



St. A's 2025 Basketball Coaches' Kit

Welcome to the 2025 Basketball season! Thank you for being part of the program and dedicating your time and talents to our young athletes. I know your involvement is going to have a positive and lasting impact on them, and I genuinely believe all students at St. A's should play basketball, because of the wonderful things we all have to teach them about leadership, teamwork, competition, and overcoming adversity as pillars into their adulthood.

The objective of this coaches' kit is to align our staff in terms of how and what we teach our athletes. It includes program philosophy, goals for the season, responsibilities of the coaches, parents, and athletes, our core curriculum, a high-level skills-by-grade matrix, and how we'll organize practices. There's also an appendix with a bibliography for training skills and drills.

Program Philosophy

Our program philosophy piggybacks off St. Athanasius's foundation of Love, Learn, Lead. First and foremost, our athletes should **love what they're doing**—to want to come to practice. We want them to support one another and treat each other as valued teammates. Second, we want the kids to **learn the concepts of responsibility, teamwork, and overcoming adversity as they'll be able to use these pillars for the rest of their lives**—this includes striving to accomplish season goals as a team and applying these pillars to their future careers. Finally, we want to **model good leadership** for them—from how we plan, communicate, and compassionately hold each other accountable.

Goals for the Season

It's important that we're able to look back on the year and determine whether our season was successful. I propose the below goals for 2025. I'd like everyone's input before we finalize these.

1. Skill Development and Fundamentals Mastery

Objective:

To ensure that each player on the team develops a strong foundation in fundamental basketball skills such as ball handling, shooting, passing, and defense by the end of the season.

Action Steps:

- Organize regular skill-focused practice sessions that focus on individual player development.
- Incorporate drills and exercises that target specific skills, allowing players to practice and refine their techniques.
- Provide personalized feedback and guidance to players to help them improve their skills.
- Track individual progress and celebrate improvements to boost player confidence and motivation.

2. Teamwork and Communication Enhancement

Objective: To foster a sense of unity and effective communication among team members and parents, promoting collaboration on and off the court.

Action Steps:

- Conduct a pre-season meeting with **parents and players** to establish team ground rules, set individual and team goals, and review the Parent Code of Conduct (with parents)
- Incorporate team-oriented drills that require players to work together, emphasizing passing, movement, and coordinated play.
- Facilitate team-building activities to strengthen interpersonal relationships and build trust among players.
- Encourage open communication during practices and games, emphasizing the importance of effective verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Follow the TeamSnap playbook communication guide in order to keep parents informed on team progress and celebrate player and team growth
- Instill a positive and supportive team culture, where players celebrate each other's successes and learn from challenges.

3. Sportsmanship and Personal Growth

Objective: To instill the values of sportsmanship, respect, and personal growth in each player, both within the context of basketball and in their broader lives.

Action Steps:

- Emphasize the importance of fair play and respect for opponents, referees, and teammates through discussions and examples.
- Set individual and team-oriented goals for character development, such as demonstrating patience, resilience, and leadership.
- Encourage players to reflect on their experiences, identifying areas for improvement and recognizing personal growth throughout the season.
- Set clear expectations on some of the behaviors that will NOT be accepted on the team - for example, screaming at a teammate on the court, showing up or arguing with referees, jeering an opponent at the free throw line.

By focusing on these high-level goals, the St. A's Basketball can ensure holistic player development, strong team dynamics, and the cultivation of essential values that extend beyond the basketball court

Coach, Parent and Athlete Expectations

Coach, Parent, and Athlete Expectations				
	Communication	Sportsmanship	Responsibility	Respect
C o a c h e s	• Indicate all practices dates, times, and locations in advance in TeamSnap • Conduct pre-season team meeting with parents and players • Announce practice changes or cancellation 1 day before practice time via TeamSnap • Approachable—any athlete or parent should feel comfortable to contact Coach with any questions or concerns	• Recognize and encourage efforts regardless of skill-level or result • Develop all athletes regardless of ability	• Provide a safe, fun environment that promotes growth and self-esteem • Plan practices in advance and make sure they're well-organized • Meet and maintain appropriate standards of coaching excellence • Be a student of the sport, bringing new and relevant tactics and techniques to practice • Coaches to take attendance on TeamSnap at the beginning of practice	• Treat athletes, parents, and opponents with compassion and respect • Model composure, poise, clear communication, compassion, and good leadership when dealing with anyone associated with the program • Promote good relationships and sportsmanship on the team
P a r e n t s	• Indicate athlete availability/attendance for practice 48 hours in advance in TeamSnap • Message head coach through TeamSnap at least 1 hour in advance if your athlete isn't going to be at practice	• Limit role to spectator and avoid sharing coaching instructions during games • Offer positive encouragement only during competition	• Make sure your athlete is healthy enough to attend practice, otherwise have them skip so they can rest and get healthy. If your athlete is at practice, coaches will expect that they can fully participate.	• Treat coaches, athletes, officials and opponents with compassion and respect
P l a y e r s	• Ask questions if you don't understand something • Notify coach immediately if you feel pain or illness during a practice or game	• Be a good teammate – at St. A's we cheer for individual and team wins. • Celebrate the success of others and encourage teammates who may be struggling • Challenge yourself • Learn something new • Have fun	• Be at practice on-time with the right shoes and clothing, and with a full water bottle • Be ready-to-go, quiet, and focused when warm-ups start • Be quiet (no talking) and attentive when a coach is talking to the group	• Treat teammates with compassion and respect • Treat coaches, parents, and opponents with respect • "Take care of your home" – keep the gym clean and take pride in wearing your St. A's uniform

Coaches Checklist

Pre-Season:

- Send pre-season kick-off email on **TeamSnap** with important information and expectations. You can use this email as an opportunity to schedule you team meeting
- Schedule and conduct an in-person or virtual meeting with **players and parents** to introduce yourself and set expectations for the season.
- Attend the in-person Positive Coaching Alliance training (or online training if unable to attend)

Uniform and Logistics:

- Coordinate uniform distribution to players at least 1 week before the season starts.
- Record jersey numbers in the "**TeamSnap - Roster**" feature for accurate tracking.
- Use the "**TeamSnap - Availability**" feature to record and monitor practice attendance. This is vital in order to backup any "playtime discussions" with parents. Data is power!

Communication and Engagement:

- Send regular RSVP reminders to parents for practices and games through **TeamSnap**.
- Make yourself available to address parent inquiries in-person or via phone calls.
- Send weekly recaps, updates, and reminders to the team using the **TeamSnap** email feature.

Team Building and Bonding:

- Recommended to organize an "off-court" team bonding event to foster team camaraderie and morale.

End of Season:

- Send out an end-of-season recap and appreciation message via the **TeamSnap** email feature.

Continuous Responsibilities:

- Provide constructive feedback and individual development goals to players during practices and games.

- Plan and execute effective practice sessions that focus on skill development, teamwork, and strategy.
- Collaborate with assistant coaches to ensure a unified coaching approach and consistent messaging.
- Promote good sportsmanship, positive attitude, and respect among players, parents, and opponents.
- Stay informed about league rules, schedules, and any changes that may affect the team.
- Monitor players' physical well-being during practices and games and address injuries appropriately.

Remember, effective communication, organization, and maintaining a positive coaching atmosphere are key to a successful and enjoyable season for both players and parents. Adapt this checklist to your team's specific needs and make sure to communicate any changes or updates promptly.

Curriculum

We teach across 5 core pillars:

1. Fundamentals and Skill Development Phase (Months 1-2)

- **Dribbling and Ball Handling:**
 - Stationary dribbling drills to improve control and coordination.
 - Moving dribbling drills to enhance agility and ball security.
- **Shooting Fundamentals:**
 - Proper shooting form and technique.
 - Shooting from different spots on the court.
 - Free throw practice.
- **Passing and Receiving:**
 - Focus on accurate and quick passes.
 - Developing court vision and decision-making.
- **Individual Defense:**
 - Defensive stance and footwork.
 - Man-to-man and help defense principles.

2. Tactical Understanding and Team Play Phase (Months 2-3)

- **Offensive Strategies:**
 - Introduction to basic offensive sets (e.g., motion offense, pick and roll).
 - Learning to read defenses and make effective decisions.
- **Defensive Strategies:**
 - Man-to-man fundamentals and principles
 - Zone defense principles and rotations.
 - Trapping and pressing techniques.
- **Fast Break and Transition Play:**
 - Transition offense and defense drills.
 - Developing fast break execution and decision-making.

3. Physical Conditioning and Fitness Phase (Months 1-4)

- **Endurance and Stamina:**
 - Conditioning drills to improve cardiovascular fitness.
 - Interval running and agility exercises.

- **Strength and Core Training:**
 - Bodyweight exercises for strength development.
 - Core stability and functional strength exercises.
- **Flexibility and Injury Prevention:**
 - Dynamic warm-up routines.
 - Static stretches for flexibility and injury prevention.

4. Game Situations and Competition Phase (Months 2-4)

- **Scrimmages and Simulated Games:**
 - Regular intrasquad scrimmages to apply learned skills in a game context.
 - Emphasis on teamwork, communication, and implementing tactical knowledge.
- **Game Analysis and Feedback:**
 - Individualized feedback sessions with players to track progress.

5. Character Building and Leadership Phase (Months 1-4)

- **Sportsmanship and Ethics:**
 - Discussions on fair play, respect for opponents, and maintaining a positive attitude.
- **Leadership Development:**
 - Assigning rotating team captains to promote leadership skills among players.
- **Community Involvement:**
 - Organizing a team community service project to emphasize giving back.
- **End-of-Season Reflection:**
 - Individual player reflections on personal growth and lessons learned.

Skills and Drills by Grade

	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
	OFFENSE				
Ball Handling	- Triple threat position - Strong and weak hand - pushing the ball into the ground - not slapping at it. - Both speed and protection dribbling - Looking up when dribbling. - Changing direction against defense - crossover. - Jump stops - Pivoting	- Triple threat position - Strong and weak hand - no looking at the ball. - Both speed and protection. - Changing direction against defense - Crossover & spin - Adding extra ball handling practice - figure eights, crab walks, etc - Jump stops - Pivoting	- Strong and weak hand - Speed, protection, dribbling out of traps, backwards, forwards, sideways. - Crossover, spin, between legs, behind back - Side to side, inside out, forward back, etc. - Two balls at a time - While playing catch with a tennis ball	- Speed, protection, dribbling out of traps, backwards, forwards, sideways. - Crossover, spin, between legs, behind back - Side to side, inside out, forward back, etc. - Two balls at a time - While playing catch with a tennis ball - Fakes off the dribble	- Speed, protection, dribbling out of traps, backwards, forwards, sideways. - Crossover, spin, between legs, behind back - Side to side, inside out, forward back, etc. - Two balls at a time - While playing catch with a tennis ball - Fakes off the dribble
Passing	- Bounce, chest, over the head - Stepping into the pass and around the defense. - Receiving - showing a target and coming to the ball. - Passing while moving.	- Bounce, chest, over the head - Stepping into the pass and around the defense. - Receiving - showing a target and coming to the ball. - While moving - catch and go - three-man-weave - lead passes. - Faking passes	- Passing off the dribble - Drive and dumping off down low. - No look passes - Hitting the post-up - Hitting the cutter - Lead passes - Quick reversals - Breaking a press with passes - Faking passes	- Passing off the dribble - Drive and dumping off down low. - No look passes - Hitting the post-up - Hitting the cutter - Lead passes - Breaking a press with passes - Quick reversals - Long passes up the floor	- Drive and dumping off down low. - No look passing - Hitting the post-up - Hitting the cutter - Lead passes - Quick reversals - Long passes up the floor
Shooting	- Feet and shoulders square to the basket - Balance - Using legs and arms - Shooting up (not launching out) - Shooting off a dribble/jump stop - Down low - hitting the backboard.	- Squaring up to the basket off a pass - receiving ready to shoot. - Shooting off a dribble/jump stop - Elbow under the ball - one hand - follow through - Down low - hitting the backboard. - Muscling up to the backboard on a rebound. - Faking shots	- Focus on form - Balance, using legs, one-hand, elbow under the ball, follow through - Receiving the ball ready to shoot. - Fake - one dribble shoot - Drive - pull up for jump shot - Start three-pointers - Muscling up in traffic - using the backboard.	- Shooting form - Increasing shooting range - three pointers - Shooting off the dribble - Popping the ball out to an outside shooter, being ready to shoot - Using the backboard - Going up strong in traffic	- Shooting form - Increasing shooting range - three pointers - Shooting off the dribble - Popping the ball out to an outside shooter, being ready to shoot - Using the backboard - Going up strong in traffic

OFFENSIVE POSITION

Creating Space

- Spread out
- Fill the open spot
- Attack the basket
- Making moves to get open

- Running an offense and a couple specific plays
- Moves to get open
- Cutting to the basket

- Running both a motion offense against a man-to-man and an offense against a zone
- 2-3 specific plays for quick scoring
- Cutting to the basket including back doors
- 1-2 press breakers (one for man-to-man press, one for zone press)

- Motion offense
- Offense against a 2-3
- Adjustment of offense to play against a 1-3-1
- Looking for the cutter - back door, hi-low
- Press breakers

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Lay-ups / Drives

- Strong hand lay-ups with good footwork
- Begin weak hand lay-ups
- Full court layups for breakaways.

- Strong and weak hand lay-ups mastered
- Make moves and drive to beat defenders.
- Layups into defense (running in to the mat)
- Layups off a pass on a cut to the basket.

- Make moves and drive to beat defenders.
- Reverse layups and driving from baseline, middle, sides, etc.
- Creative takes to the basket
- Layups into defense (running in to the mat)
- Layups off a pass on a cut to the basket.

- Make moves and drive to beat defenders.
- Reverse layups and driving from baseline, middle, sides, etc.
- Creative takes to the basket
- Layups off a pass on a cut to the basket.

- Scoring moves to beat defenders.
- Creative takes to the basket
- Layups off a pass on a cut to the basket.

Post Moves

- Squaring up from a pass down low.

- Introducing posting up
- Drop fake - change directions
- Power dribble

- Posting up down low
- Spin/square up to find the backboard and muscle the ball up
- Drop step/power dribble

- Posting up down low
- Square up, fake and muscle the ball up
- Drop step/power dribble
- Cut across key, turn to make a move

- Hook shot

Screening

- Set a screen for the dribbler to get them passed the first defense.
- Intro - off ball screen

- Screen on the dribbler looking to roll to the basket - pick and roll.
- Setting screens to get teammates open for a pass.

- Screens for a motion offense and press break.

- Screens for a motion offense and press break.
- Post screens for guards.
- Posts screening for each away from the ball side down low.

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Fast breaks	- Fast break off a steal - Push the ball up the floor - Look up ahead to pass	- Fast break off a steal - Outlet on the rebound and push up - Fill the lanes - Look up to pass - Lead pass for a layup - 3-on-2, 2-on-1	- Fill the lanes - 3-on-2, 2-on-1 - Fast break with a trailer	- Pushing up the floor for quick points - Fill the lanes - 3-on-2, 2-on-1 - Fast break with a trailer - Fast break with outside shooter	- Pushing up the floor for quick points - Fill the lanes - 3-on-2, 2-on-1 - Fast break with a trailer - Fast break with outside shooter
DEFENSE					
On Ball	- Positioning - Eyes on the ball, try to get hands on it - Defensive shuffle on toes - Arms length on dribble - Arms up on shot - Pressure when the dribble is stopped - On break away - run ahead to establish position and stop the ball	- Over-playing the strong hand side - Staying low - going for the steal with active hands - not reaching - More pressure on dribble and crazy pressure once the balls up - Quick feet to stop the dribble or change the direction. - Arms up on shot	- Over-playing the strong hand side - Quick feet to stop the ball and pressure the dribble - Going after the strong hand on a shot to cut off both the shot and a fake with a move. - Holding ground and taking a charge	- Over-playing the strong hand side - Quick feet - defensive footwork - forward, back, side - Going after the strong hand on a shot to cut off both the shot and a fake with a move. - Holding ground and taking a charge - Stopping the drive	- Over-playing the strong hand side - Quick feet - defensive footwork - forward, back, side - Going after the strong hand on a shot to cut off both the shot and a fake with a move. - Holding ground and taking a charge - Stopping the drive
Deny	- Positioning - See the ball and your player - Hands up - ready to steal the pass - Pressure to steal pass when the dribble stops	- Positioning - See the ball and your player - Hands up - ready to steal the pass - Pressure to steal pass when the dribble stops - Covering a cutter through the key - Fighting through or switching on screens	- See the ball and your player - Pressure to steal pass when the dribble stops - Covering a cutter through the key - Covering the post-up down low - Fighting through or switching on screens	- Covering a cutter - Defending the post down low - Covering others on a drive	- Covering a cutter - Defending the post down low - Covering others on a drive

Example Practice

Duration: 1.5 hours

Objective: To focus on skill development, conditioning, teamwork, and game situations in a comprehensive practice session.

Warm-Up and Conditioning (10 minutes):

- Dynamic warm-up: Light jogging, high knees, butt kicks, arm circles, leg swings.
- Conditioning drills: Down-and-backs (baseline to free-throw line and back, half-court and back, full court and back).

Skill Development and Drills (30 minutes):

Station 1: Dribbling and Ball Handling (10 minutes)

- Dribble around cones with alternating hands.
- Dribble with changes of pace and direction.
- Two-ball dribbling drills for improved control.

Station 2: Shooting Fundamentals (10 minutes)

- Form shooting: Focus on shooting mechanics and footwork.
- Shooting from key spots on the court.
- Free throw practice.

Station 3: Passing and Receiving (10 minutes)

- Partner passing: Work on accurate chest passes, bounce passes, and overhead passes.
- Passing under pressure: Incorporate a defender to simulate game situations.

Teamwork and Game Situations (20 minutes):

- **Fast Break Drills:** Divide the team into two groups. Practice executing fast breaks, emphasizing quick passes and proper spacing.
- **Defense and Transition:** Run 3-on-2 and 2-on-1 drills to work on defensive rotations and offensive transition.

Scrimmage and Games (20 minutes):

- **Half-Court Scrimmage:** Divide the team into two groups and play a half-court scrimmage. Focus on applying skills and strategies learned during the practice.

- **Full-Court Scrimmage:** Play a full-court scrimmage with modified rules, such as requiring a certain number of passes before attempting a shot.

Cool Down and Reflection (10 minutes):

- Static stretching: Focus on major muscle groups used during practice.
- **Player Reflection:** Gather the team and discuss key takeaways from the practice. Each player shares one thing they learned or improved upon.

Coach's Notes:

- **Emphasize Effort:** Encourage players to give their best effort in every drill and scrimmage.
- **Rotating Stations:** Rotate players through different stations to ensure everyone gets a chance to practice various skills.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Offer praise and constructive feedback throughout the practice to boost player confidence.
- **Hydration Breaks:** Schedule short water breaks in between different segments to keep players hydrated.
- **Adaptability:** Be prepared to modify the practice plan based on the team's energy level and needs.

Remember that the practice plan can be adjusted based on the team's progress, specific areas of focus, and any upcoming games or events. The key is to provide a well-structured and engaging practice that promotes skill development, teamwork, and enjoyment of the game.

- **Close Practice – team cheer or create team tradition**

Appendix 1 – Jr. NBA Practice Plans

Plans and Videos

[2nd and 3rd Grade – 12 practice plans](#)

[4th and 5th Grade – 12 practice plans](#)

[6th and 7th Grade – 12 practice plans](#)

[8th Grade – 12 practice plans](#)

Appendix 2 –Jr. NBA Video Links (200+ videos to plan your practice)

1. **Dribbling:** Ball handling drills and tips

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmPlogZWH3R4xiAiSfYtc0fAoRoUYiUSk>

2. **Shooting:** Shooting drills and tips

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmPlogZWH3R59Dr1P0aWjSPbYVO206PYe>

3. **Passing and Receiving:**

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmPlogZWH3R6gl4Hru6TKxf0XTz4UMN39>

4. **Defense:**

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmPlogZWH3R49KmlPCeyzY8XyQSprfg_Q

5. **Rebounding:**

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmPlogZWH3R7gz2RyNlqYensTYcBRss5X>

6. **Offense:**

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmPlogZWH3R7aDnFzgsvcCJi2D64vu6B1>

7. **Footwork and Conditioning:**

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmPlogZWH3R51KdTX527FhFeF0EF5GvAB>

Please review these resources and adapt them to your team's needs and skill level. These links should provide a comprehensive range of drills and techniques for effective practice planning.