

The effectiveness of free throws in basketball in the female school category of the EIDE in Guantánamo
La efectividad de los tiros libres en el baloncesto categoría escolar femenina de la EIDE en Guantánamo

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the problem of inadequacies in the effectiveness of free throws in the girls' high school basketball category at the EIDE in Guantánamo, caused by the coaches' lack of methodological preparation and practice, and the lack of pathways and procedures that contribute to their improvement. The thesis's structure is comprised of stages, actions, and procedures, and is supported by a system of exercises organized into two blocks: the general preparation stage and the special and competitive preparation stage. These exercises offer the possibility of being applied, contextualized, and generalized to other categories.

Keywords

Free Throws; Basketball; Effectiveness; Coaches.

RESUMEN

En la presente tesis se aborda el problema referido a las insuficiencias en la efectividad de los tiros libres en Baloncesto categoría escolar femenino de la EIDE en Guantánamo, provocado por: la falta de preparación metodológica y prácticas de los entrenadores, carencias de vías y procedimientos que contribuyan a su mejoramiento. La misma en su estructura es contentiva en etapas, acciones, procedimientos y se apoya en un sistema de ejercicios ordenados en dos bloques: la etapa de preparación general y de preparación especial y competitiva. Ejercicios que brinda la posibilidad de ser aplicada, contextualizada y generalizada a otras categorías.

Palabras clave

Tiros Libres; Baloncesto; Efectividad; Entrenadores.

INTRODUCTION

Basketball is a widely spread sport in different countries around the world, being one of the sports with the most participants and regular competitions in all regions and countries. The NBA is played in the United States, considered the world's leading club basketball competition.

Currently, it has become one of the most followed sports worldwide, considering the number of competitions held and the diverse countries that compete at the highest level. In modern basketball, there are increasingly more scoreboards ending with high scores, particularly the number of ball possessions per game and the high percentage of shots made. Today, the need for teaching this sport points toward methodological, technical, and tactical innovation that will allow this sport to become a benchmark of scientific significance and foster the sustained development of its fans. All of this is in line with the country's strategy for the improvement of all social and sporting processes.

For these reasons, this sport in Cuba has not only been limited to schools; it is also practiced by workers, the disabled, and the military, among others. As a competitive sport, basketball was introduced in 1905 by young students from the University of Havana who were studying in the United States. Through the efforts of José Sixto, the National Basketball League was created in Cuba in 1915, which years later became one of the first National Sports Federations in the country.

Women's basketball began in 1892 at Smith College, when Senda Berenson, a physical education professor, modified the Naismith rules to adapt them to the needs of women. Basketball was an exhibition sport in the 1928 and 1932 Olympic Games, achieving Olympic status in the 1936 Olympic Games. Women's basketball had to wait until 1976 to be admitted as an Olympic sport.

It spread throughout the world, and after the triumph of the Revolution, our country grew and flourished to the point of achieving international success. At the same time, basketball continued to develop domestically with participation in various competitions and categories for both men and women, such as mini basketball, school and youth categories, and first categories, as well as the Promotion Tournament and the Superior Basketball League.

Since its inception, basketball was founded on the premise of responding to the recreational needs of a group of young athletes. Today, it has gained in importance and among its fundamental functions is to develop individuals for life, both physically, mentally, and socially.

In the country, this development of the new person begins from the first steps in school education, with the inclusion of basketball in the Physical Education Programs, which are responsible for governing and guiding the professional performance of teachers. Therefore, for the development of

skills and abilities, it is used as a means of Physical Education, taught from primary to university levels, and is also used as an optional sport in the latter.

In Cuba, coaches and technicians largely rely on the guiding document, the Athlete Preparation Program (PPD), for their training planning, which details the procedures, exercises, and methodological guidelines for proper planning. However, with the scientific and technical development achieved by society, and with it, sports, new research is constantly emerging to introduce innovations in these results.

Likewise, it was found that regulatory documents lacked specific methodological guidelines for this category, and that previous studies lacked the level of in-depth analysis of the structural and functional relationships necessary to optimize this skill. In conclusion, the need to design a methodology that would address these limitations and allow basketball coaches to improve their performance and enhance the effectiveness of the free throw in girls' high school basketball, aligning it with the contemporary demands of competitive basketball, was highlighted.

All of this was confirmed based on the criteria of the coaches of this sport. However, despite the satisfactory results achieved by the girls' high school basketball team at the EIDE in Guantánamo in recent years, the free throw has been a problem they have not been able to resolve, affecting the way in which victories are achieved through fouls at the free throw line, a situation in which it is not being exploited at an acceptable rate.

Based on the situation described, the following scientific problem was formulated: How can we contribute to improving the effectiveness of the free throw in the girls' high school basketball team at the EIDE in Guantánamo?

Consistent with this scientific problem, the research objective is defined as the technical preparation process in basketball.

To address this research problem, the general objective is to develop a methodology based on hierarchically graded exercises in training stages to improve the effectiveness of the free throw in girls' high school basketball.

METHODS

For this study, a population of seven basketball coaches and 14 girls' high school basketball players was selected. The total number of subjects was 21.

The following methods were used to facilitate the study, including theoretical methods:

Analytical and Synthetic, Systemic Approach, and Document Analysis. Empirical methods included observation, survey, interview, measurement, and consultation with a specialist. Statistical and/or Mathematical methods included descriptive analysis (calculation of proportions).

RESULTS

The seven coaches interviewed have more than 10 years of experience and believe that the main causes of the low effectiveness of free throws are that training sessions do not include varied exercises that simulate different game situations to measure free throw effectiveness. They also claim that athletes are not taught concentration exercises for free throw shooting, and that individual differences are not systematically addressed. They also claim that insufficient time is devoted to practicing this action, which evidently leads to players reaching other categories without sufficient preparation. Therefore, coaches or team management must work to ensure varied and sufficient exercises to improve free throw effectiveness in basketball athletes.

The most frequent selections were offensive and defensive team tactical actions, indicated by 73.3%. Defensive team actions were next in importance, with 60%. Shooting in general was next in importance, with 46.6%. Free throws were last in importance, with 40% of the sample reporting them.

This means that only the latter group members perceive free throws as their greatest difficulties.

Table 1. Criteria for the elements that should be given more time in training.

Shooting		To the free throws		Defensive Group Actions		Offensive and defensive team tactical actions	
Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
7	46,6	6	40	9	60	11	73,3

Regarding the appropriate timing for correcting free throws, the results were as follows: 40% consider correction important at all times, 33.3% believe it should be corrected only during training sessions, and 26.6% believe it should be addressed during competition. This criterion coincides with those who perceive their greatest difficulty with free throws. This should be considered a reflection of these athletes' awareness of their main difficulty.

Table 2. Criteria for the timing of free throw corrections.

In training		During the competition		At all times	
Frequency	%	Frequency.	%	Frequency.	%
5	33,3	4	26,6	6	40

DISCUSSION

In this work, and considering the development of this sport, it is necessary to delve deeper into the various forms of shooting instruction, particularly the free throw instruction, which has gained great importance in today's game because a team's victory or defeat often influences its effectiveness.

Studies presented by Marques (1990) and Méndez (1996) in Portugal and by Kozar (1994) in the USA, cited by Díaz (2000), clearly demonstrate the contribution of this indicator to the final outcome of matches. In the last five minutes of balanced matches, winning teams scored 48.4% of their total points from free throws, while losing teams only converted 23.3%. Individual analysis of each of the last five minutes revealed that winning teams converted more free throws than losing teams, which accounted for more than two-thirds of their total points.

For this reason, this research will address the free throw, a skill executed from a specific position on the field and without any obstacles. It specifically explores how to achieve its effectiveness among female schoolchildren.

The free throw constitutes an exceptional moment during the match for a player, as they will attempt to score in their favor in isolation. This occurs during the course of a game due to a personal foul, a technical foul, or a penalty for accumulating collective fouls by the opponent, among others. It is executed without opposition from opponents, with the player themselves taking control of its execution.

In this sport, the free throw is a very unique sport. It is the only opportunity during the match in which the athlete has the ball in his hands without interruption from the opponent, allowing him to increase his team's score by one, two, or three points, and the only opponent is the athlete himself.

Based on the above arguments, various international researchers who have addressed technical preparation were consulted. Among these, we can mention Ozolin (1983); Mahlo (1985); Matveev (1983); Weineck and Harre (1988); Bayer (1992); Platanov (1996); Bompa (2000); Forteza (2001); Verjoshansky (2002); Collazo (2006); Navarro (2007); Watson (2008); Pensado (2010); as well as Vizcay; Ramos; Olivares and Quiñones (2022).

The aforementioned authors lay the theoretical foundations: In general, they contribute with various classifications of technical preparation in different sports, however, their contributions are insufficient in terms of proposing ways and procedures to contribute to improving the effectiveness of the free throw in the female school basketball category.

On the other hand, at the national level, there are studies on the preparation of basketball players, among which the following stand out: those by Ruiz (2009); Díaz (2010); and Taureanx (2013), who contribute to teaching the technical and tactical fundamentals of basketball for children aged 11-12; Cortes and Hernández (2015) propose "Technical characteristics of mini-basketball players from the coach's perspective."

Similarly, Maldonado (2015) and Freyre (2018), who contribute to the pedagogy and teaching of basketball from different perspectives, reflect on the physical preparation of basketball players, including a battery of tests to evaluate the effectiveness of free throws. They also introduce elements related to explosive strength training, as well as the teaching-learning process of offensive and defensive technique and tactics within the context and real practice of the game.

However, they lack proposals to contribute to the effectiveness of the free throw in girls' high school basketball. All of this demonstrates the epistemological gap or methodological and practical void in addressing this proposal.

Following this line of thinking, various research projects were reviewed in Guantanamo to assess the contributions made in this regard. Among them are Crespo and Crespo (2014), who propose a set of exercises to improve the effectiveness of jump shots in the 11-12-year-old boys' category; Conde (2018) proposes a system of exercises for free throw effectiveness in the first-grade boys' category; Hechavarría (2021) and Pell (2024), among others.

The first two authors address the jump shot offensively. However, they lack proposals for improving the effectiveness of the free throw in girls' high school basketball. Therefore, their inclusion is required based on the proposal presented in this research.

More recently, Pell (2024) provides a system of exercises with an integrative approach to contribute to the improvement of technical and tactical actions with direct screens in youth basketball players. The author of this research agrees with the theoretical references addressed in this proposal due to their level of applicability. However, in general, their attention to the defensive tactical preparation process is limited, leaving their contributions within the conceptual realm. The research described provides information related to the dissimilar factors that affect sports training and specifically technical preparation, which shows the lack of proposals that offer solutions to contribute to the

effectiveness of the free throw in the female school basketball category in a practical way and based on the most current foundations supported by the introduction of science, technology, innovation and in correspondence with what is required in the planning of contemporary tactical preparation.

Likewise, it was found that regulatory documents lacked specific methodological guidelines for this category, and that previous studies lacked the level of depth necessary to optimize this skill. In conclusion, the need to design a methodology that would address these limitations and allow basketball coaches to improve their performance and enhance the effectiveness of the free throw in girls' high school basketball, aligning it with the contemporary demands of competitive basketball, was highlighted.

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