



## DYA Volleyball

### Skill Development

Coaching volleyball can be kept simple if you keep skill to 5 memorable terms, or less. Keeping it that simple makes things easy to remember, and will help your athletes grow in confidence on, and off, the court.

### Serving:

#### Technique:

#### Underhand:

This technique has worked very well in teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Usually 5<sup>th</sup> graders, and older are strong enough to serve overhand when taught the proper technique.

1. **Batter** – have the server face an imaginary home plate (like in baseball), and then turns toward the net. You can even use a real home plate when first teaching the technique. This automatically puts the server’s feet in the correct position. Turning will automatically face the feet in the correct direction.
2. **Ball** to hand. The left hand holds the ball if the server is right handed.
3. Swing straight **Back** with the right hand.
4. **Step** to the net. Remember to keep the feet behind the designated serving line.
5. Swing straight **Forward** with the right hand.

#### Overhand:

There are 2 good methods of teaching overhand serving. Remember that “BIG HAND IS BETTER” regardless of the method. The ball is easier to control with a wide-open hand.

#### Bow & Arrow

1. **Batter** – have the server face an imaginary home plate (like in baseball), and then turns toward the net. You can even use a real home plate when first teaching the technique. This automatically puts the server’s feet in the correct position. Turning will automatically face the feet in the correct direction.
2. **Over The Top** – while holding the ball with the non-serving hand, straight in front of the body, place the serving hand on top of the ball.

3. **Pull The Bow** – pull the serving arm (and hand) straight back as if pulling a bow string. The serving hand should be able to tickle the ear.
4. **Step, Toss, Hit** – step forward with the FRONT foot, toss the ball to where the serving hand will be at full extension, and then swing the serving arm, and hand, to make contact with the ball.

## 2-Hand Toss

1. **BATTER** – have the server face an imaginary home plate (like in baseball), and then turns toward the net. You can even use a real home plate when first teaching the technique. This automatically puts the server's feet in the correct position. Turning will automatically face the feet in the correct direction.
2. **HOLD 2 HANDS** – hold the ball in front with 2 hands.
3. **TOSS & READY** – toss the ball slightly higher than where the serving hand will be at full extension. The arms continue to go up after the toss. The non-serving arm is used as a guide. The serving arm is drawn back to get ready to swing.
4. **STEP & HIT** – step forward with the FRONT foot, then swing the serving arm, and hand, to make contact with the ball.

There are many types of serves that can be executed from either one of the approaches listed above. Here I will list only the float serve, which is the easiest to master.

## Float Serve

5. **STOP AT THE TOP** – the trick to the float is to make contact with the ball with the serving arm at full extension, the hand wide open, and the swing abbreviated. Instead of following through the whole swing, stop the swing when the hand makes contact with the ball. A good contact will make the serve look like a knuckleball (no spin, moving side-to-side).

### Drills:

1. Progressive Serve (basic) – starting at the attack line (10' from net), attempt to serve over the net. Move back 5' when server can consistently serve the ball over the net. Maximum distance is in back of the back line, which is greater than 30 feet away from the net. This is a great way to teach proper technique while growing confidence.
2. How Many In A Row (basic)
  - a. Divide the team into 2 groups.
  - b. Each server serves 1 serve.
  - c. See how many each group can serve in a row (set a consecutive serves to achieve).

- d. You can make it harder on the winning team each time you play by increasing the number of consecutive serves needed to win.
3. Dead Fish (basic, but FUN!)
  - a. Divide the team into 2 groups, and place the 2 groups on opposite sides of the court.
  - b. Evenly distribute the balls between the teams.
  - c. A player continues to serve as long as his/her serves land in the opponent's court. A player crosses over to the opponent's court, and sits, if he/she misses a serve.
  - d. The servers attempt to make contact with the sitting teammates while serving.
  - e. The sitting teammate returns to serving when contact is made.
  - f. The team with the last players serving wins the competition.
4. Hit The Coach (basic, always a player, and fan, favorite)
  - a. Servers serve 1 at a time.
  - b. Coach takes a position somewhere on the opposite side of the court.
  - c. Servers aim at the coach.
  - d. Coach does 5 push-ups (or something) every time a server hits the coach with a serve.
  - e. This is a huge confidence builder, and fun! I always manage to get hit by every player sometime during the season.
5. Serve And Chase (basic)
  - a. Divide the team into 2 groups.
  - b. Each team starts serving (1 player at a time) once the whistle blows.
  - c. Each serve that lands in the opposite court is equal to 1 point.
  - d. The server must chase the ball, and return it to the next server.
  - e. First team to X points wins. X is the number of serves you choose to play to.
6. Serve On! (intermediate)
  - a. This incorporates serves into a game-like situation.
  - b. Server serves the ball.
  - c. Server steps into position.
  - d. Coach tosses ball back to server from opposite side of the net.
  - e. Server passes the ball to a target at the net.
7. Butterfly Serve Receive (intermediate)

This is an intermediate drill that can be used for basic level. It works on 3 fundamentals at the same time; 1) serving, 2) passing, and 3) moving the feet.

  - a. Line up 3 back row passers, and a target on one side of the net, and a server on the opposite side.
  - b. The remainder of the players line up behind the players on the court. 1 group will be waiting for passing positions to open up. The other will be waiting for the opportunity to serve. They will take the place of the player on the court when he/she leaves.
  - c. The server serves the ball across the net. He/she will have 3 chances to get 1 serve over the net.
  - d. A passer, from the 3, calls "MINE", and passes the ball to the target, which is at the net.
    - e. The passer takes the place of the target. The target gathers the ball, and goes to the server line. The server joins the line of players waiting to pass.

## Passing:

### Technique:

#### Forearm Pass:

This is the preferred method of passing when a player is receiving the ball below his/her shoulders.

1. **READY** position
  - a. Feet are slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. The right foot is slightly ahead of the left.
  - b. Knees are bent.
  - c. Hands in front of knees.
  - d. Weight on balls of the feet.
2. **MOVE** to the ball
  - a. Get behind the ball by beating it to a spot. Sometimes this is not possible, so get the arms behind the ball in those situations.
  - b. Shuffle when ball is close.
  - c. Run when not.
  - d. Always step in a direction with that foot first. For example, start with the right foot when moving right.
  - e. Aim toward the target.
3. Set the **PLATFORM**
  - a. Put hands together with the thumbs touching. 2 most common methods of putting the hands together are 1) putting 1 fist inside the other and, or putting 1 hand on top of the other. Do not interlace fingers ever.
  - b. Turn the wrists down while keeping the hands and thumbs together. This will bring the arms together, and form a nice, flat, landing area, for the ball, between the wrists and the elbows. The elbows will lock when this is done properly.
  - c. **A common mistake that can occur is when a player starts “Praying”. This occurs when the player puts his/her hands together, bends the elbows such that they go up, toward the face, and then come down into position. Teach to move the hands straight from the side of the body to the front of the body.**
  - d. **Another common mistake is called “Broken Arms”. This occurs when the hands are not bent down, and the elbows buckle while making a pass. This causes a pass to go someplace other than the target. Constant reinforcement of “Hands Down” is best to get the desired result.**
4. **SHRUG** shoulders when making contact
  - a. This will raise the platform to meet the ball.
  - b. Discourage arm swinging; especially with younger players. The platform needs to stay stationary.

- c. Use legs to lift more when players are weaker, or when the ball is driven softly.
- d. Direct body motion toward target when using more legs. Use the body to groove the ball to the target.
- e. Remember: the harder the ball is driven, the less motion that is needed to get the ball to the target.

#### Overhead Pass:

This is the preferred method of passing when a player is receiving the ball above his/her shoulders. This type of pass, when done properly, is more accurate than a forearm pass, and has become the preferred method of passing.

1. **READY** position
  - a. Feet are slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. The right foot is slightly ahead of the left.
  - b. Knees are bent.
  - c. Hands in front of knees.
  - d. Weight on balls of the feet.
2. **MOVE** to the ball
  - a. Get behind the ball by beating it to a spot. Sometimes this is not possible, so get the arms behind the ball in those situations.
  - b. Shuffle when ball is close.
  - c. Run when not.
  - d. Always step in a direction with that foot first. For example, start with the right foot when moving right.
  - e. Aim toward the target.
3. **FRAME** the ball
  - a. Put hands in front of face as if holding a 2-liter bottle of soda, but not high enough to guzzle it.
  - b. Look at the ball in the gap that is bordered by the 2 index fingers and the 2 thumbs (sort of like a picture frame).
4. **EXTEND** the arms toward the target when making contact
  - a. Wait for the ball to contact the hands.
  - b. Force the ball forward.

#### Drills:

Use of visual aids (cones, floor markers, etc) are often very helpful to teach where players are supposed to stand during drills that involve movement, and learning the different positions on the court. Many of these drills teach movement as well as passing skills.

1. Coach Toss (basic)
  - a. Player gets into passing, ready position.
  - b. Coach tosses the ball to the player.

- c. Player calls **MINE!!!**
  - d. Player passes back to the Coach.
  - e. Enforce proper passing technique.
  - f. This is a great drill to involve parents.
  - g. This drill can also be used to work on setting and serve receive (tosses keep moving farther away).
2. Pepper (basic)
    - a. This is similar to Coach Toss, except passing is continuous between the coach and the player.
    - b. This drill can also be done between players when their skills become better refined.
3. Pass-N-Go Long (basic)
    - a. 3 players/coaches/parents serve as targets, and are spread out along the net (left, middle & right). Each target has a ball.
    - b. Passers start at the back row, servers side (region 1).
    - c. The target, in front of the passer, tosses the ball to the passer.
    - d. The passer calls MINE, and passes the ball back to the target.
    - e. The passer moves to the next position (region 6) in the back row, middle, and performs the same skill.
    - f. The passer then moves to the next position (region 5) in the back row, left, and performs the same skill.
    - g. The next passer starts as soon as the previous passer leaves region 1.
    - h. Add the other side of the net for 3 more passing positions when the players' can control passes better.
  4. Pass-N-Go Short (basic)
    - a. This is the same drill as Pass-N-Go Long except the passers pass the ball from the attack line.
  5. Pass-N-Go Mixed (basic)
    - a. This drill mixes Pass-N-Go Long and Pass-N-Go Short by alternating between long and short passes
  6. Side-to-side (basic)
    - a. Set up 2 cones approximately 10 feet apart.
    - b. Passer starts in the middle of the cones.
    - c. Coach slaps the ball, and tosses it to one cone.
    - d. Passer moves to the cone, and gets behind the ball.
    - e. Passer calls MINE, and passes back to the coach.
    - f. Passer returns to the middle.
    - g. Steps b-f are repeated to the opposite cone.
    - h. Repeat 10 times.
    - i. Start by allowing the passer to move to the cone before tossing the ball, and then progressively make the task more difficult. Also be predictable at the beginning and become more elusive as to where the ball is going. This will force the passer to get back to the middle after every pass.
  7. Up-Back (intermediate)
    - a. Have 1 passer and 1 tosser paired together.
    - b. Tosses is at the net with the ball.
    - c. Passer starts in the back row.

- d. Passer makes a pass to the tosser from the back row, then runs up to the attack line.
  - e. Passer makes a pass to the tosser from the attack line, then runs back to the back row (passer's head always looking at the tosser).
  - f. Repeat 10 times each direction, then switch passer and tosser.
8. Up-Back Pepper (intermediate)
- a. Similar to Up-Back except tosser now becomes a setter, and the ball movement is continuous.
9. Shuttle Drill (intermediate)
- a. Divide players into 2 teams, with each team on the opposite side of the net. 1 passer, from each team, steps onto the court. The remainder of each team forms single lines behind the first passer (off of the court).
  - b. The coach tosses the ball to 1 passer to start the drill.
  - c. Passer passes across the net, and runs to the back of his/her team line. The next passer on the team steps onto the court.
  - d. The passer on the other side of the net moves to the ball, passes the ball back over the net, and goes to the end of his/her line.
  - e. Play continues until the ball hits the floor.
  - f. Set goals for consecutive number of passes. Start with 5, and increase by 5 as the team improves.
  - g. Improve conditioning by having the players run to the opposite line after they have made a pass.
10. Make drills more like real play as players become more advanced. Incorporate serve receive, setting and hitting as part of the passing drills.

## **Setting:**

### Technique:

1. **READY** position
  - a. Feet are slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. The right foot is slightly ahead of the left.
  - b. Knees are bent.
  - c. Weight is slightly forward.
2. **FRAME** the ball
  - a. Put hands in front of face as if holding a 2-liter bottle of soda, high enough to guzzle it.
  - b. Look at the ball in the gap that is bordered by the 2 index fingers and the 2 thumbs (sort of like a picture frame).
3. **EXTEND** the arms toward the target when making contact
  - a. Wait for the ball to contact the hands.
  - b. Force the ball upward and outward.
  - c. Finish with arms fully extended, and thumbs down.
  - d. An effective method with younger players is to teach the "TADA!" method. Have each player finish each a set with a loud "TADA!", while

extending the arms, as if he/she were finishing a magic trick. The players are having fun saying “TADA!” while learning to set properly.

### Drills:

1. Pop Bottle (basic)
  - a. Players start by framing a 2-liter pop bottle (empty), with their hands, in front of their bodies.
  - b. Players flip the bottle up as if to guzzle the pop. This will put their hands in the correct position (above head, framing the bottle).
  - c. Repeat 10-20 times each practice.
2. Set against the wall (basic)
  - a. Players practice framing the ball while setting the ball against the wall.
  - b. Starting height for beginners is just above the head.
  - c. Increase the height as the players become better setters.
3. Set Pepper (intermediate)
  - a. Similar to passing pepper except all passes are actually sets.
4. Set to the Basket (intermediate)
  - a. Setter stands 5 feet from a 10' basket.
  - b. Coach tosses a settable ball from the left side of the setter, to the setter.
  - c. Setter sets ball to the basket.
  - d. Count how many times the setter can make a basket.
  - e. This drill helps setters to learn how to set high balls.
5. Hitting Line (intermediate)
  - a. Coach, or hitter, tosses the ball to a setter, who is standing near the net.
  - b. Setter sets ball to hitter.
  - c. Hitter hits the ball over the net.
6. Make drills more like real play as players become more advanced. Incorporate serve receive, setting and hitting as part of the passing drills.

### **Attacking:**

#### Technique:

#### Downball:

This is a method of attack that takes place while both feet are on the ground. It is an easier, and more reliable, method of hitting a ball to the opponent. This method should be mastered prior to learning any other attack. The motion to do a downball is very similar to throwing an object like a baseball. Downballs should be done at, or behind, the Attack Line (the line that is @10 feet away from the net on each side).

1. Stand **READY TO THROW** a ball (use this for a right hander, transpose for left)
  - a. Left foot forward.

- b. Right arm pulled back, over the shoulder, with the thumb down (**PULL THE BOW**).
- c. Knees bent.
- 2. WAIT for the set
  - a. Keep an eye on the ball that is coming.
  - b. Timing is a learned trait, so repetitions are important.
- 3. STEP toward the net with the left foot first
- 4. SWING with the right arm while making contact with a BIG right hand.
- 5. FOLLOW through with the right foot.

#### Attack (Spike):

This method of attack is much more difficult to master because it involves foot, body, arm and eye, coordination. It is a much more effective method because the angle of attack is above the net, not below, like the downball. This allows an attacker to put more force into the attack. Spikes normally take place between the Attack Line and the net. Mastering the downball before attempting an attack is recommended.

NOTE: Only front row players may spike balls that are set between the Attack Line and the net.

Best method to progress is to incrementally teach the skill.

- 1. Teach the steps without arm movement first. Always start away from the net.
- 2. Add arm motions.
- 3. Add pulling the bow.
- 4. Add the swing.
- 5. Add tucking the hand.
- 6. Add a ball into the equation.

#### 4-step Approach:

- 1. Get into **READY** position (use this for a right hander, transpose for left)
  - a. Line up off the court (left or right side), at, or behind, the Attack Line.
  - b. Right foot forward.
  - c. Arms out at the waist.
  - d. Elbows by the waist.
- 2. **APPROACH** the net
  - a. Steps: right-left-right-left
  - b. Size: small-bigger-biggest-small
  - c. Speed: slow-faster-fastest-quick
  - d. Arms: forward-back-forward-up
  - e. Get low (bend knees) in last 2 steps.
  - f. Explode upwards. Use arms to propel.
- 3. **PULL THE BOW**
  - a. Right arm pulled back, over the shoulder, with the thumb down.

#### **4. SWING HARD**

- a. Swing at the ball just like a downball.

#### **5. TUCK IT IN YOUR POCKET**

- a. Swing through the ball while making contact.
- b. Snap the wrist down.
- c. Follow through the swing until the arm is down beside the body. The right hand will be in the position to put something in the player's back pocket.

#### Drills:

Start attacking from the Attack Line, and only progress to the net if the players can get their hands above the net during an approach.

1. Out of Hand (basic)
  - a. Coach holds a ball (one-handed) at the peak of the players jump during an approach.
  - b. Player approaches, and hits the ball out of the coach's hand.
  - c. Be careful not to injure the player and coach if the coach needs to use a ladder or chair to get high enough for this drill.
2. Coach Toss Mid-Approach (basic)
  - a. Player approaches the target area for the attack (i.e. attack line, net).
  - b. Coach stands near the target area, and tosses a ball to target area, slightly higher than the peak of the player's jump during the approach.
  - c. Player hits the ball.
3. Above the Net (basic)
  - a. Player stands on a safe platform that puts the player's head and shoulders above the net.
  - b. Player pulls the bow to get ready to hit the ball.
  - c. Coach stands beside the platform, and tosses a ball up, in front of the player.
  - d. Player hits with proper techniques of attacking and tucking the hand.
  - e. Do 10 times in a row.
4. Coach Toss Pre-Approach (intermediate)
  - a. Similar to Coach Toss Mid-Approach, except that the coach tosses the ball first. The player then starts the approach.
5. Coach Toss as Setter (intermediate)
  - a. Similar to Coach Toss Pre-Approach, except the coach is tossing the ball from the setter position.
6. Hitting Line (advanced)
  - a. Player is in hitting position.
  - b. Player tosses ball to setter, which can be a coach or another player.
  - c. Setter sets ball to target area.
  - d. Player attacks using the proper technique.
  - e. Coach can toss balls to setter from different locations on same side of net to give setter better practice.
  - f. Players can attack from different positions on the court.
7. Butterfly (advanced)

- a. A passer, setter and hitter line up on same side of the net.
- b. Coach tosses a ball to the passer from the other side of the net.
- c. Passer passes ball to the setter.
- d. Setter sets the hitter.
- e. Hitter uses proper technique to attack the ball.
- f. Add blockers and defenders for more game-like feel to the drill.

Websites of Interest:

- Lifetips has some interesting stuff. Specifically, I like:
  - <http://volleyball.lifetips.com/cat/6380/beginners/index.html>
  - <http://volleyball.lifetips.com/cat/58910/drills/index.html>
- <http://www.emporia.edu/vball/drills/> (note – the drill descriptions are links)