1. General remarks

Practical training for referees is very important – and at the same way very difficult. A referee should know about and learn the different parts of ball handling and other technical behaviour patterns by practising himself, like steps or attacker fouls. When he is able to explicate these courses of movement, he is more capable of observing and deciding in these special situations. Problem: Normally, the technical skills and expertises from referees in ball handling are limited, therefore it’s problematic to improve observation points concerning the own abilities in handball playing – and it could be dangerous. Nevertheless, we will give some variations for practical training exercises for referees on all levels.

2. Areas of improvement as a referee

There are different areas of improvement:
- Technical areas in the game (steps, attacker fault, double dribbling, foot)
- Technical skills as a referee (moving paths)
- Tactical/technical solutions in small groups (wing game, pivot game, 1 : 1, 2 : 2)
- Tactical elements in the complete team (defending- and attacking systems in 6 : 6)

2.1. Technical areas for referees

Proposal 1: Steps

Organisation 1:
Let the referees exercise their own technical variations in steps against a passive defender. The point: only « feeling » the mechanism of technical movements. The referees have to train different possibilities of feints, moments of ball catching, moments of zero – steps, different distances to the defender. It is also important, that we can show the referees the risk in a game, when a player with the ball acts in full speed.

On which picture, we have to decide for the first step? Yes – picture Nr. 4!

Organisation 2:
Later on the defender can be more active in order to produce pressure on the attacker. In all these situations some of the practising referees have to decide, if there are technical mistakes and in these moments, they have to whistle. The lecturer has to interrupt from time to time to give advices for the observation support.
Proposal 2: Attacker fault

Organisation 1:
In the same way, the lecturer can exercise also attacking mistakes. First against a defensive player, then this defender shall be more active and aggressive.

Organisation 2:
Two opponent players. Play the ball 10 – 12m in front of them and after a whistle, they have to sprint for the ball in order to take it, then running a counter attack. Some referees have to decide, if the ball scramble is correct, also the counter attack. Advice to the referees: mostly the position of the ball is not interesting....! But hands and bodies are!

Organisation 3:
We will try an established attack with pressure from the wing player into the centre – then passing the ball to the back player. He passes the ball, when he is in the air, but continues his move into the defender! Many referees don’t whistles for attacker fault, they are following the ball. The player, who was „first on spot“, owns the place.

Proposal 3: Double dribbling
Build a moving line with the players, distance 2 – 3m between the players. Let them dribble the ball through the line. Some referees outside have to observe, if the ball handling is correct or not.

2.2. Technical skills as a referee

Proposal 1: Moving paths
Most referees have the problem in counter attacks that they turn to the wrong side in order to run back to the other side. Why? It is a normal reflex to make the first step with the stronger leg. Right hander will turn to the right side!

Organisation 1:
Referees have to line-up like field referees. After a whistle, they have to turn around and sprint down to the court line. In this sprint situation, the referee has to act like in a game, that means, he has to turn his body in the direction of the court. In a second step, let the referees lie down, the head in direction of the free throw line and goal area line, hands on the back. Then whistle again. The referees have to sprint
to the other side, view every time to the court centre. In these situations, the referee has to fight against his normal instinct again.

Organisation 2:
Game possibility: Group – ball (light team plays the ball between the teammates, the dark team tries to catch the ball). The players are only allowed to move sidewardly or forewardly (like a referee) in a clear area. After a whistling signal, both teams have to sprint on the other court side and to play in a specific area again. All players have to turn after the signal with the view direction towards the court.

Organisation 3:
Counter attack is getting more and more dangerous and therefore it is important, that the referees are moving correctly and have the right angle for observing actions. It is difficult to see pushes etc., if the referee’s only concern is to run back to the goal line. The best position in most cases is 1 – 2m behind and in a speed attack along the sideline or 2 – 3 m away. Don’t forget: the counter attacks starts, when the attacking team has lost the ball......

2.3. Tactical/technical solutions in small groups (wing, pivot, 1 : 1, 2 : 1, 2 : 2, 3 : 3)

Proposal 1: Wing shots
Wing shots from amateurs, like referees, are not easy and sometimes dangerous. For these exercises, demonstration teams are preferred or the referees have to act in a passive way!

Organisation 1:
At first the defence player has to act absolutely passive with raised hands only. The wing players have to take their shots in a normal way first and after some time, they have to provoke defence mistakes themselves. They have to link their arms with the defender’s arm, they have to provoke falling downs etc. Referees outside have to decide for free-throw, 7m, attacker faults or nothing. Advice from the lecturer: goal area referees have to keep a bigger distance to the wing player, to observe the whole situation. Don’t follow the ball! But follow the legs, the bodies, hands, arms, entering the goal area in combination with the whole playing situation. The referee is not allowed to be surprised in such moments! That means, he has to anticipate!

Organisation 2:
In the second part, the defence player has to act more aggressive and with fouls on the attacker’s body. Hitting the ball arm, attacks to the hips and legs to provoke a disbalance, slight body checks, pushing from behind etc. But never in a dangerous
way! The referees have to observe this actions with support of the lecturer.

Left picture: Very dangerous situation! The defender holds the thigh, normally for a very short moment. The wing player could crash down. The referee has the reflex to observe the object of the game: the ball! In situations, in which the caught ball is on a higher position than the shoulder, he is not any more interesting for the referee – the ball is saved! That means, the referee has to observe and check the line and all other activities around the players. Not all situations are so clear like on the central and right picture...

Proposal 2: Pivot

For many years, the importance of the pivot was rather low. In the last years, this situation has totally changed. The pivot is one of the most important players, he is the second playmaker. In the games this importance can be clearly seen. More fights for space, position, blocking etc. The different ways to act and react are multi-faceted! We can introduce the circle game to understand the actions, to understand the intention of attacker and defender, to feel and execute different handlings of the players.

Organisation: 1
A defence player, a line player, a player to pass the ball to the pivot. The pivot has the target to shoot at goal. The defender has to avoid the shot. Defender and attacker have to act in different ways to „win“. The goal referee has to observe the whole situation. Advice: don’t follow the ball, but observe the bodies, legs and arms.

Organisation 2:
Two defenders, two attackers, one player to pass the ball, 2: 2. Clear advice here: The field referee has to observe the game from the field players, the goal referee the “line game“! The observation tasks stay the same.

2.4. Tactical elements in the complete team (defending, attacking systems in 6 : 6)

For the referee it’s absolutely important to know the different attacking- and defending systems - not only the systems, but also the moving paths from players, the different targets, the intention of all players. In this case he is able to understand the game and the acting of all players. He can adapt movements, behaviour, advantage, is not fixed to the ball. The referee is able to see and feel the game and to take correct decisions in all phases of the game.

It is very difficult to practise these systems with referees. It’s obligatory to have two demonstration teams. The lecturer and the coach (!) have to explain all moving- and the observation elements for the field- and the goal referee. The systems: 6 : 0 offensive and defensive, 5 : 1, 3 : 2 : 1, 4 : 2, 3 : 3. But to explain all the systems in detail in this essay would be too much......

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