

Basketball Webinar – Building a Point Guard

Question/Answer

Question: I've noticed- at the high school level- kids trying to cross players or avoid contact to get the slick finish... any advice on helping players take contact? We miss a lot more than we should in close- and I feel like we make it too tough on ourselves. We're good free throw shooters, but we NEVER get to the line.

Answer: *Sometimes it's in their DNA to not be tough and want the contact. But as far as a drill strategy. Start with having them take straight line drives to the basket from the wing, have a defender (could be a player/coach) just lean on them to get used to contact on their hip and body. After they get used to it increase the friction on them. Third stage is teaching them to come off the drive and look to initiate the contact. I think we would be lying to ourselves if we think they will all of a sudden want to take contact. Communicate WHY it's important and then explain the drills that you are doing and how we want to gradually get to the point where they are seeking it out. Also sell the fact that the more contact that they force the more times they'll get to the FT line and more points they will score.*

Question: Would you say player development has taken a wrong turn with the current generation (doing too much instead of getting strong in the foundational things) like you are speaking of?

Answer: *Of course!! The people that they are PAYING to work with them in the off season need to sell them on doing these "Advanced" Drills and moves. It isn't sexy to work on the fundamentals and being simple and the trainers that work kids have to keep up with the Joneses in their profession to continue to teach them nonsense. Of course not every trainer is like that, but the majority (more than 50.1%)*

Question: What are some ways to teach them how to absorb contact I believe my girls are just afraid, so I spent most of the season just trying to build confidence

Answer: *Start with having them take straight line drives to the basket from the wing, have a defender (could be a player/coach) just lean on them to get used to contact on their hip and body. After they get used to it increase the friction on them. Third stage is teaching them to come off the drive and look to initiate the contact. I think we would be lying to ourselves if we think they will all of a sudden want to take contact. Communicate WHY it's important and then explain the drills that you are doing and how we want to gradually get to the point where they are seeking it out. Also sell the fact that the more contact that they force the more times they'll get to the FT line and more points they will score.*

Question: In your opinion, how do we get back to the fundamentals of training as coaches/trainers?

Answer: *It's going to be a long time before it gets back because of how kids/parents are wired that everyone wants to do what LeBron, James Harden, Steph Curry do. It's the way it is and with a lot of the trainers teaching them this in the off season its hard to let the toothpaste back in the bottle. We have to just hold the line and continue to see why being simple is good. Keep talking to them, show them film on players doing simple things. Keep hammering it*

Question: what drills do you have for reading the screener?

Answer: *With things like this I don't think drills do them service. I have them play a lot of 3 on 3 live against defense. I want to teach the read first, walk them through it and even watch film with them on the specific read. Then put them in situations like that in live games. I want them to make mistakes and learn from it. Talk them through the mistake and get them right back into it to see if there is a progression with it. Drills are irrelevant in most cases. It's the way we correct and get that correction to them and have them understand where we are coming from .*

Question: we see a ton a ton of 2/3 zone. how can the pick and roll be utilized against a zone? same as man?

Answer:*Screening a defender still gives the ball handler an advantage and that's what screen and roll is about. Make sure there is a hit n the defender with the screen and everyone is spaced. Yes zone is a little tougher, but the backside will still have to rotate to the ball handler and take care of the roller. Yes it is effective*

Question: Who would you recommend watching and gain knowledge from a training/development basis?

Answer: *Dave Hopla, Dave Severns, Irv Rolland, Noah LaRoche, Drew Hanlan*

Question: In regard to coaching youth sports in preparation for high school and beyond. What are your opinions on running a read and react offense in the hopes of "teaching basketball" and also running man to man as well?

Answer:*I don't care what you run as long as the teaching is consistent and you are correcting mistakes and coaching them up. Anything where they have to think and make decisions is a good offense. Just be consistent with them and explain why they are doing things. Read and React is fine.*

Question: Mike - what are your recommendations for skill development sessions (time length) pre/post season, during season?

Answer:*Depends on the availability of facilities. In a perfect world....*

Off Season *1 HR a day of skill development 4 Days a week. Playing 3 days a week live for 2 hours. Pre season the same. During the season because of their bodies and games I would scale it back to 30 mins a day.*

Question: Mike do you use dominate foot pivots when attacking the paint?

Answer:*I use permanant pivot foot on the perimeter unless they are coming off a pin down then it is always inside foot. In the post because they are closer to the basket I don't care which foot they use.*

Question: Are drills link available on Twitter?

Answer:*yeah just follow me @hoopconsultants. I usually put content on there.*

Question: Any good advice for mental toughness

Answer:*That's tough because in my opinion people/players are wired for mental toughness or they aren't it is hard to change at any level. Make sure you are talking and communicating with them on a regular basis. I always think consistency with communication and meetings with players to evaluate them and give feedback always helps a little*

Question: how shot your point guard need to shoot every day?

Answer:*It depends really. If players are getting 300-400 shots up a day they are way ahead of the curve. I don't really have a number in mind because some days you can go harder than others especially during the season. Make sure the quality of what they are working with has value rather than the amount of shots they are taking.*

Question: Hey Mike - any links to specific drills? Thank you for everything!

Answer:*Just follow me on Twitter @hoopconsultants as well as sign up for my newsletter. You can get info on that from my twitter as well*

Question: Hey Mike, do you have a way of measuring skill development?

Answer:*Not really. You can track shots and things, but to be honest you have to evaluate every player differently because their roles and what you need them to develop changes frequently. Communicate the skill that they need to develop and keep watching and giving feedback from practices, workouts, and games and evaluate if they are getting better or not*

Question: Do you have a summer workout program that kids can do during this time that I can give to kids to work on at home?

Answer:*Follow me on Twitter @hoopconsultants I usually put content out there*

Question: If your players are not very skilled what would suggest a great way to start to develop them and what plays will be good for inexperienced players?

Answer:*I would start simple. Make sure they do form shooting every day working on form and release/shooting the ball correctly, stationary ball handling, passing, and driving to the basket and finishing. Start from there and like I said..... Dominate Simple!!!*

Question: Mike, what do you do when you have multiple players that can run PG? How would you designate roles?

Answer:*I would switch it up as far as who handles the ball and who is off the ball. Its not like QB in football where only 1 can be on the floor at once. Look at Harden and Westbrook in Houston. Many teams in the NBA play with two ball handlers just make sure they both get a good amount of reps handling the ball and running the show.*

Question: What do you do with a talented guard, who has a lot of talent, but does not take accountability and does not always lead by example on the floor?

Answer:*The easy thing I can say is you sit them. But obviously with parents and things you cant do that, especially with a talented kid. Talk to them about it and tell them that there will be consequences if their actions are considered disrespectful or detrimental to the team.*

Question: What are your thoughts when teams run a Box and 1 on defense on you PG. What are your thought per offense? I've had a few teams run that against my PG and he gets frustrated etc. Any advice/thoughts

Answer:*Obviously screen and roll will help. Get them off the ball at first and then run things to them. I like passing the ball early and then have them follow their pass for Dribble Hand Offs. Have them off the ball a little to take the pressure off a little bit. Give the defense different looks, they can even give it up early and then cut into the post or even be a screener on the ball to mess the defense up*

Question: My PG is undersized, 5'8" ish. He's very skilled but he over dribbles up top before he gets downhill. He does well at getting to the rim, but sometimes just lobs it up and gets lucky. he does this a lot in transition as well when faced with a chase down or pressure. first question, how do you get kids to stop overdribbling

Answer:*TO stop over dribbling you have to live & breathe that philosophy. Meaning you stress downgrading dribbles in workouts, practice, games and you blow the whistle EVERY time you see it to communicate to everyone that you have to do more with less when it comes to dribbling the ball. Play a lot of cut throat during practice and limit the dribbles they can take or it's a turnover. It cant be something that you emphasize ONLY when the team isn't doing well. Regardless win or lose it has to be emphasized and stay consistent with it.*

Question: In Massachusetts we are not allowed to coach in the off season.... How much time do you think a coach should spend in his or her 2-hour practice on individual skill development vs team development?

Answer:*If you have 2 hours I would say at least 30 minutes should be skill development. It's one of those things you have to continue to grind out. Skill development has to be consistent and you have to correct every day. Drills are irrlevant anyone can go to Youtube and copy drills. It is all about the corrections coach*

Question: Coach we have just one letterman returning from a good 4-year run- this returner was a starter and played with 7 seniors- he is skilled and will surely draw a lot of attention! Thoughts? If we started today- he will have to do a lot- I have some youth with potential- what are your thoughts on moving this kid around- but never too far from the ball? I hope this makes sense!

Answer:*I would definitely move them around. Tell them why you are doing what you are doing so they understand. I don't see a problem with this. Its always tough when you graduate a lot and have to start over so understanding their point of view and frustrating should be understood.*

Question: LEADERSHIP: What suggestions do you have for kids not wanting to take a leadership role because of teammates shooting them down and making it discouraging?

Answer:*Not every player will be wired towards leading. I've been around Hall of Fame Players that weren't leaders they just did their thing and were prepared, but were TERRIBLE when it came to speaking to teammates and wanting to lead. First it starts with talking to them about your expectations on their leadership, and then give them small little things like having them run a segment of your scouting sessions, or implementing a drill. Give them small leadership rolls like this and see where it goes. Leadership is something that you can't force on players especially young ones. Give them a little power and see what they do with it. As usual coach them through the process*

Question: What do you feel is the best way to go about teaching/coaching now that parents are becoming more heavily involved with basketball/sports? Because it's almost to the point that players are being coached by two people and tend to listen to their parents more than the coach

Answer:*It is hard because parents are going to do what they do with coaching their children and most parents are overly emotional about their children. Have a meeting and regular communication with your parents about what your philosophies are as far as playing time and parent interference. Don't make it confrontational, just tell them where you are coming from. It's a hard place because most administrators won't back their coach and will back the parents so it's a hard question to answer. Just communicate with parents regularly and dot your I's and cross your T's*

Question: How would you suggest incorporating game-like passing?

Answer:*Work on passing drills to get good technique and accuracy and then put them in situations where they have to pass the ball and use what they worked on. What you want is for them to make mistakes, coach them though it and see if they can correct themselves from there.*

Question: Could you explain some of your favorite combo drills that involve pressure and shooting? Most point guards don't think giving it up means they get it back. Do you drill scoring in getting the ball back?

Answer:*First coach them through a specific shot or shots. SO have them catch the ball and straight line drive for a lay up as well as a pull up jumpshot. Next have them penetrate the same way and add a defender that steps in front forcing them to jumpstop in the paint and make a pass to someone else and have them shoot. Next part of the progression is that they make the penetration and kick and then respase outside the 3 and then the player they pass to makes a drive and kick to them. TGeaches them how to drive and shoot correctly and then how to read help defenders , and then that they need to repsace after making a pass to someone and the importance of that*

Question: Mike- what is the best offense to run vs a matchup zone? Would you run a man offense or a zone offense?

Answer:*I'm not an X & O guy, but I like anything with screening. Motion offense where everyone is spacing and moving. Pick and rolls are good because it gives the ball handler an advantage. You can run Split action where you enter it to the post and have the passer screen someone on the perimeter and then cut or someone screens for them and then play off of that.*

Question: In addition to watching film, do you have anything off the court that you like to do to build these skills/decisions making

Answer: *I love film because it shows the whole picture. If I see an article or an interview I'll show that to them as well, but Film paints the picture and you can't hide from it*

Question: how would you get your kids to stop over dribbling?

Answer: *TO stop over dribbling you have to live & breathe that philosophy. Meaning you stress downgrading dribbles in workouts, practice, games and you blow the whistle EVERY time you see it to communicate to everyone that you have to do more with less when it comes to dribbling the ball. Play a lot of cut throat during practice and limit the dribbles they can take or it's a turnover. It can't be something that you emphasize ONLY when the team isn't doing well. Regardless win or lose it has to be emphasized and stay consistent with it.*

Question: I think there's a HUGE connection between QBs and PGs - leadership and passing. Thoughts?

Answer: *For sure, they both run teams, they both have to be an extension of what the coach wants, and they have the ball constantly and have to make decisions that impact the game the most.*

Question: What is something kids can do while watching film so they are actively watching and not looking at it as a highlight reel

Answer: *Have them bring notebooks and have regular review sessions where they bring their notes. Rondo was HUGE on note taking on offensive/defensive film sessions. He would run his own film sessions with players only to teach the younger players.*

Question: what if your point guard is not the captain of the team and there is no respect for the point guard because they don't hold the captain's position?

Answer: *I don't care if the PG is captain or not, because at the end of the day they are your PG. That is something that you have to communicate to your players as well. When I see things like this with the teams that I work for and there is little respect for a player I immediately start talking to other players and bring that point up and ask why they feel the way that they do. As coaches we have to put fires out all the time like this and you want to do it behind the scenes first and only if you have to bring it up in front of the group.*

Question: I would love for my high school girls to watch video of some great college or pro female point guards. Who would you recommend?

Answer: *Coach that I don't know. I have no experience in the college/pro female side. The only players that I know and they are awesome are Sabrina Ionescu and Diana Taurasi but those are obvious. I do know the person who works out Diana and she is off the charts when it comes to her routine and work ethic.*

Question: In our summer sessions we have 30-45 min shooting sessions on Monday and Tuesday then we have 1 hour sessions on Wed., Thur., Fri. Thoughts on how you would run your sessions on those days? Play the whole hour? Skill stuff for a portion then play? More shooting? I would appreciate any thoughts. I've been coaching 35 years and am always trying to improve our offseason stuff.

Answer:*I would always incorporate shot preparation 1 hand form shooting for just routine. Ball Handling to build strength in stationary ball handling, get them some shots to warm up and then you can play. Have them play cut throat. 4 on 4 halfcourt with strict rules as far as the number of dribbles a player can take, movement after the pass, thanking teammates for assist passes, squaring up on the catch, etc. I always like switching up development in drills as well as playing. I like breaking down p;aying with a lot of 3-3, 4-4 and then play all out full 5-5*

Question: Thoughts on putting your big, skilled PG in the post?

Answer:*Huge fan. I like them to be bale to shoot hooks, face up and play, as well as pass out of the post. Watch Gary Payton, Sam Cassell, Shaun Livingston highlights they were great in the post*

Question: address your opinion on how to get the pg teammates to understand they are the coach on the floor? it's like teammates think the pg is the coach's pet!

Answer:*Sometimes it takes longer especially with young players and young players that play that position. You have to keep giving them small parts of responsibility and building on it. Give them some clout to lead and call their own plays to see how teammates react. Allow them to make mistakes and have to play through them. Leadership and respect cant be forced or sped up. It is something that you have to monitor daily. Continue to talk to your players individually how important the PG is and how the need to support them not just criticize.*