



OFFENSIVE GROUP TACTICS

Clarification

The purpose of this work is to present an ensemble of tactical actions associated to **clarification** that, being a tactical subject used in basketball, it's perfectly identifiable in the offensive tactical procedures used in handball. It can be considered as a typical action in circulation of players with the specific goal to set free a certain space that shall be explored by one of them (Pereira, 1995). This movement can be used at the same time with other kinds of tactical subjects and as it involves two or more players we can consider it as a group tactical action. The proposed actions, in their majority, have as direct participants two (2x2 units) or more elements constituting small groups of players (maximum 3 to 4 elements) with different functions between each other. There are some studies that refer to the prevalence of group tactical actions during a match (Barbosa, 1998); yet it would be a great opportunity, nevertheless difficult, to study also their efficacy compared to individual or collective actions trying to know them better and apprehend the need of such tactics in the match contents, specially by identifying those with more efficacy related to the number of players involved in the offensive tactical tasks.

It must be understood that attack specific principles (Roman, 2002) and operational details should be an important task, both during the match and during the training, so that the use of exercise manipulation and the considered variables must be taken by the trainer as a deep reflection task. Therefore, participants' tasks must be drawn taking into account the time and the mode to obtain the best relation space-time and the adequate technical performance to increase answers quality and repertoire.



Following the *unity principle between elementary tactical formation and complex tactical formation* (Antón, 1998) we pretend that the following exercises should be understood as an integral part of a standardised match previously established. Actions must be worked out in different contexts (higher or lower difficulty degree) using different variables (space, number of players and balls, closed or open in different moments of the action, etc.) but always with the main purpose that players reach to recognise the constitutive elements of that same



action independent of its occurrence in a simplified form (training) or during a match.

It's imperative to know the lines of the tactical task and the factors that can condition decision (Mayo, 2001) in what concerns perception, decision and execution mechanisms to plan adequately the exercises. In regards to the perceptive phase, it's not the same thing when in a certain exercise; where a lot of or a few stimulus occur, in a sequential or simultaneous way, or the same as having during the decision phase more or less answer alternatives, that condition the next phase, but the moving gesture execution in itself.

On the other hand, the *optimal association inductive/deductive principle* (Antón, 1998) permits to guarantee equilibrium between what are the programmed activities by the trainer (inductive character) and the athletes' creative answers to the problematic situations during the match (deductive character). In this sense, beyond the existing concrete solutions non-previewed answers must always be faced as a transfer from the preceding ones and, in a logic feature, resulting from the necessity to find solutions to the imposed problems by the match in itself.

Training in similar tactical conditions (as in a match) and in order to structure exercises the following three moments: introduction, deepening or development exercises and complex or competition character (Villalobos & Morell, 2004), must be some of the aspects taken into account when devising a workout.

In figure 1 we can see a solution resulting from the relation between the lateral and the adjacent extreme, profiting the fact that their direct defenders (or mates) are scaled. The extreme changes his position to the interior (longitudinal axis of the field) at the moment when the lateral prepares to initiate the feint with a way out to the exterior of his opponent. The used tactical contents can be defined as a **clarification** done by the extreme freeing the exterior space for the benefit of the lateral. The simultaneous opposite movements of this action can cause some errors if defenders decide to change position because the extreme must at all time offer a pass line to the lateral adapting his own movement. The lateral can finalise at the exterior or assisting the extreme that stops his progression to place himself near the six meters line (figure 2). In this action, defenders have an easy task because they are acting at the exterior of the line, not only because of the trajectory quality demanded of the (lateral) support adaptation and consequently of the body, but also because of the efficient liaison of steps with the supposed needed use of dribble. Producing results in exchange between defenders, and also due to zone characteristics and participants spatial orientation, interception possibilities of the pass increase (figure 2). alternatively, at the same time that we approach the central longitudinal axis of the field, difficulties arising from the use of this change (always considering scaled defenders) oblige the defenders to be prepared to defend a wide-ranging space (if they chose to slide), inducing sometimes some debilities to the system, in particular to the 6:0 defensive system.

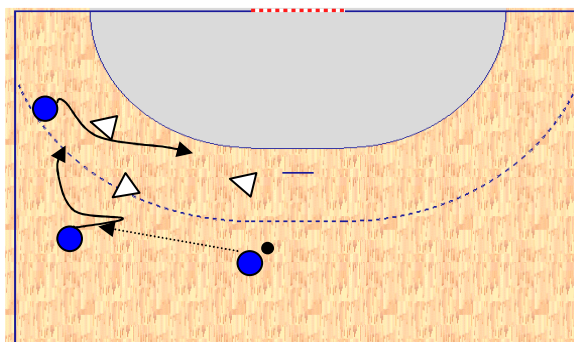


Figure 1 – Action between the lateral and the adjacent extreme resulting from the extreme clarification to the benefit of the lateral (simultaneous opposite movements).

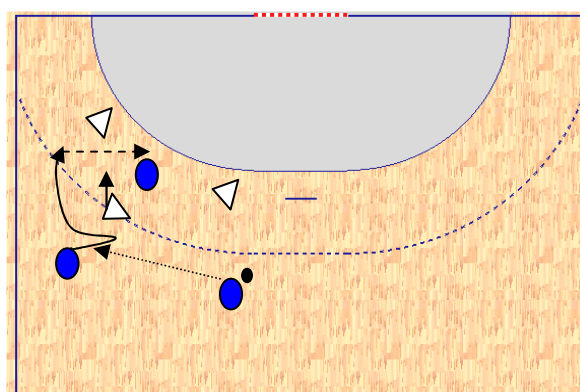


Figure 2 – If exterior defender follows the extreme, the lateral can finalise after transcending his opponent, or assisting the extreme standing near the six meter line.

If facing a 5:1 defence, this problem can be minimised (advanced defenders are just as or quicker than centrals), the same doesn't occur in a 6:0 system where central defenders are usually less mobile when compared with the opposite central player. Although this is not the main issue of this work we can't ignore the problematic imposed by the nature of individual duels (Peñas, 2002) produced in certain zones of the field and taking into account the anthropometric and functional characteristics of the direct participants in the action.

As we can see in figure 3, and considering a 6:0 defence, the **clarification** action performed by the **pivot**, combined with the feint from the **central**, can provoke irreparable errors to the defensive system because it insinuates that central defenders should be prepared to defend in an effective way e.g. the 1x1 situation in a wide-ranging space, because the positions change, in this case it wouldn't be the more effective tactical solution. Action success is determined by centre (1x1) and pivot (sliding) tasks synchronisation as well as individual performance at the moment when the balance is upset without which nothing happens. The main purpose must be to set in evidence the duel between central defender and a central attacker that should know how to dominate technical and tactical actions related to 1x1. If found under these conditions, the



central can: finalise the action with a shot, penetrate dribbling, inducing a successive progression (decalage) or assisting the pivot that should be in the position to receive; if a doubt (sliding or changing) comes to central defender's mind in a less profound position (figure 4).

This way, the end of this action is defined at first by the efficiency in the fulfilment of tasks in a 2x2 situation (central defenders against central and pivot) without which a positional or numeric advantage does not exist, these are not optimal conditions to finalise with success (main purpose of the attack).

In figure 3 we can see that the pass comes from right (lateral), yet this and other details (pivot position, opponents proximity between themselves and in relation to defenders, pass type and velocity, sliding movements type and velocity, etc.) are decisive to the success of any action. Probably, it will be more important that the ball comes from left (lateral) since at that moment the defence floats in the opposite sense of the feint.

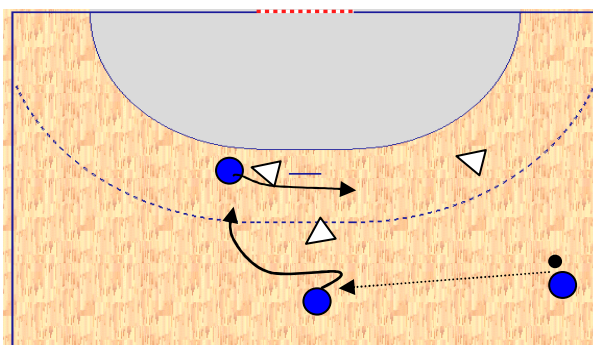


Figure 3 – This action can be performed between a central and a pivot (simultaneous opposite movements).

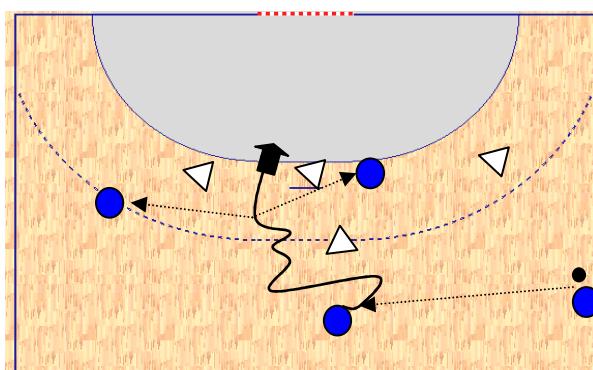


Figure 4 – Defenders behaviour determines the solution that can assume different forms.

In the construction of the group tactics, intrinsically related to the match model previously created following trainer's concepts and the characteristics of his players, it's imperative to preview continuity solutions to the worked actions. Though, even if that it isn't also the main purpose of this work, we must refer that planning the construction of any tactical action must implicate the planning of adjusted continuity solutions. A continuity solution to the action seen in figure



4 (if central defenders had a successful sliding), would be, for example, the cross between the central and left (lateral) resulting from the central fixation (Laguna, 2005), related to the exterior block from the pivot to central defender as we can see in figure 5. Left (lateral) must finalise from first rank, if space and time permits, taking advantage from the block performed by pivot or to pass the ball to the right (lateral) that will decide its continuity or not (first rank finalisation, pass to the pivot, penetration or decalage). There isn't a set time to learn this link of tactical tasks, yet all depends on participants' quality to identify the best solution, as well as a balanced plan of the exercises that, in an ending phase, must integrate the entire stimulus and in intermediate phases to localise problems that should be solved. This exercise could be open in the beginning (defenders vary their decision by change or sliding) and narrow in the end if central (that decides also in an intermediate phase its continuity) doesn't reach to develop any kind of advantage, determining previously the player that shall finalise the action. The same way, exercise can be narrow in the beginning (defining only sliding between defenders) and open in the end varying its conclusion following the best solution.

Considering now a defensive system 5:1 we can see in figure 6 the way that a lateral can obtain an advantage in a 1x1 situation over his opponent defender, simultaneously to the movement performed by the pivot that executes a trajectory to the exterior. One of the exit pretexts to this action obliges that the pivot tries to guarantee an open pass line to the lateral all the way, establishing a constant duel with central defender by space conquering. A possible variety to insert any doubt in central defender's mind arises when pivot performs a trajectory towards the nine meters line showing his intention to block lateral's opponent defender, and modifies it by going straight towards the six meters line. This action, having the same purpose of the precedent is richer because of the feinting movement performed by pivot. These and other kinds of feinting movements can be performed in any action previously presented because it makes the task of the defender harder.

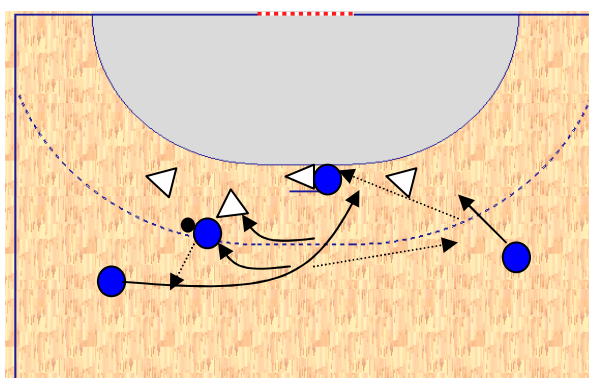
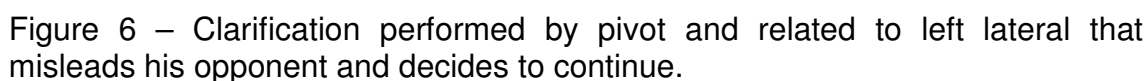
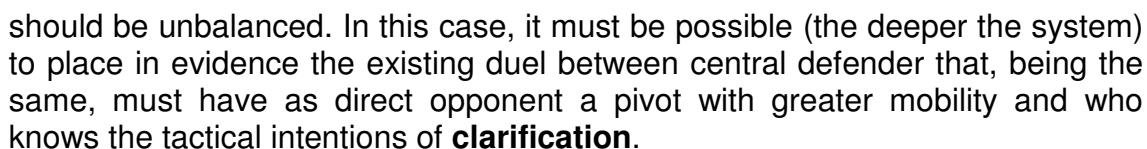


Figure 5 – Defenders behaviour determines continuity that can assume different forms.

The use of this tactical mean assumes greater possibility if considering a deeper defensive system because there is more space to be used. On the other hand, these systems usually have quicker defenders in front lines that can limit first line offensive attackers' success at the moment when a 1x1 situation



In the same way, there is the possibility to circumstantially place extreme players in lateral position, trying to fill the first offensive line with greater mobility, and always with the purpose to win individual duels established in 1x1 situations in a wide-ranging space. These adaptations oblige that, not only that athletes be able to act at their specific post, but also in other posts if the situation affords it.

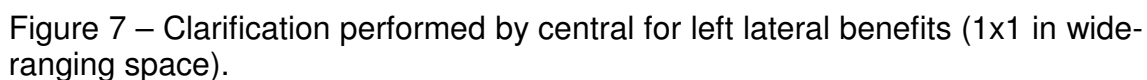


Figure 7 shows a **clarification** action facing a defensive system 3:3, initiated by the central that, after passing the ball to lateral near the pivot, transforms the offensive system into 2:4. In this case there aren't simultaneous opposite movements. The fact that central changes the system, choosing a trajectory that puts him away from the deceiving lateral (as we have already seen can be an extreme player) comes with the sense of stopping any position change by the defenders set at the second defensive line. Continuity is decided by the left lateral that has as mission to overcome his opponent defender, being conscientious of the distance that separates him from a zone where he can constitute a danger to the defensive system. Feinting and using afterwards the



dribble (unit or not) to finalise or to pass must be a link of tactical-technical means controlled by the player performing the feint. There is more space at the interior of the field, yet in function to the defender's behaviour, the lateral should decide which suitable zone to explore. When overcoming the defender, a numerical superiority situation is created 3x2 in a wide-ranging space near the six meter line.

In figure 8, the central decides to clarify the zone transforming the offensive system and choosing a trajectory which places him at the back of the opponent defender of the feinting lateral. The detail related to the efficiency of this movement concerns the way in which that trajectory must be performed by the central. In this case the aim of a central in an initial step must be to break the line between the two defenders (if it exists) placing his less deep defender with a vertical trajectory and only then diagonal.

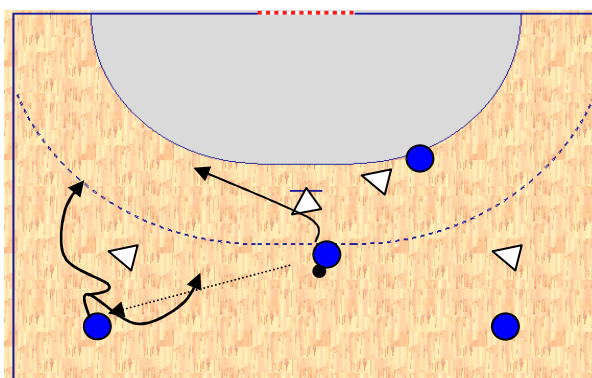


Figure 8 – Central provokes the scaling of the defence to stop change of position between defenders.

The described actions are only possible methods in the use of **clarification**, there are others that are more suitable, but I'm sure that all of them have a common denominator: to free a space for posterior exploitation.

A more complex way of clarification, involving a greater number of players, is presented in figure 9. Considering a defensive system 3:2:1, pivot clarifies a zone to be explored by the extreme (that receives the ball from central) when the ball circulates in the opposite sense to the **clarification**. A continuity solution, if exterior defender slides with the extreme, can be the finalisation of the lateral coming in from the exterior. Antón (1998) would describe this action as a double players' circulation coordinated and simultaneous (simultaneous movement of pivot and the extreme that try to offer a pass line or to fix players freeing zones), or successive if considering the spatial-temporal scale related to the extreme and lateral. This is, a double simultaneous clarification, in this case, or simple if only a zone is set free for posterior use.

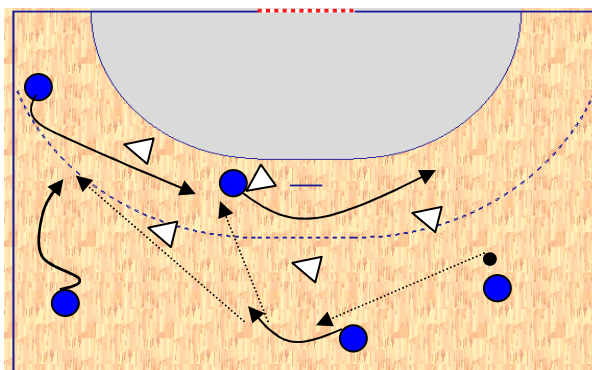


Figure 9 – Pivot clarifies to the extreme benefit receiving the ball from central.

For those less attentive, tasks of this nature can seem actions resulting from individual initiative. Yet, their success is strongly conditioned by the execution details and the creation of favourable conditions to an effective finalisation.

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