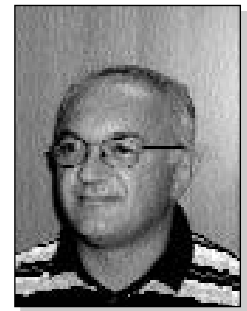


IMPROVING PERSONAL TECHNIQUES AND TACTICS OF FEINTING IN HANDBALL BY INDIVIDUAL SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING AND ANALYSIS OF GUARD PROFILES



Nenad Zvonarek / CRO
EHF lecturer

1. INTRODUCTION

General advances in sporting achievements, changes to the rules of the handball game, and increasing expectations of the wider handball sporting community mean everlasting demands for innovative and improved sport preparation programmes. Coaches and experts from various fields are continuously looking for new ways to lead their trainees to the desired sporting accomplishments. That makes the individual needs of athletes the focus of attention, in team sports as well, which is also related to the fundamental principle of sport training - individualisation. That is why coaches should treat their trainees individually, with regard to their own abilities, potential, technical-tactical proficiency, age and gender. All these items should be taken into account when designing programmes for basic and supplementary individual training.

Training theory recognizes various types of training programmes nowadays: preventative training, rehabilitation programmes, training programmes oriented to improving certain characteristics of athletes, like morphological attributes, motor abilities, functional abilities, technical-tactical skills, as well as psychological preparation.

The goal of this article is to accentuate the importance of individual supplementary training programmes for the improvement of handball technical-tactical skills and abilities of feinting in particular.

2. INDIVIDUAL SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING

Most handball coaches and experts agree that the quality and popularity of the sport depend primarily on the quality of players which embody and realize

the concept of play on the court, thus seeking sporting achievements for the team and club. Top-quality players are those players who can prove their quality (as manifested in every game on the court, i.e. overall performance) and whose quality is brought to the surface by the coach who realises the players' potential (individual and collective).

Theories on the actual quality (overall performance enhancement) and handball career development accentuate the role of individual supplementary training in: encouraging individual sport specific progress, transforming potential into top quality performance and enhancing the level of situation-related efficiency in the game. The listed goals to be achieved, long-term systematic and gradual individual and team (collective) work is indispensable throughout all segments of sporting preparation, as well as optimally adjusted mutual relationships among individual and team training programmes and sessions, system of competition, and ergogenic aids. To keep this relationship to an optimum by making adjustments to the training programmes, individual and collective alike, coaches should continuously, objectively and subjectively, assess and evaluate potential and actual quality of players on an almost daily basis.

Handball players should be encouraged to work individually on the improvement of weak points of their play at the beginning, whereas strong sides of their play and pet-moves should be perfected at the end of a training session.

Goals of training differentiate between the individual and collective/team training:

1. The goal of the individual training programme is to enhance the level of technical-tactical proficiency (skills and knowledge), whereas the collective training session is aimed at improving

team play (collectively outplaying the opponent) and effort exertion. Or, in other words, by the individual training programme we can teach handball from the aspect of individual techniques and tactics, whereas the team-training programme is based on exercises which improve performance of a team specific concept or style of play.

2. The individual training sessions provide a coach with many more opportunities to interrupt work and correct the performance of game elements. On the other hand, in the team-training session it is not advisable to interrupt the continuity too often because the intensity of work may be compromised in that way.
3. The individual training sessions allow a great number of repetitions of the selected specific exercises, being the components of individual play on attack and defence. Frequency of repetitions is considerably lower in the collective training sessions.
4. Handball ABC (including individual techniques and the fundamentals of play in one-on-one, two-on-two, three-on-three and combinations) cannot be adequately and economically mastered and perfected if players do not practise individually or in groups.

Individual training programmes are components of all stages in the annual training cycle, but are most probably represented in the period of transition. Namely, the post- and preseason periods offer vast opportunities for work on the improvement of technique. Therefore, individual training in handball is not only a method which enables permanent perfection of individual technical and tactical skills, but it is also a method which considerably advances levels of individual theoretical and psychological maturity, as well as of physical conditioning. It would be quite impossible to transform the potential quality of a player into his/her actual quality (high quality overall performance), or to ensure a long-lasting and successful sports career. Young female players on the Croatian national teams (under junior age) work according to the training model in which the individual training programme is combined with the team-training programme.

The following example will illustrate the fore-mentioned model. It is a description of individual training focused on one of the fundamental technical elements with the ball-feint to break through or shoot.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF FEINTS WITH THE BALL

Feint is a very often-used technical element of individual play on attack which is employed by players, especially back court players, to gain either the time or the space advantage over the direct guard of his/hers. The good execution of the element eventually enables an attacker to freely perform a throw at goal or to continue with the launched technical-tactical action under more favourable conditions in relation to the opponent. Feints are used to:

- break free from a guard to shoot;
- run in, or to outrun a guard, or to break through - in order to achieve a momentary outnumbering in favour of attackers;
- engage two opposing players thus opening the space for a team-mate, who gets free and into a favourable situation to score or to pass the ball.

Each feint execution, as well as execution of other elements of attack with the ball, should be initiated by an energetic start with a timely run-up (without the ball), which provides the starting velocity for the body. An attacker should receive the ball from his/her teammate on time and then he/she stops either in the parallel or diagonal stance (the so called null step).

After that, the execution of the feint unfolds in two phases:

- The fake movement (deceptive phase) - its goal and task- is to decoy a guard to follow an attacker's first false move and to start to move in the wanted direction, or to disturb his/her balance. This phase should be markedly persuasive, clearly expressed and of a longer duration than the next one. The entire attacker's body should be convincingly thrust in the pseudo direction. This phase is condensed in the first step of the feint after which the second step follows.
- The real movement (executable phase) - this phase must be executed in a flash and quite unexpectedly for a guard. An attacker moves with maximal speed in the direction opposite to the direction of the first phase, thus preventing the guard, who has already reacted to the deceptive move, from checking and stopping him/her. This phase is condensed in the second step of the feint. Efficient execution of the feint opens opportunities for the attacker to proceed with the

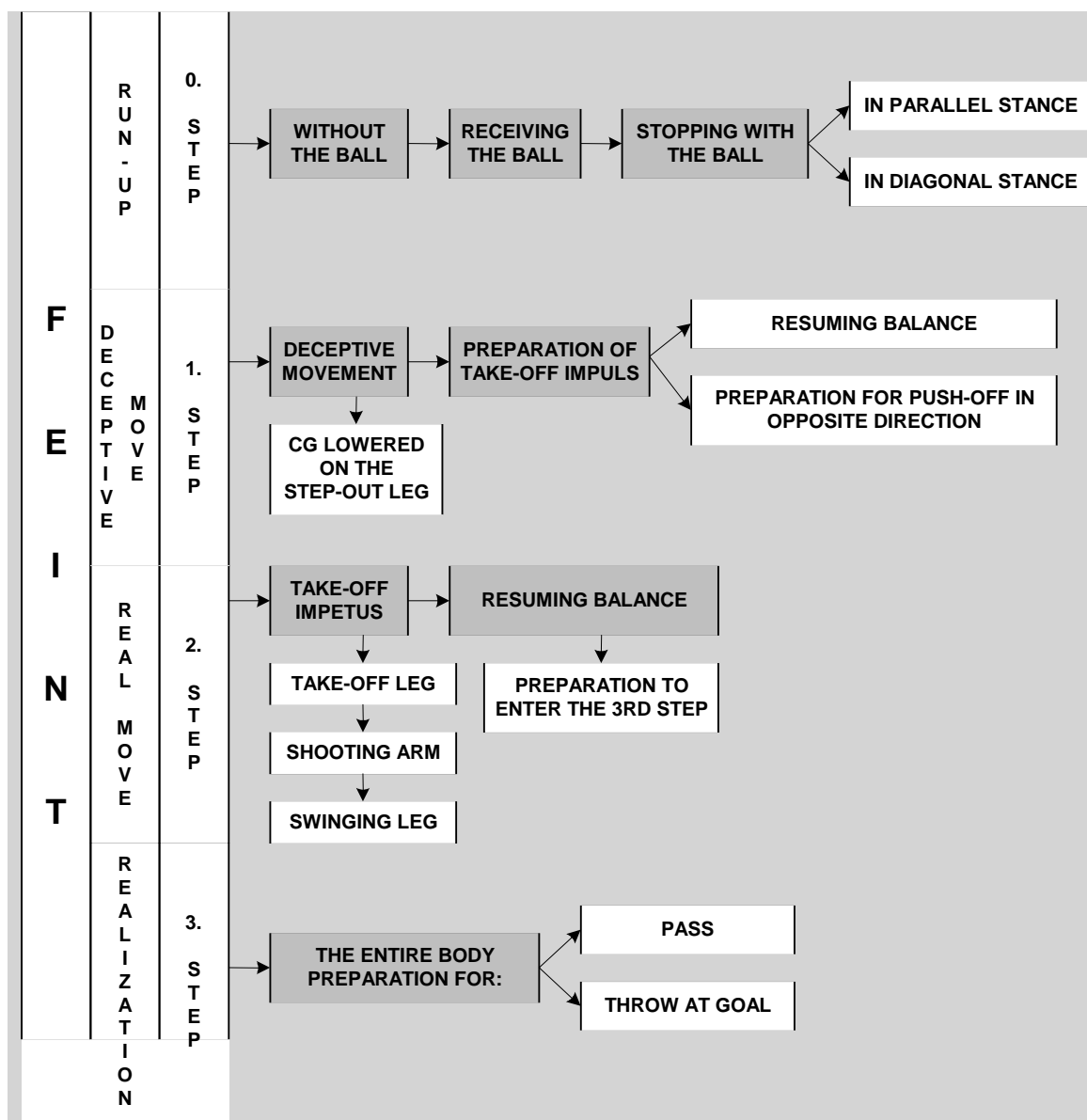
realization of the action. The feint is closed by the third step, including moving forward, or throwing at goal, or passing.

A single feint has been described here, but the same principle is valid for the performance of all types of feints. A feint type, which is going to be applied, is selected and performed according to the reaction of the guard. If the guard does not react to the deceptive phase of a feint, the attacker will proceed with the initiated action and transform it into the executable phase. If the guard reacts efficiently to both phases of the feint and prevents the attacker from breaking through on the desired side or from shooting at goal, the attacker may transform the single feint into the double one by another sudden change of movement direction (the feint is concluded to the initial, formerly fake, side).

4. SPECIFICITIES OF THE FEINT PERFORMANCE AS DETERMINED BY ANTHROPOMETRIC AND PLAY PROFILE OF GUARDS

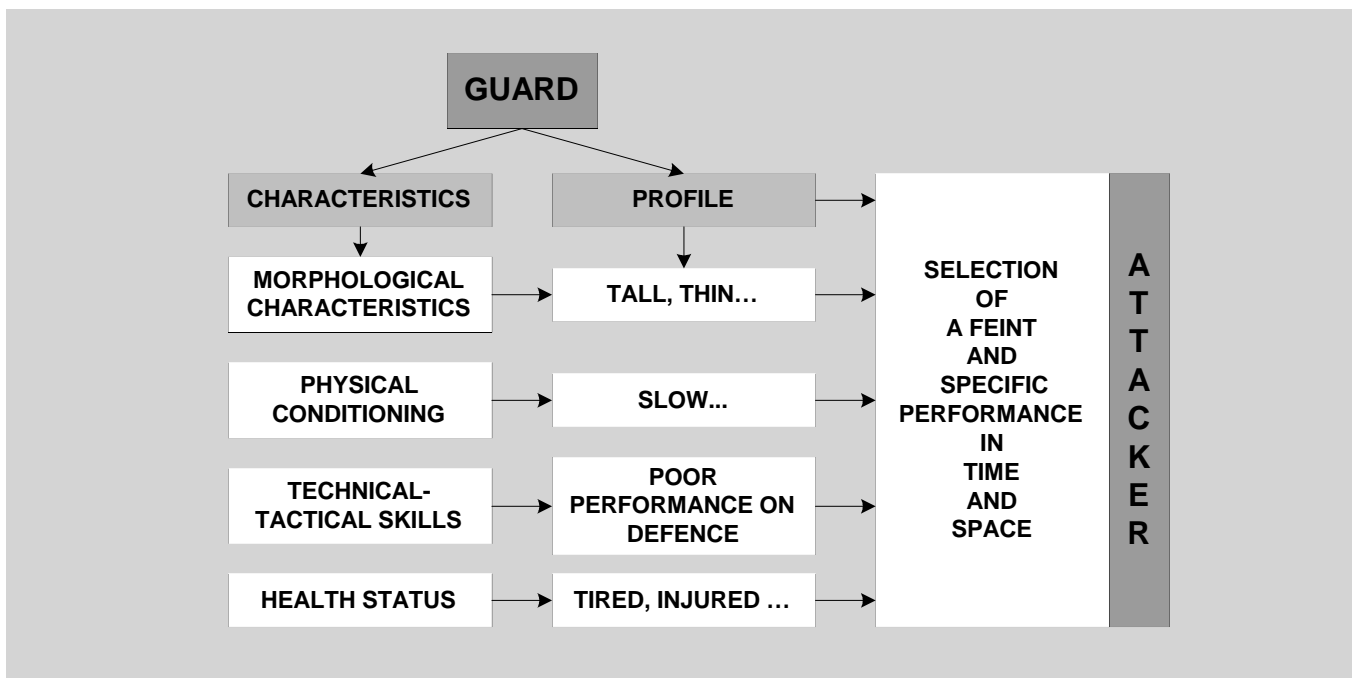
In individual training, where feinting is being perfected by one-on-one play, a coach should acquaint his/her trainee with as many expected game situations as possible. First of all, a trainee must attain and be able to execute all the technical details in a proper time sequence in relation to the reactions of a guard. All the technical details a player ought to know are described in Figure 1. Each phase - run-up, deceptive move, actual move, continuation of an action - has its own biomechanical regularities. An attacker should strictly respect them if he/she wishes to perform a fluent feint, coordinated in space and time.

Figure 1: Stages and technical details of the feint performance



The attacker must also perceive quality and profile of the guard whom he/she is attacking by a feint. From the first minute of a game, the attacker must be aware of the type of defence played by the opponent, which guard is assigned to mark him/her, what is the level of the guard's TE-TA proficiency, is the guard and how much psychologically prepared for a game, is his/her defensive play aggressive or not, what is his/her lateral and/or frontal agility; the quality of communication among opponents; his/her playing time; his/her morphological characteristics (body height, arm span, lean body mass, fat body tissue, etc.); his/her motor attributes (strength, speed, coordination, etc.); and his/her functional capacities. These characteristics and profile of an example are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: A guard's profile as analysed by an attacker



On the basis of analysis of the guard's profile and play, performed by a player alone or in cooperation with his/her coach during the tactical preparation for a game or in the tactical intervention during a game, an attacker is able to select the most effective way of offensive play against his/her direct guard. An attack may be performed as an individual action (one-on-one), or as a group action, in cooperation with one or more co-players.

Here is an example of how it can be executed in practice.

The direct **guard** has the following anthropometrical and performance characteristics (a profile): he is tall; his muscular mass volume is not very large; his

shoulder girdle is not very strong; his footwork pace is average; dynamic flexibility of hips is poor. He is excellent in employing blocking in defensive actions; his lateral agility is better than his frontal agility, the latter being his weak point. In performing defensive tasks, he uses arms instead of legs. He is more involved and motivated for play on offence than on defence. He plays under the high psychological pressure induced by his coach who is quick in substituting him.

An **attacker** will select a feint of the following characteristics and perform it against the guard of the described profile:

A feint should be executed suddenly, unexpectedly, in

the moment when the attacker has noticed guard's distraction of attention and his/her low engagement and motivation to perform defensive tasks.

The deceptive phase can be performed in two ways, but the both should be convincing. In the first way the attacker may orientate his/her action besides the guard's body with pronouncing lowering of the body on the stepping-out leg. In the second way a deceptive move may be of a shorter duration with a run-up directed to the guard's body.

The first way should decoy the guard to move laterally, whereas the second way should prevent the guard from stopping the attacker (by catching the attacker with arms) when performing the more pronouncing (in width) second phase.

A feint should be performed by **controlled speed** so as to provoke the guard to react to the offered fake movements, because they have been performed for him/her. But it should also enable the attacker to perform the double feint in case that the guard succeeds in covering his/her moves on both phases.

The **distance** between the attacker, performing the feint, and the guard, that marks him/her, depends on the guard's arm length and his/her ability to fall out and move back. If the guard starts to fall out, the attacker should shorten the deceptive phase of the feint in terms of time and space to avoid foul and interruption of the action.

The entrance in the last, closing step of the feint (before a realization) should be vigorous and aggressive to minimize possible influence of a probable body check with the guard on the balance of the attacker.

5. CONCLUSION

Individual supplementary training should be implemented in all phases of a yearly training cycle, particularly in the transitory period, because it offers the largest opportunities for individual techniques and tactics to be corrected and mastered. The most quality players have been produced and formed by this training technology. A long, long lasting process of individual learning, mastering, and perfecting of all elements, as well as the profound understanding of the philosophy of the handball game are indispensable for top-level sport achievement. Individual training is very effective in improving physical conditioning and personal theoretical and

psychological preparedness. Therefore, it is also productive in transforming potential into performance (actual quality) when optimally combined with all other types of sport preparation. And consistency of overall performance or actual quality is the basis of a successful, long sports career.

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