SEASON CURRICULUM & PRACTICE PLAN GUIDE

CSA GIRLS VOLLEYBALL · GRADES 1–6

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9-Week Season · 1 Practice Per Week · 60-Minute Sessions

Cajun Sports Association · Lafayette, Louisiana

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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide gives you a complete week-by-week practice plan for the 9-week CSA volleyball season. Each plan is designed for a **60-minute session** and follows the same four-segment structure every week. The content scales by grade division — use the plan for your specific grade group and adapt as needed based on your players' progress.

> **Core Principle:** Every player should touch the ball as many times as possible in every practice. Maximize repetitions. Minimize lines. If players are standing still for more than 60 seconds, restructure the drill.

THE 60-MINUTE PRACTICE STRUCTURE

Every practice follows this four-segment structure. Times are guidelines — adjust based on your group's needs, but maintain the sequence.

SEGMENT	TIME	PURPOSE	FORMAT
1. Warm-Up & Ball Control	15 min	Physical preparation, individual touch, partner work	Individual or pairs
2. Serving	10 min	Grade-appropriate serving repetitions; progressive distance	Individual lines or stations
3. Skill Focus / Passing	15 min	Primary skill of the week; passing, setting, or serve receive	Small groups or pairs
4. Team Play / Scrimmage	20 min	Game-like application, rotation practice, competitive play	Full team or modified game

SEASON PHASES AT A GLANCE

PHASE	WEEKS	THEME	KEY SKILLS
Phase 1 — Foundation	1–3	Individual skills & ball control	Platform pass, underhand serve, rotation basics
Phase 2 — Development	4–6	Team concepts & skill progression	Overhand serve, setting intro, serve receive, communication
	7–9		

PHASE	WEEKS	THEME	KEY SKILLS
Phase 3 — Application		Game play & tournament prep	Pass-Set-Hit system, game-like drills, competitive play

SERVING DISTANCES BY GRADE — QUICK REFERENCE

GRADE	SERVE TYPE	DISTANCE	NOTES
1st & 2nd	Underhand only	10-foot line	Every server serves 3 times, no matter what
3rd	Underhand or Overhand	UH: 15 ft · OH: 10 ft	Player chooses; encourage overhand attempts. Max 5 points in a row per server in games
4th	Underhand or Overhand	20 feet	Begin pushing toward overhand from 20 ft. Max 5 points in a row per server in games
5th	Underhand or Overhand	22 feet	Max 5 points in a row per server in games
6th	Underhand or Overhand	End line (30 feet)	Max 5 points in a row per server in games

PHASE 1 — FOUNDATION (WEEKS 1-3)

Focus: Individual ball control, passing platform mechanics, underhand serve, and basic rotation. Establish team culture and communication habits from Day 1.

WEEK 1 — FIRST CONTACT

PHASE 1

Introductions · Platform Mechanics · Underhand Serve

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL — 15 MIN

- Name game: each player says their name and does a movement (others copy)
- Self-toss and catch: toss ball above head, let it bounce once, catch — get comfortable with the ball
- Partner toss and catch: 10 feet apart, underhand toss, two-hand catch
- Introduce the platform: arms together, thumbs parallel, elbows locked, contact between wrists and elbows

SERVING — 10 MIN

- Teach underhand serve mechanics: step with opposite foot, swing arm like a pendulum, contact the bottom of the ball
- All grades: serve into the net from close range first, then back up to grade-appropriate line
- Goal: every player gets 8–10 serve attempts

SKILL FOCUS — PASSING — 15 MIN

- Coach tosses ball to each player; player passes back to coach using platform
- Key cues: "Thumbs down, elbows locked, platform to the target"
- Focus on platform formation — accuracy is secondary this week

TEAM PLAY — 20 MIN

- Introduce court positions (1–6) and clockwise rotation
- Play a modified game: coach tosses ball over net to start each rally; teams play it out
- Emphasize calling "mine" before every contact

> **Coaching Tip:** Week 1 is about culture, not perfection. Learn every player's name. Celebrate every attempt. Set the tone that this is a safe place to try and fail.

WEEK 2 — PLATFORM PASSING

Passing Accuracy · Serve Consistency · Communication

PHASE 1

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL 15 MIN

- Individual: self-bump (bump the ball to yourself, keep it going) — count consecutive contacts
- Partner passing: 10 feet apart, pass back and forth — goal is 5 consecutive without the ball hitting the floor
- Introduce "belly button to the ball" — always face the incoming ball before passing

SERVING 10 MIN

- Underhand serve from grade-appropriate line — focus on consistency over power
- 3rd grade: introduce overhand serve mechanics (toss, reach, snap wrist) from close range
- Goal: 10 serve attempts per player; track how many clear the net

SKILL FOCUS — PASSING TO TARGET 15 MIN

- Place a hula hoop or cone at the setter position (right front, position 2/3)
- Coach tosses; player passes to the target zone
- Progression: increase toss distance and vary angles as players improve

TEAM PLAY 20 MIN

- Modified game with rotation: each time the serve changes, the new serving team rotates
- Coach starts each rally with a toss (no serve yet for 1st/2nd; 3rd+ serve)
- Reinforce "mine" calls and rotation movement

> **Coaching Tip:** Passing to a target is a big jump. Don't expect accuracy yet — reward the attempt and the correct platform form. Accuracy comes with repetition.

WEEK 3 — SERVE RECEIVE BASICS

Reading the Serve · Serve Receive Positioning · Rotation Review

PHASE 1

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL 15 MIN

- Partner passing: increase distance to 15 feet — maintain platform form
- Movement drill: coach points left/right, players shuffle; then coach tosses — player passes back
- Introduce "ready position": knees bent, weight forward, hands together, eyes on the ball

SERVING 10 MIN

- All grades: serve from grade-appropriate line — focus on placement (aim for corners)
- 4th grade: introduce serving from 20 feet if not already there
- 5th: serve from 22 feet; 6th: serve from end line; work on consistency before adding power

SKILL FOCUS — SERVE RECEIVE 15 MIN

- Introduce basic serve receive: 3 players in a line across the back row
- Coach serves (or tosses) from the other side; back row players call the ball and pass to target
- Key concept: the player closest to the ball calls "mine" — others move out of the way

TEAM PLAY 20 MIN

- Full game with live serving (all grades use grade-appropriate serve line)
- Emphasize rotation each time the serve comes to your team. In 1st–2nd, that is after the other server's three serves, not after a lost rally
- Debrief: ask players "What position are you in? Who serves next?"

> **Coaching Tip:** By Week 3, players should know their rotation and call "mine" consistently. If rotation is still shaky, spend extra time on it — it is the foundation for everything in Phase 2.

PHASE 2 — DEVELOPMENT (WEEKS 4-6)

Focus: Overhand serve progression, introduction of setting, team communication, and the Pass-Set-Hit concept. Players begin connecting individual skills into team sequences.

WEEK 4 — OVERHAND SERVE & SETTING INTRO

PHASE 2

Overhand Serve Mechanics · What Is a Set? · Setting Hand Position

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL 15 MIN

- Individual: alternate self-bump and self-set — get comfortable with overhead contact
- Partner: one player bumps, one player sets — switch after 5 contacts
- Introduce setting hand position: hands form a triangle above forehead, contact with fingerpads not palms

SERVING 10 MIN

- 3rd/4th/5th/6th: overhand serve mechanics from close range (10 feet) — toss high, reach tall, snap wrist
- Progress back to grade-appropriate line as mechanics improve
- 1st/2nd: continue underhand serve from 10-foot line; focus on consistency

SKILL FOCUS — SETTING 15 MIN

- Self-set: toss ball above head, set to self, catch — repeat 10 times
- Partner set: toss to partner, partner sets back — goal is 3 consecutive sets without catching
- Key cues: "Hands up early, push through the ball, extend arms fully"

TEAM PLAY 20 MIN

- Introduce the concept of a designated setter: position 2 (right front) always tries to set the second ball
- Play game; encourage (but don't require) the Pass-Set-Hit sequence
- Celebrate any successful 3-contact sequence, regardless of outcome

> **Coaching Tip:** Setting is the hardest skill to teach at this age. Don't penalize carries aggressively — focus on the hand position and the intent. Improvement comes over multiple seasons.

WEEK 5 — PASS-SET-HIT SEQUENCE

Connecting the Three Contacts · Downball Hitting · Court Awareness

PHASE 2

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL 15 MIN

- 3-person groups: player 1 passes to player 2 (setter), player 2 sets to player 3, player 3 catches — rotate positions
- Focus: passer calls "mine," setter calls "set," hitter calls "hit" — build communication habits

SERVING 10 MIN

- All grades: serve from grade-appropriate line; focus on serving to specific zones (deep corners, short)
- 5th/6th: overhand serve from grade line (5th: 22 feet; 6th: end line) — track accuracy (aim for back half of court)

SKILL FOCUS — DOWNBALL & HITTING 15 MIN

- Introduce downball: standing behind 10-foot line, toss to self, contact ball with open hand driving it over the net
- 3rd/4th: downball only (no jump required)
- 5th/6th: introduce 3-step approach: right-left-right (for right-handers), jump, reach, contact
- Key cue: "Reach high, contact the top of the ball, follow through"

TEAM PLAY 20 MIN

- Game with a rule: every team must attempt at least two contacts before sending the ball over
- Award a bonus point for any successful 3-contact sequence
- Coach narrates: "That was a pass — now set it — now hit it!" to reinforce the sequence

> **Coaching Tip:** The bonus point for 3-contact sequences is a powerful motivator. Players will start to understand WHY the sequence matters — not just that they're supposed to do it.

WEEK 6 — SERVE RECEIVE & TEAM DEFENSE

W-Formation · Base Defense · Free Ball Transition

PHASE 2

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL 15 MIN

- Partner passing: increase distance; work on passing while moving laterally
- Introduce "free ball" concept: when the opponent sends an easy ball, your team transitions to offense

SERVING 10 MIN

- Serving to specific targets — place cones in the back corners; players aim for them
- Competition: team earns a point for every serve that lands within 3 feet of a cone

SKILL FOCUS — SERVE RECEIVE FORMATION 15 MIN

- 5th/6th: introduce "W" formation — 5 players in a W shape across the back two-thirds of the court
- 3rd/4th: simplified version — 3 back-row players spread across the baseline, 3 front-row players at net
- Coach serves; team receives and attempts to run Pass-Set-Hit

TEAM PLAY 20 MIN

- Full game with live serving; emphasize serve receive formation before each serve
- When a team receives a free ball, coach calls "FREE BALL!" — team must transition to offense

> **Coaching Tip:** Week 6 is the midpoint. Pause for 5 minutes and ask players: "What's one thing you've gotten better at this season?" Recognition of personal growth is a powerful motivator.

PHASE 3 — APPLICATION (WEEKS 7-9)

Focus: Applying all skills in game-like situations. Tournament preparation. Competitive drills. Building team identity and confidence heading into the end-of-season tournament.

WEEK 7 — GAME-LIKE DRILLS

PHASE 3

Competitive Drills · Pressure Situations · Serve & Receive Under Pressure

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL 15 MIN

- "Pepper" drill (3rd+): player 1 passes to player 2, player 2 sets to player 1, player 1 hits back to player 2 — continuous loop
- 1st/2nd: partner passing rally — count consecutive passes without the ball hitting the floor

SERVING 10 MIN

- Serving competition: each player gets 5 serves; score 1 point for in, 2 points for landing in the back half
- Team total — creates low-stakes competitive pressure similar to game situations

SKILL FOCUS — COMPETITIVE PASSING DRILL 15 MIN

- "Queen of the Court": 3v3 on a half-court; winning team stays, losing team rotates off; first to 3 points wins the side
- Emphasize communication and calling the ball — no silent contacts

TEAM PLAY 20 MIN

- Full game with tournament rules (rally scoring, standard rotation, live serving)
- Coach observes and takes notes on individual player growth for end-of-season recognition

> **Coaching Tip:** Introduce a little competitive pressure this week — it prepares players for the tournament. Keep it fun, but let them feel what it's like to play for something.

WEEK 8 — TOURNAMENT PREPARATION

Tournament Rules Review · Rotations Under Pressure · Mental Preparation

PHASE 3

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL 15 MIN

- Team warm-up: players lead their own warm-up (coach observes) — builds ownership
- Partner serving warm-up: one player serves, partner receives and passes to target

SERVING 10 MIN

- Review tournament serving rules for each grade
- Each player serves from tournament distance — focus on consistency and in-bounds percentage

SKILL FOCUS — ROTATION QUIZ 15 MIN

- Put 6 players on the court; call out a score scenario — "We just got the serve back from position 4 — where does everyone move?"
- Rotate through different scenarios; every player should know their position at any point in the game
- Reinforce: "Know where you are. Know who serves next."

TEAM PLAY — SIMULATED TOURNAMENT MATCH 20 MIN

- Play a full simulated tournament match: best 2 of 3 sets, full tournament rules
- Coach acts as referee — call faults, track score, run time-outs
- Debrief: "What did we do well? What do we want to be better at next week?"

> **Coaching Tip:** The rotation quiz is one of the highest-value activities of the season. Players who know their rotation don't panic in games. Run it fast and make it fun — not a test.

WEEK 9 — TOURNAMENT WEEK

Light Practice · Mental Readiness · Team Unity

PHASE 3

WARM-UP & BALL CONTROL 15 MIN

- Keep it light and fun — no new skills this week
- Favorite warm-up drill voted on by the team

SERVING 10 MIN

- Each player serves 5 times from tournament distance — build confidence, not pressure
- Celebrate every successful serve

SKILL FOCUS — TEAM HIGHLIGHTS 15 MIN

- Coach shares one specific improvement they've noticed in each player — out loud, in front of the team
- Quick review of tournament format: bracket, schedule, what to bring, arrival time

TEAM PLAY — FUN SCRIMMAGE 20 MIN

- Scrimmage with fun rules: bonus point for ace serves, bonus point for 3-contact sequences
- End practice with a team cheer — let the players choose it
- Remind players: "You've worked hard all season. Go have fun at the tournament."

> **Coaching Tip:** Week 9 practice is about confidence and energy — not skill work. Your players are ready. Your job this week is to remind them of that.

APPENDIX

DRILL LIBRARY — QUICK REFERENCE

Use these drills to supplement or replace segments in the weekly plans. All drills are designed to maximize ball contacts and minimize standing time.

PEPPER (PAIRS)

Grade: 3rd+ | Players: 2 | Time: 5–10 min | Skill: Passing, Setting, Hitting

Player A passes to Player B. B sets back to A. A hits (or downballs) back to B. B digs and the cycle continues. Goal: keep a continuous rally going. Count consecutive contacts without the ball hitting the floor.

QUEEN OF THE COURT

Grade: 3rd+ | Players: 6–12 | Time: 10–15 min | Skill: All skills, competition

Split court into two halves. 3v3 on each side. Winning team (first to 3 points) stays. Losing team rotates off and a new team rotates on. Creates competitive pressure in a fun, fast format. Also called King of the Court — it is the same drill.

SERVE AND SHAG

Grade: All | Players: Full team | Time: 8–10 min | Skill: Serving

Half the team serves from one side; the other half retrieves (shags) balls on the other side. After each player serves 5 balls, teams switch. Fast-paced, maximizes serve repetitions.

TOSS-PASS-SET-CATCH

Grade: 3rd+ | Players: 3 | Time: 8–10 min | Skill: Passing, Setting, Sequence

Player 1 tosses to Player 2. Player 2 passes to Player 3 (setter position). Player 3 sets back to Player 1, who catches. Rotate positions every 5 repetitions. Teaches the Pass-Set sequence without the pressure of a full rally.

DOWN THE LINE PASSING

Grade: All | Players: 4–6 | Time: 8–10 min | Skill: Passing, Movement

Players line up on one side of the court. Coach stands on the other side of the net and tosses balls to various positions. Players must move to the ball, pass it back over the net, and return to the line. Teaches movement to the ball before passing.

SERVE RECEIVE TRIANGLE

Grade: 4th+ | Players: 3 | Time: 10 min | Skill: Serve receive, passing

Three players form a triangle: one server, one passer, one target (setter). Server serves from grade-appropriate line. Passer receives and passes to the target. Target catches and feeds ball back to server. Rotate every 5 serves. Simulates game serve receive in a small group.

COACH NOTES TEMPLATE

Use this space each week to track player progress and plan adjustments for the following session.

PLAYER NAME	STRENGTH THIS WEEK	FOCUS AREA FOR NEXT WEEK