

The Position by Position Volleyball Guide

What College Coaches Look for on Tape and in Person

Highlight reels give you the opportunity to showcase your ability, athleticism and attitude. The highlights act as bait for coaches to see you play in person or watch a full game video. The SportsRecruits staff was fortunate enough to sit with a few college coaches and hear what they look for at each position, whether in a highlight reel or at a live event. Below is our position by position breakdown based on feedback from college coaches.

General Guidelines

- **Highlight Reel over Skills Video** - While skills videos provide an opportunity to showcase your fundamentals and technique, college coaches are more interested in a highlight reel. Use clips from competition when possible, whether these are tournaments, high school games or scrimmages.
- **You Do Not Need to Pay A Professional Videographer** - You can, and there are certainly many services that will help you create a professional skills video, but it's not necessary. College coaches are more interested in the quality of your play than the quality of your video.
- **Consider your Angles** - The most important thing is choosing an angle that showcases your movement, and makes it easy to identify which player you are. Film from the endline behind your team's service line works best. Coaches want to see the entire play develop, and see your movement throughout. Film from along the net doesn't provide them the full picture.
- **Look the Part** - Coaches are most interested in seeing you perform in a practice or game setting. It's much easier for a coach to visualize you with their program if they see you in full uniform. If you need to use practice or scrimmage film, try to film on days when the teams dress out.
- **Keep it Concise** - Coaches don't have time to watch 10-minutes of your video. Chances are, they will view the first few clips before determining if they want to stick around for the rest. Make sure your first 3-5 clips (rallies) showcase your skill as well as your range. It's best practice to frontload your clip with rallies, and then add shorter clips after as desired.
- **Most Applicable Clips First** - If you are a primary setter, place your setting clips first. If setting is your secondary position, place your setting clips later in the video.

Outside Hitters

- **Your film should include clips of you hitting off of a setter**
 - Clips of you hitting off of a toss do not give an idea of your timing, or how you would compete in a live setting
- **When possible, include your transition off of the net through attack.**
 - This provides an opportunity for coaches to see your movement and how you prepare for attack.
- **Showcase your front AND back row play**
 - If you are a 6 rotation player, or want to play 6 rotations in college, it is important that you show this to coaches in your film. Include clips which showcase your range.
- **Attacking:**
 - Include 5-7 swings with the camera angle from the service line on your team's side of the net.
 - These can include both front and back row attacks
 - Choose clips where you are successful with a variety of shots (Example: Run a GO to the pin and swing line, Run a 3-1 and swing deep cross court)
 - Consider which shots are most advanced and, when applicable, include them. (Example, a kill from the outside sharp cross court to zone 4)
 - Coaches want to see your adaptability, not just what you can do with a perfect set. When possible, include a clip where you convert an out of system ball to a kill.
- **Defense:**
 - When possible, look for plays where you are involved in multiple contacts (Example: dig and then attack in the same play)
 - Coaches don't want to see you make the easy plays. Choose clips which showcase your athleticism and effort (Example: Switching direction and running down a ball to the corner, hustle plays)
- **Serve Receive:**
 - Of course, we want coaches to know you can pass, but including a short clip where your only involvement in the play is serve receive is NOT ideal.
 - Choose plays where you pass and then attack
 - Don't choose clips of easy serves, or those where the ball is served straight to your lap
 - Instead, look for successful first ball contacts off of difficult serves. Showcase your ability to:
 - read the ball
 - move early
 - create angles
 - take seams / cover lots of court
 - React to both short and deep balls

Setters

- **Your film should include clips of you setting off of a live ball (pass / dig)**
 - Clips of you setting off of a perfect toss do not give an idea of your timing, or how you would compete in a live setting
- **When possible, include your transition**
 - Setting front row? Show your transition from blocking to setting
 - Setting back row? Include that transition from defense to setting
 - This provides an opportunity for coaches to see your movement and how you prepare for attack.
- **Showcase your front AND back row play (if applicable)**
 - If you are a 6 rotation player, or want to play 6 rotations in college, it is important that you show this to coaches in your film. Include clips which showcase your range.
- **Variety of 1st balls**
 - Coaches don't just want to see what you can do off of a perfect pass.
 - Include clips where you convert a variety of passes / digs to a high quality set.
 - Include clips where you have to jump, save a tight pass, run off the net, etc.
- **Include the attack**
 - The goal of the film is to highlight you, not the attackers. However, if you cut your clips before the point of attack, it prevents coaches from seeing that you can locate and connect with your hitters. Include enough of the film that they can see the attack, and your coverage
 - When possible, choose clips which convert to kills (assists rather than assist attempts)
 - Did you visibly celebrate your attacker after their kill, and bring energy to the team? Include that in the clip, too.
- **Distribution:**
 - Remember that coaches may not watch your entire video, so you want to hook them in and showcase your versatility early.
 - Your first 5 clips should include setting to BOTH pins AND the middle.
 - When possible, include clips of you setting both with and against the flow.

Liberos / DS

- **Your film should include clips of you making first call contacts off of a live set and attack**

- Clips of you passing / digging off of a coach don't provide coaches with an idea of what you can do in a live environment.

- **It's about the skills, not the jersey**

- Some players shy away from including clips of them as a DS, thinking coaches care whether they are in the libero jersey or not. They don't!
- The most important thing is that you showcase your skills. Coaches don't care about the jersey, they care about what you can do.
- When you are playing DS, make sure it is clear to coaches which player you are.

- **Involvement**

- When possible, look for plays where you are involved in multiple contacts (Example: serve receive and then cover, multiple digs within a long rally, set an out of system ball and then dig)
- It is best to find a few quality clips where you are involved throughout a rally, rather than several short clips where you only showcase one skill

- **Versatility**

- If you play more than one defensive position, include those clips.
- College coaches are interested in seeing you play both middle back and the wings

- **Defense:**

- Coaches don't want to see you make the easy plays. Choose clips which showcase your athleticism and effort (Example: Switching direction and running down a ball to the corner, hustle plays)
- Coaches want to see how you read the ball and move. Start your clips early enough for them to see how you move from base to defense before digging.
- Include 3-5 rallies filmed from behind your team's service line.

- **Serve Receive:**

- Best filmed from behind the service line on your team's side of the court, or along the net.
- Don't choose clips of easy serves, or those where the ball is served straight to your lap
- Instead, look for successful first ball contacts off of difficult serves. Showcase your ability to:
 - read the ball
 - move early
 - create angles
 - take seams / cover lots of court
 - React to both short and deep balls

Right side / Opposites

- **Your film should include clips of you hitting off of a setter**
 - Clips of you hitting off of a toss do not give an idea of your timing, or how you would compete in a live setting
- **When possible, include your transition off of the net through attack.**
 - This provides an opportunity for coaches to see your movement and how you prepare for attack.
- **Showcase your front AND back row play**
 - If you are a 6 rotation player, or want to play 6 rotations in college, it is important that you show this to coaches in your film. Include clips which showcase your range.
- **Attacking:**
 - Include 5-7 swings with the camera angle from the service line on your team's side of the net.
 - These can include both front and back row attacks
 - Choose clips where you are successful with a variety of shots (Example: Run a C to the pin and swing line, Run a crossing play and swing deep cross court)
 - Consider which shots are most advanced and, when applicable, include them. (Example, a kill from the outside sharp cross court to zone 2)
 - Coaches want to see your adaptability, not just what you can do with a perfect set. When possible, include a clip where you convert an out of system ball to a kill.
- **Blocking:**
 - Blocking is an important skill for right side players.
 - For blocking clips, choose rallies where you are involved in multiple contacts, including a block. (Example: Attack on the right then stuff block a ball, block a ball and then stuff block another ball, block a ball then take a free ball which you convert to a kill)
- **Defense:**
 - When possible, look for plays where you are involved in multiple contacts (Example: dig and then attack in the same play)
 - Coaches don't want to see you make the easy plays. Choose clips which showcase your athleticism and effort (Example: Switching direction and running down a ball to the corner, hustle plays)
- **Serve Receive:**
 - Of course, we want coaches to know you can pass, but including a short clip where your only involvement in the play is serve receive is NOT ideal.
 - Choose plays where you pass and then attack

Middle Blockers / Middles

- **Your film should include clips of you hitting off of a setter**
 - Clips of you hitting off of a toss do not give an idea of your timing, or how you would compete in a live setting
- **When possible, include your block to transition off of the net through attack.**
 - This provides an opportunity for coaches to see your movement and how well to read the ball and close the block, as well as how you transition off to prepare for attack.
 - If you start the clip too late (after you have already transitioned) you miss an opportunity to showcase your athleticism. Remember, we want a highlight reel not a skills video.
- **Blocking:**
 - Blocking is an important skill for middles. Choose clips which showcase your ability to make big moves to front a middle, and to close the block on both pins.
 - For blocking clips, choose rallies where you are involved in multiple contacts, including a block. (Example: Run a slide stuff block a ball, block a ball and then stuff block another ball, joust and then take a coverage ball which you convert to a kill)
- **Attacking:**
 - Include 5-7 swings with the camera angle shooting from behind the service line. This will allow coaches to see your point of contact and where the ball lands in the court, which cannot be seen from an on the net view.
 - Choose clips where you are successful with a variety of shots. When possible, include:
 - Quick in front
 - Quick behind
 - 3-1 or push
 - Slide / crossing pattern
 - Include a variety of shots:
 - Line of approach swing line
 - Cut back to cross court
 - Cross body shot
 - Coaches want to see your adaptability, not just what you can do with a perfect set. When possible, choose clips where the first ball pulls the setter off the net, you adjust and still get a kill.