

3v3 as the Optimal Pathway for the Development of Youth Basketball Players

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Objectives

1. Establish 3v3 basketball as a *real* sport.
2. Demonstrate that 3v3 games meet children's wants as well or better than 5v5 games.
3. Explain how 3v3 games reduce the most common negatives in youth sports.



What makes a sport real?



Game Modifications

2v2 Beach Volleyball



7s Rugby



T-Ball



4v4 Soccer



Flag Football



Common Basketball Modifications



Lower hoops
Smaller balls
No zone defense
No backcourt press

3v3: Real Basketball?



Skills, Tactics, & Strategies

- Athletic
- Psychological
- Tactical
- Technical

The optimal game for development is the smallest possible game that does not lose the game's fidelity.

(Fenoglio, 2005)

Technical Skills



Dribbling
Passing
Shooting
Footwork
Defense



What is the smallest possible game that includes all of these skills?

Tactical Skills



Give-and-Go
On-Ball Screen
Off-the-ball Screen
Dribble Hand-off
Penetrate & Kick
Help and Recover
Defensive Traps

What is the smallest possible game that includes all of these skills?

Strategies

Playing 3v3 eliminates:

- positions
- zone defenses
- full-court presses
- set plays



Reasons for Participation

Fun

Exercise

Learn new skills

Be challenged

Play with friends



(Seefeldt, Ewing, & Walk, 1992; Weiss & Petilchkoff, 1989)

Reasons to Drop out

- Lack of enjoyment/fun
- Low competence feelings
- Lack of improvement
- Injury

(Butcher, Lindner, & Johns, 2002; Weiss & Petilchkoff, 1989).





How to maximize the positives
and reduce or eliminate the negatives?



Advantages of 3v3

Possessing the ball is the most significant way to participate in basketball.

(Arias, Argudo & Alonso, 2009)

Ball Contacts = Player Involvement

Greater player involvement may be responsible for higher enjoyment levels.

(Whelan, 2011)

Soccer:

- 4v4 games are a good learning environment = 90.32%
 - 4v4 games improve techniques = 88.71%
 - 11v11 games improve techniques more than 4v4 = 48.39%
 - **11v11 games increase the number of touches per player = 17.74%**
- (Small, 2006)

Ball Contacts = Opportunity to Improve

Basketball:

- 3v3 games feature more ball contacts than 5v5 games (McCormick et al., 2012; McKay, 2011).
- Each player participated more often in an offensive attack in 3v3 compared to 5v5, (Pinar, et al., 2009).

Block Practice

Characteristics of Block Practice

- Practice one skill at a time to perfection
- High levels of constant feedback
- Instruction moves from simple to complex
- Limited simulation of game-like conditions

Block practice leads to:

- Short-term improvement (coaches and players over-estimate improvement)
- Impressive practice performance
- Inconsistent game performance
- Limited transfer to new or different situations

Random Practice

Characteristics of Random Practice

- Reduced feedback
- Use of questions as a teaching tool
- Small-sided games as teaching tools
- Emphasis on decision-making skills not just technique practice

Random practice leads to:

- More self-sufficient players
- More effective transfer to new situations or future games
- Less immediate improvement – practice sometimes appears sloppy or disorganized
- More consistent performance
- More permanent changes in performance

Comparison of Behavioral Training and Decision Training	
Behavioral Training	Decision Training
<i>Instruction</i>	<i>Instruction</i>
Part-to-Whole Training	Tactical whole training
Simple to complex drills	Competition-like drills
Easy-first instruction	Hard-first instruction
Technical emphasis	Technique within tactics
Internal focus of instruction	External focus of attention
Low use of video models	High use of video models
<i>Practice</i>	<i>Practice</i>
Blocked practice	Variable practice
Low variability	Random practice
<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Feedback</i>
Abundant coach feedback	Bandwidth feedback
Low use of questioning	High use of questioning
Low use of video feedback	High use of video feedback
Low athlete detection and correction of errors	High athlete detection and correction of errors
<i>Overall: low levels of cognitive effort</i>	<i>Overall: high level of athlete cognitive effort</i>

(Vickers, 2007)

Physical Activity

Girls prefer a coach who keeps players active; boys prefer a coach who emphasizes fitness and competitive challenges (Martin, Dale, & Jackson, 2001).



There was no statistically significant differences in average heart rate or time spent in vigorous intensity activity between 3v3 and 5v5 games, though average HR and VI was higher in 3v3 (McCormick et al., 2012).

Enjoyment

Enjoyment enhanced by inclusiveness and playing a role:
Participation and opportunity to test skills help to
determine enjoyment (McPhail et al., 2003; Whelan, 2011).

Enjoyment levels significantly higher in 7v7 Gaelic football
than 15v15 (Whelan, 2011).

Soccer was enjoyable:

4v4: 95.16%

7v7: 95.16%

11v11: 96.77%

(Small, 2006)



Challenges

Children are not miniature adults.



Challenges

Space = time = skill

(Lauder, 2001)

Player Density

NBA court scoring zone: 120 sqft/player

High-School court scoring zone (5v5): 84 sqft/player

High-school court scoring zone (3v3): 140 sqft/player

Interactions

5v5 = 90 potential interactions

3v3 = 30 potential interactions

(Snow, 2004)

Biggest Issues with Youth Sports

Coach ego

Playing time

Complaints about officials



Coach Ego

Attitudes toward the coach were positively associated with perceptions of a mastery-involved climate and negatively associated with perceptions of an ego-involved climate.

(Cumming et al., 2007)



Young athletes' sport enjoyment, and evaluations of their coach were more strongly related to coaching behaviors than to their team's won-loss record.

(Cumming et al., 2007)

Peak by Friday

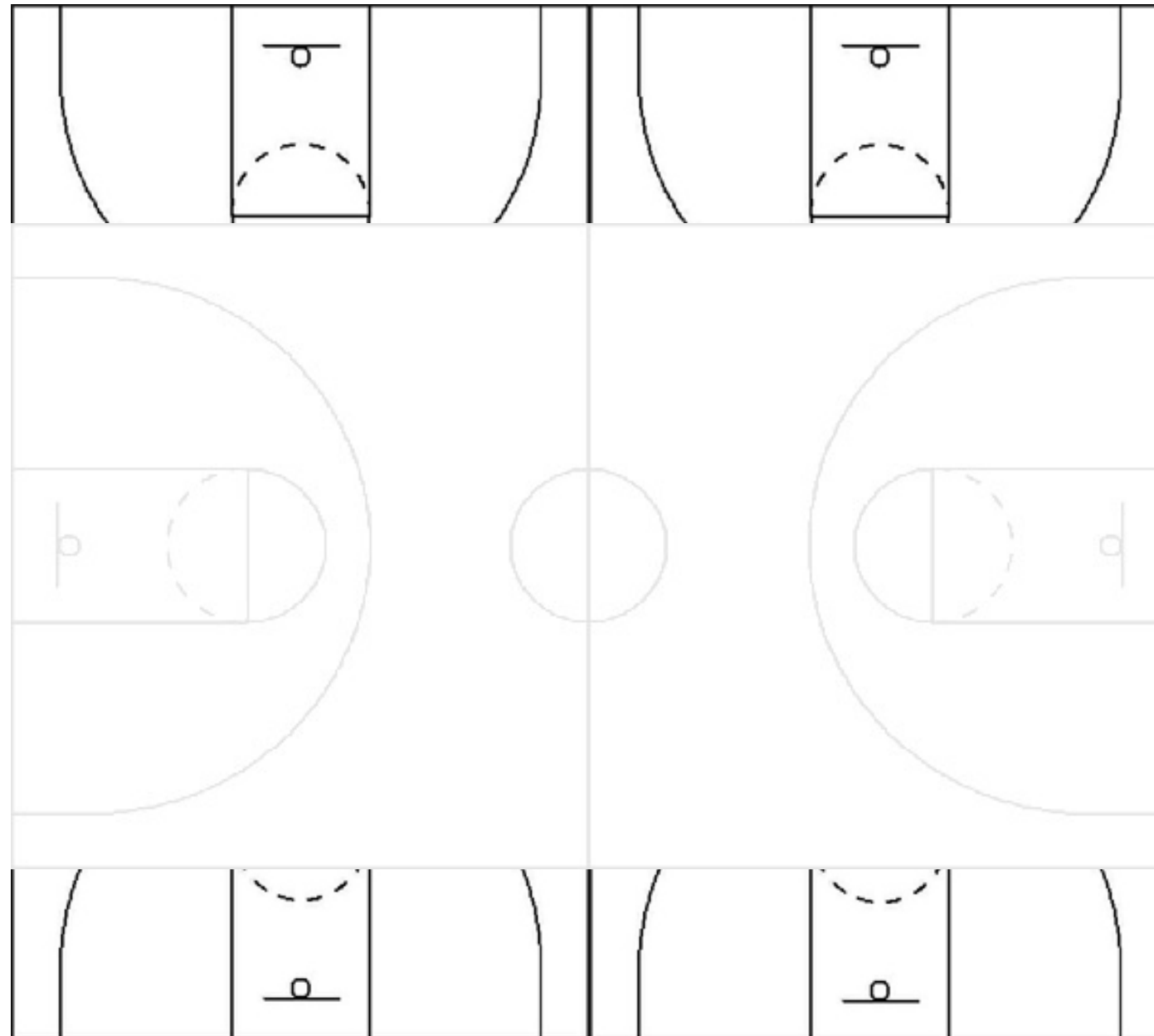
“Parents and coaches in many sports still approach training with an attitude best characterized as ‘**peaking by Friday,**’ where a short-term approach is taken to training and performance with an over-emphasis on immediate results. We now know that a long-term commitment to practice and training is required to produce elite players/athletes in all sports.”

(Balyi & Hamilton, 2003)



Playing Time

3v3 League
24 players on the court
8-16 players on the bench



Typical 5v5 League
10 players on the court
10-14 players on the bench

Complaints about Officials

A Canadian study found that parents and coaches yelled less during small-sided games compared to full-sided games (McKay, 2011).



The Greatest Game

- Equal opponents
- Motivated to play well
- Adhere to the rules
- Compatible personal goals
- View opponents/officials as facilitators

(Jody Brylinsky)



Summary

- 3v3 features all the skills of a 5v5 game.
- SSGs have been found to be as enjoyable as FSGs.
- SSGs provide more opportunities for improvement.
- SSGs meet or exceed the physical activity from FSGs.
- 3v3 is a more skill-appropriate challenge than 5v5.
- 3v3 increases playing time and reduces negative coach & parent behaviors.

**3v3 = the most appropriate league form
for young and beginner players.**

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