

The following is a proposal for return to small group, socially distanced training for youth basketball organizations in response to the changing of best practice guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This proposal has been made in collaboration between, and is endorsed by, Dr Mary Kestler (**UBC Faculty of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases**) and Dr Brad Munt (**Cardiology St Paul's Hospital**) and coach Eric Butler on behalf of the British Columbia Club Basketball Association (the BCCBA is BC's largest club basketball organization and has membership of approximately 30,000 youth basketball players)

Although there are justifiable concerns over potential virus spread with regular basketball competition because of the close contact between players, basketball training is arguably the easiest activity to adapt in a way that completely minimizes all risk of virus transmission between players, while still giving participants an excellent experience.

In fact, basketball is a unique sport in which a player can practice almost entirely in isolation and still build enough skills to be able to later compete at the highest level because of the distinct demands on players to be able to shoot, dribble and handle the ball. These skills are arguably best developed in isolation, like Larry Bird demonstrated alone in his backyard in rural Indiana. Additionally, with the prospect of regular competition remaining very much in question for the foreseeable future (tournaments, inter-club play, school seasons, etc), addressing methods for safe individual training is essential to support the large and growing youth basketball community in BC.

We believe that having young athletes follow the safe and reasonable path outlined below to train in controlled and regularly cleaned gyms while supervised by responsible adults is actually a safer environment for these kids than having them spend the summer without access to these programs. If we don't permit training in this controlled environment, children will likely be tempted to form their own unsupervised groups to play or socialize in. This is especially true for many at risk youth which the basketball community is known to support. Many parents also depend on basketball training activities as a form of part-time child care.

Promoting a healthy lifestyle and sense of normalcy for these children is more important than ever. To do so safely will require real leadership and guidance by parents, coaches and clubs as we work to change the habits and culture of a typical training environment...and we are up for the challenge.

Basketball Safety Guidelines during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Before the start of any program

Our safety plans start with clear communication guidelines between clubs and their families ensuring they understand new protocols before coming to any program. To do this, we will require:

- Clubs to email participants a set of safety guidelines and expected behaviours (as detailed in the sections below) before the start of any program
- Clubs to email out a pre-screening (primary) health check in the form of a questionnaire asking for families to self identify if:
 - The participant or household members have any **symptoms of COVID-19** (using the [BC-CDC symptoms screen](#)). If the participant or household member has symptoms of COVID-19, the participant may not enroll in the program until BC CDC criteria for self-isolation has been met
 - Anyone in the household has **travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days**. If the participant has travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days he/she must quarantine according to BC CDC guidelines. If a household member only has travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days, the player may participate as long as he/she has no symptoms and the household member in question is self-isolating according to public health criteria
 - Anyone in the household has been in **contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19** in the last 14 days. If the participant or household member has been in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, the participant must self-isolate for 14 days according to BC CDC guidelines
- Clubs to email out entry and exit procedures for the facility that the program is using. These procedures should clearly document the club's plan for preventing a large intermingling of players entering and/or leaving the gym. Suggestions for accomplishing this include:
 - Leaving at least 25 minutes between sessions for facilities that are using the same doors for both entry and exit
 - Leaving at least 15 minutes between sessions in facilities with separate doors for entry and exit
 - Creating a waiting corridor with markings for appropriate spacing for players waiting to enter the gym
 - Detailing how players will leave the gym in a spaced out manner and where they can meet their parents after the session is finished
- Clubs to maintain a list of each person to attend each training session to facilitate any necessary contact tracing

Gym entry and exit

- Players to enter the gym one-by-one and be greeted by a coach at an entry station (ie table) with appropriate social distancing and a hand sanitizing which they must use
- Coach will lead the players through a (secondary) health check and screening on a daily basis by asking the following questions:
 - Does the participant have any symptoms of COVID-19 (using the [BC-CDC symptoms screen](#))
- Clubs will follow a strict policy of immediately removing any participant who fails either the primary or second screening

- To dismiss a student who has shown up at the gym and fails the secondary screening, clubs will need to collect cell phone numbers from families and call them to pick up their child
- After passing the secondary health check and sanitizing station, a player should be directed by the coaches to which specific area of the gym they should go to
- At the end of each day, in between programs and even during water breaks, high touch surfaces (door handles, bathrooms, basketballs) are cleaned with a disinfectant
- At the end of sessions, players are dismissed one-by-one and required to leave the gym immediately

Suggested best practices

- Encourage clubs to run shorter sessions (60-90 minutes) and recommend that all players use the bathroom at home before attending a session. This will dramatically cut down on the touch points in a gym
- Encourage coaches to take leadership roles to create a safe culture through group discussions at the beginning and end of training. Coaches should explain to the children the importance of
 - Hand washing and sanitizing
 - Keeping hands clean by coughing into an elbow, or sneezing into a shirt
 - Not touching one's mouth or eyes
 - Telling all players with long hair to have it tied back (well secured by elastic) so that there is less touching of the face
 - Not doing high-fives or other contact
 - Distancing rules and avoiding potential contact points
 - Include a discussion of where players can and can not stand/move during the session. Players should have a designated "home spot" in the gym to keep their water bottle and for drills and group teaching sessions
- Programs should reduce touch and interaction points by:
 - Not sharing basketballs, pinnies or other gear
 - Not sharing water bottles or using drinking fountains
 - Propping open doors when appropriate/possible

What does the program look like?

- **100% skill development approach:** no competition, contact or passing between players unless they are members of a household who are living together
- **Limitation to group size:** we recommend training sessions should keep players in small separated groups, limited to one half of the court and shooting on one hoop. This will give structure to training sessions and limit player interactions (see diagrams of sample training set-ups below)
- Players within the small groups must maintain physical distance of 6 feet or greater at all times. This is possible because of the 100% skill development approach and operating in gyms with enough space for the number of players.
 - A full size basketball court is 50x94' plus the extra space around the court. This means there is approximately 2,250 sqft on a half court (and 4,500 sqft on a full basketball court)
 - Our recommendation is to limit the number of players on a half court to no more than 5 players. This means that on a standard half court (not including areas outside of the basketball boundaries) each of the 5 players will have more than 400 sqft of their own to operate in
 - Organizations operating on smaller courts may need to adjust the maximum number of players per half court to ensure there is at least 250 sq ft per player

- Operating well organized, socially distanced training sessions, in facilities with good modern HVAC systems and really high ceilings will be of low risk (certainly lower than many indoor facilities such as grocery or liquor stores that are currently operating).
- GET IN, TRAIN, GET OUT- players should leave the gym as soon as possible after each training session
- Only participants and coaches are allowed in the gym. Parents must wait outside the gym for dismissal of their children

What kind of training can the children do?

Players will be able to do the following activities while still meeting the above conditions

- Players shooting one at a time on a hoop and chasing down their own rebounds
- Players can work on their 1 vs 0 scoring moves on a hoop, each taking their turn
- Stationary ball handling
- No passing drills
- Conditioning sessions are possible with activities such as defensive slides, jump training, short sprints, push-ups, sit-ups etc
- If a ball does roll in the direction of another player, he/she will use his foot to push it back to the player who the ball belongs to

Targeted groups:

- This first phase, is targeted to older elementary and high school age kids who will be better able to comply with these restrictions

Future stages:

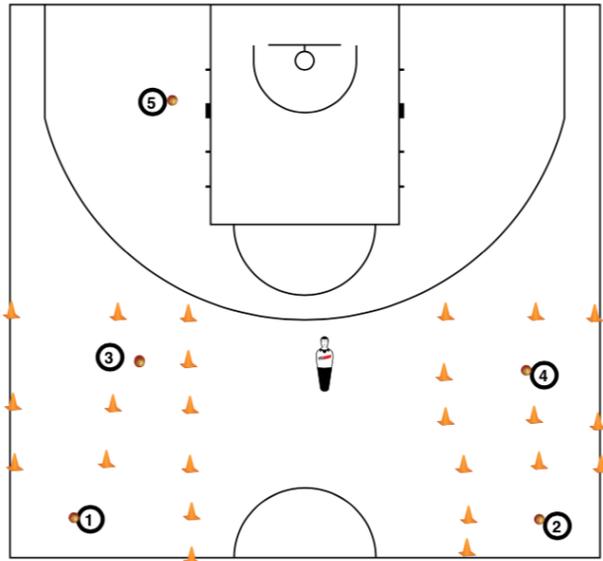
We are happy to consult on the next phase of reopening. We expect that this step-by-step journey towards a full reopening will include some of the following steps:

- Allow younger athletes to participate
- Allow passing drills
- Add in contact between players (1-on-1)
- Game play (5x5) within teams allowed but not between different teams (ie. no travel)
- Games between 2 teams without parents/fans allowed in the gym. No larger tournaments allowed
- Full return to normal game play and spectating

Other considerations

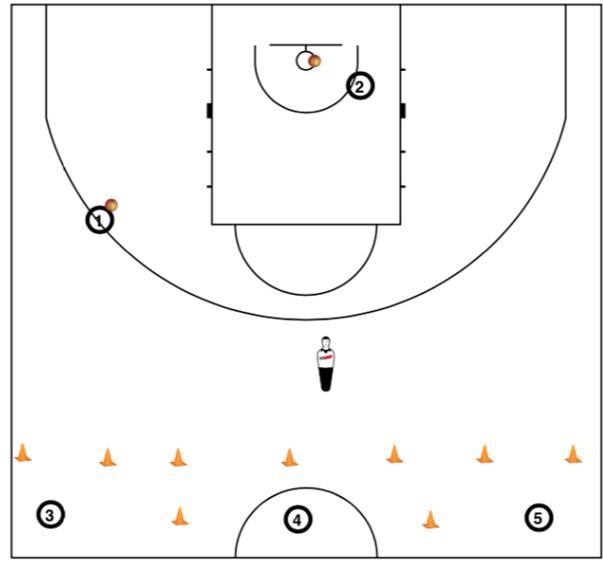
Some clubs will not have access to gyms and will need to be operating programs outside. The majority of the guidelines outlined above will remain the same, however, entry and exit procedures will need to be swapped with guidelines for making sure “non-participants” are kept separated from the program. Clubs will need cooperation and support from civic bodies like the Parks Board to ensure safe, permitted access to these outdoor spaces.

Sample gym set-up for safe social distancing drills with 5 players and a coach on a half court



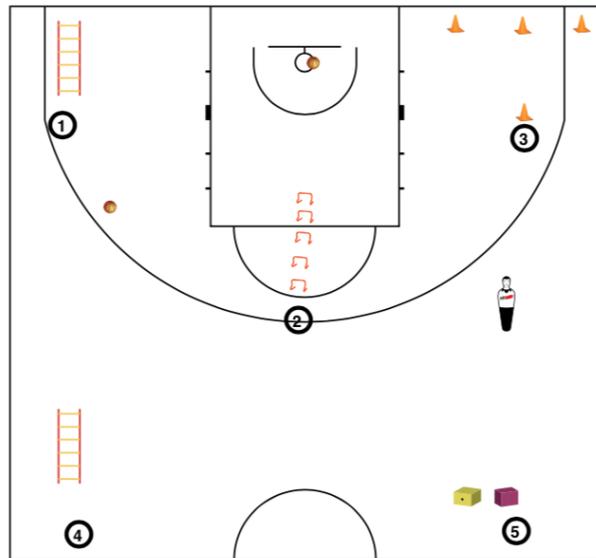
4 players dribbling or passing off the wall and 1 shooting

3/4

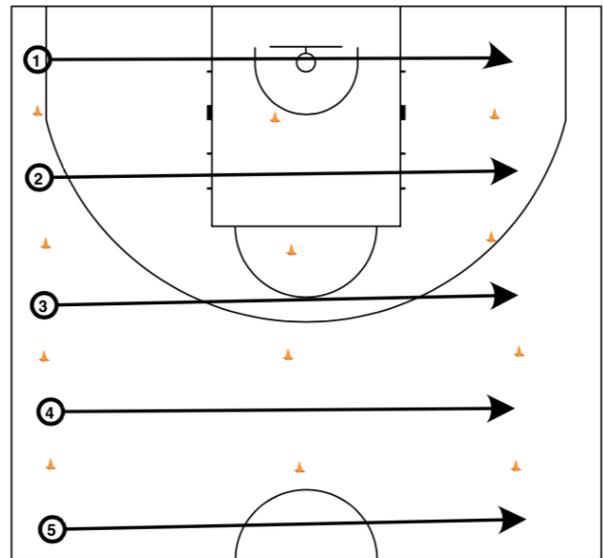


2 players alternating basket finishes and 3 players doing conditioning

4/4



5 players doing conditioning stations



5 players sprinting and doing defensive slides

- Andrew Clark- (Senior Manager- Richmond Oval and Head of High Performance Sport)