

Agree Your Team's Set Calls

Three flight examples, one fictional agreement and a blank card. Names and numbers are team conventions, not a universal code.

Agree the ball, not just its name

A useful set call tells this team which target and flight to expect. Ask the setter and hitter what the name means before using it. The sketches show flight along your own net, with left and right as your team faces the net. They are not to scale or a formation plan.

Timing below describes an agreement to practise, not a fixed number of seconds, a compulsory approach or an age requirement.

Example A: a higher ball toward the left pin

Location / flight: a higher arc from the setter toward an agreed left-side hitting window. The pin means the end of the net; agree a reachable target rather than aiming at the post.

Timing agreement: the hitter can watch the release and adjust the approach to the actual ball. Agree the cue together; do not chase an unplayable set.

Example B: a short, quicker middle ball

Location / flight: a shorter, lower path to an agreed middle target near the setter, compared with Example A.

Timing agreement: setter and hitter coordinate earlier preparation with a coach. Rehearse slowly and agree a controllable contact window before speeding up. The sketch does not prescribe one take-off instant.

Example C: a back set toward the right pin

Location / flight: the setter sends the ball behind their own position toward the agreed right-side hitting window.

Timing agreement: confirm the setter's release cue and the hitter's approach, then adjust to the pass. Here "back" describes the set behind the setter; it does not automatically mean a back-row attack.

Fictional completed card — not a dictionary

Team: Tuesday beginners. Call: CLOUD. This team uses CLOUD only for Example A.

Target: the left-side hitting window agreed with our setter. Flight: a higher arc with room to adjust.

Hitter cue: watch the release, then adjust the approach. Check the ball instead of guessing from the codeword.

If the planned ball is unavailable: call Help early and agree a high, playable alternative. Stop if the space is unsafe.

Confirmation: setter and hitter both explain the same target and practise a controlled example before using it in a game.

Blank team agreement card

Team / date / setter and hitter: _____

Our call (word, number or signal): _____

Target location / reachable hitting window: _____

Flight height / distance we mean: _____

Agreed preparation and release cue: _____

Fallback call / playable alternative: _____

Confirmed together / one thing to recheck: _____

Try the agreement before using it

Walk through the call without a ball first. Then use controlled feeds in a clear space, with the target agreed by both partners. A coach can adjust the task to the players; speed is optional.

Next: keep the completed card with your practice plan. Review it when the setter, hitter or call changes. For a broken rally, use the team's agreed backup rather than forcing the original play.