



# Coaches Manual

(Fall 2025)

Boca Basketball appreciates the contribution of your valuable time to volunteer as a coach in this League and to give back to your community. The time you invest will be rewarded with thanks from your players and their parents, and the fact that you helped the players have fun while improving their basketball skills! This Manual will provide assistance for Boca Basketball coaches desiring guidance in coaching (especially for the younger age groups). While it is primarily intended for first-year coaches, it can provide a refresher for experienced coaches.

This manual also includes a general administrative policy section which should be useful to coaches in understanding league operations.

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## **Coaches' Objectives and Responsibilities**

As Coach, it is important that you properly establish priorities from the onset of the season and adhere to your objectives throughout the season. It is easy to get caught in the race to win and neglect the fundamentals the League is attempting to achieve. Taking that into consideration, the following should reflect coaches' priorities:

1. **Safety and security of the children** - Both at practices and games, your HIGHEST PRIORITY is the safety and security of the players on your team. You or your assistant coach should not let players wander away from the group, especially not if they are younger than age 11 and especially not at practices where there are large numbers of people from other teams at the parks or schools. In August, 2013, BB instituted new requirements, consistent with State of Florida guidelines, with respect to Concussion Education and Management for Coaches. ALL COACHES, including assistants, are required to fulfill the requirements for Concussion Management as communicated by BB administration.
2. **Have Fun** - The second highest priority of the League is to make the basketball experience enjoyable for the players. A young player's experience will often decide whether he/she will continue to play basketball (or any sport). An important part of coaching is setting a tone of enjoying the practices and games (appropriate team management is critical to this goal).
3. **Practice Good Sportsmanship** - Without proper leadership and guidance from the Coach, bad habits by players can quickly develop and become contagious. These behaviors should not be tolerated and the player should be disciplined. The example you set for good sportsmanship as a coach by not tolerating unsportsmanlike behavior is critical to developing good habits with young players.
4. **Improve Basketball Skills and Coach Effort** - Part of the pleasure that comes with the coaching of any sport is the improvement of the players' skills during the season. The Coach should observe the strengths and weaknesses in each of the players' games and point them out to the player, noting certain drills or practice techniques they can improve on (both at practice and at home). Regardless of a player's skill level, every coach can teach the importance of each player giving maximum effort during the games. This is a life-long lesson where YOU can make a difference.
5. **Instill A Teamwork Attitude** - Too often the value of a player is perceived by his/her teammates by the number of points scored. At the first practice, we recommend you stress the importance of the other vital aspects of the game such as rebounds, steals, assists, blocked shots and defense. If you or one of your assistants or parents

maintain game statistics, emphasize these factors over the points scored, and you will find that your players start focusing on these aspects of the game along with shooting. Discourage "ball-hogging" and excessive shots by a single player.

6. **Maintain A Disciplined Practice and Game Environment** - At young ages, it is easy for players to get distracted and initiate horseplay which can lead to injury. Establish ground rules for eliminating excessive or rough horseplay, whether through requiring laps or sitting the players down. One technique to keep players occupied when you are working with one group is to have the other players work on drills, and appointing players to run the drills. If a parent is available and willing, they may help run these side drills. Players do like competition, so you can set goals for each of the drills, for example, shooting for 7 out of 10 lay-ups made when practicing lay-up drills. BB expects the same level of appropriate behavior from all participants during practices as well as games. A new POINT OF EMPHASIS for all coaches should be the elimination on your team of any form of BULLYING by players or parents. Failure by a coach to be aware of BULLYING by any of your players, opposing players, parents, etc. can lead to extremely disturbing consequences. If you think you have observed an incident of BULLYING, the guilty party should be disciplined immediately and if the behavior continues, you should contact the parents or League Administration.

7. **Hopefully Win Some Games in The Process** - Winning is nice but winning is really the result of reaching your team's other goals. If priorities are adhered to, in most cases you will win your share of games. Winning is the by-product of establishing and reaching the other goals set for the team by the Coach. It is important to manage players' and parents' expectations regarding wins/losses, and not have the season judged by this measure. Rather, the season should be judged by the fun the players had, the improvement of basketball skills, and the teamwork and sportsmanship developed during the season.

## **Parents Responsibilities/Orientation**

It is important that the responsibilities and expectations of parents be communicated at the onset of the season. As a general rule, the vast majority of parents are cooperative with the coaches and League's goals, if the goals are properly communicated. The following are some recommended issues to discuss with the parents at a 15–20-minute orientation prior to your first practice:

1. **Discussion of Season Objectives** - We recommend the objectives in the previous section be emphasized to parents, especially the commitment to have fun and to improve basketball skills, and not focusing on wins and losses. The game is for the children and not the adults.
2. **Displaying Sportsmanship** - Parents are not to confront, abuse or argue with any Coach, League official or Referee. You are expected to manage your bench area during games, including the area immediately behind your bench if parents have become argumentative, excessively loud or abusive during games.

3. **Practice Schedules** - It is a good idea to discuss the best nights for practices with the parents of your players at a pre-season team meeting. As a volunteer coach, you have the ultimate decision-making rights with respect to practices, but if you have flexibility, you may be able to solve some scheduling problems if you informally poll your team's parents to determine if there are nights with lots of conflicts. **NOTE THAT BOCA BASKETBALL DOES NOT SWITCH PLAYERS FROM TEAM TO TEAM DUE TO PRACTICE NIGHT CONFLICTS, NEITHER DO WE GRANT REFUNDS FOR THIS REASON.** It is in your interest as a coach to have all of your players at practice so please do your best to be flexible in choosing practice nights which are feasible for all of your players.
4. **Practices and Picking Up Children** - On practice dates, parents are to bring their children to the designated practice area. It is up to each individual Coach whether they desire to have the parents contact them if their children cannot attend practice sessions. Parents must attend practices and games. In the event of a player injury, the Coach needs to be able to turn over the responsibility of appropriate care to the parent(s). [It is not league policy for coaches to drive children home in the event a parent does not pick up their child in a timely manner. In the meantime, you as a coach and Boca Basketball League do not take responsibility for the child's welfare in the event of an accidental injury. This policy should be explained to all parents. Parents should not leave their child at practice, but if they do, the coach should communicate that if no one picks the child up at the end of practice, the coach and the league take no responsibility if the coach cannot wait for the child to be picked up. For that reason, it is imperative that coaches clearly communicate the finishing time for practices and stick to their scheduled time and not leave early especially in the younger age groups. Remember, all BB practices are for a maximum of 90 minutes \(ages 10 and under should be 60 minutes\).](#)
5. **Promptness** - Parents must have their children at games at least 20 minutes prior to the designated starting time. It is vital to stress the importance of being punctual to the parents since you need to complete the Rotation Sheets at least five (5) minutes before each game, and last minute changes are stressful. Any player who arrives after the game has begun is not allowed to play in the game defined by League rules. Coaches should also stress to the parents that they notify you when their child is not able to attend the game so you can modify your Rotation Sheet accordingly.
6. **Drinks/Snacks** - Parents should be asked to bring drinks on a rotating schedule, and coaches or a team parent/leader should provide a weekly schedule of the names. Coaches and parents are all asked to make sure the grounds are cleaned up after refreshments are served.
7. **Communication** - The e-mail addresses of the parents should be included with your team rosters. Please make sure you use the SportsEngine App as your primary form of communication. Functions like RSVP, schedule, standings, and chat make it an easy choice for your parents to communicate.
8. **Positions** - It is worthwhile to point out to both players and parents that the players will be assigned to various positions. Like football, not everyone can be the quarterback. In

basketball, not everybody can be the point guard. However, it should be your goal to ensure that everyone has a chance to touch and shoot the ball. For example, in ages 10 and under where there are restricted defenses, every player should have the opportunity to bring the ball up the court a few times each game.

9. **Parental Assistance** - Parents who wish to assist in running drills may only do so if they are approved as Assistant Coaches after having officially registered through BB. If you do not have an Assistant Coach, you are not required to have one, but BB strongly recommends it because if you cannot attend a practice or game, ONLY APPROVED ASSISTANT COACHES OR OTHER APPROVED COACHES IN BB MAY TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR TEAM. For example, if you cannot coach your game for any reason and no other designated, approved BB Coach/Assistant Coach is available to approved to take over, the game will be forfeited (refer to BB rules).
10. **Uniforms and Schedules** - At your Parent Orientation, indicate that uniforms and schedules will be forthcoming (typically the week prior to the first game) and you will give out schedules as soon as they are available. BB PRE-ORDERS OUR UNIFORMS IN STANDARD SIZES BY AGE GROUP. When the uniforms arrive and you distribute them to your team, understand that the priority is to make sure every player has a uniform that fits reasonably well. If you reach an impasse and simply cannot find something that fits one of your players, contact the league via e-mail with the details of what you will need as a replacement. **MAKE SURE YOU REALLY NEED TO REPLACE THE JERSEY BEFORE ORDERING A NEW ONE.** Where possible, use common sense and switch with other players. Report problems immediately in an e-mail to the Executive or Assistant Director of BB. It will probably take two or three weeks to get corrected uniforms if problems occur, so have the affected players wear shirts which are the same color as the team jerseys.

## **Expectations From Players**

As with parents, it is important to stress what you expect from the players on the first day of practice. This sets the tone for running productive practices and improving the children's basketball skills. The following are some suggestions to discuss:

- Good sportsmanship is important. Do not argue with the referees or get in scuffles with other players. Bad sportsmanship can result in the player being ejected from the game—ejections are an automatic one-game (and possibly longer) suspension.
- Show up for practices. Stress the importance of being at practice so that all of the players can work and play as a team and improve their skills together.
- Listen to what the coaches tell you. As a suggestion, you might consider advising the children that when you speak to them, they are to stop whatever they are doing and look you in the eyes.

- Stop when your Coach says stop. This is the most difficult challenge during practice, especially at the younger ages. Players involved in horseplay can cause injuries. If you wish, get a whistle and inform the players that when they hear the whistle, everyone is to "freeze". ● Emphasize the importance of all positions. Indicate that not everyone can play point or shooting guard. If you emphasize passing, rebounds, steals, assists, defense and blocks over points scored, players will learn to value other positions.
- Practice teamwork. Tell players that the team will not allow ball hogging or excessive shooting by one player. The sooner the players understand that, the quicker the teamwork concept works.
- Practice basketball homework. You may consider giving some practice "homework" to help improve certain skills, such as dribbling with the non-dominant hand, rebounding, shooting, etc.

## **League Rules**

- The current League Rules are included in your Coach's folder.

## **Rotation Sheets**

Rotation Sheets represent a very important objective to ensure all players are given a fair amount of playing time. This is not always achieved, especially when all 10 players are not present. Make sure to enter the player's number in the designated slot on the Rotation Sheet. Rotation Sheets must be handed to the Division Coordinator (or scorekeeper) prior to the start of the game and a copy should be kept at your team's bench. The following suggestions may be helpful in preparing Rotation Sheets:

- Refer to the copy of the Rotation Sheets in your Coach's folder.
- Understand the implications of not having all 10 players available, and that certain rotation numbers can provide more playing time for certain players. This can be a "carrot" for those attending practice or those hustling at practice.
- Assign positions to each of the players. Remember, as a general rule you want to keep a good ball handler and rebounder in each of the quarters if available.
- Prior to games prepare the Rotation Sheet as though all players are present and maintain a copy of the sheet for future use.
- Stress the importance of parents advising you at each weekly practice whether their child will be absent from the game.
- Stress to parents the importance of players being at the gym 20 minutes prior to the game starting time, and that you have to hand in the Rotation Sheets 5 minutes prior to the game start.
- Don't hesitate to contact the Division Coordinator or other more experienced coaches for help in completing the Rotation Sheet.

## **Skill Objectives and Drills for Age Groups**

### **5-6 Year Old Skill Sets**

- Fundamental Dribbling
- Two-handed chest pass/bounce pass
- Shooting
- Understanding positions
- Fundamental defensive stance

### **7-8 Year Old Skill Sets**

- Previous age skills
- Dribbling with both hands
- Lay-ups
- Positioning for rebounds
- Jumping for rebounds
- Man-to-man defense
- Shuffling feet on defense
- Getting back on defense
- Inbounding the ball
- Steals
- Simple plays (2 or 3 different plays)
- Setting picks (towards end of season)
- Fast Break (towards end of season)
- Rebounding.

### **5-6 Year Old Drills**

- Dribbling 10-20 yards
- Short passes
- Inbounding
- Defensive and offensive positions
- Going back on defense

### **7-8 Year Old Drills**

- Previous age drills
- Transition defense and offense
- Lay-ups
- Boxing out
- Repetitive jumping
- 1 on 1, 2 on 2 scrimmages
- Defensive shuffles
- Defense coverage
- Running inbound plays
- Shadow drills
- Give and go; pick and roll
- Setting picks 2 on 2
- Filling lanes

### 9-10 Year Old Skill Sets

- Previous age skills
- Dribbling with left and right hand
- Right and left hand lay-ups Setting picks
- Running fast breaks
- Zone defense

### 11-12 Year Old Skill Sets

- Previous age skills
- Solid man-to-man defense
- Stance

### 9-10 Year Old Drills

- Previous age drills
- Two-ball dribbling; blindfold
- Repetitive lay-up drills
- Fast break weaves
- Ball reaction drills

### 11-12 Year Old Drills

- Previous age drills
- One-on-one full court
- Shadow drills

## **Uniforms and Schedules**

The uniforms and schedules are generally delivered the week prior to the first game (sometimes only 2-3 days prior). However, if the uniform does not fit and there is no way for you to make adjustments by swapping jerseys within the team, you must notify the Executive Director of BB. Shorts can easily be swapped at no cost. However, if jersey was incorrectly ordered by the parent and an exchange cannot be made, the parent will be charged a fee for the reorder, which can take as long as 2-4 weeks to fill.

Schedules are normally not distributed until the week before the first game. Schedules are set and cannot be changed except under extraordinary circumstances. It is suggested that coaches assign "drink days" for the parents when the schedules are distributed.

## **Practice Facilities**

BB has leased practice facilities at several schools listed below. If you are not sure where to practice, is recommended that you discuss practice locations with your Division Coordinator. Coaches of teams age 9+ SHOULD NOT USE THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COURTS.

For ages 8 and under which should practice at approved elementary school sites on Monday-Thursday, NO PRACTICES MAY BEGIN PRIOR TO 6:15 P.M in fairness to the after-care programs at the elementary schools and to those parents who work and cannot bring their children to practice any earlier. DUE TO DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME THE OUTDOOR COURTS AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ARE NOT LEASED UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF MARCH IN THE SPRING. Current practice locations selected by the League are as follows:

● Waters Edge Elementary School	8 Foot
● Sunrise Park Elementary School	8 Foot
● Sandpiper Shores Elementary School	8 Foot
● Whispering Pines Elementary School	8 Foot
● Loggers Run Park	10 Foot
● Veterans Park	10 Foot
● South County Regional Park	10 Foot
● Olympic Heights (Outdoor)	10 Foot
● West Boca High School (Outdoor)	10 Foot

Coaches in all ages are allowed to practice as frequently as they wish PRIOR TO THE FIRST GAME OF THE SEASON. After the first game, a MAXIMUM of two practices per week is allowed.

Coaches may want to schedule practice at the same time/ place as other teams in your division in order to arrange scrimmages at the end of practice to get some game experience.

## **Equipment**

**SIZE OF BASKETBALL**—For the Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade, the Junior Basketball size 27.0 is used. For the 3rd grade to 5th grade, the 28.5 ball is used. For the 6th grade and older, the standard 29.0 basketball is used.

Listed below are some other equipment suggestions. Though not required, they can be useful with your practices.

- Whistle
- Stopwatch
- Basketball(s)
- Cones for shooting drills
- Five practice jerseys
- First aid kit

## **Parent Orientation Checklist**

### General Team protocols/objectives

1. Safety and security first
2. Have fun and learn good sportsmanship
3. Improve basketball skills
4. Install teamwork attitude
5. Hopefully, win some games; but not be over-focused on the scoreboard

Review these items with parents:

1. Understand and agree to objectives listed above
2. Download and login to SportsEngine App
3. EXCHANGE CONTACT INFORMATION—Make sure to give all parents your cell and home phone numbers, e-mail address, etc.
4. Understand the Rotation Sheets and distribution of playing time
5. Not to argue, confront or abuse any coach, referee or League official, or become excessively loud at any practice or game
6. Please no coaching from the bleachers
7. Cheer for positive plays for both teams
8. Have children on time for practices
9. Have children on time for games (at least 20 minutes prior to start)
10. Notify a coach when child cannot attend a game
11. Have parents agree to a leader who will assign "drink and snack days".
12. Provide coach with updates to phone and/or e-mail addresses
13. ATTENDANCE by at least one parent is REQUIRED at your child's games and practices (injuries need parents nearby; as do weather-shortened practices)

IMPORTANT—REVIEW WITH PARENTS PROCEDURES YOU WANT FOLLOWED IF THEIR CHILD CANNOT ATTEND A GAME OR PRACTICE, SO THAT ALL PARENTS ARE CONSIDERATE AND RESPECTFUL OF YOUR TIME. EXPLAIN WHAT YOU WILL DO IF A PRACTICE NEEDS TO BE CANCELLED OR HOW YOU WILL SEND OUT TEAM-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS.

## **General Administrative Policies**

**Volunteer Coaches**—At Approved (by BB Executive Director) Head or Assistant Coach who has passed the Background Checks, completed Concussion Management requirements, and has completed necessary Coach Application materials Clinic Attendance requirements and shown a willingness to commit time to coaching the children in a specific age group.

DIVISION COORDINATORS-- Any Approved (by BB Executive Director) individual Coach OR PARENT OR OTHER VOLUNTEER who has passed the Background Checks, completed Concussion Management requirements, and has completed necessary Coach Application materials and shown a willingness to commit time to managing an age group's activities throughout the season by supervising a gymnasium during weekend games and ensuring that League protocols are followed.

**Coach Training** - Coaches will be expected to attend a pre-season Coaches Clinic during which guidance and suggestions will be offered to enhance each Coach's ability to direct a team of children in the sport of basketball. In addition, Coaches will be provided with various information via handouts, e-mail communications, phone calls, etc. Coaches in BB are expected to stay current with the rules and regulations of the League.

Division Coordinators will be issued a separate document with guidelines for supervising activities within their respective divisions. They will also be expected to attend a meeting specifically for Coordinators so that they have adequate knowledge of the tasks which must be managed each week at the gyms.

**Background Checks** - All members of the BB leadership team, including Volunteer Coaches, Division Coordinators, Board Members, Youth Officials, and League Administrators are required to pass a background check annually. Failure to pass the background check will eliminate the individual from participating in any of the above roles in BB. Failure to pass a background check is NOT SUBJECT TO APPEAL. Details of the Background Check list of disqualifying items are available upon request to the BB Executive Director. BB is committed to comply with all Federal, State or County requirements with respect to Background Checks for all persons who assume any form of leadership role in this program.

**Concussion Management** - It is expected that periodically as required by BB, each person in a Leadership role, including Coaches, Division Coordinators, Board Members and Youth Officials

will complete an appropriate course in managing potential Head Concussion situations which could occur in games or practices while children participate in BB. Documentation of completion of Concussion management training will be required in order for those in Leadership roles to continue in those roles.

**Player Withdrawals after being drafted** - When a player has been drafted in the first or second rounds in his correct age group based on birth date, unless there was a CLEAR, WRITTEN APPROVAL from BB administration allowing him to change age groups PRIOR TO THE DRAFT, any withdrawal after the draft will cause there to be NO REFUND and there will be a suspension of one full season of participation. We take this approach to emphasize that this League is for fun and it's going to ruin the fun of the team if their best player(s) abandons them.

**Coach failure to report a withdrawn player** - When a coach is notified that a player from his/her team is withdrawing for the season, the coach is REQUIRED to report the withdrawal to BB administration as soon as reasonably possible. Reasonable in this case means within three days of the withdrawal. Failure to do so will lead to sanctions against the coach, including possible suspensions of one game or more or even suspension of coaching privileges for a season or longer. FAILURE TO REPORT A WITHDRAWAL IS CONSIDERED A MAJOR VIOLATION OF LEAGUE PROTOCOLS FOR COACHES.

**Refunds** - BB has a NO REFUND policy, however, administratively, BB will grant refunds when players must withdraw PRIOR TO the Player Evaluation weekend which is held before teams are constructed at the beginning of the season. All refunds are subject to a charge of up to \$25 for administrative expenses to BB, at the discretion of BB administrative staff based on the circumstances of the withdrawal.

**Changing teams after release of team to coaches** - BB does not change team assignments based on practice night or location conflicts or dislike of a coach or teammate by the party requesting the change. However, in the youngest age groups (normally age 7 and under), if League administration has made an error in team assignments and overlooked a practice night request, every effort will be made to remedy the problem and if BB is unable to do so, a refund can be granted.

**Conditions for suspensions** - If a party has been suspended from coaching or attending a game(s), that party is considered to have been suspended for ALL LEAGUE ACTIVITIES during the period of the suspension. That means if a Coach has two teams, the coach is suspended from participation for BOTH TEAMS during the suspension period, including practices and any other activities relating to the teams. If a parent has been suspended from attending games in the 10-year-old boys division, for example, that parent may not attend the games of a second child in a different division until the suspension period is over.

1. **Additional players assigned to rosters** - At BB discretion, additional players may be assigned to teams when space is available on those teams. The normal deadline for assignment of late-registering players is the Friday following the third game of the season. Exceptions to this policy are possible where balancing an age group's teams makes sense for the benefit of all of the participants in that age group, however, the general policy will be that no players will be added once the fourth game of the season has been played.