

Ref/Game Feedback

I understand a lot of this is common sense but for those that haven't coached before or been in the Lay-Ups program maybe some of this will be helpful. Below are tips that I used over the years to make the experience a good one for the kids and parents.

- Especially for the younger kids it's good to have the 4 kids from each team meet at half court and stand across from the player with the same color wrist band. As well as each shift. Some coaches like to size up the kids by ability or size.
- Always liked the idea of designating one coach from both teams who would keep track of the time before the game. 5 minute shifts was ample time to get the most shifts in over 40-45 minutes. As the season goes on some coaches agreed to start the game earlier for more playing time. The slowing down of the games happens when the next rotation of kids are not ready to go. Having both teams ready to pop in with their wristbands on to take the court is key. Rarely saw teams do a jump ball, just alternated possession each shift who takes it out of bounds.
- You will soon learn fast which kids get the rebounds and touch the ball more than others. One way I found that ensured that every kid gets a chance to dribble the ball up the court is the following:
 - As your 4 players come out to the middle of the court to meet the other team, the coach for your team who is the ref tells 2 kids they are the guards and the other 2 are the wings. This applies only to a made shot by the opposing team.
 - After ball goes through net you get the ball. Instruct the wings to run down to the other end of the court and pick a side on the baseline. Key for the wings is to come to the ball or move to get away from their defender so the guard can make a pass.
 - Give one of the guards the ball to take out of bounds and the other receives the ball to bring up the court. Alternate the 2 guards of course so each gets a chance to bring the ball up. Just keep a mental note for the 2 wings next time they come in for their next shift and make them the guards. Same concept for the age levels with 5 on 5. Have 2 kids take a wing and the other kids go to the middle of the court by free throw line.

Reason I say this is I saw a lot of teams have their kids huddle around the coach after a made shot "asking for the ball" or not knowing what to do. So what happens is the coach would just hand a ball to a kid and tell the other 3 kids "go to the other basket". Seemed good to have some organization for taking the ball out after a made basket and some direction for the kids. Again, very simple and they can grasp this concept.

- On missed shots just crash the boards and get the ball and go. Try to teach the others to sprint up the court and stay spread out. Obviously in time you will be able to do drills around setting screens, pass and screen away etc.
- Biggest thing you will see is kids will pick up their dribble and tend to just throw the ball, travel, run with the ball, etc. Teaching them to “pivot” around while protecting the ball will help so much. Allows them not to panic and wait until a teammate is open.
- The games where the coaches agreed to be lenient with the violations were the best. Stopping play constantly at this age level slows the game down. If you’re the ref it’s fine to flick the ball back into play when the ball was slightly out of bounds to keep things moving.
- There is always going to be a kid who is over aggressive or 2 kids who start pushing at each other. It’s easy when you are the ref to have a “knee jerk” reaction and coach or scold the kid that is not on your team. This is the only time I saw it get awkward. Since parents are so close to the court everyone hears everything. The coaches who stopped play and talked to each other about something they saw that was not right went just fine. Having coaches address their own players during these times works best. Trust me!
- I add this last tip because I kicked myself all the time. Bring a bath towel! Can’t tell you how many times one of the kids spilled their water bottle and leave a huge puddle near the court.
- Don’t hesitate to call me with any questions! Matt Krebs, 503-706-5513