



TCA players X, Y, Z, A, B and C and TCA coaches A, B and C helped Steve demonstrate these jump serving tips.



Jump Serving Your Way to SUCCESS

These drills will help put your opponent back on its heels.

By Steve Aird

One of the tenets of TCA Volleyball is our belief in teaching players to be aggressive and not fear making mistakes. A great example of this is how we train serving, specifically the jump serve.

1. Jump serving builds confidence in players
2. It helps develop a proper arm swing and footwork early in a players career
3. It is the fastest and easiest way for your players and team to score points quickly
4. Teaching an aggressive mentality from the end line carries over into many other areas of the sport. We want our athletes to be aggressive, confident and not afraid to take risks and make errors.
5. We want all players at all ages to develop a jump serve they feel comfortable using at all times during matches.
6. The players enjoy it a great deal and can typically pick up the skill at a basic level quite quickly.

When should players start using a jump serve? TCA starts training their athletes to jump serve at the 12-and-under levels. The lighter ball and the mechanics of jump serving

make it an ideal time to introduce jump serving at such an early age. Young players will benefit from the fact they are serving the ball a shorter distance. The momentum created by the jump serve's approach will provide the servers with additional power. And watching opposing teams struggle to pass their serve will generate confidence.

Before you train any style of jump serve there are a few important issues to consider. Young players are going to make a lot of mistakes. The culture you create in your gym must be one

where mistakes are part of the process and not a reason to be ashamed.

At clinics or practices with young players, make sure everyone knows that taking risks, trying new things and making errors are all part of becoming a better player. In essence, the ball becomes unimportant and the technique becomes crucial. If players send the ball under the net, into the ref stand or fail to make contact, as coaches, we should not be concerned. Concentrate on the technique and positive feedback. Take care ▶



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of the technique and the ball will take care of itself.

We like to train two types of jump serves—the jump spike and the jump float. The jump spike is a high velocity, topspin serve with a sharp arc which closely mimics hitting.

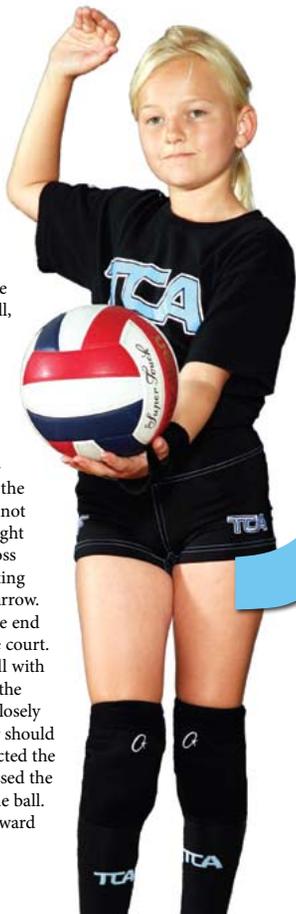
The jump float is a flat and wobbly serve which is unpredictable in its movements. Both serves are important for players to learn and both are a great weapon at any age. We feel it is vital that the players learn to serve both types of serves at a young age.

In addition to making the players effective scorers from the end line, the jump serve help players in other facets of the game. Young players who are struggling to get the ball over the net may benefit from the added power and momentum provided by a jump float. Hitters who have trouble contacting the ball at a high point would benefit from the jump spike serve because in order to successfully execute a spike serve a player must contact the ball at its apex.

* The Jump Float

The jump float's purpose is to shorten the distance the ball spends in the air and to change to angle for the passer tracking the serve. The server should start with the ball in the non-hitting hand with her hitting hand up. A right-handed player should take four steps, right, left, lift the ball, right, left serve (lefty's go left, right, lift, left, right serve).

It is important to note the player is moving when she tosses the ball for service. While executing the footwork for a jump float the server's upper body remains quiet during the first two steps. The toss should not be very high, just above the height of the hitting hand. After the toss the server should bring her hitting shoulder back into a bow and arrow. The server should take off at the end line and land several feet in the court. The player should strike the ball with a flat, strong palm and aim for the middle of the ball. By looking closely at how the ball spins, the player should be able to tell where they contacted the ball. If it has backspin, they missed the middle toward the bottom of the ball. If it has topspin, they missed toward the top of the ball.



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Jump Float Tips

1. For a jump float we want to start with the right foot forward and the ball held extended and low in your non-serving hand. Your serving hand should be high and ready to strike the ball.
2. 4 Steps—One, Two, Lift, Three, Four, HIT. Low lift for jump float.
3. Steps to contact: Small, bigger, biggest / Slow faster, fastest—rhythm of the approach is key.
4. Land on two feet! This is very important to prevent injury!

Tip

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* The Jump Spike

This serve is all about power and velocity. For a jump spike, the server should start with the ball in her hitting hand, with her opposite arm down at her side. A right-hander should start with the ball in her right hand and take a small step with her right foot. After the step, the server tosses a high ball with some spin out in front of her. This toss is high because the

server needs time to take three more steps and get her arms down, back and up.

After her toss, the player completes her approach by taking the last three steps of her approach, left, right, left. The server's steps go from small to big and from slow to fast. Again the players are tossing the ball into the court and jumping forward over the end line, shortening the distance and therefore time an opponent has to play it. Unlike the jump float, the server is stopped when she tosses and her upper body has much more movement ▶

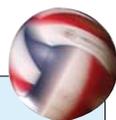


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in order to put themselves in a position to effectively contact the ball. After the first step and toss, the server's arms come down when she takes her second step with her left foot. On the third step with the right foot, the server's arms come straight back to help generate lift, and on the fourth step with the left foot, the server's arms come up into a bow and arrow with the hitting shoulder back to generate torque. Upon contact, the server should continue with her arm swing, hitting through the ball, to create the topspin and pace that characterizes the jump spike serve.

Tips For a Jump Spike Serve

1. For a topspin jump serve, we will start with the right foot forward and the ball held extended and low in the attacking hand.
2. 4 Steps—Step Toss, Step, Step, Step, HIT—HIGH TOSS for jump spike.
3. Steps before contact—Small, bigger, biggest / Slow faster fastest. Rhythm of the approach is key.
4. Arms down back and up—simple is better than complex.
5. Torque—stay tall and swing the "T"—toss has to be over hitting shoulder, avoid pike.
- 6) Land on two feet! Very important to prevent injury!



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Jump serves not only help your team score points, they also help players develop skills in other aspects of the game. If a hitter is having trouble with her footwork, a jump spike is a great way to review the approach footwork. For both skills, a right-handed athlete takes a four step approach, right, left, right, left. The steps should progress from slow to fast and from small to big. Practicing the footwork for jump serving is a good way for hitters to develop timing off their own toss which is usually more consistent than live sets.

Jump spike serves are also great for developing a hitter's arm swing. Players should follow through with their hitting hand when jump serving much like hitting. For younger players, the net can be an imposing barrier when practicing hitting. Using the jump spike to practice the arm swing eliminates this hindrance.

Both types of jump serves develop an aggressive mindset in our athletes at a young age. The confidence gained from successfully jump serving carries over to all aspects of their game. Fostering an aggressive attitude with players and a culture where it is OK to make mistakes can do wonders. The next time you find a player struggling with their serve, try teaching them to jump serve. You will find within a short time that player will get better at hitting, will carry herself with a newfound confidence and will score some

points for you from the service line. At TCA we empower players to take risks, gain confidence in their skills and hope that those lessons carry over into everything that they do in life. ●



Tip

Steve Aird is the director of operations for the Team Complete Athlete club, which has affiliates in nine different states. A former player at Penn State, Aird was part of the 2007 Penn State women's team that won the first of its two straight NCAA titles. Contact Steve at steve@tcavolleyball.com.

