The Pass and Serve

THE PASS

The pass is the fundamental skill required for effective team play and must be mastered before any other skills can be successfully utilized in the game. The purpose of the pass is to direct the ball to the team's setter who initiates the offense. This pass is medium-high looping up about two to three feet above the net and descending near the setter at the net. There are two types of passes—the underhand and the overhand.

Underhand Pass

The underhand pass is used primarily to receive the serve. Serve reception is the key to your offense, and if a team cannot pass accurately it will pose no attack threat. A bad pass can result in losing a point, but even more critical, several bad passes can result in players' losing confidence and playing poorly.

   The underhand pass is one of the easiest techniques in the game, requiring very little movement or strength. The most important factors are confidence and good footwork and positioning prior to the pass. It is a monotonous technique that is not as much fun to practice as other skills, but it is the most essential skill for proper execution of your offense.

Checklist

1. Ready position—a) feet shoulder distance apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other; b) weight on the balls and the insides of feet with very little space between heels and floor; c) knees bent and turned in slightly; d) trunk bent forward, knees ahead of toes, shoulders ahead of knees; e) arms extended out from body, hands apart and down by knees.
2. Quickly determine where the ball will go and move body behind and under the path of the ball, body facing direction of the intended pass, hips open to oncoming ball.
3. Stop, assume a balanced position and step to the target. When passing to the right, step with the right foot. When passing to the left, step with the left foot.
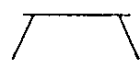4. Trunk slightly tilted forward.
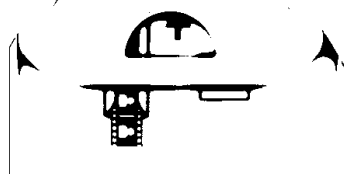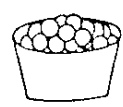
C COACH **BALLS** **CHAIR** **BENCH**

W PLAYER WAITING **SH** SHAGGER **SR** SERVER **R** RECEIVER
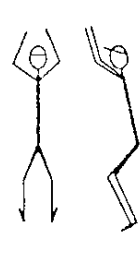
T TOSSER **B** BLOCKER **S** SETTER **A** ATTACKER

RF RIGHT FRONT **RB** RIGHT BACK

CF CENTER FRONT **CB** CENTER BACK

LF LEFT FRONT **LB** LEFT BACK

O VOLLEYBALL ⟶ PATH OF PLAYER ⟶ PATH OF BALL

LEGEND

5. Arms brought together straight in front of body to form a solid plat-form. The arms never bend in the entire execution of the pass.
6. Heel of hands and thumbs firmly held together (felt in shoulders). Fingers interlaced to first knuckle or hands held in interlocked posi-tion (Figure 1-1).
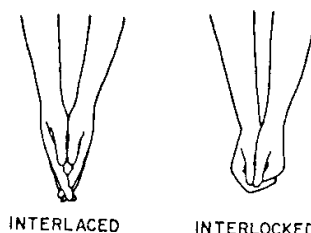
Figure 1-1

INTERLACED   INTERLOCKED

7. Hands and wrists turned down allowing elbow extension and straight arms.
8. Play ball at the body midline whenever possible, contacting the ball out from the body at about knee level (Figure 1-2).
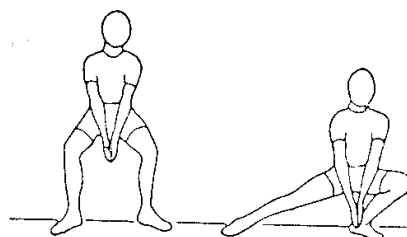
Figure 1-2

9. When it is not possible to play the ball at the midline, open the hips, turn the shoulders down to face the target, and take the ball out to the side (Figure 1-3).
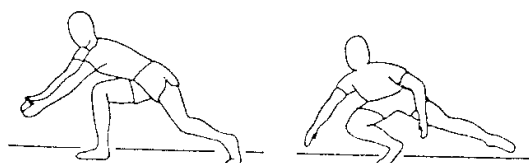
Figure 1-3

10. Pass the ball on the wide fleshy surface of the forearms, two to three inches above the wrist.
11. Watch the ball with the eyes as it contacts the arms. Do not jerk the head down.
12. Shoulders and arms face the setter and contribute the main force in the pass. Extend the shoulders and arms forward and slightly up-

ward with a controlled arm swing. Swing is directed from shoulders, with movement observed in the shoulder joint and absent in the elbow joint (Figure 1-4).
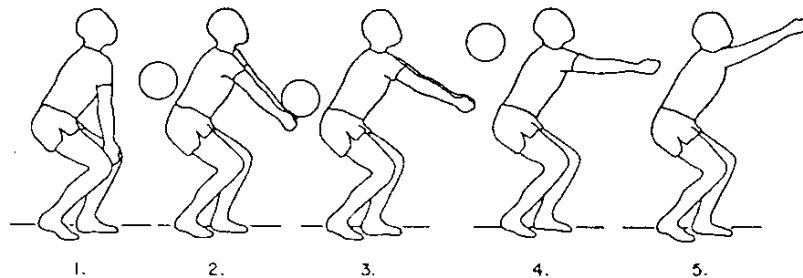

Figure 1-4

13. Guide the ball to the setter. Follow through in the direction of the desired ball flight.
14. The angle of the forearms determines the direction in which the ball will rebound.
15. At the completion of the pass the knees remain bent, body weight is forward toward the setter, arms are straight and about shoulder height.

Overhand Pass (Figure 1-5)

Either the underhand or overhand pass may be used to pass the free ball (a ball that is not attacked by the opponents but is passed over the net softly). The overhand pass is the preferred pass for the free ball because this technique provides a longer contact period and allows for better accuracy and control. Since the overhand pass must be played above the forehead, the underhand pass must be used when the ball is too low.
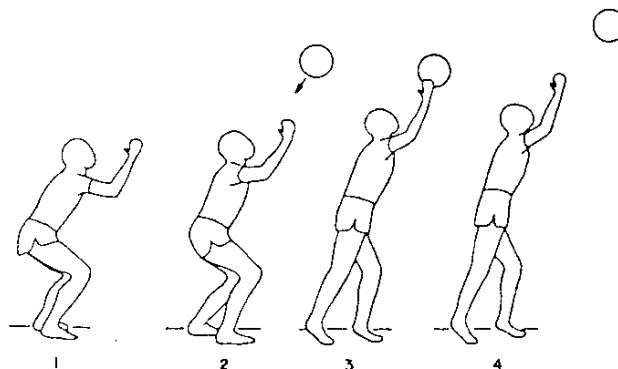

Figure 1-5

Checklist

1. Ready position—a) feet shoulder distance apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other; b) weight on the balls and insides of feet

with very little space between heels and floor; c) knees bent and turned in slightly; d) trunk bent forward; e) hands held comfortably at chest level.

2. Move quickly behind and under the ball with body facing the direction of intended pass (square off to target).
3. Stop, feet shoulder distance apart and staggered slightly, preferably with the right foot forward. Knees bent ready to push into the set.
4. Head tilted back, looking up to ball.
5. Hands move up, elbows shoulder high, forearms parallel to the floor (prior to contact, hands never above head).
6. Fingers spread wide apart, slightly tensed, and shaped to the form of a volleyball.
7. Wrists tilted back, thumbs down, the thumb and index finger form a triangle. The triangle determines the angle of the elbows.
8. Set begins with simultaneous extension of legs and arms forward and upward into the ball.
9. Fingers equally and simultaneously "grab" ball.
10. Fingers relaxed, allowing the ball to contact the fleshy pads of all the fingers, but not the palms. The thumb and first three fingers of each hand are the main contact points. The little finger serves to guide and stabilize the ball.
11. Wrists flick forward into ball. Receiving the ball is like a compressed spring and releasing the ball is the extension of the spring.
12. Arms and hands extend up quickly to contact the ball above and in front of the forehead.
13. On follow-through entire body is extended in direction of set, palms forward, fingers extended. Aim for a lengthy hand contact for best control and accuracy. A soft touch is achieved by the entire body accelerating into the ball with an equal push of the arms and legs.
14. To check position, throw the ball into the air, and with the proper body, arm, and hand position allow the ball to drop into the properly cupped fingers without rebounding. Check finger, thumb, and body position.

MAXIM: Use drill progressions to guarantee success and proper learning of skills:

A. 1. Model skill without the ball, slow to quick (movement without the ball).
   2. Perform skill with the ball, limiting movement (static).
   3. Perform skill with faster ball speed and greater distances (dynamic).
   4. Stress accuracy (targets).

5. Stress successful contacts (goals).
6. Stress mental considerations (tactics).
7. Stress pre- and post-skill movement (linking actions).
8. Stress results under any circumstances (toughness).

B. 1. Simple one-skill drills with static, then dynamic, movement.
   2. Simple combination drills with a combination of skills; each individual repeatedly performing one skill at a time.
   3. Complex combination drills involving one individual performing a sequence of skills.
   4. Complex combination drills with group or team performing a sequence of drills.

PARTNER DRILLS

Partner at net tosses, backcourt player performs skill. When skill level warrants, both players perform drill alternately.

Pass Over Line

Purpose: Technique and accuracy training.

Goal: Specific time period or one set of 30. If ball drops, drill starts at zero.

Description: Partners about ten feet apart, pass overhand or underhand over a line, beside the net or near a wall. Repeat with the overhand pass. Pass about ten to twelve feet high.

MAXIM: For each skill and drill there is always a higher level. Movement to each level must be earned and a practical degree of proficiency and success must be reached.

Pass Long-Short

Purpose: Technique and movement training.

Goal: Specific time period or one set of 30. If ball drops, drill starts at zero.

Description: Partners about ten feet apart, overhand or underhand pass alternating long and short passes so there is continual forward and backward movement. Pass about ten to twelve feet high. Stress passing from a balanced stationary position.

MAXIM: Establish clear practice goals. The more meaningful the practice is perceived as being, the greater the desire to work hard.

Pass Side to Side

Purpose: Technique and movement training.

Goal: Specific time period or one set of 30. If ball drops, drill starts at zero.

Description: Partners about ten feet apart alternating overhand or underhand passes to the right and left of partner to insure side stepping to the ball. Pass about ten to twelve feet high. Stress playing the ball directly in front of the body, shoulders and arms facing target.

Pass In/Out, Out/In

Purpose: Technique and movement training.

Goal: Specific time period or one set of 30. If ball drops, drill starts at zero.

Description: Partners about ten feet apart executing overhand or underhand pass with movement before and after pass. For in/out, move three small steps forward after set, backpedal three steps, stop and pass. For out/in, move three small steps backward after pass, move forward three steps, stop and pass.

Straddle-Sit Pass

Purpose: Active rest (practicing volleyball skills that allow cardiovascular rest and recovery), and to stress proper hand, arm, and shoulder position.

Goal: Specific time period.

Description: Partners seated in straddle position, three feet apart, facing each other. Overhead pass slightly to the right or left of body midline forcing partner to lean so as to position the upper body behind the ball.

Pass and Sit-Ups

Purpose: Overhand pass technique.

Goal: 25 passes and sit-ups each.

Description: Partners seated in straddle position three feet apart, facing each other, lie back, sit up, and receive pass from partner. Continuous pass and sit-up.

THE PASS AND SERVE

Chest-Position Pass

Purpose: Overhand pass technique and active rest.

Goal: 15 passes each.

Description: Partners facing each other lying on chest about three feet apart, both pass ball overhand. Must arch up to pass ball.

Sit-Up and Backset

Purpose: Backset technique, active rest.

Goal: Ten backsets, change tasks.

Description: One partner lying on back, other player in standing position directly behind partner's head. Standing player tosses ball over head of partner. Player on floor sits up and backsets ball back to partner.

MAXIM: Movement must be included in all drills as quickly as possible. Rarely in the game does the ball come directly to you.

Over the Net Pass—Shuttle Drill (Figure 1-6)

Purpose: Overhand and underhand pass technique training.

Team Goal: Group completes ten to 100 good underhand passes. If ball drops or error is made drill begins over at zero. Repeat with the overhand pass.
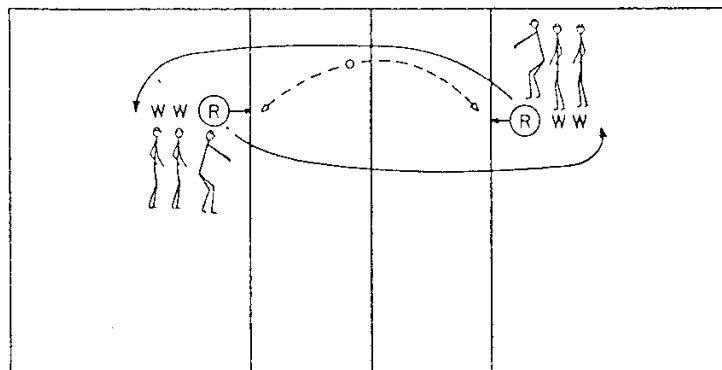

Figure 1-6

Description: Two groups of five to eight players on each court pass the ball about twelve feet high and over the net to a position near the ten-foot line. Players pass and move to the right and to the end of the opposite line. Continuous passing across the net. Stress quick movement to the

ball and passing from a stationary position. As skill level increases, add the jump set.

MAXIM: *High number of repetitions without a miss develops good concentration.*

MAXIM: *Care must be taken to set realistic goals suited to players' abilities. Goals must be difficult but attainable.*

Pass to Target With Tosser (Figure 1-7)

Purpose: Overhand and underhand pass technique and accuracy training.

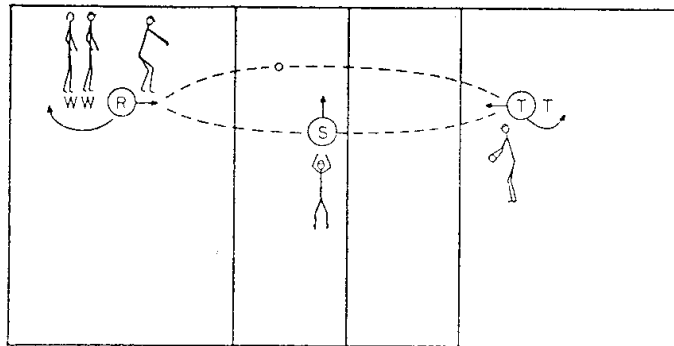*Team Goal:* 25 good overhand passes and 25 good underhand passes.

Figure 1-7

Description: Two groups of approximately six players on each court. Groups divided into receivers, setters, and tossers. The tosser tosses ball with a two-hand underhand toss to back row receiver and moves to the end of the tossing line. Receiver passes to setter. Setter catches the ball and rolls it under the net back to the tosser. Group changes tasks after 25 good passes. To keep the drill moving rapidly the tosser and the setter each start with one ball. As one ball leaves the tosser's hand the setter rolls the other ball back to the tosser so the receivers are able to pass one ball after another in rapid succession. Stress court talk—the receiver calls "mine" before the pass is made.

MAXIM: *Players must respond to each drill without being careless. Do not allow players to practice improper technique. Do not let an error go uncorrected.*

Pass to Target with Coach Tossing (Figure 1-8)

Purpose: Overhand and underhand pass technique and accuracy training.

THE PASS AND SERVE

Team Goal: 100 good passes to set target (coach designates overhand or underhand).

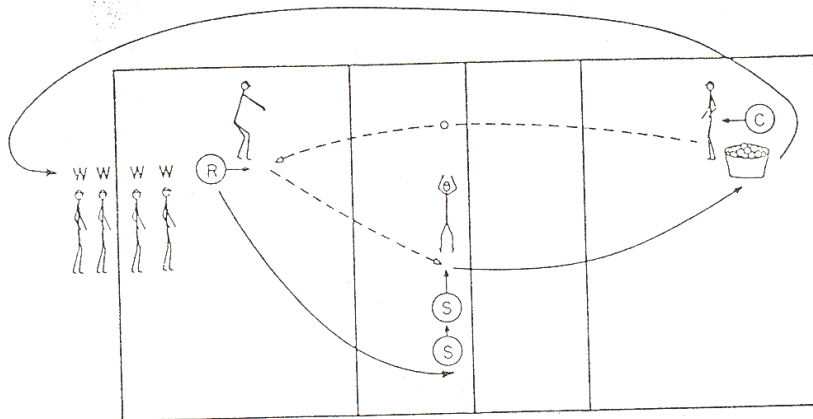Figure 1-8

Description: Similar to pass to target with tosser drill. The coach takes the place of the tosser, thus regulating where the toss will go. The coach can keep the drill moving at a rapid pace and challenge the players with more difficult tosses or with a serve. One receiving line, one setter, and one on-deck setter. The coach tosses or serves the ball to the receiver. The receiver passes the ball to the set target. The setter catches the pass, runs under the net, hands the ball back to the coach, and then circles back to the end of the receiving line. The on-deck setter moves to the setter's position and the receiver is on deck. It is important for the coach to vary the tossing position, speed, and direction of the toss. Repeat drill with receiving line in left and right back positions on the court.

MAXIM: *Require and demand success. Drills must contain specific goals that must be attained to complete the drill.*

Touch Net—Backpedal—Serve Reception (Figure 1-9)

Purpose: Serve reception training.

Team Goal: 50 good passes to set target.

Description: Two receiving lines and one setter. Two receivers begin drill facing the net and holding net with both hands. Additional players wait in line just off the court and to the side. When the coach slaps the ball, the two receivers backpedal quickly and prepare to pass a deep serve. One receiver calls "mine" and passes to the set target, then takes the place of the setter. The setter catches and returns the ball to the coach. Both players then go to the end of their receiving line. The next two receivers immediately move to their position at the net as the previous receivers

2 The Set

The purpose of the set is to place the ball in a position in which your offense can attack the ball. A setter's first priority is accuracy in height and placement to help the hitter to be consistent. A second priority is combining this accuracy with the ability to make the proper decision regarding whom to set, the type of set, and to do so quickly and deceptively.

Although the team setter has the main responsibility to captain the offense, all players must be able to set the ball high to the outside attacker. The basic overhand set is a high set, about ten feet above the net and one to two feet from the net landing near the sideline. This set may be directed forward or back (backset). There are many variations of sets that can be utilized in the game. These sets vary in both height and position along the net. These set variations will be discussed in the chapter on team offense.

FRONT SET (Figure 2-1)

The basics of setting are similar to those for the overhand pass technique, demonstrated in Chapter 1, with these exceptions:

1. The team setter must maintain a more up and down, balanced posture prior to the set. This disguises the set direction until the last moment.
2. A greater knee bend and follow-through is used for high and distant sets.
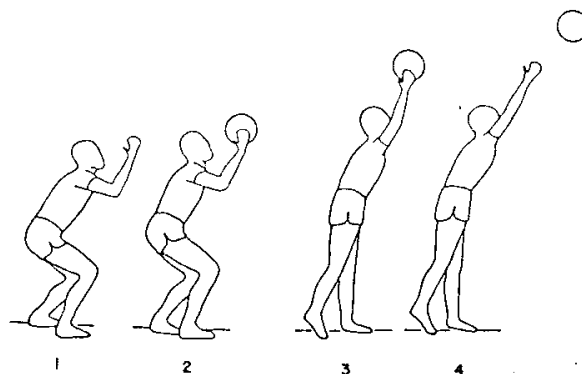

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Figure 2-1 |

3. Good footwork is needed to reach distant passes. Run to the ball, stop, pivot to face the target, and set. Plant feet to assume a good basic body position, bend knees, and set.

BACKSET (Figure 2-2)

To execute the backset, the hips move forward upon contact with the ball, the back is arched, and the weight is transferred to the forward foot. The entire body follows through in the direction of the set with the head following the flight of the ball.
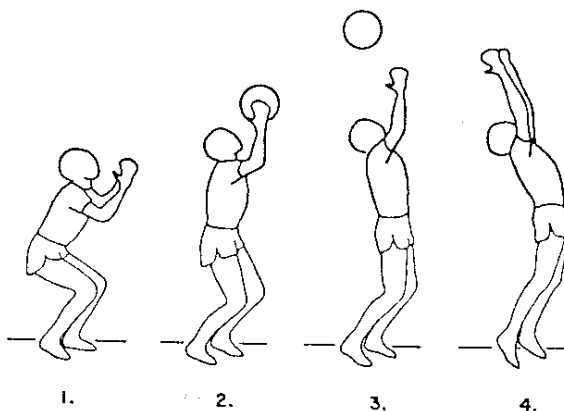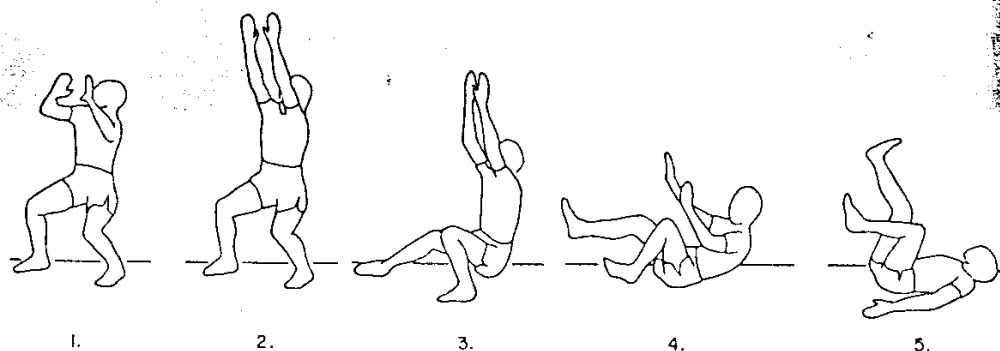
Figure 2-2

Figure 2-6

DRILLS

Catch and Throw—2's

Purpose: Set technique training.

Goal: Specific time period.

Description: Partner holds ball out in front of you; you place both hands on the ball making a triangle of the thumb and first fingers of each hand. Raise your hands with the ball to a position just above the forehead; upper arms parallel to floor, feet in a staggered position with the right foot forward, knees bent. From this position toss the ball straight up into the air by extending the arms quickly upward. Catch the ball in the original starting position, that is, a balanced position with the right foot forward, knees bent, and hands just above the forehead. Continue to catch and throw while partner checks your position. Then change tasks.

MAXIM: *The follow-through results show what happened previously in the skill. Check and correct hand and body positioning.*

Freeze, Check, and Correct—2's

Purpose: Set technique training. Freeze, check, and correct hand and body positioning.

Goal: Specific time period.

Description: Partners stand about 15 feet apart and catch and throw ball back and forth using proper setting techniques. Partners freeze their position after each catch and after each throw in order to check, and if necessary correct, their position. Check points on the catch: balanced position, feet staggered, right foot forward, upper arms parallel to the floor, all ten fingers on the ball, ball not touching the palm of the hand, and ball in front of body at forehead level. Check points on the throw: balanced position, weight on the forward foot, arms and legs extended fully in the direction of the toss. Players go slowly at first, freezing, check-

THE SET

ing, and correcting each catch and throw. As player technique improves, movement is added and throw gradually develops into partners' setting back and forth without freezing the ball.

Individual Ball Handling Drills

Purpose: Underhand pass, overhand pass, and set technique development through constant repetition.

Individual Goal: Three sets of 15 or one set of 50. If ball is dropped or error is made, drill starts over at zero. If skill level varies significantly, set individual goals for each player.

Description: Players are positioned comfortably around gym, each with a ball. Coach designates specific drill to be performed. All sets must be a minimum of 12 feet high.

1. Teach use of hands and wrist: set rapidly to floor in a two-handed dribble.
2. Teach use of hands and wrist: set the ball to the wall and receive it directly (set from several inches away from wall, and then several feet from wall). Set the ball to the wall, let the ball bounce once, and set back to wall.
3. Underhand set to self.
4. Overhand set to self (stay in specified area).
5. Alternate underhand and overhand set to self.
6. Move under ball, touch right or left knee to floor, come up, and set to self.
7. Overhand set to self: turn 180° or 360°, set.
8. Overhand set to self: sit, stand up, and set.
9. Overhand set to self: lie on floor, stand up, and set.
10. Overhand set to self: sit on floor, set to self, stand up and set to self.
11. Set to self: let bounce, backset to self, repeat.

Set From Backcourt Dig—6-2 System (Figure 2-26)

Purpose: Set training from backcourt dig.
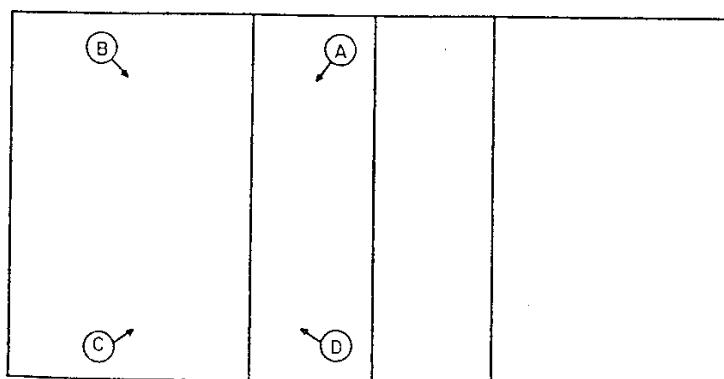
Goal: Specific time period.

Figure 2-26

Description: Four players on one side of the court, *D* positioned at right front, *C* right back, *A* left front and *B* left back. Player *A* sets across to *D* who hits to *B*. *B* digs the ball forward for *C* to release to the front court to set. *C* sets across to *A* and the sequence is repeated. This simulates the game situation with the backcourt setter releasing to set the dug ball, then returning for the next defensive play. If the ball is dug too far from the setter, another player must step in to set. Drill is repeated with *A* hitting to *C* and *B* releasing to set. This could occur in the game when the backcourt setter digs the first ball.

Basketball Accuracy Set Contest (Figure 2-27)

Purpose: Set technique and accuracy training, warmup and conditioning.
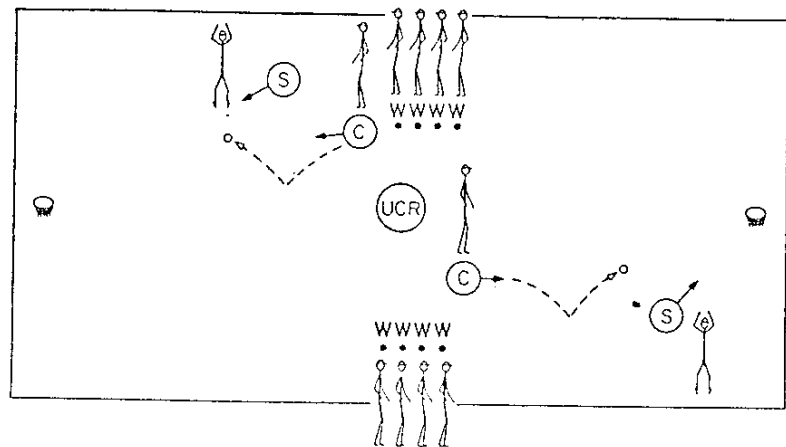
Goal: First to score 15 points wins.

Figure 2-27

Description: A regulation basketball court may be used, but a smaller court is preferred if available. Two coaches are the tossers. Players are in two lines positioned to the right and slightly behind the coaches (drill should also be done from the left). The first player in each line hands the ball to the coach, who bounces the ball in the direction of the basket. On the rebound the player overhand sets the ball to the basket. Players shag ball and move to the end of the next line. Each player in turn hands the coach the ball prior to their turn. Two points are scored for a basket (sets off the backboard do not count), and one for hitting the rim. The first player to win 15 points wins.

MAXIM: Bounce pass simulates the timing and trajectory of the game pass.

THE SET

Volley-Basketball Set Contest (Figure 2-28)

Purpose: Set training.
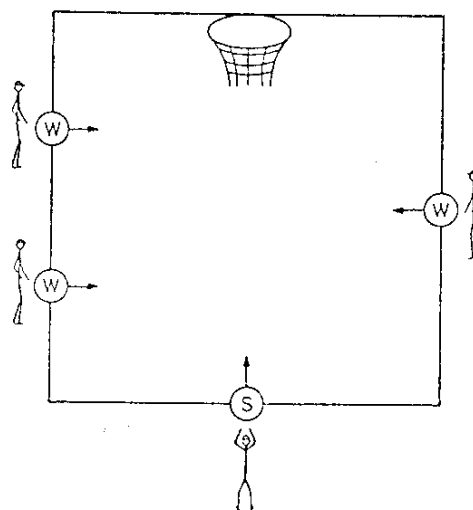
Goal: First to score 21 points wins.

Figure 2-28

Description: One player starts at the free-throw line, with remaining players outside the key area. The player at the free-throw line tosses the ball and sets to the basket. Two points are scored for a swish, and one point if the ball touches the rim and goes in. If the shot is missed, any player may overhand set the next ball on the fly or on the first bounce. The first player to call for the ball is entitled to set the ball. All sets made from this position are worth two points (sets off the backboard do not count). Any number of overhand set attempts may be made while the ball can be played off the fly or on one bounce. When this is not possible, play begins over at free throw line by a new setter. The first player to score 21 points wins.

MAXIM: Make practices interesting and fun with some less disciplined drills.

Easy, Medium, Hard Serves

Purpose: Serve training.

Goal: Specific time period.

Description: Players positioned along endline on both sides of the court. Players serve first ball fairly easy; second ball served at medium strength; third ball served hard, but all balls are expected to go "in." Repeat sequence. Players should know their own ability and be knowledgeable of what they can and cannot do with their serves. *Variation:* Players attempt their toughest serves without worrying about errors. After a specific time period players attempt to serve their toughest serve that they feel will be "in." There are times in the game that it is very important not to lose the serve. Stress the importance of tough and controlled serves.

MAXIM: *Allow players time in practice to work on tough serves without penalty.*

MAXIM: *The better the opposition receiver and setter, the better the serve must be to effectively eliminate the good attack.*

Serve to Target and Jog (Figure 1-14)

Purpose: Serve accuracy training.

Individual Goal: Nine out of ten serves to each target.

Team Goal: Point scored for each served ball that hits the target. A point is subtracted for each serving error (ball hit out or into the net). The score may not go below zero. 15 points to complete the drill.
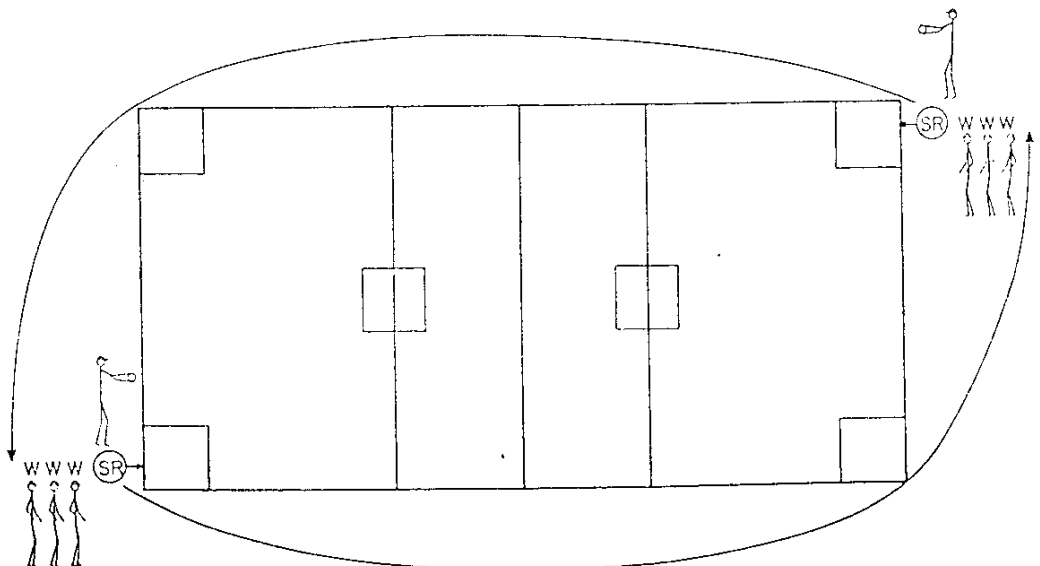

Figure 1-14

THE PASS AND SERVE

handed throw over the net to partner. Player releases ball with arm extended, elbow above the shoulder. After several successful tosses by each player, they serve over the net to one another. Players back up several steps and repeat the above sequence. This process is continued until players are serving from endline to endline. Stress serve contact out in front of the body. Practice the service toss and let the ball bounce to visually check that the ball is in front of the body and in line with the hitting shoulder.

MAXIM: Keep the serving action simple: Minimum action for maximum results.

Serve to Wall Contest

Purpose: Beginner serve training.

Goal: First team to 15 wins.

Description: Two teams stand in a separate line behind a line about 25 to 30 feet from a wall. One player assumes a serving position behind the line and the second player in line stands halfway between the server and the wall, ready to catch the serve on the rebound. The server then serves the ball to the wall above the tape mark (seven to ten feet high). If the serve is above the tape and is caught by the receiver a point is scored. Server becomes catcher and catcher moves to the end of the line. The first team to 15 wins.

MAXIM: You win or lose with points. The game is not over until the final point. Use game-related numbers, for example, 15 points to complete the drill, or 16, 17, or 18.

Serve and Catch

Purpose: Serve training.

Goal: Specific time period.

Description: Players divided equally on each side of the court. One ball for every two players. Players with a ball serve from the proper service area. Other players attempt to receive the ball by catching. Each time you have possession of the ball you serve.

MAXIM: Practice the serve, both when players are fresh and when they are fatigued, as occurs in the game.

MAXIM: Always direct the serve to a specific target. Always attempt to make serves both accurate and tough.
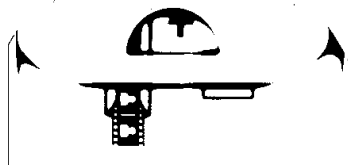
THE PASS AND SERVE

Description: The first player in each serving line serves to a specific target area. After the serve, jog and shag the ball and return to the end of the opposite serving line. Serve to target *A* until the goal is reached, then to target *B*, and so on. Jogging adds the element of conditioning to the serving drill.

MAXIM: The serve is an offensive weapon. Keep the pressure on the opponent; serve aggressively and with control.

MAXIM: Just before you serve, look confidently across the net and determine your serve strategy.

Target Serves

Purpose: Serve to target.

Description: Players serving from service area.

Goal/Competitions:

1. Serve 15 deep crosscourt serves and 15 deep line serves. The winner is the first to score 30 serves to the targets.
2. Serve between chairs, as you would want to serve between opponents.
3. Serve to targets for prizes.
4. Best record of number to target in a row.
5. Best record of consecutive good serves.
6. Best record of number to target out of ten with fewest service errors.
7. Best record of serves to targets in specific time period.
8. Look to coach for hand signal indicating the position of the court to direct serve.
9. Serve 15 to one specific target, serving at least five in a row before moving to the next target.
10. Serve to target after intense exercise. Create physical fitness conditions close to actual game situations.

MAXIM: Discipline and concentration: No talking during serve practice.

Topspin Serve (Figure 1-13)

The topspin serve is an advanced type of serve that is hit with a great deal of speed and forward spin causing it to drop rapidly to the floor. The trajectory of the ball is easily determined, but its rapid movement makes it difficult to pass.

The body position for the topspin serve is similar to that for the overhead floater, but it is the position and method of contact that creates the topspin.

The hand is open and makes contact on the lower section of the ball. The hand and wrist snaps vigorously over the ball and the arm follows through away from the body. The ball is hit upward and forward with a strong, quick wrist and forearm snap. This action causes the ball to spin.
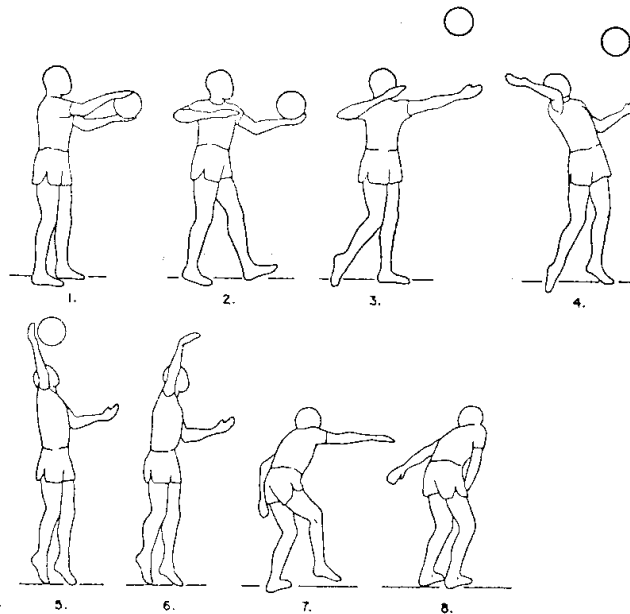
Figure 1-13

MAXIM: Most important condition to avoid errors: Attentively look at the ball in all stages of executing the serve.

DRILLS

Throw and Serve 2s

Purpose: Beginner serve training, technique and strength.

Goal: Specific time period.

Description: Partners midcourt from each other and on opposite sides of the net. Holding ball with one hand above head, player executes a one-

mc ion prior to contact, enabling even a small player to serve aggressively. The effectiveness of the serves depends solely on the execution—not on the style chosen.

Overhand Floater Checklist (Figure 1-11)

1. Stand facing the net, feet slightly staggered, foot opposite from serving arm slightly forward and pointed to the target, weight on back foot.
2. Ball held with both hands, holding hand underneath ball, hitting hand on top.
3. Arms held out in front of body parallel to floor.
4. Just prior to toss, step forward with the front foot in the direction of the target, transferring the body weight forward.
5. Ball is tossed upward over head about two feet high and in front of serving shoulder. Hitting arm is drawn back behind the ear with elbow at shoulder level (simulating a throwing action). Tossing arm remains up.
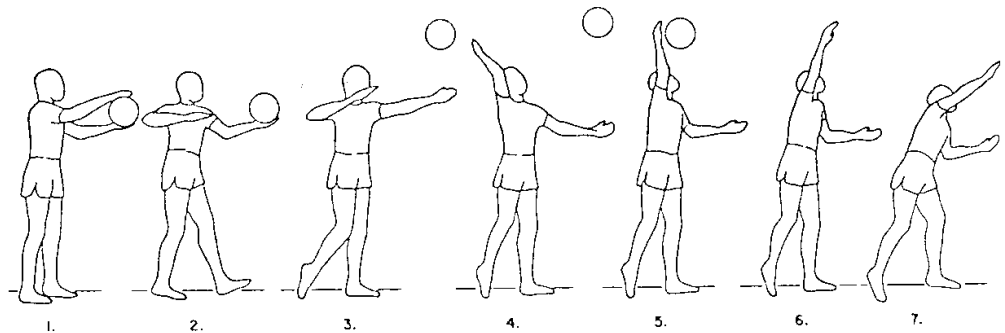

Figure 1-11

6. Shoulders drawn back to allow for body rotation into ball.
7. When ball begins to drop, shoulder and arm rotates into hit, with body weight transferred forward.
8. Contact is made in front of the body and above the head with the arm almost straight.
9. Contact is made on the palm of the open hand with wrist remaining firm. Hand and forearm act as a unit.
10. Contact center back of ball with quick action and very little follow-through.
11. Palm facing target at completion of serve.
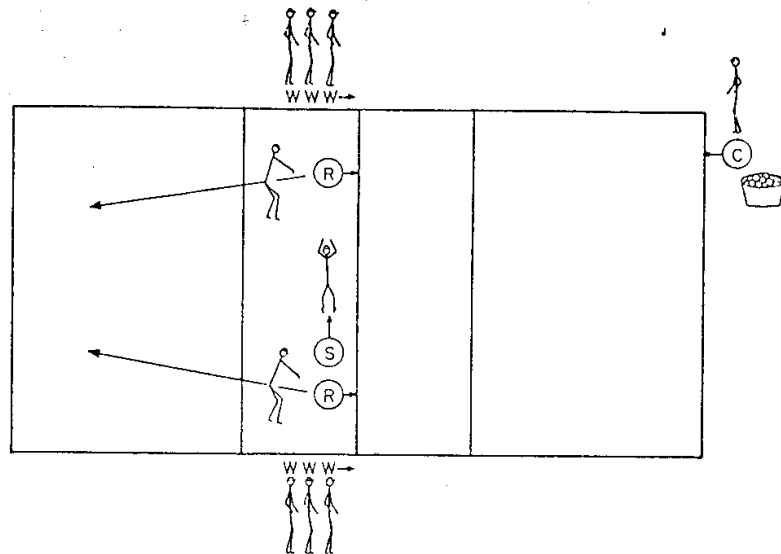12. Strive for low trajectory over net.

Figure 1-9

backpedal. Repeat drill with receivers beginning on the endline, and moving forward to receive a short serve. *Advanced variation*: Coach serves while standing on a table top. This makes the serve come harder and at a more downward trajectory.

MAXIM: Communicate with your teammates. Call "mine."

MAXIM: Good footwork prior to the pass is foremost. Many errors are caused by bad footwork. Move quickly to the ball. Pass from a stationary position.

THE SERVE

Technically, it is the purpose of the serve to initiate play, but it is also a means of attack. Only by serving can you score points, so it is important to keep the ball in play while at the same time serving aggressively in an attempt to score a direct point or to force the opponents into a disadvantaged position.

Underhand Serve

When a skill level warrants, it is recommended that the overhand or sidearm serve be taught. However, consideration should be given to the use of the underhand serve as a progression to higher levels of technique. Players, especially very young ones, generally have greater control of the underhand serve. This control eliminates many unnecessary service errors and creates a more continuous and exciting game. Placement is also

3 The Attack

The attack is the primary offensive weapon and its purpose is to score points. The attack encompasses a variety of options. The less one's height and jumping ability, the more important it is to use the attack options in order to be an effective hitter. The wider the range of attack options, the more difficult it is for opposing front- and backcourt defensive players to receive the ball. The attacker must disguise the attack option as long as possible for best results. The attack option is determined by attacker capabilities, height, positioning of the block, and positioning of the set.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Power Attack

Attacking the ball with maximum power, around, through, or off the block. On the outside set, the ball may be directed crosscourt or down the line. On the middle set, the ball may be directed to the power angle or cut back across the body to the opposite side.

Dink/Tip

After establishing power and the defense is dug in, the ball is tapped softly over the blocker's hands. The tip is generally used on balls set close or one to two feet off the net. The hand is open and contact is made on the pads of the fingers. Follow through just enough to place the ball to the target. The tip should be learned with both the right and left hand. With the ability to use either hand, many wide sets can be kept in play. This is one of the easiest yet most effective attack variations. The tip is a psychological weapon as this soft attack often embarrasses opponents who feel that this easy attack should be playable, but often is not.

Soft/Off-Speed

Used to change the pace of the game and to catch the defense off guard. Placement is emphasized more than speed. Contact and follow-through is primarily a wrist snap action with the hand rolling over the top of the ball, imparting topspin. The center of the court is a vulnerable spot for
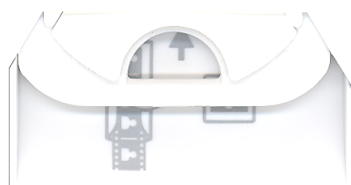
THE ATTACK

this attack. The off-speed shot may be used on balls set close or those deep off the net.

Deep Corners

Hit the corners deep crosscourt or down the line. This allows a shorter player to effectively hit around or off the top of a taller block. The deep hit is an effective option for balls set five to 10 feet off the net, as well as for the attack by back row players. The corners are vulnerable attack spots, not only because they are difficult to cover, but because they force the player to question whether close balls are in or out. Emphasis is placed on good hand contact, wrist snap, and placement.

Sharp Angle/Line

The sharp angle attack is used when balls are set close to the net or when the block is covering the line area. The ball is hit at an extreme angle inside the block, directed in front of the 10-foot line or between the front- and backcourt receivers. To execute the sharp angle shot, dip the shoulder nearest to the net and use wrist and forearm action to cut the ball inside the block. The ball is hit down the line when the blocker moves inside to cover for the angle attack. The attacker utilizes the same approach and then turns in the air to hit the power attack down the line. For quickness and deception, the armswing begins first and the body rotation follows.

Hole in Block

The attacker can hit through a poorly positioned double or triple block. The attacker must develop a feel for the block and know in which situations the block might not be solid. The attacker should learn to perceive block movement and look for the hole in the block.

Off the Block (Wipe-Off/Tool)

When the ball is set close to the net and near the sideline the attacker can sweep the ball off the blocker's hands and out of bounds. The attacker must contact the side of the ball, hitting it partially into the block and following through out of bounds. The ball may be hit hard or tipped off the block.

Rebound Play

When the attacker is trapped and cannot hit around the block, tap the ball directly into the block and play the ball up as it rebounds back.

Roundhouse

Ball contact behind head with sidearm motion. Contact is made on bottom portion of ball with quick wrist action imparting topspin.

THE APPROACH

A good approach is essential for an effective vertical jump and in turn an effective attack. The most common approaches are the step-hop approach and the step-close approach. The selection of the style of approach depends on personal preference, but can also be dictated by the situation. Players should learn to execute the attack with no approach, as well as with a short and longer step approach. For most approaches, the player begins about ten to 15 feet from the net and waits until the ball is set high to determine its trajectory and placement. The attacker jumps into the air at an arm's distance behind the ball. The approach is quick, smooth, and vigorous, and is synchronized with the arm swing for maximum lift. The movement is continuous from start to jump recovery. The greater the ability of the legs to withstand the abrupt change from forward to upward with the least significant stoppage, the greater the jumping ability. The approach pattern for right handers is at a 45° angle from the left and center front positions and straight in on the right side. This approach allows the attacker both line and crosscourt power attack options because moving the hand, arm, and shoulder from right to left (reversed for left-handed players) is the easiest and most powerful move. It is recommended that the footwork for the approach be taught first, independently of the arms.

Step-Hop Approach Checklist (Figure 3-1)

1. Medium-high track-start ready position.
2. One or two running steps forward prior to the hop.
3. Lift both feet and jump-hop landing on both feet.
4. Land with feet 1½ to 2 feet apart and on the heels, rocking to the toes into the jump.
5. During the hop forward the arms go back. Simultaneously as the heels contact the ground, the arms drive down and up, lifting the body.
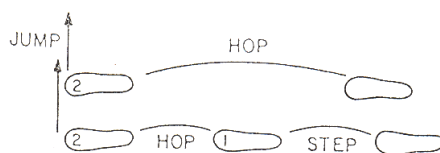
Figure 3-1

Three-Step Step-Close Approach Checklist (Figure 3-2)

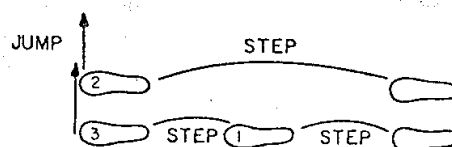1. Medium-high track-start position.

THE ATTACK

Figure 3-2

2. First step is a short running step forward with left foot for right handers and right foot for left handers. This is a timing or reading step helping the attacker get to the proper spot at the proper time.
3. The second step is a breaking step landing on the heel. The third step is a closing step landing on the toe.
4. The timing is step, heel-toe (step-close), with the closing step made as quickly as possible after the last running step.
5. On the second step the arms go back and on the last step they drive down and up, lifting the body.

Four-Step Step-Close Approach Checklist (Figure 3-3)

1. Medium high track-start position.
2. First step is a short running step forward with left foot for left handers and right foot for right handers. This is a timing or reading step helping the attacker get to the proper spot at the proper time.
3. The second step is longer; the third step is a breaking step landing on the heel; the fourth step is a closing step landing on the toe.
4. The timing is step, run, heel-toe (step-close), with the player accelerating into the approach. The closing steps are made as quickly as possible after the last running step.
5. On the third step as the foot goes forward the arms go back. On the last step the arms drive down and up, lifting the body.
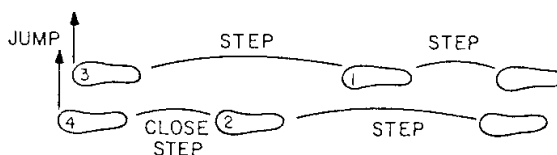

Figure 3-3

ATTACK CHECKLIST (Figure 3-4)

Coordination of Approach and Jump

1. Prior to the last step or hop the arms swing down and back as far as possible, with the upper body tilted forward.
2. On the last step or hop the body is coiled like a spring, knees flexed about 120°, trunk flexed forward, nonhitting shoulder toward net.
3. Immediately on the last step or hop, momentum abruptly changes from forward to upward.
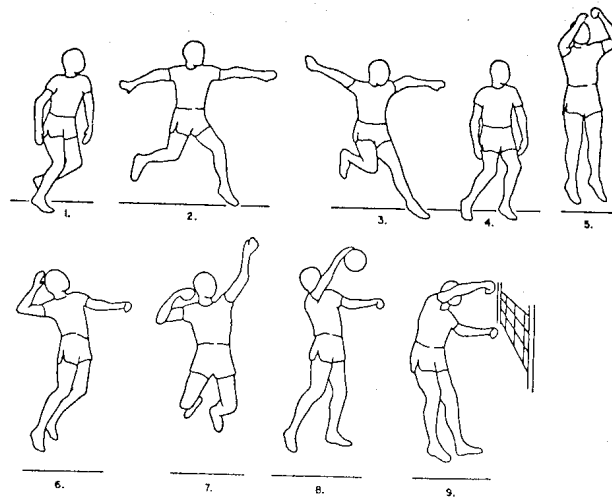
Figure 3-4

4. Hands lead, arms move quickly and vigorously forward and upward, keeping arms close to body.
5. Back arched while ascending, shoulders rotated back.
6. Hitting arm is in a throwing position with the non-hitting hand pointing at the ball.
7. Throw hitting arm up at ball and snap; non-hitting hand pulls down.
8. Contact on palm of open hand.
9. Use quick, compact snapping motion.

Contact (Figure 3-5)

All attack options are similar until the point of contact. The "ready position" of the body and arm prior to contact are all similar and allow for maximum deception and choice of option.
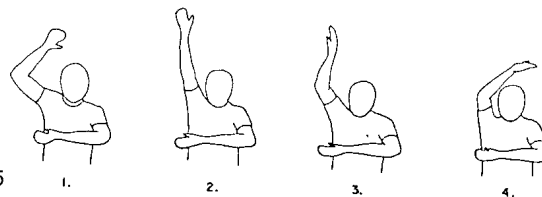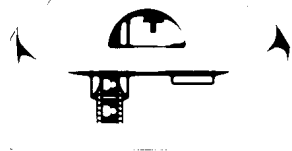

Figure 3-5

For Power Attack

1. Wrist hyperextended back and flexible prior to contact.

THE ATTACK

2. Arm and wrist uncoil and snap quickly upward and forward into the ball.
3. Contact is made in front of the body over the hitting shoulder at almost maximum arm reach, shoulder extended up.
4. Contact is made with the entire hand (open or slightly cupped). Contact on the palm gives the power while the fingers wrap around the ball for control and direction.
5. Arm follows through on same side of body. Attacker changes course of ball by changing body position in air to face direction of attack.
6. Body snaps forward, fingers pointed downward after contact.

For Deception and Quick Change of Direction

Use quick turn with forearm and wrist hitting across the body for less power but more deception.

For Soft/Off-Speed Attack

Similar to power attack but arm not swung through with such force. Ball may be hit upward with use of topspin.

Dink/Tip

As the arm uncoils the motion is slowed just prior to contact. The hand is open and contact is made on the pads of the fingers. The hand guides the ball softly to the desired target, with very little wrist action.

Landing

Cushion jump recovery by landing on both feet and bending the knees.

Drills

It is recommended that the approach and attack skills be taught independently of one another and combined later. This complex skill can be practiced in its entirety to give players a feel for what they are learning, but progressions should be utilized later to teach, emphasize, and correct proper technique. Demonstration of the various portions of the attack skill must be shown slowly so the eye can see and understand the skill parts. It is also recommended that the attack be taught on a lower net and gradually raised as skill level warrants.

Hit Stationary Ball

Purpose: To emphasize contact and wrist snap.
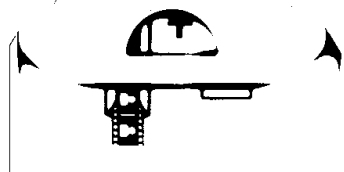
Goal: Specific time period

Description: Coach stands on chair on same side of net as players and holds ball about one to two feet above net. Players hit ball out of coach's hand (first using the last step of the approach, then adding the complete approach). Coach pulls hand away at moment attacker hits ball. With the ball stationary, the attacker can completely concentrate on technique.

Approach Overline (Figure 3-6)

Purpose: Running approach with long last step.
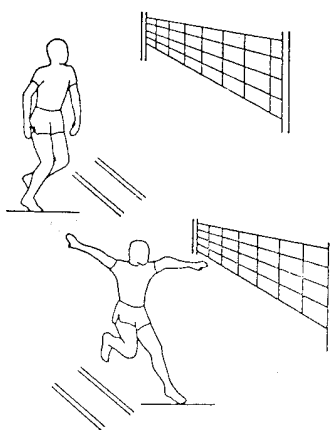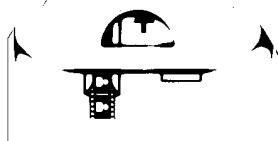
Goal: Specific time period.

Figure 3-6

Description: Place tape marks about one to two feet apart in the approach runway at the net. The player must jump over this taped section, land, and quickly jump up for the attack. Stress a long step and running rather than walking into the approach. A small mat could be used instead of the tape.

Approach and Catch

Purpose: Attack timing.

Goal: Specific time period.

Description: Coach tosses ball, player approaches, jumps, and catches ball at its peak with two hands. Ball must be caught above the height of the net, as the ball must be contacted above the net for a successful attack.

Approach, Catch, and Throw

Purpose: Attack timing.

Goal: Specific time period.

Description: Coach tosses ball, player approaches, jumps, catches, and throws ball down into opponent's court with both hands. This catch and throw simulates the "hang time" necessary to attack the ball in the air. Catch and throw the ball quickly while the body is at its highest position in the air. Snap wrists, arms, and body forward, simulating the attack action.

Model Approaches Around Gym

Purpose: Approach work.

Individual Goal: 15 approaches.

Description: Jog slowly or walk around gym. On whistle command, approach and mock attack in air.

MAXIM: Be specific and concise in error correction. Describe the error and how to correct it.

Model Approaches at Wall

Purpose: Discourage floating on approach.

Individual Goal: Ten approaches.

Description: Stand ten to 15 feet from a wall, facing wall. Practice the approach moving toward the wall.

Model Approaches with Backpedal

Purpose: Transition and approach work.

Individual Goal: 15 approaches.

Description: Jog slowly or walk around gym. On whistle command, quickly backpedal three steps, approach, and mock attack in air.