



FIRST VOLLEYBALL CAMP IN THE U.S.A.

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The first volleyball camp ever conducted in the U.S.A. for players, coaches, and teachers was held by the Columbus, Ohio. YMCA during the weekend of June 14 -16, 1968 and it was a great success. Sports camps have been common in football, basketball, baseball, tennis, and physical fitness, but no general volleyball camp had been conducted prior to this one in 1968. We have had training camps for our Olympic Games and Pan American Games players. However, these were restricted to the players chosen to those squads.

The Columbus camp was open to all interested players, coaches, and teachers. It drew 66 players and about a dozen coaches and teachers. The site for the event was YMCA Camp Alfred Willson, located near Bellefontaine, Ohio. Those in attendance came from Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, West Virginia, Texas, Missouri, California, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Ontario.

There was good balance between activity and lectures, discussions, and films. The faculty brought impressive credentials. The seven instructors were Jim Coleman, coach of the U. S. Olympic Men's Team; Harlan Cohen, coach of the U. S. Olympic women's Team; Jan Prasala, a former player and coach from Czechoslovakia who now lives in Nova Scotia; Don Shondell, coach of Ball State University; Ken Dunlap, coach of Ohio State University; G. R. "Jeep" McDonald, coach of the Youngstown, Ohio, YMCA; and Mark Watson, coach of the Columbus YMCA.

On Friday evening Jan Prasala spent two hours lecturing on setting fundamentals and techniques. His approach to volleyball skills is based on years of study concerning the anatomy and kinesiology involved in these skills.

On Saturday morning the players, guided by the seven instructors, spent five hours going through volleyball fundamentals and offensive and defensive strategy. After lunch some of the players chose up teams and played volleyball games. Others went swimming or canoeing, while some were so tired from the morning workout that they slept!

The Saturday evening session included the following topics:

1. Mental Importance to the Game, by Jim Coleman;
2. Conditioning, by Harlan Cohen;
3. Elimination of Tension, by Jan Prasula;
4. A Panel and Question-Answer Period, including Coleman, Cohen, and Prasala
5. Films

On Sunday morning there were three very interesting sessions. Cohen and Prasala talked on "Organization of Practices." Don Shondell gave a review of his doctoral dissertation, "Tests for Determining Volleyball Potential," and Ken Dunlap spoke on "Avoiding Volleyball Injuries."

The YMCA is still the leader in promoting volleyball in the Midwest. Many YMCA players were in attendance at the camp. College representatives came from Earlham College, Ball State University, Ohio State University, Bluffton College, University of Montreal, West Virginia Institute of Technology, and Indiana Institute of Technology.

Another observation concerns the volleyball films. Generally, these were very poor. We have much work to do before our films can compare to those used in other sports. Still another observation has to do with the varying and sometimes opposing viewpoints of the instructors as to how certain volleyball skills should be performed. This confirms a statement once made by the veteran instructor, Marshall L. Walters, "It is important for any writer or reader to realize that in sport there is never one way to do it, or one way to coach, or perform."

The Columbus YMCA intends to make this camp an annual affair. Great credit for this pioneering event should go to Mark Watson, chairman of the camp. Others who played important roles were Dick Swain and Dana Helmick, co-chairmen from the Columbus YMCA; members of the Columbus YMCA volleyball team; Clayton Meyers of the Ohio-West Virginia Area YMCA staff; and John Ketchum, vice president of the USVBA.