



JVA Training Curriculum 15U

[Overview](#)

This is the Evolutionary Stage, when players are continuing to mature and strengthen all areas of their game. The overall goals for this age are to develop a higher volleyball IQ by understanding the disciplines of offense and defense. Athletes should be pushed outside of their comfort zones to achieve a higher level of work ethic and learn to compete at a higher level, while understanding that the overall team success is as important as individual success.

During this stage, athletes begin to understand more advanced concepts and are continuing to adjust to the demands of playing at a faster pace. Players continue to evolve in physical and mental maturation. This is the stage where some players accelerate in their abilities and begin to truly stand out. Awareness of tactics within the game becomes an important facet of the learning process as well. Players tend to be self-critical and rebellious, but show a strong commitment to the team.

[Coach Description, Requirements and Role](#)

An ideal 15U is positive yet clear on expectations, and knows when to be firm and when to be calm and sit back to allow the player to think and respond on his/her own. During this age many athletes are transitioning to new roles, for example a hitter is becoming a 6 rotation player or a setter is becoming a libero. A 15U coach must be prepared and willing to go through growing pains with their athletes, allowing them to fail early to learn and achieve the long term goal. It is important for the coach to focus on the athletes' learning processes and not the result. It is equally important for the coach to help the athletes to understand it is a process that takes time.

At the 15U level significant development at this age with respect to independent decision making and problem-solving should be expected. Therefore it is important for the coach to encourage the narration of the game from the players. Liberos switching serve receive patterns, setters alternating offensive design, blockers calling out top

hitters and tendencies by rotation. Teach and guide the athletes to become students of the game.

Skill Development

Serving

Players should understand serving philosophy/strategy. Players should be able to serve short and deep and understand how to put more pace on their serve when needed. Players should understand what it means to be a place or pace server. Players should also understand they want to put runs of points together and know when to apply their 80% serve vs an ace serve.

- Technique:
 - Know the basic fundamentals of the standing, jump float and jump top serve from 14s.
 - Understand hand contact to manipulate the drop serve
 - Begin to understand what it means to jump through the ball to create power
 - Understand the importance of keeping the toss in front with all serves to create a flat line trajectory serve
 - Coaching queue: flat and clean to instruct the server's hand contact
- Mentality - more explanation of push pull
 - Learn when to serve with more risk and when to place the serve and why
 - Players should -Learn the push/pull concepts of serving. Serving short and deep
 - Understand short serving is a tool to predict the offense of the opponent
 - Understand the concept of cross court serving (possibilities to serve harder/cross all three passing zones)
- Result
 - Players should be able to serve all 6 zones effectively (70%)
 - Players should have an 80% serve meaning a serve that will be in 80% of the time. This serve is utilized as the first serve to get into a rhythm or in a must win situation. This serve is not a freeball serve; it has pace but control.
 - Develop a 40+ MPH serve

- Be able to consistently serve the ball on a line below the antenna
- If utilizing a jump serve develop the understanding of serving the ball downhill

Serve Receive/Passing

As the pace of the serves increase players should become more familiar with platform adjustment and learning how to absorb some of the power in order to avoid an overpass. Players need to receive a lot of repetitions in order to practice their platform angles on serve receive and free/down balls. Players also need to receive a lot of passing overhead, especially on free balls and down balls.

- Technique
 - Have a basic understanding of starting low, staying low and playing low
 - Keep the chest to the floor, thumbs together and get feet to the ball
 - For passing form, begin to understand the importance of keeping a separation from the platform to the hips
 - Understand platform tilt comes into play on every pass
 - When utilizing tilt athletes must understand that one arm of the platform is under the ball and one arm is behind the ball
 - Understand the advantage of taking freeballs with the hands to speed up the offense and have more control
 - Simple, small movements are better than complex
- Mentality
 - Develop the mindset that the pass should not dictate where the set goes
 - Stay on your feet as long as possible, only surrendering the feet to dive in an emergency situation
 - Take every serve/dig personally. Do not let the opponent beat you
 - Develop the ability to not let one become two. Respond to mistakes and make corrections so it won't happen a second time
- Result
 - The passer's goal is to get feet behind every ball so the first step is to target since the next job is to cover
 - Accept that not every ball has to be perfect
 - Up and off the net is better than over the net

Setting

Setters should be able to set 1st, 2nd and 3rd tempo sets. Setters should feel comfortable with rotations enough to direct their teammates in between plays on serve receive. Setters should be able to jump set, but it is not necessary to require them to jump set. By the end of the season, setters should be jump setting in system passes.

- Technique
 - Push an outside set to the pin when the pass is off the net or a little behind the setter
 - Push a backset to the pin when the pass is in front of the setter
 - Able to run and spin off one foot to set an out of system pass.
 - Setters should be able to look across the net to see where the best match-up for hitters is. Introduce and work on execution of this skill
 - Understand the hitting lane to not trap set the hitter (avoid a tight set)
 - Able to force the middle hitter on a pass that is off of the net (7-10 feet)
- Out of System Setting
 - Depending on the speed of your setter, the libero can begin to call off the setter on an out of system ball. The coach needs to decide if you want the setter to dictate this during a game or if the libero can step in and call the setter off when the dig or pass is in the backcourt.
 - Have a back row option out of system
 - Both pin attackers should be ready to attack everyball
 - Establish a standard set for a non setter so the hitter knows what to expect (5 feet off and 5 feet in is recommended)
 - -Cover the out of system set even harder than an in system set
- Mentality/Decision Making
 - Understand there are no bad passes; it is the setter's job to better the ball
 - The set should not dictate where the hitter has to hit the ball
 - Know and understand who the hot hitter is and also who the best hitter is on the court
 - Run a well balanced offense (incorporating all hitters)
 - See the block to know what to set your hitters (if the opposing team's setter is front row and is a short blocker, push the ball outside to the pin)
 - Know each hitters best set
 - Adjust to each hitter and understand each hitter's set especially in the middle One size does not fit all when it comes to setting the attackers at this level
 - Be a thinker and have a purpose in decision making

- Locate, then deliver with tempo, then be deceptive. In that order!
- Result
 - Be the leader of the offense
 - Accept that you facilitate the offense and may not get a lot of credit
 - Being willing to always better the ball
 - Able to set the same tempo on every ball
 - Get the attackers a swing 100% of the time

Attacking

- Technique
 - Know the basics of the approach footwork, timing and arm swing
 - Get the feet and head to the ball
 - Begin to understand and perform lifting with both arms to swing as high as possible and get a max jump
 - Go small to big on the approach. If you teach a 4 step approach, the first 2 steps should be small and slow and the last 2 steps should be big and fast. The “step/close” or last 2 steps should be very powerful and build momentum and force.
 - Develop thumb down and pinky down shots
 - Develop shots with tips and rolls by still max jumping and staying high
 - Outsides: develop the ability to attack 2nd and 3rd tempo attacks down line and to cross court corner
- Mental/Decision Making
 - Introduce libero calling a shot for the attackers
 - Develop the mentality of jumping to score every time
 - Every swing should either score or put the other team into a pursuit play
 - Have great set recognition: hit poorly located sets in the court and terminate the well located sets
- Result
 - Develop the understanding of a ball bouncing on the floor no matter how hard is a point
 - Ability to terminate the ball against one attacker on a good set at least 25% of the time
 - Middles: Ability to consistently attack 1st tempo and slides. Make yourself available to attack in defensive transition

Defense

- Technique
 - Understand the platform on a dig must be under the ball not behind the ball
 - Understand whichever way your body drifts the ball will drift
 - Position matters! Get where you are supposed to be first then make the move to the ball
 - Develop off blocker defense
- Mentality
 - Compete on every ball be mentally locked in on defense
 - Relentless pursuit on every ball will wear down the opponent
 - Throw your body on every ball
- Result
 - Players should be able to consistently dig balls to a target position just inside the 10 foot line (50%)
 - 70% overall dig percentage

Blocking

Introduce swing blocking if your team has the athletes, timing is an issue. swing blocking can cause more blocking errors

- Technique
 - Understand what it means to press over the net while blocking
 - Start to develop the idea of fronting the hitter
 - Understand what it means to block line or cross
 - Develop a strong outside hand on the pins to press in
 - Begin to use each hand independently. See it and get it - meaning dive in with inside hand on the pins and for middle blockers take an attacker's shot away with one hand
 - Spend less time with eyes on the ball and more time with eyes on the hitter, to learn to process what the hitter is telling you
- Result/Mentality
 - Develop the mentality that you can do everything right and still not block a ball
 - Understand that a blocker's job is to funnel the ball to our defense

- Be able to find the opponent's attacker on serve receive and track the attacker to execute a block

Team Systems Development

- Develop an offense that always has a first tempo option
- -Develop an offense that has a back row attack option
- -Develop offensive combination plays
- Train an overlapping defense with the expectation that at least two players pursue every ball
- The movement and transition game becomes more important at this age. Athletes must understand how the game breathes from coverage-base-defensive release-repeat
- Introduce higher level concepts such as having a transition plan for each situation. I.e: if the drop off/off blocker plays the 1st ball your team should run the middle.

Mental Development

- Start to understand the struggle is temporary and necessary for growth
- Get comfortable being uncomfortable
- Learn the ebbs and flows of the game
- Celebrate others success within the team
- Understand while the ball is in play there is always a job to be done by all players. There should never be a time of standing and watching

Strength

In this program, athletes will work off of 6 movement patterns:

-Squats

-Hinges

-Vertical Push

-Vertical Pull

- Horizontal Push

- Horizontal pull

Each movement has a progression system that allows athletes to advance based on their individual training experience and ability. While there will be age-based recommendations for where athletes should ideally begin, determining the appropriate starting point for each athlete is essential, as training backgrounds can vary significantly.

For example, a 17s athlete may have no weight room experience, while a 14s athlete may have already completed two years of structured strength training. This system allows athletes to enter at the appropriate level for their experience and progress at a pace that supports their individual development.

Level 1

This level is where all athletes ages 12 and under will start. However, any athlete who is new to the weight room, regardless of age, should master these movements before progressing to the next level.

Level 1 focuses on learning the fundamentals of each movement pattern. Because athletes at this level are either younger or new to the weight room, technique takes priority above all else. Adding weight should only be considered once an athlete demonstrates proficiency in proper technique.

For bodyweight movements, athletes may use tools to assist with the movement or perform modified variations that reduce complexity. These progressions allow athletes to build confidence while developing proper movement technique before advancing to more challenging variations.

Goals for Level 1 Athletes

- Learn each fundamental movement pattern in the system.
- Understand why these movements are important and how improving them over time can help athletes develop as volleyball players and overall athletes.
- Master proper technique in each movement pattern to build a strong foundation for success at higher levels.

Coaches can move athletes to the next level once they demonstrate a strong grasp of these goals and consistently perform the movement patterns with proper technique.

Level 2

This level is for athletes who have progressed through the Level 1 movements and goals and is ideally suited for athletes ages 13–15. Athletes at this level demonstrate proficient technique in fundamental movement patterns and begin to add weight and complexity as they progress. Level 2 introduces the barbell to most movement patterns, giving athletes a tool to progressively increase load. Bodyweight movements also advance to less-assisted variations and move closer to full-bodyweight versions.

Goals for Level 2 Athletes

- Demonstrate proficient technique with the barbell and other new tools introduced in each movement pattern.
- Develop greater strength within movement patterns over time.
- Improve control and coordination in bodyweight movements.

Level 3

This level is for athletes who have gone through level one and 2 by learning the movements within each pattern and have gained a good level of relative strength through training. This is the level you would want athletes 16-18 to be. This level doesn't add many more movements or complexity to the movements already learned, but looks to add more load to weighted movements while keeping proficient technique and fully unassisted variations of the bodyweight movements.

Goals for Level 3 athletes

- Build higher levels of relative strength in the weighted movements overtime
- Complete higher number of reps of the bodyweight movements unassisted

****It is highly debated in the strength and conditioning community what levels of strength athletes should meet (double body back squat vs 1.5 times bodyweight back squat for example) so athletes of this level should have a professional consult them on their strength levels and their proficiencies to further push their weight room capabilities appropriately.*

	Level 1: Beginner WATCH VIDEO	Level 2: Intermediate WATCH VIDEO	Level 3: Proficient WATCH VIDEO
Squat	Bodyweight/ lightly weighted goblet squat	Medium weighted/Lighter Barbell Back Squat	Heavier loaded barbell Back squat
Hinge	Bodyweight hinge/ lightly loaded Romanian Deadlift	Medium weighted romanian Deadlift/Lighter loaded barbell romanian deadlift	Heavier Loaded Barbell romanian deadlift/ Hex Bar Deadlift
Vertical Push	Knee on box handstand push ups/ Lightly weighted overhead press	Wall full handstand hold/ Medium weighted overhead press/ light barbell overhead press	Handstand Shoulder taps/ Heavier Barbell overhead press/ Barbell push press

Vertical Pull	Pull downs (banded or machine)/ Banded Chin Ups and Chin up holds	Eccentric Chin-ups/ less resistance banded chin up	Free chin ups
Horizontal Push	Eccentric push ups/ Lighter Dumbbell Bench Press	Full Push ups (at least 5 full depth) / Heavier Dumbbell Bench press/ Lighter Barbell Bench press	Full range push ups (10+), heavier Barbell Bench Press
Horizontal Pull	Bodyweight Rows/ Lighter Dumbbell Bent over rows	Heavier DB Bent Over Rows/ Lighter Barbell Rows	Heavier Barbell Rows

Plyometrics

Volleyball naturally involves a high volume of plyometric actions.

Athletes repeatedly jump, land, and jump again during rallies. Setters plant and redirect force to move quickly to the ball. Defenders react and change direction rapidly while pursuing digs. Nearly every movement on the court requires an athlete to absorb and produce force efficiently.

Training should prepare athletes for the demands of competition. Because plyometrics closely mirror the physical requirements of volleyball, they can be a valuable component of a comprehensive training program. Read more on plyometric vertical training for junior volleyball athletes.

[Begin with this Plyometric Rudiment Series.](#)

Athletes can complete the series once during a warm-up for approximately 10-20 yards per movement, or complete multiple rounds as a standalone training session.

As athletes improve, these same movements continue to build lower-body resilience. Increased athleticism naturally leads to greater speed, intensity, and force production over time.

Once athletes demonstrate proficiency with these foundational movements, coaches can begin introducing more advanced plyometric progressions like these [Plyometric Intensive Exercises.](#)

[How to Apply the Above Concepts into your Gym](#)

[Assignment and Evaluation of Coaches](#)