Mini Team Handball
Curriculum

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In recent years, team handball has become increasingly popular around the world. Its popularity has been gained by the sport's quickness and teamwork which provides a sense of attractiveness to its viewers. The positive effects of handball are beneficial for life as it helps the development of physical, psychological and social skills in people of all ages.

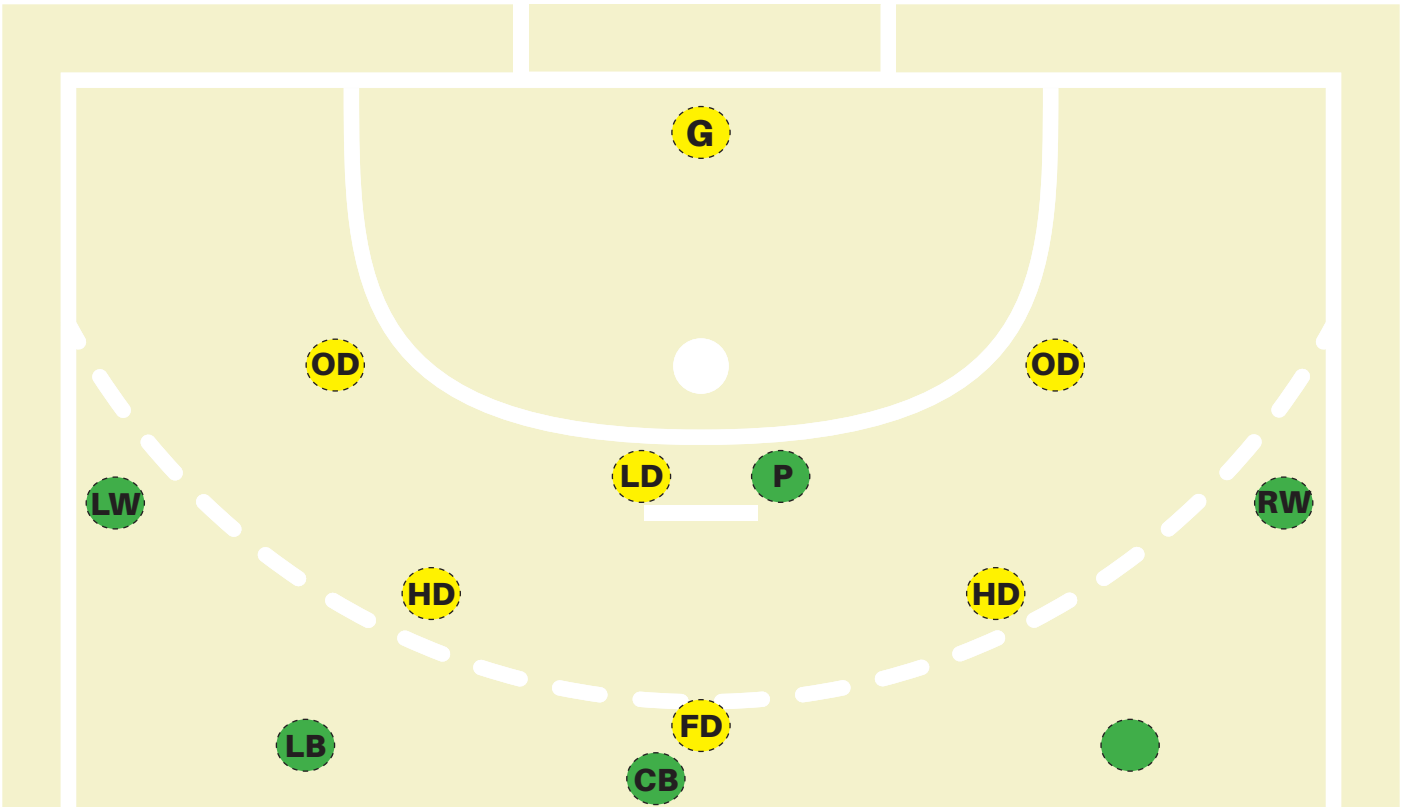
In this document, you can expect to find the resources you will need in order to create a team handball team or league in your community geared towards the ages 5-14.

THE GAME

The objective of team handball is to throw (score) goals by quickly passing the ball and throwing it past the defence and goalkeeper into the net. The ball is moved up and down the court by passing it, dribbling it, or hitting it with any body part above the knee. Only the goalkeeper may touch the ball with their foot or leg below the knee. Court players may also take 3 steps with the ball before passing or dribble the ball to take another 3 steps before passing or shooting. If a player with the ball is stationary for more than 3 seconds, the ball will be turned over.

The crease is typically a 6m diameter arc from the goal and only the goalkeeper is allowed in the crease. Offensive players may land in the crease when shooting only if they jump from outside the crease.

On defence, the players will commonly set up around the crease in their home positions as seen below. It is common for defenders to be positioned in between the 6m and 9m line. Defenders will typically stand with their hands either out to their sides or above their heads and standing on the balls of their feet in an athletic stance. Defending does involve body contact so it is important that athletes learn proper defence.



RULES

The rules of the game have been refined to focus on creating a more dynamic game while keeping safety in mind. Some rule changes include the dimensions of the court and goal, the number of players allowed on the court, change in defence, and opportunity for development.

Court and Equipment

- Ideal court size is 12 meters by 20 meters, but a volleyball sized court also works well.
    - 5-7 y/o: half of a basketball court
    - 8-11 y/o: volleyball court
- Crease should be a semicircle about 5 meters from the center of the net. Use small cones or tape to mark the crease.
- Handball nets are usually 3 meters wide and 2 meters high, but a smaller net (1.6 meters tall by 2.4 meters wide) is preferred for younger players. If not available, a floor hockey net works well
- For younger players, it is recommended that a small, soft ball be used for game play. This will help with safety and will ensure the ball fits in the hands of the younger players. A small rhino dodgeball is a great alternative if nothing else is available. Otherwise, a tchoukball or size 0 handball is recommended.

Teams

- Teams should have a minimum of 6 players on the roster
- Teams will be co-ed

The Game:

- Duration:
    - 5-7 y/o: 10 minutes, divided in two halves of 5 minutes
    - 8-11 y/o: 16 minutes, divided in two halves of 8 minutes
    - 12-14 y/o: 20 minutes, divided in two halves of 10 minutes
- Players:
    - 5-7 y/o: 4 court players, no goalkeeper
    - 8-11 y/o: 5 court players, 1 goalkeeper
    - allow every player a chance to be the goalkeeper
    - 12-14 y/o: 6 court players, 1 goalkeeper

With new or developing players a one hour lesson could be structured as follows:
The first 40 minutes would focus on individual skills, training, learning and the last 20 minutes would be game time.

RULES

(Re)starting the game:

- In handball, there are 4 different throws defined by the rules to restart the game:
- 7 meter throw - this is a penalty shot taken from the 7 meter line when a clear shot has been destroyed
- For younger players move the penalty line closer (5m) or as coaches see fit
- Free throw - taken where the infringement occurred (whether it was a penalty or simple defence). Defending team must be at least 3 meters from the player with the ball
- Throw off - Begins the first and second half of the game. After a goal, the team that got scored on will begin the game with this throw. The team starting with the ball will pass to a teammate. The defending team must be at least 3 meters from the person with the ball
- Goalkeeper throw - when a goalkeeper saves the ball, they will throw it to their teammate to continue the game

Contact:

- No contact is allowed for players 11 and under
- If a player seems to be making excessive contact with other players, the referee will ask them to stop and talk to their coach. If behaviour does not stop, they may be removed from game play

Other Rules:

- Dribbling:
    - 5-7 y/o: no dribbling
    - 8-11 y/o: no dribbling.
    - As per curriculum outcomes, by grade 3 players can begin to learn how to dribble in order to improve their control level and skill.
- Only 3 steps can be taken while holding the ball. If more than 3 steps are taken, the ball will be turned over at the spot of infringement
- Going in the crease will result in a turn over
- The ball hitting the foot of a player will result in a turnover
- A court player cannot pass the ball to their goalie when the goalie is inside the crease
- The goalkeeper can come out of the crease and become an offensive player
- If the goalkeeper's save goes behind the goalie line (0 m), a goalkeeper throw is awarded
- If a goalkeeper's save goes off the sideline, the opposition gets a throw-in from the sideline
- there are no limits to the number of substitutions that can happen at any moment during the game

OFFENCE / DEFENCE

Offence

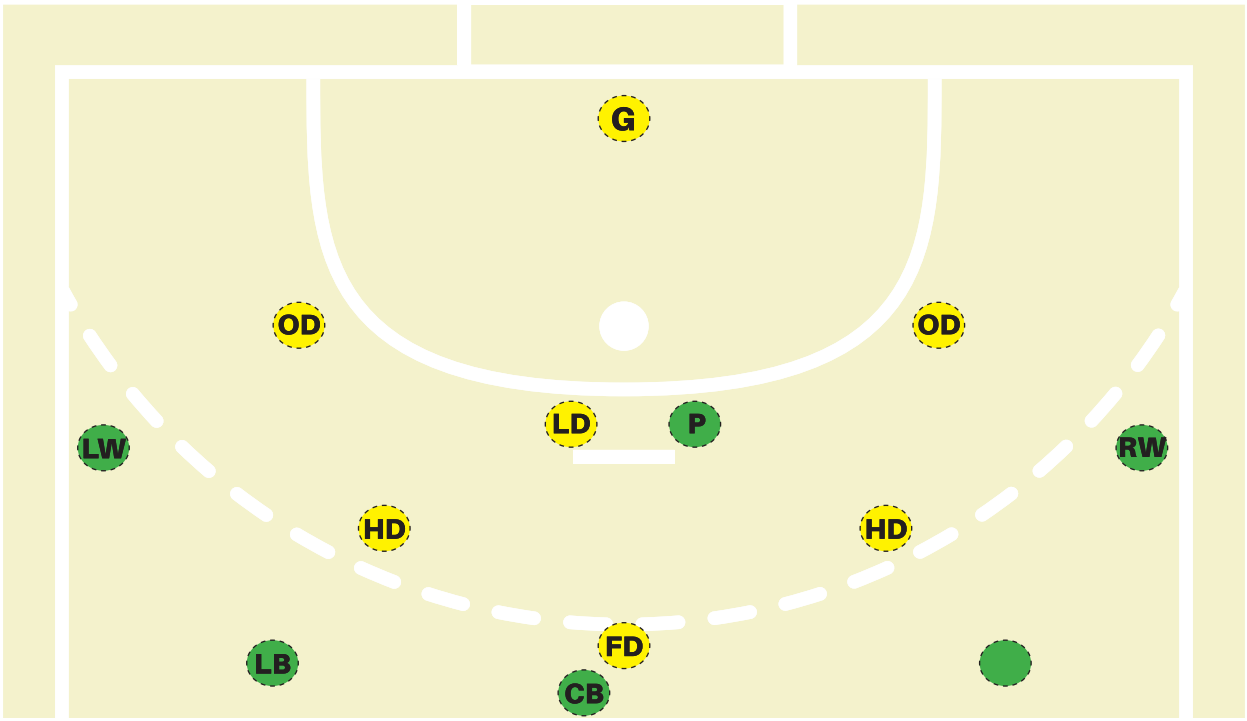
When on offence, beginner players will typically stay in their home lanes whereas more advanced players can begin to learn crosses.

- Wings (R/L): Wings are fast and agile. They are usually the first ones to get in their home lane because they are constantly running up and down the court
- Back (R/L): Backs are usually bigger than wings. They are known to shoot over the defensive wall, but can also move around the defence if a lane has opened up.
- Center Back: Usually starts the plays and will help give other backs and wings opportunities to score.
- Pivot/Line/Circle Runner: Main role is to stay along the crease and try to disrupt the defence by setting up blocks/screens similar to basketball screens.

Defence

When on defence, the placement of your hands will vary depending on the offensive player's dominant hand.

- With a right handed attacker, the defender will meet the opponent with their left hand on the attacker's shooting arm (will have the ball in their hand), and their right hand on the attacker's hip
- As a defender, meet the attacker with arms and knees slightly bent and keep your feet moving so you can move with the attacker
- If the defender is successful in stopping the attacker, the play will be stopped and the offensive team will be awarded a free pass from the 9m line
- Defenders may only put their hands on an attacker when they are in front of the defender's body. Once the attacker has moved around the defender, the defender must let go



PERFORMANCE CUES

Receiving (catching):

- Eyes on the person sending the ball
- Target - create a target with your hands
- Absorb the ball as you catch it
- Magic Circle
- If the ball is above your waist, bring thumbs together
- If the ball is below your waist, bring pinkies together

Sending (overhand pass):

- Limbs in opposition
- If right handed, step forward with left foot
- If left handed, step forward with right foot
- Dominant arm behind behind body with elbow at shoulder level
- Wrist should be behind the ball, not under it. Use thumb, index finger, and pinky to grip the ball while the other fingers are used as guides
- Open shoulders up to set up for the follow through when shooting. This will allow the shooter to become narrow and squeeze through defender

Follow through

- Extend arm bringing your elbow and wrist forward
- Arm should stay extended, snapping wrist
- Power will come from engaging your core

Sending (wrist pass):

- Grip the ball with both hands in front of your body. A good reference spot is just above your belly button
- While facing the goal, step laterally towards your teammate with the foot that is closest to them. While stepping, transfer your weight to that foot as well
- Transfer the ball to your passing hand. This pass can be made with either hand so it should ideally be made with the hand closest to your teammate
- Flip your wrist and push the ball with your thumb. With your elbow pointing to the ceiling, swing the ball outward with your fingers pointing downward. Your palm should face up and push the ball with your thumb towards your teammate

Sending (push pass):

- Hold the ball at your hip with the ball you intend to make the pass with. This pass can also be made with either hand
- Limbs in opposition. Step forward with the foot opposite of the hand making the pass
- Push the ball towards your target. The ball should still be around hip level when the pass is being made, keeping the elbow behind the ball and extending the arm away from your body.

PASSING DRILLS

Basic Partner Passing

- Have athletes line up about 5m away from their partners. Each pairing will get one ball and will practice passing and catching
- Begin with overhand passes and make corrections where you see fit
- Variations:
    - Players pass to each other from a close distance
    - Players pass to each other from a greater distance
    - Players bounce pass to each other
    - Throw with non-dominant arm
    - Older players can be introduced to push pass or wrist pass
    - Try catching with one hand
    - Try passing two balls between partners at the same time (each partner has a ball and they throw it to each other at the same time)
    - Passing against a wall – one partner with a ball stands behind the other partner and throws the ball at the wall. The other partner must try to catch the ball. Make sure both partners get a chance to throw and catch.
- Game: How many passes in a row can partners get without dropping the ball?

Shuttle Passing (Weave Passing)

- In small groups (three to five people), split each group into two lines about 6 meters apart. If groups are an odd number, the ball should start in the line with more people.
- Each group passes to each other, following their pass and switching lines.
- The goal is to get as many passes in a row as possible.
- Variations
    - Using different passes (non-dominant arm, bounce pass, etc.)
    - Adding distance between the lines
    - Moving down the court
    - Adding a defender – after the athlete passes the ball, instead of going to the back of the line, they become a defender against the next pass.

Monkey in the Middle

- In groups of three with one ball, two passers stand about 6 meters apart with the third group member, the "monkey" in the middle.
- Passers must try to pass the ball to each other, while the monkey tries to intercept it.
- When the monkey intercepts the ball, they switch places with the passer who threw the ball and the passer becomes the new monkey.
    - Other rules can be added to increase rotation in the drill such as if a passer fails to catch a ball, they become the new monkey.
- Variations
    - Limit space that the passers can move (use cones to mark a space they must stay within or limit steps)
    - Use different passes (throw with non-dominant hand, bounce pass, etc.)

PASSING GAMES

10 Passes

- Divide players into two teams (use pinnies to differentiate). Play is initiated with a throw in by the coach. The team that catches this ball becomes the offensive team, while the other team becomes the defensive team.
- The goal of the offensive team is to pass and catch ten passes between teammates in a row. The goal of the defensive team is to intercept passes and stop the offensive team from successfully passing the ball ten times.
- The defensive team cannot make physical contact to stop the offensive team.
- Offensive team members can only take three steps with the ball or hold the ball for three seconds before passing it to another team member.
- If the ball hits the ground inside the restricted area, the team to recover the ball first becomes the offensive team regardless of the last team to touch the ball before hitting the ground.
    - If the ball is recovered by the current offensive team after hitting the floor, their pass count starts over.
- If the ball goes out of bounds, the team that last touched the ball before it went out of bounds becomes the defensive team, and the offensive team must throw the ball in from where the ball went out of bounds.
    - Defensive team must leave about a meter from the offensive team during this “free-throw”.
- Team that reaches ten passes in a row first (or the most) wins.
- Variations
    - Adapt playing area to number of players and their skill level.
    - If working with young, beginner players, adapt the number of passes needed from ten to six or seven.
    - Can change how players must pass the ball (i.e. everyone throws with non-dominant hand, only push passes, etc.)
    - Adjust number of steps players can take or how long they can hold the ball for.

PASSING GAMES

Handball Tag

- Divide kids into 2 equal teams. You may use pinnies to differentiate teams. The team that is “it” has a ball.
- Passing between each other, the team that is “it” must try to tag members of the other team.
- The team that is “it” can only tag members of the other team when they have the ball.
    - Whoever has the ball can only take 3 steps before they must pass the ball. No dribbling allowed.
    - If the ball is dropped or goes out of bounds, retrieve the ball, and start passing again.
    - People who are tagged can pass to each other outside the restricted area or practice dribbling.
    - “It” team must move while they don’t have the ball and pass effectively to make this drill work.

Tiger Ball

- Divide athletes into groups of nine. Form a circle with seven athletes and place the remaining two athletes in the middle (the two in the middle are the tigers).
- The athletes around the circle must try to pass a ball between each other while the tigers try to catch or intercept the ball.
    - Athletes on the circle must stay on the circle – they can’t move forward or backward and can only take one step to each side.
    - Athletes on the circle also cannot pass to the person directly beside them.
    - If a tiger catches a ball, they replace the player who just threw the ball.
- Variations
    - Make the circle larger.
    - Add another tiger.
    - Add another ball.

Queen Game (see grade 8 book)

SHOOTING /JUMP SHOT

Key Points for Shooting

- When shooting to score in team handball, it is similar to overhand sending, but with stronger core engagement for power. There are different ways to shoot the ball such as standing shots, jump shots, dive shots, and stem shots.

Jump Shot:

1. Land at 'zero' – this means while catching the ball, take a small jump and land with both feet on the ground at the same time about hip width apart. This does not count towards steps as long as both feet land on the ground at the same time. Landing at zero is important because it allows the athlete to move smoothly in any direction
2. Take 3 steps
   a. Right handed athletes: left - right - left
   b. Left handed athletes: right - left - right
3. After your last step, spring off the foot from your last step and throw the ball while in the air. Refer to overhand sending performance cues for how to engage your core for power. Ensure athletes know how to safely land on two feet by keeping knees in line with feet and bending knees to absorb force, landing on the balls of your feet.. Consider only introducing the jump if the athletes are advanced enough. If players are just beginning, start with just three steps and shoot with no jump.
4. When players are shooting, they should be using proper throwing technique as specified in the overhand sending performance cues
5. Add targets for athletes to shoot at. This could be a ball on top of a cone, a hoop leaning against the wall, or a target inside the net.

Jump Shot (moving around a defender):

1. Land at 'zero' – this means while catching the ball, take a small jump and land with both feet on the ground at the same time about hip width apart and parallel to each other. This will ensure the player can move in any direction around a defender.
2. Immediately move your arm up into an upright position to be able to throw the ball at any time.
3. Take a large step in the direction you want to go around the defender in order to gain space and either shoot or pass the ball
4. It is ideal to land at zero about 1m or 1.5 arm lengths away from the defender. If you are successful in moving past the defence, it will give you a good shooting opportunity. If you aren't successful, it will most likely draw defence towards you, opening up a lane for your teammates

SHOOTING DRILLS

Learning to Shoot

- Start by having athletes practice without a ball. They should go through the footwork and practice their takeoff and landing.
    - Consider having athletes verbalize their steps (zero - left - right - left)
- Then, have athletes practice shooting against a wall with their footwork. This allows them to get lots of reps (since the ball comes right back to them).
    - Start with a "zero" before shooting footwork
    - Focus on last step being with opposite foot to throwing hand (i.e. a right-handed shooter should step forward with their left foot when they shoot)
- Give them a target to shoot at such as a hoop, a brick on the wall, or a ball on a cone.
- Multiple targets (at different heights and sizes) can be set up throughout the space that kids must rotate through.

Catch and Shoot

- Have athletes line up in left back and right back positions with a coach in the middle. All athletes in line should have a ball.
- Athlete will pass the ball to the coach in the middle. They start to run forward and the coach passes the ball back to the athlete.
    - Athletes must land in zero, take three steps, and then shoot the ball at the net (or target).
    - Athletes must shoot the ball outside of the crease.
- Athletes can land in the crease if they are jumping, but must take off from outside the crease and shoot the ball before they land.
- Athletes will retrieve their ball after shooting and switch lines (practice shooting from both sides of the court)
- Variations
    - Add a goalie in net – after an athlete shoots, they become the goalie and try to stop the next ball from entering the net. All athletes should take turns being the goalie.
    - Add a defender – the shooter now must take steps to get around the defender before shooting.
- Defender can make drill more and more challenging for athletes by blocking one direction (making athletes decide which way to go)
- Athletes can also practice using fakes to deceive the defender (head fakes, passing fakes, etc.)

Cannonade

- Need a medicine ball or a weighted box on a scooter. Make sure the box is heavy enough that it won't be hit off the scooter with a ball.
- Divide athletes into two teams and line them up about 12 meters apart. Place the medicine ball or scooter an equal distance between each team.
- Athletes must try to shoot the ball at the object in the middle and move it towards the other team.
- Athletes can move along their sideline to throw the ball, but cannot go over their line.
- The team furthest from the ball/scooter after a set time limit wins.
    - Or the team that is able to get the ball/scooter into the other team's boundary wins.
- Variations
    - Make the box or ball heavier for a challenge.
    - Place athletes further away.
    - Add two more teams and make a square around the ball or scooter. Dribbling (accompanying)

DRIBBLING

Key Points for Dribbling

- Dribbling in handball is different from basketball because kids must only contact the top of the ball while dribbling.
- Only one hand can dribble the ball at a time (cannot use two hands to hit the ball down as it is a double dribble).
- Contacting the ball on the side or underneath is called a double dribble and results in a turnover.
- Hitting the ball down as a catch counts as a dribble.
- Athletes can dribble multiple times as long as only one hand makes contact with the ball at one time and the ball is not caught between dribbles.
- After catching the dribble, athletes get 3 more steps with the ball.

Dribbling Drills

Incorporating Into Warm Up

- Dribbling is a skill that can be incorporated into warm up easily. If kids usually run laps to warm up, they can dribble a ball while running.
- Though dribbling is an interesting skill for many athletes, they should be encouraged to use their dribble at the right time – after they have already taken three steps.

Freeze Tag

- All athletes have a ball except the ones who are "it".
- Athletes must try to dribble the ball around without getting tagged by those who are "it".
- When athletes dribbling the ball get tagged, they hold onto their ball and stand with their legs spread apart. In order to get back in, another player must bounce their ball through the legs.
- The game is over after a set time or when all players are tagged.

Relay Races

- Divide athletes into small groups of three or four. Athletes must complete a task or obstacle and try to become the first team to have all team members finish the course.
- Variations
    - Add dribbling
    - Add a target to shoot at on the other side of the gym (must hit target before next team member can start)
    - Use cones and hoops to create footwork challenge (i.e. weaving through cones while dribbling, hop through hoops with arm high and ball in one hand, dribble around cone once)
    - At the end of the course, use a pass to the next person in line to signal their start (also gets the ball to the next person). Just make sure you set a general distance for the athletes to pass from.

DRIBBLING GAMES / MINI HANDBALL

Ball Handling Game

- Every athlete needs a ball.
- Athletes must dribble the ball while trying to make another athlete lose control of their dribble.
    - When an athlete loses control of their ball, they can go through other drills set up on the sidelines.
- The goal is to be the last one on the court dribbling.
- Variations
    - Restrict area to fit athletes appropriately – this may mean restricting it more during the game when athletes have gone "out".

Mini Handball

Key Points for Offence

- Athletes are only allowed to take three steps with the ball.
    - A dribble gives athletes three more steps after the dribble is caught.
    - A "zero" (planting two feet on the ground at the same time approximately hip width apart) does not count as a step.
    - Athletes are only allowed to hold the ball for three seconds.
- At this level, passing should be an important aspect of many games. Add rules such as getting 4 passes in a row before shooting, or everyone must pass the ball before someone can shoot.

Key Points for Defense

- Though contact is an important part of handball defense, there is NO physical contact allowed in Mini Handball.
- Always try to stay in front of offensive player (or between the player and the ball)
    - Keep feet moving while in athletic stance
- Defenders cannot grab handball out of offensive player's hands
- Keep hands up to try to block shots
    - Note: Defenders can only block the shot after it leaves the athlete's hands. If they touch the ball before the offensive player has shot the ball it results in a penalty shot.