

1.1. BASICS OF OFFENCE AND DEFENCE SET-PLAY – THEORY

Handball Facts

- Second largest sport in Europe
- Second fastest team sport
- **Olympic Sport since 1936**
- Played in over 160 Countries Worldwide
- Over 15 million participants
- **Voted Best Sport at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.**

Attacking players move the ball up-court by **passing** or **dribbling** and shoot for goal from outside an arc marked on the court. No field player is allowed to reach the goal, but they are allowed to jump into the circle, if they are leaving it at once after the jump. Players may dribble the ball as in basketball but are allowed **three steps** before and after the dribble. Players are not allowed to play the ball with their legs below the knee or to dive on the floor to play a ball

Defensive players are allowed to **use their body, arms and hands to obstruct** an opponent either with or without the ball. The game is quite fast and includes much contact as the defenders try to bodily stop the attackers from approaching the goal. **Only frontal contact by the defenders is allowed**; when a defender stops an attacker with their arms on the side, the play is stopped and restarted from the nine meter line, with the attacking team in possession.

Positions

- **backcourt players:** Usually tall, they are good leapers who shoot from the backcourt directly or try to penetrate the defense.
- **Circle runners (pivot):** Screen and pick and shoot hard and fast from the six-meter line.
- **Wing players :** mostly score their goals by ‘flying’ into the circle from wing positions
- **The goalkeepers** need to be athletic, flexible, brave and have extremely quick reflexes.

Go Forward:

In Attack: The aim of the game is to score more goals than the opposition; this is achieved by throwing from distance, penetrating defense, throwing from the wings or circle.

Playing the fast break by quick change from defense to attack.

In Defence: Prevent scoring by cooperating, battling in 1:1 duels, intercepting, anticipating on attackers intentions.

Support the Ball Carrier at all Times:

Close support of the ball carrier allows more options in attack and means possession can be maintained. Close support also means no ground needs to be lost by having to pass the ball a long way to a team-mate.

Interchange players as much as possible

A fresh set of legs on the field can be the difference between winning and losing. Look to interchange your players while on attack and in the area of the interchange box.

(<http://www.sportplan.net/drills/EditSession.do?seId=6895082&OpenedSession=true&action=&open=true>)

- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Handball – A History**

The attack phase structure

We all know the basic structure of the attack phase in the high performance handball.

- Phase 1 – fast break or counterattack;
- Phase 2 – sustained counterattack (or secondary fast break);
- Phase 3 – organizing the attack phase;
- Phase 4 – organized attack system (with one or two pivots etc).

But according to the latest evolution of the high performance handball all of these phases face a quite strong and important change of structure, developing and organizing.

That means those four phases became:

- **three** (in some international handball schools)
 - fast break, sustained and organized attack phase, or
- **two phases:**
 - fast break and organized phase.

Why and how it will (or already did!?) influence these modifications the teaching, coaching and training process?

From the teaching point of view (here we include the minihandball and “young” handball) may be those approaching points (teaching, coaching, training) has some appropriate ways of developing.

From the coaching point of view, the modifications determined by those changing in the dynamic of the game phases are pretty obvious.

Lets take a look at the physiological side of the training session according to the changing of the fundamental four phases in two.

How we will train our players for “fast center handball” after more than “lets say” five years of totally different ways of training the attack phases?

How we will structure the drills according to the new requirements?

And how the players will face the new changing's (and challenge too!) and new demands as well?

Here is a pretty synthetic and very simplifying way of treating the basics of handball offence phase of the game.

The offensive combinations and their role in attack phase

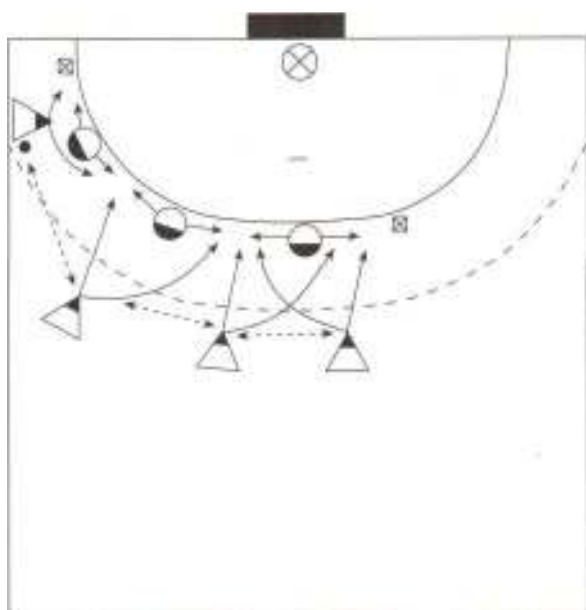
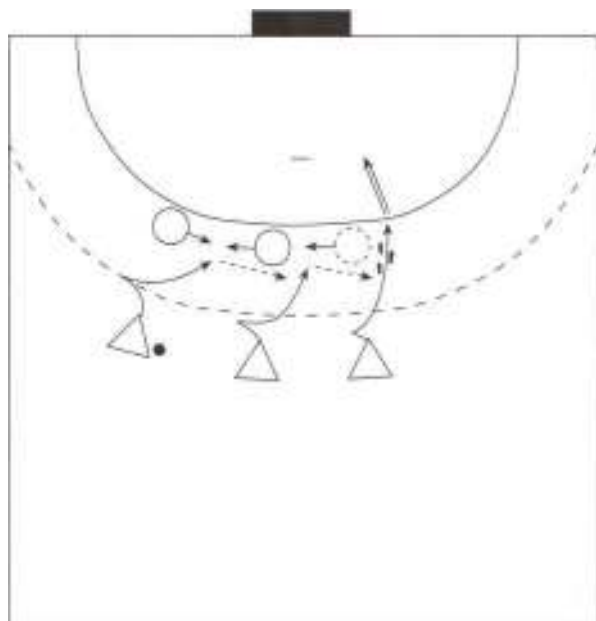
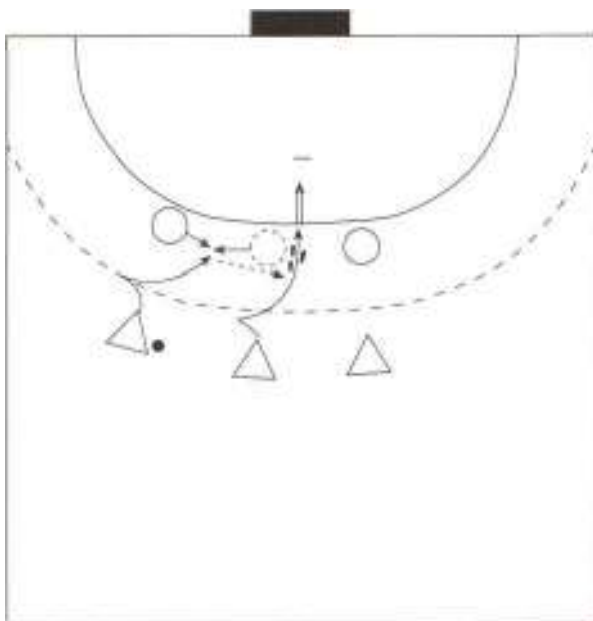
Even though team handball is played 6 vs. 6, scoring opportunities usually involve small groups creating an overload situation. If played correctly, this numerical advantage should leave one player unguarded for an open shot. Practicing combinations in 4 vs. 3 and 3 vs. 2 situations will enhance your awareness of numerical advantages and your decision-making abilities about them. You will learn to recognize when you are open to shoot and when you should pass the ball to a teammate who is in a better position to score.

Attacking the gap is an essential individual attack tactic. Equally important is your ability to support a teammate who is attacking a gap. When a teammate next to you attacks a gap and draws your defender, a 2 vs. 1

situation is created. Your awareness of the developing situation and anticipation of your defender's actions will help you take advantage of the overload (Dwight M. P., Clanton R. 1997).

- As you see your defender move to close the gap, quickly run to receive a pass and attack the defensive space vacated by your defender. Timing in this action is important for two reasons: (1) to create an open passing lane for your teammate, and (2) to get into the vacated space before your defender can recover. Moving too early will put you too far in front of your teammate, allowing the defense to obstruct the passing lane. Moving too late will allow your defender to recover to his or her defensive space and even the numbers back to one-on-one. If you receive the ball in proper timing to attack the vacated space and the next defender does not cover, you will have a clear path to penetrate the gap and shoot. If the next defender does cover, continue the overload by passing to the next teammate supporting your attack. (Dwight M. P., Clanton R. 1997.)

Use the same set-up, rules, and scoring as in Drill 1. The offense tries to score using all combinations



According to the previous aspects of attack phase, the defending one has to be in strictly relation (from the changing's point of view) with:

1. Fast running back or *quick retreat* (corresponding to fast break);
2. Temporary zone (corresponding to sustained fast break);
3. Organizing the defence phase (corresponding to the same in attack);
4. System defence phase – 6 – 0, 5 – 1, 4 – 2, 3 – 2 – 1 etc, (corresponding to the same in attack).

Now we have to be very attentive to the drills we use during training sessions, first, from the tactical point of view and second from the team collaboration point of view (including the decision make process!).

Whether playing in attack or defence the focal point is always the ball because only the ball can score. In attack this involves a small group of players working together to score goals and on defence a small group working to prevent goals. Effective defence requires the successful execution of three small group tactics: the defensive help triangle, taking over passing on procedure, and switching.

- Creating an overload, working for a situation in which attackers outnumber defenders, is the principle that should guide all offensive actions. Players achieve this by using their individual skills and tactics in support of and in combination with each other. The small group combinations of pick and roll and crossing are two tactics you can employ to create an overload. If they are executed correctly, a 2 vs. 1 situation develops, freeing you or a teammate for a shot. Intelligently coordinated actions with your teammates lay the groundwork for successful team attack (Dwight M. P., Clanton R. 1997.)

Why Are Defensive Combinations Important?

According to Dwight M. P. and Clanton R. 1997, when you step out and check the attacker in your defensive space, you create a hole behind you in the defensive structure—a vulnerable spot that the attackers could easily exploit. The defensive help triangle provides maximum defensive coverage at the point of the attack. The objective is to put pressure on the ball and fill any hole in the defense before an attacker can take advantage of it.

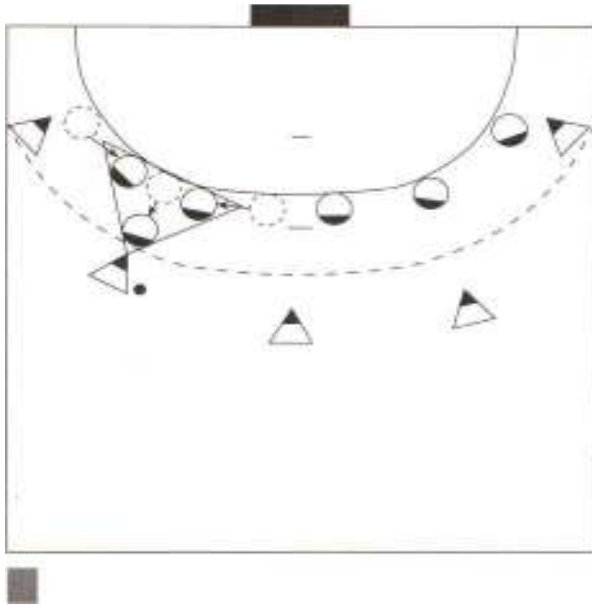
Just the presence of the circle runner is enough to disrupt defensive unity, but it is the circle runner's movement in attack that presents the toughest problems for defenders. Never leave the circle runner unguarded. The circle runner will move in and out of many defensive spaces trying to create openings in the defense structure.

To avoid confusion and to make sure one player is always responsible for the circle runner, all players must have command of the take over-pass on procedure.

Switching is the act of changing the opponent guarded. Anytime one attacker is moving into your defensive space and one is moving out simultaneously, or when two attackers are moving in the same space at the same time, the defenders responsible must switch opponents to avoid an overload.

How to Execute the Defensive Help Triangle

The same Dwight M. P. and Clanton R. in 1997, said that: the help triangle is formed by one defender positioned on the ball at the point of the triangle and two defenders positioned behind that defender providing help on either side (see the figure). When a defender steps out, it is the responsibility of the teammates on either side to squeeze in slightly to fill the hole created on the 6-meter line. The "help" defenders serve as the "point" defender's safety valves. If the point defender is beaten, the help defenders are in position to step out and prevent a shot or a penetration to the goal area. Covering the hole also helps prevent other attackers from moving into the open space for a direct pass and high-percentage shot from the 6-meter line.

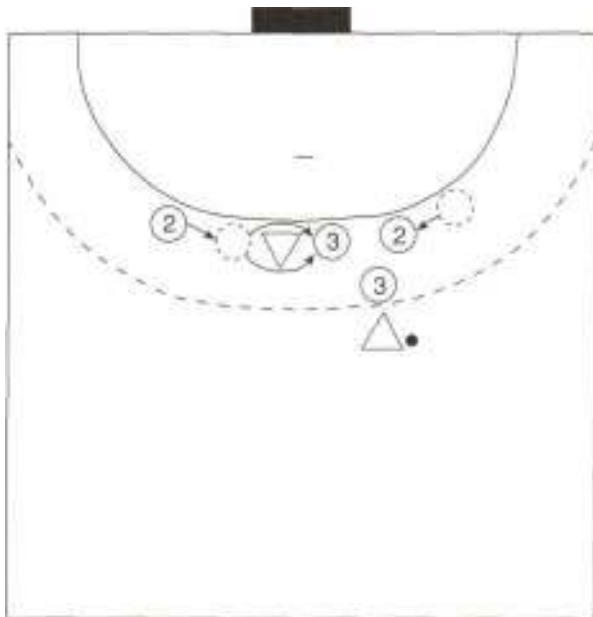


Communication in the Triangle

Communication is a key element in effectively executing the defensive help triangle. Communication is a two-way street. All three defenders should constantly talk to one another. Talking ensures that each knows who is stepping out and who is staying back to defend the 6-meter line. Executing the help triangle can be confusing at times, particularly when there are a circle runner and an attacking backcourt playing in the same defensive space. **Figure below** illustrates this situation.



The circle runner is between the number 3 defenders, and the center backcourt has the ball. The location of the circle runner and center backcourt presents a dilemma about coverage for the number 3 defenders. In this situation, two things have to happen to prevent a scoring opportunity: (1) you must put pressure on the ballhandler, and (2) you must control the circle runner. Anticipation and early communication are the keys. The number 3 defenders must decide who will step out to check the center backcourt and who will defend the circle runner. If you neglect either attacker he or she will have a clear scoring opportunity. To complete the help triangle, the number 2 defender on the side of the number 3 defender who stepped out should squeeze in to fill the hole on the 6-meter **line** (see the figure), (Dwight M. P. and Clanton R. 1997).



The purpose of defense is to prevent goals, so the focus of your team's efforts must be the ball and all the potential scorers in the immediate vicinity. Small group defense tactics are designed to ensure that this coverage occurs. Properly executing the defensive help triangle, take over and pass on procedure, and switching allows you to aggressively defend a ball handler in your defensive space with the peace of mind of knowing you've got help. Communication is the key to ensuring that all activity is covered. Verbally let your teammates know if you are stepping out, switching or taking over and passing on and expect the same from them. Remember that communication is a two-way street, so it's equally important that all communication be verbally acknowledged. Letting your teammates know that you hear them and understand their intentions allows them to confidently carry out their actions (Dwight M. P. and Clanton R. 1997).

Bibliography

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