Abstract
Basketball is one of the sports activities which consists in a multitude of diverse actions from one game phase to the next. The game is played in a very alert manner, with simultaneous participation of all players and involves a great show-like trait. Basketball has a very rich technical and tactical roster, which in turn stimulates both play and sports mastership development in the best players. Getting a superior performance in major contests revealed a modern day basketball set of elements, applied by only the best national and international teams, aspects that allowed us to present some of the trends in which basketball has and is still evolving to this date and in the future.

Keywords: basketball, counter-offense, offense, defense, training.
JEL classification: I21, I23

Introduction
“Just like any other sport, basketball, from its origins and to date has undergone several different stages, which were determined by several factors: technique and tactics evolution, physical training perfection, rule changes, TV demands, the wish for offering a better spectacle, etc.” (Predescu, Ghitescu, 2001, p15).

“This evolution of basketball, alongside the factors already mentioned is also determined by the ongoing and everlasting competition with other sports (football, handball, volleyball, etc.)” (Berceanu, Moanţă, 2007, p 22); it is also shaped by the emergence of new sports (beach-volleyball, beach-handball) which have increasingly higher broadcast time. Another fact that helps shape the evolution of basketball is the process of adapting some sports to disabled people’s needs.

Taking into account these aspects, I consider that, in order to insure maximum basketball performance both a multilateral and specific approach is needed, because maximum yield in this game cannot be based solely upon individual tricks and skills. Increasing performance in basketball is determined by the level of physical, psychological and specific skills. Systematic basketball practice ensures an optimum level of training, which can be gained and must be maintained. Basketball puts a strain and equally develops on whole range of biological and movement traits, due to its high movement requirement and to its great range of necessary abilities.

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Players in World Championships and Olympics are well-toned athletes who have superior speed, strength and detent indices all combined specifically for aiding their basketball performance.

“Developing the training process is a permanent objective for coaches in preparing both teams and high-profile players.” (Josep, 1995, p 36)

“Important international contests have shown the quick rhythm of the game, how quickly and swiftly defense follows offence and vice versa, all determined, mainly, by the increase in performing technical procedures, individual tactical actions both in defense and offence.” (Ghiţescu, 2004, p 57) Players must have a complex training including a psychological capacity that can help them achieve performance – in this last part, the trainer has the broadest contribution. A reaction in different game situation usually reflects the player’s personality (creativity, bravery, stress resistance, anticipation, control and tactical thinking).

Contents

Achieving superior performance parameters in major competitions, highlighted a number of issues that characterize current basketball game practiced by the best teams in the world, all of which allow us to present some actual and future development directions.

Modern tactics involve, mostly, counter offense and blitz attack both undertaken in any game situation: offensive or defensive rebounds, collective play, a shortening of the attack phase by finalizing after 2 or 3 passes and 1 or 2 pivots positional offence; when defending, more aggressive tactics work such as man-to-man pressing (either in the own half or on all field surface).

Counter-offence lasts about 3 to 5 seconds and is recognized by center dribbling. It is done by passing or dribbling from a defensive rebound, quarterback center dribbling and/or by 2 or 3 attackers (usually flanks and pivots). An average game contains about 10 to 13 counter-offences and a total of 22 scored points (with a success rate of 75%).

The blitz attack (or transition attack) is the most evolved play form of basketball. It lasts for 7 to 12 seconds, has a number of 3 to 4 passes and is basically a prolonged counterattack. It is characterized by a coordinated movement with a very fast advance of players without having the ball and it concludes by either a successful dunk or an offensive rebound, in case of a miss. An average game contains about 30 to 45 blitz attack, with 24 points scored and a success rate of 60%, less effective than a counter-offence.

A coordinated offence aims to display the players on the field according to team structure and to the opposing team tactical display, always having 1 or 2 pivots. It dominates tactics with a permanent movement of players, on preset tracks as well as by combining tactical schemes with a low number of passes (3 to 4), with distance
throws (over 6,75 meters), semi-distance or under-the-basket throws through individual actions, specific to different game roles (pivot, flank, defender), at the same time with offensive rebounding while maintaining a defensive equilibrium.

After losing possession, the attack phase changes to defense (specific to own systems), on all the court, on half of the court or in the own half of the court.

Defending means, in its most modern way, supposes a player distribution right inside the attack formation, right after losing the ball – in the most favorable situation, after a successful throw or in the least favorable situations, after misses, faults (travelling, 3 second rule, etc.) or wrong passes. Therefore, defense extends from the first phase on all court with aggressive marking (double marking) on the ball holder, the thrower or the dribbler and by intercepting the ball by other players who don’t have the ball, in all defensive systems: pressing, man-to-man or “pressure zone”.

In collective defense, in own court half, clearly stated by modern basketball, phase alternation is the rule (if not stated otherwise by the coach).

Individual defense has priority through placement, position and each defender position in relation to opposite attackers without possession, in possession or the area of the field where the attack takes place. Defending is executed in regards to the ball location and area of the court and in regards to a direct opponent (offensive or defensive defender, flank, pivot or center), by adapting to the other team tactical system (aggressive marking, interception prone, “crowding rebound” behavior.)

A successful defense is confirmed by making full use of individual actions in directing attackers to areas that allow back-ups by closing the gap; in modern defense, interception and defensive blocks are crucial.

The individual technical and tactical training level is characterized by mastership and technical skills. Players have a diverse movement skill set which varies according to direct relationships to the opponent and is manifested in specific technical structures in both attack and defense – low posture, arm movement (designed for closing attack gaps), dribbling, interceptions or (direct) contact with an opponent. Technical mastership in ball handling, in high speed dribbling, in overhead dribbling, dribbling pass, lobbed throws or vertical throws and acrobatic dunks is the pinnacle of this mastership. Exceptional yield in 1 to 1 confrontations is achieved by increased throw precision (both jump throws and regular ones) individual passes or offensive rebound.

Physically, the somatic aspect determines the base structure of teams, it being organized as it follows: 2 players with a height of around 2,08 - 2,12 m, 2 extremes with a stature of 2,0 - 2,1 m and a defensive player with a height of 1,8 - 1,85 m.
Managing the game from the side of the court is ensured by a technical team which consists of: a main coach, a second coach (who keeps track of player performance), a team medic, a masseur, a tactical specialist and a club team leader. Building a team is an important challenge for every coach while the team spirit rely on interpersonal relationship and communication. “The coach, as team leader, through his attitude and style will determine the climate in which these relations will be favored or hampered” (Pop, 2013).

Channeling modern tactics and techniques is reflected in the methodology of using the main group of means (exercise efficiency): daily training sessions each with duration of 4 to 6 hours daily across 44 weeks, 3 to 6 weekly training sessions from which 2 or 3 for strength and muscle development and 2 or 3 for aerobics skills and precision throwing.

Rationalization requires both accuracy and quantifiable description of mentioned indicators these being achieved in training (ex: 1000 to 1500 daily controlled throws for each player – with a medium precision of 40 to 45% for action throws and 80 to 90% for free-throws).

The criterion used to set indicators is adapting to player capacities and anticipated results, in which efficiency and game form are the most important aspects.

Rationalization pre-requisite: standard exercises will be distributed in training sessions and are organized, in all macro and micro-cycles of training, including in wholesome training sessions or parts of these.

By applying shaping principles, a coach will have to select exercises types that can provide maximum efficiency and which wholesomely or partially respond to basketball contents and structure.

In relation to objectives, a coach must set, depending on the stage in which his team is in, the focus of the exercise – an exercise can be focused on training counter-offence, pass practice and throws done in high-speed movement.

In planning exercises for the training session, effort dosing is expressed in volume, intensity and complexity. Therefore it is necessary to plan a specific number of exercises (movement skills regimes and strain regimes).

Conclusions

In conclusion, basketball is a way of expressing and at the same time a way of practicing, in a very competitive and entertaining way, physical exercise. This sport possesses a multitude of specific actions which change from game phase to game phase. Considering these aspects, I underline that, in order to insure maximum basketball performance both a multilateral and specific approach is needed, because maximum yield in this game cannot be based solely upon individual tricks and skills. Increasing performance in basketball is determined by the level of movement skills. Systematic basketball practice ensures an optimum level of training, which can be gained and must be maintained. Basketball puts a strain and equally
develops a whole range of biological and movement traits, due to its high energy expenditure requirement and to its great range of necessary moves.

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