

Palmyra Boys' Basketball

Suggested Skills and Drills

In developing this list of recommended drills, I used videos examples that can be found at the USA Basketball homepage:

<http://www.usab.com/youth/development/youth-development-introductory-level.aspx>

I highly recommend you review these. Some of the points I make in my notes are direct references to ideas mentioned in the videos.

Some general thoughts for all youth levels:

-I've tried to indicate what grade levels would be most appropriate for each drill; obviously each coach will have to assess his own players' levels and progress as he decides what to incorporate.

-Gym time is precious around here. Think about doing drills that have the ball in players' hands. Conditioning, for example, can be done with the ball.

-In practice planning, a good drill has the fewest number of players standing around as possible. I try to focus on this at the senior high level, and it's especially true with the limited gym space we have for youth teams.

-Most drills present the opportunity to work on offense and defense. For example, if we do a close-out defensive drill, we can reinforce to the offense square-up/triple threat position on every catch.

Ballhandling and dribbling:

-Bleacher dribbling (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Focus on ball control from fingertips;

*Can be adapted to one knee instead of seated.

-X-Out/Pullback (Grades 3-4-5 up; may be appropriate for Grades 1 and 2 as season progresses)

*Coaches can use different dribble moves as dribbler ends pullback and explodes forward (crossover, between the legs, behind the back).

-Crossover Crunch Series (Grades 3-4-5 up; may be appropriate for Grades 1 and 2 as season progresses)

*One thing I didn't like about this drill is having the cones in a straight line. A crossover should be a change of direction move, and a straight line of cones implies that the dribbler is just changing hands. A more effective set-up would be similarly spaced cones aligned diagonally.

Footwork:

-Square Up (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Being able to effectively square up incredibly underrated - should be an every time habit;

*Use inside pivot;

*"Squash the bug" - plant hard with the foot closest to baseline, explode back to ball on vcut.

Shooting:

-Spin Ball Shooting (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Good drill to work on proper shooting footwork, playing the game low, slowing down to focus on proper technique, as opposed to quick hoist.

-Rainbow shooting *we call this Baseline Shooting at the high school level (Grades 3 and 4 up)

*Focus on footwork - 1-2 step;

*Focus on BEEF - get power from legs, not dip to hip and hurl; boxer stance w/ strong foot forward; hold follow thru w/ index finger to rim.

-Layup lines (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Simple layup lines, with a shooting line and a rebounding line.

*Teach to shoot off the proper foot - string from shooting elbow to knee on same side.

*Teach a good angle - attack from the wing as opposed to the elbow - aim for the closest corner of the box on the backboard.

Passing:

-Circle Passing: Bounce Pass (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Could be done with chest pass or overhead pass;

*one main passer is always passing and receiving; switch passer after a preset number of successful passes;

*exaggerate follow through to target.

-Side Center Side Passing (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*focus on follow thru on pass, both hands to receivers chest - exaggerate this movement.

-Foundational Level Passing Drill - "Window Drill" (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Great drill to work on passfakes;

*Have defenders work on under control closeouts to maximize the value of the drill.

Defense:

-Close Out Cut off (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Get both hands high, as demonstrators do in video;

*As defenders approach the offensive player, they should chop their feet to get under control and ready to cut off a drive. A contested jump shot is always better than a drive to the rim.

-Guarding the Ball (Found under Footwork and Body Control section of Foundational Drills) (Grades 3-4-5 up - maybe appropriate for grades 1 and 2 as season progresses)

-Guarding Away from the Ball (Found under Foundational/Team Defense) (Grades 3-4-5 up)

*Note how the player away from the ball is 40% of the way from his man to the ball, seeing both;

*Note how he is the point of a triangle with ball-him-man as the points (ball-you-man is a great concept - never let a cut occur to make it ball-man-you);

*Note how when the defender recovers he closes out with both hands high.

Rebounding:

-Box out (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Where Coach VanDerveer talks about meeting the player with the forearm, we call that the "greeter" - greet the offensive rebounder with the forearm, making contact firm enough to stop him, before spinning and maintaining position.

*Strong attention to boxing out is a program staple.

-Rebound-Outlet-Layup and Rebound-Outlet-Jumpshot (Grades 3-4-5 up; may be appropriate for grades 1-2 as season progresses)

*One thing that is not emphasized on the link that should be: players should "chin" the basketball. Upon attacking it at the highest point of their jump, they should bring the ball under their chin with elbows out to protect the ball. Then pivot and outlet pass.

*Emphasize hop stop at the foul line for passer.

Team Play:

-Full Court Layups (found under foundational level team offense) (Grades 1 and 2 up)

*Good drill to focus on layup form and passing.

*Teaching layups by saying there's a string attached from the shooting knee to the shooting elbow - as the shooting elbow goes up it pull the knee on the same side with it.

Team Play (cont.):

-3v3v3 (Appropriate for grades 3-4-5 immediately; grades 1 and 2 should build toward executing this drill)

*winning team (team that scores or secures defensive rebound) stays and new team constantly rotates on to promote quick transitions;

*Offense can pass and cut - fake away from the ball then basket cut; or pass and screen away - step toward the ball then screen opposite wing with butt to basketball;

*Fill point, wing and wing spots;

*Focus on players squaring to the rim on the catch, ten toes toward the rim.

-Foundational Offense 3 Player Pass and Cut (Appropriate for grades 3-4-5 immediately; grades 1 and 2 should build toward executing this drill)

*We run 5 out motion offense at all levels; this drill is great for teaching those spots, spacing, and the fundamentals of cutting.

*As players become proficient with spots and spacing, add fake slow away and cut hard to the rim; players fill in straight lines to spots, never loop; receiver must catch and square in triple threat.

-Introductory Screening: Read the Screen (this is found on the footwork sectional of the Foundational level) (Appropriate for grades 6-7-8 immediately; grades 3-4-5 should build toward executing this drill)

*Great drill to work on screening concepts

*Screeners should get a great screen angle: "butt to the basketball".

There are literally hundreds of drills appropriate to players at various levels. If you need more, whether to accommodate beginning players or to challenge more advanced players please contact me. If I can clarify anything, please contact me.

Thanks for volunteering your time to help our kids, our program, and our community.

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