AVCA-Badger Region
EDUCATIONAL TIP OF THE WEEK

Thirty Minute Passing Progression – Matt Huskey, Saint Louis University Assistant Coach

THIRTY MINUTE PASSING PROGRESSION

by: Matt Huskey, Assistant Coach - Saint Louis University

"IT'S A SERVING AND PASSING GAME."
"WIN THE SERVE-PASS BATTLE."
"WE PASS. WE WIN."

NO MATTER WHAT level we coach, at some point, we all have preached to our teams the importance of receiving the serve (passing) and its direct relationship to competing at a high level. As a result, we spend a ton of time in the gym training the fundamentals of passing. In our gym, we talk about posture, movement, and finish and we will use key words like "straight and simple," "shuffle," "tilt," etc. We all teach and train skills differently. Figure out the way that you want to train Passing and make your team GREAT with their passing fundamentals!

Once you have the groundwork laid, the next challenge is maximizing your passing reps within your jam-packed practice plan. We must find enough time each day to train this critically important skill while not losing site of the fact that we have five other primary skills and team systems to train. It can get overwhelming. In this post, I am going to outline a 30 minute passing session that we like to do in our gym that maximizes touches. One note: know your team. It is great if your servers are consistent enough to run these drills. If you have inconsistent servers, you probably want coaches to control these drills to maximizes touches. We want as few services errors as possible during passing drills.

DRILL: BUTTERFLY

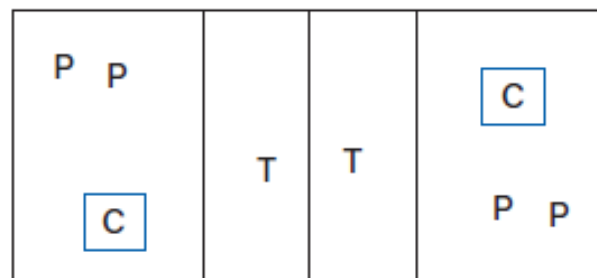## TIME ON THE CLOCK: 0-5 MINUTES

This is your basic "Follow the Ball", butterfly drill. This drill offers the players first opportunity to mentally focus on posture, movement, and finish in a very controlled setting. Coaches should enter the ball in a manner that will allow your player to experience a very high success rate. At a beginner level, you might just toss or chip a free ball over. At the more experienced level, you might go straight into a 50% serve from half court. An added benefit of doing this at the beginning of the session is that it gets the heart rate up a little bit.
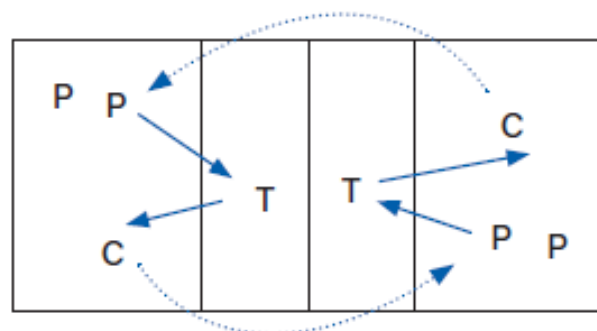
DRILL: COACH ON BOX VS. ONE PASSER

TIME ON THE CLOCK: 5-10 MINUTES

Break your passers into two groups and have them rotate from passer to target after the passer receives seven serves from a coach position at half court on a box (if available). We like this because the serve is traveling a shorter distance and requires the passer to react and move quickly/efficiently to the ball. five minutes is a pretty short period of time, so we like to change our focus every day for this five minute session (Ex: pass out of Zone 5, pass out of Zone 1, hands pass, work on movement INTO the court, work on movement toward the sideline, etc.).

DRILL: SEAM PASSING

TIME ON THE CLOCK: 10-20 MINUTES

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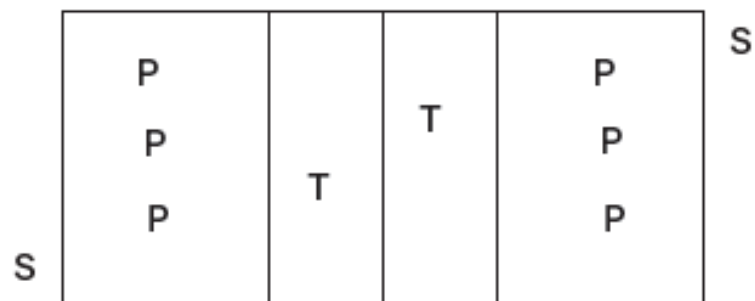
Break your passers into two groups and have them rotate on their side of the net from pass to target after the pair of passers receive seven serves from a coach/player who has moved back to the baseline and is hitting challenging serves. Passers start in Zones 5 & 6. You can switch them to Zones 1 & 6 half way through or work the 1/6 seam the next day. This drill is the first opportunity for the passers to pass next to each other. We want our passers to work on their two-way communication before, during, and after the pass. We only put two passers out there so that both players are always involved in the rep.
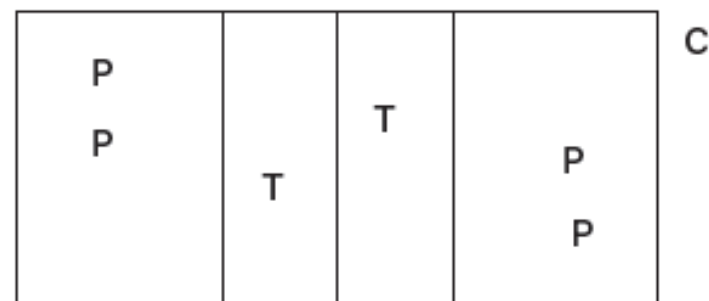
DRILL: LIVE SERVERS VS. PASSERS

TIME ON THE CLOCK: 20-30 MINUTES

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It's time to COMPETE! In my opinion, it is important to put passers in situations where they must compete against live servers. Create a group of passers and a group of servers. The serving team serves 10 balls to three passers. Keep the scoring simple. Good passes = point for passers. Aces/bad passes = point for servers. No ties… Have a tie breaker if it's tied 5-5.

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