

Alternative Training and Competition Models

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Questions to Begin

- Are we introducing the game in a way that captivates the best young athletes?
- Should “Preparation for the next level,” be the primary goal for coaches of young players? What about the players who quit before reaching that level? If not “preparation”, then what are the alternatives?
- Are other countries using more effective models/methods to teach the game to young players?
- Should 8-14 year old players compete on the same size court and implement the same systems as our USA National Teams?
- When teaching inexperienced players, what is the best balance of skill instruction vs. play? Can skill acquisition science help with this?
- Is the current junior tournament paradigm a good fit for inexperienced young players? What might be better?
- Should scrimmaging be a 6 v 6 staple? Alternatives?

Youth VB: USA vs The World

USA

- Little coaching coordination/cooperation
- Focus on 6 v 6 competition
- Little/no compensation for the size/strength of young athletes
- Early talent ranking and specialization

Canada

- LTAD (Long-term Athletic Development)
- Triple-Ball: Serve + two throw-ins

Brazil

- Small-sided games
- CLA: Constraints Led Approach
- Modified Rules: Underhand serving; Setter in MF, with only high sets to LF/RF
- No early specialization

Italy

- Structured coaches' training
- Game-based (Pairs/wall work limited to 10 minutes)

France and Poland

- “Benjamin” Style: Lower nets, smaller courts, enhances spiking at an early age
- 2 v 2, 3 v 3, 4 v 4 with everyone playing every position

Sports Performance Volleyball

Small Sided Games (Varying Net Height)

- **Speed Ball:** A catch-throw game to develop VB IQ, movement, and awareness
- **2 Contact:** Catch and spike
- **3 Contact:** Pass/Catch/Spike In 3 v 3, each player must have 1 contact.
- **3 Contact:** Pass/Catch Overhead/Spike
- **2 or 3 Contact:** Spike to Score. No points are awarded unless a player jumps & swings
- **Manchetao:** A Brazilian 2 ball game.

Alternatives to 6 v 6 Scrimmaging for Young Players

- **4 Ball Exchange:** Coach enters 4 balls, 2 to each side alternating. Each rally win equals a point. Bonus point for rally win with specific criteria- 3 contacts with a jump & spike?
- **1 + 2 Wash:** Play 6 rotations in serve and 6 in receive and start over. Receiving team gets 2 free balls, then both teams rotate. Win 2 out of 3 = 1 pt. Win all 3 = 2 pts.
- **1 and 2 Wash:** Play 6 rotations in serve and 6 in receive and start over. Each team receives a free ball. Same scoring.
- **4 Point Lock Scoring** (limit errors): Play to 12 points. A team's score locks when reaching 4 and 8 points. If a team makes a service error or gets aced, then go back to their locked score. For example, if Team A is winning 3-0 and they make a service error, they go back to 0. The score is now 0-1.

Coast VBC Youth Training Experiment

1. Priority # 1: Teach kids to love the game

- a) Start with Values/Culture. Example is *PBJ*: Passionate, Bold, Joyful
- b) Show them they are improving. Remind them before and after each meeting.
- c) Worship the rally. Fast and fun!

2. Training Philosophy

- a) Play over the net (OTN) all the time! Skill training (OTN!) to small-sided games. NO LINES!
- b) Focus on reading and moving from day 1. Git it!
- c) Narrow game focus with: deliberate initiations, freeze framing, and creative scoring.
- d) Doghouse as primary game format. Make a mistake, get your ball, and get in line. Keeping the rally alive = play more. Coach the “doghouse” player while PLAY CONTINUES.

3. Worship the Rally

- a) Serve in, Ace prevention, Defend / Pursue, Attack (shape & spin, lift tip)
- b) What is stopping the rally? Coach that, and then play some more.
- c) Initially, use catching, coaches, and 2-contact play to create/extend rallies.

Equipment Change: The 80' Net

1. Run a yarn/rope “net” perpendicular to the regular court. You now have 80' of net to play on rather than 30'.
2. **2 Court Configuration:** 10' line & endline as sidelines = 2 courts 20 x 30. This is the configuration for our 4 v 4 competitions.
3. **4 Court Configuration:** Net to 15' is 1 court. Neutral zone 15'-20'. 20' to 35' is another court. Now there are 4 mini-courts 15' x 30'. This configuration is best for 1 v 1 and 2 v 2 games.
4. **Advantages**
 - a) Pairs skill training is over a net. Ball has to go higher, and players have to track.
 - b) More courts = more play. No long lines. Everyone can play in 1 v 1 and 2 v 2 games.
 - c) One coach can easily set both sides by stepping under the yarn. Rallies!
 - d) Less chaos and more safety than playing longcourt with weak ball control.
 - e) Teach rotations twice as fast in a small area.
 - f) You can accommodate more players on a single volleyball court.

24 Players: 2 v 2 with 2 players rotating in from the doghouse.



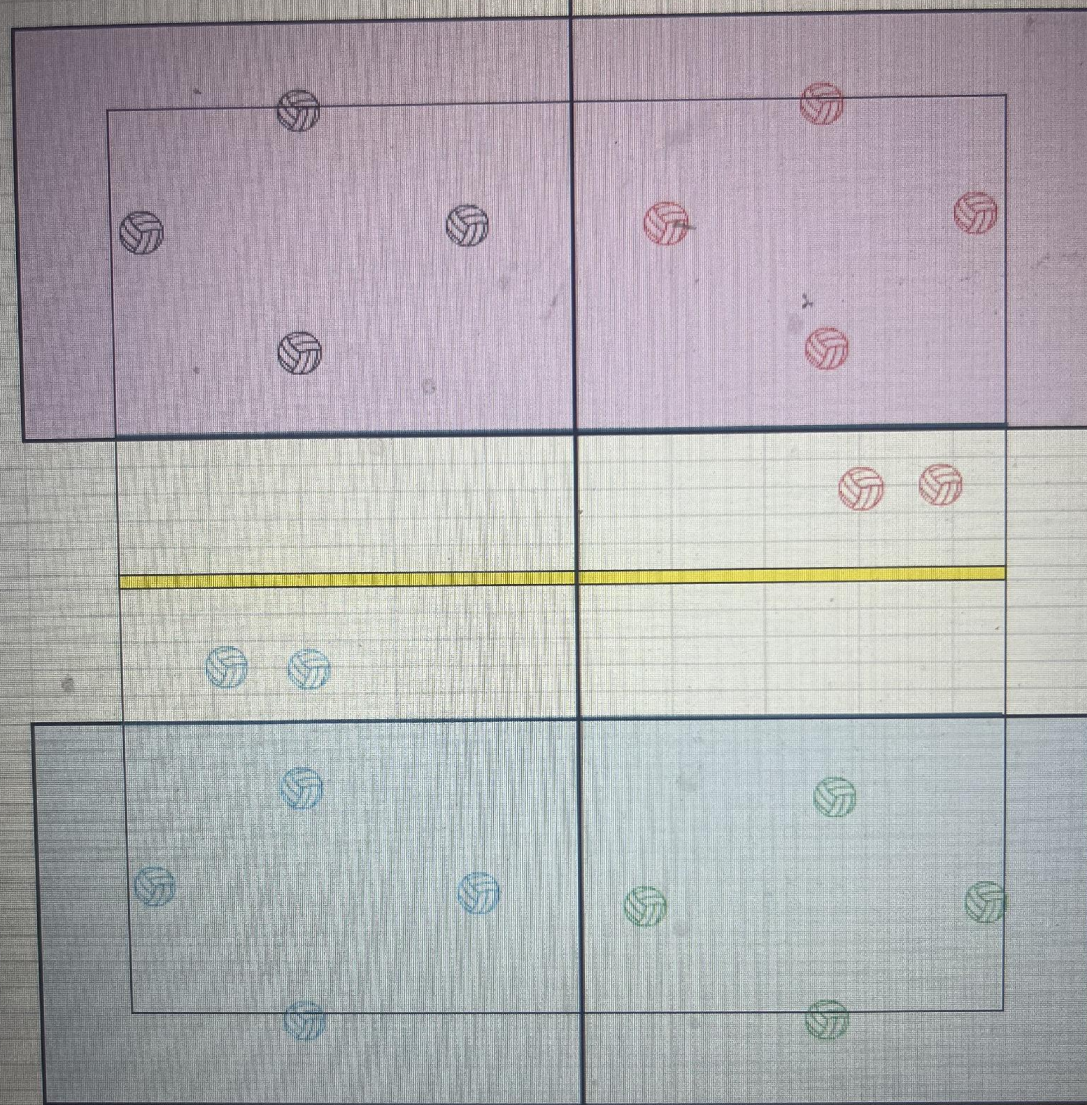
4 courts 15 feet x 15 feet

Competitive Format: 4 v 4, *Three-Ball*

1. **Yarn Court Size** (Two 20' x 40' yarn courts on 1 traditional court)
 - a) The 10' line and the endline become sidelines.
 - b) Extend the endline (sideline of traditional court) an extra 5' on each side. Each side of the yarn net is now a 20' x 20' box.
2. **4 v 4 Player Configuration**
 - a) MF is the setter, RF & LF are attackers, and middle back is the BR defender.
 - b) Middle back is also the server.
3. **3 Ball: Play a serve, and then a ball is tossed in to each side.**
 - a) Each server will serve 2x, regardless of the results of the 3 points.
 - b) Teams huddle after the third point. The receiving team then rotates to serve.
 - c) Rotating: There are 4, 5, or 6 players per side. When more than 4, a player who is out rotates in to LF, and the server rotates out. Serve at the end, not the beginning.
 - d) Flip score by parent/player/coach. No book, no ref, no linespeople. Honor calls.
4. **Teams of 6 play three 25-minute matches per competition day.**
 - a) Each team plays the other 3 teams on one single regulation court (Two 4 v 4 courts)
 - b) Play games to 15 with a 1-minute break between games. No time-outs.
 - c) The 24 players are finished in 90 minutes, and another group begins.



24 Players: 4 v 4 on 20' x 20' court. Rotate into LF.



4 teams of 6 play a 25 minute round robin, with 5 minute breaks. 3 matches in 90 minutes and go home..



Selling Parents on 4 v 4, *Three-Ball*: Making Common Sense More Common

1. The size of the court fits the size of your kid. More rallies!
2. Your kid will learn faster with more game-like touches.
3. Your kid will always have 2 chances to serve, and no server gets more than 2.
4. Your kid will play every position- setter, right side attacker, left side attacker, and back row.
5. Time is used wisely. Your kid will play for 90 minutes and then go home.
6. No reffing/books/lines: Coach blows whistle to serve, to signal a toss in, and two chirps for team huddles and rotation after 3rd ball. A parent flip scores.

