USE OF BASIC SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING TECHNIQUES
IN NON-SWIMMERS' TRAININGS

(Professional paper)

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Abstract

Taking into consideration a fact that traditional forms, methods and techniques used in non-swimmers’ training grow less interesting and low efficient with every day, the necessity for something new is born, what should help children to develop and show their creativity, motoric abilities, sense of beauty and movement in the water; all this is achievable through usage of basic synchronized swimming techniques.

In regards to diversity of movements and motion in synchronized swimming, application of the modified swimming techniques and basic synchronized swimming methods contributes toward faster and easier way in overcoming techniques in non-swimmers’ training.

Keywords: synchronized swimming, non-swimmers’ training, swimming techniques and positions, motoric abilities, physical activity, swimming course, non-swimmers’ trainings, swimming in pairs, diving in swimming, swimming rotation, swimming games

INTRODUCTION

Very few, almost no courses, in physical education in school and organized training with kids are put into system and extracurricular activities. Young children in school should be able to have everyday physical activity, among that an additional attention should be placed on athletics, gymnastics and swimming since those are more efficient when it comes to psychosomatic effect on children, the fact completely in accordance with the working strategy of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Serbia (Bačanac, Petrovic & Manojlovic, 2009; Official gazette of Serbia 05, № 66-3938/2008-1).

A great number of researches conducted in Europe show the necessity for physical activity for children (Lee, Folsom, & Blair, 2003; O’Salivan, 2004; Peneva (Пенева), 2010) given the fact that in last few years worse health condition has been noted among the children: the number of children suffering from chronic, somatic and musculoskeletal diseases has been increased, as well as the number of obese children. Deterioration in health requires finding efficient resources for development and implementation of protection and improvement in measurements. One of the activities that contribute to regular growth, physical development and health habits is precisely the swimming. According to the Educational plan and program, the students should have one swimming course in every grade, and at least one during the four years of education in first part of the cycle. The swimming course is planned with 12 classes within the whole program. At the end of the course, student should be able to swim 20m with the chosen style. According to all pedagogical and methodical advises, non-swimmers’ training should start in the pre-school and the first grades (Jurak & Kovač, 1998; Bulgakova (Булгакова), 2001; Tošić & Kocić (Тошић & Коцић), 2007; Kragujević (Крагујевић), 2008). The basic impact that swimming has on child is the environment in which child can manifest its movements and motions, in this case the environment is water which is one of the most efficient sorts for body strengthening, posturing corrections and development of hygienic habits. By being in water, child experiments certain sensations, feeling of being weightless and performs exercise in water better than on land. At the same time, water creates resistance and necessary load on muscles. During the swimming exercises, muscles are rhythmically contracted and relaxed.

Taking into consideration the fact that traditional forms, methods and techniques used in non-swimmers’ training grow less interesting and efficient with every day, the necessity for something new is born, by which the children should develop and show their creativity, motoric abilities, sense of beauty and movement in the water; all this is achievable through usage of basic synchronized swimming techniques.
Goal of this essay is to portray the essential movements, positions, transitions and motions that are used in synchronized swimming and their implementation in the non-swimmers’ training.

**BASIC TECHNIQUE IN SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING**

Synchronized swimming represents the activity which is based on performing the movements simultaneously by individual swimmers, in duet or team in water with music (Tošić, Kocić, Aleksić & Tomić, 2012; Furjan-Mandić, Perić, Krželj, Stanković, & Zenić, 2013). Non-swimmers’ trainings are conducted under the regular system which includes all the necessary elements (introduction, main part and the last part of the training), but in addition to that are used essential synchronized swimming elements both on land and in the water. The advantage of this system is also a work in pairs with different possibilities in combining the arms and legs within exercises for all swimming styles. Also, one of the advantages of the land practice and water practice with music is that it contributes toward better development of motivation (Forbes-Swan, 1984; Elkington & Chamberlain, 1986; White & Jill, 1988; Kocić & Tošić, 2008; Kocić, Aleksić & Tošić, 2009; Kocić, Tošić, Aleksić, & Toskić, 2012). Practical part of synchronized swimming includes the necessity to overcome and adjust to the water environment – the ability to perform certain horizontal movements in the water, head first or feet first forward or backwards (on the back, on stomach, sideways), vertical movements forward and backwards and combined movements. Synchronized swimming activities are performed in unnatural environment without any stable support. Motion within the three-dimensional space, including the rotations in the axis of their bodies are directly connected to need for perfect coordination under the water and high coordination skills (Forbes-Swan, 1984; Dimitrova (Димитрова), 1998; Tošić, Kocić & Andrejić (Тошић, Костић и Андрејић), 2009; Tošić, Aleksić, Andrejic, Tomić, & Aleksić, 2011; Stanković, Mekić, Aleksić, & Delibasić, 2012).

All the above mentioned data refer to movement in synchronized swimming to be applicable in non-swimmers’ training. Every synchronized swimming element is trained first on land and then in water. Work in pairs and with music is extremely suitable, especially with younger age children. In the phase of learning the skills children are capable of expressing their movements in water individually or in groups in water, inventing their own movements and adjusting them to their own abilities.

While overcoming the synchronized swimming technique, it is necessary to explore the new positions in water, arm and leg movements, motions in different body axis. In synchronized swimming the arms are not only in role of giving the substantial support, but also to set the direction of movements and motion, height in certain positions and also to provide the artistic impression. Arm movements are significantly different to those in swimming styles. Synchronized swimming arm movements can be straight, bent in different positions and directions. The movements could be intermittently or simultaneously. This kind of arm motions are extremely significant in the beginning learning phase because it gives the opportunity to develop sense of water and motion in it through playing and different arm positions and movements (beside the thighs, over the head and so on) and all that with being in the simplest horizontal positions on back or stomach. In front layout position or back layout position, arm position is diverse. For example, arms can be in front, above the head, in shoulder width, under water in depth of 35-40cm bellow the hips (Elkington & Chamberlain, 1986; Stanković (Станковић) et all, 2012; Gray, 1993). There are different variations in arm movements. Adding to that, those types of movements give the possibility of motions in all directions and speed. Swimmers have the perfect ability of motion through water. In propulsion movements in all directions according to rules, palm of the arm should be perpendicular to those in swimming styles. In freestyle and backstroke, for example, arm movements are not particularly demanding. Above the water arms are transferred sideways and upwards, and can be partially straightened or pro rata bent in elbows while transferred above the water. In synchronized swimming arm movements are more complex and all elements are applicable in non-swimmers’ training because it gives the opportunity of developing sense of water faster and easier in different ways (it as allowed to have arms move in all directions above and under the water and all positions are allowed, especially in performing choreography). Simple arm movements can be applied in competitive relay games.

Synchronized swimming also has different head positions: chin lowered on chest, backwards, facing right or left, leaning right or left. All mentioned positions give more possibilities in overcoming certain technique (for example: it is easier coordinately in butterfly if head is facing sideways).

Apart from basic positions on back and stomach with which starts every individual figure in synchronized swimming, there are also different variations of basic and transitional positions. Overcoming the basic synchronized swimming positions allows creating right idea of body position for beginners, contraction of necessary muscles, directions, space sense what contributes to overcoming basic swimming technique easier and faster. Sideways position underlines completely straight body facing sideways, face is above the water level, head is facing forward, lower arm is above the water, and upper arm is on the water surface on the thighs. This positions and motion in this position enables combining few swimming styles (freestyle, backstroke and butterfly), rotation along the longitudinal body axis, legs one style, arms different style, and etc.
Interesting preliminary exercises in non-swimmers’ training are also rotations along the longitudinal and transverse body axis. Rotations along the longitudinal body axis can be performed in horizontal position (90°, 180°, 360°). Rotations along the transverse body axis could be “rings”- backwards and forwards. These rotations are primarily trained on land then in pairs with minor water depth, and afterwards in normal water depth.

Aside from mentioned above, there are numerous water games that could be applied in non-swimmers’ training as part of a synchronized swimming training. Within the games, children learn how to dive, jump head or feet first, dive in different ways, learn how to create different shapes in water (lane, circle, row, different images on the water surface), respect game rules and develop sense of team spirit and so on. (Perfenov & Kononenko (Парфенов и Кононенко), 1979; Oсokina, Timofeava & Bogina (Осокина, Тимофеева & Богина), 1991; Yablonskay (Яблонская), 2008).

CONCLUSION
In regards to diversity of movements and motion in synchronized swimming, application of the modified swimming techniques and basic synchronized swimming techniques contributes toward faster and easier way in overcoming techniques in non-swimmers training. Considering the achieved results in non-swimmers’ training overseen during eighteen years in synchronized swimming, and which are manifested through extremely fast and quality overcoming swimming styles and diving, it is possible to express that the above mentioned example of combining basic synchronized swimming technique and traditional system in non-swimmers’ training has proved its application in practice.

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Swimming coaches are able to use the video and LabChart recordings to highlight areas that require changes. Even in a relatively short period of time, meaningful improvement in technique and performance is possible. "We are starting to believe all swimmers achieve their velocity from technique in distinctly different ways, and the differences are as unique as a fingerprint, so a one size fits all approach may not optimize the potential of swimmers or athletes that may even be swimming at the elite level." Budd Termin. Video and data recordings easily shared. Termin and associates also hold a US patent for an underwater training lights device designed to train and improve the technique of swimmers. ("System and Method for Training a Swimmer." Synchronized swimming takes place in the deep end, so the swimmers are actually treading water the entire time. Can you? Try sculls and eggbeaters. Sculls are the hand movements—bend your elbows at a 90 degree angle out to the sides, and flutter them to stay afloat. Well, a real synchronized swimmer generally uses either sculls or eggbeaters—not both. And when they use eggbeaters, they are able to rise out of the water to their hips, and remain steady enough to lift another swimmer out of the water. So work on that. 2. Floating. Since synchronized swimming involves a lot of techniques that you must get right, you must have a good coach to train you before you get started. To find one, just get in touch with your local synchronized swimming club.