

# **BASKETBALL Coaching Handbook**



**Missouri Valley Family YMCA**



**Just play. Have fun. And enjoy the game. ~ Michael Jordan**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for volunteering as a Basketball coach at the Y!

Your decision to coach a youth basketball team makes a meaningful difference in our community. Volunteer coaches are the heart of the Missouri Valley Family YMCA, shaping young athletes by teaching them fundamental skills, teamwork, and discipline.

Coaching is more than just running practices and showing up for games—it's about being a mentor, role model, and positive influence on every player. While coaching youth basketball is a rewarding experience, we understand it comes with challenges, especially for parents who volunteer to coach their child's team. That's why the YMCA is committed to supporting you and making the process as smooth as possible.

This manual is designed to help first-time coaches understand the rules, learn fundamental techniques, and discover effective drills to develop players' skills. Inside, you'll find valuable guidance to build confidence in your coaching abilities.

We sincerely appreciate your time, dedication, and commitment to youth sports. Thank you for being part of the Missouri Valley Family YMCA team!

Sincerely,

Cole Lafferty

YMCA Sports Director

## **WARM UP AND CONDITIONING**

Stretching prevents injuries, improves athletic performance and encourages a healthy lifestyle. Remember to teach kids proper techniques before they attempt any new form of exercise. Children who participate in sports or other physically demanding activities should stretch to prevent injuries. Stretching helps young athletes prevent muscle tears and pulls. Stretching also helps a child's joints move through a full range of motion.

Generally warm ups should start with low intensity exercise such as fast walking to light jogging for 5 minutes to increase heart rate, raise the body's temperature and increase blood flow to the muscles. A proper warm up may reduce chance of injury to your body. If children learn correct exercise habits when they are young, they can continue to practice them when they get older. The fun factor is integral when teaching kids about stretching. If a child thinks stretching is boring, she will likely lose interest in doing it. Below are some examples of fun stretching and warm up exercises to implement before beginning your practice.

Warm-up games should be played for at least 5 minutes at the beginning of each practice to stimulate blood flow to the muscles.

A warm-up should consist of several activities that contribute to whole body wellness: cardio, plyometrics, ballhandling, and stretching.

### **Cardio**

Basketball is a sport of constant motion. If a player is not in the proper condition, they will find it difficult to keep up with other players, and the offense, and especially the defense will suffer.

### **Drills:**

#### *Freeze Tag*

A game of tag where 1 player is "it", and tries to tag the other players, who are running away from the "it" player. Once a player is tagged, they must freeze, in a straddle position, and in order to be unfroze, another player must crawl through their legs.

#### *Run Laps*

Have players run several laps around the court.

#### *Box Run Relay*

For this drill, divide your team into equal groups. On the coach's command the first player from each team will shuffle down the baseline. Once they reach the corner of the court, the players will back pedal to half court. At half court the players will then shuffle to the center circle. Once they reach the center circle, the players will sprint back to the starting line, tagging the next player who then continues the relay.

#### *Sprint Past the Pack Run*

In this drill, have your entire team line in a straight line outside the court. The team is to jog around the exterior of the court. On the coach's command the player at the end of the line should sprint to the front of the line. This continues until all players have had a chance to be last in line.

#### *Everybody's It Tag*

A tag game where every player is it, and tries to tag as many players as they can, without being tagged themselves. Once a player is tagged, they kneel down where they were tagged. Players should remember who they were tagged by, because once that player is tagged, they get to back up and enter into the game.

#### *Line Runs*

All players line up at one end of the court. On the coach's command, all players proceed to run: 1) to the nearest free throw line and back, 2) to half court and back, 3) to the furthest free throw line and back, and 4) to the opposite end of the court and back.

### **Plyometrics**

Plyometrics is the combination of speed and strength which improve power and enhance performance. Examples include: jumping, bounding, hopping, etc.

### **Drills:**

#### *Jumping Jacks*

A jumping exercise performed by jumping to position with the legs spread wide, and the hands touching overhead, in a clap, and then returning to a position with the feet together and the arms at the sides.

#### *Coach Says*

This game is just like Simon Says; however instead of Simon, it is coach says. The players only react to the coach's commands if the coach starts the command with "Coach says...." When a player reacts to a command that does not start with "Coach Says," then that player is out. The last player in the game is the winner.

### *Jumping on One Foot*

Have players practice jumping and landing on one foot. They can land on the same foot, or try landing on the opposite foot they jumped with.

### *Jump for Distance*

Have players line up on the end line, and jump towards the opposite line, in as few jumps as possible.

### *Jump Over Line*

Have players find a line, and stand on one side of the line. Players can practice several different jumps over the line. They can jump forward and backward over the line with their feet together, or sideways over the line with their feet together. They can also put one foot on each side of the line, and scissor jump over the line, alternating which side of the line each foot is on.

## **Ball Handling**

These drills are used to improve coordination and the ability to sense the ball without looking at it.

### **Drills:**

#### *Ball Circle:*

Pass the ball from one hand to the other around different body parts. Players can go around the head, waist, knees, one foot, Figure 8 around both legs, etc.

#### *Toss Ball Up and Catch*

Players toss the ball up into the air, and try to catch it before it bounces on the floor. Once players become more experienced, they can toss the ball up and try to clap their hands and try to catch it.

#### *Fingertip Passes:*

Hold the ball over the head with 2 hands. Pass the ball back and forth between the hands using the fingertips. Have players try not to look at the ball. While passing the ball between the fingertips, players move their arms down the body. Continue passing the ball between the hands in front of the face, chest, waist, knees, ankles, and then working back up the body to the starting position.

## **FOOTWORK**

*"We try to stress the little things because little things lead to big things." ~Steve Alford*

Some of the players may have never played basketball before, so it is important to start at the bottom, and work your way up. If something is wrong with their base, everything else will be affected, from their shooting, to passing, and dribbling. Every part of their game begins with the feet.

### **Stance**

The offensive stance, or athletic stance, is the base of all movements the athlete will make. Players should always be in this stance, so they are able to catch the ball, or move quickly.

Players should stand with feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, and weight on the balls of their feet. The back should be straight, and not hunched over. Toes should be pointing to the basket, with the shooting foot slightly in front. Make sure athlete is balanced in all directions.

### **Drills:**

#### *Balance Check*

Have players spread out along baseline, and get in offensive stance. Make sure that everyone is in proper stance. It is also good to check their balance, try bumping the players, and see if they are able to keep their balance and stance against your weight.

### **Triple Threat**

Triple threat is a stance that allows a player to be able to attack using 3 different ways, dribble, shoot, or pass. The stance is the same as above, with the athlete squared up to the basket. The player protects the ball in their hip pocket, on their shooting side, and hands are positioned in the shooting formation.

It is important to explain the importance of triple threat, and children love feeling like they are a threat to the defense. Triple threat is one of the most important skills to teach a youth basketball player, but also one of the most difficult, because kids want to dribble whenever they get possession.

### **Jump Stops**

The jump stop can be used to catch the ball on the move, or to stop when dribbling. When jump stopping, both feet should hit the floor simultaneously.

### **Drills:**

#### *Jump Stop Drill*



Have players line up along the end line, with a ball. Have them start jogging down the court, and on your signal, jump stop. Have them continue until they are on the other side of the court. For more advanced players, they can do this drill while dribbling.

### *Freeze Tag With Proper Jump Stops*

Have one player be It. This player chases the other players around the court. When touched by the It player, the other players must jump stop (freeze) in a proper ready position. The coach can unfreeze a player by touching him when that player shows good ready position.

### **Pivoting**

A pivot is one foot that is allowed to move, while the other remains stationary. Pivoting is done on the balls of your feet, do not have weight back on the heel. It is important that their pivot foot does not move or slide. There are two types of pivots, the forward pivot, and the reverse pivot.

### **Drills:**

Have players line up, and practice both the forward pivot and backward pivot, until they feel comfortable with both. Players should also be able to use either foot as their pivot foot.

### *Pivot 21*

Split into 2 teams, place a chair outside of the 3-point arc on both sides. Place a ball on each chair, and then a coach should have an extra ball by each of the chairs. The first player in line runs up to the chair, picks up the ball, pivots to the basket, and dribbles in for a lay-up. As soon as the first player shoots, the next person in line can start running. The goal is to score 21 baskets before the other team.

### *Pivot Shooting*

Place a ball on a chair anywhere on the court, player starts under the basket. The player runs out to the chair, jump stops, picks up the ball, pivots to the basket and shoots. Player then gets their rebound, and if they miss, must finish with a make. Upon making a basket, the player runs back out to the chair, jump stops, touches the ball to the chair, and begins again. Repeat for 5 shots.

### *Ball Tough*

Both an offensive and defensive player starts under the basket, the offensive player cuts out to the wing position and receives a pass from the coach, the defensive player then closes out on the ball. The goal of the offensive player is to keep the defense from stealing the ball, but they cannot dribble, they can only use pivots. If the defensive player steals the ball, the offense must run a sprint, if the offensive player keeps possession, then the defensive player must run a sprint. Set a time limit on how long they have, like 5 seconds. This is also a good defensive drill to work on close outs, and not reaching.

## **DRIBBLING**

*"Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better and your better is best" - Tim Duncan*

Dribbling is one of the easiest skills for young basketball players to learn, and with that it is often over used. Most youth players will have a gut instinct to dribble the ball as soon as they receive possession. It is important to not only teach them good dribbling skills, but also when and when not to dribble.

### **How to Dribble**

1. **Bend Knees:** The athlete should have their knees bent, and back straight, so that they are in the athletic stance. If they are not in the proper stance, it is easier for the defender to knock the ball away, and they have low mobility.
2. **Fingertips:** Cup your dribbling hand, with your fingers spread. Use the pads of your fingers to dribble, not the palm. Using fingertips allows for more control over the ball. Use your forearm and wrist to bounce the ball.
3. **Waist High:** Keeping the ball low is important. Many times young basketball players have a hard time keeping it low, and want to bounce it up to their shoulders. It is important to keep it low, so that the defenders cannot steal from them as easily.
4. **Protect the Ball:** The ball should be dribbled on the back leg, so that their body is between the ball and the defender. They should also put up an armbar with their non-dribbling arm. The armbar should be parallel to the floor, and they should make a fist with their hand to discourage pushing off their defender. Although stealing is discouraged in the league, players still need to protect the ball, or else we cannot call a steal.
5. **Keep your Head Up:** Always keep your chin up, and eyes forward. It is important to see the hoop, and other teammates.

**Drills:***Dribble Knockout:*

Every player has a ball, and is dribbling within a certain area. The goal is to knock the balls away from the other players. Players cannot step out of bounds, or pick up their ball. The last person to still be dribbling is the winner.

*You're It:*

Have team line up on the end line facing the half court line. Place one less basketball than the number of players on the half court line. On your whistle the players run to the balls, and grab one, the player without a ball becomes it, and tries to get a ball from someone else. They can get a ball from stealing it, making another player lose control of it, or forcing them out of bounds. The player that had their ball taken is now it, and tries to steal a basketball from someone else. After a set amount of time (i.e. 15 seconds) the player without a ball is eliminated, and you begin again.

*Basketball Frenzy*

Scatter the basketballs on the gym floor and have players stand next to a basketball. On the "go" signal, each student will pick up a basketball and dribble it 2 times, place it back on the floor then move to the next ball and dribble it 2 times. The object is to keep all basketballs moving until the stop signal.

To add a challenge, the coach can point to a stationary basketball and start counting out loud. If he counts to 3 before a student dribbles the ball, the coach gets a point. If the coach scores 3 points by the end of the time period, the coach wins that round.

There are several variations you can do with this drill, such as dribble 3 times, dribble with non-dominant hand, cross-over dribbles, or a pattern of different number of dribbles.

*Follow the Leader*

Have players line up in a straight line behind the coach. The players are to do exactly what the coach or designated leader is doing. The coach can dribble and walk, or dribble and stand still, dribble with right hand, dribble with left hand, dribble while jogging, cross-over dribble, dribble while walking backwards, etc.

*Green, Yellow, Red, Purple Light*

Each player has their own basketball and dribbles around the court. The coach calls out a command like red light, green light, yellow light, or purple light, and the players should react accordingly.

- Red Light-Means Stop. The players dribble while standing in one place.
- Yellow Light- Means Slow Down. The players move slowly with the ball.
- Green Light-Means Go. The players move quickly around the court while dribbling the ball, but in control.
- Purple Light- Means Stop Dribbling. Place the ball on the ground, then run around the ball in a circle.

### *Dribble Around Cones*

Divide your team into 2 or 3 groups. Each group lines up in a straight line. Set up cones in a line along the court (3-4 cones should be fine). Then, the players dribble around the cone, in a zig zag pattern. Players could shoot a basket after the last cone, or it could be done as a relay race.

### *Righty Lefty Dribble*

Have the entire team line up at one end of the court. On the coach's command, the players are to dribble to half court with their right hands. Once the players cross half court, they should switch hands and dribble the rest of the way with their left hands.

### *Dribble Around Defenders*

Have a number of players line up straight down the middle of the court. These players will be the defenders. The defenders cannot move their feet, but can move their hands and lean for the ball. The defenders should have their hands up at all times. The ball handlers will dribble the ball between the defenders in a weaving pattern. The goal is for the ball handler to successfully get to the other side of the court without losing control of the ball or having the ball touched by the defense.

### *Basketball Pass and Dribble*

On the "go" signal, the partners begin passing the ball back and forth. On the coach's command, the player with the basketball begins to dribble it in a small space, while the partner tries to steal it. If the ball is stolen, the players reverse roles until the coach's command. On the coach's command, they begin passing the ball to each other again.

### *Dribble Freeze Tag*

Each player has a basketball. One player is designated as "it." On command, all players begin dribbling, and the "it" player tries to touch the other players (all players are still maintaining their dribble). Once touched, a player must freeze, still dribbling while stationary. After a specified number of dribbles (to be determined by the coach), the player may be unfrozen.

### *Dribble Laps*

Have players get in a single file line, along one of the end lines. Players will dribble the basketball following the out of bounds lines around the court. If a player loses control of their ball, have them chase it, and get back in line. Once players become more advanced dribblers, they can move faster, and run laps while dribbling.

## **PASSING**

*"It doesn't matter who scores the points, it's who can get the ball to the scorer" ~ Larry Bird*

Passing is one of the most important fundamentals to having a successful basketball team. Even though it is so important, it is often overlooked, because it seems like such an elementary skill, that everyone should be able to do, and passing drills are often boring.

There are two parts to a good pass, making a pass, and receiving the pass. The receiver should have soft hands, and watch the ball all the way into their hands. They should meet the ball, and should not be stationary. The receiver should give the passer a target, so that the passer has something to aim at. A good passer is able to see the court, and anticipate the defense. It is important that they are able to open the passing lane by making a shot fake.

### **Chest Pass**

The passer should step to the target, extend both arms, and flick their wrists, so that their palms are facing outwards, thumbs are down, and fingers are extended. It will look they are milking a cow with their thumbs. The ball should go from the passer's chest, to the receiver's chest, without lofting like a rainbow.

### **Bounce Pass**

The form for a bounce pass should look like a chest pass. To make a good bounce pass, the ball should bounce about 2/3 of the way to the receiver. Often, they think that the point of a bounce pass is to bounce it up to the ceiling by slamming it on the ground. Stress that the pass is made from the chest, and you want the receiver to catch it in their target area, between their stomach and neck.

### **Overhead Pass**

This pass will look different from the other 2 discussed. It is used to throw long distances down the court. Instead of throwing from their chest as in the chest pass and bounce pass, the pass is made from above their head. It is important to not bring the ball behind their heads, because then it is easier for the defense to steal it. Similar to the bounce and chest pass, they still need to snap their wrists, so that the ball has some velocity on it, and backspin.

### **Drills:**

#### *Triangle Passing*

Create three passing lines about 12 to 15 feet apart. One line is at the top of the key, and one in both the right and left corners. Start with the ball at the top of the key, and pass to either the left or the right. The player then runs to the next line, in the same direction of their pass, following their pass. Practice the various types of

passes. It is helpful to use defined marks for the beginning of the line to avoid the lines shifting in.

### *Find the Receiver*

The players should line up under the basket. The first player in line dribbles to the top of the key, and pivots to the basket. The next player in line should run to either of the corners and yells for the ball. The passer must locate the receiver, and make a chest pass. The passer then cuts down the lane, and receives the ball and completes a lay-up. This is a good drill to help your players learn to pass to the person, and not to a spot.

### *No Dribble Keep Away*

Playing a half court, 3-on-3 game, the offense must make 10 passes without losing the ball or committing a turnover. The offense does not attempt to score, but maintains control of the ball for 10 passes. Rotate offense and defense.

### *Partner Pass*

Have the players pair up with a partner. The pairs should line up approximately 3-5 feet apart from each other. Facing each other, the pair should pass the ball to each other. You can do this drill with different types of passes.

### *Passing Relay Race*

Divide your team into 2-3 even groups. The teams line up in a straight line down the court from one base line to the next. At the coach's command the first player passes the ball to the second and so on until they reach the last player. The last player then passes it back to the player next to him until the ball reaches the person who started the drill. The first team that completes all their passes wins. You can do this drill with all types of passes.

### *Monkey in the Middle*

Divide your team into groups of 3. Have one player in between the other 2, this player is the monkey. The 2 players on the end try to pass the ball back and forth without the monkey stealing the ball. If the monkey steals the ball, they replace the player whose pass they stole.

### *Clap Passing Drill*

Begin the drill with all your players standing in a circle around you. Pass the ball to random players. Each player must clap before they catch the ball. If a player doesn't catch the ball, forgets to clap, or claps when you fake a pass to them, they must sit down in their spot.

*Circle Passing*

Separate the players into several groups of 4-6 players. Have the groups spread out around the court. Have players stand in a circle, with one player in the middle of the circle. The player in the middle should have a ball, as well as another player on the outside of the circle. On the whistle, the player in the middle passes the ball to the player directly to the right of the player with the other ball. The player on the outside then immediately passes their ball to the player in the middle, and the pattern continues. The drill continues until all players have had a chance to be in the middle of the circle.

*Shuffle Passing*

Pair players up, and line them all up at one end of the court. The partners should be across from each other, on each side of the lane. The players will shuffle down to the other end of the court, passing the basketball back and forth while they shuffle. Have players come back the opposite direction, so that they practice shuffling each way.



## SHOOTING

*"You miss 100% of the shots you never take" ~Wayne Gretzky*

Shooting is most players' favorite part of the game. All kids love to shoot, but sometimes in a game, they are nervous, and get scared to shoot, even when the whole gym is yelling at them to shoot the ball. It is very rare that a player's form is picture perfect, so do not focus on changing their form if it works for them.

### Stance

Starting at the very bottom, their shooting foot should be slightly forward, where their toes fit perfectly in the arc of the other foot, like a puzzle. Their feet should be about shoulder width apart, and knees bent. Their shoulders and body should be square to the basket. It is important that they are balanced.

### Hands

Have them hold the ball out in front of them with their arm straight. The ball should be on their finger pads, not resting on their palm. They should be able to put a finger between the bottom of the ball, and their palm. Then, have them bend their elbow, and rotate their wrist backwards, so that the ball is resting on your shooting hand above your shoulder. The elbow should make an "L" and be pointing towards the basket, not to the side of the ball. Then, add the guide hand, which should be to the side of the ball, this hand is not used to shoot with, it is just there to guide, and keep the ball stable.

### Release

The ball should start with an upward motion towards the basket; the ball should not dip down first, which enables the defense to block the shot. Their body should uncoil, similar to a spring being released, from their legs up to the wrist. Their elbow and wrist should extend straight to the basket. The ball should roll off your fingers, so that it has backspin. Their strength comes from their legs, releasing just before the top of your jump. Follow through until the ball hits the rim, with the wrist floppy, and fingers pointed at the rim. (Like they are reaching into the cookie jar!)

### Drills:

*Shoot 'Til You Miss*

Players should have a partner, designate one as the shooter and one as the rebounder and passer. The shooter keeps shooting until they miss, while their partner rebounds and passes it back. Play for a designated amount of time, and see which partner scores the most points.

*Seven-Up*

You need 4 for this shooting drill, they form a single-file line at a pre-determined spot. The first player attempts the shot, if they make it, the next player attempts the same shot, if they miss the shot, they get one point; if they make the shot, the next player must also make the shot, or they receive 2 points. Essentially, if they miss, they receive the amount of points equal to however many consecutive shots were made before their turn.

### *Dribble Down and Shoot*

Divide your team into 2 groups. Each group lines up in a straight line at half court and the first person in each line has a ball. On the coach's command, the first person in each group dribbles down the court towards the hoop, jump stops at a specified spot, and shoots a jump shot. After making the shot (or 2 attempts at making the shot), the players rebound their basketball and dribble back to half court, passing the ball to the next player in line.

### *Half Moon*

Divide your team into 2 teams. Line players up in a half moon shape around 10-15 feet away from the hoop. Give the ball to the player in the corner on each end of the court. On the coach's command, the player with the basketball will take a shot, they will follow their shot and pass it to the next player. The first shooter slides out and puts token pressure on the new shooter.

### *5 Spot Shooting*

Split your team into 2 groups, with one group at each basket. Pick 5 spots on the floor, and line each group up at the first spot, giving each team 3 balls. On the coach's command, the first player shoots the ball. As soon as the ball hits the rim, the next player in line shoots. The shooter hustles after the ball and passes to the next person in line without a basketball. After a team makes a certain number of baskets, they are to move to the next spot. The first team to make the designated amount of baskets from each spot is the winner.

### *10 Basket Team Shooting*

Divide your team into 2 groups. Each group will be assigned their own basket, and each player will have their own basketball. At the coach's command, each team starts shooting at their basket from a designated spot. The first team to make 10 baskets wins.

### *Around the World*

For this drill, each player must make a number of shots at various locations around the basket (depending on skill level depends on distance from basket). Players start

from the first location, and when they make the shot go to the next location. Players continue around the key, until they finish at the last location.

### *Champion Ball*

Separate players into 1 group at each basket, with 2 basketballs at each basket. The first 2 students in line must dribble 3 times, and then touch basketballs. The first basket in wins, and then challenges the next player in line. If a player wins 3 in a row, they can switch to the other basket.

### *Knockout*

Line the players up at the free throw line (or closer for younger players) in single file. Give the first 2 players in line a basketball. On your command, the first player will shoot a free throw. If they make it, they will rebound the ball and pass it to the next person in line without a basketball. If they miss, they rebound the ball, and try to make a lay-up. The next player in line shoots a free throw, as soon as the previous player's ball hits the rim, or goes in. If the previous player misses, the next player is attempting to make a free throw, or rebound a shot before that player makes their rebound shot. If the scenario in step 3 occurs, the previous player has to sit out for the rest of the drill. The process continues until only 1 player remains. (Avoid rushing too much to prevent ruining your shooting mechanics.)

## REBOUNDING

*"I feel all great teams have two things in common: defense and rebounding. So, we stress defense and rebounding every day as the most important aspects in the game to win." ~Coach Larry Brown*

The most important part of rebounding is getting the inside position. The player with the inside position is much more likely to win the rebound.

Keys to successful rebounding:

1. **Box Out:** Have players locate their opponent by placing their arm in their gut, and pivot towards the basket. They should have a wide stance, and stick their backside into their opponent, as if they were sitting on their thighs, they should be between their opponent and the basket. They should always keep their eyes on the ball, and be aggressive.
2. **Attack the Ball:** After they have boxed out their opponent the next step is to secure the ball. Jump, with arms extended to the ball, and grab it, ripping it down and chinning it. It is important to be strong once securing the rebound.

## Drills:

### *Mirror Drill*

Players should line up, offense faces the coach, and the defense has their backs to the coach. The coach will raise an arm in the air, and once the coach blows his whistle, the offense will move in that direction, while the defense attempts to box them out.

### *Fight for It*

Have players stand around the free throw circle, with offense on the outside, and the defense facing them on the inside. Place a ball in the middle of the circle, and upon blowing your whistle, the defense should box out, while the offense attempts to get to the ball. Continue to box out for a count of 5 seconds.

### *War*

Split into a defensive team, and an offensive team, the defense lines up with 2 at the blocks, 2 at the elbows, and 1 at the free throw line. The offense lines up around the perimeter. A coach takes a shot from the outside, and the defense finds their player and boxes them out, while the offense crashes the boards. The defense must make contact with their opponent before going for the rebound. Rebound everything, even made shots, and there is no out of bounds, the goal is for the players to go after the rebound aggressively.

### *1 on 1 Box Out*

Make 2 lines, a shooting line on the elbow, and a defense line on the free throw line, the first person in the shooting line has a ball, and the first person in the defense line comes over to play defense. The offensive player takes a shot (the defense plays soft defense, allowing the shot), once the shot is taken, the defense boxes out, and then tries to get the rebound. If the offense gets the rebound, the defense must run a lap. If the defense wins the rebound, they must make a good outlet pass to the next person in the shooting line.

## **DEFENSE**

*Offense wins games... Defense wins championships*

### **Stance**

The feet should be shoulder width apart, with their weight on the balls of their feet, their heels should still be in contact with the floor. Knees are bent, and their back should be straight. Keep your head up, and arms out with the palms facing upward. Watch your opponent's belly button, which will always point in the direction they are going.

### **Shuffle**

Slide feet sideways, using quick short steps, keeping feet shoulder width apart. Make sure players do not cross their feet, or click their heels. Also watch that they stay at the same level, their heads should not be bobbing up and down, they must stay low the whole time, so that they do not get beat.

### **Position**

In a denial man-to-man defense, the defense should defend the passing lanes, preventing your opponent from getting the ball. If your opponent is only one pass away, you should guard between your player and the ball. Place your foot nearest the ball slightly forward, with your palm facing towards the ball. You should always be able to see the both your player and the ball.

If your man is two passes away, you can play up the line, just a little off the line between your player and the ball, towards the basket.

The defensive player should watch the belly button of the player they are guarding, instead of the head or ball. The belly button/midsection of the player will always go in the direction of the player.

### **Drills:**

#### *Defensive Challenge*

This drill can be done in either a full court or half court setting, with 3on3, 4on4, or 5on5. Only the defense can score points, by either forcing a turnover, or securing a rebound. If the defense scores, they stay on defense. If the offense scores a basket, they switch to defense, and offense becomes defense. You can play to however many points you deem necessary.

#### *No Hands*

This drill works on moving your feet, if your players have a tendency to reach in, or foul, this is a good drill. The only time a defense can use their hands is to secure a

rebound. They can put their hands behind their back, hold their jerseys, or hold onto a towel. There are many variations to this drill.

### *Mirror Drill*

Ask players to pair up, with one player on each side of a line on the court (such as the free-throw line or baseline). One player is designated as the offensive player; this player will move in a quick manner back and forth on her side of the line. The other player is the defender and must slide her feet and try to stay with the offensive player as she moves. The offensive player should remain in a 6- to 8-foot space as she moves back and forth.

### *Mirror Drill*

Have players spread out, so that they can all see the coach. The players will mirror the every movement of the coach. If the coach shuffles to the left, the players will shuffle to their right, if the coach shuffles forward, the players will shuffle backwards.

### *1 on 1 Defense*

Divide your team into 2 groups. One group is on offense, and the group is on defense. Pair up the players so that every offensive player has a player that is playing defense against them. All the players on offense should have a basketball, and line up in a line along half court. The defensive players should line up about 3-4 feet in front of them. The object of the game is for the offensive players to dribble down the court, across a specified line. The offensive player scores a point for getting the ball past the "goal" area. The defender gets a point if they steal the ball, gets the offensive player to stop dribbling, or prevents the offensive player from reaching the goal within a certain period of time (e.g. 10 seconds).

### *Defensive Shuffle*

This drill will help teach your players how to maintain the proper defensive stance and how to properly move from one part of the court to the other. Divide your team into 2 groups. Each group starts at a corner of the court. The first players from each group assume a good defensive stance. On the coach's command the players start to shuffle their feet from the corner to the free throw line, to half court, to the opposite free throw line, to the far corner of the court (zig zag pattern down the court). Once they reach the far corner, the player runs back to the starting line.

### *Hot Spot Defense*

Split players into groups of 5. 4 players stand in the 4 corners of the free throw lane, (Left Elbow, Right Elbow, Left Block, Right Block), with one player in the

middle. Each group should have 1 basketball. The outside players try to pass the basketball (using any type of pass). The center player tries to steal or touch the basketball, and the player who makes the error becomes the center player. Make sure all players get to play the center position.

### *Freeze Drill*

Group players into pairs of equal ability. Place a pair at the top of the key at each basket, with the offensive player possession the ball. On the whistle, the offensive player tries to score, and the defensive player tries to prevent this from happening by keeping himself positioned between the player and the basket. On the next whistle, all players freeze. Scoring does not come from scoring baskets, but from the following criteria: on the "freeze" whistle, if the defender is not between the player they are guarding and the basket, the offensive player gets one point, and vice versa. The first player in each pair to 3 points wins. Have players switch roles.



## **HELPFUL WEBSITES**

<http://www.coachesclipboard.net/index.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/>

<http://www.best-basketball-tips.com/>

<http://www.basketball-plays-and-tips.com/>

<http://www.howtocoachyouthbasketball.com/>