

BASKETBALL LEAGUE



COACH PLAYBOOK

*A comprehensive guide to
providing the best league
experience.*





Basketball **COACH PLAYBOOK**

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Goals For The Season

THE GOAL OF OUR SPORTS MINISTRY IS:

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

SUCCESS IN OUR SPORTS MINISTRY IS MEASURED BY:

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Why Coaching Matters

Chapter Overview:

6	Why kids need good coaches
7	How to develop players
10	Who you're coaching
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Why Coaching Matters

Welcome to Upward Basketball!

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."* During this one season, you'll have the incredible opportunity to make an eternal impact on young people, an opportunity few receive in their lifetime. As a coach, this is your chance to teach valuable life lessons that will last well beyond stats and scores.

Why Kids Need Good Coaches

When a youth sports league is only concerned with winning, the emphasis becomes strictly on how an athlete performs on the court, ignoring the other essential components that are key to a child's development. Many coaches teach the physical side of an athlete but ignore mental, social, and spiritual elements that help the athlete become a better person on and off the court.



How Upward Sports Helps You To Develop Your Players

As an Upward Basketball Coach, you play a major role in building 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, decision-making, and cognitive self-regulation.

- » **CONFIDENCE** - As players learn and improve in the skills of the sport, their self-esteem and confidence increase. Players then gain the courage to attempt new skills and recognize that mistakes are a part of the game that they can overcome. Building a child's self-esteem is essential for them to face new challenges.
- » **DECISION-MAKING** - The intricacies and complexities of sports, regardless of what age a child plays them, 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 repetition during practices, players improve their muscle memory and learn when and how to make individual decisions.
- » **COGNITIVE SELF-REGULATION** - Through intense games and drills, players learn to self-regulate emotions and gain focus. The attention span of a young athlete will increase as they age. 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

- » 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.
- » Physical activity 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.
- » 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.
- » 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.

Spiritually

Spiritual growth is an essential part of sports ministry. You play a vital role in the spiritual development of players on your team. 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.

Socially

- » 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, not just themselves.
- » Children navigate the ups and downs of relationships. They learn to encourage others when they fail and learn how to recover from mistakes when recognized.
- » Children learn how to respond to complex social situations with teammates and competitors. This learning carries over to other areas of life, helping children deal with different complex social situations in school, at home, and in other environments.
- » Serving others becomes a critical component for social development in team sports. Children learn to share the ball, defend teammates, and give their best effort to help the team and not just themselves.

What You're Coaching

HANDS



*ATHLETIC SKILLS
CONDITIONING
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT*

*CONFIDENCE
DECISION-MAKING
MENTAL STRENGTH*



HEAD

HEART



*COURAGE
SENSE OF SELF
A SENSE OF PURPOSE*

Who You're Coaching

- » **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.

- » **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?

Matthew 5:13-16 says this: *"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."*

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.

How You Coach

To be a successful coach, here are some practical keys to coaching that are necessary:

1. **Teach the game through drills** – The ability to execute proper drills 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 the rules, explain drills, and teach sportsmanship, 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 MyUpward to assist you in communicating with parents.

How To Interact With Your Players

Being an effective coach means being an effective communicator. Here are a few tips on communicating with your players:

- » Create a positive environment by greeting each player by name as he or she arrives at practice each week.
- » Always speak in a way that the player can understand.
- » Ask questions to get to know players better (hobbies, families, what excites them, etc.)
- » Hold an open meeting with parents and players together during the season to allow them to express their feelings and frustrations.
- » 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 young 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.

Get To Know 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 some things to cover in that first meeting with parents:

- » Introduce yourself and share your excitement about the season and why you are coaching.
- » Share your contact information.
- » Ask a parent to put together a schedule for families to rotate, bringing snacks to games.
- » Encourage all parents to work on skills at home with their young athletes.

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 since evaluations, so calling them to introduce yourself and give first practice information is crucial.

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.
- » Ensure safety and communicate your safety plans and 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.

Your Role in Sports Ministry

As a coach, you play a vital role in the ministry to players and their families. It is important to remember the goals and how those will be measured as shared by the League Director.

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?

The Mid-Practice Huddle

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

A link to the Gospel Video will be sent to all participants by text or email from the League Director at a designated time during the season. This video engagingly presents the Gospel by illustrating what Jesus did for us.

The story should generate discussion about the Gospel and gives you a chance to further present the Gospel. You should watch the video before the last practice as well. The Gospel Video appears on *MyUpward.org*.

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.

The First Practice

Welcome

Show enthusiasm as you meet each of your players at the first practice. 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 in 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.

DISTRIBUTING PLAYER ITEMS

Your league director will provide you with a Team Box. Inside your Team Box are individual items for each player on your team.

FIRST PRACTICE DEVOTION

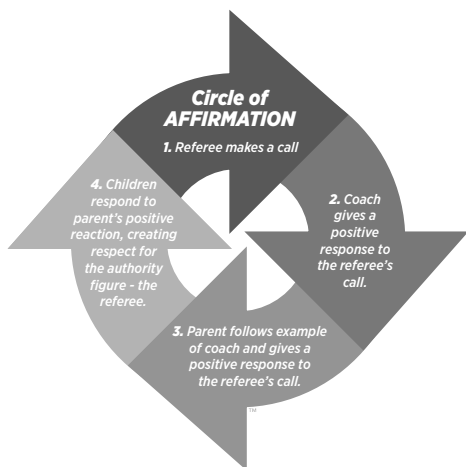
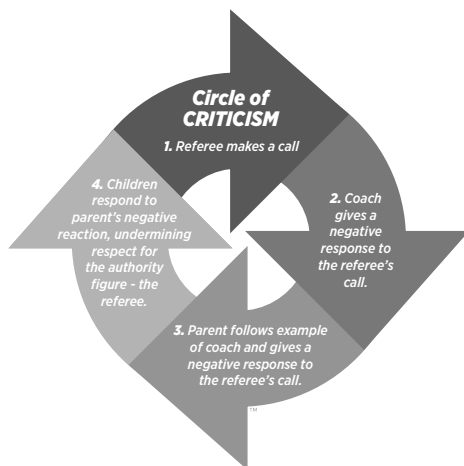
Below is the first practice devotion. This devotion, along with the devotions for the remaining practices, can be found in your Coach Playbook and online at MyUpward.org.

Circle of Affirmation

Game-Day Attitude

Choosing the right game-day attitude is a key to being an effective Upward Basketball 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 Basketball, 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.


Upward Substitution Rotation

- » The 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.

Mark the game complete to see a summary of the stars and notes you took during the game for easy post game star presentation.

 **TIP:** MYUPWARD MAKES THE SUBSTITUTION SYSTEM EASY TO MANAGE. IT SHOWS THE GAME BY GAME PER PERIOD ROTATION WHERE YOU MAY ACTIVATE PLAYERS, REMOVE PLAYERS FROM THE LINEUP, TAKE NOTES AND TRACK GAME DAY STARS.



Filling Out the Substitution Form

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 SCENERIO

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	X					
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 inside of your coach box. 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.

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.org or 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*



TIP: FIND A LOCATION OFF OF THE COURT AND TAKE YOUR TIME WITH THIS ACTIVITY AFTER THE GAME

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 and the progressive web app***

One of the most valuable tools you can use is the progressive web app.

This tool allows you to view and edit your roster, email or text parents, see your team's game schedule, the gospel video, view weekly Practice Plans, skills and drills, devotions, rules of the game, game day tools to manage your lineup and game days stars and notes.

» ***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.



Practice

Chapter Overview:

32	Preparing for Practice
33	Practice
34	Warm-Up Activities
36	Skills and Drills
54	Offensive Plays

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.

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.

<i>Practice</i>	<i>Practice Focus</i>	<i>Team Meeting</i>	<i>Rules to Cover</i>	<i>Skills & Drills</i>
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 37 › Dribbling - pg 40 › 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 37 › Ball handling - pg 40 › Dribbling - pg 40 › Shooting - pg 46
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 44 › Defense - pg 52 › 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 49 › 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 54 › 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

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 of 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

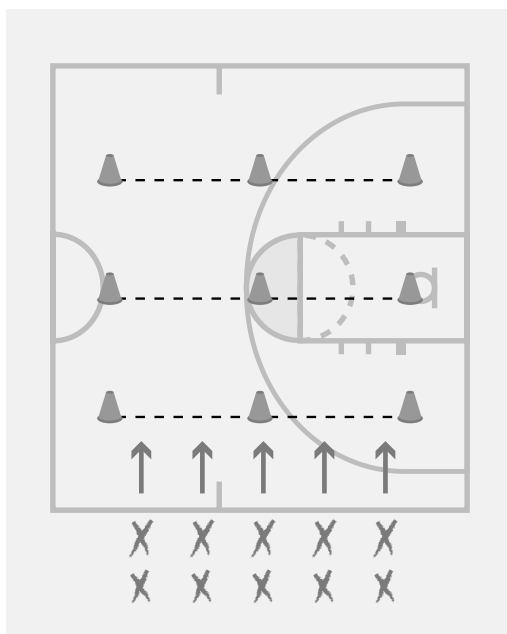
Front Pivot and Reverse Pivot

- » 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.

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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

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

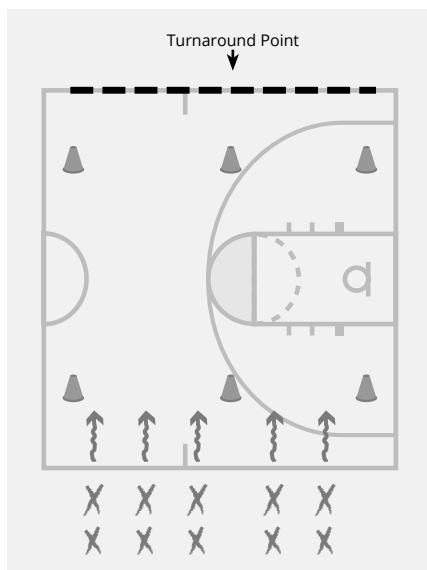
Dribbling Line Drills (three to five basketballs required)

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)

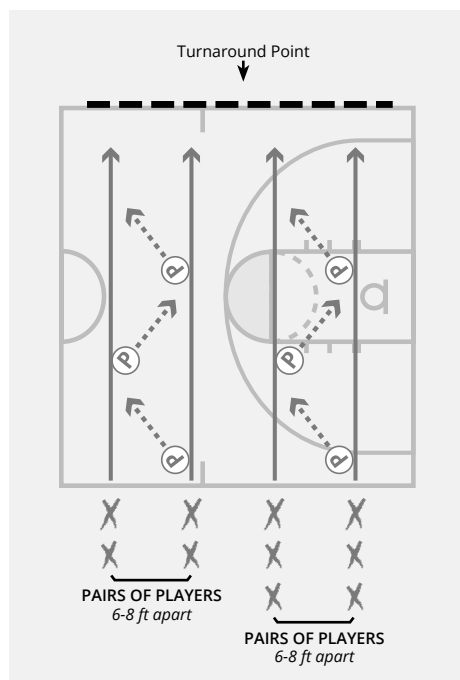
Be sure to incorporate all three basic passes into this drill.

1. Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
2. Instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
3. After several repetitions, have each player take one to two steps backwards and continue passing
4. 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.

1. Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
2. Establish a starting and turnaround point
3. One player in each pair needs a basketball
4. Using defensive slides, players move up and then back down the court
5. While sliding, instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
6. 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.

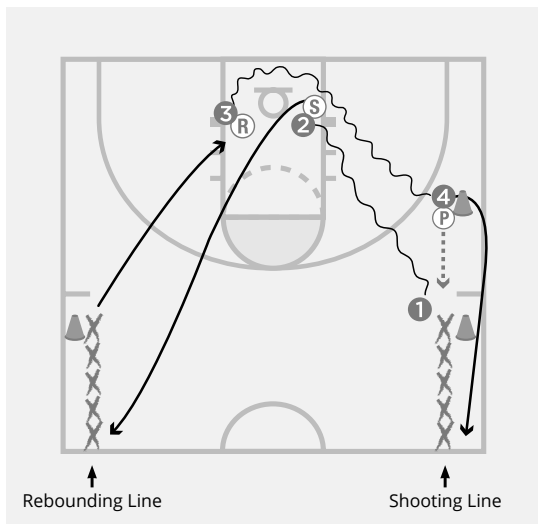
1. Player stands about four to five feet away from the wall
2. Help the player find a reasonable shooting target on the wall
3. Player assumes triple threat position
4. Player shoots the ball at the target, concentrating on elbow in and full extension
5. Player should finish the shot up on his or her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

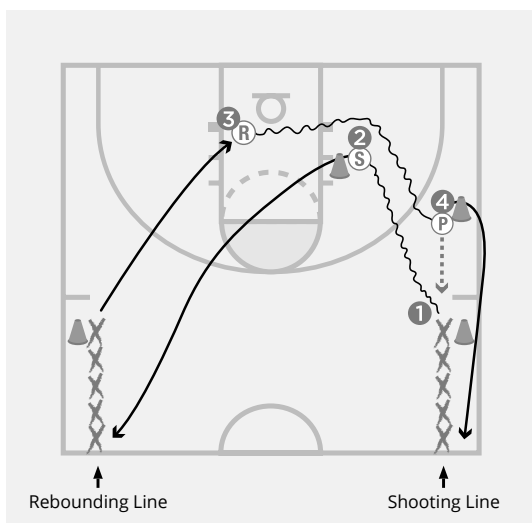
1. Players form two lines opposite the goal in each corner of practice area: a shooting line and a rebounding line (use cones or chairs to mark a starting point)



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:

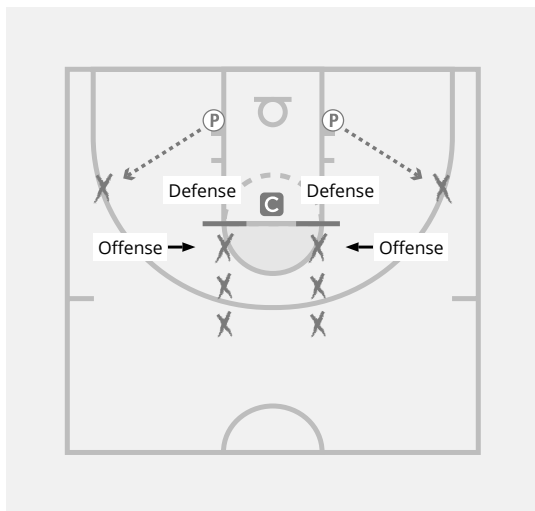
- » *Lay-ups* – Stress jumping off the proper foot and using the backboard (STEP-HOP-SHOOT)
- » *Pull-up Off the Dribble* – Set a cone at desired shooting spot (stress good jump stop and use of backboard when shooting from appropriate angle)



Rebounding Drills

Rebound Outlet Drill – no defender (one basketball required)

1. 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)
2. Coach stands at the other elbow with a basketball. Coach throws the ball off the backboard
3. 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
4. Player from the wing line passes ball back to the coach
5. 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)

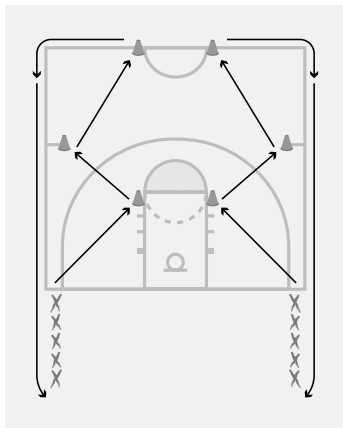
Focus on players' feet sliding (rather than hopping or skipping) and players maintaining a proper defensive stance. Have fun with this drill! Allow players to express enthusiasm and desire by slapping the playing floor and yelling "DEFENSE" on command. Drill should last 20-30 seconds. Allow short rest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

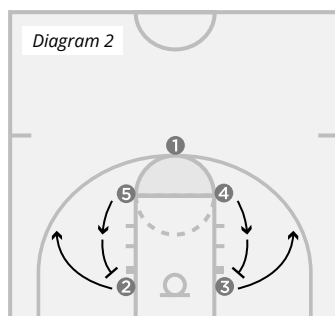
Reminder: View the Skills and Drills videos on the coach section of MyUpward.org for live demonstrations of the following offensive plays.

Half-Court Sets

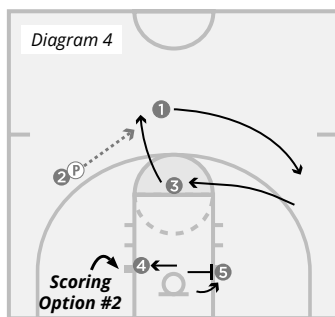
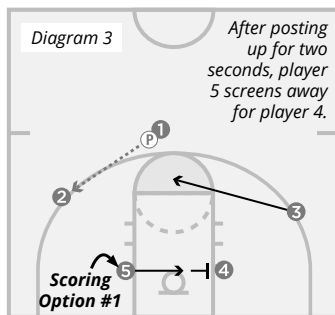
Box Set – Motion

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

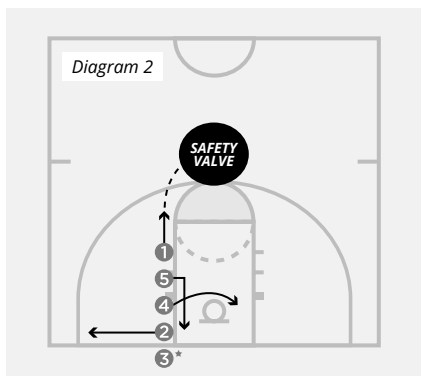
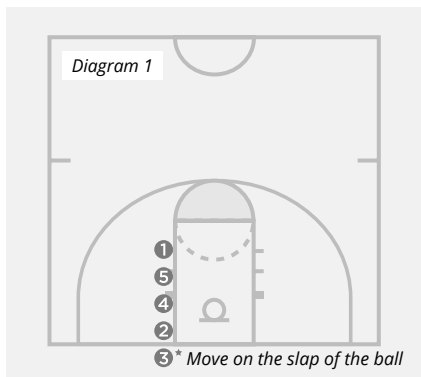
Procedure:

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 inbound 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

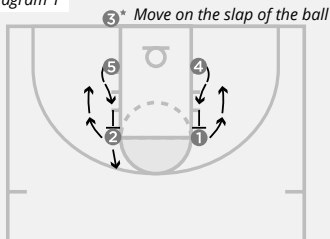


Diagram 2

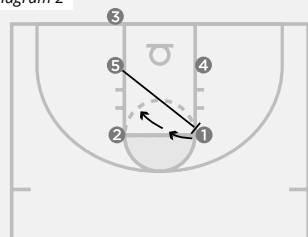


Diagram 3

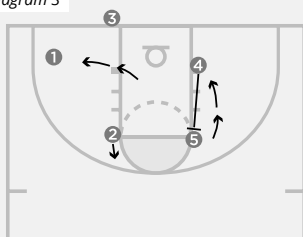


Diagram 4



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)

Diagram 1

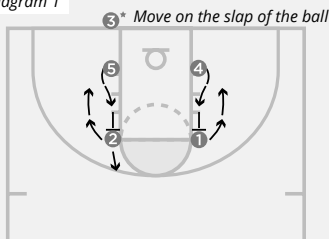
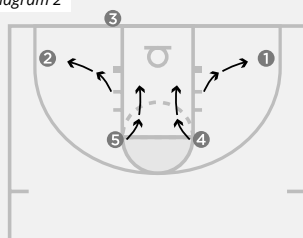


Diagram 2



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

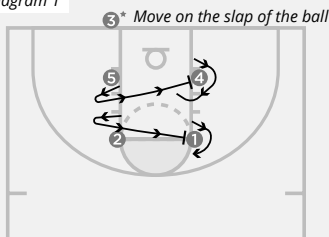
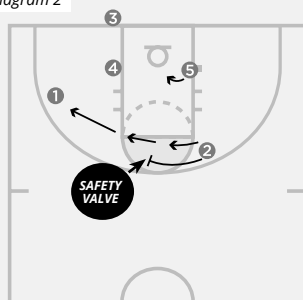


Diagram 2



Notes:

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Practice Devotions: *Biblical Virtues*

Chapter Overview:

62	Practice Devotion Chart
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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	Welcome	None (Scripture learning begins at Practice 2)
Week 2-4	CONTENTMENT	<i>I have learned to be content no matter what happens to me.</i> Philippians 4:11b (NirV)
Week 5-7	RESPECT	<i>Show proper respect to everyone.</i> 1 Peter 2:17a (NirV)
Week 8-10	SERVICE	<i>God's gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others.</i> 1 Peter 4:10 (NirV)
Week 11	HOPE	<i>Lord, what can I look forward to now? You are the only hope I have.</i> Psalm 39:7 (NirV)

Practice 1

Hey guys! I hope you are as excited as I am about this season! We're gonna have a lot of fun at practice and during games getting to know each other better and learning new things each week. One thing I want to know about each of you is this: what is the best trip you've ever been on? It could be a summer vacation, a Christmas trip, or a surprise weekend away somewhere. What's the best trip you've ever taken? *(Go around and get a response from each person. Be sure to share your favorite trip.)*

Those were some really fun trips! Now, who wants to go on a trip you want to go on someday that you haven't taken yet? *(Wait for responses)*. That's awesome!

That was a fun way to get to know each other a little more. I want →you to know how excited I am to be coaching you all this season and getting to know more about you. We're going to spend a few minutes during practice each week to have a time of devotion. During this time throughout the season, we're going to talk about four important virtues. We'll start with wisdom. After that, we'll talk about humility. Then we'll spend time discussing discipline. And at the end of the season, we'll talk about hope for the future.

I'm really looking forward to this time together each week, and I hope you are too! We'll have a few minutes each week of a devotion, then spend a few minutes talking about it together. I'm excited to hear your thoughts each week!

For now, though, I want to say a prayer and ask God to be with us this season.

Prayer: God, thank you so much for this group of individuals. We are so excited to learn and grow together as a team this season. Thank you for the gifts each of these young athletes have. Thank you for the gift you've given me in getting to coach them. Be with us this season. Help us to have fun and treat each other with respect. Thank you, God! Amen.

Practice 2

Practice Card Reminder: At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 2.”

Introduce:

- » **Virtue:** **CONTENTMENT** is deciding to be happy with what you’ve got.
- » **Scripture Verse:** “I have learned to be content no matter what happens to me.” Philippians 4:11b (NIRV)

Bottom Line: Focus on what you have instead of what you don’t have.

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What qualities make for a good friend? *(Pause as kids respond)*

For the next few practices, we’re going to talk about contentment. Contentment is deciding to be happy with what you’ve got. And sometimes, contentment has a lot to do with our stuff—things we have or don’t have.

So let’s talk about our stuff for a minute. Off the top of your head, think about how many toys you think you have in your room? How many books? How many shirts are hanging in your closet? Think about all of the stuff that’s yours—from clothes to shoes to toys to whatever. My guess is that if you tried, you couldn’t name every single item in your room.

Now, let me ask you this. What is something you would like to have that you don’t have? Is it easier to name the things you want or the stuff you already have?

It is a lot easier to list the stuff you don’t have, isn’t it? That’s because we tend to focus on what we DON’T have rather than what we do have. We dream about the things we don’t have! But you know what? That’s the opposite of contentment. A person who is content chooses to focus on and be grateful for what they have rather than always thinking about what they don’t have.

Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » What's your favorite toy? What's your favorite article of clothing?
- » Are you grateful for the things you have? How do you show that?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » What does it look like to be content?
- » What keeps us from being content? Why do you think it's difficult for so many your age to be content with the things they have?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » What are some things you wish you had that you don't? Is your discontentment causing you to be ungrateful?
- » When we are consumed with envy and jealousy over what others have, how do you think God reacts to that? How can we keep things from becoming idols of worship in our lives?

Prayer: God, thank you for blessing us with the things we need. You've even given us some things we don't need. Please forgive us for times we are ungrateful. So many times our hearts look to things we don't have to make us happy. God, please help us to be content. You've given us so much. Help us be grateful. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

Practice 3

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice

Review:

- » **Virtue:** **CONTENTMENT** – is deciding to be happy with what you’ve got.
- » **Scripture Verse:** “I have learned to be content no matter what happens to me.” Philippians 4:11b (NirV)

Bottom Line: Don’t build your life around stuff that will never last.

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We have been talking about contentment. Who remembers what contentment is? That’s right, it’s deciding to be happy with what you’ve got. Jesus told a story to help his followers understand that the stuff they have will not last. This story comes from Luke 12:13-21. There was a rich man whose land produced a good crop. But he had a problem: he didn’t have a place to store all his grain. So he decided to tear down the barns he had and build bigger barns. Then he’d be able to have a lazy life, living off his stored crop. But God said he was foolish, because he was focused on the stuff that would never last, instead of thinking about being rich toward God.

Everybody knows what a dollar bill looks like, right? Of course! But have you ever taken the time to really look at a dollar bill? You’ve probably never taken the time to really look at a dollar bill. But I’ll bet you’ve spent plenty of time thinking about what you could BUY with a dollar bill—or quite a few dollar bills to be exact.

There’s something else that you may have never seen. On the back of every dollar bill, it says, “In God we trust.” Do you know why it’s so cool that our money says this? Because it can act like a warning label or a reminder. It’s so easy for our stuff—the stuff we can buy with a dollar bill to get in the way of our relationship with God. Think about it. The Bible says that *your heart will be where your riches are*. In other words, your heart—your love, devotion, and trust—are going to be in whatever you treasure most, the thing that’s most important to

you. So if our stuff—stuff that breaks, that we outgrow or that we get tired of—is what's most important, that's where our love and trust will be.

But God doesn't want us to trust in money. He wants us to trust in him! He wants to be your richest treasure because he doesn't break, get shrunk in the wash, or become outdated! So the next time you pull out a dollar of your allowance or birthday money, remember what it says on the back—in God we trust. It's okay to buy something you want but don't build your life around the stuff that won't last like the rich man in Luke 12. *Build your life* around what's really important—your relationship with God and with others.

Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » What comes to mind when you think of the word treasure?
- » What do you treasure most? What can you do to start treasuring God above anything else?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » What things do you treasure? Do you consider yourself as someone who treasures God? Why or why not?
- » Why do you think so many people seem to trust in money more than they do God?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » Do the things you treasure keep you from trusting God? How do you know?
- » The things we treasure say a lot about the condition of our hearts. What do your treasures say about your heart?

Prayer: God, your love, your grace, and your mercy are just a few of the things we treasure. It's tempting in this world to trust in so many things other than you. We trust in money. We trust in our possessions. God, forgive us for times we've put our trust in anything other than you. We want to honor you with the things you've given us. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

Practice 4

Coach: *Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice*

Review:

- » **Virtue: CONTENTMENT** – is deciding to be happy with what you’ve got.
- » **Scripture Verse:** “I have learned to be content no matter what happens to me.” Philippians 4:11b (NirV)

Bottom Line: Wanting what other people have can get you in trouble.

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Does anyone remember what we talked about at our last practice? That’s right. We talked about contentment—deciding to be happy with what you’ve got.

When it comes to our stuff, it seems like we always want more. And sometimes we let our stuff get in the way of our relationships. Don’t believe me? Have you ever wanted something someone else had SO badly that you thought about taking it without asking? Or have you ever spent the night with a friend who had all this great stuff you didn’t even know existed—like brand new toys, clothes, or the latest video games—and you started to feel jealous or angry toward your friend? Why is that? We know people are more important than stuff. So why do we hurt our friendships just because we think we need the same cool stuff as our friends?

There’s nothing wrong with having stuff. In fact, God has given us everything we have so we can enjoy it and use it for his purpose. The problem comes when our desire for stuff gets in the way of our relationships. Wanting what other people have can get you in trouble. It can shift your focus away from what’s important—the friend you like to spend time with—to something that’s really NOT important.

Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » Do you value friendships more than possessions?
- » Have you ever been jealous of someone else? How can you ask God to help you?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » Has jealousy ever hurt a friendship you had? How can you overcome jealousy?
- » How does our lack of contentment get in the way of our relationship with God?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » Right now, are you content with what you have? Or are you jealous of someone else and what they have?
- » How has jealousy affected you? How does our lack of contentment affect our relationship with God?

Prayer: God, thank you for the relationships in our lives. Thank you for family and friends. There are times we become jealous of what someone else has. God, please help us remember how much more important you are and our friends are than the possessions we desire. We want to serve you and love others. Please help us rid ourselves of jealousy and find true contentment in you. Amen.

Practice 5

Practice Card Reminder: If included in your coach box, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 5.”

INTRODUCE:

- » **Virtue: RESPECT** is showing others they are important by what you say and do.
- » **Scripture Verse:** “Show proper respect to everyone.” 1 Peter 2:17a (NIRV)

Bottom Line: Be kind to people who aren’t kind to you.

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Do you know what VIP stands for? Very important person. VIPs get to do lots of cool things that other people don’t. They get special seating at games, “swag bags” or other cool giveaways. They get special parking and at concerts, they might even get to go backstage to meet the band!

So how do you get to be a VIP? Who decides who’s “very important”?

Well, at sports games or concerts, you usually have to pay a lot of money for VIP perks. But God’s idea of VIP is very different. You don’t have to pay lots of cash for him to treat you like you’re important. God already thinks you’re a VIP! Everyone is very important to him. And at the same time, no one is more important than anyone else.

It’s pretty cool that God thinks of us as VIPs when really he is the Ultimate VIP. He’s the most important. And he treats us like VIPs. So we should do the same thing for the people around us. Remember, you respect God when you respect the people God made. That’s what it says in the Bible, in 1 Peter 2:17—*Show proper respect to everyone.* (NIRV) We need to show others they are important by what we say and do.

Some examples would be letting your brother or sister pick the pizza toppings. You could help your mom or dad bring in the groceries without being asked.

You could tell someone they made a great catch and make a big deal about them in front of other people.

In fact, I think it would be fun if we called each other VIP for the rest of the day. When you see your teammate, say, "What's up, VIP?" "Good effort, VIP!" "Way to go, VIP!" Let's show some respect and make sure everyone on this team knows how important they are!

Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » When has someone treated you like a VIP? How did it feel?
- » Why does God treat us like VIPs?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » How have you treated someone else like a VIP?
- » Knowing God treats you like a VIP, how should you treat others?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » How can you show respect to everyone? How about teachers? Your parents? Classmates you don't like?
- » God treats us like VIPs. He loves us and cares for us. How does that prompt you to react towards him?

Prayer: God, thank you for treating us like the most important people in the world. You love us because you created us. Help us to show that love and kindness to others. Help us to show respect to everyone, regardless if we like them or not. We know you can help us, God. Amen.

Practice 6

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

REVIEW:

- » **Virtue: RESPECT** is showing others they are important by what you say and do.
- » **Scripture Verse:** "Show proper respect to everyone." 1 Peter 2:17a (NirV)

Bottom Line: I should trust and obey even when I think my way is better.

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If we want to be successful as a team, we have to respect each other.

What does that look like on the court? It looks like always trying our hardest and showing our teammates that they can count on us by giving our very best.

Who else do you need to respect? Us, your coaches. We're here for you, to help you succeed. You need to respect the referee, too. On this team, we don't whine or complain if a call doesn't go our way. We show respect by moving on from that play and giving our very best effort on the next one.

We also need to respect our opponents. They deserve for us to play fairly and treat them with honor. After all, isn't that the way we'd want to be treated?

One time Jesus talked to a guy who really understood what respect was all about. This man was an army commander; he came to tell Jesus about his servant who was very sick and couldn't move. Jesus asked the commander: "Shall I come and heal him?" (Matthew 8:7, NirV)

What the commander said next really impressed Jesus. He said: "Lord, I am not good enough to have you come into my house. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. I myself am a man under authority. And I have soldiers who obey my orders." (Matthew 8:8-9, NirV)

In other words, the commander knew what it was like to have a boss and to be the boss over others. But most of all, he recognized that Jesus was the ultimate authority. Jesus was amazed at the commander's response. He said, "In Israel I have not found anyone whose faith is so strong." (Matthew 8:10, NIV) Jesus saw that the commander truly believed that Jesus had the power to heal his servant and He did.

It's important for us to respect the people God has put around us and in charge of us. When we do that, we really show that we respect Him. Remember: show respect to God because He's in charge of everything.

Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » Are you good at showing respect to others? Why or why not?
- » How did the army commander show respect to Jesus?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » When is a time you failed to show respect to a coach, teammate, or opponent?
- » How does it look to show respect to people in authority? What about our opponents?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » When is it most difficult for you to show respect to someone else? How can you overcome that to respect them?
- » What does the story about Jesus and the army commander teach us about respect?

Prayer: God, thanks for this reminder of why respect is so important to You. We want to always respect You and remember that You're in charge of everything. Help us to show respect with the choices we make and the way we treat people. Help us to have faith in You like the commander did and show that we believe in You with the way we live each day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Practice 7

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

REVIEW:

- » **Virtue: RESPECT** is showing others they are important by what you say and do.
- » **Scripture Verse:** "Show proper respect to everyone." 1 Peter 2:17a (NIRV)

Bottom Line: You respect God when you respect the people he's put in charge.

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WDo you like being the one to make decisions?

You might feel like you don't get to make a lot of decisions and that other people are usually making decisions for you—like your parents, your teachers, and your coaches.

Just for fun, let's think about this for a second. If it were up to you, how late would you sleep in? What would you do with your day? What would you eat? How would you spend your money? How late would you stay up at night?

It's fun to think about those things. But the truth is, if we just did whatever we wanted, we'd eventually regret it. We actually need people in charge of us, because they know what's best for us. It's their job to guide us, teach us, and keep us safe every day.

Respect is showing others they are important by what you say and do. You can respect God by respecting the people He's put in charge of you. You can really listen to what they have to say and appreciate all the things they do to help you.

So if your mom asks you to clean your room, don't moan and groan about it. Put down the game controller and get it done. Show her some respect. Show her that you think she's important.

If your friends are talking and laughing during class, be strong enough not to join in. Lead by example. Show them that you think your teacher deserves your full attention.

Every day is full of chances for us to show respect to the people who are in authority over us. Don't forget—you respect God when you respect the people He's put in charge.

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Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » Who in authority should you obey?
- » If we were always in charge, how would we want people to treat us?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » Name a time you disobeyed your parents or teacher. Why did you? How did you make it right?
- » How does it look to show respect to our parents or teachers? Who else is in authority over us we should respect?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » When is it most difficult for you to obey authority figures? Why?
- » How does showing respect to people in authority also show respect to God?

Prayer: God, thanks for reminding us today that obedience was your idea. Help us to trust those who lead us by doing what we've been asked even when we don't know how things will work out. We want to trust you more and more each day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Practice 8

Practice Card Reminder: If included in your coach box, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 8.”

INTRODUCE:

- » **Virtue: SERVICE** is lending a hand to help someone else.
- » **Scripture Verse:** “God’s gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others.” 1 Peter 4:10 (NIRV)

Bottom Line: Have a good attitude when you lend a hand.

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For the next few practices, I want to talk to you about service. Service is lending a hand to help someone else. And serving others is important to God. Do you want to know how I know that? Because when Jesus, God’s only Son, came to earth, the Bible says: “He did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others.” Sounds like service is pretty important!

Sometimes we’re really good about serving other people—if it’s really obvious that somebody needs our help. But if we’re honest, sometimes we don’t really want to lend a hand. Sometimes we just don’t feel like it. Sometimes we need a little reminder to stop thinking about ourselves and start thinking about the people around us.

It’s not enough just to serve. You have to serve with a good attitude. What if you were helping your little sister clean up a mess she made, and the whole time you were complaining about how clumsy she was? How would that make her feel? Or what if you were helping a friend with his homework, and you were griping the whole time about how easy the assignment was and how it should be simple for him to figure out?

Serving with the right attitude is a big deal. And it’s a big part of being a team player. Playing sports isn’t just about doing what’s best for yourself. It’s about working together as a team and serving one another. We serve each other in

practice by encouraging one another and running drills together to get better. The only way we can succeed as a team is if we serve each other with a good attitude. So I want to challenge you for the rest of the season to have a good attitude as you serve and help each other.

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Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » Tell us about a time a teammate has served you, either in a game, practice, or another time.
- » Why should we have a good attitude when we serve others?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » Tell us about a time a teammate has served you in a game, practice, or some other time.
- » How can we know serving others is important? Who can you serve this week?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » What makes serving others difficult?
- » Is serving your teammates critical to having success as a team? Why or why not?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us today that serving others is important to You. We want to be ready to serve others when we see a need. But help us to remember that it's not enough just to lend a hand. Help us to have a good attitude as we serve, even when it's hard or when we don't feel like it. Thanks for loving us, God. We love You too! And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Practice 9

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

REVIEW:

- » **Virtue: SERVICE** is lending a hand to help someone else.
- » **Scripture Verse:** “God’s gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others.” 1 Peter 4:10 (NIRV)

Bottom Line: Lend a hand without looking for applause.

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Last practice we talked about how important it is to serve others. Service is lending a hand to help someone else. And guess what? We’re all called to serve and lend a hand. If you follow God, you know that one of the things He asks of us is to serve others and help when we see a need. But here’s something I want us to think about. Jesus said that when we serve, we should do so in secret. In other words, instead of looking for others to applaud our efforts or pat us on the back with a “good job,” we should quietly serve because it’s the right thing to do—even if no one knows you were the one who helped.

Now, I know what you’re thinking. I understand that everyone—me included—wants to be recognized when we serve and help others. But Jesus said it’s better to serve in secret. And this idea of serving in secret also applies to sports. Now I know you all want to make the game-winner and get all the applause at the end of the game. But the truth is, it’s not just about that game-ending play. It’s about a whole game played as a team. Working together is just as important as the individual achievements you make. It takes each one of you—working together and lending a hand—to help win the game.

And what about the times when you’re not even on the court—you’re sitting on the bench? Can you serve your teammates from the sidelines? Absolutely! You can cheer them on. You can give them a pat on the back when they come off the court. And win or lose, you can be grateful to be a part of the team. It’s not

about who gets the most recognition. It's about serving one another. So that's my challenge to you this week as you serve. I want you to serve in secret and lend a hand without looking for applause.

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Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » Who is your favorite athlete? Why do you like them? Do you think they became successful by themselves, without any help?
- » Why should we serve others without seeking applause?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » Who is your favorite athlete? Why do you like them? Do you think they became successful by themselves, without any help?
- » Why should we serve others without seeking applause?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » Who is your favorite athlete? Why do you like them? Do you think they became successful by themselves, without any help?
- » Why should we serve others without seeking applause?

Prayer: God, thanks for allowing us to take this time each week to talk about something even more important than sports. We want to follow what Jesus said and serve others without seeking praise or recognition. And when we do serve in secret, we know that You see our efforts and are so pleased. Help us to remember to serve and put others first this week. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Practice 10

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.

REVIEW:

- » **Virtue: SERVICE** is lending a hand to help someone else.
- » **Scripture Verse:** “God’s gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others.” 1 Peter 4:10 (NIRV)

Bottom Line: Use what you have to lend a hand.

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Have you guys ever heard the word “hangry”? That’s what happens when you’re so hungry that you get angry! Has anyone ever been hangry before? Yeah, me too.

There was one time that Jesus was teaching a bunch of hangry people, and it ended up being one of His most famous miracles in the whole Bible. As He was telling them about God and His ways, Jesus started to notice they were getting restless and hungry. This was a big deal because they didn’t have fast food places or grocery stores back then.

Feeding this big crowd—and it was big, over 5,000 people—was a challenge for sure. But there was a young boy there who had a small dinner of five loaves of bread and two fish. I’m sure he didn’t think it was all that much—certainly not enough to feed such a large crowd. But he willingly gave it to Jesus and guess what happened? The Bible says that Jesus prayed and then the disciples began passing out food. And before they knew it, the entire crowd had eaten their fill of bread and fish—with leftovers!

Now I know what you’re thinking. Of course Jesus could do that. He’s Jesus! But here’s the thing. The boy with one small lunch was willing to give what he had, even if he didn’t think it was enough to make a difference. The same is true for me and you. We can use what we have to lend a hand. And with God’s help, it’s enough.

Maybe you don’t think you have all that much to contribute to our team. Maybe you have a hard time making certain plays. Maybe you’re not the best at passing

the ball. But here's the truth: You each play an important role when it comes to helping and serving one another. This team is about learning the fundamentals of the game. But it's also about learning to work together as a team, to support one another, and to be the best teammates you can be on and off the court.

So my challenge to you as you continue to serve is to remember that what you have— however small it might seem—is enough with God's help. He's asking us to be willing—just like the boy and his lunch—to use what we have to lend a hand and leave the rest up to Him.

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Discussion Questions

(K-2ND GRADE)

- » The boy gave all the food he had to serve Jesus and the people. What can you learn from his actions?
- » What can you give, big or small, to serve others around you?

(3-6TH GRADE)

- » How hard is it for you to sacrifice something to serve others?
- » What can you give or what can you do to serve others around you?

(7TH GRADE AND UP)

- » Serving others often will involve sacrifice. Is it easy or difficult for you to sacrifice for the good of others? Why?
- » Think about your possessions, your skills and abilities, and your time. What can you do to serve someone else? What sacrifice can you make to serve?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word and the truths we learn from it. Thanks for this amazing story of a boy who was willing to serve by giving what he had. It's pretty awesome to think that You could use us and what we have to make a big difference. When we see opportunities to serve this week but we don't think we have that much to offer, remind us of this one boy's dinner. Help us to serve others this week with Your help. We love You and we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Practice 11

Practice Card Reminder: At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Last Practice.”

Introduce:

- » **Virtue: HOPE** – Believing that, no matter what, God is in control and has a plan for our lives.
- » **Scripture Verse:** “Lord, what can I look forward to now? You are the only hope I have.” Psalm 39:7 (NIRV)

Bottom Line: Above all else, we can place our hope and trust in God.

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Has anyone ever used the word “hope” before? Of course! Everyone has. Hope is a word we use for a lot of different things. We say things like “I hope the weather is nice so the game doesn’t get canceled.” Or maybe “I hope mom makes spaghetti for dinner tonight.” Or one a lot of us can relate to: “I hope I do well on the upcoming math test!”

We use hope a lot of the time when we’re uncertain. Think back to the very first practice of the season when we talked about our favorite gifts. We might say “I hope I get the new Xbox for Christmas this year” or “I hope I get those new shoes I’ve wanted for my birthday”. Those statements show that we want something, but we aren’t 100% sure we’ll get it. A lot of times, we use “hope” like we do “wish”. We “wish” for things we want but aren’t really sure we’ll get.

That’s not how it is with God. Our hope, when placed in God, is a certain thing. How do we know that?

We read many promises that God makes in the Bible. We read that he created us and he has a plan for us. There’s hope in that truth alone!

But there’s a problem. Sin gets in the way. If you don’t know what sin is, it’s anything we say or do that displeases God. Have you ever told a lie? Even a little tiny one? Have you ever stolen something? Have you ever gotten angry and hurt someone? Have you ever disrespected your parents or a teacher? See, all of those things are sins. They displease God. And because we sin, our relationship with God is broken.

Now, you and I can't do anything to fix that relationship. We can't pay off our sins. But there's hope! God sent his son Jesus to earth to pay for our sins for us! Yes, all of your sins! And mine! Jesus paid for all the sins of humankind when he died on a cross. It was a sad death, but there was still hope because three days later he rose from the dead!

Because of Jesus, we can have that relationship with God he designed us to have! We can trust in Jesus by admitting we've sinned and that we need God to forgive us. Listen to these words from 1 John 1:9—"If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done." (NIV)

When we place our hope in God, we can be certain that he forgives us of our sins and welcomes us into his family! When we place our trust in him, we have eternal life. That means that even when we die on earth, we will spend forever in heaven with God. That's great news!

There are a lot of things in this world we hope for, but only one thing is for certain: God's great love for us. Does that sound like good news to you? You bet it is! It's the best news ever. Nothing could ever be more important in your entire life than deciding to believe in Jesus.

Here's the thing. No one else can make that decision for you. Not your parents, not your siblings, your teammates, or your pastor at church. It's a decision that's between you and God.

If putting your faith in Jesus sounds like something you want to do, come talk to me after we're done today. I would love to tell your parent, or whichever adult brought you today, so you can talk about it at home together.

Remember: God sent Jesus to be our Savior. We ALL win because of Him.

Prayer: God, thank You SO much for sending Jesus to be our Savior. We are forever grateful because Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sins so that we can have a relationship with You that will last forever. Please give each of us the courage to ask questions and really understand what Jesus did for us so that we can believe and put our hope in Him. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Notes:

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Games

Chapter Overview:

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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.
- » 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.
- » 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.

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.
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>

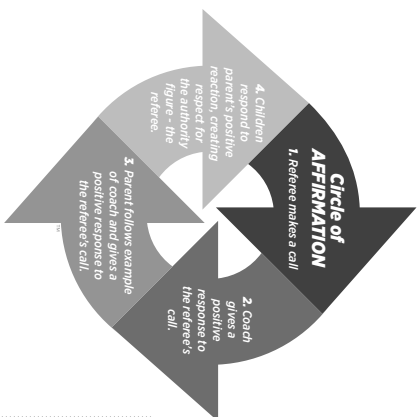
Forms

Chapter Overview:

96	Substitution Forms
108	Star Distribution Form

Game 1 - Sub. Form

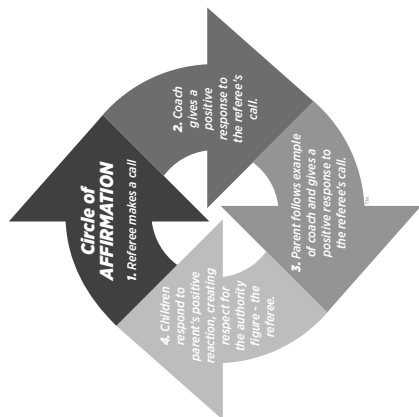
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



Notes for next practice:

Game 2 - Sub. Form

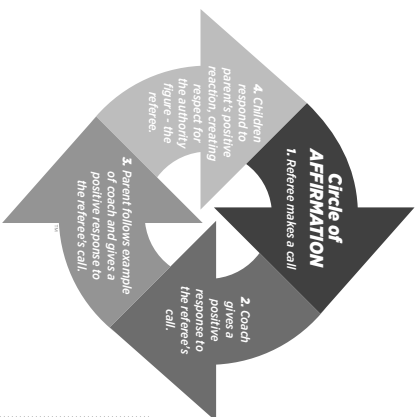
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars	
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								



Notes for next practice:

Game 3 - Sub. Form

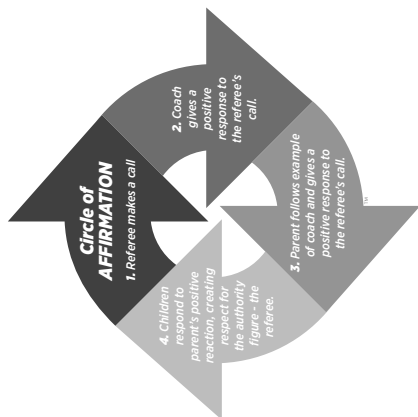
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



Notes for next practice:

Game 4 - Sub. Form

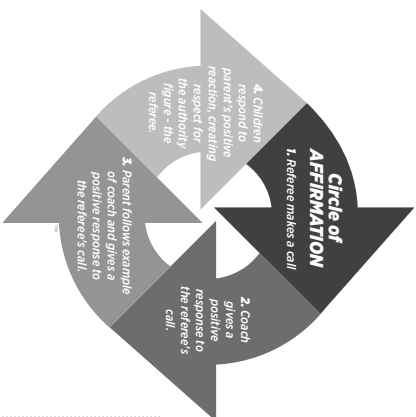
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars	
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								



Notes for next practice:

Game 5 - Sub. Form

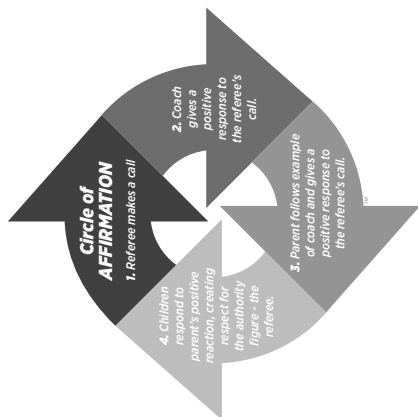
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



Notes for next practice:

Game 6 - Sub. Form

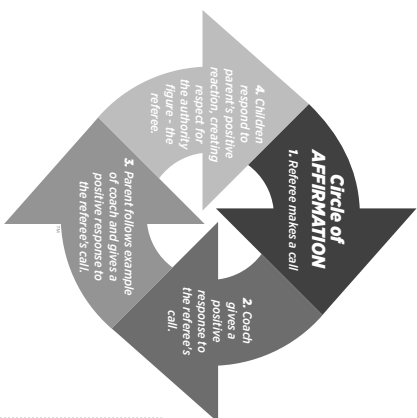
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars	
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								



Notes for next practice:

Game 7 - Sub. Form

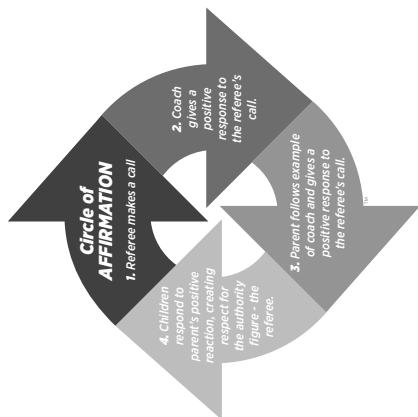
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



Notes for next practice:

Game 8 - Sub. Form

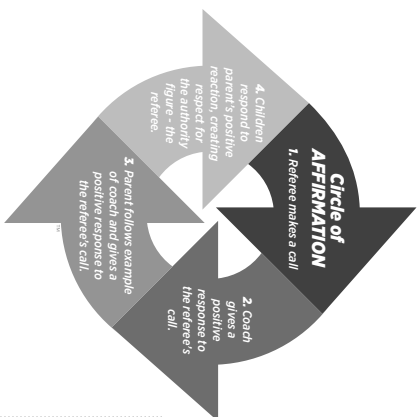
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars	
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								



Notes for next practice:

Game 9 - Sub. Form

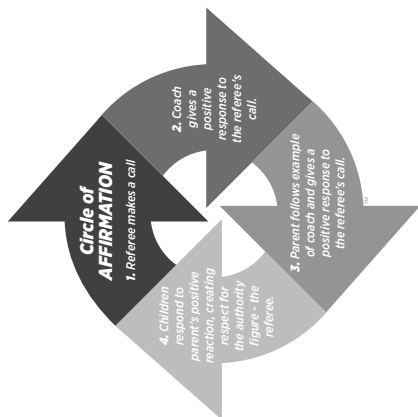
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



Notes for next practice:

Game 10 - Sub. Form

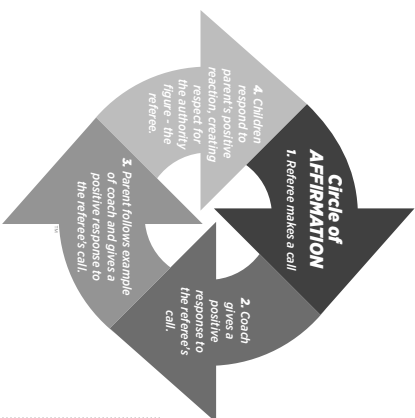
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars	
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								



Notes for next practice:

Game 11 - Sub. Form

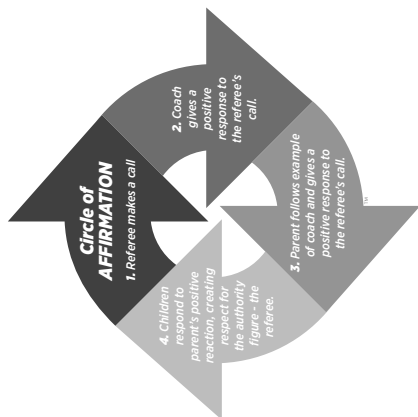
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



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
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	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.

TRAINING THE WHOLE ATHLETE



MENTALLY



ATHLETICALLY



SPIRITUALLY



SOCIALLY

UPWARD[™]
SPORTS