



One of the most important components to having a successful season is creating a plan for your program in the pre-season.

THERE ARE ENDLESS AREAS OF FOCUS TO PLAN FOR BUT HERE ARE FIVE MAIN THINGS TO FOCUS ON:

1. Coaching roles and responsibilities
2. Offensive philosophy
3. Defensive philosophy
4. Rebounding philosophy
5. Drills for individual and team skill development

Let's briefly dive into each and on a separate sheet of paper, take notes to create your own template that will streamline your season plan.

COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

From the head coach all the way down to your last assistant, each coach on your staff needs to fully understand their roles and responsibilities for the season. Here are some suggestions of responsibilities to cover:

- Academic Tracking & Progress
- Practice & Game Gym Setup (Chairs, Sweeping Floors, Clocks, etc)
- Bench Duties (What is being charted/watched on the bench?)
- Community Outreach (Newsletters, Pictures, Community Service, Booster Clubs, etc)
- Strength & Conditioning
- Film (Highlight, scouting, and motivational videos)
- Guard Development (Who is mainly in charge of the guards during individual instruction)
- Post Development (Who is mainly in charge of the bigs during individual instruction)

PRO TIP: Have a particular coach in charge of a group of players such as Guards or Bigs—it helps players by hearing the same language and terminology every day. The goal is to keep them energized and engaged, hearing conflicting teaching points could interfere with this process.

OFFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

The offensive philosophy should really be geared around your personnel and can change every year. For instance, if you're coaching an uptempo style of play and your team isn't very gifted athletically, that may not be what's best for your team.

- What pace or style of play do you want to play?
- What pace or style of play fits your personnel?
- Establish your fast break and press break systems
- Consider putting in one or several quick hitters to run as early offense (ie- Pick & Rolls, Pin-Downs, Post-Up, etc)
- Are you a **Read & React** team or a team that runs set plays? That needs to be established early.
- If you're a Read and React team, what layers do you want to get in the first week(s) of practice?
- If you are a set plays team, have your plays organized early and have a timely schedule in place of when the plays will be implemented.
- The above also applies to Side and Underneath Out-of-Bounds. Are you a "get it in" team or do you want to score out-of-bounds?
- Are you a team that can use pick & rolls/pops?
- Late Game Situations
- Do you foul if you're up 3?
- Down 3 late in the game: Go for 3 or a quick 2 and foul (Time Permitting)?

DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

Many of the details that pertain to your offense can also be upheld defensively. For example, if you love the VCU "Havoc" style of play from Shaka Smart, you may not have the personnel on your team to maintain that pace of defense over an entire game.

Also, hopefully by now you have a philosophy around running man versus zone defense or a mixture of both and you can start teaching this to your players.

Here are some additional thoughts to consider:

- How do you guard pick and rolls? (Hedge, Trap, Switch, Lift & Under, Chase, etc)
- How do you guard pin-downs and off-ball screens? (Downscreens, Flares, Staggers, etc)
- Where do you help and when? (Do you help from the corner on wing penetration? Are you a helping or stunting team?)
- Are you a full-court pressing team, half-court man, or zone team?
- Do you have defensive terminology for your positions (On Ball, Gap, Help)? This leads to enforcing communication.
- Transition defense, stopping the ball first and closing out to help.
- How do you guard the post? (Front, 1/2, 3/4, top side, bottom side)
- Do you want the ball forced middle or baseline/sideline?



REBOUND PHILOSOPHY

Some may think that rebounding should fall under offense and defense but in my opinion it's important enough to have its own category.

Some thoughts on rebounding:

- How many players crash the boards on offense? Do you send 3, 4, or all 5 to rebound?
- Fundamentals of blocking out. (We teach "Hit & Get" = Turn and hit your man somewhere between the knees and chest and go get the ball).
- Do you want to Jam the rebounder or send all 5 back on defense and retreat? (Jamming = Having closest player to the rebounder try to deflect outlet pass)

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Before you start planning your practices, make sure you're aware of your teams' weaknesses and establish drills early to improve on these deficiencies.

Whether it's shooting, ball-handling, defense, rebounding, or passing, establishing a foundation of drills early will increase the level of skill improvement on your team.

If you find it difficult to find time in your practice plan to work on skill development, don't let that be the excuse for skipping it all together.

Here are some suggestions if you fit into this category:

- Skill Development with Parts of Offense: Break down your offense into smaller parts and work on these parts. For example, if you're a pick and roll team, practice the 2-man game and have the player come off for a shot or pass to the big, have a coach/manager ready to throw a pass to the other player for a shot.
- In the Pre-Season and on Game Days, bring your players in in the morning, or right after school, and put them through 30 minutes to an hour of skill work. Keep it lighter on game days, lots of game repetitions/shots.