

Sample Youth Practice Schedule (Ages 7 to 10)

Here is a sample structure of a practice schedule for a youth team. It may not be exactly what you would do every practice. For example, some days you may spend more work on athletic skill work and spend 15 minutes at the beginning of practice to do so. Some days, you may play games to teach skills half of the practice (which I highly recommend).

Here is a template of the basic structure of every practice:

1. Dynamic Warm Up & Athletic Development Work - 10 to 15 minutes

This is probably the #1 thing missing from most youth practices. It helps prevent injury, improves performance, and improves athletic ability. What good is a basketball player who is injured or is not athletic enough to utilize the basketball skills developed? The better the player moves, the better the player performs. Why not spend time on it?

There are a lot of players who have tremendous SKILLS, but lacked the ATHLETIC ability to make it to the next level.

However, with this age group, they are NOT mentally capable to take much technical instruction, so it is great to incorporate games to get the players warmed up.

2. Teaching Skills and Using Fun Drills to Improve Skills - 25 to 30 minutes

The #1 reason kids quit sports is because it's not fun anymore. Youth coaches' primary focus should be to teach skills and make it an enjoyable experience! This isn't high school, college, or even PRO basketball, so don't treat your practices like it.

Try the skill-fun drill technique. This means that you teach a skill, then follow up that skill with a fun game or drill to work on the skill. It helps break up the monotony of practice.

3. Games to Practice Offense and Defense (Plenty of 2 on 2 & 3 on 3 work to teach skills)- 20 to 25 minutes

You'll notice in the sample practice that I did not include any 5 on 5 games. If it were up to me, I would only have kids under the age of 10 play 3 on 3 tournaments. It gets them more touches and gives them enough space to utilize skills.

If you are in a 5 on 5 league, you can incorporate some 5 on 5 time. Although, I would not recommend to do it every practice. Skill work is much more important at this age level.

4. Cool Down - 5 minutes

AVOID STATIC (held) stretching & YOGA with kids under the age of 10. At this age, the child's nervous system has not developed to the extent that they can properly use static stretching. As a result, this will decrease safety and effectiveness of the stretch. Yoga can also negatively affect a child's movement patterns and coordination. Yoga is not bad for everybody. It's just bad for this AGE GROUP. Instead, use dynamic flexibility and full range of motion exercises.

Sample Practice Schedule

Dynamic Warm Up & Athletic Work - 10 minutes

- Dribble Tag - You could also alternate days with regular tag.
- Races From Different Positions - This is great to improve athletic ability and it's a fun way to for the kids to work on first step quickness. On your command whether it's a verbal or a visual cue, the kids race to a spot (3-point line, free throw line).

You can alternate starting positions between standing, on your belly, on your back, facing the opposite direction, or anything else you can think of.

- Coach Says - This is a fun game to get the players to practice movements. Coach says a particular movement. Then, the child does what you say. It's kind of like Simon Says. Coach says "Do a push up."

You can do this with many different types of movements & directions, such as skips, backward skips, lateral skips, push ups, partner pulls, crawls, lunge, squat, jump, hop, bound, lateral shuffle, and lateral crossover.

Teaching Skills & Fun Drills - 25 minutes

- Jump Stop Drill - 5 minutes
- Fast - 5 minutes
- Form Shooting - 5 minutes
- Lay Ups - 5 minutes
- Pivot 21 - Lay Ups - 5 minutes

Fun Games to Practice Offense and Defense - 20 minutes

- No Dribble Keep Away - 10 minutes
- Defensive Challenge - 10 minutes

Cool down - 5 minutes

Some teams do this after practice. You could do some dynamic flexibility exercises. Avoid static stretching & yoga under the age of 10 for development purposes. Reasons are mentioned at the beginning of the article.

Read more: <http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/coaching/samplepractice1.html#ixzz2hthUIrbS>

