
1.2 COACHING 8-9 YEAR-OLDS

At this age, it is necessary to continue training and developing basic motor patterns (perfecting techniques) so that they can be (gradually) transformed into more specific basketball abilities.

The training and development of motor abilities (especially coordination capacity, joint mobility capacity, and overall fitness) remain more important than specifics of basketball. At this age group, fun must still be the dominant focus as the children start to learn the game.

Games that involve dribbling, passing, shooting, defending; can be introduced but without rigorous “drilling”.

Instead these activities should be presented by the coach in a general form that may be different to the playing rules of basketball.

The players should be introduced to basic rules such as:

- the movements they can perform in space and time;
- the space available to play;
- what they must do when playing offence;
- what they have to do when playing defence;
- the rules of the game.

When a child is “ready”, playing rules can be presented, from which basketball fundamentals can later be drawn:

- ✓ “You cannot walk or run while holding the ball; so in order to move on court you must dribble”.
- ✓ “To win the game you must score more baskets than your opponents; therefore you have to shoot in the opponent’s basket”.
- ✓ “You cannot always play alone against everybody, but having teammates; you need to pass them the ball”.
- ✓ “The opposing team must not score more baskets than your team, therefore you have to defend your own basket”.

Practice must provide each player with many opportunities to practice the various skills and there should be a balance between practicing skills in a contested situation and a non-contested situation. All situations though, must be fun!