MODERN ASPECTS REGARDING VOLLEYBALL COMPETITIONS

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Abstract
Volleyball is a created sport and is currently one of the world’s most spread sports which is practiced as a leisure activity, object of study for physical education classes and also as high-performance sport.

One base characteristic of modern volleyball is represented by the increased focus on attack, as a way of defeating opponents. Attack is the most sought after in volleyball both by the crowds of spectators and by the players themselves because it triggers satisfaction, given by spectacular defeat of the opposing side. A very dynamic evolution has led to changes in the rulebook which affected the game on multiple levels.

The most important objectives of a competition system aim for attracting the highest number of athletes as possible and for stimulation of an increased performance.

Keywords: volleyball, competition, technique, tactics.

JEL classification: I210, I230, I25

1. Introduction

Volleyball is a created sport and is currently one of the world’s most spread sports which is practiced as a leisure activity, object of study for physical education classes and also as high-performance sport.

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Team-play during the game and training are permanent and lead to accomplishing well-connected teams in which help, respect and trust are key factors.

Through its accessibility, volleyball offers a unique possibility of fast learning of all individual and collective game actions and game patterns and strategies, right from the early stages of training.

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2. Problems approached

The base of volleyball players’ physical training is perfection of movement skills right in the middle of games, done at the same time with both attacking and defending actions; it can also be done in special physical training sessions.

Training movement skills can be divided in 3 major categories, each having well established objectives:

1. general and specific training of movement skills;
2. individualization of specific movement skills;
3. optimization of specific movement skills.

Ordered by importance, volleyball has the following movement skills: speed, skill, jump radius and stamina – they influence each other and take effect at almost the same time but in different proportions, one of them being dominant and the other two secondary. They often appear in combinations – we can encounter combinations of speed and strength, strength and stamina etc.

The effort required in volleyball varies in regards of intensity and duration and is interrupted by short numerous pauses, it is complex and generally done under mental stress, being influenced by both skills and movement abilities.

During training, practice of ball technical and tactical methods must constantly intertwine with non-ball methods.

The operational technical and tactical models are divided into 3 major categories, each having specific objectives:

- stabilization and automation of all basic movement skills;
- optimization of field position movement actions;
- maximization of all opponent related strategic actions.

A high number of defeats is attributed to a lack in moral training, most often mistaken with athlete physical capacity, which manifest in different forms from a training session to an official game / competition.

On many occasions in these methods of sport training, both the theoretical and mental sides are present in certain technical and tactical automation which are effective when the opponent “is playing our game”.

According to M. Epran (1990): “physical, technical, tactical and theoretical methods of training influence the mental state and can even contribute to a better moral if used properly.”
In psychological training there are 3 priorities:

1. perceptive visualization of game movement actions;
2. visualization of all game related actions and possible situations;
3. player intercommunication and cooperation.

A sport competition includes active behavior of performance athletes and embodies individual the biological, mental and social unit of each player in a contest environment. During contest, mental, physical and social factors are present in different quantities, according to the sport and type of competition.

The foundation of any sports competition is the rulebook which clearly states (among other) rules regarding sex, age and performance categories, entry rules and play round rules.

A competition can be defined as an organized sport event with a purpose of ranking individual players, groups, teams or nations, based on chance and right equity for achieving maximum results, victories or a “top of the best” chart – another purpose of sports competitions can be obtaining prestige and funds.

Considering the above facts, we can extract a number of competition traits:

- competitions are stimulant for athletes, they reward athletes for all their training hours. They represent the crowning moment for all training aspects;
- competitions are ways of further athlete skill development. In a competition, all training aspects are used, making it possible to compare different opponents and previously set objectives;
- competitions allow multilateral information exchange, which can be seen as a social development factor;
- competitions develop and enhance different aspects of cultural and social life by the numerous values it stands for and displays;
- high profile competitions are profitable for many domains of activity.

In performance volleyball, just like in the case of other sports, exceptional results are often stepped down to make room for future objective fulfillment.

Currently, world volleyball is dominated by a strict player field position. Play systems are adapted to sportsman skill levels – it is increasingly rarer that we encounter players able to execute all fundamental roles.

Most successful teams of present day are those which can successfully combine speed, diversity, precision, unpredictability and other aspects of the game.
A very dynamic evolution has led to changes in the rulebook which affected the game on multiple levels:

a) game length;

b) technical and tactical method improvement;

c) strict field position specialization;

d) increased game speed;

e) increased spectacle capacity of volleyball.

In order to stay on top of the leaderboards, teams must improve constantly and develop and use new and innovative techniques in all game areas: physical, technical and tactical, mental, etc.

Due to the fact that every action in volleyball concludes with a point gain or loss (points essential for winning), all players influence in a direct way the outcome of the game.

This particularity of volleyball determines what key aspects must be enforced and practiced during training sessions.

Another novelty consists of a change in how attack actions are planned, having 4 attackers, 3 from the first line and an increased use of the second line of attackers which shows, in turn, higher and higher yield.

Due to rulebook changes but also an increase in player stature, lifting the ball when serving must be executed much further from the net in order to avoid a block.

Serving in volleyball no longer has the sole purpose of returning the ball into play but is also the main attack way, being a fast way of obtaining a direct point.

Specialization of the receiver (libero) determines the difficulty level of the serve by an increase in strength, ball handling skill or field position. Since 1999, it has been allowed for the ball to touch the net during a serve (with the condition that it lands or heads somewhere in the opposite field) and the action to continue.

All attack combinations are done by involving all 5 players, most teams having 2 or 3 players that specialize in second line attacks. It is mostly preferable to start an attack from the second line, preferably from area 1 and 5, following a medium range pass.

In defense, forward diving is the most used technique, the player using an arm to take over the ball.

In present days volleyball remains similar to what was played in the past, the difference being made by an altered game strategy and tactics.
In 1949 second line players attack action is limited to the 3 m line, on which they were not allowed to step before executing the jump. Other changes are:

1. permission to touch the ball after a block done by auto-doubling (1962)
2. increased acceptance of a more aggressive block in an opponent’s field (1964)
3. after the ball hits the block, a fourth hit is allowed (1976)
4. stepping in an opponent’s field is no longer sanctioned
5. an introduction of two rods at the sides of the net for a limitation of attacking space
6. serving is now possible from all the length of the backfield line
7. hitting the ball with any part of the body becomes legal
8. opposite serve blocking interdiction
9. the emergence of the libero position
10. the length of the set is prolonged from 15 to 25 points (with the exception of the 5th set) and a 2 point win rule (the set must be won at a difference of at least 2 points)

The most important objectives of a competition system aim for attracting the highest number of athletes as possible and for stimulation of an increased performance.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, we can state that volleyball evolution was made possible by international matches and competitions. This is the main reason for which IVBF considered necessary to fund new competitions and launched in 1981 a World Cup contest (women and men), in 1989 a World Beach Volleyball Championship, a World League for men in 1990 and a Grand Prize contest (World Grand Prix) in 1993, destined for women teams.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**