

The seven Speeds of Volleyball – Part 1

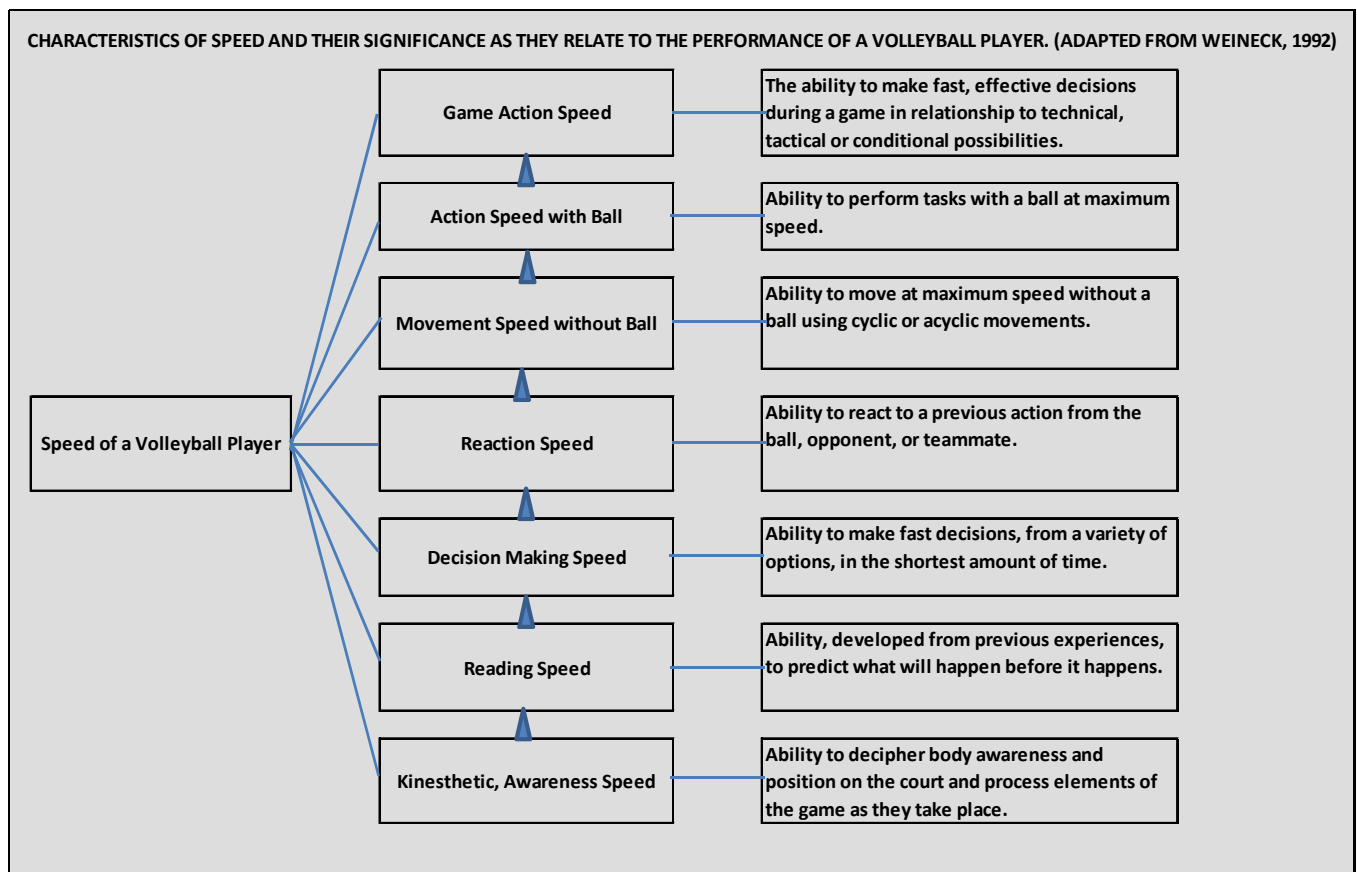
The concept of seven speeds is based on the work of soccer researcher and author Jurgen Weineck in the following reference:

Optimales Fussball training, Teil 1: Das Kon ditionstraining des Fussballspielers. PERIMED spitta Medizinische Verlagsesellschaft mbh, Nuernberg, 1992.

Soccer speed, as referred to in Germany, can be defined as the ability to react to a stimulus in the least amount of time through cyclic (patterned) or acyclic (random) movements with limited resistance. In other words, soccer speed is a complex mixture of psychophysical components. These components include perception, anticipation, decision making, reactions, moving at maximum speed without a ball, actions with a ball and reading the game. All of these components are interrelated and have a significant influence on the speed of soccer players.

John Kessel has taken the 7speeds of soccer and adapted them to volleyball in a unique and understandable way. The diagram below has been adapted from the work of Jurgen Weineck and made volleyball specific. Each speed has its own unique characteristics and training adaptations. It is my opinion that the application and training of these speeds will lead to winning volleyball matches.

The above is the introduction to this topic in the VCAP Manual and I felt I might dilute the credit if I try and use my own words.



The best way to discuss this topic is to bring it closer to home.

The TuksVolleyball team can dig, set and spike no doubt about that. These are the techniques of the game; so TuksVolleyball team have acquired the volleyball techniques and all the players have an understanding of what is expected of them when they dig, set or spike.

However, all is not well when we try to play a game. The problem is integrating these techniques to create a symphony of actions that portray the graceful game of Volleyball. The mistakes we see on the court are errors of reading, anticipation, judging and timing. Players are capable of executing the techniques well, if only they could be at the right place at the right time.

That is when the 7 speeds of volleyball become an issue. Volleyball is faster than most sports because players cannot hold, dribble, throw or stop the ball whilst trying to prevent the ball from coming into contact with the floor. A spike can be dispatched at speeds of almost 100km/h and a defender stands barely 3 metres away from the attacker. A defender has no chance if he/she cannot read, anticipate, time & judge the path of the ball.

In this article I will look at only one of the seven above and hope it emphasises the importance of understanding the 7 speeds of volleyball. Future articles will go deeper into the other elements and all attempts will be made to bring them as close to home as possible. I could use names on some of the examples but I think that would be just nasty!!

Kinesthetic Awareness Speed

Kinesthetic awareness speed relates to an athlete's ability to determine where his/her body is in relation to space and awareness of his/her position on the court, and to quickly relate this information to the game.

Your position on the court, the trajectory of the ball, the speed of the ball, the positions of your team mates your distance from the net, are a great deal of information to process when the ball is in play. Peripheral awareness and vision is a good quality of volleyball.

How often do we play a game in a multi-purpose arena with basketball markings and lines, badminton courts, tennis lines etc. and some player asks you which lines we were using right at the end of the match.

Kinesthetic awareness speed attempts to explain why the whole team shouts "out" and some poor soul still makes a vivid effort to play the ball. If a player has no general awareness of their positioning and the conditions that have been presented by the game they make clumsy mistakes that often draw the ire of the teammates. Most of you have heard the statement "if the ball is shoulder height then it's out" this adage is only true if a player is at a specific position on the court and taking a specific serve receiving posture.

The fact that the game of volleyball requires that the players spend 50 to 60% of their time looking up further complicates the kinesthetic awareness of the players.

To make matters worse we put a barrier across the court: the net which should not be touched. The centre line shall also not be crossed. All these conditions make it difficult for players who have to take all these matters into account when trying to execute a playing action. The actions of the opponent, the block, the defensive positioning are the next challenge after mastering your own kinesthetic awareness.

How do we practice this awareness?

Game like practice drills and the game itself are the best teachers of kinesthetic awareness. When conducting game like drills, allow the players to leave the ball if they think it's going out. Always do your drills with the net in place and allow its regulatory aspects to be followed. Beware of the pepper drill.....while most coaches and yours truly included...may like this drill because it teaches control, there is no game like aspect of this drill and players learn to be static and wait for the attack in a predetermined spot with no anticipation, reading or the regulatory features of the net.

That is why going forward we will try to include more game like situations in our drills and always do our passing and digging towards the net and not parallel to the net as "we" sometimes do. Free spiking must be done with a degree of game like challenges to teach attackers the rarity of a perfect set. The antennae must always be in place during practice to enforce the regulatory aspects of the side lines and crossing of the ball within the correct playing space.

I enjoyed my research on this topic I pray you will find it useful.

Until next time.

Let's work harder!!!

I Munatsi