

## Coaches Corner

### HEADS UP

I suspect almost anyone who has played more than a couple of games of basketball can tell you why it is important to keep your head up whilst dribbling. After how to catch and how to pass it is the first thing we teach new players how to do, so why do we still have so many experienced players unable to execute heads up dribbling during a game?

I hate to tell you but it is probably the coaches' fault.

Sure we have all made kids dribble the balls up and down the court calling out how many fingers the coach is holding up and most of us have probably explained to the players the reasoning why it is important to keep their head up whilst dribbling, but what else do we do (or perhaps not do).



Too often we use negative reinforcement during training at the expense of technique. For example line the kids up at the baseline dribble to one end of the court and back; last one back does 10 push-ups. All this will do is get the players to focus on getting up and back as quickly as possible and that's going to be easier when they are watching the ball right!

Something I see all the time is when players move from a simple skill, ie heads up speed dribble, to a more complex skill or drill, the technique of the simple skill is forgotten. The kids and the coach alike get so set on executing the moves of the drill (who runs where, which foot to jump off, who passes to who etc) that basics such as shooting technique or dare I say heads up dribbling are let go.

So what to do?

As new drills are being learnt remind the kids constantly about the need to execute the basics correctly within that drill. Monitor these areas as much as the correct implementation of the drill itself. If the kids let the basics slide stop the drill and go back to the basics. The players will very quickly learn you mean business if the drill stops every

couple of rotations and you make them go back to dribbling the ball up and down the court.

If you are playing a scratch match and they are dribbling with heads down, give them a warning and after that stop the game, back to heads up dribbling.

Finally never castigate a player for making an error when they are trying to execute the correct technique. If a player gets told off for bouncing the ball off their foot or similar, their response will be to minimise the chance of that reoccurring which will of course lead to.....

Remember

Good coaching always beats good luck.