



## **WINNING STRATEGIES**

When you get right down to it there are only two ways to win points: either you must hit a winner or your opponent must make an error. Below are strategies for increasing the chances of these events happening.

### **Playing Percentages**

Volleyball matches are not won by a few great shots. They are won with many, many good shots. Like chopping down a tree, you win with the accumulated effect of many small efforts. Play consistent, high-percentage volleyball and force your opponent to come up with great shots to beat you. Taking unnecessary risks costs matches. This doesn't mean you shouldn't take any risks, it means you should only take only those risks that maximize your probability of winning the point.

### **Maximizing Strengths**

Real competition requires intense and prolonged concentration. In order to win, you must have more willpower and concentration than your opponent. All winners have great willpower and concentration. They can play every point at 100 percent efficiency for hours. An opponent may be better than you for 30 minutes, but that does not mean they will be better than you after 2 hours. Everyone tires mentally if they are forced to concentrate long enough.

Matches have many temporary ebbs and flows. Successful players are not shaken by these. As a match nears its end, pressure mounts. Winning the last few points against a tough opponent is often a tough and unpleasant task.

### **Exploiting the Opponent's Weaknesses**

Matches hinge on your ability to use your team's strengths and exploit your opponent's weaknesses. A weakness usually will get worse if it is played relentlessly. The more important the point, the more you should play to the weakness. At the same time, try to hide your team's weakness and stay away from your opponent's strengths. Nobody is good at everything. You win by doing things your team is good at and lose by doing things you are not good at. You want to force your opponent to try difficult rather than easy shots.

As in a battle or a chess game, you and your team should always try to outguess your opponent's next move, set up your defense where you think the next offensive assault will take place, then counterattack where opponents are not prepared or expecting it. It is a gamble.

Much of this battle depends on your preparation and attitude or state of mind as you approach it. If you believe you can succeed, odds are you will, and if you believe you can't, odds are you won't.

All players choke sometimes. It is a normal human condition. All teams make mistakes. Don't let them see that it influences you. Never change your walk, your demeanor, or your expression.