

FOCUS►

VOLLEYING OVERHEAD

Subfocus►

Body Awareness, Relationship of Body Parts

Grades 4, 5

Standard 1

The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.

Grade-Level Outcomes

- Volleys a ball with a two-hand overhead pattern, sending it upward, demonstrating four of the five critical elements of a mature pattern (S1.E23.4)
- Volleys a ball using a two-hand pattern, sending it upward to a target (S1.E23.5)

Critical Elements for Volleying (Overhead)

- Body aligned and positioned under the ball.
- Knees, arms, and ankles bent in preparation for the volley.
- Hands rounded; thumbs and first fingers make triangle (without touching) in preparation.
- Ball contacts only the finger pads; wrists stay firm.
- Arms extended upward on contact; follow through slightly toward target.

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- Volley a ball upward to the wall with an overhead volley pattern
- Volley a ball upward over a net with an overhead volley pattern
- Volley a ball upward and forward to a partner with an overhead volley pattern

Materials and Equipment

- Lightweight balls, one per student (plastic or beach balls)
- Volley trainers, optional
- Tape line on wall at height between 6 feet and 7 feet (180 and 210 cm)
- Nets or suspended stretch ropes at heights between 6 feet and 7 feet (180 and 210 cm)

Introduction

When we first introduced the skill of volleying (kindergarten and first grade), you immediately thought we were going to play volleyball. You volleyed balloons with different body parts while in self-space. The focus was always contacting with a flat surface. In third grade, we introduced the underhand volley with a bounce as in four square and handball; you volleyed against a wall, over a line, and over a low net. Today, we will introduce still another type of volley—the overhead volley—a skill you will use in middle school physical education and perhaps in a recreational sport. Can you guess the name of the sport that uses the overhead volley? Volleyball.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: READINESS TO VOLLEY

Toss, Catch

Students are scattered in general space, each with a plastic or beach ball (grade 5: plastic balls, beach balls, and volley trainers).

The ready positions of the body and of the hands are important for the overhead volley.

Demonstrate while explaining to students the body position (slight front-back stance with knees, ankles, and arms bent) and the position of the hands (hands rounded, thumbs and first fingers making a triangle but not touching).

Model as students demonstrate readiness with body and hands positions.

- Students assume ready position, toss the ball upward gently, and catch with finger pads in triangle, or volley, position.
- They continue toss and catch, catching directly over the nose with the triangle.

Cues: *Ready position. Triangle. Finger pads.*

Volley, Catch

With ready position of body and hands, students toss the ball, extend arms to volley upward, and then catch the ball. The pattern is toss, volley, catch. Provide several minutes of practice as students attempt the gentle toss and volley with finger pads to produce upward flight of ball in self-space.

Cues: *Triangle. Extension of arms on contact. Volley above the head. Catch above the nose.*

Volley, Catch to the Wall

Standing 3 to 4 feet (90 to 120 cm) from a wall, students repeat the toss and volley catch pattern, emphasizing readiness of body and hands. (The extension of the arms is now slightly forward and up.) Allow several minutes of volleying with single hits to the wall; remind students of cues.

Cues: *Finger pads. No palms, no slap, no sound. Extend to target. Forward and up.*

The Power of the Legs

Demonstrate the overhead volley with legs straight in contrast to the volley with knees and ankles bent. Extreme example: arms and legs extend with no bending. Contrast the power of the volley with arms, knees, and ankles bent in preparation and extension on contact. Have students continue the single-hit volleys. Observe for readiness of legs, arms, and hands.

Cue: *Ready legs, ready hands.*

- Challenge students to volley the ball above the upper tape mark (7 feet [210 cm]) as they practice readiness and extension of arms and legs.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: CONSECUTIVE VOLLEYS

Students volley the ball to the wall for two hits: toss, volley, volley, catch. Students practice the overhead volley for two consecutive hits. Observe triangle of hands and finger pad contact and bending of knees and arms in preparation.

Do you remember when you practiced the underhand volley to the wall and we focused on the importance of quick feet? Just as the ball did not always come directly back to you then, neither does it always come directly back to you in the overhead volley. Move your feet to be always in position for the volley.

Cue: *Body behind and under the ball.*

- Students continue the overhead volley above the tape mark.

Cue: *Upward extension of arms.*

Assessment

Observe for critical elements. Don't rush students into a higher number of consecutive volleys or more advanced skills until they master the basics of the overhead volley.

- Challenge students to perform three volleys, four volleys, five volleys, and so on.
- Grade 5: Challenge them to seek their personal best for consecutive volleys.

In a game-like situation, only one volley is needed. Focus on making it your best each time.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: VOLLEY TO A TARGET (GRADE 5)

Partners are positioned in general space, facing each other approximately 4 to 5 feet (120 to 150 cm) apart; close proximity is important for emphasis on vertical flight of the ball. Partner A tosses the ball upward and volleys to partner B, who catches the ball. Partner B then self-tosses and volleys. Common errors are using one-hand hits, slapping the ball, and using incorrect force for distance.

Although these tasks appears to be an easy transition for students, skills often regress significantly; be prepared for reteaching and remediation.

- Challenge students to volley so that partner can catch the ball without moving from self-space.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: OVER A NET

The learning experience is appropriate only if students have a high success rate on single volleys to a partner in general space. Nets or stretch ropes are suspended 6 to 7 feet (180 to 210 cm) above floor or ground. Partners face each other 3 to 4 feet (90 to 120 cm) from net on either side. They continue single overhead volleys from self-toss to a partner over the net, emphasizing hands, arms, and legs in preparation and extension of arms and legs for volley.

- Students volley so that partner can catch without moving from self-space.
- Accuracy challenge: Volley 10 singles to partner.
- Receiving partner chooses position, such as aligned with partner, to the right, to the left, near, far; volley must now travel to partner with accuracy.

Assessment

- Observe critical elements.
- Grade 5: Students decide whether to volley to wall target or volley to partner for accuracy.

Closure

- What was the focus of our lesson today? What did we add to the skill of volleying?
- I have just arrived as a new student in our school today. As I model, tell me what I need to know to be successful at the overhead volley.
- You now have three types of volley skills: body parts to body parts in self-space, underhand volley with a bounce, and overhead volley. Tell your neighbor which was easiest, which was most difficult, and why.

Reflection

- Have fourth graders mastered four of the five critical elements of the overhead volley in a non-dynamic situation?
- Can fifth graders perform the overhead volley from a self-toss with accuracy to a target or partner? Are fifth graders ready to advance to overhead volleys in dynamic situations?
- Are the students achieving height on the volley?