



USING BALL → SETTER → BALL → HITTER

This concept cannot be stressed enough, because it benefits your defense so much. Everything revolves around it.

The defensive players watch the ball go over the net to their opponents. Once the ball is in flight, its path will not change until it is hit again. Because it is obvious where the ball is going, the defense need not waste its time watching the ball but instead should direct its attention to the intended target, the *passer*. Learning to read that person's actions can give an early clue as to what he or she is going to do with the ball. After the *ball* leaves the passer's arms, the defense should look ahead to the *setter*. (Blockers should glance quickly at the hitters to see if any are on their way for quicks.) The defensive players might notice if their opponents are going to attack, backset, or tip the ball by their preliminary actions. As soon as the defensive players know where the set is going, they should tear their eyes away from watching the *ball* the whole flight to look at the *hitter*. The set is not going to change direction in the middle of the air, and they are wasting precious moments that would be better spent observing the spiker's approach and arm action. Looking at the approaching attacker can tell them the probable speed of the hit, the direction and type of hit, and where their opponents are going to hit from, all of which can prepare them for the attack.

Being forewarned in volleyball is everything to the defense. Outguess the attackers, to do that, the more pieces of information your team can obtain, the better the odds of success. This is called reading the offense, and the best defenses do it. They seem to be just waiting to dig your team's hit. Get over this useless habit of watching the complete flight of the ball!