

## **SERVING TACTICS**

Most people judged good serving by looking at the error to ace ratio. Most coaches believe that if you can create an ace for every two errors that would be an acceptable ratio.

I do not want your focus on aces. Aces are an occasional result of serving tough; they are not the goal of serving tough.

### **I want your focus on good toss and solid contact on EVERY attempt.**

If you are standing close to the end line, then you want to commit to a specific target and trajectory and get the ball there as quickly as possible.

If you are serving a bomb, then your focus should be on a GREAT central contact, with great compression (Denting) of the ball.

My evaluation of tough serving is based on the location of the pass, not aces. If you can force the passer to pass the ball 8' or deeper off the net, you have put our block and defense in a position to win that rally.

From what I have seen, a tough serve will beat a great passer most of the time. You will beat the other team's best passer if you serve a tough serve. So . . . serve a tough serve without worrying about who you are serving or what area you are serving is my general rule of thumb.

But I also think it is important for you to understand and practice serving tactics. The first thing to look for is a weak passer that you can put pressure on or good passers who do not pass a specific type of serve well. Here are some general situations to look for.

#### **You can attack individual passers with your serve:**

1. Some passers don't like to pass on one side or the other. Most passers are better and more comfortable passing from their left side or their right side – so a fast, flat, deep serve through their opposite shoulder is very effective against that passer.
2. Some passers have trouble with very short and very deep serves; the serve does not even have to be tough. A slow lollipop serve to that particular area will cause them trouble.
3. Some passers have trouble with a flat; fast serve from the end line. They don't attack the ball and get jammed or overpass it.
4. Most passers hate a fast tempo bomb serve. They are not used to seeing it and they often misjudged the speed and depth of the serve.

If you come across a team that has no weak passers, and you don't feel that you can attack a particular person, then here are several suggestions for attacking the opponents system.

**You can also affect the setter and specific hitters with your serve:**

1. Put a passer in the line of approach, of the hitter, they want to set.  
Area 2 will often interfere with a slide approach. Area 3 will often interfere with a 2 approach.
2. Deep Area 5 will often bring the pass off the net at least 4 or 5 feet and cause problems for a slide hitter trying to get the approach line they want.
3. Area 1 (Sideline) and Area 2 (Sideline) will cause problems for a setter wanting to set a 3 set.
4. You can pin a middle hitter up against the sideline (and take them out of their approach) by serving from the middle of the court to the sideline they are starting against. If you serve that same serve from in front of the middle, it is easy for them to not get pinned.
5. A good serve to Area 1 (Sideline) will often decrease the accuracy of the four set because it will often cause a pass that makes the setter set a longer set (and usually less accurate).
6. A hitter who is most effective with a long approach, you can make less effective by serving them short.