



Ridgedale Athletic Association, Inc.  
2025-2026 Season  
COACH GUIDELINES

Thank you for volunteering to coach!  
Goal is to keep it simple and focus on fundamentals and teamwork.

**Basic Guidelines for Games**

**Offense:**

- 5-out is encouraged to use majority of the time, especially for grades prek-3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Offense sets such as 1-3-1 or others may be used. Its important players have a basic understanding of other offenses and positions on the court.
- Emphasize transition, moving the ball down court effectively after rebounding.
- Simple off ball screens, rolls and cuts to the basket. Younger divisions, try to avoid set plays.
- Goal is for them to be constantly moving, working to assist their teammates, and notice defensive weakness and when to take advantage of it.

**Defense:**

- Man to man is encouraged to use majority of the time, especially for grades prek-3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Defense sets such as 2-3 or other zones may be used. Its important players have a basic understanding of other defenses and positions on the court.
- Coach on how to move down the court and set position during defense transition.
- Coach defense help, how to guard when on and off the ball, and when to switch.
- Goal is to teach how to move and not get beat, guard their man, the ball, the basket and when to help their teammates.

**Read the Players and the Game:**

- Understand when to substitute and/or switch man coverage.
- Team sport, make sure every player is involved and gets the ball.
- The goal is to keep the game competitive and not "blow out" other teams. It should be fun for every player. For example, if you are winning by a lot, make substitutions, switch man coverage or pull back on defense to give the losing team a fair shot to close the gap.
- Communicate appropriately with the players, coaches and referees.
- Keep the players on the bench engaged and learning.
- Encourage players, control emotions, and be a good role model.
- Avoid too much instruction or over coaching. Give players the freedom to play, make their own decisions and develop chemistry.

## Basic Practice Format

- Grade school divisions will share the gym with at least 1 other team.
- Keep teams together to build chemistry.
- Work from baseline to halfcourt and back.
- If more than 2 teams share the court, line 1<sup>st</sup> team up on baseline and spread out with the 2<sup>nd</sup> team's players behind 1<sup>st</sup> team's players. Do same on other half of the court.
- Warm up, stretch, & nickel/dimes – **3 min.**
- Fundamentals – skill drills. Every player has a ball.
  - **3-min.** Triple threat stance (dribble, pass, shoot) / Peripheral vision
  - **3 – min.** Stationary dribble, Right/Left/Crossover/move
  - **3 – min.** Speed dribble Right/Left/Crossover/jump stops
  - **3-min.** Offense dribble to half court and back w/ defender.
  - **3 min.** – Pair up and pass, shuffle and/or figure eight.
  - **30 sec.** WATER BREAK
- Fundamentals - Shooting & Rebounding stations (4-6 in a group)
  - **5 min.** – Foul shots, line up, rebound (box out).
  - **5 min.** – Jump shots, rebound (box out) & passing.
  - **5 min.** – Layups, rebound (box out) & passing.
  - **30 sec.** WATER BREAK
- Team workouts - **20 Min.** (switch below or combine 10 min./10 min. week to week)
  - Scrimmage (with short stops for instruction)
  - Transition, fast breaks offense & defense
  - Offense sets (5-out, 1-3-1)
  - Defense sets (Man-to-man, 2-3 zone)
  - Inbounds plays
  - Positions & Rules
- Take 2 WATER BREAKS within 20 min. workout.
- **5 Min.** end with foul shots, knockout, and/or other game.
- Huddle and exit.

**Last practice for each division or for the day, put away equipment and clean up. Last coach who leaves the gym shut the door and make sure it's locked.**

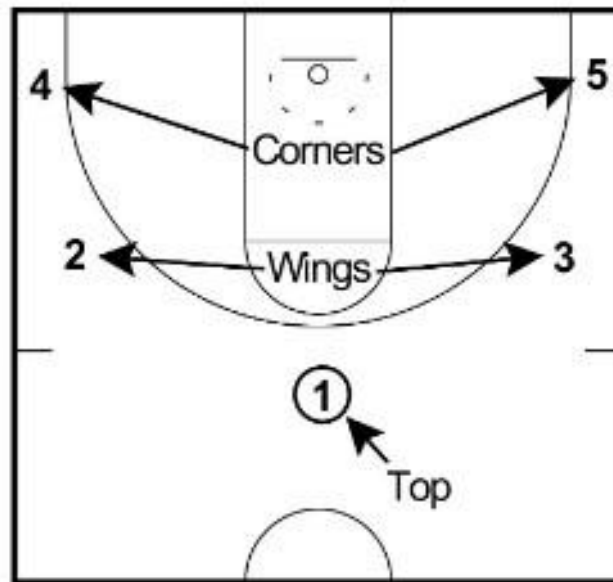
*Coach help will be in gym during 1<sup>st</sup> week of practice and be available during the season if you need help. Coaching links for offense/defense sets on following pages.*

## Coaching Tips

- Move, talk & keep energy up.
- Avoid constant starts and stops giving instructions to individual players. Pull a kid to the side, if you need to focus on one thing, but keep practicing going.
- Keep interrupted instructions < 2 minutes.
- Make sure kids have ball on hip and are listening during instruction.
- Every player is moving; no player should sit idle for more than 1 min. at practice.
- Set objectives at practice and communicate it clearly with players. For example, set a goal to make 10 foul shots before switching to another drill.
- Coach step by step. For example, shooting, start close to the basket, learn good form and consistency and then move back when players ready.
- Discipline appropriately and when necessary.
- Coach effectively. Don't yell, embarrass or diminish a player's self-esteem.
- Work together with other coaches to coordinate practice sets.
- Each player learns differently, so take note of this and separate players into groups that work best together. Slow things down or speed things up when needed.
- Let players learn by repetition without interruption.
- Stress importance of teamwork, discipline and respect. Win or lose it's done as a team.
- Make practice fun! Kids should look forward to the next practice.

## Offense Sets

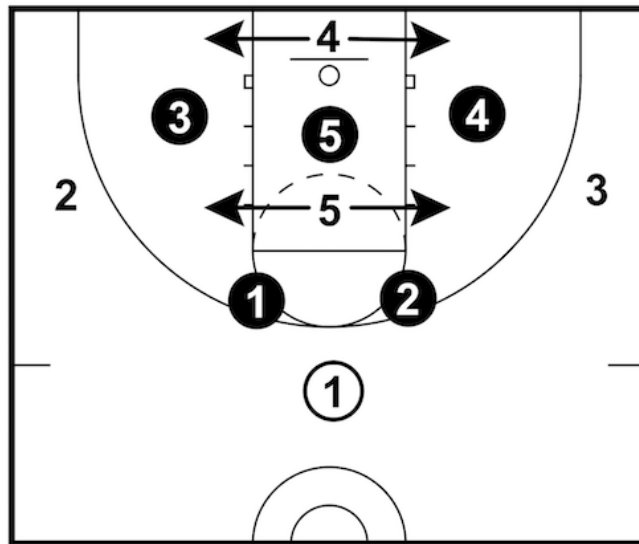
### 5 Out Motion



More details here: <https://www.basketballforcoaches.com/5-out-motion-offense/>

- **If your being denied a pass and the player with the ball looks at you, back cut immediately** – Never hesitate. This assumes you're only being denied one pass away from the ball.
- **If you believe you can attack the basket and score on your defender, do it** – Players must understand their own abilities and the abilities of their defender. If a player thinks they can attack, they should do it immediately on the catch.
- **Players must square up to the rim when they have the basketball** – A player can't telegraph what they're going to do by facing a certain direction. By squaring up, players can shoot, pass, or dribble.
- **Every action must be performed with purpose** – If you cut, cut hard. If you're screening, focus on setting a great screen. Never pass and stand still.
- **Spacing is always on the NBA three-point line** – The NBA three-point line is about 2 feet behind the normal three-point line.

### 1-3-1 Offense

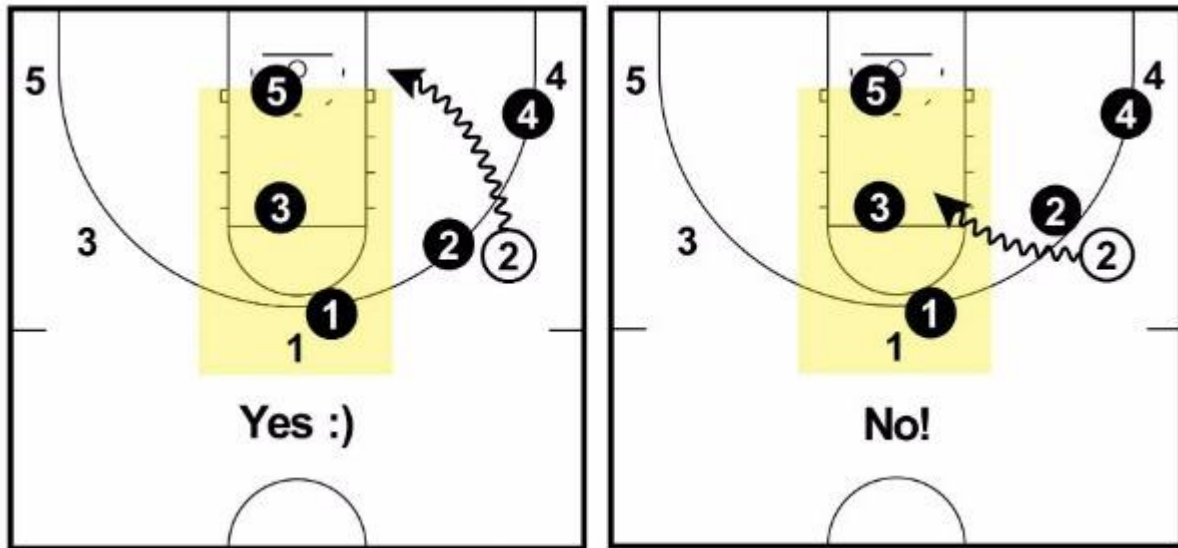


More details here: <https://www.basketballforcoaches.com/1-3-1-offense/>

- The 1-3-1 offense can be used against a 2-3 zone defense.
- It's simple enough that it can be used by young and inexperienced teams.
- Will also work for older and more experienced teams who understand and can take advantage of the spacing and angles that this 1-3-1 offense creates.
- Creates opportunities for post passes, cuts to the basket and jump shots.

## Defense Sets

### Man to Man



More details here: <https://www.basketballforcoaches.com/man-to-man-defense/>

#### The 5 main man-to-man defense rules:

1. No middle penetration.
  2. No ball reversals.
  3. No help one pass away.
  4. Always stay between your man and the basketball.
  5. Move when the ball moves.
- The man-to-man defense is one of the best defenses you can run with your team no matter what level you're coaching.
  - With nearly all high-level basketball teams using this defense, the skills that are learned in man-to-man defense are crucial for all players to develop from the earliest age possible.
  - Fun defense tests kids' strengths and weaknesses, keeps them moving and pushes them to try their best.

## 2-3 Zone Defense



Areas to guard for a 2-3 zone defense.

More details here: <https://www.basketballforcoaches.com/2-3-zone-defense/>

- **Don't make this your primary defense.** Kids will develop physically and mentally more by using man to man. They will learn to read the court and make decisions versus being stuck guarding one area.
- **Everyone must have active hands and be in stance**  
Great passing is one of the weaknesses of the zone. If teams are able to effectively make passes inside the zone the whole floor opens up for the offensive team. The defense must keep their hands up and active at all times to discourage passes inside and get deflections. Being in stance makes it quicker to react when a pass is made or a potential steal opportunity arises.
- **Everyone must move on the flight of the ball**  
Everyone must move on the flight of the ball and not on the catch. Moving on the flight of the ball means we're in defensive position when the offensive player receives the basketball. The quicker your team can get to the player with the ball the better your defense will be.
- **Everyone must communicate**  
Communication is critical to every defense and that includes the 2-3 zone. Players must communicate screens, cutters, bumping, who's got the player with the basketball, etc. All great zones have great communication.
- **No layups**  
This point may seem like the odd one out but it must be included. Do not allow layups against your zone. Players must not make it easy for the offensive team inside.