

## **the Coaches' Office**



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### **Tip-Off**

#### **Monthly Features:**

- **Locker Room** - Philosophy & Team Culture
- **Pre-Game** - Preparation & Scouting
- **Half Time** - Motivation & Quotes
- **Between the Lines** - Execution, Strategy & Technique

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- ...and another thing!

#### **EVALUATE YOUR TEAM**

Should your team look to fast break or run a slower, patterned offense? Pressure man to man defense or a safer zone defense? Full court or half court? When evaluating your season it is important to determine how you performed against the teams that you need to beat. If your goal is to win your league, conference, division, section, or state, then figure out how you did ( and what you need to do) against the teams that contend at that level. Most everything that you do will work against the teams that you are SUPPOSED to beat. The hard part is coming up with a game plan to defeat the teams that you NEED to beat.

Statistics can help you evaluate your teams ballhandling execution, shooting results (including from the 3 point line and the free throw line), and rebounding performance. Examining your opponents results will tell you about your defense.

The type of turnovers will speak to your offensive performance. Dribbling violations cue you to spend more time on that, or try different players as your primary ballhandlers. It is important to put players in positions where they can succeed. Maybe the passing turnovers are a result of forcing too quick a tempo, or not being able to get open in the half court. Slow down or work on various methods to get open.

Are your opponents getting too many second chance points on offensive rebounds. Block out drills are prescribed. Fast break points? Transition defensive drills are in order. You may be taking too many outside shots. Charles Barkley calls bad outside shots "fast break starters". Maybe you don't have good defensive balance built into your offense. Develop a transition defense plan.

Are you quick and athletic enough to play pressure defense? We'd all like to play that way, but can you do that against the better teams? Maybe quickness and agility training in the offseason and an emphasis on defense at practice is all it will take. Or maybe a zone defense designed to prevent penetration is in order.

Shooting statistics? Are you getting to the free throw line? Many coaches feel that getting fouled is the best thing that can happen on a possession. Jump shooting teams don't get fouled often. Should you dribble-drive or go inside more. Is the teams field goal percentage poor? Do you need more practice, better shot selection, or an offense that will get you better (or at least different) shots? Maybe all of the above!

Finally, do you need to adjust the type of schedule that you play? Is it too tough to compete in, or do you need to "schedule up" and prepare for your tougher opponents. Maybe the teams you play early are primarily zone teams, and you need to prepare for the man-to-man pressure from your league rival. Or vice versa. Your pre-league and tournament games can usually be controlled.

Schedule smart.

#### **In The Bleachers** by Steve Moore



"Mom! Can my role model stay for dinner? He's suspended for three games and has nowhere to go."

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# The Locker Room



"Praise, Praise, Praise," "You can catch more bees with honey, than you can with vinegar." Players respond to positive feedback. Even if the coach feels the need to say something negative, he should follow it up with a positive statement. Some coaches try to use negative comments to motivate their players. I think that players are more likely to try to live up to your high expectations when you tell them how good they can be, rather than trying to prove you wrong if you tell them that they are not playing well.

A good method of communicating to players when they exhibit negative behavior is to praise/scold/re-instruct. Tell a player how good they can be, then admonish them for a poor play, but then follow that with instruction on how they should perform or how to do it better. Players don't play well when they are "looking over their shoulder," waiting to be taken out of the game or yelled at for a mistake.

Exhibit confidence in a player and they will try to please you. Show patience for their mistakes (but re-instruct!) and they will try to correct them. Continue to teach, and you will improve right up until your final game. Remember, the player you may be ready to give up on today, may also be the player you need to help you win a big game at the end of the year.

Quite possibly the most important thing is for you as a coach to have fun. If you're having a great time, the players will tend to follow the coaches lead and feed off that. They'll have a good time too!

Set the tone when they arrive at practice and send them off on a positive note – with a bunch of hard work in between.

Enjoy!

## Pre-Game

It's important to teach sports in the proper progression. Have reasonable expectations of your level of play and teach to their ability through setting achievable goals for the players. Stretch each player to improve and try not to leave anyone behind by challenging them with drills and activities that measure their improvement over a previous standard or a competition against others. Encourage kids to ask questions by providing sincere answers to all of them. As hard as it is sometimes - it develops a growth mindset they'll appreciate forever.

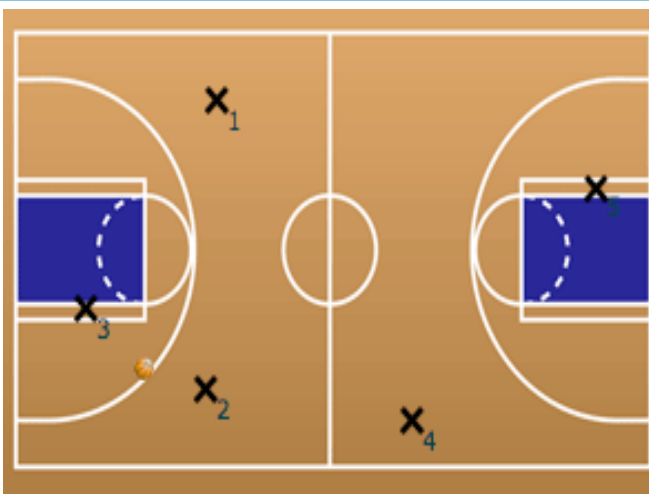
Your entire team (coaches, players and parents) should strive to achieve the Magic Ratio of FIVE positive experiences for every correction/criticism or negative experience. Consider everything verbal and non-verbal. A great rule of thumb is to **Relentlessly Reward Desired Effort!** Think about that statement. It means you're always trying, you're attempting to be more positive by recognizing achievements, it means they're learning what you want by doing what's desired and they're giving a good effort. The reward can come through praise (truthful and specific), symbolic rewards (stickers, game balls, etc) and/or playing time.

When organizing practice and dividing playing time, try to provide the maximum number of repetitions and opportunities to be active as possible. Kids get sluggish and discouraged when there is a lot of standing around waiting for their turn. A slow paced practice does not teach kids to hustle. You can't cruise through practice and expect hustle in a game. Players need to learn what it means to give 100%. Create those opportunities in practice and then let them know when they did well. Ask kids if they gave their best and find out if they have more to give (only they really know). Make hustle fun.. then reward it.



**Winning is FUN!!**

## Playbook



Even if you have an organized pressbreak, emphasize press break rules over a press break offense. Get the ball in quickly before the defense can set up. Don't run drills that result in scores where they are not required to inbound the ball. On your 3-on-2, 2-on-1 drills, have them inbound the ball after made baskets. On every shell defensive drill, have the defense inbound the ball after every score. The dividends are huge. Stretch the defense. It doesn't matter whether you start out of a stack, run four across, send guys to the midcourt corners -- just get that floor spread. Discourage the dribble, particularly the speed dribble, against a zone press. Do as much as you can off the pass. Any dribbling should be controlled dribbling, head up, reading the floor. Make sure receivers come to the ball! Attack each reception with the same intensity that the defense does. This cannot be overemphasized. Have them jump to the ball and pivot in the air, so that they are facing the front court when they land. This gives them much more latitude to attack the defense. Use V-cuts to get open and ball fakes to avoid telegraphing the pass. Have your cutters move in straight lines, either toward the ball or toward your basket. Wide arcs and side-to-side cuts favor the defense.

"Professional coaches measure success in rings. College coaches measure success in championships. High School coaches measure success to titles. Youth coaches measure success in smiles." - Paul McAllister, Youth Coach



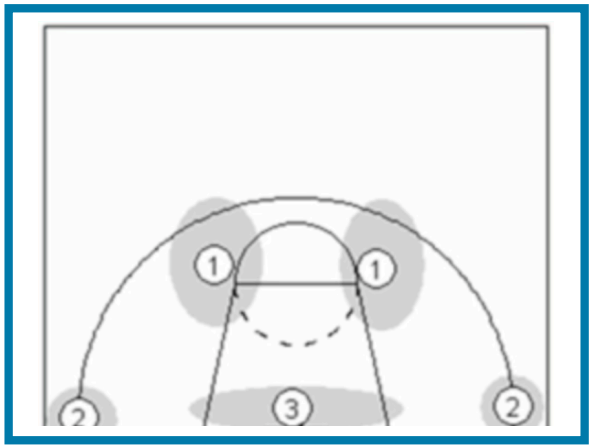
## TEACHING is rewarding!!!

On a fast break a team's primary objective should be to get:

1. an uncontested lay-up,
2. an uncontested "Power" shot inside 10'
3. an uncontested jumpshot (10-20 ft.)
4. an open 3pt. shot after a post touch or penetration,
5. a contested "Power" shot, or
6. Any of the above before the defense is set.

If none of the above opportunities present themselves, now there is time to run your offense to try to achieve the above goals. A team should take **NO contested** outside shots unless at the end of the clock.

- Read these twelve points every day for the next thirty days and see how your life changes**
1. It is your attitude at the beginning of a task that determines your success or failure.
  2. It is your attitude towards life that will determine life's attitude towards you. Despite many people's belief to the contrary, life pays no favorites.
  3. You control your attitude. If you are negative it is because you have decided to be negative and not because of other people or circumstances.
  4. Act as if you have a good attitude. Remember actions trigger feelings, just as feelings trigger actions.
  5. Before a person can achieve the kind of results he wants, he must first become that person. He must then think, walk, talk, act and conduct himself as would the person he wishes to become.
  6. Treat everybody as the most important person in the world.
  7. Attitudes are based on assumptions. In order to change attitudes one must first change one's assumptions.
  8. Develop the attitude that there are more reasons why you should succeed than why you should fail.
  9. When you are faced with a problem, adopt the attitude that you can and will solve it.
  10. We become what we think about. Control your thoughts and you will control your life.
  11. Radiate the attitude of confidence, of well being, of a person who knows where he is going. You will then find good things happening to you right away.
  12. In order to develop a good attitude, take charge first thing in the morning. When you wake up, do you say "Good Lord, it's morning???" ... or "Good morning, Lord!!!"



## **Between the Lines**

A good fast break is an organized offensive attack from the point of possession. The fast break should lead to quick and easy shot opportunities. Keep the pressure on the defense by having an early offense (also called a "secondary break") that the fast break flows into. The early offense should lead into whatever offensive attack that your team is running. Some general guidelines are listed to make your offense a quick hitting, high scoring machine.

To start the fast break, all five defensive players must rebound, then turn away from the defense to pass the ball up the floor. If the passer is not able to throw the outlet, he could clear to the sidelines with a couple of dribbles if necessary, and then pass it.

Teams should adjust their speed on the fast break and focus on number advantages and organization rather than just pure speed sprinting up the court. Too many teams today just fly down the court without any regard to body control, court position, or defensive numbers.

Guards should practice changing speeds in the open court against defensive pressure including the cross-over from a speed dribble. Ballhandlers also must slow down and be able to find teammates at the end of the break or set up the offense if there is not an offensive advantage.

While running the fast break lanes should be an all out sprint, players must learn to slow themselves down enough to gain control at the end of the break. This way, when they catch the ball they are ready to ride it in for a layup, pull up for a jump shot, put the ball on the floor to drive, or stop under control and search for open teammates.

A good way to understand this is by applying the concept of the "runway" on the fast break. A jet doesn't land on a runway at the same speed as in the middle of its flight. Fly down the lanes, get control on the runway, and then "taxi" into position for a great "landing" and a good offensive possession.

## **Video Room**

Everything in basketball goes in cycles, and while the Flex offense never really went away, it is becoming more and more popular at a variety of levels. The Flex offense has been a main staple of many youth and high school programs, while colleges such as Gonzaga and Maryland have been very successful over the years using this offense. In the NBA the Utah Jazz use it as a primary set and several other teams have Flex options – or go to it at various times during a game. Here is a very detailed video series in multiple parts. After viewing the first video, make sure to check related videos for others in the series.

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You want players to practice hard and focused because it is the right thing to do and, due to your well planned practice, is impossible NOT to do. You don't want them to practice hard for fear of running. You can't stop play in the middle of a game and tell them to "Get on the line!" They better be able to gain focus on their own - because it is a habit learned so that they know no other way.

A simple reminder or "attitude adjustment" time (sprint up and back, a lap, etc) is one thing to get their attention and recommit to the task. However, "punitive" running on a regular basis loses its effectiveness and is counter productive over the long haul. They may straighten up for the next drill, but in reality down the line they are actually losing focus. Now when they practice, they may be thinking about "not running" as opposed to the real objective - to play the right way. Similar to the "Pre-Game Speech" that everyone looks for. It's only good for about the time it takes to run down the hall from the locker room to the court - then you better have a pretty good warm up, some focused players, and a solid game plan.

Running at the very end of practice can also cause players to try to "save" themselves by not practicing as hard as they can. This can create a negative effect, and players may develop bad habits. Finally, if the last thing that players do at practice before they hit the locker room and go home is something that they do not enjoy (or even dislike!), that is what they will be talking about until the next practice comes around. A negative atmosphere may be brewing, without even knowing it. A much better method is to end practice on a positive note, and have everyone looking forward to getting back to work at the next practice. If players are required to stay in stance, play with intensity, and run the floor as fast as they can throughout practice then mixing in a few "conditioners" should be all that you need.

## Coaches' Catalogue

Athleon provides private team hubs with dozens of tools built for coaches that players can use. Their animated playbooks have easy drag-and-drop creation and customization. are good for visualization, and you can share them with your team online.

**And it's FREE !!**

• Full game film sharing • Private playbook creator • Easy Stats entry & analysis • Workout tracking & leaderboards • Full Team Text Messaging • Automatic Event Reminders • On Demand E-mail List • Private Communication Forum

"If the competition has laptops and you're still using yellow legal pads, it won't matter how hard you work, they're going to pass you. - Bill Parcells

<http://www.athleon.com>



### About Basketball4ALL

Ray Lokar is the Southern California Area Coordinator and Lead Trainer for the Positive Coaching Alliance. Coach "Lok" has coached basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, football, swimming and track in the San Gabriel Valley for over 25 years at the youth, high school, and college levels and has worked countless camps and clinics during that time for ages 8-18. Ray has been involved in the business development and marketing of the ACE Intelli-Gym(tm) for Applied Cognitive Engineering. The IntelliGym(tm) is a revolutionary training tool that enables basketball players to dramatically improve their game-intelligence skills using computer software.

Coach Lokar was the Head Basketball Coach of the 2002 CIF Champions while at Bishop Amat High School and is a Past-President of the Southern California Interscholastic Basketball Coaches Association He is now the Director of The Basketball4all Foundation that provides a variety of lessons, camps, clinics, competitions, and events for the benefit of the Southern California basketball community. Ray's book "101 Basketball Tips", published by Lifetips as part of their Lifetips Book Series, is available at Amazon.com and his second "101 Basketball Coaching Tips" is scheduled for a Summer '09 release.

## Road Trip

In this space we'll highlight some of my very favorite places to visit...on the web.

<http://playerdevelopment.wordpress.com>

Coach Steve Finamore's blog [Play the Right Way](#) addresses working hard all the time, going the extra mile, being a great teammate, doing well in school, behaving off the court, being accountable, being responsible and being coachable.

## And One

During the off-season coaches gather more and more sets, specials, and plays - then comes the question-"what do I name them?" Develop a consistent method to calling offensive plays and defensive attacks. Use colors, numbers, hand signals, or names - but make them make sense to the player. Random mascots, colleges or animals are difficult to remember and differentiate one play from another. Whether you choose names, colors or numbers to signal in plays you should attempt to make them consistent and meaningful. Choose names that are descriptive or symbolic of the play, such as "split" for a play that "splits the post", "4 Out" for a play that has four players out on the perimeter", or "Red" for a stall offense that slows you down or stops early shots. Come up with a system that HELPS the player remember, not just one that they have to remember.