



2019-20 COACHES MANUAL

DCFAMILY.COM/JRWIZARDS





GETTING STARTED

A good house is nothing without a strong foundation.

No matter if you have 30 years of experience or you're getting ready to coach for the first time, your success is dependent upon on how well you prepare. Whether you're coaching a team of 7-year-olds in your local rec league, or at an elite high school or AAU program; the work you do before the season begins will dictate the level of success your players achieve.

The first step is to understand the rules; the rules of the league your team is playing in; the rules of the school or program you coach for. The rules of play can vary from league to league, tournament to tournament, county to county. This isn't only for coaches in a new situation; leagues and referee organizations will often make small rule changes in the offseason.

TIP: Here are a few key things to take note of:

- **Age eligibility requirements and cutoff dates**
- **Academic policies**
- **Are there any restrictions on defense allowed (especially for coaches with younger players)?**
- **What rule changes were made in the offseason?**
- **How many time-outs are allowed in league play?**
- **Are there any playing time requirements?**



Next, you'll have to set your own guidelines for the season. What kind of rules will you have for your team? These rules will obviously differ depending on the level you're coaching at; you wouldn't expect a rec league team to have the same time & attendance policy as an elite high school program. Be sure to communicate the guidelines you expect your team to follow to both your players and their parents. Just remember – whatever you commit to must be enforced. Nothing will undermine the confidence that players and parents have in a coach more than selective enforcement of team rules.

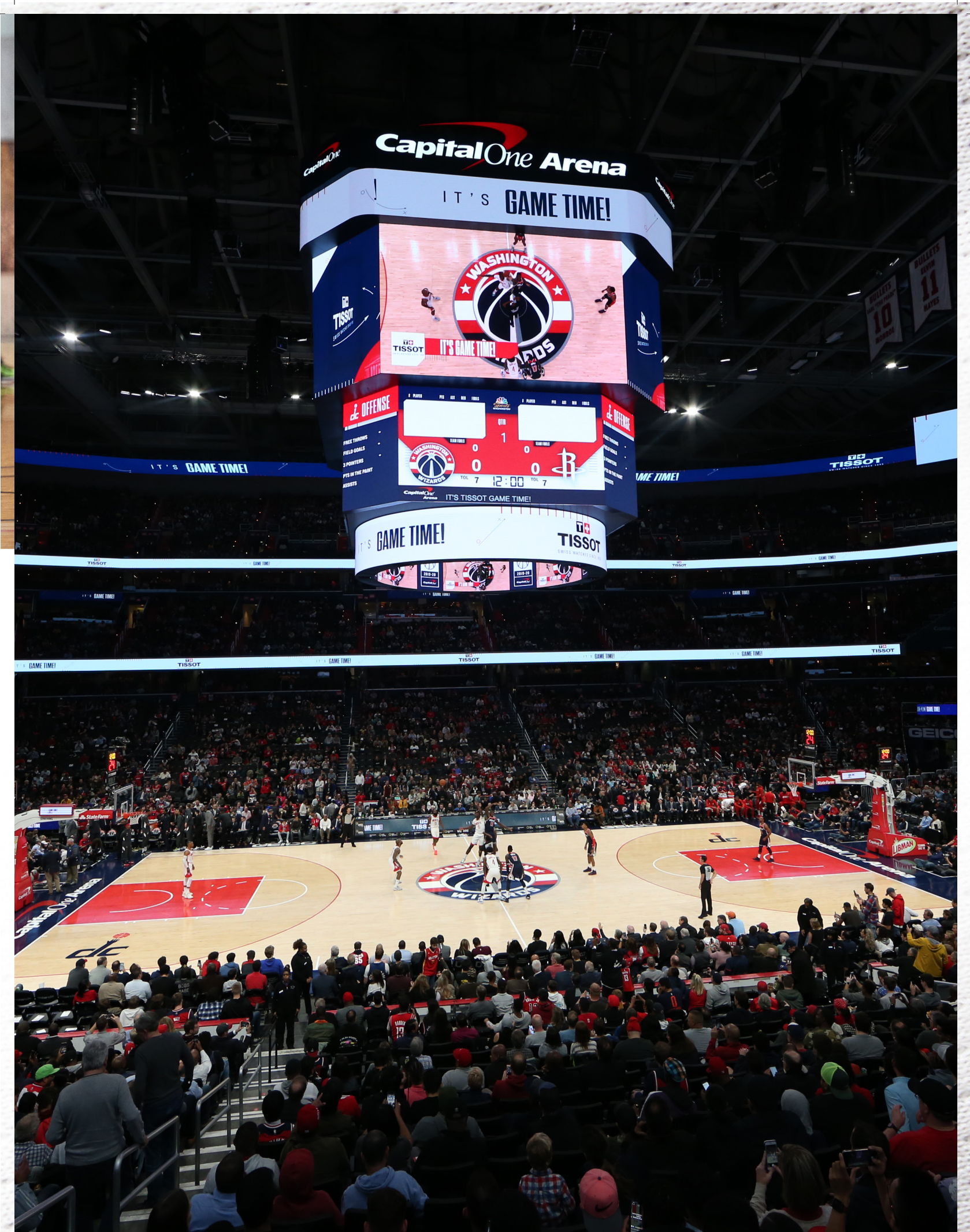


Finally, you'll need to set up your schedule for the season. How often will you practice, and for how long? Are all of the games set up by the league or do you need to schedule some? What tournaments might you play in, and are they level appropriate for your team? These things need to be figured out prior to the season and communicated clearly with players and parents alike. Parents have to shuffle a lot of schedules; the more information you can give them early on, the happier they will be.

TIP: Schedule a meeting with players and parents at the start of the season.

Use this time to hand out important documents, schedules, contact information, uniforms, etc.; and to go over your expectations for the season. Keep the meeting brief. Before or after one of your first practices usually works well for everyone's schedule.









EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

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- 🏀 **BASKETBALLS** – Make sure you have the correct basketball for your level of play. Check with your league organizer/athletic director if you are unsure. While it may be ideal to have a basketball for each player on your team (or two!), that is not always a realistic option; you can always adjust drills accordingly.
- 🏀 **GAME UNIFORMS** – Are you ordering uniforms? Does your rec league provide a certain number of shirts? Are there certain league rules that need to be adhered to regarding color? Know these things in advance. Ordering uniforms can take time; make sure you allow plenty of time before your first game. If uniforms are provided by your league organizer or athletic director, be sure to know how many full sets you have prior to making cuts.
- 🏀 **PRACTICE JERSEYS AND/OR PINNIES** – You're going to want to have competitive drills and scrimmages in practice. If your budget allows it, reversible practice jerseys will make these drills much easier. If not, pinnies are a terrific, low price alternative.



- 🏀 **CONES** – When setting up drills, especially for younger, less experienced players, having a couple of cones will make your life much easier. Placing them on the court allows players to know exactly where they need to be at a certain time. In lieu of cones, a chair or other stationary item can serve the same purpose.
- 🏀 **DRY ERASE CLIPBOARD** – A must for all coaches. Players will have an easier time understanding what you want them to do if you can diagram it on a dry-erase board during time outs.
- 🏀 **WHISTLE** – Some coaches prefer to go without one, but a whistle can help keep your practices organized and running smoothly.





THE PRACTICE PLAN

Before each practice, take some time to think about what you want to accomplish that day.

Write your ideas down. How much time do you want to dedicate to skill development? Learning a new set play? Conditioning? A good practice plan will help keep you organized and keep you on task. If in the middle of practice you find you need to spend a little more time on something, you can adjust accordingly. But going into a practice without a plan is a recipe for disorganization and chaos; and your players will notice!

Your practice plan must be unique to your team's age, ability and to your own personal coaching style. It will also change as the season progresses. You'll need to put more teaching time aside early in the season, as your sets and certain drills may be new to many of your players. As the season progresses, you'll be able to accomplish more things each day.

WHAT GOES INTO A GOOD PRACTICE?

WARMUP:

Jumping into intense competition is a good way to get your players hurt. A good 5 to 10 minute dynamic warmup is a great place to start any practice.

DYNAMIC WARMUP EXAMPLES:

- **High Knees** – while running, players bring their knees up higher than they normally would. Arm opposite the raised leg reaches to the sky.
- **Butt Kicks** – players kick their heels towards their backside while running.
- **Knee Hug** – while walking, hug your knee close to your chest, then step. Repeat with opposite leg.
- **Frankensteins** – kick your leg forward while walking. Have both hands straight in front of you and try to kick your fingertips. Alternate legs.
- **Carioca** – start with your feet shoulder lengths apart and your knees bent. Move laterally, crossing your foot in front of you, then back to your starting stance, and then behind you, and repeat.

THE PRACTICE PLAN

FUNDAMENTALS:

Be sure to set aside some practice time every day to work on the core fundamentals of basketball. Coaches can sometimes be so concerned with fine tuning their defense or running the perfect set that they forget to work on the “fundies.” Make drills emphasizing ball handling, shooting, and footwork a part of every practice.

Fundamentals encompass more than just individual skill development; it’s about forming your team’s identity. If you want to have an up-tempo, pressing team, this needs to be practiced and preached every day. It doesn’t just happen on its own!

DEFENSIVE WORK:

While most players have more fun on the offensive side of the ball, a strong defense is what will take your team to the next level. ALL defense starts with good man to man principles. Even if you see yourself as a “zone coach,” it’s important to teach your players the keys to playing good man to man. It will only make your other defenses stronger. Spend time working on fundamental footwork and positioning every day.

When teaching a zone defense or full court pressure, break things down using a “whole-part-whole” teaching method (i.e. show it, break down every aspect, and then put it back together).

OFFENSIVE WORK:

Spend some time each practice running through your sets. At the start of a season, this time may be dedicated to one or two plays, while later in the season you may be able to run through your entire offensive playbook. Correct errors and show all options. Do not allow your players to go through the motions.





TIP: Anticipate ways in which the defense can disrupt your play and share it with your players. Give them options to counter.

Good offensive players are able to read and react to any situation. Don't let your players become robots!



SCRIMMAGE TIME:

Allow yourself some time to scrimmage, but don't overdo it. Make sure your scrimmages are "controlled." Don't be afraid to stop play to correct a mistake or to teach something new. Mix-up teams to see different matchups.

WRAP IT UP:

Try to end practice with a fun, competitive drill. It's helpful to make this drill have a measurable aspect to it, so players can get excited as they improve over the course of the season. Talk to your team as a group before dismissing them. Review what went well that day, what still needs work, and remind players of upcoming important dates.



TIP:

As coaches, we are often so caught up with correcting every little mistake that we forget to acknowledge our players when they do well.



SAMPLE 1 HOUR PRACTICE LAYOUT *(drills will vary)*

- 0:00** Dynamic Warmup
- 0:05** Ball Handling
- 0:12** Shooting
- 0:18** Defensive Footwork
- 0:25** Defensive Drill Work
- 0:35** Transition Offense
- 0:42** Offensive Review / Sets
- 0:48** Scrimmage
- 0:58** Free Throws
- 1:00** Break





SKILL DEVELOPMENT



SKILL DEVELOPMENT



In this section, we'll discuss the primary areas of individual skill development that you should be working on with your players.

It is important to remember that the key to getting better is by doing things fundamentally correct. Take things slowly with younger players. Fix things that are incorrect, but do it in a positive, encouraging way. Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither are basketball players.

In each drill, instruct your players to find their baseline; the speed at which they can successfully complete the drill, correctly and comfortably. Once they find that baseline, push it just a little bit. If the fastest they can complete a ball handling drill is at a speed of 3 (out of 10), push them to try it at 4 (but don't make them try it at a 10!). Players need to be pushed out of their comfort zone to get better, but not so far that they get discouraged and give up.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

For every drill, players should begin in a low athletic stance; hips back, chest up, knees bent. Shoulders should be directly over the player's toes. Too often a player will bend their knees without ensuring that their hips are back. This can lead to strain on the knees, that can cause issues later on.

BALL HANDLING

The game of basketball is changing. The days of one primary ball handler and two “big” who play 90% of the time with their backs to the basket are over. These days everyone needs a “handle,” no matter the position.

Dribbling, like any skill, takes time to perfect. Most young players will be strong hand dominant; meaning they spend most of their time dribbling with their strong hand. It is vital that we make sure players practice equally with both hands. What is done with the right must be done with the left, and vice versa.

Here we will discuss two different types of drills to improve a player’s ball handling – stationary and on the move.

TIP: As important as ball handling is, it’s equally important that players don’t overuse the dribble.

Good offenses falter when a player kills the movement by pounding the oxygen out of the ball. The dribble should be used to advance the ball, get a better passing angle, or to relieve pressure. That’s it.



THE PRACTICE PLAN


STATIONARY BALL HANDLING

DRILL SET #1 – MARAVICH SERIES

Named after “Pistol” Pete Maravich, this series of drills is a terrific foundation for all players of every skill level. You can do the entire series as one “drill,” or pick and choose which you want to use.

- 🏀 **Finger Tip Taps** – Hold the ball out in front of you with arms straight. Tap the ball back and forth between your fingertips. Once comfortable, start moving the ball down to your waist and then back up over your head, keeping your arms straight the entire time.
- 🏀 **Ball Slaps** – Start with the ball out in front of you, with one hand below and one hand above the ball. Take the bottom hand off the ball as you rotate your top hand to the bottom. The hand that was the bottom slaps the top of the ball, becoming the top hand. Rotate back and forth.
- 🏀 **Ball Wraps** – Wrap the ball in a circle clockwise around your head for 5 to 10 reps, move ball to your waist and repeat, down to your ankles, and then back up again.
- 🏀 **Ball Wraps** – One Leg – Wrap the ball clockwise around your right leg for 10 seconds, then reverse directions. Repeat with left leg.
- 🏀 **Figure 8 – No Dribble** – Start with the ball in your right hand, in front of your right leg. Push the ball between your legs to your left hand, and then wrap the ball around your left leg. Push the ball back through your legs to your right hand, and wrap back to the front of your right leg. That’s one rep. Do 20+ reps, or as many reps you can do in a set amount of time.
- 🏀 **Pound Dribble** – Dribble the ball with your right hand as hard as you can, as if you were trying to hammer a nail with the basketball. The ball should be almost to the point where it’s out of control. Do 3 sets of 10 dribbles.
- 🏀 **Machine Gun Dribble** – Similar to the pound dribble, only this time dribble the ball as fast and as low to the ground as you can. For this dribble, do 3 sets of 10 seconds each. You can combine Pound and Machine Gun Dribbles into one drill, alternating between the two.



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- **One Leg Dribble** – Dribble the ball low, making a circle around your right foot with only your right hand. After a predetermined number of reps, reverse the direction. Repeat with your left hand.
 - **Figure 8 Dribble** – Dribble the ball low, making a circle around your right foot. Cross the ball over to your left hand between your legs, and repeat on the left leg. Repeat.

DRILL #2 – TWO BALL DRILLS

- **Pound & Machine Gun Dribble** – The same as described in the Maravich series, only with a basketball in each hand.
- **Pistons** – Alternate your dribbles. When the ball on the left side hits the floor, the ball on the right side is in your hand (and vice versa). Dribble as fast as you can.



THE PRACTICE PLAN

ON THE MOVE

DRILL #1 – BASIC SKILL LEVEL

- 🏀 **Dribble Slalom** – Line up 5 cones, about 3-5 feet apart. Players weave through the cones with their dribble, switching hands as they go.

DRILL #2 – INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED SKILL LEVEL

- 🏀 **6 Dribble Drill** – A drill to work on 6 common dribble moves that can be done with an individual or as a group. Player(s) line up at half court, facing the basket. The players make their dribble move outside the three-point line (for younger players/beginners, it is okay to move this to the foul line). After completing the dribble move, the player must get to the rim in as few dribbles as possible, finishing with a layup. Start by going through all 6 dribbles on the right side, then reverse it and do the same on the left.

TIP: Make sure players stay low; the only time they should be straight up and down is when they're extending to the rim for a layup.

A low, balanced stance is key to being a successful ball handler. The player's shoulder should be even with the defender's hip, and the first dribble after each move needs to be a push out dribble to create separation.



THE SIX DRIBBLES ARE:

Hesitation – Also known as a change of pace. The player slows the dribble almost to a stop before pushing the ball past the defender.

Stutter Step – Squeak the floor! Jab your feet in rapid succession – left, right, left, right – to keep the defender off balance, unsure of which direction the player might go with the ball; then push the ball out past the defender. Remember to stay low!



Players should change their pace before every dribble move – not just on the hesitation.



Inside-Out Dribble – The fake crossover. The player starts as if they are going to do a crossover, but instead of pushing the ball to their opposite hand, they push the ball back with the same hand. Be sure to use a head fake and a small jab step to “sell” the move.

Crossover – Everyone loves a good crossover. The problem, though, is that most young players do the move incorrectly. A good crossover should be low, quick, and take you forward – past the defender; not sideways, and certainly not backwards. For the purpose of this drill, have players start with the ball in their right hand, crossover outside the three point line, and push the ball into the lane for a layup.

Between The Legs – Much like the crossover, this move needs to be done low, quick, and take you by the defender. The ball starts in the player’s right hand. After a quick hesitation, the left foot steps in a 45 degree angle, the player’s body almost in a lunge position. The ball crosses over in the space you’ve created between your two legs. On the push out dribble, be sure to bring the right leg forward to protect the ball from the defender.

Behind The Back – Our third crossover style dribble takes the ball behind the player’s back. As the player’s right foot plants, they “rip” the ball behind their back. The ball should land outside your opposite foot, and the next dribble is a push out dribble past the defender.

TIP: Good players go **BY** their defender, not **AROUND**.

A successful move creates separation and puts the defender behind us. If the first post-move dribble goes sideways, it’s easy for the defense to recover. Be sure your players are pushing the ball past the defender.





PASSING

THE BASICS

THE CHEST PASS

The player holds the ball around their chest with both hands. They should step in the direction they want to throw the pass, snapping a crisp, clean pass off with both hands. The ball should reach their teammate on the fly, with some pace to it.

THE BOUNCE PASS

Like a chest pass, this pass is thrown with two hands; only this time we will bounce the ball to our teammate rather than throw it in the air. The ball should hit the floor approximately 2/3rds of the way to the recipient. This pass is often used to lead a player to the basket, and can be easier for players on the move to catch.

THE HOOK PASS

Sometimes called a post entry pass. The player steps towards their teammate and "hooks" a one handed bounce pass to them. They should step with the foot on the same side as the hand they're throwing the pass with, i.e. if they are throwing a right handed hook pass, step with the right foot, and vice versa.

THE OVERHEAD PASS

Similar to a soccer throw in (without the foot drag!). Just as the chest pass starts at the player's chest, the overhead pass is a two hand pass that starts over the player's head. This pass is most often used as an outlet pass off a rebound, or for older players, as a skip pass over the defense's head in the half court.

DRILL #1 – PARTNER PASSING

Players line up opposite each other on the baseline. Player A has their feet on the sideline, Player B has their feet on the Lane Line (move younger players closer together if necessary). The players pass the ball back and forth while shuffling from baseline to half court and back again. First rotation is a chest pass, next rotation is a bounce pass, last rotation is an overhead pass.

DRILL #2 – THREE PERSON WEAVE

One player lines up directly under the hoop with the ball, while two other players, one on each side, line up outside the three point line. The drill begins with the middle player throwing a chest pass to one of the two players. As the ball is in the air, the player "follows their pass," running towards the player they just passed the ball to. The player who the ball was passed to, meanwhile, begins moving diagonally towards the center of the court. After catching the ball, the player passes the ball to the third player on the opposite side of the court. This movement should continue for the length of the court, with the player who receives the last pass laying the ball into the basket.

TIP:

Don't forget the fake! Players should get used to using a pass fake in order to throw off the defense as to where they may throw the ball. A good hook pass is normally set up with a fake overhead.



SHOOTING



STAY SQUARED

A good shot starts with your feet.

Wait, what?

Yes, with your feet. There are two things you need to do consistently to be a great shooter – get the ball in the air (i.e. have good shooting arc), and keep the ball straight. Both of these things begin with a player's lower body.

Try this exercise - stand up and face a certain point in whatever room you're currently in. If you're in the gym, face the rim. Next, move your feet at a 45-degree angle to your left, while keeping your shoulders squared up to the front of the rim. Feel that? That's your body fighting against itself. Your shoulders want to face the same direction that your feet are facing.

When you square up for a shot, but you forget about your feet, you're setting yourself up for failure. Early in a practice or game, this might not be that big a deal. But as the practice wears on or the game advances to the second half, fatigue will inevitably start to set in. Your body will want to go to where it's most comfortable.

If a player's feet stay squared to the rim, their hips and shoulders will follow suit.

RYTHYM & RANGE

To watch a great shooter like Bradley Beal shoot is a thing of beauty. It seems effortless. There's no herky jerky movement. Everything is smooth and devoid of wasted motion; even from well beyond the three point arc.

This is what a good jumper should look like.

A good shooter will catch the ball with knees bent. Their energy transfers from their legs up through their body, releasing the ball as they reach the top of their jump.

SHOOTING

A good shooter is always shot ready – in their stance and ready to score before they even have the ball. They step to every pass while showing a target to the passer.

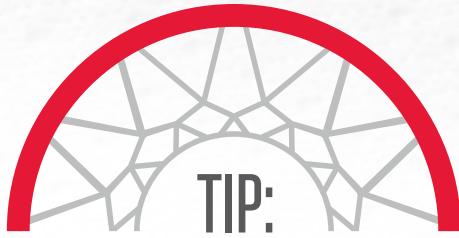
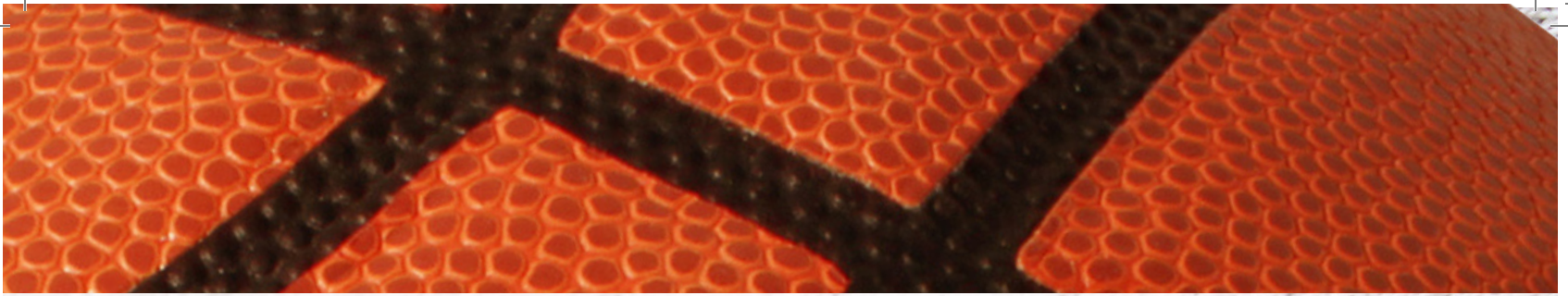
RELEASE & ROTATION

A player's fingers should be across the seams of the ball. This will give the ball the proper backspin. This is how we develop "shooter's roll" – where the seams on shots that are slightly off center catch the rim and roll into the basket. This isn't luck – it's a result of good rotation. If a shot has no rotation, like a knuckleball in baseball, nobody quite knows where it's going to go after it hits the rim.

The player's shooting arm should be bent in an L-shape, with their hand cocked behind the ball. The guide hand rests on the side of the ball, keeping it steady on the shooting hand. As our arms raise up into our shot, the guide hand falls away, and the elbow of the shooting arm locks out as our wrist snaps at the top of our jump. The shooting hand should be directed towards the center of the rim. To get proper arc on the ball, the player's elbow should be at about the level of their eyebrow. If the elbow is too low, the shot will be flat. Too high and the ball will shoot right up into the sky (and possibly knock some dust off the roof!).

TIP: If your player's shot is spinning sideways or diagonally, they are probably keeping the guide hand on the ball for too long.





Players do not need a coach to do this drill. All they need is themselves, a ball, and a rim. In fact, even the rim isn't always necessary. A player can work on their form and the rotation of the ball just by shooting it at an imaginary rim in the gym while waiting their turn, or in the driveway by themselves at home!



REPETITION

Becoming a great shooter isn't an every now and then thing; it's an every day thing. It takes endless hours to perfect one's shooting form, and endless hours to keep it that way. Players can often get frustrated with the process and fall back on bad habits. Keep things positive, and continue to reinforce the fundamentals each and every day.

DRILL #1 – FORM SHOOTING – INDIVIDUAL

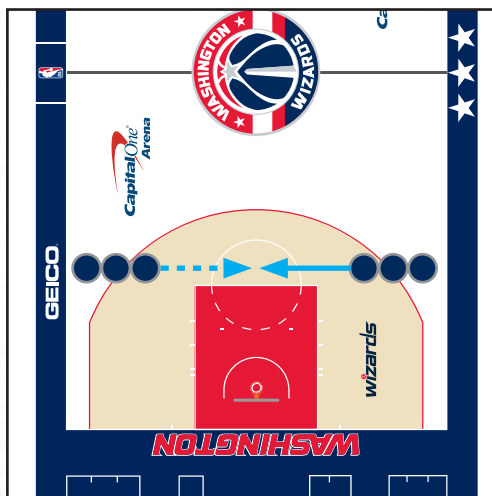
Start 2 feet in front of the rim in a low, shot ready position, but with the player's shooting arm straight out in front with their palm facing up. Pass the ball to the player's shooting hand, and make sure they rotate the ball until their fingertips are across the seams. Once the ball is in the proper position, have the player rotate the ball into a shooting position. The player lifts up into their shot, snapping their wrist and holding the follow through. At the end of their shot, the player should be on their toes (but for the sake of this drill, do not jump). The body should be straight up and down. The momentum from the shot should cause a player to fall forward if they hold on their toes for too long.

Repeat this motion over and over again. After a set number of consecutive makes, and/or a set time frame (you decide), the player should take one big step back and repeat the drill again. Emphasis is on keeping feet and shoulders squared, reaching up and out with their shooting hand, and holding their follow through.

DRILL #2 – FORM SHOOTING AS A TEAM

As important as individual form shooting is to a player becoming a great knock down shooter, it isn't always a realistic use of your practice time, especially if you have limited time or a smaller facility. This drill will allow you to work on the same concepts in a group setting.

Form two lines, one on each wing (foul line extended) opposite from each other. The line on the right wing is the passing line and starts with the ball, the line on the left wing is the shooting line. Player from the shooting line runs to the center of the foul line – low, shot ready and showing a good target – and receives the ball from the passing line. After the catch, the player squares themselves to the rim and takes a jump shot (for younger groups, move the lines in so that the catch is around the dotted line). Shooter goes to the end of the passing line, passer goes to the end of the shooting line.



SHOOTING

After everyone has taken a few shots, have the shooting line shoot a one dribble pull up. After the catch, the player rips the ball low and tight across their body and takes one dribble with their left hand before pulling up for a jump shot. Be sure that players are low before the catch, and remain low through the catch and dribble. Repeat on the left side.

DRILL #3 – THE MIKAN DRILL

We can't forget about the layup! This classic drill, named after NBA legend George Mikan, is a mainstay for players from 6 years old all the way to the NBA. This drill will help players develop a soft touch around the basket, and help with their conditioning and athleticism to boot. The player should start in front of the rim, holding the ball at about eye level. The player steps to the right side of the rim with their left foot. Their right leg lifts and the knee turns in towards the basket, and they lay the ball high off the glass with their right hand. Immediately move to grab the ball out of the rim (don't let it hit the floor!) and keep the ball high (eye level), and proceed to take a layup on the left side. This time the right foot plants, and the left leg lifts, knee turning to the basket. The player should repeat this motion for either a set number of makes or a set length of time.



TIP: The inventors of the backboard cheated for us. They put a target for where the ball should go on a layup. The player should aim to shoot the ball off the top corner of the box every time.

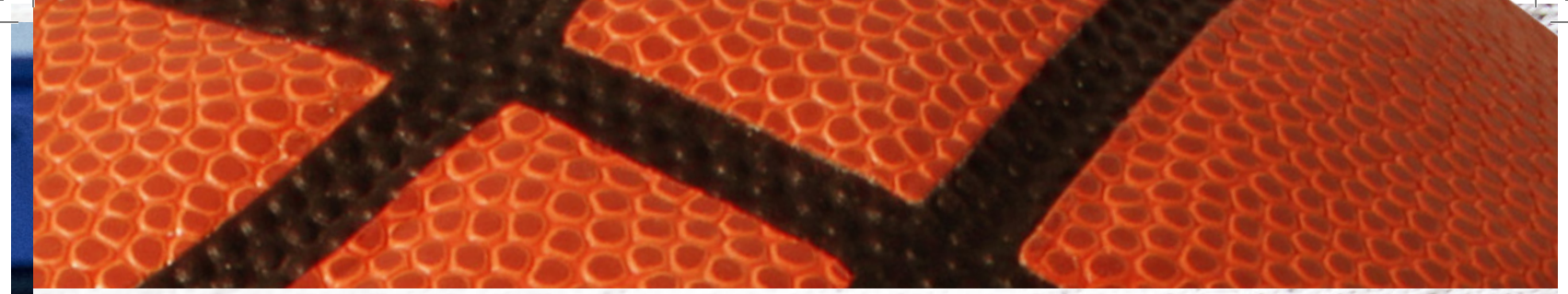
The angle such that the ball will go in the majority of the time. Additionally, come game time, if a player's normal instinct is to finish high off the glass, they will still have a good chance to score through contact. And one!








DEFENSE



The foundation of being a good individual defender starts with three things – your feet, your head, and your heart.


FEET

The hardest thing for young players to do when it comes to defense is to not use their hands. They'll reach, grab, pull, and lunge for the ball. This leads to easy baskets and unnecessary fouls, both for the player in question and for his teammates who need to help after the offensive player goes by. A strong defender stays in front of the offensive player with good footwork, not by clenching and grabbing.




HEAD

Being a good defender is as much about positioning as it is about athleticism; being in the right place at the right time. Being a smart defender is just as important as being a quick defender.



HEART

When it's all said and done, you need to WANT to be a great defender. The player needs to take pride in stopping the offensive player.



THE STANCE

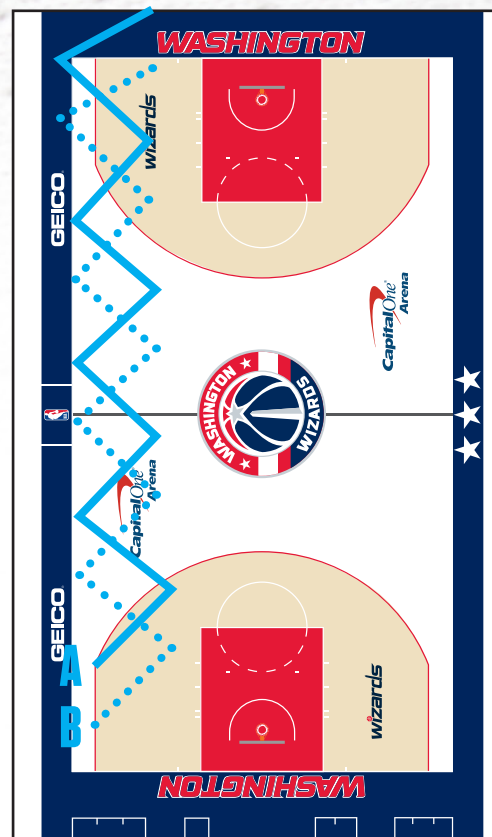
- Feet an inch or two wider than shoulder's width apart.
- Butt back, head up. Read the defender's midsection.
- Hands are wide, mirroring the movement of the ball. Reaching in throws off a player's balance and leads to more fouls than it does turnovers.

DEFENSE

DRILL – ZIG ZAGS

Partner up your players and have the two groups form two lines on the baseline, one in each corner. Player A is the offensive player, player B is the defensive player. Player A dribbles the ball down the court, “zig-zaging” between the lane line and the sideline. Player A’s job (at first) is simply to make Player B work. Do not allow them to “blow by” the defender in a straight line. Player B needs to work to stay in front of Player A, “turning” Player A at each line (the sideline or the lane line). To “turn” the offensive player, Player B needs to get the center of their chest even with Player A’s outside foot.

After a few reps up and down the court, allow Player A to go “live” with the ball at half court.



TIP: Too often coaches give too much attention to overrated statistics. Most aspects of truly great defense largely go unnoticed to the untrained eye.

It’s easy for a young player to get discouraged if they don’t see their stat sheet filled up with blocked shots and steals. In practice, make a point to highlight the player who forces a player into taking a bad shot, or stops penetration and makes the point guard pick up his dribble. These “little things” usually go overlooked, but are the true keys to a great defense.





REBOUNDING





WASHINGTON WIZARDS											
PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO
17	8	2	5	5	1	17	8	2	5	5	1
15	3	3	3	2	3	15	3	3	3	2	3
12	9	1	1	1	1	12	9	1	1	1	1
6	1	2	0	0	2	6	1	2	0	0	2
15	0	0	0	0	2	15	0	0	0	0	2
72	24	17	16			72	24	17	16		

TEAM STATS									
FG	2PT/5PT	FT	3PT	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PTS	REB
28/54	17/21	5/6	52%	52%	83%	3	2	9	15

TEAM LEADERS											
PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO
15	9	5	1	0		15	9	5	1	0	

NBA EASTERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS 1976

8:34 PM	PHI	WSH	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO
	26	24	14	17	4	2	6	3

72	WASHINGTON WIZARDS	PLS	TOL	PLAYER	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO
		2	5	17	8	9	5	1	0	
				POINTS	2	8				

StubHub

GEICO GEICO GEICO GEICO GEICO

REBOUNDING

DEFENSIVE REBOUNDING

Every coach has been there; your team has been playing lock down defense for 20 some odd seconds, stifling the opponent at every turn. They finally put up an off balance, contested shot which barely hits side rim... and the ball bounces right into the hands of an offensive player, who lays it in, or worse, lays it in while getting fouled by an out of position defender. All that work thrown away simply because somebody forgot to box out.

THE BOX OUT

When a shot goes up, the defensive player needs to find, or check, the player they are guarding. They should position their bodies between the player and the rim. Use a reverse pivot to spin back towards the offensive player, with arms wide and hands up, and immediately track the flight of the ball.

Stay in contact with the offensive player as they move. Do not release from the opponent until the ball makes contact with the rim. Read the bounce of the ball off the rim, and chase it down; pursuing the ball with both hands. After retrieving the ball, keep the ball high and "chin it," keeping the ball locked between your hands with your elbows out wide so that opponents can't slap the ball away.

DRILL – TEAM REBOUNDING

Three defensive players start in the lane around the dotted line, while three offensive players are positioned at the free throw line and on either side of the lane. A coach should stand at the top of the three point circle with the ball. On the slap of the ball by the coach, the three defensive players begin rotating clockwise in a circle, until the coach shoots the ball. On the shot, the players must find the closest player, box them out and control the rebound. If the offensive team controls the rebound, go again. If the defensive team gets the rebound, rotate.

OFFENSIVE REBOUNDING

Offensive rebounds can change the course of a game by giving you "free" points and adding extra possessions to your team's offense. Good offensive rebounders are tireless workers, constantly putting pressure on the defense with their relentless pursuit of the ball.

One problem that over aggressive offensive rebounders run into are silly fouls. Picking up a foul 90 feet from the opponent's basket is never a good idea. Great offensive rebounders sometimes need to be patient and opportunistic; continuing to test the defense, waiting for that time that somebody forgets to box them out.

DRILL – OFFENSIVE PUT BACKS

Have the player stand 2-3 feet away from the rim and toss the ball off the backboard. The player must pursue the ball with both arms raised, and keep the ball high above eye level. Jump back up quickly, laying the ball high off the glass. Remember – it's not always about who jumps the highest, but who jumps the quickest.





FORMING AN IDENTITY





DEFENSE



DEFENSE

PHILOSOPHY

You will have to decide what type of defense you're going to play; will you be a man coach or a zone coach? There are a lot of factors that go in to deciding what type of team you will be – how big is your team? How athletic is your team? What about your opponents – are you playing teams that shoot the light out, or will you be playing a lot of teams that use heavy dribble penetration to attack to the rim?

Whatever it is that you decide, remember this – to play good man to man, you need to understand zone principles, and to play good zone, you need to understand man to man principles.

So if you want to sit in a 2-3 zone all day, and that's all you practice – remember that a) your defense will never be as good as it could be, and more importantly, b) you're stunting the growth of your players by limiting their knowledge of the game.

MAN-TO-MAN

You'll see many coaches hold a fist up when they switch to man to man. This isn't an arbitrary thing. A fist is five fingers clinched together, working as one. The strength of the fist is greater than the strength of the individual fingers. This is how a good man defense works; five players working together as one cohesive unit.



THERE ARE 5 KEY AREAS THAT GOOD MAN-TO- -MAN TEAMS MUST MASTER.



A proper closeout is done at full speed with choppy feet. The closer the defender gets to his man, the shorter his/her steps get. Make sure the defender has high hands to defend against a quick shot.



BALL PRESSURE

It is vital that you put pressure on the ball. The player guarding the ball must make the offensive player uncomfortable. If the player can see the court with ease, it's easy to pick apart the defense.

CONTEST/DENY PASSES AND CUTTERS

The goal of a good defense should be to dictate the play and disrupt the offense. If an offense is allowed to pass out of pressure freely your defense will break down. Whether you want to work on a full denial of the pass, or merely contest so that they catch further from the basket is something you'll have to decide; and don't forget about post entry passes!

Likewise, we must account for all cutters. The easiest way to defeat ball pressure is off a give and go – where the passer cuts to the rim when their defender “falls asleep” after the pass. Good man to man defenders always maintain “ball-you-man” position, ensuring they can see both the ball and their man. When the ball moves, you move. When the player moves, you move.

HELP & RECOVER

Good man to man defenders do not simply “guard their man”; they are also guarding the man with the ball. Players must rotate into help position relative to how dangerous their man is. The further away from the ball a player's man is, the further away from their man they can get. This is the “5 players operating as one” concept we spoke of earlier. We are ALL guarding the ball. If a player is beat off the dribble, it's the entire team's responsibility to be in proper help position. Again – the defense is in constant motion; ball moves, you move.

COMMUNICATE

In order to be in sync with each other, we need to communicate on the court. A player guarding the ball needs to know that the help defender is there, or that a screen is coming. A silent defense is a bad defense.

FINISH THE PLAY

When the shot goes up, box out and pursue the rebound! If the ball is deflected, secure it! If the ball is on the floor, dive on it! Great defense takes maximum effort at all times. Don't waste this effort by failing to finish the play.

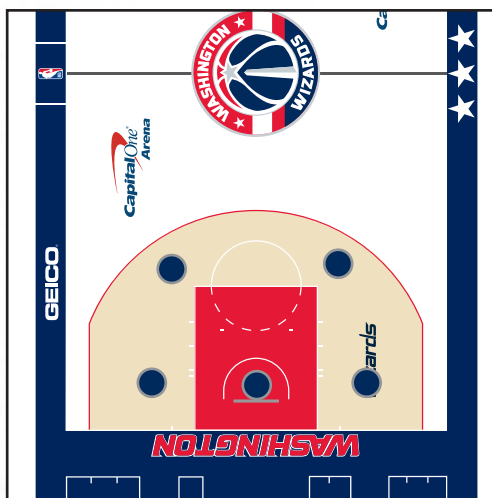
DEFENSE

ZONE DEFENSE

The main difference between man defense and zone is that rather than be assigned an offensive player, defenders are assigned an area. Defenders still must react and reposition themselves in relation to the location of the ball – only this time they stay (for the most part) within their assigned area.

Players need to have their hands up at all times, making the zone look bigger than it actually is. This will also allow them to get their hands in the passing lane to deflect passes. When the ball enters a player's area, the player should react the same way they would if they were closing out in man to man – chop your feet to close out under control, and apply pressure to the ball handler – making it difficult for the player to make decisions.

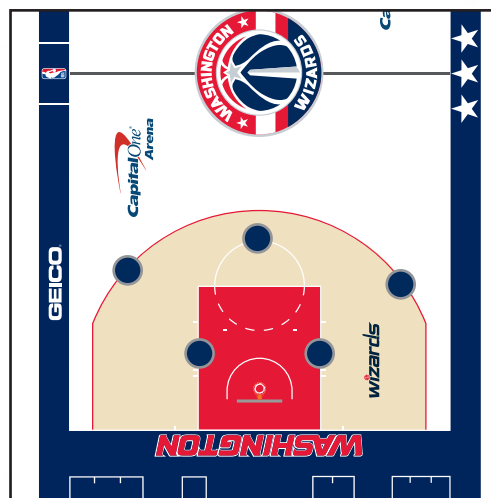
TYPES OF ZONES



2-3 Zone

Strengths: Defending the lane, rebounding, stopping baseline penetration

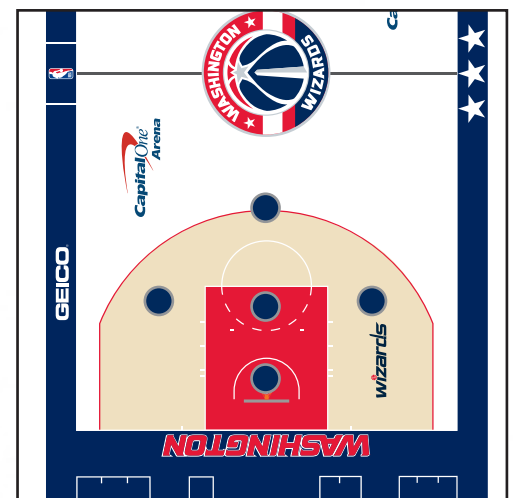
Weaknesses: Threes from the wing, middle penetration
Variation: 2-1-2 Zone



3-2 Zone

Strengths: Defending the wing three

Weaknesses: Corners, high post
Variation: 1-2-2 Zone



1-3-1 Zone

Strengths: Across free throw line, top of key

Weaknesses: Corners, weakside rebounding

TRAPING OUT OF THE ZONE

One variation that you can add to any zone is the trap. When a ball comes to an area, the two closest players trap the ball. To form the trap, the two defensive players come together, their feet/legs interlocking to form a wall in front of the offensive player. Arms and hands should be out, mirroring the ball. DO NOT REACH. The point of the trap is not to steal the ball. A trap is not designed for the trapping players to get the steal. Sure, it'll happen from time to time – but the point of the trap is to force the offensive player into throwing a lobbed or deflected pass, which one of the other three players on the court will steal.

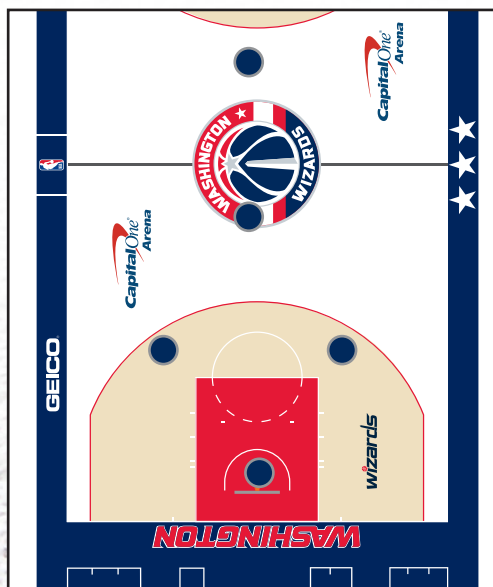
While the trap is occurring, the other three players need to position themselves accordingly. With 3 defenders now responsible for guarding four offensive players, they will need to prioritize which offensive players warrant the most attention. Generally, the closer the offensive player is to the ball, the closer the defender needs to be. Most traps will feature the two players in a denial position of the two most dangerous offensive passing targets, while the third defender “splits” the distance between the two remaining players – shading, or leaning slightly in the direction of whichever player is closer to the ball.

FULL COURT DEFENSE

Full court pressure is a terrific way to change the pace of a game – whether you need to change the pace of a game that's slipping away, or if you want to dictate the pace of the game from the opening whistle.

Just like in the half court, you can play either man to man or zone. Full court defenses can be high intensity, looking to create a chaotic, fast paced game; or they can provide token pressure, used to delay more than trap. This type of full court pressure is especially effective if you play with a shot clock. Sometimes coaches will deploy both types in order to keep the opponent off balance.

Here are two examples of full court zone pressure.



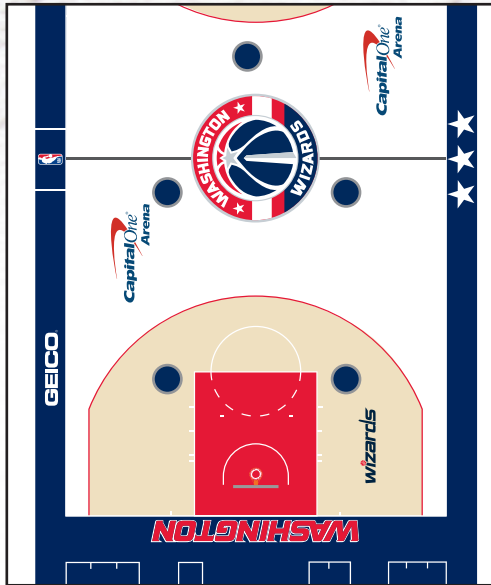
1-2-1-1 Full Court Press

Strengths: Highly aggressive, creates scoring chances close to basket, speeds up opponent

Weaknesses: Requires great energy and full buy in, over aggression can sometimes lead to cheap fouls or easy layups



DEFENSE



2-2-1 3/4 Court Press

Strengths: Disrupts tempo, runs down the shot clock (if applicable)

Weaknesses: Falls apart if opponent can get the ball to the middle of the court





A young boy with dark hair, wearing a dark blue athletic shirt and shorts, is captured in motion on a basketball court. He is dribbling an orange basketball with both hands, looking intently towards the left. The background shows a gymnasium with blue bleachers and a basketball hoop. A dark blue arrow-shaped graphic points to the right, containing the word "OFFENSE" in white capital letters.

OFFENSE



OFFENSE

PHILOSOPHY

Just as you need to decide what kind of defensive team you're going to be, you also need to decide what offense you'll run. There are many different types of offenses – way too many to go over in this section – but we'll do our best to give you a broad overview.

For specific plays and sets, be sure to visit the Jr. Wizards website at <http://www.washingtonwizards.com/jrwizards>.

BEFORE WE BEGIN – THE IMPORTANT STUFF

There are certain concepts that are common across every type of offense. These concepts are the most important things you will teach a young player when it comes to running an offense.

SPACING

It doesn't matter if you're a flex coach or a motion coach – if your team doesn't have proper floor spacing, your offense will fail; especially as you move up in age and level of competition. Good spacing forces defenders to make decisions – do I sag off the shooter to help, or do I stay and prevent a kick out three? If the floor is not spaced correctly, one defender can stop two players.

Good floor spacing generally means having your players stand about 12 to 15 feet apart. A greater distance makes it easier for the defense to jump the pass, while a shorter distance leads to easy double teams and turnovers.

TIMING

How many times do you see a player who thinks he's open start calling for the ball only to have the ball stolen by the defense when the pass is finally made? Most of the time this can be prevented with good timing. Timing is a two way street – both the cutter and the passer need to be on the same page. The cutter needs to arrive on time, while the passer needs to not hold on to the ball for too long and get the ball to the open man when they're open – not after the defense has had time to recover. If you have good timing and spacing, you're on your way to a good offense.

THE WHAT AND THE WHY

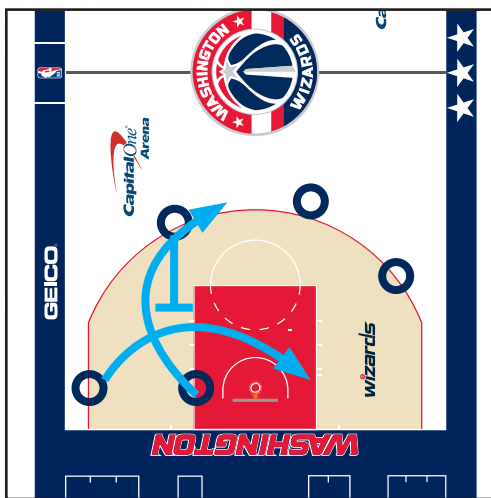
We don't want our players to be mechanical men, running through a set because this is what they were told to do. Take the time to break down your sets, explaining why you want the player to do something a certain way, what are all of the options off the set, and something that's often overlooked – what could go wrong and how to react to it. Work on this in practice so that your players can simply react during the game.



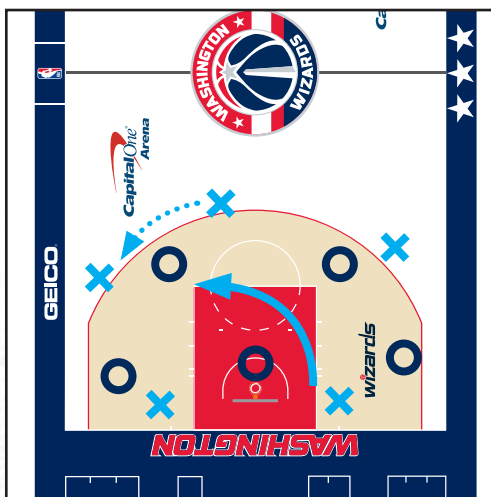
TYPES OF HALF-COURT OFFENSES

FREE FORM / MOTION OFFENSE

A free form offense is one based on a set of rules, as opposed to a set pattern. For example, if a guard passes it to the wing, they should cut to the basket, but if they pass it to another guard, they should set a down screen. The many options and read and react nature of these types of offenses make them very difficult for an opponent to prepare for. They also take the most time to perfect, as players will be free to make decisions on their own more often than in a patterned continuity style offense.



Continuity Offense



Zone Offense

CONTINUITY OFFENSE

Teams that run continuity styles of offense will run the same couple of patterns over and over again, hoping to wear down a defense by forcing them to defend repeated screens and cuts. The most common continuity offense is the flex offense.

QUICK HITTERS

A quick hitter is designed to get a certain player a shot in a certain area. These types of plays are usually run when you really need a basket – be it at the end of the game or half, or because your primary offense has stalled the last few possessions.

BLOBS AND SLOBS

Baseline and sideline out of bounds situations are often overlooked by coaches. This is a mistake. These situations, especially baseline out of bounds situations, should be looked at as opportunities to get easy baskets. Leave some time in each practice to work on a couple of options vs both man and zone.

ZONE OFFENSE

With so many teams running zone over man, it's important that you spend a decent amount of time going over how to attack different types of zones. From the point of view of the offense, there are really just two types of zones; the odd front zone, and the even front zone. An odd front zone (1-3-1, 3-2) should be attacked with an even front alignment on offense, whereas an even front zone (2-3, 2-1-2) should be attacked with an odd front offensive alignment.

Too often coaches will have players line up in a particular spot – the wing, for example – when setting up their zone offense. A good zone offense will line up in an area, specifically the gap between the two closest zone defenders. Instead of searching for a specific location on the court, the player needs to get into this gap between the two defenders.

OFFENSE

FULL-COURT / TRANSITION OFFENSE

Whether it's after a turnover, a rebound, or a made basket; transition offense is a great opportunity to pick up easy baskets. But don't leave it up to chance. Transition offense is more than just trying to run down the court faster than the other team. To truly capitalize, you need to be organized and efficient in what you do.

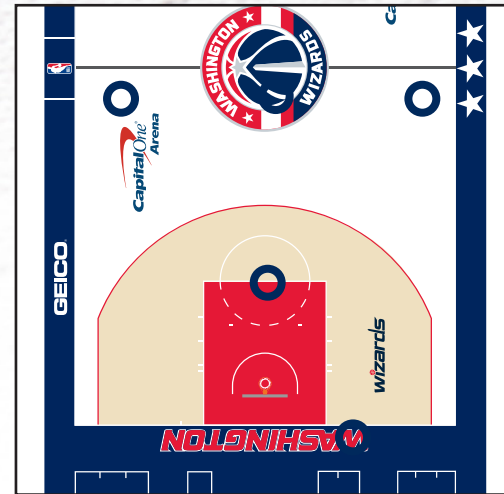
There are two main types of transition offense – numbered break or free flow. In a numbered fast break, every player knows their role. For example, if you're playing the 2 you always run down the right side of the court, if you're the 3 you always run down the left side, etc. etc. This is an easy type of break to teach, as it takes the decision-making process away from the player.

For more advanced players, you can try a free-flowing fast break. Here it is the responsibility of the players to fill each lane based on where they are when the break begins. If a player sees someone ahead of them fill the right lane, they need to move to an open lane – be it the left side or by trailing the play.

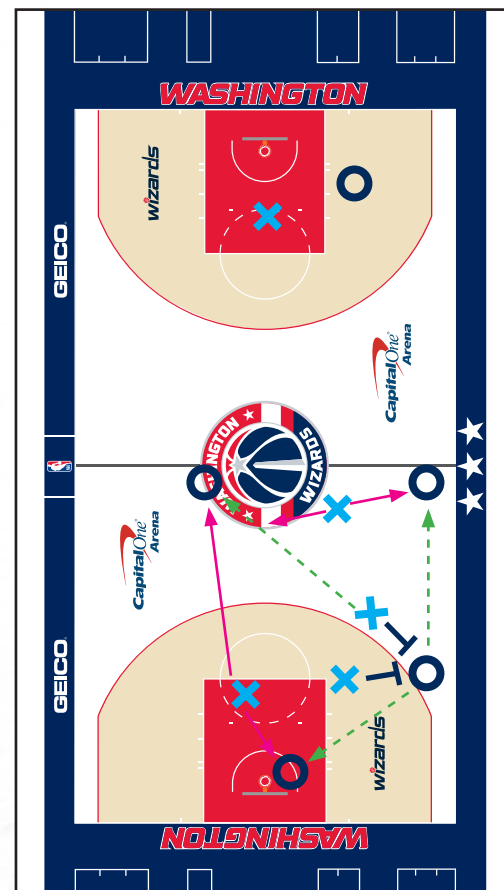
BREAKING THE PRESS

There are many ways to break full court pressure – and they can change based on the type of pressure you're facing. Whatever you decide, remember these three words – side, middle, reverse.

When playing tough full court zone pressure teams it can sometimes feel as if there's 12 defenders on the court – but of course there are only 5; and 2 of them are guarding one player. That leaves just 3 players to guard your remaining 4, and one of them will almost always start long, protecting the basket. Make sure you have one offensive player on the strong side, one in the middle gap, and another trailing the play as the reversal person. If spaced properly, one of these players should be open every time. The only way they wouldn't be open is if the defense never sent anyone long, in which case you should have an easy layup over the top.



Full-Court/Transition Offense

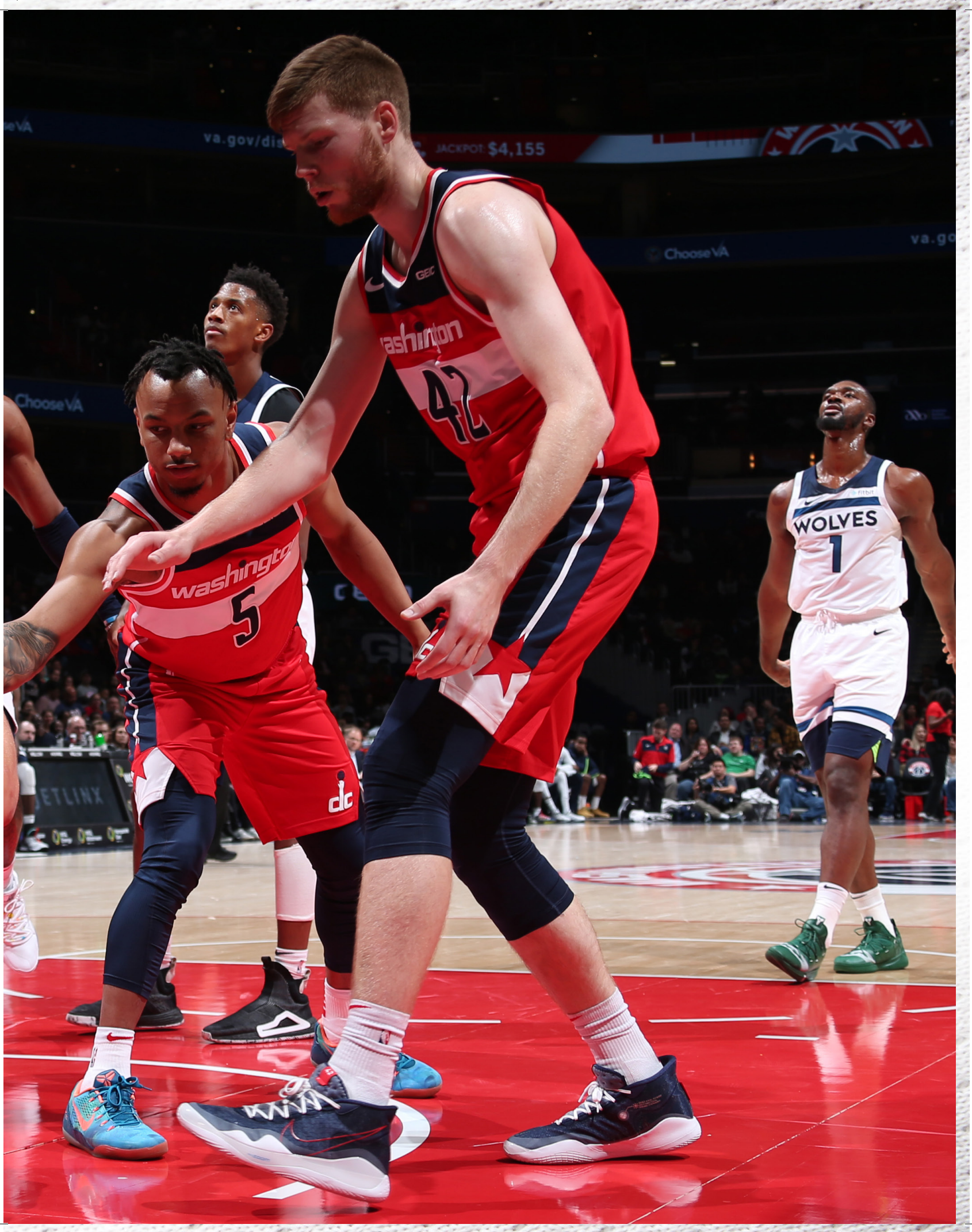


Side, Middle, Reverse





THE INTANGIBLES



THE INTANGIBLES

REFEREES

There are things that we can control and things we cannot. The referees are, unfortunately, one of those things that we can't control. It's important that your players understand that the officials will make good calls, the officials will make bad calls, and there's nothing they can do about it. The most important thing a player can do is play the next play. As frustrating as it can be at times to not get a call you think you deserved, complaining or sulking about it solves nothing, and often leads to easy baskets going the other way.

Equally important is how you deal with officials. You set the example for your players. If you lose your cool at every blown call, they will think that it's okay to do so as well. It's okay to ask questions and look for clarifications, but if you start to garner a reputation as a "hot head" who complains about every call, it will have a negative impact on your team, your players, and your athletic director/program director.

PARENTS

There's an old saying that "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." The overwhelming majority of parents you'll deal with will be supportive and positive towards what you do. It's the occasional exception to this rule that will take up most of your time.

If you keep an open dialogue with all of your parents, it will make dealing with issues that much easier. Parents love their kids, and their passion



TIP: DON'T MAKE IT PUBLIC

There may come a time in your coaching career where a fan, be it a parent, sibling, or a student at the school who isn't on the team, will take it upon themselves to critique your coaching decisions from the stands. It's important that you keep your cool in these situations. Ask your AD, league organizer, or even the officials for assistance in the moment, and deal with it behind closed doors after the game is over. As coaches, we are held to a higher standard. Lashing back at an abusive fan not only makes you look bad, but it also sets a bad example to your kids.

sometimes comes through in ways that even they wish that it wouldn't. Address poor behavior early on and don't allow it to snowball. Speak with your athletic director or league organizer about steps they can take to help you deal with especially difficult parents.

PLAYING TIME

Distribution of playing time will be the root cause of the majority of your coaching headaches, deserved or not. It's important heading into any season that you set clear expectations regarding playing time, both for players and parents. If you're coaching in a youth league that requires equal playing time? Give equal playing time! Nobody is signing you to an NBA coaching contract for winning your local youth development league.

COACH EVERYONE

While it may be tempting to devote most of your time to the better players, it's important that you spend your time coaching everyone on your roster.

The "last" player on your roster is just as important as your leading scorer. Even if you're coaching on the high school level, where playing time is not guaranteed, it's important that you spend as much time developing your bench as you do your starters.

This will create healthy competition within your team; a feeling that everyone has a chance to play if they perform well in practice. This will in turn lift your entire team up.

RUNNING UP THE SCORE

There will be times when you find yourself in a game where the opponent simply can't keep up. It is our responsibility to ensure that our kids act with class and sportsmanship both in victory and in defeat. Blowout victories should be opportunities to try something new that you might need later in a close game, or to get a player who doesn't play as often or is not a high scorer some more run or more touches. This should not be an opportunity to run up the score or embarrass an opponent.

We've all been on "the other side" of lopsided games at one point or another. It is our jobs as coaches to ensure that our players understand this, and treat the opponent how they'd like to be treated if/when they are in the same situation.



IMPORTANT BASKETBALL TERMINOLOGY

ASSIST

A pass that immediately precedes and sets up a scored basket.

BACKBOARD

The rectangular or fan-shaped board behind the basket.

BACKCOURT

A team's backcourt consists of the entire mid-court line and the rest of the court to include the opponent's basket and inbounds part of the backboard.

CARRYING THE BALL

Also called "palming;" a violation committed by a dribbler that involves placing the dribbling hand under the ball and momentarily holding or carrying it while dribbling.

CENTER

Also called the "pivot player;" an offensive position typically played by a tall player who plays mainly in the key areas (at the post).

CHARGING

A personal foul committed when an offensive player illegally contacts a defensive player who has established position or is stationary.

CHEST PASS

A two-handed pass thrown from the passer's chest in a straight line to the chest area of the receiver.

CROSSOVER DRIBBLE

A dribble in which the ball is moved from one hand to the other while the dribbler changes directions.

DEAD BALL

Occurs whenever the whistle blows to stop play and after a field goal, but before the opponent gains possession.

DEFENSE

The team not in possession of the ball whose objective is to keep the opponent from scoring; also a specific pattern of play used by a defending team.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE

A violation that occurs when a player dribbles the ball with two hands simultaneously or stops dribbling and then dribbles again.

DOUBLE TEAM

A defensive tactic in which two defenders temporarily guard one player.

DRIBBLE

Process by which a player repeatedly bounces the ball off the floor so that it returns to his/her possession. It's the only legal means by which a player may move the ball across the court.

DRIVE

A quick dribble directly to the basket in an effort to score.

DUNK

A dunk is the spectacular scoring maneuver when a player jumps high, reaches above the rim and stuffs the ball down through the hoop.

ELBOW

Also called the "junction;" a term often used to indicate the area of the court where the free throw line and side of the key meet.

FAST BREAK

An offensive strategy in which a team attempts to move the ball up court and into scoring position as quickly as possible so that the defense is outnumbered and does not have time to set up.

FIELD GOAL

A basket scored on any shot other than a free throw, worth two or three points depending on the distance of the attempt from the basket. (*See "Three-point field goal" for qualification.*)

FORWARD

An offensive position played to the sides of the basket near the key area and out toward the sideline along the baseline.

FOUL

A common personal foul is illegal physical contact which occurs with an opponent after the ball has become live.

FREE THROW

A free throw is the privilege given to a player to score one point by an unhindered attempt for the goal from a position directly behind the free throw line. This attempt must be made within 10 seconds.

FREE THROW LANE

Also called the "key," "paint," or "lane;" a 12 foot-wide area extending from the baseline to the free throw line. Players may not be in this area during a free throw attempt.

FREE THROW LINE

A 12 foot-long line that is parallel to and 15 feet from the backboard.

FRONTCOURT

A team's frontcourt consists of that part of the court between its end line and the nearer edge of the mid-court line, including the basket and inbounds part of the backboard.

FULL-COURT PRESS

A defensive tactic in which a team guards the opponents closely the full length of the court.

GUARD

A position played primarily at the perimeter, or away from the basket.

INTENTIONAL FOUL

A personal foul that the official judges to be premeditated.

JAB STEP

A jab step is used to fake out a defender by taking a short step in one direction then quickly reversing and going another direction. A good jab step will keep the defense guessing and off balance. Make sure the player does not have the ball out in front (this is easy for the defense to take). It is important to practice with the jab step.

JUMP BALL

The procedure for starting play at the beginning of a game or an overtime period. The official tosses the ball into the air between the two opponents positioned at the center-court circle; the two players jump up and try to tap the ball to a teammate.

JUMP SHOT

A shot that is released after the shooter has jumped into the air.

LAY-UP

A shot taken close to the basket that is usually banked off the backboard toward the basket.

OFFENSE

The team that has possession of the basketball. Also, a structured pattern of play that a team uses while attempting to score.

ONE-AND-ONE

The "bonus" free throw situation awarded for non-shooting fouls

after the opposing team exceeds a certain number of team fouls in a half. The person fouled shoots one free throw. If successful, the shooter takes a second.

OVERHEAD PASS

A two-handed pass thrown from above the forehead.

OVER-AND-BACK VIOLATION

A violation that occurs when the offensive team returns the ball into the backcourt once it has positioned itself in the front court.

OVER THE BACK VIOLATION

A personal foul where a player makes illegal contact while jumping over another player to get a rebound.

OVERTIME

An extra period played to break a tie score at the end of a regulation game.

PASS

An intentional throw to a teammate.

PIVOT

Pivoting is used for a variety of different reasons in basketball: to shield the defense, to gain space, to release pressure, to create an open shot, or to create an open passing lane. Pivoting is a very important skill and needs to be practiced. A good player can pivot (in a triple-threat position) both forward and backward comfortably

IMPORTANT BASKETBALL TERMANOLOGY

with either foot. To avoid traveling, the ball must be dribbled before the player picks up the pivot foot.

PLAYER-TO-PLAYER DEFENSE

Also "man-to-man defense;" a team defense in which each player is assigned to guard a particular opposing player.

POINT GUARD

An offensive position played by a guard who usually brings the ball up the court and initiates the offense.

POST

An offensive position played close to the basket along the key.

PRESS

An aggressive defense that attempts to force the opponents to make errors by guarding them closely from either half court, three-quarter court or full court.

REBOUND

The act of gaining possession of the ball after a missed shot.

SCRIMMAGE

An unofficial game between two teams or five-on-five play between team members in a practice situation.

SCREEN

A screen is the legal action of a player who, without causing undue contact, delays or prevents an

opponent from reaching a desired position.

TECHNICAL FOUL

A technical foul is the penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct or violations by team members on the floor or seated on the bench. It may be assessed for illegal contact that occurs with an opponent before the ball becomes live.

THREE-POINT FIELD GOAL

A made basket from a distance greater than 19 feet, nine inches during a high school or college game.

THREE SECONDS

A violation in which an offensive player remains within the key for more than three seconds at a time.

TRAVELING

A violation occurring when a player with the ball takes a step without dribbling (moving the established pivot foot).

TRIPLE THREAT

The triple threat stance is when a player receives the ball with bent knees and the ball in the shooting pocket or a little below. The ball should not be directly in front. Make sure you are balanced and able to pass, shoot and dribble easily from this position. Every time you catch the ball, you should be in the triple threat position.

TURNOVER

A loss of possession of the ball by means of an error or violation.

VIOLATION

An infringement of the rules that's not a foul. The penalty for a violation is the awarding of the ball to the opponent.

ZONE DEFENSE

A team defense in which each player is responsible for defending an area of the court and the opponents within that area.

ZONE OFFENSE

An offensive pattern of play designed to attack (score against) a particular zone defense.

REFEREE HAND SIGNALS



1
Stop clock for jump/held ball



2
Stop clock for foul
(optional bird dog)



3
Visible counts



4
60-second time-out



5
30-second time-out



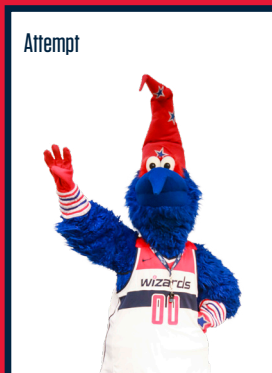
6
Not closely guarded



7
Goal counts



8
Point(s) scored use 1 or 2 fingers
after signal 7



Attempt

3-Point field goal



and if successful

9



10
Not closely guarded



Pat head

11
Shock clock violation



Twirl of finger

12
Reset shock clock



USA BASKETBALL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The USA Basketball Development Pathway describes the road that we take in experiencing the game. The experiences that make up the pathway should be designed to promote “Basketball for Life”, which encourages everyone to continue on in the sport. Positive basketball experiences ensure that those who enjoy the game will continue to take part as players, and will also stay involved in the sport as coaches, trainers, administrators, fans, officials and referees.

START. Everyone starts the game in a different fashion. Some of us are first introduced to basketball in school, while some of us start as toddlers with a toy hoop in our home. In either case, this introduction sparks our interest in the sport.

EXPLORE. With initial interest comes exploration. Often, we are entered into our local basketball league or registered for instructional lessons as children. Also, we begin to play the sport with friends in our neighborhood or in pick-up games at school. Exploring opportunities to play basketball are vital to our continued interest.

LEARN. During the exploration phase and beyond, we learn a basic understanding of how to play. Basketball is often learned from parents or guardians, local coaches, and from those that we play with and against. Many players develop skills by emulating their peers or the athletes they watch at higher levels of play.

PARTICIPATE. The next stage is participation, where players take part in the sport at all levels. This includes continued structured play on local recreation teams, travel teams, club programs and school teams. Participation also includes non-structured play without coaching, such as pick-up games, playing in the driveway, or perhaps at an outdoor court.

ADVANCE & PERFORM. Some of us will find that we will advance into higher levels of basketball. Through hard work, dedication and natural talent, we may perform basketball well enough to become very good high school players or college athletes at both the scholarship and non-scholarship levels.

ADVANCE & EXCEL. There are a small number of players that possess the attributes of talent, physical and mental ability, and extreme dedication who will go on to excel in the sport. These players move from the perform stage into the excel stage to play basketball professionally. An even smaller number of those players will be selected to play for their country’s National Team.

BASKETBALL FOR LIFE. It is important to understand and accept that while some will advance to play basketball at higher levels, and some will simply continue to participate in the game, everyone will eventually enter the “Basketball for Life” stage. This stage includes continuing to play the game, but also includes those who continue to take part as coaches, trainers, administrators, fans, officials and referees. USA Basketball’s Development Pathway is a road map to enjoying the sport forever. Great experiences along the path will ensure growth of the individual, growth of the game, and the future of the sport.



YOUTH BASKETBALL GUIDELINES

The NBA and USA Basketball have teamed up to develop the first-ever youth basketball guidelines aimed at improving the way children, parents and coaches experience the game, with a specific emphasis on promoting player health and wellness.

In the spring of 2016, the NBA and USA Basketball established three expert working groups focused on the following areas: Health and Wellness, Playing Standards, and Curriculum and Instruction. Their work was endorsed by the Jr. NBA Leadership Council, which is chaired by Retired U.S. General Martin E. Dempsey and consists of prominent basketball influencers and stakeholders.

The Health and Wellness working group drafted a scientific paper that makes eight key recommendations for promoting a positive and healthy youth basketball experience. Highlights include:

Delay single-sport specialization in the sport of basketball until age 14 or older

Participation in multiple sports in early childhood is beneficial from a player health and player development perspective. Athletes that reach the highest level of achievement are more likely to have played multiple sports at a young age and delayed single-sport specialization until late adolescence.

Limit high-density scheduling based on age-appropriate guidelines

High-density competition scheduling can increase risk for injury and burnout. Parents, coaches and event directors should be cautious in considering tournaments that schedule multiple competitive events (i.e., games) in short periods of time.

Ensure rest from organized basketball at least one day per week, extended time away from organized basketball each year, and adequate sleep each night

Daily rest is important for injury prevention, sport development and overall health. Rest days should be taken each week, and extended time off should be taken each year for physical recovery as well as to recharge oneself psychologically. Such an approach, along with getting the recommended amount of sleep, helps to maintain motivation for continued participation.

For detailed suggested and maximum participation recommendations, rest guidelines, and the suggested player segmentation model, visit www.YouthGuidelines.com





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