

Fourth Edition

COACHING YOUTH *Basketball*



AMERICAN SPORT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Coaching Youth Basketball

FOURTH EDITION

American Sport Education Program



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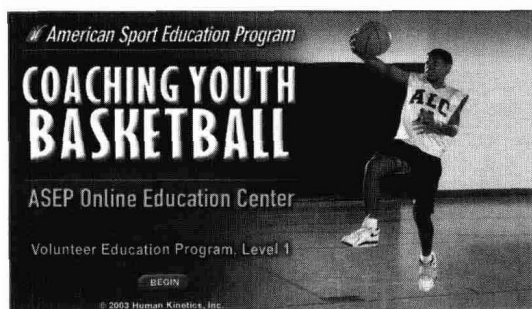
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Welcome to Coaching

Coaching young people is an exciting way to be involved in sport. But it isn't easy. Some coaches are overwhelmed by the responsibilities involved in helping players through their early sport experiences. And that's not surprising because coaching youngsters requires more than simply bringing the balls to the court and letting the players play. It also involves preparing those players physically and mentally to compete effectively, fairly, and safely in their sport, as well as providing them with a positive role model.

This book will help you meet the challenges and experience the many rewards of coaching young players. You'll learn how to meet your responsibilities as a coach, how to communicate well and provide for safety, and how to teach technical and tactical skills while keeping them fun. You'll also learn strategies for coaching on game day. To help you with your practices, over 30 drills are included throughout the text and in one of the book's appendixes. We also provide sample practice plans and season plans to help guide you throughout your season.

This book serves as a text for ASEP's Coaching Youth Basketball course. If you would like more information about this course or other American Sport Education Program courses and resources, please contact us at the following address:

ASEP
P.O. Box 5076
Champaign, IL 61825-5076
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Drill Finder

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Offensive technical skills		
Offensive footwork	Two-Ball Cutting Drill	Page 70
	Four-Line Jump Stop Drill	Page 71
	Dribble-Pivot-Pass Drill	Page 72
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	Two-Steppin'	Page 144
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	In My Dust	Page 145
Passing	Partner Passing Drill	Page 78
	Two-Line Pass and Catch Drill	Page 82
	Passing Contest	Page 145
	Room to Move	Page 146
	Screen Door	Page 147
	Return to Sender	Page 147
	Pickin' for Points	Page 148
Catching	Partner Passing Drill	Page 78
	Two-Line Pass and Catch Drill	Page 82
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Shooting	Two-Ball Shooting Drill	Page 88
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Defensive stance and footwork	Sideline Slide Drill	Page 101
Blocking or deflecting shots	Defending Shots Drill	Page 102
Guarding	Guarding Drill	Page 103
	Helping Hands	Page 150
	Cutting Off	Page 151
	No Passing Zone	Page 151
	Picking Pockets	Page 152
Defensive rebounding	Defensive Rebound Drill	Page 105
	Cleaning the Glass	Page 149
	Life in the Fast Lane	Page 149

Key to Diagrams



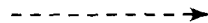
Offensive player



Defensive player



Player movement



Pass

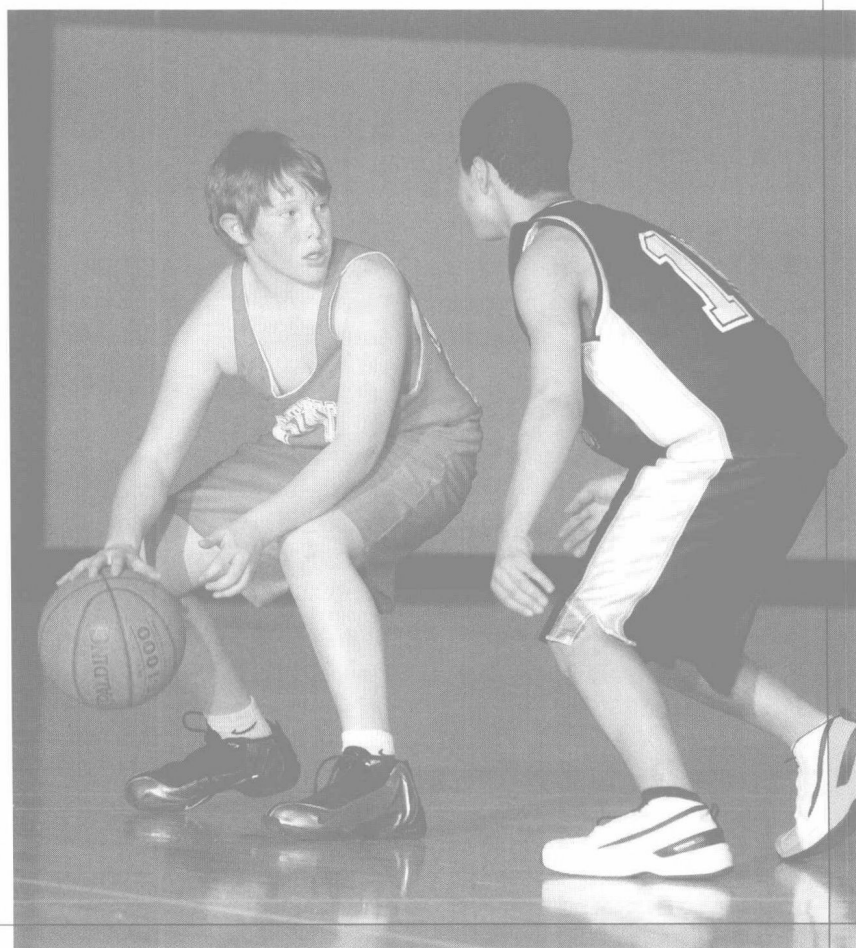


Dribble

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Stepping Into Coaching



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If you are like most youth league coaches, you have probably been recruited from the ranks of concerned parents, sport enthusiasts, or community volunteers. Like many rookie and veteran coaches, you probably have had little formal instruction on how to coach. But when the call went out for coaches to assist with the local youth basketball program, you answered because you like children and enjoy basketball, and perhaps because you wanted to be involved in a worthwhile community activity.

Your initial coaching assignment may be difficult. Like many volunteers, you may not know everything there is to know about basketball or about how to work with children. *Coaching Youth Basketball* presents the basics of coaching basketball effectively. To start, we look at your responsibilities and what's involved in being a coach. We also talk about what to do when your own child is on the team you coach, and we examine five tools for being an effective coach.

Your Responsibilities As a Coach

Coaching at all levels involves much more than designing offensive plays or drawing up defenses. Coaching involves accepting the tremendous responsibility you face when parents put their children into your care. As a basketball coach, you'll be called on to do the following:

1. *Provide a safe physical environment.*

Playing basketball holds inherent risks, but as a coach you're responsible for regularly inspecting the courts and equipment used for practice and competition (see "Facilities and Equipment Checklist" in appendix A on page 136).

2. *Communicate in a positive way.*

As you can already see, you have a lot to communicate. You'll communicate not only with your players and their parents but also with the coaching staff, officials, administrators, and others. Communicate in a way that is positive and that demonstrates that you have the best interests of the players at heart (see chapter 2 for more information).

3. *Teach the fundamental skills of basketball.*

When teaching the fundamental skills of basketball, keep in mind that basketball is a game, and therefore, you want to be sure that your players have fun. We ask that you help all players be the best they can be by creating a fun, yet productive, practice environment. To help you do this, we'll show you an innovative "games approach" to teaching and practicing the skills young players need to know—an approach that kids thoroughly enjoy (see chapter 5 for more information). Additionally,

to help your players improve their skills, you need to have a sound understanding of offensive and defensive skills. We'll provide information to assist you in gaining that understanding (see chapters 7 and 8).

4. *Teach the rules of basketball.*

You need to introduce the rules of basketball and incorporate them into individual instruction (see chapter 3 for more information). Many rules can be taught in practice, including offensive rules (such as double dribble, traveling, the three-second rule, over-and-back violations, and free throw violations) as well as defensive rules (such as fouling and the five-second rule on closely guarding an opponent). You should also plan to review the rules and go over them with your players any time an opportunity naturally arises in practices.

5. *Direct players in competition.*

Your responsibilities include determining starting lineups and a substitution plan, relating appropriately to officials and to opposing coaches and players, and making sound tactical decisions during games (see chapter 9 for more information on coaching during games). Remember that the focus is not on winning at all costs, but on coaching your kids to compete well, do their best, improve their basketball skills, and strive to win within the rules.

6. *Help your players become fit and value fitness for a lifetime.*

We want you to help your players be fit so they can play basketball safely and successfully. We also want your players to learn to become fit on their own, understand the value of fitness, and enjoy training. Thus, we ask you not to make them do push-ups or run laps for punishment. Make it fun to get fit for basketball, and make it fun to play basketball so that they'll stay fit for a lifetime.

7. *Help young people develop character.*

Character development includes learning, caring, being honest and respectful, and taking responsibility. These intangible qualities are no less important to teach to your players than the skill of shooting the basketball. We ask you to teach these values to players by demonstrating and encouraging behaviors that express these values at all times. For example, in teaching good team defense, stress to young players the importance of learning their assignments, helping their teammates, playing within the rules, showing respect for their opponents, and understanding that they are responsible for winning the individual battle on every play—even though they may not be recognized individually for their efforts.

Coaching Tip

Set a goal for yourself to make at least two positive comments to each player during each practice.

These are your responsibilities as a coach. Remember that every player is an individual. You must provide a wholesome environment in which every player has the opportunity to learn how to play the game without fear while having fun and enjoying the overall basketball experience.

Coaching Your Own Child

Coaching can become even more complicated when your child plays on the team you coach. Many coaches are parents, but the two roles should not be confused. As a parent, you are responsible for yourself and your child, but as a coach you are also responsible for the organization, all the players on the

Coaching Tip

When coaching your own child, a good rule to follow is to not bring up the topic of basketball at home unless your child initiates the conversation.

team, and their parents. Because of this additional responsibility, your behavior on the basketball floor will be different from your behavior at home, and your son or daughter may not understand why.

For example, imagine the confusion of a young boy who is the center of his parents' attention at home but is barely noticed by his father (who is the coach) in the sport setting. Or consider the mixed signals received by a young girl whose skill is constantly evaluated by a coach (who is also her mother) who otherwise rarely comments on her daughter's activities. You need to explain to your child your new responsibilities and how they will affect your relationship when coaching. Take the following steps to avoid problems in coaching your own child:

- Ask your child if he or she wants you to coach the team.
- Explain why you want to be involved with the team.
- Discuss with your child how your interactions will change when you take on the role of coach at practices or games.
- Limit your coaching behavior to when you are in the coaching role.
- Avoid parenting during practice or game situations to keep your role clear in your child's mind.
- Reaffirm your love for your child, irrespective of his or her performance on the basketball court.

Five Tools of an Effective Coach

Have you purchased the traditional coaching tools—things such as whistles, coaching clothes, sport shoes, and a clipboard? They'll help you in the act

of coaching, but to be successful, you'll need five other tools that cannot be bought. These tools are available only through self-examination and hard work; they're easy to remember with the acronym COACH:

- C** Comprehension
- O** Outlook
- A** Affection
- C** Character
- H** Humor

Comprehension

Comprehension of the rules and skills of basketball is required. You must understand the elements of the sport. To improve your comprehension of basketball, take the following steps:

- Read about the rules of basketball in chapter 3 of this book.
- Read about the fundamental skills of basketball in chapters 7 and 8.
- Read additional basketball coaching books, including those available from the American Sport Education Program (ASEP).
- Contact youth basketball organizations.
- Attend basketball coaching clinics.
- Talk with more experienced coaches.
- Observe local college, high school, and youth basketball games.
- Watch basketball games on television.

In addition to having basketball knowledge, you must implement proper training and safety methods so that your players can participate with little risk of injury. Even then, injuries may occur. And more often than not, you'll be the first person responding to your players' injuries, so be sure you understand the basic emergency care procedures described in chapter 4. Also, read in that chapter how to handle more serious sport injury situations.

Outlook

This coaching tool refers to your perspective and goals—what you seek as a coach. The most common coaching objectives are to (a) have fun; (b) help players develop their physical, mental, and social skills; and (c) strive to win. Thus, your outlook involves your priorities, your planning, and your vision for the future. See “Assessing Your Priorities” (page 6) to learn more about the priorities you set for yourself as a coach.

Assessing Your Priorities

Even though all coaches focus on competition, we want you to focus on *positive* competition—keeping the pursuit of victory in perspective by making decisions that, first, are in the best interest of the players, and second, will help to win the game.

So, how do you know if your outlook and priorities are in order? Here's a little test:

1. Which situation would you be most proud of?
 - a. *knowing that each participant enjoyed playing basketball*
 - b. *seeing that all players improved their basketball skills*
 - c. *winning the league championship*
2. Which statement best reflects your thoughts about sport?
 - a. *If it isn't fun, don't do it.*
 - b. *Everyone should learn something every day.*
 - c. *Sport isn't fun if you don't win.*
3. How would you like your players to remember you?
 - a. *as a coach who was fun to play for*
 - b. *as a coach who provided a good base of fundamental skills*
 - c. *as a coach who had a winning record*
4. Which would you most like to hear a parent of a player on your team say?
 - a. *Mike really had a good time playing basketball this year.*
 - b. *Nicole learned some important lessons playing basketball this year.*
 - c. *Willie played on the first-place basketball team this year.*
5. Which of the following would be the most rewarding moment of your season?
 - a. *having your team want to continue playing, even after practice is over*
 - b. *seeing one of your players finally master the skill of dribbling*
 - c. *winning the league championship*

Look over your answers. If you most often selected “a” responses, then having fun is most important to you. A majority of “b” answers suggests that skill development is what attracts you to coaching. And if “c” was your most frequent response, winning is tops on your list of coaching priorities. If your priorities are in order, your players’ well-being will take precedence over your team’s win–loss record every time.

ASEP has a motto that will help you keep your outlook in line with the best interests of the kids on your team. It summarizes in four words all you need to remember when establishing your coaching priorities:

Athletes First, Winning Second

This motto recognizes that striving to win is an important, even vital, part of sports. But it emphatically states that no efforts in striving to win should be made at the expense of the players' well-being, development, and enjoyment. Take the following actions to better define your outlook:

- With the members of your coaching staff, determine your priorities for the season.
- Prepare for situations that may challenge your priorities.
- Set goals for yourself and your players that are consistent with your priorities.
- Plan how you and your players can best attain your goals.
- Review your goals frequently to be sure that you are staying on track.

Affection

Another vital tool you will want to have in your coaching kit is a genuine concern for the young people you coach. This requires having a passion for kids, a desire to share with them your enjoyment and knowledge of basketball, and the patience and understanding that allow all your players to grow from their involvement in sport. You can demonstrate your affection and patience in many ways, including the following:

- Make an effort to get to know each player on your team.
- Treat each player as an individual.
- Empathize with players trying to learn new and difficult skills.
- Treat players as you would like to be treated under similar circumstances.
- Control your emotions.
- Show your enthusiasm for being involved with your team.
- Keep an upbeat tempo and positive tone in all of your communications.

Character

The fact that you have decided to coach young basketball players probably means that you think participation in sport is important. But whether that participation develops character in your players depends as much on you as it does on the sport itself. How can you help your players build character?