



Volleyball ACE™ Power Tips

Sponsored by Dimensional Software

Volume No. 20, Issue No. 3 ~ Feb. 11, 2009

Official Drill Bulletin of the American Volleyball Coaches Association

Setter and Quick Hitter Efficiency

By Mark Pavlik, Penn State University

The relationship between the quick hitter and the setter is one in which both players not only rely upon, but also enhance, the other's performance. Therefore, it is crucial to create situations in practice where the quick hitter and setter can learn how each other will react. The performance of the quick hitter and the setter becomes critical to the execution of the offense if and only if a team has reached a level of passing efficiency enabling an up-tempo multiple attack offense to be run.

Side-out Opportunities

An attacker will have the opportunity to swing at a ball in two situations: the side-out offense and in transition. The side-out offense holds great importance because the opponent simply cannot score if the ball is put away off the first swing. This importance has been magnified since the inception of rally-score games.

The transition swing can result in a point scoring opportunity or another side-out opportunity, but generally is less patterned and more predictable than the first swing side-out offense. Many times transition offense appears to be an exercise in chaos with a poorly controlled first contact, attackers scrambling visually to find the ball and the setter penetrating at any angle.

Since the setter is in motion, the quick hitter may be unsure of a take-off point for an efficient swing at a set. Moreover, if the setter is not aware of the quick hitter's approach, is it any surprise the ball usually goes high and outside? The predictability of the transition offense is centered around the apparent chaotic reaction of the blockers trying to become attackers.

Effective transition and side-out multiple offense requires attackers visually to find and react to the first contact, the setter getting to the ball under control, and the quick attacker being in the air as a target when the setter has the ball. It also requires an extremely tenacious attitude and an unwavering work ethic on the part of the quick hitter. The responsibility with that position is to be in the air when the setter has the ball every time the ball crosses the net.

Much like the defensive axiom of no judgment being made as to whether or not a ball is playable until maximum effort to play the ball is exerted, the quick hitter has no judgment to make except how to get in the air when the setter has the ball—no matter the result of the first contact. The quick hitter must transition off the net after blocking. It helps to turn toward the area in which the ball is di-



An effective quick attack requires attackers visually to find and react to the first contact, the setter getting to the ball under control and the quick attacker being in the air as a target when the setter has the ball.

Photo courtesy of FIVB

Education ❖ Recognition ❖ Innovation

www.avca.org

rected while landing on the opposite foot and running in search of the ball.

The quick hitter must realize, at times, the classical approach may not be effective due to time and distance factors, so improvisation must be encouraged. Great athletes always find ways to get their bodies into position to execute a skill, so demand the quick hitter be in the air every time the setter has the ball.

This does not mean the quick hitters should consider themselves as “fakers.” Every coach has seen a pass followed by a set outside and as the outside set is peaking the quick hitter has just jumped and executed a perfect arm-swing. This tactic deceives no one and offensively covers nobody but the net tape. It is the setter’s responsibility to decide if the quick hitter is the best option. The quick hitter must always be in the air, looking for the set, giving the setter that option, and being prepared to do something with the ball but never ever being a “faker.”

Getting the Hitter and Setter in Sync

To get the setters and quick hitters working in unison, begin by establishing where at the net the setter will penetrate. I prefer to have the setter penetrate to the right front corner, then move to the pass at target. This tactic enables the setter to view the entire court and have the weight forward when setting. This should also eliminate any backpedaling to balls passed to the extreme right off the court.

Secondly, insist the setter jump set the ball at every opportunity. This promotes a quicker exchange from setter to hitter. Show where the ball is to be set when running any quick series (i.e., 31, 41, 51, 61). The preference is to set the ball anywhere from the midline of the setter’s body to the left shoulder in relation to the net.

This motion is used when setting a ball to the outside. It will also force the quick hitter to jump, keeping the ball (and the setter) between her and the net. This gives the hit-

CALENDAR

- Feb. 13-14** **Volleyball Hall of Fame Morgan Classic**
Springfield College, UC-San Diego,
George Mason University, St. Francis University
Blake Arena, Springfield College
Springfield, Mass.
- April 17-18** **2009 Molten Division III Men’s Invitational Volleyball Championship**
Ramapo College, Nahwah, N.J.
- May 7-9** **40th Annual National Collegiate Men’s Volleyball Championship**
Smith Fieldhouse, Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah
- May 23-30** **USA Volleyball Adult Open Championships**
Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minn.
- June 26-July 4** **Eighth Annual Women’s Pan American Cup**
(U.S. Women’s National Team)
University of Miami and Florida International
University
- June 26-July 5** **USA Junior Olympic Girls’ Volleyball Championships**
Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami, Fla.
- June 27-30** **2009 JVDA National Championships**
Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, Ky.
- July 1-8** **USA Junior Olympic Boys’ Volleyball Championships**
Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga.
- July 22-26** **USA Volleyball High Performance Championships**
Ft. Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center



An excellent quick hitter has an extremely tenacious attitude and an unwavering work ethic.
Photo courtesy of USAV

ter a full armswing and follow-through without worry of raking the net and allows the hitter a wider visual perspective of the potential block being faced.

This take-off style can be altered if the pass pulls the setter off the net. The quick hitter may then be at a 45-degree angle from the setter and as far away from the setter as the ball is from the net, with hips open to the setter. The hitter must still be in a position where the swing and follow-through will be unencumbered by the net. The setter will then "shoot" the ball in front of the hitter's shoulder closest to the net.

The second option is to have the quick hitter's take-off remain constant in relation to the setter as described previously. The view of the block and all hitting angles will not be affected. However, a flat shot will be required and can be extremely effective in this situation.

Another benefit gained is not requiring the setter to change any mechanics in delivering this set. Again, encourage players to experiment with these options as often as possible. The one that becomes most effective will be that with which they become most confident.

As mentioned previously, the quick hitter must visually find the ball as she is transitioning from the net. Younger quick hitters and younger setters seem afflicted by a similar problem: standing and watching a teammate pass the ball, then attempting to initiate their own movement. Invariably, unless the pass is extremely high, the setter is late getting to the ball and the quick hitter is late also.

Encourage the setter to release from defense immediately upon identifying that the ball will not be attacked into the defensive area of responsibility. With the quick hitter, em-

phasize a quick transition from the net, running with the head up, searching for the ball with a forward lean to the body. Attention must be on the ball, not the setter.

Too many times the opportunity for an effective transition swing is eliminated due to the quick hitter watching and literally arriving on top of the setter. Suggest that the quick hitter keep the ball outside and slightly in front of the right shoulder and follow it as if the ball has the hitter on a short leash. If the hitter is leaving the ground as the pass is falling to about head level, the timing should put her in the air as the setter has the ball.

To help the quick hitters and setters develop these aspects of their game, devise a simple pass-set-quick hit drill. Initiate this drill by tossing a ball over the net to a passer who overheads the ball to the setter, who jump sets the quick attack. This mirrors a free ball situation and allows the setter and quick hitter to follow the ball. (You may choose to have another setter be the passer.) Then run the same drill with the setter and quick hitter originating from their respective serve reception areas. You may find the players making small adjustments to their starting positions so they become more comfortable initiating their hitting lanes.

The next step is to add a transition drill for the setters and hitters. Several options exist for this type of drill. One is to have a controlled hit off a stand with the quick hitter attempting to block. The ball is passed to the setter for the transition quick set. Another option is to add one, two, or even three possible front-row attackers forcing the quick hitter to move to block then attack. The attackers can be asked to establish offensive coverage when hitting then move to their blocking responsibilities to try to stop the on-



WHO SAYS HIGH-PERFORMANCE VOLLEYBALL GEAR HAS TO BE BORING?

Introducing VB RAGS:
The top selling volleyball brand in the Caribbean is making its debut into the US market.


Since 1991, VB RAGS has been turning the volleyball world upside down with a high dose of creativity, and a genuine contempt for the status quo. We hail from the Caribbean, where vibrant colors are used to project the fun, high-energy, island-vibe, and passion with which we live ... and play volleyball. Our beach volleyball roots are also evident in our unique designs. VB RAGS offers a full line of volleyball products including high-performance volleyball shoes.

As we enter the US market in 2009, we seek to erase the ridiculous notion that high-performance volleyball gear needs to be boring. In a world where all volleyball brands look alike, we are happy to walk alone. Like the eagle, we don't flock, we fly solo.

What about you?

VB RAGS is a proud sponsor of the AVCA

NO/SO CAL 310.344.4466
CENTRAL CAL 559.960.8965
MID WEST 260.348.7239
MID ATLANTIC 757.613.6821
FLORIDA 407.928.6793
CARIBBEAN / INTL / OTHER 787.688.8243



Effective quick hitters play high above the net.
Photo courtesy of FIVB



coming quick attack. The rally may be played out with the team of attackers only hitting to a specified area. It is important to have the setter penetrate from the back row and also block in these drills (if your setter is asked to block in competition) so they learn to get to the ball under control and jump set in a myriad of situations.

Yet another drill series that involves a segment of the game is a one-on-one competition. The quick attacker is swinging at any quick series set against a commit blocker or a double block. The result of the swing can be in favor of the attacker (e.g. killer blockers' net violation) or of the blockers (e.g. stuff block, controlled block or hitting error). Immediately after the ball passes the block or is blocked, the next ball is put in play on the blockers' side of the net, forcing transition to occur on both sides of the net. These drills can be designed to have the quick hitter transition right-to-left or left-to-right both in attacking and blocking.

The next step is to move to a six-on-six situation where a kill resulting from a quick attack is weighted more heavily than any other kill, or where the only front-row attack can only be a quick series set. Any other attack must be a back-row one. Decide what your team must do to be successful with the quick attack and design your own unique drills to address those needs.

Blocking Schemes

One more extremely important concept needs to be discussed. Blocking schemes are becoming more and more sophisticated and the one-ball set off the setter is not as worrisome to the blocking team as in the past. The commit

blocker just sets up near the setter and expects an approximately perpendicular approach by the quick hitter directly to the setter. The offensive advantage may not be that great, even if the quick hitter is up on time. The advantage will be reclaimed if the commit block is not as solid or is reaching. The concept of making the blocker move by "chasing" the hitter is an important one.

In the men's game, quick hitters play higher above the net and "hang" longer (appearing to fly past blockers) than their female counterparts. However, the slide set in the women's game can accomplish the same effect as a moving hitter passes through a stationary blocker's field of vision. In any quick attack drill, either for the side-out offense or in transition, work with the quick attackers to develop a more parallel approach to attack to daylight or simply between blockers.

As quick hitters and setters develop the necessary tenacity and intuitive communication, drills can be designed to promote tactical considerations of the quick attack. But, for the quick attack to be effective, passing must be at an efficient level, the setter must consistently get to the ball, and the quick hitter must always transition and be in the air when the setter has the ball. The entire offense will rise to a higher level if these responsibilities are carried out every time the ball passes across the net.

Reprinted from Coaching Volleyball: Offensive Fundamentals and Techniques (2004), pp. 134-138. Monterey, CA: Coaches Choice. To order your copy, log on to www.avca.org.

VOLLEYBALL ACE™ DRILLS

Quick vs. Quick

From *101 Winning Volleyball Drills From the AVCA* (2000)

Number of Players: 8

Number of Balls: 40

Objective:

To convert a quick attack into a quick attack response.

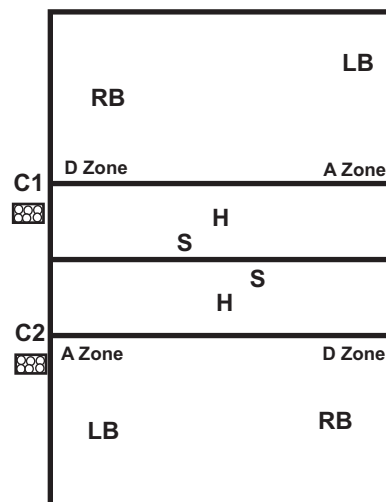
Directions:

1. Each team consists of one setter (S), one quick hitter (H) and two angle diggers (LB, RB).
2. The coach (C) initiates play with a down ball to each team alternately.
3. Preferred responses include the dig, set, quick

attack. Secondary responses include dig, set A or D zone, attack.

4. Rally score to five points. At five, quick attackers switch teams and play again. Points are scored only for quick attack kills or stuff blocks.

5. The setter does not block, but assumes defensive responsibilities at the net.



Middles Attack Pass

Peggy Martin, Central Missouri State University
(From *101 Volleyball Drills*, 1998)

Number of Players: 3-6

Number of Balls: Steady supply

Objective:

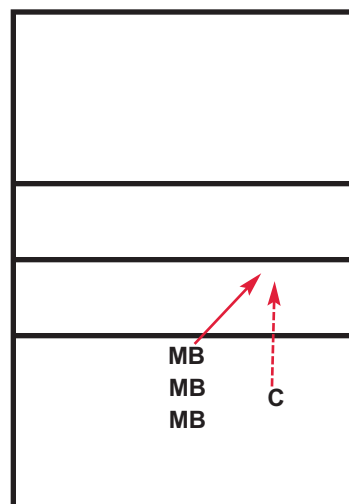
To help middle blockers develop a knack for watching the ball as it is passed to the setter and for approaching to attack the quick set by using the correct timing.

Directions:

1. The coach (C) begins the drill by tossing a ball in a manner that simulates a pass or dig to the net.
2. The middle blocker (MB) then approaches and attacks the ball with a full arm swing and/or a tip.
3. At the beginning of the drill, the coach should toss

perfect, antenna-high passes until all the hitters have shown that they can successfully approach and attack the perfect pass.

4. Once the hitters have proven their capability on the early tosses, the coach should then toss the passes higher and lower to different zones of the net.



Middle Blocker/Right-Side Transition

By Stephanie Schleuder, Macalester College

Number of Players: 7

Number of Balls: Steady supply

Objective:

To work on right-side and middle transition at the net.

Directions:

1. The coach (C) enters the ball to the passer (P) and the right-side player (RS) transitions off the net.
2. The passer passes to setter 1 (S1) and she backsets to the right-side player, who hits, and a new RS steps in.
3. Blockers on the other side are all middles (M) and they transition to block the right-side hitters. If they don't block, the middle player transitions off the net

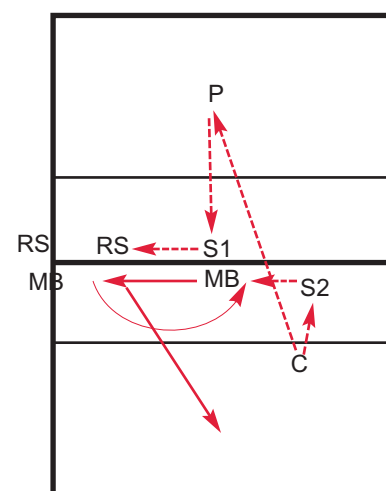
as the coach tosses a pass to setter 2 (S2) and S2 sets to the middle.

4. Play is continuous, middle players rotate and the coach enters another ball.

5. Encourage considerable talking by players. Keep the speed of the drill gamelike and make sure players are using good transition footwork.

Variations:

1. The right-side attacker can hit slides or crosses.
2. Middles can hit slides or quick sets (or others.)
3. Middles have to hit two or three in a row with an abbreviated transition back and forth off the net.
4. Add a middle blocker on the other side to block and hit different sets.
5. Substitute some outside hitters to double block their position with the middles versus the right-side attack.



AVCA/Volleyball ACE™ Power Tips Directory

•Volleyball ACE: 877.223.8225

email: coach@ace4vb.com

•AVCA Headquarters: 866.544.2822

email: members@avca.org

•AVCA Grass Roots (Club) Rep., John Sample 817.545.4551

email: jsample@dibimail.com

•AVCA Grass Roots (HS) Rep., Jodi Manore 734.850.6269

email: manorej@bedford.k12.mi.us

INTENSITY

In the game and in practice!

Bring the same intensity you get in games to practice.

Use the best stat keeping tool, Volleyball ACE, for matches to determine what you need to work on in practice. Then use the TapRecorder during practice to perfect your game. The results will be amazing.



TapRecorder

Version 2

- Now! Works on Pocket PC and Palm Handhelds
- Has Spreadsheet interface with TapRecording Cells
- Includes Built-In Volleyball PracticeStats Reports
- Can Create Custom Handheld Applications
- Calculates Efficiency % and More

Tap Tap Tap...

Instant Stat!

The Power of Two

Volleyball

Software for Coaches

Version 6

ACE

- Fast, On-Court Stats
- Pass-Serve Ratings and Charting
- Box Scores, Points Per Rotation and More
- Runs on Palm (Zire, Tungsten) and Pocket PC (iPAQ, Axio)
- Uploads data for NAIA and NCAA stats reporting



Now available
for Pocket PC
and Palm handhelds!

We are
passionate
about
Volleyball!

ORDER YOUR SOFTWARE TODAY!
www.ace4vb.com

Call: Toll free: (877) 223-8225 Web: www.ace4vb.com FAX: (650) 948-2616