



## **Under 16 - National Team Program (2009-2012)**



# UNDER 16 - NATIONAL TEAM PROGRAM

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### 1 Introduction

The purpose of training does not only involve the physical, psychological and educational aspects of the players' development, but also the aspects regarding the place of basketball within the political, marketing and economic framework. There are more and more requirements that basketball must meet, which means shorter preparation time to achieve the top results. In order to achieve the best results, basketball players go through certain selection and training processes.

Here we are going to talk about creating a fast and efficient process for moving from young selected basketball players to successful senior national team players. This process occurs over a long period, since players at full playing maturity require 5 to 8 years of specific training. We are talking about the systematic, continuous and programmed process that would lead to the improvement of physical, functional and technical/tactical abilities of talented players in the service of the national team program Under 16.

Our task is to provide direction for a promising player, to invest in his playing and competitive skills in order to develop him into a top player.

**From the very beginning the main focus is placed on the team selection and team work.**

From the very beginning the main focus is placed on team selection and team work. As for the players, modern basketball not only has strict requirements for the team, including physical characteristics and abilities, but also requirements of technical

performance regarding the players' personality, health status, psychological and social status, as well as pedagogical and ethical aspects. On the basis of the above mentioned requirements, we come to the conclusion that the knowledge base required for modern basketball exceeds the knowledge of any one expert.

The selection and elimination of players represents a complex problem, and the selection criteria need to be assessed for the following characteristics:

- morphological characteristics
- physical characteristics
- functional abilities
- competition quality
- personality characteristics

The coach should play the role of the guide, organizer, planner and coordinator of the team. The coach, with the help of his expert associates, needs to make the final selection and team analysis decisions. This means that in order to achieve good results, a successful coach must have the qualities of a successful business manager.



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### 2 Under 16 National Team

When talking about the first national team selection we should start with the young players, who are 14 and 15 years old, and should develop a process to organize, train and improve these young athletes.

Continuing conversations, visiting clubs and attending matches of the younger categories of players should create the conditions for the formation of a broad selection of 60 - 100 young players. Activities in the regions should end with the formation of the regional teams. A year and a half before the beginning of the official National Team competition, regional competitions should be organized, as they also play a key part in national team selection.

Twelve months before official competitions are organized, a high quality (two to three week) basketball camp for approximately 60 players should be arranged. At the end of the summer preparations a representative selection of approximately 20 players should be selected. During the year two to three trial training camps should be held and one or two tournaments organized to confirm the abilities of the selected candidates. The young categories' teams should be open to all and new players should always be encouraged to join.

#### *2.1 Preparation for official competition*

The national team preparations should last for a period of 5-6 weeks. The primary aim is to develop players, but it is important to always remember that basketball is a team sport. The secondary aim, that should not be ignored, is the need to achieve results or to win, since this must be the primary motivation. Depending on the quality of the team, and the quality of other teams, realistic aims have to be targeted. Remember that the key issue is to develop the players for the senior national team.

The proper selection of players will result in strong play on the court in the national team. The play is based on the players' abilities to accept, improve and enrich the original concept. The winning tactics, exhaustion and recovery problems, competition stress, tactical firmness and the ability to adapt to different stresses are conditions which will aid the development of the highest qualities in both individual players and within the team.

Preparations can start following the completion of the medical, functional and physical examinations and tests. All data should be documented and carefully studied in respect of individual development, to assist with the wider selection for the national team and the development of a new generation of players.



### ***2.2 Team staff composition:***

The first coach - national coach  
Two assistant coaches  
A doctor  
A physiotherapy specialist  
A statistics expert  
The team manager or organizer

### ***2.3 Working conditions***

Courts - sport arenas  
Gyms -fitness rooms  
Medical service  
Control and monitoring devices, camera, computer, TV set  
Complete equipment for training and competition  
Additional equipment necessary for training  
Secure finances for the basic work conditions  
Ability to cover all training and competition costs  
Remuneration for team personnel

### ***2.4 Discipline and rules***

The coach should anticipate and plan his actions in the event that problems may occur with individual players and groups within and outside the team. Discipline is not a way to exhaust energy but to channel energy towards the achievement of results. Discipline does not necessarily mean punishment.

There must be rules. The rules are the basis and skeleton of the team. They represent the code of conduct in and outside the group. The rules should be strictly followed. If there are rules, then everybody tends to follow them.

The following elements should be emphasized:

- punctuality
- responsibility
- outfit on and off the court
- conversation/communication
- nutrition/proper food intake
- prevention of injuries
- team spirit



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A fair play should be set:

- good training
- good playing opportunities for promising players - the basic aim of this period
- achievement of good results - the secondary aim we should not ignore

The motto for U16 in this period should be:

- play hard
- play fair
- be a promising player
- be a good competitor
- be a winner

The Phases in motivation learning for U 16 in this period should be:

1. make a decision
2. set the objectives:
  - progress
  - advantages/disadvantages
  - present level
3. build self-respect
4. learn to fight in difficult conditions
5. play with ease

### ***2.5 The coach's role***

A coach's plan is to win whilst ensuring the maximum improvement of the most promising players and the quality of the team development. The winning tactics are often hidden in solving the problems of exhaustion and recovery and problems related to tactical firmness during competition and the ability to adapt to competition stress. The coach must have a concept which represents a set of the coach's ideas of how to play basketball, based on the principles of basketball, tactics and strategy.

From day one the coach's efforts are focused on the following accomplishments:

- long-term plans for promising players to attain their peak level
- responsibility for the physical preparation of the team and the individual players
- expert knowledge
- players' motivation for a match
- game plan
- strategy
- tactical organization to manage and win a game, and ultimately to win the competition.



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The coach must know the differences and similarities between his players. The coach's authority comprises the following characteristics:

- expert knowledge
- technical skills
- organizational skills
- respect and honesty
- loyalty
- dedication and love for basketball

The coach must recognize the unique qualities of his players and have the ability to treat his players accordingly but equally. The coach must have the skills of a master in order to always draw a thin line between:

- acquaintance
- trust
- confidence

### ***2.6 Organization and training plan***

Everything must be ready before the start of the preparations. Every day, hour and minute should be organized according to the plan. The players should be trained to react readily to new situations. To that effect the coach must emphasize the importance of organization and training plan.

The training plan comprises the entire cycle and consists of elaborated micro-cycles and daily plans. According to the preliminary analysis we should set the training aims and objectives. Before making the training plan the following elements should be borne in mind:

- training schedule and duration
- training plan
- diversity - 70% old skills and 30% new skills
- intensity - competitive spirit
- training progress
- basketball is a game in which we make mistakes, repetitions and corrections and so we try to involve the players closer within the atmosphere of a match
- planning groups for specific tasks - prior to the training and simultaneously during break-times and game interruptions
- implementation of the training plan according to the plan
- individual work framework - before the training and also drills to be undertaken within and after the training - but no longer than 30 minutes.



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To prepare the players for all phases of a match means that each player must know his task in a certain situation. Each player must know the package of rules and limitations - the principles applicable in certain situations. The coach should emphasize the game principles during training sessions, at meetings and in informal conversations.

The team wins when it plays better than its opponent and follows its game plan. Victory depends on how well the team as a whole implements its game plan, and on how well the players as individuals implement their parts of the plan.

### *2.7 Plan elaboration and programming*

Without this segment it is not possible to achieve top results. The development of a good player and a good team depends on a well conceived and planned process. It includes everything related to the preparation and competition. In other words, this program includes:

1. training process and work methods
2. everything that accompanies this process
3. competition and competition schedule
4. methods used - practice
5. candidates, usually 16 players with the elimination dynamics
6. the beginning of the preparations - the date with the exact time and place for players to report.

The program should include the following elements:

1. Physical preparation
  - development of mental and physical characteristics
  - strength, jump
  - speed, general and specific
  - endurance
  - agility, dexterity, coordination
2. Technique
  - Basic
  - Fundamental
  - General
  - Functional - situational
  - Specific, by positions in the team

All these apply to defense and offense



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### 3. Tactics

- individual
- group
- collective (team)

All these apply to defense and offense

### 4. Matches

- training matches between 8 and 10
- competition

### 5. Psychological preparations

- individual
- group
- collective

Carried out in:

- Critical periods
- Before a match
- During a match

### 6. Social preparations

- Socialization and rivalry: The ideal form of rivalry are the players' competitive relationships regarding the development of physical or technical fitness and skills - shots and maximum power development.
- The relationships between players developing the maximum individual contribution to the collective (team) game is also important.
- Group formation - tandem: A tandem is an athletic term for a pair of players characterized by extremely functional bonds between the two players. The basic assumption of a tandem is a high quality synthesis of playing values - thus the efficiency of this tandem exceeds the individual efficiency of both players. True tandems are those in which the players enrich their individual values through joint actions.
- Team formation: The play of 10 to 12 players. We use 7-8 players and 2-3 players make the difference. This is the basis for the team formation. In this period the aim is to create all-star athletes.



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### 7. Supplementary segments

1. Testing (functional skills, physical skills, technical/tactical skills)
2. Recording (training analysis, matches)
3. Statistical monitoring (training, game)
4. Information development (scouting)

Players of that age should work as much as possible on one on one, two on two and three on three situations. A National coach should always instill a winning mentality. Sometimes players in the team play too much organized basketball and this limits the progression of the players. The National coach should be able to develop the player's decision making capabilities and players should be able to read the game situations and be creative.

Players in that age category should not play zone defense during club competitions in order to improve their individual strength. A key element is to have good cooperation between club/team coaches and the National team coach.

## ***2.8 The final phase of the preparations***

From the start of preparations team spirit has to be established and a positive working atmosphere is necessary. Discipline is important and each individual has to be part of the team. The coach has to be ready to take tough decisions (even to cut the best player) to avoid possible future disruption to the team.

This phase lasts between 5 and 6 weeks and is segmented into 3 sub-phases:

1. The preparatory phase lasts at least 1 weeks or 4 micro-cycles. It starts with 1-2 days testing.  
The first micro-cycle is the introduction into the training process. The second, third and fourth are basic and they cover the following elements:
  - technique,
  - group tactics,
  - collective tactics regarding both defense and offense,
  - general physical preparations
  - specific physical preparations



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At the end of this period it is desirable to play one or two games. Improving collective tactics is the task present throughout the entire period of preparations, even during the competition and between games. Each player should be given a chance to play and coaches have to be careful in the evaluation of the players' quality. Coaches have to be aware that players also need rest and this has to be carefully balanced.

### 2. Basic phase - coordination lasts 2 weeks or 4 micro-cycles.

Improvement of technical/tactical details

- improvement of the physical condition - specific physical preparations on the court and in the gym
- further improvement of tactics within game conditions, specifically shooting
- improvement of special tactics

Technical and tactical correction and coordination

The tasks for this period are:

- a. tactics correction
- b. maintenance of physical fitness
- c. coordination through training and games with special competitive tasks
- d. information gathering -meetings and scouting
- e. intensive work on shooting

The team should play 4 to 6 games in this phase. The form of playing the games should be similar to the dynamics of the competition.

### 3. The pre-competition period lasts 7-10 days or 2-3 micro-cycles, with 1-2 games

- adapting to the work dynamics that would be present during the competition
- competition micro-cycles

Tasks for this period

- Functional technique - emphasis on shooting, accuracy in competitive conditions
- Tactics for the first game in the competition
- Fitness and psychological work



### *2.9 Competition period*

1. Calendar of matches
  2. Traveling plan
  3. Coordination of fitness improvement
- Fitness is achieved when all elements necessary for the play reach the appropriate level - it is not good to be in top condition before the start of the competition.
  - The level of fitness refers to the technical and tactical skills, physical and psychological preparations. Here it is important to increase the fitness as the competition is in progress, and to reach maximum fitness at the end of the competition.

During the entire competition period we should train with the emphasis on the tasks that will face us in the following game. Players with insufficient court time or who do not play at all must have additional training.

In younger categories where the primary aim is to create players through learning and improvement, the games are very much part of the training process and they greatly contribute to knowledge improvement. The coach and experts should create the best conditions to achieve that aim - to win the game and to have the best possible standing.

Plenty of work has to be done on aggressive individual defense and full court zone defense. Players should not be overloaded with schemes and so the game needs to be kept simple. Players have to be taught to read the situation and to find the best solutions. Because of the need to achieve the best results in the competition, and without thinking long term, too many teams tend to use zone in this age group to gain quick success. This is a good reason to practice offense against zone defense, but the focus should still be on an aggressive defense, which will enable the team to overcome slow and result oriented opponents.