

the Coaches' Office



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Mistake Management

Monthly Features:

- **Locker Room** - Philosophy & Team Culture
- **Pre-Game** - Preparation & Scouting
- **Half Time** - Motivation & Quotes
- **Between the Lines** - Execution, Strategy & Technique

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- ...and another thing!

Do any of you use a "mistake ritual" with your players? You probably do and just don't know it. But if not... why not? When a player looks at the bench after a mistake What are they looking for? And what does he or she see? Does it help them 1) recognize it was a mistake, 2) reassure them that it's OK, 3) re-instruct them, and 4) help them get Ready for the next play? Anything else is defeating the purpose

A "mistake ritual" can help players put that mistake behind them and play without the fear of making another. The beauty of the mistake ritual is that it allows players to flush, brush off, throw away, or put mistakes behind them. The only part of the mistake a player needs to remember is that part that teaches them. So we don't want players to simply "forget it" we want them to learn from it. You don't have time to make all those corrections for every player on every play. so a simple sign or symbol says the rest. If they don't KNOW you saw it - they also don't KNOW it's OK... so you have to do something. If that something is a verbal barrage they'll be afraid of making a mistake next time and if it's a litany of instructions we run the risk of "Paralysis by Analysis". If it's a simple "mistake ritual" it may say, and do, all you need in mere seconds.

The most important step to learning from a mistake is that the player must **Recognize** that a mistake was made. If the player recognizes it on their own, there is no need for the coach to pile on. As a coach, most of the time you can tell whether they know or not - if not you may need to let them know, and that's alright. A player must also have some **Reassurance** that it's OK and they can play without the *fear* of making another one. That's why I like the word "encourage". It **EN**-ables players to play with the **COURAGE** to try... without the fear of making another mistake.

Sometimes, if a player doesn't know what they did wrong, they may need some of that **Re-instruction**. This works best if it's a short "trigger word" rather than a long explanation. Communicating your terminology and an economy of words is key when it comes to coaching -

especially during games. A word or two and they should know what correction they need to make. Whatever your "ritual" is, if the players know it means, "I saw you made the mistake, it's OK, (insert trigger word here), now let's go!" they can learn AND move on. At that point the most important thing they need to get **Ready** for the next play. They can't do anything about the last one. Except learn from it.

You might ask, "Do we want to treat a mental mistake the same as missing a key free throw or a bad pass? That would lead me to consider "when a mistake is *not* OK". By using a "mastery" definition of winning where trying your best, learning what you can, and bouncing back from mistakes is more important than the scoreboard, it is simple to define what mistakes are not OK. Those that come from lack of effort or repeated mistakes that indicate a lack of learning. Those need to be dealt with. But it's not the "mistake" and how it affects the score that is the problem - it is the action that caused the mistake. So we go back to the drawing board put in more effort, learn some more and try again. Without the worry that accompanies scoreboard watching.

In The Bleachers by Steve Moore



"Yes, Mr. Payton, I told everyone to bring a ball to class. But did I really need to go into specific detail?"

The traditional definition of a winner is the person or team that does the best on the scoreboard. Even a team that is outplayed in every facet of a game but comes away with more points on the scoreboard is declared the winner. Whereas the scoreboard definition is concerned with results over which no one has complete control, what we call Mastery focuses on effort over which one almost always has control. The scoreboard framework focuses on comparisons with others, and it spawns counter-productive thinking. "Am I better than she is?" "Is she better than me?" "Are we going to win? Lose?" These are issues over which an athlete has no immediate control and tends to cause anxiety.

The Mastery focus, instead, falls on learning and improvement. It fosters this important line of thinking: "How hard am I trying? How much of myself am I giving? I may not be able to control whether I am better than someone else or whether I can win the game, but I can control whether I continue to learn and improve." This mental framework, which takes work to develop, gives the athlete a sense of mastery, bolsters self-confidence and, as a by-product, improves performance. What is important to know is that a focus on mastery tends to decrease anxiety and increase self-confidence. When athletes experience less anxiety, they tend to experience more joy in sports. And when self-confidence increases some very good things happen.

With a Mastery focus and a Growth mindset she will know that she has given her all, to be all that she can be, and that there are no problems that she can't work to overcome. Then she'll have CONFIDENCE for sure!

A players' confidence, generally, comes from experiencing REPEATED SUCCESS. This success begins in practice. When a player has worked in practice enough, and done all that she can, she should KNOW that she has prepared enough to play, and that's what's really important. That should help define success. Too often success tends to be defined by results and the scoreboard.

The great basketball coach John Wooden uses the definition of success as "Peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable."

Pre-Game

Goals are great. It's hard to know if you are improving if you don't set goals and keep track of how well you are doing in moving toward the goals. Most coaches set Outcome Goals, which are highly dependent on the quality of one's opponent and tend to reflect the results and the scoreboard. **Effort goals** are largely under one's control regardless of the competition and tend to reflect a player's personal excellence. Effort is everything that leads up to the possibility of having a successful outcome.

Things like Deflections, Contested Shots, Block Outs, and Offensive Rebound attempts are all Effort Goals. If you contest enough shots (we would strive for a 90% contested shot rate) the opponent will probably shoot a low percentage - the desired result of your efforts. If you block out 85% of the time - you'll get the defensive rebounds you should. And if you just attempt to get enough offensive rebounds - some are bound to bounce your way.

Chart an equal number of *Effort Goals* & mental or lack of effort errors...then use "symbolic rewards" to acknowledge those players with cumulative positive results. Try to make it equal - players need to know there are at least as many *positive behaviors* you will praise as there are negative behaviors you will scold. *There should be as many ways to get to the penthouse as there are ways to get in your doghouse!*

If you strive to reach your Effort Goals you have a better chance to achieve your Result Goals!



Winning is FUN!!

Playbook



This offense can also be run with three perimeter players and two post players out of a 1-4 set, but here is an option with two guards and three forwards/posts. Work to develop enough perimeter skill in your post players to catch the ball on the perimeter, look to feed the post, and be able to reverse the basketball. Any more than that and it is a definite bonus.

This creates some great post up opportunities by erasing the help, and then getting the ball to your posts on the move off of cross screens. All screens are big/little screens which make them difficult to switch. It also has some classic screen-the-screener movement to get your guards perimeter shots, offers more post ups off that screening action, and even has lob opportunities if you have a good leaper at guard.

This can be run as a continuity/track offense – or it can reset with the dribble into a 2-3 after each cycle.

Good coaching is about leadership and instilling respect in your players. Dictators lead through fear – good coaches do not.

– John Wooden



Coach Tom Crean, (Indiana University) had these stats up in locker rooms at Marquette.

Defense

- 1.) Deflections (Individual)
- 2.) Charges taken (2 deflections count as a charge)
- 3.) Forced turnovers
- 4.) M.A.'s (missed assignments)
- 5.) 50/50 Ball + or - in getting to
- 6.) Shot challenges. Use charts to get percentage of challenged shots
- 7.) Block outs. Strive for 85%
- 8.) Blow Bye's- 1 on 1 defense

Offense

- 1.) Missed Layups- 10 push ups/after a loss 25 pushups
- 2.) Bad shots vs. open shots
- 3.) Missed Assignments. Ex: screens, cuts, spacing of penetration, positions
- 4.) Assists
- 5.) Offensive rebound attempts

*notice that most are **Effort Goals**

TEACHING is rewarding!!!

Four steps to preventing this breakaway layup.

- 1) **STOP THE BALL:** the first option should always be to get back and establish a legal guarding position.
- 2) **TAKE THE CHARGE:** If you acquire position near the basket before the shooter leaves the ground for the layup attempt, try to get set and get an offensive foul on the shooter.
- 3) **STRIP OR SWIPE:** When a defender is too late to get set to take a charge, an overlooked technique is to STRIP or SWIPE at the ball while running past the player directly thru his path as he drives for the lay-up, while avoiding contact.
- 4) **CONTEST OR BLOCK THE SHOT:** As a last resort try to CONTEST or BLOCK the shot at the point in which it is directed.



Video Room

Hubie Brown does a great job sharing some simple secrets to using screens and reading the defense. Coach Brown reveals the specific footwork and timing to execute the bump, curl cut, and fade while talking about philosophy of screening. He likes to screen an "area" I like to "headhunt" the defender. How about you?

Between the Lines

TRANSITION DEFENSE: BASKET-BALL-MAN

Quite often basketball games are decided by the team that gets the most "easy" shots. A good way to prevent your opponent from getting these easy shots is to improve your teams TRANSITION DEFENSE. There are a number of different transition defense philosophies that vary in the amount of immediate pressure the defense puts on the basketball. These range from "jamming" the rebounder by pressuring him right away with the closest man and getting into an immediate full court press to everyone simply sprinting back to the defensive end. Different styles may be chosen based on the qualities that your team possesses and it's ability to apply defensive pressure. One of the safest ways to protect against easy fast break baskets is to remember the phrase, "BASKET-BALL-MAN"

The phrase, "BASKET-BALL-MAN" refers to the order of protection when retreating on defense. The first player back on defense must protect the BASKET. This will prevent the easiest of shots and limit the number of fast break layups the opponent may get. Once the basket is protected, the next player back needs to stop the BALL. After the BASKET is protected and the BALL is pressured, then players can feel free to match up and find their appropriate MAN or responsibility. The most important transition basket to try to prevent is the open, "breakaway layup", when the offensive player is even or slightly ahead of the transition defender

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Permanent Pivot Foot or Inside Pivot Foot

In a "catch and shoot" situation a player must KNOW if he is open before the catch, when he/she is on the move. If he KNOWS he is open, he should plant the inside foot and rise into the shot. As he is heading towards the pass and he plants the inside foot, and it squares you to the basket a lot faster and is probably more comfortable. Quickness is the key to getting off a good shot. The emphasis on preparing their feet and being "shot ready" gets the player to be thinking about shooting on the catch - that's when a player should be most open. I think this helps with shot selection because it builds awareness on the catch. Also, emphasize that this is a great time to use the defenders positioning and/or speed against himself. Making a move to attack that defender is more often than not the best time to do so.

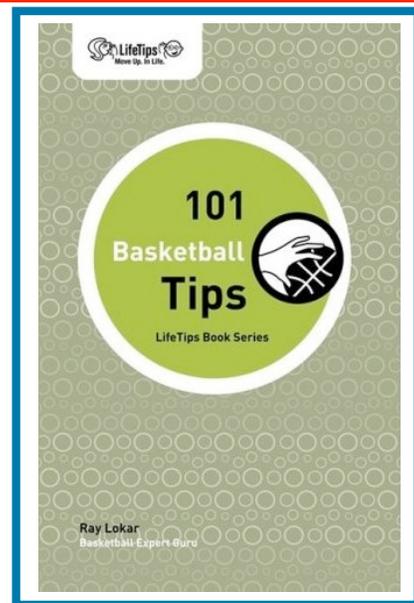
If there is any question that he is not open for a shot or immediate attack, he should establish his PERMANENT pivot foot and "free his shooting foot". I think given a choice, this is a player's preference. This enables him to go into a "rocker series" of moves to attack the defensive player. Establishing a pivot foot when catching the ball out on the floor is essential to "squaring up" and getting into triple threat position (the ability to pass, dribble or shoot effectively) The pivot and jab step are fundamental skills that can get a player relief from pressure defense, create passing angles, and the first step to beginning an offensive move.

Coaches' Catalogue

I was honored this summer to have the chance to speak at Newman High School, alma mater of Peyton & Eli Manning and author Michael Lewis (*Moneyball*) who remembers his high school baseball coach, in the book,

"Coach: Lessons on the Game of Life"

Books take on a whole new meaning when you can hear them in the voice of the subject or author. Coach Fitz coached baseball and basketball at Newman, is a great guy and legend in New Orleans. The book takes us from the work ethic of the '70s to the entitled attitude of this millennium. Coach Fitz taught kids to fight "the natural instinct to run away from adversity" and to battle their way through all the easy excuses life offers for giving up. It's a great read for anyone. <http://is.gd/2ibXn>



Road Trip

In this space I'll highlight some of my very favorite places to visit on the web.

<http://hoophoughts.blogspot.com>

LSU Women's coach offers great insights to the game, thoughts on leadership, dictaphone notes from Don Meyer, and forwards some great links to articles on a variety of topics His goal is to give you a look into a college basketball program on daily basis.

And One

Coach Wooden wrote in his book that when he coached high school he kicked a kid off the team for smoking - violating a cut & dry rule. As a result the boy quit school and lost a scholarship that was waiting for him. I've heard Coach tell the story in person and he says, "After that I began to **consider the consequences of my consequences**"

He replaced specific rules and penalties with strong suggestions and unspecified consequences. He felt that, subconsciously, kids weigh their actions vs penalties and may decide to take the risk anyway. By not knowing the consequence he may have kept some players from making bad choices. Of course, the needs of the program and what message is sent to the other players, present and future, must be considered in determining penalties. However, coaches need some leeway to deal with different players and unique situations. Remember - fair doesn't always mean equal.

About Basketball4ALL

Ray Lokar is the Southern California Area Coordinator and Lead Trainer for the Positive Coaching Alliance. Coach "Lok" has coached basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, football, swimming and track in the San Gabriel Valley for over 25 years at the youth, high school, and college levels and has worked countless camps and clinics during that time for ages 8-18. Ray has been involved in the business development and marketing of the ACE Intelli-Gym(tm) for Applied Cognitive Engineering. The IntelliGym(tm) is a revolutionary training tool that enables basketball players to dramatically improve their game-intelligence skills using computer software.

Coach Lokar was the Head Basketball Coach of the 2002 CIF Champions while at Bishop Amat High School and is a Past-President of the Southern California Interscholastic Basketball Coaches Association He is now the Director of The Basketball4all Foundation that provides a variety of lessons, camps, clinics, competitions, and events for the benefit of the Southern California basketball community. Ray's book "[101 Basketball Tips](#)", published by Lifetips as part of their Lifetips Book Series, is available at Amazon.com and his second "[101 Basketball Coaching Tips](#)" is scheduled for a March Madness release.