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Development of Table Tennis Training Methods for Beginner Players

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ABSTRACT

An effective table tennis training method for beginner players aims to form the basis of technique, improve coordination, and build endurance and consistency in the game. The purpose of this study is to examine in depth the table tennis training methods for beginners to develop basic skills, build a strong foundation, increase self-confidence, develop skills, and foster interest and love for table tennis. This research uses the library research method. The results show that table tennis training for beginners is a very important first step in forming the basis of a player's technical, physical and mental skills. The training process that is carried out gradually and systematically, starting from warm-up, mastering basic techniques, ball control, to serving variations, aims to ensure players have a strong foundation in playing. With a developmentally appropriate approach to motor development and individual abilities, these drills help improve coordination, reflexes, and overall shot accuracy. Therefore, structured and consistent training is key in supporting the development of beginner players towards a better and more competitive level of play.

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INTRODUCTION

Table tennis is one of the sports that is favored by various groups because it can be played individually or in pairs, and does not require a large field. Although it looks simple, this game requires technical skills, reaction speed, eye and hand coordination, and good strategy. Therefore, structured training is needed, especially for beginner players (1).

In practice, many beginner players have difficulty in mastering basic table tennis techniques, such as grip, stance, and forehand and backhand shots. This is often caused by training methods that are not in accordance with the needs and level of development of students' abilities. Exercises that are too monotonous, not gradual, or lack variety can reduce learning motivation and slow down skill development (2).

Along with the development of science and technology, training methods in the world of sports also continue to experience innovation. Modern approaches such as augmented reality (AR)-based training, exergames, and technology-based motor learning have begun to be applied to increase the effectiveness of training, especially in the early learning stages. However, the implementation of these methods among beginners, especially in the sport of table tennis, is still limited and has not been optimally developed (3).

The table tennis training method for beginners serves as a systematic means to help players master the basic skills of the game in a gradual and directed manner. The main function of this method is to form the

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foundation of basic techniques such as grip (bet grip), stance (ready position), footwork (foot movement), as well as forehand and backhand shots, which are the basis for developing overall playing ability (4).

In addition, training methods also play an important role in fostering the interest, motivation, and confidence of novice players through training approaches that are tailored to the ability level, age characteristics, and learning style of each individual (5). Structured, varied, and fun exercises can increase the effectiveness of motor learning, prevent early technical errors, and reduce the level of boredom in the training process (6).

Research by Azwar (2023) in Global Journal Sport shows that a forehand serve training model developed specifically for beginners is able to significantly improve the quality of service techniques. This proves the importance of training methods that are specifically designed and in accordance with the needs of beginning players (7). In addition, Mu'ammar's research (2021) in the Journal of Sports examines the effect of drill training methods with constant and changing target directions on the accuracy of table tennis backspin serves in novice athletes. This experimental study with a 2x2 factorial design involved 28 athletes and found that the drill training method with changing target directions significantly improved the accuracy of the backspin serve, especially in students with high coordination (8). This indicates that table tennis training for beginners has an important role as it is the main foundation in shaping basic technical skills, building motor coordination, and fostering interest and confidence early on. The right training methods will help beginners master movements gradually, prevent the formation of incorrect technical habits, and prepare them to follow the advanced training stages more effectively.

The development of training methods that suit the characteristics of beginner players is very important to increase the effectiveness of learning basic techniques, foster interest in the sport of table tennis, and form a strong foundation of skills. Therefore, this research or development aims to develop a table tennis training method that is systematic, progressive, and fun, and relevant to the needs of today's beginners (9). Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to examine in depth the table tennis training methods for beginners to develop basic skills, build a strong foundation, increase self-confidence, develop skills, and foster interest and love for table tennis.

METHOD

This research uses a library research method that aims to examine in depth various theories, approaches, and previous research results related to table tennis training methods for beginner players. The main objective of this study is to formulate a training approach that can develop basic technical abilities, build a strong skill foundation, increase self-confidence, and foster interest and love for the sport of table tennis from the early stages of learning.

Data collection was conducted through searches and reviews of various sources of scientific literature, such as national and international journals, coaching textbooks, previous research results, and relevant academic documents. These sources were obtained through trusted databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, DOAJ, and university repositories. Data analysis was carried out descriptively qualitatively with a content analysis approach, namely by examining the content of the literature obtained to identify patterns, main concepts, and important findings that can be used as a basis in developing recommendations for effective training models for novice players.

RESULTS

Based on the results of the review found in the book Modern Table Tennis (Wang & Liu, 2021) and Fundamentals of Table Tennis Skills and Training (Zhao & Chen, 2020), table tennis training methods for beginners emphasize an approach based on gradual mastery of basic techniques, adaptive, and integrated with the player's motor development. The effective training methods such as (10,11).

1. Warm-up and Cool-down (5-10 minutes)

Warming up before table tennis practice has the main purpose of preventing injury and improving the body's flexibility. Through warming up, the muscles become more pliable and ready to be used for physical activity, thus reducing the risk of muscle strain or joint injury. Warming up also helps improve blood circulation throughout the body, including the brain, which is important for maintaining focus and quick reactions during play. Examples of warm-up activities include light jogging in place for a few minutes to increase heart rate, stretching of frequently used body parts such as hands, shoulders, back, and legs, and wrist twisting to flex joints that will be heavily used when holding and swinging the bet. This warm-up routine should be done consistently before starting a training session to ensure the body is in optimal condition.

2. Basic Training Techniques (Fundamentals)

In table tennis training for beginners, mastery of basic techniques is very important to form the foundation of good playing skills. The basic training techniques include:

a. Grip or how to hold the bet

The recommended grip technique for beginners is the shakehand grip, which is a way of holding the bet like shaking hands. This provides a good balance between power and control, and allows players to hit forehand and backhand shots more easily. To practice the correct grip, beginners can try holding the bet and swinging it back and forth slowly to familiarize themselves with the proper hand position and basic movements.

b. Stance or body position also determines the quality of the game

The ideal body position is with the feet slightly wider than the shoulders, the knees in a slightly bent position, and the weight placed forward. This position helps maintain balance and prepares the body to move quickly in any direction. With the correct stance, players can react better to the direction of the incoming ball.

c. Footwork

Footwork training for beginners can be done by moving right and left repeatedly while keeping the body position low and balanced. The main focus of this exercise is to increase the speed and stability of the foot movement so that the player can adjust the body position to the direction of the ball efficiently. Good footwork technique will support shot consistency and reduce the risk of errors in matches.

3. Basic stroke practice

a. Forehand Drive

Forehand drive is a basic stroke in table tennis performed using the front side of the bet. This technique is done by hitting the ball when the ball bounces up, just before it reaches its highest point. In performing a forehand drive, the movements used must involve coordination between the hands and shoulders to produce a stable and powerful stroke, not just relying on the wrist. Consistent practice will help players improve accuracy and control in this forehand shot.

b. Backhand Drive

A backhand drive is a stroke in table tennis that is hit using the back side of the bet. When hitting this shot, the elbow should be kept close to the body to maintain stability and control. Regular backhand practice is important to improve consistency and accuracy of shot direction, so that players can respond more effectively to balls coming to the left side of the body.

4. Ball Control Practice

Ball control training aims to improve the consistency and accuracy of shots in a table tennis game. Some forms of training that can be done include hitting the forehand 10-20 times in a row to a certain area on the table, which trains focus and accuracy of direction. The next exercise is a combination of forehand and backhand shots alternately to hone the agility of the hands in changing the position of the shot. In addition, bouncing the ball on the bet (ball juggling) is also effective for practicing hand control and eye coordination.

5. Practice Serving

In table tennis serving practice, the main focus is to make sure the ball bounces first on one's own side of the table and then on the opponent's side according to the rules of the game. In addition, it is important to maintain the height and speed of the ball so that it remains stable and difficult for the opponent to guess. Players are also advised to practice serve variations, such as forehand, backhand serves, as well as adding basic spin to increase effectiveness and variety in the game.

Table tennis training for beginners serves to build the foundation of technical, physical and mental skills needed in the game. Through structured practice, beginners can learn basic techniques such as how to properly grip the bet, stance, footwork, and forehand and backhand shots. In addition, these drills help improve eye-hand coordination, reflexes, and ball control, which are important aspects of table tennis.

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DISCUSSION

Table tennis training needs to be done because it is a fundamental process in developing players' technical and tactical skills, especially in the early stages of learning. Based on a review of the books Modern Table Tennis (Wang & Liu, 2021) and Fundamentals of Table Tennis Skills and Training (Zhao & Chen, 2020), training methods for beginners emphasize the importance of a gradual approach that is adaptive and integrated with the player's motor development. This approach aims to ensure that every aspect of basic technique is well mastered before moving on to more complex skills.

An effective training method starts with a 5-10 minute warm-up and cool-down. These activities aim to prevent injury and improve flexibility by making the muscles more flexible and increasing blood circulation throughout the body, including the brain. Warming up involves light jogging, stretching major muscles such as the hands, shoulders, back and legs, and wrist twists.

Next, practice focuses on the fundamentals, which include three main aspects: grip, stance, and footwork. Grip or how you hold the bet determines the quality of your shot; a common technique used by beginners is the shakehand grip, as it provides optimal control and flexibility. The correct stance - with the feet wider than the shoulders, knees slightly bent, and body weight leaning forward - allows the player to stay balanced and ready to respond to the ball. Meanwhile, footwork is trained with repetitive right and left movements in a low body position. The aim is to improve speed, stability and adaptability to the direction of the ball.

The next stage is basic shot practice, namely forehand drive and backhand drive. Forehand drive is done by hitting the ball using the front side of the bet when the ball bounces up, involving hand and shoulder movements. Backhand drives use the back side of the bet by keeping the elbow close to the body to maintain stability. These two techniques are the foundation of shots that must be mastered before learning advanced techniques.

After mastering the basic strokes, players are directed to ball control exercises aimed at improving accuracy and consistency. The exercises include repeatedly hitting the ball to a specific area with the forehand, alternating forehand-backhand combinations, and bouncing the ball on the bet (ball juggling) to train control and eye-hand coordination.

Finally, serving drills are an important part of basic mastery. These drills train players to adhere to the rules of correct ball bounce - i.e. hitting their own side and their opponent's side - as well as keeping the height and speed of the serve steady and effective. Variations of the serve such as forehand, backhand, and the addition of basic spin are also taught to enrich the tactics of the game.

Overall, table tennis drills for beginners serve to build a foundation of technical, physical, and mental skills in play. With structured training, beginner players not only understand the basic techniques properly, but are also able to improve their coordination, reflexes, and control of the ball. This is an important asset to progress to a more competitive and strategic stage of play.

CONCLUSION

Table tennis training for beginners is a very important first step in forming the basis of a player's technical, physical and mental skills. The gradual and systematic training process, starting from warm-ups, mastering basic techniques, ball control, to serving variations, aims to ensure players have a strong foundation in playing. With a developmentally appropriate approach to motor development and individual abilities, these drills help improve coordination, reflexes, and overall shot accuracy. Therefore, structured and consistent training is key in supporting the development of beginner players towards a better and more competitive level of play.

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