

COACHING Volleyball

Winter 2019-20

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Leading the Way

**2008 Gold inspires
First Point VB leadership**

p. 12

Also in this issue: Timeout Philosophy • Fundraising • Side-Out Foundation Visit

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As coaches, it's in our nature to break down every skill into the tiniest of details – especially when it comes to passing. But are we taking it too far? What value is there in just letting instincts take over? Jim Miret looks at some of the top international passers in the world to see what can be learned about this critical skill.

12 Leading the Way

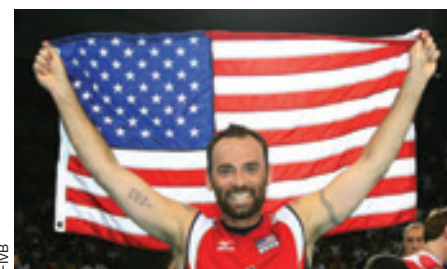
Movements don't start out accidentally – they're often the product of a specific confluence of people, places and events. You may have heard us talk about First Point Volleyball Foundation over the last couple of years, and we're proud to work with such a talented and driven group to grow the men's game at all levels. In this article, we try to tell the story of how this group got started, the happy coincidences that pushed things along, and the hard work and generosity behind each phase of their successes.

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A timeout can be a wonderful tool when used properly. It can slow the momentum of an opponent, provide a brief respite for your tired team, or allow coaches to make just the right adjustment to turn the tide of a match in your favor. Paul Leon (UC Santa Cruz) takes us inside the decision-making process by reflecting on a particular moment where a well-placed timeout might have saved the day.

24 Sharing My Story

In addition to First Point Volleyball Foundation, the AVCA is also proud to work with the Side-Out Foundation, a dedicated group of folks determined to make a real difference in the fight against cancer. Here, we share a story about the experience of getting a close-up look at the work that the group is doing and the powerful difference it can make on a personal and community level.



On the Cover

On the bus ride immediately following the 2008 Gold Medal match, Lloyd Ball had one thing on his mind: Where does the men's game go from here? He wasn't alone in wondering what would come next for the sport in the US. Read about the First Point Volleyball Foundation and learn all about how a simple question launched a men's volleyball movement that is already having a real and lasting impact. Where will the journey take them next?

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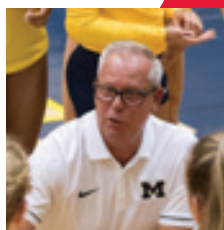
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

From the Desk of ...

Mark Rosen, Head Coach – University of Michigan

I CAN'T BELIEVE how fast these past two years have flown by. Since this is the last issue of the magazine before my term as AVCA President ends, it's the perfect opportunity to share some thoughts on the experience.

It has been an amazing opportunity to serve the membership of the AVCA. This has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my coaching career, and I would encourage any coach to get involved in a leadership role with our association. If you don't know how to do that, just introduce yourself to our executive director, Kathy DeBoer, and she will make sure you get involved! If you don't know what I am talking about, ask any board member how they got started with the AVCA and you will probably hear, "I bumped into Kathy DeBoer and the next thing I knew, I was volunteering to serve."

I'm certainly not complaining – I can't thank Kathy enough for asking me to be a part of our professional organization. Kathy and the staff at the AVCA office are an outstanding group of underpaid professionals who are dedicated and passionate towards making our sport and the coaching profession better. Without their hard work, none of the coaches serving on the board would be able to be involved and keep their "day jobs" in coaching.

In the years that I've been involved as a board member with the AVCA I've had the opportunity to be inside the ropes as sand volleyball became first an emerging, and then ultimately a sanctioned, NCAA championship sport. I have seen amazing growth in the attendance numbers and support of collegiate programs at every level. I've seen the explosion of television opportunities for both indoor and beach volleyball. Recently, there has been an organized and energized approach to growing the men's side of our game at the collegiate level. Simply stated, our sport is healthy and strong, and I can't wait to see the growth continue. Here is my



MICHIGAN VOLLEYBALL

call to action for each of you: find a way to get involved with YOUR AVCA. Trust me, it will be one of the most rewarding things you will do in your career.

Think about how you can play a role in the future of volleyball coaching as a leader in our profession.

With the continued growth of our game, there is an increasing need for strong leadership. There are a number of directions that our sport can go in the next generation, and strong leadership is the key to setting a positive course. As my father always told me, "Be part of the solution, not part of the problem." Think about how you can

play a role in the future of volleyball coaching as a leader in our profession.

I want to wish Sharon Clark the best of luck as she takes the reins for the next two years. She won't really need any luck, though, because she is incredibly smart and cares for our sport deeply. I'm looking forward to working with her this next year as the past president and I know she will serve our organization well.

The AVCA Convention in Pittsburgh is sure to be an excellent complement to the outstanding competition of the NCAA National Championship – if I didn't see you there, feel free to reach out anytime with thoughts and questions. We're all in this together.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you!

MR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Our Game: Serendipity

Kathy DeBoer



BUTLER VOLLEYBALL

Butler Head Coach and AVCA President-Elect Sharon Clark

MY FAVORITE PODCAST is “How I Built This,” stories about entrepreneurs and their struggles to build their companies. One of the questions the host, Guy Raz, asks every guest near the end of the interview is: *How much of your success was brains and hard work, and how much was luck?* Every guest, all of whom built something from nothing, says a few lucky breaks were critical to their achievements.

Our cover story on First Point Volleyball Foundation tracks their first three years of brains, hard work and luck. Certainly, board chair John Speraw and CEO and professional fundraiser Wade Garard have considerable expertise and laudatory work habits, but their most recent success, convincing six SIAC schools, a conference of historically black colleges and universities, to add men’s volleyball also took some luck.

Per NCAA demographics, only 4% of male volleyball players in DI and DII are African American. Pitching men’s volleyball to this conference located in states with no sanctioned high school boys’ programming was nothing short of a crazy idea at its inception. How could presidents and athletics directors in these resource-poor schools, most of whom had never seen a college men’s volleyball match (and if they had, would have immediately been struck by the lack of diversity on the court) ever be convinced to add the sport?

The answer: Show them African American success stories in volleyball.

This is where luck played a role: In the fall of 2018, Butler University’s Sharon Clark was voted AVCA president-elect, the first African American to hold this leadership position in the 37-year history of our organization. Nineteen days into her term, she reshuffled her travel schedule to attend the NCAA Convention in Orlando, where Garard and SIAC Commissioner Greg Moore had arranged for a visit with the league’s presidents and athletics directors. Not only is their first visual of volleyball a black woman as the incoming leader of the coaches’ association, but she could share that her son Miles was one of the top volleyball players in Indiana and was evaluating his collegiate options at the time.

Garard also recruited Jamion Hartley to join them. Hartley is a 6’7” Jamaican-born, former Ball State volleyball star who had played on the Jamaican National Team. The Caribbean is a fertile recruiting ground for SIAC schools, and Hartley, now a successful businessman in Chicago, was a walking advertisement of success of a black male volleyball player.

A second bit of serendipity was the performance of the McKendree men’s team in Provo, Utah, on March 22 and 23 of 2019. Scott Stowell, one of First Point’s major donors, had invited the SIAC presidents and athletics directors to be his guests at his Park City home during the weekend BYU was hosting Hawaii, Princeton and

McKendree. McKendree's coach is Nickie Sanlin, the only African American female coaching a men's volleyball team in NCAA DI-DII. In front of a packed house of 5,000 fans, Sanlin's team pulled off their first victory in program history over a ranked opponent, beating BYU 3-1. The next day they trounced Princeton, the eventual EIVA champion, for their first win ever over an Ivy League school.

No one could have scripted a better weekend for selling men's volleyball to the SIAC brass: a DII men's team defeating well-known, high-profile DI opponents; a black female, who also coaches the women's team, successfully leading a men's team; a large and engaged spectator base going crazy about men's volleyball. Those two days showed them what was possible if they sponsored men's volleyball.

The final lucky break was the timing of Julian Moses' success as a volleyball player at Lewis University. Julian's father, Olympic medalist Dr. Edwin Moses, is a Morehouse College graduate and an influential member of their board of trustees. The men's liberal arts college, a member of the SIAC, has produced more illustrious African American leaders than any other school in America, and has a long-standing tradition of Morehouse graduates sending their sons to attend the college. Julian did not because he wanted to play college volleyball.

Despite having no high school and limited club experience, Julian became a recruited walk-on at Lewis, the top DII men's team in the country. Two years later he was a starting middle, had earned a scholarship, and increased his GPA from 2.8 to 3.6. The day before the press conference announcing Morehouse as the sixth SIAC institution to add a men's volleyball team, Dr. Moses had taken his son to the Atlanta airport to catch a flight to Spain where he was starting his professional volleyball career.

Without Julian's success, both athletically and academically, Dr. Moses does not become an advocate for men's volleyball; without him, Morehouse College does not add a men's team; without Morehouse, the SIAC does not have the six schools needed for an NCAA bid or qualify for First Point's million-dollar incentive grant.

During the last year I have often had flashbacks from 2009 when we were engaged in a struggle to get beach volleyball added to the emerging sports list, another "crazy idea" at inception. After beach got the required votes to be put on the list, the Big 12, Big 10 and Pac-12 launched an override initiative to block beach from becoming a college sport.

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) had staunchly supported the beach initiative. Their efforts were led by two African American female volleyball players, Aminah Charles from Hampton and Monique Carroll from Arkansas Pine Bluff, representing the MEAC and SWAC, respectively, the two DI conferences of historically black universities. Both were seniors who had never played beach, but they saw new opportunities for others coming after them. When the major conferences staged the recall, they kept the SAAC from backing down, urging their leadership to speak against the override.



MCKENDREE MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

McKendree Men's Head Coach Nickie Sanlin

By the time of the vote in January of 2010, I was in the fight of my career. Support for beach was evaporating among court coaches who were scared about not getting a program, and administrators were wary about opposing the power conferences. I had my speakers lined up – veteran street fighters who would not be cowed – and the backing of my board to keep fighting, but I was also increasingly isolated.

I was standing alone near one of the microphones and Monique Carroll came over and stood next to me ... that's all, she didn't say anything, just stood near me until the floor speeches were over and the vote taken. We defeated the override by just 12 votes. With victory for beach secure, she went back to her seat with the rest of the SAAC. It was a gesture of support I'll never forget.

Aminah Charles graduated from Hampton and got a job in sports marketing at Gatorade and is now a manager at Beats by Dr. Dre in Culver City, California. Monique Carroll is now Dr. Monique Carroll and was just appointed the Associate AD/SWA at South Carolina State University.

Ten years from now, in 2030, with brains, hard work and a little luck we will have success stories like these to tell about men who played volleyball in the SIAC.

K.S.D./J

Develop a Coach's Eye

By RJ Abella, Assistant Coach/Recruiting Coordinator - South Carolina Beach Volleyball

I REMEMBER ATTENDING an indoor volleyball coaching clinic hosted by Kansas State back when I first started coaching volleyball. It was a Gold Medal Squared clinic, so there was a lot of information and scientific data thrown at you, but through all that there was one thing that head coach Suzie Fritz said that has always stuck with me – and that was to develop a coach's eye.

A coach's eye is having the ability to just focus in on certain aspects of a volleyball skill or movement while letting everything else go. It's very similar to the concept of mindfulness. For example, if a drill was designed to focus on an attacker's final two steps, we need to just put our focus and provide feedback pertaining to only that.

We can get distracted when something else catches our attention, and we provide feedback pertaining to focuses which the drill or exercise isn't for. What if there are other parts of the game that hinder the athlete's ability to practice the purpose of the drill? Then you must identify what is causing the drill to not be as efficient and modify it appropriately.



SOUTH CAROLINA BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Example: Coach wants to work on an attacker's spacing from their setter when attacking. Players line up in serve-receive and the drill is initiated by another player serving. The setter is setting balls that are too wide or way too short because their partner is passing all over the place. The coach is providing feedback to the attacker, like, "You're starting your approach too early," and telling the setter, "Face where you want to set the ball."

Possible modifications: Coach bowls in a ball to initiate the drill to provide a better pass to the setter or the setter is allowed to contact the ball twice, once to put themselves in a better position to set their partner, and a second contact to set the attacker.

Explanation: While correcting the timing of an attacker's approach and improving body positioning of a setter are important for efficient volleyball, it's not the focus of the drill and the players might forget what the whole point of the drill is because of the feedback provided. By improving the chances for a better pass and set by modifying those aspects, players are now in a better position for a coach to solely focus on the intent of the drill: improving the distance between an attacker and setter.

Beach volleyball players must be proficient in all the skills of the game. Sometimes players specialize as left- and right-side players, but regardless, everyone has to serve, pass, set, hit and play defense. Coaches should train with specific intent and provide feedback supporting that intent instead of saying a drill is designed to improve setting (too general).

We all want our players to be the most efficient players possible, and as coaches we should continue to develop our coach's eye so that we can better identify modifications as needed. Then, we can provide truly efficient feedback to help our athletes.

Setting Choices

Equipment Needed

- Full court with net and antennae
- Two balls

Objective

To get setters to make good setting decisions. As the drill is initiated with a free ball, a setter should be able to make a good choice where to set. This is a more advanced form of the setter versus blocker drill.

Procedure

1. Team A (with setter A) receives a free ball.

2. Team A gets 1 point for winning the rally and a bonus point if setter A gets the hitter in a one-on-one situation. Team B gets 1 point for winning the rally and a bonus point for any stuff block.
3. Rally score to 8, then rotate players.

Key Point

Setters need to make good choices, and they *must* cover.

Variation

This drill can also be run with the setter setting front or back quicks to the non-digger.

Position Freeze

Number of Players: 10

Number of Balls: Steady supply

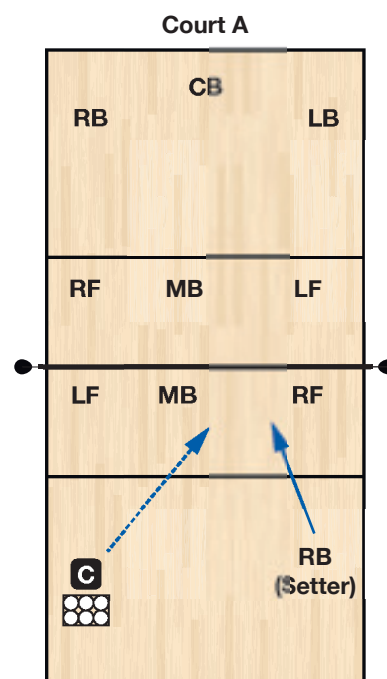
Objective

For teams with inexperienced players, this drill reinforces positioning on the court in order to cover the attack and free balls. It also provides practice for spiking and blocking.

Directions

1. Six players on court A in starting position. Four players and one coach on court B. Players in positions RF, CF, and LF. Setter is coming in from the RB position.
2. C starts play by tossing a ball to S. S sets to one player designated by C. Player attacks the ball.

3. Players on court A move into defensive positions to cover the attack. Six on four play continues until a dead ball. One point is awarded to the team that wins the point.
4. C mixes up types of sets and to which player the ball is set. C also has attacking player catch the ball instead of hitting the ball
5. When attacking player catches the ball, all players on court A freeze. Players on court B and coach point out correct position
6. If all players are in correct positions, Team A is awarded two points. If not, Team B is awarded two points.
7. First team to reach 15 points wins.
8. Have all players rotate into new positions after five or six tossed balls.



Exhaustion Serving

Number of Players: 12 or more

Number of Balls: Steady supply

Objective

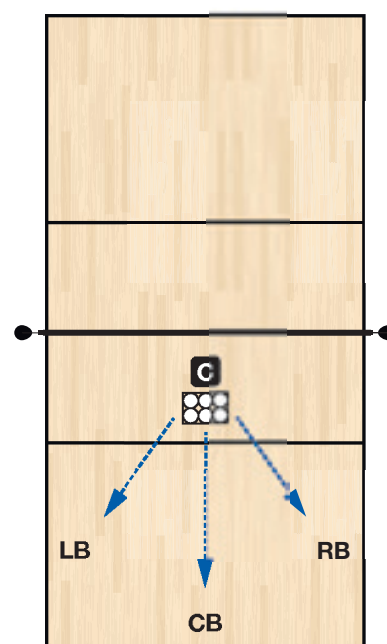
The defensive work creates physical stress on the players, and the pressure to serve the specific areas creates mental stress. These two factors combine to simulate game-like pressure on the athletes. This is a very high-level and intense drill. It can be very tiring and can create a lot of pressure in the group.

Directions

1. You can do this drill with 1–4 groups.
2. Divide the team into groups of three (taking into consideration defensive position on the floor as well as their ability to serve certain areas under pressure).
3. Three minutes are put on the clock to start the drill (collegiate level). Less time may be needed for high school or lower skilled teams.

4. The coach, or player, initiates balls to the group. Each player should be playing the ball by digging or using floor defensive moves. Incorporate what your team needs to work on while they are getting quality touches on the ball.
5. Anytime during the three minutes, if someone in the group does not go for a ball, the time starts over.
6. At the end of the time, the three defensive players go to the service line. Each player must serve one ball to area 1 and one ball to area 5 from the right back and from the left back (a total of four serves).
7. If one player in the group misses a serve, the entire group starts over with 3 minutes on the clock with defense. You can adjust the amount of time for any returning groups to fit your level of play.
8. You may also want to change the areas and number of serves that need to be made in order to complete the drill.

9. When the group is finished, they switch and the next group is up.



Paradigm Shift: A Study in Passing

By Jim Miret, Front Range Volleyball

IN THIS ARTICLE, we wanted to test the paradigm that serves in the women's game are coming to passers so quickly that it is virtually impossible to get behind the ball to pass it effectively. Many coaches also believe that the less their passers move their body and their platforms, the better ability they will have to control the ball. Because of this standard point of view, many coaches believe the primary technique for passing the serve should be to face away from the target and key on the passer's ability to angle their platform to a target. I think that looking at conditions that influence technical responses is a good way to go about making coaching and training decisions. However, as critical thinkers, it's important that we are always testing the conditions that we believe exist if they are going to be the determining factor in the techniques that we choose to teach.

If you believe in the above paradigm, what percent of the time do you guess the best passers in the world would be able to get behind the serve? 10%? 20%? Maybe 30%? If we accept that at the highest levels of volleyball, serves get to the passers so quickly that they can't get behind the ball and therefore must rely on angling their platform to pass the ball, we would expect the percentage of times that passers were able to get behind the ball to be low. Why not test our hypothesis!?

For this article, we sampled matches from the 2019 Women's World Championships. We looked at serve-receive passes executed by the countries of Brazil, United States, Netherlands, Russia, Japan, Dominican Republic, Serbia and China. Our assumption is that international servers are serving the ball at the fastest speeds in the world, so the passers at that level will have the most difficult challenge to get behind the ball. Our sample size was 3,255 serve-receive passes by the aforementioned countries. The criteria that we chose to evaluate was



the percent of times international passers from those countries at the 2019 World Championships were able to get their bodies behind the ball to pass. We compared that to the percentage of times that the same passers were forced to play the ball where the ball had either moved outside of their body line or they had to turn away from the target. Let's look at our results: Of the 3,255 service receive attempts that we sampled, 69% of the time we found that the passers were able to get behind the ball. Does that number surprise you? 31% of the time passers had to open their body away from the target, or completely rely on their platform angle to create the angle needed to bring the pass to the target, most often their setter. Perhaps the most fascinating observation we made from the video was that when passers were able to get behind the ball, their passing average was higher compared to the times they were solely depending on their platform angle. As we viewed the 3,000+ passing moves in our examination of video from the 2019 Women's World Championships, we can state that this paradigm (that passers must move their platform outside their body to pass a ball

that is coming fast) is false according to our data. Passing is a dynamic, athletic and reflexive action. Accordingly, almost every ball that a passer receives in a match is different, so passers must have many passing moves to use at their discretion. In our sample we noticed passers using their entire body – legs and arms as well as torso movements at times to help control the ball. We believe anytime you try too much to restrict or limit movement you are restricting a player's athletic response and will make it more difficult to achieve the desired result. We were also curious to see how much time it took from the contact of the server's hand to the contact of the passers' platform. We sampled serves from the same event for the teams from USA, Japan, Brazil, Russia, China and Serbia. We did not count short serves (a very small percentage of serves attempted) and we did not count serves that contacted the net. According to our sample of 363 serves, 51% of the time it took the ball 1 second or less to go from the server's contact to contact on the passer's platform. Our theory is that an international player's serve will be reaching the passers faster than at any other level of play. Therefore,

if the passers in this environment can get their body behind the ball almost 70% of the time, that is an effective technique to be teaching at all levels. I have heard of and I have taught a lot of different passing techniques in my career. Take the ball off your left hip, take the ball off your right hip, keep your right foot forward all the time, keep your left foot forward all the time, face where the ball is coming from, face where you want the ball to go, the ball only knows your angle so just key on the angle of your platform ... just to name a few. We do not believe there is only one right way to pass the ball. In fact, great volleyball players often adopt a style of passing that is unique to them and is well-suited to their athletic ability to achieve the desired result. I think too often we look at skills in volleyball as being linear – a right way versus a wrong way, and this can be extremely limiting and frustrating for players.

Instead, what if we consider volleyball as a series of situations that we are trying to solve? Imagine yourself trying to match techniques to maximize execution in the situation that you are currently faced with. Serve-receive passers at all levels are going to need a myriad of techniques – a technique to use when the ball takes them low and to their left, when the ball takes them low and to their right, when the ball drops quickly short in front of them, when the ball rises up and angles away from them high to their left and high to their right, etc. Instead of thinking about one technique to teach that is right and categorizing everything else as wrong or attempting to put players in a position where they've got to create one situation nearly 100% of the time, let's think about passing as a fluid skill – one where, as I move to the ball, I must recognize the situation that I've been taken into and that gives me the flexibility to choose the technique that's going to best help me execute the pass based on my read of the situation.

In my gym I've found that teaching my players to try and get behind every serve as much as I see the top international female passers doing provides a great benefit for my players. As players attempt to get

behind every serve, I can see a marked increase in their movement capacity on the court. They are forced to learn to read the serve earlier and judge contact quality and direction off the server's hand. As players strive to get behind the ball in serve-receive they will be faced with situations where no matter how hard they work, the ball will be outside their body when the ball makes contact with their platform ... and this is okay! If I am doing my job effectively, I will have trained them in a move that focuses on platform angling and control when the ball is outside their mid-line. So, they move to try and get behind the ball, and if they can't, they select a technique that will allow them the freedom and creativity to make a productive pass. Giving players the athletic freedom to move their body as well as their

platform and make it part of the pass or defensive moves is something we see international players do quite often. Better ball control is the key to playing better volleyball, period. Check out these examples of passing moves from high-level international play that we observed in researching this column: Facing the target; Use your body; Go to your knee(s); Face away; Side-up move.

- ▶ Video 1: Face the Target
- ▶ Video 2: Use Your Body
- ▶ Video 3: Go to Your Knee(s)
- ▶ Video 4: Face Away
- ▶ Video 5: Side-up Move

We hope this will take you on a paradigm shift to helping your players become better serve-receive passers.





IN MEMORIAM MIKE HEBERT

JANUARY 7, 1944 – OCTOBER 21, 2019

Mike Hebert impacted hundreds of players and influenced a multitude of coaches, but his greatest impact was on the profession of volleyball coaching. When Mike started at Pittsburg for \$1,500 in 1976, volleyball coaching was not a job. Title IX required programming for women, and ADs hired the cheapest option. Armed with a Ph.D., writing skills, charisma and undecided on a profession, Mike Hebert agreed to a transitional gig. Without intention, he, among others, created the foundation for a profession where today the top earners make more than half a million dollars.

As evidenced by his Peace Corps days, Mike never made decisions based on money. When I asked him, late in his career, to do a convention session on asking for a raise, he said he had never

done it. What he did do was add value to each place he worked.

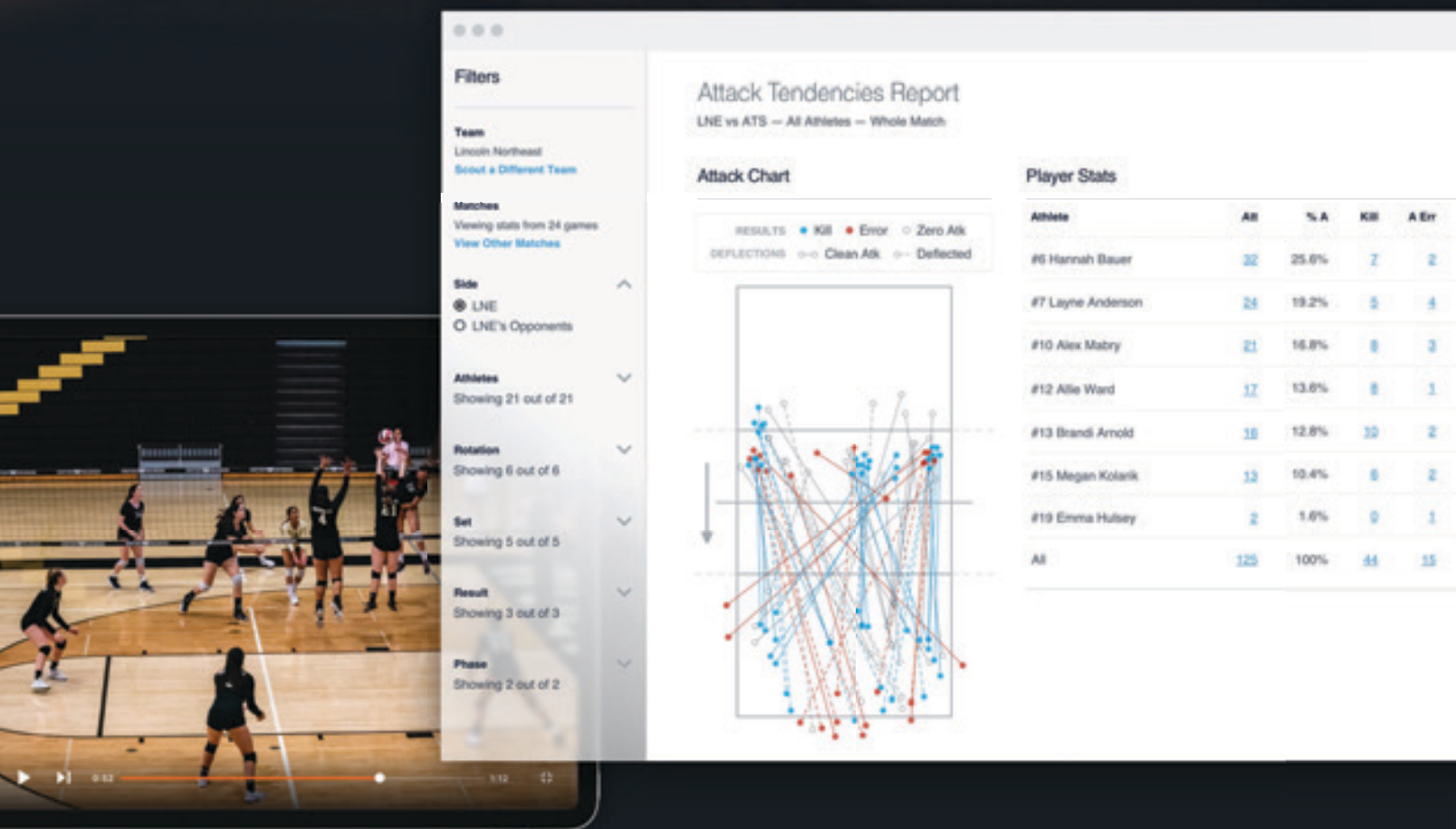
How? Mike convinced top prospects to join him before his team was good, and then made them partners in creating success. In his early days he painted, sanded and mopped his own gym to make it suitable for his team and spectators, and later became adept at fundraising to pay for improvements. He ceaselessly engaged the community and local media until he had a spectator base large enough to have influence in his institution. He nurtured administrative support until they shared accountability for results. Quite simply, Mike Hebert modeled what professional coaching looks like by writing, teaching, challenging, serving and leading.

Mike is gone, but his influence is with us every day.



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Leading the Way

The Movement and Mission of First Point Volleyball Foundation

By AVCA staff in conjunction with First Point Volleyball Foundation

THE DATE was August 24, 2008 and the USA Men's Volleyball Team had just won gold at the Beijing Olympics – they had just boarded a bus headed back to their hotel. The team was full of Olympic veterans – Clay Stanley, Reid Priddy, Riley Salmon, Tom Hoff and Ryan Millar; all had multiple Olympics appearances on their resumes. Lloy Ball, the setter and captain, was at his fourth ... and this was not only the first gold, but the first medal. Their Olympic experience had been marred by tragedy when head coach Hugh McCutcheon's father-in-law had been murdered and his mother-in-law severely injured while sightseeing just before the start of the competition.

The script called for euphoria. John Speraw, one of the assistants at the time, remembers there was certainly joy and a sense of fulfillment, but it wasn't the "giddy, youngster-type, look what we found" wildness, but a subdued, reflective atmosphere. He was sitting next to Ball, and their conversation turned to the future of men's volleyball in the United States. This was the third gold for the men's team, and yet, there were nine less NCAA DI men's teams in 2008 than there had been in 1984, the year of the first gold, and only three more than in 1988, the year of the second gold. Would this gold be different? Would it stimulate growth? Was there a plan?

After the Games, Lloy Ball returned to Russia for a few more years as a million-dollar man on an elite professional men's team and Speraw returned to coaching at the University of California-Irvine, where he had already won one NCAA Championship. He proceeded to win two more titles before being lured back to his alma mater, UCLA, in the summer of 2012.

After working as an advisor with the men's Olympic team at the London Games, Speraw was offered the head national team coaching position in the fall of 2012. He worked out a unique arrangement that allows him to keep his UCLA head coaching job and also coach the USA Men's National Team. He realized that the answers to those bus-ride questions about the future of men's volleyball in the U.S. were now *his problem*, front and center.

Sitting in his USAV office, Speraw wrote "FUTURE of MEN'S VBALL" in bold letters on the white board and then set about figuring out how to juggle two of the most high-profile, high-pressure jobs in men's volleyball at the same time.

Fast forward to the spring of 2016 ... Speraw, now married and with a two-year-old at home, gets a call from a long-time friend, Wade Garard. Garard is hanging out in a convention center, where his daughter Mamie is playing in an 800-team club

volleyball tournament. A professional fundraiser by training and a lover of volleyball who had been denied the opportunity to play as a youngster "because he was a boy," Garard asks Speraw why boys' and men's volleyball were not bigger. Honed by his trade, Garard has a practiced eye in spotting resources – and he is seeing opportunity everywhere he goes with his daughter, while realizing that his young son may, even a generation later, not get a chance to choose volleyball as his sport. He volunteers to send John a white paper on men's/boys' volleyball for his review.

That very white paper eventually led to the launch of the First Point Volleyball Foundation, originally known as MotorMVB; it took the problem of the future of men's volleyball in the U.S. off the bus and off the white board and proposed a plan of action. John sent the paper to Doug Beal, then USAV President. He found it credible enough that he agreed to fund the majority of a \$60,000 planning study, if John and Wade could find some other contributors. Garard approached the AVCA, Molten, the Southern California and North Texas Regions, and the conversations began.

During and after the 2016 Olympics, Garard interviewed 40 people about men's volleyball – some former players, some college administrators, some coaches and some prospective donors. Garard was already certain that the volleyball community had the philanthropic capacity to fund growth. What he needed to find out was where the efforts should be directed. His primary question was: *If we had 10 million dollars, what would we do with it to impact men's volleyball?*

One of those interviewees was Paul Tashima, the managing director of UBS Financial Services Corporate Cash Management Group. He was an avid volleyball player and, like Garard, a volleyball dad with two daughters. Tashima offered to host a meeting in Chicago at UBS Headquarters on October 5, 2016, so that Garard and Speraw could present the findings of the report. They would eventually showcase their research to Lloy Ball; his father

Arnie; Kelly Goodsel, another of the interviewees; Aldis Berzins; Shane Davis, Northwestern's recently hired women's coach; Sandy Abbinatti; Jenn Palilonis, professor at Ball State, and two representatives from the AVCA.

One of the attendees was Bill Scholl, the Athletics Director at Marquette University, who had become enamored with men's volleyball during his three-year stint at Ball State University. Scholl was both encouraging about the opportunities for growth of college men's volleyball and also pragmatic about the resources it would take and the obstacles which would need to be addressed. Coming out of the meeting, the focus narrowed to 1) finding resources to provide incentive grants to colleges starting men's volleyball teams, especially those offering scholarships, and 2) coordinating efforts to expand boys' volleyball in states beyond the handful currently offering sanctioned high school programs.

After the meeting, Speraw and Garard took steps to form a 501(c)(3) foundation, originally called MotorMVB, and start looking for tax-deductible funds to support the cause. Another of the 40 interviewees, Kelly Goodsel, president and CEO of Viking Plastics, and father of four volleyball-playing children (two daughters and two sons), joined Tashima, Speraw, Garard, and Lloy and Arnie Ball at the organizational Board of Directors meeting in Columbus, Ohio – held in December of 2016 at the AVCA Convention. At that meeting, they formally hired Wade Garard as CEO, made Speraw the Board President, and Goodsel the Treasurer. They also pledged \$300,000 to jumpstart the fundraising efforts.

In January of 2017, Garard visited the AVCA's Lexington offices and asked for consideration on a \$150,000 pledge, an unprecedented and breathtakingly large amount for the association. That February, the AVCA leadership trio of President Christy Johnson-Lynch, President-elect Mark Rosen and DI representative Kirsten Bernthal-Booth met with Garard in Indianapolis before a session with the NCAA DI Women's VB Committee to discuss the vision and consider the request.

As had been the case with beach volleyball 10 years earlier, the idea of investing significant time and resources in a sector of the sport that was small and not generating revenue for the association was a frightening prospect, even if it was the opening words of the AVCA mission statement. The prudent tactic was to continue to build the women's and girls' court game, where there were still many issues – marketing, recruiting, salaries, television coverage – needing attention. To provide perspective, the leadership trio asked the staff to assess how the AVCA community felt about men's volleyball.

While he was courting the AVCA for a gift, Garard was also working on showing that First Point could deliver on its vision to provide new programming and scholarships for men in collegiate volleyball. He only had \$300,000, a pittance based on the campaign goal of \$25 million, but, as an experienced fundraiser, he knew he needed to demonstrate to donors and prospective donors that their gifts would produce results.

Donny Gleason, a protégé of USC's Mick Haley, was an assistant women's coach at Daemen College, a small, tuition-driven DII college in upstate New York. Gleason knew Daemen needed male students, as only 500 of the 1,500 students were men; he



FIVB



John Speraw

UCLA MEN'S VOLLEYBALL



BYU MEN'S VOLLEYBALL



also wanted to coach a men's team. When he heard about First Point, he contacted Garard about a grant.

The First Point Board saw Daemen as a good investment based on their commitment to add 2.25 scholarships and a full-time coach, and voted to give them a \$60,000 grant, payable over three years. On May 5, 2017, Daemen College announced they were adding a men's volleyball team in 2018-19. First Point had their first win!

Three days later, however, on May 8, Cal Baptist, a DII men's team with the full complement of 4.5 scholarships, playing in the MPSE, announced they were dropping men's volleyball, effective immediately. No one in the volleyball community, even the players and coaches at Cal Baptist, saw the termination coming. In the same week, men's volleyball had picked up 2.25 scholarships and lost the same amount: a good win followed by a crushing loss.

Beside putting the First Point principals on high alert that protecting existing programs was as critical as starting new ones, the damage of the Cal Baptist decision to the vision was minimal. No sports media covered either the Daemen addition or the Cal Baptist drop, and, as evidence of discouragement in the volleyball community, no one but the AVCA reached out to the administration to question the decision. After years of futility, the community was beyond outrage and resigned to the narrative that "there was nothing we could do."

This apathy made an impression on Garard, a newcomer to the college men's scene; he resolved to make teaching volleyball coaches the value of fundraising one of the key impacts he would have on the sport. He started writing a regular column for *Coaching Volleyball* magazine and offering Convention sessions and webinars for coaches. Garard was certain that had an influential and generous donor group been active at Cal Baptist, the men's program would never have been eliminated.

Following instructions to gather information on men's volleyball, the AVCA sent a survey in April of 2017 to their 6,600 members in the April, 95% of whom were coaching women and girls. 30% responded, and they were overwhelmingly supportive of engagement and investment by the AVCA in men's volleyball. 82% said the association should commit time and resources to supporting growth in men's college volleyball.

As other AVCA board members saw the results, they warmed to the idea of investing in First Point. Most did not know Garard, but Speraw had served on the AVCA Board and was respected in coaching circles. On May 16, 2017, the AVCA Board voted unanimously to contribute \$150,000 to

First Point, and added another \$65,000 of their own money to support the cause. President Christy Johnson-Lynch captured their sentiment when she said, *"Our mission is to advance the sport with the AVCA in a leadership role. This means being at the front end of growth initiatives and making an investment before outcomes are assured. A previous board did this when beach volleyball was just a vision and now it is our turn to lead."*

As those involved in start-ups will tell you, often the focus and direction changes as the founders explore options and add new voices to the initiative. A significant strategic turn for First Point took place when Kenny Rogers joined the team. Rogers, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit professional, had been introduced to Speraw and Garard by Marin Gjaja, a fellow Princeton graduate, who had decided to invest in First Point earlier in 2017.

His career involved managing nonprofits dedicated to providing opportunities for under-resourced children, mainly in Southern California, to get the education, experiences and training that would prepare them for success in college. He had played volleyball at Princeton and his sons were playing in high school and club – and it was clear to him that the sport had a diversity problem; the overwhelming majority of boys were from white, middle and upper-middle class backgrounds.

Rogers said he would add his time and expertise to the First Point efforts if the board would consider adding a third priority to their mission: extend the reach of men's volleyball to include more boys of color and a broader range of socio-economic profiles. In response, Speraw remarked, "I'm a white guy from Arcadia, so you are going to have to help me with this, but I'm all in."

Rogers was tasked with gathering a focus group of African-American and Hispanic coaches and youth for a discussion about volleyball to identify barriers to participation. Since access to the



BENEDICTINE MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

sport was essential to extending the reach of the game through high school participation, Rogers also took on the coordination of efforts in various states to promote high school boys' growth.

By the summer of 2017, two new donors, Bruce Lincoln and Bill Andrew, both semi-retired businessmen and philanthropists from Phoenix with sons playing at BYU and Princeton, respectively, were considering joining the First Point Board. The Men's Volleyball Nations League matches in Chicago provided an ideal setting for a board meeting, called a Growing Our Reach summit, and gave Speraw the opportunity to spend time with these prospective donors and those already committed and show them "behind the curtain" at an international men's volleyball event.

Kelly Goodsel, one of original investors in the cause, provided critical leadership during this time in his role as treasurer of the board. He had experience serving on nonprofit boards and understood that long-term viability was dependent on business-based principles for managing resources. Goodsel worked closely with Garard in the early days of First Point to build a structural foundation that would earn the trust of major donors who demand accountability and transparency around the use of their gifts.

Luring seven-figure donors is critical to convincing power-five DI schools to add a men's VB program, a priority still at the heart of First Point Volleyball Foundation. What became clear in the planning study and subsequent meetings is that some P5 athletics directors will consider adding men's sports, but only if the sport is funded by a sizeable endowment; in the last five years, Arizona State and Penn State added men's ice hockey teams following gifts of \$32 and \$60 million dollars, respectively; Utah added men's lacrosse after receiving a gift of 17 million dollars. The amount needed to endow a men's volleyball program is significantly less than these other sports due mainly to higher scholarship and facility costs, but the gift requirement is still in the millions.

Garard has a favorite saying: *Fundraising is not magic; it's math.* His 25+ years in the business taught him that identification and cultivation of enough qualified prospects guarantees the success of a campaign. Where campaigns fail is in the first two steps, so at each board meeting he reviews the prospect list, and on every donor call, he asks for new leads.

Garard also knows that forward momentum is critical for success of a fundraising effort. "People give to winners," he says. First Point was able to generate that forward progress by adding grant-incentivized men's teams with scholarships at NAIA schools where costs for supporting a program were lower. In the fall of 2017, grants were awarded to four NAIA schools – Life, Cumberland, Viterbo and Midway. The added benefit of this push was moving men's volleyball from an emerging to a championship sport in the NAIA, meaning the national office would provide publicity and support for the event, a step they took in April of 2018.

Simultaneously, Kenny Rogers was collecting information on initiatives in various states to provide more opportunities for boys to play high school volleyball. Twenty-five states send boys' volleyball statistics to the National Federation of High Schools, with only one (California) reporting more than 7,500 participants. In the spring of 2018, Hugh McCutcheon, Minnesota's women's coach, lent his credibility and name recognition to an initiative to



start boys' teams in the Minneapolis area. Twenty schools and 400 boys signed up in year one.

Across the country in Colorado, Dr. Scott Siegfried, a school superintendent, had been on a mission to get sanctioning for boys' volleyball for several years. He knew the high school system, the administrative structures at the Colorado High School Athletic Association (CHSAA) and the politics of high school sports. Siegfried had patiently, yet doggedly, worked to expand participation, and to position boys' volleyball for an affirmative vote. He found and joined the First Point board in 2017, adding the voice of a seasoned high school leader to the collective knowledge of entrepreneurial philanthropists who were already engaged in the cause.

In the first week of May 2018, the NCAA Men's DI/DII National Collegiate Championship was coming to UCLA, and Speraw's team had earned a bid. He invited Scott Stowell, a developer whose son Robbie had been at Balboa Bay during Speraw's tenure as a club coach. Stowell came to the championship and was introduced to Garard and Mark Rosen, Michigan's women's coach who was also AVCA President.

Stowell had recently stepped down as CEO of Cal Atlantic Homes after an acquisition by Lennar. He was intrigued by the vision of First Point, had great respect for Speraw as a coach and, most importantly, was at a time in his life where he was open to a new challenge. Speraw asked him for both time and money, and Stowell delivered on both: pledging \$500,000 to the foundation and agreeing to represent the group on donor visits, meetings with administrators and outreach events.

A month later, on June 6, 2018, First Point passed another historic milestone: St. Francis Brooklyn, a small, private DI school, announced they were adding a men's volleyball team in 2019-20, the first addition of a men's DI program in 18 years. First Point supported the effort with a \$100,000 grant to be paid over three years as the program achieved agreed-upon benchmarks.

The Cal Baptist drop had alerted the First Point community to the reality that, while funding growth was important, the impact was diminished if existing men's programs were eliminated. Sacred Heart University, a DI men's team in the EIVA, had an unexpected coaching departure late in summer of 2018. Garard connected



the athletics director, Bobby Valentine, with a donor who sent over a \$5,000 check earmarked for men's volleyball.

The coaching search proved difficult: The part-time position, location and salary did not attract many quality candidates. Another donor, wanting to stay anonymous, pledged \$300,000 for a scholarship endowment with a friendly nudge to Valentine that he upgrade the coaching position to full-time. Bob Bertucci, a 30-year veteran of college women's volleyball, was hired on November 16, 2018. Garard's formula proved correct: Donations brought influence.

In early December of that year, Garard attended a Learfield-sponsored conference of athletics administrators held in New York City. The conference and the location were expensive, but First Point was seeking a more efficient way to connect with college administrators. At the forum he met Greg Moore, the commissioner of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletics Conference, a league of 13 historically black colleges and universities.

Besides having multiple conversations with Moore, the Learfield/SBJ forum convinced Garard that while MotorMVB was a campaign name that resonated with volleyball people, it was obtuse for administrators. He came away with an invitation from Moore to meet with the SIAC presidents and athletics directors at the 2019 NCAA Convention, and also a goal of rebranding the effort to more clearly identify the focus of the campaign.

Garard was becoming a master at simultaneously managing outreach with prospective colleges and fundraising to incentivize additions. In December of 2019 at the AVCA Convention, the Junior Volleyball Association (JVA), an organization dedicated to educating club directors and coaches, made a gift of \$125,000,

signaling they saw First Point as a credible organization for spurring boys' club growth.

A month later, Garard, Jamion Hartley, a Bahamian-born Ball State volleyball alumni turned successful businessman, and AVCA president-elect Sharon Clark, the first African-American in that position, met with the leadership of the SIAC and pitched the league-wide adoption of men's volleyball. The foundation pledged incentive grants of \$150,000 per school to the first six conference members to commit to adding a team and \$100,000 to the conference office to support the championship if the deal materialized.

Six schools are required for an automatic bid to the NCAA National Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship, and the NCAA had made clear they favored existing conferences over single-sport hybrids like the MIVA and EIVA when making bid decisions. Both Conference Carolinas (DII) and the Big West (DI) had used this strategy several years earlier to give their teams access to the championship.

Making good on his pledge to contribute both time and resources, Stowell and his wife Adrienne invited the SIAC presidents and athletics directors to their home in Park City, Utah, on March 22-24, 2019, a weekend that BYU, McKendree, Princeton and Hawaii were in Provo for men's matches. None of the SIAC leadership had seen college men's volleyball, and BYU, besides being highly ranked, is one of the best spectator environments in the sport.

DII McKendree, led by Nicholette (Nickie) Sanlin, the only African-American woman coaching a men's team, defeated BYU that weekend. She, Hawaii Head Coach Charlie Wade, and the BYU coaches and administrators spent time with representatives from the four SIAC institutions, telling them, and more importantly, showing them, what men's volleyball can contribute to a campus and community.

In April, the Colorado High School Athletics Association voted to sanction boys' volleyball as a sport, providing First Point with a high school win. Scott Siegfried, architect of the effort and a superintendent, wrote a best-practices white paper so others can take advantage of the knowledge he gained in his five-year effort.

By June of 2019, five SIAC schools – Central State (OH), Kentucky State, Fort Valley State (GA), Benedict College (SC) and Paine (GA) had committed to add a men's volleyball team. The First Point grant, however, was contingent on six, the number needed for the NCAA automatic bid. The Board met in Chicago at a preliminary round of the Volleyball Nations League. Anthony Holloman, vice president for development and athletics director at Fort Valley State, joined the meeting as did Julian Moses, son of Olympian track champion Edwin Moses. Julian had just finished a very successful senior season



PRINCETON MEN'S VOLLEYBALL



as a starting middle for Lewis University and was negotiating a contract to play professional volleyball in Europe.

Dr. Moses, Julian's father, is a Morehouse College graduate and member of their board of trustees. The Atlanta-based college is the largest and most prestigious liberal arts college for men and has produced more African-American leaders than any other college or university in the United States. Earlier in 2019 the athletics leadership was in transition, with long-serving athletics director Andre Pattillo retiring. Javarro Edwards, a successful Atlanta businessman, was appointed as an interim replacement. The change, and Dr. Moses' engagement, allowed for conversations with Morehouse about becoming the critical sixth league school to commit to a men's team.

The June 2019 First Point Board meeting coincided with a USA Volleyball Board of Directors meeting, also held in Chicago. Dr. Cecile Reynaud, the coaches representative, was elected as board chair, and Dr. Kenneth Shropshire, the only African-American member of the board, was in his last meeting as an independent director. Diversity was a pillar for USA Volleyball and a special priority for CEO Jamie Davis, as was growth of the men's player pool. The SIAC opportunity lined up well with these goals, and Davis started conversations with Garard about partnering on the initiative should a sixth school join the other five.

On August 17, 2019, Dr. David Thomas, the Morehouse College president, signed off on adding a men's volleyball team. Greg Moore and the SIAC had delivered on their part of the deal; now First Point had to deliver on the million dollars. Jamie Davis, with the support of the USAV Board, committed \$400,000; Bill Andrew and his family committed \$100,000; Scott and Adrienne Stowell designated \$100,000 of their pledge to the SIAC initiative. The grants to the schools and conference office were payable over three years with benchmarks such as hiring a coach, scheduling matches and announcing commits along the way. Each institution committed to fund three scholarships.

The addition of 18 equivalency scholarships expanded the money available in men's volleyball significantly.

Hal Rogers, a Kentucky politician, is fond of saying, "A vision without funding is a hallucination." Those who have worked in volleyball for the last 40 years have had so many hallucinations that we grew discouraged, cynical or apathetic about our ability to make a difference for men and boys in our sport. Garard's white paper and the USA Volleyball-funded feasibility study could have been just another plan with no resources to produce change, and certainly the moonshot goals of 40 DI programs and 100,000 high school boys by 2028 still look daunting. Yet, little by little, those who so wanted growth to happen but did not have a strategy to accomplish it are stepping forward with gifts: former USAV CEO Doug Beal and his family have invested \$100,000; stepping forward with time and advocacy: Mick Haley is leading the efforts to restart junior college men's programming in Michigan and elsewhere; stepping forward with influence.

The results are impressive and historic: 17 new college men's teams; new scholarships, \$3 million dollars in pledges in just three years, high school initiatives in a growing number of states; a whole host of *firsts* – DI program, HBCU conference, two new sanctioned states, NAIA Championship. Speraw and Garard have made First Point worthy of our investment. Can we count you in? ☺

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Huddle Up

Using Timeouts Effectively

By Paul Leon, Head Coach – UC Santa Cruz Men's Volleyball

There were a lot of memories to be made during the 2019 men's season, but something in particular must have stood out to the AVCA. Not long after the season ended, I was approached with some questions about our use of timeouts – particularly, how we used them to great effect during the 2019 NCAA semifinals. I was surprised at first – what was it that caught their attention? I went back to rewatch the full replay, and before long it was all rushing back to me.

Picture the scene – the UCSC Banana Slugs were up two sets to none over the top-seeded Stevens Ducks. Up until this point in the match, the Slug squad had played with grit, which inspired confidence as the match progressed. Despite being down most of the second set, we continued to chip away at the opposition's game. When we won the second set, our spirits were high but the fatigue was real. Historically, we've not stayed the course when it comes to having confidence in closing games this past year. During the regular season, we allowed a handful of teams to extend four-set matches on us when we typically had control. Diving into this third set, we wanted to be all-in.

Fast forward a couple of exchanges and the score sat at 4-4 at the beginning of the third set. The point we had just lost came off a close hitting error deep, and Stevens was now back to serve. We

lost the next two points due to our sets finishing tight despite receiving perfect passes, the score now 4-6. On the next ball, Stevens transitioned our manage play; 4-7. Another poor set made during the rally; 4-8. I substituted out my starting sophomore setter for a rookie freshman setter.

We won the following point with a side-out: a “smart” setting decision to our first team All-American outside attacker, who had 15 kills to his name already. The score was now 5-8. We got an overpass kill off of a freshman's serve; 6-8. Our freshman delivered a splitting ace serve, closing the gap in the score to 7-8. Things seemed to settle again. Suddenly, an aggressive hitting error was made, making the score now 7-9. It's followed up by an unforced setting error by the freshman; 7-10. Stevens converts a great dig into a statement transition; 7-11. Finally, an unfortunate hitting error made by a freshman opposite makes it 7-12. Timeout!

The on-court players come over and take a seat for water and breath. Bench players take to the court for pepper warm-up and dance. I sent one assistant coach over to our 16-kill “go-to” player because we noticed that he looked flustered after the recent mishaps. He usually had been relatively quick about letting these moments go – we wanted to make sure that he did. Meanwhile, I quickly held a briefing with my assistant to discuss serve-reception

seams and our best side-out option following the pass. We split up in order to divide and conquer.

Now, with one assistant reassuring the go-to player and the other assistant getting our passing line on the same page with serve-reception seam responsibilities, I was able to lay out some perfect and imperfect pass scenarios with setters, middles and pins. As mentioned, we had been in this situation often in our regular season. Even having to get this done in less than 1 minute and 15 seconds, there was enough time for us to:

- lower the heart rate and hydrate
- stop the opposition's momentum/ice the server
- implement a tactical defensive/offensive game plan
- reinforce being comfortable in these uncomfortable moments
- include a fiery call to action from the team captain

The whistle blew and both teams returned to the court. I substituted my sophomore setter back in for a larger block. My passers aligned themselves to meet the serve-to-come. We returned the serve with a great pass, and our setter dished it outside to our big man for a clean kill. He now had 17 kills and the score narrowed to 8-12. Stevens returned the side-out; 8-13. We sent it back to make it 9-13, then decided to turn it on the boosters. Big block by freshman opposite; 10-13. Great dig transition; 11-13. Clutch ace serve; 12-13. One more block as the cherry on top; 13-13. Stevens had to call a timeout!

The rest of the third set proceeds as a grueling back-and-forth tug of war. Neither team wanted to give the other any room for separation. UCSC eventually pulls off the win, with a final score of 25-21. After rewatching the entire semifinal match, I then understood the questions that the AVCA was fundamentally asking about:

1. When do you call timeouts and why?
2. What works and what doesn't work?
3. How do you structure the time given?

Coaches, before I go into each of the points above, your inflections and demeanor are essential to the delivery of information. Every coach brings something different to the conversation, so my advice would be to remain direct and genuine. Personally, my approach is to remain calm and relaxed, even when I'm going crazy inside. An example of a great coaching demeanor would be Phil Jackson-esque; act like you have been there before. I'm all about positive reinforcements and maintaining stability during matches and practices. Regardless of a play's outcome, saying the player's name and telling them specifically what they did well goes a long way.

Example: *"Jonah, way to contact that ball high!"*

Or I especially enjoy shouting the praises across the gym. Everyone hears, *"Way to run that ball down, Jonah!"* Then players become aware that hustle plays=positive coach validation. Players crave validation for their efforts.



When do you call timeouts and why?

I believe there are many exceptions to my perceived notions of calling timeouts. Ultimately, I use timeouts as a means to disrupt the game momentum. That can be at any point of time within a set. As a standard principle, you should consider stopping play if the opposition is able to score more than 2 points from behind the service line, or when the score difference reaches 3-5 points during manageable stage of play. With constant moments of mental

restarts, a team must train these mental reps during practice and understand how to handle success and failure in high-pressure situations.


Example: During the back-and-forth listed in my description above, Stevens went on a 5-0 point scoring run, followed by a UCSC 3-0 scoring run, before Stevens returned a 4-0 point swing. After our called timeout, we eventually went on a 6-1 run before Stevens called a timeout for themselves. Pressure was felt on both sides of the net early in the set. There was plenty to gain by winning the third set and everything on the line to lose. Nerves needed to be settled for the both of us.



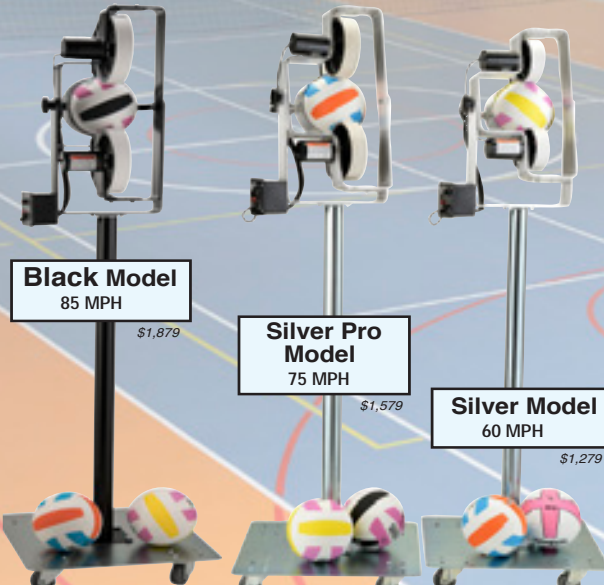
What works and what doesn't work?

A particularly great idea that I learned from Mick Haley is that when the opponent calls a timeout, have your players go to their position coaches. These are the moments to not take for granted, no matter the score differential. Teams can return to court with a solid plan of attack to earn more points serving and on defense. Position coaches can discuss opposition hitting, serving and blocking tendencies, and what minor corrections need to follow to slow the opposition.

The other side to this idea is when we call our own timeouts. Remember to relax. Teams will feed off a coach's emotion. A coach will not be able to teach a new philosophy or new technique in one minute and expect that to hold up in match play. Here's some examples of what works and doesn't work when calling timeouts:




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Silver Model
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Does not work

- Visible or audible frustration. As a coach, you have an obligation to lead by example.
- Ignore the team for the duration of the timeout. A coach needs to be there for the highs and lows of performance play.
- Call out an individual's poor performance in front of the entire team. This is very deflating to player. The entire team is responsible, not just one individual.
- Neglectful score timeouts. Sorry, coach ... if you're calling a timeout at 20-8, you missed your mark and you already lost that set without delaying the inevitable.
- Long-winded stories or explanations. In these fast-paced settings, less is more. In addition, don't throw up volley stats all over your players. Keep it simple with active dialogue or precise stats that you want them thinking about.

Works

- Have relevant information or personal thoughts on-hand to convey. I write mine down so that I can remember to share them during timeouts and to revisit for practice purposes.
- Be organized with stats and collaborative with suggestions.
- Allow time for the team to express their own perspective and opinions.
- Make yourself eye-level with team. If they are standing up, coach stands up. If players are sitting, coach takes a knee. Direct eye contact helps remind them to stay in the moment.
- A hockey proverb: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Give the mad scientist coach a rest when your team is playing exceptionally well. Be there to enjoy it with them.



How do you structure the time given?

At stoppage of play, regardless of which team called a timeout, I personally enjoy receiving the players from the court with high-fives. As the players take their seats, I will meet briefly with my assistant coaches for 15-20 seconds. After deliberation, I'll meet with the team and be as concise as possible for 30 seconds. If needed, assistant coaches can do the same to individuals or positions. During our timeouts, we refuse to linger on points that have already passed, won or lost. We can always revisit those plays after match time. Keep the team in the present, so they'll be forward-thinking on what can be done to get a side-out or point-scoring opportunity from behind the service line. However, the next point remains undetermined, and I believe upcoming plays can be willed with visualization and staying technical, similar to joust plays. Unused time at the end of timeout can go to captains to unify and fire the team up.

In closing, timeouts can be an invaluable opportunity for coaches to effectively communicate with their teams and potentially have a powerful impact on the final result of the set or match. More importantly, it is a credible moment to underscore the importance of program culture and team dynamics. In my opinion, timeouts are circumstances that give coaches the chance to be well-poised and prudently hopeful for the future.

Now, having made it to the National Championship and looking back in retrospect, the period of season, the opponent and the player-coach personnel are all important factors in the delivery of a successful timeout. I would like nothing more than to return to the NCAA playoffs in 2020. With patience and the attitude to learn more, maybe we'll earn a bid, and maybe we won't. Ultimately, the best way for us to qualify is to keep putting ourselves in that same position to repeat. ☺

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Best Practices

Balancing the Workload of Fundraising

Excerpted from an interview with Marin Gjaja, board member of First Point Volleyball Foundation

AVCA: *As part of the Princeton family of athletes, former athletes, you've seen a lot of best practices in terms of sustainability and fundraising among coaches. What's some of your advice for coaches?*

Gjaja: It's obviously a tough thing to do, because mostly you want to focus on coaching, but fundraising, especially focusing on annual fundraising (set endowments aside, because I think endowments are really a different beast all together) allows you to do the little things, to take an additional trip, or do a little bit for more the team in terms of training meals or travel allowance, or whatever it might be. I think there are five things that I would try to encourage any coach to put in place: the first is to have a point person within the administration who can help you do some of this, because it's quite likely the other sports have some kind of infrastructure that exists to raise money, whether it's a website, contact person, or mailing address. So, figure out how you can actually latch on to that and participate in that. It's always better to go with more than one person if you have that infrastructure in place. So that would be my first point.

My second point would be: who are the alums that have passion? Not necessarily because they're going to be big donors, but because they're willing to put the time in and help you as a coach form a network with the alums. That's going to be your first port-of-call for donations – actual alums of the program. And at Princeton, the good thing is the university actually has a list of all the men's and women's volleyball alums and their contact information, and anyone who's ever donated to the program. We look through that database and you can start to reach out.

If I think about what happened at Princeton, there's always someone like a president of the Friends of Princeton Men's Volleyball, that's been me for the last several



Marin Gjaja (second from right) with the Princeton Club of Chicago

years – and I'm sort of the focal point of navigating the alumni network for donations. So, really finding a couple of partners on the administrative side and the alumni side. Once you have that foundation in place, then I think it's actually about the tactics of the fundraising itself. A couple of best practices: one is funding specific needs – being able to see something tangible like “this international trip is being sponsored,” or “this is a particular workout room outfitting,” or “upgrading the locker room” or “paying for VolleyMetrics” – giving people something specific that they can contribute to so they can say, “I helped pay for X,” in general in fundraising is a powerful thing.

Start small, start with things that have a price tag of \$500 or \$1,000. Sometimes one person might do it, or you might have to start a little bit of a campaign to get there, but then over time as your momentum builds, you can go after things like funding an international trip, which might be a \$20,000 ticket. So that's an important piece of the tactics.

Another tactic is actual fundraising events, which happens each year. Princeton, for example, puts on the banquet for the volleyball team and they have sponsorship for that banquet. The banquet itself doesn't cost very much money, but you can sponsor a table at the banquet – we have different donation levels and each year it's a

pretty good fundraiser. The parents often want to participate in improvements; they have emotional energy in the success of the team, but they also care about the experience that their kids are having.

The other thing that I've seen be a best practice is to also have a consistent time of year when you try to raise money. So, you might have the banquet at one time of year, but then you might do a focused campaign. One of the things I've seen Princeton do particularly well is “Tiger Athletics Giving Day.” They have a one-day phone-a-thon where they're really activating everyone. The players and coaches come in and man the phones and they call the alums, everyone's there and they take two to three hours in an evening to get on the phone.

There's challenge grants and matching funds, you turn it into a really big event that's actually about fundraising; it's not an event that people go and attend. And that's sort of the fifth thing, this notion of, call it a fundraising phone-a-thon or something that allows you to say regularly on the third Thursday in October, that's a day that we're collecting a bunch of money for the volleyball program. You separate that from, in the spring, you're doing something that's a banquet, where you're collecting some money, and it works out pretty well to do the phone-a-thon at the start of the season.

You kind of know what your bank balance is before you go into the season and make some calls on “Ok, so we take that extra trip, do we stay in a nicer hotel, do we stay an extra night, do we fly on a different day?” and then you're getting pretty close to zero by the end of the year and the banquet helps you get yourself solvent again. Having that bookend, something before the season, after the season, also helps from a coaching standpoint because with the workload during the season, it's really hard to do events.

SAVE THE DATE



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Sharing My Story

Connecting with the Side-Out Foundation

By Lynsday Hodges

The Side-Out story reaches far and wide – check out this recent account of how one individual came to learn about the Foundation, meet the team and witness how the group goes about achieving their goals in both fundraising and research, and the real-world impact that their work is having. As an AVCA member coach, you've undoubtedly heard a lot about the Dig Pink! initiative. To learn more about how you can stay involved throughout the club season, visit www.side-out.org.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, thank you for your interest in being a part of The Side-Out Foundation's most honorable event, Dig Pink! Before I get into the details of this event and this great foundation, I hope you don't mind if I tell you the quick version of my cancer story and my journey with The Side-Out Foundation.

My name is Lynsday Hodges and I was diagnosed in November of 2015 with Stage II EP+ Ductal Carcinoma in Situ Breast Cancer. It was fast-growing, and even though it was aggressive, my oncologist believed she was more aggressive than my cancer. We started with dense dosing Adriamycin Cyclophosphamide (AC), commonly known as the Red Devil. It attacks cells hard and fast. But despite its attacking ability, we found that it had almost no effect on my tumor. So, my oncologist had me scheduled for my first mastectomy.

Upon completion of the Red Devil and the removal of my right breast, the standard biopsy of the sentinel node was also taken.

At this time it was found that the cancer had, in fact, made its way into my lymph nodes. Adjustments were made to my original plan: Taxol chemotherapy was next, as well as radiation, along with another couple of surgeries. The ride was wild and crazy, but as of February of 2017 there has been no detection of reoccurrence, so I am happy to call myself a survivor.

I first started holding Dig Pink! events in 2006, simply by stumbling upon it. I knew (I'm using this word lightly) that the Side-Out Foundation did research for breast cancer, but I didn't know to what extent. I knew they were a small group and that they got started because a coach's mom was diagnosed with stage IV metastatic breast cancer. That was enough for me, simply because I wanted to support raising awareness for a disease that affects one in eight women, including myself and many women in my family.

As the years went by, I still hadn't taken the time to truly *know* what this foundation was all about, and I started to question if we were really helping anyone. In 2016, while I was still battling my cancer, after 10 years of being a part of something that I still knew little about, I chose to find a local group to donate to so that we knew that we were making a difference. Being in the grind of the battle, I felt like I wanted to know that we were helping women in our community, that the work we put in to raise money was actually helping *someone*, not just some study. And that's when it all changed.

All it took was one year being away and an inquiry as to what happened. It was then that the real learning and an even better relationship began. After a few discussions

with some folks at Side-Out, I was invited to their home base ... I was being given an opportunity to see how all the magic happened. Still a little unsure of what I was getting into and what they could really show me, I accepted the invitation and looked forward to finding some real answers. Mind you, I went into it with a skeptic's mindset. There was no way they were going to show me anyone in their study whom I knew personally, so therefore they almost certainly weren't going to sway my passion for donating our money to someone in our local area. There was no way they could show me how their lab research with patients I knew nothing about (other than that they were diagnosed with stage IV metastatic cancer) was going to change the way cancer was treated.

The day finally came. I was taken to their offices and walked through their cozy-but-tight space, that the five to eight folks who worked there squeezed into. I had imagined a larger loft-type office, lots of extra space with computers, and individual areas for each staff member. I knew that they raised quite a bit of money during their Dig Pink! events, so my guess was they would have a rather comfortable and spacious place to work. However, I found that they preferred to not use the money for themselves or their comfort ... they wanted to use it to get answers.

As a side note, the office is perfect and totally comfortable; it totally does the job it is intended for. I loved that it felt more like a home office rather than a big corporate office that was impersonal and off-putting. Instead, I felt at ease every time I was there.





From the office, I was taken to the lab.

It was a typical lab; there was lots of stuff to look at that I didn't recognize at all – quiet but loud, not many words being spoken, the familiar hum of large machinery filling in the quiet space. But the difference, as I learned, was that this lab wasn't just a sub-contracted lab, it was actually Side-Out's lab! They weren't just paying for some random technicians to run tests and send in the results; they hired their own group of experts to solve problems and find solutions.

In this lab, they have not only worked their way through four different studies (finding success in their groups each time), they have also created groundbreaking machinery and technology that literally changes how cancer is seen and treated. From molecular splicing to printing molecular dots on film, to spraying said dots with different treatments ... it's groundbreaking stuff that is hard to make sense of.

Through these efforts they have discovered that stage IV metastatic cancer can be treated and held off in variance with

something that might treat lung cancer or brain cancer. They have discovered that each patient has a very different map for treatment and, if treated appropriately, the likelihood of reoccurrence is reduced *significantly*. And while it is easy to say that they are only helping stage IV patients, it must be understood that as each study progresses, these advances are passed down so that other patients can benefit from the unique mapping of treatment. Their work is spreading throughout the cancer treatment community. To be there, to see and hear this, put a knot in my throat. I wanted to be a part of it all again.

I still had concerns about the women who were local to me. After we left the lab, this became the direction of my questioning. I no longer doubted or questioned what The Side-Out Foundation was doing with their money, but I still wanted to know how I could help them and also help my local community of women who were in need of immediate assistance. That was when they explained another aspect of Dig Pink! that I

hadn't known about — when you organize a Dig Pink! event, you can decide to designate a portion of your fundraised money to be sent to a local charity of your choosing. Side-Out then donates to that charity on your behalf, proving to be a win-win for everybody!

If you haven't noticed, I have not only reconnected with The Side-Out Foundation, but I have dedicated myself to helping them in any way possible. Upon my diagnosis, I truly believed that I was blessed with this burden of having and sharing something. I have a desire to learn as much as possible about what I went through and sharing it with others, as well as learning about everything that is out there for women who are battling breast cancer and sharing it with anyone who will listen. Please take the time to explore Side-Out's website, ask questions, sign up and get started ... you will not regret it.

Lyndsay Hodges
Assistant Athletic Coordinator
Spring Branch Middle School

What's Next?

Reviewing the decade of media expansion

David Portney

AS THE CALENDAR year winds down, we should all take a moment and appreciate what this past decade has meant to the sport of volleyball. No, I'm not just talking about beach volleyball earning an NCAA Championship, the growth of boys'/men's volleyball, the explosion of the high school and club space, or even the countless stories that grow out of each season in every sector of our sport. I'm talking about just how drastically the media landscape has changed.

My first day at the AVCA was November 8, 2010. That was back when the only real easy way to watch volleyball at all was the occasional match that appeared on ESPN or an ultra-premier cable network. Social media was in its infancy from a brand and organizational perspective, and streaming technology was limited by high costs and throw-your-computer-out-the-window internet speeds.

Within the next few years, three consequential milestones were reached that would go on to change how volleyball is consumed forever: 1) conference networks, 2) athletics departments committing to social media, and 3) high-speed internet access becoming widely available.

The Big Ten Network officially launched in 2007, but it wasn't until 2011 that it achieved greater reach around Big Ten country. The Longhorn Network launched in 2011, Pac-12 Networks in 2012, SEC Network in 2014, and the ACC Network kicked off during this 2019 fall season. Each of these networks have streaming platforms to complement their linear stations. Additionally, national streaming services like Sling TV and YouTube TV are growing and carrying many of these networks, and volleyball-specific service FloVolleyball broadcasted their first match in 2016.

Additionally, the current iteration of ESPN3 began in the spring of 2010, opening the door for countless Power-5, mid-major and

programs in other divisions access to ESPN audiences. ESPNU has provided consistent weekly coverage over the last several years, and ESPN/ESPN2 has done a tremendous job bettering the broadcast of the NCAA Division I Women's Semifinals and Championship.

I'll also take a moment to shout out BYUtv and NET, who have long been on the cutting edge of volleyball broadcasting, and CBS Sports Network, who pioneered volleyball coverage, especially in beach before there was a template on how to do it.

The beauty of this transformational decade is that it didn't only impact NCAA Division I, but it affected every level including club and high school. Back in 2013, I hosted a webinar on some "affordable" equipment programs can purchase to start streaming their matches. At the time, you probably needed to spend somewhere in the neighborhood of a thousand dollars for the most basic equipment. Now, just to get started, a reliable internet connection and a decent camera are all you need. For just a little bit more, programs of all divisions have added graphics, multiple camera angles and announcers that are almost entirely student-run. This opportunity is also helping lay the foundation for the future generation of television personnel to gain hands-on experience broadcasting our sport.

All of this ties into the unprecedented explosion of an entirely new media platform. Social media was around prior to 2010, but the first significant step forward in our world didn't come until the early part of the decade. It's tough to pinpoint a specific moment, but 2012 seemed to be the year we reached the tipping point. Volleyball programs, starting in NCAA Division I, began adding volleyball-specific accounts en masse, so we no longer needed the general athletics account to send out updates. Today, it's more of the exception if a collegiate program

at any level doesn't have their own dedicated account for at least one of the big three outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

What can we expect over the next decade? I'll start with a disclaimer that we don't know what we don't know. Technology moves pretty quickly, so there might be a revolutionary change coming in 2026 that isn't even on our radar now.

However, we do know a few things. Social media isn't going anywhere. The aforementioned "big three" platforms will unquestionably evolve, but I wouldn't expect them to close up shop anytime soon, despite some recent negative headlines. New outlets will quickly ascend, especially those that specialize in making edited videos quickly on mobile devices.

More apps will be created to make it easier and cheaper to live-stream matches that will function primarily on mobile (notice a trend?). Don't be afraid to spend a little money (maybe just a few dollars/month) for high-quality apps and services that will make your life exponentially easier than "free" ones (they're often not really free to use the functions you need).

Expect a greater marriage between social and broadcast. We're already seeing plenty of clips and highlights happening on a network make their way into the social media-sphere in almost real-time. As of now, it requires fairly expensive and complicated technology that is more commonly available with Division I resources. Sooner than later, that will become more affordable and easier to use for the masses.

At the AVCA we're always looking at what's ahead. What's the next "big thing" that will take volleyball to the next level. Maybe for this one moment, as we pop champagne bottles welcoming the new decade, let's acknowledge just how far we've come in this past one.



GETTING FIT

Program Design Integration Report Card

Volleyball Coach/Strength and Conditioning Coach Working Together

Ken Kontor

PROGRAM DESIGN is achieved through the planning and communication between the volleyball skills coach(es) and the volleyball strength and conditioning coach. Most importantly, the final product stems from the inter-education of each coach. The ultimate goal is to design a program that emphasizes the integration of these three important factors:

1. Strength/resistance training
2. On-court conditioning and training
3. Volleyball practice/competition schedule that helps to develop volleyball athletes, improve performance, reduce the risk of injury and win championships

Initially, this is achieved through a meeting of coaches. Establishing who is in charge of what and how it is reported and adjusted is important in creating a good working relationship. But what should be discussed? Who is responsible for developing each individual component, and how does it all work together? How much of the program can be individualized based on the needs of the athlete, the amount of time available and fulfilling supervision requirements? We have developed a report card that you can use to make sure that you're covering all the aspects of program design based on our Fit-to-a-T 7-T system of Program Design. This card covers the questions that we feel are important to create a solid working relationship between the volleyball coach and the conditioning coach and to help foster productive discussions that ultimately result in a program design that maximizes benefits for the athlete.

The final suggestion is to hold meetings to discuss updates and adjustments that need to be made as the year unfolds. Communication should be scheduled to occur on a continual basis.

Good Luck!

■ T1 Training Age

In a four-year high school/collegiate setting, how can the program be adjusted as players progress from freshmen to seniors? How can you accommodate the different physical needs of players within that age range? How can it be done? What are the considerations at the club level? How does the maturation process affect training age?

■ T2 Time

This is the toughest issue. How does the strength training and court conditioning change based on time available and the season (pre-in-off)? What can be done within these constraints? What are the priorities as the seasons change? How are other sports conflicting with what you do? Do you communicate with other sport coaches as to the scheduling and coordination of activity? Can you make volleyball the "priority" sport for the athlete?

■ T3 Tools

Do you have what is needed? How do the athletes access these tools? Is strength and conditioning done on the court, and how does this compromise results?

■ T4 Teach

Who conducts the on-court conditioning and how are volleyball skills integrated? How are the strength training exercises taught and supervised as the program continues?

■ T5 Testing

Do we have time to test? What do we test, and when and what tools/technology do we have available to do the tests? What do we do with results and who knows what? How is the data organized to effectively communicate results? How is the program adjusted based on results?

■ T6 Total Workload

How is this defined, measured and interpreted? How are the three factors of program design integrated into an individualized assessment? Who is in charge of readiness/freshness of the players and how is this communicated? How is recovery measured and communicated to the players?

■ T7 Position-Specific Considerations

Position-specific Considerations Is this realistic based on time, training age and individualization opportunities?

Recruiting: Sweat the Small Stuff

By Jake Barreau, Assistant Coach/
Recruiting Coordinator - Oklahoma

A COACHING MENTOR of mine once told me to “Sweat the small stuff – that’s what will set you apart.” For me, the easiest way to put the time and attention into detail is to have a plan.

Here are a few of my favorite organizational tools:

Strategic Recruiting Outlook

To me, this is a monthly view calendar that every staff member has. It has our program’s recruiting mission on it and helps keep track

of recruiting days per month, contact/quiet/dead periods, important campus dates, each month’s general recruiting activities, etc. My head coach always preaches thinking in “twos” (i.e. What does recruiting look like two weeks/months/years from now?).

Weekly Recruiting Meeting

Find a set time that works for your staff. This is super important during the season. The time may change with your “busy” and “off” seasons, but it’s good practice to keep everyone in the loop on what’s going on, what’s coming up and their responsibilities. This helps to prevent overlap in

communication and ensure everyone is on the same page.

Mailer Schedule

Especially with new recruiting rules, I like to have a plan on paper for what I plan on sending out both electronically and via mail so I can review with the staff and prepare before that June 15 date arrives.

Visit Checklist

Each visit is different, but I’m a big fan of laminated checklists for visits (like I need an excuse to use my laminator). Check those boxes off when you finish the compliance paperwork, finish the itinerary, make the hotel or dinner reservation, etc. This helps to ensure nothing falls through the cracks and you can delegate as needed.

Social Media Plan

Your SID should be one of your best friends – if they aren’t, make him/her some cookies and get to it. I like to get a weekly plan from my SID so we know what the content will be. Collaborate with them to throw in something creative and/or new when there is space. This makes sure your program (brand) is being seen regularly.

It’s really easy as collegiate coaches to be engaged in recruiting in the off-season. However, the best strategy is to always be recruiting. There is no off-season when it comes to getting the best athletes to buy-in to what you are doing. Recruiting is the lifeblood of a successful program, and having a plan allows you to focus on the details while creating space to customize and personalize your approach. Although I may have my own system of laminated checklists and “to-dos”, you need to find what works best for you and your staff. Recruiting is one of the most fun parts of what I get to do – it combines my organizational side with my creative side.

Remember, sweat the small stuff. It matters.



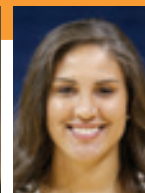
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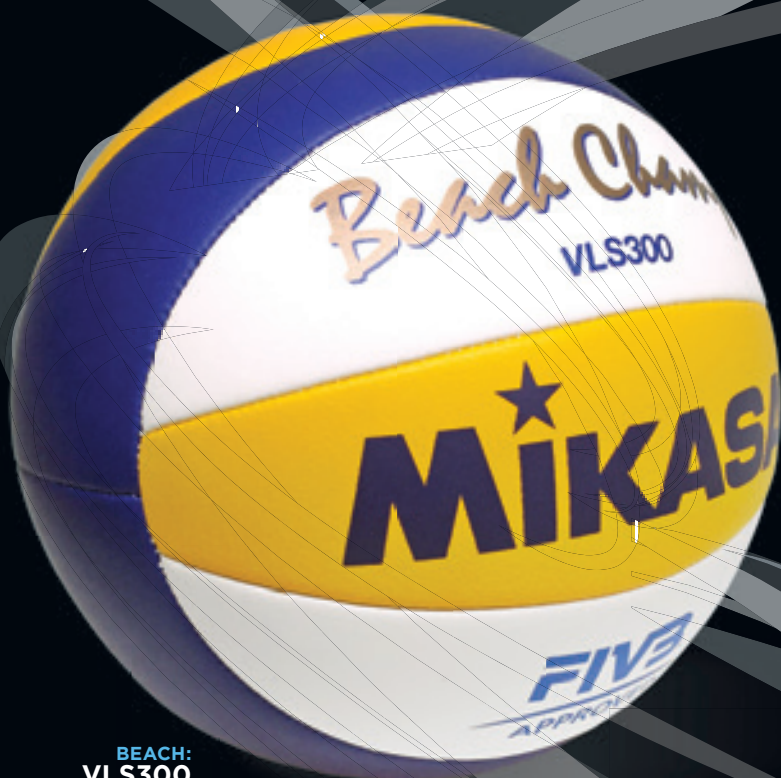
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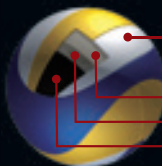
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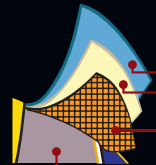
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