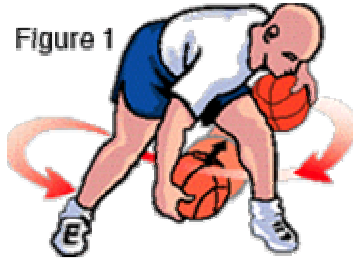


Figure 1



FUNdamental Basketball Drills

First things first; Please- try to remember that this is a children's sports league. This means that quite often we do not have the best practice facilities or game facilities. We are very grateful for whatever we can get our hands on. It is your job as a coach to make the best out of whatever we have. This is not Varsity Ball. If you need to share an area, then find the best way to do it. Keep a positive attitude. Little eyes are watching.

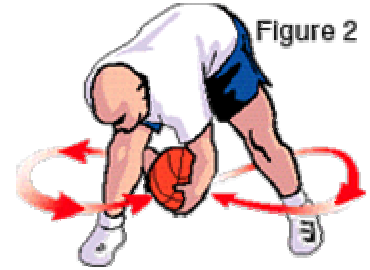


Figure 2

We may be CANCELED OUT OF THE GYM SOME NIGHTS. It happens. Relax. Take the day off and we will try to find a time to reschedule but it is not guaranteed.

Grab a parent if you need help. This is a league for everyone. **Every parent should be helping in some fashion.**

Take charge. Find a way to do something, don't wait to be told what to do. You are the coach! Feel the power! ☺ But be nice.

Have fun! We are trying to get these children to get used to the idea that someone else is going to be holding their ball.

Tips

Bring little stickers to put on the court to teach your players their general positions. Remember to remove the stickers after practice.

The # 1 mistake among youth is just going for the ball. Make them understand that as long as they are between their man and the basket they are in good position to get the ball, if they go running in and it is a long rebound they have no chance.

The Keep It Simple Principle applies best. Give your players one or two things, but have them do them very well. 1. Emphasizing court balance and spacing. Tell your players they are not allowed in another area of the court that a teammate is in.

I have found that the number one confidence builder for a Pre-K through fourth grade basketball player is MAKING BASKETS! When a child makes a basket during a game, he / she will be on cloud nine for days. At this level, stress that everyone shoots and everyone rebounds. That is their goal. You will see higher scores and more rebounds.

Give each of the kids very specific things to do on the floor and places to be. Also solicit some help from an interested parent. Short lines for every drill. Use your helper and the entire gym. Nothing is worse than having 10 kids standing in line waiting to shoot and the coach is rebounding. Get as many kids involved in every drill as much as possible.

Practice the basics at every practice (passing, receiving, shooting, footwork) set goals and try to reach them, but do not spend forever trying to get 10 left-handed lay-ups in a row, or right handed for that matter. Set the goal try to reach it but keep your time limit set for that drill whether you reach the goal or not. Use your more skilled players to show your lesser skilled players how to do something. This will help to keep them involved. Always split you talent up for group contests, so that your talented players are always rooting for and helping the lesser skilled kids.

Of paramount importance is the element of fun at this age. To teach juniors skills, teach fun drills!

1st – 4th grade; Everything I have read recently says keep the game simple and fun. Work hard on dribbling, passing and shooting drills that are fun but fundamental builders. Kids at this age will get bored if you try to push offensive strategies etc. Make practices harder than game situations and come game day they will have a blast and probably win a lot of games as well. Though winning should not be the focus, kids are competitive and know if you keep score, the goal is to win!!!

Drills

Simplifying the game for 3rd – 6th graders is easy if you can first teach them the concept of spacing and that you cannot have more than two players in an area. (I recommend 5 out offence for this age group to develop all skills, if you have a legitimate big allow him to post, but make this an area as well and allow other players to post sometimes, which means your big must clear out.)

By spacing I mean 1 at the top, 2 and 3 at wings/45s just below Free Throw Line Extended and 4 and 5 in the corners. Your 4 and 5 can post from here. From this 5 out set, the principle of basket cutting is simple.

Every time the ball gets to the point, position all players basket cut (i.e. lead straight in and straight out replacing filling their own space. Players must always see the ball on these cuts because on any one of these cuts a player may receive the ball if they beat their player or get open as they lead back out. On a pass to the wing from the point, the top player gives and goes cutting to the basket looking to receive the ball for a lay-up.

When he gets below the dotted line of the three throw line the weak side wing cuts via the Free Throw Line to the top and the weak side corner cuts to the basket looking for a pass if he doesn't get it he leads back out to the wing.

The original player who cut from the top fills the space in the weak side corner. The ball is passed back to the top if there is no score and the offence starts again (i.e. all players initiate basket cuts).

This offence helps maintain court balance and is simple to teach younger players. From the give and go and the weak side cuts you get three offensive options. This works against a man and a zone, against a zone the weak side cuts are from behind the zone it

attacks all the high percentage shooting areas and if the timing of the cuts are executed properly offers an excellent rebounding triangle if the shot goes up!

Teach your players to recognize spaces on the court and move to them. Explain that when a player moves into a free space, they create another space for another teammate to fill.

Individual Drills

Ballslaps-and-squeeze

Toss the ball up like it's a rebound grab out of the air with two hands then try to squeeze the air out of the ball. Go around the body (head, waist, knees, and ankles) starting at the top and work your way down changing directions with the ball.

Figure-8's-with-dribble

Spread legs dribble the ball in a figure eight motion around and between the legs. Do this with a lot of dribbles and then with as few as possible. Stay low!

Figure-8's-without-dribble

Hand the ball from hand to hand as you go around and through legs.

Quick-hands

With legs spread, hold the ball between legs with one hand in front and one hand reaching behind you, drop the ball and switch hands catching the ball before it hits the ground. Repeat as quickly as possible. You can also do this with both hands in front then catch it with both hands behind.

Tom-Tom-dribble

Spread legs, dribble ball with right hand passing it to the left hand, dribble ball with left hand between legs and to the right hand, dribble ball with right hand now behind you to the left hand that should also be behind you, then dribble the ball back to the right hand now in front of the body, repeat.

Drum-dribble

Either standing or on one knee have players dribble ball changing hands with each touch. Start with a steady dribble then work down to super fast low dribbles. then have them dribble with one finger on each hand and with their balled up fist.

Team Drills

Rebound-Drill

Do you have a kid who gets a bunch of offensive rebounds and just can't seem to put the ball back into the hoop. Try this drill. Two people at a basket a shooter about foul line and the other kid in front of the hoop. Tell the shooter to shoot the ball and try to miss, have the underneath kid rebound the ball and put it back into the basket. (This drill paid immediate dividends)

Dribble-Tag

Everyone dribbles a ball and they play tag, must be in control of ball when tagging someone, you may want to limit the area of play.

Knock-Away

Everyone is in a confined area of the gym, everyone has a ball ready to dribble, when coach says go everyone must dribble while at the same time trying to knock the ball out of the other players hand. Players who go outside the zone, have their ball knock away or is not aggressive enough is out of the game.

Races

Divide into two groups for full court races, i.e. dribble down right handed and back left hand. Dribble down backwards, and back frontward. Dribble down and shoot till you make a basket, or shoot once and keep track of points.

Countdown

During a scrimmage coach should start counting down from 10 (10-9-8-7-6 ...) Giving the players an idea what the end of a quarter is like, it cut down on the those wild half court shots with 5 seconds to go.

Freeze-Scrimmage

Kids love to scrimmage and coaches try to coach with drills. Do freeze scrimmage, coach blows the whistle and everyone was to freeze right where they are. Explain who was out of position, missed a open person or someone was doing something right.

Corner-Drill-aka-Bull-Rush

It really emphasizes hustle, one-on-one moves and strong defense. Plus, the kids really enjoy it. You have the group divided up into two equal teams. Each team stands along the same baseline (separately) under a basket on opposing corners, with the first two players up for each team. Place the ball at half court. Coach will say "go", both players run to the ball, trying to get it. They are allowed to dive and hustle their best to get the ball. Once they get it, they have to dribble back to the basket and try to score, with the other player playing defense. If the ball is stolen, then they switch offense/defense. I usually give a time limit of 30-45 seconds and that makes them concentrate on end-of-game situations.

Games

A good game to play is called "4 passes to score" - Basically you play in the half court or within the 3 point line depending upon ability. You have 2 teams, the objective is for each team to try to get 4 consecutive passes. Players may not dribble or run with the ball. The team without the ball must try to get the ball off the other team, however they can only do this by intercepting the pass, they may not take the ball out of their opponents. The team without the ball must stay 2 steps away from the person with the ball. Have your players man up. When a team gets 4 passes in a row they get 1 point. The first team to 7 points wins. To make it harder add the rule "you can't pass to the person who just passed it to you" and/or increase the number of passes to get 1 point.

After scoring a point the team with the ball places it down on the spot and the other team picks it up.

1. IF IT ISN'T BROKE, FIX IT ANYWAY.

Always look for better ways to do things. Make your good teaching methods even better. The best teachers are generally the best students and never stop learning. The best teachers are "experts" in their subject area. When we cease to improve, we're dead.

2. PLAN YOUR WORK, WORK YOUR PLAN.

Organization is at the heart of good teaching. Know what you are going to teach, how you are going to teach it, when you'll teach it, to whom you are teaching it and why you are teaching it.

3. THE K.I.S.S. FORMULA.

It's time tested and still rings true today: "Keep It Simple, Stupid!" Our jobs as teachers is to "trim as much fat" as possible off what we teach. Be specific in terms of teaching only things players will do in the game. Ask yourself: Is what I'm teaching necessary for success? Simplicity leads to quality.

4. BUILD ON ROCK, NOT ON SAND.

Teach the basic skills first and build progressively to those that are more difficult and challenging. As in building a house, it's the foundation that allows it to withstand the storms that come along.

5. HAVE A VISION FOR YOUR STUDENTS.

What do you see for your players individually and your team collectively? Paint a picture of what they can become. Don't underestimate the value of salesmanship in effective teaching.

6. ATTITUDES AND TECHNIQUES.

Along with teaching the techniques, teach the intangibles that make those techniques successful under the most trying circumstances. It's the intangible qualities that lead to the highest level of execution

7. WE REMEMBER BEST WHAT WE SEE.

Students are better visual learners than auditory learners. Demonstrate the correct technique while explaining it.

8. GET TO THE POINT.

Keep your explanations and demonstrations concise. Be specific. What's the attention span of your students? Don't overwhelm players with too much information.

9. SAY IT ONCE, DO IT TEN TIMES.

Students learn best by doing. Repetition, then, is the mother of learning.

10. DON'T JUST DO IT, DO IT RIGHT.

Demand quality execution from your players. Repetition alone is not enough, it's quality repetitions that count. Doing things right requires discipline and mental toughness on the part of both the players and the coach. Coaches must recognize excellence in the performance of our players. Habits, good or bad, are hard to break.

11. TEACH ON THE RUN.

Once the techniques have been explained and demonstrated, correct and instruct your players as they are doing it. Avoid stopping the group to instruct one player unless it's something everyone can benefit from.

12. DON'T BLAME THE LEMON ON THE WORKERS.

If things aren't successful, evaluate. How can you do a better job with your players? Ask another coach to evaluate your practices or games and be open to criticism. Listen to your players, as it's amazing what you can learn.

NEVER YELL AT A CHILD! Most of the time players are not doing something wrong on purpose. They are learning. Try not to yell across the court. Sometimes it's best to just let them play.