

PRE-SEASON

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Coach Džikić and Coach Mihajlović reviewed their experiences during Hapoel's previous two preseasons in Jerusalem. Coaches' primary job is to maximize players' strengths or abilities and hide their weaknesses. As head coach I want to surround myself with people who are sharing my beliefs and ambition. Team chemistry is the sum of your private interest that you are ready to give up in order the team to achieve it's goals.

First year, we created habits to work on, we established the rules to put in concepts automatics, defense offense, transition,

"X and O-s", but also understanding what kind of work is expected.

Contrary to other coaches, we like to organize the preseason starting with the first official game, such as the Super Cup game against Maccabi, and going backwards to determine what we need to accomplish by October 1. This approach allows us to focus on the level of basketball we want to show on October 1. There is zero tolerance during the preseason "gathering practice" on August 15. Every player should be there followed by a four-day-off to fix all potential off court issues and complete medical exams. Two prime priorities of the preseason are to have everybody healthy and to create a cohesive team, which leads to easier planning and programming for the rest of the season.

We have to be time efficient making giant steps towards the goal. And that is being ready and being able to play basketball the way the head coach wants, so the first five days of the preseason is used to evaluate the players and start practicing only afterwards.

Each team is built around the coach, the leader, who sets

the mentality, the tone, the direction and everybody follows him. We use the games, also for the coach to reach his peak, because coaches also have fatigue.

We have to lift the players up to be responsible enough to win under pressure.

Pay attention to the the team's reaction to different types of travelling (by bus or plane, etc.).

Communication and having predictable rules is very important within the team.

"The protocol of five red flags"

1. **get to know the players** - build the practice around the 2, 3, 4 guys that the coach believes will run the system, because they're going to be "go to guys" during the season so we have to give them more time to reach the level we want.
2. **taping** - Tape is applied slowly, understanding the player's movement and allowing the brain time to readapt. This ensures proper contact and recalculation of movements.
3. **intensity** - We try to lift intensity and efficiency movement one-on-one to scrambling as high as possible and maintaining the physical part, like efficiency and intensity in those kind of movements.
4. **contact** - We need to adapt on contact, another force attacking the body in a different direction, different angles. In different random situations we try to mimic the game as much as possible.
5. **prep game** - On a totally unpredictable preparation game we go a little bit backwards: we drop demands, like controlling the minutes, the way we play, the op-

ponent, lower the risk as much as possible. We provide enough time to the players for their bodies to adapt on every stimulus that we are going to give them.

After all these flags are checked, the team is ready for load and periodization. Maintaining the stability of the team is crucial as an injury can cause everything else to collapse.

In the second part of the preseason the same microcycle is introduced that the team will face during the season. Similar load and similar rules about rest and preparation. The practices are adapted to the games. We try to mimic the season as much as possible. Four main parts of our practices: transition, half court, defense or offense, half court plus followed by playing only after the preparation. Shooting comes before or after the practice, it is not counted as part of practice. During the first two games we are stepping into unknown territory, meaning we cannot control the opponent team's actions. The level of physicality, the level of movement, it's uncontrolled for now. On the first two games we control minutes more than intensity.

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