

# Milwaukee Rally Volleyball Club

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## From the Director...

Hello Everyone! I have a few updates on some items:

**Saturday Conditioning:** We are pleased with our turnout of athletes at our Saturday conditioning sessions. Coach Mike Walker is doing a great job and all the feedback from our athletes has been very positive. I would love to see more of our players take advantage of this, so we have changed the time that we will be doing conditioning to accommodate more athletes. Please review your March practice Schedule closely when it comes out for details.

**Tournaments:** At the end of this month we will be about midway through our season. (Time sure goes fast, even with all the snow!) There is still plenty of time to work on all aspects of your game. **Remember that practice is where the real work is done.** Push yourself now and you will see the benefits in the fall!

**Keep it Clean:** We are doing a good job of keeping our gyms clean, but I

still want to remind you to please keep your wet shoes in the hall, away from the courts, and please pick up any water bottles or wrappers when you leave the gym!

**Coaches Hitting Boxes:** We now have our first hitting box. For those of you that don't know, a hitting box is a large wooden box that coaches can use in drills to help players practice passing/digging/blocking, etc, and is much safer than a chair! This box will be available at Mount Mary. We are working on one for Immanuel as well.

**Surprises:** The first of two surprise items have arrived this month, in the form of Rally towels. Use them with pride! In March we will have another surprise for our players...stay tuned!

Thanks, and Go Rally!  
Coach Casey

## Team Updates....

**14:** We have struggled in pool play thus far, but have always managed to make it to a consolation bracket and be successful in that bracket. We have taken many matches to 3 games, which shows our competitive spirit, and hope to be in the Gold bracket in our upcoming tourneys! We have a great group of girls that have fun, and cheer each other on even through the tough matches!

**15:** We started off the season slow and finished in the bottom

third of 12 teams. The girls competitive spirit came alive at the Parkside Challenge, and we won the silver bracket championship! Although we finished in the middle of the pack at the Block Party Open, the girls had many great moments- there's a lot to look forward to during the rest of the season!

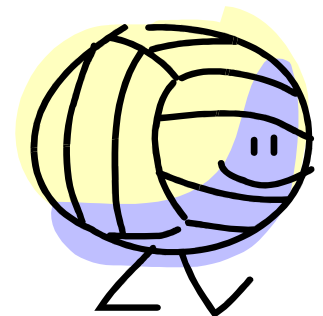
**16Black:** We were victorious in the Titan Invite on Jan. 19th, winning the Gold Championship and did a great job making it to

the Gold Quarterfinals in the Junior Elite Challenge in Pleasant Prairie, losing to the eventual winner Net Force. We then went on to place second in a 12 team event in the Fond du Lac Junior Open on probably the coldest day of the year! We lost a thrilling 3 game match to Riptide that had a controversial ending (don't get me started!) This team has tremendous energy and athleticism and always displays outstanding teamwork. They are a joy to coach!

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## FOR SALE!

Mizuno Wave Lightning 3 Volleyball Shoes

White w/ Black

Size 8 1/2

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## Coaches Corner: Become a better passer!

Passing may be the hardest skill in volleyball to master. With Rally For Life quickly approaching, we asked our Rally staff to give their best tips, suggestions and strategies about passing to help you become an awesome server!

Here's what they said:

**Dennis Casey:** Passing is done with your legs— not with swinging your arms. You must have a low, strong passing platform, and your arm position should be flat (your arms need to be rotated outward to be as flat as possible). Move quickly to the ball, while staying low and behind the ball. Upon contact, rise up with your legs, and point your hips directly to the target. It is much easier to write how to pass, than it is to perform. That is why passing is so important in practice. You must teach your body by repetition how to pass, so that it becomes second nature in game situations.

**Kendra Casey:** Staying low is very important when passing a ball, be it a free ball or a hard dig. The lower you are to the ground, the easier it will be for you to adjust to wherever the ball is going. That being said, make sure you anticipate and watch the ball, so you can save your self some reaction time. Also, don't

forget to keep your platform low, and **DO NOT SWING YOUR ARMS!** That will only create a very high pass, that is hard to set and to control.

**Katie Roessler:** If you keep your platform low, have your hips toward your target (setter), and watch the ball hit off your arms, it should be a perfect pass, every time!

**Christine Crowley:** With all the technical details to keep in mind when passing, it can be easy to forget one simple thing: keep your eyes on the ball! This goes beyond watching the ball's path and includes watching the ball make contact with your forearms. Whether you're passing a free ball, receiving a serve, or digging an attack, there are many variables that can affect the path that the ball takes, so watching the ball as it approaches your arms can help you make any last-second adjustments with your arm positioning and ensure that you get solid contact.

**Janelle Balcerzak:** Don't overrun the ball. If you move too quickly you might miss the ball completely! If you wait and watch where the ball is going to go, you will have a much better chance of getting under the ball (low platform), and getting the

ball to the setter.

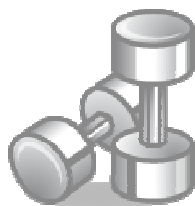
**Christine Brunow:** Face your target! Wherever your hips are facing (most likely) your pass will go. Try to take that extra step to the side and get your body behind the ball when you are passing. Don't be lazy and swing your arms to the sides. That will often lead to a shanked pass. By getting your body squared around toward your target (setter) you are in better position to judge the speed and spin of the ball, and can make a more intelligent pass to your setter.

**Robin Mueller:** Passing starts with a good stance. You should have a wide base so you can push off side to side, weight on the balls of your feet, and one foot should be slightly in front of the other. When the ball contacts your platform, your hands should be tipped down to provide a flat platform. One of the key things to remember is to keep your hips below the ball and don't swing your arms. Absorb or cushion the ball and use your legs and body for movement. Move your feet so that you can make the pass in the middle of your body. There is a lot to think about when making a pass, but be patient, with repetition, you'll learn to control the pass!

## Mike Walker Answers Your Questions!

As you all know, Mike Walker from 121 Fitness, LLC will be running conditioning sessions for the Rally this season. Mike will answer players, parents, or coaches questions regarding fitness, working out, and training. If you have a question for Mike to answer, send it to

kendralynncasey@gmail.com



**Q:** Mike, you always talk about your "core" at conditioning practices. Why is it so helpful to have a strong core for volleyball?

**A:** In my opinion, the most important types of training needed for a volleyball athlete are power and core strength. The game of volleyball is highly explosive so one must train that way. Power involves the simultaneous reaction of the hips, knees, and ankles while the abs and lower back are used for support. The lifts we use to train for power are: Hang Cleans, Push Press/Jerks, High Pulls, Power Shrugs along with plyometrics, depending on what part of the season we are in. These exercises in-

clude jumps, hops, bounds, etc. Core strength utilizes the hips, abs, and low back. The ability to stabilize your body in different planes or directions is a major factor in the game of volleyball. These muscles are important to every phase of the game, such as jumping, landing, diving, and changing directions quickly, sometimes while still in the air. Exercises that we do to strengthen this area are abdominal exercises, medicine ball exercises, rotational movements, hyperextensions, Supermans, etc. In order to maximize your potential as a volleyball player you must have strength. In order to move your body from point A to point B on the court, you

must have the strength to do so. Whether you are going up for a kill or a block, diving on the floor or running down a pass, you must have core control.

