

Defense Notes / Tips for Youth Basketball Coaches

* **Apply as much pressure on the basketball as possible** – you can only accomplish this by getting in a good defensive stance.

* **Talking on Defense:** Using this tactic portrays defensive intimidation, frame of mind, and very good discipline.

* **Defensive Gaps:** Make “drivers” shoot, and “shooters” drive!

Slow players / No Skills – Get right on them

Good players / Skills – Stay an arms length away.

Driver – Play off, use false pressure then back off.

Shooter – Get into the shooter, tight pressure.

Driver / Shooter – Deny the player the ball, use no help defense, and keep the ball out of this players hands.

* **Rule** – Defenders must move with every movement of the ball (pass or dribbling). Defenders that don't move are players that get beat 2 or 3 passes later...If a defender moves every time the ball moves, the adjustments are small, minor, gradual adjustments. When a defender gets lazy, stands up (gives up their stance), and doesn't move with the pass or dribble, this defender has to make larger adjustments to “catch up” (and that's when the defender gets beat).

* **Jump to the ball**, and to your defensive position – be there before the ball gets caught!

* **Note:** The building blocks are “universal” to man to man or zone defenses.

* **Even though you play great defense and apply great pressure**, you can still get beat, opponents will make difficult shots vs. great defense. A defender must keep applying pressure because you want to make it difficult for your opponent to do very much over the course of the game – it is a game of percentages.

* **Steer the player to use their weakest dribbling hand.** Take away your opponents strengths, and make them play to their weaknesses. Make your opponent dribble up the court with their weak hand (even though the player is a great ball handler, they still should not be able to dribble by you using their weaker hand).

Tracing the Ball – Is when a defender uses their hands to “trace” an offensive player movements (follow the ball).

*** Pressuring the Ball – Man or Zone Defenses.**

Always put pressure on the ball, in any type of defense. Why? If the defense allows the offensive player with the ball to see the floor – this player will get a great look at passing the ball (makes it easier to see an open player). When this same offensive player gets pressured – they now focus on the defender, and have a difficult time seeing open players to pass to.

- Make it difficult to see the easy shot
- Make it difficult to have an avenue for an easy drive
- Make it difficult to make a pass to a cutter or pass in to the post

*** Reason to Press**

- Great for conditioning
- Creates aggressiveness, toughness,
- Creates another way to score (and in a short period of time)
- Creates the ability to come from behind
- Helps control the tempo of the game
- Is the “ultimate” defensive weapon when executed properly.

*** Reasons not to Press**

- Takes up a lot of practice time to develop
- Players need to buy in to the system
- Sometimes the coach doesn't present the killer attitude
- Speeds up the game, can look sloppy at times.

*** Pressing Notes**

- A defender can't get beat for scores if they hustle back on defense
- If a defender gets beat, don't worry about footwork, sprint back to get control of the dribbler (recover quickly).
- A defender can take chances at this end of the court
- Defenders need to get comfortable playing defense at the other end of the court (90 feet away).

*** Arm Strength on Defense – Keeping your arms up and out...**

A good defender must keep their arms up and out at all times. A very good drill for this is holding basketballs out (younger players), weights or water jugs for older players. If the players can get to the point where they can hold the weight up for 30-40 seconds at a time, they can definitely hold their arms up for 30-40 seconds in the game!