



SETTING IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

Chuck Erbe, who has won nine national volleyball titles at various levels in twenty-six years of coaching, notes, setters “must have discipline before creativity.” You must be exact as a setter. Once you have perfected the fundamental techniques, you can develop your own style.

Feet to the Ball

- Get to the ball quickly; anticipation and quickness are important.
- Shuffle to place the right foot forward always. This helps prevent balls being set over the net and gives stability and power to the set.

Face and Square to the Target

For most sets you should face the left side of the court antennae or just to the left of it. This is a target that stays consistent on all courts. Your shoulders and hips should be perpendicular to the net. Squaring to target is extremely important for consistent sets. If you are not square (dropping the inside shoulder or turned slightly for example) and pushing the ball at an angle, instead of straight ahead, the ball will float or drift. This cause the hitter to head for where the ball appears to be going, but when the hitter gets there the ball has drifted.

Transition to the Net from Defense

Many setters release from defense either too quickly or too late. The sequence should be as follows:

- Transition to your defensive position and stop.
- As soon as you can tell the ball is not being hit to you, leave as quickly as you can to transition to the net (your offensive position with is to the right of the middle and about 3 feet off the net).
- If you leave too soon, it is called *cheating*, and smart opponents will take advantage by hitting to that empty position.
- If you release too late, any pass that is even slightly close to the net will have to be dug or tipped over. You will not be in a position to set the ball to the hitters.

Anticipating the direction of the ball and releasing at the right time are the most difficult skills a setter has to learn. These skills must be practiced repetitively.

Hands Up Early

Bring your hands up earlier than you think you have to. Your hands should be above your forehead. Many setters’ hands come up late, and they catch the ball chin or chest high. A ball that is set from that position will have a low trajectory and will be more like a shoot set, which is harder to hit.

Big Hands

Your hands should be curved round, in the shape of the ball. Many setters have their hands slightly closed or pinched. Your hands should be big and open, with fingers wide spread. They should be tipped



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back as far as the wrists will allow so the hands form a platform (like a pedestal for the ball to rest on) above the forehead. Your eyes will be looking through a window that is formed by the thumbs and forefingers. If the ball were to come through the hands, it should land on the forehead, or directly between the eyes.

All five fingers of each hand should touch the ball. The more fingers on the ball, the more control. The majority of the ball's weight is on the thumb and the first two fingers of the hand, but all fingers should be used to guide the ball. Your thumbs should face each other or be directed toward your eyes. Make sure they are dropped down so the hands have a ball shape. One of the biggest causes of sprained thumbs is incorrect position.

Quick Release

No "deep dish." That means allowing the ball to come down further than the point of contact. This is an illegal set because there is too much time in the contact. The hands usually are not the cause of the problem; the decrease of the angle between the upper arm and the forearm is the culprit. It is helpful for you to concentrate on releasing the ball quickly.

Extend Up

You should push the hands upward to the ceiling and hold the follow-through. The follow-through should be similar to a superman/superwoman pose (if flying vertical), with no breaststroke action. The follow-through is in the direction of the apex (or height) of the set. The hands remain open with fingers extended toward the ceiling. There should be *no* pinching motion.