

# **Youth Basketball Coaching Guide**

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## INTRODUCTION

This coaching guide is a resource for coaches. Under each grade level are categories of various skills. The objective is to coach your players to these skills throughout the season. By season end, players should be able to understand and properly perform these skills.

Developing these skills is critical to the overall goal; “players can respond instantaneously in any game situation, offensively or defensively, because they are no longer *thinking* about how to do anything.” (*The Confident Coach’s Guide to Teaching Basketball. Carroll, 2003*). In other words, when you think, your feet get slow.

As the grade level rises, expectations and skills increase. Any text *italicized* means it is in addition to the previous grade level. Only after your team has mastered the skills at their grade level should you consider introducing skills from the next grade level.

### Additional Resources:

<http://www.ultimate-youth-basketball-guide.com/index.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/>

<http://www.sacredhoops.com/category/basketball-dribbling-drills/>

<http://www.coachesclipboard.net/>

2010 Allatoona Youth Basketball League

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## **PRACTICES “Keys for Success”**

- Create a practice agenda based on this coaching guide for each practice.
- Come to practice ready to have fun and create a fun environment for the whole team.
- Emphasize one or two team rules such as “respect for everyone” or “when coach is talking, players are listening”; keep it simple.
- Begin and end your practice on time.
- Meet with parents before or after your practice times so you do not take away from your time on the floor with the players
- Have players stretch while waiting to take the floor
- Don’t spend practice time on conditioning; running laps or lines. With only one hour each week the most benefit will come from focusing on improving skills.
- Keep your talking to a minimum when introducing a new skill or drill. Demonstrate, and then get the players involved quickly. It’s better to interrupt after a minute or two with another demonstration.
- Use parents to help you run drills.
- Use online resources to provide a variety of proven drills that reinforce skills in this coaching guide.
- Focus on form. Take it “one step at-a-time” breaking down the skill into very small parts if necessary.
- Keep the offense and out-of-bounds play simple. Focus on excellent execution.
- Focus on the positive! Reinforce and encourage the positive. “Sandwich” the opportunity between two positive comments.
- Spend no more than 15 minutes of practice on scrimmaging. Don’t give in to players that “just want to play”.
- Encourage all players to bring a ball to practice but not to games.

## **GAMES**

- Referees (and coaches, parents, players...) are not perfect. Focus on your players and not the calls.
- Know the rules and bring a copy to each game.
- Have players and parents read and sign the code of conduct. Review it with them.
- Meet with the other head coach and refs before tip-off to review grade level rules.
- Know which parent will keep the book or clock for your team.
- Remind those at scorer’s table to remain neutral during game.
- Ask parents to cheer not coach.
- Have your roster ready for the entire game when you arrive.
- Remember that actions speak louder than words. What do your players see in their coach?

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## **Grades 1 - 2**

### **TRIPLE THREAT POSITION**

- Ready to shoot, pass or dribble
  - With or without ball
- Feet are shoulder width
- Shooting wrist cocked
- Knees bent
- Face-the-basket; catch and square

### **BALL HANDLING**

- Focus on drills (every practice) to develop both hands
- 3:1 weak to strong hand
- Emphasize using weak hand at home

### **Dribbling Technique**

- Below-the-waist dribbling
- Dribbling with finger pads on top of ball
- Head up
- Switch hands

### **SHOOTING**

Emphasis on B.E.E.E.F.

- **B**alance; squared to the basket
- **E**lbow in and under the ball
- **E**yes on target
- **E**xtension; straight arm elbow locked
- **F**ollow through; thumb down, flat hand follow through until balls hits floor

### **PASSING & RECEIVING**

Passing Technique (chest and bounce pass)

- Ball on finger pads
- Thumbs Down
- Catching ball with two hands and not in chest
- Two-hand target; hands up, open, ready to catch
- Move feet to the pass; meet the pass

### **DEFENSE**

Defensive Stance and Techniques

- Feet; wide and balanced
- Weight forward over balls of feet
- “Butt down”, straight back, head up
- Palms up

Defensive Positioning

- Between opponent and basket
- “Ball-U-Man”; always see the ball and your man

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## **FOOTWORK**

- Establish and use pivot foot
- Jump Stop
- Defensive slide
  - “Reach” and pull; lead foot reaches out and following foot is then pulled
  - Feet don’t meet(never bring them together or cross them)

## **Grades 3 - 4**

### **TRIPLE THREAT POSITION**

- Ready to shoot, pass or dribble
  - With or without ball
- Feet are shoulder width
- Shooting wrist cocked
- Knees bent
- Face-the-basket; catch and square

### **OFFENSE**

- *Spacing; 10-12 feet between players*
- *Fill the void; rotation – pass and cut, screen away from the ball*

### **BALL HANDLING**

- Focus on drills (every practice) to develop both hands
- 3:1 weak to strong hand
- Emphasize using weak hand at home

### **Dribbling Technique**

- Below-the-waist dribbling
- Dribbling with finger pads on top of ball
- Head up
- Switch hands
- *Protect the ball; dribble off outside back foot with body between ball and defender*

### **Types of Dribbling**

- *Controlled (below-the-waist)*
- *Speed (break away; pushing ball out in front)*
- *Cross over; low and close to body*

### **SHOOTING**

Emphasis on B.E.E.E.F.

- **B**alance; squared to the basket
- **E**lbow in and under the ball

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- Eyes on target
  - Extension; straight arm elbow locked
  - Follow through; thumb down, flat hand follow through until balls hits floor

### Lay – Ups

- *Proper footwork; go off inside foot and shoot with outside hand*
- *Right and left-handed in every practice*
- *Focus on form and emphasize using backboard*

## **PASSING & RECEIVING**

### Passing Technique (chest and bounce pass)

- Ball on finger pads
- Thumbs Down
- Catching ball with two hands and not in chest
- Two-hand target; hands up, open, ready to catch
- Move feet to the pass; meet the pass

### Types of Passes: (in addition to chest and bounce)

- *Fake a pass to make a pass*
- *Overhead (skip pass)*
- *Flip pass; one-handed, step & flip with weak and strong hand*
- *Pass and cut; screen away*

## **DEFENSE**

### Defensive Stance and Technique

- Feet; wide and balanced
- Weight forward over balls of feet
- “Butt down”, straight back, head up
- Palms up

### Defensive Positioning

- Between opponent and basket
- “**Ball-U-Man**”; always see the ball and your man
- *Back to the baseline*
- *Help and recover; stop ball and return to man*

## **FOOTWORK**

- Establish and use pivot foot
- Jump Stop
- Defensive slide
  - Reach and pull; lead foot reaches out and following foot is then pulled
  - Feet don't meet(never bring them together or cross them)
- *Pivot and Pass*
- *Jab Step*

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- *V- cuts*

## **REBOUNDING**

- *Box out*
- *Pursue ball*
- *Two hands on ball*
- *“Chin” ball*
- *Pivot to the outside*

## **Grades 5 - 6**

### **TRIPLE THREAT POSITION**

- Ready to shoot, pass or dribble
  - With or without ball
- Feet are shoulder width
- Shooting wrist cocked
- Knees bent
- Face-the-basket; catch and square

### **OFFENSE**

- Spacing; *12-15 feet* between players
- Fill the void; rotation – pass and cut, screen away from the ball

### **BALL HANDLING**

- Focus on drills (every practice) to develop both hands
- 3:1 weak to strong hand
- Emphasize using weak hand at home

### **Dribbling Technique**

- Below-the-waist dribbling
- Dribbling with finger pads on top of ball
- Head up
- Switch hands
- Protect the ball; dribble off outside back foot with body between ball and defender

### **Types of Dribbling**

- Controlled (below-the-waist)
- Speed (break away; pushing ball out in front)
- Cross over; low and close to body
- *Spin Dribble; pull ball through before switching hands*
- *Hesitation Dribble (Stop and Go)*
- *Between the legs; good follow through with off hand ready to receive*

### **SHOOTING**

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## **Emphasis on B.E.E.E.F.**

- **B**alance; squared to the basket
- **E**lbow in and under the ball
- **E**yes on target
- **E**xtension; straight arm elbow locked
- **F**ollow through; thumb down, flat hand follow through until balls hits floor

## **Lay – Ups**

- Proper footwork; go off inside foot and shoot with outside hand
- Right and left-handed in every practice
- Focus on form and emphasize using backboard

## **PASSING & RECEIVING**

### **Passing Technique (chest and bounce pass)**

- Ball on finger pads
- Thumbs Down
- Catching ball with two hands and not in chest
- Two-hand target; hands up, open, ready to catch
- Move feet to the pass; meet the pass

### **Types of Passes: (in addition to chest and bounce)**

- Fake a pass to make a pass
- Overhead (skip pass)
- Flip pass; one-handed, step & flip with weak and strong hand
- Pass and cut; screen away
- *Baseball pass*

## **DEFENSE**

### **Defensive Stance and Technique**

- Feet; wide and balanced
- Weight forward
- “Butt down”, straight back, head up
- Palms up

### **Defensive Positioning**

- Between opponent and basket
- “Ball-U-Man”; always see the ball and your man
- Back to the baseline
- Help and recover; stop ball and return to man
- *Weak(help) side and strong(ball) side defense; midline or split line*

## **FOOTWORK**

- Establish and use pivot foot
  - *Reverse pivot, front pivot; from left and right foot*



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- *Pivot and shoot (both sides of basket)*
  - Jump Stop
  - Defensive slide
    - Reach and pull; lead foot reaches out and following foot is then pulled
    - Feet don't meet(never bring them together or cross them)
  - Pivot and Pass
  - Jab Step
  - V- cuts

## **REBOUNDING**

- Box out
- Pursue ball
- Two hands on ball
- "Chin" ball
- Pivot to the outside

## **Grades 7 - 8**

### **TRIPLE THREAT POSITION**

- Ready to shoot, pass or dribble
  - With or without ball
- Feet are shoulder width
- Shooting wrist cocked
- Knees bent
- Face-the-basket; catch and square

### **OFFENSE**

- Spacing; 15-18 feet between players
- Fill the void; rotation – pass and cut, screen away from the ball

### **BALL HANDLING**

- Focus on drills (every practice) to develop both hands
- 3:1 weak to strong hand
- Emphasize using weak hand at home

### **Dribbling Technique**

- Below-the-waist dribbling
- Dribbling with finger pads on top of ball
- Head up
- Switch hands
- Protect the ball; dribble off outside back foot with body between ball and defender

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## Types of Dribbling

- Controlled (below-the-waist)
- Speed (break away; pushing ball out in front)
- Cross over; low and close to body
- Spin Dribble; pull ball through before switching hands
- Hesitation Dribble (Stop and Go)
- Between the legs; good follow through with off hand ready to receive ball
- Behind the back
- Step back cross over

## **SHOOTING**

Emphasis on B.E.E.E.F.

- **B**alance; squared to the basket
- **E**lbow in and under the ball
- **E**yes on target
- **E**xtension; straight arm elbow locked
- **F**ollow through; thumb down, flat hand follow through until balls hits floor

## Lay – Ups

- Proper footwork; go off inside foot and shoot with outside hand
- Right and left-handed in every practice
- Focus on form and emphasize using backboard

## **PASSING & RECEIVING**

Passing Technique (chest and bounce pass)

- Ball on finger pads
- Thumbs Down
- Catching ball with two hands and not in chest
- Two-hand target; hands up, open, ready to catch
- Move feet to the pass; meet the pass

Types of Passes: (in addition to chest and bounce)

- Fake a pass to make a pass
- Overhead (skip pass)
- Flip pass; one-handed, step & flip with weak and strong hand
- Pass and cut; screen away
- Baseball pass
- *Passing into the pos; and relocate- don't stand in same spot*

## **DEFENSE**

Defensive Stance and Technique

- Feet; wide and balanced
- Weight forward
- “Butt down”, straight back, head up
- Palms up

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### Defensive Positioning

- Between opponent and basket
- “Ball-U-Man”; always see the ball and your man
- Back to the baseline
- Help and recover; stop ball and return to man
- Weak(help) side and strong(ball) side defense; midline or split line
- *Defending the post; ¾ front, behind, full front*

### **FOOTWORK**

- Establish and use pivot foot
  - Reverse pivot, front pivot; from left and right foot
  - Pivot and shoot (both sides of basket)
- Jump Stop
- Defensive slide
  - Reach and pull; lead foot reaches out and following foot is then pulled
  - Feet don’t meet(never bring them together or cross them)
- Pivot and Pass
- Jab Step
- V- cuts

### **REBOUNDING**

- Box out
- Pursue ball (grab ball at highest point in your jump)
- Two hands on ball
- “Chin” ball
- Pivot to the outside