

Athletic Boot Camps: Preseason Workout for Basketball

by Isaac Wilkins, M.Ed, CSCS, NSCA-CPT

It's almost basketball season and that means that it's peak time to run pre-season speed, agility, and conditioning for basketball camps! I've put together a sample workout for a high-school age basketball team to get you started in your planning process. The assumption is that they've been working with you for a little while and have the basic mechanics of sprinting, shuffling, and change of direction down. This workout includes some basic reactionary drills to get them ready for playing the game against live opponents and into open-chain activities.

The basic template and components of the workout are as follows:

Welcome and Check-in: Always spend a few minutes welcoming your players and going over the objectives of the day. This is the best time to give them a few coaching cues that you want them to keep in mind throughout the session. Some example for this group might be: "Stay on the balls of the feet", "Keep low", and "Keep your eyes on the hips". If they have a few simple cues to keep in mind throughout the session they will be more efficient and perform in a way that reinforces the behavior you're looking for.

Dynamic Warm-up: The warm-up should be focused on simple drills that warm the body, loosen the joints, prime the nervous system, activate choice muscle groups, focus the mind, and reinforce good athletic mechanics. In the case of basketball we're looking for unilateral lower body movements in all planes, foot speed and elasticity, and upper/lower body coordination. Remember that the drills chosen should be simple and easy for the athletes to do correctly.

Power Movements: After the athletes are well warmed-up it's time to perform the most explosive of their drills. This is where you want to include any serious jumping or loaded drills. In this particular workout we're developing power through jumping. Focus on quality, explosive reps with lots of rest. It's not a conditioning drill so really stress quality reps over quantity of reps.

Reactionary Agility and Speed Drills: After the maximal power work it's time to move onto the slightly less taxing but more complex agility drills. As I said above, in this case we're using a reactionary component to the drills to get them ready for playing basketball. If you're just starting out with the athletes and their mechanics are flawed they might not be ready for reactionary drills and would be better served performing simpler drills.

Strength Training: Strength training is a valuable component to developing athleticism that a lot of speed and agility camps miss out on. The bottom line is that, all things being equal, a stronger athlete is going to be faster and quicker than a weaker athlete. When working with large groups it's most efficient to set up stations and perform exercises for time when possible. This also allows a conditioning component to be introduced by adjusting rest periods.

Wrap-up and Topic Discussion: Another important but often neglected part of the session is a wrap-up and topic discussion. Take a few minutes after a session to reiterate what happened that day, point out positives and points to work on, and discuss a topic to make the athletes better (mindset, nutrition, etc).

The Workout

Minute 0-5: Welcome and Check-in
Minute 6: Bodyweight Squats (30 sec) and Walking Lunges (15 yd)
Minute 7: Reverse Lunges and Side Lunges (15 sec/leg)
Minute 8: Forward/Backward Hops and Slalom Jumps (30 sec each)
Minute 9: High Kicks (15 yd) and Arm Circles (15 sec/direction)
Minute 10: Push-up Walkouts
Minute 11: Carioca (4x15yd)
Minute 12: Sprints (4x15yd)
Minute 13: Instruction - Standing Broad Jump
Minute 14-15: Standing Broad Jump
Minute 16: Instruction - Side Broad Jump
Minute 17-18: Side Broad Jump
Minute 19: Instruction - Counter Jump
Minute 20-21: Counter Jump
Minute 22: Instruction - Partner Mirror-Mirror
Minute 23-28: Partner Mirror-Mirror (30 second lead switches)
Minute 29-31: Rest Break
Minute 32: Instruction - Reactionary Shuffle to Sprint
Minute 33-37: Reactionary Shuffle to Sprint
Minute 38-39: Rest Break
Minute 40-41: Instruction - Strength Circuit
Minute 42-49: Strength Circuit (see below)
Minute 50: Instruction - Core Circuit
Minute 51-52: Core Circuit (see below)
Minute 53-60: Wrap-up and Topic Discussion

Strength Circuit:

Station A: Band-resisted Squats - 30 seconds
Station B: Push-ups - 30 seconds
Station C: Band Upright Rows - 30 seconds
Station D: Forward Sled Dragging - 30 seconds

Core Circuit:

Planche: 30 seconds
Bird Dogs: 30 seconds
Side Planche Right: 30 seconds
Side Planche Left: 30 seconds

Explanation of the More Uncommon Exercises:

Push-up Walkouts: Start standing comfortably. Maintain as straight a leg as possible and reach for the ground. Walk forward on your hands until you are in the push-up position. Perform a push-up and then, maintaining straight legs, walk yourself back to the standing position.

Side Broad Jump: Stand as ready for a normal Broad Jump. Load for the jump and explode

sideways with both feet leaving the ground at the same time. Land softly with good deceleration mechanics. Reset before the next jump.

Counter Jump: Jump as per a Side Broad Jump and upon landing immediately jump back in the direction you came. The point is to minimize ground contact time.

Partner Mirror-Mirror: Two athletes face each other in good athletic stances with about five yards between them. One is designated the leader. The leader shuffles side to side, backward and forward, and in a circle. The follower must mirror those actions.

Reactionary Shuffle to Sprint: The athletes are lined up facing the coach. The coach directs the athletes in different directions while they shuffle, following the coaches direction. When the coach blows a whistle the athlete sprint in the direction the coach points. In a ball sport such as basketball it is favorable to use a basketball, if available, as the direction device.

Isaac Wilkins, M.Ed, CSCS, NSCA-CPT is the author of the Athletic Boot Camp Profits Kit and the owner of <http://www.athleticbootcamps.com>. For more information on developing athletic boot camps and your free report "7 Tips on Starting Your Athletic Boot Camp Business" go to <http://www.athleticbootcamps.com> today!