



Coaches Manual

Developing a Coaching Philosophy

A coaching philosophy is a statement of what you value and how you will approach your coaching role. It covers your purpose as a coach and how you will approach player development and success. Your coaching philosophy consists of your major objectives and the beliefs and principles that you adhere to in order to achieve your objectives.

Writing a coaching philosophy

You want to have a statement that conveys the following:

- What your coaching objectives are
- The core values that will inform how you coach
- The approach you will take to coaching your athletes.

To create this statement, identify the key elements of the three components above and start writing down statements that include these. You will likely need to revise what you come up with several times; try different ways of combining the components, or different phrases that get the information across. Keep going until you have a succinct statement that sums up your philosophy on coaching.

Identify What is Most Important to You

It is important to first understand the non-negotiable values within your coaching role. Every coach has certain things they never compromise on. It is important once you have established your values to identify which are your most critical values. See the bottom section for more on developing your core values.

Learn from Your Own Experiences

Being a coach is largely about being yourself and this means being authentic. Most coaches learn from the coaches they had when they were athletes themselves. This aspect of learning from your own experiences is something you can bring to your current coaching role. You should identify the behaviors, values and the lessons you learnt from different coaches over your career.

What is Your Coaching Style?

Every coach has a coaching style which is largely defined by their personality and their belief in how the game of basketball should be played. This coaching style will have strengths and weaknesses. Essentially understanding your coaching style will help you to comprehend your motivations, the environment you perform best in, and how you communicate best. By understanding your coaching style, you are better positioned to be able to adapt to different situations. I would encourage all coaches to become athlete-centred in their coaching approach by putting the needs and development of your athletes at the centre of your focus.

Discover your Coaching Philosophy

Think about the behavior you wish to exhibit consistently, how you wish to conduct yourself, how this behavior will impact on your athletes, and the results of this impact. Now you can begin to create a framework to govern your conduct in your coaching role and should link to where you discovered your core values in relation to being a coach.

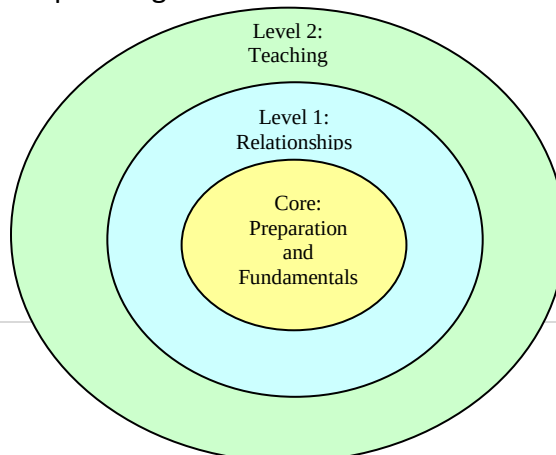
Another aspect to the coaching role and philosophy is how you define success. Defining what truly is success is often not a simple matter of determining who has more points at the end of a game. Winning, therefore, is only part of the measure of success. You should define your unique coaching philosophy in a succinct statement- here is an example of one:

I am a Coach because of my passion for my work. I am able to foster the growth of my players through the numerous opportunities I am fortunate to provide. I will mold a group of individuals to communicate, to be responsible and to hold themselves accountable. I believe in nurturing their dreams to be the best on and off the court.

Here is an example of a coaching philosophy:

I believe four factors are essential to being successful over the long haul in the coaching profession:

1. An understanding of young people and what motivates them,
2. A commitment to relational mentoring,
3. Expertise in teaching the game of basketball, and
4. A commitment to prepared planning.



The core of this philosophy centres around two concepts: preparation and fundamentals. I believe that preparation overcomes any lack of talent and that fundamentals are the building blocks of basketball.

Level 1 centres around four relational concepts: Role modeling; approachable leadership; relationship building and mentorship; and whole person development.

Level 2 includes six teaching components: Game strategy; competitive attitude; discipline; teamwork; persistence; and goal achievement.

Mastery of these levels leads to success. I define coaching success as seeing team members reach their maximum potential, both on and off the court. Winning is important in building a strong program, though it is not the benchmark for success.

Keep it Visible and Alive

Having now compiled your values, behaviors, and definitions of success, the final step is to keep this consolidated work in a place where you can review it regularly and see it every day. Your coaching philosophy is something unique to you about who you are and want to be. It is important to constantly remind yourself of what your philosophy is.

Defining Your Core Values

So, how important is it to focus on your core values when developing your coaching philosophy? It is very important. It truly takes understanding what it means to be a coach, how you view yourself in your coaching role (whether that be teacher, friend, or mentor), what you hope to accomplish in your coaching career, and what you think makes a coach effective. Core values to consider as you look at developing your philosophy could be placing players first, sport leading to development of character in your athletes, having a true love of the game as a coach, developing a positive team and individual environment, how your personality style impacts your philosophy as a coach, the teaching of positive decision-making, placing a high value on lifelong learning, and placing a high value on the consistent improvement of their players and positive skill development.

Summary

Once you have determined what you want your coaching philosophy to look like, it can be helpful to write it down, and even share it with your players, staff or colleagues, then stick to it. Although you cannot alter your players, you can alter your approach to coaching them, and that can make all the difference. While the process of developing a coaching philosophy will help you to clarify your values and what is important to you, just having it written down is not enough. Too often coaches write a philosophy statement and then leave it in the drawer. To be effective, the philosophy needs to be used, which means that you live it day in and day out. This

also means that you abide by it late in the season, when the pressure is on, as much as you do the first day of training.

Practice planning

Practice planning is one of the most important areas of becoming a successful coach. Each segment of practice should be planned with the goal of getting the most out of the session. This is especially important in Ireland where practice time is limited. Legendary Indiana University head basketball coach Bob Knight said "The structure of your practice is the most determining reason for your success or lack of success as a coach."

Take a look at these principles from legendary UCLA head basketball coach John Wooden, found in the Nater and Gallimore (2006) book, "You Haven't Taught Until They Have Learned: John Wooden's Teaching Principles and Practices." Not only was John Wooden a great basketball coach, but also a master teacher:

Coach John Wooden's Eight Principles of Practice Plan Design

1. Fundamentals before creativity
 - Basic skills before complex skills (Wooden believed that teaching of fundamentals, until they are all executed quickly, properly, and without conscious thought, is prerequisite to playing the game).
 - Some practice time should be allocated for fundamental motor skills regardless of level
 - Wooden once said this: "Drilling created a foundation on which individual initiative and imagination can flourish." That is the job of any coach.
2. Use variety
 - Although the general skeleton of practice lessons were the same for Wooden each season, he would introduce new practice activities frequently to keep things interesting and fun
 - Rearrange order of drills
 - Have themed practices
3. Teach new material at start of practice
 - Not in fatigued state mentally or physically; minds and bodies are fresh in the first part of training and Wooden could devise activities during the second half of practice for the application of new material

4. Quick transitions between activities
 - Maintain flow- Wooden's practices had lightning-quick transitions from activity to activity
 - No time wasted- the best way to keep the players focused is to have constant movement and change
 - Practical sequence of activities
 - Equipment set-up beforehand
5. Increase complexity from practice to practice
 - Progressions (teach various aspects of the game by breaking things down all together, then into parts, drill those parts, and then put it all together [whole/part/whole philosophy]).
 - From simple to complex, every movement and every action should be carefully thought out and planned
6. Conditioning for learning
 - Not conditioning for the sake of conditioning
 - Wooden's philosophy was for players and students to improve a little every day and make perfection a goal
 - Wooden had this demand- each player, when reaching the point of exhaustion, was to push themselves beyond, leading to top conditioning being attained over time
 - Progressive overload (for improvement to occur, the body must work harder than it is used to. Therefore, the load must be continually and progressively increased to continually and progressively achieve results).
7. End on positive note
 - Fun games
 - Visualization of correcting a mistake at end of practice
8. Avoid altering a plan during the lesson
 - Can disrupt the flow of the session
 - Wooden believed in ending practices on time; this, he believed, would help maintain the intensity level throughout the session.

Content of a Practice Plan

Successful Canadian coach Chris Oliver believes that all effective basketball practices have the same basic structure. The basic structure forms the beginning, body and conclusion of a practice. Within each of these parts of practice, the basic structure helps a coach plan, organize and execute a practice plan. A basketball practice can be broken down into three phases

1. Pre-Practice

- Physiological and psychological preparation for the task ahead
- Reduces the risk of injury
- Overcomes the body's inherent laziness
- Stimulates the Central Nervous System (sport specific movements)
- Should motivate individuals for upcoming activity

2. Principle Content

- Technical and tactical work
- Development of the 5 S's of sport training: Stamina, Speed, Strength, Skill, and Spirit
- Performance simulation

3. Post-Practice

- Enhance physical recovery and psychological satisfaction
- Re-hydration and carbohydrate replenishment
- Encourage psychological skills training
- Stretch
- Team talk and/or individual talks

Oliver always starts with WHAT to practice and then how. It is important that every drill has a purpose/emphasis and all understand the reason why it is being done. He also believes that spending proportional amounts of time on things that happen in a game is extremely important. Coaches need to design practice in a way that makes players feel comfortable in real game situations.

Example of a Practice Plan

Below, find an example of a practice plan that I have used in the past with a U16 club team in Ireland. This is just one example- every coach has different planning philosophies and templates, with many different examples being found on the Internet. You can also reach out to any of the Basketball Ireland Development Officers for assistance. No matter which one you use, being disciplined to use your time wisely is paramount for your success as a coach.

U16M Team Practice

*practice plan is subject to change based on time constraints

5:30-5:32	I. Introduction.
5:32-5:37	II. <i>Warm-up</i> : Full-court Coleman Drill (good passes, do not let the ball touch the ground until near basket- one dribble max; hands ready, move forward fast).
5:37-5:45	III. Dynamic Stretching. • Knee Ups (on toes). • Quad stretch (right hand to left foot behind, on toes). • Kicks Outside In- half court. • Kicks Inside Out- half court. • Conley's/"Dancers" (left hand down, right leg back straight). • Slide Stretch. • Slide Squats. • Squeakers. • Carioca (Hands Up). • Lunges with trunk twist. • Butt Kicks- half court. • High Knees- half court.
5:45-5:55	IV. <i>Whole Teaching</i> : Shell Drill (4 out, 0 in). • Regular. • Dribble gap (jab and recover). • Dribble out/clear concept. • Guard basket cut/interchange backside. • Focus on help side and jump to the ball, on the ball stance. • Play on "live" call.
5:55-6:00	V. <i>Part teaching</i> : Chair Help Drill (coaches at point and wings). • Sprint to closeout and help side. • Proper closeout...low rear end, chopping feet, hands high, cushion. • Yell "skip" and communicate in position you are in ("ball," "help," "deny").
6:00-6:07	VI. <i>Part Teaching</i> : Stance work (discuss trace hand/hand by ear/"push" verbal). • UMass Lunge Drill (1, 2). ○ Teach trace hand via Partner Trace Drill. • 1 Minute Laker Zig-Zag Drill. ○ Must have active hands or we will start over. ○ Trace hands and ear hand up or we start over. ○ Fight through fatigue. ○ Do not turn your back as a handler; get low and strong with the ball. ○ Get down in a stance, proper closeout each time with hands high and butt low. ○ Yell "Push."
6:07-6:13	VII. <i>Part Teaching</i> : Rebounding. • Quick explanation of positioning (Faceguard positioning, make contact with arm bar, be physical!). • Line Check-out Drill – three lines, one ball (hold two seconds). O to D, D to end of line, next in line is O. • 4 v. 4 Scramble Rebounding (three teams competitive).

	○ Team plays defense, then O to D, D off. ○ Offensive rebounds count 2 points. ○ Baskets count one point. ○ One point for D rebound or stop. ○ Move in counter-clockwise fashion.
6:13-6:19	VIII. <i>Part Teaching:</i> Closeout Series (Partners). • Creep up (ball high)/Back-up (ball low). • Creep up/Back-up, Right dribble/Pick-up/ "Ball" call. • Creep up/Back-up, Left dribble/Pick-up/ "Ball" call. • Creep up/Back-up, Right dribble/Take Charge. • Creep up/Back-up, Left dribble/Take Charge.
6:19-6:25	IX. <i>Part Teaching:</i> 2 v. 2 Help/Recover Drill (Two Stations). • Three dribble limit. Stop the drive.
6:25-6:31	X. <i>Part Teaching:</i> 2 v. 2 Knock Down the Cutter Drill (Two Stations). • Sprint to help and have vision on your man and ball. • Try to score if you get the opportunity.
6:31-6:37	XI. <i>Part Teaching:</i> Duke Drill (Two Stations). • 1 v. 1 with a coach. • Works on all positions played on D individually. • Closeout on the ball, jump to the ball, back door to block and back (flip head/hand), dribble out wing/defend post/"clear" help position/knock down the cutter, play 1 v. 1.
6:37-6:43	XII. <i>Part Teaching:</i> 3 v. 3 Ranger Drill (continuous). • Ball in point defender's hands. • Coach has ball at right wing. • Other coach catches ball from driving wing on right side. Will pass to the point after first ball is passed to wing. • Help rotation, sell out and take charge, help the helper.
6:43-6:52	XIII. <i>Whole Teaching:</i> Spartan Transition Drill. • 2 on 1/3 on 2/4 on 3/5 on 4/5 on 5. • Defense rebounds, adds two more players, O gets back on D for 3 on 2. • On other end, add two more coming back to make 4 on 3. • Add two more coming back for 5 on 4. • Add last one for 5 on 5. • Can be a taxing drill...must communicate and point out who you have.
6:52-6:57	XIV. <i>Whole Teaching:</i> Explain Score-Stop Scrimmage 5 v. 5 and play for five minutes. • In order to get credit for the basket you just made, you must stop the other team from scoring when they have the ball after you score. You cannot foul the other team when you are on defense. If you commit a foul the basket is negated. • Must make both free throws to get the opportunity to score on defensive end.
6:57-7:00	XV. Pick me ups, announcements. • Positive self-talk (70,000 thoughts a day). • Stretch, recover, rehydrate.

1v1 progression

Set-Up

Passer (3) at the TOK. Offense (1) is on right block. Defense (2) is on left block. When 3 slaps the ball, both 1 and 2 cut out to the wing and it goes to live 1 on 1. Offense stays if they score. If defense gets a stop they go to offense. Passer goes off and waiting player comes on to be D. Loser goes to pass.

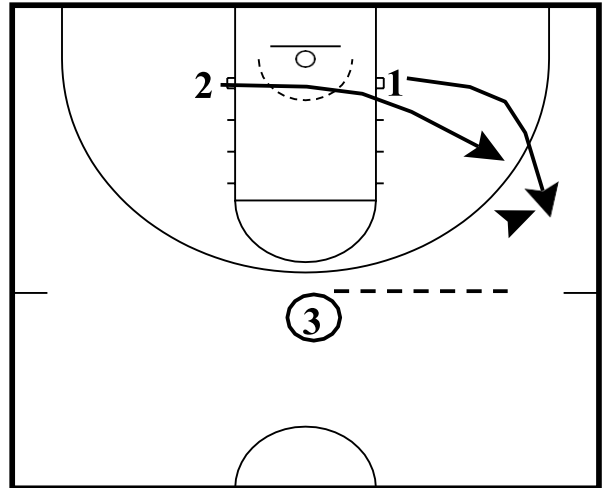
Time: 5 minutes a side

Scoring: Each made shot is 1-point

Objective: Score the most points in

5 minutes

Constraints: Offense has 3 dribbles; Offense has a 1 second decision clock (no shot or drive within 1 second = turnover).



Teaching Points (Offense):

- Shot/drive preparation on the catch
- Shoot/drive decision making
- Use the dribble to go coverground
- Shoulders lower than D on the drive
- Use body to protect ball as you finish

Teaching Points (Defense):

- Closeouts with high hands
- Catching the first dribble
- Walling up when offense tries to score in the paint
- Blocking out after a possession

Set-Up

Any spots on the court can be used. 1 player is offence, the other is defence. Coach or a third player can be the screener. Offence is trying to score off the ball screen. Defence is trying to get a stop.

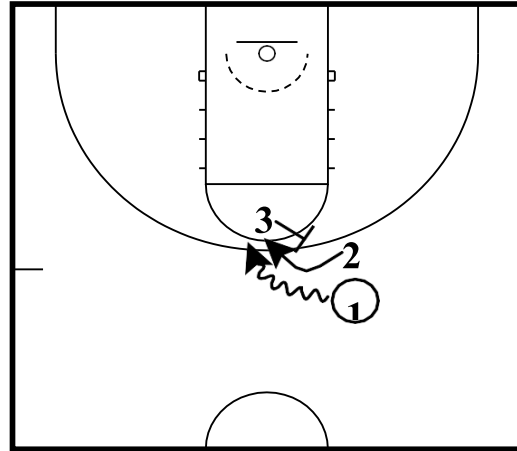
Time: Coaches choice

Scoring: both 2 point and 3 point shots are awarded.

Objective: Score the most points in 5 minutes

Teaching Points (Offensive):

- Ball screen set-up
- On ball offensive reads
- Feel your defender
- Pace and deception

**Teaching Points (Defensive):**

- On-ball defence with ball screen
- Getting skinny over a screen
- On-ball stance and position

Set-Up

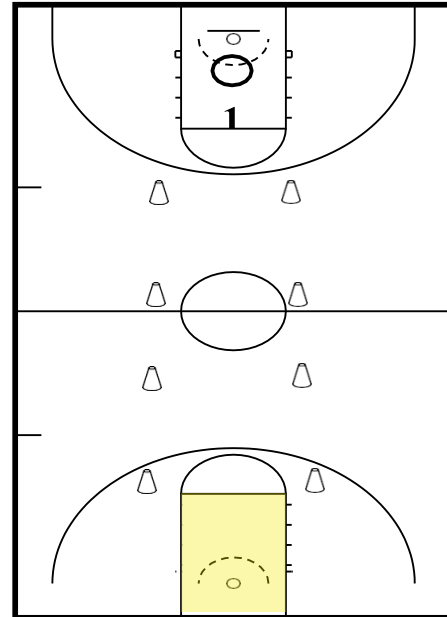
One player on offence, another on defence beginning in the far paint. Cones are set up to make a small area to play 1v1. The defence must force the offensive player to change direction as they advance down the court. 1 point for a score and 1 point for a stop, first to 5 points wins.

Teaching Points (Offensive):

- Stay low in an athletic stance
- Use a variety of moves to avoid losing possession
- Force the defender to change direction

Teaching Points (Defensive):

- Stay low in an athletic stance
- Force the offensive player to change direction
- Put pressure on the offensive player without committing a foul

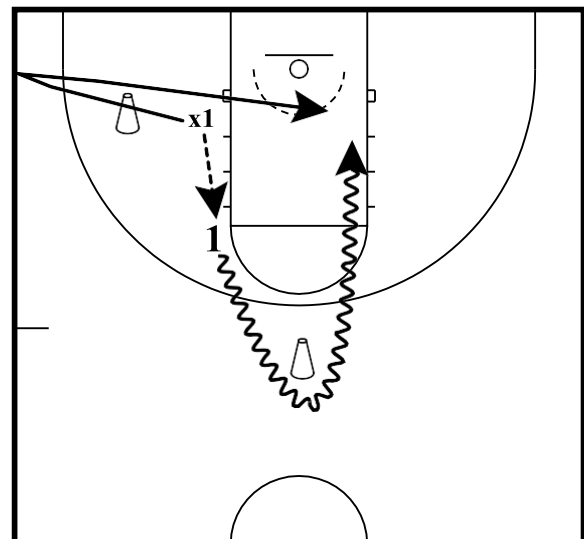


Set-up

X1 will pass the basketball to 1, 1 will dribble around the cone and attack the basket. Immediately after passing the ball, x1 will sprint around the cone and meet 1 in the paint to challenge the shot.

Some examples of finishes to use could be:

- 2 foot lay-up
- 2 foot up and under
- Pound and slide by
- Pound and slide by up and under



Set up:

On the coach's whistle, 1 dribbles around the cone and 2 sprints to touch the cone in the short corner. After that it is live 1v1.

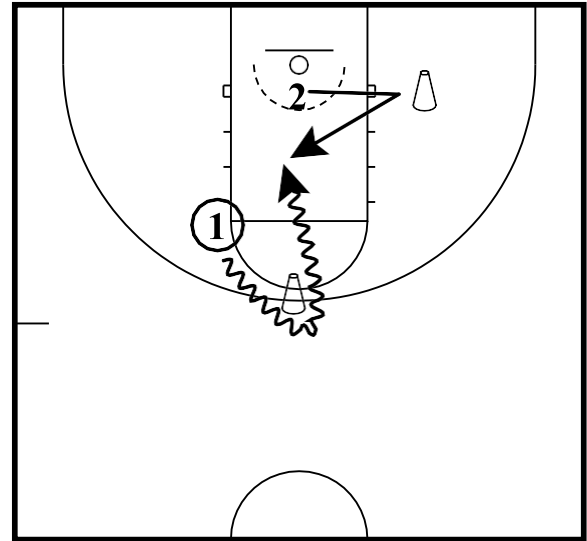
Constraints:

3 dribbles or less after the cone

Only rim finishes

Only one change of direction move allowed

Only score in the paint

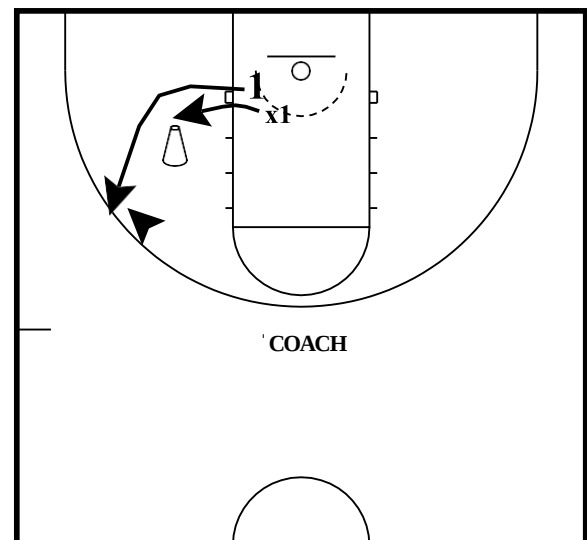


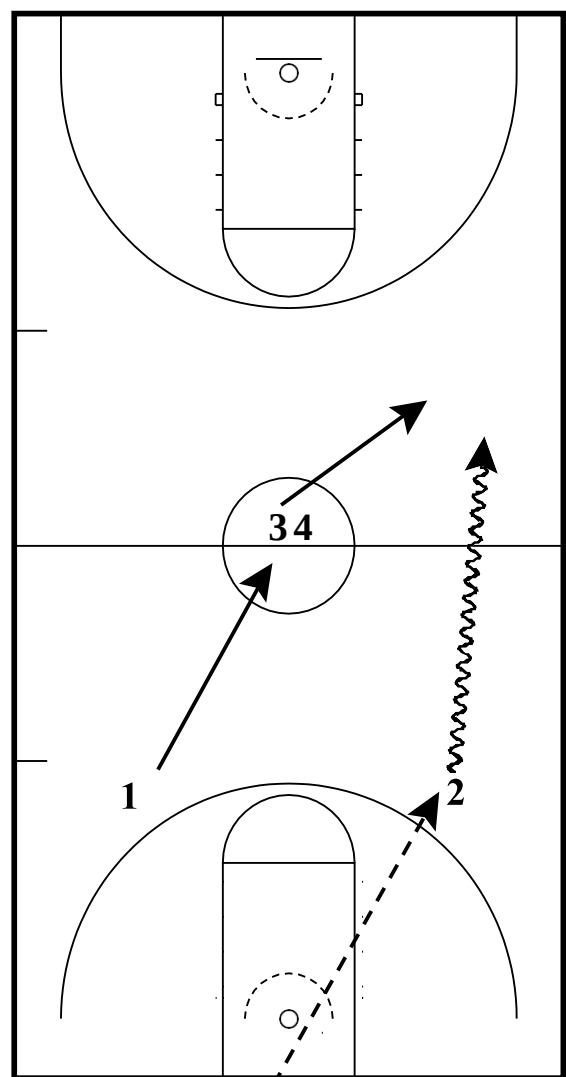
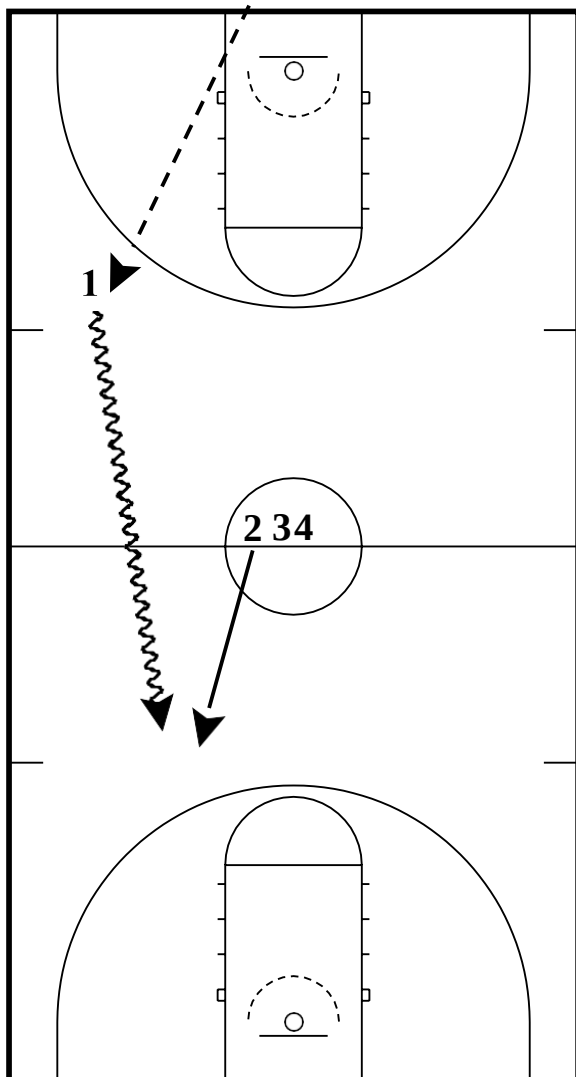
Set up:

Can use any type of screen that you choose:

- Wide pin down
- Narrow pin down (shown)
- Flare screen
- Baseline out screen

Defense can guard any way they like.
Offense only has 2 dribbles off the screen to score. Emphasis is on reading the defender and making a split-second decision.





Set up:

Coach throws ahead to 1. As 1 crosses half court, 2 sprints out to defend. Whoever wins the possession (offense score, gets fouled or offensive rebound, defensive stop or rebound) keeps going.

This drill can be adapted to play 2v2.

Rebounding

Steve Nash Youth Basketball Coaching Manual explains that “The focus of rebounding for young players should be on creating a desire for the basketball.” Players must understand that they can be an effective rebounder regardless of size or speed. In order to be an effective rebounder, the player must want to be a good rebounder. Rebounding involves all five players on a team, without this the opposing team are likely to retrieve the ball.

Every player is a potential rebounder and must work to neutralize their opponent to gather the ball. Every shot is a potential rebound and this starts as soon as the ball leaves the shooters hand. The defensive player must make contact with their counterpart and slow/stop their forward momentum to the rim. If contact cannot be made the defensive player must impede the offensive players path.

Once a player has retrieved the ball, he/she must be strong and not bring it down low to avoid it getting snatched. It is important to teach the following

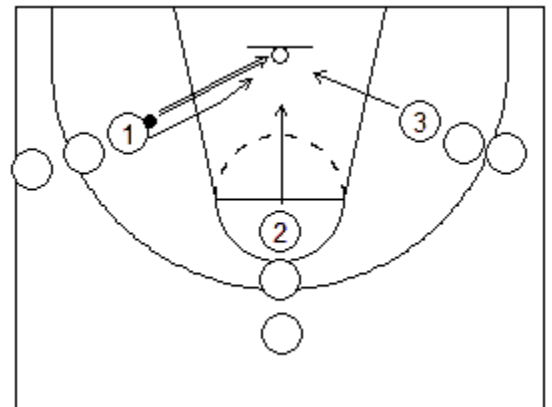
- Keep the ball high.
- Immediately turn to survey the floor.
- Outlet the ball as quickly as possible in order to start the fast break.

Remember, rebounding is an attitude and is a matter of desire, aggressiveness, awareness and consistency.

Set up:

Three lines line up around the key. The first person in each line is the defensive player. The second player in each line is the offensive player.

Once the ball is shot there is a scramble to retrieve the ball. The defensive team should stay in place until they secure three rebounds.





3X3 Rules of the Games

Court and Ball:

A half court with a standard basket can be used for 3x3.

An official 3x3 should be used where possible, if this is not available a size 6 ball should be used for all competition.

Team Roster:

3 players + 1 substitute.

The game must start with 3 players on the court for each team.

Referee(s):

1 or two referees can be used.

3x3 is also ideal for players to run themselves without the need for a referee.

Time-outs:

1 per team for 30 seconds.

FIBA rules allow for two TV time-outs, at first dead ball after 6:59 and 3:59.

Initial possession:

The initial possession is decided by coin flip.

Possession following a successful goal:

Defence gains possession right under the hoop, inside the no-charge circle.

Ball must clear the arc by passing or dribbling.

Defensive team cannot attempt to steal the ball inside the no-charge circle after a score.

A new shot clock starts when a team gathers possession of the ball.

Change of possession:

The ball must clear the 3-point line when there is a change of possession.

Scoring:

1 point for score inside the arc and 2 points for a score outside the arc.

Game duration and Score Limit:

1 x 10 minutes, playing time.

Score limit: 21 points

Overtime:

First team to 2 points.

Free throw(s) following a shooting foul:

1 free throw.

2 free throws, if foul committed behind arc.

Combining Multiple Skills in Drills

One of the biggest challenges for coaches in Ireland is the limited amount of time provided for training each week. Time constraints can affect the player's fundamentals and put a major strain on coaches. This is a challenge across Ireland, so coaches must make the most out of the time they have with their team.

One effective way to teach fundamentals is to develop drills that incorporate multiple skills. Instead of having one ball-handling drill, then another passing drill, and then another shooting drill try to combine those skills into one drill. You can get the same repetition of skills but spend less practice time. It will allow you more time to spend on other aspects of the game to prepare your team.

Here is a great example of one drill that can be used for man-to-man defense and covers multiple defensive skills/situations- it is called Duke Seven-Point Defensive Drill. This is a one-on-one drill with a coach as the passer and dribbler. It covers the following points:

1. Close-out (from the block with defender passing the ball to the wing player)
2. Wing passes to Coach at Point- Jump to the ball and deny
3. Jab and Recover on Coach's drive into the gap
4. Denial and defend the backdoor cut
5. Post defense for a two-count
6. Help side defensive positioning
7. Either one of two scenarios:
 - a. Closeout on skip pass to your man (out of help side position) from coach on opposite wing; play one-on-one, offensive player gets three dribbles max.
 - b. Denial of a flash cut by opposite wing offensive player; defender knocks down cutter, coach passes to offensive player. Play one-on-one, offensive player gets three dribbles max.

As you see in this example, this covers every defensive skill needed in one drill. However, it is important to understand that the separate skills must be taught and drilled first before combining them into one drill. It is best to first teach the skills separate then when you feel they know how to perform each skill then start to combine them into one drill. Any of the Basketball Ireland Development Officers can offer excellent ideas for drills for progression to combine multiple skills in drills. It will make a huge difference in being an efficient teacher of the game.

Strength and Conditioning

Reasoning Behind Long Term Athletic Development (LTAD) Planning:

- It is hard to “catch up” on basic physical competencies after 19 – 21 years of age
- The same model for “Strength” can be designed to incorporate Speed and Power training with specific criteria necessary for each youth athlete to move through the stages safely and effectively
- Resistance training is safe for children and youth if:
 1. Program is well designed (appropriate to child’s age and capabilities)
 2. Very well coached and supervised
- The objectives of resistance training for youth –
 - Improve body and limb control
 - Improve joint stability
 - Improve strength endurance
 - Decrease the long term risk of serious, chronic and re-occurring injuries
 - Improving these factors lays the foundations for improved maximal strength, power or sports performance in the latter years and also in the immediate term

Speed and Agility **Linear Acceleration**

Block 1 (Posture and Actions):

Wall Drills (Can use astro partitions or fences)

1. **Wall Lean Pistons (Single Leg) (2 sets of 10)** – 1 leg in triple extension and the other in triple flexion. On call (cue), the athlete will drive the fully flexed leg into triple extension in an explosive manner
2. **Reverse Wall Lean Pistons (Single leg) (2 sets of 10)** – both feet start on the ground with the athlete leaning against a surface, hands kept in line with shoulder. Athlete will be on the toes so that all three joints (ankle, knee and hip are all in extension [straight]). On cue, the athlete will drive on leg up as if starting a sprinting motion – simulating exploding out of the blocks.
3. **Static Arm Accelerations (2 sets of 10 each arm)** – start off in a staggered stance. Start off with elbows at 90⁰ angle and the starting position should be with the arm on the same side of the forward most leg in the staggered stance should also be in the forward position. The opposite side should have both the leg and arm back behind the torso. When cued (on go), the athlete should aggressive drive the arms in opposite directions (again simulating coming out of the blocks). The athlete should then return arms to starting position to perform multiple reps.

Lateral Shuffle Acceleration

Block 1 (Shuffle Acceleration):

1. **Lateral Shuffle: One Step Power Push Off (2 sets of 5 reps)** – feet wider than our shoulders and feet facing straight ahead. Drive the knees forward and hips back while keeping the heels down. Push down and away when moving laterally. Lift the foot of the direction you are going while turning the toe in that direction. Stay in the tunnel: meaning that you stay down when pushing off – not standing up tall each time.
2. **Lateral Shuffle: Two Steps (2 sets of 3 each side)** – For more than one step, lead foot turns out and drags with the foot facing the direction the athlete is travelling. Stay in the tunnel.
3. **Lateral Shuffle Run Off (8 yard shuffle / 1 set each side)** – push down and away, let the lead leg help you recover and drag through and stay in the tunnel are 3 important coaching cues with the lateral shuffle. For the shuffle run out use a distance between the cones of about 20 yards.

Crossover Acceleration

“The King of Athletic Movement”

Block 1 (Crossover Acceleration):

1. **Crossover Directional Step, Directional Step Push Off (2 sets of 5 reps)** – start with a directional step by opening up the hip of the side you are shuffling to. Backside foot pushes off, crossing the backside leg over the front, turning the body over into sprinting in that direction. 1 step to gain skill.
2. **Crossover Directional Step, 2 Crossovers (2 sets of 3 each side)** – same as crossover directional step.
3. **Crossover Run Off (10 YD Speed Crossover / 1 set of 5 each side)** – try and keep the upper body square to where the side where you started and not square to the direction you are running. Disassociation of upper and lower body is important

Retreating Skills

Highly Important Skills for Teaching Athletes to React and Move When a Play Breaks Down

Block 1 (Backpedal):

1. **Alternate Short 3 Step Backpedal (1 – 2 sets of 20 Yards)** – separate cones 20 yards apart. Athlete starts low in a power stance with nose just above the toes. 1 big backpedal followed by 3 short choppy steps – strong push – off backwards but don't extend the stride to the point where the athlete is no longer in an athletic position. Need to be in a position to react to the ball!!!!
2. **10 Yard Backpedal (2 sets of 3 – 5)** – stay low with shorter choppy arm action because of the shorter stepping action.
3. **Resisted 5 – 8 Yard Backpedal (2 sets of 3 – 5)** – band around the athletes' hips and coach must get low to keep the band around the athletes' hips. Less resistance for the younger athletes – adjust tension to coincide with strength levels.

Power Development

Going to look at landing mechanics for all drills – first

Block 1 (Parallel Stance):

1. **Toe Drops (1 x 10)** – have the athlete start up tall and on the toes and drop quickly into strong landing position with hips back, heels down, chest tall and arms up ready to catch and receive the ball.
2. **Chair jumps: Clusters (5 sets of single reps)** – start by sitting the athlete into the chair with heels down on the ground, leaning forward get the athlete to jump from the seated position and land in the same strong position as with the earlier sets
3. **Toe Drop Verticals (2 – 5 sets of 5 reps: break for a second between each of the reps)** – same as toe drop only the athlete performs vertical jump after heels drop down and then try to land again with hips back, heels down and chest tall
4. **Repeat Vertical (multiple toe drop verticals) (2 – 5 sets of 3 reps)** – start with the toe drop but then perform 3 consecutive jumps

Agility Drills (Do after performing speed work)

Go from simple drills to more complex. Go from closed (where the athlete is fully aware of the task) to open (where the athlete knows what's involved but drill has different elements – different coloured cones that any of which may be called upon).

Movement Only

T-Drill

Box Drill

Illinois Drill

Pro-Agility Drill

Ball Integrated

Colour Cone Zig Zag Drill

Colour and Numbered Cones

Teams can line up beside each or facing each other. Run to a marker and perform stutter steps on the toes. Then call out the cones according to colour. Switch the cones up and assign numbers to increase the complexity of the drill

Resistance Training

Perform resistance training in a circuit format or in 3 sets of 12-15.

Exercise 1 (Deadlift) –

KB Deadlift

Exercise 2 (Vertical Row) –

Half Kneeling Resistance Band Pulldown

Progress to:

Tall Kneeling Band Pulldown

Progress to:

Isometric Holds (Chin Up) with Negative Reps

Progress to:

Full Chin Ups

Exercise 3 (Split Stance) –

Half Kneeling Band Chop

Progress to:

BW Split Squat

Progress to:

BW Reverse Lunge

Progress to:

BW Forward Lunge

Exercise 4 (Vertical Row) –

Half Kneeling KB / Band Overhead Press

Exercise 5 –

Plank

Exercise 6 (Squat) –

BW Squat

Progress to:

KB Goblet Squat

Exercise 7 (Horizontal Row) –

Band Low Row

Progress to:

3 – point KB Row

Exercise 8 (Single Leg) –

Pistol Squat / step up

Exercise 9 (Horizontal Reach) –

Push Up

Progress to:

Band Resisted / Hindu Push Ups / Deficit Push Ups

Exercise 10 –

Side Plank / Dead Bugs

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the fundamental building block of emotional intelligence. Most top-level sport competitors often have great self-awareness; they typically understand their strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, they understand if they are attempting to do too much in critical situations in a game. For instance, if a player is not a great three-point shooter, they will probably not take a shot like this in the waning moments of a game. It would be the hope that they would lean into what they do well, such as drive to the basket or find the open player for a higher percentage shot.

Top-level sport competitors are realistic and recognize their capabilities and limitations. However, they try to improve in all areas by working on these weaknesses. In practice, great athletes work hard to overcome limitations such as only being able to dribble with the dominant hand, for instance. Also, during games they use their “weapons” or strengths against an opponent’s weakness.

As a coach, it is imperative that you understand how to help your players enhance their self-awareness. Dr. Larry Lauer, a noted sport psychology professional in the U.S., offers these key skills that can help athletes enhance their self-awareness:

- **Listen to Yourself** – Athletes must be aware of their self-talk during training and competition. Is it positive and productive or negative and unproductive? Self-talk is something you do naturally throughout your waking hours. People are becoming more aware that positive self-talk is a powerful tool for increasing your self-confidence and curbing negative emotions. People who can master positive self-talk are thought to be more confident, motivated, and productive.
- **Listen to & Accept Feedback** – Lauer states that sometimes feedback that coaches, parents, and teammates give is not fun to hear. However, to be their best, each player must learn from those around them; evaluating yourself is critical for players to reach their potential. That is why as a coach it is important to provide young athletes with feedback that builds confidence, enhances self-esteem and improves performance; it is the cornerstone of good coaching and a big part of your job to help your athletes learn and grow.
- **Know Your Blind Spots** – Just as we have visual blind spots when looking at the road through our car mirrors, we also have psychological blind spots- aspects of our personalities that are hidden from our view. These might be deeper fears or desires that are too threatening to acknowledge. Although it is generally not pleasant to confront these aspects of ourselves, doing so can be very useful when it comes to personal growth. Willingness to adapt is paramount to success. Lauer suggests that talking to others about the things that hurt your performance (specific to sport) or relationships with others (a tendency to interrupt others when talking) can be very helpful.
- **Watch Video** – Many athletes prefer to see what they are doing to learn. Video analysis, when applied to sports, is key to building a competitive edge. If you have access to any footage of games or training sessions, Lauer believes that players watch video of these performances can open their eyes whether it is during a slump or just to become more aware of their patterns of behavior in competition. Things such as looking at the players' body language, their eyes, and routines especially before and after big points and critical changes in momentum are very useful for developing as a player.
- **Set Goals** – Goal-setting is an indispensable part of the training process. Goals can keep you both grounded and focused at the same time, which can enhance the dedication of your players to training and competing. Lauer believes that spending time thinking about individual and team goals can greatly impact the direction of where the player wants to go. Goals should be specific, measurable, accepted (owned by the player/team), realistic, and **time limited** (ones in which there is a time limit for their achievement).
- **Look for Signs During Competition** – Lauer offers a couple of signs for players and coaches to look for during competition and practices; knowing these allow you to develop a plan to overcome it:

When and how do you get down on yourself?
What are trouble spots when your performance drops?

- **Post-Practice and Post-Game Reflection** – One tip that Lauer suggests can help a player is to take a few minutes to evaluate what happened in a journal after every game and practice. He suggests these questions for players:

“Did you achieve your goals?”

“Did you follow the game plan?”

“What went well and not so well?”

“What should I work on in practice based on this performance?”

In closing, self-awareness is important for players because when they have a better understanding of themselves, they can experience themselves as unique and separate individuals. They are then empowered to make changes and to build on areas of strength as well as identify areas where they would like to make improvements. It can also be beneficial for coaches to identify and become more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Mental Health and Well-Being

In our rapidly changing world, it is becoming increasingly important to focus on positive mental health and well-being. The statistics surrounding mental health conditions are staggering. Recent stats have shown that one in seven primary school kids experience mental ill-health and one in four adolescents experience mental ill-health with 65% of adolescents not seeking help for their mental illness. These numbers are astonishing and suggest that there is a strong probability some people you coach could have a mental health problem. That is why it is important to raise awareness for all coaches about mental health and well-being. It is understandable that some coaches lack the confidence to talk about mental health. It is the hope that this portion of the handbook will be of help for you to know what to look for.

It can be a difficult and complex process for any person to coach young athletes. Their development through adolescence will see them seek their own sense of independence, self-awareness, knowledge, and identity- it is an important time of change in their social, cognitive, and emotional development.

Coaches, think about your own experiences growing up- some of our most cherished memories are from playing sports as a young person and learning to engage our peers and coaches. The support that we received (and continue to receive) from these people has been invaluable in our development into the people we are today. We have such an incredible responsibility to our players to not just teach them to dribble, shoot, pass, defend, and learn the game, but to also build relationships with our players that could last a lifetime.

This social connection that is continually built between coach and player can have an impact on well-being because it can help open the lines of communication. The more you get to know your players (and the more they get to know you), the better chance there will be for them to trust you and look for additional emotional support. Being considerate in your role by being a good listener can show those having potential mental health issues that they are not alone. The first step needed for players to improve and sustain mental well-being is to be open and discuss any emotional problems they may have. Coaches who ask meaningful questions at the beginning of a session give athletes the opportunity to say if they are struggling. Basic interpersonal skills are all that is required.

Chris Harris, a psychologist in Australia, offers the following advice for coaches on how to open a conversation about mental health with a participant they are concerned about. It is called Keeping SCORES:

- Have a **setting** that is appropriate, private and quiet
- Have **conversations** that are simple, non-judgmental, and confidential.
- Have **open**, honest and clear communication about your concerns
- **Reassure** your athlete- people may not always be ready to talk right away but letting them know you are there is very helpful.
- **Explore** strategies that you both agree on to promote positive mental health (as you would for a physical concern)
- Utilize **support** as necessary including involving others (General Practitioner, Psychologist, and family). This support can also be useful for you as a coach dealing with this challenging issue.

Harris also says it is important to keep in mind the following:

- If your participant is under 18 or you believe is at risk of harm to self or others, seek support from a colleague or mental health provider;
- Remember to keep sessions fun as excess pressure can make anxiety levels worse;
- Challenge inappropriate behavior: The way others behave can impact on someone with a mental health problem; and
- Many people feel anxious when joining a group, so ensure you create a supportive environment where everyone feels welcome.

Empathetic listening and encouraging the athlete to speak openly is recommended. It is also important to let the athlete know that people care about them as a person. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in the United States offers these questions to ask when approaching an athlete with a potential mental health concern:

- “How are things going for you?”
- “Tell me what is going on.”
- “Your behavior [mention the incident or incidents] has me concerned for you. Can you tell me what is going on, or is there something I need to know to understand why this incident happened?”
- “Tell me more [about the incident].”
- “How do you feel about this [the incident or the facts presented]?”
- “Tell me how those cuts [or other wounds] got there.”
- “Perhaps you would like to talk to someone about this issue?”

- “I want to help you, but this type of issue is beyond my scope as [coach, athletic trainer, administrator]. I know how to refer you to someone who can help.”

Greg Hire, a nine-year veteran with the Perth Wildcats in the National Basketball League in Australia, founded “A Stitch in Time,” a not-for-profit organization focusing on raising awareness on mental health, particularly in young people. He can be contacted at greg@stitchintime.org.au. He offers these mental health warning signs to look out for in participants:

- Not turning up for sessions;
- Change in usual behavior/mood/interaction with others;
- Changes in training (overtraining/undertraining);
- Neglecting self-care;
- Changes in work output/motivation;
- Appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn and losing interest in activities they previously enjoyed;
- Changes in habits (appetite, sleep, and other behaviors);
- Wanting to talk about how they are feeling; and
- It is important not to make assumptions about a participant’s behavior. Talk to them about how they are feeling and any changes in behavior you have noticed.

It is important to understand that, as statistics suggest, mental health issues in young people are all too common. There are several contributing factors such as the athlete’s “super human” identity and pressure from parents and coaches. The most important factors in helping a young person with a psychological concern are education, early recognition of a potential problem, and effective referral to the mental health system. If you need assistance, please find contact information for Pieta House Ireland, an organization that has partnered with Basketball Ireland to tackle the issues of suicide and self-harm, at this link: <https://www.pieta.ie/contact-us>.