



Scoring Points in Practice

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The scoring methods used during volleyball drills and games can help achieve the goals of a practice and motivate athletes. Each drill should be designed to have a specific objective during practice. It is important for the athletes to understand the objective of each drill. Scoring systems measure the degree to which the objective is achieved and can also be used as an equalizer between different levels of talent.

The duration of the drills can be set by a time period or a specific score. There are two styles of drills that can utilize scoring: cooperative and competitive. Cooperative drills are designed to have all team members work toward a common goal, even if they are on opposite sides of the net. An example is any type of pepper drill where the objective is to keep the ball in play. Competitive drills are comprised of at least two opposing groups. Competitive drills have a team that wins and a team that loses. Each group can affect the outcome by earning points or defending against potential points.

Scoring within the framework of cooperative and competitive drills can significantly enhance the overall objective. It can also serve as a focus to key skills or situations. Types of scoring and their variations are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Types of Scoring

- Simple
 - Plus/Minus
- Side Out
- Rally
- Wash
 - Little and Big Points
 - Burden of Winning
- Handicap
- Ratio
- Emphasis
 - Bonus Points
- Progressive
 - Simple and Exponential

Simple scoring

A point is awarded whenever an objective is reached. An example of simple scoring would be awarding a point for every perfect pass executed in a passing drill. Simple scoring is an effective tool to count the amount of successful objectives reached during the drill. This style of scoring can also use a plus/minus approach. Plus points are awarded for successful executions. Minus points are taken away for errors (Neville, 1990).

Side Out scoring

A point can only be earned by the serving team. If the receiving team wins the rally, it gains the opportunity to serve for a point. That is the way the game of volleyball was scored up until the year 2000. You can use this concept creatively. By doing something positive, you get the opportunity to score a point.

Rally scoring

A point is awarded to the team that wins any rally, regardless of the serving situation. Each team is held accountable for every rally. One team earns a point at the conclusion of every rally. This is the typical scoring system for volleyball since 2001. We can use this scoring while creating drills that emphasize specific components of the game, such as: 1) the "A" team (the starting line-up) is always in serve receive, or 2) the "B" team receives all the free balls which has the "A" team focus on defending the attack.

Wash scoring

Consists of little points and big points. Winning a pre-determined amount of little points consecutively earns a big point on the scoreboard. If the pre-determined amount of little points are not earned consecutively, a wash occurs, and the team goes back to zero little points. Once a big point is earned, the team cannot lose it. The drill is played to a specified amount of big points. For example, the "A" team works on serve receive situations. The "B" team serves throughout the drill. Whenever either team wins three consecutive rallies, their team gets a big point. Both teams rotate when the "A" team earns one big point. The game is played to 6 big points (6 rotations).

Burden of Winning

A variation of wash scoring. It is placed on a team to earn a specific score or finish a game. The burden is the same style of wash scoring. A team needs to earn the final point in a game by winning a pre-determined amount of consecutive rallies (little points). The previous points in the drill or game can be earned through some other scoring system. This type of scoring will help a team learn to fight for the final point of a game (Neville, 1990).

Handicap scoring

This scoring can be used to put a team in a disadvantaged situation. The game or drill is started with a team having a deficit in the score. A game can be started with a score of 0-5 or whatever the equalizer should be to overcome (Neville, 1990).

Ratio scoring

This type of scoring can be used as a handicap or equalizer between teams of different levels of performance. It can be used with teams of differing ability levels, and also can be used as an equalizer between team functions of various efficiencies. An example is if you have a serve receive team that scores 60% of the time vs. a serving team that scores 40% of the time. Each team has a different mathematically pre-determined goal, like 6 before 4. The serve receive team needs to score 6 points before the serving team scores 4 points (or 3 before 2 which is the same ratio). The team that reaches its goal first gets a big point.

In the example above, one of the two teams will win every time. You can also do it where there is a wash component mixed in. Say the serve receive team needs to win 3 of 4 rallies, or the serving team needs to win 2 of 4 rallies. So, if each team wins 2 rallies, it is a wash as neither team reached their goal.

Emphasis points (aka Bonus points)

These points are awarded as a bonus for successfully achieving an objective within a drill or game. For example, two teams play a continuous game (a timed game where free balls or down balls come into a team as soon as each rally ends) for rally points. An emphasis point rewards the team for completing a more challenging task, such as awarding a free bonus point mid-rally as soon as a team successfully runs a transition quick attack. Emphasis points can have a significant value to reinforce difficult or

desired plays. More difficult plays could even earn more than one bonus point (3 bonus points for a stuff block).

Progressive scoring

I created this scoring system in response to helping a team understand the huge benefits or detriments of scoring streaks within games. When a team scores a run of points, it becomes a separating factor between teams. Ultimately, we want to go on scoring streaks when serving, but just trade points when in serve receive. A scoring run of 4 points or more dramatically impact a game.

The progressive scoring amplifies this effect. As a team scores on consecutive rallies, the point value progressively increases. In simple progressive scoring, winning one rally is worth 1 point, the second consecutive rally is worth 2 points, and the third rally is worth 3 points, and so on. For elite teams, exponential progressive scoring can be used to magnify the effect of consecutive rallies won. In exponential progressive scoring, winning one rally is worth 1 point, the second consecutive rally is worth double which is still 2 points, but the third consecutive rally doubles again and is worth 4 points, then 8 points, and so on.

Progressive scoring can be used in a regular game situation. Most teams have some rotations that are more productive than others. Progressive scoring ensures that each rotation will have to perform in order to achieve the objective. Any breakdown will result in a string of points being scored. You can even extend the game score to 50 points to make it last longer.

To focus on rotations, use progressive scoring in a game that plays the same rotation for 10 points. After either team scores 10 points, both teams rotate. You will learn a lot about your team within each rotation of your playing system. Discover your strengths and weaknesses by rotation!

Conclusion

Applying various types of scoring to effective drills and games can emphasize and motivate players to achieve the objectives and intensities desired. Scoring systems can create necessary pressure on the athletes to perform in different situations, monitor success, and execute specific objectives and game plans. A coach needs to create game-life drills during training sessions to simulate competitive playing conditions. Choosing the ideal scoring system can definitely enhance the experience.

Reference

Neville, William J. *Coaching Volleyball Successfully*, Champaign, IL: Leisure Press, 1990.