



SETTING TACTICS/PHILOSOPHY

All players must be confident in their setting ability. This will increase the number of attacks the team will be capable of producing and decrease free balls, if players are not afraid to step in and set when the setter is unavailable. For this to occur successfully, you need to step forward with confidence, knowledge, and experience (where to set it to, how close to the net, what positions people are hitting, and so on).

When in doubt, set it higher. Always set the ball high enough to allow the hitter time to get a complete swing at the ball. Many transitions from defense to offense do not give hitters the time in their attacks to take a full approach or swing. The result is a poor attack, such as a forced tip, half hit, or hit into the blockers. If the attackers are ready, it is better odds to set the ball higher and give the hitter time to approach and swing aggressively.

If you err, err away from the net. This helps prevent oversets (balls that are set over the net) or balls set too tight. The setter always wants to give the attacker an opportunity to swing at the ball. If the setter is moving after a difficult pass and doesn't have time to square up to set (creating a guessing situation), it would be better if he or she set the ball off of the net than too tight or possibly over the net.

Set to all hitters at the beginning of a set to find out who is hitting well that day.

The best hitters get the highest percentage of sets. Just as Michael Jordan was given the most opportunities to shoot the basketball, so should your best player be given the majority of the sets. Half-to two-thirds is an appropriate amount.

Every play, assess opponent's front row. The setter tracks the ball the first third of its path. She then can focus on hitters and blockers. The setter should also collect data when the ball is on the other side of the net, when attackers approach, and when each team is transitioning.

Establish quicks soon to divide the blockers. This slows down the blockers releasing to get outside to block, because they have to make sure your team is not running a quick first.

Do what you do well.

Attack weak blockers. Know where the shortest or poorest blockers are. Notice if they are slow moving (you can use more quicks, like shoots) or have poor skills, like not sealing the net or not squaring to the middle of the court. Set to these positions more often.



The poorer the pass, the higher the set. When the pass is poor, the setter has less control, and it would be a much higher gamble to try a quick. You want to minimize the mistakes and you do that by playing smart odds.

When in doubt, don't. Volleyball is a game requiring consistency. It isn't the one big hit that wins games, it is all the little successful hits that accumulate. Consistency is the key to success. Go with plays and sets you are most comfortable with, especially in tight situations.

Setter should maintain a neutral body position on all sets. That way you can threaten all sets all of the time. If you give away where the set is going, the defense has time to read it and get prepared earlier.

Make the opponent's blockers stay home. When you are in the front row, you need to attack every once in a while; otherwise the blocker can release and "cheat" over to block middle and outside. To help out the middle hitter, you need to be a constant threat, thereby forcing the blocker to stay where she belongs until the set is made.

Don't do what they expect you to do. If the pass looks like the setter will have to tip it, don't. Punch it up with a one-handed hit or set, tip it deep, or turn and hit it. Always try to come up with the unexpected. Set quicks on an average pass.

Establish the best hitter first. The best hitter is the best for a reason. Starting out with your big guns sets a precedent and a challenge. Many times it is intimidating, and that is just what you want your team to be.

Make the long set. The easy, expected set, especially when transitioning from defense, is the middle or back set. Do the unexpected, and set it outside to the line.

Set opposite from the movement of the ball. The defense tends to drift to one side of the court during rallies. Set away from the concentration of players.

Do not set someone who is not ready. The players should call for a set. It helps when they communicate, especially during quick exchanges or rallies.

Don't set someone because it's "their turn."

Push the pace. If you can set the first ball when transitioning, do so. Teams get into a 1,2,3 rhythm, or rut, and attacking the ball on the first or second hit throws in the unexpected. The same type of thing occurs if the setter speeds up the set.



Take advantage of another team's mistakes or poor defense. If your opponents only block one up in the middle, run a barrage of hitters from the middle in twos or tandems. The setter could also dump on the second hit to the middle of the opponent's court or to an area not covered because of the server coming back slowly to defensive position.

Audibly change your team's attack if you give up two points in a row. The setter needs to throw your opponents out of their rhythm or stop their momentum and give a new look to your team.

Go back to the same hitter. If a hitter makes a mistake, give her another chance. You should let the hitter know in advance you are going to her. This will prepare the hitter and help build her confidence.

When games are close at the end of a match, don't tip. Encouraging hitters to tip begins a passive attack, and the aggressive attack will almost always dominate. Most teams pull their defense up into the front half of the court as rallies and matches progress (because they neglect to go home when the ball goes over the net). If you swing instead of tip, the ball comes faster and usually farther back, catching opponents unprepared.

Know and use the hot hitter.

Jump at everything close to the net. This keeps blockers honest and prevents them from putting an umbrella block on the ball. It will also usually draw the blocker to jump with the setter, expecting a tip or hit. This sets your hitter up with one less blocker or a good hole in the block to hit through because the blocker is usually late getting over to them after jumping with the setter.

Setter should find reference points to aim for or establish positions on the court for sets. It helps pinpoint sets if you can use visual targets such as lines or different colors on the court to set to. One of the easiest and most consistent targets is the antenna. Setting accuracy will improve greatly in unfamiliar courts if setters will find reference points to use and practice using them during warm-ups.