



Educational Tip of the Week

**Multi-ball Drills for Mental and
Physical Development**

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Coach

Multi-ball Drills for Mental and Physical Development

- Multi-ball circuit drills (innovated by Ray Gooden and the Northern Illinois University volleyball program) have been known to stress out athletes mentally and physically while improving their skills set on the court. The different variations of this circuit are designed to be co-operative in nature – focusing on communication, ball control and thinking forward on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball.
- **Variation A – Player 1: “Swing,” Player 2: “Catch-Toss”**
 - **Player 1:** The athlete closest to the net will focus on the effective communication, getting their feet to the ball, making good hand on ball (HOB) contact to place the down ball between Player 2’s knees.
 - **Player 2:** The athlete will catch the down ball and then toss it back high enough for P1 to continue giving repetitive down balls to P2. Focus on high tosses – lower tosses will lead to pace of the drill speeding up to the point of failure.
- **Variation B – Player 1: “Swing-Toss-Catch.” Player 2: “Dig-Set”**
 - **Sequence:** P1 will hit down ball to P2, P2 will dig down ball, P1 will toss their second ball to P2, P1 will catch P2 dig, P2 will set ball and sequence will repeat.
 - **Player 1:** Both volleyballs will start with P1 at the net. P1 focus continues to be getting their feet to the ball and making good HOB contact.
 - **Player 2:** P2 will have an added focus of controlled contracts from both their platform and hands to keep the drill operating efficiently.

**Athletes will switch roles after coach-designated amount of time or successful repetitions.*

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- **Variation C – 2 V. 2 (3 Total Volleyballs)**

This drill remains cooperative in Variations C & D. To increase control, split the court into two halves. Three total volleyballs should be on the court

- **Side 1:** This side should have two volleyballs and Side 2 should have one. P1 will send the first ball to the athlete without a ball (P1) on Side 2.
- **Side 2:** P1 will pass the ball to P2, P2 will quickly toss the ball in their hands to P1. So one ball is in play and one ball is being tossed back and forth between teammates. They will use a pass-set-down ball sequence to send the ball back to the Side 1 athlete without the ball (P2). Side 1 will continue this sequence.

Variations A and B are highly recommended to use separately as a part of your warm-up in addition to or in place of traditional pepper. This adjustment can help allow practices to start off a little more crisply. You can use A-D as a progression style drill.

- **Variation D – 3 V. 3 (5 Total Volleyballs)**

- In this variation of the drill, the concept remains the same. If the ball is in play on your side, you will toss the ball in your hands to the person sending you the live ball (i.e. the athlete setting should toss her ball to the athlete who is passing the ball to her – the athlete who will be hitting the down ball should toss their ball to the setter.)

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