

Volleyball Coach Handbook 2021

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Goals of Saint Charles Volleyball

Saint Charles Volleyball has a two-fold mission which must be balanced delicately. First, our program welcomes any boy who wants to learn the sport of volleyball and reap the benefits which our program offers, including lifelong friendships, pursuit of a common goal, and learning to better oneself in any endeavor. Second, our varsity team competes at the highest level for league, regional, and state championships. We firmly believe that these two goals can be accomplished simultaneously. We love the sport and our teammates; we also love to win.

In order for our varsity team to reach its goals, lower level teams need to prepare well-rounded players who are proficient at all of the skills. Initial ability of a new player is proven to be a poor predictor of his final varsity skill level. Teaching the game to as many players as possible for as long as possible helps the individual and the program. Winning on the scoreboard for freshman and JV teams is not our goal. Our goal is the long-term development of each individual player for the eventual benefit of the program. Although there are ways to develop immediate early season success on the scoreboard, we believe that running efficient practices from the beginning of the season to the end mitigates this short-term sacrifice by accelerating the development of all players. A rising tide lifts all boats. If every player is improving consistently, practices become more competitive and each rep becomes more valuable. If we consistently play against better players, we become better more quickly. The motor learning principles of interest, specificity, and transfer are cornerstones of our program. They guide everything we do. By creating an environment in which athletes have fun and enjoy playing the sport of volleyball, and an environment in which training is specific to the game, our athletes develop skills which most effectively transfer to ultimate success in varsity competition.

These are the goals of the program, and the rest of this handbook outlines the steps to take us there.

Coaching Philosophy

Each of our coaches is a **Double-Goal Coach**. The first goal is developing skilled players to win varsity matches. The second goal, however, is more important than the first: to teach students life lessons through sports. Sports are a perfect environment to develop the qualities of hard work, pursuit of a common goal, resilience, teamwork, and love of the game. In every sports contest, a player experiences successes and failures. The sports arena is a training ground in which students can learn to be men for God and for others, even in the face of difficulty and

scrutiny. Our coaches look for “teachable moments,” most often when a player shows a positive behavior which should be reinforced, and sometimes when a player shows a negative behavior which needs to be corrected. To help our teaching, we have the following principles of a Double-Goal Coach:

ELM Tree of Mastery

In developing our athletes, we believe that great **E**ffort reaps growth. If a student gives consistent effort, **L**earning will take place. Along that road of learning, however, **M**istakes are inevitable. We train our students, therefore, to bounce back from mistakes using a team mistake ritual. Winning is defined not totally by the scoreboard, more so by our own growth.

ROOTS

Volleyball is a great sport, and we love it. We have expectations for ourselves, our players, and our fans. We Honor the Game by showing respect to the **R**ules. The rules are in place to make the contest fair and competitive; without them the sport would not exist. Coaches must know the rules, carry the rulebook and casebook at all matches, and be able to apply Rule 11, Section 3, Reviewing Decisions. The **O**fficials enforce the rules as well as they can. They devote their time to advance the sport. No official enters a match wanting to be noticed or to make a “big call.” When officials make an apparent mistake in judgement, it is our duty to Honor the Game by moving on to the next point with even more focused intensity. Our **O**pponents push us to play our best. It is not fun to play an inferior opponent, just as it is not fun to play a team that completely outmatches our skill level. A truly worthy opponent, then, is a gift that should be cherished. We respect our opponents and the new heights to which they push us. Volleyball is a team sport. One strong player cannot “carry” a team without the help of his **T**eammates. In the same way, one weak teammate can be easily exploited by the opponent. It is of major importance, therefore, that we respect our teammates and the different personalities and skills each man brings for the betterment of the group. On the court, the only aspect that can always be controlled is one’s **S**elf. The judgment of the officials may be bad. An opponent may try to provoke our emotions with bad actions. Teammates may “lose their cool.” But we are always able to control ourselves. Part of Honoring the Game is honoring one’s own development as a person and as a player.

Filling the Emotional Tank

Coaches, players, and parents are responsible to **Fill the Emotional Tank** of our team. Just as a car stalls if it runs out of gasoline, a player can do little if he is not inspired to work for team goals. Parents in the bleachers are especially able to notice and cheer for the small good plays that make a team hit on all cylinders. We should appreciate all players who make a good play, even if it is an opponent.

Motor Learning Principles

Each of our coaches applies the **Principles of Motor Learning** in his or her practice design. Many coaches simply coach the way they were coached. They do not question the reason an activity is done a certain way. For example, throughout the United States, when a coach yells to his or her players to warm up with “hitting lines,” a predictable sequence occurs. Each player grabs a ball from the cart and immediately assembles at the left sideline on each side of the net. **Why?** There is a line of five players on each side. **Why?** Two setters stand within six inches of

the net in the perfect “target” location. **Why?** From outside the court, the players toss their ball to the setter. **Why?** The setter sets the player, the player hits, and then the hitter immediately runs under the net to retrieve the ball. **Why? What are the players really learning?** Does every player only hit on the left side, or do we need to develop players who can hit from all positions on the court? Can we design a game that involves no waiting in line and more repetitions? If the setter is standing directly on the net for a target, won’t about half of the passes close to target go over the net? When will the setter ever set from a toss in the game, especially on a ball coming from outside the court? Why would we teach going under the net when only five things happen in a game after hitting the ball over the net (block in the same zone, move to block in another tactical zone, transition to hit again, turn to celebrate the kill with teammates, gesture at the referee to call a touch off the opponent’s block)?

The most important skill in volleyball is **reading**. Unlike many other ball sports, the amount of time that the players are actually touching the volleyball is extremely short: .10 seconds for setting, .05 seconds for passing, .03 for blocking, and .01 for hitting. Over the course of the 2008 Olympics in which the United States played in eight matches and won the gold medal, for instance, the average time each US player spent touching the ball was 27.4 seconds. That is just 3.4 seconds per match. A basketball player probably surpasses that total on the opening possession of a basketball game! If players are not touching the ball for very long, then, why are coaches so concerned about teaching form at the point of contact? Shouldn’t as much time or even more time be spent teaching players the right time to use a particular skill or the keys to focus on when reading a hitter?

Principle of Interest: If players have more fun, they will spend more time playing when the coach is not there. “Games” are always more fun than “drills.”

Principle of Specificity: Each motor program is independent of the program for another skill. Spiking a volleyball is a different motor program than throwing a football. Hitting a spike off of a box is a different motor program than jumping and swinging. No or very little transfer to the main skill of interest occurs. There are no general athleticism (balance is specific, vision is specific, agility is specific, hand dexterity is specific, etc.)

Principle of Whole vs. Part Learning: Practicing a whole skill leads to greater transfer than practicing parts of a skill. The best way to teach hitting (or setting, or passing) is to pass, set, hit.

Principle of Transfer: Richard Schmidt said, “Are you practicing for practice or for the game?” Practices must look almost exactly like the game. Practices do not need to “look clean” because the game does not look clean. The ball goes up and down, left and right, all over the place in the game. Players need to see and time that kind of ugliness in practice.

Principle of Blocked vs. Random Practice: No two volleyball rallies are the same. There is greater transfer when practice conditions are like game conditions. The game is random, so as soon as novice learners are barely able to perform a skill, more randomness must be added.

Principle of Feedback: The best form of feedback involves regulatory stimuli: ball, net, lines, score. The second best form of feedback involves video delay and observations from a trained coach. Guided discovery leads to greater retention than simply telling a player the answer.

Running an Effective Practice

- Practices should look like the game. If we plan an activity in practice that will not look like a competitive match, we must question the value of that activity. We must use our valuable training time to maximize transfer of skills which are important for long-term success.
- Coaches should use the following simple tools and steps to create effective practices. Practices must be centered around the whiteboard. The whiteboard is a wonderful tool which allows quick transitions between drills, simple division of practice teams, less verbal explanation, and easy daily score keeping and tracking. All coaches are expected to carry and use their whistles. Because the referee blows the whistle to start and end play, whistles are regulatory stimuli of the game. They allow coaches to more effectively initiate serve, quickly stop play in the interest of safety, and get the attention of players to make a brief strategy point.
- All practices must be planned in advance on paper. The practice plan should then be displayed for the players to see. A written plan taped to the whiteboard is a good start, but coaches are expected to transfer the important information (sequence of drills, practice teams, principles, keys) to the whiteboard in writing.
- Coaches must limit verbal explanations. Learners have a limited ability to process information. The game teaches the game. If a coach talks to the whole team for 10 minutes at the beginning of practice, we have wasted valuable player development time (more than 11% of a typical practice). It is much more beneficial to pull an individual player out of a drill for one minute while the drill continues without him. Because teams can play short-handed, it does not interrupt the drill. Then send that player right back in.
- We must (almost) never have players waiting in lines. Players should always be playing or be the next ones coming onto the court. Without lines players are much more engaged, have more fun, and learn more effectively. We learn best by reading the ball come over the net and by performing the motor skill, not by watching someone else play the ball or by hearing a coach talk about playing the ball.
- Focused, targeted feedback is important. It is easy, however, to provide too much information which over-loads the learner. The best predictor of a player's improvement is the number of game-like reps he gets. The second best predictor is the quality of the feedback he receives. Therefore, when we design practices which look just like the game, we are giving our players the best chance to improve. And if we add quality, limited feedback on top of the game-like reps, we significantly increase our effectiveness. Limit feedback to one point or one key, and then send the player back into the game. Provide bandwidth feedback by watching several repetitions before commenting. If a player is doing well eight times out of ten, for example, focus on the eight good trials. Catch players doing things the right way.
- Specificity is key. The intent of practice is to prepare for the competition, not to look good in practice. Coaches must not micromanage practices to make them look clean. We train in reality which is often not pretty. The nature of volleyball is that the ball is moving up and

down, left and right, and players have to go hit that ball. Knowing where the ball will be at a particular point in time and getting our hands or platform there at just the right split second is what makes volleyball hard. So in our practices, we must give the players as many chances as possible to read the ball coming over the net from an opponent, time the ball, and play the ball. Without reading, timing, and quick decision making, a rep is not like the game. An easy way to make sure that skills are practiced in the context of the game is to move one contact back from the skill of emphasis. For example, if we want to practice serve receive, we should initiate with a serve. If we want to work with our setters, we should initiate off of a real pass. Hitters should hit off of live sets rather than tosses. Removing some variables for novice learners of a particular skill is appropriate, but only do so until the learner can barely perform the skill. After that point, more randomized practice will lead to better retention.

Process of Teaching Fundamental Skills

- Demonstration of the whole skill
 - Whole vs. Part—always present the full skill but turn the learner’s attention to a particular key.
 - Motor programs are images in the brain. So it makes sense to give the information in the form of an image.
 - Demo yourself. Bring in an older player. Video demo from Gold Medal Squared.
- Players attempt and coach evaluates (no feedback, very short amount of time)
 - Does every kid need every key? Are some kids already good until key four? Can we skip ahead for most players? Do we have brand new players who need to go through every key?
- Cover the keys that are needed
 - So much is happening in a motor program that novices don’t know where to look for the really important stuff. Teach them where to look.
- Limited feedback until each key has been covered
 - Learners have a limited capacity to process new information.
 - What is really important here? I can’t tell them ten things.
 - Demonstrate the whole skill for each key, but turn the learners’ attention to that key.
 - If verbal feedback is not effective or if the player does not “buy in,” show him video delay of himself.

Our Principles and Keys for Fundamental Skills

- One-Handed Jump Float
 - Principles
 - Use torque to generate force.
 - Put equal emphasis on speed and accuracy.
 - Simple is repeatable.
 - Keys
 - Ball in left hand, left foot forward, 45 degrees, bow and arrow

- Step, Step, Toss (in front of hitting arm), Step, Step. Small to big, slow to fast. Land uncomfortably far into the court. Stay on the seam line.
 - Torque.
 - Contact on heel of hand. Hard seam, short change-up, deep change-up.
- Two-Handed Jump Float
 - Principles
 - Use torque to generate force.
 - Put equal emphasis on speed and accuracy.
 - Simple is repeatable.
 - Keys
 - Ball in two hands, right foot forward, first step with right foot.
 - Step, Step, Toss (in front of hitting arm), Step, Step, Hit. Small to big, slow to fast. Land uncomfortably far into the court. Stay on the seam line.
 - Torque.
 - Contact on heel of hand. Hard seam, short change-up, deep change-up.
- Jump Spin
 - Principles
 - Use torque to generate force.
 - Put equal emphasis on speed and accuracy.
 - Simple is repeatable.
 - Keys
 - Ball in right hand, right foot forward, first step with right foot.
 - Step, Toss (in front of hitting arm, better to err toward right with toss), Rest of the four step approach, Hit. Small to big, slow to fast. Land uncomfortably far into the court.
 - Double arm lift, arms swing directly back, arms stay straight.
 - Bow and arrow arm swing.
- Forearm Passing
 - Principles
 - Rules of physics apply...ball knows angles.
 - Simple is better than complex. Simple = repeatable = more accurate over time.
 - Hands and arms react better than feet or legs to an unexpected stimulus.
 - Passing high and off is statistically most effective.
 - Keys
 - Wrist and hands together.
 - Straight and simple (arms down to start, palms facing each other).
 - Face ball, angle platform to target.
 - Shuffle to move. (Midline 2.4) (Left 2.3) (Right 1.9)
 - Read the server (floater or spin, toss direction, speed of approach, angle of hand nearing contact).

- Spiking
 - Principles
 - The goal is to jump high and hit hard with timing, so we need momentum, arm lift, and an approach that will develop momentum and assist with timing.
 - We will need torque to hit hard.
 - Simple is better than complex.
 - Keys
 - Four steps—right, left, right, left for all hitters out of serve receive.
 - Right foot forward. Small to big. Slow to fast. Second step on or behind ten foot line. Second and third steps (especially third) get us to the ball.
 - Double arm lift
 - Relaxed arms on first step (a little natural forward movement is okay). Forward and down on the second step. Back on the third step (big reach directly back, arms straight). Forward and up on the fourth step.
 - Bow and arrow arm swing
 - Torque!
 - See and connect the outcome.
 - Outside Hitter Shuffle Footwork Patterns out of Serve Receive
 - Pass + Hit
 - Pass + Shuffle 3 + Hit
 - No Pass + Shuffle 5 + Hit
- Setting for Non-Setters
 - Principles
 - Simple movements are better than complex movements—the simpler the movement the more easily repeatable it will be.
 - Sets that are high, off, and inside the court are more effective than sets that low, tight, or far outside the court.
 - Keys
 - Hands up early in the shape of the ball.
 - Extend together along target line.
 - Face the ball, square to target (weight on right foot, pivot).
 - See and connect the outcome.
- Setting for Setters
 - Principles
 - The main priority is to set killable balls—both location and tempo are required to be consistent and both must be trained together.
 - Simple, consistent mechanics are deceptive. The setter does not need to fool the opponent; simply put your hitters in a good position to succeed. Let the hitter do the work.
 - The setter dictates the offense. Consideration needs to be given to schemes to isolate/overload blockers, getting our best hitters the majority of the balls, and having some limited offensive balance.

Schemes can get complex, but make sure that we are meeting principle one above all else—we need to set killable balls.

- Keys
 - **Set most of the balls to our best hitters.** Blockers in high school are not good. Even if we become somewhat predictable on offense, our best hitters should be able to score points against their blockers. We need to get our best hitters the majority of the balls in as good of a situation as we can give them.
 - **Location and tempo must be trained at the same time using live passes and live hitters.** All sets should be 3-5 feet off the net. Inside is better than too far out. Too far off is better than too tight. Too high is better than too low. Tempo will be based on team skill and setter ability. Our pins generally are running second-step tempo. Our middles are running a slow-quick tempo. But this timing should be adjusted to our personnel strengths.
 - **Get to the pocket early and read the passer's platform.** The earlier we are in the pocket and facing the passer's platform, the better read on the ball we can get. First step out of the pocket must be in the predicted direction of the pass off of the receiver's platform (not too many negative steps). The sooner we can make an accurate read on the ball, the easier our finishing footwork becomes.
 - **Footwork—needs to become habitual.** Weight on right foot when setting. Left/right on ground, left/right into jump set, pivot around right foot are techniques which can be used to put the weight onto the right foot and which allow the setter to square to the outside hitter.
 - **Armwork—hands start high and finish higher, always in the shape of the ball.** Fingers up. Start high, finish higher. All finger touch the ball.
 - **Attacking on two.** When we are in the 5-1, having a setter who can consistently score is a major weapon. We need to develop 1-2 good dump moves and become really good at those 1-2 moves.
- Blocking
 - Principles
 - Hitters tend to hit the ball where the set takes them.
 - Using the arms when blocking allows blockers to move efficiently and jump higher.
 - Late eyework = late movements
 - The ball knows angles.
 - Keys
 - Eyework: ball (is it over?), setter, setter, ball, ball, ball, hitter.
 - Footwork/Armwork: habitual patterns
 - 3 step crossover
 - 3 step shuffle
 - 2 step crossover
 - Hands over/across the net.
 - 3 Step Crossover Keys

- First step is small with leading leg, then BIG crossover step, then finishing step
 - If we take a BIG second step, our bodies should be squared correctly (squared to pole).
 - After the BIG second step, we start getting squared to the hitter.
 - Finally, we get squared to the net.
- Hands go down—not up—when we start to move. If there is not a quick in your zone or if it's a bad pass, hands/arms will drop to waist height, similar to starting position for spiking.
- Elbows bend slightly when jumping to help clear the net; press hands over, don't slap at the ball.
- Square to the net when reaching over to block—get OVER/ACROSS the net.

Why Do We Use Principles and Keys?

- These principles have been made by applying the laws of teaching and learning, statistical trends, and trained long-term observation. They are based more in science than in opinion.
- Keys allow the coaches and players to be on the same page.
- Coach can give meaningful feedback in 2-3 words and save practice time.
- Players can self-correct using the keys if they know what went wrong and why it went wrong.

First Year Player Check List

First year player development is crucial to overall program success. We must correct bad habits early in the season. It is much harder (and sometimes impossible, with the limited time we have in a season) to fully correct these technique problems later in a player's career. At the end of his first season, a new player should be able to...

- Jump float serve with either one hand or two hand, flat over the net and clean of spin.
- Do a four step approach consistently out of transition and serve receive. Right-left finish for right-handed players; left-right finish for left-handed players. Torque!
- Almost always jump and swing on out of system balls.
- Turn and run off of the net in transition.
- Stay straight and simple when receiving serve and digging.
- Receive serve outside of his midline. Ball knows angles.
- Dig, receive serve, and set off of the net.
- Verbally explain the basics of the 6-3 Offense and Middle-Middle Defense.
- Write on paper the meaning of ELM and ROOTS.

Practice Drills

Warm-Up

- Play the game over the net! Current volleyball culture does not teach warming up over the net, so we need to buck the common practices. Develop a culture of playing over the net immediately upon entering the gym.

- Practice time should never be given to stretching. If a player wants to arrive early to stretch on the side of the gym or if he has a medical situation that requires more time, that is fine. Tell him to arrive well in advance of practice. Coaches will be at the gym preparing our whiteboards anyway. Small-sided games should be the first activity once the net is up.
- N.B.: We are obviously not against warming up; we just want our volleyball warm-up to be a lower intensity version of volleyball itself.
- Come to whiteboard. Briefly explain plan (2 minutes tops) and then get out to the first drill.

Making a Drill

- Use backward design when making a drill. Players will be able to _____? Then ask, “What do we need to do to get there?”
- Always ask why. If our players become the gold medalists at _____, how does that help them in the game?
- How many people on each side of the court at a time?
 - 2 v. 2, 3 v. 3, 4 v. 4, 5 v. 5, 6 v. 6? Short-sided teams are good too.
- How are we mixing teams/players?
 - Made in advance on the whiteboard? Count off? Mixed as you go?
- How is the ball entered?
 - SERVE, toss, bounce, chip, chase, down ball, tip, bowl under net, bowl into net, atone the last error, joust, toss with reduced number of contacts left, etc.? Serving and receiving should be emphasized.
 - What happens on a missed serve? Coach serves one? Toss a bonus ball?
 - Don’t let players waste a bunch of time getting set up in their rotations/chatting with their buddies at the start of a drill. As soon as they are close to being ready, send in a “Who wants it?” ball to decide the first serving or receiving team.
- Scoring emphasis/Bonus points?
 - Award bonus points for desired process goals: jump and swing (regardless of outcome of the swing), straight and simple (regardless of outcome of pass), digging high and off, setting off and in, power tip into the deep corner, etc.
- Where is the coach giving feedback?
 - Entering/shagging balls (as little as possible), fixed in one spot to focus on a particular key, roaming to build comradery/touch base with all players.
- How does the rally end?
 - Natural point of conclusion is best. We could rarely cut a rally short with a whistle, but we should have a good reason if we are cutting off game-like volleyball.

Speedball: Losing side serves. On a missed serve the opponent immediately serves.

Link: www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Video/2013/12/13/USAV-Drill-Video-Speedball

Maxi-scoring: Serve by left side. Toss to middle back of receiving team. Toss to middle back of serving team. Right side rotates and serves. Toss to middle back of receiving team. Toss to middle back of serving team. Left side rotates and serves. Toss to middle back of receiving team. Toss to middle back of serving team...

Links: www.ontariovolleyball.org/triple-ball
www.vcdm.org/global/images/misc/Tripleball%20anglais%20modifi%C3%A9.pdf
www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBadggnpVt0

Offensive and Defensive Systems

Philosophy

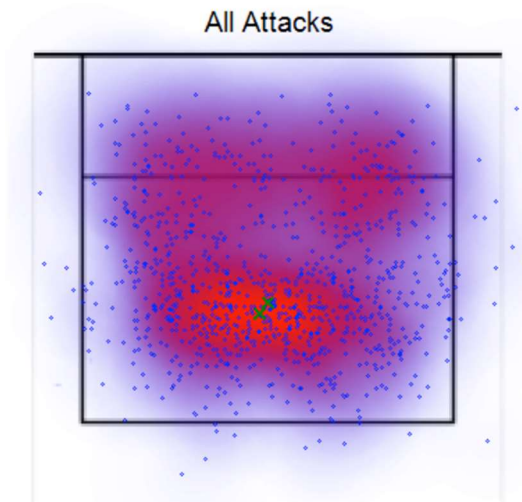
- We want to produce well-rounded players who are good at every skill and who excel at one or two skills.
- Avoid specialization. If we pick only one setter for each team and he ends up not being able to perform at the varsity level, the whole program suffers. We must not pigeonhole a tall player as a middle or a short player as a libero. Middles don't get set very much. If we have a tall player, we want him to develop into a dominant outside hitter. We want our best players playing outside hitter, next best at setter, next best at right side/libero, next best at middle.

6-3 Offense

- We must base our systems on our athletes. Since about half of our players are starting volleyball for the first time in high school, we don't know which players will end up being the best at the varsity level or which position they will eventually play.
- We are more focused on the long-term development of our athletes rather than the short term success of our lower level teams. For example, teams could choose to send the ball over on one contact every time to win freshman matches. Or a team could pick one setter to run a 5-1. Such decisions improve immediate outcomes but hinder varsity programs and athletes' development.
- The 6-3 offense avoids specialization and gives more players a chance to serve receive, hit, set, and play defense in more locations.
- Current performance is not a good predictor of future success. Higher level coaches want players who are good at all skills.
- All six athletes are hitters at some point in the set, and three of the athletes are setters at some point in the set.
- Setters set out of zones one and two. Running the setters out of zones one and two teaches the setters to transition after blocking and after playing back row defense, to dump, and to handle tight passes when "live" and "dead." There are only two serve receive patterns which are repeated, allowing the offense to be learned quickly and easily. We want our players to focus on reading the opponent during matches, rather than worrying about overlaps, rotations, and base positions. The 6-3 offense also allows an easy transition to a 6-2 or 5-1.
- If the setter takes the first ball, the player in middle front sets the second ball. When the setter is back row, the player in middle front should be another setter, so this tactic is simple and one that our players should be comfortable with early in the season.
- Links: www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Features/2018/May/03/Run-a-6-3-or-6-6
www.goldmedalsquared.com/blog/coaching-the-young-kids-part-2/

Middle-Middle Defense

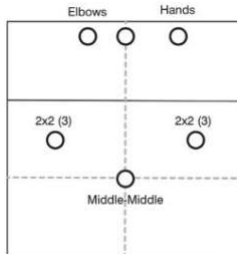
- Principles
 - Put our (best) defenders where most of the balls go (and where things happen the fastest).
 - Volleyball is a visual/motor game, so what we see is of the utmost importance.
 - Simple defensive systems are better than complex ones.
 - Hitters tend to hit where the set takes them.
 - The system must be built around the abilities of our players.
 - Tactics are dictated by statistical trends.
- Where do most of the balls go in our league? Who are our best defenders?
- We have made heat maps by hand for over 25 varsity matches in a six-year span. The data can be summarized accurately in the following heat map.



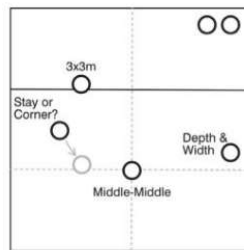
- Defenders transition (a little movement but not much) and then stay in that spot to make their own reads.
- Limit movement/flow in a direction until the player reads where the set is taking the hitter. The biggest feedback we will have to tell our players is to stay still until they are actually moving to make a read. Don't move just for the sake of moving.
- Put defenders in a spot where nearly all of the balls they can dig would land in the court. If we put a defender directly on the line, half the balls he can dig are going out of bounds. Also hitters don't hit the ball directly on the line very often. They hit 1-2 feet inside of the line. Line defender moves for depth (20 feet) and width (1-2 feet from sideline). Cross-court defender makes a read—can the hitter hit at me where I am standing (based on the location/quality of the set and the hitter's approach)? Or should I cut off the corner?
- When we get beaten deep in the last five feet of the court by an outlier swing, we need to reassure the players and remind them of the 27 other balls we dug that match in Middle-Middle. The parents will groan, "Whose ball is that?!" Nevertheless, we need to stand firm in our data. Follow the tide, not the solitary crashing wave.
- Attack/serving power correlates with depth of those attacks and serves. Lower level or younger teams may want to move the M-M or wing defenders up a couple steps. Coaches should be sure to view trends before making this shift, however.

- Link: www.coachesinsider.com/volleyball/articles-volleyball/defense-articles-volleyball/meet-in-the-middle/
- Diagrams:

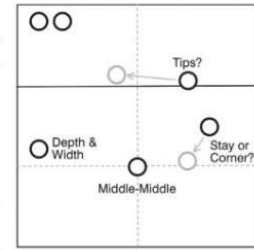
Base/Middle Attacker



Outside Attacker



Right Side Attacker



Winning in Division II Ohio High School Boys Volleyball

- Serving a little tougher than the average team. Small gains in practice add up over time. If we see better servers every day in practice, our receivers get a little better with each serve. Teams that win state tournament matches ace their opponent more often than their opponent aces them.
- Serve receive. We can never practice it enough. Increasing our number of good passes is more important than having perfect passes. We want to avoid getting aced.
- Transition offense by turning and running off of the net, jumping and swinging on difficult balls out of system (or just set it over if we have to completely give it up).
- Targets off the net for setting (3-5 feet), serve receive (3-5 feet), and digging (8-10 feet).
- Plan practices that are just like the game. Use the whiteboard and limited meaningful feedback on keys.
- “Speedball players,” no black holes in the lineup, dominant outsides, serviceable middles (raw and athletic middles are okay; focus on their hitting much more than their blocking).
- “Out-program” other schools—get more players in our program than they have, more teams, more matches, more open gyms, more players playing in the off-season, better competition on practices with adults/alumni, better coaching.

Match Procedures

Playing Time

All coaches want their players to enjoy the game. Enjoyment is limited if a player is always on the bench. On the freshman, junior varsity, and varsity B levels, our coaches will make playing time as equal as possible. Avoid specialization. Allow players to consistently play all six rotations and uninterrupted sets. When a player makes the varsity A roster, playing time will not be equal.

Game Management

The match is like a music recital or school test. The music teacher does not stop the show to correct a violinist’s finger placement for a particular note, and the math teacher does not look

over the shoulder of the student to correct his sign error on the exam. Such micro-managing slows learning. Let the student get through the content as best he can, and then work in the next class/practice to improve. Our main work has been accomplished in practice, so feedback during the match must be limited. Avoid technical feedback. Give some strategy tips, but allow players the freedom to play without looking over to the bench after every point or after every error. In the state tournament, we want players who can get over mistakes quickly without looking at the coach. We want players who go for it, who play to win. We want players who can talk to teammates about what they see happening on the other side of the net. We don't want coaches to be the sole source of all knowledge. We are not out there, we are not seeing what they see. We want players to develop their reading and strategy skills in practice, and then we have to let them see how well they have learned. Coaches should take notes, statistics, or charts which will be used to plan the next practice. Avoid over-coaching and being a cheerleader.

Timeouts should not be called to "stop the momentum" since momentum is simply a concept in the mind which is not supported by point scoring data. If players are confused, out of alignment, or emotionally charged, coaches could call a timeout. During the timeout, coaches should still avoid feedback about skill technique and instead focus on tactics and what players should do in the upcoming sequence. We want players to have the opportunity to "right the ship" on their own, so timeouts should be quite limited. Variance at lower levels is a significant factor. Teams routinely score points in runs of three or four. Such runs should not be overemphasized by coaches. Large runs are a natural part of volleyball for less experienced players. Generally just let the team play, and the runs will balance out without coach intervention. Always intervene immediately if there is a question of player safety or of conduct detrimental to Saint Charles.

Players see the actions of the coaches and will often embody the demeanor of their coaches. What do we want them to embody? Calm (sitting on the sideline), prepared (with line-ups, stat sheets, notebook), observing (for future practices), caring (about that problem they are facing, but not solving all of their problems for them), knowledgeable (about the rules), friendly (with officials, support staff, opponent coaches, opponent fans, our players' parents, our alumni).

Home Match Set-Up Check List

1. General Gym
 - a. Lights turned on
 - b. All basketball hoops cranked all the way up
 - c. Floor swept as necessary
 - d. Retractable bleachers moved out two rows
 - e. Red padded cardinal head chairs for teams, 14 on each side, starting on the yellow block
 - f. Chair for Trainer Dave
 - g. Tables and water jugs for teams near benches in corner; carry the filled jugs into the gym for Trainer Dave; cups or bottles for the teams
 - h. Red pad covers removed from end lines, folded, and hung over the upper bleacher railing near sound box
2. Score Table
 - a. Table on the retractable bleacher side; black tablecloth

- b. Two chairs for officials offset toward the lobby side; four chairs at the table for score keepers
 - c. Game day box
 - i. Three game balls
 - ii. Small black towels, two large gray towels
 - iii. Extra scoresheets, libero sheets, line-up sheets
 - iv. Extra pens and pencils.
 - v. Officials should bring their own flags for line judges, but we have a spare set in the closet
 - d. Two computers, cords, flash drive; turn on computers and set up VolleyWrite for the first match
 - e. Scoreboard and long orange extension cord
3. Net
- a. Check height
 - b. Bottom rope done first; make sure net does not get “eaten”
 - c. Velcro
 - d. Pole pads
 - e. White covers over metal parts on rope
 - f. Top of net tape on before the antennas; flat all the way across and symmetrical on the ends
 - g. Antennas on opposite sides of net
 - h. Referee stand on the permanent bleacher side
4. Admission/Concession
- a. Two tables with space in between for coolers
 - b. Red tablecloth on admission table
 - c. Admission cash box with starting bank cash from Coach Ned Gruber; you may need to retrieve cash from Tracy Loesing in the finance office
 - d. Stamp and stamp pad
 - e. Pass list from Coach Ned Gruber
 - f. Concession cash box with starting bank cash from Coach Ned Gruber; you may need to retrieve cash from Tracy Loesing in the finance office
 - g. Two blue tubs with food and supplies
 - h. Coolers filled with drinks and then ice from the training room
 - i. Hot dogs plugged in with shorter orange cord strung through railing up above; ketchup, mustard, napkins
 - j. Hang admission and concession signs
 - k. Put out Brute trash can and recycling can near coaches’ office door; make sure cans have fresh bags
 - l. Speak to Susan Gruber to see if she needs any help
 - m. Watch the cash boxes and run the table until the parent worker arrives
5. Lobby
- a. Check for any trash; make sure trash cans have room left
 - b. Hang admission signs
 - c. Portable banners up
 - d. Turn trophy case lights on in each section of lobby
6. Greet Officials

- a. They may request a space to change clothes; show them to coaches' office locker room
 - b. Ask them if they need anything; can offer them water from the concession stand
 - c. Assist them in checking and adjusting the net
 - d. Assist them in setting up VolleyWrite
7. Greet Coaches and Teams
- a. Shake the head coach's hand and introduce yourself; ask the coach if the team needs a locker room; show team to the visitors' locker room
 - b. Ask visiting coaches if they need anything; give the head coach the schedule for the day, if applicable; point out Trainer Dave for the coaches.
 - c. The bus driver may need help with parking directions or getting into the game without paying
 - d. Check with Saint Charles coaches to see if they need anything (rosters, stat sheet, blood jersey, water, joke, etc.)
 - e. Check with Saint Charles players to see if they need Trainer Dave
8. Electronics
- a. Check with Matt Gruber to make sure that camera is set up and ready
 - b. Make sure that iPad is charged and ready; open and set up stats app
 - c. Have paper stat sheets ready
 - d. Set up sound equipment and microphone; start warm-up music; check microphone
9. Work Duties and Final Check
- a. Are the assigned players present and prepared to work as line judges, ball shaggers, and score keepers? Check schedule on the wall and find anyone who is missing, find the closet player to sub, or fill the spot yourself
 - b. Is there anything else that needs to be done? Scan the whole scene
 - c. Am I dressed to represent Saint Charles (shirt and tie with volleyball jacket, or long sleeved shirt and dress slacks)?

Marginal Gains and Mitigating Risk

There are No Little Things

The difference between winning and losing can be incredibly small. Even a small change made by a coach can make a major difference in the outcome of a match. If a coach starts his team in the best rotation in the fifth set, that small change can significantly influence point scoring since each team will only rotate around 1.5 times on average. In the 2017 regional semi-final, Saint Charles sided out at 50.5%; Mount Vernon sided out at 49.5%. Saint Charles lost the match in five sets even though we scored more points overall in the match. Everything a coach does matters, and at the same time nothing a coach does matters.

2013 MPSF Results

Order of Finish	Win/Loss	Percent Points Scored
1. BYU	21-3	52.9%
2. Irvine	18-6	52.6%
3. Long Beach State	18-6	51.8%
4. UCLA	16-8	51.6%
5. Pepperdine	13-11	51.0%
6. Stanford	12-12	49.5%
7. California Baptist	12-12	50.8%
8. Santa Barbara	11-13	50.1%



 (2.8% difference)

Two Percent Rule by Dr. Gil Fellingham

Our Team Sideout	Opponent Sideout	Matches	Predicted Win %	Expected Wins	Expected Losses
.50	.50	30	50%	15	15
.51	.49	30	64%	19	11
.52	.48	30	74%	22	8
.53	.47	30	84%	25	5
.55	.45	30	94%	28	2
.60	.40	30	99%	30	0

Marginal Gains

Many of the ways to get a little extra improvement out of each practice have been outlined in previous sections of this handbook. Included here is a list of small changes that can make a large cumulative effect for a team over the course of a season. These ideas, rooted in clear facts that we know to be true, are not implemented consistently in most programs.

- Check the net height before each practice.
- Check ball inflation before the season, at the midway point, and just after the regional seed meeting. Check in the off-season during grade school boys volleyball and in January.
- Remind players to wash their hands.
- Remind players to take the cart to the balls to save time while shagging.
- Shut the gym doors when practice is in session to avoid loss of balls and outside distractions. Count balls at the end of practice.
- Players must bring a water bottle to practices; there typically should be no “water breaks,” so drink from the bottle at the whiteboard while we explain the next activity.
- Speedball or wash drills > just scrimmaging (too slow). Get a second or third ball involved before waiting for another player to go back and serve. When working on rotations, however, a simple scrimmage (or opposite volleyball for older levels) may be better.
- Encourage players to sleep and nap. Check in with players about how they are feeling (tired, sore, stressed about school, excited to play today) to see if we should lighten the practice load or cancel a practice within the next few days. As the varsity season

progresses, more rest is better. Avoid using electronics before bed (or at least set the light at lowest setting).

- Monitor grades to ensure eligibility and to intervene early with a student who has missing work.

Mitigating Risks

We want our players to focus solely on the task at hand. Players should be free to play. Coaches, therefore, must mitigate risks on match day, especially when we are playing in the State Tournament. Below is a check list for State Tournament matches.

- Extra rosters
- Extra pass lists
- Extra coach stat sheets
- Rotations and line-ups planned on paper in the padfolio
- Three blood jerseys, extra pair of kneepads
- Two towels
- Warm-up balls and cart (not all sites have the Flistatec ball or proper ball inflation)
- One sleeve of cups (because many trainers are stingy on cups)
- Trainer present or medical kit
- Medical forms or electronic access to them
- Camera with extension cord and memory space
- Computer/iPad charged for manager stat-keeping

Administrative Details

Budgeting and Fundraising

Use templates from previous year in consultation with the volleyball treasurer and Tracy Loesing.

Coach Certification

All coaches must have a valid Pupil Activity Permit on file with the school office. All certifications are uploaded and maintained through the Final Forms website. In addition to the steps for the PAP certification, all coaches must be fingerprinted and must take Protecting God's Children.

Important Dates and Deadlines for the State Association

www.ohioboysvolleyball.com/index.php/obsvca2/important-dates

Saint Charles Staff

Principal Jim Lower	(614) 738-0099	jlower@scprep.org
Athletic Director Dave Lawler	(614) 738-0096	dlawler@scprep.org
Trainer Dave Cochran	(740) 475-8126	david.cochran@ohiohealth.com
Nurse Midge Cull	(859) 421-4366	midgecull@hotmail.com
Finance/PAP Tracy Loesing	(614) 252-6714	tloesing@scprep.org
Main Office	(380) 209-2222	bgibbons@scprep.org

Fax (614) 251-6800

Volleyball Coach Contact Information

Head Varsity Coach: Ned Gruber

Phone: (614) 804-7230

E-Mail: *ngruber@scprep.org*

Junior Varsity Coach: Joe Gruber

Phone: (614) 805-4445

E-Mail: *jgruber8@gmail.com*

Freshman Coach: Zach Hartmann

Phone: (614) 743-3705

E-Mail: *zthartmann@gmail.com*

Varsity B Coach: Lonnie Stuckey

Phone: (614) 638-3163

E-Mail: *lonniestuckeyjr@gmail.com*

Addresses Main Gym: 2010 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43209
 Robotics and Mentoring Center: 1820 East Long Street, Columbus, OH 43203
 West Campus Parking Lot: 61 North Nelson Road, Columbus, OH 43219

Chain of Command

1. Team Coach
2. Head Coach
3. Athletic Director
4. Principal

Pick up the phone and talk to parents. Avoid lengthy e-mail chains, especially when relations start to go bad. Talk in person. The administration will always have our backs for as long as they can have our backs.

Safety

AEDs are located in the main gym lobby, with Trainer Dave, with Nurse Cull, in the Commons, in the main school entrance, in the theatre lobby, in the West Campus weight room, and in the Robotics and Mentoring Center.

First aid—react. Make the situation as safe as possible. Tell someone directly by name to call 911.

Be sure to greet and speak with the police officer on duty at our practices and matches. Make sure to touch base with the officer when you lock up.

Injuries/concussions—when in doubt, sit players out until cleared by Trainer Dave or a doctor.

Additional Resources and Links

Growing the Game Together blog by John Kessel of USA Volleyball

- 12 years of blog posts about coaching volleyball. This blog is a must-read for all coaches.
- www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/education/coaching-education-programs/resources/i-am-a-new-coach

Free webinars by USA Volleyball

- “Motor Learning,” “Increasing Your Contacts Per Hour,” and “On the Edge of Human Achievement”
- www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/grassroots/multimedia/free-webinars

Volleyball Coaches and Trainers Facebook group

- 21,000+ members from the United States and across the globe.
- Daily discussion threads about volleyball technique, strategy, and coaching.
- Search “Volleyball Coaches and Trainers” on *facebook.com* and request to join this closed group.

Gold Medal Squared videos, blog, and podcast by Chris McGown and staff

- Principles and keys for the fundamental skills of forearm passing, serving, spiking, setting, individual defense, and blocking. Great videos to show your players for skill demonstration in practice. Great coaching clinics. Great team camps that can be hosted in your own gym.
- www.goldmedalsquared.com/volleyball-videos

Positive Coaching Alliance website, articles, and podcasts by Jim Thompson

- Detailed information about practical youth coaching concerns, such as developing a written coaching philosophy, handling playing time, starting as a first-year coach, and hosting a pre-season parent meeting.
- www.positivecoach.org

Coach Your Brains Out podcast by Billy Allen and John Mayer (now sponsored by GMS)

- “Motor Learning” with Carl McGown
- “Be Consistent” and “External Feedback” with John Kessel
- “Common Coaching Questions” with BJ Leroy
- “Team Culture” with Hugh McCutcheon; “Team Culture” with John Speraw
- “Marv Dunphy Talks Volleyball”
- “Serving” with Andrea Becker
- “Leadership” and “Passing” with Karch Kiraly; “Leadership” with David Shaw
- “Teaching” with Jim McLaughlin
- “Rob Browning”
- “Keegan Cook”

- “Designing Practice” and “Resiliency” with Trevor Ragan; “Practice Planning” with Jason Watson
- “Feedback” with Ashley Merryman
- “Statistical Analysis” and “Principles” with Joe Trinsey
- www.goldmedalsquared.com/blog/episodes/

Train Ugly visual essays by Trevor Ragan

- “The Jungle Tiger”
- “Motor Learning”
- “Unleashing the Learning Machine”
- “Blocked vs. Random Practice”
- “Praise and Mindset”
- www.trainugly.com/v-essays

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