

7 Insider Secrets to Making the High School Basketball Team

1. Know your "Wedge" skill

- Your biggest strength that will get you on the team and on the court with playing time gets you the chance to expand and improve later
- This may not be your favorite skill - but the one your 8th grade coach relies on you for!
- Most commonly this includes defense, rebounding, and screening - simple skills that are always needed for all positions on every team!

2. Know your high school coaches and their philosophy and system of play

- I'm always surprised by how many incoming freshmen have never met their coaches before freshman tryouts!
- Some selection choices at tryout time come down to who you know, and who knows you!
- If you have the slightest idea of how their offense and defense operates and what the coaches most important priorities are, you'll be an instant stand out

3. Join your high school program for summer workouts and leagues

- Get to know your teammates and establish yourself as part of the program during the summer before freshman tryouts
- Identify where you fit best on across Freshman, JV, Varsity based on the other players in each class

- Have an idea of your “Love it” and “Live with it” spot on the roster - often being a starter on Freshman/ JV is better than 12th man on varsity!

4. Study players that are already successful in the system

- Learn who you would be shadowing/ playing behind, and eventually replacing for a starting spot.
- Watch what they do, where they get open, what kind of shots they make - and what shots they don't attempt!
- Bonus: Get to know them, workout with them, and take tips from them on what works and doesn't work with this program - think about it as downloading 2-3 years of experience that gives you a step up!

5. Prioritize decision making in your training

- The biggest lever you have to make you more effective at the pace of the HS game
- Most 8th graders average 3-4 seconds per decision whether holding the ball or doing 3 crossovers while your brain says “Uhhhhh” - (you know who you are!)
- This overshadows anything you can do to improve physically:
 - Example: You can already drive and make a layup in 1.5 seconds, but it takes you 3 seconds to decide to drive
 - Total move = 4.5 seconds
 - Training all summer on strength, agility, and foot speed might get you there in 1.2 seconds =
 - Total move = 4.2 seconds: savings 0.3 seconds (7%).
 - If you can get comfortable executing that decision in 1 second (What we call a “1 Mississippi”),
 - Total move = 2.5 seconds: Savings 2.0 seconds! (44%).

- (6x more impactful) - and you just had to change how you think - so this could happen in a week!

6. Master the Art of creating space

- Moving off the ball, screening, and cutting - modern offense value spacing above all else!
- Even if you do not touch the ball, you can greatly impact your team's success by knowing how to create space for yourself and teammates, and an ability to get open regardless of the defense
- 3 Tactics and 1 rule we use for this we call the
- "Order of Operations":
 - 1) Drive and kick - know how to move when a teammate drives, and how to re-space out of the way after you attack
 - 2) Pass & cut - if you can't drive due to defense, pass, then attack the rim with a cut, and then re-space - the key is actually try to score on your cut.
 - Bonus: learn when NOT to cut!
 - 3) Dribble Hand-off - better than a ball screen in my opinion, because the ball handler can initiate it quicker without waiting for a screen, and a back cut is a great counter move if you are the intended hand-off receiver
 - The Rule of Opposites:
 - Any 2 teammates interacting should always attack space in opposite directions
 - Drive in = Space out
 - Ball Screen/ Hand off ball handler drives in = screener pops out, ball handler stays out, screener rolls in!
 - Pass out = cut in

7. Blow it up at tryouts!

- If you've done the first six above, you're prepared.
- Coaches know you, have seen you play, and know your skill set
- Tryouts are the time to leave everything on the floor and hold nothing back.
- You'll either have the best performance of your life with the highest energy in the gym, or you may miss a lot of shots and have a few errors, but you'll still have the highest energy in the gym and most likely get more noticeable repetitions than anyone else.
- Coaches don't want to coach effort, so when they see you giving everything you've got instead of playing it safe - even if you might be equal or even lower skill level than some other players at tryouts - your value will go up in the Coaches eyes.

Your Child Can Do This—And I Can Help!

Most parents don't know how to guide their child through this crucial transition. That's where I come in. I help 8th-grade perform at a high school level BEFORE their freshman tryouts! If you would like a free consult call to discuss a plan for your player, text me at 603-932-5893

Coach BJ