



# GCBA HOUSE LEAGUE COACHING MANUAL

(Updated December 2011)

With the aid of the Bell Raptorball Youth League program, The GCBA has assembled a guideline for coaches to use to develop the skills of our young players. There are many coaching resources available that coaches can refer to in order to increase their knowledge base but the GCBA felt it was necessary to establish a working document that brings uniformity to the House League program.

The goal of the House League Coaching Manual is to:

- Ensuring all players enjoy the game improving skill level of all players
- Improving skill level of coaches
- Expose our kids to the values and skills that are required to succeed on the court and in the game of life
- Making basketball dynamic and fresh to keep as many kids interested in the sport for as long as possible

There is no one way to teach basketball skills but there are some key skills that kids need to master if they are going to be proficient in this highly technical game. Coaches will have different styles and alternate ways to arrive at the same goal however we must ensure that we are shaping skills and more importantly, shaping lives.

In the following pages, we will try to bring coaches to a level needed to coach a GCBA House League team. We have followed the Raptorball guidelines and added some of our own technical skills and philosophies to create a clear road to developing our players.

See you on the court!

Sincerely,  
Merrick Palmer  
GCBA Technical Director



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## GCBA HOUSE LEAGUE PHILOSOPHY

The goal of GCBA House League is to provide an opportunity for boys and girls to learn and enjoy the game of basketball. In Canada, basketball is still a relatively new sport when it comes to giving kids the best possible opportunity to learn the game as soon as they pick up a basketball. Our strongest coaches tend to gravitate to older players that have shown a proficiency to play the game and have the ability to understand game tactics.

Hockey has always been our national pastime and many of our kids are exposed to high-level coaching as soon as they strap on their first set of skates! The average hockey parent has probably had hours of ice time and has most likely played at a competitive level. With hockey in many households, a child already has inside knowledge of the sport. On the other hand, basketball is not so deep-rooted in our culture and more often, the first introduction to the sport is from a house league coach.

It's not a coincidence that countries that do well internationally in any sport have a strong grassroots/house league programs. It's simple, the more educated our coaches are, the better our kids will become.

### **WINNING**

We must note however that winning is a by-product of hours of training. As coaches we must do everything in our power to de-emphasize winning. Bad youth coaches will try to assemble the best kids to win as many games as possible. Good youth coaches enjoy winning but will not compromise the value of teaching the essential skills to **each** player in order to win an over-valued championship.

There have been many teams that have won only a couple of games all year and said they had a successful year as it relates to skill development. **Players will adopt the personality of the coach.** Be clear to your parents and players that "winning" doesn't always translate to scoring more points than the opponent. Emphasize attending and working hard in practices and use the games as the stage to show what you have worked on in those practices.



## PRACTICES

Practices are the single most important part of developing players at a young age. **Practices are the rehearsals for the games.** If an actor doesn't know their lines during a rehearsal, chances are they will stumble when they get on stage. The director (the coach) must put their actors or players in roles or positions where they will succeed. If a player does not know how to dribble in practice, they will not learn in a game where the pressure is intensified. Young players need small personal victories in practices and games to keep them motivated to continue playing basketball. If practices are too difficult that means that the drills may be too advanced and need to be scaled back so everyone succeeds.

**If there are players that have strong skills then the drills should be modified for them so they are challenged and don't become bored.**

Assess the abilities of each of your players and work on their deficiencies in practice. When players show proficiency in practices, coaches can shift roles during games. A role that is often mismanaged is that of the point guard, or the players that are chosen to bring up the ball and start the offense. **Not all players can fill this role.** Allowing all the players to bring up the ball in a game will not allow the team to successfully start the offense which can be demoralizing for youngsters. In the long run, though, it is important that coaches strive to develop all players to the extent that is possible, in all roles.

## SYSTEMS

Coaches should ensure that the offensive systems that are being used are age and skill appropriate. Please contact the GCBA for a copy of the **Numbered Offensive System for All Ages DVD (N.O.S.A.A) (More of N.O.S.A.A in Offense)**. Defensively, the GCBA abides by a **No-Zone policy from Novice to Bantam levels**. All players on defence must be guarding his/her player. If a player A is clearly beaten, player B may take player A's check. Player A must now recover and cover player B's check (no double teaming). (More on defensive philosophy in **Person to Person Defensive Philosophy**)



## HOUSE LEAGUE GUIDELINES

For all rules and policies and procedures for the house league program, please refer to the Gloucester Cumberland Basketball Association House League Guidelines found on the [www.GCBA.ca](http://www.gcba.ca) website.

Cut and paste this link: [http://www.gcba.ca/uploads/file/GCBAHLGuidelines\\_Sep05.pdf](http://www.gcba.ca/uploads/file/GCBAHLGuidelines_Sep05.pdf)

Or follow these steps:

1. Log onto [www.gcba.ca](http://www.gcba.ca)
2. Click on About Us tab
3. Scroll down to Policies and Procedures
4. Click on [GCBA House League Guidelines](#) (PDF English)



## WARM-UP EXERCISES

### **DYNAMIC STRETCHING**

Dynamic stretching has become the new standard for preparing the ligaments and muscles for activities that have a wide range of motion. When performed correctly, dynamic stretching warms up the joints, maintains current flexibility and reduces muscle tension (Canfit Pro). Always start dynamic stretching exercises at a slow pace then gradually increase.

### **Examples of Dynamic Stretching Exercises**

#### **1. Walking Quad Stretch**

Muscles targeted: **Quadriceps**

1. Start by lifting your right leg and grabbing it with your hand and pull it to your butt in a controlled manner.
2. Hold the stretch for a couple of seconds, release your foot and return to the ground. Then take a step and repeat with the opposite leg.
3. Continue this alternating motion for the desired repetitions.

#### **2. Leg Cradle**

Muscles targeted: **Hip Rotators**

#### **Instructions:**

1. Start by lifting your right leg and grabbing your foot and knee with your hands.
2. Pull them up towards the ceiling until a comfortable stretch is felt and simultaneously stand up on the ball of your opposite foot.
3. Return to the starting position, take a step and repeat with the other leg.
4. Continue this alternating motion until the desired repetitions are met.



### **3. Lateral Leg Swings**

Muscles targeted: **Adductors and Abductors**

#### **Instructions:**

1. Start by holding onto a secure object and raise your outside leg out to the side.
2. In a smooth and continuous motion swing your leg back and forth across the front of your body.
3. Swing through your full range of motion but keep your upper body stable throughout the movement.
4. Repeat for the recommended repetitions and then flip sides and repeat with the other leg.

### **4. Forward Backward Leg Swing**

Muscles targeted: **Hip Flexor, Quads, Glutes and Hamstrings**

#### **Instructions:**

1. Start by standing with your feet shoulder width apart. You can stand on a small step or on the ground.
2. Keeping your upper body perpendicular to the ground swing one leg forward and backward.
3. Do not swing your leg so hard that you cannot keep your upper body from moving.
4. Repeat for the recommended repetitions and repeat with the other side.

### **5. Large Arm Circles**

Muscles targeted: **Shoulders**

#### **Instructions:**

1. Stand straight with your arms out to your sides.
2. Start swinging your arms in a large circles going forward and then back.
3. Repeat for the recommended time and then repeat in the other direction



## **6. Walking Knee Pulls**

Muscles targeted: **Glutes**

### **Instructions:**

1. Do the Drill Walking
2. Go up on the Toe, and pull the knee to your chest.
3. Put the leg back on the ground take a step and repeat of the opposite leg.

**After executing several dynamic stretches, you are now ready to move to more basketball related drills**

For more dynamic stretching exercises, please visit: [www.stretchingworld.com/dynamicstretching.html#test](http://www.stretchingworld.com/dynamicstretching.html#test)

## **SKILLS CHECKLIST**

To teach the game of basketball; the game can be divided into 6 categories:

- 1) Footwork
- 2) Ball Handling/Dribbling
- 3) Shooting
- 4) Passing/Receiving
- 5) Defence
- 6) Offence

Mental preparation is an additional category that can be addressed at any age. The earlier the concepts are introduced, the greater the understanding will be as players move on to higher levels.



## SKILLS AND DRILLS

### ***Footwork***

#### **Ready Position**

The most important position in basketball is the Ready Position. Most drills will include the ready position in some fashion. This position is also known as the Offensive Triple Threat Position for the ability to 1. Dribble 2. Pass or 3. Shoot. But more importantly, this position allows players to be ready to defend.

- A) Feet are placed one slightly ahead of the other and shoulder width apart
- B) Knees are slightly bent
- C) The weight is on the balls of the feet to prepare for movement
- D) Arms are extended and palms are facing in
- E) The head and eyes are up



#### **Form Running**

Run the width or length of the gym. Encourage players to use the pad of their feet (front part) using high knee action while pumping the arms.



## Lateral Shuffle

This is used when covering your opponent- Try not to crossover your feet. When shuffling, it's a push off motion. Keep low and your head up. Make yourself as large as possible and stay between your opponent and the basket (more on defensive principals in **Person to Person Defence**)

## Pylon Shuffle

Place pylons approximately 8 ft apart in a Zig Zag formation down the length of the gym. Each player does lateral shuffles inside the pylons and back to the start line. Use volunteers or other objects if no pylons are available.

## Defensive Stance

The defensive stance (or ready position) is like sitting in an imaginary chair. Try to keep the eyes directly at an opponent's torso as the torso moves the least. Watching the head, shoulders, hands or feet leaves the defender susceptible to fakes. Coaches can try to push the player from different angles to see if the player can keep his or her balance.

## Carioca

Players begin facing the sideline. Arms are at shoulder height. Move down the length of the court by crossing the left foot in front of the right foot and bringing the right foot up beside the left. Then throw the left foot behind the right and bring the right back beside the left.

See video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEjbWMIwZVE>

## Footwork Challenge

Set up a large rectangle with the pylons inside the court. Have players run to a corner, back pedal to another, shuffle to another, carioca to another etc.



## ***Ball Handling/Dribbling***

The fingertips are an extremely important body part as it relates to developing good ball handling skills. Drills to sensitizing the hands and fingertips should be performed before any offensive drills are conducted. Try shooting a basketball immediately after coming in from the sub-zero temperatures! The fingertips are the last part of the body that the basketball comes in contact with when shooting or passing.

## **Tapping**

Tapping is done by quickly passing the ball back and forth between the fingertips with the arms extended. Do the same action with the arms above the head and to the lowest point. To make it more challenging, put the ball behind the back or with the eyes closed. Tapping can also be done on the wall.

## **Ball Circles**

Move the ball from one hand to the next around the head, waist, legs, knees, ankles, figure 8's. Speed is the key! **Encourage kids to go as fast as they can!** Have them go faster than they can keep up with in order for them to go outside their comfort zone. There will be balls flying all over the place but encourage them to pick it up and start again. **If kids are not pushed outside of their comfort zones in practice, they will be afraid to take risks in games.** With continuous repetition in practice, their speed will increase very quickly. For all ball handling and dribbling drills, it is important for the kids to not look at the basketball. At the younger ages not looking at the ball can be very challenging but coaches should always be shouting "eyes up"!

## **See-Saw Drill**

Stand with the legs a little more than shoulder width apart. Hold the ball with 2 hands behind the back. Throw the ball between the legs and catch it with 2 hands in the front. Go back and forth and increase the speed. Close the eyes to make the drill more challenging.

## **Pretzel Drill**

Stand with the legs a little more than shoulder width apart. Hold the ball between the legs with one hand holding the ball from the front and the other hand holding the ball from behind the back. Keep the ball between the legs while switching hand positions



without dropping the ball. Younger kids may need to catch the ball after one bounce but encourage catching it without a bounce. Increase speed to go outside comfort zones. Close the eyes to make the drill more challenging.

## Spot Dribbling

Each player has a basketball, or shares with a partner and prepares for the drill by getting into the ready position. Dribble in one spot always keeping the ball below the knee. This is also known as a control dribble. After every player has a chance to spot dribble, they can switch hands.

## Dribbling Figure 8's

Stand with the legs a little more than shoulder width apart. Dribble the ball as many times and as low as possible between the legs in a figure 8 shape. Close the eyes to make the drill more challenging or perform the drill while walking the length of the court.

## One Dribble Figure 8's

Stand with the legs a little more than shoulder width apart. Use one dribble between the legs and move the basketball in a figure 8 shape. More arm and hand action is needed for this drill to manoeuvre the ball. Once this drill is mastered, do this drill in motion. Have players compete in relay races using this drill.

## Compass Drill

Similar to the spot dribble, each player is in the ready position, dribbling in one spot. The coach tells the players to dribble in all directions using both hands. Only the ball moves, not the player.

## Zig Zag Drill

This drill allows players to practice both offensive and defensive concepts, defending the dribbler and the crossover dribble

- Divide the court into 3 corridors lengthwise using the existing lines on the floor. Use the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> corridors for this drill
- Players form pairs: One offensive and one defensive. The Offensive player dribbles the length of the 1<sup>st</sup> corridor in a zig zag pattern while the defensive player uses defensive slides and drop steps to try and beat the offensive player to the edge of the corridor.
- The offence must stay within the lines of the corridor
- The defence must try and stay within an arm's length away from the offensive player



- Only when skills have increased should the coach allow beating the defender or stealing the ball on defence
- Defenders can execute the drill with hands behind the back to discourage stealing and to emphasize footwork

## Two Ball Drills

Most dribbling drills can be performed using two basketballs. Dribbling two balls at one time will force the weak hand to keep up with the dominant hand. Dribbling two balls at one time with the eyes up will quickly prepare a player to make quick decisions in games because he or she doesn't have to focus on the basketball. "The ball is round and the floor is flat, the ball will come back to you with enough practice".

## Dribble Tag

Each player has a ball, use the lines of the entire basketball court as the boundaries. The coach or a player can be "it" to start. The person who is "it" must try and tag and recruit as many people as possible. The last player to be tagged by the "it" team is declared the winner. The coach can periodically blow the whistle and freeze everyone and have players who have not been tagged raise their hands. A frenzy to get those people will ensue once the coach blows the whistle to restart. Players must keep control of their ball and not step out of bounds. Remember to play safe and keep the game fun!

## *Shooting*

Scoring the basketball requires shooting the basketball into the basket. It sounds simple but to be a consistent shooter, it takes many hours of shooting the basketball with the proper technique. All players will have a different way of shooting the basketball but the great shooters will always incorporate the same key principals. Shooting is arguably the most difficult thing to teach young players. If not directed properly, kids will always try to shoot from as far as possible to see if they can make one. This is their equivalent to a slam dunk!

When kids make a shot using poor mechanics, they get a huge sense of gratification and will continue to shoot this way even from close distances. Even if their success rate is low, the brain will record these improper mechanics making it very hard to retrain them with the correct form while trying to extinguish the bad habits. **Please note: If a player has unorthodox shooting form but is consistent, leave them alone! Larry Bird or Reggie Miller didn't have the best form either.**



## Shooting the Basketball

The basic basketball shot is simple and beautiful but by no means simplistic. As pointed out previously, everyone shoots the basketball differently. Yet, there is **a general procedure that all good basketball shooters more or less follow.**

1. The feet should be shoulder width apart with the lead foot slightly ahead. Half-bend your knees before shooting a basketball for more potential power
2. Your dominant hand should have its fingers spread out
3. **Only the pad of your hand fingertips should be in contact with the ball.** Keep the heel of your hand off the basketball. Using the heel of your hand will slow the release down. Have players hold the basketball in one hand like a waiter holding a tray.
4. Your other hand (guide hand) should only support the ball. Adding pressure with the guide hand will alter the backspin of the ball.
5. The ball should be brought above the head in one motion. Once the ball is over the head, there should be a window to see the basket.
6. At this point, the **angles at your armpit, elbow, and wrist are at 90 degrees** and the shoulders are square to the basket.
7. While extending your knees, extend your forearm and **snap your wrist** (follow through). This will propel the ball forward towards the basket. Placing your hand into the rim like a cookie jar is a good reminder for kids to always follow through. Shooting with backspin will soften your shot if it hits the rim.
8. **Hold the follow through until the ball goes in or hits the rim.**
9. **Ensure that you have at least a 2 second arc on your shot!** Meaning the ball stays in the air for at least 2 seconds. This will also soften your shot as the ball has a better chance of bouncing in.
10. If it feels natural to jump upon release, do so. Shooting from long range requires more legs.



In sum, you are shooting a basketball with the kinetic energy transferred **from your legs to your hands.** The most optimal case is that the snap of wrist only **directs the basketball and adds backspin** to it. You should also shoot the basketball **as naturally as**



**possible.** In the event that the power from your legs is not enough to shoot the basketball, (for example, you are doing a fade-away and a portion of the leg power is directed towards the back.) you are forced to use your wrist in a controlled manner. In particular, do not forcefully use your wrist or jerk your wrist for extra power. This will greatly reduce your shot accuracy.

## Shooting Drills

1. **Sit down shooting:** Sit on the floor or on a chair and shoot the basketball up 4-5 feet. Focus on releasing the ball with backspin. This is a drill done at all levels and is great to refocus on the upper-body shooting mechanics.
2. **Partner shooting:** Have players line up across from a partner (squaring up). When players are in the ready position, have them shoot the ball back and forth focusing on proper form.
3. **Wall shooting:** Players stand 3 feet away from a wall and focus on shooting the ball up focusing on arc.
4. **Swish Shooting:** Players stand 3 feet away from the basket and focus on trying to get swishes. Players will naturally start shooting the ball higher as it is very difficult to get a swish with a low arcing shot.
5. **One Foot Shooting:** Begin the drill 5 feet away from in front the basket. The player will need to make 5 shots from that distance before moving back one foot. Time the players to see how long it takes to get to the foul line.
6. **Square-Up Drill:** Divide the players into to two lines. A passing line stands below the basket and a shooting line that runs from the top of the 3pt arc to the right hand corner of the key. The passer will throw a chest pass to the player running towards the basket; they will receive the ball, square up and shoot. The shooter gets their rebound and the passer goes to the shooting line.

**There is plenty of shooting drills and games available on the web!**



## Lay-up

The lay-up allows for scoring to basketball scoring the ball at close range while in motion. Once you get up in the air, there are many ways to manoeuvre the ball provided you have enough elevation. Yet, before you take off in the air, there are basically two ways to approach the basketball hoop and lay the ball in. Let's take a look at the lay up in a nutshell.

Start by dribbling the basketball towards the right side of the basketball hoop with your right hand.

1. As you approach the basket, you may carry the ball and take two steps.
2. Leap towards the basketball hoop with your left foot and bring your right knee up
3. Make sure you work the opposite side of the basket with the opposite hand. It may get ugly but if kids don't struggle early, they will struggle later on.

**Tip:** Perform the lay-up a couple steps away from the basket without a basketball. This helps kids with the footwork needed to avoid traveling and taking off of the wrong leg.

## Lay-up Drills (on the web)

Intro to making a lay-up: <http://www.5min.com/Video/How-to-Coach-Basketball-Lay-Up-Drills-6183976>

Mikan lay-up drill: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMegqlaYunI>

Coaching the lay-up: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrNQrfzOspI>

## *Passing/Receiving*

A good pass is one that's caught but there are actual techniques that help players make their passes more accurate. There are several different ways to pass the basketball and each has its own function within a game situation.

## Chest Pass

This is the most common pass in basketball. It's a good way of getting a ball to a close teammate with no opponent in the way.

- Ball held at players' chest in both hands with finger spread and thumbs pointing towards one another on back of ball
- Elbows bent and held at the side



- Ball passed with a finger, wrist and arm snap and a step into the pass
- Follow-through has elbows straight, palms out and fingers pointing towards the target
- Keep eye contact with the receiver and make sure passes are crisp

How to teach a chest pass: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eclsfy94tDE>

## Bounce Pass

The two- handed bounce pass uses almost the same mechanics as a chest pass. The bounce pass is mostly used in close quarters when trying to pass the ball to a teammate when an opponent is in the way. The one-handed bounce pass gives the passer more range to pass the ball around a defender but it is more difficult to fake this pass because the ball is in one hand.

How to teach a bounce pass: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOMzkwk-J-BY>

## Overhead Pass

The overhead pass is used when a player is getting pressured from the defense or they are trying to pass it over several defenders. The ball is held over the head with two hands and the ball is then propelled forward with a flick of the wrists. The ball does not go behind the head like a soccer throw-in. Putting the ball behind the head leaves the ball open for a defender to steal from behind.

How to teach an overhead pass: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0IOSxblfOU>

## Baseball Pass

The baseball pass is mostly performed when the player is trying to cover a large distance. The ball is held with one hand close to the ear. Step towards the target and follow through with the fingers pointing towards the target.

How to teach an overhead pass: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCY2hye9g-U>



## Passing Drills (on the web)

1. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcAuQbhs\\_ek&feature=fvvr](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcAuQbhs_ek&feature=fvvr)
2. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RvphKAknnI&feature=results\\_main&playnext=1&list=PLD4B9A84F743CFBF9](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RvphKAknnI&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PLD4B9A84F743CFBF9)
3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1B3M920t1Fg>
4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYSynGqXsyA>
5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Duj9XUqczsM&feature=related>

## No Dribble Scrimmage

Play a full court game without dribbling will work on passing and moving without the basketball. All other rules are in effect.

## ***Person to Person Defensive Philosophy***

Person to person defence (a.k.a. man to man defence) is one of the cornerstones of youth basketball development. Coaches that overlook individual defensive skills will tend to teach young players how to fall back in a zone in order to force outside shooting. The problem is that most young players can't shoot consistently from the perimeter which gives the team playing a zone the clear advantage. Teaching players to defend an area of the floor rather than one's assigned check, handicaps the defensive development of these players.

In a zone defence, players will have a difficulty developing:

1. Foot speed needed to gauge an opponent's speed to keep them from penetrating to the basket
2. Defensive responsibility and individual pride in stopping one's check from scoring
3. The skills needed to learn how to deny the basketball to keep the ball out of a dominant scorer's hands.

Most zones are designed to keep the defensive players close to the basket so there are no open gaps for the offense to drive to the basket and limited rebounding opportunities. Zone defences will also limit dribble penetration which hinders ball handling skills. Zones do very little for basketball as they encouraging kids to shoot beyond their range and force young players to chuck or heave the ball in order to reach the basket.

When coaches are myopic in their vision of developing young players, winning becomes the sole purpose of playing the game.



**Professional coaches are paid millions of dollars to win games. If we as youth coaches get caught up with wins and losses, we lose sight of the role of the GCBA house league program.**

Here is a video of a NBA coach Stan Van Gundy speaking about the role of a youth coach. **Please watch!**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ9jTOAMTtk>

## Person to Person Defensive Principals

Below is a fantastic article on teaching individual defence by Coach **Ronn Wyckoff**, Author/Producer

1. There is often a lot of generalization rather than specific teaching being done;
2. Many coaches believe zone defense is easier to teach than man defense;
3. Defensive skills are easier to teach than offensive skills. Creating a good defensive player is infinitely easier than creating a good offensive player;
4. A team can play good defense and win even when the offense is having an off game;
5. Defense has always created most of my offense.

Throughout my career, at all levels of coaching, from the playgrounds in the beginning, to national teams, we won nearly three out of every four games we played. I had some high scoring teams, and on only few occasions was I blessed to have any superior offensive players. My highest scoring teams were my best defensive teams.

I believe in teaching by building blocks. We teach defense from the ground up, starting with the placement of the feet. With the first stage, we show the foot placement and stance. We need good balance and to be able to move quickly while maintaining good balance.

Defense begins with the individual. Team defense is only as good as its weakest player, so I look for players who have the will and desire to become defensive specialists. I want players who will take pride in their defensive play because they are confident in their skills.

Coaches, do not expect your team to play good team zone defense if the individual players cannot execute good, basic man principles. In man defense we live by an individual's ability to play on his or her offensive player, whether with or without the ball.



Don't send your kids out to play five-on-five and expect them to be successful if they haven't got the individual skills to stop the flash, fight over a screen, front a cutter or be able to play "help" defense.

The successful application of teaching good defense begins with a stance that gets the player low, on balance, under control, and able to move quickly and efficiently.

To start, have your players assume a stance with the right foot forward, feet placed wider than the shoulders and hips. The toes of the back (left) foot should be about even with the heel of the front foot. Bend the knees and get the hips down, keeping the back nearly straight. Get as low as possible, with the feet as wide as possible but still enabling quick, balanced movement. Balance should be centered evenly between both feet. Extend the right arm forward to the outside of the right knee, with the hand as if it's touching the offensive player. Extend the left arm out to the left side, with the palm facing the offensive player. This is the primary stance I teach for playing on the ball with a dribbler going to the defender's left.

Change feet and hands and assume the same stance as if the dribbler is going to the defender's right. Left foot forward; right foot back and even with the heel of the front foot; left arm extended out toward the dribbler; right arm extended out in the direction of the dribble. The arms are forming the letter "L".

This won't be an altogether comfortable position for the players in the beginning. Emphasize staying low to improve reaction time and balance. Continually check the foot placement, hips low, back straight, balance between the feet, arm and hand positions. This position is where the defensive game is played. The muscles must be trained to accept this position. (Tell the brain that the body will be spending a lot of time like this, so adjust, baby!)

With the players stationary, do a little drill to have the group jump on your command from a right foot forward stance to a left foot forward stance. With the coach standing in front of the group, the coach raises either the left hand or the right hand and points in the direction the dribble is going. Players should automatically assume a correct stance with the foot back in the direction of the dribble. The players' bodies should not jump up in the air when changing directions. Only the feet and arms are changing directions. If you were to draw a line across the top of the head, when changing directions, the head would not move above that line. The feet are barely gliding over the floor during the exchange.

Now, we're ready to slide. The slide is done with a reaching slide-step in the direction of the dribble, pushing off the front foot and reaching with the back foot. This is: Push; Reach; Fill. Pushing off the foot away from the direction you're sliding, reach and step in the direction of the dribble and fill the vacated back foot spot with the front foot.



A very important point of emphasis here is, the defender should never lift up (line over the head!) during the slide, change the center of gravity or allow the feet to come together. The same distance between the feet is maintained during the slide.

This last point is important. When teaching a dribbler to attack a defender, the dribbler will look for defensive weakness. The dribbler should always be aware of what their defender is doing with their feet and what happens to their body balance during the faking moves. If the defender places weight on one foot, the dribbler can attack and drive to that side because the defender is off balance and can't react. The same thing happens if a defender straightens up, the reaction time is slowed, or the defender's body may now be too close to the dribbler's body, allowing the defender to be beaten.

Review the teaching points with the players: Foot placement, hips down low, back straight, balance between the feet, arm and hand extension, slide and reach with the back foot, push off the front foot, don't go up and down during the slide (like a carousel horse).

With the coach in front of the group again, have the coach point out dribble directions, as in the last drill, and have the players slide, changing feet when the coach changes directions. When the coach points out a direction, players should take 3-4 slides in that direction to get used to continuation defense. When changing directions, a player will jump-switch the feet (without raising up); that is, stop the rear foot slide and push off it while bringing the front foot back to become the sliding foot. While pushing off the rear foot, reach with the other in the direction of the dribble. Do the slides slowly at first in order to get the whole process controlled and precise. Make whatever corrections are necessary here and re-emphasize whatever points need to be re-covered.

Repeat this drill several times. When they have it well enough, the coach can add a ball.

To view the full article follow: [http://www.top-basketball-coaching.com/September\\_2006.html](http://www.top-basketball-coaching.com/September_2006.html)

## ***Offence***

Scoring the basketball is fun! There may be some kids on your team that will not score the basketball because their skills are extremely underdeveloped. It is your job as the coach to teach all the offensive principals discussed above to ensure every player gets to feel the excitement of seeing the ball go through the basket. Coaches should ensure that whatever offensive system that is in use, allows for all five players to have the opportunity to score the basketball. The offensive system should be age and skill appropriate in order for kids to understand and not feel anxious when on the floor.



There are many offenses that are used at the high levels but coaches must be aware that these teams practice an average of 20 hours per week! **Choose offenses that are simple and easy to understand even for brand new players.** Try and incorporate as many offensive principals as possible:

- Give and go
- Screen and roll
- Player movement i.e. Back door cuts, rotations (age appropriate)
- Dribble penetration
- Passing i.e. chest pass, bounce pass
- 1 on 1 play

The GCBA uses the Numbered Offensive System for All Ages DVD (N.O.S.A.A). The DVD goes into detail of how to teach and run a simplified offense that young kids can understand in only a few practices. The video also teaches how to start a fast break offense using the same numbered system as well a shooting tutorial using one of Canada's best university shooters.

Please contact your house league convener to get a free copy of the N.O.S.A.A DVD.