

## **Basketball Practice Guide**

The following practice guideline can be used for youth basketball players. There are dozens of great web sites with skill drills. I recommend searching the web and coming to practice with new ideas. The following site is a popular one: [www.coachesclipboard.net](http://www.coachesclipboard.net). It has excellent explanations, videos etc. for all levels.

### **I. Warm Up & Ball Skills**

- Warm Up
  - Stretch to loosen up
  - Ball skills
    - Hold the ball with the fingertips, squeezing it while rotating it back and forth from hand to hand. The ball should not touch the ground.
    - Pound or slap the ball hard from hand to hand.
    - Pass the ball from hand to hand, around the back and through the legs
  - Drills
    1. Defensive Positions
      - Demonstrate proper defensive positioning, knees bent, hands out. Shuffle side to side and up and back, do not cross feet. Coach can move side to side with the ball and players will keep along. Play defense with your legs not by reaching in.
      - Note: defensive stance differs depending if the offensive player has used his/her dribble.
  - Lay Up Line
    - For younger grades, start by teaching proper lay-up form. Right handed layup, jump off left foot. Use the backboard. Perhaps a two-step layup should begin the drill demonstrating proper form. Use all baskets in the gym.

### **II. Fundamentals**

- Dribbling
  - Right/left hand dribble
    - Teach players to dribble with their fingertips. Dribble in place alternating right/left hands.
    - Dribbling without looking at the ball. The players will be dribbling stationary, coach will hold up fingers and the players will call the #.
    - Dribble  $\frac{1}{2}$  the length of the court with alternating hands. Turn this into a cross over move.
    - Form two lines and have relay races which make it fun for the kids or play follow the leader. May need to go side to side if the length of the court is not available. This will allow for more lines to be formed.
  - Start Stop / Cross Over Dribbling
    - You can teach your players to stop/start by using the “Red Light” drill. Have them start on “Green Light”, slow down on “Yellow” and stop on “Red”. Perhaps alternate hand after every stop. Again, goal is to keep things fun.

## **Basketball Practice Guide**

- Passing: teach your players to pass with **both** hands. For bounce/chest passes, they should be making a “W” with their hands as they grip it (thumbs close together in the center).
  - Chest/Bounce/Overhead Pass
    - Pair up your players facing each other about 10-12 feet away and have them practice several chest/bounce/overhead passes. Please ensure you demonstrate each pass with your assistant coach or one of the players.
  - 2 Person up and back – note this is a catching and passing drill. You cannot execute a give and go if the receiving player cannot catch.
    - Have the paired players run the ½ court passing the ball back and forth. The ball should not hit the ground.
- Rebounding
  - Box Out Drill
    - Rebounding is about positioning. Teach your players the concept of “butt in the gut”.
    - Pair players up; have the defensive rebounder facing the other player with a ball behind him. When the coach blows the whistle, the offensive player tries to get the ball, while the defender boxes out.
    - One line under basket and the other on the FT line. Roll the ball to the FT line, have the child shoot from there, the defender will not block the shot but rather box out using the correct form.
  - Rebound Game in Paint
    - Position players around the key, with two defenders down low and two high. Match up an offensive player for each defender. The coach shoots and the players box out for the rebound.
    - Hint:
      - teach the kids to find their man rather than stare at the ball as it leaves the shooter's hand
      - teach the younger children to go to the ball and grab, after it hits the floor, before it bounces over their head.
- Shooting
  - BEEF: teach basic shooting form. Balance/Elbow/Eyes/Follow-through
  - Mikan Drill – 2 foot shots using the backboard. Shoot from the Left side then Right, then L then R, etc. Do for 60 seconds. Count the makes.
  - Receive the pass, ball fake up, drive to the basket.
- Defensive Positioning (jump to ball, man in middle..)

### **III. Offense**

**20 Mins**

- Pivoting: creates passing lanes and helps protect the ball from the defender. Be careful not to travel.

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- Passing: practice rotating the ball around the perimeter – holding the ball is NOT part of the offense.
- Rules after passing
  1. Pass and cut
  2. Pass and pick away
  3. Pass and replace – meaning go to an open spot on the floor
- Picks/screens: here is a link with a good overview and drills;  
<http://www.coachesclipboard.net/PickDrills.html>
- Basic In-bounds plays (for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders)
  - Box
  - Stack

### **Comments:**

- Most kids dribble right handed. They dribble to the right hand lower corner, run out of room, and pick up their dribble. Teach them not to pick up their dribble and to spin-dribble out of trouble.
- When a player receives a pass have them turn and face rather than dribble first. The turn and face will allow them to execute a give and go.
- Getting open – V-cut. Also teach back door plays. A fake-a-pass to make-a-pass is critical.

### **IV. Scrimmage - 2<sup>nd</sup> half of year**

- With remaining time, you may want to hold a “controlled” scrimmage. Depending on the grade and gym, you may want to make it 4 v 4. Stop play often to instruct the kids. Depending on the grade/level, decide how you want to call fouls, infractions etc.