

Volleyball Warm-Up Drills

The best way to learn to play volleyball is to play volleyball!

Since we never seem to have enough practice time working with our teams, we like to have them warm-up working with the ball instead of jogging or stretching (activities that are healthy, but do not teach our athletes anything about the game of volleyball). These are a few of our favorite warm-up games:

NEWCOMB (OR NUKE 'EM)

This is a great game for our Junior Frog players and other beginners who don't have much control passing a ball yet. However, players at all ages and experience levels have fun with this one.

This competitive game gets our athletes moving on the court in a more game-style manner (similar movements to passing a ball) than jogging or lunging, while also warming up their shoulder for serving and hitting. In addition, it teaches them how scoring works in a volleyball game.

1. Create 2-person teams (if you have odd numbers, you can make a team of 3).
2. Team A starts on the "Winners" side of the court and Team B starts on the "Losers" side.
3. One player on team A throws the ball overhand across the net to Team B's side.
4. Team B players run to catch the ball.
5. The Team B player who catches the ball must immediately throw the ball back over the net from the spot where they caught the ball.
6. Team A players run to catch the ball and play continues as long as the two teams can keep the rally going.
7. The team that wins the rally moves to (or stays on) the "Winners" side and is awarded a point. The team that loses the rally runs off court and the next team on the sidelines runs onto the "Losers" side of the court to play the winning team.

You can play this game for a set amount of time, or you can play until one of the teams reaches a pre-specified number of points.

Scoring / Pairing Modification: With an odd number of players, you can have 2 lines off the back of the "Losers" court so that each new team entering the court is a new player pairing. In this case, you can choose not to track points or you can have the players track individual points to see which individual had the most success being paired with different players.

QUEENS

This is a good game for all skill levels.

Review Newcomb above.

This game has a similar scoring system and team exchange as Newcomb above. The difference is that we create 3-person teams and have them play 3-touch volleyball. Depending on the level of experience, you can have the coach toss a ball or send in a down ball to the Queens (Winners) side of the court, or you can have the incoming team serve to the Queens side.

As with Newcomb above, you can keep the same teams and track scores to see which team wins, or you can have players line up to enter the court with different teammates each time and track individual scores. In both cases, you can require players to switch positions on the court for more challenge; 3-person teams can rotate positions each rally or individuals can be required to pick a new line each time to enter the court.

You can customize this drill to focus on specific areas for improvement. For instance, if you have young players who send the ball over the net on the first pass, you can require that all three (or maybe two) players must touch the ball to get a point. If your team is more experienced, you might require a pass-set-hit to win the point. If you want your players to learn to set, you can require the 2nd touch to be an overhead set or that all touches must be overhead sets. If you want your players to pass to target, you can require that the person in right-front must get the 2nd ball.

COOPERATIVE PEPPER (MODIFIED VERSION OF EXCHANGE)

This drill works best for players who already have a good degree of ball control.

All players participate at once in Cooperative Pepper. The objective is to keep a rally going between teams as long as possible, and to have every player touch the ball over the course of several rallies.

1. Split the team up on different sides of the court; teams may be uneven (i.e., 5 v 4).
2. Give the team a goal for how many times the ball should go over the net.
3. Coach toss (or have one team toss to the other) a ball into play.
4. Each team will play a 3-touch rally, send the ball over the net on the 3rd touch, then the entire team rotates 1 position.
5. Both teams must count how many times the ball goes over the net. On a dead ball, the ball must be tossed back into play again and the count starts over.
6. Once a team reaches the rally goal, they can then play out a rally for a point to end the drill.

This drill can be customized based on experience level and areas to improve. If your team has relatively little ball control, then you may want to make it a passing-only drill. If your team has good control, you could have stages of progression such as 10 rallies with a pass-set-pass, followed by 10 rallies with a pass-set-set, then 10 rallies with a pass-set-downball. You can make counting start over if there are less than 3 touches on a side. You can add an "atonement" element to the drill, where you have the player who made a mistake "replay" and correct that touch (for instance, if the ball drops in front of them, you toss the ball to the exact same spot until they pass it).

RUNNING THREES COMPETITION

This competitive drill works best for players who already have a good degree of ball control.

1. Split into teams of 3 (if you have 10 players, you can make 1 team of 4).
2. Team A starts on one side of the court with no one on the other.
3. Coach tosses a ball to one of the players. That player passes the ball to another player and runs under the net to the other side of the court.
4. The 2nd player passes the ball to the 3rd player and runs under the net to the other side of the court.
5. The 3rd player passes the ball over the net for another 3-touch rally on the other side, then runs under the net to that side of the court.
6. Play continues as long as the team can keep the 3-touch rally going. The players count how many times the ball goes over the net. All 3 players must touch the ball on each side for play to continue.
7. When the ball is dead, the next team enters the court to see if they can beat the prior team's score.