

Coach's Corner – August 2018

Shooting

For me, the single hardest skill to develop in basketball is shooting the basketball consistently and under pressure. It is quite easy to teach the basic steps but being able to execute when you need to and then adjust to the speed of the game and increase the range of your shot as you get older is very difficult and takes a lot of work physically and mentally.

The first stop is to explain that the greatest shooters in the world miss every second shot they take in a game but probably make 80% of the shots they practice. The take home from this is that you need to be a great shooter at training to be an ok shooter in the game. Secondly accept that you are going to miss and don't stress about it. Trust your form and your practice, put a miss behind you and get ready for the next shot. One season I was playing, my coach used to shout out an adjustment after every single shot "Elbow in, bend your knees, follow through..." - all this did was make me acutely aware of what I wasn't doing instead of focussing on rhythm, balance and muscle memory.

Many coaches have different ways of teaching shooting and this is by no means the consensus but just what I have found worked for me and works for most of the players I have coached.

1. Start with the ball off the palm of your hand and on your fingers. This gives better control of the ball and gets your wrist into the locked position ready to shoot
2. Elbow needs to be comfortable in but doesn't need to be directly behind the ball until the shot is completed
3. The starting point for me is level with your nose but can be higher or lower depending on your age
4. Bend your knees to get good lift into your shot but don't go so low that it is unnatural
5. Fix your eyes on the target whether it is a spot on the backboard or the front of the rim
6. Follow through at the ring with a snap of the wrist

As you get older the key is to shoot game type shots at game speed. By all means practice close in but eventually you need to get good pace up and shoot on the move.

There is nothing that takes the place of purposeful practice at a consistent pace concentrating on the basics. There are some good YouTube demonstrations and BA has some tips as well on the BA website. Make sure that you incorporate shooting drills into your training sessions that are based on game play, high intensity and competitive and your players will improve. However they need to also work outside of training sessions.

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