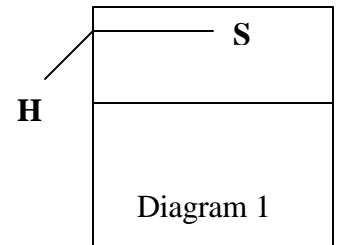


Angle Sets

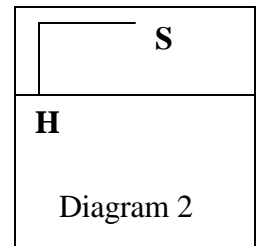
Written By: Bart Gensburg, CAP III

The reason why volleyball coaches ask players to do things a certain way, is because of a belief or concept that they have about the game. This is a concept about “Angle Sets,” which are sets that travel back toward the net.

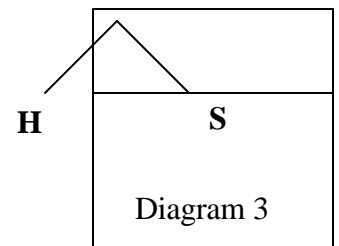
Take a look at diagram 1. The hitter is well off the court and the setter made a great set. The important thing here is the obtuse angle of about 135° . This open approach angle allows the hitter to see the ball with both eyes and that should give the hitter better depth perception to judge the distance and height of the set.



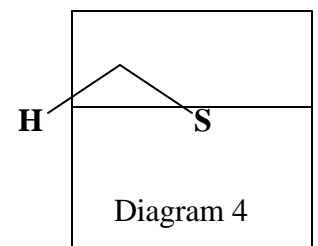
Now look at diagram 2. The setter made another great set, but the hitter stayed in the court. Now the approach angle is 90° . This is a very difficult ball to hit even if the ball is set 3 feet off the net. Going 90° to the ball only lets you see the ball with your right eye. It might be ok if the hitter is right eye dominant, but both eyes on the ball help the depth perception you need as a hitter.



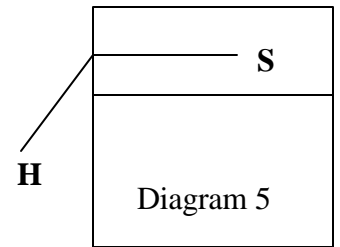
Now look at diagram 3. The hitter got off the court, and that is correct. But the setter is out of system. The setter now “angle sets” the ball to the desired zone, and keeps the set 3 feet off the net. The hitter is again approaching at a 90° angle, and this ball is just as hard to hit as any 90° approach.



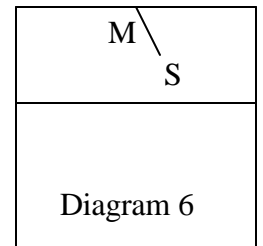
To avoid the 90° approach, the setter should have set the “55” ball. It is 5 feet off the center line and 5 feet off the side line (see diagram 4). The setter or hitter could call “55” but both should realize that the setter is out of system. This opens up the angle of approach and lets the hitter see the ball with both eyes for depth perception.



When the setter is 3 to 5 feet off the net, she should set parallel to the net (see diagram 5). The hitter will know that the set will be about as far off the net as the setter, this will let the hitter back up and make some adjustments to the distance in her approach.



In diagram 6, the middle hitter got in front of the setter. Now if the setter wants to use the MH she must angle set the ball almost over the MH shoulder and this will be a very difficult ball to hit. The MH must always adjust the approach position based on the setter's position, and should always be farther from the net than the setter.



Never set a ball less than 3 feet away from the net. The closer to the net the set is, the harder it is to hit and the easier it is to block. The blockers have the ball almost as soon as the hitter hits. If your left side hitter is a shorter player you'll need to set the ball 5 feet or more off the net to give room for the hit.

Keep in mind that there are great hitters and sometimes it doesn't matter what set you give them, they will make something out of it. But all hitters have a better chance if they keep the angle open, more than 90°, and make adjustments to the setter's position. The hitters should also make adjustments to the direction the setter is moving. The direction the setter runs to the ball will make the ball drift that direction. If the setter is moving toward the net the set will drift toward the net and this may cause an angle set that's hard to hit. This is one of the reasons to want the setter at the net (very close) so that all of her movements are going away from the net. Moving away from the net will make the set drift away from the net and open up the approach angle. If the setter is chasing the ball toward the left side hitter when the set is made, the ball will drift the direction the setter is moving. The hitter should move farther away from the setter to give the setter more room.

To summarize, if the approach angle is 90° or less, there won't be much success for the hitter. I kept track of angle sets in the finals of the Ohio state tournament in 4 divisions, and only 1 in 10 angle sets were successful. The rest were tips, poke's, free balls, hits into the net or blocked. Because of the low percentage of success, I want my setter to avoid angle sets, by using the "55" ball or a back row hitter. I would like an attack on every ball that we keep on our side. A good down ball is an attack. A good setter never angle sets.

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