



# THE PLAYERS' PLAYBOOK

GET EXCLUSIVE INSIDER TIPS FROM  
SOME OF THE BEST VOLLEYBALL  
PLAYERS IN THE WORLD

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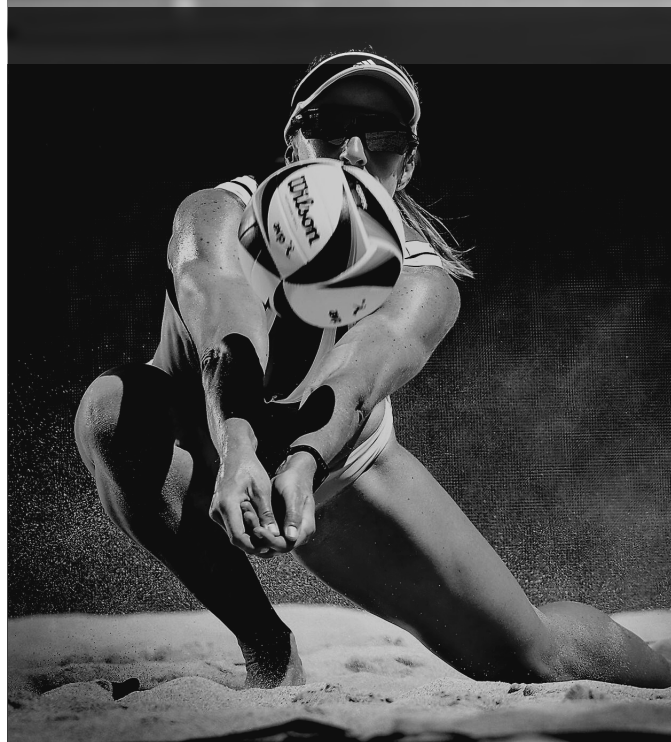
# THE PLAYERS'

## PLAYBOOK

Through our TimeOut Interview Series we have gathered the Tips and Secrets from some of the Best Indoor and Beach Volleyball Players in the World.

TimeOut is a series of deep-dive interviews where these incredible players share the behind the scenes of their volleyball journey, and all the secrets that helped them to succeed in their volleyball careers.

In this playbook we have gathered up some of our favorite pieces of advice, from all of the different interviews, on how YOU can start levelling up your volleyball game starting right NOW!





**Oreol Camejo**  
Outside Hitter

Cuba National Team  
Zenit Saint Petersburg - RUS  
Best Outside Hitter Russian  
Superleague 19/20

photo: World of Volley

"The most important is discipline and being consistent.

Set a goal and constantly work towards achieving this goal, the whole time trying to get there as fast as you can.

To do that you need the discipline to work hard. You need to train well, eat well and sleep well, so that you can keep your body in good condition and capable of working towards your goals."

"Always being present is a big one! Being present is something I had to work on, because you can very easily get caught up on the previous point or on the next point, thinking too far ahead. So I think staying present in all trainings and games is very important.

It's also something I think will really help you focus on what you are working on and not getting stressed if it's not working just yet, because trying to learn a new skill or trying to change a habit is not gonna happen over night, is gonna take time. Therefore I think staying really patient and present in training is gonna help a lot.

I also think always bringing a good attitude and staying very positive is key. You know, if you have high standards and expectations of yourself that's great, but make sure that you stay positive. Because it's always very easy for us to just pick on all the negatives and what we are doing wrong, but we don't really see what we are doing right. So I think just having that good balance is very important."



**Mariafe  
Artacho del Solar**  
Defender

Australia National Team  
5th Women's FIVB World Rankings  
6x World Tour Champion

"One tip that I always try to tell young players is to have a clear dream and vision. Then every day, from the moment they wake up and especially as they go to practice, to always keep their focus on their dream and their vision.

When you have a clear dream you can do amazing things. Things that you didn't think were possible. Because a dream is the most powerful thing there is.

So get clear on your dream, put all your energy into it and for sure you will reach it. Maybe you'll need a bit of luck along the way, but if you start with the right mindset you can truly achieve a lot of things in your life."



**Cristian Savani**  
Outside Hitter

Italia National Team  
Bronze Olympics 2012  
Best Server Olympics 2012  
2x European Champion

photo: KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV/AFP/GettyImages

"On one side I recommend trying to forget your losses as fast as you can and move forward. But at the same time, try to analyze your bad games rather than the good ones, because usually when we analyze our bad games we get much more information and insights into things that we can improve.

I also recommend watching yourself play from the outside. So put up a camera, or ask for example the coach who can see from the outside, because in reality how things look from the outside is always completely different from what we think we are doing. Nowadays, every mobile has a good camera, so just put your phone on a tripod to film yourself and watch what you can do better or why you are making mistakes.

Last is to try to learn from the best. This is the way I was growing as a player. I was watching the best players and trying to copy them. I would choose the things that I really liked and then try to use them in my own game."



## Aleksandrs Samoilovs

Defender/Blocker

Latvia National Team  
3x World Tour Champion  
3x Olympics Games 2008, 2012,  
2016

photo: Martin Steinhilber



## Jeff Ptak

Opposite

USA National Team  
Champion Cyprus National League  
2x MVP Cyprus League

photo: player's personal archive

"I like stuff that you can do by yourself. I don't want to rely on a setter to set a ball or someone to hit a ball on me to be able to practice my skills.

One thing you can do, regardless of your level, is to serve as much as possible. For jump serve practice a high and deep serve, because that will work on a nice, high arm swing.

And the same with spiking. Even if you just take a ball, throw it up in the air, make sure to keep that arm well extended as you hit the ball. This is really important, especially for shorter players. I always tell people, rarely in my career did I hit the ball down. A lot of players are concerned about bouncing the ball on the ground and getting that crazy kill, but in my career I scored 90% of my points hitting out of people's hands, high and hard.

And then squats! Squats, upon squats. You can't do enough of them.  
Squats, lunges, and swing high."

"I think a lot of times we talk to ourselves and we say things like 'ok, when I'm passing I need to have my platform out early'. But it's one thing saying it, a very different thing feeling it. How does it actually feel when you have your platform out early?"

Notice what the feeling is when you do it well and then if you pass, notice if you had the same feeling. If you didn't, then you probably didn't have your platform out early.

This is something that I really learned over the years. Before I was always telling myself what to do, but then I noticed that it is more about finding the right feeling. This has helped me improve a lot, also on technical stuff.

So my best advice is to try to notice how a certain volleyball movement feels, and then try to replicate this feeling, rather than telling yourself what to do."



**Madelein Meppelink**  
Blocker

Netherlands National Team  
Team Nederland  
2x European Champion  
2x Olympian

photo: Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP



**Tatsuya Fukuzawa**  
Outside Hitter

Japan National Team  
5x Japanese League Champion  
4x Emperor Cup Champion

photo: Fabienne Pontin

"My best advice would be to watch a lot of videos and try to imitate the players you look up to and want to be like.

For me this player is Giba. So every moment I try to imitate him, his behavior, the way he spikes, his reception... Don't get caught up in the small details, but try to imitate the player and once you get a feel for it you can then adapt and make it your own style.

I have learned a lot from watching some of the best players in the world play. So if you want to improve, watch some videos, pick your favorite players and try to set goals of who and what you want to play like."

"Take some time before practice to clear your mind.

Practice should essentially be your escape. So take 2 minutes before every practice to let go of whatever is happening that day or that week, and set an intention

This is probably the biggest thing. Set an intention for the practice and then when you come out of that practice ask yourself: 'Did I achieve what I was set out to do? Or did I at least get closer?'

I think that helps you to stay grounded, but also will get you closer to reaching your goals."



**Chiaka Ogbogu**  
Middle Blocker

USA National Team  
2x VNL Champion  
Italian & Polish Cup Champion  
Best Middle Blocker Polish Cup

photo: cev.eu



**Rodrigo Quiroga**  
Outside Hitter

Argentina National Team  
Olympic Games London 2012  
German Cup Champion

photo: Mariusz Palczynski / newspix.pl

"Love what you do and always keep going. Know that there are going to be many challenges, but you will have another chance, so just keep pushing. Work with respect, discipline, and passion for the game.

If you speak with the best players in the world, you will realize that they might speak more about their challenges than their gold medals, because you don't learn as much when you win, as you do when you lose.

Many times the greatest experiences come after overcoming challenges."

"Make the most out of every single moment of training, every single touch of the ball.

Often players will think; 'I will only pepper a little bit' or 'we have done this exercise before, I already know this'... Then in one exercise, you are only providing balls for the other guys and you lose focus... Instead, whatever the situation, you can really use every single touch and every single second of training for your improvement.

The best example is pepper or warming up. There are players that are just warming up and then there are players that are using this pepper or warm up to work on different shots, using overhead defense, and really working on improving their skill.

Make sure you always use the time that you are spending on the court fully. We cannot train 8 hours a day because our bodies are not able to, so the time that we can train with full athletic ability, we have to make the most out of."



**Alexander Huber**  
Defender

Austria National Team  
9th place Olympic Games 2016  
2x World Tour Champion  
Snow Volleyball Champion

"Keep your personality and inner child with you as long as you can.

Of course, take volleyball seriously and understand that you're gonna pass from being ordinary to a professional player, but keep your energy and your young spirit with you.

Never stop having fun!"



**Sanja Malagurski**  
Outside Hitter

Serbia National Team  
Olympics 2008  
Brazilian Superliga Champion  
2x European Champion

photo: player's personal archive



"Listen to older and more experienced players, there are a lot of things you can learn from them.

They have already been where you want to go and they can tell you which is the harder or easier path to get there."



**Douglas Duarte**  
Middle Blocker

Brazilian  
5x Austrian League Champion  
Bronze German Bundesliga

photo: player's personal archive



**Anastasija Kravcenoka**  
Defender

Latvia National Team  
Latvian Athlete of the Year  
European Championship Champion  
2x Latvian Champion

photo: FIVB

"One thing that I do myself and that I think really helps to improve my game is to keep a diary.

Write down how your practice was, which emotions you got during your practice and how you can continue to improve."



"When spiking it is always important to wait a lot. Try to see the ball flying and then imagine where will be the highest point where you can spike it.

If you learn to always try to spike the ball fast and high, then you will be hard to read and get fewer blocks."



**Marco Krattiger**  
Middle Blocker

Swiss National Team  
King of the Court Champion  
Italian & Polish Cup Champion  
NBO Nations Clash Champion

photo: cev.eu





**“THE SECRET OF  
GETTING AHEAD IS  
GETTING STARTED”**

ELBERT HUBBARD



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