



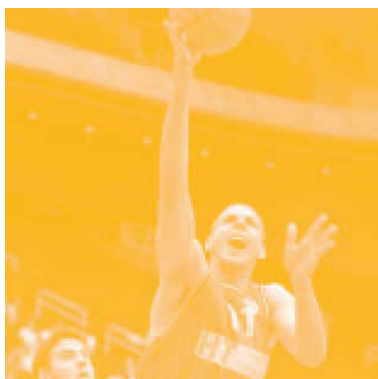
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2.1 MINI BASKETBALL



WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS CHAPTER?

Mini-Basketball is our Answer to Children's Sedentary Behavior

2005 was the United Nations' International Year of Sport and Physical Education. Many initiatives were created around the world, to promote sport as a mean to improve people's quality of life through physical exercise. Programs were also created to recognize the use of sport as a promotional tool in creating peace and understanding between people.

As the world's governing body for basketball, we are very proud of our Mini-Basketball concept. While being aimed at kids and to exclusively promote the practice of basketball amongst them, it achieves many other objectives we also share with the United Nations.

Mini-Basketball is our way to promote physical education through the practice of running, jumping, change of speed and direction. In short, it is our proposal to assist those who design physical programs for kids around the world.

This chapter tells you about the basics of Mini-Basketball and how it is specifically designed for kids and teenagers, who have yet to develop the same physical abilities as adults.

Mini-Basketball is here to help you get kids moving, to introduce them to our sport and hopefully inspire them to continue participating for many years.



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1. Introduction

Mini-Basketball seeks to introduce children to the world of Basketball, indeed to the world of sport, in a friendly, caring environment.

Mini-Basketball is the first step in preparing children for Basketball. In its self it offers children a great many skill experiences – running, jumping, change of speed and direction, handling a ball and shooting at a target - which should feature in every sound physical education curriculum.

Mini-Basketball should emphasize the sporting and educational benefits - an approach designed specifically for children. The main mission of Mini-Basketball should be to provide opportunities for children of all abilities to enjoy rich and quality experiences and ensure they are enthusiastically encouraged to transfer to Basketball.

Mini-Basketball is essentially a modification of the game of Basketball but it is important not to make children play a game that is not suitable for their physical and mental development, so change the adult game to suit them!

Recognize that Mini-Basketball and Basketball has a great deal to offer to society supporting national campaigns, like 'healthy eating', 'taking regular physical exercise', 'overcoming obesity', 'no smoking', 'no drugs' and 'avoid AIDS'.

2. Role of National Federations

The development and management of Mini-Basketball should be an integral part of every National Federation, not a separate organization.

The National Federation should oversee, monitor and resource the national programme. It is important to have a Mini-Basketball committee, made up of experienced and committed coaches, teachers, officials and administrators of Mini-Basketball. The committee should meet regularly, evolving the philosophy and the development plan, commending the delivery of programmes that have regard for the age and experience of the children.

The National Federations should be prepared to engage in dialogue with other national federations to share experiences and good practices. One does not need to re-invent the wheel, build on other's successes.

Every effort should be made to win the wholehearted support of the national education authority to ensure that experienced trainer teachers can participate in the work of the national committee. It should encourage regional and local forums of coaches and teachers to meet, plan and cooperate in the delivery of the national development plan.

Each National Federation should establish reward system for tracking of players from the mini level to the national team selection and all children participating in mini basketball should be licensed.

3. Preparation of Leaders of Mini-Basketball

To deliver an ambitious programme of club Mini-Basketball it is essential to win the interest and commitment of those who work with children - teachers, youth and social workers, providers of social leisure and sporting facilities.



Most children hold great respect for their teachers and are readily influenced by them. It follows teachers must be encouraged to have an empathy with Basketball and Mini-Basketball, Where physical education figures in the national curriculum of schools it is important that teachers are made aware of the fundamentals of Mini-Basketball and their rightful place in their physical education lessons, from the earliest age through the primary education phase.

For Mini-Basketball it is essential to win the interest and commitment of those who work with children.

Each National Federation should launch the project of teaching teachers in the primary schools how to conduct mini basketball sessions and establish close collaboration with the school system and school sports calendar.

The challenge will be to provide schools with the appropriate equipment- adaptable height goals and varying size balls, with sufficient to ensure every child has ample opportunity to experience the learning of the skills. The teachers will, in many cases, become ambassadors of Mini-Basketball encouraging the children to participate in out of school clubs and events and eventually to move smoothly to Basketball. Some will become the next generation of coaches! It follows there needs to be a comprehensive training programme for teachers.

To ensure there are sufficient coaches to deliver an imaginative development plan, it will require creative thinking to identify and recruit from basketball players, teachers, youth workers, social workers and parents, offering an intensive and extensive training. One has to win their commitment and dedication.

In Mini Basketball coach-instructor has to be a good demonstrator to show the children some moves. Coaches should introduce children to the fundamentals of basketball, working mainly on the individual techniques.

Coaches in mini-basketball are extremely important and way of work in mini-basketball should be carefully determined. Standard of work in mini-basketball could be raised only by working to a common program which has to be determined by the experts. Each NF should have curriculum content and management strategies for training teachers, coaches, instructors and officials, including health & safety and curriculum content for teaching the skills and rules with differentiation in respect of age and experience of players. Coaches should know how to teach, how to communicate, how to use appropriate teaching and training methods and how to train rather than inform.

The programme must include: through theoretical and practical experiences, a good understanding of methodology, psychology, physical development, education and specialist sport training. It is essential the aspiring coach knows 'How children grow', How chil-





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dren learn skills', 'Why children worry & how best to help them', 'How to create the best learning environment', 'How best to plan a scheme of work and prepare the series of training or lesson plans'.

Those who are in the initial learning stage of coaching will benefit from regular mentoring from experienced coaches of Mini-Basketball.

All coaches and teachers should be encouraged to undertake refresher training and attend annual conferences of the coaching fraternity. It is often said 'We should never stop learning!'

Coaches should be capable of delivering exciting and challenging learning experiences within school physical education curriculum and in 'community' clubs and organizations.

National Federations, through the national Mini-Basketball Committee, should publish resources, (like 'Basketball for Young Players', FIBA's excellent coaching and teaching manual), so a guide to teaching and coaching is a must. In addition, illustrated promotional leaflets on 'How to coach whilst working with Children', 'A code of ethics', 'Parents support and attitude' should be published.

4. Players

The aim of Mini-Basketball is to give ALL children, boys and girls, the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from regular Mini-Basketball experiences, including those with different abilities, like the physically and mentally impaired, in a friendly caring environment.

The game is simplified from Basketball to ensure greater understanding and empathy by teachers and coaches and full enjoyment by the children.

It is essential that the National Federation policy recognizes children have rights. It is important to promote the understanding that all work with children is underpinned by sound ethical and moral principles. Children can be easily bored and de-motivated. Too many have given up because the training and competitive experiences have been lacking. They must be given the freedom to play, to be creative, to think and to communicate.

Every National Federation must evolve a child protection policy; children have been abused physically, mentally and sexually, when a policy does not exist and implemented.

There is no magic age when children first experience Mini-Basketball activities. Children of four or five years of age, sometimes younger, can handle a ball, pass and catch and shoot into a target. It is not the conventional game but a wide range of small challenging games that can be played by oneself, with a partner, then with more children: 1 v 1, 2 v 1, 2 v 2, 2 v 3, 3 v 3. There is good evidence that the first real game competition should be 3 v 3, because children in the primary phase of education find it difficult to cope with more than two options.

When Mini-Basketball was first conceived it was thought that it should be for children of 12 and under. Today evidence suggests that it is best for primary aged boys and girls. In fact, one really should study the individual in the round - his or her physical, mental and social development when deciding the next challenging step forward. However, clubs and schools cannot always cope with such differentiation. One should be aware that there is a great risk in advancing a child too quickly, like playing 10 year olds with the 13 year olds. Opinions amongst experts favor no more than two years difference.



A National Federation should study and consult widely before adopting a policy, bearing in mind that it may be best to draw the line between Mini-Basketball and Basketball when a child moves from primary to secondary school.

One should gradually introduce children to greater height goals and larger dimension balls e.g. age 5 to 8 size 3 ball and height climbing to 2.60m, 9 and 10 year olds size 5 ball and 2.60m height goals and 11 year olds size 5 and 3.05m (full height).

It is important to adopt strategies to identify and monitor the development of potentially talented players.

It is important to adopt strategies to identify and monitor the development of potentially talented players and all coaches and teachers should be aware of the system and contribute to it. Here are our potential stars of tomorrow!

Not all children will, however, become able players but their love of Basketball might lead them to officiating and administer, e.g. evolve opportunities for them. There are sound officiating (refereeing, scoring and timekeeping) schemes in place, which can be adapted and adopted. They also can become our spectators of tomorrow. A good investment all-round!

5. Rules

Rules for the game should be flexible and simple, so that leaders, teachers and coaches, who may initially have little experience of Basketball, can easily understand them.

It should be obligatory to play man-to-man AND for ALL children to play.

Encourage boys and girls to play together.

Rules need to be adapted to suit the level of attainment of the children.

Provide good opportunities for children to referee, score and time keep.

National Federations should take a pride in designing the Rules of Mini-Basketball to ensure each player must play and the equipment is of the right dimension for them to succeed, e.g. size 3 ball and lower baskets for very young children and size 5 ball with a higher basket for the older children.

Provide good opportunities for children to referee, score and time keep.

6. Competition

There should be regular, challenging competitive experiences locally and regionally, but not necessarily nationally. There is no place for inter-nation competitions.

Inter-club and school competitions should actively be encouraged and there should be an information resource that can be accessed by clubs and schools, e.g. calendar of club and school tournaments.

The National Federation should use different events to promote Mini-Basketball, such as: 3 v 3 tournaments, 5 v 5 tournaments, goal shooting challenges, fun days of Mini-Basketball – a mix of skill development & games.

Bear in mind when two or more teams contest, each child deserves to receive something: certificate, badge, sticker.

National Federations should respect these good practices and widely commend them.



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National Federations should seek to obtain resources to purchase and distribute equipment – goals, balls and clothing.

Competitions in mini-basketball should be carefully monitored and structured and children should understand the positive effects of winning and losing.

Competition can be a platform for testing as it facilitates comparison of performance and act as sporting experience with an incentive.

Competition also can be against oneself – solo, and through various “games” children need to understand the aim of competitions. Bear in mind to promote two or more teams in contest and that each kid deserves to receive something.

One of the most important things for each NF is how to convince parents and coaches who what to achieve the results in the competitions that this is not important and that mini-basketball has totally different aim.

7. Mini-Basketball Day (Festival)

Each National Federation should have a National Mini-Basketball Day (Festival) promoting and raising the profile of Mini-Basketball in the public, commercial and business environments.

The National Federation should actively seek to persuade every school and club to participate and publish promotional resources to articulate the benefits of promoting a nationwide ‘Mini-Basketball Day’.

Mini-Basketball Festivals should be held, preferably in a public place, e.g. ‘market square’ or ‘car park of a shopping mall’, have a colorful ‘backcloth’ – a banner bearing the title of the event, flags, flowers, banners, displays of photographs and posters, signposting notices and have trade stalls.

Involve local personalities – town mayor, chairman of leisure services, sporting characters. Feature commercial & business interests. Ensure the Media are fully briefed well in advance and attend on the day – television, radio, and newspapers.

National team players and coaches and top division club players and coaches should play an active part in the event.

The event should be used to promote good practices that protect the health and safety of all participants in Mini-Basketball – children, coaches, teachers, instructors, officials and managers and provide advice and guidance on the construction of Mini-Basketball playing ‘areas’ – in and outdoors and the design of goals.

Here is another opportunity to promote campaigns: “No smoking”, “No Drugs”, or “No Aids” campaign, and give positive message to all participants.





Festivals give boys and girls, the experience of playing Mini-Basketball, the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills of the game, and to raise the level of their individual performances, in the friendly company of coaches and children of other schools and clubs in the community. The Mini-Basketball

The children should return home with very many happy memories.

Festival, in itself, should be a rich experience - a time for fun, amusement, education and cooperative activities, where the coaches and the children will happily be together.

The children should return home with very many happy memories, anecdotes to relate to their parents, friends and teachers, a selection of mementoes (tee-shirts, mini-basketballs, badges, pins, etc), and very often the beginnings of a lasting friendship with children from other teams. The coaches will also be the greater for the experience; it should strengthened their understanding and empathy to the philosophy and good practices of Mini-Basketball. It should be something very special in the life of the children and the coaches.

8. Working with Parents

Boys and girls need the support of their parents.

Very often parents choose to watch and support the team in competitions. One of the greatest challenges is to convince parents and coaches who want to win that this is not important and that Mini-Basketball has a totally different aim.

Offer these strategies to best help their children:

- Understand the philosophy of Mini-Basketball and support its ideals.
- Check the sessions meet the needs of your children and conform to the philosophy of Mini-Basketball.
- Establish a regular dialogue with the coach or teacher.
- Respect the coach or teacher's opinion.
- Praise your child when he or she does well and encourage him or her when they are disappointed.
- Respect the referee and never criticize him or her.
- Ensure your child does not overplay in the context of the amount of physical activity they are undertaking. Make sure they have enough rest and sleep.

Parents should be encouraged to contribute in fundraising, administrative roles, table officiating and management of uniforms and gear, but not influence work of the coaches or disrupt the games.

Remember it is more important to participate than to win, because it is more important in life not to conquer but to fight well.

9. Keep in Mind

Keep in mind that Mini-Basketball is a great initiative for the early recruitment to Basketball for both boys and girls and the early teaching of good habits and attitudes, sound and effective fundamentals and technique.

It can be the initial phase of the process of talent selection process, aiding each National Federation to create an extensive pool of players.



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It is important not to impose too much pressure on the children for it runs the risk of disrupting the biological, physiological, psychological and physical growth processes of the children.



Let children have fun and enjoy Mini-Basketball!