



Texas Image Volleyball

Defensive Tips

Jim Stone - Ohio State University

Key Concepts of Developing Good Defensive Skills

1. Keep the court in front of you. Good defensive players always have the ball and the court in front of the body. They move forward to play the ball. Too many times, defensive players get caught in the middle of the court, with court area behind the body.
2. When the ball is being attacked, have your feet on the ground with weight on your toes.
3. Always have your hips lower than the ball upon contact.
4. Always dig the ball to a target. Just up in the air is not sufficient unless it is an emergency save.
5. Focus most of your time and attention practicing balls attacked within 4 ft of your body. If you are properly positioned, this will comprise most of the attacks by your opponent.
6. Practice the manipulation of your platform (forearms). Many times you cannot get your entire body to the ball. You must direct the ball to target by turning your platform to the target.
7. You must start your defensive court position around the block.
8. Know the difference between ready posture and digging posture. Ready posture is a medium posture designed for movement prior to the attack. Digging posture is your posture as the ball is being attacked. This posture is low and coiled, ready for quick movement.
9. Pursue every ball. This is the fighting attitude that good defensive players possess.
10. Of all the skills of volleyball, defensive skills are the most time-consuming to perfect. A good defensive player understands the importance of repetition.

Reading the Opponent's Attack

Along with developing skills of playing the ball, a good defensive player has the ability to anticipate or "read" the attack. Good defensive players use the following keys:

1. Determine the tendencies of the hitter. Most hitters will hit in the direction of their approach.
2. Place yourself around the area of the court that is taken away by the block.
3. If the set is off the net, hitters tend to hit crosscourt. Close sets tend to be hit down the line.
4. Watch the shoulder of the attacker. Hitters will hit in the direction of their shoulders.
5. The elbow of an attacker will drop if a soft shot is being hit.

Most hitters hit a soft shot if they do not have an explosive approach or jump.