



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. 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.

Protective Equipment

Knee pads, elbow pads, mouth guards and eyeglass straps provide added protection and help prevent injuries. Knee and elbow 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. Sweatbands are allowed.



Basketball Equipment

It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how equipment works and impacts their performance. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it and give the use for each. Proper equipment and use are essential for safety as well as for instruction. In addition, coaches should check equipment periodically and perform preventative maintenance to ensure safety.

Basketball

Leather basketballs are recommended for indoor competition. Rubber basketballs are commonly used for practices, games and everyday play. They are particularly suited for outdoor use. Basketballs need to be inspected on a regular basis for proper inflation and possible defects. Basketballs are available in the official weight and size (29.5") or junior size (28.5"). Review current rules for allowable ball sizes for various events.

Every 1-2 athletes at practice needs a basketball. Athletes can only improve if they frequently practice with a basketball, so a personal ball is encouraged, but not mandatory. In addition, junior division athletes and women should use a smaller basketball for the Individual Skills Contest. The smaller basketball allows these athletes to dribble, pass, catch and shoot with greater success. It also encourages proper form.

Air Pump

Carry a small air pump and one or two valve needles to the training site. One may be needed and may not be available.

Scrimmage Vest/Pinnies

Scrimmage vests or over-sized shirts are essential to help athletes distinguish teammates from opponents. Beginner Special Olympics athletes may find this distinction very difficult unless the two teams are clearly differentiated through the use of brightly colored scrimmage vests. If possible, these vests should be large enough to slip over the body, rather than tie, so that they are easier to put on and take off. The material is lightweight; mesh is also appropriate.

Whistle

A whistle does not take the place of verbal commands. However, it is essential for athletes to respond to whistles as they are used by officials during games. Athletes can be taught that the whistle means: Stop, Look, and Listen. In addition, it assists in teaching athletes the habit of hustle.

Clipboard

A clipboard with a training session plan serves several purposes. Once a training session has started, it is easy to forget what should be done next. A clipboard with the training plan will greatly help the coach organize practice, share information with assistant coaches, stay on task and monitor progress.

Cones

Plastic marker cones or pylons are useful for marking off skills assessment areas and Individual Skills Contest events. Nine-inch plastic cones are inexpensive, durable and easier to use than larger marker cones.

Chalk/Tape

Chalk is used to mark areas on outside surfaces or to diagram plays on the floor or blackboard. Masking or painter's tape can be used to mark specific areas on the floor as for the Individual Skills Contest and the Skills Assessment Tests. X's marked on the floor can cue defensive positions during team play.