

## **INTRODUCTION**

I decided to write this book because I love basketball, have a passion for teaching the game and see a real need for a resource to help coaches and parents teach basketball properly to young women. Girls' basketball has become enormously popular, and now more than ever, coaches, parents and players want and need guidance. This book is designed to be understood by every individual who wants to learn and enjoy the game.

I have coached hundreds of basketball games. In this book, I want to share my thoughts on how basketball should be taught and played, and, just as important, how individuals can appreciate and value basketball as a sport and as a way of life. Basketball can play a major role in a young woman's development; coaches shouldn't underestimate how great of an influence (positive or negative) they can have! Have you ever noticed that many players seem to remember their coaches for the rest of their lives? These basketball experiences *do* stand out in players' minds. That's why it's so important that coaches and parents, together, make those experiences positive!

When I was growing up in Jacksonville, Florida, I didn't live near an indoor gym. I spent many hours on an outdoor basketball court shooting. On windy days, I would modify my shot to "play the wind." (Don't worry — there aren't any plays or drills in this book that take blustery weather conditions into account.) I was determined to become the best basketball player I could be. In my first game in 8th grade, I scored 42 points; that year I averaged 25 points a game. I went on to start in high school as a point guard. During my high school years, I made the All-City team, was named the team's Most Valuable Player, was All-State in the mile and two-mile runs, and won the John Burke Award for being the top student-athlete in school. I'm especially proud of that because I'm only 5 feet 9 inches tall (if I round up). I learned that success comes from hard work and playing together as a team.

This book is intended to benefit girls at all skill levels, from elementary school through high school (including AAU players), and is a great resource for any young woman wanting to play in college. It explains and analyzes basic fundamentals, advanced skills, and game strategies, and also provides practice plans. Many explana-

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tions are supplemented with diagrams and photos that try to capture the game.

Part One of the book provides an overview, tips on how to develop a plan for the season and some suggestions on how to communicate with players and parents. Part Two covers offensive fundamentals like shooting and the fast break. Part Three covers defensive fundamentals and man-to-man and zone defenses. Part Four explains special situations, such as the press and out-of-bounds plays, and includes tips on developing strategies and effective practice plans. Part Five contains drills. Finally, Part Six consists of appendices that include the all-important rules of the game, basketball definitions, and references to other basketball books and web sites.

Part Five is a particularly important section. Teams tend to play like they practice. So, *The Complete Guide to Girls' Basketball* provides over 200 drills, broken down to target specific skills. Some drills are basic plays that can be used directly in games; some drills focus on single basketball skills; others incorporate more than one fundamental concept. I've also included suggestions for drill variations; typically these variations describe a more advanced or more competitive alternative. As an additional teaching tool, I've included state-of-the-art illustrative diagrams to assist coaches and players alike.

The quotations in this book, sports-related or otherwise, serve as a reminder that, whether coaching, playing or spectating (for that matter, in life in general!), we all need to keep our sense of humor and enjoy the game.

I feel fortunate to have written this book. The reality is, I have made more friends through my basketball associations than through any other activity. I hope readers will experience the same excitement and reap the same benefits from the sport that I have. After you finish *The Complete Guide to Girls' Basketball*, you will see just how far the girls' game has progressed.

Have fun with this book. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it!

*Mike Mullaney*