**Standing Float Serve**

This seems to be the skill that everyone I’ve watched over the years teaches a little differently. Most important with the arm-swing is teaching a strong hand, no bending the wrist, contacting the ball bottom 1/3 of the hand.

**Stance**: Have the player start by holding the ball comfortably in front of them in their off hand with a bent elbow. Their strong hand should rest comfortably on top of the ball when the serving arm is close to outstretched. Then have the player tighten their hand so their fingers are now off the ball. Weight should be on their back foot (the right foot for a RHP), the back foot should be pointing away from the player anywhere from a 30 to 90 degrees (what is comfortable for them) and the front foot should be pointing toward the direction they wish to serve and just an inch or two from the back foot’s heel to allow for a good push step. I personally do not like the walk up serve, but to teach them to keep their back foot on the ground and push from it with a toe drag. This keeps the core engaged all the way through the serve. Picking up the back foot will release the player’s strong side core (we want to prevent this).

**Arm Draw:** when drawing the arm back they should keep their hand above their elbow and their elbow above or equal to the height of their shoulder and drawn back as far as they can (easier to show then explain). The Serving hand should be facing the net, the floor or slightly away from their bodies, not the wall behind them. The hand should never relax from the time the player tightens the fingers off of the ball until the after contact of the ball is made.

*Everything should be routine and very relaxed from the time the ref blows the whistle until the player contacts the ball.*

**Toss and Contact**: The toss should not be more than slightly higher than the player’s contact point. The time between the step/toss and contact is a very brief time period. As well, the point at which the ball stops its travel upward and begins its travel downward is when the ball is at its slowest movement and easier to make consistent contact with, especially for a beginner (I also know that with really young ones you might need them to walk up to get the proper momentum and early success, you just want stop the walk up as early as you feel they can handle it). If the player were to allow the toss to fall to the floor, you are looking for that ball to consistently land next to the front of the step foot’s instep. Making sure the hand remains strong, contact should be on the palm or preferably on the bottom 1/3 of the hand.

*The toss should be addressed and worked on until the player understands that the toss will dictate the success rate of a consistent serve, the younger the player the more emphasis. A consistent toss will allow you to work with the player to get a consistent contact point.*

Helper: If a player is struggling to get the contact correct, either slowing down through contact or just all over the place with their contact point. Have them fold their fingers down to the bottom of their palm to make a loose fist with thumb out. Now have them work on the contact point, it will really help a lot and we shouldn’t be afraid to have them serve that way. I’ve seen a few national team training coaches over the years develop really nasty float serves using this technique, not to mention a few player’s throughout my career.

During this segment of the clinic, I have asked Eric to address the way he teaches serving. We have had a few conversations regarding this and I feel he has great understanding of the biomechanics of the serve along with consistent success!

I would also like to hear more about how coaches who have worked with youngest players how they have developed players who struggled to overhand serve and have gotten them to reach success….