

Important Themes for Implementation of These Areas of Emphasis

There are also very important themes that have emerged from the consultation and analysis of our current British playing skills.

The new Clubs Skills Guide (CSG) is an important additional guide to these themes for club coaches.

1. Improved Planning For Practice (and Development)

Increasing the time dedicated to development – This demands increasing the proportion of team practices spent on individual skills, plus finding time and facilities outside of normal team practice.

While this normally means individual practice by our individual players working on their individual skills, as happens elsewhere in the world, there also is an additional challenge for British basketball.

This challenge is to find time in the basketball calendar for development activities to take place given facility access is limited and costly.

The ratio of playing games to training and teaching the skills becomes an important issue. While players want to play they must also be given the tools to play the game successfully at all levels. It will require junior coaches, clubs and schools to analyse their coaching and time allocation to the basic skills.

Therefore this will require not only coaches to modify their approach to training by scrutinising content in the context of this document but also the need for administrators and leaders at all levels of the British game to be creative in their planning and to create more opportunities for player and coach development without conflict with competition and scheduling.

Leaders of our game and administrators are also faced with a facility access issue of both availability and cost. Increasing the training time to implement this curriculum implies taking on increased costs.

Our challenge is to find ways to minimise this cost, especially to assist lower socio-economic and disadvantaged groups in our community, who find basketball a regular and attractive sport to play, and more importantly, to train for development.

However, for the main purpose of this document, initial improvement lies in reorganising the time that we already have and supplementing the costs for development through better planning for practice and training. This will create time to implement these guidelines in the short term.

2. Enhanced Teaching and Coaching for Understanding

We need to have a greater understanding of WHO(M) we are coaching and at what level.

The age and stage module of the CSG is a good guide to help assess level and anticipated need.

Better teaching of the technical skills (WHAT) is also required. The CSG checklists provide a good reference point for clubs for skills content.

Knowing HOW to best teach the concepts, principle, techniques and skills is also important for all coaches. Coaching is teaching and knowing how to improve a coach's teaching is a key to improved skill development.

The system of Coach Education and accreditation should provide a guide to the general coaching of BASIC skills .

The WHAT, HOW, WHEN and WHY are our Four teaching foundation pillars for our British players to have better understanding.

The WHY and WHEN a skill is used should always be discussed and debated with players in order to increase their understanding at the junior club and school level. This is best reinforced through repetition, including better use of breakdown drills and constrained scrimmage games. Coaching for greater player understanding must include reinforcement with appropriate feedback and more review through video analysis and other off-court learning activities.

The use of "controlled", "conditionally restrained" or modified games/drills and scrimmages leading to tactical and conceptual repetition will reinforce the WHEN and the WHY of these areas of emphasis. Showing and demonstrating team concepts through setup replay and walkthroughs are examples of the HOW.

In summary, our coaches for future generations must teach and coach the individual skills well so that players leave the programme knowing and understanding the skills and key game concepts. We will be able to measure what they have learned, not what they can't do.

Teach the player WHY the skill is important.

Teach the player HOW the skill is performed. How does it look? How does it feel? How do you perform the skill?

Teach the "breakdowns of the skill or the tactic and use the whole/part/whole teaching with effective coaching cues. Concise use of language is also important so please reference the GLOSSARY

Teach the player WHEN the skill is best performed in a game situation is also important.

Remember, teach doesn't always mean "tell", or "yell" and not everyone learns in the same way. Explore the use of other coaching methods to get the most out of your players.

3. What Do We Teach?

Individual skills most appropriate to a group programme or team. The recommendations in these guidelines are the curriculum map for the concepts, principles, skills and techniques. A checklist of concepts, principles, skills and techniques will be provided as part of the new curriculum, as well as the perspective offered in this Areas of Emphasis document.

All future teaching / coaching should be referenced against the British Basketball Master Checklists of concepts, principles, skills and techniques. Additionally, the Areas of Emphasis, along with the Club Skills Guide (a stage two roll out), will provide the necessary guidance. We must also understand the need to teach offence before defence. Create it then stop it. Develop it further then refine it against increased pressure.

After establishing the detail of HOW, teach WHY the skill is important and WHEN to perform it in a game or playing situation. This will result in better game understanding by our players.

4. Exceed at Developing Pressure in Training

Coping with defensive or speed and time pressure – increasing players' capacity to execute skills when under pressure, and exposing players to pressure by increasing the defensive intensity at all stages of the pathway, as well as developing pressure through better game context drills and execution.

The coaches' challenge will always be great in leading and managing training and development in training sessions at school, club, regional, and performance levels.

To create pressure at training requires good planning and even better management. Coaches must establish training standards not only in player behaviour but in terms of ethos and application.

How does a coach create more "pressure" at training? By pressure we mean intensity of effort and generating constraints through time, space and situational reaction. However, we also mean improving offence, then improving defence to in turn improve the level of offence again.

How do we improve and create more pressure at training?

- Train with intensity particularly at the specialising and investment stages. That is, mid to late teens and youth and pro levels.
- Plan challenging sessions and drills but demand proper technique and execution within the more pressurised training environment.
- Select appropriate drills but emphasise the detail of execution within all drills.
- "The drill is not the drill. The drill is how well we do the drill". It's the detail, reaction through time and space and quality of performance by the player.
- Control/constrain drills and game situations to get better outcomes (plan and analyse).
- Demand better execution: "perfect practice makes perfect".
- Use shorter sessions focusing on effort rather than longer sessions with too much talking by the coach. Measure training through better timing of drills to create maximum efforts and then allowing for recovery time.
- Measure our training, simply by counting/recording turnovers at training by the team and/or individuals. Record other effort areas like hustle plays (offensive rebounds, effective block-outs, deflections, sprinting man ahead)
- Demanding great defence always at every level. Make the defence repeat a possession to improve its execution and not just rotate through the drill without any consequence for playing poor defence.

5. Better Focus on Defensive Performance in Games and Training:

Defence must always be a focus when we come together as a team or squad at all levels.

Coaches should encourage and teach offence first and then teach the same players and groups how to stop the offence. Only by improving levels of defence can we raise the level of offensive skill execution. This is the cycle of development.

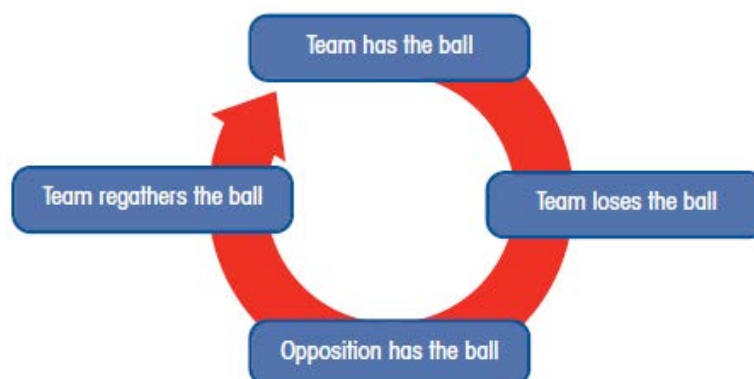


Diagram 1: Phases of the game

- Basketball is essentially an offensively orientated game. Quick movement, limited time and space all combine to make basketball the most offensively-minded sport on the Olympic calendar. Being a team game with individual skill allowing all players to score in the normal course of a game places it above most team sports in terms of offensive action. However the key controlling aspect in competition is ultimately the ability of a team to play effective defence.
- The battle of the single ball versus a defensive team of five players is an aspect that ultimately determines standard. New moves are created and new tactics and combinations of different combinations of cuts, dribbles, passes and spacing continually reinvigorate the basic game. Defence has to learn to deal with this progress.
- Offence leads, defence follows.
- The secret is to advance defence to a level that it can neutralise and then disrupt any individual and team offence.
- The need to defend in a game of shooting or scoring percentages is obvious.
- In developing our players we must concern ourselves with defence as well as offence.

The British game needs more attention from coaches to teach defence in training and team preparation.

- The slide in and from an **active stance** to stop dribble penetration in the half court.
- The teaching of **run-active stance-run** footwork and concept of positioning for full court defensive execution.
- Defensive positioning on and off the ball: the flat triangle of **ball-you-man** to build effective half court defence.
- Player vision and the need to deny passes but also help.
- Hedging and recovering from the flat triangle position. Anticipation.
- Helping and recovering against dribble penetration, but every player being more effective in shutting down their opponent.
- Closing out (footwork and understanding). Closing out shorter to contain the dribble drive.

Attention to all these components will advance our current level of defence.

All coaches must know how to effectively teach man-to-man defence in order to improve pressure at training.

6. Working to a National Plan

After use of the curriculum for planning, the link between programmes and these Areas of Emphasis and the subsequent training is most important. A curriculum is only as good as the programmes in which it is implemented. Additionally, the programme relies on the quality of the coaching.

A curriculum will work with any programme if the teaching and coaching is focused, and committed to improvement.

However it must be consistent in its emphasis and be specific and detailed when required. Once the coaches embrace British Basketball's Areas of Emphasis, the home nations will provide both the pathway and content needed to maximise the teaching of the curriculum to clubs and schools. Hopefully this will maximise player potential through their development programmes. A system of player and coach development is currently underway and must continue to grow and improve.

Much has been said about the perceived limitations that are limiting British basketball at the club level and above.

Clubs are often competing not only on the court but off it as well. Unfortunately sometimes this becomes competing not through striving to be better or maintaining focus but by demeaning the performance of others. Pulling other clubs or programmes down by criticising is not the answer. Working collaboratively for basketball will improve the success of basketball in the UK.



Supported by:



AREAS OF EMPHASIS
GUIDELINES FOR COACHES

It can't be "us against them" (or me vs. we) at a number of club, school or academy levels.

- Understanding that basketball as a sport is competing in a national sporting landscape in the UK is more important.
- Basketball cannot compete within through negative gearing, but must collectively promote basketball against other sports such as football and netball. It is a big enough challenge without demeaning other basketball clubs or national bodies, through public criticism or through our key clients such as players and parents.
- It is setting our sport to be devalued by those who need to value it most.
- The WE is BASKETBALL, not just a single club or school team.
- Successful countries internationally have strong club competition, but have a sense of national purpose and collaboration that makes their countries' basketball superior to what we currently have.
- WE have the same potential but our focus needs to become more collaborative in a development and coaching sense in order for our players to gain from all coaches and from the best training environment for each player and family.
- Often this means sharing a player with their school, club, region or country and making sure that everyone is on the same page with the player's best interests at the forefront in any decision.
- Players will move in search of opportunity and we should not hold our emerging talent back through small-mindedness or selfishness. The player's growth and progression is all-important. Loyalty will come from quality coaching and the ability of a club or school to develop players and pass them progressively through a club pathway.
- Communication and information sharing is the cornerstone of collaboration between clubs and competitions and national bodies.
- For British basketball to improve at all levels we must become more focused on individual players' development needs and assisting the player and their parents along the performance pathway.
- The number of national team players developed through a club or school, as well as the satisfaction of all players with playing for a club or school, are measures of quality - not just the number of games won by teams.
- Any plan requires good implementation and resourcing as well as a belief in the future, not the past.
- The new generation of British coaches must leave club loyalties and egos behind as they seek better collaboration while engaging each other to learn. They will become better through improving shared knowledge opportunities, or observing opposition coaches coach and then challenging each other on and off the court with respect.