

Welkomst!

Developments in Dutch youth volleyball 4-12 years

Wytse Walinga and Guus Klein Lankhorst

Copenhagen, June 14, 2025.



How can we involve youth in dynamic and rich volleyball learning environments?



Who are you?

Youth coach?

Youth coordinator?

Parent of youth volleyball player?

Educator?

Active volleyball player?

Former volleyball player?



Who are we?

Guus Klein Lankhorst



100.000 volleyball players
20.000 6-12yrs old

Wytse Walinga



Windesheim University of applied science



Today's program

1. Transition to a new approach (theory)

Example 1:



Sports Playground 4-6 years old

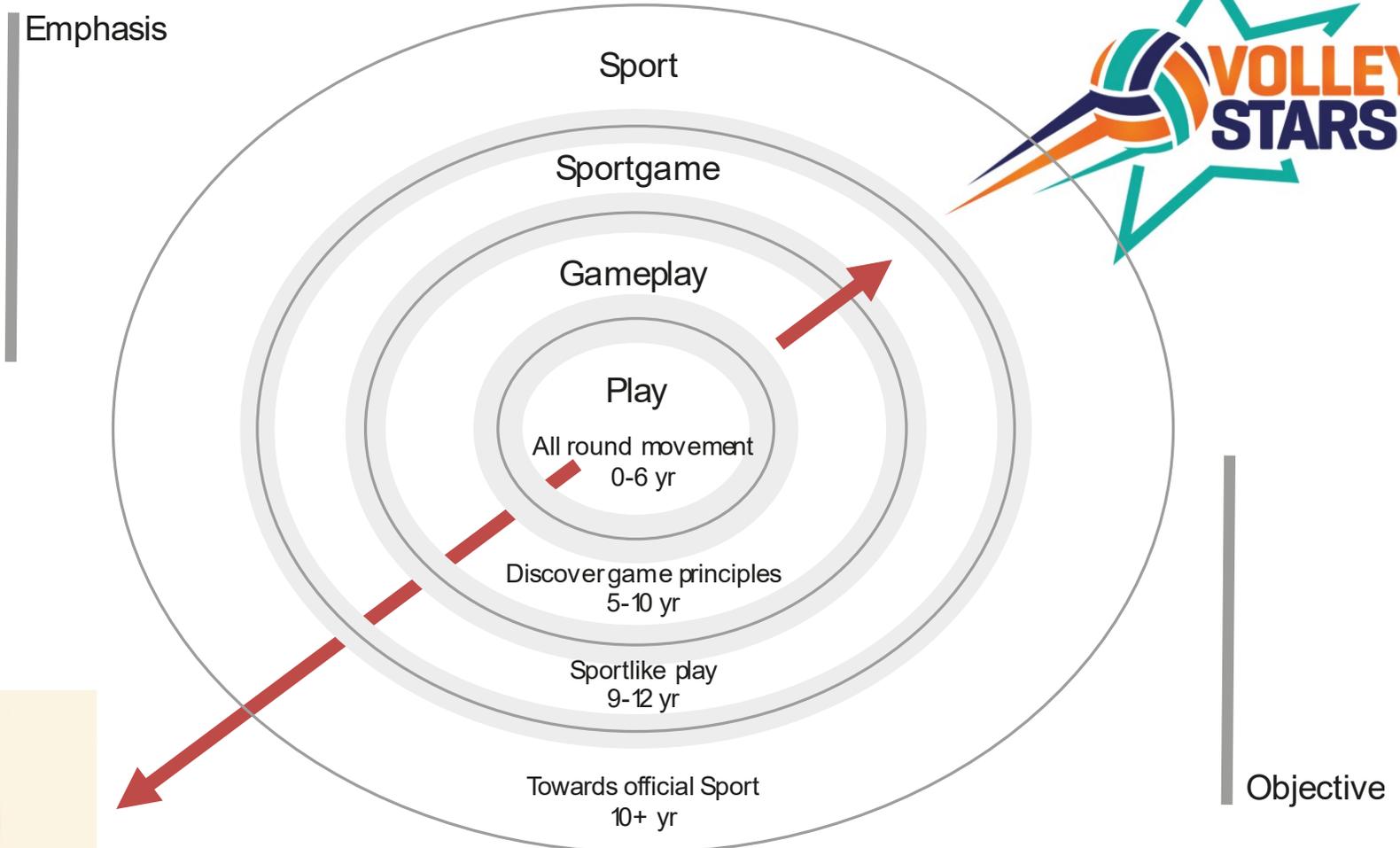
Example 2:



VolleyStars 6-12 years old

2. Examples of the new approach (Practice)





Project specific Game Skills Development Model (Walinga, 2025)

Sports Playground in the Netherlands

For children from 4-6 year
Guus Klein Lankhorst



Sportsplayground

1. Vision on youth volleyball
2. Contents of sportsplayground
3. How it's structured
4. How it's organized

Vision at youth volleyball

4 key principles



1. Child in the centre

competence, autonomy en relatedness

(Self Determination Theory, Deci & Ryan)

2. Age specific contents

Sports Playground (allround)	Volley Stars		Youth		
Fundamental Movement Skills Broad development	Level 1-3 2-2	Level 4-5 3-3	C 4-4	B 6-6	A 6-6
U7	U10	U13	U15	U17	U19
Broad general development			→ Adaptive volleyball players		

3. You can learn to perform

To deal with winning and loosing



4. Volleyball is more than sports

Sport for the sake of..... (socialisation, citizenship, selfconfidence, resilience, health, etc.)



Why the Sports Playground?

Decline in children's activeness (playing outside)

Broad development is the base for lifelong movement
(Mombarg, 2020).

Scientific research shows that the age of 2-5 jaar is the most
important period for developing basic skill (KNGU, 2022)





Improve movement/ competence

Fundamental Movement Skills

Basic forms of movement, PE



1. Balance/ slide/ falling



6. Rolling/ turning



2. Swinging



7. Shooting



3. Jumping



8. Frolicking



4. Climbing



9. Throwing & catching



5. Running



10. Movement & music



Transfer to volleyball



1. Balance/ slide/ falling
(defense)



2. Swinging



3. Jumping (smash)



4. Climbing



5. Running (move to ball
trajectory)



6. Rolling/ turning (defense)



7. Shooting



8. Frolicking



9. Throwing & catching (service,
pass, set)



10. Movement & music



Characteristics of 4-6 year olds

- Playful learning
- Creative Fantasy world
- Coördination is full in development
- Endurance, quick tired and quick recovered
- Possible reluctance:
 - Height
 - Upside down
 - Incoming Balls
 - Another child





10 lessons

Working simultaneously in four spaces (1/4 gym)

Every 1/4th a different movement principle



Structure lesson

Introduction fantasy theme (5 min.)

Warming-up game (5 min.)

4 exercises in groups (4 x 10 min.)

Freeplay (5 min.)

Joint closing (5 min.)



Handbook

Repetition of activities (4 times)
8 theme lessons (Christmas, Carnaval, etc.)
Then the max is 3 lessons

1. Circus
2. Police
3. Insects
4. Farm
5. Jungle
6. Prinses
7. Holiday
8. In the mountains
9. Pirates
10. Pyjama party

11. St. Nicholas
12. Christmas
13. Carnivale
14. Easter
15. Autumn
16. Winter
17. Spring

Methodical structure as ski slopes

Balance:

- slide (sloping bench, slideboard)
- driving (skateboard, step, skeeler, bicycle)
- balancing (bench upside down, balanceboard, blocks, stepping stones, beam)
- acrobatics (airplane, tower, scooter, bench, pyramid)

Lesson	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4
1	Balance - slide	Climbing - crawl	Swinging - swing set	Rolling - fricandel
2	Jumping - long jump	Running - sprinting	Throwing - juggling balloon	Kicking - penaltygame
3	Throwing - rolling	M&M - stomping	Balance - driving	Climbing - scramble
4	Swinging - hanging	Rolling - meatball	Jumping - support jump	Running - taggame
5	Throwing - aiming	Jumping - ropejump	Frolic (fight) - with a ball	M&M - skipping
6	Balance - benche u.s.d.	Climbing - Wall rack	Swinging - in the rings	Rolling - head roll
7	Jumping - high jump	Running - tag game	Throwing - dribbling	Kicking - on goals
8	Throwing - tennis balls	M&M - gallop sideways	Balance - acrobatic	Climbing - moutain
9	Swinging - support	Rolling - tumble	Jumping - from a box	Running - goal game
10	Throwing - Blind net	Jumping - trampolin	Frolic - on mats	M&M - dance design

Differentiation

Variation jumping:

- + more speed
- + one leg
- + two jumps behind each other
- + bigger distance
- + higher
- + tricks
- + hop step jump
- with help
- smaller distance
- without running



1. THE CIRCUS

Introductory story

Today's theme is "The Circus.

At the beginning of the lesson, you ask the children who have ever been to the circus and what you can see there. You explain that today the children may show their own tricks that come in handy in the circus.

Basic Forms

Balancing - Climbing - Swinging - Rolling

Warm-up

Part 1: Introductions in the circle, sitting down with your legs wide, roll the ball over to each other saying your name

Part 2: Song: Head, Shoulders, Knee and Toe

Part 3: Stop Dance: moving to music, when the music stops, you freeze like a statue.

It is recommended that you participate in the entire warming-up as a trainer

Exercise circuit

Below is a serie of exercises which you can divide, based on the number of supervisors available, into 2, 3 or 4 'stations'. You divide the group among the stations and change every few minutes (depending on the total lesson time).

1 Showing tricks on the slide of the clowns

One by one the children may show their skills on the slide

Variation:

- + Gliding on a narrow surface
- + Steeper
- + On a mat
- + Squatting/ standing
- + On stomach or back
- + Unwind with a judo roll
- Gliding on a wide plane
- With help
- In sit
- Not so steep

2 Climbing/scrambling in the Lionhole

Children are lions and crawl under the net, over the 2 cabinet sections, through the hoop, under the stick, under the parachute which lies on a trapezoid and through the crawl tunnel and back to the starting position.

Variation:

- + backwards/sideways creep
- + accelerate pace,
- + add obstacle
- + bring equipment (pit bag on your back, volleyball in hand)
- with the trainer together (for children who find it scary)

3 Trapeze swings

Children sit on the trapeze and are gently pushed by another (can also be on a rope with a knot or a dish).

Variation:

- + self-paced
- + stand up
- + swing high
- + in pairs
- + jumping off on a mat with caregiver
- sitting on a stationary trapeze
- swing low
- on your own (with pusher)

4 Acrobats roll through the circus

Lie down on the mat and roll like a frikandel (about the longitudinal axis) from a cabinet onto a landing mat, down onto a sloping surface (Reuther board under mat) or onto a straight mat.

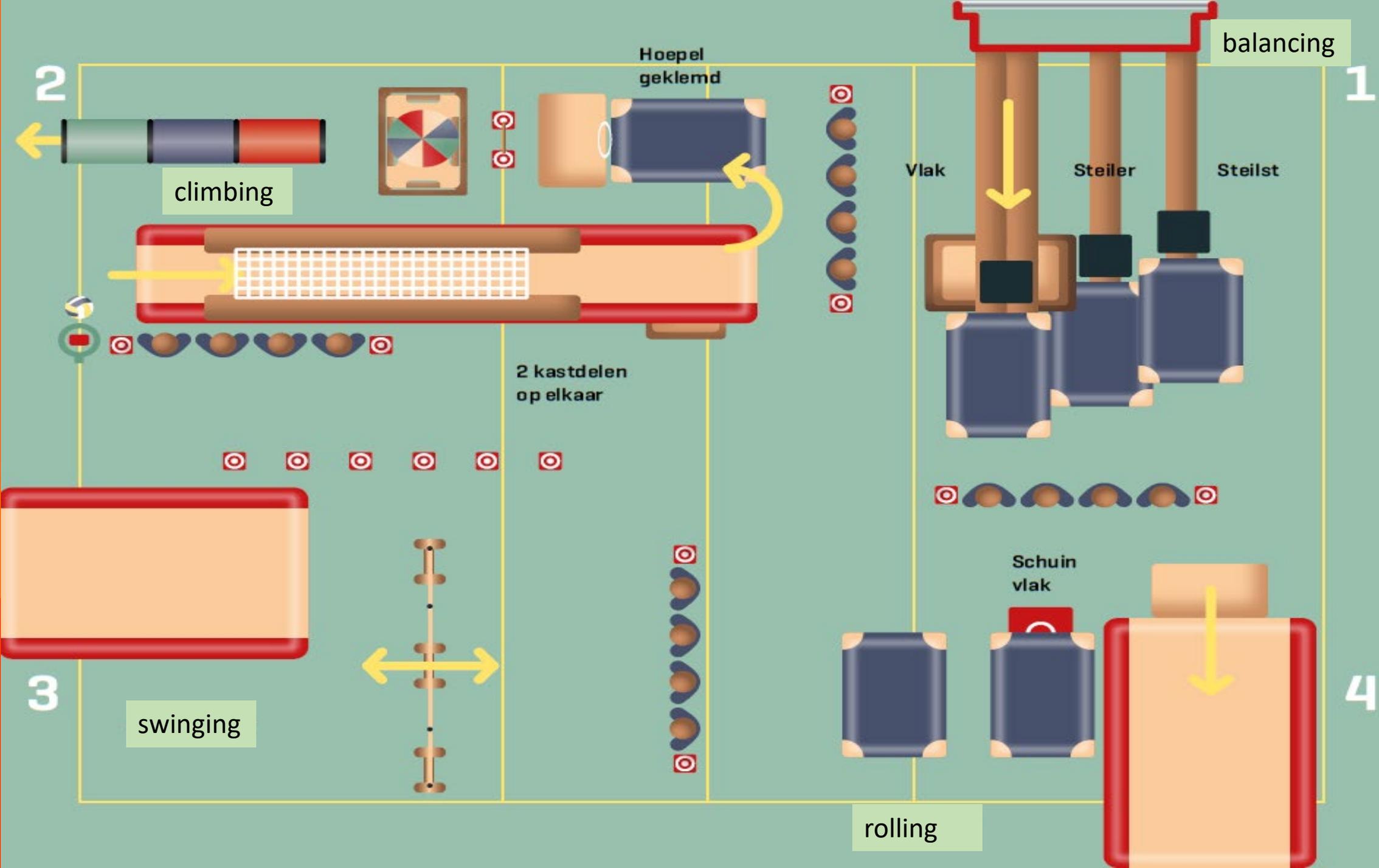
Variation:

- + roll up the mountain

- + Lateral roll (make small and roll about the longitudinal axis)
- + judo roll (over the shoulder)
- + rollover (look through your legs, helper: one hand behind the head (for chin on chest) and one hand behind the upper leg to give speed)
- + rollers on raised surface (landing mat without cabinet head)
- + with run-up
- + get up quickly after the roll (possibly without hands)
- roll down the mountain
- you are rolled with help from the trainer
- on a soft mat
- rocking, not yet fully round

Joint Closure

An end game or free play together with parents/ brothers/ sisters/ grandparents uncles/ etc.





Material

Normal equipment of the sportshall is sufficient.

Use a lot of materials, this is challenging.

You can make it even better: crawl tunnel, balloons, foamballs, parachute, skipperball, Noodle, Eggball, etc.

Beoordeling ★★★★★ 9.6/10 ✓ Fysieke winkel in Ede ✓ Groot assortiment ✓ Persoonlijk contact ✓ Snel leverbaar in NL en BE

BRONSPORT.NL
LEVERANCIER SPORT- EN SPELMATERIAAL

Zoeken... 🔍

Klantenservice Over ons Mijn account Mijn winkelwagen

Bewegingsonderwijs Kinderopvang / BSO Verenigingen Fitness & Revalidatie Over Ons

me > Verenigingen > Sportspeeltuin

Sportspeeltuin

nevo
Nieuw in de winkel

<p>Volleybal Soft Touch maat 7</p>	<p>Volleybal Spordas Light maat 7</p>	<p>Eggball Classic</p>	<p>Basketbal Wilson Gamebreaker maat 5</p>
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What kind of trainer?



Educator / pedagogical background

VT2 + Module VPG

1. Structuring
2. Stimulating
3. Giving individual attention
4. Autonomy support

A grid of small icons representing different coaching concepts. A central white box with a red border contains the text '4 INZICHTEN OVER TRainersCHAP'. The icons include a thumbs up, a lightbulb, a checklist, and a person, each with a number 1, 2, 3, or 4 next to it.

4 INZICHTEN
OVER
TRainersCHAP



Our National
Men's team is
ambassador of the
Sport Playground

Businessmodel

Cost		Revenue		Profit
Rent hall	€ 40,00 (300DK)	20 participants X € 5 (37DK)	€ 100,00 (740DK)	
		Support first 15 weeks Nevobo	€ 40,- (300DK)	
		Support week 15-30 (20,-)	€ 20,- (150DK)	
Payment assistent	€ 10,00 (75DK)			
Equipment	€ ?			
	€ 50,00 Totaal (375DK)		€ 140,- Totaal (1040DK)	€ 100,00 (665DK)

- Support Nevobo 40,- in first 15 weeks 20,- in week 15-30.
- Recruitment of young trainers
- Free in service training (Dutch federation)
- Funded in service training by government (two sessions of three hours of Euro 750,-)
- Basis materials are available. (discount and 100,- card for materials possible)

Results

Year	Number of Sport Playgrounds in NL
2021 januari	26
2022 januari	31
2023 januari	54
2024 januari	86
2025 januari	108

In total: 1200 children, 50% boys!! (normal is 80% girls).

Youth departments (6-12 years old) are growing



2 awards:
3 stars of Knowledge
Center Sport and
Movement
(max. score)

Acknowledgement:
Good substantiated
(Top 4 of best
interventions for
Fundamental
Movement Skills in the
Netherlands)







Short
break

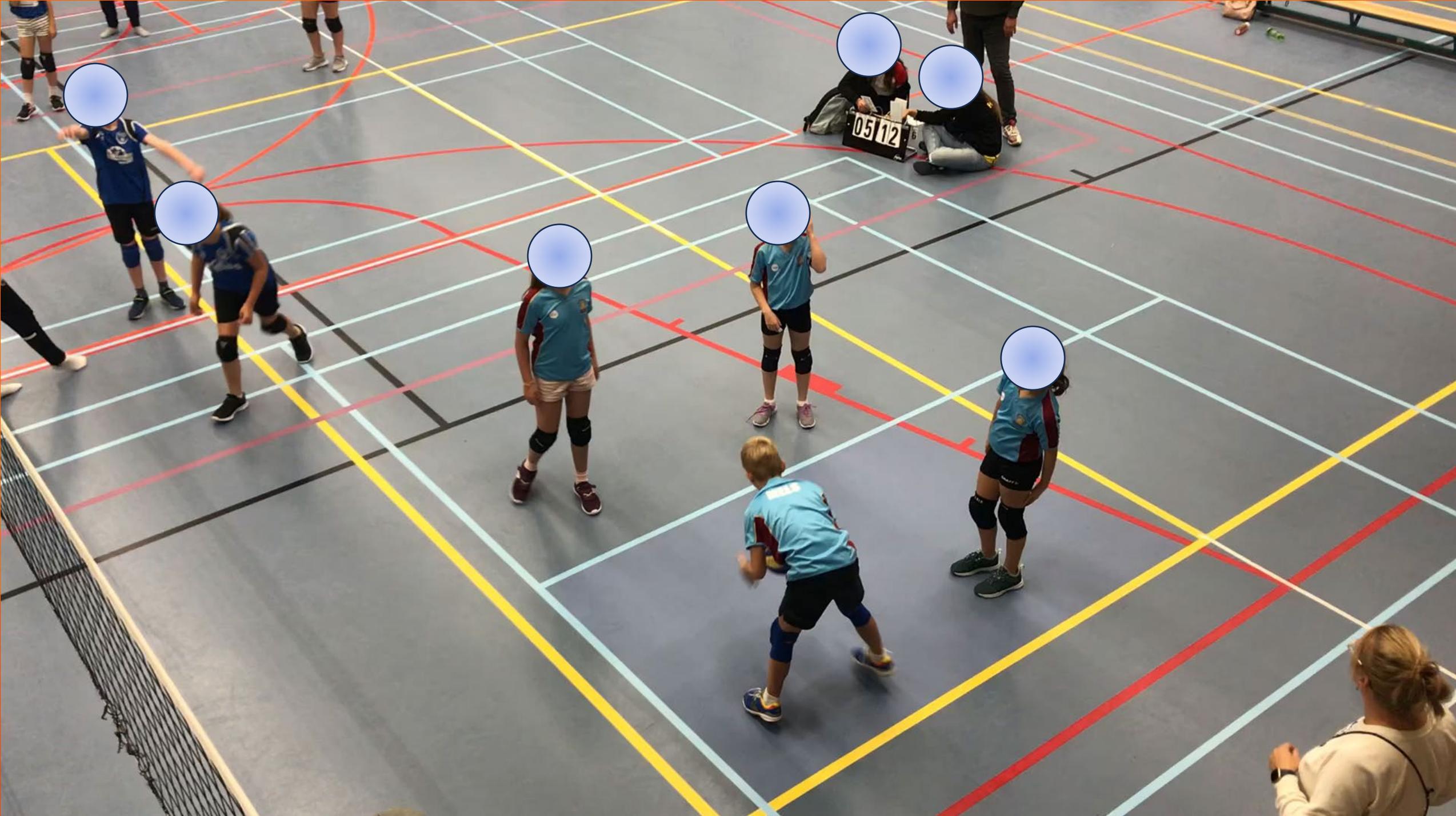




Wytse Walinga



(Re)design of the competition/tournament line for volleyball youth **6-12 years**.

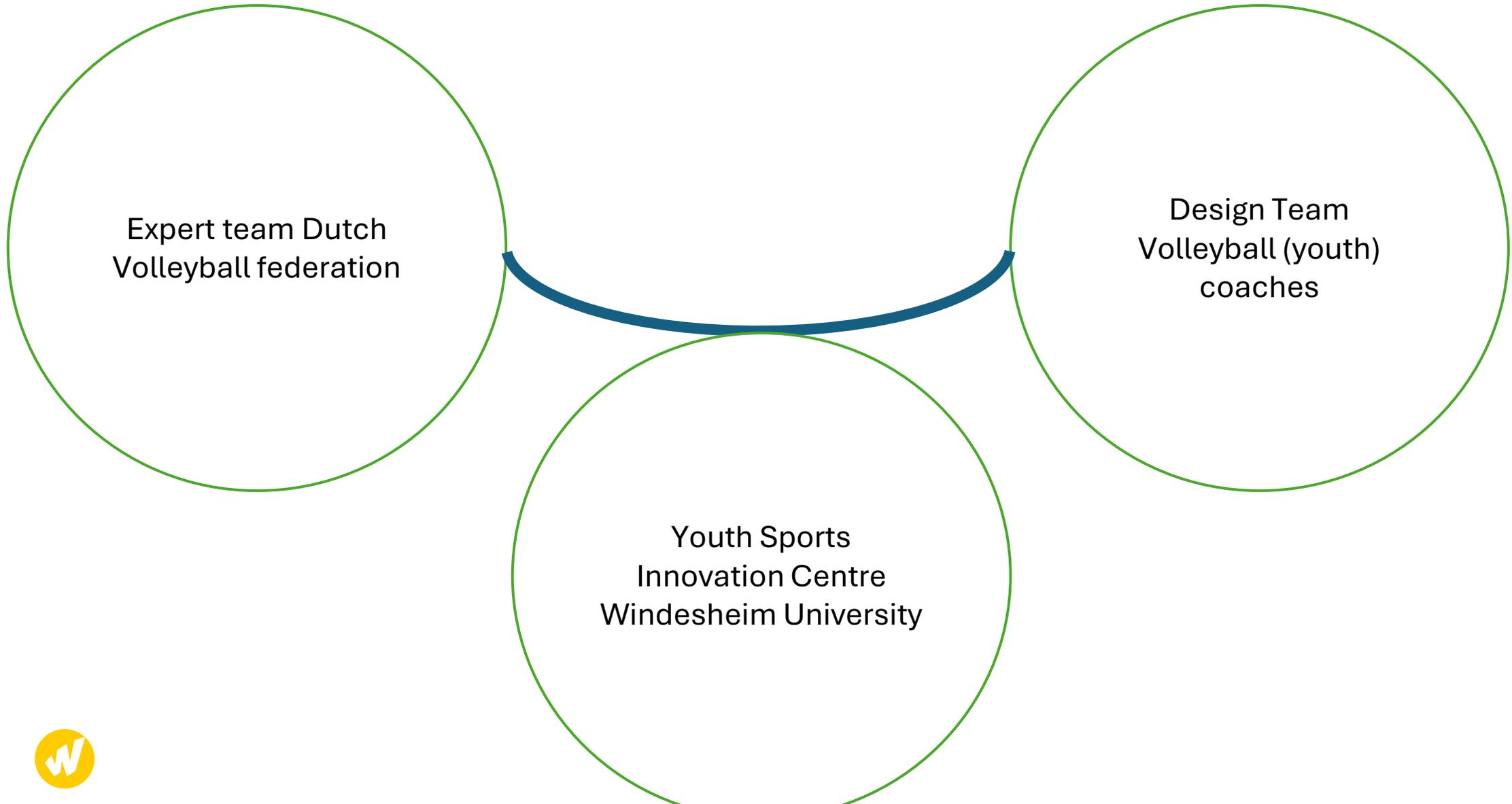


Nevobo:

- More dynamic games
- More autonomy
- Higher game involvement



Challenge: design and implement a new approach





Game-Based Pedagogy in Physical Education and Sports

Designing Rich Learning Environments

Jeroen Koekoek, Ivo Dokman and Wytse Walinga




Jeugdsport
innovatiecentrum




Nederlandse Volleybalbond

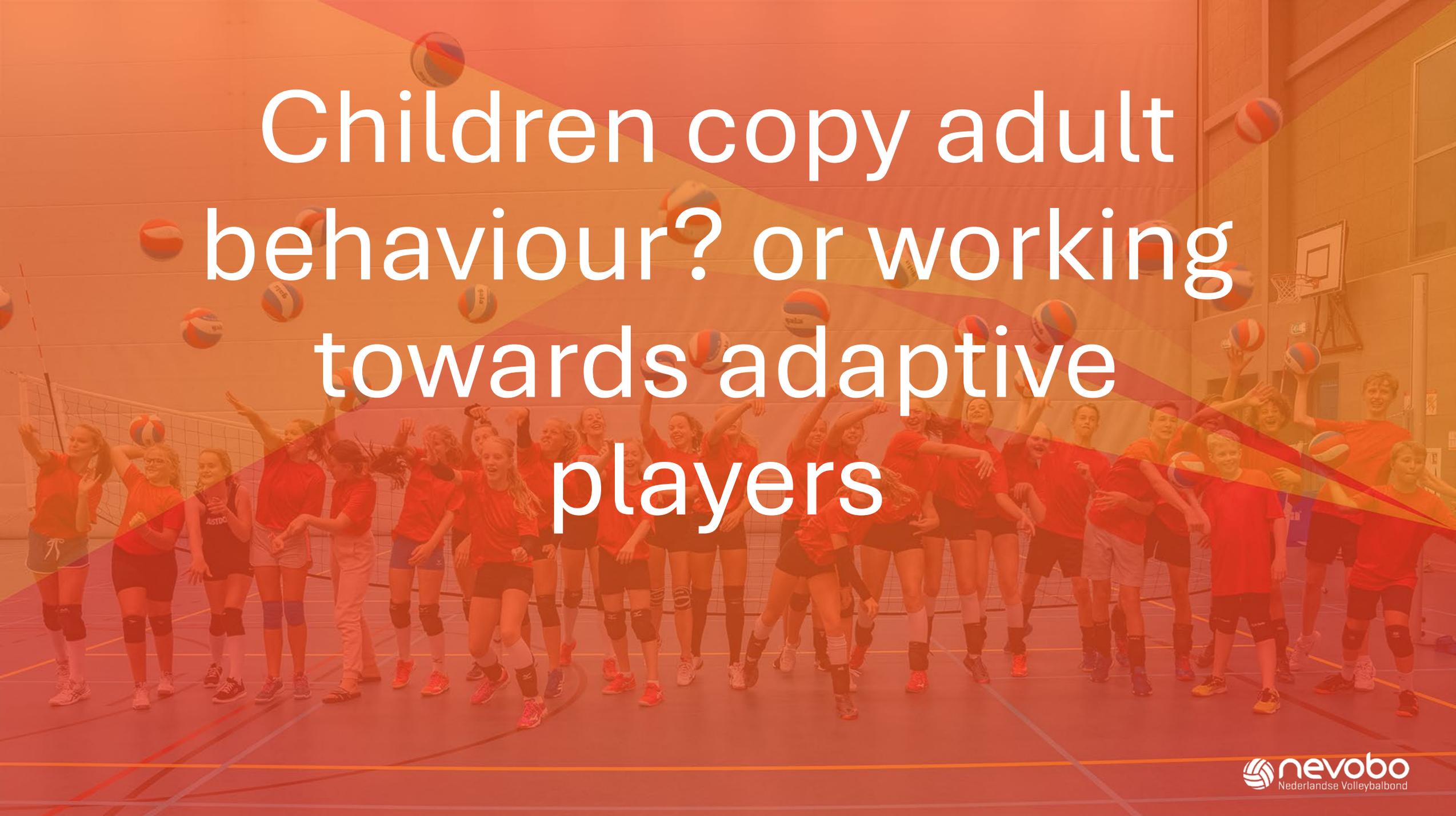


hogeschool
Windesheim



The joy of playing volleyball

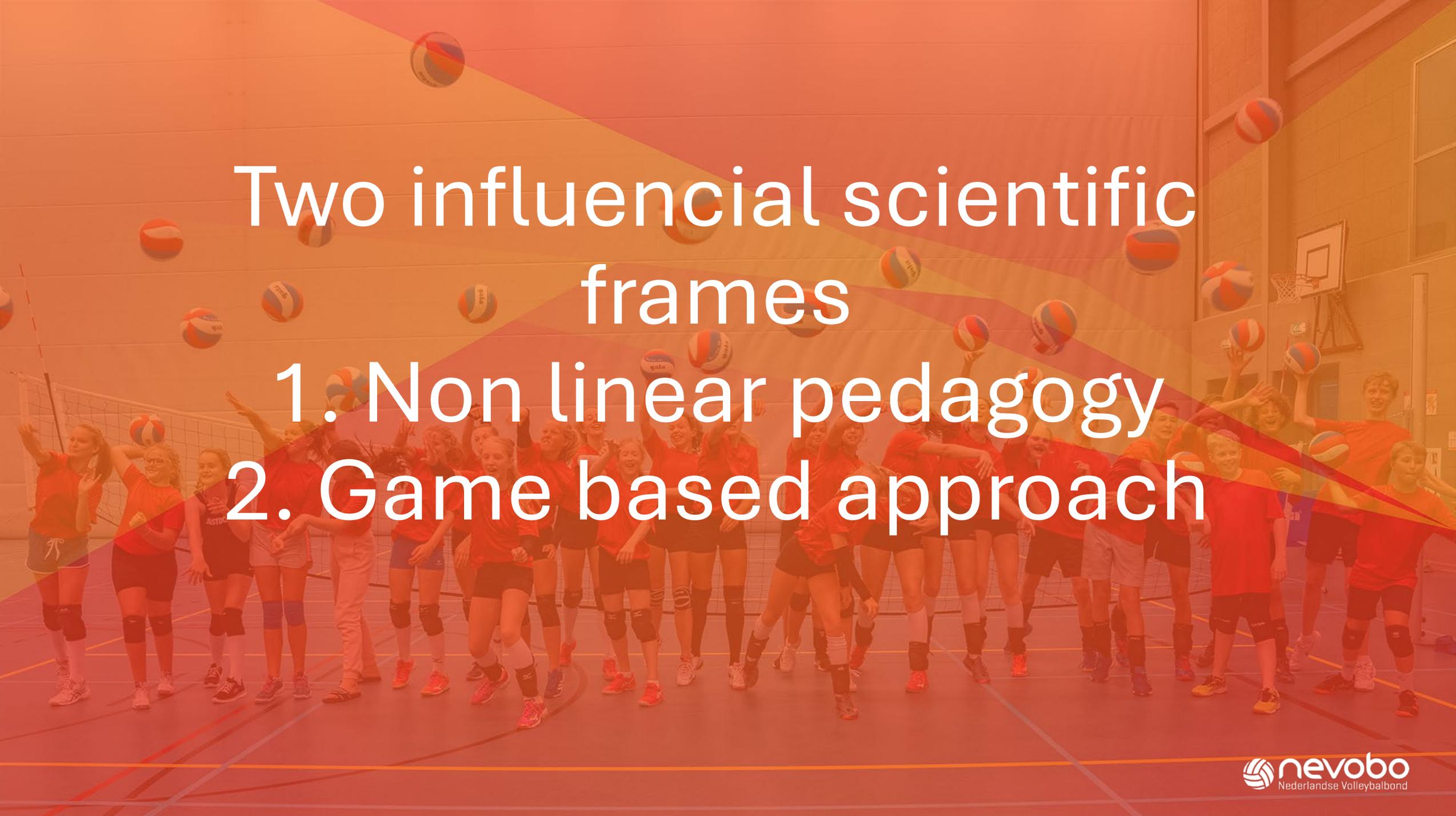




Children copy adult behaviour? or working towards adaptive players



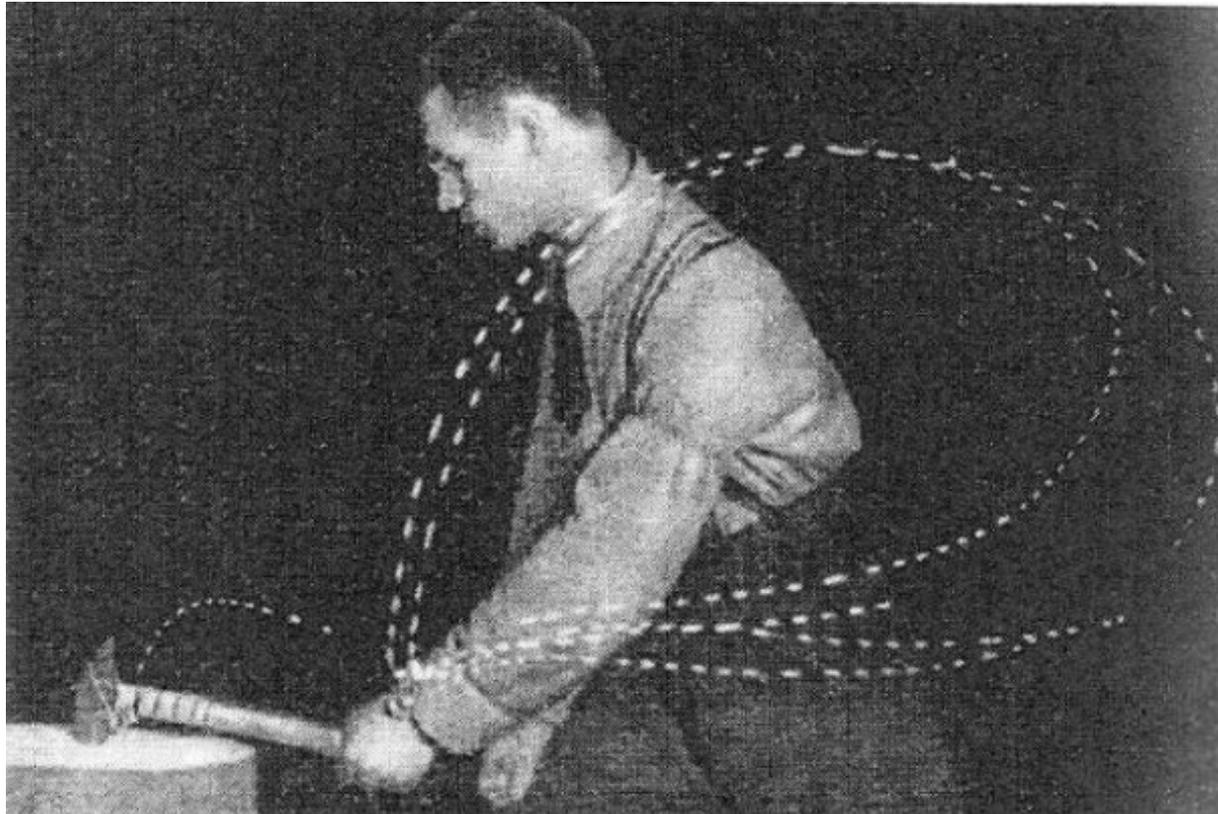
How to teach The joy of playing volleyball?

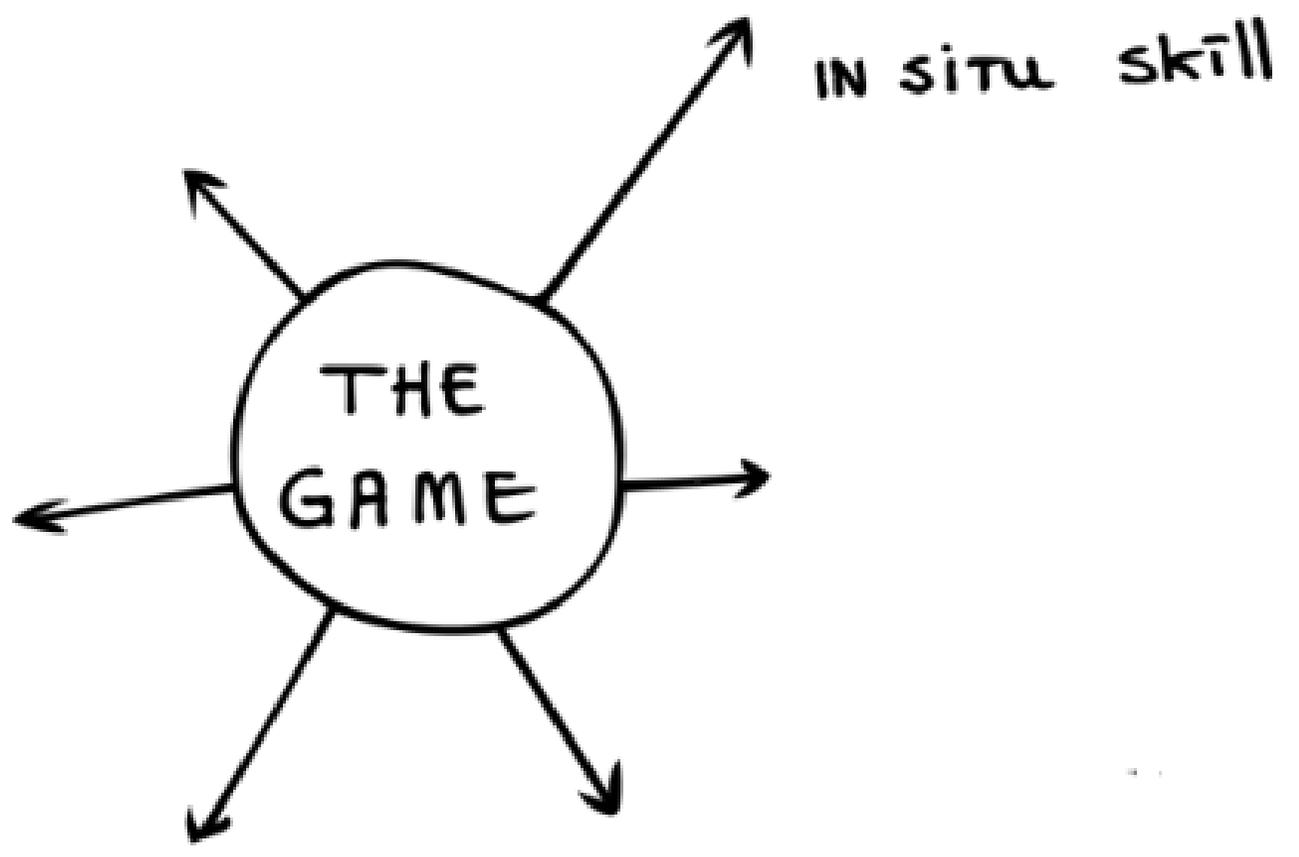
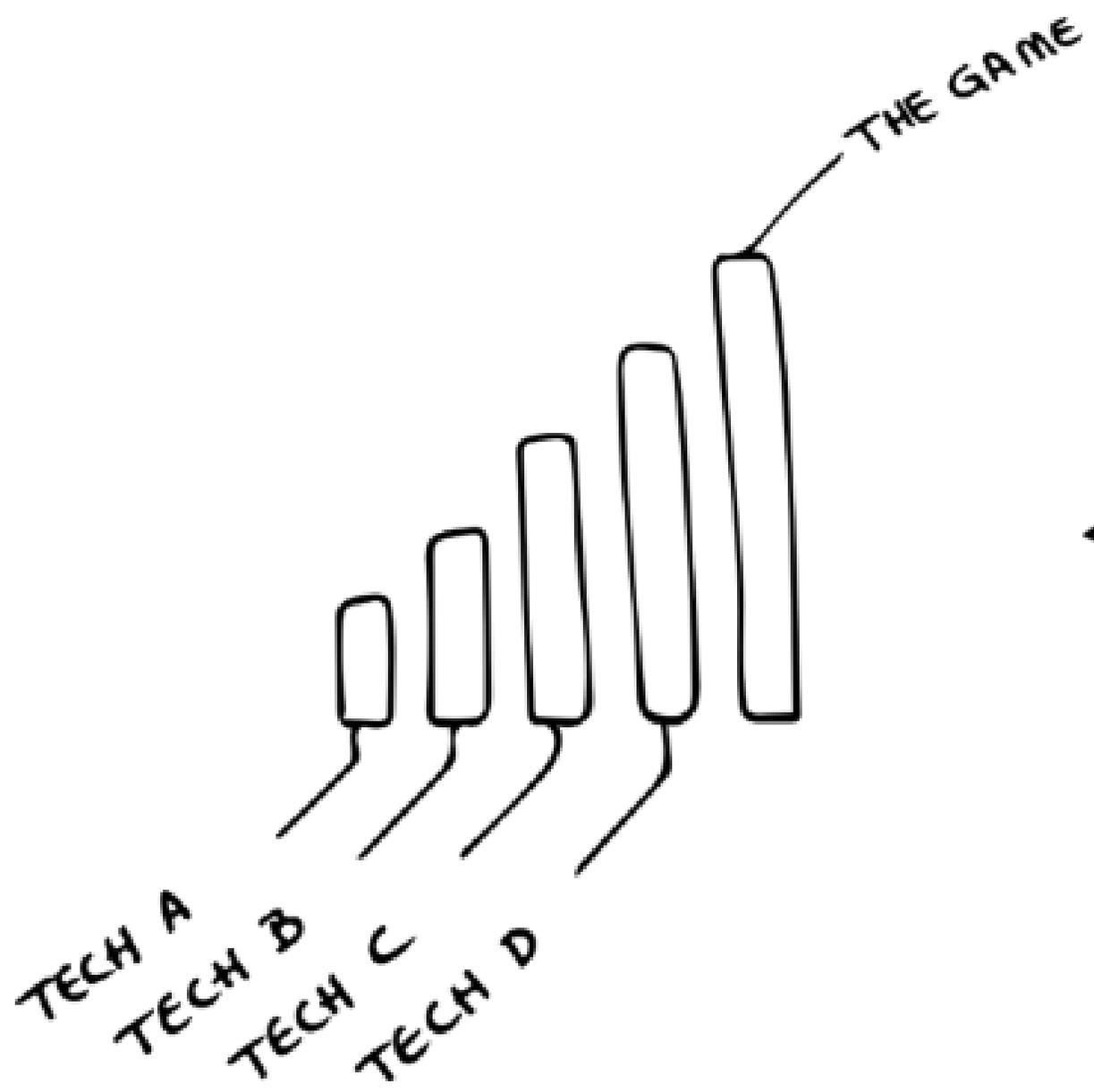


Two influential scientific frames

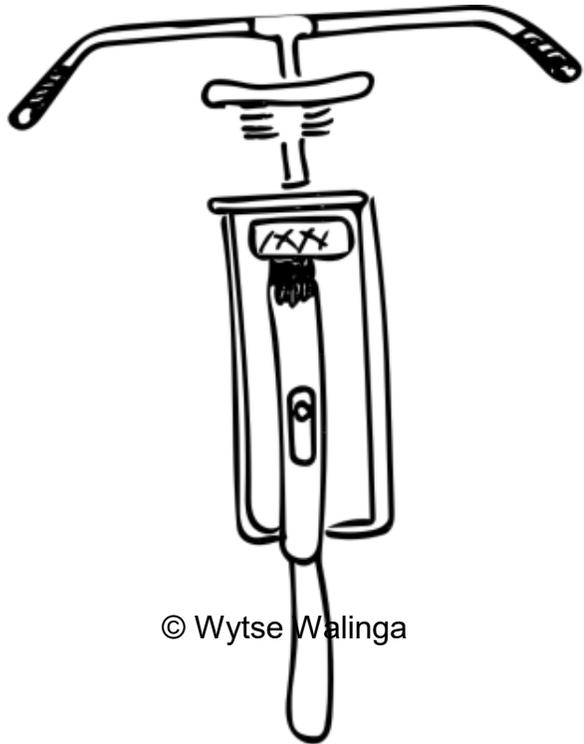
1. Non linear pedagogy
2. Game based approach

Nikolai Bernstein





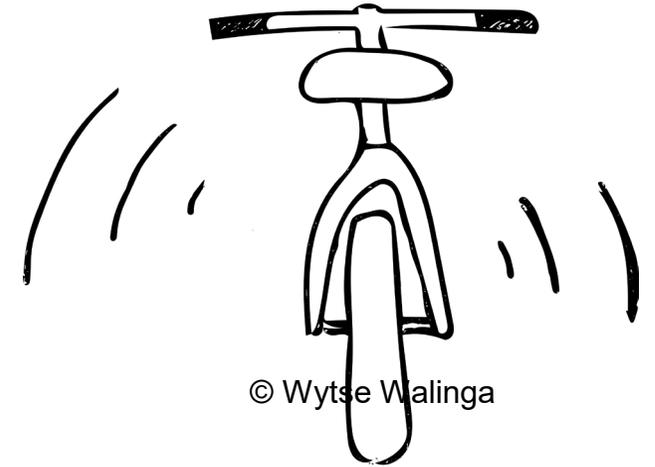
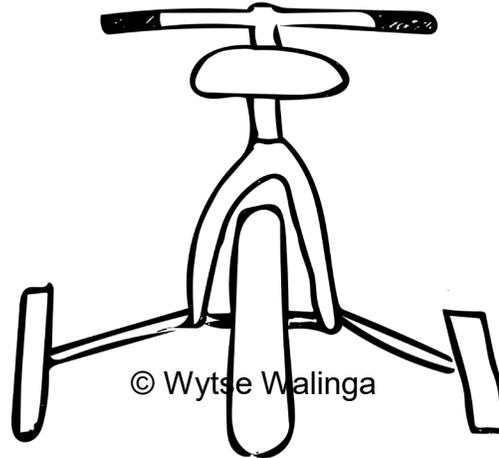
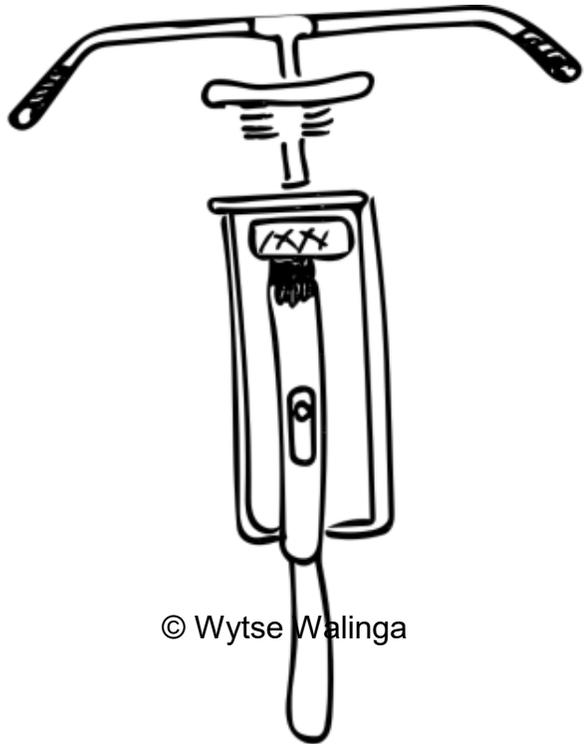
Rich learning environment?



© Wytse Walinga



Rich learning environment



Search for 'the balance bike' of volleybal

What is a rich and meaningful game?

1. Core challenge: Children experience the game principle of net & wall games and learn within basic strategies

Read, Respond, React, Recover (Hopper, 1998)

The game is balanced for both roles (rally!)

Game involvement is high (pp)

Volleyball unique?

1. KNVB (soccer) starts with 2-2 and 4-4 1/8 field (U7) and 6-6 1/4 field (U10)
2. KNHB (fieldhockey) 6 goals, 3-3 (U8)
3. NRB (rugby) matches start from U14, points difference greater than 45 -> new composition of teams
4. KNGU (gymnastics) matches have been abolished U9
5. KNKV (korfbal/ netball) at 3 goals difference you can use an extra player U10

Principles development group

1. Short-term and long-term fun
2. Active players (dynamic)
3. Development is topic no. 1 (learning with autonomy)
4. Lots of ball contacts, lots of rallies (service dominance)
5. Smash matters
6. Children are allowed to make mistakes
7. As simple as possible and organisable (KISS)
8. Good methodology
9. Preparing for team sports (together)
10. Suitable for education (motivation)

Everybody searches

Quick online search:

	U 11
Netherlands	4-4 or 3-3
Belgium	2-2 and 3-3
Norway	3-3
Italy	2-2 and 3-3
Slovenia	3-3
Czech Republic	2-2
Poland	2-2 and 3-3
Serbia	2-2 and 3-3
Germany	3-3
France	2-2 and 3-3
Spain	4-4
Denmark	3-3?

Note: National specific contents like number of players involved are hard to find online.

These numbers can be inaccurate and therefore we have research in progress to chart different approaches internationally more thoroughly.

- Service/no service
- Walk/ run with the ball
- Bounce
- Catching rules
- Field sizes
- Net heights
- Lots of variation also in training forms

Multitude of ideas and possibilities:

1 against 1

2 against 2

3 against 3

Catching rules

Running with the ball

Bounce rules

Net heights

Field sizes

Competition form/ tournament form

Move Up Move Down

Kingscourt

Choice of materials (weight of the ball)

Focus on which technical handling

what do young children play on the street

Etc.

How to choose?



Key constraints

Number of players

Court sizes

Rules

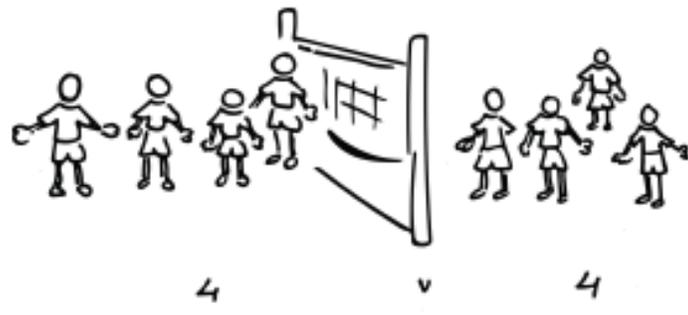
Ball contacts/involvement

Exercise form	1 player per minute
In couples	10,24
In threes	8,5
Attack row	1,6
1 against 1	5,3
2 against 2	3,9
3 against 3	2,6
4 against 4	2,2
6 against 6	1,6

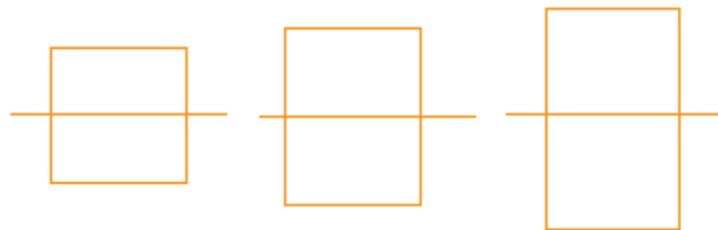
Source: Gerbrands (2005)

METHODOLOGY

Unique matches (N=15, age average 10.6 yrs old)



3 Conditions

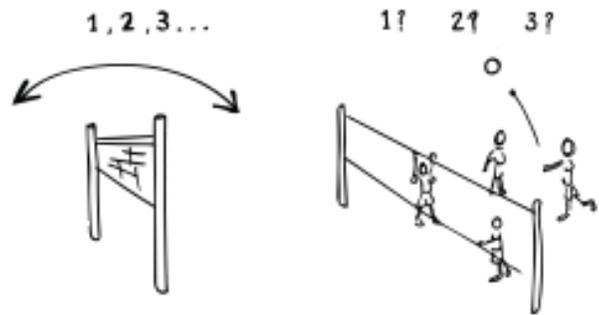


Half-court size A
6 x 4.5 m

Half-court size B
6 x 6 m

Half-court size C
6 x 7 m

Dependent variables

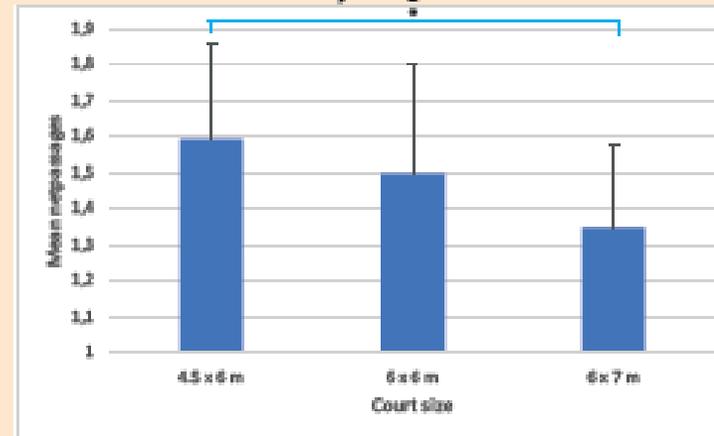


1. Average rally length

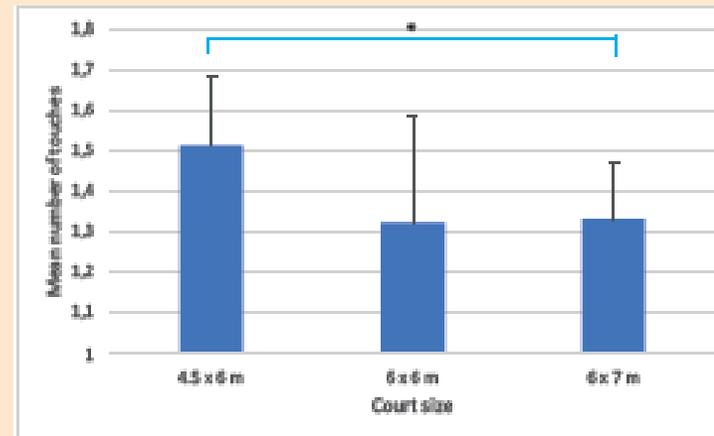
2. Team collaboration (n_touches)

RESULTS

Rally length



Team collaboration



Serve efficacy



The journey of developing innovative volleyball games for youth sport and physical education

DESIGN THINKING PROCESS STEPS

EXPLORATION Phase
Finding Out



FOCUSING Phase
Making Sense



EXPERIMENTATION Phase
Trying Out



CONTINUOUS COACHING Phase
Embedding the New

Acknowledgement:
IDEO, Stanford Design School

1. Case exploration Dutch volleyball association
2. Define: 6-12 yrs more dynamic games
3. Ideation with expert group
4. Define II: 6-10 yrs
5. Prototype I: 3 prototypes
6. Testphase I: Video analysis at clubs
7. Empathize with expert group
8. Prototype II
9. Testphase II: 4 week unit video analysis and player interviews
10. Prototype III
11. Testphase III: Tournament at club N=75 players
Videoanalysis & interviews perceptions
12. Prototype 0.9: National tournaments
13. Testphase IV: questionnaires coaches and organising committees.

Rally * Game involvement * Autonomy * Dynamics

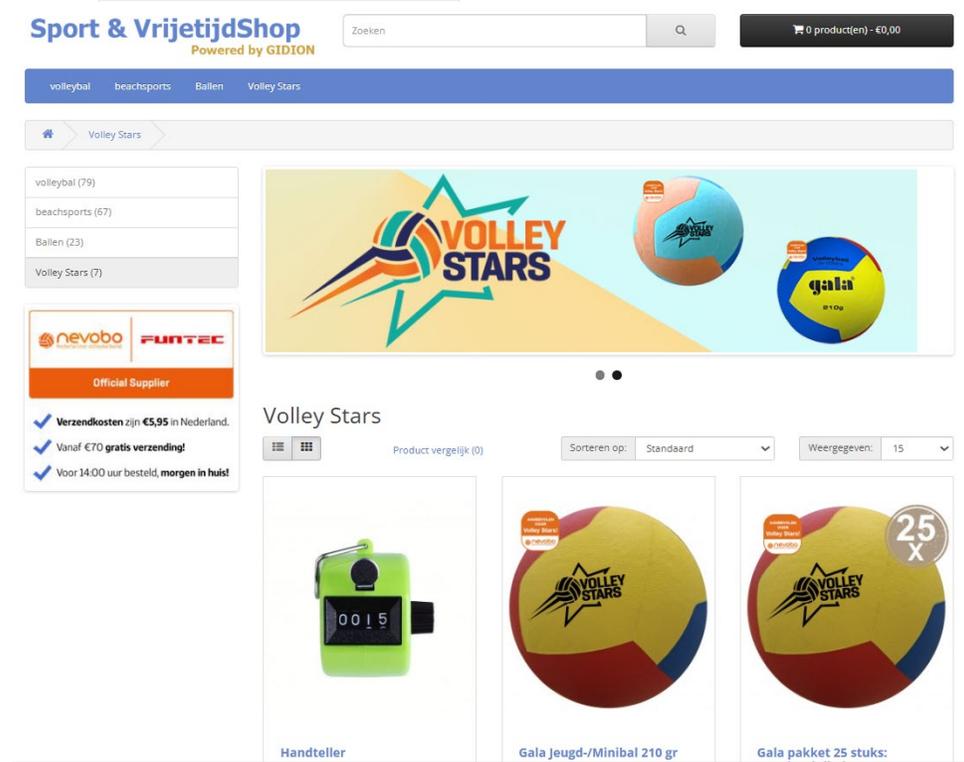
The results:



Volley Stars is het nieuwe spelconcept voor kinderen van 6 tot 12 jaar, waarin plezier, beweging en ontwikkeling centraal staan. Met speelse en dynamische levels groeit elk kind op zijn of haar eigen tempo in het volleybal. Volley Stars is de opvolger van Cool Moves Volley (CMV) en biedt een vernieuwde, eigentijdse aanpak die aansluit bij de behoeften van jonge volleyballers.



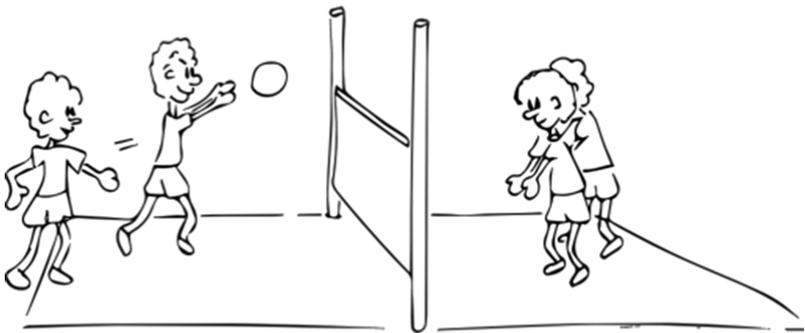
- 75% of the Netherlands switches to VolleyStars in 2025
- 1400 trainers have been educated
- VolleyStars equipment available in shop



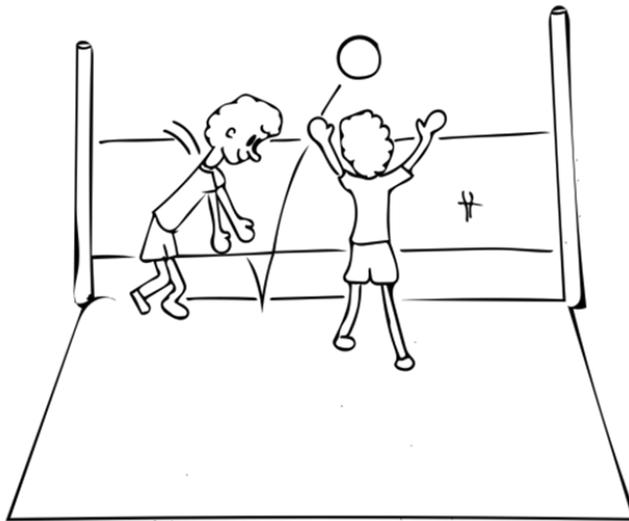
Practical: Proces of design

1v1 first ideas	2v2 and 3v3 Volleystars
Organizational forms	Explore the 5 levels of Volleystars





Level I Catch



Level II Bounce-set



Level III (Self)pass

First striking reactions according to interviewers (interviews in collaboration with Mulier institute) (Data analysis has yet to take place on patterns)

'It's easier to help a new player if you play with more'
(Test tournament player)

"Playing King's court with two teams waiting takes too long, they hit distracted' (test tournament team supervisor)

'We didn't have time for the yell in between, that's a shame' (player test tournament)



First reactions (interviews in collaboration with the Mulier Institute (about fun))

'Normally I always wave to Grandpa and Grandma in the stands, but I didn't have time for that now' (player test tournament level II)

'I have a child where I always have trouble keeping focused, that was no problem at all this time' (Team supervisor test tournament)

'I can do things that my father does with volleyball on Saturdays'
(player, test phase Bilthoven)



Level 1 - Catch Volley

Level 2 - Bounce Volley

Level 3 - Pass Volley

Level 4 - Smash Volley

Level 5 - Ultimate Volley

Organization CMV current vs. 2v2/ 3v3volley

- Mainly use of badminton courts (outer blue sidelines)
- Net height is 2 meters for each level.
- Level 1-2-3 plays 12 minutes, 3 or 4 matches per half day (3 or 4 players per team)
- Level 4 plays 2x12 minutes, 2 matches per half day (3 or 4 players per team). In a number of areas, level 4 plays the same as teams at level 1-2-3
- A level 1-2-3 team is present in the room for an average of 1 to 1 1/2 hours
- A level 4 team is on average 1 1/2 to 2 hours in the room present
- Level 5 is 6 m. by 6 m.

- The same fields will continue to be used. Mainly badminton courts (inside blue sidelines)
- Net height level 1 and 2 (1.70 m.) differs from net height level 3, 4 and 5 (2 m.). This must be taken into account when planning on the fields.
- Level 1-2-3 plays 8 minutes, 4 or 5 matches per half day (2 players per team)
- A team level 1-2-3 is present in the room for an average of 1 to 1 1/2 hours
- It is estimated that we will have an average of 25% more room space

Let's play
Lad os spille