When we play volleyball, we should consider the following elements in team formations:

1. Placement of six players
2. Basic positions of six players in the court
3. Service reception formations
4. Attack team formations
5. Spike coverage formations
6. Spike reception team formations

1. Placement of Six Players

Before considering team formation, the coach should be aware of his players’ individual mental abilities, physical performances and special technical abilities.

a. Composition and Roles of Players

Ace Spikers - Players having very good spiking ability, strong attitudes and physical performance. At least 50% spiking success for men and 40% for women required in games.

Quick Spikers - Spikers having quick spiking ability such as A,B,C,D or shoot set spikes in combination with the setter(s).

Setters - Set-up specialist for spikers. They are good at controlling balls and timing their own team’s quick spikes.

All-Around Players - Players who have ability in all technical aspects such as set-ups, blocking, spikes, service and spike receptions.

Combined Setter Attacker - Player who acts as a setter in the back line and as a spiker in the front line.
Reception Specialist - Player who has a good ability in service reception.

b. Check Blocking Ability of Team Players

When we want to use the two-man blocking system in all six rotations, we need at least four blockers who are tall enough to extend their elbows above the top of the net, if possible, for all blocking actions.

c. 3.3 Formation: 6 Tall Players with 1 Setter (Fig 14-D1)

A— Ace Spiker
Q— Quick Spiker
S— Setter
U— All round player
C— Combined setter and attacker
R— Reception specialist
S’— Short Setter without Blocking
R’— Short receiver without blocking
(see also page II fold-out for explanation of symbols used)

![Fig. 14-D1](image)

d. 3.3 Formation: 6 Tall Players with 2 Setters (Fig. 14-D2)

![Fig. 14-D2](image)

e. 2.2.2 Formation: 2 Short Receivers among 6 players (Fig. 14-I)
2. Players’ Fundamental Position Just After Service

a. Position A (Fig. 14-2)

Center forward - stays near the net to block quick spikes.
Right and left forward - One step behind the net to prepare the block or reception.
Back players - get ready for opponent’s tip ball and quick spike.

b. Position B (Fig. 14-3)

Forward Players - Same as position A (CF near the net, RF and LF stay one step back from the net).
Right and Left back Players - One or two meters behind the attack line. Center back player stays two meters behind left and right for tip ball and quick spike reception.

3. Principles of Service Reception Formation

a. Sideways

In sideways service reception, direction is decided by the positions of setters near the net.

Correct Direction (Fig. 14-4a,b)

Ball returns automatically to the setter’s direction without twisting body or arms.

Wrong Direction
Ball not to the setter (Fig. 14-4c)
b. Sample of Service Reception Direction by two Players. (*Fig. 14-D6, 14-D7*)

Two players move sideways crossing each other.

c. Conditions Concerning the Width of the Service Reception Area.

Left and right forward players should keep their positions within the imaginary lines extending from the server to the back corners of the court. (*Fig. 14-D8, 14-D9*)

Correct Positions

Wrong Positions

Distance between two receivers will be shorter on the left as reception is easier there than on the right.
d. Height of Service Reception Area by the Player

A ball served above shoulder height in a standing position should not be received by the front line player, such a ball should be received by the back line player.

e. Service Receiver Position Considering Ability and Specialty of the Server. (Fig. 14-5)

Deep Service

 Receivers should anticipate special characteristics of served balls as deep or short, fast or slow, and get into the proper position for easier reception. (Fig. 14-D10)

Short or Long Slow Service

Distance between front and back lines should be far from each other. (Fig. 14-D11)
f. Typical Examples in Service Reception Formations

1.5 System, W formation
One setter in front line stays near the net for set-ups. *(Fig. 14-D12)*

![Fig. 14-D12](image)

One receiver stays near the net for in case of service reception mistakes. *(Fig. 14-6)*
1.5 System, M Formation *(Fig. 14-D13)*

![Fig. 14-D13](image)

0.6 System, W formation
To introduce three attacker systems always after service and attack reception.

General formation and for preparation of quick attacks just after the service reception. *(Fig. 14-D14)*

![Fig. 14-D14](image)
For penetration of spiker's position (right to left for ace spiker). (Fig. 14-7A, 14-7B)

Roof Formation (0.6=R) (Fig. 14-D15) Dish Formation (Fig. 14-6, 14-D13)

For short and soft servers For hard and strong servers

g. Typical Examples of Movement Direction in Service Reception According to the Position of the Setter.

The receiver's direction of movement should be decided by the position of the team's setter. (Fig. 14-7B)

In the case of a setter staying near or coming in from the right or left side, the receiver's movements are indicated by the arrow's direction. (Fig 14-D15, 14-D16, 14-D17)
4. Attack Team Formations

a. Kinds of Attack Team Formations

Attack formation for high set
Quick attack team formations (A, B, C and D quick)
Shoot set team formations (E and F Quick)
Formations for multiple attacks with changing positions
Tip ball attack (soft spikes)
Wipe-off attacks
Second time attack

b. Attack From a High Set (Orthodox Style) (Fig. 14-8, 14-D18)

![Diagram of Three Attacker System and Two Attacker System](Fig. 14-D18)

High set attack formations are the simplest attack formation methods which should be introduced to the beginners’ team.

c. Quick Attack Team Formations, Shoot Set Team Formations

When we introduce high set formations in attack, we always give the opponent’s team a chance to directly begin the two-man blocker system. In order to prevent the two-man blocker getting in front of our spikers, we use the quick attack team formations.
Alphabet System Used By Japanese Teams (Fig. 14-9, 14-D19, 14-10)

This formation is effective in use against a taller team.

- From a free ball
- From service receptions
- From attack receptions

A. Quick: About 1 meter to the left of setter and jump up before set-up.

B. Quick: About 2 to 3 meters to the left of setter and jump at the same time as the set-up.

C. Quick: Back A. About 1 meter to the right of setter and jump before set-up.

D. Quick: Back B. Timing and position is same as B Quick.

Double B Quick: Two spikers move for B Quick Attack.

E. Quick: Shoot set spikes from the left near pole

F. Quick: Shoot set spikes from the right side near pole.
Numbering System Introduced by USA, Canadian Teams (Fig. 14-11, 14-D20)

1. Position of Ball Along Net

"S" Setters normal position

Each zone is 1 meter wide beginning at the left side line.
The center of the court divides zone 5.
The setter would normally be positioned in zones 6 and 7. No determination or designation is given to depth of set from the net.

2. Height of the Ball (Speed)

0: Normal high ball (4 to 6 meters above the net)
1: 30 cm above the net
2: 60 cm above the net
3: 1 meter above the net
9: An extremely high set (6 meters or more above the net)

3. Distance of the ball from the net

0: 0 to 50 cm distance from the net
1: 1 meter away from the net
2: 2 meters away from the net
3: 3 meters away from the net

4. Communication Between Players

Example: 100 - high set near the net to zone 1 (near the left pole. (Fig. 14-12)
Example: 520 - B Quick Spike from zone 5 (1.5 meter front of the setter) (Fig. 14-13)

Example: 803 - Back attack from zone 8 by right back player (Fig. 14-14)

d. Formation for Multiple Attack With Changing Positions

X Attack Formation: Two players cross each other (Fig. 14-15, 14-16, 14-D21)

Z Attack Formation: One player changes direction in approach to spike (Fig. 14-17, 14-D22)

Time Differential by One Player (Morita, Japanese Men’s Team 1972 Munich Olympic Games) (Fig. 14-D23, 14-18)
c. Tip Ball Attack (Soft Spikes)

All teams, in soft tip ball formations, are weak in spike reception. The following weak areas of the courts shown in cross line are very effective zones for tip ball attacks depending on team formation.

In case of right-back setter (Fig. 14-19)

In case of center back setter (Fig. 14-D24)

In case of left front receiver (Fig. 14-D25)
In the case of two receivers in second line (Fig. 14-D26)

f. Two Attack (Second Time Attack)

Two attack from free ball (Fig. 14-D27)

Two attack from spike or service reception

Two attack from direct set by front line player (Fig. 14-D28)
When a free ball comes to the front right player, the center spiker will run in for a quick spike.

When center back receiver receives the spike and received ball goes to the net high above the left front spiker, he spikes the ball after feinting a jump set. (Fig. 14-20) If the ball is too low to hit, he sets it to the center or right spiker.

g. Wipe-off Attacks

Wipe-off technique is one of the most effective attack method for short height spikers against tall blockers.

Wiping off block at the leftside

![Fig. 14-D29]

a. Blocked out (success of wipe-off attack)
b. Blocking success

Hit the ball at the inside of shoulder in right handed player

Wiping off block at the right side

![Fig. 14-D30]
a. Blocked out
b. Blocking success

Hit the ball at the out side of shoulder in right handed player.

Hit the ball aiming at the out side arm of the blocker in order to have the ball deflected outside of the court.

5. Spike Coverage Formations

a. Prediction of Trajectory of the Course of Spiked Ball and Tip Off the Block. (Fig. 14-D31, 14-D32).

Course of the spiked ball and direction of rebounded ball for prediction. (Fig. 14-D33)

Angle of blocker’s hand and directions of rebounded ball.

The positions of spike coverage players will depend upon the assessment of next factors.

1. The direction of the block
2. The angle of the block
3. The course of the spiked ball
4. The speed of the spiked ball
b. 3.2 Spike Coverage Formation

Served ball, Fig. 14-D34, 14-D37, set spike and recovery, Fig. 14-D35, 14-D38. return to original position, Fig. 14-D36, 14-D39.

Spike coverage formation means three players stay close to the spiker and another two players stay behind as second coverage line for blocked ball.

After the coverage, when the ball is hit to the opponent's area, all six players return to their original positions as shown in the diagrams.
c. 2.3 Spike Coverage Formation

When many blocked balls return to the back court area, 2.3 coverage formation has more advantages than that of 3.2 coverage formation. In this case, the setter and one other player should move closer to the spiker for coverage.

Free ball, (Fig. 14-21), (Fig. 14-D40, 14-D41, 14-D42, 14-D43, 14-D44, 14-D45)

All coverage players should anticipate the direction and timing of returned balls keeping ready positions for good coverage.
6. Spike Reception Team Formations

a. Roles of Players in Spike Reception Formations

In spike reception, all players of the defensive team should work towards being

1. a blocker
2. a tip-ball receiver
3. a long spike receiver behind blockers or tip-ball receiver.

Poor teams always have some free players who do not work efficiently for the team. All players should anticipate the direction and timing of spiker’s aim and keep the most effective positions before the opponent’s attacks. These anticipations and quick reactions to the ball are required in modern volleyball.

b. Two-Blocker System

The fundamental spike reception formation normally uses the two-blocker system as shown in the diagrams below. There are three typical tip-ball reception systems:

Two-blocker system against three spiker directions in 3.3 formations (Fig. 14.22). Left forward (L.F.) Spike.

![Central forward (C.F.)Spike](Fig. 14-D46)  ![Right forward (R.F)Spike](Fig. 14-D47)

Right back (R.B.) Coverage  Left back (L.B.), R.F. Coverage  R.B. Coverage
Three typical types of tip-ball coverage formation in the two blocker system.

L.F. Spike

R.B. moves for tip ball

Central back moves for tip ball

L.F. moves for tip ball

Fig. 14-D48

Fig. 14-D51

Fig. 14-D52

C.F. Spike

L.F. and R.F. move for tip-ball

R.F. Spike

L.B. and C.F. move for tip-ball

c. One-Blocker System

When front line players consider it is not necessary to try blocking opponent’s spike because of poor set-up, lack of spiker’s ability, or delay of the blocker’s movement, they should move for reception leaving the net as shown below.

In this case, the one-blocker, two tip-ball receivers, and three back court receivers systems will be useful for all one-blocker systems. L.F. Spike (Fig. 14-23) R.B. and C.F. move for tip-ball.
d. No-Blocker System

When the team expects to have a free ball or the opponent’s team is trying to hit soft spikes far from the net, all three front line players should move back near the attack line for reception without trying blocking.

In this case, formations for free ball looks like the service reception formations as shown in the diagrams 14-24, 14-D53, 14-D54.

Only one player, close to the free ball, may stay near the net for recovery of the net ball. (Fig. 14-24)

Setter moves near setting position for quick attack actions, and two front line players prepare for the next quick spikes.

R.F. stays near the net and when his team gets a free ball, he switches his position to the setter of the team for next attack. (Fig. 14-24). R.F. stays near the net.

![Diagram](Fig. 14-D53)

C.F. stays near the net

![Diagram](Fig. 14-D54)

L.F. stays near the net

e. Three-Blocker System

When opponent’s team has powerful attackers and it is difficult to receive spikes, the three-blocker system should be used.

In this case, three blockers, one tip-ball receiver and two back court receivers shift in the court as shown below, and Fig. 14-25.
f. Special Team Formations (Two short players on the team)

When we do not have six tall players on our team, we should consider the special team formations shown below. But we need at least four tall players who have enough height for blocking in competitive teams - not recreational teams.

Even on four-blocker teams, we need the most suitable system considering the abilities of all team players.
2.2.2 Formation (Case 1: One short setter and one short receiver on the team)

Rotation Order

Fundamental Position

Spike Reception Formation

![Fig. 14-D60](image1)

![Fig. 14-D61](image2)

![Fig. 14-D62](image3)

Free Ball Reception

![Fig. 14-D63](image4)

2.2.2 Formation (Case 2, two short receivers and two tall setters on the team)

Rotation Order

Fundamental

Spike Reception Positions Formation

![Fig. 14-D64](image5)

![Fig. 14-D65](image6)

![Fig. 14-D66](image7)
2.1.3 Formation (Case 3: One short setter and one short receiver on the team as same as case 1) (Fig. 14-26)

Rotation order, fundamental positions, spike reception formation and free ball reception are shown in the position diagram 14-26.
Fig. 14-10
Fig. 14-14
Receiving Service Formation (3 receivers only)
Service Reception
Attack Combination
References


