



Conflict Resolution: VCR (Dr. Kenneth Hardy)

Scenario - “Your attackers are frustrated and consistently committing errors when attacking Out of System, and are now starting to shot/tip/roll the ball to the libero.”

The VCR method is utilized to facilitate non-violent confrontation where the goal is to uphold an expectation without the opposing party’s ego interfering with the message.

V - Validate the point of view of the party to be held accountable. This allows both parties to greet each other on equal pages, devoid of a power differential (coach/player, captain/teammate, upper-classmen/under-classmen, etc.). Validation is an empathic approach to express compassion towards players that are obviously struggling with their play. It communicates, “I understand your perspective, I recognize where you are coming from.” Acknowledge the attitude and effort of the person you are confronting.

C - Challenge the athlete to see other perspectives of the same situation. At this point, your validation was affirming and encouraging to hear. You have the bandwidth to offer perspective into the situation. Challenging is an art. Do not assault the humanity or character of the person you are challenging. Preserve the dignity of the person being challenged.

R - Request something from your player to do so that they understand the expectation for performance. The request is your opportunity to uphold/reinforce the team standard and change behavior that is detrimental to the standard. Requests translate your feedback into positive and actionable change.

Coach, “Hey, what’s up?”

Player, “You said I should hit the ball high and hard, so I’m doing that but nothing is working.”

Coach, “What are you looking at while you swing?”

Player, “I don’t know, the ball?”

Coach, “Gotcha...okay. Well I tell ya, **those swings you are taking are nice and plenty powerful. I can see you are looking to score.**” (Validate)

Coach, “**I am wondering if you’ve thought to look past the ball before you swing to see what shots are open?**” (Challenge)

Player, “...no. No one really taught me how to do that.”

Coach, “**Fair enough, I wasn’t looking at that either when I was your age.**” (Validate)

Coach, “Consider that the most court you could score on is the corner directly opposite the one you are attacking at, your deep, cross-court corner. **I wonder if you could use your eyes to look past the ball and swing into as much court space as you can see. You could even use the edge of the block, out of bounds if you wanted to go for the tool. Have you heard of that?**” (Challenge)

Players, “I mean, I guess I can try...”

Coach, “**Well, okay, let’s try that on these next out-of-system attempts and then let’s talk about what you are looking and how well you can see the court.**” (Request).