

Basketball Immersion - Games Approach to Coaching Basketball

Using a games-sense approach to coaching basketball is a consistent theme of Basketball Immersion and can help you make your practices more game like. Player-centred coaching remains a novel approach for many. An autocratic style of instruction still dominates basketball coaching at all levels of the game. A games-sense approach attempts to draw players into the decision-making process and provide input into the learning context. A coach teaches the game within the context of the game. If you are interested in more details please check out:

1) Mike MacKay

- Many coaches run practice drills to look better in practice but too often the drills don't transfer to a game.
- We do a lot of things as coaches that do not transfer into a game.
- A thought from John Kessel – what do you coach? He argues you coach people and they play basketball. Therefore the most important thing is to understand people and how they learn.
- We do a lot of things in basketball that ask players to memorize something – patterns of offence, patterns of shooting, but the game is not a memorization test. The game is different every time.
- We don't want to teach players memorization. We want to teach them concepts.
- Practice should look ugly because that's how you learn. You make lots of mistakes.
- How did you learn how to ride a bike? By falling a lot.
- Use Socratic method of bringing out discussion when you ask a question in practice. Ask your players who wants to agree, build or challenge a concept raised in practice.
- Transfer and retention are important terms in evaluating your coaching. Do the concepts transfer to the game and do your players retain them in the game?
- The average number of trips up and down the floor in 5-on-5 play at the women's FIBA level is three. For men at the FIBA level it is four. This means you should structure your practices in trips up and down the floor of at least three before a stoppage.
- Over 65% of game possessions on offence start with a defensive rebound or an inbound play. Starting from a check ball situation never happens. He suggests you should start your trips in practice from realistic situations. If

you don't, you are robbing players of learning opportunities and the opportunity to get into offence from chaos.

Here are some fun and effective ways to start trips:

1. Force left position into a wing steal.
2. Play off a dribble through. An offensive player dribbles from one side of the court to the other by going under the rim.
3. Live off a lay-up shot block.

Three types of drills:

1. Teaching – Can stop it at any time to correct.
 2. Learning – Coach on the fly and dead balls.
 3. Competing – Just like a game. Time-outs. Play through mistakes.
- If you stop players too much in your drills they will never get the fitness components of the game.
 - The number one rule for teammates on penetration reaction is to create a double gap for the dribbler. This means to remove the defenders who are one pass away in help by cutting or spacing.
 - You have to learn to play against ball pressure because good defences collapse offensive space
 - Build practice plans around the energy systems and not just the basketball systems.
 - How can you put pressure on the basket on offence? Three ways: cutting, penetration, screening (with a cut towards the rim).
 - Freeze and rewind are his classroom management commands. Teaching signals and their meanings speed up your practice communications.
 - Practice cuts vs. game cuts is an important understanding for players and their practice improvement.
 - If you stop the action constantly throughout the practice the players will get frustrated.
 - In regards to blocked vs. random practice, although it looks like you are getting better when you shoot the same shot over and over again, the problem is that the results won't hold up in the re-test (competition).
 - Once you are on auto-pilot you are not aware. Thinking must be challenged constantly to stimulate improvement.
 - Questions to ask players: What's one thing you learned today at practice you can apply in the next practice?

2) Chris Oliver

- traditional skill-based approach to coaching basketball - learn the skill, learn the tactics, play the game
- games approach - play the game, learn the tactics, learn the skill
- how
 - play a modified game
 - help the players discover what they need to do
 - teach the skills of the game
 - practice the skills in another game

Players are introduced to a game requiring skills that are both tactical and technical:

- The players develop an understanding of the game and identify the technical and tactical skills required.
- If necessary the coach may intervene to assist players with technical skills or discuss tactical aspects.
- Players practice the skills in conditions that relate to the game.

Advantages:

- Promote and maximize game simulations very early on in skill development.
- Players more accurately see that the skills or tactics are complex and increase the amount of cognitive effort.
- Involvement of more players in each and every activity or drill.
- Young players view this approach as more fun, exciting and engaging.
- Allows players the freedom to play the game without highly structured systems that take away decision-making opportunities.
- Everyone can participate and succeed because individual needs are met by modifying games to suit varied skill levels.
- Can use small-sided games as a progression in the exploration and development of a strategic approach to the game.
- Each player is challenged but at the same time can achieve success

A coach needs to ask two questions before a coaching intervention:

1. If I intervene, will I make a difference?
2. If I give the player some time and direction, will they figure it out on their own?

How to instruct while they play:

- Stop to teach – “foul” in our practices means teaching needs to happen.
- Questions and feedback delay – allow them time to think and answer questions.
- Instruct – add your expertise and suggestions about possible solutions to the problems you present.

Notes:

- Learning often takes longer with this approach. Your practices will look very different from using drill based content.
- The most favourable drills selected will be three-on-three and four-on-four. This is because more players can become involved and be constantly active.
- Change parameters to force players to make decisions and make them solve their own problems.
- Coach-centred drill oriented practices are often boring and consequently less engaging to the players. Helping them learn by playing the game is more engaging.
- Players develop increasing freedom from the coach by being actively involved in the learning process.
- Players have considerable input to the coach and help the coach make decisions.

Goal of offence - get a good shot every possession.

- How to define good shot – ask teammates
- There are no sets or styles that are hard to guard – players are hard to guard (Stan Van Gundy)
- Use offence to create attack opportunity for best match-ups
- Match-up scores or draws help
- Most open you are going to get when you first catch the ball (Chuck Daly)
- Attack mentality on catch – shoot, first step, or pass
- Distort look of offence by having multiple entries, also helps with relieving initial defensive pressure.