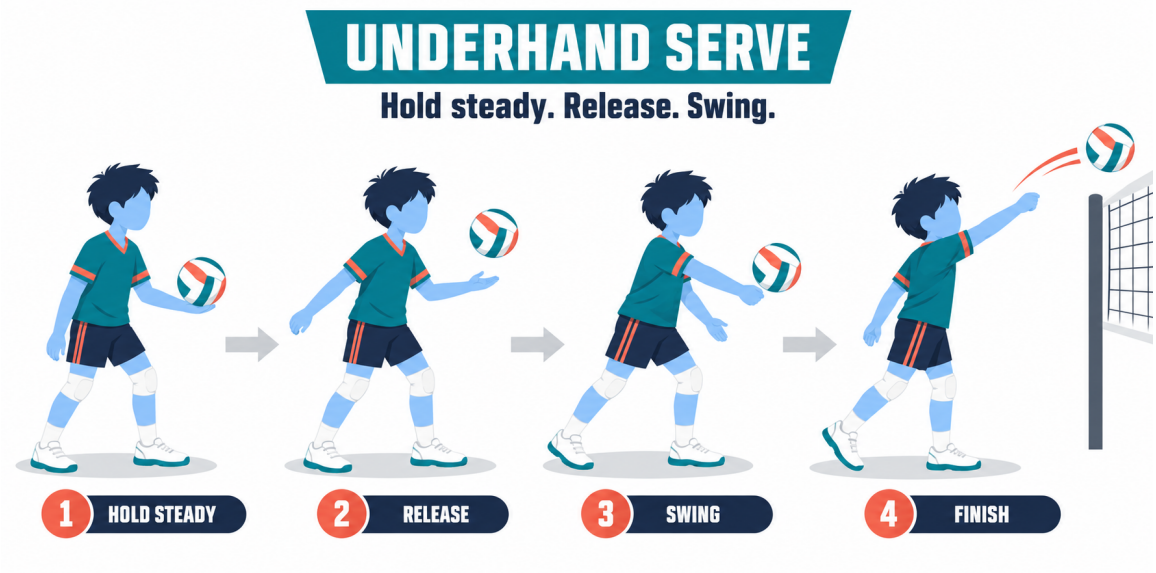
THE PRACTICAL PARENT
COACH PLAYBOOK

THE COACH'S WORKBOOK

Volleyball edition: printable plans, checklists, and forms for your first season coaching 8 to 10-year-olds



Print the pages you need. Skip the rest.

A free companion to *Coaching Youth Volleyball for Beginners*

Panicked Parent Press • panickedparent.com

HOW TO USE THIS

Print the pages you need. Not all of them, and not in order.



Before your season starts, fill in the league rules page (4) and the goals page (5). Those two shape everything else.

Print several copies of the practice plan (6), the rotation sheet (13), the substitution sheet (14) and the scorekeeping sheet (15). You will use those repeatedly.

Practice is tonight and you have read nothing? Start with page 3.

Practices 1, 2, and 3 (pages 7 to 9) are three complete practices. You can run them as written.

The one-page cheat sheet (18) is the page worth keeping on your clipboard all season.

You do not need to have read the book to use this workbook. Every page works on its own.

Find the page you need

Before the season

Practice is tonight? 3
League rules 4
Season goals 5
Gym bag 17
Parent messages 16

Practice

Practice plan 6
Practices 1, 2, 3 7–9
Drill cards 10–11

Match day

Match-day checklist 12
Rotation and serving order 13
Substitution sheet 14
Scorekeeping sheet 15

Anytime

One page to keep with you 18
End of season 19

The simple rule

Volleyball rules for this age change from league to league. Ask your league, write the answers on page 4, and follow what the referee says.

PRACTICE IS TONIGHT?

Start here. You can be ready in about 20 minutes.



Tonight is about getting players moving, having fun, and sending everyone home wanting to come back. Skip serving, rotation, and rules. First 5 minutes: tape a first name on every shirt and do a name circle (name plus one thing they like).

Pack the bag

- [ ] Volleyballs, one per pair
- [ ] Roster with parent contacts
- [ ] Masking tape and marker (name tags)
- [ ] Cones or tape
- [ ] Whistle, if your league uses one
- [ ] Water for yourself
- [ ] First-aid supplies, per league policy
- [ ] Emergency contact information
- [ ] Fully charged phone

Say this first (safety in four sentences)

"No hitting balls until I say so. Roll stray balls, never kick them. Nobody goes under the net. When I blow the whistle or say Freeze, stop right away."

1

Toss and Catch Partners — 5 to 15 min

Pairs, one ball, about 6 feet apart. Toss to the chest, catch with two hands, switch every 30 seconds. "Eyes on the ball."

2

Ready Position Freeze — 15 to 25 min

Walk around the space. On "Ready!" freeze: feet apart, knees bent, hands out. Walk first, then jog.

3

Keep It Up — 25 to 40 min

Groups of 3 to 5 keep one light ball or balloon in the air. Count touches out loud and set a goal.

4

Huddle, then tell the parents — Last 2 min

Next practice: day, time, place. What to bring. How you will message them. Then send that message tonight.

If it falls apart: stop, get everyone safe, give one instruction, restart with Toss and Catch Partners.

YOUR LEAGUE'S RULES

Fill this in before your first practice



Get answers from your league handbook or coordinator. Typical answers are in gray, but yours may differ.

Ask first: what does your league require of adult volunteers (background check, training, one-on-one contact rules)? Clearances can take weeks.

Players per side and court size *often 4v4 or 6v6*

Net height *ask: 6 ft 6 in is common at 10 and under for girls*

Ball type *often a lighter youth ball*

Serve style and our serving line *often underhand; may be moved closer*

Serve tries and re-serve rule *often one try; re-serve after a bad toss?*

Serve limit *some leagues cap points in a row*

Scoring and match format *sets, points per set, win by 2, cap*

Rotation rules *clockwise after a side-out; is overlap enforced?*

Substitution and playing-time system *new lineup each set, in-set subs, or continuous rotation*

Timeouts: how many, how long *how to request a sub or timeout*

Who serves first, and how decided *coin toss, or league procedure*

How strictly lifts, carries, and double hits are called

Ceiling, antenna, and net-serve rules

Where coaches stand; jewelry and knee-pad rules

Practice day, time, space, and cancellation contact

YOUR THREE SEASON GOALS

Small and specific beats big and vague



Pick up to three things you want your players to be able to do by the end of the season. Good goals at this age are small and specific.

Good goal: "Every player can serve the ball over the net from the close line." Not: "Win the league."

1 **Goal 1**

2 **Goal 2**

3 **Goal 3**

End of season: how did it go?

PRACTICE PLAN

One page, one practice. Fill it in before you leave the house.



PRINT SEVERAL COPIES OF THIS PAGE

Date

Today's focus (one or two skills, no more)

Plan about 45 minutes of activity for a 60-minute slot

The other 15 minutes disappear into check-in, late arrivals, water, explanations, and general chaos. That is not wasted time. That is reality.

1. **Warm-up: movement, then toss and catch** *about 10 min*

2. **Skill 1** *about 10 min*

3. **Skill 2** *about 10 min*

4. **Game or mini match** *about 10 to 15 min*

One coaching cue I will repeat today

Backup activity if something falls apart

Equipment I need

PRACTICE 1: TOSS AND SERVE

Run this as written. About 45 minutes of activity.

1

Toss and Catch Partners

0 to 10 min

Pairs, one ball per pair. Start close together. Toss gently to your partner's chest, catch with two hands, and step back after each good catch. Begin with a minute of easy movement.

> **Say this: "Find a partner. One ball. Toss it right to them."**

2

Ready Position Freeze

10 to 20 min

Players move around the space. On "freeze," they get into ready position: feet wide, knees bent, hands out in front, balanced and ready to move. Run it several times.

3

Serve Ladder, close line

20 to 35 min

Rungs at about 10, 15 and 20 feet. Everyone serves underhand from the closest rung. Over the net? Move back. Two misses in a row? Step up. Everyone serves the same direction; collect balls only on your call.

> **Say this: "Hold steady. Release. Swing."**

4

Keep It Up

35 to 45 min

Small groups use catching to start. Count how many touches before the ball hits the floor. Finish with a cheer.

> **Your one cue: "Feet apart. Knees bent. Hands out."**



Finish

Bring everyone in. Name one thing that went well. Release players to approved adults only.

PRACTICE 2: PASSING

Run this as written. About 45 minutes of activity.

1

Toss and catch warm-up

0 to 10 min

Same as last time. Repetition is the plan working, not the plan failing. If catching looks rusty, that is normal.

2

Partner Forearm Pass

10 to 25 min

Pairs, about 5 to 6 feet apart, one ball per pair. The tosser tosses to the chest. The passer makes a flat platform with the arms, lets the ball bounce off the forearms, and bumps it back. Switch every 10 tosses.

Say this: "Make a platform. Let the ball bounce off. Legs do the work."

3

Target Pass

25 to 35 min

The passer passes to a target partner standing at a cone or tape mark about 10 feet away. Give each group 30 seconds and count how many passes the target partner catches within a step or two.

4

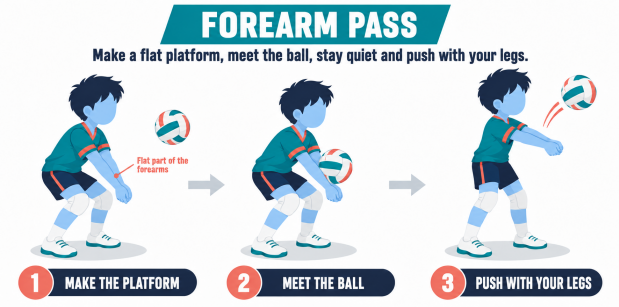
Serve Ladder, then a skill game

35 to 45 min

A few minutes of serving, then Pass Count: how many passes in a row can your group make in 60 seconds?

Your one cue: "Feet to the ball." Praise the movement, not just the pass.





PRACTICE 3: SERVE AND ROTATE

Run this as written. About 45 minutes of activity.

1 **Partner pass warm-up** — 0 to 10 min

Review Practice 2. Pairs passing and tossing.

2 **Serve Ladder** — 10 to 20 min

Everyone gets serves. Start close and move back as serves get over.

3 **Serve and Rotate** — 20 to 30 min

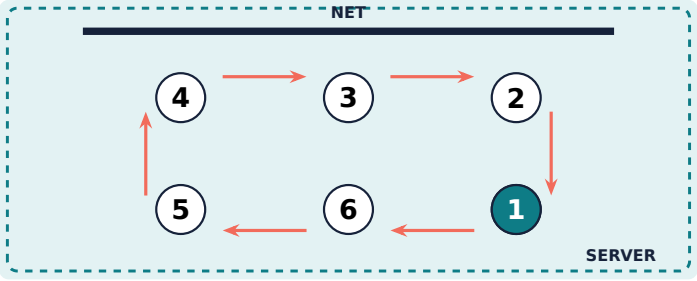
Put six players on one side in positions 1 through 6. Position 1 is the server (back right). Extra players go to the other side as passers and ball catchers. After a served ball, rotate clockwise: 2 goes to 1, and everyone follows the numbers down.

Say this: "Two goes to one, and everyone follows."

4 **Three-Touch Game** — 30 to 45 min

Start at Stage 1 or 2. This is a practice game, so catching and tossing is allowed. Your cue: "Can we get three touches?"

Your one cue: "Call it, pass it, keep it alive."



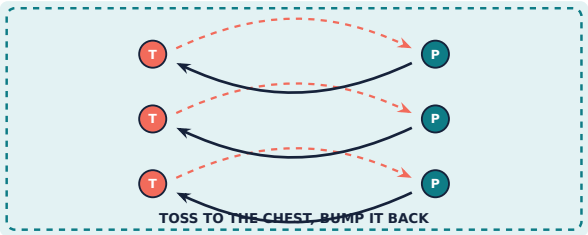


DRILL CARDS (1 OF 2)

Five drills is enough for a whole season. You do not need a hundred.

Toss and Catch Partners

ball comfort **1 ball per pair**



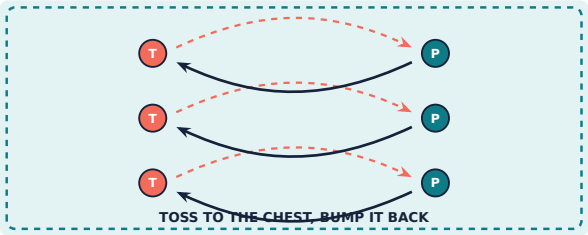
Toss gently to your partner's chest. Catch with two hands. Step back after each good catch.

Easier: stay close and toss softly; a child who flinches can step aside.

Harder: add a step and a toss to the side.

Partner Forearm Pass

passing **1 ball per pair**



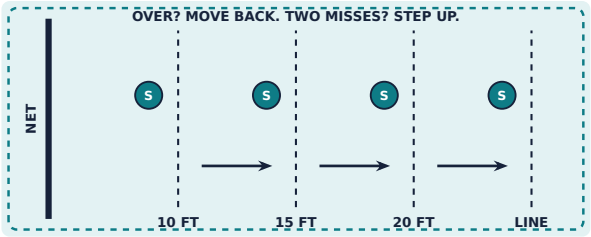
Tosser tosses to the chest. Passer makes a flat platform and bumps it back. Switch every 10.

Easier: start about 5 feet apart and catch first.

Harder: move back as passes get controlled.

Serve Ladder

serving **floor tape**



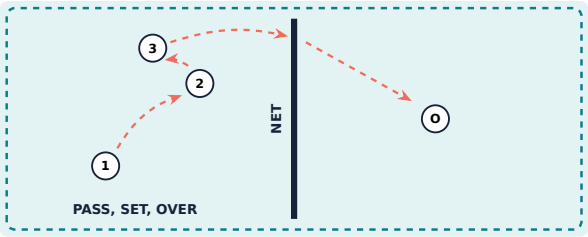
Serve underhand from rungs at 10, 15 and 20 feet. Over the net? Move back. Two misses in a row? Step up.

Easier: start at the closest rung.

Harder: finish at your league's serving line.

Three-Touch Game

team play **low net or tape**



Three per side. Practice game: catching allowed at first (Stage 1), then fully legal contacts (Stage 4). Three touches is a maximum, not a requirement.

Easier: keep catch-and-toss on every touch.

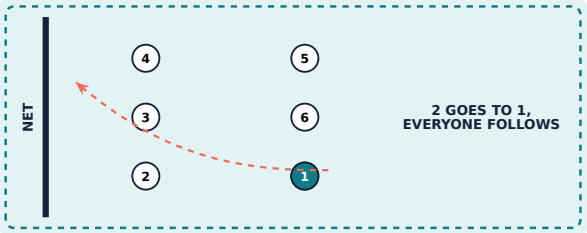
Harder: no catches, mini match.

DRILL CARDS (2 OF 2)

Add this one when the first drills feel easy

Serve and Rotate

rotation **6 players**



Six players in positions 1 to 6. Position 1 serves. After a serve, rotate clockwise: 2 goes to 1, and everyone follows the numbers down.

Easier: walk it through with no ball first.

Harder: add a short rally before each rotation.

If a drill is not working

Stop it. Do not let it limp along for five more minutes.

Make the group smaller. Pairs beat lines.

Take something away. Remove the net, the target, or the movement.

Move closer. Shorter passes, closer serves.

Give one instruction, not five.

If none of that works, switch to something they can already do and come back to it next practice.



MATCH-DAY CHECKLIST

Work down the list. Tick as you go.



Before the match

- [ ] Know when and where to arrive.
- [ ] Have your roster and parent contact information.
- [ ] Confirm the meeting point with parents.
- [ ] Bring volleyballs and equipment.
- [ ] Know your league's rules: serving, rotation, substitutions, timeouts.
- [ ] Write down your starting lineup and who serves first (page 13).
- [ ] Plan a simple warm-up and a rotation walk-through.
- [ ] Decide on one or two things to emphasize.
- [ ] Ask the referee where coaches and substitutes stand.

During the match

- [ ] Watch all the players, not just the ball.
- [ ] Keep instructions short. Give reminders before the serve, not during the rally.
- [ ] Wait for the whistle to serve. Play until the whistle.
- [ ] Rotate on every side-out only (standard 6v6; check your league).
- [ ] Track substitutions and the score.
- [ ] Coach one thing at a time.

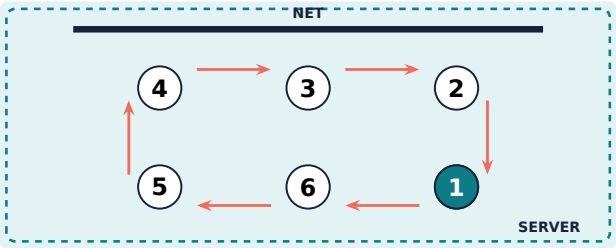
After the match

- [ ] Bring the team together.
- [ ] Name one thing that went well.
- [ ] Name one thing to work on next.
- [ ] Line up and say "good game."
- [ ] Release players to approved adults only.

ROTATION AND SERVING ORDER

Fill this in before each set. Keep it on your clipboard.

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Write each player's name in the position where they **start**. Then tick who serves first.

We serve first: Position 1 serves.
They serve first: when we win the serve back we rotate, and the player who started in Position 2 moves to Position 1 and becomes our first server.

After every side-out: 2 goes to 1, and everyone follows the numbers down.

Set _____ **Our team** _____ **Opponent** _____

Position 1 (back right, server) _____ **Position 4 (front left)** _____

Position 2 (front right) _____ **Position 5 (back left)** _____

Position 3 (front middle) _____ **Position 6 (back middle)** _____

☐ We serve first (Position 1 serves)

☐ We receive first (Position 2 starter serves first once we win the serve)

Serving order (in the order they will serve)

1. _____ **2.** _____ **3.** _____

4. _____ **5.** _____ **6.** _____

Side-out notes *score and who rotated*

Do we rotate?

We were serving and won the rally: **no**, same server serves again. They were serving and we won: **yes**, rotate once, then serve. No rotating mid-rally. Unsure whose serve it is? Ask the scorer or referee.

PLAYING TIME AND SUBS

Tick each set a player starts. Do not rely on memory.



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Write your roster down the left. Tick each set a player starts, and note who came in or out.

Player	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5

Check your league's playing-time and substitution rules first. Subs are usually requested through the referee or scorer, not made on your own.

SCOREKEEPING SHEET

Circle or cross out a number each time a team wins a rally.



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Date _____ **Opponent** _____ **Court** _____

Set 1 ☐ We serve first ☐ They serve first Timeouts: Us ○ ○ Them ○ ○

Us	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Rotations (tick each side-out) ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○ Final: Us _____ Them _____

Set 2 ☐ We serve first ☐ They serve first Timeouts: Us ○ ○ Them ○ ○

Us	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Rotations (tick each side-out) ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○ Final: Us _____ Them _____

Set 3 ☐ We serve first ☐ They serve first Timeouts: Us ○ ○ Them ○ ○

Us	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Rotations (tick each side-out) ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○ Final: Us _____ Them _____

How to use it

With rally scoring, every rally gives a point to one team. Circle the next number in the winning team's row. If your team was receiving and wins the rally, tick a rotation and rotate before the next serve. The scorer and referee keep the official score. This sheet is your backup, and it helps you see who serves next.

PARENT MESSAGES

Copy, change the details, send. Pick one channel and use only that one.

Practice reminder

Practice [day], [time]. Please arrive by [time] so players are ready to start. Bring court shoes and a water bottle. Check our league's rule on knee pads, jewelry, and hair accessories.

Match reminder

Match [day] at [time], at [location]. Please arrive by [time]. We will meet at [spot].

Schedule change

Tonight's practice is canceled because [reason]. I will post the next practice time here. Sorry for the short notice.

Logistics question

It's in the team app under Schedule.

Concern mid-practice or mid-match

I'm about to start practice (or the match is starting soon). Send me a message and I'll get back to you.

"Why isn't my kid serving or starting more?"

Thanks for asking, and I understand. I'm rotating players through every position and giving everyone chances to serve, and I track it every match so nobody gets missed. I'm happy to talk when we both have a little time.

Handle disagreements privately and later, never on the sideline in front of the kids. At this age, communicate through parents or guardians and your approved team platform.



COACH’S GYM BAG

Pack this the night before. Take a photo of this page.

- [ ] Volleyballs
- [ ] Cones or tape
- [ ] Hula hoops
- [ ] Whistle, if your league uses one
- [ ] Today’s practice plan
- [ ] Clipboard, pencils, and a backup pencil
- [ ] Rotation sheet and substitution sheet
- [ ] Scorekeeping sheet
- [ ] Water for yourself
- [ ] First-aid supplies, per league policy
- [ ] Roster with parent contact information
- [ ] Emergency contact information
- [ ] League rules page
- [ ] Fully charged phone
- [ ] This book

If you only do one thing tonight

Put the volleyballs and the roster in the bag. Everything else on this list is recoverable if you forget it. Those two are hard to improvise. Keep the roster where only you can see it, not unattended in the gym.



ONE PAGE TO KEEP WITH YOU

If you print only one page, print this one. Clip it to your clipboard.



How to teach anything

Explain it in one sentence. Show them. Let them try. Watch. Correct one thing. Let them try again.

The five reminders

1. Serving: hold steady, release, swing. Over the net is a win.
2. Receiving: spread out, call the ball, feet to the ball.
3. Passing: flat platform. Platform angle steers the ball.
4. After touching the ball: get ready again.
5. After a mistake: next ball.

When it falls apart

1. Stop.
2. Make sure everyone is safe.
3. Get their attention.
4. Give one instruction.
5. Restart with something simple they can already do.

The rotation in one line

Win the serve back (side-out)? In standard 6v6, everyone moves one position clockwise. 2 goes to 1, and everyone follows the numbers down. Same server while you keep winning rallies.

Three drills you can run without thinking

Toss and Catch Partners • Partner Forearm Pass • Serve Ladder

The practice shape

Plan 45 minutes of activity for a 60-minute slot. Warm-up, one skill, a second skill, then a game. The missing 15 minutes are check-in, late arrivals, water, and chaos. That is normal.

After the match, ask three questions

What did we do well? What did we learn? What will we work on next?

You do not need to be a volleyball expert. You need a plan.

END OF SEASON

Fill this in once, while it is still fresh. It makes next season much easier.

Look back at your three goals. How did the team do on each?

Three things that worked well

Three things you would change

Did the players improve? Name someone specific and what changed.

Did they have fun? Be honest. What is your evidence either way?

One thing to carry into next season

Notes to future you



WHAT'S IN THE FULL BOOK

This workbook covers the forms. The book covers the reasoning.

Coaching Youth Volleyball for Beginners covers the rest:

- How to teach the ready position, forearm pass, serve, set, and arm swing to kids who have never played
- Rotation, serving order, and your first match, step by step
- What to do when a practice falls apart, a player is afraid of the ball, or a serve slump hits
- Coaching your own child without wrecking the car ride home
- Handling parents, assistants, and the ones who coach from the sideline
- Finishing the season so the kids want to play again next year

Volleyball Coach's Workbook

Latest version, free. Scan the code or visit panickedparent.com/resources/coachguide/volleyball/volleyball-workbook.pdf