

Coach Mac - Practice Planning Made Easy

Summary

Use a 50/25/25 formula to create your practice plans:

- 50% - Skill Development
- 25% - Strategy
- 25% - Games
- Add in warm-up and breaks

Importance of Effective Practices

The biggest difference between experienced and inexperienced coaches is that experienced coaches create and run much more effective practices, so the best way to improve as a basketball coach is to improve your practices. (Bobby Knight - the single most important aspect of coaching is running effective practices)

- Experienced coaches spend most of practice on skill development.
- Inexperienced coaches spend most of practice running plays.
- Experienced coaches have a practice plan.
- Inexperienced coaches don't have a practice plan.
- Experienced coaches keep practice fresh and exciting with new drills.
- Inexperienced coaches run the same boring drills every practice.

Good Practices:

- Spend most of the time on skill development.
- Are created using a plan.
- Are kept fresh with new and exciting drills.

Bad Practices:

- Spend most of practice working on set plays.
- Aren't run using a practice plan.
- Are run using the same boring drills every practice.

Common practice mistakes that coaches make:

- Not having a written practice plan.
- Spending too much time on strategy.
- Not creating position-less players.
- Wasting valuable practice time.
- Running drills that don't suit the team.
- Getting frustrated and yelling at players.
- Not building relationships with your players.
- Focusing on winning too soon.

Coach Mac wants every practice plan to be simple and effective, that's why he decided to split up a basketball practice into only three parts:

1. Skill Development (50% of practice)
 - Players work on improving their individual skills such as shooting, passing, rebounding. By far the most important part of practice.
2. Strategy (25% of practice)
 - Develop your defence, offence, and set plays.
 - Coaches usually dedicate too much practice time to this. If you're coaching at the youth level, 'strategy' is the least important part of your basketball practice. Developing individual skills and allowing them to compete in game-like situations is far more important to long-term development. Working on strategy can lead to success at an early age, but instead of learning how to play basketball, they're simply learning how to execute set plays.
3. Games (25% of practice)
 - Players spend time competing in small-sided games and scrimmages that simulate game situations. This can include games like 2-on-2, 3-on-3, and advantage/disadvantage drills. Benefits include more touches, increased space, easier decisions, and more scoring opportunities.

How to Create Practice Plans

Each practice plan should be broken up into three columns:

1. Time - exactly how much time you plan to spend running the drill.
2. Drill - which drill you plan to run with a brief description.
3. Coaching points - the points of emphasis you must remember throughout the drill.

Coach Mac recommends arranging practices in the order explained, although this can be changed around to suit personal preference. Simply slot drills into the practice plan using the 3-part structure (50/25/25) as an outline.

Examples:

60-Minute Practice Plan

8-Minutes - Dribbling Drill
12-Minutes - Shooting Drill
10-Minutes - Rebounding Drill
5-Minutes - Drink Break
15-Minutes - Offense Practice
10-Minutes - Small-Sided Games

90-Minute Practice Plan

5-Minutes - Talk + Warm Up
10-Minutes - Passing Drill
12-Minutes - Layup Drill
5-Minutes - Drink Break
13-Minutes - Shooting Drill
20-Minutes - Offense Practice
5-Minutes - Drink Break
20-Minutes - Small-Sided Game

120-Minute Practice Plan

5-Minutes - Talk + Warm Up
10-Minutes - Footwork Drill
15-Minutes - Passing and Dribbling Drill
20-Minutes - Shooting Drill
5-Minutes - Drink Break
10-Minutes - Defensive Drill
10-Minutes - Defense Practice
15-Minutes - Small-Sided Game
5-Minutes - Drink Break
15-Minutes - Offensive Practice