



Special Olympics Coaching Quick Start Guide

VOLLEYBALL



Special Olympics

October 2008

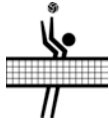


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Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

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USA Volleyball

U.S. Men's National Volleyball Team, 2008 Olympics Gold Medalist – Beijing Olympics

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Video Clips Starring Athletes from Special Olympics Southern California- Orange County

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Volleyball Practice Competitions

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

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

Setting Goals

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

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

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

Sample Volleyball Goals

- Learn to consistently serve overhand, measured as getting eight out of 10 in bounds from the regulation service line;
- Lead the team in warm-up and cool-down stretching using the correct sequence of stretches;
- Give a speech at the annual volleyball awards banquet;



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- Score four out of five in the Individual Volleyball Skills Competition Event #3, forearm passing;
- Learn to help set up and take down the nets at practice each week;
- Assist with an outreach presentation at a nearby residential home to help recruit new athletes.

Benefits of Goal Setting

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



Creating Meaningful Involvement in Unified Sports®

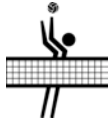
Unified Sports embraces the philosophy and principles of Special Olympics. When selecting your Unified Sports team, you want to achieve meaningful involvement at the beginning, during and at the end of your sport season. Unified Sports teams are organized to provide meaningful involvement for all athletes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

Indicators of Meaningful Involvement

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

Meaningful Involvement Is Not Achieved When Team Members

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



Sample Workouts

Beginner Team

Warm-up (10-15 minutes)

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

Skill Work (45 minutes)

Introduction to Passing

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

Introduction to Serving

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

Introduction to Hitting

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

Team Concept (15 minutes)

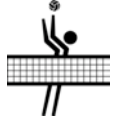
- Practice ready positions with six players on the court.
- Explain the standard rotation (clockwise) and how substitutions will be made.
- Discuss the offensive and defensive responsibilities of each position (who passes, who sets, who hits, etc.).

Cool-down (10 minutes)

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

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Intermediate Team

Warm-up (10- 15 minutes)

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

Skill Work (15 minutes)

BASE Drill

- Focus on accurately passing the ball to the setter.

Team Concept (15 minutes)

Service Reception

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

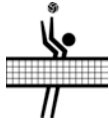
Scrimmage (30 minutes)

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

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

Cool-down (10 minutes)

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



Advanced Team

Warm-up (10- 15 minutes)

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

Skill Work (15 minutes)

BASE Drill

- Focus on accurately passing the ball to the setter.

Team Concept (15 minutes)

Transition Scoring

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

Scrimmage (30 minutes)

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

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

Cool-down (10 minutes)

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



Volleyball Skills Assessment Card

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

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

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

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

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



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Special Olympics - Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals

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

Individual Assessment for Team Play

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



Special Olympics - Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals

E. Communication (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)
 Does not communicate with teammates or coaches; does not make any motion toward the ball (1)
 Does not communicate with teammates or coaches; often runs into other players and takes balls called by teammates (2)
 Responds to communications from teammates and coaches by changing the way he/she plays on the court (4)
 Calls for and aggressively pursues balls near his/her position and backs away from teammates who call for a ball (5)
 Encourages teammates to communicate; helps guide teammates on the court (6)
 Strongly communicates with teammates and coaches during play (8)

SCORE:

F. Game Awareness (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)
 Sometimes confused on offense and defense; does not transition; stays in one place (1)
 Can play a fixed position as instructed by coach; may go after an occasional loose ball (2)
 Limited understanding of the game; performs basic skills and will run occasional plays if coach prompts (4)
 Moderate understanding of the game; some offensive plays and solid defensive skills (6)
 Advanced understanding of the game and mastery of volleyball fundamentals (8)

SCORE:

G. Movement (indicate the choice most representative of the athlete's skill level)
 Maintains a stationary position; does not move to or away from the ball as necessary (1)
 Moves only 1-2 steps toward the ball (2)
 Moves toward the ball, but reaction time is slow and has intermittent transition from offense to defense (4)
 Movement permits adequate court coverage (5)
 Good court coverage, reasonably aggressive; good transition from offense to defense (6)
 Exceptional court coverage, aggressive anticipation; great transition from offense to defense (8)

SCORE:

Total Score:
 (Maximum Score = 56)

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

OVERALL RATING: _____

Signature of Coach/ Evaluator: _____



Volleyball Attire

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

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

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

Shirt

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

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



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Shorts

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

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



Socks

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

Shoes

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



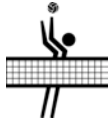
Warm-up Suits

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

Knee Pads

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





Volleyball Equipment

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

Volleyball

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



Court

While it is recommended that a regulation 9 meter x 18 meter (29 feet 6 inches x 59 feet) court be used, the Special Olympics modification allows for the service line to be moved closer to the net, but no closer than 4.5 meters (14 feet 9 inches). If a regulation size court is unavailable, then modifications may be made to allow for play in a safe manner.

Nets

Used to separate the teams during play, men's net height of 2.43 meters (7 feet 11 5/8 inches) is used for regular and Unified Sports. Women's net height of 2.24 meters (7 feet 4 1/8 inches) is used for Women's and Modified Team Competition. The official net is 1 meter (39 inches) wide and 9.5 to 10 meters (31 feet 6 inches to 33 feet) long (with 25 to 50 cm [10 inches to 19 1/2 inches] on each side of the side bands), made of 10 cm (4 inch) square black mesh. At its top a horizontal band, 7 cm (2 3/4 inches) wide and made of two-fold white canvas, is sewn along its full length.



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Antennae

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



Net Standards

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

Ball Cart/ Ball Bag

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



Teaching Volleyball Rules

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

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

Court

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

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

Officials

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

1st Referee (R1)

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

2nd Referee (R2)

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

Scorekeeper

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

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Libero Tracker

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

Line Judges (LJ)

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

SOOPA

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

Pre-match Meeting

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

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

Start of the Match

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

Start of the Set

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

Service Rotation

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

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

Ball In/Ball Out

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

Method of Scoring

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

Time-Outs

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



To Win a Set/Match

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

Sanctions

Yellow Card

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

Red Card

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

Red/Yellow Card Held Together

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

Common Violations

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



Special Olympics Unified Sports® Rules

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

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

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

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

Protest Procedures

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

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

Eligibility

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

Rules of the Game

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

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



Volleyball Glossary

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

Special Olympics Volleyball Coaches Quick Start Guide



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



Appendix: Skill Development Tips

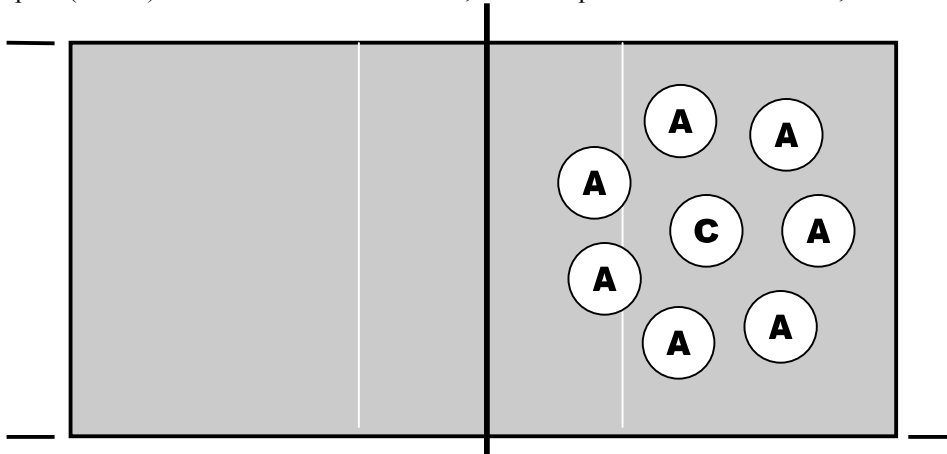
Warm-Up Drills

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

Circle Passing Drill

Description

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



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

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

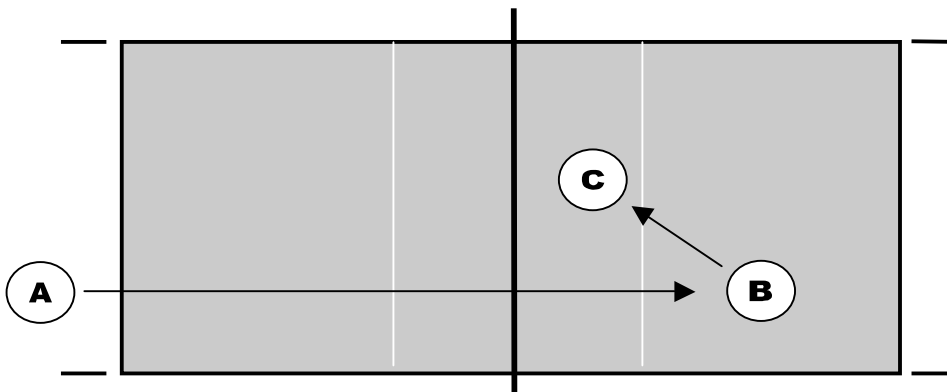
BASE Drill (Build All Skills Efficiently)

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

Description

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

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

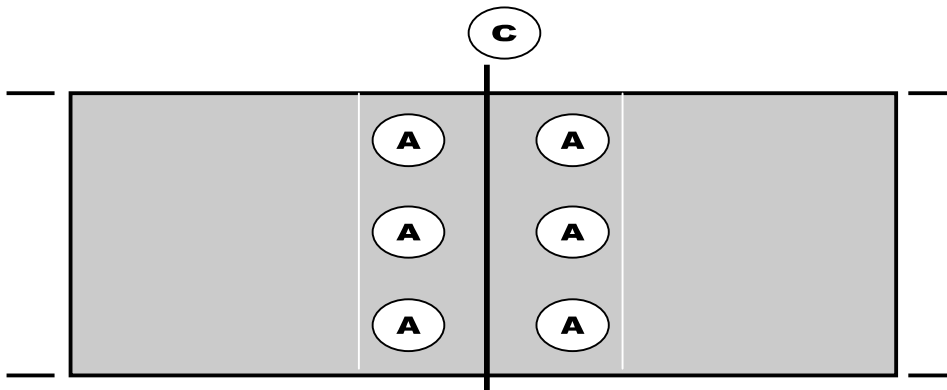


3 on 3 in 3 Drill

Description

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

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



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

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



Serving

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

Underhand Serve

Description – Underhand Serve

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



Skill Progression – Underhand Serve

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



Overhand Serve

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

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

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



Skill Progression – Overhand Serve

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



Serve Drills (Underhand and Overhand)

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

Ball Toss Drill

Drill Description

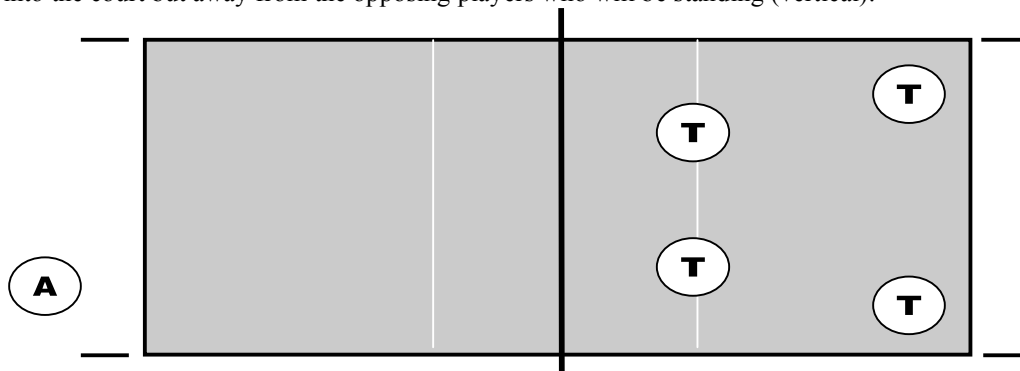
Have the athlete assume the correct serving position (perpendicular to the endline, feet shoulder width apart, off hand holding the ball in front, palm up). The athlete will repeatedly toss the ball straight up and back down into the same hand. The height of the toss will initially be very low, perhaps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



Serve to Target Drill

Drill Description

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



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

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



Passing

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

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



Skill Progression – Forearm Passing

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



Skill Progression – Overhead Passing

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

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



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



Passing Drills (Forearm and Overhead)

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

BASE Drill (Build All Skills Efficiently)

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

3 on 3 in 3 Drill

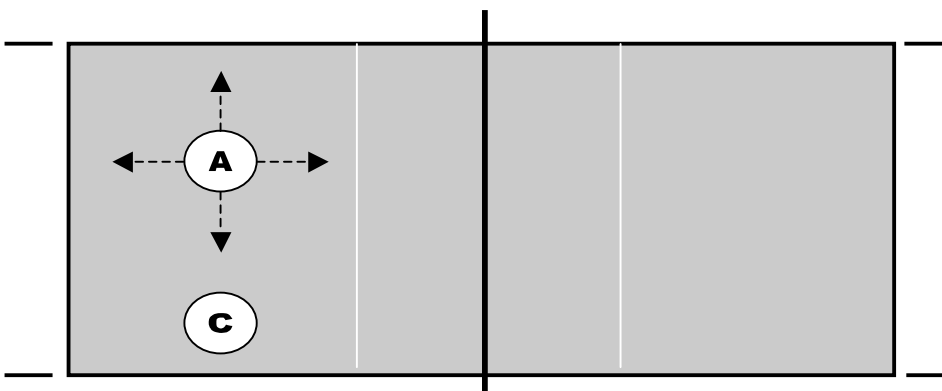
The 3 on 3 in 3 Drill is described in the Warm-up section of this book.

Compass Drill

Description

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

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



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



Variations

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

Basket Catch Drill

Description

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

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

Variations

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

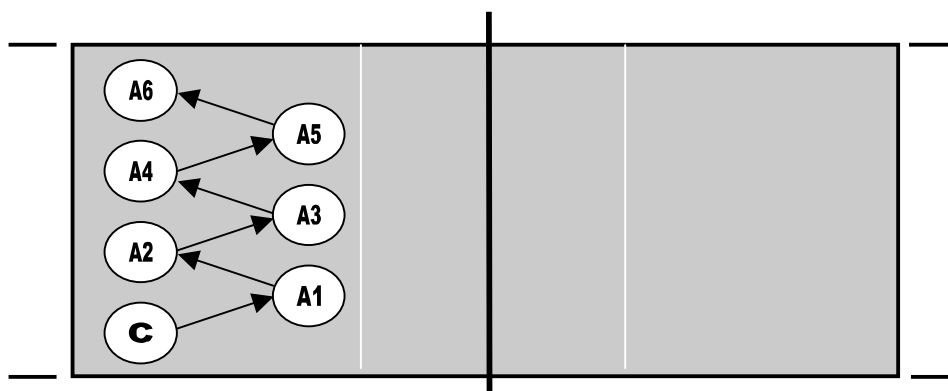
Once the athlete has demonstrated the ability to consistently catch the ball at the correct point on the arms, he/she will repeat the drill described above while bumping the ball back to the coach instead of catching it.

Zig Zag Drill

Description

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

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



Variations

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



Hand Setting

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

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



Skill Progression – Hand Setting

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



Hand Setting Drills

Flick Drill

Description

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

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



Variations

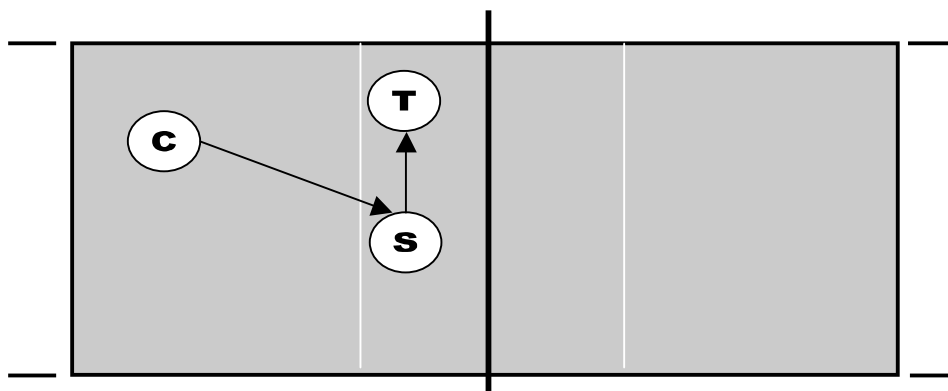
As the athlete gains confidence, the coach can increase the height of the toss, make the toss from an angle rather than directly in front or even add spin to the toss.

Run Down Drill

Description

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

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





Attacking/ Hitting

Standing Attack

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

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



Jumping Attack

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





Skill Progression – Attacking/ Hitting

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

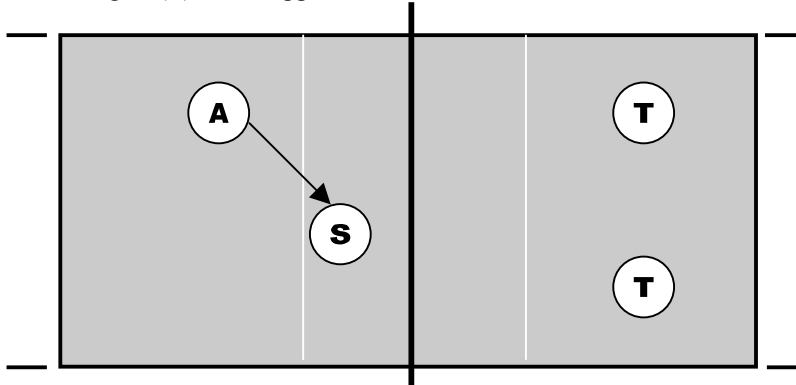


Attacking/ Hitting Drills

Target Practice Drill

Description

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



Variations

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

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





Blocking

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

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

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



Skill Progression – Blocking

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

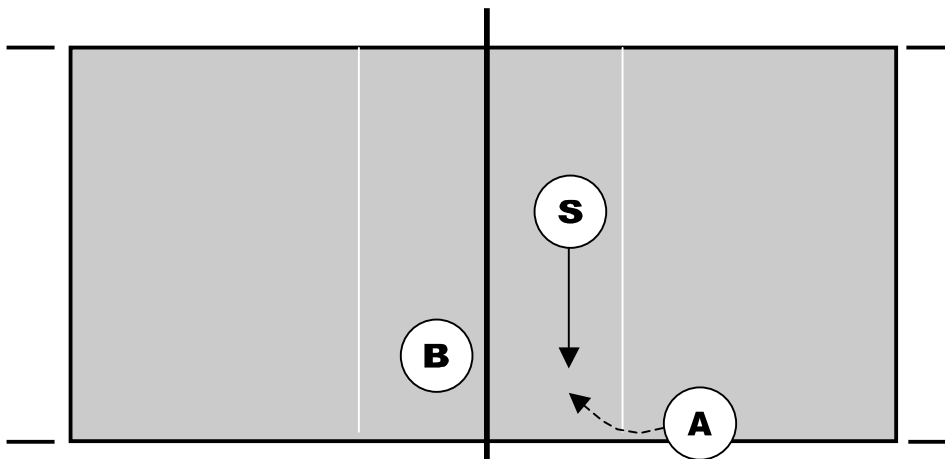


Blocking Drills

Right Place, Right Time Drill

Description

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



Variations

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

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

Over and Back Drill

Description

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

Variations

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



Special Olympics

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