

# **BASKETBALL ESSENTIALS**



Improve ballhandling,  
shooting, rebounding, and  
all aspects of your game

**Ryan Goodson**

"I don't believe you can ever learn enough about the game of basketball if the ultimate goal is perfecting your craft. What Goodson provides in this book is step-by-step guidance in the fundamentals necessary to begin to understand not only the skill one must attain, but also the discipline, drive, and desire it takes to become a sound basketball player."

**Jason M. Capel**  
ESPN College Basketball Analyst

"Ryan Goodson does a great job of instructing. I love his drills!"

**Bobby Cremins**  
Former Head Coach and Naismith Coach of the Year  
Georgia Tech University

"Basketball Essentials is a must read for any player striving to get better. Ryan describes in detail the fundamentals necessary for players of any age to improve their game."

**Mark Thompson**  
Owner and Founder  
United States Basketball Association (USBA)

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LeBron James, Stephen Curry, Kevin Durant, and all of the best basketball players in the world began their careers in the same way: by focusing on the fundamentals. With *Basketball Essentials* there has never been a better way to learn to play!

In *Basketball Essentials*, you learn by doing. Sequential instruction and detailed photographs will guide you to perform the techniques and tactics of the game:

- **Shooting**
- **Passing**
- **Dribbling**
- **Defending**
- **Rebounding**

In addition to the basics, you'll be challenged to expand your repertoire of skills and use those newly acquired tactics for competitive advantage. More than 100 of the best practice drills will develop your game and improve your performance. You'll gain an understanding of the game, offensive and defensive strategies, and proven plays.

*Basketball Essentials* is the best way to learn the basics in less time. It's the only guide that teaches the skills and the love of the game.

**Human Kinetics**

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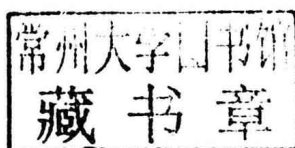
# BRANDS GET BETTER SINCE 1971



HUMAN  
KINETICS

# BASKETBALL ESSENTIALS

Ryan Goodson



HUMAN KINETICS

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To all my loved ones: Mom and Dad  
(thank you for always believing in me);  
my beautiful wife, Ashley; my immediate family,  
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I am most thankful for my relationship with my savior, Jesus Christ. He is my coach. I follow His playbook and talk to my coach through prayer. Basketball is of small importance in the grand scheme of things. One day the crowd will stop cheering. One day the ball will stop will bouncing. I am grateful to be on the team that will never lose. To God be the glory!





# Introduction: Preparing to Practice and Learn

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**W**elcome to *Basketball Essentials*! Thank you for investing in yourself and in this great game. Basketball is constantly evolving, and there is always something new to learn. The more I study the game, the more I realize what I do not know. The only way to excel is to constantly stretch, grow, reinvent, and improve; realize that you are a work in progress; and choose to be a lifetime learner. Whether you want to develop your knowledge of basketball fundamentals and improve your skills as a player or learn how to be a better coach and effectively teach, reach, and train the next generation of players, then you have come to the right place.

I have been blessed to train players all over the world from the youth level up to the NBA. I have worked with over 20,000 players since 2009, and conducted camps and coaching clinics in 30 states and 6 countries. With more than five million views on YouTube, I have produced numerous instructional DVDs and online training programs and have also worked around some of the best coaches and players in the game. I am thrilled to share all of my experiences with you.

## BASIC OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This book emphasizes learning by doing. *Form-repeat-compet*e is a skill development principle and progression that I created specifically for this book to give players and coaches a formula for learning and mastering the fundamentals of basketball in a fun, efficient, and innovative way.

### Form

First, you will learn the proper form and mechanics for each skill through a series of breakdown drills. To build a good foundation as a basketball player, you must have a good understanding of the fundamentals. The best way to learn and master these precious details is to practice the individual drills.

### Repeat

Repeat these breakdown drills until muscle memory and correct habits are conditioned.

## Compete

Once you have learned the form, you will begin a series of refinement drills. These drills are more comprehensive and gamelike, and most of them have a scoring component that allows you to measure your progress. This is where the real training begins! Steps 1 and 2 are about learning, and step 3 is about training, improving, and refining.

In addition to the aforementioned drills, each chapter has special sections to help coaches and parents become better teachers, leaders, and trainers (all of which are vital to the development of a good basketball player). *Basketball Essentials* has something for everyone.

## FOR PARENTS AND COACHES

Whether you are a parent or a coach, the first thing you learn (usually out of frustration) is that teaching the game of basketball to youth players can be very challenging. I have personally faced every possible situation and obstacle that you can imagine, and I have worked with youth with limited attention spans, behavioral issues, and little athletic ability, coordination, or interest in the game. There are countless problems that you will face as a coach, but fortunately there are solutions to these problems if you approach your practices with energy, excitement, knowledge, and innovation. It's my job to properly equip you with different teaching methods and strategies that will assist in your instruction. I wish I knew these when I first began coaching!

## TEACHING METHODS FOR YOUTH PLAYERS

When you introduce a new topic, follow this order of operations:

1. **Articulate:** explain the skill or drill using your words (auditory learning).
2. **Demonstrate:** actively display an example of the skill or drill (visual learning).
3. **Participate:** allow the players to participate and attempt the drill or skill (kinesthetic learning).

## Progression

Even the most difficult basketball concepts and skills can be learned if you know how to teach in a progression. This book will outline numerous examples of progression. Players need to learn to play solo before they learn to play one-on-one. They need to master the layup before learning the jump shot. You will learn how to build and teach the fundamentals from the ground up.

## Sound Cues and Acronyms

Sound cues and acronyms are an excellent ways to ensure that youth players retain the information you teach. With sound cues, you are packaging your teaching point in a rhyme, such as “if you dribble hard, the defense can't guard” or “if you stay low, your game will grow.” With acronyms, combine the first letter of each teaching point to create a word. For example, when teaching shooting, many coaches use the acronym BEEF, which stands for

**B**alance

**E**yes on target

**E**lbow in

**F**ollow through

Sound cues and acronyms are fun ways to help players retain pertinent information.

## Echo

One of the most important things to remember when working with youth players is that you must implement certain strategies throughout your practice to keep them engaged. Boredom is your enemy! One method I use is echoing; I always have players echo back all instructions. I also use echoing to keep players' attention. For example, I will say “Everyone give me two claps! Everyone give me two dribbles.” Players must respond quickly and assertively to my command or there is a consequence.

## Be a Choreographer

A great way to teach a complex skill or move is to train players like they are dancers, using numbers to break everything into easier-to-learn segments. For example, when teaching a common basketball finishing move called the Euro-pean step, provide the following instructions:

1. Stance
2. Forward step with right foot
3. Lateral step with left foot
4. Jump high and shoot

The player responds with the correct movements as you call out each number. Using numbers will help you to more easily identify mistakes and will expedite learning.

## Let the Student Become the Teacher

Oftentimes when I am conducting a workout outside of the United States, I am faced with challenging ratios such as 30 players for every 1 coach. How can you properly teach in this setting and not become overwhelmed? Well, it's not easy, but it can be accomplished if you let your students become your teachers. Once I begin teaching a concept, I identify players who are doing the skill properly. I ask these players to be my assistant coaches and help those that are still learning. This is very beneficial for slower learners to whom I may not have the time to dedicate the necessary one-on-one attention. It's also beneficial for my assistant coaches because they have to step outside their comfort zones and instruct. I'm a big believer that you don't have a firm understanding of a concept until you can teach it.

## Purpose

Remember, you are teaching skills and not drills. Drills are platforms for skills. It is important that every drill has a purpose and that players know and understand that purpose. Educating players about the purpose will help them perform more instinctively in games and will raise their basketball IQs.

## Teach in Bullet Points and Not in Paragraphs

Less is always more; short and concise is the way to go. The more you talk, the less the players will remember. Try to construct your curriculum into quick and to-the-point messages.

## Game-to-Instruction Ratio

To keep youth players engaged, it is important to keep a ratio of 5 minutes of activity for every 10 minutes of instruction. After every 10 minutes of instruction, I try to attach what we have just learned to a game that holds players accountable to the lesson.

## Quiz

Education is the oxygen for success as a basketball player. At the end of each segment or practice, quiz your players on what they just learned. Reward correct answers with prizes.

## The Big Picture

Teach the big picture first. When introducing a new topic, first demonstrate and allow players to participate in a gamelike drill. For example, when you introduce a motion offense to your players, quickly teach them a couple basic movements and then let them participate in a competitive five-on-five game. It will be chaotic, but if you don't show them the big picture, players will not understand how the skill applies to the game.

## LEARNING TO LEAD

Back in 2009, I attended a coaching clinic in Orlando, Florida, with world-renowned skill-development coach Ganon Baker. I was a rookie coach, and I was hungry to learn from one of the best. At the time, Ganon traveled all over the world training players. He trained some of the NBA's best, and he had amazing passion and energy when he taught. This guy was on fire! His enthusiasm at practices was infectious. You could not help but be enthusiastic about the game, and life in general, when Ganon was in the gym. I remember vividly, on the last day of the clinic, Ganon called me over for a private chat. His tone was strong and assertive. He said, "Ryan, listen man. I've been watching you and you've got great potential. I believe that it's in God's will that you coach and teach this game. It's in your blood. It's in your DNA. You have to do it, and you can be every bit as good as me, or better. You understand?" After hearing these words from a mentor and someone I held in such high esteem, something changed in me. I wanted to work harder and be more committed. I wanted to challenge myself to be better, and, most important, I believed in myself more. That day, in that conversation, Ganon Baker was a leader. What if you could lead and inspire your players to be their best? What if you could help them apply this skill in their lives to be better players, students, sons or daughters, siblings, or friends? A true leader inspires others to work harder, be better (players and people), and believe more in themselves and the team.

I'm sure you can think of leaders in your life who have had an effect on you. As a coach, you have the awesome responsibility to lead. The following are some leadership rules I have learned through experience and observation.

### Sell Rather Than Tell

I think sometimes there is a misconception that being a leader is like being a boss or a drill sergeant and that your job is to *tell* people what to do. This could not be further from the truth. Leadership is more about selling and less about telling. The best leaders inspire their players and package their instruction in such a way that it appears fun, rewarding, and attractive.

### Motivate

A true challenge for any leader is to sustain their energy. Leadership is draining. You are constantly giving all that you have to get the most out of others. That is why it is so important to dedicate time each day to motivating yourself through reading a book, listening to music, or simply spending time with someone that gives you life. Remember, if you want to light someone else's candle and inspire them, *you* must be on fire.

### Give High Fives

Lead your practice with high fives! You may not be the best or the most knowledgeable coach, but you can always lead your practice with positivity and encour-

agement. Believe it or not, there is a correlation between positive attitudes and winning! Something as simple as high five can make a difference in whether players believe in themselves.

## **Always Be Enthusiastic**

Enthusiasm is contagious! If you're excited, your players will be excited. Enthusiasm is the genesis of greatness. Be enthusiastic!

## **Let Them Know You Care**

This is a secret that I picked up from a McDonald's All-American player I trained. Being a McDonald's All-American is the highest honor that can be bestowed on a high school basketball player. He shared a rule with me that he implemented into his daily routine, and it helped lead his team to a national championship. He was the type of player that teammates loved to play with, and his teammates would do anything for him. How did he develop this kind of rapport? He made it a habit to have a 5- to 10-minute conversation with a different teammate each day. In that conversation, he made sure his teammate knew two things: He cared about them and he believed in them. Imagine how much that meant to his teammates and how this simple 5- to 10-minute conversation could impact your players! Apply this on the court and in your daily world if you want to make a difference in someone's life.

## **Be More Positive Than Negative**

Keep a ratio of three positive comments for every one negative comment. Failure to do so can create a negative environment and lower morale.

## **Start and End Each Workout With a Message**

Use motivational quotes or stories to apply basketball to life. A wise coach once told me that “[The message] is the most important part of the workout. It is the bigger purpose. It is why we coach.”

## **Always Have Good Conduct**

This should go without saying, but be sure to make good decisions on and off the court. Never do anything that you would not want printed on the front page of the newspaper. Be disciplined and understand that your decisions off the court can impact your players' willingness to follow you on the court. Lead by example and conduct yourself in a way that is worthy of being followed. You never know who is watching, and no one's life is so insignificant that others are not observing. Does your character lead others to their destiny or their destruction?

## FIVE TRAINING TIPS FOR PLAYERS

I am not too far removed from being a player myself. I know how to teach the game, but I also remember what it is like to train. I easily relate to my pupils because I actually workout alongside them as I teach. Players, there are few things that I want to impress on you before we start learning and training in the following chapters. Understand that players all over the world are doing similar drills and working on similar concepts. The question is, how do you separate yourself from everyone else? The answer is simple, but it is not easy: You must train at a high intensity and have the patience and persistence to practice difficult skills *until you master them*; then you must maintain these habits and train over a long period of time to accomplish something significant. That being said, I have five short workout rules that I share with all the players I train, whether they are in the NBA or they are beginners.

1. Be the hardest worker on the court. The easiest way to change your game is to change your work ethic. Train at a high intensity and always train at game speed or faster.
2. Be the most enthusiastic player on the court. Your body is allowed to get tired, but your spirit never can. Lead your team in high fives, chest bumps, and encouraging words. There is always a spot on a team for someone with enthusiasm and positive energy.
3. Never give up! Do not quit! There is no limit to what you can accomplish if you continue to persevere. Failure and adversity are a part of learning.
4. Have higher standards for yourself than the world around you does. If you want more, you have to expect more. Set the bar high and pursue excellence.
5. Patience: Be willing to wait! There is no easy path to greatness and success. Boring, monotonous repetition over a long period of time is the key. Slow is fast! Appreciate and celebrate even the smallest improvement along the way, and be willing to wait for major progress.

Now that you are prepared to practice and learn and you have a basic understanding of how to teach, lead, and train, let's take an in-depth look at the fundamentals of the game.





# Key to Diagrams

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————→ Cut or player movement

————| Screen

-----→ Pass

~~~~~→ Dribble

 Cone

 Coach

① ② ③ Offensive player positions

x1 x2 x3 Defensive player positions