



Capital City Volleyball Club

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SETTING KEYS

Setters are often called the “quarterback” of a volleyball team, since most of a team’s offense goes through and relies upon the setter’s ability. That said, can you imagine a football team that does not have the quarterback getting special attention and extra practice so he can better develop and hone his inherently important skills? That’s exactly what too many volleyball coaches do; not give the setter specific time to work on their craft and develop their skill.

Setters have a tremendous amount of responsibility: they must get to every second ball, put up a hittable ball, know the best match ups vs. the block, decide who to set when, read the defense, communicate for the coach to the team, etc. Above all these, always remind your setter the most important task is to put up a hittable ball!

A CCVBC, Steve will conduct specific setting practices for all setters, usually on Monday nights for 16s/15s, and on Tuesdays for 14s. You are encouraged to attend these whenever possible so you can, in turn, help your team’s setters better hone their skills. The practices are generally help just following the regularly scheduled practice.

When developing practice plans, keep in mind how you will get the setter involved whenever possible. Remember, ball touches are a key part of the development of any player, even more so with a setter.

Key Words/Sequence of Skills

Quick feet to the ball...square to the target...Chin up, hands high...flick wrists to the hitting position.

Quick Feet:

One of the keys to look for immediately and to train is that the setter must release to the net as soon as the ball is hit and she determines it is not coming her way. Many setters get trapped into watching the dig/pass first and then reacting to the ball. This is why many setters have a hard time with tight balls; they do not leave until after the ball is dug and then cannot catch up to the ball. Emphasize an explosive and immediate first step.

A setter must learn how many steps it will take them to get to the net from various spots. This, again, comes with experience through practice. I work with setters on this important element at our setter practices, but you must keep a watchful eye on this as well.

The last two steps to into the setting position should be a “round-off,” that is, the left foot should plant and then the right foot should come around parallel and close to the net. The right foot should be slightly in front of the left.

The body should be facing where the ball is coming from, not where it is going to be set. I use the illustration of a third baseman facing first base before the ball is hit rather than the batter. By “opening up” to where the ball is coming from, it will help make the setter quicker to any ball that is passed/dug.

When moving to retrieve an errant pass/dig, the setter needs to learn how to first play the ball with her feet, not with her eyes. In other words, often someone will look at the ball and then move. The setter needs to react with her feet and get after the ball immediately with her feet. I will address how to set various off-net balls later.

Square To The Target:

It is key that you remind the setter she is delivering the ball to the hitting position, not to the hitter! This is one of the most profound problems/bad habits a setter will get into. The hitting position for an outside set is approximately two feet off the net and at the sideline. This gives the hitter plenty of room to swing and the whole court to deliver the ball into. Setters will often not get their shoulders square to the hitting position, thereby delivering the ball too deep off the net, or the setter may turn her shoulders towards the net (especially when the pass is off the net), thereby delivering not only an unhittable ball but an “ankle breaker.”

After the setter has established her position at the net, when the ball is passed forward to the setting position, emphasize that she must turn her feet and shoulders to the hitting position.

The same basic idea holds true for quick sets and backsets.

Chin Up, Hands High:

Emphasize keeping the chin up. By doing so, the setter will be forced into taking the ball at a high point. When a setter’s chin drops, their hands drop as well, thereby delivering a low set to the hitting position.

Flick Wrists To The Hitting Position:

The speed of the ball is determined by the speed of the wrists through the contact. Someone who arm sets will deliver a slow set to hitter.

NOTE: I want all of our setters to learn to step into the ball with their right foot when delivering the set, even on backsets.

Keys to Various “Saves”

Tight Pass: After establishing position at the net, setter turns her shoulders parallel to the net. When the ball arrives, she takes the ball off of the right shoulder, step into the ball and with the right foot forward. **NOTE:** If the setter turns and takes the ball in front of her face, the ball will be delivered off the net to the hitter.

Low/Flat Pass:

This is undoubtedly one of the most difficult plays for a setter to make; a pass that is low and tight to the net. Again, this is where quick feet and getting off the dime quickly will make a

major difference in the setter's ability to make this play. When the setter gets to the point of the ball and the net, she needs to either "step through" or "step down" and she plays the ball. This will allow her to move fast to the ball and at the same time prevent her from going under the net. It would be difficult for me to describe what step through and step down mean, so I'll demonstrate at setter workouts. Basically, it is a method of, for lack of a better term, stopping on a dime to shoot a jump shot off the dribble.

Off the Net: Setter should learn to get to the ball with as few steps as possible, and to get to the ball with quick feet. Although the body does NOT have to be square to the hitting position, the shoulders must be turned and squared up **BEFORE** the ball is delivered. When delivering the ball to the hitting position when above the 10' line, the setter should deliver the ball just left of the standard/pole. No matter where she is on the court (above the 10' line), by delivering the ball just left of the standard/pole, the ball will stay in the hitting position (two feet off the net). The setter should **NEVER** turn her shoulders toward the net or turn her shoulders to set the ball as she is delivering the set. This will result in a ball that is headed into the net and will mean the ball is unhittable or that the ball will carry the hitter under the net (ankle breaker).

Ball Toward the Left Sideline:

As the setter moves toward the ball, she turns her wrists further back so the set is more up-and-down and remains inside the antenna. It may also help for her to arch her back slightly as she gets closer to the sideline. She must also be aware of not running through the set as this will take her directly into the hitter's path.

Knee Slide:

This is used for very low passes. The setter runs to the ball and slides down to her knees **BEFORE** setting the ball. After sliding to her knees, the setter, keeping her back straight, delivers the ball with chin up, hands high.

Jump Setting:

From at the net: Get to the ball and jump, with right foot slightly forward, before the ball gets to you. This is very important: It's jump and set, not jump-set! In other words, the setter needs to jump and meet the ball, not jump to try and catch up with the ball. On tight balls, the shoulders should be parallel to the net, as explained earlier. When the ball is off the net, be sure to square the shoulders to the hitting position. Obviously, the speed of the wrist flick must be increased on jump sets as the setter no longer has her legs to rely on for additional power.

When coming to the net: Review "Low/flat Pass." Setters must be able to jump up or through the contact so as not to net or go under.

Various Sets

Quick Set (1): Hands high, wrists turned back slightly, as upright as possible when the ball is delivered to the hitter. It is the speed of the ball (wrist flick) that makes the set. Watch for the setter lifting the ball to the hitter by using her arms instead of flicking the ball to the setter with wrist speed (correct). The ball should go up in front of the hitter's striking arm, not across her face. The faster or higher the hitter, the faster the wrist flick. Make sure the ball is set off the net to the hitter. If the setter jumps sets, depending on their jumping ability, she "drops" the ball off to the hitter.

Three (3) Set: Hands high, wrists slightly turned down, thumbs behind the ball, setter as upright as possible. Hands go through the ball with thumbs pushing into and slightly up on the delivery.

Speed is determined through repetition. Watch for the setter dropping her hands or bending forward. This will cause a low delivery. If the wrists are too far back, the ball will loop or go too high. NOTE: The “3” should NOT be set when the setter is backing up or moving away from the hitter.

“32”: Set into the three zone with a loop, which is about the height of the net. Wrists cocked slightly back, the ball is delivered with wrist speed.

Backset (B): Hands high and in front of face. To set the ball back, get thumbs under the ball and flick wrists up and back, being careful to not over-rotate the wrists or to throw the arms back. The arms go up and the wrist motion takes the ball back. Train the setter to make the backset from the same hand position as the “4” set as this will make it difficult for the blockers to read. I also like the setter to step into the backset with their right foot. By doing so, it gets the Middle Blocker to move to her right and then have to react to the backset.

Backset off the net, inside the 10’ line: Setter moves to the ball and squares body/shoulders to the “4” set hitting position. She then lets the ball come to her right shoulder before flicking the ball over that shoulder to the hitter. This takes the ball forward but along the net instead of to it.

Quick Slide (A)/Back Quick: Same mechanics as a backset, just slow down the wrist speed and the angle of the wrists of delivery is not as angled. NOTE: Most of these sets are hit by right-handed attackers, so the ball needs to be delivered over the attacker’s shoulder. Be sure the setter does not set the ball to the net, but rather sets along the net.

Slide (C): This is the slide set to the sideline. Same as backset/”A” set, but using faster wrist speed. Again, make sure the ball is along the net, not to it. This is a set that takes time for the setter to develop a feel for. The speed of the ball depends on the speed of the hitter, but there is generally a loop in the ball that allows the hitter to jump out to the ball, hopefully contacting the ball somewhere near the sideline.