

Too much emphasis on vertical?

It is apparent that jumping ability is highly beneficial to the volleyball athlete. Greater jumping ability seems to translate into more kills and blocked shots, and in some cases, separates starters from non-starters or those that make the team and those that don't. As such, a great deal of training for volleyball focuses on improving one's vertical jump. However, too much time devoted to increasing the vertical jump may become problematic. Often times athletes, especially young athletes, will become deficient in other athletic qualities (i.e. speed and agility). At the elite level it may be more appropriate to fine tune training methods because of the already high level of adaptation that has occurred. In comparison, youth athletes have a huge margin for adaptation (improvement), and as such should focus their training on developing general athleticism. This requires a variety of training methods and movements, rather than merely focusing only on a single athletic component of volleyball. Therefore, incorporating speed, agility, footwork, and balance drills are critically important in developing the young athlete, in our case volleyball. The net effect is a young athlete with the capacity for an explosive first step, change of direction ability, movement in tight spaces, and optimal body positioning.

As such, when countless hours are being spent on vertical jumping...think again. Think again about how young athletes adapt and also how they respond to training. Adding variation to training eliminates monotony and thereby reduces ones risk of overtraining.

Remember...train hard, but train smart!

Coach Ian