

VOLLEYBALL

# *Playbook: 6-2*



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## Volleyball Playbook: Running the 6-2

### Introduction

The 6-2 volleyball formation allows for maximum flexibility, because all six players can act as hitters and two of those same players can also act as setters. This ensures that there are always three hitters in the front row, strengthening the offense and letting players change positions as needed.

In the 6-2, the setter always comes up from the back row to set. The two setters line up opposite each other, as in the 4-2 formation. In fact, many people look at the 6-2 formation as just like the 4-2, except that the setter comes up from the back row to set instead of already being in the front row. The other positions also line up opposite each other so there is always one person in each position in the front and back rows.

The main benefit of the 6-2 formation is that the offense is much strengthened by the existence of three front row hitters. This creates a veritable wall that protects the other players and ensures that the ball will be returned to the opposing team.

There is a serious weakness to this formation as well, however. The 6-2 requires two players to be both excellent hitters and excellent setters, which is a highly specialized position. When not in the setting position, those setters must act as hitters, and good ones at that. Very few elite teams employ this formation because of its difficulty.

### Formation

The formation for the 6-2 is somewhat complicated. There are two players who act as setters. Those same two players, along with the other four teammates, also all act as hitters. This means that two of the players will be doing double-duty as they work to set and hit.

The setters will always come up from the back row to set in the front row. This formation is otherwise much like the 4-2 formation with the other positions opposite each other in the front and back rows.

### Basic 6-2 Formation

The letter abbreviations mean the following things:

S – setter

H – hitter

OTH – outside hitter

The following formations are basic starting positions for the game. There are variations provided so that a coach can choose where he/she wants to start each player. As a rule, the players with the same position play opposite each other.

In the diagrams that follow, the outside hitters are distinguished from the middle hitters so that there is no confusion about the positions players will maintain. With a 6-2 offense, it is very important that all the players know their positions and stick to them, even if it would be more comfortable to switch to another position.

An important thing to remember with the 6-2 formation is that the back row setter, who usually moves up to set the ball, cannot jump to block a ball or to attack. This does not mean that the person in that position can never attack or block; it simply means that the person playing the back row setting position, cannot jump when they have moved up to the front row.

Opposing team

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| OTH | S | H |
| H   | S |   |

Figure 1

OTH

This is a common starting position that has the setters in the middle and an outside hitter serving. From here, the back setter would move forward and the front setter would move right to become a “soft hitter.” The front right is usually considered to be the weakest hitting position, so the setter moves there to hit if necessary but also to back up the other setter.

Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| S   | H | OTH |
| OTH | H |     |

Figure 2

S

In this starting position, the back setter is also the server. This is the most common starting formation because most teams like to have the setter serve first. From here, the back setter will move forward to set the ball while the other setter will become a hitter. Remember, the back setter cannot jump to attack or block, even if they move forward and are not needed as a setter in the moment.

## Offensive Scenarios

Because the 6-2 formation has so many available hitters, there are many ways to switch things up. For any of these formations, a better hitter can be substituted for the second setter in the front row. This will leave the second setter in the back row and a more powerful hitter in the front. This is good to create a very strong defense while also taking the pressure off the setter.

When the strongest hitters get to the back row, they can be replaced by fast, specialized passers, since the back row hitters rarely hit anyway. Usually, the setter will set to one of the hitters in the front row, not the two hitters patrolling the back area. For this reason, a passer might serve better in that position than a strong hitter.

Opposing team

|     |          |   |
|-----|----------|---|
| OTH | S      H |   |
| H   |          | S |

Figure 3

OTH

From here, the outside hitter will move up into the middle back position while the front outside hitter crosses the court to front right position. The front server will move left into the front left position and the hitters will keep their positions. The final formation will look like this:

Opposing team

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| S | H   | OTH |
| H | OTH | S   |

Figure 4

The next offensive scenario starts with the front row all in the middle position with one of the hitters serving. From here, everyone will spread out to their respective positions, covering all areas of the court.

Opposing team

|  |   |     |   |
|--|---|-----|---|
|  | H | OTH | S |
|  | S | OTH |   |

Figure 5

H

From here, the back outside hitter will move left to the back left position while the back setter will move up to the front right position to get ready to set. The server, in this case the hitter, will move to the middle back position to cover it. The front server will cross left to cover the front left position and will be considered the “weak hitter.” Finally, the front outside hitter will move right to protect the setter. The final formation will look like this:

Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| S   | H | OTH |
| OTH | H | S   |

Figure 6

## Defensive Scenarios

For defense, the 6-2 formation works well with a positional defense, so every player has a zone to block and does not move into anyone else’s zone. This will minimize confusion and keep everyone responsible. There will always be one player, usually the middle back player, who is responsible for the entire back court. They must be prepared to run to meet any long shots that come their way.

In this first defense, everyone is pushed back and will run forward as necessary to block the tips and other short hits. The stronger of the setters should be behind the weaker of the two so that they have an optimum setting position.

## Opposing team

|              |                       |   |
|--------------|-----------------------|---|
|              |                       |   |
| OTH<br><br>H | S<br><br>S<br><br>OTH | H |

Figure 7

Figure 8 shows another defensive scenario, again with the team clustered in the back court. The main setter is on the left, assisted by a hitter. Together, these two will block shots to the left court, leaving the other setter to handle the right court.

## Opposing team

|                   |              |   |
|-------------------|--------------|---|
|                   |              |   |
| H<br>S<br><br>OTH | OTH<br><br>H | S |

Figure 8

The next defensive scenario starts out with the team split in the front and back courts. The setters are on the right side with one of the hitters and the outside hitters are defending the left court. The left front outside hitter will move in, while the front setter and hitter move together to block a ball coming straight to them. The outside back players will move up while the back middle hitter moves back to defend the entire back court.

Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| OTH |   | S H |
| OTH | H | S   |

Figure 9

The final formation will look like this:

Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| OTH |   | S H |
| OTH | H | S   |

Figure 10

The following defensive scenario starts with all the players basically symmetrical. Everyone is opposite their respective partner and prepared to move to get the ball.

Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| H   | S | OTH |
| OTH | S | H   |

Figure 11

From this spot, the front hitter and front outside hitter move back and in, leaving the setter as the front-most player. The back hitter moves to the back middle position while the back setter moves right and forward. Finally, the back outside hitter moves up and farther left, helping the front hitter to defend the left side. The final formation will look like this:

Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| H   | S | OTH |
| OTH | H | S   |

Figure 12

## 6-2 Plays

The following plays include diagrams for serving, receiving, and attacking/returning. These plays can be combined, changed, or modified as needed to ensure that a team plays to the best of its individual abilities. There is variety to choose from with different players in serving positions, but one thing remains constant. The setter always comes up from the back row and does not hit or block while serving as the setter.

### Play 1

In this very common serve, the back setter starts as the server while the other positions play opposite each other. The server will then move up to the front row, leaving the back outside hitter and back hitter as the only players in the back row.

## Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| S   | H | OTH |
| OTH | H |     |

Figure 13—serve

S

To prepare for defense, the setter moves forward and the other players move back a bit. The back outside hitter and back hitter serve as the passers for this play while the outside hitters both play as secondary passers when they are not involved in blocking the ball.

## Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
|     | S |     |
|     | H |     |
| S   | H | OTH |
| OTH |   |     |

Figure 14—receive

When returning the ball, everyone moves forward except for one outside hitter, who is left to control the back court. The setter will usually choose to set to one of the front row attackers, but he or she can also use the back outside hitter to attack if desired.

## Opposing team

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| S | H S | OTH |
|   | H   |     |
|   | OTH |     |

Figure 15—return/attack

**Play 2**

Play 2 starts off with the back outside hitter serving. This frees up the back setter to hold the back right position, from which they will move up to the front to serve as the true setter after the ball is served. The outside hitter currently serving will move up into the back middle position.

Opposing team

|     |          |   |
|-----|----------|---|
| OTH | S      H |   |
| H   |          | S |

Figure 16—serve

OTH

From the serving position, the two outside hitters join together in the back right position while the back setter moves left to back left court. The front setter moves more center to set the ball as it is received and everyone else essentially backs up to prepare for their returns.

Opposing team

|   |   |     |
|---|---|-----|
|   | S |     |
|   | H |     |
| S |   | OTH |
| H |   | OTH |

Figure 17—receive

The only players to move for the return are the left setter, the front outside hitter, and the front hitter. These players all move forward to allow the setter to choose between three hitters in the front row. It also leaves two players in the back row to control the entire back court and to serve as hitters if the setter chooses to set to them.

Opposing team

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| S | H S | OTH |
| H |     | OTH |

Figure 18–return/attack

**Play 3**

This play starts with the front row clustered together. Just after the serve they disperse to their different areas, keeping the whole court covered. In this play, one of the hitters starts as the server. As in all the 6-2 plays, the setter starts in the back row and will quickly move to the front right position to prepare to receive the opposing team’s return.

Opposing team

|  |            |  |
|--|------------|--|
|  | H OTH<br>S |  |
|  | S<br>OTH   |  |

Figure 19–serve

H

As the players prepare to receive the ball, the front positions will move back and the setter will move forward into position.

Opposing team

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
|     | S |     |
| S   | H | OTH |
| OTH | H |     |

Figure 20–receive

From here, the front row, which just moved back, moves up again to serve as hitters for the setter. Again, there is the formation of having four players, three hitters and the setter, in the front row and two players in the back row.

Opposing team

|     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
| S   | H S | OTH |
| OTH | H   |     |

Figure 21–return/attack

## Conclusion

The 6-2 formation, with all six players working as hitters and two playing also as setters, provides the ultimate flexibility in positioning and rotating. It is an extremely difficult formation to maintain because of the requirement it makes on the setters to be both talented hitters and talented setters. The setting position, a very specialized position, is almost never combined with the type of hitting talent needed for the 6-2. In fact, very few professional or national teams use the 6-2 in competition because of its difficult nature.

When it comes to offense, the players should always be opposite their respective partner. The setter in the back will always come forward to set, while the other setter will serve as a hitter for that play. The back setter will never jump to block or attack the ball. Usually, when the back setter moves forward there will be four players in the front court and only two players in the back court who will need to defend the entire area.

On defense, 6-2 players usually start in the back court and move forward as necessary. Players help each other out by joining together for a block, as demonstrated in the diagrams above. The defensive scenarios can be

combined, modified, or tweaked as coaches and players see fit, but they are a good basis for defensive strategy with this formation.

Finally, the plays included in this guide walk a team and coaches through a typical game and provide solutions for each situation, including serving, receiving, and returning. These plays present the most logical movement of players throughout the game but they can be changed as the team desires to make things most effective for that particular team.