Issue/Focus: This is a study on the effect a 12 lesson unit plan has on the tactical knowledge and motor skills of children. The authors theorize that the unit will improve the students game play more than a traditional, skill-based unit would. Twenty four students were used (12 boys and 12 girls) and were graded in skill level before the pre-testing by their teacher.

Reasoning: The reasoning provided is based on a 1997 study of baseball players 12 and under that showed that “motor development on the acquisition of sport tactics and cognitive processes used to mediate sport performance” is slow to develop. The authors concluded from previous research that the mere practice and/or game play in youth sports has not show decision making will improve substantially Therefore they were looking for a way to improve the teaching methods to allow for cognitive development to occur at a faster rate.

Assumptions: It was assumed that the students would show significant improvement in on the ball skills (i.e. passing), off the ball skills (i.e. cutting and receiving) and decision making (who to pass to, what type of pass, where to cut to get open). To test these assumptions the students played a game of Aerial Basketball (very similar to End Ball) before and after the 12 lesson unit. They were video taped and their successes and failures in each of the three categories were recorded on GPAI by the authors.

Conclusion: The results showed a scientifically significant improvement in the class as a whole in each of the 3 categories with the lesser skilled students improving more than the highly skilled students. The authors therefore concluded that a 12 lesson unit of instruction is beneficial to students in improving their all around game play.

Significant Information: A key aspect of this article was that although the class as a whole improved some of the students regressed. These students were for the most part those that were more skilled at the beginning of the experiment. Another somewhat surprising bit of information from this experiment is that in many of the categories the students that were considered “highly skilled” by their teacher performed worse as a group than those deemed “low skilled” both before and after the unit. This was especially true in the decision making.