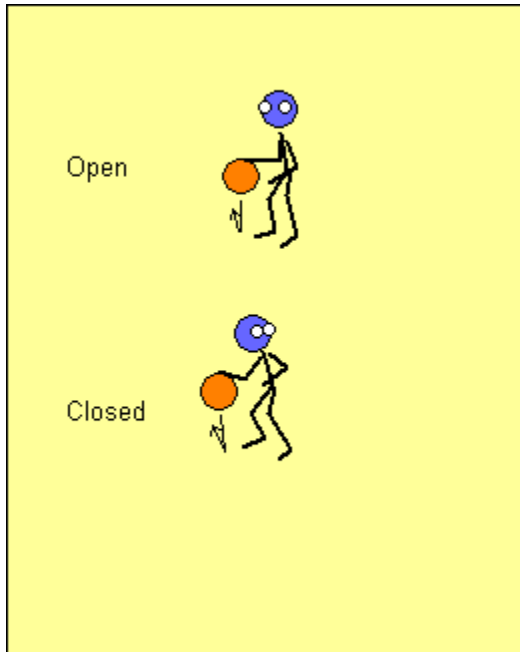


Mike M^{ac}Kay - Manager of Coach Education and Development

Here are some points of emphasis for dribbling and another for shooting. These come from working with players on individual skill development. My intent is to help increase your observation skills.



Open vs. Closed stance dribble

In working with players on improving their ball handling I have discovered that many of the problems occur because players do not know where to dribble the ball in relation to the rest of the body.

When you look at the two diagrams what is the difference? The only real difference is the position of the head.

In an open stance the ball is dribbled just outside and beside the foot. When you move to a closed stance the ball is still dribbled in the same spot. I spend a lot of time with players now on quickly changing from an open to closed stance.

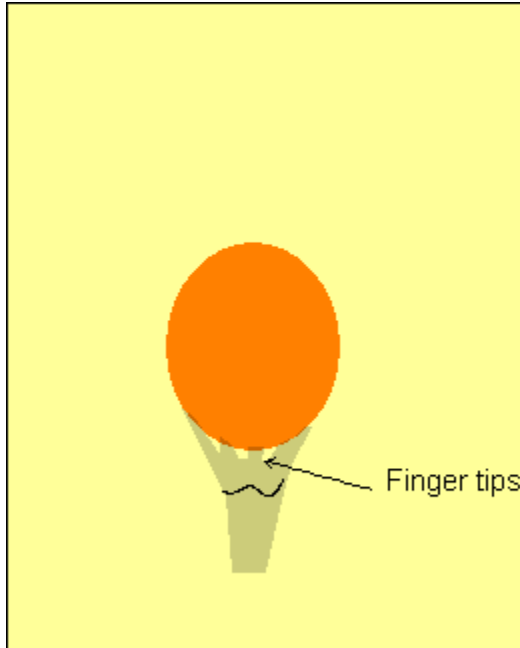
When the ball moves away from this spot is when the player loses control. He/she cannot get the hand in the proper position to push or pull the ball quickly in all directions.

Points of emphasis

- ❑ Scan with the eyes.
- ❑ Push the ball, not pat the ball. The shoulder should be involved not just the elbow and wrist.
- ❑ Hard low dribbles.
- ❑ Lots of lateral rhythmic body sway and little inside out actions with the dribble.
- ❑ Quickly change from open to close by moving the feet and body.

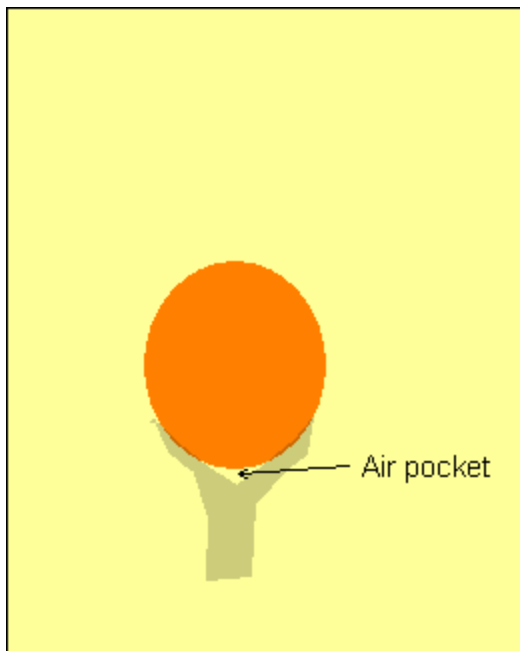
Shooting grip

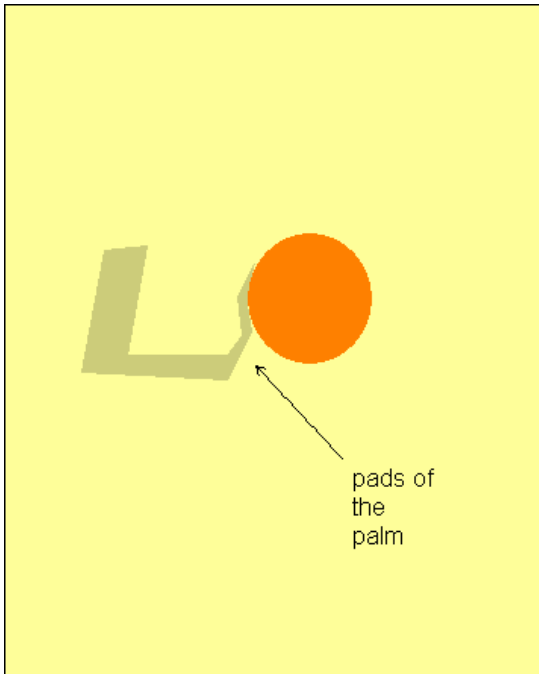
Many players have problems shooting because of their grip on the ball. We must remember that children often take what is said to the absolute. If a coach says keep the ball off the palm of the hand and shoot with your finger tips children will do exactly that.



Too many players try to shoot with only the finger pads touching the ball. This usually means that the thumb gets 'jacked' under the ball (This is a Rick Tolbert term). It is very difficult to impart proper spin on the ball when you shoot with only the fingers. The player will either push the ball or squeeze the ball out of the hand.

The pads of the palm should touch the ball. The thumb should spread naturally and comfortably by to the side. The best way to establish the proper grip is the Pete Maravich way. Place the ball in the hand with the palm facing up. Move the ball from side to side. Feel where the ball sits in as you maintain control of the ball.

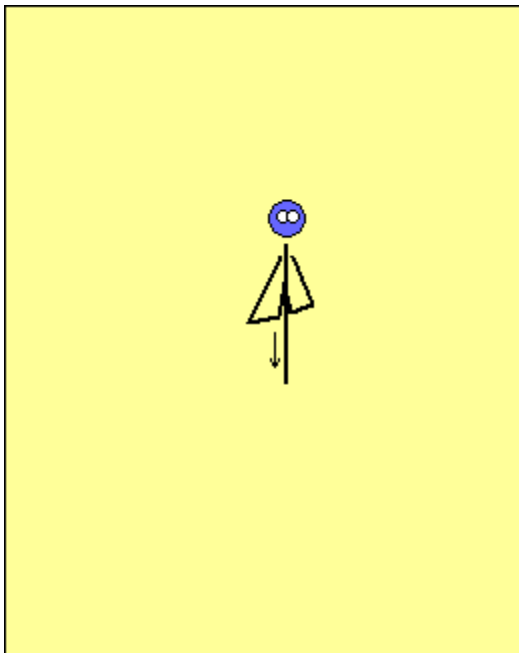




In working with players we like to start with the forearm parallel to the floor. The elbow and wrist form 90 ° angles.

Many children do not have wrist flexibility. When we tell them to form a 90 ° angle at the wrist they cheat by bending at the fingers not the wrist.

As a coach you must be vigilant to make sure they are not compromising on grip to achieve a set wrist. . Grip is more important. Have them bend as far as they can so the pads of the palm do not come off the ball. Continue to work on wrist flexibility.



Test wrist flexibility.

Have the players put their hands together like they are going to pray. Make sure the pads of the palms are touching not just the fingers. Start with the hands in front of the face and then slowly bring the hands down to the belly button. Can they get to where the forearms are parallel to the floor?

Remember the bending is at the wrist not the fingers.