TRANSFORMING NETBALL INTO A LIFE-LONG SPORT IN KENYA

JACINTA W. KINOTI, W.W.S. NJORORAI AND FLORENCE GITAU
MOI UNIVERSITY, BOX 3900, ELDORET; EGERTON UNIVERSITY, P.O. BOX 536, NJORO AND KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, BOX 43844, NAIROBI, KENYA

ABSTRACT

Netball is a team sport, which can be played for competition or recreation pursuits. This paper aims at analysing the important points to consider in teaching netball to the different targeted groups including: Minor netball to pre-primary children (3-6 years), junior netball to primary children (7-14 years), senior netball to post primary level players ranging between 15 and 34 years of age and the masters category of those past 35 years of age. In each category, the physical education teacher and coach is faced with the challenges of stating specific aims and objectives, making appropriate methodology of teaching and must arrive at solutions to any emerging challenges. Special considerations include: class size, age, motivation and interest of the participants is vital to the success in any sport including netball, hence initiation into the game should start at an early age and sustained into old age. In this age of sedentary living, crowded urban areas, shorter working hours and stress of life, it is vital that sports such as netball be emphasized for both competitive as well as recreation purposes.

Key words: Minor netball, junior netball, senior netball.

INTRODUCTION

Netball was devised by Dr. James Naismith in 1891 as an outdoor exercise for college students. In Kenya, the game was introduced by early immigrants in mid 1940's as a unit within the physical education curriculum. It is run by Kenya Netball Association, which was formed in 1969. There are an estimated two million players in active competition throughout the world. The game has not yet become an Olympic sport and this has been a major hindrance to its growth. In Kenya, the game is among the first games introduced to girls and played in almost all primary and secondary schools. It has been enjoying the same popularity as soccer is for men. Today, acculturation has introduced more new games, which appear to be taking glory away from netball. The lack of a strong base and inadequate teaching of netball skills have also contributed to the slow development and lack of glamour for netball. This paper presents an approach of teaching netball, with a view of transforming it into a life-long sport in Kenya, for fitness, conditioning, leisure and competition purposes.

MINOR- NETBALL (Pre-Primary Children 3-6 years old)
Aims and Objectives

Children should be exposed to as many experiences as possible such as
simple skills of passing, catching and targeting (K.I.E., 1988). Simple skills learnt become a basis for recreation (Ball, 1978). These activities also help maintain body health (Drophy, 1975) and help the child to adjust socially (Halsey and Porter, 1963). They also provide opportunities for physical, mental and emotional growth and development (Halsey and Porter, 1963). Emphasis should be on individualized learning but all children should have access to facility and equipment and they should be easy to handle. Varied activities and special abilities should also be given consideration (Halsey, 1963).

Motivation

Goals set should be challenging but realistic to serve as extrinsic motivation. Activities should be varied with tone, eye contact, touch and gesture used appropriately (Warren 1983). The ball should be attractive, easy to handle and light.

Safety Precautions

Apparatus should be safe in type and solid in construction (Halsey, 1963). Children should be taught on responsibility for their own safety. Equipment and facilities should be adequate. The ball should be big with a circumference of about 690mm but light, weight (100gm). Kit should be comfortable, and made of absorbent material (K.I.E., 1988).

Justification for Content

Children at this age are developing and can easily grasp simple skills already outlined (K.I.E., 1988). Children should be exposed to the relevant phases of the lesson plan including, warm-up, class and group activities for example, throwing, catching and targeting. Other activities might include, competition or climax, for example counting the throws or shots and finally activities such as marching (K.I.E, 1988).

Possible Problems

These include large numbers, different aptitudes and ability levels. Others are few equipment and facilities, poor maintenance and storage, poor health of children and poor administration and management of physical education (Halsey and Porterr, 1963).

Possible Solutions

Provide varying activities. Purchase and improvise on the facilities and equipment. The specialist should be a model to both the administration and
the community. Motivate positive behaviour. Subdivide the group according to size and/or abilities. Advise on physical fitness and healthy living.

**JUNIOR NETBALL (7-14 YEARS)**

This is meant for the lower Primary school children who are 7-20 years and for upper primary that are 11-14 years old.

**Aims and Objectives**

Emphasis should be laid on efficient and skillful movements. Lower primary pupils should be introduced to simple rules. Upper primary pupils should master all the rules. The game should be developed to competition level (K.I.E., 1988).

**Special Consideration**

Emphasis on individualised learning. It is easy to learn the skills at this age. Adolescents should be taken care of by recognising their changing needs and inclination to peers (Lawther, 1951; Warren, 1983).

**Safety Precautions**

Children can be exposed to basic skills of first aid (Halsey and Porter, 1963). The rules of netball including zone restriction, proper attire, short finger nails, no jewellery and playing distance (0.9m) to enhance safety, penalties that are awarded should also be introduced (Stratford, 1976).

**Equipment and Facilities**

A hard surface is recommended but in emergencies, a grass court can be used (Stratford, 1976). Players at lower primary should use a smaller court (7.6m by 15.2m) while those of upper primary use a bigger court (10.2m by 20.4m). The goal post should be built 2.7m high and rings about 500mm in diameter (Baggallay, 1966). Lower primary pupils should use a handball while upper primary a slightly light netball Baggallay, 1966).

**Justification of Content**

Motor components of junior netball include speed, endurance, strength, flexibility and coordination. Types of activities to be used should enhance efficiency in skills including, ball handling, footwork, dodging, interception, marking, throw-in, throw-out and shooting (K.I.E., 1988).

**Methodology**

Lower primary lessons and training sessions should take 25 minutes whereas, upper primary lessons take 30 minutes. Emphasis should be on efficiency in skills and competition.
Possible Problems

In addition to the problems experienced by pre-primary, pupils, adolescence and other related problems are prevalent.

Solutions

In addition to the solutions offered for pre-primary pupils, guidance and counselling should be encouraged. Design activities as per needs (Halsey and Porter, 1963).

SENIOR NETBALL

This is meant for the age groups characterised by late adolescence (15-19 years) and young adults 20-34 years.

Aims and Objectives

To develop the game at national and international levels (K. I. E., 1988).

Specific Consideration

A full team of fourteen players can be engaged in a standard game. In late adolescents, motivation may depend on the peers. In ages 20-34 years motivation may be intrinsic and this can only be facilitated by positive outcomes of one’s goals. Other sources of motivation would include recreation, travelling, winning and self-esteem (Lawther, 1951; Warren 1983).

Safety Precaution

Emphasis should be laid on the medical records and rules of netball should be adhered to strictly (Daughtrey, 1967).

Equipment and Facilities

The length of the court as well as the surface is a for upper primary. Measure 30.5m by 15.25m. Goal circles: There is a semi-circle in each goal third. Draw from the, middle of goal line; with a radius 4.88m. Centres circle, in the middle of the centre third (914mm). The court post should be 3.05m high placed at the mid-point of each goal line. Ring has a diameter of 380mm and is made of tubular steel which is 15mm in diameter and fitted with a net open at both ends. It projects (150mm) from top of the post (Stratford, 1976).

The ball is a netball or size 5 association football measuring between 690-710mm in circumference, weight between 400-450gms; made of leather,
rubber or similar material and well inflated. For competitions registered uniforms must be used.

**Justification For Content**

At this age, most growth and development especially in the thirties have peaked. Learners with continuous exposure have gained efficiency in speed, endurance, balancing, strength and coordination. Emphasis should be on exercise leading to efficiency in motor components (Daughtrey, 1967).

**Methodology**

Lessons should follow the phases outlined for the upper primary. Duration for a game should be one hour and four quarters (Straford, 1976).

**Possible Problems**

In addition to problems outlined for upper primary, others include social problems such as conflicting roles are more prevalent at this stage. This age group is prone to injuries and sickness.

**Solutions**

Solutions outlined for upper the primary group are applicable. In addition, emphasis should be placed on frequent medical check-ups. Training at this stage should be a continuous process and appropriate. Prescription of activities should be according to doctor's advice.

**MIDDLE AGED 36-65 YEARS (MASTER'S CATEGORY)**

**Aims and Objectives**

For leisure and recreation, enjoyment and fun. To maintain bodily health and physical fitness for sustaining the level of skills learnt.

**Specific consideration**

Most of this age group requires individual activities. They are intrinsically motivated. Extrinsic motivation will comprise mainly of individual goals and daily triumphs (Warren, 1988).

**Safety Precaution**

Consistent medical check-up should indicate whether an individual is physically fit or healthy. Appropriate facilities and equipment should be used to reduce accidents (Guyton, 1974).
Justification for Content

Motor components of minor – netball should also be emphasized at this level. These should include balance, coordination, flexibility and strength. This age group is deteriorating in these components (Shiver and Fail, 1980). A variety of activities of short duration about (15 minutes) with emphasis on flexibility and general maintenance of other components should be given.

Methodology

Mentally follow the procedure prescribed for the pre-primary group but activities to be included should depend on individuals’ ability (Ball and Cipriano, 1978).

Possible Problems

Possible problems include declining health and ability, social problems, conflicting roles, financial constraints and competition from teenagers (Allsen, Harrison and Vance, 1976).

Solutions

Possible solutions include regular medical check-ups and appropriate treatment, designing activities as per requirement and guidance and counselling (Stein and Sesson, 1997).

CONCLUSIONS

Specific handicapped groups should also be taken care of by being integrated into appropriate groups already discussed according to nature of handicap and capability. For all the groups, maximum teacher-child interaction and variety of activities should be encouraged. Individuals should be encouraged to play the game either for leisure, fitness or join elite clubs and participate nationally and internationally. Coaching and umpiring courses are encouraged for competency in the game at all levels. Interest is the key of success in netball, whose development should start from early childhood and where possible to old age. These will help to transform netball into a life long sport in Kenya.

REFERENCES


