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# Individual Player Skill Development Guide

(Revised 11-26-07)

Player Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**The Purpose of the Individual Player Skill Development booklet is to provide:**

- (1) Each Capital City VBC player with an outline of the key words and sequence of skills that we teach all players, and**
- (2) Individual players with a guide for tracking their own improvement or areas where more focus may be needed.**

**Players are encouraged to keep a running record of their achievements and progress, and to review this booklet throughout the season as a guide to improving the key skills necessary to becoming an accomplished player.**

**Your coach may also ask you to bring this booklet to practice and fill in progress reports as the season moves forward.**

**Ultimately, we hope the Individual Player Skill Development booklet will help each player in her desire to become the best player she can be.**



## **Key Words and Sequences: Overhand Serving**

### **Pause and Focus**

- Take your time; don't rush the serving motion.
- First, focus on the area of the court you are trying to hit with the serve.
- Next, focus on the ball and keep your focus on the ball until you contact through the ball.

### **Toss, Step, Reach in One Motion**

- The toss should only be as high as your arm reaches.
- Toss should be on striking side of body and in front of body.
- Short step with the opposite foot from the side you are striking the ball (Right-handed players step with the left foot, left-handers with the right)
- As the step and toss are performed, the striking side elbow goes up and the hand contacts the ball as it reaches its highest point.

### **Contact Slightly Below Middle of Ball**

- Eyes should be focused on a point just below the middle of the ball, and contact should be made with this spot on the ball.
- Elbow remains up through the contact point.
- Ball is contacted with the palm of the hand, stiff wrist.

### **Follow Through to Target Area**

- Keep elbow up through the contact.
- Forearm speed through the ball determines speed and distance.
- Where the hand goes, so goes the ball!

### **My Serving Keys/Strong Points**

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### **Areas in Serving Where I Need to Improve**

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## **Key Words and Sequences: Underhand Serving**

### **Pause and Focus**

- Take your time; don't rush the serving motion.
- First, focus on the area of the court you are trying to hit with the serve.
- Next, focus on the ball and keep your focus on the ball through contact.

### **Contact Position**

- Hold the ball in your hand opposite the striking hand (right-handed player holds ball in left hand, left-handed players in right).
- Hold ball on striking side of body.
- The foot opposite your striking hand is forward.
- Striking hand is a fist, with the thumb to the side.

### **Contact Through the Ball**

- Eyes should be focused on a point just below the middle of ball and contact should be made with this spot on the ball.
- Ball is contacted with the fist, keeping a stiff wrist.
- Contact is made with ball still in the hand.

### **Follow Through to Target Area**

- Keep elbow locked through the contact.
- Forearm speed through the ball determines speed and distance.
- Where the hand goes, so goes the ball!

### **My Serving Keys/Strong Points**

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### **Areas in Serving Where I Need to Improve**

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## Key Words and Sequences: Underhand Passing

### Ready and Steady Base Position

- Feet spread, knees slightly bent, palms on the knees, shoulders leaning forward.
- Ready to react and move to the ball.
- Focus on server.

### Slide to the Contact Point

- Track the ball with your eyes while sliding your feet to the contact point.
- Stay low, with knees bent, platform in front of body, keeping feet spread at point of contact.

### Extend Platform Under the Ball

- As you reach the contact point, create the proper platform (hand grip, arms extended with forearms together, wrists bent down, shoulders forward, elbows locked).
- See under the ball (this will keep your knees bent).
- Make contact slightly below middle of ball.

### Direct the Platform to the Target

- Drop shoulder in the direction you want the ball to travel.
- Keep arms locked.

### Punch Ball to the Target

- Contact slightly below middle of ball, keeping arms locked.
- Slight punch into the ball (depending on speed of ball), with hands/platform finishing in direction of target.
- Ball should be passed tight to the net, about antenna height.

### My Passing Keys/Strong Points

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### Areas in Passing Where I Need to Improve

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## **Key Words and Sequences: Overhand Serve Receive**

### **Feet to the Ball**

- Quickly move into position so the ball will be played in front of the body, above the forehead.

### **Square to the Target**

- Hips and shoulders face the target.

### **Block the Ball**

- Hands up quickly.
- Chin up, high hands.
- Hands and wrists are stiff and in front of body.
- Depending on speed of serve, either block or punch up and out on the ball on contact.
- Contact ball just before it hits the hands.
- Hands finish to the target.
- Ball should be passed tight to the net and about the height of the antenna.

### **My Overhand Passing Keys/Strong Points**

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### **Areas in Overhand Passing Where I Need to Improve**

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## **Key Words and Sequence: Free Ball Overhand Passing**

### **Feet to the Ball**

- Quickly move into position so the ball will be played in front of the body, above the forehead.

### **Square to the Target**

- Hips and shoulders face the target.

### **Shape the Ball**

- Hands up quickly.
- Chin up, high hands.
- Shape the ball by molding the hands around the ball; fingers spread, thumbs slightly under the ball.

### **Flick Wrists to the Target**

- With hands high, contact ball just before it hit the hands and flick wrists to the target.
- Hands finish to the target.
- Ball should be passed tight to the net and about the height of the antenna.

### **My Free Ball Overhand Passing Keys/Strong Points**

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### **Areas in Free Ball Overhand Passing Where I Need to Improve**

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## **Key Words and Sequence: Hitting**

### **Good Footwork to the Ball**

- Three step approach to the ball.
- First step is a short step taken on opposite foot of striking hand (right-handed player steps with left foot first). On outside attacks, keep the shoulders down.
- Second step is to the ball (not a spot on the court) and should be long and powerful, landing with knee bent a foot behind the ball trajectory.
- Third step is the “brake” step. Turn the front foot to a 45° angle to prevent jumping under the ball. Thrust your shoulders up into the attack.

### **Jump and Reach**

- As the front toe lands, both arms swing up through the middle of the body.
- Hands go above the head, with striking hand and shoulder pulled back, elbow out to the side.
- When well timed, reach for the ball starts as jump begins.

### **See the Block**

- Jump far enough behind the ball so you can see the blockers.
- Adjust your hit according to the blockers.

### **Snap Over the Ball**

- Reach up to hit the ball at the highest point possible.
- Depending on jump reach ability:
  - If you jump higher than the net height, hit slightly on top of the ball with the palm.
  - If you jump even with the height of the net, hit in the middle of the ball.
  - If you jump lower than the height of the net, hit slightly below the middle of the ball.
- Snap wrist and forearm over/through the ball.

### **My Hitting Keys/Strong Points**

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### **Areas in Hitting Where I Need to Improve**

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## Key Words and Sequence: Blocking

### Good Footwork to the Ball

- Quick footwork so blockers can jump with the hitter.
- Outside blockers use a hop or quick crossover step; middle blockers use explosive steps to the attacker.

### Explode to the Ball

- Before the jump, body should be positioned about a forearm's length from the net.
- Jump when the hitter jumps, with head lined up in the middle of the hitter's striking shoulder.
- Keeping hands up, explode from a position with the ankles and knees bent up to the ball.

### Go Get the Ball

- As you jump, pike at the waste and penetrate your hands to the other side of the net ("Seal the Net").
- Stiff wrists with hands spread as wide as the shoulders.
- Arms fully extended to the ball.
- NOTE: It is not how high you reach, but how far you penetrate that makes a good blocker!

### Read and Direct

- Read the hitter's arm swing to determine the speed, height, and direction of the attack.
- Turns hands to the court; outside blockers flex outside hand down, middle blockers turn outside hip to the court and hands face to the middle of court, not to the hitter.
- On contact, "press" the ball to the court while keeping wrists stiff.

### My Blocking Keys/Strong Points

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### Areas in Blocking Where I Need to Improve

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## Key Words and Sequence: Individual Defense

### Ready and Steady Base Position

- Feet spread, knees slightly bent, arms in front of body with palms up.
- Weight slightly forward, ready to react and move to the ball.
- Feet “loaded” at the moment the ball is being attacked.

### Read the Hitter

- Read the hitter’s available options in relation to the block, the set, and her ability.
- Initially, read the hitter’s approach and then after she jumps, read the hitter’s forearm to determine speed and direction of the attack.
- Slide into position; be sure to stop moving just before the ball is attacked and “load.”

### Low to Lower

- As the ball is attacked go low to lower so your platform is under the ball on contact.
- On balls hit to the side, open on-hand toe to the ball and take a slight step forward in the path of the attack, and drop the shoulder in the direction of the middle of the net as you move for the ball.
- On balls hit in front of you, use a knee slide with arms fully extended to get platform under the ball.

### Direct to the Target

- Drop shoulder in direction of the target.
- As you make contact, create the proper platform (hand grip, arms extended with forearms together, wrists bent down, shoulders forward, elbows locked).
- On balls contacted below the knee, “scoop” wrists under the ball for control.

### My Defensive Keys/Strong Points

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### Areas in Defense Where I Need to Improve

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## **Key Words and Sequence: Transition Attacking**

### **Turn and Go**

- Outside Hitters:
  - As you land, turn to the inside of the court and step off the net with your inside foot, keeping track of the ball at all times.
  - Second step with the opposite foot to the 10" line.
  - Jump and twist back to the net on the third step.
  - Now ready to attack!
- Middle Blockers:
  - As you land, turn to the inside of the court and take a big first step off the net into the middle of the court.
  - Second step with opposite foot takes you to the middle of the court at the 10' line.
  - Jump and twist back to the net on the third step.
  - Now ready to attack!

### **See the Ball**

- Always keep track of the ball.
- Middle Hitters: begin approach footwork as ball crosses your shoulder.

### **Call the Attack Option**

- Let the setter know what you are hitting in transition.
- Middle Hitter calls out set choice on the pass.
- Left and Right Hitters react on Middle Hitters call.

### **My Transition Attacking Keys/Strong Points**

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### **Areas in Transition Attacking Where I Need to Improve**

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## Key Words and Sequences: Setting

### Get to the Net

- As the ball is served or attacked, move as quickly as possible all the way to the net.
- Take as few steps as possible to the net.
- Last step, round off your body so the right foot is forward and you are facing the passer.

### Quick Feet to the Ball

- Good footwork is the single biggest skill that will make setting easier!
- Quick reaction to the ball with a big first step to the ball.
- Explode to the ball; set up as quickly as possible, as opposed to timing the turn.
- Make an immediate decision on whether you can get the ball or need “help.” If help is needed, call out a player’s name, not “help.”

### Square to the Hitting Position

- Set the hitting position, not the hitter.
- Hips and shoulders rotate so you are square to the hitting position.
- Right foot is forward of left when ball is being delivered.

### Chin Up, High Hands

- By keeping your chin slightly up, your hands will remain high at the point of contact.

### Flick Wrists to the Hitting Position

- Speed of the set is determined by the speed of the wrists through the ball.
- With chin up and hands high, flick the wrists up and out to the hitting position.
- Hands finish facing the hitting position.

### Quick Sets

- Flick the ball straight up to the middle hitter; do not lift the ball or simply touch the ball.
- See the hitter jumping and make sure the middle hitter is behind you (off the net) before delivering the ball.

### Jump Setting

- First, get to the ball.
- Jump and then set, not jump-set!
- Jump before the ball gets to the net, sometimes even jumping slightly toward the ball coming to the net.
- On tight balls, shoulders are turned parallel to the net.
- Wrist speed may need to be emphasized on jump sets to deliver the ball to the outside hitter.



### **Back Sets**

- Same basic body and hand position.
- Let ball come to front shoulder (one closest to the net)
- With chin up, hands high and in front of face, as ball is about to hit hands, flick the wrists back with the thumbs, lifting the ball back to the hitter.
- Arms DO NOT go behind the head, but remain over the top of the body!

### **My Basic Setting Keys/Strong Points**

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### **Areas in Basic Setting Where I Need to Improve**

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### **Advanced Setting Technique Points of Emphasis**

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**MENTAL SKILLS SURVEY**  
*Mental Technique Training for Volleyball*  
**By Mike Voight**

Key: Never: 0 Very Rarely: 1 Rarely: 2 Sometimes: 3 Often: 4 Very Often: 5  
Always: 6

**Section 1**

- \_\_\_ 1 I worry about making mistakes.
- \_\_\_ 2 I have a very difficult time letting go of mistakes.
- \_\_\_ 3 I bounce back quickly from setbacks.
- \_\_\_ 4 I dwell on mistakes and “carry them” with me to the next play.

**Section 2**

- \_\_\_ 5 I consider myself a confident player.
- \_\_\_ 6 When I’m not playing well, I get negative and get down on myself.
- \_\_\_ 7 When on the court, I project a confident image regardless of the score.
- \_\_\_ 8 At critical times in games, I find myself thinking negatively.

**Section 3**

- \_\_\_ 9 I find myself getting to nervous/anxious before/during games.
- \_\_\_ 10 I do my best when the pressure is on.
- \_\_\_ 11 I find it difficult to get energized to play a lesser team.
- \_\_\_ 12 I have poor focus when I have to make a critical play.

**Section 4**

- \_\_\_ 13 I get distracted during a match.
- \_\_\_ 14 I think too much while I play, instead of just playing.
- \_\_\_ 15 Poor officiating (calls), rowdy spectators, or opponent’s behaviors take me off my game.
- \_\_\_ 16 I get anxious (hope I don’t choke) the crazier it gets in competition (score, opponent behavior).

**Section 5**

- \_\_\_ 17 I’m a “slow starter,” it takes me a while to get “into the rhythm” of the game.
- \_\_\_ 18 I use a set pre-practice or pre-game routine to improve readiness.
- \_\_\_ 19 My mind wanders to end results and I have trouble focusing on the process of playing well.
- \_\_\_ 20 I mentally picture the game plan and how I’ll play before practice and games.

**Section 6**

- \_\_\_ 21 I consistently train at a high level of intensity.
- \_\_\_ 22 I find myself “going through the motions” in training sessions.
- \_\_\_ 23 I focus well in practice/games when I have problems in my life outside of volleyball.
- \_\_\_ 24 When I practice, I have a specific purpose or goal to accomplish.

**Section 7**

- \_\_\_ 25 I have a high energy walk between games (especially when I’m tired or frustrated).
- \_\_\_ 26 Observers can tell from my body language that I made a mistake or I’m playing poorly.
- \_\_\_ 27 My coaches/teammates can tell by my body language that I’m frustrated or upset.
- \_\_\_ 28 If I’m having difficulty with my play, I take it out on my teammates or coaches.

## MENTAL SKILLS SURVEY SCORING

To determine your mental skills and weaknesses, use the following scoring system:

0=1 point; 1=2; 2=3; 3=4; 4=5; 5=6; 6=6

**NOTE: REVERSE SCORE** (0=6 points; 1=5; 2=4; 3=3; 4=2; 5=1; and 6=0) the following questions: 3, 5, 7, 10, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 25.

- If the section score is 8 or fewer points, this area is a mental strength.
- If the section score is between 9-12 points, you appear to have some difficulty with the particular mental skills; some work is required in this area.
- If the section score is between 13-24 points, you have serious difficulty with this mental skill; more work is definitely needed for you to improve your performance.

### DEFENSIVE MENTAL SKILLS

Section 1 (questions 1-4) measure your ability to refocus and recover when faced with adversity (mistakes/setbacks).

Section 2 (questions 5-8) gauges your level of confidence.

Section 3 (questions 9-12) evaluates your ability to control your level of anxiety and muscle tension.

### OFFENSIVE MENTAL SKILLS

Section 4 (questions 13-16) refers to your ability to stay focused when distractions are present.

Section 5 (questions 17-20) calculates your ability to prepare physically and mentally for practice and matches.

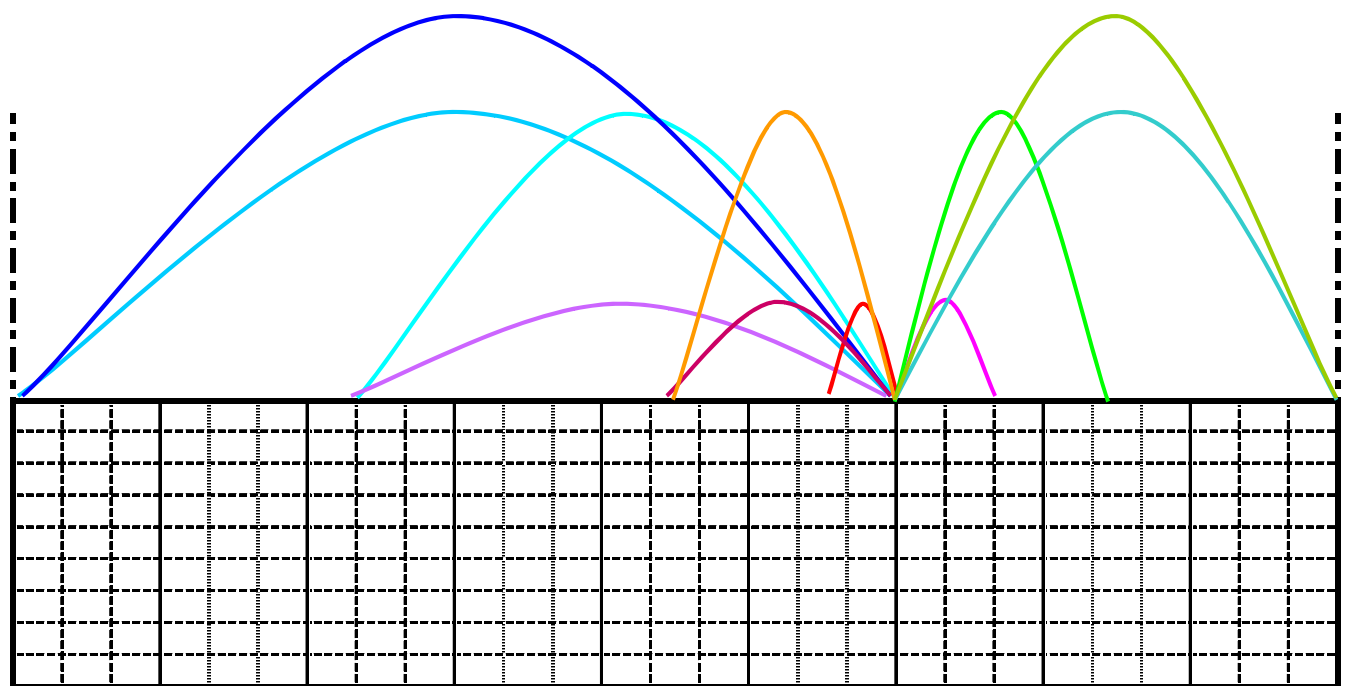
Section 6 (questions 21-24) reflects the quality of your training time.

Section 7 (questions 25-28) gauges your physical presentation when faced with adversity.

### SCORE BY SECTIONS:

**Date:**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 \_\_\_\_\_

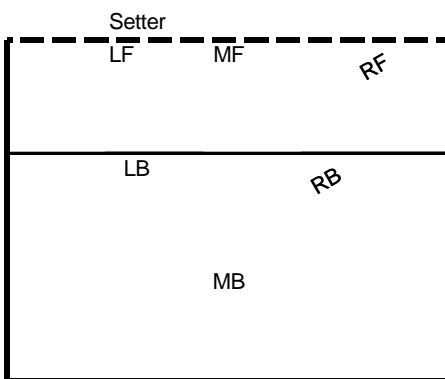


Attack Zones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Setting Zones	4		3		2	1	A	B	C

	Call	Height	Location	Signal
	4	High	1 or 2 Zone	4 Fingers apart, pointed down
	Hut	Antennae height	1 or 2 Zone	4 Fingers together, pointed down
	32	Antennae height	3 Zone	Index, middle & ring fingers apart, then wiggled
	3	1-2' above net	3 Zone	Index, middle & ring fingers apart
	Push	1-2' above net	5 Zone	Index finger pointed then wiggled
	2	Antennae height	5 Zone	Index and middle fingers apart, pointed down
	1	1-2' above net	Front of Setter	Index finger pointed down
	A (Back 1)	1-2' above net	Behind Setter	Closed Fist
	B (Back 2)	Antennae height	8 Zone	Flat Hand, across body
	C	Antennae height	9 Zone	Hand forms a C
	5	High	9 Zone	5 fingers apart, pointed down
	Black	High	10' line, 3 zone	Verbal Call
	Pipe	High	10' line 5 zone	Verbal Call
	Red	High	10' line 8 zone	Verbal Call

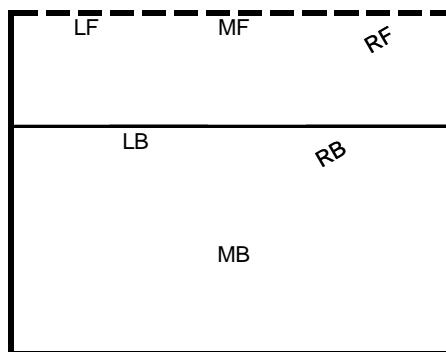
## BLOCKING & BASE DEFENSE

### STACK BLOCK BASE



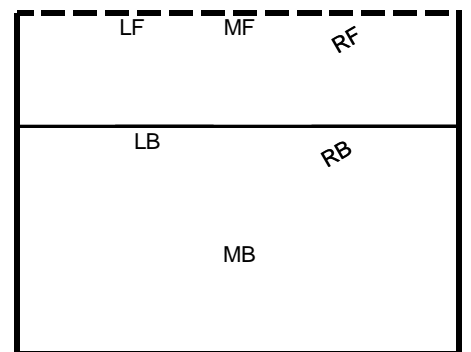
Used when left double blocks middle & attacks are from the antennas and middle.

### PERIMETER BLOCK BASE



Used when setter is back row and attack is from the antennas and the middle.

### BUNCH BLOCK BASE



Used when attacks are generally from inside the antennas.

## BLOCKING RESPONSIBILITIES & PRIORITIES

### LEFT FRONT

1. Attack Overpasses
2. Block Setter's Dumps
3. Double Block Middle
4. Block Off Hand Quick, Slides & Combos
5. Set Block Off Hand Attacks

### MIDDLE FRONTS

1. Attack Overpasses
2. Watch for Setter Dumps
3. Block Middle Attack
4. Double Block Outside Hitters
5. Block 10s, Free Balls and Down Balls

### RIGHT FRONT

1. Attack Overpasses
2. Watch for Setter Dumps
3. Cover Dumps & Tips on Middle Attack
4. Block On Hand Quick/Combo Attacks
5. Set Block on On Hand Attacks