

KINDERGARTEN INSTRUCTIONAL BASKETBALL GUIDELINES

Philosophy of the League

Kindergarten Instructional Basketball stresses **participation, sportsmanship, fun and the development of skills**. The goal of the program is to teach the players the concepts, rules, individual skills and knowledge of the game.

Organization

A. Timetable

- a. Saturdays in December/January (Dec. 7, 14, 21, Jan. 4, 11)
 1. Grade K PRACTICES at Soule Rd School
 - a. 45 minute solo team practices
 - b. 9-9:45am, 9:45-10:30am, 10:30-11:15am, 11:15am-12pm, 12-12:45pm, 12:45-1:30pm
 - b. Saturdays in January/February/March (January 18, 25, February 1, 8, 22, March 1)
 1. 30/30 will start. 2 teams will be scheduled for an hour slot to work of 30 minutes of skills and then have a 30 minute scrimmage between the teams.
 - a. Will include Hampden team(s) as well. Locations include Soule Rd School and Green Meadows School.
 - c. March
 1. Program ends on March 1.
 2. If needed, reschedule date for the 30/30 would be Saturday, March 8

B. Team Break-down

- a. Selection of teams will be determined by the Parks & Recreation Department.

Skill Development & Practice Plans at end of the Packet

Rules for Scrimmages in February & March

A. Format

- a. **4v4 is preferred, 5v5 if numbers dictate.**
- b. **All K teams co-ed.**
- c. We have co-ed divisions and break into grade groups so that kids can better develop and enhance their knowledge as they move up to aid in an easier transition with the older age groups.

B. Rosters

- a. The Recreation Department will set rosters at a minimum of six (6) players and a maximum of nine (9) players.

C. Coaches

- a. We encourage each team to have 2 coaches so that kids can be broken up into groups in practice.
- b. When scrimmaging:
 - i. One coach on the floor to instruct game play
 - ii. One coach to monitor the players on the bench.
- c. One coach from each team is allowed on the court to provide instruction and will officiate the game. Coaches should always work together on the court and give positive or constructive feedback to both teams during the game.
- d. *Coaches are expected to help teach the rules of basketball so the kids develop their game understanding.
 - i. ***BLOW THE WHISTLE & EXPLAIN/TEACH** when:

1. There are fouls that affect play
2. When players with the ball go outside the boundary lines of the court
3. When play gets out of control
4. When the ball goes out of bounds
5. At any time for a brief halt in play for a teaching moment

D. Duration of Play/Timing

- a. Each player should receive equal playing time/participation in each game.
- b. Duration of Play
 - i. Play will consist of four (4), five (5) minute periods. These short periods will **HELP WITH SUBBING at the end of each period.**
- c. Timing
 - i. Clock is running time.
 - ii. Clock will continue running during substitutions and violations.

E. Equipment/Ball Size

- a. Equipment
 - i. Sneakers must be worn. No boots, cleats, heals, etc. allowed on gym floor. All players should be playing in proper athletic attire.
 - ii. No jewelry is to be worn during practices and scrimmages. This includes earrings, necklaces, and watches.
- b. All balls used for practices and games must be a size 25.5" basketball.

F. Starting the Scrimmage/Alternating Possession

- i. **There will be no jump balls for the Kindergarten division. One team will start the scrimmage with possession of the ball.** In subsequent periods, the coaches will rotate who gets the ball based on who received it during the previous quarter.
- ii. Any held ball situation will result in the defense getting possession of the ball.

G. Defense

- a. Kindergarten (8 ft. hoops)
 - i. Pressing is NOT allowed.
 - ii. Defense must set-up behind the 3 point line extension (in 3 point circle) when the offensive team is bringing ball up. This will allow for team to bring ball up and make a pass. Red tape will be on gym floors at Soule Rd.
 - iii. We want players to be in an athletic position and be ready defensively but NO STEALING. We want to encourage offensive players to openly dribble, pass, and shoot. This will allow player to build skill.
 - iv. The defensive player will be able to pick-up a loose ball off the floor and raise their hands to block a shot.
 - v. Scrimmages will be played 4v4 or 5v5. Teams can use a zone or person-to-person defense, however, our opinion is teaching and playing person-to-person defense will benefit all players by promoting correct fundamental skills that will carry forward as players advance to the older divisions.

H. Fouls

- a. Fouls will be called but will not be recorded in any official book. Goal is to instruct and maximize participation.
- b. Any foul called by the coach will result in the coach going over to the player, instructed him or her what happened and what was wrong about it. At that point the ball will be taken out of bounds or foul shots be awarded if so needed.
 - i. Free throws will be shot from a distance that the player can reach. The goal is to provide each player with the opportunity to score. All players can rebound the ball once it touches the rim.

Cancellations

1. Cancellations of all basketball practices and scrimmages will be made two (2) hours prior to your start time.
2. If inclement weather causes school to close early, then all games and practices are automatically cancelled.
3. League website will be updated if cancelled games.
 - a. <https://www.leaguelineup.com/wmassbasketball>

Feedback

This is the 2nd year with a different format for our Kindergarten Basketball Program. Coaches Feedback is always welcomed.

Revised & Updated: October 2024

Kindergarten Basketball Practice Plan

You should conduct your basketball practice for kindergartners so that they can experience a sense of consistency from practice to practice.

Warm up progression (6-10 min)

- Basketball practice for kindergartners should begin with having a few lines of players that run back and forth to give a teammate a high five.
- Warm ups should help players get some of their energy out, learn to run and fall, develop athleticism and get ready them for practice.
- You can take that into skipping or defensive slides moving laterally.
- A great warm-up for the Kindergarten age groups is:
 - **Simon Says Basketball Drill Purpose** This simple game promotes good listening, decision making, develops footwork, incorporates change of pace, change of direction, running and is ideal as a warmup for younger basketball players. You may add a ball for more advanced players.

Ball Handling (6-10 min)

- Most of what you will be able to do with 5 and 6 year olds is going to be related to dribbling the basketball so every player having their own basketball is really important to keeping players engaged.
- The more that they can each handle the basketball and get practice with coordination with the ball, the better.
- Some fun dribbling and ball handling drills that are fun for kids to try.
 - Finger tip control (over head)
 - Control ball around the body.
 - Dribble control for right & left hand (head up, fingers, no slapping). Alternate hands.
 - Dribble across with right, then back with left.

Bounce Passing and Catching (6-10 minutes)

- The biggest obstacle that you will have to overcome with young, kindergarten basketball players is that many of them will be afraid of the ball.
- Starting them in partners close together and just focusing on bounce passing and catching is very helpful.
- After each player is more comfortable, or for players that are more ready, you can have the players pass. Then move to a different spot after each pass.
- Some players will have a hard time catching stationary. Many will have a hard time catching after they move. But that's ok.
- Some fun passing and catching drills that are fun for kids to try.
 - How to grip the ball (point out seams)
 - 2 Hand Chest & Bounce Pass(Thumbs in, elbows out, equal push, step toward target)
 - Two lines facing each other doing **short** chest and bounce passes.

Shooting Drills (6-10 minutes)

- Proper hand placement (one hand behind ball at the center with middle finger on the seam & one hand on side of ball for balance)
- Proper body position (feet shoulder width apart, toes pointing forward, knees bent)
- Proper ball rotation (good release, good arc, fingertips toward target)
- Shoot ball to yourself then a partner (emphasize 1-3)
- Shoot a few **short** shots at the basket.

Defensive Drills (6-10 minutes)

1. Happy feet drill (move left, move right as instructed)
2. Shuffle slide drill (palms up, feet shoulder length apart, knees bent, back straight)

Finish with Fun Games:

Red Light, Green Light

Either the coach, teacher, or a team member stands on one baseline and serves as the caller and judge. The players stand on the opposite baseline, each with a basketball, and turn with their back to the judge. When the judge calls out “Green Light!” the players with the balls turn around and begin running and dribbling towards the opposite baseline. If the judge calls out “Red Light!” they must stop. If a player is caught moving after the judge calls out “Red Light!” they must return to the baseline. The first player to reach the opposite baseline wins.

Variations:

Players take turns dribbling down the court and shoot at the basket when “Red Light!” is called out if within a certain distance. If the player makes the basket, the rest of the players must take turns shooting from the same spot. Those who miss are out. This variation works well with a smaller group of players.

Fox in the Henhouse

For this fast-paced fun basketball game that works well for any age, each player has a basketball. The court serves as the henhouse and the players are the chickens. One player, coach, or the teacher is the Fox. The chickens dribble their balls around the court. Then the Fox calls out, “Fox in the henhouse!” and runs after the chickens trying to knock the balls out of their hands and out of bounds. Every chicken who loses their ball becomes a Fox. However, if a player can retrieve their ball before it goes out of bounds, they can continue to be a chicken. The winner is the last person left as a chicken and gets to be the Fox for the next round.

Relay Race

Divide your group into two teams with each team lining up facing each other behind the baselines. Give a ball to the first person in the line. The goal is to dribble the ball down the court and back as fast as possible. The ball is then handed to the next member of the team. Play continues until all team members have raced. The team that completes the race first wins the game.

Keep Away

This game is designed for three players, but if you have a large group, you can simply divide them into groups of three. Two players dribble the ball and throw it back and forth between them. The third player is in the middle and attempts to steal the ball. If the player in the middle is successful, trade places with the player who had the ball just before the steal. This game has no winner or losers. Play simply continues as long as the kids enjoy it.

Sharks and Minnow

You need at least two players for this game, one to be the Minnow, and one to be the Shark. If you have many players, you can divide them into two groups, one serving as Minnows, and the other as Sharks. The goal of this game is for the Minnows to dribble the ball from one baseline to the other without losing the ball. When the whistle is blown or “Start!” is called, the Minnows start dribbling down the court. The Sharks attempt to steal the balls before the Minnows reach the baseline. Additionally, the Minnow attempts to shoot a basket while dribbling.

If a Minnow loses the ball, they become a Shark on the next round. Once all the players have turned into Sharks, the game is over. The last remaining Minnow is the winner.

End of practice:

- *End every practice with a team cheer and on a positive note!*

Things to remember:

For kids as young as five and six years old, the goal of any youth sports practice is participation, engagement, entertainment, fun, exercise, and to improve motor skills and dexterity. Young players simply need to learn to love the game and enjoy being at practice.

It's important to remember that 5 on 5 basketball scrimmages are useless for kindergarten basketball practices. However, games like red light green light, dribble tag, sharks and minnows (having practices with 4 dribblers and the rest of the players trying to run across the court from side to side) can be very productive and fun for kindergartners.

Plan and structure your practices properly:

- Planning out your practices is the most important part. Have a written plan so that you know exactly what comes next in your practice.
- Plan in breaks

- If you have a new skill or drill to teach the team, do that at the beginning of practice when the players will be most attentive.
- Each drill should be between 3 -5 minutes to keep players interest.
- Plan fun games in between more challenging, difficult drills to limit frustration.
- Plan drills that take time to set up after breaks so you can have time to set up without making the team wait.
- Be creative! You can make up games and competitions out of almost anything. Also if a drill only requires 4-5 players, you can give the other players ball handling or movement drills to keep them busy while they wait. That way no time is wasted.
- Utilize your coaches to break into groups. Smaller groups = more ball touches and more focus for player.
- Always end your practice on a positive note.
- Note: For coaching kindergarten basketball, It is better for players to receive multiple sets of repetitions with the same 5-6 core skills than it is for them to practice more skills and only get one set of repetitions. This practice plan is some ideas that won't always be able to be accomplished in one session.

Kindergarten basketball practices should be 100% skill based with games being all dribbling games, passing games, and shooting games.

INSTRUCTIONAL BASKETBALL PROPER SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- 1) **Dribbling** - emphasizing fingertip control
 - palms off of the ball, no slapping at the ball
 - knees bent
 - practice with head up, use visual count
 - practice directional dribbling, left, right, forward, back
 - practice both hands

- 2) **Passing** - two hand passes
 - chest passes
 - bounce passes
 - inbounds passes, with feet out of bounds
 - lead passes, pass where the teammate is going

- 3) **Shooting** - Practice one hand shooting, lower the hoop if necessary
 - feet shoulder width apart
 - toes pointing forward
 - knees bent
 - one hand behind, one hand beside
 - one hand release
 - good arc
 - follow through, fingertips towards target

- 4) **Defensive positioning** – know all five positions
 - knees bent
 - arms out
 - palms front
 - slide feet
 - box out, when rebounding

- 5) **Game Time/scrimmaging** – not recommended at this age
 - after a period of time, you may have some success with 3 on 3 or 4 on 4
 - turn your drill time into game time

This is just a sample of what you may want to do during your practice sessions. There are many great videos and drills available on the internet. Our goal for this age group is to instill the proper basketball techniques and fundamentals to give the kids the proper tools to enjoy basketball and have fun! The true measure of a great season is the number of players who return next year. Let's make it a goal that all of the players come back next year.