Fundamental Skills Checklist

Overhand Serving

- **Lift** – Palm flat and facing up, “lift” the ball not higher than a ball width (or two) above head
- **Step** – Small, natural step with opposite foot (right-handers: step with left) taken at same time as ball is “lifted”
- **Hand contact on ball** – Contact with palm, hand stiff
- **Arm motion** – Swift, contact ball above head with hand slightly in front of tossing shoulder – like throwing a ball
- **Weight transfer** – Transfer weight from back foot to front foot, through the ball as you make contact
- **Follow through** – Should be high then arm will naturally come back down
- **Cues** – “Present, step/toss, serve”

Underhand Serving

- **Weight** – Start with weight on back foot
- **Non-hitting hand** - Ball held in front of the toe about waist high with opposite hand with eye focused on the ball
- **Arm motion** – Slight toss ball up, and contact the bottom of the volleyball with opposite, closed fist
- **Weight transfer** – Transfer weight from back foot to front foot, through the ball as you make contact
- **Follow through** – Hitting arm toward the top of the net. Back leg and hitting arm should be in line with follow through

Forearm Passing

- **Thumbs aligned** – Position side-by-side
- **Hand-clasp** – Whatever feels natural, so long as thumbs are aligned (hand wrapped around fist, hand layed into other hand, fingers entwined, etc.)
- **Where to contact the ball (platform)** – Ball should be contacted on forearms, above the wrists and below the elbows
- **Foot position (base)** – In moving to where the ball is, shuffle your feet, keeping knees bent and hips/head in a straight, vertical line (not a line that bobs up and down)
- **Step to target** – Once in position, step with whatever foot feels most comfortable (best to step from the right side of the court with the right foot and from the left side with left foot), step in direction of target
- **Arm motion** – Arms should not move higher than shoulders, do not swing arms. Use very little arm motion – DIRECT the ball to your target
- **General body position** – Relaxed shoulders, knees bent, stay down and do not stand up as you pass
- **Relax** – This is not a fast skill, should be done in a relaxed, controlled fashion... don’t “stab” at ball, kind of “shovel” it to target
Overhand Passing

- **Hand position** – Fingers spread and firm, hands in front of face
- **Where to make contact** – Contact with ball should be made in front of face
- **Foot position** – Feet and body must be behind the ball, feet (base) should be comfortable and solid
- **Making contact** – Hands and fingers should remain firm and strong on contact, NOT soft like when you set a hitter
- **Follow through** – As contact is made, push the ball to your target by extending your arms out from your face
- **Be aggressive** – This is an aggressive skill, you have to go to the ball with strong hands and push the ball away from you – you will not be successful this is you just allow the ball to come to you and you play it passively

Setting

- **Hand position on ball** – Form a triangle on ball with thumbs and index fingers, then spread apart so that hands wrap around sides of ball.
- **Where to contact ball** – Hands should be up at forehead when contacting ball (if player takes hands away, ball should hit her in the forehead). Always set from near the forehead, if the pass is low then get forehead low and set from there rather than just dropping hands and setting from chest to midsection
- **Shoulders square with target** – Shoulders/hips should always face the left-front target (front or backsets)
- **Foot position** – You should set off of your right foot and follow through onto your left foot
- **Net position (for setters)** – Sprint to the setting zone on the next (the position between the middle front and right front hitters), get as close to the net as you can without touching it and as you reach this position, “hop” so that you are facing the players on your own court to see the pass coming in
- **Body extension/follow through** – Extend out from feet all the way through hands (like a coil) when setting, you should hold your hands/arms out extended for just a brief moment after completing your set.

Hitting

- **Flamingo** – These are the last two steps of your approach to hit and they should always be the same: a step-close, almost like a hop (very fast) – these steps should also “open” your hips up to the setter (as you actually hit the ball, you will “close” your hips to the net or your opponent’s court)
- **Heel/toe step & jump** – “Flamingo” steps should be heel to toe so that momentum is transferred upward
- **3 or 4 step approach** – Most hitters add a third (and sometimes fourth) step prior to finishing with their “flamingo” steps. These initial steps are generally larger steps designed to get the hitter TO where the ball is along the net
- **Explosive** – Hitting is an explosive skill, not relaxed like passing
- **Arm swing** - Both arms should come back pretty far on the back swing and then both go upward to the ball, cocking your hitting hand up and back, alongside but above your ear, keeping your elbow high
- **Contact ball** – Reach high, contact the ball out in front of hitting shoulder (hitter should be able to see hand on ball, or she is probably too far in front of the ball)
- **Hand on ball** – Open hand, fingers spread and make hand stiff (“like a board”) contacting first with palm
- **Wrist snap** – Snap wrist after initial hand contact on ball so that fingers come over the top to create topspin
- **Follow through** – Follow all the way through ball so hitting hand finishes down at same hip (right hand, right hip)
Floor Defense and Skills

- **Base** – The “base” position in defense is where players start out while the opponent begins their offense. In “base” players are simply protecting the court from “unexpected” occurrences (i.e. an errant pass coming over on the first hit)
- **Read** – As soon as you know the other team is going to set the ball (not send it over on a first or second hit), transition from “base” to a “read” position and try to “read” what the opponent is going to do: who they are setting and what that hitter might be able to do with the ball (tip it, hit it down the line, hit cross-court, etc.). The higher the level of play, the more factors are taken into consideration in the “read” position
- **Defense** – The final phase of playing defense is just that, playing the ball. When the hitter makes contact, STOP your movement and get low (even if you’re not in the right place). If you’re still moving, it will be harder to play it
- **Low position** – Once you get to your “read” position, touch the floor as the set goes to the hitter
- **Feet to the ball** – Take as many steps as necessary to get to the ball. RUN if you have to
- **Play ball** – This should be done BEFORE using any floor skill
- **Use floor skill to recover** – AFTER playing ball, use sprawl or barrel roll to get up from playing a low ball and quickly return to “read” position to play next ball

Blocking

- **Hands** – Palms facing net, about shoulder height (middle-blockers: keep their hands a little higher); thumbs should be parallel to one another, pointing to the ceiling and fingers should be spread
- **Footwork** – Stay close to the net while moving position to position along net, use the “push, drive, slant” method to get from position to another (“push” away from your starting position with your inside foot; “drive” (or run) one of two quick steps toward the hitter’s location on the net; “slant” both of your feet like a “hockey stop” into the position you want to block from – make sure you are slanting both feet at the same time
- **Jumping** – When moving to block, or blocking form a stationary position, “load” your weight into a slight squat and jump from both feet and jump straight up
- **Body position** – Blocker’s hips/shoulders should be facing to the middle-back of the opponent’s court
- **Arm movement** – Reach arms up and “press” from shoulders with a shrug-like motion
- **Hands on ball** – Hands should be almost as far apart as the width of the ball and they should be firm. Outside blockers should turn their outside hands in towards the middle of the court (to prevent deflection of the ball out of bounds)
- **Follow through** – When ball hits your hands, push it back across net (penetrate over net). Do not bend your elbows back and forward to penetrate the net, just “squeeze” your hands over