

# Practice Planning:

## 60 min practice planning:

5 min – Quick team meeting – goal is to explain what we are working on today and to try and get a feeling of the team's mood. Try to create a smile on their faces. See if there are birthdays, any trips coming up, fun, quick story from the week?

12 Min – ballhandling/finishing

12 Min – shooting/passing

12 Min – “emphasis of week”

15 Min – Scrimmaging / Playing of some kind

10 Min – Wrap up / review (Do this to the side or outside)



- Find positives and praise specific things – “good job today” doesn’t tell them what they did well. “We shared the ball really well today; our passes were on time and on target.” Sometimes it is really difficult to find a positive, but there was something.
- Always finish with high fives and fist bumps from everyone on the team.

\*\*\*Obviously, this is slightly longer than 60 minutes.

*I try to avoid lines – I always want players moving and doing things. The game is chaotic. When I grew up, it was “too” organized. I have never played a game where there were lines (2-line layups). I challenge you to be creative. A lot of the drills below start in lines, but once the drill starts, it flows and allows kids to move.*

*Get a parent to film a game and watch. Not to criticize, but for them to see what they look like. I am amazed that some kids have never watched themselves play. Meet 20 minutes before practice and just have fun!*

## Drill Ideas

### Ballhandling / Finishing Drills -

- 1) **Slalom Course** – be creative with this one!
  - a. Put as many cones (shoes, parents) as you have randomly around the court, but outside the 3-point line. Try to get 20+ obstacles
    - i. If you have colored cones, you can say crossover on red cones, between legs on blue cones, behind back on green cones, etc.
  - b. The idea is that every time you encounter a cone, you make a dribble move (or combo move)
  - c. Once you get inside the 3-point line, you go and attack to shoot a layup
  - d. Retrieve your layup and turn and go the other way.
  - e. Let them be creative – basketball is chaotic, and they need to learn how to play in a “crowd” that’s not organized
- 2) **“Triangle Drill”** – place 1 cone at the top of the key, 1 on the right elbow, and 1 on the left elbow
  - a. Everyone has a ball, and the line starts at the center jump circle
  - b. Speed dribble at the top of the key cone, crossover, attack an elbow, pull back crossover attack another cone, and shoot a layup

- c. Next person attacks opposite where the one in front of them went.
  - d. Change up the crossovers
  - e. There is a longer line in this drill (which I don't like), but it is a GREAT time to make them dribble with their weak hand while in line
- 3) **“Reverse pivot” layups** – 2 lines on lane lines under rim – everyone has a ball
- a. On “GO,” 1 player speed dribbles to the 3-point line and comes to a jump stop, makes a reverse pivot, turns and faces the rim, and then attacks the rim for a layup
  - b. The goal is to make it back for the layup in as few dribbles as possible
    - i. Obviously, you need to make sure you explain that you cannot pick up the ball and dribble it again. We are doing it for the drill and pivots
  - c. Switch lines each time through.
- 4) **“Short Cones”** – great drill to always have in the “back pocket” to spend time – also incorporate during drills that may have longer lines
- a. Keep feet on “tracks” outside the cones, the goal of this ballhandling drill is to stay low, quick and tight with your ballhandling
    - i. Start right hand - the sequence is pound, pound, cross (now in left hand), go pound pound cross all the way down the cones...
    - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> go pound, pound cross cross,
    - iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> go pound, pound, between legs
    - iv. 4<sup>th</sup> go pound pound, behind back
    - v. 5<sup>th</sup> – pound pound – then be creative!!!

## **Shooting / Passing Drills**

- 1) **Oiler Shooting** – 2 groups of 5 or 6.
- a. 1<sup>st</sup> person doesn't have a ball, everyone else does. You can put the pine wherever you'd like around the 3-point line
  - b. On “GO,” 1<sup>st</sup> player sprints to the rim and pops out to 10-15 feet, receives a pass, and shoots. They get their own rebound and go to the end of the line.
  - c. As soon as the pass is made, the passer sprints under the rim and pops out just as the player in front.
  - d. Tell the cutter to be creative / you don't need to just follow where the player in front goes (one can go right, next can go left.
  - e. This is a GREAT drill to work on passes and pivots (front or reverse pivots)
    - i. It is obviously a shooting drill, but it is what you emphasize!
- 2) **Oiler “post” shooting** – 2 groups of 5 or 6
- a. Same drill as above – instead of popping out to perimeter flash to block area and make a “post” move (drop step to baseline or middle)
    - i. Depending on the level, maybe you teach a couple of post-specific moves
  - b. Again – a GREAT pivoting and passing drill
    - i. Most post feeds are bounce passes – throw away from defense
    - ii. “post” players show their hands and “number” to the ball –

Make these fun and competitive after they get the hang of them – first team to 8 made shots and switch sides. Most made shots in 3 minutes, etc....

- 3) **“SAM” shots** – 2 lines on the wing – at least 2 balls per side
- a. 1<sup>st</sup> person doesn't have a ball.
  - b. On “GO”, 1<sup>st</sup> person makes a “V” cut and flashes to the FT line and receives a pass from the opposite side of the court.

- c. The shooter gets their own rebound and goes to the line they are going to (opposite from where they were – right side goes to left, etc.)
- d. As soon as the passer throws their pass, they step inside the arc and make a “V” cut to the FT line.
- e. Repeat!

Again, set a team goal and go for 4 minutes or 5 minutes... try to beat the previous week's number or there's a “fun” consequence (3 push-ups, ½ court and back)

- 4) **“Around the chair shots”** – place 2 chairs on the perimeter (appropriate to level)
  - a. Everyone has a ball on the lane line
  - b. On “GO,” 1<sup>st</sup> person on each line speed dribbles around the chair and then shoots a 1 dribble pull-up
  - c. Emphasis is on getting around the chair and creating space between the chair (defender) and your pull-up jumper.
  - d. Shoot, get your rebound, and switch lines

To make it competitive, play the first shooter to 5 makes or the most makes in 3 minutes.

Another fun way to play is “+1/-1” – partner up with someone similar to you – if the person in front makes and you miss, they are +1, next shot you make and they miss it is now even, you make and they miss again, you are +1... as the coach, you set the number at +3 or +4... If they understand, it can be a lot of fun!

## **Scrimmaging / Playing**

- **“Kentucky Scrimmage”** – 5v5
  - Play out of an FT attempt, baseline out of bounds, Set play, etc. The drill goes Offense, defense, offense – THEN you
  - Blue team starts with Ball (1<sup>st</sup> possession), 2<sup>nd</sup> possession the red team has it, and then blue has it last possession.
  - Obviously, you are playing full court, and whatever emphasis is for the drill. It could be execution of a play, it could be transitioning defense, it could be completing 10 passes per possession... whatever you create.
  - The goal is to let them play (make mistakes) and then, after the 3<sup>rd</sup> possession, you coach them. At this age, you could stop playing every pass, and the players will not have any fun. Make sure they get to run!
- **“UGLY” scrimmage** – could be 4v4 or 5v5 – great way to start practice if people are late. I think this is so important!
  - The goal here is for the players to have fun. Do not give them any feedback or emphasis prior to playing (it's a GREAT warmup). Let them play for 10 minutes, then have them discuss what they did well and what they struggled with. You'll be amazed at what they come up with!
- **4v4v4** – if you have 12 kids
  - 3 teams (1 on the sideline or you could just put them under the opposite basket).
  - Blue team attacks red team, if blue scores, they keep it and go in transition vs. the white team. The white team gets a stop on defense, and the white team goes and attacks the red team. If you score – “make it take it” – If you get a stop, go in transition vs the other team... Lots of fun and running.
  - Play the first team to X points
- **“3v3 chase”** – 3v3. You can have 2 games going on at once if you have 12 players and 2 ends of the floor.

- Place a chair high on the wing (almost where the “logo” is on the floor)
- Red has the ball, and blue is on defense. Red and blue by chair, red and blue at the top of the key, and red and blue at the opposite wing. Red dribbles around the chair, and blue must chase them!!! This should create an advantage for red (because blue is chasing / behind). Once red starts to attack, someone needs to stop the ball for blue, creating an open passing lane for someone – “Play basketball / make a read / make a decision”
- If red scores, whoever gets the rebound goes around the chair (blue must chase), and red gets set at the top of the key and opposite wing, and repeat the same action as before
- If red turns it over or misses a shot and blue gets it, blue goes around the chair and red chases – blue gets set at the top of the key and opposite wing
- You could play till the first team gets 3 or 4 points.
- It’s a little complicated at the start, but it becomes a favorite once rules are understood and kids learn how to play

I always try to play some 1v1 at some point, just to break up monotony and create a spark!

- **1v1 around cones** – playing off the dribble in transition!
  - Place 1 cone about 10 feet inside the ½ court line and about 5 feet inside the sideline. Place a 2<sup>nd</sup> cone about 12 inside the ½ court line and about on the lane line extended.
  - Offense has the ball “under” the outside cone and defense is under the 2<sup>nd</sup> cone (both are on the baseline) – Defense says “GO” and offense speed dribbles around the cone and defense sprints around the cone. They should turn towards each other.
  - Once they turn, they play 1v1 to the rim.
    - Everything should be “downhill” and attacking
  - You can have 2 sides going at once!
- **1v1 “Ball on Back”** – 1<sup>st</sup> step explosion
  - Offense and defense facing the basket at the 3-point line
  - Offense is behind defense and places the ball on its back. Once the offense takes the ball off their back, it is live.
  - The huge emphasis is that your advantage is “deception” and quickly get to an attacking mode!
  - Make sure you get them to go to different areas on the floor so they cannot use the same “move” all the time
- **1v1 “toss back”** – playing off the catch
  - Offense just outside the 3-point line and defense is just inside the 3-point line on the baseline (players are about 4 feet apart), offense starts with the ball and underhand tosses to defense, and defense underhand tosses it back to offense. This repeats until the offense decides to take a pass and attack. Offense must make a move before they reach the top of the key.
  - Players slide along the 3-point line, maintaining the 4-foot gap.
- **1v1 “Rip”** – GREAT finishing drill
  - Offense has back-to-basket, defense is facing the basket, straddling the 3-point line. Offense has hands on top and bottom of the ball, and defense has hands on the side of the ball (defense slightly resists it)
  - Whenever the offense wants, they rip the ball away and try to get to the bucket to score. Defense is trying to get a stop.

## **Simple Defensive Drills:**

I am a firm believer that defense is an attitude, an eagerness, a passion. It doesn't involve too much talent, skill or athleticism. Try to find a place for the best defensive player on your team and make sure the rest of the team knows. Everyone knows who scored the most points, but usually, a good win, some defensive stops really mattered!

I break defense down to 4 sections – **On Ball, Off Ball, Situations, and Recovery**. Just be concerned with On Ball and Off Ball. Situations are ball screens and out-of-bounds plays. Recovery is transition defense, someone gets beat, and you need to switch players...

- 1) **X Drill** – great way to warm up – (on ball defense emphasis)
  - a. Form a line on the baseline on the lane line – sprint up to elbow, closeout, push step to opposite lane line/baseline, then sprint up lane line again & push step back to where you are started-Forming an X
  - b. What makes this drill fun and exciting I that you will have people running into each other unless they are talking and aware of their surroundings
  - c. Once 1<sup>st</sup> person goes the 2<sup>nd</sup> goes when they finish their first closeout... There should be about 4 people in the drill at once...
- 2) **2 Person Tandem** – Teaching kids not to relax when their person doesn't have the ball. (On ball defense / closing out to your person, and Off ball defense – getting to help position)
  - a. Coach is at the top of the key, defense on both blocks, offense on both wings
  - b. Defense rolls or throws the ball out to the offense and works on closeouts, the ball is thrown to the coach, and defense jumps to the ball. The ball goes to the wing, and you jump to the ball. After a couple of passes, the coach says "Play," and you play 2v2 (put in a dribble limit) to keep the drill moving along.
  - c. Defense then goes to offense, and the new defense starts on blocks
- 3) **3 Person shell drill** – more basic help and moving with the ball (On ball and Off ball) – there are a million ways to work out of shell!
  - a. Have 2 wings and a top of the key offensive player and have 3 defenders in the paint. Coach has the ball under the rim and tosses the ball out to anyone.
  - b. Players close out to their person (on ball or off ball), offense must watch the coach, and you point to where you want the ball to go.
  - c. Again, pass the ball around till you are comfortable with what they have done, and then say "Play" and let them play to finish the drill.
  - d. Defense goes to offense, and the next group on is on defense!

## **Emphasis of the Day / Week:**

- This is where you can be creative with YOUR team!
- I did not put too much defensive stuff in the "drills", but you can put a huge emphasis on defense in most of the drills
- I highly encourage you to teach man-to-man defense! Having coached in college and in high school, the number of kids who don't know how to play man-to-man defense is frustrating. There is no doubt, you will probably win more games playing zones in Rec. ball because kids struggle to make shots, but are you teaching the kids how to play?
- I hope the goal is to make players better and not to win games. If you have the best player in the league and you set 100 ball screens for that player, is the rest of the team getting better?
- Create some fun goals for the season! Some of us will have "bad" teams, so it's still our job to make sure they have fun. One simple goal I have with every team I have ever coached is to "out-high-five" the other team. It just shows you care about your teammates.

- Maybe have some simple prizes for the end of the season. Not one missed practice award, best attitude of the year, most dives on the floor award, etc. I always try to avoid “most points” as an award. They are going to get enough praise on that. **Emphasize team-oriented goals!**

Resources:

Maybe the best resource on the internet!

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

This guy will get your creative mind going!

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=hoopin+mitch+](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=hoopin+mitch+)

USA Basketball youth guidelines:

<https://www.usab.com/play/youth-basketball-guidelines>

This is a little selfish...Haha – There’s a lot of coaching resources on the “coaches page” and under “Blog”

<http://www.hhahoops.com/>

I am a huge PGC fan. Lots of videos to watch!

[https://www.youtube.com/@PGC\\_Basketball](https://www.youtube.com/@PGC_Basketball)

*MAKE SURE THE PLAYERS ARE HAVING FUN AT THIS AGE! IF THEY LIKE THE GAME MORE AFTER THE SEASON, THEN YOU HAVE DONE YOUR JOB! IF THEY LIKED IT BEFORE THE SEASON, THEN THEY FELL IN LOVE WITH IT. THEN YOU REALLY DID YOUR JOB! THEY WILL REMEMBER HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL!*



[Coachhaarlow@gmail.com](mailto:Coachhaarlow@gmail.com) – Please, email me with questions!!!