

Special Olympics Basketball Coaching Guide

Teaching Basketball Skills



Loose Ball Recovery

Reps: Each athlete gets three times at the front of the line.

Purpose of the Drill

- Develop visual tracking skill
- Teaches “move to the ball”

Steps

1. Coach divides athletes into as many equal-ability groups as there are coaches or assistants.
2. Athletes in each group line up one behind the other.
3. The coach instructs first athlete to Give A Target and be ready to move.
4. The coach rolls or bounces the ball to the left or right of the athlete.
5. The athlete moves to get behind the ball, catches it, passes it back to the coach, and returns to his/her position.
6. Drill is repeated so that each athlete gets three to five attempts before going to the end of the line.
7. The emphasis is on movement and tracking.
8. Each athlete has an individual goal of recovering more than he/she did each previous time.



Key Words

- Move to Get Behind the Ball
- Go Get the Ball
- Give a Target

Passing under Pressure (Keep away)

Athletes with average to moderate ability – who can move to get behind the ball and can catch pass the ball – who are now ready for this drill.

Reps: Three rounds of 1- to 2-minute games

Purpose

- Develop quick passes to avoid steals
- Teaches players to move to get open for a pass



Steps

1. The coach divides the group into pairs.
2. Partners stand the width of the lane apart, facing each other.
3. Passing and receiving are practiced using all passes: chest and one-handed bounce passes plus one-handed and overhead passes.
4. A defender is added to each group.
5. The ball starts with one teammate versus the defender.
6. The athlete with the ball looks for the OPEN DOOR and passes to his/her teammate.
7. If the pass is not deflected or stolen, the defender turns and moves to defend against the athlete who has the ball.
8. When the defender makes a steal or deflects the ball, he/she becomes a teammate passer.
9. The person whose pass was deflected or stolen becomes the next offensive teammate.
10. Drill continues for 1-2 minutes.

Key Words

- Look for the Open Door
- Give a Target
- Move to Get Behind the Ball

Mini-Basketball: Two-on-One (in the backcourt)

The focus is on passing and catching as well as moving to get open. It is not on shooting. As the skill level increases, the defender can try to score after a steal. The offense attempts to recover and defend. The drill now becomes a transition drill as well as a skill drill.

Reps: One round of two to three possessions for each team

Purpose

- Develop teamwork and movement against a defender
- Teaches moving the ball up the court

Steps

1. The coach pairs the athletes into equal teams. (Each team of two has one better athlete and one weaker athlete.)
2. Two offense athletes and two defenders are at the end line.
3. The coach stands near them and gives the ball to the offense (team A).
4. The goal is for the offense to get the ball to the division line without it being stolen or turned over.
5. One of the other two athletes (team B) becomes a defender – he/she takes a position between the players on offense on the court.
6. As players advance the ball, the coach follows the play, verbally and physically prompting when necessary.
7. As soon as the defense steals the ball, the coach calls the athlete's name, and the athlete throws the ball to the coach.
8. Count the number of successful passes.
9. Each team will have two to three possessions.
10. Team with highest number of successful passes wins.
11. The rotation is defense/rest off court/offense/defense/etc.

Mini-Basketball: Two-on-Two (in the backcourt)

The above drill can be made more challenging when it is two-on-two in the backcourt. The offense is challenged to move more effectively to get open as well as to advance the ball. As the skill level increases, the defenders can try to score after a steal. The offense attempts to recover and defend. The drill now becomes a transition drill as well as a skill drill.

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Steps

1. Two defenders take positions between offenders at the division line.
2. The drill is conducted as above.

Partner Pass

Reps: Three trials of 30 seconds each

Purpose

- Developing accurate and fast passes
- Teaches teamwork

Steps

1. Divide athletes into teams of two – keeping athletes of similar skill together.
2. One athlete has a ball and is positioned a set distance from a partner.
3. The first athlete chest passes the ball to partner.
4. The second athlete steps up to catch the pass and immediately passes it back to the partner.
5. The first athlete steps up to catch the pass and bounce passes it back to the partner.
6. This repeats as long as the athletes can keep the passes going while alternating pass types (bounce, chest, overhead, one-arm).

Partner Pass and Dash

Reps: Three trials of 30 seconds each

Purpose

- Developing accurate and fast passes
- Teaches athletes to move out after a pass and to move in to catch a pass
- Develops proper footwork for sliding into and away from plays
- Teaches teamwork

Steps

1. Divide athletes into teams of two – keeping athletes of similar skill together.
2. One athlete has a ball and is positioned a set distance from a wall (9-12 feet is recommended).
3. The second athlete is positioned immediately behind the first.
4. The first athlete chest passes the ball to the wall and immediately slides to the right.
5. The second athlete steps up to catch the pass and immediately passes it back to the wall and slides to the left.
6. The first athlete slides back to the center to catch the pass, passes it back to the wall and then slides to the left.
7. This repeats as long as the athletes can keep the passes going while alternating sliding to the right and then left after each pass.



Teaching Two-Handed Bounce Pass

1. Hold a basketball with both hands, at chest height and under the chin.
2. Position the hands at the side of the ball, fingers pointing to target and thumbs behind the ball.
3. Step forward with one foot toward the intended target.
4. Extend elbows and push the ball forcefully toward a spot on the floor halfway to the target.
5. Release the ball by snapping hands forward so the palms face out and the thumbs point toward the floor.
6. Follow through toward the spot; track the ball to the target.

Key Words

- Step and Push
- Follow Through

Coaching Tips

- For athletes with lower ability, mark a spot on the floor that is halfway between two athletes facing each other. Have the passer aim at the spot so it will bounce up to the height of the other athlete's chest.





Teaching Two-Handed Bounce Pass

1. Hold a basketball with both hands above the head.
2. Step forward toward the target.
3. Move the forearms forward and pass the ball toward the target.
4. Release the ball by snapping the hands and arms forward.
5. Follow through with the palms turned out and the thumbs pointed down.

Key Words

- Step and Push
- Follow Through

Coaching Tips

- Explain that this pass is used to pass over an opponent who is pressuring the athlete. Let the athlete practice the overhead pass over an opponent who is standing with arms and hands up in front of the passer.

Teaching One-Handed Pass

1. Hold the basketball in dribbling position, with one hand on top of the ball and the other on the side.
2. Pick up the ball and place it to the side of the body.
3. Rest the elbow of the passing hand near the hip; the passing hand is behind the ball.
4. Step forward toward the target.
5. Release the ball by snapping the passing hand toward the target.

Key Words

- Step and Push
- Hand Behind
- Open Door
- Follow Through

Coaching Tips

- Explain that this pass is used to pass around an opponent who is pressuring the athlete. The ball is protected with the body, slightly turned away from the defender, and with the opposite arm, elbow out. The athlete looks for the Open Door and then passes through it.
- The pass can be an aerial pass or a bounce pass.