

TRAINING YOUR DEFENSIVE PLAYERS TO READ THE HITTER

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- I. Ready Defensive Position
 - A. Broad Base of Support - (Variations)
 - B. Head/Shoulder/Knee/Feet Relationship
 - C. Posture (Variations)

- II. Footwork (when needed)
 - A. Step-close
 - B. Shuffle
 - C. Cross over
 - D. Turn and run
 - E. Lateral extension
 - F. Roll
 - G. Dive/Sprawl

- III. Keys to Successful Individual Defense
 - A. Stationary at time of hitters contact
 - B. Be able to see the attackers – give up coaches control
 - C. Concept of “on-help”
 - D. React to previous shot
 1. Hit in front of you – move in
 2. Player blocked – may tip/roll
 - E. Use Block/Antennae/Sideline to aid your position
 - F. Specialization of players

- IV. Training your players in the gym
 - A. Control passing – emphasis on quality and the perfect pass
 1. Down Balls
 2. Acceleration Drills – Tips/Deflections
 3. Deflected Balls – Lateral
 - B. Hard Hit Balls – emphasis on control and effort
 1. Need a quality touch
 2. Allow players to establish their own area of coverage and responsibility
 - C. All training should be as game like as possible

- V. Defense is an attitude and must be developed and maintained.

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSIVE

- THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF EXECUTING INDIVIDUAL TECHNIQUES IS BEING IN THE CORRECT POSITION BEFORE THE BALL IS ATTACKED
- PLAYERS HAVE TO BE ABLE TO READ A HITTER AND THAT TAKES TIME TO EXPLAIN AND UNDERSTAND-COLLEGE COACHES RECRUIT IT AND HS/CLUB COACHES NEED TO TRAIN IT
- DESIGN YOUR DRILLS TO ASSURE YOUR PLAYERS UNDERSTAND THE VARIOUS SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

I. INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

A. Postural Considerations

Defensive Ready Position

1. Feet Spread minimum of should width
2. Weight distributed evenly on balls of feet
3. Knees in front of the feet and shoulders in front of knees
4. Knees pointed in with back straight and the chest pointed down
5. Ability to move from this position (feet prior to arms)
 - a. Tip/coverage
 - b. Digging of Hard hit balls requires a wider base of support
6. Postural Awareness – players need to be able to feel themselves in the correct position and move comfortable

B. Teach the necessary defensive movements and have the players develop their “range of coverage”.

1. Learn movements without the ball
2. Learn movements with ball
3. Execute drills to allow success and always push the player to find their “range”
4. Increase the players’ range without ball
5. Increase the players’ range with ball

C. Reinforcement is going to be the best teaching aid when it comes to Defense (I remove the problem from the drill and the problem is not going for the ball)

1. Player must always to for the live ball
2. Goal must be to touch the ball
3. Player must then learn to accelerate thru the ball
4. Perfect pass should be the goal
5. Be realistic – Game Like!

D. Skill Identification

1. Sprawl (for attacked balls)

- a. Start with a low basic posture
- b. Pre-hop should shift weight forward
- c. Extend/flow forward with back knee contacting the floor-Front or lead knee should turn out
- d. Arms should be extended out from the shoulders with the elbows in contact with the ground and the passing surface exposed and parallel to floor
- e. Contact the ball with both arms and extend forward to absorb the momentum generated during the pre-hop
- f. One hand normally extends out

2. Dive (for tips or deflected balls)

- a. Stay low
- b. Accelerate into the ball and hit with a fist or back of hand
- c. Contact floor with hands open
- d. Arch back and lift up chin
- e. Pull through or lower chest to floor
- f. Do not throw feet back
- g. Always follow through whether you can get to the ball or not
- h. Primarily a skill done by males but not an iron clad rule

3. Lateral Extension (for attacked balls)
 - a. Step in the direction of ball and pass from your lowest contact point
 - b. Pass the ball with both arms angled toward the target
 - c. Cushion and absorb your step by sliding arm out and extending your body on its side along floor
 - d. Upper leg may elevate and then lower to the body during the absorption phase

4. Roll (for tips or deflected balls)
 - a. Stay low and accelerate toward ball
 - b. Follow thru in a lateral extension and roll from the lower back over the opposite shoulder-back to their feet (Depends where the ball is and how much momentum must be absorbed)
 - c. Hit ball with fist or heel or hand-keep hand closed
 - d. It is important to tuck your chin to your chest on the roll to avoid head contact with the playing surface
 - e. Primarily a skill done by females
 - f. Some coaches and programs endorse the “barrel roll”

5. Stationary Dig (For attacked balls)
 - a. Absorb the contact with a slight retraction at the time of contact
 - b. Keep the chin down and keep the platform loose and low
 - c. Recognize the difference between bending at the elbow to absorb the balls momentum and balls that force the players to the floor

6. Run Through- (Tip or deflected balls)
 - a. Keep your feet and contact with the ball on the move
 - b. Pop the ball up with a “j” stroke motion to establish backspin

II. TRAINING IDEAS FOR INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

A. Specialization of players

1. Place your best defenders in the areas most often attacked
2. Develop and all purpose defender comfortable in-all positions
3. Green light theory
4. Positional Identification-play next to the right person

B. Level of Play Demands

1. The lower the level the more movement required
2. Master the easy play and advance to the challenging ball

C. Drills and Communication

1. Dig live hitters
2. Dig off boxes