



Competition Ideas

Vary the Net Height

Changing the net height, or using a different net variation, can make for many great options. You can use badminton nets, ribbon, rope or even tape. In many of these options, you can *slant* the net/rope, with one side being higher than the other, to allow for kids of different heights to have different challenges.

The first option we suggest is to lower the net or rope and play the game of sitting volleyball. String rope about a meter high down the center of a regulation volleyball court, with the regular net not up. If you have put up rope standards on the walls down the middle of the court for other training as noted above, you can just use those to anchor the nets/ropes to. If not, you can have two kids holding the rope sitting in chairs, and change the chair sitter/holders every few minutes.

What you have are THREE almost regulation sized sitting courts - which are 6 meters wide by 5 meters deep on each side. The endline and 3-meter lines are now the sidelines for courts #1 and #3, while the 3-meter lines become the sidelines for middle court #2. The rope running down the center of a 9-meter wide regular court, means the endlines now are 4.5 meters, just half a meter off regulation, and fine for everyone playing, no need to extend it. Tie a sock or a let a flag football flag hang down over the court edge as the "antenna" and kids will play for a long time. It teaches you to play overhead much better, and the shortened court speeds up your reaction time. Play using team sizes of 4, 5 or 6.

The next option is to play on a tennis court. Many places in the world play outdoors on concrete if they are lucky, or on dirt. These fenced in courts are GREAT outdoor training places for youth and junior volleyball. String TWO nets or a long rope, linked together down the middle of the tennis court, anchoring to the fence, and leaving the tennis net up as a divider net for the two courts. Chalk on the court any sized court you want, just have a 2-meter buffer zone between courts, and from the sideline to the fence. Kids programs are easily run in such a training area, weather permitting.

You can also just have the kids play over the tennis net, letting them really pound and spike like Calvin and Hobbes. Give them one bounce. Playing over a table with a balloon ball even works. Letting the younger boys hit on a women's height net is important when kids are young, as they want to have the fun of spiking down, so all lowered nets allow this and "capture" kids the way the dunk does in basketball.

Finally, put the net or rope up higher. For girls, putting it up to men's height means the players learn arm swings that hit the ball in over an about 8" high block, the height of the majority of younger players get their blocking hands above the net. When longtime coach John Kessel played with the Denver Comets pro team, his coach/teammate Jon Stanley (father of 2004 Olympian Clay Stanley), had them hit over a pair of linked badminton nets which were strung from antenna to antenna. This long net was about two

feet high on the sideline and dipped to 18 inches in the middle for those quick hitters. Players learned an arm swing that hit over a two-foot high block and into the court, a VERY valuable way to swing for an attacker.