

TEAM SYSTEMS – Designing a Defense

PRINCIPLES

- Put your **best defensive players** where most of the balls go (and where things happen the fastest)
- Volleyball is a visual/motor game so what you see is of utmost importance
- Simple defensive systems are better than complex defensive systems
- Hitters tend to hit the ball where the set takes them
- Design your defensive systems around the abilities of your players
- At certain levels of play, more blockers are better than fewer blockers
- At certain levels of play, fewer blockers are better than more blockers
- Tactics are dictated by trends

If Principle 1 is the most important principle then we have to answer these two important questions:

Where do most of the balls go? (See the following chart and the density maps). Who are our best defensive players?

There are, of course, other defensive considerations. To discuss some of them let's look at how we recommend your team play defense

RECOMMENDED BLOCK AND DEFENSE

Basic Defensive Postures

Blockers stance

Hands are chest high and comfortable

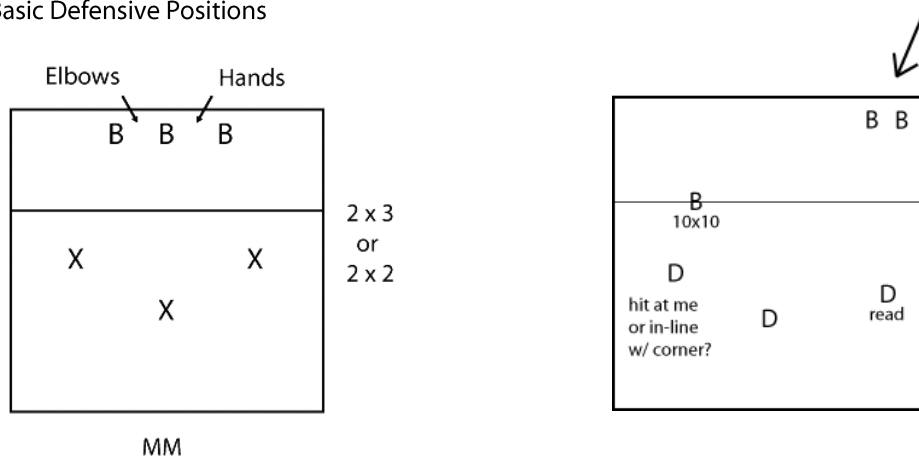
On bad passes, or when there's no quick, blockers hands drop

Ready to run and/or jump – Be athletic

Back row stance

Feet apart, knees bent, arms ready (same as for forearm passing)

Basic Defensive Positions



Note: 2 by 3 or 2 by 2 = big steps not feet or meters

READ A HITTER

1 –

2 –

3 –

4 –

5 –

DIGGING TARGET

10 x 20. Don't ever dig a ball over the net
See managing the game study

BASIC BLOCKING CONCEPTS

Great blocking is composed of (at least) these main components.

SERVING

To block effectively a team has to be able to serve teams out of perfect passes. The object of a jump serve is not to ace the opponent (aces are a bonus), but to keep the receiver from making a perfect pass. The worst thing you can do is miss a serve.

EYEWOR

Volleyball is a VISUAL/motor game so what you see is of utmost importance. Blockers should be taught to look at ball, setter, ball, ball, ball, hitter. If only one out of 20 balls is passed over the net, it is important to look quickly to the setter and not spend a lot of time looking at a ball that is not coming over.

FOOT-AND-ARMWORK

Where blockers stand, how they stand (ready to run and jump) and how they run (the various footwork patterns) are vital. We like our blockers to use their arms when they jump.

GET OVER-THE-NET-WOR

The object is to get over - this is more important than jumping high. Wherever you are, get square to the net and reach over (don't reach sideways for the ball). This is where the rubber meets the road.

TACTICS (Cost/benefit analyses, based on trends)

Wing blockers

- Help/don't help with quick
- **Load**
- Dedicate (2 step rule)

Middles

- Dedicate (2 step rule) / Don't dedicate
- Front / Don't front
- **Load**

Other Tactics

- Bunch or Spread Read
- Front
- Trap

The key to the success of the system is in scouting (and great eyework for those of you who can't scout). Every team has offensive tendencies, things they like to do, and players they like to go to. The discovery and utilization of this information is the key to putting the tactics in place. Without this knowledge you cannot have the proper cost/benefit analysis.

To implement these systems it sure is nice to train at least two "Blockheads". Blockheads are responsible for these things:

- Setting up in the middle of the court and establishing the correct spacing
- Telling where the hitters are
- Choosing the right system
- Deciding when not to block

IMPORTANT VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| • Bunch Read | • Turn the Hitter In | • See the set, see and know the hitter, get over the net and block the ball |
| • Spread Read | • Get on the Hitter Soon | • Blocking trips |
| • Lead with Your Hands | • Loaded | |
| • Big second step (blocking) | • Ready to Jump and Move | |

THREE KINDS OF SETTERS

- 1
- 2
- 3

COORDINATING YOUR BLOCK AND BACK-ROW DEFENSE

HUGH MCCUTCHEON – HEAD COACH, USA WOMEN’S NATIONAL TEAM (2009-2012)

For teams to become great defensively the blockers and back-row defenders must be on the same page. The quality of the opponent’s serve reception is a visual cue that both the front and back row defenders can attend to. It also dictates the type of offense the opponents can run. Therefore we should try and become very good at identifying the quality of the pass and then implement the appropriate defensive strategy.

DEFENDING WHEN THE PASS IS PERFECT:

- Signals?
- Ball-Setter-Ball-Hitter, the PREMIER skill in Volleyball
- What does “Head-up” mean? “Most hitters hit the ball in the direction the set takes them.”
- What about over-running the hitter?
- Know your opponents distribution on a perfect pass
- Where should you start your back row defenders?
- Should you front the Quick/Slide?
- Should your wing blockers help with the quick?
- What should you do with your non-blocker?
- Put your best defenders in the areas where most of the balls get hit
- Get stopped, be balanced and neutral, and dig the ball

DEFENDING WHEN THE PASS IS GOOD/MEDIUM:

- Where does “in-system” end and “out-of-system” begin?
- READ, READ, READ!
- Wing help
- Always try for “3” – maybe you get it. If not, tips are covered
- Train your MB’s not to follow (unless a pattern is evident)

DEFENDING WHEN THE PASS IS BAD:

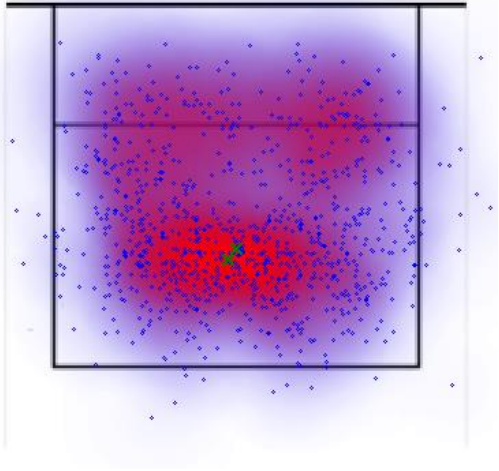
- 3-person blocking if possible (if more blockers are better than fewer blockers in your league)
- Take the line, line defender in the 1/6 or 5/6 seam looking for tips and touches
- Middle back toward the corner
- Left back starts inside the block – maybe they don’t finish there

ATTACK DISTRIBUTION. BYU WVB ~1984. COURTESY CRAIG CHOATE

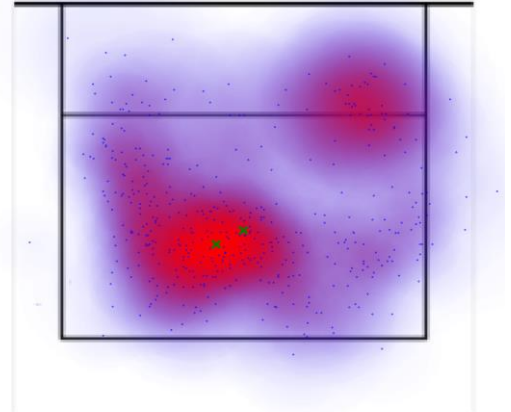
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LMU WVB, WCC CONFERENCE - JOE TRINSEY

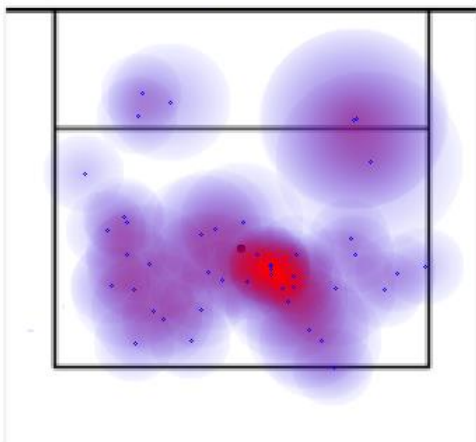
All Attacks



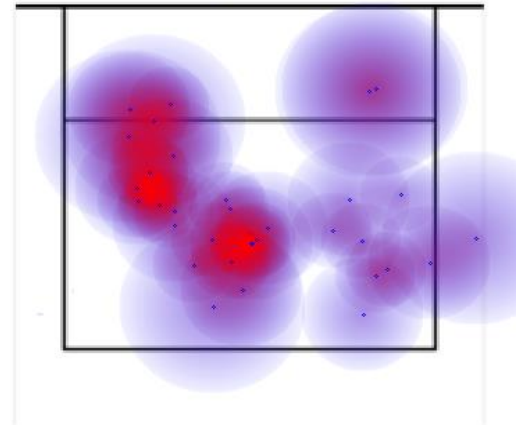
All Go



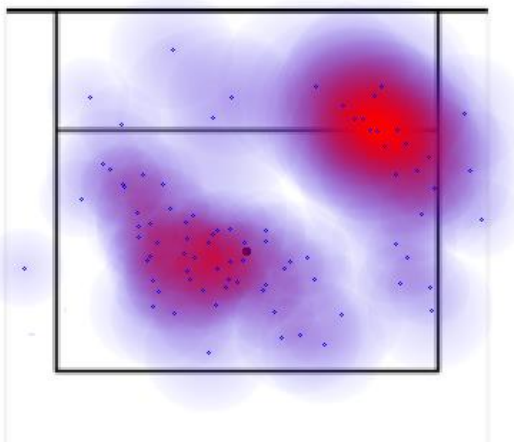
Player A Go



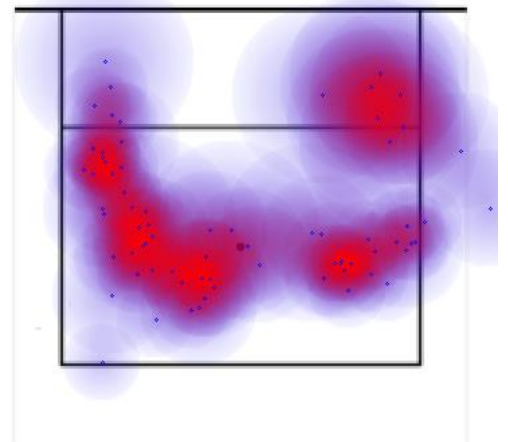
Player B Go



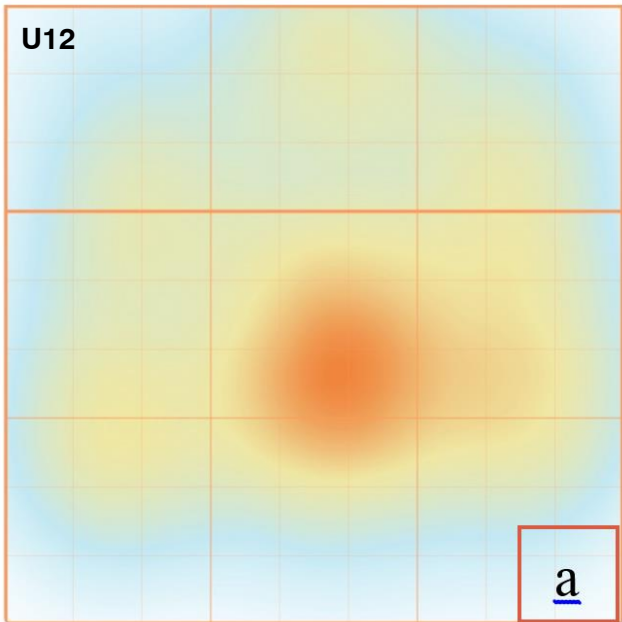
Player C Go



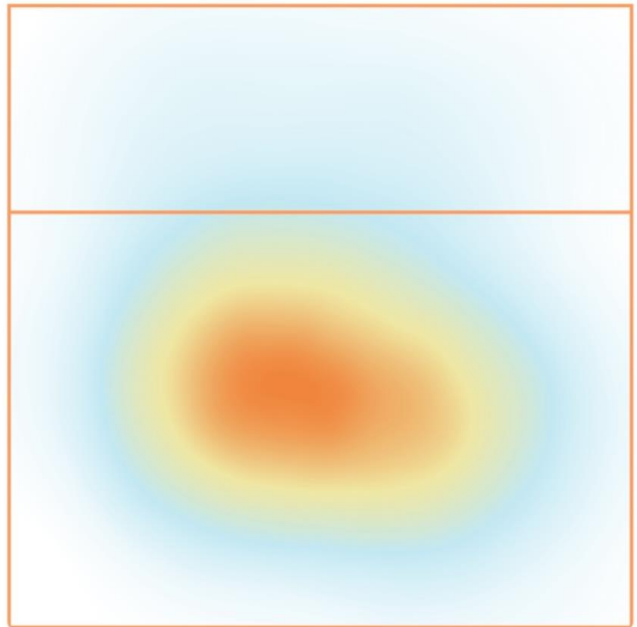
Player D Go



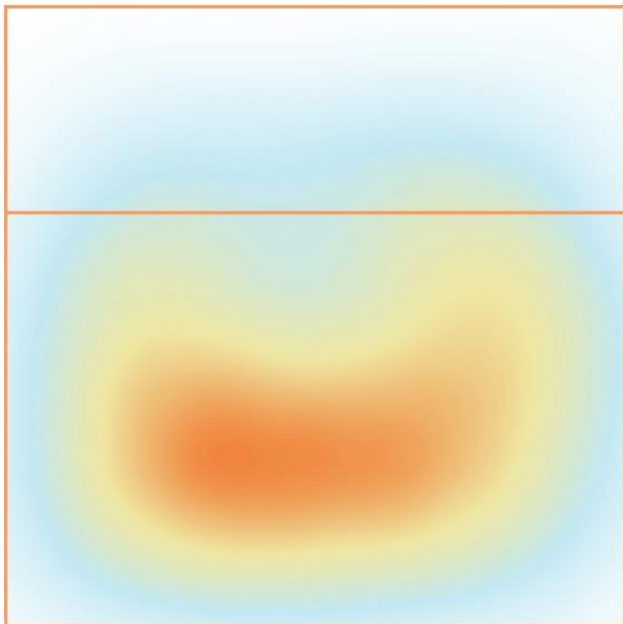
POWER VS DEPTH HEATMAPS – JOE TRINSEY



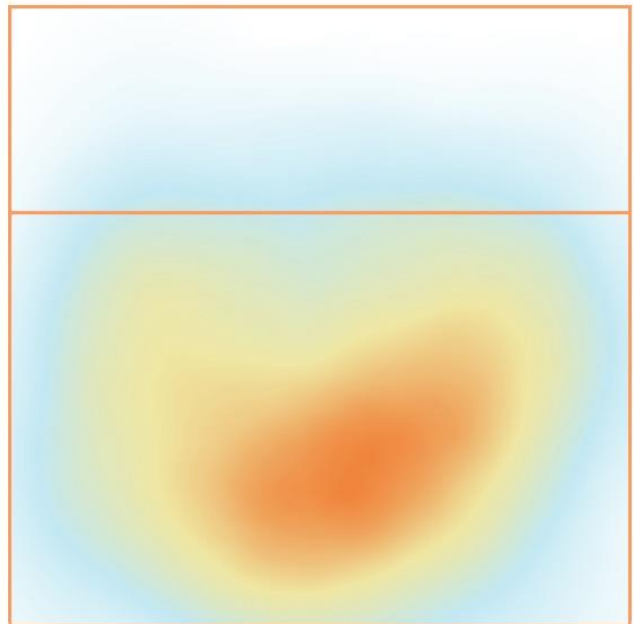
U16 - All Attacks



15 WC - All Attacks

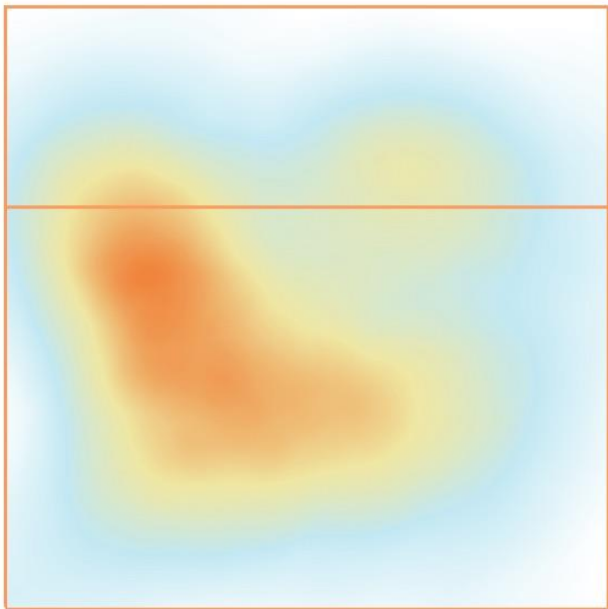


Pro Men

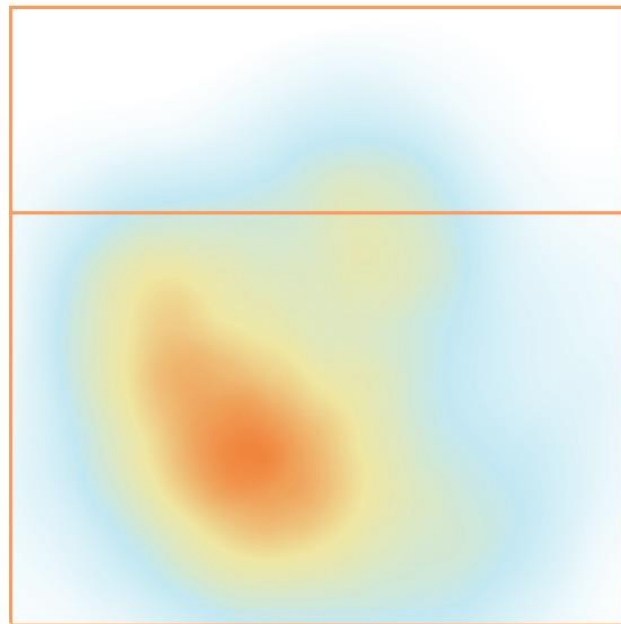


WHERE THE SET TAKES YOU – JOE TRINSEY

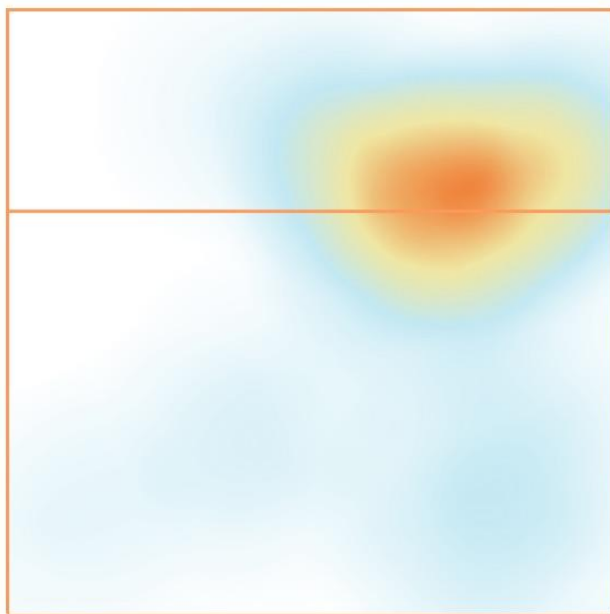
Go Attacks From Inside Sets



Go Attacks from "Off" Sets



Go Attacks From Tight Sets



Go Attacks From Wide Sets

