

2021-2022 Seasonal Plan Guide for Traditional Non-Specialized Boys Stream

This guide is meant to help coaches understand and use the [2021-22 Seasonal Plan Template – TNS Boys](#).

What is a Seasonal Plan?

A Seasonal Plan is a tool that coaches use to purposefully plan the activities that will lead the team towards achieving their objectives for the season. It helps coaches organize the multiple aspects of athlete development in a schedule that meets the needs of all participants. When carefully followed and adjusted throughout the year, the Seasonal Plan will help coaches maximize the progress of their athletes.

This document is meant to briefly explain the different sections of the OVA Seasonal Plan Template

Tab 1: Seasonal Plan Template

This first tab contains the OVA proposed seasonal plan for the TNS boys season. It is not editable and as such will serve as a reference for coaches wanting to build their own plan.

SECTION 1: The LTD Recommendations

The Long-Term Development model makes recommendations for athletes in the Train to Train stage of development. Those recommendations are listed at the very top of the proposed *2021-22 Seasonal Plan Template – TNS Boys*. The plan itself meets the LTD standards for the Train to Train stage:

LENGTH OF SEASON: 29 weeks

WEEKLY TRAINING HOURS: 4 hours

COMPETITION: 7 tournaments over 7 months = 1 tournament per month

TRAINING/COMPETITION RATIO: 60%/40%

SECTION 2: The Calendar

This calendar is the main piece of the seasonal plan. It helps coaches visualize the entire season and identify the important moments. It contains several important items:

Weeks

All 29 weeks of the season have their own column. By highlighting a specific column, coaches can see all the activities that will take place during that week. Each week is identified by a number (1-29) and by the date of that **week's Monday**.

Competitions

All important competitions are identified and included in the week at the end of which it will take place. For example, a tournament taking place on Saturday January 15th will be placed in the column associated with the week of Monday January 10th. This is to help visualize all activities that will take place **leading up** to the competition. The type of competition is included as well as the number of hours players will be competing for at each event.

Training Hours

Weekly training hours are indicated in the row associated with the day of the week on which training will take place. This is the amount of time that will be dedicated to warm-up, skill work and other technical and tactical drills for each session.

Week-day Competition

The amount of time spent on 6v6 team play during practice is included in the Week-day Competition Hours row. This type of work must be counted as competition for the total training/competition ratio. Coaches must monitor the amount of time spent on competition during practice. Too much competition will lead to a distorted training/competition ratio and take away important skill development time from the developing athletes.

Physical Training

The weekly amount of time spent on physical development is included in the Physical Training row. This training can be done in one single session or be split up over the week. The most important is to actually take that time to develop the players athletic abilities as Train to Train athletes are in a crucial window of accelerated adaptability from a physiological standpoint.

Other

This row is for coaches to add any other important team activities that will take time and demand the athletes attention. These could be fund raising activities, team building retreats, sport psychology sessions, etc. The proposed seasonal plan includes dates for physical testing and team virtual calls to address mental performance.

SECTION 3: Technical Skill Priorities

Most volleyball drills and all practices involve the execution of multiple skills. However, in order to maximize skill development, it is important for coaches to be clear on the focus and objectives of each training session.

This section is aligned with the main calendar and can be used to plan the skills that will be focused on for each session. Picking one skill as the focus of each session helps coaches make sure they appropriately cover each skill according to the needs of their athletes.

This section of the seasonal plan is extremely useful when planning the drills for a training session. Knowing what skill is the focus of attention helps organize a proper warm-up and find drills that allow for the development of that skill.

Coaches can also include the specific technical execution keys they want to teach their athletes in this section. The template suggests some elements of skill execution by using a code that refers to a technical key table.

SECTION 4: Physical Training Priorities

Similarly to other sections, this table aligns with the main calendar. For each week, this section of the plan highlights the specific component of physical development that will be focused on. The suggested priorities are plotted with the competition schedule in mind. The more tiring sessions focusing on strength are not scheduled for a competition week.

Given the limited time available with the athletes and the importance of physical development, this seasonal plan template suggests focusing on the following physical components:

Max Speed

Train to Train athletes are in their second window of accelerated adaptability for speed so it is very important that coaches include speed work in every practice. Volleyball Canada suggests that 5-10 minutes are spent on speed work at the end of warm up during each practice. This type of work includes various type of sprinting as well as general body movements. The important aspect of this work is that it must be done as fast as possible.

Strength Endurance

Train to Train athletes have not yet reached the phase for max strength. At this stage, what's important is to help athletes develop a good strength base using mainly the body weight, medicine balls or elastic bands. The exercises should help athletes better understand their bodies and acquire good movement patterns. Common exercises would include push-ups, squats,

lunges, sit-ups, etc. This will help them once they start working on max strength later in their development.

Flexibility/Mobility

It is extremely important for growing athletes to do flexibility and mobility work on a regular basis in order to avoid injuries. As the bones of their bodies grow, it is crucial to give muscles, tendons and other soft tissues a proper stretching stimulus to help them follow along.

The seasonal plan template suggests addressing flexibility and mobility during practice only a few times during the season but athletes should be encouraged to execute their stretching routine on their own at home a few times a week.

Agility & Coordination

Often referred to as “physical literacy”, agility and coordination are athletic abilities that are crucial for volleyball players. Practising volleyball encourages the development of those skills but it is important to develop them using cross-training methods during the Train to Train stage. Training footwork with ladders and eye-hand coordination using various juggling games can lead to huge improvements in volleyball-specific agility. Such activities can be planned separately from other volleyball skill work but they can also be incorporated into other phases of practice like the warm-up.

Balance

Balance work is often over-looked in volleyball training regimen, but it has been shown to improve vertical jump and reduce the rate of injuries in young athletes. Whether it is using lines on the floor or balance boards, working on proprioception and volleyball specific balance is sure to make players better and more durable overall athletes.

Physical Testing

Coaches can measure the improvement of their players on court by simply observing the way they play and taking statistics during games. It is important to also measure the physical abilities of the athletes. Taking the athletes through a series of physical tests will help coaches know their athletes better and make more effective interventions within the training program.

Testing athletes at the beginning of the season is essential to have a baseline for each athlete. Testing should also be done in the middle of the season to assess if the current program is working or if it needs adjustments. The testing at the end of the season shows how much progress athletes have made. Young players love knowing how high they jump and how much they have grown. Physical testing can be very motivating for players.

Coaches can design their own activities but it is recommended they reach out to a trained professional in order to address the development of their players’ athletic abilities .

SECTION 5: System & Tactical Objectives

This section is likely the most important one of the whole seasonal plan because it identifies the objectives of the team with regards to how the technical skills will be used in the context of a game. These are the observable and measurable objectives as it relates to how the team plays the game. The chosen objectives can have a big impact on the athlete's ability to progress to the next stage of the game.

It is important to note that the suggested objectives are not meant to maximize results and winning. They are meant to challenge the players and move them forward in their understanding of the game in order to prepare them for what's next.

This section follows the calendar and details a progression of objectives based on the expectation that players will improve throughout the year. The suggested objectives in the table should be adjusted based on the starting level of the players and the speed at which they progress. Coaches must assess their players at the start and throughout the season to know when to move to the next objective.

The objectives are:

Offensive System

This is the system the team will play and how much specialization will take place. The first number indicate the number of players who attack and the second number indicates the number of specialized setters. For example when running a 6-3, all players are attackers at some point in the rotations but only 3 players will act as setters.

The progression from a 6-6 to a 6-2 allows coaches to assess how players develop before placing them into a specialized position.

Defensive System

This is the system the team will play when in the defensive phase of the cycle of actions. The team must choose where the defenders will start in their initial defence position and where they will move to depending on the other team's offense.

For the TNS level, this plan proposes a 6-back formation for the whole year.

Serve Receive

This is the serve receive formation the team will use. Younger players often benefit from having more players involved in serve reception but the goal is to move the team to a 3-players serve receive configuration.

A 4-player cup will work well in conjunction with a 6-6 offensive system. A 3-player cup will integrate seamlessly into a 6-3 or 6-2 system.

Blocking

This line sets the objectives for the team's blocking strategy. At the TNS level, blocking becomes a more important part of the game. Players must learn how to read the set and move to the appropriate location and find the right timing to set up an effective block.

Using a spread block at the beginning of the year means the blockers can start by taking care of their priority hitter only. At the TNS level, it is almost certain that the opposite team will have 3 front row attackers at all time so each blocker will have a hitter to take care of. As the season goes on and the players get better at blocking, the team can move to a semi-bunched blocking formation and start putting two or even three blockers on certain attackers.

Serving

It's important to have serving objectives. At the TNS level, a good objective at the start of the season would be to have all players serving overhead consistently during games. In training, coaches would help players acquire the skills necessary for a jump serve so that later in the season, all players are capable of using a jump serve in a game. They may start using their jump serve in a game as they feel comfortable with it.

3 contacts

At this stage, it is still very important to encourage players to use 3 contacts. Some teams may be tempted to use only 1 or 2 contacts to send the ball over in order to score points but the long term benefits of learning to use 3 contacts effectively largely outweigh the benefits of scoring points today from a development perspective.

The % targets in the table represent the number of times the team uses 3 contacts to put the ball over the net out of all the attempts. When the ball is sent on their side, how many times does the team use 3 contacts to put the ball back over the net? The team's attempt at 3 contacts counts even if they make a mistake on the 3rd contact.

Hand Setting

In volleyball, setters set with their hands 99% of the time. The skill of hand setting must be encouraged at a young age. Players who struggle with pushing the ball all the way out to position 4 will get there as they keep practising and get stronger through repetitions. The % targets in the table represent the number of times the 2nd contact is done using an overhead set out of all the 2nd contacts the team attempts.

Set Distribution

With the offensive system suggestions within this seasonal plan, the team will always have 3 front row attackers. This allows setters to develop their skills setting to all 3 positions. At the TNS level, the back set may not be very well developed so it is normal to favour front sets at the start of the season and to aim at increasing the % of back sets later in the season in order to reach a more balanced offense.

SECTION 6: Psychological Skills

Psychological skills are a crucial component of athlete development. Unlike other skills, they are not meant to be isolated and worked on in specific sessions. Instead, they are skills that are constantly being encouraged and that require the coach's on-going attention.

Rather than planning these skills in a schedule, it is more useful to plan how coaches will integrate psychological skills development in their every day coaching. Coaches are encouraged to think about the culture they will promote in the gym and how it will positively impact the athlete's psychological development.

If specific sessions are being planned (ie: session with mental performance coach), they can be included in the main calendar's "Other" section. The proposed seasonal plan includes a monthly Zoom session to discuss as a team and work on the players' resilience.

Coaches are encouraged to add any other psychological skills they feel is appropriate for their players.

SECTION 7: Other

This table is included for coaches who want to schedule their own development progressions for their season. This table could be used for skills such as, but not limited to:

- Mental performance goals (goal setting, confidence workshop, focus, visualization, etc)
- Team building goals and activities (value setting, team bonding, etc)
- Nutrition goals (pre-tournament eating, in-tournament eating, etc)
- Etc

Tab 2: Editable Plan

This tab contains the exact same plan as in the first tab but in a version that is editable. This is where coaches are encouraged to make modifications and build their own seasonal plan. As coaches make changes to fit their reality, they can always go back to the first tab to find the OVA suggested seasonal plan.

Tab 3: Teaching Points

The teaching points are the aspects of the skill the athletes will be working to improve. Once the coach has assessed the players at the start of the season, it is recommended they identify the teaching points they will focus on at practice.

The feedback coaches will give to athletes during the sessions will be focused on the teaching points. Young athletes learning the game need to improve all aspects of all skills. Keeping feedback focused on the teaching points helps coaches stay on track with the objective instead of being distracted by everything else athletes must improve.

Choosing 1-3 teaching points at a time helps athletes understand what they are working on. It helps keeping things simple, especially if the teaching points are adapted to the skills of the athletes.

In this table, some teaching points are suggested for each skill. Coaches should take some time to see if they like the suggested teaching points or if they want to edit/add some of their own. It is recommended that coaches develop a code for their teaching points and use that code in the technical skill calendar section. This will help visualize the skill execution progression over the season.

SUMMARY

A seasonal plan is a great tool for coaches. It helps prioritize the development objectives in order to maximize the growth of athletes. It is a fluid document that should be adjusted on a regular basis to reflect the actual status of the team and players. Coaches are encouraged to use the *Editable Plan* tab of the document to design their own seasonal plan.

QUESTIONS

This document and the *2021-22 Seasonal Plan Template – TNS Boys* were designed and edited by LP Mainville, OVA Athlete Development Director. Any questions on the content of these tools can be directed to lpmainville@ontariovolleyball.org