v 4 game. Team A's passer/tosser slaps the ball, prompting teams to be ready, and tosses a high ball to team B. Team B's setter, hitter, and passers call "Free!" and make appropriate off-the-ball movements. The setter opens up and calls "Here!" The hitter prepares to receive a set. The two passers balance the court. Team B attempts a pass-set-hit and plays the rally out. Teams alternate free-ball tosses.



COACH'S cues



- "Call 'Free!'"
- "Transition!"
- "Go to base position!"
- "Open up!"

COACH'S point

☞ Communication is critical to good free-ball defense. "Base," "free ball," "open up," and "transition" are part of the universal language of the game.

☞ Instruct players to call the score out loud—their score and the opponent's score.



Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To play good free-ball defense.

Description

Same as Game 1.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team into a group. "What are some examples of showing you care about your teammates?" Listen to their responses. After each response, ask for an example of the same sign of caring that players could do outside of practice. Discuss the on-court and off-court examples at the same time, then ask for another response. "Those were all great ideas to show caring to your teammates. Have you seen someone else show an 'act of kindness' toward another teammate?" Discuss their responses. "It's important to show caring both on and off the court."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next game.

Variations

To simplify

Skill Practice—start with a free-ball toss right to the players.

To challenge

Skill Practice—toss the free ball to open spaces to force players to move.

Week 9

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In partners, players practice overhead serving from the endline. Players work at serving cross-court and down-the-line (see figure at bottom of page 171). Challenge players to get two serves in a row cross-court or down-the-line. Players should attempt to serve to areas 1 and 5 and move into the court following their serves.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Training and conditioning

Gather the team into a group. “Do you think you should jog to get ready for volleyball season? Raise your hand if you think jogging is a good way to prepare for volleyball. Jogging is a good way to keep active in the off-season or other times when you don’t have volleyball practice. To improve your volleyball conditioning either before or during volleyball season, it’s best to participate in skills you use in volleyball. That is called *specificity training* because it is specific to the sport. What are some of the training skills we should be using for volleyball?” Listen to their responses and discuss.

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To save the ball from hitting the floor.

Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure on page 181). Players start in base position and begin play with a standing spike to a back-row player. Award a bonus point when back-row players successfully pass the ball to a teammate.

Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To save the ball from hitting the floor.

Coach: What do we call it when you prevent a ball that was hit to the floor from coming in contact with the floor?

Players: A dig.

Coach: What is the role of back-row players?

Players: Dig the ball, keep the ball in play, save the ball.

PURPOSE

To defend space against an attack, focusing on digging and forearm passing.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players

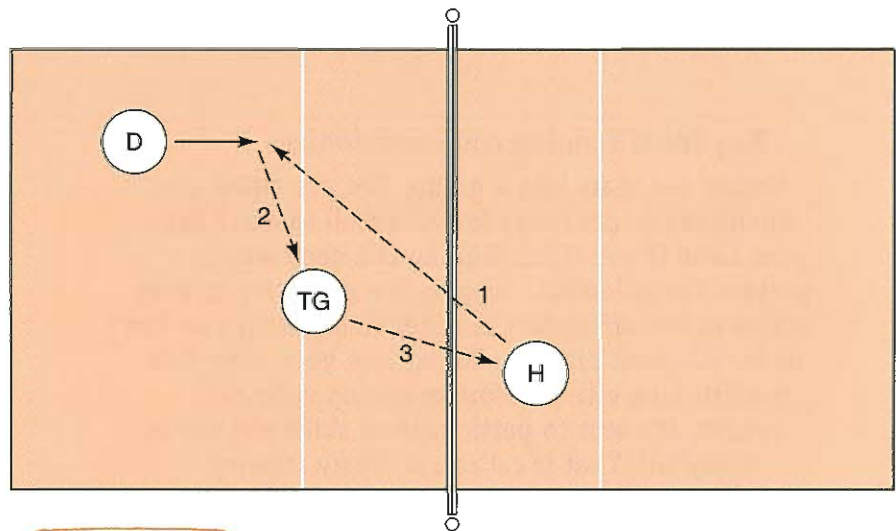


Skill Practice (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *dig* (see page 273).
2. Practice digging.

Description

In teams of three, a hitter hits a standing, off-speed spike cross-court across the net to a digger who digs the ball to a target player. Allow players three or four trials, then rotate roles. Repeat digging down-the-line.



☞ The goal for the defense is to keep the ball from touching the floor.

☞ Good defenders are intense and determined.

☞ Diggers should stay on their feet as long as they can and use both hands and arms if possible.

☞ Diggers should keep the ball between themselves and the center of the court.

COACH'S cues



"Low posture!"

"Dig to the center of the court!"

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use effective digs in defending against attacks.

Description

Same as Game 1.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team into a circle. "I want everyone to think of one thing that you, personally, can improve in your volleyball play that can make you a better player. I will go around the circle, when it is your turn tell everyone what you think you can work on." Go to each player one at a time; assist them, if necessary. Allow players the option to pass their turn. "It's important to look at your own game to see where you can improve. Improving your own game is your responsibility. We can't get better as a team unless each individual tries to improve."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next game.



Variations

To simplify

Skill Practice—have players toss the ball to diggers, rather than spiking it.

Week 10

PURPOSE

To defend space, focusing on digging and passing to the setter.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players
- Two cones

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In partners, players practice overhead serving from the endline. Players work at serving cross-court and down-the-line (see figure at bottom of page 171). Challenge players to get two serves in a row cross-court or down-the-line. Players should attempt to serve to areas 1 and 5 and move into the court following their serves.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather the team into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. Show a pyramid shape with your hands and fingers put together. "This is a pyramid. Does anyone know what the food pyramid is?" "We use the food pyramid to remind us how to eat well. The bottom of the pyramid has foods like carbohydrates (breads, cereals, rice) and fruits and vegetables; these should be eaten in greater amounts. The top of the pyramid has high-fat and sweeter foods, such as fried foods, cake, and chips; these we should eat in smaller amounts. "Tell me a snack and run to this cone if it is a bottom-of-the-pyramid snack or to the other cone if it is a top-of-the-pyramid snack. It's important to eat foods that give you energy for playing volleyball. Bottom-of-the-pyramid foods give you more energy to play volleyball and are much healthier."

Game 1 (10 minutes)

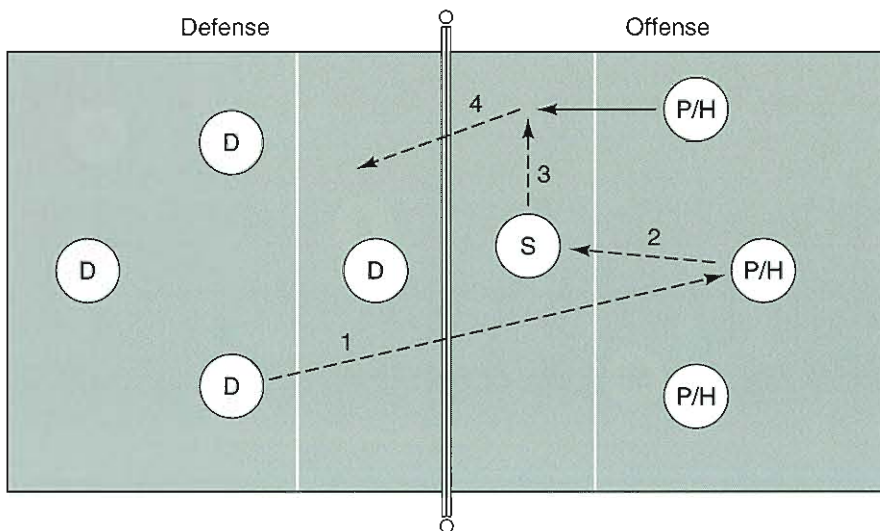
Goal

To dig the ball and transition to attack.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Use base formation. Use a standing spike to back-row players to start play. Award a bonus point when back-row players pass the ball to the setter.

Week 10



Coach: What is the goal of the game?

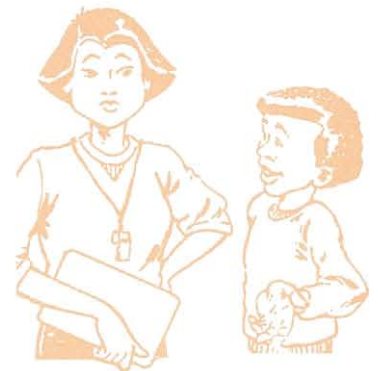
Players: Back-row player digs the ball and passes to the setter.

Coach: What should the back-row player try to do with the ball?

Players: Dig it up high in the air and toward the setter.

Coach: What should the setter do to help the digger?

Players: Call "Here!" and be ready to move to the ball.

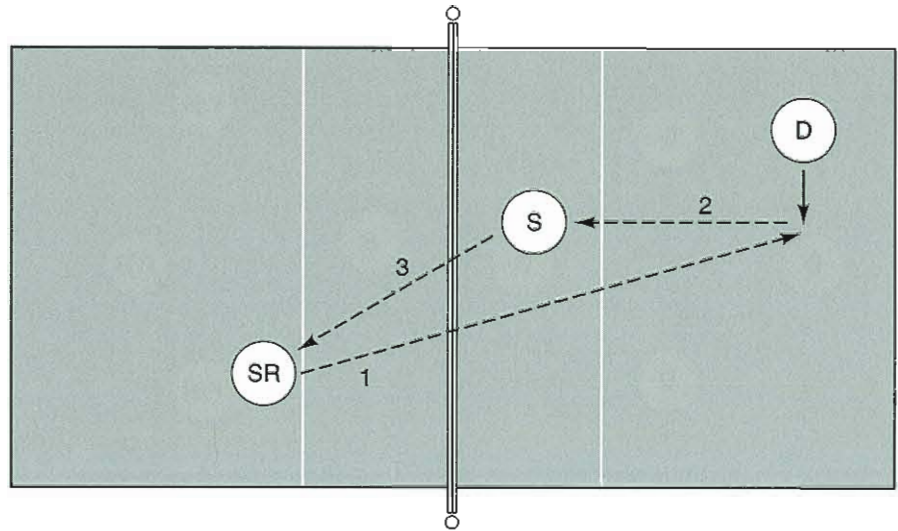


Skill Practice (20 minutes)

Practice digging to the setter.

Description

In teams of three, one player starts play with a modified overhand serve at the back-row player from midway into the court. The back-row player digs the ball high and toward the setter who is up at the net. The setter calls "Here!" and moves under the ball to catch it over his or her head in the proper setting position. Allow five trials at each position, then rotate roles.



COACH'S cues



Dig

"Low posture!"
"Dig to the setter!"

Set

"Call 'Here!'"
"Turn toward the hitter!"
"Move under the ball!"

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To dig the ball and get it to the setter.

Description

Same as Game 1.

COACH'S point

👉 Setters must be "heads-up" when back-row players have to dig the ball. They must be ready to move quickly.

👉 Diggers must focus on passing to the setter with their dig if at all possible.

Week 10

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Honesty

Gather the team into a circle. "I want you to think back to our last practice. Remember talking about improving our games? Each player said one thing they could improve on in their game. Tell me how many of you feel you have tried to improve your game from the last practice?" Call on players to tell what they did to try to improve. "All good players look honestly at themselves and how they are playing to see where they can improve their game. It's important to be honest with yourself about how you are playing, you don't need to feel bad about needing to improve your skills. The more you improve individually, the more you contribute to the team."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next game.



Variations

To simplify

Skill Practice—start with a free-ball toss or an underhand serve, then move to a modified overhand serve.

Week 11

PURPOSE

To set up to attack, focusing on pass-set-hit combinations.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players
- Two cones

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In teams of three, a hitter hits a standing, off-speed spike cross-court across the net to a digger who digs the ball to a target player (see figure on page 178). Allow players three or four trials, then rotate roles. Repeat, hitting down-the-line.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather the team into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. Tell team that one cone represents good health habits and the other poor health habits. "Give me examples of some daily habits. If you think it's a healthy habit, stand at this cone. If you think it's a poor health habit, stand at this cone." Ask all players to participate. "It's important to have all our habits be healthy habits every day. This helps your body stay healthy and helps you perform better in volleyball."

Game 1 (10 minutes)

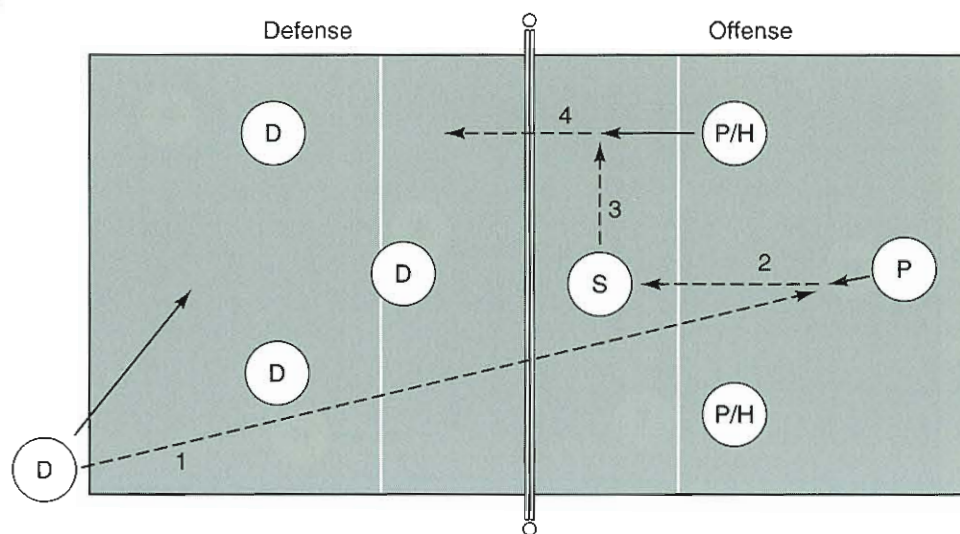
Goal

To set up to attack using good passes.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Players start in base position and begin plays with overhand serves. Award a bonus point for all pass-set-hit combinations.

Week 11



Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To make good passes; to set up to attack.

Coach: What are the steps to setting up to attack?

Players: Pass and set.

Coach: What is considered a good pass?

Players: A pass that goes to the setter in the middle of the court by the net.

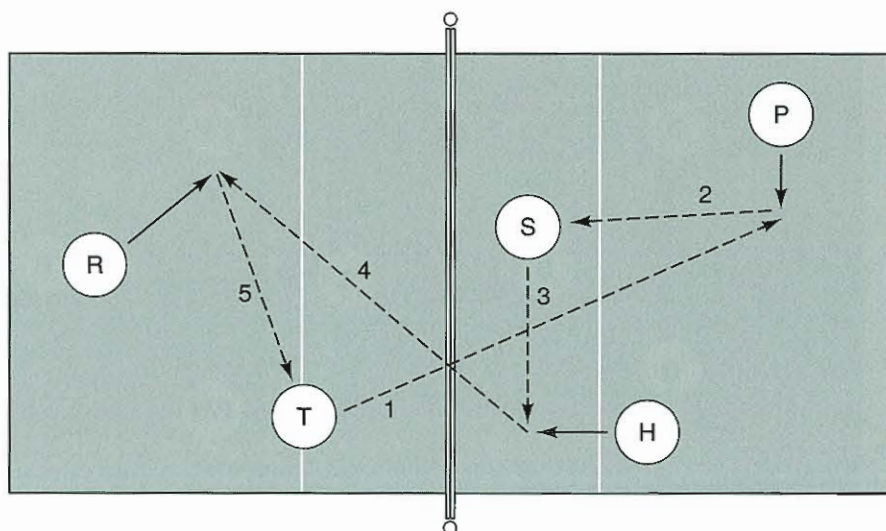


Skill Practice (20 minutes)

Practice pass-set-hit combinations.

Description

In teams of four, a tosser slaps the side of the ball and tosses a free ball over the net to a passer. The passer passes to the setter, who opens up and calls "Here!" then sets a high-outside set to a hitter. The hitter hits a standing spike, spike, or tip. Another player retrieves the balls and returns them to the tosser. Have passers pass from the right-back, middle-back, and left-back areas of the court, and have hitters attack from the right-front and the left-front areas. Allow players two trials at each position, then switch roles.



COACH'S CUES



Forearm pass

- "Medium posture!"
- "Feet to ball!"
- "Flat platform!"
- "Belly button to target!"

Open up

- "Turn to the passer!"
- "Call 'Here!'"
- "See the passer play the ball!"
- "Happy feet!" (Adjust to set the ball.)

Set

- "Hands high at your forehead!"
- "Volleyball-shaped hands!"
- "Square to target!"
- "Finish like a superhero—extend arms and legs!"

Spike

- "Feet to ball!"
- "Face the net!"
- "Jump off both feet!"
- "Throw hands high!"
- "Swing fast!"

Week 11

Game 2 (10 minutes)


Goal

To focus on three hits on a side (pass-set-hit).

Description

Play 4 v 4 (see figure on page 147). Players start in base position and begin plays with overhand serves. Teams receive a bonus point for all successful pass-set-hit combinations.



 Let players make mistakes—this is the way the game is played and learned at all levels.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team into a circle. Create two imaginary situations for the players. One is a match in which they win consecutive games without losing many points. In the second situation the team loses in a very close match. "In the match we won, did all of you contribute? Yes, we all contributed and won as a team." Set up the next scenario. "We barely lost this match. Several players made mistakes during key points, and we ended up losing the match. Who's responsible for the loss? . . . That's right—we all are. We are all responsible for both wins and losses. We win and lose as a team and try our best in any position."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the next game.



Variations

To simplify

Skill Practice—only attack from the left side of the court.

To challenge

Game—score points only when a team attempts a pass-set-hit combination (three hits on a side).

Week 12

PURPOSE

To defend as a team, focusing on digging.

Equipment

- Oversized (#6) or light (#5) balls—one ball for every two players

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

In partners, players practice overhead serving from the endline. Players work at serving cross-court and down-the-line (see figure at bottom of page 171). Challenge players to get two serves in a row cross-court or down-the-line. Players should attempt to serve to areas 1 and 5 and move into the court following their serves.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Training and conditioning

Gather the team into a group. “Everyone jog across the court and back. Do you remember your first days of practice and how you felt after running that distance?” Discuss their responses. “Think about running a further distance during the beginning of the season. Compare how you feel now that it’s the end of the season. Your bodies are conditioned from playing all season. Remember to stay active during the off-season. Play other sports or participate in other physical activities. If you don’t participate in physical activity after the season, all the training you did for your body will be lost.

Your body will reverse its conditioning.

This is called the *reversibility principle*—you use it or lose it!”

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use effective digs to transition to attack.

Description

Play 4 v 4. Use a three-player serve-receive (see figure on page 172). Use overhand serves. Award a bonus point to teams when they successfully dig-set-spike.

Week 12

Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To make good digs to transition to attack.

Coach: What is the role of back-row players?

Players: Dig the ball, keep the ball in play, get it to the setter if possible, then get ready to become a hitter.

Coach: How should you dig?

Players: Get low, stay on feet as long as possible, dig to center of court where the setter is.

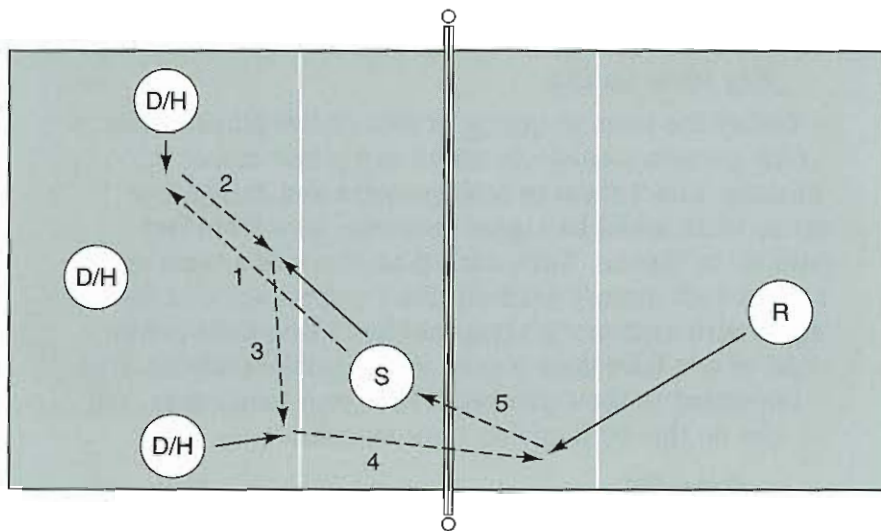


Skill Practice (20 minutes)

Practice digging.

Description

In teams of five, a setter begins by hitting a standing, off-speed spike to one of three diggers/hitters; the digger digs the ball to the center of the court, and the setter sets the ball for one of the other diggers/hitters to attack. Another player retrieves the balls. Allow players three or four trials, then rotate roles.



COACH'S point

Great defense begins with a "nothin' gets by me" attitude.

COACH'S cues



Digging

"Low posture!"

"Dig to the center of the court!"

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use effective digs to transition to attack.

Description

Same as Game 1.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team in groups of four or five players. Give each group a scenario in which one player makes a mistake. Direct them to problem solve and decide as a group what would be a good response. Give them two minutes to discuss. Bring each group back as a team and discuss each group's decision. Have players agree or disagree with each group's response by raising their hands. "All of you have done a good job in problem solving. It is important to show you care about your teammates. You can do this by forgiving their mistakes."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice, and remind players of the final game.



Variations

To simplify

Skill Practice—have players toss the ball to diggers rather than spiking it.