

Youth Basketball Practice Information

Thank you for volunteering to coach rec basketball! Here are some tips and information you can use to develop productive practices focusing on teaching the fundamentals and having fun!

- **Keep it Fun:** Use game and positive reinforcement to keep players engaged.
- **Focus on Fundamentals:** Prioritize mastering the basics of dribbling, passing, shooting, rebounding and playing defense.
- **Keep it fast-paced:** Avoid long lines and standing around. Use stations or multifaceted drills that keep players constantly moving.
- **Vary drills:** Mix up the skills involved, such as having players dribble, pass, and shoot in a single sequence rather than doing one skill at a time.
- **Allow for success:** Design drills that are challenging but also allow for frequent success so players feel accomplished. You can group players by skill level for certain drills to ensure they are challenged appropriately.
- **Stay positive and supportive:** Provide constant positive feedback and build up players' confidence rather than focusing only on weaknesses.
- **Add competition to drills:** Turn drills into games with a competitive element, like a race to see who can complete a dribbling course first.

Your practice will be 1 hour in length. Come with a plan to use your time efficiently. Here are 3 sample practice plans:

1) A typical practice for 3rd/4th graders includes a 15-minute warm-up with dynamic stretches and dribbling, followed by 15-minute stations for dribbling, passing, and shooting drills incorporating cones or obstacle courses. The session concludes with a 15-minute team game or competitive drill, like 3-on-3, that integrates learned skills in a fun, engaging way to keep practices energetic and focused on basic fundamentals.

I. Warm-Up (10-15 minutes)

- **Dynamic Stretching:** Start with fun, moving stretches to get the players' muscles ready.
- **Dribbling Fundamentals:**
 - **Stationary Dribbling:** Dribble with both hands, focusing on control, speed changes, and keeping the ball low.
 - **Moving Dribbling:** Dribble around cones or obstacles, practicing dribbling with each hand and changing directions.

II. Skill Stations (15-20 minutes)

Rotate players through different stations, each focusing on a core skill.

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Dribbling Station:

Dribble through a cone course, focusing on crossover dribbles and protecting the ball.

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Passing Station:

Practice different types of passes, such as chest passes and bounce passes, using targets or partners.

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Shooting Station:

Focus on proper form for layups and jump shots, emphasizing a strong follow-through.

III. Game or Competitive Drill (15-20 minutes)

- **Fun Games:** Introduce games that incorporate skills from the stations.
- **Competitive Drill:** Play a fun 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 game to encourage teamwork and apply skills in a real game-like situation.

IV. Cool-Down (5 minutes)

- **Light Activity:** End with a short period of light running or stretching.
- **Review:** Briefly discuss what was learned during the practice and reinforce positive effort.

2) A typical practice for 5th & 6th graders includes a warm-up, skill-based drills focusing on dribbling, passing, and shooting, and then fun games that incorporate these skills. Structure each practice with a consistent segment for basketball fundamentals, team play, and closing discussions to reinforce key concepts. Focus on foundational skills, fun, and engagement, rather than complex plays, to develop interest and build core abilities.

Typical Practice Structure

- **Warm-up (5-10 minutes):**

Start with light cardio to get players moving and focus on eye-hand coordination and ball control with a simple drill like tossing and catching the ball while turning.

- **Skill Drills (15-20 minutes):**

Dedicate time to fundamentals.

- **Dribbling:** Incorporate dribbling drills that emphasize both hands and changing speeds, using obstacles to improve control.
- **Passing:** Practice different types of passes and work on eye-hand coordination.
- **Shooting:** Focus on proper shooting form and technique.

- **Fun Games (15-20 minutes):**

Use games to make learning fun and to apply skills in a playful environment. Examples include dribbling games like "Red Light, Green Light" or modified versions of basketball games.

- **Team Concept (5-10 minutes):**

Teach one simple team concept, like a fundamental offensive play or a basic defensive strategy.

- **Cool-down/Wrap-up (5 minutes):**

End with a team circle to review key learning points and give positive feedback.

Sample Drills and Concepts

- **Dribbling:**

- **2-Ball Low-High Drill:** Players dribble one ball low with their left hand while dribbling the other ball high with their right hand, then switch.
- **Obstacle Dribbling:** Set up cones or other obstacles for players to dribble around.

- **Passing:**

- **Follow the Leader Passing:** Players pass the ball around a line of players, working on accuracy and catching.

- **Shooting:**

- **Shoot the Distance**: Players try to make shots from progressively further distances on the court.
- **Simple Offensive Concepts:**
 - **Five Out Pass and Cut**: A basic offensive strategy involving players spaced out, passing the ball, and cutting to the basket after passing.

3) Sample Practice Plan Structure (60 minutes)

1. **Dynamic Warm-Up & Athleticism (8-10 minutes)**
 - **Focus**: Get the body ready for activity.
 - **Activities**: Jogging, jumping, and basic movements like high knees and butt kicks.
2. **Ball Handling & Dribbling Drills (10-15 minutes)**
 - **Focus**: Develop control and confidence with the ball.
 - **Activities**:
 - **Stationary Dribbling**: Practice dribbling with both hands at different heights and speeds.
 - **Two-Ball Dribbling**: Hold one ball in each hand to improve coordination.
 - **Motion Dribbling**: Dribble while moving forward, backward, and changing directions in a general space.
3. **Shooting & Passing Drills (10-15 minutes)**
 - **Focus**: Improve shooting form and passing accuracy.
 - **Activities**:
 - **Passing Drills**: Use one or two balls to practice different passes.
 - **Layup Practice**: Focus on the proper technique for layups off one foot.
 - **Spot Shooting**: Players take shots from various spots on the court.
4. **Fun Games for Offense & Defense (10-15 minutes)**
 - **Focus**: Apply skills in a game-like scenario and keep players engaged.
 - **Activities**:
 - **Keep-Away**: A simple game to practice passing and defense in a large space.
 - **1-on-1 or 3-on-3 Drills**: Put skills to the test against a live defender.
5. **Cool-Down & Stretching (5 minutes)**
 - **Focus**: Aid in recovery and flexibility.

Activities: Light stretching to cool the muscles down.

There are some very good websites out there that have practice plans made for various levels and some videos that help to show you the skills you will be teaching. Some of them are below:

Jr NBA/WNBA website: <https://jr.nba.com/jr-nba-instructional-curriculum/>

The coaches clipboard with drills and videos:

<https://www.coachesclipboard.net/BasketballDrills.html>

<https://www.coachesclipboard.net/VideoClips.html>

Mojo sports on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@yougotmojo>

Free basketball drill library:

<https://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/basketball-drills.html?srsId=AfmBOoo8XXTvLAVj7--1nBNN4hICRp3cVkRwIoTicB4zpxjdGbMXZHrf>

AI Sports Practice Plan Generator:

<https://www.teachertool.ai/best-ai-tools-for-teachers/ai-sports-practice-plan-generator>

Varsity Girls Coach Julie Petrie Basketball Skills/Practice Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMcDGMn-7RQ>

Have a great season!!!