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SIVO
SITTING VOLLEYBALL FOR
INCLUSION AND WELL-BEING



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Table of Contents

Chapter 1.....	4
1. Introduction to the concept of inclusive sports and sitting volleyball: origin and rules.....	4
2. Benefits of Sitting Volleyball and importance of Inclusion.....	5
3. The role of Non-Formal Education (NFE) in Sport.....	6
Chapter 2.....	7
1. Redefining the Coach’s Role in Inclusive Sports:.....	7
2. Inclusive Coaching During Competition.....	8
Chapter 3.....	11
1. Understanding Diversity in Motor Abilities.....	11
2. Principles of Inclusive Training Design (Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in sport.).....	11
3. Group Management in Mixed-Ability Settings.....	12
4. Adaptive Equipment and Space Considerations.....	13
5. Communication and Motivation Strategies (Inclusive communication styles: visual, verbal, tactile cues. etc.).....	14
Chapter 4.....	16
Inclusive Communication and Team Building in Sitting Volleyball.....	16
1. Introduction: Why Communication Matters in Inclusive Sport.....	16
2. Principles of Team Building in Inclusive Groups.....	16
3. Inclusive Communication in Sport.....	17
4. Managing Communication Challenges in Mixed-Ability Teams.....	17
Chapter 5.....	18
Addressing Physical and Mental Well-being through Sitting Volleyball.....	19
1. Introduction.....	19
2. Physical Benefits of Sitting Volleyball.....	19
3. Mental and Emotional Well-being through Team Sport.....	19
4. Creating a Supportive and Empowering Environment.....	19
5. Strategies for Fostering Physical and Mental Health.....	20
6. The Social Dimension of Well-being.....	20
7. Conclusion.....	20
Chapter 6.....	21
Inclusive Event Planning and Management with Sitting Volleyball.....	21
1. Introduction: Why Inclusive Event Planning Matters.....	21
2. Principles of Inclusive Event Design.....	21
3. Accessibility Planning.....	22
4. Inclusive Programming and Scheduling.....	22
5. Roles and Responsibilities.....	22
6. Adaptive Equipment and Space Management.....	23
7. Case Studies and Good Practices.....	23
8. Challenges and Recommendations.....	24
9. Conclusion.....	24

Chapter 7.....	25
Advocacy and Community Engagement in Inclusive Sports.....	25
1. Introduction: The Importance of Advocacy in Inclusive Sports.....	25
2. The Role of Coaches and Trainers as Advocates.....	25
3. Building Inclusive Sport Campaigns.....	26
4. Engaging Stakeholders and Allies.....	26
5. Media and Storytelling for Social Impact.....	26
6. Community Building through Sitting Volleyball.....	27
7. Challenges and Future Directions.....	27
8. Conclusion.....	28
Chapter 8.....	29
1. Strategic planning for Sitting Volleyball integration.....	29
2. Institutionalizing Partnerships.....	29
3. Showcasing Good Practices.....	30
4. Steps for integration of policies in organizations.....	30
Annex.....	36
Useful information for Sitting Volleyball:.....	36
Alternative adaptations for equipment:.....	37
1. The Net: Alternatives to Professional Systems.....	37
2. The Ball: Adapting for Beginners and Safety.....	37
3. The Court: Defining Boundaries Without Paint.....	38
4. Player Gear: Protection on a Budget.....	38
5. Training Aids: DIY Solutions.....	38

Chapter 1

Introduction to Inclusive Sports and Sitting Volleyball

1. Introduction to the concept of inclusive sports and sitting volleyball: origin and rules.

The concept of inclusive sports is one of unity, equality and accessibility. Sports that are designed or adapted in order to allow people of all levels of abilities and backgrounds to participate equally, are considered inclusive sports. The goal of inclusive sports is to promote equality and participation and to remove existing barriers. Some common characteristics of inclusive sports are the existence of adapted rules or equipment, depending on circumstances, the capacity for mixed ability teams and they might be focused on participation more rather than only competition. Specifically, Sitting Volleyball offers an enjoyable and competitive environment where players with and without disabilities can participate together. The game is designed in order to make it an ideal sport for integrating athletes of all abilities.

Origin of Sitting Volleyball

The idea of sitting volleyball started from the need to rehabilitate Dutch veterans of the Second World War. It was first introduced in 1956 by the Dutch Sports Association by combining sitzball (seatball) with volleyball. In 1978 it was first included in the International Sports Organization for the Disabled (ISOD) program and in 1980 it was added officially in the Paralympics. Sitting Volleyball's international organization is World ParaVolley and it has connections with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

Rules of Sitting Volleyball

Sitting Volleyball while having a lot of similarities to volleyball, it has a few key differences in areas such as dimensions of the court and net, rules regarding serves and the requirement that during play players must remain seated. The dimension of the playing court is a rectangle measuring 10 x 6 m, surrounded by a free zone which is a minimum of 3 m wide on all sides. The net is placed vertically over the center line, the height of which is 1.15 m for men and 1.05 m for women. An important difference between volleyball and sitting volleyball is that blocking a serve in sitting volleyball is a legal move. In competitive Sitting Volleyball, players are classified into two categories:

- **VS2 (former MD (Minimal Disability))**. A VS2 athlete has lost some muscular strength, flexibility, or a combination, in a joint that hinders the athlete's ability to play volleyball
- **VS1 (former D (Disabled))**: A VS1 athlete has lost complete muscular strength, flexibility, or a significant combination of the two in a joint.

Teams are typically composed of a mix of VS1 and VS2 athletes. For example, a team might have five VS1 players and one VS2 player on the court at any given time, with a maximum of two VS2 players allowed on the roster from the total of 14 maximum players; this rule is used in paralympic or international matches. On the other side, regarding national regulations are laxer and more lenient regarding who is able to participate

2. Benefits of Sitting Volleyball and importance of Inclusion

First and foremost, Sitting Volleyball provides an opportunity for people with disabilities to exercise and socialize. Research has shown that it improves strength, agility, and coordination, especially in the core, arms, and shoulders. Additionally, Sitting Volleyball helps build self-discipline, self-esteem, confidence, and independence, while fostering teamwork, skill development, and goal setting. It promotes healthy living and can support future success in education, careers, and community involvement. The game requires players to work together, communicate effectively, and develop strategic thinking, enhancing teamwork and communication skill. Since individuals with disabilities often have fewer opportunities for physical activity, sitting Volleyball provides an inclusive way to stay active and reduce the risk of related health issues.

In addition, to the clear physical and psychological benefits a person with disability might experience, the social ones are important to note. That is why individuals with disabilities, participating in sports can help combat feelings of isolation and promote social inclusion through socializing with various other individuals. These individuals might not necessarily be other people with disabilities but the wider public as the sport itself is an inclusive sport that can be enjoyed by individuals with and without disabilities. Sitting Volleyball can provide a touch point for further socialization between these groups of people enhancing and strengthening the social web of the local communities Sitting Volleyball takes place.

3.The role of Non-Formal Education (NFE) in Sport

Non-Formal and Formal education

Non-formal Education (NFE) refers to all educational practices that take place outside the formal education system. It can engage a wide range of target groups, from youth to older adults, with or without disabilities, across various settings and contexts. NFE learning activities are designed to be voluntary, learner-centered, and tailored to meet participants' needs, interests, and aspirations. The methods used are diverse but focus primarily on creating environments built on trust and the sharing of experiences. It offers several advantages, including promoting the inclusion of disadvantaged groups, providing flexibility in both organization and teaching methods, and adding value through the capacity-building of organizations, systems, and institutions.

Formal education is a systematically organized and sequential learning process that begins with primary school and progresses through various levels up to university. It includes specialized programs focused on academic subjects, vocational skills, and professional training.

Education Through Sports

Education Through Sport is a non-formal educational approach that uses sports and physical activities to help individuals and groups develop key skills for personal growth and lasting social change. In this approach, sport itself is not the main focus; rather, physical activity is adapted to support a planned learning goal, which is the primary aim of the process. This method encourages teamwork, communication, and critical thinking while promoting values such as respect, inclusion, and fairness. By combining education and sport, it creates an engaging environment where participants can learn important life skills in a practical and enjoyable way.

The role of non-formal education in sports is that the ETS itself is an educational approach that has its base in sport and physical activity and builds on it to use it as a tool for developing other key competences. For example, if we plan a sports/physical activity that aims to tackle social issues the participants will grow their social skills and understand better through actively performing physical tasks we meticulously crafted to fit our goal.

Chapter 2

ADAPTED COACHING TECHNIQUES FOR SITTING VOLLEYBALL

1. Redefining the Coach's Role in Inclusive Sports:

From instructor to facilitator and motivator.

In inclusive sports environments, such as that of Sitting Volleyball, the role of the coach is fundamental—not only as the person who conveys technical and tactical skills to lead the team and athletes to competitive success, but also as a facilitator of the sporting experience, a motivator for personal growth, and a guide in an environment where the core value is inclusion. Their task thus becomes one of supporting both the personal and athletic development of the athletes, fostering a sense of belonging, self-confidence, and overall well-being.

This shift in perspective is essential when working with mixed teams, where athletes with different motor abilities play together. One of the key aspects of this sport is that, in promotional and minor competitions and tournaments (not international competitions), both male and female athletes, both able-bodied and disabled, can play within the same team.

In Sitting Volleyball, it is essential to adopt an empathetic coaching style that actively listens, recognizes progress, and values participation and enjoyment as fundamental elements of the sporting experience.

Building a positive relationship between coach and athlete is therefore fundamental to success in this sport, as it helps to develop resilience, self-esteem and team spirit. In a diverse group such as Sitting Volleyball, the coach must be able to adapt teaching techniques, communication styles and feedback methods according to the athlete and the individual in front of them. This means being able to use different forms of language (verbal, visual, tactile) and propose adapted exercises based on each player's needs and abilities, to ensure that everyone can participate actively. The coach can therefore

be defined as a mediator, with the important task of building a personalized training path and facilitating the inclusion of all athletes. Another key aspect concerns autonomy. The coach should promote the development of self-assessment, problem solving, and decision-making skills, helping players become active participants in their own sporting journey.

Creating a safe space for learning and failure.

In Sitting Volleyball, creating a safe space is an essential component of adaptive coaching. It involves building an environment where every athlete, with or without a disability, feels free to explore, learn, and even make mistakes without fear of judgment or exclusion. This kind of atmosphere fosters not only technical development but also motivation, confidence, and active participation.

To achieve this goal, the coach must promote and create a healthy environment where making mistakes is accepted, learning from them is encouraged, and growth comes as a result. In a safe setting, athletes are willing to challenge themselves, ask for help, and support one another, generating a virtuous cycle of technical and relational growth.

According to the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, sport plays a fundamental role in promoting the active participation of people with disabilities, contributing to their social inclusion and to overcoming psychological and socio-cultural barriers (European Commission, 2010).

Ethical coaching: dignity, respect, and consent.

Every inclusive sports practice is based on non-negotiable ethical principles such as respect for human dignity, the appreciation of differences, and the voluntary and informed participation in physical and social activities. The coach must create an environment where every athlete feels heard, respected, and actively involved in decisions regarding their sporting experience.

In the training framework of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC, 2015; Inside The Games, 2015), the importance of educating coaches who know how to engage, listen to, and motivate athletes is emphasized while avoiding forms of discrimination, often unconscious, that can undermine the athlete's autonomy.

Inclusion also involves building relationships based on trust, respect for personal boundaries, and the sharing of common rules. The inclusive coach does not focus solely on performance but promotes a sports culture rooted in democratic and cooperative values (UNESCO, 2015).

These principles not only strengthen trust within the group but also help create an educational and emotionally safe space where the well-being of the individual comes before any sporting result.

2. Inclusive Coaching During Competition

Inclusive coaching within a competitive context represents a significant challenge for Sitting Volleyball coaches, as it requires balancing performance optimization with respect for the principles of fair participation and overall well-being.

During tournaments and matches, coaches must navigate complex situations, such as managing athletes with different disabilities, dealing with performance pressure, and adapting strategies in real time. In this scenario, adopting inclusive approaches is not a barrier to competitiveness, but rather an opportunity to enhance group cohesion and strengthen team dynamics.

The key may lie in creating an environment where every athlete feels valued, capable, and actively involved in the competition process. In this way, the coach becomes a mediator in a process of

empowerment that goes beyond technical execution and is rooted in motivation, self-efficacy, and mutual trust.

Adapting coaching strategies for tournaments and matches.

In the context of competitions, it is essential for the coach to be able to adjust game strategies based on the composition of the team, the opponents, and environmental conditions. Specifically in Sitting Volleyball, where mobility differs from traditional volleyball, tactics must be personalized to enhance the athletes' specific skills – whether physical or interpersonal. It is beneficial to implement flexible strategies that allow for the gradual inclusion of athletes with less experience or ability, without compromising the effectiveness of the team. A useful strategy could be, for example, adapting offensive game schemes based on the functional abilities of individual athletes. Furthermore, it is essential to train athletes to read the game collectively, developing game intelligence and tactical awareness. The goal is not to simplify the game, but to make it accessible without lowering the level of challenge, because even if the sport is adapted, that does not mean there is no competitiveness or drive to win.

Managing energy, substitutions, and emotional highs/lows during games.

One of the key components during a competition is the optimal management of the athletes' psychophysical energy. This includes not only monitoring physical exertion, but also the ability to read emotional and cognitive signals that may affect performance. Substitutions, often seen as a purely technical element, should also be used as tools for emotional regulation, mental recovery, and reinforcement of self-efficacy. Some athletes may require more frequent breaks due to fatigue or competition-related stress. It is the coach's responsibility to recognize these moments and respond with sensitivity and promptness. Moreover, it is advisable to mentally prepare athletes for the possibility of errors, lapses in concentration, or moments of frustration, working, for example, on constructive self-talk during training sessions leading up to competitions. The goal is to maintain a motivating and safe environment where each athlete feels supported even during difficult moments and free to express themselves within the team.

Coaching mixed-ability teams while respecting competitive integrity.

The heterogeneous composition of Sitting Volleyball teams, often made up of athletes with motor disabilities of varying types and severity, requires the coach to pay special attention to role distribution and managing the balance between inclusion and competitiveness. The goal is not to treat everyone the same, but to recognize and value individual differences by assigning specific roles that allow each athlete to contribute to the collective success. This requires in-depth knowledge of the game rules and the classification system managed by World ParaVolley, which regulates team composition during official matches. At the same time, it is necessary to build a training system that encourages collaboration among athletes with different abilities, developing inclusive strategies such as peer support, internal mentorship, and the enhancement of tactical and communication skills. The result is a team that not only competes effectively but also grows as a cohesive and resilient group.

Promoting fair play and sportsmanship in inclusive sport settings.

Finally, competition should become an opportunity to convey values such as respect, fairness, solidarity, and a sense of responsibility. Fair play is not an abstract concept but is realized in small daily actions: accepting the referee's decision, supporting a teammate after a mistake, greeting opponents at the end of the match. The coach must act as an ethical guide, intervening when inappropriate behaviour arises, but also rewarding positive attitudes and acts of sportsmanship. It is useful to include shared reflection activities after matches – brief discussions where athletes can express emotions, acknowledge each other's merits, and strengthen team identity. Especially in inclusive contexts, sportsmanship becomes an indicator of educational quality and group maturity. Cultivating fair play means promoting a sports culture capable of fostering well-being, personal growth, and social cohesion.

Chapter 3

A Tailoring Training Programs for Diverse Abilities

1. Understanding Diversity in Motor Abilities

The foundation of any inclusive program is a deep understanding of individual motor abilities. Each athlete has a unique profile influenced by factors such as the type of disability, level of functional autonomy, prior sports experience, as well as cognitive and emotional aspects. In Sitting Volleyball, differences may involve trunk control, arm mobility, ground movement speed, or reaction time. Some athletes may use prosthetics or supports, while others may lack postural stability. In this context, the coach must adopt a functional, not medicalized, view of ability: what matters is what the athlete can do and manages to do, not their medical diagnosis.

To personalize workload, technical drills, or training goals, the first and most important tool a coach can use is direct dialogue with the athlete. This can be complemented by self-assessment tools such as training journals or perceived exertion scales, allowing the coach to better understand the athlete and tailor the training as much as possible. Other useful tools include sport-specific tests, which can be used at different points in the season to assess whether there have been improvements or declines in performance, so that workloads and training programs can be adjusted accordingly.

2. Principles of Inclusive Training Design (Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in sport.)

An effective approach to inclusive training is based on flexible instructional design that anticipates and embraces diversity. A useful theoretical reference is the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model, developed in the field of education but increasingly applied to sports (CAST, 2018). The UDL model promotes a teaching system that is inherently inclusive, meaning it is designed from the outset to be accessible and engaging for everyone.

UDL (Universal Design for Learning) is based on three core principles:

- 1. Multiple means of representation:** explaining exercises and concepts using different languages – verbal, visual, gestural, and physical – to support understanding, reduce communication barriers, and improve accessibility to the technical proposal.

- 2. Multiple means of action and expression:** offering exercises with variations that allow athletes to choose how to perform them according to their own abilities. This promotes autonomy and highlights individual motor skills.
- 3. Multiple means of engagement:** providing personalized goals, appropriately calibrated challenges, and opportunities for self-assessment to foster motivation, stimulate a sense of belonging, and encourage each athlete's commitment.

A practical example of UDL in sports could be serving drills in Sitting Volleyball: some athletes might serve from the ground with a preparatory bounce, others from a fixed position using their dominant arm, while others may focus on the trajectory of the toss with external assistance. Everyone is engaged in the same activity, the technical objective remains shared, but it is carried out in different, accessible, and functional ways.

The distinguishing feature of UDL applied to sports is its inclusive nature – “teaching for all” from the planning stage. This requires careful planning by coaches, which leads to clear benefits in terms of equity, participation and motor learning for the entire group of athletes.

3. Group Management in Mixed-Ability Settings

Managing a diverse group of athletes, as in Sitting Volleyball, requires not only significant effort in adapting and individualizing exercises, but also in building team cohesion to strengthen the team spirit. To achieve all this, the coach must be able to organize activities in a structured way, promoting participation and positive interaction among athletes, and creating an environment where everyone can learn and contribute.

In contexts like these, where athletes with different abilities are part of the same group, it is important to adopt a training approach that goes beyond performance and embraces educational and relational dimensions. The presence of diverse abilities within the same team can be a challenge, but also a valuable opportunity to develop inclusive and engaging dynamics that promote not only technical learning but also the personal and social growth of the athletes. In this sense, the team becomes a rich and stimulating environment where each athlete contributes in a unique way.

Some effective strategies for group management may include:

- **Station work:** each station offers a specific task with an adjustable level of difficulty. This approach allows athletes to train independently or in small groups, encouraging self-regulation and continuous adaptation of the workload based on individual abilities.
- **Subgroups by level or function:** useful for focusing on targeted technical aspects without isolating participants. It's important for subgroup composition to remain dynamic and to encourage rotation, allowing each athlete to engage with different teammates and experience varied roles within the game.
- **Cooperative activities:** where athletes work together to achieve a common goal, with an emphasis on valuing different roles. This approach strengthens collaboration, mutual trust, and inclusion, while reducing perceived barriers between athletes with different abilities.

- Alternating role tasks: such as observer, motivator, or referee – designed to also train cognitive and social skills. Taking on different roles helps athletes understand the game from multiple perspectives and fosters a sense of responsibility and belonging with the group.

A key aspect of training sessions is the management of time and rhythm. The coach must be able to adjust breaks, intensity, and duration of activities and exercises according to both individual and group energy levels.

Effective group management in mixed-ability settings requires flexibility, empathy, and pedagogical skills, in addition to technical expertise. The coach must be able to understand the needs of the group, enhance the potential of each individual athlete and build a climate of trust, where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process and diversity is embraced as a strength. In this sense, Sitting Volleyball stands out not only as a sport but also as a powerful tool for inclusion.

4. Adaptive Equipment and Space Considerations

The environment where training or competition takes place plays a crucial role in adapted and inclusive sports.

The physical space has a direct impact on the quality of the sporting experience, the athletes' autonomy, and the possibility for full and effective participation. An accessible, safe, and adaptable environment provides the foundation for every athlete - regardless of ability level – to take part actively and meaningfully.

On the other hand, confined, disorganized spaces or those with architectural barriers can become sources of exclusion, frustration, or even danger, hindering sports practice and undermining both individual and group motivation.

Key elements for creating an accessible space include:

- Smooth, stable surface, free of obstacles, allowing safe ground movement and reducing the risk of falls or difficulties during transfers.
- Clearly defined areas, with visible and tactile boundaries, to support spatial awareness and perception of the playing field and distances.
- Multifunctional zones, adaptable to various instructional needs, which can be reconfigured for individual exercises, group work, stations, or recovery moments.

Beyond the space, equipment also plays a key role in adapting the activity. Having a variety of materials allows coaches to offer exercise variations that are accessible to everyone, helping to boost motivation and facilitate learning.

Useful equipment to use during training sessions includes:

- Balls of different sizes, weights and textures, to adjust the difficulty of catching, passing or controlling the ball.

- Coloured ribbons, cones or hoops, to mark off areas, indicate reference points or set space-specific targets (for example, to practice serving into specific areas of the court).

Digital tools, such as tablets for video recording or apps for immediate feedback, can also promote learning and motor self-awareness, as well as the athlete's autonomy in monitoring their progress. The aim of environmental adaptation is not to simplify the activity or lower expectations, but to remove barriers, maintaining the high quality of the technical and educational programme and allowing everyone to participate and compete, fully expressing their skills and potential.

5. Communication and Motivation Strategies (Inclusive communication styles: visual, verbal, tactile cues. etc.)

Communication is the main tool for mediation between coach and athlete, especially in inclusive sports contexts such as Sitting Volleyball. It is not only about giving technical instructions but about building a relationship based on mutual understanding, active listening, and valuing individual differences. Communication is effective when it adapts to different perceptual channels, cognitive needs, and the athletes' preferred learning styles.

In inclusive contexts, it is essential to adopt multimodal communication strategies that integrate various communication codes (verbal, visual, tactile, gestural) and consider different modes of perception and learning. Among the most effective strategies are:

- Simplified verbal instructions, delivered with a regular rhythm to facilitate understanding, especially in the presence of linguistic or cognitive difficulties.
- Clear visual demonstrations, possibly repeated from different angles or in slow motion, to support observation or imitation of movement.
- Coded gestures and predefined signals, which enable communication even in the absence of verbal language (for example, a hand signal from the setter to indicate the type of set they will deliver to the attacker).

In addition to conveying technical content, another key element in group management is motivation. Maintaining high emotional engagement and a strong sense of self-efficacy is essential for athletes to feel motivated to participate and continue playing.

The coach therefore has the task of creating a motivating environment through:

- Personalized and team goals
- Frequent positive reinforcement
- Recognition of progress and effort

The coach-athlete relationship thus becomes a key factor in promoting inclusion and personal growth, on par with technical skills. This is why the coach must be able to adopt different communication channels and use an empathetic, listening-based approach, thereby contributing not only to performance improvement but also to the motivational development of individual athletes and the team.

Chapter 4

Inclusive Communication and Team Building in Sitting Volleyball

1. Introduction: Why Communication Matters in Inclusive Sport

Sitting volleyball is a well-known example of how sport can bring people from different backgrounds and abilities together. Unlike regular volleyball, sitting volleyball focuses on being adaptable and inclusive, so that people with physical disabilities can play equally alongside those without disabilities.

In this context, communication becomes much more than a tool for coordinating movements on the court. It is a foundation for inclusion, mutual understanding, and respect. Good communication allows players to feel heard and valued, motivates them to contribute, and strengthens the sense of belonging to a team. Conversely, poor communication can create misunderstandings, feelings of exclusion, or even conflict.

When athletes are encouraged to share their perspectives, listen to one another, and resolve differences respectfully, the result is not only a stronger sports team but also a community that reflects wider social values of equality and cooperation. Thus, sitting volleyball highlights the broader role of communication in promoting social integration and building bridges between diverse individuals.

2. Principles of Team Building in Inclusive Groups

Making an inclusive team is more than just bringing people together. It takes effort to create an environment where everyone feels seen and supported. Some key ideas are:

Respect and Equality: Every player should be treated as an equal part of the team, no matter their physical ability, gender, or cultural background. This helps break down stereotypes and encourages acceptance.

Shared Goals: Teams do best when everyone works toward the same purpose, whether it is winning a match, improving skills, or just having fun. Shared goals bring the group together and prevent division.

Working Together over Competing: Sport often involves competition, but inside the team the main focus should be on working together. Players should learn to use each other's strengths and help cover each other's weaknesses.

Trust and Understanding: A team cannot succeed without trust. Understanding each other's challenges builds stronger connections and makes the team closer.

Adaptability and Flexibility: Inclusive environments require constant adaptation. Team members should be open to adjusting roles, strategies, and communication methods to suit the needs of the group. When these principles are actively practiced, team members are more likely to develop not only as athletes but also as individuals who value inclusion and respect in everyday life.

3. Inclusive Communication in Sport

Inclusive communication makes sure that no one is left out of the conversations within the team. In sitting volleyball, where teamwork is essential, communication can happen in many forms—spoken words, body language, eye contact, or even simple signals. Coaches and players should use clear and simple language so that instructions are easy for everyone to understand, especially for new members who might feel excluded by complex terms. At the same time, combining words with non-verbal cues such as hand signals and gestures can help make communication clearer and more inclusive, especially for those who may not rely only on spoken language.

Equally important is active listening. When players pay attention, nod, or show understanding, it gives teammates the sense that their voices matter and helps to avoid misunderstandings during the game. Coaches and leaders also play a role in creating a safe space where athletes feel comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions. This can be done by asking open questions and recognizing each contribution with respect. In some cases, communication needs to be adapted to meet specific needs. For example, for athletes with hearing difficulties, using visual signals instead of—or together with—spoken instructions ensures fairness and equal participation.

When all of these practices are combined, communication becomes a tool that strengthens trust, improves performance, and builds a true team spirit where every voice is valued.

4. Managing Communication Challenges in Mixed-Ability Teams

Mixed-ability teams often face unique challenges in communication because players may have different levels of experience, learning styles, or physical abilities. To overcome these challenges, patience and creativity are essential. The first step is to recognize and accept differences without judgment, understanding that each player brings their own strengths and struggles to the team. From there, it can be very helpful to create a shared “team language,” such as hand signals, simple code words, or gestures, to make communication clearer during matches.

Another effective approach is encouraging peer support, where teammates with different abilities are paired together to learn from one another and build confidence. Coaches and leaders should also remember the importance of patience and repetition, explaining instructions in different ways or giving extra time when needed so that no one is left behind. Finally, teams should regularly reflect on how well their communication methods are working and seek feedback to make sure everyone feels included.

When handled in this way, the difficulties of mixed-ability teams are no longer obstacles but opportunities to build stronger relationships, increase mutual understanding, and create a truly united team.

Chapter 5

Addressing Physical and Mental Well-being through Sitting Volleyball

1. Introduction

Sitting volleyball is more than a competitive sport—it is a powerful tool for promoting both physical and mental well-being. Designed to be inclusive, this sport allows people of different abilities to participate equally while fostering teamwork, communication, and personal growth. Beyond improving athletic skills, sitting volleyball provides opportunities for players to enhance their overall health, manage stress, and develop social connections. By combining movement, strategy, and collaboration, the sport addresses multiple aspects of well-being, making it a valuable activity for individuals and communities alike.

2. Physical Benefits of Sitting Volleyball

Participating in sitting volleyball offers significant physical benefits. The game improves core strength, upper body strength, and flexibility, as players rely heavily on their arms and torso to move quickly and hit the ball. Regular practice also enhances cardiovascular endurance and coordination, as players must maintain focus and react rapidly to fast-paced plays. Because the sport is played while seated, it reduces the risk of impact-related injuries while still providing a challenging workout. For individuals with physical impairments, sitting volleyball provides a safe and effective way to engage in physical activity, helping maintain mobility, strength, and overall fitness.

3. Mental and Emotional Well-being through Team Sport

Sitting volleyball has a positive impact on mental and emotional health. Being part of a team promotes a sense of belonging, reduces feelings of isolation, and boosts self-esteem. The sport encourages players to set goals, celebrate achievements, and develop resilience when facing challenges. Engaging in regular physical activity also helps regulate mood, reduce stress, and improve cognitive functioning. Through the collaborative nature of the game, players develop social skills such as communication, empathy, and conflict resolution, which further support emotional well-being.

4. Creating a Supportive and Empowering Environment

A key factor in promoting well-being through sitting volleyball is creating a supportive and empowering environment. Coaches and teammates should foster a culture of respect, encouragement, and inclusion. Players should feel safe to express themselves, take risks, and make mistakes without fear of judgment. Adaptations for different abilities, clear communication, and positive reinforcement help ensure that everyone can participate fully. Such an environment not only enhances performance but also strengthens confidence, motivation, and personal growth.

5. Strategies for Fostering Physical and Mental Health

There are several strategies to maximize the physical and mental benefits of sitting volleyball. Structured training programs that combine skill development, conditioning, and adaptive exercises help players improve both strength and mobility. Mental health can be supported through team discussions, mindfulness exercises, and goal-setting practices that encourage reflection and personal growth. Peer mentoring and buddy systems create additional layers of support, ensuring that every player receives guidance, encouragement, and feedback. Coaches can also integrate relaxation techniques, stress management tools, and positive reinforcement to further support well-being.

6. The Social Dimension of Well-being

Sitting volleyball fosters social well-being by encouraging connection, cooperation, and inclusion. Players form meaningful relationships through shared experiences, teamwork, and mutual support. These social bonds can extend beyond the sport, providing networks of encouragement, friendship, and community engagement. The inclusive nature of the game also teaches respect for diversity, empathy for different experiences, and the value of collaboration. By participating in sitting volleyball, individuals not only enhance their physical and mental health but also strengthen their social skills and sense of belonging.

7. Conclusion

Sitting volleyball demonstrates that sport can be a holistic tool for promoting overall well-being. Its physical benefits include improved strength, coordination, and endurance, while its mental and emotional benefits enhance resilience, confidence, and mood regulation. Creating a supportive environment, implementing strategies for health, and fostering social connections ensure that all players gain the maximum benefit from participation. Ultimately, sitting volleyball goes beyond being a game—it becomes a pathway to physical fitness, mental resilience, and social empowerment, highlighting the profound impact inclusive sport can have on individual and community well-being.

Chapter 6

Inclusive Event Planning and Management with Sitting Volleyball

1. Introduction: Why Inclusive Event Planning Matters

Sporting events are powerful social platforms that bring people together, generate visibility, and promote values of cooperation and fair play. When events are designed inclusively, they do more than showcase athletic performance: they act as catalysts for cultural change, reducing stigma around disability and creating shared spaces where diversity is celebrated.

For Sitting Volleyball, event planning has a dual role: on one side, ensuring fair competition and athlete safety; on the other, serving as a living demonstration of inclusion in practice. The *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)* explicitly calls for equal participation in cultural and sporting life, while the *European Accessibility Act (2019)* and the *European Disability Strategy 2021–2030* frame accessibility as a non-negotiable condition for meaningful participation.

Therefore, event organizers should not consider accessibility and inclusion as optional features or “add-ons,” but as integral components that shape every decision—from venue selection to communication strategy.

2. Principles of Inclusive Event Design

Inclusive Sitting Volleyball events should follow guiding principles that ensure equity, dignity, and sustainability.

Equity of access: every participant, whether athlete, coach, volunteer, or spectator, should experience the same rights and opportunities.

Universal Design: events should be conceived to include everyone from the outset, minimizing the need for later adaptations. This includes designing signage, schedules, and spaces that work for the widest possible audience.

Participation and co-creation: athletes with disabilities and representative organizations should be involved in decision-making committees. Their lived experience ensures relevance and prevents tokenism.

Cultural sensitivity: recognizing differences in language, gender, religion, and social background. For example, ensuring that dietary needs are respected during catering.

Environmental sustainability: promoting accessible and environmentally friendly solutions (e.g., reusable materials, eco-friendly transport options), in line with the *European Green Deal*.

By embedding these principles, Sitting Volleyball events can demonstrate a model of inclusion that transcends sport itself.

3. Accessibility Planning

Accessibility encompasses much more than ramps or wheelchair seating. It requires a holistic vision that considers physical, informational, and communicative access.

- **Venue design:** courts, locker rooms, toilets, and spectator areas must comply with standards such as *EN 17210:2021* on accessibility of the built environment. Pathways should be wide enough for wheelchairs and surfaces must be smooth and non-slippery.
- **Transport:** public transport and shuttle services must be wheelchair accessible; clear signage should indicate the routes to venues. Reserved parking spaces should be close to entrances.
- **Information and communication:** schedules, rules, and promotional materials should be made available in multiple formats—easy-to-read text, Braille, subtitles, and sign language interpretation. Websites and apps must follow *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1)*.
- **Emergency protocols:** staff must be trained in inclusive evacuation procedures, ensuring that persons with mobility or sensory impairments are safe in case of emergencies.

Good accessibility planning ensures that barriers are eliminated before the event begins, avoiding last-minute crises and ensuring dignity for all participants.

4. Inclusive Programming and Scheduling

Inclusive programming recognizes that events are not only about competition but also about creating a holistic experience for athletes and the community.

- **Mixed-ability tournaments:** particularly effective at grassroots level, where rules may be slightly adapted to encourage maximum participation.
- **Showcase matches:** featuring national teams or professional athletes can attract media attention and raise awareness about Sitting Volleyball.
- **Workshops and clinics:** offering introductory sessions for schools, NGOs, and community groups fosters local engagement.
- **Awareness campaigns:** exhibitions, photo galleries, or storytelling spaces where athletes share their journeys.
- **Parallel activities:** children's games, cultural performances, or inclusive fitness classes ensure that families and community members feel involved.

Scheduling must take into account the needs of athletes with disabilities, for example by including longer rest intervals, avoiding excessively late matches, and ensuring medical staff are available at all times.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Clear role distribution is crucial for smooth event delivery.

- **Event Manager:** coordinates all aspects, from budget to partnerships, ensuring compliance with accessibility laws.
- **Technical Director:** adapts game rules when necessary, oversees referees, and maintains competitive integrity.
- **Accessibility Officer:** monitors implementation of accessibility standards and acts as a contact point for athletes with specific needs.
- **Volunteers:** essential for logistics and hospitality. Training sessions should cover disability awareness, inclusive communication, and basic assistance.
- **Athletes:** not only participants but also role models. Involving them as ambassadors enriches the event and increases credibility.

Empowering volunteers and staff through proper training transforms them into allies of inclusion, reinforcing the event's social impact.

6. Adaptive Equipment and Space Management

An inclusive Sitting Volleyball event must provide or facilitate access to adaptive equipment and flexible spaces.

- **Court set-up:** markings should be high-contrast and, where possible, tactile. The net should be adjustable in height according to international regulations.
- **Equipment:** different types of balls (lighter, softer, or with sound elements) allow broader participation in side events and workshops.
- **Seating:** accessible rest areas for athletes, including physiotherapy or recovery spaces.
- **Technology:** live-streaming with captions, mobile apps for real-time schedules, and accessible scoring systems enhance participation for remote audiences as well.

The aim is not to diminish competitiveness but to ensure that no one is excluded due to environmental or equipment-related barriers.

7. Case Studies and Good Practices

- **Paralympic Day (Germany, Italy, France):** combines demonstrations, workshops, and competitions with a festival-like atmosphere. These events attract thousands of visitors, raising public awareness and offering direct experiences of adaptive sports.
- **Local community tournaments (Portugal, Slovenia):** clubs partnered with municipalities to host open tournaments where residents could try Sitting Volleyball alongside professional athletes, fostering community cohesion.

These practices illustrate how Sitting Volleyball events can extend their impact beyond sport, promoting education, advocacy, and community building.

8. Challenges and Recommendations

Despite progress, organizers often face barriers:

- **Limited funding:** adaptive equipment and accessibility adjustments may increase costs. Solution: diversify funding sources (EU grants, local sponsors, NGOs).
- **Lack of awareness:** communities may not know Sitting Volleyball. Solution: integrate awareness campaigns with events, involving schools and media.
- **Volunteer training gaps:** without preparation, volunteers may unintentionally create exclusion. Solution: provide mandatory training on disability inclusion.
- **Media coverage:** adaptive sports often receive little exposure. Solution: develop storytelling strategies and involve athletes as spokespeople.

By anticipating these challenges, organizers can transform obstacles into opportunities for innovation.

9. Conclusion

Inclusive event planning for Sitting Volleyball is more than technical coordination; it is an act of social responsibility. By ensuring accessibility, designing inclusive programming, clarifying roles, and providing adaptive equipment, organizers create environments where athletes, spectators, and volunteers experience equality and belonging.

Aligned with the *UN CRPD*, the *European Accessibility Act*, and the *European Disability Strategy 2021–2030*, Sitting Volleyball events can become catalysts for community engagement and social change. Beyond the matches themselves, they send a strong message: inclusion is not an exception, but the rule.

Chapter 7

Advocacy and Community Engagement in Inclusive Sports

1. Introduction: The Importance of Advocacy in Inclusive Sports

Sport has the potential to be a powerful driver of social change. Beyond the playing field, inclusive sports can transform how society perceives disability, challenge stereotypes, and foster solidarity. Advocacy ensures that these positive values are communicated widely, reaching policymakers, institutions, and communities.

Sitting Volleyball, with its inclusive format and mixed-ability participation, is uniquely positioned to serve as a platform for advocacy. The sport visibly demonstrates equality in action: players with and without disabilities compete on equal terms, showcasing teamwork, skill, and determination. This makes it a compelling tool for campaigns that highlight the rights of persons with disabilities and the benefits of inclusive practices.

Advocacy in sport aligns with the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)*, which recognizes participation in cultural and sporting life as a human right. At European level, the *Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030* emphasizes the need for awareness-raising and inclusive communities. Advocacy initiatives in Sitting Volleyball thus contribute both to fulfilling international commitments and to fostering grassroots change.

2. The Role of Coaches and Trainers as Advocates

Coaches and trainers are often the first point of contact between athletes and the world of sport. Their influence extends far beyond teaching technical skills: they shape values, attitudes, and the culture of the team. As advocates, they can play a decisive role in promoting inclusion both inside and outside the sporting environment. Ways in which coaches act as advocates include:

Daily practice: modeling inclusive language, respect, and empathy during training.

Awareness-raising: speaking at schools, local events, or conferences to explain the importance of Sitting Volleyball.

Policy engagement: contributing to local or national sports councils, federations, or advisory boards to ensure inclusion is part of strategic planning.

Empowering athletes: encouraging players to become role models themselves, supporting their journey as leaders and ambassadors.

A coach who frames diversity as a strength, not as a limitation, sends a powerful message to athletes, parents, and the community. Over time, this advocacy shapes perceptions and strengthens the legitimacy of inclusive sports.

3. Building Inclusive Sport Campaigns

Campaigns are a central tool for advocacy because they make inclusion visible and create momentum for change. An effective campaign does not simply promote an event; it tells a story and engages people emotionally.

Steps for developing a campaign include:

1. **Defining clear objectives** – e.g., increasing participation in local Sitting Volleyball clubs, raising awareness in schools, or influencing municipal funding policies.
2. **Identifying target groups** – such as young people, educators, policymakers, sponsors, or the wider public.
3. **Crafting the message** – highlighting ability, teamwork, and empowerment rather than focusing on limitations. Messages should inspire rather than pity.
4. **Selecting communication channels** – social media, short videos, local press, community events, and partnerships with schools or NGOs.
5. **Monitoring results** – evaluating participation levels, media coverage, and long-term impact.

4. Engaging Stakeholders and Allies

Advocacy is most effective when it mobilizes diverse allies. Sitting Volleyball can attract support from a wide range of stakeholders who recognize its value for health, education, and community well-being.

- **Educational institutions:** integrating Sitting Volleyball into physical education classes introduces inclusion early in life.
- **Municipalities and local governments:** by providing venues and funding, they can ensure sustainability.
- **Health institutions:** physiotherapists and rehabilitation centers often recommend Sitting Volleyball as a form of adapted physical activity.
- **Private sector and sponsors:** companies can support campaigns as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility, gaining visibility while promoting social values.
- **Disability associations and NGOs:** their expertise ensures that advocacy is credible and rooted in lived experience.

The most successful advocacy initiatives build coalitions across these sectors, creating shared ownership and multiplying impact.

5. Media and Storytelling for Social Impact

Media representation strongly shapes how society perceives disability and inclusive sport. For this reason, advocacy campaigns must use storytelling effectively.

- **Athlete stories:** sharing personal journeys of resilience and achievement humanizes inclusion and inspires empathy.
- **Visual content:** photographs and videos of mixed-ability teams competing at a high level challenge stereotypes.

- **Digital engagement:** short videos, Instagram reels, or TikTok challenges can reach younger audiences and spread awareness rapidly.
- **Media training:** athletes can be empowered to act as spokespersons, increasing authenticity and impact.

The *European Commission's White Paper on Sport (2007)* emphasized the role of media in promoting inclusion and shaping values. By using storytelling strategically, Sitting Volleyball can transition from being perceived as a niche discipline to being recognized as an example of mainstream inclusive sport.

6. Community Building through Sitting Volleyball

Advocacy is not only top-down; it also grows from the grassroots. Sitting Volleyball is an effective tool for building inclusive communities because it fosters cooperation, interaction, and mutual understanding.

Practical approaches include:

- **Open community sessions** where anyone can try Sitting Volleyball, regardless of ability or age.
- **Volunteer programmes** that allow young people to contribute to events while learning about disability and inclusion.
- **Cross-generational events** where children, parents, and grandparents play together, breaking down both age and ability barriers.
- **Cultural partnerships** combining sport with art, music, or festivals to broaden appeal and visibility.

When communities experience inclusion directly through sport, stereotypes are broken and long-lasting bonds are created. Sitting Volleyball thus becomes a platform for citizenship, solidarity, and empowerment.

7. Challenges and Future Directions

Advocacy in inclusive sport is promising but faces obstacles:

- **Limited visibility:** Sitting Volleyball often lacks media coverage, making advocacy harder.
- **Stereotypes:** disability is still too often associated with charity rather than empowerment.
- **Funding constraints:** campaigns and inclusive events require resources that may not be readily available.
- **Volunteer fatigue:** long-term engagement requires careful planning and recognition of contributions.

Future directions should focus on:

- **Mainstreaming** Sitting Volleyball in schools and community programmes.
- **Strengthening digital advocacy** with online campaigns and accessible e-learning tools.

- **Developing European and international networks** of inclusive sport organizations to share best practices.
- **Aligning with SDGs** (particularly SDG 3: Health and Well-being; SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities; and SDG 16: Inclusive Societies) to connect local advocacy with global agendas.

8. Conclusion

Advocacy and community engagement are vital for embedding Sitting Volleyball within the social fabric. Coaches, athletes, policymakers, NGOs, and media all play complementary roles in ensuring that inclusive sport is not seen as marginal, but as central to modern society.

By combining campaigns, partnerships, media strategies, and grassroots community initiatives, Sitting Volleyball can inspire both cultural change and practical improvements in accessibility and inclusion. Its impact extends beyond the court: it strengthens communities, reduces prejudice, and advances human rights.

Chapter 8

Integration of Sitting Volleyball in Organizational Policies and Practices

1. Strategic planning for Sitting Volleyball integration

Integrating sitting volleyball into an organization's sports program requires a well-structured strategic plan that supports broader goals of inclusivity, accessibility, and athlete development. The first step is to assess current resources, infrastructure, and community interest. Stakeholders such as athletes with and without disabilities, coaches, and governing bodies should be involved from the beginning to ensure the program addresses diverse needs and builds a sense of shared responsibility. A clear vision statement should be developed to define the purpose of the initiative, whether the aim is to promote competitive excellence, strengthen community participation, or assist in rehabilitation efforts.

The next step is on operational and logistical planning. Facilities must be adapted to meet accessibility requirements, which includes ensuring proper flooring, adequate space, and the right equipment such as suitable nets and court markings. It is also essential to recruit and train qualified coaches who are skilled not only in the technical aspects of sitting volleyball but also in adaptive sports coaching. Collaborating with disability advocacy organizations, schools, rehabilitation centers, and national volleyball associations can provide valuable expertise and help maintain a steady flow of participants. Securing sustainable funding through sponsorships, grants, or government support is necessary to keep the program viable over the long term without placing undue strain on resources.

A strong marketing and outreach approach is also essential for the program's visibility and growth. This can be achieved by promoting sitting volleyball through social media, hosting community events, and engaging with schools to showcase its inclusive and competitive nature. Success should be measured not only by athletic performance but also by participation levels, athlete satisfaction, and positive community impact. Consistent evaluation and the use of feedback will allow the program to evolve and improve over time. With careful planning at every stage, organizations can make sitting volleyball a sustainable, influential, and celebrated part of their sports offerings.

2. Institutionalizing Partnerships

Institutionalizing partnerships for sitting volleyball involves creating formal and lasting collaborations with organizations that can support the sport's growth and sustainability. The process begins by identifying key stakeholders such as disability advocacy groups, national and local volleyball federations, rehabilitation centers, educational institutions, and community sports clubs. Formal agreements, including memorandums of understanding or partnership frameworks, can be used to define shared goals, roles, and responsibilities. By embedding these collaborations into official structures and policies, organizations can ensure continuity even when leadership or personnel

change. This approach builds trust, enhances resource sharing, and provides a stable foundation for the development of sitting volleyball programs.

Sustainable partnerships depend on mutual benefit and continuous engagement. Hosting regular joint activities such as tournaments, training workshops, and community outreach events keeps the collaboration active and productive. Clear communication channels and structured evaluation methods ensure that all partners remain focused on their objectives and can address challenges together. Institutionalized partnerships also make it easier to secure funding, access expertise, and expand participation across wider networks. By integrating these relationships into the core governance and daily operations of the sport, sitting volleyball programs can grow in a way that is resilient, inclusive, and responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

3. Showcasing Good Practices

Highlighting good practices in sitting volleyball plays a vital role not only in promoting the sport but also in encouraging greater participation and demonstrating its positive influence on communities. To begin with, this process involves identifying success stories from teams, clubs, and community programs that have effectively incorporated sitting volleyball into their activities. For instance, featuring examples such as inclusive training sessions, well-coordinated competitions, and adaptive coaching methods can serve as valuable models for others to adopt and learn from. Moreover, documenting these practices through case studies, interviews, and visual storytelling not only recognizes notable accomplishments but also provides practical guidance for organizations that aim to establish or improve their own programs.

In addition, sharing good practices fosters essential knowledge exchange among players, coaches, and administrators. Various platforms such as workshops, conferences, and online forums can be utilized to present innovative approaches in key areas like talent development, community outreach, and collaboration with schools or rehabilitation centers. By making these examples visible to a wider audience, the sport gains greater credibility and attracts new supporters, including potential sponsors and policymakers. Ultimately, by consistently showcasing good practices, a continuous cycle of learning and improvement is created, which helps sitting volleyball to grow as an inclusive, competitive, and community-driven sport.

4. Steps for integration of policies in organizations

Integrating policies for sitting volleyball within an organization requires a clear and systematic approach that reflects both the institution's mission and its commitment to inclusivity. To begin with, the first step is to conduct a thorough needs assessment in order to determine the current level of awareness, infrastructure, and interest in the sport. This process should involve meaningful consultations with athletes, coaches, administrators, and representatives from disability advocacy groups so that multiple perspectives are considered. Based on these valuable insights, the organization can then draft policy objectives that actively encourage accessibility and promote equal opportunities for participation. Furthermore, to ensure effectiveness, the policy should possess key qualities such as clarity and precision, making every guideline easy to understand and leaving no room for misinterpretation. It should also remain relevant to the organization's current needs, closely align with overall strategic goals, and directly support the mission. In addition, flexibility and adaptability are essential, as they allow the policy to evolve in response to changes in legislation, shifting community priorities, or developments in the sporting environment. Finally, leadership endorsement is vital to guarantee strong commitment and accountability at all levels.

Moreover, integrating supportive organizational practices can greatly enhance the success of sitting volleyball programs. For example, these practices may include establishing regular training schedules that accommodate the needs of both recreational and competitive players, while ensuring that all sessions remain inclusive and accessible. In the same way, providing professional development opportunities for coaches and officials in adaptive sports can help maintain consistently high standards of instruction and officiating. Equally important, creating mentorship programs that connect experienced athletes with newcomers can foster skill development, motivation, and a strong sense of community. Furthermore, embedding sitting volleyball into broader organizational events, such as sports festivals, community outreach programs, and awareness campaigns, can significantly raise its visibility and attract more participants. In addition, consistent recognition of achievements, both on and off the court, can further encourage ongoing engagement and reinforce the value of sitting volleyball within the organization's culture.

The next step, therefore, is to develop and implement operational guidelines that translate the policy framework into practical and actionable measures. This includes ensuring that facilities meet all relevant accessibility standards, adapting equipment specifically for sitting volleyball, and offering specialized training for coaches and officials in adaptive sports. Likewise, forming partnerships with schools, community organizations, and national sports bodies can further strengthen implementation and provide essential resources. To maintain momentum, ongoing monitoring and evaluation should be built into the process so that progress can be measured, feedback gathered, and necessary adjustments made in a timely manner. Ultimately, by embedding these qualities into its design and by following a well-structured integration process, an organization can establish a sitting volleyball policy that is sustainable, inclusive, and fully capable of adapting to future challenges while driving long-term growth.

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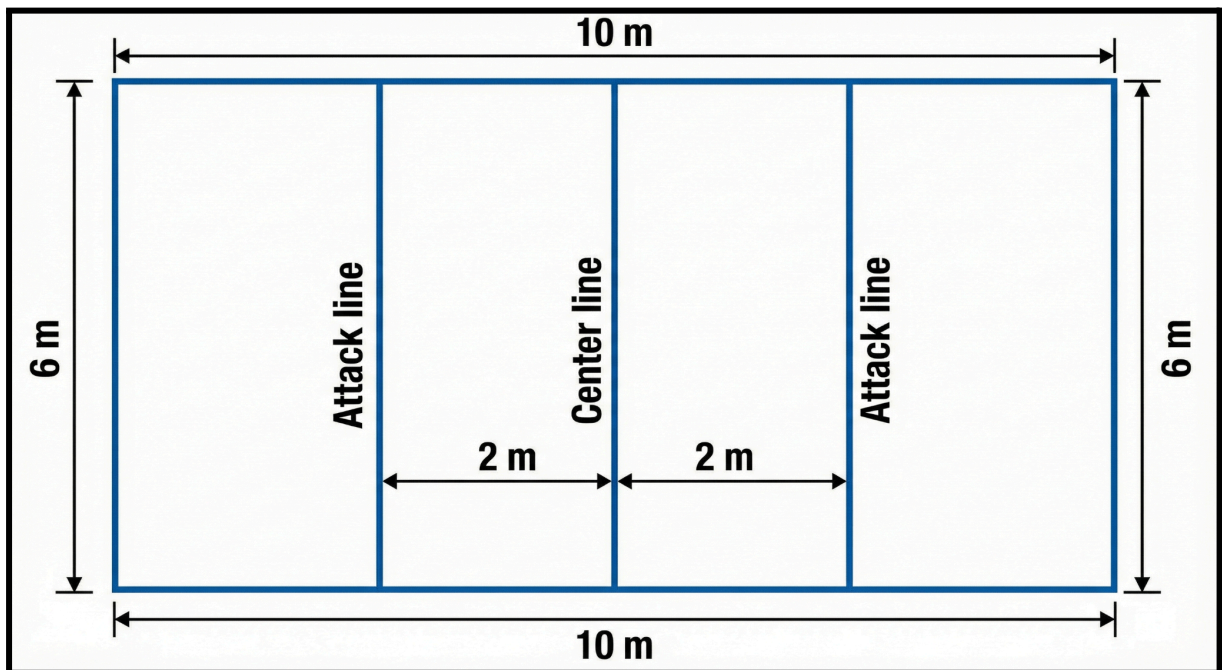
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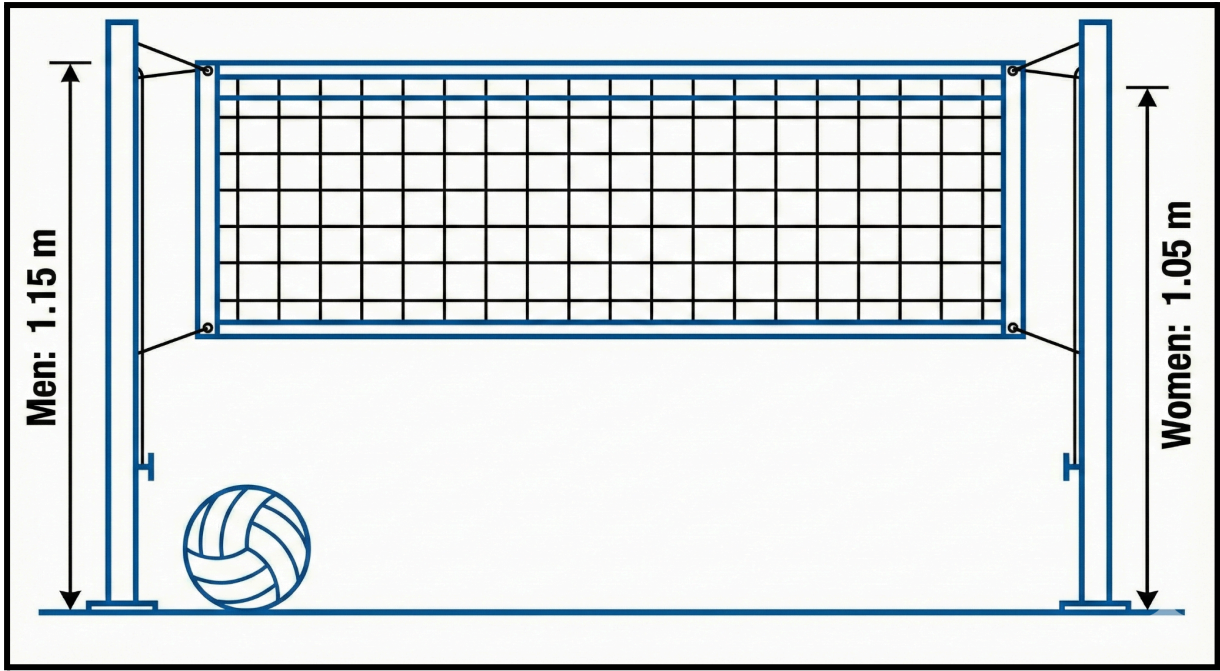
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Annex

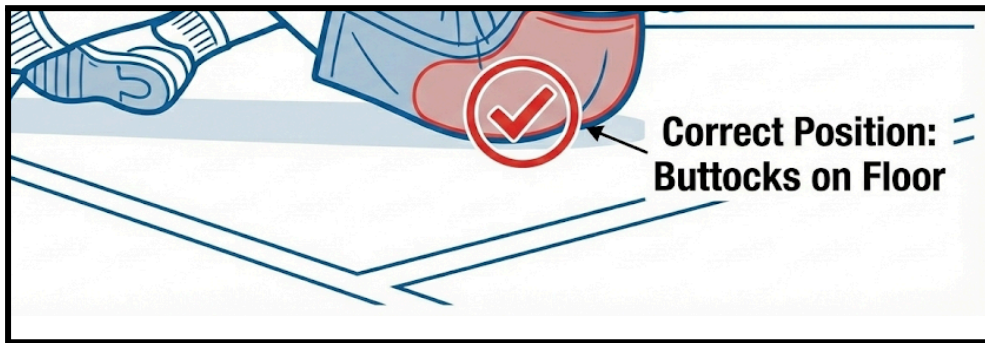
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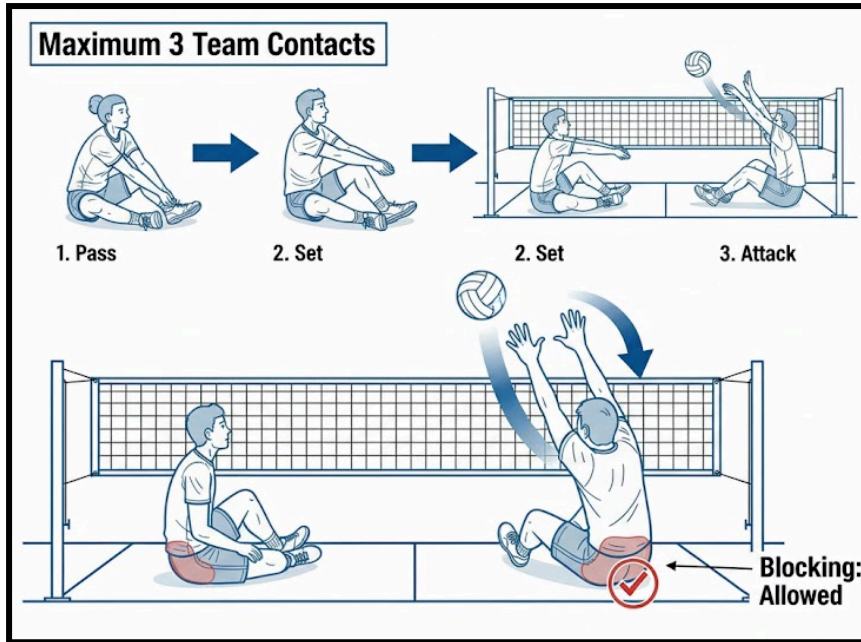
1. Dimensions of a sitting volleyball court.



2. Dimensions of net



3. Correct position



4. Example of an attack and block (block is allowed during the serve also).

Useful information for Sitting Volleyball:

1. Official Governance & Rules

These are the primary sources for international standards, official rulebooks, and classification guidelines.

- **World ParaVolley (WPV)**
 - **Website:** worldparavolley.org
 - **Why it's useful:** This is the sole international federation recognized by the IPC. It is the central hub for world competition schedules, news, and official documentation.
- **Official Sitting Volleyball Rules (2025–2028)**
 - **Direct Link:** [WPV Rules & Regulations](#)
 - **Why it's useful:** Access the most current "Rules of the Game," refereeing guidelines, and updates for the 2025–2028 cycle.
- **International Paralympic Committee (IPC) - Sitting Volleyball**
 - **Website:** paralympic.org/sitting-volleyball
 - **Why it's useful:** Provides historical context, qualification criteria for the Paralympic Games, and news on major global events.

2. Coaching & Educational Resources

These links are ideal for coaches, teachers, and new players looking for drills and training guides.

- **VolleySLIDE**
 - **Website:** worldparavolley.org/volleyslide

- **Why it's useful:** The premier educational resource for the sport. It includes a "Full Resource" pack available in multiple languages, offering task cards, session plans, and guides for starting a program.
- **Volleyball England - Volley2s**
 - **Website:** volleyballengland.org/coaching-resources
 - **Why it's useful:** Features the "Volley2s" guide, a free-to-download resource that helps teachers introduce volleyball fundamentals to children, which can be adapted for sitting versions.
- **JVA Setting Drills**
 - **Website:** jvavolleyball.org
 - **Why it's useful:** Provides specific drills to train proper technique, such as the "Have a Seat" drill which isolates arm and wrist strength—directly applicable to sitting volleyball training.
- **NCHPAD Sitting Volleyball Unit**
 - **Website:** nchpad.org
 - **Why it's useful:** A guide specifically for educators and activity directors, detailing how to set up units, adapt rules for inclusion, and utilize specific cues for skills like serving and passing.

Alternative adaptations for equipment:

1. The Net: Alternatives to Professional Systems

The official net height (1.15m for men, 1.05m for women) is the most critical adaptation, but a professional net system is not required to achieve it.

- **Rope or Ribbon:** A simple long rope, washing line, or high-visibility construction ribbon tied between two existing posts (or even chairs) works perfectly for training. The focus is on having a barrier at the correct height to encourage the upward trajectory of the ball.
- **Badminton Nets:** Most multi-sport halls already have badminton nets. Since badminton nets are set at 1.55m, they can often be lowered or simply allowed to sag slightly to approximate sitting volleyball heights. Alternatively, stringing two badminton nets together can cover the width of a volleyball court.

2. The Ball: Adapting for Beginners and Safety

Standard volleyballs can be heavy and fast for beginners. Feedback from SIVO coaches specifically highlights the value of using adapted balls to build confidence.

- **Balloons:** As noted by coach Rıdvan İnal, balloons are excellent for beginners to master ball control without fear of injury or speed. To increase the difficulty slightly, you can place a coin inside the balloon before inflating it or wrap it lightly in duct tape to give it more weight and a truer flight path.

- **Beach Balls:** These are larger and slower than regulation balls, giving players more reaction time to move their bodies into position.
- **Lighter Volleyballs:** If budget allows for some purchases, "lite" volleyballs (often used for U12 categories) are widely available and softer on the arms.

3. The Court: Defining Boundaries Without Paint

A sitting volleyball court is smaller (10m x 6m) than a standard court. You do not need permanent lines to define this space.

- **Painter's Tape (Masking Tape):** This is the gold standard for temporary courts. It is cheap, highly visible, and peels off gym floors without leaving a sticky residue or damaging the varnish.
- **Flat Rubber Markers:** If tape is not allowed, use flat rubber discs or non-slip silicone markers to define the four corners and the service line.
- **Cones:** While cones can be a tripping hazard if placed *on* the line, they are excellent for marking the four corners of the court from the outside.
- **Existing Lines:** Use the badminton court outer lines (typically 13.4m x 6.1m). While slightly longer than a sitting volleyball court, the width (6.1m) is almost perfect (official is 6m), making it an easy "ready-made" solution.

4. Player Gear: Protection on a Budget

Players in sitting volleyball move by sliding on the floor, which can cause friction burns. Specialized gear is not strictly necessary.

- **Clothing:** Players should wear long sweatpants or leggings rather than shorts. Cotton or synthetic blends that slide easily on wooden floors are ideal.
- **Towel "Sliders":** In training, players can sit on a small towel to help them slide more easily across the floor if the surface is sticky or abrasive.
- **Gloves:** Cycling gloves, weightlifting gloves, or even simple gardening gloves can protect hands from friction burns and impact, which is especially helpful for new players learning to move and block.

5. Training Aids: DIY Solutions

- **Resistance Bands:** As mentioned in the SIVO feedback, simple elastic resistance bands are a cost-effective tool for upper-body conditioning and strength training, which is crucial for sitting volleyball.
- **Hula Hoops:** Hang hula hoops from the net (or rope) to create serving and passing targets. This provides a visual goal for accuracy drills without needing high-tech sensor targets.
- **Wall Markings:** Use tape to mark a "net line" on a wall at 1.15m. Players can practice serving, setting, and attacking against the wall individually, allowing for high-repetition training without a partner.

Managing groups of different abilities

In order to manage groups with different abilities when coaching you can use the tips below to help you during the practice.

1. Communication: The Multi-Modal Approach

To ensure all athletes understand instructions regardless of cognitive or hearing abilities, coaches utilize a "multi-modal" communication style.

- **Combine Methods:** Do not rely on words alone; explain a drill verbally, demonstrate it physically, and use tactile cues (physical guidance) for athletes who need to "feel" the movement.
- **Simplify and Clarify:** Keep verbal instructions simple and direct, especially for beginners or those with cognitive impairments.
- **Visual Cues:** Use consistent hand signals for common game situations (e.g., "free ball," "mine," "over") to complement verbal commands.
- **Tactile Feedback:** With consent, use light physical guidance to help athletes understand body mechanics and positioning.

2. Peer Support and Role Definition

Leverage the diverse abilities within the team to foster cohesion and shared learning.

- **Peer Mentoring:** Pair experienced players with newcomers or those needing extra support to foster teamwork and mutual assistance.
- **Alternative Roles:** Introduce roles such as a "tactical observer" during training. This allows athletes with limited mobility to develop game intelligence and participate meaningfully even when resting.
- **Active Listening:** Promote an environment where teammates actively listen to one another and provide positive, constructive feedback.

Event planning: competitive or promotion

Primary Objective

The fundamental difference lies in the ultimate goal of the event. **Promotional events** are designed with the primary objective of "having fun". The focus is on introduction, accessibility, and allowing participants to discover the sport in a low-stakes environment. In contrast, **competitive events** are driven by the desire "to win". While inclusive sports aim to include everyone, a competitive setting shifts the focus toward performance, strategy, and results, requiring athletes to consciously switch into "competition mode".

Target Audience and Engagement

Promotional events aim to engage the broader community, including people of all ages and abilities who may have no prior experience with the sport. The strategy relies on offering "opportunities for direct experience," meaning the audience is encouraged to actively participate and try the sport rather than just watch. **Competitive events**, such as interregional tournaments, tend to have a much narrower audience, often composed almost exclusively of the athletes' families. In this setting, the engagement is passive (spectating) rather than active, and the reach is often limited to those already within the sitting volleyball community.

Atmosphere and Inclusivity

In a **promotional setting**, the atmosphere is educational and welcoming. The environment is structured to be "stimulating for everyone," regardless of whether they are able-bodied or have varying levels of disability (e.g., VS1 or VS2). The priority is creating a space where athletes feel free to make mistakes and learn without pressure. Conversely, a **competitive setting** introduces the challenge of maintaining a "healthy" environment that is simultaneously fun and high-pressure. The dynamic shifts from collective participation to distinct teams striving for victory, which can make it harder to balance the needs of mixed-ability groups compared to a purely promotional context.

Key Challenges

The main challenge for **promotional events** is "advocacy and community engagement". Organizers struggle to break out of the internal circle and attract the general public or new people with disabilities to participate. For **competitive events**, the challenge lies in the complexity of the game itself. Coaches note the difficulty of simulating the "pressure of a match" where athletes with different needs (e.g., cognitive or hearing impairments) require simultaneous, rapid tactical instructions. While promotion struggles with *getting people there*, competition struggles with *managing the intensity* effectively for a diverse team.