

McLean Youth Volleyball

Practice Drills to Consider

The following is intended as a list of drills that coaches can consider utilizing in their team practices. The drills are broken out by area and tend to start with basic drills and move to the more difficult.

Passing Drills

Player Toss: One player tosses the ball to another who forehand passes the ball back. Pass five balls and reverse players.

Number of players and equipment: Two players and one ball

Coach Toss: Players line up prepared to step into the LR (left rear or position 5) and receive a pass. The coach stands inside the net with a cart of balls and passes the ball to the passer who underhand passes the ball to the target. The target who stands a couple of feet off the net and just right of center court, catches the ball and places it in the cart. The passer replaces the target who gets in line to pass.

Number of players and equipment: At least three players, but as many as twelve, a cart of balls, and half of a court.

Progression: The coach can initiate from the other side of the net to increase ball speed and difficulty. The coach can also move from an underhand pass to a faster, overhead serve of the ball.

Single Player Passing: A player underhand passes the ball to themselves. They should focus on controlling the height of the passes (not very high) and the area that they stay within.

Progressions: Introduce overhead passing and alternate between underhand and overhead passes. Or, after each underhand pass of the ball, have the player reach down and touch the floor before passing the ball again.

Twenty passes against the wall: Have a player stand next to a wall and pass the ball twenty times without stopping. This drill is sometimes used as a consequence for poor play. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbVJDad8F9M>

Pepper Passing: Two players stand about ten to fifteen feet apart and underhand pass the ball back and forth. They should focus on controlling the passes and trying to pass the ball as many times as possible without letting the ball touch the floor.

Progression: Introduce overhead passing and include that in the pepper drill. Introduce a third player and pass at different angles.

Two Tossers: Groups of three players with two balls, start with two tossers standing side-by-side about four or five feet apart each with a ball. One tosser will toss the ball to the passer who underhand passes the ball back to the tosser. Just after the passer finishes the pass, the second tosser tosses the second ball. The objective is to get the passer to move their feet and get to the next ball. This toss/pass sequence repeats until the passer successfully passes a number of balls (10, for example). Then the players rotate to a new passer.

Shuttle Passing: Three players and one ball start with one player with the ball facing another player about ten to fifteen feet apart. The third player stands behind the player with the ball. The drill starts with the ball being tossed to the other player who underhand passes it back to the third player. The original tosser runs to the right and stands behind the passer. There is a continuous passing of the ball with the passer running around to the end of the other line.

Progression: Introduce overhead passing. Have the player successfully underhand pass twenty balls and then overhead pass (set) twenty more. First group of three that completes the drill successfully gets praise. (They get to play their music during practice, for example.). You can also have the players pass over the net. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJel64IxEIA> where they also use a fourth player.

Under the net passing: Have the players pair up with another player and one ball per pair. Starting from the left side of the net, have each pair stay low and attempt to pass the ball back and forth while keeping the ball below the net. Successfully pairs should work their way to the right side of the net while controlling the ball and not letting it hit the floor or the net.

Setting Drills

Two Players: One player tosses the ball high to the setter who set the ball back to the tosser in a high, controlled way.

Progression: Once the setter consistently sets the ball back to the tosser, have the players set the ball back and forth. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuloxH0ok24>

One Player: set the ball against a wall starting with short sets and working your way up to higher sets. Get comfortable setting the ball to different heights on the wall.

Three Players, two balls: Position the tosser at MB, the setter should be just off the net, right of center, and facing the target who is standing just inside the antenna on the left side of the court. The drill starts with the target and tosser holding balls. The tosser makes a nice high, controlled pass to the setter who sets the ball to the target. As the ball is being set the target bounce passes their ball to the tosser. The target should provide feedback to the setter in terms of whether the set is the correct height and distance from the net. This drills repeats in a continuous flow. After ten sets, rotate players.

Progression: Move the target to the backset position (RF or position 2) and have the setter backset. Have the setters vary the heights of their sets.

Hitting Drills

Footwork Only: Start line of players at the left side of the court outside the 10 foot line and outside the court. Start right footers out with a three step approach – right foot forward, small left step, followed by big right and half left step. No arm swing. They should jump and land off the net. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1WPEDna9R0&NR=1&feature=endscreen> for details.

Progressions: Add the arm swing without the ball or have the player catch a ball that is set to them. Also, have attacker approach from the right side of the court.

Off the Net Hitting (or backcourt attack): Starting with a hitting line, have a coach initiate a high toss near the middle of the court and have attackers hit the ball over the net. Encourage top spin (wrist snap and hitting up on the back of the ball).

Self Toss: Have players give themselves a nice high toss that they can attack. Vary the distance from the net starting off the net and progressing closer.

Hitting Lines: One setter is at the net and the other players have a ball and stand in the hitting line. The attacker makes a high toss to the setter who sets the ball for the attacker. The attacker hits and shags his ball and returns to the end of the line.

Progressions: Attack from both sides of the court, introduce the backset, and develop a middle attack. Have attackers hit both line and cross shots. Include a target for attackers to hit – a ball cart for example.

Hitting Transition Drill: In order to encourage effective transitions and footwork, have a hitting line where the attackers hit the ball three times in a row. They start with an attack of a coach initiated set, transition back to their base offensive position and attack the ball again, transition and attack the third set ball.

Progression: Add a block to the transition cycle.

Serving Drills

Warm up: Have players serve the ball against a wall. Have them focus on hitting specific spots on the wall. They can start from a shorter distance and move back. Also have player serve from inside the court if they aren't strong enough to get it in from the service line.

Percentage In: Players warm up by hitting a number of serves. Players are serving from both sides of the court. Players are asked to serve ten balls and to keep track of how many are in and how many are out. Reward highest percentage.

Target Serving: Use cones to identify sections of the court that you want servers to hit. Develop both short and deep serves. Have servers serve to all six positions on the court. Have players hit both a float and topspin serve.

Digging/Defense Drills

Coach on a box: Organize team in its base defensive position. Have a coach on the other side of the court stand on a box or chair so that they can easily hit balls aggressively into the court. The defense should work to successfully dig the ball and pass it to their setter.

Blocking Drills

Jousting: Have two players stand on opposite sides of the net and have a coach toss the ball high and land on top of the net. The two players jump and try and overpower the other by pushing the ball into the opponent's court. Winners stay on the court and a new opponent comes on.

Combination Drills

Serve Receive: Line up your players in your serve receive formation (between 3 and 5 players) with a passing target. Have a few players available as servers. The drill is initiated by serving the ball over the net and the passers pass the ball to the target. Passers move to become the target, targets move to become servers and servers get in line to receive serve.

Progression: Have the target set an attacker. Introduce blockers.

Small court: In order to encourage ball control and increase the number of touches each player gets, have teams of two or three play each other on a small court – shorter and/or more narrow than usual. One approach is to divide the court down the middle and have two matches

going on simultaneously on one court. Have the teams start with a cooperative toss of the ball over the net. Keep score and have the winning teams play against each other. Recommendation -- make sure that there are plenty of balls close by. You don't want to lose a lot of time while girls run around the gym chasing balls.

Queen of the Court: As an alternative to a scrimmage, have the girls line up on one end of the court and randomly put teams of three on each side of the court to play out a point. The winning team stays on the far side of the court and a new team of three enters to serve. Keep track of how many points each individual player wins. Make sure that the teams get changed over time. The first player to get 20 points is the winner. Keep the game moving fast. If the server misses their serve, they go to the end of the line.