Kessel's Volleyball Excuse List

- John Kessel, USA Volleyball Director of Membership Development and Disabled Programs

This list is intended to simplify the problem of selecting the proper alibi to suit the occasion. While some athletes are so bad that they need no excuse, most will at some time or another be in need of an explanation for why their spike at match point hit the back wall 42 bricks high. The start of this checklist was first shared with me by Sharon Peterson of NAIA powerhouse Hawaii-Hilo, to whom I give my thanks.

"Excuses are like belly-buttons, everyone has one," is a saying that we often rely on in volleyball. This list will go a long ways to taking the pressure off your players. Blank spaces are provided in certain instances, for those who have some element of creativity. I have found some players rely on certain alibis so often that it is far easier to just number the key excuses, and then, when some performance necessitates an excuse, your player can simply yell, or state "Four!" or "Sixteen." This saves us all time. It also brings to mind that the most important number in volleyball seems to be the number "2." You'll see it used often in this list, and in the gym in other ways, as in, "I'm too tired" or "It was too far..."

___ Ate too much
___ Was weak from lack of nourishment
___ Not enough time to warm up
___ Warmed up too long
___ Not enough practice time
___ Too much practice
___ Need my yogurt
___ Too much sleep
___ Couldn't sleep last night
___ Too much weightlifting
___ Not enough weightlifting
___ We run too much
___ Am a slow learner
___ They were bad sports
___ Am saving myself for the _____
___ Coach doesn't like us
___ Coach doesn't like me
___ Worried about my finances
___ Boy/girlfriend was mean last night
___ Girl/boyfriend too friendly last night
___ Didn't think
___ Thought too much
___ Am not allowed to play my game
___ Referees called too tight
___ Referees called too loose
___ Lousy referees
___ Gym was too bright
___ Gym was too dark
___ Too warm
___ Too cold
___ Didn't like the balls they used
___ Shin Splints
___ Blisters
___ New shoes
___ Shoes are too old
___ Can't play with so and so
___ Cramp in my leg
___ Cramp in _____
___ Had a killer test today
___ Have a killer test tomorrow
___ Can't play during holidays
___ It was something I ate
___ My bra/jock strap was too loose
___ My jockstrap/bra was too tight
___ Felt faint
___ Got a bad sideache
___ Too many games
___ Not enough games
___ Got lost
___ Coach left me in too long
___ Coach took me out too soon
___ The floor was too slippery
___ The floor didn't slide at all
___ The light was right in my face when I set
___ The light was right in my face when I hit
___ Too tough of competition
___ Not enough competition
___ Cheap trophies
___ Too many depending on my performance
___ Nobody cared about my performance
___ Am not really liking organized athletics
___ Really only play for the exercise
___ Just didn't feel like playing
___ Felt great, and that is a bad sign
___ Couldn't get excited about the game
___ Was overanxious
___ My coach is a _____
___ Can't stand too much success
___ Not enough space around the court
___ Can't play after bus rides
___ The balls were too hard
___ The balls were too soft
___ Can't play in a different time zone
___ We couldn't serve a ball
___ Can't play after a plane ride
___ The sets were all too far off the net
___ The sets were all too close to the net
___ All the sets were off target
___ They served too tough
___ They didn't make a mistake
___ We got to the gym too soon
___ We got to the gym too late
___ Didn't have on my lucky underwear
___ Nobody could pass
___ My coach reminds me of my mother/father, and I hate them both
___ My coach is a foreigner who doesn't understand Americans

Fill in the blank back page with any other excuse your coach should know about….Good luck!

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