



## GOLD CROWN VOLLEYBALL COACHES HANDBOOK

### INTRO

We are excited to have you here to guide our players during Gold Crown Volleyball season. We have put together this handbook to help get you started in your new role as volleyball coach. You have the incredible opportunity to help these players to find love for a sport, to teach them about good sportsmanship, and to have a ton of fun!

**Player Position:** In traditional indoor volleyball, each team will have six players on the court at a time, three in the back row and three in the front row (i.e. closer to the net). The person in the right back (when facing the net) is the server. This is typically referred to as Position 1, and the positions go up in a counterclockwise direction. So the right front is Position 2, middle front is Position 3, etc. until you get to the middle back which is Position 6. Each time a team regains the serve by winning a point, the team rotates one position clockwise. Everyone must start in their proper place in the rotation; once the server contacts the ball, they are able to move freely on the court, for example to their "specialty spot." There are "overlap rules" which basically mean that a player needs to be aware of the players adjacent to them – e.g. a player in the middle back needs to be to the left of the right back, to the right of the left back, and behind the player in middle front, until contact of the ball is made. You can practice the overlap rules with players by putting them in a position on the court and asking them how the rules apply to them in that circumstance. To make it easier and quicker for players to get to their specialty spot, players will bunch up or stack up on the court, being careful not to overlap, so they have less distance to move. On serve receive, there is usually not enough time to move to your specialty spot, or base, so players will wait until the ball goes back over to the opponent's side of the court to transition. It's important when transitioning to keep track of the ball in case it quickly comes back over to your team's side during the transition. To help beginner players with timing, teammates (and coach) can yell "switch" when it's a smart time to transition.

**Line Ups and Rotations:** The coach will submit a lineup sheet showing where the starting players will start on the court. Usually, if you have won the first serve (team captains normally play rock, paper, scissors to determine this), you would put your strongest server in right back, or Position 1. If you start on serve receive, you could rotate your lineup on the lineup sheet back (i.e. counterclockwise) one position, so that when your team does earn the serve, the team will rotate and the best server



would be in right back to serve first. If you are specializing positions, you would put setters/right side hitters opposite each other, outside hitters opposite each other, and middle hitters opposite each other, so that for every rotation you would have one of each in the back row and one in the front row. For example, if you have two setters, one could start in Position 1 (right back) and the other could start opposite her in Position 4 (left front). The coach will also designate a floor captain (with the letter "C" next to the player's number) on the submitted lineup sheet who will be responsible for discussing any questions or issues with the referee during the match. The coach should refrain from addressing issues with the referee and instead send the floor captain. If the floor captain is subbed out, a new floor captain should be provided to the scorekeeper.

**ROLES:** There are various roles for the players to have: the server puts the game in play following a whistle from the referee, players can pass or dig the ball to other players on their team (or over the net), they can overhand set the ball with their fingers, they can attack the ball with a spike or hit, and they can block the ball where front row players time their jump with the hitter from the other team to try to stop the hit from coming to their side of the net. Note that hitters are allowed to jump and hit the ball from anywhere on the court whereas backrow players can only jump and hit the ball over the top of the net if they jump from behind the 10' (or "attack) line.

**Positions:** In the beginning, it is easiest to have players stay in their spot in the rotation. After players become comfortable with the fundamental skills of the game, they can "specialize" into positions. For example, a "setter" runs the offense and is typically responsible for the second ball in a play. They specialize on the right side. Ideally, the setter will set the ball to a hitter for a successful offensive play, but she may also strategically choose to tip or set the ball over the net (being careful not to cross the plane of the net if she is a backrow setter). If she's unable to get to the second ball, the setter yells "help" and a teammate should take the second ball. A "libero" is a back row specialist, and only plays in the back row. She wears a different color jersey from the other players on her team. While a team is limited in its number of substitutions during a game, this does not apply to liberos who are allowed unlimited entries on to the court (with some restrictions, for example a libero may not be used to serve for more than one player). This is why the scorekeepers at a match will keep track of other players' substitutions on the score sheet, while they have a separate libero tracking sheet just for liberos. Teams can usually choose to have 0, 1 or 2 liberos in a match (marked on the lineup sheet), however only 1 may be on the court at a



time. Liberos are typically the best passers on a team. Substitutions of non-libero players are requested between points and need to be acknowledged by the referee. Players subbing for each other line up in front of the 10' line (player coming out waits on the court, player going in waits outside the court) and wait for the scorekeeper to record the sub and the referee to signal that the substitution can be made. Usually up to three players may be substituted for the same position. They can then only sub for each other for the rest of the set. Liberos sub anywhere along the sideline and don't require the coach to request it. They can sub in for multiple players.

**There are different types of offense a team can run once they have players specializing. The most common are the 6-2 and 5-1.** The first number refers to the number of players on a team who can hit in the front row, whereas the second number refers to how many setters the team has on the court. So, in a 6-2, there are two setters (who play opposite each other on the court, specializing right), with the back row setter being the active setter. As a result, the setter in the front row is available as a hitter. In a 5-1, there is only one setter on the court, and she is the setter regardless of whether she's in the front row or back row. As a result, she's not often available as a hitter (unless someone else ends up setting the second ball, or the setter hits a second contact over the net). The reason teams may prefer a 5-1 is that it gives a team consistency having only one setter, and they can use their very best setter. On the flip side, if the setter gets injured it can cause difficulties, and it leaves the team short one hitting option when the setter is in the front row. **For beginner players, you can also choose to run a 4-2, where it is the front row setter who is primarily responsible for setting the hitters.** While this limits the number of potential hitters available to 2 for the team's offense, it is easier for the setter to get the second ball when she is already in the front row at the net. Even simpler, if players are not ready to specialize yet, a coach may decide that whomever on the team is in the middle front or right front will be the primary setter for that rotation. In this case, though, it's important to have abundant setting practice for all players on the team at practices. If beginner players are not yet comfortable overhand setting, they could "bump set" too.

**In terms of practice plans, we would suggest a consistent structure: Warmup, stretching, partner ball control drills (or skip this part to have more time for other drills), team drills starting with basic fundamentals increasing in difficulty over time as the players solidify these skills, then ending with a game-style drill once players are getting into the swing of things.** Enclosed



please find example practice plans for six practices. Note that the conditioning drills differ to keep things fun (you could instead do something as simple as having them run laps of the gym or back and forth on the court), but the stretching and partner warmups are the same; in this way, players know what they can do to warm up if they arrive early to practices, or if coaches are at a coaches' meeting, or to warm up prior to matches. Please emphasize the importance of proper stretching to minimize the risk of injuries. When the team is learning these "routines", the coach can call out what's next or can designate a leader or captain of the team to run them. In the initial practices, there may not be time for game-type drills as the focus needs to first be on fundamental skills, however players usually love and look forward to the game-type drills. We have included recommendations for teaching the different skills in the drill descriptions.



## **PRACTICE PLAN**

### **PRACTICE #1**

#### **Warmup Drill (5 mins):**

Shuttle run: Team jogs in a line, person at the front of the line starts with a ball. Players toss the ball gently to the player behind them. When the ball reaches the last person, they sprint on the outside of the jogging line to the front and start the process again. Depending on the number of people participating, you can continue until everyone has had a chance to be the sprinter.

**Stretching (5 mins):** Players spread out on endline. Unless otherwise noted, motion is done to the net, next motion done on way back to endline. Players should focus on good form and not rushing.

Jog to the net, back pedal to endline (x2)

High knees to the net, butt kicks back to the end line

Frankenstein march (high, straight leg kicks to hand)

Seesaws (lift both arms, and one knee. That knee goes back, outstretch leg behind, touch both hands to the ground. Then alternate).

“Feed the chickens” (extend one leg out with heel on ground, toes in the air, arms come down and brush towards the ground and forward with hands open to the ceiling)

“Cherry pickers” (lift one arm to the sky, other hand grabs foot behind, pull on foot towards back, then alternate)

Figure 4s (use both hands to grab foot, bringing it to opposite hip, alternate)

Open the gate, alternating legs (lift knee straight up, open leg to side)

Close the gate, alternating legs (left knee on side, close in)

Front lunges with a twist

Side lunges

Karaoke/grapevine to the net and back

Stretch anything else that feels tight



### **GAME (Approx 5-6 Minutes)**

Alphabet Circle-players make one circle and toss the ball into a player and they pass the ball within the circle as they call out the alphabet goal being get from A-Z (you can do a variation when they get the ball and call out names or they say something fun about themselves.

### **Partner Ball Warmups (approx. 5 mins)**

Two hand overhand throws (x10)

Left hand overhand throws and/or slam on ground to partner (x10)

Right hand overhand throws and/or slam on ground to partner (x10)

Hitting dominant hand to partner (x10)

Bump to yourself, bump to your partner (x10) (if time is tight, skip this part)

Set to yourself, set to your partner (x10) (if time is tight, skip this part)

Pepper – i.e. bump set spike back and forth with partner (coach should wait until everyone is done with warmup and has had at least 5 mins to pepper)

### **DRILLS (starting with fundamentals)**

Coaches should demonstrate or explain techniques so proper form is used and encouraged from the beginning, and bad habits don't have a chance to be established.

### **Passing (10 mins):**

Reminders: Hands – pancake, pancake (cross flat hands, facing upwards), sausage, sausage (curl thumbs up so they are side by side). Fingers should never be crossed.

Arms – fully extended – to get a flat, wide platform. Pass on forearms, NOT hands/thumbs.

Players partner up. One player gets down on right knee with left leg extended forward. Partner tosses nicely to her and she tries to return to partner. Switch tossers every 10 passes. Switch legs. Then move to standing position. Legs relaxed, bent, feet ready to move to the ball first. Slightly stagger feet, and they should be slightly wider than shoulders. If players do not bend their legs, they will resort to swinging arms instead. In this case, ask them where their arms ended up – in many cases they will show arms



pointed behind their body or off to the side...and this is where the ball went. If players are not brand new, tosser can require a couple shuffle steps to get the pass.

### **Serving (10 mins):**

Reminders: Underhand serve – turn to the side and hold ball in non-dominant hand such that if dominant arm is allowed to swing it will automatically hit the ball. Lean forward a bit, bend legs. No tossing or dropping the ball (no need to create a moving target!) Overhand serve – a good toss is essential. Do not get in habit of hitting horrible tosses, let it drop. During matches, the usual rule is that a server is allowed to drop or catch a bad toss one time during that serving run. If they choose to do that, they need to wait for a new whistle from the referee before serving again. Before drill, just practice serving tosses over and over to get it consistent. Toss with non-dominant hand, about a foot to a foot and a half high. Non-dominant foot in front. Ball should be contacted with heel of dominant hand, just as tossed ball starts to come back down, and follow through over the net pointing towards the desired destination. Players can definitely practice their tosses against a wall where they make the toss and then pin (hold) the ball against the wall with their dominant hand outstretched to hit the ball against the wall.

Free serve – coach walks around offering corrections on form. Coaches should also find out what the match rules will be for serving – i.e. can newer servers move up in front of the service line, are foot faults being called, etc. Rule for free serve: hustle to get balls, don't wait for one to come to you! The only way to improve a serve is to serve a lot!

### **Setting (10 mins)**

Players tend to be intimidated by setting. They need to see that it's another way to make a really controlled move of the ball, and essentially it is a very quick catch and throw. On top of that, for better or for worse, NCAA rules are showing a loosening of standards for what constitutes a legal set. The two components of a good set are hand position and footwork. In terms of hands...hands should be held in the shape of a ball, with the fingers forming a diamond shape. The ball will ideally be contacted just above the forehead – you can tell players that if they moved their hands the ball would hit them right in the forehead. If the hands are too low, it's almost impossible to not "carry" the ball, which is not allowed. When the ball is contacted, the fingers fall back slightly to the face and then project up and towards the target. Arms will fully extend and should be pointing toward the desired target/hitter. If there is a lot of spin on the ball, it means that the player is contacting the ball unevenly with her two hands. If the



set makes a loud noise, it means the player is hitting/swatting at the ball instead of cushioning it for a very quick catch and throw. They can think of the ball as a giant fragile egg, that needs to be handled softly so it won't break. For footwork, players first move to where the ball is coming from and take a quick left, right step. Typically, the left step should face towards the ball, while the right step should be parallel to the net, making it easier to keep the ball along the net rather than setting over the net or too far off the net for a hit.

Find a partner, one ball – start sitting down to focus on hands. Partner toss, focus on hand position 20x then switch. Follow with standing up and repeat, adding footwork. Next, set to self, set to partner, then partner sets to self and sets to partner. Players should note how their hand position changes whether it goes up to themselves or forward to partner.

### **Types of Rotations- (5-10 Min)**

**Some of these kids are beginners and some are not. Feel free to skip if they know rotations and where to go. Here is a [video link](#) if you need help explaining.**

This part is optional but another tool if needed; if not feel free to add an extra drill.

### **Wrap Up- 5 min**

**At end of first practice, tell players to think about team names for next practice... also encourage them to set against a wall at home, pass with a partner at home, practice serve tosses at home. Repetition, repetition, repetition.**