

Educational Tip of the Week



Five Keys to Pre-Match Warm-Ups

Tom Mendoza, University of South Carolina

Head Coach

Five Keys to Pre-Match Warm-Ups

1. **Safety first!** Be very cognizant of when athletes take any jumps, including jump-setting. It's just not worth the risk. There is a lot going on in warm-ups, with over 30 athletes and 60 volleyballs and varying levels of control. Which leads to...
2. **Make (the right) time for blocking, often the most forgotten-about skill in warm-ups.** Blocking is the first thing that we do after stretching, only because that is the most likely time that the other team won't have balls flying under our players' feet. I always get nervous other teams when they line up for blocking reps while we are already into defense, and balls are around the net. I've seen some teams work controlled blocking reps into their whole court warm-up, and I think it works really well.
3. **One-sided serving is the new black.** Gone are the days of both sides serving with assistant coaches standing out there guarding serves from going under feet, while trying to not get hit in the face or even more sensitive areas. Similarly, it lets the servers relax and not have to worry about getting blasted. We added a simple rule that any player who serves into the net is responsible for that ball to make sure it doesn't come back under a teammate.
4. **Multi-contact drills are a good thing, even during shared court.** We like opening up with a low-key dig-set series. It reinforces where we want our digs and where we want our out-of-system sets. From there we try to gradually scale up to live play. Taking coaches out of the warm-up puts more on us on the players to control the flow of play.
5. **Controlled 6-on-6 won't destroy the universe.** We've never had 6-on-6 in warm-ups, but adding it during a year when you have been experiencing slow starts can work wonders. Coaches have a hard time putting live play into full-court warm, mainly because it gives up control by opening the door to chaotic play, which looks bad and stress the coach out. But is a little chaos a bad thing.

Volleyball is a difficult game that involves limiting errors while being aggressive and working through that balance might end up being the most productive part of warm-up.

Hopefully, you find something in there to be beneficial, or disagree with it so strongly that it helps define your philosophy



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR MEMBERSHIP
IN THE GREAT
PLAINS REGION

YOUR PARTNER IN VOLLEYBALL

