



## Webinar Q&A 3/26/2020

**QUESTION:** For out of system sets, do you widen your approach and start off the court?

**ANSWER:** For an out of system set, you will want to adjust the approach further back since an out of system set is typically 5 feet in and 5 feet off the net. Some coaches like transitioning off the court and some like to keep the player on the court. It's what is more comfortable for the player.

**QUESTION:** What are suggestions to practice good form with a large group of beginners?

**ANSWER:** For large groups you can always break it down into smaller groups and rotate the groups through. You can always do a lot of small group drills like groups of three or groups of two. You can always do Columbus type of drills so there is constant moving and rotating of the players.

**QUESTION:** Any strategies on getting both hands up quicker? I have a few girls that take too long on their backswing are consistently late unless the set is absolutely perfect.

**ANSWER:** For getting the hands up back and up sooner, I like the hands back on the second to last step (second step on a 3 step approach or 3rd step on a 4th step approach). You can also have the setter set the ball and instead of the hitter hitting it they need to catch it out in front of them with two hands. After doing this a couple of times the player should feel their timing being off or on. If they catch the ball on the way down they are early. They need to catch at their highest point.

**QUESTION:** Would you encourage use of an AccuSpike in place of a toss for individual work?

**ANSWER:** The AccuSpike is a great tool to use but a live set or coaches toss is going to make that more realistic

**QUESTION:** Any tips for timing? That is a FAQ from my athletes

**ANSWER:** Late and fast on timing is crucial. Most players are too early on their approach.

**Recommendation from a peer:** We do progressive hitting most every day- with just a few kids at a time... stand on box... then stand and jump.. then last 2 steps.. then full approach- that helps with timing sometimes

**QUESTION:** My girls have a hard time with timing the ball when they hit. What are the best drills to learn timing from outside, middle, and backside?

**ANSWER:** The best way is to really focus on the ball. Too many players watch the court while they swing and most don't make good contact when that happens. If they are hitting on the



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way down they are early and if they are jumping into the ball they are late. They want to make contact at their highest point. Reps are the best way for players to work on their timing. Also, videoing and letting the girls see themselves hit is another great tool for them to use.

**QUESTION:** How does arm-swing change for a pin hitter to a middle hitter?

**ANSWER:** For middles its all about being as open as much to the setter and getting that hitting elbow up and back. To beat your block you want a high fast swing. You don't have time to think but just react. For outsides its still about being open to the setter but you see more hip movement into a swing for an outside hitter. You have more time to react since the ball is traveling further but its still about swinging high and getting on top of the ball.

**QUESTION:** How do you aid your athletes in getting on top of the ball?

**ANSWER:** Putting a lot of focus on the ball. I like to see that middle finger on top of the ball and the player seeing the contact of hand to ball. You want that hand nice and open so that contact on the ball is good and you are pushing through the ball to create that snap. You want to make sure the ball is in front of the hitter and not on top or behind them.

**QUESTION:** How do we prevent kids from going too early, especially at the younger ages when they wait under the ball.

**ANSWER:** Teach them patience at the beginning. Most kids at a young age just want to hit a ball regardless of their timing. Slow down the first two steps and have them accelerate towards the ball. You can always have them catch the ball instead of hitting it and that will show them where that ball is when they swing.

**QUESTION:** Thoughts or suggestions on how to teach timing? Even though I tell my girls to leave when the ball is at its peak they are always early or late.

**ANSWER:** Teach them patience at the beginning. Most kids at a young age just want to hit a ball regardless of their timing. Slow down the first two steps and have them accelerate towards the ball. You can always have them catch the ball instead of hitting it and that will show them where that ball is when they swing.

**QUESTION:** Juliann mentioned a 4-step approach, will this work with a 3-step approach as well.

**ANSWER:** YES, both approaches work.

**QUESTION:** What's a good way to help girls that are always having trouble hitting into the net or out of bounds deep?



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**ANSWER:** It starts with that control. If they are hitting the ball out or in the net consistently, they need to focus on their contact to the ball. Have them take power off and put more focus on technique (elbow up, open hand, ball in front of them). They need to make sure they are getting good contact on the ball with an open hand and eyes on the ball. Simple cross the court partner hitting downballs is great for this control.

**QUESTION:** What is the best way to get players to change from waiting in the pocket mentality to swinging fast?

**ANSWER:** Patience is what we want our players to have but that isn't always the case. They need to pay attention to the situation first and then decide on how they should approach that ball. Too many players rush it and don't take their time. Ask questions to the players on why they make the decisions they make. This helps them think more about what they are doing with their swings and every swing needs to be made with a purpose.

**QUESTION:** Advice on getting hitters to get on top of the ball rather than underneath the ball.

**ANSWER:** Patience, Patience, Patience. They need to see the ball in order to hit the ball in front of them. As the players get older, they need to make sure to adjust their approach further back to compensate for that additional power and speed they have. Most of the older players need to be jumping 4-5 feet off the net as that momentum they approach the ball with will push them forward. But it's always based on where the set is for me it's always about tracking the ball on the approach and not over running it.

**QUESTION:** For smaller hitters, hitting high is tougher. Do you have specific drills that can help smaller hitters?

**ANSWER:** For the smaller hitters, I would suggest setting that ball a little more off the net so they can work around that block easier. This would mean the hitter needs to transition further back to compensate for the set being off the net. They still need to make sure they are making good contact on the ball so a big open hand and ball placement is key.

**QUESTION:** Any ideas for teaching correct approach to large groups of beginners?

**ANSWER:** You can keep it simple with groups on both sides of the net starting at the 10 ft line and have them just go through their approaches. You can also break them down in small groups of 5-7 players and rotate them through every couple of minutes. They get a lot of reps in a short period of time.

**QUESTION:** I teach a lot of new players, the powerful ones tend to always hit it out too deep. Encouraging them to snap their wrist is my go-to, timing, jump higher... any extra suggestions?



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**ANSWER:** I always ask my players what they are looking at when they are hitting. A Lot of players who mis hit or don't make good contact on the ball are the ones not looking at the ball. Have them focus more on their contact and where on the ball their hand is making contact. If they are hitting deep, they are more than likely more behind the ball compared to being on top.

**QUESTION:** In your opinion, on a not-great set, where should a middle or OH go with a tip???

**ANSWER:** Middle should tip back to the 4 and the outside should tip or push deep to the 1 corner or hard angle to the 4 as well.

**QUESTION:** what is a good drill for right sides to get around the hit?

**ANSWER:** You can have a couple of players on hitting blocks setting the block to start with. For a RS you can change the angle they approach the ball which will open up their shot selection. Too many RS hitters focus on that cross-court swing and don't work enough on line shots or deep rolls.

**QUESTION:** With all the social distancing and inability to get in the gym, what are some good exercises, workouts, drills etc kids can do on their own at home?

**ANSWER:** Join us for the [Speed, Strength and Agility webinar](https://www.bsnsports.com/ib/sswebinar) on Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, where we will cover off on great at-home workouts for your athletes – hosted by our BSN SPORTS Brand Ambassador, Robert Hackett, former NBA strength and conditioning coach. RSVP here: <https://www.bsnsports.com/ib/sswebinar>

**QUESTION:** More tips on seeing the block more?

**ANSWER:** The only way to see the block more is to make sure the hitting is behind the ball more. When the ball is right on top of a hitters head they are looking up and not out to see where that block is. Its reps of keeping the ball in front of them more. Sometimes it could be as simple as making on of the last two steps shorter.

**QUESTION:** Do you have any drills for athletes with slow back swings?

**ANSWER:** I don't have a drill specifically. You would need to slow the approach down initially to see where the slow back swing starts. The arms should be back/palms up by the time they are on their second to last step and not pulling the arms through till that last step hits that ground. If they break it down step by step it lets a player focus each part of the approach instead of the whole thing at once. Most players put too much focus on their swing instead of how they are approaching the ball to swing at it.

**QUESTION:** What do you recommend for a jump serve?



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**ANSWER:** For a jump serve I would suggest a jump float. This is going to have more movement than a top spin and as most float serves; it will be tougher to pass.

**QUESTION:** Do you have any good drills for working on verticals to get up high so players can swing at the peak of the ball?

**ANSWER:** Join us for the [Speed, Strength and Agility webinar](https://www.bsnsports.com/ib/sswebinar) on Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, where we will cover off on how to increase vertical – hosted by our BSN SPORTS Brand Ambassador, Robert Hackett, former NBA strength and conditioning coach. RSVP here: <https://www.bsnsports.com/ib/sswebinar>

**QUESTION:** Does footwork help timing?

**ANSWER:** Absolutely. The better the footwork the player has, the easier it will be for that player to hit and adjust to the ball.

**QUESTION:** Should we teach adjusting in the air or should we teach correct hitting? Especially if the athlete is frustrated, and we need quick side out?

**ANSWER:** Unless that player has a crazy vertical, adjusting in the air is tough. The only adjustment most players can make is going from a swing to a tip. But most players can't turn their body or hang in the air while they make decisions. It's best that the player approaches that ball with a purpose. This will create less errors down the road for that player. Too much thinking opens the door for too many errors which then leads to that frustration.

**QUESTION:** Any suggestions on ways to keep attackers to stand tall and shoulders facing the court rather than turning to the side when hitting? and not dropping the swinging shoulder

**ANSWER:** Have the players focus on their hip movement on their swing and how they are landing. If they are landing with the body facing away then they are typically closing those hips too early. I like the hips staying open while they swing and then close as they are making contact to the ball. I find players have more power and a faster swing this way.

For dropping of the shoulder have them reach out more on their swing and follow the path of the ball after they swing. You can also video the hitter and have them see what they are doing wrong. Most of the players out there are visual learners and have a better understanding of

**QUESTION:** Do you have resistant bands drill?

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**QUESTION:** Suggestions for keeping the attacker from crunching like a tuck jump?

**ANSWER:** If the player is having good success with swinging like that I wouldn't change anything. If that hitter is struggling with her swing you could get her on top of a box and rep out that swing and slowly break her of the habit of crunching on the swing. Get her to start reaching out more on top of the box.

**QUESTION:** When you are a right-handed right side, what is your best advice on getting a good solid swing with a good high contact and timing?

**ANSWER:** For a Right-Handed RS hitter, have her change the angle she approaches the ball. Since she is right-handed have her start more on the inside of the court 1-2 feet in as that will drastically change her angle of her approach and will open her up to better hitting options.

**QUESTION:** Can you talk about the 2nd step (3rd on a 4 step approach) facing the setter to help engage more hips and shoulders?

**ANSWER:** Here is a 4 Step Breakdown - the order of steps are...right-left-right-left.

1. **Right step**-The first step is a small step with the right foot. This step gets you moving.
2. **Left step**-The second step is a bigger and quicker step. You should take this step towards where you think the ball is being set.
3. **Big right step and quick left**-This right step should be taken to place you at the best take-off spot. The left step is taken quickly to help your body transfer your momentum into an explosive jump.
4. **Take off spot**-Where you jump from the ground is critical to contacting the ball high and in front of the body.

**QUESTION:** What are the benefits of the 4-step approach vs. 3 step approach?

**ANSWER:** The biggest advantage I feel is more power going into the 4-STEP approach as well as it helps you adjust to set easier.

**QUESTION:** How much do you worry about over use of the shoulder?

**ANSWER:** With a proper swing you can save the shoulder on the players. If a player is constantly swinging outside their body or swing across their body with will wear down that shoulder more. During practices and drills have the girls take power off their swings and put more focus on shot placement. Pay attention to your players. If you do alot of hitting drills one day, change it up and work defense the next practice.



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**QUESTION:** When approaching the ball to hit, should athletes be doing a straight approach or bending/curving their approach?

**ANSWER:** You will want the player to go straight to the ball. This will create a stronger approach and a stronger swing. This will also help keep the player balance from the start of their approach to the end of their approach.

**QUESTION:** Can you provide a list of fun and engaging games for practice that would be great to share?

**ANSWER:** Some of my favorite games that I have played and ran with players are:

**Speedball:** the best full-court and half court grill for getting a large group of players a lot of quality touches and game play.

**4v4 (Quads):** can easily be played half court if you're sharing a court with another team. Can use different alignments as well, from one front-row setter and three back-row players to two front-row and two back-row players.

**Sideline to Sideline:** maximizes use of your team's half of a court so that your players can sharpen a variety of ball control skills.

**Losers Become the Net:** created by USA Volleyball Sport Development Director John Kessel, this grill is a fun and active small-court warm-up that gets your athletes warming up a variety of skills over a most unique net.

**Short Court Tip Game:** active warm-up allows your team to play 4v4, 5v5 or 6v6 cross-court over a ribbon net when you're stuck using half of a court without access to the net while enjoying long rallies, reading, communication and touches.

**Monarchs:** Monarch is similar to kings/queens, but the kings/queens side has to not only win the rally from the challenge side but receive a bounce from the coach and win that rally to stay on the kings/queens side

**Team Cooperative Pepper (FAVORITE):** This is 5v5 cooperative with no middle front. As soon as the ball is delivered over the net, that side rotates one position. Everyone has to play every position. Set a goal for consecutive 3 contacts over the net (balls delivered over the net in 1 or 2 contacts are a wash), or set the goal to be that your team has X minutes to beat its previous high cooperative score. It is not only physically, but mentally challenging in order to work and play smart as a team.