

# The solution to making good setters great?

*Castilleja found the solution on the basketball court!*

**Athens AL --** It was right there all along.

Castilleja, an all-girls independent school located in Palo Alto, Calif., already had a Noah Select System for its basketball team. Noah helped the Gators post an impressive 20-10 record last season.

But basketball wasn't the only sport that benefitted from Noah. The volleyball team found a way to use Noah to improve its setting.

"A setter is like a point guard or quarterback. She touches the ball on almost every play," said Castilleja volleyball Coach Tracie Meskell, whose team finished 26-9 and lost in the CCS Championships semifinals. "In my experience, you can get away with not having a good setter when you have amazing hitters. But you are 100 times better when you do have a good setter. You can win games with just your setting."

It was the team's setter, Hannah Hsieh, who first inquired about Noah and how it might help her setting. And not coincidentally, Hsieh's father knew Alan Marty, who is a founder and board member of Noah.

Marty, along with varsity basketball coach and athletic director Jez McIntosh, helped Meskell position Noah so the volleyball team could practice with it.

"Basically, it's set up perpendicular to the net," Meskell said. "It's like the setter is on the free throw line setting the ball toward the hoop. We just replaced the foul shooter with a setter."

Meskell said she still needs to fine tune the location, but so far the results have been very encouraging.

"When I'm working one-on-one or privately with a setter, Noah is really a dream," said Meskell, who since 2003 has led Castilleja to one state championship and two runners-up finishes. "What I've discovered is I don't have to watch the ball after the setter sets it because Noah will tell me if it's at the right angle. It's just one less thing I need to watch. I can focus more on the setter herself, how she completes the set, what her feet are doing and



Watch Castilleja Girl's Volleyball on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com>. Search "Castilleja Girl's Volleyball."

her motion afterward. Noah allows me to give better feedback."

Unlike using Noah for basketball, Meskell has determined that the height of the setter does not affect the angle of the set. Also, she has discerned that types of hits require different angle of sets. For example, she altered her setters to hit 58 degrees instead of 55 degrees for any outsider hits. She said 55 degrees was too fast in general.

Also, Meskell said that she often has two setters who are usually very different. She discovered that with Noah, her setters became more consistent, which helped her hitters hit more consistently.

"Timing is the hardest part of hitting," Meskell said. "If you can get your sets to be consistent, then your timing will be better."

Castilleja isn't the only school in Palo Alto that is using Noah for volleyball. The Stanford University volleyball program also applies Noah to its practices. Here's what Stanford women's volleyball Coach John Dunning said about Noah.

"As soon as I saw Noah I knew it would help our team," said Dunning, who with four national championships is tied with the most in NCAA history. He also has coached in nine Division I title matches, which also is a record. "If

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you want your setters to be accurate, Noah feedback works. With Noah, our setters are striving for 3-inch accuracy in their set trajectory, which is ridiculously accurate, but maybe in a few years that's how good setting will be."

Meskell agreed and said she plans to incorporate Noah more next season in her practices.

"It's so easy to set up and the benefits are so great," Meskell said. "Noah is such a great tool. It's the only basketball machine I know that can be modified to teach volleyball."

Another aspect of Noah that Meskell and her team truly love is the system's video component. She added that she plans to use video more next season.

"Our players seem to enjoy seeing what they are doing," Meskell said. "It helps me because they don't have to take my word for it, they can see what I'm saying for themselves. It's huge to have that instantaneous feedback."

Meskell's plan to use Noah more will help Hannah Hsieh and her setting. The sophomore will have two more seasons with Noah and it will be interesting to chart her progress with the system.

"I did tell Alan that I thought Noah is great for the sport," Meskell said. "It can be used for any level of play."