



BASKETBALL COACH PLAYBOOK

©2022 Upward Unlimited. Upward® is a registered trademark of Upward Unlimited.
Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living
Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of
Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1

Introduction

Goals for Your Sports Ministry	4
--------------------------------------	---

SECTION 2

Essentials of Coaching

Coaching Matters	6
Player Development	7
Who You're Coaching	11
Seven Keys to Coaching	13
How to Interact with Players	15
How to Interact with Parents	17
How to Interact With Coaches	18
Create A Positive Culture	19
Your Role in Sports Ministry	20
Coach Tools and Resources	21

SECTION 3

Practice

Preparing for Practice	24
Practice	26
Warm-Up Activities	30
Skills and Drills	33

SECTION 4

Devotions - Biblical Virtues

WEEK 1:	Welcome.....	63
WEEKS 2-4:	Responsibility	65-73
WEEKS 5-7:	Obedience	74-82
WEEK 8:	Good News	83
WEEKS 9-11:	Initiative	86-96

SECTION 5

Games

Circle of Affirmation and Criticism	98
The Levels of Upward Basketball	99
Level 1 Rule Modifications	104
Level 2 Rule Modifications	105
Level 3 Rule Modifications	106
Level 4 Rule Modifications	107
Substitutions.....	109
Game Day Stars	116

SECTION 6

Forms

Substitution Forms	120
Star Distribution Form	132

1

GOALS FOR YOUR SPORTS MINISTRY

Chapter Overview:

Goals For The Season.....4

GOALS FOR THE SEASON

THE GOAL OF OUR SPORTS MINISTRY IS:

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

SUCCESS IN OUR SPORTS MINISTRY IS MEASURED BY:

2 ESSENTIALS OF COACHING

Chapter Overview:

Coaching Matters.....	6
Player Development	7
Who You're Coaching.....	11
Seven Keys to Coaching.....	13
How to Interact With Your Players	15
How to Interact With Your Team's Parents.....	17
How to Interact With Other Coaches and Game Officials.....	18
Create A Positive Culture	19
Your Role in Sports Ministry	20
Coach Tools and Resources on MyUpward.....	21

COACHING MATTERS

WELCOME TO A NEW SEASON

Now is your opportunity to impact the lives of players and their families.

The great evangelist Billy Graham once said: “A coach will impact more people in one year than the average person will in an entire lifetime.”

Upward Sports coaches have an opportunity to teach a sport and share the gospel by weaving both together through your actions, attitudes, and words. Make every opportunity count!

WE NEED GOOD COACHES

When a coach is only concerned with winning at any cost or handing out trophies to everyone, what is lost is the opportunity to help participants become better people. Being an Upward Sports coach involves teaching more than just the athletic side of a sports experience and includes mental, spiritual, and social development.

An Upward Sports coach considers Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7 to realize that God created everyone. He created all the young athletes participating in your league. He created the coaches and all the volunteers. God created everyone in his image. As image-bearers of God, we should treat everyone with the love and kindness that God treats them with. Your league is not just about sports, it's about helping participants and their families discover Jesus.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL = M.A.S.S.

As an Upward Sports Coach, you play a major role in encouraging your players mentally, athletically, spiritually and socially as they participate on your team.

This approach is based on Luke 2:52: “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.”

MENTALLY

Mental development for young athletes is a byproduct of the weekly practices and games where players participate. Players grow in confidence, courage, decision-making, and cognitive self-regulation.

- » **Confidence** - As players learn and improve their skills and confidence will increase. Players then gain the courage to attempt new skills and recognize that mistakes are a part of the game that they can overcome.
- » **Decision-Making** - The intricacies and complexities of sports, help train young athletes on making correct decisions quickly. When to pass a ball, when to attempt a move or make a defensive play are all part of building decision-making. Through observation and repetition, players improve their muscle memory and learn when and how to make individual and team decisions.
- » **Cognitive self-regulation** - Through intense games and drills, players learn to self-regulate emotions and gain focus. Through sports, they will enter various experiences (practices, scrimmages, games, etc.) where they will learn to narrow their focus from a broad range to a specific individual focus and team responsibilities in the pursuit of attaining particular goals.

ATHLETICALLY

Athletic development compounds through small improvements over time. Players learn and grow in their sport to achieve long term growth

- » **EXERCISE:** In a recent State of Play report, the Aspen Sports Institute reported only 24% of youth ages 6 to 17 engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, down from 30% a decade earlier. With many kids spending over 6 hours in front of screens each day (TVs, computers, phones/tablets), the desire to get out and be active is waning.

How can you tell if a child is getting proper exercise? Sweat. Sweat requires constant activity with little “downtime.” Practices should have drills that allow for continuous movement using various muscle groups. Avoid players standing in lines when possible. Keep practice fast-paced and fun, allowing for water breaks and short periods of rest.

- » **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:** Physical development has enormous benefits for children, including stronger bones and muscles, improved heart and brain health, and lowered risk of diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Participants may learn fundamental movements that allow them to run, jump, throw, catch, balance, and change direction. Basic moves will help participants enjoy a variety of sports and begin a path to physical literacy.
- » **FUN:** The key to getting kids interested in physical activity is by making it fun. Sports do just that, provided the coaches in charge are focused on the development of the athlete. Practices should teach the game using fun and safe methods.

SPIRITUALLY

Spiritual growth is an essential part of sports ministry. You play a vital role in the spiritual development of players on your team and help them discover a sense of self and a sense of purpose. This development happens in various ways.

- » **Practice devotions** - By guiding discussion around the practice devotions each week, you plant seeds of discovery within the minds and hearts of young athletes. Remember to guide every practice devotion conversation back to the Gospel and what Jesus has done for us.
- » **Your relationship with players** - You are a safe, trusted adult in the lives of young athletes. You hold a remarkable amount of influence. Listen intently, guide carefully, and be someone who continually points young athletes to Christ in your interactions.
- » **Your relationship with parents** - The top spiritual influence in a child's life is their parents. What they learn from their home life will speak more into their spiritual development than anything else. Your relationship with a child's parents must be strong. Share with them what their child is learning each week in practice. Discuss the devotions. Talk about how their child is developing in their skills. When parents know you care and are investing in their child's well-being, they'll trust you and your spiritual influence on their child.
- » **Your Example** - Be ready to step into opportunities God provides during practices, games, and your communications to demonstrate and share the gospel message

SOCIALLY

Participants develop socially by learning how to work as a team, communicate, and serve others through a sport.

- » **Teamwork:** Through team sports, children learn how to interact with peers and adults in positive ways. These include numerous opportunities for “selfless” behavior, focusing all mental and physical efforts towards the goals of the team. Participants learn how to navigate relationships, encourage others, and recover from mistakes.
- » **Communication:** Players learn how to communicate in complex social situations with teammates and competitors. This learning carries over to other areas of life, helping them communicate in school, at home, and in other environments.
- » **Serving:** Serving others becomes a critical component for social development in team sports. Children learn to share the ball, encourage teammates, and give their best effort to help the team and not just themselves.

WHO YOU'RE COACHING

- » **A Player** - A coach must observe and teach each player according to their skill set. Likely, you'll have some players that have excellent athletic skills and knowledge of the sport. You will also probably have some that have never played the game before. Working one-on-one with each player during the season will help them in their individual development. Focusing on specific skills that need improvement will also help players understand where their weaknesses are and where they can do better. You must become a player's "cheerleader," encouraging them as they develop, knowing they will make mistakes along the way.
- » **A Team** - As you coach each individual, you must also coach the group as a whole. In every team sport, players must learn how to work well with each other to be successful. Holding team scrimmages during practice helps by presenting in-game scenarios to players. Help them learn how to communicate, to help each other, and to encourage each other. Each player is at a different place in their development, so it's essential you coach everyone as equals without giving preferential treatment to more-skilled players.
- » **Self** - The only way you can coach a team well is to prepare. It's more than merely knowing which drills to run. You need to be coaching yourself. You cannot lead an athlete well if you're not first taking care of yourself. It's especially true when it comes to helping your players develop spiritually. Are you feeding your soul?

If you're not feeding your soul by spending daily time reading the Bible, praying, and staying active in church, how can you help point others to Jesus? Be sure you are taking care of yourself spiritually so that you can lead others well.



MATTHEW 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”



SEVEN KEYS TO COACHING

Here are seven essentials to help you effectively connect with players and parents as you are the front line of ministry:

1. **Teach the game** – The ability to teach the game through proper drills and demonstrations enhances skill level and improves solid foundations. Your practices should utilize drills that enhance skill development. Don't just go through the motions. TEACH each player on how to improve their game. Parents are watching and are counting on you to teach the sport.
2. **Teach the rules of the game** – for players to grow in the sport, they must understand and apply the rules of the game. Take time to explain the rules of the game and why they are essential.
3. **Instill sportsmanship with a competitive spirit and a growth mindset** – Your players need to learn how these critical elements work together:
 - » ***Great sportsmanship** involves valuing others. Your players should recognize how to appreciate their opponents as well as their teammates.*
 - » ***A competitive spirit** is all about doing your best to win in all situations of the game. Therefore, you want to teach your young athletes to value others by treating them the right way as they give their best to win each play, each half and each game.*
 - » ***A growth mindset** focuses on growing and improving at each practice and game while having fun and giving the best effort.*

4. **Communicate effectively** – To teach participants , you must be an effective communicator. Likewise, excellent communication and organization are crucial in keeping parents informed throughout the season. Keep them up to date on practice and game times and have a plan in place each practice. Be sure to utilize the resources at MyUpward.org to assist you in communicating with parents via text and email.
5. **Lead the practice devotion** - Coaches lead a devotion, discussion, and prayer during practices using the devotion material found on MyUpward.org or in the Coach Playbook. If you need help let the coach commissioner or league director know.
6. **Keep calm when things do not go your way** - Know your ability to influence the situation. Know the Circle of Affirmation and realize that the game is about the participants and not about a mistake by an official, coach, parent, or player.
7. **The idea of “Not yet”** - After a practice or two, coaches begin to categorize players and say something like, “She will never play at the next level,” or “He will never learn how to catch.” It is easy to stop helping a player improve when this occurs. What if you followed up with a response of, “Not yet.” This change in perspective challenges a coach to look for the potential that could be there.

HOW TO INTERACT WITH YOUR PLAYERS

Here are a few tips on interacting with your players:

- » Create a positive environment by greeting each player by name as he or she arrives at practice each week.
- » Always speak on a level that the player can understand.
- » Hold a meeting with parents and players at the end of the first practice to set expectations and answer questions.
- » Focus on a few skills at a time as you teach so that players can learn each one thoroughly.
- » Recognize differences in skill level so that you can help each player improve.
- » When distributing stars on game days, give specific reasons why each athlete earned a particular game day star. Don't underestimate the value of recognizing players! Recognizing players is an important driver in building confidence and self-esteem in young athletes.

One simple question that will help a coach gain understanding into most situations is, “What did you see?” This requires a coach to listen and discover what the player was seeing.

DISTRACTED AND DISRUPTIVE PLAYERS

A challenge to coaching is what to do with players who are disruptive or not focused during practice. Here are four things to understand in these situations.

1. Understand that players may have short attention spans and be patient with them.
2. Things outside of practice that day influence a players mindset coming into practice. Take the simple step of welcoming players as they arrive. This will let them know that you see them as they enter into a new environment.
3. Maintain activity and have fewer players standing in line. To do this ask parents to help run a drill so that multiple stations can take place at one time.
4. Praise desired behavior right away, use the players name, and let them know how it helps the team.

If the undesired behavior can't be ignored, address it with the player without disrupting the whole team. You should also check with the parent after practice to see if they can offer insight into working with their participant.

HOW TO INTERACT WITH YOUR TEAM'S PARENTS

Start the season off right by getting to know the parents and family members of your players. Include parents in your first post-practice huddle. Here are a few tips on interacting with parents:

- » Introduce yourself and share your excitement about the season and why you are coaching.
- » Share your contact information.
- » Take time each week to have an extra one minute conversation with a family about the season
- » Encourage all parents to work on skills at home with their young athletes.
- » Communicate, communicate, communicate with parents each week using a text or email.

Note: After you receive your roster, it is vital to contact the parents of your players as soon as possible. Families have been eagerly waiting to hear from their coach, so introducing and giving first practice information is crucial.

HOW TO INTERACT WITH OTHER COACHES AND GAME OFFICIALS

An Upward Sports league can set the standard in your community by how coaches and officials interact on game days. Parents, players, and families take notice of how the team of coaches and officials work together to provide a great experience for all players. The reputation of your league is impacted by the interaction between coaches and officials. Here are some tips on how to interact with coaches and game officials:

- » Introduce yourself to the other coaches and officials and remember their names.
- » Realize that without the other team and officials you would not have a game day. It's important to work together.
- » Read Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7 to see that God created us. Knowing we are God's creation should guide us in treating coaches and referees with love and respect.
- » Be the referees biggest fan. If you want to have referees for your league negative behavior does not help.
- » Coaches need to be a team that provides an experience that helps all participants to enjoy the sport.
- » Love one another, John 13:34
- » Thank the coaches and officials after the game.
- » Review the Circle of Affirmation and Circle of Criticism.

CREATE A POSITIVE CULTURE

A positive culture is one of safety, learning, and fun. A team's attitude and mindset often mirror that of their coach. Use the beginning of the season to set a tone of positivity throughout the weeks ahead.

- » Set expectations on behavior.
- » Communicate expectations to parents.
- » Start and end each practice on time.
- » Encourage players to support each other.
- » Be motivating and supportive during games.
- » View mistakes as teaching opportunities, not moments to criticize.

One practical way to create a positive team culture and teach communication is to establish a team huddle at the end of practice. Have players stand in a circle and include the coach. Have players address the player to their right by using their name and then offering a word of encouragement for that player. You can change from practice to practice what players share. For example, some weeks, a player can tell the person to their right something they will work on in the next game, other weeks, they can name something they saw that teammate do well in practice.

YOUR ROLE IN SPORTS MINISTRY

As a coach, you play a vital role in the ministry to players and their families. You are on the front lines of what will take place this season.

Sports ministry requires that the sport and ministry are both done with excellence. The league and coaches should always give their best effort in teaching the sport and caring for people through ministry opportunities. Your league is not “just an Upward league” or “just a church league.”

Sports ministry is your chance to provide the best youth sports experience in your community and demonstrate the gospel to the families you serve.

Hebrews 12:1-2a reads, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”*

How will you plan to grow spiritually and as a coach this season? What are things you can throw off that will help you grow in these areas?

COACH TOOLS AND RESOURCES

If you are a new coach, long-time coach, or somewhere in between, we provide you with comprehensive resources to help you this season. Take advantage of these resources to help you plan and save time this season. The resources include:

- » **MYUPWARD.ORG** – The league director will send you an invitation to access these resources from a computer or mobile device. First, accept the invitation to these resources and create a username and password. If prompted from a mobile device, you may set up an icon on your home screen. Next, go to the getting started section and review the information there. Other sections include:

- ◇ ***Getting Started***

- How-to video to show coaches how to use the online resources.
- Prepare for your role this season by reviewing these coaching ideas and tips

- ◇ ***Team***

- Manage your roster and see player information
- View schedule for your practice and game days

- ◇ ***Practice Resources***

- Practice plans provide a detailed step-by-step outline for each practice that progresses throughout the season.
- Devotions are vital as you review, discuss, and lead your team in prayer.

- Skills & drills help you teach the sport and are in specific practice plans or available for an experienced coach to review and use as needed. Most include a video demonstration to help you learn the drill, know how to demonstrate it, and what to expect.
- Rules show a complete listing for your sport.

◇ **Communication**

- Text and email communication tools to stay in touch weekly with your team.
- Team pages are shared via email or text.

◇ **Game Day**

- Manage gameday substitutions and Upward Sports gameday rotation
- Star distribution tracking

These resources are also available in print form as the Coach Playbook and used by some leagues.

The getting started section includes a video with an overview of using these tools.

- » **TEAM PAGE** – Share this with your team at the start of the season to see the team practice and gameday schedule, know the jersey color for game day, coach contact information, the league contact information, and basic team roster by first name and last initial.

3 PRACTICE

Chapter Overview:

Preparing for Practice.....	24
Practice.....	26
Warm-Up Activities	30
Skills and Drills	33

PREPARING FOR PRACTICE

We know that preparing for practice each week can be time-consuming, but it's worth the effort. ***There are entire Practice Plans for each week of the season found at MyUpward.org.*** These plans have been designed for each age group and include age-appropriate skill development and devotion material that progresses throughout the season.

Through research, we have designed these plans to maximize your time with participants and help you as a coach to be ready for practice each week. As players progress over the season, you may modify the plans to meet the needs of your team.

The Weekly Practice Plans include a warm-up, practice focus, skills and drills, devotion material, a rule review, and things that players can try on their own at home. Many valuable resources are found on MyUpward.org. Contact your Coach Commissioner or League Director if they have not sent you an invitation to access these items.

If you prefer to design your practices, use the chart on the next page to help organize your thoughts, and outline a progression of skills that you teach over the season. Be sure to use the Devotion material for weekly Mid-Practice Devotions.

The pages following the chart provide a few drills to help you get started if you decide to design your practice or would like to add to the provided weekly Practice Plans.



Quick Tip

Make sure to spend time to prepare each week. Coaches are named as the top reason parents and players return or do not return to the experience your league provides to families. Parents want to see organized practices for their participants.

PRACTICE

Use this chart if you are not using the weekly Practice Plans provided on MyUpward.org and are designing your own practice. Be sure to write out a plan so you can maximize your time and are organized. This should include a Practice Focus, practice meeting, skills review, devotion (provided for you in the next section), rules review, new skills and wrap-up.

Practice	Practice Focus	Team Meeting	Rules to Cover	Skills & Drills
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Get to know each other › Evaluate skills › Set practice rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Teammate introductions › Discuss practice ground rules › Introduce basic footwork, dribbling, and shooting skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Practice rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Footwork - pg 34 › Dribbling - pg 37 › Shooting - pg 46
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Continue skill evaluation › Teach passing fundamentals › Teach positions and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Re-introduce players and coaches › Discuss some common violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Traveling › Double Dribbling › Palming or Carrying the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Footwork - pg 34 › Ball handling - pg 37 › Dribbling - pg 38 › Shooting - pg 44
3 week of first game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Review re-start situations › Teach shooting fundamentals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Review traveling, double dribble, and palming the ball › Game situations and court spacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Three second violation › Common fouls › Help defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Passing and Receiving - pg 42 › Defense - pg 51 › Rebounding - pg 49
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Teach 3-second violation › Discuss positions on the court › Skill developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Review defensive rules › Game situations and court spacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Three second violation › Common fouls › Help defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Rebounding - pg 48 › Defense - pg 52 › Scrimmage or more drills
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Teach offensive movement › Continue to teach court spacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discuss practice focus › Review the last game › Review basic rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Review all rules as a fun quiz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Offensive plays - pg 53 › Areas the need improvement from the game
6-11 through last practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Continue skill development › Analyze game performances, coach through improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Review the last game and improvements that need to be made › Discuss practice focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Continue to review rules for clear understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Work on both offense and defense › Areas that need improvement

Make sure to spend time to prepare each week. Coaches are named as the top reason parents and players return or do not return to the experience your league provides to families. Parents want to see organized practices for their participants.

TIP: Be sure to sign in to MyUpward.org when you receive the invitation from your league and create your account so that you can access the entire set of resources.

PRACTICE

A quality sports experience begins with the relationship between the coach and each participant and their parents. Practices are an opportunity to build relationships where you can also focus on the process of learning, help encourage persistence, self-regulation, and communication. Show enthusiasm as you meet each of your players. Making a great first impression will go a long way as you connect with your team and their parents. It is also essential to evaluate your players' skill levels at the first practice. Your team roster will include evaluation scores and will indicate each participant's skill level. Use this information as the starting point for your team.

PRACTICE BREAKDOWN

- » **Pre-Practice Huddle** (3-5 minutes) – Start on time with a pre-practice huddle to signal to the team and parents that you are ready to begin. Cover a specific law or teach and review a technique for a skill used in practice.
- » **Warm-up activity** (3-5 minutes) – Provide players the opportunity to practice individually and slowly warm up their muscles.
- » **Practice skills through drills** (20 minutes) – Focus on specific skills that matter to the sport. Use drills that reinforce skill development and practice. Focus on one to two skills per practice.
- » **Practice Devotions** (5-7 minutes) – Share the practice-specific devotion for each week. Be mindful as a coach of the opportunities to demonstrate the lesson and Gospel throughout practice so that players see you living it out.
- » **Scrimmage or skills challenges that teach** (20 minutes) – Guide players in using the skills they are learning during a controlled scrimmage or with skills challenges. Here is an opportunity to celebrate their effort.
- » **End of Practice Huddle** (3-5 minutes) – Remind participants what skills they practiced. Praise effort during this time. Build your team culture and allow players to learn communication skills by having players share. One way is to stand in a circle and share specific words of encouragement to the player on their right. Model this a few times for your players.
- » **Post-practice time** – After practice take time to get to know and connect with families.

PRACTICE DEVOTIONS

During every practice, the head coach will lead the team in a 5-7-minute devotion. Carry out your team huddle at about the halfway point of each practice. These devotions teach the character of Christ through age-appropriate content and prompt or questions.

This time is an important ministry touchpoint. If you need help conducting a practice devotion check with your League Director or Coach Commissioner who can help find an assistant coach or someone who can help. You may even find a parent who would be willing to be a team devotion coach.

Make sure to set aside time before your practice to review the devotion material so that it isn't just reading from a script. Preparing ahead of time also allows for the Spirit to work through you during practice as opportunities may arise to connect the message throughout the practice.

There are devotion guides in the Coach Playbook and ***MyUpward.org***.

THE GOSPEL VIDEO

During the season, the league director will share the gospel video link with families via email or text.

This story may generate discussion and your league director will let you know when that video is sent so that you can be ready for questions at practice.

PRACTICE CARDS

At the end of designated practices, you will distribute practice cards to each of your participants. Each card contains a Scripture verse. Through these practice cards, players will be able to learn the Scripture verses away from practices and will be familiar with them when they return to the next practice.

PRACTICE STARS

Green sticker stars known as practice stars are inside your Award Stars Booklet. At the end of each practice, give a star to each player who participated in Scripture learning. Players are not required to memorize the verse individually to receive a star. The desire is to place more emphasis on learning Scripture than memorizing it. These stars are distributed at the end of practice. Players should display these iron on stars along with their game-day stars on their t-shirt.

Note: The green practice stars should not be confused with the multi-colored game day stars, awarded to players at the end of each game.

DISTRIBUTING PLAYER ITEMS

Your league director will provide you with items for individual players on your team as well as coaches.

WARM-UPS & STRETCHING

Use the first five minutes of practice to get the players moving. This can be done by incorporating athletic development exercises like the examples below. Warm-up first and then follow with stretching.

Here are warm-up activities that you can use. Add music, move to the beat and create a warm-up activity you will use at the start of each practice.

- » ***Arm Circles:*** Hold arms out standing in a T and circle them
- » ***Back pedal:*** Run backwards while stepping back as far as possible.
- » ***Donkey Kicks:*** In a standing position or moving forward, kick heels toward up toward your back side.
- » ***Feet on fire:*** Running in place.
- » ***High Knees:*** With hands in front and waist high, lift knees up and alternate between knees. Vary speed as desired.
- » ***Hops:*** This can be done in one sport of moving forward. It can be done on one foot or both feet.
- » ***Jumping jacks***
- » ***Log Step:*** With both feet on one side of an imaginary log high step sideways with one foot and then the other to cross over the “log.” Vary speed.
- » ***Lunges:*** From a standing position large step forward while keeping the back foot in place without the knee touching the ground.
- » ***Push-ups:*** May use a modified version for very young players.
- » ***Running:*** One minute around the room. If you have limited space, run in place and change the pace.

- » **Shoulder circles:** With arms by your side, lift your shoulders and take them back down, creating a circular motion.
- » **Side lunge:** Feet wider than shoulder width apart, keep one leg straight while the other bends into a squat position. Keep your back flat, chest up and rear out behind you.
- » **Trunk twists:** From a standing position, twist back and forth slowly.

Here are stretch activities you may use after warm-ups.

- » **Neck Stretch:** Sit or stand with arms by your side. Tilt head to the right and hold for eight seconds, then tilt head to the left and hold for eight seconds.
- » **Triceps Stretch:** Bring one arm up beside your head, bending it at the elbow while reaching across with the other arm and hold. Repeat, using the other arm.
- » **Biceps Stretch:** Reach one arm out straight in front of you with palm facing up. With the other hand gently push down until you feel a slight stretch in your bicep.
- » **Shoulder Stretch:** Reach one arm across your chest, holding it at the elbow with the opposite hand.
- » **Hug:** Reach as far as you can and wrap your arms around your chest giving yourself a hug.
- » **X Stretch:** With feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart, stretch your arms and hands up and out, forming an X with your body. Reach high and stand on your tip-toes.

- » **Quadriceps Stretch:** Support yourself against a wall or stationary object. Pull one heel up behind your body and hold. Repeat with opposite side.
- » **Hamstring Stretch:** Sit on the floor with right leg straight out in front. Bend left leg and cross it over the right one. Pull the knee across your body toward opposite shoulder. Change legs and repeat.
- » **Pike Stretch:** Sitting with feet straight in front of you and together, put both hands straight up and above your head and then slowly bend forward to reach your toes.
- » **Calf-Muscle Stretch:** Lean toward and support yourself against a wall while keeping your leg straight. Press you heel to the floor. Reverse and stretch other calf-muscle.







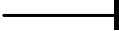



SKILLS AND DRILLS

This section reviews the fundamental skills of basketball, explains why each is important and emphasizes the skill's basic teaching points. Each skill is followed by a basic drill that reinforces the skill. ***For more drills for each skill, as well as complete practice plans, go to MyUpward.org.***

Many of the drills described in this playbook require one ball per player. If you are limited in the number of balls you have for practice, you will need to modify the drill by creating lines based on the number of balls you have available.

KEY TO DIAGRAMS

Use this key for the drills located on the following pages.

-  = player
-  = player movement without the ball
-  = dribble
-  = pass
-  = shoot
-  = rebound
-  = screen
-  = coach
-  = sequence
-  = cone

FOOTWORK

Proper footwork promotes balance, quickness, and readiness to make something happen on the court. Being proficient at this skill will improve a player's performance both offensively and defensively. Here are the three basic footwork skills:

Triple Threat Position

- » Provides a player the option to pass, shoot, or dribble
- » Position the basketball in the “shooting pocket” with shooting elbow over knee
- » Have “strong hands” with possession of the basketball so that defenders cannot easily knock the ball away

Jump Stop

- » Allows a player to establish a pivot with either foot off a dribble or pass
- » Leap/jump should be low to the floor (like sitting in a chair), not a high jump
- » Both feet hit floor at the same time – good balance
- » Land on floor in triple threat position
- » Use when catching a pass; teach “ball in air/feet in air” concept

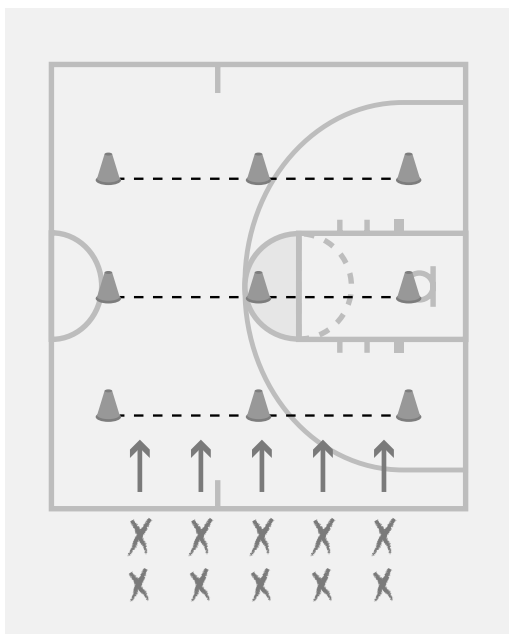
Front Pivot and Reverse Pivot

- » Lift heel, protect ball, stay low, and lead with elbow
- » Allows a player to pivot in one or more directions by keeping one foot planted on the ground
- » Allows an offensive player to move away from defenders while protecting the basketball
- » Remind players to keep their eyes up to be able to see the court.
- » Skill is also important for setting screens and rebounding.

Footwork Drills

Footwork Line Drills (no basketball required)

- » Players form lines on baseline or sideline – two players deep
- » Use cones or mark the court for starting/stopping spots – minimum 3 spots
- » No basketball necessary – players dribble and hold imaginary basketball
- » Players will start/stop on voice command or whistle
- » Players should stop at each spot with jump stop and land in triple threat position
- » Pause between stops/starts to check for proper balance
- » The second player in line starts as the preceding player leaves the first spot



Rotate the following footwork line drills:

- » Jump Stop/Triple Threat
- » Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Right Front Pivot
- » Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Left Front Pivot
- » Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Right Reverse Pivot
- » Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Left Reverse Pivot

Have each player raise his or her hand in the air that coincides with the desired pivot direction. This will help each player pivot in the correct direction.

Variation: Add basketballs after your players understand the above concepts. Allow them to practice the above skills after picking up their dribble and receiving passes.

.....

Pivot Drill (no basketball required)

- » Players should spread out in your practice area – no basketball necessary
- » Players start in triple threat position, protecting an imaginary basketball
- » Instruct players to establish a pivot foot
- » Practice half-turns and front/reverse pivots
- » Repeat with opposite foot established as the pivot

Variation: Add basketballs and defenders after your players understand the above concepts. Allow them to practice the above skills after picking up their dribble and receiving passes.

BALL HANDLING AND DRIBBLING

An adept ball handler and dribbler can make things happen on the court. Mastering these skills can help create open shots, obtain better passing angles, and lead to fewer turnovers. A great offensive player must be able to handle the ball!

- » Dribble with fingers, not palms – similar to typing on a keyboard
- » Proper body position, with knees bent and body flexed at the waist
- » Keep head up – see the court
- » Protect the basketball – use your non-dribbling arm as an “arm bar”, meaning sticking it outward with the elbow slightly bent to protect the dribble from defenders reaching in
- » Work both hands – be able to go right and left
- » When picking up a dribble, end in triple threat position

Basic Dribbling Skills

CONTROL DRIBBLE

(Use against defensive pressure)

- » With body turned to the side, dribble basketball near the back knee
- » Keep the dribble low and compact, below the knees
- » Non-dribbling arm should be held out in front of the body to protect the ball from defenders – arm bar

SPEED DRIBBLE

(Use to push the ball up the court and on fast break situations)

- » Dribble is pushed out in front of the body but controlled
- » Dribble is higher and softer

RETREAT DRIBBLE

(Use to avoid defensive pressure and to keep dribble alive)

- » Dribble backward (hop back) to avoid pressure
- » Dribble requires a change in speed and change in direction
- » Dribble teaches players not to habitually pick up their dribble when heavy, defensive pressure is applied

CROSSOVER DRIBBLE

(Use to break down a defender; good penetration move)

- » Dribble must be kept low when crossing over from one hand to another, keeping it away from the defender
- » Use head and shoulder fakes to help “sell” the move
- » Goal is to get the defender on his or her heels
- » Explode to the basket with speed dribble after the crossover

WHIRL PIVOT DRIBBLE

(Use to avoid defensive pressure and to dribble by defender)

- » Pull the basketball through low during the pivot
- » Keep the basketball in the same hand until completing the pivot
- » Pivot should be low and quick with head up
- » Explode to the basket with speed dribble after the whirl pivot

BEHIND THE BACK DRIBBLE

(Use to break down a defender; good penetration move)

- » Use head and shoulder fakes to help “sell” the move
- » Swing the basketball behind your waist, turning the hips and driving the ball down with a snap of the wrist
- » Slap opposite back thigh during the exchange

Ball Handling Drills (Team Drills)

(one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups)

- » **Ball Slams** – With feet shoulder-width apart, have players slap the basketball with fingers spread wide. Players should “slam” the ball by alternating their right and left hands.
- » **Fingertip Drill** – With feet shoulder-width apart, players pass the basketball from hand to hand in front of the body using only the fingertips. Move ball from ankles, to knees, to waist, to chest, to head, and to above head using the fingertips. Encourage players to keep their arms straight.
- » **Side to Side Dribble Drill** – With feet shoulder-width apart, have players dribble with one hand while moving the ball from side to side in front of them.
- » **Front to Back Dribble Drill** – With feet shoulder-width apart, have players dribble with one hand while moving the ball at their side from front to back.

Dribbling Drills

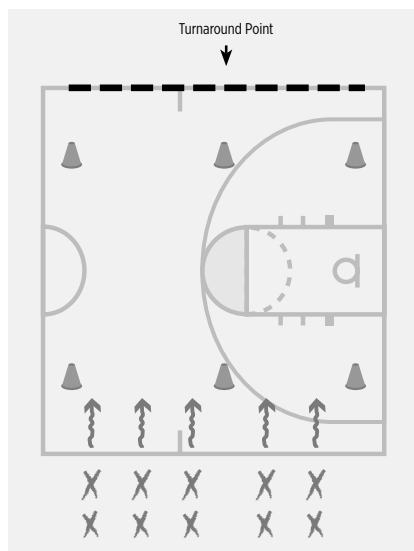
Dribbling Line Drills *(three to five basketballs required)*

During all dribbling line drills, you should stand in front of the players to teach, encourage, and evaluate each player's performance.

1. Players form lines on baseline or sideline (two players deep) – one basketball per line
2. Use cones or chairs to represent stopping/starting points or change-of-dribble spots
3. Players will begin the drills in triple threat position
4. Players will start/stop/change dribble on voice command or whistle
5. Pause between stops/starts to check for balance, arm bar, and if head is up
6. At the turnaround point, require jump stops with pivots
7. Work opposite hand on return dribble
8. Players should end drills with a jump stop, giving the basketball to the next player in line

Rotate the following dribbling line drills:

- » ***Speed Dribble***
- » ***Speed Dribble/Control Dribble*** – on command, stationary control dribble
- » ***Speed Dribble/Retreat Dribble*** – on command, two to three dribbles backward against imaginary defender followed by speed dribble



PASSING AND RECEIVING

Passing and receiving a basketball allows a team to effectively and quickly move the ball around the court. A team that has players with strong passing and receiving skills will spread the defense and be hard to guard.

Passing Teaching Points:

- » Two hands on the basketball, with fingers on the sides of the ball
- » Ball in middle of body
- » Step toward target
- » Push thumbs through ball and snap wrists, creating backspin on the basketball
- » Extend arms completely as you follow through toward target

Receiving Teaching Points:

- » Both hands up in ready position – show a target
- » Step toward the ball when passed – meet the pass
- » “Ball in air/feet in air” concept – leads to jump stop, triple threat position, and ability to pivot with either foot
- » Look the ball into the hands

BASIC PASSING SKILLS

Two-Hand Chest Pass

- » Basketball is held with two hands at chest level
- » Keep elbows out and wide
- » Passer targets the receiver's chest area
- » Passer steps toward their target with either foot as the ball is thrown
- » Snap the thumbs down extending the arms

Two-Hand Bounce Pass

- » Basketball is held with two hands at chest level
- » Passer aims for a spot on the floor about two-thirds (a little more than halfway) of the way to the receiver
- » Passer targets the receiver's chest area from the bounce

Overhead Pass

- » Basketball is held with two hands above head
- » Passer targets the receiver's chest area

Passing and Receiving Drills

Distance Passing *(one basketball for each pair of players)*

Be sure to incorporate all three basic passes into this drill.

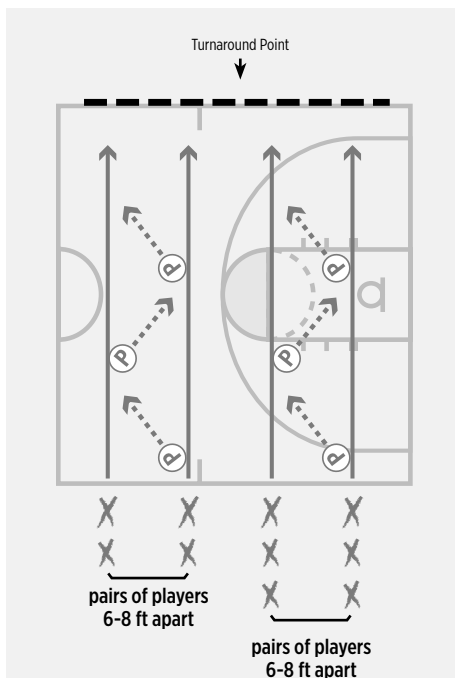
- » Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
- » Instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
- » After several repetitions, have each player take one to two steps backwards and continue passing
- » Continue moving players back until they are passing from a challenging distance

Two Line Passing

(two basketballs required)

Two pairs of players can perform this drill at one time.

- » Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
- » Establish a starting and turnaround point
- » One player in each pair needs a basketball
- » Using defensive slides, players move up and then back down the court
- » While sliding, instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
- » Players pass the ball immediately upon receiving the ball



Variations: Both players running up and down the court, rather than sliding. You may also require the receiver to perform a jump stop upon catching the basketball and immediately passing it to his or her moving partner.

SHOOTING

Shooting Teaching Points:

- » Square up shoulders to the basket
- » Ball on fingertips, not palms
- » Opposite hand should be lightly placed on side of ball (balance/weak hand)

Practice BEEF principles:

- » **Balance** – Learn to prepare for the shot by stopping with the feet set, knees slightly bent, ready to jump (good triple threat position)
- » **Elbow** - Proper shooting alignment; ball should be directly over the elbow with the wrist cocked
- » **Eyes** - Pick a spot (front of the rim, back of the rim, etc.) and focus on that target as the shot is being attempted
- » **Follow through** - Release the ball smoothly, completely extend the arm, and snap the wrist, which should create good backspin on the basketball

Shooting Drills

Lay-Up Steps *(no basketball required)*

Instruct your players to shout “STEP-HOP-SHOOT” when performing this drill. Mirror this drill to practice left-handed lay-ups.

1. Allow players to spread out in your practice area, at least four to five feet apart
2. Players start in triple threat position, holding imaginary basketballs with heads up and eyes on the target
3. On the STEP command, players step with their left foot (right-handed lay-ups)
4. On the HOP command, players raise their right knee and right arm toward the basket (visualize a string connecting a player’s right arm and right leg)
5. On the SHOOT command, players extend their right arm as they shoot an imaginary ball

Wall Shooting

(one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups)

This is a great drill to keep idle players busy while running a drill on the court that may not involve your entire team.

1. Player stands about four to five feet away from the wall
2. Help the player find a reasonable shooting target on the wall
3. Player assumes triple threat position
4. Player shoots the ball at the target, concentrating on elbow in and full extension

5. Player should finish the shot up on his or her toes with proper follow through, creating good backspin

Variations: If coaching third- through sixth-grade players, allow them to shoot using only their shooting/strong hand.

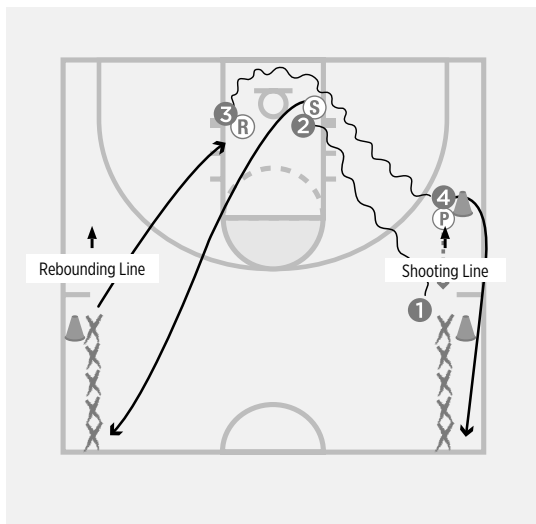
Two Line Shooting Drills *(one or two basketballs required)*

Players rotate lines after each turn. After several repetitions shooting from one side of the goal, change the designation of both lines and shoot from the other side of the court.

1. Players form two lines opposite the goal in each corner of practice area: a shooting line and a rebounding line (use cones or chairs to mark a starting point)

2. **Shooting line:**
Assume triple threat position, showing ready hands to receive a pass.

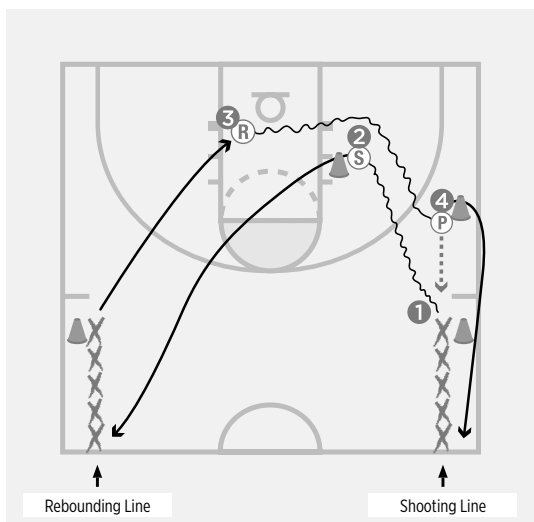
3. **Rebounding line:**
Players should block out an imaginary defender and rebound the ball above their head.



4. The player from the rebounding line secures the rebound and dribbles to a designated cone, makes a good jump stop landing in triple threat position, and uses proper passing techniques when passing to the next shooter in line.
5. Shooter receives the basketball and performs the drill as instructed by a coach.

Rotate the following two line shooting drills:

- » **Lay-ups** – Stress jumping off the proper foot and using the backboard (STEP-HOP-SHOOT)
- » **Pull-up Off the Dribble** – Set a cone at desired shooting spot (stress good jump stop and use of backboard when shooting from appropriate angle)



REBOUNDING

When discussing offensive rebounding, remind players that each shot taken by a teammate is a pass to them! Second chance points (put-backs) can be a big contributor to a team's offensive production.

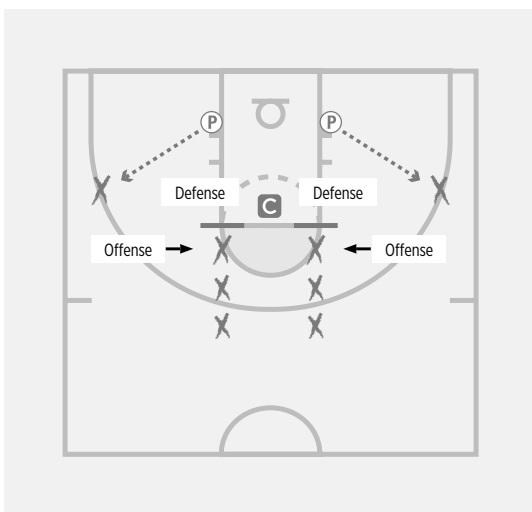
Rebounding Teaching Points:

- » Defensive player stays between the opponent and the basket
- » Using a front or reverse pivot, the defensive player pivots and makes contact with the opponent's body when the ball is shot ("block out")
- » Defensive players should yell "shot" to signal a rebounding opportunity
- » Hold the "block out" position momentarily, with the head up and body facing the goal
- » Release the "block out" - be hungry for the basketball
- » Secure the basketball
- » Be strong with the basketball, keeping the ball at chin level with elbows out

Rebounding Drills

Rebound Outlet Drill – no defender (one basketball required)

- » Facing the basket, players form two lines: one at the corner of the free-throw line (elbow), the other at the foul line extended (wing)
- » Coach stands at the other elbow with a basketball. Coach throws the ball off the backboard
- » The first player in line at elbow catches the rebound with strong hands, elbows out, and ball to the chin. The player then pivots toward the first player in the wing line and throws a two-handed chest pass
- » Player from the wing line passes ball back to the coach
- » Both players swap lines and drill is repeated with second players in each line



Rebound Outlet Drill – *with defender (one basketball required)*

1. Facing the basket, players form two lines: one at each corner of the free-throw line
2. Place one player at each wing area to serve as an outlet receiver
3. The player in the front of each line will turn his back toward the basket (defensive player), facing the next player in line (offensive player)
4. When the coach shoots the basketball, the defensive players will yell “shot” and pivot into the offensive players to obtain a good “block out”
5. Offensive players cannot move
6. Once a defender secures the basketball, pivot and throw a crisp overhead outlet pass to an outlet receiver
7. Players rotate from offense/to defense/to outlet receiver/to back of the line

Variations:

- » ***Use one line instead of two***
- » ***When the ball is shot, the offense can move and try to score off a missed shot***

DEFENSE

Defense Teaching Points:

- » Proper defensive stance
 - › Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart
 - › Knees bent, with waist slightly bent forward
 - › Good balance – ready to move and slide
 - › Place weight on the inside front of the feet but not on the toes
 - › Extend arms to the side, slightly bent
 - › Open hands, so palms face the offensive player
 - › Eyes on the offensive player's chest or "head on the ball"
- » Ball/you/basket principle: When the offensive player being guarded has the ball, the defensive player should stay between this assigned offensive player with the basketball and the basket
- » See the ball at all times
- » Sprint down the floor on a change of possession, stopping any fast breaks

Defense Drills

Defensive Slides (*no basketball required*)

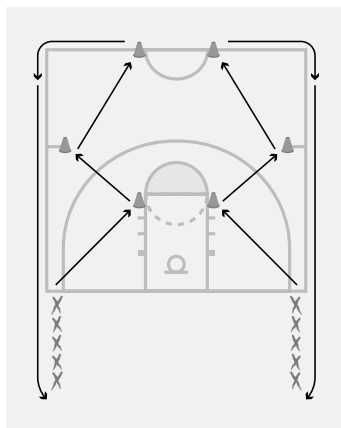
Focus on players' feet sliding (rather than hopping or skipping) and players maintaining a proper defensive stance. Have fun with this drill! Allow players to express enthusiasm and desire by slapping the playing floor and yelling "DEFENSE" on command. Drill should last 20-30 seconds. Allow short rest and repeat as desired.

1. Allow players to spread out in practice area, at least four to five feet apart
2. On command, players yell “DEFENSE” and freeze in the defensive stance
3. On command (either verbal or hand signals), players will slide left, right, up, and back

Zigzag (*no basketball required*)

Focus on players making a drop step each time they turn (rather than crossing their feet) and on players sliding correctly while maintaining a proper defensive stance.

1. Form a line of players at one end of your practice area
2. Set-up cones or chairs in a zigzag pattern, spaced 10-12 feet apart (minimum 3 spots)
3. On command, the first player in line will assume the correct defensive stance and will slide in a zigzag pattern as dictated by the cones or chairs
4. Next player in line starts as the preceding player leaves first spot
5. As each player reaches the final spot, he or she should sprint back to the end of the line



OFFENSIVE PLAYS

The following offensive plays are provided to help your team with floor spacing and floor balance. These plays are intended for Levels 3 and 4.

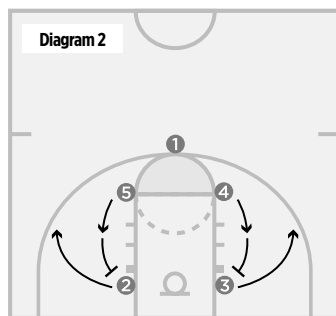
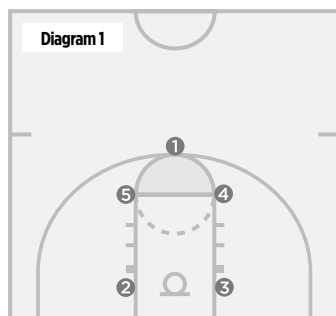
Reminder: View the Skills and Drills videos on the coach section of MyUpward.org for live demonstrations of the following offensive plays.

HALF-COURT SETS

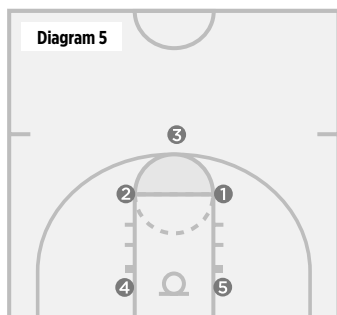
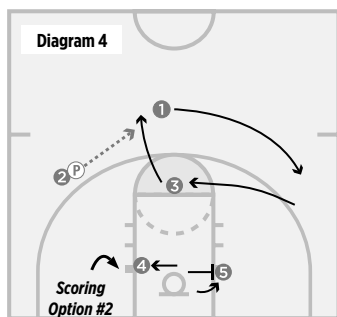
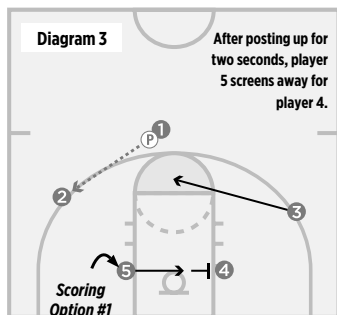
Box Set – Motion

Scoring Options:

1. Player 5 posting up down on ball-side block
2. Player 4 coming off of low screen
3. Player 3 cutting to the free-throw line
 - » Players 2, 3, 4, and 5 are in the “box” offensive set (diagram 1)
 - » Player 1 (point guard) yells “MOTION” or “GO” to start the play (player 1 should keep dribble alive until making a pass)
 - » Players 4 and 5, who are standing outside the lane area at the free-throw line extended areas, will screen down for players 2 and 3 (diagram 2)
 - » Before the screens occur, players 2 and 3 will take two to three steps toward the lane area (to set up their defenders) and then make hard V-cuts to their respective wing areas (diagram 2)
 - » Player 1 will pass the basketball to player 2 or 3 (assume player 2 in this example) who will square up to the basket (diagram 3)



- » Player 5, post player on the ball-side of the court, will post up for two seconds (diagram 3)
- » After two seconds, player 5 will screen away for opposite post player - player 4 (diagram 3)
- » As player 5 turns to screen away for the opposite post player, player 3 will cut toward the free-throw line and player 1 will “fill” his or her spot at the wing (diagram 3)
- » If a pass cannot be made to player 4 coming off the low screen or to player 3 on the cut to the lane area, player 3 will move to the top of the key area to receive a pass from player 2 (diagram 4)
- » If the pass is made to player 3 at the top of the key area, team will be in the “box” offensive set again (diagram 5)



Box Set – (Double Down)

Scoring Options:

1. Player 3 coming off of low screen
2. Player 2 coming off the double screen

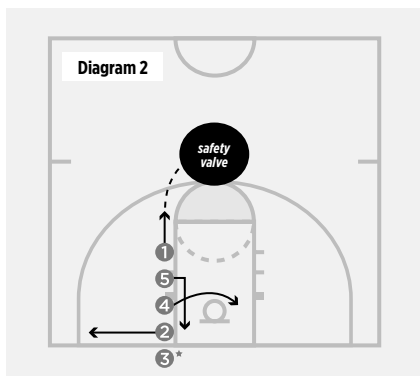
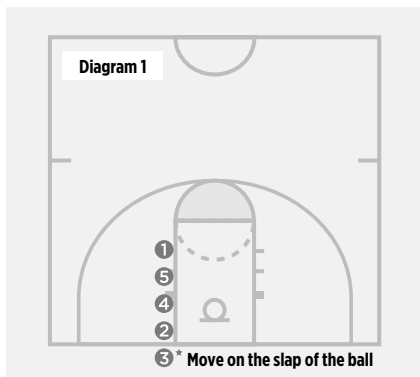
Procedure:

1. Players 2, 3, 4, and 5 are in the “box” offensive set
2. Player 1 (point guard) yells “DOUBLE” or “GO” to start the play (player 1 should keep dribble alive until making a pass)
3. Player 1 dribbles to right-side of the goal - can go to right or left (diagram 1)
4. As player 1 dribbles to the wing area (attack zone), player 2 will screen away for player 3 (diagram 1)
5. Player 3 cuts to the ball-side block area hoping to receive a pass from player 1 (diagrams 1 and 2)
6. As player 3 cuts to the ball-side block area, players 4 and 5 will set a double screen in the middle of the lane for player 2 (diagram 2)
7. Player 1 looks for player 2 as he or she curls around the screen for an open jump-shot (diagram 3)

INBOUNDS PLAYS

Stack (baseline)

1. All four players line-up straight across from the player throwing in the basketball (diagram 1)
2. When the passer slaps the basketball or yells “break,” the players move simultaneously as follows (diagram 2):
 - » First player in line breaks to ball-side corner
 - » Second player in line cuts to opposite block
 - » Third player in line moves straight down to block area toward the ball
 - » Fourth player in line takes two to three steps back, serving as a safety valve



Note:

All inbounds plays - Players should use fakes and jab steps to set up their defenders and get open. Encourage players coming off a screen to rub shoulders with the screener. As the person throwing in the basketball can pass to any teammate, encourage ready hands.

Reminder:

This play can also be used on the sideline, with players moving in the same pattern as above.

Box (baseline)

- » Each player takes a spot outside the lane area, with the post players (Players 4 and 5) at the block areas and the perimeter players (Players 1 and 2) at the free-throw line extended areas. Player 3 will throw in the basketball (diagram 1).
- » When the passer slaps the basketball or yells “break,” the players move as follows:

Box Option #1:

1. Player 5 sets a diagonal screen for Player 1 (diagram 2)
2. Player 1 waits for the screen and moves toward the basketball to the opposite block (diagram 2)
3. If Player 1 does not receive the basketball, he or she continues to the ball-side corner (diagram 3)
4. Player 4 moves up to set a screen on Player 5, who cuts down toward the weak-side block (diagram 3)
5. Player 4 rolls toward the middle of the lane after setting the screen (diagram 4)
6. Player 2 serves as a safety valve (diagram 4)

Diagram 1

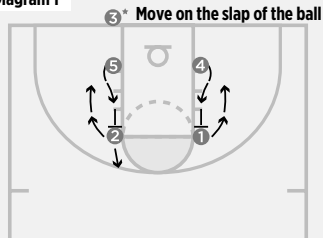


Diagram 2

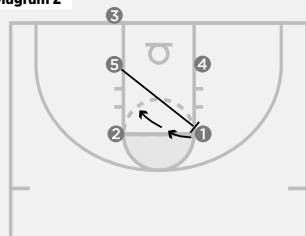


Diagram 3

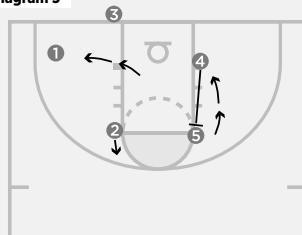
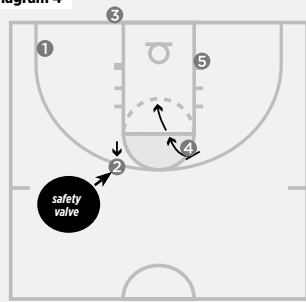


Diagram 4



Box Option #2:

1. Players 4 and 5 screen up for Players 1 and 2 (diagram 1)
2. If a pass cannot be made to either 1 or 2, they each move to the closest corner (diagram 2)
3. After setting the screens, Players 4 and 5 should roll back toward the ball (diagram 2)

Box Option #3:

All four players will take one to two steps toward the closest sideline to set up their defenders (diagram 1)

1. Players 5 and 2 will both cross-screen for Players 4 and 1 on the weak-side (diagram 1)
2. After setting a screen, Player 5 will turn around with ready hands (diagram 2)
3. Player 2 will roll back to ball-side, free-throw line extended area to serve as a safety valve (diagram 2)

Diagram 1

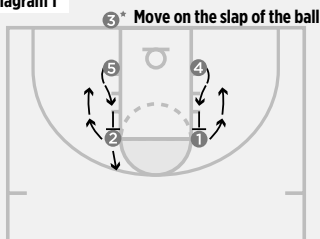


Diagram 2

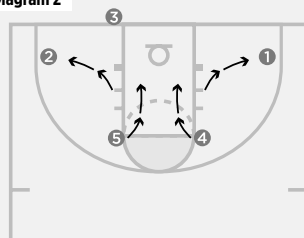


Diagram 1

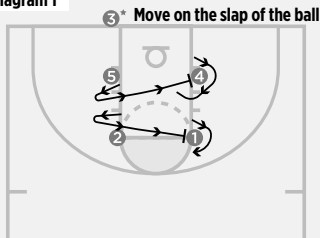
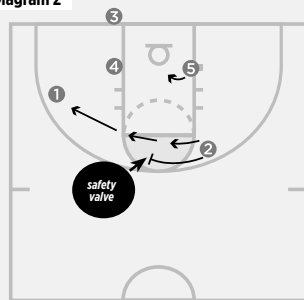


Diagram 2



4 PRACTICE DEVOTIONS BIBLICAL VIRTUES

Chapter Overview:

WEEK 1:	Welcome.....	63
WEEKS 2-4:	Responsibility	65-73
WEEKS 5-7:	Obedience	74-82
WEEK 8:	Good News	83
WEEKS 9-11:	Initiative	86-96

DEVOTIONS

As an Upward Coach, you are not only teaching skills for the sport but also values for life. The devotion time allows you to teach the character of Christ through the virtues He modeled. This season will focus on virtues which are taught in your practices and are highlighted by Bible verses. The chart below is designed to assist you as you organize and prepare for your devotions. It shows the virtues and verses for each group of practices.

PRACTICE NUMBER	BIBLICAL VIRTUE	VERSE
Week 1	<i>Welcome</i>	None (Scripture learning begins at Practice 2)
Weeks 2-4	<i>Responsibility</i>	If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. Luke 16:10 (NLT)
Weeks 5-7	<i>Obedience</i>	Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Hebrews 13:17a (NLT)
Week 8	<i>Good News</i>	God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Ephesians 2:8 (NLT)
Weeks 9-11	<i>Initiative</i>	Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. Philippians 2:4 (NLT)

Okay, team. I want to start this huddle by asking you a question. What does the word responsibility mean to you? (*Wait for responses*)

Did you cringe a bit when you heard that word? Thinking about responsibility might bring to mind Saturday chores, homework, or eating vegetables. Responsibility doesn't always make us think of fun things. But it is an important part of life.

This season we're going to spend time learning about responsibility. We'll also learn about some other things related to responsibility such as obedience and initiative. We'll dive deeper into the word responsibility next week using a verse from the Bible: *If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.* Luke 16:10 (NLT)

That verse is from a book in the Bible called Luke. Luke is found in the New Testament.

This season during our devotion time, we'll be learning responsibility, obedience, and initiative using stories and verses from the Bible. The Bible is a book that contains 66 smaller books written by people who lived a really, really long time ago. You might wonder, "why would a book written so long ago be important for me to learn about responsibility?" You might wonder how a book that old could be relevant to your life at all. Let me quickly go over a few key reasons the Bible is such an important, life-changing book.

First of all, it's historically accurate. All of the stories from the Bible actually happened. We know this because historians have studied various manuscripts and personal accounts of stories. Secondly, the Bible represents the lives of real people. The people in the Bible faced real

problems and made real mistakes. They aren't any better or any worse than we are. Because of that, we can find important lessons that pertain to our own lives through their stories.

Third, the Bible is a life-changing book. We'll talk more about this as the season goes along, but the essence of the Bible is this: God made us, He loves us, and even when we do things that displease him, he still wants us to trust him. That's where God's Son Jesus comes in. Because of Jesus living on earth, dying on the cross for our sins, and rising from the dead, we can be forgiven of our sins and have eternal life! More on that later, but it's a really important part of the Bible.

Lastly, the Bible is inspired by God. We read in a passage in 2nd Timothy that all of scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching. When we are unsure as to what is right and wrong, we can look to the Bible for answers.

I'm excited to be with you all this season. I can't wait to see you learn how to play and work together as a team. But I'm also super excited to see you learn more about the Bible, about responsibility, and about how much God loves you!

Let's take a minute to pray and ask God to bless our season.

Prayer

God, thank you for these young athletes. Thank you that they want to learn more about playing and working together as a team. Open their hearts and minds to what you want to say to them through your Word, the Bible. We are excited for what you have in store for us this season! Bless our time together at this practice and this entire season. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

RESPONSIBILITY

DEVOTION 2

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 2” at the end of practice.

Introduce:

- » **Virtue:** RESPONSIBILITY is showing you can be trusted with what’s expected of you.
- » **Scripture Verse:** If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. Luke 16:10 (NLT)

Bottom Line: I can be trusted when I put God first.

Do you ever want to be first? First in line. The first one in the pool. First one down the stairs on Christmas morning. First picked for the team. First to score. I would guess that if you could choose your place in any situation, you would almost always choose the first spot!

If we’re completely honest with ourselves, we want to win. Nobody wants to lose. And that drive to win will serve us well in sports. But this “me-first” attitude could also get us in trouble. If we let it, the race for first might lead us to do some things we wouldn’t normally do. We might cheat to gain an advantage. Or lie to get ahead. We might hurt a friendship or a relationship with a sibling if we’re always fighting to be first.

For the next few practices, we’re going to talk about responsibility. Responsibility is showing you can be trusted with what’s expected of you.

Now you might be thinking, what does responsibility have to do with being first? Well, let's talk about that for a minute.

What happens if you only look out for yourself? What happens if you knock your brother over on the way to the car? What happens if you cheat to get the best grade on a spelling test? What happens if you take off for a cannonball into the pool without watching where you're going?

In all these scenarios, somebody is bound to get hurt. And in each of these situations, the drive to be first or to win causes others to not be able to trust you.

You see, when it comes to being first, there's something you and I need to remember. When you are always trying to be first, you end up losing the trust of everyone around you. But when you put God first, you begin making choices that prove you can be trusted.

Think about it, what would happen if you thought about how God wants you to treat your brother before blowing past him on the way to sit in the best seat? What if you first thought about how God would want you to act when taking a spelling test or our next game? What would happen if you took a second to think about how God would want you to behave and treat others at the swimming pool before jumping in full force?

Chances are, you'll begin to make choices that honor God. Instead of pushing your way to the front, you might see a friend that's always overlooked and give him the first spot. Instead of being tempted to cheat to get ahead, you might remember the consequences and what God has to say about honesty. If you want to be given more responsibility and to be someone that can be trusted, the quickest way to get there is to put God first and follow what he would want you to do. Because you can be trusted when you put God first.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(K-2nd Grade)

- » What does it mean to put God first?
- » Name a few ways you could put God first at home or school.

(3rd-6th Grade)

- » Is it hard to put others first? Why or why not?
- » How can you put God first in your life?

(7th Grade and up)

- » Do you think of yourself as a responsible person? Why or why not?
- » What efforts can you make to put others first in your life? How can you put God first?

Prayer:

God, we want to be trusted. We know we need to put you first in our lives. God, help us to be responsible with the things you've given us and help us honor you in the choices we make. Keep us from the need to always be right, to always be first, and to always win. Humble us so that we may follow you and your word. Amen.

RESPONSIBILITY

DEVOTION 3

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

Review:

- » **Virtue:** RESPONSIBILITY is showing you can be trusted with what's expected of you.
- » **Scripture Verse:** If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. Luke 16:10 (NLT)

Bottom Line: I can be trusted when I make the most of what God has given to me.

Have you ever had anyone tell you that you have a natural talent for something? Maybe you can draw or maybe you can hear a melody once and play it back on the piano from memory. Maybe you love to build things and have a knack for figuring out how things fit together. Maybe you're really great at sports! Whatever your skill or talent might be, did you ever think about what would happen if you didn't use it? If you knew you had a talent and you chose to do nothing with it?

There's a story in the book of Matthew that Jesus told about three men. Their boss decided to go on a journey so he gave each of them part of his money. Let's say to the first guy, he gave 50 dollars. To the second, he gave 20 dollars and to the last, he gave 10. Now the first two men were smart. They went out and used the money in a way that doubled it! So, the first man ended up with 100 dollars while the second ended up with 40.

But guess what the last guy did with his 10 dollars? He buried it! Now, if you were that boss, who would you be frustrated with? The two men that doubled your money or the one who buried it in the ground? That's right – the guy who buried your money.

So, what does this story have to do with you and me? Why would Jesus choose to tell it? Well, in this particular story – the “boss” is our Heavenly Father and the “money” is the gifts and talents that God has given us. If you have a knack for art, or writing, or music or sports, or anything else, God wants you to use those gifts – not bury them and act like they don't exist.

See the master in this story was proud of the men who chose to use his money. And because they proved they could be trusted with a little, their master said he would trust them with more in the future.

The same goes for us. When we choose to use the gifts and talents God has given us, then we show him that we can be trusted with more and more. This is true for me. I know that I can be trusted when I make the most of what God has given to me. And once you discover the unique gifts and abilities God has given to you, you will be trusted with more, too.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(K-2nd Grade)

- » What unique skills and talents do you have?
- » How can you make the most of the abilities God has given you?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- » What abilities has God given you? What abilities do you see in your teammates?
- » How can you use your abilities to serve others?

(7th Grade and up)

- » Are you more like the men who used their money to make more money, or are you like the man who buried his money? Why?
- » In what ways can you use your abilities to serve others? Do you feel a responsibility to do so?

Prayer:

Thank you God for giving us talents and abilities. Thank you for reminding us today of the unique ways you have blessed us. Help us to use our gifts and talents to make you happy. Let us not be selfish with our gifts but use them to serve others. Amen.

RESPONSIBILITY

DEVOTION 4

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

Review:

- » **Virtue:** RESPONSIBILITY is showing you can be trusted with what's expected of you.
- » **Scripture Verse:** If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. Luke 16:10 (NLT)

Bottom Line: I can be trusted when I choose to help others.

Ever wish you were older? Old enough to drive a car? Old enough to make your own decisions? Old enough to stay up as late as you want? Or how about this? Maybe you wish your parents would just see that you are able to take care of yourself and give you more responsibility.

The truth is that responsibility goes together with trust. When you've proven you can be trusted, you're given more responsibility. Maybe your mom or dad waited to see if you could take care of the neighbor's dog for the weekend before agreeing to get you a dog of your own. Maybe you had to prove that you could handle riding your bike in your own cul-de-sac before your mom would let you ride to your friend's house down the street. Whatever the privilege or responsibility, chances are you had to prove that you could be trusted first.

The best way to be given bigger responsibilities is to follow through and do what you're asked to do. But I'll take it one step further. One big way you can show you're ready for more responsibility is by helping others.

Think about it, when you choose to help your brother with his homework, when you choose to help your neighbor by feeding his dog or when you choose to help your mom by carrying the groceries, you're showing others that they are more important than you. When you are willing to sacrifice your own time to help someone else, you show them that you care about their needs. And when you do, you show that you can be trusted. So, look for ways this week to help those around you. Seek out opportunities to make someone's day a little easier and watch your responsibilities grow because you can be trusted when you choose to help others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(K-2nd Grade)

- » What are some responsibilities you have at home? What happens if you don't get those things done?
- » How else can you show responsibility at home? At school? At practice?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- » How well do you handle your responsibilities at home? At school?
- » What can you begin doing to help others?

(7th Grade and up)

- » What responsibilities are you most tempted to neglect? Why?
- » Why does it show responsibility when we help others?

Prayer:

God, thank you for loving us. You help us get through each day, each practice, and each game. God, help us help others when we see a need. You've told us to love others, so help us show them love by meeting their needs. We love you Lord. Amen.

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 5” at the end of practice.

Introduce:

- » **Virtue:** OBEDIENCE is trusting those who lead you by doing what you’re asked to do.
- » **Scripture Verse:** Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Hebrews 13:17a (NLT)

Bottom Line: It’s right to listen to God because he’s God.

How many of you like to create things? Maybe you love to draw or paint. Maybe you play an instrument and you’ve written a song or two. Maybe you love to build cool structures out of Legos. Maybe you haven’t quite figured out how you’re creative. But do you know who’s infinitely creative? God.

Okay, another question. How strong are you? Can you lift your little brother? What about that jumbo bag of dog food your mom just bought at the grocery store? Think you could pick up a car or a refrigerator? Okay, maybe that’s a little too heavy for you guys. But you know who’s incredibly powerful? God.

Okay, let’s switch gears a bit. How many of you are perfect? Anyone here who’s never made a mistake? You’ve never lied. You’ve never cheated.

You've never thought a mean thing about anyone. Anyone? No? Do you know who is perfect? God.

Did you know we have a lot in common with God? The Bible says that he made us in his image. But we can't do all of the things he can do because we are not God.

You see, no matter how creative we might be, no one here is as creative as God is. We didn't carve out the Grand Canyon and we can't paint a sunset high in the sky. And no matter how much we might workout, lift weights, or train like crazy, we'll never be powerful enough to control the waves in the ocean or calm a storm. And perfect? Forget it. You and I both know that we're far from perfect. We make mistakes all the time. And even if we tried hard to not mess up, we still would. Guaranteed.

So what does all this mean? Well, because all these things are true of God, I think it means we should listen to him. I think it means we should obey him. You guys know what obedience means right? Obedience is trusting those who lead you by doing what you're asked to do. That's what we'll be talking about for the next few practices. When we obey God, we show him that we believe he is who he says he is. When we obey God, we show him that we believe that he loves us. When we obey God, we show him that we believe he is God. It's right to listen to God and to obey him because he's God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(K5-2nd Grade)

- » What is the most amazing thing you've seen that God created?
- » Why do you think we should obey God?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- » How do we obey God?
- » Is it hard for you to obey God sometimes? When? Why?

(7th Grade and up)

- » What are some things God can do that you can't?
- » What does it look like to obey God? When you realize God is perfect, does it make it easier to obey him?

Prayer:

God, you are powerful. You are creative. You are perfect. You are gracious. Thank you for loving us! Help us to obey you. We know you want what's best for us because you created us in your image. Help us to follow you. Amen.

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

Review:

- » **Virtue:** OBEDIENCE is trusting those who lead you by doing what you're asked to do.
- » **Scripture Verse:** Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Hebrews 13:17a (NLT)

Bottom Line: It's always better to do what God says—the first time.

Last practice we started talking about obedience—trusting those who lead you by doing what you're asked to do. Let me start today by asking you a question. Do you ever get in trouble for not doing something the first time you were asked? I guess that not one of you can say you always follow directions the first time. It's probably one of the things you get in trouble for—especially when someone has to ask you to do something over and over again.

Sometimes we really have to obey the first time or we could get in serious trouble. Let's say a little boy is heading straight for the street and his mom yells, "STOP!" If he doesn't stop immediately, he could get hurt. Or what if you're not listening when I tell the team to do one thing and you do your own thing? Something might happen and the other team could score. In both situations, it's important to do what you're told the first time.

But what about when it comes to following God, we should listen to Him the first time. Why? Have you guys heard about a guy named Jonah from the Bible? In the book of Jonah, we see God asked him to go to a city named Nineveh and tell the people there to follow Him. But Jonah didn't listen. In fact, instead of heading to Nineveh, he got on a boat and headed in a completely different direction. And I'll bet you guys have heard about what happened. Does anybody know? That's right, Jonah was swallowed by a huge fish. He stayed inside the fish's belly for three days. Three days to think about what he should have done in the first place. And when that fish finally spit him out, where do you think Jonah went? That's right! To Nineveh!

It is important to listen to God the first time, just like it is important to obey our authority and follow instructions. If Jonah had done that, to begin with instead of trying to run from God, he could have saved himself from a pretty terrible situation. Remember, God created you and has a plan for your life that you can follow the easy way . . . or the hard way, like Jonah. So, when it comes to following God, it's always better to do what God says—the first time!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(K5-2nd Grade)

- » What happened to Jonah when he didn't listen to God?
- » How did Jonah show he was listening to God after the fish spit him out?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- » What makes it difficult to obey the first time?
- » What might be the consequences of not obeying God in your life?

(7th Grade and up)

- » What might happen if you disobey God?
- » How did God use Jonah even after he disobeyed him? What might God have planned for your life?

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for reminding us through the life of Jonah of the importance of listening to you. We want to honor you by obeying you. Help us to listen to you the first time. We know you have a plan for our lives. Help us to follow you. Amen.

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice

Review:

- » **Virtue:** OBEDIENCE is trusting those who lead you by doing what you're asked to do.
- » **Scripture Verse:** Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Hebrews 13:17a (NLT)

Bottom Line: *When you think you can't wait, don't lose your cool.*

"Eat your veggies."

"Brush your teeth."

"Turn off the TV and go outside to play."

"Don't hit your brother."

"Finish your homework."

Ever heard any of these from your mom or dad? Does it feel like they're always telling you what to do? Why is that? Do you just sometimes wish you could do whatever you want? I mean, so what if you miss brushing your teeth a couple of nights in a row? And sure, you might get in trouble for not finishing your homework, but there's always extra credit, right?

Not so fast. The Bible has something to say about obeying your parents. Check out our memory verse—Hebrews 13:17. It says, *Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say.* Let's break this verse down a little bit.

First question: Who are your leaders? They are your parents, your teachers, your coaches—yes, even me. We are the “leaders” the passage mentions when it says, “Obey your spiritual leaders.”

But the people you obey aren't off the hook. Check out the second part of Hebrews 13:17: *Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God.* Your parents, teachers, and coaches are responsible for you because he put them in that position of authority to do his works. So, when you obey them, you're also obeying God. And when you refuse to obey them, you're saying that you don't trust God to put the right leaders in your life. Because how you obey your parents shows what you think about God.

But that doesn't mean your parents, teachers, and coaches are perfect. Sometimes they mess up. Still, God has placed them in authority over you. It's not a light responsibility: they are accountable to God.

Do you see how it's all connected? It says in the Bible that God put your parents in your life to lead you—to keep watch over you. It's like when your teacher is out sick and puts a substitute in charge of the classroom. If you treat that substitute with respect, you're also showing your teacher that you respect her decision. But if you disobey and misbehave for the substitute, you're showing your teacher that you really don't think very highly of her or trust her enough to put a capable leader in charge. That's how it is when you disobey your parents. It tells God that you don't trust Him. Remember, how you obey your parents shows what you think about God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(K5-2nd Grade)

- » What is your least favorite chore? Why?
- » Why is it important we obey our parents?

(3rd-6th)

- » Why should we obey people in authority?
- » When are you tempted to be disobedient? How can you improve?

(7th Grade and up)

- » What authority exists in your life? How obedient are you to them?
- » Have you been a leader in any area of life? How do you want people to treat you when you are in authority?

Prayer:

God, help us to obey, even when it is hard. We are thankful for parents that love us. Help us to honor you by obeying them! You want what's best for us. We love you, Lord. Amen.

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 8” at the end of practice.

- » **Scripture Verse:** “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 (NLT)

We’ve spent time the past several weeks in devotion time talking about responsibility and obedience. I want to continue talking about those things today by discussing something really important: the Gospel. The word gospel means “good story” or “good news”. And I think the Gospel we learn about in the Bible is the best story and the best news ever!

The Bible tells us a lot about God and his love for people. But you know what? The Bible also tells us a lot about ourselves. We learn in the very first chapter of the Bible that God made us in his image. He made us to be like him. God is perfect and wants us to be that way too!

But something keeps us from being perfect. Do you know what it is? Sin. Sin is anything we say, do, or think that displeases God. Everyone other than Jesus that has ever lived has sinned. Everyone. We learn this in the Bible as well. Romans 3:23 tells us that everyone has sinned and has fallen short of God’s standard. Maybe you wonder how you’ve sinned. Have you ever told a lie, even a small one? Have you ever made fun of someone else? Have you ever been disobedient to a parent or disrespectful to a teacher? All of those are sins. And we are responsible for them.

Because of our sin, we cannot have a right relationship with God. Sure, we might say God exists and believe that, but if we continue living in sin and

not seeking forgiveness for our sin, we can't walk step-in-step with God. And there's nothing that we can do to achieve this right relationship. But Jesus can do something. Jesus did do something!

Jesus is God's Son who came to earth, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross as a payment for our sins. Not only that, but three days after he died on the cross, Jesus rose from the grave! He defeated both sin and death. And he did it for us.

See, Jesus took on the responsibility for our sins. He was obedient to God, his Father, in giving up his life as a payment for your sin and my sin. Why did he do that? Because he loves us. John 3:16 tells us this: For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. When we believe in God and that the way for us to have a relationship with him is through his Son, Jesus, we will have eternal life!

We need to admit that we've messed up, that we've sinned. We can't manage life on our own. We need to follow Jesus and live the way he wants us to live!

I want to close in prayer and if you feel like God is asking you to trust him and follow him with your life, I want you to come talk to me after the prayer or after practice. The most important decision you'll ever make with your life is whether or not you will devote your life to trusting in Jesus and living a life pleasing to God.

****No discussion questions this week. If players have questions about this devotion, consider answering them one-on-one with the League Director or another coach present.***

Prayer

God, thank you for your great love for us. You made us to love you. You made us to be like you! And God, we have failed so many times. We have done so many things that are displeasing to you. We have not obeyed you. God, I pray right now for the forgiveness of my sins. Help others admit their sin and their need for you. Speak to the hearts and minds of everyone here that they too may seek to follow you and dedicate their lives to living the way you want them to live. Remind them, Father, of your great love for them. We love you, Lord. Amen.

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 9” at the end of practice.

Introduce:

- » **Virtue:** INITIATIVE is seeing what needs to be done and doing it..
- » **Scripture Verse:** Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. Philippians 2:4 (NLT)

Bottom Line: When there's a job to be done, first you have to see it..

Today I want to talk to you about something important when it comes to sports. It's pretty important in real life, too. I'm talking about showing initiative. Without it, no one would ever get anywhere in sports—or life! Initiative is seeing what needs to be done and doing it.

But to get the job done, there's something that has to happen first. You need to see the problem. If you can't see the job ahead of you, then you'll never do anything about it. Because when there's a job to be done, first you have to see it.

Now I know I don't live in your house, but I would guess that at least once a day your mom or dad says something like . . .

“Can you please clean up this mess? I can't see the floor of your room!”

“Your brother is struggling with his coat. Could you help him, please?”

“Hey, can you give me a hand with these leaves? I’ll never get them all picked up without some help.”

“My arms are full with all these groceries. Think you could lend me a hand?”

Sometimes, it’s easy to ignore a big job or to think that someone else will do it. After all, your mom already has all the bags in her hands, right? And your dad, well, how did all those leaves get picked up before you were big enough to help? And what about your brother? I mean, he wasn’t around to help you when you were little, right?

But how would that attitude work for us? If no one took initiative to make a play during a game, we’d never get anywhere. If we spent the entire game thinking that someone else would make all the plays, I think we’d end up as the losing team for sure.

Showing initiative means you take responsibility when there’s a job to be done. Initiative doesn’t mean you ignore it or wait for someone else to do it. So, this week, practice taking the time to see what needs to be done—at home, at school, and during practice. Then, follow through and do something about it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(K-2nd Grade)

- » When is the last time you saw something that needed to be done and did it, all on your own?
- » What can you do when you get home today to show initiative?

(3-6th Grade)

- » How are you taking initiative at home? How about at school?
- » Is it hard to look out for the interest of others? Why or why not?

(7th Grade and up)

- » How has someone else looked out for your interests?
- » Do you lack initiative? What do you need to do today to take initiative at home, school, and in your personal life?

Prayer

God, you are awesome. Thanks for helping us understand today how important it is to show initiative. We don't want to wait for someone else to do what needs to be done. Help us to see the problem first and then to lend a hand. Thanks for loving us. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

Review:

- » **Virtue:** INITIATIVE is seeing what needs to be done and doing it.
- » **Scripture Verse:** Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. Philippians 2:4 (NLT)

Bottom Line: When you see there's a job to be done, don't wait for someone else to do it.

Does anyone remember what we talked about at our last practice? We talked about initiative, which is: seeing what needs to be done and doing it.

Today I want to tell you about a guy from the Bible named Nehemiah who knew how to get the job done. Nehemiah worked for the King of Persia, but he was Jewish. Some of his people had moved back from Persia to Jerusalem, the capital of the land God had given them, and Nehemiah got word that Jerusalem was in trouble. Back then, cities were surrounded by thick, high walls. These walls protected and guarded the city. But the walls around Jerusalem were broken down. It was a big mess.

Now, Nehemiah wasn't an engineer. He didn't have any construction experience. He didn't even live in Jerusalem. And he had a pretty cushy job, working as a cupbearer to a king. But Nehemiah knew that he could help. He knew he had to help. And he figured that he might be the only person willing to get the job done. So, he did.

The Bible tells us that because of Nehemiah, the wall around Jerusalem was completely rebuilt in 52 days. Isn't that amazing? Nehemiah saw the job that needed to be done. He didn't wait for someone else to do it.

And guess what? You and I can learn a lesson from Nehemiah, too. It's easy to make excuses when there's a job to be done. We're all tempted to think that someone else will do it. But that's not showing initiative.

Philippians 2:4 (NLT) says, *Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.* That's what we do when we play together as a team. We look out for each other. That's what Nehemiah did for all of those people in Jerusalem. He cared more about them and their needs than his own.

Remember, when you see there's a job to be done, don't wait for someone else to do it. You are the person who could make a difference when you look out for the good of others and show initiative this week.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(K-2nd Grade)

- » What are some jobs outside of your home you need to take initiative to do?
- » What did you learn about Nehemiah? How did he show initiative?

(3-6th Grade)

- » What might happen if your parents or teachers failed to take initiative and do the jobs they're supposed to do?
- » What job can you take initiative to do right now, even if it seems too big to handle like Nehemiah did?

(7th Grade and up)

- » How did Nehemiah show initiative? How did he show leadership?
- » As you get older, your responsibilities increase. What in your life right now do you need to take initiative and get done? It might be a school project or a broken relationship that needs to be addressed.

Prayer

Dear God, you are an awesome, holy God. Thank you for the story of Nehemiah and how he was willing to tackle such a big job himself instead of waiting for someone else to do it. Help us to show that same kind of initiative this week. We love you and we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

Review:

- » **Virtue:** INITIATIVE is seeing what needs to be done and doing it.
- » **Scripture Verse:** Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. Philippians 2:4 (NLT)

Bottom Line: When there are people in need, don't wait for someone else to help them.

Did you guys follow through and show initiative this week? Would someone be willing to share with the team what you did and what happened?

(Allow a player to answer. If no one volunteers, be prepared to share an example.)

Initiative is seeing what needs to be done and doing it. We've talked a little bit about what that looks like both on and off the court. But I want to see how well you've been listening. So I have a little multiple-choice quiz for you. If you know the answer, raise your hand. Ready? Okay, here we go.

1. A kid from your grade comes into the lunchroom with his tray full of food, and just as he's about to find a seat, he trips and everything goes flying. You:
 - a. *Ignore it. After all, you don't want to lose your place in line.*
 - b. ***Help him clean it up and then offer to share your lunch with him.***
 - c. *Go find a teacher so she can clean it up.*

2. There's an older lady who lives down the street. You don't see her outside much, but you notice her trashcan hasn't been taken to the street and garbage day is tomorrow. You:
 - a. *Knock on the door to remind her it needs to go out to the street.*
 - b. *Act as if you never saw it, assuring yourself that she'll remember before tomorrow.*
 - c. ***Run over to her house and pull it out to the curb after you take out the trash at your house.***

3. Your mom is working on dinner in the kitchen, and you see that the table hasn't been set yet. You:
 - a. ***Grab the stack of placemats and get busy.***
 - b. *Tell your little brother to do it.*
 - c. *Figure that once your mom gets supper in the oven, then she can do it.*

4. At the end of P.E., all the balls and cones are out all over the gym.
You:

- a. *Head outside to play for free time with the rest of the class.*
- b. *Assume your teacher prefers the mess and decide to leave it that way.*
- c. ***Stay behind to help your teacher quickly put things away.***

5. At church, you hear about a village in Africa that doesn't have clean water. Your church is collecting money to build the village a well.
You:

- a. *Feel bad that there are people in the world who don't have clean water and feel lucky that you can get it whenever you want.*
- b. *Figure that all the adults at church will pitch in.*
- c. ***Tell your mom that instead of presents for your birthday next week, you want to collect money to help build the well.***

Okay, okay. That was like the easiest test ever, right? I mean, we can all pick out the answer that sounds the best. But here's the hard part. In real life, if we're really honest, most of us would rather wait to see if someone else will help first. Instead of showing initiative, many times we make excuses or assume that someone else will do something about it.

But the Bible says that we should look out for the interest of others first. That means when we see a problem, we're supposed to do something about it. This is especially true when it comes to people in need.

We all have more than we need and definitely more than we deserve. When you see someone in need, don't wait for someone else to fix it.

Figure out what part you can play to get the job done. And as you show initiative, you never know the good you can do for someone else. When there are people in need, don't wait for someone else to help them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(K-2nd Grade)

- » Do you think you have more than you need? Are you grateful for what you have?
- » Who do you know that's in need right now that you can help?

(3-6th Grade)

- » Do you look out for the interests of others often? If not, what keeps you from doing so?
- » What can you do this week to help someone else in need?

(7th Grade and up)

- » Is it easy to help someone else in need? Are you the first one to help? What keeps you from taking initiative?
- » Often taking initiative to help someone else requires us to rearrange our priorities and make sacrifices. What might you need to change in your schedule or give up to help someone else?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for your love and care for us. We are so grateful for every good thing because we know they come from you. Help us to see the needs around us this week and to do something. We don't want to wait for someone else when we could be the ones to help. We love you, God. And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

5 GAMES

Chapter Overview:

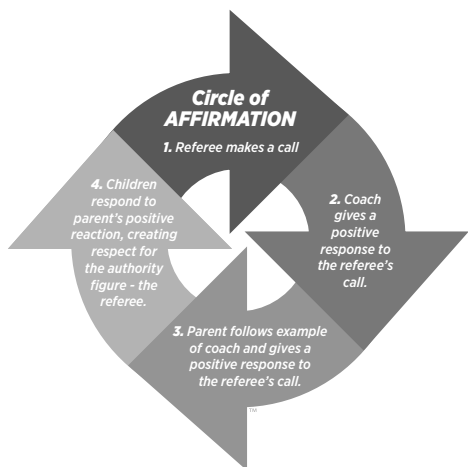
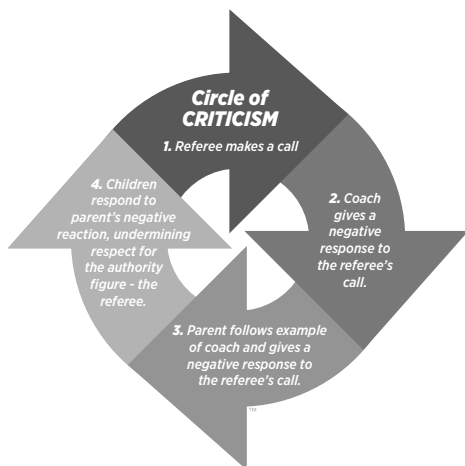
Circle of Affirmation and Criticism	98
The Levels of Upward Basketball	99
Level 1 Rule Modifications	104
Level 2 Rule Modifications	105
Level 3 Rule Modifications	106
Level 4 Rule Modifications	107
Substitutions	109
Game Day Stars	116

CIRCLE OF AFFIRMATION

GAME-DAY ATTITUDE

Choosing the right game-day attitude is a key to being an effective Upward Sports Coach. Actions and reactions on the court can either open or close the door to ministry. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple diagrams that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.

In Upward Sports, coaches and referees work together as a unified team. Coaches have the opportunity and the responsibility to stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation. The Circle of Affirmation



goes beyond the referee. A coach's affirmation of players inspires encouragement and praise from parents, family members and other players. Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game a better experience for everyone.

THE LEVELS OF UPWARD BASKETBALL

Upward Basketball suggests a four-level age appropriate format that progresses with each player. Each level of Upward Basketball is tailored to meet players where they are in their age development and ability, allowing them to reach their full potential.



Basic Rules for LEVELS 1-3

Note: These rules do NOT apply to Level 4.

Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) Rules Book www.nfhs.org

Game Format

- » Referees lead both teams in prayer at center court before every game. This sets the tone and focus for the game.
- » A coin flip or other impartial method determines which team receives possession first. In jump ball situations, possessions will alternate. This promotes fairness for both teams while adhering to the NFHS rule for jump ball situations.
- » Clock format: Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for pre-determined substitutions at the end of each segment and halftime.
- » At the end of each segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. This avoids the offensive team that may have possession in the next segment from stalling at the end of a period.
- » All coaches will adhere to the Upward substitution system. The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players.
- » There are no timeouts. This allows more playing time and keeps the games on time.
- » Teams switch goals at halftime. This rule is in compliance with NFHS Rules. It also evens any advantage that may occur because of the court.
- » Standings add unneeded pressure to the game and therefore will not be maintained.” Any game ending in a tie should remain in a tie. No overtimes are played so games stay on schedule.

Rules for Play

Defense

- » Man-to-man defense will be played at all times in Levels 1-3. In a man-to-man defense, players are only guarding the opponent that closely matches their ability and height. This allows for a more competitive system for every player on the court while creating an equal opportunity for each player.
- » Defensive players must stay within approximate arm's reach of the player they are guarding. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
 - › After a warning to the player, the player will be assessed a personal foul for subsequent violations.
- » Double-teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
 - › **Lane Area:** If a defender is in the lane and the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense. Since many goals are scored in the lane, it provides the defense more opportunity to properly defend this area.
 - › **Picks and Screens:** Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks or screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend their offensive player. This is commonly referred to as "help and recover." This prevents the offense from continually setting screens to gain an advantage.

- › **Fast Breaks:** When a transition begins in the backcourt and the offense quickly moves the ball up court, another defensive player may help. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players. This rule is meant to prevent the defenders from helplessly watching the offensive player score without being able to help.
- » At the beginning of each segment, players will line up at half court and “match up” with whom they are guarding. This act is performed to promote equal player match-ups. Equal match-ups combined with man-to-man defense create five competitive pairings on the court.
- » Full court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This will allow for more play to occur in the front court and create an equal opportunity for each player to participate both on offense and defense.
- » When playing on a short court, backcourt violations will not be called. If playing on a regulation-size court (84 feet) as opposed to cross-court, backcourt violations should be called. 10 seconds should be called on short courts or regulation size courts.
- » A player committing two fouls in one segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation comes in as the substitute and is rewarded some extra game time. This does not change the normal rotation as the fouled-out player does not re-enter the game until they are next scheduled to do so. This rule allows the offending player time to regroup during the remainder of the segment while realizing that there is a consequence for the violation.

Offense

- » The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling or throwing the ball into the backcourt to “reset” a play or “retreat” from the defense. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt where the opponent is unable to play defense.
- » Isolation plays will not be a part of Levels 1-3 because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. For offense this prevents players being positioned at half-court to isolate defenders away from the play.
- » Non-shooting fouls will result in the ball being in-bounded from either the baseline or sideline. All shooting fouls will result in two free throws. By not administering “bonus” situation free throws, all players on the court can contribute to consistent game action.
- » No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover and will be taken out along the baseline. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.

LEVEL 1 (K5) MODIFICATIONS

RULE	EXPLANATION / COMMENTS
Goal Height	7 feet
Ball Size	27.5"
Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.	This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame
Score is not kept	The focus of this age is to learn fundamentals, not winning and losing.
3-second violation is not called	Referees should advise players of this potential violation but not penalize.
Coaches are allowed on the floor with players	The focus is for coaches to instruct and encourage players at all times.
Stealing the ball from the dribbler is not allowed	To encourage the offensive player to dribble with correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen.
Stealing the ball off a pass is not allowed	To encourage the offensive player to pass with correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen. A block should not be considered a steal.
Violation is not called for having two hands on the ball while dribbling	Due to limited hand-eye coordination, this allows a player to establish correct dribbling form through rhythm and pressure on the ball.
Violation for double dribbling is called but does not result in a turnover	Players should learn the concept of double dribble but should be allowed the opportunity to correct it without penalty.
Violation for traveling is called but does not result in a turnover	Players should learn the concept of traveling but should be allowed the opportunity to correct it without penalty.
Violation for traveling is not called when a player shuffles feet when trying to set up for a shot	Because this age group is single skill focused, players will tend to shuffle their feet when focusing on setting up for a shot. This is corrected as the player develops in skill as he gets older.
Fast Breaks are allowed in any transition situation	Players at this age will learn proper transition offense.
Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls	Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 10' line. Offense may have up to 2 players on the lane, not including the shooter. Defense may have up to 3 players on the lane. After the last free throw attempt, the ball becomes live.

LEVEL 2 (1ST-2ND GRADE) MODIFICATIONS

RULE	EXPLANATION / COMMENTS
Goal Height	8 feet
Ball Size	27.5"
Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.	This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame.
Score is Optional	Focus on teaching young athletes the proper skill development traits needed to handle winning and losing after a game. This will translate into life lessons.
3-second violation is not called	Young athletes at this age should focus on offensive basics (dribbling, passing, shooting, and rebounding).
One Coach per team is allowed to walk the sidelines to encourage and instruct players	Players will be able to focus their attention on the coach standing. Walking the sidelines allows the coach to instruct and encourage players at all times.
Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls	Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 10' line. Offense may have up to 2 players on the lane, not including the shooter. Defense may have up to 3 players on the lane. After the last free throw attempt, the ball becomes live.
Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass is allowed	Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.
Double dribble violation is called in all circumstances	
Traveling violation is called in all circumstances	
Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation	

LEVEL 3 (3RD-4TH GRADE) MODIFICATIONS

RULE	EXPLANATION / COMMENTS
Goal Height	9 feet
Ball Size	28.5"
Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8-minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.	This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame.
Score IS kept	Young athletes at this age should learn how to handle winning and losing after competition. This translates into life lessons.
3-second violation is called and results in a turnover	At this age, young athletes should understand the concept of offensive movement by not allowing an offensive player to stay in the lane more than 3 seconds
One coach per team is allowed to stand in their coach box area to encourage and instruct players.	Players will be able to focus their attention on the coach standing. Walking the sidelines allows the coach to instruct and encourage players at all times.
<p>Clock runs continuously with special rules in effect with fewer than two minutes remaining in the game:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Non-shooting fouls result in the offensive team getting one point and the ball. » Shooting fouls result in the offensive team scoring two points. The opposing team then takes possession. » Players fouled in the act of shooting and making the basket are credited with the basket plus one point. The opposing team then takes possession. 	Because the clock does not stop, this rule keeps the game moving without wasting the running game clock on lining up for free throw attempts
Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls.	Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 12' line. Offense may have up to 2 players on the lane, not including the shooter. Defense may have up to 3 players on the lane. After the last free throw attempt, the ball becomes live.
Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass is allowed	Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.
Double dribble violation is called in all circumstances	
Traveling violation is called in all circumstances	
Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation	

LEVEL 4 (5TH GRADE AND UP) RULES

**The following rules are exclusive to Level 4. They follow a more traditional middle school format and game play. Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) Rules Book www.nfhs.org*

RULE	EXPLANATION / COMMENTS
Referees lead both team in prayer at center court before every game	This sets the tone and focus for the game
Goal Height	10 feet
Ball Size	28.5" (girls), 29.5" (boys)
Games consist of 4, six minute quarters	Follows middle school rules and allows game to begin and end within an hour timeframe
The clock stops at each whistle	Stoppage of play includes violations, fouls, out-of-bounds play, timeouts, and injury
Overtimes are 2 minutes in length (regulation clock)	Gives both teams the opportunity to win the game with reasonably extended time. If the game is still tied at the end of the first overtime period, you have two options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The game ends in a tie » First team to score a basket wins the game (no extra time needed)
Teams are allowed one 30-second timeout per half (1 per team per half)	This allows a coach to meet with players and adjust strategy during a game
All games are played on a full-sized regulation court (no cross court)	This is appropriate floor size for players at this level
A jump ball is used to start the game and overtime period	Athletes at this age have the physical ability to jump for the ball to obtain possession. It also follows the NFHS rules for starting a game or overtime
Zone and man defenses are allowed (both may be used throughout the season)	Players at this level possess the ability to defend and attack both zone and man principles. Zone and man defenses are a part of the game of basketball and should be understood by players as they prepare for the next level.
Press defense is allowed in the backcourt at all times except if a team has a 15-point advantage	To promote fairness and integrity of the game, teams with a 15-point advantage should drop into a basic half-court defense.

(cont.)

LEVEL 4 (5TH GRADE AND UP) RULES - CONT.

RULE	EXPLANATION / COMMENTS
<p>All players are allowed five fouls each game. After the 5th foul is committed, the player is out for the remainder of the game</p> <p>-----</p> <p>After the seventh team foul in each half, bonus free throws are awarded to the fouled team (1 and 1)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>After the tenth team foul in each half, double bonus free throws are awarded to the fouled team (2 shots)</p>	<p>This rule follows traditional middle school rules format</p>
<p>Three point shots are allowed only if the court features a three-point arc.</p>	<p>Courts without a 3-point line should not award 3 points no matter the shot distance</p>
<p>Playing time requirements for each player in Level 4 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Each athlete plays a minimum of ¼ of each game » Each athlete must play in both halves of each game 	<p>Level 4 does not use the substitution system found in Levels 1-3. This allows flexibility in managing playing time for each coach based on the game situation while promoting fair game participation for all players</p>
<p>End of season tournaments are encouraged for Level 4</p>	<p>End of season tournament play adds excitement to your league. (see Resources on MyUpward.org for tournament templates)</p>

UPWARD SUBSTITUTION ROTATION

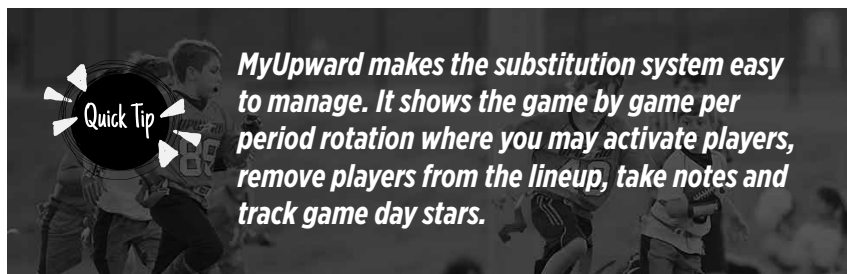
- » The basic Upward substitution system applies to ONLY Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 divisions.
- » Level 4 division does not use the basic Upward Substitution Rotations detailed in this training guide. Playing time for this division are:
 - Each player plays a minimum of 1/4 each game.
 - Each player must play in both halves of each game.
- » In Level 1 games consist of six 4-minute segments with an 8-minute halftime. Levels 2 and 3 plays six 6-minute segments with an 8-minute halftime.

The Upward Substitution Rotation for Levels 1-3 is designed to provide every player equal opportunity for improvement. The substitution system ensures the following:

- » Every player will play at least half of the game. This eliminates preferential treatment of players.
- » No player will sit out more than six minutes at a time. This allows each player to be involved in consistent game action and assists in keeping players focused and engaged in the game.
- » The starting lineup shifts down one player for the start of every game allowing every player to be in the starting lineup. This gives all players a time to be on the court first and no child feels as though they are used only as a reserve player.

- » Coaches are not open to making unfair substitutions. Following substitution rotation helps coaches manage who should be in the game.
- » Coaches are free from monitoring playing time for each player. The substitution system allows coaches to focus more on instructing and encouraging players than awarding playing time.
- » Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season. This gives all players game experience and to allows them to be a contributing teammate.

When using MyUpward, mark the game complete to see a summary of the stars and notes you took during the game for easy post game star presentation.



FILLING OUT THE SUBSTITUTION FORM

Here is how to use substitution form in the back of the book if you are not using MyUpward.org.

Step 1

Rank players according to skill level starting with letter "A." This ranking is based on evaluation score and what you observe at pre-season practices.

Step 2

For Week 1, begin with Player "A" and work down the first column (A-E). These are your starting five.

Step 3

Begin the rotation where you left off in the previous segment. If you are at the bottom of your list, be sure to go back to the top until you have five players in the segment.

Week 1		FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF		
PLAYER NAME		18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min
A	Beth	X	X	X		X	X
B	Ann	X	X		X	X	X
C	Susan	X	X		X	X	
D	Kim	X		X	X	X	
E	Mary	X		X	X		X
F	Karen		X	X	X		X
G	Amy		X	X		X	X
H							
I							
J							

Step 4

Continue this process for the remainder of the segments.

For Week 2, begin with Player “B” and fill in five players for the starting lineup.

Using the previous method, you would then fill in the rest of the form accordingly for Week 2.

Week 2

PLAYER NAME	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF		
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min
A Beth						
B Ann	X					
C Susan	X					
D Kim	X					
E Mary	X					
F Karen	X					
G Amy						
H						
I						
J						

SUBSTITUTION SCENARIO

It's Week 3 and, as game time approaches, Mary has not arrived (she is supposed to be in the starting lineup for Week Three). She did not call prior to the game and inform you that she will not be present.

How to fill out the form:

Since it's Week 3, you'll start with Susan followed by Kim. For the first segment only, draw a line through the box for Mary. Fill in the box for Karen and Amy (this now gives you four players). To occupy the fifth spot, fill in the next person in the rotation (Beth). This is your new starting lineup for Week Three.

Week 3

PLAYER NAME	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF		
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min
A Beth	X					
B Ann						
C Susan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
D Kim	X					
E Mary	---					
F Karen	X					
G Amy	X					
H						
I						
J						

For the second segment, start with the next person in the rotation (Ann) and work down the form to include Susan and Kim. Draw a line through Mary's box and continue down the form to include Karen and Amy.

If by the third segment Mary has yet to arrive, draw another line through her name and begin with the next person in the rotation (Beth) to begin this segment. Continue this lineup with Ann, Susan, Kim and Karen.

Week 3

PLAYER NAME	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF		
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min
A Beth	X		X			
B Ann		X	X			
C Susan	X	X	X			
D Kim	X	X	X			
E Mary	---	---	---			
F Karen	X	X	X			
G Amy	X	X				
H						
I						
J						

If Mary arrives during halftime, continue with the current cycle including Mary in the proper rotation. Then continue with the rest of the rotations through the end of the game. As you can see with the previous example, it is important to NOT fill out your form prior to the game. If a participant is absent, it is best to fill out your form segment by segment in case the absent player arrives at some point during the game.

Week 3

PLAYER NAME	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF		
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min
A Beth	X		X	X	X	
B Ann		X	X	X	X	
C Susan	X	X	X	X		X
D Kim	X	X	X	X		X
E Mary	---	---	---		X	X
F Karen	X	X	X		X	X
G Amy	X	X		X	X	X
H						
I						
J						

GAME DAY STARS *(*if included in your Team Box)*

If your league is using Game Day Stars you have an Award Stars booklet. These multi-colored stickers are given to each player at the end of every game. Star presentation should be an exciting time. Encourage parents to cheer as stars are distributed to each player. Make specific points why each participant receives a particular star. Notes you or your assistant coach take during the game should be used during this time as you encourage their efforts.

TIP: Find a location off of the court and take your time with this activity after the game.

Here is an example of how to conduct a star presentation:

“During the game today Luke was in the right position on defense every time with his arms out and palms up and defending the other players strong hand. Luke made great decisions and made the defensive stop each time. Today Luke will get the red star for his defensive effort. Great defense today Luke!”

Use the star distribution form on MyUpward in the Gameday area or in the back of your coach playbook to track which stars each participant has received. Make an attempt to award each participant all five stars throughout the season.



Blue is for Effort



Gold is for Sportsmanship



Gray is for Offense



Red is for Defense



White is for Christlikeness

Encourage players to display the stars they receive on their posters. Here is a list of the game day stars and what they represent.

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT COACH TOOLS

The Leadership Team of your sports ministry will send you an invitation to access additional resources online through the **MyUpward.org** website or from your mobile device. After accepting the invitation, you will create a username and password.

THE COACHES PRACTICE PLANS

These detailed Practice Plans help you prepare for each practice. In each Practice Plan, you will find pre-practice huddle topics, Warm-up activities, Skill focus, Skills and Drills, and Practice devotion. Use these guides as a step by step plan for your practice. If you are an experienced coach, you may include additional ideas to supplement the experience for the players.

These plans can be printed by accessing them through MyUpward.

MYUPWARD.ORG

One of the most valuable tools you can use is accessing MyUpward.org!

- » View and edit your roster
- » Email or text parents
- » See your team's game schedule
- » See Game Day stars and notes
- » View weekly practice plans, skills and drills, rules of the game
- » Access game day tools to manage your lineup

This online tool allows you to see the Gospel Video, download and print practice plans, devotions, rules, and other forms.

THE SEASON CELEBRATION

The Season Celebration event provides another opportunity to celebrate your players and connect with their families. Since your attendance at this event demonstrates your love and support for your players, all coaches should make every effort to attend. Your League Director may provide each team with an award that could be given out at the Season Celebration.

6 FORMS

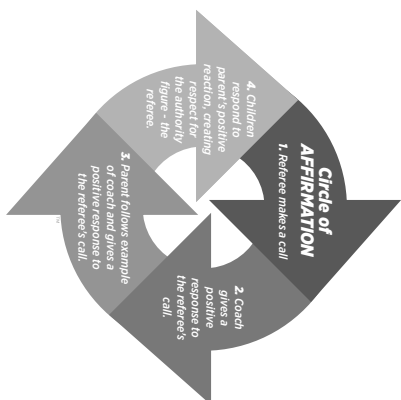
Chapter Overview:

Substitution Forms	120
Star Distribution Form.....	132

Game 1 - Sub. Form

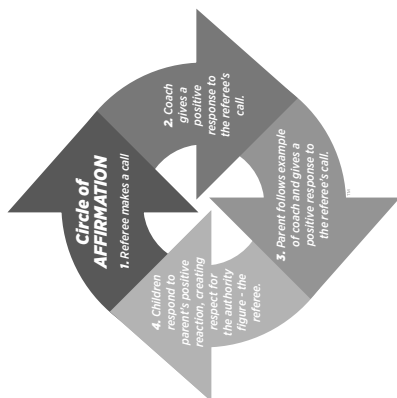
Player's Name	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF				Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min		18 min	12 min	6 min		
A									
B									
C									
D									
E									
F									
G									
H									
I									
J									

NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



Game 2 - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF				POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min		18 min	12 min	6 min		Notes / Stars	
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										

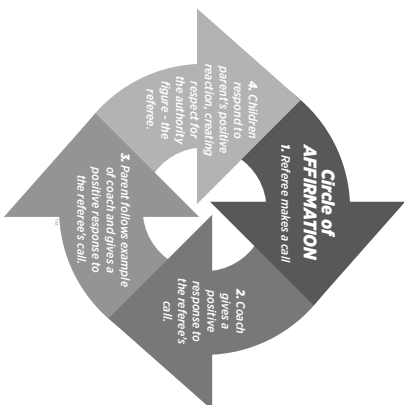


NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

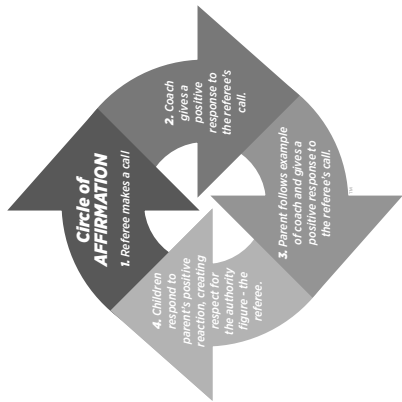
Game 3 - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							

NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



Game 4 - Sub. Form				
Player's Name	FIRST HALF		SECOND HALF	
	18 min	12 min	18 min	12 min
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				
F				
G				
H				
I				
J				
	Notes / Stars			

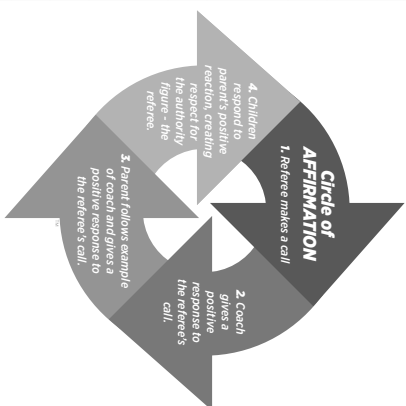


NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

Game 5 - Sub. Form

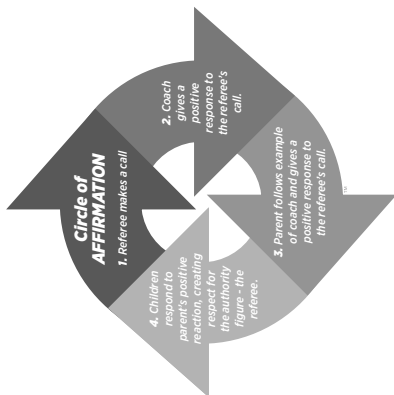
Player's Name	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF				POST GAME
	18 min	12 min	6 min		18 min	12 min	6 min		Notes / Stars
A									
B									
C									
D									
E									
F									
G									
H									
I									
J									

NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



Game 6 - Sub. Form

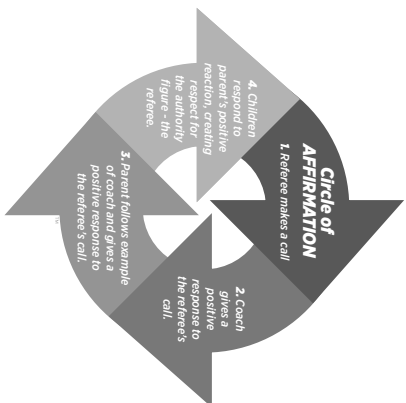
	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF			POST GAME
	18 min	12 min	6 min		18 min	12 min	6 min	
Player's Name								Notes / Stars
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								



NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

Game 7 - Sld. Form

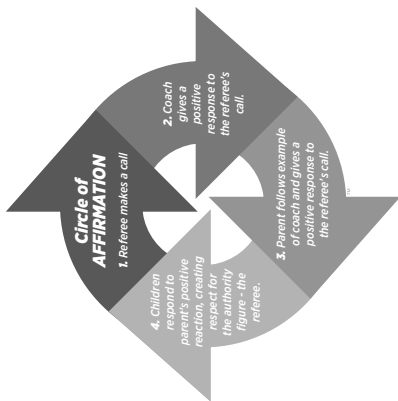
Player's Name	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF				POST GAME
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min			
A									Notes / Stars
B									
C									
D									
E									
F									
G									
H									
I									
J									



NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

Game 8 - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF				POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min		18 min	12 min	6 min		Notes / Stars	
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										

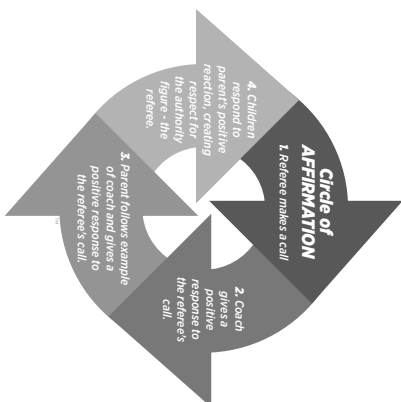


NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

Game 9 - Sub. Form

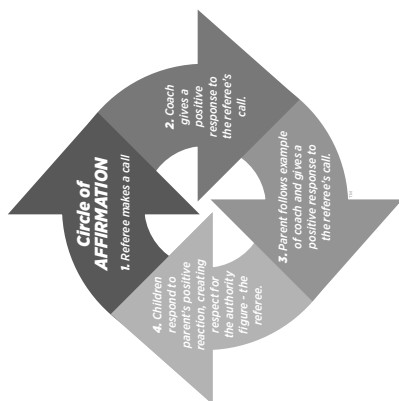
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							

NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



Game 10 - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF				POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min		18 min	12 min	6 min		Notes / Stars	
A										
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										

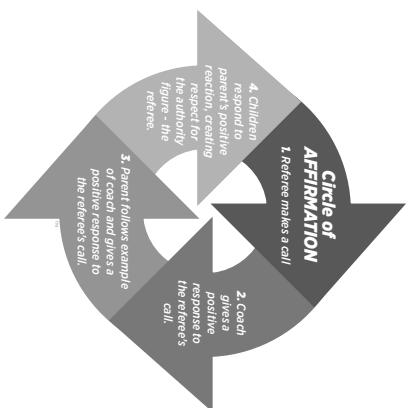


NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

Game 11 - Sub. Form

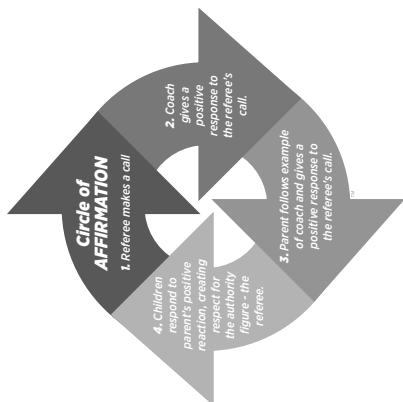
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							

NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



Game 12 - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars	
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								



NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

UPWARD BASKETBALL *STAR DISTRIBUTION FORM*

Use a pencil to record the color of the star that players receive each game.

Player's Name	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4	Game 5	Game 6	Game 7	Game 8	Game 9	Game 10	Game 11	Game 12

Award Stars help you to celebrate effort and place value in individual and team growth. Coaches should give sincere praise, which is specific to what participants have earned. Consider recruiting a “Star Coach” who can take notes and help with times where stars are presented.

BLUE STAR – The blue star represents EFFORT which means giving your best at all times regardless of the circumstances.

GOLD STAR – The gold star represents SPORTSMANSHIP which means treating your teammates and opponents the way you want to be treated. You show respect to yourself, teammates, opponents, referees, coaches, and the game by demonstrating sportsmanship.

RED STAR – The red star represents DEFENSE which means coordinating with your team to slow down or stop the opponent from making a play or scoring. Defense requires an awareness of being in the right position, hustle and hard work.

GRAY STAR – The gray star represents OFFENSE which means working with your team for a positive play or a score. Offense requires being aware of your teammates and their opportunities as well as using your skills to advance the goals of your team which leads to a score.

WHITE STAR – The white star represents CHRISTLIKENESS which means doing your best to imitate Jesus in every way through your words, attitudes, and actions.