

THOUGHTS AND SKILLS

7TH & 8TH GRADE - TRAINING STAGE



THOUGHTS FOR GRADES 7 & 8

-Constraints: They are mostly gone but the constraints still present mostly relate to puberty. There is a wide range of physical development to manage. Don't get fixated on athletes solely due to maturity at this age.

-Purpose: Prepare players for the high school system. Emphasize life skills through basketball and promote proper conduct/behaviors.

-Movement Patterns: Help build proper fundamental movement patterns (balancing, running, jumping, pivoting, etc.) through dynamic warmups and games with added stimuli to make games more challenging. Continue incorporating tools like the reaction ball and agility ladder into training.

-Playing Time: Coaches divide playing time based on merit, but attempt to find development opportunities for all. All players do not need to play in each contest.

-Skill Development: Teach "positionless" basketball, meaning all players learn all skills. There should be no breakdown drills separating guards and posts.

-Practice Considerations: We now have daily practice time with more mature players so we must get more in depth with teaching and system concepts.

-Small Sided Games (SSG): We still want to use SSG and 3v3 often, especially to breakdown our system of play. SSG allows more players to handle the ball and make decisions. Keep score. Have winners and losers.

-Athletic Development: Players should begin to develop their bodies through body weight exercises - chin up, lunge, pushup, medicine ball squats, core training.

-Offseason Programming: Players have more opportunities to train and play in the offseason with year round open gyms, seasonal skill camps, playing AAU, as well as the Kosta Koufos Little Eagles Youth Camp.

-Basketball System Integration: Players and teams should be learning concepts connected to the high school program. Certain offensive concepts, defensive concepts, fundamentals and cultural emphasis should begin to be taught.

SKILLS FOR GRADES 7 & 8

Carry Over From Previous Development Stage

Rules and Terminology: Don't assume players know the rules. Use common language to describe positions, places, equipment.

Ball Handling: Introduce all basic dribble moves including change of direction, change of pace and same side. Place a heavy emphasis on changing pace.

Passing/Catching: Introduce "Passing Windows" concept. Place a high emphasis on passing under pressure.

Pivoting: Continue to place a heavy emphasis on the power jump stop. Progress the jab series to teach rocker step and step across moves. Teach pivoting under pressure, and avoiding "Turtling" - turning your back to the defense to avoid pressure.

Shooting: Continue teaching "Ready, Up, In" and BEEF shooting techniques. Teach footwork for shooting off the catch and off the dribble. Introduce 1-2 and hop shooting techniques. Introduce "Dip" technique.

Layups: Practice contested layups often. Introduce "goofy" layup footwork. Introduce floater, runner and spin finishes.

Rebounding: Place a heavy emphasis on boxing out and perform a rebounding specific drill each practice. Emphasize pursuing the ball.

Cutting: Teach change of pace and direction on cuts. Teach v-cut and pin & seal techniques. Teach pivoting to square using front and reverse pivots.

Team Offense: Implement staple sets (Tennessee, Bear, Backdoor) with interchangeable parts to fit personnel. Have an organized 4 out transition. Install "Corners" and "Gaps" zone offense.

1 on 1: Continue 1 on 1 off a stationary pivot and a live dribble. Play a lot of full court 1 on 1 with various constraints. Play a lot of 1 on 1 against a closeout for shot/drive decision making.

Post Play: Teach basic post moves (Drop step and baby hook) and strategies for gaining interior position.

Team Defense: Implement a full team defensive system. Master seeing ball, moving when the ball moves and communication. Use the shell drill on a regular basis. Install a press - man, 2-2-1 or diamond. Train players on transition defense. Have a systematic approach to ball screen defense. Play limited zone defense (80/20).

Individual Defense: Emphasize not getting split and contesting all shots.



DRILLS/GAMES FOR GRADES 7 & 8

Dynamic Warmup

5 minutes each practice to develop movement patterns and balance.

Shell Defense Progression

Teaches fundamental team and individual defensive principles.

Zig Zag Progression

Teaches basics of individual defense, including stance and slides.

Coach K Drill

Fine tunes the basic fundamentals of basketball - cutting, fakes, pass accuracy, catching on two feet, pivoting, etc.

5 Pass Deny

Teaches pivoting, passing and catching under pressure.

Bull in the Ring Passing

Teaches pivoting and passing under pressure.

Stationary Ball Handling (2 Ball)

Familiarize players with the ball in a more challenging context than ball handling with one ball.

Full Court Dribbling (2 Ball)

Speed dribble ball handling in a more challenging way than with one ball.

Self Toss and Pivot

Teaches catching on two feet, pivoting to square and the jab series.

Form Shooting

Familiarizes players with the mechanics of their shot.

5 Man 4 Ball Shooting

Volume shooting, teaching shooting prep and communication, and allows players to work on their shooting technique.

1v1 Finishing Drills

Teaches the jab series and contested finishing.

3v3 & 4v4 Wildcat

SSG to build decision making, guard skill and an attack mentality.

3v3 and 4v4 Louisville

Teaches communication, transition offense and defense, as well as advantage and disadvantage situations.

2v1, 1v2

Teaches ball handling and advantage offense.

Ultimate Basketball

Teaches pivoting, passing and catching under pressure.

The Ladder

A preseason conditioning test.