

middle school offensive & defensive systems

volleyball coaches' clinic

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presented by TINA JASINOWSKI
ALTER GIRLS' & BOYS' VARSITY VOLLEYBALL COACH
-- BACK-to-BACK State Champions, 2002 & 2003 --

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various offensive systems

6-2 Offense

A 6-2 offense is named as such because there are always six (6) hitters on the court and there are always two (2) setters on the court. This doesn't; however, mean that there are eight players on the court. The way a 6-2 works is that there will always be one setter in the front row and one setter in the back row at all times (they line up opposite one another at the start of the match). The setter who is in the back row is considered the "active" setter, she is the one who will be running the offense and who should be setting the second ball during each play. The setter who is in the front row is not considered a "setter" while she is in the front row, but is a hitter during that time. So, each setter is at some point (during her three rotations in the front) a hitter and this is why the offense is known as a 6-2. This strategy creates a stronger offensive attack because there are always three potential hitters who can attack the ball at all times.

In a 6-2 offense, the active setter will run from her position in the back row (see the 6-2 serve receive formations and middle back defensive formations on the subsequent pages) to a setting position near the net between the middle front and right front hitters. She will have two frontset options (to either the left front hitter or the middle hitter) and one backset option (to the right front hitter). Once the ball is hit over the net, the setter returns to the back row to a defensive position in right back (this is the standard defensive position for the "active" setter in a 6-2). As soon as it is clear that the "active" setter does not have to dig or make a defensive play, she will "release" and run to her setting position in the front row to set the second hit to one of her hitters. On a freeball, the setter releases immediately from her defensive position and comes to the front to set.

The primary advantage of running a 6-2 is that you have the offensive strength of three hitters at all times, thus creating a more confusing attack to the defense. The main disadvantage is that different setters set differently and having two setters means that your hitters don't have the continuity provided by a single setter. You also do not have the advantage of a setter who can hit from the front row (a backrow setter cannot attack the ball because rules do not allow a backrow player to jump up, make contact with the ball above the plane of the net and hit it over if she is taking off anywhere in front of the 10-foot line).

5-1 Offense

A 5-1 offense is named as such because there are always five (5) hitters on the court and there is always just one (1) setter on the court. Usually the setter will start the match in the back row (typically in right back) and the offense will almost entirely resemble a 6-2 during the three rotations that the setter is in the back row. This is due to the fact that there will be three hitters in the front during this time and the setter will set from the same setting position as in a 6-2 (near the net between the middle front and right front hitters). Even the serve receive and defensive alignments are the same as in a 6-2 (again, refer to the 6-2 serve receive formations and middle back defensive formations on the subsequent pages).

The difference in a 5-1 offense comes when the setter rotates into the front row. When this happens, there will only be two available front row hitters (because the setter is the third front row player). Typically the setter will switch to a setting position in right front so that she has frontset opportunities to the middle and left front hitters. The other difference occurs defensively because the setter does not move to the backcourt on defense, but rather stays at the net and blocks.

Some advantages of a 5-1 include the continuity of having one setter run your offense and the "trickery" of having a front row setter jump up, pretending to set the ball and actually hit it over the net (which cannot be done by a backrow setter in a 6-2 due to the regulation explained above). The primary disadvantage of a 5-1 is having only two available hitters in the front row when the setter is also there (making for a more predictable attack).

various offensive systems

4-2 Offense

A 4-2 offense is named as such because there are always four (4) hitters on the court and there are always two (2) setters on the court. The 4-2 offense is run very much like the 5-1 offense is run when the 5-1 setter is in the front row. The primary difference with a 4-2 is that there are two different setters who will take turns setting. These players will line up opposite one another at the start of the match and when one setter rotates to the back row (where she is NOT the "active" setter), the other setter rotates to the front and becomes the "active" setter. The other difference from a 5-1 is that the "base" setting position in the front row is usually in middle front rather than right front which means the setter has one frontset option (to left front) and one backset option (to right front). This means that the "active" setter in a 4-2 will switch to the middle front position when she is in the front row, like the 5-1 setter switches to the right front position in the front row.

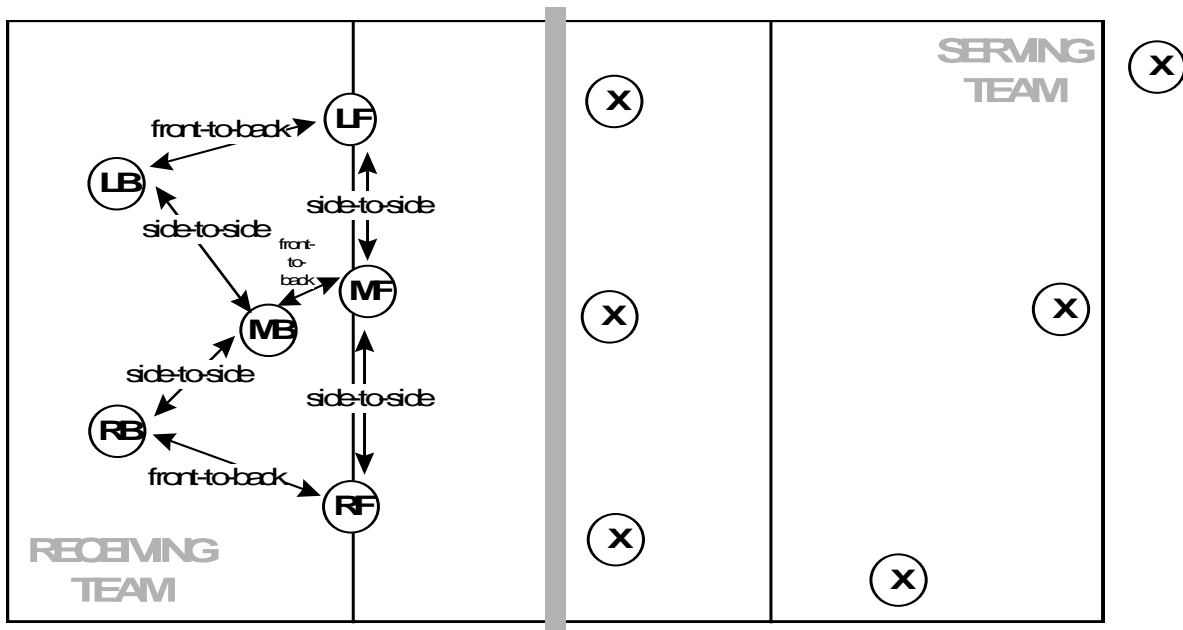
The advantage of running a 4-2 is that it places your setter more near the middle of the court and enables her to play more second hits (allowing for a little less precision in passing). It also allows two setters to run your offense without all the switching of positions that goes on in a 6-2 (where the setter runs from the back to the front and back to the back again). The disadvantages are that you don't have the continuity of a single setter, you don't have the offensive strength of three front row hitters at all times, and your setter does not have two frontset options.

"International" 4-2 Offense

The "international" 4-2 offense is almost identical to the basic 4-2 offense except that the "active" (front row) setter will set from a "base" position in RIGHT front rather than middle front. This is the only difference in an "international" 4-2. There are a couple of reasons you might consider using this variation: 1) if you have fairly young, inexperienced setters who have not yet mastered a "backset" - with the setter in right front you will still have two hitters, but they will both be FRONT sets for your setter; 2) you want to train your setter for the front row portion of a 5-1 offense - the "international" 4-2 is identical to the 5-1 offense when the setter is in the front row.

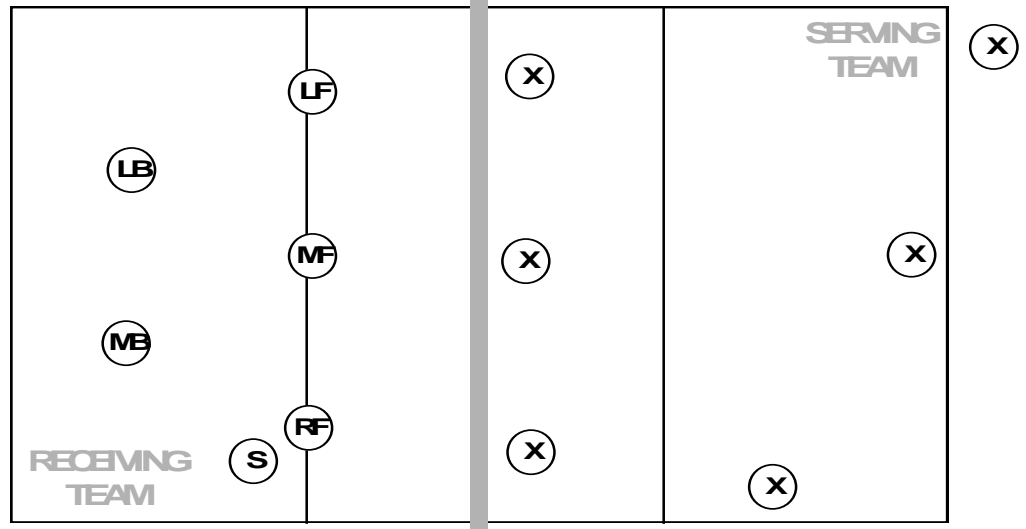
overlapping

Before the ball is served (in ANY offensive or defensive formation), players may NOT overlap those players who are adjacent to them (side-to-side AND front-to-back). Specifically, players in the front row must line up in front of the players directly behind them (left front in front of left back, middle front in front of middle back and right front in front of right back) AND players must also not overlap teammates to their right and left (left front must be to the left of middle front, middle front must be to left of the right front player, left back must be to the left of middle back and middle back must be to the left of right back). For example, in the diagram below, the middle front (MF) player must have the front-most position between her and the middle back (MB) player. As long as the middle front player's feet are closer to the net than the middle back player, then they are lined up okay. Overlapping restrictions apply to both the serving and receiving team; however, there are NO restrictions on the server, she may overlap any player on her team while she is serving. Once the ball is contacted on the serve, players may move to any spot on the court.

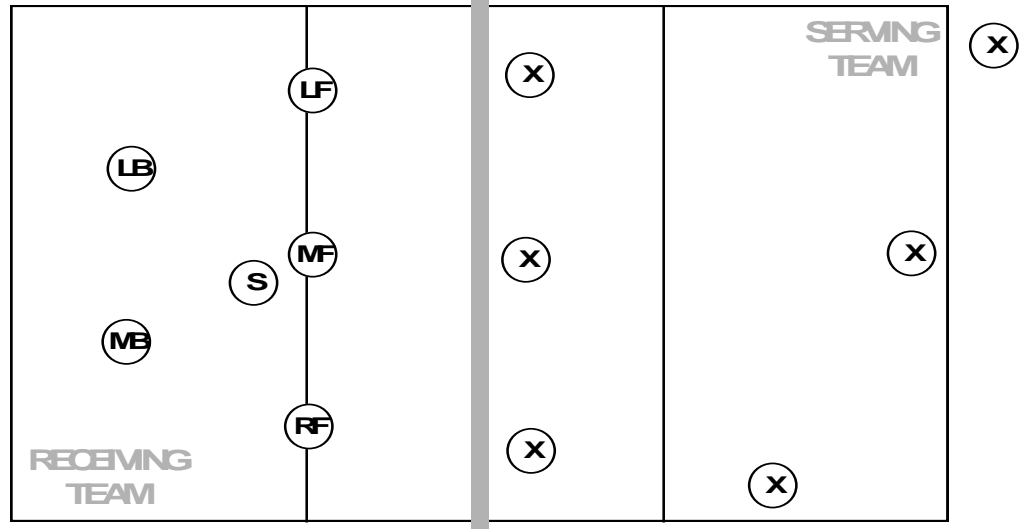


serve receive: 6-2 offense/ 5-1 offense (setter's in back row)

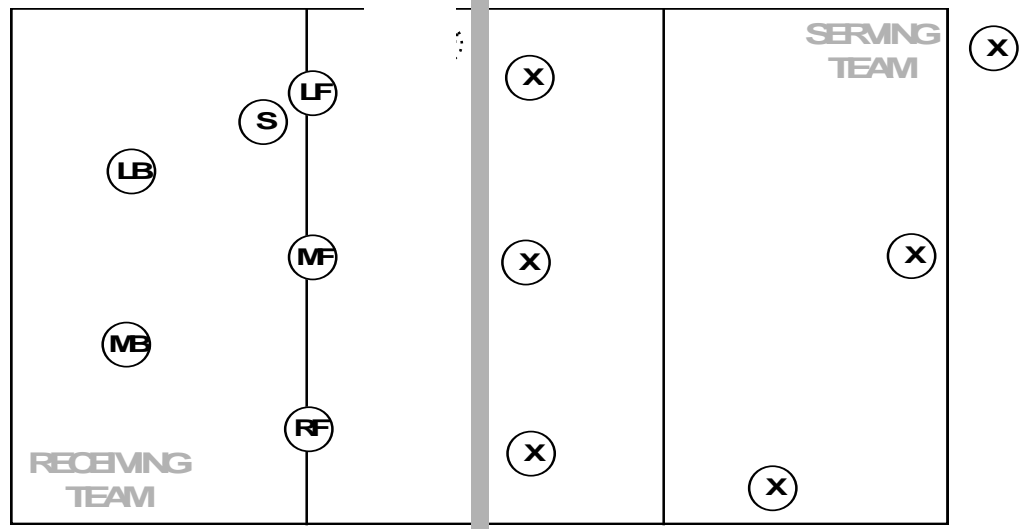
"W" FORMATION
5-MAN SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
COMING FROM
RIGHT BACK



"W" FORMATION
5-MAN SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
COMING FROM
MIDDLE BACK

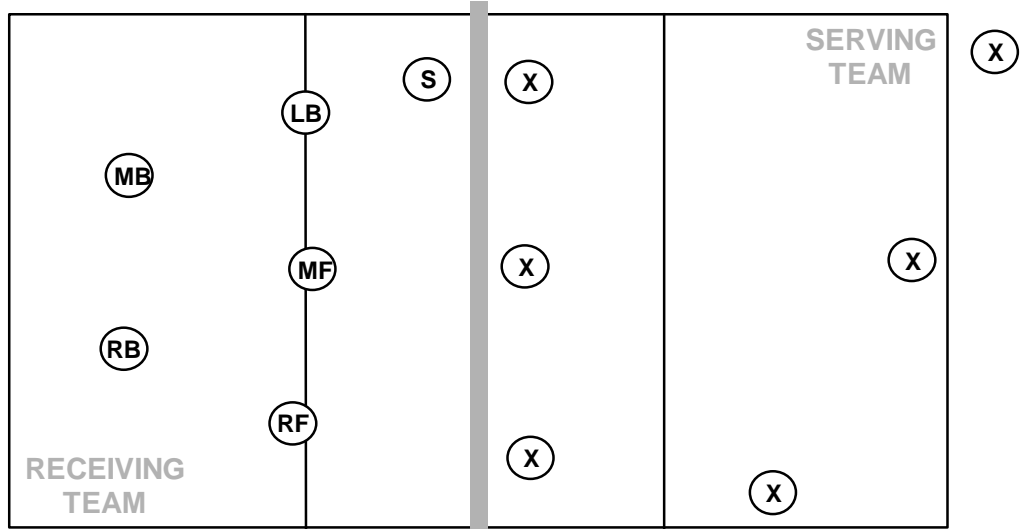


"W" FORMATION
5-MAN SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
COMING FROM
LEFT BACK

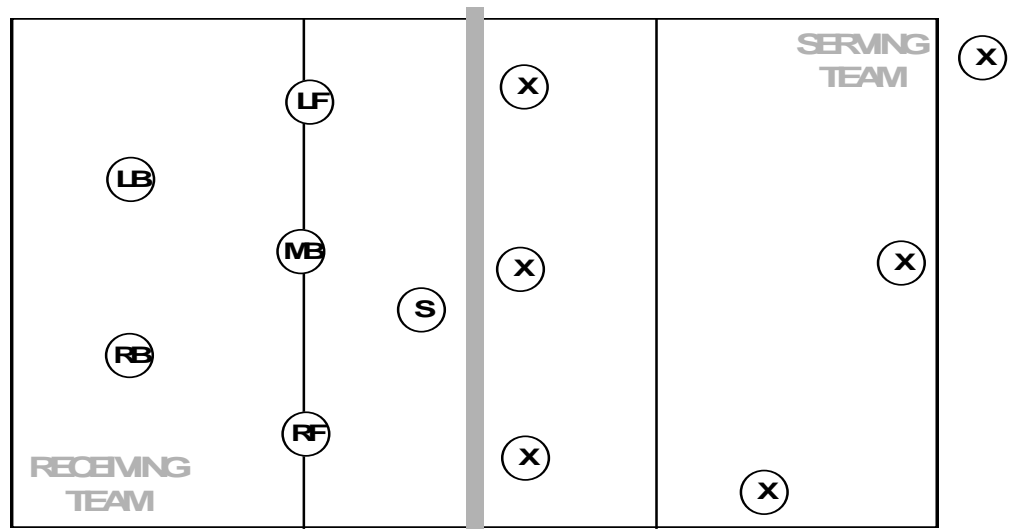


serve receive: 5-1 / int'l 4-2 offense (when setter's in front row)

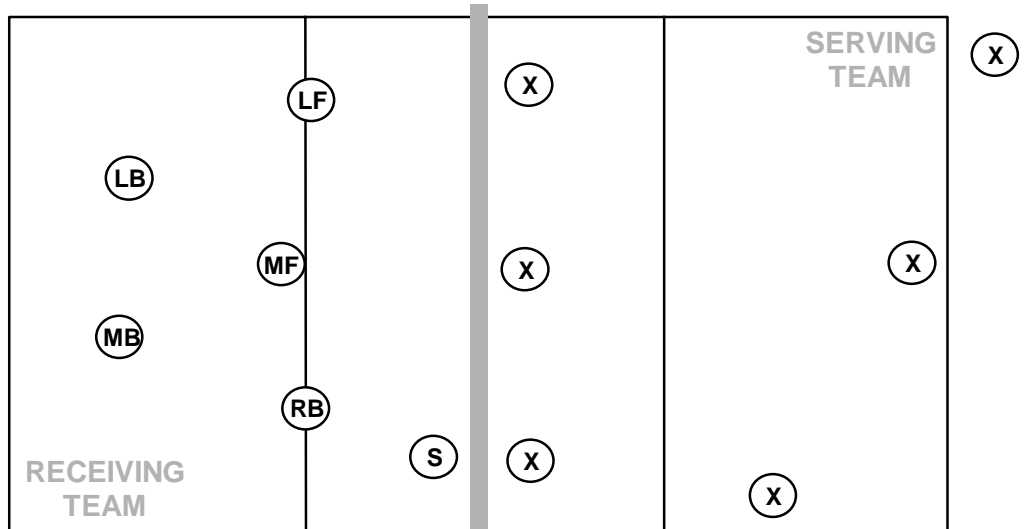
"W" FORMATION
5-MAN SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
IN LEFT FRONT



"W" FORMATION
5-MAN SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
IN MIDDLE FRONT

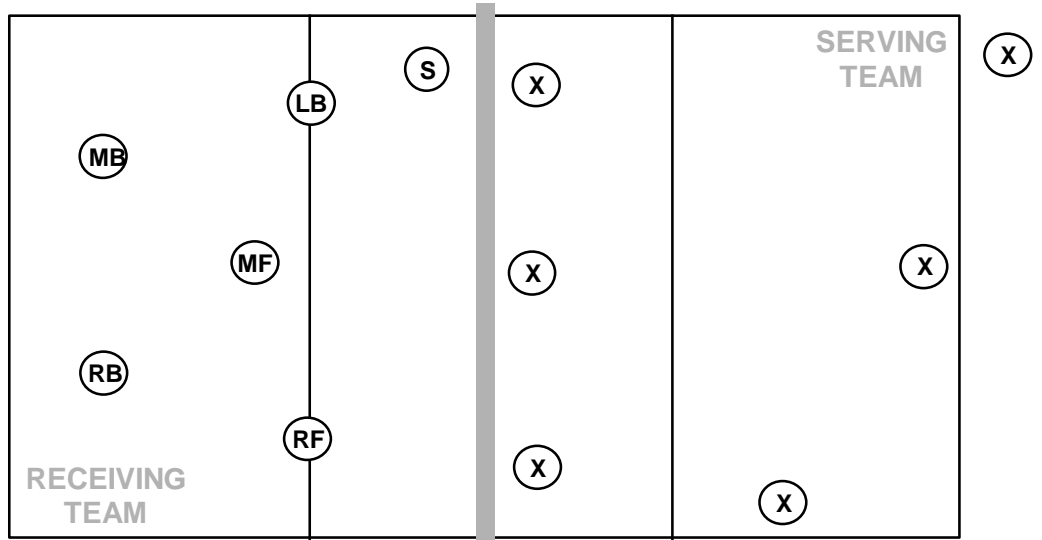


"W" FORMATION
5-MAN SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
IN RIGHT FRONT

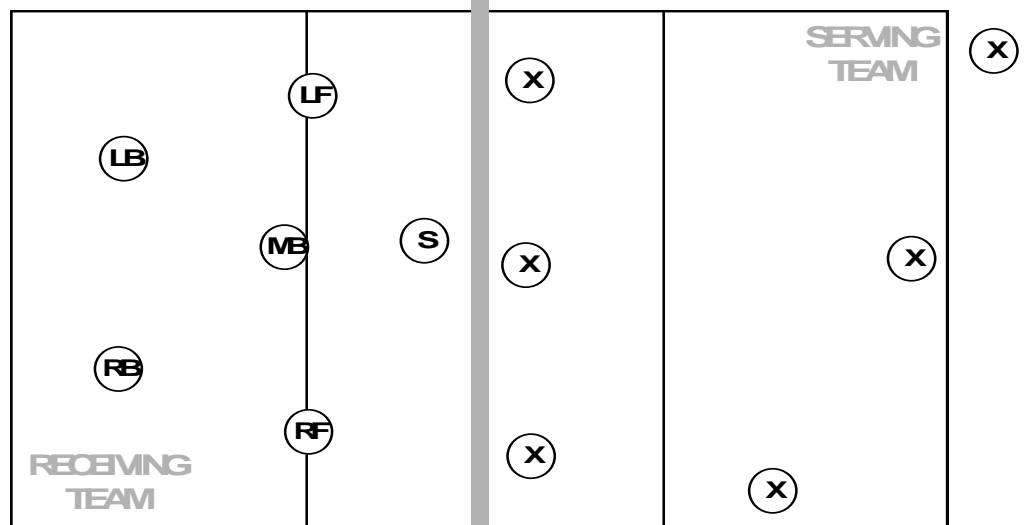


serve receive: 4-2 offense

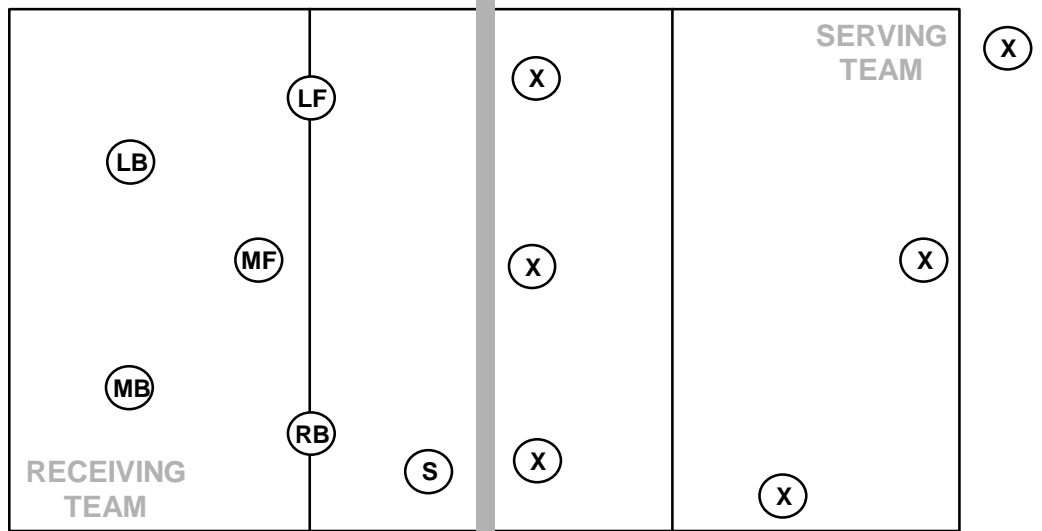
SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
IN LEFT FRONT



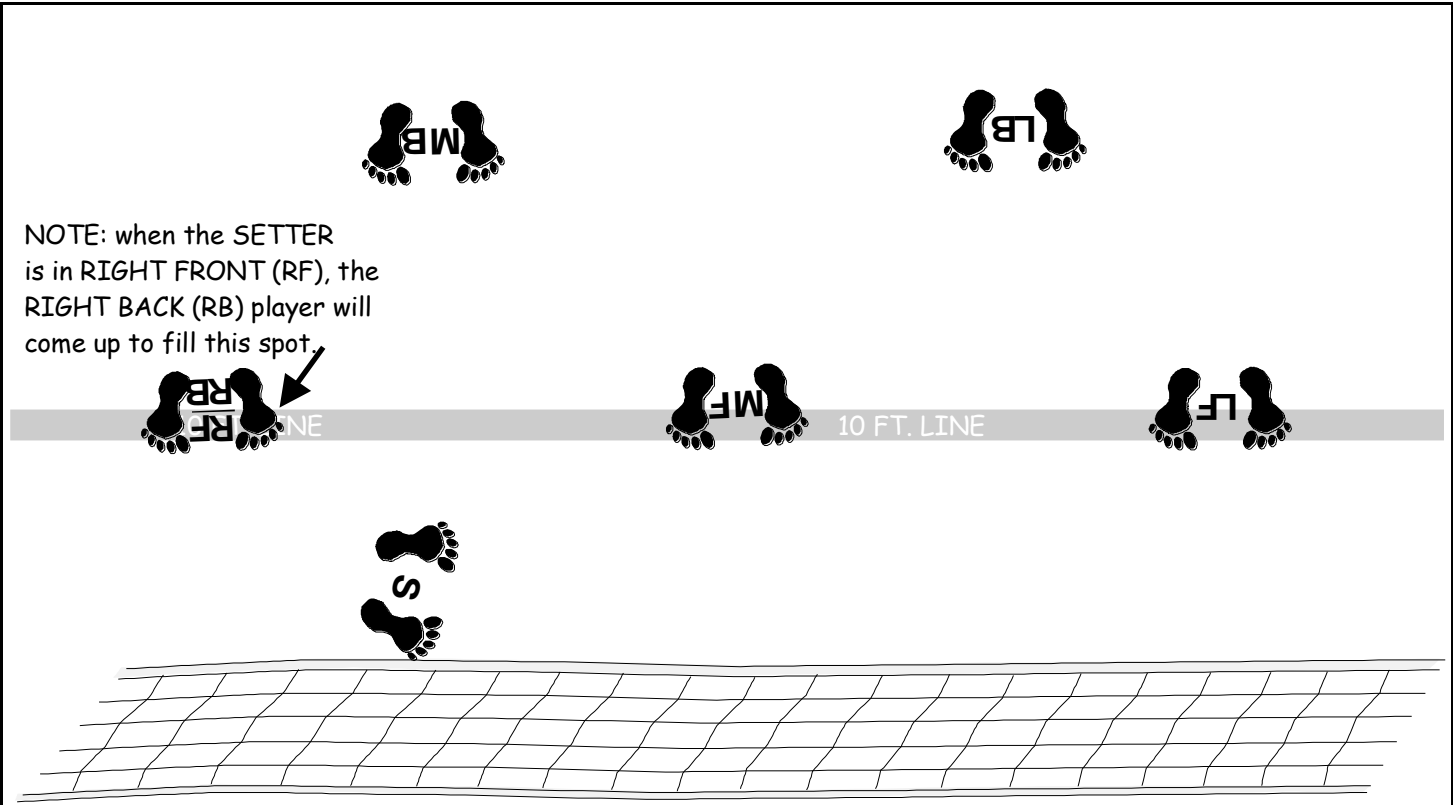
SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
IN MIDDLE FRONT



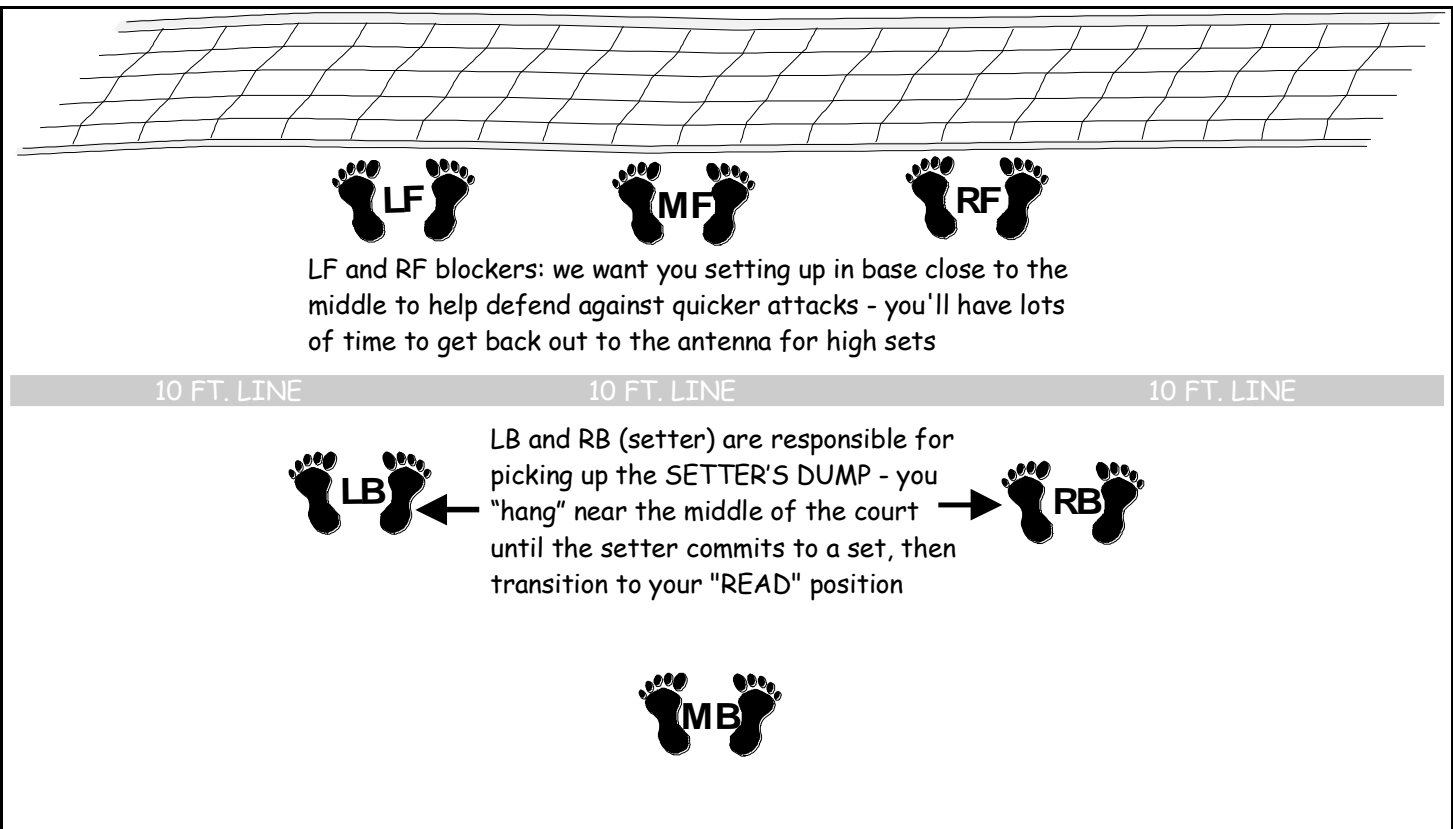
SERVE RECEIVE
WITH SETTER
IN RIGHT FRONT



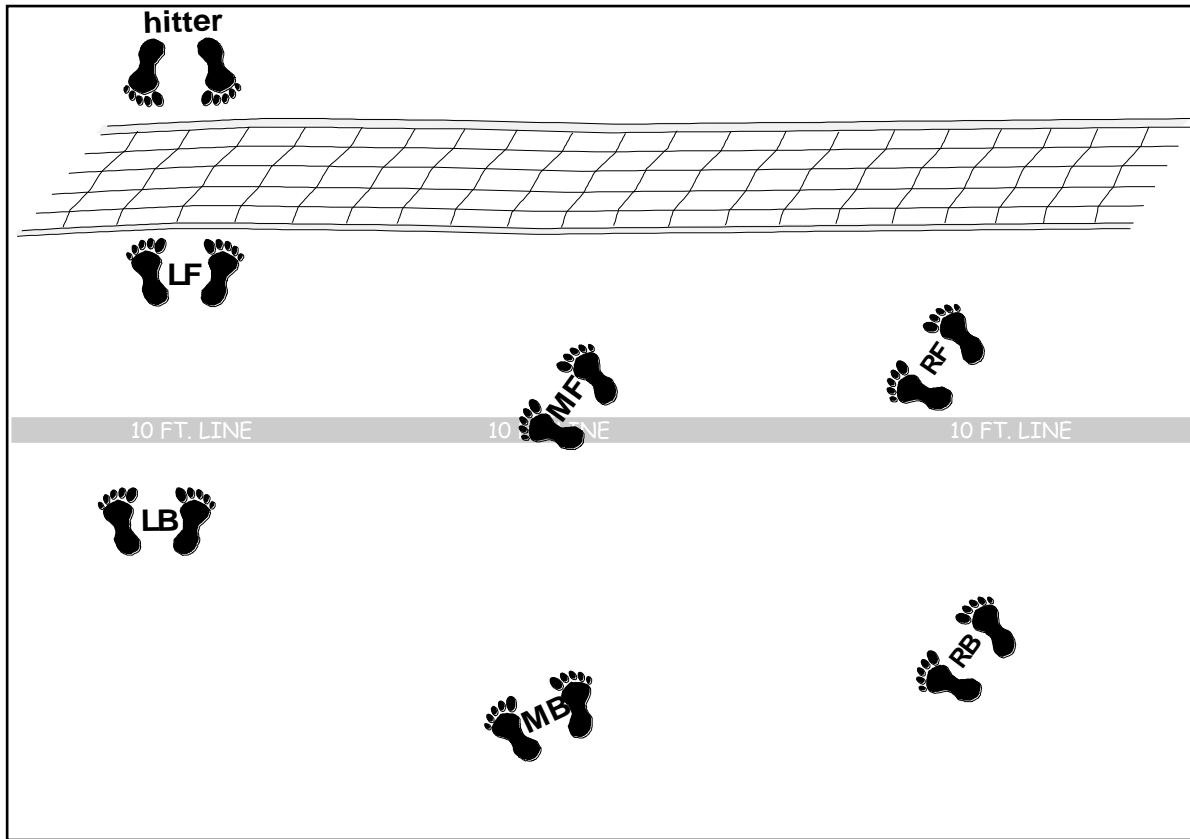
freeball positions with setter in back row



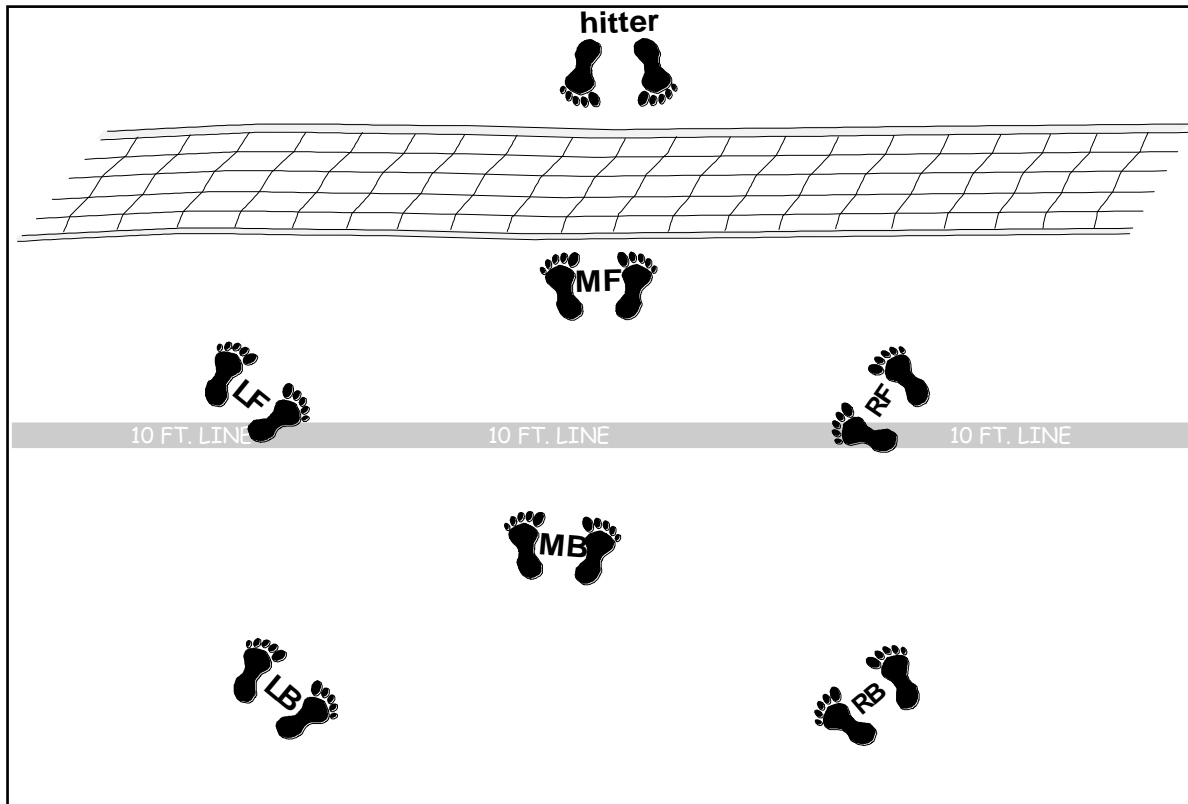
"base" defensive positions



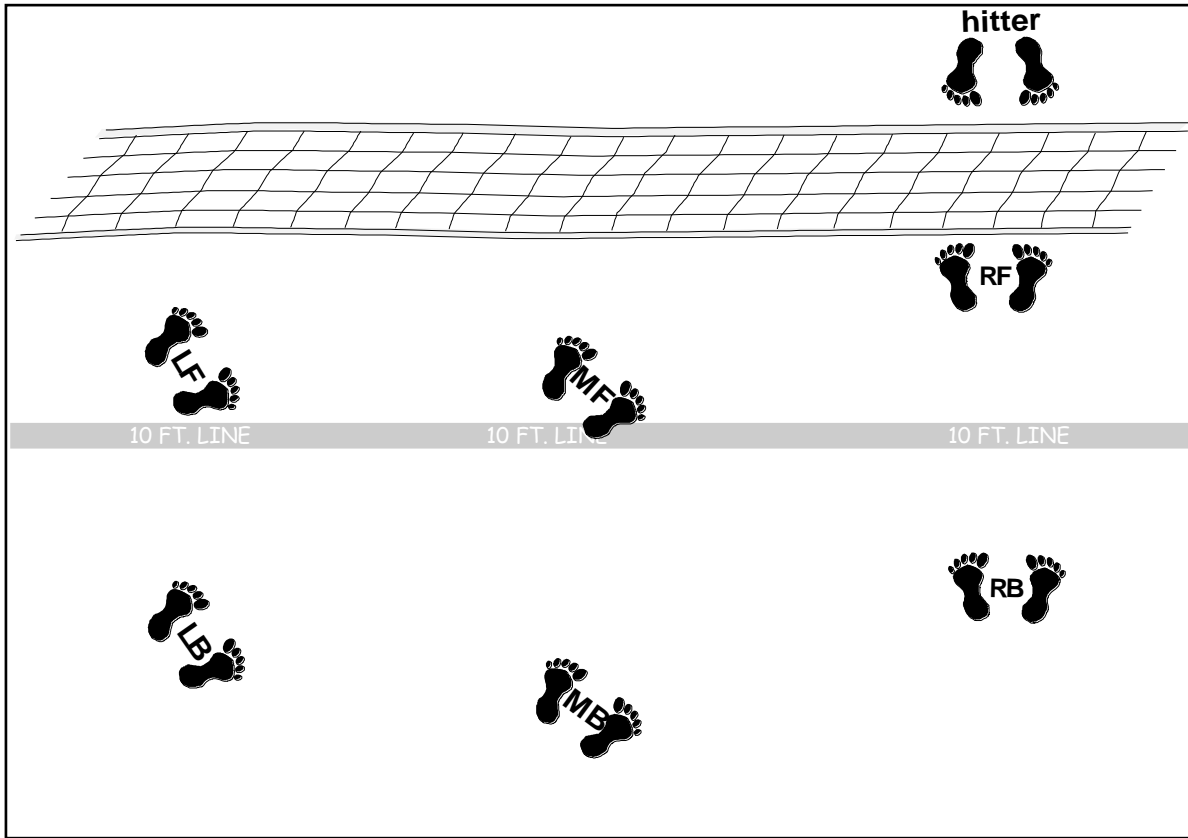
very basic defense vs right/weak side hitter



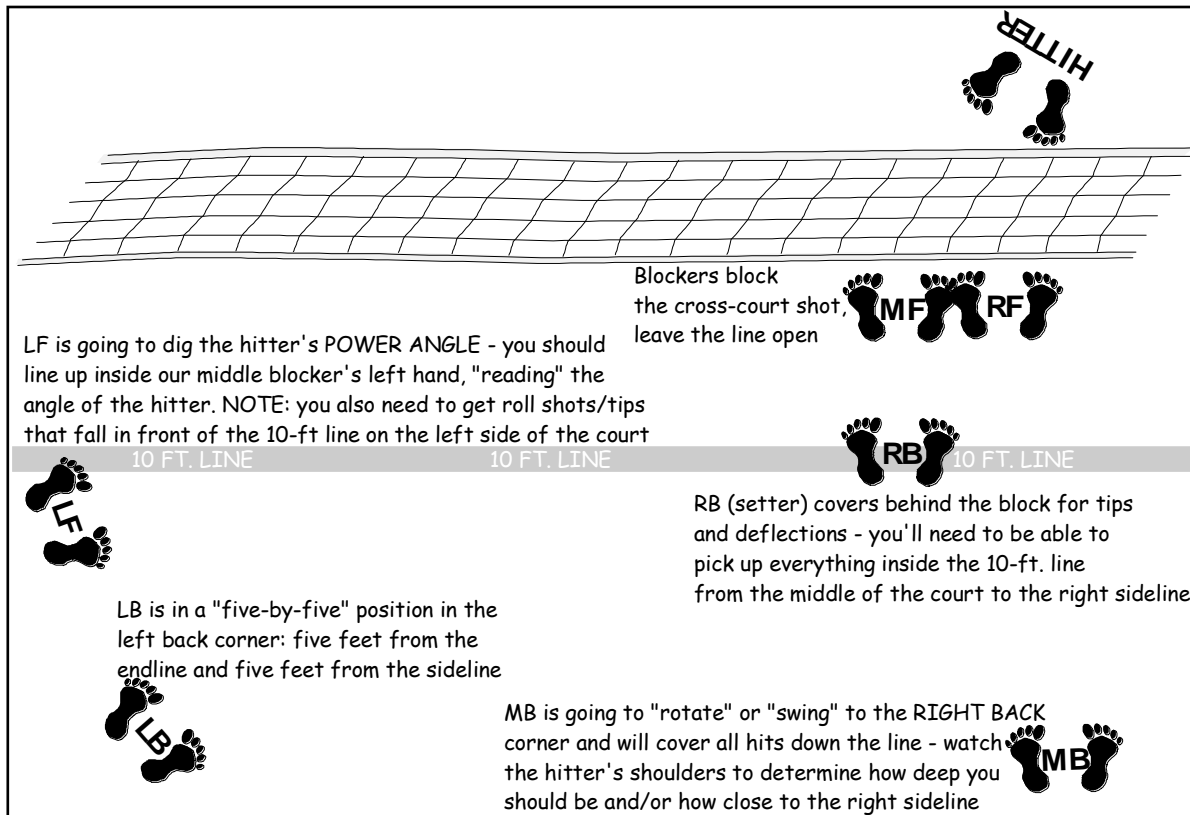
very basic defense vs middle hitter



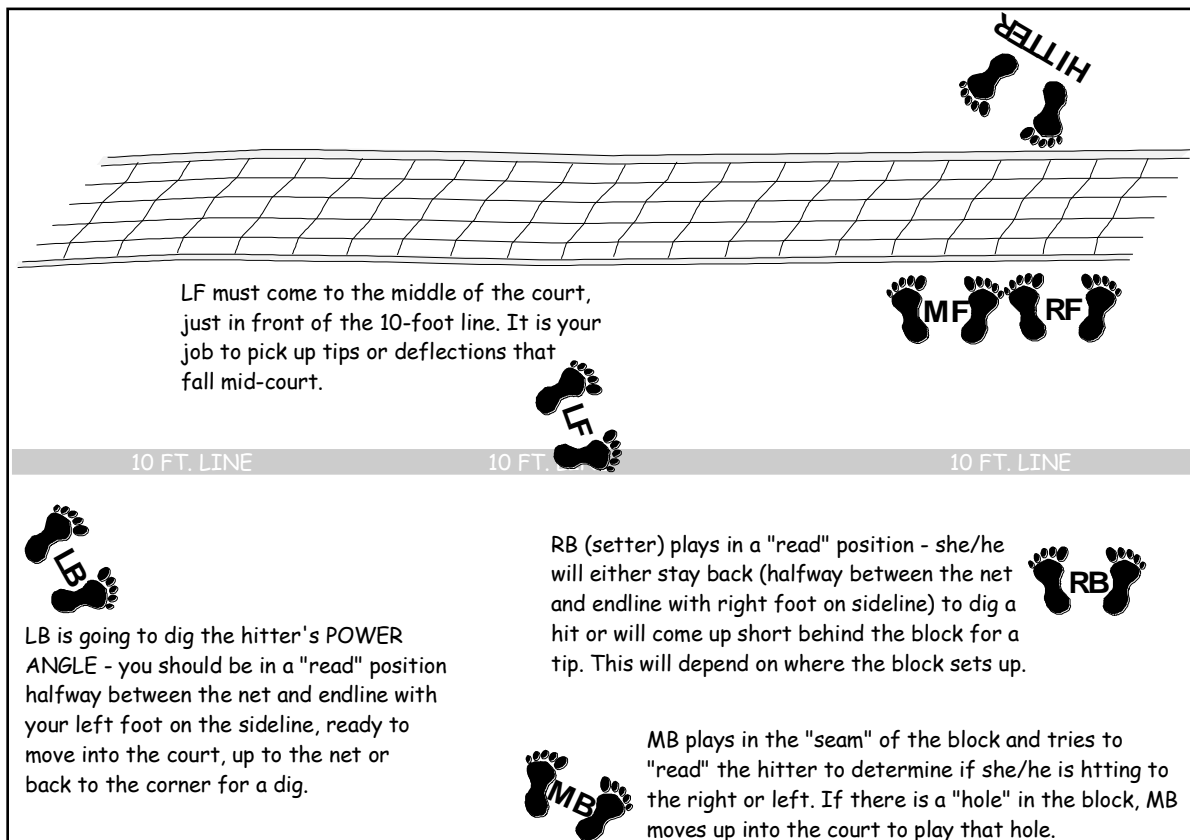
very basic defense vs left/strong side hitter



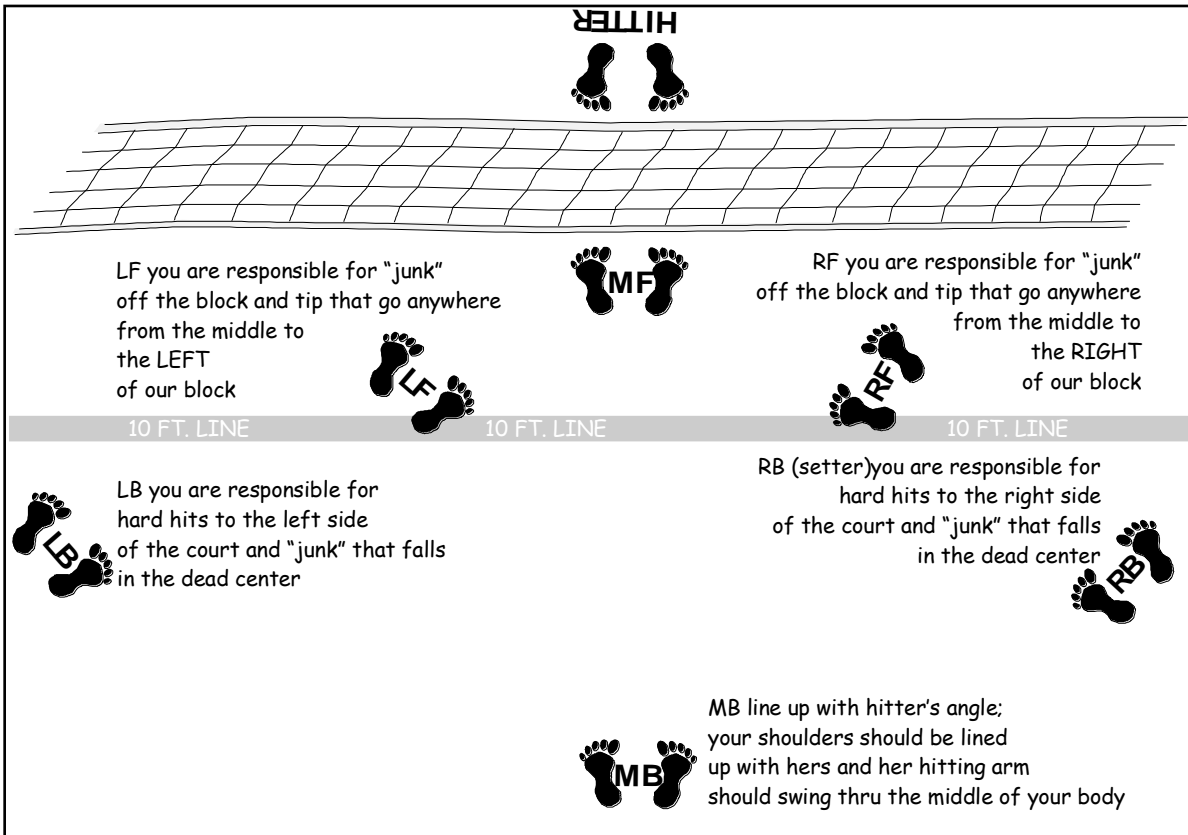
rotational defense vs opponent's left/strong side hitter



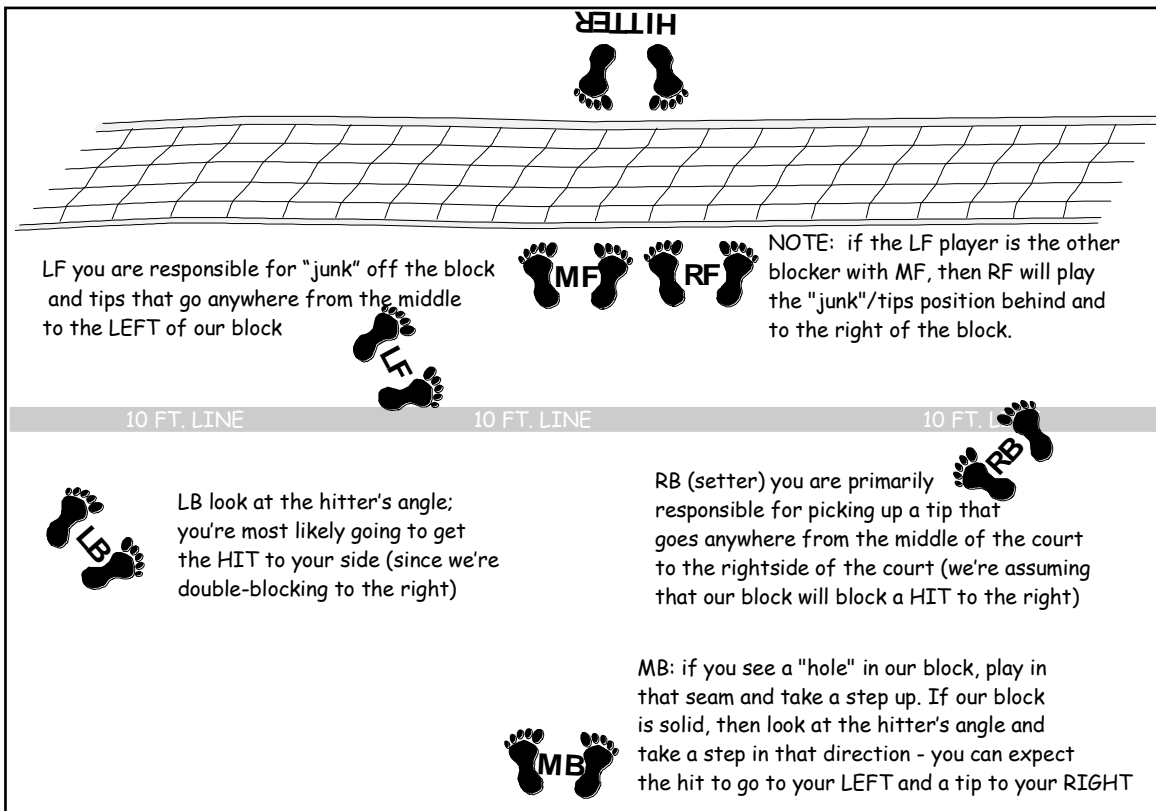
perimeter (middle back) defense vs left/strong side hitter



perimeter (middle back) defense vs opponent's middle hitter



perimeter (middle back) defense vs opponent's middle hitter



perimeter (middle back) defense vs right/weak side hitter

