



Coaching Youth Basketball Tips



1. **Go to each practice with a plan** – list your drills and the amount of time you plan to spend on each drill. Stick to the plan. It is often easy to lose their attention when you overdue one drill/skill until it is “*perfected*”. State the goal or skill they should learn from each drill. Don’t have too many drills planned for each practice. BASICS and FUNDAMENTALS for all ages!
2. **Keep them moving** - Make sure all players are involved (in some way) during drills, as well as regular rotation of positions during practices, scrimmages and games.
3. **Make practice fun for you and your players!** Short simple instruction, do not lecture. Demonstrate everything while teaching and have them repeat back your quick cues. Teach them what basketball listening looks like – *eyes on the ball, eyes on coach and lip-zipped*. PRAISE. PRAISE. PRAISE.
4. **Play skill games (examples)**

DRIBBLING: Sharks and Minnows (can be used in other variations and sports)

RULES: one person is the “shark”, who stands in the middle of the court (no basketball). All other “minnows” start at one baseline each with a basketball. On the command/whistle, each minnow must dribble their ball to the other end of the court before the shark either steals or knocks it out of bounds. Once “caught”, the minnows also become sharks and play continues until one minnow has “survived.”

SKILLS: ball handling with your head up, speed and controlled dribbling, changing direction and protecting the ball.

PASSING: Partner Passing

RULES: Players are paired up and face one another about 5-8 feet apart (dependent on age level). They then pass back and forth, making sure that they step toward their partner to pass and step to the ball to receive. Coach calls the type of pass to be thrown. Gradually, partners move further apart as they are comfortable and accurate.

Using the same setup as above, players shuffle from baseline to baseline, passing the ball back and forth. Speed of their movement and distance of the pass is determined by each player's ability. This is not a race and the objective is for players to learn to pass on the move. The coach can determine which type of pass is used.

SKILLS: step to pass, proper passing technique with both palms out and thumbs pointing down, catching the ball with both hands out and wide, looking at the ball as it goes into your hands

SHOOTING: Bump (AKA Gotcha)

RULES: You need 2 balls. Everyone lines up at either the free throw line or the 3-point line. The first person and the second person have one ball each. The first person shoots and if they miss, they run as fast as they can to get their ball and make a shot before the second person makes theirs. If the second person makes the shot and the first person didn't then the first person is out. You do this until there are two people left, and you have a shoot off between them. The one left is the winner.

SKILLS: shooting form, hustling for loose balls, rebounding, put-back shots

Here are a few good websites to get practice plans/drills and many coaching tips!

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/coaching/youthbasketball.html>

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

<http://www.degerstrom.com/basketball/drills/>

<http://www.weplay.com/youth-basketball/drills/skills/offense-and-plays>