



## **JVA Training Curriculum**

### **13U**

#### [Overview](#)

This is the Transition Stage when players make the adjustment from a lighter ball to a women's ball and a lower net to a women's net height. The overall goals for this age are to enhance individual skills while improving reaction time, understand team strategy, and build on basic volleyball IQ. Players should play a variety of positions with emphasis placed on player development first—team development second! As the demands of the game increase, the goal is to maintain a level of hunger to learn and pure enjoyment for the sport.

During this stage the physicality of the athlete can play a larger role in a team's and individual's success. This is a time of transition from self-centered to self-critical. It is important for the athlete to understand the "why" behind the principles he/she is learning, and to also learn to not compare his/her accomplishments to others, but to focus on oneself and the progress made day to day and week to week.

This is the "golden age of learning" and the most important age for development of skill and love of the game. The impact of a role model is very important at this stage of development. Demonstration is very important and the players learn best by "doing." This continues to be an important time to introduce and teach principles of team play and teamwork. It is critical to establish discipline from the beginning.

#### [Coach Description, Requirements and Role](#)

An ideal 13U Coach is a patient teacher who enjoys the process of developing an athlete from the physical and mental aspect. Knowledge and experience of team development/management, as well as advanced skill development is important. A 13U Coach should have the ability to demonstrate themselves OR be able to utilize someone who can (use an assistant coach, create modeling with older players). A 13U Coach can be stern, but needs to also keep the training environment rewarding, positive and fun.

Understanding and competency on how to make line-up adjustments during the game is important for this age group. On top of that, a 13U Coach needs to be able to explain to the athlete WHY a change was made. Open communication is extremely important at the younger age groups.

At this age it is important to find the right times for the athletes to learn to work through tough situations during a game, even if it means dropping a set or losing some points. The athletes need to have the opportunity to fail and grow from it.

A 13U Coach has the important role of enforcing a strong, solid training culture among the athletes and team. Teaching correct skill development and proper technique is essential. The coach must also emphasize that there will be no more parents coaching from the sidelines, or feedback during practice or games, unless the athlete is hurt or there is an emergency. In addition, the athletes need to be encouraged to communicate directly with their coach in regards to their playing time and skill development.

Finally, it is important to be flexible and adapt each and every year to different challenges and different expectations. What you did last year, last month, or last week...it constantly changes!

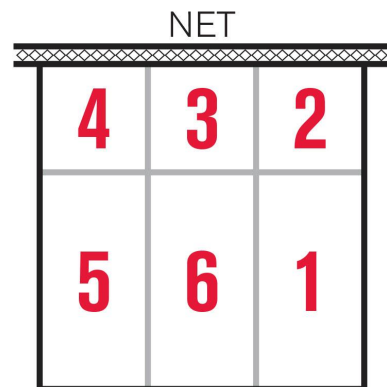
## **Skill Development**

### Serving

Players should be able to execute a float serve consistently below the antenna. Speed of the serve will come as the athletes get older and develop good habits. Focus on consistency to zones, hand placement on ball, and the height of the toss and the serve.

- Technique: Standing Float
  - Posture
    - right handed servers = left foot slightly in front of right
    - left handed servers = right foot slightly in front of left
    - toes pointed towards target
  - Toss
    - toss ball consistently in front of your hitting shoulder
  - Arm Swing
    - start with high hand and elbow back by ear
  - Hand Contact

- contact the ball with the palm of the hand so there is a pop on the ball to create the float serve. If there is pop on the ball there is good contact with the palm. If it is only the heel of the hand that contacts the ball, a thud sound, and if towards the fingers it sounds like a slap.
  - Weight Transfer
    - understand how to take one step and rotate hip through the ball to generate speed and power
- Technique - Introduce Jump Float
  - Footwork
    - 3 step footwork (step hop). First step is with left foot then right-left hop
    - Broad jump into the court
  - Toss
    - Start with a two hand toss
    - Release ball right after first step and before the hop
    - Toss just above reach while jump softly off the ground
    - Can also teach a one hand toss with opposite hand after learning a two hand toss
- Mentality
  - have a consistent serving routine
  - hit the zone given by your coach or serve away from the libero
  - understand when to be aggressive and when to place the ball to disrupt the other team and give your team a chance to defend
- Result
  - able to serve all 6 zones
  - able to serve a standing float below a serving cord (between top of the antenna and the top of net tape)
  - serve the ball at 32-34 mph speed. It is not necessary to focus on the number on a radar gun. This is simply for a reference when comparing to older age groups.



### [Serve Receive/Passing](#)

Players need to develop a soft touch/sound platform...not swing, and to understand the balance and power that comes from their legs and stance. Players will continue to learn the basics of platform adjustment (tilt). Players should be comfortable with basic movement (load and launch/shuffle step). Introduce or reteach passing grades: 3 option pass, 2 option pass, 1 option pass, 0 is an ace. Goal is to avoid 0 grade passes.

- Technique

- Footwork

- Ability to shuffle behind the ball, drop step and t-stop
    - Don't let platform drop between legs when moving
    - Players should not be taking crossover steps when passing a serve receive ball or free ball

- Posture

- Feet at least shoulder width apart. You can consider feet more than shoulder width apart for more balance and platform area between the knees
    - Medium height posture (not super low)
    - Bend at the knees and ankles to create a bottom down position
    - Knees over toes, shoulders over knees
    - Head forward and thumbnails pointed towards the ground



- Eye Work/Depth Perception

- Introduce/reteach reading the serve. Provide ample reps for athletes to practice their depth perception and reaction.
    - Identify if it is going short or deep based on speed of ball and server's arm
    - Depth perception is an acquired skill that takes a ton of work with this age group. Being uncertain if the ball is short/deep is typical at this age group. Coaches need to pick up on cues if their athletes are "squinting" to see the serve or if constantly overrunning the ball or too far away. It's normal to ask them when was the last time they got their eyes checked, because many of them have not been to an eye doctor appointment since they were in elementary school and eye sight can begin to change.
    - Make athlete say "short", "mine" or "deep" as the ball is coming to them
    - Begin to introduce terminology of serves
      - top spin = drop ball

- float = going to move side to side
- Touch
  - Introduce slow ball = PUSH faster with shoulders
  - Introduce fast ball = PUSH slower with shoulders
  - Learn how to cushion the ball for a soft pass and understand “quiet” platform skills.
- Angels
  - Understand how to create an angle by dropping the shoulder to point “platform to target”
  - Left and middle back - take the ball midline or off to your left
- Serve Receive Responsibilities
  - Introduce who is responsible for which seam for the 3 back court passers
  - Whichever passer is closer to the server will take the short seam. For example if the server is serving from the right back corner, the passer in left back on the receiving side will take the short seam.
- Overhand Passing
  - Introduce overhand passing on free balls and serve receive balls. Players should learn and coaches must stress proper body position and posture, hand position and follow through (ball goes up, not out).
  - Players should try to use hands to pass free/down balls in practice to continue to build strength and confidence
  - On serve receive the goal should be to get the feet behind ball first. The 1st reaction should not be to go straight up with hands. Most athletes don’t have the upper body strength to redirect with arms/hands only.
- Mentality
  - No ball hits the ground without effort
  - No fear to pass the serve, want the ball!
  - When communicating on serve receive or passing, encourage athletes to communicate loudly without the fear of being “wrong”. Encourage athletes that it is better to be loud for everyone to hear and read the ball incorrectly (In/Out) than to stay quiet and not risk being wrong.
- Result
  - Being able to pass a free ball and down ball to target
  - Pass grade goal = 2.0 on a 3.0 scale

- Consistently pass free balls to target 60-70%
- Consistently receive serve to target 45-55%

### Setting

This is the age where you are continuing to identify future setters. An athlete may not have set as a 12 year old, but should be given the opportunity to set if he/she shows signs of wanting to be a setter, and he/she also has the ability to be a setter. Seek out your best natural athletes (regardless of height) and train them to set. Have multiple athletes training as setters (at least 3 per team) to create a large pool that will shrink as the athletes move up in age groups. Height should not matter when selecting your setters.

Allow players to set and hit. Running a 6-2 offense allows for setters to hit and hitters to set. Location is more important than tempo. Focus on outside and back sets and being able to push the set to the antenna. Introduce 1st tempo setting while focusing on 2nd and 3rd tempo tempo.

- Technique
  - Footwork
    - understand efficient footwork from base to target position. Take large running steps and then open all the way to the passers with the back to the net
    - able to do *left, right, set* footwork and 4 step footwork to set a pass 10 feet off of the net using *left, right, left, right* footwork
    - able to get hips around the ball and square to the target
    - receive ball over top of forehead (ball should hit your forehead if it were to slip through hands)
    - semi-circle footwork- every setter should be able to do proper footwork to a ball in front of target, off the net and behind the target
  - Hand Shape and Wrists
    - hands in shape of a ball, small triangle and thumbs back
    - pointer finger and thumbs should have even distance of space
    - understand “wrinkles in wrist” and thumbs back



- Introduce 1st tempo setting and manipulating speed of the ball with wrist flick
- finishing with a small triangle follow-through every time
- receiving balls with elbows bent and release with elbows straight on 2nd and 3rd tempo balls
- players can use medicine balls to improve hand and upper body strength
- emphasize starting with big hands, finishing with big hands when releasing the ball and freezing with big hands.
- Legs
  - understand knees bent when you receive the ball/straight when you release the ball
  - Legs are what helps you push the ball to target. Focus on pushing the ball out to the antenna
  - Must have feet under the ball so you can take the weight transfer step
- Out of System Setting
  - Every athlete should be able to platform set a ball 5 feet off of the net and 5 feet inside the court
  - To platform set an out of system ball take the ball sideways and down/up body weight to target
- Tight Passes
  - Setters should learn how to handle tight passes: when and how to go up to meet the ball, when to try and jump set, one-hand set, etc.
  - Practice how to jump without touching the net on the tight passes
  - Setters need to understand that they might get called for being “over” when they are in the back row and that’s okay. However, there will be times when they win the call because they did not hesitate and that’s important for their development in the setting position.
- Mentality/Decision Making
  - Begin to develop decision making and when to set which player and why
  - Begin to teach the athlete to set the “hot” hitter when they are on
  - you can give the same hitter multiple sets in a row
  - Introduce the setter being an offensive option
  - Introduce and train the back row attack as an offensive option, not only an emergency option
  - Introduce play calling on serve-receive and freeballs. During the first part of the season, the coaches can help setters with their calls and options. By the end of

the season let the setters start making more of the choices.

- Result
  - LOCATION IS KEY AT ALL AGE GROUPS
  - Location is more important than tempo at this age
  - put up a hittable ball, even on a poor serve receive pass
  - able to set a 4, 2 and 8 all with hips square to the outside target
  - able to platform set an out of system ball 5 feet off the net and 5 feet inside the court at 60% accuracy

## Attacking

- Technique
  - Footwork and Posture
    - FEET TO THE BALL. Depth perception is a major component and learning to not over run or over plant on the ball. The ball should not be behind the attacker on contact, but at the same time, it can't be so far in front that their shoulders and head are leading/reaching too far in front.
    - Able to make correct 3-step approach (1st step = drive step and 2nd/3rd step = plant step)
    - Shoulders forward
    - Understand arms forward on first step and back on plant step
    - Use arms to explode off the ground
    - Understand how to jump straight up
    - Floating is minimal
    - Understand opening up to the ball and not being flat to the net on the approach.
    - Introduce inside/outside plant step and outside/inside plant step. Set location is more inconsistent at this age, so the plant step might constantly have to change last second.
    - Introduce how to run a slide and jump off one foot so they understand the footwork (not actually using a ball)
    - Able to do proper block transition footwork
      - step, cross, hop footwork
    - Able to do proper base to read defense to transition footwork
      - step, cross hop footwork
    - Able to do proper serve receive to transition footwork
      - turn, run, slant to get all the way outside (even with the 10ft. line)



- Hand Contact
  - Spend quality time perfecting the hand contact. Teach the hard, wide hand, shaped like the ball.
  - Understand how to apply top spin to ball by snapping wrist. Creating spin is the number one thing to learn as a young player
  - Understand to contact the ball with arm fully extended
  - Using the opposite arm/hand is also important. Train attackers to track/spot the ball with their opposite hand while pulling their hitting shoulder back to generate some speed in the swing
- Tools
  - Able to show a swing and “tip”
  - Contact tipping ball with finger pads
  - Able to show a swing and “roll”
- Mentality
  - Shot selection is more important than a kill. Not every attempt has to be a kill. Learn to take a smart swing at the ball to allow the play to continue.
  - If you make a mistake, make an aggressive mistake
  - Always want the ball even after an error
  - Approach hard on every ball
- Result
  - Hit a ball to zone 1 and 5
  - Complete a roll shot
  - Middles should be able to show repetitive transition skills
  - Block, serve receive and play defense then transition to make approach
  - Understand body-to-ball position (Is a ball hittable)
  - Attacking 70-80% of 3rd contact balls
  - Successfully downball attack to 10' x 10' corners 30-40% while showing proper arm swing and wrist snap

## Defense

It is very important to teach defensive range and staying on your feet to play the ball. Floor moves / techniques are the last resort. Repeat footwork appropriate for ball play during training such as run throughs, shuffles, run to the ball and jump stop.



- Technique

- Footwork

- Step, cross hop for base to read
    - Shuffle through a defensive ball
    - Take a big first step to the ball by pushing off opposite leg
    - Step to the ball and then push off FRONT leg to increase defensive range
    - Introduce floor moves and how to execute them (STAYING OFF YOUR KNEE), such as run and roll, run and slide, side layout, barrel roll.

- Posture

- Bending at the knees not the waist
    - Bending at the ankles
    - Weight forward
    - Head and shoulders forward (lead with the head)
    - Hands neutral to be able to play balls with platform or hands

- Positioning

- Understanding base to read and moving to the dig position for one of these defensive systems
      - perimeter
      - rotation
      - Man-up

- Eyework

- Introduce reading the type of pass/set of the opponent and how to make a quick adjustment. Tight passes and sets tend to get tipped, so your back row defenders should crowd in and move more into a rotation defense



- Mentality

- Defense is an Attitude
  - All out pursuit: In practice, train athletes to play the ball off of everything: the wall, bleachers, mats, etc...pursue everything so it's 2nd nature in games. Refs will blow the whistle to end the play, but until then, pursue.
  - Every ball is YOUR ball. No hesitation
  - Mentality to KEEP BALL OFF THE FLOOR

- Result

- No ball hits the floor
  - Be able to dig balls high and off the net

- Perform basic defensive components: Position, Posture, Passion
- Show an understanding of basic defensive systems (freeball, down ball, etc.).
- Dig downballs to target 60-65%

## Blocking

This is the skill you can spend the least amount of time training and focusing on, however it is still important for the players to learn the proper technique, basic footwork, and understand the basic goals of blocking.

- Technique
  - Footwork
    - Feet shoulder width apart, legs loaded
    - Space between you and net
    - Step, cross, hop for middle blocking footwork
  - Hand Shape
    - Fingers spread apart
    - Thumbs pointed towards each other or at a slight angle to the ceiling
    - Keep arms shoulder-width apart when they block, because at this age, most hitters will try and hit away from the block, not in the middle of it.
    - Understand going over the net not straight up
    - Finish hands to Zone 6
  - Set Up & Timing
    - Pin blocker set the block
    - Hitter's hitting shoulder should slice the pin blocker in half
    - Athlete jumps when their attacking arm starts to go forward
    - Understand if the setter is in front row or back row and who your hitter is
    - Only single blocking the middles at this age
  - Vision
    - Introduce on, off, over eye work
- Mentality
  - Learn how to get in front of the hitter every time
  - Block the path before blocking the ball
- Result
  - Know if the setter is back row or front row
  - Be able to find your hitter
  - Be able to do proper footwork to get in front of your hitter

- Understand a stuff block isn't the only successful block
- Teach slowing ball down is equally as helpful

## **Team Systems Development**

- Positions: Even though at this age players will play a variety of positions, they should have a basic understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the setter, the left side hitter, middle hitter, and the libero
- Put players in situations where they are forced to learn other positions by competing in doubles, triples and quads during practice or encourage it outside of practice (beach, grass, 4s tournaments). Cooperative or competitive "Columbus" style drills are also a great way to force the athletes to play all positions.
- Players should understand the service rotation and overlap rules (teach players to understand who they are across from in the line-up)
- Players should know how to sub
- Players should know the rules of the libero position (how they rotate, setting in front of the ten foot line, who they can serve for)
- Court awareness: Knowing when a ball is out of bounds. Transitioning off the court to hit, setters getting to the net first. Defense according to opponent hitting angles and set.
- Importance of communication with teammates: "MINE", "OUT", "IN", etc. Learn it early.
- Players should understand 3 across serve-receive formation
- Offensive Systems: 4-2, 6-2 and 5-1 offense, out of system vs. in system offense, free ball offense according to setter location

While the focus of this age group should be on maintaining balance and learning correct technique, simple defensive tactics need to occur. The tactics need to be implemented and trained, but more importantly...explained. The more cerebral athletes become at an earlier age the better the chance for Volley Savvy athletes in the older age groups. The cerebral part of the game is what will help them get to the next level, whether that be making their high school team in a couple of years or being able to obtain the college scholarship they start dreaming about at 13's. The first three months of the season should be about individual player development, rather than wins and losses.

## **Mental Development**

The number one priority should be to continue to develop pure joy for the game, and an eagerness to learn. Learn to compare yourself to yourself by evaluating your improvement from week to week. Build confidence by evaluating yourself and your own improvement.

Self doubt, self confidence issues, and comparing oneself with others is prevalent at this age. It is important that the athletes stay in a positive headspace to adapt, learn to respond to failure and move onto the next opportunity.

Teaching athletes the importance of a growth mindset should be established during this age, and understanding that it's OK to feel uncomfortable when presented with a challenge or opportunity to change.

Continue to emphasize the importance of respecting the opponent and having good sportsmanship, while also developing the hunger to compete and win. It is important to teach the players to understand they won't win every point and that's okay. Understand they can't dig every ball. It's about "percentages." 2-3 really good kills in the deep corner because your team is choosing to let that be the open hole, beats the 9-10 shots the opponent hits to Zone 6 so you set up defense around the higher percentage shots.

### Strength and Agility Development

It is recommended to do all fitness with the ball through fun and engaging activities.

- Flexibility
- Agility
- Quickness
- Leg strength
- Speed
- Balance
- Plyometrics

At the 13U level athletes will continue to develop an idea for how to win games (serving certain people, hitting open spots on the court, going after someone who is struggling). At this age the preparation before a match, gaining independence, and leadership skills by doing the little things consistently is still coach driven. The mental aspect of the game including visualization, staying focused, and understanding what separates the GOOD athletes from the GREAT athletes is important to teach and develop at this age.