

Special Olympics Coaching Quick Start Guide

BASKETBALL



Special Olympics

February 2008



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Acknowledgements

Special Olympics wishes to thank the professionals, volunteers, coaches and athletes who helped in the production of the *Basketball Coaching Guide*. They have helped fulfill the mission of Special Olympics: To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 8 years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

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Sample Training Session

Special Olympics athletes generally respond to a simple, well-structured training routine. A structured routine can be a positive experience for Special Olympics athletes because it provides familiarity, stability and consistency. In addition, an organized plan, prepared before the coach arrives on site, will enable the coach to make the best use of limited time. It will also assist the head coach in organizing and communicating responsibilities with the assistant coaches. Every practice session should contain the following elements:

- ☐ Warm-up
- ☐ Stretches
- ☐ Previously taught skills
- ☐ New skills
- ☐ Competition experience
- ☐ Fitness training
- ☐ Cool-down
- ☐ Feedback on performance

The amount of time spent on each element will vary because of several factors:

1. Time of the season - more skills practice is provided earlier in the season. In comparison, more competition experience is provided later in the season.
2. Skill level - more practice of previously taught skills is needed for lower ability athletes.
3. Number of coaches - the more coaches present and the more quality 1-to-1 instruction offered, the more improvement seen.
4. Total amount of training time available - more time is spent on new skills in a 2-hour session than in a 90-minute session.

A recommended 90-minute training plan with coaching tips is outlined in the next column.

1. Warm-Up and Stretching (20-25 minutes)
 - ☐ Provide a safe court.
 - ☐ Provide a basketball to every athlete, if possible.
 - ☐ Start with a team cheer.
 - ☐ Use a basketball as much as possible.
 - ☐ Provide footwork activities.
 - ☐ Stretch each muscle group.
 - ☐ After the routine is learned, have athletes lead the stretching while coaches provide individual assistance, when needed.
2. Basic Skills (15-20 minutes)
 - ☐ Review previously learned skills.
 - ☐ Introduce the new skill theme for this training session.
 - ☐ Demonstrate simply and dramatically.
 - ☐ Physically prompt and assist athletes with lower ability, when needed.



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3. Competition Experience (20-30 minutes)
 - ☐ After being introduced to skills, athletes learn by playing the game. The game is the greatest teacher, for it is an opportunity to apply those skills.
 - ☐ Mini games (Mini Basketball) teach basic rules and an understanding of the game.
 - ☐ Scrimmages teach basic positions and the game itself.
 - ☐ Utilize “freeze play” to periodically stop the game and reinforce proper skills.
 - ☐ Teamwork and effort should be recognized and reinforced.
 - ☐ Always allow at least 10 minutes of free play where the coach says nothing, but does enforce the game rules.
4. Cool-Down And Team Talk (5 Minutes)
 - ☐ Slowly jog, walk and stretch.
 - ☐ Comment on the training session as the athletes cool down.
 - ☐ Provide positive reinforcement on what they did well; recognize everyone’s contribution.
 - ☐ Finish with a team cheer.

Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep all athletes active	Athlete needs to be an active listener
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun – help keep it this way for you and your athletes
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully• Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it• General to specific – this is why I am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities



Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of basketball. The safety and well-being of athletes are the coaches' primary concerns. Basketball is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

1. Establish clear rules for behavior at the first practice, and enforce them.
2. Keep your hands to yourself.
3. Listen to the coach.
4. When you hear the whistle, Stop, Look, and Listen.
5. Ask the coach before you leave the court.
6. Make sure athletes bring water to every practice.
7. Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
8. Identify the nearest phone accessible during practice.
9. Ensure that the locker rooms and/or rest rooms are available and clean during practice.
10. Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
11. Do not allow athletes to play while wearing watches, bracelets or jewelry, including earrings.
12. Provide proper stretching exercises after warming up at the beginning of each practice.
13. Provide activities that also improve general fitness levels. Fit athletes are less likely to get injured.
14. Make the area safe. Repair warped boards or holes on the floors, remove protruding objects from walls, etc., that could cause injury. Simply telling athletes to avoid obstacles is not enough.
15. Walk the court to see that safe conditions exist. The floor should be clean, lighting should be adequate and padding provided where needed. There should be no unnecessary equipment or obstacles and no loose objects.
16. Identify a safe area where basketballs can be stored during practice. Safe areas must be at least two meters to the side or beyond the court. Unused basketballs can be placed in ball bags and stored in this location.
17. Check the basketballs for proper inflation and loose panels.
18. Check the baskets and nets.
19. Encourage athletes to wear knee pads, knee braces, athletic supporters, eyeglass straps and mouth guards when needed. Some athletes need the extra protection.
20. Encourage athletes to wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing, one or two pairs of white cotton or cotton-blend socks, and properly fitted and tied court shoes.
21. Evenly match athletes physically in games where they play against each other and in activities such as one-on-one, scrimmages, Mini-Basketball, etc.
22. Provide one-to-one instruction, especially to athletes with lower ability.
23. Always have at least two coaches at each practice and game to provide:
 - One-to-one coaching of athletes with the lowest ability
 - One-to-two coaching of athletes with lower ability
 - One-to-three coaching of athletes with moderate ability
 - One-to-four coaching of athletes with higher ability



Assessment & Matching Athletes with Events

It is important to encourage and to give athletes an opportunity to choose appropriate sports and events. However, the health and safety of all athletes is paramount. Sports and events must provide safe, meaningful and challenging opportunities for all athletes. For example, if sufficient numbers of athletes exist, wheelchair basketball is a highly appropriate sport for those non-ambulatory athletes. But when limited numbers of athletes prevent full 5-on-5 participation, coaches should provide assistance in referring athletes to community programs.

- Wheelchair basketball, half-court 3-on-3 basketball, Individual Skills Contest, Speed Dribble and/or Team Skills Basketball are ideal for wheelchair athletes.
- Wheelchair basketball, Individual Skills Contest, Speed Dribble and/or Team Skills Basketball are ideal for physically impaired athletes.
- Half-court 3-on-3 basketball, Individual Skills Contest, Speed Dribble and/or Team Skills Basketball are ideal for visually impaired athletes.

It is important for the coach to consider the competition opportunity for which each athlete should train.

Speed Dribble	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate for athletes who are non-ambulatory and are very low-skilled.
Individual Skills Contest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate for athletes who have very slow reactions, are unable to dribble the ball more than 10 meters, do not move to catch even a slow moving ball, and do not participate in an active manner.
Team Skills Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate for athletes who are non-ambulatory and low-skilled, and can pass and catch.
3-on-3 Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate for athletes who can dribble a ball at least 10 meters, pass and catch, shoot a lay-up, pursue a moving ball and recognize the difference between teammates and opponents.• Also appropriate where facilities are limited and half court is more available, or where half court is more normalized in the community.
Full-Court 5-on-5 Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate for athletes who possess good basic skills, a good understanding of the rules and basic tactics of the game and endurance.
Unified Sports Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate for higher-skilled athletes.



Basketball Attire

To train and compete successfully in any sport requires an athlete to be outfitted in appropriate sport attire. Inappropriate clothing and equipment can impact an athlete's ability to move, as well as to play the game. Slick-soled, poor-fitting or unlaced shoes, un-strapped eyeglasses and jewelry are dangerous not only to the athlete wearing them, but also to others. An athlete dressed in a good looking, properly-fitted uniform and basketball shoes will feel good about himself or herself, be a part of a team and tend to play better.

Appropriate basketball attire is required for all competitors. As coach, discuss the types of sport clothes acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, long-pant jeans to blue jean shorts are not proper basketball attire for any event. Explain that athletes cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. Take athletes to high school or college basketball training sessions or competitions and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes who do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

Shirts

Shirts for practice should be T-shirt type or sleeveless. Shirts should consist of lightweight material, be comfortable and allow freedom of movement in the shoulders. For competitions, the athlete should wear a clean uniform shirt (also with or without sleeves) that has a number on the front and the back. Check the rules regarding the size of the numbers. The shirt should fit properly and be long enough to tuck into the shorts.

Shorts

Shorts should be of a lightweight material, have an elastic waistband and allow freedom of movement in the hips and thighs.

Socks

Socks can come in all lengths and materials. One to two pairs of white, properly-fitted cotton or cotton-blend socks are recommended to prevent blisters.

Shoes

Shoes are the most important article of clothing for the athlete. They must have a good tread for traction. In addition, they must fit snugly around an athlete's ankle yet provide room in the toe to prevent blisters. High-top court shoes are recommended because they provide the athlete with the best foot and ankle support. A firm arch and heel support and a cushioned insole are things to look for in a quality court shoe. Black-soled shoes should be avoided as they leave marks on some courts.

Knee Pads

Knee pads, elbow pads and eyeglass straps provide added protection and help prevent injuries. Knee braces may also be worn if they are properly covered.

Warm-Up Suits

Warm-up suits are needed for warming up before, and for staying warm after, a basketball practice or game. Warm-ups should not be worn during a practice or game because of their added weight and because they may cause heavy sweating. A medium weight cotton sweatshirt and pants are excellent and inexpensive warm-ups.

Head Bands

Head bands, rubber bands or ribbons are necessary for safety reason when the athlete needs to keep hair away from the face. According to the rules, metal clips or bobby pins are not acceptable.



Basketball Equipment

It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how equipment works and impacts their performance. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it and give the use for each. Proper equipment and use are essential for safety as well as for instruction. In addition, coaches should check equipment periodically and perform preventative maintenance to ensure safety.

Basketball

Rubber covered basketballs are commonly used for practices, games and everyday play. They are particularly suited for outdoor use. Leather basketballs are recommended for indoor competition. Basketballs need to be inspected on a regular basis for proper inflation and possible defects. Basketballs are available in the official weight and size (76cm) or junior size (71cm).

Every athlete needs a basketball. Athletes can only improve if they frequently practice with a basketball. In addition, junior division athletes and women should use a smaller basketball. The smaller basketball allows these athletes to dribble, pass, catch and shoot with greater success. It also encourages proper form.

Air Pump

Carry a small air pump and one or two valve needles to the training site. One may be needed and may not be available.

Scrimmage Vest

Scrimmage vests or over-sized shirts are essential to help athletes distinguish teammates from opponents. Beginner Special Olympics athletes may find this distinction very difficult unless the two teams are clearly differentiated through the use of brightly colored scrimmage vests. If possible, these vests should be large enough to slip over the body, rather than tie, so that they are easier to put on and take off. The material is lightweight; mesh is also appropriate.

Whistle

A whistle does not take the place of verbal commands. However, it is essential for athletes to respond to whistles as they are used by officials during games. Athletes can be taught that the whistle means Stop, Look, and Listen. In addition, it assists in teaching athletes the habit of hustle.

Clipboard

A clipboard with a training session plan serves several purposes. Once a training session has started, it is easy to forget what should be done next. A clipboard with the training plan will greatly help the coach organize practice, share information with assistant coaches, stay on task and monitor progress.

Cones

Plastic marker cones or pylons are useful for marking off skills assessment areas and Individual Skills Contest events. Nine-inch plastic cones are inexpensive, durable and easier to use than larger marker cones.

Chalk

Chalk is used to mark areas on outside surfaces or to diagram plays on the floor or blackboard. Masking tape can be used to mark specific areas on the floor as for the Individual Skills Contest and the Skills Assessment Tests. X's marked on the floor can cue defensive positions during team play.



Teaching the Rules of Basketball

Every coach should obtain a copy of the *Official Rules of the Game*, available from Federation Internationale de Basketball (FIBA) found at <http://www.fiba.com/pages/eng/fc/FIBA/ruleRegu/p/openNodeIDs/915/selNodeID/915/baskOffiRule.html>. The coach should also study the rule modifications in the *Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Basketball*, which can be found at www.specialolympics.org and described later in a separate section. The *Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Basketball* will give details of the rules; however, to get started, the coach and athletes need to know the basics.

The Court

- ☐ 5-on-5: Maximum is 28 meters (94 feet) long by 15 meters (50 feet) wide; minimum is 25.6 meters (84 feet) long by 15 meters (50 feet) wide.
- ☐ 3-on-3: (Half-court) Maximum is 14m (47 feet) long by 15 m (50 feet) wide; minimum is 12.8 meters (42 feet) long by 15 meters (50 feet) wide.
- ☐ For both: The court should be properly marked with sidelines, free-throw lanes, center circle and three-point field goal arc.
- ☐ The three-point field goal arc is a semi-circle that has a radius of 6.25m (19 feet 9 inches) from a point in the middle of the free-throw lane and directly below the center of the basket.
- ☐ There are two field goal baskets on backboards, one at each end of the court and each at 3.05 m (10 feet) above the floor.

The Ball

- ☐ For females: the smaller ball is used; it is 74 centimeters (28.5 inches) in circumference and 567 grams (18-20 ounces) in weight. It may be used as an alternative ball for junior division competition.
- ☐ For males ages 15 and older, the regulation ball is 78cm (29.5-30 inches) in circumference and 650g (20-22 ounces) in weight.

Number of Players

- ☐ To begin the game for 5-on-5, it is five; for 3-on-3, it is three.
- ☐ The minimum number to continue playing before forfeiture is two and one, respectively... unless the referee believes that the short-handed team has a possibility to win the game.
- ☐ Maximum number players on a team, eligible to participate in a game, is ten (in full-court 5-on-5 play) and five (in half-court 3-on-3 play).

Uniform of the Players

- ☐ Same color shirts and shorts must be worn by all players.
- ☐ According to Federation Rules, shirts must be numbered with plain Arabic numerals, front and back. The number shall be at least 6 inches high on the back and at least 4 inches high on the front and not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in width.
- ☐ The following numbers are legal: 0, 3, 4, 5, 00, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54 and 55. A team member list shall not have both numbers 0 and 00.
- ☐ In international competition, FIBA Rules dictate that shirts must be numbered with plain numbers, front and back.
- ☐ In international competition, the numbers on the back are at least 20cm high; those on the front at least 10cm high; and all made with material not less than 2cm wide. Players shall use numbers from 4 to 15. No watches or jewelry are to be worn.

Referees

- ☐ The officials on the court include a referee and an umpire (or when teams mutually agree, a referee and two umpires). The referee is the authority on the court.
- ☐ Decisions of the officials are final.



Official Score Table Personnel

- ☐ A scorer, a timer, and a 30-second clock operator assist the referees.

Duration of the Game

- ☐ The Official 5-on-5 game in Federation Rules includes four quarters of 8 minutes each.
- ☐ The Official 5-on-5 game in FIBA Rules includes two halves of 20 minutes each. Intermission is 10 minutes long.
- ☐ The Official 3-on-3 games are 20 minutes in length or until a team scores 20 points, whichever occurs first.
- ☐ All competition may be modified by local tournament organizers.

The Start of the Game

In 5-on-5, the referee will toss the ball between any two opponents at the center circle to start the game and each extra period necessary. Teams shoot at the basket opposite their benches during the first half. On a neutral court, the referee shall toss a coin to determine baskets. In 3-on-3, the game is started with a toss of a coin for team possession. There is no jump ball.

The Game

Basketball is played by two teams of five (in 5-on-5) and three (in 3-on-3) each. The goal for each team is to shoot the ball into its opponent's basket and to prevent the other team from securing the ball or scoring. The ball may be passed, thrown, tapped, batted, rolled or dribbled in any direction, subject to restrictions in the Rules.

The Ball In and Out Play

The ball is out of play when it touches any baseline, sideline or anything outside the lines. It is put in play by the team opposite that which caused it to go out of bounds.

Scoring

Two points are awarded when a player makes a field goal that is shot inside the three-point arc. Three points are awarded when a player makes a field goal outside the three-point arc. One point is awarded for each made free throw.

Fouls

A personal foul is one that involves contact with an opponent. A player shall not block, hold, push, charge, trip, impede the progress of an opponent by extending his/her arm, shoulder or knee or by bending his/her body into other than normal position, nor use rough tactics. The player who has been offended against gets two free throws, if that player was in the act of shooting and missed. On the 7th foul in a half, the player fouled is allowed a 1-and-1 situation. On the 10th foul and thereafter in a half, the player fouled is allowed two shots. Prior to the 7th foul in a half, the team that has been offended against gets the ball out-of-bounds nearest the spot of the infraction. In 3-on-3, the player who has been offended against gets the ball at a designated spot above the free-throw line.

Violations

Ball handling infractions (double dribbling, traveling, carrying the ball, etc.), causing the ball to go out of play, stepping on the line, entering the free throw lane before the ball has left the shooter's hand, etc., are penalized by awarding the ball out-of-bounds at the nearest point generally on the sideline from where the infraction occurred. A throw-in is taken from here by the team that has been offended against. In 3-on-3 play, the ball is taken at the designated spot above the free-throw line.

Other Situations

For a held ball (two opponents holding onto the ball simultaneously), the ball will be given to the teams on alternate possessions. During international competition, jump ball is administered. A technical foul is called for delay of game or unsportsmanlike conduct. The team that has been offended against gets two free throws and the ball out-of-bounds. In 5-on-5, each team gets five time-outs during regulation play.



Special Olympics Unified Sports® Rules

There are few differences in the rules for Special Olympics Unified Sports® competition as stipulated in the *Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Basketball* and modifications outlined in the rules book. The additions are highlighted below:

1. A roster consists of a proportionate number of athletes and partners. Although the exact distribution of roster spots is not specified, a basketball roster containing eight athletes and two partners does not meet the goals of Special Olympics Unified Sports.
2. A lineup during the competition consists of half athletes and half partners. Teams that have an odd number of players (e.g., 5-on-5 basketball) have one more athlete than partner in the game at all times.
3. Teams are divisioned for competition based primarily on ability. In team sports, division assignment is based on the best players on the roster, not the average ability of all players.
4. Team sports must have an adult, non-playing coach. Player-coaches are not allowed in team sports.

Protest Procedures

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition. The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As a coach, your duty to your athletes and team is to protest any action or events while your athlete is competing that you think violated the *Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Basketball*. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome of an event. Making a protest is a serious matter that impacts a competition's schedule.

Check with the competition team prior to competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.



Basketball Glossary

Term	Definition
Assist	A pass to a teammate who scores directly or who does not dribble more than twice before scoring.
Backcourt	The end of the court opposite a team's offensive goal.
Baseline	The end boundary line on a court.
Bench	Reserves.
Blocking	Personal contact that impedes the progress of an opponent who does not have the ball.
Blocking Out	A technique (also called "boxing out") used by a rebounding player who steps in front of and with his/her back to an opponent and keeps that opponent behind him/her.
Blocks	The first lane spaces underneath the basket.
Boards	The backboards.
Bounce Pass	A pass that strikes the floor just more than halfway to the receiver.
Center	A player who plays in the center area close to the basket.
Chest Pass	A pass that is thrown in the air from about chest level.
Control	A player is in control when he is holding or dribbling a live ball. Team control exists when a live ball is being passed between members of a team.
Defender	A member of the team who does not have possession of the ball.
Defense	The team that does not have possession of the ball.
Double dribble	A violation in which a player dribbles the ball, stops, then begins to dribble again.
Dribble	Bounce the ball.
Fast Break	A play in which a team gains possession and then pushes the ball downcourt quickly, hoping to get a good shot off before the other team has a chance to get back and set up on defense.
Field goal	A basket, worth either two or three points, depending on whether it was taken from inside or outside the three-point line.
Foul	A rules infraction for which the penalty is one or more free throws.
Free Throw	Opportunity given to player to score one point by an unimpeded shot from behind the free throw line. Also called a Foul Shot.
Goaltending	A violation, in which a player interferes with a shot while the ball is on its downward arc, pins it against the backboard or touches it while it is in an imaginary cylinder above the basket; may be committed by either an offensive or defensive player.
Holding	Personal contact with an opponent which interferes with his freedom of movement.
Hoop	Basket or rim.
Jump Ball	A method of putting the ball in play by tossing it up between two opponents in one of three circles.

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Term	Definition
Jump Shot	A shot taken after a player jumps in the air.
Key	The free throw lane and circle.
Lane	The painted area between the end line and the free-throw line near each basket, outside which players line up for free throws. Also known as the key.
Offense	The team that has possession of the ball.
Outlet Pass	A quick, pass (often after a rebound) to a teammate that starts a fast break.
Perimeter Players	The offensive players (guards and one forward) who play outside the lane and face the basket.
Post Players	The offensive players (center and one forward) who play near the lane and have their backs to the basket.
Press	A term that is an abbreviation for pressure, as in defensive pressure.
Rebound	A missed shot that bounces off the rim or backboard; also to gain possession of the ball after such a missed shot.
Screen	An offensive play in which a player of offense acts as a stationary barrier to prevent a player on defense from defending a player. Also called a pick.
Steal	To take the ball away from the opposing team, either off the dribble or by picking off a pass.
Technical Foul	A penalty for improper behavior, such as using foul language or arguing with the referee.
Throw-in	Method of putting the ball in play from out of bounds.
Trap	A situation in which two defenders guard the player on offense who has the ball.
Travel	To run or walk illegally while holding the ball.
Turnover	Any loss of possession without a shot being taken.



Appendix: Skill Development Tips

Dribbling

Dribbling is one of the most fundamental skills that must be learned. Not only is it important to learn how to dribble well, but it is also important to know when, and when not, to dribble. To become a good dribbler and ball handler, you must practice dribbling as often as you can, using both hands.

Skill Progression – Dribbling

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Attempt to dribble a basketball in any manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball in any manner at least three bounces in a row	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble a ball with one hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with the opposite hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with one hand, then the other hand, three bounces in a row each, without stopping, while standing still	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with one hand while walking forward ten steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with one hand while running forward 20 steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with either hand while moving in any direction (forward, backward or sideways)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with either hand while moving in any direction while protecting the ball from a defender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Teaching the Dribble

Key Words

- Feel for the Ball
- Head Up
- Protect



Dribbling Drills

Stationary Dribbling

Perform while standing in place or simply moving with the ball.

Purpose of the Drill

- Develop ability and confidence in dribbling
- Teach athletes that once they catch a ball they have been dribbling, they must pass it

Steps

1. Start dribbling with one hand only and count out loud to ten with the right hand and then to ten with the left hand.
2. If the athlete has to catch the ball with both hands to control it, he or she must then pass it to the coach or another player (this prevents a “double dribble” call)
3. The coach or other player then passes the ball back to the athlete to begin again.
4. This may also be done in a circle with several athletes. Each time an athlete either completes 10 dribbles with each hand OR has to catch the ball with two hands, that athlete passes to another player in the circle.

Mini-Basketball: Dribbling Tag

Purpose of the Drill

- Practice dribbling and protecting the ball
- Practice trying to legally steal the ball from an opponent

Steps

1. The group is divided into no fewer than two teams of two athletes each.
2. Each player has a ball and wears a scrimmage vest for team identification.
3. The area of the court depends upon the size and ability level of the group. The lower the ability level, the fewer the athletes. If there are two athletes, a jump ball circle can be used. If there are four to six athletes, the area inside the three-point arc and baseline can be used.
4. The coach signals the athletes to begin dribbling. Each athlete must keep the ball bouncing and protected while trying to tip an opponent’s basketball away or outside the arc and the baseline.
5. If anyone stops his/her dribble, or the basketball goes outside the boundaries, those athletes are out of the game.
6. If a foul occurs, the ball handler stays and continues playing while the opponent is out of the game.
7. Play Dribble Tag for 1-2 minutes.
8. The team with the most athletes left dribbling inside the arc at the end of the time period wins.
9. A best-of-three game series can be played to heighten competition.



NOTE: For more Drills refer to the Full Basketball Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org



Special Olympics Basketball Coaches Quick Start Guide

Passing

A pass is a method of moving the ball between players. Most passes are accompanied by a step forward to increase power and are followed through with the hands to ensure accuracy.

Skill Progression – Passing

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Attempt to pass a basketball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pass the ball in any manner and in any direction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pass the ball in any manner to an intended target	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a two-handed chest pass in any direction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a two-handed chest pass to an intended target	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a bounce pass to an intended target	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a two-handed overhead pass to an intended target	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a lob pass to an intended target	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a baseball pass to an intended target	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in team passing drills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Catching

While catching is obviously part of the passing skill (it isn't a good pass if it isn't caught!), here are some tips to break down the catching skill for instruction.

Skill Progression – Catching

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Attempt to catch a basketball in any manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch the ball in any manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch a bounce pass in arms and chest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch a bounce pass with hands only	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch a chest pass in arms and chest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch a chest pass with hands only	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attempt to catch a pass in any manner while moving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch a pass in any manner while moving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch a pass with hands only, while moving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Teaching Catching

Key Words

- Get Behind the Ball
- Give a Target
- Catching the Egg
- Relax and Give with the Ball



Passing & Catching Drills

Partner Pass

Purpose

- Developing accurate and fast passes
- Teaches teamwork

Steps

1. Divide athletes into teams of two – keeping athletes of similar skill together.
2. One athlete has a ball and is positioned a set distance from a partner.
3. The first athlete chest passes the ball to partner.
4. The second athlete steps up to catch the pass and immediately passes it back to the partner.
5. The first athlete steps up to catch the pass and bounce passes it back to the partner.
6. This repeats as long as the athletes can keep the passes going while alternating pass types (bounce, chest, overhead, one-arm).



Passing under Pressure (Keep away)

Athletes with average to moderate ability – who can move to get behind the ball and can catch pass the ball – who are now ready for this drill.

Purpose

- Develop quick passes to avoid steals
- Teaches players to move to get open for a pass

Steps

1. The coach divides the group into pairs.
2. Partners stand the width of the lane apart, facing each other.
3. Passing and receiving are practiced using all passes: chest and one-handed bounce passes plus one-handed and overhead passes.
4. A defender is added to each group.
5. The ball starts with one teammate versus the defender.
6. The athlete with the ball looks for the OPEN DOOR and passes to his/her teammate.
7. If the pass is not deflected or stolen, the defender turns and moves to defend against the athlete who has the ball.
8. When the defender makes a steal or deflects the ball, he/she becomes a teammate passer.
9. The person whose pass was deflected or stolen becomes the next offensive teammate.

NOTE: For more Drills refer to the Full Basketball Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Special Olympics Basketball Coaches Quick Start Guide



Shooting

Shooting is the most important skill in basketball. To win, you have to score points. All the other skills are tools a team uses to get the ball and its players into position to score. If your athletes can develop confident, accurate shooting skills, they will be hard to stop on the court!

Skill Progression – Shooting

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Attempt to shoot a basketball in any manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hit the backboard with a one-hand set shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a basket with a one-hand set shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hit the backboard on a lay-up attempt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a basket on a lay-up attempt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hit the backboard with a jump shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a basket with a jump shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Shooting Drills

Teaching a One-Handed Set Shot

1. Hold the ball in good dribbling position.
2. Bring the ball up to the shooting position. The shooting hand is behind and slightly under the ball; the non-shooting hand is to the side of the ball; thumbs are up and apart from one another.
3. Face the basket and look over the ball, focusing on the target.
4. Keep the shooting-side leg slightly forward.
5. Bend knees; lift elbow and extend shooting arm toward basket.
6. Release the ball by snapping the shooting hand down, rolling the ball off the fingertips to impart lift and backspin to the ball.
7. During this Follow Through, hand and arm form a Gooseneck.

Teaching a Lay-Up Using the Backboard

1. Face the front of the backboard and stand two steps away and to the right of the rim for a right-handed shooter.
2. Pick the ball up to chest height in proper shooting position.
3. Sight the target over the ball. Focus on the top right corner of the square on backboard for a right-hander.
4. Step forward onto right foot, then left foot.
5. Raise the shooting-side knee as the ball is lifted to the forehead.
6. Extend body toward basket off left foot.
7. Gently lay the ball up against the backboard on the top right corner of the square.
8. Land on both feet under the backboard.



NOTE: For more Drills refer to the Full Basketball Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org



Defending

Skill Progression – Defending

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Assume proper body stance: legs bent, head and hands up and weight on balls of feet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain proper body position while moving sideways, forward and backward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain proper body position while moving in relation to the ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain proper body position while moving in relation to opponent and the ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Teaching Defending



Key Words

- See the Ball
- Head and Hands Up
- Slide



Defending Drills

Defensive Positioning and Movement

“Ike Like Mike”

1. Athletes spread out in the gym, at least arm’s length from one another. All athletes will move in the same way and in the same direction as the leader. Coach can also point direction of the movement and say key words as athletes follow the leader.
2. Now the leader defends a player who has a basketball. All athletes will move in the same way and in the same direction as the leader.
3. The goal for each athlete is to do cued footwork skills, not getting caught off balance, three times in a row.
4. Three times equals one point; the first athlete to accumulate five points becomes the next leader.

Key Words

- See the Ball
- Slide



Rebounding

Skill Progression – Rebounding

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Attempt to catch in any manner a basketball that is tossed into the air	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch a ball that is tossed into the air	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attempt to catch in any manner a ball that rebounds off the backboard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track the ball as it is shot at the basket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turn to face the basket and take ready position for rebounding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch the ball in any manner after it rebounds off the backboard and bounces once on the floor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch the ball with hands only after it rebounds off the backboard and bounces once on the floor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catch the ball in the air with hands only after it rebounds off the backboard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Move to “box out” an opponent before jumping for a rebound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in team rebounding drills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Key Words

- See the Ball
- Go Get the Ball



Rebounding Drills

Jumping

If athlete still does not jump off floor, physically and visually prompt the movement by putting the athlete in the proper position and moving him/her through the jumping movement. If athlete still does not jump off floor, coaches can stand next to the athlete to model jumping, leading with their arms up in the air. On “Ready,” make sure the athlete is balanced with head over feet. On “Bend,” make sure the athlete maintains balance while bending at the knees. On “Jump,” model pushing up through the knees to arms extended up as if to grab a rebound. If progress is slow, be sure to look for small victories in each phase of the jump progression.

Purpose of the Drill

- Develop basic jumping skill

Steps

1. Coach demonstrates; athletes watch, and then perform.
2. Take a position with legs bent, elbows at sides and hands up.
3. Bend legs and extend, sending body off floor into the air with arms overhead.



Key Words

- Bend and Jump

Jumping and Grabbing a Ball

Purpose

- Develop reach and grab skills
- Practice control and protecting the ball while coming down with a rebound

Steps

1. Hold a ball up and out of the athlete’s reach. If you aren’t tall enough to hold the ball out of reach, a slight toss works.
2. Instruct the athlete to “Rebound the Ball.”
3. Athlete jumps, grabs the ball and places it under his/her chin with elbows out.

Key Words

- See the Ball

NOTE: For more Drills refer to the Full Basketball Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Special Olympics Basketball Coaches Quick Start Guide



Footwork

Footwork is an essential part of both offense and defensive movement on the court. The ability to move and change directions or stop quickly is critical to success on the basketball court. While specific footwork is outlined in several drills, this section gives some basic drills that will also be helpful.

Skill Progression – Footwork

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Run forward, then run backward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Slide right, then slide left (step one foot to side, then step with other foot replacing first foot)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hop on one foot, then hop on the other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skip (step then hop on that foot, step with other foot then hop on that foot)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut (run diagonally for three steps, plant and push off the outside foot to change directions, turn hips to face desired direction and run three steps in that direction)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop (perform a two-step stop and later a jump-stop on the whistle)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pivot (put weight on the ball of one stationary foot; other foot steps as the body circles around the pivot point)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Key Words

- Head Up
- Elbows Bent With Hands Up (Ready)
- Run On Balls of Feet
- Get Low To Stop
- Pivot
- Slide



Agility Footwork Activities

Before doing the activity, demonstrate the skill. All athletes then do the skill in their places. When performing the two-step stop or the jump-stop, the athletes are to stop in no more than two steps, or a step to a jump-stop upon hearing the whistle. A game can be played, such as “Red Light, Green Light.”

1. Line team up at the baseline in equal rows of four athletes across.
2. Coach starts the first row.
3. Athletes perform one of the above two footwork activities down the court, stopping at the free throw line, half court, far free-throw line and far baseline.
4. As soon as the athletes pass the closest free-throw line, the coach starts the next row.
5. Coaches perform the footwork activities alongside the athletes, verbally and physically prompting as necessary.
6. Once at the far baseline, the coaches help line up the rows to return with the same footwork activity.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Especially suitable for warm-up
- ☐ Once ball handling skills are learned, do a series of footwork drills while dribbling



Additional Basketball Drills

Circle Passing

One team can play against the other, but at opposite ends of the floor. A lower ability team may pass the ball in and out of the circle in a particular direction. Coach counts the number of passes in 60 seconds. This activity is fun and can go faster as skill increases. It adds movement to passing that is more game-like.

1. Coach divides group into teams of four, five or six.
2. Each team takes a position around one of the circles.
3. One person from each team goes to the middle of that team's circle.
4. A person on the outside of the circle starts with the ball. The ball is passed to the person in the middle. The passer follows the pass, moving into the middle.
5. The person in the middle passes to a teammate on the outside of the circle, follows his/her pass and takes that person's place.
6. The circle passing and moving continues for a prescribed number of passes (25) or a prescribed amount of time (60 seconds).
7. If the ball goes out of control or out of play, it always begins with a person on the outside of the circle.

Key Words

- Face Your Teammate Before You Pass
- "Hands Up" – Give A Target
- Follow Your Pass

Full Court Double Post Lay-up Drill

This is a continuous drill that lasts 2-3 minutes. It emphasizes passing and receiving on the move, taking a controlled lay-up or jump-stop lay-up and conditioning. Change posts every 60 seconds. Count the baskets made at each end. Do this drill periodically. It is the team against a goal, setting a personal best team mark.

1. Four "posts" take positions at the corners where the free-throw lines meet the lane lines.
2. Half the team lines up under one basket; the other half lines up under the opposite basket.
3. Moving counterclockwise will emphasize right-handed lay-ups.
4. The first person under each basket begins by passing (out letting) the ball to the post ahead.
5. After the pass, each continues up that sideline and receives a return pass from the post.
6. The athlete dribbles to the half court, passes to the next post and continues up sideline.
7. Once the athlete reaches the free-throw line extended, he/she cuts toward the basket.
8. The post bounce-passes the ball just in front so that the athlete can shoot a lay-up without dribbling.
9. The first person under the basket rebounds the ball and passes to the post on the other side, continuing the activity up court.

Key Words

- Grab The Ball
- Move Under Control
- Hands Up

NOTE: For more Drills refer to the Full Basketball Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org



Changing Baskets after Halftime

Teaching the Concept

1. The team stands behind the coach at the team's bench area; each athlete should be able to see the court and baskets.
2. The coach points to and identifies the basket farthest from the team as the shooting basket - Offense.
3. The coach asks the team at which basket they are shooting; the team responds by pointing and saying "Offense."
4. If necessary, the coach then physically assists the athletes into their team offense positions on the court.
5. At the beginning of the second half, the team and the coach return to the bench.
6. The coach points to the basket closest to the bench, which is now the new shooting basket.
7. The coach asks the team at which basket they are now shooting; the team responds.
8. The coach asks the team at which basket they are now defending; the team responds.
9. If necessary, the coach then physically assists the athletes into team offense positions.

Key Words

- Offense
- Defense

Three Seconds in the Lane

Teaching the Concept

1. Identify the lane areas of the court one is defensive, one offensive.
2. Use the terms Hot and Cold. Identify offensive end with Hot: on offense, one must move through it or else burn up.
3. Identify the defensive end with Cold: on defense, it helps to defend the opponent.
4. Constantly reinforce Hot and Cold with proper positioning.
5. Set up athletes' positions on offense where all athletes are outside the lane.
6. During half-court or full-court play, stand on the court. As players move into their Set-Up positions on offense, move them out of the lane.

Key Words

- Hot
- Cold



Fast Break

The fast break is a play in which the defensive team gains possession of the ball and moves the ball quickly down the court. The goal is to score before the other team has a chance to set up a strong defense.

- All five players take part in the fast break and have various responsibilities. The ball is usually passed to the point guard, who dribbles it down the middle. Two teammates “Fill The Lanes” (explain) that are on either side of the point guard. These teammates run just inside the sidelines to give the dribbler enough dribbling space. In addition, running near the sidelines prevents defenders from stopping the play. The two remaining teammates initially trail the play and then move to get good rebounding positions under the basket.

Teaching the Fast Break

- ☐ Review going for the ball.
- ☐ Review the rebound progression.
- ☐ Perform a Break-Away drill.
- ☐ After the point guard receives the ball he/she turns to face offensive basket, looks for the opening, drives down court and lays the ball up. The rebounder/passers trails the dribbler, rebounds a missed shot and attempts to make a follow-up shot.
- ☐ Perform a Two-Player Break.
- ☐ Plus Trailer Drill: A teammate is added to the above drill; he/she becomes one of the “WINGS” (explain) filling the nearest fast break lane.

Key Words

- Rebound
- Turn And Look
- Outlet
- Fill The Lanes
- Trail

Free Throw

Teaching the Free Throw

1. Set up a free-throw situation and explain why it has occurred (athlete has been fouled, especially while shooting).
2. Two defenders take positions underneath lane at the blocks.
3. Opponents alternate positions up the lane spaces (maximum four defensive players and two offensive players).
4. The free-throw shooter has both feet behind the free-throw line.
5. The players around the lane cannot move into the lane until the ball has left the shooter’s hands.
6. The free-throw shooter cannot enter the lane until the ball hits the rim.
7. Practice the situation during controlled scrimmages.

Key Words

- Feet Behind The Line
- Hold Your Position
- Go Get Ball After It Leaves Shooter’s Hand
- Come In After Shooting



Jump Ball

Teaching the Jump Ball

1. Demonstrate and review the jump.
2. Hold the ball above the athlete's head and ask the athlete to tap it to a teammate.
3. Toss the ball above athlete's head and ask the athlete to tap it to a teammate.
4. Take the position at a jump ball circle and repeat skill.
5. Have the team line up around the center circle and next to an opponent.
6. Repeat the skill.
7. Remember, one player from each team stands at the top of the key protecting their basket.

Key Words

- Jump and Tap
- Tap To a Teammate



The Give-and-Go

The give-and-go is one of the most important team skills. An athlete learns to recognize and work with a teammate where the ultimate goal is scoring. An athlete passes the ball to a teammate who has moved to get open. The passer cuts to the basket for a return pass. This skill assists athletes in making the transition from skills to game play. The skill does not exist in isolation; it is incorporated into offense and team play.

Teaching the Concept

1. Review the bounce pass.
2. Teach the V-cut. The athlete takes one step to the basket, plants that outside foot, turns his/her hips toward the teammate with the ball and moves one or two steps toward the ball. The athlete receives the ball and attempts to score.
3. Practice receiving the pass and turning (pivoting) to face the basket. As the athlete pivots to face the basket, the athlete raises the ball to a position in front and to the shooting side of the body. The athlete is now in an effective position to pass, dribble or shoot. This position is called “triple threat.”
4. Perform the give-and-go without defense.
5. Perform the give-and-go against a passive defender on the receiver.
6. Perform the give-and-go against passive defenders one on the receiver and the other on the passer-cutter.
7. Perform the give-and-go against more active defense.

Key Words

- Go Get the Ball
- Bounce Pass to Teammate
- V-Cut

Mini-Basketball: Two-on-One (in the front court)

1. Teams are comprised of two athletes; team members wear same-colored scrimmage vests.
2. Attacking team plays with two on the court.
3. Defending team plays with one on the court and one off the court.
4. Offense must make at least one pass before shooting.
5. Defender protects basket but tries to steal ball.
6. If ball goes out of bounds, it counts as a possession and a turnover.
7. If offense shoots and gets rebound, play continues.
8. If defender gets the ball, play is over and ball is passed to coach.
9. Each team stays on offense or defense for three possessions.
10. On each possession, a new defender plays defense.
11. Each team plays offense and defense two to three times.
12. Offense scores two points for a score and one point for offensive rebound; defense scores one point each for a steal or a rebound.



Recognizing and Working with Teammates

Teaching the Concept

1. Create teams of three.
2. Place scrimmage vests of the same color on each team, different from the other teams' colors.
3. Require a minimum of one pass before a shot can be taken.

Key Words

- Go Get the Ball
- Bounce Pass to Teammate
- V-Cut

Mini-Basketball: Three-on-Three (w/o conversion)

1. Create equal ability teams of three athletes at each basket.
2. Attacking team, team A, faces the basket.
3. Defending team, team B, plays between the basket and offenders (use offensive players).
4. Coach stands at the division line, giving ball to offense.
5. Offense must make at least one pass before shooting.
6. Defenders protect basket but try to steal ball.
7. Ball going out of bounds counts as a possession and a turnover.
8. If offense shoots and gets rebound, play continues.
9. If defense gets the ball, play is over and ball is passed to coach.
10. Each team stays on offense or defense for three possessions.
11. Each team plays offense and defense two to three times.
12. Award two points for offensive score and one point for rebound; one point each for a defensive steal or rebound.

Mini-Basketball: Three-on-Three (w/ modified conversion)

Play three-on-three as above with the following exceptions.

1. When the defense gets the ball or when the offense scores, the ball is thrown to the coach.
2. The teams change offensive and defensive positions.
3. The coach passes to middle offender, and play continues.
4. Each team stays on offense or defense for three possessions.
5. Each team plays offense and defense two to three times.
6. Award two points for offensive score and one point for rebound; one point each a defensive steal or rebound.

Mini-Basketball: Three-on-Three (with conversion)

Play three-on-three with the following exceptions.

1. When the defense gets the ball or when the offense scores, the ball is dribbled back to a position beyond the foul line extended.
2. The teams change offensive and defensive positions.
3. Play continues as before.
4. One pass must be made before an offender can shoot.
5. Play continues for 2-3 minutes
6. Award two points for offensive score and one point for rebound; one point each for a defensive steal or rebound.



Team Defense

Athlete Readiness

- ☐ Athlete can pass and catch, dribble, defend and move to the ball.
- ☐ Athlete can recognize and work with teammates.
- ☐ Athlete does not defend nor take the ball away from teammates.
- ☐ Athlete recognizes which basket to defend.
- ☐ Athlete understands the basic rules of the game.

Certainly, the aim of the game is to score more points than your opponent. Conversely, it is also to limit the number of points your opponent scores. Team defense is the concept that focuses on that aspect.

- When teaching team defense, it is much easier to begin by teaching a zone defense. Each team member learns how to defend an opponent, but within the safety of a smaller space.
- The 2-1-2 zone defense is one of the more easily taught zones. The coach is able to use court markings to place athletes close to the basket to prevent high percentage shots. Each athlete has one task to perform. It is important for the coach to recognize the abilities and capabilities of all team members for their strategic placement in the zone, making the team defense most effective.
- Concerning the placement of athletes, it is suggested that the most skilled all-around athlete (#1) be placed in the middle of the zone. This person is a stabilizing force, helping teammates and protecting the most vulnerable area (the middle). The smaller and quicker athletes take the top spots (#2 and #3). Taller athletes are at the bottom spots (#4 and #5) and closer to the basket. However, it is suggested that at least one of the positions be played by a smaller athlete who is assertive and who jumps or moves to the ball strongly.



Teaching Progression for Team Defense

Teach defensive positioning on the athlete with the ball.

- ☐ An athlete, coach or volunteer demonstrates proper stance, arm position and body position (arm's length away from athlete with the ball, between opponent and basket, and with back to basket).
- ☐ While the team is spread around the court, each volunteer works with three to four athletes, verbally prompting proper body position.
- ☐ Then the group is divided so that there are four athletes and one coach/volunteer at each basket to individually practice positioning and movement one-on-one at the five zone positions. One offensive athlete has a ball and tries to drive past or shoot over one defensive athlete.

Key Words

- Belly to the Ball (explain)
- Step to the Ball

Teach zone areas for which each athlete is responsible

- ☐ Optional: Tape X's on the floor, and gradually remove them over the course of the season. Make sure this is approved by the facility manager before putting tape on the floor.
- ☐ Use existing lines or marks on the court for cues, i.e., the junction of the foul line and lane line for the top spots on each side of the lane (#2, #3); the middle of the lane for the middle defender (#1); the low post blocks on the lane for the two bottom spots on each side of the lane (#4, #5).
- ☐ At the top spots, each athlete places his/her outside foot on the spots. At the bottom spots, each athlete places his/her inside foot on the spots. #1 is responsible for the lane.
- ☐ Place athletes in their areas; have them individually recognize their positions and court markings. Each area is two sliding steps out in radius from the athlete's originating position.
- ☐ Cue Belly to the Ball and Step to the Ball (explain) and reinforce them throughout the progression.
- ☐ Direct athletes to move within their areas while the team on offense passes the ball around the perimeter. Each athlete adjusts to defending the opponent who has and does not have the ball in his or her area. Emphasize that:
 - It takes all five athletes moving together to stop the ball and,
 - When one defender moves, all must move, otherwise openings occur for scoring. (#3 moves to fill ball side block area.)

Teach offense-to-defense conversion

- ☐ Athletes line up in positions at their own offensive end of the court. Athlete shoots ball and coach retrieves. Coach cues "Defense" and "Go to Your X." Assistants physically prompt athletes to run to the other end and set up their defensive positions on their respective X's.
- ☐ Athletes sprint to opposite end and set up defense on their spots.
- ☐ Athletes move on defense as ball is passed by offense.
- ☐ Keep reinforcing "Belly to the Ball" and "Step to the Ball."
- ☐ Gradually remove the X's on the court.

Practice offense-to-defense-to-offense conversion

- ☐ Repeat above drill, beginning with ball shot at offensive end and athletes sprinting to defensive end to set up 2-1-2 zone.
- ☐ On a defensive steal and rebound, team breaks down court to offensive spots.
- ☐ Get offensive center out of lane; use strong physical prompt plus verbal cues (Hot, Get Out of the Fire). The coach must do this from day one, or athletes will have problems discriminating between defensive and offensive ends as well as getting out of the lane.



Teach off-the-ball defense (helping)

- ☐ Review proper defensive stance and movement.
- ☐ Teach a point-the-gun (open up) position on defending an opponent without the ball.
 1. One hand points to player defending; other hand points to player with the ball.
 2. Defender must always know where the ball is.
 3. Each defender must be able to see it without turning his/her head.

Key Words

- Step to the Ball
- Belly to the Ball
- Ball
- Help
- Deny

Mini-Basketball: Help and Recover positioning with passing

- ☐ Tape a dotted line down the middle of the court, lengthwise. This line is basket to basket.
- ☐ Movement and positioning should be demonstrated by the coaches, then practiced by the athletes.
- ☐ Two players play stationary offense at each side, with one coach being the point guard.
- ☐ Defenders take defensive positions on the offenders.
- ☐ Point guard is on one side of the basket-to-basket line.
- ☐ Athletes are positioned, taught that they play arm's length away from the offender on the ball side and on the basket-to-basket line on the help side (non-ball side).
- ☐ Ball is passed slowly from the point guard to one offender.
- ☐ Cue "Step to the Ball" and "Belly to the Ball."
- ☐ Defender on the ball plays between the offender and basket.
- ☐ Defender off the ball has one foot on the basket-to-basket line, other foot on the help side of the court, and back to the basket.
- ☐ As the ball moves, the two defenders move and call their positions.
 1. When on the player with the ball, an athlete yells Ball.
 2. When one pass away from the ball, the athlete yells Deny.
 3. When two passes away from the ball, the athlete yells Help.
- ☐ They pivot and slide to position while facing the ball.

The defense's goal is a deflection, steal or rebound. Play in 1-minute intervals against a set offense. Keep score; the defense gets one point each for a deflection, steal or rebound. Each team has two to three times on defense. The team with the most points wins.



Team Offense

Team offense is based on the fundamental skills of dribbling, passing and catching, shooting and offensive rebounding. A coach can present each of these skills and assist in the athlete's individual development. However, skills are just skills until an athlete uses them appropriately and successfully in game play with other teammates. Offense means scoring points making baskets. The ultimate goal of any of the offensive fundamental skills is to assist the athlete and the team in scoring. Certainly the aim of the game of basketball is to score more points than your opponent.

Athlete Readiness

- ☐ Athlete can pass and catch, dribble, shoot and go for the ball.
- ☐ Athlete can recognize and work with teammates.
- ☐ Athlete does not take the ball away from teammates.
- ☐ Athlete recognizes at which basket to score.
- ☐ Athlete understands the basic rules of the game.



Teaching Progression for Team Offense

Offensive skills: dribbling, passing, catching, shooting and rebounding.

- ☐ Present each skill.
- ☐ Practice it.
- ☐ Challenge higher skill: do the skill; do the skill more times (make five baskets); do the skill at higher speed; do a minimum of the skill in a limited time (make five baskets in 30 seconds).

Practice individually against defense: Attack to score.

Use the Mini-Basketball game of 1-on-1 to isolate basic offense against defense.

Practice team skills first without defense and then against defense

- ☐ Give-and-go is one of the most important team skills of recognizing and working with your teammate where the ultimate goal is scoring. An athlete passes the ball to a teammate (who has moved to get open) and cuts to the basket for a return pass.

Place athletes in positions that best fit their abilities

- ☐ Utilize the strength of each athlete. For example, if an athlete can pass but not catch, he or she could be the point guard.
- ☐ Work around your best athlete. As in the mainstream, each team has an athlete or two who is higher in ability and game understanding than others. By utilizing their strengths, the coach gives his/her team the best chance for success.
- ☐ Assist each athlete in improving those skills. Provide time during practice for repetition and reinforcement of those individual skills.
- ☐ Help each athlete play a role, know and understand that role, and feel important to the team by playing it.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for all athletes to participate meaningfully. Give each athlete time on the court during practice and during competition. An opponent can help to elevate everyone's skill. Athletes rise to the occasion. As opponents and situations become increasingly challenging, athletes' abilities improve to meet those challenges. Athletes' abilities improve with each practice and with each game.

Create a simple offense

The structure will give the team the best chance to play to its strengths and succeed. Simple structure will help, not complicate, athletes' learning the game and playing together. It provides them stability and some certainty of what to do and where to move. The following is a simple offense called "Go Jerry." It has been successfully played by lower ability athletes/teams.

- ☐ Team is the offense on the half court without defense. Each of the athletes is identified by a number. Their placement on the court is based on following abilities:
 - #1: best all-around athlete who is right-handed
 - #2: guard/average dribbler
 - #3: good driver/rebounder
 - #4: inside shooter/rebounder
 - #5: good passer
- ☐ All athletes have Set-Up spots. #4 and #5 take positions one behind the other on the block on the left side of the court. #3 is in the same corner about 3m away.
- ☐ When athlete #1 reaches mid court, this is the visual cue for everyone to break (Cut) to their new positions. The verbal cue "Go Jerry" (who is the #4 athlete) is also given at this time.
- ☐ #2, #3, #4 and #5 move to their new positions, while #1 dribbles toward the top and right side of the key creating a passing angle.



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- ☐ The cutting provides movement into open areas. It also gives the point guard a better passing angle. The offense then has an advantage over the defense.
- ☐ #1 passes to #5.
- ☐ #5 has four options:
 - turn and shoot,
 - pass to #1, who has cut to basket for return pass or rebound,
 - pass to #4 or #3 for inside shots, or
 - pass to #2.
- ☐ There will always be at least three rebounders (#3, #4, and #1), who are the most active in getting the ball.
- ☐ Once the offense is learned, it is important for the coach to assist athletes in performing it under more game-like conditions. One way to do this is to move athletes to the division or mid court line. The coach cues “Offense” and “Set Up” as the ball is picked up by the point guard. The athletes run to their spots and then run the offense on the “Go Jerry” cue.
- ☐ Athletes begin at their defensive end. The rebounder passes or hands off the ball to #1, who dribbles the ball up the court. The coach cues “Set Up” with the athletes running to their spots and then running the offense on the “Go Jerry” cue.
- ☐ Progress from offense to defense to offense. This now is the most game-like situation. The team is prompted in recognizing the transition from offense (when they get the ball) to defense (when their opponent has the ball) to offense (when they get the ball again).



Throw-In

Teaching the Throw-In

1. Divide the group into pairs.
2. One partner is out of bounds, the other is in bounds as a receiver. There are no defenders.
3. Coach gives the ball to the passer, who throws a bounce pass to his/her teammate.
4. Receiver V-cuts to get open and meets the pass.
5. Passer steps inbounds to receive a pass back.
6. Change responsibilities so that each athlete has a chance to inbound the ball and receive a pass.
7. Add a defender in front of the passer. This defender pressures the pass and then defends the athlete stepping onto the court.
8. Then add another defender on the receiver. The receiver has to work harder to get open.
9. The goal for offense is making three of five passes. The goal of defense is making three of five steals or deflections.
10. Consistently reinforce proper out-of-bounds placement and a proper throw-in by the passer during scrimmages.
11. Teach when the athlete can move (after a made basket) and when the athlete can't move (violation).

Key Words

- Feet Behind The Line
- Hold Your Position
- Come In After Passing

Teaching Out-Of-Bounds Play At the Sideline

1. Initially, use your offensive Set-Up positions. Athletes already know where they are to move (cut) on "Go."
2. Use one of the designated passers to yell "Go" and inbound the ball.
3. Add a simple "box" set-up position.
4. Each athlete has one cut and task to perform.
 - ☐ Your best all-around athlete (#1) takes the ball out-of-bounds.
 - ☐ The best re-bouncers (#4 and #5) are at the top of the free-throw lane; the best passers (#2 and #3) are on the blocks. Ideally, the best rebounder (#4) and inside shooter are opposite the ball.
 - ☐ On "Go," #4 and #5 cut toward the basket, and #2 and #3 cut away from the basket.
 - ☐ #1 passes the ball to #3 and then cuts to the nearest corner.
 - ☐ #3 turns and bounce passes the ball to #1 for a shot.
 - ☐ #3, #4, and #5 Go Get the Ball for an offensive rebound and score.

Teaching Out-Of-Bounds Play At Baseline

1. Initially, use your offensive Set-Up positions. Athletes already know where they are to move (cut) on "Go."
2. Use one of the designated passers to yell "Go" and inbound the ball.
3. Add a simple "box" set-up position as before.
4. Athletes will have one cut and one task to perform.
 - ☐ Your best all-around athlete (#1) takes the ball out of bounds.
 - ☐ The best rebounders (#4 and #5) are at the top of the free-throw lane; the best passers (#2 and #3) are on the blocks. Ideally, your best rebounder (#4) and inside shooter is opposite the ball.
 - ☐ On "Go," #4 and #5 cut toward the baseline, and #2 and #3 cut toward the top of the key and turn to face the ball.
 - ☐ #1 passes to #4 and then cuts to the nearest corner.
 - ☐ #4 powers up a shot.
 - ☐ #3, #4 and #5 Go Get the Ball for an offensive rebound and score.



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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.