



BANYULE HAWKS

**COACH'S
HANDBOOK**



Introduction

Coaching youth basketball is a gift. As a coach, you have the opportunity to positively impact a young person's life, and that influence may well be lifelong. This Handbook aims to help make you a better coach and role model by giving you practical advice, stimulate your thinking, and hopefully inspire your coaching journey.



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The heart of coaching

The Hawks coaching ethos is “athlete first”. We strive to create an environment where the athlete experience is at the centre of everything we do.

We aim to make our sessions:

- Fun
- Engaging
- Inclusive
- Educational

Winning... That’s not why we’re here

Everyone likes to win, but it is not our primary objective.

First and foremost, our responsibility is to teach and engage our athletes and have every one of them excited to come back next week and next season.



What is your philosophy?

What is driving you to coach? Whether you are an experienced veteran or a first-time coach that has never played the game, it is important to think about:

- Your motivation for coaching
- Your goals for the team
- Your style of communication
- The environment you want to create

Talking with other coaches is a great way to help you explore this.



Expectations of our coaches

- Be a great role model
- Treat **everyone** with respect
- Be a knowledge seeker
- Be organised
- Be genuine



Setting up your season for success

What does success look like?

- Players leaving the stadium after training and games with smiles on their faces and looking forward to the next session
- Improving your athletes' skill level over the course of the season
- Getting your athletes to play as a team
- Playing better against a team you lost to earlier in the season
- Having every player come back the following season
- Winning is often about the vagaries of the grading. The same team may be placed in a grade that is too weak and win the championship, or in a grade that's too strong and not win a game. Your coaching success and your team's success should not be measured by wins and losses.



Coach/team alignment

What do your players want to get out of the season? It is important that the coach and team share an understanding of what the group wants to achieve. If the coach is focused on winning, while the team is primarily playing for friendship and fun, then this will inevitably cause tension and frustration within the team. **It is incumbent on the coach to modify their coaching to the group, not the other way round.** Remember, it is about the athletes, not about you!

What is your team capable of achieving?

It is important to have realistic expectations of your team. It is common for inexperienced coaches to start teaching concepts and plays that are beyond the abilities of their group. You will struggle to teach any organised offence if your group can't dribble with their eyes up and can't catch and pass. Understand where your group is at and coach accordingly.



Plan your season

Having an overall season plan is a useful way of keeping yourself on track. This should involve introducing and consolidating individual skills.

For younger teams it could be that everyone on the team should be able to execute a right-hand and left-hand layup with correct footwork.

For older teams it may include running a particular offence.

Team talk

No matter what age group you're coaching, it's a great idea to start your first training session with a team talk. This is an opportunity to listen to what your athletes aspire to, share your vision, agree on team standards and check that you and the team are in alignment.



Communicate your expectations to families

After your team meeting, communicate what you discussed with parents. By doing this you are making a statement that you care about the team and want to create a collegial environment. This can be done by email, or a group meeting after a game or training. This is particularly important for younger teams where you will be relying on parents to assist in ensuring their children meet team expectations, such as getting to training on time or practicing outside of training.

Engage parents

- Chatting with parents is a great way to build trust and garner their support. Be open to hearing their insights and views on the team.
- Grab parents at training and get them involved in drills
- A successful team is more than just the players and coach



Team Manager

Agree with your TM about the standards that you expect **families** to adhere to. These should include:

- Not questioning referees' calls
- Not coaching their child or the team from the sideline
- Being respectful to opposition players and officials

Your TM can be a great support by:

- Helping to manage “difficult” situations
- Feeding back any issues that are brewing amongst parents
- Organising a get together after a game (great for team bonding at the start of the season for new teams)



Assistant Coach

Is there another parent or older sibling that can coach with you? An assistant, or co-coach can really lighten your load by:

- Assisting with athlete management at training
- Being a sounding board for ideas
- Helping with subbing during games
- Filling in when you are unavailable



What should you be teaching?

Individual offence

Individual skills should be your unwavering focus, especially in younger age groups. These skills include:

- Shooting/finishing
- Passing and catching
- Ball handling
- Footwork
- Movement and body control
- Decision making

Individual defence

- Guarding your opponent when they have the ball
- Guarding your opponent when they **don't** have the ball



Team offence

- [Cutting and movement](#) should be introduced from the youngest age groups
- Simple motion offence with few rules that encourages spacing and lets the player with the ball make decisions based on 'reads' rather than set patterns. [Read & React](#) is a good example of a motion offence
- Transition offence (how the team 'transitions' from defence to offence). It is in this phase of the game that most points are scored in younger age groups
- It is difficult to teach full court transition when you only have a half court to practice. If you train with a team that is at a similar developmental level, you could practice full court transition as a squad. Alternatively, you could negotiate with the other coach for each team to have the full court for 10 minutes each practice. The team that is not on the court can do ball handling or passing on the side of the court.



Team defence

- [No Zone](#) is allowed U14 and younger
- [‘Help’ defence](#) in the half court
- Transition defence (how the team ‘transitions’ from defence to offence)

Low value

SET PLAYS

- Everything we teach has an opportunity cost. The time it takes to teach a young group a ‘quick hitter’ play is time that you are not teaching fundamentals

RIGID OFFENSIVE PATTERNS

- We want to teach athletes to read the game and make good decisions, not memorise predetermined patterns of movement

Have realistic expectations

Ensure that what you teach is developmentally appropriate. Do your athletes have the cognitive ability and skills to execute your plan?



How should you be teaching?

Block drills

These are activities that practice a skill in isolation. An example of this is pounding the ball 10 times on each hand to practice dribbling. Block drills are useful to show technique but become boring very quickly. Athletes are soon just going through the motions. Move quickly to practice the skill in a dynamic drill that reflects what the athlete will experience in the game.

Randomised drills

Randomised drills bring in variations to force the athlete to adjust and make decisions. Turning the block dribbling example into a random drill could involve pairing up athletes with a tennis ball and getting them to toss the tennis ball back and forth while pounding the ball thus introducing decision making and movement. This could further be randomised by having the athletes perform a crossover every time the coach blows their whistle.



Adaptive drills

These are training games where you (or your players) can easily change the rules to bring in different challenges and guide your players to learn particular skills. Using the dribbling example again, you could play a game of dribble tag where the first athlete to make three tags wins. The next game could be that only tags below the knee count (teaching players to get low). This game could be followed by non-preferred hand dribbling only.

Small sided games

- Can be 1v1, 2v2, 3v3 or 4v4
- These should be a mainstay of your practice because:
 - Everyone gets lots of reps (athletes can't 'hide')
 - Skills and concepts are being learnt within the context of the game (ie there is offence and defence)



- It is efficient for athletes to experience offence and defence within the same activity (2 way teaching)

Advantage/disadvantage drills such as 2 on 1, 3 on 2 etc are great for teaching decision making (eg finding the open player) and growing the confidence of players on the team with the advantage by having them experience success.

Decision making

- Just like physical skills, decision making must be taught and practised
- Try to incorporate elements of decision making into all your drills

Let the game be the teacher

Guided learning is when you lead an athlete to discover a solution for themselves rather than just giving it to them. Adaptive drills and small sided games are good for this.



DON'T OVERCOACH

Athletes can only take in so much information. Be patient and be intentional about your feedback. Overloading your athletes will not achieve the desired result.

How to correct and give feedback

Don't be the coach that only sees mistakes. Positive feedback is crucial for building your athletes' confidence. You will get much better results with your team if you focus on encouraging the positives.

Do not stop a drill because you saw something that you didn't like, or to give feedback to one or two players. Let it flow, even if it is ugly and messy.

When giving feedback, "Praise, Prompt & Leave". Make your feedback short and to the point... and then leave the athlete with it.



Read your group

If an activity/drill is not working, move on. Don't be the coach who makes it a battle of wills ("You are going to do this drill until it's perfect")

Ask yourself why it isn't working. Why haven't YOU engaged the team?

- Is it beyond their ability?
- Have you been on it for too long?
- Is it engaging?

Be creative

- Steal other coaches' drills and put your own spin on them. Or just steal them.
- Be prepared to tweak on the run – this comes with confidence and experience
- Change the parameters and rules of a drill or game to make it less or more challenging
- Don't be afraid to experiment



Running your training session

Planning

SEASON PLAN

- Assess where your team is at and set a goal for the season
- Focus on that goal as you write your weekly session plans

SESSION PLAN

- Every coach should have a written session plan for every session
 - It can be as simple as dot points scribbled on the back of an envelope, but it should include:
- A goal for the session
 - Drills/activities that will lead you to achieving that goal
 - Time allowed for each drill
- It may also include
 - Points of emphasis for the drills
 - Notes for team discussion



WHY IS A SESSION PLAN IMPORTANT?

- You can plan a flow to your session rather than just running isolated drills
- It encourages you to reflect on what you want to achieve
- It will encourage you to seek out new drills and activities to achieve your goals
- Without planning it is easy to keep going back to the same drills and activities that will soon become boring for you and the team

YOUR COACHING “BUDGET”

- Everything you do has an opportunity cost. Spend your budget wisely
- Budget for lots of individual skill development (dribbling, lay ups, shooting, footwork etc), especially in younger age groups
- Play lots of 1v1 and small sided games to teach individual skills



LINE FREE ZONE

- Athletes don't get better standing in a line. They lose focus and disengage.
- No athlete should be waiting for more than 20 seconds for 'their turn'.
- Maximise the reps of whatever drill you are doing



Game day

GAME MANAGEMENT

- Come prepared with a focus for the game.
Try to stay true to that focus for the whole game.
- Present like a coach
 - Wear your Banyule Hawks polo
 - Shake hands with the referees and opposition coach before and after the game
 - Never question a referee's call. They make mistakes, just like all of us.
 - Acknowledge the score bench after the game
 - Be a good role model. Athletes and families will be watching you and your behaviour will set the tone for your team.



WARM UP

- Have a simple drill that your players can set up quickly and execute in the minutes that they have for warm up. [This is a great example of a warm up](#) that includes passing, close outs and layups

COURT TIME

- All Banyule Hawks teams should strive to give equal court time to all players, even in finals. Kids don't get better sitting on the bench. That's not to say that you can't manipulate your subbing to ensure that you have your strongest five on the court in the last minutes of a close game
- A simple method managing your substitutions can be found [here](#)



TIMEOUTS

- The EDJBA allows for each team to have two timeouts per half. These can be used for a variety of reasons. Some of the more common reasons to call a timeout are:
 - To make a teaching point to your team
 - To draw up an offensive play (for more experienced teams)
 - To halt the momentum of your opposition
 - To allow your players to rest and refocus
 - To advance the ball from the back court to the front court (in the last two minutes of the second half)



WINNING & LOSING WITH GRACE

- Regardless of what has occurred prior to the final whistle, it is incumbent on you to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. Shake hands with the referees and opposition coach and move on
- This is important role modelling for your athletes

INTERACTING WITH OFFICIALS

- No matter what you think of the refereeing, do not show any dissent either verbally or with body language
- You can approach the referees during a time out or at half time to ask questions or clarify a call. This must always be done respectfully. Aggression and/or intimidating behaviour is NEVER acceptable



Tournaments

There are [many opportunities](#) throughout the year to take your team to a tournament. They are usually played over a long weekend and you will be guaranteed to play 4 or 5 games. They are great fun and brilliant for team bonding and game development

Popular local tournaments include:

- Eltham/Dandenong Tournament (Australia Day long weekend)
- Whittlesea Junior Autumn Classic (Usually last weekend of April school holidays)
- Nunawading Tournament (Kings Birthday long weekend)
- 3x3 basketball is becoming increasingly popular and many clubs are running 3x3 tournaments during school holidays



Getting support

Coaching a basketball team can be a daunting prospect, especially if you are doing it with little or no experience. It takes time to build experience and knowledge. Here are some suggestions to help you, especially in the early days:

- Meet up with another coach to swap ideas and support each other
- Watch other coaches' sessions
- Attend coaching clinics
- Find an experienced mentor. Be brave and approach another coach, or ask the Head of Coach Development to make a recommendation



Broadening your knowledge

There is an infinite number of coaching drills and clinics on the internet. Finding what is appropriate for you and your team is the hard part! Hopefully this will point you in the right direction!

Excellent sites with quality material:

- [Basketball Manitoba](#)
- [FIBA Coaching Series](#)
- [Basketball NSW](#)
- [Resources | Basketball Australia Coaching Resource](#)
- [Coaches Clipboard](#)
- [Ian Stacker's All Star Coaching](#). Free to sign up and get access to a fantastic library of skill development videos and drills



If you have never coached before and are wondering where to begin, here are some links to some videos that will show you some simple drills and activities:

- These Jnr NBA videos are very American, but the games based approach is a fantastic way to engage your athletes:

<https://www.youtube.com/@yougotmojo>

- Jarrod Moore from Basketball NSW also has some great games based drills and has a wonderful coaching manner. There are four parts:

[PART 1](#)

[PART 2](#)

[PART 3](#)

[PART 4](#)



If you are coaching very young athletes:

- [Teddy Dupay](#)
- [Some fun ideas](#)

INDIVIDUAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

David Pascual Garmendia is a brilliant Spanish youth coach with really creative ideas that will challenge and inspire you:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rO3evjhGZUo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zHNboJUiN4>

Fancesco Nanni leading an u13 practice using a games based, constraints led approach:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPkyCm9h7vw>



DEVELOPING DEFENSE

Pascal Meurs Tijdens has some great drills in this defensive decision making clinic:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqE6fi0sFWw&t=3071s>

Jim Boylen is a longtime NBA assistant and college coach who demonstrates the basic concepts of team defence:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0lsxZKGfEQ>

PASSING DRILLS

Kristen Veale shows some team passing drills:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMoA_m_fODQ&t=913s



SHOOTING DRILLS

Sam Gruggen from Basketball NSW with shooting mechanics and drills:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RCQPRemAiM&list=PLDruiBrCRhQnzYNUbid5WC9cjinmeyf2&index=3>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qJxsr-N12U&list=PLDruiBrCRhQnzYNUbid5WC9cjinmeyf2&index=4>

EXCELLENT COACHING CLINICS

[Jack Fleming](#)

[Kirby Schepp – Shoot, Pass or Drive?](#)

[Chris Oliver – Lessons from coaching a U12 Basketball](#)

[Chris Oliver – This or That](#)

[Dan Showalter - Fundamental Skills for Offence](#)

[Ash Arnott - Small sided games for decision making](#)



PODCASTS

[Talking Split](#) – A very entertaining podcast from the Basketball Victoria High Performance team talking about coaching junior basketball in Victoria. Highly recommended

[The Way of Champions](#) – Hundreds of episodes delving into all aspects of coaching across many sports exploring all aspects of coaching



Tools & resources

- [EDJBA By-laws](#)
- [FIBA Rules](#)
- [How to manage your subs fairly](#)
- [Junior NBA Practice Plans](#)
- [Skills matrix](#)
- [Glossary of Basketball terms](#)
- [The 35 best basketball documentaries](#)



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