

# A PROPOSAL FOR RULES' MODIFICATION AND ADAPTATION FOR HB MASTERS (VETERAN PLAYERS)



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## 1. HANDBALL FOR MASTERS (VETERANS)

The outstanding characteristic of this players' population group is the fact that all of them are former handball players, who currently do not have the same physical training condition they once did. Although in this case the motivation is a given for obvious reasons, it is doubtless that in handball, the absolute abandonment of the sport practice occurs in high frequency. In most cases the players disappear from handball completely with few exceptions of players becoming coaches or trainers, delegates or in some few cases managers or referees. One of the reasons of sport abandonment is the absence of proposals adapted that at the same time are sufficiently interesting according to the needs of this group of ex-athletes. These old players get together to play handball usually under the traditional rules and at a high tempo, because of their desire to remember old pleasant times, forgetting that their organism can no longer respond like before<sup>1</sup>. This is our idea: *to propose a handball form that does not decline from the conventional one, but which takes into consideration the organic and muscular condition of the specific group of players*, by reducing the risk of injuries, avoiding violent or explosive actions and diminishing the load of the activity. If the proposal is adapted based on their conditions and necessities, the number of ex-players who will follow some other handball-related function will increase progressively and former players will be able to stay close to handball, perhaps through some kind of organizational function, in addition to being able to continue enjoying actively the sport that they like the most<sup>2</sup>.

### 1.1. General description of the adapted sport

The population to which our model focuses includes ages over 35 years and until approximately 50 years, in some cases even older, but in my opinion it should be limited to this age, and all of them should be former handball players, with knowledge of the rules of the sport. The problem is that they are no longer in the same physical training condition to play with the intensity that traditional handball demands. For that reason the proposal is fundamentally based on fitting the intensity to their given

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<sup>1</sup> In Spain, different competitions in which veterans' teams of some provinces participate have been held since at least 20 years (Alicante, Madrid, Barcelona, Navarra, Malaga, etc.), and although the approach is absolutely recreational, the intensity of the game results in a lot of injuries for the participants, in an event held between 2 or 3 days. Nevertheless, in countries like Denmark the activities for this population are much more systematic (with some rule alteration), and the players' injuries there are not as many.

<sup>2</sup> Our aim is that the players understand that they have arrived at an age and condition, which does not allow them to play with the same intensity as they were used to, but also realize that not only is it still possible to participate in handball and practice this activity, but that by doing so, it helps them maintain their minds and bodies in a remarkable condition.

abilities. In that age group, the physical condition of each player is different, because some can still maintain their physical training condition on a good level, whereas others time have been undergoing important corporal and biological alterations for a long. Logically, we must try to consider these last ones much more and in such a way that the number of potential players could be higher, but is necessary to maintain equality between the two groups. Taking care of these starting points, **the first thing to consider is perhaps to shorten the range in the routes, while at the same time increasing the possibility of free spaces for penetration (breakthrough), apart from reducing the total time of participation.** Also very importantly, since the shooting power has decreased, regulations must allow that the objective of the game, i.e. scoring, can be achieved frequently so that motivation is preserved and diversion is guaranteed. At the same time, **it is absolutely essential to diminish the risk of injuries.** For this reason, in our proposal we reduce the number of players to 6 (1 of them goalkeeper), the field court decreases in length but maintains the same dimension in width. We also consider prohibiting physical contact and changing the rules. The synthesized rules will be the following ones:

- **The measures of the court for playing will be 20 meters wide and 30 meters long, with the 2 traditional goal areas of 6 meters and the rest of the lines of the field court of traditional handball.**
- **The goals are the usual ones, but the posts are 1.70 meters high, which limits the free space to score to the lower part of the goal<sup>3</sup>.**
- **Two teams of 6 players will be competing (5 field players and 1 goalkeeper).**
- **The match is played in 3 parts or sets (times of 15 minutes with intermediate rests of 5 minutes), entering the scores like tennis sets, in separate scores. The match is eventually won by the team which is able to win two parts or sets.**
- **The tie brakes are solved alternatively by a series of 7 meters shootings conducted by all the players of each team, including the substitutes.**
- **The game is played with a Beach Handball ball (in order to prevent the danger for the goalkeepers).**
- **The physical contact between opponents is not allowed.**
- **Only zone defense is allowed.**
- **The direct fastbreak is not allowed, only one player. At least 4 passes are necessary among the players before attempting a shot at the goal but also no long pass to a player, who receives in the half field of the rival (crossing the middle line of the court).**
- **The sanction for cumulative faults by player and teams is applied. A player who commits 3 faults (illegal physical contacts) will be suspended for 1 minute, and when a cycle of 6 faults of the same team is completed, an additional 7-meter throw is indicated.**

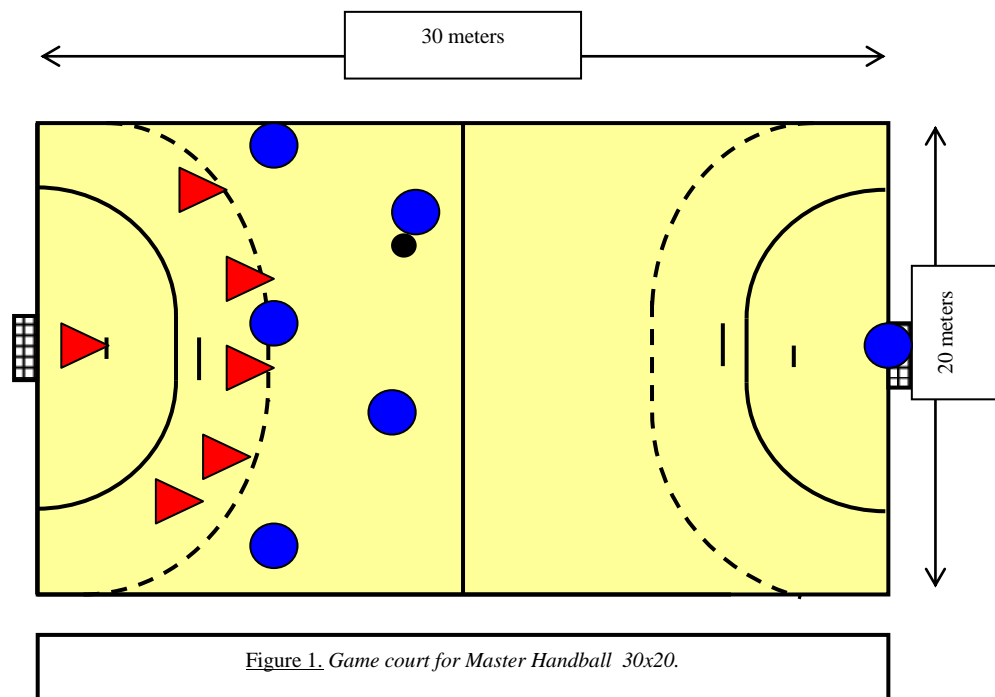
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<sup>3</sup> I have had the opportunity to verify in some veterans' matches that the shootings, which strike the opponent goalkeeper in the face, cause much more damage when these goalkeepers were professionals in the past.

## 1.2. RULES OF THE GAME OF HANDBALL FOR MASTERS (VETERANS)

### Rule 1. The game court

- 1.1. It is the normal field court of Handball, in which the dimension of length is reduced to 30 meters, with the rest of the characteristic lines.
- 1.2. To the normal goal of 3x2 meters a post held with clips is added to it to 1.70 meters off the ground, in such a way that the goal will be of 3 meters in width and 1.70 meters high (1.60 for women), in order to avoid dangerous shootings that can strike the goalkeeper in the face.



### Rule 2. The duration of the match and the system of score

- 2.1. The match is played in 3 parts or sets of 15 minutes of duration, with 5-minute breaks between each part or set.
- 2.2. The results of each part are entered separately, in such a way that the winner of the match will be the team that wins two parts of the match (two sets).
- 2.3. Each team can ask for only one time-out in each part of the match and cannot use more than one time-out per part. The time-out can only be granted when the team is in ball possession.
- 2.4. In the beginning of each part, a referee throw will take place from the center of the court.

### Rule 3. The ball.

- 3.1. A Beach Handball will be used for playing, trying to avoid impacts that cause injuries (even injuries in the reception of the ball).

#### **Rule 4. The players**

- 4.1. *Each team will be made up of 10 players, of whom only 6 (one of which a goalkeeper) will be able to take part at the same time.*
- 4.2. *All the registered players could play as goalkeepers or court players, but it is essential that the one playing as goalkeeper always uses a t-shirt of different color than the field players. In order to replace a goalkeeper, it is necessary that the substitute will be always be outside of the court –on the bench- and never acting like a field player in that moment.*
- 4.3. *It is obligatory to make at least 2 substitutions of players every 5 minutes, for which the teams will receive an indication by the timekeeper (the objective is to manage the participation of all the players, apart from reducing the power cost for the players).*

#### **Rule 5. The form to play the ball**

- 5.1. *The norms considered in traditional Handball with the following modifications will be applied.*
  - 5.1.1. *No direct passes are allowed during the counterattack to a player who is in the field of the adversary team.*
  - 5.1.2. *In all cases, it is necessary that both teams make at least 4 passes among their players before trying to shoot a goal and score (that is for assuring the participation of all players in contact with the ball and to avoid frequent individual actions by younger players)*
  - 5.1.3. *Only zone defense is allowed, sanctioning with accumulated team's faults the intervention in combined or individual defenses.*

#### **Rule 6. Behavior with the opponents**

- 6.1. *The corporal physical contact with the adversary is not allowed (to avoid injuries).*
- 6.2. *The sanctions of accumulated faults by player and team will be applied. A player who commits 3 faults through illegal physical contact with the adversary will be sanctioned with 1-minute suspension. When a cycle of 6 faults is fulfilled by any team, an additional 7-meter throw will be indicated. From that moment a new cycle of 6 faults begins.*
- 6.3. *Insults or manifestations of unsportsmanlike behavior through inappropriate gestures or any other gestures of contempt against the adversaries, the referees, the teammates or the public will be accumulated in the same way, but the player will be suspended directly or disqualified based on the hardness of the action.*

#### **Rule 7. The scores and the points.**

- 7.1. *The same criteria will be applied such as that in traditional handball, with the difference that the size of the goal is reduced to 1.70 meters height by the crosspiece added.*
- 7.2. *The team that obtains the greatest number of goals in each part gets one point (one set). In case of a tie at the end of a game, the winner will be decided by an*

*alternative series of 7-meter shooting made by the 9 players of each team against the goalkeeper of the other team. The order in the series will be decided by drawing.*

*7.3. The team that wins two parts will be declared winner of the match, in such a way that the match can only have the following results: 3-0 or 2-1.*

### **Rule 8. The execution of the throws, the free throws and the 7 meters throws**

*8.1. The same criteria and forms of sanctions and execution of the different free throws will be applied as in traditional handball.*

### **Rule 9. The disciplinary sanctions**

- 9.1. A 1-minute suspension will be applied instead of the 2 traditional minutes.*
- 9.2. As indicated in rule 6.2., 3 faults made by the same player will be reason for suspension.*
- 9.3. If a player pushes, quarrels, or trips an opponent, he will be disqualified and the team will be sanctioned by an additional 7-meter throw. If the situation or conditions of the fault already suppose a 7-meter throw, the violating team must be sanctioned by two 7-meter throws, and the opponent has two possibilities to score (Above all, the main target is to avoid the dangerous actions and those actions are to be sanctioned with harshness and seriousness).*

### **Rule 10. The referee's team**

- 10.1. The same rules are to be followed as indicated in traditional handball for conducting the match, but it is necessary that referees put special attention in the prohibition of physical contact. We must not forget that the rules are set in benefit of the players, and it is essential that they are accepted as regulators of behavior.*
- 10.2. They will have to take the control of the number of faults made by each player in order to apply the cumulative sanctions that correspond in each case.*

### **Final remark**

For any explanation not contemplated in this adapted proposal regulation, the rules of traditional handball will have to be followed (I.H.F.).

### **1.3.Context and alternatives of application.**

#### ***a) Time of the year and conditions of application.***

Ideally, an activity should be organized with a certain degree of continuity, even if the frequency is every two weeks or once a month, it is important to organize it with consistency. In any case, these last ones must be avoided because they suppose an unnecessary increase of the load that can get to be detrimental. Starting off of this base, there is no time of the year more suitable than another, although in these age groups for labor reasons difficult systematic activities in non-holidays periods are made sometimes. Of course, added to this circumstance, the necessary condition is to have sufficient people to be able to organize the activity that, in any case, requires the necessary time of assimilation for its suitable benefit. I can understand that most of the

former players surely would like to play traditional handball, but is what usually happens at any time someone tries to begin a new activity or needs to adapt to new rules.

***b) Variants of application.***

Other models could be raised, like for example Handball 4x4. Also different age-group categories could be formed (for example from 35 to 42 years and 42 to 50 years).

***c) Scopes of performance in which it is possible to be raised***

Competitions between players of old clubs can be raised to promote the model. The continuity of the activity depends on the acceptance and the number of the players. Two teams of 10 players would be sufficient, and not difficult to obtain, although that supposes to always play against the same players, because we cannot forget that the main objective is entertainment. However, in order to avoid matches becoming a routine, it is possible to organize confrontations among the same 20 players, but distribute both teams every time in a different form. If the participation is increasing, small leagues with sequences like the indicated ones can be organized, emphasizing over all the recreational aspects, in which case suppers or meals can be organized after the matches, in which the families of both teams can also participate.

**1.4. Some tactical, technical or physical strategic peculiarities**

- a) The characteristics derive from the objective and demands that we considered. To avoid physical load, guarantee balanced participation, reduce risk of injuries, and ensure enjoyment. From that point of view, we will emphasize there, the smaller number of players the greater spaces of breakthroughs or penetrations and shootings that must go towards lower zones to avoid injuring the goalkeeper.
- b) The rules pertaining to the counterattack aim at prohibiting the players in better physical training condition from running during the whole match and thus having the determining role of the protagonist. Furthermore, it aims at a better communication among the players and to avoid that some of them do not make a defensive retreat, because they are going to have more time to back down towards their own goal.
- c) Ball handling is going to be facilitated by the prohibition of physical contact. Although the condition at the beginning could be complicated for the players accustomed to other behaviors, slowly they will get used to it and the number of goals will increase, because the rules are the same for both teams.