



Cross-training and Training Options in Volleyball

- John Kessel, USA Volleyball Director of Membership Development and Disabled Programs

Most coaches are not aware of the many options to play the game of volleyball. This handout is intended to give you reference to options to the indoor 6 vs. 6 game, that you might have your players experience. New, fun and different...a break from what you do normally.

Other related articles address these areas in different ways - "Training Without a Net or Friends" gives insight into training by oneself, or with less than three friends. The other way to become a better player is to coach, a concept 99% of coaches agree to, but rarely let their kids do it as part of season training. The many ways to enhance playing by coaching are referenced in "You'll be a Better Player if You Coach." A third but oft neglected area of cross training is simply the mental side of the game. Ask most coaches how much of the game is mental, and they will reply "80-90 percent." Ask them next how much they train mentally, and they always look sheepish and reply, "About 10 percent..." Team cohesion and coaching strategies, taught by asking questions of your players, is part of this area of cross-training. Great movies about sport can also be a training period about the mental side, and if you wish, we can email you a list of those we took to Athens for the Games. Just email john.kessel@usav.org and ask for the article.

One of the things about volleyball is the varied surfaces we can play the game on. Lang Ping once told how she was so excited to play in her first Nationals in China, as she was going to play on a wood court...not on the kind of court she had trained on - dirt. In Fairbanks, you can play on a great wood chip court, soft and forgiving, never a splinter, and play by the Alaska Summer rules of bank shots from the black spruce surround the court are good, while once a game you can call "Four" and get an additional hit on your side. Sure we all know the beach option is on sand, but why not go down to the Rio Grande River and put up portable courts on the sand bars. Put a court in your back yard and LIGHT it, so you can play in the cool of the evening or night. To the north, fill an ice rink with sand in the summer.

Take a tip from Chinese 9 man practices, get access to an asphalt parking lot, near some shade trees, and put two cars about 15 meters apart, anchoring your portable court to the front and back wheels. Roll out indoor carpet over the ice at the Vail rink, and put up four nice courts, though it can be a bit cold on the feet for the line judges standing there. Get permission to use the concrete courts at any local tennis court, leaving the net up as a ball barrier, anchoring two nets lengthwise to the fence, chalking the lines, and that same fence keeping the balls near. Put up one of over 100 grass courts at the Motherlode, and play all day long in the shadow of Aspen Ski areas. Come back later, and keep your ski boots on and play in the snow. And who has not had some fun times playing water volleyball, where the court lines are whatever the shape of the pool is...

Don't have a net? Play balloon ball over a table in the living room. Bring ropes to a gym and string them to make more courts. Create stations for extra training in your gym, by putting up a rope or net in a corner, backed by mesh netting, and spike away with a partner. Take advantage of those 6 or more volleyball training devices each gym seems to have, and play setting and passing games of accuracy (bank shots do not count), off of one bounce. String a rope between the two inside poles of a double court, and let kids play doubles there. String a rope from your outside poles to the wall and train.

Let kids spike and play over a tennis net, no matter how short, they can pound the ball, just let the diggers get one bounce if you want. Hit over a permanent soccer goal, with the net removed, for a great grass game. Light a court in your backyard, no matter what size or surface, and let the kids PLAY, without being coached, solving their own rule disagreements, and learning new ways to make shots and more. Teach them to control what they can – attitude and effort. Hustle beats talent when talent does not hustle. Finally, let them train daily with their NON-dominate hand – do you know why? These ideas are simple. Let them play.

Brief looks at the many areas to be experienced include:

1. *Beach Doubles* – While everyone knows of this option, after three consecutive gold medals by USA teams in the Olympics, many indoor coaches fail to use the training advantages of this game. A review of the most recent HP National Beach Camp, where one parent said they would need to come back 15 more times, to finally get all the information shared.
2. *Grass Doubles* – Most sand courts inland are hard to get access to as a junior, for several reasons. Every club should own several grass systems like those made by Park and Sun, for summer/extra training. In traveling to many nations, I always marvel at the surfaces most kids learn and develop on, from dirt to asphalt, and feel fortunate that we have so many indoor courts and grass playing fields.
3. *Triples/Four Person* – Sure Monarch of the court is every player's favorite game option. What also can be developed is ranking tournaments for the two and three person variations. Movement and increasing the opportunities to respond, along with free ball pressure training will be covered. (Carry over – shots.
4. *Coed* – The ladies benefit more from playing with/against the men, but in any version above, on grass or on sand, this variation is a huge hit with players. A look at the way this game has helped develop many female players.
5. *Father/ Son & Father/Daughter and Mother/Son & Mother/Daughter* - Hold doubles tournaments on that Sunday of Mothers and Fathers Day. Family first can be blended into extra volleyball playing and fun.
6. *Soft Volley* – Badminton nets raised on badminton courts. Three courts where one volleyball court exists. The option of how to put up 9 small courts for younger kids is done by linking two badminton nets together down the middle of each court, much like we do for youth volleyball with two regulation volleyball nets, or rope.
7. *Paralympic Sitting Volleyball* – Lose the gym, don't cancel practice get into the cafeteria and train the sitting game. Help get kids comfortable with the floor and defense. Adopt a

Paralympic hopeful and become a better player and program. (Top Spin and great over the net armswing, eyes to target on passing, shots, using the hands, fast reactions of a 5 meter deep court) www.usparalympics.org

8. *Wallyball* – Joe Garcia, the inventor of the game, has lots of information on the web page at www.uswallyball.org. New developments in the program include a high school program and summer camp training opportunities.
9. *Special Olympics* – The unified version of the game, playing with three Special Olympians on the court, both inspires and humbles most Jr. Olympians. Passing, setting and hitting in less than five minutes at the World Games. www.specialolympics.org
10. *Chinese 9-man* – Training on asphalt, using cars to anchor the standards. Rule modifications and the national tournaments on the streets of Chinatowns in major cities like Washington DC, San Francisco, Toronto, New York and Boston. Their suicide player in the 5.1.3 defense, was the original libero, loose ball handling, and rally scoring to 21 have been the norm for many decades. 10 meter square courts and a hit into the net negates the contact, so you have 4 total hits. <http://www.nacivt.com/>
11. *Sepak Takraw/Buka* – Big in SE Asia, this game is a popular PE game for many schools in the USA, resembling hackey sack. Teach kids how to use their feet in volleyball-like ways. <http://203.200.152.230/takraw/main.php>
12. *RocBall* – Spike the ball over the net into a soccer goal, or some other goal, to get a point. The man says he invented rally scoring. <http://www.saipan.com/business/rocball/index.htm>
13. *Brazil Foot Volley* – Digs and even sets with the chest, great reading and anticipation, a very popular game in Miami and the beaches of Brazil. To see the teams in action, click on the videos at <http://www.footvolley.net/>
14. *Mud Volleyball* – Fundraise for charity, or your own program, dozens of mud tournaments are held nationally. One of the best is at www.mudvolleyball.org