



Coaches Manual

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Prelude



A Poem For Volunteers

Many will be shocked to find
When the day of judgment nears
That there's a special place in Heaven
Set aside for volunteers.
Furnished with big recliners,
Satin couches and foot stools
Where there's no Committee Chairman
No group leaders or car-pools.
No eager team that needs a coach
No bazaar and no bake sale,
There will be nothing to staple,
Not one thing to fold or mail,
Telephone lists will be outlawed,
But a finger-snap will bring
Cool drinks and gourmet dinners,
And rare treats fit for a king.
You ask, "Who'll serve these privileged few?
And work for all they're worth??"
Why, all those who reaped the benefits
And not once volunteered on earth!

author unknown

Fun is Good

Here's a little formula
that works everytime:

Choose to have fun.
Fun creates enjoyment.

Enjoyment invites
participation.
Participation focuses attention.

Attention expands awareness.

Awareness promotes insight.

Insight generates knowledge.

Knowledge facilitates action.

Action yields results.

And it all started
by choosing to have fun.



Table of Contents



What's Inside...

CHAPTER 01	About Steve Nash Youth Basketball	04
	A Coach's Focus	05
CHAPTER 02	The 4 Phases to Training	06
CHAPTER 03	Suggested Modifications	08
CHAPTER 04	Planning Practise	09
	Coaching Philosophy	10
CHAPTER 05	Age Specific Skills	13
	Technical Basketball Skills Aged 7-13	13
	Physical Basketball Skills Athletes Aged 6-10	14
	Mental and Social Basketball Skills Aged 6-10	15
	Physical Basketball Skills Aged 10-13	16
	Mental and Social Basketball Skills Aged 10-13	17
CHAPTER 06	General Administration	18
	How to Teach	18
	Role of a Coach	19
	Don't Stop Learning	19
	Goal Setting	19
	Communication	20
CHAPTER 07	Developing an Athlete	21
CHAPTER 08	Start Up Activities	27
CHAPTER 09	Triple Threat	29
CHAPTER 10	Shooting	31
CHAPTER 11	Passing and Catching	37
CHAPTER 12	Dribbling	41
CHAPTER 13	Ball Handling	45
CHAPTER 14	Lay-Ups	46
CHAPTER 15	Pivoting	48
CHAPTER 16	Defense	49
CHAPTER 17	One on One Play	52
CHAPTER 18	Rebounding	54
CHAPTER 19	Cutting-Getting Open	56
CHAPTER 20	Fast Break Offense	57
CHAPTER 21	Offensive Concepts	59
CHAPTER 22	Sweeping-Advanced	62
CHAPTER 23	Team Defense-Advanced	64
Bibliography		67

DIAGRAM KEY	
dribble	
cut	
pass	
screen	
deny	



Steve Nash Youth Basketball

Steve Nash Youth Basketball is a Basketball BC program designed to teach the fundamentals and skills of basketball in a structured and fun environment. As a community based program, Steve Nash Youth Basketball allows for local input within the parameters of a sound, well researched youth sports program. Primarily, though not exclusively, designed for boys and girls ages 7-13, Steve Nash Youth Basketball emphasizes participation and skill development by community coaches who are supported in their efforts through clinics, manuals, access to Basketball BC resources and through the offices of the Coaching and Youth Managers. To all coaches, welcome aboard – this program could not exist without you.

Mike McNeill

Director, Coaching Development, Basketball BC

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A Coach's Focus

It is important not to underestimate how extremely important you are as a figure in the lives of the participants you will be coaching. You have an opportunity to mould character and develop athletes. Even though you see your athletes one, or two times a week, you have the opportunity to have a major impact on their outcome, mentally, socially and physically.

There are many skills involved in the game of basketball, most of which are presented here. But besides basketball specific skills, there is a large focus on athlete development. Too often, the importance of fundamentals are overlooked by coaches and parents. These skills include balance and agility exercises as well as running techniques that will lay a foundation of athleticism for years to come.

Many coaches believe that applying the training schedule of an adult to a young athlete is the best way to train that athlete. Children are not miniature adults and we cannot expect the same methods that work for a 22 year old, to work for an 8 year old. There are many physical and mental factors that are involved in an athlete's development, so we as coaches must find a way to adapt our training programs to suit the needs of our developing athletes.

In Canada, athletes undergo very specific sport training at young ages without receiving basic skills and fitness levels. There are a number of athletes competing at the international level that do not know how to run properly, lack flexibility, general coordination skills and have structural imbalances in their muscular make-up. Although these athletes compete at an international level, their full potential will never be realized because their fundamental preparation was neglected as a youth.

"It takes 8-12 years to prepare an international caliber athlete."

(ISTVAN BALYI)

Realistically speaking, not all of the players in our systems will become international athletes. However, that is not up for us to decide. It is our job to give these young players every opportunity, every resource available so that they may make this decision. Although this decision may be made at a much later date in their athletic careers, we must instill proper fundamentals so that when the time to make this choice arrives, they have the basic tools to work from. If we do not give these young athletes the proper fundamentals to build from, it is certain that they will not reach their potential. If we do provide a strong base, who knows what will happen? Therefore, it is important that you as a coach have a basic understanding of athletic fundamentals, and the reasons behind them.

The 4 Phases to Training

1. The FUNdamental Phase-This is a very important part of a child's development, but unfortunately, it is also one that tends to get neglected. Athletes are between the ages of 6-10 during this stage. This is where a child's basic general physical, motor-learning, affective, cognitive and psycho-social skills and capacities are developed. These skills are acquired through the use of fun activities, games and participation in as many sports as possible. This is where the ABCs of athletics are introduced and developed: Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed. Athletes can be shown the basis of specialized sports skills such as: shooting, catching, passing and dribbling. (Balyi, 2000)

Depending on how many times per week your players get together to practise, will determine their ability to grasp certain motor skills. It is suggested that 3 times a week is only maintenance, while at least 4 sessions per week is needed to optimize development. It will be difficult for you and your team to get together this many times a week, therefore it may be a good idea for you to suggest that they play some other sports or games several times a week to help keep them active.

2. Training to Train Phase-This is a phase that many coaches in the Steve Nash Youth League will be focused on. Children will be between the ages of 10 and 13 during this phase. The focus here is not on the technical aspects of basketball, although some techniques should be introduced, nor is the emphasis on competing or competing to win. The major emphasis in these first 3 or 4 years of training should be on acquiring fundamental skills such as running, jumping, throwing, agility, balance, eye-hand coordination, and eye-foot coordination. Mastering these skills at a young age is critical as they form the base for all of the more complex, sport specific skills to be learned later in an athlete's career. It is important to note that if these skills are not acquired early in an athlete's career, it will inhibit that athlete's ability to reach his or her potential in later years. Children can be taught to play in certain positions at the beginning of this phase, and position specific training can be introduced towards the end of this phase.

Shortening or neglecting the training to train phase of preparation will have serious consequences on athletic development.

- BALYI, 1995

3. Training to Compete- This phase emphasizes position specific skills, conditioning programs and full individualization. Training is position specific and highly specialized. Steve Nash Youth League athletes will not be trained using these principles.

4. Training to Win-The emphasis now is on optimum performance. Athletes will be trained and tapered for major competitions, their progress will be closely monitored.

It is optimal if you can get together with your athletes aged 6-10 twice a week to train. Besides the two times a week you get together with your athletes, it is recommended that they participate in other sports 3 or 4 times per week. It is essential for young athletes to capture fundamental motor



chapter 02



skills during this time, while still placing most of the emphasis of your sessions on kids having fun. Sometimes too much emphasis is placed on competition and not enough on training-practising fundamental basketball skills and running skills. An ideal situation would see a ratio of 75% training to 25% competition. Athletes who are trained accordingly will be better prepared for competitive situations in upcoming games and in years to come. Consequently, athletes who focus too much on winning and competing during these years may never reach their full athletic potential as these athletes tend to plateau later in their careers.(Balyi, 2000)

“If these fundamental skills are not mastered early in an athlete’s career, his or her ability to move to a higher level of sport achievement will be limited.”

– ISTVAN BALYI

In conclusion, you should feel pride in the fact that you are a vital part of a young athlete’s future potential. You are in a position to help your players a great deal over the course of the season; mentally, socially, emotionally and physically.

Basketball BC sincerely appreciates your time and effort.



Suggested Modifications

To properly develop basketball players, we must alter the environment these young athletes train in to suit their needs. Instead of having young athletes compete in an adult world we can make several changes that will have a positive impact on their development.

1. Play with a smaller sized basketball either a no.5 or 6. Small hands require small basketballs.
2. Lower hoops. It is much easier for young players to learn to shoot correctly on hoops that are within their range.
3. Reduce the number of players when scrimmaging as this allows everybody more opportunity to handle the ball.
4. Do not play zone defenses as this slows the pace of games and inhibits the development of individual fundamentals-offensively and defensively.



PLANNING PRACTICE

Using Practise Time Wisely

PRACTICE TIPS

- Take stock of the practice environment: gym space, pylons, balls, number of baskets, etc.
- Maximize activity time and minimize waiting time: make use of space as much as possible
- Move players quickly from drill to drill. Don't give them a chance to even think about being bored
- Provide simple, clear, precise instructions. Keep them brief.
- Have names for all of your drills so that as players become familiar with drills, they respond quicker to commands
- Constantly provide feedback on player's performance, on an individual and team level. Try to give feedback immediately
- BE POSITIVE. You can never say "great job, good hustle or nice try" too many times
- Be creative with gym equipment. Use what you have.
- Know your limits: don't teach something you don't know. If you are unsure of something, seek help from those who know.
- Give them time to get water, but make sure they do not stall or linger.
- Be over organized for practise. Make photo copies of the practise template, and be very detailed when filling it out. You want to make sure you have more than not enough.
- It is a good idea to have mini-meetings at the beginning of practice to discuss the goals or focus of the day. This will narrow the player's focus as to what you expect from them.
- At the end of practice it is a good idea to meet again, for only 2-3 mins to review the practise and discuss what went well, and what needs improving upon. This will also add a sense of routine and structure to your workouts

SKILL OF THE DAY

- A skill of the day should be taught in each practise session.
- This skill should be the emphasis of the practise session for approximately 20-25 mins; any longer and your young athletes may begin to drift
- When teaching a skill, allow yourself 4-6 mins of lecture time
- The remainder of the time should be spent breaking down the skill with your athletes and practicing the skill
- Athletes should spend little time waiting
- Each skill should be worked on using 3 to 4 different drills, so the athletes do not become bored with one particular activity
- If athlete's attention is wandering do not be afraid to change the activity
- If a particular drill is working well, then stay with that drill. Make a read of your athlete's level of enjoyment and concentration
- Be sure to change drills to suit the skill level of your players.



COACHING PHILOSOPHY

To be a successful coach, there is no one particular style that you should have. A good coach can be very loud and vocal while another can be calm and quiet. Either way may be suitable for you, it depends of how you are comfortable coaching.

However, there is a wrong way to coach, especially when dealing with youth. As competitive as coaches sometimes are, it does not help anybody to be negative or disrespectful towards players, other coaches or officials. You must remember that you are a role model for your players and they will mimic what they see.

Your goal is to make basketball a physically fun experience for your players. This is a time when kids should learn to work as a team, in a positive, open environment. Regardless of your coaching background, your responsibility is to create a positive and safe learning environment in which kids can challenge each other and themselves to become better.

Kids must feel as though they can make mistakes, as this is how they learn best. *Encourage them to make as many mistakes as possible.* For example, when doing ball handling activities, encourage kids to lose control of the ball. When doing dribbling exercises, encourage them to lose control of the ball. This demonstrates that they are pushing themselves to become better. Without this kind of determination and without kids feeling as though it is alright to make mistakes, it will be difficult for them to improve.

Here are some additional suggestions:

- How you teach is just as important as what you say.
- Players don't always listen, but they always watch.
- Move with purpose and speak with passion.
- Be excited to be there! Your enthusiasm and level of excitement will transfer down to your players.
- You are their example and role model.
- You must develop your own coaching personality. This means that you must be comfortable with your coaching style. Don't try to be someone else
- Body language such as facial expressions, eye contact, arm and hand movements, and even touch, are all very effective means of communicating
- Keep control of your practice environment. Carry a whistle, and/or use "EYES" and "EARS"(Coach yells "EYES" players must clap their hands, if Coach yells "EARS" players must stomp feet). This is a very effective way of maintaining and regaining their focus.
- Use key words to keep athlete's focus and to emphasize techniques. "JUMP, FLICK, SPRINT, LOW, EXPLODE, HANDS" etc.
- Be consistent with rules and how you treat each player
- A player's experience should be challenging, competitive and fun. Yes, kids are competitive and like to compete, and it is OK to have a winner and a "non-winner" for drills and games
- Some coaches feel that attaching a physical exercise to losing will turn kids off exercise. If the exercise is small, easy and fun kids won't mind doing it. These little "consequences" are not deemed as punishment, but are a very effective method of keeping drills competitive, and hence this is how players improve



Practice Template

Suggested time for practice is 60mins

RUNNING TECHNIQUE DRILLS-THE FUNDAMENTALS 5-7 MINS.

- Choose several of the suggested running exercises
- This should be done every session

Ball Handling Drills 6-8 mins

- It is essential that players develop a good feel for the basketball
- Ball handling drill should be done in every session
- As your get on in your season, you can ask players to lead these ball handling routines

Start up Activity 4-6 mins

- Choose from any of the suggested activities
- Athletes should be talking and getting loose
- This is a good time to have fun and to communicate

Skill of Day 25mins

- Lecture on skill topic 4-6 mins
- Specific skill drills preferably 3 or 4

Quick review 2 mins

Competing Activity 8-10mins

- Select a competition activity
- Players need to compete against each other to get better
- "Non winners" have push ups, sit ups, etc. Again this is not punishment.

Skill review 4-6 mins

- Perhaps repeat last week's skill
- Re-explain and perform activity using familiar drills

Competing Activity 4-6 mins

- Shooting games, relays, 3 on 3 or 5 on 5

It is also a good idea to have a "**quick review**" in which you call the name of an activity and have the players go quickly to do these drills. These drills last only 2 mins and work on a very specific skill. These are good to keep kids on their toes.

For example, "Wall shooting, go!" Players run to a spot on the wall and very quickly review shooting technique while receiving feedback.

See the blank practise template. It is suggested that you make photo copies of this template and use it for each practice session.



Technical Basketball Skills

Development Principles for Athletes aged 7-13

This is the suggested order in which skills are to be taught:

- 1 TRIPLE THREAT STANCE
 - teach the athlete to become familiar with this stance
 - from this position the athlete can dribble, shoot or pass
- 2 SHOOTING
 - getting squared up to hoop
 - getting shot ready
 - shooting technique
- 3 PASSING AND CATCHING
 - ready position
 - passing technique
 - catching technique
 - passing on the move
- 4 LAY UPS
 - foot work
 - right and left hand lay ups
- 5 DRIBBLING AND BALL HANDLING
 - ball familiarity
 - ball control
 - dexterity-right and left hands
- 6 PIVOTING
 - front and back pivoting
 - 2 foot jump stop
 - being tight with the ball
- 7 DEFENSE
 - defensive stance
 - defensive slides
 - on the ball defense
- 8 OFFENSIVE CONCEPTS
 - go to the hoop
 - give and go cut
 - space and movement
- 9 ONE ON ONE PLAY
 - shot fake
 - jab step
 - recognizing advantages
- 10 REBOUNDING
 - Box-out position
 - A desire for the ball
 - Valuing the basketball
- 11 GETTING OPEN
 - V-Cut
 - L-Cut
- 12 FAST BREAK
 - Passing on the move
 - Decision making
 - Advantage situations
- 13 SWEEPING THE BALL - **ADVANCED**
 - Being aggressive
 - Protecting the ball
- 14 TEAM DEFENSE - **ADVANCED**
 - see the ball

Physical Basketball Skills

Development Principles for Athletes aged 6-10

FUNDamental Stage

1) FOOTWORK

- forward and backward running
- starting and stopping
- change of direction
- pivoting
- offensive ready position
- defensive ready position

2) SPEED

- general speed training
- speed of reaction to different stimuli
- hopping skipping, jumping

3) CO-ORDINATION

- wide range of general skills-games should emphasize this
- mobility
- eye feet co-ordination
- eye hand co-ordination

4) ENDURANCE

- aerobic activities should be kept short

5) FLEXIBILITY

- introduce general exercises

6) BALANCE

- balance is extremely important in basketball
- at this age children begin to develop balance



Mental & Social Basketball Skills

For Athletes Aged 6-10 years

FUNdamental Stage

- 1) SELF CONFIDENCE
 - Formation of self concept, therefore children need positive reinforcement
 - If situation is threatening, children will lose confidence
 - Influence of peers is very strong, child will want acceptance
 - Emphasis on self worth and personal pride
- 2) LEADERSHIP
 - Children need to be led
 - Encourage interaction with teammates to build personal skills
 - Learn to play fair and respect all aspects of competition
- 3) EFFORT AND COMMITMENT
 - Encourage involvement
 - Provide encouragement
 - Encourage hard work
 - Emphasis on giving one's best
- 4) INDEPENDENCE
 - Encourage players to take responsibility
- 5) ATTITUDE
 - Stress enjoyment
 - Develop good habits
 - Experimentation and creativity should be encouraged
- 6) TEAM WORK
 - Encourage kids to work together under different circumstances
 - Encourage respect for each other
 - Encourage the construction of positive relationships with others
- 7) FOCUS
 - Attention span is short, players cannot sit for long periods of time. Use short, clear instructions



Physical Basketball Skills

For Athletes Aged 10-13 Years

Training to Train Stage

1) TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Specific basketball skills can be worked on at this level
- Positions can be taught and specified

2) STAMINA

- Towards the end of this stage players can be trained aerobically
- Drills can be used and players will not even realize that they are endurance training

3) STRENGTH

- Strength can be trained at this age using Medicine Balls, Swiss Balls, and the player's own body weight
- Hopping and bounding can be used
- Push ups and chin-ups
- At the end of this stage you may want to show players how to properly lift weights.

4) SPEED

- Should be trained at sessions as part of warm-up
- Starting and acceleration must be emphasized

5) FLEXIBILITY

- Introduction of light stretching at beginning and end of sessions



Mental and Social Basketball Skills

For Athletes Aged 10-13 years

Training to Train Stage

1) SELF CONFIDENCE

- Much emphasis is placed on self-identity
- Great influence on behavior from peer groups
- Values and attitudes are being created and reinforced by the group

2) ATTITUDE

- Players are eager to perfect skills, so they must be taught correctly how to do these
- Some players may develop earlier than others, it is important not to play favorites, as this can have a negative impact on that player's development

3) LEARNING CAPACITY

- Decision making through more complex technical training
- Players can learn how to train, technically and tactically

4) INDEPENDENCE

- Players are capable of cooperating and accepting responsibility

General Administration

DEALING WITH PARENTS

It is important that a meeting is held in which the parents become fully aware of team dynamics, team rules, team goals and team philosophy. Find out which parents are willing to help drive the kids around, or are willing to help out on the basketball court, regardless of their basketball experience. An enthusiastic, energetic personality is always valuable.

Other Parental responsibilities may include

- Participating in fund-raising activities
- Supplying proper equipment
- Paying fees
- Supporting coaches decisions
- Supporting team rules and regulations

Conflict may arise if a parent feels a particular child is not getting enough attention, or if their child is not getting enough playing time, etc. It is important as a coach to be very open, assertive and clear with regards to your intentions, and where you see that player.

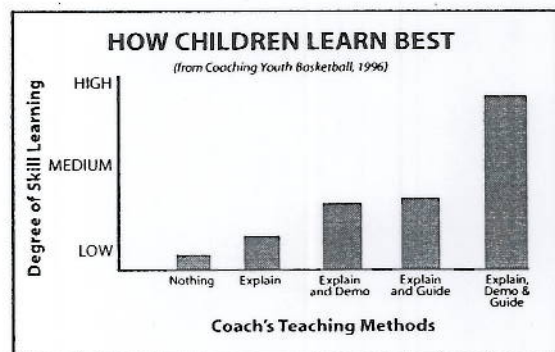
HOW TO TEACH

There are many methods used in teaching basketball to youth. Presented here is just one method. You may wish to use a different method or one that you are more comfortable with.

The method presented here involves 3 steps:

- 1) The Presentation Phase
- 2) The Application Phase
- 3) The Feedback Phase

- 1) **The Presentation Phase** should be conducted according to your level of comfort. It is a good idea to explain and demonstrate the drill at the same time. You must decide how you are most comfortable teaching basketball.



During the presentation phase, the skill is explained and demonstrated for your athletes. When presenting a new skill, emphasize only a few key points so that your players don't become overloaded with new information. It is also a good idea to have key words so that players associate the sound of the word with the required movement. Select short descriptive words that catch the attention of your players.

It is also important that when demonstrating skills, these demonstrations are done properly so that players can see exactly how a skill is performed. If you cannot demonstrate a skill correctly, use a guest demonstrator, or use one of the players to demonstrate the skill. Using videos can be a very effective means of illustrating the proper technique for a particular skill.

When you are finished your lecture, encourage questions from your players and remind them that there are no stupid questions. They must feel comfortable enough to speak up, if they do not understand something.



- 2) **The Application Phase** involves the athletes actually practicing the skills you've just lectured on and should be done immediately after your lecture. If there is too much time between the Presentation Phase and the Application Phase, your players may not remember the specifics of the lectured skill. As the skill is being practiced it is a good idea to reinforce key points. If you have forgotten to mention certain aspects of the skill, do not be afraid to stop the drill to throw in other comments or suggestions.

When practicing a skill, use a variety of drills. If you use the same drill time after time or if you stay with the same activity, your players will become bored and uninterested in the activity. This is where you must make a read on your players. If you see their attention drifting, don't hesitate to change the activity immediately to a different one that works on the same skill. Conversely, if your athletes seem to be enjoying a particular drill, stay with that drill until it becomes unproductive. As you become more comfortable with your coaching style you will learn to recognize when something is working or not working.

- 3) **Feedback Phase** is really where coaching comes into play. As the athletes are practicing their new skill, it is very important that you provide constructive feedback. If a player is doing a particular skill incorrectly, it is essential that you correct errors so that the skill is practiced with proper technique.

In correcting athletes you will find that you must repeat yourself, over and over again. This is coaching. Players need to hear this so habits will form. They need to hear corrections time and time again, until the skill becomes natural.

ROLE OF A COACH

As a coach you are responsible for much more than teaching basketball. You are in a position to teach life and to aid in the development of young people. You are in a position to teach character, discipline, and punctuality. You are a leader, a teacher, an organizer and a role model for your players.

DON'T STOP LEARNING

One of the best ways to learn anything, let alone basketball, is from our peers. In your circle of coaches there are going to be people with more basketball or teaching experience than others. It is strongly recommended that you use these individuals to better your basketball knowledge.

The best coaches at all levels of basketball are constantly learning not only from each other, but from observing other teams play, from videos, from books and from coaching clinics. Basketball BC has an excellent library of videos from which you can gain information. It may also be a good idea to watch another team practice, perhaps a local high school team. It is always helpful to observe how other people do things. Use all the resources you can so that your athletes have a greater opportunity to reach their potential.

GOAL SETTING

Although your athletes are young, it is still a good idea to introduce them to the concept of goal setting, as this can serve as an important motivational technique. When discussing goal setting with your athletes have your players decide together, what their team goals should consist of. Also encourage each player to write down on a piece of paper what their immediate and long term goals are both individually and as a team. Some children may need your assistance in setting goals. Suggest putting self-improvement first and victories second.

Try to have a number of specific, achievable goals, so that a number of successes can be experienced as it is important for athletes to feel what it feels like to be successful.

Communication

To be successful in coaching you must be able to effectively communicate with your players, parents, other coaches and officials. Good communication skills arise from constantly making an effort to become a better communicator.

The keys to becoming an effective communicator are being able to communicate openly, positively and clearly.

Sports is an excellent environment for kids to learn to communicate with each other. This is an opportunity for shy, timid kids to come out of their shell and unleash themselves vocally! Kids are usually told "to be quiet" or "don't yell so loud". Sports is an arena where the louder they are, and the more vocal they are, the better. As well, the more kids feel they are able to let go, the more fun they will have.

For a team to be successful they must be able to effectively communicate with each other when the coach is not present. The drills that your team performs provides a great opportunity for encouraging kids to communicate with each other. For example, in a passing drill, tell the kids to call the name of the person they are passing to.

Communicating openly is reliant on you being honest with your athletes. It relies on you being sensitive to their needs and responding to their needs. It relies on you listening to what they as individuals and as a group have to say in a non-judgemental fashion, and making adjustments where you see them necessary.

Communicating positively especially with young athletes is extremely important. We must remember why these kids participate in sports; to have fun. Everything else should be secondary. When corrections are made and there will be many, it should be done in a very non-threatening manner. For example the *sandwich effect* "You had a great follow through on your shot, but you must use your legs more, and it was great to see your feet squared to the basket". In this technique a negative is given between two positives.

Communicating Clearly involves getting to the point of what you are saying in a simple, precise manner. It is a good idea to speak a little louder than normal (outside voice) to get the attention of wandering ears. Be sure to make eye contact with everyone you are talking to; this keeps them focused.