

Modified Games

The organisation and implementation of modified games is a useful method for the effective coach and instructor. Often, it is where players are involved in a proper competitive scenario but the scale of the playing area, or certain aspects of it, is altered to be more suitable to that particular group of players or will consequentially necessitate the use of those skills and techniques which the coach intends to develop. At other times, it may be that the conventional scoring system is changed or that the playing kit is different to that usually used.

Modified games are often used by coaches as a step on the pathway towards the conventional full game. They are perhaps most often used when developing skills and experience in the sport with young learners. However, such activities may also be usefully used with more experienced, adult players, perhaps to add variety, interest and fun to training sessions, or as a revision of certain skills.

There are several advantages in the use of modified games as a training method:

- It encourages the development of the competitive approach in players.
- It familiarises players with some essential elements of the conventional and real game.
- It can encourage more involvement than might normally occur.
- It allows a higher degree of player success, satisfaction and enjoyment.

Examples of The Modified Game in Petanque

1. The use of regulation size/smaller boules for youngsters is an example of a modification to the game.
2. An end is played at a shorter distance, more suited to young players eg between 3 and 7 metres.
3. Conversely, adults or very able youngsters, may play at an increased minimum distance eg 8 metres. This would be to develop accuracy of skills at longer distances.
4. A larger size jack is used. The target is easier to see and arrive at.
5. A match is scored up to 7 points for young players with difficulty maintaining concentration for longer periods.
6. After a training session on pointing accurately, the playing lane width is reduced to 2 metres, using strings, spray marking, wood or other temporary method.
7. To encourage shooting and to develop increased confidence with this, a box (2 metres wide and 4 metres long) is marked 2 metres in front of the playing circle. This becomes the reduced playing area for the game.
8. An out-of-bounds area is marked on the playing lane up to 4 metres from playing circle. This discourages rolling the boule and encourages loop and backspin to delivery.
9. "Fixed Jack." The jack's original position at each end is marked, and the jack is always replaced here if moved during an end. To encourage skilful shooting and boule nudging. Also speeds up matches during a tournament as there are no dead ends caused by shooting it off.

The extent to which such modified games and activities are used will depend on facilities, kit available, suitability to the group and the coach's ability to improvise and be creative.