



2008 EHF Top Coaches' Seminar – Skopje / MKD

1. Start of a new Olympic cycle – many teams with a lot of newcomers.
2. For some teams it was their first participation at all.
3. A few teams very well organized and experienced.
4. Referees team with a lot of rookies as well.
5. New schedule with more rest days for the teams.

Table of data

	average	ESP	GER	NOR	RUS
Attacks	62	57	65	61	60
Shots	50	42	52	53	52
Shots on target	40				
Goals	26-27	24	29.5	32	27
Turnovers	16	18	17	12.5	15
Shots against		34	42	35	41
On target		31	42	35	39
Saves		12	19	16	18

General statements

1. Defence systems extremely individual.
2. Turnover play well trained
3. Experienced GKs vs. young shooters
4. New style of cooperation between coaches and referees necessary



In the following the most common trends in defence and offence set-play will be discussed more in detail with reference to the respective video clips (when available).

In this discussion only the teams participating in the main round will be respected.

1. Defence systems

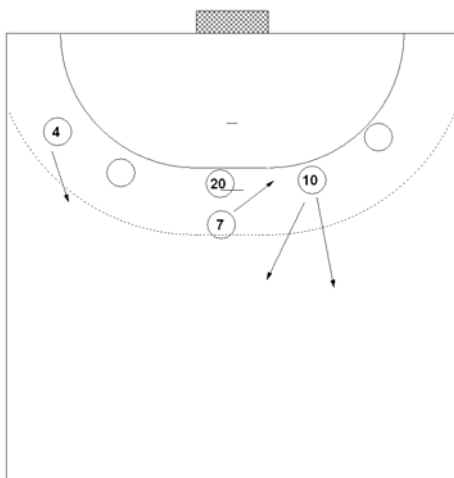
It seems that we have reached another step in the development of the set-play defence. In the old days the figures of the concepts made it very clear how the defence formation worked and how the style of the cooperation of the players was.

The second step was when we had to define in between the figures which style of the respective formation was played. French 5-1 is very much different from the late Russian 5-1 and both are far away from old style 5-1. The same applies in the different interpretations of 6-0, where Scandinavian, Spanish and German 6-0 all are far away from the old orthodox one. which makes it impossible to characterize a formation by mere figures.

Some examples for this:

5-1 GER

Refer to video clip GER 5-1



Basically a 5-1 set up, but will never look like that. With LOERPER (#10) playing very deep, it will look a lot like a 4-2. If there is any transition to a 4-2 by the offence, WÖRZ (#7) will fall back to the line, therefore the set-up will look like the asymmetric Russian 5-1. In any case JURACK (#4) will play very aggressive and go for steals and early fast break.

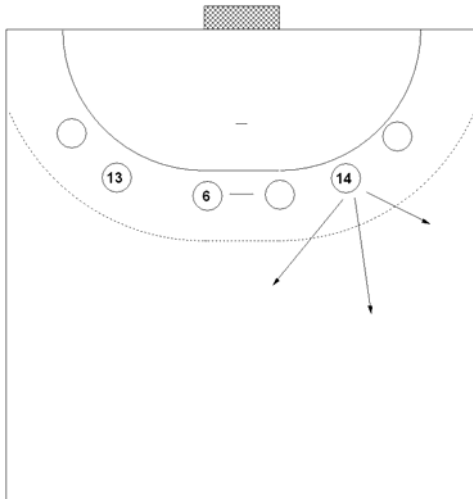
With LOERPER playing on BR, JURACK will stay at the line – but not always. This will be a matter of individual agreement between the two players, when to switch.

In 6-5 GER will play 5+1

Video clip GER 5+1

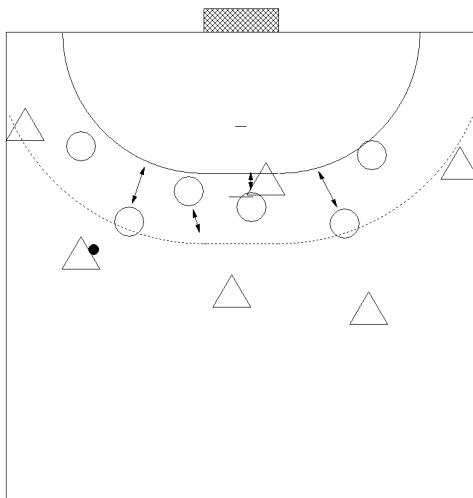


6-0 BLR
No video clip



From a 6-0 set-up, KURCHANKOVA (#14) will go deep in the style of „Red Indian“. She will move according to the situation and cover a wide area in a total irregular way making it impossible to predict the action. Sometimes she will even go for short 5+1 and then return back to the line.

6-0 ESP
Video clip ESP 6-0



In this variation of 6-0 all the four players in the central area will go deep. IR and IL will go up to 9m, BR and BL will go to 10m or even more.

According to the situation there will be anticipating move in order to screen ball flights as shown in this sketch.

In case of an attack player sweeping in, this player will be accompanied and after switch the respective defender will return to her basic position.

These are just some examples of a development that took place in all the teams. If we give basic formations for the teams now in the set-play there are much more individual interpretations than it was some years ago.

So we have to take into account that if we talk about 8 teams playing 6-0 as the basic formation we have to split into

- BLR, UKR - individual solutions by single players
- HUN, RUS – more or less orthodox
- SWE, DEN, NOR – Scandinavian style, but BR and BL more deep than before
- ESP – specific style.



Four teams played 5-1 as the basic conception, but the same applies here as well.

- GER – very specific version
- ROU – basically French style 5-1
- MKD – orthodox version
- CRO – very deep, sometimes going into 3-2-1.

Alternative formations were 6-0 (ROU, CRO), 5-1 (RUS, HUN) and 5+1 (CRO, DEN) in specific situations.

2. Goalkeeper styles and trends

In general the old fashioned basic systems are still in operation in terms of the task distribution between defenders and goalkeepers.

There were the

- short – long side of the goal system
- throwing arm system
- Scandinavian system which is a mixture depending of the kind of shot fired.

But in terms of the goalkeepers the situation is even more unclear than it is in the defence systems.

The only general line is that Scandinavian goalkeepers play Scandinavian style – mostly. In certain cases after consultation with the defence even some of them will do variations. As for all the others they all play very individual and they do have a lot of specific agreements with their defenders.

One of the main reasons for this might be seen in the transfer situation. Many of the goalkeepers are quite experienced and playing abroad, some even played in different clubs in different countries, so they had to arrange themselves with different systems and interpretations.

Adding to this we had a situation in this tournament with a good number of very experienced goalkeepers facing many young strikers thus giving them quite some advantage.

It could be seen during the course of the tournament that because of scouting and the gain of experience the extreme high figures of saves of the first days decreased.

Still we had very fine appearances of the goalkeepers and some promising youngsters in this position. And still the performance of the goalkeeper is a decisive factor for the result of the game in most of the matches.

3. Fast break and fast throw-off

Since the turnover play of all the teams has improved tremendously the conceptive fast-break has disappeared. All the teams play fast-breaks with single players after a steal and with 4-5 players running straight lanes if they win the ball by saves or blocked shots.

Fast throw-offs were hardly seen, only the teams of HUN (just for initiation) and GER (until termination) showed this as a regular element that was played frequently.



4. Offence set-play

The basic statement is that team tactics are out, all the successful teams used to build their offence play on group tactics 2-2 or 3-3.

In these moves the shot of the backcourt player will be fired over the lineplayer or through a gap created by this player.

This is a style that is taken from men's handball, the team of FRA was the first one using it very frequently in the 1992 OG in Barcelona.

There are fast jump shots as well as forearm shots and even lay-away shots for executing this particular goal shots. That means that we have a good development in terms of the shooting skills of the backcourt players in female handball since we can find three or four players in every team with that capability.

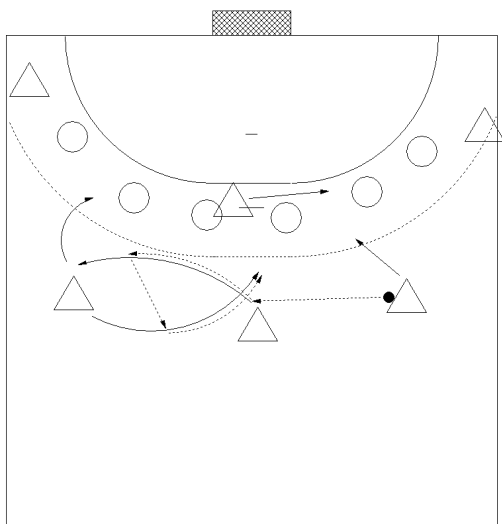
The second very common action is straight breakthrough after a diagonal pass following a crossing or double-crossing.

This is a general finding, there is only a clear difference in the preparation of this shooting situation and according to the nations I will talk about a "Northern" (NOR, SWE, DEN, GER) and a "Southern" (ESP, ROU, CRO, MKD) style of preparation.

The "Northern" preparation is done by crossings, double-crossings or sweeping in of a backcourt player.

"Northern" 1

Video clip Northern 1



After an initial crossing the LB will be in a central position for a shot over the LP. At the same time the RB and the PM will be ready to receive the ball and go for penetration.

Additional solution: LP moves with the ball flight, either for creating a shot position for RB or to receive the ball.

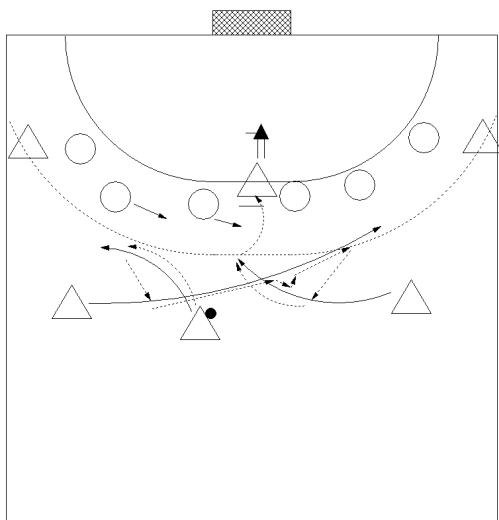
After a re-pass LB to PM continuation by breakthrough or by pass to LW.

Remark: In the video clip the team of GER has done the crossing already before the free throw and so the shot of JURACK is executed after a fast give and go move with LOERPER only.



“Northern” 2

Video clip NOR DX+KM



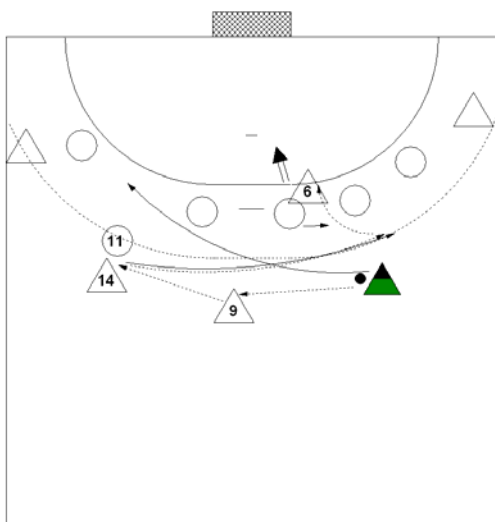
Double-crossing starting from the PM with the RB playing a short pass to the LP in the end.

Alternative solutions will be shot of the RB over the LP or pass to the PM who will go for breakthrough.

If this penetration by the PM after the diagonal pass might be prevented by the OR, a short pass to the LW will follow.

“Northern” 3

Video clip NOR add player



In a short-handed situation NOR brings in an additional court player to the position of RB, because RUS starts playing 5+1 against LARSEN (#14).

This player sweeps inside for the line after passing the ball to the PM (LUNDE #9).

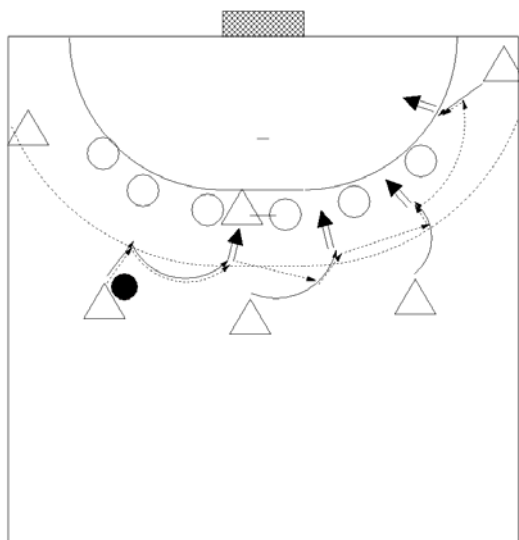
The PM passes on the LB who can take the ball in spite of being pressed and moves fast towards throwing arm.

A shot of the LB is prevented by the defence but still she succeeds in passing the ball to the LP for the shot.



The “Southern” style preparation is done by 1-1 actions and continuation by parallel thrust. Sometimes the initiating move can be sweeping in of a wing player as well, but again we will find 1-1 plus continuation.

“Southern” 1
Video clip ROU Off2

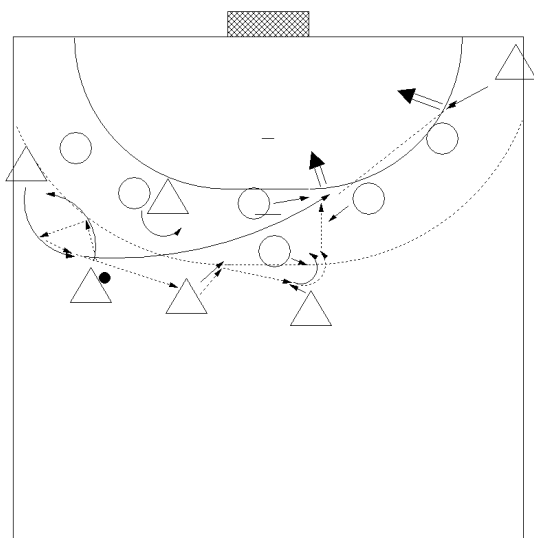


The move starts with a 1-1 towards throwing arm to fire over LP. If this does not work, continuation follows with parallel thrust until the wing position.

This is the basic move from which passing to the LP might come from every position.

The finish might be breakthrough as well as fast jump shot or forearm shot.

“Southern” 2
Video clip ESP Off1



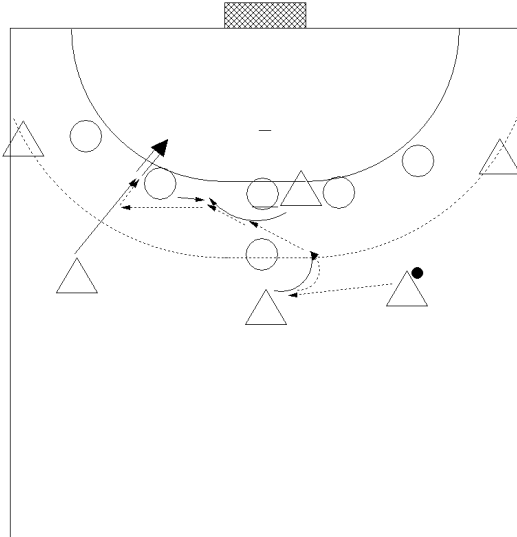
After a short crossing with the LB the LW passes the ball on to the PM and sweeps in fort he line.

After a short parallel thrust of PM and RB the RB (righthanded) passes on to the LW at the line.

Alternative: In some matches the LW passed on to the RW in the corner.



“Southern” 3
Video clip ESP Of2



The PM starts a 1-1 action towards throwing arm. The LP starts a countermove off the ball and receives the pass in this move.

With the BR of the defence closing in against the LP, she passes on to the running LB who has free space for the breakthrough.

This move can be played to either side and continued until the wing position.

5.Cooperation between coaches and referees

According to all the details that have been mentioned in this paper and the fact that the average time of the attacks was around 20 seconds the cooperation between coaches and referees must be thought over in two very important aspects at least.

First of all the set play in this tournament turned out to be too hectic, therefore we do need a new definition of the so called “passive play”. Because, if a team really tries to score and just fails to succeed, the term “passive play” is not correct.

So we have to find a different term for the delay of play and the denying of terminating the attack play.

Second both sides must take actions for a real cooperation in the future.

Following the findings of this tournament and previous observations in men's tournaments it has to be stated clearly that for the good referee of the future rules and regulations only will be just too little.

The referees must learn about tactics and philosophy of the game and train actively in cooperation with teams. They will have to change habits and even the positioning at the pitch in order to match the requirements of the more and more changing set-ups of the teams.

One of the most important tools of the referee of the future will be anticipation and this can only be achieved by constant training and active cooperation with coaches and teams.

On the other hand the coaches must learn more about rules and regulations and they have to keep themselves on line with the guidelines that are worked out for the referees.

This will enable them to work out strategic concepts in accordance to refereeing and will lead from the present “hide and seek” behaviour to a real kind of cooperation.

Referees cannot play without coaches and players – coaches cannot win titles without referees.