

DEFENSIVE SYSTEM 3:3: INTRODUCTION TO DEFENSE IN ZONE

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Summary

This article deals with the early experiences of the so-called zonal defences open in Spain, to later define the characteristics of the 3:3 zonal defensive system¹, and the denomination of the players in the different specific positions.

The central part offers a "Decalogue", explaining the different roles that players must know, learn and work. Some individual roles, the defender of the player with the ball and the defender of the player without the ball. Other groupal roles, in order to coordinate the work between the defenders, and, finally, a collective role. It ends highlighting the importance that tactical means of help and coverage have in this defensive system.

Keywords

Team handball, defence in zone, introduction to defence in zone

Introduction

The first time we saw a 3:3 zonal defensive system with a lot of distance between lines, with players taking on a lot of profundity, was the Spanish Junior Women's National Team, preparing their qualification for the 1995 World Championship in Brazil, the coach of that team was the Spanish coach Carlos Colmenero Rubio (Colmenero, 1995). Accustomed to zonal defences with little profundity, we have to confess that, for us, it was quite a shock.

Before developing this proposal 3:3 zonal defence, we would like to note that, in our opinion, and in line with other authors, as Alonso (1983), Oliver and Sosa (1996), García-Herrero (1998, 2003) etc., the open zonal defences are essential in the teaching-learning process of children at the base. Why? In general, nowadays no one disputes the need that in the early contacts with handball, in the first matches, teams must use an individually defensive system over the whole playing field, and subsequently, just in one half of the own playing field.

But, how do we must move from an individually defence to a zonal defence? In our opinion, the answer is with an open defence in two lines, the 3:3 zonal defensive system we are going to present here, because it allows us to explain to the players, and put in practice in an easy way, -among other things- the concept of zonal defence, and on this basis, changes of opponents-adversaries, basis of zonal defensive systems. However, we would also like to note that this is no a defensive system just for the beginners, because with it we can assure that several teams have achieved success in different categories, included teams of top sports performance.

This article presents a proposal of executing a 3:3 zonal defence, which of course is not the only, but it is what we have practiced a few years ago with the Cadet and Junior Women's

¹ This proposal was exposed for the first time on 27 July 2006 during the "V National Meeting o Handball's Teachers of Brazilian Higher Education Institutions" held in Aracaju (Sergipe) Brazil, organized by Brazilian Handball Confederation (Oliver, 2006).

Selections of Andalusia, Brazilian women's National Team, and nowadays the Spanish youth women's National Team, among other teams.

Characteristics

Our proposed 3:3 zonal defensive system has the following characteristics:

- ✚ *A zonal defence:*
Players defend an area delimited by their coach in profundity and width. Therefore, as a rule, if occur the abandonment of the specific playing position, by an attacker, either by movements of wings or by any first line player (left back, right back or center back), the defender will accompany the attacker, and when they crossing, there will be a corresponding change of opponent, keeping each defenders, their initial defensive zone.
- ✚ *A defence of "help":*
Players must learn to perform the collective tactical means named "coverage" and "help", and reach to domain its. In this kind of open defences the errors have an easy solution through helps. We must also begin to think that, as well as we leave the specific position when we are in attack, we also can likewise leave to the specific position in denfense. It is therefore a defence of helps, a "joint defence".
- ✚ *"Offensive" Defence:*
The proposal allows also work the collective defensive tactical means, -using the terminology of Antón (2002), such as defending the odd, flotation or two against one. But above all, the philosophy of this model is to prevent tactical organization of the opponent team, not let them play ordered, shortening the decision time, getting that they are always uncomfortable, pressured, etc.

Distribution of players

- ✚ *Initial spatial distribution of the players in the 3:3 zonal defensive system*

Figure 1 reflects the zonal distribution of the defenders in this defensive system, and on the left, the name of each specific position, according to the classical designation of specific position in zonal defensive systems.

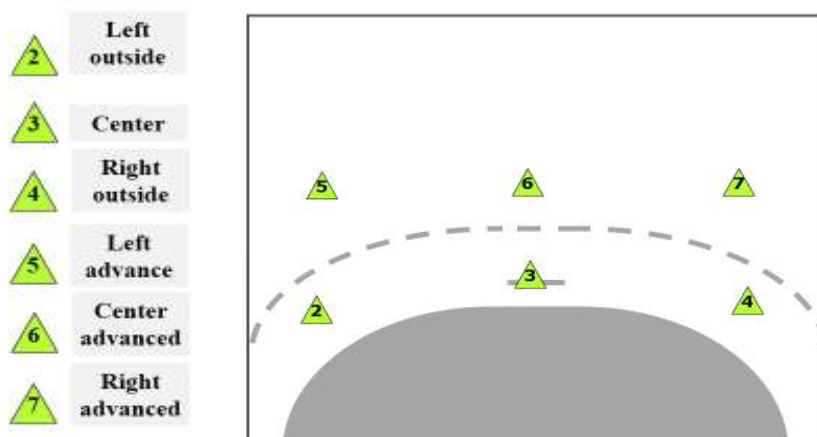


Figure 1. Graphic Representation of 3:3 zonal defensive system.

Proposal work: "the decalogue"

The aim of this work is to explain how to teach and train through 10 steps or decalogue, the approach, philosophy and functioning of this zonal defence 3:3 open, with profundity.

Player must learn and perfect 10 functions:

- 7 Individual Responsibilities:
 - ✓ When defends to a player who has the ball (4 responsibilities)
 - ✓ When defending the player who hasn't the ball (4 responsibilities)
- 2 Groupal Responsibilities
- 1 Collective responsibility

✚ Individual responsibilities

We refer to those responsibilities which the player must follow and which does not need any coordination with their teammates. This not mean that each of defenders acting on their own. The idea is that everyone must do its share of work from the perspective of individually technique-tactic.

- A) *Defender of the player with the ball.*

✚ (1). *Do not go towards the opponent*

The defender will not go ever towards an opponent with the ball, this circumstance would be with the attacker steps cycle intact and would have much advantage, multiplying **the danger of his feint of displacement and commit disciplinary sanctions.**

Wait until the attacker with ball use the three steps and need to bounce the ball.

✚ (2). *On the bounce, harass!*

Once the attacker with ball begins to bounce must harass **in order to stop bouncing and take or adapt the ball.**

So, the attacker only can perform three steps to complete the cycle of steps.

✚ (3). *Harassing without technique fault.*

Once the player with the ball has used its cycle of steps (3-step + bounce (s) + 3-step) the defending player shall harass without committing any technique fault.

The idea is to get that the attacker with ball make a mistake, as offensive fault, steps, bad pass, etc.

✚ (4). *Assess the dangerous of the opponent.*

The defender must assess the dangerousness of his opponent with ball. This is primarily determined by two or three parameters.

The first is the orientation to the goal, while more vertical, more dangerous, on the contrary, while more orientation towards the sidelines, less dangerous.

The second is the arm position and head. Arm prepared to throw, danger, if the arm is not armed the danger decreased. Regarding the head, if it is up, looking straight ahead with wide visual field, maximum risk, if instead the opponent is looking down with a small visual field, the risk is greatly reduced.

The third parameter would be the distance to the goal. The more distance, the less danger of effectiveness in the throwing.

We have to "educate" the defenders learn to appreciate the danger of the opponent with the ball, according terms of these instruction, because, with maximum danger may commit a fault, but if there is no dangerous, to commit a fault would be an important error, as this would let the opposing team could reorganize.

- B) *Defender of the player without the ball*

✚ (4). *Assess the dangerous of the opponent*



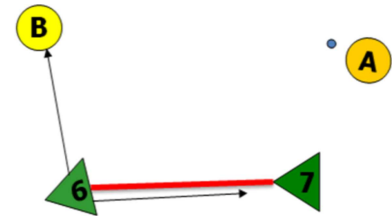
All above is also valid for the player whose opponent doesn't have ball possession, applying the logical adaptations.

The good use of individual tactic, will let lead the opponent to positions and situations of limited danger.

✚ (5). *Half way*

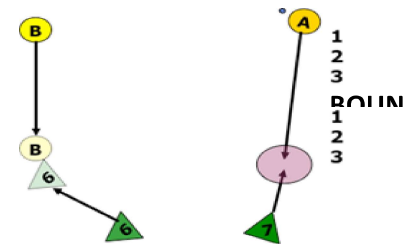
The defender (6) of the player without the ball (B) shall be placed in a situation of “coverage” to make a help to his teammate (7) if it is necessary, and also to get to defend his direct opponent (B), if he gets the ball.

That is, should be placed at half way (50%), to help and mark his opponent with the ball when he receives it.



✚ (6). *Assess harass*

As in point 3, harass without committing any technique fault to direct opponent with the ball, but this time, must be reduced / closed the pass line of player with ball through to be placed in the interception line, between the player with the ball and his opponent without the ball.

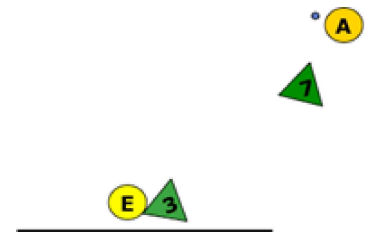


✚ (7) *Ball in zone of pivot*

The relationship between first line players (center, left back and right back) with pivot, forces to study several situations, and, based on them, give appropriate instructions.

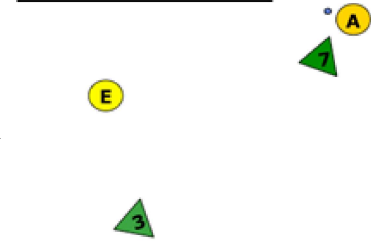
1. *With pivot placed on 6-m line*

The defender of the pivot must perform a close marking of the pivot. The aim is that the pivot must not be able to receive the ball, because if he receives it, his chance to throw to the goal is very high.



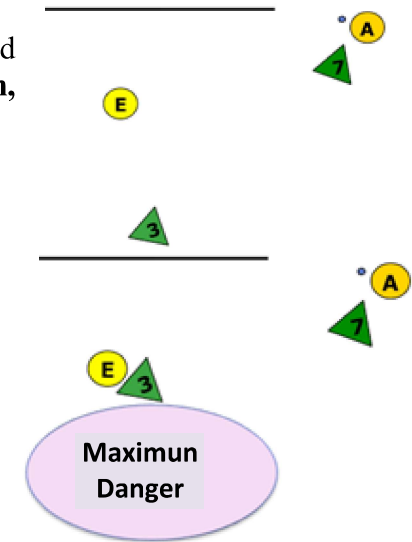
2. *Pivot away 6-m line (8/10 meters)*

When pivot goes out the area near the goal area (6-m line), and acquires profundity, 8 or 9 m., **defender mustn't follow him, mustn't stick to him, nor perform a close marking.**



The principal reason is that if he follows the pivot by 8/10 meters, the central space, near 6 meters is very vulnerable, giving options to perform circulations of wings or circulations of first line players.

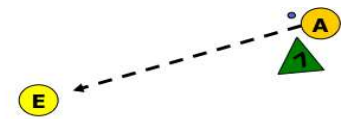
Also we would be without central defender, important defender because he usually is the last defender to give help to their teammate.



In this situation there is the possibility of not receiving the ball, and the possibility that he receives it. If the pivot receives the ball between 8/10 meters, the defender must observe and assess what performs pivot in that situation.

✓ *Option 1. The pivot does not turn around*

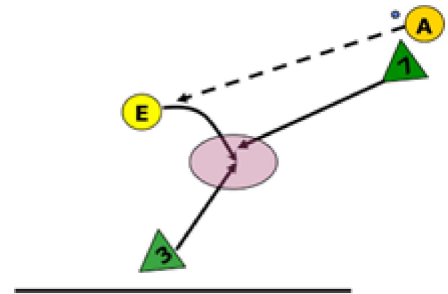
If the pivot does not turn and continues playing back to goal, his opponent will continue using a visual marking. Defenders of the player with the ball and pivot, should individually interpret the possibility that be perform a pass and go.



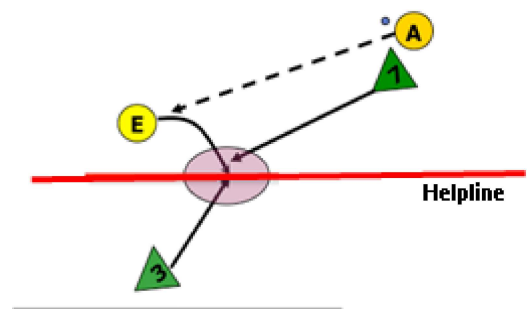
✓ *Option 2. The pivot turns around*

His direct opponent will perform a close marking to the pivot with ball, and even should make a technique fault, based on the dangerous of the pivot action.

But what is most important for us is that the defender of second line closer to the pivot turn, must make a help to his fellow defender of the pivot, to avoid thereby any action there of.



We argue that in this system, when a defending player stays above of the “helpline” or line of "offside", (marked this line by the situation of the ball between the two defensive lines), and especially when the player with the ball is oriented to the goal, must make a help. On one hand, it is quite difficult for the player with the ball do a backward pass, and on the other hand, in the case of the occurrence of this pass, its dangerousness is small.



✚ *Groupal responsibilities*

To carry out these groupal responsibilities the players must interact with their teammates applying collective defensive tactical means.

Basically we will use tactical means named "reactives", although the means "actives" are highly recommended.

✚ (8) *Crosses and circulations of wings*

When the opposing team applies basic offensive tactical means, as crossing, their defenders, shall make a change of opponent. Logically should observe the principles of change of opponent, especially to be in the same line. When a circulation of wing occurs, his opponent must avoid it, go with him, and then, if it is necessary, make a change of opponent with the defender of the pivot.

✚ (9) *Circulations of first line players (center, left back, right back)*

If a player of the first offensive line performs a circulation towards the pivot area, 6 meters, his direct opponent must avoid it and go with him, transforming the 3:3 defensive system to a 4:2. Later, if there are a crossing with the pivot, must perform a change of opponent.

Again, we note the importance of the central defender, not go out to look for the pivot, because if the circulation occurs, the possibility of change of opponent does not exist.

This solution is implemented in a generic way, as it could have its adaptations based on opposing players, mainly in anthropometric differences and development of physical and motor skills.

Collective Responsibilities

We understand the collective term when all of the team players are involved in an action, while in groupal responsibilities those interventions are in small groups, usually 2 or 3 players, no more.

(10) *Errors and Help*





Possibly this principle and collective tactical means defensive gets a greater role in this defence. We all understand that a profound defence generates more and larger spaces to be occupied by the attackers. So that, it is very important to fill these spaces if they are occupied by the opponents and, especially, if they are occupied due to defenders' errors. The only solution to solve a defensive error is that some teammate performs a help.

Important note about the help:

For give help, it is very important the use of collective tactical means called "preventive", such as coverage and lateral displacements ("basculation"). Thus, the basculation leads players to do coverage, and this is the essential first step for give help. Therefore, all players must understand that this is a group action, coordinated, not isolated. Only basculating, staying in coverage, and being aware of this, players will perform a correct help.

Final Considerations

Here we would like to highlight some important considerations:

-  *"Where is the ball, is the danger."* All defenders must know, interpret and apply this principle. Sure that the game without the ball is very important! But, is even more important with the ball, because without a ball you can't get a goal. As elementary as true.
-  *"It doesn't matter to leave specific position in defence and occupy other."* In this defensive system, where one of its fundamental principles is the help, it appears this idea, perhaps not widespread. But, if we do that in attack! Why not do so in defence? In addition, this abandonment of the specific position in defence is momentary, only last long enough for helping, successive or not, until the imminent danger disappears.
-  *"Not one defender must stay above the helpline or "offside" line"* marked by the situation of the ball between the two defensive lines. The preventive tactical mean called coverage, must be permanently associated with this individual tactical defensive principle of helpline.
-  *"The error must be trained"*. It is necessary to explain and train solutions to take when a defender, a teammate, commits an error. It is idealistic to think that during a match we will not have any error in defence. So, what to do if we have a mistake? If perception, decision or execution of a defending player is bad or wrong, should we resign ourselves to concede a goal? In our proposal, the answer is No! The solution: the correct interpretation and application of the helps, successive or not.