



# West Hartford Girls Basketball League



## Fundamentals

Fundamentals are an important part of the game of basketball. Skills will improve through executing properly, repetition, hard work and having fun. The girls must be taught that they will play as they practice and it is important for them to try new things each and every day. Challenge the girls. Mistakes will happen – they will learn from their mistakes. Be positive, encouraging – catch em doing something right and praise, praise, praise. The fundamentals below can be taught at every level of our league. This is a guide to help those coaches that have requested some help in the past. Use it as you like. If you need additional help, please contact us. Have a great time with the girls and enjoy the season!

### Triple Threat

The basic triple threat position allows a player to become an offensive threat to:

- a) Shoot
- b) Pass
- c) Dribble

An offensive player should immediately assume the triple threat position when receiving a pass. Most players have a tendency to put the ball on the floor to dribble when they receive the ball. By dribbling first, the player has taken away 2/3 of her offensive options.

The triple threat requires you to:

- 1) Catch the ball
- 2) Pivot and square up to the basket
- 3) Knees and waist slightly bent
- 4) Eyes up
- 5) Ball protected from defender on your shooting side (“in your hip pocket”)
- 6) Hands are positioned on the ball in the shooting position
- 7) Weight on your pivot foot – often the left foot for a right handed player and vice versa for the left handed player.

*\* The player is now an offensive threat to shoot, pass or dribble.*

### Dribbling

When young players receive a pass, they automatically want to dribble the ball. Teach them to get in a triple threat position! Be an offensive threat!

Three reasons to dribble:

1. Attack the basket
2. Improve a passing lane/angle
3. Escape pressure

*\* Once you put the ball on the floor, it should be to help you get where you want to go. If the dribble can't help, pass to a teammate.*

Dribbling requires:

- 1) Finger control. Finger pads and upper palm, particularly, the thumb and the 3 middle fingers.
- 2) Receive, Cradle and Pump. Receive ball before top of dribble, cradle for split second and pump back to the floor.

- 3) Move with Rhythm and Control. Entire arm and shoulder move in pumping action, rising at the shoulder and bending at the elbow. Arm pumps in rhythm with the bouncing ball which gets the entire body moving in the same rhythm. Elbow close to body.
- 4) Head up, eyes focused on what's happening on the court. Know where the ball is by feel instead of sight.
- 5) Keep everything low. Balanced, relaxed, knees bent, slightly bent at the waist, weight forward on the balls of the feet.
- 6) Shield the ball. Protect by keeping body between ball and the defender.
- 7) Develop both hands.

**Important rule – Do not pick up your dribble until you know what you are going to do with the ball!**

### Drills –

- a) Around Gym – All players get a ball and dribble around perimeter of gym. Begin at a walk, to trot and then  $\frac{3}{4}$  speed. Change up from right hand to left and back again. Head up, feel the ball.
- b) Speed Dribble – Begin on baseline with 2 groups of players each with one ball. First player in each group dribbles length of court to baseline and back as fast as possible. Pass to next teammate in line and go to end of line. And so on. Stress ball control, push ball out front, head up and feel ball. Change up – RH up, LH back. Backwards up, frontwards back. Compete! Race! Speed is nothing without control.
- c) Dribble, Jump stop, Pivot, Pass - Begin on baseline with 2 groups of players each with one ball. First player in each group will speed dribble to RH or LH foul line elbow, jump stop, left foot pivot, turn and pass to next player in line. After pass go to back of line. Teammates follow turn. Control, head up, feel ball, jump stop, pivot and good hard pass.
- d) Sideline Protect – Begin on sideline with 2 or more groups each with one ball. First player in line dribbles to opposite sideline and back with imaginary player in front of them. Protect ball with arm bar and slide dribble. Incorporate defender at half speed and then full speed. Protect ball in a ball-you-defender position.
- e) Knock Away - Everyone is in a confined area of the gym with a ball ready to dribble. When the coach says, “ Go”, everyone must dribble while at the same time trying to knock the ball out of the other players hand. Players who go outside the zone or have their ball knocked away are out of the game. Protect ball, head up, see the floor.
- f) Wooden Drill – Will be presented at Coaches Clinic.

### Passing

Begin in triple threat position.

Simple, crisp and short passes.

Eye contact.

Snap/flick wrist, follow through.

Pass to target between waist and chest area.

### Technique

- Chest pass
  - 1) Use two hands
  - 2) Use proper hand position – Form an oval with the thumbs and index fingers. Rotate the ball up and into the chest area.
  - 3) Step toward the target - Extend the ball straight out and snap/flick wrists and fingers outward.

- 4) Drive forward and follow through (palms out, thumbs down) for power and accuracy.
  - Bounce pass
- 1) Same as chest pass except extend ball to hit floor about 2/3 of the way to receiver of pass.
  - Side bounce pass
- 1) Same as previous pass except pivot, step across body & pivot foot, extend arms and deliver bounce pass about 2/3 of the way to receiver.
  - Overhead pass
- 1) Same as previous passes except ball extended overhead, elbows straight and flick ball to receiver above the defensive player. Palms down, thumbs in. No lobs or “floaters”.

### Dynamics

- 1) Passes must be quick and snappy
- 2) Pass to an open space – pass to the space where the receiver is moving to
- 3) Don't broadcast the pass. Develop “floor vision” so as not to telegraph pass
- 4) Lead the receiver
- 5) Hit receivers in the chest
- 6) Pass away from the defender

### Drills –

- a) Line Drill – Players pair up with one ball approx 10-12 feet apart. Passing drill for chest pass, bounce pass, side bounce pass and overhead pass – 1 minute per pass. Stress technique and dynamics with passer and receiver. Receiver provides target, see ball, step or “jump” to ball, catch, pivot, triple threat and return pass. No dropped passes!
- b) Bull In the Ring – Form circle at center court. Step back to form bigger circle with players 4-5 feet apart. Place one defensive player in middle. Object of this drill is to pass ball to each other within 3 count without the defensive player touching ball. If the ball is touched, passer replaces defender in middle. \*\*\*Players are not allowed to pass to player next to them. Players should use all passes except overhead. Defender slides, extends arms and hustles. Everyone gets a chance!
- c) Rapid Fire – Form circle as above. One player in middle. One ball! Outside player passes to middle. Middle player passes to next player in circle going clockwise and so on going around circle. Quick! Go 2 or 3 times and/or incorporate counter clockwise. Stress provide target, see ball, catch ball, snap pass and pivot. Incorporate 2 balls when players are comfortable. After receipt of 1<sup>st</sup> ball, return pass to 3<sup>rd</sup> player in circle while 2<sup>nd</sup> ball is passed from 2<sup>nd</sup> player and so on.
- d) Full Court Slide - Begin on baseline with 2 groups of players each with one ball. Partner up! The 2 players pass ball back and forth going the length of the floor and back. Players slide and lead teammate with pass. Change type of pass used. Go sideline to sideline to get more players involved.
- e) Rapid Pass & Slide – Place 4-5 players on foul line between elbows. Coach is slightly above key with ball. Coach will pass ball to right elbow (pick a pass). Player catching ball @ right elbow will return pass to coach, drop step and slide behind teammates to left elbow. Next player will slide to right elbow, accept pass, return pass and follow previous player and so on. Player move in circular motion. Target, see ball, catch, return good pass and slide.
- f) Monkey In the Middle – Groups of 3 players. 2 passers approx 10 feet apart & 1 defender. Passers pass back and forth while defender attempts to deflect passes. If the ball is touched, passer replaces defender. This is not

keep away! Defender closes out (sprint, sprint, squeak, squeak) on passers – belly up! Passers work on fakes, pivots and different passes.

- g) Hot Potato – Scrimmage full court! No dribbling! If player dribbles or ball hits floor, turnover – team loses possession. Other team immediately takes ball out and goes other way. All players will be forced to concentrate on their passing game and looking for the open player without dribbling. A twist – player receiving any pass in game counts out loud 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and then must pass ball. Fun, exciting! Stresses passing, getting open and teamwork.

## Pivoting

1. Every movement with the ball initially involves pivoting.
2. All moves, most fakes and driving to the basket depend on the ability to pivot.
3. Players must be able to pivot forward, backward and to the side using either foot.
4. The pivot foot is the foot that stays in place.
5. The ball of the foot stays stationary. As you turn, the rest of the foot rotates about the ball of the foot.
6. If you slide or change your pivot foot when you have the ball, a walking violation occurs and your team loses possession of the ball.

## Drills –

- a) Keep Away – Players get a partner with 1 ball. One defender and offensive player in triple threat position. Defender tries to tip, steal or tie up offensive player for a held ball without fouling for 20-30 seconds. Offensive player pivots back, front, side, all around to avoid defender with head up. Switch positions. Offensive player will quickly learn that pivoting away will prevent defensive player from touching ball. Easy and effective! Try 2 defenders! Offensive player will work hard to avoid tie up! If players come from left and right – front pivot through.
- b) See other drills in passing and dribbling.

## Shooting

The first step in teaching players to shoot the basketball is to teach them the proper form. Insist on proper form during practice. Proper form starts with the mechanics of shooting and an understanding of their shooting range.

1. Stance – Feet about shoulder width apart. If RH, right foot slightly forward, vice versa for LH. Weight on balls of the feet, not heels. Shoulders and body should be square to the basket. Knees slightly bent as thigh muscles provide power for shot. Stay balanced.
2. Holding ball – Both hands to hold ball. Shooting hand should be underneath ball with wrist cocked back. Elbow bent at about 90 degrees (backwards “L”) and underneath ball close to body in a tuck position. Non-shooting hand or guide hand supports or balances ball during stroke but comes off the ball before release.
3. Set point – The position of the ball just prior to release. If RH, ball to the right of the face a little toward right shoulder. Ball should be as high as forehead or higher.
4. Upward force – Power is provided by upward force of jump (jump shot) or thighs (free throw). Legs!
5. Aiming ball – Back of the rim, just over the front of the rim or square/box for bank shot. Concentrate on spot not ball or flight of ball.

6. Releasing/Shooting ball – Shooting arm extends forward toward hoop (elbow in), release with snap of wrist and ball rolls off fingertips. Shoot ball with high arc on flight of ball. Do not push ball with heel of palm.
7. Follow through – Fingers should be pointing toward basket and wrist bent forward with palm of hand facing downward toward floor – “gooseneck”, “fishhook” or “reaching into the cookie jar”. Hold release until ball hits rim. Proper form will create rotation or backspin on ball.

\* Confused? Who wouldn't be! It is difficult to teach the proper form of shooting a basketball using the above text. It is simple – use the method some experts call the Catch, Square, Tuck and Follow Through method. The player catches the ball, square shoulders to the basket, tuck the elbow and follow through on release.

### Drills –

**Wall shot –** Everybody gets a ball. No basket. Find empty wall space. Player picks a spot on the wall (3-5 feet away) and shoots for the spot. Ball returns, shoot again. 1 minute. Prompt players with catch ball, square shoulders, tuck elbow, bend knees, follow through and backspin. No wall space! Flick ball above head – same motion. Proper form.

**All Net –** One shooter and one rebounder per basket. Shooter shoots from 3-5 feet in front of rim. Nothing but net shots – swish! Rebounder rebounds. Switch positions after 1 minute. Proper form – catch, square, tuck, bend and follow through. Extend in increments of 2 feet during practice or over a number of practices. Proper form + comfort level = range. Insist players shoot in comfort zone.

**Speed Lay-up –** 1 player, 1 ball, 1 basket. Shoot lay-ups using backboard only. Start right side, shoot – rebound own shot. Left side, shoot and rebound own shot. No dribble. Back & forth for 1 minute. Proper form. Accuracy. Hit box on backboard. Right hander – extend right hand and lift right knee. Jump! Left hander – opposite.

**On the Blocks –** 3 players. 1 shooter & 2 rebounders. 1 ball on each low block with 1 rebounder. Shooter starts in middle. On whistle, shooter picks up ball on either block, pivots, shoots bank shot. (No Dribble) Shooter moves to other block, picks up ball, pivots, shoots bank shot. Rebounder on either side is responsible for getting rebound quickly and placing it back on the block for next shot attempt. Shooter goes back and forth for 1 minute (extend during season). Rebounders count shots made. Players rotate!! Stress proper form, accuracy, pivot and hustle. Over season challenge players, count shots made and extend time.

**On the elbows –** Same as On the Blocks except balls are now placed on elbows of the foul line. 1 rebounder near basket and 1 on foul line between balls. On whistle, shooter picks up ball on right side and dribbles for a lay-up right side. Make or miss, shooter now runs to left elbow, picks up ball and dribbles for a lay-up on left side. Rotate back and forth for 1 minute. Rebounders count made shots. Rebounder down low rebounds and passes to player on foul line who places ball on empty block. Players rotate! Stress proper form, accuracy, head up on dribble and hitting square on backboard. Over season challenge players and extend time. Grueling but fun and competitive.

**Lay-up Drill –** Two lines of players at mid-court line. 2 balls in one line. Offensive player assumes triple threat position, fakes and drives to basket for lay-up. First player from other line is rebounder. Rebounder gets rebound and dribbles back and hands off ball to next offensive player in line. Players go to back of other line. Lay-up from left and right. Can have offensive player dribble to center of foul line, jump stop and bounce pass to other player for lay-up or jump shot. You know the drill.

**Weave** – 3 lines at mid-court line, center line has balls. Center player passes L or R and goes behind player to low block of that side. Player receiving pass dribbles quickly to the foul line, jump stops and bounce passes to players at L or R low block for lay-up. Other player who did not receive pass goes to low block on their side looking for pass. During season, extend to full court, chest or bounce pass and challenge the players to use fewer passes.

**Knockout** – Team lines up at foul line. First 2 players in line have ball. First player shoots free throw. If she makes, she passes ball to 3<sup>rd</sup> player in line while 2<sup>nd</sup> player is attempting free throw. If any player misses free throw shot, they get rebound and shoot at basket until they make a shot. If the player behind you shoots and makes basket before you ..... you are eliminated. Teammates in line will rotate in and continue on or be eliminated in same fashion.

**21** – Divide players into 2 equal teams. One team positions itself on left elbow of foul line with one ball and the other team positions itself at right elbow of the foul line with one ball. Object is 21 points by the team, 2 points awarded for each shot made at the foul line elbow and 1 point awarded for each made layup. Teams begin play

## **Defense**

### **Stance & Movement**

1. Feet shoulder-width apart and staggered, one foot slightly higher than other
2. Weight on balls of feet (not on heels or flat-footed)
3. Knees bent
4. Hips down
5. Back slightly arched
6. Head up – eyes on belly button or hips of offensive player
7. Arms extended out, hands – fingers up & thumbs toward ears, elbows bent
8. Head steady at midpoint of body to maintain balance
9. Movement is step-and-slide motion in which the feet never cross. No hopping or jumping
10. Keep low, almost in a sitting position

### **Positioning**

1. On the ball – Pressure! Get in player’s “bubble” – arm’s length. “Paw” like bear to establish distance from offensive player. Nose up on strong shoulder. Head always lower than that of the player being guarded. Force offensive player to their weak hand – the hand she is most uncomfortable dribbling with.
2. One pass away – Deny pass ! Ball side foot up, arm extended, palm of hand open to ball and thumb down to swat away pass. Denial position in the passing lane between the ball and receiver so that you can see ball. This is the ball-you-man principle.
3. Two passes away – Help position or drop to the paint. “Six-shooters” or “pistols in the paint” position. See the ball and your man to help on defense.
4. If you get beat, do not reach in or swipe at ball. Instead, turn and sprint to an open area where your opponent is going – cut em off at the pass. Resume defensive positioning.
5. Be aggressive
6. If a player being guarded gives up the dribble/stops dribbling, rush player and belly up. Do not reach or slap down on ball. Defender should mirror ball with both hands to create difficulty for next pass or “held ball” call.

### **Drills –**

- a) **Slide Drills – Whole team. Bend knees, sit in chair, eyes up, arms extended. Slide – do not cross feet. Proper footwork. Get slow to get quick.**
1. **Sideline – Sideline to sideline and back. 30 second rest. Increase to 2-3 repetitions.**
  2. **In the Paint – Quick slide from one side of paint to the other. 20-30 seconds. Rotate ½ team in and out. 2 repetitions.**
  3. **Whistle drill – Players line up on left sideline length of court. Coach blows whistle and players slide right. When whistle blown again, slide opposite direction. Whistle signifies change of direction. 30 seconds.**
- b) **Defensive positioning – Two groups of player begin on baseline and get a partner. One player on offense with ball, other on defense. Offense dribbles length of court in zig-zag fashion as defensive player slides and defends. Wait for other team members finish. Players switch position on return. Confine area of dribbling/defense.**
- Options:**
1. **Defensive player – hands clasped behind back. ½ speed.**
  2. **Defensive player – hold shorts or shirttail. ½ speed.**
  3. **Defensive player – Extend arms. No stealing. ¾ speed.**
  4. **Defensive player – Extend arms. Steal ball. Full speed.**
- \*\*\* Stress head on ball, footwork/slides and force offensive player to weak hand. No reaching or slapping ball.**
- c) **Shell Drill – Set 5 offensive players up on the perimeter spaced around the half court just inside the 3 point line. Assign 5 defensive players to the offensive players in person-to-person coverage. Start with ball at point and swing the ball slowly around the perimeter. Position defensive players as discussed in “Positioning” 1, 2, & 3 above. If your player has ball, pressure on ball. One pass away – deny pass. 2 passes away – help to the paint. Reposition players after every pass to get them to understand helping defense.**

## **Getting Open**

There is nothing worse than little Katie dribbling the ball and her teammates yelling her name in unison because they want the ball. Problem is, they are standing flatfooted next to their defender and then before you know it, they all rush poor Katie en masse. In desperation and fear for her life, Katie turns her back and cradles the ball like the neighborhood bully is trying to steal her precious doll. A ten player “scrum” in the corner and a held ball call are the result.

What do we do?

Communicate to players:

1. **You cannot stand around hoping for a pass.**
2. **Constant movement makes you a threat.**
3. **If you are not open where you are, MOVE!**
4. **Sudden change in direction makes you a better target.**
5. **Never turn your back to the ball – eye on the ball.**

The basic cut to get open to receive a pass is the V-cut.

1. **Take 3-4 steps towards the baseline or basket.**
2. **Firmly plant inside foot and push off. Eyes on ball & passer.**
3. **Quickly cut outside for the pass (blast away)**
4. **This will create spacing between the player and defender to receive the pass.**

5. Jump to the ball, give target, catch ball, square up to basket and triple threat.

### Drills –

1. V-Cut Drill – 1 offensive player, 1 defensive and 1 passer with ball at top of key.
  - a) V-Cut, no defense – Offensive player begins on wing. Toe touch low block and blast away back to wing. Pass ball to wing. Triple threat, fake and drive to hoop for basket. Alternate side of basket.
  - b) V-Cut with defense – Same as “a” above except add defensive player to deny pass. Play 1 on 1 with emphasis on offensive player driving to the hoop.

\*\* Practice this drill all over the floor. Have offensive player take 3-4 quick steps away from ball, toe touch and blast back to the ball looking for a pass.

2. Make a Friend – Have the offensive player stand next to the defensive player. O blasts away from D and looks for a pass. Play 1 on 1 or return pass back to point and v-cut for another pass. Change up – O must get open for 2-3 passes & return before receiving last pass and playing 1 on 1.

\*\*\* Remind the offensive player that they have an advantage – they know what they are going to do but the defense doesn't.

### Screens

A screen is a legal block set by an offensive player on the side of or behind a defender in order to free a teammate for a shot, pass or dribble. The screen can be set “on the ball” to assist the dribbler or “off the ball” to free up a teammate for a pass or shot. The same basic principle exists for both.

Contrary to what most people think, the screener should set a screen on a position on the floor, not on a defender.

To properly set a screen:

- Set a good base by spreading feet wide and bend knees. Get BIG! Be strong!
- Cross arms over your chest – protect yourself!
- Make contact with defender being screened but do not foul – no pushing, grabbing or holding.
- Plant feet – “feet in cement”
- Eyes up.
- Any movement of feet, arms or body when screen is set could result in a blocking foul and change of possession.
- After setting the screen, pivot towards ball and break to the basket to receive a pass back.

About this time, some of you coaches are looking up my e-mail or phone number to give me a piece of your mind. Hold it! I know most of you are used to seeing a screener flying across the floor and putting a bone jarring hit (it ain't a screen) on the dribbler's defender. Screens really should be set on a position with the dribbler being responsible for setting up the defensive player. In this situation, the defender initiates contact with the screener. Since this is a difficult concept to teach, young players are often taught to set a screen on a teammate's defensive player with a jump stop and minimal contact. Screens are a problem in our league and can be dangerous if not taught properly. Please teach the proper mechanics to ensure the safety of all our girls.

### Drills –



**Box – Set up 4 players in the paint - 2 players on the low blocks and 2 players on the foul line elbows. Coach or player with ball sets up on baseline out-of-bounds in front of one player on block. On “GO”, the 2 players in front of the ball pivot and go across the lane and set a pick for the players on the weak side using a jump stop. The players on the weak side wait for the screen and come across the paint looking for a pass and shot. Option – Players on blocks go up and screen for players on elbows. Add defense! Easy screen drill to teach - I just gave away two of my inbounds plays.**

**Pass & Screen Away – 3 lines of players – 2 lines on L & R wings and 1 line at top of key with ball. Passer passes L and sets screen for player on R. R player comes around screen (rub shoulders) and goes to basket waiting for a bounce pass from the L wing for a lay-up. All go to hoop for rebound. Change up! Change sides! Players take jump shot rather than lay-up.**

## **Rebounding**

- **Defensive**

- a) Always maintain a position between opponent and basket.**
- b) When shot is released, step into opponent with armbar and make contact.**
- c) Rear pivot, wide feet and wide elbows tucked and swim.**
- d) Crouch with knees bent.**
- e) Feel for opponent and maintain contact. This is “boxing out”.**
- f) Head erect, eyes focused and hands ready.**
- g) Release from opponent and spring to the ball.**
- h) Grab ball firmly with both hands.**
- i) Pivot to nearside of court with head up and overhead pass to outlet player.**

**Rebounder should yell “ball” and player in outlet position (flats) should yell “outlet” for pass. All players must box out to eliminate second chances by the offensive team. Boxing out is the key to rebounding not how high one can jump.**

- **Offensive**

- a) Offensive rebounding is about positioning oneself in anticipation of your teammate’s shot attempt.**
- b) If you can box out the defensive player before being boxed out, your team has an opportunity for second chance opportunities in the offensive end.**
- c) A good offensive rebounder must be aggressive in pursuing the ball and outhustling her opponent.**

## **Drills –**

**Circle drill – Each player gets a partner based on position. Guards with guards, forwards with forwards and centers with centers. One player is on offense, the other on defense. Get in circle and expand out 2 steps. One ball in middle. On whistle, defense boxes out offense. Box out for 5-7 seconds or until offensive player touches ball. 2<sup>nd</sup> whistle stops action. Rotate players. Physical drill – remind girls to be careful. This drill demands physical contact. No more than 4 pairs of players in the drill for safety purposes. Offensive player must make defensive player work.**

**Box – Same as above except set up players in a box around paint. Use elbows and 2<sup>nd</sup> hash mark for starting points. Coach or player shoots and yells “shot” – drill begin. 2<sup>nd</sup> whistle stops action. Rotate players. Not important that girls get rebound in mid-air. Remind players that if everyone does their job, the rebound can be retrieved off the bounce. As season progresses, have guards rotate to outlet after box out for outlet pass from inside players.**

**10/21/04 - JEB**