

A Dozen Keys to Your Successful Basketball Season! **(regardless of your skills, these are things every player can commit to)**

1. TEAM FIRST!

Be the player constantly encouraging their teammates...picking them up both physically and emotionally when the time comes. Don't be the player with the horrific body language when a teammate turns the ball over. Instead, pick them up – “forget it, _____, we're coming back to you next time!” Learn to say, “my bad”. Slap hands, all the time.

2. Shot Fake and Pass Fake

Truly a lost art. When's the last time you said to yourself. Few things can help an offensive player more than the proper use of a pass fake and a shot fake.

3. Know and Execute the Plays

Sounds a little silly saying “know the plays” but it's amazing to see a player or two who doesn't know where they are supposed to be or what they are supposed to be doing. Whether an inbound play, a half-court set, a motion entry or anything else structured, take the time to know where you are supposed to be and what you are supposed to be doing. Next is execution — doing it when you are supposed to and as well as you can. This does not take talent, but commitment to knowing and understanding your team's offensive and defensive plans.

4. Play Hard

Again, seems like it shouldn't have to be said, but it does. And here is the key to playing hard — you have to do it all the time...not just when your team's ahead or the play is called for you. Playing hard means that you are making all your cuts in your offense hard. It means that you are sprinting to screen. It means that getting back on defense is a full speed proposition, even after your or a teammate's miscue on the other end.

5. Understand Shot Selection

Forcing shots does not help your team, nor does it impress a coach. Know what a good shot is for you — and yes, your shot selection will vary from those of your teammates. Don't hunt shots, let the shots find you. Be in tune with shooting percentage, and what a good percentage is. Your coach will be glad to help you determine what a good shot for you is.

6. Concentrate

“Wherever your shoes are, be there.” Don't wonder mentally. Stay focused to the job at hand. Be a process oriented player. Don't worry about a past play — it's over. Don't worry about a play in the future that may or may not happen. All you can control is the current possession you are involved with — give the possession complete concentration.

7. Be a Great Listener

This actually can go a long way to helping with concentration. In timeouts, are you locked in with your eyes and ears. Does your coach have your complete attention? There's a free throw situation and your coach or captain is barking out

instructions. Are you actually listening and processing or just hearing — and there is a difference between listening and hearing.

8. Be in Great Shape

Without doing anything in regard to skill work...without saying anything about your talent level...you can make an impact on your team by being in great physical shape. When the game is in the fourth quarter or late in the second half and everyone else is starting to drag, this is where you can make a difference. Not only will you be a step faster because of your conditioning level, but you will be mentally sharper as well. How many times have we seen a team put on a late run and in large part because of players that are in just better shape that run the floor and past their opponent.

9. Control Your Intangibles

Again, these have nothing to do with skill or talent, but they are game changers. The three areas that players can control (but often choose not to) are: attitude, energy, and enthusiasm. It is not easy, but if you want to make a difference in your team its well work working on. By controlling your intangibles, I mean you don't let officiating, teammates, opponents, coaches, gym conditions or anything else affect you having a team-first attitude, with high energy and positive enthusiasm. Body language!

10. Be an Example

What do your teammates see when they see or think of you? He or she is always early to the gym. They are on time for meetings. They listen to the coach. They keep their composure. Off the court, they conduct themselves the right way. They maintain a proper diet to put fuel in the tank. They are positive talkers — not criticizing a coach or gossiping about a teammate.

11. Rebound

Some of the best rebounders are lacking in talent and athleticism — they board well because of effort and tenacity. Rebounding is one of the only areas in basketball where it's OK to be selfish. I've coached for over 35 years and have never heard of a coach taking a player out for rebounding too much!

12. Toughness

Strive to be the player that your coach and teammates want in at the end of the game. The one who is going to get the tough rebounds and loose balls. The one who will draw a charge. The one who will say, when the game is tight, "Ladies, we've got this", and mean it.