



# **Skill Cue Cards**

## **Defence**

### Pre---contact phase

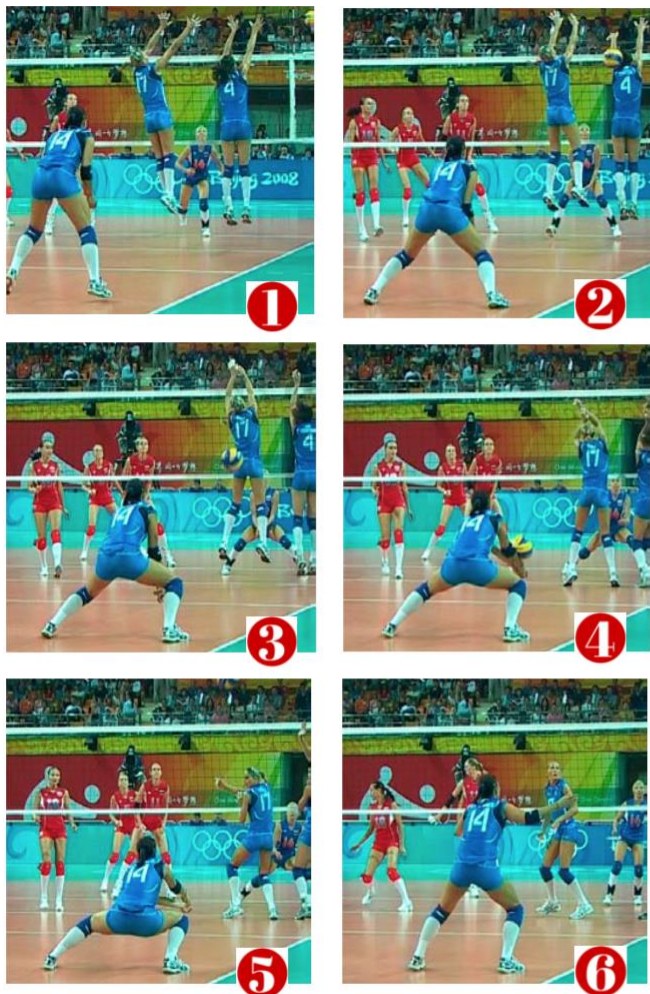
1. Defender is in ready position with feet slightly wider than shoulders, weight on the front of the feet and shoulders forward. The arms are bent in front of the body with the palms facing up. The defender is facing and reading the hitter.
2. Just before the hit, the defender drops their weight into the floor by doing a split step. This will allow the defender to react to the hit by either being in a stable position or by moving towards the ball.  
The position is like the ready position but the feet are wider, the knees are bent at a comfortable angle and they are in line with the toes.
3. The defender sees the direction of the hit and moves the body and arms toward the ball without moving the feet. Having the weight on the toes will allow for forward and lateral movements, which will come from bending one leg and extending the other.

### Contact phase

4. The hands come together at point of contact to create the platform. The arms are in front of the body and the shoulders are over the knees. A small bent in the elbows might be necessary to make sure the contact happens under the ball.

### Post---contact phase

5. After the ball is dug, the arms stay together for a fraction of a second and the defender follows through the defensive motion with their body. Stopping the motion at the point of contact may result in low dig.
6. The defender recovers from the low position they were in, stands up and gets ready to attack or cover.



Defence requires the player to be **intense** and **calm** at the same time. **Intense** because the ball can't touch the floor and because the player needs to be ready to do what it takes to get under the ball. **Calm** because controlling a ball coming at full speed requires a smooth touch. This contrast makes defence one of the most challenging skills to learn, but one of the most fun as well.





## Defence – Overhand



### Pre--contact phase

4. The defender is in defensive ready position (see *Basic Defence*) and is looking at the attacker to read the hit. The hands are apart.
5. The defender identifies the trajectory of the ball and reacts by bringing the hands up. The defender starts to rise to intercept the ball and tries to keep the ball in front of the face.

### Contact phase

5. Contact is in front of the face with the inside of the hands as opposed to the fingers during a set. The arms are straightening through the contact in an attempt to deflect the ball upwards. The outside shoulder stays strong and comes around the ball to make sure the ball stays inside the court.
6. The legs push upwards lifting the body off the ground in the immediate follow through motion. The arms are now completely extended.

### Post--contact phase

5. The body leans backwards as a result of the quick rising of the hands and body. The fingers are pointing back as there is no wrist motion in the overhand defence.
6. The defender lands and finds their balance to get ready for next action.



Depending on the trajectory of the ball and position of defender, the defender may drop to the knees in order to get under the ball. The key factor is to have a strong contact and to extend the arms firmly upwards

## Defence – Ball Pursuit and Retrieval

### Pre---contact phase

- Defence is a reaction skill and the players often need to chase a ball that was deflected by another player or that was played in an area of the court that wasn't covered by anyone.
1. The defender needs to be in a ready position that will allow them to play both the high hit (B) and the low hit (A). The knees have to be bent in a comfortable position and the weight is on the front of the feet. It is that position that will allow the player to quickly start chasing the ball.
  2. The defender is looking at the hitter and reads the play.
  3. The defender identifies the trajectory of the ball and initiates movement with first step in the direction of the ball. If the ball is deflected behind them, they open their body by taking a first step backwards with the foot closest to the ball.
  4. The defender chases the ball by taking quick steps towards it. While moving, the centre of gravity either lowers (D) or raises (C) depending on the trajectory of the ball that has to be dug.



### Contact phase

5. The most important factor in retrieving the ball is the angle of the platform. Just before contact, the defender must position their body in a way that will allow them to orient their platform towards the middle of the court. That might mean jump (B), dive with one hand (D) or fall to the floor (E).
6. The eyes are on the ball and arms are oriented towards the middle of the court. The shoulder further away from the court is slightly lifted and wraps around the ball at contact. (B, C)



### Post---contact phase

7. The follow through is oriented towards the middle of the court as much as possible.
8. The player either rolls or dives to avoid injuries during the fall and to be back on their feet quickly for the next action.





## Basic Diving



### Pre--contact phase

(Refer *Basic Defence* for initial defence ready position)

1. The defender sees the short ball and reacts by taking a step toward it by pushing on one foot to create momentum. Be careful not to take a step backwards in order to push forward.
2. The defender lowers their centre of gravity by bending the front knee and bringing their chest down. The defender extends one arm toward the ball. The hands come together for a two-hand dig if possible

### Contact phase

3. From a very low position, the defender pushes forward with their front leg and extends their body toward the ball. The eyes are locked on the ball as the hand comes under the ball. The player can play the ball with the hand open or with the fist closed, thumb on top. Curling the wrist will help bring the ball up at the moment of contact.

### Post--contact phase

4. Immediately after contact, the feet leave the ground and the hands get to the floor to absorb the fall. The defender uses their momentum to land safely. The chest and stomach help to absorb the fall. The chin is up throughout the dive to avoid injury.

5. The hands push back to allow the body to slide on the floor and therefore avoid the sharp impact of a complete stop. The defender bends and lifts their knees.



Typically, boys kick their legs up and use their chest to slide more

## Defence – Roll

The roll is used as a means to protect the player from injuries as the fall during a low defence. If done properly, it will make the player more confident in defending balls that are far away.

### Pre--contact phase

6. Defender is in defensive ready position. See *Basic Defence* for more details. Eyes are on the hitter reading the play.
7. The defender identifies the direction and trajectory of the ball and sees it will be short. The defender takes a step towards the ball with the foot closest to the ball and pushes with the other foot. The centre of gravity lowers. Eyes are on the ball.

### Contact phase

7. The player extends the right arm and swings it towards the ball in an upward motion. The contact happens under the ball and is made with the palm of the hand or with the fist, thumb on top. A wrist motion can help get the ball up. The centre of gravity keeps lowering down towards the floor and the left hand can be put on the floor to prepare for the roll.

### Post--contact phase

7. The arm that just dug the ball is extended forward and leads the roll. The right leg is pushing on the floor to maintain the momentum created while stepping into the ball for the dig. The more speed, the easier the roll will be.
8. The defender lands on the side of the body with the latissimus dorsi touching absorbing the shock. The right arm is extended forward and keeps the head from hitting the floor. **\*\*Warning! Some players will tuck their right elbow in\*\*** The legs are bent at the hips and follow the rotation initiated by the defence.
9. The rotation is coming to an end. The defender tucks the left knee in and flexes the left foot to pull the toes up. The right hand finds the floor to slow down the rotation and help with getting back up.
10. The defender pushes on the floor with the left foot as the right foot finds the floor. Both hands are on the floor and are pushing to lift the body.
11. Player stands up and is back in defensive ready position ready for the next action.



## Diving - Pancake



### Pre--contact phase

1-2. The pre-contact phase is the same as in the basic diving motion. Please refer to the document on *Basic Diving* for the full description.

### Contact phase

3. From a very low position, the defender pushes forward with their front leg and extends their body toward the ball. The feet may or may not leave the floor but the important point is to push with the leg.
4. The defender's right hand slides wide open on the floor while the left hand is controlling and absorbing the fall by pushing backward. Eyes are locked on the ball as it contacts the hand.

### Post--contact phase

5. Right after the contact, the defender may slide on their chest or stomach while keeping the right arm forward. The chin has to stay up to avoid an injury.
6. The defender gets back up by using both hands and gets ready to cover the hit or play more defence.

