



Keys to Good Blocking



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Introduction

Blocking is a very difficult skill and to be good at it requires a large amount of good work.

Good blocking does not necessarily mean actually blocking the ball to the floor but is most important to take space away from the attacker. This forces the hitter to hit the ball to the back court defence.

The difficulty of blocking requires that it be kept as simple as possible.

The following information is key to becoming a good blocker.

The Starting Position

Feet about shoulder width apart, wider for middle.

About upper arm distance from net with knees slightly bent.

Hands at about face height for blocking higher sets and almost full extension for quick attacks.

Hands face the net.



Movement along the net

When moving along the net it is extremely important to keep the shoulders as parallel to the net as possible.

The efficiency of footwork is critical to getting the body into proper blocking position in time. The biggest problem is the use of too many steps.

Shuffle (don't drag trailing foot)

Stride to hop (an extension of shuffle)

Stride to crossover to hop (an extension of stride to hop) primarily used by middle blockers.

Important to be stopped and balanced when jumping.

The footwork cannot be learned by chance but must be precisely worked on. Start slow and simple and move to fast and complex.

The Blocking Action

Explosive knee flexion and extension jumping action. Exception for this is middle blockers doing toe jumps if tall enough.

Extension of arms at shoulders and elbows, sliding the hands up the surface of the net, to full extension.

Hands start reaching over the net as soon as the top of the net is reached.

As attacker swings striking arm forward only a crunching action of the trunk is done **NOT** an aggressive striking type action of arm flexion.

Head position should be between the arms not back looking up.



The Hands

Fingers should be spread and slightly flexed in the shape of the ball – creates strong position.

Hands should be slightly rotated laterally

- Creates wider block
- Forces elbows closer together

Hands should not try to turn ball to the inside rather just set position according to anticipated angle of attack.





Outside Blocking and Vision

Biggest problem again is proper sequencing of eye focus. Tend to watch the ball too much.

Use the following eye sequence:

- **Attacker** - As ball is passing over the net have a look at outside attacker for an early indication of what they might do.
- **Ball** - Look back to the ball and track it to the setter while still paying attention to the hitter with **peripheral vision**.
- Track the ball as it leaves the setters hands to determine direction and trajectory.
- **Attacker** - Look at the attacker for information of where and when to block.



Middle Blocking and Vision

Use the following eye sequence:

- **Attacker** - As ball is passing over the net have a look at the middle attacker for an early indication of what they might do.
- **Ball** - Look back to the ball and track it to the setter while still paying attention to the hitter with **peripheral vision**.
- Track the ball as it leaves the setters hands to determine direction and trajectory.
- If attack is first tempo (quick) keep focus on the ball while blocking in a position and timing (read/commit) as determined by match plan.
- **Attacker** - If attack is second tempo or ball goes outside take focus off ball and as moving to block look at the attacker for information of where and when to block. (Do not look to the outside blocker see them with **peripheral vision**).