

# 8-Week Training Plan - Basketball

## Eight- Week Training Program

### Preseason Planning

1. Improve your knowledge of basketball and of coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities by attending a Special Olympics training school.
2. Locate a facility that will accommodate your athletes' needs (school, YMCA, church, playground, etc.).
3. Secure the proper equipment.
4. Recruit and orient volunteer assistant coaches.
5. Recruit assistance providing athletes' transportation to and from practice.
6. Schedule two or more practices per week for at least eight weeks before a major tournament or National/State Games.
7. Schedule scrimmages and games against local teams before National/State Games.
8. Ensure that all athletes have been medically approved before the first practice.
9. Obtain medical and parental releases.
10. Establish goals and develop a plan for the
  - season. What must your athletes be able to do by their
  - first game? When do you introduce those skills?
  - How will you build upon them?

### Essential Components of Planning a Basketball Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season, and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program. Please refer to the noted sections in each area for more in-depth information and guidance on these topics.

|                                 |               |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Warm-Up                         | 25-30 minutes |
| Skill Development Workout       | 15-20 minutes |
| Conditioning or Fitness Workout | 15-20 minutes |
| Cool-Down                       | 15-20 minutes |

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember when creating a training session to allow for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

- Easy to
- difficult Slow
- to fast Known
- to unknown
- General to specific Start to finish

The following eight-week training plans have been used successfully with athletes of varying abilities with all training sessions. These are offered as samples and not as required training programs. In a best-case scenario, you will have many more than eight weeks to train, and many more opportunities for competition, than are listed here.

### **Week One- Practice 1**

1. Warm up with footwork activities and a ball, then stretch.
2. Conduct Basketball Skills Assessment Tests (BSAT s) Dribble, Rebound, Perimeter Shooting.
3. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week One- Practice 2**

1. Warm up with footwork activities and a ball, then stretch.
2. Conduct Basketball Home Training Program emphasis on dribbling theme.
3. Play Dribble Tag; also introduce the concept of offense and defense.
4. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Two- Practice 1**

1. Warm up with footwork activities and a ball, then stretch.
2. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (10 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, shooting and going after the ball.
3. Conduct a controlled scrimmage.
4. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Two- Practice 2**

1. Warm up with footwork activities and a ball, then stretch.
2. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (10 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching (introduce throw-in), shooting and going after the ball.
3. Teach a simple offense on the half court; scrimmage.
4. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Three- Practice 1**

1. Warm up with footwork activities and a ball, then stretch.
2. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (10 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, shooting with Rebound Ball and one-on-one defense.
3. Review a simple offense on the half court; teach a simple defense; scrimmage.
4. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Three- Practice 2**

1. Warm up with footwork activities and a ball, then stretch.
2. Teach simple pre-game warm-up routine.
3. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (5-7 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, shooting with Rebound Ball, and one-on-one and then two-on-one defender.
4. Review a simple offense and defense on the half court and scrimmage (introduce 3-second lane).
5. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Four- Practice 1**

1. Warm up with footwork activities and a ball, then stretch.
2. Use pre-game warm-up.
3. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (5-6 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, shooting with Rebound Ball and two-on-one defender.
4. Review a simple offense and defense on the half court and scrimmage (introduce changing baskets at halftime).

5. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Four- Practice 2**

1. Warm up with footwork activities and a ball, then stretch.
2. Use pre-game warm-up.
3. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (5 minutes each ) dribbling, passing/catching, shooting with Rebound Ball, and two-on-one and then two-on-two defense.
4. Review a simple offense and defense on the half court, and scrimmage (teach jump ball and practice changing baskets at halftime).
5. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Five- Practice 1**

1. Use pre-game warm-up and then stretch.
2. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (4-5 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, free throw with rebounding and two-on-two.
3. Review the offense and defense on the half court; play a shortened game (set up a situation with ball out of bounds under the basket).
4. Cool down and team talk.

Week Five Practice 2 (Play a game against a local team.)

### **Week Six Practice 1**

1. Use footwork activities, run through the pre-game warm-up, and then stretch.
2. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (4 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, free throw with rebound ball, and two-on-two and then three-on-two.
3. Review the offense and defense on the half court; play a shortened game (emphasize playing positions and changing ends at halftime; review situation with ball out of bounds under basket; set up situation with ball out of bounds at the sideline).
4. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Six- Practice 2**

1. Use footwork activities, run through pre-game warm-up, and then stretch.
2. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (4 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, free throw with rebound ball, and three-on-two and then three-on-three.
3. Review the offense and defense on the half court; play a shortened game (emphasize playing positions and changing ends at halftime; review situation with ball out of bounds under basket and at sideline).
4. Cool down and team talk.

### **Week Seven Practice 1**

1. Use footwork activities, run through pre-game warm-up, and then stretch.
2. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (3-4 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, free throw with rebound ball, and three-on-two and then three-on-three.
3. Review the offense and defense on the half court; play shortened game (emphasize playing positions and changing ends at halftime; review situation with ball out of bounds under basket and at sideline).
4. Cool down and team talk.

## **Week Seven-Practice 2 (Play a game against a local team.)**

### **Week Eight**

#### **Practice 1**

1. Use footwork activities, pre-game warm-up, and then stretch.
2. Divide into four equal groups and conduct four skill stations (3-4 minutes each) dribbling, passing/catching, free throw with rebound ball, and three-on-two and then three-on-three.
3. Prepare for Area Tournament; set up any situations and scrimmage.
4. Cool down and team talk.

#### **Week Eight- Practice 2 (Compete in the Area Tournament.)**

1. Travel; arrive; register team and Individual Skills athletes; review schedule.
2. Eat snack or meal an hour and a half before competing (or after competing when necessary).
3. Warm up and stretch 20 minutes before competing.
4. Compete.
5. Receive awards.
6. Cool down.
7. Return home.

#### **After the Eight-Week Season**

1. Continue training athletes going beyond Local or Area competition.
2. Invite athletes, parents, group home staff, facility host, sponsors, etc.
3. Have an end-of-the-season party to celebrate and recognize athletes achievements and assistant coaches help.
4. Thank the facility host.
5. Thank assistant coaches.
6. Thank other volunteers.
7. Send a follow-up news story and photos to media.
8. Evaluate the season.
9. Develop the season plan for next year.

## Sample Practice Schedules

### Basketball Week-1 Practices

Suggest Two Practices Minimum (repeating and reinforcing concepts for both)

- 20 minutes Warm up en masse in waves of four, starting at one end of court: Jogging (forward, backward; defensive sliding)  
Dribbling, passing and moving to ball (in pairs and moving sideline to sideline).  
*First person dribbles to opposite sideline, turns toward ball-hand side, pulls ball in new direction, stops halfway, bounce passes to partner who moves to catch ball before continuing dribble and repeating what partner did.*  
Stretching: Calves, hamstrings, quads, groin and arms
- 25 minutes Skill Work (one or two coaches per basketball; stations 5 minutes each; jogging to next station; athletes are ability-grouped to match strength and size for safety)
- Rebounding: Go to the Ball (from rolling ball straight and then to each side, bouncing ball straight and then to each side, tossing ball straight and then to each side). *Set up station with coach and line of athletes; athletes go to the ball, catch ball, bounce pass back to coach and go to end of line.*
  - Shooting: Pick up ball in proper shooting position (shooting hand on top; guide hand at side); then shoot short shots. *Set up station with coach in front of basket and to side of line of athletes along lane line; athletes use backboard for shot.* If time permits, player takes ball out of coach's hand in proper shooting position.
  - Two-on-the-coach (Two offenders work on passing, moving, rebounding and scoring against one coach-defender). *This is the beginning of offense.* Three-on-three: Work on formation of defense in triangle (step to ball; belly to ball).  
*Focus is on defense, reacting and moving to stop ball; start by passing the ball with defense stepping to ball and belly facing ball.*
- 35 minutes Team Concept for Five-on-five Teams
- Offense and two or three defense with no-opponent ” work on Go offense.
  - Then scrimmage (play); coaches may need to shadow and assist low-ability athletes to positions on court.

### Individual Skills Work with ISC Athletes: 10m Dribble; Target Pass; Spot Shot

- Conduct ISC and score; record efforts.
- Then play low-organized fun games using skills, i.e., Beat the Clock: see how many shots from positions 1 and 2 can be made in 30 seconds.

Conditioning Activities: Jump-the-Lines; Sit-ups; Push-ups

- 10 minutes Bring team together for cool-down stretching and reward efforts: winner's circle with each athlete receiving accolades; coach notes one positive per athlete

## Basketball Week-2 Practices

Suggest Two Practices Minimum (repeating and reinforcing concepts for both)

- 20 minutes Warm-up: Jogging (forward then backward; side to side [defensive sliding]) Dribbling, passing and moving to ball (in pairs and moving sideline to sideline) Stretching: Calves, hamstrings, quads, groin and arms.
- 25 minutes Skill Work (one or two coaches per basketball; stations 5 minutes each; jogging to next station; athletes are ability-grouped to match strength and size for safety)
- Rebounding: Go to the Ball (from rolling ball, bouncing, tossing; add shooting with athletes still in line, but coach shooting from side). *Set up station with coach and line of athletes; athletes go to the ball, catch ball, bounce pass back to coach and go to end of line.*
  - Shooting: Pick up ball in proper shooting position (shooting hand on top; guide hand at side); progress to receive pass, shoot and follow for rebound; then short shots. *Set up station with coach under basket and in line of athletes along lane line.*
  - scoring against one coach-defender who offers increasing levels of pressure.
  - Three-on-three: Continue work on defense (step to ball; belly to ball / add Close the Door on drive). *Focus is on defense, reacting and moving to stop ball; start by passing the ball with defense stepping to ball and belly facing ball, then dribble to gap with defense closing the door coming together and not allowing offender to go through the gap.*
- 35 minutes Team Concept for Five-on-five Teams
- Offense and two-on-three defense with no-opponent continue work on Go offense. Run to set-up positions from half court; proceed into offense.
  - Then scrimmage in 5- to 7-minute blocks of time.
  - Add jump ball practice to start game, add sideline play at offensive end: *team goes to set up position with best passer or point guard taking ball out of bounds.*

### Individual Skills Work with ISC Athletes: 10m Dribble; Target Pass; Spot Shot

- Conduct ISC and score; record efforts.
- Then play low-organized fun games using skills (two-player Keep Away from Coach).

Conditioning Activities: Jump-the-Lines; Sit-ups; Push-ups

- 10 minutes Bring team together for cool-down stretching and reward efforts: winner s circle with each athlete receiving accolades; coach notes one positive per athlete.

## Basketball Week-3 Practices

Suggest Two Practices Minimum (repeating and reinforcing concepts for both)

- 20 minutes Warm-up: Jogging (forward then backward; side to side [defensive sliding]) Dribbling, passing, and moving to ball (in pairs and moving sideline to sideline)  
Add playing Dribble Tag for 5 minutes: *Divide athletes by ability, putting groups with each coach; depending on level of athlete, put two athletes in jumpball circle; each has a ball; each must start dribbling ball and prevent opponent from stealing ball while dribbling his/her own ball.*  
Stretching: Calves, hamstrings, quads, groin and arms
- 25 minutes Skill Work (one or two coaches per basketball; stations 5 minutes each; jogging to next station; athletes are ability-grouped to match strength and size for safety)
- Rebounding: Go to the Ball from rolling ball, bouncing, tossing, and shooting. *Coach shoots from corner as last week; add pressure with coach trying to steal ball and providing physical contact with athlete.*
  - Shooting: Pick up ball in proper shooting position (shooting hand on top; guide and at side); progress to receive pass, shoot and follow for rebound; then short shots: *Set up station with coach under basket and in line of athletes along lane line.*
  - Two-on-the-coach: Two offenders work on passing, moving, rebounding and scoring against one coach-defender who offers increasing levels of pressure. add that athletes must make at least two passes before shooting.
  - Three-on-three: Continue work on defense (step to ball; belly to ball / add Close the Door on drive). *Focus is on defense, reacting and moving to stop ball; start by passing the ball with defense stepping to ball and belly facing ball, then dribble to gap with defense closing the door with closest defenders coming together and not allowing offender to go through the gap; add when defense gets ball, pass back to coach with teams switching from offense to defense.*
- 35 minutes Team Concept for Five-on-five Teams
- Review Gō offense and two-three defense with no opponent; run to set-up positions from half court and then from defense; proceed into offense.
  - Scrimmage in 5- to 7-minute blocks of time.
  - Continue jump ball and sideline out-of-bounds play on other side of basket; add lining up and shooting free throw.

### Individual Skills Work with ISC Athletes: 10m Dribble; Target Pass; Spot Shot;

- Conduct ISC and score; record efforts.
  - Then play low-organized fun games using skills (two-on-two coach-athlete teams).
- 10 minutes Bring team together for cool-down stretching and reward efforts; go over plans for competition this week (uniforms; travel logistics; individual responsibilities)

## Basketball Week-4 Practices

Suggest Two Practices Minimum (repeating and reinforcing concepts for both)

20 minutes Warm-up: Jogging (forward then backward; side to side [defensive sliding]) Dribbling, passing and moving to ball (in pairs and moving sideline to sideline)  
Playing Dribble Tag for 6 minutes: *Divide athletes into four groups two groups lower ability, two groups higher ability; lower teams play in one half court; higher teams play in other half court; play in 3-minute time blocks; winning teams have more players left on the court at end of time.*  
Stretching: Calves, hamstrings, quads, groin and arms

25 minutes Skill Work (one or two coaches per basketball; stations 5 minutes each; jogging to next station; athletes are ability-grouped to match strength and size for safety)

- Rebounding: Go to the Ball from rolling ball, bouncing, tossing and shooting. Coach shoots from corner as last week; add more pressure with coach and/or athlete behind trying to steal ball and providing physical contact with athlete.2-
- Shooting: Receive ball in proper shooting position (shooting hand on top; guide hand at side); progress to receive pass, shoot and follow for rebound; then short shots: *Set up station with coach now at foul line, with pass coming at different angle.*
- Three-on-the-coach: Three offenders work on passing, moving, rebounding and scoring against one coach-defender who offers increasing levels of pressure; add that athletes must make at least two passes before shooting.
- Three-on-three: Continue focus on defense (step to ball; belly to ball; close the door on drive). *Focus is on defense, reacting and moving to stop ball; stepping*
- Continue review of "Go" offense and two-three defense with no opponent; run to positions from half court and then from defense; proceed into offense.
- Scrimmage in 5- to 7-minute blocks of time.
- Continue jump ball, sideline out-of-bounds play and shooting free throw; add end-line out-of- bounds play to score under own basket.

### Individual Skills Work with ISC Athletes: 10m Dribble; Target Pass; Spot Shot

- Conduct ISC and score; record efforts.
- Then play low-organized fun games using skills (two-on-two coach-athlete teams).

10 minutes Bring team together for cool-down stretching and reward efforts; go over plans for competition this week (uniforms; travel logistics; parent and coach responsibilities).

## Basketball Week-5 Practices

Suggest Two Practices Minimum (repeating and reinforcing concepts for both)

- 20 minutes Warm-up: Jogging (forward then backward; side to side [defensive sliding]) Dribbling, passing and moving to ball (in pairs and moving sideline to sideline)  
Playing Dribble Tag for 6 minutes: *Divide athletes into four groups -- two groups lower ability, two groups higher ability; lower teams play in one half court; higher teams play in other half court; play in 3-minute time blocks; winning teams have more players left on the court at end of time.*  
Stretching: Calves, hamstrings, quads, groin and arms
- 25 minutes Skill Work (one or two coaches per basketball; stations 5 minutes each; jogging to next station; athletes are ability-grouped to match strength and size for safety)
- Rebounding: Go to the Ball from rolling ball, bouncing, tossing and shooting; then play Rebound Ball: *Two players at a time with coach shooting and players trying to grab ball first.*
  - Shooting: Receive ball in proper shooting position; shoot without and then with pressure. *Set up station with coach under basket who passes to athlete and comes out to offer hand-up or in-face pressure.*
  - Three-on-the-coach plus One: *Three offenders work on passing, moving, rebounding and scoring against one coach-defender and athlete teammate, who offer increasing levels of pressure.*
  - Three-on-three: Continue focus on defense (step to ball; belly to ball; close the door on drive). *Focus is on defense, reacting and moving to stop ball; start by passing the ball with defense stepping to ball and belly facing ball, then dribble to gap with defense closing the door with closest defenders coming together and not allowing offender to go through the gap; continue when defense gets ball, pass back to coach with teams switching from offense to defense.*
- 35 minutes Team Concept for Five-on-five Teams
- Continue review of Go offense and two-three defense with no opponent. Run to positions from half court and then from defense; proceed into offense. Scrimmage in 5- to 7-minute blocks of time.
  - Continue jump ball, sideline out-of-bounds play and shooting free throw; add end-line out-of-bounds play to score under own basket.

### Individual Skills Work with ISC Athletes: 10m Dribble; Target Pass; Spot Shot

- Conduct ISC and score; record efforts.
  - Then play low-organized fun games using skills (two-on-two athlete teams).
- 10 minutes Bring team together for cool-down stretching and reward efforts; go over plans for competition this week (uniforms; travel logistics; individual responsibilities).

## Basketball Week-6 Practices

Suggest 2 Practices Minimum (repeating and reinforcing concepts for both)

- 25 minutes Warm-up: Formalize pre-game warm-up (jogging, then partner dribbling and passing) Stretching: Calves, hamstrings, quads, groin and arms  
Lay-up and shooting (two lines: one shooting, the other rebounding)  
Add Fast Break drill: Coach throws long; athlete runs, grabs ball first (does not dribble a bouncing ball), then dribbles in for lay-up, gets rebound and passes to coach; repeat coming back down court with new coach throwing ball.
- 20 minutes Skill Work (one or two coaches per basketball; stations 5 minutes each; athletes are ability-grouped to match strength and size for safety)
- Rebounding: Rebound ball. *Two players at a time, with coach shooting and players trying to grab ball first.*
  - Shooting: Rapid Fire Shooting in group of three with two balls. *Set up station with rebounder, passer and shooter, with coach near athlete to provide assistance.*
  - Three-on-three: Offense-defense. *Defense steps to ball, belly to ball and "closes the door; offense works with teammates, moves to get open, rebounds and is aware of 3-second lane violation; when defense gets ball, pass back to coach with teams switching from offense to defense.*
- 35 minutes Team Concept for Five-on-five Teams
- Continue review of "Go" offense and two-three defense with no opponent. Run to positions from half court and then from defense; proceed into offense.
  - Scrimmage in 5- to 7-minute blocks of time.
  - Continue jump ball, sideline out-of-bounds play from both sides of court, shooting free throw, and end-line out-of-bounds play at both sides of court to score under own basket.

### Individual Skills Work with ISC Athletes: 10m Dribble; Target Pass; Spot Shot

- Conduct ISC and score; record efforts.
  - Then play low-organized fun games using skills (three-on-three teams of one coach and two athletes).
- 10 minutes Bring team together for cool-down stretching and reward efforts; go over plans for competition this week (uniforms; travel logistics; parent and coach responsibilities).

## Basketball Week-7 Practices

Suggest Two Practices Minimum (repeating and reinforcing concepts for both)

- 25 minutes Warm-up: Review pre-game warm-up (jogging, then partner dribbling and passing) Stretching: Calves, hamstrings, quads, groin and arms  
Lay-up and shooting (two lines: one shooting, the other rebounding)  
Continue Fast Break drill: Coach throws long; athlete runs, grabs ball first (does not dribble a bouncing ball), then dribbles in for lay-up, gets rebound and passes to coach; repeat coming back down court with new coach throwing ball.
- 20 minutes Skill Work (one or two coaches per basketball; stations 5 minutes each; jogging to next station; athletes are ability-grouped to match strength and size for safety)
- Rebounding: Rebound Ball. *Two players at a time, with coach shooting and players trying to grab ball first.*
  - Shooting: Rapid Fire Shooting from opposite side in groups of three with two balls. *Set up station with rebounder, passer and shooter and coach near athletes to provide assistance; rotate clockwise every 30 seconds.*
  - 3-on-3: Offense-defense. *Defense steps to ball, belly to ball and closes the door; offense works with teammates, moves to get open, rebounds and is aware of 3-second lane violation; when defense gets ball, pass back to coach with teams switching from offense to defense.*
- 35 minutes Team Concept for Five-on-five Teams
- Continue review of "Go" offense and two-three defense with no opponent. Run to positions from half court and then from defense; proceed into offense.
  - Scrimmage in 5- to 7-minute blocks of time.
  - Continue jump ball, sideline out-of-bounds play from both sides of court, shooting free throw and end-line out-of-bounds play at both sides of court to score under own basket.

### Individual Skills Work with ISC Athletes

- 10m Dribble; Target Pass; Spot
  - Shot Conduct ISC and score; record efforts.
  - Then play low-organized fun games using skills (three-on-three teams of one coach and two athletes).
- 10 minutes Bring team together for cool-down stretching and reward efforts; go over plans for competition this week (uniforms; travel logistics; parent and coach responsibilities).

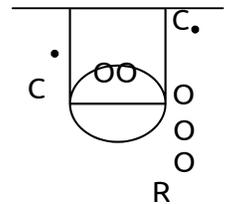
## Basketball Week-8 Practices

Suggest Two Practices Minimum (repeating and reinforcing concepts for both)

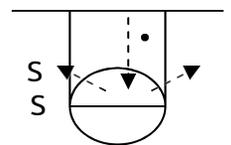
- 25 minutes Warm-up: Review pre-game warm-up (jogging, then partner dribbling and passing) Stretching: Calves, hamstrings, quads, groin and arms
- Lay-up and shooting (two lines: one shooting, the other rebounding)
- Continue Fast Break drill: Coach throws long; athlete runs, grabs ball first (does not dribble a bouncing ball), then dribbles in for lay-up, gets rebound and passes to coach; repeat coming back down court with new coach throwing ball.

- 20 minutes Skill Work (one or two coaches per basketball; stations 5 minutes each; jogging to next station; athletes are ability-grouped to match strength and size for safety)

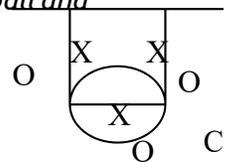
- Rebounding: Rebound Ball. *Three players at a time, with coach shooting and players trying to grab ball first.*



- Shooting: Rapid Fire Shooting from both sides in groups of four with two balls and two shooters. *Set up station with rebounder, passer and shooters; rotate C clockwise every 30 seconds.*



- Three-on-three: Offense-defense. *Defense steps to ball, belly to ball and "closes the door"; offense works with teammates, moves to get open, rebounds and is aware of 3-second lane violation; when defense gets ball, pass back to coach with teams switching from offense to defense.*



- 35 minutes Team Concept for Five-on-five Teams
- Scrimmage in 5- to 7-minute blocks of time.
  - Continue jump ball, sideline out-of-bounds play from both sides of court, shooting free throw and end-line out-of-bounds play at both sides of court to score under own basket.

### Individual Skills Work with ISC Athletes

- 10m Dribble; Target Pass; Spot
- Shot Conduct ISC and score; record efforts.
- Then play low-organized fun games using skills (three-on-three athlete teams).

- 10 minutes Bring team together for cool-down stretching and reward efforts; go over plans for culminating competition this week (uniforms; travel logistics; parent and coach responsibilities).

## **In-Season Planning**

1. Use skills assessments to identify each athlete's skill level and to record each athlete's progress throughout the season.
2. Assess the team's abilities:
  - How many athletes can play one-on-one?
  - How many athletes can work with teammates (two-on-two)?
  - How many athletes can run the floor and control the ball (fast break)?
  - How many athletes can offer pressure defense: half court, full court?
3. Design an eight-week training program, such as the one suggested for a beginning program that follows.
4. Plan and modify each session according to what needs to be accomplished.
5. Design or use drills based on your needs:
  - Directly relate drills to your offensive and defensive systems. Keep everyone busy.
  - Be simple and specific.
  - Reinforce proper technique.
  - Keep drills short and intense (no shorter than 30 seconds, no longer than 10 minutes). Add progressions and demands to familiar drills as skills increase.
  - Contribute to more than one aspect of the game when possible. Emphasize conditioning as skill is learned.
  - Involve offense and defense (one area may be emphasized, but not at expense of other).
6. Develop skills by progressively increasing
  - difficulty. Perform the skill.
  - Perform the skill a certain number of times.
  - Count the number of times the skill is done in a prescribed time.
  - Require the skill to be done a minimum number of times in a prescribed amount of time. Add an opponent and play, but emphasize the skill and enforce the rules.
  - Play and reach a prescribed goal (time or frequency).
  - Add more players (encourage competition and cooperation). Add conditions that must be met within the play.
7. Introduce game concepts according to readiness level and development; modify the implementation schedule as needed.

## Sample Practice Plan Form

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time: Goals:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Warm-Up** - Make the body ready for practice.

| Leader | Activity | Equipment |
|--------|----------|-----------|
|        |          |           |
|        |          |           |

**Team Talk** - Let the athletes know your expectations for practice.

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Goals for Today</b>       |  |
| <b>Previous Skill Lesson</b> |  |
| <b>New Skill Lesson</b>      |  |

**Skill Development** - Games and exercises to reinforce learning. Make it fun.

| Leader | Activity | Equipment |
|--------|----------|-----------|
|        |          |           |
|        |          |           |
|        |          |           |

**Break** - Supply water and take the skill into the scrimmage.

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Reinforce Skill from Today:</b> |  |
|------------------------------------|--|

**Scrimmage** - Emphasize last week's skill and new skill.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Previous Skill</b> |  |
| <b>New Skill</b>      |  |

**Team Talk** - Emphasize new skill and techniques from scrimmage.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Scrimmage Lesson 1</b>       |  |
| <b>Scrimmage Lesson 2</b>       |  |
| <b>Review Last Week's Skill</b> |  |

## Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of basketball. The safety and well-being of athletes are the coaches' primary concerns. Basketball is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

1. Establish clear rules for behavior at the first practice, and enforce them.
2. Keep your hands to yourself.
3. Listen to the coach.
4. When you hear the whistle, Stop, Look, and Listen.
5. Ask the coach before you leave the court.
6. Make sure athletes bring water to every practice.
7. Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
8. Identify the nearest phone accessible during practice.
9. Ensure that the locker rooms and/or rest rooms are available and clean during practice.
10. Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
11. Do not allow athletes to play while wearing watches, bracelets or jewelry, including earrings.
12. Provide proper stretching exercises after warming up at the beginning of each practice.
13. Provide activities that also improve general fitness levels. Fit athletes are less likely to get injured.
14. Make the area safe. Repair warped boards or holes on the floors, remove protruding objects from walls, etc., that could cause injury. Simply telling athletes to avoid obstacles is not enough.
15. Walk the court to see that safe conditions exist. The floor should be clean, lighting should be adequate and padding provided where needed. There should be no unnecessary equipment or obstacles and no loose objects.
16. Identify a safe area where basketballs can be stored during practice. Safe areas must be at least two meters to the side or beyond the court. Unused basketballs can be placed in ball bags and stored in this location.
17. Check the basketballs for proper inflation and loose panels.
18. Check the baskets and nets.
19. Encourage athletes to wear knee pads, knee braces, athletic supporters, eyeglass straps and mouth guards when needed. Some athletes need the extra protection.
20. Encourage athletes to wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing, one or two pairs of white cotton or cotton-blend socks, and properly fitted and tied court shoes.
21. Evenly match athletes physically in games where they play against each other and in activities such as one-on-one, scrimmages, Mini-Basketball, etc.
22. Provide one-to-one instruction, especially to athletes with lower ability.
23. Always have at least two coaches at each practice and game to provide:
  - One-to-one coaching of athletes with the lowest ability

- One-to-two coaching of athletes with lower ability
- One-to-three coaching of athletes with moderate ability
- One-to-four coaching of athletes with higher ability

### **Basketball Practice Competitions**

The more we compete, the better we get. Competition motivates athletes, coaches and the entire sport management team. Expand or add to your schedule as many competition opportunities as possible. We have provided a few suggestions below:

1. Host basketball games with adjacent local programs.
2. Ask the local high school whether your athletes can compete with teams as practice basketball games.
3. Join the local community basketball league, club and/or association.
4. Create your own basketball league or club in your community.
5. Host weekly basketball games for the area.
6. Incorporate competition components and scrimmages at the end of every training session.

## Sample Training Session

Special Olympics athletes generally respond to a simple, well-structured training routine. A structured routine can be a positive experience for Special Olympics athletes because it provides familiarity, stability and consistency. In addition, an organized plan, prepared before the coach arrives on site, will enable the coach to make the best use of limited time. It will also assist the head coach in organizing and communicating responsibilities with the assistant coaches. Every practice session should contain the following elements:

- Warm-up
- Stretch
- Previously taught skills
- New skills
- Competition
- Fitness training
- Cool-down
- Feedback on performance

The amount of time spent on each element will vary because of several factors:

1. Time of the season - more skills practice is provided earlier in the season. In comparison, more competition experience is provided later in the season.
2. Skill level - more practice of previously taught skills is needed for lower ability athletes.
3. Number of coaches - the more coaches present and the more quality 1-to-1 instruction offered, the more improvement seen.
4. Total amount of training time available - more time is spent on new skills in a 2-hour session than in a 90-minute session.

A recommended 90-minute training plan with coaching tips is outlined in the next column.

1. Warm-Up and Stretching (20-25 minutes)
  - Provide a safe court.
  - Provide a basketball to every athlete, if possible. Start with a team cheer.
  - Use a basketball as much as possible. Provide footwork activities.
  - Stretch each muscle group.
  - After the routine is learned, have athletes lead the stretching while coaches provide individual assistance, when needed.
2. Basic Skills (15-20 minutes)
  - Review previously learned skills.

- Introduce the new skill theme for this
  - training session. Demonstrate simply and dramatically.
  - Physically prompt and assist athletes with lower ability, when needed.
3. Competition Experience (20-30 minutes)
- After being introduced to skills, athletes learn by playing the game. The game is the greatest teacher, for it is an opportunity to apply those skills.
  - Mini games (Mini Basketball) teach basic rules and an understanding of the game.
  - Scrimmages teach basic positions and the game itself.
  - Utilize ‘freeze play’ to periodically stop the game and reinforce proper skills. Teamwork and effort should be recognized and reinforced.
  - Always allow at least 10 minutes of free play where the coach says nothing, but does enforce the game rules.
4. Cool-Down And Team Talk
- (5 Minutes)
5. Slowly jog, walk and stretch.
- Comment on the training session as the athletes cool down.
  - Provide positive reinforcement on what they did well; recognize everyone's contribution. Finish with a team cheer

## Special Olympics Basketball Skills Assessment Card

**Athlete Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions

1. Use tool at the beginning of the training/competition season to establish a basis of the athlete's starting skill level.
2. Have the athlete perform the skill several times.
3. If the athlete performs the skill correctly three out of five times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.
4. Program Assessment Sessions into your program.
5. Athletes may accomplish skills in any order. Athletes have accomplished this list when all possible items have been achieved.

### Dribbling

- Attempts to dribble a basketball in any manner.
- Dribbles the ball in any manner at least three bounces in a row.
- Dribbles the ball with one hand more than three bounces in a row while standing
- in one place. Dribbles the ball with the opposite hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in one place.
- Dribbles the ball with one hand, then the other hand, three bounces in a row each, without stopping and while standing still.
- Dribbles the ball with one hand while walking forward
- ten steps. Dribbles the ball with one hand while running forward twenty steps.
- Dribbles the ball with either hand while moving in any direction (forward, backward or sideways).

### Passing

- Attempts to pass a basketball.
- Passes the ball in any manner and in any
- direction. Passes the ball in any manner
- to an intended target. Makes a two-hand chest pass in any direction.
- Makes a two-hand chest pass to an
- intended target. Makes a bounce pass to an intended target.
- Makes a two-hand overhead pass to an
- intended target. Makes a lob pass to an intended target.
- Makes a baseball pass to an intended target.
-

### **Catching**

- Attempts to catch a basketball in any
- manner. Catches the ball in any manner.
- Catches a bounce pass in arms and
- chest. Catches a bounce pass with
- hands only. Catches a chest pass in
- arms and chest. Catches a chest pass with hands only.
- Attempts to catch a pass in any manner
- while moving. Catches a pass in any manner while moving.
- Catches a pass with hands only, while moving.

### **Shooting**

- Attempts to shoot a basketball toward
- the basket. Hits the backboard with a one-hand set shot.
- Makes a basket with a one-hand set
- shot. Hits the backboard on a lay-up.
- Makes a basket on a lay-up.
- Hits the backboard with a jump
- shot. Makes a basket with a jump shot.

### **Rebounding**

- Attempts to catch in any manner a basketball that is tossed
- into the air. Catches a ball that is tossed into the air.
- Attempts to catch in any manner a ball that rebounds off
- the backboard. Tracks the ball as it is shot at the basket.
- Turns to face the basket and takes ready position for rebounding.
- Catches in any manner the ball after it rebounds off the backboard and bounces
- once on the floor. Catches the ball with hands only, after it rebounds off the
- backboard and bounces once on the floor. Catches the ball in the air with hands only after it rebounds off the backboard.

Participates in team rebounding drills.

### **Team Play**

Attempts to participate in team play skills.

Participates in any manner in an offensive team play

drill. Participates in any manner in a defensive team

play drill. Demonstrates knowledge of fundamentals

of offensive team play. Demonstrates knowledge of

fundamentals of defensive team play.

### **Participation**

Attempts to participate in a basketball training

program. Participates in any manner in a basketball

training program. Participates upon own initiative in

a basketball training program. Practices basketball

skills a minimum of three days a week.

Takes part in team activities.

Demonstrates knowledge of the basic rules of basketball.

## Assessment & Matching Athletes with Events

It is important to encourage and to give athletes an opportunity to choose appropriate sports and events. However, the health and safety of all athletes is paramount. Sports and events must provide safe, meaningful and challenging opportunities for all athletes. For example, if sufficient numbers of athletes exist, wheelchair basketball is a highly appropriate sport for those non-ambulatory athletes. But when limited numbers of athletes prevent full 5 v 5 participation, coaches should provide assistance in referring athletes to community programs.

Wheelchair basketball, half-court 3 v 3 basketball, Individual Skills Contest, Speed Dribble and/or Team Skills Basketball are ideal for wheelchair athletes.

Wheelchair basketball, Individual Skills Contest, Speed Dribble and/or Team Skills Basketball are ideal for physically impaired athletes.

Half-court 3 v 3 basketball, Individual Skills Contest, Speed Dribble and/or Team Skills Basketball are ideal for visually impaired athletes.

It is important for the coach to consider the competition opportunity for which each athlete should train.

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|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Speed Dribble</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate for athletes who are non-ambulatory and are very low-skilled.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Individual Skills Contest</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate for athletes who have very slow reactions, are unable to dribble the ball more than 10 meters, do not move to catch even a slow moving ball, and do not participate in an active manner.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Team Skills Basketball</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate for athletes who are non-ambulatory and low-skilled, and can pass and catch.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3 v 3 Basketball</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate for athletes who can dribble a ball at least 10 meters, pass and catch, shoot a lay-up, pursue a moving ball and recognize the difference between teammates and opponents.</li> <li>• Also appropriate where facilities are limited and half court is more available, or where half court is more normalized in the community.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Full-Court 5 v 5 Basketball</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate for athletes who possess good basic skills, a good understanding of the rules and basic tactics of the game and endurance.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Unified Sports Basketball</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate for higher-skilled athletes.</li> </ul>   |

## **Basketball Attire**

To train and compete successfully in any sport requires an athlete to be outfitted in appropriate sport attire. Inappropriate clothing and equipment can impact an athlete's ability to move, as well as to play the game. Slick-soled, poor-fitting or unlaced shoes, un-strapped eyeglasses and jewelry are dangerous not only to the athlete wearing them, but also to others. An athlete dressed in a good looking, properly-fitted uniform and basketball shoes will feel good about himself or herself, be a part of a team and tend to play better.

Appropriate basketball attire is required for all competitors. As coach, discuss the types of sport clothes acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, long-pant jeans to blue jean shorts are not proper basketball attire for any event. Explain that athletes cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. Take athletes to high school or college basketball training sessions or competitions and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes who do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

### **Shirts**

Shirts for practice should be T-shirt type or sleeveless. Shirts should consist of lightweight material, be comfortable and allow freedom of movement in the shoulders. For competitions, the athlete should wear a clean uniform shirt (also with or without sleeves) that has a number on the front and the back. Check the rules regarding the size of the numbers. The shirt should fit properly and be long enough to tuck into the shorts.

### **Shorts**

Shorts should be of a lightweight material, have an elastic waistband and allow freedom of movement in the hips and thighs.

### **Socks**

Socks can come in all lengths and materials. One to two pairs of white, properly-fitted cotton or cotton-blend socks are recommended to prevent blisters.

### **Shoes**

Shoes are the most important article of clothing for the athlete. They must have a good tread for traction. In addition, they must fit snugly around an athlete's ankle yet provide room in the toe to prevent blisters. High-top court shoes are recommended because they provide the athlete with the best foot and ankle support. A firm arch and heel support and a cushioned insole are things to look for in a quality court shoe. Black-soled shoes should be avoided as they leave marks on some courts.

### **Knee Pads**

Knee pads, elbow pads and eyeglass straps provide added protection and help prevent injuries. Knee braces may also be worn if they are properly covered.

### **Warm-Up Suits**

Warm-up suits are needed for warming up before, and for staying warm after, a basketball practice or game. Warm-ups should not be worn during a practice or game because of their added weight and because they may cause heavy sweating. A medium weight cotton sweatshirt and pants are excellent and inexpensive warm-ups.

## **Basketball Equipment**

It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how equipment works and impacts their performance. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it and give the use for each.

Proper equipment and use are essential for safety as well as for instruction. In addition, coaches should check equipment periodically and perform preventative maintenance to ensure safety.

Rubber covered basketballs are commonly used for practices, games and everyday play. They are particularly suited for outdoor use. Leather basketballs are recommended for indoor competition. Basketballs need to be inspected on a regular basis for proper inflation and possible defects. Basketballs are available in the official weight and size (76cm) or junior size (71 cm).

Every athlete needs a basketball. Athletes can only improve if they frequently practice with a basketball. In addition, junior division athletes and women should use a smaller basketball. The smaller basketball allows these athletes to dribble, pass, catch and shoot with greater success. It also encourages proper form.

Carry a small air pump and one or two valve needles to the training site. One may be needed and may not be available.

Scrimmage vests or over-sized shirts are essential to help athletes distinguish teammates from opponents. Beginner Special Olympics athletes may find this distinction very difficult unless the two teams are clearly differentiated through the use of brightly colored scrimmage vests. If possible, these vests should be large enough to slip over the body, rather than tie, so that they are easier to put on and take off. The material is lightweight; mesh is also appropriate.

Plastic marker cones or pylons are useful for marking off skills assessment areas and Individual Skills Contest events. Nine-inch plastic cones are inexpensive, durable and easier to use than larger marker cones.

Chalk is used to mark areas on outside surfaces or to diagram plays on the floor or blackboard. Masking tape can be used to mark specific areas on the floor as for the Individual Skills Contest and the Skills Assessment Tests. X s marked on the floor can cue defensive positions during team play.

A whistle does not take the place of verbal commands. However, it is essential for athletes to respond to whistles as they are used by officials during games. Athletes can be taught that the whistle means Stop, Look, and Listen. In addition, it assists in teaching athletes the habit of hustle.

A clipboard with a training session plan serves several purposes. Once a training session has started, it is easy to forget what should be done next. A clipboard with the training plan will greatly help the coach organize practice, share information with assistant coaches, stay on task and monitor progress.