



## **South Muskoka Breakers Basketball Coaching Fundamentals**

### **Preamble**

The purpose of this document is to provide some general guidelines for instruction that coaches can use to develop practice plans. Each coach has an individual style, strengths and weakness, particular goals and areas of special interest. Therefore, it is difficult to predict with exact precision what one coach will want, need, connect with and successfully incorporate into their coaching practice.

This document presents three basic sections, guiding principles, coaching tips and fundamental skill development. It is our hope that this document is used as a working document to share ideas, and, over time, will be modified to reflect best practices within the Breakers organization.

### **Part 1: Guiding Principles**

#### **Map Out the Practice:**

Every practice should be on paper and kept in a binder. Create a practice plan template. There are lots to choose from on line. Allot time in the margin for every talk, every drill, and every action that takes place in practice - to the minute.

### **On-ball Time:**

If you have a 12-player roster there should be 24 balls in your ball bag. You may not use 24 balls each practice, which you can plan for in advance. But two-ball dribbling, passing and shooting should be a part of most practices. Utilizing small groups and reducing talk time can also increase on-ball time. The two most important individual offensive skills are shooting and dribbling. Predict the number of shots each player will take based on the structure of your drills and set specific targets.

### **Every Player Action Should Have Imposed Limits:**

You want to be very specific with your expectations around task completion. Here are a couple of examples. If you asking the players to do a one-hand set shot with the other hand behind their back from three ft. away from the front of the basket, do not allow them to shot the ball from 4 ft. If you are running a full court drill and asking the players to always catch the ball with two hands, provide a penalty for those that do not, such as make them run a lap before reentering the drill. If limitations are not put on players then they will tend to perform a skill the way they feel most comfortable, develop poor habits and never develop the weaker areas of their game.

### **Loading:**

Loading may be the most challenging part of a coaches planning session. The more you know about the specific steps needed to learn a skill the more you can help each player at the level they are at. You can also more easily identify where the execution may be breaking down. For example: there are approximately 6 steps to teaching the basic layup. Once that is accomplished other more challenging skills can be added to the basic layup. It's important to know the steps and move the player through each of those steps to check for proper execution. Some players will move through the steps more quickly than others and therefore, necessitate the need for groupings.

### **Reduce Talk Time:**

When you step on the floor at the beginning of practice you likely will want to spend one or two minutes commenting on the last practice or game and identifying the goals for the practice. Beyond that point in time talking should be kept to very short segments – just a minute or two. Use water breaks as instructional time. With older players more time may be needed to instruct an offense or defense. Make sure the players are coming off of some high level activity.

### **Use Good Formations:**

It's so important to develop a repertoire of good drill formations. Some examples of "bread and butter" formations are given below in the fundamental skills section of this document. Just like any individual skill teaching progression, a good drill

formation has a progression with increasingly more difficult tasks. As the players learn these good drill formations the practices will move more quickly, there is less talk time and you can identify the drills that the players love.

### **Build in Competition:**

Most kids love to compete. Use time or completions vs. attempts as a way to create a challenge. Mini games with restrictions also work well.

### **Part 2: Coaching Tips: Things I need to remember about the way we play.**

- Our success begins in practice working on individual skills such as dribbling, passing and shooting. It's what we need to focus on most of all to demonstrate to others that we care about our performance.

**"It's not about the will to win, but more importantly the will to prepare."**

- As we become more physically fit we become more mentally fit.

#### **On Offence**

- Take up space well beyond the 3 point line
- Pass and cut with purpose
- Always face up into triple threat – always think offense first, pass second
- Attack, attack, attack – be aggressive to the hoop.
- Be the first to make contact – bump the opponents hip
- We like the outside shot – we love the layup
- Support the dribble drive by filling in behind
- Get out of the way of the dribble drive – step to the weak side
- Be ready to shoot from the weak side kick out
- Rebound, rebound, rebound
- Read, catch, react

#### **On Defense**

- Stance, stance, stance
- The number one goal is to **stop the ball**
- Make the opponent do something they don't want to do
- Close out on all shooters and don't get beat on the floor
- Help, help, help
- Every time an opponent drives the basket they should face three defenders
- Locate, meet and greet with a bar arm and knee, box out and rebound

- The average amount of time your check will touch the ball on each possession is 4 seconds – try to lower that time by playing tough when they don't have the ball.
- After an opponent's shot or basket respond with urgency by blowing out of the backcourt.

## **Part 3: Fundamental Skills**

### **Set Shot:**

#### **Grades 1 – 4**

##### Modified Approaches:

- Smaller ball
- Lower basket
- Shorter distance
- More time to shoot

##### Shooting Mechanics:

- “Square shooting” inside of 12'
- 60% of body weight on balls of feet, 40% on heels
- Shooting foot slightly forward
- Index finger placed on air valve
- Shooting hand forms V between thumb and index finger toward same shoulder
- Shooting hand and off hand form T between both thumbs
- Thumb pointing to the eye – hand turned outward
- Initial shooting pocket – lower forearm parallel to floor
- Eyes focused above center of r
- Force producing movement upper arm parallel to the floor
- Shooting arm elbow slightly out from body
- Extension of arm initiated after upper arm (elbow) is above the shoulder
- Release straightens arm leaving index finger down and other 4 fingers up
- Freeze the gun barrel (straightened arm) for one one-thousand count

##### Drills:

- One hand shooting
- Two feet from basket – both sides baseline and front of basket
- Nothing but net
- Make two shots in a row nothing but net move back one step
- Miss two shots in a row step forward

## Grades 5 and Up

- Beyond 12 feet move to “sweep and sway”
- Same hand position with shooting arm
- Feet are swayed approximately 15 degrees closer to inside of body
- Shoulders follow feet
- Feet 6 inches apart
- Feet, knee, hip, shoulder, elbow all line up with basket
- Shooting sequence: catch while hopping and turning into the pass and toward the basket. Stay close to floor with feet.
- Land with feet in proper sweep and sway alignment. Forearm parallel to floor.
- Dip ball chest to waist.
- Push with toes and wrists.
- Jump forward approximately six inches.
- Extension follow through as above

Note: Aim for 50% success rate with all shooting drills. If players are continually missing shots then the shot is too difficult. Simplify and move closer to the basket.

## Layup: All Ages

Note: There are two fundamental ways to finish a layup. Technique and application of both will be discussed in a clinic setting.

### One Step layup:

- Begin one step from block.
- Step with inside foot to the block
- Reach with shooting hand, shooting elbow and knee to the basket
- Thumb rotates outward on release
- Make sure the elbow is pointing to the basket

### Two Step Layup:

- Begin two steps from the block
- First step is with the outside foot
- Second step is with the inside foot onto the block
- Finish as above

### Three Step Layup (Travelling)

- Begin three steps back from the block
- First step with inside foot

- Second step with outside foot
- Third step with inside foot at the block
- Finish as above

### Three Step Layup with Dribble

- Begin three steps back from the block
- First step with inside foot while simultaneously bounding the ball to floor for one dribble.
- Second step with outside foot
- Third step with inside foot to block
- Finish as above

### Moving Layup

- Work player back towards three point line
- Work player back to mid-court line
- Players experiment with length of stride and foot speed to establish positioning for final three steps
- Teach stutter step leading up to last three steps to establish preparation and proper sequencing of final three steps
- Continue to add speed as technique allows
- Add pressure by having a partner push on the dribbling shoulder and hip from center court line – release dribbler at three point line

### **Triple Threat:**

#### Toss Only:

- Toss from top of semi-circle to foul line (coach on line)
- Player comes to jump stop while catching ball
- Inside crossover pivots going left and right
- One dribble only
- Eyes to basket
- Elbow pointing to basket

Note: Numerous variations of this progression will be demonstrated in a clinic setting

#### Toss and Turn:

- Player throws ball with backspin to inside of 3 point line
- Two foot jump stop
- Outside pivot to square up

- Right hand shooters should use a dominant left foot pivot
- Left hand shooters the opposite of above
- Weight on shooting foot
- Sweep ball below knees or above shoulder
- Lock the ball in the pocket (on the hip)
- Teach rocker step and jab fake to move opponent
- “See two shoulders” – no drive
- “See one shoulder” – drive
- Attack lead leg of defender contacting hip and shoulder
- Teach knifing and hooking for more advanced players
- Teach that we want the offense player to initiate the contact
- One dribble to rack from inside the three point line

Break Down the Gate:

- Defender holds arms straight out to the side
- Offensive player grabs elbow of defender and pushes to the floor

Note: Move toss and turn to all positions around the three-point line. Players experiment with distance and angles. Teach different finishes to the layup i.e. jump stop, step-through, power hook, power slide, reverse layup (all to be reviewed in a clinic setting). Various continuous-shooting formations can be used once players develop reasonable proficiency with a particular shot.

## **Ball Handling:**

Modified Approaches:

- Juggling
- Stationary ball handling
- Moving – forwards, backwards, sideways
- Low speed stationary
- High speed moving
- With and without defender

Stationary Concepts:

Note: 15 seconds maximum for each task. Emphasize pounding the ball. Tell players to “make a hole in the floor”.

- One finger space between ball and palm
- Seat down
- Use peripheral vision – pick spots on floor progressively farther away from ball

- Create distraction – hold up signs, fingers etc.
- Partner slaps dribbler on one arm/both arms
- Partner pushes shoulders/hips of dribbler
- V-sit dribbling – various ways i.e. outside left, between legs, other outside right, continuous variation of two locations i.e. outside left to centre to outside left and then continuous variations with three locations i.e. outside right to centre to outside left and back again
- Two ball maneuvers – find a “+ sign” on the floor
- Divide + sign area into 4 quadrants
- Pounding two balls in various quadrants
- Various tasks i.e. two ball simultaneous, alternating, crab dribble, walk the dog, high low.

#### Moving Concepts:

- One ball and two
- Use pylons
- Use 3 point line as a game-ready target – baseline-to-baseline dribbling around 3-point line i.e. pounding the ball below waste (left and right), three forward and one back dribble, behind the back, spin dribble, half spin, between legs, hesitation
- Partner pushing on shoulders and hips
- Two ball dribbling against partner pushing on shoulders
- Two ball dribbling with partner pulling on ropes from behind and various angles from the side.
- High speed dribble – get ball spinning in palm held a 45-degree angle.
- Add various finishes to high speed dribble i.e. jump stops and various attack modes at the three point line i.e. crossovers, hesitation, stutter step, spin
- Use “Tubby Smith” drill from half court sideline

#### **Passing:**

##### Chest and Bounce Pass:

- Fingertips to the ceiling
- Elbows tucked
- Snap wrists
- Thumbs down and away
- Bounce pass should hit floor 1/2 to 2/3 of the distance to the receiver
- Can you see the player’s palms when receiving
- Soft hands/cushion catch
- Teach use of block and trap to receive pass ahead of the body



### Baseball Pass:

- Teach principle of opposition
- Ball behind ear
- Follow through with lead leg

### Advanced Passing:

- Push pass, behind the back, scoop pass

### Drills:

- Stationary versus moving
- Individually against the wall stationary and moving/ one ball and two ball
- Passing multiple balls simultaneously while stationary and moving/ in partners or larger groups
- Continuous four corners drill is an excellent formation to teach chest and bounce pass and will eventually incorporate baseball pass and shooting.

### **Defensive Principles:**

Note: There are several key concepts we want to teach the players about what we are trying to accomplish from a defensive perspective.

- At the elementary and high school level of basketball most teams have a maximum of three good shooters. Who are they? What is their primary shot? Do they show a secondary shot? Many do not. How do we take that primary shot away?
- Good defense is largely about taking away time and space. A defensive player's offensive opponent only touches the ball for 4 seconds each possession. We want to encourage each player to try and reduce the time on ball, and when they do have the ball make it increasingly difficult for the opponent to make an uncontested shot. Everything should be under pressure."
- We want our defense to try and shrink the opponent's floor space. This is accomplished by defending with wide and high arms and legs, utilizing sword fight and helping on the weak side.
- Communication should be stressed in all drills including: "ball", "sword fight", "I've got two" and "dead". If you can get the team to verbalize those 4 situations consistently you are doing well.

Stance:

- Wide and high
- Weight 60% on balls of feet and 40% on heels
- Ability to touch offensive player (touching from time-to-time)
- “Ball”

Laning:

- Between the elbows – play straight up and force outside the elbows
- Outside elbows/above the foul line extended – top foot above defenders back foot and force to baseline
- Outside elbows/below foul line extended – defend straight and inside
- Outside lane at baseline – deny escape dribble

Glide:

- Utilize drop step
- Shoulder-to-shoulder contact
- Lead hand high, trail hand low
- Lead hand functioning as a tennis racket

Note: Move toss and turn to all positions around the three-point line. Defensive players experiment with distance and angles. Teach different laning positions from one-on-one toss and turn. Progress to two-on-two toss and turn etc.

Help:

- One pass away – “sword fight”
- Funnel trap offensive dribble drive into gap.
- Two passes away – “I’ve got two”

## **Offense Principles:**

Floor Balance:

- Motion – one cutter
- Weak side cutters act as a decoy
- Pass cut and replace
- Pass and interchange – Wing guards passing to top interchange with ball side wing
- Point guards interchange away

## Decision-making

- Back court eight seconds belongs to the players on floor
- First eight seconds in forecourt belong to the coach (Midget)
- Last eight seconds of shot clock belong to players on floor (Midget)
- First pass – poor shot
- Second pass – better shot
- Third pass – good shot

## Attack:

- Read then catch then attack
- Swing, attack, attack, swing, attack
- One times gap most difficult drive
- Two times gap good drive
- Three times gap (clear out) excellent drive
- Try to penetrate the foul line areas and create gap
- Use of freeze dribble to move defender

## Key Rotations:

Note: Players should become familiar with the following cuts and when to use them:

- V-cut, L-cut, Back Door Cut, Replacement Cut, Interchange Cut, Slides
- Closest offensive player fills in behind playing on the dribble drive
- If dribble drive is to the baseline then weak side guard slides to baseline
- If the dribble drive is to the foul line the weak side guard slides to foul line extended
- If there is an entry pass to the post all players slide to level or below the post player

## Combining Offensive and Defensive Concepts:

Note: It takes a lot longer to teach offensive skills. Therefore, structure practices proportionately 2/3 offense and 1/3 defense.

- Use the toss and turn formation to teach triple threat and defensive positioning
- Toss and turn in groups of 4 – 6 to teach offensive decision-making, vision, and evaluating one-times, two-times, three times gap, slides, rotations etc. and for defense to teach laning, sword fight and “I got two”.
- Various other drill formations to be reviewed on court.