

SUMMER CAMPS - Ideas and Philosophy
(With Particular Reference to the Summer Camps Organised by the Polish Handball Federation since 2010)

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Introduction

Summer holidays are a time of increased physical activity for children who, without the obligation of attending school, eagerly play outside in the fresh air, reaping the benefits of sunny weather and free time. A similar situation occurs with school-age youth (primary and secondary school), especially those not involved in organised sports activities. This gives their parents, guardians, and physical education (PE) teachers the task of ensuring proper care as well as providing the children with attractive ways to spend their free time, which most often consist of various educational and sport group activities. At the same time, the summer holidays are usually used by coaches of youth groups (Younger Age Categories) to prepare for the following competition season. This situation – partly obvious and objectively existing – presents teachers and coaches with excellent possibilities of continuing their educational-sport work, focused on teaching or improving specific sports abilities of children and youth. This has also become the basis for the 2005 EHF proposal of the Summer Camp program for children, as well as making the main program content regarding educational-sport activities for children age 6–12 available to all interested parties. This idea, which is one of the areas the EHF Methods Commission activity, systematically promoted through the Federation website, has recently undergone a series of modifications, intended to adjust the training program to various age groups and the participants' level of organised sports experience.

Types of Summer Camps

Depending on the age and skill level of the Summer Camp participants, it is possible to distinguish the following types of camps, different both in terms of the program content as well as the scope of activities:

- 1) Age category children: 6–9 years old, duration: 5–7 days;
- 2) Age category children: 10–12 years old, duration: 7–10 days;
- 3) Age category youth: 13–15 years old, duration: 10–14 days.

In the first case, the summer camp activities will be based on general fitness games and motor activities, with elements of handball play (passing, catching, dribbling, one-handed throwing). It is necessary to select the appropriate size of the ball, as well as the set of exercises, implemented mainly as playtime activities (games and motor activities with and without the ball, mini handball, small games, etc.) based on the children's physical abilities. The proportion of sport and educational activities should be balanced. Summer Camps for this age group should be co-educational, because of the similar level of physical and motor skills of

girls and boys. Particular attention should be paid to preparing children for a pro-sport lifestyle, following the rules of fair play, building ethical and moral foundations in sport, preventing social exclusion and building social relations through sport.

The second age category consists of children the majority of whom have had contact with handball, through participation in organised activities either in school (such as physical education lessons) or a sports club. The Summer Camp training groups may still be co-educational. The program should include significantly more specialised activities (handball technical skills) organised in a more formalised setting, although other playtime activities should not be overlooked. At the same time, the increased scope of training sessions and the changes in the program content do not exempt coaches from conducting educational activities and shaping the general physical fitness of the children (aerobic fitness, general motor abilities, coordination, flexibility, agility, etc.).

The third age category concerns girls and boys who have already acquired a certain skill level in handball and regularly train with club coaches. Because of the varying levels of motor abilities, the Summer Camps have to be dedicated exclusively to boys or girls. The program of the camp should still emphasize the development of technical and tactical skills, improvement of physical abilities (overall, targeted, and specialised), as well as take into account educational activities (especially raising the training awareness of the players through understanding of the game and the content of the training activities). Youth in this age group should have the opportunity to participate in Summer Camp activities based on other sports (track and field, team games, gymnastics, and swimming) in order to develop their overall motor abilities (skills), which are helpful in their development as handball players. An important element of the Summer Camp training process are tests of fitness ability, both general and specialised, which allow the coaches (as well as players) to properly assess the skills and level of motor abilities of their boys/girls as compared to the entire group and individual camp participants.

In order to realize one of the basic goals of the Summer Camps – that is, integration through sport (handball) – the camps should have an international character. The participation of players from other countries promotes a more complete development of social attitudes and tolerance, the ability to cooperate during sports activities, discovering the cultural diversity of representatives of other countries, as well as the physical abilities and sports skills of players in the same age group from other countries, even before the first competition on the international level (YAC ECh). In the case of the youngest age group, because of social and organisational factors, the Summer Camp should be conducted on a national level.

Model proposal of the Summer Camp concept

Since 2010, the Polish Handball Federation (PHF), in close co-operation with the EHF, has organised yearly Summer Camps for girls or boys aged 13–14 in sports facilities of the Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdansk. There are usually 90–120 girls or boys participating in the camp, which normally run for 11 days. Summer Camps in Gdansk are basically international and training activities are led by lecturers nominated by the EHF and leading Polish coaches.

On the first day of the camp, the participants are assigned to various training groups (6 to 8 groups, depending on the number of players), which gives them the opportunity to train in one group with members of other teams and with coaches not associated with the team they are normally part of. The players have access to full-sized sports halls with handball and basketball courts, an athletic stadium with a running track, gymnastics hall fully furnished with special equipment, and a covered 25m swimming pool. Gymnastics and athletics activities are conducted by leading coaches of the sports and academic teachers. During the camp, the participants have an experienced sports physiotherapist at their disposal. The safety of the participants is overseen by members of an emergency medical team. During the SC, additional individual training sessions are conducted for goalkeepers, pivots or wingers by specialists (including EHF lecturers and national YAC team coaches).

Every day when the workouts have ended, a meeting of all the camp staff takes place. During the meeting the day's training sessions are discussed, as well as the plans for the following day. Adjustments to the training sessions may be made, along with a discussion of the essential organisational issues.

An example SC program is included in Appendix 1 (the DVD is available on the EHF website).

One of the most important educational tasks undertaken during the SC is the organisation of a one-day course for youth team coaches and physical education teachers, which is available free of charge to everyone (not only coaches participating in the camp). The course is composed of a theoretical part, conducted in an audio-visual hall, and a practical part which takes place in a sports hall. The course is led by EHF lecturers and experienced coaches who play during the SC an advisory and coordinating role, as well as others (such as national YAC team coaches) invited by the PHF to conduct lectures or training sessions. The coaching courses during the SC were very popular in Poland, with over 70 coaches and PE teachers participated in.

Additionally to training activities, the participants of the camp usually have the opportunity to attend national team matches and support their older colleagues (the SC in 2013 and 2014 took place at the same time as the EHF Women's 17 European Championship and the EHF Men's 18 European Championship, respectively). In addition, as part of the social program, the participants of each SC have the chance to sightsee the old town district of Gdansk, sail the Gdansk Bay in small boats, participate in dance parties specially organised in the Academy of Physical Education and Sport facilities, as well as integration meetings along with a bonfire.

Training programme includes:

- 1) Improvement of technique and tactics;
- 2) Increasing overall fitness (athletics, swimming, other games);
- 3) Teaching elements of equipment-assisted acrobatics and gymnastics
- 4) Improvement of goalkeepers' performance;
- 5) Tests and examinations to verify overall and specialized skills;
- 6) Playing handball
- 7) Watching international matches.

Other non-sport activities:

- 1) Excursions and sightseeing of Gdansk;
- 2) Sailing;
- 3) Evening parties with music and singing ("bonfires")
- 4) Short course of Nordic-Walking.

Summary

The Summer Camp program for children and youth is an important element of the promotion of handball, especially among the youngest participants. The most important tasks and goals implemented during the camps is encouragement of children's interest in handball, development of their motor skills, shaping pro-social behaviours and attitudes, and further developing their social skills. The amount of physical activity connected with handball in the program gradually increases in the subsequent age categories, at the cost of strictly educational activities, intended to develop social skills, which are instead cultivated during the sports training process and handball play. This is also facilitated by the extensive social program (gatherings, sightseeing, etc.).

Another extremely important aspect of the sports development of players and coaches participating in the SC is the opportunity to exchange sports experiences and educational practices (coaches, as well as players) with their partners from other teams (other countries). Open courses for youth team coaches, which are an integral part of the SC program, are very popular, not only among the participants of the camp.

Organisers of international or domestic Summer Camps may apply for the EHF patronage, which makes the possibility of receiving methodological support (EHF lecturers) or/and material support (balls, bibs, etc.), as well as permission to use the EHF logo for commercial purposes, such as finding local sponsors to cover the organization costs of the SC.

There are three the most important goals specified by the EHF Methods Commission in the educational project, intended to spread the idea of organising Summer Camps for children and youth interested in playing handball:

- 1) Integration through handball.
- 2) Cooperation in handball.
- 3) Methodological and material support.

One of the development directions of the SC idea is connected with organising camps of an educational and sport character, with a clearly outlined and defined subject, which is particularly useful and effective in the case of children. Thus sports activities intended to develop motor abilities and handball skills can be connected with, for example, an intensive course of a native or a foreign language. The fact that children from different countries participate in the Summer Camps, which creates the need to communicate in a foreign language (such as English), is additional motivation for all the children. Summer Language Camps of this type are usually combined with physical activity on a recreational level (horseback riding, hiking, or canoeing). Maybe it's time to try with handball?

Appendix 1.

The agenda of international handball summer camp for girls
Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdansk
10 -20.08.2011, Gdansk

10/08/2011 Wednesday

1:00 pm – Arrival to Gdansk; accommodation in the dormitories on the Academy camp

1:00 pm- 3:00 pm – Lunch

3:30 pm- Technical Meeting

4:00 pm- 5:00 pm – Tour around the Academy Camp, Group B1+C1+B2+C2

5:00 pm- 6:00 pm – Tour around the Academy Camp, Group A1+A2

6:00 pm-6:30 pm – Dinner A1+B1+C1

6.30 pm-7.00 pm – Dinner A2+B2+C2

7.30 pm-9:30 pm - Training sessions (6 teams: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2)

Group A: 7.30-8.30 A1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)

8.30-9.30 A2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)

Group B: 7.30-8.30 B1 – Sports Hall no 2, Handball (H2)

8.30-9.30 B2 – Sports Hall no 2, Handball (H2)

Group C: 7.30-8.30 C1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (agility and flexibility) (G)

8.30-9.30 C2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (agility and flexibility) (G)

11/08/2011 Thursday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1

8.30 am – 9.00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:30 am - 12:30 pm – Training sessions

The workout lasts 1hour 20 minutes

Group C: 9.30-11.00 C1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)

11.00-12.30 C2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)

Group B: 9.30-11.00 B1 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)

11.00-12.30 B2 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)

Group A: 9.30-11.00 A1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

11.00-12.30 A2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1.30 pm-2.00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

3:00 pm-4:00 pm – Goalkeepers' training

4:00 pm-7:00 pm- Training session

Group A: 4.00-5.30 A1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
5.30-7.00 A2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
Group C: 4.00-5.30 C1 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
5.30-7.00 C2 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
Group B: 4.00-5.30 B1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)
5.30-7.00 B2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A1+B1+C1

7:30 pm-8:00 pm - Dinner A2+B2+C2

12/08/2011 Friday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1

8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:30 am - 12:30 pm – Training sessions

Group B: 9.30-11.00 B1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
11.00-12.30 B2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
Group A: 9.30-11.00 A1 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
11.00-12.30 A2 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
Group C: 9.30-11.00 C1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)
11.00-12.30 C2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1.30 pm-2.00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

3:00 pm-4:00 pm – Goalkeepers' training

Group C: 4.00-5.30 C1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
5.30-7.00 C2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
Group B: 4.00-5.30 B1 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
5.30-7.00 B2 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
Group A: 4.00-5.30 A1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)
5.30-7.00 A2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A1+B1+C1

7:30 pm-8:00 pm - Dinner A2+B2+C2

13/08/2011 Saturday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1

8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:00 am – 1:00 pm - a course of Nordic walking A1+B1+C1

9:00 am – 1:00 pm - a trip to Gorki Zachodnie (sailing) A2+B2+C2

10:00 am - 1:00 pm – Conference and professional training for coaches (lectures)

1. Comprehensive motor ability (exercises and methods) in one year training cycle on the YAC level W.Pollany (EHF)
2. Fast throw-off in the modern handball – tactics or improvisation - W.Pollany (EHF)
3. Goalkeeper – predispositions and proper selection. The main rules on the basic stage of training – W.Nowiński (POL).

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1:30 pm-2:00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

3:00 pm-6:30 pm- Conference and professional training for coaches (practice)

1. Individual and group exercises improving the motor abilities in handball – W.Pollany (EHF)
2. The basic rules for goalkeepers' trainings – position, movements and tapes of saves - W.Nowiński (POL)
3. Methodics of teaching the positional attack against 5:1 and 3:2:1 defense - W.Pollany (EHF).
4. Group exercises (2x2 and 3x3) improving cooperation back player – winger and back player-winger-line player – POL

2:30-6:00 pm - a trip around Gdansk - sightseeing tour

4:00 pm-6:00 pm – Tests (reserve term)

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A1+B1+C1

7:00 pm-7:30 pm - Dinner A2+B2+C2

8:00 pm -11:00 pm- Party (disco)

14/08/2011 Sunday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1

8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:00 am – 1:00 pm - a trip to Gorki Zachodnie (sailing) A1+B1+C1

9:00 am – 1:00 pm - a course of Nordic walking A2+B2+C2

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1:30 pm-2:00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

4:00 pm - 7:00 pm- Training (Tournament Part I – games 2x20 min)

4:00-5:00 – A1 – A2

5:00-6:00 – B1 – B2

6:00-7:00 – C1 – C2

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A1+A2+B1

7:30 pm-8:00 pm - Dinner B2+C1+C2

8:30 pm -11:00 pm- Party (disco)

15/08/2011 Monday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1

8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

10:00 am - 12:00 – Training – “Beep Test”

10:00 – 11:00 - A1+B1+C1 - Sports Hall no 1 (H1)

11:00 – 12:00 - A2+B2+C2 - Sports Hall no 1 (H1)

11:00 – 12:00 - A1+B1+C1 - Sports Hall no 2, Handball (H2)

12:00 – 13:00 - A2+B2+C2 - Sports Hall no 2, Handball (H2)

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1:30 pm-2:00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

3:00 pm-4:00 pm – Goalkeepers’ training

4:00 pm - 7:00 pm- Training (Tournament Part II)

4:00-5:00 – A2 – C2

5:00-6:00 – B2 – C1

6:00-7:00 – A1 – B1

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A2+B2+C2

7:30 pm-8:00 pm - Dinner A1+C1+B1

16/08/2011 Tuesday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1

8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:30 am - 12:30 pm – Training sessions

Group B: 9.30-11.00 B1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)

11.00-12.30 B2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)

Group A: 9.30-11.00 A1 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)

11.00-12.30 A2 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)

Group C: 9.30-11.00 C1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

11.00-12.30 C2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1.30 pm-2.00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

3:00 pm-4:00 pm – Goalkeepers’ training

4:00 pm- 7:00 pm- Training (Tournament Part III)

4:00-5:00 – A2 – B1

5:00-6:00 - A1– C1

6:00-7:00 – B2– C2

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A2+B1+A1
7:30 pm-8:00 pm - Dinner C1+B2+C2
8:30 pm- 11:00 pm – Party (disco)

17/08/2011 Wednesday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1
8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:30 am - 12:30 pm – Training sessions

Group C: 9.30-11.00 C1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
11.00-12.30 C2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
Group B: 9.30-11.00 B1 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
11.00-12.30 B2 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
Group A: 9.30-11.00 A1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)
11.00-12.30 A2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1
1.30 pm-2.00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

3:00 pm-4:00 pm – Goalkeepers' training

4:00 pm- 7:00 pm- Training (Tournament Part IV)
4:00-5:00 – A2 – B2
5:00-6:00 - A1– C2
6:00-7:00 – B1– C1

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A2+B2+A1
7:30 pm-8:00 pm - Dinner C1+B1+C2
8:30 pm- 11:00 pm – Party (disco)

18/08/2011 Thursday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1
8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:30 am - 12:30 pm – Training sessions

Group A: 9.30-11.00 A1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
11.00-12.30 A2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)
Group C: 9.30-11.00 C1 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
11.00-12.30 C2 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)
Group B: 9.30-11.00 B1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)
11.00-12.30 B2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)
1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1.30 pm-2.00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

3:30 pm- 7:00 pm- international tournament (boys)

Russia – SMS Gdansk

Poland – Finland

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A1+B1+C1

7:00 pm-7:30 pm - Dinner A2+B2+C2

19/08/2011 Friday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1

8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:30 am - 12:30 pm – Training sessions

Group B: 9.30-11.00 B1 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)

11.00-12.30 B2 – Sports Hall no 1, Handball (H1)

Group A: 9.30-11.00 A1 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)

11.00-12.30 A2 – outside field; complementary games (football, track-and-field, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and so on) (OF)

Group C: 9.30-11.00 C1 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

11.00-12.30 C2 – gym, gymnastics with equipment (G)

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1.30 pm-2.00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

3:00 pm-4:00 pm – Goalkeepers' training

4:00 pm- 7:00 pm- Training (Tournament Part V)

4:00-5:00 – A2 - C1

5:00-6:00 - B1– C2

6:00-7:00 – A1- B2

6:30 pm-7:00 pm – Dinner A2+B1+C1

7:00 pm-7:30 pm - Dinner A1+B2+C2

8:00 pm- 10:00 pm- The final ceremony (with camp-fire)

20/08/2011 Saturday

8:00 am – 8:30 am – Breakfast A1+B1+C1

8:30 am – 9:00 am – Breakfast A2+B2+C2

9:30 am - 1:30 pm – trainings due to the schedule but depend on departure time of the teams

1:00 pm-1:30 pm – Lunch A1+B1+C1

1.30 pm-2.00 pm – Lunch A2+B2+C2

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm – Departures