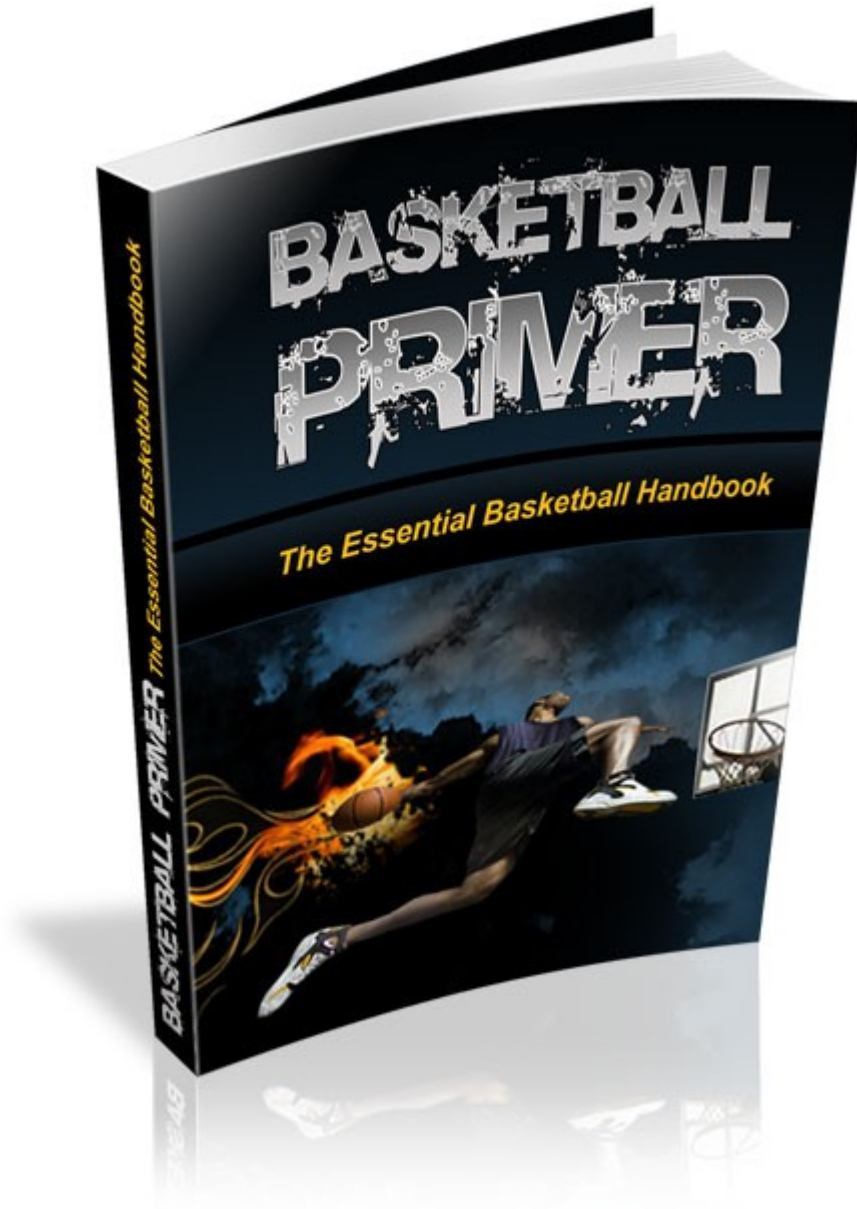


Basketball Primer



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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Basketball gets its heritage from Springfield, Massachusetts. It is a game that was invented to be played indoors and in relatively little space. The original baskets that were used in basketball were peach baskets that were hung ten feet in the air. Although Basketball originated in the United States, the invention of the sport is attributed to Dr. James Naismith who was a physical education professor from Canada. He wrote some rules for the game and then nailed the peach basket to the wall. Back in the day, the balls had to be taken from the basket when a shot was made as the peach basket still had a bottom.

The game borrowed some of the rules from the game "Duck On A Rock," which was a popular children's game in 1891 when Naismith invented basketball. Women's basketball started at Smith College by Senda Berenson. Surprisingly, the first college basketball team was not made up of men, but of women. Smith started the first team in 1893.

Basketball soon gained popularity, especially in YMCAs and high schools across the United States and in Canada. College leagues were formed prior to WWI, but soon disbanded. But by the 1950s, college basketball was a major sport on campus. The Hall of Fame for basketball was founded in 1959.

Today, the NBA basketball games are among the most watched sporting events in the world. The NBA, as we know it today, was formed in 1976 when it combined the American Basketball Association which was the National Basketball Association formed in 1949.

The Women's version of the NBA, the WNBA, was formed in 1997 but folded because of lack of attendance at games.

While you may associate basketball with the United States and the NBA, America is not the only country that hosts basketball games and nurtures a love for the sport. There are other countries that also have excellent players. This includes Germany, New Zealand, Spain, and Argentina, to name a few. Some basketball players that have come to the United States to play in the NBA are from other countries such as Great Britain, Italy and South Africa. Many of them come to the United States to play because of the lucrative contracts the NBA, a wealthy organization, can offer.

Japan also hosts basketball games with similar vigor as the United States. The FIBA World Championships have helped globalize the sport. Many players who are members of the NBA today are from other countries.

Basketball is a very active sport as the players rush from one end of the court to the other constantly trying to score points by putting the ball in the basket. Only five members of each team can be on the court at the same time and play defense as well as offense.

Height and speed as well as agility and coordination are coveted by basketball scouts, who often look to the high schools and even the junior high schools in the United States, for talent. At the high school level, basketball is more than just a game. It is a path to a scholarship for many.

What started as a way to keep athletes active in the YMCA during the winter months has emerged into a world wide sport that has been beloved for years.

Chapter 2 - Equipment Needed For Basketball

One of the best aspects about playing basketball is that there is not a lot of equipment needed to play the game. The game can be played on full court or half court and need only a flat surface, a steel basket that can be permanently affixed to the ground or transportable, and a basketball.

Basketballs are regulated in size and weight. For men's basketball, the ball is 29.5 inches circumference and will weigh 22 ounces. This is considered a size 7 basketball.

Women will play with a size 6 basketball which is lighter and slightly smaller. The steel rim of the basket is attached to a backboard and hangs 10 feet above the floor for both men and women. It is very important that the rim is affixed to the correct height for all levels of play as basketball players learn to shoot with certain finesse. In order to maintain consistency when training basketball players and for games, rims should all be a certain height.

Netting is usually made of nylon and hangs down from the metal rim. The netting is essential because it slows the ball from emerging from the hoop, giving players more time to scramble for the rebound. You may often see netting removed from outdoor basketball hoops, but in the professional and school arenas, the netting is secure.

Because there is relatively little equipment that needs to be used and a small sized court (about 92 by 49 feet long), basketball has been considered a sport of the inner city and is one in which children who have little means often aspire to excel at. Other sports, such as baseball and football, require more ground and more equipment. Baseball, for example, requires bases,

batting helmets, bats, several baseballs, a pitching mound and plate. These can, and often are, improvised by young people, even to the point of, at one time, using sticks as bats, but in leagues, this equipment is needed. In basketball leagues, however, there is not the need for a lot of space or a lot of equipment.

Clothing Needed

Clothing should be light and comfortable to wear. Most basketball players who are playing in indoor leagues wear shorts. Basketball is an indoor sport, although it is often played outdoors. Basketball uniforms include sweats to wear as cover ups before the game and then shorts and tank tops for the game. High topped shoes with rubber soles are used in basketball. Before the endorsement craze of the 1980s and the idea of paying \$150 for a pair of shoes came to fruition, basketball shoes were distinct as they looked like regular sneakers with high tops. The high tops protect the ankles when jumping.

Many professional basketball players today endorse products such as Reebok, Nike and other brands and wear these shoes. When Michael Jordan endorsed Nike shoes, the price of the shoes went sky high. Jordan even had his own line.

Some players will wear headbands to contain sweat. As you can imagine, there is quite a bit of sweating going on when someone is playing basketball. Sweatbands are often used as a way to keep sweat from dripping into the eyes of the players.

In addition to sweatbands, some players who need to use glasses use goggles. Contact lenses can end up falling out or giving the player more trouble if they are hit. Basketball is not supposed to be a full contact sport, but fouls definitely start to emerge as they play. A player who needs corrective vision wear will use goggles to allow him to see. They strap around his head and stay in place. The plastic lenses are shatter proof.

Because basketball is tough on the knees, some players will also wear knee pads or warmers around their knees. Some will bandage their knees to prevent from damage. Just as tennis players often get tennis elbow, basketball players can get the same type of torn tendon in their knees.

It is important to make sure that you have the right equipment when you are playing basketball. The equipment to play basketball is not expensive, making it one of the most affordable of all of the organized sports.

Chapter 3 - When Should Someone Start Playing Basketball?

In the United States, children start playing basketball as soon as they are able to understand the concept of tossing the ball into the basket. This simple game is delightful for most toddlers. There are small basketball sets that can be used to teach children the concept of "making a basket." This can be something that they play all the time for fun. When a child is about two years old, you can start him playing basketball.

Many parents who want their kids to play basketball will get a basket hoop installed in the driveway. This can be a transportable basketball hoop that is weighted down with a heavy base, or it can actually be installed in cement. While it should be on even, flat ground, if you look at any suburb in the United States, you will see basketball hoops - some permanent and others transportable, on sloping driveways and small places. Outdoor basketball courts are also seen throughout most parks in the suburbs and on concrete in urban areas.

If you decide to get a basketball hoop for your kids, you should get one that you can raise and lower so that it will be age appropriate for the kids. You cannot expect a five year old to be able to sink a 10 foot basket. Most hoops that are made from the home are adjustable.

Some people only get a backboard and steel hoop and attach it to the top of the garage. This is also a staple in many American homes. This gives the kids a chance to learn how to sink baskets from the driveway and allows kids to play a fun game outdoors.

In this day and age where children are constantly pressured to either succeed at organized sports or are spending their time inside watching TV or being on the computer, it is a good idea to have some sort of activity for them to play outside. One of the best aspects about installing a basketball hoop is that it will get the kids out of the house. They are easy to install, there are a variety of different types of hoops that are available and you do not have to make it "perfect." Most NBA players who excel in this sport grew up playing the sport at the YMCA or in the local basketball court.

If you want your youngster to learn how to play this game proficiently, make sure that he or she has the right equipment and shoot a few hoops with him or her when you get home from work. This not only allows the child to have a love for the game, but it will also give you bonding time together.

It does not cost a lot of money to entertain your kids. You can get a basketball for under \$10 just about anywhere and install a hoop for about \$20. You can then encourage them to get away from the computer and television (as well as yourself) and shoot a few hoops with them outside.

If your child expresses an interest in playing basketball on a team, there are several options open to you when it comes to getting them in an organized basketball team at a young age.

Chapter 4 - Basketball Organizations For Youngsters

The purpose of getting your child into an organized sport for youngsters is to see what type of talent he has as well as to build his self esteem. Children as young as 5 years old are able to enjoy playing basketball in organized sports leagues. At this age, most coaches realize that they need encouragement and to learn the necessary skills and rules involved in the game.

Sportsmanship is also taught in youth sports organizations.

Before you sign up your child to play basketball, you should make sure that the organization is one that will instill a love of the game in your child, teach them the proper basketball playing techniques and also teach them sportsmanship. Serious competition among the young children is rare, although children should be taught that basketball, like all other sports, is competitive. Some children will naturally excel at this sport. Some will be just fair players and some will be poor players.

Those who are poor players are usually forced into the league by parents who want their child to play. If a child likes the sport and wants to exceed, chances are he will be at least fair. If he hates the idea of going to practice and balks at playing the sport, you should try to find another activity that is more suited for him.

There are many places where you can sign your child up to learn and play basketball. Here is a run down of some of them:

YMCA

The place where basketball originated has remained one of the top spots for city kids to learn to play basketball and join a team. If you live in an urban area, you should check out your local YMCA and sign your child up for a team. The YMCA is usually either free or very low costing.

Some parents like sending their kids to the YMCA because it gets them off the streets and keeps them out of trouble. The YMCA is an age old institution that is for young men and now, young women. They are usually located in just about every urban area.

Instructors at the YMCA can teach young people how to play basketball and put them on organized teams so they can learn the competitive nature of the game. Many of the all time greats in basketball, such as Wilt Chamberlain, got their start by playing at the YMCA.

Parks And Recreation Department

If you live in the suburbs, you will most likely have a parks and recreation department. Most cities have these departments as well. They often host organized sporting teams for both children and adults. Take a look at the activities that are offered in your local parks department and see if you can sign up your son or daughter for basketball.

Basketball is a winter sport, so you will want to sign up in the late fall so that your child can be part of a team. Most parks departments have a cut off time as to when they can accept applicants. Take a trip to your park department to see what type of options are available to you.

Chances are that you will have to pay a fee for your child to be part of a team at your parks department. It is not as expensive as a private league because taxes usually subsidize the park district or department. But you do have to pay something towards getting your child involved. If you are in a limited budget or living below the poverty level, you can ask for a waiver of the fee and, in some cases, you will be able to get it.

Private Leagues

There are private sports organizations abound. These organizations mostly flourish in the suburbs and in more affluent areas. This is because they cost to join and also include fundraising activities that are needed to fund the league even further. Some leagues are created for fun while others are more competitive in nature. Find a league that has a little of both in order to teach your child the true merits of playing basketball.

Private leagues are always looking for volunteers to help coach teams. Uniforms are usually given as part of the fee, which can be \$100 or more per player. Private leagues will usually have parents who are very much into the entire basketball league culture and will want their team to win.

There's no difference in the players who are at the YMCA and those who are in the private leagues. The choice you make when it comes to the type of organization that you want your child to join will depend on where you live and your financial status. Basketball has the same rules no matter where you go.

Basketball Camps

Some parents are so sure that their child is the next Michael Jordan that they send them to basketball camp. In the United States, there are camps for kids that specialize in just about every activity known to man. There are camps for cheerleading, basketball, football, baseball, math, weight loss, etc. The camps are not like ordinary summer camps in that they do not last as long and concentrate on one particular aspect. Basketball camp for two weeks will most likely run you at least \$500. If you feel that your child will benefit from such an experience, you may want to send him or her. In most cases, children do not start attending camp until they are around 8 years old.

Whatever you choose for your child to introduce him to the competitive world of basketball, make sure that it is something that he or she wants to do. Many parents project onto their children and get them to perform activities that they, themselves, wish they would have performed in when they were young. If your child really hates basketball practice and playing games, chances are that he or she is not cut out for the sport. You will not be doing him or her a service by forcing them to play the game.

If your child loves basketball and you are limited on funds, check out your local park department or YMCA. Ask for a voucher so that they can play.

Most park departments will have special circumstances vouchers so that kids who want to play the game can afford to play at the park district. Most YMCAs operate in the same manner and will be glad to take on a willing youngster.

As your child gets older and starts to progress in skills, the stakes get raised and it gets to be more competitive. When kids are young, however, they need only sign up for the team in order to play. By the time they reach the junior high level, however, they will have to try out for the team.

Chapter 5 - How To Get Ready For Junior High Basketball

So, how do you prepare your child for junior high basketball and making the team? Junior high is one of the most precarious parts of a kid's life. This is the time in their life when they really need some sort of direction in which to go. If your child has his heart set on playing basketball on the team and has the required skills that are needed, then he should be able to make the team. If he is going out for the team because his friends are going out for the team or you want him to play the game, chances are that the spot will go to another child. There are only a limited number of spots available for a basketball team in any school. Junior high is when the selection is made.

Tommy And Michael - Two Basketball Players

Both Tommy and Michael came of age in Chicago during years where Michael Jordan was bringing the Bulls to one victory after another. The Bulls seemed to be an unstoppable team and with Jordan at the helm, who knew where it would lead. Many youngsters got interested in basketball around this time. In fact, more kids were signing up to play basketball than baseball, which was always the all time favorite for young American kids.

Tommy had the skills that you need to play basketball and a genuine love for the sport. He was tall for his age, was able to run very fast and had good hand and eye coordination. He could dribble the basketball and make shots easily. He was a shoo in for the team.

What was more than that, Tommy was a very competitive player. He was competitive in just about everything that he did - even school. He excelled at school and anything that he put his mind to. He was a true sportsman.

One of the reasons why Tommy was so good in sports was that he had a father who was often seen shooting hoops with his son, who took him hunting and fishing and spent a lot of time with his son. Tommy was the middle child and had a younger brother and an older sister.

Michael was raised by a single mom. He liked the idea of playing basketball, but was not very good at it. He could not run fast as he had flat feet. He was short for his age and could not make the baskets. He played basketball with Tommy quite a bit, who was his friend, but could never win. Michael liked the idea of fitting in with the neighborhood kids better than he liked the idea of playing basketball. He loved watching the Bulls and admired Jordan, but Michael was more into science class than gym class.

So what happened when Michael and Tommy both went to Junior High? They both tried out for the basketball team and Tommy made it and Michael didn't. Michael wasn't particularly upset - he hadn't expected to make the team. Especially since only 12 kids were being picked from the 50 or so who turned out to try out.

Tommy was thrilled to make the team and the basketball coach was thrilled to have him on the team. He went on to win a scholarship for a private high school when he was a freshman. Michael attended the public school. Flash back four years later. Both young men are in the work force and have graduated college. Michael has a biology degree and works for a lab.

Tommy has a degree in journalism and works for a paper. As good as he was in basketball, he soon faded into obscurity in high school and didn't even get a college scholarship. However, he retains his competitive spirit today and is happy with his journalist job.

Not every child who is good in basketball as a youngster will make the junior high league. Not every junior high star is going to make the high school basketball team, or stand out. Not every high school basketball star is going to get a scholarship for college ball. And only a hand full of college players will be drafted by the NBA. It keeps getting tougher as you get older.

Tommy and Michael are still friends. Do you know what they like doing? Shooting hoops at the local park district. The pressure is off and both can exercise and have fun talking about old times together while playing their favorite sport.

After reading this, you might think, "well, what is the point of learning basketball when chances are that you won't make the big leagues? The point is that you or your child will have fun playing the game, will learn how to be a team player, will learn how to get along with their team mates, will learn how to follow rules and be disciplined. If they have a good coach, they will learn the rules of sportsmanship. Anyone can benefit from learning the skills needed in basketball. Even if you never make it as a professional athlete.

In order to get your child ready for Junior High basketball, you can make sure that this is something that he wants to do and help him improve his basketball skills by sending him to basketball camp. He will have to be fast on his feet, be able to sink baskets with ease, know the rules of the game and also be aggressive as well as highly competitive. Again, this is not a full contact sport, but you have to have a degree of aggression in order to succeed at any competitive sport.

Chapter 6 - Skills In Basketball

We talked earlier about the skills needed in basketball. The most important is the competitive spirit. This is a tough one because it cannot be taught. While the basic skills of the game can be taught to just about anyone, you cannot teach the nature of competition. Some children and adults are more competitive and aggressive than others. A passive child is most likely not going to be a good sportsman. Most people who are good at sports are very assertive to the point of aggressive by nature.

You will often note that many youngsters who are good in sports grow up with several siblings. They are forced into competition right away as they fight for attention from mom and dad. When you have several boys in one family, they will be rougher. They enjoy roughhousing with one another and will often fight - much to the chagrin of their parents. But these are often the youngsters who are the best when it comes to sports.

Even girls who grow up with older brothers will tend to be rougher than girls who grow up in an all girl home. Being ready for competition, not being afraid of the fight, being assertive if not aggressive and wanting to win at all costs are character traits that are often thought of as negative in today's society. But these same characteristics produce good athletes.

Some of the more technical skills that you need to play basketball and how they can be developed are as follows:

Speed

Basketball players have to be good runners. One way to become a good runner is to (A) wear good running shoes and (B) practice running on a steady basis. If you are going to be a runner, you have to learn proper breathing techniques and how to protect your knees from damage.

You can practice running both indoors and outdoors. Start a little bit each day and gradually build yourself up. You can continue to improve your running technique if you practice a little bit each day. Breathing is an essential part of running and you have to practice good breathing techniques.

Breathe in from your mouth and out through your nose when you are running. This will help you build endurance. Endurance is not something that you will get overnight. It takes time to build this type of running skill up. But if you practice running every day, your breathing skills will improve, you will be able to run faster and be able to continue running for a long period of time.

Remember that when you are playing basketball, you have to endurance and running skills. Most of the game requires running - from one end of the court to the other. While coaches take players in and out to make sure that they are properly hydrated and rested, endurance for the sport and the running aspect of basketball is absolutely necessary to excel at this game.

And the faster you can run down one end of the court to the other, the better basketball player you will be. For this reason, when you are practicing running, practice sprints. Sprinting is running very fast for short distances. This is the type of running that you will use when you play basketball.

As for the shoes, you will want shoes that will be comfortable and will do everything to increase speed. If the soles of your feet hurt, wear insets. These can help with the arches in your feet and increase your speed. Proper shoes for basketball help the player excel at running and jumping.

Agility

It is not enough to be fast, you have to be agile. Agility means that you can run up one end of the court and then run back down again, while dribbling a basketball or blocking others from being able to catch a basketball. You have to act like you own the court when you are playing basketball.

One way to gain agility is to practice playing the sport. A good coach will have you practice drills. These are meant to test your agility so that you can excel at the game. Agility is often described as being “wirey.” It means that you can move quickly and get around the court with ease.

Most basketball players are tall and thin. It doesn't pay to be large and bulky when you are playing basketball as it can slow you down and make you less agile.

Jumping

Jumping for those hoop shots is an essential skill in basketball. It is no wonder that many basketball players who excel at this sport also excel at track and field. Track and field sports such as running and jumping, can help you with basketball.

You can practice jumping for shots when practicing for basketball. Remember that you will be jumping on a hard wooden floor when playing basketball - another reason to wear good, protective shoes. Most basketball players can jump up and touch the rim of the basket.

Hand Eye Coordination

You have to be able to handle the ball with ease, control the ball and sink the shot. Or pass it to a teammate or even receive it from a team mate. In order to do this, you will need good hand and eye coordination. This is an essential aspect of playing this game.

Hand and eye coordination can be practiced and improved upon, but it is one of those attributes that either you have or you do not have. Some people seem to be better adapted when it comes to this skill than others. Practicing the game and playing with others, however, can improve hand eye coordination and enable you to be able to play better basketball.

Know the rules

It is essential that you know the rules of basketball and understand them. This seems like a no-brainer, but there are many people who try to play basketball who either defy the rules or do not seem to know them. In addition to the rules, you have to know the strategy that the team is using as well as the strategy of the opponents. A coach should be able to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the other team and go after them. Know the rules and listen to your coach if you are to be a good basketball player.

Being a good basketball player requires all of the above. It is not good enough to be able to sink a basket and know how to make a rim shot. It is not good enough to have endurance to run back and forth across the court repeatedly. You have to have everything, as well as a competitive spirit, in order to be a good basketball player.

Chapter 7 - Rules Of Basketball

The rules of basketball have not changed much since the game was first invented in the late 1800s. They have been refined throughout the years, but it is still a relatively simple game to play and understand. Each team has 12 members, but there are only five on a court at one time.

Basketball rules are one of the easiest of all sporting rules. There is not a lot to know. This is a non contact sport, although players will bump into one another when guarding opposing team members from getting the ball.

Basketball Positions

There are three positions in basketball - center, guard and forward. All have different jobs. Guards consist of point guards and shooting guards and are usually the best players on the team. Michael Jordan, for example, was a shooting guard. They play the back court and are able to shoot the ball from all positions. Guards mostly play offensive plays, but, like all basketball players, have to be able to defend as well. The point guard is usually one who will run with the ball most of the time and will often pass it to the shooting guard.

The forwards play the front court. They are usually shorter than the taller guards and much quicker. They are equally adept at defense as well as offense plays. They are considered to be the most versatile of all of the players on the team. Not all forwards are shorter than the guards, however. But a smaller stature sometimes makes it easier for them to run the court.

In basketball, there is a small forward and power forward. In high school sports on down, these are not differentiated. Scottie Pippen of the Chicago Bulls was a forward. While all basketball players are expected to be able to make the shot, the forwards are used mostly to defend against the other team.

The center is usually the tallest person on the team. They will usually be the person who plays around the free throw line and will be tossing in the ball from the sidelines when it goes out of bounds. Because they are the tallest players (usually) they are also the less mobile. But because they are steady, they are very valuable on the basketball court. It will be the center who will lead off the game and be able to complete a pass to one of the guards from the sidelines.

When there is a dead ball, such as the ball goes out of bounds during play, the last team that touched the ball is penalized. This means that the team that did not touch the ball as it was going out of bounds gets to toss the ball in from the sidelines. The clock stops when the ball goes out of bounds.

A jump ball is when two opposing team members struggle for the ball. This happens when an interception is attempted. The person who maintains the most control of the ball will get to keep the ball and, again, the team will resume play by tossing the ball in from the sidelines. The center will toss it in to a guard, or two guards will toss the ball in from the sidelines to get it back into play.

Unlike football but like baseball, all players on a basketball team play both offense and defense equally. Players are often being shuffled in and out of the game during the brief, 20 second time outs. This is to give the players a chance to rest. While forwards may be better at defense and guards more adept at shooting, all players will go through the same drills.

If you are coaching a basketball team, you will want to make your most aggressive players forwards. They should be quick and versatile. Your tallest player is usually the center and the players that are the best shots and are experts at handling the ball are guards. Younger players should be switched around so that they can play different types of positions.

Unlike football, where the quarterback rules and everyone strives to protect him, basketball is more of an all player sport. No one player rules the roost - they all work as a team to score baskets for their team and stop the other team from scoring.

Scoring

Points are scored for every basket that the team makes. If a player scores a basket, the team scores two points. If the player is out of the scoring zone and makes a shot from outside of the three point line, then three points are scored instead of two.

If a player gets to shoot a free throw because he has been fouled by another player while trying to shoot the ball, he has to stand behind the free throw line and then has 10 seconds to shoot the ball. This usually occurs in the case of a personal foul. If the foul was thought to be a flagrant foul, this

means that the foul was unnecessary and pretty much done for the sake of harming the other player. The player then gets to take two free throws.

Basketball scores are usually high in numbers. A score of 58 to 47 is not unheard of in a basketball game.

Time Allowed To Play

A basketball game, like a football game, is divided into two halves and four quarters. Each quarter is 15 minutes long. Unlike a football game, the basketball game goes by rather quickly. This is because there are not that many time outs as there are in football. Also, basketball players play both offense and defense, unlike football players that play one or the other.

Players are only allowed in the shooting zone for a period of 20 seconds. Players can toss the ball out of the zone so that they do not violate this rule.

Jump Ball

The game starts off with a jump ball. The two centers of the opposing teams will face each other and the referee will toss the ball up in the air and the two players will jump for it. The player who gets to the ball first tries to hit it to one of his team mates, usually a forward. They will then take the ball and run down court so that they can try to score a basket. The guards on the same team will try to block the opposing team members from stopping him, or receivers and try to be clear so that they can allow him to pass the ball to them.

The ball can be passed around repeatedly by players in a game. It can also be intercepted by the other team in mid air and then taken down court. The clock is always running during the play, which makes a basketball game go so much faster than a football game.

Common Rules

The players cannot run with the ball without dribbling it. Dribbling the ball entails them bouncing the ball on the ground while they are traveling on the court. They can pass it back and forth to other players, stand and pivot on one foot and one foot only while holding the ball, or they can dribble it. They cannot run with the ball without dribbling as this is considered traveling. The penalty for this is that the other team gets to take the ball out of the end zone and toss it in to their players.

Another common problem that is made, mostly with younger players, is called the double dribble. Once the player stops dribbling the ball and holds it, he or she has to toss it to another player or shoot at the basket. They cannot stop and then start dribbling it again. If they put the ball back down on the ground again, it is called a double dribble and the other team gets the ball, similar to if the player had been traveling.

Fouls often occur in a game. It is up to each team to prevent the opposing team from scoring. They do this by trying to block them and, in some cases, make contact. In the NBA and college basketball, team members will foul players on purpose, preventing them from making the shot. The theory behind this is that they are better off to take the foul and allow them the free throw than to give them the sure thing of the shot that they are close to.

This mindset is considered to be unsportsmanlike at the high school level and younger and is not taught to younger players in many leagues. Fouling a player who is shooting will be a penalty against the team (the foul is marked down against the player - 5 fouls and the player is out of the game) and the shooter who was fouled will get one or two free throws, depending on the call by the referee. If the foul was determined to be a flagrant foul, then the player will get two free throws. Each free throw counts as one point.

Coaches can call for time out to substitute players and often do this throughout the game, as the game can be very tiring. The time outs are only for 20 seconds.

Players cannot stand in the shooting zone for a long period of time with the ball without shooting or they risk forfeiting the ball on the 20 second rule.

Unlike football, penalties for basketball rule violations usually entail the team that did not violate the rules getting the ball. The ball goes back and forth quite often in a basketball game. The team members should be adept at offense and defense and should practice drills.

Chapter 8 - Offensive Drills

When you think of practicing for basketball, chances are that you think about shooting baskets. There are many different ways to shoot baskets, however. In most cases, a player is not going to have the luxury of making a shot without being blocked by one or more members of the opposing team. They will need to practice blocked shots as well as lay ups. Free throws should also be practiced when they are practicing offensive drills.

Lay ups

A lay up is when the player rushes down the court with the ball, dribbling, and then gets close to the basket, usually on the side of the basket, and tosses the ball into the net. Because he is using the back board to make the shot and running at the time instead of stopping to get steady aim, this is called a lay up. This is an important shot for anyone playing basketball to know how to make.

Practicing any sort of basketball is usually called a drill. Lay up drills are made when players take turns dribbling the ball and running towards the basket to make the shot. The lay up is made when a player unexpectedly gets the ball and has a clear run towards their basket. They are often made during an interception of the ball. The drills will last for about 15 minutes.

If you're coaching a basketball team, you will want to make sure that each player knows how to make this type of shot. They should get right next to the basket and be able to make the shot as they stand next to the basket.

Right handed players will run to the left of the basket while left handed players will run to the right. A lay up is a quick two points for a basketball team.

Blocked Shots

A player has to know how to make a shot over the head of their opposing teammates. This is where jumping comes in. A blocked shot is also called a jump shot. The player will jump up a bit to give them the advantage and make the shot.

This is one of the most difficult shots of all to make in basketball because it not only requires great skill, but also total concentration. The player must literally block out the interference of the opposing team member and concentrate on their shot. In some cases, a player may fake out the blocking player and pass the ball to another player on their team who is free, if they cannot make the jump shot themselves.

Making a jump shot requires skill, precision and the ability to concentrate despite the adversity. You have to be able to put the other player out of your mind and make the shot as if she or he is not even there.

Free Throws

By the college levels, free throws should be second nature for basketball players. But when younger players are playing the game, they are not always adept at making free throws. But these are an important part of the game and are an easy point for the players that can make them.

Free throw drills are usually part of all offensive basketball drills. The team members will usually line up and then take a shot and move on. By the time a player becomes a senior in high school, he or she should be able to make a free throw without any trouble.

Dribbling Drills

Players need to know how to have total control of the ball when they are dribbling. They have to learn how to guard it with their hands and be able to keep the other team from intercepting the ball. A player who is not on guard may have another player come along and slap the ball out of their hands. This is why dribbling drills are so important for today's basketball players. The ball has to seem as though it is part of the player and, above all, the player has to have control of the ball the entire time he has the ball in his presence.

Most coaches will drill players on dribbling by allowing them to race back and forth down the court while dribbling the ball. They will then do the same drill while having another player attempt to get the ball from the dribbling player. The player will then learn how to move with the ball while preventing an interception from another player.

Passing Drills

Basketball is a team sport. Players need to work together in order to succeed in this sport. Passing drills are important because they teach players how to pass the ball back and forth to one another without having the ball intercepted by the other team.

Although there are quite a few basketball stars and each team will have players who are better than the others, it must be asserted to the players that this is a team effort. The team is only as good as weakest of the players and if one player is open and can make the shot, a player who may be seeking individual glory to score is doing an disservice to the team if he does not pass the ball to the team make who is open.

There are several ways that a player can pass the ball. The ball can be handed off to another player where it just goes from one player to another. It can be thrown by another player over the heads of the opposing team, or it can be bounced to another player. It can only hit the ground when bounced. This is the most risky of all passing and requires the most practice.

Passing drills are probably the most important of all of the offensive basketball drills. Younger players will want to make the shot and may be tempted to put their team in jeopardy by making a difficult shot instead of taking the safe bet and passing it to a team mate who is open. While individual achievement is something that all basketball players, as well as all sportsmen, strive to achieve, when playing a team sport, it is important to make players understand that they are doing what they are doing for the sake of a team. Therefore, the team must be first and foremost in the minds of the players. It is better not to get the glory than to risk losing the shot.

This can be the toughest thing to make younger players understand. One way to make sure that they understand that this is a team effort and not a forum for individual achievement is to make sure that the team all does things together outside of the basketball court.

If you are coaching younger players, you may want to have pizza parties or other events to make them realize that they are all in it together. Teamwork cannot be overstressed when you are trying to teach anyone to play basketball.

Chapter 9 - Defensive Drills

Defense is just as important as offense when you are playing basketball or teaching a team to play basketball. The team that is weak on defense can end up losing games that should be a slam dunk, so to speak.

Defensive drills involve teaching players to rebound the ball, box in the other team and intercept the ball. When players are older, you might teach them to use fouls as a way not to allow a team to get an easy shot.

Rebound Drills

After the opposing team shoots the basket, the other team needs to be under the basket so that they can rebound the ball. This is now a chance for the other team to take the ball down to their end of the court so they can score as well. Both teams will be grappling for the ball, so rebounding is essential.

A professional basketball game is usually pretty close in score up until the last few minutes. It is not unusual for one team to score, then the other, repeatedly. Both teams are made up of professional players who know how to rebound, are good at handling the ball and know how to shoot to make baskets. Often a game is won over fouls, problems with defense or too many interceptions.

Rebounding should come natural for both teams. The players should know how to get the ball once it has emerged from the basket and then pass it to teammates or attempt to dribble it up to their side of the court. The opposing team has the advantage because team members are not allowed

inside the scoring area once a basket has been scored. They will rush down to protect their scoring area.

Teach the team members to grab the ball and go on the offense as soon as a basket is made.

Boxing In Drills

The team that is shooting the basket can only stay in their zone for 20 seconds with the ball, or else they have to pass it. The team members will have to continue passing it in order to avoid being caught with this penalty, in which they would have to forfeit the ball to the other team. When a team is playing defense, they should attempt to box in the opposing team, not allowing them to make a shot.

Defense does not mean contact. In basketball, making contact with another player is considered to be a foul. If the player is shooting at the time of contact, or has possession of the ball, it will result in a free throw. Players can block and even reach for the ball. They can slap the ball out of the hands of the opposing team, but they cannot touch the opposing team mates.

Basketball is not a contact sport - at least, its not supposed to be.

When you teach your team to play basketball, or if you are trying to learn to play basketball, there is a temptation to place a lot of emphasis on the offensive strategy of making baskets. But defensive drills are just as important. Boxing in is something that you want to teach your team to do effectively so that the other team does not have easy access to the hoop.

Interceptions

Intercepting the ball is not difficult. You can intercept the ball by either catching it when it is being tossed to another player or by bouncing it out of another player's hands. Interceptions most often occur, at the NBA level, when the ball is being passed. In younger leagues, interceptions are more inclined to occur at just about any time. You should drill your team on how to make interceptions and how they can work for the team.

The best aspect of an interception is that the play is usually at the opposing team's basket. This means that the player who intercepts the ball will be able to have a clear path to his team's basket.

Drilling for a tough defense is essential for a good basketball team. When you are training basketball players, you should make sure that you have defensive drills as well as offensive drills.

Chapter 10 - Getting to Know Basketball Positions

Basketball is amongst the most popular sports, enjoyed by professionals and amateurs alike everywhere in the world. And even if you know just the basics, you can play the game, take pleasure from the recreation and profit from the exercise. So here is some basic information for you to get to know the game and to start playing.

Basketball is played between two teams, comprising five players on either side. Each time assigns its players to specific positions on the court depending on the player's size, ability and skills, and each position comes with certain specific functions and responsibilities. These positions are as follows.

- Center – The biggest player on the court for either team is usually allotted this role. Their main function is to score for the team and so the center is required to be a force near the opponent's basket. The centers are therefore asked to limit their movements and remain close to the scoring basket to capitalize on all rebounds.
- Forward – The second tallest player in the team is usually given this position, and the positional responsibilities differ according to the skill levels of the players in the team. Generally, there are two types of forwards:
 - Power forward – They are the team's second tallest player, and are required to make rebounds and scores. Unlike the centers, however, they can play

away from the opponent's basket.

- Small forward – They are usually the scorer and playmaker for their team. They can play anywhere in the court, even away from the basket. So, they are required to go down, collect and move the ball up, dribbling, shooting the ball outside and rebounding. The position demands versatile and skilled players, especially those who are sharp around the three-point perimeter.
- Guard – There are two types of guards:
 - Shooting Guard – This position functions with similar duties as that of the small forward, and the players in these two positions may be interchanged or even held by the same player. Although the shooting guard has a slightly defensive role and is not expected to make many rebounds, they may also be focused on scoring
 - Point Guard – This is arguably the most important position in the team. The position needs the player to organize and orchestrate the team's offense by distributing the ball to the other members of the team. Point guards are usually the smallest player in the court, and are nimble, fast, skillful passers and playmakers. They are often also very good shooters, making them invaluable to the team.

If you need further information and in-depth analysis regarding these positions, you should consult books on basketball which are widely available.

Apart from textual data, these books also usually contain useful figures and drawings illustrating the strategies and executions for each position.

You can also find additional information and tips on the internet for all the different basketball positions along with descriptions of the basketball players famous for each position.

Chapter 11 - Good Health For Basketball Playing

It is important that basketball players stay in good health. Just like all athletes, they should watch what they eat, drink and their lifestyle habits. Most schools will have rules for basketball players that they are not to drink or smoke. An infraction of the rules may end up causing a player to be disqualified from the team. High school and college basketball teams usually also have a mandatory grade requirement. In many cases, students who are on the football or basketball team are required to have a B average in order to be allowed to play.

If you are a coach of a youth basketball team, you should make sure that the youngsters all understand about good health habits and what they should and should not do if they are to excel as athletes. This can be a good chance to teach them about the dangers of smoking and alcohol. Smoking will severely limit their ability to run and inhibit their breathing. Alcohol is just not good for athletes and can end up getting them kicked off the team.

Players who are tempted to bulk up muscles using steroids should be taught that this is against the rules for most major league sports and can also be dangerous to their health. Discipline, eating right and exercise are what an athlete needs to excel.

Discipline

Even if your team does not turn out to be the all time all stars of their time, they will learn a valuable lesson when they are playing basketball. They will learn how to play as a member of a team while, at the same time trying to achieve their own personal best. Discipline is one of the most positive aspects of being in athletics and can end up keeping a child on the straight and narrow path. Studies indicate that students who participate in extra-curricular sports less inclined to try drugs, alcohol or smoking at a young age. The discipline that they learn on the basketball court also gives them a raised self esteem.

Eating Right

Eating right is important for everyone, not just athletes. Athletes can learn to eat the right foods - something that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. While you will not want to put children on a diet, and as a coach this is not your job, it is your job to train them as to which are the right foods for them.

Athletes tend to stick to high protein diets, although fruits, vegetables and whole grains are also essential for a healthy diet.

Exercise

Even if your team does not win the championship, they are getting exercise. Exercise is something that many kids today are missing. And basketball is one way to make sure that people get exercise as it is a very active sport.

If you are looking for a way for your children to get exercise, or even yourself, go out and shoot a few hoops.

Chapter 11 - High School Basketball

At the high school level, basketball has fierce competition. The basketball season starts in the winter and extends to the spring. It is the perfect indoor sport as it does not require a lot of space. In the United States, basketball season falls between the end of football season and baseball - two of the major sports watched in the US.

Basketball has achieved worldwide status and is played in the Olympics. Athletes who play in the Olympics are supposed to be amateur athletes. Many high school basketball stars look to Olympic glory. Others have their hopes of getting a scholarship to college.

Some colleges will give a full scholarship to students who excel in basketball. The top 10 percent of the high school basketball team can look forward to getting scholarships for all or some of their tuition. If you have a student who is very good at basketball and maintains a good grade point average, they can apply for these scholarships from various colleges. Colleges usually send out scouts to the basketball games to see the stars and often approach them with offers of scholarships.

It is important to realize that not every student who plays on the basketball team in high school will be getting a scholarship to college. Colleges do recruit from high schools, but they have a lot of high schools from which to recruit. Therefore, only the top players will be scouted and offered the coveted basketball scholarship.

Still, even without the chance of a scholarship, basketball is a fun sport to

enjoy. The camaraderie together with the thrill of playing the sport is something that cannot be overlooked.

High school basketball rules differ slightly from NBA rules. In the NBA, when a foul is committed, a player will get a free throw at the basket. Unless it is a flagrant foul, he will only get one shot. At the high school level, the player will get one shot and a bonus on a personal foul if they were shooting at the time of the foul.

High schools often belong to conferences. They play against other teams in the conference for a championship title. If they win the conference title, they often go to the state championship level. There is also a national level for high school basketball. High school basketball coaches are usually physical education teachers, but very often teach other subjects as well. Most high schools do not have the budget to hire a full time coach, so a teacher who is well versed in basketball will get paid extra money to coach the team. High school teams have both a Freshman-Sophomore team as well as a Varsity Team. The Varsity team is usually made up of juniors and seniors, although any younger student who is good enough for the team can try out for Varsity. Team selection is done by try outs and most teams will have 12 boys or girls. In the United States, there is a gender separation for this sport.

Chapter 12 - College Basketball

Once a student gets to the college level, they are usually hopeful of being drafted by the NBA. Not all college players, however, will be drafted. Those who do not make the draft cut still get their education - in most cases, fully paid. About 20 percent of all college basketball players get drafted for the NBA.

College basketball is followed just as closely as NBA basketball. Many people prefer to watch college sports because the athletes are younger and are not commanding huge salaries. It is also cheaper to go to a college game. In many cases, they are free.

In the United States, both the NFL and the NBA draft players from college leagues. College basketball and football is very well liked in this part of the world and followed by many fans. Hockey and Baseball players, however, are usually drafted right out of high school.

College basketball can be very rewarding for the player as they can end up finding a sports agent and getting drafted to an NBA team with a lucrative contract. It can also be rewarding as most college athletes will get the advantage of having a college education without having to pay any money towards tuition. They must still maintain a high grade point average and attend classes.

College basketball rules mandate that the players attend a certain number of hours in class per semester and money is not allowed to change hands. Any college athlete caught taking money for playing is disqualified from the league.

Chapter 13 - Basketball For Fun

Anyone can play basketball for fun, exercise and even relaxation. Because it is an indoor game (for the most part) you do not have to worry about the weather when you are playing basketball. Most park departments have indoor basketball courts that can be used to play the game. You can play a full game, which is five people on each team, or you can even play what is called "one on one" which is a game that consists of two people.

Basketball is a very inexpensive sport to play. Most parks departments will supply basketballs. You just need good gym shoes and comfortable clothing in order to play this sport.

In addition to being an inexpensive sport to play, it is also a very easy sport to learn. The rules for basketball are not very intricate. Unlike other sports where the rules are more difficult and extensive, basketball is simple. Anyone can learn to play and enjoy this sport.

Basketball is fast moving. It requires a lot of running and will enable you to stay trim while having fun at the same time. Most communities have adult leagues as well as youth leagues for basketball.

If you want to have some fun, get some good exercise and even work off extra pounds basketball is the way to do it. Look into your local parks and recreation department so that you can enjoy the benefits of playing basketball.

Chapter 14 - 16 Basketball Tips For Point Guards!

The ball handler, also referred to as the point guard in basketball lingo, is the lynchpin of the team. He must be adept at controlling the ball at high speeds and ensure that his run of play ends in a basket for his team. If you desire to be the quickest point guard on court, you would naturally wish to know the training routines used by both NBA and WNBA superstars. Following these will not only help you to improve your ball control but also make you good at creating plays and openings for the scoring shots. So here are 16 great basketball tips:

- 1) Introductory ball handling drill: Stand at one end of the court holding a ball in each hand. Walk towards the other end of the court and bounce your balls alternatively, one after the other, as you walk. The timing of the bouncing should be such that you release one ball just as the other ball hits the floor, and vice versa, continuously. Go faster as you get used to the drill. The peak goal in this drill is to run while dribbling both the balls. If you can reach that level, you can do much better with just one ball while playing.
- 2) Around the world drill: Stand holding a ball with both hands and then start to circle the ball about your head, waist, and knees. Try to bend and spread your legs, and circle the ball around one leg and then the other. This will better your feel for the ball as well as promote hand coordination and hand speed.

- 3) The Scissors: With your legs apart and the left foot ahead of the right, bounce the ball between your legs and pass it from the right hand to the left. As the ball passes between your legs, reverse the position of your legs, putting the right leg ahead of the left now. Repeat for the left hand and so on.
- 4) Catch-catch-catch: Hold the ball between your legs with both your hands, with one hand in front of the other. Now try to quickly switch hand positions on the ball without letting it drop.
- 5) Crab Walk: Stand at one end of the court with one leg forward and pass the ball from one hand to the other from under the leg. Change your steps while going forward and keep passing the ball underneath the forward leg.
- 6) Figure 8: Stand with your legs apart and move the ball around the legs making the figure of an 8. Concentrate on the ball, but as you gain in practice, try to have your head looking forward and gradually increase speed.
- 7) Figure 8 dribbling: Bend at the waist and dribble the ball around your legs making an 8 pattern. Increase speed with practice.
- 8) Figure 8 drop: Circle the ball from the outside of one leg to the outside of the other. Just when it is directly behind you, between your legs, let it drop. Now change hands and catch the ball before it bounces again. Repeat.

- 9) Figure 8 drop reverse: Do the drill #8 but when you bounce the ball, reverse the direction of the ball around you when you switch your hands.
- 10) Figure 8 running in place: Do the drill #8 but rather than stand, try to run on the spot.
- 11) One on two: imagine that you have two defenders on you, and try to advance the ball against the defense. This shall cause you not only to utilize a wide range of maneuvers but also become alert of the defense.
- 12) Pass and Catch: This is a body awareness drill. Spread your legs and bounce the ball to the back between the legs. Then catch the ball using both hands and pass it again to the front. Repeat.
- 13) Sit-up while dribbling: Try to do sit-ups while dribbling with your right hand around your feet. As you lie down, switch hands; and when you sit up again, dribble with your left hand.
- 14) Squeeze the banana: Squeeze your fingers and thumb together as you pass the ball from one hand to the other at eye level without bouncing the ball. This will increase your finger and arm strength for improved ball control.
- 15) Touch-touch-touch: Place the ball between your legs in front of you and touch the ball alternately with your right fingers and then with your left. Repeat with the ball behind you. The goal is to bend down and touch the ball as quickly as possible.

16) Up the ladder: Use only your finger tips to pass the ball from one hand to the other in front of your waist. This will develop your finger tip control while handling the ball.

These drills may appear difficult when you begin, but with regular practice you will soon master the art of point guarding.

Chapter 15 - Tips on How to Play Basketball

Whether you are just a basketball buff or an amateur player who dreams to make it big someday, here are some interesting guidelines and tips which could assist you technically on court. If you are an intermediate player or even just a beginner, these tips are sure to add to your game.

The following 9 simple steps are designed to help you play basketball more effectively and efficiently as a team. The scenario is that as a team you are playing to win and your success depends on your strategies in attacking or defending against the other team.

Tip Number 1:

Connect and grow as a team. It is basic knowledge that basketball is a team sport, but it bears repeating. Try and choose teammates who have a feel for the game, have the winning attitude, and most importantly are willing to bond and work together. The required skill and knowledge will improve with training and experience on court

Tip Number 2:

Break the ice. In practice, since there is no opponent team, you don't need to jump for the ball and be aggressive. You can instead use free throw to start the game where the first basket scores two points and the succeeding baskets are worth one point each.

Tip Number 3:

If the first shooter misses the basket, the second in line will have to latch onto the rebound and try to make the basket. Follow the rule that the ball must bounce only once on the rebound, failing which the player who is second in line loses his turn. In that eventuality, the third in line must shoot from outside the three-point perimeter to restart the game. Every restart is worth two points.

Tip Number 4:

Jump whenever handling the ball. According to the rules of this mode, you are allowed to touch the ball only while your feet are off unless off course during the free throw. So you must make it a point to jump in order to collect the ball when the player ahead of you misses the basket on his shot.

Tip Number 5:

When you play the game in this mode, each shot can, alternatively, be worth two points.

Tip Number 6:

Free throw after making a basket. In this mode, the player who makes a basket gets to make a free throw worth one point.

Tip Number 7:

Free throw until you miss. In this mode, when you make a basket, you get to do free throws in an unlimited row until the time you miss at least one shot and the turn passes to the next player.

Tip Number 8:

Restart the game in the same manner. If anyone misses their free throw, the next player steps in for a free throw. If they miss, the next player rebounds, but if it is a score, then they get to do a series of free throws until they miss.

Tip Number 9:

For the game to end, a player must reach a score of exactly 30 points. If anyone's score exceed 30, then it automatically drops to 19 and the game continues. The first to reach 30 points wins.

Following these rules allows your game to be fulfilling but at the same time non aggressive, while at once helping to improve your skills and knowledge as a team. As your shooting and passing skills improve, you can gradually start to play against opponent teams.

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