

FAST BREAK BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION

CORE SKILLS & DRILLS

Coaches Guide

Fast Break Basketball Association (FBBA) is dedicated to fun, safety, and basketball fundamentals. That is why the season exposes children to both games *and* instructional clinics. Regardless of whether you're coaching basketball for the first time or have been a gym rat for years, FBBA Core Skills and Drills will provide you with a valuable guide as you teach the basics of the game.

SPECIAL THANKS

Fast Break Basketball would like to express its gratitude and thanks to Bo Henning, East Brunswick High School's Head Boys Varsity basketball coach, for his time in reviewing this curriculum.

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COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILDREN, RELAX, HAVE FUN

The more you communicate with the children on your team, the more the players, their parents, and you will enjoy Fast Break Basketball. Teaching basketball skills and providing encouragement are the most important ways you will communicate with the kids. You don't have to be Michael Jordan, Doctor J, or Clyde (Frazier that is), to be an effective teacher of basketball skills and drills. Think of the word **"IDEA"** when coaching.

I—Introduce the skill: Identify the name of the skill and explain its importance.

D—Demonstrate the skill: Perform the skill as best you can to the children. Don't worry if you're not perfect. You can ask another coach to do the demonstration if that would make you feel more comfortable. You can also ask a child on your team to demonstrate the skill.

E—Explain the skill step-by-step *in sequence*, especially for more complex ones.

A—Attend to the children as they practice the skill. Provide constructive feedback in "compliment sandwiches." In other words, when you notice that a skill is being performed incorrectly, first provide positive feedback to the child, second point out the correct way to perform the component of the skill that the child has difficulty with, and third, provide positive feedback to the child before attending to the next individual.

CLINIC STRUCTURE

It is important that you make the most of the time you have allotted for clinic each week. While you have a great deal of flexibility as to how you conduct your instructional clinics, we ask that you divide your sessions into four broad components:

1. Warm-up and Stretching, which lasts between five and ten minutes.
2. Shooting Lines, which lasts between five and ten minutes.
3. Instructional Clinic, which lasts between 35 and 45 minutes.
4. Warm Down and team talk, which lasts five minutes.

1. Warm-up & Stretching: Make sure that the children engage in activities that enable sufficient aerobic activity and muscle stretching prior to basketball instruction. Mild aerobic exercises, such as jumping jacks and slow in-place jogging, should precede stretching exercises. Please make sure that children have had the opportunity to stretch the calves, hamstrings, thighs, groin, lower and upper back, arms, and wrists. Some recommended exercises include the following:

- Jumping Jacks
- Slow In-Place Jogging
- Mild Foot Sliding in Ready Position
- Slow Trunk Twisters
- Toe and Ground Touching
- Hurdler's Stretching
- Wall Leans
- Arm Windmills
- Wrist Stretches

2. Shooting Lines: Create shooting lines once the children have warmed up and stretched. You should direct the children to take lay-ups, jump/set shots, and/or give & go's. In the beginning, however, we suggest that you begin with lay-ups. In addition to practicing various shots, shooting lines give coaches the opportunity to encourage teamwork and reinforce proper shooting, passing, and rebounding technique.

3. Instructional Clinic: The next section is devoted to the component of the clinic devoted to instruction.

CORE SKILLS

When planning and conducting your instructional clinics please be mindful of the five CORE Skills that FBBA has identified. They are:

- Dribbling
- Passing
- Shooting
- Rebounding
- Defense

During the course of the season you will be expected to introduce and develop these skills through the CORE Drills that FBBA has identified. Below are specific drills for each of the Core Skills. Drills are divided into two components--**Standard and Advanced**. Core Standard Drills should be used to *introduce* a Core Skill and to *reinforce* fundamentals. Core Advanced Drills can be used for children who have demonstrated proficiency in conducting the full range of standard drills for the Core Skill.

CORE DRILLS

Coaches should introduce, reinforce, and continually develop at least one of the Core Skills at every instructional clinic. Start simple and add-on as the season progresses. Be comfortable knowing that you will not have time to do every drill for each skill every session in the season. As the players learn your routine, you should be able to cover enough drills to touch upon all the Core Skills. Remember, drills will be divided into **Standard** Core and **Advanced** Core drills.

DRIBBLING

Standard Core Drills

1. **Stationary preferred hand:** Stress the importance of being in the correct stance and using fingertips, not palms, when dribbling the ball.
2. **Stationary non-preferred hand:** Players should develop the confidence to use the non-preferred hand. In addition to a correct stance and the use of fingertips, encourage the children to not look at their hands while dribbling.
3. **Stationary cross-over:** Have the players dribble the ball between the right and left hands in front of the body. Continue to stress proper technique.
4. **Pounding with each hand:** This means pounding the ball hard onto the court, **not** pounding the hand hard onto the ball. The drill will help develop ball control.
5. **Slow movement forward/back preferred hand:** Line the children up with appropriate space between each player and, with the preferred hand, have them dribble slowly forward. When children display a satisfactory level of proficiency you should ask them to dribble forward and then take several dribble steps backward.
6. **Slow movement forward/back non-preferred hand:** Line the children up with appropriate space between each player and, with the preferred hand, have them dribble slowly forward. When children display a satisfactory level of proficiency you should ask them to dribble forward and then take several dribble steps backward.
7. **Slow movement cross-over:** Line the children up with appropriate space between each player and ask them to dribble slowly forward by dribbling the ball from one hand to the other.
8. **Snake Dribbling:** Place cones five to seven feet apart full court baseline to baseline. Player weaves in and out of cones while dribbling at half speed, three-quarter speed, and full speed. The drill develops all the fundamentals of dribbling—ball handling, footwork, and court awareness. The drill can also be made into a game by way of relay races or timed races.
9. **Box Dribbling:** Create a box on the court using cones. Ask the children to dribble only in the box while not bumping into another player. The drill will help develop ball control and encourage the children to keep the eyes focussed on the court, not the ball.

Advanced Core Drills

1. **Fast movement forward/back preferred hand:** Line the children up with appropriate space between each player and, with the preferred hand, have them dribble forward at half speed, three-quarter speed,

and full speed. When children display a satisfactory level of proficiency you should ask them to dribble forward and then take several dribble steps backward.

2. **Fast movement forward/back non-preferred hand:** Line the children up with appropriate space between each player and, with the non-preferred hand, have them dribble forward at half speed, three-quarter speed, and full speed. When children display a satisfactory level of proficiency you should ask them to dribble forward and then take several dribble steps backward.
3. **One hand cup-dribble back and forth stationary:** The player cup-dribbles the ball back and forth in front of the body and along the side. Use preferred hand first, then non-preferred hand. This drill is particularly important for players who display good ball handling skills and like to play guard.
4. **Cross-Over drive:** The player dribbles half-speed toward a cone or stationary child/coach with one hand and crosses the dribble to the other hand before reaching the stationary target. Once the ball is crossed to the other hand continue the dribble and drive three-quarter and/or full speed toward the basket.
5. **Zig-Zags:** Create two lanes with cones full court baseline to baseline. Pair off children so one is a dribbler and the other is a defender. The offensive player dribbles the ball across from cone-to-cone down the lane while the defense player, in ready position, shuffles with the advancing dribbler. Add complexity by adding speed and having the defender place hands behind his/her back during shuffling.
6. **Box Dribbling:** Create a box on the court using cones. Ask the children to dribble only in the box while not bumping into another player. To add complexity, have the children dribble at three-quarter speed and full speed. Also, the drill can be made into a game by introducing concepts of protecting the ball and defense. Ask players to dribble in the box while also trying to deflect the ball of another dribbler out of the box. The last child to be in the box wins.
7. **Heads Up Dribbling:** Designed to encourage children to keep their heads up while dribbling. Create two lines, two or three kids in each line, with each line facing one another separated by between 10 and 20 feet. Place a coach in the middle of the two lines. Coach tells children that they will be cutting right or left. For safety purposes, make sure the children confirm that they are cutting in the direction the coach wants (i.e., right or left). Upon the whistle, the child at the head of each line dribbles toward the coach and cuts (i.e., right or left as specified) when he/she is within 5 feet from the coach. Coaches should ensure that children are not bumping into one another when cutting. Again, start this drill out at walking speed and work yourself up as appropriate.
8. **Two Handed Dribbling:** Ask players to dribble *two* basketballs, one in each hand. Players should perform the drill in an increasingly difficult sequence, as they acquire proficiency, as follows: Stationary simultaneous; Stationary alternating; Walking forward simultaneous; Walking forward alternating; Running forward simultaneous; Running forward alternating. The drill is useful in developing the many finer elements of dribbling, and it especially helps the child focus attention on the weak hand.

PASSING

Standard Core Drills

1. **Stationary two-handed chest pass with partner:** Pair off players and have them pass to each other, focussing on proper technique—hand placement on ball, arm/wrist action, creating proper spin on ball, and receiving the pass.
2. **Stationary two-handed bounce pass with partner:** Pair off players and have them pass to each other, focussing on proper technique—hand placement on ball, arm/wrist action, creating proper spin on ball, identifying spot on the court to bounce the ball, and receiving the pass.
3. **Two-handed overhead pass with partner:** Pair off players and have them pass to each other, *imagining* that there is a defender between them. First have the players pass the ball with an arching pass with feet stationary. Then have the players combine the pass with a jump. To add a little complexity you should add a third person who stands between the passers.
4. **Two person pivot and pass:** This drill is designed to introduce pivoting, a vital skill that is necessary for a player to gain advantage when passing, dribbling, and shooting. Line up children, demonstrate the pivoting motion, and have them practice first *without* the ball, and then with the ball. Children should rotate 180 degrees back and forth and 360 degrees in both directions. Then pair off players with one passing and the other receiving. The player who receives pivots 180 and 360 degrees after getting

the ball, then passes to his/her partner who then does the same. Repeat several times. You can add some complexity by having the passer apply passive defensive pressure after the pass.

Advanced Core Drills

1. **Movement chest passing with partner:** This is a drill that is better done on a full court. Pair off players and create two lines at the baseline. Have each pair advance up the court and back while they chest pass to each other. (Initially, do not worry about children who commit travel violations.) You can add complexity by increasing speed and having children finish the drill with a lay-up or jump shot.
2. **Movement bounce passing with partner:** This is a drill that is better done on a full court. Pair off players and create two lines at the baseline. Have each pair advance up the court and back while they bounce pass to each other. (Initially, do not worry about children who commit travel violations.) You can add complexity by increasing speed and having children finish the drill with a lay-up or jump shot.
3. **Three-person pass round-robin:** Create groups of three players. One player is at the top of the key, one in the middle of the lane, and the third at one of the wings. Player at the top of the key passes to the wing. The player in the middle moves to the receiver and applies defensive pressure. Once defensive pressure is applied the wing attempts to pass the ball back to the guard without dribbling; only pivoting is allowed. The guard can roam anywhere on the court to receive the pass. The drill ends when the defender steals or deflects the ball (without fouling) or when the receiver successfully passes the ball back to the guard. The drill is resumed after the children rotate to the next position.
4. **Monkey in the Middle:** This drill is done on half court, and can be used to introduce the jump stop. Five players position themselves on the court in offensive positions and pass to each other slowly at first and then with increasing quickness until at full speed. Once a regimen of quick passing is established begin to introduce increasing defensive pressure. Send in one defensive player to try to steal the ball. Play continues until the pass is stolen or everyone touches the ball twice. Then a second defensive player is sent in to repeat the drill. *As the number of defenders increase, it is important to stress the value of pass faking.* When combined with pivoting, players have strong tools to make this an excellent core drill that simulates game situations.

SHOOTING

Standard Core Drills

1. **Set/Jump Shot:** From the outset, do your very best to ensure that each child develops sound shooting habits; they will last a lifetime. Begin with the proper technique of a set shot. Make sure the child is **squared-up** to the basket. Help the player **sight** the ball by using the rim and box above the hoop so shots are aimed properly. While **handling** the ball, make sure the child uses one hand to shoot the ball and the other to guide. Some children will need to begin their shots from the hip or stomach, while others will be strong enough to begin their shots from the chest. Finally, emphasize the **proper wrist action** and **follow-through** while taking the shot. You can advance to jump shots during the course of the season for those who can perform them.
 - One-Foot Shot:* Create groups of three children and place one child about one foot in front of the hoop, one child about one foot to the right of the hoop, and one child about one foot to the left of the hoop. Have each child square-up to the basket with legs slightly bent. Then ask the child to form an L with his/her shooting arm and mimic a set shot with the appropriate wrist action. After demonstrating the proper technique give a ball to each child and begin shooting at the same time. Children should retrieve the balls after the shot, go back to his/her spot, and shoot again. Rotate so each child shoots from each position. Use cones to help orient children to the appropriate spots.
 - Three-Foot Shot:* Same as above but place children three feet from basket at each position. Help the players acclimate to the increased distance.
 - Five-Foot Shot:* Same as above but place children five feet from basket at each position. Help the players acclimate to the increased distance.
2. **Lay-ups:** The fundamental things to remember about lay-ups is that the player should shoot with the hand/arm that is away from the side of the basket (i.e., use the right hand for lay-ups taken from the right side) and push off with the foot that is closest to the basket (i.e., use the left foot to launch for lay-ups taken from the right side). Children who learn proper shooting mechanics will develop excellent shooting skills over time.

No-Step Lay-up: Create shooting lines slightly diagonal, with one line on the left and the other on the right of the basket about one foot away. Without dribbling, have the children from each side step toward the basket with the foot closest to the basket and shoot with the hand closest to the sideline. After each child shoots he/she should retrieve the ball, pass the ball to the next player, and go back to the end of the same line. Coaches should then switch children to the other line after each child has taken two or three shots.

One Dribble Lay-up: Create shooting lines as described above, but begin the lines about three feet from the basket. Have the children from each side shoot, but this time taking only one dribble. After each child shoots he/she should retrieve the ball, pass the ball to the next player, and go back to the end of the same line. Coaches should then switch children to the other line after each child has taken two or three shots.

Multiple Dribble Lay-up: Create shooting lines as described above, but begin the lines on the right and left sides of the foul line extended. Designate one line as the shooting line and one side as the rebounding line. Since this drill requires the combination of several skills (i.e., dribbling, shooting, rebounding, passing) be prepared to demonstrate sequence-by-sequence.

3. **Foul Shots:** This shot should be taught after children on your team have demonstrated at least basic proficiency in shooting set shots. Foul lines should be set as close to the basket as you feel appropriate. The same basic mechanics of the set shot apply. Remind the children to concentrate and not rush the shot. Perform this Standard Core Skill without any time or game simulated pressure.

Advanced Core Skill

1. **Dribble to spot and shoot:** Create a line starting at mid-court and another one at one end of the foul line. The coach selects a spot on the court where he/she would like the child to shoot. The player from mid-court dribbles to that spot and shoots a jump/set shot, and the player in front of the other line gets the rebound and passes to the next shooter. Both children then go back to the end of the line. Coaches switches lines after each child on shooting line has taken two shots. This drill will help you introduce the players to taking shots in game-like situations. Increase the speed of the dribble to add complexity.
2. **Receive pass at spot and shoot:** Set up one line somewhere near mid-court and another one within shooting range. The child at the front of the line near mid-court passes the ball to the child at the front of the shooting line. The receiver then squares and shoots. The passer gets the rebound. Both children go to the back of the line. Complexity can be added by directing the children in the receiving line to cut to a spot the coach designates. This is when coaches can introduce faking (e.g., head fake, jab step) and cutting (e.g., L-Cuts, V-Cuts). In time, children will begin to find their favorite spots on the court.
3. **Hard drive lay-ups:** Set up shooting lines somewhere between the foul line extended and mid-court. One line shoots lay-ups and the other line rebounds. That means the shooter dribbles *hard* to the basket and lays the ball in while maintaining body control. The rebounder runs with the shooter from the other side of the court toward the basket, rebounds, and passes to the next shooter. This drill should simulate a fast-break situation.
4. **Pressure Foul Shots:** The same as the Standard Core drill, except add pressure situations. For example, you can tell the child that the score is tied with no time left and he/she has to make the basket.

REBOUNDING

Standard Core Drills

1. **Guess Where the Ball Bounces:** Position your team in a semicircle at the top of the key. The coach takes a shot. As the ball bounces off the rim or backboard players should shout out where they think the ball will bounce (e.g., Long! Short! Left! Right! Middle! Out-of-Bounds!). Their guesses will become more accurate as they become more accustomed to ball speeds, arcs, and trajectories. The accuracy of their answers are not as important as making eye contact with the ball during a shot.
2. **Ready or Not—Rebound Ready Position:** Line up children in front of the basket, sideline to sideline. Have them bend their knees slightly, head up, arms partially extended and palms facing out and up. This is the rebounding ready position that each child should demonstrate to you.
3. **Claw Drill:** Ask players to assume the rebound ready position and make believe the fingers on their hands (palms facing slightly up and out) are claws. Have the children spread out the fingers as wide as

they can for five seconds and then relax. Repeat up to ten times. The drill will help the players grab rebounds and hold onto the ball.

4. **Touch Drill:** Repeat the claw drill, but use a basketball this time. Make sure the children use their fingers and fingertips as much as possible when grabbing a rebound and holding onto the ball.
5. **Same-Team Rebound:** Create a group of four or five children. Position the players on the court so they can get an offensive rebound if the ball approaches his/her area of the court. Designate one person as a shooter and have the children rebound the ball aggressively, but without pressure from a defensive player. This drill is like a shoot-around, but with the emphasis on rebounding.

Advanced Core Drills

1. **Dead Ball Box Out:** A ball is set on the floor and the “defensive” player is positioned between the ball and the “offensive” player. When a whistle is blown, the offensive player tries to grab the ball while the defensive player tries to box him/her out. Play continues for about five seconds or when the offensive player gets the ball. Make sure children learn how to step in front of a player to establish position, and how to use the hips and lower back to maintain the advantage.
2. **Live Ball Box Out:** As players become more skilled at boxing out, the ball should be shot or thrown against the backboard, and the “defensive” player should box out his opponent until the ball bounces on the court once or twice. Alternatively, the coach can blow the whistle and wait a few seconds while the players battle for position and then throw the ball against the backboard. Show the players to rebound at the highest point possible.

DEFENSE

Standard Core Drills

1. **Ready or Not—Defensive Ready Position:** Very similar to the rebound ready position drill. Line up children in front of the basket facing mid-court, sideline to sideline. Have them bend their knees slightly, standing on the balls of the feet, back straight, arms partially extended in front of the body, and palms partially facing the offensive player with fingers apart. This is the defensive ready position that each child should demonstrate to you.
2. **Defensive Tap Dance:** When in the ready position, have children tap the floor with the balls of the feet slowly at first, and then more rapidly, for 20 seconds. Repeat up to five times.
3. **Slow Move Slide in Defensive Position:** This drill is designed to teach children the critical skill component of good foot work in defense. Line up children in front of the basket facing mid-court, sideline to sideline. Have them assume the ready position and have them slide their feet sideways and front to back at your direction.
4. **Slide and Pivot Round-About:** Line up children on the baseline facing mid-court, sideline to sideline. Have them assume the ready position and slide along the perimeter of the half-court. When the child reaches each corner of the half-court box (e.g., the corner of the right baseline and right sideline) they should pivot as they change direction. Children should slide and pivot around the half-court box up to three times, with breaks in-between each revolution at the coaches’ discretion.

Advanced Core Drills

1. **Zig-Zags:** Create two lanes with cones full court. Pair off children so one is a dribbler and the other is a defender. The offensive player dribbles the ball across from cone-to-cone down the lane while the defense player, in ready position, shuffles with the advancing dribbler. Add complexity by increasing speed and having the defender place hands his/her behind the back during shuffling.
2. **Monkey in the Middle:** This drill is done on half court. Five players position themselves on the court in offensive positions and pass to each other slowly at first and then with increasing quickness until at full speed. Once a regimen of quick passing is established begin to introduce increasing defensive pressure. Send in one defensive player to try to steal the ball. Play continues until the pass is stolen or everyone touches the ball twice. Then a second defensive player is sent in to repeat the drill. This continues until the offensive team is able to complete a pass to all five players with five defenders on the court.
3. **Deny, Deny, Deny:** This drill is similar to the Three-Person Pass Round-Robin. Create groups of three players. One player is at the top of the key, and an offensive player is at one of the low posts with a

defender who overplays the person he/she is defending. When the whistle is blown, the defender will try to deny the pass of the guard by partial fronting and extending the arm in the direction of the passer. The drill ends when the defender steals or deflects the ball (without fouling) or when the other offensive player successfully receives the pass. The drill is resumed after the children rotate to the next position.

GAMES & SCRIMMAGES

Games and scrimmages are a great way to have fun at FBBA. Games, such as the samples below, help the players apply the skills that they have learned in a fun environment. After the first week or two, scrimmages should be played to give coaches the opportunity to stop play for instructional purposes. **(Coaches of each Team: Actively communicate with one another before and during each clinic so you can plan scrimmages, games, or joint drills for the session you are together.)**

Sample Games

1. Snake Relay Races.
2. Foul Shooting Contests
3. Lay-Up Contests
4. One-on-One and Two-on-Two Round-Robin
5. Jump/Set Shot Contests

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Three instructional books we have found very helpful are as follows:

1. Coaching Youth Basketball, Second Edition, American Sport Education Program
2. The Basketball Coaches Bible, Third Printing, Sidney Goldstein.
3. Basketball For Dummies, IDG Books Worldwide, Digger Phelps
4. Five Star Basketball Drills (revised edition); by Howard Garfinkel; Masters Press
5. Youth Basketball: The Guide for Coaches & Parents (2nd edition); by John P. McCarthy, Jr.; Betterway Books
6. Baffled Parent's Guide to Coaching Youth Basketball; by David G. Farber; Ragged Mountain Press/McGraw-Hill

CALL US IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

In addition to communicating with the children and your fellow coaches, please feel perfectly free to call the director in your program if you have questions about the curriculum or have any suggestions. Thank you for making FBBA's first season a great success.

