



Special Olympics Basketball Coaching Guide Planning a Basketball Training & Competition Season

Basketball Attire

To train and compete successfully in any sport requires an athlete to be outfitted in appropriate sport attire. Inappropriate clothing and equipment can impact an athlete's ability to move, as well as to play the game. Slick-soled, poor-fitting or unlaced shoes, un-strapped eyeglasses and jewelry are dangerous not only to the athlete wearing them, but also to others. An athlete dressed in a good looking, properly-fitted uniform and basketball shoes will feel good about himself or herself, be a part of a team and tend to play better.

Appropriate basketball attire is required for all competitors. As coach, discuss the types of sport clothes acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, long-pant jeans to blue jean shorts are not proper basketball attire for any event. Explain that athletes cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. Take athletes to high school or college basketball training sessions or competitions and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes who do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

Shirts

Shirts for practice should be T-shirt type or sleeveless. Shirts should consist of lightweight material, be comfortable and allow freedom of movement in the shoulders. For competitions, the athlete should wear a clean uniform shirt (also with or without sleeves) that has a number on the front and the back. Check the rules regarding the size of the numbers. The shirt should fit properly and be long enough to tuck into the shorts.

Shorts

Shorts should be of a lightweight material, have an elastic waistband and allow freedom of movement in the hips and thighs.

Socks

Socks can come in all lengths and materials. One to two pairs of white, properly-fitted cotton or cotton-blend socks are recommended to prevent blisters.

Shoes

Shoes are the most important article of clothing for the athlete. They must have a good tread for traction. In addition, they must fit snugly around an athlete's ankle yet provide room in the toe to prevent blisters. High-top court shoes are recommended because they provide the athlete with the best foot and ankle support. A firm arch and heel support and a cushioned insole are things to look for in a quality court shoe. Black-soled shoes should be avoided as they leave marks on some courts.

Knee Pads

Knee pads, elbow pads and eyeglass straps provide added protection and help prevent injuries. Knee braces may also be worn if they are properly covered.

Warm-Up Suits

Warm-up suits are needed for warming up before, and for staying warm after, a basketball practice or game. Warm-ups should not be worn during a practice or game because of their added weight and because they may cause heavy sweating. A medium weight cotton sweatshirt and pants are excellent and inexpensive warm-ups.

Head Bands

Head bands, rubber bands or ribbons are necessary for safety reason when the athlete needs to keep hair away from the face. According to the rules, metal clips or bobby pins are not acceptable.

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Coaching Tips

- Display and discuss the types of clothing that can be worn to play basketball. Discuss the importance of wearing properly-fitted clothing.
- Point to the advantages and disadvantages of various types of clothing.
- Take the athletes to a basketball game and point out the clothes worn by the athletes.
- Involve the athletes in designing a team uniform.