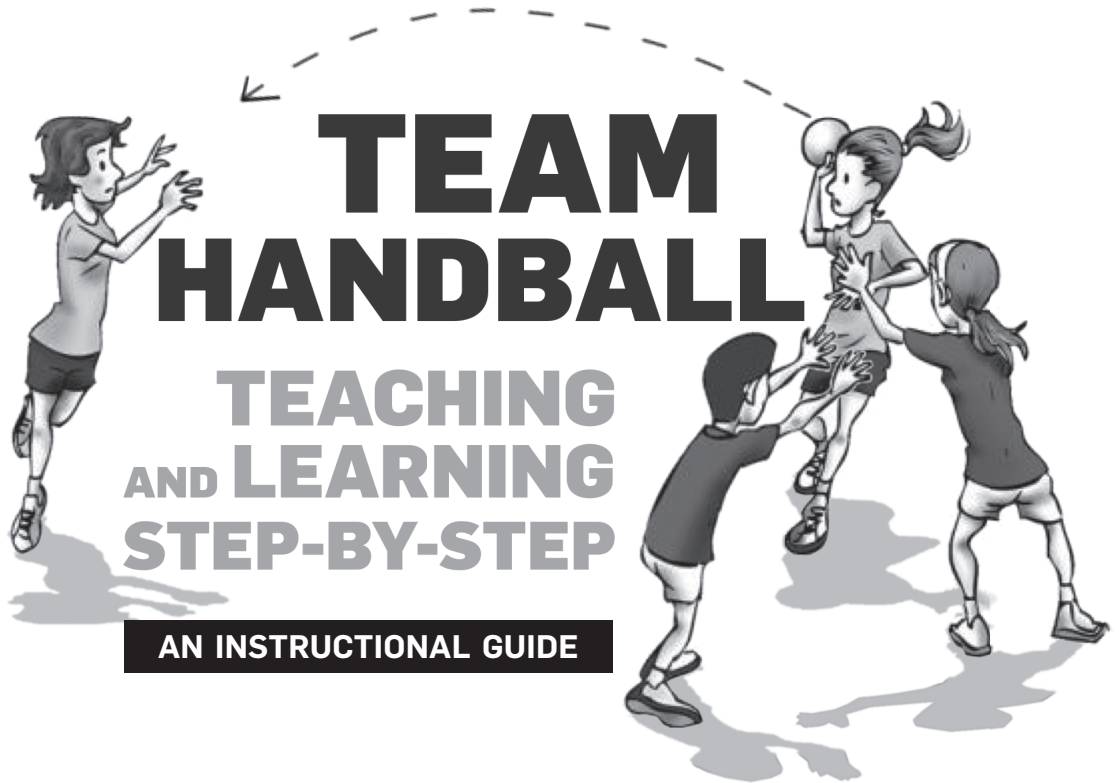


LUÍSA ESTRIGA



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## THE GAME – WHAT IS (TEAM) HANDBALL?

**Handball** is an Olympic team sport where each team invades the other team's court, and the winning team is the one that scores more goals within the regular playing time. This sport is typically played indoors, but outdoor variants also exist, such as *beach handball* or *street handball*, with adapted rules.

**Team sports** were designed to balance confrontation between attack and defence. If the attacker may grab and run with the ball, like in Rugby and American Football, then, the defenders are allowed to tackle. If the attacker is not allowed to run while holding the ball (like in Basketball or Netball), then he/she is *more protected* as physical contact is forbidden. When holding the ball is forbidden (like in soccer), its control is much harder, therefore, dribbling is unlimited and the ball is always disputable.

In **Handball**, like other invasion team sports (*e.g.*, soccer, water polo, basketball, netball, among others), two teams confront each other in a shared playing area, fighting for or seeking to keep the ball, to create space advantage and to score, with a goal-target in the middle of each field.

**It looks like SOCCER/FUTSAL**, but the ball is played with hands, which make it easier to learn, to cooperate with teammates, to deal with the opposition and to score.

**It looks like WATER POLO**, but without water, which makes it a much faster and dynamic game.

**It looks like BASKETBALL**, but allows more steps with the ball in their hands (up to three) and physical contact, which implies faster decision-making and exchanging of ball, instead of dribbling.

**It looks like NETBALL**, but allows all players to attack and to score.

**But it differs from other SPORTS** because the **handball goals are surrounded by a 6-meter area**, inside which only the defending goalkeeper is allowed. Accordingly, a goal is achieved when the ball is sent into the opposing goal, from anywhere outside or while jumping/diving into the goal area. This is a very unusual rule *that makes handball distinctive*. Players concentrate around this boundary – a relatively small area of the playing field – which makes the fight for space critical. Consequently, mostly technical and tactical actions are performed in this densely populated area, forcing players to make decisions rapidly and perform actions in small spaces.



## FUNDAMENTALS OF HANDBALL GAME-BASED APPROACH

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, several authors have emphasised the importance of teaching and coaching sport games focused more on tactics, on understanding the inner logic of the game, and on teaching how to play within the game, breaking away from a more traditional approach focused on teaching technical skills out of playing context. Therefore, *innovative* approaches have been developed that brought new insights, not only pertaining to instructional methods and strategies, but also in the nature of contents to be privileged. A *major* contribution to these teaching trends was done by Bunker and Thorpe (1982), with the primary formulations about the ***Teaching Games for Understanding***. Subsequently, other slightly different approaches emerged, namely *Tactical Games Approach* (Griffin, Mitchell & Oslin, 1997), *Play Practice* (2001), *Game Sense* (Light, 2004), and *Invasion Games Competence Model* (Musch *et al.*, 2002). Here, other concepts should also be mentioned, such as *Ballschule* (Kröger & Roth 1999) and *L'enseignement des jeux sportifs collectifs à l'école* (Gréhaigne, Billard & Laroche, 1999).

Notwithstanding the various contributions, research papers, and critical thinking on the traditional approaches, handball teaching practices have not changed significantly. The instructional process still tends to be focused on exercising and improving technical skills analytically, giving little value to the tactical understanding of the game and the ways of effectively playing it. For example, passing and receiving exercises, which are analytically repeated every session, usually in a *face-to-face* situation (never encountered in real game situations) with no opposition, no competitive or recreational aims are only *boring* practices for learners and not very effective when it comes to improving the ability to play the game.

Furthermore, beginners' difficulties in maintaining possession of the ball and setting up scoring situations are seldom restricted to technical limitations<sup>1</sup>. Instead, more organisational and relational constraints occur, which translate into difficulties in making decisions, such as *who to pass the ball to, when to pass or when and where to move without ball*. As to the game's play time, it is not used as a unique and powerful opportunity of teaching/learning; instead the educator tends to be primarily focused on maintaining classroom discipline, management and correct application of the rules of the game.

According to the recommendations in *Teaching Games for Understanding* (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982), the approach to teaching Handball presented here is designed to elicit the players' tactical awareness and on the development of the players' playing skills. We assume, therefore, that the players are primarily faced with the game, with the necessity of understanding/appreciating and enjoying it and finding solutions to the problems/situations they encounter. Consequently, the context of the game and the tactical options (*what to do* and *when to do it*) are the elements justifying the necessity of a particular technique (*how to do it*) instead of the opposite. As such, technical skills must be approached according to their usefulness in solving tactical problems faced inherent to the game itself. Of course, this is always a dialectic process, in a sense that, if the players have greater technical skills, they will have more resources to find clever playing solutions. Thus, raising the level of playing competence demands of the educator being able to understand what should be prioritised according to game playing needs of a learner.

– To a player with ball who doesn't know what to look for, where to look, when to look, or why to make one decision or another, or just does not know where to be positioned to receive the ball, it is obvious that lack of game understanding is the major cause to unskilful play.

1. Provided that standard conditions for practice are in place, such as appropriate balls for initiation.

- To a player who struggles to catch ball or to accurately throw the ball, but shows some competence in reading the game and understanding the decision-making clues, he/she, most likely, needs extra catching and throwing tasks to improve his/her playing skills.

In fact, becoming a knowledgeable and skilled player is a gradual process that implies learning to understand the game and competence in discovering and executing the most appropriate or clever playing solutions. So, developing *thinking* and competent players is a matter of creating a learning environment or training process that empowers learners to make informed decisions based on reading situational constraints in the moment and understanding decision-making cues, and, in those decisions, teaching and guiding them to prioritise the game principles above all else.

## BREAKING DOWN THE HANDBALL GAME TO IMPROVE LEARNING

Given that, in a full game (7v7), organisational demands and the possibilities of player actions and interrelations are excessive for beginners to the game, it is imperative to reduce options and the uncertainty of actions, evolving later on into more complex game play configurations, according to the learners' readiness. Therefore, it is crucial that the players are faced with an accessible and stimulating form of game playing, in terms of tactical understanding, game appreciation, paths of action, and physical/technical requirements. Based on these assumptions, modified game versions<sup>2</sup> are introduced to calibrate students' difficulties, challenges and motivation levels.

The game-centred and tactical learning approaches place emphasis on the concept of **learning to play through playing**, where the game is the constant starting and returning point. In other words, it is within the context of the different game forms adopted that the learners experiences, explores and tries to solve the game's problems. These are the tools (and the purpose) used to expose the student to the suitable level of problems. It is, therefore, a process of guided discovery which always revolves around the *game as a problem*. The collective dimension of the full game is broken into *smaller tactical* units, in order to focus on or emphasise meaningful game problems, so that the player finds it easier to identify the relevant *information* (i.e., visual clues) to make appropriate tactical decisions. We have, then, a chain of simplifications available: **basic game forms**, **partial game forms** and **game-based tasks**. These learning situations not only enable one to tailor the problems to the learners by manipulating the situational constraints (*calibrating/exaggerating*), but also allow them to occur countless times, facilitating learning and experimentation, which would rarely happen in a more complex situation of the game. This way, the learners are stimulated to improve their reading of situations and tactical reasoning, while, at the same time, they are given the opportunity to fine tune the carrying out of technical skills in a more authentic way. This dialectic between the collective context of the game (macro) and the more sectorial or individual tasks (micro) should always be maintained.

Shape, enrich learners' handball practice through the manipulation of key playing or task constraints (opposition, time-space, complexity/possibilities of game play and risk) attempting:

- To generate a more fluid game with less interruptions, mistakes and fouls.
- To increase number of shooting opportunities and with higher success.
- To adjust exigencies of decision-making and physical-technical demands.
- To stimulate and enrich tactical understanding and to trigger creativity.
- To foster and intensify involvement (great number of functional actions), pleasure (ensuring success and enjoyment) and fun.

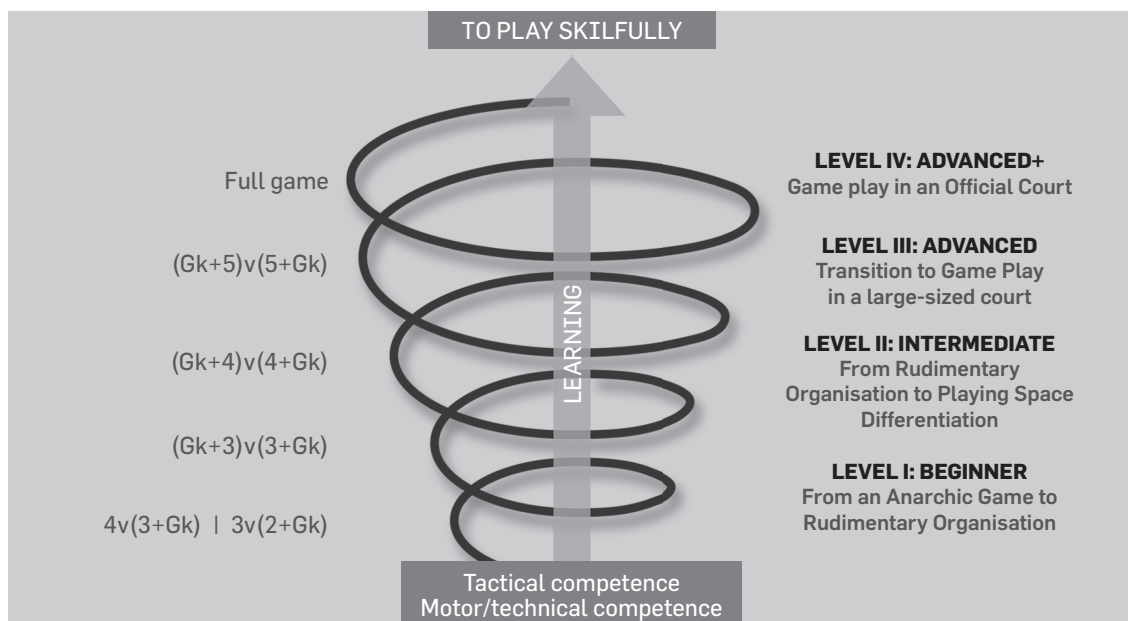
2. Here called basic game forms, in which modifications are implemented to deal with structural and functional aspects without jeopardizing the essence of the game and its *core* tactical principles.

## LEARNING STAGES vs BASIC GAME FORMS

The teaching and coaching approach described in this book includes four stages to learn to play handball, setting priorities based on, gradually, understanding tactics and the acquisition of interrelated playing skills, with an increasing complexity. Each stage corresponds, *broadly*, to the work of one or two basic forms of game. Within each game play configuration (*i.e.*, game form), the primary tactical problems and playing difficulties that required to be prioritised are focused on, simplified and shaped through designed practice tasks – *partial game forms* and *game-based tasks*. These learning tasks are intended to facilitate solution-finding or problem-solving processes and learning skills (at individual or group level), returning to the basic form of the game as soon as possible. This process is repeated pending completion of the learning phase before moving into the following one.

Although we suggest matching the players' age levels and the basic game forms (see Table 1.1), we think that their adoption must be considered according to the playing competence demonstrated by the youngsters and the learning environment variables. It is obvious that the selection of a basic form of game depends on the educator's ability to perform a diagnosis and to make the right decisions – we will come to this subject further ahead.

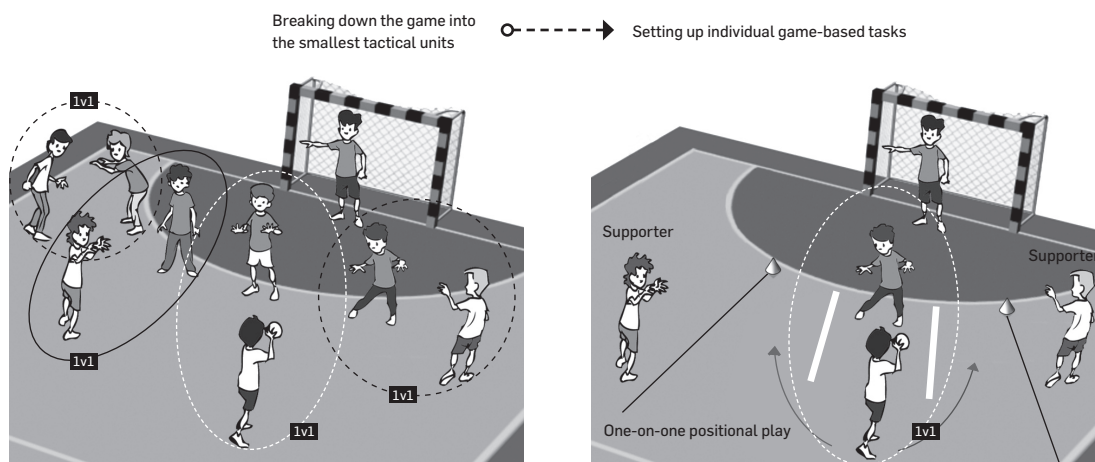
Our approach stresses the development of attacking skills, but the defensive play sometimes takes a leading role, in so far as the opposition is paramount in improving the attacking competence. Different defensive organisations place different constraints on attack. Therefore, the educator must know how to choose the most appropriate defensive configuration and its form of acting (*e.g.*, open with deep pressure or closed with a lined-up defence) to highlight the tactical problems he/she wants to address. The idea is to foster or encourage the use of certain attacking solutions while, at the same time, reducing the degree of uncertainty, taking into account the recommended playing model and the learning objectives.



**1.1.** Students are gradually exposed to increased levels of complexity and possibilities of action through modified game forms (4v4, 5v5, 6v6) up to the full game (7v7).

## GAME-BASED TASKS

These tasks are even simpler than the partial game forms and aim to improve the technique, movement or tactical component of an individual skill, keeping its functional structure of use within a certain context of the game problems as much as possible. Passing game, such as 2v1 in open space, where only bounce passes are valid, is an example of a task focused on raising up the individual passing skills of absolute beginners. In such an example, while having the possibility to pass/catch a lot with different directions and distances, they are encouraged to look, evaluate and decide when and how to pass the ball, with the priority of keeping ball possession, and also the passer and receiver are compelled to break the alignment with the defender to be connected. Another example is the positional duels with the ball (1v1) where the defensive form of acting or response might be constrained, in order to facilitate learning the concept of using misdirection penetration to unbalance opponent and to achieve spatial advantage for a scoring attempt, while developing execution skills in a more *game-like* situation.



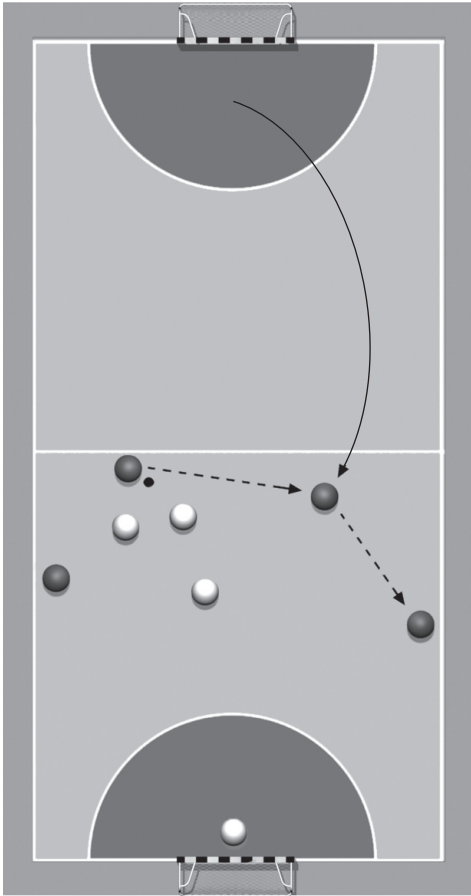
**1.4.** When building up an attack in an even-sided game situation, the development of individual skills in beating the opponent are essential.

**1.5.** An example of a task designed to teach how to get a defender off balance (by attacking the space, not the defender) and to execute a straight or misdirection penetration according to the defender's response. If the defender steps outside one of the marked lines on the floor to contest a straight penetration, he/she is not allowed to return to the initial position (or to recover), which makes misdirection penetration easier to perform but keeping their tactical settings or situational clues.

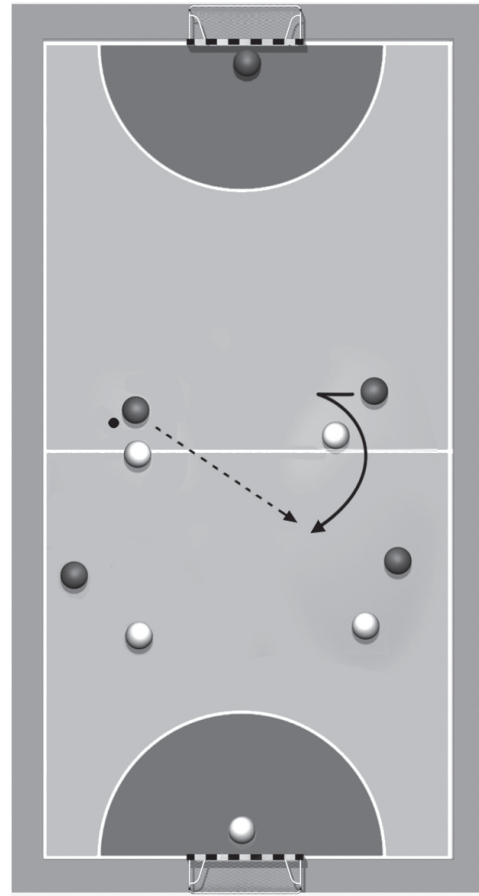
## RECOMMENDATIONS

The learning tasks are paramount in exercising and improving the ability to recognise situational constraints, playing patterns and to formulate realistic expectations on the behaviour of the various elements, enabling players to act in anticipation; which means **enhancing the ability to make clever and quick choices**.

The idea is to design learning tasks where the playing possibilities are exaggerated or facilitated in a way that will aid learners' memory in retrieving situational constraints and critical clues to discover desirable courses of action. At the same time, they are developing the technique in a more authentic and contextualized way. Therefore, learners are more likely to bring into play new skills if they were learned in similar decision-making settings and/or technical-execution constraints.



**1.6. BGF1:** To encourage learners to adopt a spread out positioning and spacing, which increases possibilities to retain possession of ball and to make progression toward goal.



**1.7. BGF2:** As a teaching strategy to emphasise and develop attacking-play without ball, an open and deep defensive pressing configuration is introduced.

## FIRST BASIC GAME FORM

At this stage, it is desirable to introduce extremely simplified game forms to decrease the complexity of playing situations, to increase effective space to play and time to decide and execute. Meanwhile, we are ensuring that each player will have better chances to be involved in game play actions. Therefore, in this approach, to adopt a game form 4v4 or 3v3, with the possibility of using a goalkeeper as a court player to create effective numerical advantage in the attacking play is recommended. The game form 5v5 (mini-handball) might also be used, depending on the number of students per class and available space. When this is the case, it is not advisable to introduce individual marking, as it will lead to a more crowded attacking play, frequent physical contact and more game play interruptions, with frequent missed passes/receptions.

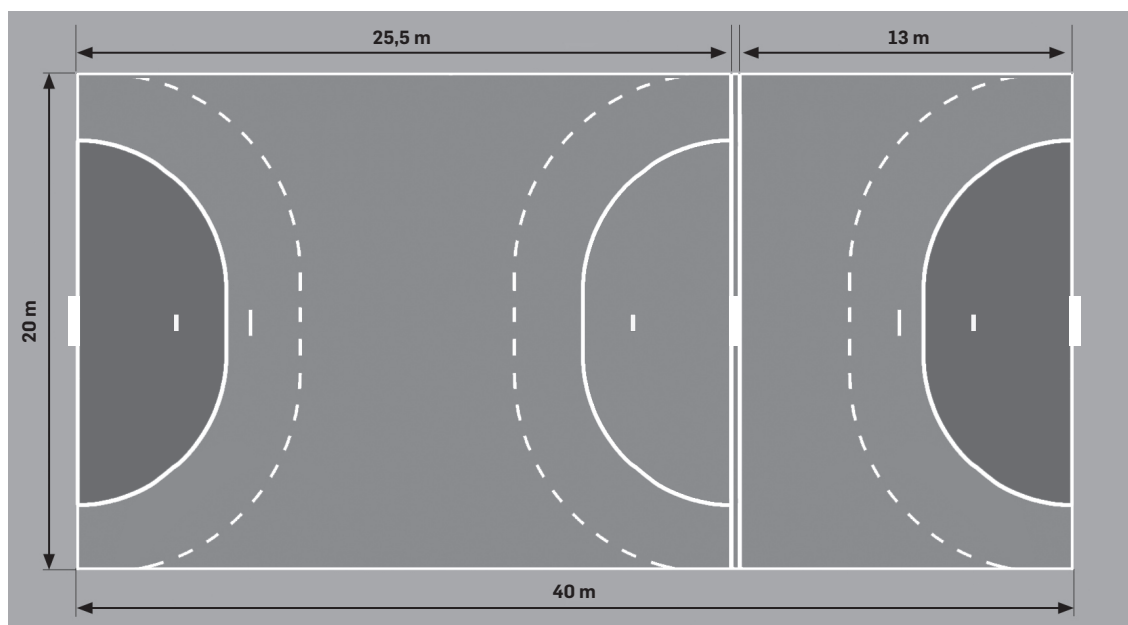
## ● LEVEL III: ADVANCED

### ● TRANSITION TO OFFICIAL COURT (or large-sized one)

During this level, the transition from a small-sized court to a bigger court (large-sized or even an official court size) may occur according to players' level of play, characteristics and school conditions.

When moving to a full-sized court, space increases dramatically (3 times larger), so, it is absolutely necessary to increase the number of players as well, and so, we progress to the modified game form 6 *against* 6. When building up an attack around goal area, the increase of distance between back players creates difficulties of interaction (for example, a pass between right- and left-back players is now a long range pass). These difficulties are fought against with the introduction of a sixth player, who is, first, integrated into the middle of the attack, facilitating wide attacking play and continuity. The implementation of the fast transition offence also becomes easier through the introduction of an intermediate passing lane between sidelines/back players (constituting the second wave).

The need to retreat fast after losing the ball possession to enclose space of the goal area is now reinforced: i) by a greater playing space to protect, ii) by an increase of attackers' competence and iii) by the interest in advancing to a more structured defence system, giving continuity to defensive principles introduced in the preceding level. From an offensive point of view, the inclusion of one more player per team (game 5v5, plus goalkeepers) and greater game space facilitates: i) development and differentiation



**1.10.** A shorter court (2/3 of an official handball court, with about 25.5mx20m) is enough to introduce learners to the game form 6v6.

In defensive terms, the organisational constraints imposed (defence 4:1) to facilitate development of attack have the merit of promoting the improvement of concepts of zone defence, with the constant need of redefining direct opponent and positional (re)adjustments relative to ball, spaces of great value and closing off passing lanes. This defensive system also has the advantage of reinforcing development of fast breaking play, because it fosters the formation of three waves. Here, we mean that it allows for an immediate balanced and spacing positioning for fast forward progression by setting up spread out and staggered functional passing lanes in the big space<sup>12</sup>.

**TABLE 1.6. SUMMARY OF FIFTH BASIC GAME FORM (6v6, with a two-lined zone defence)**

	ATTACK	DEFENCE
<b>Team-based configuration</b>	Optimization of spacing, in width and depth Differentiation of attacking subphases in a large-sized court Development of attack play (3:2 → 2:3), for introduction of pivot's role	Optimization of quick retreat Two-lined zone defence approach (4:1) Zones/positions of defensive responsibility (advanced and backcourt defenders)
<b>Tactical focus</b>	Fast transition offence to exploit temporary numerical and spatial advantage by employing individual and supported fast break Building up attack against two-lined zone defence: – Working together with the pivot to create space and numerical advantage – Attack continuity and fast-ball circulation	Increasing defensive pressure in dangerous zones and ball oriented Constraining offensive solutions, specially between back players and pivot
<b>Interrelational skills</b> (including group-tactical actions)	Continued pressure play, integrating different group manoeuvres Switching-play Teamwork between exterior players and pivot Interior pressure play (creating positional advantage and drawing defenders) Basic screening manoeuvre	Redefinition of direct opponent due to attack switching and ball circulation
<b>Individual skills</b>	<b>Tactical</b> (principles and courses of action) To apply diverse fakes (with/without ball) to get advantage for oneself or teammates' benefit <b>With ball</b> – Getting opponent off balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to beat him/her (1v1) and to penetrate/threaten goal or</li> <li>• to attract/engage defenders to create spatial/numerical advantage for teammates</li> </ul> <b>Without ball</b> – Getting into spaces of great value to threaten goal – Finding space and positional advantage – Getting into an open shielding-receiving position by employing body (pivot)	Defensive positioning oriented toward attacker's <i>strong</i> /dangerous side Close and contact marking, blocking throwing arm To cover and close out the pivot Blocking (stopping throw at goal) Goalkeeping function (saving and launching fast break)
	<b>Technical-motor</b> Overhand pass (sideways) with increased distances Penetrating pass (e.g., bounce-pass) and wrist pass Diverse and positional shots (through-shots, side-shots, long range jump-shots, narrow angle-shots) Running start and approach/draw dribble Forward and backward moves (repositioning after a penetration attempt) Side-stepping	Basic defensive positioning and sliding (moving forward, back and to the side) Controlling/contesting opponent by employing legal body contact – tackling

**12.** Big space or great space means the space between the two areas of positional play, in other words, the central space of the court (middle field).

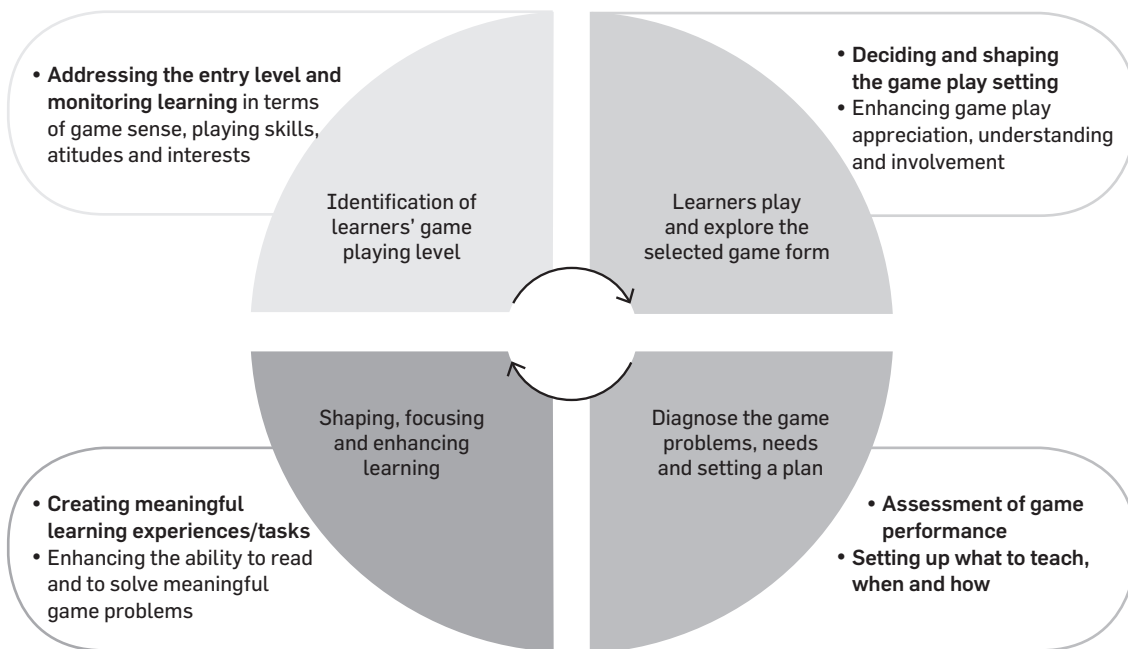


## 13. ADDRESSING INSTRUCTIONAL AND PLANNING ISSUES

### 1.3.1. THE HANDBALL GAME-BASED APPROACH (IN ACTION)

Effective handball teaching is not a recipe that has to be followed exactly; instead, it is a set of context-driven decisions and actions that has its core in the educator's competence, enthusiasm and energy to teach handball; in the ability to learn from his/her own experience through reflections; and, yet, in his/her love or passion for dealing with children and youngsters.

This chapter addresses and explores key elements when thinking of using a handball game-based approach in school settings – namely, issues related to planning, assessment, and implementation.



1.18. The big picture of Handball Game-Based Approach (in action).

#### ● Identification of learners' game playing level and readiness to meet a certain level of play complexity – *get started with handball*

Before starting, consider what you know about the learners (*e.g.*, age, interests, attitude, motor skills, prior experiences with team sports and handball). Remember, it's the **first day of handball**, do not disappoint the ones that are excited to get started, and surprise the apprehensive ones. Start the lesson with very simple and fun lead-up games, and, as soon as possible, play the handball game through a modified game form according to students' development level, number of learners, space and equipment available.



**TABLE 1.8. FRAMEWORKS FOR DIAGNOSING LEVEL OF GAME PLAY PERFORMANCE**

Major game problems	Shaping game play settings
If players struggle to retain ball possession and to progress toward goal when facing close defensive pressure; they never/rarely reach goal	→ <b>Level I – First Basic Game Form</b> Choose a game form based on numerical advantage, namely 4v4, where the goalkeeper joins the attack, creating out-numbered play (4v3) The 3v3 and 4v4 game form (plus goalkeepers) may also be adopted as long as no individual marking is applied or other kind of defensive organisation
If players are able to retain ball possession and to make forward progression to goal when closely marked, but still struggle getting unmarked without ball and beating defender with ball in wide open spaces to threaten goal If defenders are not able to avoid open scoring opportunities as a cause of lack of individual defensive skills	→ <b>Level I – Second Basic Game Form</b> Use a game form 3v3/4v4, plus goalkeepers, with deep and open defensive pressure, emphasising fast offensive transition and game play without ball  → Work on individual defensive responsibility and skills to exert pressure and to regain ball possession
If defenders are not able to keep deep and open pressuring defence, as a cause of proficient attacking play, enabling opponents easy ball progression and setting up open scoring opportunities in spaces of great value	→ <b>Level II – Third Basic Game Form</b> Bring into play a game form with a more closed and zone defence (4v4, plus goalkeepers), focusing on wide attacking play and breakthrough defence organisation (enhancing playing skills with ball)
If attackers are able to easily set up scoring opportunities when facing a zone defence, within a small-sized court, due to improvement of playing skills and physical development (as a consequence of normal growth and development around puberty)	→ <b>Level III – Fourth/Fifth Basic Game Form</b> Introduce a more complex game form in a bigger court size (i.e., large-sized or official), namely 5v5, plus goalkeepers. If a bigger court size is not available, the number of players must be reduced to 3v3, with or without using a pivot player, plus goalkeepers

**NOTE**

The educator's competence to modify and shape the game play settings to suit learners' needs is of great value for effective handball teaching. Therefore, the educator is challenged to recognise the impact of different game play configurations, and key playing constraints on learners' learning process in order to decide where to start or when to progress to a more complex game form.

### ● Identifying the game problems' causes, playing difficulties and limiting factors

As mentioned somewhere, the game is a unique source of experience, knowledge and game sense for both learners and educators. Learners develop their game appreciation and tactical awareness while experiencing enjoyment and fun. For the educators, these **game playing situations are the roots of pedagogic knowledge**, as they allow noting the *game problems* that the learners are not able to solve and to understand their causes. As the major problems always arise from minor problems, namely, relational and individual problems, it is the ultimate goal to clearly identify them when it comes to setting up teaching priorities. This judgment is essential to design challenging and meaningful learning tasks. With absolute beginners, it is easier to determine what needs to be improved. But, when working with challenging groups of adolescents and more experienced players, this might be a complex task, demanding considerable analysis and critical thinking.

### • Designing a lesson plan

In the lesson plan, it should specify concretely what is aimed at according to the teaching objectives, contents and which learning tasks should be addressed. Each lesson should make sense by itself, taking into account where the students are in terms of the big picture (unit plan). Based on our experience, we strongly recommend taking into consideration what has or not been reached in the previous handball lesson and what is pursued next. Also, a planned lesson should be designed and implemented in a flexible way.

Although the handball teaching context may differ completely from one place to another, or between classes of the same school, some guidelines are suggested.

It is, therefore, important to emphasise that the game form to be worked on should be one of the central elements, **and excessive imbalance between the learning tasks and the game itself should be avoided.**

### • Planning lesson guidelines

#### – OPENING THE LESSON

Focus on what is planned for the lesson and why it is relevant. Link the experienced game playing problems and challenges with the lesson outcomes (*i.e.*, what is expected of the learners to achieve).

#### – WARM-UP

Initiate with dynamic, enjoyable, and easy lead-up games. Strive to begin with inclusive activities that work on skills linked with learners' difficulties and lesson outcomes (for example, ball handling or chasing exercises).

✗ *Avoid activities that require students to stand still awaiting their turn (e.g., relays) or that may be eliminated – keep everybody involved.*

#### – DEVELOPMENT (LEARNING TASKS AND GAME PLAY)

The learning experiences entail game playing activities (basic game form and partial game forms) and game-like tasks focusing on game principles, relational skills (*i.e.*, inter-passing skills or group manoeuvres), action rules and/or motor-technical skills wishing to be addressed.

Wherever possible, a short interclass competition should be organised. The game play may take place at the beginning or at the end of the class, depending on instructional methods, day of plan unit, and available facilities.

#### – ENDING THE LESSON

An exciting and challenging activity might be addressed at the end of the lesson. Afterwards, learners might be questioned about what they enjoyed most, and what they learned. This period can also be used to check for learners' game understanding or recap critical playing principles and actions. Learners should also be involved in tidying the material. Cooling down is particularly important when students have theoretical lessons immediately after.

### Remember

- Be clear about how the learning activity/tasks align with the game problems and objectives.
- Ensure time and plenty of opportunities for effective practice, involvement and enjoyment.
- Scaffold learning experiences and game playing skills from simple to complex.
- Diversity and optimal challenge are key points for enjoyment, improvement and enhancement of game play creativity. Ensure *repetition without repeating*.
- Monitor players' learning and provide meaningful feedback.



**1.19. Avoid having queues of children waiting for their turn.** Instead, organise several different tasks for small groups of children.

### ***How to manage classes with a huge number of students and lack of space?***

The allocated time for handball practice, school conditions (i.e., limited space and equipment) and size of class are not always the most appropriate.

One of the great constraints of teaching handball in schools is brought about because of the lack of appropriate spaces. Taking into account one of the most critical situations, when we have, at the same time, three classes in a sport pavilion with equal or inferior dimensions of an official handball court, and each class being confined to 1/3 of the sports hall (a mini-handball court), it is fundamental that the educator be capable of organizing the activity in order not to discredit the quality of teaching. The existence of a restricted area for the goalkeeper has its implications in the area available for the class and the game. This entails more difficulty for older students and larger classes. In the latter case, we recommend that handball be taught only when there is enough indoor space for the class or it is possible to go outside and to use bigger fields. However, if you only have a small playground, we recommend a very creative approach to the situation, such as organizing a rotational system with several different learning tasks with few students per each (as exemplified in the lesson plan above) to guarantee a dynamic exercising and more learning opportunities.

### 1.3.3. ADDRESSING TEACHING STRATEGIES AND INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUES

Regardless of the educator's own teaching style, it is desirable that the educator be aware of the various instructional models and strategies, acknowledging how to use it depending upon the content to be taught, the outcomes to be achieved and development level of learners. For instance, it might be more effective to use a more direct or reproductive approach (mirror and replication), if the outcome is to learn the shooting technique, or a more guided discovery approach may be needed if the aim is to learn how to solve and exploit numerical advantage situations (e.g., 2v1 and 3v2).

#### **When starting the lesson**

The participants' attention should be drawn towards the central objectives and contents of the session, contextualizing their interest and utility in improving game play competence or skills. These moments can also be used to verify acquired knowledge, questioning about the possibilities of action and behaviour to be adopted in certain game settings. These talks should be brief, succinct and clear. Keep in mind that the initial intervention should capture learners' interest, fostering emotional and mental engagement.

#### **When introducing learning tasks**

Clear understanding about what is intended to be done, achieved and how are absolutely critical points for effective initial instruction. The objective(s) and the actions to be carried out in each task should be clearly set forth, contextualizing their application to experienced game situations; the purpose is to guide the students' efforts and to increase the understanding of a problem, how to solve it (what, when to do that).

Since the **partial game forms** allow focusing on specific game problems, the instruction should lead learners to read the situational play (what clues to consider and why), guiding them to understand what to do from an individual perspective (action rules) and more suitable joint efforts to deal with the opposition. During this presentation, possible courses of action may be slowly simulated focusing on certain situational contingencies where the most likely opposing actions should be exemplified, questioning the students before producing the most appropriate solutions.

Specifically in the **individual game-based tasks** (i.e., individual tactics-techniques), the transfer and assimilation of the information is advantageous if accompanied by a demonstration, as rigorous as possible, of the intended motor pattern/technical ability, stressing the criteria for its use (situational constraints) and key or critical features. In some cases, possible adaptations of the referenced motor patterns can be presented, adjusting motor exigency or complexity to students with distinct levels of skills.

Practice shows that, within a short learning time (like we usually have at most of the schools), it's really problematic to change a poor throwing technique with youngsters, so it is essential to learn how to throw correctly since the very beginning. In this case, the **technical freeze method** may be helpful, like we are showing in the picture. In these cases, a more direct instructional approach, with more informative and prescriptive feedbacks, is required.



1.21

**Demonstration** is an excellent way to transfer the intended information and, eventually, will speed up learning in the sphere of technical skill or tactical behaviour. Essentially, the demonstration allows, objectively and rapidly, the creation of a visual model of the intended motor pattern (in a technical skill) or of tracking dynamic changing of situational constraints (position of defenders, colleagues and the ball, for example) in order to seek appropriate decisions and actions.

**Feedback** is unequivocally important in the success of pedagogical intervention. However, in games like Handball, the production of cor-

rect and useful information is not always a simple task, since it depends on the capacity to analyse and judge the game's actions in the context of great uncertainty and complexity. In other words, the capacity to *read* game settings is considered fundamental, by selecting and processing pertinent information in an appropriate manner. This process demands sound knowledge on the internal behavioural<sup>14</sup> logic of the game to be taught.

During **game play**, stand back, concentrate and carefully observe learners' performance before making any correction. Avoid stopping game play; instructions/feedbacks should be provided mainly during natural stoppages or while playing. Whenever absolutely needed, use the **freeze method**. **Tactical freeze** should be used to focus on teamwork, tactical awareness (e.g., players' position and operative moving), and can benefit from guided questioning about the faced game problems and how to solve them (e.g., where, when and how to move to create an opening).

**Questioning** is one of the great instructional strategies, particularly in games where a variety of situational constraints and open-ended tasks are a constant, attempting to guide and help in the development of game reading competence and tactical reasoning.

**Example of possible questioning to help attackers when they are struggling to solve numerical advantage around goal, being unaware of how to make space and create an effective threat to the opponent's goal**

**Question:** How does one make space?

**Answer:** By adopting a balanced, offensive spacing positioning.

**Question:** What does one do when being out of ball possession – in a supporting role?

**Answer:** Be wide open and being prepared to receive ball to attack the goal.

**Question:** When does one start running to receive and to effectively threaten goal?

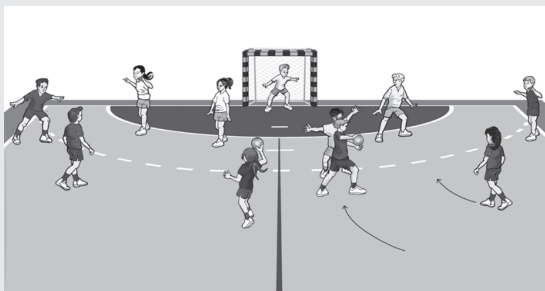
**Answer:** At the moment ball handler is releasing the ball.

**Question:** What does one do when being uncovered and having the ball in front of goal?

**Answer:** Shoot!

**Question:** If a defender is pressuring ball possessor, what does one do?

**Answer:** Pass!



1.22

**Question:** Towards whom should one pass the ball?

**Answer:** Toward an open receiver and the side where there is numerical advantage.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Give the students time to experience game settings in a logic of trial and error**, where the discovery (more or less guided) of paths of action is one of the essential instructional strategies for the development of tactical reasoning.

**Carefully think about the type and frequency of verbal interventions**, especially when this implies interrupting a game.

**Develop the capacity to detect performance errors** (learn to observe the beginners' game) and identify their causes on pain of the interventions being counterproductive and quite ineffective. The intervention should exist to correct the limiting factor of the performance, whether it is of a cognitive, tactical, technical or motor nature.

<sup>14</sup>. Here we mean, the interrelational game playing actions performed within a team performing against another team with opposite goals.

## 14.

## SHAPING THE RULES TO ENHANCE LEARNING

The rules set the universal parameters of the game, determine the degree of freedom, the players' boundaries concerning their behaviour and action (Bayer, 1983).

**Knowledge of key rules is decisive to understand how to shape the rules within the teaching process.**

This chapter provides a brief description of the rules of the game that the author considers of fundamental importance for an educator to know. Recommendations, interpretations, or adjustments of those rules are proposed based upon the learners' age, level of expertise and school conditions. Therefore, in this approach, the adoption of basic game forms with shaped rules (Table 1.14), which will be discussed in detail in the context of each level of learning, is suggested. The full Rules of the Game can be seen in the *IX Rules of the Game, Indoor Handball, 2016*.

**TABLE 1.14.** SUMMARY OF THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES MATCHING THE VARIOUS BASIC GAME FORMS

LEVEL OF PRACTICE	BASIC GAME FORMS	NUMBER OF PLAYERS per team/court size	BALL SIZE	PLAYING TIME
LEVEL IV: ADVANCED <sup>+</sup>	Full game	7v7 Official court size	According to regulations	2 x 25' (10)
III. ADVANCED	BGF4 and BGF5	6v6 Official or large-sized court	1 or 2	2 x 25' (10)
II. INTERMEDIATE	BGF3	5v5 Small or medium-sized court	1	2 x 20' (5) 4 x 10' (1+5+1)
I. BEGINNER	BGF1 and BGF2	4v4 and 5v5 Reduced court size	0 or 1	10' 4 x 8' (1+5+1)

Note: Size 0 – adapted as needed (47–49 cm); IHF Size 1 – 50–52 cm and 290–330 g; IHF Size 2 – 54–56 cm and 325–375g.

### Let's have an authentic handball game

The handball game should be designed to foster learners to feel the game and achieve success from the first day. For most beginners, having fun, achievement and challenge are the key features for their engagement and commitment to learning.

The following are some of the key rules to modify in order to promote learning and involvement, but without misrepresenting the game's internal logic, as mentioned somewhere:

- Playing court and number of players per team.
- The goal and scoring.
- Playing time.
- The ball and playing the ball.
- Defending, dealing with opponents and punishments.
- Goalkeeping.
- Starting the game and throws.
- Refereeing.



game and make decisions, as there are fewer paths of action, interplaying possibilities and, in a certain way, less *confusion* in the game. In this way, each game form is designed to meet learners' level of competence and to open space for game experience and learning.

Remember, the adjustments of the number of players should necessarily match court size, amongst other needed adaptations (e.g., ball size, defensive constraints).

As a general teaching principle, the educator should introduce playing self-applied routines promoting rotation of playing roles or positions. Here, the idea is to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to experience different roles or to play at different positions (e.g., to play as a goalkeeper).

## THE GOAL AND SCORING

The goals on an official court are placed on opposite ends: they are 3 metres wide per 2 metres high and they are directly defended by the goalkeepers. A goal is scored only when the entire ball has completely crossed the goal line, between the goal posts.

A goal may be achieved directly from any throw, except when executing a *goalkeeper throw* and the ball accidentally enters his/her own goal.

## SHAPING GOALS AND SYSTEM OF POINTS/SCORING

Our recommendation is to adjust the official goals (Figure 1.30) or to replace them by smaller ones, according to the players' stature and maturity. The strategy is to make the confrontation between shooter and goalkeeper balanced or fair. When using an official goal with very small children, slow and lob shots (high arc) over goalkeeper's head are commonly observed, without having any possibility for the goalkeepers to reach the ball. To avoid this problem, the height of the goal can be reduced with a simple rubber band attached to the goalposts (see Figure 1.30). Remember, there are lots of strategies to create goals easily (Figures 1.31, 1.32 and 1.33), as simple cones (or similar objects) can represent goals.

Special rules can be used to help integrate students with a lower level of performance and to promote the involvement of all team players in the game play. For example, the same player is not allowed to score twice in a row and/or the first goal of each team player is given two points.

Also, special shooting constraints can be introduced for students with high-level knowledge and playing skills, such as being mandatory to shoot with the non-dominant arm. The idea is to use playing constraints that are still challenging and effective for these students' learning or skills development.



**1.30.** Adjustment of the official handball goal with reduced height, so a goal is scored when the ball enters goal below the adapted horizontal crossbar.



**1.34. Ball tailored to the size of the player's hand** – the player is able to drop and catch it again while the ball is in the air.



**1.35. Oversized ball** – the player drops the ball, but he/she is not able to catch it again while the ball is in flight.

## PLAYING WITH BALL AND PASSIVE PLAY

Because of the relatively small ball size and weight, which facilitates gripping, it is mainly **played with one hand** (i.e., one-handed throwing). The player in possession of the ball is allowed to **hold the ball during a maximum of 3 seconds, taking up to three (3) steps with ball**<sup>17</sup>, and to dribble.

### It's allowed

- To play with the ball using any part of the body, except with feet or legs below the knees.
- To throw, catch, push, or hit the ball (including when kneeling, sitting or lying on the floor).
- To hold the ball for a maximum of 3 seconds, also when lying on the floor.
- To take a maximum of 3 steps with the ball (Figure 1.36).
- To move the ball from one hand to the other.
- To dribble (moving and bouncing the ball repeatedly with one hand) or to roll the ball on the floor.

### It is not allowed

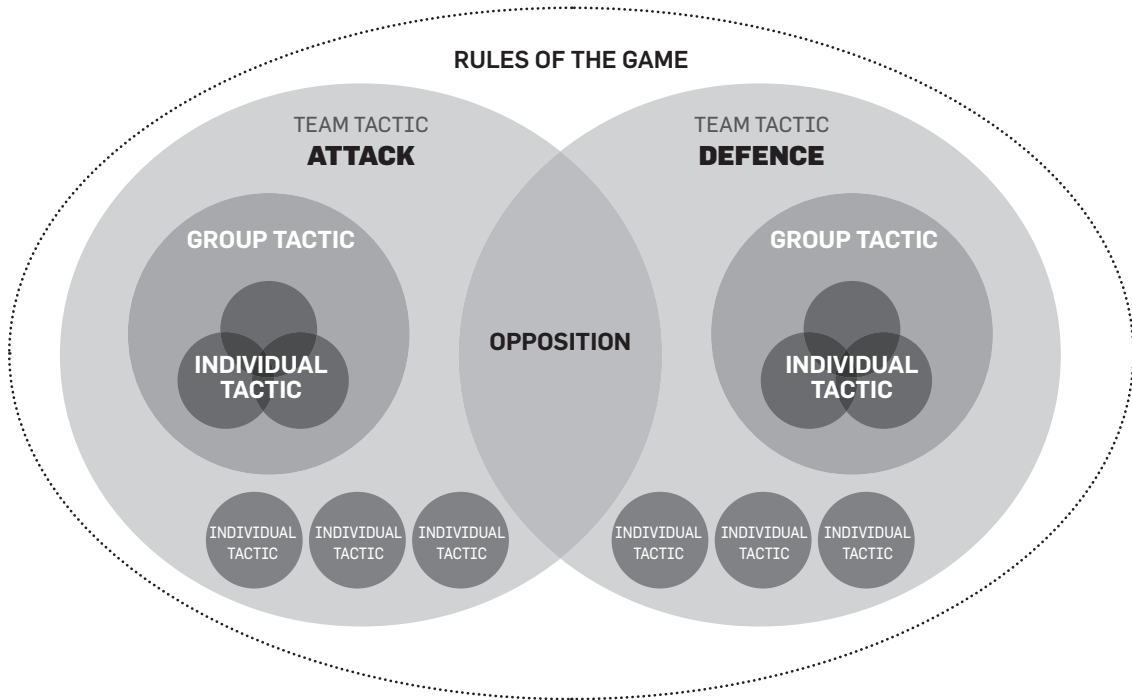
- To touch the ball more than once, unless it has, meanwhile, touched the floor, another player, a goalpost or the crossbar.
- To dribble the ball, to catch it, and to dribble it again.
- To fall over the ball.
- To throw the ball against an opponent (e.g., foot or leg below the knee).

### CONSEQUENCE

**Free throw** for  
the opposing  
team

<sup>17</sup> **Note:** the interpretation of this rule in handball is fundamentally different from basketball.





2.1. Brief overview of handball's functional structure.

The player's visible behaviour is the outcome of the ability to read the various situational clues and make a decision, according to his/her motor and technical skills. The decision underlies the purpose intended to be reached, *i.e.*, the tactical intention, which sometimes is not achieved, as a result of the presence of the opponent or due to difficulties in communicating with teammates.

In this chapter, we approach the basic content of handball, which is helpful for understanding the tactical game analysis discussed on each teaching level.



2.2. Levels of tactical organisation.

receiver, and suddenly attacking the path line. By foreseeing ball possessor's actions and suddenly reducing potential receivers, they can force slowing down the game rhythm, to break ball circulation and attacking continuity. To be effective, the defenders must move and act in a very flexible and adaptive way. This means to adjust positioning, switching roles/positions, to fall back or to re-group quickly according to situational constraints, while keeping a balanced and dynamic structure, particularly in the *conflict zone*.

## 2.3. BREAKING DOWN THE GAME PHASES

The game is composed of sequentially occurring phases that depend on having the ball or not: **attack** and **defence**. These phases include subphases that tend to occur interdependently; however, it is not mandatory to go through all of them (Table 2.3).

Formally, we consider that the attack, or attacking phase, begins immediately after regaining ball possession. However, dynamic and highly pressuring defensive behaviour is rather frequent, as the priority is to force the opponent's offensive mistakes and get the ball back to counterattack. This means that, even when not having ball possession, the defence is in an *attack mode*, attempting to take control of the game, i.e., forcing attacking team to become more reactive rather than proactive (Connolly and White, 2017).

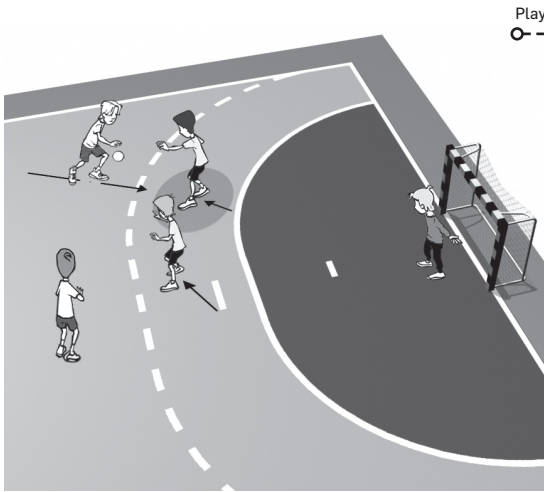
During the preparation of the attack against a positional defence (or a defence organised with a system), a balanced collective positioning is important, enabling fast retreat to defence.

**TABLE 2.3. ATTACK VS. DEFENCE**

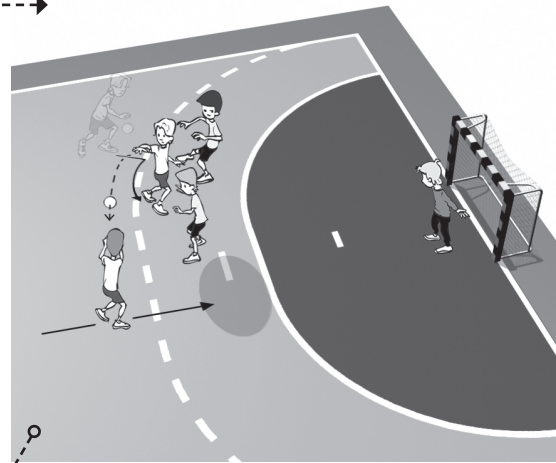
ATTACK		DEFENCE	
Subphases	<b>Fast transition to attack</b>	↔	<b>Fast transition to defend</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast throw-off</li> <li>• Fast break or counterattack (simple or supported)</li> <li>• Extended fast break or fast attack</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick retreat               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Obstructing or detaining the opponent's fast throw-off</li> <li>– Stopping, slowing down or delaying the fast break</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Temporary defence</li> </ul>
	<b>Attack against positional defence</b> (or build-up attack with a system)	↔	<b>Positional defence</b> (with a system)

Having regained the ball, the team can move rapidly to the attacking field trying to surprise (counter-attack) the opposing team, which is returning to its defensive field. The transition from defence to attack can be very fast/aggressive or slow, depending on several factors, such as team tactics and opposing team strengths.

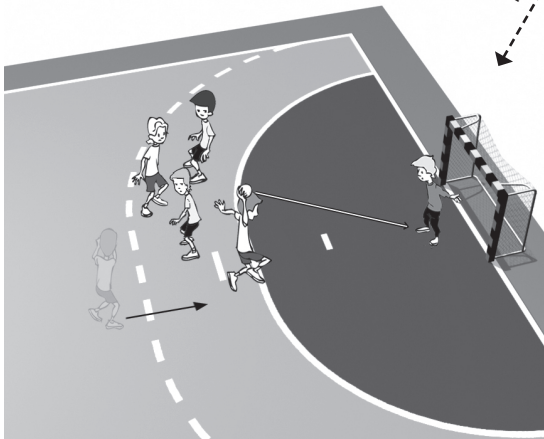
Fast transition aims to create a scoring situation with a significant numerical and positional, temporal-spatial advantage. There are distinct forms of fast transition depending on the starting conditions (timing, place and form of regaining the ball, empty space, positioning of teammates and opponents) and further development (tactical structure and solutions undertaken).



2.18. Action of approaching the defender.

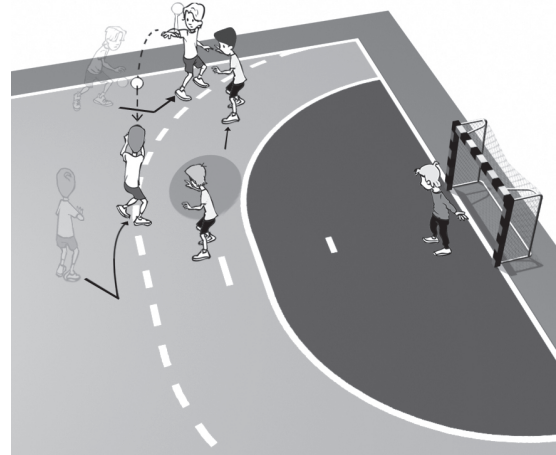


2.19. Action of attacking the gap between defenders, forcing the next defender to move out of his/her position (1v2), creating an opening for a teammate.

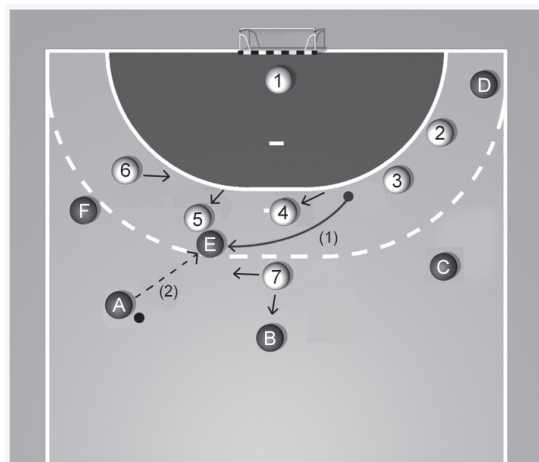


2.20. Receiver must run into the empty space trying to receive the break-through pass and, then, takes a penetration-shot.

The **engaging** and **drawing** can also be applied in width in order to create space for the benefit of a teammate and to constrain defensive help (Figure 2.21).



2.21. Receiver must run into the empty space trying to receive the pass and shoot.



**2.28.** Performing a post-up.

(1) The pivot (E) moves towards the ball to provide support to the ball handler positioned outside the defence. To post-up, the pivot has his/her back to the goal, shielding the defender behind his/her body, so he/she can receive a pass easily.

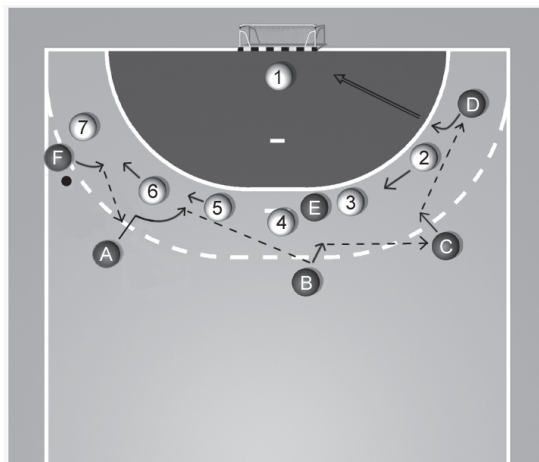
(2) The left back (A) passes the ball to the pivot (E) that may attack the goal directly or continue the game, giving the ball back to the same teammate or to another one nearby.

### CONTINUED PRESSURE PLAY

The main idea of **continued pressure play** arises from joint individual attempts of breaking through/penetrating with ball into the gaps between defenders and effective ball circulation. This manoeuvre can be performed by only two pressuring players or involving several players in a more collective coordinated play, even involving the pivot.

The purpose of the **continued pressure play from the exterior** is to create a situation where the attackers outnumber the defenders or push them so hard that a good scoring opportunity is built.

The starting player should be moving while receiving the ball or starts the action of approaching the defender, dribbling into the space between defenders and, if required, using misdirection to beat the direct opponent and break through into the defensive space. If the defenders positioned nearby make a sideways move to help their teammate, closing down the gap and the chance to shoot is lost, the attacker with the ball should pass it immediately. Therefore, a new attempt of breakthrough should be made by the receiver. These joint individual attempts of breaking through should be carried out until a situation of numerical or spatial advantage (1v1, with wide space) is achieved.



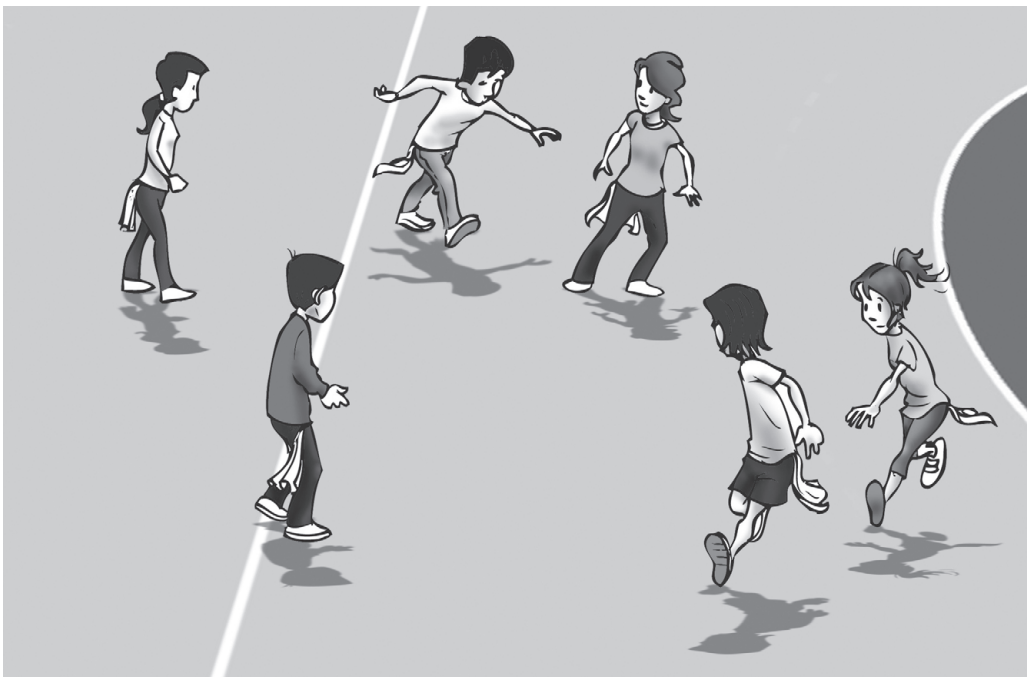
**2.29.** Continued pressure play performed by the exterior players creating numerical and spatial advantage.

In this playing situation, the left wing plays one-on-one, performs a successful attack towards inward gap, threatening in order to draw the next defender. All players are required to move fast when receiving the ball, ensuring workable space but relatively close to the defender in order to exploit and, if possible, to increase the advantage. Therefore, the penetrating ball handler (F) must wait for the backup defender (6) and adjust the timing of the pass, otherwise, the defender will have time to recover the position and the attacking pressure loses its effectiveness.

**TASK 3** [CHASING GAMES | MOTOR AGILITY]**TAIL TAG GAME**

**OBJECTIVES:** To play a competitive game; to improve visual and locomotor skills (running, evading, faking, changes of pace and direction).

**DESCRIPTION:** This game can be played on an enclosed area of almost any shape. Each player tucks a piece of ribbon (coloured band or vest) into the back of his/her waistband and leaves a ribbon end out (*tail*). They all run/move freely in the area, trying to steal as many *tails* as possible and avoid losing their own. Grabbed *tails* must immediately be tucked into the back of the *robber's* waistband. The player who wins is the one who has more *tails*.



*Tail tag game.*

**TEACHING FOCUS**

- Avoiding opponents by dodging and moving away.
- Chasing, faking attack, and grabbing opponent's *tail*.

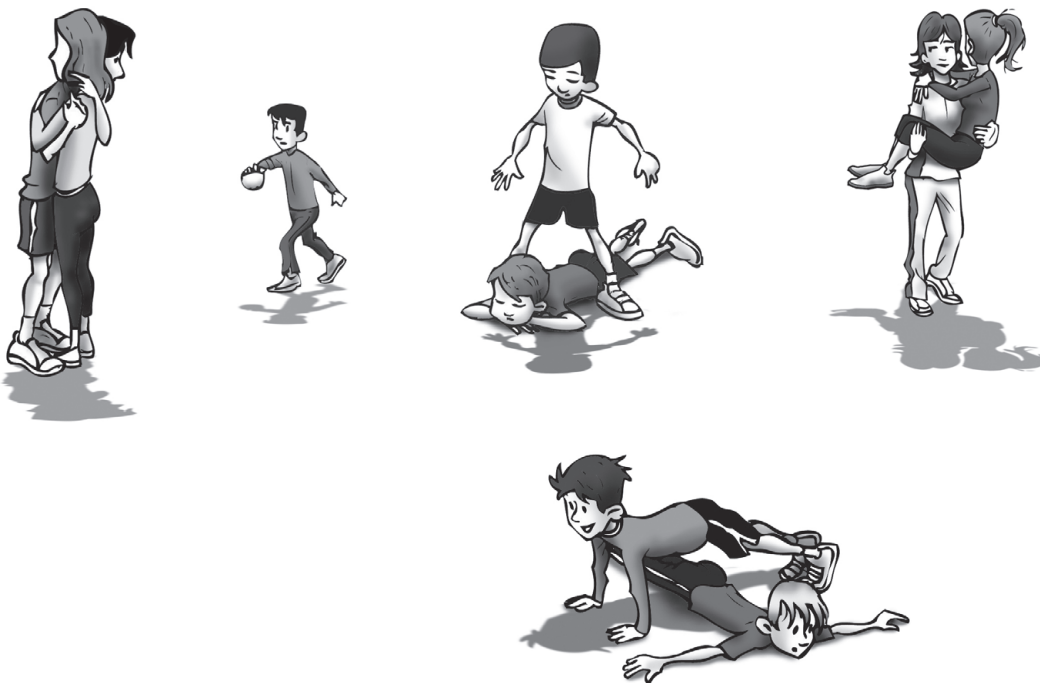
**VARIANTS**

- One third of the class are taggers and have no *tail*. The remaining players (fugitives) move, avoiding the loss of their own *tail*. If the tagger grasps a *tail*, the fugitive loses a *tail*, he/she must perform a task (for example, two jumps) before he/she can steal another *tail*.
- Split the class into two teams, each team uses different coloured *tails*. The game ends when one of the teams loses all its *tails*.

**TASK 5** [CHASING GAMES | LOCOMOTOR SKILLS]**CHASING GAME WITH MUTUAL HELP**

**OBJECTIVES:** To play a competitive and cooperative game; to improve motor agility and ball manipulating skills.

**DESCRIPTION:** The game is restricted to a specific area. One player is appointed as the *hunter* (tagger). The remaining ones, *fugitives* (uneven number) spread throughout the game court, which must be proportionate to the number of participants. They can avoid being *hunted* by adopting a specific position as pairs (according to educator's instructions). Once caught, the *fugitive* exchanges role with the *hunter*.

**VARIANTS**

- The *hunter* moves with a ball in hand, which he/she uses to tag players who stand alone. There are many positions that can be adopted (see pictures).
- Task constraints can be introduced to enforce more dynamism, e.g., when two players are holding hands and, if a third element arrives, the element located at the opposite side must leave and becomes a running player or all three have to run.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Change positions throughout the exercise, starting with the simplest and easiest ones. Stimulate cooperation and mutual help, i.e., strengthening the idea that they must leave their pair and help a colleague who is alone and at risk. Highlight that the group's aim is preventing any colleague from being *hunted*.

**TASK 13** [CHASING GAMES | DRIBBLING SKILLS]**BALL STEALING AND DRIBBLE GAME**

**OBJECTIVES:** To learn to retain possession of ball by dribbling toward open spaces, while keeping visual control of opponents.

**DESCRIPTION:** The game is restricted to a specific area. Form two groups, one-third move without ball (being the *ball robbers*), and two-thirds are dribblers, trying to avoid having ball stolen. Players without ball (*robbers*) try to steal a ball from one of those who are dribbling. If the *robber* steals a ball, he/she becomes a dribbler, and the loser becomes a *ball robber*. Players who voluntarily stop dribbling are considered *hunted* and must exchange roles with *ball robber*.



The *robber* is stealing a ball.

**TEACHING FOCUS**

- Dribbler moves away from defenders without losing the ball.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Rules must be adapted according to bouncing proficiency, *e.g.*, the dribbling rule can be breached when students find it difficult to control it, namely, when they lose control of the ball without being under pressure. Do not allow intentional physical contact during the act of ball stealing.

**VARIANT**

- Robbers hold hands while moving.





**TASK 15** [CHASING GAMES | INTER-PASSING SKILLS/DRIBBLING]**PASSING BALL-TAG GAME**

**OBJECTIVES:** To develop passing and catching skills while running (no opposition) and cooperation strategy; to exercise *lead passes* and to understand the concept.

**DESCRIPTION:** The game is restricted to a specific area. Form groups of four elements with one ball. One of the attacking pairs has ball and follows the other pair (running holding hands), trying to chase them while passing the ball. Taggers cannot take more than three (3) steps holding the ball, before either passing or tagging. Pairs swap roles if one of the passing-players tags the runners (obtaining one point) or they drop the ball (no point is achieved). The winning pair is the one who scores more.



Two players passing to one another chase a group of runners.

**TEACHING FOCUS****Attacker with ball**

– Looks for the best decision: close to target, he/she advances and reaches the goal; when far from target, he/she executes a *catchable pass* and continues moving after the runner.

**Attacker without ball (receiver)**

– Runs to catch the ball, as close as possible to the runner, and maintains visual contact with passer.

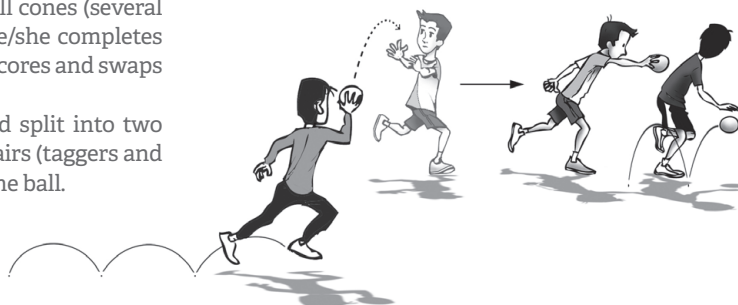
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Adjust the game area or restrain the fugitive's moves according to players' skill level. Reducing the playing area facilitates the chasers' task.

**ADVANCED TASKS**

**1.** Form groups of three elements; two are chasers and move while passing ball to each other. The aim is to touch the fugitive with the ball. Fugitive moves while dribbling. An extra task can be added to the bouncing-runner, such as go around or touch all cones (several spread over the game area), and if he/she completes the task before being tagged, he/she scores and swaps roles with one of the taggers.

**2.** Form groups of four elements and split into two pairs, and each one has a ball. Both pairs (taggers and fugitives) have to run while passing the ball.



Tagger receives ball and tags the bouncing-runner.



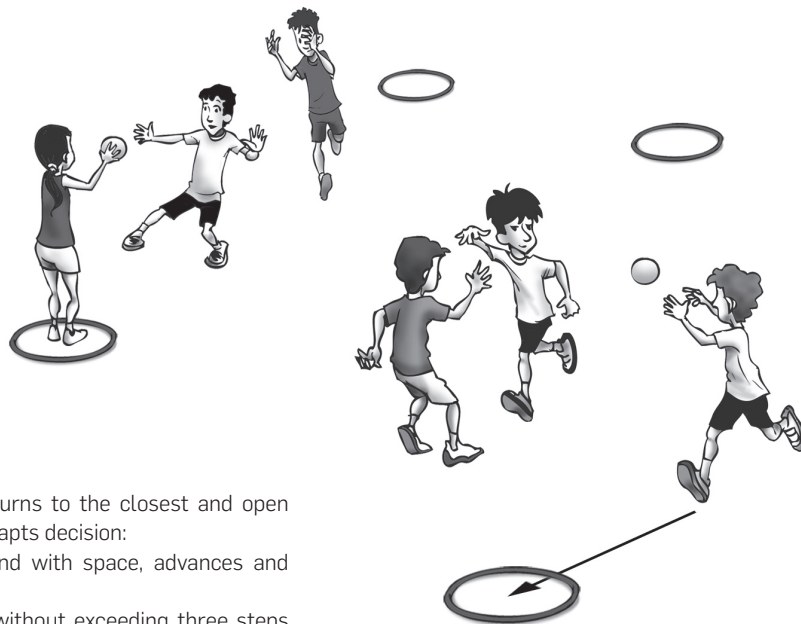
**TASK 33** [MAINTAINING BALL | RELATIONAL SKILLS IN OPEN SPACE]**POSSESSION GAME TWO-ON-ONE**

(2v1, with progression)

**OBJECTIVES:** To develop inter-passing skills (passer-catcher) to maintain ball possession, and to move ball towards zones of progression/scoring.

**Attack (with ball):** to improve ability to read the position of targets, teammate and defender, and to learn to choose when to progress/attack or to release ball; **(without ball)** to learn to move to create an opening to receive ball.

**DESCRIPTION:** Constitute groups of three players. Two players become attackers and one a defender (game play 2v1). Attackers obtain one point if they score (touching with the ball the inside of hoop/tire) and pass again, for example, six consecutive times in target zones. Teams cannot score twice in a row in the same target zone. Define ways for rotation (defender/attacker) according to task success (for example, whoever scores for the sixth time remains an attacker). In case of interception/recovery of the ball by the defender, there is also a swap of functions.

**TEACHING FOCUS****Attacker with ball**

- After receiving, he/she turns to the closest and open target, reads play and adapts decision:
  - Near/close to target and with space, advances and scores.
  - With space, advances without exceeding three steps and uses one bounce when appropriate.
  - Without opposition or far from target, passes ball.
- Executes lead pass (*catchable pass*).

**Attacker without ball**

- Moves away from ball handler and uses cutting moves to create an open passing lane.
- Moves to empty spaces oriented toward passer.
- Avoids being aligned with defender.

**Defender**

- Moves following ball.
- Places him/herself between ball handler and target (goal).

**PROGRESSIONS**

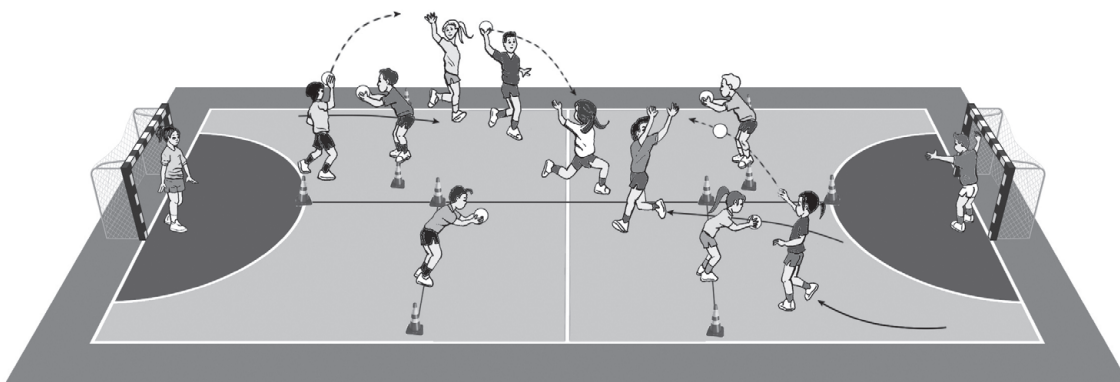
- Reduced number of spread-out targets (hoops, tires or markers).
- No dribbling is allowed, to ensure that players focus on passing and moving without ball.

**VARIANTS**

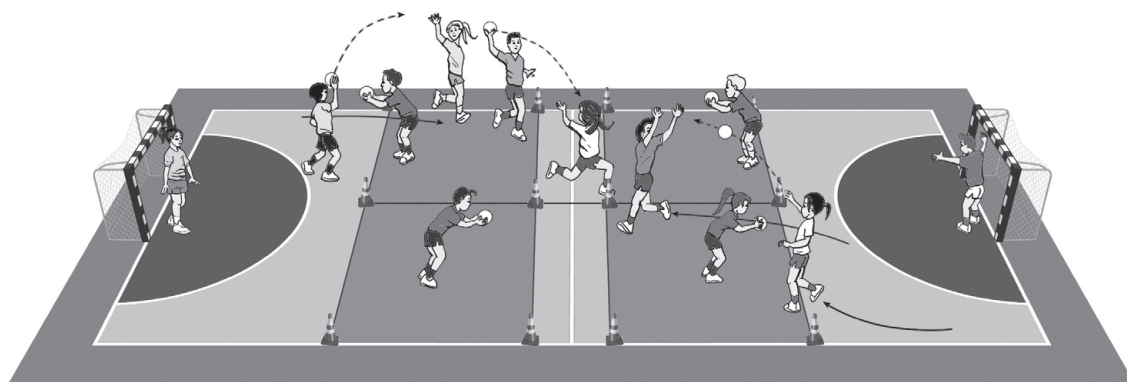
- Game 2v2, in which defenders play holding hands, facilitating attackers' actions.
- Use of field/court lines instead of tires/hoops.

**VARIANT 1. GAME PLAY 2v1 IN MARKED LINES (2v1 → 2v1, in side corridor)**

Various playing areas are organised (marked with two cones), as many as possible, in depth dimension of court. One player, whose action is restricted to the imaginary line that unites the two cones, defends each marked zone. In case of ball stealing (interception) or loss of ball (for example, ball falls), an immediate swap is made between defender and attacker who lost ball.

**VARIANT 2. GAME PLAY 2v1 IN CONFINED AREAS (2v1 → 2v1, in side corridor)**

Different playing areas (in side or central corridor) are organised in squares (marked with four cones) in longitudinal direction of court (one or two corridors). Each square is defended by one player, whose action is restricted to the space in question. In case of ball interception, immediate swap proceeds between defender and attacker who lost the ball.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

In a first phase, defender's action should be restrained by introducing obligatory non-playing ball transport with both hands, maintaining upper limbs flexed and in frontal position (as in the pictures). Contact with adversary should be avoided.

**TASK 39** [SHOOTING | OVERHAND THROWING MOTION]**THROWING ON THE GROUND/FLOOR**

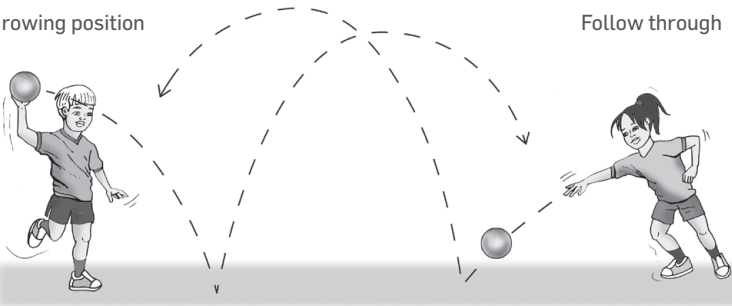
**OBJECTIVES:** To learn the overhand throwing motion; to exercise forming arm-throwing position.

**DESCRIPTION:** Work with groups of two face to face with one or two balls. The players should throw balls onto the ground/floor with technical correction and maximum strength (bouncing as high as possible).

**PROGRESSION:**

1. Two-handed overhead throw standing still, two feet on ground/floor, then on either foot.
2. One-handed overhand throw standing still with two feet on ground/floor, then, on the opposite foot to the throwing arm (i.e. right-handed thrower = left foot slightly forward).
3. Two and one-handed overhead/overhand throw standing still, with different number of steps before throwing (one, two or three steps).
4. Two- and one-handed overhead/overhand jumping throw, with different number of steps before throwing (one, two or three steps), and one- or two-foot take off.

Throwing position



Follow through

**TEACHING FOCUS****Arm throwing position** (single-handed throw of ball)

- Step forward onto the opposite foot to the throwing arm (i.e., right-handed thrower = left foot slightly forward).
- Torso twists back along with high, ample back movement of throwing arm. At the same time, the elbow bends and the wrist turns ball (pronation movement), so that the back of the hand faces the throwing direction.

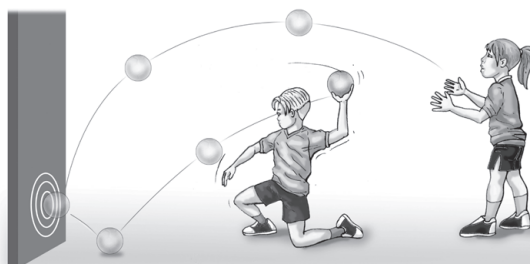
**Throwing motion** (ball release)

- At ball release, torso twists forward, followed by the elbow, wrist, hand and fingers.
- Ball released at shoulder height.

Shooting constraints, such as marker (lying-down cone) on the floor/ground, can be used to help executer to step onto the opposite foot to his/her throwing arm (as in the picture).

**COMPLEMENTARY TASK**

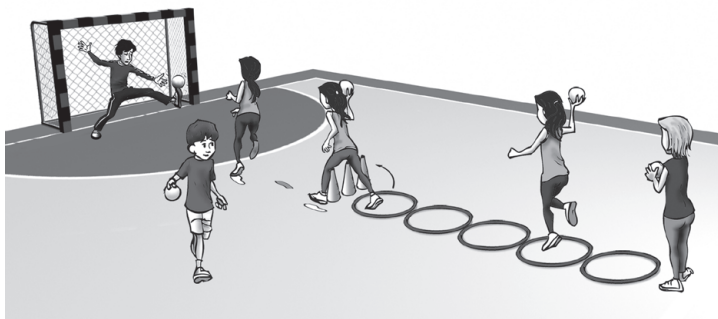
Throwing exercise against wall, intending to correct arm-throwing position and motion.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Reinforce importance of correctly positioning arm to prepare throwing.



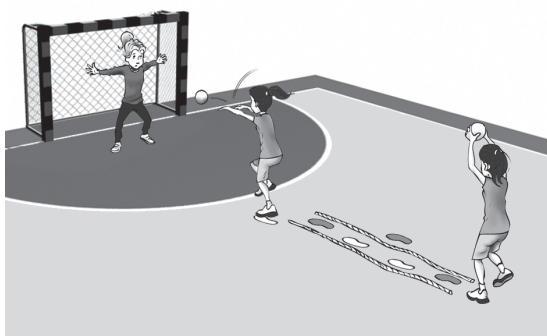
## EXERCISING



## TEACHING FOCUS

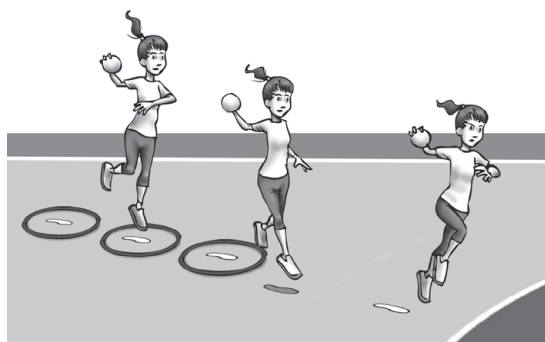
*Adjust number, type of steps and rhythm relative to moves, actions and throwing techniques*

- Footwork with raised throwing arm or with two hands above head.
- Contact-impulse with foot contrary to throwing arm.
- Alternate curved running trajectory to right and left before throwing.



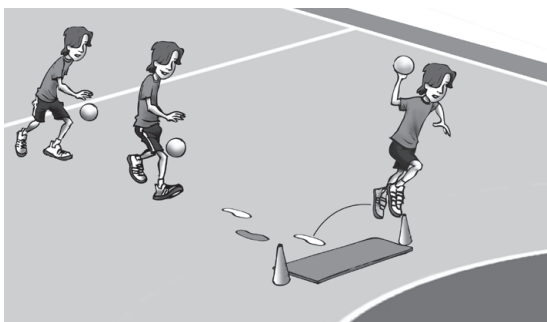
*To coordinate moves between upper or lower limbs*

- Throwing with one or two hands.
- Diverse footwork with signs/marks on the floor (e.g., rope, cones, court lines).



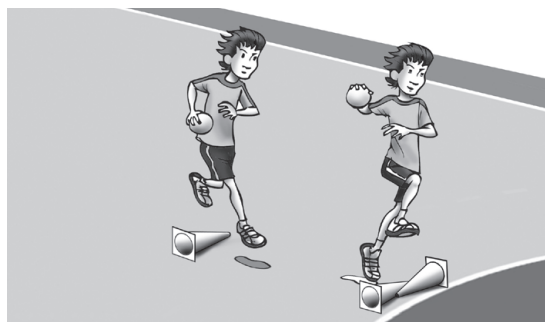
*Sequence of different moves with three-step approach and jump throw*

- Footwork with raised throwing arm.



*Sequence of bounce-dribble, using cycle of two or three steps before throwing (standing still, running or jumping)*

- Adjust timing of bouncing interruption to prepare throwing.



*Coordination of steps*

- Standing still on two feet in front of goal, advancing cycle of steps before throwing on one foot.
- Sequence of actions with the first foot before the first marker (1st step) and second and third steps passing over the second marker.
- Contact-impulse with foot contrary to throwing arm.

**TASK 46** [ATTACKING THE GOAL | INTER-PASS/SET UP AN OPEN SHOT]**GROUP PROGRESSION****UNDER PRESSURE, IN OPEN SPACE** (2v1 delayed, plus Gk)

**OBJECTIVES:** To develop inter-passing skills (passer-catcher) aiming for fast progression of the ball to shoot, avoiding the defensive opposition; to execute fast defensive recovery to protect goal.

**DESCRIPTION:** Constitute groups of three elements, two attackers and one defender. One ball per group (if possible). Court is divided lengthwise into two corridors and the groups form a queue in each of them. The exercise starts with both attackers positioning ahead of the defender (he/she is delayed). When the attackers start to pass the ball, the defender may run and try to intercept ball or avoid goal-throwing attempt. A point is achieved if attackers score. After score attempt, the group moves to the other corridor and exchanges positions/roles. Define rotation rules between goalkeepers and court players based on success.

**TEACHING FOCUS****Attacker with ball**

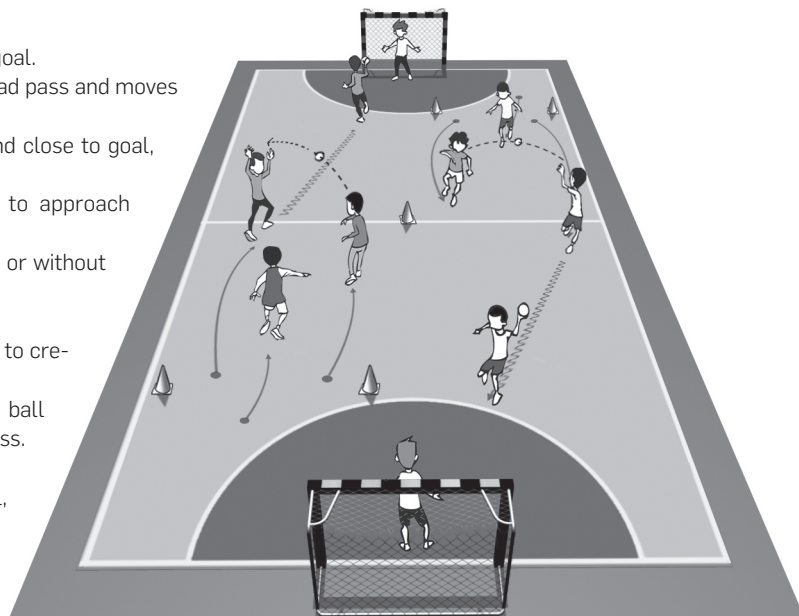
- Receives ball and squares up to goal.
- Distant from goal, executes a lead pass and moves forward.
- Without defensive opposition and close to goal, advances and shoots.
- Uses cycle of steps correctly to approach goal.
- Throws at goal on the run (with or without jumping) in a balanced manner.

**Attacker without ball**

- Makes quick run (after passing) to create passing lane ahead.
- Moves to catch ball, adjusting ball catching according to type of pass.

**Defender**

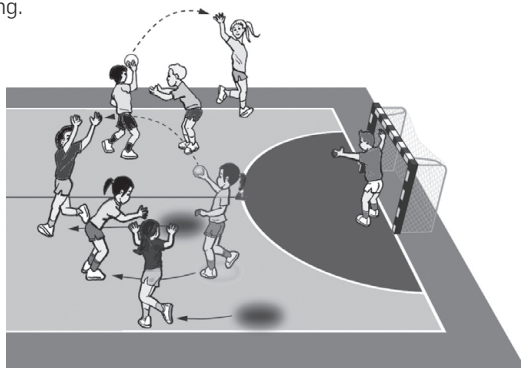
- Runs quickly to protect goal, attempting to face ball attacker.

**ADVANCED TASK**

Limit number of passes to increase the running speed and fast passing.

**VARIANT**

- The exercise starts with both attackers and defender aligned. The defender is the initiator, being positioned in the middle of attackers and holding the ball. When the defender releases ball towards one of the attackers, the defender may run and try to intercept ball or avoid goal-throwing attempt. A point is achieved if attackers score. After a score attempt, the group moves to the other corridor and exchanges positions/roles. If needed, the defender has an obligatory task (such as running and touching the outer goal line or ending line/cone) before being allowed to defend.





**TASK 61** [FAST PROGRESSION | OPEN SHOOTING]**ONE-ON-ONE WITHOUT BALL****IN DEPTH AND OPEN SPACE** (1v1, with thrower)**OBJECTIVES****Attack:** to practice progression by dribbling and open scoring skills (1vGk).

**DESCRIPTION:** Constitute groups of two elements/players. Two groups assume the functions of goalkeepers and throwers. The first group of the queue passes the ball to the thrower and both players advance in the direction of the goal, disputing the conquest of the ball that is thrown by passer to one of the players (without revealing his/her intention). The player who catches the ball assumes the function of the attacker and the other of the defender.

**TEACHING FOCUS****Attacker with ball**

- Adjusts speed and running in order to conquer ball possession.
- Once in possession of ball, progresses dribbling up to goal, avoiding defender's action.
- Interrupts dribbling in a zone close to the goal-area line, exploiting cycle of steps to shoot.
- Shoots without opposition (1vGk) in frontal zone, and close to goal; executes a jump or stationary shot.

**Defender**

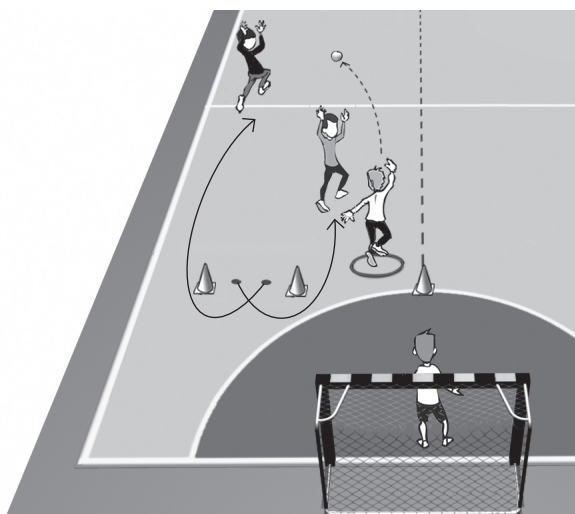
- Tries to recover defensively to deny scoring.



One-on-one (1v1, with thrower), in open space and beginning far from goal.

**VARIANT 1. ONE-ON-ONE WITH MISDIRECTION TO BREAK AWAY.**

The exercises begin with both attacker (player with the ball) and defender side-by-side in the middle of the cones. Ball handler passes ball to supporter (or goalkeeper) and, then, runs around one of the cones before running up court to get open to receive and to shoot; he/she may use misdirection actions. The defender has to repeat the same actions but in the contrary direction. In the next attempt, players switch roles.



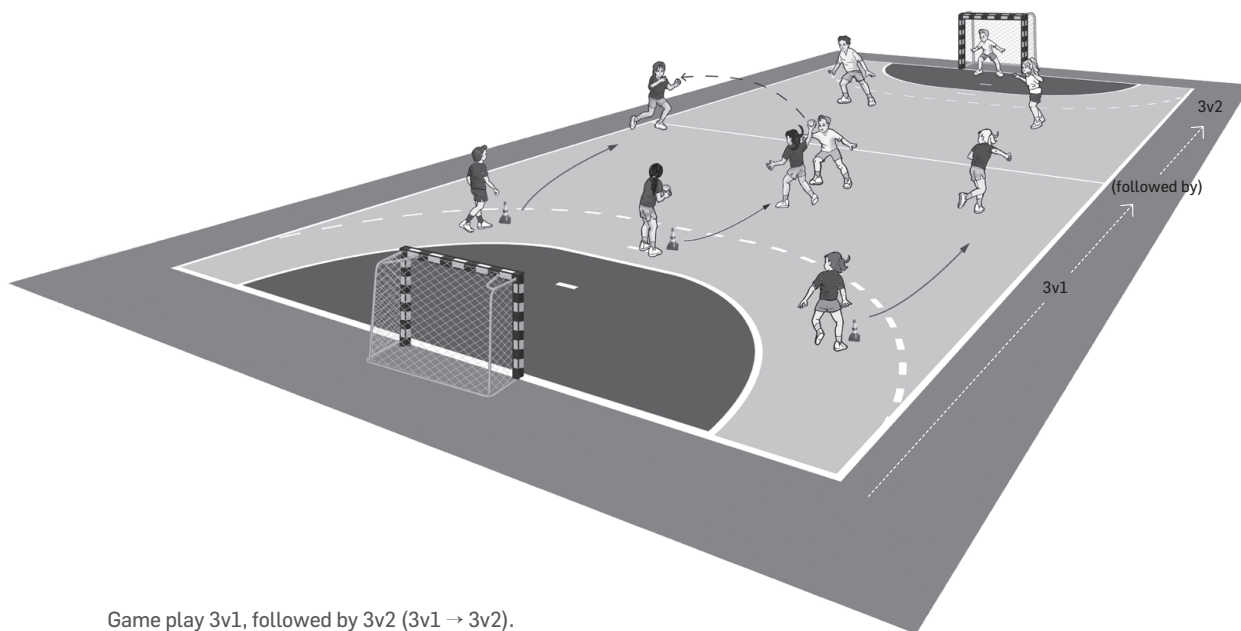
**TASK 63** [FAST PROGRESSION | RELATIONAL SKILLS]**THREE-ON-ONE FOLLOWED****BY THREE-ON-TWO IN DEPTH AND OPEN SPACE**

**OBJECTIVES:** To develop awareness of fast moving ball up court, as a team, to exploit numerical and space advantage, creating an open scoring opportunity.

**Attack:** to practice passing and receiving ball on the run, taking it to open spaces away from opposition; to employ a spread-out position to create space and move without ball to get open, offering supporting passing lanes ahead.

**Defence:** to provoke passing mistakes to regain ball possession.

**DESCRIPTION:** Groups of three players each are constituted; one is chosen as the defending team. In full court, place one of the defenders in the nearest half court and the other two in the farthest half. While one group attacks, the others await their turn at initial position. The attacking team tries to successfully score, a circumstance in which they pick up their ball, and return to initial position. Define a maximum number of defences per group; afterwards, it is mandatory to exchange with an attacking group. But, if defenders force a passing mistake, they swap functions with the team that lost the ball.



Game play 3v1, followed by 3v2 (3v1 → 3v2).

**TEACHING FOCUS****Attacker with ball**

– Faces up to goal and seeks the best decision:

- If free and without a better-positioned teammate ahead, he/she should approach and attack the goal, by using cycle of steps and dribbling if needed.

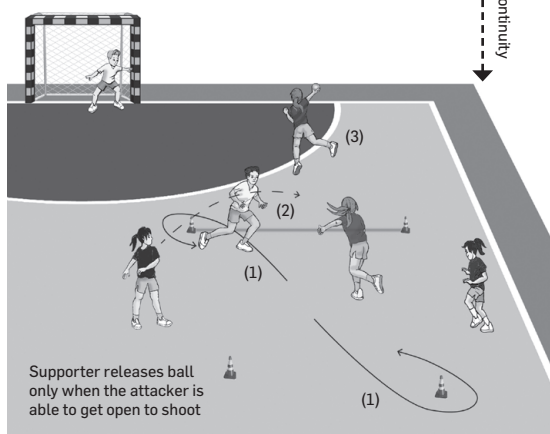
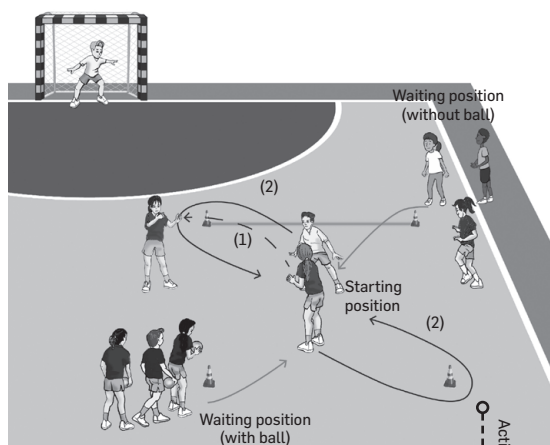
- With opposition, seeks to pass the ball to an open receiver, by executing a lead pass.
- If a defender is in the passing lane, he/she must learn to open it by making a fake pass in the closed-off pass direction and, then, pass or dribble forward.

**TASK 66** [FORWARD PROGRESSION | GETTING FREE TO SHOOT]**ONE-ON-ONE WITHOUT BALL****IN A CONFINED SPACE** (1v1, with Ss)**OBJECTIVES**

**Attack:** to focus on playing one-on-one without the ball to evade opponent, getting open to receive the ball (creating an opening).

**Defence:** to practice defensive positioning, sliding and fast footwork to avoid being beaten, frustrating attacker's intentions.

**DESCRIPTION:** Set up the task as illustrated. The exercise begins with ball handler facing the defender and the goal/target, with two supporters (placed at the right and left). Both attacker and defender initiate the task close positioned and in the middle of the area bounded by the markers/cones. Defender is only allowed to defend in the area bounded by the cones. The attacker is the initiator and chooses one side to pass the ball. Then, runs back and around the cone placed on the contrary side of the pass before trying to progress, passing through the farthest two cones (closest to goal). The defender should respond to the initial pass but runs back toward the cone placed at the ball-passing side. In this way, the attacker has more chances to get free ahead to receive a lead pass. The supporters should be instructed to pass the ball only after the attacker is able to cross the line between the last two cones, where the defender is not allowed to defend.

**ORGANISATIONAL RULES**

Form two queues of players and place them close to the starting positions (attacking/defensive tasks). The students with offensive tasks should carry one ball. After a duel, the defender gets the ball and moves to the offensive tasks, while the attacker goes to the defensive tasks.

**Reminder:**

Attacker passes ball towards one of the supporters. Then, runs back and around the cone placed on the contrary side of the pass before trying to get open ahead of ball. Meanwhile defender runs back toward the cone placed at ball-passing side.

**TEACHING FOCUS****Attacker**

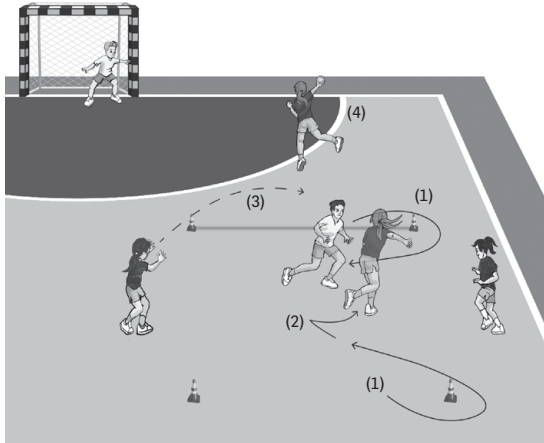
- Passes ball to supporter and retreats, then, moves forward, trying to beat opponent in order to get open ahead to receive and score.
- While moving forward, is aware of free space and defender's movement. Decides to employ a straight cut if defender is late/out of position or uses changes of direction/pace to unbalance and evade him/her.
- If he/she does not surpass direct adversary, he/she should retreat to receive ball, again passing, running around cone and trying once more to beat defender.

**Supporter**

- Delays making a pass in order to give time for the attacker to evade and get past the defender.



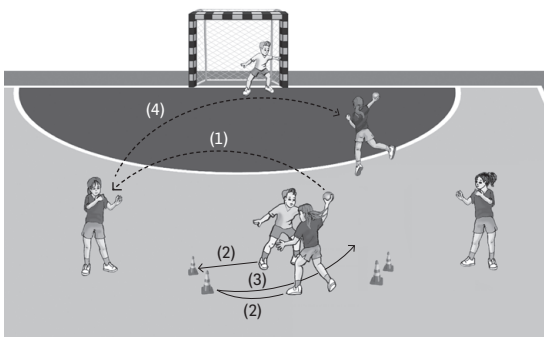
**VARIANT 1.** Exercise is identical to the former one. The task begins with the attacker and defender positioned on an imaginary line that divides game space. After passing the ball to one of the supporters, the shooter moves back and round one of the chosen cones (right/left); defender should repeat the same task (as in a mirror). Subsequently, tries to get open ahead to receive and score. If the defender is fast in recovering defensive position, he/she must employ cutting/misdirection moves to beat him/her.



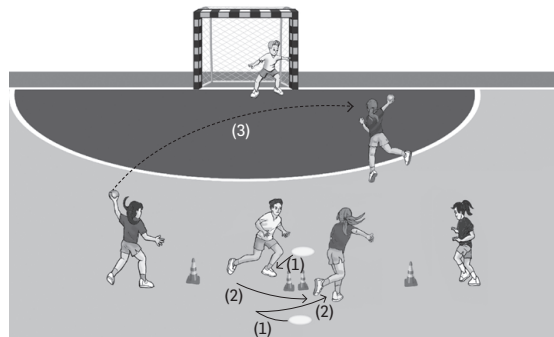
### RECOMMENDATIONS

The manipulation of spatial (the defender moves to the opposite side of attacker or has more distance to travel than the attacker) and temporal constraints (the ball handler has the initiative, so he/she acts and the defender reacts) permits a situation of disadvantage for the defender. Here, the attacker should learn to exploit defender's momentary being out of position and off-balance.

**VARIANT 2.** The exercise begins with attacker and defender positioned on the imaginary line between the two pairs of cones (note that with unskilful learners, the two pairs of cones corresponding to the defender are further away, giving more time/space to the attacker). Both attacker and defender initiate the task close positioned and in the middle of the two pairs of cones. The attacker is the initiator and chooses one side to pass the ball to one of the supporters. Then, runs toward one of his/her cones (right/left side), it being mandatory to touch once before attempting to get open ahead of supporter to receive and to shoot; defender should repeat the same task (as in a mirror). If the defender is fast in recovering position, the attacker must employ misdirection to evade him/her or executes another cone touching manoeuvre to get the defender off balance/position.



**VARIANT 3.** The task begins with the defender positioned behind the two cones. The attacker passes the ball to one of the supporters and, then, chooses to break through into one of the gaps (*doors*) attempting to get open ahead of supporter to receive and to shoot. Facing defender's reaction by fast step-sliding and closing off the gap where the attacker is attempting to progress, he/she should change direction to progress through the other gap (the open one). The defender is allowed to move and to close off the other gap as well, but, as he/she must always pass in front of the cones when switching from one gap to the other, attacker will have better chances to get free.



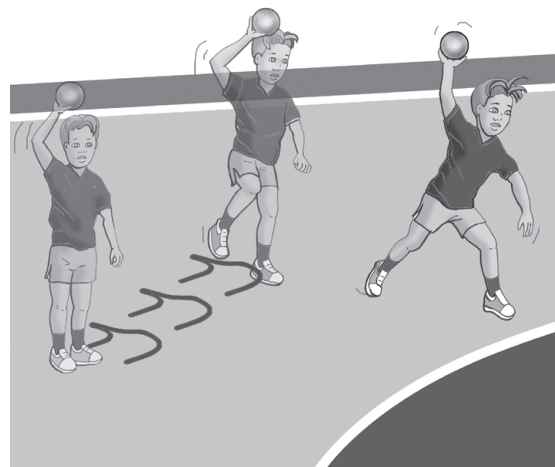
**TASK 76** [ATTACKING THE GOAL | STEPS APPROACH/SHOOTING SKILLS]**SHOOTING WITH TWO- AND THREE-STEP APPROACH**

**OBJECTIVES:** To execute footwork; to improve the ability to execute isolated or integrated multiple movements with various body segments, ending with jumping or throwing standing still with two- or three-step approach.

**DESCRIPTION:** Standing still on two feet beside barriers, executing footwork between barriers, and advancing cycle of steps before throwing on one foot.



Footwork followed by a two-step approach (e.g., right-handed thrower steps right-left before throwing).



Footwork followed by a three-step approach (e.g., right-handed thrower steps left-right-left before throwing).

**TEACHING FOCUS**

- Footwork with raised throwing arm or with two hands above head.
- Ground contact-impulse or take-off with foot contrary to throwing arm.

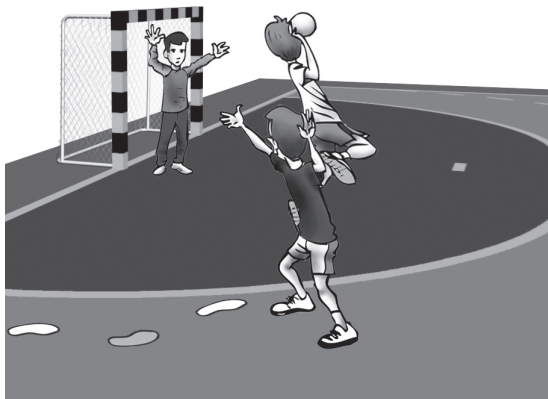
**VARIANTS**

- Introduce different types of footwork: jumping between barriers with feet together, hopping, skipping, a sequence of steps with different lengths, etc.

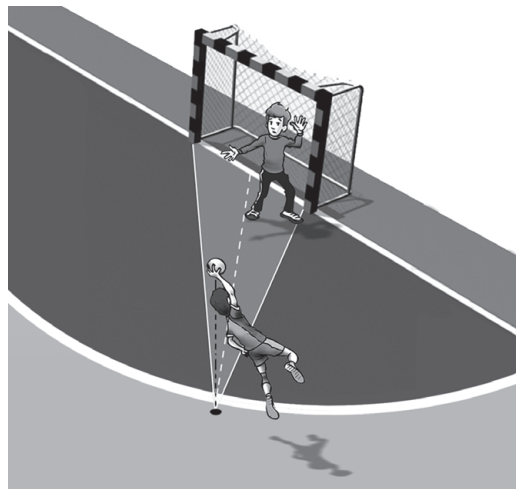
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Organise many spots avoiding long waits. Use of targets in goal (e.g., cones placed in the goal line, close to goal posts) permits increase of shooting frequency, which is particularly recommended in cases of elevated number of participants.

**It is important for learners to practice different types of shots**, since it isn't very likely that they will master decision-making and shooting skills only while playing. From the point of view of execution, when an opening arises from the side, learners should be aware of jumping diagonally towards area in front of goal without losing body balance, and adjusting ball-throwing arm position to maximize shot angle.



**4.37.** Wing shooting – on the opposite side of the throwing arm (e.g., right-handed player shoots from the left wing, attempting to open the throwing angle).



**4.38.** Wing shooting – on the same side of the throwing arm (e.g., right-handed player shoots from the right wing, attempting to open the throwing angle).

Learning tasks 2v1 (in half court and in side corridors) or shooting tasks (1vGk) starting the run-approach from the corner with or without a preparation pass with a supporter (positioned at the back position) can be used to learn to shoot from the wing. For shots from back positions, we can include partial game forms 2v2 (with two supporters) in half court or practice tasks of jump-shooting over the drawn-back defence or penetration shooting with conditioned defence.



**4.39.** Ball handler approaches goal, while defender stands back.



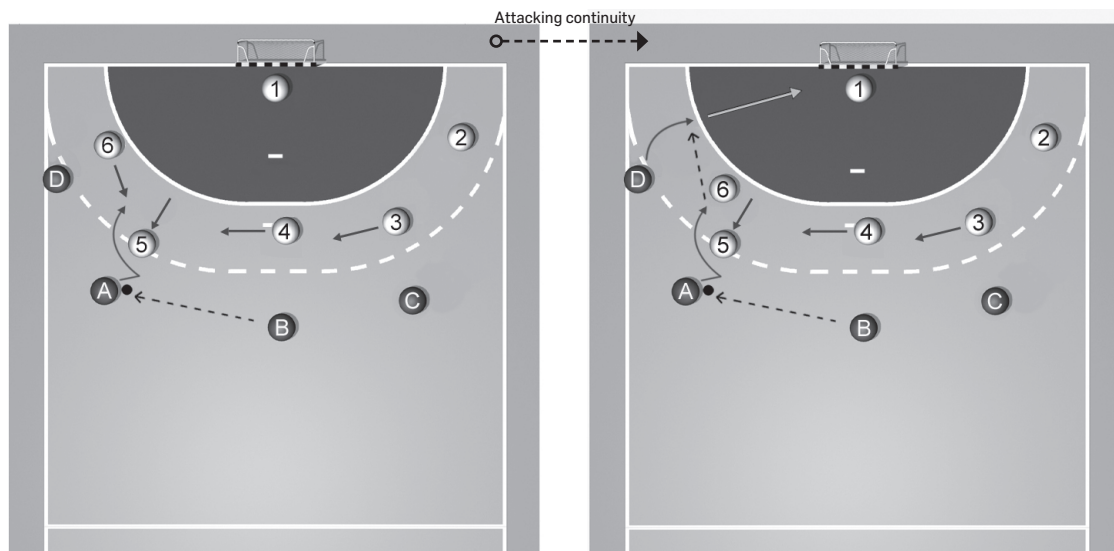
**4.40.** Ball handler chooses to shoot over the defender.



**4.41.** Defender blocks the ball.

**EMPHASISE**

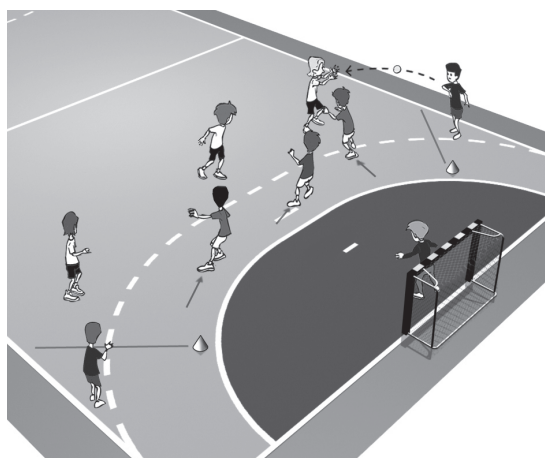
- Spacing to ensure wide attacking-play.
- Being in motion to receive ball toward goal, threatening to score and attempting to gain space-time.
- After an attacking attempt (without shooting), and after having released ball, he/she should move back quickly, readjusting position in the attack organisation – that is, to support teammates (creating passing lane) and to be prepared for another attack attempt.



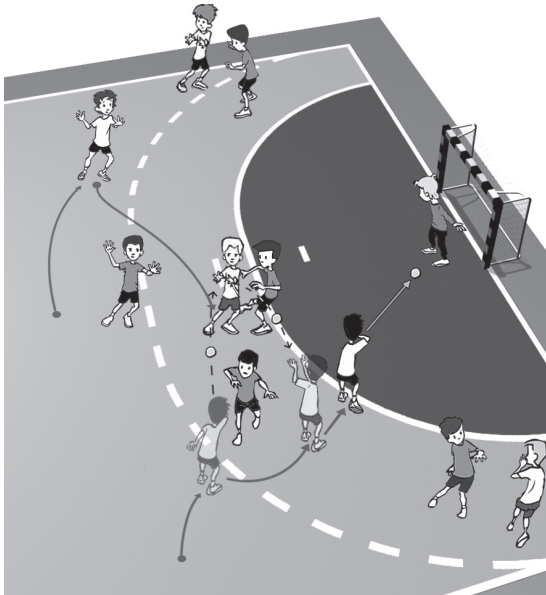
**5.27.** Left back (A) beats defender, breaking through into the outward space, leading winger's defender to move out of position to avoid an immediate chance of scoring, thereby helping ball handler's defender.

**5.28.** Ball possessor reads defenders' reaction (two defenders were trapped) and assists winger, after having created an opening for teammate.

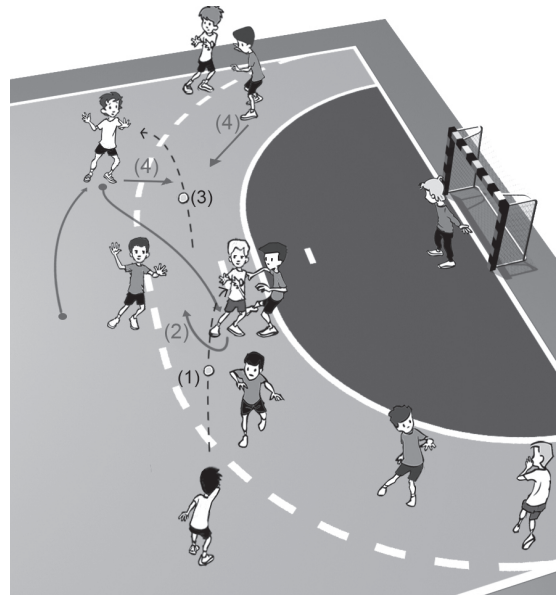
Mastery of these game principles and action rules allows exploitation of interplaying possibilities and creating new and creative courses of action. These tactical concepts can be approached and developed through partial game forms 3v3 or 2v2, in the central or side corridor and half court with or without supporters strategically positioned. As an example, we illustrate in Figure 5.29 the partial game form 3v3, with two supporters at the wings, using a match-up zone defensive configuration, ball oriented. Here, we mean that the on-ball defender will step out to play *tight* as if he/she is playing man-to-man and, then, when the attacker passes the ball, he/she will fall back toward the defensive line.



**5.29.** Partial game form 3v3 in central corridor, with two supporters at the wing. A match-up zone defence is illustrated, with focus on exerting pressure on ball possessor, which facilitates defensive mutual help to cover space and to protect goal.

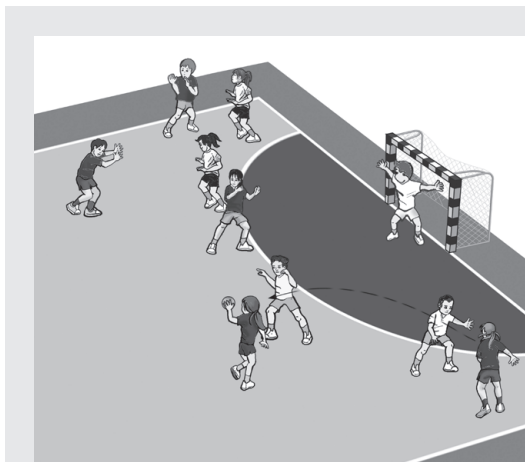


**5.43.** Situation-example where pivot receives ball but is closely marked (without possibility of scoring), returns ball to right back, that, meanwhile, unmarks him/herself outside (applying a *give-and-go manoeuvre*). Back player surpassed direct defender, receives ball and attempts to score.

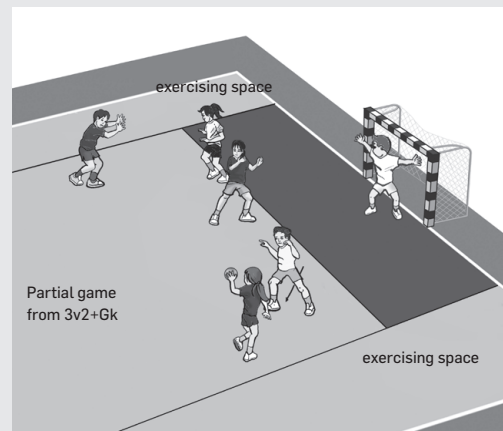


**5.44.** Situation-example where pivot, without advantage to score or to play on initial attacking side, engages direct defender to that side and turns to opposite side. Meanwhile, when pivot turns, he/she may get into a scoring situation, and must shoot; otherwise, he/she must release ball to open left back. Left back anticipates ball release, receives ball and adjusts decision: scores or assists left winger.

When having only a medium-sized court or smaller, alternative game forms might be used, such as 5v4+Gk (see the pictures 5.45 and 5.46).



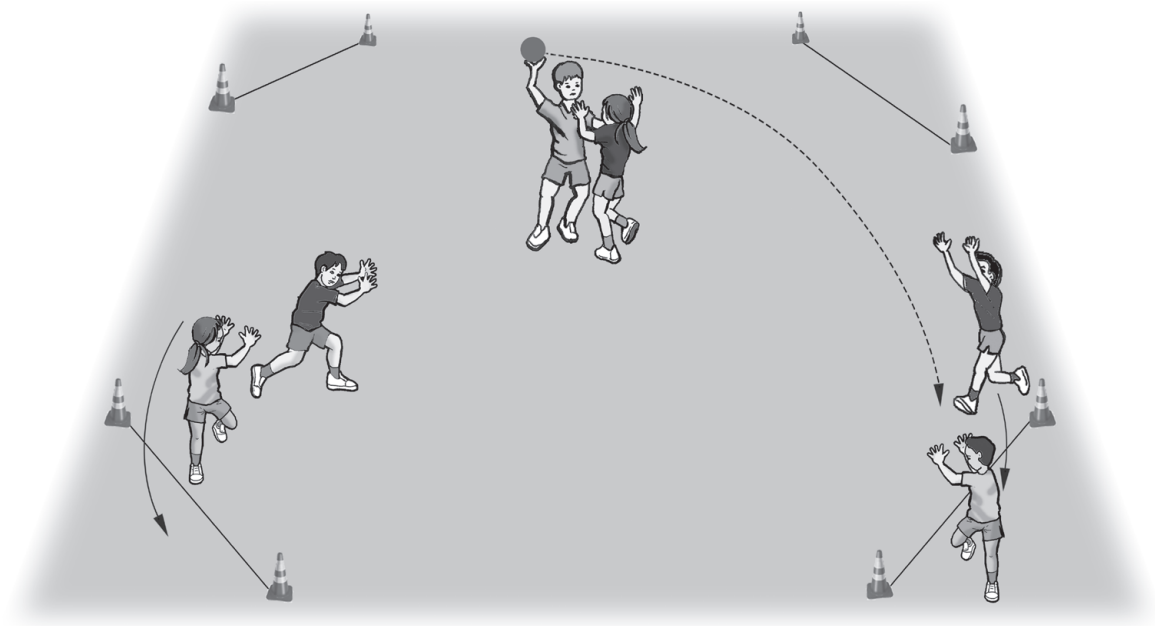
**5.45.** Example of an alternative game form (5v4+Gk) to introduce the pivot's role when having a medium-sized court (about the size of a basketball court).



**5.46.** Example of game play situation or task 3v2+Gk, with a pivot, in a small-sized court.

**VARIANT 1. POSSESSION GAME THREE-ON-THREE WITH FOUR RECEPTION AREAS**

Follows the same task structure and instructional focus as the previous one, but, now, with the reception areas in a more diagonal position to compel more variation in the inter-passing constraints and reception on the run. Here, only the receptions made while crossing or immediately after crossing the marked reception areas (the imaginary line between cones) count as scoring pass-receptions. The attacking group tries to maintain ball possession by receiving-passing, intending to reach a certain number of scoring passes (example: 10 passes), thereby obtaining one point.

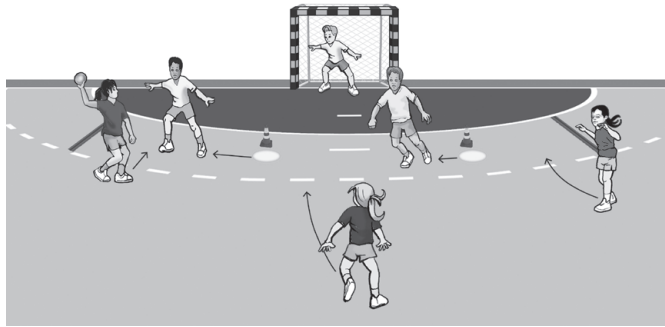
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Adjust the playing area space and number of players to their passing skills and instruction focus. By enlarging the distance between passing-receiving areas, longer-range passes will be exercised, which are very important in fast transition (between *waves*). As this task is conditionally very demanding (fast running, acceleration-deceleration, changing direction, long-range passes), it should be interspersed with recovery periods (for example, passing technique at slower pace). When having lack of space, organise several different tasks and implement a rotational system. As a last recourse, a sort of rotation between playing and waiting roles might be implemented.

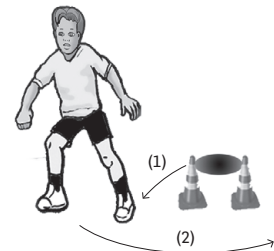


### VARIANT 3. BACK POSITIONAL PLAY IN WIDTH, THREE-ON-TWO WITH BOUNDED GAPS

Various groups of three players are constituted. Place cones bounding the positional back attacking spaces (left, middle and right), with a defender in front or behind each cone (see the picture below). Attackers practice preparation passes by exchanging ball (maximum of three times) until one clearly attempts to penetrate his/her respective gap. Facing defender's reaction (that must be to lock the gap by moving/sliding to stop ball possessor), attacker protects the ball and releases the ball to the near receiver, until reaching an open gap. A group begins to defend (two defenders and one goalkeeper) and another attacks at the back positions, with the other groups awaiting their turn on the centre line. Use rotational rules according to the number of participants and available space for the session.



Game play 3v2 in back positional area, with bounded attacking gaps.

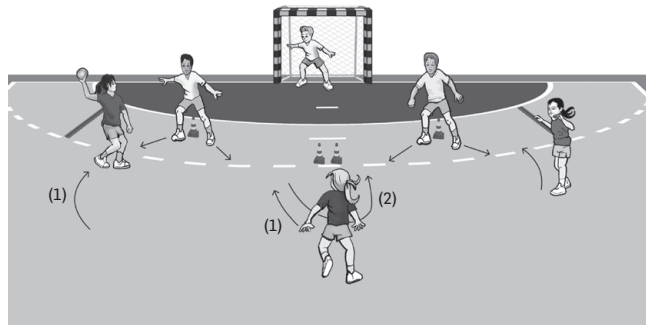


#### MODIFICATION

The defender must always pass in front of the cones when switching from one gap to the other (action 2); with this task constraint, the attackers will have better chances to get into an open path to shoot.

### VARIANT 4. BACK POSITIONAL PLAY IN WIDTH, THREE-ON-TWO WITH FOUR ATTACKING GAPS (see picture at the right).

The centre-back attacker is allowed to penetrate into both gaps at his/her right and left, but the back players are only allowed to penetrate into the respective outward gap. Each defender is responsible for protecting both gaps, at his/her right and left. After an unsuccessful breaking-through attempt in one of the sides, it is mandatory to give attacking continuity toward the opposite attacking side.



Back positional play (3v2) with constrained attacking gaps.

### TEACHING FOCUS

#### **Back (right/left) player with ball – outward breaking-through role, with wide trajectory**

- Squares up to goal, threatening to score:
  - If defender does not close off the (outward) gap, penetrates and shoots.
  - If forcing defender to close the attacked gap/space, protects ball and passes to centre-back player.

#### **Back (right/left) player without ball**

- Adopts spread-out positioning, being prepared to timely receive ball, attacking the outward gap.

#### **Centre-back player – inward breaking-through role, with wide trajectories**

- Is aware of back player's actions and defender's reaction, being prepared to timely receive ball to exploit the nearby gap (action 1).
- If not able to get into an open path to shoot, releases ball toward the opposite back player, and returns back (action 2), being prepared for another breaking-through attempt.



**TASK 121** [BREAKING THROUGH | CREATING AN OPENING]**GAME PLAY 3-ON-2**

with pivot and lined-up defenders (3v2, with Pt, in side positional area)

**OBJECTIVES**

**Attack:** to focus on running inside, pivot positioning and spacing; awareness of wide attacking play to exploit pivot's positioning (depth dimension).

**Defence:** to focus on readjusting positioning and redefining direct opponent to avoid numerical inferiority in the ball area and in greater danger.

**DESCRIPTION:** Split the court into two sectors (right and left), as shown in the figure. Organise groups of three players. Every two groups play in opposition (3v2+Gk) by sectors. The attacking team can only score after one of the players (middle or winger) changes to pivot. The defending team tries to recover the ball and, in case of three consecutive repossessions, changes functions without completing a number of established defences, for example, six. Another possibility is after a repossession; the defending team attempts to perform fast breaking until midfield line (if not having full court). In this case, goalkeeper joins attack (3v3) or a third player enters the game (is outside the court waiting). When the defending team is successful, swaps with the attacking team.

**TEACHING FOCUS****Preparation of attack**

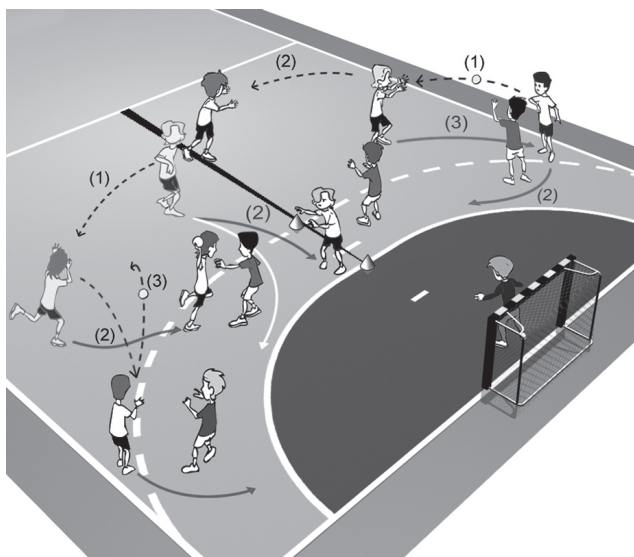
- A player becomes pivot or pivot is already positioned in interior of defence.
- Attackers guarantee wide and deep attacking play.
- Circulation of ball (without *strong attack*) in initial preparation or preparation of new attack.

**Development of attack**

- *Strong attack* by exterior player attempting to penetrate or attract/draw defender to benefit teammates.
- Ball handler, without positional advantage, assists free teammate or releases ball for attacking continuity.
- Pivot plays in free space near the goal-area line to create a penetrating passing lane or to attract/draw defenders to make space for teammates.

**Defenders join actions**

- Nearest defender pressures ball handler and teammate readjusts position to restrict passing options.



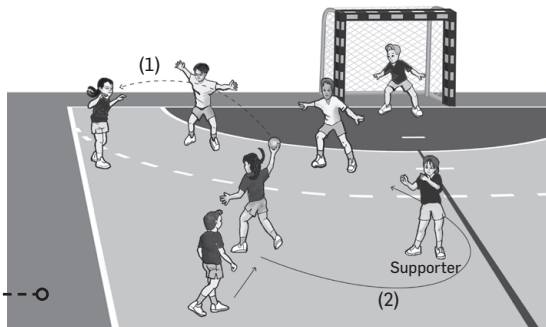
3v2 situation with one of the exterior players becoming pivot.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

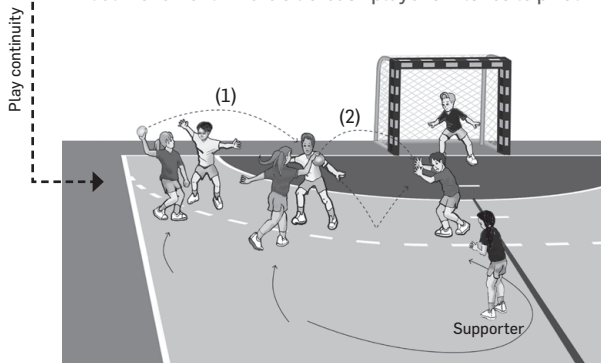
Having a huge number of learners, after each attack, a new attacking group enters; the non-playing groups await their turn at the centre line. Also, the use of targets (e.g., cones placed on the goal line) in goal permits increase of attacking attempts. If a goalkeeper is used, attacks to the right and the left should be alternated, avoiding simultaneous shots. However, learners should use shots towards the floor/ground every time two shots occur at the same time. While waiting their turn, students should exercise inter-passing.

**VARIANT 1. GAME PLAY THREE-ON-TWO, WITH PIVOT AND A SUPPORTER (3v2, with Pt, plus S)**

Set up the task as illustrated. At the back position, there are two attackers, with the first one holding one ball. The task begins with back player passing to winger, going around the supporter, and, then, runs inside (with this movement, the back player who becomes pivot is coming from the opposite side of ball, as it is being worked). After a running-inside action from the first of the back players (changing to pivot position), the second one enters in game play. The supporter is not allowed to pass to pivot.



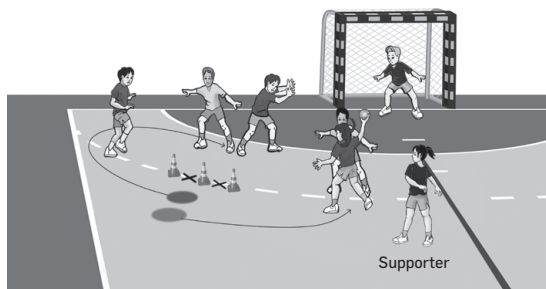
Initial movement where side-back player switches to pivot.



Development of game play 3v(2+Gk) with a pivot.

**VARIANT 2. GAME PLAY THREE-ON-TWO, WITH PIVOT, AND CONSTRAINED BACK TRAJECTORY (3v2, with Pt, plus S)**

Set up the task as illustrated, placing cones (or other markers) in the middle of back positional area, to force the back player to execute wide trajectories to make space and freeing the pivot or the winger.



Game play three-on-two, with pivot, and constrained back trajectory.

**TEACHING FOCUS****Winger**

- Without ball, adopts a wide open position.
- Having received ball, attacks the outward space, to draw away outside (1<sup>st</sup>) defender.

**Pivot**

- Pivot plays in free space near the goal-area line to create a penetrating passing lane or to attract/draw defenders to make space for teammates.

**Back player**

- Receives ball and threatens goal towards the opposite side of pivot movement or position, and seeks the best decision:
  - Having advantage, takes a penetration-shot.
  - Having freed the pivot by attracting side/2<sup>nd</sup> defender, assists him/her.
  - Without advantage, releases ball to supporter and prepares a new attacking attempt.

**TEACHING FOCUS**

When the back player receives ball from the supporter **threatening goal towards the middle** (inward trajectory), pivot attempts to get free in the side space. When the back player receives from the winger, **threatening goal toward the side** (outward trajectory), pivot moves to the middle, getting free.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

The learning track proposed in this book is not easy. It aims at developing skilful and *thinking* players, i.e. players that are good at *reading* the game, have strong situational *awareness* and have a strong *tactical* sense. The reasoning behind this choice is trifold:

- It is harder and slower to develop game play intelligence, creativity than technical and conditional skills. This is the way to develop high performance team players.
- Physical education will have more emphasis on *education* and students of all levels will be able to enjoy it (not only the athletic ones).
- Learners (both students and young players) will become, at least, involved life-long spectators of game sports.

However, this approach demands very knowledgeable teachers/coaches, which *know* the game, can *diagnose* the learners' game problems and can *devise* the appropriate strategy for helping them. It is much harder than just selecting a few exercises and building a practical session around them. There is a need to constantly *observe*, *diagnose* and *adapt* the practice.

Similarly, although this focuses on the *tactical* side of the game, in the sense of the players being able to play well with the team (the whole is much more than the sum of the parts), this is not at all a quick guide to win the next match. It is an educational project, a hard one for that matter.

It tries to be a guide to help the educators that commit to the *thinking player* project. This route will take time to develop but, in the end, it will make students, players and educators happier.

*Proper domain-specific knowledge, commitment, guidance and leadership on the part of the teacher/coach are paramount to any success that a teaching/coaching approach of this nature may have.*

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULA AND HANDBALL GAME-BASED APPROACH

**The essential challenge in this book has been the need to bring back the joy of playing handball by shaping game rules and game playing possibilities, without changing its essence, in progressive stages.** For this purpose, the notion of the spiral curriculum was used to bring some order to the increasing tactical complexity and technical-motor demands through a logical sequence of integrated and interlinked basic game forms. Ultimately, by providing a skeleton of interlinked stages, we intend to help educators to design a clear direction in their work, anchored by learning priorities and development outcomes. These priorities and desired outcomes serve as rough guides that should be modified as required by the school context and students' needs.