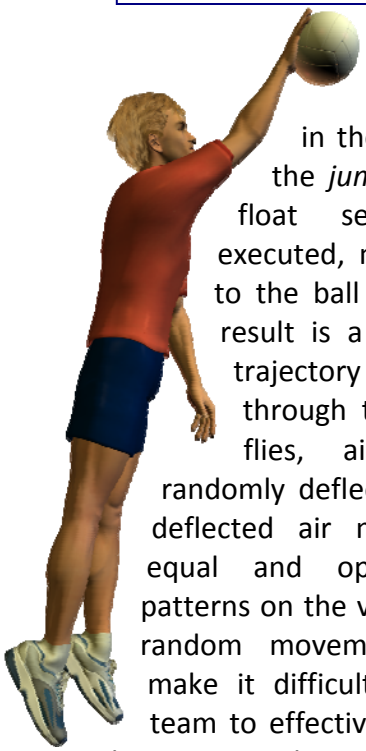
The Secret to the Jump Float Serve's Success



The latest evolution in the volleyball serve is the *jump float.* When any float serve is properly executed, no spin is imparted to the ball by the server. The result is a relatively unstable trajectory as the ball floats through the air. As the ball flies, air molecules are randomly deflected. The randomly deflected air molecules generate equal and opposite movement patterns on the volleyball. It is these random movement patterns that make it difficult for the opposing team to effectively pass the ball to their setter. This is the goal for most serves: make the ball difficult to pass.

Any serve, including a float serve, becomes more difficult to pass as the velocity of the ball increases. Serves also become more difficult to pass as the time between server contact and receiver contact decreases. With a *standing* float serve there is a direct conflict when trying to optimize these variables. The more velocity imparted during a float serve, the further the ball will travel. This means the server must stand further back from the service line to prevent the ball from travelling past the end line on the opponent's side of the court. Standing further from the service line means that the ball's time in the air is not being minimized. The *jump* float serve permits greater optimization of both of these variables.

The higher the ball is contacted during a serve, the more velocity the ball can posses and still land within the length of the opposing team's court. For *standing* float serves, the ball must be given an upward trajectory so that ball will clear the height of the net. If the ball is contacted high enough with a *jump* float serve, then a downward trajectory may be imparted to the ball with a successful result. From a qualitative standpoint, a downward trajectory may also be inherently more difficult for a receiver to handle.

When properly executed, a *jump* float serve will also reduce the time a receiver has to track the ball in the air. When executing a *jump* float, the server can make contact with the volleyball inside of the court. This reduces the distance the ball will travel in reaching the opposing receiver. This shorter distance coupled with the increased velocity, explained in the previous paragraph, means less time for the receiver.

For these reasons, the *jump* float serve has become a formidable weapon in all levels of competitive volleyball.

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