



Serve and Serve Receive with Alison Duncan, Crown Point High School Head Coach

Goals of the session: Discuss philosophies, provide you with drills, and provide you with some sample statistics to take.

I am going to focus on what has worked for me at the high school level. My concepts may not entirely correlate to the club and the collegiate level. We all know that at the high school level you get the kids that you get and you have to make it work. I encourage you to figure out how you can get your teams to win based upon strengths and weaknesses.

Serve and serve receive are, in many coaches opinions, the most important part of the game. If your team struggles on serve and/or receive you will find it difficult to compete.

Serve Fundamentals and Philosophy

Serving Techniques

- Keep it simple
 - Develop a serving pattern and or ritual
 - Never forget about the basics
 - Serve Aggressively (find a comfort level)
1. I promote a jump float
 - a. I do not let athletes do crazy side arm serves.
 - b. I have not had a top spin server for several years. I find it to be ineffective.
 2. Develop a warmup pattern in practice for serving
 3. Treat and train each server differently (talk to servers about their strengths and weaknesses)
 - a. What zones do they prefer to serve to?
 - b. What do they want to work on?

Serving Fundamentals

- Strong wrist
- No barbie hands
- Ball contact point (hit it in the nose)
- High Elbow
- Hit high reach high
- Find balance
- Use your core
- Hand eye contact
- Toss in front of striking shoulder

Serving Strategies

1. Serve the seams (statistics show that serving seams produce a lower serve receive efficiency for your opponents)
2. Develop 1 mega serving bomber (aim for the 6 and let it rip)
3. Develop at least 3 ace short servers that you can rely on in games to serve it effectively
4. Know your opponent
 - a. Get intel

- i. Scout your opponent (what type of serves give them trouble)
 - ii. Know what serve receive patterns are strong and weak. Know what they want to do with the ball.
- b. Push buttons to predict outcomes
 - i. Look for player tendencies
 - ii. Serve based upon first ball tendencies and hitting patterns
 - iii. Look for player/team conflicts and/or issues
 - iv. Serve over the top (tall middle)
 - v. Serve to predict a hitter and set up your blockers
 - vi. Serve to take out hitters
 - 1. Sometimes this is very effective and sometimes it is not

Point of Emphasis: It is better to serve in than out. How aggressive do you want to be with your service calls? Get to know each server and think about what zones she serves best. If you are going to work on getting a player out of a comfort zone you need to decide when you are going to make the call. Do you want to give all of the serving calls or do you want an assistant to give serving calls? I prefer to give serving calls so I can talk to my servers during the signal.

Serving Drills

Serving Lanes

2 to 3 lanes per court based upon numbers (serve your entire ball court, then shag)

Purpose is to prevent injuries (ankle and concussion)

Serving Warm Up--start in and progress backwards to your normal starting point

Zone Serving

Each zone 5 times (you can use targets or complete this during wash drills)

1. Practice serving seams
2. Practice serving at an OH on serve receive
3. Practice serving at a setter
4. Practice serving deep corner

Timed/Number Goal Competitions--Split your team in half. Which team can hit zone 1 20 x first? You can do this in every zone. (The preference is to do this on 2 courts so there is enough space for safety)

Serving Deep Drill--Hitting the last 5 feet of the court. You need to place markers or have coaches in the last 5 feet so there is a visual.

Keep Away Drill--Working to keep the ball away from certain players at all costs. Coaches can be the keep away athlete on the other side if you are just practicing zone serving. Training athletes to understand the game is important. This can be done on a 6 on 6 drill as well. Liberos can be the keep away. Go anywhere but them.

Serve Receive Team Philosophies

- Serve Receive tactics and strategies will change every year based on your level of experience.
- I am not a huge fan of serve receiving 2 at the high school level. I think it is possible, but tough to do well.
- I am a proponent of stacking on serve receive.
- Athletes need to work on movement and ball tracking to be successful serve receive passers.
- I do promote passing bands of some sort to help athletes track to their platform.
- Your serve receive kill percentage is highest when your setter is closest to the target. (statistical studies show this) Think of ways to get your setter as close as possible to the target.
- Who do you want to pass on each serve receive pattern? Spend time looking at each serve receive pattern carefully.
- Teach them to pass on serve receive under pressure.

Serve Receive Fundamentals

Player communication (communicating seams)

Read and React

Feet

Load

Tract to your platform

Pass on your midline or on your right side. (left side has lower serve receive efficiency percentages)

Pass with your shoulders

Contact the ball out in front (away from your body)

Push your platform down so your shoulders do not come up

Serve Receive Player Philosophies

No fear mentality. Have confidence while you are back there. Players make this way to hard.

No emotion other than good emotion.

Serve Receive Drills (Also working on serving) (Have a coach take serve receive stats during drills)

***When we start to warm up serve receive, servers are never serving for aces. It is important to build confidence in your core passing group prior to adding rigor.

1. 2 Person Pass on both sides (Teach stacking on one side of the court)
 - a. Serves need to come from different angles
2. 3 Person Pass with stacking on 1 side
 - a. Serves need to come from different angles
3. Rapid Fire with setters or coaches on boxes. (can also be done from the floor)
4. Serve Receive rotation work (vary the level of ball entry difficulty)
 - a. Incorporate all hitters into the drill
5. Serve Receive Ladders
6. Pass or Don't Pass (to train your outsides)

7. Have a coach take primary passers in your program to an auxiliary court to work on serve receive
8. Serve receive drills under time restraints.
(for example, the team/group has to serve 50 perfect passes in 1 minute in 30 seconds.
8. If necessary, have a separate practice just for defensive specialists.

See attached statistic diagrams

- Formation Options and making decisions
- See serve receive and serving statistics