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Let us play volleyball

Volleyball is a popular game all over the world and is a compulsory game in all schools in Sri Lanka. Volleyball is a less expensive game and it can be played in a small area. There are six main skills in volleyball, namely serving, receiving, setting, spiking, blocking and defending.

You may remember that, you have learnt the skills of serving, receiving and setting when you were in the previous grades.

In this grade you will learn the skills of spiking and blocking.

Volleyball – Introduction

In a game of volleyball, there are twelve players in each team. Among them, one or two are nominated as libero players. During the play, six players take part. Out of them, three players should be positioned in the front and the other three should be positioned at the back. They are called front-row players and back-row players respectively.

A team gets the opportunity to choose a libero player as one out of six. The libero player acts as a back-row player, but there are restrictions and rules on how a libero player is allowed to play.

Spiking

Spiking can simply be defined as hitting the ball that is above the net so that it goes straight over the net on to the opposite side. Except for serving and blocking, any other action which directs the ball towards the opponent can be considered as spiking.

Spiking can be described in several stages for easy understanding of the technique.



Figure 5.1 - Spiking

Approach

- Reaching the part of the court where the ball is up in the air in order to hit the ball is called the approach.

Take-off

- After reaching the area of the court under the ball, jumping up towards the ball is called take-off.
- When taking off, first the knees are bent and the body is leaned downwards.
- Swinging the two hands backwards as the body moves downwards helps make an easy take-off.
- Together with the take-off, the body should be bent backwards like a bow and the two hands should be brought upwards from the front of the body.

Hitting the ball

- The hitting hand should be brought back over the head and the ball should be hit as the body is brought forwards very fast.
- When hitting the ball, the hitting hand should be well straightened and should hit at the highest possible level.
- When hitting the ball, the free hand should be held freely at the level of the head in front of the body.
- The eyes should be focused on the ball.

Landing

After hitting the ball, the player should land on the ground maintaining the balance of the body by bending his knees.



Let us go outdoor

Activities to practise spiking

1. > Take a volleyball.
 - > Toss the ball up with the non-dominant hand.
 - > Hit the upper part of the tossed ball hard with the dominant hand.
 - > Do this activity as many times as possible.



Figure 5.2

2. > Toss the ball up with both hands.
 - > After tossing the ball, jump and hit it hard.



Figure 5.3

3. > Fix a net in the playground so that the net lies above the level of your raised hands.
 - > Now take a volleyball and throw it up above the net.
 - > Now jump up and hit the ball so that it lands on the opposite side of the court.
 - > Continue practising this activity, gradually increasing the height of the net.

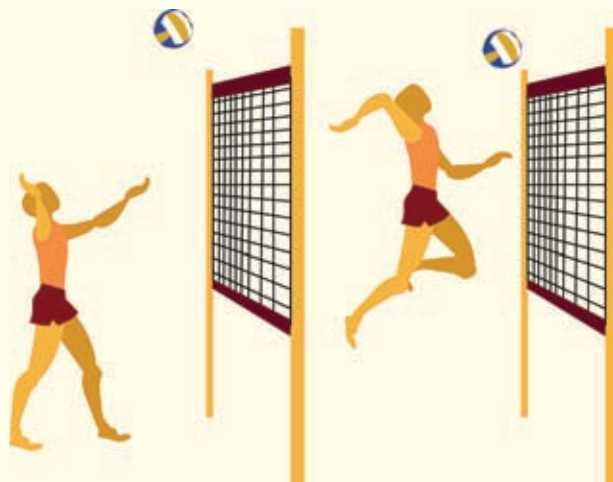


Figure 5.4

4. > Ask a friend to toss the ball up into the air close to the net.
 - > Jump up and hit the ball so that it lands on the opposite side of the court.



Figure 5.5

5. > Take a volleyball and bounce it fast on the ground so that it bounces into the air above your head.
 - > As the ball bounces, jump up and hit the ball.

- > The speed at which the ball should be bounced has to be determined according to your jump.

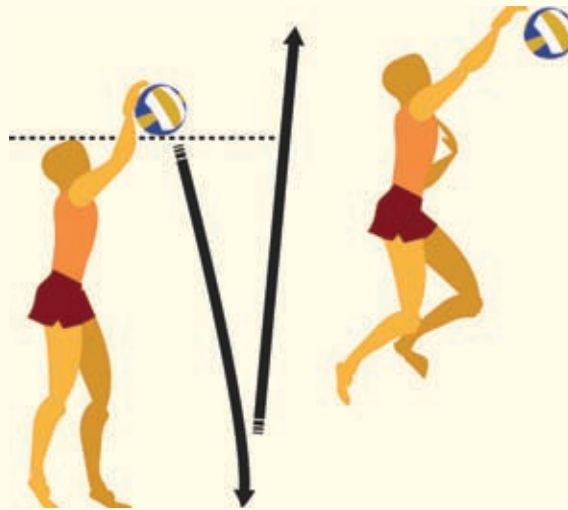


Figure 5.6

6. > Do the activity described above together with a friend.
 - > When one of you bounce the ball on the ground, the other can jump up and hit the ball.
 - > Continue doing this activity changing roles.



Figure 5.7

Factors that should be taken into consideration when spiking

- While spiking, the ball should not be caught or thrown.
- Should not hit the ball while the ball is in the opponent's side.
- After hitting, the ball should land on the opposite side of the court.
- A front-row player can hit the ball at any height within the player's own playing space.
- But a front-row player cannot hit the ball that is served, when it is completely above the top level of the net.
- A back-row player can hit the ball at any height, from the back zone.
- A back-row player may also hit the ball from the front zone, but at the time at least a part of the ball should be below the top level of the net.
- On any occasion, a libero player cannot hit a ball that is above the top level of the net.
- No player in the same side can hit the ball that is lifted by the libero player in the front zone, if it is completely above the top level of the net.

Blocking

Blocking is obstructing the ball coming from the opposite side, when it is above the net, by a front row player, before it enters their side.

Only front-row players are permitted to block. At the time the blocker is in contact with the ball, a part of the body of that player should be above the top level of the net.

In order to secure victory in a game of volleyball, blocking the ball is as important as spiking. Blocking, which is an action that should be done against the spiking of the opponents, should take place at the same time the ball has been spiked. When the ball is hit by the opponents, the challenge can be reduced by blocking it at the net. Therefore, as a volleyball player, you should diligently practise the skill of blocking.

The technique of blocking, too, can be described in several steps:

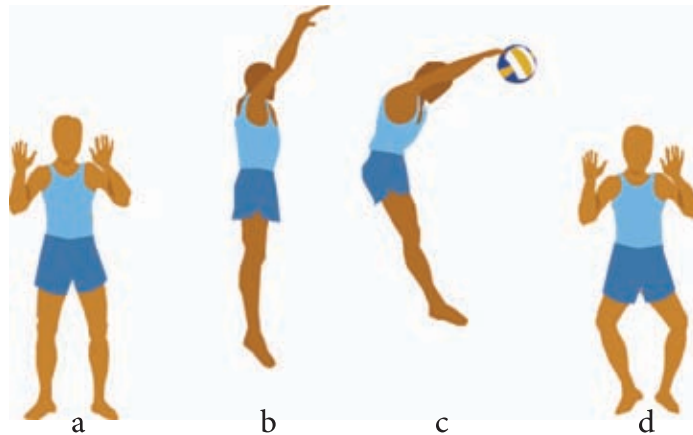


Figure 5.8 - Blocking

Preparation

- Stand facing the net with legs shoulder-width apart, keeping the body in a balanced position.
(5.8 a)

Approaching the ball

- Anticipate the place where the ball is going to land and approach it.

Taking off and touching the ball

- Bend the hands at the elbows, raise them and position them on either side of the head.
- Spread the fingers and hold with your palms facing towards the net.
- Bend the knees and then jump up.
- As the blocker is up in the air, the hands should be placed over the net directed towards the opponents' court.
(5.8 b,c)

Landing

- Landing should be done on the balls of the feet.
- After landing, the two hands should be brought down.
- Body balance should be maintained by bending the knees.
(5.8 d)



Let us go outdoor

Activities to practise blocking

1. > Take a volleyball and go to a playground or an open place.
 - > Stand with your legs a shoulder-width apart.
 - > Hold the ball with both hands and raise the hands with the ball.
 - > Now bend the hands at the wrist and make the ball fall fast on to the ground close to your feet.
 - > Do this activity as many times as possible.



Figure 5.9

2. > Join with a friend who is of different height from yours.
 - > The taller one should hold the ball in one hand and keep that hand raised from a side.
 - > The other should jump up a little and make the ball fall on the ground in the same way it was done in the previous activity.
 - > Do this activity as many times as possible.



Figure 5.10

3. > Go to a volleyball court or to an open space where a net has been fixed. Get into pairs.
 - > One should stand at the back of the court and send the ball over the net.
 - > The other should stand in front and should block the ball jumping up.
 - > Before doing the blocking, the blocker should keep the two legs a shoulder-width apart, lower the body by bending the knees and be prepared to jump up.
 - > All the participants should do this activity changing roles.



Figure 5.11

Factors to be considered for effective blocking

- A blocker should not touch the ball that is in the opponent's side before an opponent hit the ball.
- Blocker's hands should not be placed over the top level of the net before the ball has been spiked by an opponent.
- Blocking cannot be done by a back-row player or the libero player.



Activity

Engage in playing volleyball following the rules of spiking and blocking.

Summary

For a game of volleyball, a team requires six players – three front-row players and three back-row players.

Both the skills of spiking and blocking are very important in order to secure victory in volleyball.

Spiking is to hit the ball that is in the air above the net to send it to the opposite side. Spiking can be described under four stages, namely approach, take-off, hitting the ball and landing.

When the ball is coming from the opponent's side, obstructing it before it enters the other side is called blocking. Blocking is done in four stages namely, preparation, approaching the ball, taking-off and contacting the ball and landing.

Rules of spiking and blocking should be followed in order to execute a successful spiking or blocking.

You can develop these skills by engaging in simple practice activities.



Exercise

1. Execute the spiking and the blocking by following their techniques step by step.
2. Write three factors for each, to be taken into consideration when spiking and blocking.