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EPIC UNITED
& THE EPIC FAMILY
THOUGHTS ON...

LESSONS: PRIVATE, SEMI- PRIVATE, INTERNAL, EXTERNAL

A REVIEW OF OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION AND SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

The “Thoughts on” series is a series of papers designed to supply Epic family members (and potential Epic family members) with our thoughts on various topics. There are exceptions to many rules, so if Epic is “for” or “against” a topic, that does not mean that it’s members cannot or must participate or that there is not an exception for a specific player. These are general guidelines and are a reflection of the opinions of the Epic Administration in most scenarios. Epic United usually refers to the Epic family (Epic, Diamond Elite, and Altitude)

I. Getting Started

- a. Epic United highly recommends Individual and small group instruction as an invaluable supplemental tool for your daughter's growth. Go to the Epic website. On the main page, you will find a link to a form to fill out. There you will find a list of mostly Epic coaches who are interested in individual instruction as well as the process and costs for both individual and small group lessons. Make sure you are familiar with your state rules (mostly they don't affect players until they reach high school).
- b. The form should be filled out by each Saturday and you will be notified by Sunday if you are assigned a lesson for the following week. The more flexible that you are, the more likely you are to be assigned a lesson. Once you fill out the form, you are committing to the lesson, whether or not you attend.
- c. Definitions
 - i. Individual lesson or private lesson means 1 coach and 1 player
 - ii. Small group lesson or semi-private lesson means 1 coach and 2-6 players
 - iii. "external" means a coach that is not related to the Epic family
 - iv. "internal" means an "Epic" coach or an "Epic approved" coach

II. Who should do lessons?

- a. First, any time a player is contacting a volleyball (s)he is probably improving, so lessons are good for anyone; however, to steal a term from economics, there is a rule called the LAW OF DIMINISHING RETURNS. In short, the more skilled an athlete is, the less valuable private lessons are. This may come as a shock, because external lesson coaches (not affiliated with Epic) will have you believe the opposite. The more talented a player is, the more valuable (s)he is to the coach doing the lessons because she elevates his/her prestige and gives her a chance to recruit away a more talented player.

- b. LAW OF DIMINISHING RETURNS explained: Players who are newer and/or who have major deficiencies will benefit greatly from individual instruction.

Completely reworking an arm-swing is difficult in a team practice. Players who have been taught the fundamentals but still do not quite have it will should look into small group lessons. They will get about as many touches for less cost and still get the coaching they need. Advanced players who have most of the fundamentals correct and only need tweaking can get everything they need from team and positional practices. It's not that individual lessons are bad. Contacts are still beneficial, it's just not efficient. We find that sometimes advanced players are 'hooked' on the lesson drug when the lesson isn't giving them much that they don't already get in practices.

III. External lessons?

- a. Epic permits players to do external lessons only with approved coaches. Players must get permission from their AGC to do a lesson with a non-Epic approved coach.
- b. External coaches are likely to give a different perspective and we have seen that perspective interfere with the coaching styles that the player is getting in practice. Sometimes this can be troublesome and hinder growth.
- c. Sometimes external coaches feel the need to "prove their value" which they do by undermining the current coach and program. This obviously impedes skill development. A common practice by scrupulous external coaches is to "offer a free consultation." Free consultations always have the same result. "Oh, yeah, your daughter has potential, but I've identified some deficiencies in her training that we can fix to get her up to speed" and usually are accompanied by a recommended position change or other things that need to change.

- d. External coaches are known to not follow the states eligibility rules (see section V at the bottom), thus making players ineligible for their high school season.
- e. When doing Internal lessons (Epic approved coaches) you can be assured that all coaches are working with the same general concepts and all coaches have the best interest of your athlete in mind.

IV. What if I get different instruction from different coaches?

- a. This is one of the reasons we like players to use Epic-Approved instructors. We are in the process of dividing the skillsets of the sport and determining where we allow, 'coaches prerogative' and what we are classifying as 'our way and the wrong way.' Some of our individual instruction coaches may teach things slightly differently. Treat this as a personal preference and you have a choice. Most things will be taught the same, regardless of which Epic-approved coach that you use.

V. Know your State's Rules

- a. Disclaimer: State rules do change. I would discuss items with your high school volleyball coach and or your state institution. At the time of this writing, the guidelines below are correct.
- b. Illinois Rules governing Individual instruction for high school students (prior to high school the rules are more lenient)
 - i. According to Illinois rules, there is no small group lesson. It's either individual (1 or 2) or a camp (more than 2).
 1. From a coach who's not a member school coach: There are no restrictions, so long as the coach is not one of your member school coaches. There are restrictions on the other players though.
 2. From Their Own Coach: Illinois players may receive paid instruction from their school coaches outside of season if their coaches offer paid instruction to athletes not participating in their

school as well. (Q60). If this is out of season during the school year, they must follow the rule of 3. If this is over the summer, then lessons do count towards their 25 contact days.

ii. Indiana Rules governing Individual can be found on ihsaa.org select About IHSAA select by-laws. 15.2 is the most relevant area.

1. Out of season: no high school athlete can receive instruction from a member of that high school coaching staff (15-2.2c) & (Q15-33). This includes volunteer coaches.
2. Out of season: Players may receive instruction from other coaches as long as they still follow the rule of 3
3. In season: Small groups cannot be a combination of players from multiple states (Q15-36)
4. In season: Students may receive a lesson but not from a coach from their high school if there is any sort of compensation. (15-1.2b3)