

PIVOTS SKILLS

Study of the ASOBAL League (2005-2006 Season) pivots basic skills.

1. Introduction

The sports competition brings about several critical situations. (Dasil, 2004). We may observe decisive or maximum responsibility situations such as playing the match at the visitor's home, equal scoreboards as well as the spectators' protests against the referee's decisions. According to Csikszentimihalyi (1998), little experienced players follow two performance directions under critical pressure contexts: they rush the execution, or, on the contrary, they do not solve the situation due to thinking about much more possible options than the ones the advantage initially offered them. Competent players gather enough experience to face the critical moments. Needless to say, it is a must for any player the importance of having played a considerable amount of national and international matches in order to get a benefit from this experience. This makes them use their skills repertoire during the game to offer some continuity to the series of activities and the level of achievement. Orlick (2004) indicates that the competition time is more about connection than thinking. Thus indicates that the players perform under the influence of consolidated skills. Through the game, the competent pivot performs skillfully, without paying much conscious attention to the way they implement their skills.

This study is aimed to introduce the pivot game fundamental skills. The competence profiles are defined through the analysis of the critical moments whether affecting the team and the player. The analysis is made emphasizing the connected skills, from the starting skill, which is the first to use in the sequence.

2. ASOBAL League 2005-2006 Season pivots basic skills.

The pivots under review show a huge output in the skills performance, taking into account that just a few of them lead to a negative achievement. This negative consequence is accompanying the pivot along the whole game. They happen when there is a disruption in the action according to the game rules, an inaccuracy at the moment of execution or simply because of the rival's interaction.

The conceptual framework exposes that the competent pivots' profile shows they are people who focus their efforts on the self improvement, the purchase of success and perfection. We can confirm this when we notice that the 1st Pivot (2,37%), 2nd Pivot (1,74%) and the 3rd Pivot (1,91%) show little negative achievement skills. (Chart 1)

		1st PIVOT			2nd PIVOT			3rd PIVOT		
		N	NEG	%	N	NEG	%	n	NEG	%
NEGATIVE ACHIEVEMENT SKILLS	BLOCKING	128	3 (2.34%)	0.44	154	2 (1.29%)	0.33	199	-	-
	GETTING AWAY FROM THE MARKER	100	3 (3%)	0.44	132	2 (1.51%)	0.33	84	3 (3.57%)	0.38
	FEINTING	56	1 (0.17%)	0.14	21	1 (4.76%)	0.16	53	3 (5.66%)	0.38
	WINNING THE POSITION	404	-	-	268	-	-	411	2(0.48%)	0.25
	THROWING THE BALL	54	10(18.5%)	1.47	30	6 (20%)	0.99	81	8 (9.87%)	1.02
TOTAL		742	18/758	2.37	605	11/632	1.74	828	16/836	1.91

Chart 1: Negative achievement skills frequency. The keeping away skill and the holding back skill have not been presented in the chart because they do not contribute with data about the negative achievements.

We can see that throwing is the skill the pivots get more negative achievements with. The interpretation of data shows the high percentage of goal throwing. However, the percentage of negative achievements is far below the average on contrast to other pivots and players. Obviously, not all the negative achievements can be considered the same way, since each of their consequences penalize, more or less, the team's final result.

Another issue to take into account is the reaction when there is an error. The way a pivot reacts when facing a single or multiple negative actions, in view of the trainer's

permissiveness. The negative achievement management, in these players, is sensed as an incentive, as a trigger for future skills propulsion. The competent pivots, when facing the most difficult and pressure situations, manage to show all their game competence.

Generally speaking, the pivots in the study share some similar competent profiles. The differences among them are established on the skills they less use, those ones seldom used.

In order to establish a more precise profile of the three pivots, we have to analyze the result of the attack, distinguishing between the consequences of the skills, checking whether they are for the pivot themselves or for another team mate.

From the initial theoretical approach, it is confirmed that among the spectrum of nine skills defined in the game of the pivot, only seven are used as a result of their activity in the game. The screening and the breakaway are the two skills defined by the experts, however, they are not observed in this sample. A possible explanation about the absence of the screening in the game of the pivot is found in the construction of the playing system, which is an skill that implies the coordination with many more players. As for the breakaway, it is an skill the pivots who play away from the 6m line have. On the open defenses that provide them some space between the defense lines, they can easily get away and they have the possibility of managing the trajectory with the ball. In these situations, the pivot tends to assume a different role, one that can guarantee the circulation of the ball. We might say that they become a second center half.

It has been reflected in the results analysis that the three pivots prototype is one about a player who basically performs in the central area near the 6m and they mainly interfere on the second right defender. The duration of the skills execution oscillates between 4 and 5 seconds on average. Likewise, winning the position is the most used skill by the pivot, and the first line players get the maximum benefits from this action (left back and center half) and they end the attack actions in the central area near the 6m

The most frequent skills the competent pivots use (chart 2) show little differences in the profile design for each pivot.

	1st PIVOT		2nd PIVOT		3rd PIVOT	
1st	WINNING POSITION	n 185 % 43,3	WINNING POSITION	n 119 % 37,4	WINNING POSITION	N 211 % 38,6
2nd	BLOCKING	n 58 % 13,6	BLOCKING	n 73 % 23,0	BLOCKING	N 113 % 20,7
3rd		n 54 % 12,6	GETTING AWAY	n 39 % 12,3	KEEPING AWAY	N 95 % 17,4
4th	GETTING AWAY	n 31 % 7,3	KEEPING AWAY	n 23 % 7,2	GETTING AWAY	N 32 % 5,9
5th	WINNING POSITION + FEINTING	n 22 % 5,2	HOLDING	n 19 % 6,0	WINNING POSITION+ FEINTING + THROWING	n 20 % 3,7
6th	WINNING POSITION + GETTING AWAY	n 14 % 3,3	BLOCKING + GETTING AWAY	n 11 % 3,5	WINNING POSITION+ THROWING	n 17 % 3,1
TOTAL CONNECTED ACTIONS	427		318		546	

Chart 2: Organization of the skills the competent pivots most use in the critical moments of the games analyzed.

These skills are emphasized due to their high repetition in the game. They are fundamental skills and they define the post characteristics. As it was mentioned in the theoretical part, the predominant skills are typical for the game without ball. It is only from the fifth position when we can observe the connection of more than one skill, that means, more complex structures and, in some cases, developing a game with the ball. The last skills configuration sets the pivot profile and also sets the differences among them. The exploitation of the connected actions indicates the quality of the pivot. The competent pivot is able to link skills together with performances

The three analyzed pivots show some differences among their connected actions (chart 1). While the 3rd pivot exploits some connected actions which allow him to end the attack up with a throwing, on the other hand, the 2nd and the 3rd pivot have skills with a collective goal.

Both pivot 1 and 3 show some apparent similar skills. They are set apart from the rest due to their body contact game without a ball. Furthermore, the 3rd pivot is able to take advantage in order to end the connecting up, then, it is more efficient in the execution of the technical and tactical skills, both with and without the ball.

The 2nd pivot shows less connected skills, and at the same time, he has a bigger variety of skills as the most used ones. In his activity, he moves around fundamental skills such as winning the position, blocking, getting away from the opponent, keeping away or holding

the defender back. The fifth ones are isolated skills, without any connection, which shows a game based on simplicity and the domination of them in his activity. We could find an explanation about the use of these fundamental skills in the resistance some opponents offer, in the team game planning or in the collective sensitivity towards his work. However, the study is only trying to identify the skills.

Some other interesting data are the skills performed by the competent pivots with a positive consequence. It is observed that the multiple possibilities in the skills connection are reduced to a limited number. The pivots are competent performing some skills, not all of them though. They use the skills their capacity offer them and they repeat them fixing them to the competence context.

The skills association to a positive consequence shows a limited number of skills connection in the three pivots. There is a domination of connections of two and three fundamental skills. The domination of these connections is very important in order to obtain the competence of this specific post (chart 3).

1st PIVOT	2nd PIVOT	3rd PIVOT
Winning position	Winning position	Winning position
Winning position+blocking	Winning position+getting away	Winning position+getting away
Winning position+getting away	Winning position + getting away	Winning position + getting away
Winning position + getting away +throwing	+throwing	+throwing
Winning position+throwing	Winning position+throwing	Winning position+feinting
Winning position+feinting+throwing	Winning position+feinting+throwing	Winning position+feinting+throwing
Winning position+throwing	Winning position+throwing	Winning position+throwing
Blocking	Blocking+getting away	Blocking
Blockingr+winning position+feinting	Blocking+holding	Blockingr+winning position
Blocking+winning position+feinting+throwing	Blocking	Blockingr+winning position+feinting
Blocking+getting away	Blockingr+winning position+feinting	Blocking+winning position+feinting+throwing
Blocking+getting away+throwing	Blocking+getting away	Blocking+getting away+throwing
Getting away	Blocking+getting away+throwing	Blocking+throwing
Getting away+blocking	Getting away	Getting away
Getting away+throwing	Getting away+blocking	Getting away+throwing
Throwing	Getting away+feinting	Throwing
Holding	Getting away+throwing	Holding
	Throwing	
	Holding	
	Holding+getting away+throwing	

Chart 3: List of the skills with positive consequences in the critical moments of the analyzed games.

Among the three pivots there are some disparities following two aspects. The 3rd pivot, qualified as the more competent by the experts, exploits a minor number of skills in comparison to the other two pivots. A debate could be set about the quantity or the quality of their skills an extraordinary player dominates. It seems as if the competence of a player is not related to the variety of skills but to the domination of a few ones, the ones that are executed in determination, which means, performed at the precise moment, on the pertinent space and with an excellent result.

The association of skills gathers all the connections that lead into a positive consequence. In these connections it is possible to combine neutral consequence skills with positive ones. Under this premise, the whole of skills the 1st pivot performs are identified as 5; the 2nd pivot uses 4 and lastly, the 3rd pivot performs 1 neutral consequence skill (Daza, 2009).

3. Conclusion

Examining the volume of positive interventions, it is possible to assert that the pivots give priority to these connected skills. These structures are very interesting for the training tasks planning. The competent pivots tend to complete skill systems in their game, from the space body exploitation in the game without the ball, to the ending of the game with the ball. If we value the results of the three pivots, it is possible to remark that the positive consequence skills go mainly around three big connecting families (chart4):

FAMILY	CONNECTED ACTIONS	USE OF PERCENTAGES			
		GARABAYA	NIKOLIC	URÍOS	MEDIA
WINNING THE POSITION	Winning position	62,7 %	47,6 %	57,4 %	55,9 %
	Winning position +getting away				
	Winning position +getting away +throwing				
	Winning position +feinting				
	Winning position +feinting +throwing				
	Winning position +throwing				
	Winning position +throwing				
BLOCKING	Blocking	25,3 %	32,1 %	35,9 %	31,1 %
	Blocking+holding				
	Blocking+throwing				
	Blocking+getting away				
	Blocking+getting away+throwing				
	Blocking+winning positon				
	Blocking+winning position+feinting				
	Bloquear+ganar-posición+fintar+lanzar				
GETTING AWAY	Getting away	8,2 %	11,8 %	4,8 %	8,3 %
	Getting away+blocking				
	Getting away+feinting				
	Getting away+throwing				
	Throwing				
OTHER SKILLS	Holding	3,9 %	8,5 %	1,5 %	4,6 %
	Holding+getting away+throwing				
	Holding+feinting+throwing				
	Keeping away				

Chart 4: positive consequence skills family performed by the pivots. It is observed that the connected actions performed when using the winning position to the opponent skill hugely dominate.

According to the compiled data about the skills connected system, the pivots preferently make three groups of connected actions:

1. WINNING THE POSITION + GETTING AWAY FROM THE OPPONENT or FEINTING + TRHOWING THE BALL (~ 56%)
2. BLOCKING + GETTING AWAY FROM THE OPPONENT + WINNING THE POSITION + THROWING THE BALL (~ 31%)
3. GETTING AWAY FROM THE OPPONENT + TRHOWING THE BALL (~ 8,3%)

4. Biographical references.

CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, M. (1998). Creatividad. El fluir y la psicología del descubrimiento y la invención. Barcelona: Paidós.

DAZA, G. (2009). Las habilidades del pivote en la alta competición de balonmano. Tesis Doctoral Inédita. Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona. Departamento de Teoría y Historia de la Educación.

DOSIL, J. (2004). Psicología de la actividad física y el deporte. Madrid: McGraw-Hill.

ORLICK, T. (2004). Entrenamiento mental: cómo vencer en el deporte y en la vida. Barcelona: Paidotribo.