

## **Q&A with Jackie Ansley**

*Q: I have a few players who like to do their own workouts (running, lifting etc.) apart from regular practice. I worry that they are overdoing it but they say they are fine. Going into tournament play, is this something that will affect them or should I take their word for it?*

A: Maintenance for all players throughout the season is extremely important so that they keep their strength going into the post-season. If there is not a structured program in place, make sure you are monitoring the individual workouts of each athlete to ensure the intensity and structures are adequate. Without me knowing the amount of running/conditioning you are doing it is hard to determine if they should be doing extra. If you would like to discuss in more detail please get in touch and I will help you get more structure (jackieansley@mindspring.com)

*Q: My players sweat a lot during games. How much water should they be drinking while playing to stay hydrated?*

A: Hydration is an important key to performance. On the day of a competition players should consume plenty of fluids, with about 17-20oz coming approximately 2 hours before the game, and another 6-8oz 15 minutes before. During competition, 7-10oz should be consumed, if possible, every 10-20 minutes to stay properly hydrated. After the game fluids with electrolytes, along with water, should be utilized to replenish lost stores. Keep in mind that each player is different and some may consume more or less depending on their body and the amount they sweat.

*Q: What types of drills do you suggest to make my 6-foot-6 post player more agile and light on her feet?*

A: Any reactionary drills where she needs to quickly respond to a command or movement will be helpful. (Ex: use of tennis ball or basketball for quick step coordination movements) Also, utilizing linear and lateral directions in an agility ladder will help to keep the athlete on balance and light on her feet.

*Q: How hard should my players be going before a game? I have some girls who are barely sweating and others who are drenched. I do not want them worn out before the game, but I do want them warmed-up.*

A: Your players should have broken a light sweat and feel their muscles loose and warm. We do not want them over-exerted, but some quick reaction movements should be included to prepare them for game-like situations. Perceived exertion is best not just measuring their sweat levels. For example they should not be winded and out of breath wanting to sit down and rest.

*Q: I am trying to decide if I want to make it mandatory that my team has to wear ankle braces and knee pads regardless of whether or not they have bad ankles. Do you think this is a good idea?*

A: Utilizing ankle braces is okay, but actual strengthening will do more for prevention of injuries than simply being taped or braced. As one of the most common basketball injuries, the ankles need to be strengthened in all four planes of movement. The use of bands is a great way to accomplish this.

Q: As a speed and agility coach, what is one thing you see that most guards need to work on?

A: In regards to defensive movement, one main area would be in developing lateral first step quickness and explosiveness while staying in control and on top of their feet. Too many times athletes lean in lateral movement and lose the ability to change direction, and thus defend, quickly and efficiently. Offensively the ability to explode linearly with a quick first step and changes of speed are vital.

*Q: As we play more and more games, I can see things I drilled into my team slowly fade away. What are the best drills to remind them to do things like stay in a defensive stance or even move their feet on defense?*

A: Any repetitive drill involving those particular movements are good. Utilizing sliding drills while holding them accountable to form and stance, especially when fatigued, are good. The ability to move their feet on defense comes from hip strength and their initial movement while defending. Make them react to the offense to work on their first step quickness. Have them do defensive shuffling drills as a warm up with reactionary changes of direction and angles.

*Q: Aside from massages, what are some good ways my team can flush out tired muscles?*

A: Staying hydrated and maintaining flexibility are two important keys to muscular endurance and maintenance. Electrolytes are important throughout the day to keep solute concentrations consistent. Stretching will help keep muscle fibers elongated and less likely to stiffen up. Utilizing foam rollers are a great way to roll out the muscles as well.