



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

HELENA FAMILY YMCA YOUTH BASKETBALL



Parent/Coach Handbook

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HELENA FAMILY YMCA
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***Welcome Parents and Coaches to the
Helena Family YMCA***

YOUTH SPORTS PHILOSOPHY

The Youth Soccer program at the Helena Family YMCA gives children ages 3 through 5th grade the opportunity to learn sports skills in a supervised recreational environment. We believe that participating in sports should be *FUN* and that every player should have an *EQUAL OPPORTUNITY* to play. The emphasis of our program is on the *DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS and SPORTSMANSHIP*. We de-emphasize winning and ensure equal playing time for all players.

CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY

The YMCA has made a national commitment to help young people learn the values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility, all necessary to hold us together as a community. We seek to incorporate these values in all that we do and to partner with families in teaching these essential values to our young people. By teaching these values during the practices of this youth sports program, we hope to give participating children the opportunity to become better teammates both on and off the field.

SEASON FAQ's:

Games: Games take place on Saturdays at various school gyms around Helena between 9am-2pm. There may be some make-up weekday games due to weather. Please note that games *do not* all take place at the YMCA.

Practices: Practice day and time is selected during registration. Practices take place at various school gyms around Helena for 60-minutes on weekday evenings.

Equipment: Players bring their own basketballs, with their name on them. Please wear your YMCA jersey (distributed by the first game), athletic shorts or pants, and appropriate athletic shoes. Please no winter boots or 'street shoes' on gym floors.

Game Schedules: A link to access your game schedule will be sent out in the pre-season email, typically 1-2 weeks before the season starts. Game schedules are accessed through YGametime.

- YGametime can always be accessed by going to helenaymca.org. Click "YGametime" from along the top. Then click "Sports and Programs" from along the top. Choose your division from the dropdown. Scroll down to see full schedules.

Snacks: Although not necessary, many kids "live" for the after-game snack! Help out your coach by volunteering to create a snack schedule for parents.

Weather: It is our policy to cancel games only in extreme weather conditions. If games must be cancelled, the Coaches will be notified and a text blast will be sent out. ***You will only receive notice via text if you OPT IN to receive them. Visit YGametime to sign-up for ALERTS.***

Cancellations, substitutes, and make-up games: Please be mindful that our coaches are all volunteering their time! Sometimes illness or last-minute cancellations are inevitable. Coaches will reach out to their teams to find substitutes if they cannot make a practice or game. Please volunteer if you can!

If a game does end up being cancelled, we will try our best to schedule make-up games during regular practice times throughout the week.

YMCA COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES:

Coach a group of kids in a safe, positive, and inclusive environment. Remember that sports at the Y focus on fundamentals and sportsmanship – not competition! Every player gets equal playing time, regardless of ability.

Contact all the families on your roster when prompted after receiving your finalized practice details and game schedule. Introduce yourself, remind them of practice time, and ask now for any assistants or substitutes to cover you during the season if needed.

Distribute team jerseys, provided by the Y. This may involve swinging by the Y before a practice or game to pick up your team's jerseys.

Inform your team if you will miss a practice or game and ask other parents for substitutes. Please don't cancel practice unless it is an emergency. 99% of the time we've seen that a parent will be happy to cover you for one day.

Designate a team parent to assist with a snack schedule if you like.

Ask for support if needed! Sports Coordinators at the Y are there to help you with scheduling needs, roster concerns, and to provide extra equipment if desired. Players bring their own balls to practice. The Y can also provide scrimmage vests, whistles, stopwatches, colored armbands, and cones BY REQUEST.

Know the rules at each level of play. The YMCA modifies rules to create a positive experience for the kids. As children grow and their skills get better, the rules grow with them. Check out the Coach's Corner on YGametime for a "rules cheat sheet."

Maintain good relationships with your players and their families by being positive, communicative, and promoting the YMCA values in your actions. You are a major role model for your team!

Parent Agreement

As a parent in the Helena Family YMCA's Youth Sports Program...

1. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
2. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
3. I will not engage in unsportsmanlike or disrespectful conduct with any official, coach, player, volunteer, Y staff member, or other parent.
4. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
5. I will teach my child to treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, gender, or ability.
6. I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time. Remember, we don't keep score at the Y!
7. I will respect the officials and their authority during games.
8. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.

Kindergarten Co-ed Rules

YMCA Youth Sports is unique, emphasizing skill-development, sportsmanship, and teamwork. We de-emphasize competition and instead focus on the fun and learning that sports can provide. The YMCA also promotes equal playing time for all its participants.

EQUIPMENT:

- Junior Size Ball (27") – players bring their own balls
- YMCA jersey, athletic shorts or sweats, appropriate athletic shoes.

HOOP HEIGHT:

- 8 feet
- Games are played sideways on full courts (shortened court)

NUMBER OF PLAYERS ON COURT:

- Minimum to play: 3
- Maximum: 5
- Teams must play to match each other

If a team has less than the minimum number of players, there are 3 options:

- The team forfeits the game
- The opposing team plays short to match
- The opposing team lends players to the short team

EQUAL PLAY RULE:

- Substitutions are unlimited, at any time.
- All players must play an equal amount of playing time in each game, regardless of ability.
- Depending on team numbers, players should play at least 2 quarters each, or sit out at least 1 quarter each.

REFEREES:

- Coaches act as referees for Kindergarten games.
- Feel free to assign a co-coach or parent volunteer to help referee.
- Rule cheat sheets will be available on game days with Y staff.
- Coaches or Y Gym Attendants act as timekeepers. Stopwatches are available.
- We don't keep score!

GAME DURATION:

- Four 8-minute quarters. If needed, feel free to switch to 6-minute quarters depending on player stamina.
- Time will continue to run (except in timeouts), with no overtime.
- Each team gets two 1-minute timeouts per half.

- Teams get 1-min break in between quarters, plus 5-min half-time.

START OF PLAY:

- Use a coin-flip, rock paper scissors, or other agreed-upon method to determine first possession.
- Alternate Possession rule applies on all 'held balls' and at the start of each quarter.
- Kindergarten *does not* use a jump ball to start.

RULES OF PLAY:

- *Sports at the Y focus on skill and technique development like passing, dribbling, shooting, rebounding, and spacing. Over-emphasis on set plays and game tactics could take away from individual player development.*
- Player-to-player defense is the only type of defense allowed. P2P defense starts at the three-point arc. No zones or full-court presses.
- Players use colored wristbands to determine which opponent to defend. No double-teaming.
- Double-teaming will result in the ball being taken out-of-bounds by the offensive team.
- Screens or switches are not allowed.
- No lane violations will be called.
- No free-throws will be taken (even in the case of a shooting foul). Ball will be taken out-of-bounds on every call.
- Players have 10 seconds to advance the ball past half-court. Violation of this results in forfeiting the ball to the other team.
- Players on defense *cannot* strip the ball from the ball handler.
 - In the Kindergarten division, the defense has the advantage. Offensive skills like dribbling, passing, and controlling the ball require years of practice to acquire. These skills might never be mastered if defenders are constantly stripping the ball or playing full-court press.

1st Grade Rules

YMCA Youth Sports is unique, emphasizing skill-development, sportsmanship, and teamwork. We de-emphasize competition and instead focus on the fun and learning that sports can provide. The YMCA also promotes equal playing time for all its participants.

EQUIPMENT:

- Junior Size Ball (27") – players bring their own balls
- YMCA jersey, athletic shorts or sweats, appropriate athletic shoes.

HOOP HEIGHT:

- 8 feet
- Games are played sideways on full-courts (shortened court)

NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

- Minimum to play: 3
- Maximum: 5
- Teams must play to match each other

If a team has less than the minimum number of players, there are 3 options:

- The team forfeits the game
- The opposing team plays short to match
- The opposing team lends players to the short team

EQUAL PLAY RULE:

- Substitutions are unlimited, at any time.
- All players must play an equal amount of playing time in each game, regardless of ability.
- Depending on team numbers, players should play at least 2 quarters each, or sit out at least 1 quarter each.

REFEREES:

- Coaches act as referees for 1st Grade games.
- Feel free to assign a co-coach or parent volunteer to help referee.
- Rule cheat sheets will be available on game days with Y staff.
- Coaches or Y Gym Attendants act as timekeepers. Stopwatches are available.
- We don't keep score!

GAME DURATION:

- Four 8-minute quarters. If needed, switch to 7-minute quarters depending on player stamina.
- Time will continue to run (except in timeouts), with no overtime.

- Each team gets two 1-minute timeouts per half.
- Teams get 1-min break in between quarters, plus 5-min half-time.

START OF PLAY:

- Play begins with a Jump Ball.
- Alternate Possession rule applies on all 'held balls' and at the start of each quarter.

RULES OF PLAY:

- *Sports at the Y focus on skill and technique development like passing, dribbling, shooting, rebounding, and spacing. Over-emphasis on set plays and game tactics could take away from individual player development.*
- Player-to-player defense is the only type of defense allowed. P2P defense starts at the three-point arc. No zones or full-court presses.
- Players use colored wristbands to determine which opponent to defend. No double-teaming.
- Double-teaming will result in the ball being taken out-of-bounds by the offensive team.
- Screens or switches are not allowed.
- No lane violations will be called.
- No free-throws will be taken (even in the case of a shooting foul). Ball will be taken out-of-bounds on every call.
- Players cannot foul out. Players can accrue an unlimited number of fouls. However, coaches should monitor and correct fouls when they happen – use this as a teaching moment.
- Players have 10 seconds to advance the ball past half-court. Violation of this results in forfeiting the ball to the other team.
- Players on defense **cannot** strip the ball from the ball handler.
 - In the 1st Grade division, the defense has the advantage. Offensive skills like dribbling, passing, and controlling the ball require years of practice to acquire. These skills might never be mastered if defenders are constantly stripping the ball or playing full-court press.
- A 7-second rule will be applied to offensive players. Players cannot hold or dribble the ball without forward movement for more than 7 seconds. Infraction will result in the ball being awarded to the defensive team.
- Traditional rules of basketball should be taught and enforced: double dribble, traveling, etc.
- Coaches will call out infractions and inform the player what not to do and why. But players will **not** receive official fouls or be removed from the game.

2nd Grade Rules

YMCA Youth Sports is unique, emphasizing skill-development, sportsmanship, and teamwork. We de-emphasize competition and instead focus on the fun and learning that sports can provide. The YMCA also promotes equal playing time for all its participants.

EQUIPMENT:

- Junior Size Ball (27") – players bring their own balls
- YMCA jersey, athletic shorts or sweats, appropriate athletic shoes.

HOOP HEIGHT:

- 9 feet
- Games are played on full courts

NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

- Minimum to play: 3
- Maximum: 5
- Teams must play to match each other

If a team has less than the minimum number of players, there are 3 options:

- The team forfeits the game
- The opposing team plays short to match
- The opposing team lends players to the short team

EQUAL PLAY RULE:

- Substitutions are unlimited, at any time.
- All players must play an equal amount of playing time in each game, regardless of ability.
- Depending on team numbers, players should play at least 2 quarters each, or sit out at least 1 quarter each.

REFEREES:

- Coaches act as referees for 2nd Grade games.
- Feel free to assign a co-coach or parent volunteer to help referee.
- Rule cheat sheets will be available on game days with Y staff.
- Coaches or Y Gym Attendants act as timekeepers. Stopwatches are available.
- We don't keep score!

GAME DURATION:

- Four 8-minute quarters.
- Time will continue to run
 - Except during timeouts, Free Throws and last minute of each quarter
- No overtime

- Each team gets two 1-minute timeouts per half.
- Teams get 1-min break in between quarters, plus 5-min half-time.

START OF PLAY:

- Play begins with a Jump Ball.
- Alternate Possession rule applies on all 'held balls' and at the start of each quarter.

RULES OF PLAY:

- *Sports at the Y focus on skill and technique development like passing, dribbling, shooting, rebounding, and spacing. Over-emphasis on set plays and game tactics could take away from individual player development.*
- Player-to-player defense is the only type of defense allowed. P2P defense starts at the three-point arc. No zones or full-court presses.
- Colored wristbands are available BY REQUEST to help players identify who they are defending.
- Double-teaming will result in the ball being taken out-of-bounds by the offensive team.
- Screens or switches are not allowed.
- No lane violations will be called.
- Free Throws Allowed:
 - Taken in the case of a shooting foul
 - Use an adjusted line of 10 feet (not regulation 15)
 - No one-on-one bonus
- Players can accrue up to 6 fouls, at which point they must be removed from play
 - Use fouls as a teaching moment, and use leniency with these younger players. It should be extremely rare for any player to foul out in this division.
- Players have 10 seconds to advance the ball past half-court. Violation of this results in forfeiting the ball to the other team.
- Players on defense **cannot** strip the ball from the ball handler.
 - In the 2nd Grade division, the defense has the advantage. Offensive skills like dribbling, passing, and controlling the ball require years of practice to acquire. These skills might never be mastered if defenders are constantly stripping the ball or playing full-court press.
- A 7-second rule will be applied to offensive players. Players cannot hold or dribble the ball without forward movement for more than 7 seconds. Infraction will result in the ball being awarded to the defensive team.
- Traditional rules of basketball should be taught and enforced: double dribble, traveling, etc.
- Coaches will call out infractions and inform the player what not to do and why. But players will **not** receive official fouls or be removed from the game.

3rd Grade Rules

YMCA Youth Sports is unique, emphasizing skill-development, sportsmanship, and teamwork. We de-emphasize competition and instead focus on the fun and learning that sports can provide. The YMCA also promotes equal playing time for all its participants.

EQUIPMENT:

- Intermediate Size Ball (28.5") – players bring their own balls
- YMCA jersey, athletic shorts or sweats, appropriate athletic shoes.

HOOP HEIGHT:

- 9 feet
- Games are played on full courts

NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

- Minimum to play: 4
- Maximum: 5
- Teams must play to match each other

If a team has less than the minimum number of players, there are 3 options:

- The team forfeits the game
- The opposing team plays short to match
- The opposing team lends players to the short team

EQUAL PLAY RULE:

- Substitutions are unlimited. Substitutions can be made at any time during a Dead Ball.
- All players must play an equal amount of playing time in each game, regardless of ability.
- Depending on team numbers, players should play at least 2 quarters each, or sit out at least 1 quarter each.

REFEREES:

- Referees are provided for 3rd Grade games whenever possible.
- Rule cheat sheets will be available on game days with Y staff.
- Y Gym Attendants act as timekeepers. Stopwatches are available.
- We don't keep score!

GAME DURATION:

- Four 8-minute quarters.
- No overtime.
- Each team gets two 1-minute timeouts per half.
- Teams get 1-min break in between quarters, plus 5-min half-time.
- Time runs continuously - except during timeouts, free throws, and

during the last minute of each quarter.

START OF PLAY:

- Play begins with a Jump Ball.
- Alternate Possession rule applies on all 'held balls' and at the start of each quarter.

RULES OF PLAY:

- *Sports at the Y focus on skill and technique development like passing, dribbling, shooting, rebounding, and spacing. Over-emphasis on set plays and game tactics could take away from individual player development.*
- Player-to-player defense is the only type of defense allowed. P2P defense starts at the three-point arc. No zones or full-court presses.
- Colored wristbands are available BY REQUEST to help players identify who they are defending.
- No double-teaming, except within the key.
 - In the case of a double-team being called outside the key, the ball will be taken out of bounds by the offensive team.
- Screens away from the ball are allowed. Switching is also allowed when away from the ball.
- 5-second lane violations will be called.
- Free Throws allowed:
 - Done in the case of a shooting foul
 - Use either adjusted 10 foot line nor regulation 15 foot line (coaches agree based on player skill level)
 - 2 shots allowed for a shooting foul
 - 1 shot allowed if a basket was still made after the foul
- No one-on-one bonus for fouls.
- Players **can** foul out. Players can accrue a maximum of 6 fouls. Please use fouls as teaching moments, reminding players what not to do!
 - Use leniency with the players as they learn the rules. It should be extremely rare for any player to foul out of the 3rd grade division
- Players have 10 seconds to advance the ball past half-court. Violation of this results in forfeiting the ball to the other team.
- Players on defense CAN strip the ball from the ball handler.
- A 7-second rule will be applied to offensive players. Players cannot hold or dribble the ball without forward movement for more than 7 seconds. Infraction will result in the ball being awarded to the defensive team.
- Traditional rules of basketball should be taught and enforced: double dribble, traveling, rebounds, etc.
- Coaches will help referees call out infractions and inform the player what not to do and why.

4th/5th Grade Boys/Girls RULES

YMCA Youth Sports is unique, emphasizing skill-development, sportsmanship, and teamwork. We de-emphasize competition and instead focus on the fun and learning that sports can provide. The YMCA also promotes equal playing time for all its participants.

EQUIPMENT:

- Intermediate Size Ball (28.5") – players bring their own balls
- YMCA jersey, athletic shorts or sweats, appropriate athletic shoes.

HOOP HEIGHT:

- 10 feet
- Games are played on full courts

NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

- Minimum to play: 4
- Maximum: 5
- Teams must play to match each other

If a team has less than the minimum number of players, there are 3 options:

- The team forfeits the game
- The opposing team plays short to match
- The opposing team lends players to the short team

EQUAL PLAY RULE:

- Substitutions are unlimited. Substitutions can be made at any time during a Dead Ball.
- All players must play an equal amount of playing time in each game, regardless of ability.
- Depending on team numbers, players should play at least 2 quarters each, or sit out at least 1 quarter each.

REFEREES:

- Montana Officials Association referees are provided for 4th/5th grade games. These are trained, paid professionals, and their calls are final.
- Rule cheat sheets will be available on game days with Y staff.
- Y Gym Attendants act as timekeepers. Stopwatches are available.
- We don't keep score!

GAME DURATION:

- Four 8-minute quarters.
- No overtime.
- Each team gets two 1-minute timeouts per half.
- Teams get 1-min break in between quarters, plus 5-min half-time.

- Time runs continuously - except during timeouts, free throws, and during the last 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarters.

START OF PLAY:

- Play begins with a Jump Ball.
- Alternate Possession rule applies on all 'held balls' and at the start of each quarter.

RULES OF PLAY:

- *Sports at the Y focus on skill and technique development like passing, dribbling, shooting, rebounding, and spacing. Over-emphasis on set plays and game tactics could take away from individual player development.*
- Player-to-player defense is the only type of defense allowed. P2P defense starts at the three-point arc.
 - EXCEPT: other defense can be used in the last 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarters
- No Zones.
- No full-court presses
- No double-teaming, except within the key.
 - In the case of a double-team being called outside the key, the ball will be taken out of bounds by the offensive team.
- Screens and switches are allowed.
- 5-second lane violations will be called.
- Free Throws Allowed:
 - Done in case of shooting fouls
 - Taken from regulation 15 foot line, or can be taken from an adjusted 12 foot line if coaches agree (based on skill level)
 - 2 shots allowed for a shooting foul
 - 1 shot allowed if a basket was still made after the foul
- No one-on-one bonus for fouls.
- Players CAN foul out. Players can accrue a maximum of 5 fouls. Please use fouls as teaching moments, reminding players what not to do!
 - Referees and coaches may need to stop the game and explain a rule or foul in certain instances
 - Fouls should be called more closely in cases when the offensive player is shooting or handling the ball
- Players have 10 seconds to advance the ball past half-court. Violation of this results in forfeiting the ball to the other team.
- Players on defense CAN strip the ball from the ball handler.
- A 5-second rule will be applied to offensive players. Players cannot hold or dribble the ball without forward movement for more than 5 seconds. Infraction will result in the ball being awarded to the defensive team.
- Traditional rules of basketball should be taught and enforced: double dribble, traveling, rebounds, etc.

BASKETBALL BASICS

For coaches who may need a quick refresher on common basketball terms, skills, and strategies:

READY POSITION

- Alert and ready to move in any direction
- Ready to pass, receive a pass, dribble the ball, or shoot
- Any move, drill, or technique should be started from Ready Position
- Feet hip width apart, knees slightly bent
- Eyes up and focused, looking ahead
- Hold the ball in front of the chest with fingertips, using the thumbs to keep the ball from slipping
- To practice Ready Position:
 - Have players move about and dribble, then call out 'Ready Position!' at random intervals. Players should freeze in the correct position, ready to follow any instructions
 - Have players pass the ball with a teammate, focusing on throwing and catching using fingertips (instead of the whole arm/hand to hold the ball)
- Emphasize the Ready Position as a "triple threat"
 - Players can dribble, pass, or shoot from this position, and their opponents won't be able to tell what they're about to do

PASSING

- Chest Pass
 - Start in the ready position.
 - Look at the player who will receive the pass.
 - Step forward and snap the ball to the other player, from the chest outwards.
 - The ball should not bounce or touch the floor.
 - Arms should end straight out in front of the player.
- Overhead Pass
 - Start in the ready position.
 - Look at the player who will receive the pass.
 - Bring the ball up and back over your head, bending at the elbows.
 - Step forward and throw the ball to the other player, keeping the ball high and off the ground.
- Bounce Pass
 - Start in the ready position
 - Look at the player who will receive the pass.
 - Start the same way as a Chest Pass, stepping forward.
 - Snap the ball forward and towards the ground.
 - The ball should bounce once, then be caught by the other player.

DRIBBLING

- Emphasize moving the ball down the court.
- Eventual goal is for players to have eyes up and watching the court, not down at their feet
- Start a dribble from the Ready Position.
- Push the ball down towards the floor with the fingers and wrist.
- When the ball bounces back up, let it push the hands up as it is 'caught', then push it back down again.
- Focus on 5-Finger-Feel: dribbling the ball with 5 fingertips instead of using the whole palm of the hand.

DO:

- Maintain the dribble until a pass or shot can be made
- Work on varying speed and direction of the dribble so defenders can't steal the ball
- Keep your body between a ball and defender when dribbling near an opponent
- Practice cross-over or switching dribbling hands to pass by an opponent without then stealing the ball
- Stay in middle areas of the court, away from the edges, to avoid becoming trapped while dribbling

DON'T:

- Don't automatically start to dribble after receiving the ball. Stop in ready position, look around, or pivot first.
- Don't stop dribbling the ball if no shot or passing option is available.
- Don't dribble straight into a crowd.
- Don't be a ball-hog – equal playing time for all players is a fundamental aspect of Y sports.
 - If a player consistently has the ball, have them focus on passing skills and good sportsmanship
 - In rare cases, players may play-up a division if their skill level prevents others on their team from having equal playing time. Prior permission from Y staff is required.

SHOOTING:

- Set Shot:
 - Start from Ready Position
 - Bring the ball up in front of your face, with one hand slightly behind the ball to hold it
 - Look up at the basket and aim.
 - Shoot the ball straight up and slightly forward from the fingertips. Focus on snapping the ball away with the fingertips and wrists.
 - Arms should end straight and above the player's head
 - Best used when not being guarded by opponents too closely
- Jump Shot:

- Use when being closely guarded, with the aim of catching opponents by surprise
- Start from a quick Ready Position
- Jump straight up, both feet leaving the ground, and shoot the ball from the fingertips at the very top of the jump
- Focus on shooting as quickly as possible, so opponents don't have time to jump and block the shot
- Free Throw
 - Most free throws are done with a Set Shot
 - Focus on rising up on the toes during the shot, without actually jumping off the floor
 - Practice arriving at the free throw line at the very center
 - Look up at the basket, bounce the ball a few times, look at the basket again to aim, and shoot
- Lay-Up
 - A shot done very close to the basket, from right underneath
 - Can be either a Set Shot or Jump Shot
 - Focus on bouncing the ball off the backboard to aim it into the net (like a bounce pass to the backboard, instead of to the floor)
 - Focus on the fingertips of the hand pushing the ball upwards, with the whole body straightening during the jump

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Emphasize that basketball isn't only about shooting the ball. A good player can effectively move across the court, create good passing opportunities, dribble, and work together with teammates
- **Passing:**
 - Practice passing quickly to keep the ball moving
 - Players should move toward the basket and away from opponents to be in a good position to receive a pass
 - Practice players following the ball with their eyes around the court
- **Pivoting:**
 - Players can't walk with the ball (not more than 2 steps), but they can pivot
 - Practice pivoting with one foot planted on the floor (pivot foot) and the other foot moving forward or backward
 - Players cannot pick up the pivot foot once it is set
 - Use to look for teammates, passing opportunities, or to dribble the ball away from an opponent
- **Rebounds:**
 - When a team makes a basket, the other team gets the ball

- But when a shot is missed, either team can get the ball by catching the rebound
- Practice moving towards the basket immediately after a shot is attempted – don't wait to see whether the shot is made!
- **Shuffling:**
 - A good way to move around the court, especially for players on defense
 - Practice shuffling by sliding feet sideways along the court, knees bent and in Ready Position, without the feet crossing over each other
- **One-to-One Defense:**
 - In Y Basketball, every team plays One-to-One defense
 - Each player is assigned "your player" to guard while on defense
 - Practice staying between "your player" and the basket, making it harder for them to take a shot or receive a pass
 - When "your player" doesn't have the ball, practice visually following both the ball and "your player" at the same time
- **Screens:**
 - Allowed only in 3rd Grade and 4th/5th Grade
 - An offensive player "sets a screen" by standing beside their teammate to block them from opponents
 - Feet must be planted, with arms down at the side or crossed over the chest (no waving hands or arms)
 - In 3rd Grade, screens are allowed only away from the ball (for example, a player might screen their teammate, allowing them to receive a pass without being blocked by defense)
 - In 4th/5th Grade, screens are allowed with or without the ball (for example, a player might screen their teammate who has the ball so they can dribble, pass, or shoot)
 - No pushing during a screen
- **Guarding:**
 - Practice using hands as an important part of defense – think of holding the arms out or straight up in a "V"
 - Arms can be used to block the ball, but not to touch another player
 - A defender's hands should be close to the ball, following it either up high or down low
 - Keep one arm's length away from the player you are guarding
 - Stay between "your player" and the basket as much as possible

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE COACHING

Remember, children develop and learn at their own individual pace. The developmental information below is a guide only. Use your judgment when it comes to getting through to your players. Every team will have children that overlap into both developmental levels.

Kindergarten Level

- Rules are not as important to this age group. Players may forget the rules from week to week. Think of the games as a skills demonstration.
- Remind them which direction they are supposed to go. What does defense mean? What does offense mean? Who has the ball?
- The first two weeks of play are usually chaotic. This is fine! Focus on skills like dribbling, passing, understanding which basket they are aiming towards, and learning how to play with other kids while listening to their coach.

First – Third Grade Levels

- At this age they love rules. They like to know what is going on and what they are supposed to be doing.
- Explain some of the rules each week without overwhelming them. It's alright if kids don't know every rule of the game until the end of the season.
- Players should start understanding how to make their own choices within the game. Think of yourself as a facilitator, rather than a controller of each child's move.
- Remember to build team pride as the players form positive relationships with each other.

Fourth and Fifth Grade Levels

- Emphasize the rules and fundamentals of the game.
- Educate the players about fouls and how their actions affect others.
- Give tips on strategy while allowing the players to make their own choices.
- Guide the players to develop a team playing strategy and sense of teamwork.

All Grade Levels

- Make sure all team members are kept active as much as possible. Remember the Y's equal play rule – regardless of a player's ability.
- Avoid long lines with only one player going at a time during practices.
- Use assistant coaches or parents whenever possible to split up the team, allowing you to have more kids active at one time.

Potential Weekly Schedule for Practice

WARM-UP (5 MINUTES)

- Explain the importance of warming up our bodies to prevent injury and get ready to play.
- Form your team in a circle or line and introduce stretching and conditioning exercises. As the season progresses, have players volunteer to lead these exercises.

SKILL FOCUS (25 Minutes)

- Explain the importance of focusing on skill development and how that will help them in the games.
- Focus each week on a different fundamental skill of basketball: dribbling, passing, shooting, types of throws, ballhandling, and team play.
- For the older divisions, start to introduce foundational rules, fouls, and penalties.
- Review previously taught skills each week.

TEAM TALK - VALUES (10 Minutes)

- Sit your team down in a circle and use this time as a physical break while introducing one of the core sportsmanship values of basketball at the Y.
- Players can volunteer to come up with examples of each value (such as a time they showed respect or honesty).
- Review the previously taught value from the week before. Discuss where you saw players using that value during Saturday's game.
- Remember that each player brings something unique. It should be the goal to verbally praise and reward each team member for something positive they showed during the last game or practice.

SCRIMMAGE (20 Minutes)

- Use the end of each practice for a scrimmage, concentrating on skills they've been working on during the practice.
- For older divisions, basic strategy or formations can be introduced.
- For younger divisions, feel free to use co-coaches or volunteer parents to help run alongside the players and help them get into place.
- The YMCA has scrimmage vests available on site by request. Please ask a Sports Coordinator to borrow vests, whistles, stopwatches, cones, or flags!

STRETCHING EXERCISES

Arm circles: Rotate arms forward and backward, in both big and small circles.

Jumping jacks: Self explanatory 😊

Trunk twister: Twist side-to-side from the abdomen, keeping the hips stationary.

Hip rotations: Standing with feet hip-width apart, hands on hips, circle the hips in a complete rotation (front, side, back, side). Do both clockwise and counter-clockwise.

Bent-knee sit-ups: Lying on back on the ground, bend knees to 90 degrees in the air. Hands behind head, sit up to touch the opposite knee with each elbow.

Push-ups: Can be done from toes or knees depending on player comfort and ability.

Windmill: With arms stretched out to the side, feet shoulder-width apart, bend over at the waist to touch the opposite foot before coming back to standing.

Superperson: Lying on stomach, arms extended overhead, raise one leg, lower, switch, repeat.

Alternate knee hug: Lie on the back, lift knee and hug it to chest. Switch leg.

Lunge stretch: Feet hip width apart, step one foot back about one leg-length from the front foot, bend both knees, then come back to standing.

Ankle and knee twists: Place the toe of one foot on the ground and rotate the ankle clockwise and counter-clockwise. Switch. Then stand with feet and knees together, hands on hips, bend knees to rotate side, front, side, then back to standing straight.

Quad stretch: Standing, lift one bent leg and reach behind the grab the ankle. Pull the ankle as close to the body as possible, hold for a stretch.

Calf raises: Standing with feet hip-width apart, slowly raise up onto toes, then back down.

AFTER STRETCHING: Consider 1-2 conditioning exercises (sprints, team jogs, or running drills).

SKILLS AND DRILLS

These drills and games are intended to develop the basic skills of basketball. The drills are arranged roughly by groups emphasizing different skills.

Use individual and partner drills frequently. These give each player more of an opportunity to practice and handle the ball than they would in group drills. Group drills may leave players standing around and lead to a loss of focus.

Remember, drills don't have winners or losers! Try and provide one praise and one small correction (if needed) for each player. It's not necessary to rank players by who did best and worst.

Introduce the READY POSITION for the start of drills. Players may respond well to a special code-word or call-and-response chant that means "get into ready position!"

CIRCLE PASSING

Instructions: Players form a circle and pass crisply to each other. Pass to any player in the circle except to players directly on either side. Emphasize quick, accurate passes, proper receiving techniques, and Ready Position. Help players learn each other's names by calling who they are passing to.

Variations:

- Specify chest, overhead or bounce passes.
- Vary distance between players depending on ability.
- Play with 2 balls at once

PRESSURE PASSING

Instructions: Have players form a circle, with one player in the middle. Players in the circle pass the ball only to the player in the middle. Rotate so that all players have a turn in the middle.

The middle player practices passing with speed and accuracy. Remember to keep the ball at chest height.

PLAYER IN THE RING

Instructions: One defender stands in the middle of a circle of 3-5 players and must try to intercept the pass. Players in the circle pass quickly to each other. Passes cannot be "lobbed" over the defender's head, or handed to the player right next to them. The player who "loses" the ball becomes the new defender – or change players after every 60 seconds.

Stress quick, accurate passing. For older kids, introduce disguise and fakes. Encourage the defender, and don't keep any player as the defender for too long.

LINE PASSING

Instructions: Players form two parallel lines. The player at the front of one line passes the ball to the player at the front of the other line, then runs to the back of their own line. The player with the ball now does the same.

Repeat to cycle through the line.

Practice pivoting when turning to face the other line and make the pass.

Vary the distances between the lines.

Use smaller groups to increase ball time and decrease time spent waiting in line.

Variations:

- Have passing player establish pivot foot, then fake either before or after passing.
- Have passing player establish pivot foot, practice dribbling while pivoting 2 times before each pass
- Practice with the 3 different types of passes (chest, bounce, overhead)
- Allow the player who receives the ball last to go for a lay-up. Cycle through so each player has the chance to attempt the lay-up.

COMPLETE THE PASSES

Instructions: Divide players into two even teams – offense and defense. Use only half-court. The offense team must complete 5 passes to score a “point.” Practice taking 2 steps while dribbling, stopping in Ready Position, pivoting, then passing.

If a defender intercepts the ball, they are allowed to immediately try to make a basket (with no guarding).

Emphasize intelligent ball movement, uses of pivots and fakes. Referee carefully for traveling violations and guarding fouls.

Variations:

- Vary number of passes necessary to score a “point”
- Don’t permit the receiver to return ball to last passer
- If defense gets the ball, specify the type of shot they’re allowed to make (for example, lay-ups only or free throws only)

COPY THE COACH

Instructions: Players spread out in front of coach with one ball each.

Coach dribbles side to side, forward, or backward and players must copy. Practice new dribbling skills, speeds, rhythms, and moving back and forth between hands.

Introduce harder skills for a fun challenge like behind the back, or through the legs.

CIRCLE DRIBBLING

Instructions: Players form large circle. One player starts with the ball,

dribbles it across the circle, passes the ball to another player, then assumes that player's position in the circle.

Variation:

- Add a second ball, challenging player to avoid collisions by staying alert, keeping eyes up

DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE

Instructions: Players form one large circle and sit down. Select one player to dribble around the entire outside of the circle. While walking and dribbling, the player touches the head of each seated player and says "duck" or "goose."

If the dribbler calls "duck," the seated player does nothing.

If the dribbler calls "goose," the seated player must get up and chase the dribbler.

The dribbler must dribble the ball as fast as possible, keeping control, as they run once around the circle until they sit down in the "goose's" position. The goose attempts to steal the ball from the dribbler before they make it around the circle.

Make sure each player has a chance to be the goose.

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

Instructions: Every player has a ball and lines up along the wall under one basket. Coach stands with back to players at other end of gym and calls commands, "Red light" or "Green light". Players can dribble toward coach on "Green light" but must stop quickly on "Red light." After calling "red light," the coach quickly spins around to spot any players who are seen moving and send them back to start again at the wall. Emphasize ball control and Ready Position.

SPACE RAIDERS

Instructions: Divide players into three groups in half court area. Players in only two groups have one ball each. On coach's signal, the players in the group without any balls (the "raiders") must try to steal a ball away from those with a ball.

Once a player's ball is stolen, they become a new "raider."

Stress "no contact" – players must try to steal the ball without fouling.

Emphasize different ways of protecting the ball.

Variations:

- Specify which hand must be used for dribbling
- Allow players who steal a ball to attempt a free throw or lay-up immediately after

AROUND THE WORLD

Instructions: Establish 3-4 shooting positions around the court. One player

starts out from Position #1 and tries to make a shot. If they score, that player moves onto Position #2 and attempts that shot. This repeats, moving to each position, until a shot is missed.

When player 1 misses their shot, the second player attempts to score from Position #1, continuing until they miss a basket.

Continue, cycling through players, until the first player successfully shoots (without missing) from all shooting positions.

SHOOT, REBOUND, PASS

Instructions: Players work in groups of 2 or 3 around the basket. Each player steps forward, attempts a shot, then runs to catch their own rebound. Player then pivots and passes the ball to the next shooter in line.

Designate the type of shots for players to practice. Give individual help with shooting technique.

LINE SHOOTING DRILLS

Instructions: Form two parallel lines facing the basket. The first player in line #1 dribbles to the basket, shoots a lay-up, then immediately runs to the back of line #2.

The first player in line #2 runs forward to get the rebound of the first player's shot. They pass the ball to the player who is next-up in line #1.

That player then runs to the end of line #1.

Cycle through so every player has a chance to shoot from line #1, and catch the rebound from line #2.

Variation:

- Have 'rebounding' players perform a dribble or pivoting skill before passing to the next player in the shooting line

Weekly Team Talks

Team Talk Week 1: Introductions

Spend some time getting to know each other. Make sure that each child has a chance to talk. The coach's role is to ask questions and let each player share an answer. Cover topics like names, favorite sports, hobbies, etc.

This is a good time to introduce some basic terms (players can volunteer to provide or demonstrate definitions): ready position, passing, dribbling, shooting, offense, defense

Team Talk Week 2: What makes a good athlete?

Introduce Players to the 4 YMCA Character Values: Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility. Explain how a good athlete isn't just a person who is fast or good at the game, but also a person who shows these values on and off the field. Each value will be explored more in depth in the following weeks.

If time allows, make sure players remember each other's names. A team chant or cheer could be developed to create team pride and bonding among the players.

Team Talk Week 3: Caring

Tell the players that one way of showing that you care is by doing kind things for people. Provide an example by using something you saw a player do on the field (helping another player who fell, cheering for teammates, handshakes with the opposing team, etc).

Ask the players to think of how they could show caring and kindness to members of their family (helping siblings, cleaning their room, washing dishes, etc.) Encourage each player to do one kind thing for a member of their family over the next week.

Team Talk Week 4: Honesty

Ask the players what caring things they did for their families last week as a follow up on last week's discussion.

Explain what honesty means in sports. What does it mean to play fairly? What does cheating mean? Why is that important in sports? Explore how honesty makes the game more fun for both teams.

Team Talk Week 5: Respect

Discuss the idea of cooperation/teamwork versus competition. Point out that the other team makes the game possible. Remember, we don't keep score in YMCA basketball. How does this make respect even more important?

Ask the players to brainstorm ways to show respect to the other team (making positive comments to other players, shaking hands at the end of the game, etc). Explain how you will cheer for the other team in this Saturday's game. Create a cheer your team can do to show support for the other team during the game.

Team Talk Week 6: Responsibility

In YMCA sports, every player gets equal playing time. This means that players are responsible for passing the ball, supporting teammates, and helping their teammates learn during practices.

One of the biggest responsibilities of a basketball player is sportsmanship. How can players show good responsibility during the game? When they win? When they've lost? What does it mean for a player to show good responsibility by listening to their coach?

If time allows, discuss how each player can have a specific responsibility during their final game of the season. Examples include: leading cheers, handing players water, leading stretches, taking care of the game ball, leading the handshake after the game, passing out snacks.