Introduction to Volleyball Coaching

McLean Youth Volleyball
Spring 2018 Season
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Goals

• Encourage and inspire
• Use positive coaching
• Improve player skills and appreciation for the sport
• Build team cohesion and comradery
• Encourage good sportsmanship
• Have fun
Develop Your Philosophy

What is important to you?

- What do you hope your players get out of the season?
- What do you want to get out of the season?
- How do you want to approach practices? Games?
- What do you want to emphasis? Promote controlled volleyball (three touches) or just get the ball over to win?

Share your principles and stick to your principles

- Be predictable and consistent
- Avoid sending mixed messages
Approach

• Connect with your players
• Focus on team and player objectives
• With every practice, players should learn and be challenged
• Raise the bar with each practice, best at the end of the season
• Playing the game teaches the game
• Provide 5x more positive feedback than negative feedback
Practice Planning

• Spend time before practice to select drills and sequence events; write a practice plan
• Have areas of focus for each practice such as improving service or serve receive, increasing multiple touches
• Coaching is best one-on-one: design drills with players or assistant coaches initiate balls so one coach can pull out a player for specific technique coaching or “correction”
• Evaluate your team and devote time to how to improve on the playing skills needed to keep the team progressing and performing
• Start the season focused 1/3 serving, 1/3 passing, 1/3 competitive play (scrimmaging)
• Include water brakes every 20 – 30 minutes
• For younger players, include “unstructured play” to keep the practice fun and the players energized
Drill Tips

- Have a specific goal and focus for each drill
- Provide simple instructions
- Keep all of your players involved - minimize standing around and waiting
- Use scoring and competition to keep them motivated
- Vary what ends a drill (successful passes, time limit, total number of balls in a drill, competition, etc.) – avoid going longer than 10 minutes per drill
- When possible, include the net in the drill
- Consider including progressions in your drills – add targets, have multiple receivers, add blockers on hitting drills, serve to specific locations, etc.
- Focus on improvement and process over results
Coaching Matches

- **Develop lineups** – which players should sever first, which play best together, which are designated setters today

- Tell players when to **arrive at the gym** and ready to warm up – usually 15-20 minutes before match start time

- During games, **encourage** players and **provide feedback** – “move the W formation” and “get low” for serve receive, “take a step to your right” if a player is out of position.

- Encourage **High-5s** for all good plays and good efforts – this is a pillar of team unity and having fun

- Call **timeouts** when your team is in a slump or distracted -- Pump them up, have them take a deep breath, make sure they go back ready to focus and play hard.
Continuous Substitution

- Plan out your team rotation for matches to optimize serving talents and teamwork
- Encourage those not on court during continuous substitution to cheer, high-5 teammates, and call out of bound balls
Passing

Keys:

• Ready
  o Ready to move with weight forward, feet wide, knees bent and chest down
  o Beat the ball to the spot

• Solid Platform
  o Hands together evenly with wrists together and thumbs pointed down
  o Contact ball above the wrists

• Platform to Target
  o Rebound the ball and finish to target

Drill Tips:

• Focus on process, not results

• Have players hold their platform until the ball gets to the target

• Have a well-defined target whether a person or a ball cart
Setting

Keys

• Moose antlers
  o Ball-shaped hands, triangle with thumbs faced down and spread fingers

• Window
  o Ball enters hands at eye-level with arms and knees bent

• Superhero
  o Push up ball evenly to minimize rotation using arms and legs for strength; do not crack wrists
  o Shoulders, hips, and body face target

Drill Tips

• Include a change in direction
  o Don’t set the ball back to the direction of its source. Triangles (groups of three) can be used instead of partner setting
Hitting

Keys:

• Ready
  - Be available and ready to attack

• Accelerate (Run)
  - Three step, rhythm approach – “left <pause>, right , left” with a 2 foot jump

• Explode (Jump)
  - Swing both arms forward and up on takeoff

• Swing Fast (High 5)
  - Contact the ball high at full arm extension
  - Whip arm turning elbow, shoulder and torso to maximize contact speed

Drill Tips

• Start with standing hits (down balls) then move to jumping hits
• Emphasize correct foot work
• Focus on what is correct in the jumping and swinging motion
• Practice hitting front and back row
Underhand Serving

Keys

• Bend knees and waist, **hold the ball low** at the waistline in front of the swinging arm

• Do not toss ball, **hit it directly out of hand**

• **Shift weight** from the back foot to front foot during the swing

• **Pendulum arm swing** starting the hitting hand as high as possible and whipping though the ball

• Make contact with the **flat knuckle side of a fist**

• Follow the ball into the court

Drill Tips:

• Partner serving reduces ball chasing and improve aim

• Start serving close to the net and move back gradually once successful
Overhead Serving

Keys

• **Stable Stance**
  - “Statue” stance with shoulders open and elbow above shoulder
  - Opposite foot forward and knees slightly bent

• **Low Toss**
  - Toss (“lift”) low, in front and consistent

• **Swing Fast (High 5)**
  - Whip arm turning elbow, shoulder and torso to maximize contact speed
  - Rigid write/hand hitting heal of hand in center of ball

**Drill Tips:**

• **Practice Tossing** — no one likes too, but when the toss is consistent, serving gets better

• **Start serving close to the net and move back gradually once successful.**
Serve Receive

Keys:
• Use the “W formation” to cover as much floor area as possible
  o Move closer to net if serves are short
• Players start in “ready position” with weight forward, feet wide, knees bent and chest down
• Everyone moves when the ball is served
• Beat the ball to the spot
• Push ball to target (setter)

Drill Tips
• Always initiative ball over net
• Practice bread-basket catches to improve reading ball in air and moving to optimal spot
• Team shouts IN or OUT on all services
Court Movement

Keys:
• Always some place to move
  o Even the team “high-5” helps improve court movement
• Anticipate and gravitate towards ball
• Want the ball

Drill Tips
• Practice taking two quick shuffle steps forward and sideways and one step back
• Practice pursuing balls out of bounds and playing balls off ceiling rafters
Favorite Drills

- **Passing/Receiving**
  - Shuffle and pass with partner – forward, side to side, backward
  - Pass and Replace Competition (Figure 8 passing)
  - 3 Person Scramble – var. 3 person knee-pad touch
  - Long-Short-Long – a long toss, short toss and another long toss

- **Hitting**
  - Lowered net hitting – make it easy to hit in
  - Down ball hitting – hit from back court
  - Out of system hitting – hit from anywhere on and off court

- **Serving**
  - Serving Relay Race
  - Serve To A Teammate Around The World
  - Dead Fish / Jail Break

- **Game Oriented**
  - Queen of the Court – 2, 3 or 4 on each side for 1 or 2 points, winner stays on as “queens”
  - Short Court – play within the 10 foot lines, required 2 or more touches to earn point
Feedback Loop

• Instead of repeating the same instruction, ask a question.

• For example, when working on hitting, the footwork I teach is left-right-left. If a player does an approach, rather than saying “good job” or “no, left-right-left”, ask the question “Did you do left-right-left?”
  o Tell the players they can give one of three answers: yes, no, I don’t know
  o This teaches them to be self managing
  o If a player knows what they should be doing and knows they are not doing it, they don’t need you to explain it again

• Listen and adjust as necessary
In the end ...

• Patience and perseverance
• Your practice needs to fit your philosophy and style – be consistent with expectations
• Players don’t try to make mistakes. Be positive when you can
• Coach the players that are in the gym
• Compete with yourself – focus on that improvement you see
• Have fun – you and the players
Ball of the Week / Team Ball

- Utilize a “Ball of the Week” / “Team Ball” to help motivate and inspire your players
  - Fun way to build team cohesion
  - Recognize accomplishments, big or small
- Recommended approach:
  - Give it to a different girl at each of your nine team practices
  - Recognize spirit, leadership, commitment, improvement, skills or even the best joke
  - Ask the player to decorate a panel with sharpies and brings it back to the next match
  - At end of year, coach keeps the ball as team souvenir or gives it to a clear team MVP
- Pick up your team ball at the Coaches Clinics
  - Several fun options available