

Slade, D.G. (2015, November, 18). A game centred approach to teaching handball: Introductory lessons. *Game sense Conference, Canterbury University, Christchurch.* (d.g.slade@massey.ac.nz)

Handball

This is a great game within either single gender or coeducation contexts. It brings together lots of fundamental skills plus some generic invasion game tactics. The game encourages lots of faking and hand-offs and its generally non-body contact nature ensures if you can catch and throw you can be involved in the game. The game requires some tactical work around a zone defence. It requires the ability to throw the ball into a goal within a rule constraint that allows for a player to dive into the throw. It also requires very quick, 'control-pass-move' activity. There is of course much more but as an introduction within the one-hour time slot I have been allocated this is a good start.

Support:

Today's session is an introductory one but a Google of Team Handball will reveal countless drills and ideas you could take on from today's session. I also think the game lends itself to the Sport Education model of instruction. It works well because while the techniques and tactics are not new, the game not being widely played has a 'we're all starting in this together' feel. It also provides lots of photo opportunities for spectacular shots and plays.

Tactics: Zone defence and fast break

A traditional approach to introducing players to this game would be to focus on technique. Teach and practice a range of throws. However, this game centred introduction that could be spread over a couple of lessons will instigate mandate¹ coaching opportunities as well as 'capture' the students as in motivating their desire to play the game. Pedagogically this game centred approach is much more in line with the concept of non-linear pedagogy and dynamical system theory around the concept of degrees of freedom in movement than a behaviourist approach. Within the dynamical systems theory it is important that as the learner becomes more stable in their performance it is your job to disturb that stability with a little extension. Ultimately you arrive at a player who has a great range of techniques and movements and one who can improvise.

In these activities I set out the outcomes within a constraining game context and let the players arrive at an understanding of what is required. I can have input at whatever level I deem appropriate. I might ask questions about ball movement or speed, tactical questions.

Here is the first activities set up as a circuit.

ZONE DEFENCE

Tactic: Zone Defence. Technique: One handed throw at a cone target.

4 vs. 3. Two defenders out in front and one goalkeeper in a goalkeeper only zone. Cones for targets. Play 5 attacks – keep the score and then rotate defenders and attackers.

No running with the ball. Shot at goal with one hand. No body contact. Cannot snatch ball from player's hands. Can only hold ball for 3 seconds before pass.

Extension: Set up two goals on other side of the gym. If defenders intercept ball they can throw directly or after ONE pass to goal to score a bonus point.

JUMP CONE

Technique: Throw from a jump to hit a cone.

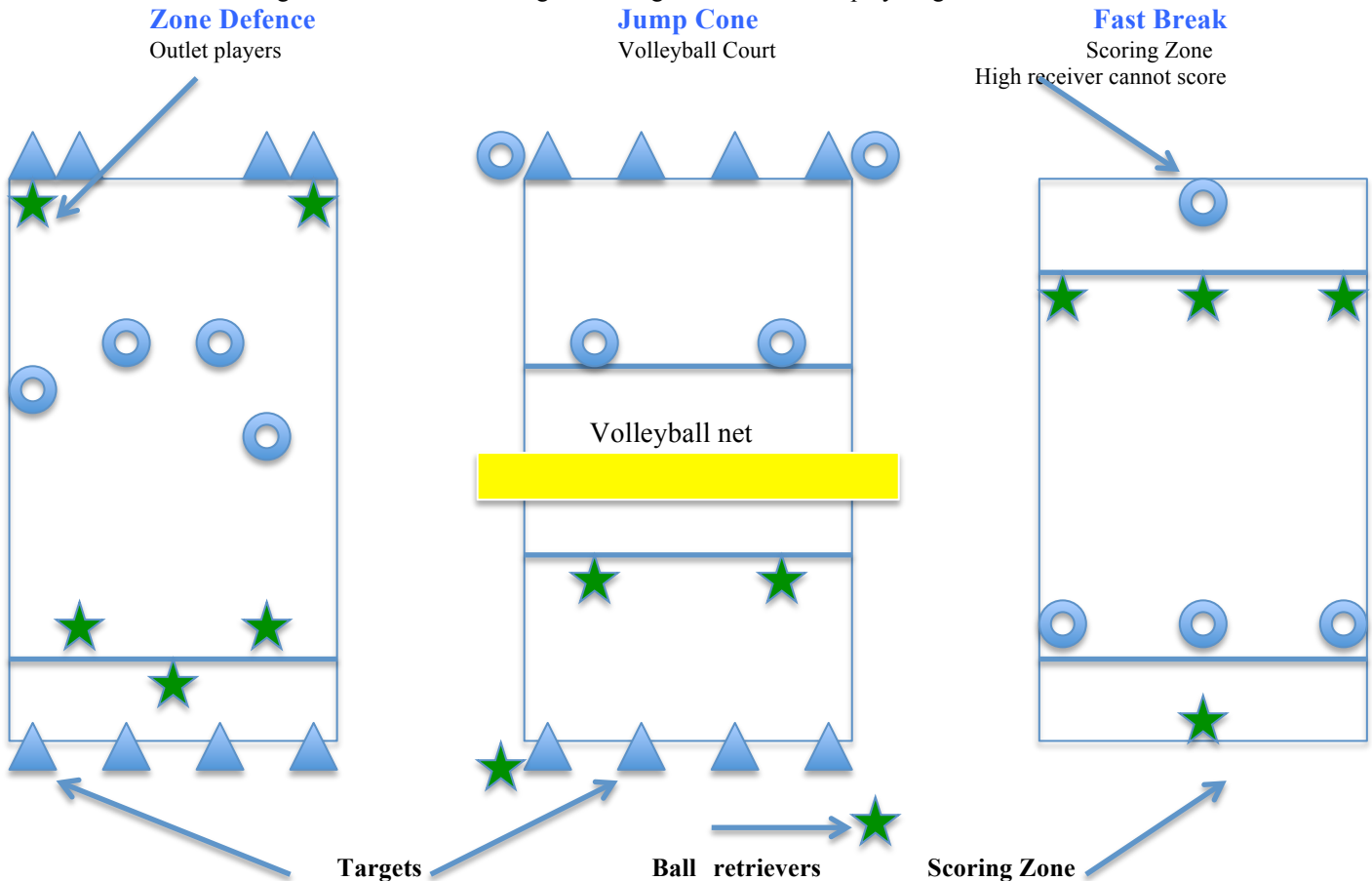
There is some defending but the main focus here is to encourage a jump throw action. The constraints encourage implicit learning around the need to jump in order to generate a downward throw. The line behind which the throw must be taken mirrors Handball rules. Defending is also part of this game but my experience is that players merely concentrate on trying to hit the cones.

¹ Mandate coaching occurs when from a game centred learning context it either becomes obvious to the instructor or the players request some technical insights that are best delivered in the form of a drill. Deficiencies in playing the game provide the mandate for the more traditional approach to instruction (Slade, 2014.)

FAST BREAK

The implicit learning here is associated with teaching a wide external focus in vision. The game requires players after a point has been scored to immediately look up for the long outlet pass in the form of a fast break. It requires the receiver to lead into space and as such promotes relationship passing i.e., passer and receiver need to understand each others playing capabilities. If the fast break pass is not on then the shorter option needs to be taken. Either way, configuration of the game encourages a fast break and the counter defensive option of a very fast transition between attack and defence.

All of these games lead into the next games designed to further the players game-sense.



REPRESENTATIVE LEARNING DESIGN

The key to a representative learning design is that the perception and action elements that players will experience in the game are replicated in the practice or in this case the learning progressions in the introduction to this game. In order to achieve that linkage the next games become more Handball specific.

ZONE DEFENCE EXTENSION

The non-specific zone defence game now is played around the goal circle of Handball. Make up some constraints to make the game work and achieve your outcomes but essentially you are looking to move the ball so quickly and at times randomly that the defence cannot keep up. To score you place your foot in the circle after receiving a pass. Don't let players wait in that position to score. After a goal, retreat to outside the dotted line. Work a defence vs. attack that ensures the attackers need to work hard for the point. Encourage talking.

Extension: Instead of the step into the goalkeeper zone, attackers score by throwing the ball into the goal. **Constraint:** The throw must be a one handed, jump throw that results in the thrower on releasing the ball landing in the goalkeeper area. This combines the Zone defence game with Jump Cone.

Extension: Attackers now start at half way. Only three defenders but a goalkeeper is added. If you have six players per team I'd play 5 attackers and a substitute. For the defenders: 3 defenders, a goalkeeper and two outlet players if the defenders secure a turnover of possession.

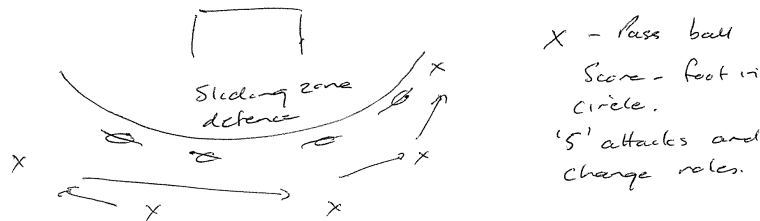
THREE COURT KINGS

Three teams playing. I play it as 5vs 3 defenders and a goalkeeper. You could play with extra field players and no goalie. Your call. One team attacks. Score stay on as Kings and attack other end. Lose possession or miss goal; defenders become middle team 'Court Kings.' Outlet players join attack, goalie moves to side. Joins in at next turn-over but not as goal keeper

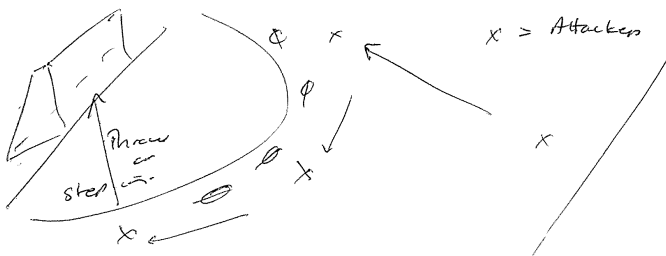
From here you can go to technique development, sport education model or video analysis. Look at U-tube for ideas, making up plays, teaching games that demonstrate a fast break. It is down to you and your imagination. Enjoy.

D. Slade, author: *Transforming Play: Teaching tactics and game-sense.* Human Kinetics.

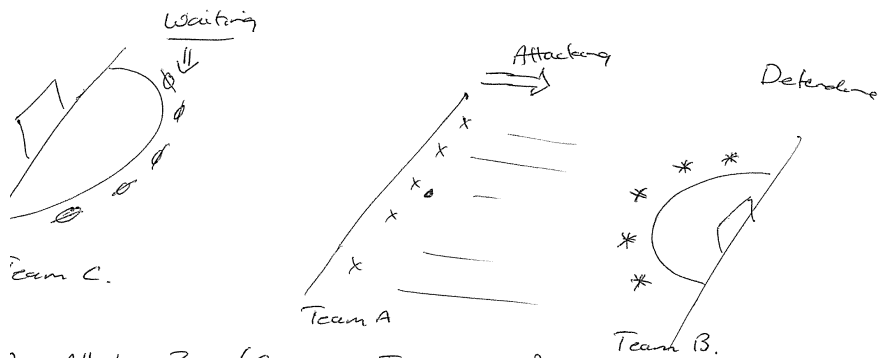
Half court 5 v 4 games where the object was to penetrate the goal circle. This was about developing fastball movement in order to get a space to penetrate that in the actual game would result in a dive and shot at goal. The defence was a sliding zone one.



Half Court game as before but now with the option of also throwing the ball into the goal as a means of scoring. The defenders now have to contend with the fact that a fake pass could open up a goal throw. I'm not sure but I think there needed to be a rule about where you could throw from otherwise you could stand back and just lob the ball into the goal.



5 v 5, three team attacking handball (Note this format works well with other games too, especially basketball). My own preference is to have two outlet players per 5 so that there is always a 5 v 3 attacking advantage. It also provides a focus for the outlet pass at the turn over.



A - Attacks B - (Score or Turn-over -) - B attacks C & A become defenders. B score vs C or turnover - Team C attacks Team A. Continuous.