

In this Issue

- Game-like Training for Player Positions
- Frequently Asked Questions

COACHES' CLIPBOARD

A NEWSLETTER FOR OVR JUNIORS COACHES

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GAME-LIKE TRAINING FOR PLAYER POSITIONS

One of the questions that coaches seem to always ask during IMPACT and CAP courses is how to train in game-like fashion with only 8 or 9 players on a club team. I used to ask the same question when I started coaching.

During my first years of coaching volleyball I was honestly disappointed with the performance of my teams. I followed the directions for running drills I found in various books and notes from clinics with precision and accuracy. My frustration caused me to give up on the books and look for better ways to train the complete athlete. I was finally tired of complaining that my teams were great practice teams but seemed to forget everything when it came time for the match. I had come to realize that it was my fault—not the team.

I used to think that game-like training meant 'scrimmage'. This led to keeping 12 players on my first club teams. The natural progression led to later teams having about 9 players and doing lots of drills with 6 on one side and the rest on the other side. However, I still had trouble when only 5-7 players would attend a practice—how can I do things game-like now?

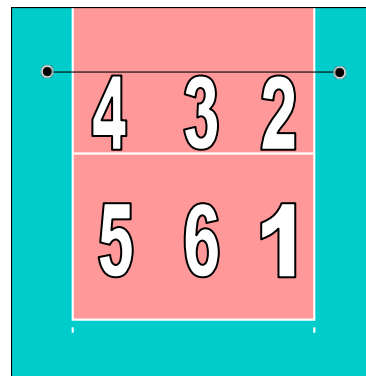
Many coaching resources simply define game-like training as learning activities that most closely approximate the target performance environment. For teachers, this sounds suspiciously like teaching to the test. Let's begin with a simple question: Are your teams' able to execute everything that you are training in practice? If yes, then you are most likely doing a fair amount of game-like training. If no, the problem is not the match; the problem is practice. Who's responsible for the learning activities of practice? The coach. The performance in the match is not only an indicator of achievement, but more so an evaluation of the effectiveness of training's preparation.

One of the primary ways I've found to be an effective method for developing game-like learning opportunities for my teams is to work backwards from the match itself. Asking questions like "What is it that I want my players and my team to be able to do in the match?" is an important first step. Once I have determined the "learning target", a drill can be effectively developed. The more specific the learning target is, the more game-like training can become. If we really want maximum results, it's important to understand that the individual athlete needs to receive game-like position training as much as the team itself. Let me explain.

For the indoor game, players do not obviously play by themselves; they play with 5 other teammates in various positions. Specifically players mostly interact with teammates in adjacent positions. Think about this: how often does your left back player need to meaningfully communicate with your

right front in any of your systems of play? Probably not much, if any at all. Most likely because these players are not in adjacent (next to each other) positions. How often does your left back communicate with your left front in any of your systems of play? Probably a lot, if not constantly. Why? They are in adjacent positions on the court. Finally, a primary key to game-like training: train players in adjacent positions!

Why do players tend to play so much better when they are in a drill by themselves? He/She knows that the decision has already been made; he/she is the only one on the court, therefore he/she has to play the ball. Why do players and even small groups of players tend to play worse than individuals? They now have to make a decision as to who will play the ball. This latter situation is the one players consistently find themselves in during the match. Training players in adjacent position situations will improve team match performance.



Consider the figure above. Using the rules of overlap for the serve receive team, you can easily determine who the adjacent players are; be sure to also include diagonal zones too. It is in these pairings that you can make a difference in match performance! When training your left back players, be sure to include drills that pair them with outside hitters and middle backs, drills in which the middle blocker is added can greatly improve offensive and defensive reading and positioning understanding. For the outside hitter, be sure to do drills pairing the left back and middle blocker. For the middle back, pair with the left and right backs and also front row players for various attack situations; use outside hitters for opponent right-side attacks, middle blockers for opponent middle attacks and right-side players for opponent outside attacks.

How often do your drills have players playing, learning, communicating and seeing each other in the positions that they would be in the match? If these are the kind of things that we want our players doing in the match, we as coaches

need to be training them in practice.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here's some of the biggies I get on an almost daily basis—especially at the beginning of the season!

“How do I find out if all my certifications are in the region database?”

First, go to the OVR Certification Database page and type in your last name - be sure to use your last name that you had at the time of certification. OVR requires that all members use their legal first and last name at all times (never use your nickname on any OVR documentation!).

If you see your certifications, but they don't show on your membership record - What do I do if my certification does not show up on my membership record?

If you do not see your certifications - How do I get my certification added to my membership record?

“What are the requirements for coaching a juniors team in the OVR?”

In order to be permitted to head coach a juniors team, you must:

- be an adult (over 18 years old) member in good standing with the OVR (registration fee paid by you or your club, signed and submitted Waiver and Release of Liability, signed and submitted USA Volleyball Juniors' Club Personnel Code of Ethics
- have a cleared SSCI background screening on file with the region office
- have either an IMPACT or USA Volleyball CAP certification on file with the region
- In order to be permitted to assistant coach a juniors team, you must:
- be a member in good standing with the OVR (registration fee paid by you or your club, signed and submitted Waiver and Release of Liability, signed and submitted USA Volleyball Juniors' Club Personnel Code of Ethics
- if you are 18 years old or older, you must have a cleared SSCI background screen on file with the region office. If you are under 18 years old, but attain that age during the season, you must STOP coaching immediately until you have completed the SSCI background screening process - only then will you be permitted to continue coaching for the remainder of the season.
- have either an IMPACT or USA Volleyball CAP certification on file with the region.

“What do I do if my certification does not show up on my membership record?”

Certification records are matched to membership records through the following criteria:

- first names must match letter for letter (Mike is not the same as Michael to a computer database - never use your nickname on any OVR documentation!)

- last names must match letter for letter.
- date of birth must match number for number

If you detect an entry error on your membership record - contact the OVR Verification Officer

If you detect an entry error on your certification record - contact the Director of Coaching Education

“How do I get my certification added to my membership record?”

IMPACT certifications obtained through an OVR regional/local clinic are added to the regional certification database at the time the IMPACT certificate is emailed to the coach.

If you obtained your IMPACT certificate through another region clinic, you need to send by mail or email attachment (preferred) a copy of the certificate along with the New/Replacement Coaching Certification Form to the Director of Coaching Education. Only when the certificate is matched to the membership record are you permitted to coach in matches.

If you obtained your IMPACT certificate through an online IMPACT Webinar clinic, you need to send by mail or email attachment (preferred) a copy of the certificate you received from USAV along with the New/Replacement Coaching Certification Form to the Director of Coaching Education. Only when the certificate is matched to the membership record are you permitted to coach in matches.

“My name has legally been changed. How do I get my membership and certifications updated?”

If your last name has legally changed and it is now different than the last name you had at the time a coaching certification was entered into the regional database for you, you need to contact the Director of Coaching Education to have the last name updated. The coach must personally request by phone or email the name change. Requests made by club director or other personnel will not be honored. Only the one named on the certificate has the right to request their name be changed.

“How do I become an IMPACT Instructor for the OVR?”

The requirements for becoming a regional IMPACT Instructor can be found on USA Volleyball's website at:

<http://usavolleyball.org/resources/education/impact/impact-instructor-requirements>. A PDF of the requirements is also available on the same page.

OVR Coaching Education

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