

Functional warmups - Mark Lebedew

(gebruik ev <https://www.deepl.com/nl/translator> voor een goede vertaling)

are great. Obviously. A lot of highly educated specialists have created exercises that perfectly prepare a player's body ([Note: always a player, never an athlete](#)) for ultimate performance. New information alert... the mind also plays a role in practice and sometimes, not always, but sometimes, players need to relax their minds to be fully ready for practice and a structured, perfect warmup does not help. In that case there is a class of volleyball based (barely) games that coaches use for the purpose. Different languages have different names for these games. Vollis. Bagherone. Baggerpiel. Baggertennis. Mostly variations of the word bagger/bagher, which translates roughly as 'dig' and is used as the term for the technical skill of underarm passing.

### **COACH DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES**

There are many variations starting with 'Classico' in which teams are on each side of the net, one player inside the court, others standing behind the court. Players have one contact to direct the ball over the net using only underarm pass. After playing the ball, the player goes off the court and is replaced by the next player. And so on and so forth. One game I like to play sometimes is called 'Don't Drop the Baby'. In this game, two players are on each side. One player on each side has a ball. Let's call it a baby. The rules are the same as 'Classico'. The ball must go over the net with one contact BUT or AND the baby cannot be dropped. Players cannot play the ball while holding the baby, but are allowed to transfer the baby between them. The basic idea is to create confusion so that both players try to play the ball and forget about the baby, or protect the baby and miss the ball. Sometimes when I play it in my practices I use a different kind of ball for very deeply considered pedagogical reasons. Or just to make it different from the last time we played it. Yesterday I played it using baseballs as babies.

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Team B was leading 7-2 when the the Team A called a timeout (solving problems is allowed in my practices). There are a variety of tactics that can be used, and Team A chose 'put the player with the baby in the corner and play with only one player'. As they reeled off the next three points, coming back to 5-7, my mind frantically scrambled with solutions to combat one team having 'solved' the game. But I needn't have worried. The inherent flaw in the tactic soon revealed itself. Obviously Team B started probing the area close to the corner and made some errors, but soon they hit the sweet spot. The inherent flaw with making strict rules on who should play the ball is that eventually something happens that the rules don't cover. Excluding a player from the play, however well intentioned and tactically sound, inevitably leads to a loss of attention. The player doesn't expect to the play the ball, and so is not ready to play it when it comes. Once Team B found the sweet spot around the player holding the baby, 7-5 very quickly became 15-7, with Team A in inevitable disarray.

The lesson is that in volleyball, all players, [even middles](#), have to play and be ready to play. Systems of strict specialisation provide the illusion of organisation and efficacy. Until the moment they don't.