

## Your first youth basketball practice...

**Teach Plays 1st, or the team won't be ready for the 1st game?**

True or False? Well it depends. If you are coaching an experienced basketball team then go ahead and start with the plays, but if you are coaching an inexperienced younger basketball team I would have to say that you should teach the fundamentals first! This is a mistake that most rookie basketball coaches make that can actually hurt their team's chances of succeeding. Youth basketball coaches can't understand why a play is not working in a game, or why the players can't set a screen, or even box out. Think about this - when you watch a movie do you start at the end of the movie or at the beginning of the movie? It wouldn't make much sense to start at the end... Then why would a coach start teaching younger players, who do not know the fundamentals of the game of basketball, a bunch of plays first?

***When I coach a group of inexperienced players I follow this strategy:***

- a) I start with the fundamental basketball skills of passing, catching, cutting, triple threat, boxing out, setting screens, fakes, ball handling, and any other youth basketball drill that will help develop the players.
- b) Then, when I feel its time to demonstrate the plays (I start with a basic zone defense, and then a basic zone offense) I always show the players how these fundamental basketball skills “apply” to making the plays work properly in the game.
- c) Lastly, I scrimmage each and every practice. Nothing can replace live game situations when teaching the younger players (scrimmaging also keeps the younger players excited about coming to practice – they look forward to this part of the practice). Good luck!

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