

## STRUCTURING YOUR SEASON:

Working out how to kick off the season is a tough task. Should a coach start off the season by focusing on skills, technique or by simply explaining the rules? I have always found it helpful to set a target for last game of the season. Have prepared all the things you wish to teach, such as a new drill, a new play such as the one below, a technique such as the pivot foot etc. and aim to have it taught by the last game of the season. Do not try to get all your information in before the first game. A suggestion for setting up the structure of your training sessions follows:

Start of season: Training should be simple as players come to grips with the way drills are run. Once players are set up into their drills, coaches should point out ways players can improve. Depending on players experience, this can include explaining to players why they broke a rule such as traveling, or reminding players to aim for the top corner of the box on the backboard as they take a lay-up.

Mid season: Focus on teaching players techniques. For example, teach players the shooting technique (which will be covered in the next edition). In the previous phase, the focus was on running drills at game pace. This phase is where players work on their techniques and are free to make mistakes. In a sense, players take a one step backwards as they learn a technique and two steps forward when they have mastered the technique.

Mid-late season: Now we have worked on each players skills as well as improving their technique, but now it is time to get your team working together *as* a team. Here the focus is on match-day. This would be a great time to introduce the play below.