

Basketball:
Man-to-Man Defense

*The game is a game for happiness.
The rules of the game are to be regarded as mutual agreements, the spirit of which no one
should try to break.*

*To win is desirable. But to win at any cost defeats the purpose of the game.
Code for Coaches*

Learning and Inclusion

The goal of *District School Board of Niagara's* interschool sports is to provide students an educational opportunity to learn and apply fundamental movement skills in competitive and inclusive settings. In general, children at this level are very much still learning and coaches should teach their students important aspects of the game and not about "winning."

Man-defense is more appropriate for our purpose in offering a general-skills basketball program. Inclusion during a game and more player involvement in elementary basketball must be a priority.

Agreement

The "man-defense" rule in elementary basketball shall be played at all levels of competition at the DSBN. This applies to Junior and Intermediate basketball leagues for boys and girls interschool divisional, regional and board-wide competition.

This must be maintained as a mutual agreement between all teachers and coaches as a gentleman's rule adhered to at every game. As such, this agreement is not an official playing-foul (e.g. 3-second violation or blocking foul) and therefore is not penalized since it is a gentleman's rule that no coach should try to break intentionally. The referees employed are not expected to enforce our man-defense rule at any game.

Rule Definition

The defensive player must demonstrate awareness of the opponent or "man" they are guarding. The defensive player is 4-feet (maximum) in proximity of opponent they are guarding when the opponent is attacking the basket.

Our organization encourages communication and reminder about the agreement rule between teachers and coaches before each game.

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Some benefits of man-defense

1. Preparation and teaching of students is simple since there is just one type of defense even when it is full court.
2. The game is faster which is beneficial to the over-all condition and health of the students.
3. More students can be involved by substitution as a result of more physical movement, speed and effort in man-defense. Subbing more students throughout the whole game especially in all-day tournaments allow students opportunity to improve and a chance to experience the game.
4. Students and teachers learn more during the game as they adjust to the opposing team's skill sets.
5. Students learn fundamental foot-work required for basic skill development.
6. Man-defense allows students to be creative on the floor because they cannot afford to stand around and watch the game come to them.
7. When both teams play man-defense, students will touch with the ball more often since passing and moving are integral on offense.
8. Students learn the "help-defense" idea when their man beats them to a spot or the hoop. This reinforces a team concept.
9. The space on the floor becomes wider and creates more room for movement as your students spread the court and run motion offense plays.
10. Students learn to pass, dribble and set screens (picks) in man to man, skills hardly needed against a zone (outside of some passing).

Ontario Association for the Supervision of Physical and Health Education, (OASPHE) 2006.

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Zone Defense

Playing this type of team defense is not appropriate in our school board. In our schools, playing zone-defense is a very technical concept for a very 'generalist' school system.

Not all teachers/coaches specialize in basketball. Not all are experts in basketball to be able to consider all the implications of playing zone-defense. A more appropriate progression into high-school is to teach first "individual" or man-defense before "team-defense" or zone-defense.

Negative aspects of zone-defense

- Low scoring games.
- Zone-defense creates bigger disparity and unfairness between skilled players and non-skilled players e.g. when combinations of the following tactics are used: e.g. zone-traps, zone-presses, full-court zones, box-and-1, triangle-and-2 etc.
- Zone-defense may allow teams to win but is no way to develop fundamental skills.
- Zone defense creates an imbalance of competition e.g. situations of 1-on-3, and 1-on-4 when a team moves with the ball.
- There is no physical challenge and accomplishment of the 1-on-1 situation. E.g. ball-handling, jab-step, fakes, dodging is not important in zone-defense.
- Zone-defense promotes an attitude of win-at-all-cost as in cases of small schools that draw fewer talented players than bigger schools.
- As a result, students attempt shots from unrealistic distances outside the zone as an only choice. Rather, coaching for shooting success will teach them to be more successful.

Why some coaches prefer zone-defense

- Difficult to score against a zone – exactly why coaches who only care about winning want to play it. There is nothing worse than a basketball game with a 12 to 6 score.
- It is easier to coach zone-defense for new coaches because areas of the court can be easily covered and they do not have to teach "help-defense" because the zone allows a natural fill in for the defenders.
- The zone takes away areas of the floor where shooters excel so it helps to cut down on open shots.
- Zone-defense manipulates and slows the other team down especially if they are better.

Ontario Association for the Supervision of Physical and Health Education (OASPHE)) 2006.