








BARRINGTON PARK DISTRICT



YOUTH BASKETBALL LEAGUE PLAYBOOK

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FUNDAMENTAL BASKETBALL SKILLS



It cannot be emphasized enough that the goal for this level is, **NOT TO WIN, BUT TO HAVE FUN WHILE PLAYING.** The players need to learn **FUND**amental skills through basketball in a **FUN AND POSITIVE WAY.** If they are having fun they will be more likely to continue participating. It is the coach's #1 responsibility to guarantee success for every child. This does not mean that each child will be a great dribbler or shoot the ball well. What this does mean is that as a coach you give challenging, yet achievable goals for your players. If a player starts the season not being able to dribble the ball or make a short jump shot, and then during the season is able to dribble more effectively and makes a shot in a game, that is success!

MOVEMENT SKILLS

Agility, balance, coordination (throwing and catching), proper running technique, change of speed and direction, jumping and landing, starting and stopping (stride stop and 2 foot drop stop), pivoting

BASKETBALL SKILLS

Ready position, triple threat, play with eyes up.

BALL HANDLING SKILLS

Ball control, stationary dribbling (low, high, and wide), movement while dribbling (running, sliding, walking, change of direction, starts, stops, low, high)

PASSING SKILLS

Stationary passing, moving and passing, passing to a teammate, receiving the ball(absorbing) catching on the move, catching the ball with **2 HANDS – 2 EYES – 2 FEET**

SHOOTING SKILLS

Squaring the feet and shoulders to the target, pushing with both legs, proper hand and arm placement (hand under/behind ball, fingers spread, elbow under ball/over knee), follow through (release). Learn first without the ball then with the ball. Close range shots, lay-up progression.

PLAYING PRINCIPLES

Basic offensive concepts, advancing the ball toward your offensive end, shooting the ball into the basket to score, spacing of players (4-6' apart), cutting of players (away from ball towards basket)

BASIC DEFENSIVE CONCEPTS

Recognition of when you are on defense, recognition of the person you are defending, when defending the ball staying between the person you are guarding and the basket, when you are defending away from the ball staying between the person you are guarding and the basket

BALL HANDLING

Triple Threat Position

It is important that all players, no matter of skill level or age, learn the triple threat position. There are four key concepts that should be taught:

- Players are in an athletic stance, knees bent, feet shoulder width apart.
- Left in front of right foot (for right-handed players) with ten toes pointing towards the basket.
- The basketball should be held close to your right hip.
- Players' heads are up so they can see what is happening on the floor.

In every drill, you teach your players to begin with the concept of triple threat so it becomes a habit for your team.

For left-handed players, all points discussed above would be done the opposite way. For example, your right heel would align with the toes on your left foot, and the basketball would be held at your left hip.



DRIBBLING GAMES

- **DRIBBLE TAG** 
Choose one player to be “it.” All players must be dribbling a basketball. Once a person is tagged, he also becomes “it.” Game continues until last person is tagged.
- **SHARKS & MINNOWS** 
All players start on one side of court. The coach usually starts in the middle. Game begins when coach yells “shark.” All players must dribble safely to the other side of the court. If a player gets caught by the shark, (either picks up their dribble, or gets the basketball stolen from them) they also become a shark. Game continues until all players become sharks.
- **RELAY RACES** 
Divide kids into teams. Have them line up single file. Only one basketball is needed per team. Start by having the players hand the basketball over their heads to the end of the line, and then between their legs back to the start of the line. As your team progresses, have them use two or three basketballs per line. This is a good idea to improve teamwork and communication.
- **TOUCH DRIBBLING** 
Set 2 cones up in front of player, a little wider than shoulder width. Player will start dribbling with the ball to their side. With their off-hand, they have to touch the cone closest to them. Then cross the ball over to their other hand, and touch the top of the cone.
- **FIGURE 8** 
Set 2 cones up in front of player, a little wider than shoulder width. Player has to dribble in, and around, the cones in a figure-8 motion. Make sure to have player switch hands after a set time or number of rotations
- **BEHIND THE BACK** 
Set 2 cones up in front of player, a little wider than shoulder width. Have the player take a dribble in front of the cone, then in back of the same cone, and then behind their back and switch dribbling hands. Then dribble in front of the cone, behind the cone, and behind the back to the other dribbling hand.

- **SIMON SAYS** 
Put players in a circle somewhere on the basketball court. Pick one person to be Simon. Have them go through different ball handling skills (left hand dribble, figure eight, dribble around left foot, around the waist, lay down and dribble, etc.) Whoever is working the hardest at improving their ball handling, reward them by letting them be Simon. This teaches players to listen while working on the most important part of the game.
- **DRIBBLE RACES** 
Divide team into groups of four. Have them use different moves (cross over, between the legs, behind the back, spin dribble) each race. If the basketball gets away from the players, they must run after the ball, and bring it back to the place they lost it at. Team wins when everybody has completed the race and is sitting down. Players work on teamwork and controlling their dribble on the run.
- **KNOCK OUT** 
Pick out a large square in the basketball court. The game begins with everybody dribbling. Players must stay within the boundaries set by the coach. Object of the game is to be the last player dribbling a basketball in the square. Players are allowed to knock other player's balls out of the square; however, they must keep their dribble alive in the process. If players pick up their basketball with two hands, they are out. If their ball gets knocked out of the square, they are out. When the game begins to dwindle down to a handful of players, make the boundaries smaller. Players learn to keep their head up while dribbling the basketball. They learn how to handle the basketball in traffic, and they are protecting the ball from defenders.
- **SNAKE DRIBBLING** 
All players with a ball. Players form a winding line in the middle of the court; they are spaced a few feet apart. The players all begin dribbling while in the line. The player at the end of the line must dribble through the line weaving in and out of the other players until they reach the front of the line and stop (they continue dribbling in a stationary position) each time a player is at the end of the snake they must work their way to the front and stop. You can progress with this drill to having the snake move around the court, have the players in line try to knock the ball away from player attempting to make their way to the front of the line and have players use their non- dominate hand.

- **TWO-BALL DRIBBLING** 

Each player has two basketballs, have them dribble to one end of the court and back. Start them in lines to prevent crowding on the court. If possible, as the players continue to progress, have everybody go at the same time. Have them zigzag (still with two basketballs) and perform crossover, behind the back, etc. whenever they change direction.

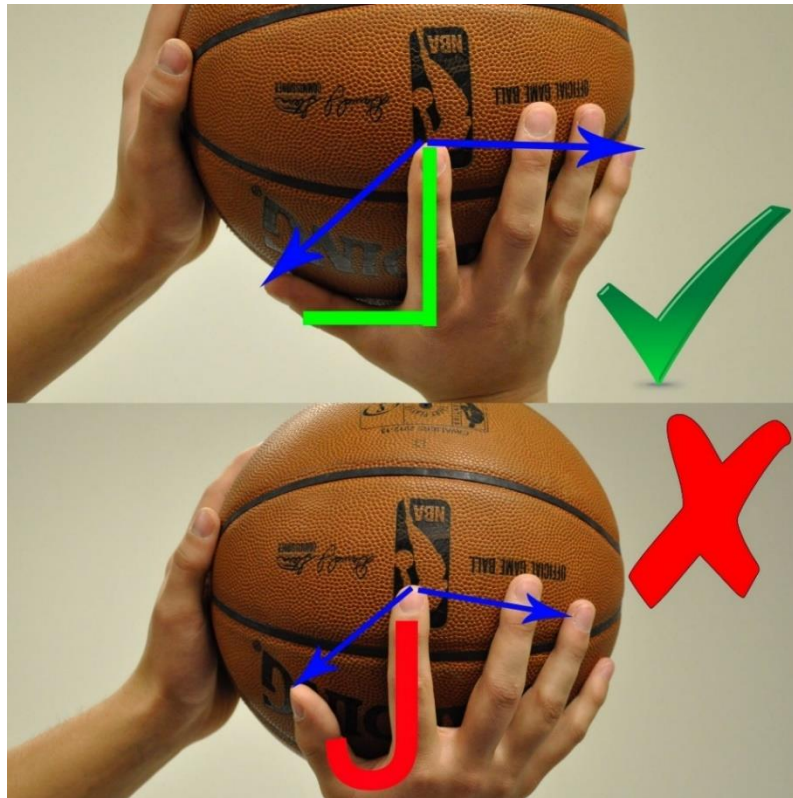
- **SUICIDE DRIBBLING** 

Have players line up facing their partner. Each child has a basketball. If you do not have enough basketballs for every player, then divide into as many lines as you can (if you have only four basketballs, then divide into four lines). When coach blows his whistle, players dribble at game speed directly at their partner using a right hand dribble. When the players are about to run into each other, each player executes a crossover dribble to avoid running into their partner, and dribbles to opposite end of the line with their left hand. After a few rotations, rotate which change of direction dribble the players are to use. Once your team has executed all change of direction dribbles, repeat the drill, but start with a left-hand dribble.


SHOOTING

We feel it is important that children learn the proper fundamentals in regards to shooting the basketball. Too often children, simply because they are not strong enough, develop poor shooting habits. A few ideas to keep in mind during practice:


- Have the players shoot close to the basket. Do not let your players shoot from outside of their range.
- Make sure they are using proper basketballs (28.5" for 3, 4, 5 and 6th grades.)
- Teach players to use their legs as main source of power for their shot. Feet should be shoulder width apart and in proper heel / toe alignment (for a right handed shooter, right heel should be aligned with their left toe.)
- Have players lift the basketball from their right hip to above their right eye. Look for proper hand placement on the ball. Thumb resemble a "L" shape; fingers on shooting hand should be spread.




SHOOTING DRILLS & GAMES

- **LIGHTNING** 

Everybody's favorite game. Have kids line up in a single file line behind the free throw line (for younger kids, have them move in.) Object of the game is for the first player to make a basket before the second player in line. Once you make a basket, you make a bounce pass to the next player in line. If the player behind you makes a basket before you, then you are eliminated from the game. Play until there is only one person left.

- **DRIBBLE & SHOOT** 

Have players line up in two lines at half court, one line facing one basket and one line facing the other basket. When the coach blows the whistle, players dribble to the elbow (quickly) and shoot a lay-up. Watch for proper form and footwork. Once the entire team has shot two lay ups at each basket, switch to jump shots. Again, watch for proper form (planting their inside foot, hands are in proper positioning on the ball, and lifting the basketball over their head), and make sure they are shooting reasonable shots. As your team progresses, place a chair (to act as a defender) at the three point line, have your players use moves such as a crossover, behind the back dribble, etc. to beat the defender and pull up for a jump shot or a lay-up. Make sure you use both sides of the floor so players learn how to use their weaker hand. To continue even further with this drill, have players partner up, and play one on one. Great drill to simulate a fast break and shooting off the dribble. Also gives the players a little conditioning.

- **SPOT-UP SHOOTING** 

Have players partner up, it does not matter how many players are at each basket. One player starts as the rebounder and the other starts as the shooter. After each shot, the players switch. After player 1 shoots the basketball, they track down their own rebound and throw a solid pass to player two, who would then rebound their shot and pass to player one. The key points during this drill are: After the player rebounds their shot, they should be hustling to a spot on the floor. Before they catch the basketball, they should be ready to shoot (hands ready to receive the basketball, weight is on the balls of your feet). Players should meet the pass, planting their inside foot, and rise into their jump shot. This is a fast-moving drill, it will not be effective unless players are going full speed. Try timing the players and see which team can shoot the most shots without losing focus on their fundamentals. Teaches players to follow their own shot, works on developing a quick release, and is a good drill to demonstrate how much hard work it takes to get open shots at the basket.

- **AROUND THE WORLD** 

Mark shooting spots on the court. Player has to make a shot from each shooting spot in the least amount of total shots. Shooting spot distances are determined by the player's skill level; recommended keeping the shooting spots all within the 3-point arc.

- **CREATIVE SHOOTING** 

Players spread out to all available baskets. Start underneath the basket and toss the basketball out to the wing. Players run out to the ball and immediately grab it and go into triple threat. Start with jump shots only. After they make about twenty to twenty-five shots, have players execute a pump fake, take one dribble and shoot. Continue the drill in later weeks by adding rules where player must make two separate change of direction dribbles during the move. Good drill to develop shot because you get a ton of repetition, and also improves shooting off the dribble.

- **SHOOTING FROM THE PASS** 

Three, four or five players in each group with two basketballs. Have one player on each wing with the remaining players at the top of the key. Player at the top of the key dribbles to the left makes a solid pass to player on the wing. Then screens for the player on the opposite wing, who executes a v-cut (make the defender think you're going to the baseline and cut across the screener's top shoulder) and receive the pass in the lane. Coaches should watch that the shooter is doing three things: after they come across the screen shooter should be making short choppy steps, they should meet the pass (as they catch the basketball, shooter should take a long step with their foot hooked to the basket to create separation,) and square up to the basket. The next player in line passes the basketball to the screener who takes a jump shot.



An idea that will help your players in actual game situations is to give them multiple scenarios during practice. For example, during this last drill, add three defensive players. The first time through the drill, have the defenders fight through screens. Next time through the drill, have the defense switch on screens. Try not to do a lot of coaching at first. Have the players figure out how to score and create open shots on their own. If they are struggling with this, then intervene. Explain to your team how to read the defense, if they are switching on the screens, have the player setting the screen roll to the basket. If they are fighting through the screens, have them step back and shoot a jump shot.

PASSING


Passing is one of the least emphasized skills in basketball, but it one of the most important skills. Too often we see players fail to pass for a number of reasons. Remind players that the best players on the court need to pass to give themselves a chance to get open and score.

- Teach players the 3 main types of passing, bounce, chest and overhead, and the best time to use each
- Stress that passes should always be crisp, and hit the target. Lazy passing in practice translate to lazy passing during games, creating turnovers
- Stress smart passing, i.e. passing to the players closest to you, not passing across court, not passing into multiple defenders, etc.

PASSING DRILLS & GAMES

- **BOUNCE & CHEST PASS** 
have players partner up with another player, have one row of players line up on the sideline, with their partners about 12 – 15 feet away. Have the players on the sideline hold the basketballs. When you blow your whistle, have the players throw a bounce pass to their partner. Check for proper technique. Make sure that the players with the basketball start in triple threat position with their left foot acting as their pivot foot (for left handed players, pivot foot would be their right foot.) Make sure children are stepping toward the target, extending their arms, palms are pointing towards the target, and thumbs are pointing to the ground. Also check to see that the players receiving the pass are giving their partner a target, then catching the basketball, and “ripping it to the hip” (triple threat position.) When all the players are doing this properly, repeat same drill, only use the chest pass.
- **RELAY RACES** 
Have players line up in a zigzag line starting at one baseline and ending at the other. Players must pass to one end of the line and back, winners get a point. Vary which pass you want the kids to throw.


- **OVERHEAD OUTLET PASS** 


Have two players line up single file at the free throw line, have one player be the outlet man (standing free throw line extended) and another player in rebounding position under the basket. Coach shoots a brick; player rebounds the basketball, and pivots towards the outlet man. Player brings the basketball over their head, and fires a strike to the outlet man. Player passing the ball rotates to outlet man position, and the outlet man goes to end of line. Watch for proper fundamentals (same as bounce pass and chest pass.) Player is squared up to target, takes a step target, palms are point forward, and thumbs are pointing towards the floor.
- **BULL IN THE RING PASS** 


Have players partner up in three. First teach kids how to do a solid ball fake. Have players stand about 10 feet apart facing each other with defender guarding the player with ball. Have the passer start in triple threat position, step toward the target, and fake a pass over the defenders' shoulder. Then, the passer brings the ball back to his hip, and takes a long step with their right foot or a cross-over step (watch for traveling.) Release point should be at knee level and "wrapping" around the defender. Have the players work on ball faking to the right, then executing a crossover step and releasing the basketball off their right knee. Next, have the player's ball fake left, and execute a long step to the right, and release the pass. This is a great way to feed the post.
- **MONKEY IN THE MIDDLE** 

Break players into groups of three. Players are not allowed to dribble, and they cannot lob the basketball over the head of the defender. Must make a strong pass to their partner, if the defender steals the ball, the player who made the pass becomes the "monkey in the middle." Players should work on their ball fakes and bull in the ring passes during this game.
- **FEEDING THE POST** 

Put two players on each team, one is the passer, and one is the post-up player. Game starts when the defender hands the passer the basketball. Players play a live game after that. Players should be working on ball fakes, bull in the ring passes, and moving without the ball. Post up players should work on using their forearm to create space and giving the passer a solid target. If the offensive team scores they receive a point. Game is played to five, then rotate so teams are playing a different opponent.

- **ULTIMATE BASKETBALL** 

Divide team into 2 teams of 5. The game is played on the full court. The teams cannot dribble and can only take 2 steps. Teams pass the ball down the court and try to get the ball passed to a player behind the baseline, teams get 5 points for each time they do are able to do that. If a pass is dropped the other team gets possession. First team to get to 20 points wins. Emphasize communication, passing under pressure and getting open for a pass.
- **PIG IN THE MIDDLE WITH CUTTERS** 

Form a square with cones on the floor. The weaker the players, the bigger the square should be. 3 offensive players are on one of the corners of the box. The one defensive player is in the middle of the box. The defender is trying to steal the passes. The offensive players can slide to any empty corner to receive a pass. Passers can only pass to a corner next to them. If the defender steals the pass, they trade places with the passer. 1-minute rounds. If the defensive player hasn't stolen a pass during that time, they would change places. Emphasis on good passes to an open player and having passer focus on where the defender is and passing away from them.
- **FOUR CORNERS** 

Divide team into four equal lines. Have each group go to a separate corner on the floor resembling a square. Drill starts with one ball. Player from the opposite corner then sprints to the middle of the square and meets the pass, executes a reverse pivot, and passes the basketball to another corner. After the player passes the ball to the middle, he/she moves to the line to their right. The player in the middle follows their pass and goes to the end of that line. Then the drill repeats itself with different players. A key to this drill is during each pass; the player passing the basketball must yell the person's name in which he/she is passing to. Great drill for improving communication and teaching how to meet the basketball.

REBOUNDING

Passing is one of the least emphasized skills in basketball, but it one of the most important skills. Too often we see players fail to pass for a number of reasons. Remind players that the best players on the court need to pass to give themselves a chance to get open and score.

- A nice way to teach the value of rebounding the basketball is to tell the kids to attack the ball just like they would if a \$100 bill was floating in the air.
- Teach players how to properly box out:
 - Stand between player and basket (anticipating the direction of the rebound)
 - Turn your back toward that player
 - Extend your arms out to the side
 - Bend your knees and thrust your backside into other player (butt-to-gut)
 - Controlling player with your backside and extended arms will allow you to always have the angle between player and basket



REBOUNDING DRILLS & GAMES

DEFENSIVE BLOCK OUT (4 LEVELS)

LEVEL 1

Place ball in the center of the jump ball circle, or the free throw circle. Start with two players around the circle with their toes on the line. Add two more offensive players, have them stand directly behind defensive players. Teach the defensive player to make him or herself “big” by extending arms downward and outward. Coach blows the whistle and the offensive players try to get ball in the middle of the circle. Award points to defensive team if they are able to stop the offensive team and vice versa.

LEVEL 2

Move players underneath a basket. Set them up in a triangle. Make sure the defenders are in solid defensive positioning. Teach players how to spin and block out players with their butts. Continue to stress the phrase, “make yourself big.” Now blow the whistle and have the players practice blocking out. Continue by adding a basketball into this drill. Have the players set up, then shoot the basketball, and let the players go after the rebound. Award points to whichever team grabs the rebound.

LEVEL 3

As the players get more advanced, let them scrimmage a little bit, still keeping the emphasis on blocking out. Continue using three players per team, start by the coach passing the ball to the offensive team, have them make three passes, and then they must shoot the basketball. Concentrate on blocking out the shooter and proper defensive positioning. Being in the proper defensive position makes blocking out much easier.

LEVEL 4

Continue with this drill, however, add two players on each side of the floor. These players will act as point guards for an outlet pass. When the defensive players rebound the basketball, have them pivot to the nearest sideline, and throw an outlet pass to the player. Then all five players hustle to opposite end of the floor. (This helps players understand the fast break and transition game.) Offensive players then rotate to defense.

“Blocking out” drills tend to become a little rough and dangerous when too many bodies are on the floor. Stress offensive players going to the ball, instead of running around other teammates. For the defensive players teach them to stay low (knees bent, feet spread) with elbows extending out, never above the shoulders, and to move their feet. If things start becoming rough, let the players cool off a little bit before allowing the drill to continue.










DEFENSE

Most young basketball players try to swat at the ball while playing defense, thus causing a lot of fouls. Coach your players on the importance of playing defense, both on the ball and off the ball.

- A basic way to teach children to play solid defense is emphasizing “arms-out, arms-up”. While playing defense in the open court, stress the players’ arms straight out to the side. Relate this to wide person; it’s harder to get around a wide person, than it is a thin person. While playing defense in the lane, stress the players’ arms be straight up in the air. Relate this to a tall person; it’s harder to shoot over a tall person, than it is a short person.
- Some of the key points to playing solid defense are:
 - Knees bent, in an athletic stance, staying low to the ground.
 - Feet should not cross or come together.
 - Players should reach out with their lead leg, and slide the trailing leg.
 - One hand is shadowing the basketball, the opposite hand is in the air, disrupting the vision of the offensive player.
 - Force offensive player to “weak” side



DEFENSIVE DRILLS & GAMES

- **DEFENSIVE SLIDE** 
Divide your team into two groups. Have group 1 start by lining up on one side of the free throw lane. Give that group thirty seconds and see how many times they can go from side to side. After the thirty seconds is up, see who had the highest number. Then have group two go. Watch for proper technique (see below) and that the players are not cutting corners. Encourage the players to do better than their previous effort.
- **ZIG ZAG**  
Have players partner up. Form three lines at one end of the floor. One player is on offense; the other player is on defense. Begin by teaching players the proper way to play defense. Offensive player dribbles down the court, cutting (zig-zagging) back-and-forth. Defensive player shuffles feet and tries to keep themselves between the basket and the offensive player.
- **MAN IN THE HOLE**  
Have players partner up. Start everybody underneath one of the baskets. One player is on defense, and the other is on offense. Players play the length of the floor, if the offensive player scores, they receive a point, if the defensive player stops him, they receive a point. Players alternate roles and return to the original basket. After your team has circled around a few times, change the perimeters of the game. Start playing two on two, three on three, etc.
- **CLOSE-OUT**  
Divide group into 3 offensive players and 2 defensive players. Have 2 offensive players around the 3-point arc and 1 offensive player in the lane. Place 2 defensive players in the lane. Starts with defensive player nearest ball closing out on offensive player. Once the defensive player closes out, the other defensive player rotates into position to help defend pass. Once offensive player passes, one of the defenders closes out on the ball, while the other defensive player rotates into defensive position
- **DRIBBLE-CHASE**  
Defender stands on the baseline. Dribbler stands at the wing facing the opposite hoop. On the whistle, the dribbler speed dribbles to the opposite hoop and tries to score a lay-up. The defender sprints to catch up to try and block, or stop, the offensive player from scoring



OFFENSE



This is what the kids want! This is what the game has (unfortunately) become. In our rec. league, each team will have a mix of player talent. The best teams find ways to utilize every player on the offensive end of the court. Find each player's individual strength and utilize that on the court.

- After a player passes, they should never just stand in that spot. They should be cutting to the hoop, looking for a return pass
- After that player cuts to the hoop, the next closest player should fill that open spot. The player that just cut to the hoop, will fill the newly abandoned spot
- It is the coach's job to stress communication between players. Stronger ball handlers should always try and rotate closer to the top of the arc. The taller, stronger rebounding players should always try and rotate towards the baseline

SETTING SCREENS (PICKS)

- One of the easiest ways to get players open on the court is to set screens for one another. There are 4 basic types of screens to use, but the same fundamentals are used for each type. Some hints on setting screens are:
 - Feet should be a little wider than shoulder length apart.
 - Hands should cross your chest (for girls) or protecting your groin area (for boys).
 - The screener must be completely stationary while setting a screen or an offensive foul will be called.
 - Body should be vertical and squared up to the defender.
1. **Down Screen** – Player runs toward the baseline closest to the basketball hoop to set a screen
 2. **Ball Screen** – Player sets a screen for the offensive players who currently has possession of the ball and is still dribbling
 3. **Back Screen (Blind Screen)** – Player sets a screen away from the ball on the defender's back. Player setting the screen must give defensive player one step or an offensive foul may be called
 4. **Away Screen** – Player sets a screen away from the ball, usually after a pass or after being denied the ball.

OFFENSIVE DRILLS

- **ANIMAL DRILL** 

Divide the kids up into 2 teams, give each kid a number (opposing team should have the same numbering system). Try to pair each kid up by skill/position. Line both teams up on the same baseline, or opposing sidelines. Call a number (or multiple numbers) and throw the ball somewhere on the court. Those players will race to the ball, with the player securing it first becoming the offensive player. The goal is to either score (as the offensive player) or get the ball (as the defensive player)

- **ALASKAN BASEBALL** 

Divide the group into 2 equal teams. One team will throw the basketball anywhere on the court. Once that team throws, the players on that throwing team will get in a circle and the thrower will try and run as many laps around their group as possible. The players on the non-throwing team will race to the basketball and get in a single-file line. They will pass the basketball behind them, alternating between over-the-head and between-the-legs handoff passes. Once they get to the last player, that teams yells “STOP” and will throw the ball anywhere on the court. Now, the other team will have to race to the ball, line up single-file, and pass the ball alternating between over-the-head and between-the-legs handoff passes.

- **FILL THE OPEN SPOT** 

Position five players spaced out evenly around the 3-point line, with the coach standing under the basket. Pass the ball to any of the five players. That player will catch the ball and drive to the hoop for a lay-up. When the player leaves their spot, the closet player must fill in that open spot. The driver to the hoop will shoot the ball, and then fill up the new open spot that was left empty by the rotating player. The coach will then pass to another player, that player drives to the hoop, the closet player fills that open spot, and the driver fills the new open spot.



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