### Contents

- **Welcome & Coaches Expectations** ................................................................. 3-4
- **Code of Ethics** ................................................................................................. 4-6
- **Mission Statement/Program Goals and Guidelines** ...................................... 7-9
- **Must Play Rule** ................................................................................................. 9
- **Conduct Standards and Procedures** ............................................................... 10-12
- **Contact Information** ....................................................................................... 12-13
- **Field of Play** .................................................................................................. 15-17
- **Equipment & Uniforms** ................................................................................. 17-18
- **Player Positions** ............................................................................................. 18-20
- **Regulations** .................................................................................................... 20-25
- **Fouls & Misconduct** ....................................................................................... 25-26
- **Referee Signals** .............................................................................................. 26-31
- **Coaching Children** ....................................................................................... 33-34
- **Coaches Responsibility** ................................................................................. 35-40
- **Official & Scorer Role** .................................................................................. 40
- **Principles of Practice Organization** .............................................................. 41-42
- **Practice/Session Plan & Template** ................................................................. 43-44
- **Fundamentals & Drills** .................................................................................. 45-56
- **10 Nutrition Tips for the Young Athlete** ....................................................... 57
- **Resources & Supporting Information** ............................................................ 58
Welcome & Important Information

Congratulations on your decision to take your first steps coaching youth sports within Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. Volunteer coaches serve as positive role models to the youth of our community while helping them to develop strong character and encouraging them to perform to the best of their abilities. This handbook is designed as a one-stop resource to support coaches in our youth sports program in providing a safe environment for children to have fun, learn new skills and enjoy youth sports. This is achieved by volunteer coaches teaching the fundamentals of a sport and allowing children to enjoy everything that sport is about.

This handbook is intended to increase your knowledge and understanding of the coaching process within Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation youth sports and enable volunteer coaches to become more confident coaching youths. This is achieved by:

- Understanding our Mission Statement, program philosophy, goals, guidelines, conduct standards and procedures.
- Providing coaches, a better understanding of the delivery of sport specific skills with safe, effective and organized practices.

All coaches possess their own unique skill set based on experience, personality, philosophy and knowledge. All effective coaches, however, have certain skills in common, which include:

- Planning skills
- Communication skills
- Motivational skills
- Organizational and Administrative skills
- Analytical skills
- Flexibility of style appropriate to individual players’ needs

This handbook will help set you on your way to becoming a more confident and effective youth sports coach.

The role of volunteer coach means that you will be held in high esteem and will become an important role model for young people. Do not underestimate the importance of your volunteer coach position in the eyes of your players and their parents. It is therefore vital that all volunteer coaches working within Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Youth Sports read, understand and agree to abide by the content and underlying principles of the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) Coaches’ Code of Ethics (available on page 5) or as a download.

All head coaches must be certified under the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) and are required to complete NYSCA sport specific training. This training is conducted on-line and the $20 membership fee is paid for by MCPRD Youth sports via the home recreation centers where they will be
coaching. The recreation center’s chapter director for NYSCA must create each coach’s separate account with the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS).

**Youth Sports Volunteer Coaches’ Expectations**

- Make practice and games safe (ensure playing areas are free from any hazards before play begins), conduct adequate warm-up and cool-down times, etc. and FUN.
- Teach sport skills to all players, not just gifted ones.
- Encourage, reward and praise young athletes’ efforts and improvement.
- Remember that effort, learning and fun are more important than winning (accept the “youth athletes first, winning second” perspective on youth sports).
- Permit athletes to share in the leadership and decision making for their team, including team rules.
- Be the team “leader” and continuously set positive and uplifting examples of good sportsmanship for their players and their players’ parents.
- Continuously encourage, monitor and help enforce their players’ and parents’ Code of Ethics (see pages 6-8).

**Code of Ethics for Youth Coaches (NYSCA)**

I hereby pledge to live up to my certification as a NYSCA Coach by following the NYSCA Coaches’ Code of Ethics:

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
• I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.

• I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.

• I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach and will teach these rules to my players.

• I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.

• I will remember that I am a youth sports coach and that the game is for children and not adults.

**Code of Ethics for Players (NYSCA)**

I hereby pledge to be positive about my youth sports experiences and accept responsibility for my participation by following this Players’ Code of Ethics pledge:

• I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.

• I will attend every practice and game that I can and will notify my coach if I cannot.

• I will expect to receive a fair and equal amount of playing time.

• I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.

• I will treat my coaches, other players, officials and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or abilities and I will expect to be treated accordingly.

• I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun.

• I deserve to play in an environment that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.

• I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it is important to me.

• I will do my very best in school.

• I will remember that sports participation is an opportunity to learn and have fun.
**Code of Ethics for Parents (NYSCA)**

The Parents Alliance for Youth Sports (PAYS) program sets a standard for parent education by providing a video-based educational program which offers a simple, effective way to make youth sports parents aware of their roles and responsibilities, as well as ways they can make their child’s experience more enjoyable and positive.

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this PAYS Parents Code of Ethics:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.

- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.

- I will require that my child’s coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach upholds the Coaches Code of Ethics.

- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.

- I will remember that the game is for youth – not for adults.

- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.

- I will help my child to enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching or providing transportation.

- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.

- I will read the National Standards for Youth Sports and do what I can to help all youth sports organizations implement and enforce them.
Mission Statement and Related Items

The Mission:

“To provide an environment for children to learn the fundamentals of sports while emphasizing the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, physical fitness and fair play”

Program Philosophy

The three main guiding principles for our youth sports programs are:

1. Safety
2. Fun
3. Participant development based on:
   - **Everyone Plays:** Provide opportunities to learn skills and improve conditioning by minimizing roster sizes and ensuring players play at least half of every game.
   - **Balanced Teams:** Build teams that are evenly balanced on age and experience.
   - **Positive Coaching:** Train and encourage coaches to help develop a child’s sense of self-worth.
   - **Sportsmanship:** Create a safe, fair, fun and positive environment based on mutual respect.

Program Goals

**Fun and enjoyment:** Provide all youth ages 3-18 with opportunities for participation, fun and enjoyment.

**Leisure Skills Development:** Provide opportunities for youth to develop lifetime leisure skills.

**Physical Development:** Assist youth with physical development by:

- Teaching fundamental and safe sport skills appropriate for their age
- Providing opportunities to improve their physical conditioning
- Teaching sound health habits
- Providing safe playing areas and proper supplies and equipment

**Psychological Development:** Help youth develop psychologically by:

- Fostering the development of self-worth and personal identity
- Providing opportunities to express and control emotions
- Creating a learning environment

**Social Development:** Help youth develop socially by providing opportunities to:

- Have fun with others
- Learn independence and the importance of teamwork
- Learn cooperation and sportsmanship
- Develop leadership skills and initiative
- Learn how to compete – how to put winning and losing in proper perspective
Concept of Winning:

- Participants can learn from both winning and losing if winning is placed in a healthy perspective.
- Winning is not the primary goal. Do not define success as only winning.
- Losing a game or sporting event is not a reflection on the participant’s self-worth.
- Success is directly related to one’s effort and is found in striving for the best that one can do.

Program Guidelines

Player Eligibility:

Ineligible Players: Participants can play on only one (1) team within the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation league structure. Any player listed on multiple rosters or participating on multiple teams will be found to be ineligible immediately. Any and all teams which the ineligible player is found to be listed on the roster of will be subject to forcible forfeit of all games found in violation pending an investigation. An ineligible player will be subject to suspension, pending review of the incident(s). Any team manager/coach knowingly or willingly playing a suspended or ineligible player will be suspended for one (1) calendar year or more from all Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation youth sports activities.

Equal play opportunities are provided for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status or ability.

- Sex/race stereotyping and prejudice of any kind are prohibited.
- Adult youth sports leaders must demonstrate a tolerance of and respect for people of all abilities, sizes, shapes, colors, cultural and economic backgrounds.
- Each league is subject to Mecklenburg County’s Inclusion Statement and a “MUST PLAY” rule that ensures participation for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status or ability.
- There is an active coaching recruitment program to recruit and select qualified women, men and minorities to be trained as National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) certified coaches.
- Sexual harassment issues should be reported to a member of CMPRD staff immediately. There is zero tolerance for this behavior.
- ADA Compliance: In order to comply with the American Disabilities Act, league rules may be adapted in order to accommodate participation. An “ADA Exception Form” will be submitted prior to the beginning of league play and approved by Karla Gray, Therapeutics Division Director and the Youth Sports staff and kept on file to verify applicable changes of league rules.

Inclusion Statement Policy:

“Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department encourages and promotes inclusive leisure experiences in all of our programs, activities and sports. Inclusive leisure experiences encourage and enhance opportunities for people of varying abilities to participate and interact in life’s activities together with dignity. It also provides an environment that promotes and fosters physical, social and psychological inclusion of people with diverse experiences and skill levels. Inclusion enhances individuals’ potential for full and active participation in leisure activities and experiences.”
**Must Play Rule:**

“MUST PLAY”

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department encourages maximum participation for all participants. ALL TEAMS are required to abide by the "MUST PLAY" Rule. In the 5-6 Instructional and 7-8 Instructional/Transitional age divisions, coaches are required to distribute playing time as evenly as possible. Substitutions are not restricted. Coaches in the 5-6 Instructional and 7-8 Instructional/Transitional divisions are expected to play all players two full quarters (one in each half), except for injury.

All coaches in the 9-10 and up and Girls Only 10-12 years Recreation divisions must play ALL players a minimum of 1 full quarter, during the 1st half with no substitutions permitted (except for injury) in the first or second quarter. Coaches with 6-10 players must play 5 in the entire first quarter and the remaining players in the second quarter. NOTE: The rule allowing coaches to select which opposing players can play in the second quarter (when a team had less than their 10 rostered players) HAS BEEN ELIMINATED. Coaches will select their own players to play in the second quarter following the guidelines outlined above. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that all players get to play for a minimum of four (4) consecutive minutes during the second half of each game to assure fair playing time. (new – 2018).

**Inclement Weather Policy:**

In the event that outdoor conditions become too icy or unsafe for participant travel due to inclement weather, the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department will utilize the Rain-Out Hotline # (704-432-3834) to notify coaches, parents, participants and the general public as to exactly which programs and facilities have been affected. Inclement weather notifications can also be followed via social media and GOV Delivery email subscriptions.

**Practice and Game Day Safety:**

The number one priority of the MCPRD youth sports program is the safety of all participants. All efforts need to be made to ensure that a safe environment is maintained at all scheduled team practices and games by adhering to the following:

- All playing areas are checked for any hazards prior to the start of each scheduled practice and game.
- All players are wearing the proper uniforms and footwear before each scheduled game.
- Adequate warm-up and cool down times (suggested 2-5 minutes) are provided before each scheduled practice and game.
- During scheduled games, all spectators are required to stand back from playing areas to minimize player distraction.

Note – during scheduled games, CMPRD staff will take the lead to ensure safe playing conditions at all times.
Conduct Standards and Procedures

Code of Conduct:

MCPRD possesses a ZERO TOLERANCE policy for coaches, participants, parents and spectators in regards to inappropriate conduct and reserves the right to assess suspensions and/or prohibit attendance/participation at their discretion in order to maintain safety, appropriate conduct and overall program integrity. Each coach, participant parent and spectator will be held accountable for the following conduct standards:

Sportsmanship/Inappropriate Behavior:

Any and all team-affiliated persons (coaches, participants, parents and spectators) must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner when involved in any Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department’s youth athletic programs. This rule applies to conduct on all MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK PROPERTY before, during and after scheduled events.

NOTE: If spectators and/or affiliated person’s conduct become overly unruly and unsportsmanlike during the course of the game, the MCPRD staff and game officials reserve the authority to ultimately remove the offending person(s) from the premises for the remainder of the game, or in extreme circumstances, empty the facility and allow only coaches and players to remain in an effort to finish game play. Failure to comply with MCPRD staff and/or game officials request for facility removal will result in a forfeit by the applicable team.

Important Reminder – Head Coaches are held responsible for the conduct of all of their team related participants, including spectators.

Bullying/Intimidation:

Coaches, participants, parents and spectators must not threaten, verbally abuse or make physical contact of an aggressive behavior with any other coaches, participants, spectators, Charlotte Mecklenburg Park and Recreation staff or game officials.

Child Abuse/Neglect – Mandatory Reporting:

Per Mecklenburg County’s Volunteer Services Policy, North Carolina law requires staff to report any suggested abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult to the appropriate authorities or to the local police. As a volunteer for Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, you are expected to follow these same guidelines. You may report your concerns to any member of the MPCRD youth sports or facility staff or anonymously to Child Protective Services at 704-336-2273.

Communication with Officials:

Questioning/Arguing judgement calls made by game officials is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. ONLY HEAD COACHES will be permitted to consult with the game officials and this MUST ONLY BE DONE IN A SPORTSMANLIKE MANNER. It is in the best interest of head coaches to approach the game officials in a courteous manner and in the presence of CMPRD staff whenever possible.
Arguing/disputing judgement calls is strictly prohibited and will be viewed as verbal abuse. Coaches, participants, parents and/or spectators are not permitted to badger, criticize, harass or mock game officials.

Coaches, participants, parents and/or spectators must not threaten, verbally abuse or make physical contact of an aggressive nature with any of the game officials (this includes game support staff such as scorekeepers, timers, etc.).

Coaching Staff:

Head Coaches are RESPONSIBLE for the eligibility of all their players, as well as the conduct of all participants, parents and spectators. Failure to comply with this CMPRD rule may result in a technical foul (basketball) and will also result in the Head Coach being restricted to his/her bench and seated for the remainder of the game.

Alcohol/Illegal Substances:

The possession of, use of and/or participation while under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance is strictly prohibited. Law enforcement will be notified.

Ejections:

Any coaches, participants or spectators who are ejected will be automatically suspended and ineligible to coach, participate and/or spectate until such time that they are notified by the MCPRD Youth Sports staff.

Incident Procedures:

Individuals reported to be ejected or in violation of the Code of Conduct will be notified and asked to provide a written statement regarding the details of the incident in question as well as their involvement or participation in said incident by 5:00pm of the following Tuesday to a MCPRD Youth Sports staff person at YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov. Failure to provide a written statement is viewed as an admission of guilt and will be grounds for suspension.

Suspensions:

All volunteer coaches must abide by Volunteer Services’ policies, specifically in the area of conduct. Volunteer coaches are an extension of the Park and Recreation department which adheres to a ‘zero tolerance’ policy regarding conduct.

Any coaches, participants or spectators who are suspended from league play will be ineligible to coach, participate and/or spectate for the duration of their suspension term. This includes any and all program related activities.

Any violation while under suspension will be treated as a 2nd offense and all penalties will apply, including extending the existing suspension.

Any suspension occurring with less than two games remaining in the regular season will result in suspension from the remaining regular season games, as well as any and all upcoming post-season tournament games.
Any suspension for a term of six months or more will require a written request for reinstatement to be submitted following the suspension term. The request may be emailed to YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov or mailed to MCPRD Youth Sports, 1225 Remount Road, Charlotte, NC 28208. The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department reserves the right to deny reinstatement and/or extend any and all suspensions.

League rules provide guidance regarding ejections/suspensions. For a complete guide regarding suspensions, please ask park and recreation staff for a copy of the youth sports suspension policy.

Contact Information

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Youth Sports

Address: Revolution Park Sports Academy
1225 Remount Road
Charlotte, NC 28208

Phone: 980-314-1116
Fax: 704-335-3199
Email: YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov
Website: www.parkandrec.com
Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/#!/mecklenburgcountyparkandrecreation
https://twitter.com/meckparkrec

Youth Sports Updated Info and Inclement Weather Hotline:

704-432-3834
Recreation Center Locations

Albemarle Road
5027 Idlewild Rd. 28227
980-314-1101

Arbor Glen
1520 Clanton Rd. 28208
980-314-1110

Berewick
5910 Dixie River Rd. 28278
980-314-1102

Bette Rae Thomas
2921 Tuckaseegee Rd. 28208
980-314-1111

Elon
11401 Ardrey Kell Rd. 28277
980-314-1103

Hickory Grove
6709 Pence Rd. 28215
980-314-1122

Ivory/Baker
1920 Stroud Park Ct. 28206
980-314-1112

Mallard Creek
2530 Johnston-Oehler Rd. 28269
980-314-1121

Marion Diehl
2219 Tyvola Rd. 28210
980-314-1300

Methodist Home
3200 Shamrock Dr. 28215
980-314-1123

Naomi Drenan
750 Beal St. 28211
980-314-1100

Ray’s Splash Planet
215 N. Sycamore St. 28202
980-314-4729

Revolution Park Sports Academy
1225 Remount Rd. 28208
980-314-1116

Southview
1720 Vilma St. 28208
980-314-1105

Sugaw Creek
943 W. Sugar Creek Rd. 28213
980-314-1124

Tom Sykes
1501 Euclid Ave. 28203
980-314-1113

Tuckaseegee
4820 Tuckaseegee Rd. 28208
980-314-1115

Wallace Pruitt
440 Tuckaseegee Rd. 28208
980-314-1114

West Charlotte
2401 Kendall Dr. 28216
980-314-1120

Winget Recreation Site
12235 Winget Rd 28278
704-504-5433
SECTION 2

FIELD OF PLAY
AND RULES
The Court of Play

Court Size

- Court sizes at the youth level vary, based on the program. Generally, they’re 84 feet long and 50 feet wide. Usually, the smaller the kids, the smaller the court so that they don’t get overwhelmed by the size of the playing surface.
COURT MARKINGS

A basketball court features the following markings:

- **Baskets**: The top of the rim is 10 feet off the ground; the rim itself is 18 inches in diameter. Depending on the age of the participants and the program, basket heights vary. Popular heights that are used for some of the younger kids are 8 and 9 feet.

- **Backboard**: The piece of equipment the basket attaches to is 6 feet wide and 31/2 feet high. The front of the rim is 24 inches from the backboard, and the backboard extends 4 feet from the baseline. The painted rectangle above the rim is there for kids to aim their shots when banking them off the backboard.

- **Baselines**: The lines that run underneath the baskets at both ends of the court. Also known as the end lines, the baselines separate the playing court from the out-of-bounds area. Players who step on a baseline while in possession of the ball are considered out of bounds; this action turns the ball over to the other team. After an opponent makes a basket, a player inbounds the ball by moving behind the baseline and passing to a teammate standing in the court of play.

- **Sidelines**: The lines that run the court’s length of the court. The sidelines define the playing area from the out-of-bounds area. Players who touch these lines while handling the ball are considered out of bounds. Depending on where the ball gets knocked out of play, players often inbounds the ball from behind the sidelines. The benches for both teams also are located along one sideline, as well as the scoring table (where score is kept and where players go to substitute into the game).

- **Mid-court line**: This line, also called the division line, bisects the court vertically. When a team inbounds the ball under its basket, its players must get the ball across this line in less than ten seconds. After crossing this line, the team in possession of the ball can’t pass it back over the line to the other side of the court (called a backcourt violation).

- **Center circle**: The circle in the middle of the court! This is where the game begins with a jump ball between a player from each team. A ref tosses the ball into the air, and the players jump and try to tip it to their teams.

- **Lanes**: The rectangular (often colored) areas in front of each basket — also known as the paint. Offensive players can’t stand in this area for more than three seconds at a time (known as a three-second violation). Also, during free throws, players aren’t allowed to step into the lane until the ball has been released by the shooter; otherwise, it’s a lane violation.

- **Free-throw lines**: The lines at the top of the lanes at each end of the court. The free-throw line is where players stand to attempt free throws. Depending on the age of the participants and the program, the free throw distances vary, typically ranging in the 8-12 feet range (standard distance is 15 feet to the backboard).

- **Blocks**: The squares (often colored) on both sides of the lanes near the baskets. When a player attempts a free throw, players from the opposing team stand next to these blocks. Usually, the tallest players occupy these spots because they’re in the best position to grab rebounds.
• **Tabs**: The short lines that extend from both sides of the lanes. The tabs mark where players stand while attempting free throws.

• **Top of the key**: The half circle that arcs above the free-throw line.

• **Wing**: The area outside the three-point line where players take long shots.

• **Key**: The *key* (the area from the baseline to the free-throw line) is 19 feet to the center of the circle and 12 feet wide.

• **Half circle above the key**: The radius of the half circle above the key is 6 feet.

• **Blocks**: The blocks are 12 inches wide and 8 inches deep.

• **Three-point line**: The three-point line begins with a straight line extending from the baseline and curves around the perimeter; the distance is 19 feet, 9 inches.

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### Equipment & Uniforms

One of the many great things about basketball — one reason it’s so popular in so many places all over the world — is that it requires little equipment.

Many leagues provide a set number of basketballs for each coach to use at his or her practices. The balls will be distributed at the start of the season, and the coaches must turn them back in after their last practices. As always, check with your league to make sure. If your league doesn’t have the financial resources to provide enough basketballs, you may need to ask your players to bring balls to practice so you can run through all your drills without sacrificing valuable time.

Many programs also give coaches pylons or other markers, or access to them, for use in practices, along with whistles, clipboards, and, of course, access to the facility’s courts. Others leave it up to you to purchase any extra items that will help with your practices.

#### Balls

• Youngsters have little chance of maintaining control of a regulation basketball with their small hands; trying to do so and constantly failing may lead to disenchantment with the sport. Balls come in a variety of sizes, and youth leagues often use smaller ones for their players.

#### Shoes

• A player should have a pair of comfortable shoes that provide good traction on the court so he/she isn’t slipping and sliding around. At the more advanced levels of play, kids may want to opt for shoes made specifically for basketball; these shoes provide extra support for the ankles.
Mouth Guards

- A mouth guard is a horseshoe-shaped, soft plastic device used to protect the teeth, lips, gums and cheeks from injury. Several studies suggest that mouth guards also reduce the number of concussions by decreasing the force of impact. The American Dental Association and other sports dentistry groups recommend the use of mouth guards in all organized team sports where a mouth injury can occur - this includes basketball.

Water Bottles

- Make sure all the players bring their own water bottles to every practice and game. Please put the player’s name on their respective water bottles.

Uniforms

The cost of your team uniform often is built into the registration fee paid for the league. At all the age groups, players will receive a team shirt and shorts. Here are a couple more uniform considerations for players:

- **Socks**: Players should wear a comfortable pair of athletic socks.

- **Athletic cups and sports bras**: At the older levels of play, kids need to use these supportive undergarments.

Make sure you check on with a league’s policies regarding accessories. A lot of players enjoy wearing sweatbands or headbands to emulate their favorite college or professional players. **Also, any type of jewelry is not allowed to be worn during scheduled games because of the injury risk.**

**Player Positions**

A basketball team consists of five players on a team. The goal is to score points by getting the ball through the hoop. The five positions on the team consist of two guards, two forwards, and one center. Each of these positions has a different skills and physical requirements. In the younger leagues, the skills and requirements are harder to pinpoint however during practices and games you might be able to find the most skilled players for each position.

**Point Guard**

Typically called the 1 position and is often the shortest player on the team. This player will be the team’s best passer and ball handler but not primarily a shooter. The traditional role requires them to dribble the ball up the court and start the offense. The player can take the ball to the basket or pass to a team and then wait at the top of the key, ready to retreat on defense.

**Shooting Guard**
The shooting guard is usually a little taller than the point guard but shorter than small forward. This player is often called the 2 position. They can come off screens set by the bigger teammates and prepare to shoot, pass it, or go to the basket. The shooter can also look to grab rebounds while on offense.

**Small Forward**

The small forward is known as the 3 position. This all-purpose player is often the most athletic player on the team. They can go inside to score/defend or go outside and shoot well.

**Power Forward**

The second biggest player on the team is reserved for the power forward at the 4 position. This player typically has some size and can play in the paint. They must be able to rebound and move effective in the paint on offense and defense. Unlike the center the power forward can step out and shoot up to 15 feet all around the basket.

**Center**

The 5 position is reserved for the tallest player on the team. The position requires the player to receive the ball with his back to the basket and pivot to hit close range shots near the basket. The player also grabs offensive rebounds and can pass to other open players nearby.

**What makes a good player?**

Each position on the court, at both the offensive and defensive ends, carries specific responsibilities — especially at the more advanced levels of play. When assigning players to positions, you must understand what’s expected of each position and be able to share that information with your players. The more knowledgeable you are regarding the positions, the better chance you have of matching the right players to the most appropriate positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Defense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point guard (the 1 position)</strong></td>
<td>Best dribbler and ball handler; best passer; good outside shooter; good leadership abilities; ability to run set offense</td>
<td>Quickness; ability to shut down drives to the basket and pressure outside shots; willingness to be the first line of defense against breaks; quick hands to create turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shooting guard (the 2 position)</strong></td>
<td>Best shooter; ability to manufacture own shot; good ball handler and passer; good shooting range</td>
<td>Good perimeter defender; ability to deny penetration; quickness to get back on defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small forward (the 3 position)</strong></td>
<td>Good dribbler; able to create own shot; comfortable moving around the lane to receive passes; ability to penetrate the defense; good inside and outside shooter</td>
<td>Most versatile defender; athletic; can defend both post players and outside shooters; ability to prevent penetration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power forward (the 4 position)</strong></td>
<td>Comfort level dribbling in traffic; ability to move around the lane and</td>
<td>Very good post defender; very good rebounder; willingness to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
get open; good scoring moves in the post; good passer after rebounds and when double teamed; good hands for catching passes; ability to set screen

Center (the 5 position)

Biggest threat to score from close range; good close-range scoring moves; good hands; decent passer; good screen setter; willingness to work to get open; works to get offensive rebound

provide help defense on open players; ability to take charges; ability to block shot

Best shot blocker; willingness to take many charges; very good rebounder; works to alter inside shots; prevents inside scoring and offensive rebound

Regulations

The Start and Restart of Play

A game begins with a jump ball in the center circle at midcourt. The referee will toss the ball into the air, a player from either team will be inside the circle and be allowed to jump for the ball to try and tip it to their team. All other players on the court must be outside the center circle.

The ball is in play as long as any part of it is touching the court or in a player’s hands. The baselines and sidelines are considered part of the court, so the entire ball must pass completely beyond the outside edge of these lines for the ball to be called out of bounds. Also, once a ball is out of bounds, it can’t roll back in bounds and be played. So if the ball rolls out of bounds, hits a bleacher and ricochets back into play, it’s a dead ball.

The opponents of the team that last touched the ball before it went out of play get to put the ball back into play. For example, if a player from the blue team passes the ball, and it hits a player from the red team in the arm and bounces out of bounds, the blue team puts the ball into play, because the player in red was the last to touch it. Players will inbound the ball from the spot it went out of play. A player will also have to inbound the ball from their own baseline if an opposing team scores.

A ball that makes contact with a referee or linesman on the field is still in play unless, of course, it bounces out of bounds after hitting him.

Scoring

A team can score points in a number of ways. It can score field goals, which are baskets worth two or three points (depending on where the shot is taken). Teams also can score single points via free throws, which you take when the defensive team commits a foul on a player in the act of shooting. If the player makes a basket and gets fouled, he gets to attempt one free throw to complete a three-point play (or a four-point play if he’s fouled while making a three-point shot). The team can also attempt free throws after the defensive team commits a set number of fouls in a quarter or half (putting it over the limit).
Timeouts

Timeouts are stoppages in play called by coaches or players when their teams have possession of the ball. Coaches can call a timeout for a variety of reasons:

- To give players a short breather if they’ve been on the court for a long time
- To set up a specific play
- To make adjustments in strategy
- To slow down the momentum of an opposing team

The number of timeouts a team receives depends on the players’ ages. All Recreational divisions (ages 9 years and up) get the standard three full timeouts and two 30-second timeouts per game. The younger Instructional and Transitional divisions (ages 5-8) get three full timeouts per game in order to keep those games moving along. Coaches should exercise great care in choosing when to use their allotted timeouts.

Offensive Terms

When a team gets the ball and goes on offense, the main goal is to try to score. The following list presents some basic terms and phrases associated with the offensive end of the court:

- **Assist**: A pass (to a teammate) that leads directly to a basket.
- **Ball handler**: The player dribbling or trying to pass the ball.
- **Bank shot**: A shot that bounces off the backboard and goes into the basket.
- **Beat the defender**: When an offensive player, with or without the ball, gets past the player guarding him in order to take a shot or receive a pass.
- **Charging**: When an offensive player runs into a defensive player who has already established set position.
- **Crossover dribble**: A player dribbling the ball from one hand to the other in front of his body.
- **Double bonus**: After a team has committed a set number of fouls in a quarter or half, the opponent receives two free throws for every foul during that quarter or half.
- **Dribbling**: A ball-movement method carried out by repeatedly bouncing the ball on the floor. You bounce the ball by using the fingertips of one hand to push or tap it toward the floor.
- **Drive**: When a player with the ball advances toward the basket by trying to beat his defender.
- **Fake (or feint)**: When an offensive player tries to put the player guarding him off-balance with a deceptive move. This creates an advantage for getting an open shot, dribbling past the
defender, or delivering a pass to a teammate. Offensive players can execute fakes with the head, body, or by movement of the basketball.

- **Fast break**: When a team gains possession of the ball and immediately tries to advance it down the floor as quickly as possible to outnumber the defense and generate a good scoring opportunity.

- **Field goal**: A basket that’s made during regular play. A field goal is worth two points within (or when standing on) the three-point line and three points beyond it.

- **Free throw**: An unguarded shot taken from behind the free-throw line by a player whose opponent committed a foul on him. A made free throw is worth one point.

- **Jump ball**: Games begin at midcourt, where the referee tosses the ball into the air between two opposing players, who jump up and try to tap the ball to teammates who are lined up outside the center circle.

- **Lay-up**: A shot that occurs when a player drives to the basket (or gets a rebound) and attempts a close-range shot, usually by banking the ball off the backboard.

- **Offensive rebound**: When an offensive player secures the ball after a teammate’s missed shot.

- **One and one**: A free-throw attempt awarded to the offense when the opposing team commits a foul that puts it over the limit. The shooter gets a second free-throw attempt only if he makes the first one.

- **Pivot**: When a ball handler has stopped dribbling, the *pivot* is the foot that must remain touching the floor until he shoots or passes. He can rotate on whichever foot he establishes as his pivot; he can spin completely around, if needed.

- **Posting up**: When an offensive player goes into the lane, with the defensive player behind him, and establishes an advantageous position to receive a pass and score a basket.

- **Release**: The moment the ball leaves a shooter’s hands.

- **Screen**: A play in which an offensive player stands between a teammate and his defender in order to obstruct the opponent and allow his teammate to get open for a shot, a pass, or a drive to the basket; also called a *pick*.

- **Set offense**: A team with a set offense (also known as the *half-court offense*) brings the ball down court slowly and runs specific plays to create scoring opportunities.

- **Shooting range**: The distance from which a player has a legitimate chance of making shots.

- **Squaring up**: When a player sets his shoulders to face the basket as he releases the ball for a shot.
- **Turnover**: When the offensive team loses possession of the ball to the opponent prior to taking a shot.

**Defensive Terms**

When a team is swarming the court on defense, the players must work together to prevent the offense from scoring. The following list presents some basic terms associated with the defensive end of the court:

- **Blocked shot**: Deflecting an attempted shot by an opponent by swapping the ball with a hand.

- **Boxing out**: When a player positions his body between an offensive player and the basket (with his back toward the player) in an attempt to grab a rebound. This position prevents the other player from getting the ball. Boxing out is also called *blocking out* or *checking out*.

- **Defensive rebound**: A rebound of an offensive player’s missed shot by a defender

- **Deflection**: When a defensive player gets his hand on the ball just enough to knock it off its intended course, whether it’s a pass, shot, or dribble.

- **Double team**: When two defenders guard an offensive player.

- **Fouling out**: Refers to a player using his maximum number of fouls allowed (usually five), at which point he can’t play the remainder of the game.

- **Held ball**: When a defensive player grabs the ball while an offensive player is holding it; both players possess the basketball, but neither has sole possession. Most leagues use an alternating possession rule, in which the refs award the ball to the team that didn’t get it after the last held ball, at the beginning of the game, or at the last break.

- **Help defense**: When a defensive player assists a teammate with guarding an offensive player who poses a scoring threat.

- **Loose ball**: When neither team has possession of the ball and it’s up for grabs.

- **Over the limit**: Also known as *in the penalty*, this situation occurs when a team commits a specific number of fouls in a quarter or half, determined by the league you’re in. The penalty results in the opposing team receiving free-throw opportunities when subsequent fouls are committed.

- **Steal**: When the defensive team takes the ball from the offense.

- **Trap**: When two defenders converge on a ball handler to catch him by surprise, usually near the sidelines or baselines.
Violations

Many violations don’t result in fouls or free-throw attempts, but they still cost the team because they lose possession of the ball (called a turnover). Basically, they give their opponent an extra opportunity to score. The following list presents the basketball violations players and coaches need to know:

- **Double dribble:** When a player dribbles the ball, stops his/her dribble, and then dribbles again. A ref can also call double dribble if a player dribbles with both hands at the same time.

- **Illegal defense:** The 5-6 yr. old Instructional division leagues has specific rules in place regarding what types of defenses the teams can play (zone defense only). If a player/team gets caught playing man-to-man, the official will stop play and correct/instruct the players (along with the team coaches) on proper positioning. Since this age group is Instructional in nature, no penalties will be applied. Age divisions 7-12 year have limitations on where the defensive players must “set-up” (behind the top of the key extended, defined as the top center point of the three-point arch extended east to west on the court) and when they can engage the offense (once the offensive player and ball cross the half point line). Age divisions 13 years and older have no defensive limitations (other than score differential pressing rules).

- **Lane violation:** During a free throw, players can’t step into the lane until the ball hits the rim.

- **Line violation:** When a player is inbounding the ball, he/she can’t step on or over the boundary line until the ball leaves his/her hands.

- **Over and back:** After the ball and both of the ball handler’s feet cross the half-court line on offense, no part of the ball or the dribbler can go back over the line (also called a backcourt violation).

  If the defensive team deflects the ball into the backcourt, an offensive player can retrieve it without being whistled for a violation as long as he/she wasn’t the last person to touch the ball before it went into the backcourt.

- **Palming:** When an offensive player puts his/her hand underneath the ball and rotates it over to dribble.

- **Traveling:** When a ball handler takes more than 1½ steps without dribbling the ball. A player also can travel, or walk, when he/she picks up his/her dribble and then moves or changes his/her pivot foot, or when he/she secures a loose ball on the ground and stands up with it. A player on the ground must look to pass to a teammate or call a timeout.

At the 5-6 yr. old Instructional and 7-8 yr. old Transitional divisions, many violations aren’t called simply because the focal point for these youngsters is learning the basics of the game and “teaching moments”.
Time-related Terms

The clock plays an important role in the game of basketball, to both offenses that want to keep the ball and defenses that want to take possession. All coaches have the responsibility of making players aware of the clock rules. A coach can teach them during practices and reinforce the teachings during games.

Here’s a list of time violations that a player must avoid if they want to keep the ball or take advantage of if they want to take it away:

- **Ten seconds in the backcourt**: When a team has possession of the ball in the backcourt (after a made basket or an opponent’s violation), its players must get the ball across the mid-court line in less than ten seconds.

- **Five seconds to inbound**: A team has five seconds to inbound the ball from the sidelines or the baseline. If a player can’t spot an open teammate, he can call a timeout and his team can try again.

- **Closely guarded for five seconds**: When an offensive player catches the ball and a defender jumps in to guard him within six feet, the referee starts a five-second count. If the ball handler starts to dribble and the defender maintains his guarding position, a new five-second count starts. When the offensive player ends his dribble and the defender again maintains his guarding position, a new five-second count starts. If at any time during these counts the referee reaches five, he/she calls a violation.

- **Three seconds in the lane**: When a team has the ball, the players can’t be in the lane for more than three seconds at a time.

Fouls & Misconduct

Fouls

When players make too much contact on the basketball court, they often get whistled for fouls by the referees. A **personal foul** is the most common and minor type of foul in basketball; it consists of making illegal contact with an opposing player. An example of a personal foul is a defensive player slapping down on an offensive player’s arm when he/she is shooting.

In the game of basketball, refs call six types of basic fouls: blocking, hand checking, holding, illegal use of hands, offensive fouls (either player control or team control), and pushing. Here’s a quick glance at them:

- **Blocking**: When a defender illegally prevents an opposing player from moving forward by sliding in front of him/her without being in the legal guarding position or after the offensive player has already committed himself/herself in the air.

- **Hand checking**: When a defender uses one or both hands on an opposing player to keep him/her in front.
• **Holding:** A player grabbing with his/her hands to disrupt or stop an opponent from moving.

• **Illegal use of hands:** When a player reaches in to steal a ball and makes contact with any part of the opponent’s body.

• **Offensive fouls:** These are control fouls, such as charging, where an offensive player runs into a defensive player who has established position.

• **Pushing:** When a player shoves an opponent to gain an advantage in positioning. Refs often call this near the basket when players are vying for rebounding position.

**Serious Fouls**

As youngsters get bigger and stronger — and gain more experience playing the game — the intensity level picks up. That can lead to some more serious fouls that generally aren’t found at the beginning levels of play. The following is a quick glance at these fouls:

• **Intentional:** A hard foul deliberately committed by a defensive player to stop the clock. Teams that are trailing late in games intentionally foul the offense in the hopes that an opposing player will miss the free throws and give them a chance at a rebound. When a team gets called for an intentional foul, though, its players were a bit overzealous in the foul attempt. Now the opponent gets two free throws with the lane cleared and then possession of the ball at the site of the foul.

• **Technical:** Fouls whistled for unsportsmanlike behavior. For example, a player may be arguing with the referee over a call, or a coach or player may be using inappropriate language. The opponent gets to shoot one or two free throws, depending on the league’s rules, and gets to keep possession of the ball.

• **Flagrant:** Unnecessary or excessive contact against an opposing player. Flagrant fouls usually get called if the defender isn’t making a play on the basketball when he/she commits the foul. For example, if an offensive player is driving toward the basket for a lay-up and a defender shoves him/her hard from behind, a ref will call a flagrant foul. The opposition gets to shoot two free throws and retain possession of the ball.

**Referee Signals**

**Hand Signals**

Referees are an important part of every basketball game. They run around the court monitoring the action, protecting the players, and enforcing the rules. Without them, the game would quickly deteriorate into total chaos, like every playground game where the players must regulate themselves. Professional, college, and most high school games feature three officials. Youth basketball games, on the other hand, typically use one (in beginner leagues) or two (at the more advanced levels).
Having a ref is great, but his/her game management won’t make much sense if a coach and players don’t know his/her signals. In some cases, a referee will be striking some strange poses! You can check out the most commonly used ref signals below.

**Starting and Stopping Clock**

- **Start clock:** To start the clock the referee simply has to raise his/her hand above his head and lower it next to his/her body.

- **Stop clock:** To stop the clock the referee will lift his/her hand above his/her head.

- **Stop clock for jump/held ball:** When stopping the clock for a jump or held ball the referee will outstretch both hands out in front of his/her body with thumbs up and raise both hands above
his/her head.

- **Stop clock for foul**: When stopping the clock for a foul the referee will raise his/her hand with a clenched fist.

- **Stop clock for foul (optional bird dog)**: A referee can also stop the clock for a foul with the bird dog signal. Raising a clenched fist with one hand and the other hand will be out straight with palms down.

**Information**

- **Directional signal**: The referee will use one hand to point in the direction of the possession. Palm will be facing straight forward with their arm out to the side.

- **Designated spot**: A referee may have to point to a designated spot when calling a foul. To do so the referee will point to the spot on the court where the foul occurred.

- **Visible counts**: To count off seconds, a referee will place his hand, palm facing down against his chest as his elbow sticks out to the side. With each count he will swing his hand out to his side, keeping palm facing down.

- **Beckoning substitutes**: When a substitute needs to come into the game the referee will have his/her hand out, palms up and bend at the elbow bring his/her hand towards his/her head to make the correct signal.

- **60-second timeout**: To signal a 60-second timeout the referee will place his/her open hands at his/her chest and keep his/her elbows out to the sides of his/her body. He will then move each hand out to the side to form a T with his/her body to make the signal.

- **30-second timeout**: Using the tip of the fingers on both hands a referee will touch his/her shoulders keeping his/her elbows out from his/her body to indicate a 30-second timeout.

**Shooting/Scoring**

- **Goal counts**: With a bent hand above his/her head the referee will lower his/her raised hand down in front of his/her body to give the signal of a goal counting.

- **No score**: With palms facing down the referee will shift arms back and forth across her body in different directions to give the signal of a score not counting.
• **Point(s) scored use 1 or 2 fingers:** Pointing out from his/her body a referee will show one or two fingers to indicate how many points were scored.

• **Attempt 3-point field goal:** Using three fingers and raising his/her arm above his/her head a referee will give the signal for an attempted three-point field goal.

• **3-point field goal successful:** To indicate a successful three-point field goal the referee will raise both hands above his/her head, palms facing one another.

• **Bonus free throw:** For a bonus free throw the referee will drop one arm to indicate a 2nd throw; for 2 throws the referee will use 1 arm with 2 fingers; for three throws the referee will use 1 arm with 3 fingers.

• **Delayed lane violation:** When a delayed lane violation occurs, the referee will clench his/her hand into a fist and stick his/her arm out to one side at a 90-degree angle.

### VIOLATIONS

• **Traveling:** A referee will rotate his/her fists one in front of the other to signal a player has travelled.

• **Illegal dribble:** To signal an illegal dribble the referee with put his/her hands out palms down moving one hand up while the other goes down and repeating the motion.

• **Palming/carrying the ball:** Using an open palm a referee with stick one hand out with palm facing up. With a sweeping motion, he/she will rotate his/her arm in front of his/her chest until the palm of his/her hand is facing down.

• **Over and back:** To indicate an over and back call the referee will move his/her hand from his/her opposite hip in a sweeping motion to the correct side of his/her body to show the ball crossed back over the half court line.

• **Kicking:** The official will lift one leg up off the ground to show the ball has been kicked.

• **3-second violation:** With 3 fingers pointing out, a referee will swing his/her hand next to his/her body showing a 3-second violation has occurred.

• **5-second violation:** A 5-second violation is indicated by the referee putting his/her hand straight forward, palm facing out to show all five fingers.

• **10-second violation:** A 10-second violation is indicated by the referee putting both hands straight forward, palms facing out to show all ten fingers.

• **Free throw, designated spot, or other violation:** When this violation occurs, the referee will point to the spot and move his/her hand outward.
• **Excessively swinging arm(s)/elbow(s):** Using his/her elbow out straight in front of his/her body, the referee will swing his/her elbow to one side to show the violation.

**FOULS**

• **Illegal use of hand:** Closing both fists and crossing wrists in front of the referee will indicate an illegal use of hands.

• **Hand check:** To signal a hand check the referee will put one hand straight forward with palm facing forward and the other hand will grab the wrist of the hand going forward.

• **Holding:** Using one hand and clenching a fist at a vertical 90 degree angle the referee will pull down while the other hand holds the wrist of the clenched fist.

• **Blocking:** To signal a blocking foul the official will place both hands on his/her hips.

• **Pushing or charging:** using a pushing motion the referee will use both hands to thrust out from his/her chest with palms facing forward.

• **Player-control foul:** An official will place one hand behind their hand to indicate a player-control foul.

• **Team-control foul:** With a clenched fist the referee will push his/her hand out to show a team-control foul.

• **Intentional foul:** A referee will cross his/her wrists above his/her head to designate an intentional foul has occurred.

• **Double foul:** When a double foul occurs, a referee will outstretch his/her arms to each side and have closed fists, palms down.

• **Technical foul:** A technical foul is called when a referee creates a T symbol using both hands. One hand, palms down is used in front of their chest. The other hand, with fingers pointing straight up, will intersect the palm of the hand facing down.
SECTION 3

COACHING TIPS, PRACTICES & DRILLS
Coaching Children

Physical Growth and Development

Differences in physical maturation will affect young players’ capability to develop athletic skills. Coaches should ensure that appropriate equipment is available for all individuals.

When coaching young children, coaches need to be aware that:

- Early maturers often perform impressively but may be ‘caught up’ and overtaken by late maturers during adolescence.
- Early or late physical development may cause emotional problems.

Mental Growth and Development

- Young players tend to look to coaches, teachers, parents and friends to find out more about the world and themselves.
- It is important that coaches help children attain a positive self-image by being POSITIVE, ENCOURAGING and SUPPORTIVE and encouraging a positive perception of the activities they are asked to undertake.
- Broader issues such as physical development, transferable skill development, social development and the development of self-confidence are all benefits of effective coaching.

Children and Exercise

An important part of helping young children cope with the physical demands of sports is rest. Practices should allow sufficient rest periods after bursts of activity. Early morning or late evening sessions are not ideal for younger players as they may reduce resistance to fatigue.

Coaches should note that:

- Children breathe more often than adults and are therefore more prone to dehydration – drinks should be available at all times during sessions. Children should be encouraged to drink a ‘little and often’ when involved in physical activity.
- Children are more susceptible to heat loss or gain and therefore should be appropriately dressed for the environment in which activity is taking place.
- Intensive training during growth spurts can lead to injury.
- Inappropriate forms of training that are based on adult principles will increase the risk of injury.
**Teaching New Skills**

When teaching a new skill or enhancing an existing one, the IDEAL sequence may be useful:

- **I**ntroduce the skill.
- **D**emonstrate or provide an appropriate ‘technical model’.
- **E**xplain the key technical and organizational points.
- **A**ctivity as individuals or groups practice.
- **L**earning through further activity, demonstrations, explanations, and positive and corrective feedback.

**Coaching Young People**

Some useful pointers:

- Keep their interest – children have relatively short attention spans.
- Keep your talks brief and to the point – children can be bored easily.
- Keep any lines formed short or better yet, no lines at all, as possible.
- Progress at the appropriate pace for the learner – individuals learn at different speeds.
- Early activity brings enjoyment and maximum learning – activity is the key to holding interest.

Errors are a learning medium – everyone makes them and everyone can learn from them.

Think of a child’s brain as an elastic band – continue to provide them information slowly and they will grow. Providing too much information too quickly will overload them, and the growth is lost (the band snaps).
Roles & Responsibilities of Coaches

Responsibilities of a Coach to the League

Equipment
1. Maintain and care for issued equipment as if it were your own.
2. Insure that only approved equipment is used and that it is used properly.
3. Return all equipment promptly after the season ends.
4. Inform your recreation center staff immediately if there is missing or damaged equipment.

Certification
1. Ensure you are approved as an MCPRD volunteer through volunteer services.
2. Head coaches have been certified and that you retain certification in the National Youth Sports Coaches Association.
3. You are required to know the rules of the sport that you are coaching as well as any local bylaw adaptations that may exist.
4. You must attend all coaches’ meetings that are scheduled.

Responsibilities to your players

Safety
1. Supervise the physical environment of all playing areas.
2. Supervise the wearing and use of proper and approved equipment at all times.
3. Supervise the emotional and physical well-being of each player.

Morals and Morale
1. Teach respect for self; others, authority, and equipment.
2. Set a good example for players to follow.
3. Create positive attitudes.
4. Implement discipline during games and practices.
5. Abstain from use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco prior to and during team events.
6. Do not use profanity or inappropriate language.

Fundamentals
1. Teach and demonstrate the skills of the game.
2. Teach and obey the rules of the game.
3. Help develop techniques to match each player’s individual skill level.

Sportsmanship
1. Show respect toward others and authorities.
2. Teach fair play.
3. Encourage competitive spirit, yet de-emphasize the importance of winning.
4. Support team play.
5. Demonstrate self-control.
6. Conduct of parents of your players is your responsibility during the game.

As a coach, you will be called upon to do the following:
1. As you know, you have a lot to communicate. You’ll communicate not only with your players and parents but also with the coaching staff, game officials, administrators, and others. Communicate in a positive way that demonstrates you have the best interest of the players at heart.
2. When teaching the fundamental skills of youth sports, keep in mind that they are games, and as such, you want to be sure that your players have fun. You can help all players be the best they can be by creating a fun yet productive practice environment.
3. Introduce the rules of the games and incorporate them into individual instruction. Many rules can be taught in practice but plan to review rules any time an opportunity naturally arises in practice.
4. Remember that the focus is not on winning at all costs but on coaching your kids to compete well, do their best, improve their skills and strive to win within the rules.
5. Helping your players to be fit means they can play the game safely and successfully. This may help your players to become fit on their own, understand the value of fitness, and enjoy
training. Don’t make your players do push-ups or run laps for punishment. Make it fun to get fit for the game and make it fun to play the game so that they will stay fit for a lifetime.

6. Character development includes learning, caring, being honest and respectful, and taking responsibility. These intangible qualities are no less important to teach than the skills of your sport. Teach these values to players by demonstrating and encouraging behaviors that express these values at all times.

The Coach During a Game

Games provide the opportunity for players to showcase what they have learned in practice. For players, focus shifts from learning and practicing to competing. Similarly, a coach’s focus should shift from teaching skills to coaching players. Teaching and learning are still important; however, the focus should remain on performance, participation and having fun.

Many coaches focus on how they will coach only during the actual game, when instead preparations should begin well before the first play of the contest.

Before the Game

Creating a Line-Up

Depending on the age of your players, you may not need to focus too much on orchestrating the perfect line-up. With younger players the main goal is to give each player equal playing time. With older players at increasing skill levels, there are guidelines for putting together a tactical line-up.

Deciding Team Tactics

Team tactics do not need to be complex. For example:

- Have a safety in football to avoid the deep pass.
- Get the lead runner, hit your cut-off, and throw to the correct base in baseball and softball.

These are clear, concise and good tactics! Emphasis needs to be placed on teamwork and the role each player has, even when not involved in a play. As the team and players evolve, coaches can focus on specific tactics to improve performance and results.

Warm-up

Players need to prepare for a game both physically and mentally. The younger the player, the closer to game times they should arrive, so they stay focused and don’t become too tired. Warm-ups should be consistent, as consistency breeds familiarity and familiarity breeds confidence.
Physical warm-ups and should focus on stretches, brief games, drills or skill practice and range-of-motion exercises. Mental preparation can be as simple as reminding players of the skills they have been practicing and focusing their attention on their strengths and what they have been doing well.

A warm-up is used to excite the athlete before their game. This is a good time to build a competitive environment. A proper warm-up prepares the body for vigorous activity that an athlete is about to perform. Athletes perform warm-up for three purposes:

1] **Enhance performance**-the warm-up allows the body temperature to increase the blood flow to the working muscles that allows required nutrients to be used as energy, faster muscle contraction, and muscles to work more efficiently.

2] **Prevent injury**- The warm-up allows the body temperature to increase to reduce joint and muscle injuries.

3] **Mental preparation**- The warm-up allows the athlete to process the activities that is about to occur. Mental preparation can assist in improving drill technique, coordination of movements, and overcome discomfort of the workout.

**Be Flexible!**

With the best will in the world, coaches need to expect the unexpected! Always keep in mind that unexpected events may lead to game cancellation or postponement or players (or even you) being late or not arriving at all. Having plans already in place can help mitigate the effects of these unexpected events.

**During the Game**

**Tactical Decisions**

Coaches will always be called upon to make a variety of tactical decisions related to game strategies throughout a game.

- **Starting and Substituting Players**

When considering amounts of playing time for younger players, coaches are required by rules to provide equal playing time to their players (See MUST PLAY Rule- page 11). Coaches should also frequently rotate player positions, starters and substitutes for each child’s personal growth. Coaches should always keep a record of where and how long each player has played.

- **Adjusting Team Tactics**

The flow of the game will tell coaches if they need to adjust the way the team is approaching a game. When making adjustments it is very important that the players have previously prepared for and have learned those adjustments in practice. Be careful not to overanalyze the situation and stress tactics too much, as this may take the fun out of the game.
• **Correcting Players’ Errors**

Learning errors occur because players don’t know how to correct a skill. Performance errors occur when players make mistakes in carrying out skills they already know. It is not always easy to tell which type of error your players are making. If a player makes a learning error, make a note of it and cover it at the next practice. Game time is not the time to teach or learn skills.

If players are making performance errors, this is often because they have a lapse in concentration or motivation, or they simply made a human error. A few words of encouragement about concentration may help. If you do correct a performance error during a game coaches should do so in a quiet, controlled and positive manner during a stoppage of play or when the player is on the bench. The player may be aware of the error they made, and more specifically why they made it, and may not appreciate any comments about their mistake.

**Coach Behavior**

A coach’s behavior should focus on positive competition and having fun. Remember that game day is for the players – practice days are for the coaches:

- Be prepared and organized.
- Be calm, in control, and supportive of your players.
- Encourage players often, but instruct sparingly during play. Players need to focus on performance, not instruction.
- If you do need to instruct, do so when you are both on the bench in an unobtrusive manner.
- Never yell at players for making a mistake.

**Player Conduct**

Coaches are responsible for keeping players under control. By setting a good example, setting team rules, rewarding good behavior and enforcing consequences for breaking team rules coaches go a long way to ensuring their players remain well behaved. Areas for particular attention are: player language, player behavior, and interactions with officials.

**Player Welfare**

Players can become anxious when they are uncertain whether they can meet the expectations of others or of themselves, especially when that expectation is important to them. When coaching during games, remember that the most important outcome of playing is building or enhancing player’s self-worth and having fun.
Opponents and Officials

Respect opponents and officials, period! Opponents provide opportunities for your team to test itself, improve and excel. Officials help provide a fair and safe experience for players and may even help them learn the game.

After the Game

Opponents and Officials

Firstly, join your team in congratulating the coaches and players of the opposition and thanking the officials.

Cool-down

A cool-down allows the body to return to its pre-exercise state and offers a time for stretching and injury analysis. It may also be a good time to have the after-game meeting. Cool-downs should be completed after every game.

Team Meeting

It is best to keep the outcome of the game in perspective and settle players’ emotions, as you don’t want them too high after a win or too low after a loss. Always take time to have a quick (less than 5 minutes) post-game meeting in a designated area away from distractions. Compliment and congratulate the team and tell them specifically what they did well, regardless of whether they won or lost. Shortcomings should not be confronted until the next practice session.

Roles of the Officials/Scorers

Officials enforce the rules of the game. Decisions are usually indicated both by the use of hand signals and by vocalizing the call. The official scorers will be trained Recreation Assistant facility staff.

Safety

One of the official’s main responsibilities is to provide for the players’ safety during the game. Both you, the officials and MCPRD staff are working together to protect the players whenever possible. Don’t hesitate to address an issue of safety with MCPRD staff on site when the need arises.

Challenging Calls

All decisions made by the officials are considered to be final. Only a player’s age is considered to be protestable. If you are asking an official for more information or for further understanding, you should ask calmly and professionally, without raising your voice or questioning the official’s skills. Once an official has responded to your question with an answer, you cannot continue to protest. If you continue your protest, raise your voice or use inappropriate language, you may be given a warning or even ejected from the game. Any ejections will result in further disciplinary action by MCPRD Youth Sports. Interrupting a game to argue with an official won’t change the call and it sets a very poor example for your players.
**Principles of Practice Organization**

If you accept that the main function of a coach is to teach the game in a safe, fun environment, and that practicing is the main vehicle through which this teaching occurs, then it follows that practice planning is vital to your success as a coach. How well you conduct training sessions and prepare your players for competition will greatly affect not only your players' enjoyment and success throughout the season but also your own. The key to effective practice is good organization and attention to detail, so a little extra time spent planning will pay dividends in the long run.

Why have practices? Practice should promote:

- **Learning**: Involves a change. Something is done differently if it takes place.
- Opportunities to **Practice** and **Revise**: Basic skills are practiced repeatedly at all levels.
- **Conditioning**: Raise fitness levels – sport involves explosive activity and games can last a long time.
- **Enjoyment**: Coaches have to make practices varied and keep the participant interested in the practice.

Practice which is **NOT** planned can be:

- Repetitive
- Lacking in progress
- Boring
- Dangerous
- Chaotic
- Non-directional
- Chaotic
- Non-directional
- Waste of time, energy, money, etc.

What aspects do you need to consider when planning a practice?

- The participants.
- The weather, etc.
- Number of coaches, MCPRD approved assistants/helpers available.
- Number of players available.
- Type and amount of equipment required.
- Age of players.
- Physical condition of players.
- Availability and condition of playing field/facilities.
- Time available to practice.
- Your objectives.

**Practice Principles**

Remember the following principles when you are coaching, and also remember that it takes time to learn to be an effective coach!

- Maximum use of resources - players, coaches, equipment, facilities, time.
- Maximum activity - keep busy throughout practice.
- Effective instruction - relevant practice & positive feedback.
- Use of variety - keep them interested and challenged.
- Individuality - teach individuals to play together.
- Make it fun - add challenge and competition.

Assistant Coach

Assistant Coaches are also important in practice planning. Assistants should:

- Contribute to the practice plan.
- Be prepared for the parts of the practice that you assist with or deliver.
- Be able to describe, model and contextualize the skills you instruct.
- Be able to promote good practice and correct faults in participants.
- Be positive in your coaching and help your players to learn and enjoy the game.
- Contribute to post-activity evaluation.

Season Plans

Your season plan acts as a snapshot of the entire season. Before the first practice with your players, you should sit down and develop such a plan. To do so, simply write down each practice and game date on a calendar, then go back and number the practices. These practice numbers are the foundation of your season plan. Now you can work through the plan, moving from practice to practice, outlining line what you hope to achieve by noting the purpose of the practice, the main skills you will cover, and the activities you will use. This will assist you build upon the skills taught each practice.

While developing your season plan, keep in mind that you will want to incorporate a game approach into your practices. Using game-like activities better prepares the players, both physically and mentally, for the demands of the game.
Practice / Session Plans

Coaches rarely believe they have time to practice everything they want to cover, therefore practice plans help you organize your thoughts so you stay on track with your practice objectives and help you better visualize and prepare so you can run your practice effectively.

Your practice plans should be appropriate for the age group and skill level of the players you are coaching and should incorporate all the skills and concepts presented in that particular age group's season plan. To begin, each practice plan should note the practice objective, which is drawn from your season plan for the particular age group, and the equipment necessary to execute the specific practice.

Each practice plan should also include a warm-up and cool-down. Remember that during the cool-down, you should attend to any injuries suffered during practice and make sure the players drink plenty of water.

Your Practice / Session Plan

You need to have general information about each session, such as risks, players, times etc., as well as making sure you have thought about:

- Goals / objectives.
- Introduction and warm up.
- Main Content:
  - Conditioning elements.
  - Learning a skill.
  - Practicing skills.
  - Gaining knowledge about the game.
  - Practicing team strategies.
  - Competitive element / game.
- Cool down.
- Evaluation.

The session plan on the next page is an attempt to put on one page the various factors which need consideration in planning a practice or even part of a practice. They can be adapted for individual use.
# Practice Plan Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE/TIME</th>
<th>STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VENUE</td>
<td>ACTIVITY AREA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP AGE</td>
<td>GROUP SIZE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDICAL INFORMATION/ SPECIAL NEEDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Equipment Required

Have you got your First Aid kit and do you have immediate access to a telephone?

### Session Goals/ Objectives (may link to previous session)

## Session Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>WARM UP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAIN EXERCISE/ ACTIVITY</td>
<td>COACHING/ OBSERVATION POINTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOL DOWN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Player Information

## Review/ Evaluation
The Fundamentals

Pointers to keep in mind while teaching the fundamentals:

Dribbling & Ball Handling

• Ball handling and dribbling are essential in the beginner stage of basketball. These two skills allow the basketball to be advanced legally throughout the court of play. At the Introductory Level, ball handling and dribbling take on the most basic form, allowing players to become familiar with the basketball.

Passing & Receiving

• The ability to pass is a basic skill in basketball, which is essential in the beginner stage of development. Passing the ball is important because it helps teams disrupt the defense of the opposing team and creates shooting/scoring opportunities.

Shooting & Form

• A basketball is not used in this skill to ensure strong habits are created prior to introducing one. The concepts below can be practiced in a group, facing an instructor, or circled around the three-point arc on a basketball floor. To teach the mechanics of shooting, it can be helpful to use the acronym, B.E.E.F., which stands for balance, elbow, eyes, and follow-through.

BEGINNER (6U-8U)

Ball Handling & Dribbling:

1. Ball Slaps: The player holds the ball in her/her left hand and smacks the ball hard with his/her right hand. Then repeat from the right hand to the left hand. Repeat 10-15 times, then the player releases the ball and smacks it hard with both hands.
2. Ball Circles: Put your feet together and make circles around both legs. Then circle around the back. And then circle around the head. Then combine them and move the ball in circles around your head, then down your body, down around your knees, and then around your ankles. Then come back up again. (Be sure to use your fingertips, not the palms and the ball should not touch the floor)
3. Standing Series Dribbling: Players will stand in an athletic stance (knees slightly bent, back straight, feet shoulder width apart, and head-up). Begin dribbling the ball in a stationary position with a controlled dribble using finger tips, not bouncing the ball above the waist. 20 reps with each hand.
4. **Linear Path Dribbling**: Players will start in an athletic position (from the Standing Series Dribbling Drill) then begin to walk forward in a straight line dribbling with one hand, the length of the basketball court and back (alternating hands down and back).

**Passing & Receiving**

1. **Bounce Pass** - Each player will need a partner for this drill. The starting position for the bounce pass is to hold the ball at chest level with both hands with knees slightly bent and feet should be shoulder-width apart. The passer should step with the lead foot and pass the ball to a partner finishing with hands out, thumbs pointing in and down. The basketball should hit the floor about two-thirds to three-quarters of the distance from the passer. The ball should arrive at the midsection or waist of the teammate.

2. **Chest Pass** - Each player will need a partner for this drill. The starting position for the chest pass is to hold the ball at chest level with both hands with knees slightly bent and feet should be shoulder-width apart. The passer should step with the lead foot and pass the ball to a partner finishing with hands out, thumbs pointing in and down. When throwing a chest pass, the players should strive to throw it to the receiver’s chest level. Passes that go low to high or high to low are difficult to catch.
Shooting & Form

1. **Step Back Form Shooting** - To begin this drill, players will stand directly in front of the rim. Players will shoot the ball, working on form and technique, trying to make the shot without touching the rim. Players should hold their form until the ball goes through the net. Do five reps, then take one step back. Make five shots from that spot, and repeat until you reach the last spot at the free-throw line.

2. **Step Lay-Up Drill** - Players will start close to the basket with the right foot forward and left foot back. Bend your knees and get low so you are ready to explode. Take a step with your left foot, jump and shoot the lay-up. Grab the rebound out of the net, return to where you began and do it again. (Right-handed lay-up, right foot forward, left-handed lay-up, left foot forward)

3. **Dribble Lay-Up Drill** - The next progression is to add the dribble to the lay-up. Players should start near the free throw line, or beyond the 3-point line to help work on dribbling. Just like in the first progression, the player will start with their right foot forward and their left foot back. Have them take one dribble, and then shoot the lay-up. (The same thing can be completed on the left side, starting with their left foot forward)
INTERMEDIATE (9U-12U)

Ball Handling & Dribbling

1. **Stationary/Linear 2 Ball Dribbling**: Player should get in a wide/low stance and dribble two basketballs at the same time or alternating. Work on dribbling below the knees, below the waist, and also popping them all the way to the shoulders to work on strength. (This drill can be done stationary or if skill level is advanced, it can be done dribbling the length of the basketball court).

2. **Zig Zag Drill**: Using five cones, set up the cones on one side of the basketball court from one end to the other, using a right to left zig-zag pattern. This drill teaches a player to focus on his surroundings instead of looking at the floor. A player begins by dribbling with the ball in the right hand, moving towards the first cone. When the first cone is reached, the player does a crossover dribble to the left hand, and dribbles toward the second cone. At the second cone, a crossover dribble returns the ball to the right hand. This zig-zag pattern is continued until the last cone is reached. (Different variations of crossover dribbles can be implemented to match skill level)
3. **Around Leg Dribble** - You want to start this drill in an athletic stance. Begin by dribbling the ball at ankle height and slowly begin to dribble around the leg that’s on the same side as the hand you’re dribbling with (if dribbling with the left hand dribble around the left leg). You want to get around 20 reps with each hand, remember to keep your eyes and head up while maintaining a low and steady dribble.

**Passing & Receiving**

1. **3 On 2 Passing Drill** - The drill starts with 3 offensive players in the middle of the court, 2 defenders in each half court, and the rest of the players standing out of bounds at the half court line. Only one basketball is needed for this drill. The three offensive players attack two defenders at one end of the court and will either score or the defensive players will get the basketball. Once the two defensive players get the basketball (either by steal, rebound, or because the offensive team scored), they outlet to the next player in line at half way who sprints in to help advance the ball. The two defenders now become offensive team and they get an extra player from the sideline to give them 3 players. They now attack towards the other end of the court 3 on 2. As for the 3 previous offensive players, 2 of them become the next defenders and 1 of them joins the end of the out of bounds line. This process repeats for a set amount of time.
2. **Machine Gun Passing**- Form a line of 3 people next to each other. They should be about 4 to 5 feet apart. Have a 4th player stand about 12 to 15 ft away facing the other 3 players. Player 4 starts out with a ball & Player 1 also has a ball. Player 4 passes the ball to Player 3. After Player 4 has released the ball, Player 1 passes the ball to Player 4. Player 4 then passes the ball to Player 2, and simultaneously, Player 3 passes it to Player 4. Then Player 4 passes the ball to Player 1. Simultaneously, Player 2 passes the ball to Player 4. Then return to the position you were in step 1. Repeat the Process Over and Over.

3. **Double Line Passing Drill**- Two lines of players face each other as shown in the illustration. Ten feet separates the first player in each line. One player stands in the middle between the two lines, facing the player with the basketball. The player with the ball, using fakes, attempts to pass by the middle player to the first player in the opposite line. Whether, or not, the pass is successful, the passer takes the middle player’s position. The middle player goes to the end of the line and the receiver attempts to pass by the new player in the middle. Continue drill as long as desired.
Shooting & Form

1. **Screen Shooting**: Instruct the players which cut they should be using off the screen. You can run 1-2 minutes of each cut or let them choose themselves. To start the drill, the first player cuts directly underneath the basket before changing pace and exploding out to use one of the screens. The next person in line passes to the shooter off the screen. After the shot the player that passed the ball then becomes the cutter and uses the screen on the other side of the floor before receiving a pass from the next player in line. This process continues for the drills duration.

2. **Pressure Jump Shooting**: When the coach says to start, the first person in each line takes a shot and returns the ball back to the same line. If they make the shot they move to the next line, if they miss they join the same line to try again. This process continues until a player has made a total of eight shots.
3. **Fatigue Shooting Drill**- The three players in the middle of the court all sprint the same direction towards their partner. They receive the ball in shooting stance from the distance designated by the coach and take a shot. After the shot, the shooter rebounds their own ball and dribbles the ball out of bounds and waits to pass to the next player in their group. The player who passes the ball to the shooter immediately sprints down the other end of the court after passing and now becomes the next shooter. They will receive the pass off the player in their group at the other end of the court who will then sprint towards the original end to receive the pass from the first shooter. This cycle continues for the designated amount of time.

![Diagram of Fatigue Shooting Drill]

**ADVANCED (13U-18U)**

**Ball Handling & Dribbling**

1. **Figure 8 Drill**- This drill is very similar to the drill above but as you make your way around one leg you switch hands and take the ball between the other leg. Stand with your knees about shoulder-width apart and bend over slightly. With the ball in your right hand, dribble it between your legs in a figure eight motion to your left hand. Swing the ball to the front and then dribble it from your left hand back to your right hand through your legs. As with all ball handling drills, start slowly and increase your speed as you get more comfortable.
2. **Dribble Moves-Lay Up Drill** - This drill requires two chairs and two cones. Set up the court as shown in the diagram to the right. Divide your team into two lines just out of bounds at half court. Every player will need a ball. The first players in each line step in and start dribbling with the hand closest to the mid line. When they reach the cones, they will execute a dribble move (cross over, behind the back, etc.) and then change direction. Players 3 and 4 start dribbling following after 1 and 2. When players 1 and 2 are in front of the chairs, they execute another dribble move and drive for a lay-up using the proper hand (left hand on left side & right hand on right side). 1 and 2 get their rebounds and sprint to half court, switching lines.

3. **2 Ball Ladder Drill** - In this drill, the player will handle two basketballs while running through the agility ladder. At the end of the agility ladder, the player will pass the ball in their right hand to the coach while continuing to dribble with the left hand. They will then attack with one dribble and finish at the rim. The player will then run a curl cut around the chair and receive a pass back from the coach for the jump shot.
Passing & Receiving

1. **The Star Passing Drill** - Players form a star with 5 points at distance where all players can make good passes to any player in the star. 1 ball in the star and 1 on the baseline. Player 1 makes a chest pass to Player 3 and runs to Player 3’s spot. Player 3 makes a chest pass to Player 5 and runs to Player 5’s spot. Player 5 makes a chest pass to Player 2 and runs to Player 2’s spot. Player 2 makes a chest pass to Player 4 and runs to Player 4’s spot. Player 4 makes a chest pass to Player 1 and runs to Player 1’s spot. Once comfortable introduce a 2nd ball, or a layup instead of a pass to the player under the hoop.

2. **3 Man Weave** - Players line up in three lines at the base line, with the ball in the middle line. Player #1 executes a proper chest pass to player #2. Player #1 immediately sprints behind the player he passed to (player #2) Meanwhile, player #2 executes a proper chest pass to player #3 Player #2 then immediately sprints behind the player he passed to (player #3) Player #3 passes to player #1 Player #3 then sprints behind player #1 They continue to pass in this fashion - pass and go behind - until one player is close enough to cut to the basket At this point, the passer (in this example player #2) passes to the cutter (in this example player #3) using a bounce pass, and the cutter takes the ball hard to the hoop to score.
3. **Drive & Dish**- Use three guards and three post players. You can divide your 12-man squad into two groups and use both ends of the court. O1 is at the point. Place two defenders just above the elbows (like against a 2-3 zone). Put a defensive post in the middle of the lane, and two offensive post players half way up the lane on each side. Your point guard (O1), will dribble penetrate and split the two defenders and pass to either post player. The X3 defender will try to deny this pass. The receiving post player can either shoot, make a power move to the hoop, or dish off to the opposite post, who finishes the lay-up.

**Shooting & Form**

1. **Elbow Shooting Drill**- Ideally, have four players at a basket for this drill. Start the drill with a player in the shooting line just above the top of the key, a rebounder positioned near the basket on the off-side of the right-side shooting elbow, and two players in the passing line at the right wing, free throw line extended and outside the three-point line. The ball will be in a passer's hands to begin with. The shooter will do a jab step to the left and then cut to the right elbow. The passer will deliver a pass so that the shooter can step right into the shot using the left foot as the pivot foot.

2. **Hurley, Curl-Pop-Fade Shooting Drill**
   - **Curl**
     The cutter curls around the screen (cone or chair) when his/her defender trails him around the screen (diagram 1 below). The point guard recognizes this and takes one dribble opposite for better spacing, and then makes a leading bounce pass to the cutter for a pull-up elbow jump shot.
Pop
Diagram 2. Here the defender runs right into the screen. The cutter pops to the arc for a quick chest pass from O1. He could shoot this 3-pointer, or dribble-drive to the hoop.

Fade
Diagram 3. The defender "cheats" and goes under the screen. The cutter fades to the corner for the over-the-top pass from O1 and an open corner 3-point shot.

When doing this drill, go through each option, and then have the defender mix it up so that the cutter learns to read the correct option.

3. **Hand-Off Shooting Drill**- The first players from the top of the key dribble down to the wing on their respective sides. At the same time, the wing player should be making cut towards the baseline. Making sure to change speeds, the wing player explodes up towards the wing and receives the hand-off and performs a certain shot. The person that hands off the basketball joins the end of the wing line. The shooter rebounds their basketball and then joins the line at the top of the key on the opposite side from the one they shot from.
10 Nutrition Tips for the Young Athletes

1 Maximize with nutrient-packed foods
Give your body the nutrients it needs by eating a variety of nutrient-packed food, including whole grains, lean protein, fruits, and vegetables.

2 Energize with grains
Your body’s quickest energy source comes from foods such as bread, pasta, oatmeal, cereals, and tortillas.

3 Power up with protein
Protein is essential for building and repairing muscle. Choose lean or low-fat cut and skinless meats. Quality protein sources come from plant-based foods.

4 Mix it up with plant protein foods
Choose beans and peas (kidney, pinto, black, or white beans; split peas; chick peas; soy products (tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers), unsalted nuts, and seeds.

5 Vary your fruits and vegetables
Get the nutrients your body needs by eating a variety of colors, in various ways. Choose fresh, frozen, low-sodium canned, dried, or 100 percent juice options.

6 Don’t forget dairy
Foods like fat-free and low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified soy beverages (soymilk) help to build and maintain strong bones needed for everyday activities.

7 Take your time
Savor your food. Eat slowly, enjoy the taste and textures, and pay attention to how you feel. Be mindful. Eating very quickly may cause you to eat too much.

8 Drink water
Stay hydrated by drinking water instead of sugary drinks. Keep a reusable water bottle with you to always have water on hand.

9 Know how much to eat
Get personalized nutrition information based on your physical activity level. This will allow you to keep eating a well-balanced diet to accomplish your goals.

10 Reach your goals
Reach your physical activity goals by eating healthy.

Resource can be found on chooemyplate.gov
Resources and Supporting Information


https://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/

http://www.coachesclipboard.net/