

Unified Volleyball Coaching Guide



**UNIFIED
VOLLEYBALL
SPIKES**



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Disclaimer

This guide is the deliverable of the SO Europe Eurasia Foundation led “*Unified volleyball Spikes for people with and without intellectual disability to promote social inclusion (UVSFA)*” project.

(a) This content reflects only Special Olympics view;

and

(b) that the Agency and the Commission are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.



Introduction

Unified Sports is a signature Special Olympics initiative which sees people with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) train and compete on the same teams and on the same pitches and courts, learn from each other off the sports court, with the objective of understanding first-hand each one's differences, and accepting them. Ultimately, this contributes to a more accepting compassionate and genuinely inclusive world.

Volleyball is a team sport where cooperation between players is a necessity in order to play and enjoy, and is therefore an ideal sport to continue to expand as a Unified Sport across Europe. Volleyball became an official Special Olympics sports in 1983 and since then it has continued to grow. Today it is offered in 15 SO National Programmes in EU countries, and 30 SO National Programmes in total in the Europe Eurasia region. These SO National Programmes offer volleyball in a variety of formats, such as traditional volleyball, Unified volleyball (3 athletes and 3 partners), and Unified beach volleyball (2 athletes and 2 partners). International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) rules are applied to all official tournaments, international tournaments in the region, as well as at Special Olympics World Summer Games.

"Unified Volleyball Spikes" is a transnational project consisted of eight partners: Special Olympics Austria, Special Olympics Italy, Special Olympics Netherlands, Special Olympics Poland, Special Olympics Serbia, Special Olympics Slovakia, Slovak Volleyball Federation and SO Europe Eurasia Foundation. The project focused on the development of Unified Volleyball and provided resources to support the development of the sport in Special Olympics Europe Eurasia. The Partners involved in the project contributed to the outcomes with their expertise and knowledge on the sport of Volleyball and in Unified Sports.

The "Unified Volleyball Coaching guide" is the outcome of the project which includes the three topics (Intellectual Outputs) that the consortium worked on during the period of the project:

- ▷ "How to create a Unified Volleyball Team" based on best practises and experience from the field of play
- ▷ "Unified Volleyball Training Sessions" which were created by volleyball coaches and tested onsite with the help of athletes and Unified partners
- ▷ "Unified volleyball Mix Gender Division" proposal, an initiative of the project for specific rules in a Mixed Gender Division.

The goal of this project, and with the coaching guide as a tool, is to increase the number of participants in Unified Volleyball in each Special Olympics National Programmes, promote social inclusion through Unified volleyball, develop a pool of trained and certified coaches, increase the participation of female athletes in Unified Volleyball, increase the amount of Unified Volleyball teams and develop the idea of Unified Volleyball mixed gender division.

The Coaching guide is a resource for volleyball coaches that want to learn more about Unified Volleyball in Special Olympics, and for coaches that already train their own Unified Teams and need to refresh their knowledge with new material. The guide is also for coaches that want to start a new Unified team and are looking for additional Volleyball specific information.

The guide was designed with the condition in mind that the athletes and Unified partners have practised volleyball before and are not beginners.





What is Special Olympics Unified Sports®?

In this chapter we would like to share some basic information on Unified Sports, however you can find more information by watching the [Unified Sports Educational video](#) or by referring to [Article 1, Sport Rules](#) or by visiting the [Special Olympics Resources page on Unified Sports](#). Unified Sports means that people with and without intellectual disabilities do sports together on the same team. Unified Sports players with intellectual disabilities are called athletes and players without intellectual disabilities are called partners. They train regularly at least once per week throughout the year and the team can go to competitions like any other sports team. Team members learn a lot from each other and find new friends while having fun which is also a very important part of Unified Sports.

Unified Sports can be played in many team and individual sports. You can have a Unified Sports team in your school or your sport club in your village or city. When a team competes in smaller competitions in your village or city, this is called “local level”, whereas when competes in different cities in your country it’s called “national level” and lastly when competes in competitions in other countries it is called “international level”.

There are six key points everyone on the Unified team needs to know and agree on. These points are important to make sure everyone on the Unified team is happy.

1. Every player gets to play.
2. Every player has an important role during a game.
3. Every player can show their skills.
4. The game is safe and people are careful that no one gets injured.
5. Players and their coaches are nice to each other.
6. All players train together as one team. No separate training sessions.

All of these six points just mentioned describe what Special Olympics calls “The Principle of Meaningful Involvement”.

There are three ways to do Unified Sports. We call them Unified Sports Models. They give people the opportunity to choose how they want to play.



Unified Sports Models

1. Recreational Model

Athletes with intellectual disabilities and partners without intellectual disabilities come together for casual sports E.g.

Try out a new sport, age and level do not matter

2. Development Model

Same or almost the same number of athletes and partners on the team

All players must be the same or almost the same age

Players who are better in the sport than others support those who are not as good

By following the above the team gets stronger and can compete against other

3. Competitive Model

Athletes and partners train together for larger sports competitions

Same or almost the same number of athletes and partners on the team

Team members must be of same or a similar age

All players must have the same or similar skills and every player must know the sport and the rules very well



How to create a Unified Volleyball team

Introduction

Experts in Volleyball and Unified sports came together in this project to explore effective ways of creating Unified Teams, through shared thoughts, experiences and best practices from their own Special Olympics programmes.

In the creation of a Unified Volleyball team, we have to remember the characteristics of Unified Sports. Volleyball one of the best sports that Unified values can be applied. As it is already mentioned in previous chapter, Unified Sports bring together athletes with intellectual disabilities and without (Unified partners) in the same sports teams for training and competition. Players should be of similar skill level, train regularly and compete in local, national and international competitions.

We have to understand that there is no recipe in creating the perfect Unified Team. Coaches should recruit the members of the team wisely, then it will be easier for them to train and share their knowledge to the players while creating a good atmosphere and good relations between the Athlete-Unified Partner-Coach from the start of the creation of a Unified Team.



Steps of Unified Volleyball team creation





Vision



The vision for creating a Unified team and thus a Unified Volleyball team aligns with the objectives of Unified Sports in general, to give people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to develop sports skills, but also to meet their peers, make new friends, visit interesting places, integrate and actively participate in the life of their local community.

Goals and tasks

In the initial phase of creating a Unified Volleyball team, we have to set short-term goals and tasks of what we would like to achieve. Goals and tasks have to be clear and specific and in the subsequent stages can be modified and adjusted to the team's new level.

Goals:

- To support the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in training sessions and sports competitions
- To enjoy physical activity
- To provide players with an opportunity to showcase their sport skills in front of their family and peers
- To integrate students, family members, local community in the team
- Assist player development in volleyball
- To shape positive behaviours and personalities among children, adolescents and adults
- To develop friendships between people with and without intellectual disabilities
- To increase the level of self-esteem among people with intellectual disabilities
- To increase social awareness about the capabilities of people with intellectual disability

Tasks:

- Appropriate selection of athletes and Unified partners
- Participation in Unified volleyball training
- Form a Unified volleyball team
- Take part in Unified volleyball competitions of any level
- Inclusive opportunities within the local society

Planning

In the planning step we need to establish a long term plan (for 2-3 years at the beginning) that will allow us to achieve the goals and tasks that we have set.

A few important components of the plan could be the below:

Club, local sports institutions

- Cooperate with local sports clubs (it would be recommended for Unified volleyball teams)
- Invite/recruit players from the club to play to the Unified team
- During matches engage the local community, create awareness for Special Olympics philosophy and Unified sports.
- Cooperate with other local teams and cheer for them during their matches
- Become a member of the local team's fan club

Volleyball Sport club/ Volleyball Training programme/School Team etc.:

- Coordinators/Manager- people who will run the activities of the sport club/training programme and will be the main point of contact

Athletes

- Players with intellectual disabilities
- Select athletes with the appropriate skills for volleyball

Unified Partners

- Players without intellectual disability
- Depending on the Unified Sports model the support of the Unified partners towards the athletes during training sessions vary (Recreational model, Development model, Competitive model)
- Support athletes during team travel
- Each partner has certain role within the setting of the team
- Partners should embrace the principle of meaningful involvement during their play
- Partners should be friendly, patient and helpful
- During training, can act also as an assistant coach and demonstrate more difficult exercises to make it easier to understand

Coach

- Manages and coordinates the team
- Should decide carefully the selection of athletes and partners
- Prepare Unified partners for their involvement with people with intellectual disability
- Delivers the training sessions and teaches the skills, attitude, values and spirit that defines the team
- Is aware of the Special Olympics philosophy
- Respects and follows the Special Olympics rules
- Cooperates with the management board, parents and institutions who support the team
- He is not only acting as a coach but also as a psychologist, who takes care for the safety of all team members and solves any arguments between players
- Brings enthusiasm, commitment and a positive attitude to each training session, event and/or competition
- Should have some soft characteristics like good communications skills, be creative, patient, open to suggestions etc.





- Ensures the principle of meaningful involvement of Unified Sports for all players (POMI) during training sessions and competition



Families

- Families should be involved in the process of team building
- Good communication with family members
- Engage family members in the team's activities by organizing social events, for example a dinner, a film show, watching a match together etc.

Trainings

- The same or almost the same number of athletes and partners for an effective training session
- Athletes should create pairs with Unified partners for training drills
- Design and prepare training sessions beforehand
- Come up with a team name and a team shout so players feel more engaged and included and create a good atmosphere among the team members

Inclusion

- Introduce players before first training in a social event
- Encourage players to socialize outside the sports hall
- Thanks to social relations players might achieve better sport performance



- Socializing between players will develop self-esteem, motivation and empathy
- Organization of a sports camp will combine the sports aspect and Inclusion

Medical

- Cooperate with a doctor or a nurse
- Encourage players to have regular examinations and medical tests
- During training always have a First Aid kit
- Be aware of any medical conditions of the players and for their medication (if they take any)

Safety

- Remember that the safety of players is crucial
- In training always choose exercises that are safe for the players
- Make sure the training facility is safe for the players
- Sport equipment is safe for use

The community/village/city in which you will create a team

- Establish cooperation with the local authorities
- Seek support from local authorities
- The possibility of applying for sponsors support (eg. sports equipment, travel costs, organization of sports events)

Social media

- Set up a team page in social media, it will get you connected with other social groups
- Promote sport activities through the SO National Programme social media
- Create awareness for your Unified Volleyball Team
- Promote participation in Unified Sports and engage more athletes and partners
- Possible to attract sponsors

Budget

- Special Olympics National Programme financial support
- Municipality/city financial support
- Sport Club support
- Acquiring sponsors and donors

Unified Volleyball Ambassador

- Invite a well-known personality, for example a famous volleyball player, thanks to them you will have more opportunities to promote your team
- Players will have an extra motivation to work and improve their skills

Volunteers

- Volunteers are a very important group in Special Olympics
- Create opportunities for engagement with the Unified team
- Recruit volunteers from the local communities, like schools, clubs etc.





- Volunteers can assist in organizing local sports events
- Develop awareness and tolerance among young people

The above mentioned factors will need attention apart from the sport side. All these tasks should be taken under consideration in the planning step, they will contribute towards the goals we have set ourselves.

Best Practices

While forming a Unified team, special attention should be paid in two aspects: sports and non-sports. For sports aspect, a difficult task for the coach is the appropriate selection of athletes and Unified partners and the procedures that have to be set in order for the team to function according to the rules that coach has set. The players-coach relationship is very important.

Five Best Practices while creating a Unified Volleyball Team:

1. The most important and challenging task while creating a team is the right selection of athletes and partners.

- There are some pre decided criteria for creating a Unified Team that should be followed such as age, gender, skills, and the level of physical fitness (Special Olympics Volleyball Rules).
- Partners should be aware of the definition of intellectual disability and their role within the team.
- The lack of conscious partner involvement and understanding of the main idea of Unified sports will lead to challenges within the team.
- Players should be taught the values of Unified Sports and make their decision to participate responsibly. (Meet with the players, talk to them, let them try, don't force anyone).



2. The coach has to consider: Why am I doing this and how should I act to make this task successful?

- Conducting sports training is not difficult for an experienced Volleyball coach as it might be to support any non-sports aspects that are important for the Unified Team's inclusion, acceptance, and understanding, without such approach it will be not easy to achieve our Unified goals.
- The challenge for a coach, will be to adapt the training sessions to different skill levels of the players, but also to create an atmosphere of openness and inclusion on and off the sports field.
- In the Unified team, it is important to remember about acceptance and development of players as key members of the team.



(A coach should be aware if he/she can support the non-sport aspect of the Unified Team).

3. Keeping internal relationships.

- It is the coach's duty to create good relations within the team.
- The coach should try to know the character and personality of each player as soon as possible, it is even more important than the knowledge of sports skills of the players. Thanks to it the coach will find the appropriate way to support the players in sports and in emotional development.
- In team sports, arguments between players might happen, it is the coach's obligation to solve the issue and calm players down.
- Sometimes it is very important to talk to the players all together, however there are also situations when it's better to talk to athletes and Unified partners separately. (Encourage players to meet and engage in non-volleyball activities.)

4. Choosing the appropriate Unified Sports model.

- It is suggested when starting a new Unified Team to pick the implementation of the Recreational or Sports Development model and while the team is progressing the Competitive model.
- When the team is ready the coach can decide to organize a friendly match against another local Unified team.
- An effort should be made for players with higher ability to not dominate the game.
- All these tasks need to be practiced in regular training sessions. (Use the tools proposed in the Unified Sports Guide to find out which model is right for your team).

5. Setting a goal for the team.

- According to the Unified Team model, coach has to set short and long term goals for the team.
- Every player should be aware of its duties and goals on the field, even if it is a substitute role.
- Together with local authorities, organize a tournament that will be an opportunity to present new skills to the friends/family and popularize Unified disciplines. (Cooperate with the SO National programme and other local organisations to organize more and more sport events).

Inclusion

Creating a Unified Team is a complex process. Thanks to inclusive activities and players selection step by step we are able to connect athletes and partners and call this group of people a team. However, a Unified volleyball team consists of over a dozen, maybe more, men and women of different ages, with different characters, different ways of expressing emotions, ambitions, plans, and life situations. This condition could result in difficult situations with the whole team to try to help to overcome the problem, to cheer after victories, and to support each other after defeats. When there is no "team spirit", everyone plays for themselves and after a successful point there is no joy as someone would expect. Describing such situation,





we want to show how important it is for a Unified team to have good communication and understanding during games which can be achieved by participating in non-sport activities and engaging in social events.

Suggestions for Inclusion of the Unified Special Olympics volleyball team:

- **After a match** - no matter the result of the game gather the team and organize an activity to spend some time together after the match, a dinner, a movie, or visit a coffee shop where players can have conversations, laughs and engage in life experiences outside of the field of play. Such activities build the unified atmosphere of the team. Try to organize such activities regularly and give time to the team to relax after a not good performance. It's desirable if family members can join such activities from time to time.

- **Support other local teams** - gather the team and go watch a match of the local volleyball team. Players will find it interesting and will enjoy watching something they do themselves and also they can relate/engage with the local volleyball players.

- **Visit new places** - visit new places together in free time after competition matches.

- **Engage in social activities** - players to volunteer for their club/school/institution activities and engage in social activities of their own local club.

- **End of Training Season** - organize an event at the end of the season to celebrate the achievements of the team and have fun! Appreciate and recognize the efforts of the players, supporters, volunteers etc. The event could be a barbecue, a dinner at a restaurant or a dance event at the local hall, or a nice road trip combined with entertainment games such as paintball or bowling. It is important that the team spends time together and enjoys oneself.



Participation in Competitions

It is important that the players and the team have goals for participating in competitions with other teams. The coach will decide when the team is ready to start competing. It would be suggested to start with friendly matches in a familiar setting for the players and build on that year by year with competitions on other sport halls, at a local, national and international level.

Unified Team

Following the above steps and you have a Unified Volleyball team. The beginning is not easy, every participant in this journey has many tasks to do, so it is important to prepare a plan and follow it step by step. We cannot approach this topic unprepared because we will face various difficulties along the way and we will quickly get discouraged. Volleyball is a difficult disci-



pline to teach because of its technical aspect. In this team game, the crucial element is the team, one player is not able to win the match, but we know that this is not the most important thing. It needs time for the results to come, players will need to spend hours on and off the court to deliver a beautiful performance but also to see smiling faces!

At the beginning being a part of a Unified team is a new experience for both athletes and Unified partners. We have to remember that important element is the communication and the cooperation of the team members on and off the court. That is why the role of the coach is so important, as he/she has to manage the team and convey the values of Unified Sports.

To conclude we believe that a period of 2-3 years of players being trained together will show that players have increased their physical fitness, improved technical skills, have greater self-confidence, and self-esteem.

Remember:

- **"Play Unified. Live Unified".**
- **Do not forget about players' families and their friends- they will help you.**
- **Include the local community to build the team - it will be an added value.**
- **Remember about volunteers - they will create a calm and friendly atmosphere.**
- **Training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.**
- **Sport should be an inclusive and safe environment - sports results are not always the most important.**
- **"Only a team that knows each other can achieve good sports results".**
- **Unified Sports is something more than a physical activity, it is a continuous process which is written by the team on the field, where step by step develops their skills and builds non-sport relationships between team members.**
- **Have fun, enjoy the game and be safe at all times.**
- **Have fun, enjoy the game and be safe at all times!**



10 tips for Special Olympics Unified Sports® teams*

Top 10 tips for Unified athletes

1. **Come to training regularly.** Only if you train regularly you can get better. This also applies to your team. Your teammates are counting on you.
2. **Listen well.** When your coach explains something, you have to listen well and concentrate.
3. **Talk to your coach.** Tell him or her what makes you feel good and what you like or what you don't like. If something hurts you, you should say so. Pay attention to your body and take care of it.
4. **Stay calm.** If something is going badly, take a deep breath...and keep your pa-tience.
5. **Learn from your mistakes.** Mistakes happen to everyone. Learn from them and try to do better next time.
6. **Always show respect and be fair!** Respect the decisions of your coach, the offi-cials, and referees, even if they have a dif-ferent opinion than you. If others mis-behave, keep behaving well yourself!
7. **Learn the rules of your sport.** Only if you know the rules you can perform well and be better at following the rules.
8. **Be there for your teammates.** Help them if you are good at something. Encour-age your teammates even when they make mistakes. Get on well with your team.
9. **Set yourself goals.** Goals motivate you during training and help you get better. Make sure the goals you set are reachable.
10. **Do your best!** Show commitment and get involved with your team. And above all, have fun!

**Tips were developed by Unified athletes, partners and coaches of the SOEE Region*



Top 10 tips for Unified partners

1. **Show respect.** Respect is the basis of all interactions. Show recognition and ap-preciation to all your teammates. They are your team members. Show them re-spect both on and off-court, not just for their sporting efforts!
2. **Build relationships.** A positive relationship with all team-mates, athletes and partners, is the basis for a successful collab-oration. Take the time to get to know the athletes as people! Any prejudices can be reduced by getting to know each other.
3. **Show patience.** In many training situations, some teammates may take a bit longer. Give them this time, and stay calm!
4. **Be flexible.** Only some things can always go according to a precise plan. Be cre-ative and open to change.
5. **Take care of your health.** Safety is paramount. Adjust the intensity of your movements in direct physical contact with your teammates so that no one gets hurt!
6. **Use simple language.** When communicating with your teammates, use easy-to-understand wording and simple sentence structure! Avoid foreign words and complex sentences!
7. **Ensure active participation.** All teammates should have space to make valua-ble contributions! Encourage each other and don't take over for others.
8. **Avoid dominance.** Ensure that all team members contribute equally to the course of the game. Actively involve all the athletes and partners in the sport!
9. **Learn from each other.** Support each other on and off the field. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. Be open, share your strengths and weaknesses with each other.
10. **Find your role.** Team responsibilities should be shared and equal. (e.g., pump balls, set up or break down equipment, etc.).





Top 10 tips for Unified coaches

1. **Strengthen team spirit.** Every player is essential. All players contribute to the success of the team. Support this actively and avoid dominance of players and avoid exclusion.
2. **Show respect.** Respect is the basis for getting along with each other. Show all players recognition and appreciation, not just for their sporting efforts!
3. **Build relationships.** A positive relationship with your players is the basis of a successful partnership. Take the time to get to know the athletes and Unified partners as people!
4. **Pay attention to safety.** Everyone on the team knows the strengths of the others and takes their weaknesses into account. Communicate this attitude and thus reduce possible injuries or accidents. Consider age and ability requirements when composing your team for competitions.
5. **Be a role model.** Inclusion starts with the coach's attitude. Be fair and friendly to all players. Communicate this attitude to your team and help the whole team to improve. Everyone can be a role model for others!
6. **Be flexible.** Only some things can always go according to a precise plan. Be creative and react openly to changes. Apply training methods flexibly.
7. **Use simple language.** When communicating with your team, use easy-to-understand sentences and simple sentence structures so everyone can understand you. Avoid foreign words and complex sentences!
8. **Involve everyone equally.** Take into account your players' different needs and abilities. Promote equality and pay attention to all players. No one should be neglected.



9. **Stay Informed.** Regularly participate in in-service training and education. Knowledge of sports rules and Unified Sports principles will help you lead inclusive sports activities. Sharing experiences with other coaches is precious.

10. **Know your duties and limits.** As a coach, you care for your players during training and competitions. The tasks are numerous and require your full attention. This means you cannot simultaneously participate in competitions as a Unified Partner, and as a coach. There needs to be a clear boundary between coaching and playing.



Unified Volleyball Mixed Gender Division

Introduction

The Mixed Gender Division is an initiative that was born based on feedback from Special Olympics coaches and a diverse group of Unified Volleyball experts. They observed several Special Olympics Unified Volleyball tournaments in the Europe Eurasia region with high participation numbers of Mixed Gender teams.

During competition matches it was noticed that a game could start with mixed gender teams and during the game, with the substitutions, to end up being a game of males against females.



In Special Olympics Rules for Teams Sports one of the division criteria is gender (Article 1), and the teams are divided into two groups male and female. Female teams shall compete against other female teams, and male teams shall compete against other male teams, however if a team consists of mixed gender athletes (even with only one player of the opposite sex) then this team will have to participate in the male's division. The rule though does not specify the composition of the team regarding the number of female or male players on the court. The rule for the composition of the team is that during competition, the lineup shall never exceed three athletes and three Unified partners at any time (Special Olympics Volleyball Rules).

The consortium of the project wanted to address this issue. It felt that it wasn't fair for the female athletes and for the quality of the sport. Female athletes expressed that they found it very challenging to play in teams dominated by male players and also challenging to play in men's net height (2,43m). However female Special Olympics (SO) athletes/Unified partners ex-

pressed their wish to continue playing the sport but they would wish to see a few adjustments. In the Europe Eurasia region it has been noticed that female-players-only teams were very few but on the other hand there are more Unified mixed gender Volleyball teams. This could be because SO National Programmes are struggling to form female-only teams. In an attempt to not lose the players they form mixed gender ones. It also seems easier for SO Programmes to start with mixed gender teams when developing Unified Volleyball in their sports. Mixed gender sports exist also in mainstream sports as well, in teams and in doubles/pairs sports with equal numbers of male and female players.

The purpose of this output is to create a new structured Mixed Gender Division, with specific rules which will address the above issues and bring more female players either athletes or partners to Volleyball.

Composition of Mixed Gender team

The project consortium had extensive discussions on the topic of Mixed gender teams. The focus was on exploring what the adjusted rules for the Unified Mixed Gender Division should and could be without affecting the established ratio of 3 athletes, 3 Unified partners on the court (Special Olympics Volleyball Rules).

Other challenges were the gender ratio on the composition of the team in the field of play and the number of females in the delegation so to ensure smooth substitutions and if that would be determined by the Unified model that was chosen by the coach for the team.

As mentioned already in Special Olympics in team sports the divisions are: Female division- only female teams and Male/Mixed division- males teams or mixed gender (all males team with 1 female plays in Male's division and if all female s team with 1 male plays in Male's division).

At the Joint Unified Volleyball Coaching Workshop which took place in Serbia (action of the project) tested also the idea of Mixed Gender teams that had been developed during the project. The group of experts came to the conclusions regarding for the Mixed Gender teams competing in the Mixed Gender Division as outlined below.

Suggestions:

- Number of players: max 12 players (6 athletes + 6 Unified Partners)
- In the field of play: always 3 athletes and 3 Unified Partners
- Substitutions: max 3 athletes and 3 Unified Partners
- Gender: always 3 female players and 3 male players (without distinction if they are athletes or Unified partners)
- Possible combinations: 2 UP and 1 athlete male and 1 UP and 2 athletes female or 1 UP and 2 athletes male and 2 UP and 1 athletes female
- Double substitutions can be used as a tool to keep the gender balance
- Respect the rule that Athlete substitutes Athlete and Unified partner a Unified partner

- Ratio of 3 athletes, 3 Unified Partners, 3 female, 3 male should be kept
- Substitutions for both genders, athletes and Unified partners should be available
- The net height for the Mixed Gender division should be adjusted to 2,35m between male's net height (2,43m) and female's net height (2,24m)

Coach's role

In this new format of competition the coach will have to deal with additional challenges on how to handle the players during training sessions and matches. It is their responsibility to select and decide about the composition of the team regarding gender, age, athletes, Unified partners and the Unified model that they will follow. It is important to create an inclusive philosophy among all players from the start.

It is common that certain players of higher ability dominate the game especially when the match is important. In this case the coach should intervene and remind all players of the purpose of Unified Sports and everyone's roles in the team. Depending on the chosen Unified Sports model, some internal rules can be implemented during training sessions to ensure participation from all players, for example double rally by players of higher ability has a penalty point.

Summary

In conclusion our experience in this project showed that Special Olympics programmes with no history in Unified Volleyball were able to establish new teams because they used the mixed gender idea. Of course this initiative is still work in progress and we will have to wait for the outcomes. However we believe that Mixed Gender teams could be a very useful tool:

- to engage more athletes and Unified partners in Volleyball
- to engage female players
- to help create only female Unified teams
- to assist in the development of volleyball in Special Olympics
- to create Unified Volleyball teams
- to create Mixed Gender Divisions in local, national & international competitions





Unified Volleyball Training Sessions Guide

Introduction

The Unified Volleyball Training Sessions which are included in this chapter, is the final outcome from this project. The training sessions were designed by volleyball coaches experienced in Unified Volleyball and in Special Olympics sports. Each project partner was assigned to create a number of training sessions which were tested by athletes and Unified partners during the Joint Unified Volleyball Coaching workshop action of the “Unified Volleyball Spikes” project. Delegations from all Special Olympics programmes took part at the coaching workshop. Coaches, volleyball experts and players shared their feedback after each session. Coaches took under consideration the training plan of the [SOI Coaching Guide Volleyball](#) and the level of their athletes in their respective training programmes and created these 16 training sessions, an eight week training period. The training sessions are suggestive and coaches who use the guide can amend as they think necessary to address the needs and the level of their players and their team. For example, they could focus more on a certain skill or by decreasing /increasing the level of the drills. The training sessions are not designed for players who have just started practising volleyball.

Please keep in mind to gather the team 10-15 minutes before practise, to give them time to socialise and inform them on today’s training session’s goals, to involve all players in the training sessions, and to create a Unified atmosphere for all.

Principles of Effective Training Sessions (SOI Coaching Guide Volleyball)

- Keep all players active - player needs to listen on feedback and instructions and act accordingly
- Create clear, concise goals - Learning improves when players know what is expected of them
- Give clear, concise instructions - Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction
- Record progress - You and your players chart progress together
- Give positive feedback - Emphasize what the player is doing well
- Provide variety - Vary exercises – prevent boredom
- Encourage enjoyment Training and competition is fun - help keep it this way for you and your players
- Create progressions- Learning is increased when information progresses from:
 - Known to unknown - discovering new things successfully
 - Simple to complex - seeing that “I” can do it
 - General to specific - this is why I am working so hard
- Plan maximum use of resources
- Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have –think creatively
- Allow for individual differences - Different players, different learning rates, different capacities

Training Sessions



Week 1

Training Session 1

Introduction

The below volleyball drills will be used to assess the level of the athletes. During and at the end of your training session you can use the Volleyball Skills Assessment tool (Appendix) to complete for your players. You can keep it as a record for your team’s performance and development and redo it towards the end of the 8 week training period.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified Partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups.

Time of Session

1 hour.

Equipment

hoops, volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, cones.

Warm Up

1. Players line up on the side line of the court, different ways of running up and down the court.

Variations:

high knees, sideways, sprints, running backwards, jumps etc.

2. Dynamic Stretching: Arm circles, squats, leg swings, lunges etc.

3. Depending on the number of the players we divide them in either 2 or 4 groups behind the basic line of both courts.

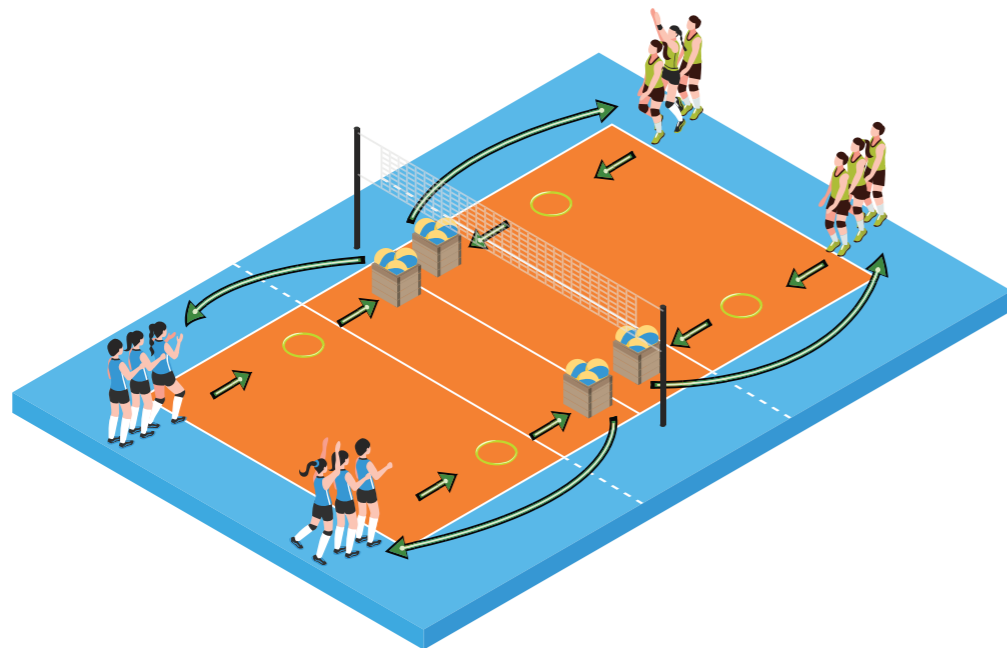
First person in the line is holding a ball. Between the net and the baseline (in the middle) place a hoop on the floor and a basket close to the net.

The players run towards the net from the baseline, stop where the hoop is, leave the ball on the floor, lift and cross inside the hoop and run and leave the ball into the basket by the net, then run back to the line. Second person does the same without holding a ball, however when reaches the basket takes the ball and runs back to the line and gives the ball to next person in line.

Variations:

All players have a ball from the starting line, players can run backwards to the base line from the net, make it a contest between the teams by having them place first all balls into the basket.



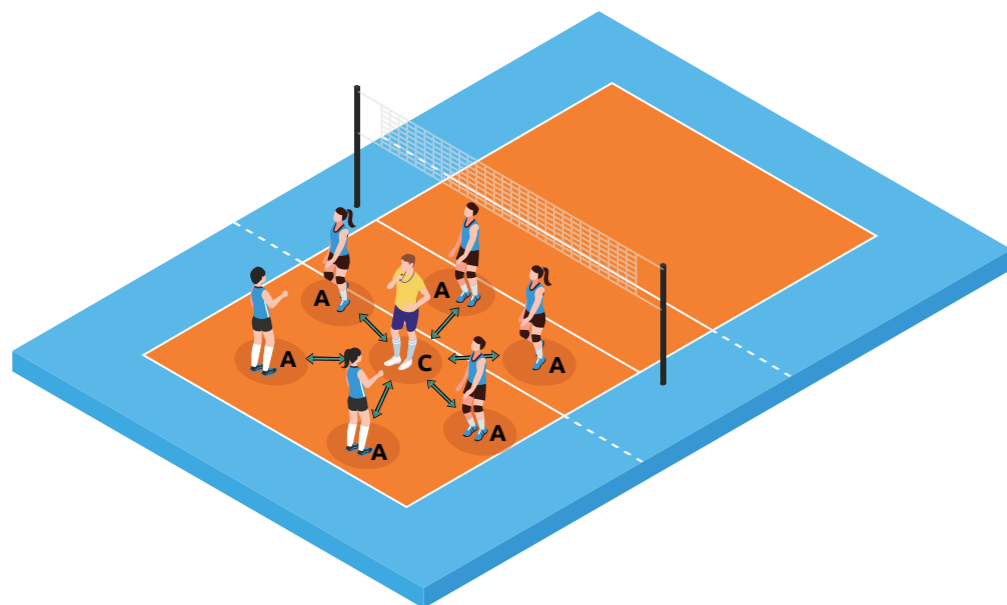

DRILL 1

Players will form a circle (A). Depending on the number of the players create number of groups including athletes and Unified Partners. The coach (C) will stand in the middle of the circle and initiate the drill by tossing the ball to one of the players, who will pass the ball back to the coach. The coach in turn will pass (or toss) the ball to a different player, who will pass it back to the coach, and so on. Maximum of 6 players per group.

Variations:

You can practice setting and digging.

Ball can be played around with the team without stopping.


DRILL 2

We have 3 stations for the players. 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. Player A can be closer to the net if needed.
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 catches the ball and moves to position A.
4. Players move one position ahead following the ball's direction, A to B, B to C and C to A

Variations:

Player A instead of tossing the ball can do a serve.

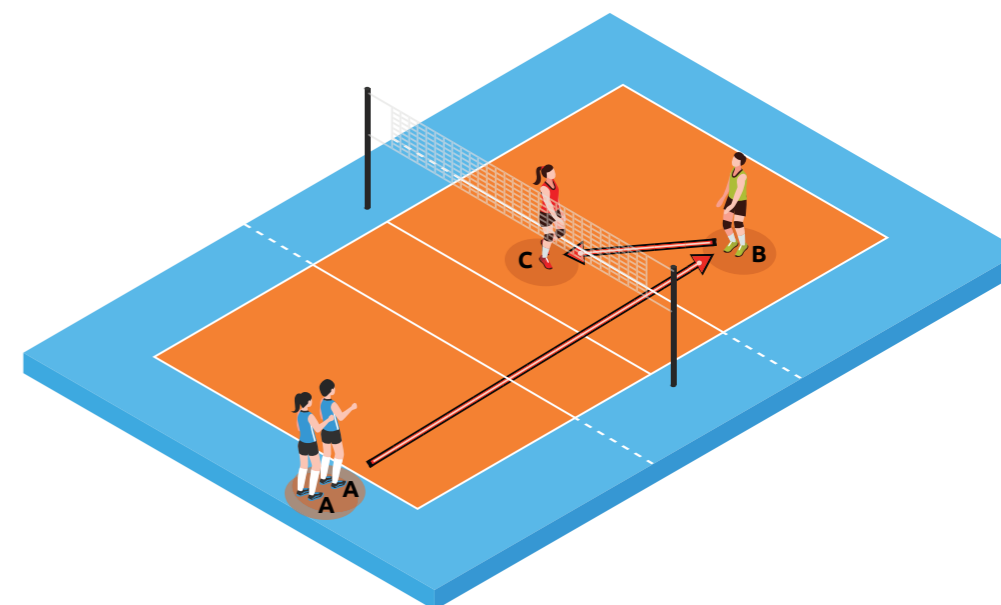
Player C sets the ball to Player B, who is standing 2 meters from the net.

Player B catches the ball and rolls it under the net to the next Player A in line

Player B passes the ball over the net with an overhead pass towards A position.

Player B attacks the ball over the net.

Volleyball court can be split vertically and work same drill in two sides.



**DRILL 3**

Same court setting as in Drill 2. Place 3 players from each side of the net. Use cones to mark the size of the court around depending on the level of the players.

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 A on the other side. Player A tosses the ball from around 7m.**
2. **Player A passes the ball to Player B with either an overhead or a forearm pass.**
3. **Player B passes the ball to Player C preferably with an overhead pass.**
4. **Player C passes the ball over the net to Player A continue to play till the ball falls down. When game stops players rotate following the clockwise rotation.**

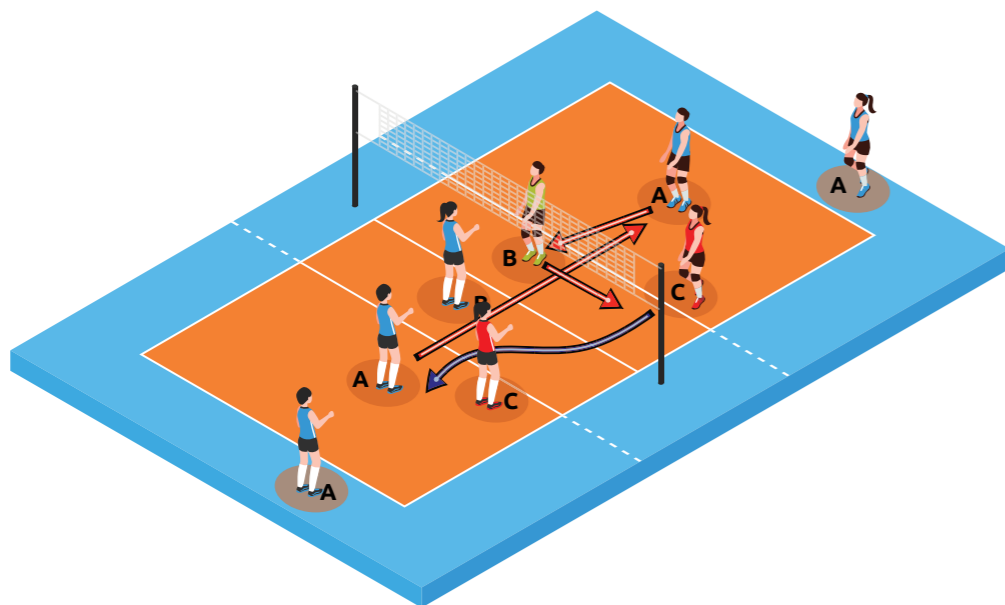
Variations:

Player A instead of throwing can service.

Player A can increase distance to make it more difficult.

Player C instead of passing the ball over the net to attack the ball.

Volleyball court can be split vertically and work same drill in two sides.

**DRILL 4**

King of the court

Create groups of 4 players by mixing up athletes/Unified partners and male/female players.

Two groups are inside the court, one on each side. The remaining groups will form a line off the court. Use cones to adjust the court to the preferable size depending on the level of the players. The drill begins each time with the coach tossing the ball to a player on one of the teams. The player will need to pass the ball to a controlled way to the player next to him/her who will set the ball to a third player. The last player will then pass the ball over the net to the other team. The team wins a point when the ball lands within the opposing team's legal area, or if the opposing team is unable to return the ball.

The team who loses the point goes out of the court and a new group is coming to the court. The team which collects the most points win. Goal is to keep the ball up in the air!

Variations:

Instead of coach tossing the ball, players perform service, distance can vary.

Increase/decrease the size of the playing field to increase/decrease difficulty.

Obligatory three contacts before passing ball over the net.

Cool down:

All team together performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback





Training Session 2

Introduction

The below volleyball drills will be used to assess the level of the athletes. During and at the end of your training session you can use the Volleyball Skills Assessment tool (Appendix) to complete for your players. You can keep it as a record for your team's performance and development and redo it towards the end of the 8 week training period.

Reminder:

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups.

Time of Session:

1 hour

Equipment:

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, cones, hoops

Warm up:

1. Players line up on the side line of the court, different ways of running up and down the court
Variations: high knees, sideways, running backwards, marching, small jumps in different directions, frog jumps.
2. Dynamic Stretching: Arm circles, squats, leg swings, lunges etc.
3. Players line up on the side line of the court, different starting positions (standing, sitting on the floor, small jumps etc.) coach gives a sound signal (whistle) and players sprint till the other side line.
4. Long Jumps from sideline to sideline, walk back or jump backwards.

DRILL 1

Players line up parallel to the net in pairs with the net between them. Depending on the level of the players, height and jumping skill you may need to lower the net.

1. **Players perform in pairs the blocking movement (synchronized) without ball. Try to touch their hands over the net.**
2. **Every pair has one ball, player A jumps with the ball in hands and leaves the ball over the net to the other side. Players perform the exercise in turns.**
3. **Player A has the ball, player A and B jump at the same time. Player A passes the ball over the net to Player B. Player B catches the ball above the net and performs the same movement.**



4. **Player A stands by the net, Player B has stepped back from the net 2-3 steps and holds the ball. Player B tosses the ball over the net to player A aiming the hands. Player A performs blocking to the ball. After a few repetitions players switch positions.**

Variations:

Depending on the skills level of the players the level of these drills can be increased: add side-ways movement to blocking,
Instead of throwing the ball Player A performs an attack over the net targeting Player B hands.

DRILL 2

Players in pairs with 1 ball parallel or vertical to the net.

1. **Warm up shoulders for attacking, players throw the ball with two or one hand to each other.**
2. **Spiking movement for a few repetitions**
3. **Pepper exercise (starting with just passing and digging)**

DRILL 3

Players line up in both sides of the court at 3 meters line at zone 4 and perform attacks over the net to the other court. After some time we can switch sides and perform attacking from zone 2.

- a. **Toss their ball on their own and hit the ball**
- b. **Add a setter, players attack the ball coming from the setter (by throw or setting)**
- c. **Pass the ball to the setter and hit the ball from the setter**

We can ask the players to rotate from attacking to setting, or change setter every 10 repetitions.

DRILL 4

Players split in two groups, on both sides of the court, they perform service skill either underhand or overhead serve. Depending of the level of the players, we guide the players to the correct distance from the net starting from behind the 4-5 meters and keep progressing till they reach the base line.



**Variations:**

Add targets like hoops or mattresses on the court at different spots, decrease the size of the targets to increase difficulty.

DRILL 5

Place 6 players at each side of the court, keep the ratio of 3 athletes/3 Unified partners and split equally female/male players. Target to make as many contacts as possible in every play.

Coach tosses the ball to start the game at every part of the court to encourage communication between the players. Short games of 3-5 points and then players can rotate.

Depending on the number of players, an extra team of 3 or 6 players can be outside and switch every 3-5 points with a team from inside.

Variations:

Start the game by serving.

Increase/decrease the size of the playing field to increase/decrease difficulty.

Obligatory three contacts before passing ball over the net.

Cool down:

All team together performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback

**Week 2****Training Session 3****Introduction**

This training is focusing in service skills. Before start teaching the serving skill, you should find out if the players are left or righthanded. Some of the Athletes may not be able to inform you.

Reminder: During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. End the exercise when the players have successful tries so to stop with a positive experience.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, mattresses, hoops

Warm up

Running in pairs around the court, warming up their shoulders at the same time arm circles etc.

Dynamic Stretching

squats, leg swings, lunges etc.

DRILL 1

Bowling the ball: Create groups of 4 players. Two players inside the court, around 3-4 meters from the baseline, one behind each other with their legs spread out. Two players with balls on the baseline practicing the movement of serving with one arm fully stretched, trying to get the ball underneath the legs of their teammates. Players collect the ball and run back to the line. Next player is bowling the ball. After a few repetitions players switch positions. You can increase difficulty by asking the players to close the opening of their legs.

DRILL 2

Use a wall in the sport facility to serve against, coach should define a line above which the ball should touch the wall. Players should stand against the wall about 4-5 meters away, distance can keep increasing.

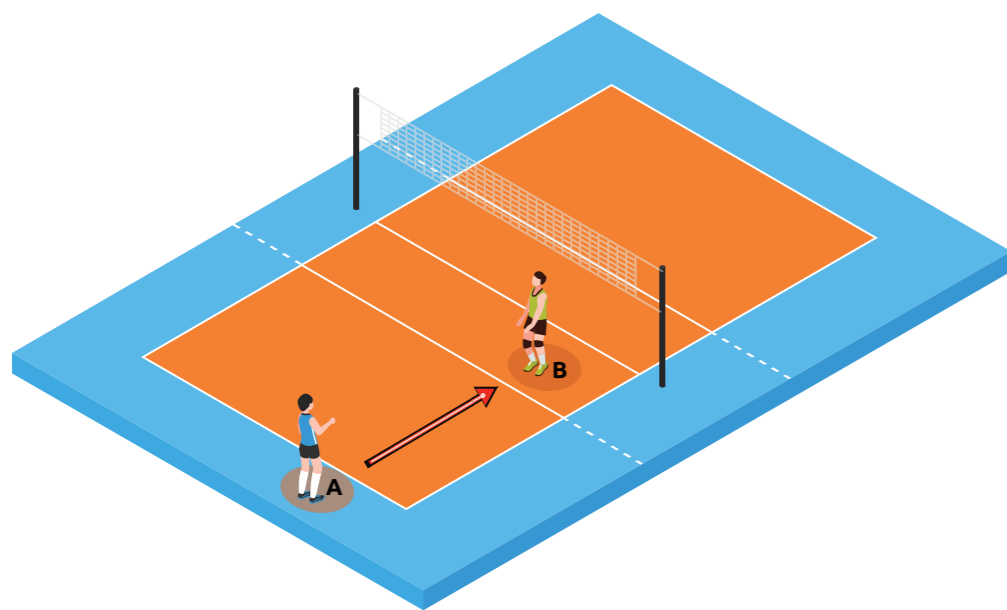
Variations:

- Serve against the wall (under or over hand) and catch the ball after one bounce.
- Serve against the wall and catch the ball without bounce.
- Serve the ball against the wall and perform a controled overhead or forearm pass.



DRILL 3

Players are split into pairs with one ball each. Player A is standing behind the baseline and player B by the net. Player A serves to player B and runs into the court to be ready for receiving. Player B catches the ball. After a few repetitions players switch positions.



Variations:

Player A serves to Player B and player B catches the ball and tosses it back to player A to do an overhead/ forearm pass.

Player B instead of catching and tossing the ball performs an overhead pass to player A and player A does an overhead/forearm pass.

DRILL 4

Players split in two groups, one at each side of the court, they perform service skill either underhand or overhead serve. Depending of the level of the players we guide the players to the correct distance from the net starting from behind the 5-6 meters and keep progressing till you reach the base line.

Variations:

Add targets like hoops or mattresses on the court at different spots, decrease the size of the targets to increase difficulty.

Cool down:

All team together performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.

Training Session 4

Introduction

Fitness and moving skills for improving defence

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. End the exercise when the players has successful tries so to stop with a positive experience.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, cones

Warm up

Players are spread out in the court facing the coach. The coach gives signal to the players in which direction should they move by pointing out, it could be forwards/backwards/sideways. Coach should change directions spontaneously for players to react fast. Coach could add jumps and touching the ground moves.

Dynamic Stretching

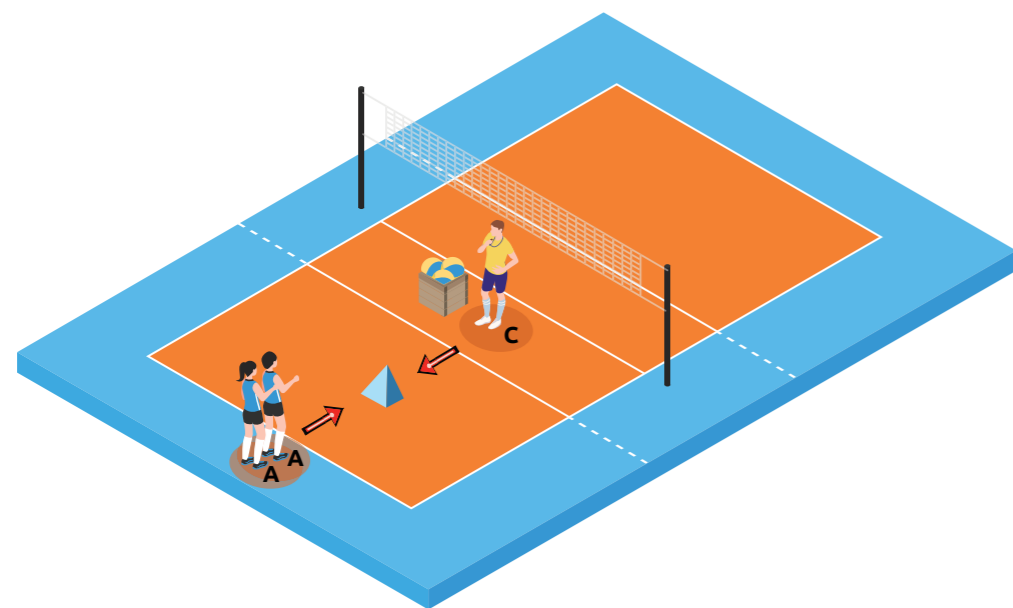
squats, leg swings, lunges etc.

DRILL 1

Players (A) are forming a line outside of the court in zone 6, coach is at zone 3 with a basket of volleyballs. Coach tosses a ball in zone 6 and players one by one coming into court and tossing the ball back to the coach in zone 3 by passing overhead or with forearm pass.

Variation:

Coach throws the ball into zone 5 or 1 and players have to move sideways to hit the ball.

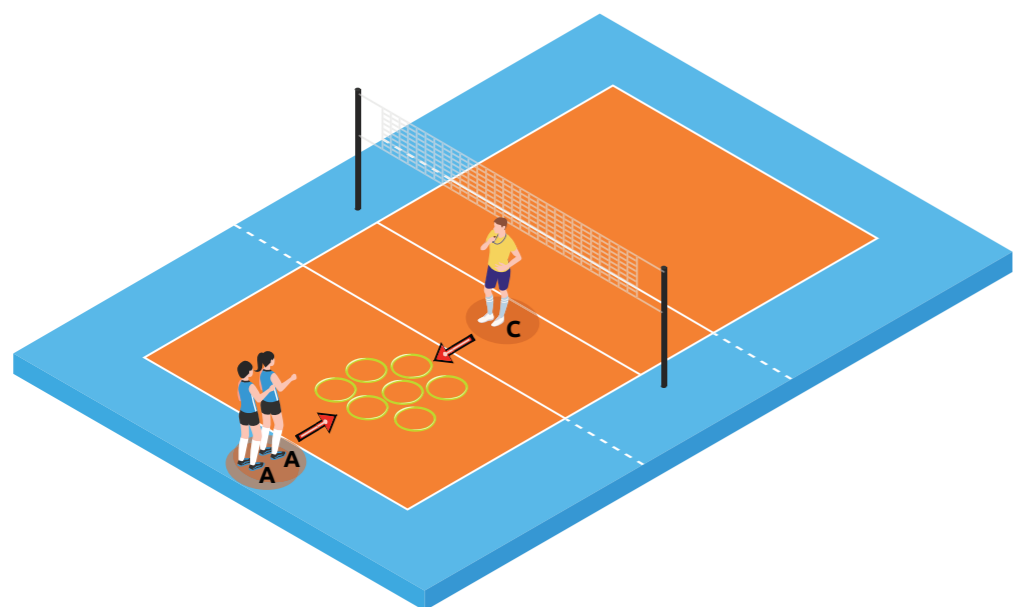


DRILL 2

Place 8-10 hoops to create a path, player A should run through the hoops by stepping inside each one of them then coach tosses a ball to hit back by forearm of overhead pass.

Variations:

Players (A) should run through the hoops faster.
Move in different positions the hoops, create gaps between them.
Coach tosses the ball in different directions for the players to move and perform and overhead or forearm pass to the coach.

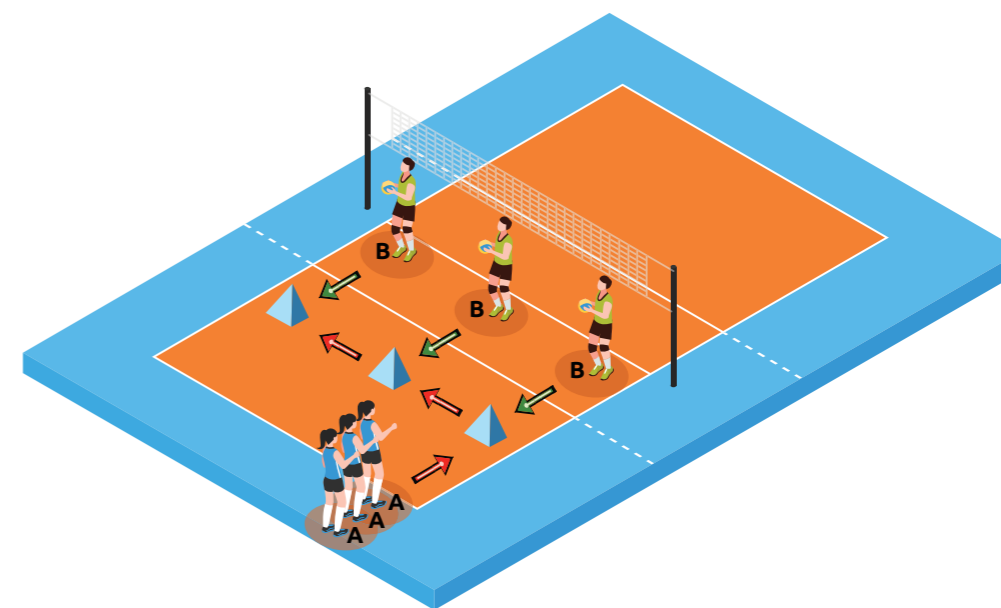


DRILL 3

Three players (B) stand in front of the net facing their own field holding balls, rest of the players (A) form a line outside of the court. Player A runs into court in zone 1 and perform and forehand pass to the ball that player B tossed. Then player A moves sideways to zone 6 and zone 5 performing the same at each player B. After a few repetitions players switch positions.

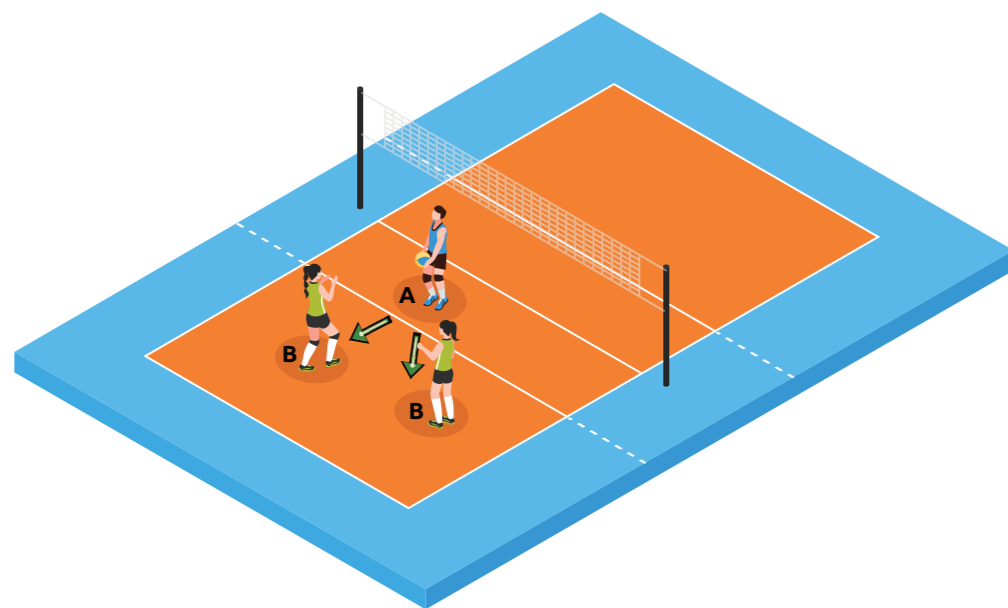
Variations:

Change direction of players' movement from 5 to 1.
Increase difficulty - player B is not throwing the ball directly to player A but to his left or right.
Player B instead of tossing the ball performs an overhead pass to Player A.
Player B instead of an overhead pass performs a serve to player A.



DRILL 4

Players in groups of 3 with one ball, and they form a triangle.
Player A passes the ball with an overhead pass to Players B in turns and they respond back the same. After a few repetitions players switch positions.

**Variations:**

Players B perform only forearm pass to player A.

Have the teams count how many contacts they do in 1 min.

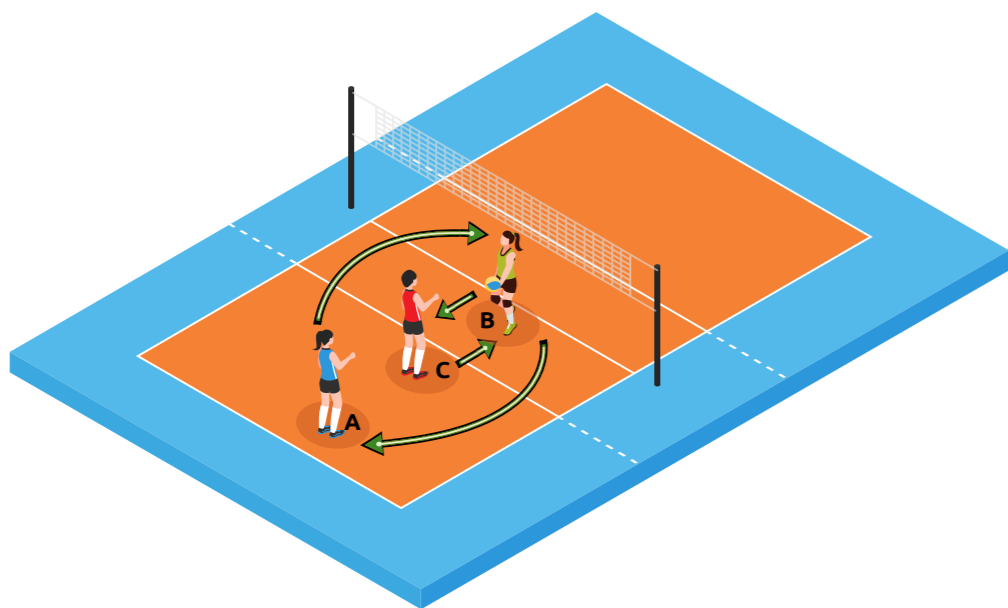
DRILL 5

Players in groups of 3 with one ball and they form a line. Player A passes the ball to player B and player B to player C. Player C to Player B and player B to Player A. After a few repetitions players switch positions.

Variations:

Set different passing skills like only overhead pass or only forearm pass.

Increase/decrease distance between players.

**DRILL 6**

Place 2 players from each side of the net. Positions A and B. Use cones to mark the size of the court depending on the level of the players. One player will be stationed at each position A, and B. The remaining players C will form a line off the court behind position A.

1. The ball is tossed over the net from Player A to Player A on the other side. Player A tosses the ball from around 4-5m.
2. Player A passes the ball to Player B with either an overhead or a forearm pass.
3. Player B passes the ball to Player A on his court preferably with an overhead pass.
4. Player A passes the ball over the net to Player A and switch positions with the player C who stands behind A. Players continue to play until ball is missed. Player B does not change positions.

We can rotate players after a few repetitions.

Variations:

Player A instead of throwing can serve.

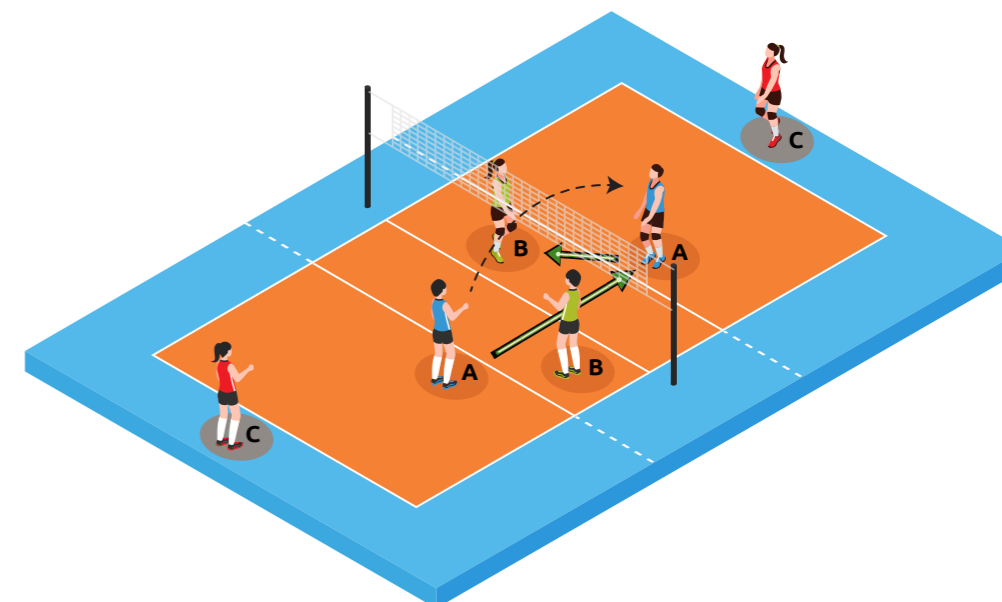
Increase size of field of play to make it more difficult.

Player A instead of passing the ball over the net performs attacking.

Instructions for using only the 3 meters zone when ball is over the net.

Volleyball court can be split vertically and work same drill in two sides.

You can count how many contacts in one rally players did

**Cool down:**

All team together performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback



Week 3

Training Session 5

Introduction

The training session is focusing on improving movement skills with the ball and setting up the defence.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. End the exercise when the players has successful tries so to stop with a positive experience.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets,

Warm up

Players are running around the volleyball court in a slow pace, coach is shouting a random number and the players need to create groups of people of that number.

Dynamic Stretching

squats, leg swings, lunges etc.

DRILL 1

Throwing and catching the ball over the net.

Players form a line outside of the court holding a ball, parallel to the net. The player throws the ball over the net to the other side and at the same time crosses underneath to catch it. Continues till the end of the net.

Variations:

Instead of throwing the ball, can do an overhead pass and cross.

Instead of catching the ball, can do a forearm pass with the ball.

Depending on the level of the athletes they can perform the drill without stopping using self-control passes.

DRILL 2

Players form 2 lines one in each court at the baseline outside of number 6.

Player A throws the ball over the net with proper technique of forearm pass, Player B catches the ball after one bounce and throws the ball over the net as well. Once player A and B have

taken their turns they go back to the line and another players runs into the court.

Variations:

Throwing catching without movement.

Throwing catching with movement.

Ball to bounce inside the 3 meters zone.

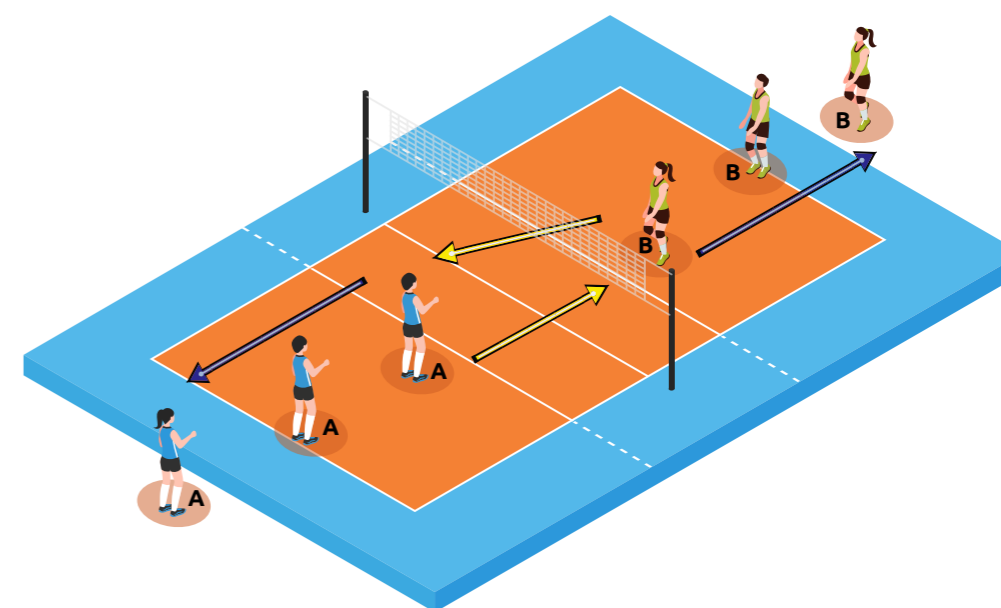
Proper technique with 2 bounces (ball) on the floor and throwing the ball (back) over the net to other side.

Proper technique with 1 bounce (ball) on the floor and forearm pass over the net to other side.

Proper technique with 1 bounce (ball) on the floor + over hand pass over the net.

Depending on the number of athletes, court can be split vertically in half and work with 4 groups.

Create a short game with points for the two teams.



DRILL 3

Same setting as in Drill 2, players form 2 lines one in each court at the baseline outside of zone 6. Coach and assistant coach are in zone 3. Coach rolls the ball sideways to zone 5 or 1 and players with correct technique move sideways and catch the ball between the legs and throwing back to coach in zone 3 by following the movement and doing 1-2 steps in front.

Variations:

Coach rolling the ball (faster) and players catch and throw the ball to zone 3.

Coach throwing the ball and players play forearm pass to zone 3.

Coach throwing the ball and players play overhead pass to zone 3.

Coach spikes the ball and players play defence and send the ball to zone 3.

DRILL 4

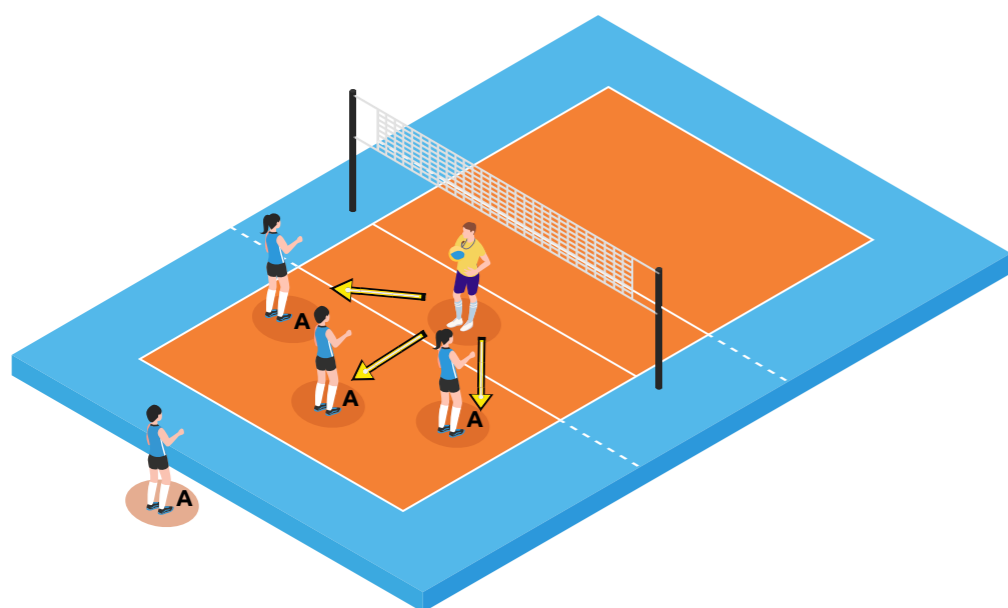
Place 3 players (A) in zones 1,6,5. You can use both courts depending on the number of the players same setting as below. Coach and/or assistant coach are in position 3. Coach throws the ball to the players and they play a forearm pass to zone 3. Remaining players form a line outside of the baseline and substitute the player who had a contact with the ball.

Variations:

Players start moving backwards with the toss of the ball from the coach to their positions.

Increase difficulty by moving the players in different directions to play the ball.

Coach instead of throwing can spike the ball.

**DRILL 5****2 versus 2**

Players play against each other. Depending on the level of players we can modify the size of the court. Players start the game with throwing the ball.

Variations:

Game starts with a serve.

Players play only overhead and forearm passes.

Players must have 3 contacts before passing the ball over.

Players can spike the ball.

You can keep a score.

Cool down:

Use reaction balls exercise reflections and also have fun. Create 3-4 groups depending on the number of the reaction balls available and create same number of groups. Players can make a line and one of them is throwing the ball to the others and take turns, or make a circle and all players play together. All team gets together and performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.

Training Session 6**Introduction**

The training session is focusing on improving movement skills, cooperation between players and serving receiving skills.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. End the exercise when the players has successful tries so to stop with a positive experience.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, mats

Warm up

Players are running around the volleyball court in a slow pace, coach is shouting a random number and the players need to create groups of people of that number.

Dynamic Stretching: squats, leg swings, lunges etc.

DRILL 1

Players in pairs with 1 ball parallel or vertical to the net.

Games warm up, shoulders warm up, players throw the ball with two or one hand to each other.

Spiking movement for a few repetitions, throwing the ball with 2 or 1 hand.

DRILL 2

Same setting as Drill 1. Player A throws the ball and spikes it to player B. Player A can throw with 2 hands or 1 hand the ball.

Variations:

Player B catches the ball as fast as they can (coaches have to focus for low position of players immediately).



Player B plays the ball with a controlled forearm pass.
 Player B plays the ball with a forearm pass to Player A.
 After a few repetitions players switch roles.

DRILL 3

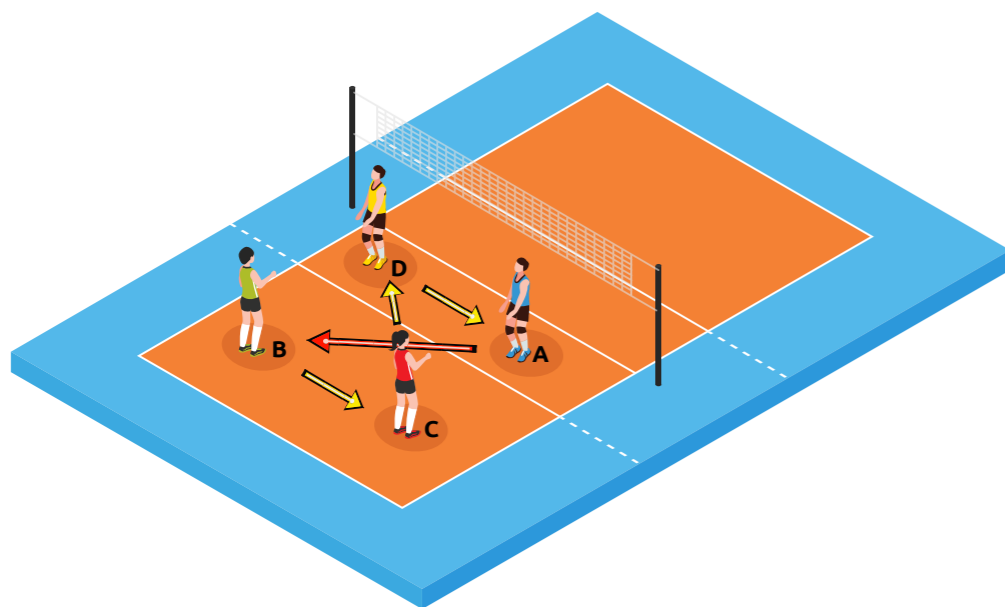
Pepper exercise (starting with just passing and digging). Change positions after a few minutes.

DRILL 4

Place players (A,B,C,D) into the court in zones 1,5,4 and 2. Player A throws the ball with 1 hand to player B, Player B with an overhead/forearm pass gives the ball to player C. Player C with an overhead pass gives the ball to player D. Player D sets the ball to player A. The play stops there and starts again.

Variation:

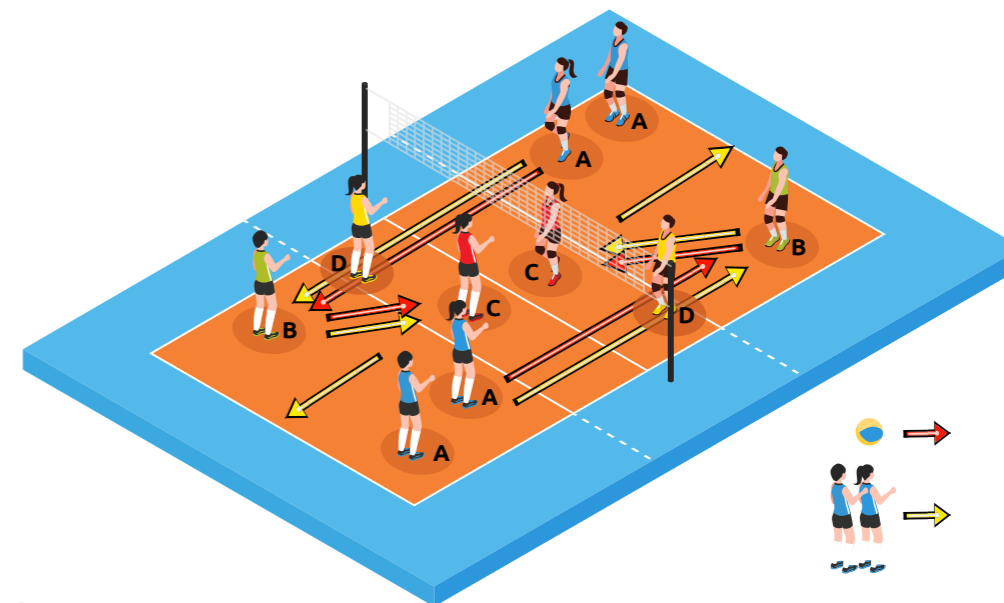
Instead of throwing the ball Player A can perform an attack.
 No stopping after one full circle continue to play.
 Rotate the players.

**DRILL 5**

Players (A) form a line from one side of the court in zone 1. We place initially 1 player (B) to the other side in zone 5. Player A throws the ball with 1 hand to player B who plays the ball with a controlled overhead /forearm pass. We can split the court vertically and use both sides, players rotate after every try. A to B and B to A.

Variations:

We add player C to zone 3. Now player B directs the ball from player A to player C with an overhead or forearm pass.
 Player C catches the ball from player B.
 Player C plays a controlled overhead or forearm pass to itself.
 Player C can direct the ball to player B in zone 4 with an overhead or forearm pass.
 Player B can pass the ball over the net.
 Player A moves to Player B, Player B to Player C and Player C to Player A.
 We can build up this exercise and add one more player in zone 4, Player D and have 3 contacts with Player D to pass the ball over the net.
 Instead of a throw player A can serve.
 To increase difficulty coach can throw a free ball to Player B after the serve.

**DRILL 6**

Players in two groups, half of them are serving from the baseline depending on the level. Remaining athletes are in the court practising receiving of the ball with target the zone 3. Switch courts and positions after a few minutes.

Cool down:

All team gets together and performs stretching exercises.
 It's a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.



Week 4

Training Session 7

Introduction

The training session is focusing on developing serving/passing/setting.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, mats

Warm up

Players line up on the side line of the court, different ways of running up and down the court.

Variations

high knees, sideways, sprints, running backwards, jumps, sprints etc.

Dynamic Stretching

squats, leg swings, lunges etc.

Players in pairs they do warm up exercises for shoulders, throws, spikes etc.

DRILL 1

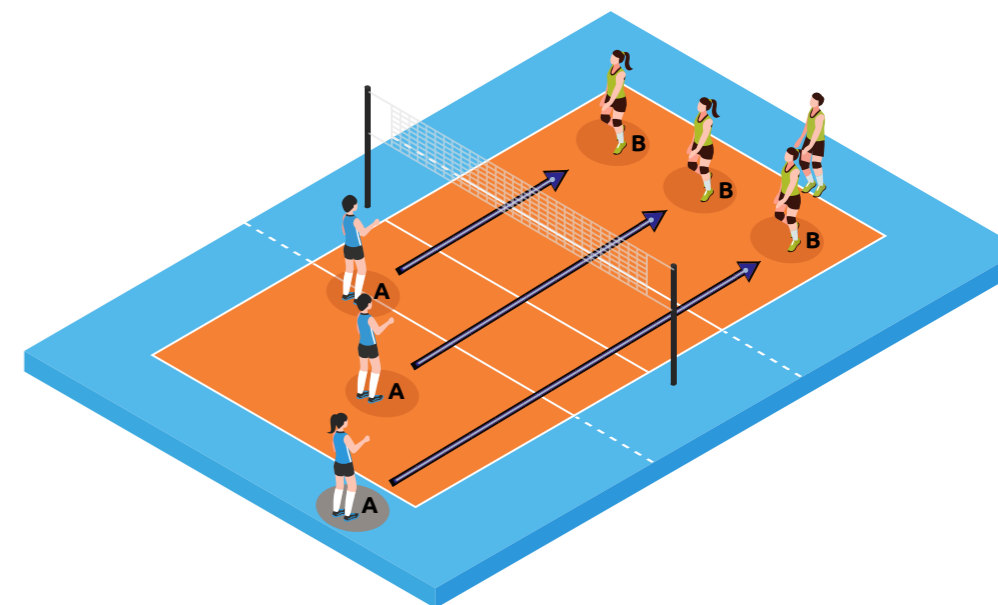
Players split in pairs placing the net between them. Player A throws/serves the ball in a straight line to player B, depending on the skills level player can start with a shorter distance for example 3-4 meters away from the net and increase.

Variations:

Player B catches the ball and rolls back to A under the net.

Player B plays a controlled overhead/forearm pass.

After a few repetitions players switch positions.



DRILL 2

Players (A) form a line in zone 1 and serve towards zone 5. Goal is to send the ball to the mats. Then catch the ball and rotate around to the other court.

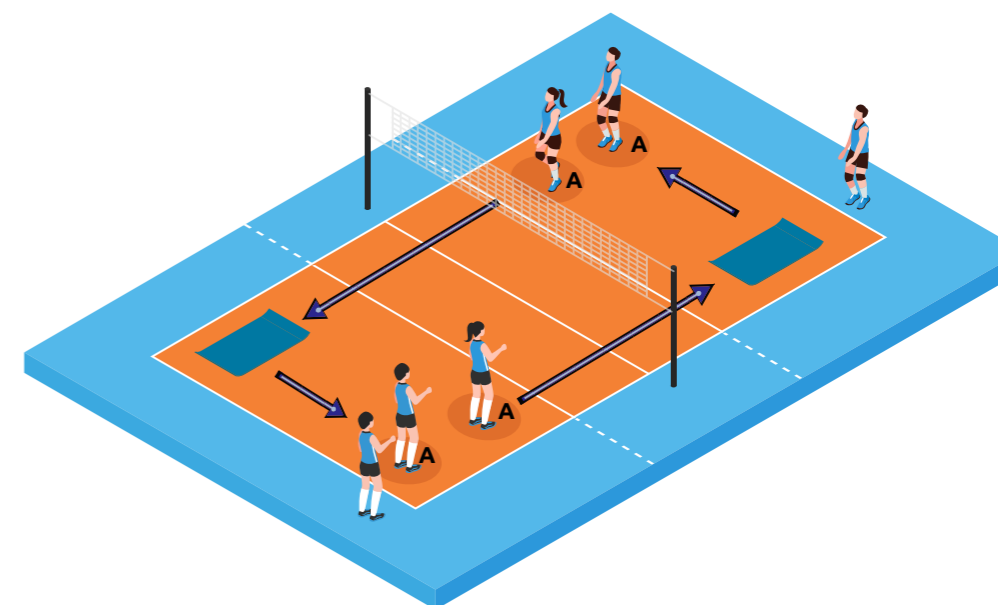
Variations:

You can increase/decrease the distance of serving.

You can move the mats to other positions.

You can ask the players to count points when the ball hits the mat.

You can replace the mats with a smaller target like a hoop or a chair.



DRILL 3

Players split in 2 groups (A,B) and form a line in zone 6 of each court placing the net between them.

Player A starts by serving the ball over the net (underhand/overhead serve) to player B, after serving player A moves to the end of the line on the same court.

Player B plays the ball (forearm pass) over the net to player A and moves to the end of the line on the same court. Players continue to play till the ball lands within the opposing team's area, or if the opposing team is unable to return the ball.

Variations:

Players play only overhead passes.

Players play only forearm passes.

Players after contact with the ball run across to the end of the line on the other side of the court.

Count how many continually contacts players performed in one try.

DRILL 4

Players split into pairs. We divide the court into 3 smaller fields of play (3X3).

Players place the net between them and play 2 versus 2 inside the 3 meter zone.

Players start with serving from 3 meter line.

Players count points, winner is the team who collects first 10 points.

Players perform serving in turns.

We can repeat the game as many times as necessary by mixing up the pairs or switch the opponents.

Variations:

Players play only overhead passes.

Players play only forearm passes.

Players pass the ball over the net by spiking.

DRILL 5

Place 3 players from each side of the net. Court can be split vertically and use both sides.

Mark the size of filed of play (4,5m -6m).

Players B are setting the ball in this drill. Players A are receiving the ball and pass over to player B and players C are attacking/passing over the net to player A.

Drill starts with player C throwing or serving the ball to player A from 3 meters zone.

When the ball lands within the opposing team's legal area, or if the opposing team is unable to return the ball the players rotate one position following the clockwise rotation.

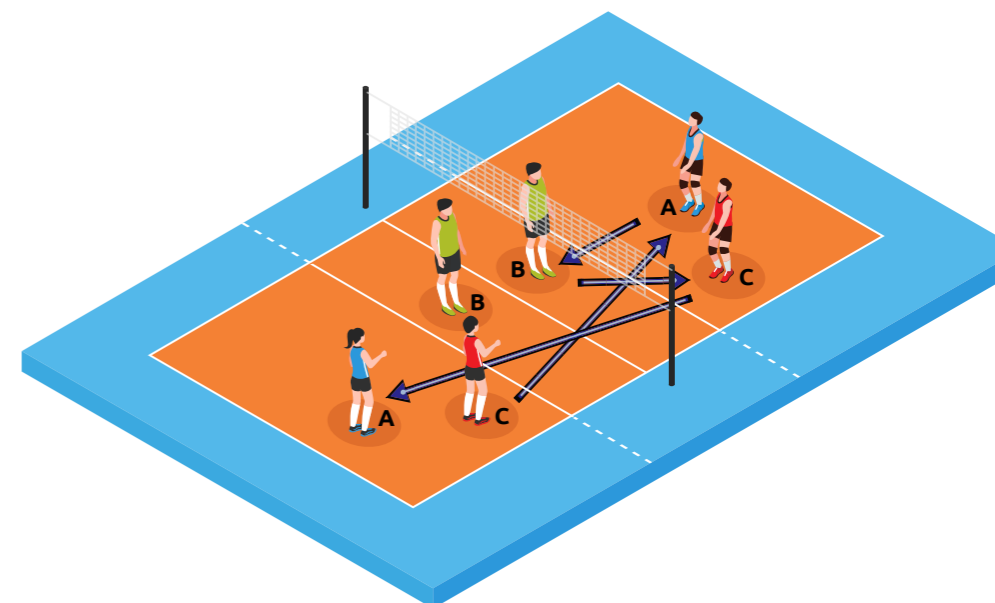
Variations:

Instead of player C throwing/serving, drill starts with player A doing the same skill.

Increase the length of the court to 9 meters.

Add blocking from player C.

Count points.



DRILL 6

Player A serves (under head/overhead) the ball over the net. Distance can vary depending on the skill level.

Players B receive the ball in zones 5 and 6 and direct it to player C in zone 3.

Player C does an overhead pass and targets the ball to touch the mat in zone 4.

In case the pass to player C from players B is not successful the coach (T) tosses a free ball to the players B.

Variations:

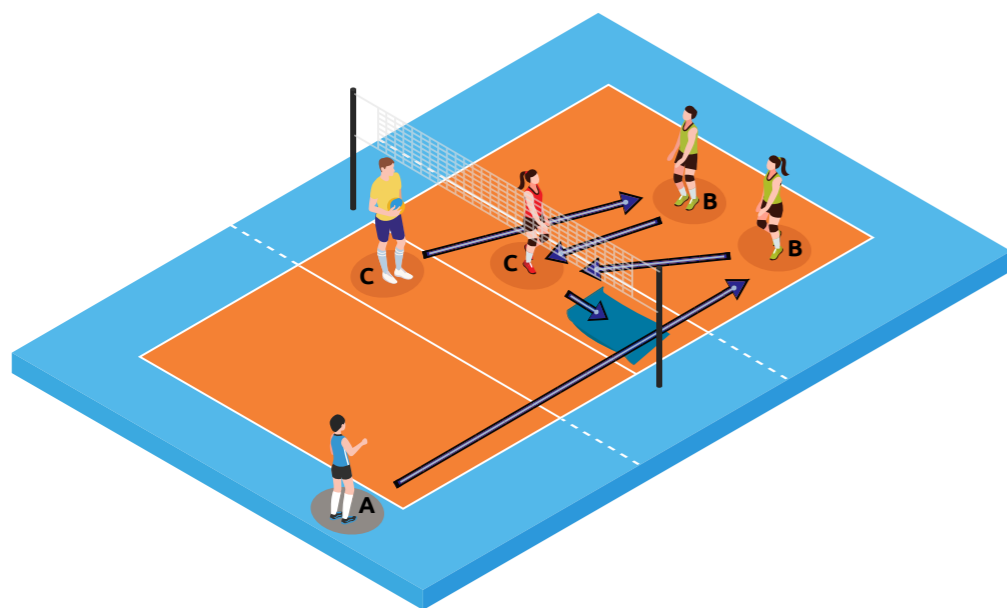
Coach tosses a free ball after every sequence from serving.

Better aim for the player who didn't receive the ball.

Remove the mat and add a player who passes/attacks the ball over the net.

Switch sides of the court, players B receive the ball in zones 6 and 1. Mat should be in zone 2.

Players can rotate after every try or after a few repetitions.



Cool down:

All team gets together and performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.

Training Session 8

Introduction

The training session is focusing developing serving/passing/setting skills.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, mats, volleyball blocker trainer, cones, desks.

Warm up

Players line up on the side line of the court, different ways of running up and down the court.

Variations

high knees, sideways, sprints, running backwards, sprints etc.

Dynamic Stretching

squats, leg swings, lunges etc.

DRILL 1

Split the players in 3 groups. Players form a line facing the net at around 4 meters away holding balls.

Player A starts walking towards the net while playing controlled overhead or forearm passes.

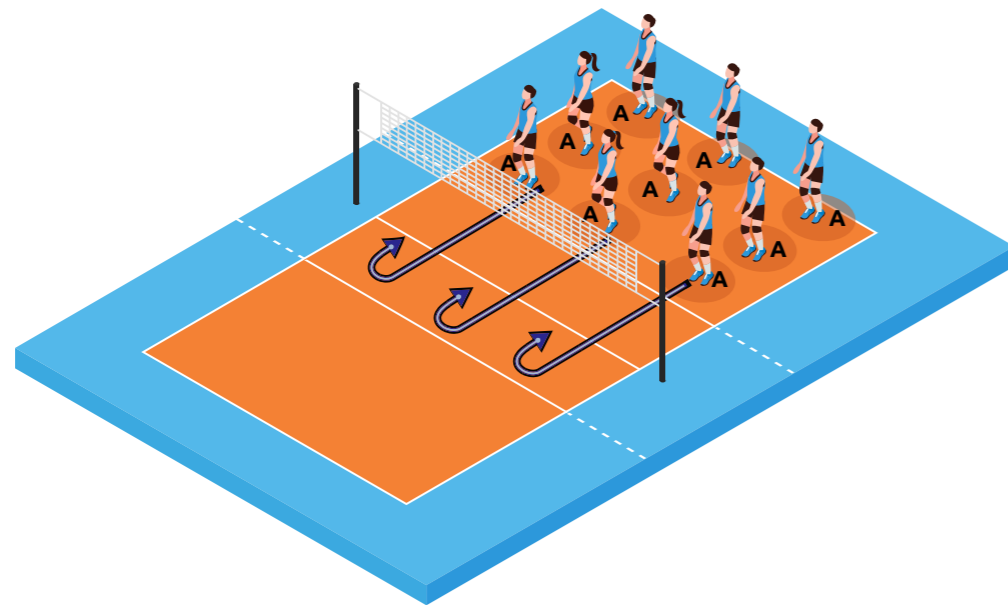
When approaches the net player is passing the ball over the net and at the same time is crossing underneath and turns around to face the net. Player leaves the ball to bounce once and plays the ball with a controlled pass. Player moves back to the end of the line.

Variations:

Player performs only overhead passes or only forearm passes while walking towards the net.

Instead of a controlled pass player passes the ball over the net to the next player in line.

Play the ball without a bounce.

**DRILL 2**

Players split in pairs. Each pair has 2 balls.
 Player A and Player B are holding 1 ball each.
 Player A throws the ball to Player B.
 Player B needs to throw the ball that is holding up to the air close to where is standing and at the same time to play back and overhead/forearm pass to player's A ball, then needs to catch the ball that threw up in the air. After a few repetitions players change positions.

Variations:

Player A instead of a throw does an overhead pass to player B.
 Player's B ball to bounce certain times, like two or one before the player catches it.
 Player's B ball doesn't bounce at all before the player catches it.

DRILL 3

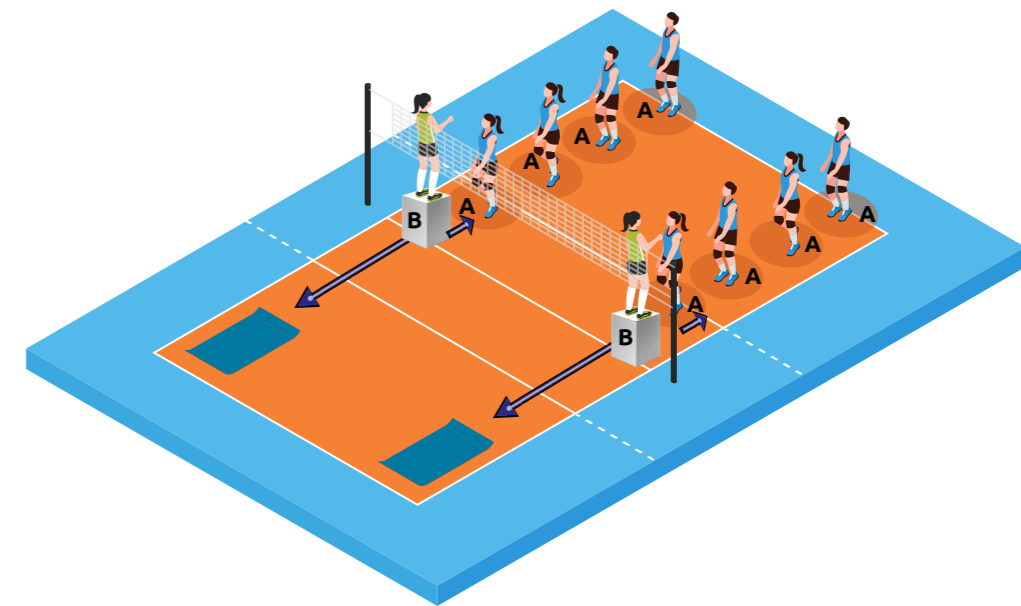
Players in pairs they do warm up exercises for shoulders, throws, spikes etc for a few minutes.

**DRILL 4**

Players A form 2 lines in zones 4 and 2. Players B stand on a surface like a desk/table which is steady and hold the ball in 1 hand. Players B will approach and hit the ball in straight line with direction to zones 1 and 5 respectively to touch the mats. Players B collect their ball and go back to the line. After a few repetitions we switch players B from standing on the surface.

Variations:

We move away the standing surface and players B toss the ball to players A to do a spike.
 Players B are setting the ball to players A not tossing.
 We ask the players to target diagonally from zones 4 and 2 and we adjust the mats.
 Players after spiking the ball they move to the other line.
 Depending on the skills level of athletes in attacking coach can pick the level of difficulty of the drill to start with.

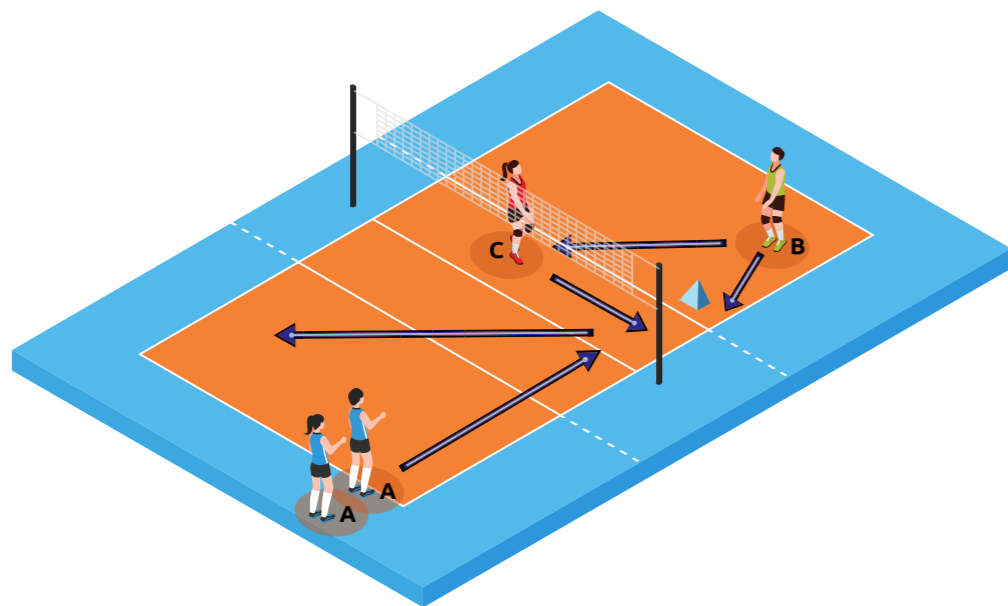


DRILL 5

Player A serves the ball from zone 1 to zone 5.
 Player B receives the ball and pass it over to player C with an overhead/forearm pass.
 Player C sets the ball to zone 4.
 Player B moves around the cone from the left side and approaches the ball and hits it over the net diagonally to zone 5.
 Players can rotate after a successful sequence of contacts. Both sides of the court can be used.

Variations:

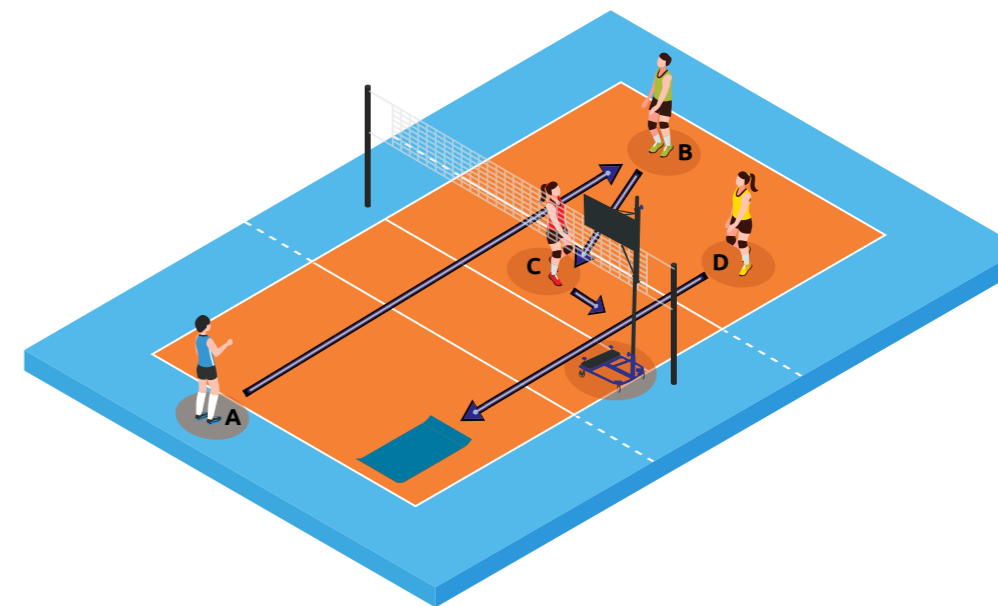
Same setting but change the zones of receiving from 5 to 1 and attacking from 4 to 2.
 Add a player in defence in zone 5 of the other side of the court.
 Add a player in receiving the ball in zone 6.
 Rotate players after a few repetitions.


DRILL 6

Player A serves the ball from zone 6 to zone 6.
 Player B receives the ball and pass to player C in zone 3.
 Player C sets the ball to zone 4.
 Player D approaches and attacks the ball targeting zone 1 where the mat is.
 In zone 2 by the net (on the other side) we place a player/assistant coach on a standing surface or a volleyball blocker trainer (if available) to block the diagonally direction towards zone 5 of player's D attack and force the player to direct the ball straight to zone 1.

Variations:

Add one more player in receiving the ball in zone 5.
 Blocker to block out zone 1 and force hitting in zone 5.
 Same drill switching zones of receiving from 5 to 1 and attacking from 4 to 2.


Cool down:

All team gets together and performs stretching exercises.
 It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.

Week 5

Training Session 9

Introduction

In volleyball there are different systems depending on the numbers of the hitters and setters that are playing inside the court. Depending on the level of the skills of the team and their experience the coach can decide on which system to use. Such systems are: the 6:0 (all players are available to spike and set the ball), the 4:2 (4 players available to spike and 2 dedicated setters), the 6:2 (6 available players to spike and 2 that set) and the 5:1 (5 players available to spike and 1 dedicated setter). In this session we will introduce to the players the system 6:0 and the formation "W". It is a simple system that can be used initially especially from a new team and allows players to play in all positions without specializations. Especially, when players and partners can perform the basic elements of the game (overhead and forearm passing, serving passing setting and attacking).

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, elastic bands, white board.

Warm up

Players line up on the side line of the court, different ways of running up and down the court.

Variations

High knees, sideways, sprints, running backwards etc.

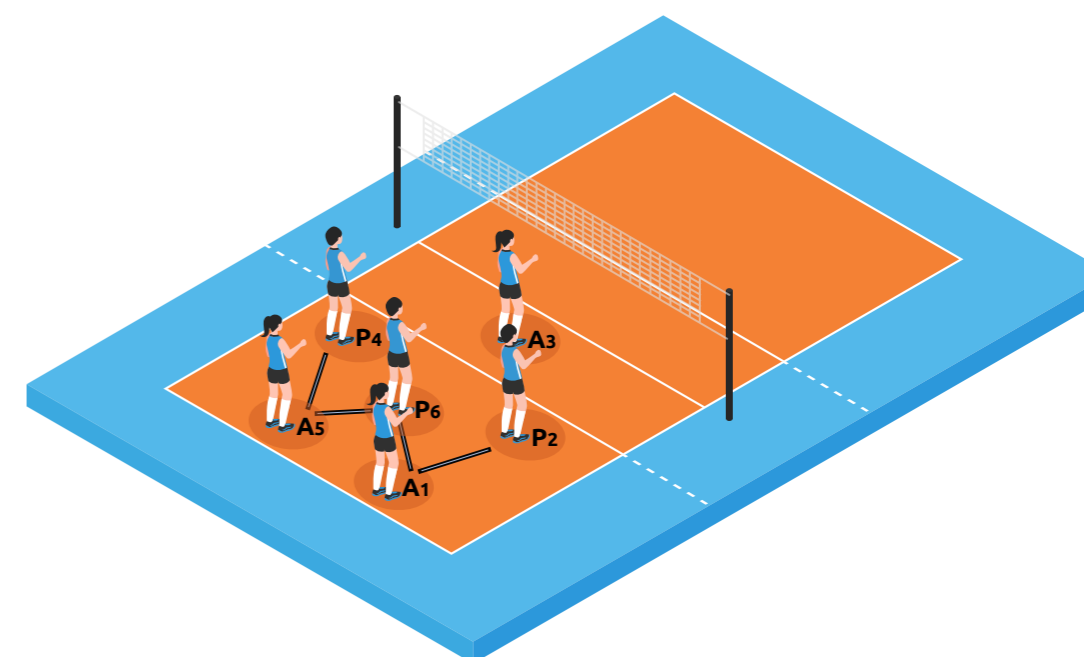
Players create a big circle around the court, coach/assistant coach stays in the middle and shows the exercises with elastic bands for different muscle groups.

Stretching in pairs.

DRILL 1

Theoretical part:

We use a white board to sketch the court and the positions to show the formation to the players like the graphic below. The positions on the court should be an alteration of 3 Athletes (A) and 3 Unified Partners (P) (SOI Volleyball Rules). Mixed groups can be formed as well, with 3 female and 3 male players (no indication if it is an Athlete or Unified partner). Once explained on the board then we can do the same on the court by positioning the players into the correct spots. We do a few rotations and then we can use throw/catch of the ball to make it more understandable. Both courts can be used. W formation can be used for receiving the ball from the opponent's serve and be kept throughout the play till the point is won by any of the teams.



DRILL 2

Games warm up with balls.

Players split in pairs and they do a games warm with balls, throws, attacks and pepper drill.

DRILL 3

Place the players on the court as indicated in drill 1. Remaining players (R) form a line at the base line and serve the ball to the other side of the net. Aim is for the team to receive the ball, direct it to the setter in zone 3 and the setter to zone 4 or zone 2 and then over the net. If the serve is missed or players didn't perform 3 contacts and pass the ball over the net then the Coach (C) throws a free ball.

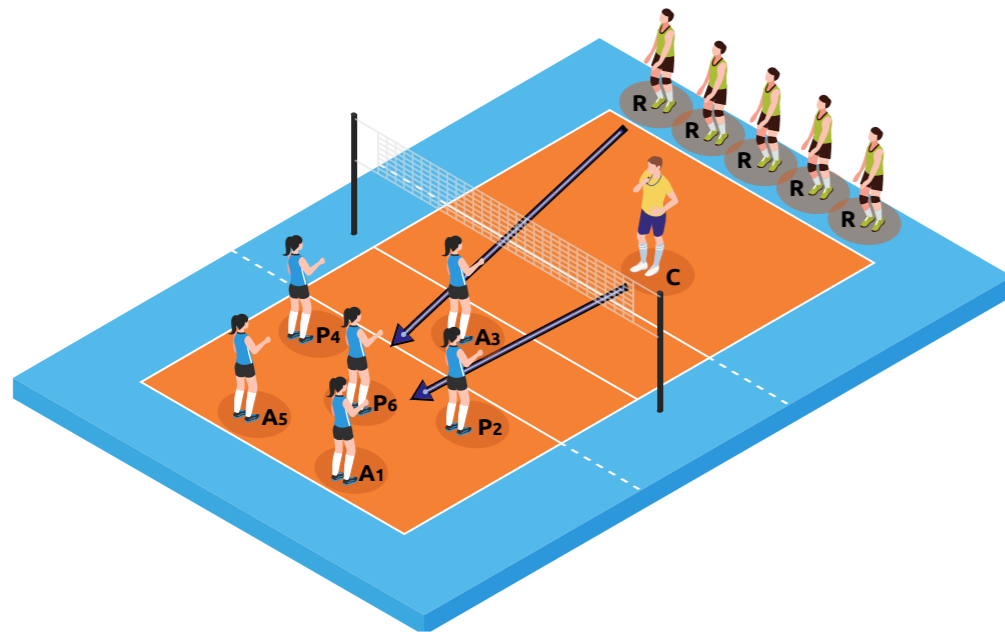
Variations:

Rotation of the players after a few successful plays.

After serving player (R) gets into the court for defence, aim to touch the ball.

Players (R) from serving to substitute players from the other side of the court.

Count points.



Cool down:

Team gets together and provides feedback on the training session, any questions on the W system etc.

All team gets together and performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.

Training Session 10

Introduction

Interactive cooperation between coaches and athletes and partners on the court. Starting with basics physical exercises that develop into more intensive drills and movement. Break down formation W in drills.

Reminder:

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

Volleyball balls, volleyball baskets.

Warm up

- Players create a big circle and coach/players demonstrates exercises for joint mobility: rotations of the ankles in both directions, bending knees, lateral movements of the pelvis, anteroposterior movements of the pelvis, hip mobility, shoulder mobility, circumduction of the upper limbs in both directions, slow twisting of the neck, slow lateral inclinations of the neck etc.
- Players run in circle around the volleyball court. Coach gives the signal for changing the way of running. Variations: high knees, sideways, sprints, running backwards, etc.

Stretching

Players create a big circle. We build up from simple and less demanding moves to more demanding ones. Create a routine for players to warm up their muscles which will help to avoid injuries and getting ready the activities to follow.

DRILL 1

Players split in two groups on both sides of the court. Players for a line across the base line. Coach gives a sound signal and players sprint towards the net. Starting position can vary each time, sitting, lying down facing the ceiling, doing small jumps etc.

DRILL 2

Players remain in the same two groups on both sides of the court.

Players for a line across the base line and lie down on their stomach. Coach gives a sound signal

and players run towards the net, once they approach the 3 meter zone they perform the spiking movement and one block movement. They walk back to the base line and repeat the drill for a few times.

DRILL 3

Player A throws the ball with 2 hands over the net to Player B from around 6 meters distance away from the net.

Player B is positioned in zone 5 and receives the ball and pass it to player C with an overhead or forearm pass, in zone 3.

Player C does an overhead pass to zone 4 and collects the ball.

Players rotate following the ball direction, A to B and B to C and C to A either on the same side of the court or to the opposite.

We can split the court vertically and use both sides.

Variations:

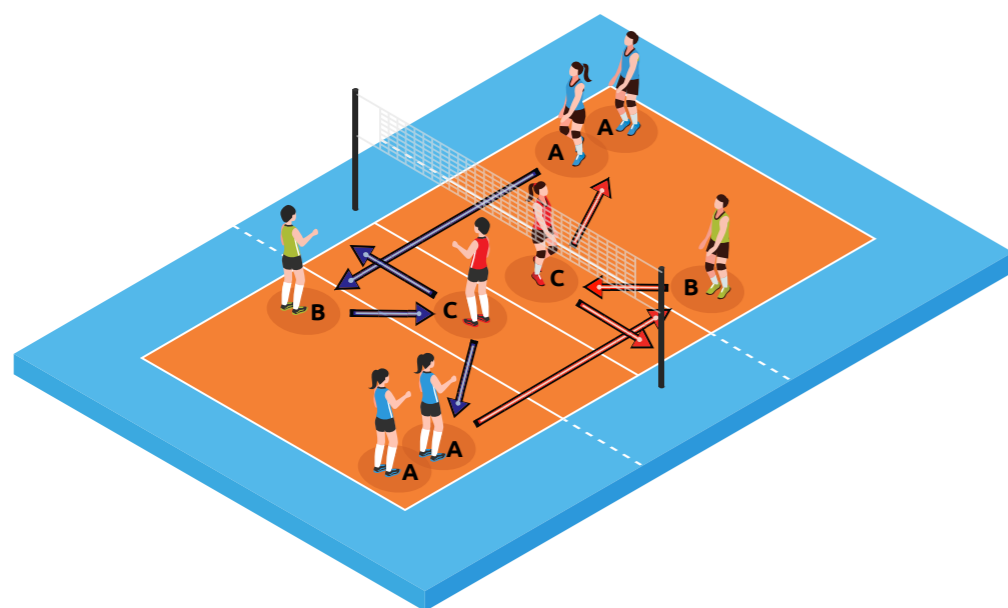
Throw the ball instead of 2 hands with 1 hand.

Instead of 1 hand, serve the ball over the net.

Player C sets the ball to zone 4 and player B pass the ball over the net with player A to run into the court and play a controlled pass.

Same exercise working on the other half of the court, players A serve from zone 5, player B receive in zone 1.

Rotations can be after every serve or after a few repetitions.



DRILL 4

Same as Drill 3 but we add 2 more players in position 6 and 4. We work the W formation in half of the court in zones 6,5, and 4.

Player A serves the ball over the net to one of the players B in zones 6,5 or 4.

Players B should receive the ball and pass it to player C with an overhead or forearm pass, in zone 3.

Player C does an overhead pass to zone 4 and player B4 should pass the ball over the net towards zone 1 or 2.

Players rotate following the clockwise rotation and player C either moves to A on the same side of the court or to the opposite side.

We can split the court vertically and use both sides.

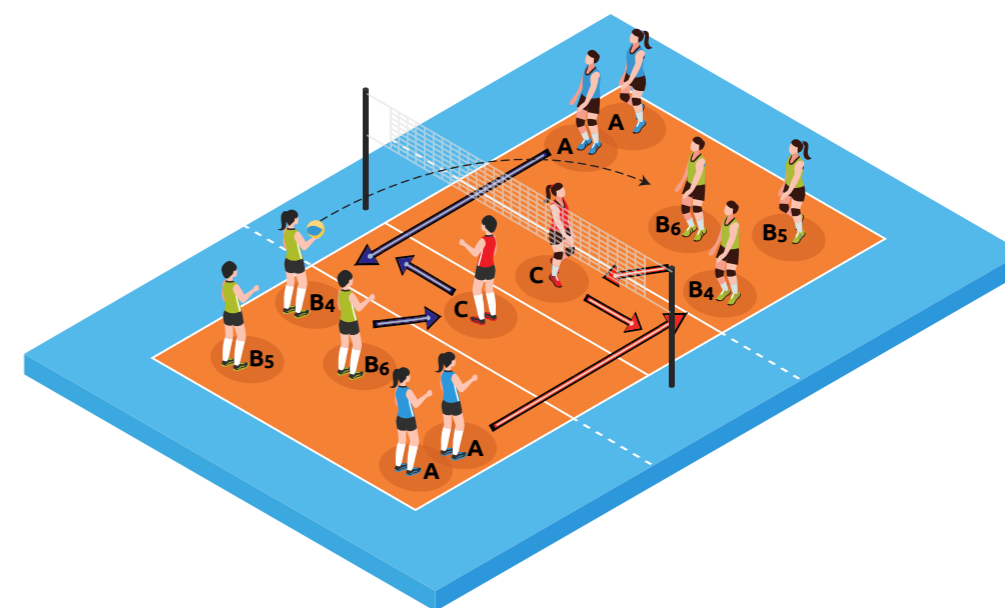
Variations:

Player B4 can pass the ball with an overhead pass or a spike.

Player A after serve should run into the court for defence.

Same exercise working on the other half of the court, players A serve from zone 5, players B receive in zones 6,1, and 2.

Rotations can be after every serve or after a few repetitions.



**DRILL 5**

Players split into two groups.

Group A is serving from one side of the net and group B is positioned at the other side of the net. Players from group B are sitting on the floor, inside the court lines in random positions, with their arms around their legs trying to catch the less space possible, they should not move during the serving.

Group's A target is to serve the ball over the net and the ball to touch one of the players from group B. Every time the ball touches a player group A gets a point and that players walks away from the court.

Games finishes when all players are moved away. Groups switch positions.

Variations:

Instead of sitting down , players can be standing up without moving.

Drill can be done with time limit, like how many touches in 3 minutes.

We need to be careful with players wearing glasses, or players that don't want to be touched by the ball.

Cool down:

Team gets together and provides feedback on the training session.

All team gets together and performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.

**Week 6****Training Session 11****Introduction**

Interactive cooperation between players on the court. Work on personal technique and accuracy. Formation W for defence.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

Volleyball balls, volleyball baskets, cones, hoops.

Warm up

- Players line up on the side line of the court, coach gives the signal for changing the way of running. **Variations:** high knees, sideways, running backwards, jumps, scissor kicks etc.
- Joint mobility: Players create a big circle and coach/players demonstrates exercises for joint mobility, rotations of the ankles in both directions, bending knees, lateral movements of the pelvis, anteroposterior movements of the pelvis, hip mobility, shoulder mobility , circumduction of the upper limbs in both directions, slow twisting of the neck, slow lateral inclinations of the neck etc.

Stretching

Players stay in the same circle and coach/player demonstrates for the other to follow stretching exercises for upper and lower body muscles.

DRILL 1

We create a drill with various stations where players have to do different moves or skills around the volleyball court.

Players form a line outside of the court in zone 5.

1st station: They imitate the move of forearm pass and fall onto the mat.

2nd station: Run towards the net where they imitate the spike movement and once landed they do a block movement, cross under the net and do a block movement as well.

3rd station: Run backwards to zone 1 and move around the 3 cones reaching the base line.



4th station: Run sideways parallel to the net to zone 5.

5th station: Run towards the net and do 3 jumps inside the 3 consecutive hoops which we have placed behind the 3 meter zone.

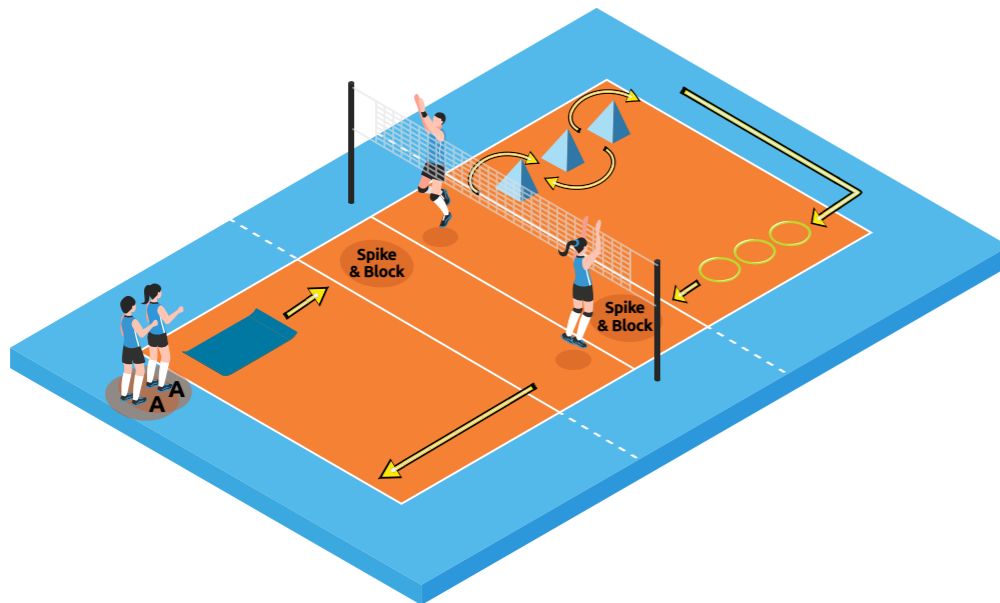
6th station: Imitate the spike movement and once landed they do a block movement, they cross under the net and do a block movement as well.

7th station: run backwards to the base line.

We repeat the same round for 3 times.

Variations:

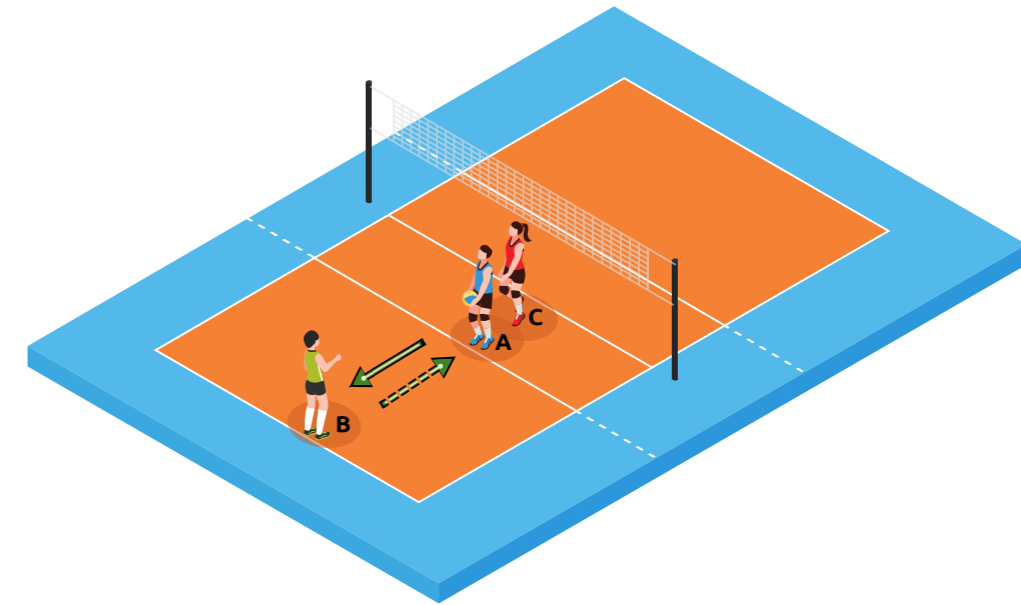
We can change the direction of the players, instead of starting from zone 5, start from zone 1. Keep the format and change some movements in the stations.



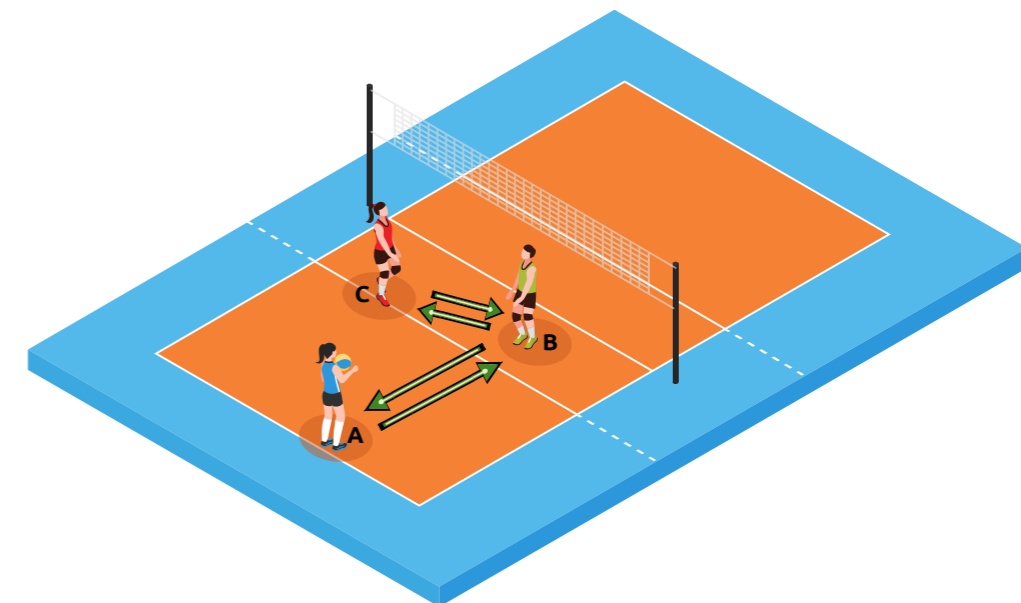
DRILL 2

Players split into groups of 3. We will do a series of exercises in this format.

1. Players are positioned vertically to the net, players A and C are by the net and] player B is at the base line across each other. Ball starts from player A. After every throw the player runs across and stays behind its teammate. They do throws with the ball, start with 2 hands, 1 hand, bounce the ball with 2 hands, with 1 hand, and spike hits. When the ball is coming towards the players they don't catch it but they do a controlled overhead /forearm pass.



2. Players do a controlled overhead pass and then set the ball to their teammate with an overhead pass and run across to the end of the line.
3. Players do a controlled forearm pass and then set the ball to the to their team mate with an overhead pass and run across to the end of the line.
4. Play only overhead passes (without controlled ball).
5. Play only forearm passes (without controlled ball).
6. Same groups but now players are positioned 1 at the base line, 1 by the net and one between them. Player's B role in the middle is to set the ball to the player that does a defence (dig) of the ball.
Player A starts and passes the ball to player B.
Player B passes the ball to player C in the middle.
Player C passes the ball to Player B who does a spike move to Player A.
Player A should dig the ball to player C who sets the ball back to player A to do a spike move to player B. After a few repetitions players switch positions.



DRILL 3

Players R form two lines, one in zone 4 and 1 in zone 2. We place two setters in zone 3, players B. On the other side of the court we place 6 players (3 A, 3UP) as indicated in training session 9. Players R perform a spike movement to the overhead pass from the setters (B) in turns (once from zone 4, once from zone 2) and pass the ball over the net.

The other team is trying to defend the ball and direct it to the setter in zone 3 and create an attack either from zone 4 or 2.

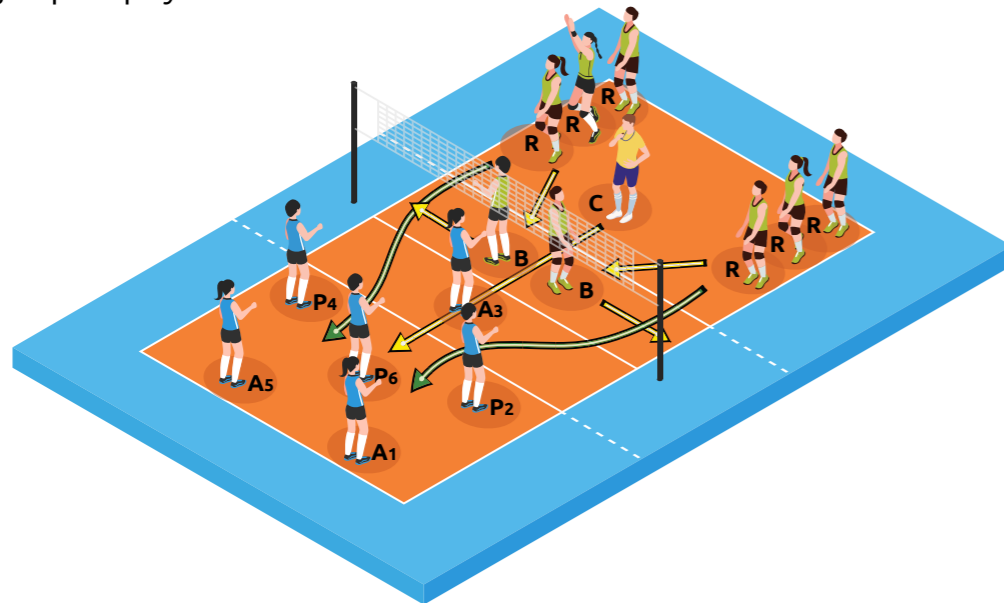
Coach is throwing a free ball if the spike attempt didn't not pass over the net to keep the flow in the drill. We encourage the players to speak up and claim the ball if it is in their zone.

Variations:

Players R can switch zone of attacking after every attempt.

Players rotate after a few repetitions.

Switch groups of players.



DRILL 4

Players do serving from the base line. They count 10 serves and how many were successful and switch courts.

Cool down:

Team gets together and provides feedback on the training session.

Team gets together and performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.

Training Session 12

Introduction

Interactive cooperation between players on the court. Work on personal technique and accuracy. Formation W for defence.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

Volleyball balls, vision board, writing material, coordination ladder, polygon, cones, hoops, small balls

Warm up

- **Joint mobility:** Players create a big circle and coach/players demonstrates exercises for joint mobility, rotations of the ankles in both directions, bending knees, lateral movements of the pelvis, anteroposterior movements of the pelvis, hip mobility, shoulder mobility, circumduction of the upper limbs in both directions, slow twisting of the neck, slow lateral inclinations of the neck etc.
- **Ladder agility drills** for improvement of basic coordination skills. There is a big variety of drills to be used here for upper and lower body, we will suggest a few but you can add new ones every time, do 2 rounds of each drill:
 - run through the ladder squares one foot at the time,
 - stepping first only the right foot, then the left foot,
 - run sideways one foot at the time inside the ladder squares, change side,
 - jumps with 2 legs in every square,
 - jumps only with right foot,
 - jumps only with left foot,
 - walk with the hands, one hand in each square etc.
- Players run in circle around the volleyball court. Coach gives the signal for changing the way of running. **Variations:** high knees, sideways, sprints, running backwards, etc.

Dynamic Stretching

squats, leg swings, lunges etc walking up and down from the base line to the net.

DRILL 1

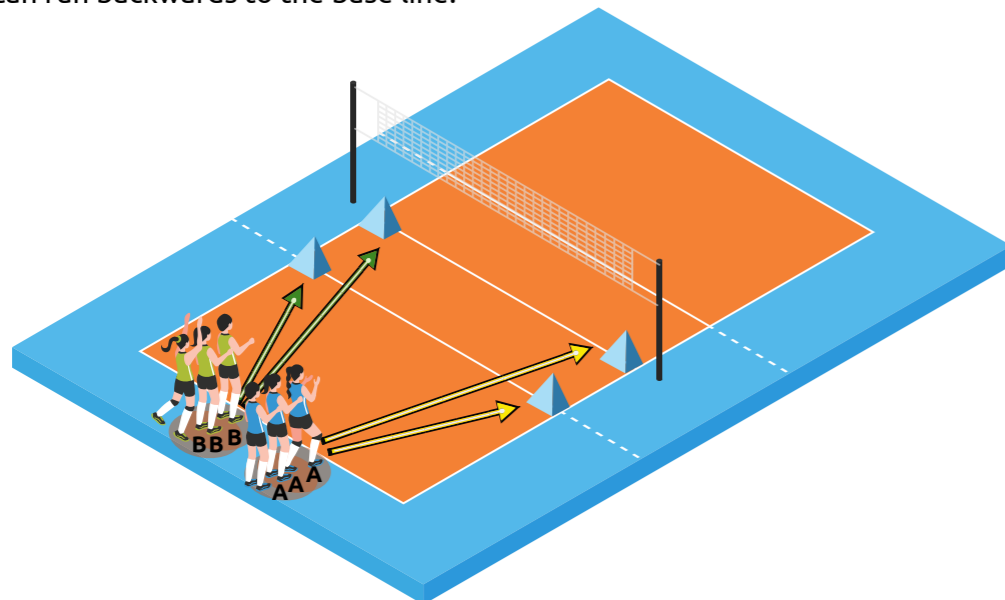
Players (A,B) form 2 lines parallel outside of the court in zone 6. They run in pairs. With coach's signal the first players run towards the cone placed in the corner of 3 meter zone and side line. They run back to the base line touch the cone and run again towards the net to the second cone which is placed in the corner of the central line and side line of the same side of the court. Then they run back to the base line.

Variations:

Speed can be increased in every attempt.

After players run towards the cones of the same side of the court they continue by switching sides between them and run towards the other 2 cones in the same sequence.

Players can run backwards to the base line.


DRILL 2

Players form a line in 3 meters zone and they do sideways movement from 3 meter zone to the net and back 10 repetitions and they switch sides.

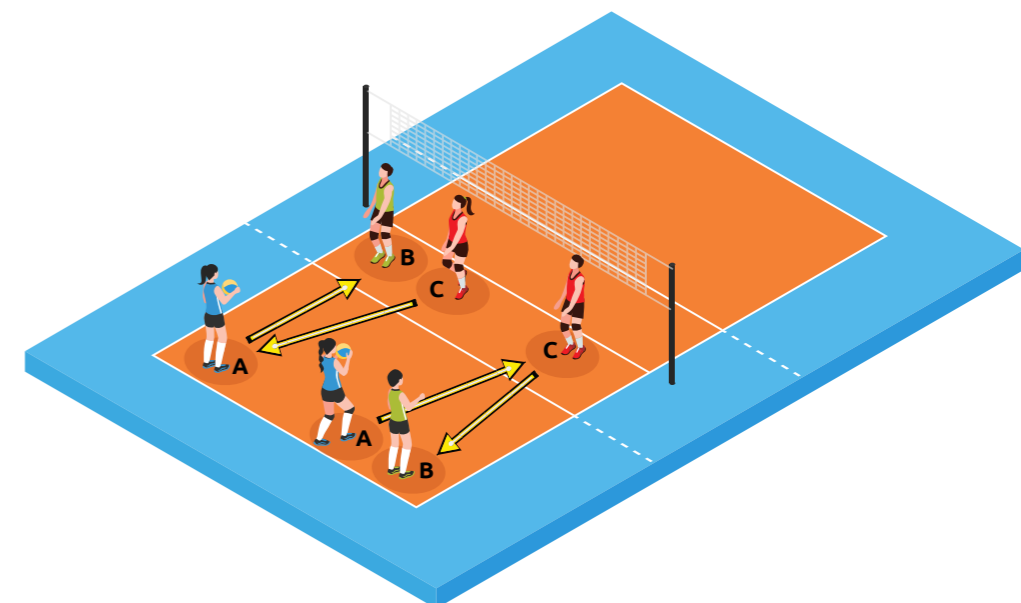
DRILL 3

Players form a line in 3 meters zone and imitate spike movement (steps) towards the net. 10 repetitions then they do 10 block moves and lastly a combination of spiking and blocking movement together 10 repetitions.

DRILL 4

Players split into groups of 3. We will do a series of exercises in this format.

1. Players are forming a triangle, players B and C by the net and player A at the base line across each other. Groups have 2 balls each, 1 at each side. They throw the balls simultaneously, they start with 2 hands, 1 hand, bounce the ball with 2 hands, with 1 hand, and spike hits, the players when the ball is coming towards them they don't catch the ball but they do a controlled overhead /forearm pass. Good communication skills and perception of the direction of the ball.



2. In the same format players do controlled overhead pass and then set the ball to their teammate with an overhead pass.
3. In the same format players do a controlled forearm pass and then set the ball to their teammate with an overhead pass.
4. In the same format they play only overhead passes (without controlled ball) with one ball.
5. In the same format they play only forearm passes (without controlled ball) with one ball.

Players rotate positions after a few repetitions, or coach keeps time and ask them to rotate.

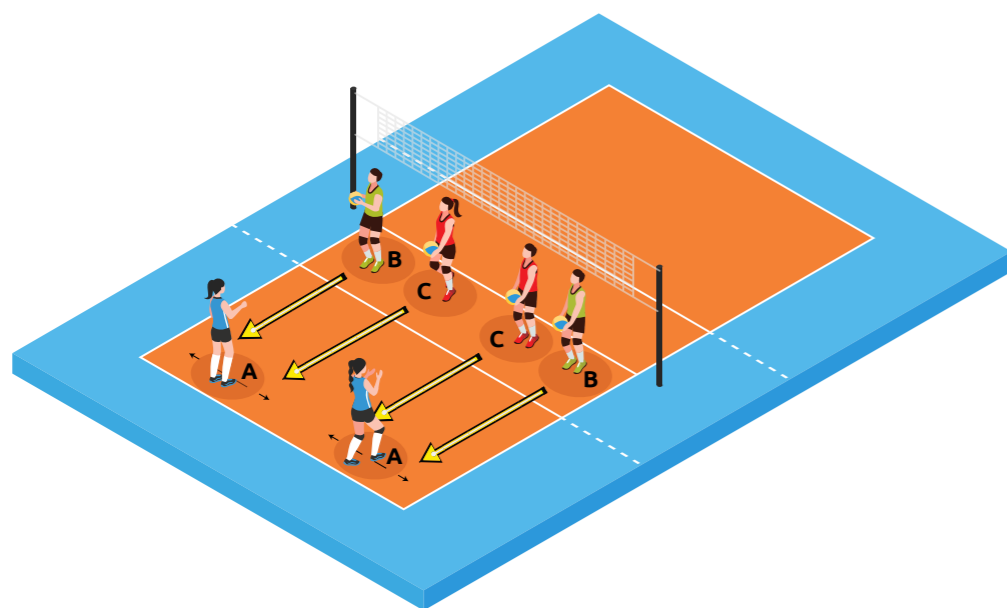
DRILL 5

Players stay in groups of 3. Player A is playing defence and positioned around 6-7 meters away from the net. Players B and C are by the net with 1 ball each. Players B and C attack the ball in straight line in front of them. Player A needs to move sideways and defend the ball and direct it back to players B or C. Players rotate after a few repetitions.

Variations:

Instead of a straight line attack players B and C can do a diagonally attack. Player A keeps moving sideways.

Instead of 2 attacks, player C can tip the ball close to 3 meters line.


DRILL 6

Place one setter (C) in each court in zone 3, players (A) do free spikes from zone 4. Switch to zone 2 as well.

Setters can be changed every few repetitions or every player who attacks moves to the setter position.

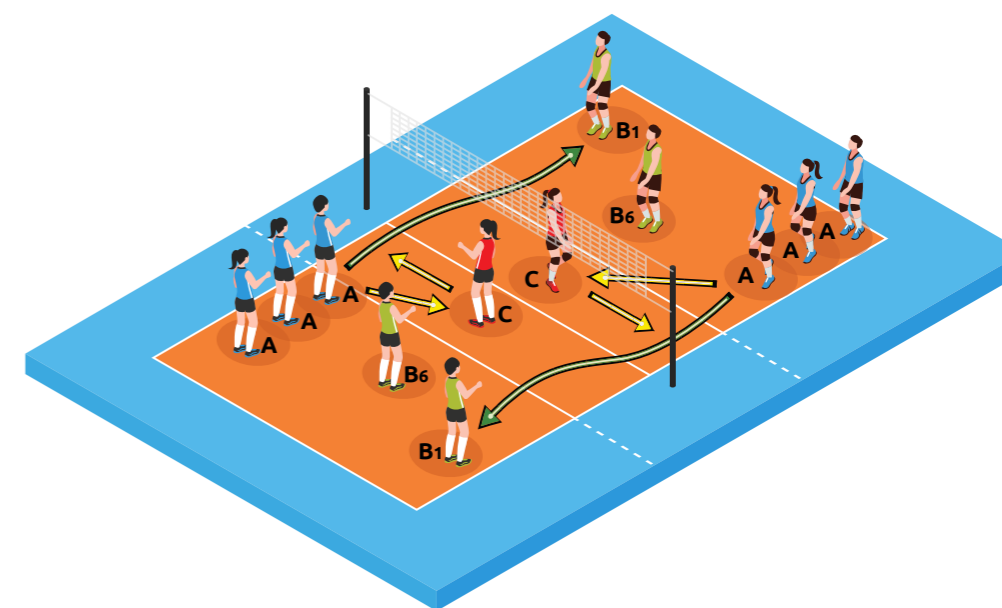
DRILL 7

Same as drill 6 but now we add defence players in zones 1 and 6. Defence players should direct the ball close to zone 3.

When attacking from zone 2 defence players are positioned in zones 5 and 6.

If the drill is running smoothly we can add more defence players e.g. zone 2, zone 5 and accordingly when attacking from zone 2 to zone 4 and 1.

We need to be careful with the free balls inside the court during the drill not to have any injuries.


Cool down:

Team gets together and provides feedback on the training session.

Team gets together and performs stretching exercises.

It a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.

Week 7

Training Session 13

Introduction

Review of field and defensive positions. Use and compilation of the Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals (Appendix) during the training session.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

volleyball balls, volleyball baskets.

Warm up

- Joint mobility: Players create a big circle and coach/players demonstrates exercises for joint mobility, rotations of the ankles in both directions, bending knees, lateral movements of the pelvis, anteroposterior movements of the pelvis, hip mobility, shoulder mobility, circumduction of the upper limbs in both directions, slow twisting of the neck, slow lateral inclinations of the neck etc. In the meantime, recap of the last session and presentation of the program for the day.
- Players start from zone 1 and run slowly diagonally towards zone 4, sideways movement to the net up to zone 2, backwards run up to zone 1 and low sideways movement up to zone 5 and start again on the opposite diagonal (forward run from place 5 to place 2, sideways movement to the net up to place 4,...). Four repetitions in total.
- Players are spread around the court. Coach is pointing out the directions that players should go to (forwards, backwards, right or left). Coach is changing the direction in fast pace. While players are moving coach is giving them a sound signal to do one more move like jump, or touch the floor, sit etc.

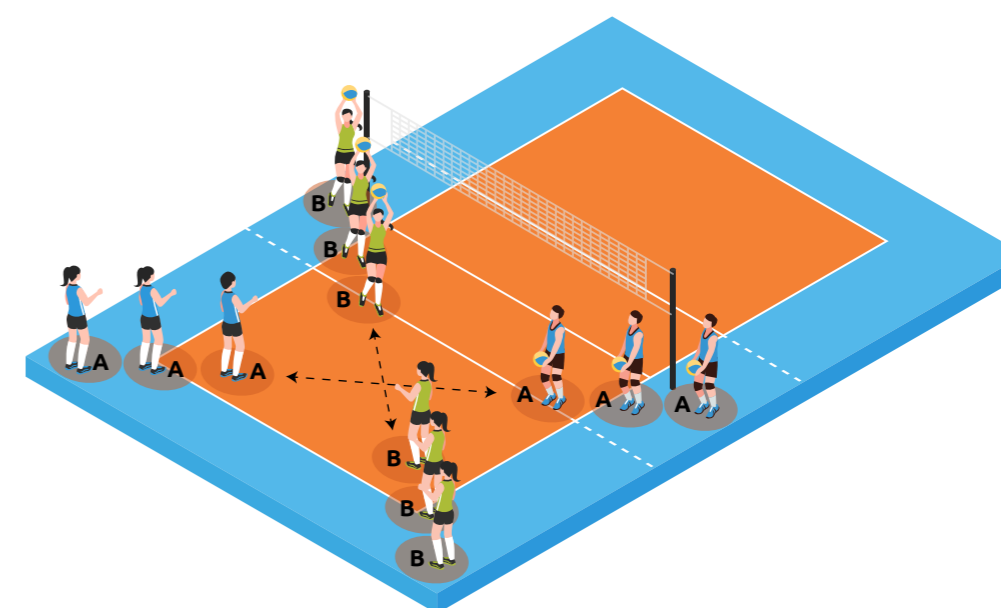
Stretching

players form a circle and coach/player demonstrates for the others to follow stretching exercises for upper and lower body muscles.

DRILL 1

Depending on the number of players they either form one group or split into two groups using both sides of the net. We encourage communication between them and attention to surroundings, in order to avoid collisions.

Players are split in equal numbers in zones 5,4,2 and 1 as showed below. Players in zones 5 and 2 are group A and players in zones 4 and 1 are group B. Drill starts with Group A throwing the ball from zone 5 to zone 2 and group B from zone 4 to zone 1 simultaneously. Players switch to different throws/spike movement after coach's guideline. Players after throwing/spiking run across to the end of the line. Players who receive the ball either they catch it or perform a controlled forearm pass. Players need to be careful while running across to not interfere in the other groups throws.



DRILL 2

Players split in pairs. Pepper exercise (starting with just passing and digging). Switch positions after a few minutes. Players must perform overhead pass, an attack and defense continuously without dropping the ball in the same sequence.

DRILL 3

Players split in 3 groups, A, B and C.

Group A: Players in zones 5 and 6 perform a defensive forearm pass to the attack of player in zone 3 (players rotate every 10 spikes). Players perform the exercise in rotation, the player who makes a defense switches with the player that is in waiting outside of the court. When all players have rotated from zone 3 then the groups rotate as well, A to B, B to C, and C to A.

Group B: Players in zones 2 and 6 perform a defensive forearm pass to a short ball/tip of player in zone 3 (players rotate every 10 attempts). Players perform the exercise in rotation, the player who makes a defense switches with the player that is in waiting outside of the court.

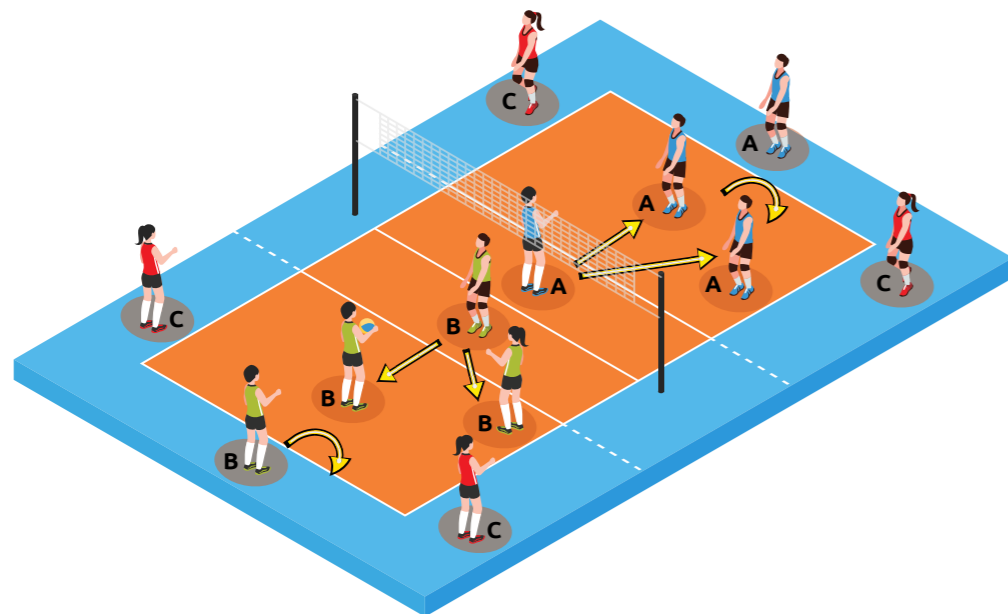
Group C: Players in group C provide assistance by collecting the balls around the court and placing them back to the volleyball basket.

Variations:

Groups switch sides and perform same exercise for example group A does defense in zones 1 and 6, and group B in zones 4 and 6.

Add one more player in defense in both groups. Players rotate every 10 attempts.

Coach keeps time instead of attempts to rotate players and groups.



DRILL 4

Play in the court with no service or keeping score. Coach positions 6 players in each court (team A, team B) following the composition of the team as indicated in training session 9. Mixed groups can be formed as well, with 3 female and 3 male players (no indication if it is athlete or Unified partner).

Drill starts with a free throw of the coach to the defense area of team A. Players will need to defend, set and attack the ball over the net to the opposite team B. The play continues until one of the two teams makes a mistake. Coach throws the ball in turns to both teams. Every five throws both teams do a clockwise rotation.

If there are more than 12 players, the remaining players who are waiting outside of the court switch after the fifth throw with the player in zone 1. Coach is trying to involve all players and manage any attempts for dominance from the Unified partners during the drill.

Cool down:

Team gets together and performs stretching exercises.

Team gets together and summarises the topics covered during training.

It is a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.



Training Session 14

Introduction

Review of field defensive positions. Use and compilation of the Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals (Appendix) during the training session.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

Volleyball balls, volleyball baskets.

Warm up

- **Joint mobility:** Players create a big circle and coach/players demonstrates exercises for joint mobility, rotations of the ankles in both directions, bending knees, lateral movements of the pelvis, anteroposterior movements of the pelvis, hip mobility, shoulder mobility, circumduction of the upper limbs in both directions, slow twisting of the neck, slow lateral inclinations of the neck etc. In the meantime, recap of the last session and presentation of the program for the day.
- **Field game:** The players are divided into two groups, A and B (equal numbers of athletes/partners and male/female players), one group in each side of the net. Each team starts the game with the same number of balls in their possession. Coaches gives the signal "Go", and for the entire duration of the game (2 minutes), the players try to throw their balls into the opponent's court. Players can throw the ball with 2 or 1 hand and the throw must be above the net. When time runs out, coach is giving the signal to stop and the team who has the least number of balls in their court wins.

Variations: repeat the game with 1) overhead pass 2) underarm serve or overhead (behind the 3 meters zone) 4) backwards throw etc.

Stretching: players form a circle and coach/player demonstrates for the others to follow stretching exercises for upper and lower body muscles.



DRILL 1

Players split in pairs. Pepper exercise (starting with just passing and digging). Switch positions after a few minutes. Players must perform overhead pass, an attack and defense continuously without dropping the ball in the same sequence.

DRILL 2

The players are divided into two teams, A and B (equal numbers of athletes/partners and male/female players), one group in each side of the net in zone 6 forming a line. Coach is throwing a free ball to team A and players should do a forearm pass over the net to team B. The play continues until one of the two teams makes a mistake, then the coach throws another free ball to the other team. Goal is to keep the ball playing as much as possible. Once the player had its turn moves back to the end of the line on the same court.

Variations:

Coach can ask the players to count loudly every time they play the ball and set a target number. Make the drill more competitive. Players should pass the ball over the net in such way that the opponent can not pass the ball back. Then the team gets one point. The team who gets first 10 points is the winner.

Limitation to the zones that players can send the ball, e.g. not inside the 3 meters zone.

DRILL 3

Same format as above but players are in pairs. One pair of players is inside the court in both sides.

The remaining pairs are standing outside of the court.

Coach (C) is throwing a free ball in turns to the pairs which are inside the court. The players should play three passes and send the ball over the net to the opponent's court. Once they had their turn they move quickly outside the court to the end of the line and a new pair is coming inside the court.

Goal is to keep the ball playing as much as possible. The pairs who are waiting outside the court are helping with collecting the balls and placing them back to the volleyball basket.

Variations:

Instead of a pass over the net players can attack the ball.

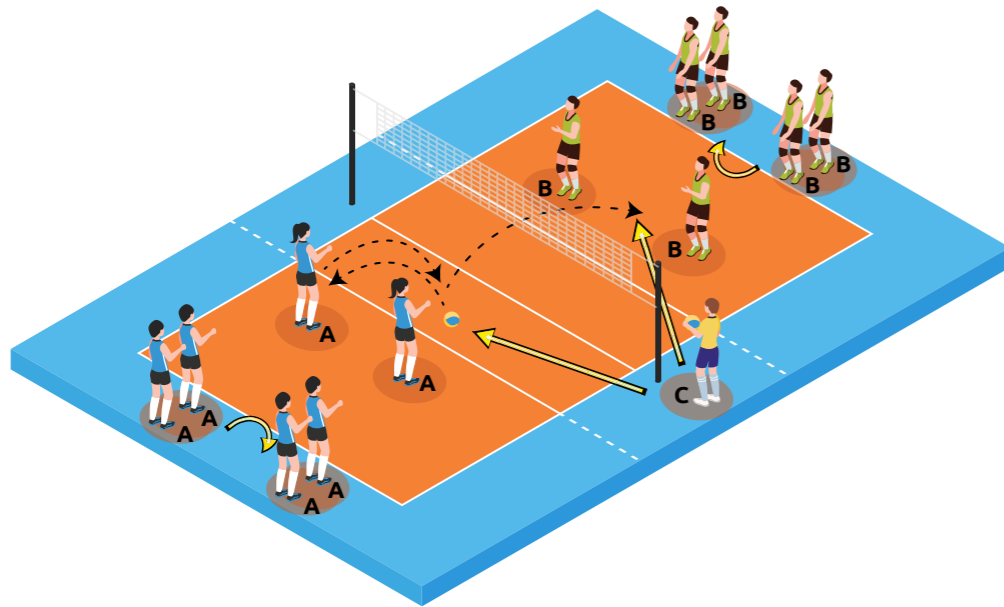
Coach asks the players to send the ball to a specific zone before the second pass.

Make the drill more competitive. Players should pass the ball over the net in such way that the opponent can not defend the ball. Pair then gets one point. The pair who gets first 5 points is the winner.

Limitation to the zones that players can send the ball, e.g. not inside the 3 meters zone.

No rotation of the pairs, they play until there is mistake and the play cannot continue.





DRILL 4

Play in the court with no service but with keeping score. The team who wins the set/game gets a reward (real or figurative).

Coach positions 6 players in each court (team A, team B) following the composition of the team as indicated in training session 9. Mixed groups can be formed as well, with 3 female and 3 male players (no indication if it is athlete or Unified partner).

Drill starts with a free throw of the coach to the defense area of team A. Players will need to defend, set and attack the ball over the net to the opposite team B. The play continues until one of the two teams makes a mistake. Coach throws the ball in turns to both teams. Every five throws both teams do a clockwise rotation.

If there are more than 12 players, the remaining players who are waiting outside of the court switch after the fifth throw with the player in zone 1. Coach is trying to involve all players and manage any attempts for dominance from the Unified partners during the drill.

DRILL 5

Players are split in 2 groups and perform service from both sides of the court. Players after they do a serve should go into the court and receive a ball from the opposite team's serving.

Cool down:

Team gets together and performs stretching exercises.

Team gets together and summarises the topics covered during training.

It is a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.



Week 8

Training Session 15

Introduction

Analysis together with the team of the updated results of Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals compiled at the end of last two training sessions by the coach to celebrate the improvements from initial assessment of each player together with the teammates. Serving receiving formation and space responsibility.

Reminder

During the training remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups. During the training, coach corrects mistakes and adjust exercise to individual's skills, he can always adapt while conducting a training session.

Time of Session

1 hour

Equipment

Volleyball balls, volleyball baskets.

Warm up

- **Joint mobility:** Players create a big circle and coach/players demonstrates exercises for joint mobility, rotations of the ankles in both directions, bending knees, lateral movements of the pelvis, anteroposterior movements of the pelvis, hip mobility, shoulder mobility, circumduction of the upper limbs in both directions, slow twisting of the neck, slow lateral inclinations of the neck etc. In the meantime, recap of the last session and presentation of the program for the day.

Stretching

Players form a circle and coach/player demonstrates for the others to follow stretching exercises for upper and lower body muscles.

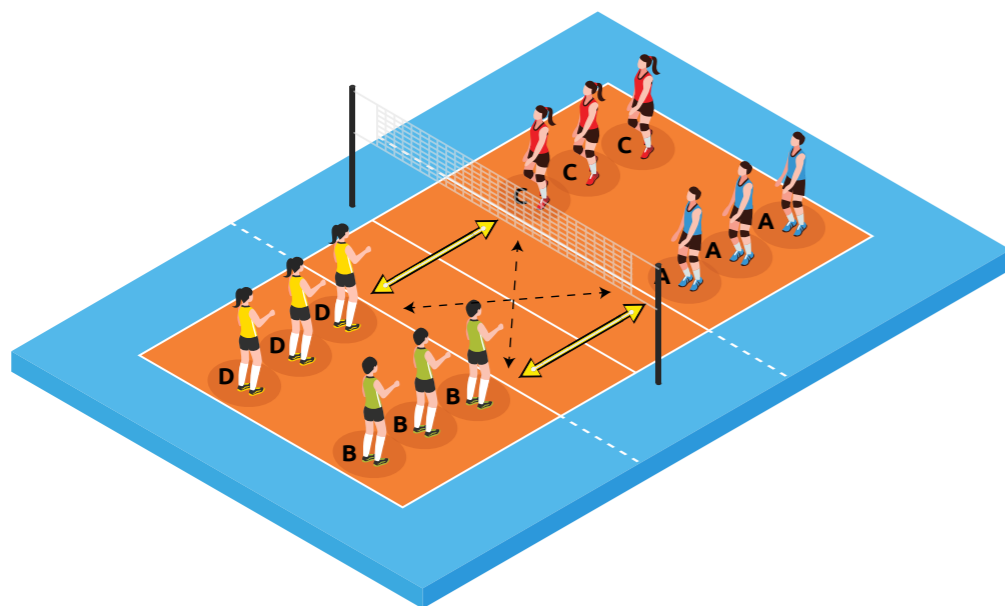


DRILL 1

Players are divided equally into 4 teams, A,B,C and D.
 Teams A and B place the net between them and teams C and D do the same.
 Players are positioned outside of the 3 meter zone. Each group is trying to do 10 (number can be increased) consecutive overhead passes over the net. If players cannot continue to play the ball then they start counting from zero. After every try the player moves back to the line of its team. The group of teams who gets first 10 passes get one point. The drill can be repeated and coach can ask the players to do a different skill like forearm pass. The team who will collect most points win.

Variation:

Teams to play diagonally.
 After every try the players can run across under the net to the end of the line of the opposite team.


DRILL 2

Players are split in groups of 3. Players are positioned 1 at the base line (A), 1 by the net (B) and 1(C). midway between the other two. Player's C role in the middle is to set the ball to the player that does a defence (dig) of the ball.

- Player A starts and passes the ball to player B.
- Player B passes the ball to player C in the middle.
- Player C passes the ball to Player B who does a spike move to Player A.
- Player A should defend the ball to player C who sets back to player A to do a spike move to player B.

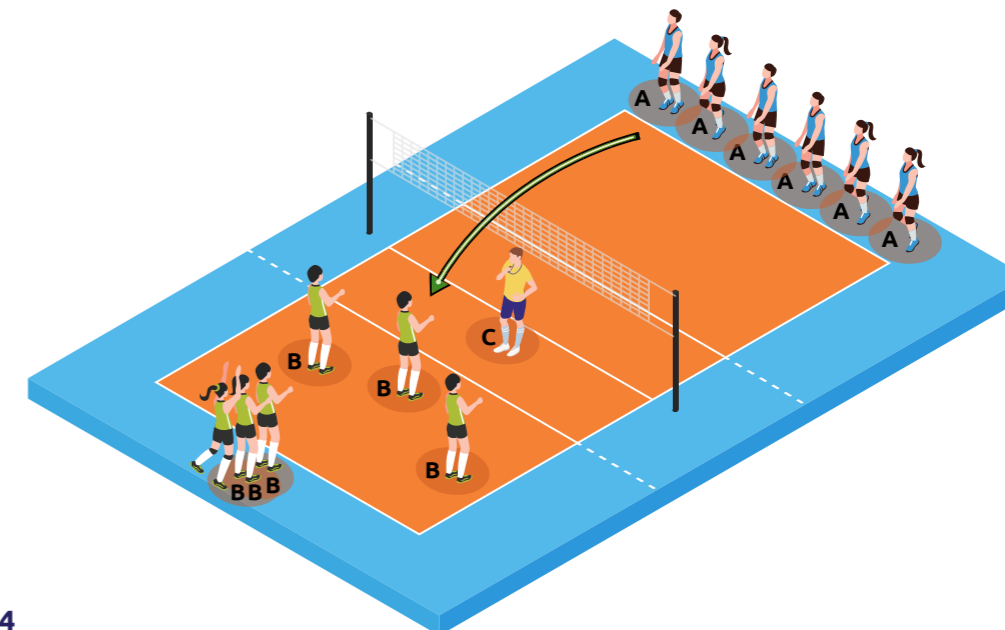
Players continue the same sequence and after a few repetitions players switch positions.

DRILL 3

Players serve from the base line for a few minutes.
 Then players split into 2 teams (A,B). Team A stays at the base line and does service. Team B is positioned to the court across from team A. Players positioned in zones 1,6, and 5 to receive the ball from the service and direct it to zone 3 where the coach (C) stands to collect the balls. Remaining players of team B form a line outside the court and switch with the player that receives the ball. We encourage players to call out the ball with the word me/mine for better communication between the players and taking responsibility for the action.
 Teams switch positions.

Variation:

Add more players in receiving the ball in zones 4 and 2.


DRILL 4

Play in the court with service and without keeping score.
 Coach positions 6 players in each court (team A, team B) following the composition of the team as indicated in training session 9. Mixed groups can be formed as well, with 3 female and 3 male players (no indication if it is athlete or Unified partner).
 Drill starts with a serve from player A in zone 1. Team B will need to defend, set and attack the ball over the net to the opposite team A. The play continues until one of the two teams makes a mistake. Coach throws a free ball to the team that made the mistake so to have a successful attempt. Play continues with a serve from the team that won the point. Players rotate according to the rule.
 If there are more than 12 players, the remaining players who are waiting outside of the court switch with the player in zone 1 after is finished with serving. Coach is trying to involve all players and manage any attempts for dominance from the Unified partners during the drill.

Cool down:

Team gets together and performs stretching exercises.
 Team gets together and summarises the topics covered during training.
 It is a good time to provide the team with some positive feedback.



Training Session 16

Introduction

Simulation of a match, either two equal teams can be created or if the coach thinks its time another team can be invited for a friendly match. All game processes should be followed like warm up, coin toss, greeting of the two teams, referee (can be the assistant coach), timeouts etc.

Each team has its own warm up processes before a game ,up to the last 10 minutes which the referee give the signal for spiking and serving. Such process can be created during this session. The below is a suggestion however coaches can create their own. Warm up times should be tested before attending a competition.

Reminder

During the game remember to include same numbers of athletes and Unified partners when splitting groups. If you have mixed gender teams split equally male/female among the groups.

Time of Session

1,5 hour

Equipment

Volleyball balls, volleyball baskets.

Warm up

- **Joint mobility:** Players create a big circle and coach/players demonstrates exercises for joint mobility, rotations of the ankles in both directions, bending knees, lateral movements of the pelvis, anteroposterior movements of the pelvis, hip mobility, shoulder mobility , circumduction of the upper limbs in both directions, slow twisting of the neck, slow lateral inclinations of the neck etc. In the meantime, presentation of the game, team encouragement, analysis of the game of the opponents.
- Players run up and down to the net. Coach/player gives the signal for changing the style of running. **Variations:** high knees, sideways, sprints, running backwards, etc.

Stretching

Players form a circle and coach/player demonstrates for the others to follow stretching exercises for upper and lower body muscles.

DRILL 1

Players do a few sprints from line to line, e.g. base line- 3 meter line, base line- central line etc. Players imitate different skills like spiking, blocking, defending and diving for 2 min and switch positions.

DRILL 2

Players split into pairs and positioned vertically or parallel to the net. Start with different types of throws (2 hands, 1 hand, bounce, spike move etc.). Then they continue with overhead and forearm passes and end with pepper exercise.

DRILL 3

With coach's/referee's signal players move to the net for spiking firstly from zone 4 and then from zone 2. Setter should change every few repetitions or switch after every spiking attempt from the player that spiked.

DRILL 3

Players do service from the base line for a few minutes.

DRILL 4

While the players have a water break the coach/referee toss the coin with the two captains. The team who chose to serve at the coin toss starts the game after coach's/referee's whistle signal. All rules shall be respected. The coach stays by the side of the court and analyzes any mistakes committed from time to time reminding the rules. If possible each team should have a coach/assistant coach to give them advice and manage the substitutions if more players are available on the bench. For players that stay outside for a period of time it would be good keep them busy, maybe with a drill or keeping score etc. Principles of Meaningful involvement should be respected. Goals is for all players to play end enjoy the game. We inform the teams how many sets they need to get (2/3) to win the game. The team that wins gets a reward. At the end of the game team gets together and evaluate the game, the system used, any tactical problems encountered, strengths or weaknesses, positive feedback on what was best performed.

Cool down:

Team gets together and performs stretching exercises.





General Notes

At this point we would like to share some final notes/reminders for the coaches that will be using this Coaching guide.

- The above Unified Volleyball training sessions were created by volleyball coaches with experience in Special Olympics Unified sports with a few criteria in mind:

- Players should have some experience in volleyball and they are not just starting.
- The training sessions are held twice per week.
- The training sessions are taking place in an indoor/outdoor volleyball court.
- For mixed gender teams net high should be at 2,35m.

- Minimum period of training according to the Special Olympics rules is 8 weeks before competition, however training period could be extended and focus on technique and tactic of the team.

- Training sessions and drills can be adjusted (lower/higher) depending on the skills level of the players of each team.

- Whole training sessions or specific drills can be repeated if coach thinks necessary.

- The main focus of the trainings sessions is the main part of each day, therefore more warm up and cooldown options can be added as coach thinks necessary.



- Coach should decide on the most suitable Unified Model to use for its team.

- Coach should be able to manage all players and address any Unified partners dominance during training sessions and competitions.

- Keep in mind during training sessions and competitions the ratio between athletes/partners and male/female players.

- Create a Unified spirit among the members of the team.

- Create Unified fun activities for athletes and Unified partners outside the training sessions.

- Create a team's verbal slogan to start and end the training session.

Useful Links

1. **Unified Sports Educational Video-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0KiZm3KDqY>
2. **Article 1, Sports Rules-** <https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/sport-rules/Sports-Essentials-Article-1-Rules-2022.pdf>
3. **Special Olympics Resources page on Unified Sports-** <https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/unified-sports?locale=en>
4. **SOI Coaching Guide Volleyball-** <http://digitalguides.specialolympics.org/volleyball/>
5. **Sports & Coaching – Sports Essentials- Volleyball-** <https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching>





Summary

Summary of the project results

Despite the difficulties presented by the COVID 19 pandemic during the project, SOEEF and the project consortium are very satisfied with the results and impact of the project. We believe that there will be a strong legacy from this project that will support the growth of Unified Volleyball in Special Olympics. Here is an outline of the main metrics from the project:

1. **498 participants in the project consisting of athletes, coaches, Unified partners and volunteers.**
2. **12 amount of multiplier events in each of the Special Olympics National Programmes participating in the project.**
3. **80 coaches trained**
4. **30 Unified Volleyball teams created during the project including mixed gender teams**
5. **Overall growth of 439% in Unified partners and athletes participating in Unified Volleyball in the Special Olympics (SO) National Programmes in the consortium since the start of the project.**

Project Legacy

There will be a significant legacy from the project and the below are the following key points around legacy.

- ◆ For SO Volleyball athletes and Unified partners, due to the coaching resources, new coaches and upskilled coaches, it means that these target groups will receive a higher quality of training and preparation for volleyball competitions. As there will be new coaches coming from this project, it means that the SO National Programmes can engage new athletes, females and Unified partners in their volleyball programme which aligns well with the Erasmus+ programme's priorities around inclusion and disability.
- ◆ With the guides and Intellectual Outputs developed during the project, Special Olympics National Programmes from all parts of the world will have resources that will help them develop Unified volleyball in their National Programmes.
- ◆ It is hoped that with these resources, that in the Europe Eurasia region, more Unified and Mixed Gender teams will emerge leading to more local, national and international competitions (including Special Olympics World Summer Games) for Unified Volleyball athletes and partners.



- ◆ For the SO Programmes engaged in the project, sustainable networks have been established. For example, in SO Netherlands have developed a partnership with NeVoBo (Dutch Volleyball Federation), SO Slovakia will continue to grow its partnership with the Slovakian Volleyball Federation, SO Austria wish to collaborate with the volleyball programmes run by SO Poland and SO Slovakia to help grow their own programme and SO Italy and SO Serbia to maintain the good relations that have created all these years as they have a very good established Volleyball programme.
- ◆ Post project, SO Athletes will be further encouraged to become either coaching assistants or to become qualified volleyball coaches which will have a significant impact in showing how people with ID are equally capable undertaking leadership roles. This proved difficult to implement during the project due to the COVID 19 restrictions but it is hoped that this will develop further post project. This is again an important element as it shows genuine inclusion at work. Athletes and Unified partners played a significant role in giving feedback around the development of the various guides.
- ◆ Inclusion of girls with and without ID in Unified Volleyball as proven difficult for SO Programmes before this project. However, through the development of the "Unified volleyball Mix Gender Division Guide" in intellectual output 3, this has been made possible. As a result of this project a number of mixed gender Unified teams have been created and these teams will further develop into both male and female teams as more athletes and Unified partners engage in Unified Volleyball. However, mixed – gender will also in itself will stay as a competition category.

Project partners contributed to the best of their knowledge for the creation of these resources, experts in Volleyball, Unified Sports and in Special Olympics philosophy came together with main goal to find effective ways to develop Unified Volleyball and increase the numbers of players. It was important that these experts brought their experiences from the field of play and their best practises to share.

Project partners were committed to continue the development of Unified Volleyball in their SO National Programmes. It was also suggested to repeat actions of this project like the "Joint Unified Coaching Workshop" -where delegations of athletes, Unified partners and coaches came together co-trained and shared knowledge- by including more SO Programmes from Europe Eurasia region.





Special Olympics Volleyball Coaching Guide Planning a Volleyball Training & Competition Season



Special Olympics - Volleyball Skills Assessment for Individuals

Name: _____ Athlete Partner
 Jersey Number: _____ Coach's Name: _____
 Team Name: _____ Evaluator's Name: _____
 Delegation: _____ D ate 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 Coaching Guide Planning a Volleyball Training & Competition Season



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>



Unified Volleyball Coaching Guide



**UNIFIED
VOLLEYBALL
SPIKES**



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

