

Ed & Ruth Lehman  
**YMCA**  
**LONGMONT** ®  
Basketball Coaches Handbook  
Winter 2009

*“I pledge to play the game the best I can. To be a team player. To respect my opponents, the rules, and officials, and to improve myself in Spirit, Mind, and Body.”*

Dear Coach,

Volunteers are the backbone of the sport and recreation industry. Across Longmont and the surrounding area there are hundreds of coaches, officials and volunteers that give of their time each week ensuring that people of all ages have an opportunity to participate in the activities they enjoy.

Thanks again for your time and involvement. It means a great deal to me, the Longmont YMCA, the community and I know it means a great deal to the children.

So Coaches, thank you for...

**helping, training, cheering, teaching,  
motivating, inspiring, developing responsibility,  
respecting, caring, being there, giving your time.**



Sincerely,

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Sports Director  
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If you ever need anything, don't hesitate to call or e-mail.

### **Tips for a Successful Practice**

1. Never end a drill artificially. Teach your players to play every drill out, regardless of the drill's objective.
2. Create a competitive environment. Players can compete with themselves to raise a new standard for individual drills. That competitive element makes the players comfortable with winning, losing, and scoring points and it fosters a head-in-the-game attitude right up to the end.
3. Try not to talk too much. Coach effectively in a concise manner. Most coaches talk too much. When you coach, don't stop the exercise or drill unless it's absolutely necessary. Coach while the activity continues by talking directly to an individual or a small group. On those rare occasions when you must stop the entire activity and bring something to the attention of the team, do it quickly and succinctly. Then get back into action immediately.
4. Positive feedback elicits a better response than negative feedback. Praise when it's warranted; otherwise say nothing.
5. Give your drills names that your players will remember. The next time you do a specific drill, you won't need to waste time explaining it. Just name it and run it.
6. Make sure the players understand the objective of each drill. Tell them what they are trying to accomplish.
7. Adjust and modify the scoring system of a drill to increase the complexity of drills that your players particularly enjoy. Doing this will keep the drill effective. Move gradually.
8. Give your players simple practice rules to follow consistently at every training session, perhaps nothing more than starting on time with a certain sequence of events, using a particular method of receiving instruction, and taking breaks at predetermined times. Rules of practice should provide structure and create a comfortable environment for your athletes.
9. Normally, practice is not the best environment in which to do physical training. You can accomplish that more effectively outside practice, when physical training can be the first priority.
10. Be sensitive to the moods and flow of a practice. If things aren't going well, it may be better to end practice prematurely than continue to practice poorly. On the other hand, abbreviating practice too often is not the way to develop a high-caliber team

**Key Points:**

- Focus on fundamentals and not elaborate offensive plays especially for 3rd graders and below.
  
- Follow the Dean Smith formula and focus on *executing* what is taught in practice and not the wins or the losses.
  
- Focus on defense, which is much easier for kids to succeed at than scoring points.
  
- Have defensive goals for kids and don't keep track of points.
  
- Establish incentives for kids. For example, if a player gets 10 rebounds or a charge then take the whole team for ice cream.
  
- Most importantly meet with the parents and tell them your philosophy. Mine is the three "Fs": fundamentals, fun, and fairness.
  
- Establish your player rules...in writing.
  
- Don't complain about ref calls...be a role model for your players. Don't tolerate poor sportsmanship from your players.
  
- Have a quote for each practice and discuss it with players....also have a "focus" or goal for each practice.
  
- Isn't the coach who can win by 20, but somehow makes adjustments to only win by less than 8 the better than the coach who humiliates a team by beating them by 25 points or more?
  
- Have someone video tape you coaching during an entire game. Would you be embarrassed or proud to have me show the video during the next coach's mtg.

**1) Stationary (Non-dribbling) DRILLS:**

- a) **Pancake:** Face hand with palms up on ball resting on a palm. Flip the ball to the other hand like a pancake.
- b) **Hot Potato:** Treat the ball like a hot potato and with fingertips only juggle the ball back and forth. Also take the ball from above the head to a low position near the knees.
- c) **Ball Circles:** Rotate the ball around the head, waist, knees. Also reverse the ball.
- d) **Ball Circles (Level 2):** Circle the ball around both legs, then step forward with the left and circle the ball in the same direction around this leg, then step back and circle the ball around both legs, then step forward with the right and circle the ball around the right leg, then step back and circle the ball around both legs.
- e) **Catch Ball:** Have kids throw the ball into the air, above the head, and catch it.
- f) **Catch Ball (Level 2):** Jump off of the ground and catch ball above head. For both levels have kids "chin-it", elbows out like a porcupine...to protect, and then pivot back and forth after chin-it.

g) **Catch Ball (Level 3):** The player tosses the ball against a wall and tries to jump off the ground and catch it above his head.

h) **Catch Ball (Level 4):** Have two players about 3 ft apart and with one ball. The first player tosses the ball to the 2nd player who tries to jump into the air and catch and throw the ball back while they are in the air. The first player tries to catch the ball and throw it back in the air as well.

i) **Catch Ball...Tip-In (Level 5):** Have four or more players stand in line with one ball about 3 ft from the backboard. The first player tosses the ball against the backboard and the next player tries to tip it back against the backboard. After every tip the player hustles to get back in line. On the 10th tip the player tries to tip the ball in. Have another line on the other side of the basket and have the teams compete against each other.

j) **Forward & Back: Level 1:** Place ball between legs, put both hands on ball and roll forward and catch ball. Next, roll ball backwards, thru legs, and place *both arms* behind legs and catch ball. Try to do this as fast as you can. **Level 2:** Same thing but allow the ball to bounce one or two times (no rolling). **Level 3:** Same thing, but catch the ball in the air. It is easier to start with the ball behind your legs and then toss it forward. **Level 4:** Look up at a partner and don't look at ball.

k) **Helicopter: Level 1:** Place ball between legs and stand with arms straight out, shoulder-level. Turn 90 degrees and then go down and touch ball. One arm should be in front of legs and one arm behind legs...both hands should be on ball. Now slightly stand and twist 90 deg in the opposite direction and touch both hands to the ball. Stay crouched and continue this twisting motion as fast as you can. **Level 2:** Same thing, but allow the ball to bounce one or two times while you switch your hands. **Level 3:** Same thing, but catch the ball in the air as you twist. **Level 4:** Look up at a partner and don't look at ball.

l) **Spider Man:** Get into a squat position and balance the ball with the left hand only. Next, lightly roll the ball into the right hand. Next, place the left hand behind the legs and roll the ball into the left hand. Next place the right hand behind both legs and roll the ball into the right hand. For smaller kids just roll the ball on the ground.

m) **Competition Speed Drill:** Perform 5 each of forward & back, Helicopter, and ball circles. The first one to slam their ball to the ground is the winner.

n) **Fig 8 Weave: Level 1:** Put the ball on the floor between legs with a wide stance. Next, roll the ball thru the tunnel (legs) and around the mountain (legs) in a Fig 8 pattern. **Level 2:** Have the kids do this with their eyes closed. **Level 3:** Bounce the ball in a Fig 8 pattern with all ball bounces below the knee level...do lots of tiny little bounces; rather, than carrying the ball.

o) **Slam: Level 1:** Have the player slam the ball into the ground and then catch the ball with only his hands. Note the ball should not be caught above the hands. **Level 2:** Slam the ball below your knees and catch it. **Level 3:** Spread your legs and slam the ball from front to back thru your legs and catch the ball with both hands behind your back.

p) **Gun Slinger: Level 1:** Two players and one ball. Have the players stand in a line. The player behind the first player will take a ball and place it at the back of the neck of the first player. The first player will have their hands at their side as if they were trying to draw a gun. When the first player feels the player release the ball, then they will try to catch the ball behind their back. **Level 2:** The first player will try to clap and then catch the ball behind their back.

q) **Weave and Walk: Level 1:** Place ball between legs and walk forward. As you walk roll the ball in a weaving fashion thru your legs (from the front to the back). **Level 2:** Pick the ball up and weave it thru your legs as you walk...if the players mess up send them back to the start.

**2) DRIBBLING Drills:**

a) **Maravich "V": Level 1:** With the right hand only, roll ball back and forth and flip over hand like in baseball and fielding a ground ball on the non-glove side. Perform this 10 to 20 times. With the right foot forward and the left directly in back of the right, roll the ball back and forth parallel with the stance. The hand should flip over and push and pull the ball back and forwards. Assume an even stance (shoulder-width) with the toes even and use both arms and roll the ball from side to side but in back of your shoes. With the left foot forward, roll the ball forward and back parallel to the staggered stance. Assume an even stance (shoulder-width) apart, and with the left hand only, roll the ball back and forth. Flip the hand over as in baseball when fielding a ball on the non-glove side. **Level 2:** Bounce the ball in a "V" manner instead of rolling the ball. This should be done 15-20 times each side. **Level 3:** If a player performs 40 behind the backs, then I reward them with a ice cream certificate.

b) **Sitting "V": Level 1:** Sit down with legs spread in a "V" and bounce the ball, alternating hands, between both legs. **Level 2:** Using the right hand only, bounce the ball one time on the right side of the right leg, then on the next dribble, bounce the ball once between the legs, on the next dribble bounce the ball on the left side of the left leg. Then repeat and bring the ball back to the right side. Dribble the ball hard and this drill is easier. This drill can also be performed as a hamstring stretching exercise as well.

c) **Machine Gun: Level 1:** Place the ball between your legs. Tap the ball with the left hand and then the right hand enough so that the ball rolls slightly backward. Next, place both hands behind the legs and tap the ball with the left and then the right hand enough so that the ball rolls forward. NOTE: hands should always be in a piano position to encourage the kids to get into a low position: **Level 2:** Same thing but bounce the ball with the left and then the right (hand in front of both legs) and then repeat with both hands behind both legs.

**d) Follow- the-Leader:** Each player will have a ball and mimic the coach. The players will never stop dribbling during this drill:

i) Dribble with arm-bar up and in a snow-board position

ii) Call out numbers and have kids repeat

iii) Call out "switch" and have kids call out numbers. During switch the players should not turn their back, but should switch hands with the ball.

iv) Kneel...sit...lay down with head on ground...sit...lay face down....

v) During kneel or stand: clap 2 times and continue dribble, clap 5 times and continue dribble, clap 5 times and spin one revolution and continue dribble

vi) During kneel, have kids exchange ball

vii) During kneel have kids exchange ball and dribble both balls simultaneously

viii) During kneel, **Level 1:** Roll ball back and forth on the floor. **Level 2:** Bounce the ball with fingers pointed to the ground and as low as possible.

ix) While kneeling on one leg, bounce the ball back and forth under the leg. While still on one knee, dribble the ball in a circle and around the back over the extended leg.

x) Dribble thru agility ladder, dribble while tapping on wall, dribble on one side of a line and then the other, dribble on bleachers, dribble under a broom handle between chairs while keeping your dribble alive.

e) **Retreat Dribble:** All the players will have their back foot on the same line. On “forward” players dribble forward for 10 feet and then perform a retreat dribble. When they reach the same starting position they perform a reverse pivot while dribbling and switching dribbling hands.

f) **Kick-Thru Dribble: Level 1:** Perform a kick-thru dribble while walking. **Level 2:** After each kick-thru dribble touch belly with the hand that just dribbled the ball thru the leg. **Level 3:** After each kick-thru dribble, touch belly and then chin. **Level 4:** After each kick-thru dribble, touch belly, then chin, then forehead.

g) **Dribble Lines:** Players pair up with a partner and are about 20 yards apart. They will dribble at each other and perform various dribble moves at the center: cross-over, kick-thru, spin, behind-the-back, stop and go, shoulder feint, kick-thru with immediate behind the back.

h) **Dribble Games:**

(1) **King of Circle:** Put two players in the jump circle with two balls. At the whistle they try to slap the other player’s ball out of the circle or push the other player out of the circle.

(2) **BEE STING (kid’s favorite):** All kids have a ball and parents do not have a ball. Kids must dribble towards a parent, who will be slowly moving away, when they get close they will continue to dribble but touch the parent with the non-dribbling hand. The parent has been stung and will dramatically fall to the floor. The player will switch dribbling hands so they have a new “stinger” and try to sting another parent. Parents will stay on the floor until all parents have been stung. The game is played in four levels with parents increasing their activity level to a run by the fourth level.

(3) **REVERSE BEE STING:** Parents have a ball and dribble after their kids.

(4) **SHIPS & SUBS:** Randomly place some cones out in a half-court area. Give one team pennies and tell them they are the subs. The subs job is to dribble over to a cone and then without stopping dribbling knock the cone over with their left hand. The subs dribble to a new cone and knock it over with their right hand. The subs should never stop dribbling. The ships job is to dribble over to a cone and come to a jump stop with a triple threat position. Next the subs pick up the cone and place it in the upright position. See how many cones are left upright in 2 minutes and then have subs switch to ships and vice versa.

(5) **Red Light – Green Light:** Kids start at one end of court in a triple threat, at one whistle they dribble forward as fast as they can advance. At two whistles they use a jump stop to stop and assume a triple threat position. Instead of beginning with one whistle, blow two whistles and you will catch most kids moving. Make sure kids don’t fall to their knees if they lose their ball...they should remain standing.

(6) **DRAG & DRIBBLE RELAY RACE:** There are four to ten kids in a team. Each kid pairs up with an equivalent sized partner. One kid has a basketball and grabs the other kids hand who is sitting on the floor. At the whistle the kid standing with the ball starts dribbling and dragging the other kid to his teammate across the floor.

(7) **Pac-Man:** All players have a basketball, but 3 to five players are the Pac-Men. Play full-court or halfcourt. All players must dribble on a line. Once a player is touched by a

Pac-Men, they must sit where they are and they are a road-block to other players and a player can't dribble around them. Continue until all the Pac-Men have tagged (eaten) all the other players.

(8) **Team Pac-Man:** Form a team of 3 to five players. Each player of the team has a basketball and must grab a fist of the shirt of the teammate in front of him. One team is the chaser or Pac-Men team and the other team tries to escape from the Pac-Men. Once the team is caught the game ends and teams exchange roles.

(9) **Flag Tag :** Issue a flag football flag to each player. If flags are not available, then have the player take off their shirt and tuck it in their pants. The following games are played with flags:

(a) **Sharks and Minnows:** Play this game width-wise on the court. All the minnows have their balls and are on one side of the court. The object is to dribble from one side of the court to the other without losing your ball out of bounds or having a shark (does not have a ball) pull one of your flags. Players who go out of bounds or lose their dribble must pull a flag. Once both flags have been pulled, the player is out and has to go to the sideline.

The players don't know it, but they are basically running liners \_

(b) **Team Survivor:** The players with red flags are against the players with blue flags. All players have a basketball and must keep their dribble alive. A player going out of bounds or losing their dribble must pull a flag. Additionally, opposing players can pull the flag from another player. Use a half-court area to start. At the next whistle, shrink the playing area to inside the 3 pt arc. At the next whistle, shrink the playing area to the lane. Note: The coach can place dribbling restrictions such as only off-hand dribbling.

(c) **Individual Survivor:** Same thing as "team survivor", but everybody is against everybody.

**3) Teaching Lay-Ups:** Teach right handed lay-ups using a three step method: All players stand shoulder to shoulder with a ball. First, have them step with the left foot. Second, have them raise their right foot as if they are stepping on a step. Third, be in a shooting position and bank the ball off of the back board.

a) **Level 2:** Without dribbling walk in to the basket and perform a lay-up. You can have your whole team do this with the off-hand as a challenge to perform 10 in a row.

b) **Level 3:** Dribble and walk and perform a lay-up

c) **Level 4:** Dribble and run and perform a lay-up

d) **Four Lay-ups with Agility Ladder:** Form two lines, one at the center and one at the side. The line on the side will have two balls. One coach will pretend and play light defense. Perform a back-door, dribble back-door, give and go, then perform a reverse lay-up with a "offensive move" (kick-thru, spin, or behind-the-back). For a reverse lay-up the player dribbles under the basket and then turns into the basket, but does not shoot a hook shot. After the shot, the shooter yells "outlet" and the other player rebounds the ball and outlets it.

e) **Lay-ups (one dribble, two dribbles, & three dribbles):** Perform a lay-up from a triple threat position with only one dribble from the 3 pt arc....with two dribbles from half-court....with three dribbles from the free-throw line extended on the other half of the court.

f) **Warrior:** Form three lines at the end of the court. This is a full-court lay-up and defensive drill. The two end lines must start at the end of the court and at the corner. The middle player has a ball and starts at about 8 feet from the free-throw line. At the whistle

the player with the ball races to shoot a lay-up while the other two players race to block his shot. There is only one attempt at the lay-up and no outside shots. After the lay-up attempt the player races back to defend his court and the two remaining players race down the court in a 2 on 1 fast break. The defender can't play defense until they are within the 3 pt arc. The two players must spread out and stay wide. The defender must lunge at the attacker and make them pick up their dribble.

#### **4) Passing Drills:**

a) **Celtic:** Three lines at the end of the basket with one ball starting at the corner. Every time the ball is passed the player either SPRINTS to the mid-way point or to the corner. The drill is performed using the whole half-court. Players need to make sure they turn into the court with the nearest shoulder to the ball opening up to the ball. If your team is good, then you can start another wave after the first wave sweeps to half-court. This is a great drill to warm-up your team. All passes must be snapped and hard with the last player timing his cut so that there is no dribble. Switch starting corners to get both a right and a left-handed lay-up.

b) **Two-Man Shuffle Pass:** Two players line up about 8-10 feet apart with one ball. They slide their feet and pass the ball back and forth. Level 2: Use two balls

c) **Star Passing:** Line players up in five lines around the basket in a star pattern (from top of key a 1-2-2 pattern) with two balls. The player passes the ball in a star pattern and stands in line behind the person they passed to... This continues until a lay-up is shot.

d) **Line Wall Pass:** Players line up in a line facing a wall with one ball. The first player passes the ball into the wall and the next player catches the ball before it touches the ground and passes the ball into the wall again. Continue until a certain number is reached without an error or have two teams compete and the first one to 25 wins.

e) **Three Man Weave with "Rush" back:** Three lines at the end of the basket. Pass the ball and go behind the player you passed the ball to...continue until a lay-up is shot. Regarding "Rush", the ball is passed back to the center player who passes the ball from left to right without weaving.

f) **Flat-nose:** Position all of the team around the 3 pt arc with two balls. The "passer" stays under the basket and passes the balls successively to the players around the 3 pt arc. There is no waiting and as soon as the pass is in the air the other ball is headed back towards the passer under the basket.

g) **Baseball:** Form two teams in a half-court scenario. Both teams are not allowed to dribble. Teams score a run by a successful pass...a lay-up is a home run. If a team steps out of bounds or loses possession their "inning" stops and the other team takes over. Play 3 innings with the team scoring the fewest runs having to run a "liner".

#### **5. Teaching Pivoting:**

**Level 1:** Line up your team and have them play Simon Says as you pivot 90 deg pivots...both forward and reverse. Right-handed shooters should pivot on their left foot and vice versa for lefties.

**Level 2:** Demo how to sweep the ball and gain space from a tight defender. Sweep the ball across the feet and knock over a soda can. Players must step forward between the defenders legs to create space from the defender.

**Level 3: Monkey in the middle.** Three players and one ball. The player in the middle is the defender and the other two players are teammates. The defender should use a close-out technique. Pick up dribble and then pivot under pressure from defender. The end

player will hold up one hand and the passer will recognize this and pass the ball to that side.

**Level 4: Monkey in the middle (two defenders):** Four players and a defender. The offensive man starts at the top of the key and dribbles into the semi-arc above the free-throw lane. As soon as this occurs the two defenders at the elbow double-team the dribbler. The coach waits 4-6 sec and then signals for one of the two players on the block to raise their hand and signal for the passer to make the pass.

**6. Rebounding:**

a. **King of the Hill:** Have three players under the basket and the coach misses a shot. All three players are against each other with no teams. Slight fouling is allowed. There is no dribbling. If a player scores, the other two do a lap around the gym and get back in line. First one to five wins.

b. **Push Drill:** Line up two players (no ball) back to back and in the middle of the lane and straddling a line. At the whistle they try to push the other one out of the lane. The first one to step one foot out of the lane loses. The secret is to stay low.

c. **Desire Drill:** Match up players (no ball) and have one player on def and the other on off. Place the matched up players around the jump circle. Place a ball on the floor in the center of the jump circle. At the whistle, the off players try to get the ball and the def players try to box out the off players.

d. **Weak-side Rebounding:** Demo. Box out man first, then go get dribble. Be in a help position and prevent dribble drive as well. Coach has ball on strong side and the def player guards another coach on the weak side. Coach with ball can drive for a lay-up or shoot and purposely miss shot.

**Agility Ladder and Jump Stop/Pivots** (Single Step, Double-Step, Hop-Scotch, Def Slide, Straddle, Bunny, Skiing 1, Skiing 2, Iggy, Buzz-saw, Scissors, Chimney) Jump-rope.....no rope use a line on the court Plyometric Bleacher Jumping

**Shooting Drills**

**1-1**

**2 on 2**

**3 on 3**

**Defensive Drills....score points on defense only**

**Shell Drill (4 players....progress to no one in paint)**

Team Offense



YMCA

We build strong kids,  
strong families, strong communities.