

Playing YMCA Volleyball Bronze Edition



YOUTH SUPER SPORTS™
We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

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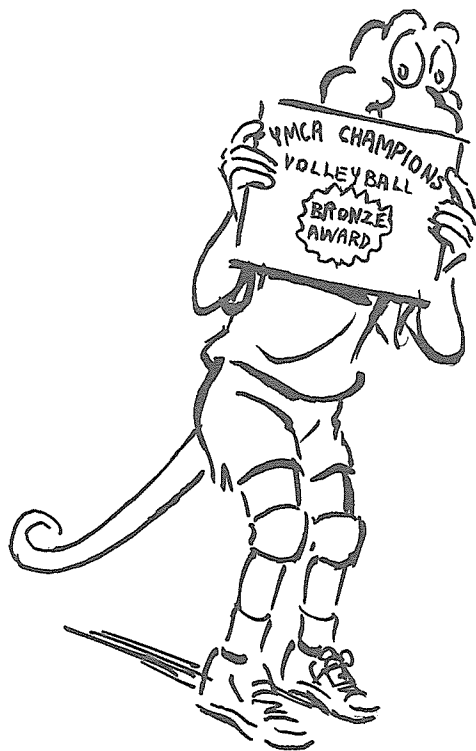
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Welcome to YMCA Youth Super Sports



You're a YMCA Youth Super Sport

You're a YMCA Youth Super Sport when you play on a YMCA team. You'll learn volleyball skills like how to spike and other cool things like setting effectively and team strategies. But that's not all. You'll get high-fives from lots of new friends, find out more about how to stay strong and healthy, and learn more about being the best you—on and off the court.

A Look in the Book

The table of contents on pages iv-v shows where to find the information you need to know in this book. In addition, use the inside of the front cover to write down the team information your coach gives you. That way, it will always be in a handy place.

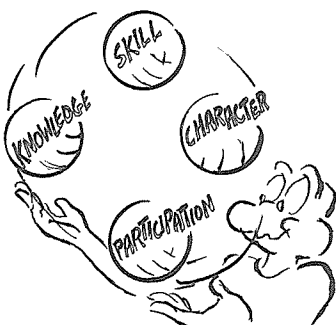
For the players participating in the YMCA Champions, chapter 7 explains how to earn the Bronze Award. So, grab your volleyball and find out what being a YMCA Youth Super Sport is all about.



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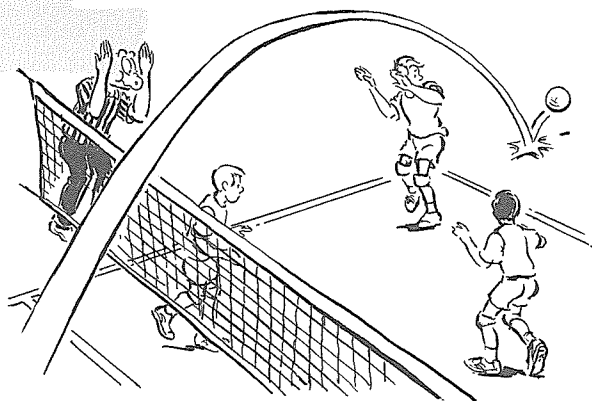
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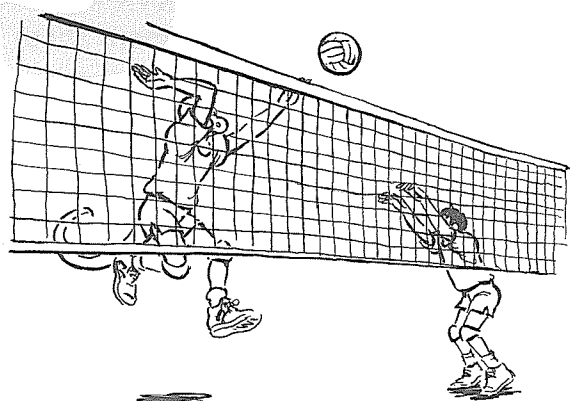
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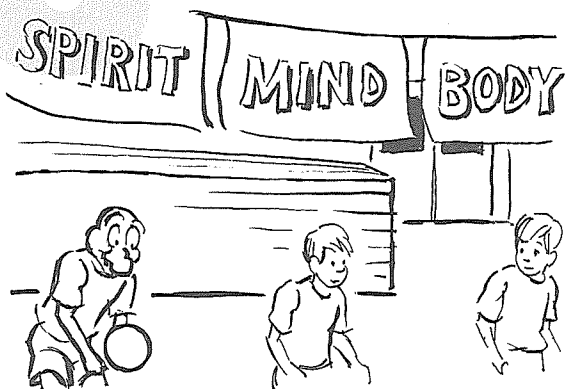
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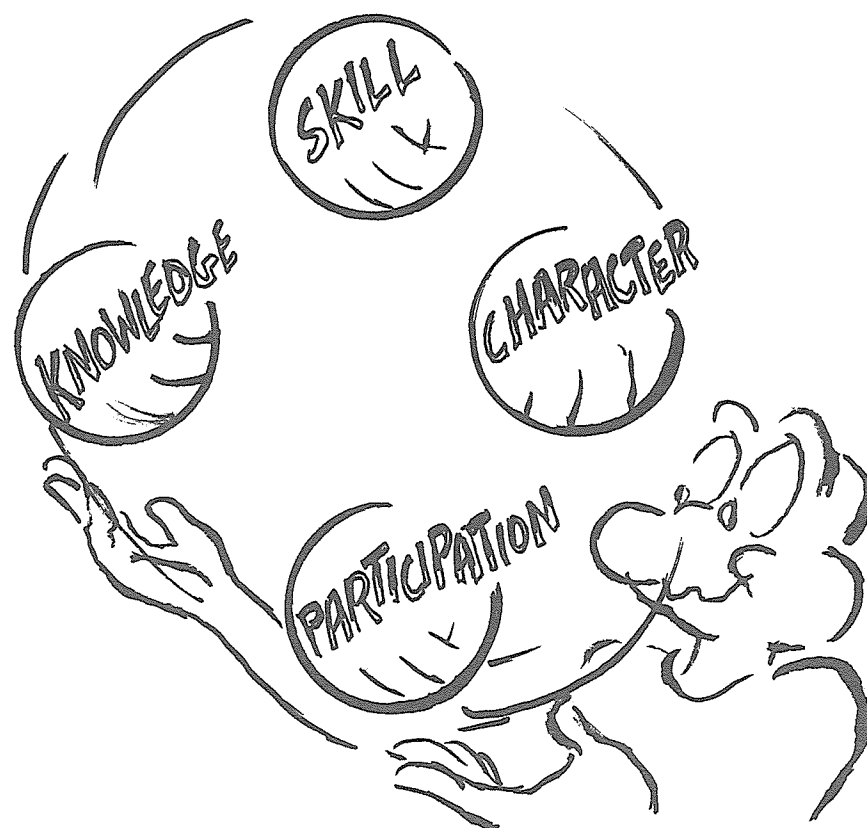


chapter

1

YMCA Youth Super Sports

The Cool Way to Stay Fit



You and lots of other kids are playing in YMCA Youth Super Sports. Kids who are 4 to 7 years old start on the YMCA Rookies teams. Older kids, ages 8 to 16, are on the YMCA Winners teams.

YMCA Rookies

You may have already played in a YMCA Rookies program. YMCA Rookies don't worry about keeping score, and everybody gets to play. The YMCA Rookies program is where kids learn by doing and practice by playing. As YMCA Rookies, players prepare for the YMCA Winners program you're in now. Do you have a little brother or sister who's between 4 and 7 years old? If you do, tell them about YMCA Rookies so they can get in the game, too!

YMCA Winners

YMCA Winners is for 8- to 16-year-olds. In YMCA Winners, players learn how to pass, set, and hit better. Your coach will teach you how to refine your skills to take your game to the next level. By the end of the season, you'll see a difference in how you play and understand volleyball. You'll learn some more advanced offensive and defensive strategies, and you'll make a team full of friends while you're at it. Usually, YMCA Winners volleyball teams practice once a week and play one game a week. Everyone on a team will get to play at least half of each game.

YMCA Champions

Every player in the YMCA Youth Super Sports program can be a champion! The YMCA Champions program offers fun and exciting chances to earn great awards in each YMCA Youth Super Sport offered. You can work on your own and with part-

ners for Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards—just like in the Olympics. Bronze is the first level, Silver is the second level, and Gold is the third and top level. You must start by working on getting your Bronze Award. At each level, you must pass four test criteria (areas) to earn an award. Here is what you must do to earn a Bronze Award:

- ⊙ **Knowledge**—You will be tested about volleyball rules and fitness facts. Chapters 2 through 5 and your practices and contests will help you study for the Volleyball Knowledge Test.
- ⊙ **Skill**—Your coach will test you on basic volleyball skills and tactics such as serving and passing. Chapters 3 and 4 will help you study for the Volleyball Skills Tests, which are found in chapter 7. You will complete two Skills Tests with partners. Ask teammates to be your partner. Or, ask your YMCA Champions coach to assign you partners.
- ⊙ **Participation**—You must not miss more than three practices and games combined. All absences must be excused.
- ⊙ **Character**—Your character will be evaluated by your YMCA Winners coach and one other adult. To earn this part of your Bronze Award, you need to receive passing scores in four areas: respect, responsibility, honesty, and caring. Chapter 6 in this book will help you understand what YMCA Youth Super Sports values in a person's character.

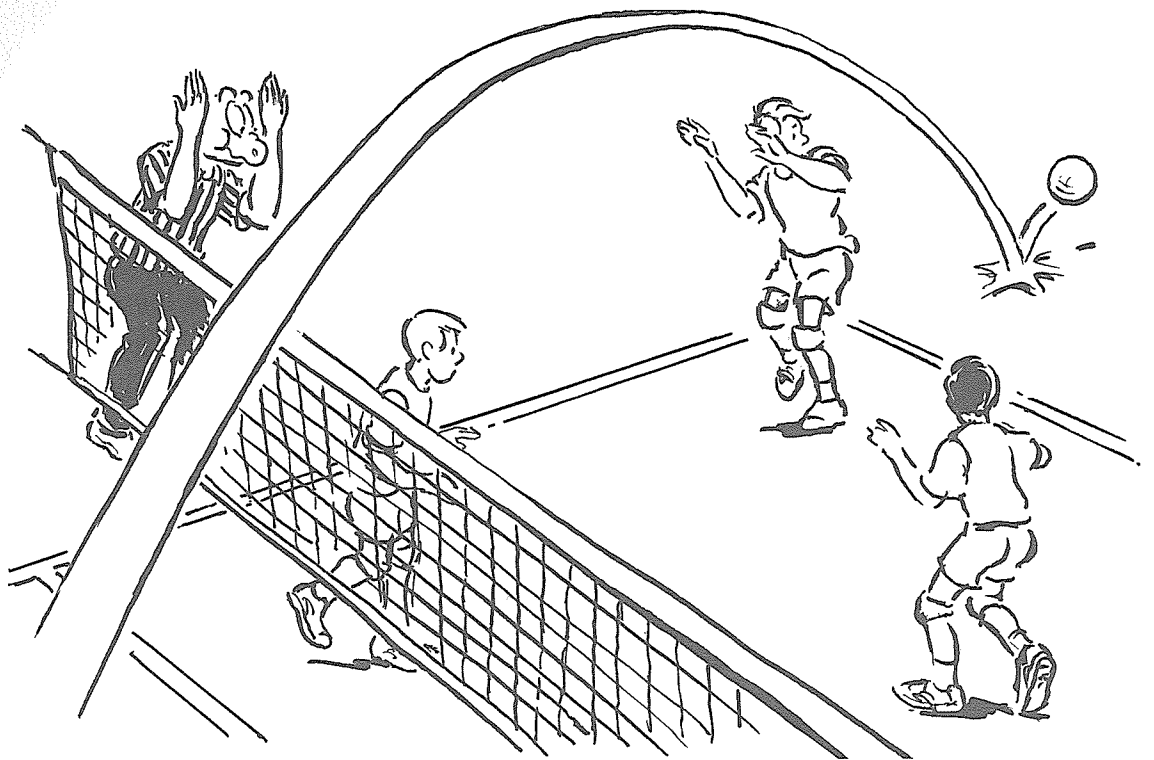
Chapter 7 tells you more about how to earn the Bronze Award for volleyball. Earning a YMCA Champions Award takes time and effort. But you can do it! And in the end you will be a better athlete and person—both on and off the volleyball court. You'll have earned something you can be truly proud of.



chapter
2

Order on the Court

Rules and Equipment



This chapter tells you what you need to know about the volleyball court, rules, fair play, and equipment. Learn these so that your games will go more smoothly. Then you can work on being the best player you can be.

Rules

On the volleyball court, rules keep the game running smoothly and fairly for everyone. It's everyone's job to obey the rules. Officials make sure the players follow the rules. Coaches teach and review the rules during practices. Then it's up to you to know and follow the rules during games. Knowing and following the rules keeps the game fair. This also helps prevent you and others from getting hurt. In this chapter, we will look at the main rules.

Teams

YMCA Winners Volleyball teams may have three, four, or six players on the court during official games. The size of the team depends on your age group and your local YMCA's rules.

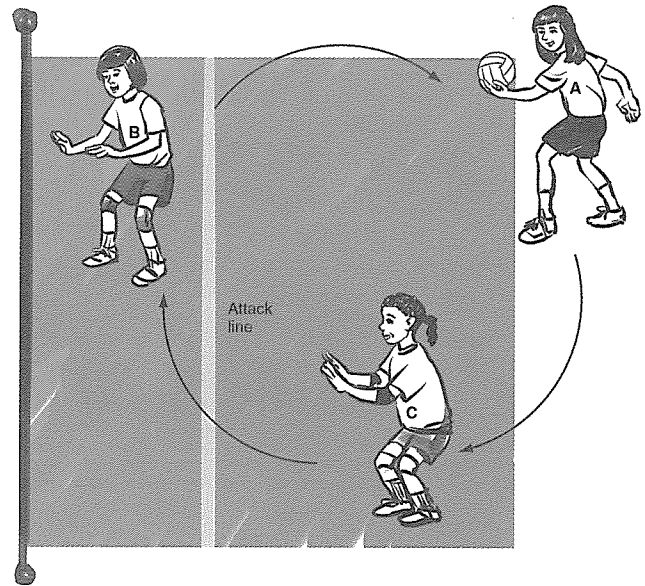
In all YMCA Youth Super Sports programs, every player gets to play at least half of each game. There are some ways to substitute players so that everyone has a chance to improve their skills. Usually, a player comes in for a teammate who has had a chance to serve and has just rotated back to serve. Another way to substitute is for the coach to make pairs of players for each position. Each person in the pair plays half of the game. A substitution may also take place during one of the two 30-second time-outs per game.

Player Rotation

The lineup at the beginning of the game is the order in which you and your teammates will serve throughout the game. Players on both teams must

be in the correct order to rotate. Once the ball is served, you may move out of your spot. Players rotate one spot clockwise when your team gets the serve. So:

1. Player A (who served last on this team) moves to where Player C was.
2. Player C moves to where Player B was.
3. Player B moves to where Player A was. Now Player B serves.

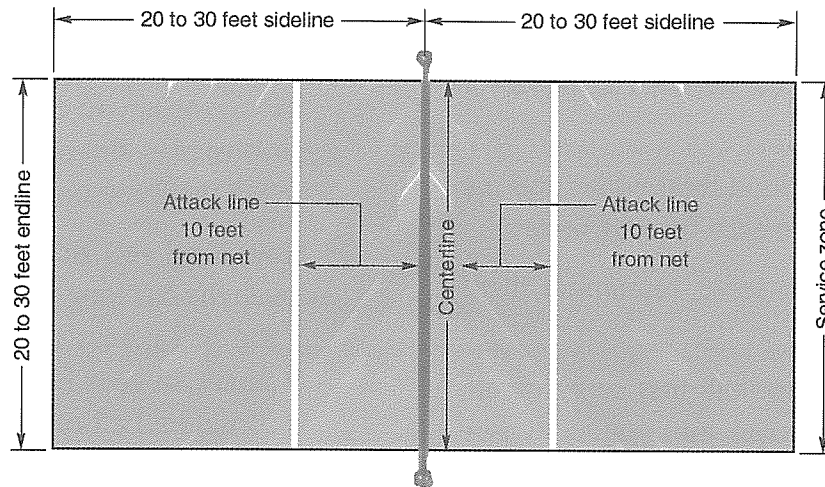


Court

Depending on your age level, your volleyball court may be 20 or 30 feet square on a side, and the net may be 6 feet high up to 7 feet $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches high. The court may also have an attack line marked 10 feet from each side of the net. The service zone is behind the end line on each side of the court. See the picture on the top of page 5.

Boundaries

Even though a court is marked in volleyball, the entire gym is available for play, until the ball lands out of bounds. If the ball lands on the ground outside of the court, it is out of bounds. Balls landing on the lines are in bounds. You can go outside the



court to play a ball. So if a teammate sends the ball out of bounds, you can chase the ball outside the court area and play it back into the court. But, remember, you may not catch or pick up a ball coming from the opponent until it lands in an out-of-bounds area.



Helping Your Teammates

Help your teammates by calling balls that are about to land “Out!” or “Good!” This helps them make good judgments about playing the ball.

Scoring

Your YMCA Winners team may use different ways of scoring:

🌀 **Rally scoring**—A point is scored on every serve, no matter which team served. The team who wins the point gets to serve the next point. This is the only method in which the nonserving team can score points. A team must win two out of three games to win the match. Games 1 and 2 are played until the first team gets 25 points. Game 3 is played until the first team gets 15 points.

🌀 **Timed games**—In large tournaments or competitions, timed games may be used to keep the competition moving along smoothly. Timed games are usually 8 to 10 minutes long. The clock starts when the ball is contacted on the serve and stops when the rally ends.

Teams change sides at 8 points in the deciding game.

Game Play

Here we will look at the rules of the game.

Serving

A coin toss decides the first serve of game 1. After that, teams take turns serving first. For example, the team that did not win the coin toss in game 1 automatically gets the first serve in game 2.

Several rules apply to serving. Some of them are unwritten rules—things you should do to be polite to your opponents. For example:

- ☉ Call “Serve!” before each of your serves.
- ☉ Roll the ball under the net back to the server between points.
- ☉ Call the score out loud (both yours and the opponent’s) before each of your serves.

When it’s your turn to serve, remember these written rules, too:

- ☉ You may use a free-ball toss serve or another serve your coach asks you to try (see the “Serving” section in chapter 4).
- ☉ You may move anywhere you want in the service zone (see the picture on page 5).
- ☉ When the official blows a whistle for the serve, you have 8 seconds to serve the ball.
- ☉ You are allowed one “service error” per turn serving.

Service errors happen when the ball:

- ☉ Touches a player of the serving team
- ☉ Does not pass over the net
- ☉ Touches the net
- ☉ Lands out of bounds

Touching the Ball During Play

You need to know several rules about how you can touch the ball in volleyball. A touch in volleyball is called a **contact**. Keep in mind that, in YMCA Winners Volleyball, you are expected to call your own illegal hits.

General rules:

- ☉ **Number of touches**—Each team may contact the ball three times in returning the ball to the opponents’ side of the net.
- ☉ **What you may hit with**—The ball may contact any part of your body. You can also hit

it with more than one body part. But both parts must touch at the exact same time. For example, you can use both arms in the forearm pass. But both arms must touch the ball at the same time.

- ☉ **How long you may touch**—You can only touch the ball long enough to move it again. If the ball comes to rest, even for a brief moment, in your hands or on your arms, it is considered a **hold**. This is a violation.
- ☉ **Double contact**—You can’t touch the ball two times in a row unless the first touch is a block. You have to let a teammate touch it before contacting it again.
- ☉ **Joust**—A joust occurs when players of opposing teams cause the ball to come to a rest above the net by contacting the ball at the same time. A joust is not a fault, and play continues.

Spiking (hitting) rules:

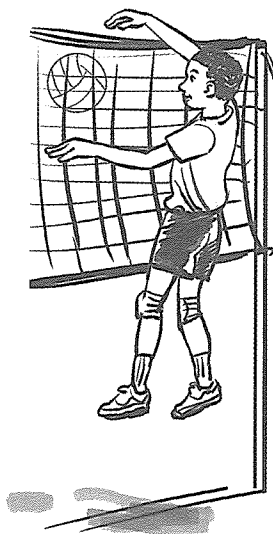
- ☉ Only frontcourt players are allowed to spike or return the ball with their hands in a position higher than the top of the net from *in front of the attack line* (see the picture of the court on page 5).
- ☉ Backcourt players may spike only when they take off (jump) *from behind the attack line*.

Net Play

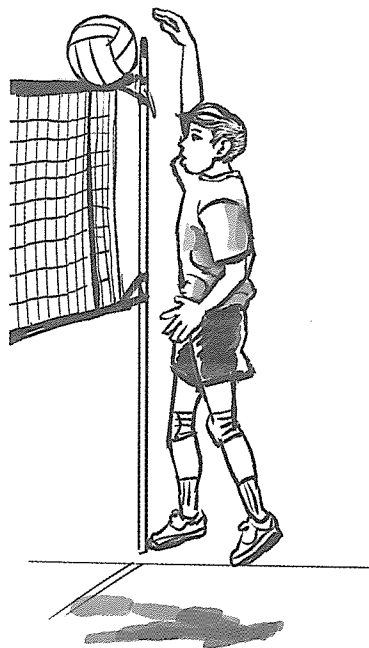
Your coach will teach you the rules you need to know for legal net play. Here are some of the main rules for playing near the net:

- ☉ You may not touch the net during play (except for insignificant contact when you’re not playing the ball). If you do touch the net while playing the ball, raise your hand to tell the official.

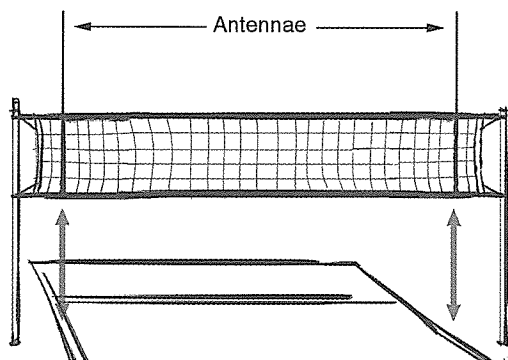




- ⦿ You may not spike (hit) the ball until part of the ball is on your side of the net.

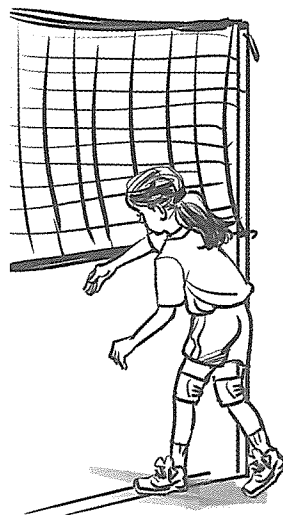
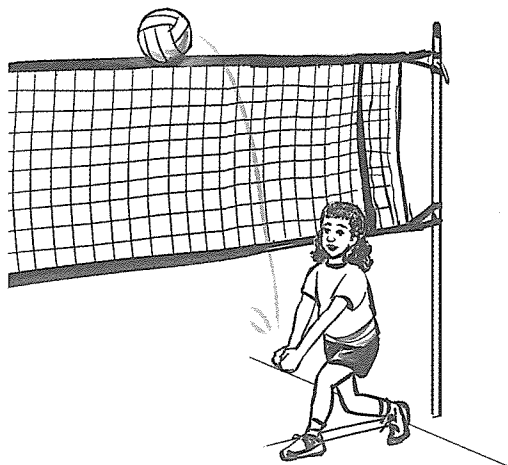


- ⦿ The ball must pass from one side of the net to the other over the legal part of the net. The legal part is between the tape markers and/or the antennae on the net.



- ⦿ Your feet may touch the opponent's court as long as some part of one or both feet are still on or above the centerline. No other body part may touch the opponent's court at any time.

- ⦿ The ball stays in play if it touches the legal part of the net in play—except on a serve.



Penalties and Officiating Signals

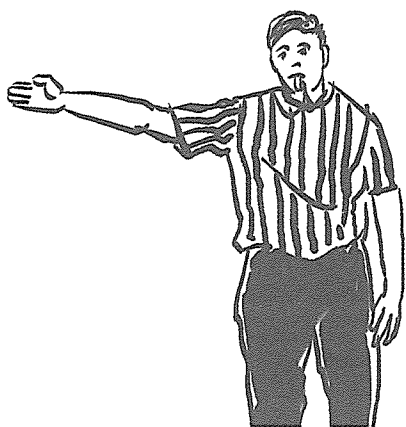
YMCA Winners Volleyball officials are volunteers, not professionals. They are there to help you learn the game and have good, clean fun. Treat them with respect at all times. Players who do any of the following will cause their team to be given an individual or team penalty:

- ⊙ Saying rude things or making rude gestures
- ⊙ Misbehaving during the game from outside the court

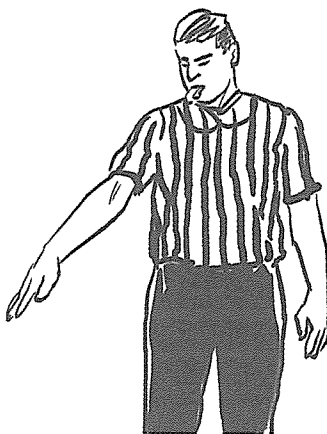
- ⊙ Yelling, shouting, or clapping at an opponent who is playing or attempting to play a ball

If your team commits an error when your team has the serve, your team loses the chance to serve. Such serving errors include hitting the ball out of bounds, into the net, or so the ball touches the net as it goes over it.

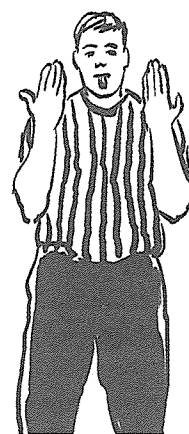
Volleyball officials use many signals to run a game. Make sure you know them so play can continue quickly and smoothly.



Side out



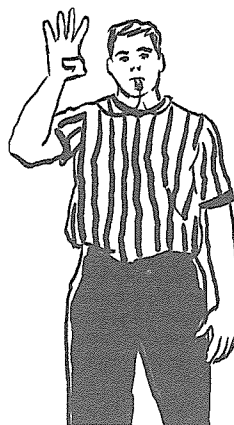
Ball in bounds



Ball out



Ball contacted and going out of bounds



Four hits

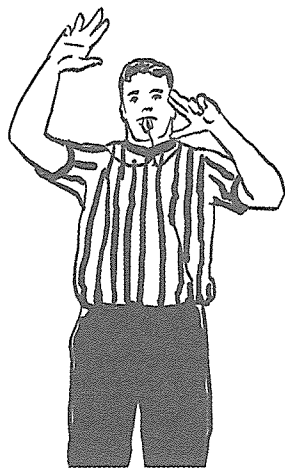


Crossing the centerline

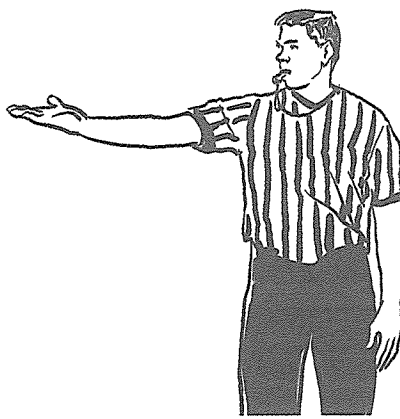




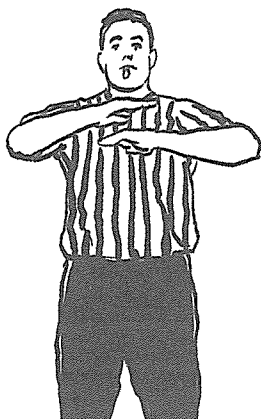
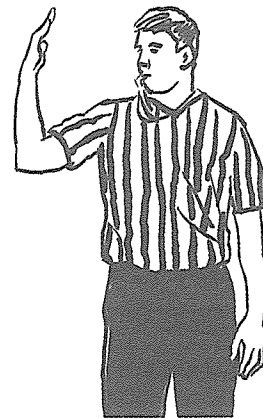
Held ball



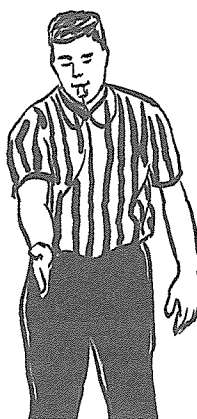
Double hit



Beckoning the serve



Substitution



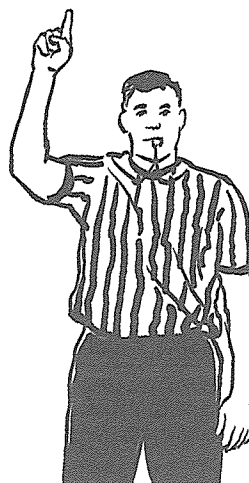
Ball served into net/
player touched net



Over the net



Double fault/
play over



Point



Equipment

You don't need a lot of equipment to play volleyball. Here are the basics.

Ball

If you'd like to have a volleyball of your own to practice with at home, ask your coach which size and type he or she thinks is best for you at this time. Or just have fun with a beach ball!

Uniform

Your coach will tell you what to wear for your uniform. Your coach may ask you to wear a team shirt. Usually, a T-shirt and shorts that allow you to move freely are fine. You might like to have a long-sleeved shirt to help take the sting out of the ball on your forearms. When playing outside, consider the weather conditions when deciding what to wear. Here are some other tips to keep in mind.

☉ **Shoes**—Volleyball or court shoes give you the support and cushioning your feet need on a hard court. Don't choose running shoes, though; they don't give you the side-to-side support you need. Make sure you break in your shoes before wearing them while playing hard.

Some players choose to wear shoes on grassy courts. Others play barefoot. Most beach players go barefoot or play with socks on so that the sand doesn't burn them. Ask your coach what his or her rules are about wearing or not wearing shoes.

☉ **Socks**—Socks are more important than you might think, because they help protect your feet. When wearing shoes, don't ever play without socks, because your feet can blister. Choose a pair of socks that are thick and snug on your feet. Cotton absorbs sweat well. Your coach may ask you to wear a specific color to match your uniform.

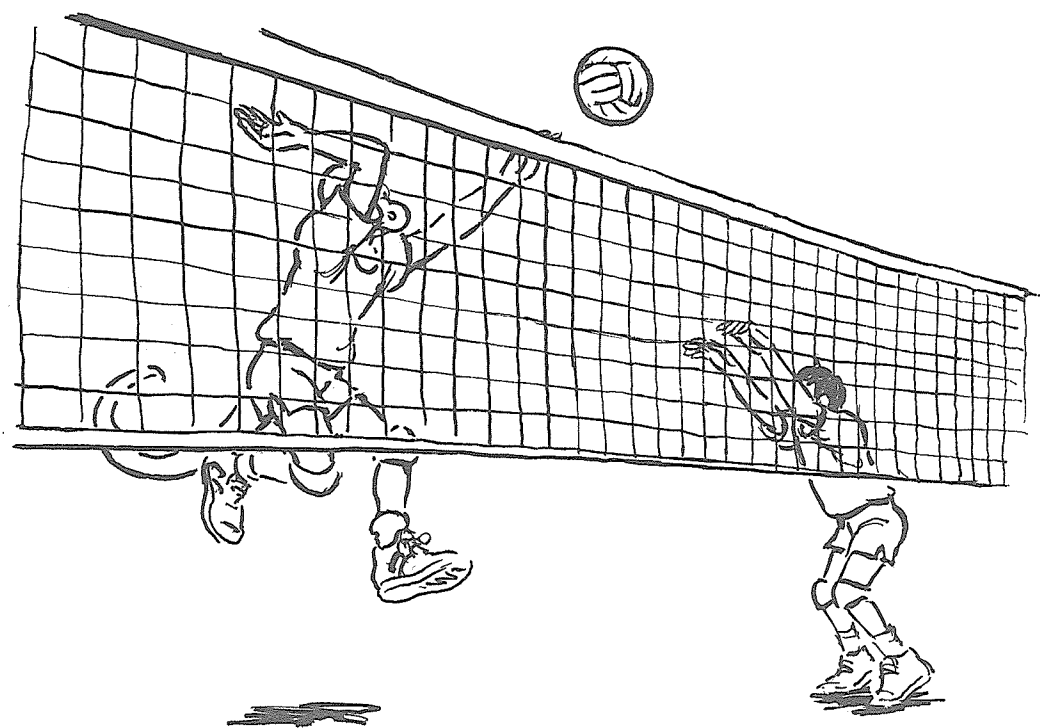
☉ **Knee Pads**—Knee pads help protect your knees when you're playing on hard surfaces. You can wear them on grass or sand courts, too. But most players don't feel they need them. The pads you buy should fit snugly and stay comfortable for a long time. If you can't find appropriate knee pads at a local sporting goods store, ask your coach about ordering some through a volleyball magazine or catalog.

☉ **Jewelry**—You may *not* wear any jewelry, including watches, during games or practices. It can catch on teammates and their clothing and hurt one or both of you.

chapter 3

Dig It!

Learning Volleyball Tactics



“Oh! Great back-row set! Score one bonus point for Team A.”

Score an extra point for completing a back-row set? That’s right! In YMCA Youth Super Sports, you get to play “mini-games.” Mini-games use only one or a few of the tactics and skills of volleyball to give you a chance to practice just what your coach is teaching you. So if, as in the example, your team is working on back-row sets, you might score a point for doing just that. Mini-games get everyone involved. This means everyone gets a lot of practice. There is almost no standing around waiting your turn. Cool!

Playing many different mini-games will teach you to think while playing, getting you ready for the real thing. And you’ll have fun, too! This chapter will remind you about some of the basics of volleyball tactics you are working on in practices and games. The “Practice With Friends” sections will help you discover ways to improve your volleyball game.

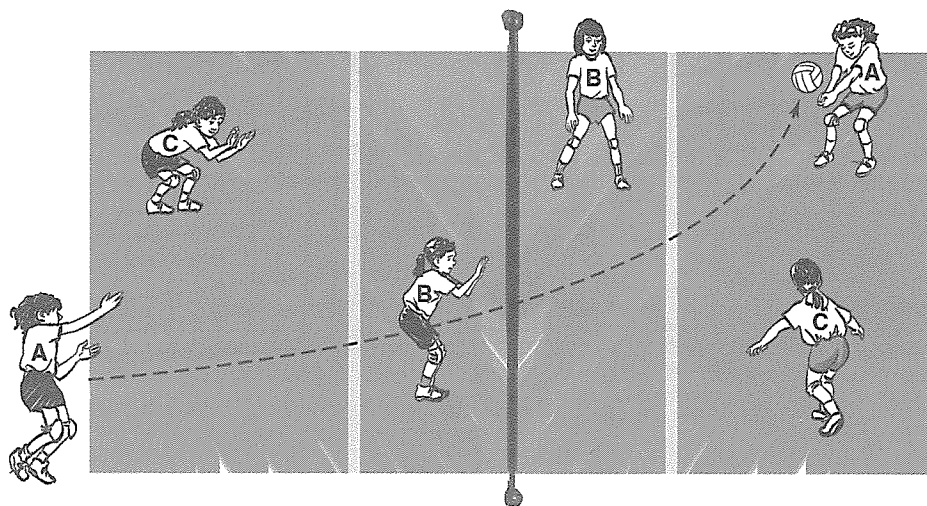
Positions on Three-Player Teams

Each position helps your team play a good game. The picture shows where players should be posi-

tioned before the serve in three-on-three volleyball. Note that on both sides of the net, one player begins in the frontcourt (front half of the court) and the other two begin in the backcourt (back half of the court). Look at the picture on the bottom of the page and learn what each position’s responsibilities include:

- ⊙ Player A—Player A serves and then becomes a defensive player.
- ⊙ Player B—Player B is the main setter on offense and a digger on defense.
- ⊙ Player C—Player C is the main attacker on offense and a digger on defense. This player will also occasionally set the ball for Player A.
- ⊙ Players A and C usually touch the ball first when the opponent sends it over the net.

These are the basic jobs of each position. But if someone is not able to do his or her job, another player must help out. *Playing YMCA Volleyball: Silver Edition* explains positions for four-player contests, and *Playing YMCA Volleyball: Gold Edition* explains positions for six-on-a-side volleyball.

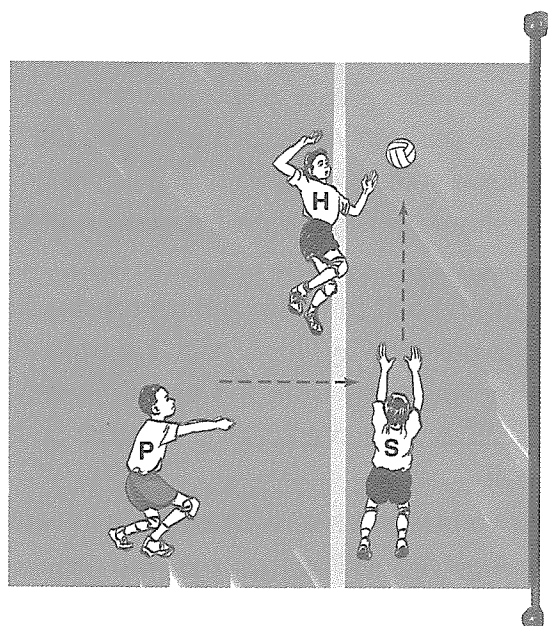


Offensive Tactics

The **offense** begins with a pass to the setter, a set to a hitter, and an attack over the net, as seen in the picture below:

- ⊙ Offense—When your team gets the ball after a serve or volley (when the ball comes back from the other team).
- ⊙ Pass—Sending the ball to the setter so that the setter can set up the attack.
- ⊙ Set—Sending the ball high so that another player can attack it.
- ⊙ Attack—Hitting the ball.

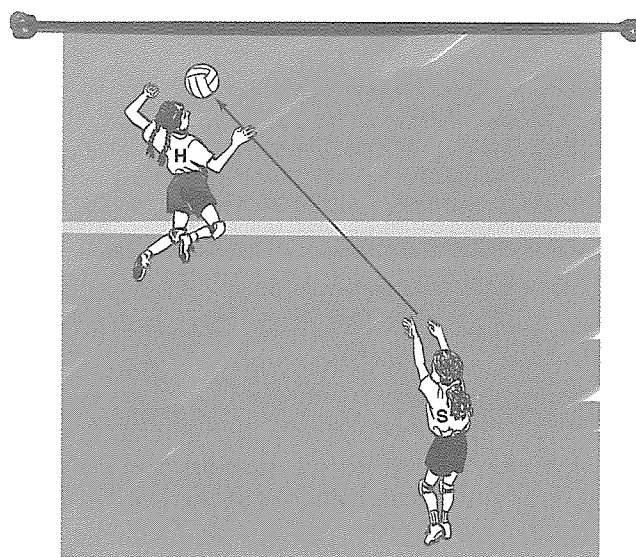
When we say **offensive tactics**, we are talking about how a team works together to handle the ball and score. A team that works together to pass, set, and hit the ball can control the ball better. This gives the team better chances to score points and keep the serve.



Back-Row Setting

This offensive tactic involves a back-row player setting the ball to a front-row player. It is best to set

the ball to a player who is across from you diagonally, instead of to someone who is straight in front of you. The picture below shows a back-row setter (S) setting diagonally to a hitter (H) who is near the net. The arrow shows the diagonal path the ball should travel in.



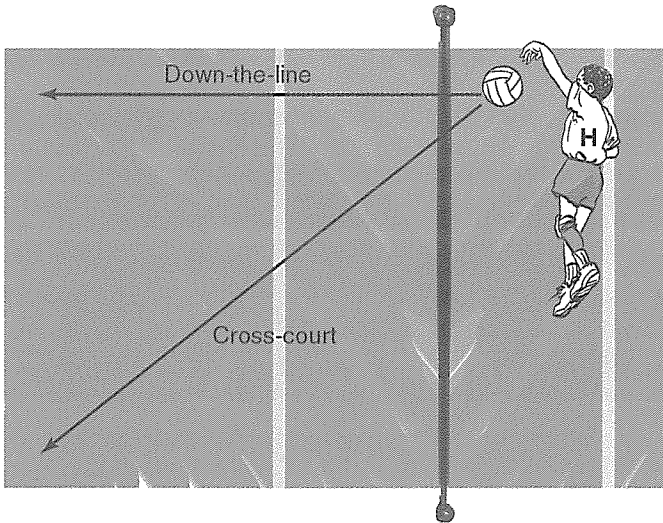
A back-row set should be high so that the hitter has time to move under the ball. The set should not go too close to the net so that the hitter can keep from hitting the net. Remember, touching the net while playing the ball is illegal. The setter should call out "Mine!" to let teammates know he or she is going to set the ball.

Set-Hit Combinations

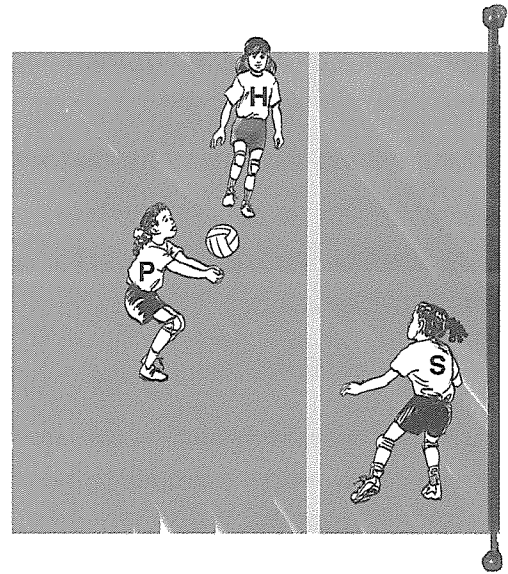
The setter sets the ball high so that the hitter can move under it and hit it over the net. This set, then hit is a "one-two punch" called a **set-hit combination**. It takes practice to make these combinations go smoothly. It's very important to talk to each other on the court so that everyone knows what is going on. The "Practice With Friends" section on page 15 will give you extra practice in doing set-hit combinations.

Try to hit spikes to the open court—the spots where opposing players are not standing. The way

to do this is to use different angles—cross-court and down-the-line. You need good technique and quick decision-making skills to hit good down-the-line and cross-court spikes. The picture below shows an example of a cross-court spike and an example of a down-the-line spike. (The “H” means “Hitter.”)



back to cover the cross-court angle. The passer (P) covers the middle of the court. The setter (S) backs off the net, waiting for the pass from either the passer or hitter. Once the setter receives the ball, your team is back on offense.



Defensive Tactics

Every time your team receives a serve or digs an attack, it is playing **defense**. Once you know the forearm pass (see chapter 4), defense is mostly about being in the right position to stop your opponent’s offense from succeeding.

Defensive Alignments

How you and your teammates line yourselves up on defense is called a **defensive alignment**. The free-ball alignment is one such lineup. A **free ball** is when the other team is not able to set up an attack and so just sends it high, back over the net. The team receiving a free ball has an advantage because such balls are easier to play than attacks (hits).

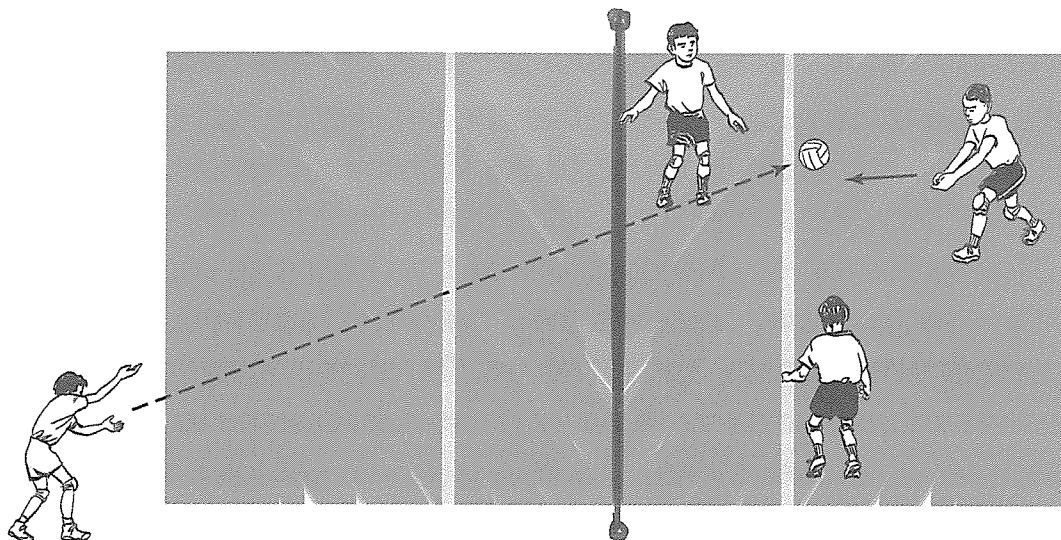
The diagram in the second column shows an example and how to line up to handle getting a free ball. The hitter (H) moves from near the net

Serve Receiving

Don’t let a serve drop between you and a teammate. A **serve receive** is simply how you and your teammates position yourselves to handle the other team’s serve well.

Who should get that serve? A good rule to follow is that the person who can move *toward* where you want the ball to go (to the setter) should become the passer. Why? It’s hard to control a pass if you’re moving away from the target. Here is one way to set up a serve receive in three-on-three volleyball.

The two-player serve receive usually means the two back players will be the ones who will receive serves. One player is a passer (P) and one is a passer-hitter (P/H). One of them needs to pass to the setter (S). The setter should not have to move very far. (The passer-hitter then moves forward to hit [attack] the set.)

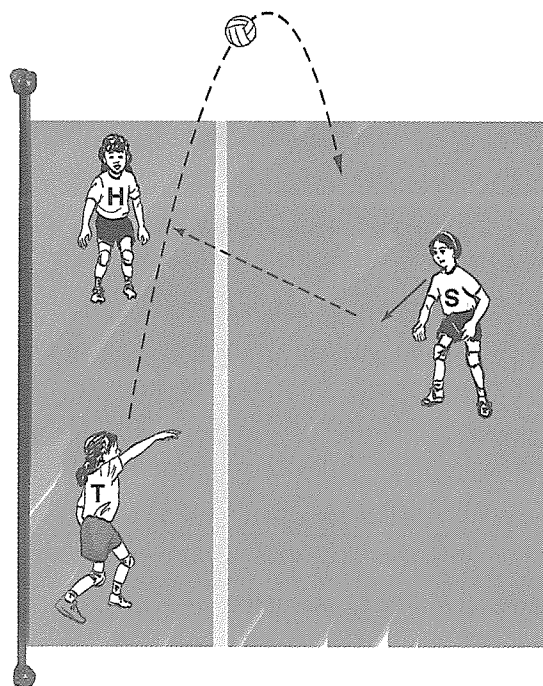


..... PRACTICE WITH FRIENDS

Look at the picture and follow the steps:

1. One person is the tosser (T). He or she tosses the ball to the setter (S) (in the back-row area).
2. The setter should call out "Mine!" and set the ball high to the hitter (H).
3. The hitter hits the ball over the net. Use a standing spike, spike, or tip (see chapter 4 under "Hitting").

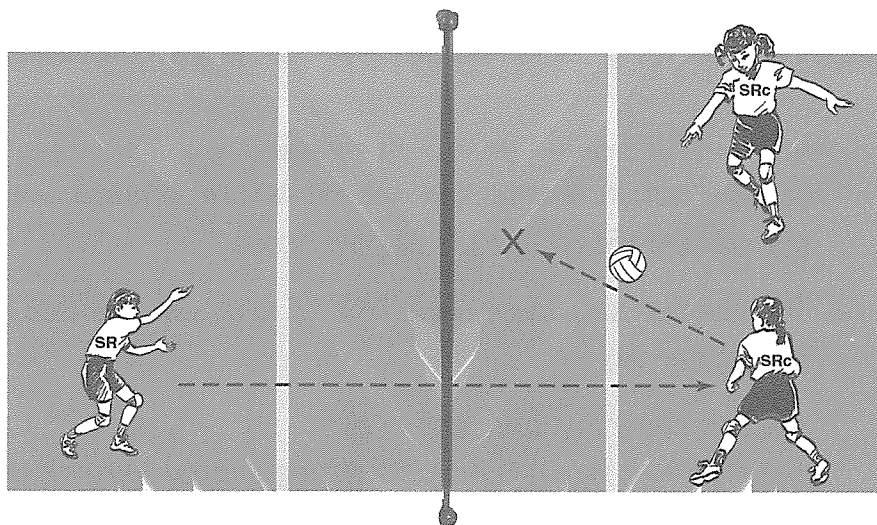
Get the ball back and give the setter and hitter two more tries. Then change roles until everyone has had several turns as the setter and the hitter.



PRACTICE WITH FRIENDS

You need three people to practice the two-player serve receive. One of you starts out as the server (SR). The other two of you are the serve receivers (SRc). Stand where shown on the diagram.

The server serves the ball to one of the other two people. One of the serve receivers receives the serve and forearm-passes (see chapter 4) to a spot (X) near the net. This spot is where a setter would be if you had a fourth player in this drill. Have the server give each serve receiver three tries, mixing up who gets the serve to keep the serve receivers alert. Rotate positions until all three of you have had a chance to be the server.



chapter

4

Spike!

Improving Your Volleyball Skills



You've heard of a bag of tricks. The gym bag here is packed with important volleyball skills. Do you have these packed into your game? This chapter will help you do so. Then do the "Take It Home," "Practice With a Partner," and "Practice With Friends" sections to further improve your skills.

Offensive Skills

Remember, offense is when your team gets the ball after a serve or volley. Work on these offensive skills to help you improve your volleyball game.

Hitting

Pass, set, spike! It's exciting to work as a team and attack the ball successfully. **Attack** means you play the ball over the net by swinging at it instead of just trying to return it as best as you can. The hit, or **spike**, is the main skill you will use to attack the ball. It is the hardest attack to defend. If your team develops a strong attack, you will have more chances to score points. The next few sections will help you improve your hitting skills.

Ready Position for Hitting

The photo below shows the ready position for an attack approach. You should be standing in a relaxed position with your arms comfortably at your sides. Stand at the side of the court, 8 to 12 feet back off the net, waiting for the set.

Approach

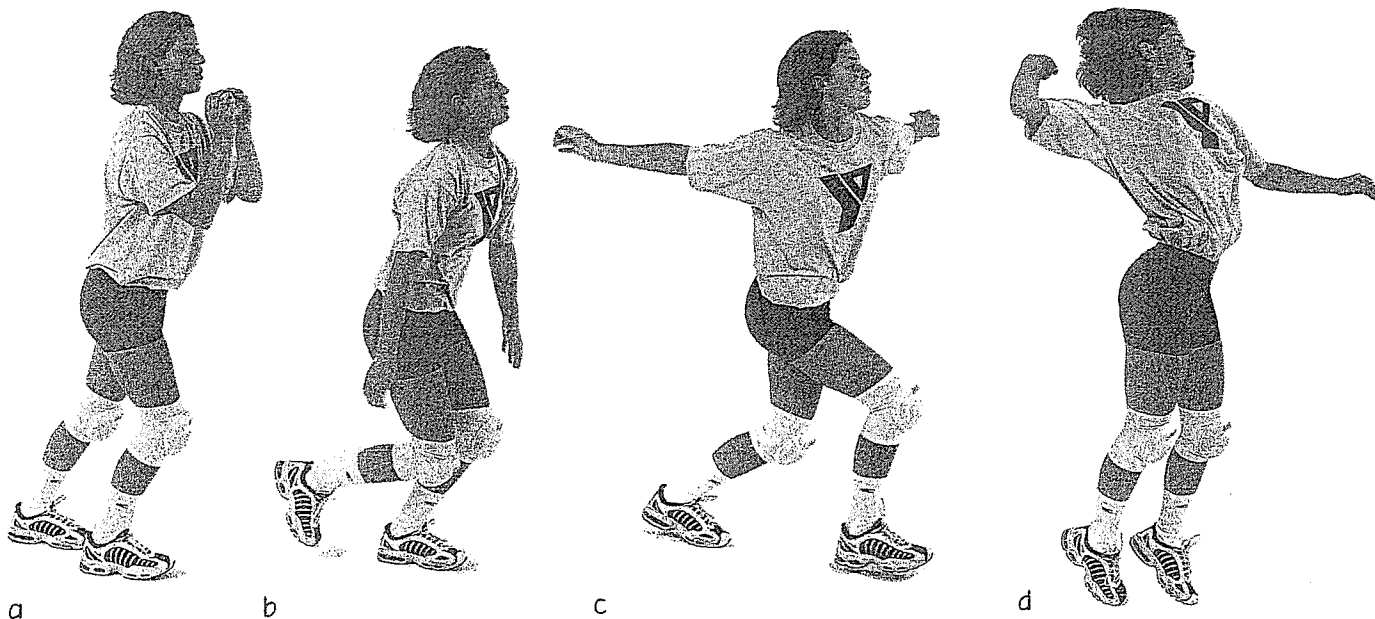
Learn the four-step pattern to a good approach (see the four photos on page 19).

- ☉ **Step 1**—If you're left-handed, start with your left foot. If you're right-handed, start with your right foot.
- ☉ **Step 2**—"Explode" into step 3.
- ☉ **Step 3**—Stretch your arms and swing them straight back as far as possible. Meanwhile, plant your feet, ready to jump.
- ☉ **Step 4**—As you begin this step, drive your arms forward in a full sweeping motion. This will help you get off the ground to attack the ball.

Body Position and Contact

When you touch the ball on a hit, think of your arm as a whip and your hand as the tip of that whip. The snap of the whip begins at your shoulder. To make the contact:





1. Pull back the elbow of your hitting hand, high and away from your shoulder, as in photo a below.
2. As you touch the ball, keep your hand firm and open, hitting the top half of the ball with your palm, as in photo b.

3. Follow through quickly. Keep your arm on the same side of your body (don't let it cross over). Finish with your hitting arm behind your hitting-side leg.

Types of Hits

You need to know how to hit in many ways. This will help you be ready for just about anything!

Standing Spike. Use a *standing spike* if you don't have time to approach and jump. Also called a *down ball*, it is done—as its name says—while standing. Use the same arm motion and hand contact as in a spike with a jump.



Open-Handed Tip. Use an open-handed tip to keep opponents off balance. Follow these steps to perform this hit:

1. Run forward and swing your arms high to help you jump high (photo a).
2. Gently contact the ball with the top half of your fingers. Stretch your hitting arm up fully, and contact the ball with your hand a little forward of your shoulder (photo b). Connect with the ball slightly below its center back. Direct the ball to gently go over the net and drop to the floor.
3. Get back in position to play defense (photo c).



Controlling Your Hits

What happens if you hit the ball to an open court space on the other team's side of the net? It will probably hit the floor! This will score a point for your team, assuming you are playing by the rally scoring system. So you need to learn to aim your hits. Practice hitting spikes in two directions:

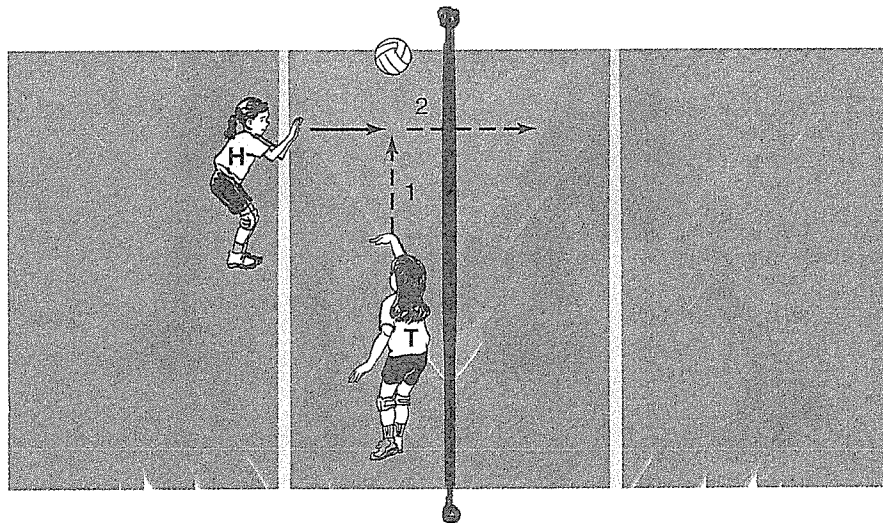
- ⊙ Cross-court—Hit the ball to an area on the other team's court that is across from where you're standing. The arrow in the diagram on page 14 shows one place you could hit the ball cross-court.
- ⊙ Down-the-line—Hit the ball straight in front of you, close to the sideline.

Stay in the line, but remember, a ball that lands on the line is in. The arrow on the diagram on page 14 shows where to hit the ball down-the-line from the position shown.

The "Practice With a Partner" idea will help you practice controlling your spikes.

..... PRACTICE WITH A PARTNER

You need one friend to do this skill practice. You start as a hitter and your friend starts as a tosser. Look at the diagram. The hitter (H) stands about 10 feet from the net. The tosser (T) stands about 10 feet off to the side, closer to the net. The tosser tosses a high ball for the hitter to spike over the net. Score a point for spiking over the net. Score an extra point if the hitter can aim the ball in the direction the tosser calls out (cross-court or down-the-line). The hitter gets three tries in a row, then you switch roles. Keep switching off to get plenty of practice.



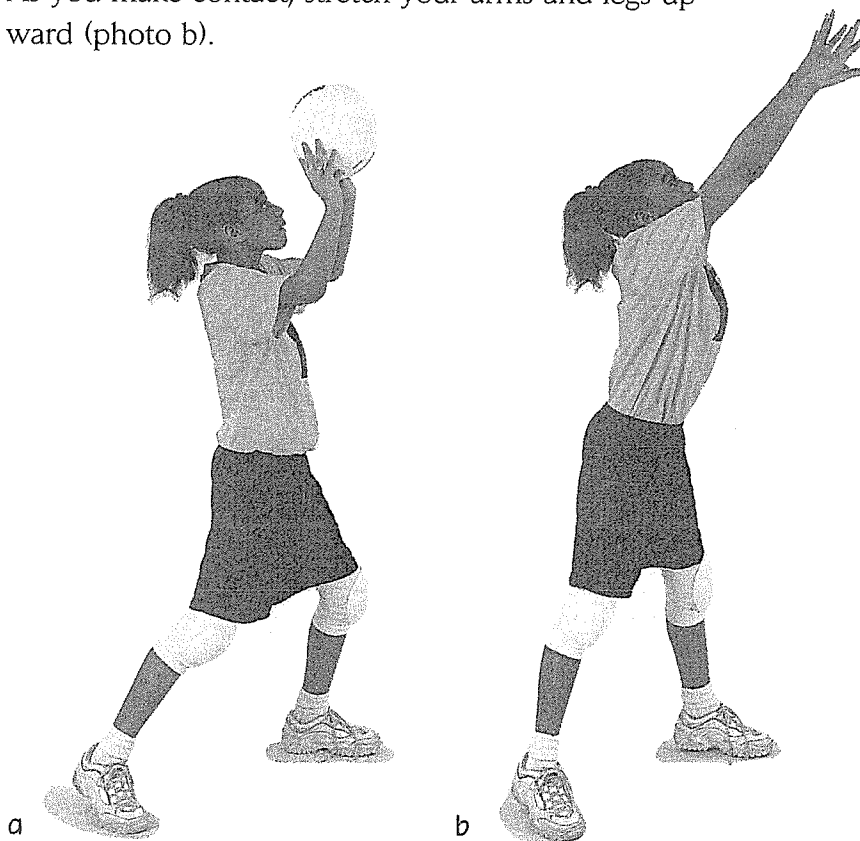
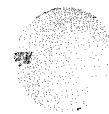
Overhead Passing

Use an overhead pass:

- ☉ To play any ball that is moving high and slow
- ☉ To set up an attack
- ☉ To keep the ball in play when an attack is not possible

The **set** is a type of overhead pass (see discussion of setting tactics in chapter 3). To perform an effective overhead pass:

1. Get in the ready position for an overhead pass. Bend your knees slightly. Raise and cup your hands above your forehead. Shape your hands like a volleyball.
2. Contact the ball in the middle of your forehead (photo a).
3. Use the pads of your fingers, not the palm of your hand.
4. As you make contact, stretch your arms and legs upward (photo b).

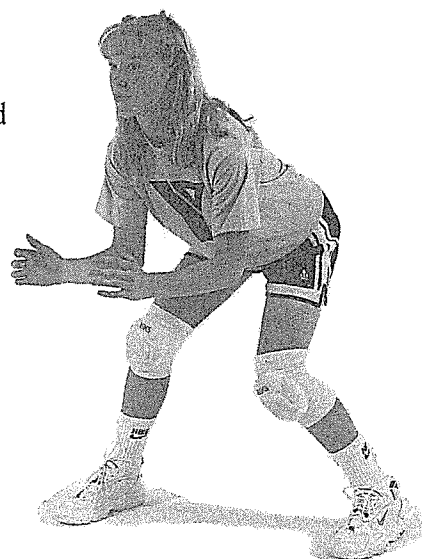


Forearm Passing

Use the **forearm pass** for receiving hard-driven serves and spikes and for playing any ball that has gone into the net.

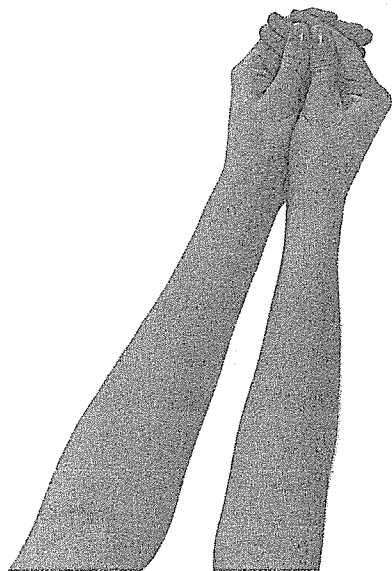
To perform the forearm pass:

1. Get in the ready position as shown in this photo:
 - Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes turned in slightly.
 - Place your right foot slightly ahead of the left.
 - Bend at your waist and knees, shifting your weight onto the balls of your feet.
 - Keep your head up.



2. Make your platform:

- Look carefully at the photo to the left.
- Put your hands in the right position to make a flat surface with your forearms. This makes a “platform” to control the ball with.



3. Learn the platform tilt:

- If you can't face your target squarely, use the platform tilt to direct the pass to your target as shown in the photo to the right.
- Dip your shoulders to tilt your platform and send the ball right where you want it to go.
- The platform stays the same—flat—no matter which way you tilt.



.....PRACTICE WITH FRIENDS.....

You need two friends to do this drill. Form a triangle and have one friend toss a ball to you. Return it with a forearm pass to your other friend. Challenge yourselves to keep the ball moving from person to person as long as possible. Remember:

1. Get in the ready position—before the toss.
2. Make your platform.
3. Tilt your platform as needed.

If you end up passing the ball with your hands or upper arms instead of your forearms, try these tips, one at a time. See which ones work:

- * Make sure you move your feet to get into a good position for contacting the ball.
- * Tilt your platform more.
- * Do *not* swing your arms to improve your contact position. Instead, bend your knees more.

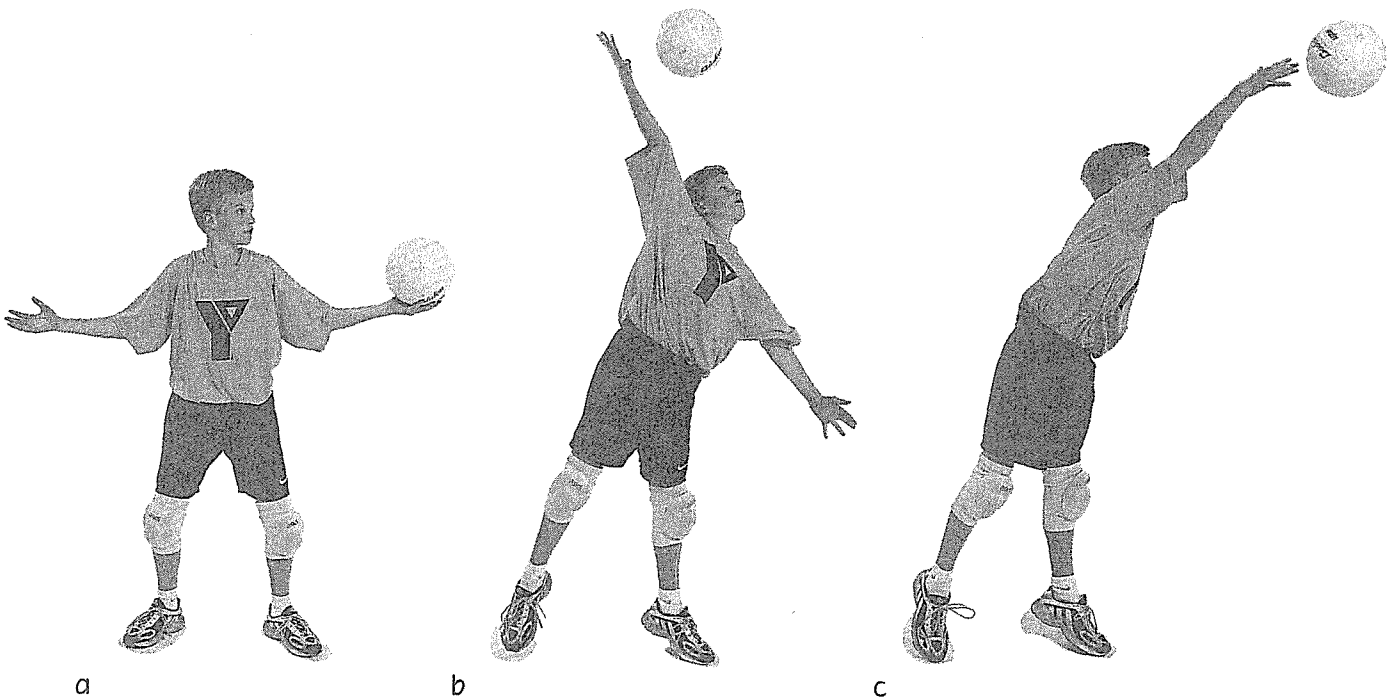
Serving

Yes, **serving** puts the ball in play, but it can be so much more: A chance to score quickly! Here, we'll show you how to do the roundhouse and underhand serves. Then, we'll look closely at how to do a more powerful kind of serve: the overhand serve.

Roundhouse Serve

You can get more power with this serve than the underhand serve. You will have to toss and hit the ball, though. So study each step carefully:

1. Stand facing the sideline with your front foot pointed toward a net post (photo a). Which hand will you hit with? Put the foot on the opposite side of your body in front. Your weight should be mostly on your back foot.
2. Toss the ball slightly in front of your body.
3. Stretch your arm out completely through the whole motion of the serve. Drop your arm back, then swing it up over your head (photo b).
4. As you swing your arm, move your weight onto your front foot. Turn your hips so they are square to the net. Roll your shoulder forward, bringing your hitting arm into contact with the ball. Hit the ball right in front of your body (photo c).



5. Touch the ball with the heel of an open hand just below the center back of the ball. (The "heel" of your hand is just above your wrist.) Use a poking action without a wrist snap and not much follow-through.
6. Turn your body and move toward the court, ready to play defense.

You will need to practice tossing so that the ball doesn't go too far in front of you.

TAKE IT HOME

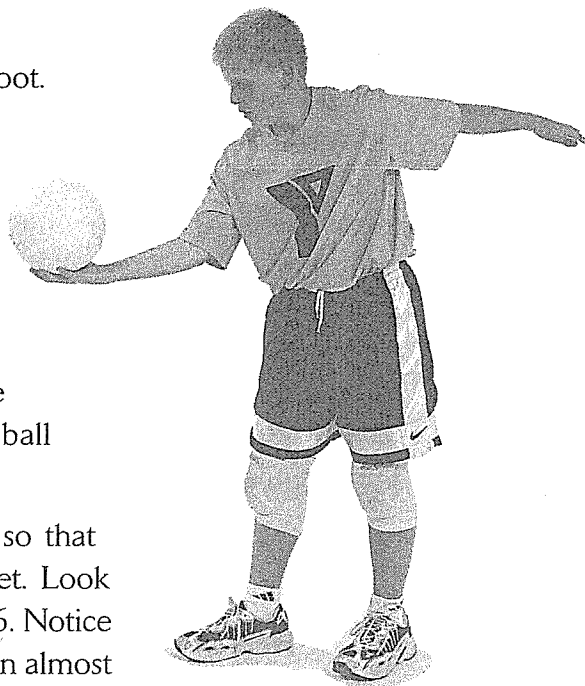
Practice the steps of the roundhouse serve just listed. Here are tips for two common problems with the roundhouse serve:

- * The ball goes into the net—Your toss is probably too far ahead of your nonhitting shoulder. Or your toss is too low. Experiment until you find what works.
- * The ball does not reach the net—Turn your body into the contact, hitting the ball with the heel of your open hand.

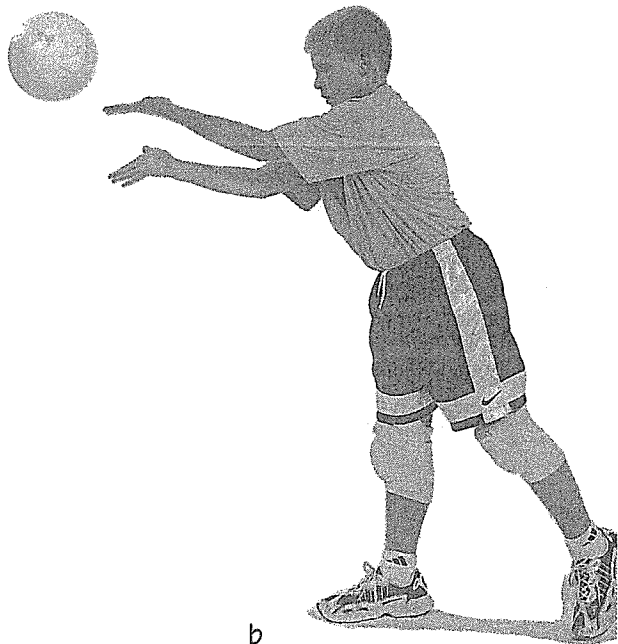
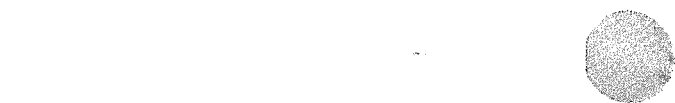
Underhand Serve

This is the easiest serve to master, because you don't have to toss the ball. Follow these steps to do the underhand serve correctly:

1. Start with your weight on your back foot. Hold the ball in front of your front foot by the "shelf" (nonhitting hand). Keep your eyes on the ball until you hit it (photo a).
2. Shift your weight from your back to your front foot as you swing your hitting arm toward the ball. Drop the shelf hand and immediately hit the ball (photo b on page 26).
3. Follow through with your hitting arm so that your fingers end up pointing at the net. Look closely at the boy in photo c on page 26. Notice how his hitting arm and back leg form an almost straight line on the follow-through.



a



Serve Receiving

Your team needs to play solid defense in order to win back the serve. If you have good defensive skills, you can help your team win points—and games.

To successfully receive a serve, you must be able to judge the direction of the ball and then decide as a team who will receive it. The sooner your team figures this out, the more time that player has to get into the correct position. Watch the server's body: Which way are the shoulders turned? Where is the forward foot pointing? What direction is the hitting arm moving in? The answers to these questions can give you important clues.

If you think you can receive the serve, you should call "Mine!" before the ball crosses the net. Then quickly move to the correct place on the court. Set your position, then use a forearm pass to start the attack.

chapter

5

Ace

Fitness for Volleyball—
and for Life



Playing YMCA Youth Super Sports volleyball is about more than just hitting spikes and having fun. At your practices and games, you are becoming more physically fit. During the season, you use your legs to run a lot. But you should also know about some other healthy habits. In practices, your coach will probably talk about being fit and teach you things, like about the importance of stretching.

Being fit is important for volleyball—and for the rest of your life. So read on to find out some more ways to get your body in tip-top shape.

CARDIO FITNESS

High-Performance Pump

Your heart is a pump. It sends oxygen in your blood to all parts of your body. Your body's cells must have enough oxygen to work well.

SET-HIT

Your blood picks up oxygen in your lungs. Then your heart pumps this oxygen-rich blood to the rest of your body.

MOVING TO THE BEAT

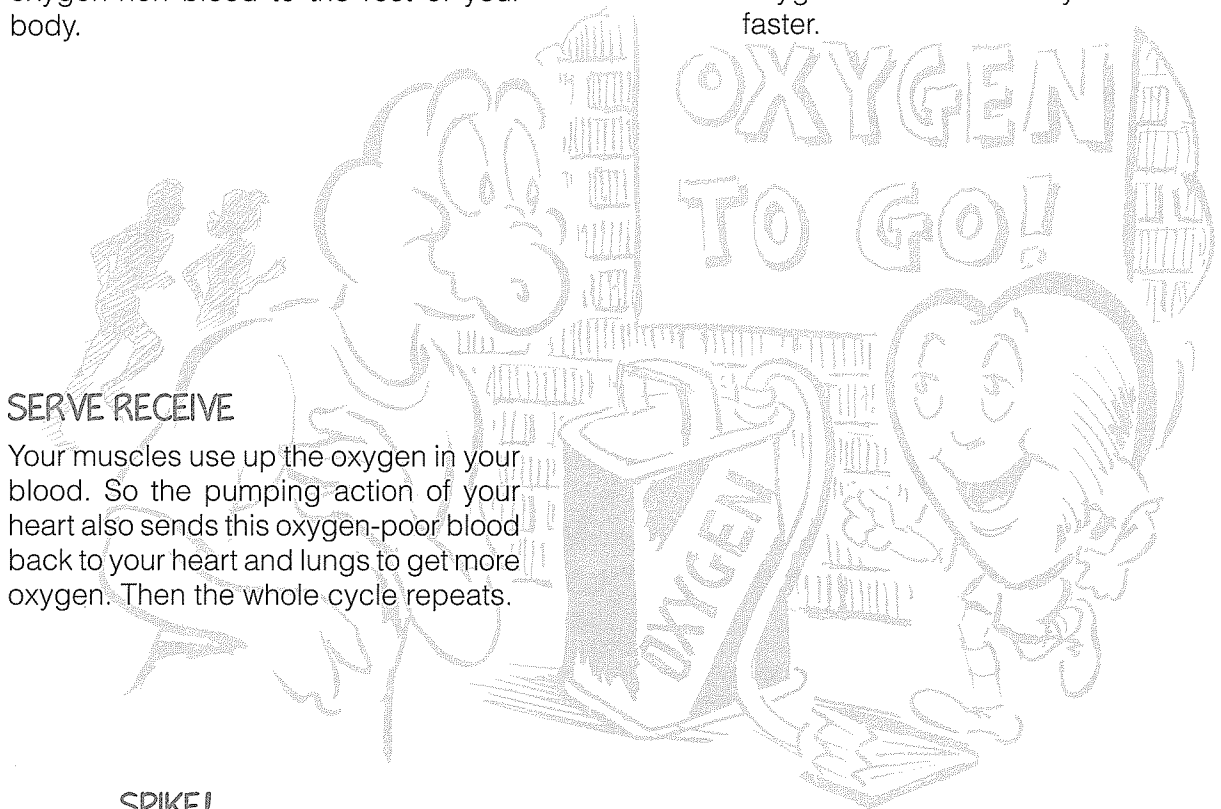
When you move your body faster, your heart beats faster. This helps it send oxygen-rich blood to your muscles faster.

SERVE RECEIVE

Your muscles use up the oxygen in your blood. So the pumping action of your heart also sends this oxygen-poor blood back to your heart and lungs to get more oxygen. Then the whole cycle repeats.

SPIKE!

Playing volleyball, and doing other activities that get your heart pumping hard, helps your heart become healthy and strong. A strong and healthy heart can pump more oxygen to your muscles. And muscles that get enough oxygen can keep working without feeling overtired. So having a healthy heart helps you play better volleyball.



MUSCULAR FITNESS

Flexibility Helps You Play Volleyball Better

Flexibility means how well a muscle or group of muscles can stretch. Working on flexibility is part of keeping your muscles fit.

STRETCH OFTEN

Stretching helps get your muscles ready for physical activity. This is why stretching before each practice or game can help you play better volleyball. It can also help prevent injuries. Stretch even on days you don't have a practice or game.

TAKE 10

Hold each stretch for 10 seconds. Just count to 10 slowly. As your muscles get used to stretching, you can build up to holding each stretch for as long as 30 seconds.

BE SAFE

But you must stretch safely. You can stretch a rubber band too much and break it. And you can stretch a muscle too much and hurt it. So stretch until you feel a pull, but no pain. Move smoothly and slowly into the stretch position. No bouncing!

THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM

Do each stretch your coach teaches you three times.

NUTRITION

Drink Up!

To stay healthy, drink enough water before, during, and after volleyball practices and games. Drink even before you are thirsty to get a head start.

WATER WISDOM

Drinking enough water helps you play volleyball better in many ways:

- It keeps your body cooler during physical activity.
- It carries nutrients (energy from food) to your body.
- It carries waste away from your body.
- It keeps your joints lubricated, or "oiled."

WATER FALL

Dehydration happens when your body does not have the water it needs to work well. You may feel overheated, overtired, or ill if you are **dehydrated**.

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE

Get in the habit of drinking 7 to 11 cups of water a day. (A cup is 8 ounces.) Drink even more if:

- You are more active than usual
- The weather is hot
- You still feel thirsty

Drink before, during, and after practice to stay **hydrated** (in healthy water balance).

LIFESTYLE

You Snooze, You . . . Win!

Getting enough sleep and rest will help you
play volleyball better.

ZZZZZZZZ TIME

You need at least 8 hours of sleep a night to be healthy. Get even more sleep if you are:

- Still tired
- Getting sick
- Feeling grumpy

NIGHTY NIGHTMARE

Not getting enough sleep can:

- Make you feel grumpy
- Make it hard for you to think clearly and remember things
- Make you more likely to get sick
- Keep you from playing volleyball at your best!

ZZZZZZZZ HEAVEN

Here are some tips for getting a good night's sleep:

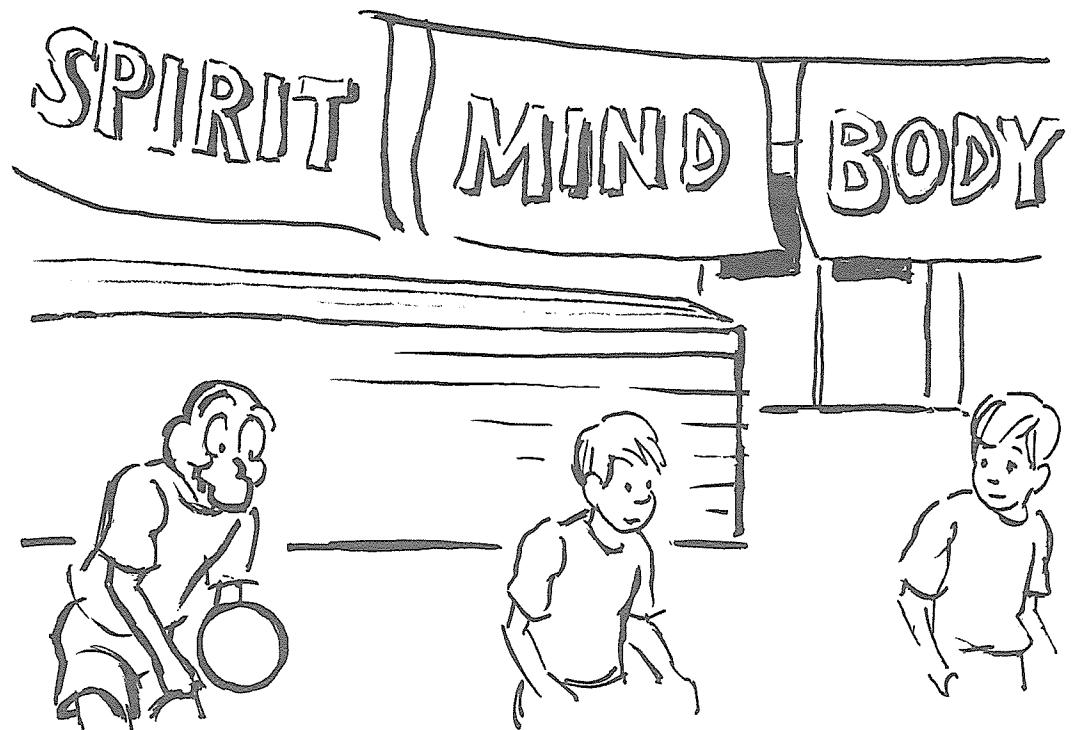
- Always go to bed and get up at the same time.
- Exercise regularly—but not too close to bedtime.
- Plan quiet activities in the evening. Reading, listening to music, taking a warm bath, or just daydreaming can help your body get ready for sleep.
- Eat a *light* snack right before bed. It's hard to sleep if you're too hungry or too full.

chapter

6

Pass, Set, Hit

Growing As a Person



In YMCA Youth Super Sports, we hope you will not only learn about how to be a better volleyball player, but that you'll also become a better person. That's probably one of the main reasons your parents put you on a YMCA team and why your coach and other adults give so much time to helping with the team. So always be thinking about what might help you off the court, too.

Caring

Everyone makes mistakes, especially when they are just learning how to play. How would you like others to treat you if you made a mistake in a game? If you forgive teammates when they make mistakes, then they will forgive you, too. Only say positive things to your teammates, such as, "We'll get 'em next time," or, "That was a good try."

When you win a game, celebrate away from your opponents. Don't try to embarrass them or make them feel bad. When you lose, you should congratulate the winning team. Think about the fun you had during the game and how you'll still try hard in the next game. At the end of games, you will line up to shake or high-five the other team's hands. Keep your head high, look the other players in the eyes, and say, "Good game" with a nice voice.

Honesty

You've probably heard people say volleyball is just a game. They are right, but in the game, you can practice things you'll use all your life, like honesty. If you touch the net, for example, you should admit the violation and not argue with the official.

Respect

Respect means a lot of things—both on and off the volleyball court. Respect yourself, your coaches, officials, other players, and your parents and family.

YMCA HOUSE RULES

Speak for yourself—Not for anyone else.

Listen to others—Then they'll listen to you.

Avoid put-downs—Who needs them?

Take charge of yourself—
You are responsible for you.

Show respect—Every person is important.

⊙ **Self-respect.** How you serve or pass does not make you a good or bad person. Because volleyball is just a game, your ability should not tell you what you should think of yourself.

⊙ **Respect for coaches.** Respect your coach by following directions quickly, trying your hardest to learn, and not arguing or complaining. Behave in a way you and your coach can be proud of at all times.

⊙ **Respect for officials.** Don't argue with officials. Like you, they are trying their best to make the game fair and fun. Always thank the officials at the end of a game.

⊙ **Respect for other players.** When someone on your team or even the other team makes a really good play, you should say, "Good job" or "Great set." Everyone likes it when someone notices his or her hard work. And hey—maybe someday you'll hear someone say "Good job" to you, too!

⊙ **Respect for parents and family.** The respect you show to yourself and others on the court should carry over into your home. Your parents and brothers and sisters count on you to be courteous, cooperative, and helpful. Make respect a habit both on and off the volleyball court.

Responsibility

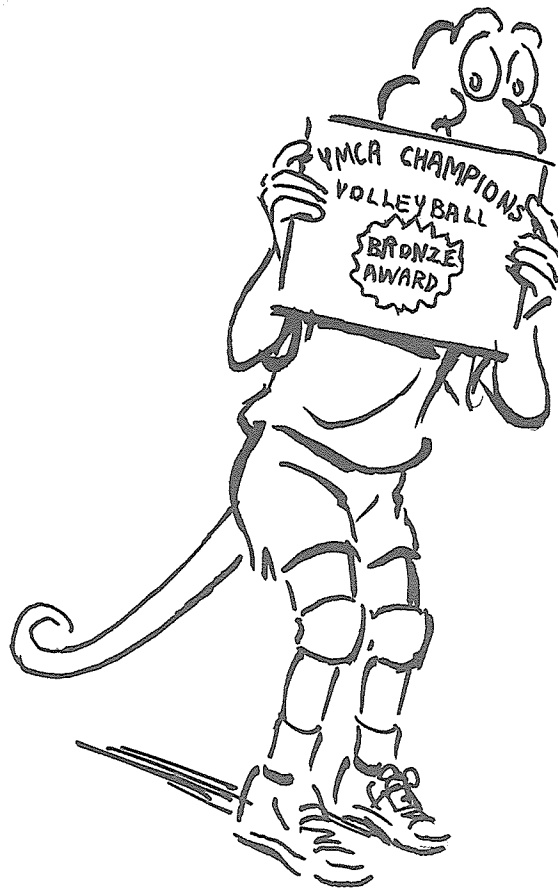
You have a responsibility on your volleyball team to work well with others, do your best, and to help your teammates and cheer for them even when you're just watching. You also have a responsibility to show up for all the practices and games or to let your coach know when you can't.

chapter

7

YMCA Champions

The Bronze Award



Everyone can be a champion in YMCA Youth Super Sports! This chapter will show you how to earn your Bronze Award.

What Is YMCA Champions?

YMCA Champions is the awards program of YMCA Youth Super Sports. Players in YMCA Winners sports can choose to do extra work to earn Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards in each YMCA Youth Super Sport their local YMCA offers. A player may work on earning different awards in more than one sport at the same time. For example, a player may work on achieving the Bronze Award in volleyball while working for the Silver Award in softball. But remember, you must play at least one full season after receiving an award in a sport at one level before earning the award at the next level in the same sport. For example, in volleyball, you must play a full season after earning your Bronze Award before you can earn your Silver Award.

YMCA Champions Support Team

The YMCA Youth Super Sports program is interested in helping you succeed in earning your YMCA Champions Awards. So your local YMCA will provide at least one special person to support your efforts.

Your YMCA Champions Coach

Your YMCA Champions coach is a volunteer who is available to help you earn your YMCA Champions Awards. This person supports both you and your YMCA Winners coach to help you become the best player and person you can be. Your YMCA Champions coach does not take the place of your YMCA Winners coach. Instead, your YMCA Champions coach will work with you outside of practice

times, so you will not miss the skills, tactics, and other concepts your YMCA Winners coach is teaching. Your YMCA Champions coach will be available to help you practice the skills you need extra work on to prepare for the Skills Tests that you must pass to earn your Bronze Award.

Gold Leaders

Gold Leaders are players who have earned the Gold Award in your sport. They must be at least 14 years old, and they must be recommended for this honor by their YMCA Winners coach and YMCA Champions coach. They help with the YMCA Youth Super Sports program in many ways, including acting as assistants to YMCA Champions coaches. You may be assigned a Gold Leader to help you prepare for your YMCA Champions Skills Tests. Gold Leaders may also help your local YMCA Youth Super Sports program in other ways. Who knows—maybe someday you'll be a Gold Leader, too!

Award Areas

Here's a list of the four areas you have to do well in to earn a YMCA Champions Bronze Award:

- ⊗ Knowledge
- ⊗ Skill
- ⊗ Participation
- ⊗ Character

When you have met the requirements in each of these areas, your YMCA Champions coach will arrange an awards ceremony for you and any of your teammates who have also earned awards. The following sections explain each of these areas in detail.

Knowledge

To be the best you can be, you need to know about the game of volleyball. As you work toward the

YMCA Champions Bronze Award in volleyball, you'll learn about rules, skills and tactics, and fitness. The Volleyball Knowledge Test (Bronze Level) has 15 volleyball items and 5 fitness items. You must get 16 correct to pass the test. Chapters 2 through 5 and your experiences in practices and games will help you study for this test. Of course, your YMCA Champions coach cannot tell you the answers to the test, but he or she can help you get ready for it and help you find the information you need. You may have to take the test on a set schedule, or your YMCA may arrange for you to take it whenever you are ready. You can take the test again if you need to, but probably not more often than once a month.

Skill

Passing, setting, and hitting are some of the important skills you'll learn. The two Skills Tests you'll need to pass appear at the end of this chapter. Chapter 4 gives you more information to help you do well on your Volleyball Skills Tests.

You will need partners to do the Skills Tests, so work with the players assigned by your YMCA Champions coach to practice that test. The main time you should practice these skills is during your regular practices and games with your YMCA Winners team. Your YMCA Champions coach may also help you work on things you are having trouble with or give you a video or book that reviews the skills in your sport. In the end, however, you are responsible for working hard and learning these skills.

When you are ready, your YMCA Champions coach will give you the two Volleyball Skills Tests, at a set time or by special arrangement. You must complete the game-like Skills Tests within time limits to show your mastery of the key skills of the game. These tests are challenging, but if you work hard, you'll be ready! You will be allowed to retake the

Skills Tests, but probably not more often than once a month.

Participation

Getting better at any sport means you have to play it. So one step to earning the Bronze Award is to participate in practices and games during the YMCA Winners season. To earn a Bronze Award, you can't miss more than three practices or games total, and these absences must be excused. For example, missing two practices and two games, for a total of four absences, even if excused, would mean you did not meet the participation requirement.

Character

Being a great player is more than playing the sport well. It's also being a great person as you do it. Chapter 6 talks more about the character part of your Bronze Award efforts. In addition, using a special form, both your YMCA Winners coach and an assistant coach (or a parent who has attended most games—but not your own parent) will evaluate your character. To earn this part of your Bronze Award, you need to receive passing scores in four areas: respect, responsibility, honesty, and caring.

Awards

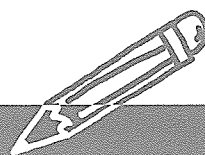
The YMCA Champions Bronze Award is something to be proud of! You'll receive a bronze ribbon mounted on a Certificate of Achievement for wall display. Now you're ready to go for the Silver Award. And don't forget—there are other sports you can earn YMCA Champions Awards in as well!

Volleyball Skills Tests

This section explains the two Skills Tests you need to pass to earn your Bronze Award. Get an adult to help you, and practice them with your partners.

Routine 1

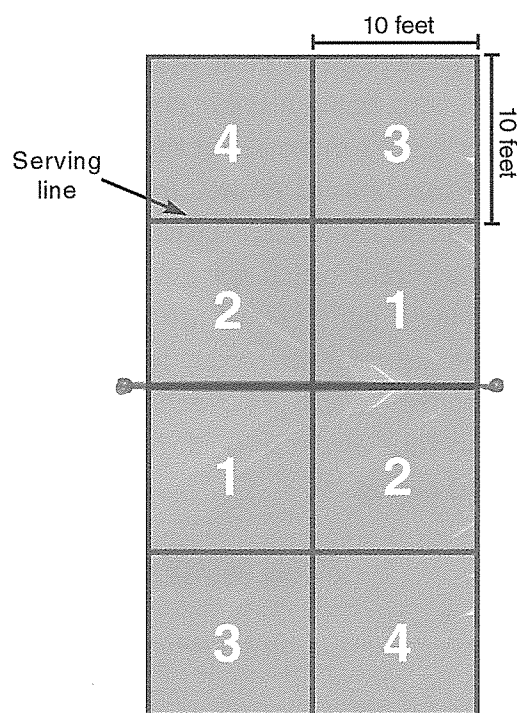
Four-Square Serving



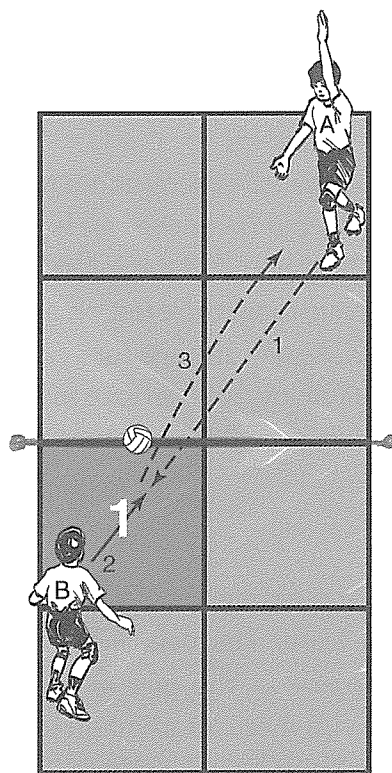
In this test, you and a partner must serve to four sections of the court, getting a good serve into each shaded section.

You'll need one ball and tape that won't leave marks on the floor. Mark the court in 10-foot by 10-foot quadrants as shown in the picture below. Get an adult to help you set up and to time you.

Ready? Good luck—and serve up a good score!



1. Player A stands anywhere behind the serving line marked in the picture above and serves the ball either underhand or roundhouse into quadrant 1 (see line 1 in figure to the right). The adult will start the watch when Player A touches the ball with the serving hand.



2. Player B lets the serve hit the floor, goes and gets it (see line 2), and rolls it back to Player A (see line 3).

3. Player A then serves into each of the other quadrants. Player B continues to roll the ball back until Player A has made a good serve in each of the four areas.

4. Repeat Steps 1, 2, and 3 with Player B serving into the quadrants. Player A lets the serves hit and then rolls the ball back to Player A.

5. The adult will stop the stopwatch when Player B's final serve lands successfully in the last quadrant.

THINGS TO KNOW

- * The player serving can stand anywhere behind the serve line marked in the pictures on page 38. At the moment of contact, the server's feet cannot be touching the floor on, or past, the serving line.
- * Players must hit the areas in the order shown. The server continues to serve to an area until he or she gets a good serve in that area before moving on. It's helpful for the teammate to stand inside the area, as a "target."

- * If the ball hits the net on a serve, it doesn't count even if it lands in the correct area.
- * If the serve lands on a line of the area, the serve is good.

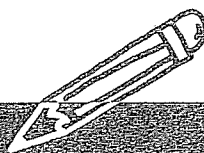
SCORING

Girls must complete this routine in 1 minute and 25 seconds or under to pass.

Boys must complete this routine in 1 minute and 25 seconds or under to pass.

Routine 2

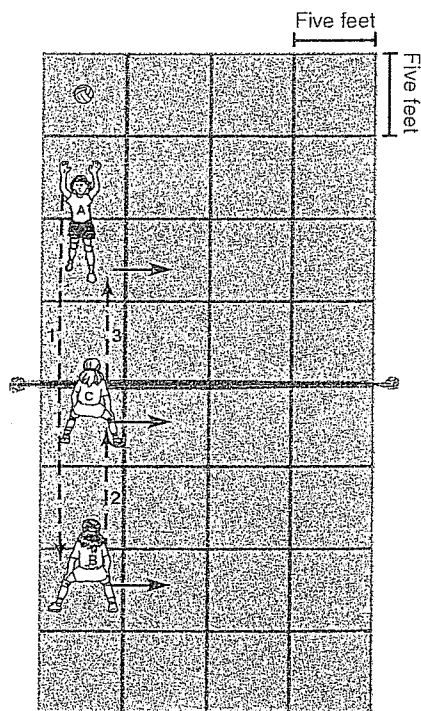
Partner Passing



In this test, you and two partners will pass the ball back and forth to each other, using overhead passing (setting) and forearm passing. To do well on this test, you must pass accurately.

You'll need one ball and tape that won't leave marks on the floor. Get an adult to help you set the court up as shown in the picture below and to time you.

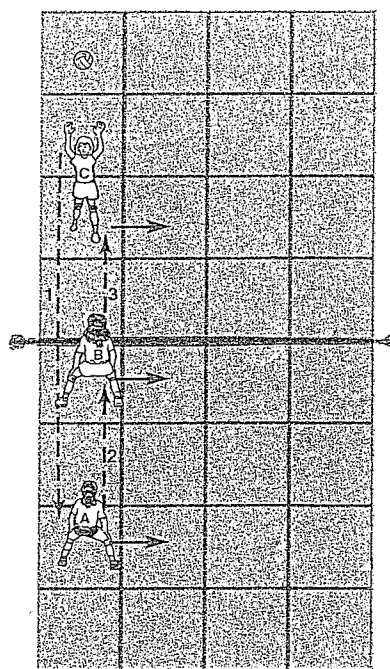
Ready? Good luck—pass well and you'll pass this test!



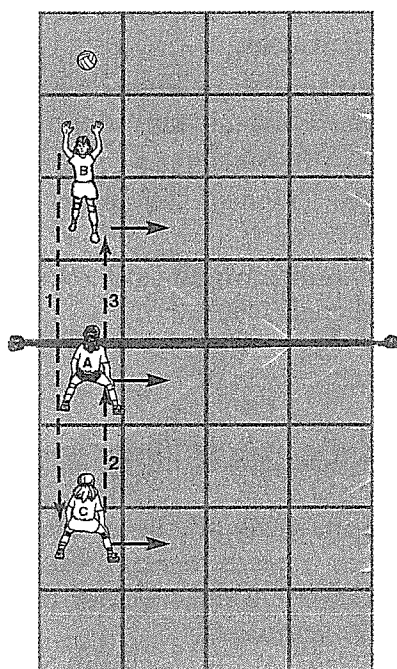
1. Players A, B, and C stand in their squares on the far left side of the court, as shown in the drawing above. As Player A tosses the ball in the air, an adult will start the stopwatch. Player A hits an overhead pass to Player B (see line 1). Staying in his or her shaded square, Player B uses a fore-

arm pass to send the ball to Player C (see line 2). Player C lets the ball bounce in the shaded square. Then Player C picks up the ball and rolls it back under the net to Player A (see line 3).

2. The players move down the line of squares, repeating this pattern in the other three sets of squares. When the final pass is completed from Player B to Player C on the far right side of the court (see line 11), the players return to the starting position and switch roles. Player C moves to Player A's position, Player A moves to Player B's position, and Player B moves to Player C's position (see the drawing below). Now Player C starts the action by overhead-passing to Player A (see line 1). Player A then forearm-passes to Player B (see line 2), and so on, with the players moving down the line of squares.



3. When the final forearm pass is completed from Player A to Player B on the far right side of the court, the players return to the starting position and switch roles one more time (see the drawing below). Now Player B overhead-passes first, and once again the players move down the line of squares. Once the final forearm pass from Player C lands in the correct shaded area, the adult will stop the watch.



THINGS TO KNOW

- * The player making the overhead pass must toss the ball up to herself or himself and then make the pass. This player can stand in either of the two squares (or on the square lines) that are in line with the player's teammates.
- * Balls that hit on the line of the correct shaded area are good.
- * Players must hit passes with no part of their body contacting the floor outside of the lines of the shaded area.
- * All passes must be higher than the net to count.
- * If any pass in a sequence is no good, the players must begin that sequence again. For example, in the first drawing on page 40, if Player B's pass to Player C goes wild, the players must begin that sequence again with Player A hitting another overhead pass.

SCORING

Girls must complete this routine in 1 minute and 40 seconds or under to pass.

Boys must complete this routine in 1 minute and 40 seconds or under to pass.

Words to Know

Volleyball Terms

attack—How the ball is played over the net.

contact—Touching the ball.

defense—When a team is receiving, or preparing to receive, a serve or an attack.

defensive alignment—How players line themselves up on defense.

forearm pass—Used to receive serves and spikes and play balls that have gone into the net.

free ball—When a team is not able to set up an attack and so just sends the ball high back over the net.

hold—When the ball comes to rest, even for a brief moment, in the hands or on the arms.

offense—When your team gets the ball after a serve or volley and begins its attack.

offensive tactics—How a team works together to handle the ball and score.

serve receive—How teammates position themselves to handle the other team's serve well.

service errors—When the ball, for example, touches a player of the serving team, does not pass over the net, touches the net, or lands out of bounds.

serving—Putting the ball into play.

set—To send the ball high so another player can attack it. The person who sets the ball is called the **setter**.

set-hit combination—When a setter sets the ball high so that a hitter can move under it and hit it over the net.

spike—A hit. The main skill used to attack the ball.

tip—A gentle contact of the ball to drop the ball over the net.

Fitness Terms

dehydration—When the body does not have the water it needs to work well. A person may feel overheated, overtired, or ill if he or she is **dehydrated**.

flexibility—How well a muscle or group of muscles can stretch.

hydrated—When the body has a healthy balance of water.

Team name _____

Coach's name _____

Coach's telephone number _____

Practice days _____

Time practices begin _____

Time practices end _____

My coach says to remember _____

Team Roster

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Game Day Checklist

Equipment

- ☐ Uniform or team shirt
- ☐ Tennis shoes
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Knee pads

Spirit

- ☐ Play fair
- ☐ Play hard
- ☐ Cheer for teammates

Mind

- ☐ Have a Team Circle
- ☐ Listen to coach's instructions

Body

- ☐ Warm up before the game: jog, stretch, sprint
- ☐ Cool down after the game: walk, stretch

Use the area below to keep track of your progress toward earning your Bronze Award.

- _____ Knowledge test
- _____ Skill test—Routine 1: Four-Square Serving
- _____ Skill test—Routine 2: Partner Passing
- _____ Character
- _____ Participation