



***USA*Volleyball®**

# **MINIVOLLEY**

**Volleyball 4 Youth**



**By John Kessel**



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## Preface: Minivolley = Youth Volleyball

Decades ago, an East German FIVB coach named Horst Baacke brought forward a concept for kids to play the game of volleyball using a smaller ball, net, court, and team size. The game, called minivolleyball or minivolley, was intended for kids 14 & under to play—not intended in any way to be a miniature adult/6 vs. 6 volleyball version.

In the best of all worlds, it is a simple game set up by the kids; officiated/self-officiated by the kids; is played indoors or outdoors, with little or no adult supervision or coaching; fits within the culture of that nation or area; and promotes a culture of play. The rules are few, and have a spirit that is not written into the rules—to promote play and fun.

This book is intended for elementary and junior high PE teachers and USAV Junior Olympic Volleyball program directors and leaders. More than 30 years of teaching minivolley programs and ideas in more than 40 nations and every state in America will be shared, making the game easy to make happen. There is a GREAT amount of information and material to help you succeed in all age ranges, but the KEY is to STOP playing 9 vs. 9 and even 6 vs. 6 and create more smaller courts and play GAMES for 1 vs. 1 up to 4 vs. 4 on lower nets—or just rope! The pictures, unless noted, are all from minivolley/VB events I have done for USAV and the FIVB over the years. I am sharing these ideas to help you help the children you contact love the game. If they love the game, when they inherit a bad coach, they play more easily through that period...if not, we lose them. We want them always to love the game, no matter the circumstances.

These days, kids are playing less physically outside after school and all summer long. Volleyball happens to be a fun game you can play in a small space just about anywhere—indoors or outdoors—coed, and with a mix of ages. It is a sport more of skill than of strength, and the earlier you learn the challenge of keeping the ball off the ground, the better, even as gravity fights against you every second. The biggest challenge for younger kids is that Mr. Gravity pulls the ball down just as fast for them as for the adults, who have much more experience. Slowing the ball down in some way—using balloons and balloon bladder balls—is important to be able to VOLLEY the ball. Thus, in Brazil, a popular version is to use feathered badminton-type birdies, which also travel slower.

For the last decade, the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) has had the motto that fits all levels of the sport, kids included. It is the goal of this manual to follow that motto and KEEP THE BALL FLYING. USA Volleyball regions and Junior Olympic Volleyball clubs can help you start a successful minivolley program. Annual membership (September-August) for kids 11 and under can be found in most regions for just \$15, and includes general liability and secondary sports accident insurance, along with a year's subscription to USAV's magazine, *Volleyball USA*. For more information, check with your local RVA or visit the USAV Web site at [www.usavolleyball.org](http://www.usavolleyball.org) and click on the grassroots button.

Let us know how else we can help you Grow the Game.

Citius, Altius, Fortius,

John Kessel

USA Volleyball Membership Development Director

FIVB/CAP Level IV Instructor



## Chapter 1: QUICK STARTING YOUR VOLLEYBALL VIBE

No matter how long you have taught this game, this book will have hundreds of new ideas to help you make volleyball the most fun time period of your kids' day and yours. It actually contains even more secrets to making all your sports better. Nonetheless, the keys are simply to:

*Create a culture of PLAY, where kids do not wait for the adult to begin or direct play, and kids teach kids.*

*Create more—and smaller—courts: See Chapters 3 and 6 for easy-to-do examples.*

*Use lighter volleyballs, from balloons on up for younger kids and beginners.*

*Teach Pass, Set, Hit from the very start! You will be surprised how well they can do it!*

*Lower the net to a level all the kids can successfully spike over.*

*Form team/game/drill sizes of 1, 2, 3 or 4 first and most often, even if you are preparing to play 6 vs. 6, let the game teach the game.*

*Warm up and cool down with games—the last third of this book has hundreds.*

*Score in all sorts of kid-related ways—maxi, cooperatively, transitionally and competitively.*

*Create fun station options for kids to learn a variety of motor skills when not playing volleyball.*

### Grubroot Volleyball Training

I know a team that formed by friendship—some 12-year-olds who just wanted to play a team sport that did not involve crashing into an opponent in any way and was fun. Later in this book, I note how a project we did in Italy with Walt Disney had a comic featuring Huey, Dewey and Louie as a mini team. They approach Gyro Gearloose and the following dialogue takes place:

“Vi presento bic record il mio computer sportive! Battete sulla tastier le caratteristiche che il gioco deve avere!” and the three little ducks type in “GIOCO SPORTIVO DIVERTENTE CON LA PALLA ECONOMIC A SQUADRE GICOCABILE ALL APERTO PER REGAZZINI!” To which Gyro replies, “Perfetto! Tra un attimo avrete la riposta” and whammo, out falls a minivolley kit from the sport computer’s side panel. In short, they asked Gyro’s “Sport Computer” for a fun sporting game played with a ball that is an economical team game playable by kids...

This team formed with eight friends who were not all from the same school and decided to play volleyball. They entered the four-person youth league and would practice 4 vs. 4 an hour a week, then play an hour, splitting into two squads. Then this same group decided to enter into a 12 & under USAV-sanctioned league in town, and without any extra practice, would play 6 vs. 6 with everyone rotating in equally. Like their four-person option, whoever was middle front would set. They never *practiced* the six-person game; they only *played* it once a week. Like monarch of the court and their four-person league, they set 3-meter line sets (calling them just like the national team’s sets), and rarely blocked. They all focused on being the best servers they could be, practicing

at home against the garage door, since that was the single skill they could learn to control and do on their own. They laughed, focused on making all their mistakes over the net, and they had fun.

In the end, the league playoffs found this group of friends winning the entire six-person league, defeating Junior Olympic Volleyball club teams that trained far more than they had. This is at the older player level. For younger kids, they just want to play each other, in class, in the training group, and with smaller-sized teams and courts.

Note that I did not say girls or boys. This level, especially 8<sup>th</sup> grade and under, can be played coed, boys vs. girls, or any number of the opposite sex filling up the team. The key thing is to have groups of eight per “team” and 16 per one regular volleyball court. For the normal school where SIX basketball hoops are up, EIGHT doubles and FOUR three- to four-person courts can be laid out.

So here is how this format goes:

1. **Teach everything from Pass Set Hit** – overhead first, to set-hit, then show how beach players warm up with dig/pass-set-hit.
2. **Hit from end line first, mid-court second, 3-meter line third and stay there for this level.** Not on the net.
3. **Teach Front Back** so they always hit both sides of the court. We need to hit both right and left side.
4. **Teach EVERYONE to set** so the hitters go next to set. Then, once they set, they chase down a ball, even before the hit is made. This is an amazing culture change; the hitters want to chase their spikes and will forget to set next for many reps until the new habit/pattern is learned.
5. **Set low sets first**, 1-2 meters high at most, for easier timing. The higher the set, the harder to set/time.
6. **Don't worry about teaching blocking** – yet. We want them to learn to read/dig/move.
7. **Serve several times in the training**, with sprints on the court once you strike the ball.
8. **Play 2 vs. 2** on four courts made 4x4 meters on the double down the court net and a 2-meter buffer zone; **then 3 or 4 vs. 3 or 4** on 6x6 meter courts. **Finish, if your kids are 5<sup>th</sup> grade or older, with 6 vs. 6** on the regular single-net court, with the two players on each team of eight (or fewer) out rotating in at left front and right back.
9. **Everyone plays everyone** – timed games, whoever is ahead at the whistle to rotate/play the next team wins. If tied, one-point, sudden-death tiebreaker. For older kids, keep track of the wins by player–ala competitive cauldron–so they can see who is the best team player.
10. **If you are only using one ball on a court they should simply be playing.**– So many teachers create one ball in motion drills, while other players stand around. Either get two balls on motion on a court, or if just one ball, play and focus on whatever you might have drilled on, thru scoring or playing “rules..”
11. **Change the Scoring** using combinations of scoring to fit the time slots you have. Do not eliminate the “everyone plays everyone” format. Play games of 5 minutes for doubles, 15-minute games for the 4 vs. 4 rounds, and any game version for the 6 vs. 6 round to last 30-60 minutes, with any point scoring options you want. There are nearly 100 scoring and game variations later in the book to pick from. Use “Maxivolley” scoring where the point is scored after a serve and two tosses, one to each team by team’s own sub who is out, or an “unbiased” referee/teacher. After these THREE things happen, serve/toss and hopefully rally/toss and hopefully rally, one side has at least two of the three points, maybe all three, and gets the big point on the scoreboard. This a key way to score matches for 1<sup>st</sup> year players of any age.





## Chapter 2: Minivolley Set Up

The game teaches the game, just like each of you learned to ride a bike. As dangerous and challenging as it can be to ride, you almost certainly did not hire a bike riding coach, were not put through bike riding drills, or were not sent to bike riding camp. Likewise, we learn to play volleyball primarily by playing volleyball—and the coach who makes what drills they use the most game like they can is simply doing the right thing for the kids in teaching them to LOVE this lifetime sport. Tons of GREAT information - all FREE - like posters, books, articles, videos and more for coaches, players, parents, officials, etc. are at the grassroots button of USA Volleyball. <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots.aspx> . The last chapter has some other great reference material from all over the world, including content in Spanish. We also have 30 min skill/drill video “Aprendiamos Voleibol Mediante Juegos” – learning volleyball through games – which you can get from USAV.

It is also important to note that for elementary school ages, the games SHOULD be COED, and for the older kids, it can still be coed. The official net height of Junior Olympic Volleyball play for boys and girls is 7’4 1/8”, with the net being raised higher for the boys only once they reach 15 years of age. Volleyball is a boys’ sport too, so all minivolley is played by both genders.

**Safety Always** – Your program needs a call that means stay down, do not jump. The suggested term is simply BALL! It is one syllable and fast. Option two is DOWN! We want to stay away from screaming, “Don’t Jump!” which not only takes longer, but they hear the word JUMP!

**Replace That Cable** – If you already have a net, but it is one of those alive-and-stabbing-your-hands frayed cable types, spend some money to replace the cable with the synthetic fiber ropes that are stronger than steel. We suggest getting it from a marine supply store in your area, or Google for the best prices. Kevlar® is one option, but does not have the UV resistance that is needed for outdoor use, so we recommend either Vectran® or Spectra® ropes. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vectran> The 8mm rope sells for about 80 cents a foot.

### Beach Volleyball Option

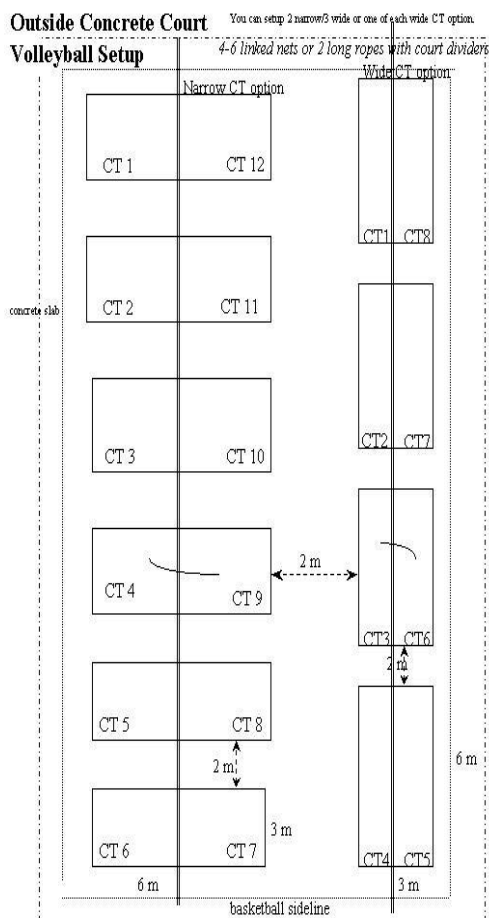
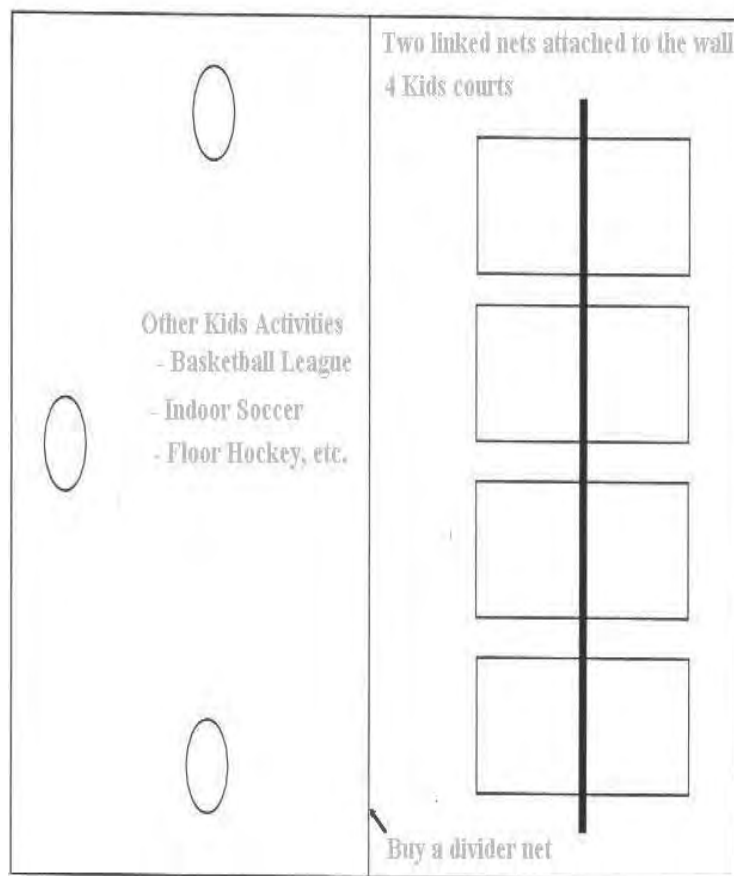


When minivolley began, there was no game being played internationally other than the 6 vs. 6 version. Now, the Olympic sport of 2 vs. 2 on sand (beach volleyball) is simply another way of playing a form of minivolley. The adult court is 8x8 meters, and many young players simply learn this way, playing with a parent or the one other passionate friend who loves volleyball. Just about every idea promoted in this manual works for beach volleyball, too! There is a lot of material on playing grassroots doubles for all ages online at <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots.aspx> , [www.avp.com](http://www.avp.com) and [www.fivb.org](http://www.fivb.org). Great indoor players like Karch Kiraly and Misty May-Treanor started learning playing 2 vs. 2 with their parents, against adults, gaining valuable repetitions and ideas/shots against savvy veterans. USAV RVAs have wonderful father/ child and mother/child doubles events in the spring and summer. Catch an AVP or USAV Beach stop when the tour comes near you, and watch/record matches to show your kids this limited-player game, for it is just minivolley on the sand! Encourage your kids to play on the U.S. Junior Olympic Beach Volleyball Tour, which has stops all over America, with age groups at the Under 14 (U14), U13, U12 and U11 age groups at the Junior Olympic Beach Volleyball Championships in Southern California in August each year. The more they play, the better they get. Finally, there now are college scholarships for women in beach at the NCAA level, and USAV had a great High Performance pipeline for not just indoor, but all levels of beach, including World Championships at the Youth (18 and under) and Junior (21 and under) levels, and even younger HP training camps, both on and off the sand.

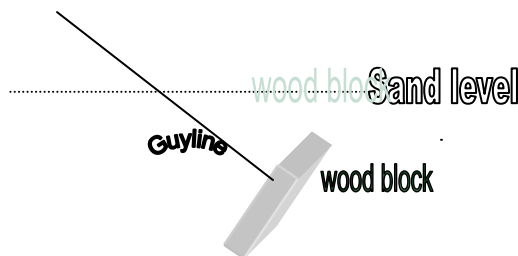


## Net & Court and Support Options

Setting up minivolley is done in a variety of ways, as seen in these pictures I have taken from other minivolley courses done all over the world. A vine, rope, clothesline, swing set, net-less soccer goal, string in the basement, or even a line drawn in the sand works just fine as a "net." Just trucker knot between two trees, poles, or other vertical "standard." As a picture is worth a thousand words, here is a large chapter on net set-up options you can make happen...



**Deadman Anchor Example** – Leave a short rope out of the ground from the buried deadman so you can quickly set up and anchor without having to re-dig the hole.



**Brasil** – No. 1-Ranked VB Nation in the World



**Vanuatu** – Kids' courts next to the adult courts



**Finland** at "nite" over 100 courts on a soccer field



**Alaska** – 80 kids all playing 2 vs. 2 late at night



**Texas** - PassSetHit with 2008 gold medalist Ryan Millar

**U.S. Olympic Training Center, Colorado Springs**



A core concept that many fail to practice enough is to help players learn to hit every third ball over that 7 foot 4  $\frac{1}{4}$  in barrier for girls/women and the higher 7 foot 11  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch obstacle for boys/men. Players also need to serve every ball over that same wall on EVERY serve they do, that first and oh so important contact, while those receiving these serves and attacks, need to READ the ball as early as possible from the other side of the net.

Our sport is played over a net – like tennis, badminton and table tennis. Those other sports are never played 6 vs. 6, but 1 on 1 or 2 vs. 2, so the athletes get plenty of contacts on each net crossing – as in 50-100 percent per team. So what we need to do is get either more nets up or more net length up.

### Tables, Boxes or String



The first net for many might be just a table or a string, and just using a balloon. Basement boxes worked too, any barrier that can be volleyed across.... One of the most intense table matches I have seen was between Steve Timmons and Karch Kiraly, with a balloon. Epic. One rally I will never forget was with my roomie Abel Wolman, in the living room when his errant dig flew up, struck the overhead lamp which came crashing down on the table/net which had Laurie Glassgold's 6 month geology map project on it, and shredded it. So I strongly recommend a balloon or balloon ball (see the back of the Minivolley book on how to make that), or the 70 gram Molten First Touch ball for such indoor play...

### Fences, Ribbon and Rope

A Chain link fence, the top bar of a soccer goal, and just rope or ribbon is the next level of net options to play over. This picture of boys playing 4 vs 4 over a chain link fence is from East High, Karch Kiraly's high school, with thanks to Ed Gover who took the pic for me.





A higher than usual fence has also been an option. This clip shows some over the Mexico USA Border wall... <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uM3SkHolLdU> The ribbon shot of 16 sitting volleyball courts set up using chairs with weight room plates to anchor the system is from the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Leadership and Character Symposium at the US Air Force Academy. The next evolution is of rope courts set up using long linked into an “X” wood slats or PVC pipe even bamboo. You can also span the gap between two courts, or from a standard near a wall to the wall, with ribbon or rope to make great a single small training court space. The most common way to add an “extra court” is to span between courts – and the end of this document shows two courts being turned into six courts using either a ribbon or a 4 nets on a rope system.

## A Net

Then we get to nets that do not have just the barrier at the top but the net itself. You don’t need a LOT of net to pull it off, especially as it can be a challenge and cost to create, but that is what the regulations require. As an American, you might need to check your net to see if it is made by feet – thus 30 feet long by 3 feet wide, or to the standards that every other nation makes their nets to – metric, thus 10 meters long by a meter wide. Recently at a camp, the coach had bought nets made in feet, only to find the antennas they owned were too long to fit and tape was needed to attach things properly at the top. So check your net and make sure to get antennas that can be made to fit without tape!

Now you can mix net options, as I strongly suggest putting a ribbon or rope up between the regular standards you might have, over to the side wall, and especially between the small or large gap found between two courts. Also note that with so many nets and volleyballs around, a divider net can help with safety, and the video and upcoming USAV Toolkit shows how you can create a 50’ long by 14’ high divider made from deer netting by zip tying a roll cut in half – or if needed you use the netting uncut, to have a 100’ x 7’ high option. The cost of the string to weave thru the top and the netting is under \$20, and you attach it to a single eyebolt set at the appropriate height on each side of the wall at the center of the gym.

## Four Nets on a Rope Variations

Finally, we get to having more and smaller nets set up in the same space, so more players can train and learn. A video showing how to do this is being finished by this fall, but these images show how “rope wall standards” and rope topped nets can be tightened using a “trucker’s pulley knot.” You see, in this blog about nets, someone still unknown usually installs a minimum of 6 “volleyball training device nets” up in school gyms from the elementary to the collegiate level. The nets are small and short, and are attached to an orange colored setting accuracy circle. While it is nice to use them to set, and even forearm pass directly into (no misses off the backboard and in, accuracy-wise), six of them is a lot and allows for a lot of activity training. So the idea is to get as many or more actual volleyball nets up in the gym.



The secret of a sort is the wall rope anchor system for an indoor gym or tennis court, or the crossed wood X's for outdoor and beach court play. You should not drill individual attachment points at various, possible volleyball net heights. You instead set an attachment point very high, 10-11 feet from the floor, and another one just off the floor. Then you tie a rope and tighten it, again using a slip knotted trucker pulley knot, against the wall. You can attach to a basketball cranking device, or drill an eyebolt/anchor into the wall, one you can screw in and out if needed for when you put the eyebolt into the wall at the low floor level.

Then you simply attach from one rope to the other far wall rope, your ribbon, rope or volleyball net, again with the pulley knot to tension the top of the net across the distance being spanned. This net can be bought below \$100 for all four together on one rope from USA Volleyball, just email [info@usav.org](mailto:info@usav.org) to order one or more. Also check out the USA website at [www.usavolleyball.org](http://www.usavolleyball.org) and click on the Grassroots section where helpful videos of the net system, and running youth programming webinars are located, all FREE of charge!



The best part of this inexpensive system is how easy it is to adjust the net height – you simply slide it up and down the rope. When you combine it with the USA Volleyball “Four Nets on a Rope” option, you can get EIGHT nets up in a gym where one or two might have previously been used to train players. Even better, you can then lower it down a bit, and have 8 badminton training nets, and lower it further to have 8 youth tennis, pickleball or sitting volleyball nets! This is all part of USA Volleyball’s dedicated work to grow the game for all in our sport, not just one group, and to even support other Olympic and Paralympic sports from Sitting Volleyball, to tennis, wheelchair tennis and badminton. Go to <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots.aspx> and watch the video on creating courts from the rope over bleachers, concrete, free floating stages, cafeteria tables and more.



**Wood X Standards** - Attached to stakes, buried “deadmans” and concrete blocks, etc.



***WATCH THIS, while I did it in Spanish, it shows how we created this program in Puerto Rico a decade ago...***

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1YP91KS6x0>

***and sometimes you just need to make a ball...***





## Stick "X" Standards



## Rope/Wall/Eyehook Standard



## Over the Basketball Backboard Standard



## Bucket Standard



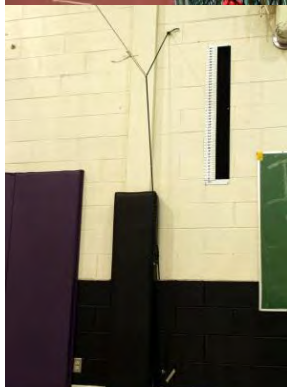
## Tennis Court Fence Standards



Simply dig a hole in the sand and bury

Or fill with 50-lb bags of rice/dog food...

Or seal the attachment bolts with silicone and fill with water.



it...





## Options for Physical Disabilities – Sitting Volleyball

Every teacher, coach, and JOV program leader reading this is asked to be a talent scout for U.S. Paralympics. With the rise of the HIPAA regulations and integration of students with disabilities into regular schools, we discover often it is the officials, coaches and players who “find” Paralympic possible athletes. Many are not aware of the sports options available for students with physical disabilities, the powerful role sports can play in their lives and the potential for those who can play at an elite level to represent our country in international competition, culminating with the Paralympic Games. Please refer to the chart on the next page and let these potential athletes, regardless of age, know of the opportunities. Visit [www.usparalympics.org](http://www.usparalympics.org) or email [mvp@usav.org](mailto:mvp@usav.org) if you want more information. *Thank you.*

Three sitting courts can be made from one regulation court—like pickleball—as the official court is 6x5 meters. You can play indoors, on carpet, or in a cafeteria on linoleum. When you lose a gym, don’t cancel practice; simply adapt and create courts. Put a rope/nets down the middle of a regular volleyball court and you have three courts sharing sidelines. If it is only 4.5 meters deep per side, no need to extend it .5 meters; simply play using those lines. The game has only four rule differences from the Olympic rules (smaller court/feet may cross lines/okay to block serve/no “air butt”). The sitting game is played by non-disabled players more in other nations - of the 3,000 or so members of the Nederland Sitting Volleyball Program, more than half are able-bodied players just wanting to jump less. It is a fun warm up, as well.

*Photos below clockwise from upper left: Alaskan school kids playing; Paralympic military Wounded Warriors playing (even in wheelchairs) along with a four-year-old child standing; Children’s Hospital kids with physical disabilities in Mexico playing balloon minivolley with their parents; High Performance Camp players warming up playing sitting volleyball.*







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read the latest Paralympic news  
and much more!



[www.usparalympics.org](http://www.usparalympics.org)

### Paralympic Sports by Physical Disability Group

Summer Sports	Amputee/ Les Autres	Blind/ Visually Impaired	Spinal Cord Injury	Traumatic Brain Injury / Cerebral Palsy/Stroke
Archery	✓		✓	✓
Basketball	✓		✓	
Boccia				✓
Cycling	✓	✓	✓	✓
Equestrian	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fencing	✓		✓	✓
Goalball		✓		
Judo		✓		
Powerlifting	✓		✓	✓
Rowing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rugby			✓	
Sailing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shooting	✓		✓	✓
Soccer				✓
Swimming	✓	✓	✓	✓
Table Tennis	✓		✓	✓
Tennis	✓		✓	
Track and Field	✓	✓	✓	✓
Volleyball	✓			
<b>Winter Sports</b>				
Alpine Skiing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Biathlon	✓	✓	✓	✓
Curling	✓		✓	✓
Nordic Skiing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sled Hockey	✓		✓	✓



## Chapter 3: Successful Minivolley

Best practices ideas for starting a program and developing the game of minivolley follow. Although the ideas are not necessarily in “chronological order,” it would be best to try to accomplish one challenge before moving on to the next. Let us know if you have others not noted in this manual so we can share them with members of the volleyball family.

**GET A LEADER AT EACH SCHOOL/SITE** – Do this by working with the PE teacher, the youth activity programs and park and rec programs, where gym access is more established. Getting enough coaches is part of the need/challenge, too. Current players, parents and past players, “YOU WILL BE A BETTER PLAYER IF YOU COACH.

The concept of “kids coaching younger kids” needs to happen at ALL JOV clubs, where the teams spend time coaching youth in minivolley programming. Get every child to join USA. Take two hours a month from practice to coach the younger pipeline. It is VERY important for the future of your program and the role modeling/ leadership lessons for the mentors. We need to mentor more. Famed coach Sally Kus has the national high school record for consecutive victories in a row—nearly 300. She was a 4-6<sup>th</sup> grade PE teacher who got the kids loving volleyball early on. Through kids teaching kids, by the time they were high school freshmen, Kus’s players were more experienced and skilled than most other schools’ seniors.

I find most programs fall short of taking advantage of this opportunity to develop players in both skill and leadership. USA Volleyball has a full membership option, good starting in September of each year until August of the next year, which gives 11 & under kids *Volleyball USA* magazine, USAV liability and sports accident insurance and *Rotations* e-newsletters for \$15—even less if the region you are in wishes to. That is about four to six youth league cycles for one membership fee. You need not make it every week for a certain team, but for the youth coming in, they get a practice and a match each week in a “first touch” program for an 8-12 week cycle.

Have your 14s teach every other weeknight on the four youth courts you get by putting a double net down the middle of their practice court. Have your 13s do it the other two times a month. And have teams that practice weekends in the morning or afternoon come early or stay a bit late to coach/officiate/score the league matches, using two out of three scoring that takes place after or before their own practices. Other age groups can do more teams. In Japan, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders coach the 1<sup>st</sup> thru 4<sup>th</sup> graders for 45 minutes, then their coach works with them for the second half of a 90-minute after school practice.

You are creating a pipeline, helping your JOV players become better at self coaching, and helping young players get both positive role models and a great start to this lifetime sport. The costs are minimal, as the coaches are already USAV members, and the gym is also “free.” My daughter’s 13 & under JOV team did this while en route to a bronze medal at the USA Girls’ Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships, and the time spent teaching helped them ALL better self coach.

**GET THE KIDS** – Whether it is PE class during school, or after-school programs for the afternoon, get the kids playing. Offer to teach the game to the younger fans after each collegiate home match as part of the college booster program. Run your practices in park and rec and YMCA facilities and invite kids to try it out. Set up an outdoor practice in a mall or downtown street and invite newbies.

**GET COURT TIME** – Share the gym or put up nets next to soccer/football fields. Pick a time that the gyms are not used, even 7 a.m. (look what ice hockey and swimmers do for training). Asphalt, concrete, tennis and grass courts, where weather permits, are all perfect venues. The public schools need to be USED after school for your programs. Private schools and facilities like the YMCA will more likely let you use the program if you pay membership or if you provide a service (i.e., train their kids). Build courts/standards, buy new gear and safer



padding rather than pay rent. Use tennis courts. Attach your rope or net to the poles in the fence and leave the net up.

### **PUT UP MORE NETS AND COURTS IN THE SPACE YOU HAVE**

Instead of being able to control or watch one ball move around as the group plays 6 vs. 6 or, horrors, 9 vs. 9, you will have more than one ball/net/court to watch and teach. Of course, your training area needs to be safe at all times. Volleyball is the most space-efficient (read “crowded”) court sport. You can get 24 or even 32 kids on a single regulation basketball court. Share the gym with hoops, soccer, or other programs. String nets up for just half the gym. You can fit several kids on one half, and buy a divider net that can be tied up to eyebolts wall to wall. Use deer netting, noted in the equipment section of the manual.



**Corollary – Make these nets EASY and fast to set up.** Use rope/Kevlar® nets (not cable), using wall anchors rather than standards if need be. It is best to get a nice AAI sleeved pole system that goes up quickly. Mark the corners of the court only with tape, or put down markers (flat, thin rubber discs) in the corners. If outside, put down socks and play barefoot, or mark the lines by dragging your foot in the sand.

**Corollary – A net does not have to be a regulation adult net.** Each 10-meter long adult net can be made to host TWO kids’ courts, with a 2-meter buffer in between. Rope nets are fine, with markers hanging down to separate the court areas. If your PE program plays pickleball ([www.pickleball.com](http://www.pickleball.com)) you know those same set-ups will work for minivolley and sitting volleyball. Badminton nets are great for all kids, just put a PVC pipe over the top to extend the height higher for 13- to 14-year-olds. And in a pinch, one kid standing there can be a net/barrier to play over! Not one net and 20 kids per side, but four to 10 nets and two to four maximum per side. If no long rope, link jump ropes together. Or use two kids as the “standards” per court and they hold up the jump rope as the net while the other four kids play 2 vs. 2. Rotate through, playing short games. The kids holding up the “net” are getting conditioning, too. Not anchoring the bottom of the net is FINE—indeed, for active gym situations, preferable—even though the ball does not play out of the net.

**Corollary – Get more volleyballs!** Your volleyball program should have just as many volleyballs in the storeroom as you have basketballs...and as many nets, as well (how popular/fun would basketball be if your gym only had one hoop and one or two basketballs for your entire group?). These balls must NOT be rubber. The best choices are the “Lite” volleyballs—made regulation-sized, but lighter in weight, and used in the USA Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships 12 & under division. Beach balls (rainbow colored for \$1) are great for younger kids, as they travel slower. “Market” balls (the ones that are about \$2 and permanently inflated) are also fun options. Even round balloons for any age on a small court are fun, travel slower and are safe. You can make them with a fabric, nylon or cloth cover, in school, program or other wild colors, using a helium-quality round party balloon as a bladder. The pattern for these balls is found on the Players and Coaches section under Grassroots of our Web site at <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots>. Even panty hose rings or duct tape applied around the balloon can give it heft for faster but safe flight.

**Corollary – Play on any surface.** Use tennis courts, play sitting volleyball on a stage or in the lunchroom, play on grass, sand, concrete, asphalt. Heck, they make about \$100,000 for the March of Dimes in a mud volleyball tourney. Play in the pool, or in a racquetball or squash court. Sport Courts® has allowed USA nationals to be held on 50 courts under one roof ([www.sportcourt.com](http://www.sportcourt.com)). PowerGrips (you have seen those big suction cups being used to carry window glass) allow you to set up outdoor courts inside. Park & Sun Sports® nets are great options for nets that can be used on grass, sand or hard court, complete with standards and anchor ropes ([www.parksun.com](http://www.parksun.com)). These same PowerGrips are used to create sitting volleyball court options using wallyball

nets in racquetball courts. Not having to chase balls when playing wallyball or sitting volleyball in that walled court space simply means the participants get many more contacts and get better faster.

### ***PLAY HALF YOUR PRACTICE***

You are not training them for the Olympics; you are teaching them to LOVE activity and fitness. Learn to teach technique to each player as he/she PLAYS the game. Step in and show what to do right, as all eyes will be on you. Never show what they are doing wrong. Show what to do, over and over and over. ...

Start with the game, and go back to the game. Drills are used to introduce a skill, but the game is the key. Enjoy the game, as the game teaches the game. Why would kids want to play a sport that is no fun, or if they rarely get to play games?

### ***SPIKE FIRST AND OFTEN***

This is THE skill that all love to do, and right now everyone in the world is forced to beg for it ("Coach, when can we hit?"). Do it as their first introduction to the sport at ANY age, using the overhead pass to set things up, NOT the arm bruising, wince making, shank happy forearm pass skill too often taught. If you spike and serve first and often, more and more kids will join the sport, rather than be driven off by the forearm-pain inflicting frustration.

**Corollary - Lower the nets, so they CAN hit.** Put them waaaay down so everyone can hit over them easy.

### ***MAKE YOUR LARGEST TEAM SIZE FOUR***

If you can, put up lots and lots of nets and play all games like the Olympic sport of beach volleyball, where they cover the entire court, 2 vs. 2. Your kids get tons of reps, and when the ball comes over, you have a 50 percent chance on the first one, and a 100 percent chance of touching the ball with the second one.

### ***TEACH & REWARD COOPERATION, CHARACTER, AND EFFORT***

This is a sport that has a national championship for coed Open level play, that tens of millions play at the park and recreation/church levels as a way to meet new friends. Let them move, run, throw and play hard. Help kids train HARD—before and during the practice. Karch Kiraly set up the gym, preparing it himself when he was captain. As a leader, you need to do the basic "grunt" work of the sport. This is a blue collar, hard-work ethic sport to win. Marv Dunphy, USA 1988 gold medal coach, noted that one of the rarest things is to see a player make full effort in training all the time. Reward cooperation and effort and have FUN; worry about technique later.

**Corollary - Good teams know the "better the ball" concept** as a good citizen and team player.

### ***TEACH THEM TO TEACH THEMSELVES***

If you have a group of 25 kids and 30 minutes, you can only give about a minute of individual attention to each one. They need to get better during the other 29 minutes you are not paying individual attention to them. The tossers and servers and all should be the players acting as "assistant coaches." Active learning is preferable. To quote a bull riding camp brochure, "Plenty of bulls, lots of riding." Perform practices/drills/plays designed by the players.

## **SHOW THEM RATHER THAN TELL THEM**

Words have little meaning to beginners. Ask them questions; do not tell them the answers. Guide players to timing and judgment adjustments, not technique only. "I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand" (Chinese proverb). The more you know, the more you try to tell them, and the more you confuse them. ...

## **CREATE A POSITIVE, FUN ENVIRONMENT**

There should be no fear of mistakes. Get excited about players doing it right, and ignore most of their errors. Teach them to make good mistakes rather than bad ones. Coach proactively, not reactively. Be specific and positive in feedback. If it starts with the word "don't," then don't say it. Avoid all sarcasm. Talk only in the positive. Say what they should do, and not the don'ts. If it starts with don't, don't say it. Be consistently positive. Problems are stepping stones, not obstacles. Be enthusiastic. "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm" - R.W. Emerson

**Corollary – Be Consistent** - Kids need you to be positive in practice and in competition, not Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde.

## **MAKE THINGS AS GAMELIKE AS POSSIBLE**

Given the choice of a drill or a game, everyone chooses the game. At this level, learn to play "games" that are actually drills, and make them game like in terms of the ball going over the net, keeping score, etc. Even your "warm up" should be a game, using balls, one vs. one over the rope (three hits in a row by the same player). You can set up stations, even using the "volleyball training devices" (commonly called basketball hoops) for games of one bounce for setting and passing accuracy.

**Corollary – Help kids MOVE on the court.** Stop teaching them not to move (X on the floor and playing 6 vs. 6). One of the unique things about volleyball at the starting level is tactically to win, you play poorly (one hit will win, vs. three hits per side you lose). Pair passing teaches NOT moving. Warm up with running to and through the BALL, not running on the court. What we are trying to help you with is stopping "bump ball," where the kids stand and pass the ball over the net. They need to learn to READ, ANTICIPATE, JUDGE and TIME the flow of the game and flight of the ball.

**Corollary – Let them serve OFTEN, but in brief, 1- to 2-minute periods.** Serving, being a closed motor skill (i.e., the only skill kids do all by themselves), will be the skill they have fastest success with. Indeed, you may need to change the rules and only let a kid serve a maximum of three serves before a new server rotates in.

## **MAKE SURE TO HAVE SCORING AND "CONSEQUENCES"**

Rally score for kids rather than sideout score. Play for five to 10 minutes each "match," with the winner whoever is ahead at the buzzer. Modify league play; do not keep score. Festival finishes at the end of the league. Delay the start of the scoring competition until the end of the season and REWARD learning. Use Maxi Scoring for all match play for athletes – regardless of age - in their first year of experience. See below for explanation.

**Corollary** – Use loss of playing time as your "consequence." Do not use physical activity as the punishment (e.g., sit-ups or pushups). The beach game teaches the idea of "winners stay on." Use Monarch/King/Queen of the Court, where the winning side, in a one-point, "instant winner" game, gets to stay on. It is the No. 1 favorite of all kids.

**Corollary** – Score cooperatively first, transition scoring second, competitive third.

**Cooperative Scoring** - The point is scored each time the ball crosses the net after three hits. The two sides work to keep the ball off the floor on both sides, and make only positive errors so the point rally increases.

**Transition Scoring** - The players cooperate to a certain level, and once reached, the rally becomes competitive, using any type of competitive scoring. This is much like the tradition of rallying for serve in table tennis (P-I-N-G).

**Competitive Scoring** - Traditional scoring, but kids work best with rally scoring (a point on every serve). This point on every serve has been the way the game has been played by children all over the world since Jan 1, 1999 (and in the 2000, '04 and '08 Olympics).

**PUT UP POSTERS TO STUDY** – In PE class or club training time, having skill posters to study when there is down time – before practice, during water breaks, etc. is a great way to gain more deliberate practice time. There are many FREE skill posters on the USA Volleyball website's grassroots button, under the posters section.



## WINNING THE SERVE PASS WAR

At this level, while we want teams to pass/dig – set – hit, the reality is that the games will be won or lost on the scoreboard by the team who serve and pass better. The second and third contacts cannot develop or be even learned, if the serve does not go in, or if the serve receiver cannot read and pass the first ball.

In terms of skill, the serve is a closed motor program, and thus will develop first over and ahead of the open motor program of serve reception. I often get letters from young players who write USAV to let us know that they served 32 straight points, won the match 25-0 on their serve, and, having watched the US Olympic team miss so many serves, they want us to know they are available to either teach, or play for the USA team right away. If we can develop even better servers, it will help develop better serve receivers, but only if the coaches and teachers stop spending time passing balls in pairs from in front of the darn net, ignoring the net, and instead start teaching the most important skill in our sport – READING the ball.

### READING – *THE Most Important Skill in our Sport*

I have addressed this fact at length, and urge you to visit the USA Volleyball website to download several articles on this topic to learn more. For the purposes of this minivolley book, the reality is simple. Reading must take place OVER the net, with a served ball coming in, so that the passer can gain the time and anticipation/judgment skills needed, to be able to perform the actual skill. You see, passing as a concept/no ball skill involved is a pretty easy skill to do. Two year olds can be taught to hold their hands right, and make simple, minimal movement to “pass” a ball. Throw it right to them, and voila! they pass the ball. The problem comes in when they have to track and move to the ball, and get their arms in the right place and time to deflect it to the setter target. THAT takes years of skill development to be great at.

The younger they start, the better they will be when they get older. More importantly, this reading skill is not learned against a wall, it is learned by playing and tracking served balls coming OVER the net. I have asked many different Olympic team passers and liberos, what percentage of their success in serve reception happens BEFORE the ball crosses the plane of the net. Their answers, for both men and women, are always the same – for floaters, about 80% of their success, and for jump serves – which come faster – it is about 90%. This is REALLY important...the vast majority of a serve receiver's success has happened by the time the ball breaks the plane of the net. This is why in other sports, researchers

**"Let us not forget that the school curriculum in itself is dull and lifeless. It needs the personality of a teacher to breathe the breath of life into it to make it a vital, living thing."**

**-Inez Johnson Lewis, Colorado State Superintendent of Public Instruction, from the "Course of Study for Elementary Schools," 1936**



study the before and at contact information, but do not spend time studying ball flight information after contact. We need to increase the amount of chances our players have at seeing balls come over the net or rope, from the other side, not from the same side.

If you have played and are now being so kind as to give back to our sport by teaching/coaching, you know this to be true too. So what is being learned about serve reception when we wall pass and partner pass? How to be bad at passing! If you become the Olympic Gold medalist at partner and wall passing, and then get put out on the court to serve receive, what are you the best in the world at? Passing a ball straight back to where it came from. This is why many balls served to the left side of the court, get passed not to the setter who is more to the right, but instead directly forward to the left side of the net, making the setter run forward. Ask a setter, they know this to be true. Passing is never performed as a right back to where it came from skill in a game, yet these old drills create habits that are hard to change, while not teaching ANYTHING of value about the most important skill – reading. Players of all ages must learn to serve receive serves – not coach tossed balls, or partner forearm passed balls. Note that this same key reading skills needs to happen so setters are reading passers, and hitters are reading sets, not thrown balls.

### **MAXIVOLLEYBALL OPTION**

The bridge to having a serve error/ace game –with no rallies - happening at the beginning levels of our sport means we ask you to also teach and develop rallies. Since you understand that the best passing drills/games are pass-set-hit; that the best setting games/drills are pass-set-hit; that the best spiking drills/games are pass-set-hit; and that the best digging drills/games are dig-set-hit , you have been developing this combination of skills from day one. When the competition comes in, and the serve overpowers or errs the vast majority of the first contacts, you simply continue to teach the pass-set-hit combos as part of the actual game. *This version is not age based, but experienced base – once the teams can pass real serves regularly, shift to regular scoring, and use wash scoring in practice to increase contacts per training period.*

Maxivolley is where the game scoring is changed for the teams of 3 vs.3 on up to even 6 vs. 6. Each point on the scoreboard is comprised of three parts – 1. The serve, by the team who earned the last point; 2. A player (off the court sub preferred), or adult off court tossed ball to one team, which has three hits remaining; 3. A player or adult tossed ball to the other team, which also has three hits remaining. Each of these result in a small point being scored, and after the second tossed ball rally ends, one team certainly will have two little points to the other team's one little point, and that team gets the big point on the scoreboard. One team might have all three as well, and some programs might end with best two of three there. The core idea is to bring the VOLLEY back to these games, rather than the current serve-ace/serve-err version normally played. We need to learn to serve and serve receive, but we also need to learn the second and third contacts and rally, not just have aces and service errors. Maxivolley brings this into the game.

At higher levels, Maxivolley changes from the second and third balls being thrown to the team for three hits remaining, to the ball being tossed to each side to be put OVER the net as a “free” ball by the team getting the tossed ball. There is a powerful tradition of the COACH hitting the third ball at teams, standing on one side hitting it to be dug-set-hit, or hitting it over the net to be dug-set-hit. This tradition also must change at EVERY level of our game, for the PLAYERS must get good at putting the third ball over the net, not the coaches. So once your player's volleyball reading skills improve enough to be able to pass a ball tossed from the same side of the net, they need to be stepped up in challenge levels to be passing balls coming from OVER the net. You know how beach players warm up by dig-set-hit, even though there are only two of them – this is the first level of maxivolley. Work in time to this higher level version where the players put the third ball over each time, by getting the “second contact” ball tossed to them by a teammate or coach off the court, and teach them how to be more aggressive at putting the third ball over. Note that you can toss the “second contact” low....resulting in

a free/passed ball; medium – which should result in a overhead pass shoot or even standing spike third contact; high- which hopefully will be jumped and spiked over, depending on how far and high your toss is.

Due to this serving success overpowering the serve reception success, some nations and programs have a rule, if they do not follow the Maxivolley option, that after about 5 serves, the team must rotate in a new server, to stop this serving domination. The idea being that a team likely does not have two great servers in a row. You might consider such a rule, especially if you teach the serve so well every player has a strong successful serve. The fact is that those players passing strong serves are learning how to pass; they just need more time to develop the reading and anticipation skills to get to the right place and time, in time.

This lack of serving/serve reception skill is seen all the way up the pipeline to our top USA National team players competing internationally. Jim Stone, 2009 National Youth Team head coach and 2009 Junior National Team assistant coach, wrote the following on his return from the two world championships, where our teams both took 12<sup>th</sup> place.

*“The team stats found both the Junior and Youth teams in the bottom half of the tournament in all the skills. Specifically, the skills of serve and pass are not up to international standard. We do not serve with the velocity or accuracy of other teams. Since we do not face this type of aggressive serving within the club environment, our reception skills were also lacking. The USA Youth passed at a 2.41 level on a 4 point scale. Our competition was passing at a 2.90 level. This is partially due to good passing skills, partially due to our average level of serving. We served at a 1.50 on a 4 pt. scale. This translated to our opponent being in system about 80% of the time. Defense certainly becomes more challenging with this type of serving. Another glaring difference is the outside attacking. We must have better terminating outside attackers. At the same time, these outsides must be able to receive serve. So, there is some work to do.*

## **SERVING IDEAS**

The grassroots button on the USAV website also has articles for players- including some great ones on how to be a better, server, passer, setter, hitter, and digger. From a teaching motor skill point of view, the two big changes from traditional culture in teaching serving are serving more often, for shorter periods of time, and sprinting into the court after you serve.

The serve is performed at skilled levels an average of three times, before the serve is lost to the other team. This player then does not serve again until every other server ON BOTH SIDES, gets their chance(s) to serve. This takes 5-10 minutes, before the player gets to serve again. We need to emulate the pattern of serve/do all the other skills for a while/serve again, more in our practicing. So simply serve 10 times for two minutes, not one long session of serving at the end of practice. They need to focus and concentrate on serving to be great at it, and know how to do this time and time again after doing all the other skills for a while as others do the serving. Serving 5 balls after each game/drill ends before going on to the next drill/game (and serving 5 after and/or before a water break or other break in training) teaches this ability to focus hard on those precious few serve moments.

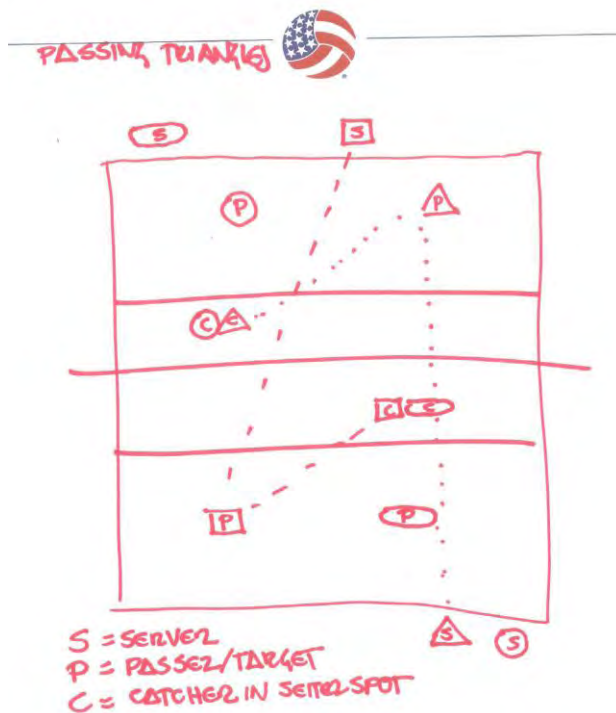
Sprinting in to cover your space on the court is what happens in EVERY rally in the game. What we see too often is in every serving practice session, short or long, that coaches let their players serve and WATCH, not serve and run into their home/base position. So all you have to do is teach your kids to do the whole, game like skill of serving, by having them serve and sprint. Then get a ball, and do another serve. A great by product of this game like training is that your players do dozens to hundreds of sprints each practice, and get in better shape for the real game ahead.

Don't forget that power comes from torquing, so teaching the smallest and younger players to high torque serve, standing sideways and hitting the ball above their shoulder in a high sidearm fashion, is best. They don't need to underhand serve to start; they can do this baseball pitcher falling off a mound twist for power at the very start. This will then evolve into a regular overhead serve – with the power of torque – rather than a serve that has no power. See the serving skill pictures to, see this being done in a game by a very young player, or catch the Lions Cup videos online.

As always, in both these core skills – simpler is better. Servers should watch a great free throw shooter to see how little movement is done to be most accurate. No step is needed. Low consistent toss, not a high one. Fast arm off a rigid consistent contact point. For passing, same thing, simple is best. No need to “pray” before or after the pass. Just wait and put your arms out – in front or to the side – and angle the ball to the setter. The ball knows only the angle it is given to bounce off of. It does not know how old the player is, or if the player is disabled (some sitting players have no legs, yet pass wonderfully). Put eyes on the base of their thumbs, and get the eyes to look at the target, not the incoming ball flight. If those eyes look at the setter on ball contact, gosh, it goes in line to the setter! Young kids love the eyes helping them pass (and you can put them on their palms for setting and blocking too).



So it all comes down to reading balls incoming over the net, and serving a lot over that same darn net. Simple but important. The best game/drill to do this if you are having to play six vs. six on one court? Passing Triplets, where FOUR groups of three can be doing server vs. passer scoring games on one regular net. When we play minivolley, and train smaller groups on more nets, we get this same advantage of higher numbers of contacts and are already doing passing triplets/triangles. A great adaptation is Concentration passing, where you group into three groups of four, and the fourth player attempts to distract the passer in any way possible, without ever touching the ball or the passer. This version below shows ball flights for two of the four groups – four balls should be being used at the start, and better skilled players can have the catcher (C) hold a second ball, which they toss to the server, then turn and catch the incoming passed ball – again increasing the contacts per hour.





## Chapter 4: Are You Learning?

This is a part of teaching/coaching to share with the older kids in your program—in part to help those coaching the younger players know more about the philosophy of coaching, and in part to guide them to self-coach better.

**NO MORE MISTAKES AND YOU'RE THROUGH** – Monty Python's brilliant actor John Cleese first wrote this idea in an article by the same title in *Forbes* magazine more than 20 years ago. The point is that when you are learning minivolley, or pushing yourself in Junior Olympic Volleyball as a player or player coach, you are going to do things you have never done before, and thus, mistakes will happen. They are part of pushing an athlete of ANY age to do things at a higher level.

How did you learn to ride a bike or walk? Did your parents hire a bike riding/walking coach? Put you through bike riding/walking drills? Send you to bike riding/walking camp? Also know that, with all those thousands of hours and years of training, you still stumble, trip, and err. Errors happen, but not intentionally.

**IT'S ABOUT THE "ER" NOT THE "EST"** – Citius, Altius, Fortius is the motto of the Olympics, and is a good way to focus at all ages of learning. SwiftER, highER, strongER means every individual works daily to be a bit better in what he/she is doing; there can only be one gold medalist. All other competitors, if they do work on the "Er," can be proud of what they have done, and are doing so along the journey that defines success, not the destination.

**MISTAKES ARE SIMPLY OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH** – That is how a good teacher sees errors—not as something due to a failure in teaching. Not as something the player is doing on purpose against you or the team. Simply they are just another chance to check for understanding and to teach.

**THE PLAYER WHO KNOWS WHY BEATS THE PLAYER WHO KNOWS HOW** – A simple, powerful, true statement. This is the reason for teaching "socratically"—asking questions all the time, including WHY?, so they understand that it is not just because you said so. This might be a slower way to "teach," but once again, you develop players who are better leaders, and better at teaching themselves.

**APART OR A PART** – All children need to find things they are good at, and every child needs to be A PART of the program you are creating, not APART. Minivolley's shared values with volleyball help participants bring things from ME to WE.

**REPETITION WITHOUT REPETITIVENESS** – This statement, made by Dr. Richard Schmidt, is echoed in the drill design section by Hugh McCutcheon. Research shows that random training is superior to blocked training – in retention, and in problem solving difficult or novel situations. The motor learning cousin to this statement is that variable practice is superior to learning and performance over constant practice. Create small changes in the practice environment, like playing on grass or sand (not just indoor), using smaller courts or varied noise levels, or even different balls. Change the scoring, change the teams, change the number of contacts before you send it over the net (the 1897 rules allowed you to "air dribble" as long as you wanted until you crossed the 4-foot dribbling line). ASK THE PLAYERS how they might make this more fun or challenging.

**WE PRACTICE FOR PERFORMANCE, NOT PRACTICE** – At a recent USOC symposium on motor learning, the question kept being asked back to the coaches: "Are you practicing for practice or for performance?" In reality, we are practicing to perform better at a later time. As a result, even though the chaos of random training looks



worse, it is simply going to help all athletes perform better when it matters! Randomly trained players outperform blocked trained players in the days following practice. Schmidt wryly observed in one of his motor learning texts how a golfer hits on the range (same club over and over), compared to how he/she plays (constantly changing clubs and showing a handicap that does not lower much until he/she plays more). Some of you know this to be true by how a team warms up using blocked training (i.e., tossed balls).

**LEARN WHEN THE TEACHER IS NOT WATCHING** – In an hour practice for minivolley, in a group of 30, the teacher can average 2 minutes per child. In a two-hour practice for older kids, even with a smaller group of only 12 kids, the teacher can average 10 minutes of attention per athlete. The question is, what are the players doing during the other 58 or 110 minutes? Players need to work the most when the leaders are not watching. Otherwise, they will only improve during 2 or 10 minutes a training period.

**DELIBERATE PRACTICE MATTERS** – Dr. Ericsson of Florida State has done decades of research showing that talent is acquired, for the most part, and a high level of performance at most things takes 10,000 hours of deliberate practice. His work has spawned some recent good books, such as Malcom Gladwell's *Outliers*, and Daniel Coyle's *The Talent Code*. You need to focus, not just do it; thus, the word "deliberate" practice. A wise teacher once said, "That which gets measured and rewarded improves."

**Play and Play Mo'–** Practice, along with feedback (both extrinsic [outside you, like coach's words, video, teammate help] and intrinsic [inside you/your self-talk]) is the core reason for getting better. Players must always move toward those 10,000 hours. Burt Fuller, when he was at UCLA, coached Wiz Bachman of the USA Women's 2004 Olympic Volleyball Team. He recently recalled how when Wiz was injured, redshirting, and still healing, she would practice one-armed with her non-dominant, non-injured arm, doing all the skills she could one-handed. Getting more time to play "street" volleyball – no coach, sometimes no net even, is needed more in all areas of our game. It may be why the national teams love to play volleyball as their warm up. ...



The photo depicts more than 80 kids playing on just "two" courts. Putting up runs of rope allows for this large group to warm up and train Pass/Dig – Set – Hit over the "net" in small groups of two to four. I counted more than 25 balls in the air at one time as the kids played, and the coaches caught kids doing it right. After showing the concepts and new skills of the day, we warmed up with these games and then split up into the middle and elementary school gyms and even went outside on a rotation pattern to two outside courts. In all, there was 360 feet of net possible, and even when playing tennis warm ups or speedball and monarch of the court games, the group size per actual net dropped to 10-12 per court, depending on the age group.

**DEVELOP AMAZING LEADERS** – It is not about requiring leadership, but about inspiring it. This is my personal three-word teaching philosophy (what is yours in three words or so?). Why I do not tell a player ever where to serve in a match? My job to do that is in practice; for practice is the "competition" I must win...I must treat them as kids learning volleyball, not volleyball players who happen to be kids!

**TELL MORE STORIES** – Children of all ages are wired to remember stories better than facts or details, so weave the facts and things you want them to learn into stories. Like our ancestors thousands of years ago, we will remember those tales. A Jewish proverb says this well: “What is truer than truth? – the story.” Become a better storyteller.

**CHECK WITH THE SIX FRIENDS OFTEN** - This is my favorite poem for kids to ask, and coaches too, before they hand something in to me or others...

*I HAVE SIX FRIENDS  
WHO SERVE ME TRUE  
THEIR NAMES ARE WHAT, WHERE WHY  
HOW, WHEN AND WHO*

**CATCH THEM DOING IT RIGHT** – Punishment is not necessary in youth volleyball. Volleyball is fun; the kids want to try hard and learn. So always choose encouragement and praise rather than threat of punishment to inspire and motivate.

**I HEAR & I FORGET – I SEE & I REMEMBER – I DO & I UNDERSTAND** – Kids learn by doing, not listening. When you have a choice between explaining or showing, always show briefly, then get them touching the ball as quickly as possible. Your drills should be games, and intros should be 30 seconds or less—then get the balls in play!

**REWARD PERFORMANCE OVER OUTCOME** – Praise an *attempt* to learn a skill or the *attempt* to incorporate a strategy more than actual outcome. Kids who feel free to try new things become learners for life ...and better volleyball players.

**TEACH POSITIVE ERRORS OVER NEGATIVE ERRORS** – This way the learning happens faster and rallies will last longer. For more on this concept, check the USAV Web site – the idea is to err in a way that points still might happen, rather than certain dead-enders. So spike over the net and out, letting your teammates learn what “OUT!” is all about, rather than into the net. Pass/dig a ball straight up, rather than over the net. Set the ball too far off the net rather than too tight or over the net, and so forth.

**FEEDFORWARD WORKS BETTER THAN FEEDBACK** – It’s human nature for all of us to accept a positive, encouraging reminder on what we are *about* to do willingly. Our job is not to point out the past error, it is to encourage and inspire future success. Speaking to young learners about what they are about to do also teaches them to be their own coach and control their own destiny. FeedForward coaching is collaborative in nature. The athletes can feel that you are on their side to help them succeed rather than being just another grown-up telling them what they did wrong. FeedForward allows your coaching to make a real difference in kids’ lives, and it also makes coaching more fun for you!

**KIDS DON’T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW, UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE** – You need to know as much as you can about the kids you are working with, and at the end of the book is a “Player Info Page” that you can print back-to-back to get a one-page informative information sheet on your older players.

**SCREAM WHEN THEY SUCCEED, NEVER WHEN THEY ERR** – One of the most amazing things I experience when I do a coaching clinic is to see how many hands go up when I ask how many in the crowd remember a negative experience or even single negative comment from a coach. These people remember this painful stuff even half a century later...for the animation is given when a negative happens, rather than a positive. Since we only

remember action, get excited when they do it right, and stay calm when they do things wrong. This calmness goes a long way to helping kids be confident that making a mistake is okay. ...

**WARM-UP DOES NOT REQUIRE STRETCHING** – Remember how you sat for hours, then the recess bell went off. Did any child jog and/or stretch before getting the most out of that 15-minute chance to be active? Did the children come back complaining of pulled muscles? You need to get the body warm if it is cold, but games do that fine.

**TEACH HOW TO ATTACK WITH BOTH HANDS** – I can't say this enough! From the start, young kids need to know how to play/attack a volleyball with both hands so they can make in-the-air saves/adjustments and land safely. Would you make a hoops, football, soccer, tennis player play one-handed? Teach them to use their non-dominant hand. You will make them more all-around players.

**USE EMPOWERING NICKNAMES ONLY** – It is amazing what happens when you only give young kids powerful nicknames – they rise to be the name given them. Too often nicknames are given for past errors and the like – make sure if you give them a nickname, it is one that is positive, not negative.

**REMEMBER THE HOLIDAYS** – It is important for kids that the holidays are celebrated, even in the gym. For very little cost at the dollar store, you can decorate your training courts to celebrate Thanksgiving, St. Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day, etc. Get some 25-foot holiday "vines" and weave them into the net. Bring out the construction paper and crayons and have the kids make the decorations for the court/gym. In a related way, when you know it is a participant's birthday, celebrate it. Give him/her the "Monarch's Chair" to sit in for a water break, and you deliver a special glass of water. Let him/her go first/lead the games. Finish with a circle talk where everyone says something positive about the birthday child.

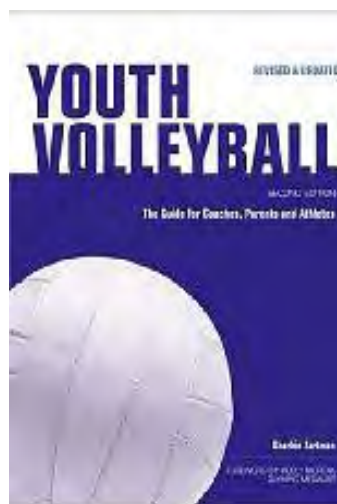
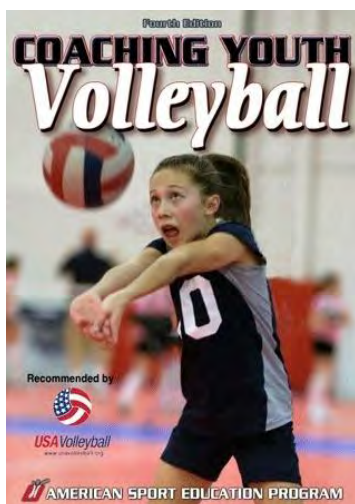
**WELCOME TO THE CAROUSEL** - Volleyball is a VERY random game and a team game, so no individual can win a game by themselves. This also means players and teams will play well and play poorly, for one point and many in a row. I have seen a 13 and under team at a Junior Olympic Qualifying tournament win game one 25-0, then against the same team lose 0-25 I have watched NCAA Championships and Olympic semifinal games be lost while one of the teams scored zero points at this top level. Caca occurs, and you just need to focus on what you can control – the next point only – not the past points, nor two points ahead. This is what we call "Right here, right now" focus – and the younger you can help kids understand this, the better. Focus on performance over outcome; reward effort and hustle over the scoreboard, and you will win more games when scoring matters. Joan Duda from England studied recent Olympic medalists and found that nearly 80 percent of the medals were won by teams/coaches who focused on the process over the medal, according to the Positive Coach Alliance. Your kids will go round and round and up and down. Enjoy it all, for it is a game and should be fun.

## TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR GRASSROOTS & MINIVOLLEY COACHING

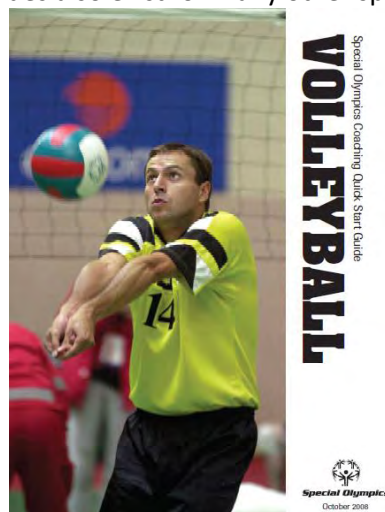
1. NEVER BE A CHILD'S LAST COACH
2. NEVER SAYETH CAN'T, DON'T OR TRY
3. FOCUS ON POTENTIAL OVER LIMITATIONS
4. FOCUS ON EFFORT OVER OUTCOME
5. IT IS WHAT IT IS
6. RANDOM TRAINING PROMOTES SUPERIOR LEARNING, AS DOES WHOLE SKILL TRAINING

7. CACA OCCURS
8. BE DEMANDING, NEVER DEMEANING
9. ALWAYS USE POSITIVE FEEDFORWARD SPECIFICITY, NEVER NEGATIVE FEEDBACK/GENERAL WORDING
10. ELICIT PASSION, CONFIDENCE, RESPECT, SKILL, DEDICATION, ETC. BY DEMONSTRATING THE SAME

For more tips on how to make minivolley your best sport option all year long, there are two books worth adding to your library. *Coaching Youth Volleyball*, by Human Kinetics, is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition – it first came out in 1993. *Youth Volleyball* by Sharkie and Pat Zartman is the other.



The other set of resources for beginners of any age in volleyball, updated in 2008, is the *Special Olympics Coaching Guide* and their *Quick Start Guide for Volleyball*. Both can be downloaded free of charge from <http://www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx>, where guides also exist for many other sports.



## U.S. Olympic Materials for Teachers and Coaches

<http://sports.specialolympics.org/specialo.org/Special /English/Coach/Coaching/Volleyba/default.htm>



For back issues of the *Olympic Coach E* magazine, go to: <http://www.teamusa.org/About-the-USOC/Sport-Performance/Coaching-Education/Coach-E-Magazine.aspx>

In closing, **share your ideas and secrets to help grow the game for all kids**. As you will see below, there are many more ideas that are valuable, if not in our top 10 list. **Everything changes**, so take time to read all the new ideas in this minivolley book, as many will help you at ALL levels of the game!

You can download dozens of articles for players, like “It’s Not Where You Are, It’s Who You Are,” “Am I Too Short to Play Volleyball?” “How Do I Spike Harder?” as well as tips for each skill and much more at USA Volleyball’s Web site. Just click on the grassroots button. I also urge you to include the concept of Olympism into your training. To quote the Olympic Charter, “*Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.*” Take advantage of the many great things the International Olympic Committee gives away free for educators at [http://www.olympic.org/uk/passion/studies/index\\_uk.asp](http://www.olympic.org/uk/passion/studies/index_uk.asp) and the “Best of Us” Campaign that communicates the key Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect to a global youth audience.



**LEARN MORE THROUGH IMPACT AND CAP COURSES** – This book contains a great amount of information to help you get started in the youth and Junior Olympic Volleyball, and person to help you with this next Program and IMPACT stands for of Coaching Theory. Click on the see the online IMPACT Webinar High School Associations online volleyball-specific CAP course, and in-person CAP courses offered nationwide. You will take the ideas learned in this minivolley book to the next level of training and coaching, and get certified by the National Governing Body of the sport as recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee–USA Volleyball.





## Chapter 5: Minivolley “Rulebook”

USA Volleyball has a full rule book annually updated called *Domestic Competition Regulations*, which follows the rules of the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB). The set of rules in this publication is designed to simplify the DCR regulations for youth play for 3- to 11-year-old-teams, which should be playing less than the six-person game.

### Teams

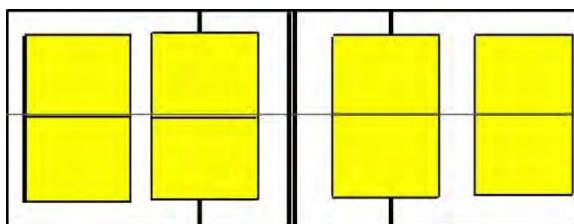
Teams can be made of two, three or four players per side. Teams can be all of one gender, or coed at any percentage. This is a non-contact game. These rules can also be used to play *one-on-one*, with each player being able to hit the ball one to three times in a row before playing the ball back over the net.

*Spirit of the Rule: Substitutions are unlimited, and often should be done by “circulation,” where the players rotate from playing to waiting out in a consistent pattern, even when the ball is in play, rotating positions and from sub to on-court each time the ball crosses the net. A team can play with one player fewer than team size for the program. U.S. teams play many two-, three- and four-person games, with uneven numbers, to allow players to touch more balls per rally, to cover more court area, and to learn faster than playing 6 vs. 6.*

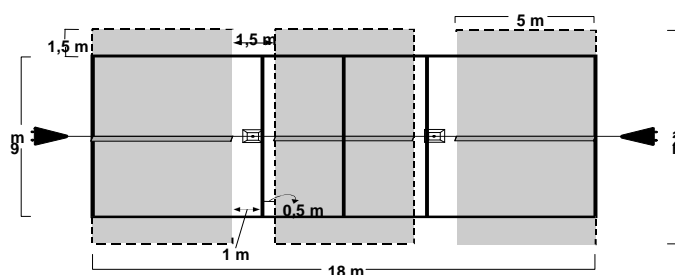
### Playing Area Options

Courts need to be consistent for the league, and smaller than the adult-sized courts. Most common options include:

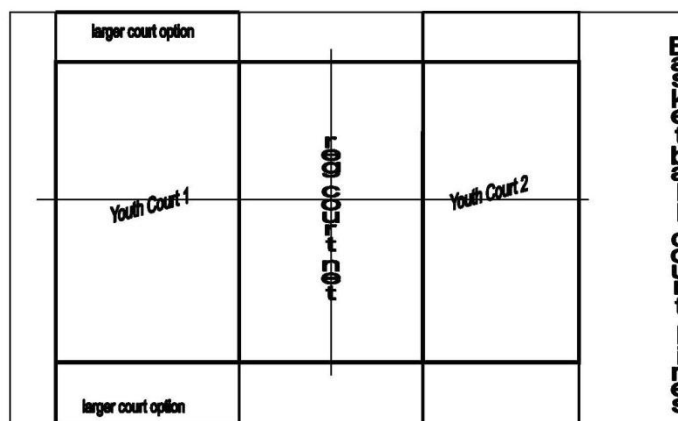
- Two youth courts on one regular adult court net - 4 meters wide each with a 2-meter buffer between each court sideline, marking the net buffer area with antennas, tape, swim noodles, etc. The *depth* per court can vary from 4 meters, to 4.5, to 6, and for older youth, 9 meters. It is important to make the 2- meter buffer, and not use a shared sideline (making the courts 5 meters wide with no buffer), for safety reasons.
- FOUR youth courts on two linked adult nets – again 4 meters wide, and either 4.5 meters deep (adult court sideline), or 6 meters (normal basketball court sideline).



- THREE courts on one regular court using two nets tied into one.



- d. ANY racquetball court, installing “wallyball” nets. No chasing of the ball, big empowering noise when the kids spike, size is great for youth AND sitting volleyball, the Paralympic sport option to experience or use.
- e. ANY tennis court! Leave the net up as a divider net, string rope/nets down the court center (attach to the fence, chalk down court lines). These are great training/program areas available in almost every sized town.
- f. TWO youth courts on two linked adult nets, 6 meters wide (adult end line to adult 3-meter line) and 4.5 or 6 meters deep as in B.



### **Playing Surface Options**

The rulebook notes that the surface must be flat, horizontal and uniform. Youth games around the world are played on city streets, concrete surfaces (tennis courts can be modified into great kid courts), grass courts, wood courts and beach or river sand. As long as the court is consistent for both teams, play on! A buffer area of 2 meters before changing into a new surface or a wall is required around all sides of the court.

*Spirit of the Rule: Lines are suggested but not required in youth volleyball. Marking just the corners allows the kids to determine the ball being in or out by consensus, including the important concept of “do over!”*

### **Nets & Balls**

When possible, a net should be used so the players can learn to play out of the net. To make more nets and save money, a simple rope can serve as a fine “net” for all levels of youth play. The official ball for kids under 12 is a “lite” version of the adult ball. These are adult-sized volleyballs, which are constructed of lighter materials and are thus easier to contact for younger players. The net height for a youth program may vary, from 5-6 feet for younger players, to 7 feet for 12 & unders. A badminton net/court, without extenders for younger players and with for the older kids, is an excellent youth court option.

*Spirit of the Rule: When making two youth courts on one adult net (indoor or portable outdoor nets), put an antenna or some marker on the top of the net, so the edge of that court is seen. If no such markers exist, the pole is the out of bounds court marker on one side, while the line below the net is the other marker. Regarding balls, beach balls, outdoor volleyballs, oversized volleyballs, “market” balls, even balloons and balloon balls are also*



*fine options, as some of these move slower and are not impacted by the wind if used indoors. Both sides are using the same ball, so the game is fair.*

### **Uniforms**

They need to match, shorts and shirts, and be numbered 1-99.

*Spirit of the Rule: For youth programs, while looking like a team is important, it is not required to have matching tops or shorts. It allows for good branding of your program, but is not mandatory. Jewelry must be removed, except for medical alert and religious ones.*

### **Coach**

Calls time outs and substitutions, and determines the starting line-up order.

*Spirit of the Rule: The game teaches the game, so a team does not have to have a coach at all to play. That which you teach, you learn; therefore, we encourage older players (10-12) to spend time coaching the younger players in your program. There only must be adult supervision around the activity area; many great physical education moments occur when one teacher is training a class of 30 or more.*

### **Warm-up**

Optional for youth play. If your space allows you to warm up safely while other teams are playing, then you can simply get on the court and start play once you have the first server determined. Teams warming up should have an equal amount of time on the court. During this time, serve or side is determined, either by a coin toss, "odd or even" or even rock-paper-scissors. The team winning the toss can elect to serve first, or pick a side, and the other team then gets to pick the other option. The warm-up can be shared on the same court, or one team can warm up (hitting, serving, etc.) for a short set time, two to four minutes, while the other team is off the court.

*Spirit of the Rule: When warming up outside, each team helps the other team stop spikes and/or serves so nobody has to chase a ball far down the field or beach. The best way to warm up is by having teams pass, set and hit – and switch sides after a couple of minutes to hit from both the left and the underdeveloped RIGHT side of the court.*

### **Playing Format**

To Score a Point – Basically, there are three ways to score a point: 1) the opponents make an error; 2) the opponents get a penalty for poor conduct; 3) the team puts the ball down on the opponent's court. If an error occurs simultaneously, a replay is called; otherwise, the first fault made is the one called, and errors that occur afterwards, unless a conduct violation, do not matter.

*Spirit of the Rule: Transitional and cooperative scoring of a "point" is also an option to promote more rallying. In cooperative scoring, the ball is the opponent, and both teams work together to get as high a score as possible by counting each three contacts per side/net crossing of the ball as a point. A transitional point is scored only after the two teams rally a pre-determined number of rallies across the net (much like Americans determine who will serve in table tennis by playing "P-I-N-G") before a point can go up on the scoreboard.*

To Win a Set

Sets, or games, are played to 25 points around the world, with the winning team having to have at least a two-point lead.

Spirit of the Rule: *Kids like to play more teams, for shorter matches, than one team for a long time. You can play to fewer than 25 points, or start each game above zero (e.g. 10-10 and we are playing to 25).*

### To Win a Match

A match can be either one game, or best two out of three, with the deciding third set, if needed, being played to 15 points.

Spirit of the Rule: *When a match is over before the scheduled time, let the kids keep playing until the next match is on.*

### **Rotation and Position Faults**

At the moment of the serve being struck, all starting players must be on the court or court lines, not standing outside the court. Rotation for service moves in a clockwise direction. A player may not touch any part of the opponent's side of the court, except for with the foot or feet. As there is no center line on many courts, err in this case in keeping/teaching the players to stay away from the other team's side by making sure their feet are certainly partially on their own side of the court. You can unintentionally touch the net poles and guy wires.

Spirit of the Rule: *Equal playing time is strongly encouraged, rather than having starters and subs. Rotating through the line up so that players come in to serve and/or into the front row, as long as each player is circulating equally through the rotational pattern (not determined by the number or serves made or errors), is best.*

NOTE: In northern Europe, the minivolley game is played with the "circulation rule," which means every time the ball crosses over the net, the sending team rotates, including, if there is a "sub" or two standing off the court, they immediately rotate on. This option is strongly encouraged to be used at times to stop specialization of the players and to promote the learning that comes from random training.

### **States of Play**

#### Ball In

The ball touches the surface of the playing court, including the boundary lines.

Spirit of the Rule: *If the line bounces, the ball is good.*

#### Ball Out

The ball touches completely outside the playing court; touches an object or person standing out of play (more than 2 meters away from the side/end lines); passes completely under the net; or touches the support lines, antenna, posts, or net itself outside the antenna.

Spirit of the Rule: *The ball can touch the ceiling, and play continues, unless the ball is banked in from one team to the other team's side.*

#### Playing the Ball

The ball may not be carried/thrown. The ball cannot be double hit, except on the first contact of your three possible hits. Unintentional double hits (e.g. off a player's arm and glancing off the head) are allowed. The ball must be hit over the net with a maximum of three contacts. The ball can hit ANY part of the player's body, including the feet.

Spirit of the Rule: *Let them play – call only flagrant faults, and let them learn. Focus on the performance over the outcome of the contact or play. Long rallies are fun, as we are playing VOLLEYball. Hitting the ball over after one or two contacts is allowed; however good teams work to get all three contacts – pass-set-attack or good pass, good set, good bye!*

### Ball-handling Faults

Hitting the ball more than four times. Lifting/carrying/throwing the ball.

Spirit of the Rule: *As the ball by the laws of physics must actually be coming to rest a tiny bit before rebounding away, the term “visibly comes to rest” is a judgment call. Give them a lot of latitude when first learning to play, so the rallies continue and only the blatant carrying of the ball is called.*

### Net Play

Players may not touch the net, unless the ball drives the net into them. The ball may hit the net and continue over at any time, as long as it passes fully between the antennas.

Spirit of the Rule: *The most common injury in volleyball occurs during collisions/contact right at the net. Make sure to teach aggressive players to jump farther back, and always stay out of the net.*

### **Skill-Specific Play**

#### Service

Service can be accomplished by overhead action, jump/spike action, underhanded or windmill (roundhouse). Youth players can hit the ball out of their hand, but should work toward a low and consistent toss in time. A youth player gets two chances at service tossing, letting the ball drop to the ground (not catching it) if the first toss is not good. Serves can take place anywhere on the end line of your side of the court, and up to 5 meters behind the end line, if space permits. The server must hit the ball before stepping on the end line or into the court (a jump server may be above the court, but must serve the ball before landing in the court). You may not kick the ball for a serve, however.

Spirit of the Rule: *As some servers can dominate the game at the youth level, it is permitted to limit each server to a maximum of three to five serves before rotating and having a new server from the same team. Likewise, it is permitted to move the service line up into the court to allow younger/weaker players to get the serve over the net. Should the endline be fewer than 2 meters from the back wall, players can step in at all levels to wherever the 2 meters from the wall line would be. Only call service foot faults if the player is gaining a clear advantage. Good Miss: over the net and out...Bad Miss: into the net.*

#### Reception/Defense

Normal ball handling rules apply; just remember first ball reception can be done overhead, like a set, or with a forearm pass. The ball can rebound off any surface of your body, so heading the ball, like soccer, or even kicking up a save is allowed. The ball can be touched one- or two-handed, as well.

Spirit of the Rule: *We want to encourage hustle/effort. Good Miss? Playing the ball up high and/or to the center of the court. Bad Miss? Playing the ball over the net or on a very low trajectory.*

#### Setting



This is the second contact by the team, most frequently placing the ball up to be spiked by using two hands. The set does not have to go the way a player is facing, and can even be set behind the setting player, called a backset. This second contact is, of course, also legal if done with a forearm pass/dig action. The main desire is to make the ball hittable.

*Spirit of the Rule: This is the ball, when setting with both hands that players may carry/throw. Give them a lot of latitude when they first start setting. Good Miss? Too high, too far off the net, too far inside the court. Bad Miss? Too low, too close to the net, too far outside the court.*

### Attacking

This is the act of directing the ball toward the opponent's side. A player can jump and spike or tip, stand and set it over, forearm pass it over, etc. The tip action (one- or two-handed) cannot be caught or thrown over. Any one of the two to four players on a youth team may jump and attack the ball from above the top of the net.

*Spirit of the Rule: Getting the attackers to start learning first OFF the net, and running, jumping and swinging fast. Good Miss? Over the net but out. Bad Miss? Into the net.*

### Blocking

A ball blocked counts as a touch, but does not count as one of the team's three hits, and can thus be played by a blocker without being called for a double hit. A team cannot block the serve or block a ball that is completely on the other side of the net (it must be hit into you; you cannot block a ball unless part of the ball is on your side of the net, or the team hits the ball into your block). In youth volleyball, only one player maximum should jump to make a block.

*Spirit of the Rule: Blocking is one of the ways to get a lead in rally scoring (stuff blocking). However, unless the net is low enough that the blocker can get his/her full hand above the top of the net during the blocking action, it is better not to block at all and teach the player(s) to read and play defense. Many attacks at the youth level do not deserve a block, and at most the attack needs only a one-person block, taking the crosscourt angle. A double block is permitted by the official rules, but is strongly discouraged. Good Miss? Not touching the ball. Bad Miss? Touching the net, or blocking the ball out of bounds.*

### Injury

Stop the game immediately and tend to the injured player. A replay is called.

*Spirit of the Rule: Volleyball is a very safe, non-contact sport. Still, a sprained ankle and jammed fingers can happen. Should the team size drop below the correct number per side due to injury or just a no show, it is fine to let the team that is short a player continue.*

### Referee

Stands by one of the net supports and directs the match from start to end, with his/her decision being final. The referee whistles for each new serve. Referees make the ball handling calls, in and out calls, and other judgment decisions. It is encouraged that the kids learn to referee when not playing in a match, with some sort of adult guidance and teaching going on at the beginning of the youth's refereeing experience. If a referee whistles by mistake, a replay is called.

*Spirit of the Rule: A referee is not required, as long as both teams are willing to call their own faults, including net contact fouls. When there is no referee, play overs are important to agree on quickly so play can continue. A*

player may not contact the net at any time when there is no referee (as opposed to a player being able to touch the net after the ball hits the floor when there is a referee).

### **Parental Conduct**

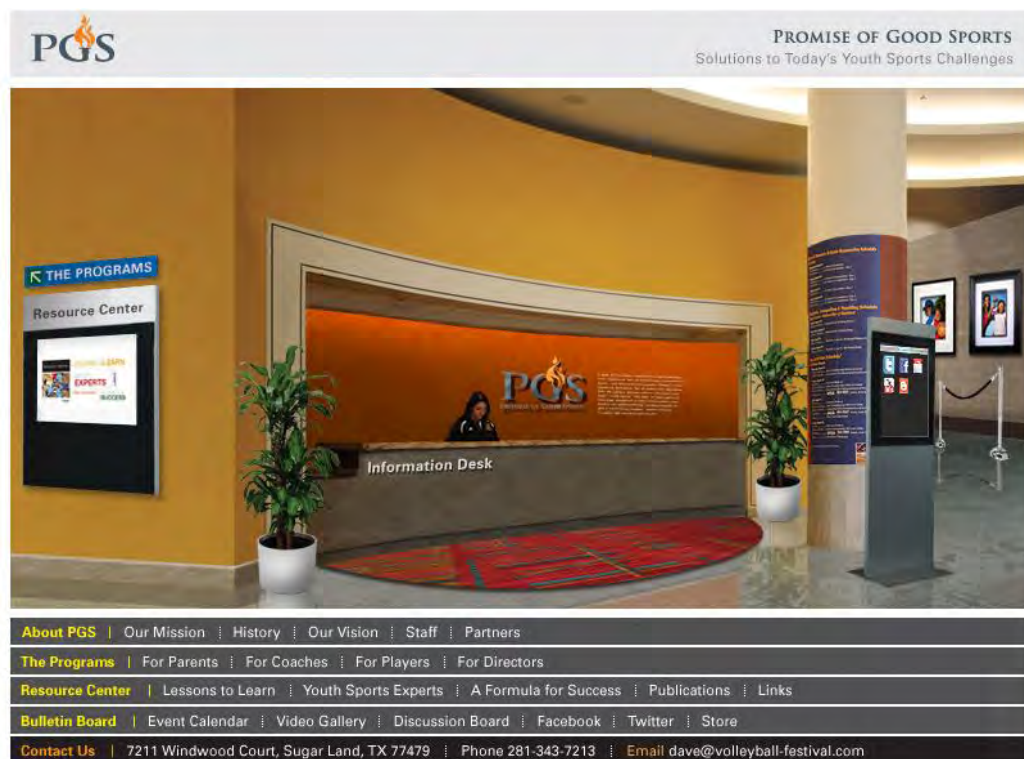
Kids first, winning second. Praise in public, criticize in private. Be the most encouraging parent you know.

Spirit of the Rule - *It you have problems with parents, we recommend two groups to get extra help.*

The Positive Coaching Alliance at [www.positivecoach.org](http://www.positivecoach.org)



And the Promise of Good Sports at [www.promiseofgoodsports.org](http://www.promiseofgoodsports.org) has a lot of great parental material for volleyball programming specifically too.



Promise for Good Sports  
19855 Southwest Freeway, Suite 200  
Sugar Land, TX 77479  
Phone 281-207-1070  
Fax 281-207-1071

## KEEP 'EM PLAYING PROGRAMS

This is a request to all educators and JOV Clubs on behalf of USA Volleyball, to please assist in giving kids the chance to make volleyball their sport. It is a sport that takes more than a few days to start getting the hang of it. Yet in school programs, where several elementary schools narrow down to the one junior high, and of course then the junior highs into one high school, dozens, even hundreds of kids are cut from the chance to play volleyball at the school level.

In Colorado Springs, the largest school district worked with USAV to create a place through the school program for these players who were cut in the past. Schools still had their 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams, but also created Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday teams. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams practiced Monday through Thursday, and these other four teams (and fewer if it was a smaller Junior High), practiced with the 7<sup>th</sup> grade team/coach leading both teams in training – one practice a week for the other four teams. Some schools have three courts, and/or a coach helping the one day a week team specifically. The weekday teams would get together against other weekday teams of the same day/level and play school against school on a Friday or Saturday, with parents helping out, for the 10-12 weeks of the volleyball season. At one high school, the half the freshman team selected came from the weekday team s – kids who would otherwise have been cut in the past.

In a related way, JOV Clubs and USAV Regions have helped reach down the pipeline. They stage:

1. Elementary school festivals – one long day of small court 3 or 4 person team tourneys on smaller courts, so the schools get to play other schools
2. School District Festivals – where PE teams from elementary and junior high classes get to compete within the same larger school districts.
3. Jr High State or City Championships – where areas that do not have scholastic teams, invite every school in the state is to send a PE All-star team (which often trains 2-3 weeks in advance of the “championships”)
4. JOV Club Coaching Leagues – mentioned already, where junior teams coach minivolley teams on their practice courts for one hour as part of their two hour practice, and help coach those mini teams in weekend competitions.

### **Paralympic, Deaflympic and Special Olympic Players**

A player with a hard cast on is not allowed to play volleyball, even if the cast is padded. Only a small finger splint is allowed. Please be a talent scout for our USA teams with these young players. Volleyball is played in both a “unified” and standard form for Special Olympians. An entire program and training manual for these athletes is available (go to [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)). Athletes who are hearing impaired should consider trying out for the USA Deaf National Teams (men and women), who compete every four years in the Deaflympics all over the world (<http://www.usdeafsports.org>.) Finally, those disabled athletes missing a limb should check out the USA Standing and Sitting Volleyball National Team Programs, with sitting teams that train year round at the University of Central Oklahoma. Scholarships are available for collegiate-level players, and the teams compete in both the World Championships, held in 2006, 2010, etc., and the Paralympics, held two weeks after the Olympics in the same city ([www.usparalympics.org](http://www.usparalympics.org)). The USA women won a bronze medal in Athens and a silver in Beijing, and one of the best players in China was only 15 years old! The WOVD – the World Organisation of Volleyball for the Disabled - has charge of the program. Make sure to visit their website and Facebook pages, [www.wovd.info](http://www.wovd.info) for more on the international game. If you are interested in starting a disabled sitting program here in the USA, simply email [info@usav.org](mailto:info@usav.org) with your mailing address and we will send you the WOVD development program CD at no charge. It has lots of footage of sitting volleyball play, sitting volleyball posters, articles, history and the Level 1 WOVD coaching course material all in one place!



Following is a list of the materials we use to playfully develop a wide range of motor skills and body awareness in younger kids for USA Volleyball programming. The vast majority of these items are either made/free or very inexpensive, as this manual is for all NORCECA nations, with a focus on the USA. You will not see expensive scooters or high-end technical items as options. For JOV programs, you can order PE teacher materials from [www.sportime.com](http://www.sportime.com), the biggest and best equipment supplier online, or there are many others offering sporting equipment. The average PE closet has lots of great items, and if your school does activity days outside, other fun equipment can be borrowed from that program, as well.

The list below comes from decades of creating motor skill fun activities while focusing on volleyball for elementary school kids. Thanks mom, and grazie, gracias, and so much more to the thousands of coaches and teachers I have been lucky to work with from around the world for your creative and playful ideas. If you have other low-cost activities your players enjoy, let us know at [mvp@usav.org](mailto:mvp@usav.org).

Music can be used to start and stop the movement station options. You can have them walk backwards, kneel, hop and lie down etc. Boundaries can be made from ropes and cones, remember that lines can be a bit too abstract for preschool kids. Take advantage of the follow the leader option and if you are skilled at Simon Says, take advantage of it or learn it! This is all child centered to develop locomotor and object control skills.

**Volleyballs** – Molten First Touch® balls are the best options for 3 to 9 year olds when used indoors. They come in 70, 140 and 210 g versions and cost only about \$10 each when bought in quantities of six or more. The 70-gram ball is GREAT for indoor little kid play around the house. Buy lots for your young nieces and nephews. The 140 gram is the BEST option for all grade school use. The 210 is just 20 grams lighter than the more durable Lite Ball listed below, so the price difference is what you have to choose between. All First Touch cloth volleyballs come with a bladder/valve and have varying weights of fabric covers.



Molten® VB U12 Volleyballs, the official 12 & under ball of USA Volleyball and the USYVL, is the best and most durable option for training 10 to 12 year olds. It weighs in at 230 grams and has a synthetic leather cover, while the new “Light Touch” is one you can give way to each “older” player as they are very inexpensive too.



**Balloons** – The ideal youngest kid ball for starting to learn to play, as it takes so much longer to fall to the floor. Basically, 12-inch helium rounds are at party stores and the Xmarts all over the USA. Making a balloon ball for home play is found in the appendix.

**Whistle** – Part of the game, and saves your voice when needing to get larger groups to gather round.

**Whiteboard** – Used to score your hangman or tic-tac-toe games (called crosses and naughts down under), and write other messages or lists of activities for each day. Good teachers have a chalkboard and use it. Gym teachers need one too, even if it is Post-it Notes® paper versions on the wall, or an easel with flip chart paper. Here is a shot of gold medal coach Hugh McCutcheon and his favorite teaching tool.



**Open Mesh Colored Laundry Bags** – Save money and have an easy way to carry your volleyballs and other loose equipment from site to site. Choosing different colors allows you to organize your equipment in different ways, either by age or station options.

**Playground Balls** – Like you see in tall grocery store or Wal-Mart® bins – usually \$1-2, permanently inflated and superlight plastic with all sorts of cartoon character and design options.

**Balance Trainers** – Simply use flattened, discarded balls—basketball, soccer, volleyball are fine. Get the kids to stand on them with both legs, and then one-legged, on the uneven surface the ball makes.

**Make a Ball** – In Africa, the kids make a ball out of woven banana leaves, tied into a ball by tight woven “string.”

**Used Tires** – Just have one or two around the court for balance and movement and other challenges you create.

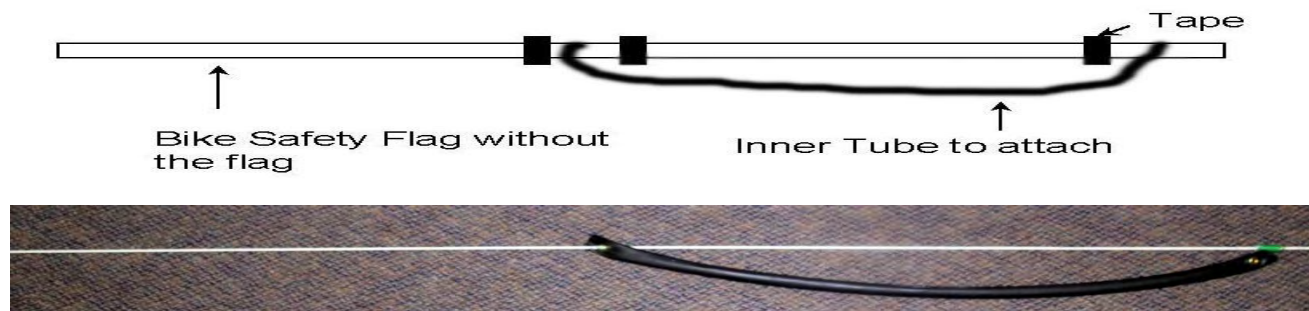
**Sheets & Blankets** – These are bigger flat tossing/serving targets, which can be folded smaller as the kids’ skills and ages increase. They also can be used for a fun game of “blanket volleyball,” where four to six players hold the edges of the blanket and learn to run together to catch a lite ball, or other safe flying object then fling it up in unison over the net/rope/space to their opponents or teammates. Again, this activity is cooperatively scored to start and teach the skill, then competitively scored as they mature. Other great games are “blocked volleyball” where you play a game over sheets hanging from the net and blocking their view, and “garbage clean up” where you put the sheets over the net again and place 10-20 soft items on a side and see if one half can clean up their side before the other side, by flinging the items over the sheets to the other team. Plus, you have a blanket should some really little kid need a nap!



**River Stones** - Randomly tape colored, irregularly shaped “stones” to the floor, then hop across a “stream,” varying the color patterns to make each trip challenging.

**2x4s n’ Rope** – You make these into monster feet (one player walking) or team walking boards for two to four kids. You buy 2x4s and drill holes on each side for looped rope for each participant. Loop the rope to make the two handles needed; don’t have only one single line rope per side/person. Then you can learn to walk on these new low stilts and even have races as their skills improve. The monster feet can be made for one player to use in various lengths, while the team monster feet are much longer. 2x 4s are also great balance beams to walk on.

**Bike Safety Flag Antennas** – Created from discarded bike inner tubes, some tape, and the rod. Remember swim noodles can also be used in full length to show the “safety space” that you should have between each court.



**Swim Noodles** – Target markers and “dead zone” areas for rope and regular nets. Simply slice the noodle down the tube to the center, but not all the way through, and clip on. Cut into short target area markers, or leave a full 2 meters long to mark as the safety boundary zones between courts. These noodles will be used for many other things to follow, including weaving them into the top of a net and notching the bottom of a 2- to 3-foot piece of a noodle for an inexpensive antenna. Finally, use the shorter noodles to play floor hockey with a crushed soda can, or as a bat to hit a balloon ball or Molten First Touch® for safe “stick and ball” games.



**Fitness/Dance** – You simply create stations that are part of a circuit, where the kids do sit-ups, toe reaches, jumping jacks, pushup variations and other fitness moves. This can include doing dance moves, which they either create (do the monkey, be a kangaroo), or that are learned – like the twist or moonwalking. Have one or two dice at this station and the kids can roll them to see how many actions to perform (between two and 12), doing a bit of math teaching along the way.

**Rope** – Every program should have many jump ropes around, for various uses, and they simply can be made from the same 5/8" rope used to make a kids' net, as seen in so many previous variations. Certainly, every child needs to know how to jump rope and be taught by their peers the fun variations and patterns of jumping and maneuvering the rope. Then you simply tie two jump ropes together and get the kids into groups of three or four, with two spinning one or even two ropes for their partner(s) to jump.

Ropes can also be made into targets for serving and tossing games. Finally, they serve as shapes to learn to walk a "tightrope," which is simply the rope laid down on the ground in spirals and hard cornering and circles and more. Ropes and jump ropes can combined and made into a maze, with dead ends

**Elastic** – Usually, you get this from a fabric shop in long lengths you then can cut like rope into other desired lengths. The primary game to teach/play is the GREAT coordination and balance game we call in America "Chinese Jump Rope," usually played with three players, (two enders and the jumper).



**Hula Hoops** – These are for learning and teaching the skill of hula hooping. (don't forget music!). They also serve as wonderful flat serving targets. They make the holes for playing a "round of miniature golf" (how many serves, shots or tosses to hit inside the hole/hoop, including bank shots for some versions. You can "putt your golf ball" by hitting a playground ball or even First Touch lite ball with your foam noodle "club" or you can use your leg as your "club"). Span a swim noodle between two sides of a hula hoop, and you have a great top/bottom bean bag toss target, putting it on the floor or at an angle to be tossed at. They can be held and crawled through as a tunnel

**Power Grips** – These are used to put up a net on a smooth wall surface of a racquetball court. Get the Power Grip six-inch TL6-FH with red line vacuum indicator and a tough plastic pad protector. PO Box 368 Laurel, MT 59044 888-POWRGRIP (888-769-7474) <http://www.powrgrip.com/cgi-bin/powrgrip/index.html>



**Plastic Badminton Birdies** – Most schools and homes have a shuttlecock or two around; they are very inexpensive if you don't. Volley the birdie by hand, or kick it up with your feet like a hackysack. In Brazil, they play with larger "petecas" which have colored feathers or white ones. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peteca>



**Stilts** – You can make these out of big TIN CANS, with string as the handles, or the classic handheld ones with wooden rods and pegs for the feet. I suggest you take a look at the history and usage of stilts at



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stilts> to learn more about why kids should learn to use them. There are many patterns for making stilts online, as well as companies selling a variety of levels of the many stilts available.

**Divider Nets** – Deer netting is the most affordable option. It runs \$25 for a 7' by 100' roll. Cut it in half and zip-tie the halves together and you have a 14"-high divider net that is 50 feet long for very low cost. The mesh is lightweight and allows those doing the other sports to see you spiking and playing the game. Here you can see it in use while the kids play.



**2 -Liter Empty Soda Bottles** – These are great bowling pins to use to knock down with a ball, or by body bowling and learning to move body parts to knock down the pins. They are also simple cones for pattern running and marking just like any cone.

**Construction Paper** – Fold lengthwise and you get a short hurdle that is challenging for the youngest kids. Fold the other way and get a higher hurdle to leap over. If the child misses, he/she simply crushes the paper rather than falling on/over the hurdle. You can also write on them (things that matter to your program in the process of developing leadership and good sportsmanship; create share/target games from messages on one side).

**Butcher Paper and Crayons** – Combined with painter's or masking tape, you can draw outlines of good form, make bigger targets, write up plans if your white board is missing– an elementary teacher's tool for sure. Draw the outline of each player lying down and have them fill their body outline in – then cut it up and make it into a puzzle, in a race or timed game as well.

**Tunnels** – Here you can make, using the blankets, sheets and hula hoops, simple tunnels to climb through. You can also spend \$35-50 for a 6-foot fully made tunnel to use in various ways, including obstacle courses and as taller serving golf holes.

**Sidewalk Chalk** – Welcome the great kids at the gym entrance by writing hello to all or their names. Take the kids outside when weather permits and play hopscotch. Draw their body outlines outside and color them. Then play tossing games onto their drawings. All you need is sidewalk chalk!

**Beanbags** – They can be made from rice or hard beans permanently sewn into small, colorful fabric bags, or you can buy them. You can raid an older sibling's collection of Beanie Babies® and claim the unwanted ones, as the animals can be used for different tossing patterns or scoring options in some games. Have the kids draw bull's-eyes or other wacky targets to toss onto. Draw a larger tic-tac-toe or even shuffleboard triangle on the paper (butcher paper option here, painter taped down). You can play bocce ball with beanbags in a gym, using a Beanie Baby® as the target ball.

**Balancing Rods** – At craft shops, you can find full peacock feathers, which are a great challenge to learn to balance vertically as long as possible. You can also learn to do this with small sticks, and any length of those versatile swim noodles.

**Juggling** – It is important to learn to juggle. When things are weighted the same, you can learn easier. We suggest also starting slowly, using colored nylon mesh scarves, which allows for slow-motion juggling. Then move up to golf balls or small bags like hackey-sack balls.

**Yo-Yos** – Use simple, inexpensive yo-yos so kids who can do tricks can teach kids who don't, from the simple moves to walking the dog and cat's cradle, once you know how to make a yo-yo sleep.

**Skillastics** – Creating fitness fun for everyone, [www.skillastics.com](http://www.skillastics.com). This is a great volleyball-based skill/fitness chart to use at these age levels.



**DUCT Tape** – I always carry a roll with me when I travel and teach. Now in colors and different thicknesses, duct tape is a must. Visit a web site for creative leaders—the Duct Tape Guys at <http://www.ducttapeguys.com>. Use it to put down a hopscotch pattern on a long, roll-able rug. It is also important for making the wall serving and spiking station.



**Painters Tape** – This comes in a variety of widths, and two levels of adhesion. The light purple is the least sticky, while the standard blue tape is the stickier option. The tape allows you to mark your program's surface temporarily for things like four square, targets, start/stop lines, etc.

**Piñatas** – using the foam swim noodles, hit balloons hanging from a string.

**Cups** – These can be used in great relay games (Styrofoam® cups, small buckets, etc.). Smaller cups are approximately \$1 for 10 hard/smooth plastic cups. These are great for speed-stacking, a game where the patterns are trained (talk about specificity in training...) and kids work to be the fastest stacker in the patterns

developed. Keep team sizes smaller, so there is a lot of activity and not as much standing around watching. With younger kids you can do some great “matching” games where you hide an equal number of small objects, numbers on paper or even crumpled colored paper, under the cups, and the kids take turns at guessing where the two matching objects are found, putting the wrong guesses back under the same cup. A good remembering game and cool down.

**Nylon Volleyball** – damaged nylon allows you to put a ball pattern in the while in giving grip



Made from long, light fabric – in the examples, stockings are used – sewn into a sphere which balloon in the shell and inflate. Like the balloon appendix, this shell gives some weight to the ball, areas for younger or disabled kids.

**Z Balls** – This is one must-have item for kids of all ages to train and play with, which simply needs to be bought and not made. They cost about \$ 7 each and with the multi-bulbous pattern, bounce and randomly go all over the place. This unpredictability makes for fun reactions and game options. In a related way, playing with a rugby ball or a soft football – even with one bounce like the Newcomb/Tennis game option - is a hoot!

**Tricycle** – bring a tricycle to the practice and make a relay game including riding the bike for the appropriate aged kids. Get older, bigger kids on a tiny trike and lots of laughs will result too.

**The Success Store** – Go to a real “Dollar Store” or go to [www.funexpress.com](http://www.funexpress.com). Buy \$100 worth of trinkets, birthday multiple pack party favors, and get a ton of stuff. Then fill and the award chest full of these goodies for successful accomplishments by the players. Could be 3 serves over in row, pass to target X times, 2 v 2 tourney play with winners, etc. Jimmy Peden of Palmetto RVA says “They LOVE IT.”

## MINIVOLLEY NOTES:



## Chapter 7: Skill Information

Reading is the most important skill in volleyball and with young kids; it will take a long time for that skill to be learned. Reading needs to come in GAMELIKE ways so the skill is of value when they play the game.

In EVERY skill learned, simpler is always better (the less movement, the more accuracy overall). In forearm passing, for example, you could bend your arms in advance and “pray” or finish by swinging up or even praying again. However, a good passer keeps the arms out and straight, and moves to the ball with little arm movement. Since your arms move faster than your feet, if the ball is almost to you, there is no more time to move your feet.

Since the best way to learn is by seeing, take time to visit the best clips of each skill, all shown by gender and skill topic, and hosted by our International Federation of Volleyball, the FIVB.

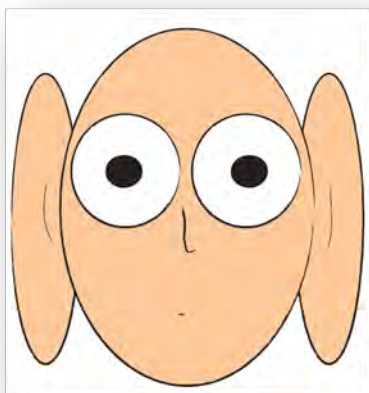
<http://www.fivb.org/en/technical/olympics/2008/men/>

<http://www.fivb.org/en/technical/olympics/2008/women/>

<http://www.fivb.org/EN/Technical/eLibrary/>

Take time to look at all the Dartfish clips at [www.dartfish.tv](http://www.dartfish.tv) and the USAV web site has other clips of Junior Olympic Volleyball age-group competition. Of course, YouTube® and other sites have clips galore; be careful to make sure the ideas being taught are up-to-date and not from the far past.

Motor skill research, well-covered in IMPACT and CAP courses offered by USA Volleyball, has an entire chapter on this key area of teaching skills. Sign up online for an in-person course or take the IMPACT and CAP courses online through USAV. The key is simply to **Show-Do-Feedforward**. Words have little meaning to beginners in any skill they are learning, so here is the *ideal teaching coach* for kids:





Below for example, Ryan Millar is showing the players, and they are doing it with the ball. Then you do the whole skill, WITH the ball, and follow up individually with feedforward for their next attempt.



## Lesson Plans

A three-, six-, eight- or 12-week lesson plan can be put together by picking and choosing from the options presented below. The format is simple for a session of any length you have:

1. **Warm-Up Game** – 1v1/1v1v1/2v2, tag games, relays, etc. (5 minutes max)
2. **Movement Station Options** – one or more movement stations to rotate through when not playing volleyball (during both new skill and play periods).
3. **New Skill** – from simpler to more complex. The order of introduction is *spike, overhead pass, set, serve, forearm pass, dig, blocking*. You may not even need to teach blocking, but kids like it – it is just that the spikes do not deserve a block, and reading/digging is more valuable for the lower levels (50 percent of the time left after warm up/cool down)
4. **Play a Game** – games of 1v1 to 4v4 with circulation. Given all the scoring options and game variations, you can go for months with new variations as desired (50 percent of time left after warm up/cool down).
5. **Cool Down Game** – mental or physical game (5 minutes max)

**Teaching Notes!** – Please note that conditioning as a stand-alone section is NOT included. The games shared in this manual will get the kids not only active, but in shape. Three important teaching concepts must be mentioned here in order to increase the number of contacts per session the kids will get. 1. Every time you whistle the group in, THEY RUN, so by the end of a session they have done many wind sprints to you. 2. Every time you talk to them, get them to face a wall or other non-distracting area of your training zone. If moving objects/distractions/ other teams are behind you, they learn slower, since they do not pay attention to you. 3. When they serve, the players must SPRINT into their area of defense, not stand and watch their serve.



## Game (Drill) Design

Quoting Hugh McCutcheon, 2008 Olympic gold-medal winning head coach, we simply need to *“make subtle variations of game like themes.”*

1988 Olympic gold-medal coach Marv Dunphy put it this way: *“Since we learn best in training situations that are basically game like, we should incorporate three-contact drills as often as possible. I am convinced that the best hitting drills are Pass-Set-Hit (PSH), the best setting drills are P-S-H and the best passing drills are P-S-H. Likewise, the best defensive drills are Dig-Set-Hit combinations.”*

And in a CAP Level III course not too long ago, 1984 Olympic gold-medal winning coach Doug Beal (who also coached the team in 2000 and 2004, finishing fourth in Athens), said, *“We don’t have more than about a dozen good drills – we just change the scoring or some subtle variance demand on the player to perform in the drill.”*

In a 2004 *Sports Coach* article, Dr. Damian Farrow writes, *“Whether a player then becomes a skilled decision maker relates to whether their coach draws their attention to such details. Coaches who provide their players with game-based training opportunities rather than stereotypical drills with minimal decision making requirements are likely to develop more competent decision makers.”*

It is more important to change the scoring and the game like pieces than to learn new drills. After all, ask a child if he/she wants to play a game or do a drill, and you will see why you need to name all your drills as games.

You may also note in this manual that there is no “conditioning” section to training, nor any recommendations for the players to run lines, do pushups, or otherwise be punished by such actions. There are many games used as child motor skill movement learning stations with running and many other actions that are not volleyball-specific. Young kids need to learn about their bodies in general ways. Specificity in training, however, means that once you want your players to learn volleyball skills, they should be playing volleyball. This is, in part, why children all over the world will cry out “NO!” when the teacher tells them to stop playing games. ...

In volleyball, the No. 1 game is “Monarch of the Court” (aka queen of the court, king of the court, instant winners, etc.), where it is simply one-point games and winners stay on. Let’s take a look from a drill design standpoint why this is so popular. 1) It starts with the skill that starts every point being scored in a regular game – the serve. How many drills start with a serve? 2) The ball is played over the net – how many of your drills are played over the net (allowing the crucial reading/anticipation/judgment time needed to be learned)? 3) What is the chance for touching the ball in the drill/scrimmage (called opportunities to respond, which we want to increase so we learn more in the same amount of time)? In 3 vs. 3 games, you have a good chance to be one of the people touching one of the three hits. In 2 vs. 2 versions, it is almost certain you will be involved in each rally. In 6 vs. 6, half the team watches, not touching and learning. 4) You learn “winners stay on,” with the punishment being not playing instead of the old non-teacher-based way of “losers do pushups/run lines.” 5) There is lots of hustle and court coverage by the team working together. This is why even top, older teams will play this drill/game a third of their practice.

Use the net, play over it, do more PSH and DSH combinations, change up the scoring to weight your desired results, be patient (it takes time to learn to read the flying ball), and have fun!



## Cue Words & Images

One of the projects we developed while serving on the FIVB Technical & Coaches Commission were the skill posters of the Olympic gold medalist USA men and Russian women. Each can be downloaded at no charge from the FIVB and printed at a high resolution (using a nine-grid printout poster option or going to an architectural/building company and using their large color plotter). Two samples from spiking are shown below. On the USAV web site, another series is also downloadable, and used as the spike skill sequence example below. A youth skill poster sample that is a nine-page grid also follows later in this section. Having posters up is another way to add deliberate practice time to down time in your gym, along with other skill/motivational quotes and other paper postings. The Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center has hundreds of quotes up, in the dining hall, gym, and other training areas for this reason.

<http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots/Posters.aspx>

[http://www.fivb.org/EN/Technical-Coach/Technical\\_ePosters.asp](http://www.fivb.org/EN/Technical-Coach/Technical_ePosters.asp)



**IMPORTANT NOTE** regarding technique: Your kids will know what the technique is pretty quickly, but they will rarely LOOK like the images to follow. This is simply because this game requires so much anticipation and reading experience to perform the skill in the right place and time. For a long time, your kids will be in the wrong place and/or time. They will adjust as best they can to rebound the ball, as that is the rule of the game, but they will simply look nothing like the images. Some will have many parts right, but still err at contact. Conversely, the BEST players will have many parts "wrong," but still make the CONTACT successful and the game will go on. These images are the goal to strive for, but relax when they misread and are not there. There is no need to yell at them to "MOVE YOUR FEET!" or the like. They need more over-the-net play in order to move those feet early enough by knowing what is happening on the other side of the net. By the time the ball crosses the net, it is too late. Or they will misread the set, for the sets by young players vary greatly on all three axes of flight, and they will miss-hit the ball. This is why a LOWER set (falling slower through the hitting zone and easier to set more consistently than a high outside set) is the FIRST kind of set to have new hitters attack (keeping it well off the net as well, so there is room to swing, and no net collisions happen). Not because they want to err, but because they need more game like experience to get to be WHERE they want to be, WHEN they want to be. Relax and enjoy the play. ...



## Spike

Run/Jump/Swing – that is as complex as you get at the start.

Look for, *Right/left footwork – Double Arm Lift – Open Door High Hand – Slam the Door/Swing Fast*



**Overhead Pass/Set** – *Staggered Stance – Ball-Shaped Hands – Fly like Superman – Make it Hittable*





## Serve

*Find Weakest Space – Simple Ready Position – Low, Consistent Toss – Rigid, Consistent Contact Point*

**Torque (hi side arm)**



**Underhand**



**Overhand**



## Forearm Pass

*Ready n Read – Stable Stance – Simple Arms – Platform to Target*



## Floor Defense

*Get Ready – Read – Dig Up, Never Over – Go Low as Needed*



## Block

Simple skill, except the challenge of learning to *jump* in the right *place* at the right *time*. You may not even touch the ball, but if you have forced the hitter not to hit his/her favorite shot, you did your job!

Watch the Hitter (not the ball) – Take Hitter's Favorite Shot – Stay off the net





Even alone, the best training is to go pass UP...Set...and Hit...as this young player shows playing 1 vs. 2



## MINIVOLLEY SKILL NOTES:

This all skills youth poster, with referee hand signals, is available from in the grassroots poster section.  
<http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots/Posters.aspx> It comes in nine pages, and thus makes a great large skill learning station. A full set of skill posters can also be downloaded, covering all six skills by Olympians (both men and women).







## TEAM SYSTEMS FROM DOUBLES TO SIX PERSON

As this book is designed to be used by teachers from K – 8<sup>th</sup> grades, this chapter will show the ideas and options in putting team groups from doubles to the full six person game. The concepts in minivolley remain paramount for training, even if your program or league forces you to ultimately compete with younger kids in the six person game. We wanted you to use options which keep the developmental focus of all players in the forefront.

### ***Train Off the Net***

Regardless of the team size or system chosen, it is VERY important to remember to teach all inexperienced players to pass and set off the net. With passing to off the net as a target (about 3 meter line on a full sized court, or a minimum of 1.5 meters for smaller courts, the passer can err by a lot and still keep the ball on their side so it can be set. This is also safer for the setter (reducing net contact), and is what we call a positive error (passing up where your teammates are) rather than the negative error of passing over or tight (into the net or given to the opponents). Alas, at this inexperienced level overpassing can result in many points, but as you are teaching 3 contact volleyball, you should not celebrate such errors, just focus on the next point. Playing the warm up game of “Tennis” can also help a lot in reading and dealing with first ball overpasses.

Once the setter sets, the same concept of setting off the net to first (and rarely closer than a meter even at high levels) applies powerfully. When young players have to hit near the net, there is not only a safety issue should there be blockers or just opponents near the net, the net becomes a huge barrier to clear. By setting off the net, the spiker is free to swing away without any worry of netting, and able to hit the ball with a faster arm (thus harder) and develop their range of attack better as well. While it is also important to err inside the court, rather than off the court/past the antenna – again for safety reasons until the player has developed their non-dominate hand use – it is most important to err further off the net rather than tighter.

One thing that helps here is starting to teach spiking by using the USA National team set calls. Yep, these K-8 players should not only call their sets, but use the USA team back row attack calls just like they would hear their role models call in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. So as they practice pass-set-hit from off the net, after they pass they get to call out:

Left side “RED! or A!” Middle of the court – “WHITE! or B and C” Right side -- “BLUE or D!” The set to the center, lower like a meter ball, is called a “Bic!” Balls to the left seam of center are B, and right side seam are C. Our Paralympic team also has two other calls the kids like – “Pink!” which is the seam between red and white, and “SKY!” as in sky blue, the seam between white and blue.

You become a better player if you coach, so don’t forget the option of putting an older skilled player in as a player/coach who would first become the setter, and be able to better run down errant passes, and make the three hits happen. Even the teacher can start in this role, as long as the players, once hooked into the fun of the game, get to start setting too. The ideal version of this is the JOV Club has teams serve as coaches for the first hour of their two hour practices. Net strung up for four or more mini courts. The JOV players coach the minivolley kids, using the Molten 140gr First Touch balls each minivolley player should get for signing up – as these balls only cost \$10. Gym is covered, coaches are covered, background checks covered by the JOV program, all you need is shirts, USAV membership and a ball per kid which they bring to practices and games. It is a wonderful win-win situation where the costs are lowered and the older kids become better players by coaching.

### ***Two Person Teams***

The players share the court side by side. If you have a left-handed teammate, often that player plays more on the right side, but the most important thing is to make sure players play both sides. A better passer might take more than half of the court and let their teammate only have to worry about the smaller part. With the ability to receive serve overhead, players move more up more towards the net than in the past, and receive with both overhead and forearm pass options. The beauty of the two person game is that each teammate gets to touch the ball during every three contact rally. As players skills develop, a player gets to work on their weaknesses – as a team would not serve the better hitter, allowing the hitter to hit the third ball, so the better hitter gets to set more and become a better setter.

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X      X

### ***Three Person Teams***

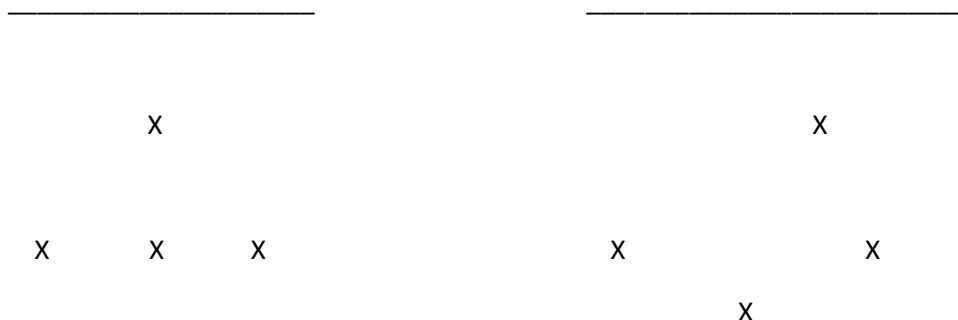
The players share the court in thirds, or can have one player near the net – center or right side, and let the other two players serve receive. With most players bring right handed, the right side passer, if they do not pass, becomes the setter allowing for mostly front sets. The setter can also set from the middle of the court, delivering front and back sets, especially if the right side passer has to handle the first contact. It is preferred that you teach the three passer version, as this transfers far better into playing both the four and six person versions of the game at the older levels.

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X      X      X

### ***Four Person Teams***

This is most often done in a diamond formation with three passers as above and the fourth teammate inside the 3 meter line who sets all three of their teammates, again using the USA National Team play calls. Doing a box formation of two passers and two setters near the net is discouraged, as it will not transfer as well into the six person game. At this level, you still want EVERY player to set when in middle front, as you are still developing all around players. If you are a skilled/experienced six person team using fours to get more contact in games like monarch of the court and speedball, you can have setters designated at times, but even with skilled players, setting in the chaos of minivolley/small sided games is great for when the setter has to call help!



### ***Six Person Teams***

There are hundreds of books and articles on the 4-2, 5-1 and 6-2. Here we are assuming that you **MUST** play 6 vs. 6 due to the league rules – so we want to present two systems which blend best into the need for all player development. They are known as the 6-6 and the 6-3.

The 6-6 is the first option to develop everyone in every role. It is the system I am sure all of you reading have used and played. Up to five players are off the net to pass, to the setter who is nearer to the net. This setter can, as in the 4 player systems above, be setting from middle or right front to all the players. The front row players hit nearer to the net, about 1.5 meters back, and the three back row players hit from the 3 meter line or further behind. It is important to train all the players to learn to hit from deep in their court – even 7-8 meters back if on a regulation court. Kids should be jumping and hitting all the third contact balls they can.

I would suggest to do more three and four person reception patterns, just like they have been practicing in the games noted above as it can be an almost seamless transition which eliminates the “ducking” players and allows for the setter to stand right where the pass should go to, 2 meters off the net, to the right -ish side of the court. This is true in the following system below, which is a great one for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade six person play.

The 6-3 is for a bit older and more experienced teams, where you have determined for that season the players who can be setter-hitters, not just hitters. The setters are put into the rotation order in every other position. The two most commonly used versions are where the setter comes from Right front first, then rotates to the serving position and sets a second time. When the team rotates again, the player who now is in right front would then set the next two rotations, and similarly the last two rotations would be set by the third player designated as setter, again from right front and back.

### **Team Defense Systems**

The vast majority of play at the minivolley level simply does not have blocking. The intent is to teach the players to read and dig the attacks of any sort – from spikes to just balls passed, or shanked over. If you feel the opponents **DESERVE** a blocker – one blocker will suffice, who is jumping at the right place and time. Remember that blocking is a skill that needs coach feedback, as you can do a great job blocking --taking away the hitter’s favorite shot – yet never touch a ball, as the ball gets tipped, or hit out or otherwise changes direction from the hitter’s favorite shot.

This shot is at this level almost always cross court, where the most court to hit in is found. Thus, the blocker simply needs to jump “inside” the hitter’s approach angle, in front of this cross court shot. As fronting the opponent is best in other sports like soccer and basketball, and is how we meet people (standing in front of them ), young players too often jump more down the line area of the attacker, and do not block this important cross court angle shot. Help them learn when and where to jump – for the skill of blocking is pretty simple. This jump changes based on how far off the net the hitter is, how short or tall they are compared to the blocker and how fast the hitter jumps and swings.

So the systems used include the zero blocker system, with the diggers put on the court where the ball is most often hit (see above, cross court), and one player near the net to get the tipped balls and over passes. The second is a one blocker system – either with the one tall enough kid to block ranging along the net, or with more taller kids, blocking the players in your half of third of the net space. Again you would likely have a player near the net for short shots, and the rest of the team deeper and able to move forward if needed. They should not stand too far back, as they can dig overhead as well and below the waist.

## Conclusion

This has been a short look at team system options, primarily shared in case your program is having players from K-8 grade play the six person game. In such a situation, train as much as you can in groups of three and four, get lots of over the net reading and contacts, and use the 6-6 or 6-3 systems to develop your entire program. You likely will run into teams where the coach is running a 5-1 system, already determining who he or she thinks should set, and who can hit. This team, with one key player touching every second ball, is more likely to beat you. Who remembers who won at 6<sup>th</sup> grade level? Who remembers the joy of playing and a coach who helps you when you are not grown into your body yet or sadly does not believe? I again ask you to be focused on believing in each player, teaching them the leadership and hard work skills it takes to be good, and enjoying the playing of this lifetime game – even as it is filled with errors of judgment and inexperience.

Remember also it is just fine to have a two person team play a three person team, a team of three take on a team of four, and even a team of four playing a team of six. The games do not have to be equal to be fair. Indeed, I have played over 400 one vs. six games in camps and clinics. They get three hits, but so do I, pass-set-hit to myself. They can tip, so can I, but I can’t jump and hit, only standing spike, as it is a woman’s net. I get my favorite pizza if I win, and so do they. I give them 15 points to start, making me down 0-15. At 10-16 they say, “He is only one guy, come on!” At 15-17 they celebrate getting a point on an unreadable shot by a teammate. At 20-16 they exhort each other to really play hard. At 25-18 they gather and we talk about the importance of why I won, and the importance of reading and not hitting the way you face, and serving over and in always. This is a game at most levels more about skill, experience and reading, than about being in better shape or taller and stronger. I have lost one match over the years, but hey, who is counting...

We need players all levels of the pipeline who can do ALL the skills and who are great at one or two of them. It is very wrong to hear players, often short, who state that “we are not allowed to hit,” or “I am only allowed to set.” As our Gold Medal Head Coach Hugh McCutcheon says in many ways and places – “We need players who are good at ALL skills, and great at a skill or two...” Volleyball playing at this age is not about winning, it is about learning how to put in the effort and deliberate practice time to become an all around player in a fun, team environment.





## Homework

The time in the gym with your kids should be as much as possible, as they get better at volleyball and do less movement stations and games, at playing as much volleyball as possible. They don't need to run or do footwork at the older levels, the game has plenty of sprints, dashes, and acrobatic moves. I will quote Dr. Richard Schmidt here from his book on Motor Skill Learning *"Drills and lead-up activities take considerable practice time and do not produce much transfer, so use them sparingly in later practice stages. It is fruitless to try to train fundamental abilities (e.g. quickness, balance) so concentrate on the fundamental skills instead."*

And since I am in a quoting mood, these two from Anson Dorrance, 19 time NCAA Division I women's soccer championships head coach – in his book Training Soccer Champions – Chapter 8 – The Off Season – *"For the entire off-season, all we do is play...the ultimate game that you can play, in my opinion, is five vs. five – four field players and a goalkeeper. It gives you the basic elements of the game. It gives you enough players for fundamental attacking shape...you can't hide or hang out in this game, or your teammates will get shredded. It permits players a lot of time on the ball. It has every dimension, so much so that the Dutch – who on the men's side might produce the highest number of quality players per capita in the world – make a religion out of it...And since we always play with goalkeepers in this environment, we are practicing finishing all the time. One more thing: It's fun to play"* From chapter 9 – Fit for Life - *"One thing I learned very quickly is that if you want your team to be successful, the players have to be responsible for their own fitness."*

So conditioning is homework, and remember that in volleyball at the mini level and even higher, the game is far, far more a skill game not a fitness game. Give them jump rope ideas, and guide them on building a base of fitness in all the ways possible at home.

Skill work is harder to do as homework but here is a short list of what can be done, that is as game like as possible, as a station or at home. They just need to find a wall to use as a teammate, and a rope to hit the ball over. Getting just one other player really helps, and this information is found in much more detail in the article *"Training without a Net or Friends,"* on the USAV Grassroots button player section.

**Serve** – Stand 20-30 feet back from a garage door – or wall with no windows – and serve over a chalk line or duct tape strip which is net height for your level of play. Sprint in while getting the ball for the next serve attempt.

**Forearm/Overhead Pass/Digging** – As the ball comes off the windowless wall, play it up to your self (learning the positive error), then pass it to the wall and repeat. The idea is to learn to take any ball coming at you and first play it up, not back to where it came from. So it goes up, then against the wall, and up, then against the wall. You then want to start working on passing the angles of the game, by passing a ball "served" against the wall, into a box placed "off the net" to one side (most often to the right).

**Setting** – You would throw the ball against the wall and then move to the rebound to set front or back sets (face the wall facing 180 degrees differently for the two options. Your set should go along an imaginary net line, and not be set "over" that line/net. After you set, go "cover" the imaginary hitter, and catch your own set, then return to your starting position and repeat. If you can find a corner, like in the gym, you can set off the wall pass to you, and the set will bounce off the wall back to you, without having to cover.

**Spiking** – Again use the garage door/windowless wall with the net height stripe. Stand 3-5 meters back, set yourself and hit the ball over the "net." Remember to turn to both the right and left to practice hitting away from the way you face (as in line/cut shots), while the ball should still bounce back to you. Remember to train tip and roll shots too, not just spikes, working to have the same "neutral" unreadable look as long as possible

before you decide the shot to do. You can bounce a hard ball off the ground and jump and hit it, but this is really where you need a friend or family member to help you out by setting. You can hit over a rope into a corner, where you have hung a sheet (or more of that deer netting used to create divider nets in the affordable equipment chapter) to hit into which deadens the ball and stops you

If you can get a helper – even if they don't play volleyball, all the above skills can be made even more game like. Find one to two more and then just play 1 vs. 1 plus one (where the setter sets for both sides) or doubles over a rope, or even like handball, against the garage door.

Homework can also include doing team and community building ideas, found near the end of this book, teaching the game to others less experienced or younger, and learning the history of the sport. The appendix has the original 1897 Rules of Volleyball, and the USAV website has an entire history section under the grassroots button to help in these assignments.

## **MINIVOLLEY NOTES:**



## Chapter 8: Scoring Options

**POOL Chart** – If you are tied after X minutes, use sudden death (serve one ball to break the tie, then rotate to your next court and new opponent). A pool is done the same way, as you see in this rotation of courts below. If you had a pool of four teams, you would first go:

1 vs. 4

2 vs. 3

Then move the numbers counter-clockwise for

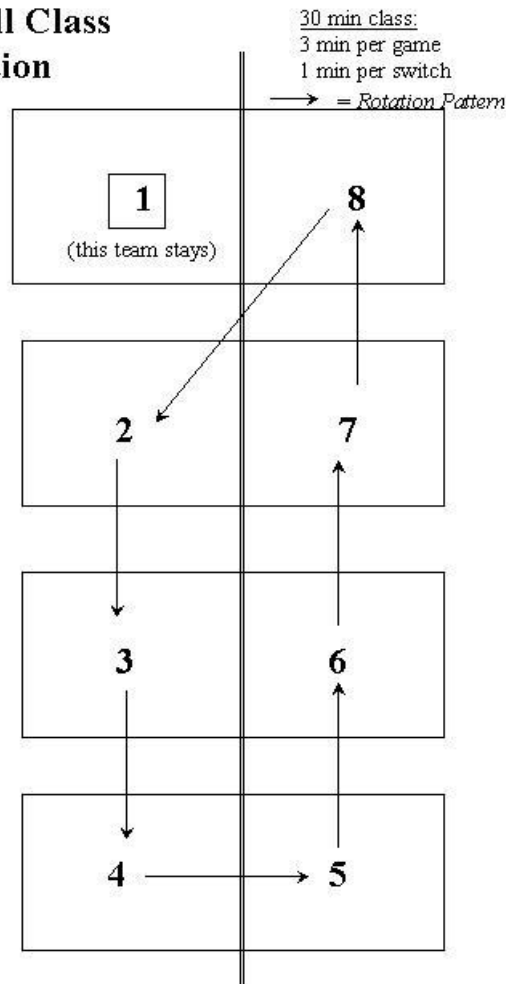
1 vs. 3 and finish with 1 vs. 2

4 vs. 2

3 vs. 4

Top-seeded teams play last. If a bye, just put in bye for a number.

### GYM Volleyball Class Competition



**Rally Score** - A point is scored for every serve; no sideout exists. This is the way volleyball has been scored as of Jan 1, 1999 all over the world, including the Olympic Games, with best three out of five to 25 points for the first four games and the deciding set played to 15 points. Kids' games can be two of three, or one to 25, or lower the score to stay within the time you have. The net does not count as a fault on the serve.

**Cooperative/Transition/Competitive Scoring** – Mentioned earlier, the cooperative version is the BEST way to teach “ball control” by getting both sides to work together to keep the net crossing/point scoring rallies to last as long as possible. Remember, negative errors (e.g., putting the ball into the net) are rally killers, while positive errors (e.g., hitting the ball out long or wide) can be kept alive. In the example, an out ball is treated as a “touch by the block” and kept alive, not letting it fall out and end the rally.

**Kids' Games Scoring** - Use as the “Scoreboard” these classic games kids know and love. Some kids do not know some of these games, so you are teaching them something else new. On a white board (ship location hidden or on a separate piece of paper for Battleship) or a table (connect 4's), each team gets to pick/place their X after winning the rally. Remember, you set the definition of a rally-winning point.

Tic-Tac-Toe (Crosses and Naughts)

Hangman

Connect 4s

Battleship

Candyland



**Steal Their Coconuts** – Each team starts with an equal number of objects put well off the court in a safe place (four teams per court, two on each side). The winning team runs off and steals the coconut, the losing team just exits, and the other two teams run on for a one-point game. The game ends when one side has all the coconuts, water bottles, or whatever. This also is like YO-YO scoring (say it like Rap...) where the score starts at 5-5 and the right side team wants to get to 0 before the left side gets to 10.

**X before Y** - One team has to get “X” number of points before the other team gets “Y”. This is most common with Four before Two and Seven before Three. You can set this ratio to fit your team and let the starters have a real challenge to beat the bench players.

**X out of Y** - The team that gets the most points (X), given the number of balls (Y) introduced by the coach.

**X in a Row** - The winner has the highest number of points in a row. When the team getting the points in a row errs (including the opponent's success in any way), the counter is reset back to 1 (as the one team just got that point) and the other team works to get the highest number of rallies won in a row.

**Exponential Scoring** – Each point scored can be either saved, or you can double or nothing the point. Thus you can score 2, then 4, then 8, then 16 – but if you lose, you go back to nothing.



**Wash Scoring** - Created by Doug Beal and Bill Neville, 1984 Olympic gold medal men's volleyball coaches, is named from the concept, "I paid for lunch and you picked up dinner, so it's a wash." Thus, in order to get a point on the scoreboard, a team must win two or more rallies. If one team wins the served ball rally, and the other team wins the coach-introduced-ball rally, it is a wash. Rally scoring is used, not sideout scoring. Keeping track of the scoring in this higher intensity situation can be its own challenge. I use my fingers, raising one or more on the side of the team that has won the little points before a big point is reached. Other coaches use the balls being carried to be added in, while others use a team manager or player out of the game to scorekeep. The art of coaching includes letting them argue about the scoring to see who has the best recall of the team, though the objective is to touch more balls in the same amount of time, not practice arguing. This art also includes determining which team gets the coach-introduced balls, as they can be given to the rally losing side, or the rally winning side, and can be given easily or aggressively by the person putting the additional ball(s) into the court.

**Criterion** - In any game, certain point numbers are designated as criterion points. The first team to reach that point gets bonus points. You can also "bet" additional points at these criterion points.

**Team Spelling** - Rotationally, team spells a word out loud before the tossed ball hits the floor.

**X in Y minutes** - Playing games by time and not score is one option. Playing to see who can accumulate the largest number of points in each unit of time, with an overall aggregate total at the end, is another option.

**Bucket of Balls** - There is a stated time limit and a set number of balls in the cart. When a ball goes dead, it is gone. The players have only the balls in the cart to keep going for the set block of time.

**Handicapping and Reinforcing** - This concept is at the discretion of the coach. Commonly the starters might have to perform something three times, while the second group only has to get two successes. In any game, you can give two points for the team behind and one point for the team leading.

**Start in the Frying Pan** - Start at 12-12, 23-22, 20-20 or 14-13, etc., not at 0-0.

**Negative Scoring** - Points can be taken away for pre-discussed attitudes or lack of hustle.

**Bongo** - A team must win "X" number of rallies to get a chance to serve for a point on the scoreboard.

**Twofer Serves** - Each player serves two in a row, no more or less, taking momentum out of the game, and at the lower levels, eliminating the 15-serves-in-a-row-by-one-server situations.

**ScoreFlip** - At any time, for learning, competitive and intensity reasons, the coach can reverse the scores. No complaining; each team must then deal with the score as it then stands, using whatever point scoring variation being used. Thus, the starters might go from a 14-10 lead to suddenly being down 10-14.

**Final Point Mountain** - You have to score "X" number of consecutive little points to score that final point.

**Spell Supercalifragilisticexpialdocious or IT** - This is used in the cooperative and transitional scoring phases, where long or short words must be spelled out, getting one letter for each three-hit net crossing by the cooperating teams. Once the word is spelled, the teams can go into competitive mode for that rally and can then score an actual point, or can continue to cooperate to see what is the highest number they can reach together.

**Negative Points** - A point does not count if a player performs an undesired action. For example, if Sue hits a spike with a closed fist (and you as coach want an open hand with wrist snap), the rally does not count.

**Wave Wash** - Winners go under the net, while the losing side back row moves off-court.

**Weighted Scoring** - 0 for free ball, +1 for a down ball, +2 for an attacked ball, - 2 if not put over net, -1 if not put into opponent's court. Similar for giving an extra point if the team has 3 hits before sending it over, to reward three hit rallies vs. just sending the ball over on one hit for the other team to err.

**First Ball Killed** - The point can only be scored on the first rally by the team getting the ball, while the team defending will get a point for winning the rally at any time. The wash comes when the team getting the ball puts the ball away but not in the first rally.

**Eternal Rally** - Simply keep throwing in balls, monitoring the players' fatigue factor, and watching for errant balls loose on the floor to see how few balls, how many balls, or how long the team can play in a constant rally.

**Scramble** - You give each side "X" minutes to score points successfully in free/down ball situations. Unforced errors can be negative points, while no effort by either side can take the teams back a rotation.

**Peer Pressure Goal** - Play for one continual minute, with everyone going for the ball hard, and/or everyone staying low, or whatever a main goal is. Should someone not execute the demand, 1) stop drill, 2) announce name, 3) restart drill at zero again.

**Time Ball in Air** - A set amount of time that no ball can hit the floor, as the entire team must keep its balls off the floor. If coach sees or hears a ball hit the floor, team restarts the clock.

**Hat Scoring** – Put all sorts of scores in a hat, 22-24, 12-14, 12-12, 14-12, 21-21, 10-20, 20-10 etc. A player draws out the score and the training session starts with that score.

**M&M/Granola Chair** – Remember vertical targets are NOT right for serving, but they ARE good for Passers. So leave an empty chair with a bag of healthy granola munch, or a tube of mini-M&Ms on it. First passer to hit the chair gets to sit there and *slowly* eat M&Ms until another passer hits him/her and takes his/her place.

**Putting Kids' Courts next to the adult court(s) is a KEY way to teach. Outrigger Canoe Club has a kids' court next to the two adult courts and several Olympians have come from starting on the kids' court.**

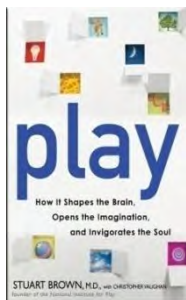




## Chapter 9: MOVEment Stations & Games

With the scoring options above introduced, the second part of teaching minivolley is to create movement stations, especially for young kids. This has become more necessary, as kids growing up now in the USA fail to get outside as much, and are having fewer chances simply to PLAY. The importance of play cannot be understated, and my work with Stuart Brown's National Institute for Play can be studied at <http://www.nifplay.org/index.html>. He has a new book out also, definitely worth adding to your library. An excellent *New York Times* article on the topic is seen at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/17/magazine/17play.html?ex=1360904400&en=370521e3a96cf510&ei=5124&partner=permalink&expd=permalink>



The chance just to PLAY is vital for kids to become good at volleyball. There are 7 million beach players in the USA, but only a handful of beach coaches, for the game teaches the game. Research, for example, shows that street soccer (without coaches, imperfect fields, just playing the game) was the main factor between players being signed to pro contracts vs. those released after years of identical training in the English football academies. For more on this topic, see the blog titled "Street Volleyball" at <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots/Grow-The-Game-Blog.aspx>. And no matter WHAT the skill is, everyone learns by DOING, not by watching. FIVB research shows that the 6 vs. 6 game for kids averaged 206 ball actions per set, while the 4v4 game had 332 touches per set. This translates to 34 ball actions per player for the 6 vs. 6 game, while those playing 4v4 touched 83 balls per set. Also, the number of rallies with more than four contacts went from 24 in 6 vs. 6 to 45 in 4 vs. 4. It is about teaching VOLLEY ball, not watch others touch and err and ace ball.

*Not many years ago I began to play the cello. Most people would say that what I am doing is "learning to play" the cello. But these words carry into our mind the strange idea that there exists two very different processes: (1) learning to play the cello; and (2) playing the cello. They imply that I will do the first until I have completed it, at which point I will stop the first process and begin the second. In short, I will go on "learning to play" until I have "learned to play" and then I will begin to play. Of course, this is nonsense. There are not two processes, but one. We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way... -- John Holt*

When we teach kids 3-9 years old, time needs to be spent helping them learn about their bodies. This is done by **creating a mix of station options around the training space**, most often in the space created when you create smaller courts for kids, or on the courts that are fast to set up and take down, or taped in advance on the floor to use when taking a break from volleyball. Set up your gym with painter's-tape courts for games like four square, hopscotch, or even shuffleboard. (More ideas in the equipment and games sections to follow.)

In all these games, you can also create "**Citius, Altius, Fortius Challenges**," where you combine all sorts of movement options into a series, timed or not. Set the buzzer/bell at a period of time all can beat (kids love to hear the buzzer sound after they finish) and kids cheer on kids. Timed events also show how each child meets the CAF idea by beating their own time. Teach the new courses you create in follow-the-leader fashion.



## GAMES

**Limbo** – Once again, the swim noodles come into play, being used to limbo under a variety of heights. You can rest them on chairs, using the kids' bucket and stick standards, put pegs in for holding up the swim noodle bar, or just have two kids hold it lightly in a flat hand.

**Dodgeball** – When you ask most kids in PE what game they want to play the most, worldwide it is dodgeball. Using playground balls or Molten Lites, this game can be fast and fun, yet without the sting of a hard ball. Make sure there are medics to save and drag teammates back, or just to keep score so that nobody goes out, and you get a lot of body learning moving going on! Below you see a picture from a water dodgeball game in Vanuatu and from the Center for the Intrepid, with wounded veterans playing the game as well.



**Dodgebowl** – Roll balls at the opponent's pins while defending your pins. Pins are 2-liter soda bottles, partly filled for weighted balance.

**PLAYGROUND Games** – Teach ALL the kids (developing leadership by letting the kids teach the kids) the games of kickball (four bases), four square and hopscotch. These playground games are simply an option to play in the gym to let some players who might not shine yet at volleyball shine in another activity. All you need is painter's tape.

**Circle Soccer** – Circles of four to six players' feet spread to form the "goal" and touching the players' feet on either side to form a tight circle; using one hand to shoot, the other to guard the goal, try to score by shooting the ball through the legs of any other goal.

**Hand Soccer** – Only one hand may touch the ball, no goalies. Goals are formed with a pair of kneepads (either two teams end line to end line or four teams sideline to sideline).

**Follow the Leader** – Follow a leader around the gym for a couple of minutes and mimic all he/she does.

**Balloon Day** - Do all ball warm-ups with balloons. Finish with a balloon pop (tie a balloon to your shoelace).

**Team Hot Potato** – Either inside the 3-meter line or the entire court. Each player starts with a ball and a half-vs.-the-other-half ball rolling war ensues. At coach's final call, loser is the side with more balls.



**Bucketball** – Place two ball carts at each end of the volleyball court, with the net up. Dribble the volleyballs, playing regular basketball rules, but no more than three on a team. Play “half court” first. No score is made if the ball bounces out of the bucket.

## **VOLLEYBALL GAMES**

**Stations** – To get players to perform warm-up games and such; always have at least four to six players using the net from as soon as you walk in the gym.

**One vs. One** - players compete on small courts, putting no more than four courts on each length of net, while the end line is the 3-meter line.

**One vs. One vs. One vs. One** - Each player keeps track of his/her own points scored, or team total points. Knockout scoring puts the player out who erred until there is only one winner; then all players get back into the next rally.

**Wallyball** – The sport of wallyball, when introduced to young and novice players in a recreational environment, is referred to by some of volleyball’s most elite coaches and players as *volleyball with training wheels!* It is a chance for the shy, inexperienced and sedentary youth to develop confidence and self-esteem quickly by playing a familiar sport, in a safe and controlled environment. There are more touches, longer rallies, a great workout and with the walls keeping the ball near, you can get back to playing and exercising just that much more.

For those not familiar with wallyball, it is, simply put, the sport of volleyball played on a racquetball court with the added dimension of playing the ball off the walls. Founded in 1979 by Joe Garcia and UCLA coach Al Scates, who assisted in developing the playing rules, wallyball is estimated to have more than a million participants around the world. The sport combines the basic rules and skill sets of volleyball, while incorporating the walls of the court to increase the speed of the game, keeping the ball in play and boosting player interaction and participation.

**Circulation VB** – Three to five play with three on each side, rotating with each crossing of the net by the ball. When there is one player out with each net crossing, a different player rotates and waits out. When there are six, two players wait on each side of the court to rotate in immediately on the next net crossing (waiting out one, playing two, waiting out one, etc.).

**Tennis** – One vs. One or Two vs. Two – one hit on the fly, or even get one bounce. Favorite warm up game of USA Men and Women’s National Team. Great for teaching reading and placement to spaces to win.

**Three vs. Three vs. Three vs. Three DEEP COURT EXCHANGE** – Three on, three off on each side. Cooperative scoring. Coach’s role is to throw ball immediately to the player making an error to correct the error, and to stop down time.

**Circle Drill Passing** – Run throughs and serve reception options. For groups of nine or fewer, one circle group is fine. For 10 or more, two groups should be using each side of the net.

**Over-the-Net Pepper** – Whenever there is a net or a rope to hit over, not partner pepper.

**Warm-Up Game Options** – Score cooperatively or transitionally. Use only one arm for all contacts. Use your non-dominant hand for all serves and attacks. Allow only cut shots or line shots; no hitting the way you are facing shots. Twirl between each net crossing or do a sit-up.

**Wash Drills Games** – Created first by USA national team coaches Doug Beal and Bill Neville, wash drills are just one way to enhance how the game teaches the game. This is done by having the coach add one or more balls into the game immediately, while players need to learn how to clear the ball off the court fast and safely to be able to focus on the next ball. An important fact of these kinds of fast-added ball drills is that research shows players get up to 30 percent more touches on the ball in the same amount of time as in a standard scrimmage. Equally importantly, the players learn a key game like element—competing—with winners and losers in some form. The higher intensity also teaches each player how to handle pressure that is higher than most matches.

**See Ya! Tournament** – This is an instant winner/single-point game run on as many courts as you have available. When you lose, you move on to the next court. Then, at the last court, return to the first court and start all over again. Scored by whoever has the highest number of one-point game wins total.

**Speed Ball** – Lets you put double the number of teams on one court and keeps everyone active, as the ball is essentially in the air the ENTIRE time (four sets of teams, two on each court side, one team on the court and one off, with both off teams having a ball ready to serve). The second the teams on the court lose, that losing side “off” team serves over the top of them, as the other team runs off, and the winning team stays on. The ball will basically be in the air the entire time with hustle by the losing teams.

**Monarch of the Court** – Otherwise known as Queen of the Court and King of the Court in single-sex competitive situations. You can designate one side that the winning side defends so that the challenger runs under the net to that side when they win the one-point rally. You can also say that the winning side must change sides each time to add more conditioning to the game.

**Match-ups** – Hitter vs. Blocker, Server vs. Passer, Digger vs. Hitter, Setter vs. Blockers

**Two vs. Four** – The doubles team can hit from anywhere on the court, the four-person team can block with one blocker only and must attack from deeper.

**Prisoner Volleyball** – Each rally point scored, the winning side gets one of the other side’s players, the player who made the error or who was closest to the ball as it was killed.

**Softball** – This has as many innings as there are players on one side of the court.

- Each half of an inning is over when the pitching team (serving) gets three outs.
- An out is achieved when the batting team (team receiving) either errs or the pitching team stuff blocks/ace serves/transition kills.
- An untouched ace serve is a double play.
- A stuff block is a double play.
- Home Run - batting team kills ball on first attempt.
- Triple - batting team gets point before or at the second net crossing of the ball.
- Double - batting team gets point before or at the third net crossing of the ball.
- Single - batting team gets point before or at the fourth net crossing of the ball.
- Any longer rally is a foul ball.
- Serves into net are a ground rule double for the batting team.
- Serves out over net are a walk for the batting team.

You can give any kind of hit or out for actions desired, letting the team define things as the game develops. (e.g., a triple play if no one even moves for a ball, or a stolen base because of the extra hustle or team play by the batting team.)

**Football** – Creating football levels of wash scoring, you get to keep getting the ball, and after two successes in a row, you can opt for a “field goal,” getting three points. If the opponents block your attempt, however, they “run it back for a touchdown.” You can wait and go for six in a row, thus a touchdown, and then go for an extra point, or go for two by killing the ball from the back row. Play for five or 10 minutes per “quarter” and switch sides at each quarter, giving them a two-minute break for “halftime.”

**You Da Star** – One vs. Two, Three or Four – if the single player can touch it, he/she stays on.

**Got the Whole World** – Four servers vs. one passer on both sides of the net at the same time. If you can touch the serve, stay on.

**Golf** (shoot for hula hoops) – Keeping track of the number of serves to hit into the hoop/target. Lower skilled players get holed out if they hit any part of the target. Higher skilled must hit completely within the target boundaries.

**Play Sepak Takraw** (foot volleyball) – In the first fun variation shown, the rugby team is playing volleyball over a rope, having to adjust to the random bounces of their oblong ball.



Sepak Takraw, a game played since the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the Far East, has balls woven by hand from rattan. This dries out too much in the less humid areas of the world, so commercially they make a hard plastic version. Hacky Sack balls are another good option, and low-



inflated smaller balloons are, also.

**Play Sitting Volleyball & Special Olympic Unified Volleyball,**  
*even in a cafeteria or carpeted hallway.*



**BALL WARM UPS** *using a volleyball* (number per group)

**Leg Bounce** - Bounce ball through legs forward and back (1 or 2 back to back).

**High Ball** - Toss ball high and execute an extension roll before either the first or second bounce (1, 2).

**Quick Clap** - Hold ball with both hands just below posterior, bending over with bent knees. Drop the ball, clap hands once or twice in front of knees, and catch ball before it hits the floor (1).

**Splat Ball** - Toss ball high, place flat and rigid hand on floor under the ball so as to rebound the ball as high as possible off the back of the hand. Continue with whatever sort of rebound there is until no rebound is possible. Goal is maximizing the number of bounces in one toss (1,2,3).

**Bowling** - Roll ball the length of the court. Partner gets a "pin" for each time the ball rolls between the legs completely until ball goes off court or stops (2).

**Sprints** - Tuck the ball under your shirt and sprint (1).

**Ball Presses** - Run with the ball pressed between rear, back, head, hips, chest without using hands (2,3).

**Hop Ball** - Run or hop with 1, 2 or 3 balls between legs forward and back (1).

**Ball Steal** - Each person tries to steal the ball from the other while back to back through their legs, back to back overhead, face to face at chest (2).

**Crab Run** - Without lifting either foot off the floor, "run" and pass the ball between legs from one hand to the other; one pass for each step forward or backwards (1).

**Ball Hide** - Crawl, end line to net, with ball underneath. Protect from partner who tries to steal it (2).

**Row Boat** - Grasp ball and "row" back and forth (2).

**Leg-ups** - Head to head on back, pass ball using feet only above heads; return feet to floor after each pass.

**Over-unders** - Pass ball overhead to get through legs; switch rotation of ball (2,3).

**Side to Sides** - Pass ball back and forth mirroring each other's sideways bend (2,3).

**Standing Weave** - Back to back pass the ball from one side to the other around self. Pairs will have the ball figure 8 and can receive left to right or right to right (2,3).

**Sit-ups** - Feet to feet pass ball with both hands, lay down on back and sit up to receive ball, then lay back down with arms extended overhead with ball; mirror if no ball (2,3).

**Hand Softball** - Using a volleyball, the bases are the corners of the court on one side of the net. Pitching distance is about 15'. The batter hits it with fist or open hand. The pitcher pitches underhand. A base runner may be put out by hitting him with the ball.



## TAG GAMES

Again, keeping the action to the confines of the court or something smaller than the entire gym will keep things moving. Refrain from tag-outs. Tag games as a warm-up should allow a player, once tagged, to get active right away, or sit out only for a very brief amount of time. Let the kids come up with rules/actions to use to make it different. You should always vary the fleeing motor skill – choosing to hop, skip, jump, gallop, etc., not just run.

**Crazy Foot Tag** - Must play tag with foot movement skill (cross over, shuffle only etc.).

**Powerball Tag** - Confined to the entire court, tag by touching with the volleyball (only one ball). Once tagged, you can toss ball to other "its." "Its" can trap or corner players.

**Partner Duck, Duck Goose** - An example of changing an old game to a more modern activity. Here's how you do it: There are no circles and stew pots. Pair students up and use the centerline in the gym. Partners stand on either side of the line and face each other. Each student has a "home base" line behind him/her at the end of the gym that he/she must run to if he/she says goose and tags the other. The two students alternate touching each other's shoulder and say "duck." This continues until one touches the other and says "goose." The goose then chases his partner back to his home base line. Then you go back to the line and start again. The positives are: very little standing around, you can have up to 10 individual games going on at a time, no one knows how others in class are doing (either good or bad).

**Tank Tag** - The tank is a person who is driven by the person behind him/her. The driver cannot be hit or the tank is out of action. The tank must move around with his/her eyes shut. A dozen or more balls are placed on the court and the driver must get the tank over to the balls and load up (eyes shut!). The tank shoots at the command of FIRE! by pushing the ball out with two hands from the chest.

**Sharks and Minnows** - Just like in the swimming pool. Begin with one shark standing on a line about 30 yards wide, 30 yards away. When the whistle blows, minnows run from other end to the shark's end without being "eaten" (tagged) by shark. All tagged minnows become sharks on the next turn as the remaining minnows run back. Can use other locomotor skills besides running.

**Follow the Leader** - In groups of no more than four to five outdoors, a leader begins performing any locomotor movement and can change the type, speed, level, and/or plane of the movement, switch to a different movement, stop and perform any non-locomotor movement, or add vocalizations. If older, students may utilize the physical geography of the space in their movements (e.g., climb over a table, scrape a fence with their hand, etc.). At each whistle blow from the teacher, leaders change.

**Behind-the-Back Clap** - You run along with one hand behind your back and get a point for slapping anyone else's hand.

**Ball Hunt** - About 20 numbered volleyballs are scattered in a gym. Student teams are given a list of the numbered balls they must bring back (e.g., 7, 11, 17). When the whistle blows, the students run to look for the balls and get them back to the start ASAP. A stopwatch times the students. Cumulative times for teams may be recorded, as many rounds of the game can be played during a period. Also, let students know that just because a team wins one round does not mean they win the entire game. Stamina counts and a team that places third each round could conceivably have the lowest cumulative time.

**Blob Tag** - Players can be single, paired or in threes; once tagged, the player or group hooks up to whoever is "it" to become a larger "it"; this group "it" grows until all are in the "blob."

**Defense Tag** - This is a one-on-one tag with a third person (or pair with both arms interlocked) helping defend and shield the one from the one who is "it" (3,4).

**Snake on the Court** - Everyone is confined to the space between the two 3-meter lines. Each player must lie on his/her stomach with arms crossed behind the back; only "writhing" like a snake is okay for movement, no rolling over; the "snake" must flick his/her tongue. Once tagged you become a snake, until all have become snakes (1).

**Crab Crawl Tag** - On one's back, on all fours; once tagged, you become a "crab" signified by a huge frown (1).

**Fox, Man, Gun; or Frog, Slug, Snake** - This can be done in unison as a team or one-on-one. Either way, stand opposite someone with the net separating each other; on the court of three, reveal what you are. Loser tries to tag winner before he/she can escape to true victory by crossing the end line (2,5).

**Freeze Tag** - Single, pairs or threes holding hands; unfreeze techniques include crawl through their legs/jumping over their backs; those tagged can also be made to crouch on the floor so that the two unfreezing techniques are similar but harder (1,2,3).

**Ball Dribble Tag** - Can be continuous or freeze style, unfreezing by bouncing a ball through their legs (1,2).

**Get Up and Go Tap** - Pairs lie down opposite each other on their stomachs, at the net, arms outstretched and touching both the centerline and the fingertips of their opponent. Coach signals by dropping a ball on one side of the net or the other (have one in each hand); the side the ball falls on frees the tagger to engage in an end line sprint (2).

**Pac Man** - Each player hops around with a ball between the knees; only the lines on the gym floor (for any sport) that are within the volleyball court are allowed for movement. One player is an eater signified by outstretched arms that are opening and closing. Once tagged, you become an eater. You may only be eaten when on the same exact line as an eater (1).

**Dragon Tail** - Form a chain of three or more players with hands on the hips of the player in front. Place a kneepad or sock in the "tail" person's shorts. The head tries to grab the kneepad of any other "dragon" while protecting his or her own (3,4,6).

**Shark** - Everyone but the two "sharks" have a safe "boat" (kneepad on floor) that they sit on and make rowing motions. On command all must get up away from their boats and "swim" using any sort of swimming arm motion. On the cry of "Shark!" the sharks (signified by opening and closing arms that are huge "jaws") try to tag people before they can get back to their boats; those tagged become sharks. Anyone's boat can be escaped to or just your own boat; decide beforehand (1).

**One Hand on the Floor/One Foot on the Floor** - Tag games where everyone must leave a hand or foot always in contact with the floor (1).

**Hop Tags/Ankle Grip Tag** - Everyone must hop on one foot, or hold the ankle of one foot. It can be done as partners holding on to each other, too (1,2).

**Cling-on Tag** - Two are "it," two others "unsafe"; all others are paired up interlocking one arm each with bent elbows. If one of the unsafe players takes refuge on another player's arm, the untouched side becomes unsafe and must get to another refuge. If tagger gets someone, he/she must get to a refuge by clinging on before getting tagged back, as tagbacks are allowed. Another version has two players standing tall palm to palm, creating an arch (1).

**Tail Tag** - Two are it. All others have a kneepad in the back of their shorts which, when taken by one who is it, makes them it. No immediate tag backs allowed (1,2).

**Wrestler's Tag** - Hold each other's left hand, try to tag opponent's right knee while protecting own (2).

**Tri Tag** - One player is it, while the other defends the third from being touched (3).

**Spin Tag** - Players in a circle of four to six have one player to protect. The player who is out of the circle tries only to tag the target player as the group whirls around trying to protect the targeted teammate (4,5,6).

**Rock, Paper, Scissors Tag** - Divide the team in half. Each team huddles to decide on ONE symbol as a team (rock, paper or scissors). Teams meet at the net facing each other in two lines, opposite an opponent. The back line is the end-of-zone line. Players in unison hit fists into the other hand for the three count, showing the team choice on the third hit. Losers run away and winners tag. Anyone caught joins the other team's side and repeat. If a tie, kids do five jumping jacks in place then re-huddle.

**Elbow Tag** - To set up, have everyone pair off and link elbows with their partners. Form a wide circle, leaving 3-4 feet (1 to 1.5 meters) between each pair. Choose one or TWO of the pairs to start the game. One player is the fox and the other is the squirrel. The fox chases the squirrels anywhere in or around the circle until the squirrel links elbows with one of the pairs. As the squirrel links elbows with another player A in the pair, player B of that pair becomes the squirrel. If the squirrel is tagged before linking up with another pair, he becomes the fox and the fox becomes the squirrel.

**Hospital Tag** - In this activity, everyone is "it." The objective is to keep from being "tagged" by another player, but to tag as many other people as possible. The first time you are tagged you have to put a hand on where you were tagged. For instance, if you are tagged on the top of the head, you then have to play with one hand on top of your head. You can then resume attempting to tag others. The next time you are tagged you have to put your other hand where you are tagged that time. The third time you are tagged you're dead.

**Fish In The Sea** - All players but one stand at the net. "It" stands midway between the line and the end line. It shouts "Fish in the ocean, fish in the sea; don't get the notion you'll get by me." The fish leave their line and try to cross the goal line without being tagged. Players who are tagged join "It" and help catch others.

**Vegetable Soup Tag** – Each child thinks of a vegetable to be. When the "spoon" in the middle guesses a veggie correctly, the kids start walking in a circle chanting "the soup is boiling," and the "spoon" continues to guess until all are inside the 3-meter line/centerline "pot." Then when the spoon shouts "It's burning!" they all run off the court and the one tagged becomes the next "spoon."

**Turtle Tag** - To ensure safety, a player must be on his/her back with all four feet in the air. The player who is "it" counts to 10 and all turtles (other players) must hop up and run at least 10 steps before again assuming the turtle position. If "it" can tag a player before he or she is "safe," they exchange places and the other player becomes "it."

**Guard The Treasure** - One player is chosen to be "It," the keeper of the treasure, who stands guard over the "jewels" (a volleyball, etc.). Everyone else forms a circle around "It". The group standing around "It" must try to steal the treasure without being tagged. Those touched by "It" are frozen in place and can no longer try for the treasure. Play ends when the "jewels" are captured.

**Goldilocks and the Three Bears** – Three kids in chairs (momma, papa, baby bear using varied voices; step size toward the bears is dependent on bear size). Kid asks, "Who's in the House?" Kids in chairs vary the bears. When the kids in the chairs or the teacher say, "Goldilocks," everyone flees, trying not to be tagged.

***Reading the opponent's and teammates' intent is the most important skill in our sport....***



## RELAYS AND RACES

Most of these games can safely be confined to the court, from end line to net and return, or end line to end line. Jogging to warm up while touching a teammate the entire time is also a possibility.

**Line Weave** - Hands on the player in front allows for fair spacing. Players weave through the line as fast as possible (3,4,6). NOTE: Team can also do a united warm up jogging around gym, dodging obstacles.

**Crawl Through** - Same hands on the shoulder spacing as above; crawl through legs (3,4,6).

**Horse and Rider** - Carry rider on back and run or crawl to a halfway point and return; rider becomes the next horse (2,3,4,6).

**Scoot Line** - Players sit on rear end in front of each other (almost in their lap) and put their hands on the player's feet behind; "scoot" forward in unison (2,3,4,6).

**Leapfrog** - Players leapfrog over one another; could add a block jump between crouches (2,3,4,6).

**Snake Skinning** - Line up, bend over and reach through leg with right hand to grab the left hand of the player behind you (head and tail will have one hand free). On go, run forward to halfway point then, starting with the tail person, everyone lies down as the others wriggle backwards over them, without letting go of each other. When everyone is down, get up and run to finish still connected (3,4,6).



**Dragon Dash** - Linked together for a forward dash, hands on the hips or shoulders of the others, then whirling around at the halfway point to regroup and run facing the person who was behind (2-6).

**Whole Body** - Head to head/feet to feet lying down on stomach or back. Also could lie side to side (2,3,4).

**Coach Carry** - Groups of three, four, or six (depends on how heavy you or your assistants are; this used to be called the coaches drag until a few pairs of shorts had melted holes from the floor friction!) relay you back and forth for time or one-half squad versus the other. Volunteer your assistant (3-6).

**Lines** - Run or side step starting at the end line, touch 3-meter line, return to touch end line, then centerline, end line return, far 3-meter line, return, then sprint full length. Touch with both hands or do a skill like a roll or block jump at each line (3,4).

**Seal Walk** - Using hands only with feet dragging behind, "waddle," whether face down or on back (2,3).

**Crab Walk** - On back, crawling on all fours (1,2).

**Crouch Touch** - On all fours crawl, alternating touching right hand to left heel, then left hand to right heel (1,2).

**Wheelbarrow** - Legs of player who's the "wheelbarrow" should be straight; switch at halfway point (2,3).

**Baton** - Same player is the baton who is relayed around the court. Players are evenly spaced around the court. One of the batons could be staff, as could all (as in coaches carry) (4,6).

**Ostrich** - Bend over and grab left hand to right ankle and right hand around left ankle; "run" (1,2).

**Inchworm** - Can only move both feet or both hands at the same time, from a facedown crouch (1,2).

**Lame Dog** - Can only move using one arm and the opposite leg for balance and propulsion (1,2).

**Flat Shoes** - "Run" to net and back with feet on, but not in, each shoe (1,2).

**Sheet Race** - Two sheets (no longer worth using on a bed) are what each team must stay completely on and propel from the end line to end line with crawling action (and floor cleaning) (3,6).

**Tunnels and Hills** - Continuous movement of players in group who are either forming tunnels and hills by sitting with hands outstretched as shown, or climbing through the obstacles, to a finish line (4,6).

**Birds On A Telephone Line** - Divide the group into two relay teams. Clip 20 or more round-topped clothespin "birds" onto the net. On signal, the first player in each team runs to the line, removes a pin with his teeth (no hands!), brings it back to his team and drops it past the 3-meter line. The team with the most birds wins.

## OTHER WARM-UPS

**Player-To-Player** - There has to be an odd number of people for this activity to work. The coach stands in the midst of the group and asks everyone else to pick a partner. Explain that you'll give them from two to five commands that they must perform as a pair. The last command is always "layer-to-player" and everyone, including the player giving the commands, will have to scramble to find a new partner. The odd player out gets to go into the middle of the group and provide the next set of commands. The game officially begins with the player in the center giving instructions such as "elbow to elbow" and the pairs must put an elbow to elbow. The coach can then say, "ear to ear" and the pairs then have to put an ear to an ear, as well as keeping the elbow to elbow. Then the coach says, "player-to-player"; everyone finds a new partner, and you go on to the next player calling out commands.

**Secret Agent** - In this game, it's best to have a pretty good sized, open area. Have players begin by standing around in a circle. Tell them that there is someone in the group out to get them – a "secret agent" – and only you know whom he/she is. Each individual also has a "bodyguard," whom only they know about. Then, quietly, without pointing or telling anyone, each individual identifies to him/herself who his/her "secret agent" is for this game. After everyone seems to have made a selection, have them then select another individual – quietly, without pointing or telling anyone – who will serve as the "bodyguard" for the activity.

After everyone has made their selections, let them know that they are now free to move around, but they must keep their "bodyguard" between themselves and their "secret agent" at all times. This can get pretty funny and interesting as people move about. It often turns into utter chaos because of the odd combinations of "bodyguards" and "secret agents."

**Fling It** - Hold sheets and send a ball back and forth catching and flinging the vball. Use same sheets to make nebula tracking around the gym.

**Foot Balance** - Stand opposite a partner with one foot off the floor; try to push or force opponent to have to touch the other foot to the floor (2).

**Circle Touches** - Touch the same spot on the floor and run around it "X" number of times (1).

**12 Days of Practice** - Sung to the tune of "12 Days of Christmas." Start out with one and go the entire way through the song. It's a warm-up all by itself. From the last day, the song is as follows: On the 12th day of practice, my coach said to do 12 extension rolls, 11 spike jumps, 10 rag doll jogs, 9 (team-related thing), 8 block jumps, 7 backsets with extension, 6 line serves, 5 forearm passes, 4 get set hops, 3 high outside sets, 2 arm swings with follow through, and a sprawl with hops...and soon."

**Circle Jumps** - In a circle, each player does the jump the leader does, only when it is done by the teammate to their right. The leader does such jumps as wiggle hips twice or thrice in the air; touch ankles; back arch; fake spike with follow through; leprechauns with side kick; tuck ups; rear end wiggles; square patterns; pike; block; twirls; slalom from side to side with hands on hips.

**Simon Says** - Given a good, tricky leader, this old game can be a fun and funny warm-up.

**Dance Songs** - Either parts or the whole of aerobic dance routines or similar creations from the players' favorite songs. The hula (using such classic Hawaiian songs as "Hilo Bay"), punk rock (like the famous Sherman version of the B-52's "Rock Lobster"), native folk songs and even "Swan Lake" (speeded up by camp coach Drew Steele to

become "Duck Pond") have all been transformed into a good warm-up. Leo Apel made Barry Manilow's "Jump, Shout, Boogie" into a camp classic using Jackie Sorenson's aerobic dance routine. Create a special one with your squad.

**Circle XXXX** - Many of the ball warm-ups and relays or races can be made into a good team circle warm-up, where the action doesn't stop until the coach says to.

**Bug Tug** - Bend over and cross arms between legs, grab opponents opposite hands; try to pull them across the neutral line. Can also be done group against group by grabbing the persons on either side, not directly opposite.

**Balloon Pop** - Everyone ties a balloon to their shoelace and runs around the court trying to protect theirs while popping anyone else's. Winner is the last with an un-popped balloon.

**Tunnel Races** - Players must crawl through a partner-formed tunnel, then sprint to centerline and return to form, after another crawl through, a standing tunnel for partner(s) (2,3,4).

**Human Pinball** - All but one stand in a circle facing outwards. Spread your legs as wide as comfortable, until your feet are touching your neighbors' on both sides. Everyone bends down and swings their arms between their legs—these are the flippers. One player stands in the middle. A ball is released and the flippers try to hit the player in the middle (possibly for points if you have a use for them). Try it with several balls and more people in the center if the group is very large.

**Sweets** – Use Kudos® candy bars, Tootsie Rolls® or Popsicles® as pattern interrupter awards. It is amazing how hard a player will train for a mini Tootsie Roll®.

#### **Partner Warm-ups**

##### **Eskimo Rolls**

(unison somersault)

##### **Leg Powers**

(press up and down)

##### **Negative Sit-ups**

(stop thrown legs from hitting the floor)



## PHYSICAL COOL DOWNS

*Ending a training period with kids of any age should be positive. This is a compilation of my favorite cool downs and mind games for travel and tournament break time from more than 35 years of doing summer volleyball camps. They build character and cohesion in your team and program; meet group needs of competency, as a sub will be better than the starters; and you will laugh. If you know of any cool downs we should have in this master listing, let me know at [john.kessel@usav.org](mailto:john.kessel@usav.org). Thanks!*

### PHYSICAL COOL DOWNS

**Log Roll** - Players lie down on stomachs close to one another in a row all facing the same way; one after another, from one end of the group, each player rolls over the top of the others, arms crossed on chest, until all have had a chance.

**My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean** - Half the group is squatting, the other half standing, in alternation. Sing the song and on every "B" sound, switch to standing or squatting. A second version is sung to the same tune, only more relevant words are used: "My body lies over the bleachers, my body lies over the floor, my body lies over the bleachers, oh why is my body so sore, bring back...my body to me. ..."

**Machine** - One half the group against the other; the object is to make the strangest sounding and looking "machine." Each player provides his/her own part with silly sounds and a unique motion, as well as way of attaching to the machine. Coach judges each final machine for the victor.

**HA / HA-HA / HA-HA-HA** - Players lie down on their backs with their heads on the stomachs of one another to form the pattern. First player says "Ha," second "Ha-Ha," third "Ha-Ha-Ha," etc. If they are in the right mood, uncontrollable laughter soon ensues. You can also sit, and the team is to pass the word 'ha' around a circle. At the start, the first teammate begins the cool down by saying "Ha." The next must repeat the "Ha" and then say another "Ha." The third player must say Ha, Ha and then given an additional "Ha." In this manner, the "Ha" continues around the circle. The cool down ends when everyone trying not to laugh (a virtual impossibility), has repeated the "Ha's" that preceded them and then added their own "Ha."

**Volleyball Massage** - Partners take turns giving each other full body massages, kneading with the volleyball, including the arms and all the way out to the fingertips. A second version has the players give themselves a backrub by rolling their back and legs back and forth on the ball.

**Animals** - It takes three people to create an animal. The person in the middle makes the major central distinguishing characteristic of the named animal (i.e., the "trunk" of an elephant, by extending the arms out in front interlocked). The two players on either side must make a part different from the middle, but the same by each other (i.e., say the "ears" of the elephant by placing both hands splayed out on the middle person's head). Everyone is in a circle with a "pointer" in the center who whirls around to point at a player who becomes the middle part of whatever animal is named. The last of the three creating the animal becomes the next pointer. Animals easy to do are a rabbit (teeth/two ears), deer (nose/two antlers), kangaroo (pouch/two "hoppers"), lion (roaring mouth/one-half mane), rattlesnake, billy goat, chicken, duck, alligator. Include sound effects.



**Caterpillar** - Whole team or one half versus the other create this by putting their legs on the shoulders of the player behind them and walking on their hands.

**Body Pass** - Everyone on their backs, hands interlaced. Hands up in the air propel one player, who lies down on his/her back upon the "conveyor belt" of hands from one side to the other.

**Pulse** - Everyone holds hands in a circle, either standing or lying down on their stomachs. When a squeeze is felt in the left hand, squeeze the right hand as fast as possible and say "OOOH." When felt in the right, squeeze the left and say "AAAH." Only the leader can start a pulse. The object is to get the pulse or pulses going through the network as fast as possible without vanishing.

**Musical Instruments** – This is a rhythm game. Everyone sits with legs straight and out front; each player in the circle has a unique "instrument" they "play" to a two-count rhythm. Everyone keeps the rhythm by slapping hands on the floor or thighs twice, then clapping twice. One player "plays" his/her instrument twice instead of clapping the first time and then "sends" a command to some other player to play his instrument by "playing" that person's action instead of clapping the second time. The receiver of the command must not break the rhythm but first play his/her action, then send another command to play to anyone else (no immediate "send backs" allowed). This can be an elimination game or just a team effort to see how fast the rhythm can go without losing a beat. Any instrument is fine - piano, violin, tuba, cymbals, harmonica.

**Circle Balance** - All hold hands in an outstretched circle; everyone pulls one another to try to make someone lose their balance and have to move their feet. Eliminate the player or players who lose balance and go again until only two are left.

**Human Knot** - Groups of six or more come together and create a "knot" by first all holding the left hand of anyone in the group but the two beside them, then the right hand of someone else (except the two on either side). This knot is then untangled without breaking hand contact by stepping over each other's arms, weaving the circle through until it becomes a big circle.

**Balance War** - Two people stand face to face at one player's arm's length. Each stands with his/her feet side-by-side and together. Palms must face inward to start. The object is to make the other lose balance without touching any part of the body other than the palm. Go for two out of three. You can dodge and feint with your hands, but touch no other part of your body. Another version is from the martial art aikido. Players start with palms together and must stay together throughout play. The object is to make your partner lose balance, but no sudden moves are permissible.

**Switched Circuits** - Cross arms, clasp hands, turn hands under and to chest, then try to wiggle the finger that your partner points to.

**Cat and Mouse** - Partner is at the net with his/her back to the "cat," which has the goal of touching the "mouse." The "mouse" may turn its head at any time and, if it catches the "cat" in motion, the player must return to the end line to try stalking again.

**Hokey Pokey** - Classic song: "Put your right foot in/you put your right foot out/you put your right foot in/and you shake it all about; then you do the hokey pokey/and you turn yourself about/that's what this sport's about." Standing in a circle with hands on the hips of the person in front; do body parts - left and right hand, elbow, hip, rear, until finally the entire body is "put in."

**Cotton Throw** - Test the arm power of the team by seeing who can throw a piece of cotton the furthest.

**Jump the Pencil** - Put a pencil on the floor just in front of the player's toes. Player must bend over and grab the toes of his/her shoes, curling the fingers under the sole, then jump over the pencil without letting go of the toes.

**Standups** - Players back to back in groups of two to six must go from a sitting position on the floor to standing without using their hands, instead pressing against their partner(s) for help.

**Thumb Wrestle** - Once good at one thumb, cross arms and "wrestle" to pin either or both of the opponents' thumbs while clasping hands. Cross the arms of one of the two competitors and do double time.

**Circle Back Massage** - As you give the player in front a back rub, tell him/her how good he/she is doing in practice. Add the "Circle Sit" by sitting in unison in each other's lap; then creep around.

**Towel Bend** - Roll up a towel tightly, starting at the top. Go down the towel, alternating hands in grasping the towel until it "breaks" and bends over.

**Laps** - Each player sits on a teammate's lap in a circle. Ask questions of any sort (I did my homework last night/I am 17/I got kissed this week) with a "yes" answer, meaning they may move forward one lap (occupied or not, just let them pile up!) and a "no" response, meaning they must stay put. Object is to get all around the circle first.

**Coin Tricks** - Teach them a few coin tricks at cool down. One is Triple Coin, where three coins are placed on the back of the hand and, after tossing them up backhand, try to catch all three in succession (separately) before they can hit the floor. Another is to catch a stack of coins resting on your elbow, using the same hand of that arm. Reaction games like the dollar bill drop are also fun. One player hangs a dollar bill between the gap of a partner's thumb and forefinger. Because of reaction time, you can let the dollar drop with just gravity's help, and the partner cannot pinch the bill in time, if the starting gap is wide. The narrower the gap, the better the chance of catching the falling dollar.

**Human Compass** - The team members must ALL shut their eyes and get over to a place across the gym. They can get there as a group, or individually, but cannot open their eyes. Once they get there (to the person or object), they can open their eyes and direct the other compasses in the group.

**Hot Potato** - One player is "hopping" in the middle while the rest pass a volleyball around the circle; when the player stops hopping, whoever is holding the ball loses and becomes the hopper.

**Sonic Boom** - Everyone gets together in a group and on the count of three says "BOOM" loud and fast.

**Hand Slap** - Reaction game. One player holds his/her hands below the opponent's and "flicks" his/her own over to slap the tops of the partner's hands. Continue until a slap is missed, at which time the players switch roles.

**Name Draw** - At the start of practice, draw a teammate's name who you must tell, in front of the group, three things seen done well during that practice.

**Walk the Plank** - Spin fast six or more revolutions then, dizzy, immediately try to walk the end line without stepping off the line.

**Trust Walk** - Players spend two minutes blindfolded and moving around the gym being led by a teammate.

**Shoe Pile** - Everyone's shoes are mixed into a pile at the net; the race is to see who can find and put on their shoes, then get back to the end line first.

**Clumpers** - It starts out as everyone collects in one big group. The coach initially calls out a number, usually a number between two and 15. The number shouldn't be more than half of the number of total players. When the number is called, everyone must try to collect in a group that contains that number of players. The group members should be latching arms or have their arms wrapped around each other so that the coach can see who is in the group. If someone cannot enter a group because the number of required members has been reached, he/she is out of the game. As different numbers are successively called, the number of players gets smaller and smaller. Eventually, there are fewer than 10 people. The last group, or winning group, should have anywhere from two to five people.

A variation is not to make people go "out" of the game. Rather, constantly re-group people in different-sized groups. Have everyone say something like, "mingle mingle mingle" as they mill about together waiting for a number to be called out. Ultimately, try to make it so that everyone is in a group.

**Lion's Roar** - This only works once a season. Everyone except two players is let in on the game of making the first player roar all alone. This is accomplished by setting him/her up by having everyone roar as loudly as possible while the first one tries to pick who the head lion is by the loudest roar. It's nobody, just let it be the person that the first chooses fourth. Then bring the second one in and explain just as was done to the first how the goal is to pick the "head lion," Nobody will roar on this round, but the first does not know that and roars alone. First could be told before second gets there that he/she is the head lion; make sure everyone looks like they are going to roar and even have everyone open their mouths, only just don't utter a sound. A similar version is called Ferocious Gorilla, with everyone jumping crazily about and trying to "pick" the meanest. You need to determine in advance which of the roars everyone goes silent on other than the tricked person, of course. Usually it is the third yell. Similarly, you usually let the first person in on round one "win" with the third choice he/she makes.

**Circle Trust** - Everyone stands or sits around one player who must fall into their hands and trust them to not let him/her hit the floor while passing the stiff body around in a circle.

**I See a Bear** - This only works once, too. Everyone stands in a line, shoulder to shoulder. One at a time they say "I see a bear," to which you respond, "Where?" They then crouch down while saying, "Over there" and pointing. Continue down the line until you are crouched, then you can say, "Y'all are wrong; it's over there" and when you point, knock the entire group down from one end.

**Bim Bum Bam** - One player chooses even or odd; the other player becomes whatever wasn't chosen. They say "Bim, Bum, Bam" and flick out a hand each, with the numbers 1-5 all options. The winner is whoever is in accordance, odd or even, with the even or odd sum of the two hands' numbers. This is a fun option to flipping a coin.

**Volleyball Hug** - Entire team holds hands and wraps in an outward spiral around the person receiving the "hug." When the team is wrapped around the player, all squeeze together to give the center person a real hug.

**Body Surfing** - Players all lie on the floor and continuously roll over while one teammate on top rides the rolling action.

**Ball Flying** - Place a dozen or more balls about a foot apart in a straight line. With two teammates each holding the arm of one side of another person, have the "flyer" and supporters take a low lateral leap onto the balls. The player "flying" is pulled along the tops of the volleyballs by the supporting players.

**Percussion Massage** - Everyone getting the light karate-like chops on their back sings "Row, row, row your boat."

**Minefield Cool Down.** With balls all over court, you have to walk a teammate with his/her eyes shut through the minefield.

**Amoeba** - Materials: 3-ft. pieces of yarn, two blindfolds. Tie a piece of yarn between each of the creating a line. Tie a blindfold on the first player and the last player in line. Then proceed to have the line of players go through a previously set up obstacle course.

**Aura** - Two people stand face to face, arms-out, palms touching. Then, each turns around three times and tries to find each other's palms again and return to the original position without opening their eyes. This is a great spectator sport and is also a riot if an entire group of pairs is trying to do it at the same time.

**Psychic Shake** - This cool down calls for as much silence as possible. Each player decides on a number from 1 to 3. While not saying a word, everyone in the group wanders around shaking people's hands. The number of shakes should match the number chosen. There will be an unmistakable moment of tension when the numbers don't agree. But when they do the two should silently decide how to group themselves. Eventually, everyone will be in three groups. Surprisingly, the groups are often very evenly divided. It must be something psychic....

**Animals** - The group divides into two parallel lines facing each other across the room (perhaps boys/girls, but it doesn't matter). Each player is assigned an animal with at least one other player being the same animal. After being given a moment of thought, everyone in the room acts like the assigned animal and walks (crawls, flaps, waddles, etc.) around the court in search of their species. No human language is allowed.

**Red Handed** - Also called "Button, button, who's got the button?" The group forms a circle and one player, "It," stands in the center. The group faces in, fists closed, palms up. "It" places a marble (or button, or other small object) into someone's hand. "It" then closes his/her eyes. While the eyes are closed, the group passes the marble around. The idea is to trick "It" so everyone pretends to pass the marble.

"It" shouts out a word (any will do; "RED-HANDED" for example) and opens his/her eyes. He/she then tries to guess (or catch) who has the marble. Everyone presents their hands in the original position (fists closed, palm up) and "It" picks a hand. If you get caught with the marble, you become "It." If "It" fails to catch someone, "It" goes again.

**Musical Chairs** - It is fun to play this classic game as a cool down, but to place obstacles in the path (i.e., between the numbers) for the players to crawl under, jump over, or step around. or by crawling, hopping, or skipping.

**Zoom!** - The object of Zoom is to be one of two winners. The game is played by everyone sitting in a circle, facing in. One player begins by saying the word "zoom" and turning to face the player on either the right or left. The player "zoomed" can do one of two things. First, turn his/her head and look at the next player in the circle and say "zoom," thus continuing in the same direction. Second, he/she can make a brake screeching noise and look back toward the player who just "zoomed" him/her (or perhaps braked him/her), thus reversing the direction of



the zoom. The game must go rapidly and with rhythm. If someone messes up—looks the wrong direction, says the wrong thing, or hesitates—he/she out and the circle closes in. The game continues until there are only two left (can hardly do it with only two).

**Electric Squares** - Using the Sport Court® or floor tiles as a grid, players find the path through a maze that only you know to the other side. Once they take a wrong step, you "buzz" them and they have to go back the same way. Then the next player takes the same steps until he/she reaches the other side or gets "electrocuted." No one can say anything to help the person in the maze. You can only move forward, backward, or sideways (not diagonally). Winner is the team that gets all of its people over to the other side. Ideal size is 10x10, but you can make it easier or harder by adding more squares.

**All My Neighbors** - You need an odd number of people for this game, which is a distant cousin to musical chairs. Everyone begins by sitting on a spot in a circle (again, chairs can also be used) with the coach standing in the middle. Explain that the player in the middle needs to find some "neighbors." To do so, they'll make a true statement about themselves and hope that it will be true for others. Everyone who "identifies" with the statement then has to stand up and find an empty spot. The player in the center is also looking for a chair, so once again someone will be without a spot, and he/she gets to go to the middle and find some "neighbors." The coach then begins with something like: "All my neighbors wearing black-bottomed shoes." At this, everyone who is should jump out of their seats and look for an empty seat. The odd player out goes to the middle.

*All my neighbors who:*

are in their second year of volleyball  
have an older sibling  
were born in a month without an R in it  
whose last digit of their social security number is odd  
like Frosted Flakes®  
don't eat meat  
know the name of Yogi Bear's sidekick  
have watched *Gone With the Wind* in one sitting  
play the piano (even a little bit)  
have been to a Hannah Montana concert  
have written a song  
can't drink milk

**Pioneer Went To Sleep** - Everyone stands in a circle. The first player begins by saying, "Pioneer went to sleep." The rest of the group answers, "How did Pioneer go to sleep?" The leader then says, "Pioneer went to sleep like this, like this," repeating a small gesture such as nodding the head or twisting the wrist. The rest of the group mimics the gesture and answers, "like this, like this." The entire group continues to repeat the gesture as the next player in line says, "Pioneer went to sleep," and others respond as before. The second player adds another gesture to the first, so that now there are two movements to keep going. The game continues around the circle, each player adding a gesture. By the end of the game, the entire group should be a foot-wiggling, eye-blinking, head-shaking, nose-twitching mess. Try to add as many gestures as possible before the game totally falls apart. Since it is difficult to do more than 10 gestures at once, you may not get everyone in the group, but the challenge is to see how far you do get. Start off slowly with small things, such as toes and fingers, and work up to the bigger things, such as arms and legs.

**Sentry Post** - The prize goes to the quietest team in this game. Two players with eyes shut tightly (trust is part of it; blindfolds should not be required) stand at the end of the court, 3 meters apart, as the sentry posts facing each other. The other players divide into two teams. At signal from the leader, the first player in each line sneaks forward on tiptoe and tries to pass between the two sentries without a sound. If either sentry hears anything, he/she calls out and points in the direction from which the sound came. If he/she's right, the player is "captured" and out of the game. If he/she points in the wrong direction, the player sneaks ahead. Each team goes through just once. The winner is the team that gets the most players past the sentries.

**Bombing** - Drop a small item like a rock or a barrette into an empty soda can or bottle from an erect kneeling position on a chair seat. Dropped item must be held at eye level. Score one point for each item dropped in the bottle.

**Calendar Toss** - Toss pennies or other small objects onto a numbered calendar page laid flat 5 feet from the player. Score by adding the dates on which the bottle tops come to rest.

**Count To Ten** - All players stand at the net except one player who is "It," who stands with his/her back to the other players on the end line. "It" counts to 10 as fast and as clearly as he/she can. While counting, the other players advance as fast as they can by putting one foot directly in front of the other (heel, toe, heel, toe). At the count of 10, "It" turns around. Everyone freezes. If someone moves he/she starts all over again. The first player across the goal line wins and becomes the next "It."

**Static Electricity** - Give each player a balloon and at the given signal, the player blows up the balloon, ties it, and rubs it on his/her hair to make static electricity, then sticks it on the wall. The balloon that sticks the longest is the winner.

**Minivolley in El Salvador: two courts on one regular net, outside the National Stadium in 1986.**





## MENTAL COOL DOWNS/TEAM BUILDERS

As volleyball is mostly a mental sport, it's fun to have the team members using their minds with riddles, jokes and other mind games that often continue outside of practice and can meet many social needs for the players (including affiliation and competency needs). Often you can give the secret to the weaker members of the team or, if they get the answer first, so much the better. Some of these are specifically team building exercises, while all will help in team cohesion.

**Tongue Twisters** - Some funny ones are (remember, speed first...):

One smart fellow, he felt smart, two smart fellows, they felt smart, three smart fellows, they felt smart.  
I slit the sheet, the sheet I slit and on the slitted sheet I sit; whoever slit the sheet is a good sheet slitter.  
Toy boat, toy boat, toy boat. Unique New York, Unique New York, Unique New York.

**Minute Mysteries** - Given the mini-story, solve the mystery of what happened by asking questions that may be answered by the person who knows what happened with just yes or no (or not important) answers. For instance: There's a man lying dead in a field with a backpack on and a ring in his hand. What happened? He was a parachutist. A minor was in court after downing three highballs and attacking a girl. The high judge determined it was a setup but he still had to serve his time. What happened? It was a coed volleyball game going on, that's all. A man walks into a bar to get a drink, the bartender pulls out a gun, the man says thanks and leaves. He had hiccups. There are countless others and with a bit of thought, you can create your own. A long list follows in this book.

**One-Way Coaching** - Draw either a turkey or a horse, without the other teammate you are sitting back to back with seeing what it is, and without you being able to see how your teammate is hearing your drawing "coaching." When done as a team exercise, the coaches should be on one side and the drawing players who are listening should be on the other so the drawing already done of the "coaches" cannot be seen by the players. Shapes and lines are the words to be used, not "draw a horse's leg. ..." This can also be done by using two sets of identical Legos®/blocks/other items to be arranged the same way as each other but back to back/not seeing the arrangement as the coaches make theirs.

**Achievement Speakers** - My kids' elementary school has had a Junior Achievement staffer come each week to speak about life and achievement. Take some time to find out about your team's parents or your town's leaders, and have some of them speak to the team about what they have achieved and how.

**Confidence Collage** - Have players over the season or during the off season cut out images and phrases they think are empowering and paste them onto a poster board to share with the team at some time.

**Empty Boat** - Players need to learn to focus on what they can control, and not worry about those things out of their control. I use the Empty Boat parable for this team discussion. In order to get the outcome desired, you need to focus on the present, and what you can control, thus increasing the chance of your reaching the outcome. The process goals, such as Citius, Altius, Fortius, help a team/player reach the medal stand, but as Baron Pierre de Coubertin said, "It is not the winning, but the taking part. ..." Keep posters/lists of the things players can and cannot control, helping remind them.

**Picnics** - "I am going on a picnic and I can bring XXXXX but not XXX." The things you can and can't bring have a certain pattern that, once known, makes it easy to know what to bring. The items do not have to fit a real picnic.

One version has you able to bring anything that starts with the same first letters as either your first and/or last name; so Blase Czerniakowski could bring butter, candy, bicycle, catsup. Many other patterns can be created from just the letters in the words that may or may not be "brought," like only allowing words with the letter "e" to be "brought." The "Deep But Not Profound" version means you can bring words with double letters, like deep or letter, but not others, like "profound" or "words."

**Semantics and Logic** - These sentences seem simple at first, but require listening and thought. A few examples are: If you take two apples from three apples what do you have? Two apples, you took them! What laws in \_\_\_\_\_ prevent a man from marrying his widow's sister? He's dead, if he has a widow.. Two coins found in an ancient dig are dated 49 B.C. How does the archeologist know they are forgeries? They couldn't be dated B.C. *Games* and *Omni* magazines are great sources for seasons and seasons of mind games, just drop by a library and copy the best ones.

**Hangman** - First using only volleyball terms, then something somewhat team-related.

**Roll the Ball name game** – sitting in their team group, the child say the name of the teammate they roll the ball to. Variations can be in rolling an apple, hardboiled egg, potato, balloon, or other object. There is a song my mom taught me long ago– *"I have a (color here) (object here), as round as it can be, I'll roll it over to you and you roll it over to me."*

**Languages** - Teaching the team the volleyball terms and phrases of another country can be not only a learning experience, but helps provide an aspect of uniqueness to the team members while helping them realize the universality of the sport. They also can learn the jargon of volleyball found in the appendix, as well as create their own. A form of pig Latin could also help provide for needs on the team like affiliation. One example is the "Ong" language. Normal words have every letter pronounced with an -ong ending for all consonants. CAT becomes Cong-A-Tong, dog - Dong-O-Gong. Cussigungaringhi means "net" in Australian aborigine. Bellbudgeri means no good.

**Team Shoes Statement** - Each player on the team has two letters of a phrase (spaces or not optional) that make up a powerful team statement. The letters are put on the back heel cup area usually, or on the toes, so that when lined up together, the statement can be read.

**Scissors** - A pair of scissors is passed around the circle in both closed and open positions. Players say, "I receive them crossed/uncrossed and pass them crossed/uncrossed." While a great deal is being made of the scissors, it is actually whether or not the recipient/giver's legs are crossed or not that is correct. Players who can subtly change their leg position will keep those unaware of the real key to the game and frustrate their fellow teammates who cannot demonstrate the same competency. There are a great many such "clue" games that can be so simple yet so darn hard to figure out, such as "Chinese Numbers" and "Are You Listening?"

**Mind Reader** - Lay out nine magazines in a 3x3 grid. Where you touch the center magazine in a same relative quadrant to the actual one is the answer. Thus, upper right corner of the center magazine means that it is the third, the upper right of the nine.

**Polar Bears** – Roll two dice, and with the numbers you can say how many "polar bears" are around the "ice hole," from none to several. The trick is, only the dice that have a number with a dot on the die (3 and 5), have this ice hole, and it can take some kids a long time to determine this pattern.



**Jenkins Up** - Four or more people pass a penny around under the table, and with the call of "Jenkins Up," everyone must put both hands up on the table. Then the hands must be slammed down, including the one with the penny, and the person out must guess which hand is hiding the penny. Calling creepers after means player must put his/her hands down slowly.

**Circle Compliments** - Like circle memorization, but with compliments. Each person says a compliment about the teammate next to him/her, and it adds up to be a long list for the last players in the circle, as they must repeat all the other compliments.

**Jersey Words** – A line drawing of a jersey outline, with lots of room to write words and sentences inside, is given to each player. They put their jersey numbers down on the paper on the jersey, then everyone passes their sheet of paper to every other player, who writes a positive word, sentence, thought or observation about that teammate. When it is done, it will be filled with great things for each teammate to read about themselves, as thought of by their own teammates.

**Name Those Logos** - Go through several magazines and cut out advertisement symbols (i.e. the 7 UP® dot, but not the word 7 UP®. Paste each on the white side of a 3x5 card and have everyone go around the room with an answer sheet and try to identify as many of the symbols as possible.

**Olympic Pictographs** - My kids brought home from school a life-sized drawing of themselves (their body outline drawn by a classmate). For volleyball, I can see teammates tracing each other doing their weakest and/or favorite skill, life-sized, then the players filling them in with empowering things. The jugs and other items used now as Olympic awards with stylized sports poses, or team sayings/empowering quotes, could also be done on a volleyball or the team cooler that comes to each event.

**Four Facts** - Each player writes down four facts about themselves, one of which is a lie. Each player takes turns reading their lists aloud and the rest of the team writes down the one they think is a lie. When all are done reading the lists aloud, the first player reads his/her list again and identifies the lie. The team sees how well they did.

**What's Different, Partner?** - Ask everyone to team up with a partner (someone they haven't met or who has the same color eyes). Ask them to turn back-to-back and change five things about their appearance, one which is very silly. Partners turn around when ready and try to guess the five things that have been changed. It shows how observant we really are.

**Red Light Green Light** - When I was growing up, Engineer Bill on Channel 9 in LA had a contest to see who could drink the glass of milk the fastest using start and stop phrases. What I do now is have each player put down words or actions on single slips of paper that start them or stop them from being great—words or actions that they think of when they see themselves or teammates playing powerfully or poorly. Put the strengthening ones in the green light glass, and the team weakening ones in a red cup, and draw them out for discussion over time as a team. You can also have them do this about specific scenarios with go/stop responses, such as being on the bench, playing in a tough away match environment, getting a bad call, and have them write responses both ways they have seen. Finally, this can be done as self-evaluation on how they played a match or tournament, with related questions like, "How much of your time was spent in green light mode" or "How did you get there and how did you stay there?"

As a coach, think the same things about the best teachers and worst you have had (what those start/stop traits and actions were) and focus on the green light actions.

**Birth Order** - Put one of the following signs in each room corner: Only Child, Oldest Child, Youngest Child, Middle Child. Have players go to the appropriate corner of the room based on their own birth order position. When everyone is assembled, ask them to discuss what special characteristics their birth order has and how it is reflected in their choice of job. Assign a recorder based on some criteria (i.e., player who was born the farthest from the meeting site, player who has been with their company the longest/shortest, player who is the tallest, etc.).

**Volleyball Brainstorming** - Announce a topic (things associated with a season, a holiday, the practice content, the tournament ahead, etc.). Then pass around the volleyball. Have everyone stand and pass the ball. When someone catches the ball, he/she shouts something related to the topic and then tosses the ball to someone else.

**Bug** - This is a road trip/tourney dead time game. Each player receives paper and pencil. One die is used. Players in turn throw the die. Each side of the die represents one part of the bug. Players draw parts of the body as they roll die. 1) One makes the body. Players must throw a 1 before they can make other parts of their "bug." 2) Two is the head. 3) Feelers are 3s. A bug has two feelers. 4) Legs are 4s. A bug has six legs. 5) Eyes and mouth are 5s. A bug has two eyes, 1 mouth. 6) Tail is 6. Winner is player who finishes bug first.

**Names, Adjectives & Stories** - Ask each player to take a few moments to think of an adjective that starts with the same first letter as their first name (e.g. "Merry Marilee"). Start by modeling it yourself. Then move around the group asking each player to state his/her name/adjective combination. Ask players to introduce themselves, with each player talking briefly about the most ridiculous thing they have done in sport. Additionally, players can be asked other pertinent information.

**Tourney Stuff** - Bring a few decks of cards, a couple of chess sets and a backgammon set. You don't have to say a word. Bring Koosh stress balls, Silly Putty® and Slinkies®, or a big tub of Legos®. Select a card game such as Rummy, Crazy Eights, or Concentration. Bring yo-yos to do new tricks with. Teach everyone on the team to juggle. Work on small cube puzzles or metal objects that are flexible and 3D puzzles such as the type with objects stuck inside them where the challenge is to remove the objects.

***The Game Teaches the Game....ya just need a ball, a barrier and three other friends.... Growing the Game Together***



I first began coaching in 1971 at Colorado College, doing both the men's and women's teams. By 1976, I had moved with my company, Holubar Mountaineering, to its headquarters in Boulder, where I started coaching at the University of Colorado with Elvie McKenzie. She and her husband, Bill, had two neat kids, Joy and David. Both ended up playing collegiately at the NCAA Division I level, and David played for the USA men's national team for several years. It was there in Boulder that I coached my first youth program (pictured below) in 1976 with a CU player named Jamie Kane. I also trained with the Denver Comets in the International Volleyball Association under coach Jon Stanley. I still keep in touch with Jon, whose son, Clay, won a gold medal in Beijing with the men in 2008, and give thanks to these kids for the first chance to teach minivolley.



In the early 1980s, I was playing volleyball professionally in Italy, and in my spare time, I was writing and coaching minivolley. Amazingly, thanks to the Internet and Facebook, I still am in touch with most of my teammates, who have gone on to become coaches, doctors and other leaders in their nation. In Genoa, we would close down a central downtown street, as level ground was hard to find other than that used for soccer, and put up portable courts. Dozens of trophies were given out to the many age-group winners, and the champions would move on to the Topolino Cup, the national tournament sponsored by Disney.



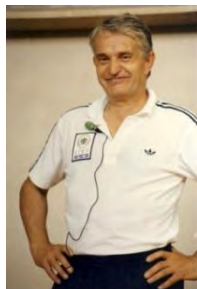
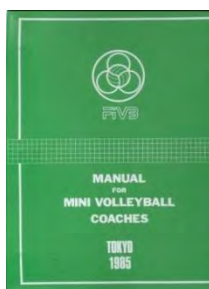
Topolino means Mickey Mouse in Italian, and the model minivolley team was Huey, Dewey and Louie. The trio was coached by Donald Duck, in material shared with all the schools. I still have a 60-page comic book showing Huey, Dewey and Louie training body movements by hopping along a stream, saving Scrooge McDuck's fortune from the Beagle Boy burglars by using their spiking skills, and playing minivolley all the while.





From FIPAV 1983

In 1985, I attended the first-ever FIVB Minivolley Symposium in Japan, along with Dick Powell, on behalf of our National Federation, the United States Volleyball Association. We returned and shared this information with the Junior Olympic Volleyball world through the regions, volleyball magazines such as *Volleyball USA* and USVBA Coaching Clinics. Horst Baake and Hiroshi Toyoda led the event, and Mr. Toyoda remains active in his 70s, still helping grow the game. USA Volleyball owes a great deal of thanks to these two long-time international leaders, as well as the past president of the FIVB, Dr. Ruben Acosta of Mexico, who grew our sport greatly in 25 years.

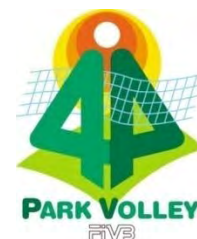


Ten years later, many of these same leaders joined together in Quebec, Canada, for another FIVB International Volleyball in the Schools Symposium, featuring minivolleyball programming for primary school children. I was fortunate to be an instructor and then in 2007, flew from my mom's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday family celebration in Mexico to Canada to join more than 30 other nations in sharing the best practices ideas each had developed in the 12 years since the previous gathering. The presentations and material culled from eight nations have been online for use worldwide since then, both in Canada and via the FIVB. Visit the Web sites for more ideas and examples of minivolley as played around the world.



<http://www.fivb.org/EN/Programmes/SchoolVolleyball/presentedMaterial.asp>

In addition to the decades-long support of minivolley, the FIVB made the 2 vs. 2 game of beach volleyball an Olympic sport in 1996. In the past decade, the world's largest International Sporting Federation—with more than 220 National Federations like USA Volleyball—has also promoted world competitions for players around 6 feet tall and under, as well as recreational volleyball such as 4 vs. 4 park volley. Development centers in every Olympic zone, world prize money competitions for millions of dollars for the top nations' men's and women's teams, and so much more can be found today. USA Volleyball and its regions and other affiliated organizations have been a major part of this effort to make volleyball a global sport for all.



During the past couple of decades, while many clubs and RVAs began minivolley programs in a variety of ways, Randy Sapozniak has spent many years running and



expanding his well-organized United States Youth Volleyball League ([www.usyvl.org](http://www.usyvl.org)), an affiliated organization of USAV. Sapozniak's programs run primarily outside on grass, and utilize the 4 vs. 4 version for primary and junior high kids ages 7-14. More recently, John Sample has taken the concepts and focused more on the 3- to 9-year-old level with a program he calls VolleyTots. Kudos to both Sapozniak and Sample for their efforts in growing the game at the younger level, as well as to all JOV clubs and regions, which have been doing the same.

In the Athens Centennial Olympiad year, USAV Regional Volleyball Associations (RVAs) and Youth and Junior Olympic Volleyball (YJOV) leaders received a give-away/copy-at-will *MVP Grow the Game* CD for expanding youth, disabled, boys and beach volleyball. Earlier this year, USAV and Brazil minivolley leaders presented a five-hour workshop at the national PE teachers' convention. USAV Affiliated Organization American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAPHERD) and RVAs are working now to outreach to the eight regional AAPHERD conventions, as well as the state conventions.



In our North, Central America and Caribbean (NORCECA) zone of 43 nations, the FIVB Development Center in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, has annually hosted both FIVB Olympic Solidarity, Coaches and Referee courses. The Technical and Coaches Commission I work on also added a Volleyball for Schools Seminar

that coincides with our annual commission meeting, and more than 200 teachers from the region take part each February, learning the newest ideas in minivolley. They get the benefit from learning from three-time women's Olympic gold medal coach Eugenio George, current England Olympic women's coach Lorne Sawula, Mark Tennant (director of volleyball for the World University Games), and others. This new information is then incorporated into the USAV-CAP and IMPACT courses annually, so all can benefit.

With all the years of hard work and development, in the USA we reached a level of success at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing never achieved by any nation in our sport's history.

**Gold – USA Indoor Men.....**

**Gold – USA Beach Women....**

**Gold – USA Beach Men...**

**Silver – USA Indoor Women...**

**Silver – USA Sitting Women...**

Thus, the five-medal ball is a representation of the dedication to the sport (and is a decal and/or pin you can order to show your support). The unprecedented five medals happened due to the grassroots work by tens of thousands of volleyball leaders like yourself. The USA competed in the 1964 and '68 Olympics, and then went through more than a decade without being in the Games, missing the '72, '76 and '80 Games. The 2012 Games in London brought similar success for the women, with a gold and three silver medals, but the men faltered in the playoffs. You may not be aware but collegiately on the women's side there are an estimated 12,000 full scholarships, while on the men's side, just 120 exist. That is not a typo, it is a 100:1 ratio, and thus we need your help especially on developing boys who love the game too. We want to do even better in the future and never miss an Olympic Games. Your work in getting kids to play and learn to love the game for a lifetime is crucial to this effort. The ideas to follow are intended to help with this effort, and your USAV regions and Junior Olympic Volleyball Clubs are right in your area to help any time you want. Ask away!



**USAVolleyball®**

During the winter of 1895-96, Mr. W.G. Morgan of Holyoke, Mass., developed a game in his gymnasium which he called Volley Ball. It was presented to the succeeding Physical Directors' Conference and the general impression seemed to be that it would fill a place not filled by any other game. It is to be played indoors, and by those who wish a game not so rough as basket ball and yet one where the same degree of activity is demanded. As PE teachers often test classes on some items of a sport's history, we are including this for such use, and to show our roots too all. The report as given to the conference by Mr. Morgan is as follows:

Volley Ball is a new game which is pre-eminently fitted for the gymnasium or the exercise hall, but which may also be played out-of-doors. Any number of persons may play the game. The play consists of keeping a ball in motion over a high net, from one side to the other, thus partaking of the character of two games—tennis and hand ball.

Play is started by a player on one side serving the ball over the net into the opponents' field or court. The opponents then, without allowing the ball to strike the floor, return it, and it is in this way kept going back and forth until one side fails to return it or it hits the floor. This counts a "score" for one side, or a "server out" for the other, depending on the side in point. The game consists of nine innings, each side serving a certain number of times, as per the rules, per inning.

## RULES OF VOLLEY BALL

### I. GAME

The game consists of nine innings.

### II. INNING

An inning consists of: when one person is playing on each side, one service each side; when two are playing on each side, two services each side; when three or more are playing on each side, three services each side. The man serving continues to do so until out by failure of his side to return the ball. Each man shall serve in turn.

### III. COURT

The court or floor space shall be 25 feet wide and 50 feet long, to be divided into two square courts, 25 by 25 feet, by the net. Four feet from the net on either side and parallel with it shall be a line across the court, the Dribbling line. The boundary lines must be plainly marked so as to be visible from all parts of the court. Note: The exact size of the court may be changed to suit the convenience of the place.

### IV. NET

The net shall be at least 2 feet wide and 27 feet long and shall be suspended from uprights placed at least 1 foot outside the side lines. The top line of the net must be 6 feet 6 inches from the floor.

### V. BALL

The ball shall be a rubber bladder covered with leather or canvas. It shall measure not less than 25 inches, nor more than 27 inches in circumference, and shall weigh not less than 9 ounces nor more than 12 ounces.

### VI. SERVER AND SERVICE

The server shall stand with one foot on the back line. The ball must be batted with the hand. Two services or trials are allowed him to place the ball in the opponent's court (as in tennis). The server may serve into the

opponents' court at any place. In a service, the ball must be batted at least 10 feet, no dribbling allowed. A service which would strike the net, but which is struck by another of the same side before striking the net, if it goes over into the opponent's court, is good, but if it should go outside, the server has no second trial.

#### VII. SCORING

Each good service unreturned or ball in play unreturned by the side receiving counts one score for the side serving. A side only scores when serving, as a failure to return the ball in their part results in the server being put out.

#### VIII. NET BALL

A play which hits the net, aside from first service, is called a net ball, and is equivalent to a failure to return, counting for the opposite side. The ball hitting the net on first service shall be called dead, and counts as a trial.

#### IX. LINE BALL

It is a ball striking the boundary line. It is equivalent to one out of court, and counts as such.

#### X. PLAY AND PLAYERS

Any number may play that is convenient to the place. A player should be able to cover about 10 by 10 feet. Should any player during play touch the net, it puts the ball out of play and counts against his side. Should any player catch or hold for an instant the ball, it is out of play and counts for the opposite side. Should the ball strike any object other than the floor and bound back into play, it is still in play.

To dribble the ball is to carry it all the time, keeping it bouncing. When dribbling the ball no player shall cross the dribbling line, this putting the ball out of play and counting against him.

Any player except the captain, addressing the umpire or casting any slurring remarks at him or any of the players on the opposite side, may be disqualified and his side be compelled to play the game without him or a substitute, or forfeit the same.

#### **HELPS IN PLAYING THE GAME (1897)**

Strike the ball with both hands.

Look for uncovered space in the opponent's field.

Play together; cover your own space.

Pass from one to another when possible.

Watch the play constantly, especially the opponents.



# Cloth / Balloon Volleyball Sewing Instructions

- 3 pattern pieces, included at end of these instructions
- All seams are 5/8 inch

## Materials

- 1/2 yard of 45" fabric
- 1/8 yard of heavy "sew in" interfacing (optional)

1. Cut all pattern pieces. Marking all notches, dots and diamonds.
2. Pattern Piece "C", Bottom End Cover for ball.  
Stay stitch 5/8" around edge. Clip several notches up to the stitching line (See Diagram 1). Fold & press the clipped edges to the wrong side. Set aside.



Diagram 1

## NOTE: IF USING HEAVYWEIGHT NYLON MATERIAL...

Cut along the sew line and simply singe the edges of the piece with a lighter to seal and then proceed.

3. Top Cover, Piece B  
Sew piece "B" the same as Piece C.  
Sew a button hole in the middle of piece C and slit. Set aside.

## NOTE: IF USING HEAVYWEIGHT NYLON MATERIAL...

Cut along the sew line and simply singe the edges of the piece with a lighter to seal and then proceed.

4. Ball Sides: Pattern Piece "A" , 6 pieces



Diagram #2

With right sides together, matching notches, sew 5/8" seam from top to large dots. Do this with all 6 pieces. Press the seams open forming a "daisy" shape (see Diagram #2 ). On the outer side, center ball top cover "B" (the one with the slit button hole in it) over opening. Top stitch close to the edge. On the inner side, trim the seams close to stitching.



Diagram #3

On the bottom side of the ball side-pieces, sew from the bottom edge to the diamond marks. Connecting all 6 pieces the same as in the previous step (see Diagram #3). Press the seams open. Turn right-side-out through one of the open panels. Center the "C" disk over the opening and top stitch close to the edge.



Turn the ball inside out and sew a 5/8" seams to close up 5 of the 8 panels. On 6th side, sew up the seam, leaving a 4" opening for turning. Turn the ball right-side-out and close the opening by hand, using a slip stitch.

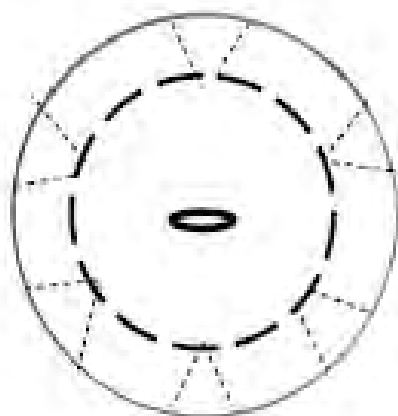
Insert a deflated 11" balloon through the button hole slit in top of ball, holding onto the balloon top. Inflate the balloon and tie a knot. Push the knot inside the button hole.

## PLAY BALL!

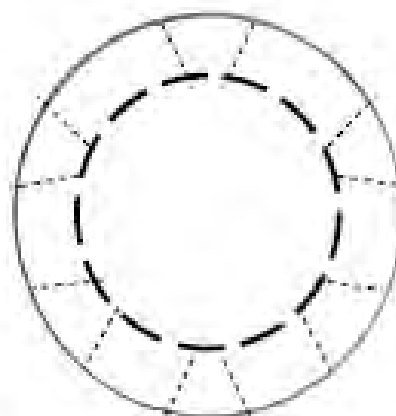
**NOTE:** cloth used can be white to allow kids to sign each others' ball, or panels can be made utilizing school or club colors, etc.

## PATTERN PIECES

**PLEASE NOTE:** Pieces B & C have been reduced to fit this document. When you print them out, enlarge these pieces by 155% to compensate.



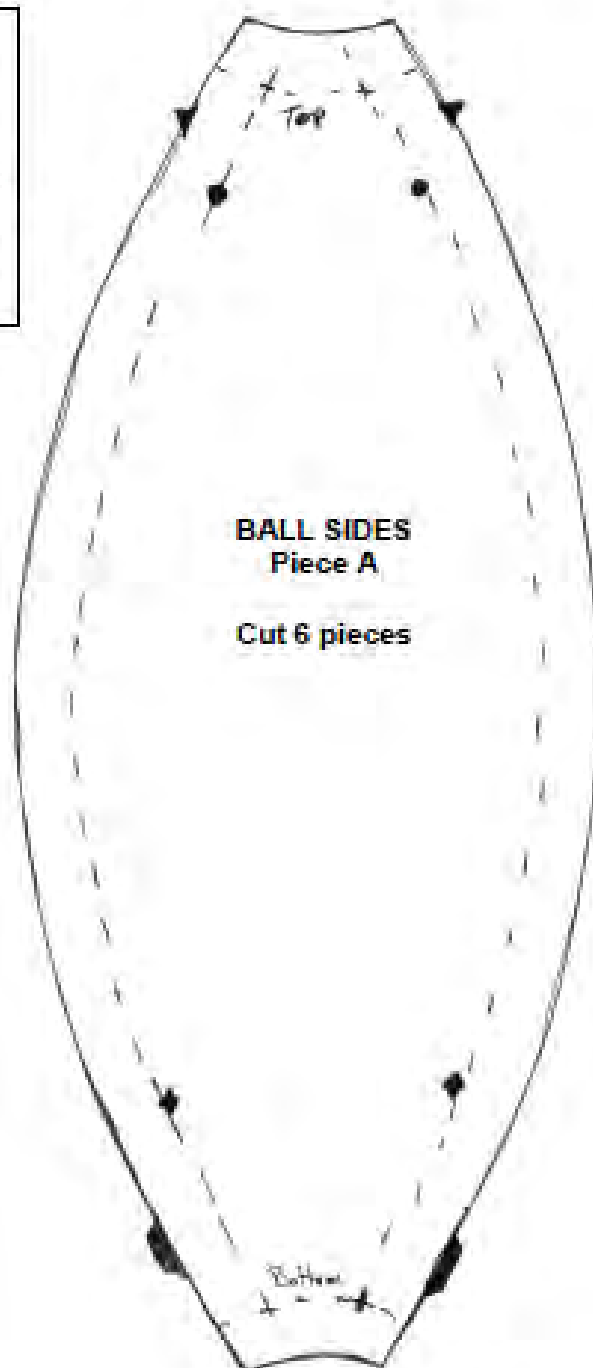
**TOP COVER**  
**Piece B**  
**Cut 1**



**BOTTOM COVER**  
**Piece C**  
**Cut 1**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Piece A has been reduced to fit this document. When you print it out, enlarge this diagram by 100% and print to 11"x17" paper to compensate.



Name

What is your favorite childhood memory?

Favorite Candy?

What makes a season a success?

List 3 things you like about volleyball.

What are your specific goals for the season?

Your favorite number?

List 3 things you dislike:

Favorite color and food?

Describe yourself in 15 words or less.

One person you admire? Why?

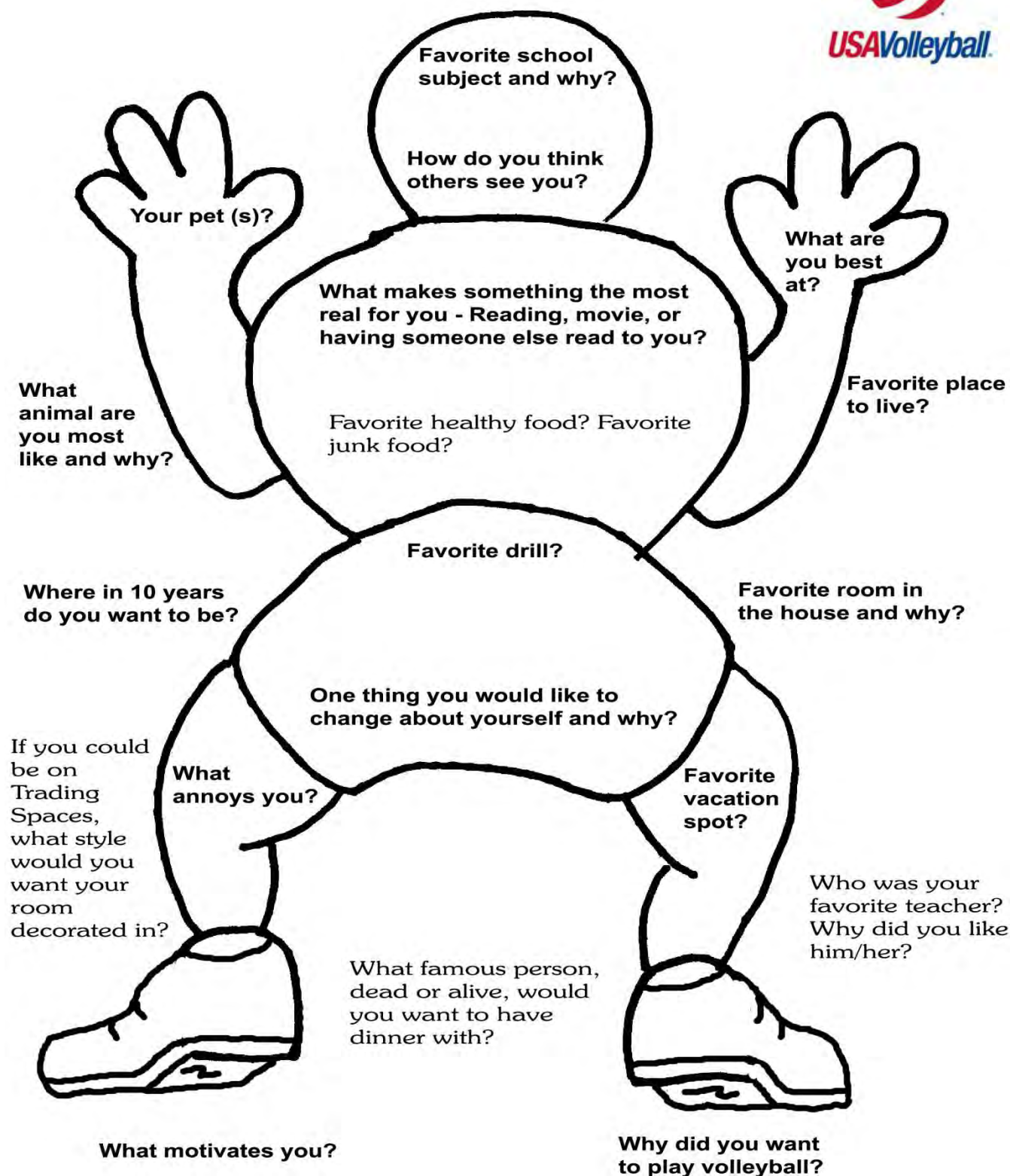
What other sports do you play?

Favorite time of day?

Favorite music group?

Your most recent success?

Your most recent disappointment?





# Sitting Volleyball

**Value:** Respect for sporting achievement  
**Activity:** Practicing Sitting Volleyball skills

## GENERAL GOAL

Students gain respect for the sporting abilities of athletes with a movement impairment.

## SPECIFIC GOALS

- To learn about the rules of Sitting Volleyball.
- To create understanding for the specific needs based on movement limitations.
- To experience Sitting Volleyball skills.
- To experience different ways of movement and the concept of differentiation.

## ENVIRONMENT

- Indoor or outdoor court.

## SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

- Balls of varying size and weight, depending on age (e.g., volleyballs, balloons, beach balls, slow motion ball, monsterball, etc.).  
Note: a monsterball is several balloons bound together with a very light net.
- Low net for every court (official height: 1.15m for men and 1.05m for women).

## PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE ACTIVITY

- Session leader, classroom teacher, athletes (optional).

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

Basic ball control skills (throwing, catching, passing).

## STARTING THE ACTIVITY

The session leader divides the group in pairs and each group receives one ball. The session leader gives the task to play with the ball for about two minutes without further instructions. After two minutes, the session leader gathers all students and initiates a discussion on how to modify this activity for persons with a motor impairment.



Photo © Lieven Couderys



Photo © Getty Images



Photo © Erdelmann

## RUNNING THE ACTIVITY

The aim of the following stages within this activity are to demonstrate the differences in performance among ball handling skills from a seated versus standing position.

1. Throw and catch over the net: Two students opposite each other throw and catch a ball over the net and indicate the maximal distance position with a cone. The exercise is repeated from a seated position. Compare the distances between standing and sitting.
2. Service: Students stand/sit on the service line and practice service over the net. Compare the differences between standing and sitting.
3. Moving skills: Students are lined up in two lines (one standing, one seated), one on either side of the net. While moving horizontally across the court, the students pass the ball back and forth over the net. Compare the difficulty level between sitting and standing.
4. Two-on-two game. This game is similar to Volleyball, the only difference is that students are to catch and throw rather than perform traditional Volleyball actions. With elementary school students, this game is more appropriate when considering skill level.
5. Four-on-four (or six-on-six).
6. Monsterball - an adapted version of Sitting Volleyball: Students are divided into teams of six players and play Volleyball from a seated position (on the knees or bottom) with a monsterball (see page 1).

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Photo © Lieven Coudanys

#### GUIDELINES FOR ADAPTATION TO YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS

- Use lighter/softer/bright coloured balls and allow the students to sit on their knees instead of buttocks.
- Throw volleyball to targets from standing and sitting positions and talk about differences.

#### GUIDELINES FOR ADAPTATION TO OLDER PARTICIPANTS

- All exercises are performed using Volleyball skills: finger play, service, attack, defense, setting and bumping.
- Explain the rules of the game and play a regular game of Sitting Volleyball (preferably with an athlete).

#### REFLECTION

In order to reach the desired goals of this activity, it is extremely important that in the reflection process, the session leader emphasizes the challenges of ball handling from a sitting position. Through a group discussion, the session leader directs the conversation towards the realisation that only through physics and skill can persons with a disability practice a challenging sport such as Sitting Volleyball. Video clips (provided on the DVD) can be shown to demonstrate these skills.

#### Sample Questions:

- How did you feel playing? What was most difficult action to do?
- What are the differences between Sitting and Standing Volleyball?
- Is it easy to become an elite Sitting Volleyball player?
- What skills and abilities must one gain to become an elite Sitting Volleyball player?
- What difficulties might these players face in daily living situations? How might they overcome those difficulties?

## sitting volleyball rules

**History:** Standing Volleyball became a Paralympic Sport in 1976 (it was removed in 2000 as it did not have required number of countries/territories widely and regularly practicing the sport). Sitting Volleyball first appeared on the Paralympic Programme at the Arnhem 1980 Paralympic Games.

**Court:** The court is separated into two equal parts divided by a centre line, each side measuring 5m x 6m.

**Net:** Measures 1.15 metres for men and 1.05 metres for women.

**Duration:** A maximum of five sets is allowed and each of the first four sets is completed when a team wins 25 points, having a difference of at least two points over the opposing team (e.g., 25:23). In case of a 2:2 set draw, a fifth set will follow which is completed when one team wins 15 points. The winning team is the first to win three sets.

**Players:** There are only six players allowed on the court at one time. Teams may have up to 12 athletes.

**Rules:** Compared to Standing Volleyball it is permitted to block an opponent's service. Contact of the feet or the legs with the opposing team's side of the court is allowed, on condition that the play of the opposing team is not obstructed. Contact with the hands is allowed with the condition that one part of the hand is either in contact with the central line or exactly above it.

Upon performing an attacking hit, the pelvis of the front zone's player must touch the ground. A defense player can take attacking action which means to send or spike the ball from whatever height behind the attacking zone, as long as the pelvis does not touch or pass over the attacking line. After the hit, the player can touch the attacking zone.

Throughout the game, the players who are involved in a defensive effort must have contact with the ground with some part of the body between the pelvis and the shoulders. In certain cases of defensive action at the back end of the court, for example while "saving the ball", the players are allowed to lose contact with the ground for a short time. But they are not allowed to stand up, lift up their body or take steps.

The official rules of Sitting Volleyball can be found at [www.wovd.info](http://www.wovd.info).

#### LINKS

Website: [www.paralympic.org/release/Summer\\_Sports/Volleyball](http://www.paralympic.org/release/Summer_Sports/Volleyball)  
PSD Manual: Section Two, Chapter 8

#### Did you know...?

Sitting Volleyball can be played by people both with and without a disability, of all ages and genders - in any combination!





## Suggested Minivolley & Junior Olympic Volleyball Player and Teacher Book Reading List

***Big Girl in the Middle*** by Gabrielle Reece & Karen Karbo (1997). Crown Publishers, New York, NY (ISBN 0-517-70835-3).

***Can I Play?*** by J. Dillard (2005), Stickyrocks Publishing (ISBN 0-9768954-0-4).

***The Edge: The Guide to Fulfilling Dreams, Maximizing Success, and Enjoying a Lifetime of Achievement*** by Howard E. Ferguson (1990). Getting the Edge Co., Cleveland, OH (ISBN 0940601044).

***Get With It, Girls! Life Is Competition*** by Teri Clemens (2001), Diamond Communications, South Bend, IN (ISBN 1-888698-37-3).

***The Inner Game of Tennis*** by W. Timothy Gallwey (1982), Random House, New York, NY (ISBN 0-553-247557).

***The John Wooden Pyramid of Success*** by Neville L. Johnson (2003). Cool Titles, Los Angeles, CA (ISBN 096739202-0).

***Man's Search for Meaning*** by Viktor E. Frankl (2006), Beacon Press (ISBN 978-0807014295).

***The Man Watching*** by Tim Crothers (2006), Sports Media Group, Ann Arbor, MI (ISBN 13-978-1-58726-434-4).

***Mental Toughness Training for Sports*** by James E. Loehr (1982), Donnelley & Sons, Harrisonburg, VA (ISBN 0-8289-0574-6).

***Mental Toughness Training for Volleyball*** by Mike Voight (2005). Coaches Choice, Monterey, CA (ISBN 1-58518-942-1).

***My Mom Thinks She's My Volleyball Coach...but She's Not!: Humorous Reminder for Parents About Sports Etiquette*** by Julia Cook (2007), Ctc. Publishing (ISBN 9781934073100).

***No Excuses*** by Kyle Maynard (2005), Regnery Publishing, Washington, DC (ISBN 0-89526-011-5).

***Power of One*** by Bryce Courtenay (1989), Random House, New York, NY (ISBN 345-41005-X).

***Rules of the Red Rubber Ball***, by Kevin Carroll (2004), Hammerpress, Kansas City, MO (ISBN 1-933060-02-6).

***Sacred Hoops*** by Phil Jackson & Hugh Delehanty (1995), Hyperion, New York, NY (ISBN 0-7868-8200-X).

***Season of Life*** by Jeffrey Marx (2003), Simon and Shuster, New York, NY (ISBN 0-7432-6974-8).

***Strength & Power for Young Athletes: Exercise Programs for Ages 7-15*** by Avery Faigenbaum, Ed.D. & Wayne Westcott, Ph.D. (2000), Human Kinetics, Champaign, IL (ISBN 0-7360-0218-9).

***The Vision of a Champion*** by Anson Dorrance & Gloria Averbuch (2002), Huron River Press, Ann Arbor, MI (ISBN 1-932399-10-0).

***Volleyball Centennial*** by Byron Shewman (1995), Masters Press, Indianapolis, IN (ISBN 1-57028-009-6).

***Wooden on Leadership*** by John Wooden and Steve Jamison (2005), Professional Publishing, New York, NY (ISBN 0-07-145339-3).

***The Young Athlete's Handbook: Your Guide to Success in Sports***, by Youth Sport Trust (2001), Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc., Champaign, IL (ISBN 0-7360-3712-8).

**A special “sign” for your training area**


# **USE OF THE COURT WITHOUT USE OF THE NET IS PROHIBITED**





FREE new COOL VOLLEY program by the FIVB at this link:

[http://www.fivb.org/EN/Development/Cool\\_Volley.asp](http://www.fivb.org/EN/Development/Cool_Volley.asp)




FIVB  
FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE  
DE VOLLEYBALL

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**COOL VOLLEY**



## WE PLAY IT COOL!

We play it Cool is the [new FIVB campaign](#) to attract the youth to participate in volleyball and beach volleyball. Cool Volley is a proactive development tool aimed at assisting National Federations to recruit youth through their projects at a national level. Each Federation can download a complete set of the Cool Volley campaign and rebrand it in line with its needs and goals. Cool Volley promotes volleyball as an easy, fun, and competitive way of playing.



**Main Goals**

- Spread volleyball at a national level
- Develop new opportunities for volleyball
- Create interest and passion


**Educational Goals**

- **Enjoy Sport**  
Cool Volley aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to enjoy sport, make new friends, learn new skills, acquire habits of self-discipline, learn to cooperate, to compete fairly and thus occupy their free-time.
- **Building new relationships**  
Fostering personal relationships between young people, with the other Cool Volley Centres/Clubs, with coaches, referees and with other people connected to the sporting community.

**Levels**

- Beginners (8-10 years old)
  - > Stage 1
- Youth (students) from 1st level (11-12 years old)
  - > Stage 2
- Youth (students) from 1st level (13-15 years old)
  - > Stage 3


**Manual**



**EASY**  
**FUN**  
**COMPETITIVE**

[English](#) | [Français](#) | [Español](#)

**COOL VOLLEY DOWNLOADS**



You will need the Adobe Reader application to view the PDF files. Download it free of charge by clicking on the image.

**Promotional material (available soon) and Forms**

- [Candidature Form](#)
- [Registration Form](#)
- [Scoreboard](#)
- [Scoresheet](#)
- Diploma: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [Español](#)

**Logos**

- PDF: [Logo 1](#) | [Logo 2](#) | [Logo 3](#)
- Adobe Illustrator: [here](#)

**Mascots**

- PDF files: [Mascot 1](#) | [Mascot 2](#) | [Mascot 3](#)
- Adobe Illustrator: [here](#)

FREE great Youth Volleyball Coloring Book at this link:

[http://www.teamusa.org/~media/USA\\_Volleyball/Documents/Resources/USAV%20Coloring%20Book%20v10%204612.pdf](http://www.teamusa.org/~media/USA_Volleyball/Documents/Resources/USAV%20Coloring%20Book%20v10%204612.pdf)



*USA Volleyball.*

[www.usavolleyball.org](http://www.usavolleyball.org)

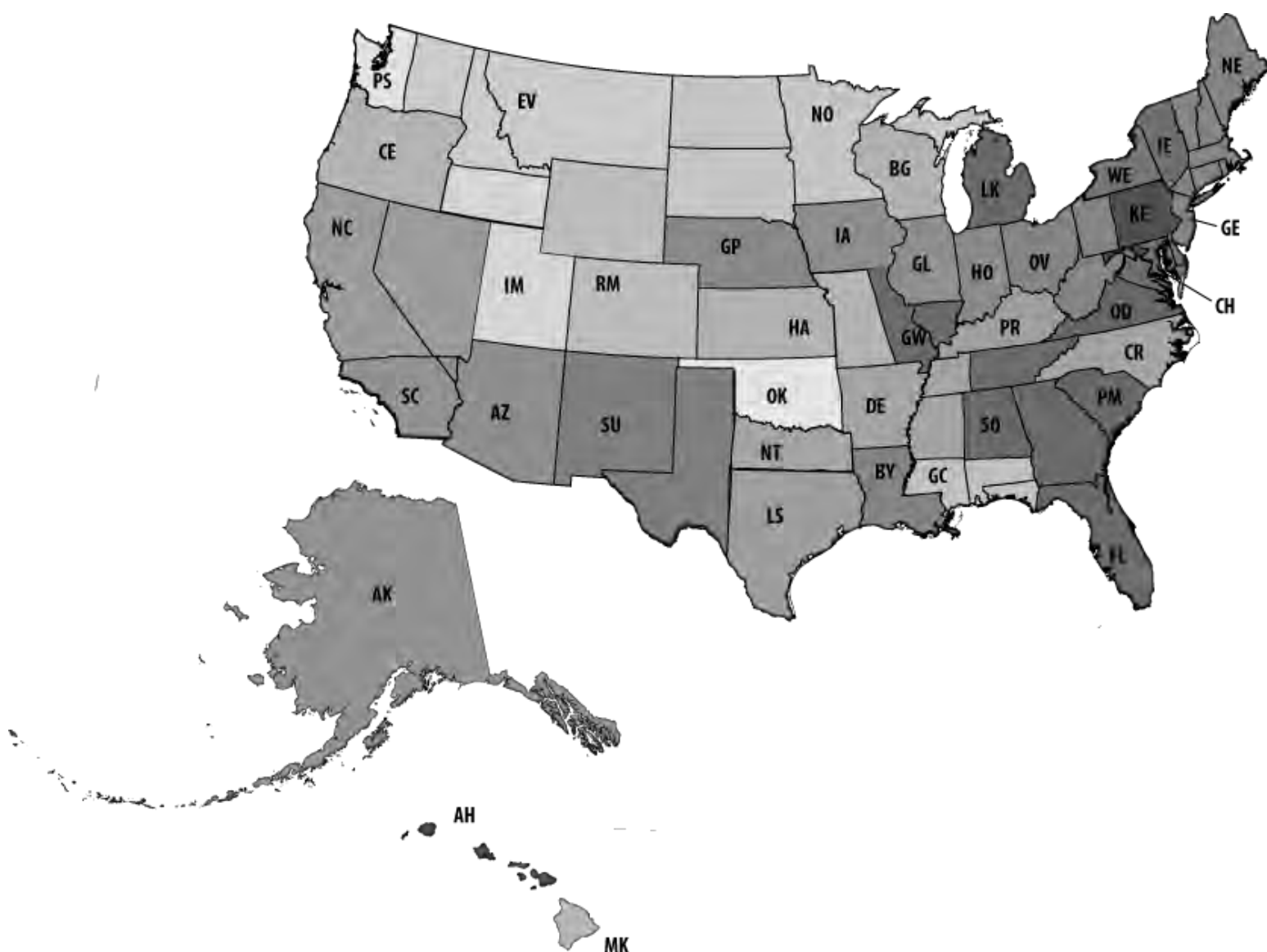
## YOUTH COLORING BOOK

EDITION 2 - MARCH 2011



Visit the USA Volleyball website and find this map and tons of other information on becoming a better player, coach, official, and more under the “Grassroots” section.

The local RVA will help you find adult, junior, and youth programs in your area. There are low cost memberships in most Regions, including FREE ones for 8 & under kids!



<b><u>Code</u></b>	<b><u>Region</u></b>	<b><u>Web-site</u></b>
AH	Aloha	<a href="http://www.aloharegion.com">www.aloharegion.com</a>
AK	Alaska	<a href="http://www.alaskavolleyball.com">www.alaskavolleyball.com</a>
AZ	Arizona	<a href="http://www.azregionvolleyball.org">www.azregionvolleyball.org</a>
BG	Badger	<a href="http://www.badgervolleyball.org">www.badgervolleyball.org</a>
BY	Bayou	<a href="http://www.bayouvolleyball.com">www.bayouvolleyball.com</a>
CE	Columbia Empire	<a href="http://www.columbiaempirevolleyball.com">www.columbiaempirevolleyball.com</a>
CH	Chesapeake	<a href="http://www.chrva.org">www.chrva.org</a>
CR	Carolina	<a href="http://www.carolinaregionvb.org">www.carolinaregionvb.org</a>
DE	Delta	<a href="http://www.deltavolleyball.net">www.deltavolleyball.net</a>
EV	Evergreen	<a href="http://www.evergreenregion.org">www.evergreenregion.org</a>
FL	Florida	<a href="http://www.FloridaVolleyball.org">www.FloridaVolleyball.org</a>
GC	Golf Coast	<a href="http://www.gulfcoastvolleyball.org">www.gulfcoastvolleyball.org</a>
GE	Garden Empire	<a href="http://www.geva.org">www.geva.org</a>
GL	Great Lakes	<a href="http://www.greatlakesvolleyball.org">www.greatlakesvolleyball.org</a>
GP	Great Plains	<a href="http://www.gpvb.org">www.gpvb.org</a>
GW	Gateway	<a href="http://www.gatewayvb.org">www.gatewayvb.org</a>
HA	Heart of America	<a href="http://www.hoavb.org">www.hoavb.org</a>
HO	Hoosier	<a href="http://www.indianavolleyball.org">www.indianavolleyball.org</a>
IA	Iowa	<a href="http://www.iavbreg.org">www.iavbreg.org</a>
IE	Iroquois Empire	<a href="http://www.ireva.org">www.ireva.org</a>
IM	Intermountain	<a href="http://www.imvolleyball.org">www.imvolleyball.org</a>



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KE	Keystone	<a href="http://www.krva.org">www.krva.org</a>
LK	Lakeshore	<a href="http://www.lakeshorevolleyball.org">www.lakeshorevolleyball.org</a>
LS	Lone Star	<a href="http://www.lsvolleyball.org">www.lsvolleyball.org</a>
MK	Moku O Keawe	<a href="http://www.leaguelineup.com/mokuokeawe">www.leaguelineup.com/mokuokeawe</a>
NE	New England	<a href="http://www.nevolleyball.org">www.nevolleyball.org</a>
NC	Northern California	<a href="http://www.ncva.com">www.ncva.com</a>
NO	North Country	<a href="http://www.ncrusav.org">www.ncrusav.org</a>
NT	North Texas	<a href="http://www.ntrvolleyball.org">www.ntrvolleyball.org</a>
OD	Old Dominion	<a href="http://www.odrvb.org">www.odrvb.org</a>
OK	Oklahoma	<a href="http://www.okrva.com">www.okrva.com</a>
OV	Ohio Valley	<a href="http://www.ovr.org/index.php">www.ovr.org/index.php</a>
PM	Palmetto	<a href="http://www.palmettovb.com">www.palmettovb.com</a>
PR	Pioneer	<a href="http://www.pioneervb.com">www.pioneervb.com</a>
PS	Puget Sound	<a href="http://www.pugetsoundvb.org">www.pugetsoundvb.org</a>
RM	Rocky Mountain	<a href="http://www.rmrvolleyball.org">www.rmrvolleyball.org</a>
SC	Southern California	<a href="http://www.scvavolleyball.org">www.scvavolleyball.org</a>
SO	Southern	<a href="http://www.srva.org">www.srva.org</a>
SU	Sun Country	<a href="http://www.suncountryvb.org">www.suncountryvb.org</a>
WE	Western Empire	<a href="http://www.wevavolleyball.org">www.wevavolleyball.org</a>