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Master Coach Education

# Natural basic movements and gymnastic exercises with a partner in different parts of handball training

Seminar paper

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## Abstract

Exercising with a partner in Team handball is often used as means for strength development. It is greatly linked to the action in a handball game, especially in defense, such as stopping and pushing of attacking players, hidden body contacts in the struggle for space with the pivot etc. Exercising with a partner can be performed in different ways. In this seminar paper we try to demonstrate a variety of useful exercises with a partner with elements of natural basic movements and gymnastic exercises in various parts of handball training.

**Key words:** Team handball, natural basic movements, gymnastic exercises, exercising with a partner

## Introduction

The modern handball game is nowadays much more demanding for the players and coaches than in the past (Šibila, 2004). The range of technical and tactical skills which one has to adapt or develop continuously for achieving top results is getting wider each year. In parallel with the fast development of the handball game, training contents and methods in the coaching field, through which the players master different technical and tactical skills in a more improved way, are also developing and improving.

For effective implementation of different activities throughout the handball game the players must have optimally developed physical abilities. Also in this field a great progress can be noted in the last past years. Big contributions were the results of numerous studies on load and effort of handball players. Contents and planning of fitness build-up of handball players at trainings are gradually approaching the conditions the players face during the game. With this the fitness trainings could become more rational and much more effective.

Strength is one of the most important motor skills for handball players. Coaches are aware of that so they pay a lot of attention to the development of the aforesaid skill. In the training process there are various methods and means for strength development at our disposal which can lead to progress in the desired appearance of strength at proper amount and intensity (Luzar, 2010).

An appropriate tool for strength development in handball is often exercising with a partner. It is greatly linked to contents of a handball game, especially in defense, such as stopping and pushing of attacking players, hidden body contacts in the struggle for space with the pivot etc.

In this seminar paper we want to give examples of natural basic movements and gymnastic exercises with a partner that can be used in various parts of handball training. In addition to elements for building strength with a partner suitable especially for the main part of the exercise unit (pushing, pulling, resisting, creeping, crawling and strengthening gymnastic exercises), we will also present contents appropriate for initial and final parts of handball trainings.

## **NATURAL BASIC MOVEMENTS**

Natural basic movements are elementary movements which humans developed through their phylogenetic and are the alphabet of movements. Basic movements that occur in the first phases of the development of humans are linked to food gathering, hunting and fighting natural enemies. For these activities it's typical that they consist of basic movement structures, like running, jumping, climbing, throwing etc. (Pistotnik, 2001).

Natural basic movements are divided into two basic groups of movements. These two categories are i) locomotions, comprising of body movements in space and ii) manipulations, comprising of basic movement activities with individual body segments. Other movements consisting of locomotions and manipulations are called iii) basic combined movements.

In sport exercise basic locomotions like crawling and creeping, walking and running, climbing, jumping (long jump, high jump, and depth jump) and falling are used as the base of movement activities. Manipulations are a sort of upgrade of locomotions as they are usually linked to them. They are mainly limited to handling of various objects or carrying out activities with different body segments. In sport they mostly occur as throwing and catching of objects, punches, blocking of punches and grips. In everyday life combined movements are most common. More common forms of basic combined movements, which are important for living and are a part of natural basic movements are pushing and pulling as well as lifting and carrying. All listed movements are also very useful in sports practice, since through their use different goals in the motive education of trainees can be achieved (Pistotnik, Pintar and Pori, 2002).

The basis for development of basic appearances of strength in young team handball players is definitively natural basic movement where the load on trainees needs to be properly increased (above their everyday load). Basically one cannot speak about actual strength training because it's not possible to accurately determine all variables of an exercise, especially not intensity. Nevertheless, basic methodical principles in development of individual appearances of strength (e.g. adequate number of muscle contractions, proper way of movement, proper activation of muscles etc.) have to be considered, because only so desired effects are going to be achieved. Different ways of crawling and creeping which are natural basic movements are therefore in different organizational forms very suitable for development of strength in young handball players.

It is essential that a child performs natural basic movements as frequently as possible, because these movements represent an important element of motive education. With them we can influence the development of motor skills (strength, coordination, speed etc.) and growth of the base of motor skills which represents the basis for execution of demanding and combined movements later on. With natural basic movements different goals can be achieved in the exercise unit (Pistotnik, Pinter, and Dolenc, 2002). They can be used for warm-up (preliminary part of the exercise unit), learning and development of motor skills (main part of the exercise unit) and psychophysical relaxation (closing part of the exercising unit). When we decide for one of the aforementioned exercise goals, a suitable movement and organizational form of exercise is chosen.

### **Practical application of natural basic movements in the exercise unit/workout (EU)**

The exercise unit/workout (EU) represents the smallest single unit in planning a sport exercise. Normally it consists of a preliminary (PP), main (MP) and the closing part (CP). With natural basic movements various tasks in individual parts of an exercise session can be carried out. In that way the mentioned movements can be used for (Pori, Pori, Pistotnik, Dolenc, Tomažin, Štirn, and Majerič 2013):

#### 1. Warm-up in the preliminary part of the exercise unit.

Its use is suitable for all ages. In use are vivid i.e. dynamic locomotions like running, jumping and creeping, some more dynamic forms of crawling and pulling, and manipulations like throws and catching items and grasps of the partner.

#### 2. Development of motor skills in the main part of the exercise unit.

It could be also used in all age categories. With them one can influence the development of: *strength* – with all forms of locomotions and manipulations, with a bigger load on the trainees (use of loads); *coordination* – performance of complex and unusual motive tasks; *speed* – with fast performing of locomotions like running, creeping, climbing; and *various manipulations* like throwing, hitting, blocking; *balance* – with locomotions on a narrowed supporting surface (walking, running, creeping, pulling, pushing, carrying); *precision* – with precise performing of a locomotion (running, creeping, jumping, falling) or in *manipulations of scoring a goal* (throwing, catching, hitting, blocking). *Flexibility* can be developed in a smaller scope or is maintained with achieving of big amplitudes of movements in locomotions such as crawling, creeping and some forms of climbing.

#### 3. Acquisition of motor information or improving of motor skills in the main part of the exercise unit.

Those content are especially suitable for younger age groups. They are used in learning of new movement structures and in strengthening the already learned, where all forms of locomotions and manipulations that are not familiar to trainees can be used. Motor skills are achieved through repetitions.

#### 4. The Psychophysical relaxation in the closing part of the exercise unit.

In this case movements are used that don't demand too much energy and are not too dynamic, for example walking, crawling, creeping and different manipulations with different objects. Such exercise approach is suitable for psychophysical relaxation in all age groups.

Natural basic movements can in all parts of an exercise unit be performed in elemental form and in easy or difficult conditions (overcoming natural and artificial obstacles etc.). Movements can be *free* – without tools or performed with the *use of props* (jumping ropes, balls, sticks etc.) *or* auxiliary and main tools (bench, parallel bars, horizontal bar, rings etc.). Natural basic movements are most common in simple forms of play in i.e. elementary games, where same goals can be achieved in the exercise unit, but in a much more interesting form than through dull elementary mediation of natural basic movements. Because of the bigger exercising motivation stimulated by the play proper exercise results is achieved much faster (Pistotnik, 2004).

### **GYMNASTIC EXERCISES**

Gymnastic exercises are purposefully constructed motor task with the main purpose of achieving the wanted local influence on the motor structure of a human with precise performing of temporal and spatial motor elements. The definition emphasizes two essential elements of performing gymnastic exercises that must be considered for the achievement of set goals: *the consideration of temporal* (rhythm, tempo) and *spatial* (plain, amplitude) motor elements. Through rhythm the gymnastic exercise can be defined as a whole, since the rhythm emphasizes and numerically defines the more important individual movements within the exercise. Tempo (speed of the course, performing) is conditioned by the choice of the body segment with which the exercise will be performed (smaller segments like hands – faster; bigger segments like body, feet – slower). The plain on which the movement is performed influences the local impact of the gymnastic exercise on the chosen part of the human motive structure and the amplitude (of the span and scope) of movements influences the measure or the method in which the exercise will be performed (Pistotnik, 2011).

To meet all these requirements positions and movements of the body have to be precisely determined which requires detailed knowledge of the body structure and specialized terminology to ensure exact and unambiguous definition of exercises. In comparison to other means used in sports (elementary games, sports games, individual sports etc.) only gymnastic exercises have a local effect on the trainee's body. With a certain gymnastic exercise one certain muscle group or joint can be influenced, while other means have a more or less wholesome impact on human motive structure (Pistotnik, 2011). With Team handball alone one cannot effectively fight against decreased flexibility in joints, weakness of a certain muscle group or poor posture. These effects can be localized only with gymnastic exercises (Pori et al, 2013).

In the process of sports exercise the gymnastic exercises are used for the warm-up, development of some motor skills and muscle relaxation. If an optimal effect on the human motive structure is desired, we have to choose, organize and lead the gymnastic exercises in a systematic and professional way. They have to be treated complexly (as a whole) considering their effect and load on the body and regarding the body parts included in the exercise.

### **Classification of gymnastic exercises**

Gymnastic exercises where the basic motor action or at least the tendency is muscle contraction (approximation of muscle mergers) are called *strengthening gymnastic exercises*. With muscle contraction releasing of warmth is achieved, which arises from decomposition of energy matter and leads to reduction of muscle viscosity (density) and to more effective functioning. In overcoming bigger forces, working contrary to the muscle force, muscles are strengthened i.e. strength development – ability of manifesting a bigger force. Gymnastic exercises in which the basic motive action is muscle stretching (deviation of relaxed muscle mergers) are called *stretching gymnastic exercises*. With stretching the functional (working) ability of muscles is preserved and if maximum deviation of muscle mergers is achieved this has an impact on flexibility. Muscle stretching and stretching of the capillaries in it accelerates the squeezing of blood, which affects the increased blood circulation and a faster influx of fresh, warm blood into the muscle. With *relaxing gymnastic exercises* (for example shaking of body segments) the muscle tension is decreased and the muscle's working ability to contract and stretch is preserved. A better flow through the muscle is also granted, which enables a more effective elimination of decomposable products out of the muscle and a faster regeneration (Pistotnik, 2011).

### **Sets of gymnastic exercises**

Gymnastic exercises can be put together into groups (sets) of exercises for achieving broader goals. Goals that can be achieved with sets of gymnastic exercises are: *i) general warm-up, ii) special warm-up, iii) development of some motor skills, iv) development of aerobic skills, v) psychophysical relaxation and iv) other special goals*.

Among these exercises we will in detail present those closely connected with the subject and problem of our task (Pori et al, 2013):

*Set of gymnastic exercises for general warm-up* is designed for achieving positive body changes as a preparation for greater effort to which the trainees will be exposed in the main part of the exercise unit. It's of utmost importance to include all muscle groups and joints into the warm-up. With the right choice of exercises the local muscle temperature is increased, nutritional status of muscles is better, their viscosity is reduced etc. The set of gymnastic exercises for general warm-up represents only a part of the warm-up process and is performed in the preliminary part of the exercise unit or before any serious motive activity. With this form of preparing the trainee the effect of the movement is increased, because the activity of

motor centers in the brain on a higher level is enabled and with that the chance of injuries is reduced. Therefore no sport exercise unit should be carried out without previous warm-up.

Main characteristics of gymnastic exercises for general warm-up are (Pori, Pistotnik, Pori, 2005):

- ☞ Warm-up of all main (bigger) muscle groups and joints,
- ☞ use of all three types of gymnastic exercises (stretching, strengthening, relaxing),
- ☞ gradual increasing the body load (from lighter to heavier – first stretching then strengthening and at the end relaxing gymnastic exercises),
- ☞ topological approach of processing segments (first the upper limbs with the pectoral girdle then the torso and in the end the feet – processing the body shoulders downwards),
- ☞ complexity of the effect of chosen gymnastic exercises (achieving simultaneous influence on several body parts or muscle groups with an individual exercise).

The set of gymnastic exercises for general warm-up has to include all three types of gymnastic exercises. Set execution starts with stretching gymnastic exercises, because they are the least demanding and their amplitude can be gradually increased (considering the principle of gradual loading, which is used for physiological load curve). Following are strengthening gymnastic exercises, which are more demanding and require preparation with stretching exercises for their execution. At the end of the set, or in combination between harder strengthening exercises, relaxing gymnastic exercises are used, which reduce the impact of muscle tiredness.

Set of gymnastic exercises for special warm-up is designed for extensive preparation of the muscle groups and joints, which will be especially burdened in the main part of the exercise unit. For a suitable choice of gymnastic exercises an analysis of muscle and joint load in the predicted activity can be used. Main characteristics of a set of gymnastic exercises for a special warm-up are: it contains only as many exercises needed for the preparation of chosen segments, it includes stretching and relaxing gymnastic exercises, individual exercises, which are very closely aimed at chosen muscle groups or joints. The set for a special warm-up follows only after the set for general warm-up.

Sets of gymnastic exercises for the development of motor skills are used above all in strength and flexibility development. With more complex gymnastic exercises the development of some forms of coordination could be influenced, yet there are many other, more suitable means available. In sets of gymnastic exercises for motor skills development the gymnastic exercises connected to the development of such a skill prevail, however the exercise must include also other exercises for the maintenance of functional abilities of the motive apparatus.

Set of gymnastic exercises for strength development mainly includes strengthening gymnastic exercises for the body elements, which we aim to strengthen. In the execution of strengthening gymnastic exercises bodyweight, the body of the partner, different tools and props, exercise machines etc. can be used as a load. Each strengthening exercise is very closely directed to a certain muscle group, that's why all body segments have to be positioned

into a suitable position so the effect on will be the biggest. The exercises have to be performed at optimal amplitude and at a suitable number of repetitions and sets (considering methodical procedures of strength development). Strengthening exercises in such a set have to be combined with stretching and relaxing gymnastic exercises so the muscle can preserve its functional elasticity. It is important to note, that strength training doesn't consists only of muscle contractions (strengthening gymnastic exercises), but also includes stretching and relaxing, which have to be an obligatory part of such a training.

Sets of gymnastic exercises for psychophysical relaxation include above all relaxing and static stretching gymnastic exercises. They are meant for muscle and psychic relaxation of trainees after a demanding training in the main part of the exercise unit. With the exercises in the set muscles that were exposed to many contractions are stretched and relaxed, so that decomposable products, which are poisoning the muscle, are removed and the muscle can maintain its functional ability. Relaxing reduces the muscle tonus (tension) and because of the interruption of nerve stimulations the tiredness is repressed and a greater movement economy is enabled.

## **ABOUT STRENGTH**

Strength is one of the most important motor skills in Team handball, however its structure is complex and depends on motor demands. According to the definition strength is the ability of effective exploitation of forces from own muscles for the function against external forces (Coburn and Malek, 2012). We need it for the movement of our own body in different media (air, water etc.), overcoming of forces from the opponent or for lifting, carrying and throwing of objects. With training a big progress can be achieved in strength. The more the exercise is adapted to the individual, the bigger the progress in strength. Strength exercise can be better adapted to an individual if we know the structure of strength (Pori, et al, 2013).

Strength can be simply defined as *absolute* and *relative* strength (Ušaj, 2003). Absolute strength is in this case the biggest strength that a handball player can develop in a certain move, and the relative strength is the ratio between the absolute strength and the weight of the handball player. Because in handball the players are overcoming the weight of their own body (speed and acceleration of the body are very important) all the time, a high level of relative strength is needed, especially for lower limbs. Through the game direct contacts with the opponent also appear (defense, attack) and with that the disruption of the balanced position, where the absolute strength of the players plays a big role.

Regarding mastering of external force with muscle force, the strength is shown in three basic appearances: explosive strength, repetitive strength and static strength. Explosive strength is the ability of achieving the maximum acceleration, which is shown in body or body parts movement in space or in the activity on objects in the environment. In handball this is shown primarily in acyclical activities like different jumps, short sprints, quick changes in the direction of movement and shots on goal. Repetitive strength is the ability for repeatedly overcoming external forces based on alternating muscle contraction and relaxation under a

submaximal load. In handball above all cyclical movements like running at different speeds is shown. Static strength is the ability of a longer persistence in a fixed position under a load and is mainly reflected in the preservation of positions e.g. grasps and resistance in defense (Škoda, 2004).

Strength exercise or training is a very popular form of exercise. Trainees are improving their motor efficiency, are preventing injuries and shaping their body. For a safe strength exercise one has to consider following rules:

Before exercise it makes sense to do a medical examination and obtain a medical opinion on whether the strength workout is suitable for the individual (Pori et al, 2013):

- ☞ Any exercise which the trainee did not perform till now has to be learned to perform properly.
- ☞ If the exercise will be carried out with additional loads, the learning of exercises should take place with lighter loads.
- ☞ Wrong execution of an exercise can lead to an injury of the trainee.
- ☞ Before exercise one has to do a special warm-up with lighter loads.
- ☞ The movement should be carried out in full amplitude. Only in auxiliary exercises can the movement be carried out in restricted amplitude.
- ☞ Pain in or around a joint should not be ignored.
- ☞ Execution of exercises should not be carried out with maximum loads, if the individual did not learn the correct execution of an exercise and didn't perform strength exercise for a number of weeks.

### **Tools for strength development**

The purpose of strength training in handball is the improvement of skills to a level that the player can best adapt and respond to a variety of loads throughout the handball match or training. Loads during the strength exercise can induce the muscle adaptation processes in the body. Positive effects can be seen in the strength exercise as long as the muscle doesn't adapt to them, then it is necessary to increase the load.

Tools for strength development can be categorized in several ways. Most often, they are divided into (Pistotnik, 2013):

- ☞ Strengthening gymnastic exercises, which can be carried out in different ways and with different devices (with own body weight, partner, podium, big balls, heavy balls, elastic bands, devices, small tools, free weights, and other),
- ☞ elementary games with natural basic movements and
- ☞ basic movements of a chosen sport, carried out with different loads.

## **Strength exercise with a partner**

Exercising with a partner is a popular way of adding variety to any strength exercise. Most of the times the contents of the exercise are in close connection to various forms of natural basic movements such as pushing, pulling, and resisting. Carrying of the partial or total weight of the partner through the room is also very useful. The most common delivery of strength exercise with a partner can be achieved through strengthening gymnastic exercises. We can improve different forms of strength, especially repetitive and static strength of the torso and pelvis. In case of execution of strengthening gymnastic exercises with a partner it's very important that the pairs are homogeneous, and that between the executions of exercises continuous communication between partners is present. It is also very important to never impose the biggest load during the first repetitions of exercises, but introduce it gradually and safely (Pori, Pori and Vidič, 2013).

There are several ways for organizing an exercise with a partner:

- ☞ One of the couple executes a strengthening gymnastic exercise and the other is assisting him (for example, help in maintaining the balance through the execution of the exercise),
- ☞ both perform the same exercise at the same time (for example, one keeps a static body position under a load, the other leaning on the first and dynamically performing a certain strengthening gymnastic exercise),
- ☞ one of the couple offers resistance to another (for example, the burden of the whole or partial body weight of the partner).

Exercising with a partner can be effective from a psychological and social point of view. Exercising in small groups, for example, can improve relations between the members of the group, encourage cooperation, as well as significantly raise the motivation to exercise (partner's incentive can help achieve better physical performance).

Strength exercise with a partner also has some disadvantages. This type of exercise is a bit more difficult to construct, especially when dealing with heterogeneous groups. In such cases restrictions in the completion of certain strengthening gymnastic exercise are frequently arising, which is mainly due to premature fatigue and thereby the fall of performance technique by one of the partners.

Especially in younger age groups (as well as in senior category) some recommendations have to be taken into consideration in strength exercise with a partner: i) it is always necessary to strive for the correct performance of exercises (also in the protective phase), ii) at the introduction of new strengthening gymnastic exercises the course, purpose and the "traps" of certain exercise should be very carefully explained, and iii) that during the execution of exercises communication between partners is always present.

## Examples of natural basic movements and gymnastic exercises with a partner for the preliminary parts of an exercise unit

### **EXAMPLE OF GENERAL (DYNAMIC) WARM-UP WITH A PARTNER**

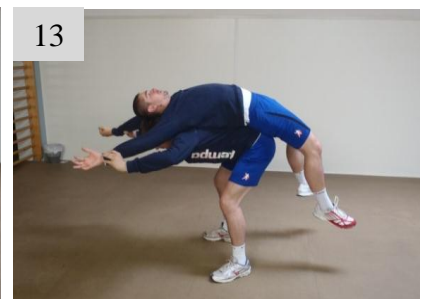
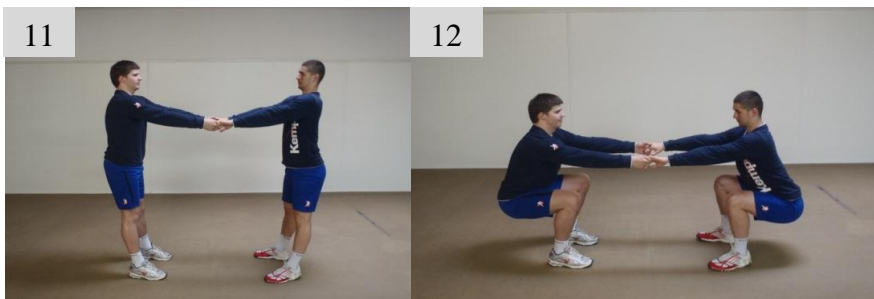
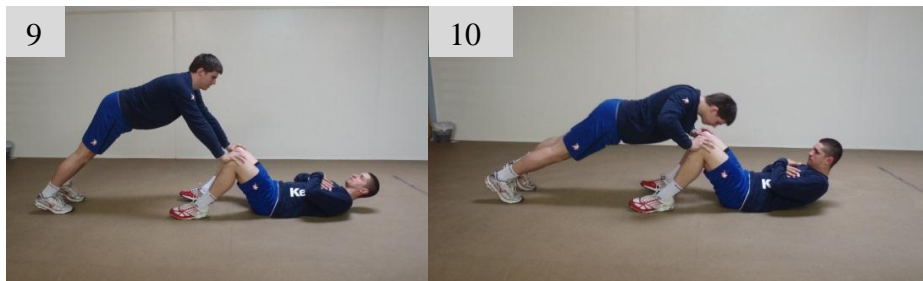
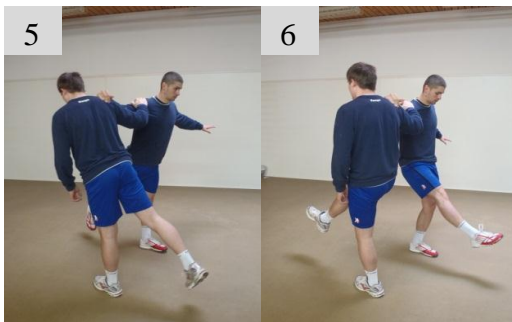
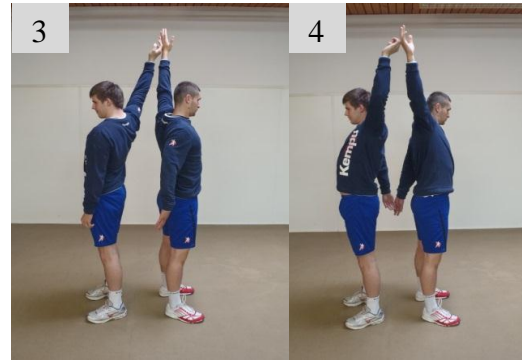
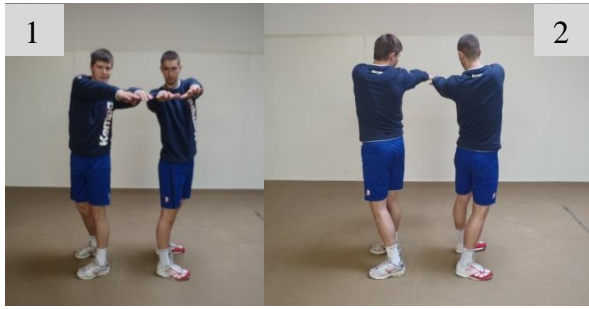
Trainees (in pairs) are arranged into a row alongside the gym. They perform the activities at a distance of 10 to 20 meters (depending on the difficulty of the exercise) and then return to the starting point with light jogging.

- ☞ The first trainee stands in place, the second one runs around the first one (the latter then moves approx. 1 m forward and they exchange roles).
- ☞ The first trainee stands in place, the second one runs backwards around the first one (then moves approx. 1 m forward and they exchange roles).
- ☞ The first trainee stands in place, the second one runs sideways around the first one (then moves approx. 1 m forward and they exchange roles).
- ☞ The first trainee creeps forward in prone support, the second one runs around the first one (they exchange the roles in the next repetition of the exercise).
- ☞ The first trainee stands astride, the second one creeps forward in prone support between his legs (than he moves approx. 1 m forward and they exchange roles).
- ☞ The first trainee creeps sideways in prone support, the second one creeps forward under the torso of the first one (they exchange roles in the next repetition of the exercise).
- ☞ Lunges forward/backward (one trainee is performing lunges forward, the other one backwards; partners are holding hands).
- ☞ The first trainee sits, the second one jumps over the legs of the first one (then he moves approx. 1 m forward and they exchange roles).
- ☞ Lunges sideways (partners are holding hands; in the middle they switch roles).
- ☞ The first trainee is in a position with prone lying support, the second one does lateral jumps (than he moves approx. 1 m forward and they exchange roles).
- ☞ The first trainee performs middle skipping, the second one is behind him, holds him by the hips and restrains him safely in place (they exchange roles in the next repetition of the exercise).

### **EXAMPLE OF A SET OF DYNAMIC STRETCHING GYMNASTIC EXERCISES WITH A PARTNER**

- ☞ Alternating turns of the torso with touching hands standing astride (*figures 1 and 2*)
- ☞ Alternating backward arm swings and touching hands standing astride (*figures 3 and 4*)
- ☞ Alternating forward and backward leg swings with support on partner's shoulders (then changing of the leg) (*figures 5 and 6*)
- ☞ Sideway leg swings with support on partner's shoulders (then switching the leg) (*figures 7 and 8*)

- ☞ The first trainee perform crunches lying on his back with bended legs, the second one perform push-ups with support on partner's knees (then changing of the roles) (figures 9 and 10)
- ☞ Squats (partners are holding hands) (figures 11 and 12)
- ☞ "Weighing" (shaking of the partner on one's back) (figure 13)



## Examples of natural basic movements and gymnastic exercises with a partner for the main parts of an exercise unit

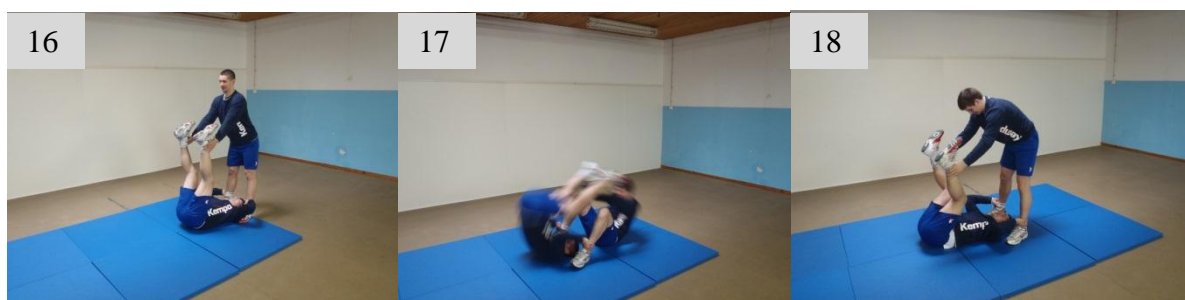
### EXAMPLES OF CREEPING AND CRAWLING WITH A PARTNER

Some practical advice for creeping and crawling or their use in elementary games (Pori, Pistotnik and Pori, 2007):

- ☞ do not exaggerate in the length of crawling, because this movement is very demanding (max. 15 meters),
- ☞ trainees should wear clothes, suitable for the surface on which they're going to crawl (training suit – long pants, long sleeves),
- ☞ all forms of creeping are performed freely, on a flat surface, and are then intensified with obstacles, additional load, prolongation of the distance of creeping (max. 15 meters), or speeding up (use in original forms),
- ☞ because they are demanding, these movements should be combined with walking and running, and after the completion of the exercise stretching in a hang is advisable.

### Examples of crawling with a partner:

- ☞ Rolling with a partner from the lying position on a lateral plane (*figures 14 and 15*)
- ☞ Rolling with a partner in dive rolls (one is lying, the other is standing) (*figures 16, 17 and 18*)
- ☞ Crawling with a "wounded person" (*figures 19 and 20*)





**Examples of creeping with a partner:**

- ☞ Wheelbarrow in prone support (different grasps of the partner) (*figures 21 and 22*)
- ☞ Wheelbarrow in lying support with hands on balls (*figure 23*)
- ☞ Reverse wheelbarrow (trainee on the ground is in a supine position) (*figure 24*)
- ☞ Wheelbarrow in lying support while holding the partner by only one leg (*figure 25*)



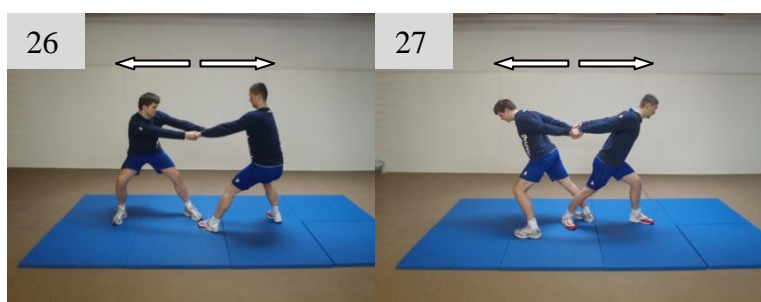
## EXAMPLES OF PULLING AND PUSHING WITH A PARTNER

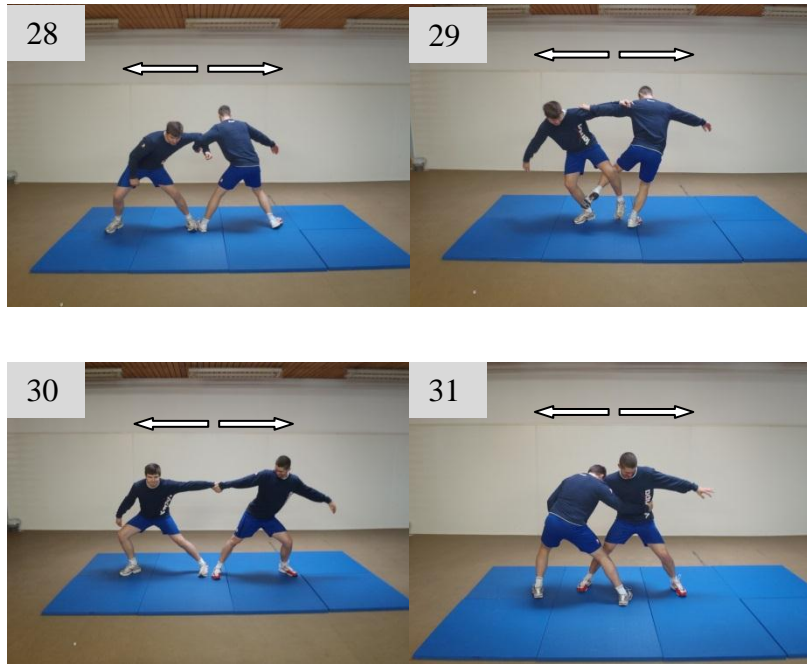
Some practical advice for pulling and pushing or their use in fighting games (Pori, Pistotnik and Pori, 2008):

- ☞ In case of pulling in a pair in a frontal positioning of partners, there is no holding hands, but a so called double grip at the wrists.
- ☞ All forms of pulling and pushing can be performed in the form of fights.
- ☞ Before the fights, clear instructions about what's permitted should be given and considered. With younger trainees the emphasis should be more on the development of skills than strength.
- ☞ To achieve the wanted goals with fights, you should choose equal opponents (according to strength, body structure and aggressiveness) so that everyone has theoretical chances of winning.
- ☞ With older trainees the duration of the fight can be longer and the fights can be directed towards strength development.
- ☞ At the command "prepare" the trainees should strain (activate) the muscles and at "fight" they should start pulling or pushing. Distance at which the movement is performed shouldn't be longer than 3 meters or the fight shouldn't last longer than 30 sec. (check time – depending on the method of static strength development).
- ☞ Jerky pulling or pushing and sudden drops are forbidden. We do not allow tugging, grasps around the neck etc.; continuous pulling or pushing should be demanded.
- ☞ At the coach's signal all the fights end (in case of danger – fall of the trainee, interfering with the space of other fights etc.).
- ☞ If an opponent is losing strength, he should tell that to his partner, so he doesn't fall.
- ☞ After the exercise of pulling and pushing stretching and relaxing exercises for the burdened muscles and breathing exercises for the isometric contractions of shoulder and torso muscles are necessary.

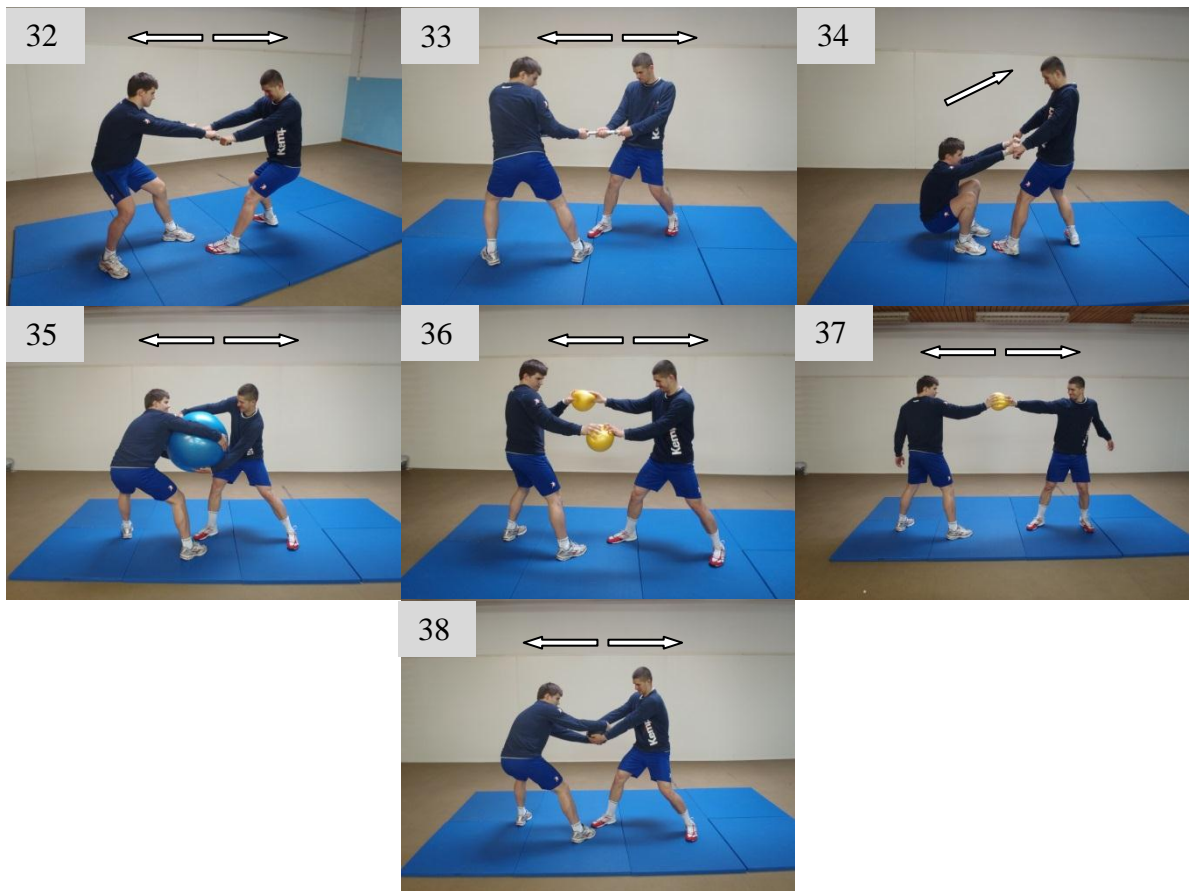
### Examples of pulling with a partner:

- ☞ Free frontal and backwards pulling with a partner (*figures 26 and 27*)
- ☞ Free pulling with a partner with elbows and knees together (*figures 28 and 29*)
- ☞ Free lateral pulling with a partner with the same and opposite hip (*figures 30 and 31*)



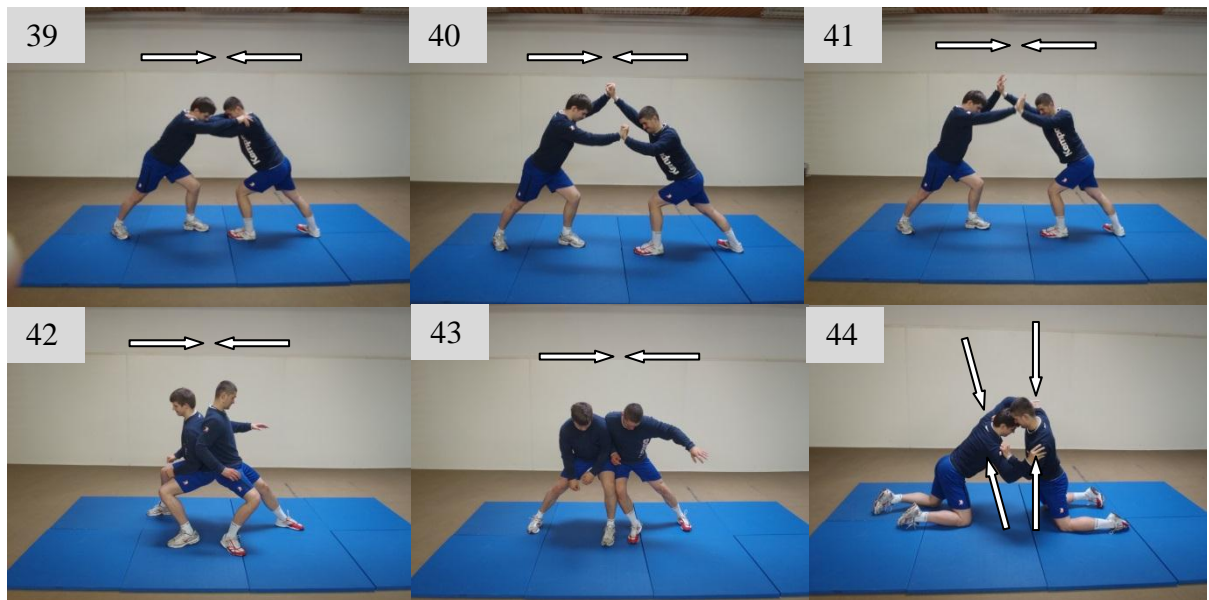


☞ Pulling with a partner using a stick or different balls (figures 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 and 38)

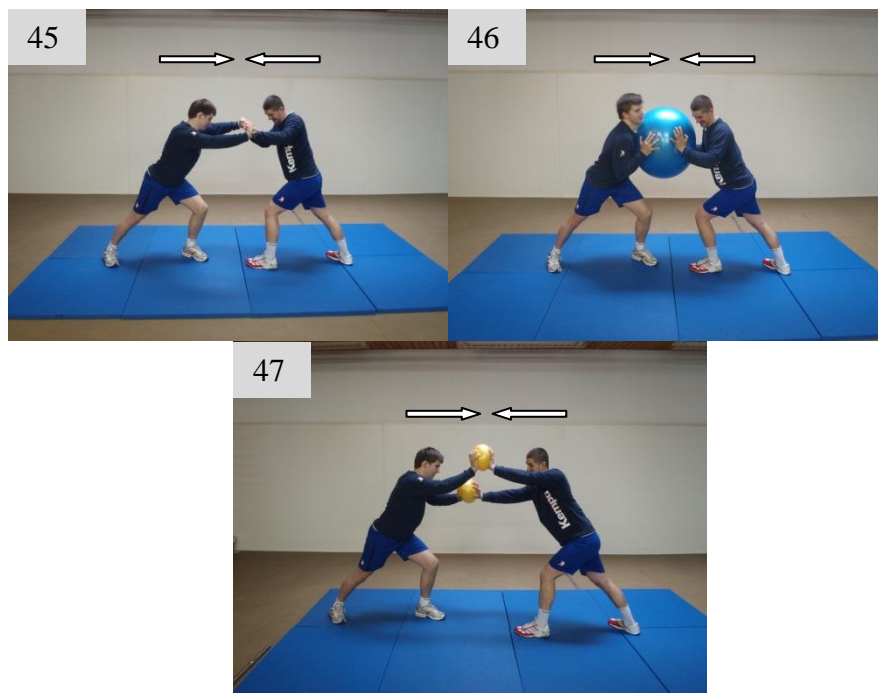


## Examples of pushing with a partner:

- ☞ Free frontal, backwards and lateral pushing with a partner (*figures 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43*)
- ☞ Free pushing on knees (*figure 44*)

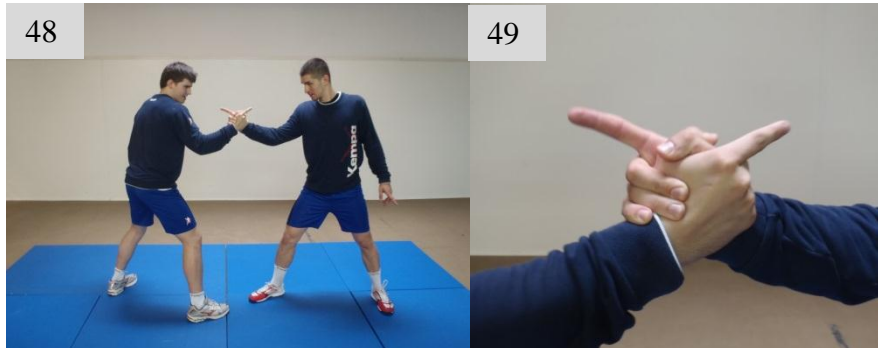


- ☞ Pushing with a partner using a stick and different balls (*figures 45, 46 and 47*)



## Examples of combination of pushing and pulling with a partner:

☞ Elementary game "finger fight" (*figures 48 and 49*)

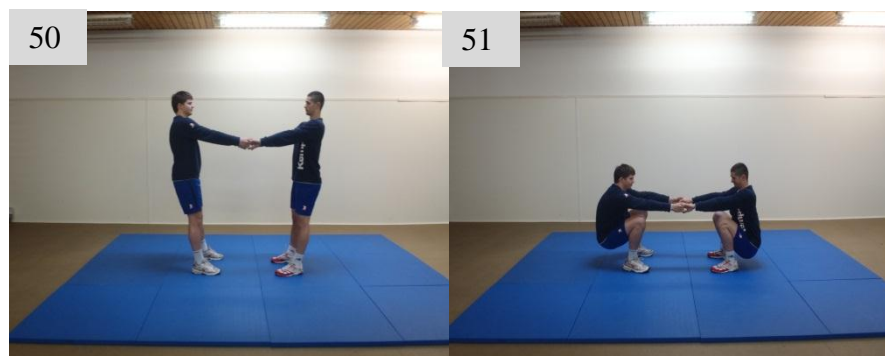


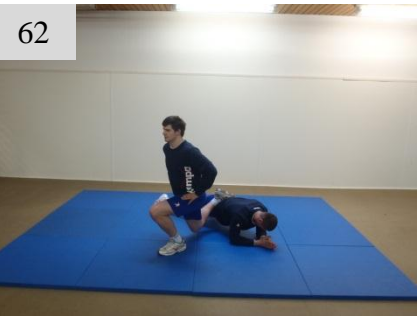
## EXAMPLES OF STRENGTHENING GYMNASTIC EXERCISES WITH A PARTNER

Examples of strengthening gymnastic exercises with a partner are demonstrated in three topological sets. We divided them into strengthening gymnastic exercises with a partner, affecting the development of legs, arms, pectoral girdle and torso strength.

### Knee and hip extension

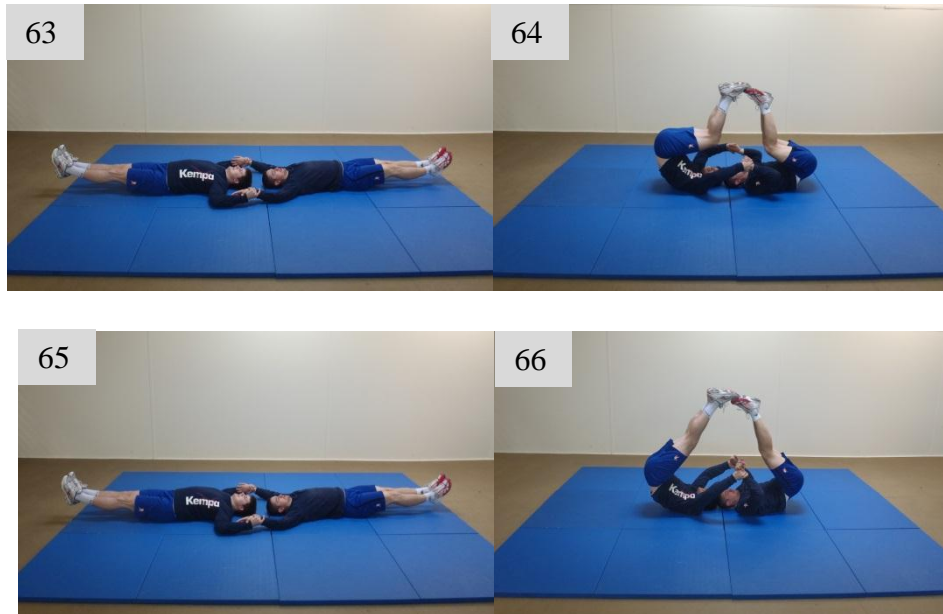
- ✓ Deep squat with a partner (*figures 50 and 51*)
- ✓ Half squat on one leg with a partner (*figures 52 and 53*)
- ✓ Push of the partner with legs (*figures 54 and 55*)
- ✓ Half squat with partner's legs on shoulders (*figures 56 and 57*)
- ✓ Lunges forward and backward with a partner (*figures 58, 59 and 60*)
- ✓ Half squat on one leg and the other on the partner (*figures 61 and 62*)





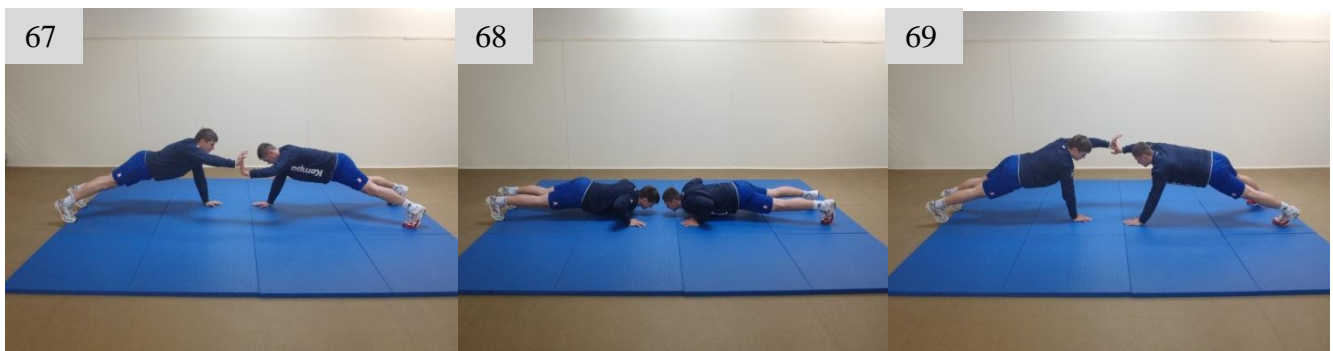
## Hip flexion

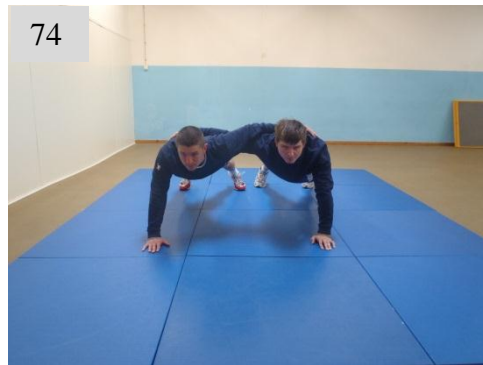
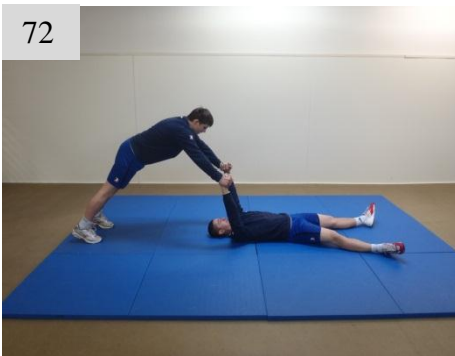
- ✓ Hip bending from dorsal lying position with bended legs (*figures 63 and 64*)
- ✓ Hip bending from dorsal lying position with stretched legs (*figures 65 and 66*)



## Shoulder horizontal abduction

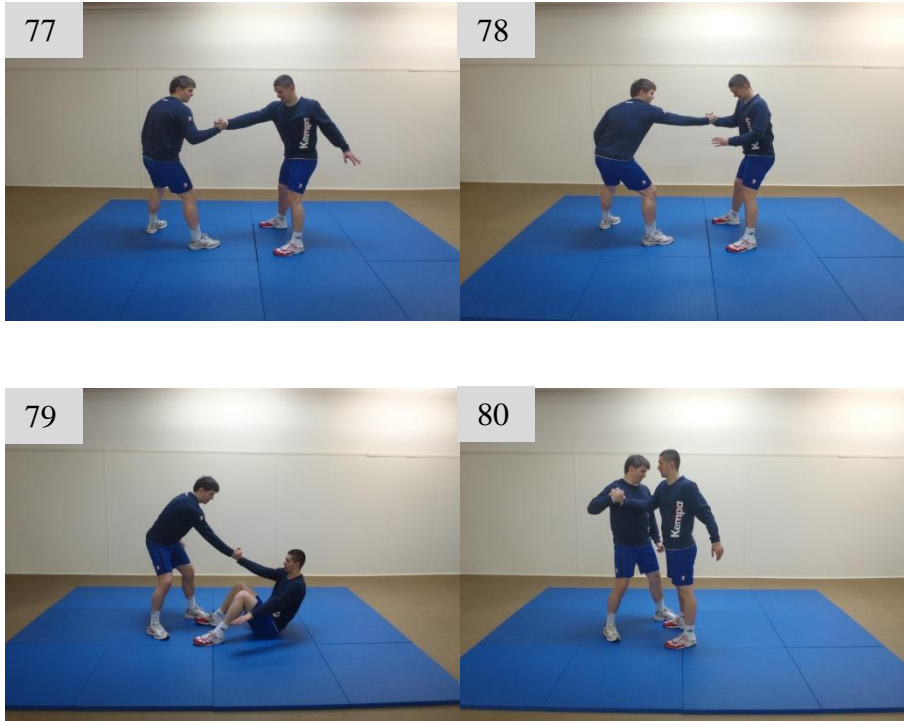
- ✓ Push-ups with alternating touches of partner's hand (*figures 67, 68 and 69*)
- ✓ Standing push-ups with two hands (*figures 70 and 71*)
- ✓ Push-ups over the lying partner (*figures 72 and 73*)
- ✓ One hand push-ups with a partner (*figure 74*)
- ✓ Reverse push-ups with a partner (*figures 75 and 76*)





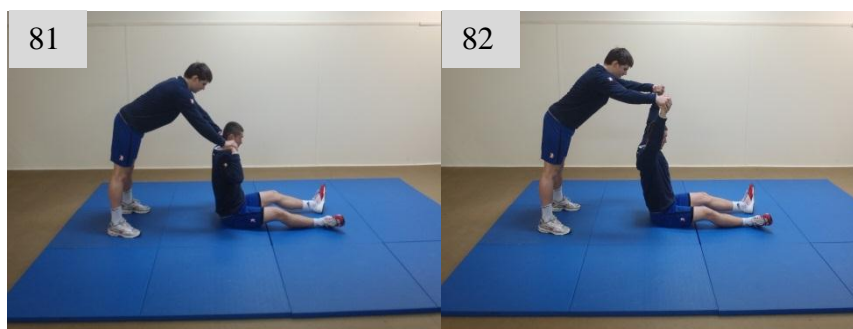
## Shoulder horizontal adduction

- ✓ Alternating horizontal pulling of the partner with one hand (*figures 77 and 78*)
- ✓ Pulling of the partner with one hand from sitting to standing position (*figures 79 and 80*)



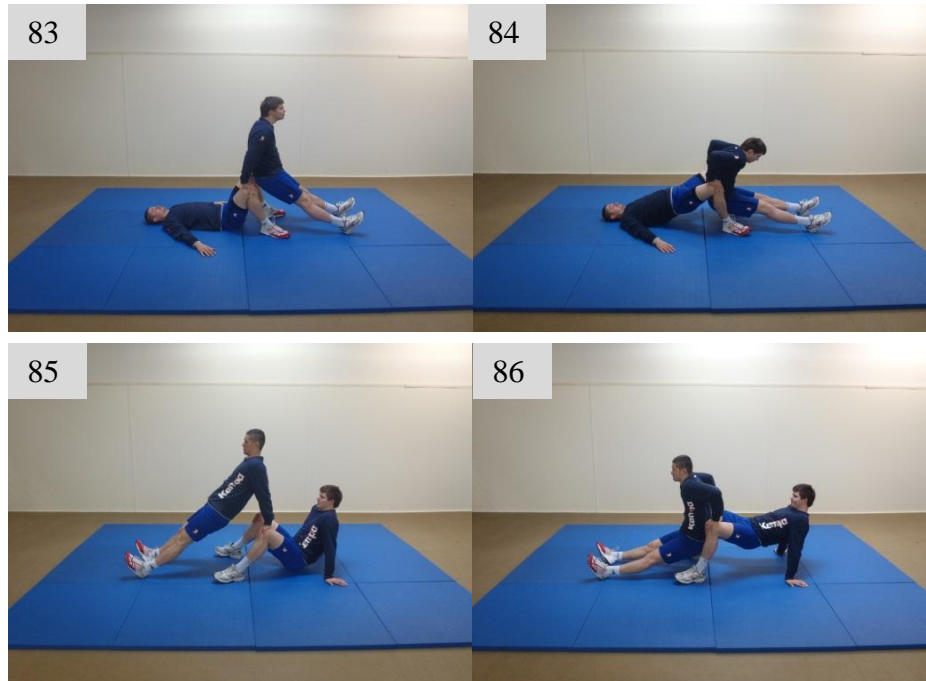
## Shoulder adduction

- ✓ Vertical pushing of the partner from a sitting position (*figures 81 and 82*)



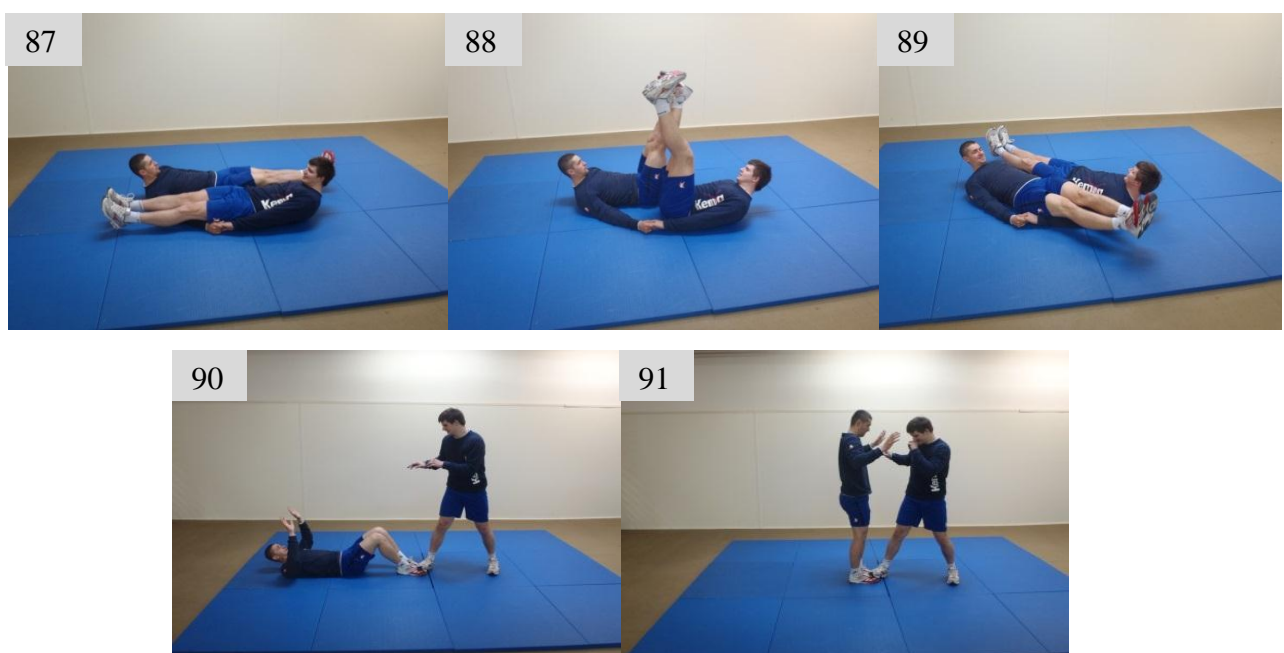
## Back and elbow extension

- ✓ Push-ups in rear lying support and hip lifting from rear lying support (*figures 83 and 84*)
- ✓ Push-ups in rear lying support and hip lifting from rear squatting support (*figures 85 and 86*)



## Hip and core flexion

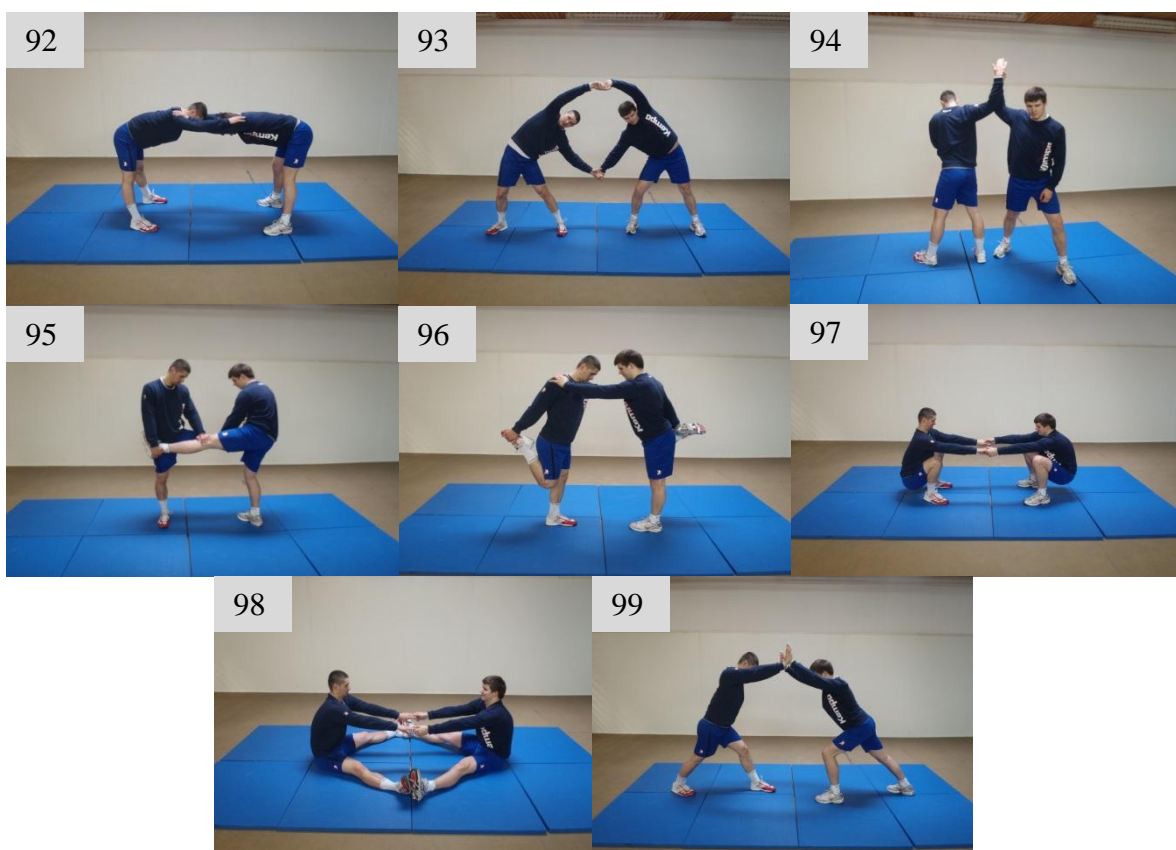
- ✓ Alternating transmission of stretched legs with a partner (*figures 87, 88 and 89*)
- ✓ Lifts from supine lying position with touching partner's hands (*figures 90 and 91*)



Examples of gymnastic exercises with a partner suitable for final parts of exercise units

**EXAMPLE OF A SET OF STATIC STRETCHING GYMNASTIC EXERCISES WITH A PARTNER**

- ☞ Stretching of hip extensors and knee flexors with a partner (*figure 92*)
- ☞ Stretching of lateral core flexors with a partner (*figure 93*)
- ☞ Stretching of horizontal abductors of the shoulder with a partner (*figure 94*)
- ☞ Stretching of hip extensors with a partner (*figure 95*)
- ☞ Stretching of knee extensors with a partner (*figure 96*)
- ☞ Stretching of hip, knee and ankle extensors with a partner (*figure 97*)
- ☞ Stretching of core extensors and hip adductor muscles with a partner (*figure 98*)
- ☞ Stretching of ankle extensors with a partner (*figure 99*)



## Conclusion

This seminar paper presents examples of different natural basic movements and gymnastic exercises with a partner (with an emphasis on strength exercise), which present a suitable content for different parts of handball training. The use of different stretching, strengthening and relaxing gymnastic exercises that can be associated with natural basic movements, as well as with various elementary games, is practically unlimited. In strength developing of handball players in different age groups the exercise with partners can in addition to fitness, also be effective from the psychological and social aspect. Exercise in small groups, for example, can improve relations between the members of the group, encourage cooperation, as well as significantly raise the motivation to exercise.

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**Handball Federation of Slovenia**

**Slovenian Handball Coaches Association**

**Master Coach Course**

**Defensive system transformations during the development of youth players and teams  
from mini handball to the end of youth age categories**

**(Seminar paper)**

**Mentor:**  
**Author: Aleš Praznik**

**dr. Marko Šibila**

**Ljubljana, June 14, 2013**

## **EHF Master Coach seminar paper**

**Author: Aleš Praznik**

### **Title:**

**Defensive system transformations during the development of youth players and teams from mini handball to the end of youth age categories**

### **Abstract**

This seminar paper tries to describe the author's technical and tactical knowledge acquired during years of playing handball and coaching teams of all age groups from mini handball to senior teams at the highest levels as well as youth national teams of the Slovenian Handball Federation (U-15, U-17, U-21). The author was lucky to be able to work with many internationally acclaimed Yugoslav handball coaches during his playing career. Most of them are still active today. Names like Abas Arslanagič-Ako, Antun Bašić, Sead Hasanefendić, Slavko Ivezić, Leopold Jeras, Ivo Munitić, Bojan Levstik, Niko Markovič, Slobodan Miškovič-Čile, Cveto Pavčič, Branislav Pokrajac-Kraja, Jezdimir Stankovič, Jože Šilc, Marko Šibila need no further introduction. His coaching experience was acquired mostly in youth categories of RD Kolinska Slovan, RD Dinos Slovan and RD Slovan (this was a single club except for the naming rights which were held by different companies through time) as well as under the auspices of his own handball school - The Aleš Praznik Handball School. He passed his playing and coaching knowledge along to his teams and also learned and gained experience from working with them. This allowed him to also acquire knowledge and experience through years of working with players of various quality and age groups. This experience and knowledge form the foundation of this seminar paper with the particular focus being placed on defensive skills and tactics in different development stages of all age groups from mini handball to U21. The author tried to provide a concise overview of how the correct selection of defensive formation (i.e. system) in various age groups affects the development of individuals and teams (which incidentally, due to constant interaction and communication with teammates and the relationship with opponents, also affect the individual defensive skills).

**Keywords:** (youth) handball, defence (formation), transformation, youth (players), team

## Introduction

As a player in the 1970s and 1980s, I belonged to the famous Yugoslav handball school which was in fact very diverse despite the single political system. From Gevgelija in Macedonia to Jesenice in Slovenia, the economic and cultural diversity was one of the many influences that gave a unique character to individual handball centres. Handball and the views on handball in Macedonia are completely different from that in Slovenia. Back then, Slovenian U21 teams already started using shallow defensive formations, e.g. 6-0, although we did not have particularly tall players. Among the visionaries in this area was the Aero Celje U21 coach Niko Markovič who was followed by Bojan Levstik, as well as senior coaches, such as the late Slobodan Mišković - Čile, who won the gold medal at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, and Ivo Munitić - Dundo with Slovan handball club. Why is this important? At the time, Yugoslavia had the best national team and the strongest league competition in the world. Most teams played a 3-2-1 defensive formation with variants corresponding to their local character. The situation was similar at the national team level: every coach implemented his own vision despite the fact for many years the position of the national coach and head of development was held by the legendary Celje coach Ivan Janez Snoj and despite the dominance of the Zagreb handball school led by the legendary Vlado Štencel. Vlado Štencel was, along with Branislav Pokrajac as a player, the founding father of the "indian" defence - at the time, indians were deemed to be uncontrolled savages and eccentrics and this defensive system fit the description perfectly. In its essence, this is a type of the 5+1 defence. As the "indian", Pokrajac had a free defensive role and tried to position himself between two attackers - his movements were unconventional and unpredictable for that time, although it has to be said that Pokrajac's ability, intelligence and excellent motor skills meant that his tactical style was far from uncontrolled savagery. This is just one example of the level of innovation by coaches in Yugoslavia at the time. The coach of Aero Celje Slobodan Mišković - Čile prepared the 4+2 defensive formation for the final match of the Marshall Tito Cup against RD Slovan of Ljubljana. The two front defenders marked Matjaž Tominec and Radivoj Krivokapić and the tactics proved to be an unequivocal success - Aero Celje won convincingly despite the fact the RD Slovan featured Krivokapić, the player with the most powerful shot in the world at the time. In the 1980s, the legendary Vinko Kandija used the 4-2 defensive formation with the two forwards following the ball when he coached the women's team Radnički of Belgrade. During the 1980s under the guidance of Leopold Jeras and Nikola Radić before him, Slovan often used a deep 3-3 defence to surprise the opposition. It often resembled a 3+3 defence with the front line of defenders standing almost on the halfway line. When Niko Markovič was the Slovenian national team coach during the 1970s, he also used these defences to surprise the opposition at the Brotherhood and Unity tournaments, a de facto federal competition of Yugoslav states and regions. The 5+1 combined defence was also often used against teams that had good shooters, for example Žagmeštar from Zagreb. The 6-0 defence also had many variants: focus on shot blocking, aggressively falling out to close down the attackers, or adapted to stop a specific attacker who stood out and was predictable enough for the team to stop him. The flexible 6-0 defence enabled Aero Celje led by Tone Goršič to beat the illustrious Partizan Bjelovar at the Yugoslavia Cup. Partizan featured such players as Hrvoje Horvat (who later won the gold medal at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich) and Zvonimir Serdarušič, now better known as the former THW Kiel and Slovenian national team coach. By adopting a tactical plan unlike the established norm, he was able to stop the partnership of these two players and break the communication between the centre back and the line player. Years of playing experience allowed me to see various defensive formations and I was able to try them as a coach at club and national team level.

This led me to think of ways to implement various defensive formations into a development method for individuals and teams of various age groups. Due to a lack of reflection by some experts and strict copying from basketball (man-to-man defence), I started to test the behaviour of young players in various defensive roles (with individual and collective tasks) at the mini handball level.

In my belief, described in this seminar paper, the argument of using man-to-man defence exclusively at a certain development level does not hold up under scrutiny. This led me to create an algorithm to develop technical/tactical, cognitive and emotional abilities of players with the help of the right methods. It consists of motor skills needed to play in defence and the development of a tactical skillset for various defensive formations.

Every period of player development has specific requirements and must take into account the morphological characteristics, motor skills, mental traits and social skills. This is why I also developed a methodological model for teaching defensive skills and the necessary abilities at various ages. This means that at the initial stage more than man-to-man defence is required and by adapting the rules, we can achieve completely the opposite.

I would like to point out that this seminar paper does not include references to other works. This seminar paper is my work alone and is based on my theoretical knowledge and practical experience acquired through years of playing handball and coaching various age groups. However, some influences of sport literature acquired through the years of my education and development as a coach are certainly felt throughout this seminar paper.

## **Defensive system transformations during the development of youth players and teams from mini handball to the end of youth age categories**

For start, I will list the defensive formations i.e. ways to defend used in training and competitive play in my handball school.

### **Man-to-man defence**

I believe it is often not the best choice for handball due to the differences between handball and basketball. Let's list some of the major ones: ball size, travelling rules, court size, depth limit with the goal area, the number of players etc.

If man-to-man defence is nevertheless used with the youngest age groups, we must demand the following from our players: they must not touch an opponent who does not have the ball and they should not drag the opponent with the ball back or hug them in any way.

**It demands a lot of energy.** From a physiological and developmental point of view, children quickly become tired, but they also quickly recover. Taking into account that children today have an enormous amount of activities and spent a lot of time in front of various screens, it is impossible to demand that mini handball players play man-to-man defence all the time, especially if the team does not have appropriate substitutions. Due to this it can occur that heavier and less agile players hold, hug and drag back opponents in practice sessions, matches and tournaments, and the handball on show is of low quality despite the fact that many experts try to convince us that man-to-man defence would lead to the development of handball-specific motor skills. Years of experience have taught me that this is not the case, so I use man-to-man defence very sparingly and in carefully selected moments in combination with other defensive methods. The dosage must be just right to ensure the development of all motor skills and technical/tactical abilities.

### **Zone defence in mini handball**

Despite the unified instructions of the EHF and the Slovenian Handball Federation, mini handball differs significantly from school to school. The reason is often quite simple - the number of players participating in a training session. Initially, coaches want to simply attract as many young players to the sport as possible. This can be achieved by allowing everyone to actively participate all the time. This means that sometimes teams have more players than allowed, so that players don't sit and wait their turn. Even more often, we distribute the players in multiple teams who often change places - sometimes even after every goal. Teams often have less players in these cases, for example three: 3 players + a goalkeeper - in this case there is nothing wrong in having three defenders in front of the goal area; or four: 4 + a goalkeeper which already allows for the use of a 3+1 or 3-1 defensive formation. During my practice sessions, mini handball was often played with 5 players or even 6 players + a goalkeeper. This allowed the players to familiarize themselves with a variety of defensive formations - naturally, in a fairly rudimentary fashion with just a few basic tasks, such as positioning at a particular defensive position. My experience shows that this can be very beneficial at this age to improve spatial orientation. The youngest players also get to know individual playing positions in attack and defence. By using man-to-man defence with all the children running after the ball and with the players concentrated only on the ball, the situation is much more confusing and less clear. Let me repeat again: man-to-man defence at this age is not the one and only training method to develop handball-specific abilities for greater success in latter age groups.

## Simple defensive formations

This name is used for all defensive formations from relatively simple ones, like the 6-0 defence with the focus on blocking, to more complex combined defences, such as the 4+2, which are much more difficult in terms of playing possibilities for the opposition, mental and technical/tactical aspects as well as physical abilities and energy requirements. However, it is possible to explain all this in simpler, more child-friendly terms. Experience has taught me that we often underestimate a child's ability to understand spatial and temporal handball elements. Nevertheless, the defensive formations are explained to children during training sessions in a way that simplifies as much as possible the explanations of individual and group tactical tasks and their difficulty is adapted to children as well. At the mini handball level, I have been using the following defences to teach players about deep formations: 2- 1 or 3- 1 and even 4- 1. The basis for a shallow defence is 3-0 or 4-0, 5-0 or even 6-0, which was used with two intentions as the last stage of a shallow defence utilizing the defensive block:

1. To teach young players to try to block shots not only when they are unable to foul the opponent, but also as a group tactical defensive weapon in certain competitive matches.
2. To teach young players to attack against a shallow "blocking" defensive formation not only by out jumping the opposition but also by seeking empty space between two or three defenders.

These **simple defensive formations** are used in the period between the end of the mini handball age and the end of the U15 age group (the term "pioneers" was used in Yugoslavia) - somewhere between the ages of 13 to 15. Its use is adapted to every period according to intermediary objectives and the current skill level and abilities of individual teams. Some groups of players have more ability and better skills at a particular age than others. Some are physical more developed, but have worse motor skills, others have fantastic motor skills, but are still physically underdeveloped.

The basic goals of these simple defensive formations are the following:

1. To demonstrate to the young players the meaning of formations on the court from a spatial and temporal point of view.
2. They will get the basic information about the width and depth of the court and the characteristics of playing in both dimensions.
3. At this age, players can already demonstrate a high level of selfishness, so by making them think about the positioning on the court, we are in effect forcing them to play more collectively at least in terms of formation.
4. Focusing only on the ball and on one opponent has not proved to be beneficial at the initial stages of a player's development - and it can also have a detrimental effect at higher levels, especially if not enough attention has been paid to this aspect at an early age.
5. Exercises are executed according to the principles of a graduated situational training, whose founder in Slovenia is Tone Goršič. However, the term itself was in fact invented by me, so I think of it as my intellectual property in a way.
6. By adapting the technical/tactical tasks of an individual and the team, we can achieve a balanced and age-adapted development of individual players.
7. In addition to taking into account the age of a player, we must also consider the current level of physical development in terms of physical ability and motor skills as well as mental and social characteristics.

### **Man-to-man defence up to the 9-meter line**

This defensive system is relatively unknown and little used in Slovenia, but can be seen on handball courts around the world, which is why I included it in my teaching model. It is very difficult to play not only due to high physical and energy demands, but also from a technical/tactical point of view - players need to possess high technical/tactical skills. This is why this defence can be used only from the U17 age group on. Even then, players need to have great technical/tactical skills and extraordinary physical abilities.

### **3-3 defence**

This is a very aggressive defence where players spend most of the time in a low diagonal defensive stance facing the attackers. Its main characteristic is tight marking high up the court and along the entire width of the court. This defence can be used only with players that possess the necessary skills and abilities: short fast players with great motor skills. This will allow them to turn their deficiencies into strengths. At first, the training process will include practicing various segments and elements of the game used for different tactical assignments on an individual and team level.

### **1-5 defence**

Most handball professionals would consider this a very unusual defensive formation, but certain international teams have already used it in competitions, so I decided to include it. It is mostly used for short amounts of time during matches and only rarely for the entire duration of a match. If the opposition manages to get past the front line of five defenders, they will have a lot of goalscoring opportunities from the goal area line. I occasionally used it to expand the technical/tactical skills due to various reasons, such as: -larger distance of the front defensive line from the goal which means that the opposition shooters are further away as well, -the five forwards need to cooperate on a wider area which requires better lateral agility, -the attackers have more space to play one-on-one, so the defensive tasks are very specific and - the marking required from the forwards is completely opposite than in the 5-1 defence (the situations are completely different in terms of marking and preventing the opposition to score before and after they receive the ball).

### **0-6 defence**

This defence is in essence similar to the 1-5 defence described above and can in fact often transform into a 1-5 defence, especially after the opposing wings or backs run to the line or, even better, when the line player comes out of defence and then returns back on the

line through a deep and dense defensive formation of six players. When the line player does return to the line, it makes no sense staying in a 0-6 formation unless we want to force the attackers to shoot from the line, because we believe the goalkeeper will save the shot. This means that this is one of those defences where the basic formation is usually not held for long. It is unusual but not unseen and is normally used in specific match segments. In terms of individual and team development, it has several benefits.

#### **4-2 defence**

This defence has two variants depending on the positioning and movements of the two forwards. In the first variant, the two forwards are focussed on the two opposing backs (e.g. centre and left back), but they don't mark them too tight. They also move forward and back in order to intercept passes. In the second variant, they follow the ball and first mark the right and centre back for some time and then move on to the other side. Normally their movement follows the path of the ball. If the ball arrives on the right wing, they mark the right and centre back. Their movements also depend on the abilities and skills of the opposing players.

#### **4+2 defence**

This combined defence has a lot in common with the previously described 4-2 defence, with the basic difference being the tight marking of two backs. This may lead to a greater number of attacks ending with shots by the wings or the line player, or even after individual breakthroughs by backs - in a way this makes the goalkeeper's job easier compared to the preceding defence. Due to mostly similar characteristics, the same individual and team development rules in various age groups apply as with the preceding defence.

#### **3-2-1 defence (aggressive and shallow version)**

This defence, along with its versions (aggressive and shallow), was in a way an integral part of the defensive tactical acumen of various teams from former Yugoslavia. Its execution in national teams depended on the individual coach, although most of them followed the ideas of Vlado Štencel. The greatest differences were in the way its greatest

weakness was supposed to be solved - players making runs to the line. If it is possible to position the players in defence in a way that is suited to launching fast breaks (i.e. two wings and the line player at the front, the centre back at the centre and the left and right back as the first defenders on each side), then this defence represents an ideal starting point to develop individual and group fast breaks as well as fast breaks involving the entire team. This defence offers the easiest transition into fast breaks in three waves - which can be seen and observed during play. In terms of defending and consequently launching fast breaks in youth teams, it makes sense to maintain the ideal defensive positioning for fast breaks. Deviations should occur only later and even then the roles during transition into attacks must be clearly defined. With these defences, coaches mostly prefer goalkeepers who are better at saving shots from the wings or from the line.

### **5+1 defence**

This defence has a lot of similarities with the 3-2-1 defence, especially if it involves high positioning of the second defender when the ball is on the other side. The best time to do this is when the line player is on the other side. This defence allows us to test the response of individual players when playing on a wider and more open space in competitive matches of the youngest age groups. Practical experience has shown that coaches normally assign this role to players they trust and who have the necessary abilities to play it - agility is an essential requirement. This defence is a great starting point for the forward or one of the wings to run into a fast break.

### **5-1 defence**

This defence is even more similar to the 3-2-1 defence and is in a way a compromise solution between 3-2-1 and 6-0 defences. It emerged because attackers started playing with two line players. In a way, the first team to start using it was the Soviet national team, because their players were too tall and slow to successfully play 3-2-1.

#### **4-1+1 defence**

This is a very specific defensive formation, because it has the characteristics of zone and combined defences. I have read about it in German handball texts as it was used by Essen in the German Bundesliga a long time ago. I have applied my own interpretation and occasionally used it successfully in senior and U21 teams. I have changed and upgraded some fine tactical details compared to the original - because I have had to adapt it to the abilities of my team and the characteristics of the opposition.

#### **6-0 defence (aggressive and shallow version)**

This defensive formation has specific characteristics depending on which country the team playing it comes from. Even individual Scandinavian teams don't have the same style: the Swedes are less aggressive than the Danes or Norwegians. The Spanish have their own specific way of playing it - the two central and the two second defenders are so aggressive and are positioned so far out that we constantly feel that they actually combine various defensive formations, such as 3-2-1, 5-1 etc.

## **Defensive formation development phases in terms of individual and team development**

These development phases are assigned to age groups used in Slovenian competitive handball:

- U11

- U12

- U13

- U14

- U15

- U17

- U21

### **Man-to-man defence**

U11: As I have already said, experts suggest that this age group should use only man-to-man defence. However, coaches that train U11 teams should carefully consider and question this approach. My experience points in the opposite direction and my approach differs significantly. Initially, this includes learning how to mark the opponent without physical contact. Children despise physical contact and their enthusiasm wanes in the face of constant physical contact - especially since we can often witness how coaches encourage contact (hold him, grab him etc.).

U12: Man-to-man defence is still predominantly used in this age group, but coaches need to apply common sense in training sessions and competitive matches.

U13: This defence is still used in training sessions and competitive matches; however its use is diminishing compared to the so-called simple defensive formations - in particular deep defences, such as 3-3.

U14: Man-to-man defence is occasionally used in training sessions during warm up or specific physical conditioning.

U15: Players in this age group already have good attacking and defensive technical/tactical skills, so man-to-man defence is used only to make training sessions more interesting and diverse. During matches, it is used to pressure opponents or to change the tempo in individual periods or in cases when we need to win the ball quickly without committing a foul - in particular at the end of matches when we have to come up from behind. Even then, the tactics include various tricks, such as offering space to the opponents on the outside or forcing them to shoot from less favourable angles in relation to the goalkeeper, e.g. forcing them to jump towards the side-line instead of towards the middle.

U17: As with the previous age group, this defence is almost never played, but can be included occasionally in training sessions or used during matches. It is particularly effective against

weaker opposition, because individual players and the team as a whole will gain confidence due to their superior motor and technical/tactical skills.

U21: As the last age group before the senior level, U21 trainings can include man-to-man defence more often than other age groups to train agility and because teams have a higher number of training sessions that last longer. This will improve the speed endurance of individuals in attack and defence. Moreover, this defence is often even more successful at the U21 level than with other age groups due to better technical/tactical skills of players and the team as a whole as well as due to their greater experience.

### **Man-to-man defence up to the 9-meter line**

U11: This defence cannot be used at this level, because there are not enough players on the court.

U12: In this age group, this defence can optionally be used to demonstrate the density and depth of the space that the players must defend, which differs completely from the 6-0 defence due to the greater distance from the goal and due to the empty space between the 9-meter line and the goal area line. However, the demonstration must follow the guidelines for simple defences - which means using basic information with few tactical tasks for the players.

U13: The rules for this age group should be the same as for U12.

U14: At this skill level and defensive knowledge we can (optionally) use this defence during training sessions a bit more often than with younger age groups.

U15: This age is ideal for training this defence to make the sessions more diverse and to force the team to move closer to the attacker - this will increase the density of players in the initial defensive phase and force the attackers to find alternative solutions.

U17: The rules are the same as with the previous age group. Additionally, we can include and focus on the strength training component of individual duels.

U21: U21 teams in Slovenia do not use this defence, but I recommend using it in training sessions with additional requirements particularly when the original defence transforms due to the attackers' response to improve technical/tactical skills and abilities.

### **3-3 defence**

U11: It is not used in matches and training sessions due to the insufficient number of players in a team.

U12: In this age group, this defence should serve as a basis for an eventual transition from man-to-man to zone defence skills and abilities. As it is similar to man-to-man defence, it has been selected as the main defence for the transition period from man-to-man to zone defence - this is why a lot of time is dedicated to this defence.

U13: In a way, the rules are the same as for the previous age groups, however players are more developed and skilled, so additional details and requirements of individual and team play can be included.

U14: A lot of time is still dedicated to this defence, but it is increasingly replaced by exercises that move the defensive focus closer to the goal line and towards a more collective defence.

U15: The rules are the same as for the previous age group, because this age represents an end of an era in a player's life - the transition from elementary school to high school. During this period, players can experience growth spurts, so these exercises can also be used to increase agility.

U17: This defence is appropriate to use in trainings and matches from a mental and social development point of view to develop a player's sense of responsibility, because it can clearly show the qualities and deficiencies of an individual player.

U21: It is used in this age group for the same reasons and with the same goals as with U17.

### **1-5 defence**

U11: Cannot be used for reasons already described in previous defensive systems.

U12: Is used as a combination of 3-3 and 3-2-1 with appropriate modifications. Due to the reactions of the attack, this defence can only be used for a limited amount of time and it is difficult to describe a defensive formation as 1-5 for the duration of the entire attack. This is why it is used less often in trainings as other defences in all age groups.

U13: Everything written for U12 above applies here as well.

U14: This defence can be used as an optional defence against a line player in a larger area - effectively from wing to wing - who is playing one-on-one against the defenders. It can be useful for attackers and defenders.

U15: The same as U14.

U17: This defence can be used to diversify the training sessions and perhaps to surprise the opposition who have a particularly ineffective line player - with bad shot conversion or predictable shots - of course we have to have a good goalkeeper.

U15: The same as U17.

### **0-6 defence**

U11: The rules are the same as for man-to-man defence up to the 9-meter line and all other defences that simply cannot be used at this age.

U12: The rules for training and learning are the same as for man-to-man defence up to the 9-meter line that were stated for all age groups above. There is nothing else to add for other age groups, so the space reserved for the description is empty!

U13:

U14:

U15:

U17:

U21:

### **4-2 defence**

U11: Not used for reasons already stated.

U12: This defence allows players in this age group to get the basic information on combined defences; the exposure of the front defensive line is diminished and the job of the two forwards, who have to defend further away from the goal and in a wider area, is more difficult. These two forwards have a more difficult job than the front three players in 3-3 defence, while the back line has an easier job compared to 3-3.

U13: The same as U12. Please note that learning and training this defence should take a lot of time when preparing the annual training plan, because it on the one hand improves individual defensive skills and on the other already contains enough elements and related information of shallower zone defences.

U14: Something similar could be said for this age group as well, except that less time should be dedicated to it in training sessions and that it should be used less often in matches in favour of other zone defences.

U15: The same as for U14.

U17: As it is less often used in matches, it is consequently less often included in training sessions in this age group.

U21: As this defence is rarely used in modern handball and since this is the last age group before the transition to the senior level, this defence is also increasingly less often used and trained. In other words, almost never at the U21 level. However, it should be included into the annual training plan lest the players forget it.

### **4+2 defence**

U11: The same as for other zone defences.

U12: The rules are the same for this age group up to the U21 level as the rules for the 4-2 defence, except for the assignments of the two forwards who have to isolate two backs by tightly marking them along the entire length and width of the court. Coaches and players have to decide for themselves on the assignment of the roles in situations when attackers change places or run into empty space. These details are simply beyond the scope of this seminar paper - this is true of other defences as well.

U13: As already mentioned, the rules are the same for all age groups up to U21.

U14:

U15:

U17:

U21:

### **3-2-1 defence (aggressive and shallow version)**

U11: Not used for reasons already described.

U12: We can sometimes include this defence when talking about simple defences - which means that only the basic rules and individual and team assignments are outlined at this age group.

U13: The difficulty level at this age group can increase and the basic information on the version when the attackers use two line players can be given to defenders. I recommend that the 3-2-1 defence be used without any transformations into other formations. If anything needs to change, only a few minor details of individual players should be adapted.

U14: My experience and knowledge of individual and team development shows that this defence should be the main defence from U14 up to U17 due the individual development and according to the principles of graduated situational training, especially now when there is no U19 age group in Slovenia.

U15: Similar to age groups U14 and U17 (partially).

U17: Due to the demanding trends of modern handball, this defence is used and trained less often than other defensive formations in terms of exercise quantity and the amount of technical/tactical requirements expected from individuals and teams. However, I believe this defence with a few modifications has recently been mounting a successful comeback to modern handball at the highest level.

U21: It is desired that players know this defence due to versatility in terms of defensive formations and, at least in this geographic area which can be deemed the cradle of 3-2-1, from a historical point of view to maintain tradition. This means not only being aware of this defence, but also being able to play it effectively and knowing its variants not only in terms of aggressiveness towards the player with the ball, but also in terms of reactions to situations when the opposition uses two line players - a tactic that has proven to be the best weapon against this defence.

## **5+1 defence**

U11: Not used.

U12: It is used in trainings and competitive matches despite my belief that it should be banned at this level, because tall players are not yet able to respond effectively in terms of technical/tactical skills and motor skills. Our goal should be to motivate and keep tall players in handball, so we must select exercises that offer them enough success so that they stay motivated and do not force them to lose motivation due to a lack of success.

U13: The same as for U12.

U14: The same as for U13.

U15: At this level, some individuals stand so far out that this defence should be taught, so that players know how to stop them and to be able to compete against them. However, the annual training and competition plan should place more focus on other exercises compared to 5+1 defence.

U17: At the U17 and U21 level, we should focus on the quality of collective defending in zone defences that are currently the most used in modern handball and the 3-2-1 defence. Less time and focus should be placed on combined defences over the course of the year and they should be trained shorter periods.

U21: The same as for U17.

## **5-1 defence**

U11: Not used.

U12: Players can be informed about this defence, but it should not be extensively covered in the annual training program in comparison to other deeper defences.

U13: The same as U12.

U14: This is a transitional age group when the focus changes from aggressive defences to shallow ones like 3-2-1 and other less aggressive formations.

U15: The same as U14.

U17: In this age group, the amount of exercises for this defence should already exceed the exercises for aggressive defences - this defence and the 6-0 defence should each take up 30% of the time during training sessions and matches. The remaining amount should be distributed among other defences. Perhaps a similar amount should be dedicated to the 3-2-1 defence and the final 10% should be used to train other defensive formations. This is what I believe at the moment. However, handball development is dynamic and it can well happen that the percentage ratio will change in favour of one or the other defence. In terms of shaping trends, coaches can have a big influence by working towards the future given the fact that Slovenian youth national teams regularly and successfully feature in major competitions.

U21: The same as U17, except that more focus is placed on individual and collective technical/tactical requirements.

#### **4-1+1 defence**

U11: Not used.

U12: Not used.

U13: Not used.

U14: Not used.

U15: Not used.

U17: As players already have a foundation and a lot of information regarding various defences, this defence can be demonstrated in training sessions and can even occasionally be used in matches to surprise the opposition.

U21: The same as U17, except that individual tasks and requirements in terms of various defensive assignments can be even more detailed. A more detailed analysis is used to solve certain situations on the court than in the previous age group.

#### **6-0 defence (aggressive and shallow version)**

U11: Not used.

U12: It can be demonstrated as a simple defensive formation, so that players will be able to distinguish between defensive width and depth and to understand the meaning of formation density in terms of width. In percentage terms, about 10% of the annual training program should be dedicated to this defence, which is similar to deep and combined defences at the U21 level.

U13: The same as U12, especially because most clubs that have both age groups do not have separate training sessions - teams only have separate competitions.

U14: Similar as U13 and U12, but more time should be dedicated to the aggressive version which should serve as a basis - the four middle defenders are very aggressive and this can optionally include the two outer defenders as well when the line player is standing at the far opposite side of the defence.

U15: The amount of time dedicated to this defence is slowly increased (aggressive and shallow version) in terms of individual and collective exercise range, the quantity of exercises in the annual training plan, and the use of this defence in matches. However, aggressive and combined defensive formations should still hold an advantage in percentage terms.

U17: At this level, a more detailed approach to training and learning this defence and all of its versions should be implemented and the amount of time dedicated to this defence in trainings and matches should gradually be increased.

U21: Similar can be said for U21, except for a lack of gradualism. In terms of quantity, this defence should, as I have already mentioned, take up at least about 30% of the time dedicated to training.

## Individual defensive elements

For a better overview of the difficulty levels and assignments individual players must master during the course of their development in training sessions and matches, I have prepared an overview of the individual defensive elements that players must get to know and master during the course of the development from the U11 to U21 level.

1. The basic defensive stance. We immediately come upon the problem of when the defensive stance is actually used and if other, less typical movement sequences can also be called defensive stances. I believe a more languid posture does not necessarily mean that a player is not completely concentrated on the task at hand especially when the attacker is less active and the defender can seemingly rest.
2. The defender must position himself frontally towards the defender only when the attacker is close enough that an immediate reaction is necessary - only then can we talk about a defensive stance that is being described in handball manuals.
3. This is a basic stance with horizontal foot placement.
4. It can be further broken down into high, middle and extremely low stance.
5. Another increasingly important aspect of modern handball is the diagonal stance which includes frequent changes of the foot that is placed forward - depending on the movement of the attackers and the ball.
6. Our focus is now diverted from various defensive stances - which all demand high concentration levels meaning that good defence often depends on mental aspects, because many players find playing without the ball boring and cannot find sufficient motivation levels - to individual movement patterns in defence.
7. We talk about lateral movement with horizontal foot placement or about shuffling but without touching of the feet for better balance.
8. A faster version of lateral movement used in defensive tasks is when one foot is placed over the other one - over the supporting leg.
9. An even faster movement is simply running, but - in terms of upper body position - players must focus on the ball and opposition movement on the entire court and not just on the activities of the player immediately in front of them.
10. Activities without physical contact can be broken down into activities that involve preventing shots in various ways and activities preventing attackers from receiving the ball or preventing passes in various directions to all playing positions.
11. Preventing a ground shot is in a way even more difficult than preventing a jump shot due to a larger repertoire of shots (leaning on both sides, overarm shot, underarm shot) - this means that more focus should be placed on preventing ground shots than jump shots. It is also worth noting that blocking ground shots usually occurs in one-on-one situations. Jump shots on the other hand are usually blocked in pairs.
12. Jump shot blocking requires good timing of the jump and arm movement, so it is important to train correct blocking technique - as close as possible to the graduated situational training principles.

13. Other defensive activities are linked to different ways of winning the ball without physical contact or at least preventing the defenders from receiving the ball unobstructed.
14. This can be done in various ways in terms of the positioning of the attacker with the ball and in terms of the distance to the attackers.
15. Defenders can mark defenders with their backs towards them; they can stand sideways in front of the attackers or frontally facing the attackers or coming from behind to surprise them at the last moment.
16. Furthermore, defensive activities can be broken down in terms of the laws of the game - physical contact, which is used much too often in Slovenia in my opinion, and aggressive focus on the ball.
17. Too often, referees allow physical contact that is against the laws of the game and should be sanctioned with cautions and 2-minute penalties. However, they are not and consequently handball is seen as an overly aggressive game with many injuries.
18. The only allowed physical contact should be with arms bent when facing the opponent frontally and standing in a diagonal position (in some exceptional cases, parallel positioning is also permissible).
19. Defenders should always maintain contact with the floor, but we often see how they obstruct attackers while in the air with their only goal being fouling the opponent.
20. Defensive activities in the air should be limited to blocking from the front (or from the hip for wing shots).
21. In Slovenia, defenders often come into physical contact with attackers from the side - especially when marking the line player - and this approach is much different than frontal physical contact with the aim to stop the opponent with a foul. Defenders step in front of the attackers from the side and, in doing so, come into contact with them from the side. This physical contact type is also used when marking wings in specific playing situations on the wings and when they are making a run to the line

## Conclusion

The basic idea of this seminar paper is to describe the training methods i.e. descriptions, exercises and use of various defences, used in my handball school in various age groups - from the youngest at the mini handball level to the end of the U21 level.

To gradually increase the difficulty of defence training at the individual and team (collective) level, I based the methods on years of practical experience and theoretical knowledge. During my career, I have come up with unique ideas and used them to prepare assignments and goals for various team and individual development stages. My ideas are also based on the graduated situational exercises and use of individual elements needed in defence - all of this is combined and included in various defensive systems to achieve effective collective collaboration. I devised a system to train various defensive elements for every individual at the most basic level - at first only the technical elements which are later upgraded based on the opponent activities at the one-on-one or two-on-two level until the end when teams of six players play against each other (with ever more difficult requirements). One of the basic methodical tools for developing a player's technical/tactical skills and abilities is, in my opinion, the selection of the correct defensive system in various development stages and at various ages. The foundation of my ideas is the handball legacy of former Yugoslavia where, contrary to the Scandinavian nations, a multitude of defensive formations were used in the effort to win games. It is my professional opinion that this is the reason why national teams from this area are more successful at the world stage than others and have less problems adapting to various playing styles than other teams (compared to teams from Northern or Eastern Europe or North Africa) had or still have. I believe that a larger repertoire of defensive skills in handball acquired during the development years improves not only the defensive efficiency but also increases the versatility of attacking activities. My main focus, due to various reasons described here, was to gradually teach players about defensive formations from aggressive defences, such as 3-3, combined and only somewhat aggressive defences, such as 4-2, to the final stage of less aggressive defences that rely mainly on blocking and are used at the U21 level. However, this does not mean that what was taught at the initial levels is not trained anymore at the U21 level. By adapting the difficulty and using various defensive formations, we can also accelerate individual development in various development stages (i.e. age groups). Coaches must decide how to select various defences at various stages. Currently, most coaches want to have three collective defences at their disposal: plan A is 6-0, plan B is 3-2-1 and plan C is 5+1. In my opinion, the reason for this is that there is not enough time to effectively train more than three defences during one season. It is therefore even more important that the players and teams get sufficient information and training regarding various defensive formations in different development stages, because this makes the decisions of senior coaches on the alternative defensive systems that much easier. In recent years, the opinion in Slovenia is that not enough attention has been placed on the repertoire of defensive formations. Some believe this will have a negative effect in the long run, because our advantages

stemming from the area of former Yugoslavia will be lost and so too will our ability to adapt to varying playing styles.

**SLOVENIAN HANDBALL FEDERATION**

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**AN INTEGRAL PREPARATION OF A HANDBALL TEAM  
FOR AN IMPORTANT MATCH**

**THE PREPARATION OF CIMOS KOPER HANDBALL TEAM FOR  
THE RETURN MATCH vs. KIELCE HANDBALL TEAM  
QUARTER FINALS OF THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE IN THE 2011/12  
SEASON**

**(Seminar paper)**

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**Ljubljana, July 2013**

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## **AN INTEGRAL PREPARATION OF A HANDBALL TEAM FOR AN IMPORTANT MATCH**

### **THE PREPARATION OF CIMOS KOPER HANDBALL TEAM FOR THE RETURN MATCH vs. KIELCE HANDBALL TEAM**

#### **QUARTER FINALS OF THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE IN THE 2011/12 SEASON**

##### **Abstract:**

In this seminar paper we have described an integrated preparation of a handball team for an important match, in our case the match which led Cimos Koper handball team in the quarter finals of the Champions League in 2011/12 season. The preparation for this kind of match requires maximum professional organizational and substantive approach. Physical, technical tactical and psychological contents are important in the preparation for each match. For this particular match we focused on technical-tactical and psychological preparation. After we had analysed the first match in Poland, we divided the tasks and we thoroughly prepared the material for presenting a detailed analysis on the computer. Group tactics as well as individual tactics of each player were analysed. As the match was very important, we paid special attention to psychological preparation with a lot of formal and informal, individual and group discussions. We were very successful and we decided to present the way in which the preparation was carried out in the microcycle prior to the match.

##### **Key words:**

Physical preparation, technical tactical preparation, psychological preparation

# 1 Introduction

Each match is important for a sportsman but in the season full of matches (championship, cup and European matches) there is always one that is more important than the others. The preparation for this kind of match is of extreme importance. Days and hours before such a match can be decisive for achieving the set aim. Our success depends on quality integrated preparation for this kind of match. We must pay special attention to the microcycle during the week prior to the match and to the fact whether there is another challenging match in the same week. If there is one, it is highly recommended (if the match is important for the prestige and higher rating of the Slovenian handball) to reach an agreement with the opposing team in order to postpone the match to a later date.

We are going to present the preparation for an important match where there is an ordinary weekly microcycle. The preparation for the match may be divided into three parts: physical, technical tactical and psychological preparation. In this seminar paper we are going to present an integrated preparation of a handball team for an important match, in this case the preparation of the return match of the Champions League between HC CIMOS Koper and HC TARGE KIELCE from Kielce for the classification in the quarter finals of the Champions League in the 2011/12 season. This match was very important for the club (Cimos), the players and the technical staff, in fact it was one of the most important matches not only in the 2011/12 season but in the history of the club. Therefore the preparation for this match was also very important for achieving success. Our team returned from Kielce with a minimal defeat of one goal (27-26). The chances for the classification in the quarter finals were therefore realistic and achievable despite favoured guests. We had the whole microcycle for an integrated preparation for this match. We made an integrated analysis immediately after the match and in the first part of the microcycle we prepared the material for the technical-tactical preparation for the second part of the microcycle. For the analysis we used only statistics from the match, the special statistics led by the goalkeepers' coach and we also prepared abstracts of the recordings for the group and individual technical tactical preparation with the use of a simple programme for the preparation of abstracts - VLC media player. We tried to obtain some information about their reaction to the result which was not very favourable for their team and if the rumours about problems they had concerning fragmentation from the aspect of homogeneity were true and if the team was, due to all this, additionally vulnerable. We approached an integrated preparation for the match with all these information.

## **2 Contents**

A professional approach to an integrated preparation of a handball team before an important match in terms of physical, technical tactical and psychological readiness.

## **3 Methods of work**

The description and the presentation of material we had at hand before the HC CIMOS-HC TARGE KIELCE match for an integrated preparation for the return match of the Champions League.

## **4 Discussion**

An integrated preparation of a handball match includes three important parts:

- 1 Physical preparation for the match
- 2 Technical tactical preparation for the match
- 3 Psychological preparation for the match

## 5 Physical preparation before the match

The fitness of each player and the appropriate management of the team is an important factor in achieving the desired success in a game of handball. Motor abilities such as strength, agility, speed, flexibility and endurance represent the foundation for the successful handball play. Good fitness is the basis for the successful operation of other systems in the body as it works in synergy with them.

In the period of competitions fitness is at a high level and the units of training that are designed for physical preparation are planned to maintain the current level of readiness.

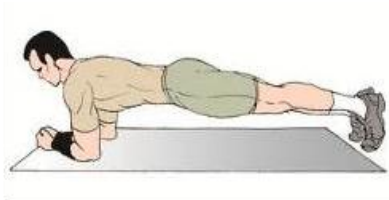
In our case there are contents in the first part of the microcycle (Monday and Tuesday) that are designed to maintain physical fitness and are intertwined with technical-tactical handball contents. Two units of training are designed for the stabilization and proprioception and to work with weights at the gym (Tuesday and Thursday).

Fitness maintenance: speed endurance, endurance in strength of agility and speed are organized in the form of handball contents in the first two days of the microcycle. Agility and speed were trained with transitions into counter-attack in a 3 on 3 game without dribble or with single dribble. Endurance in strength was trained with contents which illustrate the game in defence (stop, push, 1 on 1 and 2 on 2 game). Speed endurance was trained with group transition into counter-attack and with active return in defence by preventing the opponent's counter-attack (the actual technical tactical contents are intertwined as the preparation for the match).

Here are some practical examples of morning trainings designed for stabilization and proprioception as an introduction to the work with weights.

**Exercises for stabilization and proprioception (exercises for static strain or a definite number of recurrences):**

Plank



super series: abdominal, back



Raising the knee on the heel



raise on the heel



feet on the ground 90°



Knee - elbow touch



lateral knee - elbow touch



Narrow grip (push - ups)



neutral "standard grip" (push - ups)



**Example of strength maintenance at the gym during the week:**

Pull



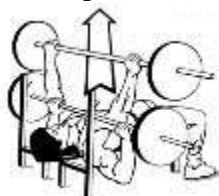
80/90% 4 repetitions x 4 series

Weightlifting



80/90% 4 repetitions x 4 series

Bench press



80/90% 4 repetitions x 3 series

Two morning trainings (on Tuesday and Thursday) were designed for maintaining physical abilities with these contents.

Informal conversations with players were carried out during the training and intertwined with psychological contents which are to be dealt with later.

## **6 Technical-tactical preparation before the match**

Handball is a team game and the result depends on the game of each individual player and on the quality of their cooperation. The competitive achievement can not be precisely measured and it also depends directly on the game of the opponent. Therefore, a great deal of attention in top handball is paid to the study of the opponents.

In the phase of studying we collect information about the opponent and we analyse their matches. We also carry out a structural game analysis of individual players and functional analysis of the opponent's game system based on videos. We also prepare abstracts of matches with the help of the computer and the appropriate software. In the next phase we combine all important information that we have concerning the opponent. Then we prepare a tactical plan for the match where we set the rules about the way in which players must react in specific situations during the match. We convey information from this plan to the players through joint meetings, trainings and individual conversations. Individual and group as well as common trainings are adjusted to the preparation of the opponent. We gathered the information for our match from collective and individual tactics before the first match. We only added our last match that we played in Poland and we analysed thoroughly.

A thorough study of the opponent is the most important factor of the technical-tactical preparation. In the strict sense of the word it represents the sequence of coach's tasks before the beginning of the preparation for the opponent. In a broader sense it is a process of collecting and compiling information. The first group of tasks represents the gathering of all information about the opponent that we have at our disposal. Our indispensable sources of information are the internet, videos of matches and various media that report about handball. It is very important to see some live matches but this is rarely possible. We can also gather information by using connections and acquaintances among coaches, players and even journalists but we have to check the reliability of such information. For the Champions League the videos are available on EHF TV. Through software we recorded some matches before our first match and we also got the match of the Championship League between Wisla and Kielce. We gathered some information from compatriots who currently play in the Polish team of Wisla Plock. We also added our match with them and we made a complete analysis as the preparation for the return match.

The studying of HC Kielce consisted of:

- The group tactics analysis that includes tactical elements in which two, three or four players take part and they want to solve common tactical tasks,
- The individual tactics analysis that includes tactical elements which are carried out by an individual player in the game
- The group tactics analysis that includes the operation of all players in the game within the chosen tactical plan and tactical combination.

The analysis was made by using VLC software with which we cut out the abstracts and by the Sportplan drawing system.

## 6.1 Kielce players group tactics:

While watching the recordings of several matches including our match we found out that the cooperation among the players was slightly different if the organizers were Zorman or Tkaczyk. We noticed that there is much more cooperation in offensive group activities between Tkaczyk in Jurecki on one side and between Zorman and Buntič on the other side. We also noticed that Musa or Stojkovič (line players) came more to the fore when Zorman was playing (picture 1). Jurecki also repeatedly played with Musa in 2 on 2 game (picture 2). The cooperation of the left back and right back players with the wings was not very good as both wings got very few useful balls. Time and position analysis of shots and hits of Kielce players showed that in the first half time there was no hit from the wings and just one missed shot from the right wing. In the second half time they scored three goals. One was scored from the left wing with one extra player; one from the right wing after the ball had bounced from our goal keeper towards the wing and just one goal was scored by the right wing in cooperation with the right back.

Picture 1



Picture 2



We prepared defence players for the match when Tkaczyk or Zorman are the central back players (play makers). We also paid much more attention to cover the line player in 2 on 2 game with Jurecki and we tolerated somewhat speculative game of the first defenders.

## **6.2 Kielce players' individual tactics:**

We started the analysis of individual players before the first match, now we have thoroughly analysed those players who caused us some problems in the first match. The Kielce game is based primarily on the game of back players as they are prominent scorers and on their cooperation with line players Musa and Stojkovič. We analysed primarily the individual game of Buntič, Jurecki, Zorman, Tkaczyk, Musa and Stojkovič. We paid special attention to the goal keeper Szmal.

Buntič is the one that caused the most of our problems and he took the responsibility in decisive moments. That is why we made a special analysis of his game and the preparation for the return match.

### **6.2.1 Buntič Denis**

He is an extremely physical player. He is 198 cm tall and he weighs 98 kilograms. He is a sharp shooter from afar and he is very strong in the 1 on 1 game. His cooperation with the line player is a bit worse. He takes responsibility in decisive moments when he does not cooperate with other players. During the match he came to the centre by switching positions thus causing a lot of problems to the third defence player by dribbling (picture 3) or a shot from the ground (picture 4). He is extremely strong in dribbling. His dribbling is stronger towards the middle. During this match he also took the responsibility in the last minutes with individual actions. By analysing the time and the position of shots in the last third of the match we can see that he shot three times and hit twice namely the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> goals when the score was still active in our favour.

On the basis of our analysis we decided that we would make the centre of our defence more compact when he was moving to the middle. We would try to push him as far away from the middle as we could. Shots from the wide position will be studied by the goalkeeper in cooperation with the goalkeepers' coach. If the score will be tight or the game passive we can double him and speculate the wing or the line player as it is very likely that he will try to complete the attack without cooperation.

Picture 3



Picture 4



### 6.2.2 Tkaczyk Grzegorz

He is 195 cm tall and he weighs 95 kg. He has more shooting than organizational characteristics. In the Kielce team he plays the central back as well as the left back. He is an outstanding shooter from afar from the first step (picture 5) and he has a good penetration in width. He is sometimes sloppy when passing the ball. In Kielce he lost three balls (technical mistake) due to his carelessness (picture 6). He also has a very strong personality and in decisive moments he takes responsibility, sometimes even irrationally. He wants to be at the fore front and you sometimes get the feeling that he competes with Zorman and Buntič in demonstrating his importance on the court. We also made an agreement not to enable him easy shots from afar and to allow him wide penetrations especially in situations of a passive game as it was highly probable that he would try to complete the attack by himself.

Picture 5



Picture 6



### 6.2.3 Jurecki Michal

He is 198 cm tall and he weighs 110 kg. He is extremely physical in a 1 on 1 game and he is even a more pronounced shooter from afar (picture 7). In a 2 on 2 game he cooperates with the line player (picture 8). When he tries to cooperate with other players in a team game he is

very unreliable and he loses a lot of balls. He seemed tense and under a lot of pressure on the first match as he could not come to the fore with shots from afar. He tried to cooperate with the line player and left wing many times but he lost several balls. We can see from the time and position analysis of shots that in the last part of the first half time and in the initial part of the second half time he lost 6 consecutive balls. His shot realization in the match was  $\frac{1}{4}$  and 7 technical faults.

We decided that we would take a very aggressive approach towards him and with constant pressure when he will be in possession of the ball. He would feel provoked if he could not play and shoot undisturbed. We counted on the fact that he could lose a ball with which we would start a counter-attack. We also agreed to play in a more compact way in a 2 on 2 game with a line player. In a game with an extra player we decided to make him lose a ball with a defence movement and a fake movement towards him.

Picture 7



Picture 8



#### 6.2.4 Zorman Uroš

He is 189 cm tall and weighs 96 kg. He is the central back. He is extremely strong in penetrations. His typical penetration is on the left after a fake shot from the ground in the middle (picture 9) as well as from a wide position between the first and the second defence player (picture 10). He cooperates with other back players very well and he tries to take the central defence players and to block other defence players from left and right by a wide crossing and thus to enable a smooth shot of the back players. He is also a good shooter from the ground (side shot) but in Kielce he does not apply this kind of shot very often. He cooperates well with line players Musa and Stojkovič. We agreed about him that we would prevent such penetrations with a compact formation in defence. When it comes to crossing two defence players will push him and they will not allow him to block them. In precarious situations he takes responsibility and he wants to end the attack himself thus we must pay special attention to him only.

Picture 9



Picture 10



### 6.2.5 Rosinski Tomasz

He is 192 cm tall and weighs 86 kg. He is not as strong physically as the other back players. He is a central back but in our match he played left back as a substitute for Jurecki. He is a good shooter from afar if you let him shoot freely (picture 11), but he is not as experienced a player as the others. If the coach chooses him as an alternative for Jurecki, it is necessary to treat him aggressively and not to allow him shots without pressure.

Picture 11



### 6.2.6 Musa Željko

He is a 200 cm tall line player who weighs 103 kg. He is physically very strong and cooperates well in a 2 on 2 game (picture 12). His physical characteristics enable him wide formations in the form of blocks from which a defence player gets out with difficulty. From time and position analysis of shots we can see that he cooperates much more with players on the left side of the attack and in the middle. He scored 4 goals and extorted 2 penalties, all on the left side of the attack. We agreed that he has to be pushed out of place in cooperation with the defence player standing next to him. It is also important to keep the defence compact in a

2 on 2 game with him so that he does not have any space to set the block (picture 13). In case the defence player remains alone in a game on him it is his task to intercept the ball and to push him out as much as he can with his body only in order not to be suspended.

Picture 12



Picture 13



### 6.2.7 Stojković Rastko

He is 191 cm tall and weighs 104 kg. He is a line player who played very little in Kielce. He does not play in defence. He is very agile and versatile in attack and the shooter of the 7m penalty.

### 6.2.8 Jurasik Mariusz

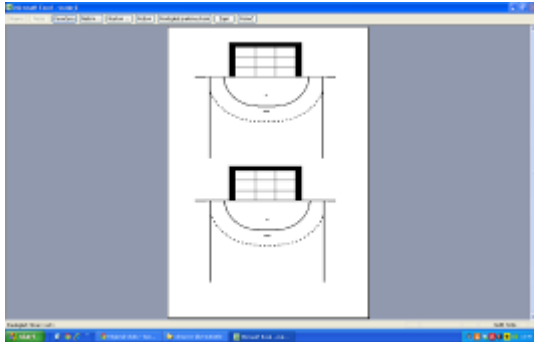
He is 190 cm tall and weighs 98 kg. He is the right back. In our match he played for a very short time in the right wing as a substitute for Olafsson. As he is more the right back than the right wing he is best with shots when he comes from a combination from the right back position.

### 6.2.9 Olafsson Thorir, Kuchczynski Patryk, Jachlewski Mateusz, Tomczak Bartolomiej

The first two players are left-handed on the right wing and the other two players are right-handed on the left wing. During the first match Tomczak only shot one penalty, Kuchczynski did not even play. Very few useful balls and goals came from the wings. From the time and position analysis of the shots we can see that in the first half time in the position attack only one shot (a missed shot) was carried out from the right wing (Olafsson) and one goal was scored by Jachlewski from a counter-attack. In the second half time they shot three times from the right wing (one missed shot) and in one shot from the right wing the ball bounced from our goalkeeper into Olafsson's hands. Only one goal was scored from the left wing in the game with one extra player.

The goalkeepers' coach and the goalkeepers had to study the shots from the wing because we expected the Polish players to play more to the wings because we would make the centre of our defence very compact. By using a form the goalkeepers' coach in cooperation with the goalkeepers wrote down the positions from where the wing players shot and the direction of the shot towards the goal (picture 14).

.Picture 14



#### 6.2.10 Szymal Slavomir

He is a goalkeeper of extreme quality but he was absent for a long time due to an injury. On our match he played after a long period of time and we could notice that he was lacking his proper feeling which is so characteristic of him. He had a lot of problems with shots from the ground (Skube in Bombač) and also from the wing, left and right. As saving shots is very important his not being in the game for a longer time was an advantage for us.

### 6.3 The team tactics of Kielce players

We divided the team tactics analysis into two parts:

1. The attack phase which was divided into two parts:
  - The attack against the set defence
  - The transition into counter-attack
  
2. The defence phase which was also divided into two parts:
  - The defence formation against the position attack
  - Returning into defence

### 6.3.1 The attack phase

#### 6.3.1.1 The attack on the set defence

We could see during the match and from the recording that the Kielce game is based primarily on the back players' game. The exchanging of places and crossing were made with two initial combinations at the most with which they tried to make the middle of the court less compact:

- the sweeping in of the wing as the second line player (wide between the first and the second defence players to the opposite side) while the line player is standing between the second and the third defence player or wide between the first and the second defence player. This combination was used more with the running of the left wing and the position of the line player on the left side of the attack. As the line player stood between the second and the third defence player they tried to create a surplus on the right side of the court and play 2 on 2 or to continue with wide crossings (picture 15). When the line player stood wide between the first and the second defence player they tried a 2 on 2 game with the line player (wide) or 1 on 1 in the middle or wide crossings to open our defence (picture 16).

Picture 15



Picture 16



- the game of the central back with the line player who is running towards the ball (picture 17) and playing with the opposite back player and at the same time he is going to block the second right defence player. On the other side of the court the central back and the right back switch their position without the ball. This combination was carried out more in the second half time and mostly with the exchange of position between the central back and the right back. They were looking for a 2 on 2 game on the left side with the line player (picture 18) or a shot from afar or a 1 on 1 game in the middle with Buntič (picture 19).

Picture 17



Picture 18



Picture 19



We agreed at the first as well as at the second combination to make our defence more compact not to leave the defence players by themselves in the centre or in a 1 on 1 or 2 on 2 game with the line player. Therefore, the emphasis was on an extremely aggressive and compact defence in the centre and if we had to ease let it be from the wing.

They mostly used these two initial combinations and we thoroughly prepared ourselves for them and the game in defence.

#### **(a) The attack on set defence with an extra player**

In the game with an extra player they used two initial combinations:

- the line player is set wide between the first and the second defence player, the central back spreads wide and passes the ball to the back player who runs without the ball towards the third defence player and he creates a situation where a 3 on 2 game is played (picture 20),
- the wide transition of the left wing on the opposite side of the defence, the line player is standing between the second and the third defence player. The central back is playing wide at first and then he is crossing wide with the right back and they try to create man advantage (a 3 on 2 game) on the left side of the court (picture 21).

Picture 20



Picture 21



We also made an agreement here to put a lot of pressure on the back players with the ball and try to get them into a situation where the passes would be made under pressure and it seemed possible that they would make some bad passes or the last pass would be bad and thus the shot would be bad also.

**(b) The attack on the set defence with one player less**

In the game with one player less the crossing of the central back with the left wing and the running of the right wing to the line followed. By using this tactics they tried to create a 3 on 3 game on the left side of the attack (picture 22).

Picture 22



### 6.3.1.2 *The transition into the counter-attack*

As there was not an individual counter-attack they carried out an organized group counter-attack with a long crossing of the left and right back and thus looking for surplus to the right (picture 23). Our task was to return in defence and to close the centre as fast as we could and in the shortest possible way.

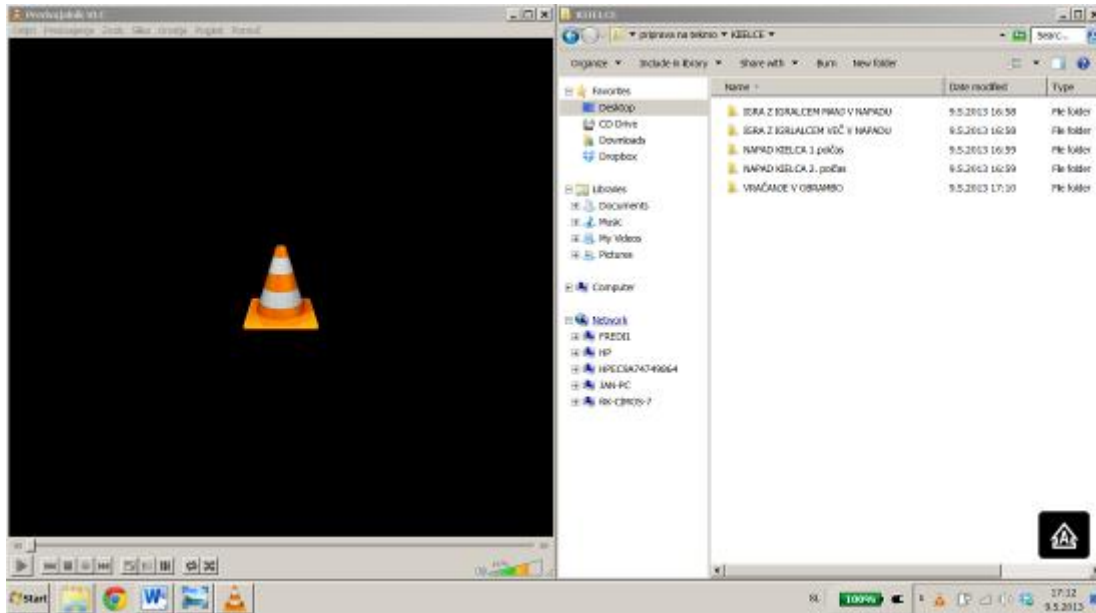
Picture 23



The presentation of the material, the analysis of the Kielce game in attack to the set defence and the phase of returning in defence was on the agenda of the afternoon training on Wednesday. We gathered in the video analysis room 90 minutes before the training and with the use of the computer we at first showed to the players the time and position arrangement of shots performed by the Kielce players. By doing this we wanted to show where the attack actions ended and to find out where we mostly failed in defence. Each player could see by himself where our defence was bad and who are the players taking responsibility in the decisive moments of the attack. At the same time we analysed the return into defence after a goal or after a lost ball. In this way our players could see where all the weaknesses were and how to make use of them if they could not return on time and organize the game again. When Zorman, Buntič and Tkaczyk were on the back positions, their defence formation was very vulnerable, Buntič remained with the third defence player and Zorman with the second defence player. We saw that the defence was weak and we had to take advantage of it. We also studied their returning into defence which was not very good. Therefore we combined the training of defence with the transition into the counter-attack.

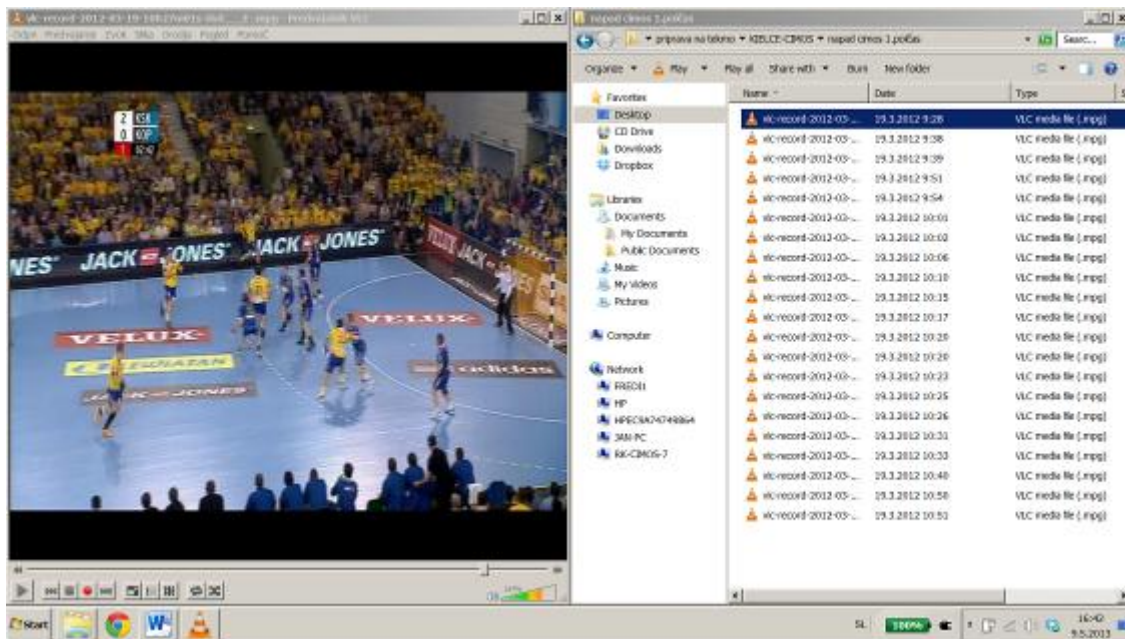
After that we showed all the above mentioned situations with extracts and analysed each extract itself by using the computer and the video projector. The extracts are cut in such a way that we can use them when analysing an individual, group and team tactics (picture 24).

Picture 24.



We choose what we want to watch, we open the file and download it on vlc – a programme that helps us to make extracts and to check them (picture 25).

Picture 25

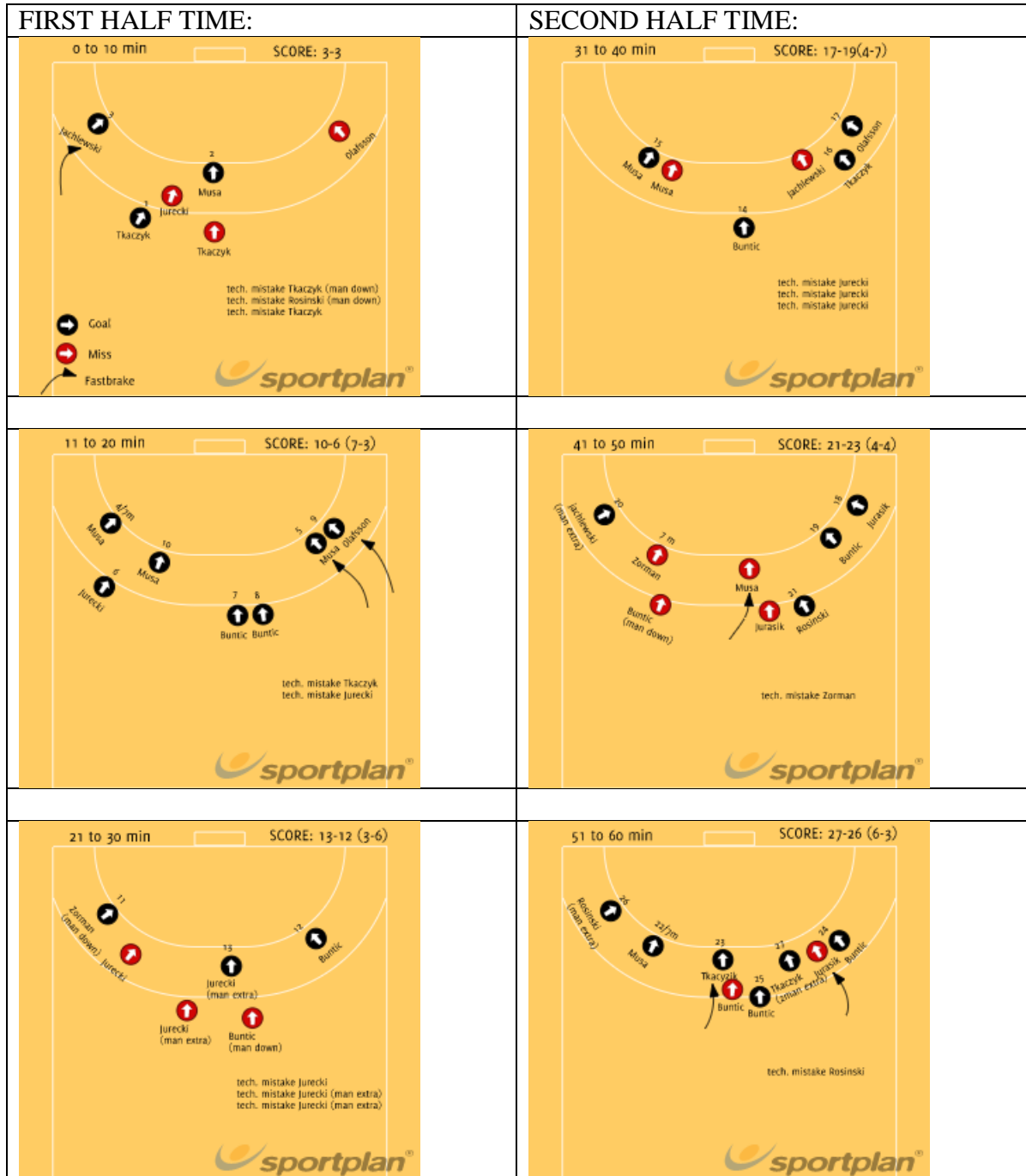


When watching the extracts one group of players had to make notes and to memorize the Kielce game in these elements so that they could simulate the Kielce game and try to simulate the game of individual players. Thus the defence phase would be qualitatively prepared in all segments of the game. They exchanged opinions about how to solve situations best in the

defence phase in a 6 on 6 game and in a game with one player less and an extra player. After the agreement had been reached they had to stick to it and there was no diversion.

After watching the recording there was a 30-minute break and the preparation for the training on the court where we first warmed-up and then simulated the Kielce game on one half and precisely defined the movements of our defence players and corrected eventual mistakes. On the court we allowed the possibility of an additional agreement in the cooperation of two defence players until we reached a concrete agreement. Short matches followed in which the attackers simulated the Kielce game and tried to go into the counter-attack in the shortest way and with fast transitions and to use the slowness of their back and line players in returning into defence and to try to transfer the ball on the left side of the court.

### 6.3.1.3 TIME AND POSITION ANALYSIS OF KIELCE PLAYERS SHOTS



## 6.3.2 The defence phase

### 6.3.2.1 The defence formation against the position attack

Their typical defence formation is 6:0 with falling out towards the attackers and those players who are not pronounced shooters. Two central defence players could be: Musa, Jurecki, Grabarczyk (he only plays in defence) and Rosinski. They are all very strong defence players but they are not agile enough to play this way. When at the beginning Bogunovič, Bombač, Krivokapič played as back players they acted successfully but in the second part of the first half time when we changed the back players (Skube, Bombač, Brumen) they were not very successful anymore because they did not adjust their game to our physically weaker but very agile players. When we managed to open their defence and create some space for a 1 on 1 game for Skube and Bombač their problems began (pictures 26 and 27).

Picture 26



Picture 27



In spite of the fact that we did not have pronounced shooters they continued with falling out towards our back players and the game increased to 2 on 2 with line players (pictures 28 and 29).

Picture 28



Picture 29



We decided that we would play the game against the set defence in a tolerant and disciplined way. We would try to begin again with players capable of scoring from afar (Bogunovič and Krivokapič). In case we would not be successful we would try with a skilful and agile back line again with penetrations and a 1 on 1 game or create situations for a 2 on 2 game.

**(a) A defence formation with an extra player against the position attack**

When playing with an extra player in defence they played impulsively with idle running towards our back players and they were completely lost when our wing ran on the line and then back (picture 30).

Picture 30



We agreed that with one player less we would use the initial combination as in the 6 on 6 game where the wing runs on the line and with substitutes of back players we would try to drag their defence players even deeper and thus create some space for the wing to find the appropriate shooting position.

**(b) A defence formation with one less player against the position attack**

When playing with an extra player they played on the line and not so compact in the centre of the defence but when the ball was on the left or right the first defence player disabled a wide penetration and left a lot of space for the wing (picture 31).

Picture 31



We agreed that we would try to play combinations for shooting from the wing. If Buntič was on the court we would try to score a goal from the left side of the attack.

### 6.3.2.2 *Returning in defence*

Their returning in defence was very slow and unorganized. Musa, Buntič and Zorman returned slowly and we made advantage of it several times in the second half time (picture 32).

Picture 32



We agreed to play fast in the counter-attack and with a fast centre but not always and not by all means. In case that Stojkovič played as line player we would have to prevent the substitutions of Buntič and Zorman

We had material presentation, the Kielce defence game analysis and their transition into the counter-attack on Thursday afternoon training, 90 minutes prior to the training. Like the day before, we used the computer and video projector to show the position analysis of our shots on the first match. It was evident that we were very unsuccessful at shooting from afar and that we scored almost all our goals by penetrating from the counter-attack (8 goals). Everyone could see when he was or was not successful. While watching the recording a group of players was responsible for studying the Kielce game in defence. Thus we could simulate a

similar type of game on the training – a game with aggressive running towards our back players. We agreed that we would try to open the defence of Kielce with three initial combinations at the most. We would try to split the defence in two parts by changing the position of back players on one side of the attack and by placing the pivot on the other side between the second and third defence player. In this way the back players would have more space for penetrations or to play a 2 on 2 game with a greater number of dangerous transitions or a line player.

A discussion among the players followed, especially between the central back Bombač and two line players about the most appropriate and efficient formation both in terms of timing as well as in terms of position. When the agreement was adopted it was fixed.

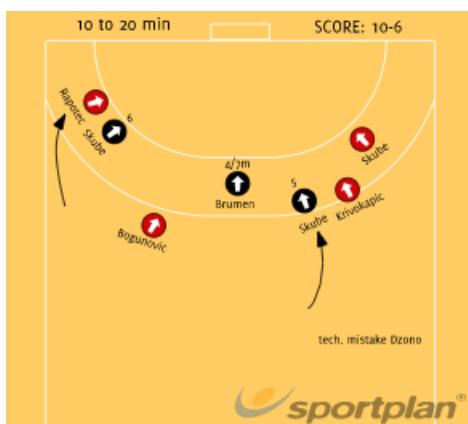
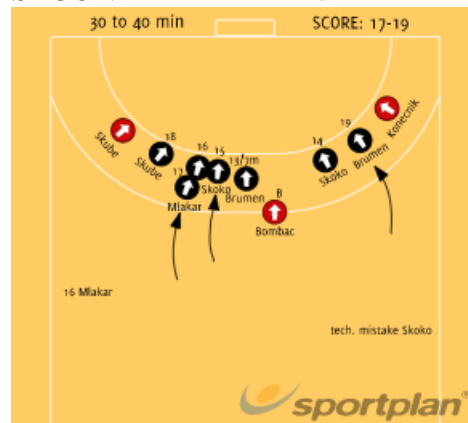
After watching the recording a 30-minute break followed and the preparation for the training. We first trained the attack on the half of the court and tried to repeat all the initial combinations we agreed about and that we would try to open their defence formation. We corrected details and allowed the last possibility of agreement among the players. Short matches followed when we trained returning in defence among other things.

### 6.3.2.3 TIME AND POSITION ANALYSIS OF OUR TEAM'S SHOTS

FIRST HALF TIME:



SECOND HALF TIME:



## 7 PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION FOR THE GAME

Psychological preparation influences the sportsman's successful performance beside physical, technical and tactical preparation. We usually become aware of its importance in matches when things turned out not exactly as we planned. It is important that we start the psychological preparation during trainings and not only shortly before matches.

We are well aware that different physical characteristics (speed, strength, endurance), well-learned technical elements (passing the ball, shots,...) and tactical skills can have a strong influence on our performance. But we know little about psychological characteristics that also have a strong influence on success in sports. These characteristics are:

- 1) self-confidence,
- 2) motivation,
- 3) concentration,
- 4) control of emotions,
- 5) the level of activation and relaxation,
- 6) stress management.

We make these characteristics better with psychological preparation in order to:

- 1) reduce variations in performance,
- 2) raise our limits,
- 3) reduce the difference between training and match,
- 4) overcome downs and crisis,
- 5) accelerate progress.

The most important psychological methods and techniques are:

- 1) relaxation and activation techniques,
- 2) presentation,
- 3) monologue,
- 4) setting goals,
- 5) routines before matches,
- 6) the analysis of sports problem,
- 7) changing useless thoughts.

We use these methods and techniques on matches to achieve optimal condition in which we achieve better results and we feel better. Athletes sometimes say "today it was not my day, I did not have the right feeling, it did not go" as if someone or something outside them had control over their performance. This is not true because we can obtain the right feelings by using certain techniques and despite external circumstances achieve optimal condition (Tušák, 2003).

In our case we tried to work especially on self-confidence, motivation and concentration. We did all this on the first training on Monday morning when we went into wellness centre. As

we arrived late on Sunday afternoon the Monday morning training was focused on relaxation. While relaxing in a pleasant environment we had a lot of individual interviews and we tried to obtain information about feelings after an active result and information about the fact if they believe that the classification in the quarter finals is a real option. Athletes are more open and receptive for confession in a relaxing environment and in informal conversation. In every conversation we tried to calm down the athletes and to set weekly goals to them as a means of keeping a high level of motivation and concentration (for example: today we are going to train games with transitions into the counter-attack as this is going to be our means of achieving easy goals; try to be concentrated in every exercise, do not think too much about the match,...).

In the first part of the microcycle (Monday and Tuesday) beside physical preparation intertwined with handball contents we carried out individual and group conversations about setting the goals – how to do something in order to be successful. In every exercise we emphasized its importance for scoring the goal, for example: in the exercise of stopping the attackers in a 2 on 2 game we emphasized the importance of compactness for closing the space against the line player.

In the second part of microcycle (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) we combined psychological preparation with the help of audio-visual contents.

On Wednesday and Thursday we set even more concrete objectives for training and, indirectly, for the match while watching the videos (example: the right side of their defence is a bit weaker as Buntič is not a remarkable defence player). We have to increase attack activities in this part of the court, this is a specific task which has to be carried out on the training.

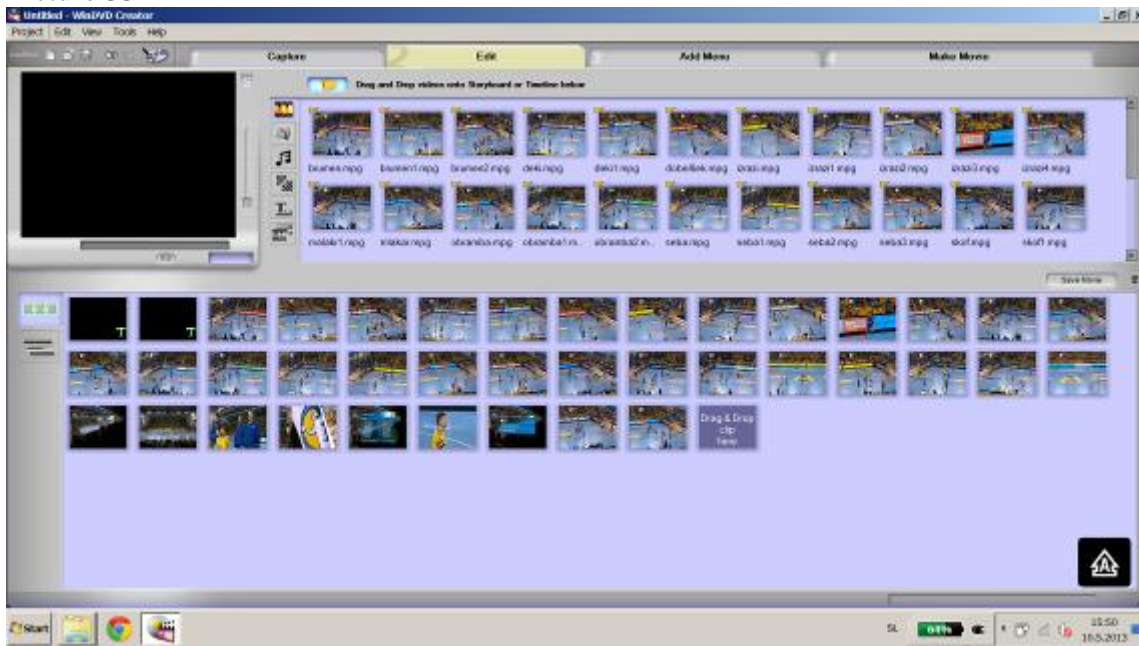
On trainings we required a strict implementation of the things we agreed about and a high level of concentration even with specific tasks as for example: in transitions into the counter-attack it is forbidden to lose balls, density is obligatory in defence and we all together raise the level of defence. A specific task was included in every exercise. We wanted to keep a high level of activation and concentration. We carried out each task to a successful performance and thus influenced on self-confidence and motivation.

Friday morning training was designed exclusively for psychological preparation: to increase confidence, motivation. At first we met for a coffee where we discussed whether we did everything we had to and whether there was something we did not do. After finishing the coffee we went into the video room where we showed some abstracts of our opponents' individual game. They were made with vlc programme where everyone further observed the players. We paid a lot of attention to defence and therefore we further emphasized the information about Kielce players. At the end we prepared a 10-minute video based on positive experiences from the past. In this video we further activated motivation with music and motivational phrases. The abstract and the structure of the video were not coincidental but we made it following an already used principle from the past.

The introductory part is the presentation of the match and the memory of the environment where there was a lot of pressure and we were able of winning a positive result. After that extracts of goals, game and fighting in defence, expressions of satisfaction and self-confidence and pictures of these expressions follow. During all this time we were listening to Metallica music as this is the rock group our players listen to in the changing room before important matches.

The video is made of extracts that we used for the technical tactical preparation and we put them together into the whole with the help of Wind dvd creator programme (picture 33).

Picture 33



During the afternoon training we continued with the psychological preparation which was intertwined with handball contents like shooting and motivation games, the last group discussions and the instructions for an independent match preparation. We usually had a free morning on the day of the match and every player prepared for the match by himself. This habit originated in the opinion that a team consists of individuals and that everyone has different methods for an optimal match preparation. The only common thought was that everyone has to find the right measure of precompetitive tension providing it is not harmful as the team consists mainly of experienced players although they are still young. Everyone knew for himself what is best for him before the match.

- The meeting before the match

Meetings before the match are usually very short – no more than 15 minutes. The instructions are short, concrete and clear. We try to express the most important points with certain sentences: in defence the highest density is in the centre, a constant pressure on Buntič, Musa must not be left alone in the game on the line, ... The last motivational instruction: we play at home and we have the opportunity to enter the history of the club. Let's make good use of this moment because it may be the only one for some of you.

**Organizational structure of the microcycle for an important match:**

<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>
<b>Morning</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>morning</b>	<b>morning</b>	<b>morning</b>	<b>morning</b>
Regeneration training and relaxation	Fitness	Free	Fitness	Spending time together and watching video	Free for individual preparation
<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>afternoon</b>	<b>afternoon</b>	<b>afternoon</b>	<b>afternoon</b>
Agility and speed training with handball contents	Strength endurance and speed endurance trainin with hadnball contents	Analysis and preparation with video  Defence training and transizion in counter. attack	Analysis and preparation with video  Attack training and returning in defence	Motivation games. Shoting and short meeting before the match	<b>MATCH</b>

## **8 Conclusion**

In this seminar paper we tried to describe an example of an integrated preparation for an important match and how we got ready for the return match for the classification in Champions League (the classification among the eight best teams in Europe) between RK CIMOS and HC TARGE KIELCE. We described the complete course of microcycle with daily contents. In the first part of the microcycle we paid most of our attention on physical preparation which included handball contents and this led us into the field of technical tactical preparation. The second part of the microcycle was exclusively dedicated to technical tactical preparation for the game in defence and in attack. During the whole microcycle the psychological preparation was in course, less intensive at the beginning and more intense on Friday, the day before the match. The technical staff prepared the material for video analysis and the motivational video at the end of the microcycle. We all know that we played as we had planned – with a great game in defence where we disabled the back and line players (Jurecki without a goal, Zorman 1 goal, Buntič 2 goals, Rosinski without a goal, Tkaczyk 4 goals, Musa without a goal, Stojkovič 2 goals from the game) and excellent performance of our goalkeeper from the wing, with 9 saves of 18 shots. In the attack phase we scored 7 goals from the counter-attack. We can say that we played the match exactly as we had prepared it. Our players held to every agreement we had set, the motivation was at its peak and that is why we classified in the quarter finals of the Champions League.

Each match has to have the right preparation but for the most important matches the feelings are the most important thing and that is why we have to put the heart in everything we do.

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SLOVENIA HANDBALL FEDERATION

Handball coaches association of Slovenia

Training for the title of: Master Coach

VISION AND STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE HANDBALL CLUB ZELENE DOLINE ŽALEC

(Seminar paper)

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# 1 ABSTRACT

The aim of this project is to demonstrate that strategic planning is also important for non-profit organizations, such as the sports club.

In times of a fast changing organizational environment, it is important for non-profit organizations to detect changes in due time, so they can respond according to their strategic plan. Even sport clubs have to meet the expectations of their members, volunteers, and all those who are involved in management and operation.

My aim is to present a strategic plan for the Sports club ZDZ, especially in terms of the competitive part. The organizational model is covered otherwise but it is not my primary part of work.

The sports club, which is the subject of the presentation, was founded in order to spread positive sportsmanship. Experience and knowledge of the individual members in the Management segment was acquired in business world and they are trying to apply it to the club. They have come to the conclusion that they benefit from this experience, especially in the field of relationships.

If the club wants to develop in the future, it needs a different basic approach. Underlined, this means defining its strategic direction and strategic plan. Its purpose is developing and improving the long-term success of the club. This means carefully examining the current situation, adapt to changes in the environment and a look into the future from a visionaries perspective. By doing so, we covered evaluation of current state of affair, and analyzed changes and different problems that the club is facing.

**Keywords:** strategy, handball, sports club, association model, game model

## 2 INTRODUCTION

Handball has been a major part of my life for more than forty years. For almost twenty years I have been active as a player and now, for more than twenty years, as a coach in female handball. All along I have also been actively working in the organizational field as well. This is why I have decided to analyze the functioning of the club, where I have been active for the last ten years.

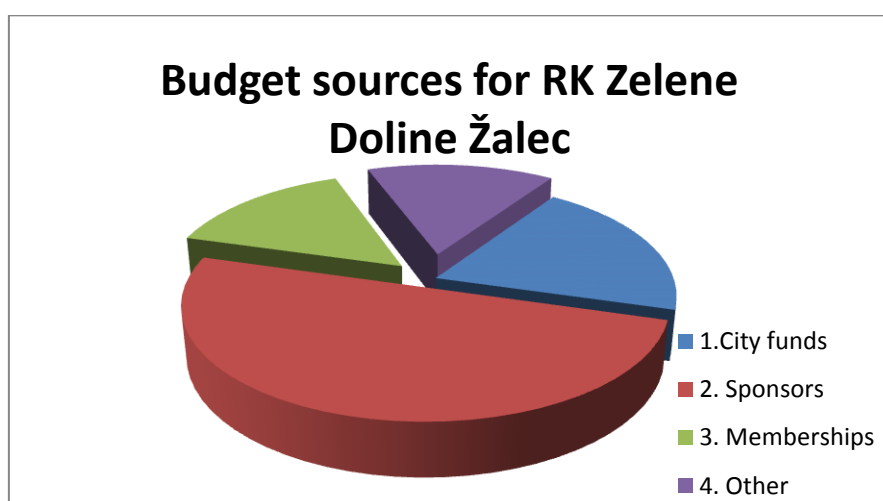
For more than twenty years, female handball has played a major role in the sport identity of the city of Žalec and its surroundings. It also had an important role in physical education of local youth. In healthy sport spirit, we have learned sport and humane values. These are being passed on to new generations and surroundings.

For the proper function of the club financial support is needed. Around 50% of the finances come from private sponsors. For the club to gain private financial support, it needs to be attractive to the sponsors, which means it has to be successful and achieve good results. But results do not come if there is no financial backup so we actually fall in to a loop hole.

Beside good results, sponsors also do look at the clubs vision for the future, its goals and of course what is the strategy for achieving these goals.

The purpose for this work is to present the organization and policy of an ambitious sport club, even in times of financial and economic crisis.

My goal is to present and analyze RK Zelene Doline Žalec, based on its organizational policy and give directions that will further improve the clubs future. If the club does not have a solid mid and long term policy, good results will not come by themselves and there will be no development in the future. This paper is divided on five parts. After this introduction there is a briefing on the history of the club. The core of the paper are the third and fourth part, where I will introduce the development strategy of RK Žalec, show the organizational model and above all, introduce the sport strategy model of the clubs development. At the end there is a short briefing of paper.



Picture 1: Budget sources for RK Zelene Doline Žalec

## **Mission, vision, culture, values and development**

The mission was established when the club was founded, but changes can be made on the yearly general assembly. As the purpose of its existence, RK Žalec has written in its statute: The club with its operations, enables recreation of youth and grown up members, develops handball as a competitive sport and tries to improve the overall physical health of Žalec inhabitants. The clubs mission is focused on socially responsible behavior.

Detailed tactical goals for each year are established in the yearly general assembly and on monthly meetings of the management board.

The vision comes from the clubs rich tradition and immense success at working with the youths. Development and progress of RK Žalec and particularly of female handball in Slovenia are the clubs two main missions.

The clubs priority is competitive and personality development of its players, which in times of fast changing values is especially important. The clubs vision is to become a professionally organized club, which will be able to adapt to current market situation and give support to all young girls that are interested in handball.

By achieving the mentioned goals, RK Zelene Doline Žalenc wil follow its mission and vision, and play an important role in popularizing women handball in systematic work with youths. It is important to stress out the increased meaning of education goals in working with youths. In sense of increasing moral and ethical values, which are seen as problematic in the contemporary world, we have, with the arrival of new era and leadership, determined the culture and values that RK Zelene Doline Žalenc and its members will be orientating after.

Values of RK Zelene Doline Žalec:

- Passion
- Perseverance
- Tenacity
- Honesty
- Mutual help
- Unity
- Patience
- School and academic success
- Friendship
- Health

Hoye et.al. (2006, 147), define sport culture of organizations as a set of base values, believes and relationships that are common for all the member of a certain sport organization and they define behavioral standards and norms for all members. Culture in sport organizations, especially in sport clubs, is inherently linked to multi culture and can be perceived on multiple levels and on multiple subjects. Cultures differentiate themselves by purpose and type of organization (professional clubs, larger national leagues are more commercially oriented, while smaller clubs (nonprofit) are more about fun and participation). The only all-present property in sport culture is striving for competition, winning and being able. It also brings out strong emotions regarding victory and defeat (Hoye et.al. 2006, 151)

## History of RK Žalec

The start of handball in Žalec goes back to 1986/87, when an ambitious coach, Adi Hudarín from Velenje, started a handball school in Žalec primary school. At the beginning he received help from Marjan Golob. After two years of work and preparation, players from neighboring Petrovče, Griže, Šempeter, Prebold and Polzela, also started to participate.

The first official game was in 1989 on the state championship for younger girls-W13 in Škofije, where they achieved the 4<sup>th</sup> place. In 1990, Older girls – W15 achieved the first title of national champions, which led to better motivation for further work and expanding. The year 1991 was crucial for Žalec Handball. It was when the club ŽRK Žalec was founded. Not only that in 1991 the 1<sup>st</sup> team qualified for the 1<sup>st</sup> national league. In 1991, 65 of Žalec's players were officially competing and some of them were even participating in several national selections.

All of this could never be achieved without the support of the principals at Žalec primary school and many sponsors which supported the efforts of the clubs leadership.

Successful results have led to even more fierce and competent work of the entire team. 1994/95 season has brought advancement through the ranks of the first national league, the confirmation of the results of the youth and younger category, and most importantly, the breakthrough to the top of Slovenian women's handball. The only thing missing was the breakthrough to the European cup, which the club was planning for the next season.

In the season 1995/96, ZRK Žalec got the first taste of Europe. The club competed in the Cup Champions league and qualified for the round of 16, where they encountered the later winner, Istochnik from Rostov-on-Don.

From 1999 to 2007, Žalec handball players continued with good results. At the end of season 1999/00, the 1<sup>st</sup> team achieved the 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the country. The same result was repeated in season 2000/01. In the same year, they ended the Cup Champions league in quarter finals, against E.S.B.F. Besancon. After the season 2005/06, the clubs management was changed. Although finding financial support is getting more and more difficult, the club is still operating, especially thanks to many people that sacrifice their free time, to help out. In season 2006/07, Žalec handball team, competed in champions league qualifications for the first time. After two games played, it was eliminated from further competition. The European journey continued in EHF trophy, but ended in 3<sup>rd</sup> round against the Hungarian team, Kiskunhalas NKSE.

After finishing on 5<sup>th</sup> place in 2006/07 season, the clubs 1<sup>st</sup> team has been changing a lot until 2010/11 season.

Unfortunately, the team as such, was an excessive financial burden for the club and its leadership, which despite the best efforts failed to cover it in full. This meant the departure of experienced players from the club, so before the season 2010/11, a complete rejuvenation of the senior team was made. This meant that local, young and inexperienced players, unfortunately had to assume the burden of playing in 1<sup>st</sup> national league very early.

The beginning of season 2010/11, meant a complete reorganization of the club. All the thanks for the clubs continuation in all its segment, goes to a handful of players parents, who contributed a lot of effort.

The rejuvenated 1<sup>st</sup> team, which consisted of players from 15 to 17 of age, ended the season on the 11<sup>th</sup> place in national league, and because of this, was dropped down to 2<sup>nd</sup> league, after many years.

But despite this, the younger teams had great success as a result of previous good work. W17 team managed to win 2<sup>nd</sup> rank in the country, and W13 team, managed to win 3<sup>rd</sup> rank in the country.

### **Introduction of RK Žalec's recent activities**

Falling out of 1<sup>st</sup> national league after 2010/11 season, was a big shock for the club and a struggle for survival. Only a handful of enthusiasts, which were basically parents of younger players, are responsible for the continuation of woman's handball in Savinjska Valley. RK Zelene Doline Žalec got its name from the new sponsor. In its statute it is organized in a way that it is being led by the general assembly that votes for management board, which must consist of at least eight members and a president.

RK ZDŽ in 2012 season had about 130 members. The yearly budget was about 70.000 €.

The 1<sup>st</sup> team managed to get back in to the 1<sup>st</sup> national league after only one year. In 2012/13 it returned and was very successful. It finished on 3<sup>rd</sup> place. All of RK ZDŽ younger teams are very successful and are regularly amongst the top national teams.

We can say that RK ZDŽ has again reached a high level of organization, with clearly defined vision, mission and goals, which are measurable, reachable and realistic.

It is to be expected that the club will continue to expand and develop its values amongst the local youths.

## **3 Methods of work**

My main method of work was analyzing literature, which was written in different languages. The literature was based on strategies of developing sport clubs as non-profit organizations. I used information found in different case studies, some internet literature, and different professional journals that had information regarding my work. Very useful sources of information were different handball experts. I have gained the information using the interview method. My experiences which I have gained in many recent years by working in handball were also very useful.

### **Strategies of RK ZDŽ development**

Developmental goals are entirely subordinated to the main goal which is stay between the top five teams in Slovenia, using mainly players that were trained and raised by RK ZDŽ and from surrounding regions.

As sportsmen by hart, we would like more, but for now, this is a very realistic and measurable goal. It also very encouraging, especially if we consider the current financial state and the size of the environment RK ZDŽ is situated in.

The primary goal of RK ZDZ has to be directed towards keeping long term stability. This means that the club has to enable conditions that are linked to good organization, sufficient number of players, and provide the proper infrastructure and the quality of the training process. We will need an even more systematical approach at promoting women handball in the region.

## **Strategic planning**

The word strategy derives from a compound word in the Greek language. The word “Stratos” means the Army, and “again” to lead. The strategy is a doctrine of the procedures, ways of planning, especially for military purposes. It is the method for managing large military operations. There are also procedures and methods for achieving the objectives in the business world, or in sports games (Velik slovar tujk, 2006).

Planning means to define what we want and how to get to the objectives pursued, which are the basis of planning.

For success of strategic planning, we need consistency and a true sense of why we are doing this. We are not doing this just because it is becoming popular, but because we want to grow, we want to satisfy our supporters and at last, we want to be better than the competition.

Relatively large absence of strategic planning in the non-profit organizations, especially in sports, carries a lot of responsibility for the current state of affairs in the non-profit sector.

## **Defining development strategy for RK ZDŽ**

Planning is a long term process and we cannot expect long term success if planning is based only on intuitive decisions. By strategic planning of the club's future, we also have to be aware of and accept the risks and include relations of the club's important members.

We are deriving from the fact, that RK ZDŽ never before had a clear and documented mission from its environment and established goals. By doing so, RK ZDŽ, which has good coaches, and an environment that provides a stable basis for new members, will try to save finances and focus on raising its own players. This means that developing and raising young players is the strategy that will bring us to the final goal (good results in different competitions).

The basic definition of the club's strategy is that the whole strategy of the club is being built on a goal of creating a stable 1<sup>st</sup> league club.

The basic strategic directions and goals are (provided the club will have the necessary financial means):

- To establish a sound organizational structure and club's integration in to the wider environment
- Competitive stability and a 1<sup>st</sup> league status on the top, and setting new goals
- To be one of the leading clubs in women handball in Slovenia, not just by results, but also because of our organizational model
- To provide a strong player base from our own handball school and with this, increase the meaning of our youth handball school
- Provide permanent and quality sources of finance
- Establish a whole image of the club that includes an organized fan and supporter base
- Developing volunteer work in the club as a social value

## **Marketing and market Communication in RK ZDŽ**

Sport in a human's life is being perceived as a social activity where participants are establishing inter-human relationships, that are more or less organized. Sport Clubs are a common form of Sport organizations. The basis of modern marketing also requires certain changes in sport marketing and the way sport organizations are being run. For sport clubs, which are the most common and wide spread type of sport organization in Slovenia, marketing skills are becoming increasingly important.

RK ZDŽ is a club that is operating in Žalec and its adjacent surroundings. For improved functioning of the club, RK ZDŽ should acquire professional help from the marketing and PR sector.

Currently, only volunteers are taking care of the club's marketing, which means they don't have the necessary marketing skills.

I believe that the club should organize education for those who are currently taking care of the marketing, or perhaps find a club member, that is an expert in this field and recruit him for the work. Currently, based on the financial situation, hiring an outside expert is not an option.

## **Public relations in RK Zelene Doline Žalec**

According to Jefkins (1998), public relations are all the forms of communication between an organization and the public environment. Public relations are a part of the management functions in a small sports club like RK ZDŽ. We have a volunteer that is taking care of our PR, and the content is usually being discussed at management board meetings. RK ZDŽ communicates with its inside and its outside public. Our basic means of communication is our website and e-mails.

The person responsible for PR is also the one who composes the messages. There have been no news or press conferences organized by now. We also do use the local media to communicate with public. They often get in touch with us by themselves, because we have a strong reputation in the field of women handball in our region.

## **Advertising in RK ZDŽ**

The most direct form of advertisement in sport is through a sponsor.

RK ZDŽ works with its main sponsor Mlekarna Celeia d.o.o. and some of the smaller sponsors, that are being advertised through different means.

Surfaces meant for advertising mostly consist of advertisement on the players' kits, clothes of club staff and members, areas on and around the court and advertisements on different promotional flyers. Mouth to mouth advertisement is also considered important since we originate from a small environment with local sponsors.

## **Organizational model of RK ZDŽ**

High quality and organization of work in a handball club is essential for its stable and successful development. In this chapter I will introduce the organizational model of RK ZDŽ.

Professional sport has, through the process of professionalization and commercialization, become an activity that requires maximum commitment of players. But on the other hand the club in which they are competing, has to provide them with optimal conditions for work, training and competition.

Each organization has to take in to account its traits and find its own weaknesses, in order to properly function.

In past years, like all sport organization in Slovenia, RK ZDŽ has been largely supported by the state, with financial and volunteer help. Today, the state is diminishing its help, so the clubs and organizations have to rely on the free market.

Setting up a strategic plan is a necessary framework on which we can base our mission and the path to our goals. But this by itself does not mean that the club has done everything to achieve its goals. This is just the first step that shows, the club has decided to go on a path that is a basis for a long term survival. Recognizing your own abilities and taking advantage of opportunities are the foundation of success, but you still need also to recognize your weaknesses and be able to defend yourself from surrounding dangers.

Based on the analysis of the club, I have identified the state of affairs in the club, and also what the club wants to achieve. Setting up strategies that are with accordance to the clubs mission, is the end goal. Controlling and resolving deficiencies, is an upgrade of the clubs strategic plan. In RK ZDŽ we believe, that our case of building and setting up the strategic plan, can be a good example for managing a non-profit organization.

## Organizational scheme

### Clubs management

Tasks of the clubs management:

**The General assembly** is the clubs highest organ. It consists of all the members of the club performing these tasks:

- Deciding what is on the daily agenda
- Approval and coordination of the annual and multi-annual work program and financial plan
- Monitors the realization of previous projects
- Responsible for the implementation of commitments and agreements
- Discuss the work and reports to Board of Directors, the Supervisory Board and the Disciplinary Board
- Decide about the financial plan for the coming year and approves the annual accounts
- Approve amends of the rules and other documents of the club
- By public voting, it can directly elect and dismiss the clubs organs
- It elects the president of the club, Chairman of the Supervisory Board and the Disciplinary Board
- Decides on the amount of the membership fee
- Takes in to account and decides on the public appeals against decisions of the Executive Committee, the Disciplinary Board and the Supervisory Board on second stage
- Decides on the mergers and cessation of the club

**The Board of directors** is the clubs executive body. It performs tasks given to it by the general assembly and other tasks related to it working field. Basically the board manages the work of all the clubs members, but most of all it:

- Implements the decisions of the General Assembly
- Implements the work plans and financial plans and proposes according measures
- Prepares the material for the General Meeting
- Establishes permanent and temporary commissions
- Manages contracts with the players
- Prepares drafts of agreements and agreements themselves
- Reports on its work to the General Assembly
- Performs any other functions, imposed to it by the Assembly
- Manages business relating to the life of the club members
- Prepares and constitutes a financial plan and final yearly report
- Accepts and resolves the sports director and secretary of the club
- Examines the accounts and financial plans for the current year
- Notes irregularities in the work of the organs and eliminates them
- Appoints and resolves the main (chief) coach of the club and other staff
- Appoints representatives of the club to sports and other organizations
- Manages, coordinates and organizes activities related to sponsors and donors

**The Disciplinary commission** is responsible for all disciplinary procedures and imposes penalties, according to the disciplinary statute. The disciplinary commission can impose to its members, the following measures:

- Warning
- Reprimand
- Prohibition of competitions for the club for a limited time or a certain number of matches
- Exclusion from the club for a limited time
- Cessation of functions in the club for a limited time
- Permanent exclusion or suspension from all functions in the club
- Material sanctions defined in the Disciplinary statute

**The Club President** performs the following tasks:

- Convenes the General Assembly
- Convenes and manages the meetings of the Board of Directors
- Signs the acts and decisions of the Assembly and the Board of Directors
- Performs other duties entrusted to him by the Board of Directors and the General Meeting
- Represents the club against third parties
- Monitors the implementation of decisions by the Assembly and the Board of Directors

## **The Professional part of the club**

**The Technical leadership** consists of the head coach (for the 1<sup>st</sup> team), who is also the coach of W19, W17, W15, W13 and W11 teams. The technical leadership meets monthly and it designs, performs and controls the clubs professional policy.

Tasks of the technical leadership:

- Before the beginning of the season, it develops strategic and technical direction for the club
- Coordinates actions and plans of the senior team, youth team and handball school
- Before the beginning of the season it manages the club's players distributed to different teams
- Registers players from other clubs, which could strengthen the team (Member, Junior, Cadet)
- Solves the technical and organizational problems
- Responsible for education and training of the entire coaching staff at the club
- Looks for ways to improve the training process
- Is in constant contact with technical organs of RZS and the clubs leadership
- Analyzes and evaluates the competitive performance of all the teams in the club

### **1<sup>st</sup> team**

RK ZDŽ competes in the 1<sup>st</sup> national league (I. ADRL) and in the Cup winners competition. The technical leadership consists of the main coach, his assistant, and from time to time, also a physiotherapist. The first team has practice five times per week in I. OŠ Žalec stadium.

## Youths

### Number of teams from RK ZDŽ youth program

W17  
year 1996

W15  
year 1998,99

W13  
year 2000

W11  
year 2001

Handball school						
OŠ	OŠ	OŠ	OŠ	OŠ	OŠ	OŠ
Žalec	Petrovče	Griže	Trje	Polzela	Vransko	Šmartno ob Paki

We have four youth teams in the club and a handball school, which is located in neighboring primary schools.

Quality and professional work with young handball players is one of the main factors in developing Slovenian handball. The basis of professional sport is proper development of youth, that is directed towards quality professional sport.

Mass promotion and popularization of handball, and quality professional work with gifted young players, does not require too much financial input and guarantees long term profit. According to current state of affair of Slovenian women handball, this segment needs a lot of care and attention, and in RK ZDŽ we are aware of that.

#### The goals of youth development program in RK ZDŽ are:

- Systematic, yearly managing of talented girls and commending, gradual and complementary selection of young players from all categories
- To enable the most perspective players, who want to learn and develop, optimal sport development to top-notch, professional handball players
- To educate as much perspective players as we can, so they can play in professional handball and soften the leap from young to professional categories
- Constant search for perspective young players all over Slovenia and try to include them in our club
- Further development of cooperation with local primary schools from the whole region and increase the talent base of future handball players

The foundation of RK ZDŽ development pyramid is the handball school. In cooperation with other handball schools we strive to organize tournaments and matches. We want to emphasize the meaning of social interaction, learning the basics and motivation for the future development. The results in the matches have a secondary meaning.

The foundation of RK ZDŽ development pyramid is the handball school. In cooperation with other handball schools we strive to organize tournaments and matches. We want to emphasize the meaning of social interaction, learning the basics and motivation for the future development. The results in the matches are of secondary meaning only.

The first selection consists of the best players from the handball school (players up to 10 years of age). Next is the transfer to selection of Women's W11 and W13. After this the W15 follows. Some of the best players from this age category also play for the 1<sup>st</sup> team. The point is for them to gain some experience and play some games, but of course not too much.

Besides competing in the national championship, our teams also attend many international tournaments.

### **Handball school**

RK ZDŽ has been running a handball school for many years now. Training sessions are taking place in seven different primary schools in Žalec region, under supervision of professional coaches.

#### **The goals of RK ZDŽ handball school are:**

- Introduction of basic elements and techniques of handball
- Learning movement alphabet
- Learning athletics
- Learning basic gymnastics
- Learning the basics of ball games
- Other interesting sports (hockey, climbing,...)

Young handball players often display their skills and knowledge between the recesses of 1<sup>st</sup> team matches. This way they can have the experience of playing in front of larger audiences. 1<sup>st</sup> team players sometimes also visit the training sessions of younger teams. We wish to continue this practice.

The wishes and goals of RK ZDŽ handball school for the future are:

- Increase the number of participants in continue the good work on all primary schools
- Ensure and maintain high quality of work
- To include successful and gifted young players in to older – competing teams
- Retain the people that have ended their sport career as players and direct them to other jobs related to handball (Coaches, referees,...)

### **Sport strategy model of RK ZDŽ**

RK ZDŽ, has always emphasized the meaning of working with young handball players. Although Slovenia has a long tradition and many experiences at designing practical methods of teaching an practicing handball in all age categories, we can often see in practice, that coaches often choose wrong practical methods, especially with young players. Individual methods are being combined in a wrong way, but the main problem is that coaches in younger categories take inspiration from professional handball only. But of course, young players require a different approach. A lot of people also do think too shortsighted. Consequently, suitable long term development of players is being neglected in general, motoric, technically-tactical and in psycho-social field.

Fewer and fewer of the young players move on to professional handball. Even those who are very close to that last step often quit.

Bad state of handball on club level, of course reflects in the national teams. If we want to improve things, we have to realize that systematical approach is necessary.

### Different paths that get special attention in RK ZDŽ:

- Creating a broad talent base
- Directing players
- Educating young, talented players
- To develop and nourish recognizable and attractive handball
- Popularization of handball

Year/category	76-77	78	79-80	81-82	83-84	85-86	88-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	96-97
W 7	5	5	3	1	2	3	1	1	2	4	3
W 19	5	7	1	0	2	3	1	1	0	2	/
1 <sup>st</sup> team	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	/

Table of content1: Number of RK ZDŽ players that have competed for the national team

### Strategy for directing and drafting players

Drafting in sports means the process of selecting the best players on different stages of their career. It represents a pedagogical process which is closely related to base and specialized process of coaching. It takes place in at least two stages.

**On the first stage**, the process of selection is an upgrade of directing children to specific sports. With it, we select those who are most successful and have great potential, but are unable to use it right now. It is closely related to the basic stage of training (versatile training).

**On the second stage**, the process of selecting is an upgrade of directing young players to a specific role or place they will take in the team. With this, we draft, from the base of all who play a certain part, those who are really successful at it. It is related to the special phase of the training process (versatile and specialized process of training)

Quality development and with it, maturing of players can take place for ten years or more. It takes place on multiple stages which are closely related with their physical and social maturing. Because of this, the coach has to be familiarized with these stages and the basic goals, which the players should reach on individual developmental stages.

Kapus, Bednarik, Ušaj and Lasaj (1990), came to the conclusion, that finding and distinguishing talent in the beginner stages is a huge problem of sport, which is more or less being resolved on all fields with developed sport activity.

Pavlovič (2006, in Misej, 2007), mentions, that at drafting young players, we have to emphasize, that selection is not a one time thing, but a process. Selection in handball continues at all times. The kids are being faced with selection from the beginning – By entering the club, being directed on specialized playing fields, with the 1<sup>st</sup> team selection process, and of course, by being drafted for regional or national teams. So we have to see drafting in handball as a long term process.

When young players are choosing certain sports, an important factor is the popularity of a certain sport in their region. A big role is also being played by coaches, because they have the opportunity to observe young players and their abilities, and try to direct the accordingly to specific sports.

A relatively big number of players chose handball, but the competition by other sports in Slovenia is pretty high. That is why quality and planned work in the club is even more important, which can be taken care only by expert staff and good club organization. In the future, RK ZDŽ wants to increase the number of players, because this is one of the conditions, necessary for keeping current standards and developing even further.

**In Slovenia, the following models of managing and selection are in use (Šibila, 2000):**

Age- category	Process of universal Training and Specialization	Process of directing to handball and playing parts	Process of selection
Above 18 years 1 <sup>st</sup> teams	Functional training		5 <sup>th</sup> stage
21 years M 21 19 years W 19	Deep specialized Training	Direction towards the Most suitable playing field	4 <sup>th</sup> stage
17 years M17 17 years W17	Specialized Training	Direction towards 2 or 3 Paying fields in all phases	3 <sup>rd</sup> stage
15 years M15 15 years W 15	Universal and Specialized training	Searching for suitable playing fields	2 <sup>nd</sup> stage
12-13 years M 13 12-13 years W 13	Universal Training		1 <sup>st</sup> stage
10 - 9years Beginners	Introduction to handball (Mini Handball)	Searching for children suitable for handball	
		Promoting handball	

Table of content 2: **Models of managing and selection in handball**  
(Adjusted for handball according to Dežman, 1998 by Šibila, 2000)

The basic selection of players is occurring in two directions:

- Drafting for the club
- Drafting for the national team

The criteria in clubs is usually a bit lower than those made for national team. Nevertheless, every club needs to take care of an appropriate selection of players from their own base or from other sources (Šibila 2004). For RK ZDŽ this means the broader Savinjska region.

We cannot expect, that all children interested in handball, will reach the stage of professionalism. Many of them stop playing handball, because they realize that they are not successful enough. This kind of method of “self-exclusion” can sometimes be dangerous, because at certain development stages, even the most talented players can decide to stop playing handball. That is why an important aspect of work is the monitoring of the development of players and to regularly determine their potential of success. In RK ZDŽ this kind of measurements takes place every two years.

### **Handball game model**

Model of the game determines basic principles of placement, movement and cooperation of players in offence and defense, and the parameter of the game models efficiency. Modern game models represent the current situation in handball development. Specific game model of the team is directly connected with according game models of players, which are playing on specific places, and the later from their modeled dimensions (Šibila 2004).

Šibila (2004) emphasizes, that that methods of learning and practicing handball with the youngest age categories, is at least partially submitted to the end goal – appropriately trained players, who will on technically-tactical and morphologically-motoric, fitness and psycho-social field, be able with demands of modern handball. When looking at the development process of players, we have to account to the fact that players need to have those skills and knowledge, which will enable them to participate in the game model the best teams are practicing. From selection to combining suitable practical learning methods and training tactical elements of handball, the speed of progress is very much related to. The basic postulate, which should be taken into account when working with children, is that practice and learning should not be subordinate to short-term periodisation. Periodisation can only be long term (in principle at least four years) and directed towards long term and versatile development of players and the team. Knowing the modern model of handball game is the base that helps the coach choose suitable methods for learning and practice, especially with the youngest players (Šibila 1999).

Method/age	Game method	Analytical integrated model	Situational method	Competing Method
8-10 years	70%	20-25%		5-10%
11-12 years	50% (out of this 60% Game of personal defense and 30-40% game with zone defense	10-15%	20-25%	10-15%
13 – 14 years	40%	5-10%	30-35%	15-20%
15 – 16 years	30 – 35%	5-10%	30-35%	20-25%

Table of content 3: Ratios of chosen practical teaching models in younger categories

### **The modern handball game model requires:**

- In all phases of the game ( Offence, defense, returning to defense,...), exactly specified and elaborated playing roles, which are spatially and situationally defined
- Universality asks for simultaneous specialization of players; Specialization without universality is no longer possible, because the player can come face to face with different structural situations, which he has to be able to solve

- Change from a game based on attack to a game based on the whole field
- Shorter offence time
- Incorporating the game above the goalkeeper, when preparing the completion of offence and at the conclusion it self
- More and more play without the ball in offence
- Giving more importance to fast returns to defense and play in deep zone formations. With this we try to prevent exact shots on goal

Modern handball game model is no longer based on static defense formations and the attempts of the opponent to defeat this. The foundations of the game are based all over the field. The game is faster, but the way the offence works has also changed. Instead of focusing on the opponent's body, the defense tries to focus on the ball (Šibila, Bon, Kuželj, 1999).

Handball has changed a lot in the last decade. The changes can be seen in the speed, dynamics and stronger player on all level of the game. This changes are also a result of changes in the rules relating the initial throw, passive game, increased number of team members,...

The basic of modern handball is no longer just controlling the ball, but more about controlling the tempo for as long as you can (preferably for the whole match) (Veraja, 2001).

Sevim (2006) in his study shows new findings in terms of offence, defense, counter offence and goalkeeping.

#### **The modern trends in offence:**

- Passing from the floor, even in tough situations
- Using many different fast passes
- Decreasing the number of bad passes
- Increased number of individual technical elements (like catching the ball with one hand)
- Increased number of players, that can play 1:1, and thus pull the opposing teams defense on themselves
- Increase the number of successful passes made in tough conditions
- Increase the number of team attacks
- Shorter offence time
- Offence game strategy should be largely based on 1:1 and 2:2 attacks
- Although defense often prevents counter attacks, teams still often try tactical combinations to finish play in the extended fast break
- Short cross moves between the back player and the wing are typical
- Fast game with a lot of goals

#### **The modern trends in defense:**

- Mainly used defense systems are: 6:0, 5:1 and 3:2:1
- Defense systems are getting more flexible and are adapting to the opposing team
- Teams create variable offensive systems which are based on individual skills of the defense players

- Passes to pivot are more easily prevented
- Defense players have good hand and legs movement and improvement in defense orientation skills are also improving
- Immediate return to defense after scoring
- Immediate return to defense with intention to prevent the opponents counter-attack
- Improved tactics for preventing counter-attacks
- Improved individual abilities of offensive players enable flexibility in game and tactical strategy
- There are still two ball intercepting specialists present in defense

#### **The modern trends in counterattacking:**

- The results of intercepted plays are shown in fast counterattacks
- There are running lanes specified for counter-attacks
- Simple counter-attacks with one (long) pass
- First wave with one or two players
- Second wave follows right after the first one
- Instead of the goal keeper, the first pass is made by the first defense players or the one in the middle
- Limited success in counter attacks on high ranking games

#### **The modern trends in goalkeeping:**

- High efficiency at preventing 100% chances
- Increased amount of cooperation with the defense
- Making the first throw happens more often
- The success of the goalkeeper is often seen in the final result

#### **Learning methods and methods of teaching young players**

	Development stage	Age category	Age
1.	Period of broader sport learning		7-10
	a.) building broad sport basis		7-8
	b.) familiarizing with mini handball	beginners	9-10
2.	Period of fundamental sport learning		11-14
	a.) Transition to normal handball	W 11 – W 13	11-12
	b.) Period of universal training	W 15	13-14
3.	Period of specialized training		15-18
	a.) Broader specialization	W 17	15-16
	b.) Narrowed specialization	W 19	17-18
4.	Period of achievements in sports		19
	a.) Period of establishing achievements	B Team	19-22
	b.) Period of established achievements	1 <sup>st</sup> team	22

Table of contents 4: Phases of development

The basic guideline when working with children should be their age. Based on this we select appropriate exercises and means, measure effort, use appropriate methods of learning and practice. The best method is the one that enables the fastest understanding of game elements and still enables children to have fun. In large part, choosing appropriate methods of teaching will decide if the children will fall in love with the game and practice and get familiar with the game with joy.

We distinguish four groups of methods, which differentiate, and at the same time complement each other. These are:

- VERBAL methods (explanation, directing, warning, analyzing,...)
- VIZUAL methods (demonstration, movies, diagrams,...)
- IDEOMOTORIC methods

PRACTICAL methods (synthetic, analytical, playful, combined, situational and competing)

### **Ages between 8-10**

In this age period, when we often start with directed handball practice, the playful method dominates as the basic teaching model. The means of the playful method can be different elemental games like catching, relay racing, different modified games and also handball with modified rules and real rules. The common point in all this is, that they all have primal and specific handball motorics built into them.

Especially important is handball with modified rules, where the coach tries to modify rules based on the current skill level. Mini handball as a special form of handball with modified rules is especially suitable in this period.

Playing handball and using the entire field, using official rules and individual defense, is not that suited, because the children do not have the necessary skills.

Analytical integrated method should not be given to much attention, but we still must not neglect it. In correspondence with the children's skills, 20-25% of time should be dedicated to teaching and practicing technical-tactical aspects, using this method.

Kinematic structure and tactical point of most technical-tactical basics of handball game, the children are just beginning to understand, because they are learning and perfecting them on an analytical whole way. The children are not familiar enough with handball to differentiate certain types of game situations – they perceive the game integrally.

Prof. Goršič, when explaining a program for practicing mini handball says:

- At the beginning we teach handball with one offensive player more and by resolving 2:1, 3:2, 4:3 situation, because the children will more easily comprehend the goal of the game: “attract two offense players on to you, and thus give your teammate a chance to shoot”. The defense on the other hand learns that they have to help each other.
- When exercising offense elements, most attention goes to proper catching, chasing and immediate setting of the ball to offensive position, passing or shooting with frontal or

sideways swing bask, opening the palm, turning the body,... Later with proper command of receiving short passes that will enable them doing all these elements.

- The kids like to force themselves to the ball, that is why getting them used to width and depth of the offense, is the coach's first task. It is easier if he/she determines the player's positions.

Counterattack:

- Counterattack is a very popular phase for kids, because it is being played "without the center". The play is thus usually initiated by the goalkeeper. It is wrong if everyone is waiting at the 5m line, instead of running to the other side and spreading over the field. This is why we must soon establish playing positions. In 1:3 system we have: ball receiver, pivot and two wings. The first receives the goalkeepers pass and the others are situated on the other half of the field. For the pivot it is essential that he reaches his spot as soon as possible.

Defense:

Beginners must be taught to always cover someone in defense

- 1:1 covering is quite typical because it enables more room for playing
- Proper placement between the attacker and goalkeeper is essential

## **Ages between 10-12**

This age period means a transition to a more specific way of learning and practicing handball, because certain forms of situational exercise are already being used. This period also means the transition to learning and playing handball on the standard size field. When choosing methods of teaching, the playful method is still predominant. But it is getting more specific handball like. In the previous period this meant that children were familiarizing with basic rules, but now it is being directed to more specific characteristics of the game. Specially important is playing all over the field, using personal defense, in your half of the field or 12m from your own goal. The number of defense and offense players is equal (2:2, 3:3, 4:4), or the number of attacker is bigger (3:2, 4:3, 2:2+2, 3:3+3). The next step is playing 2 X 3:3, using the whole field with official size. This should mean 60% of total time meant for playful method.

Playing handball by official rules and zone-types of defense should be given further 20-30% of the time. It is recommended to start using deep zone-type formations (3:2:1, 3:3, and even 1:5). Deep zone formations are a logical step from man-to-man defense, because they still have some of the basic elements.

In this period more practicing of elementary situations in counterattack and turnover is recommended. Specially practicing proper and on time leaving of defense places, on time and effective opening, receiving and passing the ball when in full speed, finding proper solutions and situational awareness.

### **Goals and content for this age period according to Šibila (2004)**

Goals:

- The players should develop movement and other skill to a point that will enable successful playing of mini handball with adjusted rules and normal handball

- Spatial orientation and operative-situational thinking
- Coordination skills (speed, complex movements, timing, agility)
- Precise hitting of the target, receiving and passing

The players should know:

- Basic tactical-technical elements required for defense and offense
- Basics of covering and following opposing player when using personal defense
- Basics of proper placement and opening yourself up

The players should form and develop views, habits and ways of reacting:

- Attitude towards handball and respecting rules
- Attitude towards teammates, competitors and referees
- Attitude towards accepting victory and defeat
- Independence and self-discipline when performing tasks
- Controlled behavior in conflict situations
- Helping each other and cooperating
- Self-confidence, fighting spirit and perseverance
- cultured cheering for teammates in matches

Broader set of content:

- Different ways of moving in handball (running straight, back, sideways movement, running with sudden direction changes, side stepping,...)
- Opening yourself up without the ball, by change of speed and the direction of movement
- Covering and monitoring of the opposing player
- Elbow pass, pass with the long swing over the head, from the floor, with a running start and without
- Shooting while jumping after penetrating defense
- Changing positions by using cross passes
- Learning basic group technical-tactical basics for the game in offence against zone defense (a series of passes while moving towards the goal)
- The basics of individual counterattacks 1:0, and with a player more (2:1, 3:2)
- Basic techniques and tactics of defense
- Learning individual and group technical-tactical basics for the need of playing in deep zone defense setups (counting players, approaching a dangerous shooter,...)
- Playing personal defense in your own half of the field

## Goals

The players should be able to perform the following tasks and their combinations:

- Holding the ball with one or two hands
- Picking the ball up from the ground (when moving or stagnant)
- Catching the ball from different heights and directions
- Elbow pass
- Penetration with one bounce
- Passing with a long swing, above the head from the ground

- Shooting with a long swing, above the head from the ground
- Shooting from a jump
- Opening yourself up in different directions
- Covering and monitoring in parallel and diagonal offense pose

### **Ages between 13-14**

In this age period, there is an increase of situational and competing method. Integrated analytic method should get no more than 20% of practice time, especially in the beginning of the training session. It is slowly transforming to situational method. Individual basics are being taught less broken down, analytical and in free connection to basics. The competing method gains its influence in this time period. Even in matches, we should at least partially insist on personal or deep zone defense. Playful method is still essential, but the means used are changing: there is more of handball without modified rules. Elementary games are only being used at the beginning of the training session. This is also the period, where we include the situational method more often, and can slowly escalate its difficulty. Children are, by now mature enough and have sufficient knowledge, to make this kind of practice reasonable.

Methodic steps when learning and practicing handball with playful method:

- Elementary games (chasing, relay racing, team games), that have one or more elements, typical for handball (tactical-technical elements), tactical solving of situations that is similar to handball and some rules of handball, and at the same time is learning children to cooperate for the common goal.
- Adjusted games or rules of the game – team games, where we adjust some rules (like size of the field, number of players,...), so that we can reach the planned goals for learning.
- Playing on one goal, using individual defense and decreased number of players. Number of player in defense and offence can be equal (2:2, 3:3, 4:4), or we can have more attackers (3:2,4:3, 2:2+2, 3:3+2).
- Playing 2X 3:3 all over the field, specified by the rules
- Playing on two goals, using individual defense (3:3, 3:2:1, 1:5), shallow (6:0, 5:1), or combined defense (5+1, 4+2).

### **Further age categories as specified in German handball**

For the training of 1<sup>st</sup> level (15-16 years old) game with two lines in defense and offense is typical (double-lined game). This encourages group implementation in action, which requires group interaction between player in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> line (cooperation between pivot, back players and wings). All players should thus gain experience playing in both lines that is why individual practice continues in 1:1 game, near the goalkeeper line. Further training for the 2<sup>nd</sup> level (17-18 years old), requires playing on smaller field, which can be achieved with higher degree of technical skill. This kind of game model also requires higher awareness, differentiation and accuracy when doing certain activities, because smaller space gives more meaning on game speed in all phases (counterattack, initial throw,...). Initial specialization for specific playing fields begins. Practices for joining the 1<sup>st</sup> team (19 years of age or more), require more focus on the opponent. This means that on this level, fast,

situational and correct response, according to the opponents game style is required. Sensing this is under increased physical and psychological conditions. Adjustment of group actions, according with individual skills and characters of players is very important. That is why practice with competing traits, where there are more of “open situations” occurring, is highly recommended. When growing up, and going to adult players, the player is physical and psychologically hardened, which leads to favorable conditions for determining not only game types, but also tactical tasks of individual players.

## **Practice methods**

We know three different methods of work, which we use according with selected method of learning or practice and organizational method.

### **Individual practice or learning**

Although handball is a sport where cooperation between players is important, individual practice is a necessary part of the process. Using this method, every single player can be working on his own individual program (Dežman1 1996). This sort of exercise is useful when learning tactical-technical basics, using the analytic method, when repairing flaws of an individual, and when developing specific traits, according to the playing field (Elsner, 1984).

### **Group practice**

The most important form of work with young players is group practice. We can divide players into groups systematically or improvised. This is very important when choosing the playful method of work. According to the phase of the learning process, learning method and content of individual practice, we divide them in permanent, occasional, temporary and casual groups. According to skills, knowledge and developmental level of the children, certain groups can be homogenized (the children are very equal according to some criteria) or heterogeneous (children inside the group are very different) (Elsner, 1984).

### **Group collective practice**

Using this form, everyone is practicing at the same time and with the same program. It is only recommended to use it occasionally, when working with a bit older players, especially at the beginning of individual practice, and when teaching basic technical-tactical element to young players, using analytical-synthetic method (Dežman, 1996)

### **Structuring of coaching teams**

In theoretical model of professional sport club, the professional team is set relatively broad. In theoretical model and in practice, the role of the coach is most important, because he is the one responsible for good results and with this has an impact on everything in the club.

Coaches are for certain the foundation of professional development of sport, especially when it comes to problematic of coaching and leading players to competitions. The coaches work is highly professional and has high ethic responsibility, and thus requires appropriate professional qualifications. The foundation for this qualification is education, which must also include educational and leadership skills. But only by reaching the prescribed level of education, the coach is not yet qualified enough to take over the most difficult tasks. To become a master of his profession, he has to,

with help of his own activities, develop to a high professional level, which will enable him successful, practical work (Dolenc, Jošt, Pori, 2002, page 59)

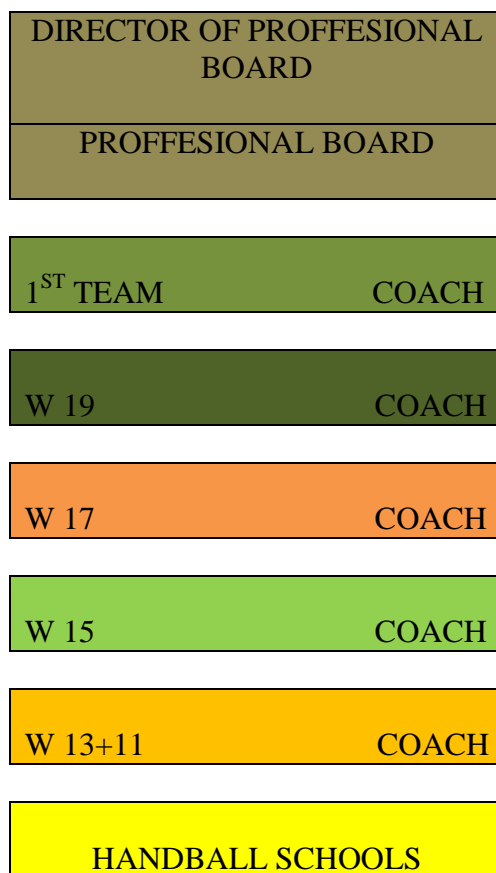


Table of content 5: Overview of teams and coaches in RK ZDŽ

Because of the importance and responsibility of the coach's works, he is the person that is the most exposed. He is responsible for the results and with this has an impact on quality and the way the club works.

The main coach, based on consulting the board and the club leadership, puts together a professional team, and at the same time drafts players for the team.

The main tasks of the coach are:

- Leading and managing the process of training
- Selecting the appropriate strategy
- Preparing specific tactics for a specific opponent
- Leading the team in competition and analyze return data
- Taking care of the player and the team itself

All this requires cooperation with the professional team the coach is leading

We divide the professional team into three levels

**1<sup>st</sup> level** – The sport director with his associates

Some of their tasks are:

- Suggesting the clubs development on yearly basis
- Setting the goals for the clubs development
- Suggests the managing of the players
- Gives suggestions regarding the continuation of employment of the coach
- Confirming the training model for the 1<sup>st</sup> team and reporting to board of directors
- Professional leadership of younger teams and supervising the coaches work in this teams
- Cooperating with other clubs

**2<sup>nd</sup> level** – The head coach with individuals that are directly responsible for work with players

Their tasks are:

- Suggests transfers of players to and from the club
- Cooperates with primary and middle schools in the region and follows the progress of perspective players
- Cooperates with institutions such as the Faculty of sports and other research institutions
- Cooperates with different commissions in the club
- Plans, programs, forecasts and models the professional work in the club

**3<sup>rd</sup> level** – Co workers from outside who cooperate with the professional team of the club. As the need arises these are usually: psychologist, sociologist, physiologist, pedagogue (for working with the youngest players). Their task is to additionally contribute to the readiness of the team from their point of profession.

### **Young athletes**

Success and greatness can not be achieved without local players, that are educated locally. That is why we must give a certain amount of attention to establishment and functioning of future players. This happens on two levels. Outside of the club, in form of handball schools in primary schools and inside the club, through working with younger players. The coordinator sometimes cooperates with the professional team.

## **4 Discussion**

Handball is a sports game, where only professional, long term and planned work, can bring good results. That is why quality work in all age categories is essential. For the coach in younger teams it is important to have a good initial selection a good way of organizing players to specific fields, motivation to work in sports and above all, the methodical work in teaching and coaching all elements of handball techniques and tactics. For the exercise to be attractive to young players, it is important to include as much interesting and demanding exercises, which are prerequisite to good motivation.

Because handball is a team sport, the team will succeed only if it will work collectively as a whole on all levels of the game. This means that individuals in the team have to be coordinated as much as possible and combine their individual skills with help of group activities, in our case, in the phase of offense on zone or combined defense. Because the individual can not defeat the opposing team by working by himself, it is important that we start with different forms of group effort in the youngest

age categories. Here we can help ourselves with use of elementary games, games with adjusted rules and with handball itself. It is important for young players to realize, that the only way of overcoming the opponent is when every ones individual abilities are combined and subdued to their team.

## **5 Conclusion**

Every organization, in order to function, has to recognize their abilities and find its weaknesses. Sport clubs as a form on a non-profit organization have been supported by the state for a long time and have thus managed to survive based on state funding and voluntary work. Today the state is no longer supporting activities such as sport, at least not as much as before. This is why this organizations are under the influence of free market forces, so event his field has had a strong impact of competitive forces.

RK ZDŽ, which has been the object of this work, will have to organize properly, and put their basic advantages to use. Intuitive decisions by themselves are not enough to function in today's environment.

Setting up a strategic plan is the basis that the club has to follow in order to defend their current competitive advantages in the environment that it is functioning in, and also expand its working environment. This is one of the strategic goals.

The vision that the club is following looks easy to achieve at first look, but increased levels of activities in competitive clubs is also to be expected. This means, that the club will have to activate all of its potentials, just in order to keep its current position. The existing activities, without adding new and attractive ones, will once again lead stagnation, or even decline.

The theory of strategic planning introduced in this work, also served as basis for developing new strategy of RK ZDŽ. But setting up a strategic plan, does not mean that the club has done everything in its power. It is only the first step, which shows, that the club has stepped on the right track that can lead to long term survival.

For the strategic plans, basic activities are set, but their realization will require planned work, which will strain the financial, marketing, organizational, and managing fields. RK ZDŽ is on a path to fulfilling its goals, because we are aware the strategic plan, introduced in this work, is a good foundation on which the clubs future can be built on.

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**Handball Federation of Slovenia**

Slovenian Handball Coaches Association

Master Coach Course

**A COMPARISON OF VARIOUS TYPES OF  
DEFENSIVE ACTIVITIES IN ZONE SET-DEFENCES  
USED TO FIGHT TYPICAL OFFENSE SET-PLAYS**

Seminar paper

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Author: Igor Razgor

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this seminar paper is to determine and analyse the underlying ideas behind defensive activities and their tactical aspects in situations when the attackers are executing typical attacking set-plays. Different predetermined defensive tactical activities are compared in order to find the most successful defence against these situations on the court.

When preparing the tactical defensive activities in a zone defence, we aim to improve the quality of the defence and the cooperation between defenders. In training, we must prepare situations that resemble those occurring in matches, so that our players will be able to respond appropriately to the offense activities of the opposition.

This seminar paper contains an analysis of eight 2012-2013 Champions League matches which feature the typical defensive responses to various typical attacking activities, such as when wings or backs do a transition to the goal area line.

Individual video clips taken from the matches allow us to analyse the situations. We are able to see that both the attackers and the defenders strive to gain a numerical advantage. Often zone defences seemingly transform into two groups - four and two or three and three - and the present comparison can be used to create our own zone defence concept (3-2-1, 6-0, 5-1).

The teams included in this seminar paper are intentionally selected from various European countries to analyse a wide range of tactical defensive activities.

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**KEY:**

LW - left wing

LB - left back

CB - centre back

RB - right back

RW - right wing

LP - line player

2LP - second line player

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

To be able to compare various tactical defensive activities in zone defences, we must first describe the tactical attacking activities, the typical attacking set-plays and how continuous attacks evolve.

The basic attacking formations include one line player. In a continuously dangerous attack, attackers can repeatedly make runs to the line from various positions. In recent years, the most frequent position to make a run from is the left wing; a run from the right wing is less frequent. Runs from the backs are mostly limited to the centre back; runs from the left and right back occur less often.

The main objective of attacking with two line players is to sow confusion among defenders in a zone defence which leads to a breakdown of organized defending. Later, the attackers can use their physical superiority to force the defenders into errors and force them to play by their own rules. A well-organized team is able to seamlessly connect set-plays during the course of a single attack - after a run to the line, backs can execute crosses to create numerical advantages and goalscoring opportunities.

On the other hand, appropriate defensive tactical activities are conceived in the opposite way. Based on their experience, all coaches first create their own tactical plan in terms of the following factors that define an actual situation on the court:

- Depending on the defenders
- Depending on the line player (weight, height, dominant hand, etc.)
- Depending on the understanding between teammates
- Depending on the amount of shots taken from a particular side or location

It is important to pay attention to the basic variables related to runs to the line:

- Who is making the run (from what position)
- Where the LP is located (the exact position of the original LP)
- When does the player make the run (with the ball, when the ball is travelling from the other side, etc.)
- How does the player make the run (in front or behind the defenders)
- Whether the LP and 2LP change positions
- Whether the opposition uses two natural line players to attack with two line players

The basic requirement of a good zone defence is density in the middle where the attackers have the best chance of scoring. Likewise, the attackers like to cause havoc in the middle to decrease the density of the zone defence.

## 2.0 SUBJECT

The analysis of video clips has shown that zone defences use various ways to adapt to two line players.

One of the possibilities is to transform the zone defence into another one; however most coaches prefer other solutions. In any case, the most effective zone defences have clearly defined roles and individual solutions for every situation on the court.

We aim to compare various zone defence activities when facing two line players:

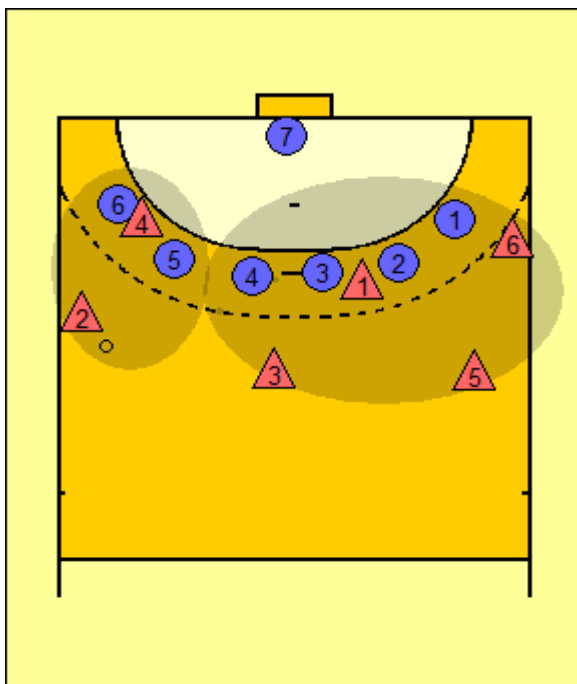
- 6-0 zone defence
- 5-1 zone defence
- 3-2-1 zone defence
- 3-3 zone defence

Explaining the actions of defenders with figures and videos allows us to gain an insight into the tactical objectives of the defence; however, these activities will not necessarily be successful.

Extremely important information for coaches trying to define their zone defence tactics are their team's physical attributes. The examples confirm the desire of the defenders to have a numerical advantage which is often closely related to physical superiority (height, weight).

### 2.1 6-0 ZONE DEFENCE

#### 2.1.1 A RUN TO THE LINE - LW



**Figure 1: The positioning of defenders in a 6-0 zone defence when one of the attackers makes a run to the line**

Figure 1 shows a run to the line by the LW. At this moment, the ball is with the LB and we can already observe the division of the 6-0 zone defence into two distinct areas. The left area contains a 2-on-2 situation and the right area contains a 4-on-4 situation.

The tactical defensive activities in the 6-0 zone defence remain unchanged - there are no changes for defenders 1 and 6.

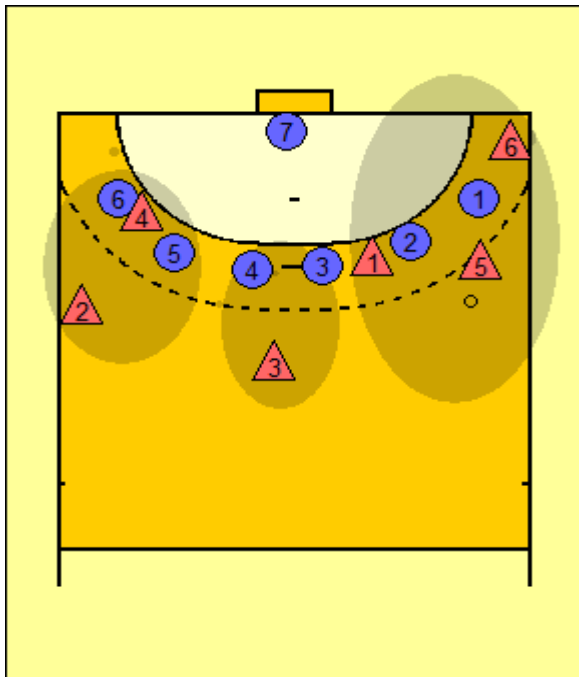


Figure 2 shows three new areas in the 6-0 zone defence which are the result of the attackers playing on - if the ball is quickly moved to the other side, then the area on the right contains a 3-on-2 situation.

Figure 2: New areas in the 6-0 zone defence when the ball is quickly moved to the right-hand side of the attack



Image 1: 6-0 zone defence during a match between Kiel and Veszprem

Image 1 shows the 6-0 zone defence during a match between KIEL (in white) and VEZSPREM (in red). There are no changes in the formation after the LW made a run to the line to the opposite side.

### 2.1.1 A RUN TO THE LINE - RW

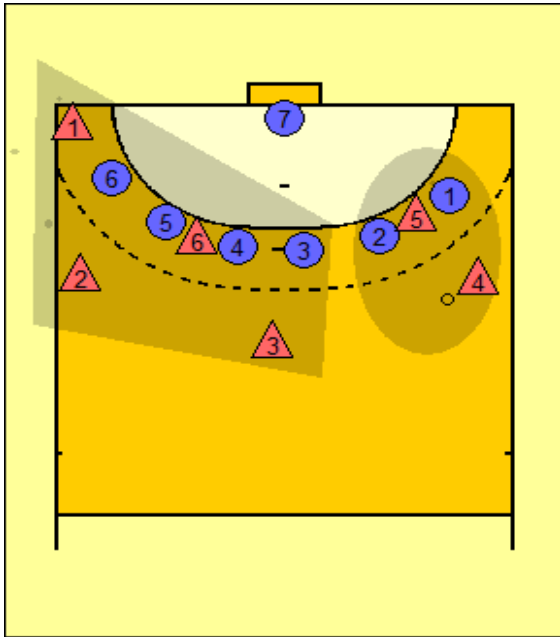


Figure 3: The 6-0 zone defence after a run to the line by the RW

Figure 3 shows the 6-0 zone defence when the RW makes a run to the line - there are no changes to the formation.

We can again observe the two areas: 2-on-2 on the right-hand side and 4-on-4 on the left-hand side. The 6-0 zone defence remains unchanged and defenders B2, B3 and B4 do not allow attackers to create a numerical advantage for a goalscoring opportunity.

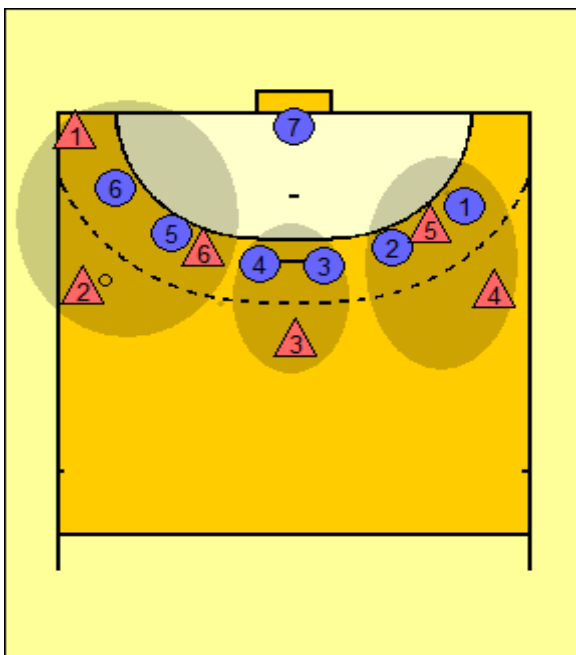


Figure 4: New areas when the RW makes a run to the line

Figure 4 shows the three areas where attackers and defenders want to create a numerical advantage to create a goalscoring opportunity, or successfully win the ball, respectively.

The situation emerges after a run to the line by the RW.



Image 2: 6-0 zone defence during a match between Kiel and Vezsprem

Image 2 shows the 6-0 zone defence during a match between KIEL (in white) and VEZSPREM (in red). There are no changes in the formation after the RW made a run to the line.

### 2.1.3 A RUN TO THE LINE - LW

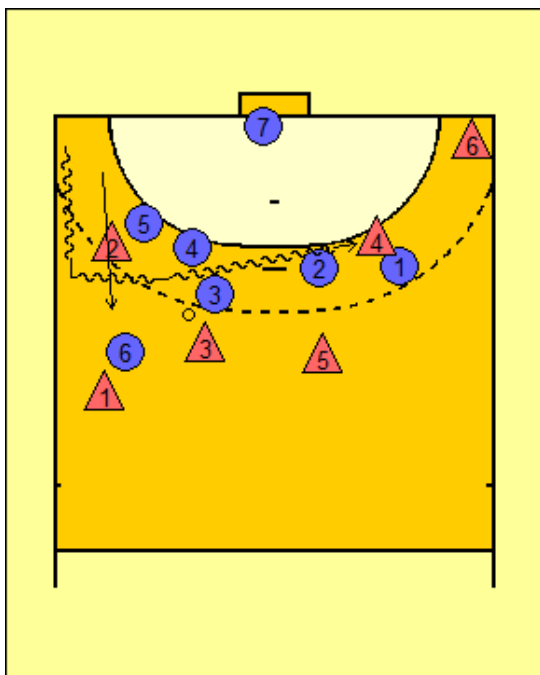


Figure 5: The transformation from 6-0 to 5+1

Figure 5 shows the assignment of the first defender from the right who must tightly mark the LB after the LW made a run to the line. The 6-0 zone defence transforms into 5+1.



Image 3: The transformation from 6-0 to 5+1

Image 3 shows the tight marking of the LB by the first defender from the right. The image is taken from a match between BARCELONA (in blue) and FÜCHSE BERLIN (yellow).

## 2.2 5-1 ZONE DEFENCE

### 2.2.1 A RUN TO THE LINE - LW

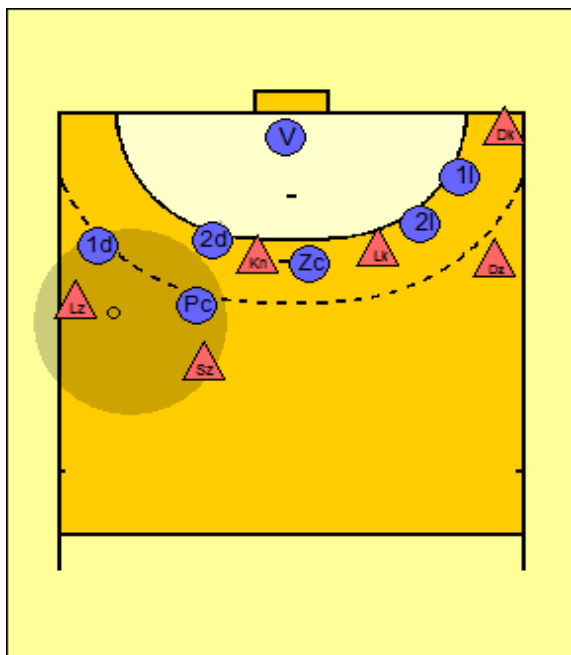


Figure 6: The transformation from 5-1 to 4+2

Figure 6 shows the 5-1 zone defence when the LW makes a run to the line - we can observe the formation of the "pressing zone".

The first defender from the right and the forward tightly mark the LB and CB when the ball is with the LB.



Image 4: The 5-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the LW

Image 4 shows the 5-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the LW - the first defender from the right and the forward tightly mark the LB and CB when they have the ball. The 5-1 zone defence transforms into a 4+2 defence. The image is taken from a match between KIEL (in white) and ATLETICO MADRID (in stripes).

### 2.2.2 A RUN TO THE LINE - RW

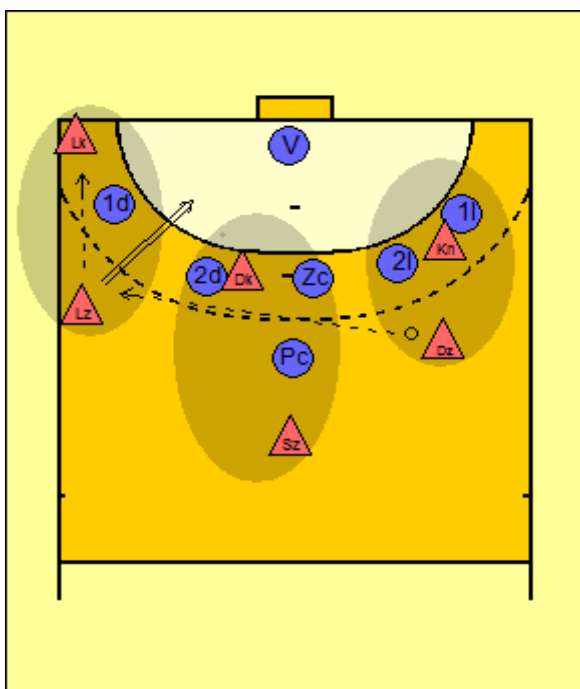


Figure 7: New areas in 5-1 zone defence

Figure 7 shows the numerical ratio of defenders and attackers in the areas.

The situation occurred after a run to the line by the RW.

The figure shows a potential danger for the 5-1 defence, if the RB manages to quickly pass the ball to the LB. This would mean a 2-on-1 situation. Cases such as this one represent a significant challenge for defensive tactics preparation.



Image 5: The 5-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the RW

Image 5 shows the unchanged 5-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the RW. The RB can quickly pass the ball to the LB to create a numerical advantage on the right-hand side of the 5-1 zone defence. The image is taken from a match between KIEL (in white) and ATLETICO MADRID (in stripes).

### 2.2.3 A RUN TO THE LINE - CB

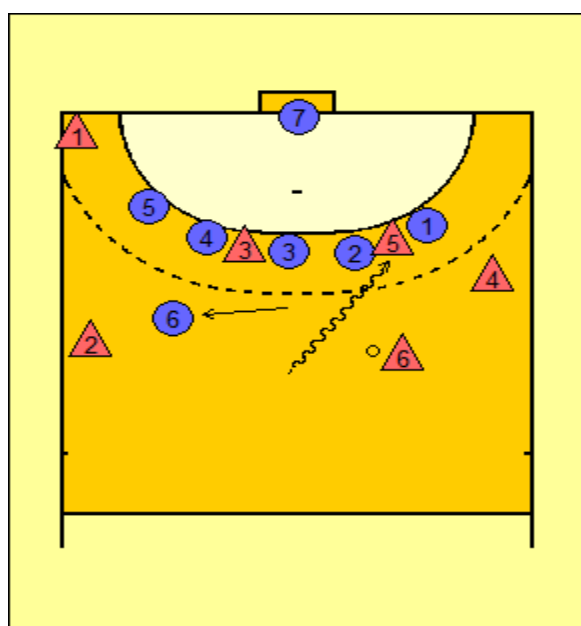


Figure 8: The transformation from 5-1 to 5+1

Figure 8 shows the 5-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the CB. The forward starts tightly marking the LB.

The tactical agreement between defenders in this situation is clear - to tightly mark the LB if the CB makes a run to the line.

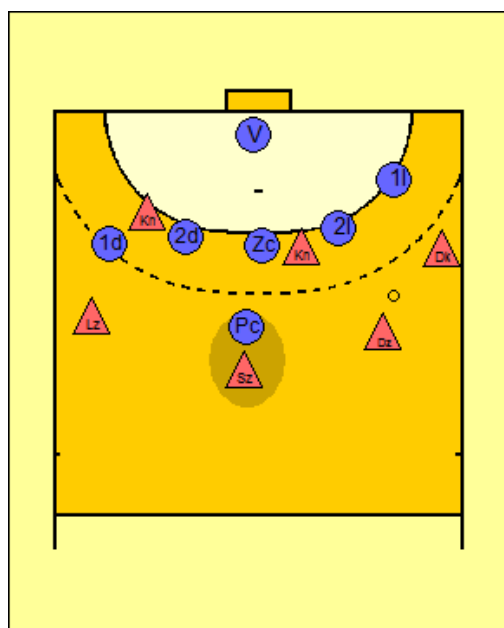


Image 6: The 5-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the CB

Image 6 shows the intent of the forward to mark the LB when the RB has the ball after a run to the line by the CB. The image is taken from a match between KIEL (in white) and VESZPREM (in red).

## 2.2.4 ATTACKING WITH TWO LINE PLAYERS - WITHOUT LW

### 5-1 ZONE DEFENCE



We can clearly see the instructions for the defenders in the 5-1 defence on figure 9: the forward must tightly marks the CB, because the opposition has no LW and two natural line players on court (they are physically superior).

Figure 9: The transformation from 5-1 to 5+1



Image 7: 5-1 zone defence against two LPs

On image 7, the forward tightly marks the CB - the 5-1 zone defence has transformed into 5+1 when the attackers started using two line players. The image is taken from a match between BARCELONA (in dark-blue) and FÜCHSE BERLIN (yellow).

## 2.3 3-2-1 ZONE DEFENCE

### 2.3.1 A RUN TO THE LINE - LW

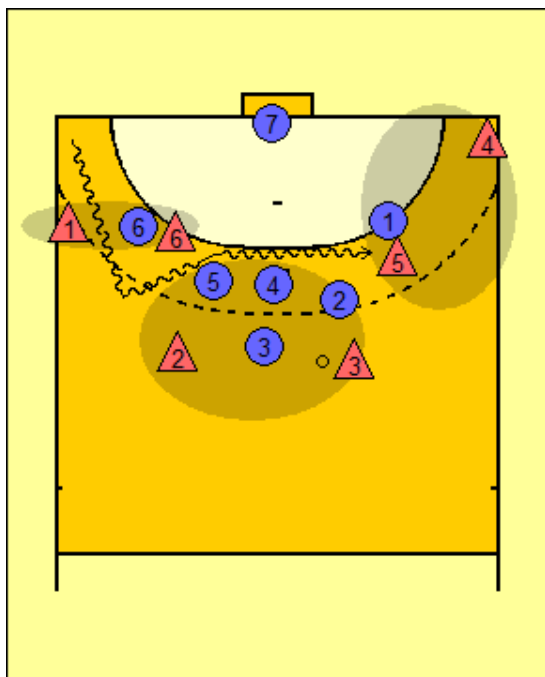


Figure 10: New areas in 3-2-1 zone defence

Figure 10 shows a dense 3-2-1 zone defence which is very vulnerable after a quick pass to the left-hand side of the attack - from where the goal was actually scored in this match.

The defenders have a numerical advantage in the area with the ball - which is understandable from a tactical point of view - but after a quick pass to the other side and a successful screen by the LP on the second defender from the right, the attackers can create a numerical advantage and prepare a goalscoring opportunity for the LW.



Image 8: The 3-2-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the LW

Image 8 shows the clear numerical advantage of defenders in the middle of the 3-2-1 defence. The coach of the team in defence is alerting the first defender from the right on the possibility of a shot from the LW.



Image 9: The 3-2-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the LW

Image 9 again shows a clear numerical advantage of the attackers after a successful block by the LP on the second defender from the right. Defenders are using the 3-2-1 zone defence. Images 8 and 9 are taken from a match between KIEL (in white) and ATLETICO MADRID (in stripes).

## 2.4 3-3 ZONE DEFENCE

### 2.4.1 A RUN TO THE LINE - CB

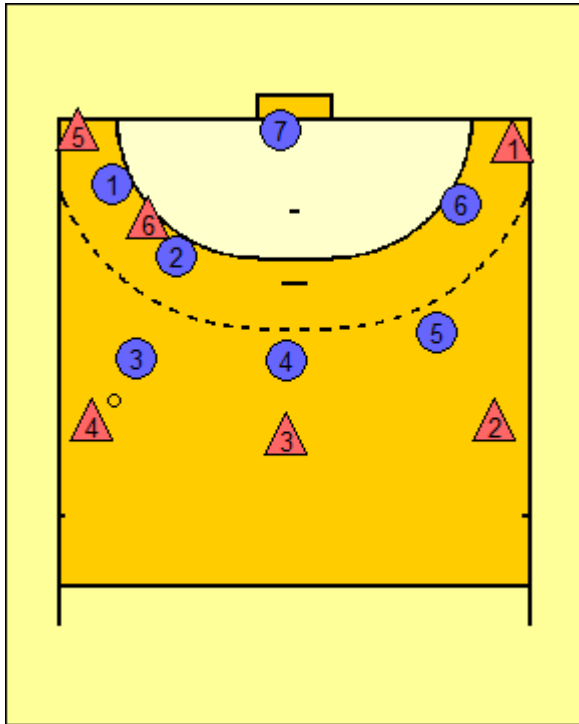


Figure 12: 3-3 zone defence

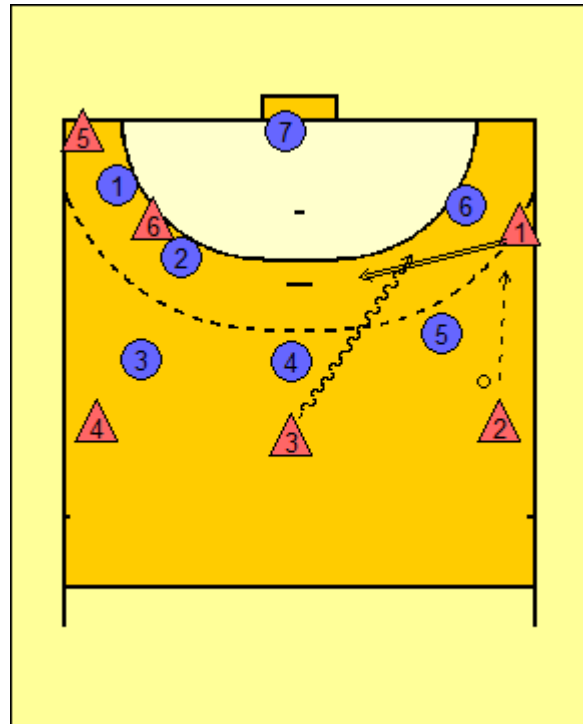


Figure 11: The 3-3 zone defence after a run to the line by the CB

Figure 11 shows the 3-3 zone defence when attackers are passively passing the ball in piston movement. When the RB passes the ball to the RW, the CB makes a run to receive the ball. He shoots on goal after a cross (figure 12). After the cross, the defenders try to play man-to-man defence, but are not successful.

Most teams use runs to the line from all positions when playing against a 3-3 defence and defenders find it difficult to prevent runs and shots soon enough. This situation in the 3-3 zone defence can be seen in images 10 and 11 as well.



Image 10: 3-3 zone defence



Image 11: The 3-3 zone defence after a run to the line by the CB

Images 10 and 11 are taken from a match between FÜCHSE BERLIN (in yellow) and DINAMO MINSK (in blue).

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

I've used YouTube videos of matches and drawing board software to prepare this seminar paper. My references include the Slovenian handball journal *Trener rokomet*, foreign web sources and my own knowledge. I've used the Kino software for video analysis and editing.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is difficult to statistically evaluate the effect of zone defence tactical adaptations. Detailed analysis of the typical offense set-plays can point coaches in the direction of optimal defensive tactics. However, it is possible to statistically compare the efficiency of attackers against zone defences in the described situations on the court.

A common starting point for tactical defensive activities in zone defences are physical characteristics.

During his quest for progress many years ago, the well-known sports teacher and coach Spartak Mironovič believed physical characteristics to be of utmost importance and he tried to develop players' motor skills in a way that would lead to new trends in handball. Naturally, if this held true for attackers, then defenders would need to adapt and the game would become faster and more effective - which would lead to higher requirements in terms of physical characteristics. Competitive results have increasingly indicated the importance of physical and motor skill superiority.

The described typical offense set-plays in this seminar paper are limited to runs to the line from various positions during attacks. The tactical defensive activities used when attackers repeatedly make runs to the line from various positions depend to a large extent on physical characteristics. In various zone defences, the positions of the first defender from right and left are usually occupied by shorter and lighter defenders compared to the defenders in the middle. In most cases, the defensive response is related to the expected typical offense set-plays - the first defenders have clearly defined assignments, such as pressing of a back far away from the goal area line, or staying at the line.

This seminar paper contains a comparison of various defensive activities for four zone defences.

In the 6-0 zone defence, most defenders remain in their basic position; however, if the first defenders are shorter and lighter than the attacking line players - i.e. the attackers are physical superior - then the first defender from the right can tightly mark the left back when the left wing makes a run to the line. Physically superior teams with greater player selection, such as Barcelona and Kiel, have an advantage in this respect.

The 5-1 zone defence may contain various tactical defensive activities which differ in terms of the actual needs for cooperation between defenders.

In some situations, after one of the wings makes a run to the line, the forward may tightly mark one of the backs and the first left or right defender may at the same time tightly mark another back - the 5-1 defence transforms into 4+2.

If the forward is taller, some teams may elect to transform from 5-1 to 6-0 when an attacker makes a run to the line. When the second line player returns to his original position, the defence transforms back into 5-1.

The 3-2-1 zone defence includes systemic solutions for defending against two line players, but systemic problems occur when there is no attacker on one of the wings. The centre-half's duties change and the first defender from the right has just the line player to mark.

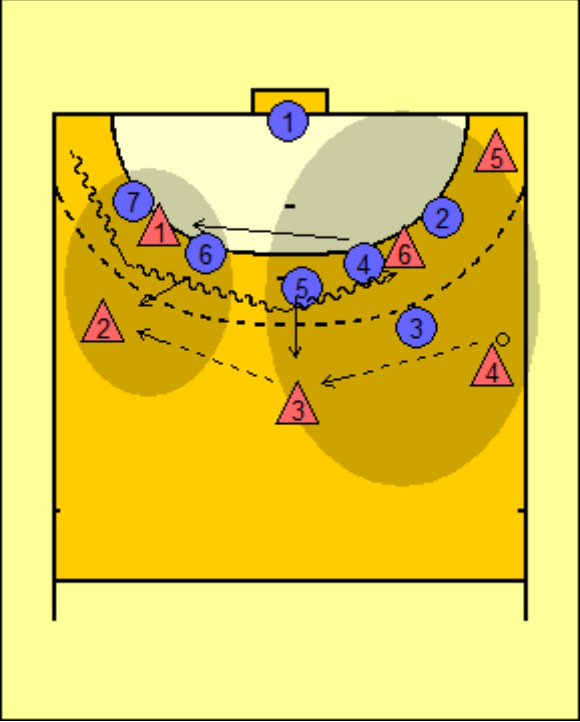


Figure 13: The 3-2-1 zone defence after a run to the line by the LW

Figure 13 shows the division of the 3-2-1 defence after the LW made a run to the line. The centre-half's duties and functions change in that moment.

The 3-3 defence does not adapt when one of the wings makes a run to the line; The two defenders exchange their respective attackers. See figure 14.

If a back makes a run to the line, the 3-3 defence transforms into 4-2. See figure 15.

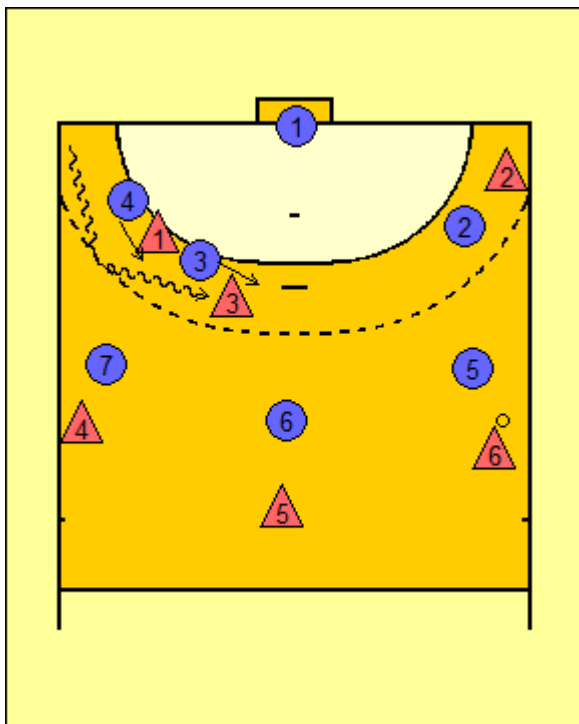


Figure 14: The 3-3 zone defence after a run to the line by the LW

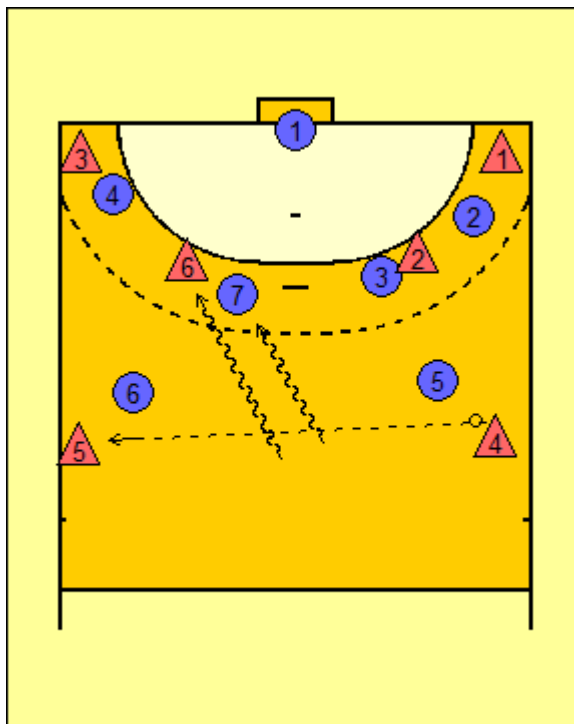


Figure 15: The 3-3 zone defence after a run to the line by the CB

A comprehensive overview of the game in all four phases shows the advantages and disadvantages of the selected tactical defensive activities. Using taller and heavier defenders, who are, as a rule, better defenders, will lead to slower fast breaks - something that runs against the desire to score goals quickly. Fast breaks will be faster and more effective with shorter and lighter defenders, but they may have problems in defence due to their physical inferiority.

Finding the best possible solutions in the game is a constant challenge for coaches who must always take into account the many factors that affect results in handball.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

This seminar paper aims to compare various tactical defensive activities in zone defences used to counter the typical attacking set-plays of the opposition.

It contains descriptions of the frequent defensive activities used by the best teams of the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 Champions League seasons. We can conclude that, in addition to individual skills and abilities, the tactical activities greatly depend on the physical characteristics of players. Attackers execute various set-plays and defenders must react fast enough with appropriate solutions.

Every coach can find solutions based on the situations described in this seminar paper, but they must be adapted to the characteristics of players in their own team.

At the end, I would like to say a few words about the origin of problems in defence. Good shooters from distance increase the attack efficiency. As a result, defenders must move further away from the line which opens up space in front of the goal area - this is when the situations described here take place and it has a significant impact on their selection by coaches.

Based on the comparison of various tactical defensive activities, we can conclude that the training process must produce tall players who are good shooters from distance as well as good defenders.

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Handball Federation of Slovenia  
Slovenian Handball Coaches Association

Master Coach Course

PLAYING WITH NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE IN  
OFFENSE

(Seminar paper)

Mentor: Dr. Marko Šibila

Author: Uroš Šerbec

Celje, 2013

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**Abstract**

Playing with a numerical advantage or disadvantage is a crucial part of offence and defence in handball. When teams have a numerical advantage, they score more goals - in an average match, teams score about 5 goals with a numerical advantage and less than 3 when one of their players is suspended. When teams have only 5 players on the court, they are at a disadvantage and the opposition can break away as a result.

**Keywords:**

handball, fast break, extended fast break, attack, collective activities

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Handball is currently one of the most popular collective ball games in Slovenia and worldwide. One of the main reasons is undoubtedly the high level of organization and the work being performed by clubs performing in the best national competitions (German Bundesliga, Spanish LigaAsobal etc.) where people have discovered long ago that handball is, just like any other ball game (football, basketball) a large business opportunity that is extremely marketable. A proof of this was the 2007 Handball World Championships in Germany where we were able to witness some of the most spectacular sporting events - huge crowds, fast and attractive style of play, minor differences in quality of teams (which shows that the speed of development and the quality of work is similar all over the world), a huge number of commercial partners, live match screenings through various media (TV, Internet, radio, etc.), merchandise sales, concerts and parties, press conferences before and after matches, other supporting events etc.

Games that include throwing a ball with a hand towards a certain destination have been played for a long time. The Ancient Greeks were known to play a game called *urania* which was based on gymnastics and included dance elements. In Ancient Rome, they played *harpaston*, a fierce game similar to modern-day rugby. 19th century saw a rapid development of games that are thought to be the precursors of handball as we know it today. The German sports teacher K. Koch (1846-1911) came up with a game called *rafttall* which included two teams of 10-12 players playing against each other; he even developed and published the rules. 1898 saw the emergence in Denmark of the immediate predecessor of handball - *hadbold* whose founding father was another sports teacher Holger Nielsen. The game was played by two teams of 11 players on a 30x45m court. The goal was 3 meters wide and 2 meters high and the court included a marked goal area where players were not allowed to step in. The rules of the game were written down and published in 1906 and 1916. A few years earlier, the *hazena* ball game emerged in the area now part of the modern-day Czech Republic. It was similar to handball, but it was played only by women. Handball became a member of the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) in 1926. Handball was played as a demonstration sport at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games and the first official Olympic handball matches were played in Berlin in 1936. The first indoor handball World Championships was played in 1938 in Berlin. Handball extended to almost every European country after World War II. In addition to Germany, Scandinavian and Slavic countries also started playing handball with indoor handball coming into prominence. In just a few years, it completely supplanted outdoor handball - mostly due to being more attractive and easier to play. The International Handball Federation (IHF) was established in 1946. At the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, men's handball became part of the regular Olympic programme, while women's handball followed in Montreal in 1976. Handball was not popular in Slovenia before World War II. *Hazena* was played in Maribor and Ljubljana. Handball developed through German influence, especially in schools. It first emerged in Celje, Maribor, MurskaSobota, Lendava and Ptuj as well as Ljubljana and Kranj. The first handball team was established at the University of Ljubljana. The Slovenian Handball Federation was established in 1950. The men's Slovan Handball Club of Ljubljana won the Yugoslav Championships in 1980, while the most prominent women's team was Olimpija of Ljubljana which regularly played for top honours from 1983 on. After the Slovenian independence, Slovenian teams have achieved notable success in men's and women's competitions at the club and national

team levels of all ages. Krim and Celje have become European Champions and other teams (Gorenje, Prevent, Prule, Trebnje, Olimpija) have successfully competed in Europe. The men's national team won bronze at the 1993 Mediterranean Games in France, qualified for the 1994 European Championships in Portugal (achieved 10<sup>th</sup> place) as well as for the 1995 World Championships in Iceland and the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. Its greatest success was the silver medal at the European Championships in Slovenia which also ensured participation at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. The women's national team won bronze at the 1997 Mediterranean Games in Bari and played at the World Championships in Germany the same year. They also qualified for the World Championships in 2001 (Italy), 2003 (Croatia) and 2005 (Russia) and the European Championships in 2002 (Denmark) and 2004 (Hungary) (Šibila, 2004). Handball belongs to multi-structural complex ball games. It is a fast collective game with quick transitions from one side to the other and with firm physical contact between players of opposing teams. The objective of the game is to score goals with a handball - the winner is the team which scores more goals than the opposition (Šibila, 2004). The typical handball movements are natural in most cases. There are a lot of quick short runs, stopping and suddenly changing directions, many jumps, shots etc. Training and playing handball affects almost every human ability, skill or characteristic. Playing handball will develop muscles as well as the respiratory and cardiovascular system, and will have a positive effect on behaviour towards opponents, teammates, referees and yourself; players will develop different thought patterns and the ability of quick problem-solving. Handball also has a beneficial effect on emotional stability, confidence, persistence and concentration, and it also reduces anxiety and improves frustration tolerance levels. Its effects are wide-ranging (Kuzma, 2001).

As already mentioned, handball is a multi-structural ball game which means that it consists of numerous individual elements (basic and handball-specific motor skills) carried out by players in complex cooperation with teammates. Teammate cooperation (and its prevention in defence) consists of various situations (plays) that can be typical (they appear often and in an expected way, so that players recognize them as such) and atypical (they can only appear sporadically or appear in an unexpected way, so that players don't recognize them as such).

## **1.1 Handball technique and tactics structure**

The structural elements (units) of handball are called technical/tactical elements or handball-specific motor skills that can be broken down into:

- The basic handball motor skills comprising of all playing activities without the ball (running forward, running backward, running sideways, shuffling, jumping etc.).
- Handball-specific motor skills comprising of playing activities with the ball (passing, shooting, catching, holding and picking up the ball etc.).

"Technical" describes the fact that they are executed according to bio-mechanical laws that enable optimal execution. "Tactical" describes the fact that they are always executed with a certain tactical goal in mind (to pass or shoot accurately is a complex technical/tactical task). The technical and tactical aspects of individual elements cannot be separated in play, so we often discuss them together. The handball technique and tactics can be broken down into attacking and defensive technique and attacking and defensive tactics. As this seminar paper discusses the methodology and training of collective activities in attack against a full zone or combined defence, I will just quickly outline the basic attacking technical and tactical aspects - please bear in mind that a whole separate chapter could have been dedicated to defensive

technical and tactical elements. Coaches should have a systemic overview of the technical and tactical element classification in handball because it would help them with training session planning.

### 1.1.1 Handball technique structure in offense

Table 1: A basic outline of handball technique in attack

BREZ ŽOGE	Z ŽOGO
položaji	položaji
hoja	vodenja
prehodi v tek	lovljenja
teki	podaje
zaustavljanja	streli
spremembe smeri	varanja
obrati	preigravanje
skoki	blokade
padci	
pobiranja	

Without the ball: positions, walking, transition from walking into running, running, stopping, changing direction, turning, jumping, diving, getting back up

With the ball: positions, dribbling, catching, passing, shooting, faking, feinting, screening

### 1.1.2 Handball tactics structure in offense play:

#### 1.1.2.1 Individual

- player movement
- evading fouls
- shots
- feints

#### 1.1.2.2 Group

- making yourself available
- running into open space
- crosses
- pick and roll

- give and go
- running up and passing

### **1.1.2.3 Collective**

- fast break
- extended fast break
- attack against a zone or combined set defence:
  - with one line player
  - with two line players
- special situations:
  - numerical advantage
  - numerical disadvantage
  - with a line player
  - without a line player
- free throw

## **2 HANDBALL TACTICS IN OFFENSE**

Tactics defines the way individual players or the entire team play to be as successful as possible. "Tactics" usually denotes elements of collective tactics: systems or collective ways of playing, tactical goals and principles, playing position arrangement etc. However, tactics is reflected in every activity, movement or decision undertaken by individual players (Goršič, 1986). Attack is the phase when a team is in possession of the ball and tries to score a goal. It starts immediately after the team wins the ball and lasts until the end of the offense activities (ends with a goal or a lost ball). The objective of an attack is to use logical combinations (set-plays) to score a goal or prepare a goal scoring opportunity; however, teams that have a favourable result often try to keep the ball in possession as long as possible and are only passively attacking. In attack against a zone or combined defence, players must first position themselves to their respective playing positions. This is followed by tactical plan preparation which depends on the defensive formation of the opposition. Players then use individual, group and collective activities to create a goal scoring opportunity and score goals.

The attacking style is determined by various factors with some of the most important being:

- Difference in quality between the attacking and defending team
- Individual abilities of players
- Tactical characteristics of opposition defence
- Difference in physical condition between the attacking and defending team
- Location of the match and playing conditions
- Referees
- Importance of the match

During tactical preparation, we must not forget that the objective of every attack is to score a goal - this means that we must select activities that are always directed towards the goal and that players executing them, irrespective of the playing position, are always dangerous for the defence.

### **2.1 The main tactical assignments in offense**

The assignments of the attacker with the ball:

1. To immediately shoot or create a goalscoring opportunity
2. To immediately pass or pass after they were unable to create a goalscoring opportunity
3. To create an opportunity for a safe pass

The assignments of the attacker without the ball:

1. To create space for a shot by a teammate
2. To position himself in goalscoring position
3. To make himself available for a pass (Goršič, 1999)

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When training attacking tactics, we must pay attention to three things:

1. The team tactics must be adapted to individual abilities of all players. Even the best tactical ideas will not be successful, if the pass is bad or if players make mistakes while dribbling. It makes no sense training various attacking combinations, if players haven't yet mastered basic technical and tactical elements.
2. Every tactical combination must be simple; otherwise it won't be efficient during matches. The whole team participates in attack preparation, but only two or three players participate in the conclusion of the attack. This is the only way to achieve the correct timing and positioning of players which is an essential prerequisite for concluding a combination.
3. Regardless of the level of familiarity between players executing a combination, it is impossible to be certain that the combination will be successfully executed during a match. This means that it is good that every attacking combination has multiple solutions and players are able to select the best one depending on the situation at hand (Poklar, 1985).

Attacking tactics can be broken down into:

- individual
- group
- collective

## **2.2 Individual tactical activities in offense**

Individual tactical activities consist of a player independently selecting and executing a particular technical element that represents the best solution in a given situation. Individual tactics is the selection of the most appropriate solution for a typical or atypical situation in the game. Narrowly speaking, individual tactical elements are: technical elements without the ball (making yourself available, running into open space, running past opponents, evading fouls) and technical elements with the ball (catching, passing, shooting, feinting, faking, foul evading, moving with the ball).

## **2.3 Group tactical activities in offense**

Group tactical activities in attack are solutions of a (a)typical situation in the game in which two or more players take part, but not the entire team.

Group tactical elements in attack are:

- running up and passing
- crosses
- changing position without the ball
- pick and roll

- give and go
- making yourself available

## **2.4 Collective tactical activities in offense play**

A collective tactical activity is an activity that involves every player in a team. It could be said that a collective tactical activity is the sum of individual activities of all players, and the agreed-upon collective tactical elements make the selection and execution of tactical ideas easier (Poklar, 1985).

Collective tactical activities are:

- fast break
- extended fast break
- attack against a full zone or combined defensive formation:
  - - with one line player
  - - with two line players

There are also some specific situations in attack against a full zone or combined defensive formation:

- attacking with a numerical advantage
- attacking with a numerical disadvantage (with or without a line player)
- free throw

Individual and collective tactics of various zone and combined defences have seen fast development in recent years and defences have been getting tighter. Even good individuals have little opportunities to create a goalscoring opportunity individually without any help from teammates (Šibila, 2006).

## **2.5 Attack against a full zone or combined defence**

In most cases, the initial positioning of attackers resembles a semi-circle with one line player. The semi-circle consists of the left and right wings, and the left, centre and right backs. The left and right wing starting position is usually the intersection of the free throw line and the sideline. The left and right back starting position is 12-13 meters from the goal line and 2-3 meters from the sideline, and the centre back stands in the middle of the court 1-2 meters behind the left and right back. The line player is positioned along the goal area line between the second and third defender (Šibila, 2006). The roles are assigned based on attributes, abilities and characteristics of players. All playing positions require high mobility; however the exact skills differ from position to position.

**Wings:** Wings usually operate in a limited area. Normally, they shoot on goal after jumping inside the goal area with various run up types and directions. They also use various shot types depending on their own morphological characteristics and mobility as well as goalkeeper's positioning

Wings can shoot on goal from various positions:

- From the wing after a semi-circular run up from the corner or after a feint or breakthrough
- From a back position after running in front of the defence
- From the line after running towards the heart of the defence or after breaking through the first and second defender with the ball

The crucial attribute for wings in attack is speed in all of its forms.

**Backs:** In most teams, play is dictated by the centre back who must have, in addition to high mobility (explosive and elastic arm, shoulder and leg strength, agility etc.), good vision, a lot of technical/tactical knowledge and organization and leadership abilities. Left and right backs are usually good shooters (versatility); they must also be proficient with feinting and faking and have good mobility.

Backs should have the following skills and abilities:

- A good jump or ground shot from distance with a minimal number of steps (shooting from the first step is common in modern handball)
- Good foul evasion skills, so that defenders are not able to interrupt attacks
- Be constantly on the move - immediately after passing the ball, they should be moving into a new position to continue the attack

**Line players:** Activities of playing on the line are moving into open space, screening opponents and shooting on goal to finish attacks. These shots are mostly diving shots into the goal area. Due to the proximity of the goal, their shot conversion should be high. In modern handball, line players are actively participating in all phases of play (they can even participate in crosses with backs or wings etc.). They often play an important role in attacks and fast breaks (Bon, 2002).

Various zone defences have various weak points depending on the initial positioning and the operational mechanisms. Attackers use various activities to create situations that are the most difficult to solve for a particular defence. Of course, the way a particular defence is played constantly changes and adapts. Recently, we have seen a number of classic defence variants which are used to neutralize classic attacking activities. On the other hand, attackers try to use new and adapted activities to surprise defences and take advantage of weaknesses in classic defensive formations and their variants. This is how playing in defence and attacking against a full defence evolve and develop in constant interaction.

Attackers can play against full zone or combined defences in an organized fashion with pre-trained set-plays or they can improvise. When they improvise, they string together various activities depending on the situation in response to the reactions of the defence. A positive side of improvisation is unpredictability, and the negative side is a lack of organization, interaction, and bad choices that can be made when playing against a particular defensive formation.

In recent years, teams are extremely versatile in selecting various set-plays used in attack against zone and combined defences. This has less to do with new options in combining individual activities into collective combinations (set-plays), and more with the ability of players to express their creativity at almost any time during a combination. This means that a combination starts according to a certain agreement (i.e. agreed-upon sequence), but every player participating can (must) adapt his activity to the actual situation and the reaction of the defenders. An attacking combination does not mean activities are carried out according to a predetermined scheme. However, this way of playing requires players to understand the meaning of individual combinations, be familiar with the various ways of how individual combinations evolve in play, in addition to individual skills and abilities - in other words, a lot of theoretical and practical knowledge.

A combination means a sequence of individual activities executed by multiple players that are synchronized, take place in a predetermined area and form a logical unit. Individual activities are thus logically connected and represent an effective way of attacking against certain defences. In combinations, individual activities are utilized in way that represents the greatest efficiency for the combination (Šibila, 2006).

The basic prerequisites for attacking against any full defensive formation are:

- A high quality of quick movements with and without the ball
- Correct execution of technical/tactical elements
- Interaction between players
- Constantly maintaining width and depth
- Understanding the attacking tactics (individual etc.)
- The ability to solve new situations individually (Papić, 2002)

### 3 TACTICS OF ATTACKING WITH A NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE

Playing with a numerical advantage or disadvantage is a crucial part of attack and defence in handball. Analysis of competitions at the highest level confirms this. The tables below show some data that illustrate the importance of playing with a numerical advantage or disadvantage. We can observe that the number of attacks with a numerical advantage is a bit higher than the number of attacks with a numerical disadvantage. When teams have a numerical advantage, they score more goals - in an average match, teams score about 5 goals with a numerical advantage and less than 3 when one of their players is suspended. Particularly interesting is the data on the high number of suspensions in certain teams that were less successful (Hungary, Serbia etc.).

This is a high percentage that shows the importance of playing with a numerical advantage in handball. This is also the result of the fact that coaches often do not dedicate enough time to suitable tactical preparation. The tactical problems that occur during matches in situations with numerical advantage or disadvantage are unique in many aspects. Defences can adapt to the new situation and use certain tactical elements to make the attackers' job more difficult.

Table 2: The number of attacks and goals scored with numerical advantage or disadvantage in European Championships between 2002 and 2010

Evropsko prvenstvo	St. napadov moštva z igralcem več na tekmo	St. zadetkov moštva z igralcem več na tekmo	Število napadov moštva z igralcem manj na tekmo	Število zadetkov z igralcem manj na tekmo
EP 2002	7.95	4.47	6.15	2.34
EP 2004	9.43	5.54	7.35	2.60
EP 2006	8.70	5.16	6.72	2.81
EP 2008	7.74	4.71	5.85	2.32
EP 2010	7.82	4.76	5.84	2.94

#### European Championships

The number of attacks with a numerical advantage per match

The number of goals scored with a numerical advantage per match

The number of attacks with a numerical disadvantage per match

The number of goals scored with a numerical disadvantage per match

Table 3: The average number of suspensions and their duration per team per match during the 2010 European Championships in Austria

Evropsko prvenstvo 2010 v Avstriji			
Ekipa	Št. tek.	2. min. izključitve	Povprečje minut izključitev
AUSTRIA	6	33	11
HRVAŠ.	8	32	8
ČEŠKA	6	26	8.6
DANSKA	7	33	9.4
ŠPANIJA	7	28	8
FRANC.	8	17	4.3
NEMČIJA	6	20	6.7
MADŽA.	3	20	13.3
ISLAND.	8	39	9.8
NORVE.	6	26	8.7
POLJSKA	8	35	8.8
RUSIJA	6	33	11
SLOVENI.	6	27	9
SRBIJA	3	18	12
ŠVEDSKA	3	16	10.7
UKRAJINA	3	15	10
SKUPAJ	94	<b>418</b>	<b>8.9</b>

#### 2010 European Championships in Austria

Team, No. of matches, Suspensions, Average duration per game in minutes

Table 4: The total number of attacks, the number of attacks with a numerical advantage and disadvantage and the efficiency of these attacks during the 2010 European Championships in Austria 2002 to 2010

Evropsko prvenstvo 2010 v Avstriji				
Ekipa	Št. tek.	Skupno št. zadetkov/napadov	Zadetki/napadi z igralcem več	Zadetki/napadi z igralcem manj
AUSTRIA	6	184/346 (53%)	27/39 (69%)	21/44 (48%)
HRVAŠ.	8	207/397 (52%)	44/67 (66%)	17/36 (47%)
ČEŠKA	6	175/358 (49%)	26/38 (68%)	15/35 (43%)
DANSKA	7	198/371 (53%)	35/52 (67%)	14/36 (39%)
ŠPANIJA	7	213/394 (54%)	30/58 (52%)	19/40 (48%)
FRANC.	8	225/451 (50%)	41/63 (65%)	11/24 (46%)
NEMČIJA	6	157/339 (46%)	26/44 (59%)	12/29 (41%)
MADŽA.	3	80/169 (47%)	11/22 (50%)	9/27 (33%)
ISLAND.	8	249/459 (54%)	48/77 (62%)	20/45 (44%)
NORVE.	6	169/347 (49%)	36/58 (62%)	15/30 (50%)
POLJSKA	8	222/463 (48%)	32/63 (51%)	13/46 (28%)
RUSIJA	6	177/354 (50%)	28/48 (58%)	25/46 (54%)
SLOVENI.	6	186/381 (49%)	28/41 (68%)	15/39 (38%)
SRBIJA	3	83/161 (52%)	9/18 (50%)	13/27 (48%)
ŠVEDSKA	3	78/170 (46%)	15/24 (63%)	9/24 (38%)
UKRAJINA	3	87/181 (48%)	11/23 (48%)	6/21 (29%)
SKUPAJ	94	<b>2690/5341 (50%)</b>	<b>447/735 (61%)</b>	<b>234/549 (43%)</b>

2010 European Championships in Austria

Team, No. of matches, goals/attacks total, goals/attacks with a numerical advantage, goals/attacks with a numerical disadvantage

### 3.1 Attacking with a numerical advantage

From a tactical point of view, having a numerical advantage is significant, but its importance diminishes if we take into account other factors (i.e. mentality) as well. Most teams at the highest level try to use a specific concept when playing with a numerical advantage - and it is mostly related to the line player's position. Below are figures showing the most popular tactical solutions.

Example 1:

The line player stands between the 2. and 3. defender on the side where the ball is i.e. on the side where the attacking combination starts. The LB and LP try to attract the 2. and the central defender onto themselves in a wide position. The LB can then decide how to continue by passing the ball to the LP, CB or any other open teammate. If the defence does not react appropriately, he can also shoot.

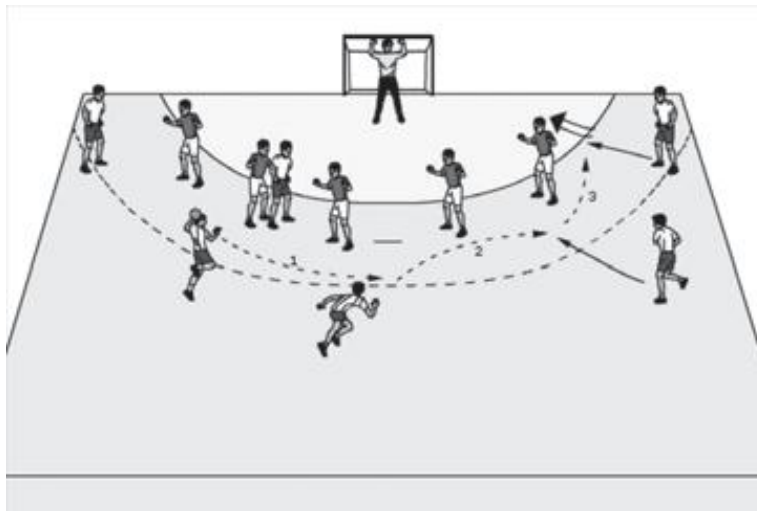


Figure 1: A figure of example 1

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**Example 2:**

The line player stands between the 2. and 3. defender on the side opposite of the ball i.e. the side opposite of the start of the attacking combination. The basic tactical idea in attack is to take advantage of the LP's block vs. the central defender. After the CB receives the ball from the LB, he runs past the blocked defender and tries to create a numerical advantage or create an opportunity to continue playing in any other way.

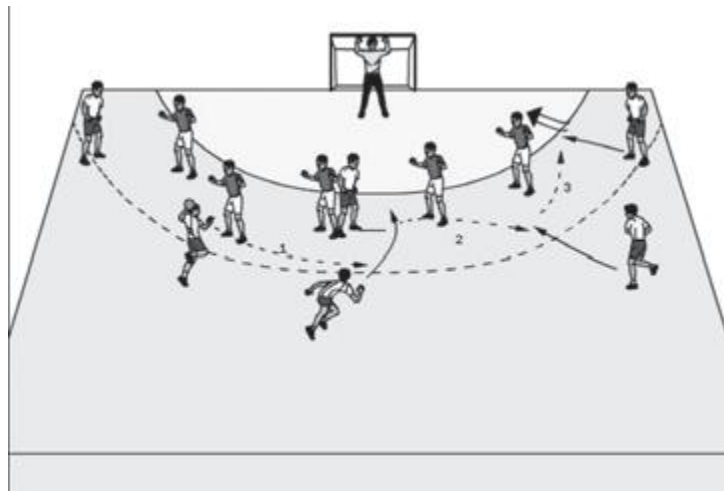


Figure 2: A figure of example 2

**Example 3:**

The line player stands between the 1. and 2. defender.

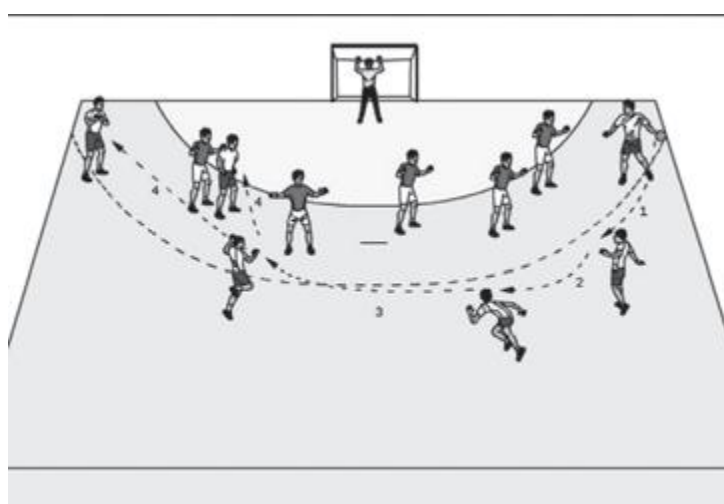


Figure 3: A figure of example 3

#### Example 4:

An example of a player running into the second line player position. Defenders try to stop the classic attack with three backs by closing them down high up to court (anticipatory defending). By doing so, they diminish the space the attackers have to execute attacking activities. The attackers find it more difficult to receive the ball in full flight or even pass the ball. This means that they must select less appropriate and riskier solutions from a tactical point of view. One of the ways to avoid the traps set by the defenders is to have one of the players move into the second line player position. This can be one of the wings or backs. It can be improvised depending on the actual situation or planned in the context of a particular tactical combination. The figure shows an example of the CB running into the second line player position. The CB moves to the line when the RB is receiving the ball from the RW. The CB tries to screen the 2. defender from the left and the RB tries to take advantage of the screen to continue the play in the best possible way.

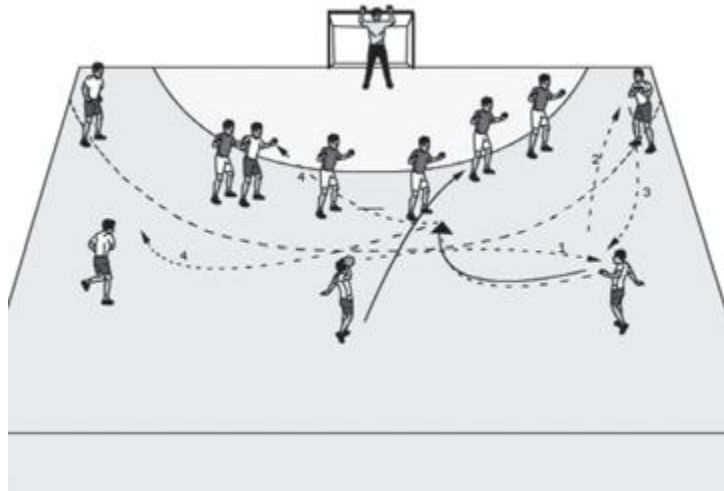


Figure 4: A figure of example 4

The described tactical solutions must of course be adapted to the team's structure i.e. the quality of players in particular playing positions. Too often we see in matches at all levels how players are unable to find the appropriate solutions within an otherwise good tactical combination. One of the largest problems is that they shoot too fast from situations that do not represent clear goal scoring opportunities. They do not have the required patience in the process of creating a goal scoring opportunity. They do not execute enough dangerous run ups and passes of the ball without being interrupted by a foul. Defenders are often able to predict the combination based on the LP positioning and the initial movements of attackers - if the attackers' actions are too predictable, it makes the defenders' job easier. An appropriate selection of tactical solutions allows the players to learn how to solve problems when playing with a numerical advantage in a dynamic and creative way. It is important to maintain the speed and the correct sequence of run ups and take into account the depth and width. Cooperating with the line player makes taking advantage of a numerical advantage easier. Line players must be able to surprise the defenders - by positioning themselves and making themselves available in different ways. Blocks are used to break the defensive formation and prevent the defenders from anticipating the attackers' actions.

## 3.2 Exercise description

### Exercise 1

Backs take advantage of the LP's screen to break through the defence. If the defender manages to get past the LP, the back must change the direction of movement and take advantage of the block on the other side. This means that the exercise is executed at two positions at the same time (LB and RB). It can be upgraded with various individual or collective fast break exercises.

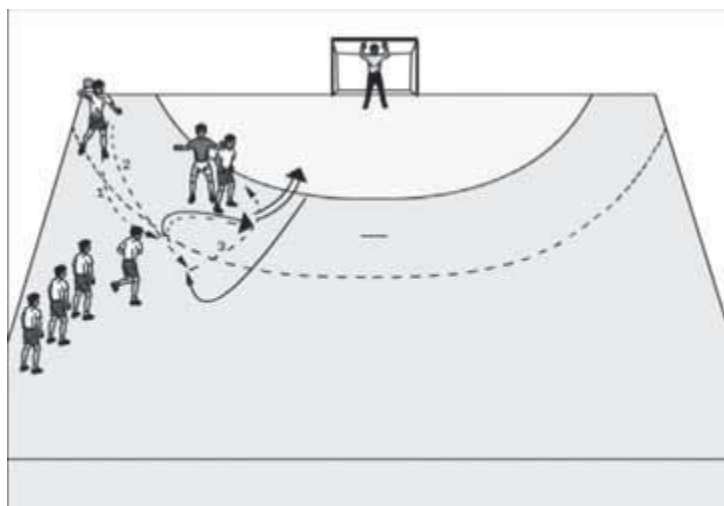


Figure 5: Exercise 1

### Exercise 2

Playing 2-on-2 in the middle or on the left and right. After a couple of passes, one of the backs moves into the second line player position. The other back adapts his intentions and takes advantage of the block to break through, shoot or pass the ball to the LP. The exercise is an upgrade of the previous exercise.

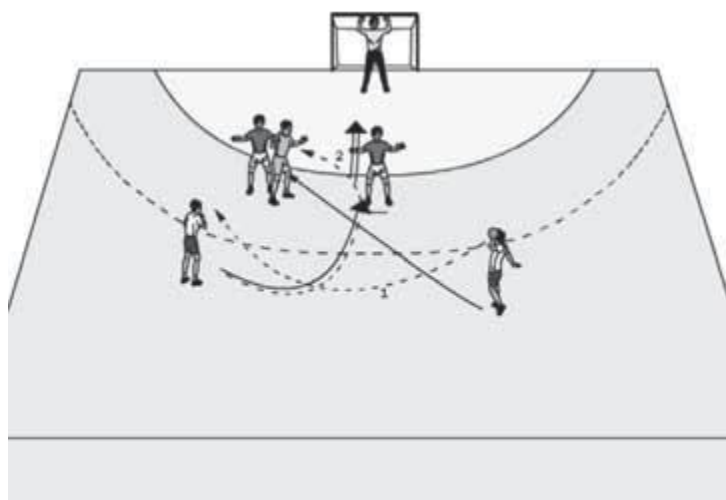


Figure 6: Exercise 2

### Exercise 3

Two defenders and two line players are positioned on the goal area line. Players are standing in pairs in two lines at LB and RB. Pairs of backs exchange passes and then the diagonally positioned LP makes himself available to the back with the ball. The RB passes the ball to the LP who immediately returns the ball. The LP then runs along the goal area line and tries to block the defender. The RB passes the ball to the LB, while the other LP runs towards the LB along the goal area line, receives the ball and shoots. The exercises can continue with a fast break (2-on-0).

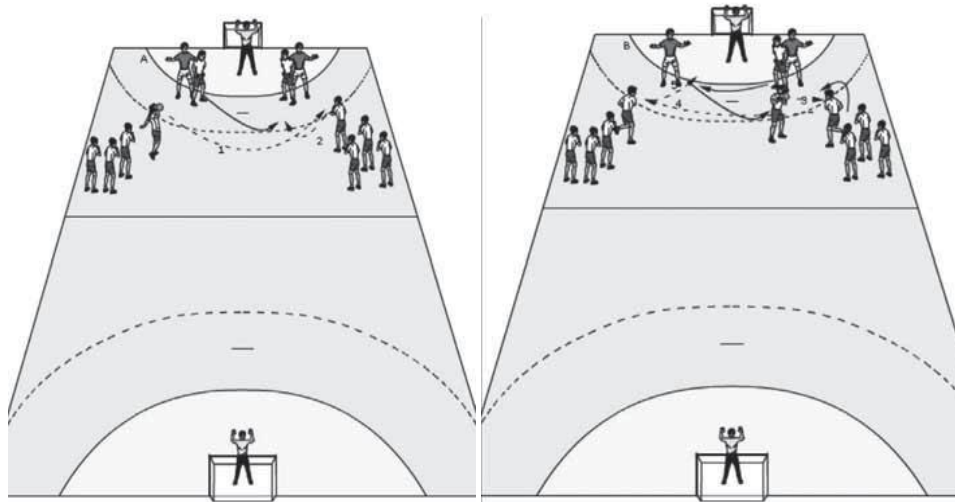


Figure 7: Exercise 3

### Exercise 4

Playing 3-on-3. Three defenders are standing on the goal area line and three attackers are facing them. The LB runs up wide, passes the ball to the CB who makes himself available wide. Immediately after the pass, the LB runs to the line and tries to block the central defender. The CB runs up wide and passes the ball to the RB who is running towards the middle to overtake "his" defender. This is how you create a numerical advantage on a certain area of the court.

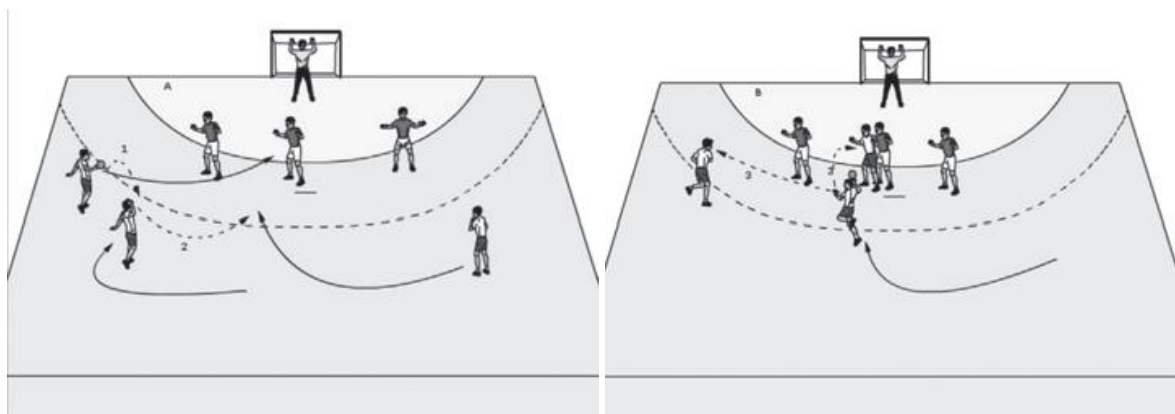


Figure 8: Exercise 4

### Exercise 5

Playing 4-on-3. Three backs and a line player are playing against three defenders. They try to use different tactical solutions. One of the options is the CB moving to the second line player position (after a pass to the RB). The RB passes the ball to the LB. At this moment the line player from the other side moves towards the LB. The LB passes the ball to this LP who immediately returns it and moves back to the goal line to block the 2. defender.

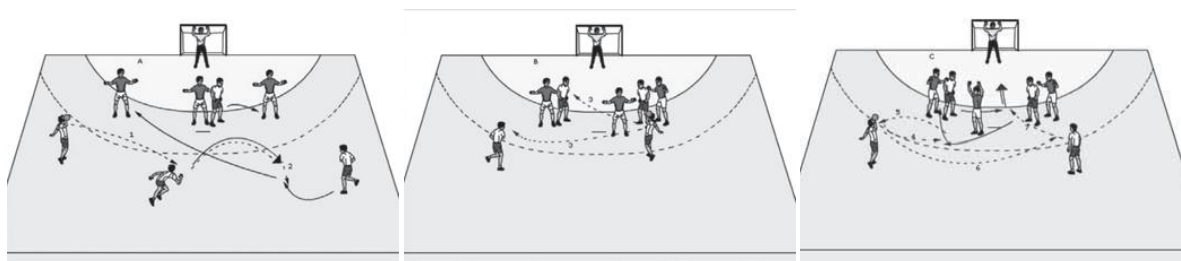


Figure 9: Exercise 5

### Exercise 6

Playing 6-on-5. Players are now trying to use the previously described tactical solutions to create a goal scoring opportunity. The situation described here is one of the possible options. They can use other solutions which can be difficult for defenders to recognize and react appropriately:

- The CB and LB exchange positions after a pass between from the CB to RB. This is followed by a cross between the LB and RB, or the LB (or even CB) moves to the line.
- A cross between the CB and RB with the CB optionally moving to the line.
- A give and go between the CB and LB who runs towards the middle to overtake the 2. defender.
- A fake wide cross between the RB and CB and a pass from the RB to the LB who again runs towards the middle.

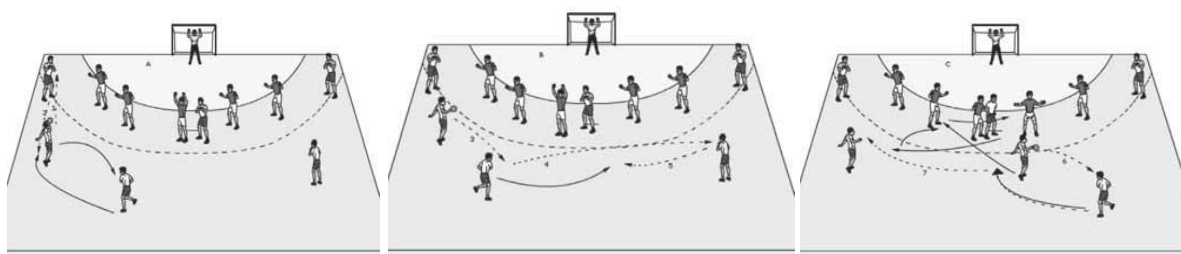


Figure 10: Exercise 6

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Tactical formation preparation

Before starting the actual numerical advantage attack training, let's make another exercise to encourage the attackers to react as quickly as possible to the situation at hand and try to find the best solution.

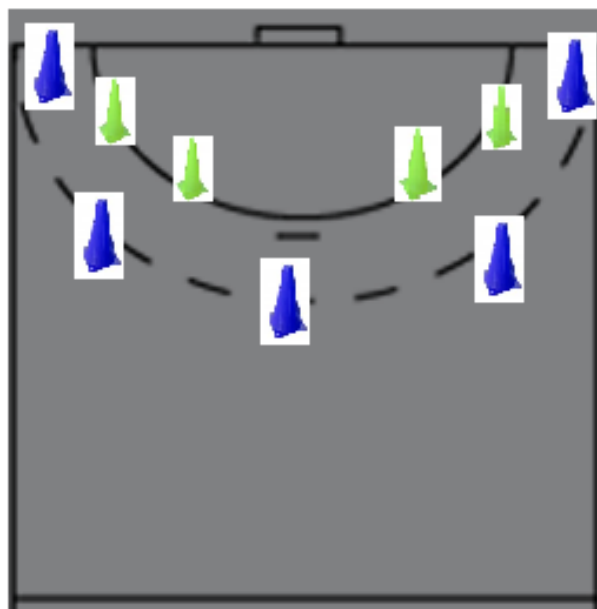


Figure 11: Tactical formation preparation

Legenda:



Obrambni igralci



Igralci v napadu

Key

Defenders

Attackers

Five attackers (without a line player) are playing against four defenders. Their objective is to score in 6 seconds. Additionally, we can also limit the number of passes available. The exercise can be upgraded by making the rule that the attackers lose the ball every time a defender touches the attacker with the ball inside the 9-meter area. The attackers must sprint to the centre line after every missed shot or lost ball.

## 4.2 Training attacking tactical formations with a numerical advantage

Every coach selects the tactical solutions based on the team structure and the quality of players in individual positions. Below, I will describe some of the solutions I believe are very effective. I am a firm believer in simple and effective solutions. However, when the defence recognises the combinations and becomes more aggressive, attackers must have multiple solutions available. Some of the basic formations were already described in the previous chapter (figures 1-4). Now I will describe some of the combinations I believe are very effective.

## 4.3 Tactical formations with one LP

### Tactical formation 1

The LP stands with the central defender. The LB passes a long ball to the RB who is already running towards the middle and crosses the ball back to the LB. The CB meanwhile moves towards the RB position. The LP blocks the central defender from the left to make space for the LB. The LB can shoot on goal, break through the defence on the line or create a numerical advantage on the right-hand side. The same sequence can be repeated on the other side if we have a left-hander at RB.

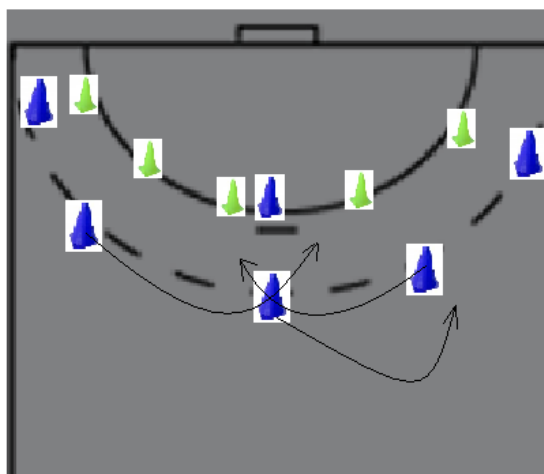
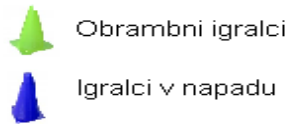


Figure 12: Tactical formation 1

Legenda:



## Key

## Defenders

## Attackers

## Tactical formation 2

The line player stands between the 2. and the central defender. The RB passes the ball to the LB who runs up wide towards the second defender; the line player blocks the second defender from the left. The LB passes the ball to the CB who attacks the central defender to create space for the LP to receive the ball. I recommend that the ball be passed bounced.

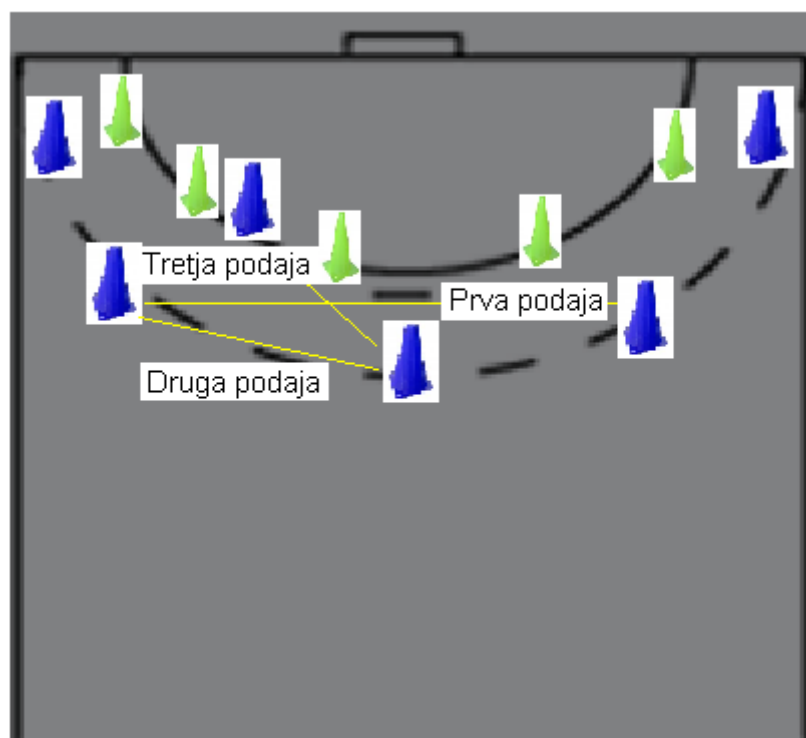
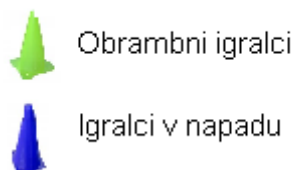


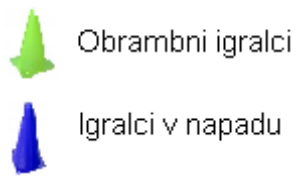
Figure 13: Tactical formation 2

Legenda:





Legenda:



Key

Defenders

Attackers

## Tactical formation 2

The line player stands between the central defender and the second defender from the left. When the LW passes the ball to the LB, the CB runs to the line between the first and second defender. After receiving the ball, the LB attacks the space between the second and central defender and looks for solutions similar to the previous tactical formation.

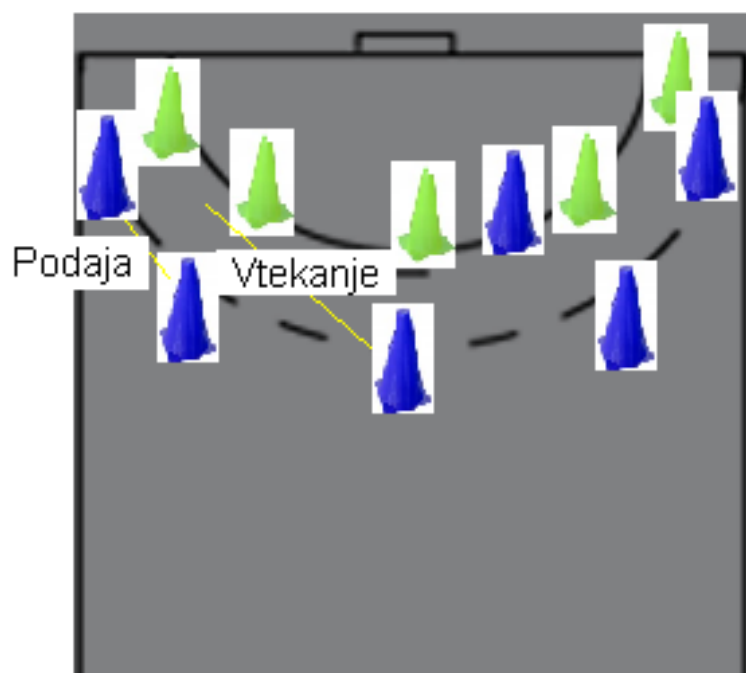
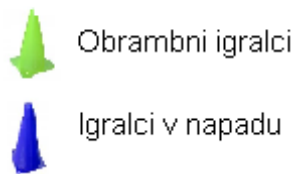


Figure 15: The second tactical formation with two line players

Pass

Run into space

Legenda:



**Key**

**Defenders**

**Attackers**

### Tactical formation 3

The line player stands between the central defender and the second defender from the left. The ball is travelling from the right-hand side. The CB crosses the ball to the LB, the LB passes the ball to the RB who runs up wide towards the second defender from the left. The LP screens the central defender and the CB runs into the space in front of them to receive the ball from the RB and shoot on goal.

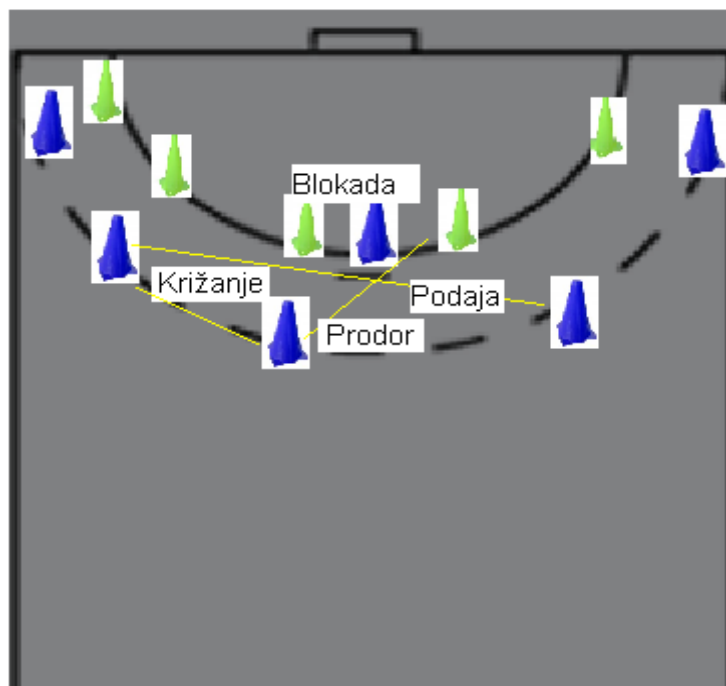


Figure 16: The third tactical formation with two line players

**Križanje – Cross**

**Prodor – Breakthrough**

**Podaja – Pass**

**Blokada - Block**

Legenda:



Obrambni igralci



Igralci v napadu

**Key****Defenders****Attackers**

## 5 CONCLUSION

Handball is a ball game where only professional, long-term and planned work yields good results, so it is of utmost importance that the work of coaches in all age groups is of the highest quality. In addition to the initial assignment of players to playing positions and a high level of motivation, the training methods for the technical/tactical handball elements play the most important role for youth coaches. To make training sessions interesting for young players, we must include a lot of dynamic and exciting exercises, which is an essential prerequisite for player motivation. Handball is a collective team sport and a team will be successful only when everyone contributes - when the team plays collectively as a unit. This means that the individual abilities and technical/tactical skills of players must be incorporated into the team with various collective activities - for example during attacks against a zone or combined defence as is the case in this seminar paper. As individuals cannot beat the opposition alone, it is important that we introduce various cooperation exercises from the youngest age groups on. Various basic games are particularly useful at this stage, as well as games with adapted rules and even actual games of handball. It is important that young players realize that they can beat the opponents only when they combine their individual abilities and use them for the good of the team.

Targeted and tactically suitable attacks with a numerical advantage are very important for the offense play success of teams. Teams must use a certain tactical concept which leaves a lot of room for creativity and allows players to select those activities that are the most difficult to predict for the defenders. This means that the attackers will convert numerical advantages into goals on a more regular basis. Of extreme importance is the correct selection of training methods to gradually introduce players to tactically suitable activities. Work performed in youth categories is crucial, because it makes the step up to the senior team smoother.

This discussion includes my ideas for playing with a numerical advantage. I would to particularly highlight the need for utmost concentration in attack and that players must always present a danger to the opposition. Only then will our tactical formations yield results and we will be able to achieve sufficient efficiency levels. This element is extremely important in modern handball - and it is something that should be reflected in the composition of training sessions as well.

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<p>Active player in Champions League</p> <p>RK Celje Pivovarna Laško 1993 – 2002</p>	<p>5<sup>th</sup> time in semi - finals in Champions League (RK CPL (1996 – 2000))</p> <p>Quarter finalist 2001</p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> place in 1993 / 94</p> <p>Best scorer in Champions League 1993 / 94</p>
<p>Member of the national A team 1992 – 2000</p>	<p>120 caps for the national A team</p> <p>460 goals for the national A team</p> <p>3<sup>th</sup> place at the Mediterranean games France 1993</p> <p>10<sup>th</sup> place in the European Championship, Portugal 1994</p> <p>11<sup>th</sup> place in the European Championship, Spain 1996</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> place in the European Championship, Croatia 2000</p> <p>18<sup>th</sup> place in the World Championship, Island 1995</p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> place on the Olympic Games, Sydney 2000</p> <p>Award as the best Right back player of the Slovenian handball history</p>
<p>Assistant coach of RK Maribor klima Petek (A team) 2008 – 2010</p>	<p>2<sup>nd</sup> place in the second national division 2008 / 2009</p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> place in the national Championship 2009 / 2010</p>
<p>Coach of the RK Krško (A team) 2010 – 2012</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> place in the second national division 2010 / 2011</p> <p>6<sup>th</sup> place of the national Championship 2011 / 2012</p>
<p>Coach of the RK Drava Ptuj 2013 -</p>	<p>Member of the second national league C division</p>

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HANDBALL FEDERATION OF SLOVENIA

Slovenian Handball Coaches Association

Master Coach Course

**»THE ROLE OF THE COACH IN TEAM HANDBALL«**

(Seminar paper)

Mentor: dr. Marko ŠIBILA

Author: Nenad STOJAKOVIĆ

Celje, Junij 2013

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## **1.ABSTRACT**

The art of the profession with the title handball coach is a skill that means very much to each of us who are used to deal with this superb sports industry in one way or another innate skill. Definitely by engaging we are not aware what drives us to do this profession. The art of leadership is a skill that is largely individual innate skill, but if unfortunately we are not among those lucky ones with this innate ability, it is gratifying to hear that these skills can be trained for. Despite the fact that we will get familiarized and put a lot of effort and persistence at the conquest of knowledge, it is necessary to have developed the so-called peripheral abilities and skills that are a prerequisite for the development of essential qualities of a good leader. Successful leaders must largely develop interpersonal, technical and communication skills, such as intuition, the ability to work methods, power-sharing, and more. The coach must be fair, but the work must be effective, only this way he can develop his influence and reputation. Players must observe their own progress. The coach must lead by example in all aspects, because he is leader and players should follow him.

The coach must be an authority, teacher, friend and in a lot of cases, even the person who is called an alternative "parent".

## **KEYWORDS**

Coach, leadership, motivation, teamwork, emotional intelligence

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Every coach wants to be or to become a good leader. How to achieve this, when there are so many models and ways of doing things as much as combinations of different leaderships and circumstances, as well as general leadership styles are in accordance with the given situation constantly changing. My thinking is that the exact instructions on how to carry out our profession does not exist. There are only a few that succeed, for all achieved they require time, the circumstances, club and at the end a mosaic of skillfully assembled personalities (ie players) is directed and led by the coach. In bookstores, libraries and on the Internet can find a huge amount of literature describing many techniques for successful leadership, however, it is clear that each individual has his own style of leadership. If he doesn't have a certain style he must create it by himself because a "copy - paste" style does not exist, as well as in the world we can not find two identical people.

Coaches in the handball team must be aware that in addition to the tactical depth technical expertise required for successful performance of our profession it will be necessary to master the skills in other areas. Leadership skills are one of the most important skills needed by the team for the successful operation and management. Some coaches believe that the preparation of top players is now so advanced that the body can draw players even to perfection, but unfortunately this only affects the success by 30 percent. For the remaining 70 percent of the success we have to look at other skills that would be called mental preparation.

### **3. KEEPING IN TEAM SPORTS**

Sports such as balance of mind and body, accompanied by a man from the very beginning of their stay and throughout history varies, but consistency of physical and mental perfection, until this century, remained the same. Consumer mindset that it subordinates today's civilization upsets this balance in humans. The age-old principle of "bread and games", which is still valid today confirms that people always attracted by games. Of all the parties, the most widely attracts people right sport. Today, sport is an important economic branch, where there are high humidity and high hopes for and deserves. The main players in sports - athletes today are more people involved in sport purely out of love and joy, but they paid a great professional players. In most respects, they can be compared to the "normal" employees and their management can use similar methods and ways to achieve goals, like in business.

Each individual has their own personal potential, which is rarely recognized and even more rarely fully exploited. Whether in sports or in business, one is able to achieve more than the current range, regardless of their ability, education, current performance, or achievements. However, in the business environment, as well as in team sports, this potential can not be achieved without the cooperation of other individuals ie. without effective leadership style and age of the individual - Head (Carling, 1995, p. 27).

We can not only compare sports and athletes with the economy and with employees, sports teams do have a lot in common with teams in companies as well.

#### **3.1. CONCEPT SPORTS TEAMS**

Teams in team sports are usually composed of 10 to 20 sportsmen or sportswomen and their coaches. This is then called a real team, but it is anything but able to lead or guide it. Individual athletes in team sports are, however, still only individual people with their abilities, desires, ambitions and aspirations. The coach of a sports team is the one who has achieved the goals of individuals with the aim of subordinate team. In sport many times it has been confirmed that homogeneous teams can be much better than teams composed of individuals objectively better but inhomogenous as a team. A sports team and its coach, when they are aware of the importance of teamwork and efficiency considerations in the team, they are able to achieve the results of their real capabilities. It has been shown many times in sports also that the coach is largely dependent on the efficiency of the team, its internal structure and the relationships between its members. When you replace the coach often the same individuals' group structures might change completely (Kos, 2003, p. 32).

In Slovenia, the most famous team sports are football, basketball, handball, hockey, volleyball, water polo . Of course there are couple of other team sports , which are less known to us either because they are more recent, still in development, or are played in other cultures or environments (baseball, rugby, polo, underwater hockey, lacrosse ... ) .

According to research by viewing judging are left in team sports, most viewed and popular . The attractiveness of team sports lies in the fact that they are diverse sports, consisting of a number of individuals with a variety of tasks and functions (eg, handball, defensive , aggressive players , keeper ... ), the game allows a myriad of different , new and unpredictable situations. For some individuals sports such as jogging or swimming means already much less " interesting " sports, mainly because repeated continuity of certain body movements and little chance variations thereof. One of the reasons for the mass appeal of team sports should be sought in the fact that we are all part of some collectives . Every individual has certainly met the life in the group, in various areas of social life. Such work is anything but easy , and if they were successful as a team, the team is even more attractive because they embody the kind of team spirit, enthusiasm, that in the real world is often lost. The third cause of attraction of sport is that the nature of each individual's need for performance validation winning . If the individual fails to meet the needs of himself in the real world , it identifies those who have succeeded . The process of identification is largely dictated by the media, generating celebrities from world-class athletes (Wooden , 1988 , p. 182 ) .

This multiplicity , phenomenal popularity and viewership of sports games is advantageously exploited by advertisers and other economic entities, and thus indirectly helps to the fact that professional sport today has little in common with the basic principles of sport : " A healthy mind in a healthy body " , but for some it means increasingly lucrative business .

### **3.2. KEEPING ATHLETES IN TEAM SPORTS**

Comparing the performance of different companies shows the fact that the differences between them are not so much due to cultural differences or differences in the environment - that of course there are - but success is largely dependent on how many people are in positions of responsibility and leadership positions are able to perceive the resources they have available and how they can utilize them. Then there is also the financial, material and human resources in particular. Successful companies on the one hand allow a lot of freedom and independence for employees, on the other hand, maintain and provide consistent monitoring and review of the situation in all areas of labor and management. Co-existence of large individual autonomy and precise control itself, on the one hand relaxed, initiative and employee satisfaction, which creates a sense of power and belonging to society, on the other hand gives a feeling of success because of the general order, inspect the results achieved and the potential for further development (Pavšič, 2003 , p. 17).

Even sports coaches should work in this direction and allow the athletes to have some autonomy in their work, but only to the extent required to ensure good results.

### 3.2.1. The role of the coach in sport

When we try to define the precise role of the coach in a particular sport situation, we must be fully aware of the characteristics and skills of the coach as a man. We must determine whether the more important his personality and ability to work with people and his expertise on how the coach's personality affects his behavior and his attitude to the athletes how to coach accepts new developments in the methodology of training, how to accept the integration of foreign workers in their work group. It is important to get to know his style of leadership, whether it is democratic or autocratic or unable to establish a relationship of interaction with competitors, which is not only professional but also friendly.

The authoritarian coach behaves dominant, does not allow individual freedom, counter-arguments, and thus destroys the relationship coach - athlete and prevents further work. Coaches with democratic ways of governance are more available, and it is more easy to communicate with them, and this allows the coach to be able to recognize the athlete's problems, frustration, acceptance of individual views, allows one client's own decisions ... There is still an innovative coach who fails to comply with the time and established methods, but always looking for new possibilities.

A successful coach should have features such as orientation towards performance, social skills teaching, sustainability, social contacts, responsibility, self-control ability and last but not least good management skills.

Coaches are certainly an essential lever for professional development of competitive sports, especially and particularly when it comes to the issue of training and management of athletes in competitions. Coaches work is highly professional and ethical responsibility and requires adequate professional training. The cornerstone of this qualification is a professional coach education, but should also include teaching skills and leadership abilities. However, with this a coach, when he reaches the prescribed level of education is not sufficiently qualified to take on the most responsible professional duties. To become a master in his profession, must be through their own activities to develop a high level of expertise, which will enable the successful practical operation (Dolenec, Jost, Pori, 2002, p. 59).

The coach trains an athlete prepares him for some sports competition. The success depends largely on the authority of his professional role, in terms of both the personal creativity as well as the broader social factors. Building the performance of athletes is a lengthy process to which many factors do contribute. At each stage of maturation sports specific requirements and problems will occur. Every time a tackle performance of athletes associated with the use of specific methods and tools adapted to the development stage of athletes. In this respect, the changing role and importance of coaches and more specifically their tasks, patterns of behavior and conduct in managing the transformation process. In the first stage, the first coach is an educator and teacher, but later comes to the fore in sports training. In conducting the real athletes are increasingly dominated by the need to coach "manager", which will cooperate with specialists (eg. Biomechanics, Doctors, Physiotherapists, Sports psychologists,

Fitness trainers, nutritionists) responsible for the preparation of athletes and their management in competitions (Bednarik, 2003).

### 3.2.2. Success Factors of coaches working in team sports

The sport is no shortcut to success . This finding is confirmed by innumerable examples , collected together all-star cast that did not justify the expectation , or at least in the short term. The path to success is dependent on several factors , but primarily this way is very long and it starts very early ( Praznik , 2001 , p. 58).

Like in every leader at work the coach is affected by the type of situational factors: family environment, the single athlete, the environment in which it operates , the number of athletes on the team, material conditions , professional qualifications , the goals of the collective sports ...

First and foremost the coach's path to success depends on the family environment, which gives rise to an athlete and not necessarily will represent the status of a psycho-social or material ideal . Many examples show just the opposite , because such a bad microsocial environment athlete does show often greater intrinsic motivation for sports performance. However, in these cases much more important is the micro- psycho-social environment, such as a school or sports club , where the young athletes compensate for inadequate local climate and potentiate their sporting potential. In these cases, the proper training and professional ethos of the coach is even more important. Young people from these backgrounds tend to be more grateful " material " to work with, but they are just so much more sensitive to external influences.

If coaches wants to work successfully , it is also extremely important in which environment he works and whether it is susceptible to support his work and ambition. Without adequate logistics a good coach can be less effective than it would be otherwise . One example is the former coach of women's European Handball Championship Krim , Tone Tiselj , whose abilities are indisputable by today . However, in his last period of the things a lot of ups and downs, which were often independent of his ability, but more than the other conditions for success . Well organized sports clubs, which in Slovenia, however, have a well- positioned and guided by the principle of a cascade system of young teams - selections through a sieve come the best individuals in the senior team . Coaches powerlessness of the poor working conditions to some extent can be compensated by the coaches great desire for animation environment for sports performance and thus, indirectly, to improve working conditions .

On coaching work significantly affects the number of team members . There is a huge difference in the management of four to six individuals (ie sports teams in individual sports - team competitions, ski-jumper teams , athletics teams) and in the management of twenty individuals (football , handball , basketball team) . In larger teams, it takes a lot more energy to focus on the team as a whole. The head coach cannot give to every individual such attention

as they wanted to . Depth should deal only with individuals who have a negative attitude, willingly or unwillingly , leaving the team and undermine the rule set inside it.

One of the major problems which the coaches have in their work are poor material conditions. The poor material conditions of inadequate understanding of sports training facilities, an insufficient number of hours of sport training, or lack of the necessary sports equipment obsolescence, inadequate medical and physiotherapy support for the athletes, irregular psychomotor, morphological testing of individuals, inappropriate video technique for analyzing opponents etc.. With poor material conditions, it is impossible to guarantee the quality and intensity of training as well as comparability with teams that do not have these problems. Coaches who have good working conditions and material basis for high-quality and large-scale programs of work and are therefore even more stimulated, they have definitely an improved initial basis for the success compared with someone who works in poor working conditions and has a lower support of the environment. A kind of unwritten rule shows that will soon come good athlete well-groomed middle regardless of the working conditions at a worse professional work, rather than having a good professional work and poor working conditions due to lack of funds for the implementation of high-volume work program .

I have already talked about the importance of professional qualifications of coaches. I just want to tell you again that coaches who have the appropriate level of formal education have a significant advantage over their counterparts who do not have this knowledge. A professional worker in sports or a coach must have appropriate professional qualifications. Still, it is true a successful leader - Coach will become the individual who will be using their own activities and personal qualities to strive for progress on a highly professional level, both operationally, teaching and management, which will enable the successful practical operation.

Success of coaches work is reflected in the objectives of sports teams. A team that competes at the lower levels requires for its operation a modest amount of cash and has definitely lower targets than a top club team or national team. Success of the leader is always determined by the objectives, which are just adapted to these factors of the environment. The coach of a handball team, which finished last in the National Championship, is not necessarily a failed coach. If this is the point reached with the lowest budget of all teams by far and the youngest players in average, while these players bring progress to individual and team handball game, he can also be a very successful coach.

We can see that coaches work like the work of leaders provide situational factors. According to them the team to choose the way they work - coaching and management. Some universal model or management style, even in sports, does not exist.

### 3.2.3. Scouting, selection of athletes in team sports

There are coaches who know the details of technique and tactics of certain games. They are excellent in the analysis of an opponent and setting the appropriate tactics, but however, they "never win". There is not a single victory, but the victory of historic significance achieved in the biggest competitions. On the other hand, there are coaches, which many would say that they are not anything special, but nevertheless conquer the most prestigious honors and lead the most famous clubs. Today it is already clear that there is something more difficult to determine a category of skills that separates the truly successful from less successful managers. Many call it the mind-set that covers both recruitment as well as to motivate and to communicate to achieve specific goals.

Successful teamwork can not be conjured. You need a group of players who work together and capable leader. We can not combine a few individuals - although they were all exceptionally talented - and expect them to be great together. Therefore, the greatest team of NBA stars, pulls the short races with a team of exceptional cooperation, although they are undoubtedly the best in basketball skills, strength and other physical abilities by playing basketball requires. An assembly of the best individuals is not necessarily the best and most successful team. In the hands of its members is too much egotism. Individuals were too long in the spotlight too often on the sports pages of newspapers. When these super stars are supposed to play as part of a whole, they often fail. They lack teamwork. Forming a successful group is a real piece of art, and even capable coaches cannot form winners overnight. The key thing is the selection of which - at the appropriate level, of course - based on the criteria in the selection of characterful actresses and actors. The most selective element is definitely a responsibility and a willingness of a player to, if necessary, willing to sacrifice the interests of the collective. Biggest sports fallacies and delusions are typically associated with misguided selection characteristically poor and irresponsible individuals who have personal interests far ahead of the collective. The top European clubs thus practice to filter dictated the development of professionalism, which is the excellent quality began to look for internal reserves. And they found it in Bollywood aspect to filter. More technically uninspired, a characteristically excellent individual. Many sports stars due to difficulties in integrating into the collective enthusiasm lost all their shine (Božič, 2003, p. 25).

Dusko Vujošević, who was coach of Serbia national basketball team and coach of many prominent European clubs says: "The key thing in sports is a collective team selection and acceptance of Trainer's philosophy, creating the principles of team work and the setting of competing objectives. The primary task of the selection of players with a strong desire for victories and good character. Such individuals is trenerjevo work only teach you how to achieve victory. In itself it is already having a winning mentality. Of course, each individual has its own character and its own desires, ambitions. Coaches should be aware of. But enough is just one egoistic individual to disturb the equilibrium of the whole team. The work of a coach to get to know individuals inflexible and timely manner, even if it requires dismissal of the most professional high-quality individual. The team is required to develop a "cult of altruism," if we are to achieve the best results. "(Vujošević, 2003, p. 36)

Already at the very beginning of the sports career the ability of the coach to forecast the assumption of selection are shown.. Only the "real" coaches detect potentials for some years to manifest themselves. Over the long-term success and professional good job, many coaches led to world-class athletes, individuals who do not have the innate talent or other above-average ability. From this we can conclude that the driver and a central figure in the development of athlete, coach, and his personality. Especially young people in the process of growing up like the coaches identify and monitor their example. That is why it is extremely important to have a positive attitude coaches morally ethical profile, a lot of expertise and motivation continuous monitoring developments in professional patterns of their sport. A good leader or athletic trainer has the choice of choosing more attuned individuals who together form a harmonious ensemble. On the other hand, of course, managers also manage and co-workers regardless of their current level of personal development to deploy them suitable jobs. However, opportunities to engage in the group, is today one of the essential characteristics desired by employees, of course, especially as athletes in team sports. Anyone who hopes knows that in the coming years, a good leader must master some basic aspects of human psychology. It is in the business world just as important as on the sports field.

#### **3.2.4. Motivating athletes in team sports**

Even in team sports motivation is one of the key factors necessary for success and achieving goals. The coach has a variety of ways to guide and motivate individuals to positive thinking. Positive thinking in the team is to become the dominant mindset.

Already mentioned motivational factors such as individual differences, job characteristics, organizational practices are also crucial for sports teams. Each individual is an athlete has its own expectations, own needs and desires, they must recognize and respect the coach. The coach has to meet both their individual needs as well as the needs of the entire team and bring them together in a complementary system. Also, the sport are differences in the properties of the work. Sports team needs people like a variety of skills, experience, abilities. Individual athletes have their own ambitions, and some have a greater desire to learn, some minor, some are young, others old ... All of these are factors that significantly affect the level of motivation of the individual, must be observed and lead towards the right direction. Organizational practice in sports clubs, clubs is different in each center. Coach, manager should aim at the fact that the rules of engagement and the general policy of the club and the clear to all that the reward system encourages a desire for greater efforts to achieve the targets.

The manager should try to find the appropriate motivational model, which will provoke the desired behavior in his subordinates athletes. It must be attentive to their feelings as well as their own behavior, to be fair, non-discriminatory and trustworthy (Buxton, 1992, p. 321).

Important factors of any motivating model are rewards and punishments. Every sports club should have a clear disciplinary policy that would specify when, how and why someone will be punished or rewarded. This policy should be made in view of all the acting, athletes and

coaches. Unfortunately, the precise criteria and individual reward in Slovenian sports clubs is an exception rather than the rule. Many sports officials are too often taken the right decision of arbitrary punishment and reward. A good coach would be a good leader of his subordinates, to request the administration of the club, that these things are either explicit or will not be done. Direct perspectives of motivation are completely in the hands of the coach, the praise and the blame. The coach must be able to express praise and achieve to encounter fertile ground. Praise should be an incentive for continued good work and is to be given in public as well as internally. In a team where there is a positive atmosphere it also becomes a sign of honest critics, to believe in someone and you care for him. The criticisms are inevitable in any team that wants to be effective and move forward. A leader must be able to create such an agreement and pass it into the consciousness of every individual and the entire team, as each team that wants to progress towards its goal fully dedicated and committed just like this.

So as you can influence the behavior of individuals with prizes or penalties, that may influence them with a system of wages. Wage system and wage is an important motivational tool that is among the primary motives, but it is the foundation for successful work. Every athlete, like a worker, first of all needs it on the lower levels. Social security of the individual, comfortable and suitable working environment and pay are the primary motives that must be met first. Motivational power of wages is greatest when the athlete is not practicing because he must but because he wants to. So like to work in a "normal" team typically to meet members of the mainly secondary motive, it holds also true for team sports. Sports as a specific activity depends to a large extent on the media or on the public, attracts individuals with a strong desire to exercise, power, special public status which is often difficult to reconcile with the team membership, as it featured the conflict between individual and team goals. Here is the very important role of the coach as a leader who manages to combine these different interests in the whole, works well and achieves the objectives.

Many sports professionals, in particular coaches emphasize that everything is in your head. They want to tell with that, that players can do everything, but they all failed to realize the potential because of other reasons. It appears that the success of the sport (not only in the life of) is the state of mind. If someone wants to succeed must visualize a successful person, because probably no really big sporting achievement did happen without a previous dream. A person with a negative mental attitude of thought: I cannot do this focuses on the problems of people looking for errors, focuses on what it lacks, see the limitations ... A person with a positive mental attitude and thinking, and I can handle it, focuses on solutions in people looking for good features, devoted to blessings, sees possibilities ... the individuals need to inspire a positive mindset.

People are different. Some, especially young athletes, may lose enthusiasm because of failure, they become frustrated and give up their dreams and goals. So, these individuals have considerable difficulty in achieving success. The coach can largely compensate for the mindset - it requires only the will and proper engagement at all levels (Bon, 2002/2, p. 61).

The coach of a sports team is the one who has by example, speaking, thinking and behavior to achieve positive team spirit in the squad. It is undisputed that negative thinking leads to defeat, while positive thinking brings success.

### **3.2.5. Communicating in team sports**

Communication is one of the key leaders and core activities intended to achieve the objectives. Through communication people are aware of their responsibilities and implement them. Even sports teams are no exception .

In sports , different modes of communication do exist. The most commonly coach communicates with his athletes verbally through interviews , meetings, giving instructions for the job. The manager should watch his words , style of speaking . Often it is appropriate to communicate with to achieve a high goal . The coach has to communicate with the appropriate choice of words and style reinforce a positive mindset . Choose the positive thoughts and support them with positive words . Thus, not only reinforce the positive belief, but also promote the interoperability . Positivity should be entrenched in the individual and the communication plays a major role. The coach must be a person who is extremely positive to support good ideas , is looking forward to the success of the individual and would focus on themselves and their own interests . Their plans and goals should be discussed with the team, they also allow their own opinion , and above all to create a positive relationship based on mutual respect and communication. Words are also necessary to be carefully selected and used; only those that will lead us towards the goal. Less frequently , though unjustifiably , the sport uses a written verbal communication. Most of the coaches are not aware of the advantages of written communication as a means of allowing individuals to express their feelings more easily, criticism, frustration. I believe that the anonymous written survey among team members once a month , make a substantial contribution to the efficiency of the whole team work and better results. This would also provide the new coaches with helpful, honest information at the same time it would also make the members of the team feel better , because any opportunity of expressing their frustrations , without risking loss of support for the rest of the team or leaders. The sport is in a form of written communication occur mainly as notices , posters, billboards , but appeal to the general public and shall not affect the communication within the team sports . The coach must be extremely mindful of non-verbal communication . The body language of the coaches is often very strong , it must be reasonable and must not incite discomfort in athletes or even fear and anger . A good coach should , as a good leader, be able to select and properly use a variety of communication channels . It is necessary to combine different methods , which also sports coaches can strengthen especially when

analyzing opponents and learn the tactics of audiovisual aids ( watching DVDs ), and pictorial material.

The coach, as a leader, must reach some agreement on cooperation with the players. The agreement is an agreement that connects people. It may be given in writing, with all the details, but it may be unspoken and completely expressed by the acts or confidence. The coach must be able to establish a proper, constructive agreement that will connect people in a team, create equality, help individuals take responsibility, setting out the conditions for the aid and support of others, and as such, creating a basis for teamwork. Positive peer pressure enhance the effectiveness of each team, and bring it closer to the peak. Arrangements obtain energy only in an atmosphere of complete trust (Riley, 2001, p. 146).

Even in the communication within the sports teams there is disruption of communication. The causes of this are the most differences in language, emotions, excessive volume of information. In the Slovenian sports area, there are a few coaches of other nationalities. There are frequent coaches from the area of the former Yugoslavia, but rarely proficient in Slovenian. Problems are also present on the side of the recipient, since it now has any quality team at least three, if not five to ten foreigners. They also have the language limitations a huge problem even for the communication, let alone quality compressed communication. For effective communication is essential to speak the same language, or at least passively managed. A good example is a few years ago was European champion team from Galjevica Crimea, which was made up of eight players of different nationalities. In their team is kind of an unwritten rule that every actress who comes from abroad to the team, try to attend courses in Slovenian. Thus, their players from Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, learned to speak almost fluent Slovenian, which enabled them to better and higher quality communication, which is essential for good teamwork. Management of sports teams is not always an easy job, sometimes it's very emotionally and mentally exhausting. Coaches want to win matches, extract the most out of the players and the public under extreme pressure. This leads to often react too emotionally to lapse, screaming and abusive gestions. All this, of course, act as a disturbance in the communication process itself and have a negative impact. The problem that is interfering with communication is the excessive volume of information provided by coaches to their athletes. Usually it comes down to it, when there is a team coach in November, who seeks to establish as soon as possible in your team his work, his techniques, methods, tactics ...

Communication in team sports does not only take place between the head and the members. In appearance each communicates with each. They appear as vertical, horizontal and diagonal communication. Sports teams are structured so that each team has its specific formal leader, called the captain. Typically, these are individuals who are older, experienced, honest, clear, and his force between the kind of authority. Many teams also communicate only with the team captain, and this information is transmitted to other team members. Coaches would of course have to communicate bilaterally and you are allowed to receive ideas, suggestions from the subordinates. Unfortunately, however, in practice this is rarely the case. Sports coaches in the majority still build their governance solely on the status of their authority. It should be noted also that in sports such factors as confidence among team members, genuine

relationships, common goals and values, the structure of the team, have a significant impact on the communications team.

## **4. MOTIVATION**

Motivation is one of the key management processes. Only motivated players will be happy and successful in their work. The coach must be aware of the importance of motivation, knowledge of the factors affecting it, motivational theories and models to succeed in their desired state players to challenge and reactions that contribute both to a better outcome as well as to greater personal satisfaction.

### **4.1. The concept of individual motivation**

The answer to the question why are we doing and trying, do our job effectively, and what drives us to achieve some objectives lies in motivation. Motivation is what makes people with certain skills and knowledge work. Without motivation, individuals, will not do any activity and will not be able to satisfy their needs. Work motivation helps an individual to realize the own goals and to meet the organization's objectives in which it operates. Motivation is a process used by managers to control human activities in the desired direction (Možina, 1992, p. 182). To simplify the situation, we could say that the staff work as a manager offers something which can satisfy your needs. First, meet the needs at the lower levels, then rising. This leads to motivation, which in terms of heads means waking of needs. awareness of the need and at the same time transferring the solution to satisfy them. The motive is the reason that man works. The individual will work only if the manager knew the reason and the employee also offered.

However, motivation is not self-evident. An individual may also have unlimited needs in addition to the operation of the company comes into contact with other people who may be limited in each other's performance and achievement of goals. From this we can conclude that motivation does not depend on a single individual, but to a large extent socially conditioned.

### **4.2. Factors that affect on motivation**

Many factors do influence motivation. To operate effectively the leader figure out how to achieve the most efficient interaction between these factors. Three of the most important factors that influence motivation are:

- Individual differences: Each person is unique. Individual differences, such as personal needs, values, attitudes and interests are those which are peculiar to each individual. Some individuals are motivated by money, others by safety, leisure third-, fourth-reputation ... leaders must be aware of their employees, and according to their wishes properly motivate them to achieve a common objective.

- Description of work: Properties, labor demand for different abilities, knowledge, experience, skills and ambitions of individuals. Some jobs require a lot of specific features, some of which are appreciated for quite other. In teams where the work is constantly changing, the employees must constantly learn, improve, to take the knowledge and experience of others. A leader must also pay attention to the fact that the cast of team members desire to learn and cooperate with each other.

- Organizational Practice: Organizational practices are rules, general policy, managerial practice, a system of rewards within the organization ... The prize is to motivate employees, but they must be based on performance. Correctly oriented remuneration policy is what in individuals awakes desire for greater efforts to achieve the objectives. A leader must be able to optimally motivate the employees with prizes that range also to the maximum business performance.

The interaction of all these factors affect on motivation of employees. Interaction is made up of all the factors of influence. When motivating employees, the head has to consider all the factors (Lipičnik, 1994, p. 495-497).

### **4.3. Motivational models**

Motivational models are some conscious construction, made up of different elements that encourage the behavior that humans show the desired reaction and the state. Each motivational theory shows a certain use value and the expected behavior of employees. By using the results of motivational theories you can build a motivational model, which will repeatedly in humans provoke the desired behavior. When designing motivational models themselves, we must be attentive to the feelings of employees who may significantly alter the desired pattern of behavior. Particular attention must be paid to a sense of justice, equality and expectations.

Most of the factors that make up motivational models can be divided between rewards and punishments. They try to either strengthen the desirable human behavior and eliminate undesirable behavior. Particular attention as a motivational tool should be paid to the wage system. The behavior of employees like reward or punishment, will also affect the salary. It is wrong to use salary as a social category, as in this case, it loses its motivational power (Lipičnik, 1994, p. 488-518). Motivational power is the maximum when a worker brings in a situation where he has to work in a situation where he wants to work.

## **5. COMMUNICATION**

The process of communication is one of the fundamental processes of management. People communicate at all levels of operations and in different ways. Especially in the workplace, communication is of the utmost importance. Leaders, therefore, in their work most of the time

do communicate, they must have accurate knowledge of the communication process, the means and methods of communication and the disruption of communication and also the ways of overcoming them.

## **5.1. The concept of communication**

Communication would generally be classified intercourse, discussion, consultation, questioning, short form of behavior towards people. Communicate, to inform, to be informed and to influence the people around us.

Communicating allows: giving and receiving of information, mutual exchange of information and opinions, the transfer of ideas, concepts and solution, and maintaining corporate, personal and commercial contacts, directing and coordinating the operations, conflict resolution and problem ...

Communication in business touches business managers and other professionals in the organization. The target activity designed to reach organizational goals and useful. The leader has to spend a lot of time to communicate with people, to communicate with their subordinates and superiors.

The content, method and understanding of the message depends on the knowledge, skills and dispositions of the sender. Also there is a receiver and understand the message depending on the properties of the same recipient. Capacity of each communication channel is limited by the maximum amount of information that it is possible to pass through it. Also important is the credibility of the transfer, since the communication channels created disturbances that reduce the efficiency of the transmission and impede the accurate and rapid transmission of messages. Effective communication is one in which the recipient understands the message of the sender as it has been designed.

## **5.2. Means and methods of communication**

There are several important ways and methods of communication. In general, we distinguish verbal and non-verbal communication from body language. Verbal mode of communication takes place verbally or in writing (including electronic communication). Verbal methods of communication, discussion, meeting, negotiation, lectures, conferences ... verbal and written communication methods as messages, posters, letters ... The criteria of written communication methods are speed, accuracy, clarity, check the ...

Many methods of communication are of the combined nature and should be used together with audiovisual media and other accessories.

As a rule, the modes of communication are intertwined and complementary. Successful leaders select the method of communication according to the given situation, the number of participants, content, time and news topics (Damjan, 1994, p. 576).

### 5.3. Disruption in communication

Communication is not always as effective as it should be. The information may be in the course of the communication process distorted and the recipient do not occur in the right format. Disruption in communication can occur in different places: either on the transmitter or on the receiver's side, but also in the actual communication channel. As the most common causes of interference are indicated (Rozman, Kovač, Koletnik, 1993, p. 232-233) less developed ability to communicate (either the transmitter or receiver), a selective selection of information, diversity of language, filtering, communications, status message, emotion is too large amount of information ... Obstacles and disturbance on the path of successful communication is naturally possible to overcome. First, you need to be aware and remove them by means of: managing the flow of information, encouraging feedback, the use of simple information, active listening, keeping negative emotions, the use of non-verbal signs and, where appropriate, the use of informal channels of communication (Damjan, 1994, p. 573 ).

The leader needs - if he wants to succeed - to be able to communicate. To be familiar with the ability to understand which providers give guidance as they successfully make it easier to explain, clarify and clearly delegate tasks and work instructions.

## 6. EMOTIONS AND INTELLIGENCE

Despite the fact that the translations of Golemans works and some other authors use the term emotional intelligence, hereinafter we use the term emotional intelligence. There is a conceptual difference between the concepts of intelligence and intelligence, because intelligence is the term used when a person's ability to think, the word intelligence is when we think of social class and educated (Pogačnik, 1995, p. 11).

Emotional intelligence is the intelligent use of emotions. Understanding of their feelings and emotions to other people deliberately used to help us towards such behavior and thinking that we are in favor of (Weisinger, 2001, p. 17). The first step in learning control emotional responses to the awareness of our self. Thus we learn all the time to pay attention to our internal state, to see what we feel, identify events that promote the excitement and again to master our emotions. If you are aware of yourself and recognize emotions, we can talk about fear, frustration, envy and happiness, and we can understand and predict such emotions in other people. Everyone of the adults has to be particularly emotionally mature, because only physically mature, we can not tell a grown man.

## 6.1 Emotions

In the following chapters are presents the various definitions of emotion and sharing emotions on fixed and assembled in pleasant and unpleasant, and, depending on the formation, the subconscious and the conscious emotion is activated.

## 6.2 The definition of emotions

In dictionary an emotion is defined as "intense mental state that evokes subjective, and not by conscious action, and is often accompanied by physiological changes," and as part of the consciousness that involves feeling. According to Neurologist Damasio feelings are seen as a set of changes in the body related to specific imagery, which activate specific brain system. Experiencing these changes are called feelings. And though all the emotions cause feelings, all feelings do not come from emotions - for example, if the strike (Damasio, 1994, p. 143-145).

Expression of feeling or emotion (It. *emotere*) is an outwardly directed movement. Emotions encourage people to action, and the current management plans. They are the deepest longings and passions that are always ready for proper operation (Goleman, 1997, p. 20). Mental processes by which we experience a special relationship to the events, objects and persons, their attractiveness or unattractiveness, their unique experiential value and hue. Our lives give fullness, meaning and beauty (metacommunication, 1993, p. 136).

Emotion is a response to a significant change in the outside world and encourage the person to conduct what will result in adjustment of the change occurred. If it is a pleasant feeling for the person, the person tends to consolidate and adapt to the change. Unpleasant emotion causes behavior that is directed to the change of a given situation (Možina, 2002, p. 510). Feelings can not be denied and trampled them in front of them to hide. There they are, as they have their own function and purpose. Because emotion is a world of colorful and multicolored, misunderstanding of emotions it depletes. Therefore, felt and feel all the emotions (Klobučar, 2005).

## 6.3 Sharing of emotions

Emotions are divided into basic and compound ones. Basic is what you feel first. Done basic emotion and emotion follows and is also composed of several primary, simple feelings. Indeed, it is difficult to identify some reason that is not only intellectually. Many researchers defined it as the experience of emotion, the other arising from the behavior motivated by emotions, feelings and the third is determined on the basis of common belief. However, emotions are subjective and can not be separated from the individual to feel. At the same time

they are also associated with the environment or the situation in which a person feels an emotion. Therefore, we can say that there is an emotional relationship between the individual and the environment (Milivojević, 2000, p. 15).

Neuroscience research has shown that emotions can be divided according to the origin, it can occur unconsciously or consciously (Encyclopaedia Britannica, CD, Emotion and Human, 1998):

- subconscious activation and perception of emotions is important when it is necessary to immediately respond and there is no time for reflection (for example, when we are in danger). The motive for the survival of the human presence has always been so implicated lower brain centers. Such information processing that occurs before mental thinking affects perception, thinking, remembering, judging, behavior, etc.
- Conscious activation and perception of emotions is important in the management of complex situations. Such operations involve the higher brain centers. Knowingly activate certain emotions is very important to solve the complex situations in which we find ourselves, as we can certain emotions greatly facilitate rescue and experiencing these situations.

Emotions are very large-scale phenomenon, and are anything but static. Impact on the areas of life such as health, learning and behavior and interpersonal relationships. People who are emotionally adept - know how to properly deal with their emotions and recognize the feelings of others and respond appropriate answers - they have the advantage in all areas of life. These people do easier to tolerate frustration, less arguing, and are less prone to self-destructive behavior. They are healthier, less lonely, less impulsive and more focused. Nevertheless, it still does not talk about feelings much (especially not the unpleasant). Emotions are often classified as negative and positive, that we experience as pleasant and unpleasant. Unpleasant emotions (distress, fear, sadness, anger, anxiety, envy, disgust, shame and excitement) are valued as negative and cause disharmony in the operation of the total man. Are those unwanted emotions that they prefer to avoid. Pleasant emotions (joy, sympathy, interest, pleasure, respect, love) are valued as a positive and coherent action causing the whole man. Pleasant feelings people fill with energy and encourage them to take new actions, as their needs are being met, as well as physical health have plenty of (Hatter, 2005). It is assumed that emotions do not lead to a situation, but to thoughts. No one is forcing people to have emotions in a certain position in a certain way. In any situation, the emotions can be improved only by changing thoughts from negative to neutral or positive. Therefore, the easiest way to change your feelings in a particular situation is by changing the thoughts about it.

## 6.4 Intelligence

Intelligence is the ability to effective thinking, learning and problem solving (metacommunication, Pečjak, 2001, p. 209). Mead regarded intelligence as a mutual adjustment of actions of different individuals, which takes place on the basis of

communication. He says that intelligence is the process of human behavior in the social environment (Mead, 1997, p. 60).

Pogačnik said that intelligence is defined as "the ability of living beings, to process the information in a way that is new for them" (Pogačnik, 1995, p. 11). It's processability, not only converting information (changes that creature distinction) in situations that are new and in which information can not be processed stereotype. Intelligence is similar to that figure, too large a whole, that could be described with only one number. Is a function of several factors (motivation, emotional stability, inertia), and not just intellectual abilities, as is evident from the practice, because people can vary considerably, although it does have the same IQ, representing a measure of intelligence (Leksikon Cankarjeve založbe, 1994, p. 401).

Musek intelligence present as (Musek, 1993, p. 249):

- ability to think, mental assessment, understanding and insight relations;
- ability to adapt to new situations, creativity and effectiveness of adaptation;
- ability to use skills, ability to solve problems and tasks;
- ability to learn;
- efficiency in their mutual relations.

Intelligence develops in children already. They also have two types of mind: one that thinks and one that feels. These two systems are governed by two different but interrelated types of intelligence, intellectually and emotionally. Rational intelligence is particularly illustrative of the verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical part of human abilities (for example, vocabulary, short-term memory, verbal comprehension, spatial imagination, abstract understanding of and ability to learn new connections). Indicates the individual skill of speech, reading, writing, arithmetic, logic, science, reason, and critical thinking. Trojnar is characterized as a logical, subject to the rules, precise, clear and reliable (Trojnar, 2002, p. 27). Emotional intelligence is the ability to acquire and use information, emotional nature, feelings and emotional response. This ability rests in the emotional part of the brain or mind. Thus, people often consider as being composed of two parts of the rational mind and of the emotional field that is irrational and downstream scale when evaluating both parts, so people hide from other emotions in front of them because they are worth less from reason. But the mind of people who have a low level of awareness of their feelings, becoming more like a computer mind that is able to make any further step only on the basis of calculated decisions without attributing importance of different options. All options to become equivalent, which can not decide on the right. Therefore, their feelings should not be ashamed and hide them and ask lower than the intellect, because people decide based on feelings regarding certain things.

## 6.5 Emotional intelligence

Compared with the intelligence quotient, which remains the same throughout life, the emotional intelligence develops and improves with experience throughout life (Urbanija, 2001, p. 63). It is well known that the level of emotional intelligence, change, increase or decrease compared to the rational intelligence, which in the course of life largely unchanged.

Feelings are a mental process of experiencing relationship to objects, events, people and myself. Experience of adding value, and activity-Intensity component. Emotions trigger the behavior and motives (Mayer, 2001, p. 19). Intelligence is after the philosopher William Stern general ability to focus conscious thought to the new requirements, the overall ability to adapt to new tasks and conditions of life (Lang, 1990, p. 24).

Because authors different define emotions and intelligence, we can not expect that there would be a generally accepted theory and the definition of emotional intelligence. It is known, however, that its foundations resulting from many years of studying the history of both personal and social as well as individual and organizational psychology, and today it is becoming more important in business sciences.

Between intelligence and emotion, there are some key differences. Paul Ekman, head of the Laboratory for Human Relations at the University of California, and Seymour Epstein, a clinical psychologist at the University of Massachusetts found that the emotional mind is much faster than the rational mind and enters the scene without time to think about what it actually does. Because of its speed, the response is related to the entire image or its most conspicuous parts. Immediately recognize, or Compassionate other persons real or that they overlap (Goleman, 1997, p. 345-347).

## 7. CONCLUSION

The work and role of the coach in handball team is a complex process. If you want to be a good coach you have to be able to manage with words and deeds. At all, it is important to be a good listener. If you can listen to someone, you can feel his soul. In our profession, success is sometimes a bad teacher. Many of fact we learn about ourselves and learn from failures. Failure is the path to success.

Each of us wants to achieve success in work we do. The goal of every coach is the best possible result - a victory. This can be illustrated in different ways. Integral parts of every handball teams are all on the way who are active in the club. The principal sponsor club president, sporting director, coaches, players, physiotherapists ... All sit in a boat that is rowing and we have the task to arrive as quickly as possible to the target. Just the right strokes in the same direction it is possible to achieve the objective sought in the optimal time. If someone was pulled from the rowers paddle in his direction and not keeping to the agreement, we will soon find that we run out of the way and our journey is far from ideal line. In my trhirty years of active participation in sports, I had the opportunity to meet and work with a variety of coaches, both at club and representative level. I deliberately wrote the work and do not work, because my own experience that most coaches still do not perceive the differences between the group and work as a team. Today, sports coaches largely still swear only to order, work and discipline. Do not deal with aspects of management, which include motivation, communication, and other factors in the successful management team. Definitely an extremely democratic relationship between coaches and players in sport is not possible. Nonetheless the top coaches of teams that have collected in the team of professional players, have to pay more attention to relationships within a team. Professional players are in most inherently motivated to work well as a team leader should be the ones who make these individuals together into a successful whole. A good team does not, as erroneously thought by a lot of coaches, consist of top-quality individuals.

Good, effective and efficient team is a team of capable individuals whho do work and train in pleasant atmosphere, positive competition, cooperation and maximum confidence. Athletes, like workers in a company can achieve much better results of working when they feel loyalty appearance, emotional attachment and responsibility to their teammates, coaches, and if the objectives of competition is perceived as their own. Coaches in team sports should pay more attention to the establishment of a work environment because this is the only way to achieve long-term success. The ultimate authority is also in sport, proved to be effective only in the short run, for constant good work, every coach, manager needs to trust athletes or employees effectively if he wants to achieve his goals. My opinion is that the coaches should pay more attention than in their own tactics of the game to the establishment of a long-term operating strategy, which must include appropriate management, adequate communication, motivation, and that must be in place to tasks directed to the satisfaction of athletes.

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Handball Federation of Slovenia  
Slovenian Handball Coaches Association  
Master Coach Course

**LINE PLAYER - TECHNICAL/TACTICAL PREPARATION**

(Seminar paper)

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Žalec, June 2, 2013

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# Key

The key defines the following symbols:

- balls**: A cluster of six white circles.
- LW - left wing**: A yellow circle with two arms.
- LB - left back**: An orange circle with two arms.
- CB - centre back**: A white circle with two arms.
- LP - line player**: A red circle with two arms.
- RB - right back**: A blue circle with two arms.
- RW - right wing**: A black circle with two arms.
- D - defender**: Three circles with arrows pointing right, colored black, blue, and green.
- 1,2,3,4,5,6**: Three circles with arrows pointing right, colored white, red, and orange.
- pass**: A dashed line with an arrowhead.
- attacking movement, shot**: A solid line with an arrowhead.
- defensive movement**: A wavy line with an arrowhead.
- block**: A vertical double-headed arrow.

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## Abstract

In handball, line players play in a different way than backs and wings. They must constantly fight defenders for space to receive the ball and successfully shoot on goal or, at the very least, win a penalty shot. Defenders try to prevent them from doing so by holding their arms or grabbing their bodies, or by pushing them. However, line players themselves sometimes also obstruct defenders to help backs shoot on goal. Their style of play is some reminiscent of wrestling, both with and without the ball. This is why their technique and tactics, as well as physical and mental requirements, are unique and require special training. This is the topic of this seminar paper.

## Keywords:

line player, moving into open space, catching, scoring, situational training

## 1 Introduction

All successful teams at the highest level have great partnerships of backs and line players, e.g. Balić - Vori, Karabatić - Gille, Hammerseng - Loke.

The line players' style of play contains elements that differ significantly from wings and backs:

- ☞ they don't handle the ball a lot, but when they do, they only rarely pass it on; it would seem that they don't enjoy the game as much as players in other positions. Their versatility means they can also sometimes play in other positions - this is important to take into account with younger players
- ☞ They usually stand with one of the hips facing the goal
- ☞ Most of the time, they are in contact with defenders who are trying to prevent them from moving and positioning without the ball, from receiving the ball, moving with the ball and shooting
- ☞ They don't have much time to shoot and are often obstructed by defenders

A line player should have the following physical, technical/tactical and mental abilities:

- ☞ Basic strength, explosive strength and agility (for dives)
- ☞ The ability for moving into open space just at the right time and for predicting where some space will open
- ☞ The ability to receive the ball with both hands and with one hand, in particular catching bad passes when under pressure by defenders
- ☞ Good shot conversion and versatility (shooting without indicating the direction too soon, delaying shots)
- ☞ Mental stability and patience in the face of various provocations and assaults by defenders

### Selecting line players

As they are so important, we must select a tall player with less technical/tactical abilities and with characteristics of backs (Matej Gaber, Miha Žvižej). Men should be at least 185 cm tall. A line player should be strong and capable of playing in the middle of defence along with the three backs. The outer defenders should be wings, who are usually shorter, because they can quickly run into fast breaks.

## 1.1 Individual technique - the line player tasks during various phases of the game

### 1.1.1 *During transition into defence*

Line players should first wait for potential rebounds. If possible, they should try to obstruct the player receiving the ball from the goalkeeper to prevent the opposition from launching a fast break; otherwise, they should immediately return into defence.

### 1.1.2 *In defence*

For fast breaks, it is best if that line players are playing as the second or third defender from the right. The left side of defence should consist of two right-handed backs. This allows for the optimal arrangement of players in fast breaks - three attackers on the left and three of the right. In a 5-1 zone defence, the point defender should be a tall line player in order to obstruct passes between the attacking backs and have the shortest distance to their own position in attack.

In a 6-0 zone defence, the ideal arrangement of players is the following: 1-RW, 2- RB, 3- LP, 4- LB, 5- CB, 6- LW - **figure 1**.

Figure 1: Defensive arrangement



### 1.1.3 *In fast breaks*

The line players' task is to immediately run to the other end of the court and position themselves at the goal area line. This draws one or two defenders and creates space for other teammates. If necessary, they can also move back towards the 9-meter line.

When line players win a ball in defence, they first look if there is a wing available on the other end of the court (but only if they are good passers); otherwise, they pass the ball to the player designated to receive the first ball and then run to the other end.

While running, they should not look for the ball. Even if they did receive it, it would be very difficult to score past the defenders already in defence. Their main task is to attract defenders to themselves, so that another part of the court is cleared and teammates can launch a fast break.

#### **1.1.4      *In attack***

Ideally, line players receive the ball at head level or even higher with hands in front so that they can shoot immediately. The arm can be quickly swung back and defenders have only small chances of fouling them. The ball coming to the line players should have a back-rotation, so that the line player will catch it easier - the ball should be released through the fingers with the fingers leaving the lower side of the ball last.

Bounced passes are also popular as they are difficult to intercept. From the starting position in front of the body, the ball is pushed towards the floor, so that it bounces about one meter in front of the line player.

Wings can also pass the ball to line players. E.g. when they jump from a dead angle or when they attack the space between the two outside defenders. These passes are the most effective when the defenders are careful enough. Regardless of the situation, the ball should always be held above the head as it allows for the fastest and most precise passes.

Defenders will fall out to stop good shooters, so it makes sense that line players stand in front of them. It will be easier to move into open space and prepare empty space for others.

They should attract two defenders onto themselves and help create numerical advantages which lead to goalscoring opportunities. With this in mind, line players are positioned between defenders 2 and 3, 3 and 4 and 4 and 5 when playing against a 6-0 defence. When a wing or a back is running into the second line player position, the line players can stand between the outside defenders. When standing between the 3rd and 4th defender of a 6-0 defence, the center back should be a good scorer who should also be able to pass the ball to the line player.

When teams are in numerical disadvantage (5 against 6), wings usually run into the second line player position. Attacking with an actual line player is also suggested; this player should stand between the 3rd and 4th defender to attract two defenders. The LB and RB try to beat the 2nd and 5th defender respectively, and pass the ball to the line player or the wing. When players are fouled, they are able to time-waste, score a goal or win a penalty shot - **figure 2**.



## 1.2 Line players in mini handball

Playing with a line player in mini handball is recommended, because it makes playing on a smaller court easier. With children, it is difficult to achieve sufficient width and depth, because they would all like to have the ball. Line players increase the depth, while wings should get accustomed to playing on the sidelines. Playing with four players against four defenders without any particular organization is successful only if the defenders can't defend or the attackers are good at feinting and faking.

The problem in mini handball is the transition to the offense play (fast break), if all players are waiting for the ball on the goal area line and the defenders are obstructing them.

The easiest way to solve this problem is assigning each player a specific position which they must reach after winning the ball.

**Figure 4** shows the movement of players after winning the ball.

Figure 4: The movement of players after winning the ball

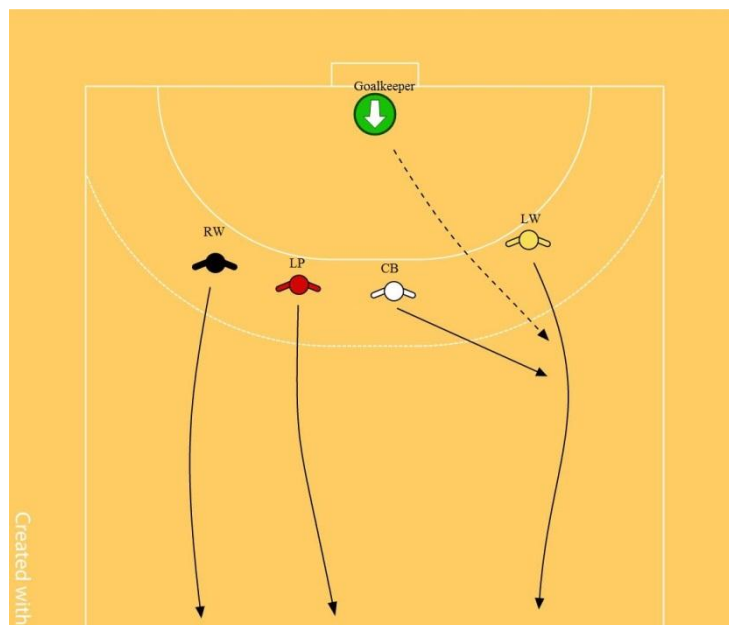
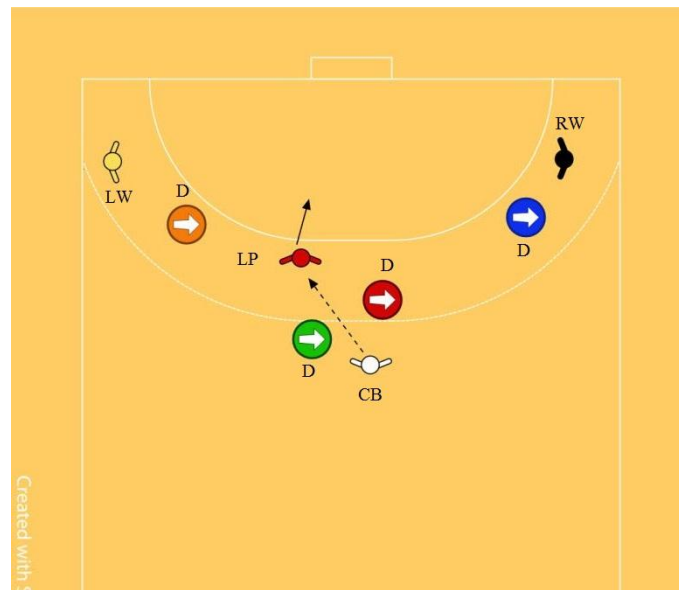


Figure 5 shows the positioning of players with a line player

Figure 5: The positioning of players with a line player



The line player should immediately run to goal area line on the other end of the court and the wings should run into the corners. If necessary, they can move back to move into open space for a pass from the backs. By immediately running forward, they clear the court, so that the backs can receive the ball easier and launch a fast break. If the wings are not covered by defence during the run, the goalkeeper can pass the ball to them. Of course the goalkeeper must be good at throwing long passes. The goalkeeper usually passes the ball to the receiver, normally a back, who receives the ball on the left or right-hand side of the court close to the centre.

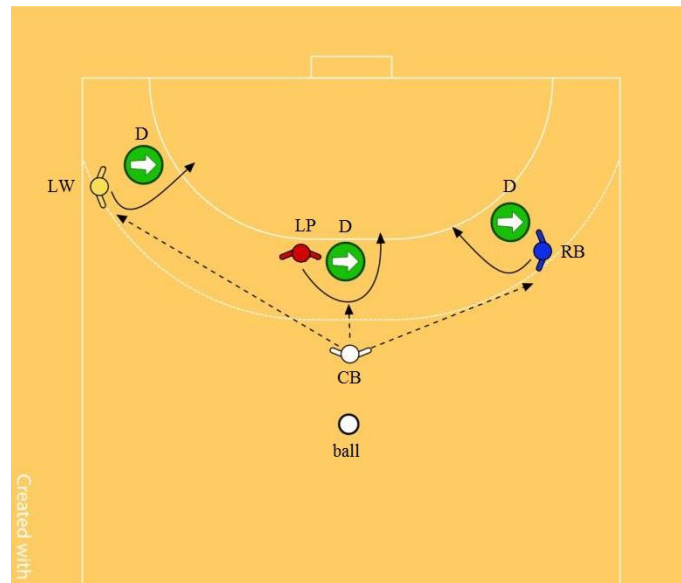
Using a line player in mini handball is also welcome in terms of familiarizing yourself with the line player position and the specific circumstances of playing in this position. From the beginning, children will be familiar with the specific passes to line players that are characteristic for handball on a full-size court. This will improve their vision on the court. Lastly, if the line player is not covered, this represents a good simple scoring opportunity (jump pass or after one step). Every player should play on the line for some time due to versatility.

The initial stages of mini handball with a line player should cover the basic elements:

1. Jump shot from the line, with the left/right leg (hip) facing the goal, from a standstill or with a one-step run up. The right hip is facing the goal and the player places the left leg parallel to the right and jumps off both legs or off the left leg
2. Moving into open space and a jump shot from the goal area line. Line players should move into open space at the very last moment
3. A shot past the defender on the right or left-hand side. The ball is held in both or just one hand high above the head ready to shoot or evade the defender

The exercises for these elements are demonstrated in stages, so that beginners can execute them as well. The wings and line players are practicing simultaneously and the backs are passing the balls to them - see **figure 6**:

Figure 6: Practicing the basic shot elements



- Jump shot after three steps (left, right, left), without defence
- Jump shot after three steps with a short pass
- Jump shot after a body feint past a defender on the left or right-hand side (the defender does not move)
- Jump shot after a pass and a body feint past a defender who tries to obstruct the player without moving (arms only)
- Jump shot after moving into open space, a pass and a body feint past a defender with three steps - figure 6

A passer can be included in the exercise to practice passes and children will get to know the main attacking tasks – moving into open space, passing, catching, body feints and shooting. The players should lift the head before every run up, because they will be able to beat defenders and score easier.

### 1.3 The technical/tactical elements of playing at the line and the characteristics of the execution (selection)

#### 1.3.1 *Elements without the ball*

The main task of line players is running into open space either to the side away from the defender or by screening the defender and waiting for the ball while being tightly marked. Both activities are only demonstrated and then practiced alongside other elements.

#### 1.3.2 *Positioning for running into open space and shooting*

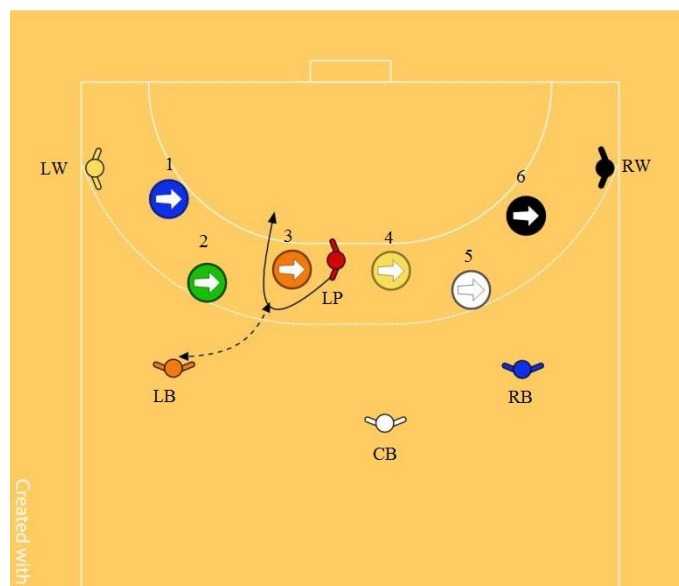
- ☞ Line players are usually standing with the left or right foot facing the goal.

- ☞ The front leg should be almost touching the line, so that the defender cannot hug the line player from the inside (defenders are not allowed to step into the goal area). Even when the line player reaches for the ball, the leg should not move.
- ☞ Legs should be wide apart, the more space the line player occupies, the easier will he shake off the defender.
- ☞ When running into open space, the line player should raise and bend the arms, turn the elbows outwards and jump away from the defender.
- ☞ To receive the ball from a player in the air, the line player can also lean back towards the goal.
- ☞ When a wing receives the ball, the line player should turn towards the goal and wait for a pass from the wing.

### 1.3.3 *Running into open space*

- ☞ Line players should be calm and patient. They should not constantly run around searching for space. It is better to wait for the right moment and explode and quickly move into open space.
- ☞ Moving into open space should be fast, so that they are not obstructed when receiving the ball; however, they should not move too quickly, because the defenders would cover them.
- ☞ They should use a step or a short jump to move into open space, or they can run if there is enough space.
- ☞ They can also run from the position between the 3rd and 4th defender - either around the third defender behind the second, and around the fourth defender behind the fifth - **figure 7**
- ☞ They can also come off the line which is followed by a return pass, a run back to the line or a screen on a defender to create space for a jump shot by a back.

Figure 7: Line player running into open space

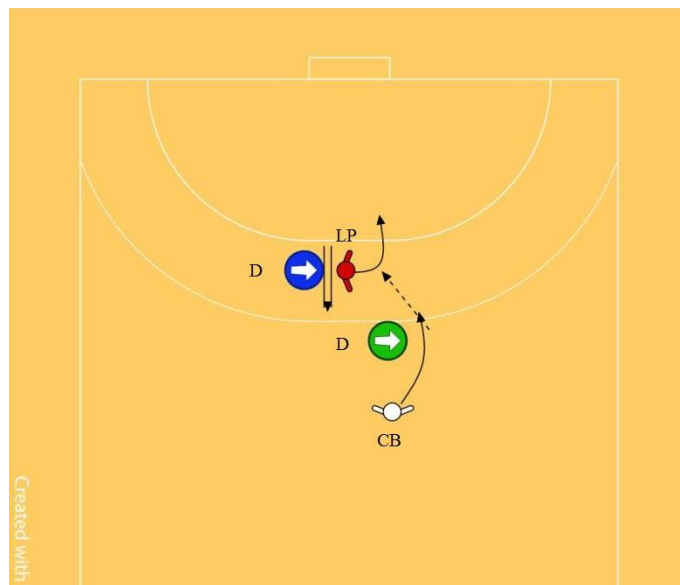


### 1.3.4 *Screening and receiving the ball*

- ☞ Line players should wait for the ball with feet wide apart and slightly bent - this makes them stronger and prevents the defenders from holding them. Arms should also be bent and prepared to catch the ball.
- ☞ The defenders usually obstruct them by holding their arms. At least one arm must be free. They should catch the ball with one hand, using the chest to control it, if necessary. The other arm should be used to hold the defender back.

Off-the-floor passes can also be aimed a bit past the line player who will move towards the ball to get away from the defender - **figure 8**.

Figure 8: Screening the defender



### 1.3.5 *Screening and obstructing defenders*

- ☞ Screens can be frontal, with the chest, or with the back. Line players should position themselves in the lane of the defender's movement.
- ☞ By positioning themselves in front of the defender, line players can obstruct the defender from aggressively falling out to stop a shot.
- ☞ Just before the shot, the line player should grab an arm of the defender, so that the defender cannot block the shot in time.
- ☞ Against a 5-1 defence, line players often block the front defender from the left or right-hand side; against a 3-2-1 defence, they regularly block all three front defenders. A block is followed by some movement into open space and the line player can successfully combine with the back to create a goalscoring opportunity. Against a 6-0 defence, the main job of line players is to prevent the defenders from coming out; blocks are less frequent, because there is less space.

### 1.3.6 *Elements of receiving the ball*

For a quick shot with the hand above the head, the ball should be received high. Before shooting, the hand should be in a position that enables aiming the ball in any direction: it

should be held high with the palm turned up and open, the elbow turned out and the body slightly bent to the side. This position allows line players to avoid the arms of the defenders who must then grab the body and not the shooting arm.

Naturally, shot type, receiving the ball and arm swing greatly depend on the situation and the position of the line player, the defenders and the goalkeeper. The ball can be also caught to the left or right to shoot past the goalkeeper. Instead of wanting the ball up, a lot of shorter line players want the ball low to shake off the defender easier. We can also catch the ball low, if we want to jump higher by using a down-up swing - if we have enough time.

At the highest levels in handball, line players often catch the ball with one hand only, because they are always obstructed. One hand is used to make space and hold the defender, while the other is used to catch the ball and shoot.

### **1.3.7      *Catching the ball with both hands - high or low***

- ☞ The ball is coming above the head with a strong back-rotation.
- ☞ The ball is coming straight at the line player and is passed just above the head of a defender or around the defender's body.
- ☞ The ball is passed off the floor by pushing the ball.

### **1.3.8      *Catching the ball with one hand***

- ☞ Balls can be caught with one hand at any height - arms can be up, away from the body or down. Normally, a defender is holding the other arm or the ball is too far to catch it with both hands.
- ☞ It is safer to use the chest to control the ball with one hand. The palm is turned inside and it is used to guide the ball onto the chest, while the other arm is used to hold the defender back. When we control the ball on the chest, it is easy to grab it with one hand and lift it.
- ☞ In modern handball, line players must be able to catch balls with both hands, because defenders constantly obstruct them and they must constantly make space for themselves, i.e. position themselves with one of the sides facing the goal.

### **1.3.9      *Elements of playing with the ball – breakthroughs and feints***

When executing breakthroughs and feints, line players are usually turned away from the goal or have one side towards the goal. They can let the defenders hug them, but should take care that they don't grab the arm holding the ball, because they won't be able to shoot, pass or continue playing in this case. We distinguish between left and right breakthroughs and feints.

If it appear that a breakthrough won't be successful, the line player should quickly change direction with a feint. When turning, line players should have feet wide apart and be bent forward. The ball should be held in the front in one or both hands. When trying to break through or change direction, the first step should be over the defender's foot to shake the defender off easier. The ball should be held in the outside hand, while the inside should be used to hold the defender back. Before the shot, the ball must be lifted and the palm must be opened.

### **1.3.10**     *Elements of throwing the ball - shots, passes*

In recent years, line players often use jump shots or delayed shots in addition to diving shots. A delayed shot makes it easier to select the right shot type and direction. A lot of goalkeepers are able to smartly close down space by good positioning. It is important that the shot is not indicated too soon, i.e. that the player does not look into the direction of the shot, because these are the most difficult shots for goalkeepers to save.

Another thing to note is the cross between a line player and a back when the line player runs around the zone defence. It is better to use the elbow pass to gently slide the ball over the fingers instead of the wrist pass. In addition to passing to a back, they will also be able to pass the ball to a wing, or even make a feint and shoot from distance.

### **1.3.11**     *Jump shots for line players*

- ☞ After one, two or three steps, jumping off the left or right foot
- ☞ After one, two or three steps, jumping off both feet
- ☞ From a standstill, jumping off both feet - facing the goal frontally
- ☞ From a standstill - left or right side facing the goal

Multiple steps are used in breakthroughs and feints and line players can use them when they have their back, side or face facing the goal. It is difficult to shoot with the right leg closer to the goal, so it is better to turn and jump off both feet (feet wide apart), if there is enough time. There are eight shot directions available - four corners, past the goalkeeper's head and hips or between the legs.

### **1.3.12**     *Diving shots*

All basic shots can include a dive. A dive is usually executed when the line player is low and there is not enough time to stand up. This technique is also used when a defender is holding the line player tight or even hugging him - the line player will be able to shake him off easier. When diving, the jump is usually to the left or right-hand side of the goalkeeper and the shot follows immediately. When diving to the left, the body must lean, so that all four corners are visible. The head (and thus the body) should be held high for a better view and a gentler landing.

Lifting the knee of the other leg will also increase the balance and make the landing easier. A dive can be executed with or without a jump. When diving after a jump, the first contact with the floor should be made with the feet.

### **1.3.13**     *Special shots*

Due to ever better goalkeepers in modern handball, line players must increase their repertoire of shots. It is essential that players train passing and shooting with both hands.

#### a) A lob shot

It is important that the hand position is the same as with all other shots. The shoulder should be high, the elbow in front of the ball and the palm open - this indicates that we plan to use a "normal" shot. But instead of shooting, the arm is only extended and the

ball is directed above the goalkeeper's hands; the ball should have a slight back-rotation, i.e. the ball is stopping just like with passes.

- b) A backspin shot - past the goalkeeper's head or hands  
A powerful shot is indicated and then the ball gently slides through the fingers. The ball should travel almost in a straight line. This shot requires a similar technique like the normal shots, except that the fake swing should be even more powerful, so that the fingers rotate the ball from below or one of the sides.
- c) A rotation shot - with a change of direction after bouncing off the floor or in the air  
If there is only a tight angle available to shoot or if the hands are not in a shooting position, the ball can be rotated. The palm and the fingers are pulled back and inside. After the ball bounces off the floor (sometimes also in the air), it significantly changes direction.
- d) A body turn shot  
If the defender is marking the line player from behind, the line player can shoot with the arm lowered by swinging it backwards to surprise the goalkeeper.

## **2 Working methods**

### **2.1 Practicing technical and tactical elements of playing on the line**

#### **2.1.1 *Technical element exercises***

The technical/tactical elements described above serve as the basis for the exercise order - from easier elements to more difficult ones. Additional tasks are added to the exercises once players master the initial assignments and are capable of using them in a match.

Technical elements are practiced at the 1st or 2nd exercise stage (Tone Goršič, Teorija in metodika, 1982). Technical elements are practiced in the context of wider situations where they appear during a match (i.e. along the goal area line). One or two defenders are present, but they are passive or only partially active (2nd stage). Line players execute the exercises alone or receive passes from teammates. At first, the speed of execution is low, but it increases with time. Preparatory exercises are important - they must include repetition of certain movements to familiarize ourselves with correct sequences and to fix mistakes.

1. The shot types described above are at first practiced in isolation.  
As a preparatory exercise, certain swings can be repeated that are typical of certain shots. Afterwards, the players proceed to practicing jump shots and diving shots. A goalkeeper is not needed with these exercises; if a goalkeeper is nevertheless present, they should not move to allow the shooter to concentrate on correct technique.
2. Diving shots  
Initially, a mat is used to practice diving shots. Later, a defender is holding the line player's waist and the line player tries to shake the defender off by diving. It is actually easier to dive when someone is holding you than without obstructions. At the

beginning, dives are executed without the ball and players break the fall by catching themselves on the hands and chest. Later, they start mimicking diving shots on goal.

3. This is followed by shots with an optional dive after a short pass. The length of the passes must gradually increase. It is important that the players have the correct catching technique. The shot type and direction are selected beforehand. The goalkeeper must be positioned accordingly. If the goalkeeper is standing on the left side of the goal, the line player must shoot to the right etc.
4. Breakthroughs and feints: line players receive the ball with the back or one of the sides facing the goal and the defender. Initially, the players practice breakthroughs using 1-3 steps to get to the line past a defender who tries to obstruct them only with hands (must not move). Feints are practiced in the same way: the players first indicate a breakthrough in one direction and then go the other way. In both cases, they can pass the ball to themselves by bouncing it off the floor in front of themselves, or someone can pass them the ball.
5. Catching "bad passes" with one or both hands: a teammate is passing the ball to the line player in all directions. Initially, the line player catches the ball and passes it back. Later, the line player shoots on goal. The shot can be made with the hand that was used to catch the ball, or with the other (dominant) hand, by moving it from hand to hand.
6. Lobs, rotation shots and backspin shots can be practiced only when the basic shot are completely mastered.

### **2.1.2 Conversion practice - shot type selection**

For the best shot conversion, line players must be able to select the best type and direction of the shot depending on the situation. Naturally, they must master these shots first. The goalkeeper is standing in a position that is typically used to save certain shot types. Later, they can use different types of positioning and the line player must select the best shot type. Just like everything else, "thinking" can also be taught.

The goalkeeper is using different types of positioning and the line player is shooting according to our instructions, e.g.:

- ☞ The goalkeeper covers all four corners by standing in front of the line player with the arms and legs wide apart
- ☞ The goalkeeper covers three corners by standing on one leg and lifting the other
- ☞ The goalkeeper jumps in the air in front of the line player
- ☞ The goalkeeper executes a split etc.

The goalkeeper is using different save techniques and the line player must select the appropriate shot:

- ☞ If the goalkeeper jumps forward, the line player uses a lob etc. For easier selection and better conversion, the line player should wait for a few moments in the air to see the goalkeeper's reaction.

## 2.2 Practicing elements of playing at the line in groups

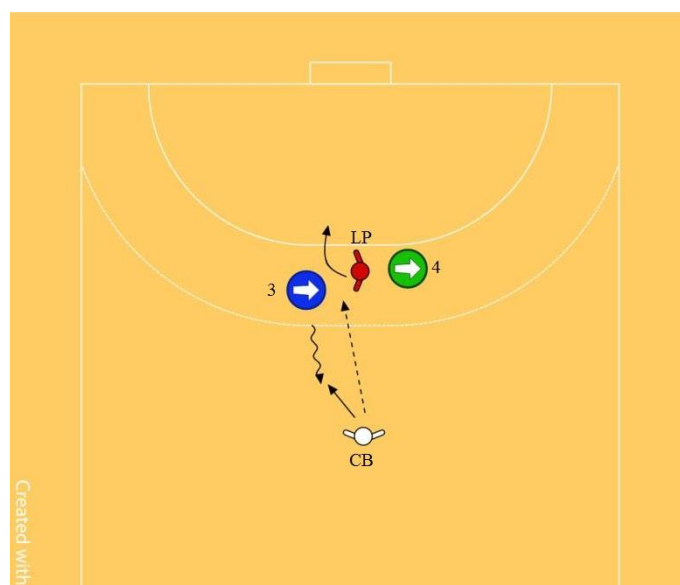
After the line player masters the basic technique (exercises of the 1st and 2nd stage), we can move onto refining the technical and tactical elements with situational exercises of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th stage. The exercises are now similar to situations in matches between two or three attackers and defenders (2-on-2, 3-on-3) and are primarily focused on the line player, although everyone can practice something. The exercises are designed to mimic situations against a 6-0 or 5-1 defence.

The difficulty of the exercises must gradually increase. In the second exercise stage, the attackers are familiar with the roles beforehand and the defenders obstruct them only with 50% of strength. In the third stage, the defenders are playing at a 100%, but they are deliberately a bit late, so that the attackers can execute the exercises successfully.

### 2.2.1 *Practicing 2-on-2*

Moving into open space and shooting after the defender falls out - **figure 9**

Figure 9: Moving into open space and shooting after the defender comes out



The line player stands between the 3rd and 4th defender. The centre back first moves towards the 3rd defender and then towards the 4th one. The defenders come out, and the line player moves into the open space to receive the ball and shoot. The centre back uses different passes.

Moving into open space by stepping or jumping away from the defender - **figure 10**

Figure 10: Moving into open space by jumping away from the defender



The exercise resembles a typical situation against a 5-1 defence; wings and backs can also participate. The centre back bounces the ball off the floor or receives a pass from a back, beats the front defender to the left or right and passes to the line player who moves into the open space away from the ball and shoots. The centre back uses various passes and does not look at the line player when passing (i.e. does not indicate a pass).

**2.2.2 Pick and Roll**

Similar to exercise 1, figure 9.



Let's add some freedom to the exercise: The centre back moves to the left or right and the 3rd or 4th defender comes out. The line player positions himself for a block accordingly. The centre back passes the ball off the floor in front of the line player and away from the defender.

### 2.2.3 *Catching and shooting under pressure*

The line player catches the ball in various ways (one hand or both) depending on the defender who is holding his left or right arm. The defender is gradually becoming more active.

### 2.2.4 *Practicing 3-on-3*

For a situational exercise, we can play 3-on-3 with the line player on the left or right-hand side of the attack.

- ☞ Shots from the line between the 2nd and 3rd defender (mirror image on the other side with a left-handed right back - the line player is between the 4th and 5th defender). Attacking the defense by narrowing the field of play - the left (right) wing attacks the space between the two outer defenders and passes the ball to the left back. The 3rd defender comes out and the left back jumps and passes the ball to the line player - **figure 11**.

Figure 11: Practicing 3-on-3



The defenders are preventing the left wing from breaking through and the left (right) back from jumping and shooting. The 2nd (5th) defender tries to prevent the pass to the line player, but is deliberately a bit late.

### 2.2.5 *Exercises that include freedom of choice (4th stage)*

- ☞ The coach instructs the 2nd or 3rd (4th or 5th respectively) defender to fall out on the LB (RB), the line player moves into the open space behind the 2nd or 3rd defender receives a pass from the LB and shoots.

## 2.3 Practicing collective combinations that include passing to the line player

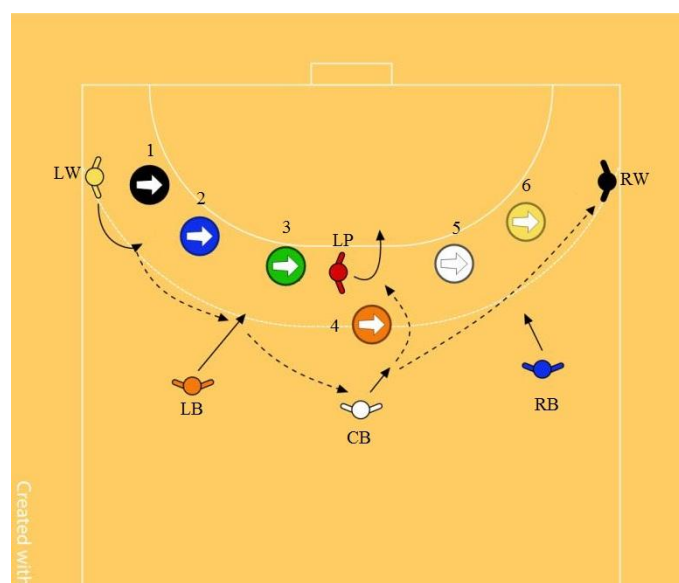
Collective combinations are combinations that involve all attackers. If the exercise includes defenders, then this is a true situational exercise. *This is the only way to learn how to play and to see the results of our work in matches.* The effect of practicing without an opposition is smaller. If possible, exercises should include two teams of six players with the collective combinations starting on the left and right-hand side.

To create a goalscoring opportunity after a certain combination, we must determine the attacking methods and the passing order. E.g. every attacker can break through to the line in the direction of the attack and even shoot, but only if the chance is right. Naturally, the defenders must not allow it and they won't have a difficult job, because they will be aware of the activities and intentions of the attackers who will be forced to pass the ball according to the pre-determined sequence.

To create a goalscoring opportunity for a particular player, every attacker must convincingly attack empty space and be prepared to shoot to force the defender to close him down at the very least. The defenders have to be active and careful - this will make sure that the pre-determined passes will be logical. A collective combination should end with a shot by a pre-determined player. However, this player does not always get into a goalscoring opportunity, so we must practice up to 5 variations of passes (i.e. collective combinations).

An example of an attack against a 6-0 defence is demonstrated. The attackers create a numerical advantage and prepare a goal scoring opportunity for the centre back who must be capable of scoring from distance. We must also take into account that the collective combination will not always be successful - the 4th defender might come out and stop the centre back - **figure 4**.

Figure 12: Attacking a 6-0 defence by creating a numerical advantage and preparing a goalscoring opportunity for the CB



The CB now has five passes available - to five teammates - and one of them is a pass to the line player. It is quite common, because of the available space behind the defender falling out.

The line player can take advantage of this space and shoot on goal. If the right back is a left-hander, the exercises on the other side are mirror images and can be executed immediately after the end of the exercise on the right-hand side. I will describe an example of an attack starting on the left side: "piston movements to narrow the field of play and create a jump shot opportunity for the centre back". The LB and RB, or the CB have the balls. The attacks alternately start on the left or right-hand side. If the attack is not successful, it's the other side's turn. After a short run up, the LB passes the ball to the LW who attacks the space between the 1st and 2nd defender. If he breaks through, he can shoot, otherwise he passes the ball to the LB who attacks the space between the 2nd and 3rd defender and passes the ball to the CB who jumps and shoots (if possible on the first step). If the 4th defender comes out, the CB passes the ball to the line player who shoots on goal. The 3rd defender lets the line player receive the ball and is deliberately a bit late closing him down - so that the CB's pass seems logical, just as is the case in competitive play - and tries to hold him back. However, the line player already has a decisive advantage.

For an even more dangerous attack, the line player can receive the pass also from the the LB and not only the CB - provided that the line player is open. The defenders will have to be even more careful.

### ***2.3.1 All attackers should pay attention to these important elements when executing collective combinations:***

- ☞ The timing of the run up - it is important that the players are not too early. They should skip while waiting to start the run up and start moving only when the teammate swings the arm holding the ball back; otherwise, they will have to stop and wait. They must take into account the time balls spend in the air.
- ☞ The ball should be received on the right leg to allow three steps (left-right-left) for a breakthrough or a run up towards the defender.
- ☞ Catching the ball high, immediately swinging the arm back and carrying the ball in an open palm.
- ☞ A convincing run up towards the defensive line with the eyes always on goal.
- ☞ Passing immediately before the defender touches them; accurate, fast passes towards the teammate's shoulder.
- ☞ Shooting according to the instructions of the coach or freely depending on the situation.
- ☞ Accurate jump passes, or ground passes during the run up, in various ways.

Coaches must constantly supervise the execution of these elements. They must find the reasons for errors and iron them of one by one, if necessary. A player can even be taken aside during collective combination training and be ordered to execute an appropriate preparatory exercise designed to eliminate the error. Later, this player can re-join the collective training.

Particular attention must be paid to timing - the run up must be timed just right, not too early - so that the attacker receives the ball in full flight, not in a standstill. To be dangerous and to be able to break through and shoot on goal or force a defender to move, players must always hold the ball in the shooting position (Goršič, Model tehnike napadalcev).

At first, the basic collective combination is practiced - in our case, this includes a shot by the centre back from distance and the 4th defender just tries to block the shot and does not come

out. Later, variations with passes to teammates are practiced, in particular to the line player and the right wing.

At the beginning, the collective combination activities (run ups and passes) are executed slow and as accurate as possible to minimize mistakes. Later, the speed is increased.

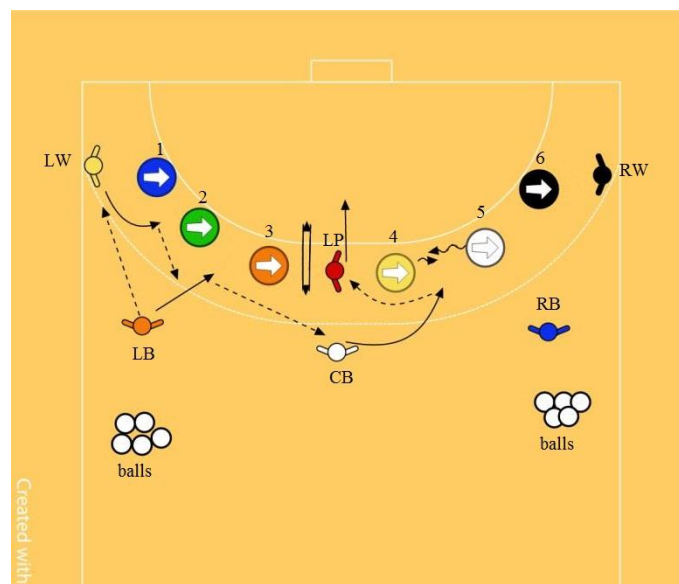
The above description corresponds to 3rd grade exercises. Everyone, from defenders to attackers, practice something and have certain tasks. When not participating in the combination, the line player is positioned on the shooter's side and practices running into open space and screening to become familiar with the way the defenders and the attackers play. The defenders try their best to stop the attackers, but are not allowed to intercept passes, because they know the combination already i.e. they are not allowed to close down open space too soon. If this is the case, this is not an exercise anymore, because the attackers will have to react in a different way and start playing properly. However, the exercises are good for defenders, because they can train obstructing the attacker who is breaking through and familiarize themselves with the attackers and their options in the game.

## 2.4 Examples of collective combinations involving a pass to the line player

Only the collective combination on the left-hand side is described, the combination on the other side is a mirror image.

*Attacking a 6-0 defence: the line player stands between the 3rd and 4th defender and the centre back does not shoot, but instead dictates the play - **figure 13***

Figure 13: Attacking a 6-0 defence

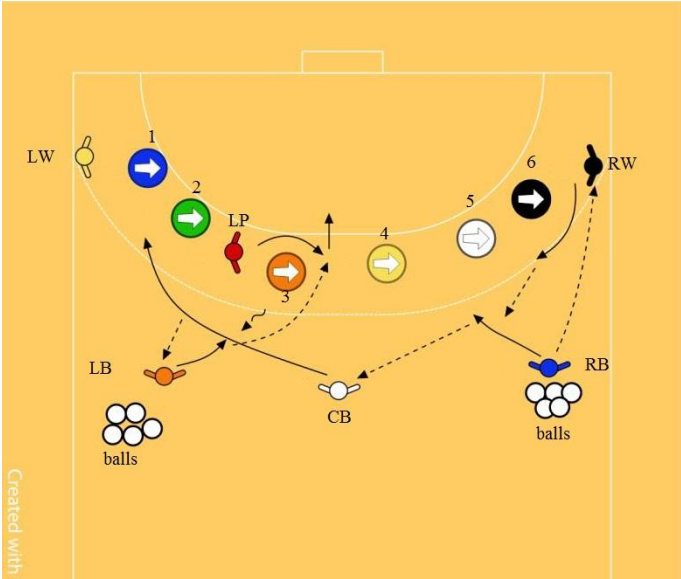


This is a classic attack against a 6-0 defence. It is not a special collective combination by itself. However, it can be very effective, if executed convincingly. After a pass from the LB to the LW, the LW attacks the space between the 1st and 2nd defender and passes the ball to the LB. The LB in turn attacks the space between the 2nd and 3rd defender and passes the ball to the centre back. The CB can try to break through between the 4th and 5th defender, pass the

ball to the line player over the air or off the floor, pass the ball to the RB in front or behind the 5th defender or above the goal area, or pass the ball to the RW. The line player screens the 3rd defender and the 4th defender must close down the centre back when he moves between the 4th and 5th defender. The CB can then pass the ball to the line player.

*A collective combination against a 6-0 defence (5-1): the line player is between the 2nd and 3rd defender, the CB crosses the ball to the LB who jumps and shoots - **figure 14***

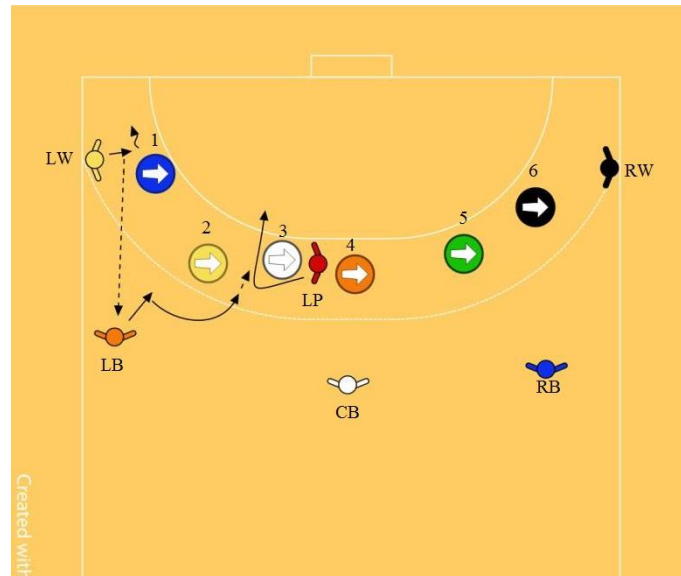
Figure 14: A collective combination against a 6-0 defence (5-1)



This is a typical combination that requires active play by the centre back who should not simply cross the ball with a low pass. The attack starts with a pass from the RB to the RW; as always, the RW attacks the space between the two outer defenders. The RB attacks the space between the 5th and 4th defender, passes the ball to the CB who crosses the ball to the LB and runs towards the space between the 1st and 2nd defender to receive a return pass from the LB. The 3rd defender comes out on the LB in the air who must then pass the ball to the line player who is normally screening the 4th defender. The LB can also pass the ball to any other offense player.

*Attacking a 6-0 defence with a right feint by the LB and movement by the line player standing between the 3rd and 4th defender - **figure 15***

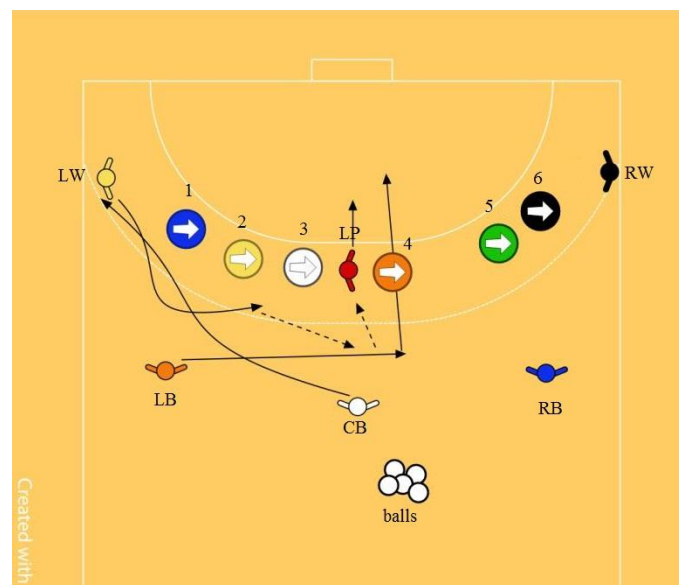
Figure 15: Attacking a 6-0 defence with a feint by the LB



The LW widens the play by moving towards the sideline. The LB tries to beat the 2nd defender with a right feint; because the LB is a good shooter, the 2nd defender must fall out and the LB passes the ball to the line player who moves into the empty space behind the 2nd defender.

*A cross from the CB to a wing and a piston movement - the line player is between the 2nd and 3rd defender - **figure 16***

Figure 16: A cross by the centre back with a wing



The centre back moves towards the LW, attacks the space between the 1st and 2nd defender and then moves further forward towards the LW. The LW runs around, attacks the space



*A sideways cross between the CB and LB against a 5-1 defence (or 6-0) - the line player is between the 2nd and 3rd defender - figure 18*

Figure 18: A sideways cross between the centre back and the left back



The LW widens the play and passes the ball to the LB who runs towards the goal and jumps in the air to force the 2nd and 3rd defender to close him down. The LB passes the ball to the centre back by simulating a shot and releasing the ball through the fingers for the centre back running around him. The centre back attacks the space between the 1st and 2nd defender. The 2nd defender closes him down, so he passes the ball to the line player who is screening the 3rd defender.

#### **2.4.1 All collective combination exercises can be executed at the 4th and 5th grade**

The 4th grade exercises add freedom of choice - in this case, for the centre back and line player. The 4th (3rd) defender can react freely - by closing the attacker down, so that he must pass the ball to the line player who moves into the open space and shoots, or by staying on the line and trying to block the shot from distance. If the attackers attack the defence convincingly, fully certain that they will shoot, they won't have problems changing their mind and passing the ball to line players.

When playing on one half or the entire court, the defenders can deliberately change defensive strategies or make mistakes by not marking the line player correctly, but the attackers must have good enough vision to see the line player etc. Moreover, when playing with a numerical advantage, line players have a lot of goalscoring opportunities.

#### **2.4.2 5th grade exercises - refining the attack and defence with the focus on the line player**

Practicing collective combinations at the 5th grade means using only one collective combination with all of its 24 variants. Let's count them: every collective combination has a mirror image - there are 12 variants on each side. The potential shooter and the last passer do have 6 options - a shot and 5 teammates available for a pass.

We should come up with an idea for handball rules that would emphasize the role and activities of line players. E.g. defenders cannot touch them or the goal scored by a line player counts double etc.

### **3 Discussion**

Collective combinations are often executed too slow or without any danger to the defence, or the shooter is predictable - these two elements are usually why an attack is interrupted.

Situational exercises will allow the attacking game to flow. If every attacker would attack the defence convincingly in full flight, would always try to shoot and would be able to select from passes to at least three teammates, there would be no need for team gelling. For this reason, attackers must have good vision, be able to play with the ball above the head, so that they are always ready for a strong and accurate immediate pass or shot.

There is no need for teams to have a lot of collective combinations. We should select one or two for each defensive system. At the end, one combination can have as much as 24 variations. If the attackers are dangerous in the initial attacking phase and the last passer and potential shooter are able to make correct decisions, the team will be successful without a doubt.

These exercises are interesting for attackers and defenders and coaches can get an insight into the skills and abilities of the players before actual matches.

The role of the line player is very important. Every weakness can be compensated - even height and strength. However, what is needed is a dynamic style of play with lots of quick movement, excellent agility when receiving the ball in attack and with aggressive closing down in defence.

## 4 Conclusion

It would be a good idea to implement a more systemic play in mini handball as well. It would make playing handball for children easier as they would know where to stand. Then they could become familiar with the role of line players sooner and the transition the full-sized handball courts would be smoother.

The technical elements used by line players in modern handball differ mostly in terms of receiving the ball. The best line players mostly catch the ball with one hand only (left or right) They are forced to do it this way, because defenders obstruct them with any means necessary.

Shot conversion is important and line players must use delayed shots, shots without a dive etc. in addition to other general shot types.

A good timing for moving into open space can be gained through years of experience, but situational exercise can speed up this process.

Line players are too often left to depend on their own resourcefulness and talent. I believe they could be taught even more. Line-player-specific training aims to iron out errors and prepare them for different situations in competitive play. The exercises described here will provide them first with technical ability and then also with tactical knowledge.

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