

Simple 5-1 Volleyball Rotations

- In any volleyball match, there are 6 players on each side of the court, meaning there are 6 rotations that players rotate through. A 5-1 rotation means a team has 5 hitters that play and 1 setter that plays. For 3 rotations (1, 2, 3) there are 3 front row hitters and the setter transitions from the back row. For the other 3 rotations (4, 5, 6) there are 2 front row hitters with the setter.
- Here are the 7 primary positions used in a 5-1, and 2 more that are very commonly used:

Position Abbreviation	Position	Serving Rotation	Base Abbreviation	Base on Defense
S1	Setter	1	RF/RB	Right Front/Back
OH1	Outside Hitter 1	2	LF/LB	Left Front/Back
MH1	Middle Hitter 1	3	MF/MB	Middle Front/Back
RS	Right Side	4	RF/RB	Right Front/Back
OH2	Outside Hitter 2	5	LF/LB	Left Front/Back
MH2	Middle Hitter 2	6	MF/MB	Middle Front/Back
L	Libero 1	any or none	MB	Middle Back
R	Libero 2	any or none	MB	Middle Back
DS	Defense Specialist	varies	LB/MB/RB	varies

- A coach can start out in any rotation they choose, and usually start out so their stronger servers will serve first, so they will have the potential opportunity to get to serve more times. The players always rotate clockwise. The most common rotation to start the game in is rotation 6 if your team is receiving and rotation 1 if your team is serving.
- Regardless of what rotation you are in, the 6 players on the court must start in those spots until the server contacts the ball, then they may move freely to any part of the court until the point is over and the next ball is going to be served.
- These positions all start in different spots on the court, and must rotate in a clockwise circle.

- Rotations are symmetrical, meaning the S and RS are always opposite, the OH1 and OH2 are always opposite, and the MH1 and MH2 are always opposite.
- When our team is serving and wins the point, the same person keeps serving until we lose a point, then we go to "Serve Receive".
- When our team is in "Serve Receive", if we win the point then we ROTATE, if we lose the point we stay in the same serve receive rotation. The only time we rotate is when we are in serve receive and win the point!

Serve Receive Notes:

- In serve receive (when the other team is serving), we always put our setter near the middle of the court because the setter will have to move the most.
- In rotations 1, 2, 3 - The setter is back row, but we pull back one of our front row hitters to pass and stack the setter as close as possible to where we want to pass to make their job the easiest. When we pull back a front row player to pass, they must start in front of the back row passer adjacent to them.
- In rotations 4, 5, 6 - The two front row hitters start around the 10 foot line to help cover short, then transition to their launch pads to get ready to approach and hit. In each rotation, the hitters will start in different spots based on their relationship to the setter, because remember we always line up around the setter in serve receive. The three back row defenders always line up in a straight line opposite of the person of their same position that is front row, then once we attack the ball over the net, they shift to their base defense. They may shift the straight line forward or backward based on the tendencies they identify of each server.
- We avoid running a 2 and a 4 with our 2 front row hitters, because many times the set will end up between the 2 hitters and create confusion. By running a hitter in front of the setter and behind the setter, we still teach young setters to back set and there is no confusion on which hitter the set is intended for.

Serve Notes:

- When we are serving (the other team is receiving), we always put our middle front and middle back in the middle of the court, and the rest of the front row/back row rotates around them. We do this in the front row because our middle front typically has to move the most. We do this in the back row to minimize the amount of space the left back/right back have to cover to get to base.

- Typically our middles are our tallest players and can be effective blockers even at a young age, so we place them on the net to block. Our front row outside hitters and setters are usually better defenders than they are blockers, so we pull them off the net to the 10 foot line to cover their half of the front row court.

Libero Notes:

- In club volleyball, a team can have 1 libero or 2 liberos, but only 1 can be in the game at a time
- Only 1 libero can serve and they can only serve for 1 of the 6 rotations. For example, if we have 2 players in libero jerseys and the L serves for the MH1, the R is not allowed to serve for anyone and the L can only serve in the MH1 spot (serve 3) for the rest of that game.
Defense Specialist (DS) notes: I did not put a DS in the rotation spreadsheet, but the DS comes in back row for ANY player and plays their rotations.

Serve/Serve Receive for Each Rotation:

Rotation 6 Serve Receive:

Front Row: The S1 is right front, the OH1 is middle front, and the MH1 is left front.

Option 1: Stack the OH1 just left of the setter to cover the right half of short, then transition to hit an 8. Keep the MH1 left front to cover the left half of short, then transition to hit a 2 or 4.

Option 2: Stack the OH1 and MH1 in the middle of the court, send the MH1 right to cover short and hit an 8, and the OH1 left to cover short then hit a 4 or 2.

(note: we can just explain the basic rotation and not give options if that is less confusing, then have a more advanced version with extra tips/tricks for stacking hitters/pushing and pulling)

Back Row: The RS is left back, the OH2 is middle back, and the L or R is in the game for the MH2 right back. All players move to pass first, cover the setter/hitter, then go to base once we successfully attack the ball over the net.

Rotation 1 Serve: The S1 is serving.

Front row: The OH1 is right front, the MH1 is middle front, the RS is left front, all stacked as close together as possible while staying in rotation. As soon as the server makes contact, the OH1 and RS switch and go to base.

Back Row: The OH1 is already left back in base, the L or R is in the game for the MH2 and is already middle back in base, the S serves and runs to right back base.

Rotation 1 Serve Receive:

Front Row: The RS is left front, the MH1 is middle front, and the OH1 is right front.

Back Row: The OH2 is left back, the L or R is in the game for the MH2 middle back, and the S1 is right back.

Option 1: stack the setter behind the OH1 right front making the setter's job the easiest, pull the RS back from left front to pass in serve receive, so the OH2 passes middle and the The MH1 starts on the 10 ft line in the seam between the left and middle serve receive passers. The RS hits an outside set, the MH1 hits a middle set, and the OH1 hits a rightside set. The OH2 passes middle and the L or R passes right. Once our side attacks everyone goes to base defense. (coaches have the option to leave the RS on the left and the OH1 on the right for the remainder of the rally)

Option 2: pull the OH1 back in serve receive on the right side of the court to pass then hit a right side set, meaning the setter will stack behind them until the ball is served, the MH1 again starts in the seam and runs a middle set and the RS starts left front and hits an outside set. The L or R passes the middle of the court and the OH2 passes the left side of the court. Once our side attacks everyone goes to base defense.

Rotation 2 Serve: The OH1 is serving.

Front Row: The MH1 is right front but starts in the middle of the court, the RS is middle front, and the OH2 is right front. As soon as the server makes contact, the RS moves to base in right front. The server immediately runs to left back after serving.

Back Row: The S1 is middle back but since the right back is serving they may start in base at right back. The L or R is left back and may start in their base at middle back as long as they're to the left of the S. The OH1 serves and goes to base at left back.

Rotation 2 Serve Receive:

Front Row: The OH2 is left front, the RS is middle front, and the MH1 is right front.

Back Row: The OH1 is right back, the S1 is middle back, and the L or R is left back.

Option 1: Pull the OH2 back to pass the left side of the court then hit an outside set, stack the RS and S middle front making sure the RS is in front of the S1 and send the RS to hit right side, the MH1 starts right front and transitions to hit a middle set. The OH1 passes the right side of the court and the L or R passes the middle of the court. Once our side attacks everyone goes to base defense.

Rotation 3 Serve: The MH1 or L/R is serving.

Front Row: The MH2 is left front but starts in the middle of the court, the OH2 is middle front and must stay to the right of the MH2 until we serve, and the RS starts right front in base.

Back Row: The OH1 is middle back and the S1 is left back, so they both stack in the middle and switch as soon as the server contacts the ball. The server immediately runs to middle back after serving.

Rotation 3 Serve Receive:

Front Row: The MH2 is left front, the OH2 is middle front, and the RS is right front.

Back Row: The S is left back, the OH1 is middle back, and the L or R is in the game for the MH1 right back.

The MH2 starts left front on the left sideline and on the net, the OH2 passes the left side of the court then hits an outside set, the right side starts on the right sideline around the 10 ft line and hits a right side set. The S1 is left back, and must be behind the MH2 and to the left of the OH1. The L/R passes the right side of the court, and the OH1 passes the middle of the court. All players move to pass first, then get ready to hit or cover the setter/hitter, then go to base once we successfully attack the ball over the net.

Rotation 4 Serve: The RS is serving.

Front row: The OH2 is right front, the MH2 is middle front, the S1 is left front, all stacked as close together as possible while staying in rotation. As soon as the server makes contact, the OH2 and S1 switch and go to base. The server runs to right back after serving.

Back Row: The OH1 is already left back in base, the L or R is in the game for the MH1 and is already middle back in base, the RS serves and runs to right back base.

Rotation 4 Serve Receive:

Front Row: The S1 is left front, the MH2 is middle front, and the OH2 is right front.

Option 1: leave the OH2 right front to cover the right half of short, then transition to hit an 8. Stack the S1 and the MH2 in the middle of the court, the MH2 covers the left half of short, then transitions to hit a 4 or a 2.

Option 2: Stack both the OH2 and MH2 in the middle with the setter, send the OH2 left to cover short/transition to hit a 2 or 4, send the MH2 right to cover short/transition to hit an 8.

Back Row: The OH1 is left back, the L1 or L2 is in the game for the MH1 middle back, and the RS is right back. All players move to pass first, cover the setter/hitter, then go to base once we successfully attack the ball over the net.

Rotation 5 Serve: The OH2 is serving.

Front Row: The MH2 is right front but starts in the middle of the court, the S is middle front, and the OH1 is right front. As soon as the server makes contact, the S moves to base in right front. The server immediately runs to left back after serving.

Back Row: The RS is middle back but since the right back is serving they may start in base at right back. The L or R is left back and may start in their base at middle back as long as they're to the left of the S1. The OH2 serves and goes to base at left back.

Rotation 5 Serve Receive:

Front Row: The OH1 is left front, the S1 is middle front, and the MH2 is right front.

Option 1: Leave the OH1 left front to cover the left half of short, then hit a 4 or 2. The setter stays in the middle, and leave the MH2 right front to cover the right half of short, then hit an 8.

Option 2: Stack the OH1 and MH1 around the S1 in the middle, send the OH1 right to cover short then hit an 8, send the MH1 left to cover short then hit a 2 or 4.

Rotation 6 Serve: The MH2 or L/R is serving.

Front Row: The MH1 is left front but starts in the middle of the court, the OH1 is middle front and must stay to the right of the MH1 until we serve, and the S1 starts right front in base.

Back Row: The OH2 is middle back and the RS is left back, so they both stack in the middle and switch as soon as the server contacts the ball. The server immediately runs to middle back after serving.

Things to consider:

- Which front row players are effective blockers - who should actually block and who should help on defense. This will change how we line up our base defense in EVERY rotation. Most young players are stronger at defense than blocking.
- Where is each hitter the strongest hitting from - we can line up differently around the front row setter to allow hitters to hit their favorite sets (option 2 above is the complex version)
- Is the other team consistently running an offense or is it mainly free balls. Should we stay and block or should we transition off the net and defend space.