Coaching Middle School Basketball

Coaching middle school basketball presents some unique challenges because your players have SUCH a wide array of talent and experience...

Some players have very little experience and they need youth level drills and coaching. Other players have already played hundreds of games and might even be good enough to play high school basketball. So we'll be sure to provide you with a mix of tips geared for both youth and more advanced levels.

Before digging into the information below, be sure to pick up our free <u>Drills and Plays</u> <u>eBooks</u> (if you haven't already done so). These eBooks serve as a great resource for middle school coaches and all levels.

Top Resources for Middle School Coaches

For your convenience, we have compiled our <u>top</u> drills, plays, tips, and resources for middle school basketball coaches. This should help you sift through the huge amount of material on this website and quickly find the best stuff that pertains to you.

You can of course refer to the <u>left navigation menu</u> for an index of everything on this site. But to cut to the chase, here are some top resources for you...

DVD Resource - Bob Bigelow's Coaching Middle School Basketball The Right Way

Top 10 All-Around Basketball Drills for Middle School Teams

We call these top "all-around" drills because the drills you choose should depend on your coaching philosophy, the offense you use, skill level, and player strengths.

For example, if you run a motion offense, we suggest that you use lots of drills that mimic motion movements from your offense (cuts and screens) while working on skills at the same time (shooting, passing, etc).

Never the less, we're still constantly asked what drills we recommend. So here are our top "all-around" drills for middle school coaches:

- 1. Jump Stop Drill
- 2. Steve Nash Passing Series
- 3. The Multi-Purpose Offense and Shooting Drill
- 4. Fast Break Drill

- 5. Defensive Challenge
- 6. Full Court Press Breaker Drill
- 7. <u>Defense Drill 1,2,3 Progression</u>
- 8. Chair Changes
- 9. Middle Man Passing
- 10. Reaction Rebounding

For more <u>Basketball Drills</u>, click <u>here</u>

Best All Around Advice for Middle School Basketball Coaches

1) Keep things fun!

Don't forget that your young players are there just want to have fun. Don't make the all too common mistake of getting caught up in the pressure of winning.

To keep things fun, young players like to be active and keep moving. So be sure to plan out practices that keep things fast paced and fun. You should minimize standing in lines and use fun drills. (For more ideas, check out this eBook for <u>fun basketball drills</u> and<u>tips to make practice fun.</u>)

2) Allow your players to be successful!

Sometimes competition is not a motivator for young kids. However ALL kids need to taste success (and hopefully lots of it). Now this doesn't mean winning. It means getting better and succeeding in practice. Allow your players to run drills that they can succeed at and feel good about. Celebrate small accomplishments and successes with your players.

3) Don't neglect the inexperienced kids.

You'd be surprised how good some players can become if they just get a chance. I was one of those late bloomers that didn't get interested in basketball until late in school. Many kids just need an opportunity, confidence, and someone that believes in them.

I know it seems that some kids are hopeless, but at this level you should implement a program that gives everyone an equal opportunity to learn fundamentals and skills.

4) Teach life lessons in your practices.

A good reminder of what's important and we can all do a better job with this...https://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/articles/lifelesson1.html

5) Make sure your players have a solid foundation!

This is a critical time in most player's lives where they really start getting lots of experience and develop habits. This point and time can have a HUGE effect on your player's success when they get into high school and college.

You should teach basic fundamentals and skills that these players can use no matter who is coaching them in the future. You must build a SOLID foundation for these kids to build on. This is better for your players in the long run.

6) Fix shooting form NOW!

If you have players with poor shooting form, take the time to fix them now. I know it's hard to do. But if they don't fix it now, it may never happen. When <u>correcting shooting</u> <u>mechanics</u>, make sure players practice AWAY from the basket. In other words, have them shoot to a spot on the floor, to a spot on the wall, or to themselves. Do NOT send them to the basket. Because if they don't see the ball going through the hoop, they will think the new form does not work and get discouraged.

7) Focus on the fundamentals.

8) Work with your high school coach (even if you don't like him/her!).

It amazed me how few middle schools run a system that complements the high school program. Swallow your pride and do what's best for your players. You should run a program that complements the high school coache's system and prepares your players for maximum success.

Arrange some meetings with the school coach. Learn about their system and teach your players fundamentals that will benefit them when they get into high school. Why in the world should players have to learn a whole new style of play every single year? That doesn't help them. Working with the high school coaches is the right thing to do.

Top 10 Articles for Middle School Basketball Coaches

Here are some of the more important articles we think you should read.

- 1. The Easy Way To Teach Basketball Offense
- 2. **IMPORTANT**: Focusing on the Fundamentals
- 3. 16 Best Set Play/Offense Tips (This is a Must Read)
- 4. Score More Points: Offense Theory Article
- 5. Top 3 Defensive Quickness Secrets
- 6. Top 5 Tips for Better Defense on the Ball
- 7. Simple Trick to Reduce Turnovers
- 8. <u>10 Tips to Motivate Players</u>

- 9. The Foundation for Success: Your Coaching Philosophy
- 10. How to Establish Control and Discipline

For more Basketball Tips & Articles, click here

Top 10 Offenses & Plays For Middle School Coaches

- 1. <u>5 Out Motion Offense Cutters</u> Motion offense that was used by State Champs (and it can be taught in ONE day)! It can be used as a delay offense, primary offense, and can be used at any level.
- 2. <u>Michigan Man Offense</u> This offense is continuous and has a very simple motion.
- 3. <u>Yo Yo Zone Offense</u> This is a very simple zone offense that can be used at any level. It works best against a 2-3 zone.
- 4. Overload Zone Play This overload play is simple, but very effective against zone defenses.
- 5. <u>Double Zone Play</u> This play works great against any zone defense but works especially well against the 2-3 zone.
- 6. <u>Pitt Zone Play</u> If you have a point guard who is a solid decision maker, this play can work at any level. I've seen it used by Pittsburgh against Syracuse's deadly 2-3 zone, and I've used it with 12 year olds as well.
- 7. Quick Hitter Against 1-3-1 Zone This play can get you an easy lay up against a traditional 1-3-1 zone defense.
- 8. <u>Wide Open Spaces Inbounds Play</u> This is an inbounds play against man-to-man defense that creates great shot opportunities and forces the defense to be concerned about the whole court.
- 9. <u>Slice Sideline Inbounds Play</u> This sideline inbound play can get your best shooter a wide open jump shot.
- 10. <u>Line Press Breaker</u> This press breaker works extremely well against teams that pressure the inbounds pass.

For More <u>Basketball Plays</u>, click <u>here:</u>

Fore more on Basketball Offenses, click here:

Recommended Products for Middle School Coaches

Here are a few products that we highly recommend for middle school coaches. These products will help you accelerate your teaching of fundamentals and your team's success.

- 1. <u>Coaching Middle School Basketball the RIGHT WAY (By Bob Bigelow)</u> In this two DVD set Bob Bigelow takes you through a variety of drills, fundamentals, and teaching points specifically targeting coaches that work with players around the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. We highly recommend this DVD. It gives you excellent ideas on how to run offense, teach fundamentals, and drills to run.
- 2. <u>Footwork and Post Player Development</u> One of the most important things to teach players is proper footwork. Yet few coaches know how to teach footwork properly. Tim Duncan, Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, and countless superstar players all have ONE THING in common -- they have superb footwork. Teaching proper footwork will take your players a long way in their development. We highly recommend this book because it demonstrates footwork brilliantly and simplifies the teaching process.
- 3. <u>Developing a High Scoring Motion Offense</u> We highly recommend motion offense for middle school coaches because of its versatility, effectiveness, and because it teaches kids "how to play". One of the best things about a motion offense is that you work on fundamental skills while practicing the offense. This allows you to get more done in less time and also improves player development. This is what we recommend to all youth and middle school coaches.
- 4. <u>Developing High Percentage Shooters</u> In addition to footwork (which is an important aspect of shooting), developing a great shooting stroke is very important for young kids. In this book you will discover concepts you never knew existed. This product is the most comprehensive shooting resource available today -- partly because it was developed by a group of 8 experts, 6 of which are some of the greatest shooting coaches in the world. We guarantee this book will help you develop better shooters and increase your team's shooting percentage.
- 5. <u>Developing a Tough Man to Man Defense</u> When it comes to defense we strongly recommend man to man defense. From a development standpoint, there are numerous advantages to a man defense, which you can read about <u>here</u>. If you'd like the quickest and most effective step by step method to teach defense, check out this <u>book</u>.
- 6. <u>Fun Youth Drills and Games</u> This is a very popular product that youth and middle school coaches really appreciate. We recommend this product because it will make practices more for fun for you and your players. And making practice fun is one of the best ways to motivate and get more done!

Where to Go From Here?

Don't stop with this "Top Resources" section...

For general coaching tips and advice, check out the Coaching Links on the left menu. You'll find a huge selection of coaching information that you can use for reference.

You can also post your questions and start discussions in our forum.