



## Winter Volleyball Academy – Middle Blockers Curriculum

### Overview

Target Group: 17U / 16U Middle Blockers

The Middle Blockers group will follow a two-week progression structure designed to improve blocking mechanics, offensive timing/ connection, and transition efficiency. Each training phase builds upon the last to develop middle blockers who are dynamic, intelligent, and adaptable on both sides of the net.

After every practice, athletes will have access to analyzed video footage, allowing them to review their footwork, timing, and blocking decisions to support continuous development.

### Practice Schedule

Starting January 8th / Ending March 22nd

- Thursday Mornings:

- Time: 6:30 AM – 7:30 AM
- Location: UNB Rec Gym (15 Peter Kelly Dr)

- Sunday Group Sessions: Athletes will be notified which groups to attend in advance

Times:

- Session 1 : 9:00am - 10:00am
- Session 2 : 10:00am - 11:00am

Location:

- Ecole des Bâtisseurs (715 Priestman St, Fredericton)

- March Break: No practices / March 2 – 8

### **Mental Preparation Workshops**

- Mental preparation workshops will take place bi-weekly, weeknight afternoon /evenings.
- (TBD)

The Mental Prep Workshop is designed to help athletes strengthen the mental side of their game. Led by a certified sports performance consultant. Through guided discussions and interactive activities, players learn how to manage pressure, build confidence, and maintain focus during competition. The workshop also teaches strategies for goal setting, visualization, and handling mistakes effectively — helping athletes develop a resilient mindset that translates to both their performance on the court and their everyday life.

### **Strength and Conditioning Sessions (Optional)**

- Strength and Conditioning sessions will take place weekly, scheduled around practice times to best complement on-court training.
- Schedule (TBD)

These sessions are designed to help athletes improve their overall athleticism, movement efficiency, and injury resilience. Led by certified strength and conditioning specialists, athletes will focus on developing strength, power, speed, and mobility through age-appropriate and volleyball-specific exercises. Each session emphasizes proper technique and functional movement patterns — ensuring that athletes not only get stronger, but also move better and perform with greater stability and confidence on the court.

## Two-Week Focus Plan (January 8th – March 22nd)

Phase / Weeks	Focus Theme	Key Objectives
Weeks 1–2	Blocking Mechanics & Footwork	Develop efficient blocking movement (shuffle and swing block), hand positioning, and eye sequencing (setter → ball → hitter). Emphasize timing, and reading the setter's cues.
Weeks 3–4	Transition from Blocking and Defensive Positions	Improve speed and efficiency transitioning from block or defensive coverage into attack approach. Focus on body control, spacing, and approach timing.
Weeks 5–6	Offensive Timing & Quick Attack Connection	Strengthen connection and rhythm with setters on quick sets (1s, 31s, back 1s, slides).
Weeks 7–8	Reading & Decision-Making	Enhance ability to read the opponent's offense, anticipate hitter tendencies, and choose appropriate blocking strategies. Incorporate decision-making under game speed.
Weeks 9–10	Game Application	Apply all prior concepts during live gameplay. Focus on transition footwork, blocking-to-attack efficiency.

### Additional Skill Integration

Although the focus / themes outlined above are the primary focus areas for middle blockers, other skills such as serving, defense, and out of system setting will continue to be implemented into practices. These elements ensure athletes remain well-rounded and capable of adapting in all phases of play, while the weekly themes above remain the primary developmental emphasis.