

5-1 SYSTEM

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Now that the first semester events are over, it is time for us to put together new, more elaborate tactics, the like of those the great teams we played at the Intervarsities relied on.

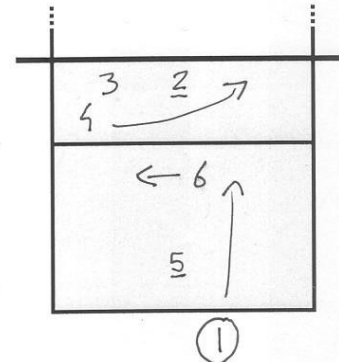
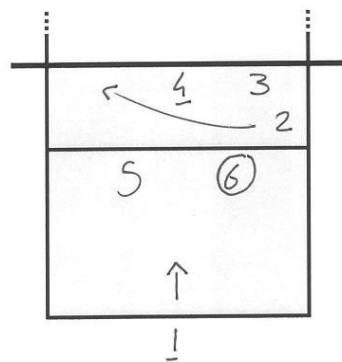
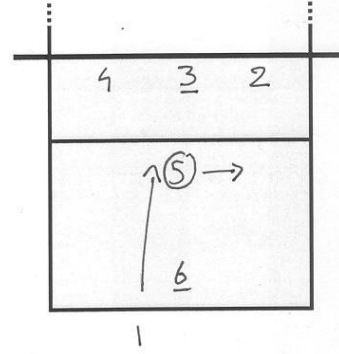
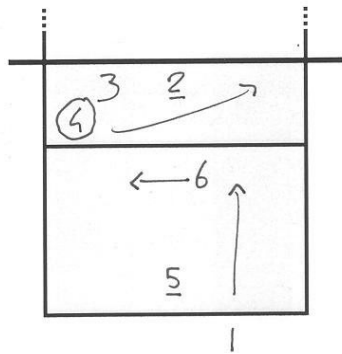
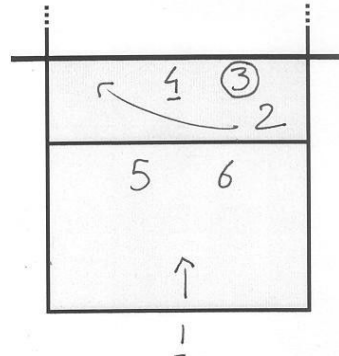
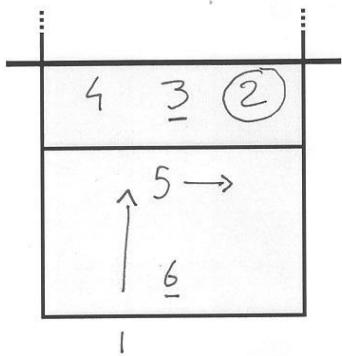
The main change we have to make is to have the setter to the right of the net (position 2).

This will make our attacks less predictable; the way we've done it so far, the opponents knew who would attack as soon as they saw which direction the ball took. Now, with appropriate exercises, we can simulate a double attack (both front rows jump for the ball, but only one, depending on the setter's choice, actually smashes it).

Now, we still could do a 4-2, and I guess it would be more straightforward with regard to serve-receive positioning. The advantage of the 5-1 is that as often as the setter is in a back-row position (5, 6 or 1), all three front-row players are left to attack (4, 3 and 2), the third attacking from the extreme right-hand side of the net.

Here are the six service rotations diagrams (note that I mistakenly inversed the rotations' direction, as Andrea pointed out: you should actually visualize the first frame, then the last, and therefore make your way back to the first, the inverse way you would read a comic book):

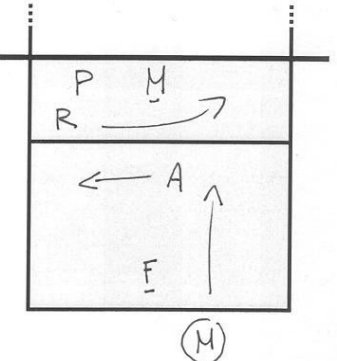
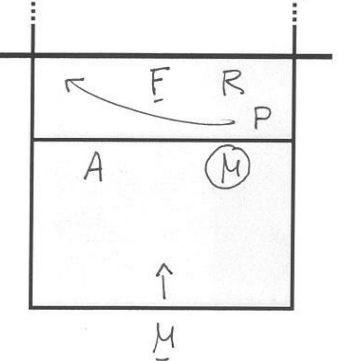
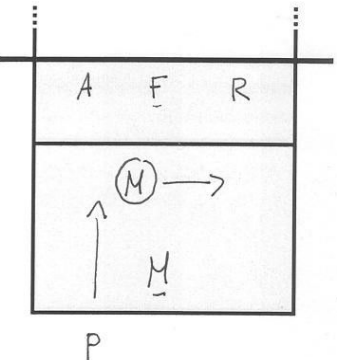
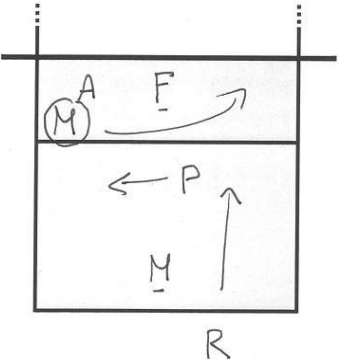
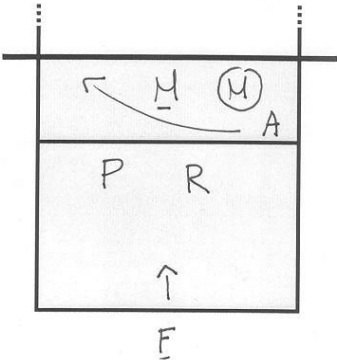
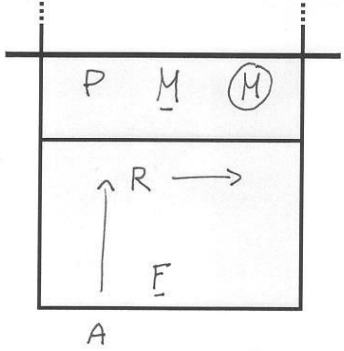
Service



The setter is circled, and middles (I'll come to it later) are underlined. Looking at it grossly, you can see a pattern repeating itself every three rotations, which should make the apprenticeship twice as quick. Also, if you look at the next

representation of the same diagrams, with name-designating letters instead of figures, you'll see that each player sticks to his own front or back row position: left, middle, or right:

Service



The choice of the letters was inspired from our players, of course. I'll explain it later.

You can see that, when back-row, the setter always positions himself behind the right-hand side double block. That is because it is the closest to where he is actually supposed to set from.

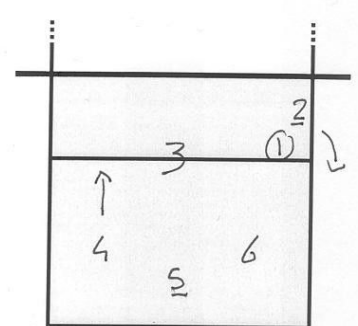
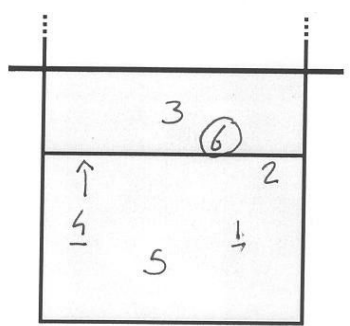
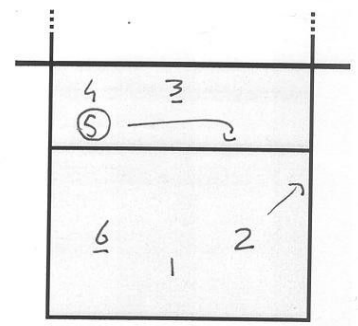
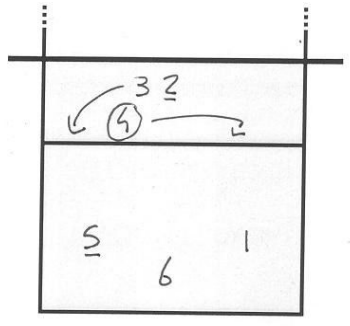
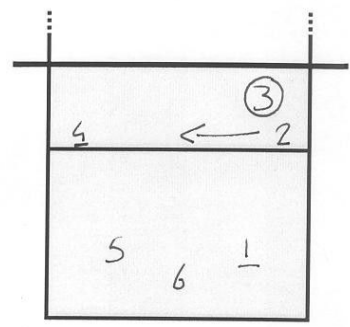
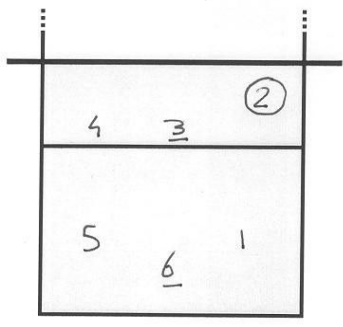
This is what constrains us to turn our previous W into a big fractal triangle: the setter's positioning already making him secure from a lift the right hand-side block (in which event the setter would actually touch the first ball, making of the right-hand side attacker a back-up setter), the center-back has to move elsewhere. That will be the back of the court, so as to balance the whole configuration: the right-back (i.e. the setter) secures the block from a right-hand side attack, and the left back, from a left-hand side attack. The only position for the center back is... the back. Big job: left alone there, he'd better like diving!

The middles, lucky ones, only have to move every three rotations, from middle front/back to middle back/front. But since they have to concentrate very little on their positioning, I'll ask them to help the setter supervise the positioning of the rest of the players. In addition, the middle-front always blocks (unless in the case of free balls, of course), and has to be able to attack on short settings, which requires a good middle-setter understanding.

That is why I would like Florian and Martin to be the two middles. Both good blockers, they are also involved players who I count on to integrate the logic of the positioning, and help me with it on the court. Also, Florian will stay here for another one or two years, which will help build a mutual understanding on short attacks; Martin only stays until March, but he has the experience of such things, and will therefore prove helpful. Of course, I will be the setter, the guy who always has to be there.

The receive, now. That is much less schematic. Here, we are under the pressure of a fast service, we don't have time to move much until the ball gets back on the other side of the net. Let's have a look at the receive diagrams:

Receive



Many things to say about that.

Firstly, only three players really prepare themselves to receive the ball (cheeks down to the heels). This is common practice. If the opponents' service is very strong, then we may consider sending another player back (most often number 4) on the spot. Depending on the rotation, one or two front-row players do not have to worry about moving too much. These can look out for short balls, or balls that are slowed down touching the net.

When the setter is front row, players 5, 6 and 1 always are the receivers, so that's pretty easy. On the other hand, the setter never takes the first ball, so when back-row, one front-row player has to replace him receive, not forgetting that he actually is front-row and allowed by the rules to attack at the net. On the three last diagrams, you see players 2, 4, and again 4 receiving. The arrow I've drawn in front of them in such situation is a reminder of their actual front-row positioning.

Bearing in mind the volleyball positioning rules (4 3 2 in front of 5 6 1; 4 5 to the left of 3 6, themselves to that of 2 1, all respectively. Pretty obvious on the upper-left diagram), an exercise you could do to make yourself familiar with these rotations is to check that I did not make a mistake. Could be...

Unfortunately, to assign each player a specific position (back-front left, middle or right) at the receive makes it way more complicate. We will not do it, at least in the beginning. On the other hand, not doing it will help us knowing where players are supposed to go when rotating, while shifting systematically, like we'll do when serving, blurs the actual positioning.

All right, that is all I can think of saying about it for the moment. If you have any question, you can certainly send the club or me an e-mail. Thanks for taking time to read and do a bit of thinking about all that. See you around, and if not, have a merry Christmas!

Love,

Matthew