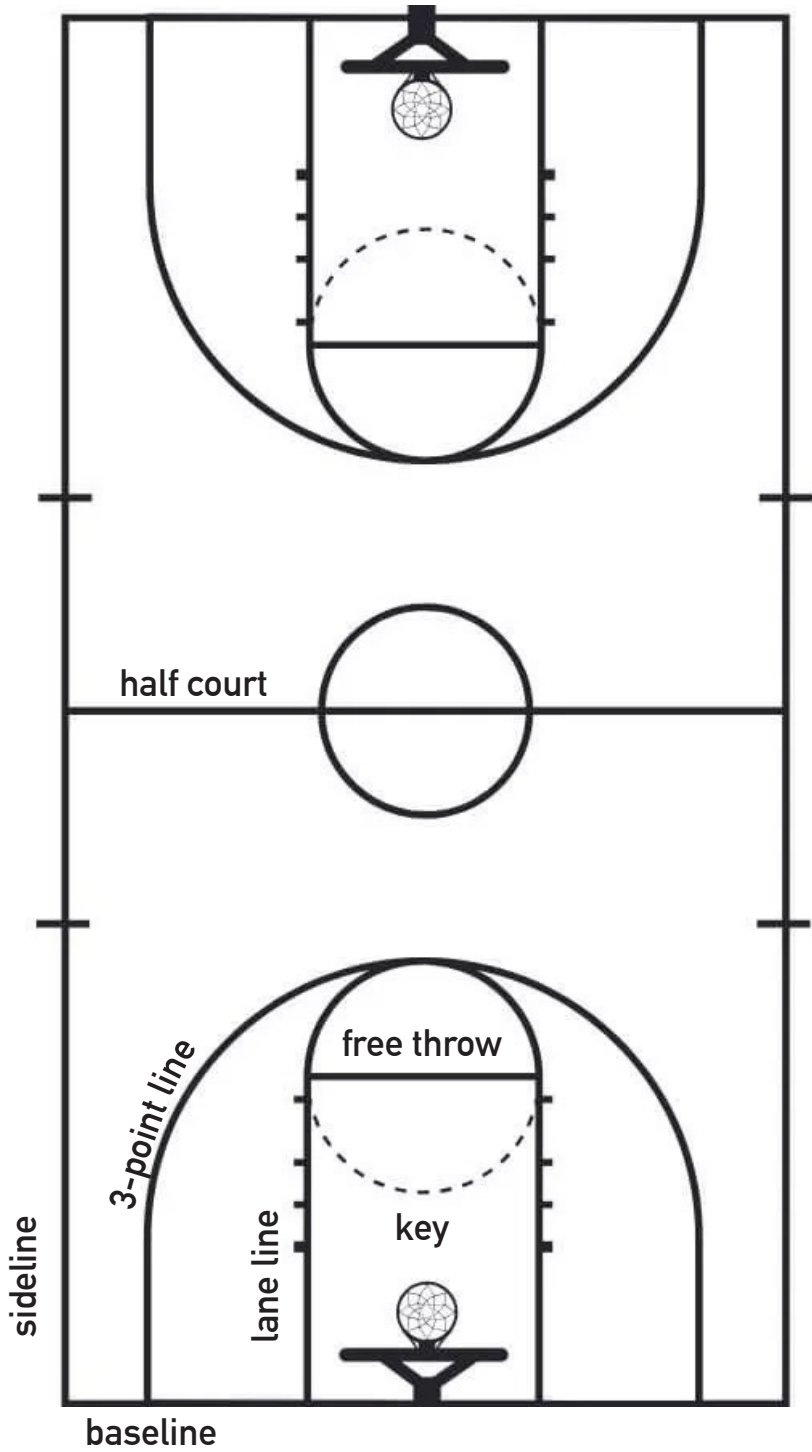


LEARNING **THE GAME OF** **BASKETBALL**

volume 1: foundational skills and principles



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INTRODUCTION

When I was a child, I became completely invested in basketball. From watching and playing to collecting cards and learning about players, it was my main interest all throughout my childhood. I can remember it becoming a family activity for us.

We would learn fundamentals from my dad. My mom would drive us to the library so we could check out books about basketball players.

While the concepts in this book are not complex, I hope these pages can help families who are new to the game of basketball grow in the sport together.

This book is intended to be a starting point, the foundation for the journey of a young player.

SECTION 1
OFFENSE

DRIBBLING

Dribbling, also known as ball handling, allows the player to move with the ball by bouncing it with one hand. The ball can switch hands after hitting the floor, but it can never touch both hands at the same time.

Effective ball handlers can control the ball while moving quickly in multiple directions.

The best ball handlers purposefully use their dribble to gain an advantage against the defense. A few reasons to use the dribble would be to create a scoring opportunity, generate a passing angle or advance the ball into the front court.

VIOLATIONS

DOUBLE DRIBBLE

This occurs when a player dribbles the ball simultaneously with two hands OR when a player dribbles after they have picked the ball up.

CARRYING

The player must maintain their hand position on the top of the ball while dribbling. If the hand comes under the ball while dribbling, it will be called a carrying violation.

PASSING

Passing is when the ball is thrown from one teammate to another. There are many different ways to pass the ball. Most coaches will direct players to pass with two hands at all times. However, there are times when a one handed pass can be useful.

Efficient passes travel quickly and in a direct line.

The most traditional passes that are taught are the chest pass, bounce pass, and overhead pass. Passing is a quicker way to move the ball than dribbling is. A good passing team can be difficult to guard.

OTHER TYPES OF PASSES

BALL REVERSAL

When the ball is passed from one side of the floor to the midline and then to the other side of the floor.

SKIP PASS

When the ball is passed from one side of the court directly to the other side of the court.

POST ENTRY

When the ball is passed from the perimeter into the post area.

SHOOTING

Shooting the ball is the means to scoring points. Traditional shooting form is typically broken down like this: bend your legs, elbow under the ball in the shooting pocket, flip your wrist to release the ball. However, if you watch the NBA, you will see variations of movement and motion from some of the best shooters. Yet, the foundations of shooting can still be seen in all of them.

While shooting used to be reserved as a specialty for smaller players, it is now an essential skill for all positions and sizes.

Being a threat with the outside shot helps to spread the defense out and open up lanes for driving and cutting. But let's not neglect the shots that come from near the basket. Layups and floaters are easy buckets that still take practice and concentration.

TYPES OF SHOTS

LAY UP

Shooting the ball near the basket after jumping off of 1 foot.

POWER UP

Shooting the ball near the basket after coming to a jump stop.

FLOATER

Releasing the ball near the basket with a high arc to ensure the ball does not get blocked by the defense.

FREE THROW

A shot from the free throw line without defense resulting from a foul call while shooting (or while in the bonus).

MID-RANGE

A jump shot inside the three point line.

THREE POINT SHOT

A jump shot from outside the three point line.

MOVEMENT

The offensive game is built on movement, meaning player movement and ball movement. The ball can move with the dribble or the pass. Player movement is typically focused on cuts and screens.

Movement from the offense makes the defense have to work harder to prevent scoring opportunities.

When offense players stand still and the ball remains with one player, defenses can easily set up to prevent scoring opportunities.

HOW TO GENERATE MOVEMENT

DRIVING

Using the dribble to attack gaps in the defense and get to the basket.

BALL MOVEMENT

Typically used to describe rapid passing between players.

CUTTING

When a player without the ball moves in a direction to create a passing angle. This is usually used to describe movement towards the basket.

REPLACE

A term used to describe player movement to an outside spot that is vacant, or free of another teammate

SCREEN

When an offensive player uses their body to block a defender of another player. Screens can occur for the ball handler or a teammate away from the ball. The screening player must get set and remain stationary.

FOOTWORK

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FOUNDATIONAL FOOTWORK

FRONT PIVOT

Pivoting in the direction of your chest.

REVERSE PIVOT

Pivoting in the direction of your back.

SQUARING UP

Sometimes referred to as “turn and face”, This is when the offensive player pivots in order to face the basket which allows them to see the whole court.

FOOT FAKE

Stepping with the non-pivot foot in a rapid motion to get the defense off balance.

SECTION 2
DEFENSE

GUARDING THE BALL

Known as “on-ball” defense, each player has an assigned opponent to guard. When their assignment has the ball, they are guarding “on-ball”. The goal is to contain the ball handler, meaning not allowing them to have an open shot, take an easy driving lane or pass with clear vision.

The best defenders never allow their man to be comfortable with the ball.

On-ball defense requires lateral speed and agility in order to beat the ball handler to their desired spot. Maintaining a defensive stance is crucial to being a strong defender. Being active with your hands can keep pressure on the ball handler.

DEFENSIVE STANCE

Create a wide base with your feet, bend at the knees and hips to get the body low. Arms extended to lengthen your position.

BLOCKING OUT

When a shot goes up, statistically it's more likely to come off the rim than go through the net. Securing the ball after a missed shot is called a rebound. In order to get your body in position to have the advantage over the other team you will need to block out.

This is a skill that requires a player to use their body to obtain and maintain a desirable rebounding position against their opponent.

This alone does not make someone a great rebounder. Timing and anticipation are big parts of being able to see where the ball is going and be the first one to it. Combine those traits with all-out hustle, and you will find a great rebounder.

3 KEYS TO BLOCKING OUT WELL

1. Locate your man
2. Make contact with your man
3. Find the ball

JUMP TO THE BALL

Most coaches use this term to describe the movement of a defender in relation to the movement of the ball. Jumping to the ball means taking a step (or more) in the direction of the ball. This is important because defense is best accomplished as a team.

Being in the right position in relation to where your man is and where the ball is can be advantageous for multiple reasons.

Not only does it put you in a spot where you can potentially help if the ball handler beats his man, but can also help you be ready to guard a cut from your man off the ball.

GUARDING SCREENS

When an offensive player sets his body up to interfere with the defender's path, they are screening for a teammate. Screens can be set for the ball handler and also for a player without the ball.

Coaches can teach a variety of ways to get through a screen.

When you are guarding the ball handler, you can go over the screen (following the ball handler's path) or go under the screen (anticipating the path of the ball handler). If your man is away from the ball and another offensive player is screening you, the key is to be in the right position on the court to make it hard for an effective screen to be set. There are multiple ways to get through a screen off the ball. You can go on the ball side of the screen, chase your man around the screen or jump the screen in order to beat your man to his spot. The important thing to remember is guarding screens is a team effort. Your other teammates need to do their jobs for screens to be guarded effectively.

CLOSEOUT

When your man is receiving the pass, they immediately become a threat to shoot or drive. While there are multiple ways to teach guarding your man on a catch, the most common way is through the closeout.

The goal with a closeout is to take away the ball handler's ability to make a quick decision.

This involves a sprint to your man as the ball is being thrown to him, followed by short, choppy steps that put you in a defensive stance. Putting your hands high on the closeout can help be ready to contest a shot, drive or pass.

3 S'S OF A CLOSEOUT SPRINT

Move quickly to your man as he catches the ball.

STUTTER

Chop your feet in quick, short steps.

STANCE

Settle into your defensive position.

SECTION 3
X-FACTORS

TALKING

One of the most overlooked aspects of the game is communication on the court. Players spend countless hours working on individual skills. Teams come together in the season to work on defensive and offensive schemes that include many types of drills. However, talking on the court is one of the hardest skills to teach, practice and enforce. Yet, every coach will be quick to say how important it is for a successful team.

Communication allows teams to work together on a higher level.

Physical teamwork is one thing, but a team that is in sync mentally can help them reach a higher level. Communicating verbally allows a team to work together to anticipate what the other team is going to do, stay in sync while the game is moving, and cohesively respond to what is going on. One of the most difficult things about this, is it involves seeing what is going on around the whole court, and not just in regards to what your man is doing.

BENCH DECORUM

The chances are you will not be on the court for the entire duration of the game. Being on the bench is a huge part of the game. But time spent on the bench is not just wasted time or a break from playing. It's important to stay engaged in the game while you are on the bench.

This is your chance to see trends in the game and how you can adjust when you go back in.

Listen to what your coaches are saying to your teammates and take that instruction into consideration when you return to the game. Cheering and encouraging your teammates is great, but don't simply become a cheerleader. Prepare your mind to reenter the game while your body recuperates.

COACHABILITY

There is a difference between correction and criticism. The reality is that some coaches do criticize and speak negatively. But most coaches are into helping their players become better.

**When a coach corrects you,
it is because they want to
see you improve.**

Being coachable means that you take their correction and use it to improve as a player. It can be difficult to take corrective feedback in a positive way at first. Our natural reaction is usually to be defensive or to be afraid to make mistakes. It's a coaches job to get the most out of their players, and it's the players responsibility to take feedback and improve upon it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi, I'm Matt Espinoza, the founder and director of Salem Hoops Project, a 501(c)3 that provides free basketball clinics to the city of Salem, OR. After playing in college, I spent 15 years coaching high school basketball. I'm on a little hiatus to be a father and husband right now, but plan to return in the future. I've coached league title teams and have also coached a winless team. While the winning teams were more fun, it was the teams where individual talent was limited that made me grow as a teacher. I hope I can share something of value with you in this book series. If you have something to share with me, head over to salemhoopsproject.org and connect with me.



