

Handball

(A) History

In the ancient Greek slave's society of 8th century B.C., nobles played game similar to handball for entertainment. According to the Chinese history, there was handball game – “Sau Guk” in Hang Dynasty. It became popular in the Tong and Song Dynasty. “Tossing Ball” in Tong Dynasty was a colourful ball with a long ribbon attached. It was similar to the ball game with a small bell in the mid-century Europe.

Modern handball originated in Europe. However, it is very difficult to locate its birthplace accurately. Sweden sports encyclopedia believes that handball was originated from a Sports college in Denmark at the end of 19th century. In 1898, a Denmark PE teacher, Holger Nielson, invented a game like handball. In this game, a goal was placed on each side of the court. There was no limitation to the players on the court. Participants used hands to pass and shoot. In 1917, a German PE Teacher, Max Heiser, realized that girl could not kick football like boys. Thus, he invented this game for girls and allowed them to throw and pass football by hand. In 1919, another German P.E teacher, Carl Schelenz, spread this game to boys and introduced a smaller ball. This game allowed player to move three steps before passing or shooting. Both teams could have reasonably body contact which made the game more competitive.

Starting from the 11th Olympic Game in 1936 in Berlin, the 11-player handball was allowed to be one of the official competitive games. Starting from the 20th Olympic Game in 1972, the 7-player handball has replaced the 11-player handball. Since the 21st Olympic Games in 1976, female 7-player handball has been an official competitive game.

(B) Basic rules & regulations

(1) Number of players

14 players in a team (7 on court players & 7 substitution players)

(2) Competition time

There are 2 halves in each match and the official playing time of each half is 30 minutes. There is 3 Team Time-outs in total. Only 2 Team Time-out at most for each team in each half. Overtime is played, following a 5-minute break, if a game is tied at the end of the regular playing time. The overtime period consists of 2 halves of 5 minutes. If the game is again tied after the first overtime period, a second period is played after a 5- minute break. If the game is still tied, the winner will be determined by using 7-metre throwing.

(3) Competition ball

Size 3 for men (over age 16)

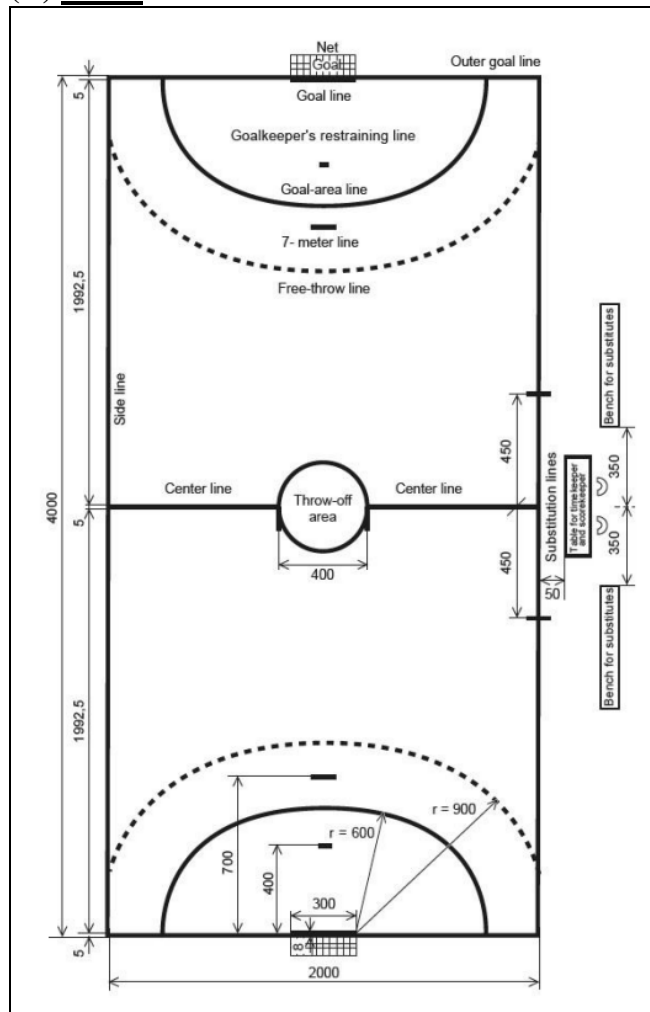
Size 2 for women (over age 14), and male youth (age 12 to 16)

Size 1 for children

(4) Violation

1. A free throw is granted for violation. It is taken from the place where the infraction occurred.
2. It is not allowed to hold the ball more than 3 seconds nor move more than 3 steps. There is no restriction for goalkeeper in his own goal area.
3. It is not allowed to double dribble.
4. It is not allowed to step into the Goal Area (Entering the Goal Area).
5. It is not allowed to touch the ball with the parts below knee.

(C) Court



1. The handball court is rectangular with a length of 40 meters and a width of 20 meters.
2. The area surrounded by the 6-meter Line (Goal Area Line) is called “Goal Area”.
3. The dotted line lying beyond the 6-meter Line is called 9-meter Line (Free Throw Line).
4. There are 2 goals in the court with 2 meters high and 3 meters wide.
5. A circle of 4 meters diameter is located at the centre of the centre line is called “Throw-off area”
6. The thrower can throw the ball in any direction from the throw-off area. The ball must be thrown within 3 seconds after the whistle signal by the referees.
7. The thrower cannot dribble after the whistle signal, the ball must be passed out.
8. The team of the thrower must not cross the centre line before the whistle signal, excluding the “throw-off area”.

(D) Skills

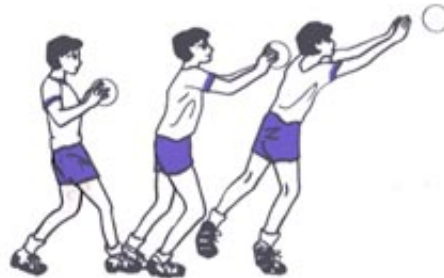
(Taking right-handed player as example)

(1) Holding ball

In handball games, holding the ball with one or two hands is very common. In holding ball with two hands, the fingers evenly spread, two hands form an arch shape with the palm and fingers holding two sides of the ball. Holding a ball with two hands has lower agility when compared to that with one hand. Holding ball with one hand is easier for passing and shooting. Therefore, after catching ball by two hands, it should be followed by passing or shooting by one hand. In holding the ball with one hand, fingers evenly spread. Players should use the part above finger root to touch the ball. The thumb and the ring finger are opposite to hold the ball and the wrist should be relaxed.

(2) Catching ball with two hands

Watch the ball coming, two arms raise up to get the ball actively and all your fingers evenly spread and pointing upward. Two thumbs and two first fingers form a Chinese number 'eight'. Two hands form a semi-ball shape. Once your fingers touch the ball, all the fingers hold the ball and move it to where passing or shooting begins.



(3) Catching low ball by two hands

Watch the ball coming, two arms press down to get the ball actively and all your fingers evenly spread and point downward. A semi-ball shape is formed to catch the ball. Once your fingers touch the ball, lean backward to release the momentum and hold it.



(4) Dribbling

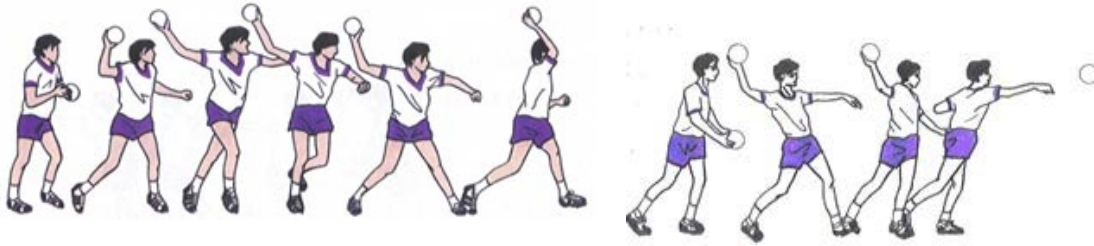
Even though the dribbling technique is few used, it is still a vital basic component in handball to help adjusting footwork and long-distance travelling. During dribbling, you have to control the force of movement in both forearms and wrists, simulating the dribbling technique in basketball, however you should be aware of facing your palm directly towards the ground during dribbling and not to palm the ball or hold it for too long during dribbling as they are not permitted.



(5) Overarm Pass

The left foot steps forward after catching the ball, while the right foot is at the back. The width of two legs should be similar to that of your shoulder. Then use your right hand to hold the ball and raise it to the position above the shoulder. The body should point in a direction which is perpendicular

to the ball direction. The forearm and the upper arm should form an angle which is equal or larger than 90 degrees at the elbow joint. When the passing begins, the left foot steps on the floor, and the trunk rotates forcefully, flex your abdomen and wave your hand forward. The forearm presses downward strongly. Finally, combine the flexion of wrist and the fingers to pass the ball.



(6) Wrist Pass

Hold the ball with one or two hands in front of the chest and abdomen, the right palm pointing downward. The elbow joint acts as the rotating axis. The forearm and wrist swing to the right. The thumb and the first finger press on the ball and pass the ball out.

(7) Shooting

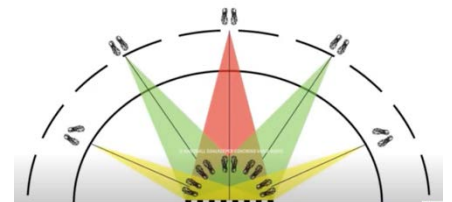
There is a great variety in shooting. According to different footwork and the changes of body position, it can be divided into three main groups:

1. Set Shot – One or both legs will remain on ground and act as a supporting point for shooting.
2. Jump Shot – Making use of trampled step on the ground, lift up body and execute the shot in the air.
3. Falling Shot - Shooting is executing under changing of center of gravity, rolling or sliding action will be followed to release momentum and for safe landing.

(8) Goalkeeping

8.1 Basic Stance

Legs are as wide as the shoulders. Knees are slightly bent. The upper arms are raised up to ready for saving. The basic movement should be done in semicircle in front of the goal. The principle of this movement is facing the ball holder and blocking the center point of the goal.

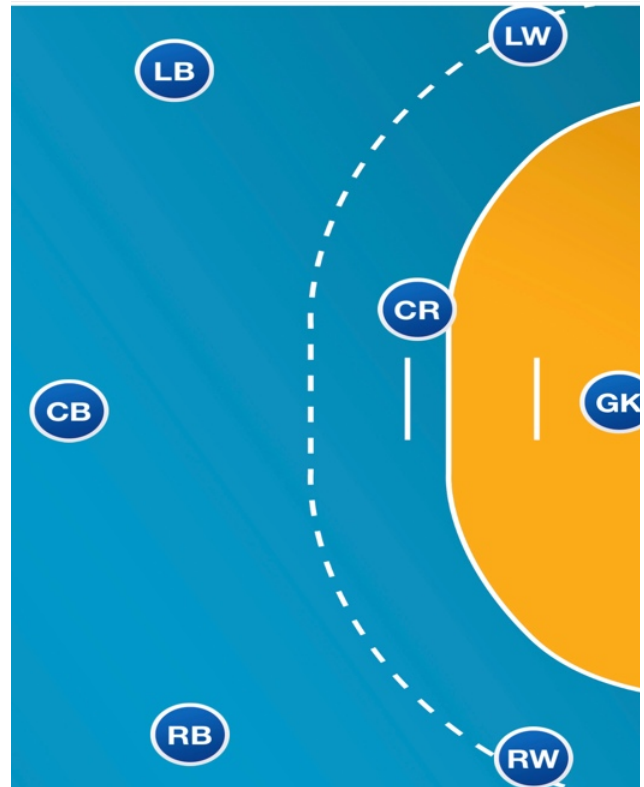


8.2 Saving Technique

1. Saving by arm – To block the ball shooting above hip, upper limbs are preferred. The advantage of saving the ball with one hand is fast which can cover a larger space. However, the area is small. Saving the ball by two hands results in larger hitting area but reduction in agility.
2. Saving by leg – Lower limbs are preferred when goalkeeper try to save the ball shooting below hip, the reaction and speed are faster than using upper limbs
3. Combination of arm and leg - To save ball, which is flying between shoulder and knee, it is better to use arm and leg together, to increase the hitting area

(9) Positions in Handball

1. Left/ right wingers (LW/RW): They usually run faster than other players, which is conducive to fast breaks. They usually shoot from tougher angles during set play.
2. Left/ right back (LB/ RB): Scorers of the team. They are usually good at long shots and individual breakthroughs.
3. Center Backer (CB): Also called Playmaker. A creative player to direct the play in both attack and defense.
4. Circle runner (CR): Also called Pivot. Innovative force that disrupts rivals while defending. They work to extend chances for teammates and help them to score. Meanwhile they turn to shoot after receiving the ball at the opponents' defensive area.
5. Goalkeeper (GK): The final defender in the team. The only player that can hold the ball in the goal area. Also, they usually lead the fast break.



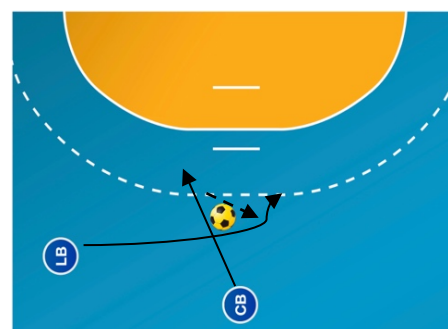
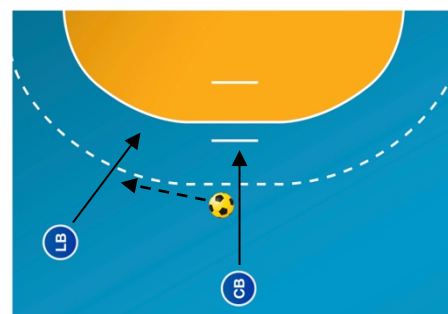
(10) Offense Formation

10.1 Individual breakthrough with ball

Individual breakthroughs make use of the 3 steps rule. The player usually land after receiving the ball in the air (0 steps). Then straddle 3 steps quickly to breakthrough the opponent's defense by changing speed and direction of the body and steps to feint the defender.

10.2 Group attack

1. H-Formation: running forward with the ball and passing it to a nearby running teammate who runs forward and shoots after catching the ball.
2. X-Formation: running with ball to the front of an opponent, pass the ball to a teammate who has run with cross direction and then performed a long shot.



10.3 Team offense styles

1. Wave Offense (Consecutive H-Formation).
2. Mostly perform 5-1 offense, sometimes 4-2 offense and 3-3 offense.

10.4 Fast break

The purpose of the fast break is to create numerical superiority during offense. It occurs following a steal, rebound, goalkeeper throw after opponent's shot, and free throw after opponent's violation or throw in at sideline. It is usually divided into three types: first wave fast break, second wave and third wave extended break.

(11) Defense Formation

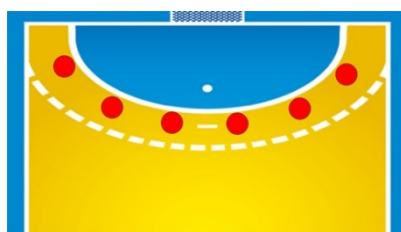
11.1 Individual defense

The agility of footwork is very important because the defender mainly uses the body to defend. The defender should lower the center of gravity by bending the knee slightly. Keep your heels off the ground in preparation for movement. It is most dangerous when facing the ball holder, so it needs to deal with first. First, force the opponent to the sidelines in order to narrow his shooting angle. Meanwhile, use the body with arms to stop the opponent when he is breaking through. When the opponent is ready to shoot, raise your hand to block it. For defending the non-ball holder, we should pay attention to the opponent's movement and block his path.

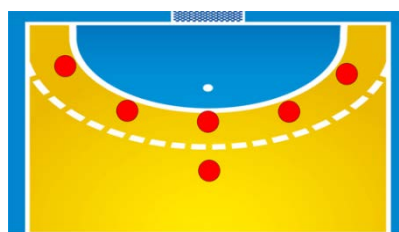


11.2 Zone defense

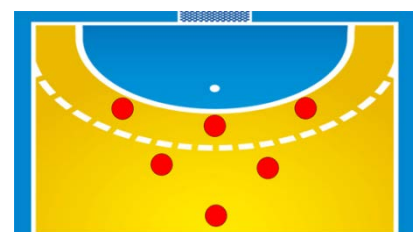
In handball game, defense team seldom applies Man-to-man Defense. Zone Defense is commonly used. Defense formation is mainly divided into 6 • 0 Defense; 5 • 1 Defense; 4 • 2 Defense; 3 • 3 Defense and 3 • 2 • 1 Defense. Defense formation mainly consists of one or two layers. The greater the number of the former, the wider the defensive area. This is favorable to defend the team with strong wing shot or without long shot. The greater the number of the latter, the deeper the defensive area. This is favorable to defend the team with strong long shot or poor passing quality. The most commonly used are 6 • 0 Defense and 5 • 1 Defense.



6 • 0 Defense



5 • 1 Defense



3 • 2 • 1 Defense

10.3 Man-to-man defense

In man-to-man defense, the stronger opponent(s) will be focusing defended. When it applies to the whole team, each defender is responsible for the designated opponent. But it is

dangerous to lose points if the opponent escapes successfully. Defenders should clearly understand the goal of defense is “opponent first and ball second”. It is better to take good care of the opponent and the ball at any time.

(E) Rules of Competition

1. Substitutes may enter the court, at any time and repeatedly, without notifying the timekeeper/scorekeeper, as long as the players they are replacing have already left the court. The players involved in the substitution shall always leave and enter the court over their own team's substitution line. A faulty substitution shall be penalized with a 2-minute suspension for the guilty player.
2. Goalkeeper can substitute with field player. In this case the team may be on the court with seven field players at the same time.
3. Goalkeeper with no ball on hand can leave the Goal Area. Once he leaves the Goal Area, he has to obey the rules of the court players.
4. It is not allowed to seize and to hit the ball away from opponent's hands.
5. If defenders' infringement occurs between the Goal Area Line and Free Throw Line, attackers will have a Free Throw beyond the Free Throw Line.
6. For the throw off, throw in and free throw, the opponents must be at least 3 meters away from the player taking the ball.
7. A goal is scored when the entire ball has completely crossed the goal line during any time of the game, except for an own goal executed by a goalkeeper throw.
8. The player taking the ball must have at least one leg touching the ground before the ball is thrown out.
9. If the team keeps the ball in possession without making any recognizable attempt to attack or to shoot on goal, referee will warn the offence team as Passive Play.
10. When a tendency to passive play is recognized, the forewarning signal is shown. If no shot on goal is taken by the attacking team after a maximum of 4 passes, then a free throw is called against this team.
11. Players or officials will be executed to a Warning (Yellow Card) if they have performed any unsportsmanlike behaviors.
12. Players and officials are restricted to 1 Warning while each team is restricted to 3 Warnings.
13. If players or officials have been executed over the Warning restriction, they will be executed to 2-minute Suspension (Leave the court for 2 minutes and is allowed to play on court after 2 minutes).
14. Faulty substitution should be penalized with a 2-minute suspension.
15. A direct 2-minutes suspension will be given to shooter that hits the goalkeeper's head with ball -criteria: there is no defender between the shooter and goalkeeper/the head is the first contact of the hit of ball/goalkeeper's head does not take initiative to move to the direction of ball.
16. Performing seriously unsportsmanlike behavior will be executed to a 2-minutes Suspension.
17. Player will be executed to Disqualification (Red Card) once he has been executed the third 2-minute Suspension.
18. Performing dangerous infraction to the opponent will be disqualified (Red card).
19. Injured players must leave the playing court, after receiving medical care on the court. He can only re-enter it when the third attack of his team is complete
20. Unsportsmanlike behavior and severe rules violation will be penalized with a blue card, referee is required to hand in written report and is followed up by the discipline council

Reference:

1. T. L. Siu & W. C. Yeung (2006). Basis Handball, Macao: Macao Polytechnic Institute.
2. Reita E. Clanton, Mary Phy Dwight. (2013). Team Handball: Steps to Success. United States : Human Kinetics.
3. Radu, F.L., & Abalasei, B.A. (2015). 101 Team handball. London: Bloomsbury.
4. 洪海蕭(2020) 。《全新正版 全民健身计划系列丛书-手球 分步详解体育健身书籍》。吉林出版集團股份有限公司。
5. Estriga, L. (2019). TEAM HANDBALL: TEACHING AND LEARNING STEP-BY-STEP United States: Agência Nacional.

Websites:

1. Handball Association of Hong Kong, China. (2024). <http://www.handball.org.hk>
2. International Handball Federation. (2024). www.ihf.info
3. Asian Handball Federation. (2024). <http://www.asianhandball.org/index.php?lang=en>
4. 101 academy 入門教室. (2022, October 14). 【運動教室 101】第三十四集:手球 (I)【Learning Sports 101】Episode 34 - Handball (I) [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stw7nBpcgXY>
5. 101 academy 入門教室. (2022b, October 21). 【運動教室 101】第三十四集:手球 (II)【Learning Sports 101】Episode 34 - Handball (II) [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YRvw47C8P4>