

## **GAME STRATEGIES - SERVING**

- You should have a variety of serving skills: spin serve, floaters, and short, deep, and jump serves.
- When your team is winning points, you should get the ball to the server fast.
- When struggling or losing points you need to slow the game down.
- Don't serve right at passers (that makes it easy for them); instead, make them move to play the ball. It adds another element that can go wrong. It is even better to "seam" players (go between them), which incorporates another person into decision making and can complicate things, or it might make them late or less sure when playing the ball.
- Target whoever made the last mistake. Pick on them. It is natural for your opponents to be preoccupied thinking about their mistakes, decreasing their focus. Take advantage of that.
- Target substitutes. They aren't into the rhythm of the game, are under more stress to perform, and many times are not ready to play.
- If the setter is coming from the back row during serve receive, serve at her or her path to the net. The setter will obstruct the view of the passer and confuse her. Sometimes the setter will be forced to take the serve.
- Don't let your opponents get used to the same type of serve; keep them guessing (hard, soft, floater, deep, short). Mix them up.
- Serve to position 1 (their back-right side facing the net) a lot. A pass coming from behind the server's shoulder is difficult to set and not as effective to run quicks on because most setters turn slightly to take the ball. Also, a lot of teams will move closer to the net on that side and give more open court in the deep corner. It is a harder serve to pass in the direction of the setter than a position 5 or position 6.
- If a front-row hitter is passing, target that player to take the serve. It is often hard for the player to pass and then get outside to hit. You can slow down the action by serving deep or short so the hitter can't get an approach or run quicks.
- Hard serves create more aces. Players have to make decisions quickly and the ball is more apt to be passed tight or over the net. If mishandled, it goes farther and is harder to retrieve. Passers have less time to move up or back. If you couple the hard serve with a floater or mix them up with a short soft serve when the opponent expects a hard deep one, you set up success.
- Jump serves are mentally winners. Just the fact that you are aggressive and talented enough to attempt them adds a mental block to your opponents, even if the serve isn't great. Because of the downward spin of the serve it is difficult to determine if it is in or out.
- The serve **MUST** be in the court in the following situations:
  - After a timeout (the opposing coach may call one to put pressure on you)
  - On game point
  - After the player before you has missed (on either team). Two missed serves in a row can really put your team in a mental slump. Volleyball is such a momentum game that two missed serves in a row can have quite a negative impact.
  - The first serve of a set.