

FREE SIX-PAGE COACH STARTER KIT

You volunteered. Here is what to do next.

A calm, practical starting point for first-time CYO volleyball coaches. Print the page you need, leave the rest for later, and always confirm local league rules.

Your goal is not to know everything. Your goal is to create a safe, welcoming team, help players learn, and arrive at the first match with the important questions already answered.

Your first 48 hours

- [] Confirm practice and match schedules, gym access, and arrival procedures.
- [] Ask what equipment, uniforms, rosters, and first-aid supplies the organization provides.
- [] Get the current local rulebook and identify the athletic director or league contact who has the final word.
- [] Confirm required clearances, safety expectations, and emergency procedures.
- [] Choose one communication channel for families and send the welcome message on page 3.
- [] Open the first-practice plan on page 2. Adjust only for time, space, attendance, and equipment.

The only three promises you need to make

1	Players will be treated with care, dignity, and patience.
2	Practices will keep players active and learning, with mistakes treated as information.
3	Local participation, safety, and match rules will be confirmed before decisions are communicated.

A welcoming 90-minute first practice

Keep every player moving, let them experience the game early, and use only a few short coaching cues.

TIME	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE AND COACHING CUES
0-5	Welcome and names	Set the tone: effort, kindness, safety, and learning. Mistakes are expected.
5-15	Small-court winners	Play 2v2 or 3v3 on narrow courts. Start with an easy ball across. Cue: See the ball. Help the next teammate.
15-27	Passing seams	Use controlled serves and a visible target. Cue: Read first. Send a high, playable ball.
27-35	Setting window	Briefly practice a high second contact. Cue: Give the hitter time.
35-47	Serve over the river	Let players move closer and choose underhand or overhand. Cue: Success before distance.
47-65	Catch-set volleyball	Allow a caught second ball briefly so teams can organize three contacts, then remove it.
65-85	Three-contact challenge	Award a bonus for a playable first contact and a three-touch attempt. Cue: Read, move, help.
85-90	Team close	Ask what players learned. Recognize one example of effort and one of teamwork. End on time.

If the plan starts to fall apart: shorten the court, move servers closer, make teams smaller, and return to a simple game. Do not solve confusion with a long speech.

Full plan with drill links: coachyouthvolleyball.com/practice-plans/first-volleyball-practice

A parent welcome message you can personalize

Copy the message, replace the brackets, and keep your communication rhythm simple and predictable.

Subject: Welcome to [Team Name] CYO volleyball

Hello families,

I am excited to coach [Team Name] this season. Our goal is to help every player learn volleyball, become a dependable teammate, and enjoy being part of the group.

Our first practice is [date, time, location]. Players should bring [water, shoes, knee pads if used, and any required equipment]. Please arrive [time] so we can begin together.

I will use [communication channel] for schedule updates and reminders. You can reach me at [contact method]. I will share participation and team expectations after I confirm the current local CYO rules.

For the first practice, players only need to arrive ready to move, learn, communicate, and try again after mistakes. Volleyball experience is not required.

Thank you for trusting me with the team. I am looking forward to a positive season together.

Coach [Name]

Set the communication rhythm

WHEN	WHAT TO SEND
Before the season	Welcome, schedule, equipment, contact method, and when rules or participation guidance will follow.
Before each practice	Only changes, reminders, or one short focus. Avoid a long newsletter every time.
Before a match	Arrival time, location, uniform, logistics, and any confirmed local procedures families need to know.
After a problem	Describe the behavior or decision calmly, explain the next step, and move sensitive player matters to a private conversation.

Decide the hard things before the gym gets noisy

Your local athletic director, league organizer, and current rulebook have the final word. Use this page to know what to ask.

Rules to confirm

- [] Participation requirements and how much each dressed player must play.
- [] Substitution procedure and whether any divisions allow unlimited substitutions.
- [] Any consecutive-serve limit and what happens after the limit is reached.
- [] Ball, net height, serving line, set format, scoring cap, timeouts, and warm-up time.
- [] Roster, eligibility, lineup, late-arrival, and official-scorekeeping procedures.

Write down your match plan

DECISION	YOUR PLAN
Arrival and warm-up	
Starting lineup and serving order	
Participation and substitutions	
One volleyball priority	
One teammate priority	
Who tracks lineup, score, or participation	

Pregame message: We do not need perfect volleyball. We need the next playable ball, clear communication, and teammates who stay connected.

What to say when you do not know what to say

Use short cues players can act on during the next rally. Save longer teaching for practice.

MOMENT	TRY THIS	AVOID THIS
After a missed serve	Reset your routine. Choose a smart distance.	Just get it in.
After a passing error	Read the ball, move early, and make the next contact playable.	Use your platform.
When the team is quiet	Call before the ball arrives. Help your teammate decide.	Talk more.
When rallies are short	Shorten the court. First ball gives the team time.	Stop making mistakes.
After losing several points	One ball at a time. Serve, enter, and get ready.	We cannot give away another point.
During a timeout	Name one thing to notice and one thing to do next.	Review every mistake from the last rotation.

The three-contact story

First contact: Give the team time. **Second contact:** Help a teammate. **Third contact:** Send the ball with purpose.

Closing question for players

What did we do today that made the next contact easier for a teammate?

PAGE 6 - SEASON ROADMAP

Keep the season simple: solve the next moment

Return to this sequence whenever coaching starts to feel too large.

1. Before the season

Confirm logistics and rules. Welcome families. Decide how you will communicate.

2. Before the first practice

Choose one or two goals. Keep players moving. Let them experience the game early.

3. Before each practice

Review the last session. Pick one main focus. Move from simple learning into game-like play.

4. Before the first match

Confirm local rules. Write the lineup, serving order, participation plan, and one team message.

5. After each match

Ask what helped, where play broke down, and what the next practice should solve.

Free online tools

CYO coaching hub: <https://coachyouthvolleyball.com/cyo>

First practice plan: <https://coachyouthvolleyball.com/practice-plans/first-volleyball-practice>

Practice builder: <https://coachyouthvolleyball.com/practice-builder>

Printable lineup and participation tools: <https://coachyouthvolleyball.com/resources>

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