

TEACHING HANDBALL THROUGH MOVEMENT GAMES

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Abstract: Handball is becoming increasingly popular worldwide as the quality of performing diverse and complex technical skills continues to improve. In particular, developing effective means and methods aimed at achieving high performance in handball players is of great relevance. The coordination of players' actions and the large number of complex technical techniques contribute to the growing interest in this sport. Moreover, with competition between teams intensifying, it is crucial to identify the factors that influence game outcomes and to purposefully plan the training process. This includes improving passing and receiving, feinting movements, and the accuracy of shots on goal starting from the initial stage of training. Considering these aspects, targeted planning of the training process remains one of the most pressing issues.

Keywords: game-based method, general physical fitness, competitive game activity, physical and technical training, proper organization of the educational and training process.

Introduction. In our republic, particular attention is being paid to implementing systematic measures aimed at developing sport games and increasing their mass participation, as this is one of the priority directions of state policy in the field of physical education and sport. The necessity has been defined to "introduce into practice clear programs that contribute to strengthening the population's health in the sphere of physical education and sport." Based on this, there is a growing need to conduct research in handball related to the technology of athlete selection, improving the technical and tactical preparedness of players, and enhancing the educational and training process at the initial stage of preparation for young handball athletes.

However, in these studies, the problem of using targeted movement games and exercises as a primary means of developing young handball players' physical and technical preparedness from the very beginning of training has not been sufficiently implemented by handball coaches. As a result, a number of requirements arise in building a solid foundation for handball players' basic preparation. This, in turn, necessitates conducting research focused on improving the methodology of using movement games in organizing the educational and training process for young handball players at the initial stage of preparation.

In pedagogical practice, the game-based method is widely used to address general physical fitness problems and is also broadly applied as an auxiliary tool in sports training. This has been reflected in the scientific and methodological works of scholars such as V.N. Platonov, M.S. Bril, V.I. Lyakh, I.M. Korotkov, S.A. Shmakov, H. Hammami, and T.S. Usmonkhojaev.

Among leading foreign researchers—J.L. Kozina, I.G. Shestakov, V.Ya. Ignatieva, V.M. Geletskiy, Y.D. Zheleznyak, and L.S. Luteberget—there is a strong emphasis on the need for innovative approaches to properly organize the educational and training process for children practicing handball in sports schools and to develop their physical and technical preparedness.

Based on the study of scientific and methodological literature, we became convinced that all components of sports training carried out at the initial stage—especially the process of developing technique—are implemented with difficulty. Yet in practice, coaches often overlook the developmental potential of movement games within the system of sports training. In our view,

this is related to the insufficiently formed competence of coaches in using movement games during the training process. Selecting movement games and modifying them purposefully requires greater qualifications from the coach and, accordingly, a high level of pedagogical mastery.

As a result of the analysis of a questionnaire survey conducted among handball coaches regarding the organization and conduct of training sessions, as well as the significance of using movement games when teaching game technique to young female handball players at the initial stage of preparation, improvements were achieved in several directions. These included preparation for conducting movement games and their implementation, preparing handball players under conditions of competitive game activity, classifying training based on the use of a competitive-game approach, systematizing movement games applied in training, and developing methods for their use in practice. At the beginning of the pedagogical experiment, indicators of the physical and technical preparedness of female athletes training at the initial stage of preparation increased.

Methodology. A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design with a control group was used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching basic handball techniques through movement games at the initial training stage. The study involved 30 female beginner handball players (sports school/club), aged 11–13 years, with no previous systematic handball training experience beyond introductory sessions. Participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group ($n = 15$) and a control group ($n = 15$). Inclusion criteria were: (1) beginner level, (2) regular attendance, and (3) absence of acute injuries or medical contraindications. Participants with more than 20% missed sessions were excluded from final analysis.

Training intervention. The intervention lasted 8 weeks, with 3 sessions per week (total: 24 sessions). Each session lasted 60 minutes and followed a unified structure:

- Warm-up (10–12 min): dynamic mobility and basic ball-handling tasks;
- Main part (30–40 min): skill development and small-sided games;
- Cool-down (3–5 min): low-intensity movement and stretching.

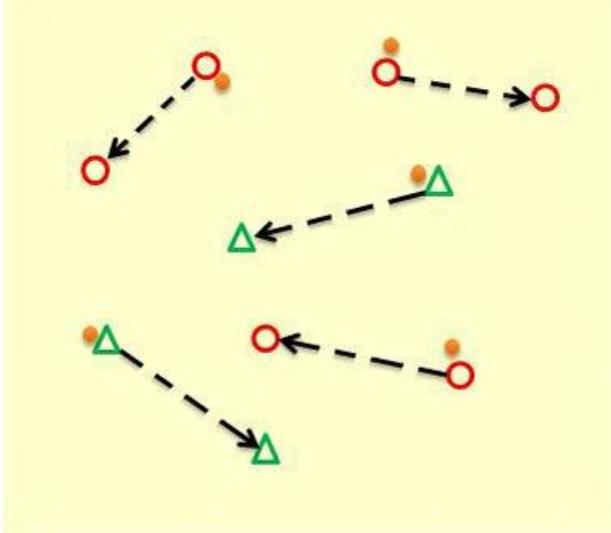
Experimental group: training was centered on targeted movement games designed to teach and consolidate handball techniques in game-like conditions. The games were selected and modified according to the “three-step rule” and time restrictions typical for handball. Examples included:

- “Play Together” (2v2 passing while moving into open space; additionally attempting to intercept/knock away opponents’ balls);
- “Protect Your Teammates” (a chaser attempts to tag a player without a ball; ball holders pass quickly to protect the at-risk teammate; 1–2 balls can be used).

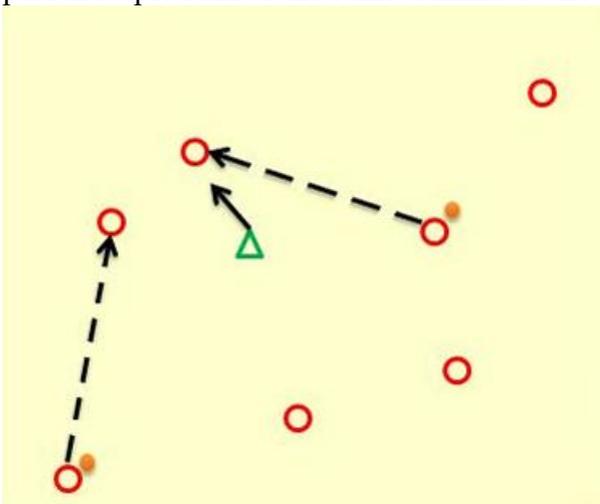
Across the program, games were systematically aligned with technical objectives:

(1) ball handling and catching, (2) passing under pressure, (3) feints and change of direction, (4) shooting accuracy, and (5) basic defensive positioning. Game complexity progressed weekly from simple passing tasks to more complex small-sided competitive games (e.g., 2v2 and 3v3 with constraints).

“Play Together.” The players are divided into teams of two. Each team has a ball and must pass it to one another. In addition to running into open space to receive the ball, teams should try to steal or knock away the ball of other teams. The three-step rule and the time rule apply in this game.



“Protect Your Teammates.” The chaser tries to tag a player who does not have the ball. Players who are in possession of the ball must pass it to the teammate who is at risk of being tagged. One or several balls may be used. If more balls are used, players should be careful not to pass multiple balls to the same teammate who is in danger of being caught.



Advantages of teaching handball through movement games:

1. Creating an engaging and active learning environment: By using movement games in teaching handball, learners can be involved in an active and enjoyable way. Such games increase young people’s interest in sport and physical activity.
2. Teaching rules and technique more effectively: The basic elements of handball (ball handling, passing, shooting, and defending) can be taught more easily through movement games. These games provide learners with practical experience, which is often more effective than purely theoretical instruction.
3. Developing teamwork and cooperation: Handball is a team sport; therefore, movement games are important for developing teamwork skills, cooperation, and a healthy sense of competition.

Methodological principles of using movement games in teaching handball:

1. A step-by-step approach: Learners should first be taught simple actions, such as passing and receiving, and then gradually progress to more complex tasks. In this process, movement games develop from simple drills to more complex group games.

2. Increasing learners' motivation: Movement games encourage active participation, enhance interest in sport, and make the learning process more enjoyable.
3. Physical and psychological readiness: Movement games activate learners through movement and prepare them both physically and psychologically. They help learners make quick decisions and assess both their own condition and the situation of the team.

Results. Following the 8-week training program, positive changes were observed in both groups; however, the experimental group (movement-game-based training) demonstrated more pronounced improvements across most indicators of technical and physical preparedness. In terms of technical performance, the experimental group showed clearer progress in passing accuracy and catching reliability, especially under time pressure and in situations requiring movement into open space. Improvements were also evident in dribbling agility, where post-test performance reflected faster and more controlled execution of the slalom dribble task. In addition, shooting accuracy increased after the intervention, indicating better coordination of approach steps, body control, and targeting of goal zones in game-like conditions.

Physical fitness measures also improved over the training period. The experimental group generally displayed better gains in speed and agility tests (e.g., short sprint and shuttle run), which is consistent with the high-intensity, variable-direction demands of movement games. Explosive power and endurance indicators showed positive dynamics as well, suggesting that repeated game situations supported the development of general physical readiness alongside sport-specific skills.

In contrast, the control group (traditional drill-based approach) demonstrated mainly moderate progress, particularly in tasks practiced in more static or repetitive formats. Although some technical improvements were recorded, the transfer of these skills into dynamic, competitive game situations was less evident compared with the experimental group. Overall, the results indicate that structured use of targeted movement games at the initial stage of preparation supports more effective consolidation of basic handball techniques and promotes broader improvements in physical readiness and engagement during training.

Conclusion. Teaching handball through movement games is an effective approach for increasing physical activity, reinforcing sport rules and technical skills through practice, and developing teamwork.

This method helps learners develop a stronger interest in sport and can turn physical activity into an enjoyable and preferred pastime. Through movement games, learners successfully acquire key handball techniques such as ball handling, passing, shooting, and defending.