

Coach's Development: Practice Tips

1. Have a plan for EVERY practice.

- I recommend writing/typing it out.
- Doesn't have to be super detailed, but it will give you a reference point and structure.
- We provide practice plans for you. They are great to use. However, make them your own. Make them fit your personality and your team.
- Practice is for an hour. That doesn't seem like a long time. But if you are just "winging it", that hour will drag.

2. Communicating with your players

- Bring your players in close to you every time you are addressing them, showing a skill, explaining a drill, etc.
- The acoustics are not great and if they are not close to you, they probably aren't hearing or listening to you.
- If they aren't looking at you, they probably aren't listening to you. Make sure they are making eye contact with you.
- Make your players put the basketball on the ground when you are talking to the team or teaching a drill or new skill. If they are holding a ball while you are talking, they will likely bounce or drop it, causing a distraction.

3. It's ok to practice without using a basketball

- Many of your players will need to work on and improve their coordination, balance, agility, etc.
- Incorporate drills and games that will help them in these areas. Improving in these areas will help them in the game of basketball.

4. Skill work (passing, dribbling, shooting, defense) – Do skill work every practice.

- Your players will need work in these areas every practice. Start with the easiest thing (a bounce pass) and work up from there.
- When teaching passing, be very detailed and specific in where they need to put their hands, what they do with their feet, where do they want the ball to go, etc.

- When teaching dribbling, it's the same thought process. You need to go over the very basics of dribbling with them. Don't ASSUME they know something. How many hands do you dribble with? How high should you dribble? Where are your eyes when you dribble? Should you slap at the ball? How should you stand? Again, don't assume they know.
- Don't start the dribbling portion off with them dribbling while running. Start with stationary dribbling and progress from there. I like telling them the ball is their "dog". When you are walking your dog, YOU are in control, not the dog. You keep the dog close to you. When dribbling, you are supposed to be in control, keep the ball close to you and be under control with it.
- During all of the skill work drills make sure you are going around correcting things they are doing wrong and praising things they are doing well. Kids LOVE feedback. They want to know you are watching.
- Find ways to incorporate fun games while working on skills. After a while, it will get boring for a player to just stationary pass, dribbling down the court back and forth, etc. Find ways to do those things while playing a game. Youtube has great ideas for different games. If you can't find some, let me know and I can give you ideas.

5. Try to avoid elimination games or games/drills where they are standing around waiting a long time for their turn.

- Use your assistant coach. If you have 10 players, let them work with 4-5 of them in a drill while you work with the others. This will lead to your players getting more reps. If you do play an elimination game like "Put Out", when a player gets out, have them go do a drill or work on a skill with your assistant coach or yourself.
- If you are doing a dribbling or shooting drill don't have just one line where it's 8 people deep. Have 2 or 3 lines. This will give your players more reps. They won't get better doing something 1 or 2 times.

Practice Example

- Dynamic warm-up/Team building exercises- 5 minutes
- Agility, coordination, balance, footwork drills- 5 minutes
- Skill work- Dribbling, passing, shooting, defense drills and games- 15-20 minutes
- Teaching the basic flow of basketball- teaching offense, defense, inbounding the ball, simulated scrimmages- 15 minutes
- End with a fun game or competition- Shooting competitions etc.- 10-15 minutes
- Have fun with your players.
- Build them up. You will have players who are scared to assert themselves. Find ways to help them gain confidence. It may take time for them to get comfortable or gain confidence.
- Look for ways to modify things. Sometimes something you planned isn't going to work. That's ok. Try something else.