



**Team Alberta
Men's Volleyball
Curriculum
(15U - 18U Athletes)**

Version 2: September 2019



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Appendix (Included at the end of the document)

Team Alberta Block and Defensive Systems

Block-Defense Relationship- Basic Principles (2 pages)

Basic movement and responsibility of players at net in blocking & defending situation

Basic movement and responsibility of players in defending situation

Basic movement and responsibility of players in blocking situation attack from zone 4

Basic movement and responsibility of players in blocking Situation-Attack from zone 2 or 1

Basic movement and responsibility of players in blocking situation-attack from position 3

Team Alberta Offensive Systems

Basic Outside Sets

Basic Middle Sets

Front quick – 51

31

Back quick – 61

Pipe

Separation 51 – Blue

Separation 61 – Blue

Separation 31 – White



Overload 31 – Blue

Overload 61 – White

Time Differential 51 – Pipe 53



Abstract

In order to get all male volleyball players in Alberta onto a similar learning and training program, the Volleyball Alberta High Performance Committee was tasked with forming a curriculum for 15 to 18 year-old athletes to follow. This curriculum was originally designed to help guide Provincial Team training and planning, but is now being made available to the public, as we feel as though this document will help High School and Club coaches, and athletes as well. It has taken years to prepare, and has been written and vetted by many of the top coaches in Alberta and Canada.

As with any curriculum, this is a general guide to be followed, and not a set script. All athletes and teams are different, and coaches should feel comfortable adjusting the timing and implementation of the curriculum to best suit the individual and the situation. Experienced coaches may have different concepts and teaching points for the outlined skills, and while variety is encouraged and respected, all athletes and teams will benefit from following the VA curriculum. It is designed to help season and practice planning, but the way that these skills are implemented and practiced is up to the coach. It is recommended that coaches use consistent wording across the age categories to streamline development as athletes' progress. As such, please try to implement the terms used here in a way that will not be too foreign to your coaching practice. In order to be prepared to move on to post-secondary level volleyball, athletes should be competent in the vast majority of skills outlined at their position.

In order to better understand the curriculum, the following words are described below:

- **Acquire:** Present to the athletes a new element, or new way of practicing the element (skill OR tactical component) in stable and easy conditions.
- **Consolidate:** To stabilize the element in controlled conditions by the coach, or semi-controlled and random conditions. This framework requires opponent's opposition /confrontation.
- **Refine:** To maintain a repertoire of techniques, tactics and strategies, to polish and improve the elements in controlled, semi-controlled, or random conditions.

We thank you for considering the use of this curriculum for the coaching of 15-18U Men's volleyball. We trust that this will help guide your planning, and help you to better understand what skills and tactics are needed to achieve a higher level of performance.

Good luck in your training!

Volleyball Alberta High Performance Committee



Team Alberta Men's Volleyball- Serving Curriculum: 15U -18U

KEY TEACHING POINTS:

- Toss & weight transfer must be consistent
- Contact point should be high to drive the ball flat
- Linear and efficient movement towards the target is encouraged
- Accuracy and success should be valued over pace
- Players and teams should have a variety of serves
- Teams should have a serving philosophy and game plan that suits their ability

Training Aspect	15U	16U	17U	18U
Throwing action	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Landing	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Toss	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Standing Float	Consolidate	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Jump Float	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Jump Spin	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Short Serve		Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Serving Accuracy			Acquire	Consolidate
Serving Pace			Acquire	Consolidate
Serving as a team			Acquire	Consolidate
Tactical Serving			Acquire	Consolidate

Throwing Action:

Opposite foot steps forward, weight transfer towards target, use hip and shoulder rotation to generate force, lead throw with high elbow, follow through with whipping motion towards target. This translates to a serving/attacking motion for volleyball.

Landing:

On all jump serves, land softly with equal weight distribution on each foot, ready to move into defensive position.

Toss:

In order to hit the ball at peak of your arm swing: (Float) - toss with opposite hand, 1-1.5m above head, in front of hitting arm (Jump Float) - toss with either 2 hands or non-hitting hand, midway through approach, 1-2m above head, lead yourself into court (Jump Spin) - toss with hitting hand, create top spin on toss, 3-5m above head, toss initiates approach, lead yourself into court.

Standing Float:

High success rate serve, drive ball flat over the net, create 'knuckleball' effect by striking the ball crisply with a flat palm, aim for sidelines or seams, adjust angle and depth of serve location. High level players should be moving beyond this serve as their ability allows.



Jump Float:

High success rate serve, use jump to create aggression and angle, drive ball flat and fast over the net, create 'knuckleball' effect by striking the ball crisply with a flat palm, aim for sidelines or seams, adjust angle and depth of serve location. Try to develop consistent and aggressive serve.

Jump Spin:

Aggressive serve, goal is to attack passers with velocity and spin. Aim deep in court at seams, allow topspin to work for you, eventually creating side spin to increase passing difficulty. Must balance aggression with consistency. Everyone should practice this serve as it also improves attacking, but should only be used in games if it has enough velocity and consistency to be effective.

Short Serve:

Should be deceptive, same action as normal serve (all types), but slow down arm slightly and adjust angle of hand at the end. Goal is to catch passers off balance, or to take out strong attacker by limiting their approach. Aim for attack line depth. Goal is not to get an ace, but to create an advantage, and it must be a high success rate.

Serving Accuracy:

When proper technique is acquired, work on developing accuracy - to seams, to sidelines, to different depths, to L/R side of passer, to deep corners, to passer's forearm or hands, etc. Can use targets to develop accuracy.

Serving Pace:

When proper technique is acquired, work on developing pace and velocity of serve - harder and flatter over the net, enhance aggression. Develop in practice with less consequence for missing. Technique should not be compromised.

Serving as a Team:

Concept that each team should have a variety of different servers (float vs spin) in lineup. Float servers must make serves at a high rate to allow spin servers to be aggressive. Awareness of situations where a made serve is necessary (player before you misses, after a timeout, after 20 pts, after winning a big rally, etc.)

Tactical Serving:

As part of game plan: Who is weakest passer? Does the passer struggle with forearms or hands? How can we create a positional crisis for setter? Will a short serve work? Do passers struggle with floats or spins? What is best serve location in each rotation? Does the setter struggle when ball is passed from pos. 1? Can rotations be adjusted to maximize strengths of servers' vs location of passers?



Team Alberta Men's Volleyball- Passing Curriculum: 15U -18U

KEY TEACHING POINTS:

- Proper footwork must be practiced and developed
- Body should be stopped, stable and balanced upon contact
- Platform should be set towards target before contact and held through contact
- Arms toward target with a stable body as pass is made
- Position passers in court to adapt to and dictate server options
- Communicate passer responsibilities (seams) to ensure success

Training Aspect	15U	16U	17U	18U
Footwork	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Arm/body position	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Pass location	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Seam responsibility	Acquire	Consolidate	Consolidate	Consolidate
Passing overhead	Acquire	Consolidate	Consolidate	Consolidate
Passing outside of	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Consolidate
Pass to attack footwork	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Consolidate
Absorbing hard spin		Acquire	Acquire	Acquire
Dictating server			Acquire	Acquire

Footwork:

Starting position is: feet shoulder width apart, hands on the knees, back straight and head/eyes up looking at the server. On the toss, hands come off knees, arms in front of body and passer is balanced and ready to move. Movement to the ball must be efficient and quick in a shuffling motion: head staying level, arms in front. Passer must get to a point where he is stopped, balanced, and his platform is facing the setter on contact.

Arm/body position:

Passer must read the server's cues: toss (height, location), arm action, approach (speed, angle), so that they are ready to intercept the ball as it approaches. Passing action should be made with the arms in front of the body. As soon as feet have gotten to the ball (and passer is stopped and balanced), the platform should be formed away from the body and towards the target. The ball only knows angle, so the platform angle must be set to where the passer is intending the ball to go. Platform should move towards the setter as the pass is made, keeping the shoulders and head level.

Pass location:

Passers should aim to arc the ball to the setter (3-4m above net height), having it land in the setter's hands ONE METER off the net. This allows more room for error, and initiates the offense at 1m off the net. Pass should be towards zone 2.



Seam responsibility:

Passers should be communicating prior to the serve on how they want to pass certain serves, depending on location and whose responsibility it is to take certain balls (seams, zones, etc.). Passers must then be communicating to one another once the ball has been served. Generally, passers will call 'left seam' (pass the ball on your left) or 'right seam' (pass the ball on your right). Ideally try to free up front row attackers, or give your best passers more responsibility (while taking away court from weaker passers).

Passing overhead:

Footwork is essential, and ball must be lined up in midline of body. Keep a strong base with feet, and attack the ball in an upward motion with your hands in front of your hips. Similar to a set, but with stronger fingers, and a faster redirection. Skill becomes easier as strength improves.

Passing outside of your midline:

When passing from the midline is not an option, passer must ensure that his feet are still stable and platform is angled towards the target before ball arrives. Passer may open up their hips (drop step) and/or drop their inside shoulder to achieve this position. As passing action is made, ensure that arms move towards the target.

Pass to attack footwork

Primary focus is to make a good pass, as there are always other attackers available. From the left side (pos. 4), weight should be on right foot as pass is made. Passer then pushes off right foot, shuffling towards sideline, then into their approach. Should be a smooth motion, and becomes more important as set speed increases. Please refer to this link for technique:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZAqWUeUd2I>

Absorbing hard spin serve:

Passers should try to move their feet as much as possible to pass the ball from their midline. Very important that platform is facing target early. As pass is made, a slight absorption can be made with arms and body, but platform should hold strong. On very hard serves, aim to pass the ball high and to the attack line, as that still gives 2-3 attack options.

Dictating server options:

As passers learn opponents' tendencies (game planning), their serve receive formation should reflect different types of serves: spin vs. float, for example. Passers can adjust their starting position to force server to hit a less comfortable serve. Liberos and good passers can start to take more court to pinch out weaker passers or front row attackers. This should be talked about in game plan, and also adjusted throughout the match.



Team Alberta Men's Volleyball- Setting Curriculum: 15U -18U

KEY TEACHING POINTS – SETTING FOR SETTERS:

- Develop a consistent neutral body position upon the set
- Proper footwork (loaded, squared to position 4) must be a focus
- Big hands, fast release, thumbs through the ball to create force and trajectory
- System and ability of attackers should dictate speed and location of sets
- Setter must be aware of attackers and opposing blockers to create best matchup
- Run the offence (spread/overload) based on matchups and opposing block system
- Adjust throughout the match to defense, know your attackers, think ahead

Training Aspect	15U	16U	17U	18U
Footwork (square to position 4)	Acquire	Consolidate	Consolidate	Consolidate
Neutral body position	Acquire	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
Consistent contact point	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Consolidate
Fast release, thumbs through		Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
In-system setting (tempo)		Acquire	Consolidate	Consolidate
Out-of-system setting (high ball)	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Dumping as an attack	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Implement offensive game plan	Acquire	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
Adjusting throughout the match		Acquire	Acquire	Acquire
Spread/overload situations			Acquire	Consolidate
Utilizing pipe ball as 2nd tempo			Acquire	Consolidate
Managing your attackers			Acquire	Consolidate
Creating matchups for attackers			Acquire	Acquire
Attacking gaps/block weakness			Acquire	Acquire
Watching opposing blockers				Acquire

Footwork (square to position 4):

4 priorities of movement 1. Square - jump-set from stopped position 2. Square, stopped and stable on the ground 3. Stopped and stable on the ground (square not possible) 4. Athletic and/or creative adjustment - allow athlete to feel out emergency situation with forearm setting, stride-slide or dive setting. Options 1-3 to be executed with a right-left footwork arrival to the ball, pivoting on the right heel to allow for hip rotation.

Neutral body position:

Athlete keeps body neutral for as long as possible before the set is made. Strong core, fast feet and fast hands pre-requisite to maintain neutrality.



Consistent contact point:

Varies for individual. Above head and can be slightly forward. Do not let drop in front of face or lower - will cause timing & trajectory issues particularly with middles and pipe sets. High contact is preferable but NOT at the expense of strength and location. The more the setter moves in-system, but still able to run tempo - the more the contact point must remain consistent for neutrality purposes.

Fast release:

Thumbs should come through to have the ball sit in or float through the hitting zone. Fingers and wrists must be active and strong, do not rely purely on elbows. Impulse or accelerate the ball out of the hands - be weary of 'soft hands' as they contribute to low contact point if not disciplined.

In-system setting (tempo):

Able to get stopped and utilize footwork patterns to remain in stable body position - can set tempo from neutral position on a variety of passes - in-system determined by ability to locate tempo to the outsides and locate middle - more ability to do this the larger the 'in-system' area is. *See Team AB Offensive Systems for reference*

Out-of-system setting (high ball):

Athlete is able to decide between the footwork patterns for arrival. Athlete uses an 'in low-out high' technique to set a high ball to be hit at 1m off net and 1m inside the sideline. Squaring to position 4 is preferred, but not mandatory, and squaring back to position 2 for setting back can be employed. Technique may be variable as athlete can draw on athleticism and creativity as long as consistency is upheld. Priority is to give attacker a hittable set.

Dumping as an attack

(Left Hand): Athlete is able to dump with deception to the pot and with more of an aggressive move to shallow position 2. (Right hand): Athlete is able to flick dump to 4 disguising as one hand set, one hand push dump to 5 or utilize a one hand wipe off the block when close to position 2 antenna or running towards position 4 antenna. Jousting should be utilized when passes are very tight. Turn hitting or spiking should be utilized with deception by left handed setters, but only by right handed setters if proficient and with the use of a rock step with the right foot just prior to the jump.

Implementing offensive game plan:

Athlete is capable of following the game plan given to him by coach. Can process several directives without being overwhelmed. Coaches should add details to game plan as athlete becomes more comfortable with executing basic tactics.

Adjusting throughout the match:

Athlete is able to take directives from coach that are counter to original game plan. Athlete can pick up tendencies of the other team. Athlete is able to feel out which of his attackers are struggling and which are thriving and is able to elevate play of those struggling and maintain those who are thriving. Capable of moving middles around and implementing various offensive runs in order to change the rhythm of his own offence when the opposition has begun to



decipher his flow. Difficult for 15U-16U athletes to master but thought process of this must begin.

Spread/overload situations:

Athlete grasps the concept of creating isolation through the spread offence and also can identify when to set against flow. Recognizes that certain middles will read more while others will commit more and he can utilize these tendencies to attack the middle of the court to create isolations on the outside. Athlete also understands how to create time crisis with overload situations by either negating a swing blocker's movement to the outside, or running a number of options into a zone where a weaker outside blocker likes to bunch block.

Utilizing pipe ball as 2nd tempo:

Setter stays square to position 4 when setting pipe, does not face pipe. Keeps high contact point and disguises between middle and pipe. Able to run pipe over the 51 with a slight drift towards position 4. Able to run straight up pipe between himself and the 31, set can't drift towards 4. This should be run in-system, and not as a release set when setter is in trouble.

Managing your attackers

Can decipher personalities and emotions of attackers. Understands when and how to reset and when not to. Keeps a balanced distribution. Knows how to handle hot hitters - does not feed hot hitters in streaks but manages hot hitters while maintaining flow. Is able to take feedback from attackers which may come in multiple forms.

Creating matchups for attackers

Athlete identifies before each rally where weak blockers are on the other side. Athlete recognizes that not all short blockers are weak and not all tall blockers are strong. Athlete is also aware of any tendencies of opposing blockers to switch in order to hide weak blockers. Design attack sequences to create the best matchups possible.

Attacking gaps/block weakness

Setter is able to attack 2 inner gaps between middles and outsides with 31s, 61s and movement along the net with all middle runs as well as using pipes to attack these gaps. Also able to attack 2 outer gaps between outside and antennae - can use overload. Understands that gaps may close and needs to adjust appropriately. Identifies that gaps vary differently when he is backrow and front row and from team to team.

Watching opposing blockers

Uses one of three types of watching techniques: 1) Full head turn, 2) No head turn, only eyes move to see blockers, 3) Uses only peripheral vision to pick up blockers. Is able to understand where the ball will land before looking - has very efficient footwork as a pre-requisite to training eye work. Does not use nuisance looks, this means that merely looking at the block does nothing; the setter must be able to look at the block and then process the information gathered from looking and translate that into a decision while not sacrificing location. Proper footwork and body position are extremely important in this process.



KEY TEACHING POINTS – SETTING FOR LIBEROS:

- If capable, libero should take control of second contact when setter is unable to, especially behind the attack line
- Court awareness is paramount; knowing to use forearms in front of attack line
- Priority is to deliver a hittable set; deception and speed are not at the expense of being hittable

Training Aspect	15U	16U	17U	18U
Controlling 2nd contact Out of System	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Court awareness (including 3m line)	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
High ball set location	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Forearm setting in front of attack line	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Back-setting			Acquire	Consolidate
Setting faster tempo				Acquire
Jump setting at attack line				Acquire

Controlling 2nd contact Out of System:

Ability to set highballs to both sides. Can set both directions from a variety of positions. Identifies quickly when it is the setter that has dug the ball or when the setter is unable to get to the ball and he can. Ideally we want the Libero setting when the setter cannot unless another athlete is right under the ball.

Court awareness (including 3m line):

Understands where they are in the court in a variety of situations. Can locate outside attackers from a variety of situations. This requires body control and a comfort level from all positions on the court. Athlete must spend time familiarizing himself with where the attack line is; at first by looking at it before setting, but ideally should know where it is without even having to shift gaze from the play to the ground.

High ball location:

Able to set so that the hitter contacts ball 1m in from the sideline and 1m off the net (changes for back row RS attack). Set is at least two times the height of the antennae. Able to make this set with both forearm and overhead passing action. As the athlete acquires the skill, they should also be able to make setting decisions based on the history of the match.

Forearm setting in front of attack line:

Athlete must recognize when they are around the attack line and be able to shift quickly to forearm setting. The same height and location requirements are maintained. It is important that the athlete can identify the type of spin that is on the ball and work with or against it using a slight swing towards the ball to counter spin. Ability to forearm set forwards and backwards should be experimented with and is a higher level skill.



Back-setting:

Able to back set to either position 4 or 2. Should line up midline in order to make the set. Use thumbs and hips to create power. Off shoulder back-setting can be done by more experienced players and/or those who have mastered midline back setting. Does not sacrifice height when setting back but is still able to locate the same as a front set.

Setting faster tempo:

Athlete is able to locate outside hitters, pipe hitter and at times middle attackers with tempo. It is important that Liberos have an upward finish and not be tempted to set speed with a forward finish of the hands. The skill is important to attain and experimenting should be encouraged so the athlete gains a greater feel of setting tempo, however tempo should be run only in ideal situations after much practice. As the athlete acquires the skill, they must understand the tactical implications of the setter-hitter relationship, risk management that comes with tempo, and possible blocking match ups.

Jump setting at attack line:

Athlete is able to recognize when to jump over attack line in order to use hands. Hands can be a useful way to deal with spin from defence. One-leg take offs with the hips sliding under the ball should be used with priority over two leg take offs as one leg allows for a better centre of gravity when penetrating into the front row from the jump. Experimentation should be granted to the Libero in training situations.

KEY TEACHING POINTS – SETTING FOR NON-SETTERS:

- Develop a consistent body position for the set- feet square to target

Training Aspect	15U	16U	17U	18U
Feet square to target	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Use legs and arms to generate power	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Wide hands, thumbs through the ball	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
High ball location		Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Forearm high ball setting		Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Situational recognition				Acquire

Feet square to target:

Feet, hips and shoulders are squared to target before the set is made. Athlete is able to get stopped and take the ball in his midline. If need be, the athlete can set backwards. The back of the body should be square to the target in these instances to prevent off-axis setting.

Use legs and arms to generate power:

Both legs and arms should be bent and in a 'loaded' position before the set is made in order to generate power. Athlete should be sure not to commence the setting action too early as this can cause inconsistencies in contact and location.



Wide hands, thumbs through the ball:

Athlete has wide hands, thumbs back before the set is made and pushes thumbs through the ball with a symmetric finish to create 1.5 back rotations on the ball.

High ball location:

Able to set so that attacker hits 1m in from the sideline and 1m off the net (changes for back row RS attack). Set is at least two times the height of the antennae. Must ensure that they are creating a hittable set.

Forearm high ball setting:

Athlete is able to identify when using hands to set may be a risk due to possible violations, or when more power is needed to make a longer set. The legs should be used more in this action than they are on serve receive. Countering spin should be considered as this can affect forearm set outcomes. The same parameters for high ball location are maintained.

Situational recognition:

The athlete has the court awareness to deal with the proximity of the net and other players on the court. High ball pipes should only be used in emergency situations and the athlete should be looking to set to the outside the majority of the time (can vary within team tactics). Athlete must know if the RS on their team is backrow or front row. Understanding difficult angles for outside attackers is important, i.e.) setting a high ball to a RS player from position 1 is a set that is very difficult to hit for a right handed player. Having the ability to detect any fallen players is higher level recognition.



Team Alberta Men's Volleyball- Attacking Curriculum: 15U -18U

KEY TEACHING POINTS:

- Approach should be dynamic, jumping into the court
- Shoulder rotation and high elbow in arm swing to develop power and tempo
- Attacker must differentiate between in-system and out-of-system approach tempo
- Approach while able to see blockers in periphery, keep all shots available
- Develop a variety of shots (cross/line/roll/wipe) in practice, to use in games
- Attacker must realize when he can go for the kill, and when to keep the ball in play
- When not able to get a kill, ball should always go to position 1/2 or be recycled to gain advantage in rally

Training Aspect	15U	16U	17U	18U
Approach and Jump	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
Arm Swing	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine	Refine
In system (tempo)	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Out of system (high ball)	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Quick middle (51, 31, 61)	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Tip/Roll	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Back Row attack (pipe, C)	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Cross Body line shot		Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
Sharp Cross court shot		Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
Using the block to score		Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
High ball decision making		Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
Using the block to recycle			Acquire	Acquire
75% shot to position 1		Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
Pipe attack options				Acquire

[Approach and Jump:](#)

Right-Left-Right-Left approach (4-step) for right-handed hitters (opposite for Left-handed hitters). First step is to establish rhythm and direction, second step to adjust for set location and speed, third step is dynamic and powerful (with heel-to-toe motion), fourth step closes the approach and ensures that attacker is squared to the set. Use arm swing to increase jump. Jump should be towards the ball with a small drift. Very important that athlete is jumping into the court to cut off the ball. Land on both feet. For middle attackers, use 2 or 3 step approach only,



jump as the ball is being set to establish fast tempo. Be careful to not jam yourself by jumping too close to the net.

Arm Swing:

Shoulders rotate to generate power, lead with high elbow throughout. Use opposite arm to create torque with core. Contact the ball in front of body and as high as possible, snap the wrist with wide hand to generate topspin.

In System (tempo):

Offense on good passes: 31/51/61 in the middle, sets with faster pace to the outside. Hitters must start their approach sooner and adjust to the set with their last 2 steps. Tempo based on ability of attackers and setter. Should be a high success rate to score. *See Team AB Offensive Systems for reference*

Out of System (high ball):

Attackers must delay in order to see where ball will end up, and approach dynamically to that spot. Ideally contact will be made 1m off the net and 1m inside the court. Keep the ball in front of the attacker, and hit the ball high and deep in the court, or a smart shot to gain the advantage in rally. Lower success rate of kills, but games are won and lost with this skill.

Quick Middle Attack (31/51/61):

Attacker jumps as or before the ball is being set and hits it quickly. Sets and ball contact should be one meter off of the net. 31 is approx. 2m in front of the setter (seam between 2 blockers). 51 is directly in front of the setter. 61 is directly behind the setter (seam between 2 blockers).

Tip/roll:

A shot that needs to be practiced and developed. Approach should look the same as a normal attack to create deception. Tip or roll just over the block, ideally into the pot or into position 2 or 4. Used either to score or to take out opposing team setter/rightside or front row hitter.

Back Row Attack (pipe, C):

Used to create spacing or timing issues for blockers. Attackers should jump from just behind the attack line and drift forward. Pipe should be used mostly in-system as a timing crisis for blockers. C ball can be in or out of system to create spacing issues for blockers. These shots gain more importance as athletes become physical enough to hit them successfully.

Cross Body Line Shot:

Used for RH hitters on left side, or LH hitters on right side. Approach as if hitting cross court, then contact the ball with thumb up and follow through across the body, creating a deceptive line shot. It is important to still contact the ball high, without dropping the elbow. Same action can also be used to hit a sharp cross court shot on other side.

Sharp Cross Court Shot:

Used for RH hitters on left side, or LH hitters on right side. Cut the ball off a little earlier than normal, contact the ball with thumb down and follow through away from body to create sharp angle shot.



Using the block to score:

Hitting wipe shots either off the side of the block or off the top. Must swing at the edges of the block, becomes more difficult as blockers improve. Changing attack angles and speed helps create wipes.

High Ball Decision Making:

Understanding when to swing hard to score (green light), when to hit a smart shot off the block or into a corner (yellow light) and when to just keep the ball in play when scoring is not a viable option (red light). If unable to score, attacker should almost always play the ball to position 1 or 2 to take out the opposing setter or rightside.

Using the block to recycle/replay:

When attacker is not in a position to score vs a well-formed block, hit the ball flat with about 60-70% force into the top of the block to get it back. Aim for the blockers hands. Team must work on block coverage to take advantage of this situation.

75% Shot to Position 1:

When not able to hit full speed, this is a great shot from LS, RS or pipe. It is a controlled shot with 75% pace that will score sometimes, but is most often used to take out the opposing setter or rightside attacker. Aim for the back corner in position 1, ensuring that your contact point stays high.

Pipe Attack Options:

As opposing blockers become more sophisticated, offense must find ways to attack gaps in the block. Can use the following 4 pipe options:

1. 51/pipe timing combination, where pipe attack is just over left shoulder of middle attacker on a good pass.
2. Gap ball, where pipe is set in the 31 zone (often in combination with a 51 or 61),
3. Back pipe, where pipe is set directly behind setter in 61 zone (can be used with 31 or 51).
4. Straight pipe with the middle running a 31.



Team Alberta Men's Volleyball- Blocking Curriculum: 15U -18U

KEY TEACHING POINTS:

- A variety of footwork patterns can be taught, as long as eyes are trained properly, shoulders are square, and arms press over the net.
- Hands press over, sealing the net, pushing with the palms, creating big hands.
- Footwork pattern based on athletes' ability and game situation.
- Team blocking system dictates movement priority and starting position.

Training Aspect	15U	16U	17U	18U
Starting Position	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Eye Sequencing	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Hand/arm action	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Landing	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Blocking quick attack	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Crossover footwork	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Closing the block	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Swing blocking	Acquire	Acquire	Acquire	Refine
Lining up the attacker	Acquire	Acquire	Acquire	Refine
Team Alberta System	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Quick 2 footwork	Acquire	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
Quick 3 footwork	Acquire	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate
Triple Blocking			Acquire	Consolidate
Strategic Blocking				Acquire

Starting Position:

Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, .5m away from the net. Arms in front and high, palms facing net, ready to block quick attack or move in either direction.

Eye Sequencing:

Look at 'ball-hitter-setter-ball-hitter'. 1) Pass determines possible attack options, in system vs high ball. 2) Have a quick look to see if hitters are moving into or out of your zone. 3) Setter often gives away the set, make a read based on setter movements and hand position. 4) Quick look at flight of the ball to see who was set and make initial adjustments. 5) Focus on the attacker to line them up and watch for attack angle, speed, etc.

Hand/arm action:

Arms press over the net, instantly sealing the top of the tape in a smooth motion. Hands are big and wide, leading with the palms (not fingers) to create more blocking surface area and to avoid injuries to fingers. Press with core and shoulders to finish the block into the court.



Landing:

Land softly on both feet to preserve body and reduce chronic injuries, then open up quickly to the ball and get off the net to transition into attack.

Blocking quick attack:

Start with high hands, quick 'pop' jump to press over the net and take away space. Goal is more to get a slow down than a stuff block. Speed and penetration are more valued than height of jump, as attack is coming quickly.

Crossover footwork:

Three step sequence to cover distance to block outside: 1) push towards direction of set, lead foot and hips open up perpendicular to net, try to gain distance, 2) trail leg (closest to net) crosses over, land first on heel to allow for hip rotation, and foot pivots to be perpendicular to net, 3) original lead leg swings around and plants, getting hips mostly parallel to net to begin jump. Jump should be straight up and down.

Closing the block:

Once the set is made to the outside, middles should look to close the block by moving laterally (quick 3 or crossover), watching the outside blocker's inside shoulder to ensure a block with no seam, and no physical contact between blockers. As blockers gain more experience with this skill, they should start to key on attackers as they are closing the block, as this can be a valuable source of reading cues.

Swing blocking:

Using the crossover footwork from above, add a dynamic arm swing (elbow drive) to generate more height on jump and penetration on block. Arms must penetrate immediately and be disciplined (avoid reaching laterally or touching the net).

Lining up the attacker:

Done primarily with the eyes and feet. When blocking line, line up inside blocking hand on attacker's shoulder. When blocking cross-court, line up outside blocking hand on attacker's shoulder. To start, could try lining up blockers head on attacking shoulder in order to develop the skill. Eyes must focus on attacker, not ball, and feet must adjust to set location. Block jump should begin slightly after the attacker jumps (dependent on blocker jumping ability).

Team Alberta System:

Zone blocking system where all blockers are responsible for any attack in their zone. Blockers must work as a team, coordinated with back row defense. *See 'Defensive Systems' appendix for specific details.*

Quick 2 footwork:

Used to defend quick attacks, pipe balls, and overload situations that aren't directly in front of blocker. Hips stay parallel to the net, hands stay high, quick lateral shuffle to cover space, then a 'pop' jump to get hands over the net.

Quick 3 footwork:

Used to cover more ground vs fast sets, or instead of crossover. Hips stay parallel to net at all times. First step is pushing off in direction of the set, then hop though laterally, landing on both



feet in a loaded position and ready to jump straight up (step-hop-jump). More powerful jump than the quick-2.

Triple Blocking:

Used in high ball situations vs. good attackers. All 3 blockers move towards the set, synchronizing crossover footwork to jump at the same time. All 6 arms press together forming a wall. Outside blocker must set up to take away line shot from attacker. Trail blocker must yell 'seal' to initiate the triple block and ensure that all teammates are on the same page. Must ensure that spacing and timing of blockers is in sync, as back row defense sets up around the block.

Strategic Blocking:

Done as part of game plan to take away opponents strengths; can take many forms depending on team and player composition. Potential situations include: commit blocking, leaving some attackers 1-on-1, adjusting start positioning, ignoring the C ball, prioritizing attackers in certain situations, etc.



Team Alberta Men's Volleyball- Defense Curriculum: 15U -18U

KEY TEACHING POINTS:

- Defenders should be relaxed and ready for all attacks.
- Watch setter and attacker tendencies to anticipate where the ball will go.
- Move towards ball with feet and arms, intercepting the flight path.
- Arms start apart, ready to dig the ball with forearms or with hands.
- Play the ball in front of you, keeping hips and shoulders parallel to attacker.
- Elbows break to create 'J-stroke' motion of arms, popping the ball up high into court
- Starting position and movement priority based upon defensive system.

Training Aspect	15U	16U	17U	18U
Ready position	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Training eyes what to watch	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Being stopped as ball is hit	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Movement to the ball	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Arm/body action of dig	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Line block defensive system	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Cross block defensive system	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Digging with hands	Acquire	Acquire	Consolidate	Refine
Digging redirection off block			Acquire	Consolidate
Triple block defensive system				Acquire
Adjusting defense to game plan				Acquire

Ready position:

Stable base with feet shoulder width apart, comfortable body position, watching the play progress. Must be ready to dig hard driven ball and move quickly in any direction. Start position based on defensive system and/or attacker tendencies.

Training eyes what to watch:

Similar to block read progression 'ball-hitters-setter-ball-attacker'. Watch the play progress, and adjust positioning based on attack patterns. Prioritize 1st tempo attack first. When set is made, focus on attacker, watching attack angle, block formation, and arm swing. Anticipate movement based on these cues.

Being stopped as ball is hit:

Regardless of positioning, defender must be stopped and balanced upon attack contact. Defender must be in a position to dig a hard driven ball and also chase down a tip or wipe. Use video feedback to review defender movement and positioning upon attack.



Movement to the ball

Defender can shuffle and adjust position based on rally. After being stopped on contact, defender must move quickly to tipped or deflected ball in whichever means necessary. On hard hit ball outside of body, slide hips behind the ball by bending lead knee, and keep shoulders square to the attacker.

Arm/body action of dig:

Ideally keep hips and shoulders square to the attacker and open to the court. Keep hips back, and use a j-stroke motion of arms (breaking elbows) to dig the ball high and into the middle of your court. Platform angle must be formed before contact, and finish the dig towards the court.

Line block defensive system:

Please refer to the Team AB Defensive System for diagrams. From a left side attack: Position 4 defender plays drop-off to dig sharp cross court. Pos. 5 digs cross-court attack inside the block. Pos. 6 can dig seam or deep cross court depending on priority. Pos. 1 covers tips over the block and in the pot. System is reversed from a RS attack. Adjust based on opponent tendencies and your strengths.

Cross block defensive system:

Please refer to the Team AB Defensive System for diagrams. From a left side attack: Position 4 defender curls under block to dig tips and rolls. Pos. 5 digs cross-court attack inside the block. Pos. 6 can dig seam or deep line. Pos. 1 digs line shot. System is reversed from a RS attack. Adjust based on opponent tendencies and your strengths.

Digging with hands:

Ensure that defenders hands are apart on contact. On high hit ball, cut the ball off in setting motion, directing the ball high into the middle of your court. Strength is gained from stability of the legs.

Digging redirection off block:

Defender must be stable and ready to move quickly in any direction. When ball is redirected high and behind the defender, turn and run rather than backpedalling. Dig location is based on speed of play. Can use exercise balls to simulate block touch in training.

Triple block defensive system:

Please refer to the Team AB Defensive System for diagrams. From a left side attack: Position 4 defender helps form the block. Pos. 5 digs cross-court attack inside the block and sharp tip to 4. Pos. 6 digs any seam or high off hands. Pos. 1 digs tips and rolls in the pot. System is reversed from a RS attack. Adjust based on opponent tendencies and your strengths.

Adjusting defense to game plan:

Practice your defensive systems based on sound principles and your team's strengths. Some opponents require an adjustment to the system based on their setting and attacking tendencies. Do what you can to take away their strengths without compromising your system.