

Netball

Developing player game sense

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The traditional approach to skill learning involved breaking the skill down into its parts and then progressively reassembling the movement pattern beginning with highly simplified movements performed under controlled, or 'closed', training conditions. This skill and drill directive approach to sport skill learning separated the performance of the skill as technique from the game play. Game play generally occurred only after extensive practice.

Game Sense is the decision making and motor competency to execute the decision for a successful outcome in a game situation (Pill, 2007). In other words, "Technique + Game Context = Skill" (Den Duyn, 1997, p.6), where skill is defined as the performance of a technique in a game to produce a successful game outcome. The game performance cycle explained by Hopper (2003) helps understand Game Sense. During a game players must continuously:

READ the situation to make appropriate decisions

RESPOND to the situation

REACT with skilful movement execution

RECOVER from the skill execution to prepare for the next game involvement

This requires four capacities:

1. Technical skill;
2. Attention to relevant information in the game environment;
3. Tactical game appreciation; and
4. Experience.

The primary and secondary rules of Netball develop player understanding of the "logic" of the game. To introduce netball to beginners we suggest starting with primary rules that assist players' development of fundamental sport skills; such as dodging, receiving, passing, jumping, running, with the principles of play common to invasion games. For example, how do you work as a team to keep possession of the ball?

At the 2013 28th ACHPER International Conference in Melbourne, delegates came up with the following list of primary rules for netball.

- Teams gain points by getting the ball into a goal
- Player movement is restricted to defined parts of the court based on the position allocated
- Players are not permitted to travel when in possession of the ball
- A player with the ball is provided time and space to make a pass upon gaining possession
- Defenders are not permitted to contact the player with the ball
- If the ball goes out of court the team to touch it last gives possession to the other team to re-start play.
- After a score, the scoring team gives the re-start of play to the other team

With these primary rules in mind, the following secondary rules were negotiated with the understanding

that small-sided game play maximises engagement and opportunity for individual player on-the-ball and off-the-ball game action, and thus small-sided game play advantages skill development.

- One defender and one attacking player, identified by a sash, are permitted in the scoring zone (illustrated by the dotted line in Figure 1)
- Points are scored by the designated attacking player getting the ball into the goals (a plastic rubbish bin)
- Each team has 5 players (There were 35 active participants in the workshop so we created 7 teams. At any one time 6 teams would participate in three concurrent games and the 7th team would be the duty team allocated umpiring, scoring and time-keeping roles)
- After a score the re-start occurs from the centre of the court

The set-up for the three games is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

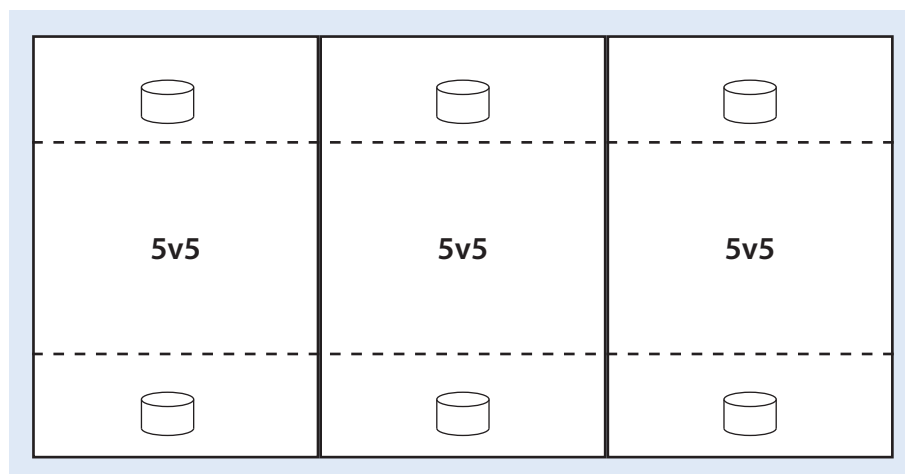


Figure 1. 5v5 netball for novice players

The non-game active workshop participants agreed that a casual observer would believe participants were playing netball, even though the games were not like the “full rules” netball; much the same as a casual observer would see a group of children kicking a squashed can along the ground in a game on the street would comment that they were playing soccer.

This initial game of netball couples sport specific skill learning within the context of play so that players develop the information-movement coupling that leads eventually to ‘skilled’ netball performance. The focus is on guiding players to understand the game and to appreciate its tactical complexity, while providing the opportunity to develop and then refine the movement competencies necessary to successfully meet the challenges presented within the game. Over time the game is evolved from this simple representation of netball to progressively more complex and complete versions of the game as players tactical and body management skills develop.

When do we teach “technique”?

In a game sense sport teaching/coaching approach it is recognised that game play needs to be supplemented with other teaching strategies to develop specific movement (tactical and technical body control) skills to progress players ability. Keep the Ball Alive (Figure 2) was used during the workshop to illustrate the type of activity suitable for novice player passing skill development. Corner Spry (Figure 3) was used to illustrate player passing skill development for players that had moved beyond the stage of developing coordination and control to the stage of refining their netball specific movement skill. The 3v1 Play Practice (Figure 4) was used to illustrate game-like practice of specific offense running and ball movement patterns.

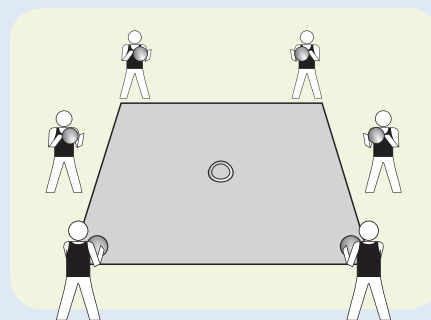
KEEP THE BALL ALIVE

AIM:

- To keep the ball off the ground.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Each group creates an 8m x 8m grid with a hoop in the centre of the grid.
- Each player collects a ball (one ball per person).
- In groups of 5-6, players throw and catch the ball, passing the ball between each other.
- Any player who drops the ball must pick the ball up and put it in the hoop, and then return to the game.
- One point is allocated for each ball not in the hoop when time is called.



CHANGE IT:

- Experiment with different types of passes.

Figure 2

MODIFY TO 3v2 CORNER SPRY

3 Players attempt to keep possession of the ball by moving between the corners of a square - only one player allowed at one corner at a time. The 2 defenders attempt to intercept the ball.

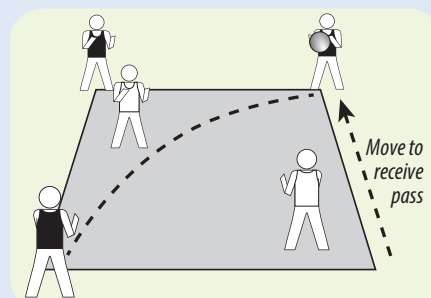


Figure 3

EXAMPLE 6

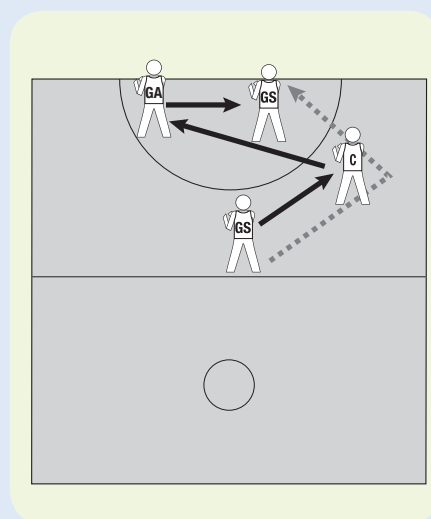
3V1 GOAL SHOOTING PRACTICE

AIM:

- To beat the defensive action and score a goal.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- GS starts with the ball outside the D, and passes to the centre (C) on a 45° angle outside the D. GA has set up on the opposite 45° angle just inside the D.
- After passing the ball, the GS runs around the C in an “L-cut” to the ring.
- C passes to GA, who then passes to GS near the ring to shoot at goal.
- After rehearsing this pattern, add a defender who plays inside the D to attempt to prevent a shot at goal. That is, create a 3v1.



CHANGE IT:

- Alter the movement pattern, attempting to isolate either the GA or GS to receive the ball close to the ring.

Figure 4

Netball skill assessment

The final aspect of the workshop was netball skill assessment. We set up two games of 5v5 half-court netball and the off-court duty teams first carried out peer assessment of passing using a skill checklist from Play with Purpose: Developing Netball Game Sense (ACHPER Australia) (Figure 5). This tool was used to illustrate the type of data collection that could be used to validate student achievement of content descriptions related to control and coordination of specific netball technical skills.

Duty teams next carried out a game performance assessment based on the GPAL tools developed by Griffin, Mitchell and Oslin (1997) in their Tactical Games text (Figure 6). This tool was used to illustrate the type of data collection that could be used to validate student achievement of content descriptions related to tactical and body control performance in the “real” context of game play. Delegates highlighted the value of this type of peer observation of performance as learning through assessment as the bench coaches took the assessment ideas into their own game play after providing the feedback to their peer.

A Game Sense approach combines technical movement skills, tactical understanding, game appreciation, physical conditioning and concentration into one age and developmentally appropriate ‘package’ to develop the information-movement coupling that leads to “thinking”, or intelligent players. The path to the development of players with high “game IQ” begins with a coherent, systematic development of game-centred tactical and technical learning from when young players start to explore, experiment and then refine their movement performance. This is not a ‘roll out the ball’ approach, but a structured environment of play with purpose.

- * the activities illustrated in this article come from **Play with Purpose: Developing Netball Game Sense**

SKILL: PASSING		Always	Sometimes	Rarely
Observation Checklist	Eyes are focussed on the target throughout the throw			
	Holds ball with two hands sides of the netball			
	Bends knees when ready to pass			
	Holds ball near chest before passing (Chest pass)			
	Holds ball directly above head before passing (Overhead Pass)			
	Steps forward with one leg prior to passing the ball			
	The ball bounces off the floor 2/3 of the way to partner (Bounce Pass)			
	Ball is released with a “snapping” wrist movement leading to palms facing outward and thumbs down			
Comment:				

Figure 5

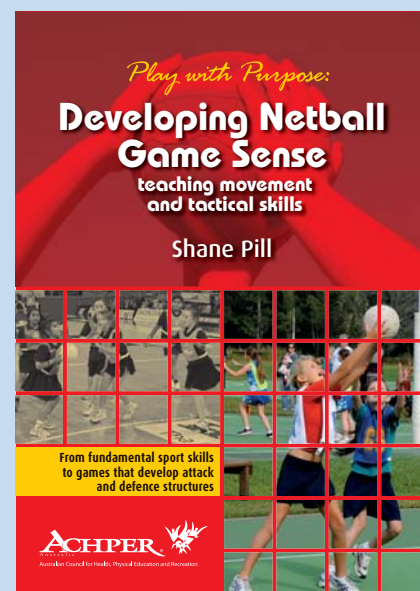
About the Authors

Shane Pill has worked for 18 years as a science and physical education teacher in schools in Perth and Adelaide; holding leadership positions including HPE Coordinator, Sport Coordinator, Year Level Coordinator, Director of School Administration and Deputy Principal. At Flinders University he lectures in curriculum studies, physical education and sport studies. His research interests include curriculum design and enactment, pedagogy and instructional strategies for games and sport teaching, sport coaching and curriculum leadership. Shane is the author of four books on game sense teaching and coaching, and he is internationally recognised for his research into sport teaching and coaching. He can be contacted via email shane.pill@flinders.edu.au.

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For more ideas....

Purchase Play with Purpose: Developing Netball Game Sense by Shane Pill from the ACHPER Bookshop.



2. GAME PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT FOR NETBALL

Observation Dates

a)	b)	c)	d)	e)
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Levels of Performance

4 = Very Effective Performance: almost always observable

3 = Effective Performance: usually observable

2 = Moderately Effective Performance: observable in more than half of the player's attempts

1 = Weak Performance: observable in less than half of the player's attempts

Game Components

1(a). Passing Skill Execution: The player passes the ball accurately (ball reaches the intended target).

1(b). Passing Skill Execution: The player passes the ball accurately (ball reaches the intended target).

2. Ball Control: The player takes possession of the ball cleanly (consistently with control).

3. Decision Making: The player makes appropriate skill choices according to the game situation.

4. Support: The player attempts to move into position to provide a passing option to the team-mate with the ball by moving to support forward of the play, to the side of the player or behind the player.

During the observation period, for each game component mark the performance as either Appropriate (A) or Inappropriate (I)

After the observation period, give each player a score from 1-4 on each game component.

	Passing Skill Execution		Ball Control		Decision Making		Support	
Team/Players	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I

Game Involvement Score = Total Appropriate (A) and Inappropriate (I) actions: Total A + Total I

Category Efficiency Score = Total (category) Appropriate (A)/ Total (category) Inappropriate (I)

Game Efficiency Score = Total (all categories) Appropriate (A)/ Total (all categories) Inappropriate (I)

Adapted from Mitchell, S., Oslin, J., & Griffin, L. (2006) Teaching sport concepts and skills: A tactical games approach. Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics

Figure 6. Netball game performance assessment tool