



# How to run a Smashball Program

# A Special Thank You to

## **THE ONTARIO VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION AND:**

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For the development of the original version  
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# What Is Smashball?

SMASHBALL is volleyball for kids ages 6 to 12.

SMASHBALL is for schools, clubs, and community centres.

SMASHBALL is played with:

- 3 vs 3 (plus 1 extra per team)
- badminton courts (or a smaller modified volleyball court)
- badminton nets (or a low net)
- light volleyball
- one bounce allowed
- 5 progressive levels



# Why Smashball?

...because

- it's fun
- it's safe
- it's developmentally appropriate
- it's effective in teaching volleyball skills
- kids learn to smash/spike right away
- it teaches collaboration and inclusion
- it develops physical literacy



# Long Term Development

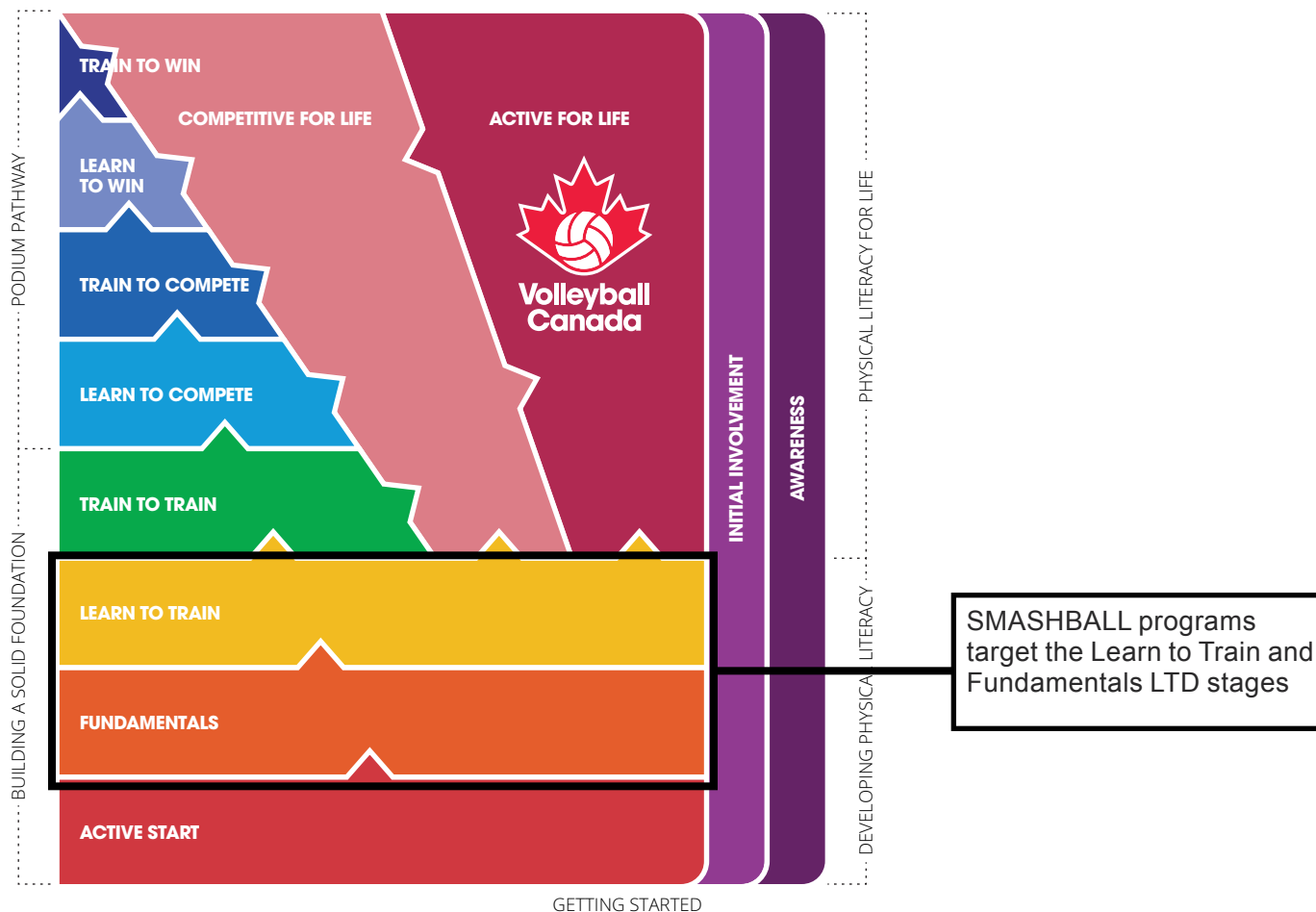
Volleyball Canada programs are based on Long Term Development (LTD) principles and research. To summarize LTD, Individuals pass through different life-stages as they grow and develop—from Birth and Early Childhood through Adolescence, and Adulthood and onto becoming senior citizens.

The education system has long recognized this, and Kindergarten instruction looks nothing like high school or post-secondary classes. Methods of instruction, and demands placed on students systematically progress with students taking ever greater responsibility for their own learning. Education is developmentally appropriate.

Sport, unfortunately, has not always been developmentally appropriate, and Long Term Development— at its core—is about making sport developmentally appropriate. This means:

- Learning the right skills, and developing the right capabilities
- At the right time in the person’s development
- In the right way—consistent with their physical, cognitive, psychological, emotional and moral development

**Long Term Development 3.0 - A Roadmap for Volleyball in Canada** provides a broad set of guidelines and recommendations for the volleyball community to consider. In addition, the **Volleyball Development Matrix** provides detailed recommendations on what to teach, when to teach it, and what success can look like. Check out these documents for resources, guidelines and ideas on how to grow a healthy and vibrant volleyball community.



# Developing Physical Literacy through Stage-Appropriate Games

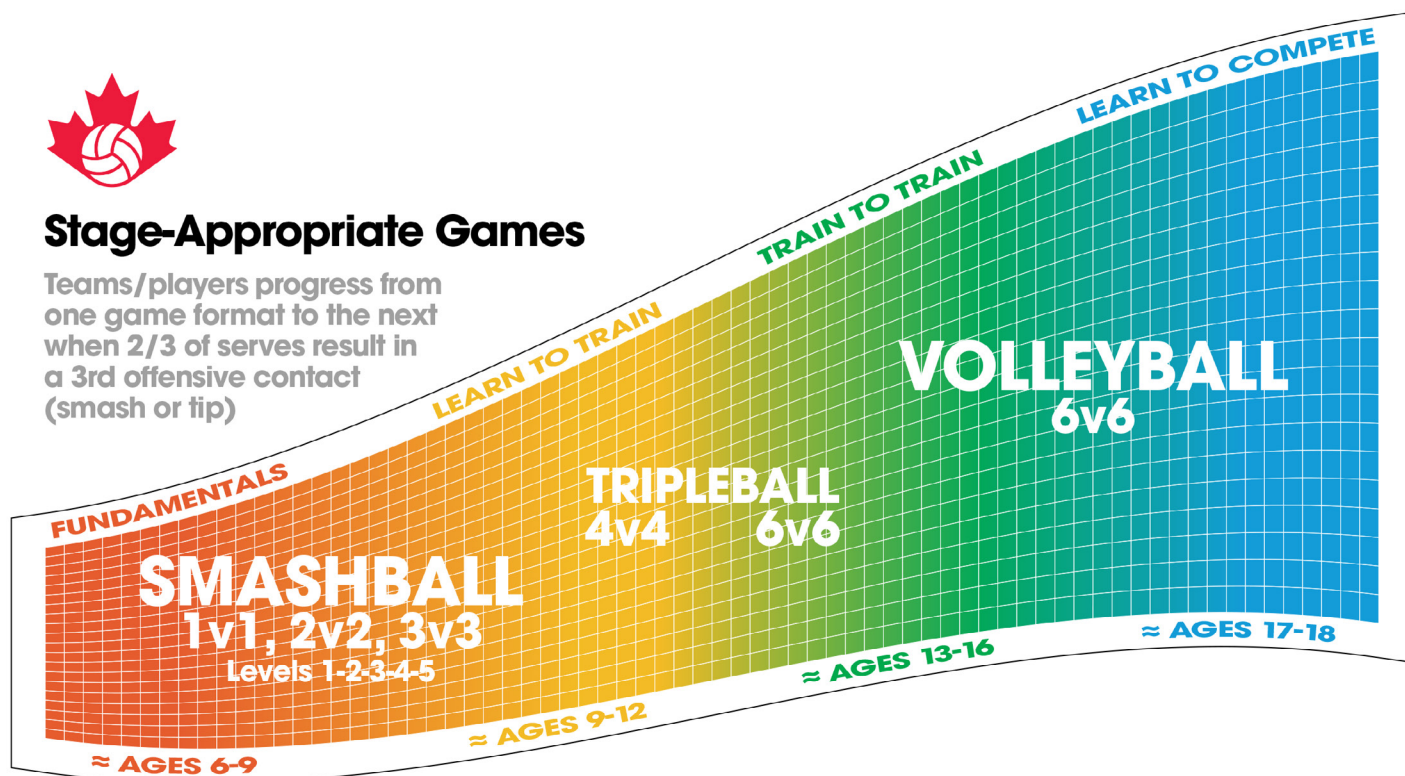
Participants can enter our sport at a developmentally appropriate level. The graphic below lists stage-appropriate games for the Fundamentals, Learn to Train, and Train to Train stages. The ages listed within each LTD stage are approximate.

Ideally, children's first exposure to volleyball are in the Fundamentals and Learn to Train stages, and the entry-point game they play is SMASHBALL. These games give kids the best chance to enjoy their first experience with volleyball and ultimately develop physical literacy.



## Stage-Appropriate Games

Teams/players progress from one game format to the next when 2/3 of serves result in a 3rd offensive contact (smash or tip)



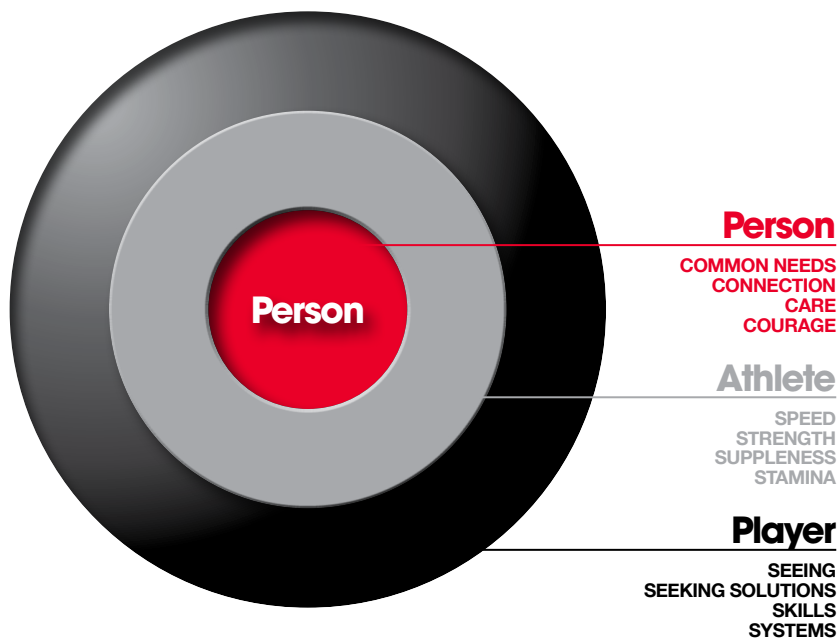
*“Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.”*

# Person-Centred Approach

Image description: Target shape with three rings. The centre of the ring represents the Person, the middle ring represents the Athlete, and the outer ring represents the Player.

Volleyball Canada uses a person-centred approach, which recognizes that basic human needs are the essential building blocks of development. Coaches can often overlook these foundational objectives and assume they are taken care of elsewhere – or feel that the role of the coach is limited to developing skills and systems. This mindset can be detrimental to the person, the athlete, and the player.

Volleyball Canada invites coaches to prioritize the COMMON NEEDS of the individual, their ability to CONNECT, to CARE, and to have COURAGE throughout the volleyball season and in their daily lives.



The PERSON pillar has 4 main dimensions: Common Needs, Connection, Care, and Courage.

Each dimension is divided into 2-4 elements.

The list of dimensions and elements are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a prioritized list that captures the essential building blocks for participant wellbeing and fulfillment.

For more details on the Person Pillar, visit the [Volleyball Development Matrix](#)



Image description: The Person Pillar has 4 Roman-type columns representing each of the 4 main dimensions

# Hiring and Training Coaches

Your SMASHBALL coaching staff will be your most valuable asset! Good coaches will draw participants back week after week and ensure the continued success of your program. They will build up the esteem of participants and encourage them to love activity, not just volleyball. Good coaches will also build strong connections with each of the participants, so that the SMASHBALL experience is one of fun, friendship and sport.

## THE HEAD COACH ROLE

As a Program Convener, your first priority is to identify a strong Head Coach. The Head Coach is responsible for guiding the technical aspects of the program and ensuring that each week flows smoothly. The Head Coach usually instructs, and often demonstrates, the core skills being delivered to the participants. Additionally, the Head Coach interacts with assistant coaches to support their efforts, and to assist in their development.

To ensure the success of your program and to adhere to the SMASHBALL standard of excellence, your Head Coach must be a **NCCP “Trained” Community Coach** and someone with volleyball experience.

Ensure that your Head Coach is fun, energetic, and a positive communicator in the gym. SMASHBALL is about having fun while learning skills — your Head Coach should reflect these values!

## THE ASSISTANT COACH ROLE

Assistant coaches work closely with small groups of participants, guiding them through drills, providing them with feedback, and coaching them through game play. They take direction from the Head Coach on what to do with the participants they have been assigned to and provide feedback to the Head Coach on the success of the drills, and any concerns with participants.

Determine the number of assistant coaches you will need for your program based on the number of courts you will be using. If you are using badminton courts for SMASHBALL, you will require one Assistant Coach per court. If you are using volleyball courts, split into two mini-courts, you will require two Assistant Coaches per full court. This means you have a ratio of 1 coach for each 6-8 participants.

## FINDING QUALITY PROGRAM STAFF

Perhaps you are well connected in the volleyball community — either involved with a club, or with volleyball in schools or colleges. If this is the case, it is likely you will find your program staff easily through these sources.

If not, there are several ways to find quality program staff. Start with any nearby [Provincial/Territorial Association \(PTA\) clubs](#). Another option is to connect with volleyball coaches at local high schools — they are often enthusiastic about getting their students involved in outside initiatives, particularly ones which will also further their volleyball skills!

You may also wish to speak with high-school guidance counsellors — they may be able to quickly connect you with students and resources within or outside the school system.

If you have a nearby college or university, find a contact in their athletics/recreation department. Start with their volleyball teams and coaches. Also, universities and colleges often run coaching classes, or may have a physical education or kinesiology degree programs. Your SMASHBALL program may provide an opportunity for these students to receive some practical training.

In any of these, or other situations you may think of, you may require an advertisement, or some basic text to send by email.



# Interviewing Potential Coaches

You have your candidates - now it is time to make selections, ensuring that your program staff will deliver the quality expected from SMASHBALL.

Before an interview, ensure that you have with you all program information — this should include registration forms, posters, and t-shirts, if you have them available. Additionally, have prepared the Coach's Contract, the Responsibilities of a SMASHBALL Coach Handout (both can be found in the [Smashball Toolkit](#)), and a selection of interview questions.

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

During the interview, you will want to ask probing questions to get a sense of the skill and attitude of each candidate. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- Where have you played and how long?
- What do you like about volleyball?
- What have you learned about yourself as you have played?
- What lessons have you learned from sports that you can apply to life in general?
- Do you have any coaching experience?
- Why do you think you would make a good coach?
- Think about your favourite coach. What is it that makes them a good coach?
- Will you be able to arrive early? Are you responsible? How will you get to the gym?
- Can you commit to attending the full program?
- What would you bring to this program?
- How are you encouraged? How would you be an encourager?
- How would you encourage a shy child to participate?
- How would you encourage a distracted child to participate?
- Do you have your parent's permission to apply for this job? (If applicable.)

## Other Information to Share During the Interview

During the interview, you will also need to tell the candidate more about the Smashball program. Remember that they need to make this decision too! Be prepared to provide and speak to the following:

- Schedule and location of the program;
- Philosophy of Smashball;
- Ages of kids participating
- Name and number of Program Convener/Head Coach;
- Payment - how much, and when paid; and
- The date/time/location of the coaches training session
- Safe Sport Training
- Background Checks

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR

During the interview, reflect on the suitability of your candidates by considering the following: A good candidate is...

- Someone who conveys confidence both verbally and non-verbally.
- Someone whose language is positive.
- Someone with a clear voice. If you have trouble hearing their interview answers, they will have trouble being heard in the gym. One of the most important components of Smashball is positive encouragement - this happens throughout the time in the gym ~ your coaches need to be heard!
- Someone with a love of the game of volleyball.
- Someone who works well under authority.
- Someone who exhibits leadership qualities.
- Someone who is empathetic
- Someone who is person-centred
- Someone who is responsible!

Have two copies of the contact ready to sign - one for them and one for you. If it goes well, and you know you are going to hire them - sign them up!

# Booking Coach Training



Volleyball Canada offers two different training opportunities for those working with kids in the Fundamentals and Learn to Train stages:

- 1 Community Coach Workshop
- 2 Elementary Volleyball eLearning

The **Community Coach Workshop** is designed for coaches working in the **club** environment and is a 3-hour National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) synchronous online course that provides:

- Interactive, Learning Facilitator lead exercises, video demonstrations, and quizzes to support learning and program delivery
- Lesson plans and assessments
- 5 Professional Development (PD) points for NCCP certified coaches
- The NCCP status of: “Trained” Community Volleyball Coach

We recommend scheduling the **Community Coach workshop** at least 2-3 weeks prior to the start of your SMASHBALL program. To find the dates of upcoming workshops, log into the VC Coaching Centre **HERE** and select WORKSHOPS or email [coaching@volleyball.ca](mailto:coaching@volleyball.ca) to see if a new workshop can be scheduled based on the needs of your coaches.



## Coaching Requirements

**Special note:** all coaches are now required to complete **Safe Sport Training** before interacting with youth. This critical training is 15 minutes, free, and educates coaches on how to identify and prevent maltreatment in sport. To begin click **HERE**.

In addition, clubs must ensure all coaches complete a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Screening.

# Smashball Trainer **The App**

The Community Coach workshop draws on the information provided within the free Smashball Trainer App. **This user-friendly app** provides expert lesson plans with lots of video to make running a practice or gym class easy and fun. Produced by Volleyball Canada, and based on the proven teaching methodology of Teaching Games for Understanding, kids will be kept engaged and active throughout a game or practice. Setup support and official rules for competitions are also provided.



## Smashball Trainer 4+

A tool for teaching Smashball

Denman Digital Inc.

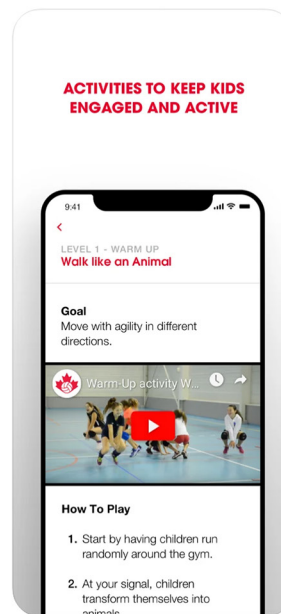
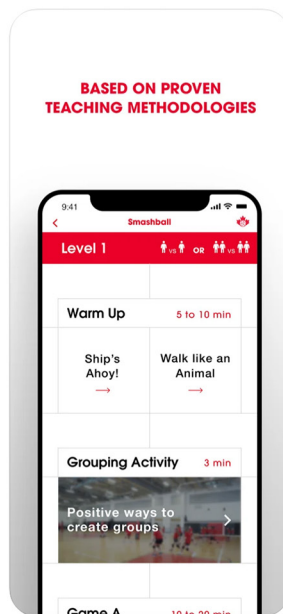
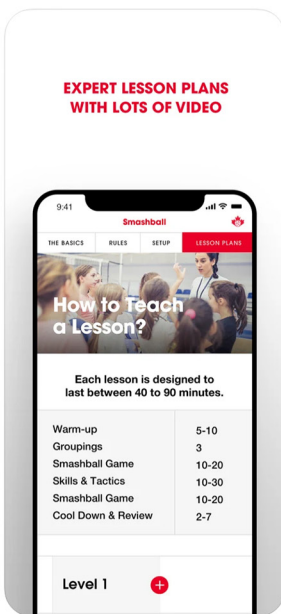
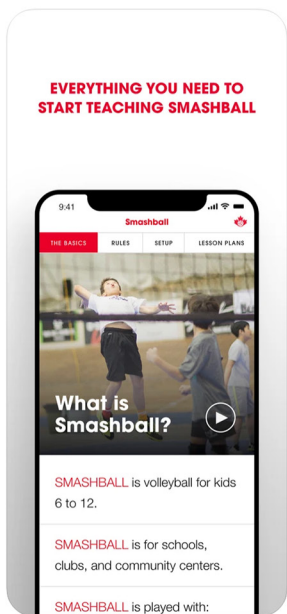
Designed for iPhone

★★★★★ 4.8 • 6 Ratings

Free

[View in Mac App Store ↗](#)

## iPhone Screenshots



# Reminding Coaches About the Training Session

At least two weeks ahead of the start of the program, you will want to communicate with the Head Coach and Assistant Coaches, to let them know how registration has progressed, and fill them in on any other news regarding the program.

This is also the time to remind them of the date and time for the coach workshop and the importance of attending. The Community Coach workshop is a fun, enjoyable experience — and, thus far, has proven not only to increase the coaching skills of the attendees, but their problem solving skills as well!

Include in your e-mail any logistical information regarding the time and time zone of the training, any special details about laptop requirements, and other details on how to prepare.

The schedule for the Community Coach workshop is as follows:

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Total Time: 3h 00 minutes</b>
<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Section Time: 28 minutes</b>
Introductions	3 minutes
Reflecting on Your Practice	15 minutes
LTD & Person-Centred Approach	10 minutes
<b>Playing</b>	<b>Section Time: 20 minutes</b>
How to Play Smashball	15 minutes
<b>Planning</b>	<b>Section Time: 1h22 minutes</b>
Elements of a Plan	10 minutes
Building Your Plan – Part A	25 minutes
BREAK	10 minutes
Building Your Plan – Part B	27 minutes
Adapting	10 minutes
<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Section Time: 40 minutes</b>
Coaching Skills	40 minutes
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Section Time: 5 minutes</b>
What Makes Smashball Great for Kids	5 minutes
Self-Reflection and Action Plan	3 minutes
Next Steps	2 minutes

Ensure you get verbal or e-mail responses, so that you know that everyone will be in attendance.

# Facilities and Equipment

## Finding and booking a suitable facility

Depending on your community, your connections and the time of year – finding and booking a facility can either be very simple or a significant challenge. Do not move ahead with any substantial program planning without a facility secured for your program!

The facility booking process will dictate the location of your program, dates and program start time. Be aware that permit processing time may vary from a week to several months.

### BEFORE BOOKING

- Determine the day of the week you prefer for your program
- Determine your start and end dates
- Determine your start and end times
- Decide on your preferred entry and exit time
- Estimate the number of participants your program can accommodate (this will be based on the # of courts in the gym)
- Determine the equipment you will need to use i.e. washrooms, change rooms, volleyball/badminton nets and standards, tables and chairs – or if you need an additional room for your parents on registration night.
- Have a credit card handy in case one is required for the processing fee

### CHOOSING A FACILITY

Many communities have a variety of facilities to choose from. Start with the best. A quality facility creates a more positive atmosphere for athletes and coaches, and most notably, raises the quality of the program in the eyes of parents and guardians.

If you are not sure where to check, or you know a facility but are unsure who to contact, continue to review the information on the following pages.

## SCHOOLS

Schools are the most common type of facility selected for SMASHBALL programs. They have the added benefit of an internal marketing opportunity, once you develop a good relationship with the school contacts. Gym facilities vary greatly from school to school – be sure to pick a school which has a quality environment and suitable/safe equipment.

Unless you have a strong contact within the school, it is likely that you will book a facility through the school board's facility booking department. Contact information for facility booking will be available on each school board's website

## COMMUNITY CENTRES

Some community centres are under the administration of the city, and some are operated by other non-profit or for-profit organizations – phone contacts are typically listed on their websites. Your local YMCA will have a quality facility, which can be used for the SMASHBALL program. Usually, working with the local Y will involve partnering with them for delivery of the program and including their name and logo on promotional material.

For-Profit Facilities can also be good options, and you may want to explore a local sponsorship of the program at the same time!

## COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

If you have a college or university in the area, they are often good options for a facility – provided they have time available. During the post-secondary academic year, many colleges' facilities are fully booked from early morning to very late at night. However, it is always worth asking, as the quality of facilities at these institutions is usually very good. In addition, during the period from April to September, there may be greater availability to choose from. If listed, call the school's athletic department and ask for whoever handles outside permits.

## CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Many larger, modern, churches and religious based organizations have gymnasiums that can be booked for your program. Youth leaders or youth pastors may be especially interested in supporting the SMASHBALL program. Be aware that in some communities, particularly multicultural communities, holding a program in a religious institution may have some participation barriers.

## FORMS

Once you have decided on a facility you wish to book, you will typically have to fill out a form to complete the booking. Many of these are available on their websites. Every school board, facility and recreation department has a unique form to fill out. As such, this section provides general tips to help ensure your application runs as smooth as possible.

## NON-PROFIT RATES

Many facilities offer discounted rates for non-profit / community programs. Each facility will have slightly different criteria within their application. We have had reports of some facilities even providing their gym for free, under certain government initiatives, so ask around!

Some facilities may allow you to claim non-profit rates through your affiliation with your provincial volleyball association.

## INSURANCE

Most facilities will also request an insurance certificate, usually naming their facility as an additional insured party.

Insurance certificates are typically emailed directly to the facility. To obtain an insurance certificate send the following information to your [Provincial Territorial Volleyball Association](#) with the subject "SMASHBALL – Insurance Certificate Request":

1	Program Requesting Insurance	Smashball
2	Name of organization running the program	
3	SMASHBALL Program Convener name	
4	Dates Requested	
5	Name of School	
6	Name of School Board	
7	Contact Person at the School Board	
8	Fax and/or email of the School Board	

Insurance certificates are typically processed within three (3) business days. Note however, that they may take longer at peak periods or during holiday times.

## ADDITIONAL FEES

Some facilities, will charge you fees on top of the actual facility rental fee. Be sure to ask for an outline of all applicable fees with each facility, so that you can ensure you are making the best comparisons. Also, confirm if your booking time gives you early access for set-up or if you need to consider set-up time within your booking as you may need to adjust your program start time accordingly.



# Asking the Right Questions

You are about to make a call to the facility. What do you say? What do you ask?

Write down any key questions you want to remind yourself to ask the facility. Here are some common questions to get you started:

- How many volleyball/badminton courts are there in the facility? Do they have grass courts?
- Are there any special rates for youth non-profit sport programs?
- Is there an additional processing fee?
- What happens when the school requests the gym for a school function, such as a dance, during the time frame that you have slotted for your SMASHBALL program? Which request has a priority? Is there an alternative gym that is available?
- Is there an additional processing fee for this change or is it waived?
- How much notice will you receive if you are bumped?
- Are there any parking restrictions or limitations associated with the facility?
- Where is the access door that will be open for use in the evening or weekend?
- Will the door remain open for the duration of the practice or will it be locked during the time that the program is running?
- Will there be a maintenance person in the building during your session?
- If not, will you need any additional keys (i.e. light and door keys)? Do you need a security code to set the alarm system when you leave the building?
- Is there a deposit for the keys?
- What is the name and number of the after-hours contact person?
- What is the email and person to whom the proof of insurance needs to be sent?
- The facility may have a number of gyms – be specific about with one you are booking (i.e. a single gym or a double gym).

# **Your Facility Permit**

The facility booking process is successful once you receive your facility permit. Your permit is the most important document you will carry with you. Check to make sure the dates listed are correct. Check to see if any of the dates you have requested are not available due to a previous function, school activities or holidays. Note these dates in your house league calendar.

It is important to have your permit with you at every session. This is proof you have the gym booked in case the maintenance staff doesn't have a copy or a teacher has inadvertently scheduled an activity without a permit. The permit will have an emergency contact phone number should anything go wrong at the school. The permit will also have your access code should you need one to get into the building.

If this is the case, make sure that you have a cell phone to contact the security company - first time codes very often need to be activated, and don't always work the first time!

Any extra duties will be listed on the permit. For example, you may be required to clean the floor after you are done. Also, talk to the maintenance staff about wet shoes and boots policy.

# Ordering Equipment

One month out, having evaluated your program registration and made any adjustments (if necessary) to your program size, you have the information needed to order any balls and equipment you may require.

Balls and equipment are one of the larger start-up costs required to run SMASHBALL. Be sure to do your homework to ensure that you get the right amounts of the right equipment.

## PURCHASING BALLS

The SMASHBALL program recommends using the Mikasa VS123W-SL balls for the delivery of the program. This ball lighter than a standard ball and weighs 7 ounces. It has an excellent lightweight micro fiber, is great for drills, and the softer touch is ideal for new players. Having the appropriate ball will be the difference between kids enjoying the game and being afraid of the ball due to the pain it causes their arms and hands.

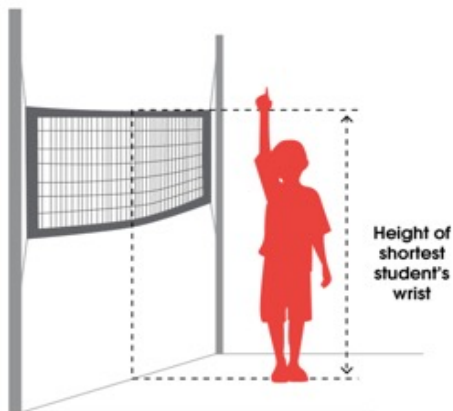


We recommend one ball, per court, as a game ball; and one ball per child.

[Order Here](#)

## NET HEIGHT

The net height for Smashball is not standardized, but changes depending the height of the players. You will need to adjust the net to be the **height of the shortest players' wrist**. This adjustment is critical because the Smashball game is based on ALL players having the ability to spike the ball at all levels of SMASHBALL.

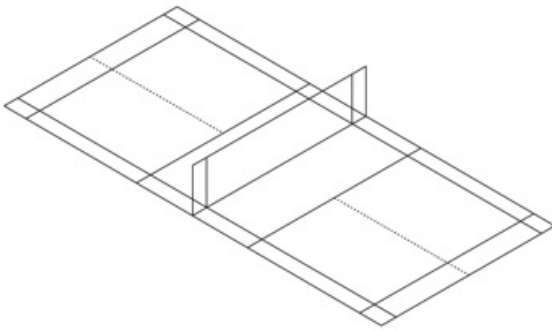


# Courts, Poles and Nets

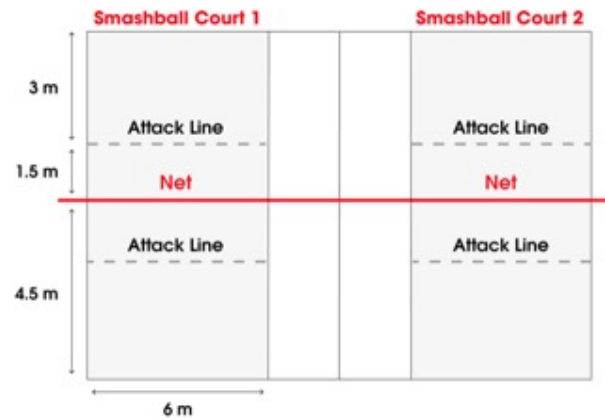
## COURT DIMENSIONS

The game is ideally played using a Doubles Badminton Court. However, a standard Volleyball Court divided in two using floor tape, can also be used.

**Badminton Court**



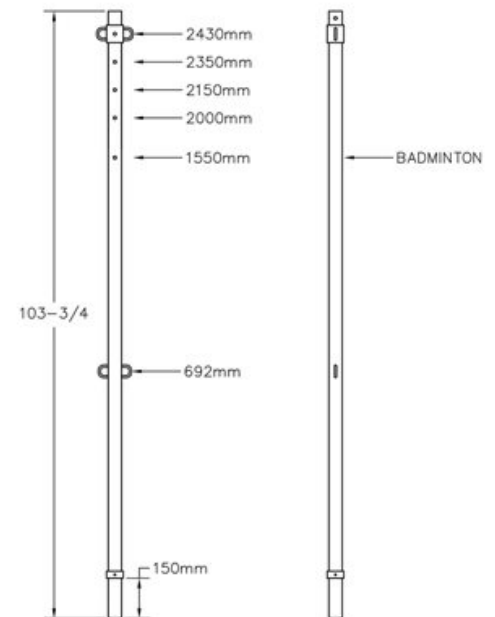
**Modified Volleyball Court**



## POLES AND NETS

In most cases, you will not require additional equipment to run the SMASHBALL program. However, depending upon the gym set-up and age categories you deliver, you may wish to acquire badminton/volleyball poles and net systems.

The combination badminton/volleyball poles allow for taller age categories such as 11/12 year olds to play with an appropriately low net height, and not so low that they can be struck in the face with the ball while blocking. These specific poles allow for incremental adjustments of the net height and the added benefit of multi-sport use.



[Order Here](#)

[Order Here](#)

## Ordering T-Shirts

At the two-week mark before the start of your program, you should have a good sense of your final numbers, such that you can complete your t-shirt order. T-shirts can be ordered from a variety of locations including the [VC Shop Store](#).

T-shirts should be colourful, age-appropriate shirts produced specially for the SMASHBALL program. Each season, we recommend the colour of the t-shirt change, so that the shirt becomes one of the most anticipated elements of the program.

To place your t-shirt order, send an e-mail to your local provider with the number of shirts you wish to obtain, per size. If you are still filling a few spaces, use your judgement based on registration so far, to estimate the remaining shirt sizes. Typically, participant shirts are available in sizes from Youth Small through to Adult XL.

Remember to separately indicate the number of leader t-shirts, and the sizes required. We recommend red leader shirts to make coaches and leaders stand out in the gym.

# Budgeting

The Smashball **Budget Tool** found in the [Smashball Toolkit](#) will help you determine participation numbers, financial sustainability, and give you a sense of expenditures.

Start by determining the variables relative to your program, as follows:

- **Facility Rental Price:** Enter your hourly facility rental price, not including one-time fees such as application fees.
- **Rental Hours:** How many hours are you renting the facility? Often, it is economically sound to rent enough time to run two programs back to back – this allows you to accommodate more participants.
- **Number of Sessions Offered:** Booking two hours or more allows you to offer two sessions (one hour per session), perhaps for split age groups, or a beginner and advanced session. Enter the number of sessions you will offer.
- **Number of Courts Available:** How many courts do you have access to in your facility? This will determine the maximum number of participants you can accommodate. For each Badminton/Smashball court, 6-8 participants is ideal.
- **Program Length:** The standard program length (in weeks or sessions) is 8. Make any adjustments here, if necessary.
- **Number of Paid Coaches:** We strongly recommend paying your coaches to increase commitment in delivering a high quality program. We recommend minimum wage for Assistant Coaches and a higher wage for a Lead Coach overseeing new coaches. There should be one coach per court for a ratio of 1:8, or for even higher quality, 1 coach per 6 participants.
- **Actual Number of Coaches/Leaders:** It is ideal to plan for one coach per court, and any other staff involved. It is important to include everyone involved in program delivery, so that your insurance is not invalidated!

## Your Financial Responsibilities

As a Program Convener, you are directly responsible for handling the following financial commitments, each of which is automatically calculated for your convenience:

- **Facility Rental:** This is the amount that the facility will cost over the duration of the program, minus any one-time fees.
- **Promotion/Office Supplies:** Based on our experience with programs of this nature, we have estimated the amount you can expect to spend on photocopying, name tags, and other administrative items.
- **Coach Wages and Membership:** We recommend paying the registration fees for coaches and leaders. If your budget and registration fees can cover it, we recommend deciding upon an hourly rate for paying your coaches.
- **Club/Program Convener Profit:** This is the amount of profit you can expect to realize from the program. You may choose to use this profit however you see fit. Many clubs use this as fundraising for the club; independent entrepreneurs typically re-invest a portion of the profit, while the remainder becomes part time income to compensate for their efforts.

# Additional Expenses

There are often additional expenses, which you may wish to reflect in the budget. The **Budget Tool** gives you space to record the nature of the expense, along with your budgeted amount. Your first time running SMASHBALL often involves a few additional expenses, which will not be necessary the second and third time you run the program. You will find your profit increases when you run the program in the future!

Here are some additional expenses which may, or may not, need to be accounted for:

- Facility Rental — Additional Fees: Any application or administrative fees, which are charged once.
- Equipment: Your first time through, you will want to budget for balls. We recommend 1 Mikasa volleyball, per court, as a game ball; and then one ball per child.
- T-Shirts/Awards/Prizing: You may wish to provide awards other than the Certificates provided in the [Smashball Toolkit](#). Programs have given prizes at the Final Tournament, such as balls signed by all the coaches, or knick-knacks such as water bottles, tattoos, pens, or promotional items from any local sponsors. If there is a cost, account for it here.
- Scholarships for families who are experiencing financial challenges

# Planning and Promotions

## Target market

The key to successfully promoting SMASHBALL is to reach two target groups - kids and parents.

What follows are suggested materials and ideas to assist in promoting the program, all revolving around the same theme - Everybody Plays. Kids will perceive SMASHBALL as a fun, cool program, while parents should learn that SMASHBALL is a safe, structured, convenient, and inexpensive way for their children to learn about fair play and participation.

With this messaging in mind, there are some relatively simple ways to reach your target audience(s).

A first step in promoting the program would be to start with your own community contacts. Brainstorm and make a list that may include local sports groups, church groups, school contacts, local news outlets, and community web sites/blogs, for example. Ensure the groups you include are a balanced representation (gender, ancestry, language groups, ethnicity, ability, etc.) of your community.

Get advice from people in your area who may have had success in the past in promoting youth sports programs.

Once you've created a plan of who you'd like to contact and have an idea of your general messaging, it's time to prepare and distribute your materials suitable for the target group (s).

## Preparing your Materials

Effectively promoting your SMASHBALL program will attract the youth of your community to this safe and affordable way to participate in volleyball. Smashball **Media Tools** are provided within the [Smashball Toolkit](#). These are promotional materials designed to make your job easier. The items are themed with the Volleyball Canada brand to ensure a consistent message across the country.

1. Social media posts: Featuring the VC SMASHBALL brand logo and suggested scripts and links to e-Flyers or registration pages. Social media should also be fun and engaging – you may also create your own posts around the basic Smashball theme, and where possible use images and video to support your message and are representative of your community and consider all aspects of identity.
2. e-Flyer: Professionally designed and customizable, the SMASHBALL e-flyer may be emailed to all your contacts to include key program information, such as location, dates/times, gender, age categories, fees, contact information and registration link (if you have one).
3. Posters for print: Professionally designed and customizable, the SMASHBALL posters may be printed and distributed in local schools, community centres, etc.
4. Registration Form or Links: Many clubs or organizations have their own websites and registration systems. If this is not available, Volleyball Canada and your local Provincial/Territorial Association may be able offer to set up registration and payment through the Volleyball Registration System. Contact your Provincial/Territorial Association's membership services staff for support.
5. Press Release: A media release allows you to get the word out, simply by filling in the specifics about your program. Depending on your local market, community newspapers and web sites may be receptive to receiving a press release and ideally running an article.
6. Messaging for local community radio stations/event web pages. Often local TV or radio stations will have free events listings for community associations. Be sure to keep the message accurate and concise.
7. Share options for funding support such as KidSport or Jumpstart and have a form to apply for a



# Getting the Message Out

Your final step in the initial promotion of SMASHBALL is getting your marketing materials in front of kids and parents in your community. Here is a list of potential avenues you might consider for promoting your program:

1. **Social Media:** do what you are comfortable with or enlist someone within your network who is experienced with the different platforms. There are options to “boost” posts or purchase ads on social media to widen your reach. You may wish to share messages in popular languages of your community (Cantonese, Punjabi) to encourage participation of all families.
2. **Provincial/Territorial Volleyball Association website postings:** Your posting on these websites will be effective with youth and parents who are already involved in volleyball, as well as those who are browsing the provincial site to find volleyball opportunities in their community. Province-wide materials also refer interested parties to a SMASHBALL webpage, so be sure that the information is up-to-date and accurate.
3. **Community or municipal websites:** Often local community websites list upcoming community events, activities and sports registrations. They are usually free of charge; however, if there is a fee, be sure to inquire as to the cost and duration of the posting to ensure it's within your budget.
4. **Community sports and recreation guides:** Many communities release a guide to all the sports and recreational programs running during the season. These guides are usually put out by community centres and may be free of charge if you are using their facilities. Again, it is important to inquire about the cost, if any, and the deadline for submissions.
5. **Posters in the community:** After printing and photocopying your posters, you may ask the local community centres, businesses and high traffic areas (such as post offices, malls, and banks) for permission to post on their bulletin boards or in their windows.
6. **Local schools:** Schools are an excellent place to recruit participants. However, before embarking into the schools, you must seek permission from the school or school-board. If you are distributing flyers in the school, make sure they are going to the proper grades, that you have copied the correct number, and separated them accordingly. This will help to ensure that the teachers will actually hand them out. Additionally, you may make announcements in local high schools if you are seeking volunteers (assistant coaches for example) since many high school students are required to do several hours of community service prior to graduation.
7. **Create a free intro to Smashball event at your club and invite as many local groups as possible.** Demonstrate Smashball in a fun, safe manner and perhaps even invite other local sports groups and community members.

# Evaluating Registration Numbers

It's one month before the start of your program - which means it is time to evaluate how your registration is proceeding.

There is certainly no science to evaluating registration progress. Many people, particularly in larger cities, tend to wait to the last minute to register for programs, as they have so many other options competing for their attention. Also, another common saying is "out of sight, out of mind" — if people don't register right away, and the flyer disappears under a stack of emails or papers - it may not happen.

The best way to evaluate is based on your knowledge of the community, and any history you have personally with registration for similar programs. If you have no such knowledge or experience, guess conservatively.

Here is a conservative strategy for evaluating your program registration: halfway through the registration period, you will want at minimum, two-thirds to four-fifths of the program spots filled. This leaves you time to market and fill the remaining spots, if required.

Let's say you have planned a program for 32 kids and have marketed to a substantial subsection of your community to generate this number. After one month of marketing, if you have more than 28 spots filled, you are on track to a full program, with some minimal supplemental marketing. If you have less, you may wish to revise your facility and staffing and plan for a smaller program. And, if you are blessed with more, you have time and flexibility to expand the program, if your facility permits.

Here is a chart to help you evaluate your progress:

Number of Smashball Courts/Timeslots You Have	Planned Program Size (Participants)	Scale Down	Market to Fill the Program	Scale Up / Waiting List
2	16	>16	8-15	16>
3	24	>24	17-23	24>
4	32	>32	25-31	32>
5	40	>40	33-39	40>
6	48	>48	41-47	48>

Remember to adjust these suggestions based on your experience within your specific community. People from one region register in differing patterns than in other communities!

# One Week Before

## Prepare and Send Participant Confirmations

Touch base with your participants approximately one week before the program to remind them of any key pieces of information, and build the anticipation of the start of the program! To do so, we have designed a template, which you will find in the **Smashball Toolkit**, called a Participant Confirmation.

The Participant Confirmation is a word document, which allows you to fill out the pertinent details before you save and send it to your contacts. You will likely want to send the confirmations via e-mail - so make sure you have the e-mail addresses handy.

Consider asking adults about carpool options as transportation is often a big barrier to participation.

Think of any other last-minute questions that parents might have. Where do we go at the facility? How early should I arrive the first night? These are all questions you will want to address in the confirmation and/or the accompanying e-mail.

Prepare yourself to receive last minute questions, changes, and potentially a couple dropouts. Better to know now, and then fill those spots, than find out later.

## Recruiting Registration Night Staff

Gearing up for your registration night - organization is the key!

You will want to have a few helpers on hand, depending upon the size of your program, in order to ensure that your first night goes smoothly. The Head Coach and Assistant Coaches should be free to interact with the youth, so that the transition into the first night happens smoothly and the flow is organized and professional.

You will want a minimum of one greeter for every 24 kids in your program, and at least one registrar for every 16 kids. So, for a program of 32 - have 2 greeters, 2 registrars; for 48, 2 greeters, and 3 registrars.

Often, greeters and registrars are friends, club members, or even family members who have been recruited to help out! Look for ways to involve family and friends into official roles as many want to be involved, but not sure how (greeter, photographer, sticker distributor... be creative and find out family skillsets). Each person should understand the basics of the program, so that they can answer most questions – any more difficult questions go to you, as the Program Convener.

Give plenty of time, two weeks is ideal, to confirm your roster of help for registration night. The time commitment is typically one hour.

# Game Time

## Prepare for Registration Night / First Session

Registration night is one week away - it's time to get yourself prepared. There are a few things that will help you be well organized, so that you are a smooth machine during the registration!

1. Purchase and set aside pens, pencils, markers, and name tags. Our favourite nametags are plain white printer labels in the 2" X 3" size.
2. Organize your registration forms in alphabetical order, by last name.
3. Print out a couple copies of the full registration list, to keep at the registration table.
4. Write out nametags (ask for pronouns - consider adding to nametags), using strong readable colours such as blue or green (avoid using red). On the nametag, write the first name only, organized in alphabetical order. Include several blank nametags in case of additions or errors. You may even wish to consider writing two name tags per participant - one for the front, one for the back, for the first week only - call them by name no matter which way they are facing!
5. Depending upon the size of your program, divide your registration forms and nametags into alphabetical groups (i.e. two groups would be A-L and M-Z). Prepare signs that show which of your registrars will be taking registrants from each group.
6. Check your t-shirt shipment against numbers and sizes ordered, and ensure they are sorted by size. Make sure you have all the coaches' shirts separated and easily accessible.
7. Print out several "This Way to the Gym" signs - there is a template for this in your resource package. The arrow can be changed to different directions - print a few of each if you don't know what is needed.
8. Print out several copies of the SMASHBALL schedule, to hand out to parents who may not have received a copy by e-mail, or to refer to at the parents meeting.
9. Assemble all the above materials in one or two easy - to-carry boxes or tubs, ready to go!

If you have a sizable program, you may wish to divide your materials in the boxes or tubs into registration materials by group, and then anything that goes into the gym, separately. Every bit of organization is one bit less to think about on registration day!

# Registration / Welcome / Session One

## Registration Checklist

Ready to head off for your first night? Here is a quick checklist to ensure that you have everything you may need, with you! There is some blank space at the end for anything you may wish to add to this list.

- Your gym permit! This serves as proof that you have rented the facility, if proof is required.
- Emergency contact numbers for your permit, in case you have difficulty accessing the facility.
- Contact list of your staff.
- Responsible Adult contact info - approved pickup/drop-off adults.
- Your registration boxes/bins (see Preparation in the previous section), which contain:
  - Registration forms, alphabetically organized
  - Name tags for participants and staff, alphabetically organized
  - Full copies of the registration list
  - Pens/pencils/markers
  - Participant and coaches' shirts, organized by size
  - Copies of the program schedule
- Directional signs
- Equipment: Balls, extenders (if needed)
- Stamps or stickers for hands at end of each practice!
- A Whole lot of Smashball spirit!

# Conducting a Smooth Registration Night

You have arrived at the facility, and are ready to make things happen! What now?

1. Start by making sure that the correct doors are accessible, and that the facility is available as permitted. Introduce yourself to the facility staff, and/or maintenance staff immediately — this is good PR! If you have any difficulties, report these to the staff on hand; or, in the case of no staff being available, use the emergency contacts you have brought with you.
2. As program staff arrive, assign them tasks which will require minimal input from you, such as setting up the nets in the gym, posting directional signs, and setting up the registration desk.
3. Check out the parent's meeting room, ensuring it is accessible and set up to your liking. Bring any materials you have prepared for this meeting into this room.
4. Ensure the registration table is set up correctly, with grouped registrations alphabetically, and the correct materials handy (name tags and t-shirts.)
5. Debrief your registration staff, so they are ready to greet and register the participants as they arrive. Ensure table staff know to check off the participants, provide them with the correct size t-shirt, and affix their nametags.
6. Debrief with your coaching staff, ensuring the head coach (if other than you) is ready to go, and the assistant coaches are prepared to start working with the participants. Coaches should be stationed inside the gym with t-shirts and nametags on. Designate an area for gym bags, water bottles, and spectators (many parents will want to watch the first week). Check to make sure the gym is in good order, no water on the floor, there is no school equipment left out (i.e. gymnastics equipment, hockey nets, gym mats, etc.), and that basketball nets have been raised, if need be. Coaches should have the lesson plan for the evening - a clipboard is handy for this purpose. Have the assistant coaches set up the nets before the arrival of participants, and have the balls readily available.
7. Now the magic begins! Watch with wonderment as parents and youth flow into the facility, are registered quickly and easily, and enter the gym wearing their new t-shirts, excited about the start of the new program because of your great planning and organizing!
8. As the program begins, gather the parents in the parent's meeting room.

Be sure to be on hand, near the registration table, to handle any questions, which your registration staff may be unable to answer.

# Parents Meeting

The SMASHBALL parent's meeting is a wonderful opportunity to get parents excited about the upcoming weeks - and to build positive PR for the program - all while explaining the SMASHBALL process and answering any questions parents may have. You will find the parent's meeting goes a long way in building a positive rapport with your biggest potential fan base!

Establishing a good relationship with parents is essential to the success of your program. Parents are responsible for signing up, paying for, and transporting your participants. Parents will be instrumental in encouraging their child to participate again.

Remember to be organized, friendly and available on registration night. This means successfully delegating all duties so that you are free to meet and greet, and letting them know that they will find the parent's meeting valuable.

## RUNNING THE PARENTS MEETING

Have parents gather in the classroom or other booked space during the first half hour of your program. This is your time to sell them on the SMASHBALL philosophy.

Start the meeting promptly some of the attendees may have things to do - and starting the meeting exactly as planned will increase your professionalism.

Here are some ideas to convey what SMASHBALL is all about:

- SMASHBALL has been designed to encourage kids to have a great time participating. One of our goals is to work alongside of you as parents to build a positive self-image in your kids. We know that self-image affects motivation, learning, performance, interpersonal relationships and satisfaction. We also know that self-image is learnt, it can be molded, it can change and it is vital to living a fulfilled life. At SMASHBALL we believe that we can participate in building a positive self-image.
- SMASHBALL coaches are trained to give positive feedback to the participants. Coaches will ensure that the SMASHBALL environment is a safe place to make the mistakes that come while learning a new skill. Our coaches have been taught to give positive feedback as well as the technical correction your child will need to progress. Our coaches have the necessary skill to break down any aspect of the game so that everyone will experience success almost immediately. Our program is comprehensive enough to ensure that every child will be challenged as well.
- The SMASHBALL program has been designed for maximum participation! Our games are 2v2 or 3V3 and are designed so that every player is expected to touch the ball in every rally. Skill development occurs quickly when there are so many touches. We teach them the concept that it takes teamwork to get the ball over the net and score. We strive to build the fundamentals of excellent volleyball strategy right from the beginning!
- SMASHBALL is proud of its' innovative and technically excellent curriculum! Our technical advisors have taken each skill and broken them down into two areas of skill development, starting with kids favourite skill first, the spike! Our coaches will reinforce these two concepts at each practice! By the end of the session, SMASHBALL participants will have a very clear picture of how to succeed in each skill.
- Lastly, SMASHBALL creates an environment where 'fair play' rules the day! Respecting the rules of the game; respecting our opponents; providing equal opportunities to participate; and maintaining dignity under all circumstance are all components of the fair play code. SMASHBALL participants facilitate fair play by teaching participants to encourage themselves and others, to look forward rather than backward, and to talk constructively, not destructively.

## FAQ

You can anticipate that there will be some questions at the meeting, when you invite parents to do so. Here are some of the most common questions, along with suggestions for how to answer them.

Q: My child is not particularly athletic. How will they do in this program?

A: One of the goals of the SMASHBALL program is to encourage lifelong participation for everyone. It is our mandate that this time in the gym is filled with fun, positive high energy!! Our program is designed so that everyone can succeed. Our goal is to instill many good technical skills in our participants so that if they chose volleyball as a lifelong activity, they will have the skill to perform well!

Q: My child is shy, and prone to stand on the side.

A: The SMASHBALL program is designed with an introduction game at the beginning to get the kids to run and interact. This warm-up game is meant to establish relationships between the participants and also between the coaches and kids. You can rely on our coaches to establish a friendly relationship with your child to ease them into the SMASHBALL program. We expect that your child will look forward to seeing their coach again next week. Pairing up of kids for drills will be done in a non-threatening way, and we switch partners frequently to facilitate friendships. We also teach the participants to encourage each other and leave correction to the coaches!

Q: If the skills and drills have been broken down for beginners, will my athletic child be challenged?

A: SMASHBALL is fully adaptable to all levels of play. The low player coach ratio ensures that your child's skill competence can be quickly assessed and adjusted accordingly. During the drills, players are encouraged to play either in cooperation or in competition. The one-on-one competition segments are as challenging as the pairs wish to make them. Even in our coaches training session, many of our athletes have found this segment to be quite a work out! We expect that all of our participants will be challenged at an appropriate level.

Q: 3 v 3, and catching after a bounce, isn't real volleyball.

A: We've designed this program to speed up the game and to take away as many stops in the play as possible. Volleyball Canada believes that the best possible way to learn the game is when the play is continuous and fast. Playing 'real' volleyball with a limited skill level is slower and there are fewer touches per participant. SMASHBALL encourages all players to touch the ball before the ball is sent over to the other side. This way, everyone takes responsibility for getting the ball over.

Q: My child has a developmental/physical/behavioural disability? Can they play?

A: Yes. Please privately share as much information as possible about your child's abilities to allow the coaches to prepare accordingly. For example, if your child has a lower limb physical disability, children can rotate into Sitting Volleyball games and drills.

Q: What is after SMASHBALL?

A: SMASHBALL helps youth transition into either a recreational or a competitive stream of volleyball, depending upon their skill, passion, and comfort level. Talented athletes will often wish to move to a club team in the region, or try out for their school team with much greater success!

Recreational athletes can continue to participate in fun developmental programs such as SMASHBALL, 4v4 Tripleball, or in house leagues in the area.



# Evaluating Registration Day

A valuable exercise is to have short evaluation after each session, to get a sense of what went well, what could be improved, and if anything needs to be addressed in upcoming weeks. On week one, you will also want to include discussing the whole registration/welcome process.

Ask your group the following questions:

- Did we look organized, and professional?
- Did everything go smoothly at the registration table? Are there any outstanding concerns?
- Were all participants quickly integrated into the group, and introduced to coaches?
- Did the parent's meeting go smoothly? Were any concerns or questions raised that the rest of the program staff should be aware of?
- Was there feedback from parents about the first night?
- Was there feedback from the youth about their introduction to the program?

# Making a Smooth Departure

They came, they laughed, they played and now they have gone home. Congratulations on your successful first night of the SMASHBALL program!

Here are a few things to check before you leave the facility:

- Ensure that all participants have been picked up and/or safely left the facility. You should be the last to leave.
- Bring any Injury Report Forms and check in on anyone who got injured
- Take the nets down, and put them away. Put away any tables and chairs you may have used. Check that the space you used for the parent's meeting is tidy. Ultimately - make sure you have left things the way you found them. Build a good relationship with the maintenance staff by being a good citizen!
- Take extra materials and nametags with you, rather than tossing them out - you might be able to use them for your next program!
- Count the balls, and make sure you have extenders and any other equipment packed and ready to go home.
- Follow any instructions from your permit regarding lights and doors, as you leave the building.

## Session One Follow Up

After you have made it through your first evening, you will want to take some time in the next one or two days to do some follow-up activities.

You will likely have a small list of things to do, change, or look into, coming out of the registration process. This may range from payments to t-shirt sizes, or recording information that someone will be away a particular week.

Equally important is following up with the parents of any participants who did not arrive the first evening. Check to see what happened - and that you'd love to see them week two. If there were logistical reasons that prevented a child from arriving, get as many details as you can so that you can avoid a re-occurrence in the future.

Address any dropouts, and fill spots with anyone on your waiting list, if applicable.

You may also wish to send a brief follow-up e-mail to all parents, celebrating the success of the first night, and letting them know you are looking forward to working with their children for the duration of the program.

Again, encourage parents to contact you with any feedback, concerns....praise!

## **During the Program**

### **Effectively Handle Late Registrations**

Things happen! And as a result, you may have participants who don't show up the first week, who need to register the second week; and new participants filling spots or coming off the waiting list.

It is acceptable for a participant to start the program on the second session. Starting the third session is possible, yet challenging, particularly for participants without volleyball experience. Screen participants on this basis if you are allowing new registrations at this juncture.

Arrive for sessions two and three well prepared to handle these late registrations ~ ensuring that you, or your designate, are easily accessible for the arrival of these participants. This means having a mini-version of the registration materials from week one: registration lists and forms, t-shirts, and nametags.

#### **ADJUSTING FEES**

SMASHBALL has no hard and fast rule on adjusting fees for late registrations. It is truly a judgment call, based on your situation and the timing.

Some people handle it this way: if you are doing the participant a favour by giving them a spot, charge the full program fee - after all, your costs will be the same. If they are filling a need for you, you may want to consider prorating the fee (i.e. an \$100 program, joined at session three, would be \$80.)

# Handling Missed Sessions and Attrition

We all know that life has a way of throwing curveballs; there is no doubt that things will happen unexpectedly in the lives of your participants during the SMASHBALL program. As a result, you will find some participants miss one or several sessions; some may drop out of the program completely.

Handling both missed sessions and attrition with professionalism and grace can be a subtle way to further the quality of the program in the minds of those who are affected.

## HANDLING MISSED SESSIONS

It is inevitable that participants will miss sessions now and then. Some parents will let you know in advance, particularly for vacations. Other times, you will just notice someone missing.

If you do not know the reason for a participant's absence, it is a really good idea to take the time to make a quick call. This is especially the case at the beginning, as there may be feedback or a situation, which is preventing the athlete from returning. In this instance, there may be something you can do, structurally, to rectify any uncomfortable situations.

Regardless of the reason, parents are usually pleased that you are attentive enough to even notice that their child was missing, and that you care enough to call. It makes for great customer service!

## HANDLING ATTRITION

Unfortunately, it happens that for a variety of reasons, participants will occasionally drop out of the SMASHBALL program. As sad as you may be to see them go, recognize that there are a variety of reasons why this may happen:

- The participant may not be enjoying the program. If this is the case, it may not have anything to do with SMASHBALL, but with other factors you do not have control over. If you DO have control over the factors that led to the participants' withdrawal, use the feedback to your advantage, if possible.
- The participant may be involved with other things, which they are more passionate about.
- The participant may have ongoing concerns such as health, transportation, or behavioural issues which are preventing them from attending.
- The parents may want to place the participant in another program for a variety of reasons.

The important thing to do is to get as much feedback as possible, and then let it go. Use the feedback to improve the program where possible, recognizing that, no program can be everything to everyone.

You may also need to process a partial refund, depending on the refund policy you have adopted. If this is the case, process the refund promptly so that it is off everyone's mind.

# Positively Handle Coaching Issues

Your coaching staff is the face of the SMASHBALL program to the athletes and their parents. It's important to ensure that your coaches remain positive ambassadors, and role models for the participants.

Unfortunately, sometimes coaches have bad days; or worse, may not have been the best selection. The question becomes — how can you handle coaching issues effectively in your program?

Coaching issues are easiest to handle if you are proactive. Here are some ideas on how to handle your coaching staff effectively.

## SET POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS

The SMASHBALL resources and training include information on the guidelines and conduct, which is expected of your coaching staff. Review this information with each coach, and let them know how important it is that they remain engaged, positive, and supportive in the gym.

Ask the coach if they have any questions about these guidelines, and how easily they believe they can keep themselves in this space. Another great question to ask is: what support might you need during the delivery of SMASHBALL to ensure you are a model coach? You may be surprised at what they come up with, which will help keep them on track.

Another great question to ask is - if I am concerned about your performance, how would you like me to bring this to your attention? Again, it will amaze you how coaches will respond - and empower you to bring things to their attention promptly.

If having a conversation like this is awkward for you, remind yourself that it is much more comfortable having conversations when things come up if you've set the guidelines ahead of time!

## PROACTIVELY GUIDE COACHES

Nip it in the bud! If you see a coach conducting him/herself in a way that is different from the established guidelines, address it immediately. Often, coaches won't realize how their actions impact others, and will appreciate the opportunity to change their behaviour.

Whenever bringing feedback to coaches, especially the first couple of times, remember to be respectful, constructive, and positive with your feedback. Assume that the coach wants to do a good job! For instance:

- “Amir, I noticed that you are watching the kids play, but not really interacting with them or giving them feedback. Your feedback and input is a very important part of the SMASHBALL program, and they will really appreciate it! I encourage you to engage more, and you'll be surprised how much more fun you have too.”
- “Sarah, you've been giving some great pointers, just be sure to give positive feedback as well.”

## What to Do When a Coach Just Doesn't Work Out

Unfortunately, there are times when a coach is just not working out. If you have brought things to the coach's attention at least twice, and are not seeing marked improvement, you may feel that you need to remove them from the program delivery team.

If this is the case, depending upon the severity of the issue, remember to remain constructive, supportive, and positive. They may still be a good coach in the future, if they are encouraged.

Be clear with your reasons, and firm in your resolve. Let them know that you appreciate the contributions they have made, and that you feel it is just not a fit. SMASHBALL is an intensive coaching environment, and some people may just not have the right personality traits at this moment in their lives to handle this responsibility with passion! Take time to listen to their response, whether it is acceptance, disappointment, or frustration. Hear them fully and clearly.

Let the participants know, the next week, in a simple way that the coach is unable to continue assisting in the program, and acknowledge the coach's contributions.

## Obtaining Feedback from Parents

Feedback is immensely valuable and provides you with a great opportunity to improve the program in ways you may not have thought. Feedback is also your doorway into areas of concern, particularly if any of your participants are having a tougher time than you may realize.

Here are a few simple ideas to keep the feedback loop going throughout the SMASHBALL program delivery:

- Keep the "door open." Use every opportunity possible to remind parents (and participants) that their feedback is welcome and appreciated.
- Send an e-mail to parents around week three or four, inviting feedback, comments, and ideas and any thoughts on how things are going for their child.
- Use any and every opportunity to speak with parents, when they are arriving, leaving, or just Watching the SMASHBALL session.

The more you encourage and invite feedback, the more safe and comfortable parents will feel in telling you not just what they like, but what they think could be improved. Find these nuggets of wisdom!

# Final Day

# Tournament and Celebrations

## Distribute Final Day/Tournament Invitations

The Final Day is coming! This exciting finale to the SMASHBALL program requires a bit of advance preparation to ensure it is the smash hit that keeps them coming back for more.

Among the resources available to you is an announcement for parents, for you to fill out with the details of the date, time, and location of the Celebration night. This template is in Word format, and allows you to fill in the blanks with the appropriate information.

Once you have prepared the announcement, you may choose to either print a sufficient number of copies to distribute, or email to parents.

Either way, you will wish to ensure that you distribute this announcement two weeks prior to the last day of the program. This gives parents enough notice, so that they can attend and support their children, and see what great skills they have learned!

## Prepare Certificates of Completion

Included in the [Smashball Toolkit](#) is a template for a certificate of completion. This professionally designed certificate will serve as both a symbol of each child's success, and a reminder of their commitment to SMASHBALL's core values of respect, safety, and fair play.

If you have a colour printer, or have access to one, you are all set. Print the certificates on a paper with a nice thickness, so that they have the professional look intended.

You may also consider having them printed at a print shop, such as Staples. This will help you ensure that the certificates look great!

It's the little things, the smaller touches, that parents notice, and that contribute to the quality of your program delivery. Make the effort here, and it will be noticed!

# Final Day - Preparations & Awards

In addition to sending out the announcement and preparing your award certificates, there are several items you will wish to attend to, to ensure your Final Day runs smoothly:

1. Decide what you will be providing for awards for each team in the tournament. This could be any small, inexpensive item (under \$5), which will still have use and meaning. ***Our favourite choice for an award is to provide each child with a ball by each of the coaches with a positive message for the athlete.*** This typically goes over VERY well with both parents and athletes alike ~ and has a nice wow factor. The ball encourages the child to continue in the sport, while the signatures and positive reinforcement creates a sense of belonging, importance, and self-confidence. Other possible awards can be sourced through your local PTA office; they may have a variety of products available with the SMASHBALL logo, for you to consider for your program. Remember that in SMASHBALL, everyone receives an award!
2. Decide who amongst your coaching team will be the “Master of Ceremonies” for the evening. You will want to choose someone with a booming voice, who can get the audience involved by cheering and applauding. Think “ringmaster” — this is the role the emcee takes on.
3. Print the Tournament/Celebration Award Sheets. There are two versions - one for coaches, and one for parents and friends. The Award Sheets are used during the Tournament to observe skills (for the coaches), and team spirit/support (for parents and friends) — so that each team can be recognized for things they do well. You will want enough Award Sheets for each of your coaches, and at least enough for one volunteer parent/friend per team.
4. Prepare marketing materials for your next delivery. With the excitement and fun of the Final Day, your best opportunity to get kids registered in the next program is to have your marketing materials ready to distribute! Bring registration forms, and/or flyers, and be prepared to sign-em-up!
5. Assemble your materials. Organize certificates alphabetically by name, and put them with the other Tournament materials in a box, ready to go for Celebration night. Include similar materials to registration night, such as nametags and directional signs. Also required for Celebration night is a noisemaker to signify the end of each timed game. This could be anything from a Zen chime or gong to a megaphone with a siren. Or run music during the play time of the Tournament and stop the music when timed games are complete.
6. Rehearse the Final Day/Tournament. Use the second to last day to rehearse the demonstration part of the Tournament, and also to introduce the participants to the tournament format. Both the emcee and the athletes will appreciate the rehearsal opportunity!
7. Have your coaching staff arrive early for set-up. Let the coaching team know that there are extra things to do before the SMASHBALL Celebration, and ask them to come 15-30 minutes earlier, especially if you are having them sign balls.
8. Prepare coaches' thank-you letters and payment (cheques or e-transfers). Included in the templates for you to customize and print is a letter to thank each coach for their participation and contributions. It encourages coaches to continue coaching — our country needs more coaches! Customize this letter, and prepare each coach's final payment, and place it into an envelope so that each is private.



## Checklist Before You Leave

Ready to head off for Celebration Night? Here is a quick checklist to ensure that you have everything you may need, with you! There is some blank space at the end for anything you may wish to add to this list.

- Award certificates, organized alphabetically.
- Team prizes. If distributing balls, ensure that you have markers for coaches to sign them!
- Name tags for participants, staff, coaches, and leaders, alphabetically organized
- Pens/Pencils/Markers
- Directional signs
- Emcee script
- Tournament Award Sheets
- Music, or noisemaker for signaling end of timed games
- Marketing materials for your next SMASHBALL delivery
- Coaches thank-you letters, and cheques, in private envelopes
- Once again - a Whole lot of Smashball spirit!

## Preparing the Facility

Once you have arrived at the facility for the final night, you will want to quickly get everything organized for a smooth and stress-free evening of fun and celebration. Your coaches will have arrived 15- 30 minutes early, and this will give you extra time to have everything prepared.

1. If at all possible, have your coaching team set up the nets early, so that this is complete and ready to go.
2. Arrange chairs and/or benches in the gym to provide a seating area for parents. Think safety! Ensure that the seating area, and any items that parents may bring, is a safe distance from the court space. Also consider where it will be best to do the demonstration portion of the evening, so that parents can clearly see their children show off their new skills.
3. Place awards and certificates in an accessible, but hidden or out of the way location.
4. Place the noisemaker and Award Sheets in a readily accessible location for the start of the tournament.
5. Get everyone's nametags on, and the athlete's nametags ready for their arrival.
6. Ensure the emcee for the evening has their script.
7. Have music available and ready.

Give the gym a festive once-over - making sure everything looks great. You're ready to go!

## Conducting the Final Day Tournament and Celebrations

The outline for the Final Day is found in the Smashball Toolkit. The overall agenda of the Final Day is as follows:

1. Introduction and Welcome
2. Warm-up — Involve guests as appropriate. Consider musical chairs for parents!
3. Team Cheer — Involve guests
4. Skills Showcase
5. Tournament Explanation and Volunteer Recruitment
6. Tournament Play
7. Awards and Celebration!

## **Awards Presentation / Photos**

Begin your awards presentation by announcing team awards. Each team should be recognized for one or two particular things they did well during the tournament, such as:

- Team with excellent movement (based on how they cross and move)
- Team with excellent connection (based on hand slapping and connecting after plays)
- Team with excellent communication (based on calling “mine, out, play”, etc.)
- Team with excellent cheers (based on their beginning and end of game cheers)
- Team that includes everyone (based on making sure that all 3 players make a contact with the ball when it’s on their side)

It is most efficient to announce all the team awards, and then indicate what each team member will receive when they are called up for their certificate.

Have your coaches support you while announcing each athlete’s name, and pass you the certificate and award. Pause for a moment for photos, if a parent wants to take one.

Following the presentation of all individual certificates and awards, assemble for a group photo so parents — and your designate — can capture the memories!

## **Distribute Next Session Info**

Quick! Get them while they’re hot! One of your best opportunities to sign up participants for the next session is right now while the glow and pride of the Tournament Day is hanging in the air. Make sure you have coaches at the exits with information sheets and/or registration forms, and/or mention that these are available during the closing remarks of your session.

Ensure you have pens ready so that parents can fill out the forms now — and perhaps their cheques too!

You may also wish to consider offering a discount (\$5?) for anyone who registers that night for the next session. Depending upon your budget, having a head start on your next session’s numbers may be worth the discount given.

## **Celebrate and Compensate Coaches**

Your coaching staff has worked hard — it’s time to celebrate their contributions. Do a quick debrief of the Final Day, and then thank your coaches for their efforts throughout the delivery of SMASHBALL. This calls for a cheer!

Distribute the thank you letters and cheques to your coaches, and let them know that you are available for questions and feedback — in either direction.

This is also a great time to recruit your coaches for your next delivery — while they are excited about the Celebration Day and the conclusion of the SMASHBALL program. Ask them to indicate their interest, or ask if you may contact them for next time.

Of course, if any coaches were unable to make the final session, call them personally to thank them, and mail the letter and cheque to them promptly.

# After Smashball

## Reflect and Evaluate your Smashball Program

Congratulations! You've successfully delivered SMASHBALL. Now, as you are basking in the glow of a completed project, you are in the best mindset to do one of the most important things you can possibly do: write down your thoughts on the program.

Reflect on the pre-planning and planning stages, all the way through to the Tournament Day, using this resource as a guide. What did you do well? What would you change for next time? What would you like more information about, in order to be more successful? Who didn't register? Was it 90% girls? What can you do to recruit more boys to play? Did the participants reflect the community (ethnicity, etc)?

Consider making a list broken into the timeline of the things you'd like to modify for your next delivery, and attach it to this resource as a reminder.

Another critical step in evaluating your program is to send out evaluation surveys. There are many providers that offer simple tools to collect information online including Formstack, and Survey Monkey. Key information that you will need from participants to move your program forward include program and coach evaluations. Feedback from the parents on items such as time, location, cost and the registration and communications experience are also very beneficial.

## Send Out Thank You Notes

Thank-you notes are a simple yet effective way to remind people of your program, and to show what a classy outfit you are! Taking a bit of time to send out thank-you notes, either printed or electronic, will be much appreciated by the recipients.

If printed, use the SMASHBALL letterhead to type up or handwrite a simple letter. For electronic thank-you notes, jazz up an e-mail with [www.hallmark.com](http://www.hallmark.com) and select from the e-cards available there!

Consider sending thank-you notes to:

- Participants. They'll be touched to know you are thinking of them, and it's great for their self-esteem.
- Parents. Acknowledge their participation in the program: driving kids back and forth, giving feedback, and celebrating at the Final Day. They'll appreciate the acknowledgement.
- Sponsors. If you had any local program sponsors, let them know how thankful you are! Send them a note with final thoughts, anecdotes, and write it in such a way that they could use it promotionally to show their involvement in the community.
- Custodial and school administrative staff
- Anyone else who helped you!

## **Send Feedback to Volleyball Canada and your Provincial / Territorial Association**

We appreciate the time and gusto it has taken for you to deliver the SMASHBALL program in your community. We hope that you have had as much fun delivering the program as we have putting it together for you to use!

Of course, the SMASHBALL team would love to hear from you what you have learned — this helps us develop new and improved resources, and allows us to answer questions with anecdotes from programs such as yours.

Additionally, it is valuable for Volleyball Canada and the Provincial/Territorial Associations to receive information about your programs, specifically participation numbers, broken down by age and gender.

We invite you to send your thoughts and information to us at [coaching@volleyball.ca](mailto:coaching@volleyball.ca).

We thank you for providing youth the opportunity for positive sport experiences and for running SMASHBALL in your community!

More questions or support?

Contact [coaching@volleyball.ca](mailto:coaching@volleyball.ca)



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Canada**