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## Practice Organization

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*We have a practice outline and practice sequence for both pre-season practice and another practice outline that we follow once we begin playing games. We consistently follow the outlines but we vary the drills.*

- 3:15-3:25      Stretching (5-8 minutes)
- 3:25-3:45      Warm-up drills (10-20 minutes)
- a. Four corner passing.
  - b. Team shooting drill.
  - c. Defensive footwork drills, etc.
- 3:40-4:00      Shooting individual work (20 minutes)
- a. Perimeter people
  - b. Low-post people
- 4:00-4:30      Break down drills (30 minutes)
- a. Blocking out/rebounding
  - b. Offensive break down
  - c. Defensive break down
- 4:30-5:00      Team Defense (30 minutes)  
Team Offense
- 5:00-5:30      We try to end practice with transition drills that are fun and competitive and drills that promote conditioning and quickness. This includes team free throws and shooting drills.

Once the season begins, we take 5 minutes off warm-up drills, individual work and break down drills on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to go over scouting reports and see edited video. We also shoot free throws after various drill work at least three times during each practice. Each player will be paired with another player or two (2-3 players per basket). Each player will shoot at least 40 free throws per practice. We record each player's weekly free throw percentage and post the results in the locker room. The top three percentage free throw shooters are declared our free throw shooters of the week.

The beginning of the season our practice sessions last no longer than 2 hours and 45 minutes (November and December). The night before a game, practice is 1 hour and 30 minutes. In late January, we utilize the fresh legs approach and scale back practice to no longer than 2 hours with one hour and 15 minutes for practice the night before a game. In February, we scale back to 1 hour 30 minutes for practice and 45 minutes to 1 hour on the night before a game. In February, we also look at taking a day off, usually on Mondays, depending on how the season is progressing and the maturity level of our players.

# Practice Principals to Consider

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1. Basketball is becoming the most over-coached and under-taught sport there is.
2. The practices all week are the classroom. The games on Friday and Saturday night are the test to see how well the lessons in practice were learned.
3. If you have not worked it out in practice, don't expect to see it happen in the game.
4. Use the whole / part / whole teaching approach.
5. Teaching style: Explanation, Demonstration, Correction, repetition is the key to teaching correct habits.
6. Repetition promotes retention.
7. Teach new concepts early in practice.
8. Utilize breakdown drills.
9. Monitor how players transfer what is learned in breakdown drills to five on five drills.
10. Paying attention to details prevents transfer problems and game slippage.
11. Practice sequence:
  - a. Stretch/warm-up
  - b. Shooting and individual work
  - c. Breakdown drills
  - d. Team drills
  - e. Team free throw shooting
12. Practice should be planned ahead of time. To plan properly, it has been found it takes about one hour to plan an effective 2 ½ hour practice.
13. Make sure the assistant coaches and managers have a copy of the practice plan.
14. Post the practice plan in the locker room for players to see.
15. Follow the practice plan. Limit the length of drills to no longer than 5-8 minutes.
16. Practice facilities and environment must be conducive to learning. The gym during practice is a coach's classroom.
17. Utilize your facilities and equipment to make efficient use of practice time: number of players, number of basketballs, number of baskets, etc.
18. Have a variety of drills that teach the same skills.
19. Drills should be competitive and simulate game action.
20. Make sure players understand the purpose of all drills.
21. Compile a list of key drills that need to be worked on each day.
22. Coaching staff must understand the key teaching points of each drill.
23. Identify fundamental skills that need to be worked on each day.
24. Build conditioning into various drills. Avoid running sprints for discipline or conditioning purposes at the end practice. Utilize positive reinforcement.

## Practice Principals to Consider (Continued)

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25. Combine five-on-five work with transition drills.
26. Individual or position specific work should be done before or after practice or early in the practice.
27. Have players shoot free throws when they are tired after vigorous drills during practice
28. For evaluation purpose, videotape practice.
29. Meet with assistant coaches after practice for their input on how they think practice went and any suggestions they may have for the next day's practice.
30. The head coach cannot do it by himself. Delegate practice responsibilities to assistant coaches and managers.
31. End practice with a fun drill or on a positive note.
32. Fun at practice... fun comes with the wins on Friday and Saturday night. Fun also appears with team improvement, team execution of correct fundamentals and the individual accomplishments and recognition that comes as a result of team success.
33. Have a positive quote for the day on each practice plan.
34. Archive practice plans by week, month and year.
35. The best compliment a coach can receive from his players, "Coach was the best teacher I ever had!"
36. The worst comment a player could say about his coach, "I wish coach would have worked us harder."

## **Organizing Practice Time**

### **Prepare for Success**

Time on the floor with your players is very valuable. Much time and thought should be put into each practice session. The quality of your practices will eventually determine how many games you win or lose during the season. Talent level of players, number of players, time, facilities, and equipment are all things to consider when putting your practice schedule together.

The following is a collection of ideas that will contribute to more organized practice sessions:

### **Practice Considerations**

1. Each day ask this question: What do I want to accomplish this practice session?
2. Certain aspects of the game should be performed every day; (i.e. – ball handling, shooting, defense, rebounding, passing, setting picks, etc.)
3. Be a teacher on the floor and assume nothing when teaching. These four points are important when teaching: explain, demonstrate, correction, repetition
4. Teach new concepts early in practice sessions when players are most alert.
5. Once new ideas have been taught, repetition is the key.
6. When showing a new concept to the team, walk through it first so players can see what is expected. (whole-part-whole concept).
7. Follow demanding drills with free throws or less demanding drills. Shoot free throws when tired.
8. Simulate game conditions in practice so players are accustomed to these conditions. Use the game and shot clock to simulate various game situations.
9. Practice what you stress and believe in. Work on those things you will use in the game.
10. Build conditioning into your drills to avoid excessive running after practice. Don't make players dread the end of practice.
11. Limit drills to 5-6 minutes. Half and full court team situations will take longer.
12. Explain the purpose of each drill. Let them in on the "why" of what you're doing.

# PRACTICE Tips

by Mike Krzyzewski - Head Basketball Coach -  
Duke University & Wilson Advisory Staff Member



To be considered a good basketball coach, you must be able to teach the game. And make no mistake about it - teaching is an art. It can be done in many different ways, but planning what you teach is of the utmost importance. As a coach, you may have plenty of basketball knowledge, but your teaching ability will be judged by what your players know and what they are able to do under game conditions. This is the most

important aspect of teaching - translating your knowledge to your players to enhance performance. Can your players become instinctive in their game-like habits and react as one when you are playing offense or defense? This is my goal when I teach my basketball team each season.

## Free Throws

One point of emphasis within my program is shooting free throws. A primary goal of our team is to shoot more free throws than our opponents. In both the 1991 and 1992 seasons, for example, my team made more free throw situations throughout the game. It's the responsibility of each player to know our team fouls and the opponents team fouls as well as his own individual foul situation. When we have an opponent in the one-on-one situation, we may drive the ball more on offense to draw the fouls that will get us in a two-shot situation. Or, if we are on the verge of placing our opponent in the bonus situation, we may adjust our defense to ensure that we do not foul.

Once you get to the line, of course, you need to take advantage of the opportunity. So our players shoot free throws a number of different times - before, during and after practice. Usually before and after practice, we will ask our players to shoot several one-on-one situations. During the practice we have some type of pressure free throw shooting situation. A player may be asked to hit a one-on-one after a certain segment of practice, and if he hits it, we are able to take a break. If he misses, we will either run or go on to another drill without taking a break. We also have a team drill where the specific goal for a 12-man team is to hit nine free throws, with each player shooting once. When a player knows that his miss may cause the whole team to run, this definitely creates a pressure free throw situation. Also, some of our team drills are predicated upon a player making a free throw. When we want to run a fullcourt press-breaker drill, or apply fullcourt pressure defensively, we don't just start the drill assuming someone has made a free throw. We line up and someone has to make a free throw for the drill to begin. That is a pressure free throw.

We frequently are one of the top free throw shooting teams in the nation, and I believe one of the reasons for this is that we incorporate free throw shooting - and pressure free throw shooting - in all of our practices

## Game Situations

No part of practice simulates game conditions better than when we work on specific game situations themselves. We simulate a variety of game situations throughout the year, incorporating one to four of them daily into our practice sessions. These game situations may be:

1. End-of-half situations
2. End-of-clock situations
3. End-of-game situations, where we work on what we should do when we are behind AND ahead with different amounts of time on the clock
4. Foul situations and timeouts

In one five-minute period during practice, we may work on as many as three game situations. For example, the first situation might be: Duke 47, Opponent 44, and Duke has the ball with 50 seconds to go in the half. In this situation, we will attempt to get two offensive possessions to our opponent's one. Seeing how alert the players are to this situation is always interesting and revealing. Next we'll set the clock for 1:45 to play, with Duke trailing 84-77, where both teams have seven team fouls and Duke has two timeouts to the opponents' one. Third, we may make it a tie game, 82-82, with nine seconds left, and one of our players is shooting a one-on-one.

Of course you can simulate any number of game situations. We keep track of our record and use a tape to analyze them with our team. There will be anywhere from four to eight games during our season when one play or one situation ultimately will determine the outcome. How prepared do you have your team for this type of situation? By the time we enter ACC conference play, our record in these practice game situations may be 25-12.

It's important to realize that game situations also make practice more fun and more competitive for your players. A boring practice is not an effective practice. Working on game situations adds variety to the workout.

## General Comments

Remember during the year to adjust the total times of your practices so you don't wear your team out by practicing too much. They must be fresh mentally and physically. We have our players lift weights all year, usually two times a week during the season in a maintenance program. We also have our players come in during the day, between classes, to talk or to watch tape or shoot free throws on their own. Each player must understand that he must make an individual investment in addition to what we do as a team.

In order to add more variety to your practice sessions, I think it is important to have members of your school's administration speak to the team to tell them how important the team is to the school. Whenever we have an important visitor at a practice, I usually ask that person to speak to the team for a few minutes.

I also like to have a few practices open to the public each month so that our players get accustomed to playing in front of people and learning in an environment where there are distractions. Usually, I open all of our Friday practices during the preseason specifically for these reasons. Our new players then will have been exposed to crowds before they have to play their first game in front of a crowd, and all of our players will have had to communicate with each other in the face of distraction.

Remember, keep things simple and try to make the practices as game-like as possible. It does not matter what system of offense or defense you run; you will be a better coach if you can get your players to concentrate together and work hard for a full practice session. If they do this in practice, there is a much better chance that they'll also do it during a ball game.

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## BASKETBALL PRACTICE OBSERVATION/ASSESSMENT

- **Exemplary** – performance is highly commendable
- **Effective** – performance is at an acceptable level
- **Needs Growth** – performance demonstrates efforts need improvement

<b>Instructional Leadership</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Needs Growth</b>
Whole/Part/Whole teaching theory			
Utilize breakdown drills			
Attention to details is evident			
New concepts are taught early in practice			
Utilizes and delegates responsibilities to Assistant Coaches and Managers			
Coaching staff understands key teaching parts of each drill			
Fundamental skills have been identified that need to be worked on each day			
Coaching staff recognizes various learning styles of players and provides for individual differences			
Constructive criticism is utilized			
Positive/negative reinforcement is utilized			

**Comments:**

<b>Practice Management</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Needs Growth</b>
Evidence of practice pre planning			
All coaches have a copy of practice plan			
Practice plan meets game needs and selected drills are competitive and simulate game action			
Practice Sequence: 1. Stretch/warm up 2. Shooting/individual work 3. Breakdown drills 4. Team drills 5. Free throw shooting			
Length of each drill			
Time on task/stay on practice schedule			
Players have a break at various times after vigorous drills so they can shoot free throws while they are tired			
Is there a thought for the day (the mental approach)			
Practice ends on a positive note			
Pre-practice/Post-practice procedures			
Post-practice practice evaluation by staff and suggestions for next day's practice plan			
Archive practice plans by week, month, year			

**Comments:**

<b>Player Performance</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Needs Growth</b>
Dressed Properly			
Work ethic/players work at game speed/stay on task			
Attitude and enthusiasm for learning/students of the game/coachable			
Players understand team goals and game goals			
Players understand purpose of each drill			
Evidence of positive senior leadership			
Evidence team goals have been established			
Evidence of positive team chemistry			
How players deal with diversity			
Transfer skills learned in breakdown drills to five on five team drills			
Respect for equipment and facilities			

**Comments:**

<b>Personal Characteristics of Coaching Staff</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Needs Growth</b>
Dressed properly for practice			
Displays enthusiasm			
Displays a positive attitude			
Has a sense of humor			
Flexible			
Tactful			

**Comments:**

<b>Use of Facilities</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Needs Growth</b>
Practice facilities and environment are conducive to learning			
All facilities available are utilized			
Has the necessary equipment/basketball, etc. ready to go before practice begins			

**Comments:**

*Created By: Steve Witty  
 Executive Director - The Indiana Basketball Coaches Association IBCA  
 Two Time IHSAA State Championship Coach  
 2012 Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Inductee*