A survey of coaches as a method for evaluating the effectiveness of active games in developing the technical skills of young basketball players

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of a study on the pedagogical effectiveness of using active games to teach novice basketball players the fundamental technical actions of passing and receiving the ball. The research was conducted via a survey of coaches working within the children's and youth basketball system.

The survey involved 30 specialists with varying levels of professional experience and qualifications. An analysis of their responses made it possible to determine the frequency of using game-based methods during training sessions, their impact on technique formation, coordination abilities, and the development of quick reaction times, as well as to identify factors that complicate their practical application. The results indicate that the majority of coaches consider active games to be an effective pedagogical tool in the initial training of athletes. At the same time, a need was identified to improve methodological support and develop more systematic recommendations for the use of game-based exercises in the training process.

Keywords: active games, beginner basketball players, coaches' survey, technical preparation, passing, catching, game methodology, coordination, training process.

Introduction

Training young basketball players at the initial stage of education requires pedagogical tools that enable the effective formation of basic technical skills while simultaneously maintaining children's interest in sports. One of the most crucial elements of initial technical training is passing and catching the ball, as these actions form the basis of interaction between players on the court. In children's and youth sports, game-based teaching methods are receiving increasing attention. Active games allow for the integration of technical training with high motor activity and the emotional engagement of participants. Thanks to the game format, children grasp training tasks more easily, engage in physical activities more readily, and cooperate more actively with one another. Using active games helps develop coordination, reaction speed, spatial orientation, and teamwork skills. Furthermore, play-based activity is well-suited to the developmental characteristics of primary and middle school-aged children, who are defined by a strong need for movement and competition.

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of using dynamic games in the process of forming passing and catching skills in beginner basketball players.

Methods

A questionnaire method was used to achieve this aim. The study involved 30 coaches working within the children's and youth basketball system. The respondents included specialists with diverse professional experience and qualifications. The questionnaire consisted of five main closed- and open-ended questions. The questions were designed to obtain information about the coaches' professional experience, the age groups of the athletes, the frequency of training sessions, the specifics of using dynamic games, and their impact on the development of technical skills.

Results and discussion

An analysis of the participants' professional experience showed that coaches with varying lengths of service took part in the survey. Approximately a quarter of the respondents had less than three years of coaching experience. These specialists are in the professional development stage and are actively learning modern methodological approaches. The majority of coaches have between three and ten years of experience, which indicates stable practical experience. Additionally, approximately one-fifth of those surveyed are specialists with more than ten years of experience. An analysis of the respondents' qualification structure showed that the study included coaches without a category, as well as specialists with second, first, and highest qualification categories. The participation of coaches with different levels of professional training allowed for a more objective assessment of the practice of using dynamic games.

The survey results showed that the majority of coaches work with children of primary and middle school age. The most common age groups are children aged 9–10 and 11–12. It is during this period that fundamental basketball skills—dribbling, passing, and catching the ball—are actively developed.

Figure 1. Distribution of Young Basketball Players by Age Group

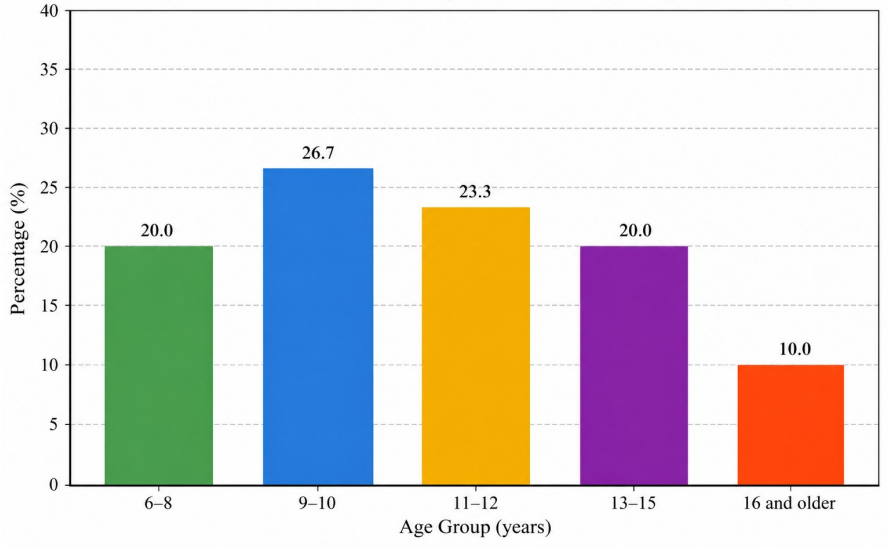


Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of young basketball players across different age groups. The results indicate that the largest proportion of players belongs to the 9–10 years age group, accounting for 26.7% of the total sample. This suggests that children in this age category demonstrate a particularly high level of participation in basketball activities.

The 11–12 years age group represents 23.3% of participants, showing that interest and involvement in basketball remain relatively high during early adolescence. Meanwhile, the 6–8 years and 13–15 years age groups each account for 20.0% of the sample, indicating a balanced level of participation among younger children and mid-adolescents.

In contrast, the lowest percentage was observed in the “16 years and older” category, which constituted only 10.0% of the participants. This decline may be associated with increased academic workload, changing interests, or specialization in other sports and activities at older ages.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that basketball participation is most common among children aged 9–12 years, highlighting this developmental stage as a critical period for skill acquisition and long-term athletic development.Particular attention was paid to the organization of the training process. Analysis of the responses showed that the most common training frequency is three sessions per week. This training regimen ensures sufficient regularity of training effects and creates the conditions for the gradual mastery of the game's technical elements. An important aspect of the research was to study the practice of using dynamic games in the training process. More than half of the coaches noted that they regularly use game-based exercises when training beginner athletes. Another third of the specialists periodically use dynamic games depending on the training objectives. Only a small portion of coaches rarely or never use this method. The respondents also indicated when and at which stages game-based exercises are used during the training process.

Some coaches use them primarily for warm-ups, viewing games as a means to activate motor skills and prepare the body for the main workload. Other specialists incorporate active games into the main part of the training session and use them to reinforce technical skills. Most coaches consider integrating game-based exercises throughout the entire training structure to be the most effective approach. An analysis of the responses showed that, according to most specialists, the optimal duration for game-based exercises is ten to twenty minutes. This time frame allows for maintaining a high level of activity in children while also providing sufficient time to reinforce technical movements. The coaches also identified the main pedagogical objectives that can be addressed through active games. The experts most frequently cited developing motor coordination,

increasing children's interest in training, improving reaction speed, and forming teamwork skills. A significant portion of respondents noted that game-based exercises enable effective training of passing and catching techniques in a dynamic play environment.

According to coaches, the regular use of active games contributes to a gradual reduction in the number of technical errors. A significant portion of specialists noted an improvement in passing and catching techniques after several sessions that incorporated game-based exercises.

Conclusion

The results of the conducted research confirm the high pedagogical significance of active games within the training system for beginner basketball players. Many coaches actively use game-based exercises during training and have noted their positive impact on the formation of technical skills. Active games serve to develop coordination abilities, reaction speed, spatial orientation, and teamwork skills. Furthermore, the game-based format of training increases children's interest in the preparation process and helps them master technical actions more effectively. The results obtained indicate the need to further improve the methodological support for the training process and to develop systematized programs for using active games in coaching novice basketball players.

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