PARENTS GUIDE TO VIDEOING VOLLEYBALL

At Little Neck Productions, our goal is to assist you in the recruiting process – and that includes helping you learn to shoot better video of your player for college coaches to evaluate!

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED TO VIDEO A VOLLEYBALL MATCH?

**Camcorder** – Okay, so that’s kind of obvious. However, you don’t need a $5,000 professional video camera to record your player’s matches. Quality consumer camcorders are now available for $300-$500, including ones with High Definition, image stabilization, and flash memory. If you haven’t purchased a camcorder in a few years, go ahead and budget the money to buy a new one today; you’ll be amazed at the increase in video quality, usability, and features compared with the atomic powered VHS camera you may still be using. Also, many of today’s digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) cameras have HD video record capability that is as good – or better – than many a dedicated camcorder’s. If yours is one of those DSLRs, try the video feature and see what you get; why pay for the same capability twice?

**Tripod** – Trust us on this one! You may think you have the rock solid hands of the Waco Kid, but use a tripod anyway. Your tripod should be sturdy and rigid, yet also set up and break down quickly. Some tripods use quick-release hinged latches that let you open and close the legs rapidly, but they can’t support as much weight as screw-type leg locks. Height is a huge issue, too (no pun intended). Try to get a tripod that extends to at least 72 inches (6 feet). Not only does that help you get a better vantage point to shoot from, but it also reduces the number of bodies walking in front of your camera. Of course, if you’re the handy type… there’s always PVC and duct tape from the local home improvement warehouse, too.

**Batteries** – Make sure you have at least one spare, fully charged battery for your camcorder (having a third is even better). Investing in a rapid charger – one that will juice your depleted battery in under an hour- can also be a lifesaver. In most volleyball venues, there are few, if any, electrical outlets anywhere near the courts, and rarely the court where your player is competing (Murphy’s Rule).

**Flash Memory Card (or mini-DVDs)** – In digital memory… bigger really is better! Don’t get caught without enough memory! As a reference, a standard 4GB flash memory card, in a baseline HD camcorder, at standard record speed, recording uninterrupted, will hold about one set of volleyball. When that card’s full, we guarantee the most exciting sets will be the second and third (or fourth, or fifth). SO, figuring approximately 4GB a set, you’ll want a minimum 16GB memory card to be sure you get that entire one match. Shooting all weekend? Plan your camera’s brain power accordingly!

I’VE GOT ALL MY GEAR – NOW WHAT?

When you shoot video of a match, it’s extremely important to record from as much of a full-court perspective as possible. Volleyball is a sport of angles, rebounds, constant interaction and movement, so coaches need to see what your son or daughter is doing in relation to the play. **DO NOT ZOOM IN ON YOUR PLAYER.** When you do that, coaches aren’t able to see where the ball is coming from, how the players transitioned as a result of the ball’s line of flight, and how the play transpired in winning/losing the point.
MORE TIPS TO VIDEOING A VOLLEYBALL MATCH

- **Set up your camera in the middle of the court behind the side your player is on**, if possible. When the teams switch sides, you should too. If you simply can’t get behind the court (which is tough at large club tournaments or small gyms), then set up on a backline corner of the court - about a 45 degree angle to the court will do.
- **If you do have to shoot from a 45 degree angle to the court**, shoot from the corner the line judge is NOT standing on.
- **Zoom in as close as possible to the court’s dimensions**; maintain the end line and the antennas as your guide (antennas should be shown). If you can’t identify your athlete by their jersey #, then you’re not shooting tight enough for a coach’s viewing purposes.
- **Raise the tripod high enough so you can see both sides of the net**, if possible.
- **Fresh Caught Tuna (aka Shooting Through Netting).** That darned netting that separates courts at big tournaments is a big visual distraction on video. If at all possible (and we know it’s very hard in some venues), don’t shoot through court barrier netting with it in front of your camera lens. Instead, try sticking your lens through one of the openings in the net to keep the “cross-hairs” from being visible in the frame. You may have to get somewhat ingenious in order to get the net to cooperate, but it’s well worth the effort.
- **Don’t follow the ball or the player around the court.** Following the play seems like a good idea, but by doing so you won’t be capturing what’s happening on the other side of the net or what your player’s teammates are doing. Again, coaches need a full court perspective! **Keep cheering (and outbursts) to a minimum.** Most of the time coaches will watch video on mute, but if not - they don’t want/need to hear your commentary.
- **Watch for flying balls!** They somehow always seem to be attracted to expensive cameras!
- **Pause filming to exclude down time including ball shagging and time in-between games.** Coaches prefer to see action that is uninterrupted, which includes seeing if a player taken out for a reason or just a part of normal rotation, to see what a player’s body language and attention is like during the timeout process, how a player enters and leaves the huddle, and how they respond after a rally ends. That said there is also no reason to waste valuable time-and memory space- capturing lengthy time periods shagging the ball when it shanks five courts over, nor time between games.
- **Pick matches against the best competition you faced.** This gives coaches the opportunity to evaluate you in comparison to other strong players. This is especially important when submitting video for the All American nominations. The committee members are interested in rating your student-athlete against the best competition you faced.
- **Hit the record button once you have the full-court perspective and simply back away from the camera.**

Once you have great video footage, you can use LITTLE NECK PRODUCTIONS to help create a great looking highlight and/or match-play video to show off the volleyball talent college coaches and staffs are searching for - YOU!