

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

NON-TRADITIONAL SPORTS AT SCHOOL. BENEFITS FOR PHYSICAL AND MOTOR
DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Physical Education teachers have been using some very classic team sports, like football, basketball, handball, volleyball, etc. for many years in order to develop their education work at school. As a consequence of this, the benefits of this kind of activities on Physical Education lessons have not been as notable as we might have expected, since, even if they are increasing, their development and application are still low. There are many and very varied new non-traditional sports that have emerged and extended across Spain in recent years. To mention an example, we could refer to a newly created non-traditional sport such as kin-ball. This sport was created for the purpose of achieving a way to combine several factors such as health, team-work and competitiveness. Three teams of four players each participate. This way, every player can participate to a great extent in all the moves of the match, for each of them must defend one area of their half in order to achieve a common objective. Besides, kin-ball helps to develop motor skills at school in an easy way; that is, coordination, balance and perception. There is a large variety of non-traditional games and sports that are similar to kin-ball, such as floorball, intercrosse, mazaball, tchoukball, ultimate, indiacca, shuttleball... All of them show many physical, psychic and social advantages, and can help us to make the Physical Education teaching-learning process more motivating, acquiring the recreational component that it showed some years ago and which has now disappeared.

Key Words: Kinball, health, team-works, competitiveness, coeducation.

Introduction

Physical Education (PE) teachers have been using some very classic team sports, like football, basketball, handball, volleyball, etc. for many years in order to develop their education work at school both in Primary Education (Real Decreto 1513/2006) and Secondary Education (Real Decreto 1631/2006). However, in some occasions their lessons have become a mere teaching process of technical movements aimed at sport as performance rather than at the educative function, which should take precedence in PE sessions (Martínez-López, Lara, Cachón and Rodríguez, 2009).

Nowadays, to continue with such a wrong model would mean some backwardness. Hence, a change is necessary regarding this way to understand Physical Education. So much so that society has been requesting this change and demanding greater quality of the education system. This change should achieve a stronger compromise and better qualifications of the people in charge of this teaching-learning process (Lara-Sánchez, Miranda-Moreno, Ferrer-Contreras, Martínez-Guerrero and Ruiz-Ruiseño, 2008; Lara-Sánchez and Cachón-Zagalaz, 2010).

It seems we are immersed in this process of change. The majority of new generation teachers who are specialised in Physical Education are conscious of this problem and most of their training aims to overcome

these difficulties successfully. Even a big proportion of the older generations, highly committed to the training process, are aware of the society demands and face them with a positive attitude, by trying to renew their knowledge and receiving further training to be able to rise to the occasion (Lara-Sánchez, Miranda-Moreno, Ferrer-Contreras, Martínez-Guerrero and Ruiz-Ruiseño, 2008; Lara-Sánchez and Cachón-Zagalaz, 2010).

Nevertheless, there are still some teaching staff groups who are not involved in the new education patterns or are not committed to their own teaching development. Some of them – only some small groups – correspond to the new generations, who due to lack of interest or motivation, or owing to the wrong career election, continue with their PE classes in a more traditional way that focuses on sport performance rather than on the education process (Romero and Campos, 2010).

In this process of change towards a kind of Physical Education that is directed to the complete training and personal development of the teacher rather than to sport performance, non-traditional games and sports play a fundamental role thanks to the possibilities that the teaching staff are offered (Asociación de Scouts de Canada, 1987; Grupo de trabajo “Atlas Deportivo”, 1999). In their PE lessons, teachers can use the former in a very varied way in order to obtain various results regarding motor or intellectual development, cooperation, coeducation, collaboration, commitment, ethics, etc. (Ruiz, 1991; Aguado and Fernández, 1992; Virosta, 1994; Sánchez, 1996; Lara, 2010).

Although many teachers use these non-traditional games and sports during their lessons, it is also true that many others, for several reasons such as lack of knowledge, lack of materials or lack of information, do not use them or use them in a scattered way. As a consequence of this, the benefits of this kind of activities on PE lessons have not been as notable as we might have expected, since, even if they are increasing, their development and application are still low (Romero and Campos, 2010).

In this sense, those who work in the education sector should try to provide and share their own knowledge about non-traditional games and sports. Hopefully, the existence of these will spread among PE teachers and it will be possible to create a corpus that is large enough and of such quality that those people who are involved and are aware of the need to improve their teaching skills can resort to them in order to be used in their classes, and so teach PE lessons of greater quality. This would entail the overall improvement of the education system. So, the aim of this paper is to show the benefits of the use the non-traditional sports in the PE lessons, and in particular, of Kin-Ball.

Material and Methods: Kin-Ball

There are many and very varied new non-traditional sports that have emerged and extended across Spain in recent years. To mention an example, we could refer to a newly created non-traditional sport such as kin-ball, which came to Spain from Canada some years ago and – despite the advantages and possibilities that it shows regarding not only education but also leisure time – is still trying to find its way within Spain, where it is spreading very slowly.

Kin-ball, also known as Omnikin, is a team sport created in Quebec, Canada in 1986 by Mario Demers, a physical education teacher. The International Kin-ball Federation counts 3.8 million of participants, basically from Canada, the United States, Japan, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, Denmark and Malaysia (International Kin-ball Federation, 2010). This sport was created for the purpose of achieving a way to combine several factors such as health (Sánchez, 1996), team-work and competitiveness (Demers, 2006). It is played with a huge ball (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Ball used in kin-ball (adapted from the International Kin-ball Federation website).

Three teams of four players each participate (Figure 2). This way, every player can participate to a great extent in all the moves of the match, for each of them must defend one area of their half in order to achieve a common objective. These areas correspond to the four corners of each half (Llorens and Zurdo, 2003).



Figure 2: Simulation of a kin-ball match where each of the players of the three teams can be seen (adapted from the International Kin-ball Federation website).

Apart from cooperation, health issues (Sánchez, 1996; García-Hermoso, Domínguez, Escalante, and Saavedra García, 2009) and competition, kin-ball fosters and promotes other factors like fair play, tactical intelligence and comradeship (Verdú-Pascual, 2008). In addition, it facilitates the integration of the less skilful players (Australian Sports Commission, 1999), for it is a sport that can be easily learnt and, due to its novelty, all students have the same knowledge of the game. Finally, its marking system (Figure 3) is aimed at the three teams scoring equally. There is a balance, so any of the participating teams can compete for the win until the end of the match.



Figure 3: Scoreboard used in kin-ball matches.

Besides, kin-ball helps to develop motor skills at school in an easy way; that is, coordination, balance and perception.

The big size of the ball, which has a diameter of 1.22 m, will lead to some imbalance of children and youngsters. When one player has to defend a move, the huge ball will create a situation of instability and imbalance, which will be easily overcome when the rest of the players of the team help to defend. What is more, these imbalances are easily overcome above all thanks to the low weight of the ball, which weighs around 1 kg.

Work and development of general dynamic, intersegmentary and oculo-manual coordination through kin-ball is very effective. Motor activity with such a large ball will facilitate coordination work in PE lessons and, at the same time, it will be something entertaining.

On the other hand, both space and time perception will also be developed and improved by practising kin-ball. This is a highly perceptive sport, in which it is necessary to adapt movement to the ball's speed, and observe empty spaces and those that are occupied by defence players and by the rest of our team members, etc.

Therefore, by practising it, it is possible to develop effective perception strategies which are of benefit to motor development (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Group of students playing kin-ball.

Conclusions

There is a large variety of non-traditional games and sports that are similar to kin-ball, such as floorball, intercrosse, mazaball, tchoukball, ultimate, indiana, shuttleball, spiribol (Trujillo-Navas, 2010). All of them show many physical, psychic and social advantages, and can help us to make the Physical Education teaching-learning process more motivating, acquiring the recreational component that it showed some years ago and which has now disappeared.

Furthermore it has been shown that girls are more interested in participating in non-traditional sports in the PE lessons than in traditional sports (Allender, Cowburn and Foster, 2006), since they are bored by the traditional sports (Orme, 1991; Torres-García, 2005). Mulvihill, Rivers and Aggleton (2000) found that many girls were disappointed with the lack of variety in PE and would rather play sports other than football, basketball, handball, rugby and hockey.

In the same line than Feu (2007) the main conclusions of this paper have shown that these contents themselves are not coeducational but have great potential for it, for increasing the number of participants in PE lessons and physical activities (Hernández-Pérez, 2007). To achieve the coeducation in PE lessons through these and other contents will be necessary to propose a series of complementary measures. Moreover these activities are demanded by students (girls in particular) as way out of the monotony of traditional contents, since these non-traditional sports provide fun and help to develop the creativity through the design of new games. Therefore non-traditional sports should be included in PE lessons (Ballard and Chase, 2004).

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