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**Title: Theory of open 5:1 zone defence**

### Introduction

The actions of the defenders in the zone defence 5:1 may vary depending on the basic concept that is used. In particular there is a difference in terms of aggressiveness and depth of attacking toward the attackers. This is meant as acting against an attack with classic layout – two wings, three backs and one pivot, as in the transformation of attack with two pivots. Regarding this aggressiveness in principle we can consider 5:1 zone defence as more open or more close zone defence.

In this contribution open 5:1 zone defence system is presented. Players stand in their basic position in two lines. Along six metres line act outside right (OR), outside left (OL), mid-right (MR), mid-left (ML) and centre (C) defenders. At the centre of the playing field stand the player who is furthest from the line of goalkeepers area – front centre (FC) at about 9 metres (Figure 1).

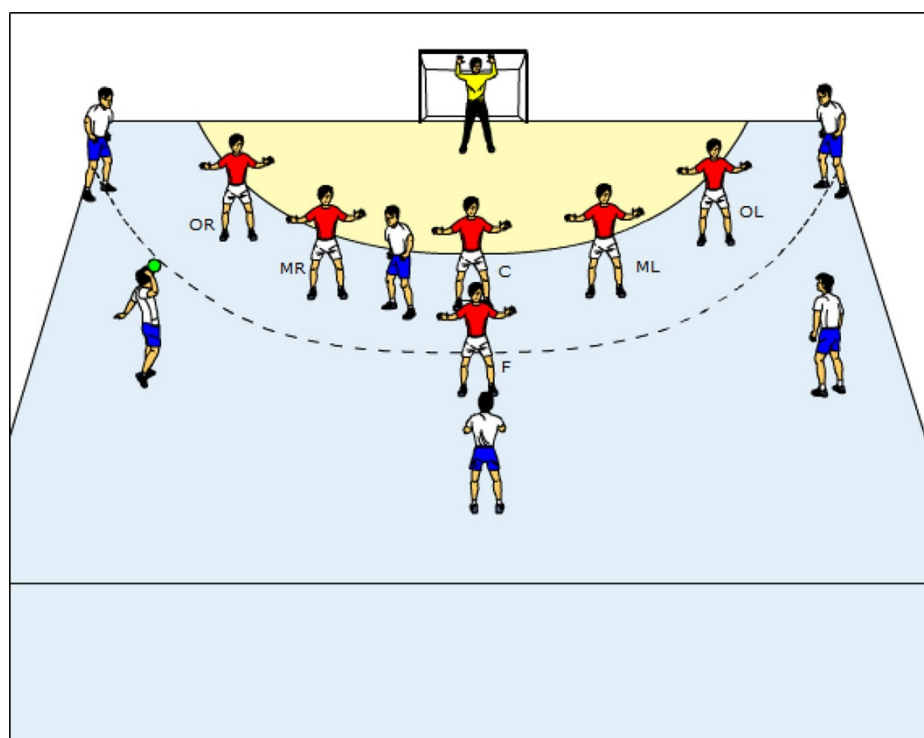


Figure 1: Player's initial position in 5:1 zone defence.

### **Basic individual and team tactic of 5:1 open zone defence**

Similar as in the 3:2:1 zone defence the main task of the OR and OL is to provide a good width of the zone and to prevent shoots from the wing position. With this purpose they use especially side acting along the six metres line. Rarely and only as an exception (when they have to correct the mistake of other players) they act also in depth. But they can also use a tactical approach to hinder the pass between back player and wing player. They have also a very important role at guarding the pivot player, especially when he moves in a very width position. So they help the MR and ML defenders (in collaboration with other players). The tasks of C defender are slightly different as they are in 3:2:1 zone defence. Namely in a principle he can also act in a depth of the court toward the back players (Figure 2). F defender is basically responsible for CB attacker. He can also help other defenders to prevent dangers situations (Figure 1).

The work of MR, ML and C defenders depend mainly on the position of the attacking pivot player. If the pivot stands between the MR or ML defender and C on the side of the ball, whilst the ball is in possession of the back player (e.g. LB is in possession of the ball, pivot stands between MR and C defenders), the piston movement of the back attacker determines who and how deep will step towards the ball and who will remain with the pivot. If the run of the LB is straight (wide run), MR defender moves towards the ball up to the 8-metre distance from the goal. When the run of the LB is towards the middle of the field, C defender moves towards the ball up to the 9 or 10-metre distance from the goal (Figure 2). When the pivot stands on the other side than MR can freely move much more in the depth toward the LB attacker (more open) (Figure 3).

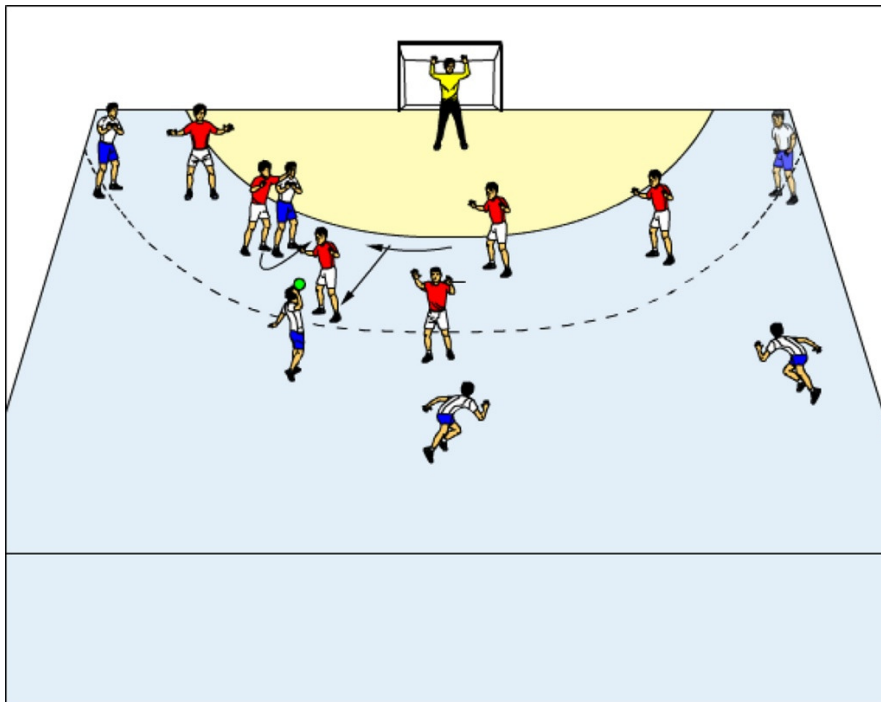


Figure 2: Player's position when the LB makes a piston movement toward centre – P position is between MR and C.

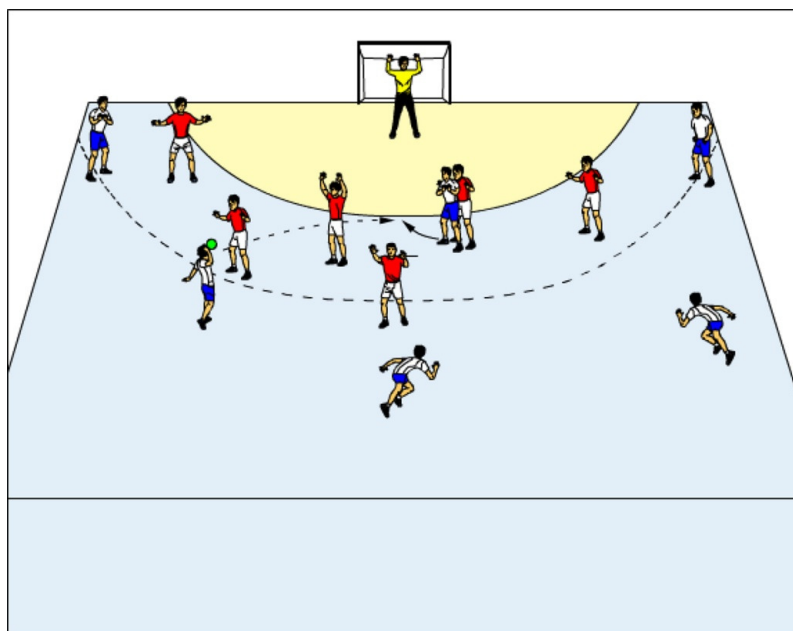


Figure 3: Player's position when the LB makes a piston movement toward centre – P is on the opposite side.

A special case of team tactical acting in zone defence 5:1 represent the reaction of defenders when attack make a transition to play with two pivots, two backs and two wings (one of backs run to goalkeeper's area). In this case the defence should make a transition into zone defence 4:2 (or even combined defence 4+2) (Figure 4). In the second case however team makes a transition into combined defence 5+1 (Figure 5). Similarly is valid also in the case when wing player run along the goalkeepers area line. Now MR defender act aggressive and F remain in the basic position (Figure 6).

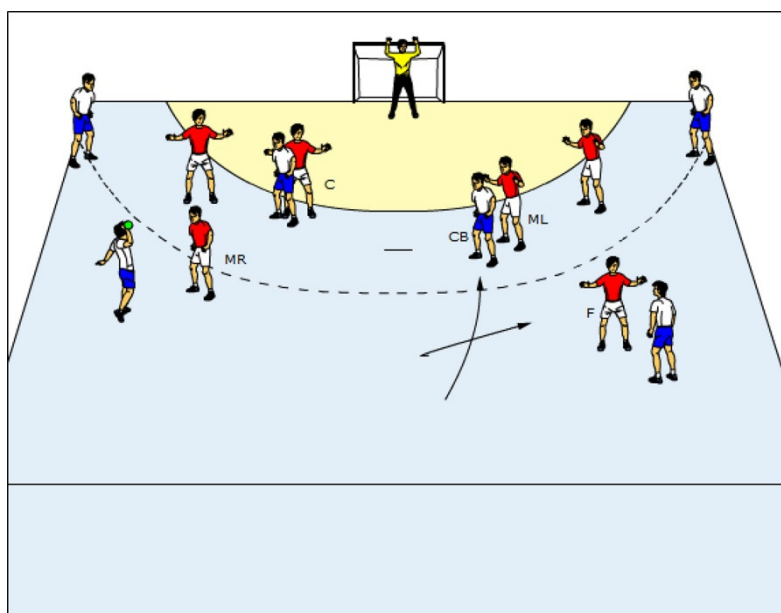


Figure 4: Players position when attacking team makes a transition and continue to play with 2 pivots, 2 backs and 2 wings (one of the back players take a position beside goalkeeper line).

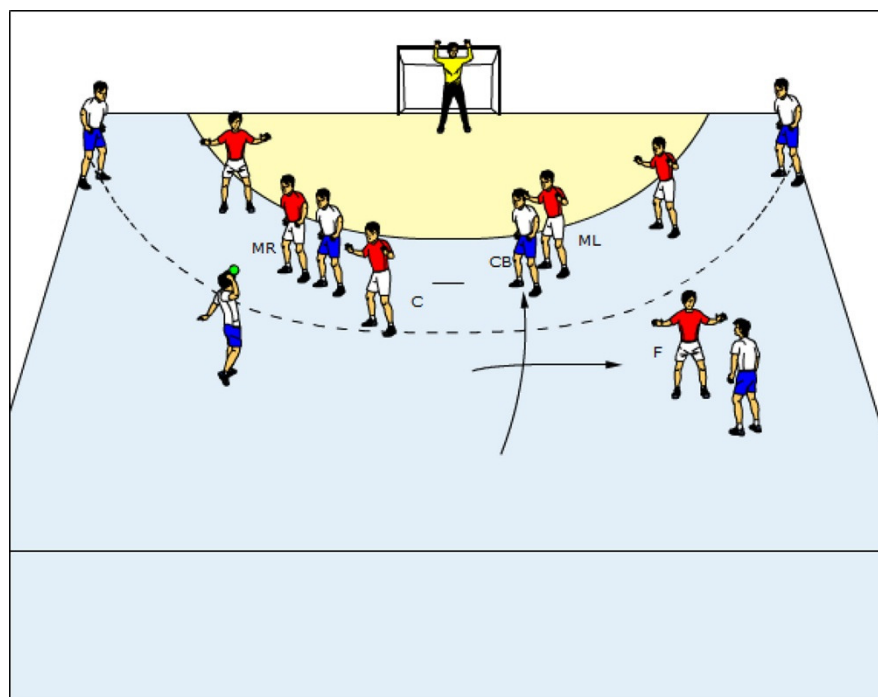


Figure 5: Players position when attacking team makes a transition and continue to play with 2 pivots, 2 backs and 2 wings (one of the back players take a position beside goalkeeper line) – 5+1 zone defence. CB run toward goalkeeper line F defender overtake RB attacker and C act aggressive.

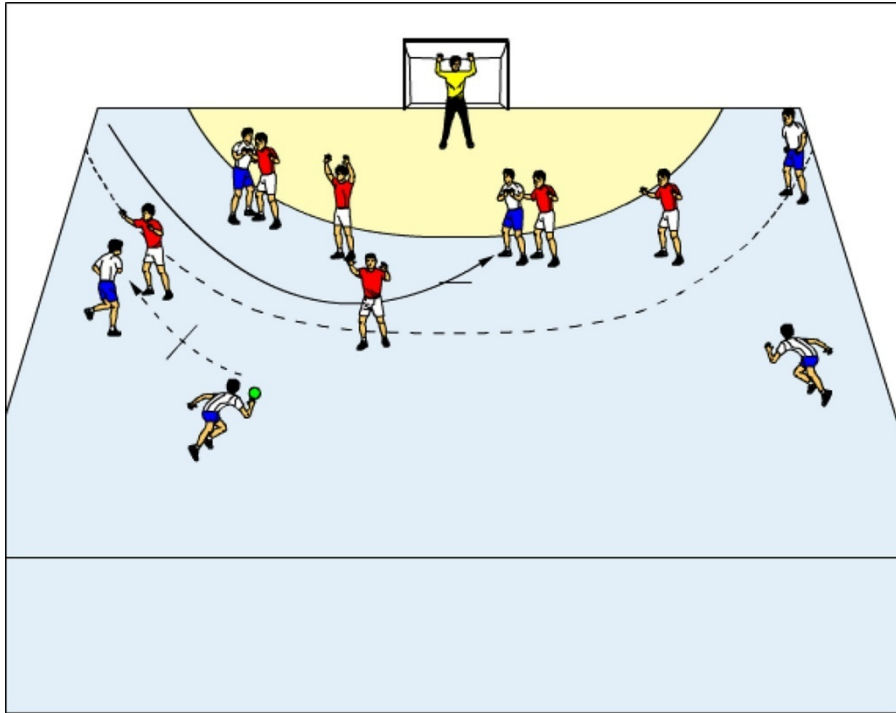


Figure 6: Players position when attacking team makes a transition and continue to play with 2 pivots, 3 backs and 1 wing (one of the wing players take a position beside goalkeeper line).

### Conclusion

Open zone defence 5:1 is often used in top level handball competitions. It offers defenders many options for creative operations – both in individual and team tactics. Its biggest strength is that provides a lot of aggressiveness and restricts the attacks team's tactical operations. Many times defenders change their tactic also during a single match what provoke a lot of problems for the attacking team.