

THE COACH'S WORKBOOK



Printable plans, checklists, and forms for your first season

COACHING 7-9-YEAR-OLDS

A COMPANION TO COACHING YOUTH BASKETBALL FOR BEGINNERS

HOW TO USE THIS

- Print the pages you need. Not all of them, and not in order.
- Before your season starts, fill in Your League's Rules and Your Three Season Goals.
- Print several copies of the Practice Plan and Substitution Sheet; you will use those repeatedly.
- Practices 1, 2, and 3 are complete practices you can run as written.
- One Page to Keep With You is designed to stay on your clipboard all season.

THE SIMPLE RULE

You do not need to have read the book to use this workbook. Every page works on its own.

PRINT WHAT YOU NEED • WRITE ON IT • TAKE IT TO THE GYM

Your League's Rules

Fill this in before your first practice. Get the answers from your league handbook, website, or coordinator. Typical answers are shown in gray, but your league may differ.

Ball size	<i>often size 5, about 27.5 in.</i>
Hoop height	<i>often 8 or 9 feet</i>
Defense allowed	<i>often man-to-man only</i>
Is pressing allowed?	<i>usually not at this age</i>
Minimum playing time rules	
Substitution pattern	<i>often at quarter breaks</i>
Timeouts per team, and length	
Game structure	<i>quarters or halves, how long</i>
Are fouls called? Free throws?	
Mercy rule	
Players per side	<i>often 5v5</i>
Practice day, time, and space	
Cancellation policy and contact	

ASK THIS FIRST

What does your league require of adult volunteers? Background check, safety training, two-adult rules? Clearances can take weeks, and some leagues will not let you run a practice until yours clears.

Your Three Season Goals

Pick up to three things you want your players to be able to do by the end of the season. Good goals at this age are small and specific.

GOOD GOAL

“Every player can dribble the length of the court without losing the ball.”

Not: “Win the league.”

GOAL 1

GOAL 2

GOAL 3

END OF SEASON: HOW DID IT GO?

Practice Plan

One page. One practice. Fill it in before you leave the house.

PRINT SEVERAL COPIES OF THIS PAGE

Date

Today's focus (one or two skills, no more)

PLAN ABOUT 45 MINUTES OF ACTIVITY FOR A 60-MINUTE SLOT

The other 15 minutes disappear into late arrivals, water, explanations, and general chaos. That is not wasted time. That is reality.

WARM-UP

about 10 min

SKILL 1

about 10 min

SKILL 2

about 10 min

GAME OR SCRIMMAGE

about 10-15 min

One coaching cue I will repeat today

Backup activity if something falls apart

Equipment I need

Practice 1: Ball Control

Run this as written. You do not need to change anything. Total activity: about 45 minutes.

0-10 MIN

Warm-up and dribbling

Every player with a ball, spread out so nobody can touch the person next to them. Dribble in place. Then dribble while walking. Then while jogging.

Say this: "Eyes up. Look at me, not the ball."

10-25 MIN

Teach one skill: control

Dribble and Freeze. Players dribble around the space. When you call "freeze," they stop the ball and hold it still. Run it several times. Add movement: forward, backward, change direction on your call.

Correct one thing only: keep the ball below the waist, or keep eyes up. Pick one. Not both.

25-35 MIN

Simple game

Red Light, Green Light with basketballs. Green light means dribble forward. Red light means stop and hold the ball. This is a dribbling drill that does not feel like one.

35-45 MIN

Scrimmage

Let them play. Do not stop it every twenty seconds.

Your one cue: "Eyes up."

Finish by bringing everyone in. Name one thing that went well. Send them home.

Practice 2: Passing

Run this as written. Total activity: about 45 minutes.

0-10 MIN

Ball handling warm-up

Same as last time. Individual dribbling, right hand, left hand, moving forward, stop and start.

Repetition is the plan working, not the plan failing. If it looks rusty, that is normal.

10-25 MIN

Partner passing

Pairs, one ball each pair. Start close together. Chest pass, catch with two hands, step toward the target.

Once they are accurate, move them further apart. **Do not let distance become more important than accuracy.**

Say this: "Two hands. Step and push. Aim at their chest."

25-35 MIN

Pass and move

Groups of three. Pass, then move to open space. Pass again.

If everyone follows the ball, stop and reset. **The rule: do not stand next to the ball.**

35-45 MIN

Passing game or scrimmage

Give each group a target: "How many good passes can you complete in one minute?" Only count passes the teammate catches. Try to beat the score.

Your one cue: "Pass and move." Praise the movement, not just the pass.

Practice 3: Defense

Run this as written. Total activity: about 45 minutes.

0-10 MIN

Movement, no basketballs

Players move forward, backward, and side to side on your call. No balls yet.
Then introduce the defensive stance: knees bent, feet about shoulder-width, hands out, eyes up.

10-25 MIN

Defensive position

Pairs. One player moves slowly side to side. The other stays in front of them, sliding, without crossing their feet. Swap after a minute. Keep the bursts short. This is about learning the movement, not conditioning.
Say this: "Stay between your player and the basket."

25-35 MIN

Defensive slides

Set two cones a few steps apart. Players slide from one to the other, staying low, feet never crossing. Make it a race only once they have the form. Speed before form teaches the wrong thing.

35-45 MIN

Small-sided scrimmage

Three-on-three if you can. Fewer players means more touches and more chances to actually guard someone.
Your one cue: "Find your player."

Drill Cards

Five drills is enough for a whole season. You do not need a hundred.

Dribble and Freeze

TEACHES Ball control

NEEDS One ball per player

Players dribble in their own space. On “freeze,” they stop the ball and hold it.

EASIER Everyone stands still and dribbles in place.

HARDER Move while dribbling and call direction changes.

Partner Passing

TEACHES Passing and catching

NEEDS One ball per pair

Pairs pass back and forth. Chest pass, two hands, step toward the target.

EASIER Stand closer together.

HARDER Move further apart, or add a bounce pass.

Pass and Move

TEACHES Passing, moving without the ball

NEEDS One ball per group of three

Groups of three. Pass, then immediately move to open space. Pass again.

EASIER Tell them exactly where to move after passing.

HARDER Add a defender.

Drill Cards

Two more drills, plus a quick rescue plan for when an activity is not working.

Red Light, Green Light

TEACHES Dribbling, changing speed

NEEDS One ball per player

Green light: dribble forward. Red light: stop and hold the ball. Anyone who loses control goes back a few steps.

EASIER Walk instead of run.

HARDER Add “yellow light” for slow dribbling.

Defensive Slides

TEACHES Defensive movement

NEEDS Cones

Slide between two cones, staying low, feet never crossing.

EASIER Move the cones closer, go slower.

HARDER Add a partner with a ball to shadow.

IF A DRILL IS NOT WORKING

- Stop it. Do not let it limp along for five more minutes.
- Make the group smaller. Two groups of five beats one group of ten.
- Take something away. Remove the defender, movement, or ball.
- Move closer. Shorter passes, closer shots, smaller space.
- Give one instruction, not five.
- If none of that works, switch to something they can already do and come back to it next practice.

Game-Day Checklist

Work down the list. Tick as you go.

BEFORE THE GAME

- ☐ Know when and where to arrive.
- ☐ Have your roster and parent contact information.
- ☐ Confirm the meeting point with parents.
- ☐ Bring basketballs and equipment.
- ☐ Know your league's rules for substitutions, timeouts, and fouls.
- ☐ Plan a simple warm-up.
- ☐ Decide on one or two things to emphasize. Not six.

DURING THE GAME

- ☐ Watch all the players, not just the ball.
- ☐ Keep instructions short.
- ☐ Track substitutions on your sheet.
- ☐ Coach one thing at a time.
- ☐ Praise the behavior you want to see again.

AFTER THE GAME

- ☐ Bring the team together.
- ☐ Name one thing that went well.
- ☐ Name one thing to work on next.
- ☐ Let them go. Keep it short.

INBOUNDING: THE MESSIEST FIVE SECONDS OF THE GAME

When your team passes the ball in, tell them: **"Spread out. Corners. One person come get it."** The instinct is to run at the ball. That is what causes turnovers.

Substitution Sheet

Write your roster down the left. Tick each period a player is on the floor. Do not rely on memory while you are coaching.

PRINT SEVERAL COPIES OF THIS PAGE

PLAYER	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH

PLAYING-TIME REMINDER

Check your league’s playing-time rules before your first game. Many require close to equal time for every player.

Parent Messages

Copy these, change the details, send. Pick one communication channel and use only that one.

Before the season

Hi everyone, I'm [name], coaching [team] this season. Practices are [day, time, location], starting [date].

Please bring a water bottle and gym shoes to every practice. I'll send updates through [text group / email / app] only, so please make sure you're on it.

My goal this season is for the kids to learn the basics, get plenty of playing time, and enjoy it enough to want to play again next year. Looking forward to meeting everyone.

Practice cancelled

Practice tonight is cancelled due to [reason]. Next practice is [day, date, time] as normal. Sorry for the short notice.

Game-day details

Game this [day] at [time], at [location]. Please arrive by [time] so we can warm up. Wear [uniform]. Bring a water bottle.

"Why isn't my kid playing more?"

Thanks for asking, and I understand. I'm trying to give everyone close to equal time across the season, and I track it every game so nobody gets missed. If you'd like, I can walk you through what I've got written down for [child]. Happy to talk after practice, just not during the game.

Handle disagreements privately and later, never on the sideline in front of the kids.

Gym Bag

Pack this the night before. Take a photo of this page and keep it on your phone.

- ☐ Basketballs
- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Whistle, if your league uses one
- ☐ Today's practice plan
- ☐ Clipboard and pen
- ☐ Substitution sheet, on game days
- ☐ Water for yourself
- ☐ First-aid supplies, per your league's policy
- ☐ Roster with parent contact information
- ☐ Emergency contact information
- ☐ Fully charged phone

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING TONIGHT

Put the basketballs and the roster in the bag.

Everything else on this list is recoverable if you forget it. Those two are hard to improvise.

One Page to Keep With You

If you print only one page, print this one. Clip it to your clipboard.

HOW TO TEACH ANYTHING

Explain it in one sentence. Show them. Let them try. Watch. **Correct one thing.** Let them try again.

THE FIVE REMINDERS

1. On offense: spread out. Do not stand next to the ball.
2. With the ball: look up. See teammates, defenders, and the basket.
3. After you pass: move. Do not stand and watch.
4. On defense: stay between your player and the basket.
5. Always: move your feet.

WHEN IT FALLS APART

1. Stop.
2. Make sure everyone is safe.
3. Get their attention.
4. Give one instruction.
5. Restart with something simple they can already do.

THREE DRILLS YOU CAN RUN WITHOUT THINKING

Dribble and Freeze • Partner Passing • Red Light, Green Light

THE PRACTICE SHAPE

Plan 45 minutes of activity for a 60-minute slot. Warm-up, one skill, a second skill, then a game. The missing 15 minutes are late arrivals, water, and chaos. That is normal.

AFTER THE GAME, ASK THREE QUESTIONS

What did we do well? What did we learn? What will we work on next?

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE A BASKETBALL EXPERT. YOU NEED A PLAN.

End of Season

Fill this in once, while it is still fresh. It makes next season much easier.

LOOK BACK AT YOUR THREE GOALS

How did the team do on each?

THREE THINGS THAT WORKED WELL

THREE THINGS YOU WOULD CHANGE

DID THE PLAYERS IMPROVE?

Name someone specific and what changed.

DID THEY HAVE FUN?

Be honest. What is your evidence either way?

ONE THING TO CARRY INTO NEXT SEASON

What's in the Full Book

This workbook covers the forms. The full book explains the reasoning behind them, and what to do when the season gets complicated.

Coaching Youth Basketball for Beginners covers the rest:

- How to actually teach dribbling, passing, shooting, layups, defense, and spacing to kids who have never played
- What to do when a practice falls apart, a player cries, or a drill you spent twenty minutes planning does not work
- Coaching your own child without wrecking the car ride home
- Handling parents, assistants, and the ones who coach from the sideline
- Game day in full: substitutions, timeouts, referees, and what to say when you are losing by twenty
- Finishing the season so the kids want to play again next year

If this workbook was useful, the book is the same voice at more length. And if the workbook is all you need, that is genuinely fine. You are the one standing in the gym.

LATEST VERSION OF THIS WORKBOOK



Basketball Coach's Workbook

Scan the code, or follow the link. Free, print as many copies as you need.