



ETHOS VOLLEYBALL CLUB

Recruiting Notes Fall 2017

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Liberos: “A Dime A Dozen”

If you attended the Recruiting Seminar last Sunday, you heard me talk about the difficulty that defensive specialists can face in the recruiting process. As one college coach told me just a couple of weeks ago, “Liberos are a dime a dozen.” However, college programs need at least 2-3 defensive specialists on their team every year. So if you are a libero looking to play college volleyball, how can you stand out from the crowd and land a spot on a college team?

Improve Speed and Athleticism

Typically, defensive specialists are shorter than the other players on the court (setters, pin hitters, and middles), but they shouldn't be any less athletic. In fact, **liberos should work to be the fastest player on the court.** They should be able to make quick, explosive movements toward the ball. They should have strong platforms that don't break away when passing a fast serve or digging a hard hit ball. In order to stand out, liberos need to outwork the other players on the court, especially in defensive and serve/receive drills.

Be Versatile

College coaches love defensive specialists that can do more than just play defense. **Liberos who can set or hit are far more marketable** than those that can't do those skills with efficiency. I have coached two liberos who have gone on to play college ball; one now plays at a Division I program and the other plays at a Division II program. Both of them set for me; one for my State runner-up high school team and one for my Ethos 16 Elite team. Even if you never set or hit in a match, make it clear that you could if your coach needed you.

High Energy, Loud Voice

One of the easiest ways to stand out to coaches is to be the loudest player on the court. Celebrate good plays with the most enthusiasm. **Play the game with high energy!** To understand what I'm suggesting, watch some college volleyball matches and keep your eye on the Libero. She is usually all over the back court, directing traffic, and jumping up and down like crazy person when her outside hitter gets a big kill or her middle blocker stuff blocks the opponent. Locally, I've been most impressed with the UT-C libero this year; she has received tons of accolades and she's only a freshman. She is a high energy player who helps her team run a fast offense.

Know the Game, Improve Your Volleyball IQ

I like to say that the Setter is the offensive captain while the **Libero is the defense captain on the court.** Not only should Liberos know standard serve/receive rotations, they should also know how to make adjustments in a rotation if another player is struggling to pass to target. Liberos should know how to read an attacker's arm swing and hand contact to be able to make adjustments to her defense. Liberos can determine the speed at which her team plays by adjusting the tempo of her passes; she can even determine who the setter sets based on the direction she passes the ball. Liberos need to have great vision and a thorough understanding of the game. How does a player improve her knowledge and vision? Watch as much volleyball as she plays!

Strong Academics

The bottom line is this; college coaches don't like spending their scholarship monies on defensive players. That doesn't mean they don't want you on their team. Liberos need to be prepared to play college volleyball on zero to partial athletic scholarship. That means **earn your scholarship money with your academics!** A strong GPA and ACT score will bring as much if not more money than an athletic scholarship. If your ACT score is subpar, consider enrolling in an ACT prep class. Those classes do work.