

Week 1 Value: Caring. Find ways to show you genuinely care about your teammates this practice. Positive encouragement, high fives, compliments all show care.

Conversation starters:

What ways can you show your teammates you care about them?

How do you best like helping others?

If you could be any animal for a day, what would you be?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

Dynamic Warm Up/Stretches on the court – stay consistent so the kids can take turns leading the group. Use the whole court, examples of dynamic warm ups/stretches: high knees, high feet, low feet, fanny kickers, toe touches, Frankensteins, slides, standing/sitting quad stretch, arm circles.

Individual—Players should stand apart from each other (allow 15 seconds for them to move to their own space); on a signal, they begin dribbling around the court without losing control. Players stop and catch the ball quickly on a signal. Repeat this exercise three times in short intervals (20, 30, and 45 seconds).

Fitness Component: (5 minutes): Following the warm-up, gather the players and briefly discuss the fitness concept for that practice.

Key Idea:

General fitness Gather children into a group. “Everyone jump 10 times. Our muscles help us jump. When you use your muscles a long time without getting too tired, it improves your endurance, which means you can run longer without getting tired. Now run really fast to the free throw line and back.” Wait for them to return. “Running strengthens your heart and lungs. Now touch your toes; try to keep your fingers down there while I count to 10. Stretching makes you flexible, like a rubber band. When we play basketball, our bodies run, jump and move. It makes our bodies stronger and improves our fitness, which means we can run and play longer and faster. Having good physical fitness is important for basketball and for being healthy. Every practice we’ll talk about fitness in our Fitness Circles. At the beginning of each practice, after the warm-up, we’ll have a Fitness Circle. The Fitness Circle is a time during which we will learn more about how basketball makes you healthy and fit and how being healthy and fit helps you play better basketball.

Terminology: (5 minutes)

Out of bounds, free throw line, half court line, travel & double dribble.
(Play line game, no ball to learn the boundaries)

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

- Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to dribble without losing control.
- Have your players practice dribbling without losing control.

Teaching Points:

“Use your finger pads.”
“Don’t slap the ball”
“Keep the ball below your hip.”
“Keep the ball at your side.”

Description:

–5/10 count dribble: Dribble 10 times in control, at 10 pick up the ball with both hands.

–Individual—Players should stand apart from each other (allow 15 seconds for them to move to their own space); on a signal, they begin dribbling around the court without losing control. Players stop and catch the ball quickly on a signal. Repeat three times using short intervals (20, 30, and 45 seconds).

Free Shoot: (5 Minutes)

Not just time for getting up shots but time for coaches to build relationships with players.

Game / Play: (20 minutes)

Description: Dribble Relay Race

Divide players into 2 or 3 teams. Set up cones, chairs or parents and have players dribble to and/or around obstacles, and return to the line. The next player then takes their turn. Emphasize ball control instead of speed. Relays don’t always have to be with basketball. Be creative!

Week 2 Value: Honesty. Question for players: What are ways we can show honesty off the court? How can we show honesty at home, in the classroom?

Conversation starters:

How can we show honesty at home and at school?

Name a time you told the truth even though it was difficult.

What do you think your first job will be?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

Dynamic Warm Up/Stretches on the court – stay consistent so the kids can take turns leading the group. Use the whole court, examples of dynamic warm ups/stretches: high knees, high feet, low feet, fanny kickers, toe touches, Frankensteins, slides, standing/sitting quad stretch, arm circles.

Individual—Players should stand apart from each other (allow 15 seconds for them to move to their own space); on a signal, they begin dribbling around the court without losing control. Players stop and catch the ball quickly on a signal. Repeat this exercise three times in short intervals (20, 30, and 45 seconds).

Fitness Component: (5 minutes)

Cardio respiratory fitness Gather children into a group. “Everyone hold one hand up and make a fist. Squeeze your fist tightly, then let go. Keep tightening and letting go.” Children continue for 10 counts. “Your heart is a special muscle that tightens and relaxes just like your fist is doing. Your heart is about the size of your fist. Let’s put our fists over our chests. Every time it tightens, or beats, your heart pumps blood all over your body. When you run during basketball, your heart beats faster. The beat slows down when you slow down. Let’s run with high knees for 15 counts while we count together. Stop and feel your heartbeat by putting your hand over your chest.” Model for players. “Running strengthens your heart and lungs and improves your fitness.”

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

Individual—each player practices dribbling. Have them try the following activities: • Dribbling and moving with the ball.

- Dribbling in different places around the body while stationary.
- Dribbling continuously while switching hands.
- Dribbling at different heights.

Teaching Points:

“Use your finger pads.”
“Keep the ball below your hips”
“Keep practicing!”

Introduce Passing: (10 minutes)

Demonstrate three passes against the wall: chest pass, bounce pass and two handed over head pass. Have player practice these passes against wall while coaching (step toward wall when passing, be ready to catch off the wall, etc.).

Free Shoot: (5 minutes)

Teach some of the fundamentals of shooting. Up instead of at the rim. Start shoot position with the focus on balance (focus on their feet/hips facing toward basketball).

Game / Play: (5 minutes)

Goal: Players will dribble their basketball from one baseline to the other. The Coach will try and “steal” the player’s ball. Players must focus on protecting and keeping control of their dribble. *It’s not about speed!

Week 3 Value: Respect. Our team is learning, we are being great teammates and were having fun this season. Think about our opponents. Are they trying to do the same thing? Yes. It is important to respect their qualities as much as our own.

Conversation Starters:

What are ways you can show respect for others? How about for your coach or teachers?

If you saw another kid being teased, what would you do?

If you had a pet dragon, what would you name it?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

Dynamic Stretches on the court – stay consistent so the kids can take turns leading the group.

Individual—each player has a ball to practice dribbling. Have them try the following activities:

- Dribble while stationary (10 counts)
- Dribbling and moving with the ball. (baseline to baseline, baseline to half court and back)
- Dribble while zigzagging through cones. (If you're going right dribble with your right hand, if going left dribble with your left.)
- Dribbling in different places around the body while stationary.

Fitness Component: (5 minutes) Muscular strength and endurance

Gather children into a circle. "Everyone find your own space so that you don't bump your neighbor. You're going to run in your own spot for 30 seconds, then stop. Ready, go!" Time children and verbally let them know the time remaining; stop them at the end of the time. "What part of the body did we just use the most when we ran?" Encourage their responses. "When we play basketball, which part of the body do we use the most?" Wait for their responses. Muscles in our body help us to move our legs. Playing basketball will help our leg muscles get stronger and grow bigger.

Skills & Drills: (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to pass and receive.

2. Have your players practice passing and receiving. Description: Individual or pairs—demonstrate throwing and catching, and then have players practice some of the following throwing and catching activities. Tossing to self and catching.

- Catching from a skilled thrower (Coach).
- Bouncing a ball to self and catching it.
- Passing or throwing to a target (spot on a wall).
- Passing/catching with other player using Teaching Points.

Game / Play: (20 minutes)

Description: Relay races. Divide players into 2 or 3 teams. Set up cones, chairs or parents and have players dribble to and/or around obstacles, and return to the line. The next player then takes their turn. Emphasize ball control instead of speed. Make relays fun, it doesn't always have to be about basketball! Bear crawls, crab walks, one foot hops, be creative.

Teaching Points:

For catching "Target the hands."
"Keep your eyes on the ball."
"Reach for it."
"Pull it in."

For passing make eye contact with your partner.
"Put your hands on the sides of the ball, with your thumbs pointing to each other."
"Step forward with your preferred foot."
"Push the ball forward at chest level, elbows out, and snap it." (After the pass)
"Move your thumbs down, backs of your hands facing each other, and move your weight forward."

Week 4 Value: Integrity. “Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.” – C.S. Lewis. It is a simple idea but a necessary value to strive for on and off the court.

Conversation Starters:

What does Integrity mean to you? “Making the right choice, even when no one is watching.”

Tell me about a time when you made a good choice, even though it was difficult.

What is your favorite song? Can you sing it?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

Dynamic Stretches on the court – see if they can begin to remember the stretches you have done.

Pac-Man Line Dribbling: Quick easy game to get kids moving and dribbling. Each player must have a ball. Tell kids to spread out around the court on a line. They must stay on a line at all times. First game, the coach is the “ghost”. Kids must keep control of their ball and change directions to avoid the ghost. Next time through pick a player to be the “ghost”.

Fitness Component: (5 minutes) Safety

Gather children into a circle. “What are the easiest ways to get hurt while playing basketball?” Wait for answers (slipping and falling, getting poked in the eye, getting hit in the face with a pass). “What’s the best way to keep from getting hurt? How do we prevent these accidents from happening?” Point out that while no sport is injury free, their risks of being hurt are much reduced when they follow the rules and show respect to other teammates as well as other teams.

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to chest pass and bounce pass.

2. Have your players practice chest passes and bounce passes.

Description: Pairs—Players practice passing to each other. After they have passed the ball four times, they change partners.

Free Shoot: (5 minutes)

Build on prior fundamentals. Build on relationships with your team.

Game / Play: (15 minutes)

Passing Game:

5 vs. 0. Is not allowed to move with the ball (they can pivot). They must pass the ball as quickly as they can from one baseline to the other. Every player must touch the ball at least twice. The ball is not allowed to hit the ground or else they have to start over. Time them and then have another group go and compare times. Point out ways they can improve their times, running ahead, good passes to teammates, etc.

5 vs. 5. Same game, just with defense now. Emphasizes the importance of everyone on the floor moving. Remind players to stay spread out and avoid ‘hand offs’. Move to get open, make good passes.

Teaching Points:

“Pass with purpose.”

“Pass on the move.”

“Control the ball.”

“Be a great teammate.”

Review teaching points from past practice.



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Week 5 Value: Service. What are ways we serve others? Possible answers: Helping with chores without being asked, picking up some trash you may see on the ground, or something simple as saying thank you to whoever brought you to practice tonight. Instilling service to youth is vital. Maybe one day they will want to volunteer coach just like you!

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

Dynamic Stretches on the court – see if they can begin to remember the stretches you have done.

Pairs—Partners play follow-the-leader in single file while dribbling (have players leave three feet between them); they should switch who leads frequently. Caterpillar if ready.

Fitness Component: (5 minutes)

Key Idea:

Healthy habits Gather children in a circle. “Do you know that when your body doesn’t eat healthy foods and get enough sleep it moves slowly? Let’s pretend we have no energy to move because we didn’t eat enough healthy foods or get enough sleep.” Begin to move slowly and encourage the children to follow. Move extremely slowly. “Everyone stop. Now fill your bodies up with healthy foods. Pretend we are sleeping. When I say ‘Wake up!’ you can move faster because you have enough energy and enough rest. Wake up and move faster. Stop! What are some other healthy habits you have learned?” Examples: daily exercise, brushing teeth, eat healthy foods and drink water. “It’s important for everyone to practice healthy habits.”

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to shoot baskets with a set shot.

2. Have your players practice shooting baskets with a set shot.

Free Shoot: (5 minutes) Use teaching points!

Description: Individual or pairs—Players can practice shooting individually or in pairs in a game of Around the Key. For this game, mark shooting spots with cones in an arc around the basket (inside the key). All shots should be close to the basket. Each player moves from spot to spot in order, shooting at each spot. If pairs are playing, player 2 gets the rebound and passes the ball back to player. Players should “high five” their partners whether they make the basket or not.

Game / Play: (20 minutes)

Poison:

Players line up at a spot on the court. They get one shot, if they miss they go to the end of the line and the next player is up. If they make it, all of the other players scatter on the court until the shooter rebounds their basketball and yells “Poison!” Everyone must freeze. The shooter then rolls the ball at one of the players, if they hit the player then that player is out. If they miss everyone lines back up and the game continues.

*This game teaches the importance of making shots as well as rebounding quickly.

Teaching Points:

“Strong hand on back of the ball, off hand on the side.”

“Keep hands apart on the ball.” “Only fingers pads touch the ball.”

“Point dominate elbow toward the basket.”

“Flick the wrist and wave good-bye.” (The hand follows through after the shot).

“Eyes on the target.”

“Full arm extension”

“Balance = feet first”

“BEEF: Balance, Eyes, Elbow, Follow-Through”

Week 6 Value: Teamwork. “You have a choice to make when you’re not in the game. Either you’re invested and a great teammate or you’re not.” –Brad Stevens. Being a great teammate takes a concentrated effort, at the end of the day our team’s goals are the same.

Conversation Starters:

How can you be a great teammate on the court? What about off the court?

What is a good memory you have about your teammates this season?

Pretend you’re a chef, and tell me about your restaurant. What foods do you serve?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

Dynamic Stretches on the court – see if anyone would like to lead during stretches.

Partners (or groups) practice shooting in the game “Around the Key”. Remember to emphasize proper form over made shots.

Fitness Component: (5 minutes) Flexibility

Bring a rubber band and show children or have them visualize one. “This rubber band is like our muscles. When I pull it, it stretches; when I let go, it pulls back to its original shape.” Show the action of a band—stretch it out and back; repeat, using a gentle, slow action. “Your muscles work the same way. When you reach and stretch, your muscles are stretching just like the rubber band. When your body comes back, your muscles go back to their original shape. Everyone slowly reach down to the floor with your arms and then bring your arms back up.” Have children repeat three times. “Your leg muscles need to stretch because we use them a lot in basketball; it makes them more flexible. When muscles are flexible, it keeps them from getting hurt and makes the muscles feel good.”

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to start, stop and change direction quickly while dribbling.

2. Have your player’s practice starting and stopping and changing direction quickly while dribbling. Description: Individual—Players practice starting and stopping and changing directions quickly while dribbling, using the following activities:

- Dribble moving slowly at first and then gradually increase speed.
- On a signal, quickly stop both moving and dribbling— jump stop.
- Dribble in general space. On the signal, stop quickly in a triple threat stance, maintain the dribble, and then continue moving forward on the signal. To increase the challenge, pivot in another direction and then continue moving.
- Move from one basket to the next by dribbling, and then jump stop and shoot. All shooting should be close to the basket (within two feet).

Teaching Points:

For jump stops “Stay in a balanced position.”

“Land on two feet”

“Bend the knees.”

“Lower the body.”

Game / Play: (20 minutes)

Goal:

Players dribble and drive to shoot Description: 2 v 2, modified half-court game — If a team makes a basket, that team gets the ball again (gets a second turn). Designate the area (such as the lane) from which players must shoot to earn a point. Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. Emphasize the dribbling, passing and shooting teaching points from the past.

Week 7 Value: Friendship. “The most important thing to me are the friend I’ve made along the way.” –Bill Russell. Basketball is much more than wins and losses, skills and drills. It is a vehicle to create lasting relationships for life.

Conversation Starters:

What does being a good friend mean?

What makes your friends so awesome?

What’s your Superhero name and what powers do you have?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

Dynamic Stretches on the court – see if another person would like to lead.

Individual—Each player dribbles from one basketball to the other, and then jump stops and shoots. All shooting should be close to the basket (within two feet).

Fitness Component: (5 minutes) Muscular strength and endurance

Gather children in a group. Have a ball and show children the differences between a dribble with minimal effort and close to maximum effort. “Watch how the ball moves when I dribble it two different times.” Show both dribbles to children. “Let’s make a circle and you show me how you would dribble the ball. Now step back two big steps and show me a fast dribble as you go across the circle.” Highlight the ball going farther in the second dribble. “You can dribble the ball farther when the muscles in your arms are strong. The muscles in your arms get stronger when you practice dribbling.”

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

Description:

Individual—Each player practices dribbling. Have them try the following activities: Dribbling and changing the speed of movement (moving both fast and slow in general space). Dribbling while changing directions forward and back or right to left. Dribbling in different pathways:

- Move in straight, curved and zigzag pathways in general space.
- Follow the straight lines on the gym floor.
- Move in a straight pathway. Each time a player meets another person or hears your signal, he or she turns quickly to the right or left and continues dribbling.

Free Shoot: (5 minutes) Emphasize good form. Build relationships with your team, Coach!

Game / Play: (20 minutes)

3 vs. 3 (Modified inside the three-point line).

The offensive team must pass twice or more before shooting. Teams earn a point if they dribble and/or pass and attempt a shot close to the basket (for example, in the lane). Designate the area from which players must shoot to earn a point. Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. If a violation occurs, the team’s opponent takes a turn. Don’t keep score the first few times. Once the players get the hang of it then add the score keeping element. Emphasis for this game is not scoring but getting players and their teammates in good positions to score.



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Week 8 Value: Kindness. "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." – Aesop.

"Homework" for the week; perform a single act of kindness each day this coming week.

Conversation Starters:

What are some ways you can be kind to others?

What makes you feel loved?

What's the coolest thing you saw someone do today?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

New player leads stretches/warm ups.

Intro to defense: Defensive stance and slides. On the whistle every player gets down in defensive position. Sit "down in the chair", feet wide, arms wide, eyes up. Point in a direction and players must slide (don't cross your feet) three times in that direction. Repeat, switching directions.

Fitness Component: (5 minutes) Muscular strength and endurance

Have children spread out in a group. "Put your hand on the front of your thigh, then lift your leg up and set it down. Did you feel the muscle get tight when you lifted it up and then relax when you set it down? Try it again five times." Assist players if needed. "Muscles tighten or contract when you move. You use the thigh muscles or quadriceps when you play basketball. The more you practice, the stronger your thigh or quadriceps muscles will get. That's called improving your muscular strength.

Free Shoot (5 minutes): Proper form and relationships!

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to defend against an opponent.

2. Have your players practice defending against an opponent.

Description: Match players of similar skill. The defensive player moves in a defensive position in front of the offensive player, who dribbles slowly then gradually faster in a zigzag pathway. Go from one baseline to the other, then have players switch roles and perform the same drill.

Teaching Points:

Basic Defensive Position:

"Keep the knees bent."

"Keep your body low."

"Put one hand up, one hand down." "Keep a wide stance."

"Keep eyes up."

Playing Defense:

"Move feet"

"Arms wide"

"Hands active"

Game / Play: (20 minutes)

Goal: Players learn basic defensive technique.

3 v 3, Short-Court Game.

Defensive players earn a point when they take the ball away. Offense earns a point if they complete five passes in a row. Limit offensive players to dribbling three times or less before passing. Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. If a violation occurs, the player's opponent takes a turn. Starting with this game, call fouls as violations. The defender can touch the ball, but he or she cannot touch the opponent. If a violation occurs, the opponent gets the ball. Only steal on the pass.

Week 9 Value: Patience. “There’s no substitute for hard work. If you work hard and prepare yourself, you might get beat, but you’ll never lose.” –Nancy Lieberman. **Trust the process. Learning and developing takes time. It is not going to happen all at once. Focus on getting 1% better each day.**

Conversation Starters:

What is an example of a time you were patient this week?

If you wrote a book, what would it be about?

What are three things you want to do this summer?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes) New player leads stretches/warm ups.

Partner 1 dribbles the ball 2-3 times and then passes it to partner 2. Partner 2 starts dribbling the ball forward and then passes it back to Partner 1. The partners continue to dribble and pass from one end of the gym to the other. Make good passes, keep dribble when moving.

Fitness Component: (5 minutes) Training and conditioning.

Gather children into a circle. “What will you do tonight after you eat dinner?” Wait for their responses. “At the end of the day what do you do?” Encourage children to discuss sleep. “Let’s pretend you are at your homes, and you climb into bed to go to sleep. Everyone lie down. Now let’s pretend its morning and a new day. You don’t have basketball practice today. Your body needs to move every day to stay in good physical condition for basketball. What should we do to move our bodies?” Wait for their responses. If a child suggests biking, walking or swimming, and so on, have everyone pretend to do that activity. Then have them “sleep” again, wake up, and choose another physical activity idea.

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate and explain how to keep possession of the ball while dribbling against defense.
2. Have your players practice keeping possession of the ball while dribbling.

Description: Individual—Each player practices dribbling. Set up obstacles so players can learn to vary the force of the bounce. Here are some examples:

- Play follow-the-leader with a partner (followers are three feet behind).
- Dribble around stationary players. Divide players into groups of five to six players. One player is the dribbler. The other players in the group become the obstacles and arrange them-selves in a zigzag obstacle pattern down the floor. The players try to make the dribbler lose control of the ball. They can stretch and pivot, but cannot move from their spots; the defensive players cannot touch the ball or the dribbler.
- Dribbling against an opponent. Match partners with similar skill levels. Partner 1 begins dribbling and moving toward the baseline while Partner 2 plays cooperative defense. Increase the difficulty by moving to active defense. If Partner 2 takes the ball away before 30 seconds are up, he or she gives it back; when 30 seconds are up, partners switch roles. Coach: What ways can you move to protect the basketball from your opponent when dribbling? Players: Keep ball on my side; keep the ball low; and change speed/directions.

Game / Play: (20 minutes)

Goal: Players keep possession of the ball until they shoot. 3 vs. 2, modified half-court game—Three players play offense and two players defend, then two offensive players must switch roles with the defensive players. Switch at least twice so all players get to play defense. Players earn a point if they keep possession of the ball (dribble with control) until they shoot.

Week 10 Value: Family. “Every season is a journey. Every journey is a lifetime.” – Mike Krzyzewski. Think about your family. How do you support each other, how to do show love to each other? Our team has been our family this season.

Conversation Starters:

How do you show love to your family?

What’s a memory that makes you happy?

Name one thing you learned this season.

If you could only eat one food for a year, which food would it be?

Warm-Up: (5 minutes)

New player leads stretches

Pairs—The defensive player moves in a defensive position in front of the offensive player, who is dribbling slowly and then gradually, dribbles faster in a zigzag pathway. The offensive player changes speed and directions. The players move down the length of floor, and then switch roles.

Fitness Component: (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather children into a group. “When I say ‘Go!’ we all will run as fast as we can, with- out bumping into each other, staying in this area.” Mark boundary areas for children. “Ready, go!” Have children run for about a minute or until fatigued. “You had enough energy to run. But when you don’t take care of your body, you can get tired much faster playing basketball. I am going to say a habit and you shout if it is healthy or unhealthy.” Examples: brushing teeth, drinking plenty of water, drinking a lot of soda, eating a whole bag of candy, getting plenty of sleep/rest, eating fruits/vegetables. “Can you think of any others? Healthy or unhealthy?”

Skills & Drills: (20 minutes)

- Revisit terminology (out of bounds lines, free throw lines, double dribbles, travels, etc.).
- Review Core Values (Circle Wrap-Ups).
- Drill and Skill Review: Player’s choice of drill for dribbling passing, shooting and defense.

Teaching Points:

Have fun and enjoy this time with your team!

Game / Play: (20 minutes)

Player’s choice of game for first 5-10 minutes.

Second portion of time for 5 vs. 5 game play or this is a good time to have a parent vs. player game. It’s always fun to see families get out there and play with their kids.