

## **Chapter 2 Teaching**

### **2.0 Introduction**

Teaching is a process of deliberate and planned action that enhances learning and performance in a predictable manner. The key to teaching young players is to keep things simple, a principle which is applied repeatedly in this chapter.

Effective and efficient management skills are also essential to good teaching. Successful coaches establish in their practices a learning environment that enables players to perform at their best. To ensure that practices provide such an environment, coaches must develop several management techniques. In particular, they must learn to control their players, reestablish control if it is lost, use effective teaching formations, care for equipment and supplies, and modify games and equipment.

After working through this chapter, you should be better able to do the following:

- List the three phases of effective teaching
- Present information effectively to players
- Help players apply new information
- Give players feedback
- Apply management techniques that ensure an optimal learning environment
- Reestablish control in situations that call for doing so
- Use effective teaching formations
- Care for equipment and supplies
- Modify games and equipment.

### **2.1 The Three Phases of Effective Teaching**

Teaching young players skills and techniques consists of far more than simply presenting information. First, information must be presented clearly and concisely. Second, players must learn to apply this new information. Third, errors must be corrected, techniques improved, and players' learning enhanced. Effective teaching, therefore, has three distinct phases: presentation, application, and feedback.

In the presentation phase, players are exposed to new facts, concepts, procedures, skills, drills, or other information. During the application phase, players apply this information to specific situations in basketball. In the feedback phase, players receive feedback on how well they applied the information just presented.

Beginning coaches often present new information to young players without allowing them to apply it - to practice skills, play games, receive appropriate feedback, etc. Unfortunately, players forget most information presented to them without such follow-up. It is therefore imperative that young players work through all three phases of effective teaching.

## **2.2 The Presentation Phase**

There are many ways of presenting information to players. However, different teaching techniques are appropriate for different situations and age groups. The three methods of presentation considered most effective for use with players at Stages 1 and 2 of the *Basketball Development Model* are demonstration, lectures, and guided discovery.

### **Demonstration**

Demonstration, a show-and-tell method, is perhaps the most widely used method of presenting material to young players. Done correctly, demonstration can be most effective; however, if players do not practice skills or do not receive appropriate feedback, demonstration will not be as effective. It is suggested that time is allocated as follows when giving demonstrations:

- Introduction (5% to 10% of total time)
- Demonstration (15% to 20% of total time)
- Practice and feedback (65% to 75% of total time).

For example, when you decide to spend 10 minutes on introducing and practicing the chest pass, break the time up as follows:

- Introduction (30 seconds to 1 minute)
- Demonstration (1 to 2 1/2 minutes)
- Practice and feedback (7 to 8 minutes).

With young players, try not to spend more than 10 or 15 minutes on one particular skill or drill.

**Tips on Making Demonstrations Effective.** Emphasize only a limited number of points during a demonstration. Keep it simple! One or two teaching points are quite enough when teaching young players. For example, in a passing demonstration, hold the ball correctly, and follow through on the release.

It is suggested to separate two demonstrations with practice than to present everything at one time. For instance, arrange one demonstration of passing (hold the ball correctly, and follow through on the release); have players practice passing in this way, and give them feedback. Then set up a second demonstration (take a short jab step, and rock over on the front foot). Once again, have players practice passing, and give them feedback.

Emphasize key points first. Decide what is most important, demonstrate it, have players practice it, and provide feedback. Once players master a skill, introduce additional teaching points. For example, if the most important factors in a successful lay-up are holding the ball correctly and jumping off the proper foot, emphasize these two points before covering additional elements of technique.

Select short, descriptive key words. Explanations usually last too long. For example, to describe the rhythm for a right-handed player shooting a lay-up, simply say "Right, left, and jump," and get on with the practice.

Ensure that skills are demonstrated properly. If you cannot demonstrate a skill correctly, have a guest demonstrator or one of the players who has mastered the skill demonstrate it. Alternatively, use audiovisual aids, videotape, film, pictures, or posters. If you cannot demonstrate in motion a skill that players understand, demonstrate from several static positions.

Ensure that players understand key points. Answer players' questions, but avoid doing so at the expense of practice time. If one or two players seem confused, talk to them individually while other players continue to practice.

Give players an opportunity to practice immediately after the demonstration. The probability that players will perform a skill successfully is increased if they can practice while the image of the skill is still vivid.

## **Lectures**

Lectures are an effective way of presenting and clarifying basic concepts and strategies.

**Tips on Making Lectures Effective.** *Never* plan to lecture for more than 20 minutes. In fact, for players younger than 14 years of age, 5-to-10-minute lectures usually suffice. Since gym time is usually at a premium, lectures should perhaps take place before or after a practice session at a location better suited for lectures (for example, a classroom, an enclosed stage area, or a small team meeting room).

To ensure that players remember material, build periodic reviews or summaries into lectures.

Repeat key points *frequently* for emphasis.

Follow each lecture with a practical application. For example, before a practice session, meet to discuss spatial awareness (its purpose, its advantages, ways of creating it, etc.), and apply this concept once the gym is available.

Use appropriate audiovisual aids, for instance, pictures, loop films, videotapes, or blackboards. These aids should both create interest *and* present useful technical knowledge.

Involve players in lectures by encouraging them to ask questions and demonstrate skills. Focus the attention of players by drawing them into the discussion.

## **Guided Discovery**

The Basketball Development Model recommends that players at Stages 1 and 2 have the opportunity to learn by solving problems. One method of providing such opportunities is through guided discovery. In this method, *you* provide the necessary challenges, and players explore or discover solutions to specific problems.

**Tips on Making Guided Discovery Effective.** Have a clear understanding of the intended outcome, for example, being able to dribble the ball with either hand. Then plan a series of questions that will allow players to move toward the intended outcome. For example:

- "How many ways can you bounce the basketball?"
- "What three ways do you like best, and how can you improve them?"
- "What would be the best way for someone to try to take the basketball away from you?"
- "How can you protect the basketball?"

Anticipate possible responses, and be prepared to steer the conversation toward the intended outcome.

Always let the players work toward the intended outcome *without telling them that they are wrong*. Simply redirect them through appropriate challenges. For example, if a player is slapping the ball while dribbling, say, "John, can you dribble the ball so that I can't hear your hand hit the ball?"

### **2.3 The Application Phase**

Although players can apply new information in many ways, practical exercises and drills are regarded as most appropriate for Level 1 players. The reason for this emphasis is that exercises and drills provide players with opportunities to repeat skills - opportunities players *must have* if they are to master a skill.

## Tips on Making Drills Effective

Provide opportunities for "plenty of perfect practice." Achieving this goal requires that drills be:

- Pertinent - skills taught must suit players' abilities, interests, and experience.
- Purposeful - players must stay on track in a safe and challenging climate.
- Progressive - players must learn skills in a sequence that leads to significant learning.
- Paced - practices must last long enough for skills to improve, but not so long that players get bored; moreover, since competence does not develop during one long training session, several shorter practices are preferable to one longer session.
- Participatory - players must stay actively involved, for the more time they actively spend on a task, the better the results.

If drills are to help make learning *permanent*, they must consist of meaningful practice, that is, practice directed toward *correct* performance of a skill. To ensure that practice is meaningful, give appropriate feedback during drills so that players do not practice incorrectly, and allot sufficient time under gamelike conditions for players to improve a skill.

Finally, remember that the best drills are those designed to meet a specific need. Too often, coaches come to clinics hoping to learn drills they can use with their teams. To design drills for players, use the following procedure:

- Decide what situations need to be practiced.
- Identify the number of players involved in the situation.
- Decide whether continuity is desirable.
- Choose a situation that involves as many players as possible.

### 2.4 The Feedback Phase

Effective learning cannot occur without appropriate feedback. However, *providing* feedback is not enough; rather, players must *evaluate* their responses and *correct* errors.

Many types of feedback are effective, but only four are discussed in this manual:

- Verbal confirmation of correctness
- Positive feedback that includes specific information
- Nonverbal, positive feedback
- The use of preset standards.

Verbal confirmation of correctness consists of positive statements, for example, "Nice shot, Jane," "Good defence, Dave," or "That's better, Sally."

Examples of positive feedback that includes specific information are

- "Good defence, Dave. You stayed between your check and the basket."
- "Nice shot, Jane. The ball was played perfectly on the backboard."
- "That's better, Sally. You protected the ball on your dribble."

Players' learning is enhanced when coaches include specific information in feedback, and there is considerable evidence that 50% to 70% of all feedback should be of this type (Siedentop, 1974, p. 199). Furthermore, as players become more skilled, they benefit increasingly from such feedback.

Nonverbal, positive feedback includes smiling (or other approving facial expressions), clapping, and giving the thumbs-up sign.

To use preset standards, establish standards for various drills (for instance, making 8 out of 10 lay-ups or 6 out of 10 foul shots), and have players rate their performances against these standards.

## 2.5 Management Techniques

Although no management technique is *guaranteed* to work, personal presence - characteristics such as personality and knowledge - is usually the most effective method to use to control players. Coaches perceived as knowledgeable, sincere, sympathetic, concerned, and genuinely interested in players as individuals can usually control their players.

The best way to maintain discipline is to prevent the occurrence of situations that *could* cause problems. For example, planning carefully, developing and enforcing reasonable rules of conduct, and organizing practices efficiently *all* make it easier to control players.

By considering the following factors, practices can be made more efficient, thereby maintaining control over players:

- The need for rules. Rules are necessary because they define acceptable behavior in a team framework. Moreover, they must be clear and concise, few in number, and specific, and players must be aware of the consequences of *breaking* them. Convey rules positively, and involve players in developing and enforcing them.
- The need for planning. The more interesting and meaningful the content of a practice, the less likely it is that problems of discipline will occur. Plan practices by gearing them to *individual* needs and interests, make sure that presentations suit players' abilities, alter the schedule or tempo of the practice if necessary, and provide opportunities for success.
- Your coaching style. Interaction with players is often the most important factor in maintaining control. The development of a coaching style requires establishing behavioral limits for players; setting social distance from players; using the voice and mannerisms positively; demonstrating interest, enthusiasm, and confidence; and treating all players fairly and equally.
- The players' environment. The general appearance of the gym, locker rooms, showers, and equipment rooms *significantly* affects a coach's control over his or her players. For example, gloomy, messy rooms are not a positive environment for learning, and broken equipment and supplies do not encourage players to take pride in their effort or performance. By contrast, continuous visual supervision encourages maximum involvement by players, and closeness to other players encourages effort and participation.

## 2.6 Reestablishing Control

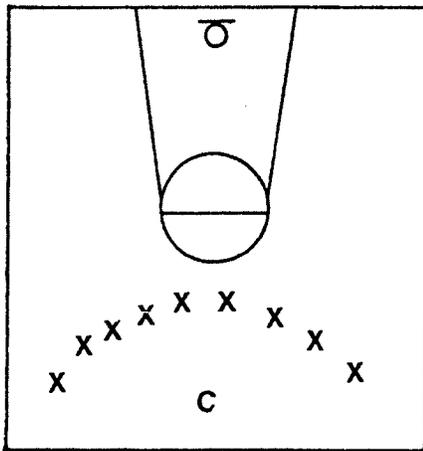
Despite your best efforts, you will occasionally have difficulty managing players. Unfortunately, there is no best way to deal with problems of discipline. However, you are most likely to handle such problems successfully if players perceive you as a caring person who deals with them consistently and if you take the following steps when problems occur:

- Analyze the situation.
- Find out whether players understand the importance of standards of behavior, and decide whether your standards are realistic.
- Provide rewards appropriate for the particular situation. Nonmaterial rewards - for instance, recognition by peers, praise, or affection - are usually suitable.
- Treat problem situations as teachable moments - moments when you can make points about features of play, for example, teamwork. This approach is often more effective than any other action.
- *Use punishment only as a last resort.* When you do punish players, explain why you are punishing them and how you want them to behave. Administer punishment immediately, be consistent, and limit mass punishment. Do not use exercise or extra work as punishment, do not force rebellion, do not antagonize, and do not administer unnecessary punishment. Assign the group another activity, and talk to the player being punished individually.
- Do not reward unproductive behavior by constantly drawing attention to it.
- Make it as easy as you can for players to behave appropriately: State explicitly what your expectations about behavior are, reduce environmental distractions, etc.
- Recognize that responding inappropriately to players' undesirable behavior will have a ripple effect, that is, will affect your future control over players.
- Make sure that your *own* feelings or moods do not cause players to overreact to inappropriate behavior. In other words, make it clear that things are not as bad as they might seem.
- Do not interrupt the practice of players who are behaving acceptably to deal with those who are creating problems.

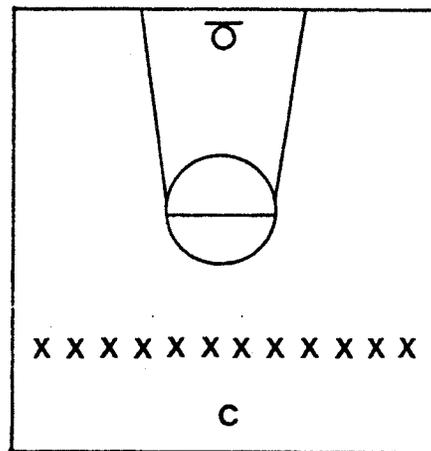
## 2.7 Teaching Formations

Learning is significantly enhanced by varying the physical arrangements used to group players for discussions or demonstrations. Several basic teaching formations ensure that players can see and hear you, are facing you and are not distracted, and are close enough to make eye contact with you.

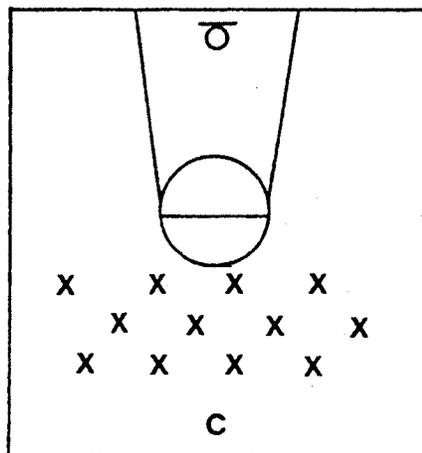
Make practices more efficient by *naming* formations so that players know how to arrange themselves in specific situations. Several standard formations are shown in Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.



**Figure 2.1**  
**Semicircle Formation**

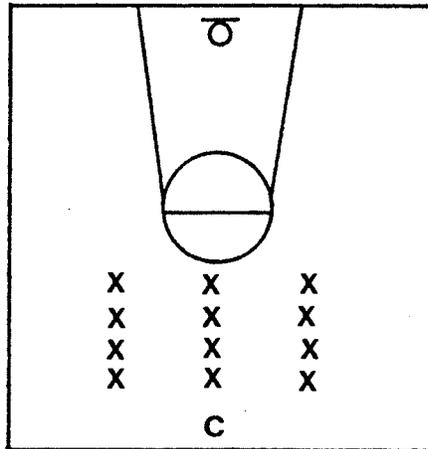


**Figure 2.2**  
**Line Formation**



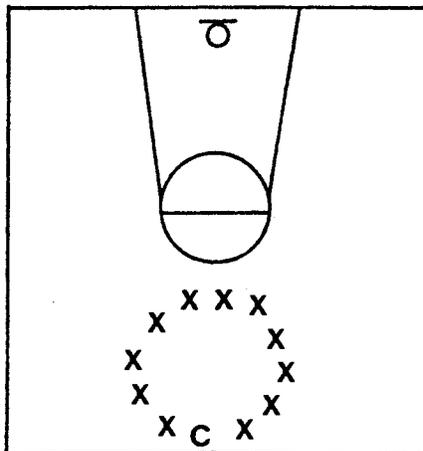
**Figure 2.3**  
**Scatter Formation**

If the group is large enough, consider using a row formation (Figure 2.4): Arrange players in rows, have the first row sit, have the next row kneel, and have the third (if applicable) stand.



**Figure 2.4**  
**Row Formation**

Try not to instruct from the center of a circle (Figure 2.5) - those behind have difficulty hearing and seeing, will probably lose interest, and may become discipline problems. If a circle formation is used, stand *on the perimeter* - with the players.



**Figure 2.5**  
**Circle Formation**

## 2.8 Equipment and Supplies

The following procedures are essential to the proper care of basketball equipment and supplies:

- Establish rules for storing and maintaining equipment both during and between practices (establish a convenient location for inflating basketballs, use a movable storage cart, etc.).
- Establish routines for getting equipment and putting it away (choose a location for storage, decide who will get the equipment ready, etc.).
- Observe proper safety rules for the care and maintenance of equipment. For example, specify that players not sit on basketballs, roll them on the ground, or kick them.

## 2.9 Modified Games and Equipment

It is essential that equipment matches players' needs. Consequently, it is important that you be fully aware of the any modifications specific to your situation and that you decide on such modifications *before* planning practices and choosing teaching techniques. For example:

- Modify the game (the size of the ball, the height of the basket, the size of the court, the length of the game, etc. - see the *Basketball Development Model*).
- Choose modifications to suit players' needs and limitations, coordination, height, weight, fitness level, etc.
- Make modifications to accommodate your knowledge of basketball and background (years of coaching, playing experience, certification level, etc.).

In addition to modifying the game and equipment to enhance learning, use specialized equipment and supplies to make practices more effective. For example, use colored pinnies, marking cones, floor lines, and dribbling blinders.

## Chapter 3

### The Analysis of Skills

#### 3.0 Introduction

Coaches need to *understand* the basic mechanical principles that underlie all movement. Moreover, they also need to be able to *apply* this knowledge, especially when corrections in technique become necessary. For example, when players make mistakes, the causes of these mistakes should be isolated and any errors corrected. By contrast, when things are going smoothly and players are performing skills well, it is important not to be overly analytical. In particular, coaches must be able to do the following:

- Determine that a principle of movement is being violated and that poor results are not simply a matter of inadequate practice
- Determine how to correct the problem
- Describe to players *in language they can understand* how to correct the error.

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) theory courses cover eight principles of movement. After working through this chapter, you will be better able to understand and apply the following principles:

- The summation of joint forces
- The continuity of joint forces
- Balance.

#### 3.1 Principle #1: The Summation of Joint Forces

The principle of the summation of joint forces states that the forces each joint produces are summed to produce the resultant force. Therefore, to produce maximum force, players should use all the joints that can be used.

This principle comes into play in many basketball skills: passing, shooting, jumping, etc. For example, to achieve maximum force in the chest pass, players should shift their weight forward, flex the shoulders, extend the elbows, and flex the wrists and fingers. If players fail to use any of these joints, the pass will lack crispness.

The one-handed set shot also illustrates the principle of the summation of joint forces. The seemingly effortless shot of skilled shooters is, in fact, produced by the combined action of several joints: the ankle, knee, hip, shoulder, elbow, wrist, and fingers.

## Drills

**Drill #1.** Pick a partner, and pass the ball back and forth without stepping in the direction of the pass. Then try this exercise while stepping forward, and note the difference.

**Drill #2.** Try several foul shots while limiting the action of the hip and legs. Then try the exercise while using the hips and legs to help impart force. Note which way of shooting foul shots requires less effort, and explain why.

## Exercise

Identify several basic basketball skills; for each skill, list one joint players often fail to use. Identify the error in technique that results, and describe the effect of this error on the skill in question.

Skill	Joint Not Used	Error and Effect
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### 3.2 Principle #2: The Continuity of Joint Forces

The principle of the continuity of joint forces states that if maximum force and precision are to be produced, joints should be used in a certain order. Because the joints surrounded by the largest muscles resist motion the most, these joints should start any sequence of action. Smaller muscles offer less resistance and must therefore start later in any sequence. In other words, movement should progress from large to small muscle groups.

## Drills

**Drill #1.** Throw chest passes to a partner. Step toward the other player *before* starting the arm movement. Then pass again, but start arm movement *before* leg movement. Which technique gives better results?

**Drill #2.** Shoot a set shot, and start the arm motion well before pushing with the legs. Now try a shot, but push with the legs as the ball is lifted. Which movement produces more power?

**Exercise**

List the following joints in the order in which they should be used for maximum force in the jump shot.

- the shoulder \_\_\_\_\_
- the knee \_\_\_\_\_
- the ankle \_\_\_\_\_
- the wrist \_\_\_\_\_
- the elbow \_\_\_\_\_
- the hip \_\_\_\_\_

**3.3 Principle #3: Balance**

Balance allows players to move quickly in any direction, for example,

- When guarding a stationary opponent with or without the ball
- When moving backward and guarding an opponent who is dribbling the ball
- When running forward while dribbling the ball
- When rebounding.

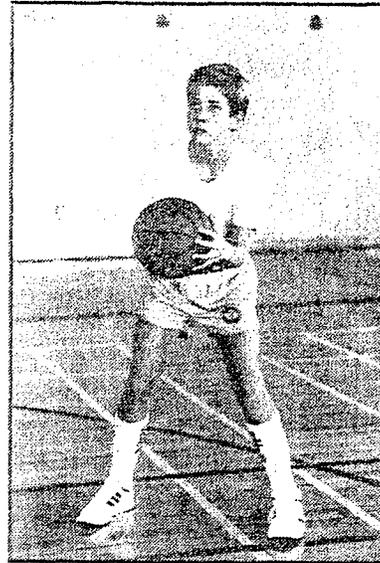
To have proper balance, players must have a wide base of support and a low center of gravity.

### **The Base of Support**

In general, players should have their feet at least shoulder width apart. If the base is too narrow, players cannot apply the strong lateral force necessary for quick movement (Figure 3.1). By contrast, if the base is too wide, players' legs are so extended that they cannot move through a wide range of motion, and movement is impaired (Figure 3.2).



**Figure 3.1**  
**Base Too Narrow**



**Figure 3.2**  
**Base Too Wide**

### The Center of Gravity

Balance depends on the relationship between the center of gravity and the base of support. The center of gravity may be thought of as the geometric center of the body. The exact position of the center of gravity varies with a person's shape and stance but is generally in the lower stomach area (Figure 3.3). Players have good balance when their center of gravity is over the base of support. Figure 3.4 shows a player who is unbalanced because the center of gravity is *not* over the base of support.



**Figure 3.3**  
**Center of Gravity:**  
**Balanced Position**

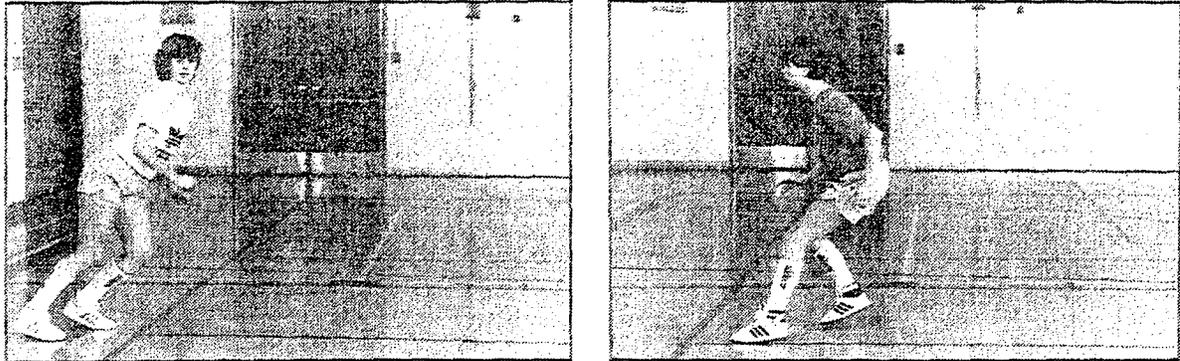


**Figure 3.4**  
**Center of Gravity:**  
**Unbalanced Position**

Raising the center of gravity by extending the body upward reduces stability, because the center of gravity falls outside the base sooner; in other words, the higher the center of gravity, the less a player can tilt before becoming unstable. For example, players in a defensive stance with a narrow base are susceptible to fakes, for any movement on their part places them in an unbalanced position.

## Change of Direction

A player can be balanced while stationary or when running at a constant speed. Players must, however, assume an unbalanced position to change direction. Figure 3.5 shows examples of players in unbalanced positions that allow them to change direction; these players have shifted their centers of gravity in the intended direction and cannot push off in the new direction without such a shift in balance.



**Figure 3.5**  
**Players in Unbalanced Positions**

## Drills

**Drill #1.** Demonstrate how to adjust balance while stationary to resist being pushed forward on a rebound:

- Spread the feet apart to have a wider base.
- Bend the knees to lower the center of gravity.
- Lean backward to resist the player pushing.

**Drill #2.** Demonstrate the principles of balance involved in guarding an opponent who has received a pass and has not yet dribbled:

- Maintain a balanced stance with the center of gravity over the base.
- Avoid lunging at the ball.

**Drill #3.** Demonstrate how a player could be unbalanced while on offence or on defence:

- Leaning forward when starting to run backward
- Extending the body upward in reaction to a shot fake.

## Chapter 4 Footwork and Dribbling

### 4.0 Introduction

To be effective offensively, players need to be able to perform a variety of offensive skills. Since footwork makes it possible for players to simultaneously execute skills and move about on court, it is important that players learn both basic offensive skills *and* footwork.

After working through this chapter, you will be better prepared to teach players the following:

- Footwork
- The offensive ready position
- The triple-threat position
- Starting
- Running
- Stopping
- Pivoting
- Getting open
- Ballhandling
- Dribbling.

### 4.1 Footwork

The prerequisites of correct footwork are quickness, balance, agility, and technique. Players need quickness to deceive and beat an opponent, balance to maintain control of their body, agility to change speed and body position quickly, and technique to make optimal use of quickness, balance, and agility.

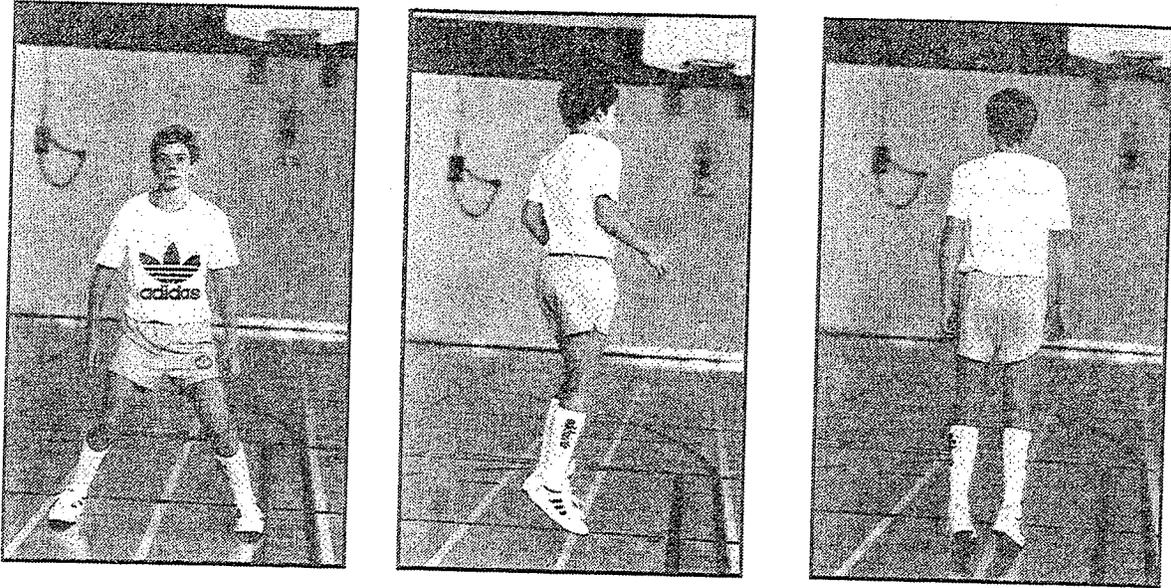
It is recommended that players execute footwork as follows:

- Maintain a balanced position.
- Move along straight lines whenever possible.
- Change direction sharply.
- Execute combinations of footwork patterns and fakes with and without the ball.

When introducing players to the fundamentals of footwork, start *without the ball* - it distracts beginning players and should be introduced only once players can correctly perform fundamentals without it. In addition, emphasize the importance of using footwork appropriate for the situation as it develops.

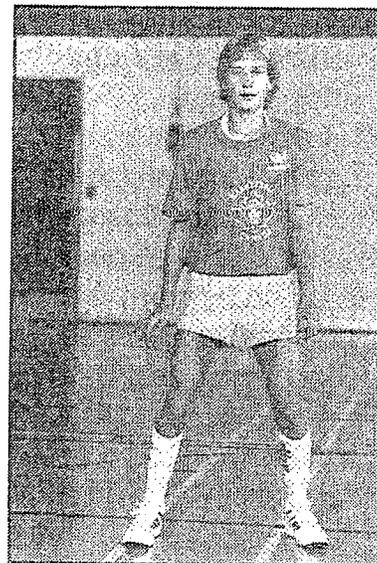
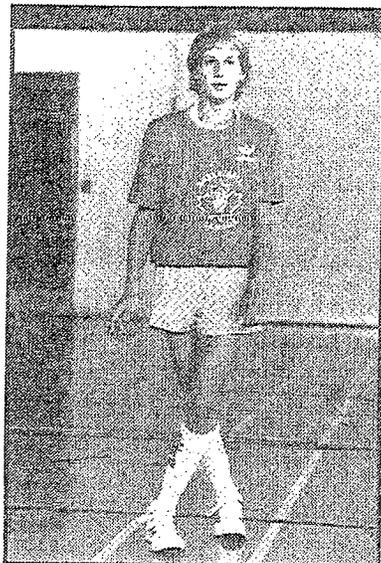
## Drills

**Hopscotch Drill (Figure 4.1).** Players stand with their feet apart. They then jump vertically, perform a 180-degree turn, and land with their feet apart. Players maintain proper form and repeat this sequence as many times as possible in 10 seconds.



**Figure 4.1**  
**Hopscotch Drill**

**Crisscross Drill** (Figure 4.2). Players start with their feet crossed, uncross them, and cross them again. Each time the feet cross, they cross front to back. Players continue this crisscrossing for 10 seconds, moving through the drill as quickly as possible.



**Figure 4.2**  
**Crisscross Drill**

**Motor Drill.** Players take short, quick steps on the spot (patter running). While players are running on the spot, indicate a direction; players *immediately* kick out the corresponding foot and hand in the direction indicated. Continue for 10 seconds.

#### **4.2 The Offensive Ready Position**

The offensive ready position is a balanced stance that provides a strong base and therefore enables players to initiate movement in any direction.

It is recommended that players without the ball assume the offensive ready position (Figure 4.3) as follows:

- Keep the feet shoulder width apart and slightly staggered.
- Turn the head toward the ball.
- Either square to the hoop or be ready to square to the basket after receiving the ball.
- Distribute the weight evenly on both feet and primarily on the balls of the feet.
- Slightly contact the floor with the heels.
- Slightly flex the ankles, knees, and hips.
- Keep the head upright, the back fairly straight.
- If in position to receive a pass, provide a target with the hands. Hold the upper arms close to the body. Flex the elbows, and position the hands slightly higher than the elbows. Slightly cup the palms, angle them toward the ball, and flex the fingers somewhat.
- If *not* in position to receive a pass, relax the arms at the side of the body.



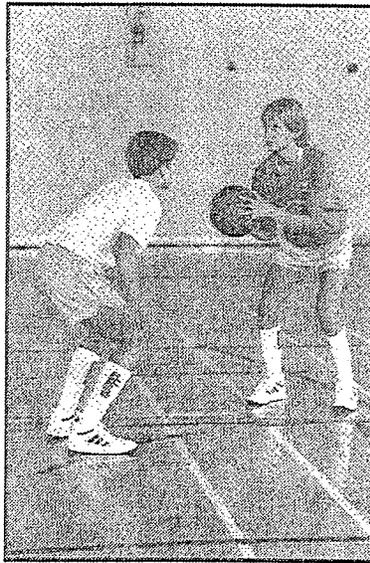
**Figure 4.3**  
**Offensive Ready Position**

### 4.3 The Triple-Threat Position

Players who receive the ball within their shooting range should immediately assume the triple-threat position - square to the basket, and be a threat to attack the defence with a pass, a dribble, or a shot.

Recommended form for the triple-threat position (Figure 4.4) is as follows:

- The feet are shoulder width apart.
- The foot on the shooting-arm side is in front, and the toe of the back foot is even with the instep of the front foot.
- The weight is evenly distributed on both feet and is primarily on the balls of the feet.
- The ankles, knees, and hips are slightly flexed.
- The head is upright, and the back is slightly flexed.
- The shooting hand is behind the ball, and the off hand is on the side of the ball.
- The shooting wrist is cocked.
- The top of the ball is just below the shoulder.



**Figure 4.4**  
**Triple-Threat Position**

Players should practice assuming the triple-threat position *every time they receive the ball*. However, if players are outside their shooting range or have lost their dribble, they can pose only a double threat. Nevertheless, players in these situations are encouraged to assume the triple-threat position, because they need to learn to *continually* pressure defences by keeping open the threat of more than one option.

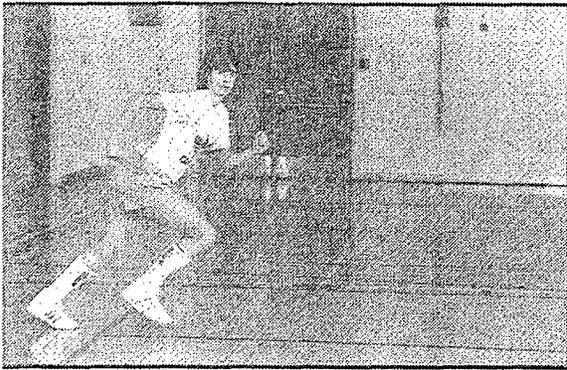
#### 4.4 Starting

Starting is the initiation of movement with quick, explosive steps.

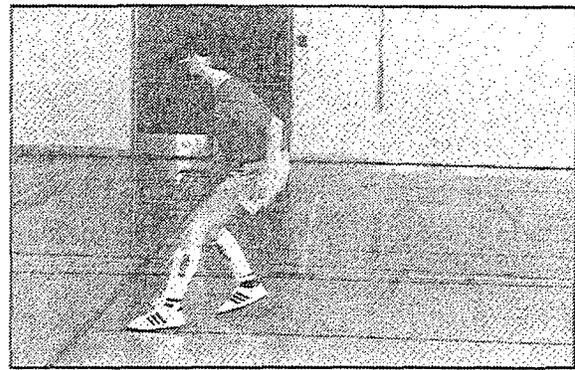
Recommended technique for starting is as follows:

- Lean in the intended direction of movement.
- Push off explosively with the back foot, and simultaneously drive the lead foot forward.
- Swing the arms rhythmically to increase acceleration.
- Take short steps, and gradually lengthen them.
- Decrease body lean through the first three to five steps.
- Keep the body nearly erect once a steady speed has been attained.

When players are starting to run, they must be unbalanced in the intended direction of movement (Figures 4.5 and 4.6).



**Figure 4.5**  
**Starting Forward**



**Figure 4.6**  
**Starting Backward**

#### Drills

Most drills for starting combine starting and stopping; see section 4.6, on stopping, for examples of this type of drill.

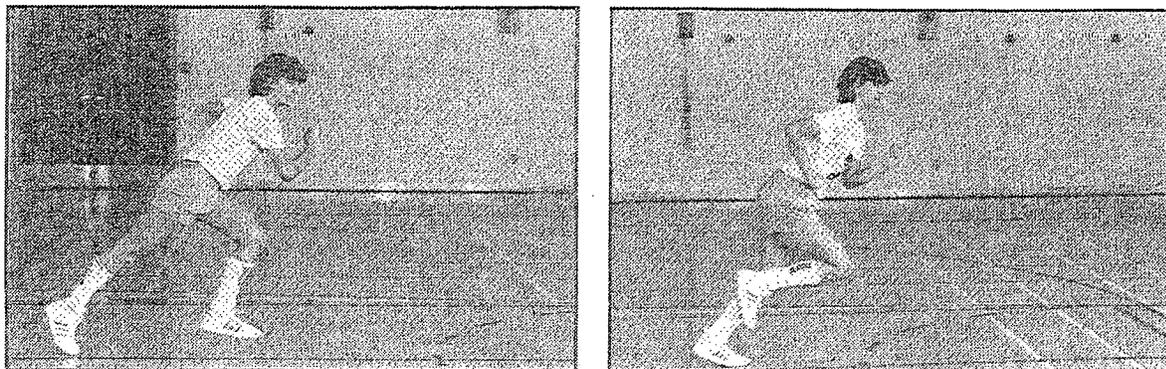
**Starting from the Offensive Ready Position.** Players assume the offensive ready position. On the whistle, players accelerate, taking five explosive steps, and gradually decelerate to a stationary position. The focus of this drill is on explosiveness, body lean, and arm action.

## 4.5 Running

Players need to be able to run forward, run backward, change pace while running, and change direction while running.

### Running Forward

To run forward, the player runs on the balls of the feet, lifts the knees high, and takes long strides forward. The upper body should be almost erect, the head upright. The arms swing rhythmically back and forth, *not* from side to side. See Figure 4.7.



**Figure 4.7**  
**Running Forward**

Players can increase their speed by pumping their arms forcefully.

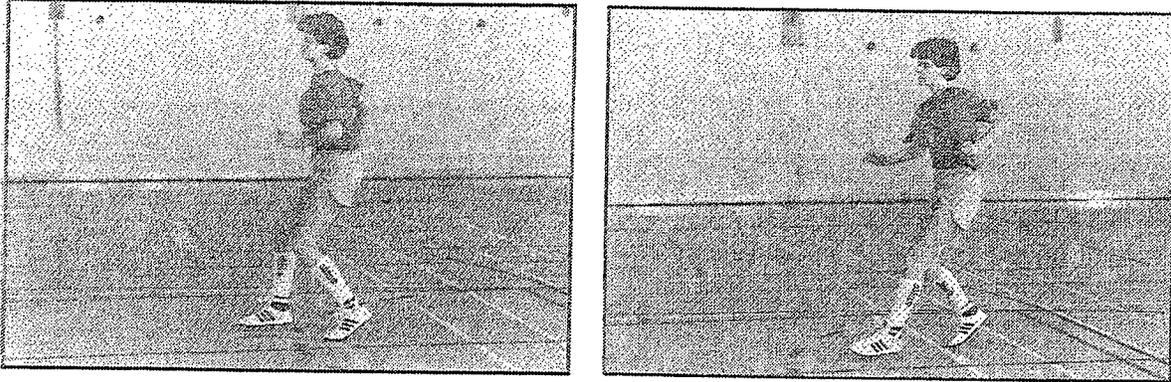
### Drills

Be sure to make drills for this type of running a regular part of practices, for players do considerable forward running in every game.

The best drill for running forward is simply running. Encourage players to concentrate on high knee lift, correct foot placement, optimal body lean, and rhythmic arm swing.

### **Running Backward**

Players run backward by pumping their arms back and forth and rocking from the ball to the heel of the foot (Figure 4.8). The backward lean cannot be too pronounced, or players will lose their balance.



**Figure 4.8**  
**Running Backward**

### **Drills**

Make drills for this type of running a regular part of practices, for players often run backward in games.

### **Change-of-Pace Running**

In change-of-pace running, players change their running speed to gain an advantage over an opponent.

To change pace, players change either the length of their stride or the frequency with which their feet hit the ground. When changing pace, players need to act convincingly and realistically, keep their balance, and make dynamic changes. Players who want to run faster often lean backward slightly just before accelerating.

### **Drills**

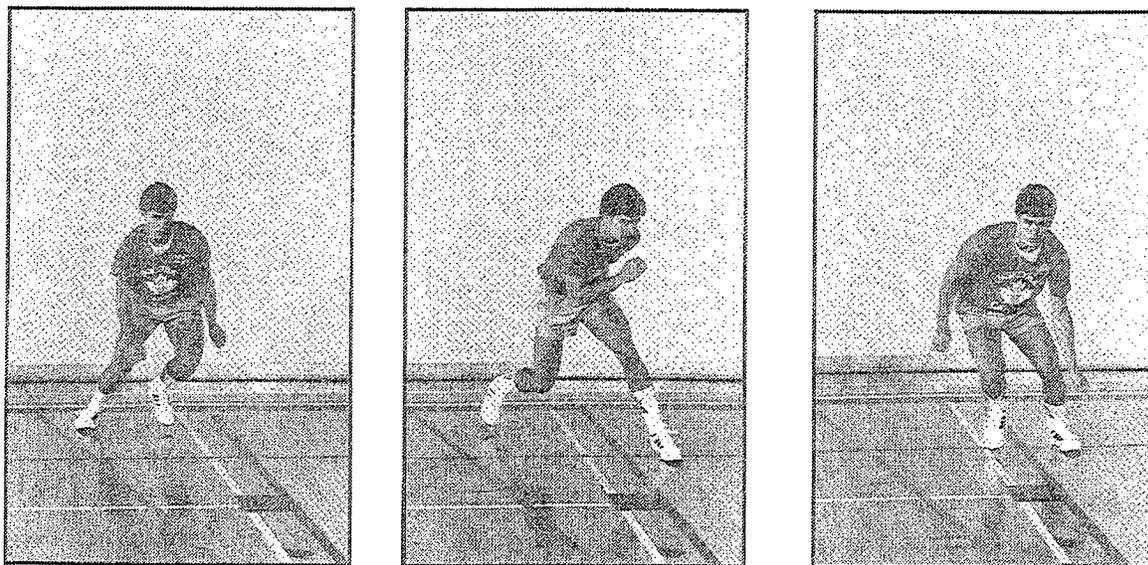
Begin by having players practice change-of-pace running while running in a straight line. Then incorporate change-of-pace running into other drills as players learn new skills.

## Change-of-Direction Running

Change-of-direction running is the basis for many offensive and defensive maneuvers. For example, players often need to change from running forward to running backward or vice versa, when coming back on defence.

It is strongly recommended that players change direction (Figure 4.9) as follows:

- Slow down, and plant the foot in the direction opposite that of the new direction. This foot is called the outside foot.
- Flex the knee of the planted leg, and drop the hips to lower the center of gravity.
- Push forcefully off the outside foot, and simultaneously take a short, powerful step in the new direction.



**Figure 4.9**  
**Change-of-Direction Running**

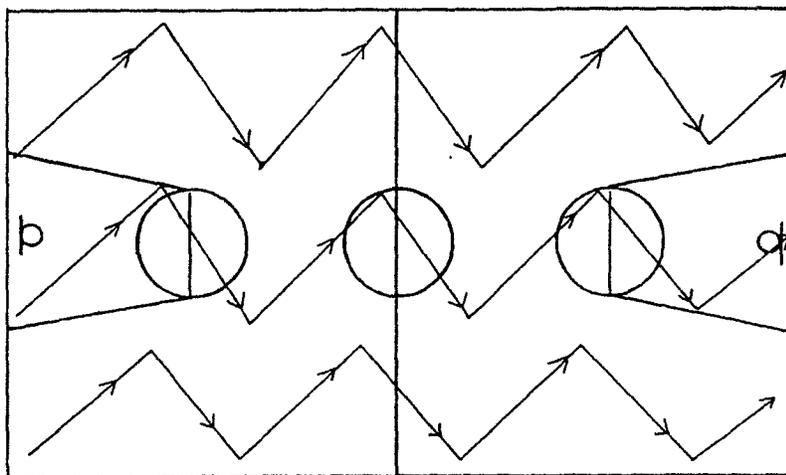
To properly disguise change of direction, players need to be able to change direction *at the last possible moment*. This skill in turn depends on being able to maintain good balance while running.

### Drills

**Straight-Line Running Drills.** Incorporate backward-to-forward and forward-to-backward running into straight-line running drills.

**Relay Races.** Players divide into groups of three or four, and line up at the end line. The first player in each line runs backward from the end line to center, forward from center to the opposite end line, backward from the opposite end line to center, and forward from center to the original end line. The next player then begins, and the sequence is repeated. The winner is the first group of players to finish.

**Line Drill.** Players follow a zigzag pattern between two lines on the floor. Using three corridors (Figure 4.10) allows all players to practice at the same time. Players walk at first, increasing speed only once they have mastered the change-of-direction technique.



**Figure 4.10**  
**Line Drill**

**Whistle Drill.** In this drill, players react to a whistle. On the first *single* whistle, players start running from the offensive ready position. At each single whistle thereafter, players change direction. On the first *double* whistle, the drill ends.

**Collision Drill.** Players react to the movement of other players in a congested area - one-half or one-quarter of the court, depending on the number of players. Players start and stay within prescribed boundaries by moving in straight lines in any direction and at varying speeds. When confronted by another player, a player must stop and pivot before starting to run again. Once players have mastered stopping and pivoting, they may simply change direction when confronted by another player.

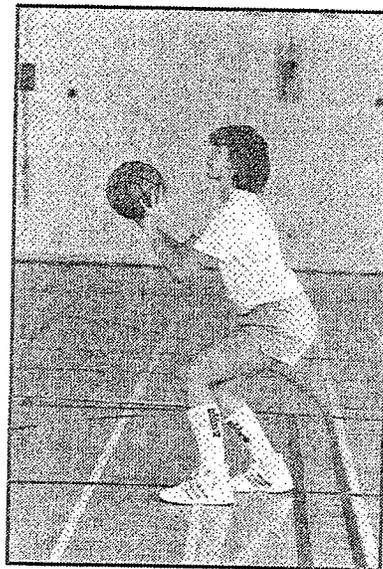
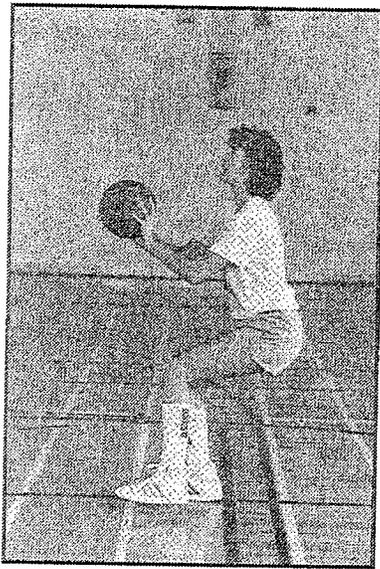
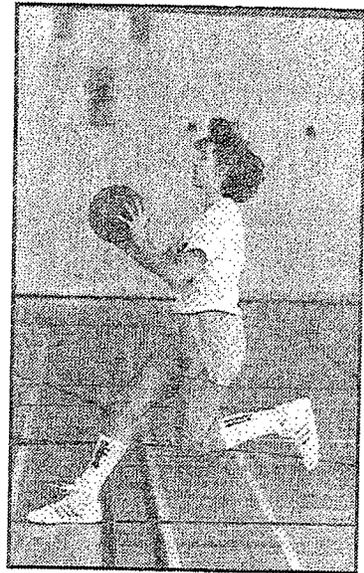
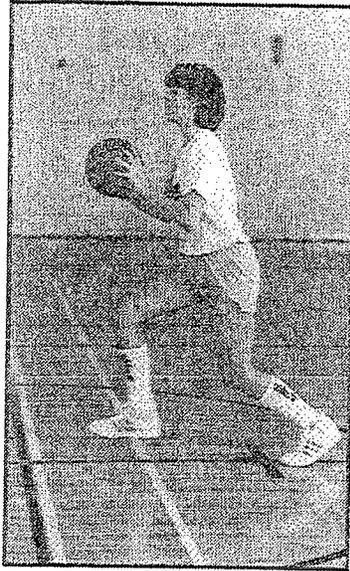
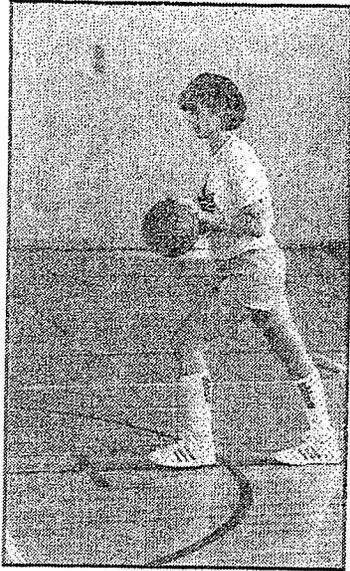
## 4.6 Stopping

Two methods of stopping are recommended at Level 1: the stride stop and the two-foot jump stop. In both cases, players may perform the stop with or without the ball.

In the stride stop, the feet land one after another and are staggered; the first foot to contact the floor becomes the pivot foot. In the two-foot jump stop, both feet land simultaneously and approximately parallel; either foot may be the pivot foot. In both stops, the foot on the side of the shooting-hand should be slightly advanced.

Recommended technique for the stride stop (Figure 4.11) is as follows:

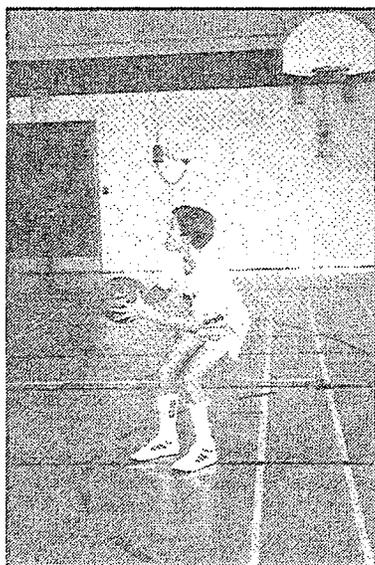
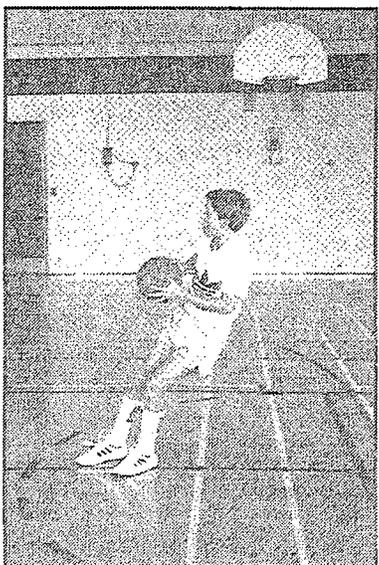
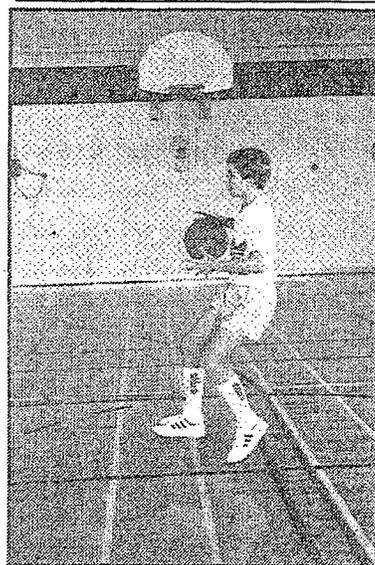
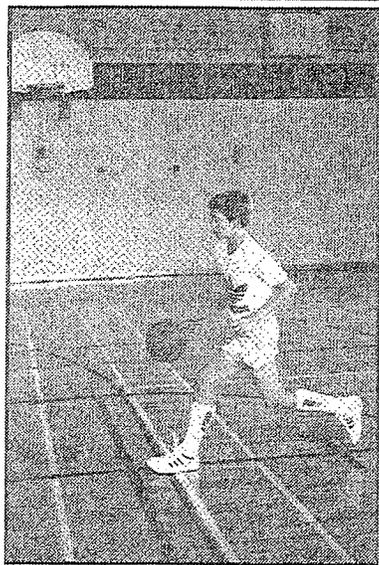
- Lower the center of gravity by semi-crouching and leaning backward.
- Drive the heel of the foot that lands first into the floor, and then rotate the heel to point toward the basket.
- Flex the knee of the lead leg as the weight transfers forward from the heel to the ball of the foot.
- Plant the entire sole of the trail leg on the floor in front of the foot that landed first.



**Figure 4.11**  
**Stride Stop**

It is strongly recommended that players perform the two-foot jump stop (Figure 4.12) as follows:

- Assume an accentuated crouch and backward lean while preparing to stop.
- Plant both feet on the floor. The feet land simultaneously and nearly parallel.
- Lower the center of gravity on landing by flexing the knees and lowering the buttocks.
- Keep the head upright.
- Regain balance, and assume the appropriate offensive ready position.



**Figure 4.12**  
**Two-Foot Jump Stop**

## **Drills**

Teach drills for stopping *without the ball* until players have learned to dribble. Once players have learned proper technique, incorporate stops and starts into other drills.

**Go-Stop Drill.** Players stop and start on a signal from the coach. Emphasize heads-up running and landing with balance and control. Keep the drill short and vary the signals to keep players alert.

### **4.7 Pivoting**

Pivoting refers to moving one foot in any direction while the other remains in contact with one spot on the floor. The stationary foot is called the pivot foot, and it must remain in contact with the floor *without sliding* until the ball is dribbled, shot, or passed.

Players pivot for five reasons:

- To improve their view of the court while in possession of the ball
- To square up to the basket for a shot
- To protect the ball from a defensive player who is checking very closely
- To improve the passing or driving lane
- To beat a defensive player by pivoting around him or her.

Pivots made in a forward direction are called front pivots; those made in a backward direction, reverse pivots.

### **The Pivot Foot**

The pivot foot may be lifted only if a player is making a pass or a shot. Furthermore, the ball must leave the player's hand *before* the pivot foot contacts the floor again, and players starting to dribble must ensure that the ball leaves their hand *before* they lift the pivot foot. Failure to observe these rules will result in a travelling violation.

The pivot foot of a player with the ball is the first foot to contact the floor as the player receives or picks up the ball. If both feet hit the floor simultaneously, either foot may be the pivot foot. Players may not use one foot and then the other as the pivot foot in the same possession.

### **The Choice of Pivot Foot**

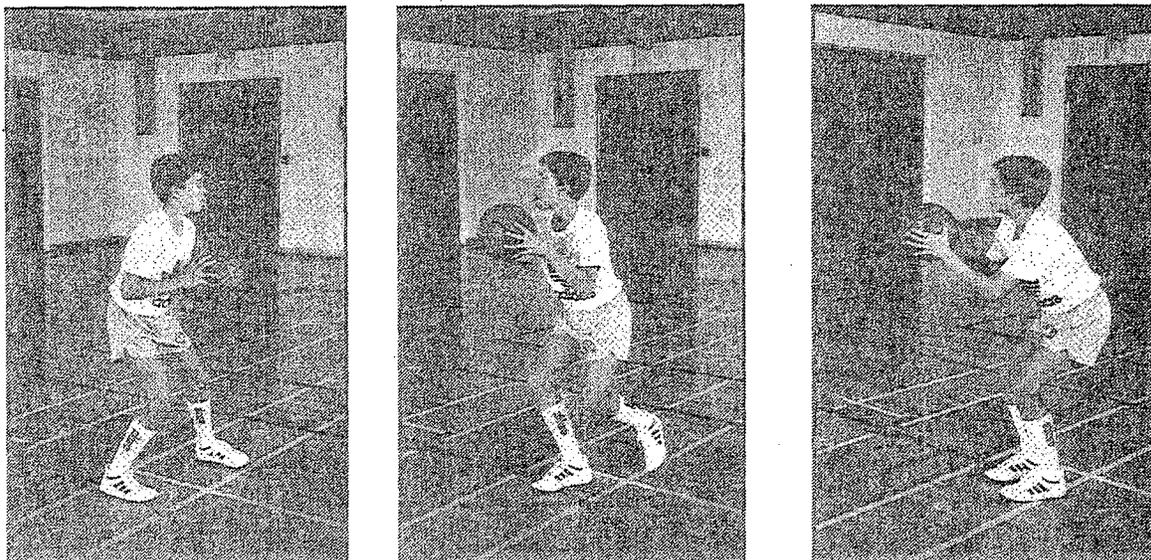
Every time players receive the ball or stop dribbling, they must declare a pivot foot. This choice is important, because players can make some offensive movements more easily with one pivot foot than the other. For example, players usually learn to shoot when the pivot foot is opposite the shooting arm. Consequently, some coaches ask right-handed shooters to use the left foot as the pivot foot; left-handed shooters, the right foot. This approach is sometimes referred to as having a *permanent pivot foot*.

In addition to facilitating shooting, having a permanent pivot foot reduces the number of movements players driving to the basket need to know. *All* players must be able to go both left and right - two movements - regardless of their choice of pivot foot. However, because the motion of driving to the basket varies with the foot used as the pivot foot, those using either foot as the pivot foot must learn *two* moves to the basket for each direction. For example, driving left with a left-foot pivot foot requires going away from the stationary foot, but driving left with a right-foot pivot foot calls for crossing over in front of the stationary foot. Being able to go both left and right therefore requires learning four different movements if the player uses either foot as the pivot foot, two if the player uses a permanent pivot foot.

Despite the advantages of having a permanent pivot foot, some coaches prefer that players learn to use either foot as the pivot foot. Coaches with this philosophy usually feel that flexibility regarding choice is necessary in games and that there are situations - for example, post play and getting open at the wing - in which it may be advisable to use a *particular* foot as the pivot foot. It is therefore important that you carefully consider all variations before developing a philosophy regarding the pivot foot.

### **The Front Pivot**

In the front pivot, players step forward with the free foot keeping the knees bent throughout the pivot, shifting the weight to the ball of the pivot foot, and pushing forcefully off the nonpivot foot to rotate the body forward. See Figure 4.13.



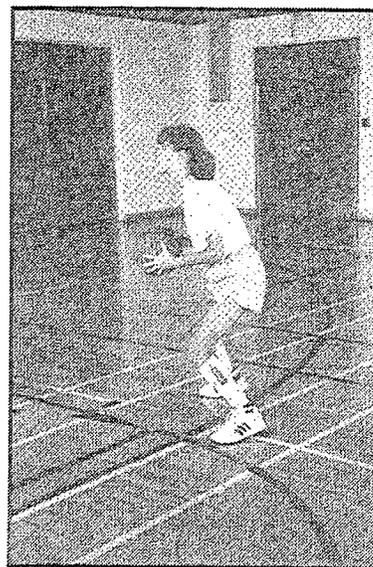
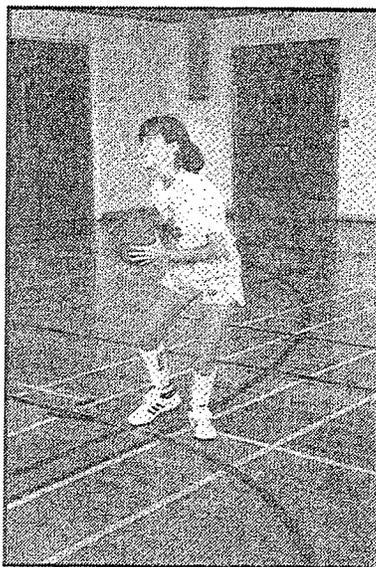
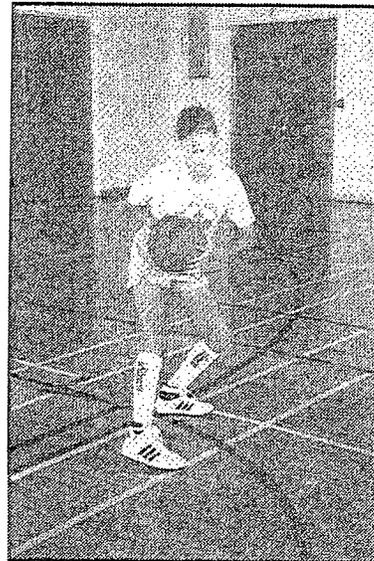
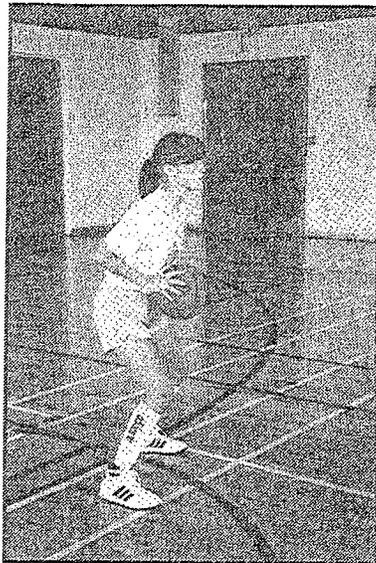
**Figure 4.13**  
**Front Pivot**

If players have the ball, it is recommended that they pivot as follows:

- Vary the position of the ball to protect it from the defence.
- Keep the body between the ball and the defensive player.
- Keep the feet approximately shoulder width apart to avoid losing their balance.

### The Reverse Pivot

The reverse pivot is similar to the front pivot, except that the player steps *back* with the free foot. See Figure 4.14.



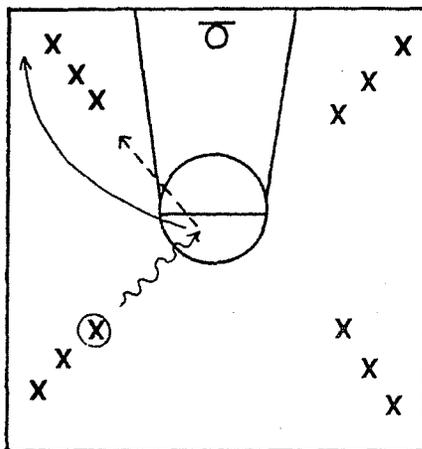
**Figure 4.14**  
**Reverse Pivot**

### Drills

**Pivot Drill.** Players assume a triple-threat position, perform both front and reverse pivots to protect the ball from an imaginary defender, and return -facing the basket - to the triple-threat position. Players keep their knees bent throughout this drill.

**Stop-and-Start Drill.** Players dribble down the floor; on a signal, they stop and pivot several times; on the next signal, they continue down the floor. This drill also provides opportunities to practice other skills, for example, changes of direction, changes of speed, stopping, and starting.

**Dribble-Stop-Pivot-and-Pass Drill.** Players line up in four lines (Figure 4.15). One player dribbles to the center of the court, stops, pivots toward the line on either the immediate left or immediate right, passes to the first player in the line, and then goes to the end of that line. The next ballhandler repeats the same sequence. As players become more skilled, more balls may be added.



**Figure 4.15**  
**Dribble-Stop-Pivot-and-Pass Drill**

#### 4.8 Getting Open

Getting open for a pass is one of the keys to the success of any offensive system. Level 1 players may use two *specific* techniques to get open: the V-cut and the ball cut.

The following *general* principles apply to getting open:

- If possible, players getting open on the ball side should start well within their shooting range; this tactic puts added pressure on the defender.
- Players should coordinate attempts to get open so that they are open when the ballhandler is ready to pass the ball. For their part, ballhandlers must be ready to pass *at the moment the receiver breaks from the defender*.
- Players can get open at the wing (Figure 4.16) by making a short fake away from the basket, cutting to the basket, and either cutting straight back to the original position or using a V-cut (depending on how the defender is playing). As skills improve, players may add fakes and combinations of fakes.

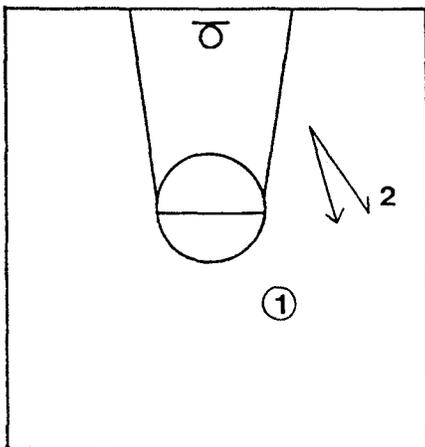


Figure 4.16  
Getting Open at the Wing

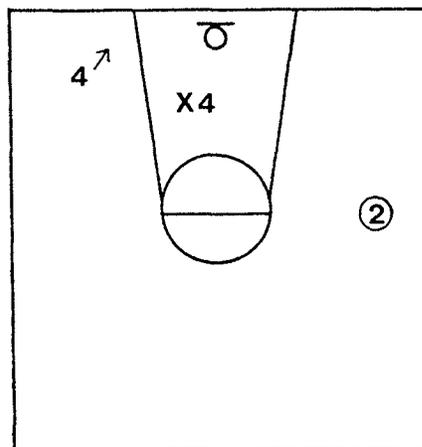


Figure 4.17  
Getting Open  
on the Weak Side

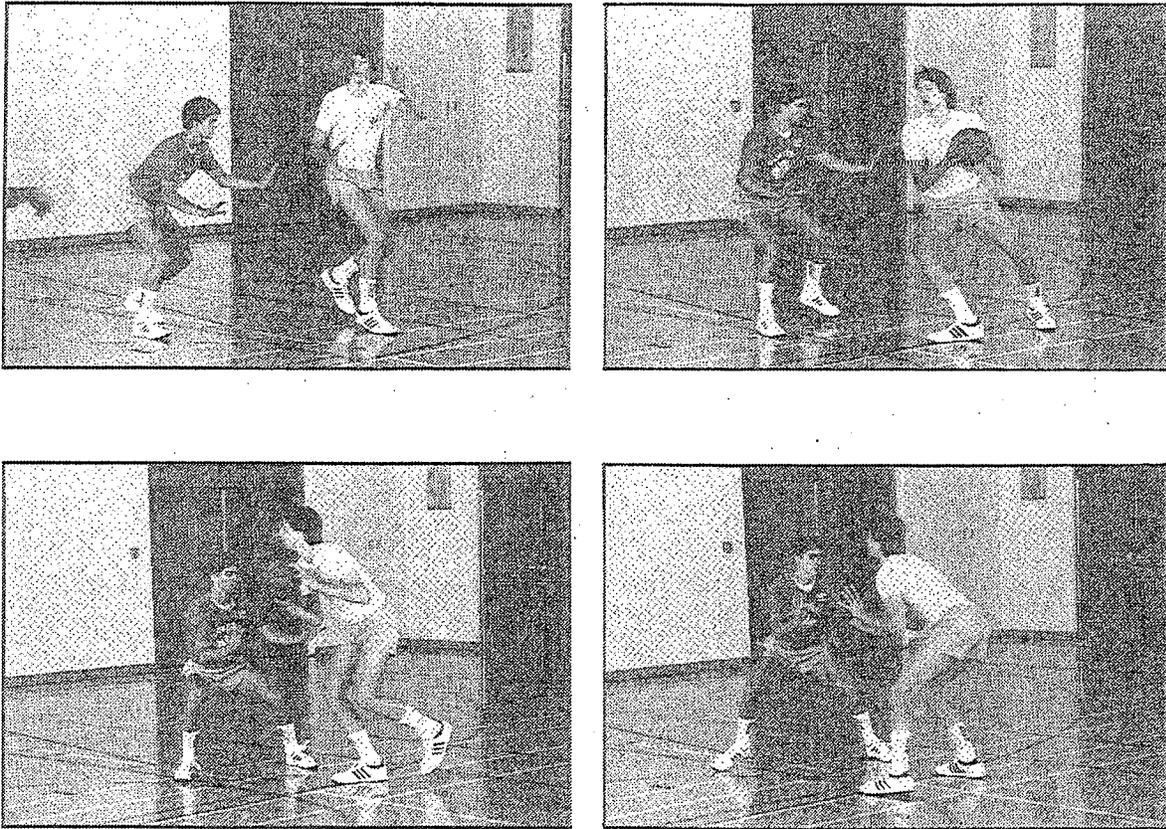
- Players on the weak side can use two tactics to make it easier to get open on an eventual ball cut. First, they can keep active with fakes, thus preventing defenders from cheating to the ball side and therefore making them more susceptible to ball cuts; faking also prevents defenders from helping the ballhandler. Second, weak-side players can move out of the defender's field of vision (Figure 4.17), thereby making it more difficult for defenders to react to moves to get open.
- Players should square to the basket upon receiving the ball - it puts pressure on the defender (the pivot move players use when squaring to the basket may be considered a jab step and can lead into the jab moves discussed in *Level 2 Technical*).
- Ideally, players know what their options are *before* the ball arrives, allowing them to take advantage of passing, shooting, and driving opportunities, which may be momentarily open.

### **The Pivot Foot**

When players square to the basket after receiving a pass, they have two choices regarding the pivot foot: They may either use a permanent pivot foot or attack the basket.

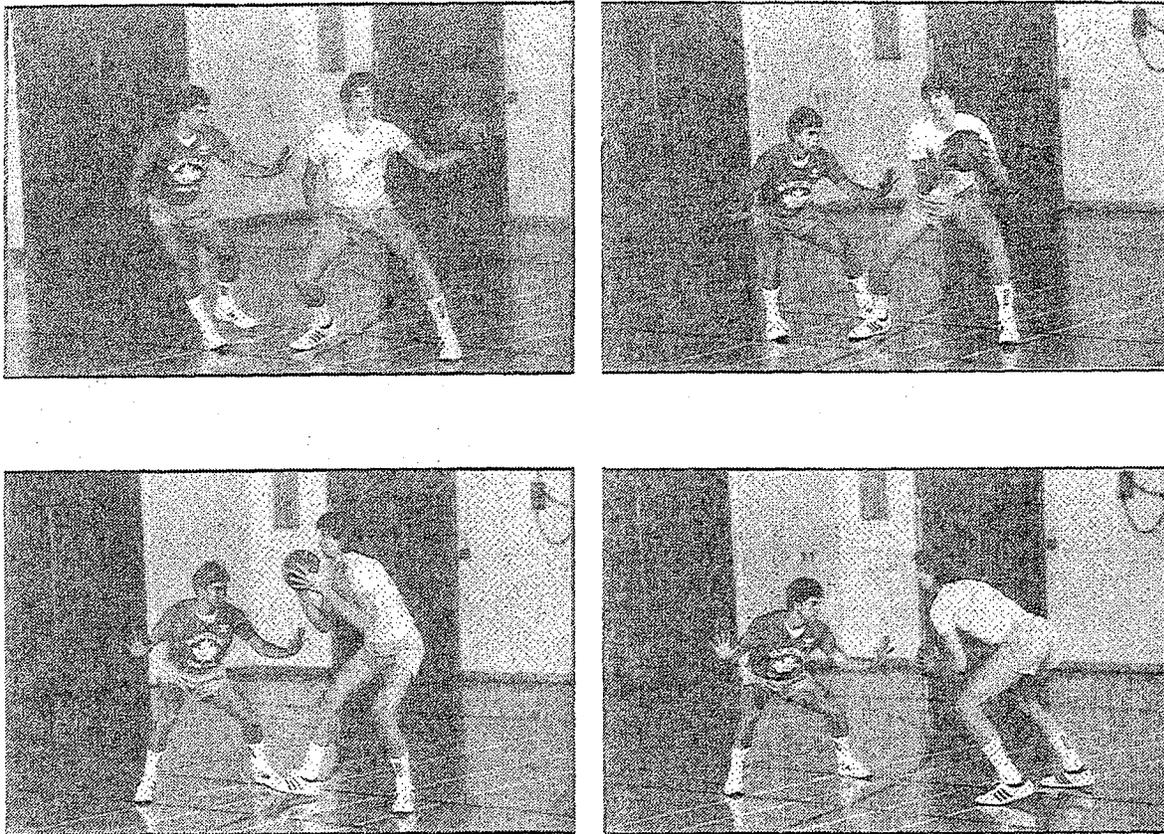
### Using a Permanent Pivot Foot

If players use a permanent pivot foot, the preferred foot is the foot opposite the shooting hand, enabling them to step into the shot. A left-handed player therefore uses a front pivot to get open on the right side (Figure 4.18).



**Figure 4.18**  
**Front Pivot to Get Open on the Right Side**

In addition, a left-handed player may use a reverse pivot to square up on the right side (Figure 4.19).



**Figure 4.19**  
**Reverse Pivot to get Open on the Right Side**

### **Attacking the Basket**

This technique for the pivot foot encourages players to attack the basket by performing a front pivot on the inside foot (that is, the left foot on the left side, the right foot on the right side). Pivoting in this way allows players to attack the basket on both sides, but requires that players learn to shoot using either foot as the pivot foot.

### **The V-Cut**

The V-cut is a quick change of direction in which a player moves away from a close-checking defender to get open for a pass.

Recommended technique for the V-cut at the wing position (Figure 4.20) is as follows:

- Take the defender to the basket. Move at full speed, and "sell" the move to the basket.
- Get close to the defender, and plant the foot that is closer to the defender.
- Cut back hard to the wing, and be ready to receive the pass.

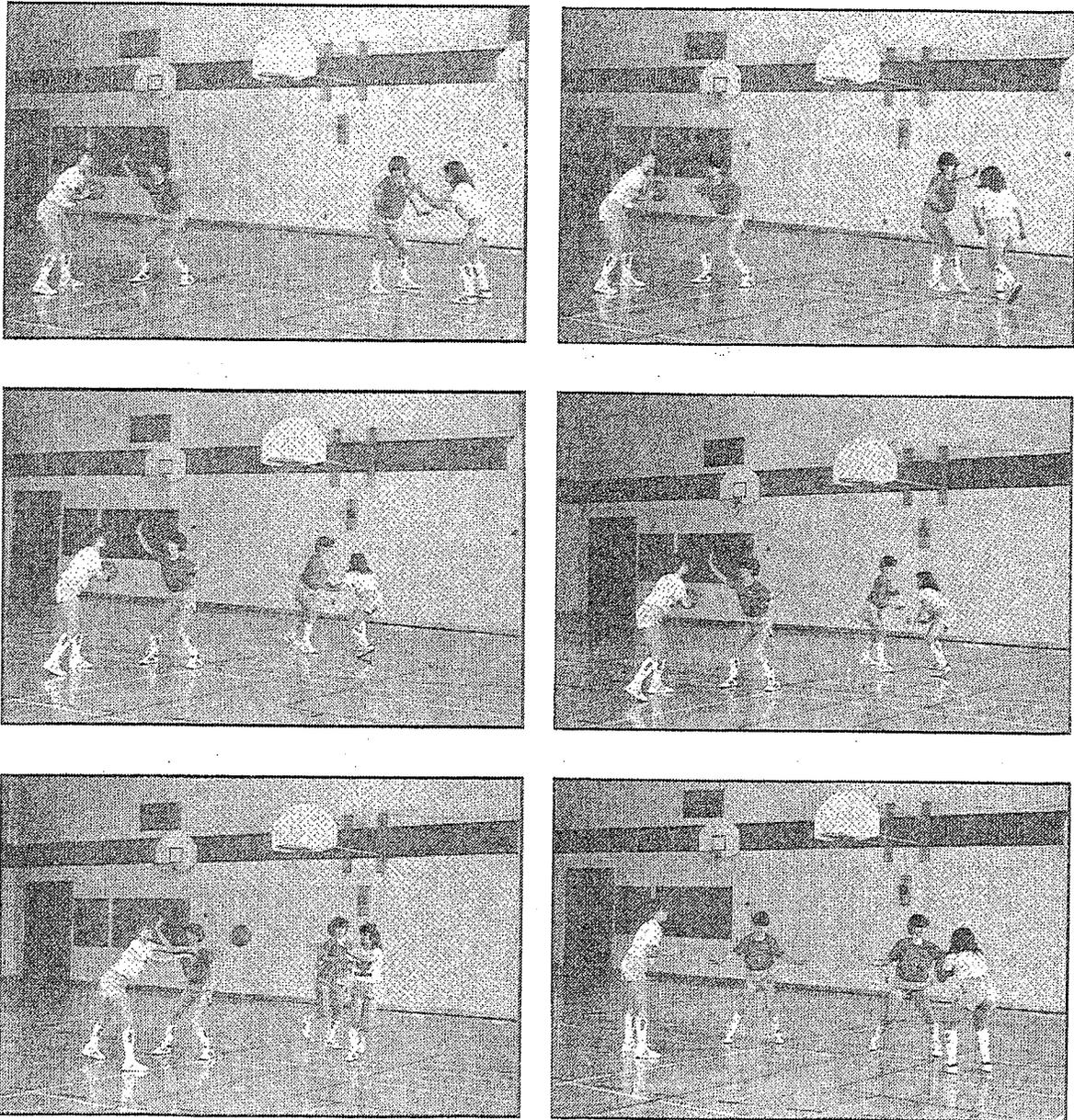


Figure 4.20 V-Cut to Get Open at the Wing

When using a V-cut to get open, offensive players should get close to the defender before changing direction - it is difficult to get open if defenders can keep space between themselves and offensive players.

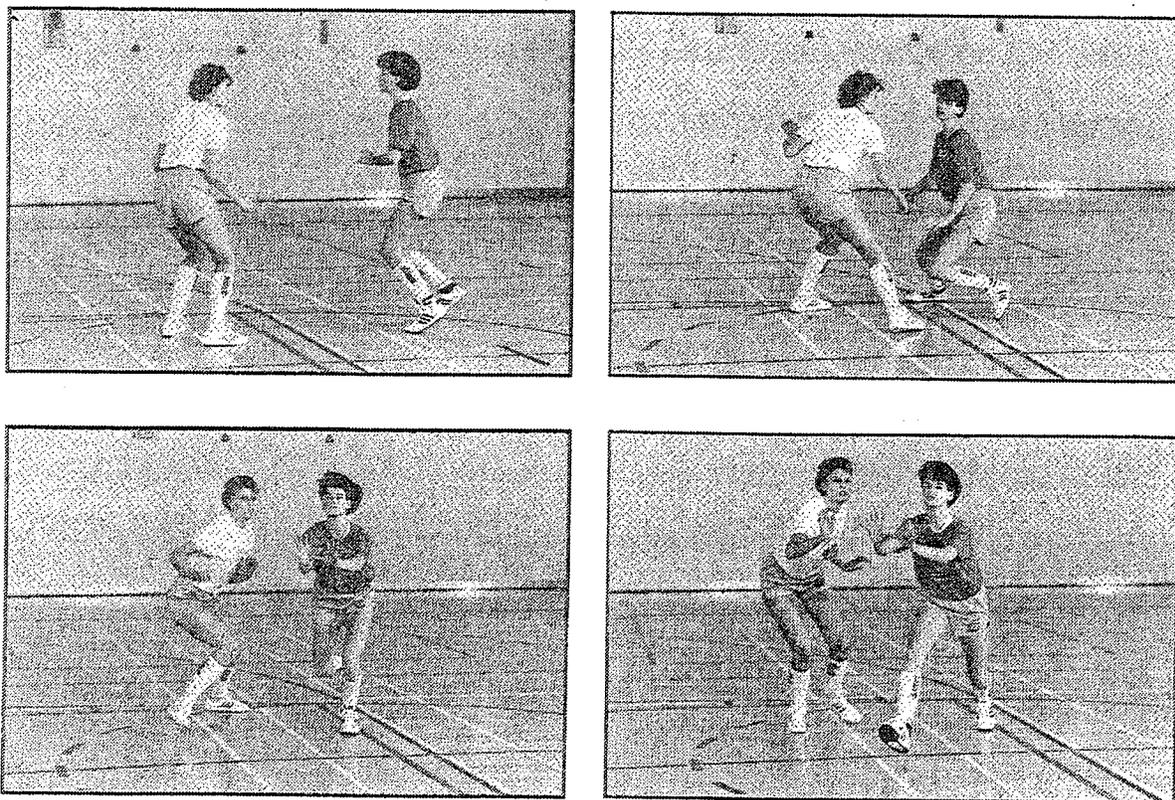
Players can use V-cuts anywhere on the floor, but they occur most often in the front court.

### **The Ball Cut**

Ball cuts are variations of V-cuts that players use when cutting to the ball from the weak side of the court.

It is recommended that players cut to the ball (Figure 4.21) as follows:

- Cut toward the defender to freeze him or her.
- Plant the foot away from the intended direction of movement.
- Cut hard to the ball.



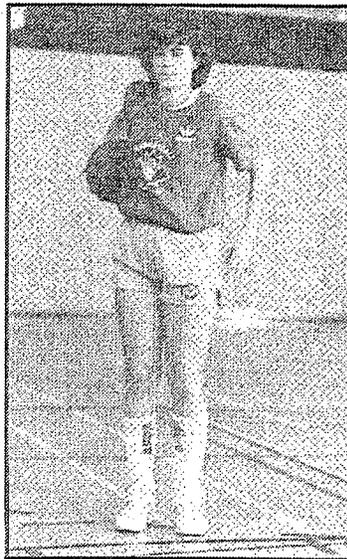
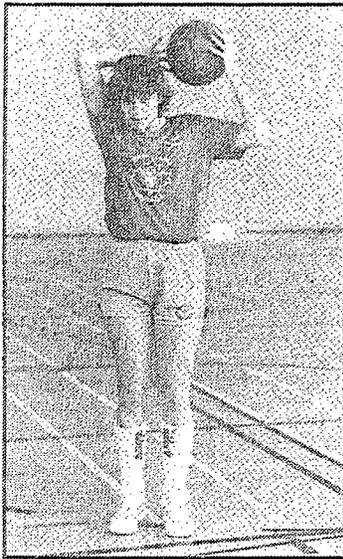
**Figure 4.21**  
**Ball Cut**

Chapter 6, on team offence, contains more information on ball cuts.

## 4.9 Ballhandling

Players need to work on ballhandling before learning specific types of dribbling. The following drills for ballhandling may be helpful.

**Around-the-Body-and-Legs Drill** (Figure 4.22). Players assume the offensive ready position and pass the ball from one hand to another around the waist, around both knees and ankles, or around one knee and ankle. Players pass the ball both clockwise and counterclockwise, strive for speed, and keep the head up at all times.

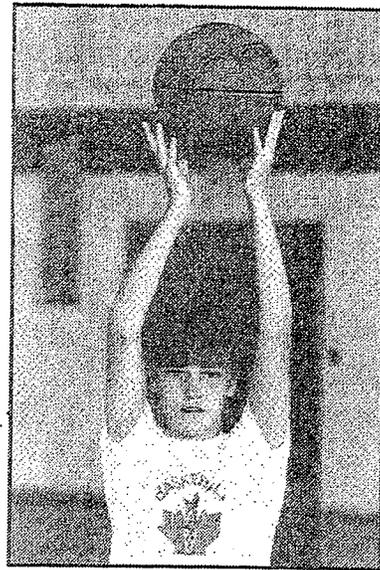


**Figure 4.22**  
**Around-the-Body-and-Legs Drill**

**Single Leg Circles.** Players get down on one knee and pass the ball around the lower leg - in both directions (Figure 4.23).



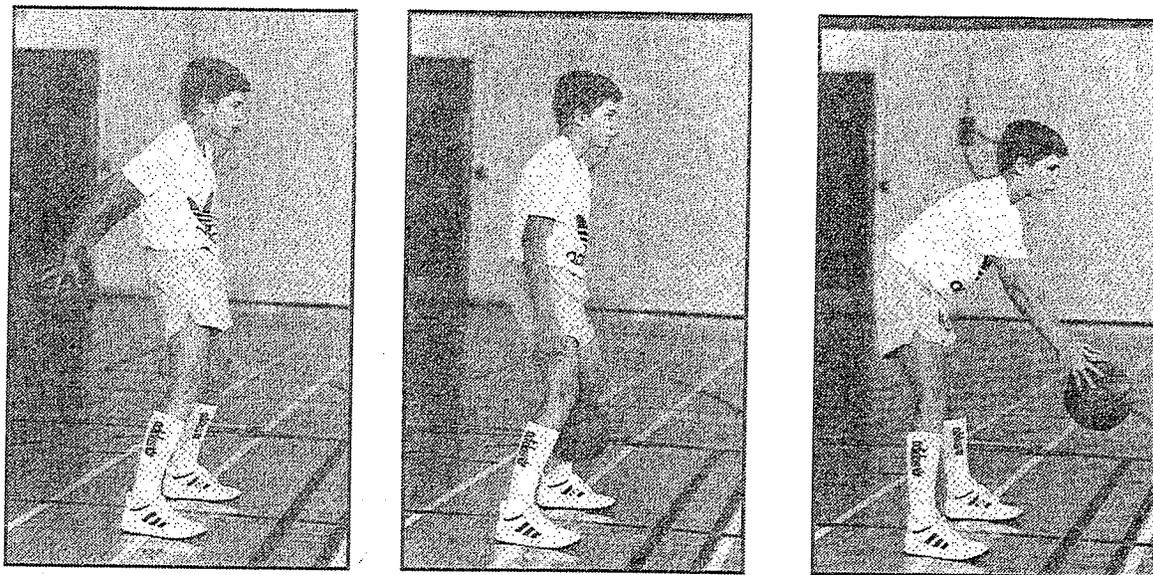
**Figure 4.23**  
**Single Leg Circles**



**Figure 4.24**  
**Tap Drill**

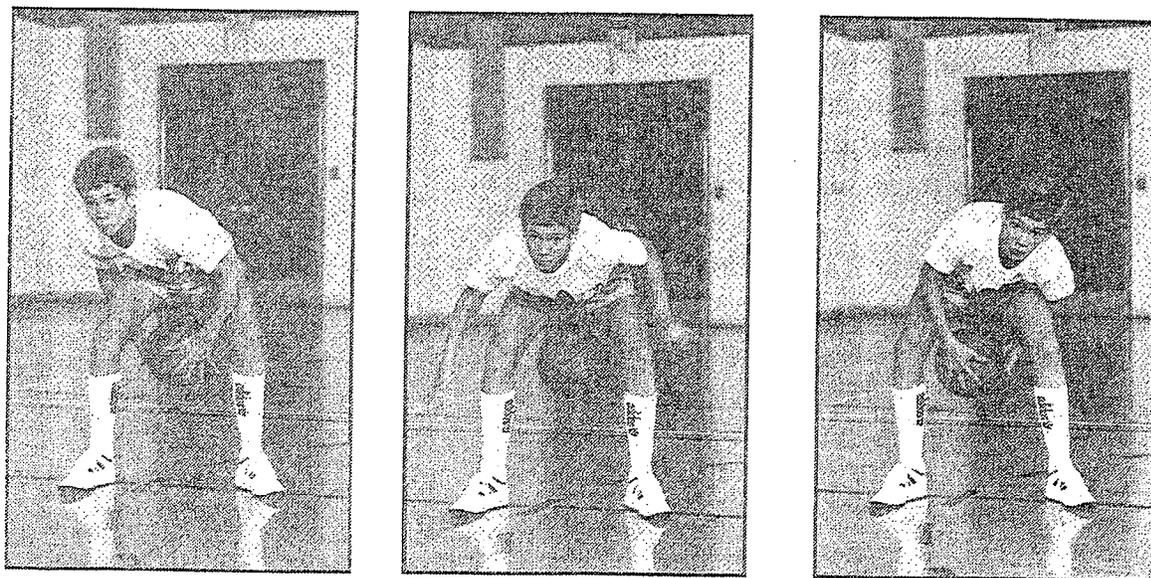
**Tap Drill.** Players tap the ball back and forth between the hands (Figure 4.24). Players may vary the height of the ball, and they may also squeeze the ball to develop good touch.

**Seesaw Drill.** Players stand and pass the ball - using both hands - back and forth between the legs (Figure 4.25).



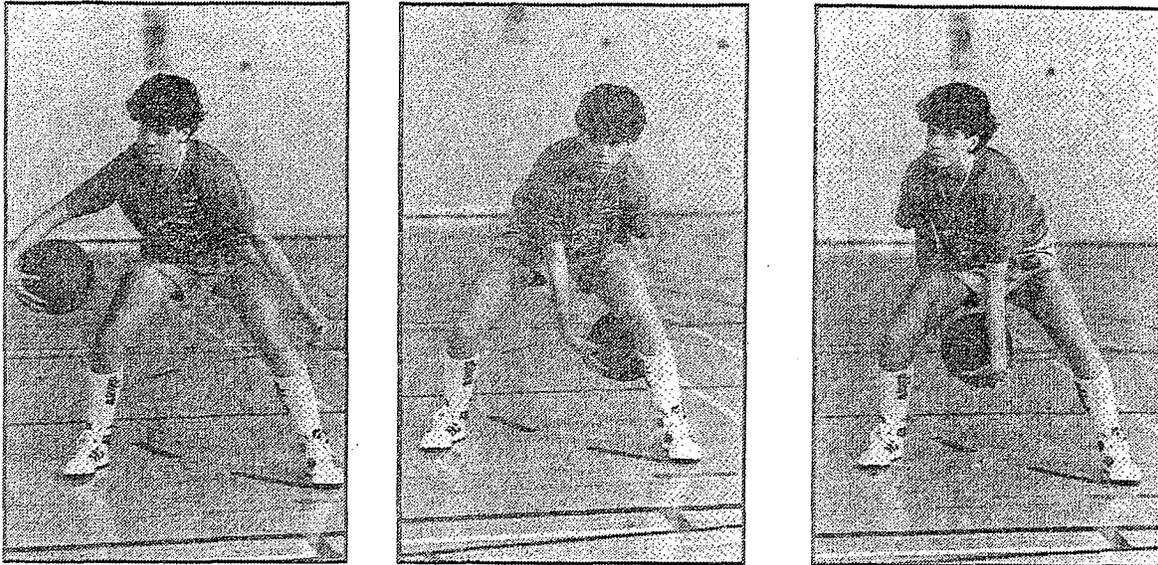
**Figure 4.25**  
**Seesaw Drill**

**Pretzel Drill.** Players hold the ball between their legs with one hand in front of their legs, the other behind (Figure 4.26). Players keep the ball in this position while changing hands on the ball - the hand in front moves to the back, and the hand on the back moves to the front.



**Figure 4.26** Pretzel Drill

**Figure-Eight Drill.** Players stand with their legs shoulder width apart and weave the ball through the legs in a figure eight fashion (Figure 4.27). Players weave the ball in *both* directions. Players may also perform this drill while walking.



**Figure 4.27**  
**Figure-Eight Drill**

#### **4.10 Dribbling**

Dribbling is the act of bouncing the ball against the floor with one hand while running, walking, or standing. This section covers four types of dribbling:

- The static dribble
- The control dribble
- The speed dribble
- The alternate-hands dribble.

The *general* purpose of dribbling is to enable players to maneuver the ball in any direction at varying speeds. The *specific* purposes of this skill are to facilitate the following:

- Advancing the ball into the offensive end when a pass is not possible
- Improving an opportunity for passing or shooting
- Relieving pressure in a congested area
- Making an offensive move to the hoop.

Various rules govern dribbling, and players need to know both what falls within these rules and what violates them. *Sound* technique for dribbling has the following characteristics:

- Players protect the ball with the body or outside leg in congested areas or against defensive pressure.
- The height of the dribble rises as running speed increases and falls as defensive pressure increases or the area becomes congested.
- The dribbler has court awareness (head up, ready to make an offensive play).
- The dribbling hand remains on top of the ball.
- Players pick up the ball efficiently, that is, in such a way that they can pass or shoot the ball with as little movement as possible

By contrast, the following actions *violate* the rules governing dribbling:

- Bouncing the ball with two hands on the ball at the same time
- Having the pivot foot leave the floor or drag along the floor before releasing the ball from the hand (when initiating the dribble)
- Letting the ball come to rest in the hand while continuing to move
- Losing control of the dribble and continuing to dribble
- Stopping, dribbling, and starting again in a single possession (unless a defender causes the dribbler to lose control).

On a violation, the referee blows the whistle, and the team violating the rules loses possession of the ball.

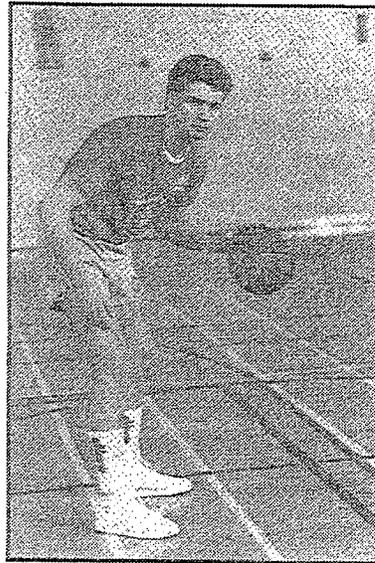
Encourage players to develop their dribbling: It is an essential skill in itself, and it facilitates other skills, such as ambidexterity. In addition, encourage players to limit their dribbling to purposeful action - excessive dribbling slows the pace of the game and may cause players to miss opportunities for passing or shooting.

### **The Static Dribble**

In the static dribble, players dribble the ball under control and in a stationary, protected position. This dribble is usually used by players who have been dribbling on the move and want to maintain their dribble while waiting for further play to develop.

Recommended technique for the static dribble (Figure 4.28) is as follows:

- Protect the ball by keeping the nondribbling shoulder, arm, and leg between the ball and defensive players.
- Flex the knees and hips, and keep the head up.
- Keep the fingers comfortably spread and relaxed.
- Push the ball downward with the combined force of the fingers, wrist, and elbow.
- Point the fingers to the floor after each dribble.
- Cushion the ball with the hand, wrist, and elbow as the ball returns to the hand.



**Figure 4.28**  
**Static Dribble**

In addition to emphasizing correct technique, advise players of the following tips:

- Players with larger hands need not place the heel of their hand on the ball; by contrast, players with smaller hands *do* need to place their whole hand on the ball.
- Ambidexterity facilitates correct technique.
- The more pressure there is on a player, the lower the dribble; the less pressure there is on the player, the higher the dribble.
- Varying the rhythm of the dribble and seeing the play while dribbling make it easier for players to perform correct technique.

## **Drills**

**Spot Drill.** Players dribble the ball below the knee in a stationary position. Vary the drill by moving in a restricted area while dribbling the ball. In all versions of this drill, players alternate between left and right hands.

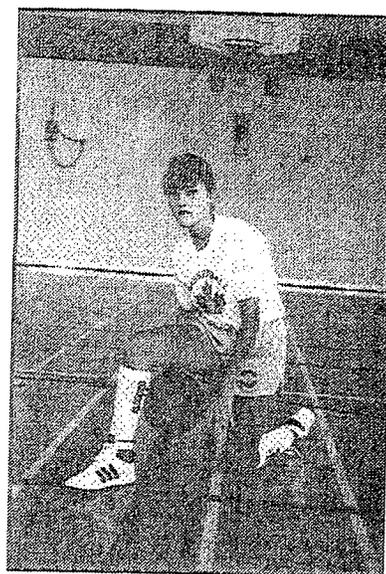
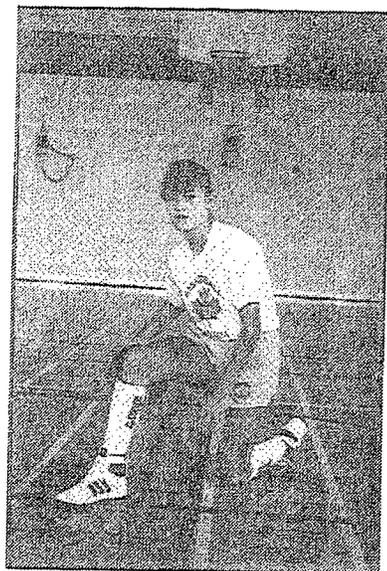
**Compass Drill.** Players begin as they do in the spot drill and dribble through the four compass points twice - dribble north from the center and return, dribble south and return, and so on, through all four compass points.

**Static-Dribble Drill.** Players perform the static dribble while practicing dribbles of different height and direction. Mirroring a leader discourages players from watching the ball. Players add figure-eight dribbling and around-the-legs dribbling as proficiency increases.

**Typewriter Drill.** Players dribble the ball below their knees *with one finger*. After using the five fingers of one hand, switch to the other hand.

**Quick-Dribble Drill.** Players stand with their knees bent and feet shoulder width apart. The ball is dribbled directly under the body, in the space between the feet. Players perform one right-hand dribble in front of the body, one left-hand dribble in front of the body, one right-hand dribble behind the body, and one left-hand dribble behind the body. Strive for speed and keep the head up.

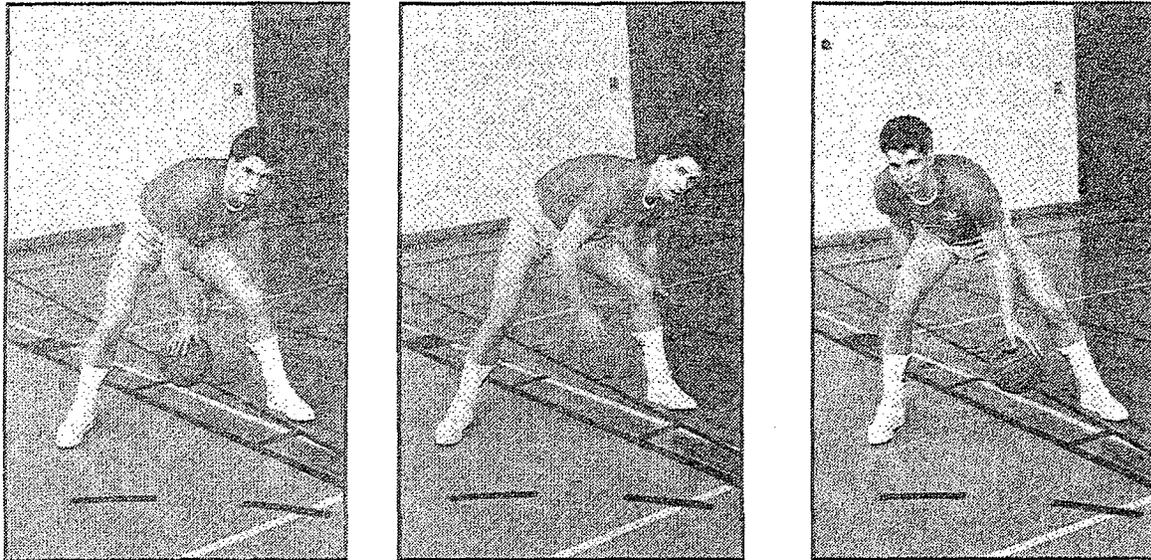
**Dribbling around One Leg.** Players kneel on one knee and use one hand to dribble the ball around the leg (Figure 4.29). Vary this drill by using both hands - one on each side of the body.



**Figure 4.29**  
**Dribbling Around One Leg**

**Dribbling under One Leg.** Players kneel on one knee and dribble the ball from one hand to the other under the knee (Figure 4.29).

**Figure-Eight Dribble.** Players use both hands to dribble the ball around the knees in a figure-eight pattern (Figure 4.30). Dribble in both directions.



**Figure 4.30**  
**Figure-Eight Dribble**

**Two-Ball Drill.** Players try to dribble two balls at the same time. As proficiency increases, players vary the drill - add movement, crisscross balls, keep one ball stationary while dribbling the other in a figure eight around one leg, etc. Players may even use a basketball and a tennis ball, dribble the basketball with one hand, and use the other hand to play catch with a partner with the tennis ball.

### **The Control Dribble**

The control dribble is a low, controlled, protected dribble that players use while moving at medium-slow speed. Players use this dribble to move the ball away from defensive pressure in congested areas or to move the ball up the court toward the basket when being closely guarded.

It is recommended that players perform the control dribble (Figure 4.31) as follows:

- Assume the ready position.
- Keep the ball close to the body, and protect the ball with the nondribbling arm and leg.
- Dribble with the hand away from the defender.
- Look up the court, not at the ball
- Use the same arm action as for the static dribble.



**Figure 4.31**  
**Control Dribble**

### **Drills**

**Partner Drill.** Two players dribble within an area of the floor bounded by lines, and try to steal each other's ball *while maintaining their dribble*.

**Dribble Tag.** Players simultaneously dribble and play tag in a confined area while dribbling.

In one variation on dribble tag, one or two players are "it," and they dribble and knock away other players' balls; when players are "out," they form a line - a boundary - around the playing area and continue to dribble. The line moves in to make the playing area smaller and smaller as fewer and fewer players are left inside the boundary.

In a second variation, everyone is "it," and each player tries to knock away every other player's ball.

**Collision Drill.** Players dribble continuously in a small, restricted area (a half-court or quarter-court, depending on the number of players). Players stay within the boundaries, continually moving to avoid other players.

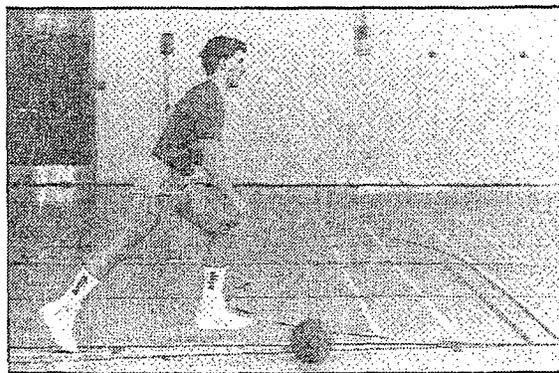
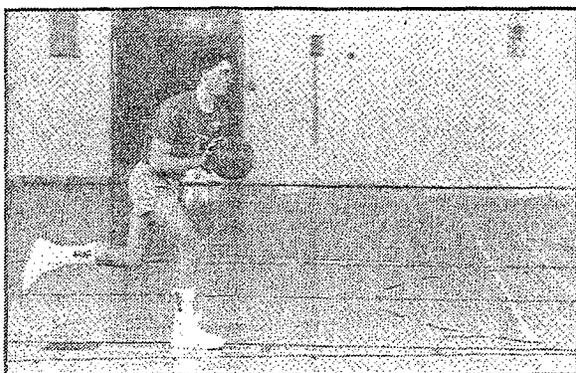
In one variation on this drill, players dribble with their weak hand. In a second variation, players start the drill on one boundary line of the playing area, and dribble to the opposite boundary line on a signal.

### **The Speed Dribble**

Players use the speed dribble when they are running near top speed and are in an uncongested area with little defensive pressure, for example, on a fast break or breakaway.

Recommended technique for the speed dribble (Figure 4.32) is as follows:

- Position the body as for high-speed running.
- Flex and extend the elbow, wrist, and fingers to push the ball ahead.
- The greater the running speed, the farther out in front the ball should be pushed.
- Contact the ball on the backside, between waist and chest, and in front of and outside the dribbling-side hip.



**Figure 4.32**  
**Speed Dribble**

## **Drills**

**Speed-Control Dribble.** Players gather at one end of the gym and divide into groups of three or four; *every* player in *every* group has a ball. On a signal, each player in the first group starts a speed dribble; on the next signal, each switches to a control dribble. Players also change hands while they are dribbling and stop and start *without travelling*. The second group begins when the first group has passed the foul line.

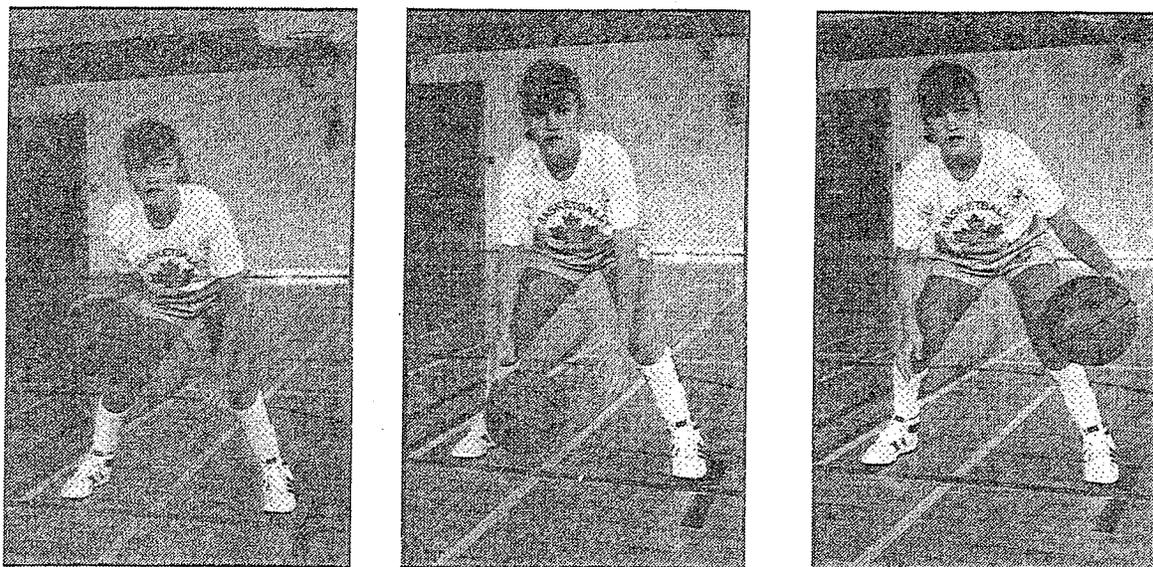
**Relay Race.** Players gather at one end of the gym and divide into teams of three or four. On a signal, the first player on each team speed-dribbles to the far end of the gym, returns with the speed-dribble *with the other hand*, and passes to the next player on the team. The winning team is first to have *all* its members finish dribbling.

## **The Alternate-Hands Dribble**

The alternate-hands dribble is a beginner's technique for changing dribbling hands. Players use this technique when defensive pressure is moderate.

In the alternate-hands dribble (Figure 4.33), players move the ball in front of the body from one hand to the other. Recommended technique for making this switch is as follows:

- Contact the ball at a 45-degree angle with the dribbling hand.
- Push the ball to the left hand from the right with strong wrist and forearm action.
- Continue the dribble with the left hand.



**Figure 4.33**  
**Alternate-Hands Dribble**

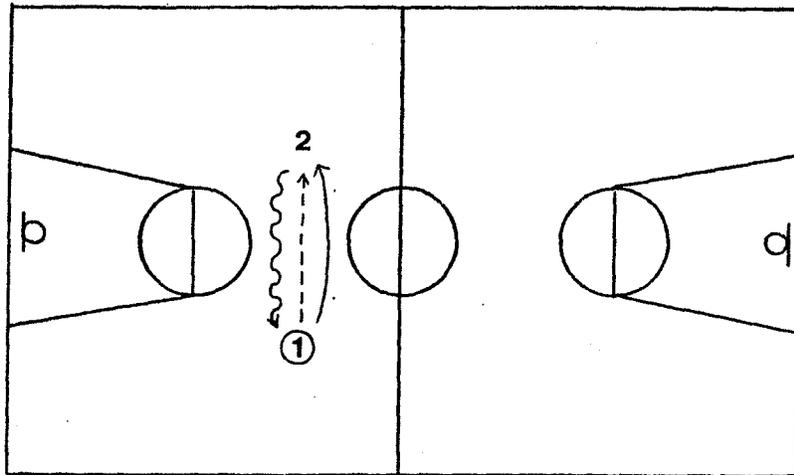
### **Drills**

**Side-to-Side Drill.** Players dribble the ball in front of their body, pushing the ball from side to side, using only one hand. Players may move around the court while dribbling once they have mastered side-to-side movement.

**Stationary Alternate-Hands Drill.** Players assume the position for the control dribble, dribble three times with the right hand, switch the ball to the opposite hand, perform three control dribbles, and so on.

**V-Dribble.** Players dribble the ball in front of their body and move the ball from side to side on every dribble.

**Pivot-Drive Drill** (Figure 4.34). Players form pairs, and each pair has a ball. Players stand about five meters apart (players may use lines on the court to position themselves). Players pass to their partner, and follow their pass. Receivers drive toward their partner's original position using a stopping technique specified by the coach (stride stop or two-foot jump stop), and pivot to pass to their partner. The rotation continues in this manner.



**Figure 4.34**  
**Pivot-Drive Drill**

## Chapter 5 Individual Offence

### 5.0 Introduction

A number of fundamental offensive skills are essential in basketball. After working through this chapter, you will be better prepared to teach your players the following:

- Passing
- Receiving
- Faking
- Shooting
- One-on-one play.

**Teaching Point:** Although passing and receiving are separate skills and are treated in different sections of this chapter, it is suggested that coaches teach these skills in the same session, and *then* choose drills and exercises that concentrate on one skill. In addition, it is important to emphasize passing and receiving in *all* drills and games.

### 5.1 Passing

Passing promotes team play and is therefore one of the most important fundamentals of offensive basketball. Passing also contributes to the excitement of the game, because the pass is a much quicker way to move the ball than the dribble.

The purposes of passing are as follows:

- To advance the ball up the court as quickly as possible
- To achieve better court position
- To improve shooting position.

A successful pass requires two players: a passer and a receiver. The passer has the following responsibilities:

- To maintain a balanced position so that a pass can be made quickly.
- To anticipate the movements of teammates.
- To use peripheral vision to keep at least two potential pass receivers in view at all times.
- To throw the pass as the receiver breaks to an open area of the floor.
- To use pass fakes to keep defenders out of passing lanes.
- To use good technique to throw crisp, accurate passes.

This section introduces three passes: the chest pass, the chest pass while running, and the overhead pass.

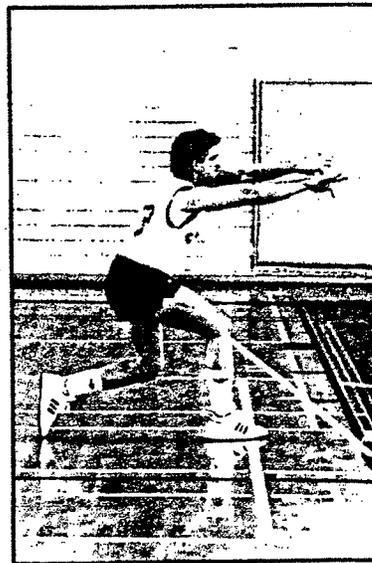
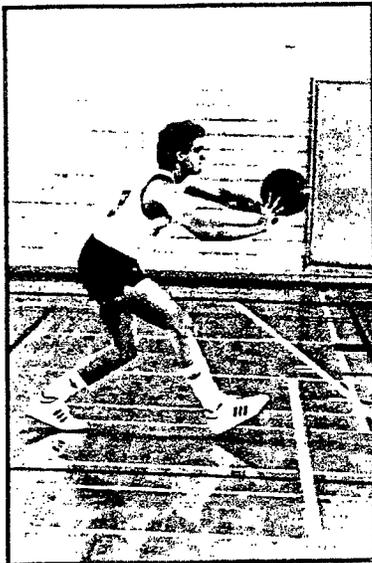
### **The Chest Pass**

The chest pass is a straight, quick pass that should go from the passer's to the receiver's chest on the same plane. In addition, the distance between passer and receiver should be approximately the width of the key for Level 1 players. This pass is often the best method to advance the ball up the court or around the perimeter, but is not a good penetrating pass.

Recommended technique for the chest pass (Figure 5.1) is as follows:

- Start in the offensive ready position.
- Hold the ball close to the chest, with two hands, and with the thumbs on top of the ball.
- Generate force by extending the rear leg, elbows, wrists, and fingers.
- Step toward the receiver to add force to the pass (players at higher levels are stronger and may not have to add force in this way).

- Release the ball with a quick snap of the wrists and fingers.
- Follow through so that the palms face outward, the fingers point in the direction of the receiver, and the ball has backspin.
- Restore balance by bringing the rear foot forward.



**Figure 5.1**  
**Chest Pass**

## **Drills**

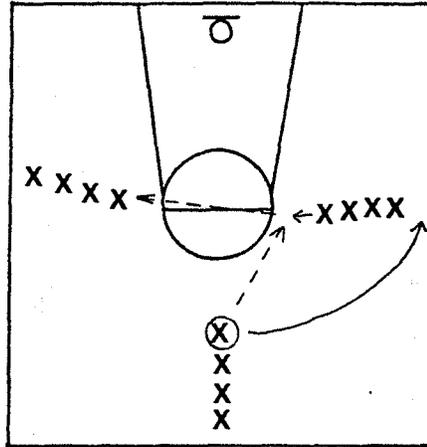
Use passing drills at every practice. Early in the season, use drills that *focus* on passing; later in the season, choose drills that include passing as one of several components.

**Wall Drill.** This drill is designed for one player with a ball. The player stands two to six meters from a wall and throws chest passes at the wall; the player aims at a target at about chest height and concentrates on technique, especially proper backspin. The player begins the drill close to the wall but moves farther away as skill increases.

**Stationary Chest-Pass Drill.** Two players use one ball, stand the width of the key apart, and practice proper technique for the chest pass. Players practice stepping into the pass with either foot. They also assume the triple-threat position when receiving the ball and *then* make the pass.

**Name Drill.** This drill is not a separate drill; rather, it is potentially part of *any* passing drill. Ask players performing the drill to say the name of the player to whom they are passing *as they make the pass*. This drill helps players focus on the receiver.

**Triangle Passing Drill.** Players begin with one ball, and form three lines (Figure 5.2). Passers pass to the first player in one of the other lines, and follow their pass. The drill runs continuously; more balls are added as players' skills increase until players are keeping three balls in motion.



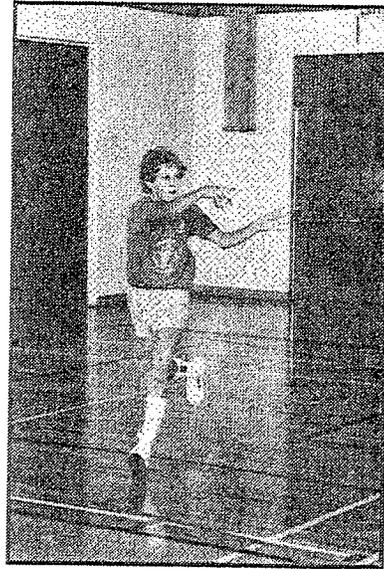
**Figure 5.2**  
**Triangle Passing Drill**

### **The Chest Pass While Running**

The chest pass while running requires basically the same technique as the chest pass. However, the chest pass while running is slightly more difficult to execute, for the player must pass within two steps of picking up the ball to avoid a travelling violation.

To throw a chest pass while running (Figure 5.3), the player:

- Runs straight ahead with a normal rhythm
- Picks the ball up and turns in the direction of the intended pass
- Throws the pass using the same technique used for the chest pass.

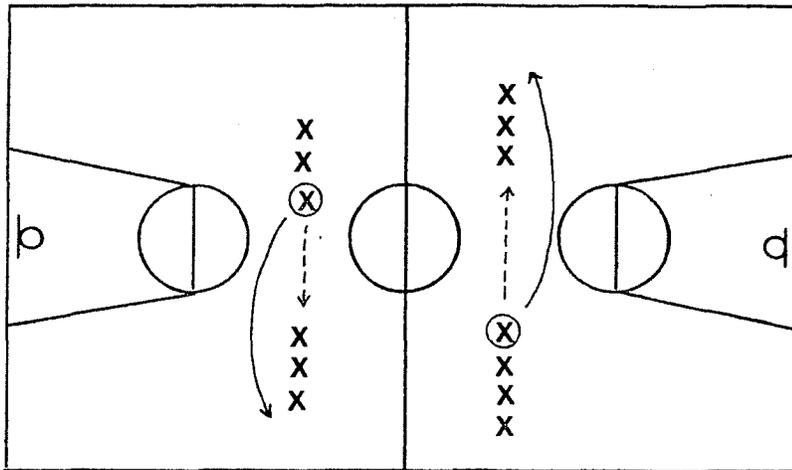


**Figure 5.3**  
**Chest Pass While Running**

Players should first practice throwing passes in the direction of their movement, then progress to passes requiring rotation of the trunk at the moment of the pass.

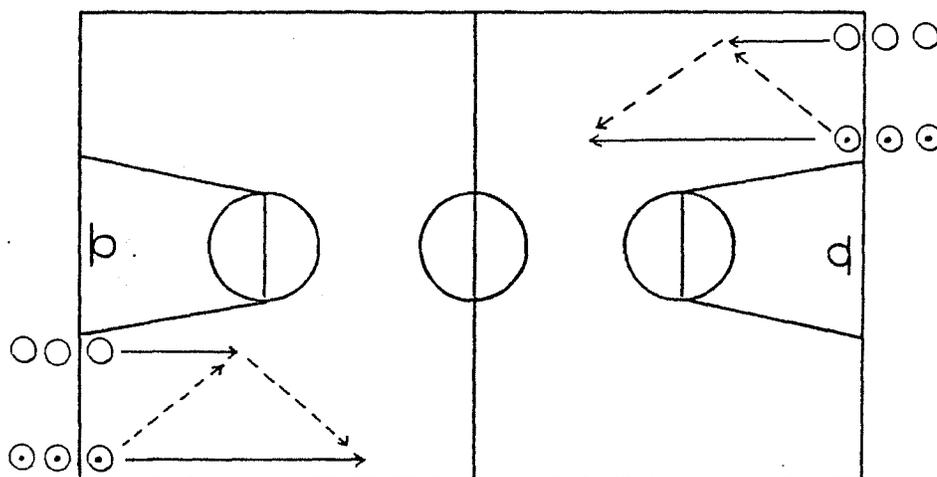
## Drills

**Two-Line Passing Drill.** Players divide into two groups and form two single-file lines; these lines should face each other and should be approximately the width of the key apart (Figure 5.4). One player begins with the ball and throws a pass to the first player in the opposite line, who moves forward to meet the pass. The passer goes to the end of the opposite line, and the player with the ball passes to the first player in the opposite line without dribbling. Continuous.



**Figure 5.4**  
**Two-Line Passing Drill**

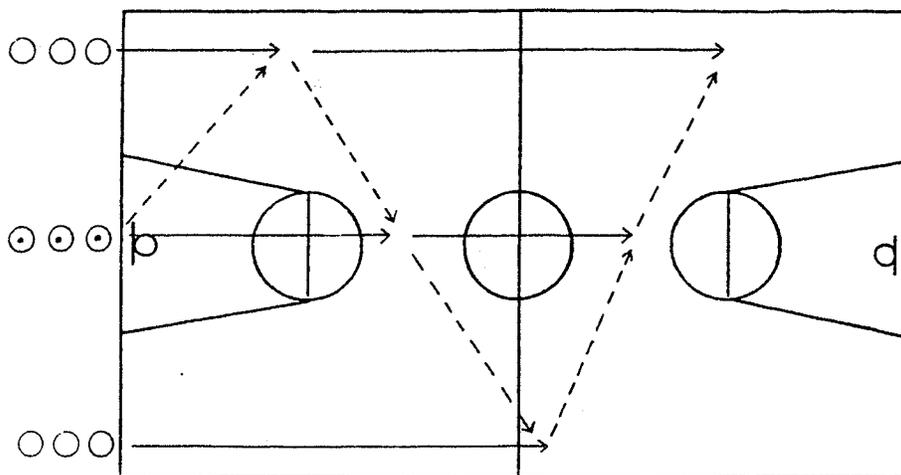
**Two-Lane Passing Drill.** Players form two lines, and each player is paired with a player in the opposite line (Figure 5.5). Each pair has a ball, and players run in pairs to one end of the court, throwing passes to each other *without dribbling*. When players reach the end of the court, they switch sides and come back on the opposite side of the court. Emphasize that players should not change their running rhythm and that they should turn *only the upper body* toward their partner. Beginning players tend to use a shuffling motion when they first do this drill; it is therefore important to encourage them to run straight ahead.



**Figure 5.5**  
**Two-Lane Passing Drill**

Vary this drill by having players stop after each pass they catch - it helps players learn to control their balance.

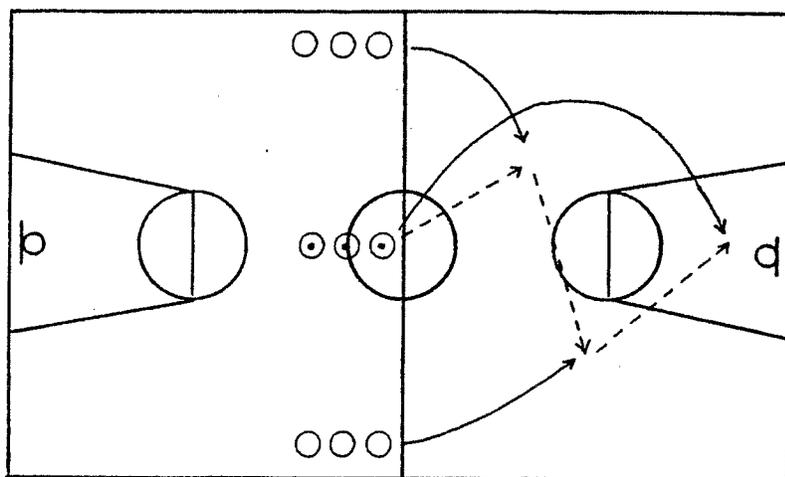
**Three-Lane Passing Drill.** Players form three lines at one end of the court, and players in the center line have basketballs. Players leave in groups of three (Figure 5.6) and run straight down the court, passing the ball back and forth among themselves, without dribbling. When a group reaches the center line, the next group leaves. Players switch lines at the end of the court so that everyone has a turn in the center line.



**Figure 5.6**  
**Three-Lane Passing Drill**

**Three-Player Weave.** This drill (Figure 5.7) is designed to improve both passing and receiving skills. The first part of the drill is as follows:

- Players form three lines at center.
- Players in the middle have basketballs and slap the ball as a signal for the first player in each line to start running.
- Players in the center pass to the left or the right and follow the pass.
- Players receiving a pass catch the ball and pass to the player in the opposite outside lane who moves toward the ball.
- The player moving toward the ball then passes to the player who was originally in the middle, who shoots a lay-up.



**Figure 5.7**  
**Three-Player Weave**

After the shot, players move as follows:

- The shooter continues through to the outside lane.
- The player who threw the last pass continues to the foul line extended and waits there for the outlet pass.
- The third player continues to the basket, gets the rebound, and throws the outlet pass.
- Players rotate to the right when changing lines; players in the right line rotate to the far left.

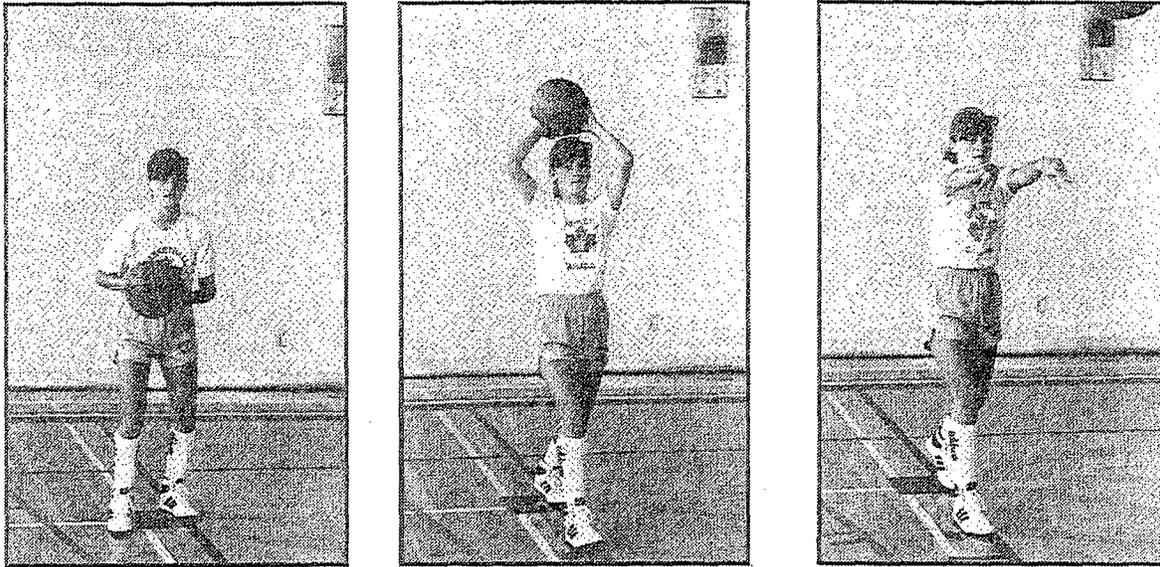
A full-court version of this drill can be performed by using a similar pattern and incorporating one or two extra passes.

## **The Overhead Pass**

This pass is a straight, crisp pass in which the passer holds the ball with two hands and throws the ball from above the head. Players use this pass when pressured, when they have a height advantage, or when they are making a penetrating pass. Players also use this pass when outside their shooting range, where the value of the triple-threat position is somewhat diminished. Because both hands are on the ball, players can easily make fakes with this pass.

Recommended technique for the overhead pass (Figure 5.8) is as follows:

- Start in the offensive ready position.
- Lift the ball close to the body and in front of the face until the ball is above the head with the elbows slightly bent.
- Do not put the ball behind the head, as another player could deflect the ball or steal it from behind; putting the ball behind the head also slows release of the ball.
- Keep the hands on the side of the ball and slightly to the rear.
- While holding the ball, point the thumbs inward and backward at a 45-degree angle, and cock the wrists one quarter-turn backward.
- Initiate the pass by taking a short step with the lead foot in the direction of the receiver.
- To add force to the pass, snap the wrists from the cocked position as the arms approach full extension.
- Make sure that the hands and fingers point downward in the follow-through. Rotate the thumbs inward and downward after releasing the ball, thus imparting slight backspin on the ball and making it easier for the receiver to catch the ball.



**Figure 5.8**  
**Overhead Pass**

### **Drills**

To teach the overhead pass, use drills for passes from stationary positions.

### **5.2 Receiving**

Because the pass is considered one of the most important fundamentals of offensive basketball, a successful pass reception is essential to overall success in the game. All players must be ready to receive a pass at any time.

Good receivers:

- See the ball at all times.
- Time their moves to get open so that the ballhandler will be able to pass them the ball as they get open.
- Anticipate passes directed toward them.
- Use good receiving technique so that they can dribble, shoot, or pass without significantly changing their grip on the ball.
- Square up to the basket upon receipt of the pass.
- Anticipate their offensive maneuver in advance of receiving the ball.

## **Basic Techniques**

Whether players are stationary or moving, they can use the same technique for receiving the ball, namely, either funnelling, or blocking and trapping. It is recommended funnelling be taught before blocking and trapping.

In both techniques, players receiving the ball must:

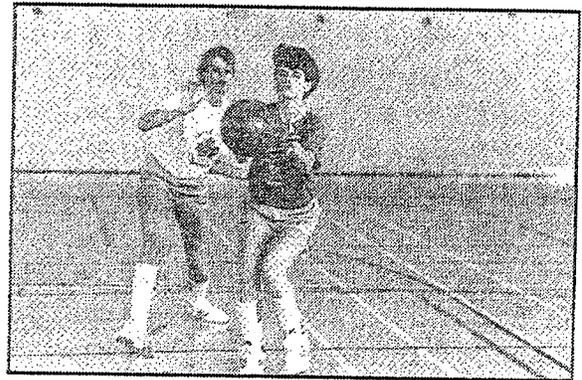
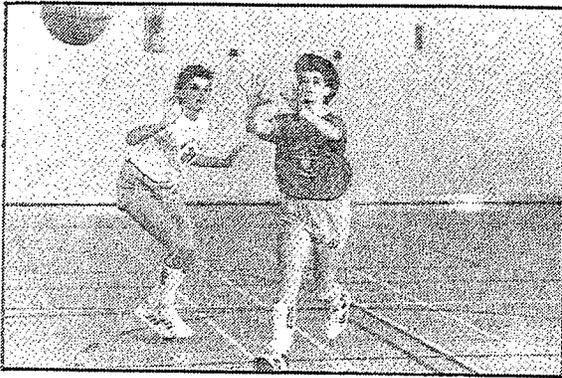
- Give the passer a target with both hands. The hands are relatively close together, the fingers are spread, and the thumbs are close together.
- Focus total attention on the flight of the ball.
- Absorb the impact of the ball with the fingers, wrist, arms, and body.
- Move to the ball in all situations.
- Square to the basket and assume the triple-threat position *immediately after receiving the ball.*

Beginning players often fear the ball when first learning to receive passes. This fear can be alleviated by having players begin with foam balls and use soft, underhand passes.

## **Funnelling**

Technique for funnelling (Figure 5.9) is as follows:

- Assume the offensive ready position, and keep both hands together, the fingers spread, and the thumbs close together.
- Catch the ball with both hands, thus funnelling the ball into a firm grip.

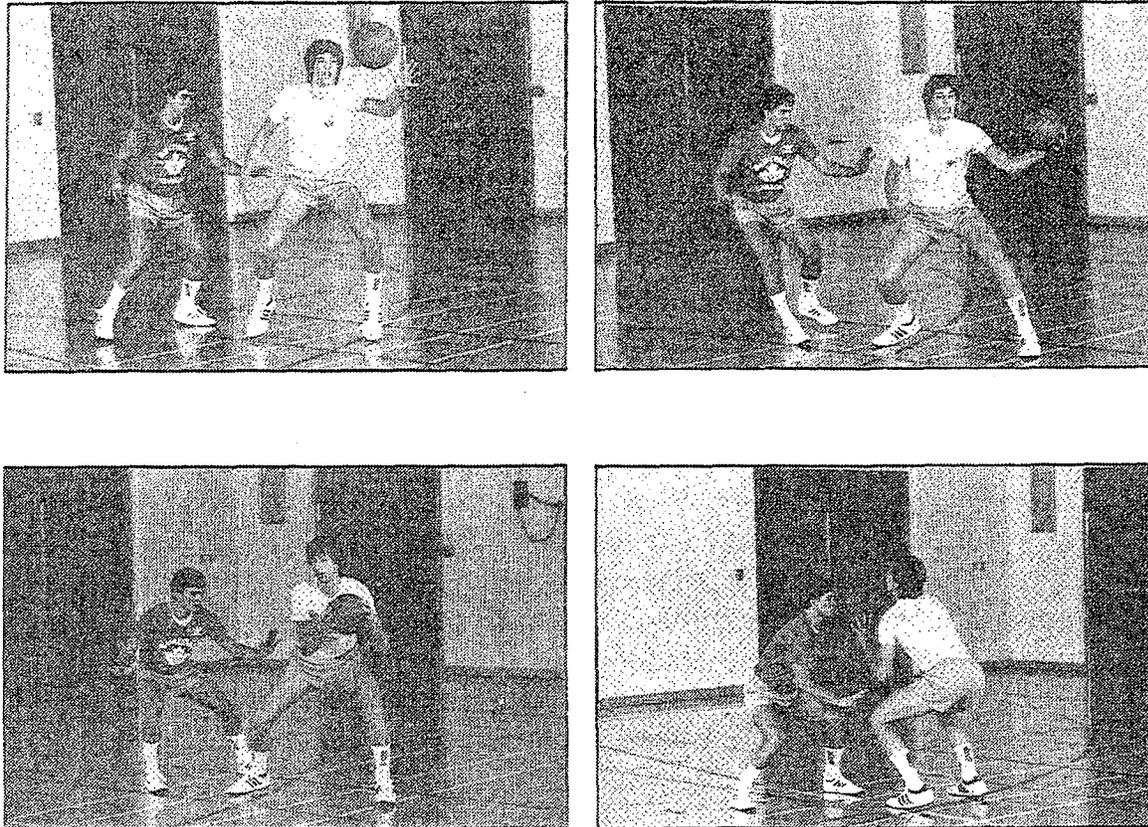


**Figure 5.9**  
**Funnelling**

## **Blocking and Trapping**

Players use this technique when the pass is off target, or when the pass is thrown away from defensive pressure. In this technique (Figure 5.10), players do the following:

- Block the ball with the hand closer to the ball
- Pull the ball toward the body and trap it with the opposite hand.



**Figure 5.10**  
**Blocking and Trapping**

### Drills

**Jump-and-Catch Drill.** Passer and receiver stand three or four meters apart. The receiver stands in the offensive ready position with his or her back to the passer. As the passer says the receiver's name, he or she passes to the receiver, and the receiver does a 180-degree jump turn to face the passer. The receiver concentrates on quickly picking up the flight of the ball and having the hands in a good receiving position.

### Options after Receiving a Pass While Running

Players have three options after receiving a pass while running: to stop, to keep running and start dribbling, or to pass immediately. Whatever option players choose - and they must be able to perform *all three* - they should pay particular attention to the position of their hands after receiving the ball.

To be able to stop immediately after receiving the pass, players must act *before* the pass arrives. In particular, players should begin to lower their center of gravity by dropping their hips. Then, when players receive the ball, they can use a stride stop or a jump stop, and pivot toward the basket in a triple-threat position. To practice this option, players can vary the two-lane passing drill (Figure 5.5) by stopping after receiving a pass.

If players decide to keep running and start dribbling, they should move the ball to the dribbling hand immediately after catching the ball. Players should cock the dribbling hand *on receiving the pass*.

### 5.3 Faking

A fake is a deceptive offensive movement designed to "freeze" defensive players or make them commit themselves in the direction opposite that of the intended offensive movement. The success of a basketball play often depends on the ability of the ballhandler to use fakes effectively.

It is suggested to teach fakes after players have learned the basic offensive movements, namely, passing, shooting, and driving.

An effective use of fakes does the following:

- Increases the probability that passes will succeed
- Opens up driving lanes to the basket
- Creates shooting opportunities
- Makes it more difficult for defenders to help each other.

Many players use fakes poorly because they do not first read the defence. Players should therefore not try faking if there is a clear opportunity for passing, shooting, or driving.

Players can also make fakes much more effective by squaring to the basket in a triple-threat position *every time they get the ball*. This move puts *immediate* pressure on the defensive player, who may overreact and thus make a fake unnecessary.

Good fakes have the following characteristics:

- They are short and sharp.
- Players keep their balance.
- They are directed in a logical direction (for instance, toward the basket or toward a potential receiver).
- They are realistic. A good shot fake should look exactly like the beginning of the shooting motion, and a good pass fake should look exactly like the beginning of the passing motion.
- They *mislead* about direction; for example, the player fakes in one direction but passes in another.
- They are followed *immediately* by the intended move.

Fakes may involve one or more of the following moves:

- A head fake
- A shoulder fake
- A body fake
- A foot fake
- A ball fake (shot, pass, or dribble).

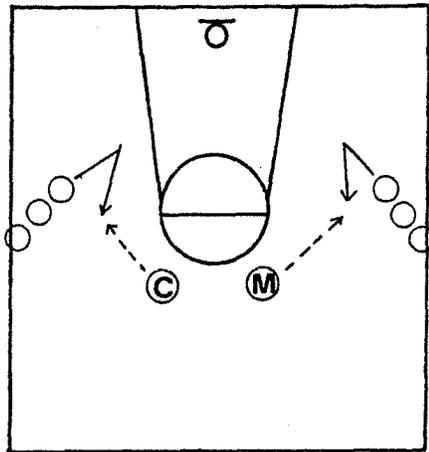
Players should work at "selling" the fake to the defender. For selling to succeed, the fake must look *just like the intended movement*. Players can achieve this realism by working on details, for example, movement of the eyes or shoulders.

## Drills

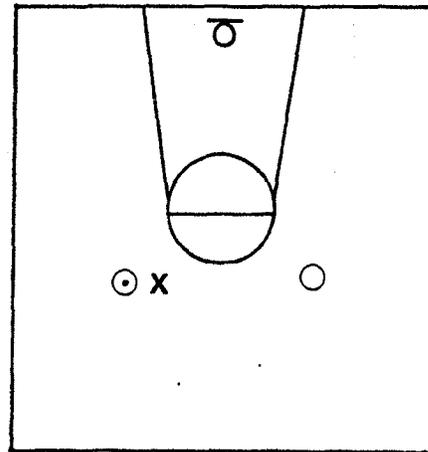
**Shadow Drill.** Players work without a ball to concentrate solely on their own movements. Players spread out on the court, break to get open, simulate catching a pass, square to the hoop, and then perform - without a ball - one of the following sequences:

- Fake pass, pass
- Fake pass, shot
- Fake pass, drive
- Fake shot, pass
- Fake shot, shot
- Fake shot, drive
- Fake drive, pass
- Fake drive, shot
- Fake drive, drive.

Once players have mastered this part of the drill, they can practice the same fakes *with* the ball (Figure 5.11). Two passers at the foul line pass to players in each line, who receive the ball after V-cutting to get open. The ball is returned to the passer after each move is performed.



**Figure 5.11**  
**Shadow Drill**



**Figure 5.12**  
**Pig-in-the-Middle Drill**

**Pig-in-the-Middle Drill.** Players divide into groups of three; each group has one ball and designates one player as the pig. The pig is positioned between the other two players, who are approximately the width of the key apart (Figure 5.12). The drill proceeds as follows:

- The pig must assume a defensive ready position against the player with the ball.
- The player with the ball has three seconds to release the ball (the defender counts "One thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three").
- If the passer is unsuccessful because the ball is deflected or intercepted, or because the passer hesitates, that player becomes the pig.
- Players may not throw high lob passes, nor are receivers permitted to move from their positions to catch the ball.

Vary this drill by assigning receivers to specific positions, for example, guard-forward or guard-guard.

**Bull-in-the-Ring Drill.** One player stands in the center of either the foul circle or the center circle; five other players stand around the circle with their toes on the circle line. Players pass the ball around the circle to prevent the bull from deflecting the ball. Players on the circle may not pass to players immediately next to them. If the ball is touched by the player in the middle, the passer becomes the bull.

#### **5.4 Shooting**

Shooting is a key skill in basketball, and one *all* players should master. Not all players can become great shooters, but good technique and plenty of practice can make any player a *good* shooter.

When teaching shooting, it is important to be aware of individual differences among players. Not all players have the strength or coordination necessary to use the same technique, but two players can use slightly different styles and still adhere to the basic principles of shooting (see below). In addition, it is important that you realize how difficult it can be to change styles that players have learned thoroughly, *but incorrectly*.

#### **Basic Principles**

Shooting is a fine motor skill, and players must practice a great deal to become good shooters. Fortunately, most players enjoy shooting and gladly practice it on their own. However, practicing can be much more productive if players incorporate the following basic principles:

- Aim at the hoop.
- Choose an appropriate angle of release.
- Use all the joints that can be used.
- Start from a balanced position.
- Practice.
- Take psychological factors into account.

#### **Aim at the Hoop**

The rim is the best reference point for shooters. Aiming just over the front part of the rim or just in front of the back part of the rim is open to debate, but either is acceptable.

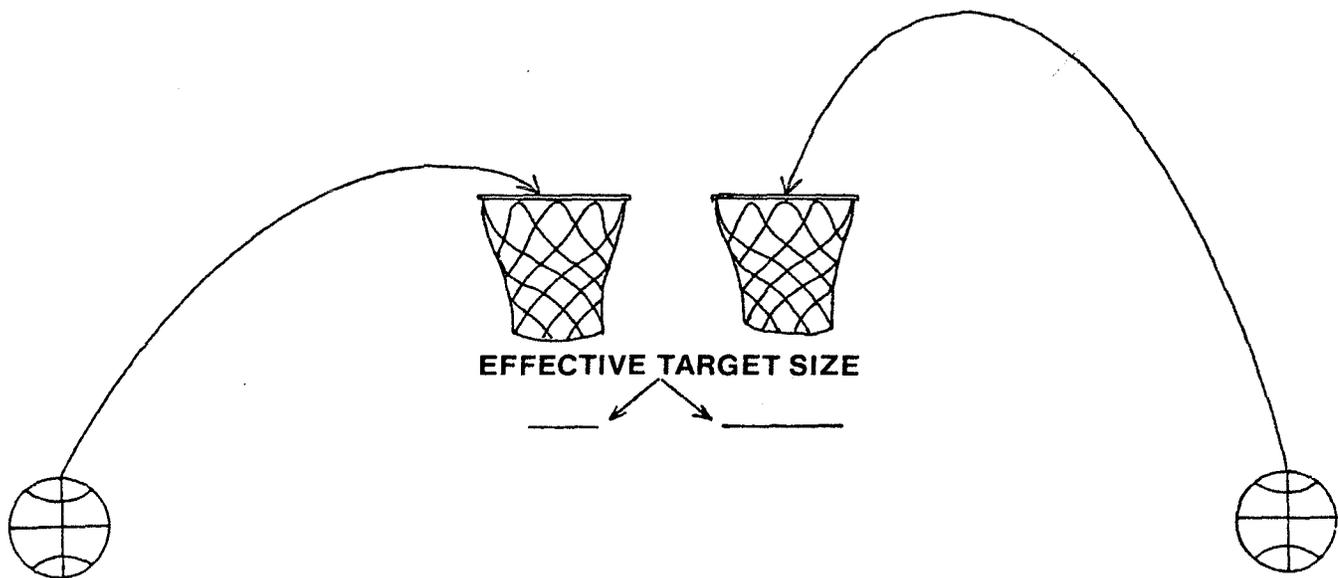
When aiming at the hoop, players should:

- Use the same aiming point every time.
- Avoid using the backboard (except for lay-ups) until basic technique has been mastered.
- Concentrate on the basket until the ball reaches the target.

### Choose an Appropriate Angle of Release

The angle of release of the ball affects the precision necessary on the shot. A high arc increases the effective size of the target (Figure 5.13). However, a shot with a high arc travels farther than a shot with a flatter arc, and any errors in aiming are more pronounced.

This relationship between angle of release and precision results in certain recommendations for the angle of release. For medium- and long-range shots, an angle of approximately 45 degrees is recommended. For shots close to the basket, the angle of release depends primarily on players' size.



**Figure 5.13**  
Effect of Angle of Release on Effective Size of Target

### **Use All the Joints That Can Be Used**

The force that pushes the ball to the basket is the sum of all the forces the player has put in motion. The legs, arms, and shooting wrist provide most of the force that propels the ball, and they must work *together* to produce a smooth, coordinated movement and maximum force.

As an example of the application of this principle, consider the set shot. Ideally, players lift the ball as they lift their body and release the ball just at or before the top of the body's upward movement. Wrist movement should occur at or just before the top of the jump, and much stronger wrist and arm action is necessary if wrist movement occurs as players fall from the top of their jump.

The application of this principle is less evident with players who are very strong or with players who are close to the basket; in both cases, the arms and wrists can supply all the force necessary on a shot. See Chapter 3, on the analysis of skills, for more information on the physical principles involved in shooting.

### **Start from a Balanced Position**

Players should be in a balanced position before beginning the shooting motion; otherwise, they will find it difficult to shoot consistently, and bad habits may develop.

As a general rule, players should assume the triple-threat position *before* starting the shot. If doing so is not possible - and it may not be - players should at least bring the ball *to the same starting point* before lifting the ball to shoot.

### **Practice**

Shooting is a fine motor skill, and hours of practice are necessary if players are to become good shooters. Encourage players to practice shooting outside regular practice, and, since outside practice is not always possible, include shooting drills in every practice.

## **Take Psychological Factors into Account**

Shooting is a fine motor skill and is therefore greatly influenced by several psychological factors, including concentration, shot selection, and confidence. As a result, it is essential that these factors be taken into consideration when players are learning to shoot.

### **Concentration**

Shooters must concentrate *completely* on the target once they have decided to shoot. Players therefore need to develop such concentration as they work on their technique. Once players' technique is sound, introduce distractions - for instance, pressure, noise, or fatigue - so that players learn to concentrate under conditions that are less than ideal.

### **Shot Selection**

In many cases, the best way to improve shooting percentage is to take better shots. Players should know their own limitations and should know *not to shoot* in the following situations:

- When a teammate is in a better shooting position.
- When there are no offensive rebounders.
- When the shooter is off balance.
- When the team is trying to slow the tempo.
- When they are outside their effective shooting range.

You can help individual players define their shooting range. Players should know *before they get the ball* whether or not they are within their shooting range. Situations involving the 30-second clock or the end of the period can also influence shot selection.

### **Confidence**

Confidence may well be the most important factor in shooting. Once players decide to shoot, they must have complete confidence that the ball will go in. Help players develop this confidence by structuring shooting drills so that success is attainable. For example, have players work close to the basket in the beginning, and gradually move further out.

Players who want to develop confidence should do as follows:

- Visualize all shots going into the basket.
- Take shots within their shooting range.
- Extend the shooting range in small steps.
- Practice shooting regularly.
- Forget missed shots immediately.

Help players develop confidence by doing the following:

- Emphasize the size of the target by demonstrating that two regulation balls will almost fit through a regulation hoop simultaneously.
- Not criticizing players who missed a shot from within their shooting range.
- Setting realistic shooting goals for players.

### **Adaptations for Smaller Players**

Some adjustments to technique may be necessary for smaller players. Such adjustments include the following:

- Using a smaller ball.
- Using a lower basket (this adaptation may be more important than using a smaller ball).
- Stepping into the shot with the foot on the shooting-arm side (this adaptation provides more power).
- Not lifting the ball as high before pushing it with arm motion (younger players may lift the ball to shoulder height instead of above the forehead).

### **Key Phrases**

Using key phrases when players are practicing their shooting may help them considerably. For example:

- "Lift the ball, and then push it."
- "Lift the ball straight up so that it stays in an imaginary vertical cylinder until the forward arm movement begins."
- "Lift the ball with your arms as your legs raise your body."

## **Teaching Progressions**

The basic steps in learning to shoot are the following:

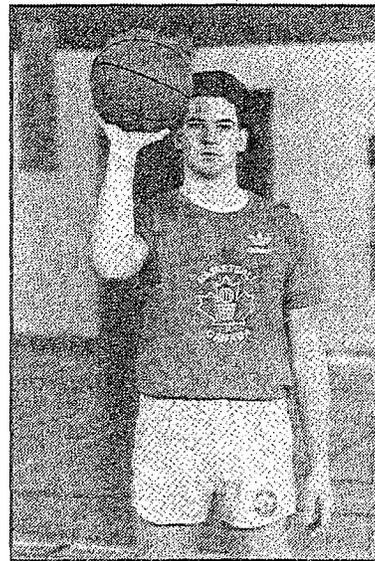
- Learning the triple-threat position.
- Learning the proper grip.
- Learning the shooting motion with one hand.
- Learning the shooting motion with both hands.

It is strongly recommended that players master each step before proceeding to the next. Furthermore, when checking technique, observe players from the side, from the front, and from the rear - this facilitates picking out mistakes.

**The Triple-Threat Position.** Make sure that your players have mastered this position, and constantly emphasize its use.

**The Proper Grip.** Players can learn the proper grip by doing as follows:

- Start by holding the ball underhand (Figure 5.14). The hand is slightly cupped, and the ball rests comfortably in it.
- Lift the ball to the forehead so that the hand is underneath the ball.
- Cock the wrist so that the arm, forearm, and wrist form a sideways U (Figure 5.14).
- Place the off hand on the side of the ball, slightly toward its front, and pointing toward the ceiling.
- Lower the ball, and assume the triple-threat position.



**Figure 5.14**  
**Proper Grip**

**Shooting with One Hand.** Shooting with one hand helps players develop proper wrist and arm motion. Shooting against a wall or backboard should help players concentrate on technique.

Players should work first on developing good wrist motion. They can do so by shooting against a wall from close range and using only their wrist (Figure 5.15). The ball should have good backspin and a medium arc.



**Figure 5.15**  
**Wrist Motion (Side View)**

Figure 5.16 shows wrist motion from behind.



**Figure 5.16**  
**Wrist Motion (Rear View)**

Once players have mastered wrist motion, they can work on arm motion:

- Start shooting with the ball just above the forehead.
- Move the upper arm very little, but extend the forearm.
- Introduce wrist movement as the forearm finishes its extension.

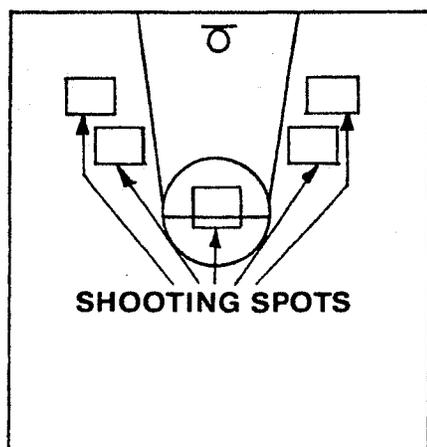
**Shooting with Both Hands.** When players practice shooting with both hands, they should do as follows:

- Start from the triple-threat position.
- Use the two-handed grip.
- Progress to shooting at a basket once technique against the wall is sound, and start shooting at the basket from no more than one step away. Players' feet can leave the floor, but allow only set shots at this stage.
- Make a specified number of shots in a row (5 to 10) at each distance before moving back.
- Increase shooting distance one step at a time to maintain the emphasis on good technique.
- Do not change basic shooting technique for the arms as distance from the basket increases.
- Push harder with the legs to provide extra power on shots farther from the basket.

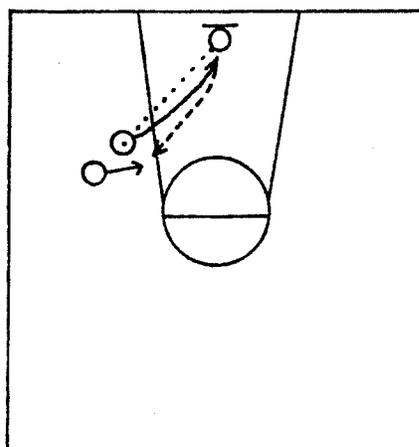
### **Drills**

**Area-Shooting Drill.** The purpose of this drill is to accustom players to how the basket looks from different locations on the floor. It is suggested that players initially practice shots from the end line, from a 45-degree angle to the basket, and from directly in front of the basket (Figure 5.17).

Players organize in pairs - a shooter and a rebounder - and the shooter shoots from the end line, from a 45-degree angle to the basket, or from directly in front of the basket. The beginning player shoots from within one to three meters of the basket and progressively moves farther from the basket as technique, rhythm, and success ratio improve. Each player takes a specified number of shots before shooter and retriever exchange roles, and the pair moves to a new location.



**Figure 5.17**  
**Area-Shooting Drill**



**Figure 5.18**  
**Paired-Shooting Drill**

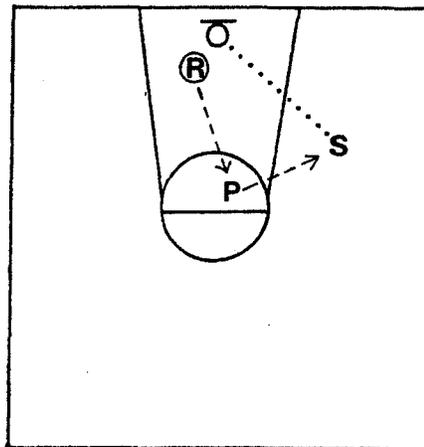
**Paired-Shooting Drill.** Players form pairs, with one, two, or three pairs at a basket and each pair shooting from a different position on the court. The second player of each pair lines up behind the shooter (Figure 5.18). The object of this drill is to follow shots to the basket. Shooters follow the shot, retrieve the rebound or the ball (after it has passed through the hoop), and pass to their partner, who shoots and follows the shot. After passing, the passer returns to the spot from which the shot was made. To add competition to this drill, have pairs compete against each other to be the first to score a designated number of baskets.

**Pressure-Shooting Drill.** Players form pairs in different shooting areas - this way, they will not be distracted during shooting by a defender's outstretched hand. The rebounder passes the ball to the shooter, moves forward, and puts a hand up to force the shooter to sight "through" and "over" the defender's hand while shooting. The defender does not try to block the shot. Shooters get the rebound and pass to their partner, who is now the shooter. Continue this sequence for a specific length of time.

**Shooting-Speed Drill.** The purpose of this drill is to help players increase their shooting speed and accuracy by scoring as many baskets as possible in a given amount of time. Players form pairs - a rebounder and a shooter - in different shooting areas. The rebounder passes as quickly as possible to the shooter so that he or she can take as many shots as possible in a period of time.

Players must not increase shooting speed at the expense of technique and accuracy; it is therefore important to try to increase the shooting speed only of players whose technique and accuracy will *not* be affected. In this drill, the key phrase is John Wooden's "Be quick, but don't hurry."

**Pivot-and-Shoot Drill.** The purpose of this drill is to teach players to receive the ball, pivot to a position facing the basket, and shoot. Players form groups of three - rebounder, passer, and shooter - in different shooting areas (Figure 5.19). The rebounder passes to the passer, who is positioned *relative to the shooter* at an angle similar to those that occur in games. The passer passes to the shooter, who receives the ball, pivots on the designated pivot foot to face the basket, and shoots. After a designated number of shots or length of time, players reverse roles.



**Figure 5.19**  
**Pivot-and-Shoot Drill**

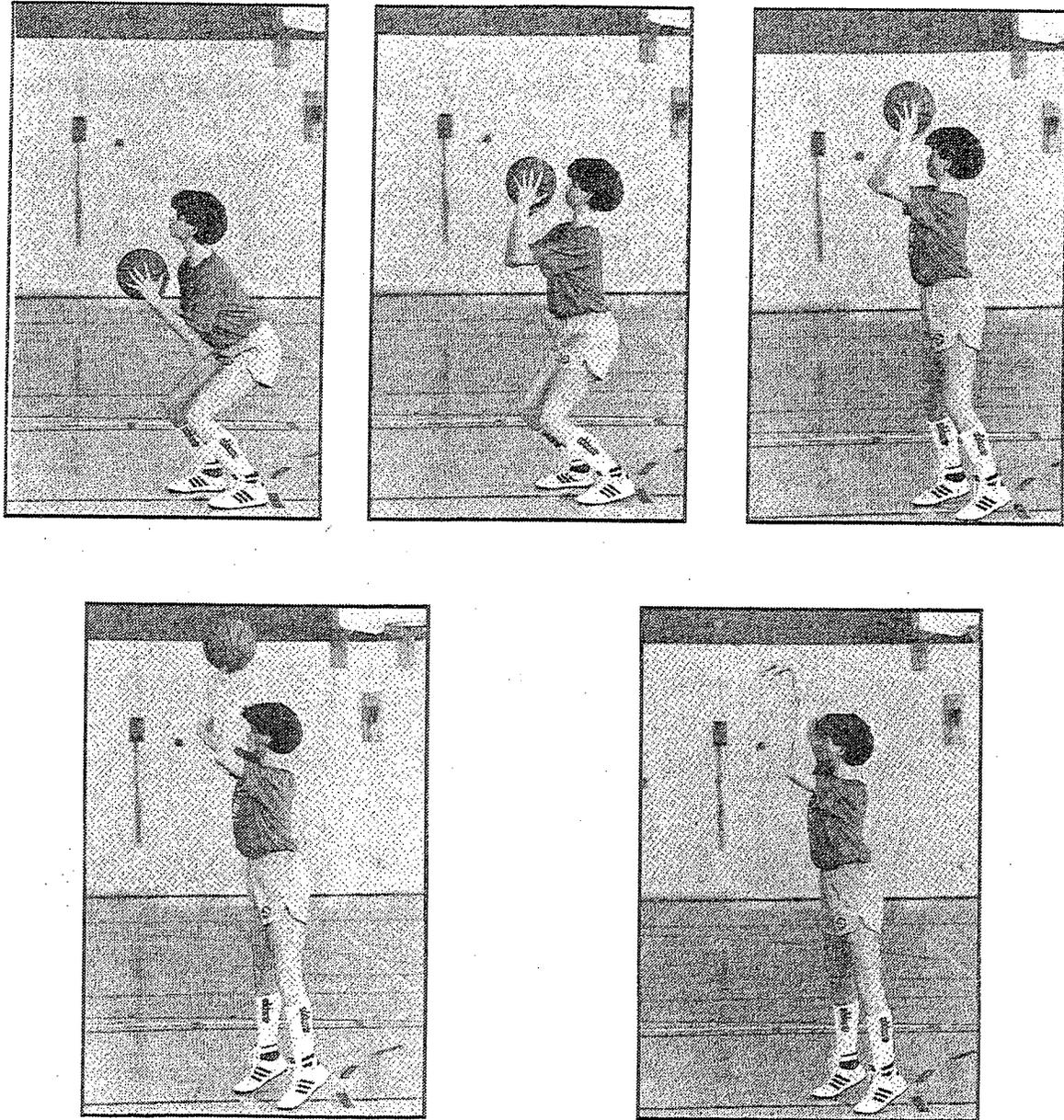
### **The One-Handed Set Shot**

Since the one-handed set shot is the basis of all shots, it is strongly recommended that it be the first shot taught.

Basic technique for the one-handed set shot (Figure 5.20) is as follows:

- Face the basket, and assume the triple-threat position.
- Lift the ball through a point above the forehead, and simultaneously bend the knees. The shooting elbow should now be pointing *toward the basket*.
- Extend the shooting arm as the body straightens.
- Just as the body reaches its highest point, shoot the ball with a strong *forward* movement of the wrist.
- Keep the nonshooting hand - which has been helping the shooting hand hold the ball - in place so that the ball can move forward without resistance.
- Let the shooting hand continue forward after the ball is released, and keep this hand in the slightly cupped shape it had while holding the ball.

The follow-through allows the player's hand to remain on the ball for as long as possible, and the entire motion of the shot should produce a shot with medium arc and good backspin.



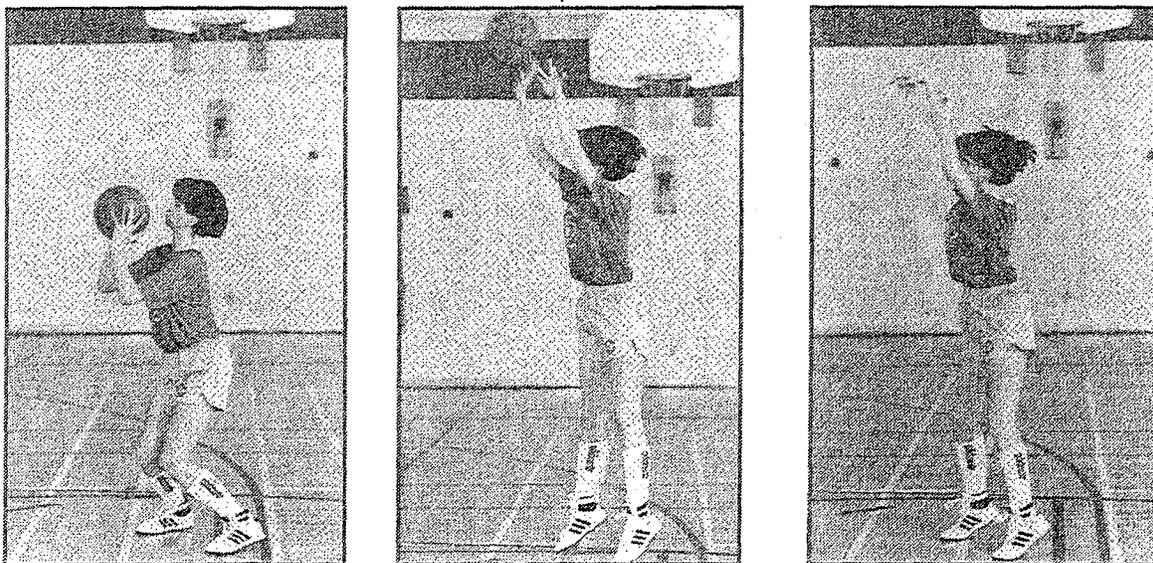
**Figure 5.20**  
**One-Handed Set Shot**

### **The Lead-up to the Jump Shot**

The jump shot is the most popular shot at higher levels of basketball. The basic principles of the jump shot are the same as those for the one-handed set shot.

It is recommended that the jump shot be taught only once players have the necessary strength and have good basic shooting technique. The age at which these developments occur varies from player to player, but they do not usually occur until players are 13 or 14 years of age.

It is both normal and acceptable, however, for players to practice a jumping set shot on their own. In this shot, the player's feet leave the ground as the shot is released (Figure 5.21). As with the jump shot, the player should not try for maximum height on the jump, for poor technique often results.



**Figure 5.21**  
**Jumping Set Shot**

## 5.5 The Lay-up

The lay-up is taken on the move, usually off the dribble or a pass. Moreover, the shot is characterized by a one-foot takeoff and a short shot by the hand opposite the takeoff foot. The name is derived from the action of shooting - that is, laying - the ball off the backboard. Encourage players to use the backboard on this shot, because doing so makes for a more accurate shot.

Since there are many variations on the lay-up, it is important to execute the shot properly. In particular, players need to learn to shoot lay-ups with their off hand - many players are allowed to shoot with their strong hand on both sides, develop bad habits, and consequently have considerable difficulty making the shot with their off hand. Avoid this problem by insisting that players learn proper technique *with both hands* from the beginning and use correct technique in drills. It is suggested, however, to let players use either hand in games until they are comfortable with both hands.

### Teaching Points

The arm motion of the lay-up is similar to that of the one-handed set shot. The following teaching points underlie the technique recommended for lay-ups:

- By using the right hand on the right side and the left hand on the left side, players can use their body to protect the ball from the defender.
- To attain maximum height on the jump, players should jump off the foot on the side opposite the shooting hand.
- Players should convert forward movement into upward momentum by leaning back slightly, dropping the hips, and shortening the last two or three strides.
- To set up their takeoff foot, players usually take stutter steps during the last few dribbles or just before receiving a pass. It is recommended that players learn this part of technique through experience after learning basic technique.
- Players should concentrate on learning to pick up the ball with both hands - it facilitates the use the off hand to protect the ball.

## **The Lay-up off the Dribble**

It is strongly recommended that you use the following teaching progression to teach the lay-up off the dribble:

- Wall shooting
- The one-step lay-up
- The two-step lay-up
- The three-step lay-up
- The one-dribble lay-up
- The complete lay-up off the dribble.

When using this progression, do *not* allow players to move on to a new step until they have mastered the previous step. If players have problems with a particular movement, they should return to the previous step or to an intermediate step.

## **Wall Shooting**

Players should have a basic level of proficiency with the one-handed set shot before starting to learn the lay-up - especially when learning with their weak hand. Players can develop proficiency with the weak hand by shooting one-handed set shots against a wall.

## **The One-Step Lay-up**

The player starts from the basket in the following stance:

- The feet are parallel and shoulder width apart.
- The knees are bent.
- The player is holding the ball; the shooting hand (for example, the left hand on the left side) is behind the ball, and the off hand is on the side of the ball.
- The player concentrates on a point on the backboard.

The player then takes a step with the inside foot (for example, the left foot on the right side) and shoots a lay-up. Emphasize the following points:

- Step with the correct foot.
- Simultaneously jump and drive the opposite knee upward.
- Shoot with the correct hand.
- Use the correct arm motion.

### **The Two-Step Lay-up**

To shoot a two-step lay-up, players back up one full step from the starting position for the one-step lay-up, and assume the triple-threat position. They then take two steps and jump off the correct foot for shooting a lay-up. Emphasize the teaching points for the one-step lay-up *and* the following:

- Use a running rhythm for the two steps.
- To prepare for the jump, make the second step shorter than the first.
- Keep the ball in front - do not move it from side to side.
- Consider using a key phrase, for example, "Outside, inside" or "Left, right (for a left-handed lay-up) - it may help."

### **The Three-Step Lay-up**

To shoot a three-step lay-up, players position themselves three running steps from the basket (choosing a reference mark on the floor often ensures consistency). They then assume the starting position for the two-step lay-up and shoot a lay-up using three steps *and no dribble*. Shooting in this way is actually travelling, but it helps develop a running rhythm. Players should consider using a key phrase, for example, "Left, right, left" (for a right-handed lay-up).

### **The One-Dribble Lay-up**

This part of the teaching progression is identical to the three-step lay-up, except that the player adds a dribble that coincides with the first step.

The key points of this sequence are as follows:

- Dribble the ball with the outside hand (for example, the left hand when doing a left-handed lay-up).
- The ball and the first step should hit the floor at the same time.
- Pick up the ball by letting it bounce up into the dribbling hand.  
Trap the ball with the off hand, thus forming a good shooting grip with the hands.

### **The Complete Lay-up off the Dribble**

To perform the lay-up off the dribble, players need to be able to take stutter steps - to make it possible to arrive on the correct foot for shooting. However, it is difficult to *explain* how to do stutter steps in all situations, and it is even more difficult to *think about* a verbal explanation *while performing a skill*. Nevertheless, by concentrating on jumping off the correct foot and thus learning what it feels like to jump off the correct foot, players can learn *almost unconsciously* how to take stutter steps. Help players in this area by asking them whether they jumped off the correct foot, *and* by using the following progression:

- Dribble on the spot; then shoot a one-dribble lay-up.
- Start at about half-court, and dribble toward the basket at half-to-three-quarter speed to shoot a lay-up.

### **The Lay-up off a Pass**

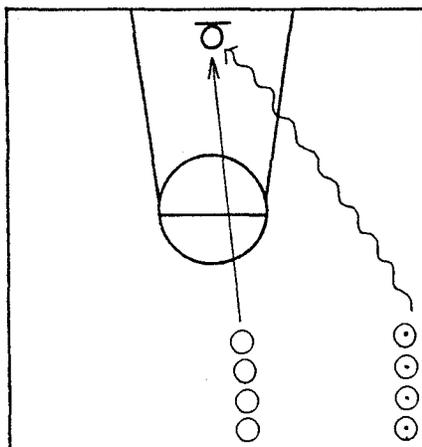
The technique for a lay-up after a pass is the same as that for a lay-up after the dribble, except that players may have to take stutter steps to arrive on the correct takeoff foot. Passers must learn to pass the ball at the correct moment so that shooters can catch the ball and shoot after taking two steps. The following progression can help teach the lay-up off a pass:

- In a stationary position, catch a pass; then take one step for a lay-up.
- Catch a pass after running several steps, and then shoot a lay-up.
- Catch a pass on the run before shooting a lay-up.

### **Drills**

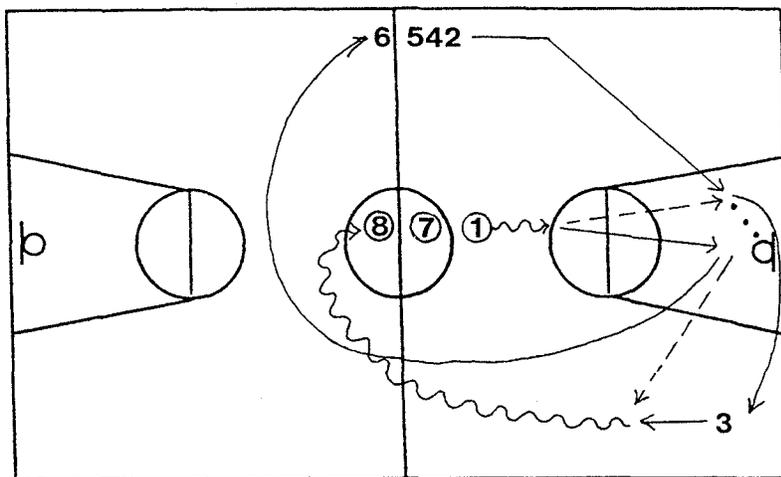
In all cases, players should perform drills for lay-ups from both sides.

**Two-Line Lay-ups.** Players form two lines (Figure 5.22). Players in the outside line have basketballs and drive to the basket to shoot a lay-up. Players in the second line rebound, passing the ball to players in the shooting line. Players then switch lines.



**Figure 5.22**  
**Two-Line Lay-ups**

**Pass-to-Lay-up Drill.** Players form lines as shown in Figure 5.23; players in the center line have basketballs. Player #1 dribbles toward the basket and passes to Player #2, who runs down the outside lane and cuts to the basket at the foul line extended. After shooting the lay-up, Player #2 continues to the corner. Player #1 gets the rebound, passes it to Player #3, and follows the pass. Player #3 dribbles to the end of the center line.



**Figure 5.23**      **Pass-to-Lay-up Drill**

## 5.6 One-on-One Play

Since all offensive situations eventually result in a one-on-one situation, players must learn to beat their check. However, players must also learn that the need to beat their check is *not* a licence to play one-on-five; rather, players must learn to *create and take advantage of* one-on-one situations.

There are several things players can do in the offensive end to become better offensive one-on-one players:

- Work to get the ball to their scoring area.
- Square up to the basket immediately in the triple-threat position.
- Read the defence to see how the defence is playing.
- Be aware of the probable movements of teammates within the team offensive structure.
- Study, and take advantage of the defender's reactions to previous scoring plays.

### One-on-One Games

Players should get regular practice at one-on-one play from different areas of the court. To stimulate competition, use a round-robin format.

The following are some suitable sample rules for this format:

- Play must start from where the defender hands the offensive player the ball, and this spot is designated in advance.
- Allow the offensive player to dribble only three times (this restriction encourages powerful moves).
- Play all rebounds until there is a defensive rebound or until a basket is scored.
- If the defender gets the rebound, he or she gets the ball at a designated spot.
- Designate either the offensive or the defensive player to call all fouls (encourage players to ignore minor contact that has no effect on play). Play begins again when the ball is handed to the offensive player at the foul line.
- After a basket, players change places and play begins again at the foul line.
- Players lose possession on a violation.

## Chapter 6 Team Offence

### 6.0 Introduction

Team offence refers to the individual and group maneuvers players use to create opportunities to score. The overall purpose of this offence is to create high-percentage shots.

After working through this chapter, you will be better able to do the following:

- Implement an appropriate philosophy of team offence
- Teach concepts of team offence
- Teach offensive maneuvers
- Use the whole-part teaching method to teach team offence
- Introduce an offensive structure
- Teach a ruled offensive system.

### 6.1 A Philosophy of Team Offence

It is imperative that players learn team offence within an appropriate learning environment. For such an environment to exist, coaches must have developed a philosophy of team offence suitable to their players' stage of development. At Level 1, a philosophy of team offence should have the following characteristics:

- Teaching should occur within a loosely structured format.
- Players should be used effectively.

#### A Format for Learning

It is important to avoid the temptation of teaching a structured team offence, because doing so with young players can lead to the following problems:

- Players are assigned specific positions, and their personal development is consequently limited.
- Players may learn skills that will not be useful when they have reached their full height.
- Players tend to learn the offence, not the concepts upon which offences are based.

It is therefore strongly recommended that you teach Level 1 players team offence within a *loosely* structured format.

## The Effective Use of Players

There are several things you can do to make the most effective use of players:

- Choose 12 players for the team.
- Use all players in every game.
- Give players equal floor time.

Most coaches of Level 1 players choose 12-person teams. With 12 players, many different group separations - 6 x 2, 2 x 6, 3 x 4, 4 x 3 - are possible. Choosing 12-player teams also makes it more likely that there will be at least 10 players for scrimmaging.

Using all players in every game also helps make basketball fun for players. Emphasize participation, and stress learning new skills and trying hard. (Participation rules are included in Mini Basketball and many leagues for younger children.)

Equal floor time encourages *all* players to develop their skills. Such an approach is advisable, for it helps keep players in the game - many potentially good players drop out because of overspecialization and an overemphasis on winning at a young age. In addition, since it is difficult to predict how much players will grow, keeping players in the game is a good coaching strategy. Give players equal floor time by changing five players at a time, or by using a rotation that guarantees equal floor time.

## 6.2 Concepts of Team Offence

Players' development consists of far more than learning individual skills. In particular, players must both integrate skills into the flow of games *and* understand and apply basic concepts of team offence. Make sure that players are familiar with the following concepts, for they apply at all levels of basketball and provide a good base for beginning basketball players:

- See the ball.
- See teammates.
- Maintain appropriate spacing.
- Decide on options *before* receiving the ball.
- Attack the middle.
- Read the defence.
- Respect the sequencing of options.
- Get back on defence.

### **See the Ball**

Players should see the ball *at all times* by using peripheral vision and by turning their head to the ball. Players' feet should usually be oriented toward the basket.

### **See Teammates**

By seeing their teammates, players facilitate team offence. Players must keep teammates in view *at all times* - even after learning to think a step or two ahead. In general, ballhandlers should always have at least two potential receivers in view.

### **Maintain Appropriate Spacing**

Players tend to cluster around the ball both on offence and on defence, and doing so is inefficient offensively. Ideally, players should stay four to five meters apart until a shot is taken.

### **Decide on Options before Receiving the Ball**

Players should try to decide on the option they will use *before* they receive the ball. Player's options are as follows:

- To pass to someone closer to the basket.
- To pass to someone in a better scoring position.
- To drive to the basket if a driving lane is open.
- To pass to an open player.
- To shoot.

### **Attack the Middle**

For several reasons, it is recommended that players attack the middle area of the key:

- Players usually find it easier to shoot from in front of the basket than from other areas.
- The defence cannot establish a ball side and help side when the ball is in the middle of the court.
- Passing angles are better when the ball is in the middle.

Players should not, however, stay in the middle if they do *not* get the ball - doing so prevents players who might want to cut or dribble to the middle from using this area. Avoid assigning younger players to the post area, for such specialization at a young age can harm a player's development.

## **Read the Defence**

To a certain extent, all offensive players can do is *react to* the defence (for example, go to the left if the defender is out of position on the right). Offensive players should take advantage of what the defence gives them, and force defenders to make errors.

## **Establish Priorities for Options**

There are several options after each movement of the ball or of players. Movement is an essential element of attacking the defence, but uncontrolled movement produces chaos. To avoid this situation, establish priorities for options; for instance, players should not use a give-and-go if a weak-side player is already cutting to the middle.

## **Get Back on Defence**

Once a team loses possession, players must get back *immediately* on defence. Strictly speaking, getting back is transition, not offence; nevertheless, instruct players to get back on defence when running offence-oriented scrimmages.

## **6.3 Offensive Maneuvers**

Introduce the following maneuvers to your players:

- The straight ball cut.
- The change-of-direction ball cut.
- The give-and-go.

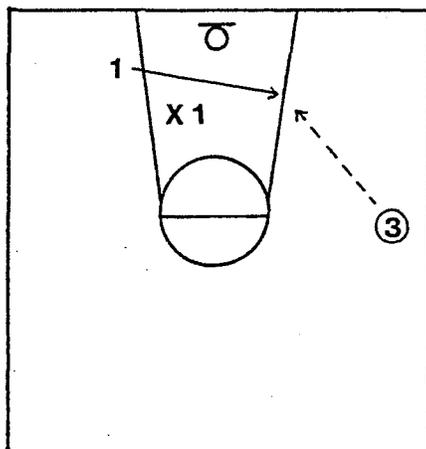
These maneuvers are essential building blocks for *all* offensive actions, and they are necessary at *every* level of basketball.

### **The Straight Ball Cut**

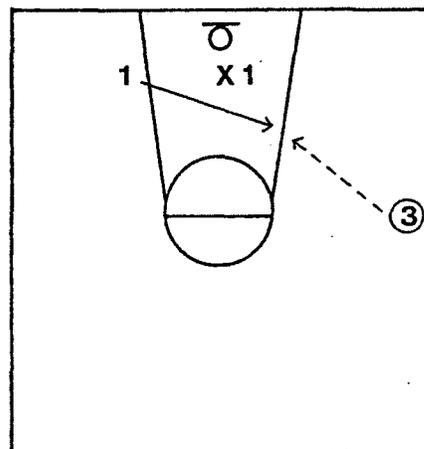
Players on the weak side - the side away from the ball - should *always* be looking for opportunities to cut to the ball. Moreover, if players can receive the ball in the middle of the floor, a good scoring chance should result. By doing as follows, players can increase the probability that a cutting lane will be open:

- Using fakes to keep their defender occupied on the weak side
- Moving to stay out of the defender's line of sight
- Cutting without hesitating and without telegraphing the cut.

In Figure 6.1, Player 1 can cut to the ball because Defender X<sub>1</sub> is playing too high. If the defender plays too low, another cutting lane opens up (Figure 6.2).



**Figure 6.1**  
**Straight Ball Cut: Defender**  
**Playing High**



**Figure 6.2**  
**Straight Ball Cut: Defender**  
**Playing Low**

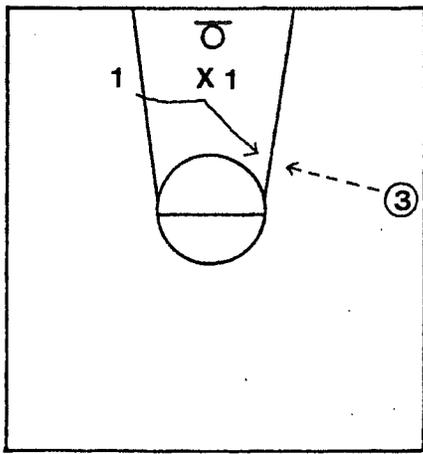
Players cutting straight to the ball should observe several rules:

- Keep the middle clear. Even if they are open, players who have not received the ball should leave the middle area. Two seconds is a commonly accepted time to wait before clearing out.
- Square to the basket; on receiving the ball, look for the shot.
- Do *not* cut if another player is already cutting to the same area. Establishing priorities for options can help avoid this problem.

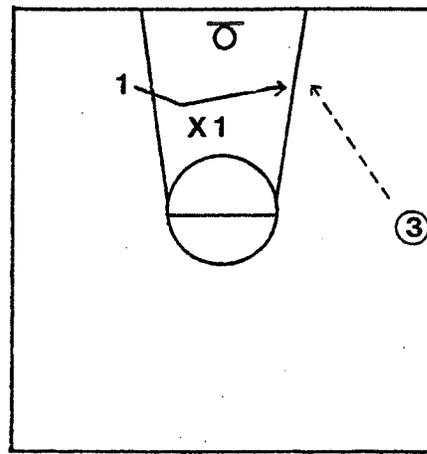
## The Change-of-Direction Ball Cut

The weak-side offensive player can create a clear cutting lane by cutting in one direction to "freeze" the defender and then changing direction to cut toward the ball. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show the two basic possibilities for cutting to the ball:

- Starting low and cutting high
- Starting high and cutting low.



**Figure 6.3**  
**Change-of-Direction Cut:**  
**Start Low, Cut High**



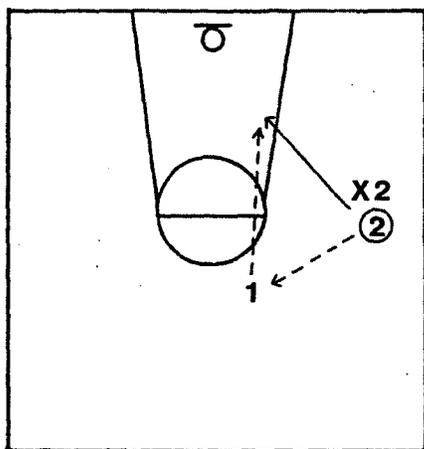
**Figure 6.4**  
**Change-of-Direction Cut**  
**Start High, Cut Low**

Players can use the change-of-direction cut effectively by doing as follows:

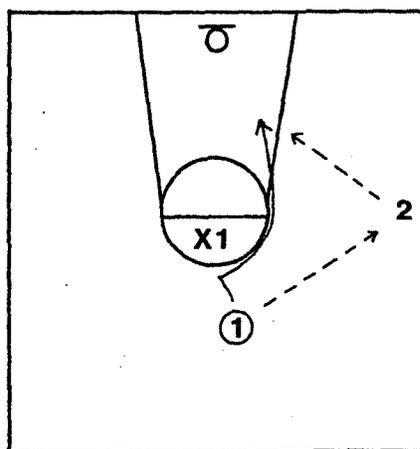
- Making the initial cut in the direction the defender is favouring (for example, cut low and then high if the defender is playing low).
- Getting close to the defender before changing directions. This approach makes it difficult for the defender to cut off movement in the new direction.

## The Give-and-Go

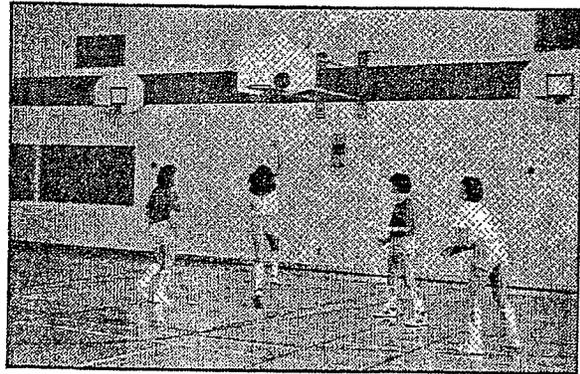
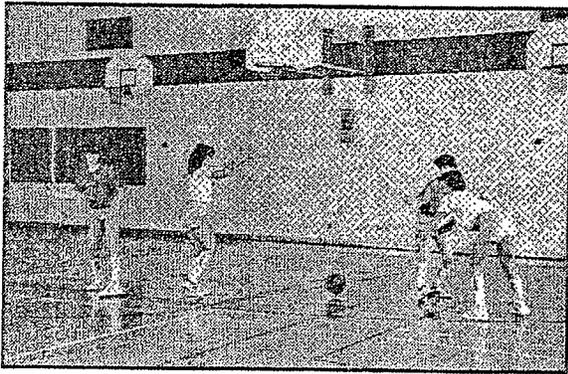
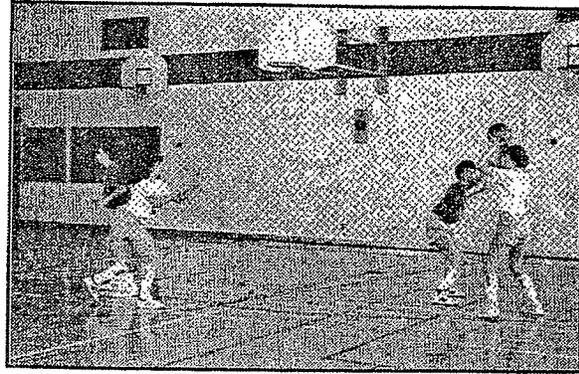
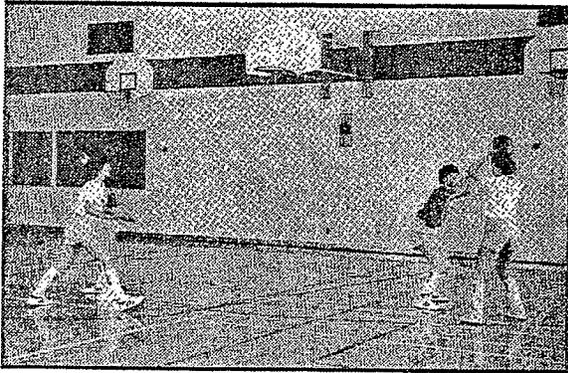
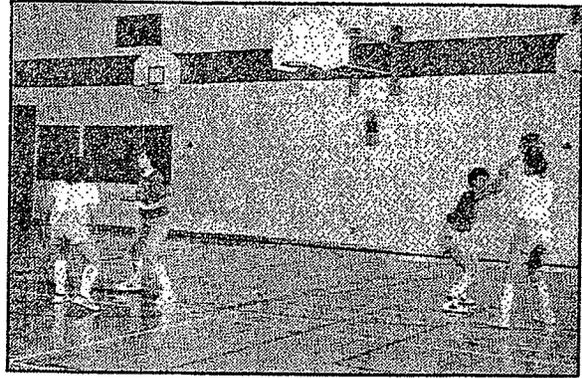
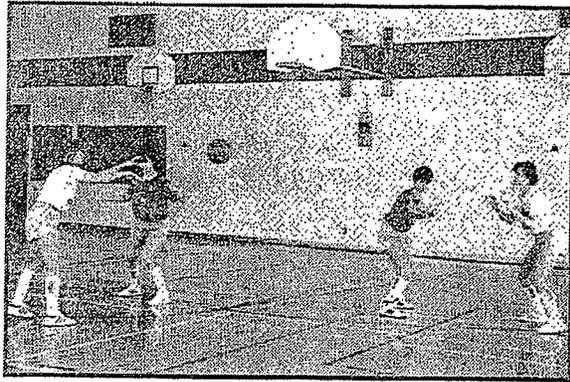
The give-and-go is a two-player maneuver that combines a pass and a cut to the basket. The player with the ball passes to a teammate and cuts to the basket. The cut to the basket is a straight cut if the cutting lane is open (Figure 6.5). If the lane to the basket is not open, passers can take their check away from the the ball, and then cut to the basket with a change-of-direction cut (Figures 6.6 and 6.7).



**Figure 6.5**  
**Give-and-Go:**  
**Straight Cut**



**Figure 6.6**  
**Give-and-Go:**  
**Change-of-Direction Cut**



**Figure 6.7**  
**Give-and-Go**

#### **6.4 The Whole-Part Teaching Method**

The teaching methods most often used to teach team offence are the whole-part method and the part-whole method.

In the whole-part method, players are put in gamelike situations designed to introduce basic concepts. While playing, players discover the need to learn individual skills, for instance, shooting, dribbling, or passing. Players then learn these skills before returning to the game. This cycle is used repeatedly, and gamelike rules progress toward game rules.

In the part-whole method, players first learn individual basketball skills - for example, shooting or dribbling. These skills are then incorporated into gamelike situations, which may feature modified rules.

There are many variations on these two themes, and each teaching method has many advantages. In particular, the whole-part method offers the following advantages:

- Children can play the game, and they have fun very quickly. Furthermore, the extensive use of games corresponds to children's use of time.
- Using this method makes it easier to teach *concepts*.

### **Teaching Progression**

The teaching progression presented here has been designed to introduce basketball to beginning players. This progression, which can be adapted to players of any age or level of experience, has the following objectives:

- To introduce basketball in a gamelike situation
- To encourage player movement *without the ball*
- To limit the effects of size and aggressive play so that *all* players can have fun
- To allow players to shoot without added defensive pressure
- To encourage passing into the key area.

Teams of four or five players can play, starting in half-court and progressing to full-court games. A "magic area" is defined in the offensive end; this area may be the key itself or the key extended (use other lines or tape on the floor to define this larger area).

The rules of play are the following:

- The game is played in half-court.
- Boundary lines are defined.
- No contact is allowed.
- Only one player at a time can guard the ballhandler - and from at least arm's length.
- No dribbling is allowed.
- No running with the ball is permitted; however, young players are allowed to move their feet slightly.
- When the ball is passed into the magic area, defenders back off and allow a free shot - without defensive pressure.
- When players are new to the progression, play starts over again at the top of the key after a shot.

With younger children, use a modified scoring system. For example:

- Three points for a basket
- Two points for hitting the rim
- One point for hitting the backboard
- One point for a pass.

After players have played for a short time, ask them which skill would most help them improve their game. They will probably identify shooting and therefore be receptive to a session on the one-handed set shot. Players can then use this skill in a gamelike situation.

Continually modify the rules to make them more like game rules, and use each modification of the rules to introduce or reinforce game skills. For example, make rules more and more like game rules as follows:

- In the original game, teach the one-handed set shot and the chest pass.
- Next, modify the original game by introducing the pivot; teach pivoting and spacing.
- Then modify the game by allowing dribbling; teach the control dribble and the speed dribble, and introduce the rules on travelling and double dribbling.
- Modify the game further by using the regular scoring system. Teach the lay-up (right and left), and introduce the jump-ball rule.
- Then take away the magic-area rule. Teach both straight and change-of-direction ball cuts, and teach players how to get open.
- Finally, allow defenders to play closer. Teach the give-and-go, and establish priorities for options.

## 6.5 Offensive Structure

Players under 13 learn a great deal and have a lot of fun just playing; they can also learn many basic concepts by playing modified games (section 6.4). Consequently, it is strongly recommended that you introduce a team offensive structure *only* to players 13 and over and that you encourage those under 13 to simply *play*.

When introducing an offensive structure, keep in mind both the usefulness of formations and the need to establish priorities among options.

### Formations

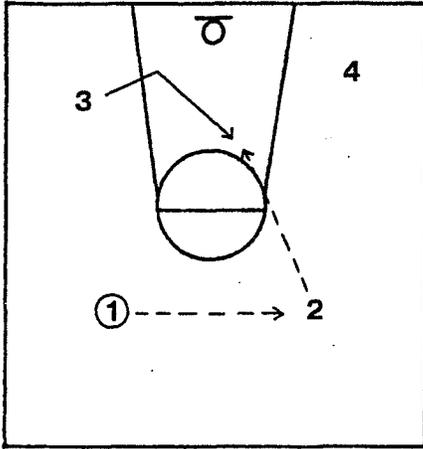
Formations are *starting points* for offensive structures. However, formations alone do not provide a great deal of information about offensive structures. Rather, formations are flexible structures designed to *assist* play, and a given formation can be used with many different philosophies and patterns.

One of the main advantages of formations is that they encourage good spacing. Beginning players in particular should play at *all* positions in a formation, because doing so furthers development.

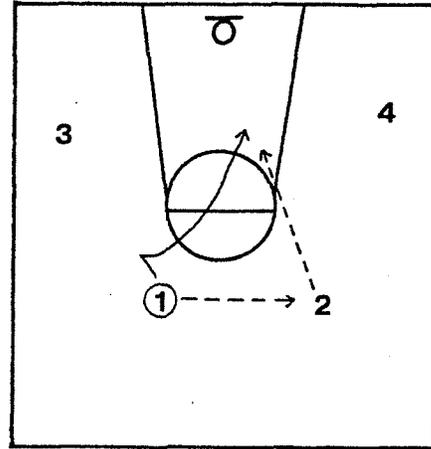
At Level 1, players use formations mainly in 4-on-4 or 5-on-5 situations.

### Formations in 4-on-4 Situations

Many concepts of team offence are best learned in 4-on-4 situations, for they allow players considerable space. In 4-on-4 situations, a 2-2 formation is useful - it makes both ball cuts and give-and-go plays possible (Figures 6.8 and 6.9).



**Figure 6.8**  
**2-2 Formation:**  
**Ball Cut**



**Figure 6.9**  
**2-2 Formation**  
**Give-and-Go**

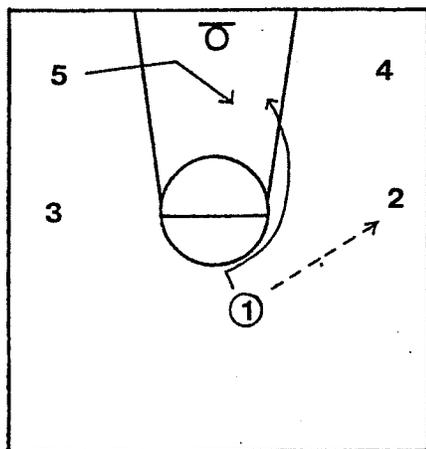
### Formations in 5-on-5 Situations

In 5-on-5 situations, the 1-2-2 formation is especially well suited to beginning players. It has the following advantages:

- The middle is kept open.
- Players can easily run ball cuts and give-and-go plays out of this formation.
- Players are well spaced.

### Priorities among Options

In any offensive structure, it is important to try to make it difficult for one defender to guard two or more offensive players; for example, this situation arises if a give-and-go follows a ball cut (Figure 6.10).



**Figure 6.10**  
**One Defender Guarding Two Offensive Players**

Such situations can be avoided by establishing priorities among options. For instance, if ball cuts have priority over give-and-go plays, Player #1 in Figure 6.10 would not cut to the basket if Player #5 was already cutting to the ball. However, establishing priorities does *not* give absolute priority to players performing particular plays. For example, Player #5 in Figure 6.10 should not cut to the ball if Player #1 has already started a give-and-go cut.

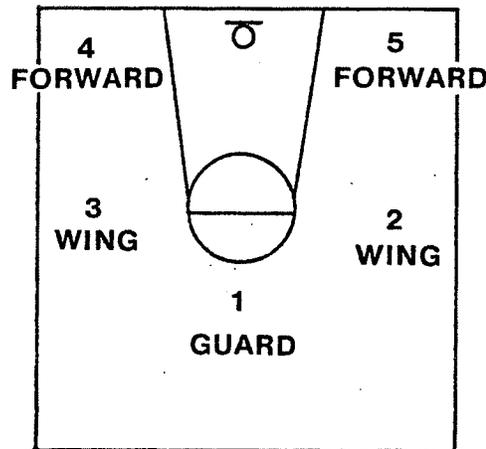
### 6.6 A Ruled Offensive System

A ruled offensive system is an offensive structure in which players' movements are determined by rules. Moreover, the rules in such a system are not predetermined; rather, they are a matter of conscious *choice*. As a result, the rules determine how structured the system is; for instance, rules that *restrict* players' movements and options make the system very structured.

There are no set plays in a ruled offensive system, and many different movements are possible. Consequently, there may initially be some confusion, but it will decrease as players become more familiar with the basic concept of a ruled offensive system.

To design a ruled offensive system, first choose basic rules, and then select movements.

In the discussion of rules and movements that follows, both numbers and terms - guard, wing, and forward - are used. The terms and numbers apply to the positions on the floor shown in Figure 6.11, *not* to the player.



**Figure 6.11**  
**Positions on the Floor**

## **Basic Rules**

Choose a few simple rules so that your system is flexible. Encourage players to use the options that best suit them and to continue thinking and creating. Some sample rules follow:

- A ball cut has priority over a give-and-go play. This rule is recommended because the give-and-go takes longer to master than does a ball cut, and because players running a give-and-go can easily see that a ball cut is being made.
- If two players ball-cut at the same time, the first player to cut has priority.
- The five basic positions on the floor (Figure 6.11) must be filled after each series of movements.
- All players play in all positions.
- Players must take advantage of one-on-one opportunities.

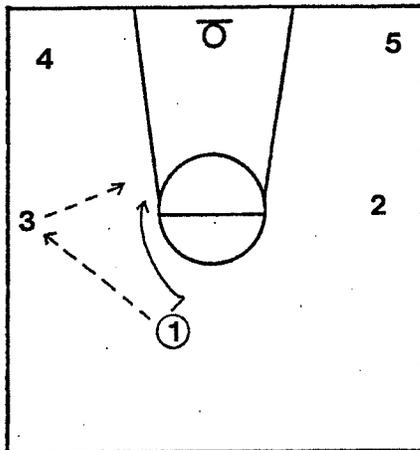
## **Movements**

Several possible movements are illustrated:

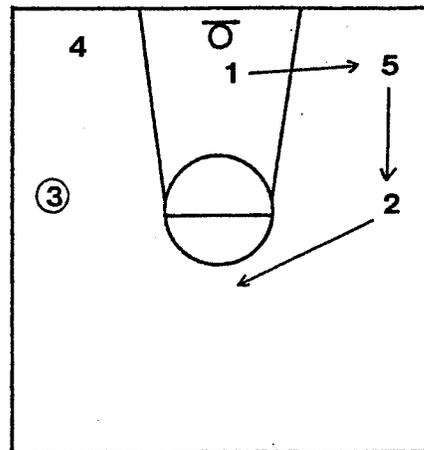
- A give-and-go by the guard
- A ball cut by the weak-side forward.

### Give-and-Go by the Guard

Player #1 passes to Player#3 and cuts to the basket (Figure 6.12). If Player #1 is not open, he or she continues to the weak side. Players #2 and #5 rotate to fill the vacated positions (Figure 6.13).



**Figure 6.12**  
**Give-and-Go by Guard**



**Figure 6.13**  
**Rotation after Give-and-Go**

### Ball Cut by Weak-Side Forward

Player #3 has the ball at the wing. Player #5 cuts to the middle (Figure 6.14). Player #2 rotates to fill Player #5's position, and Player #5 rotates back to the position vacated (Figure 6.15).

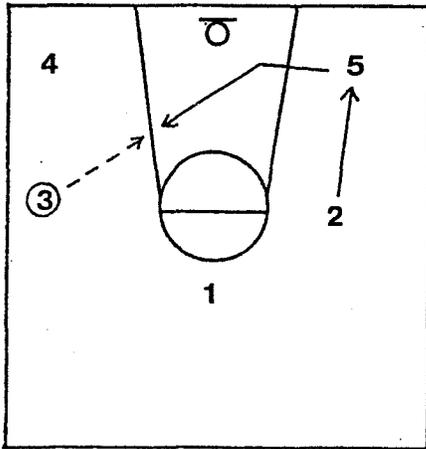


Figure 6.14  
Ball Cut

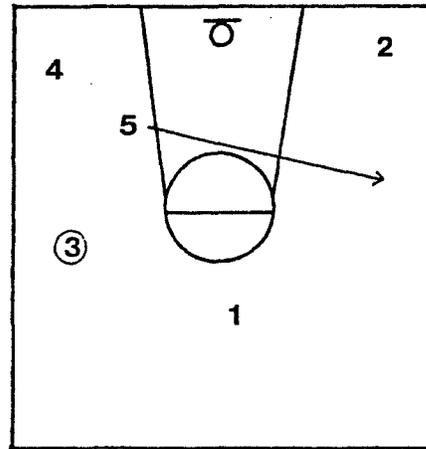
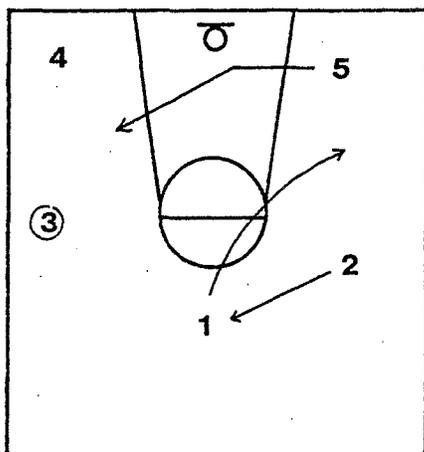
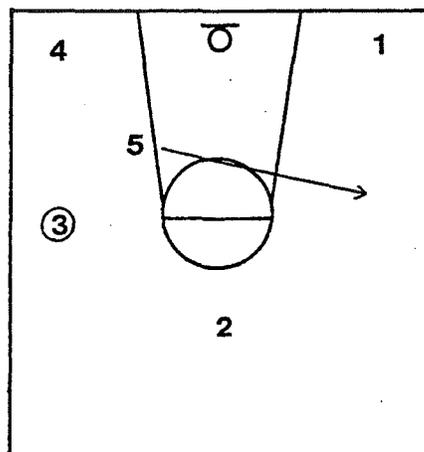


Figure 6.15  
Rotation after Ball Cut

Alternately, Player #1 could cut to the basket, Player #2 could fill Player #1's spot, and Player #5 could rotate to the open spot (Figures 6.16 and 6.17).



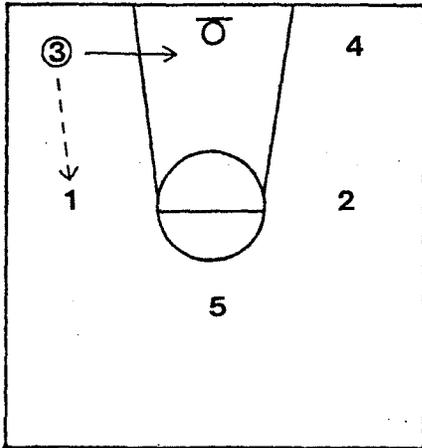
**Figure 6.16**  
**Alternative Ball Cut**



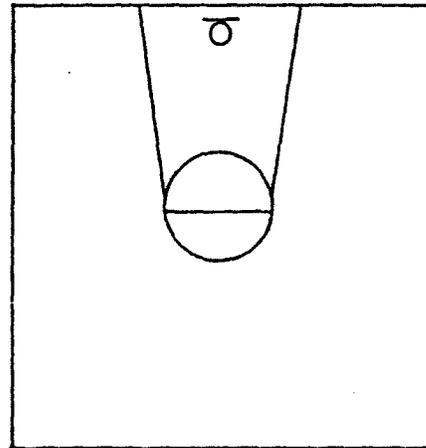
**Figure 6.17**  
**Rotation to Fill the Spot**

### Exercise

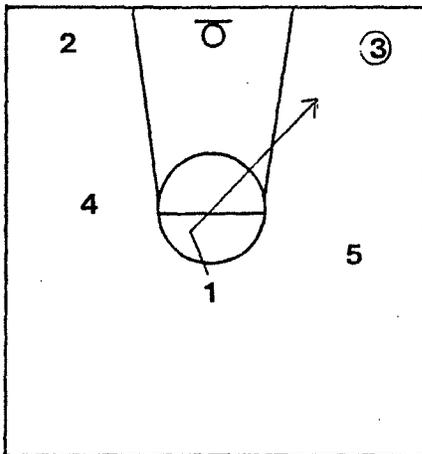
The situations shown in Figures 6.18, 6.20, and 6.22 are all possibilities under the rules listed above. Diagram a possible next step (Figures 6.19, 6.21, and 6.23). Remember that there are no "right" answers; the only restriction is that the rules, as outlined, be observed.



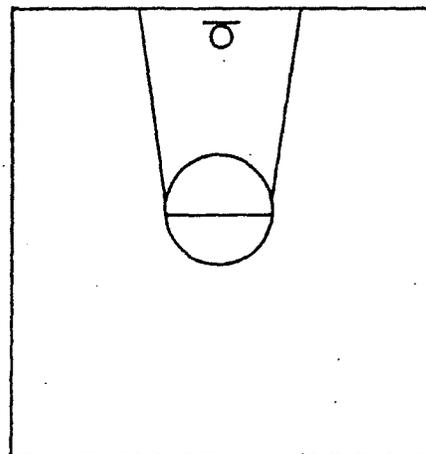
**Figure 6.18**  
Give-and-Go by Forward



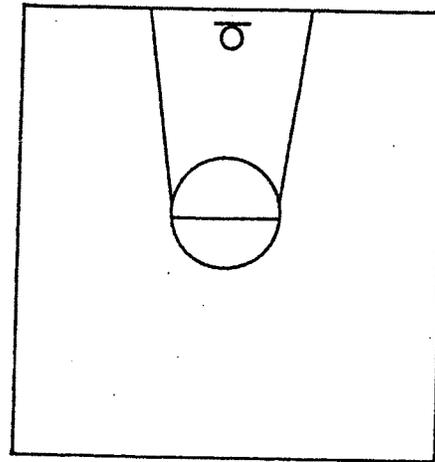
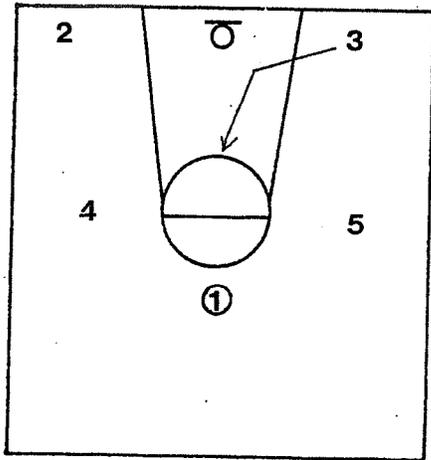
**Figure 6.19**  
Give-and-Go by Forward:  
Next Step



**Figure 6.20**  
Ball Cut by Guard



**Figure 6.21**  
Ball Cut by Guard:Next Step



**Next Step**

## Chapter 7 Rebounding

### 7.0 Introduction

Rebounding is a key contributor to success on both offence and defence. On offence, rebounds give players the opportunity to shoot high-percentage shots from close to the basket; on defence, they keep the opposition from shooting high-percentage shots after offensive rebounds. It is therefore important that coaches teach players the fundamentals of this skill and emphasize the need to use rebounding in all facets of the game.

After working through this chapter, you will be better prepared to do the following:

- Teach basic technique for jumping
- Teach basic technique for rebounding.

### 7.1 Jumping

Jumping may be regarded as the basis of rebounding, because players must jump for *every* rebound if they are to rebound effectively.

Recommended technique for jumping (Figure 7.1) is as follows:

- Assume a ready position with the knees bent, elbows out, and the arms in the air.
- Keep the leg muscles tense.
- Thrust upward with a strong, explosive leg movement, and straighten the arms.



**Figure 7.1**  
**Jumping Stance**

Once players have mastered single jumps, have them execute *consecutive* jumps - doing so both simulates situations in games when neither team can gain possession of the ball, *and* conditions the legs.

### **Drills**

**Wall Drill.** Players record both their two-handed standing height and their maximum two-handed jumping height on vertical strips of adhesive or masking tape on the wall of the gym. Players then stand 12 to 18 inches from the wall and practice single jumps. Players focus on technique, especially on coordinating the thrusting motion of their legs and arms.

Once players have mastered performing this drill with single jumps, they may jump continuously for a specified period of time or for a specified number of jumps.

## 7.2 Rebounding

Once players have mastered basic jumping technique, they may progress to two-handed rebounding (Figure 7.2). Recommended technique is as follows:

- Try to time the jump to snatch the ball at maximum height on the jump. The arms *should be* fully extended, in front of the body, and at approximately 60 degrees to the floor, because catching the ball at this angle instead of over the head makes it difficult for a taller rebounder positioned behind to deflect the ball. However, it is not always possible to catch the ball in this way; rather, the ability to do so depends on the flight of the ball and angle of the rebound.
- Land in a balanced position with the feet shoulder width apart, the hips low, and the legs well bent.
- Take the ball strong to the basket following an offensive rebound.

By contrast, quickly and forcefully pull down a defensive rebound, and look for an opportunity to outlet the ball.

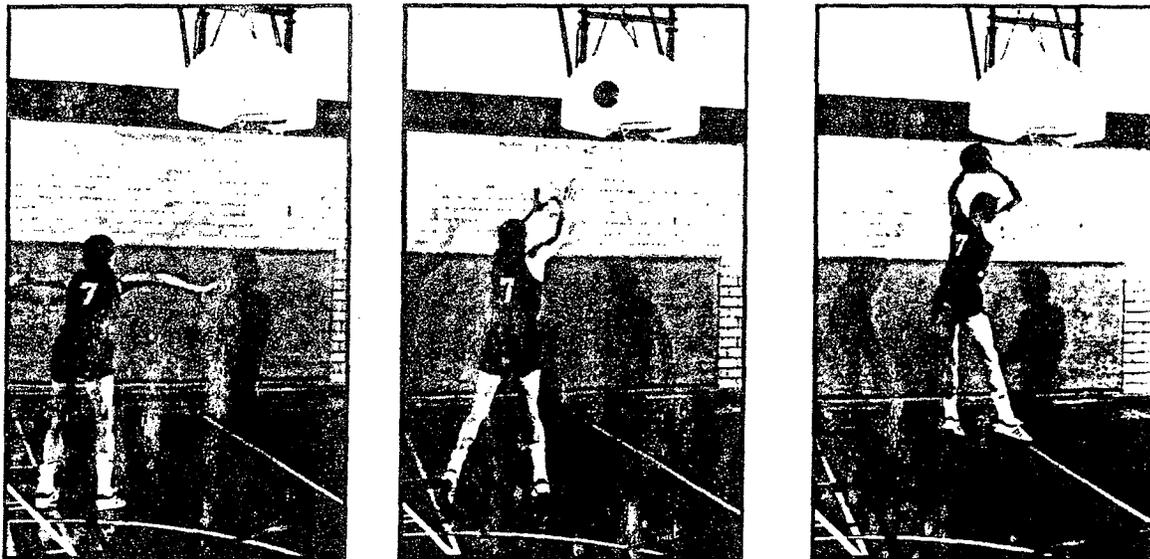


Figure 7.2  
Two-Handed Rebounding

Be patient with players learning to coordinate their jump with the flight of the ball - players will develop this timing through continuous practice.

### **Drills**

**Bench Rebounding.** One player stands on a bench and holds a ball in the air. Another player jumps up, grabs the ball, and returns to the floor using proper rebounding technique.

Players may also perform this drill in pairs - one player tosses the ball against the backboard, and the other rebounds.

## Chapter 8 Defence

### 8.0 Introduction

Successful defence in basketball depends on each player's learning and executing a set of skills fundamental to defensive play. Regardless of the type of team defence used, coaches can expect little success if their players do not have the *individual* skills needed to defend one-on-one within a defensive system.

Since the fundamentals of individual defence are not based on ball skills, players usually master these fundamentals more easily than those of individual offence. However, players are also usually less motivated to develop defensive skills than practicing offensive skills. As a result, coaches must make an extra effort to encourage and reinforce the acquisition of defensive skills.

After working through this chapter, you will be better able to teach the following:

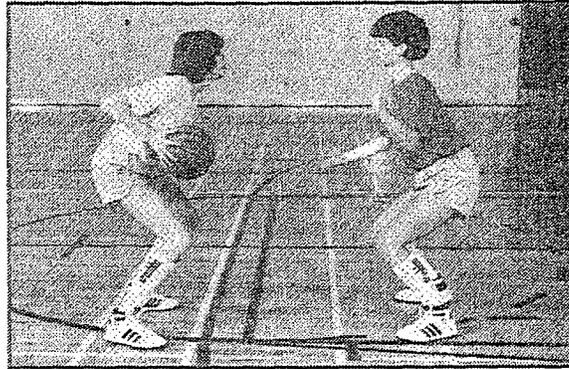
- The defensive ready position
- Defensive footwork
- Defending the player with the ball
- Team defence.

### 8.1 The Defensive Ready Position

Players assume the defensive ready position when preparing to play defence. Assuming this position enables defensive players to maintain a position between the offensive player and the basket, *and* react to the offensive player's movement.

It is recommended that players assume the defensive ready position (Figure 8.1) as follows:

- Bend the knees.
- Keep the head up.
- Keep the back straight, and lean forward slightly.
- Keep the hands slightly above and outside the knees.
- Extend the fingers, and point the palms forward.
- Assume a slightly open stance (point the toes slightly outward).
- Position the feet approximately shoulder width apart.
- Distribute the weight evenly on the balls of the feet.



**Figure 8.1**  
**Defensive Ready Position**

## **8.2 Defensive Footwork**

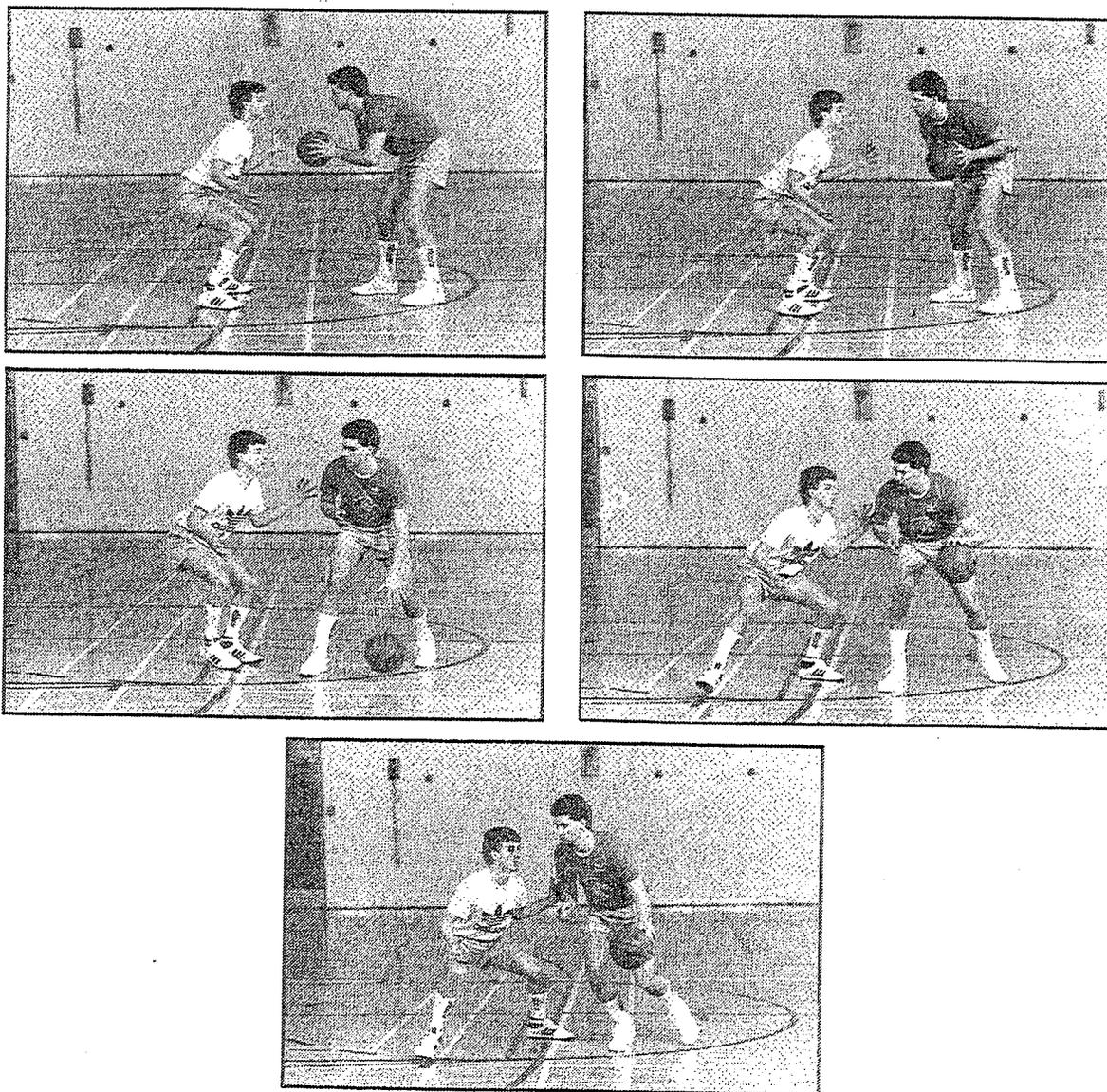
Level 1 players need to know the fundamentals of defensive footwork, namely, the defensive slide, the forward defensive slide, and the drop step.

### **The Defensive Slide**

The defensive slide enables players to move laterally while maintaining the ready position. Players should maintain this stance unless they have been beaten, in which case they turn, run to cut off the player with the ball, and then reassume the defensive ready position.

It is strongly recommended that players perform the defensive slide (Figure 8.2) as follows:

- Do not allow the feet to cross.
- Keep the feet as close as possible to the floor when sliding to eliminate up-and-down movement.
- Point the lead foot in the line of travel (the lead foot is the foot closer to the desired line of travel).
- Position the lead foot closer to the defensive basket, the toe of the lead foot even with the heel of the trail foot.
- Use the trail foot to propel the body with a strong lateral push, and maintain the ready position *throughout* this lateral movement.



**Figure 8.2**  
**Defensive Slide**

The defensive slide is sometimes described as a shuffle step. It is suggested that you *avoid* using this terminology, for it gives players the impression that the feet skim the floor in the defensive slide. Moreover, a shuffling motion is much slower than the aggressive steps needed to successfully defend the player with the ball.

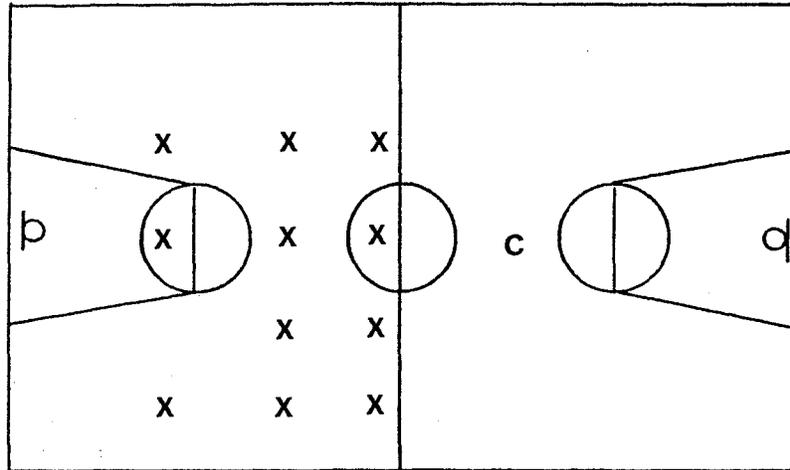
### **The Forward Defensive Slide**

The forward defensive slide allows players to move forward defensively to guard a ballhandler who retreats while dribbling. In addition, this move can help defenders create offensive space - if they do *not* react to the movement of the ball. Recommended technique for this maneuver is as follows:

- Maintain the defensive ready position, but with one foot slightly advanced.
- Push with the trail foot, step with the front foot, and take short steps.
- Keep both hands in the air, and hold the lead hand - the hand on the side of the lead foot - higher.
- Maintain good balance, and do not lunge for the ball.
- Use the lead hand to apply pressure on any shot attempts.

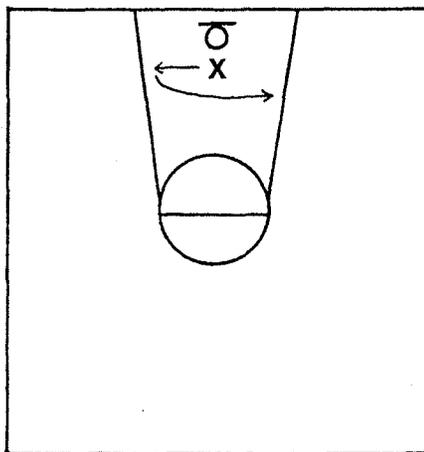
## Drills

**Wave Drill.** Players line up - facing the coach - in a scatter formation (Figure 8.3) They then slide in unison, following the coach's directions.

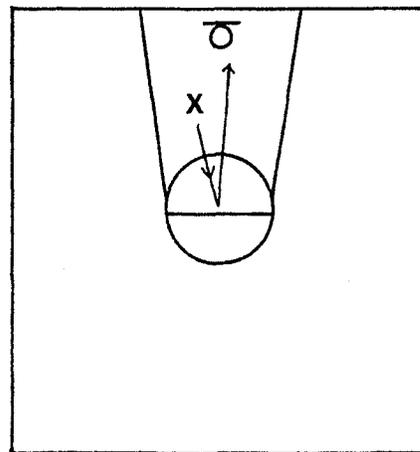


**Figure 8.3**  
**Wave Drill**

**Key Drill.** Players line up on the side of the key and perform lateral slides - slides from one side of the key to the other - for a specified period of time (Figure 8.4). Players may make this drill competitive by recording the number of slides; they may also practice vertical slides (Figure 8.5).



**Figure 8.4**  
**Lateral Slide**



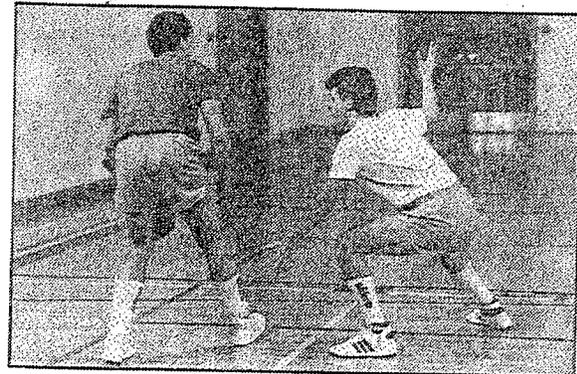
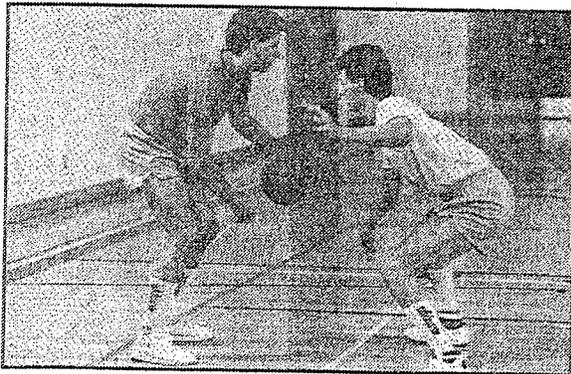
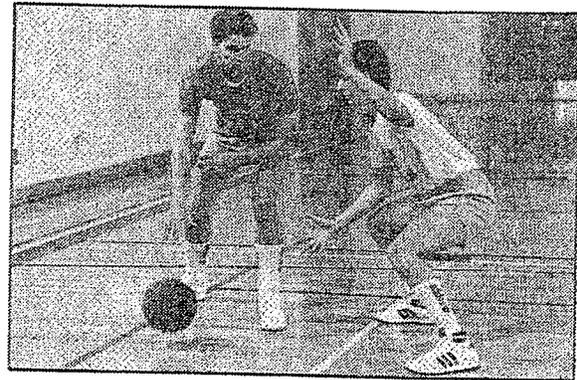
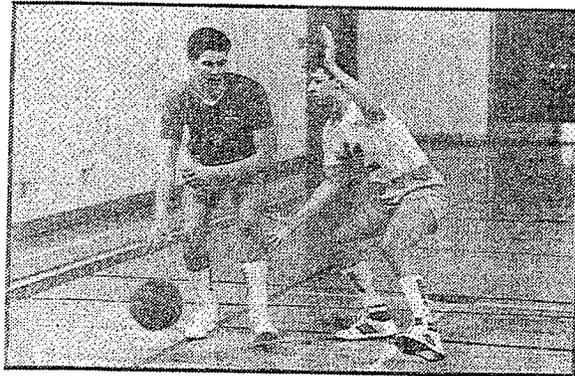
**Figure 8.5**  
**Vertical Slide**

## The Drop Step

Players use the drop step to change directions (left to right or right to left) when retreating laterally down the floor in the defensive ready position.

It is recommended that players perform the drop step (Figure 8.6) as follows:

- Start in the ready position.
- Step back quickly with the foot on the side to which the ballhandler is moving; this step should be a half-step and should be at a 45-degree angle.
- Push off with the trail foot to block the path to the basket.

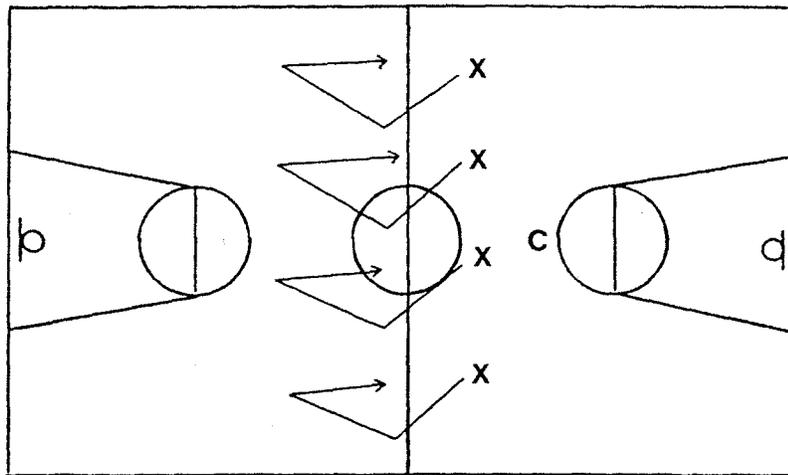


**Figure 8.6**  
**Drop Step**

**Shot Drill.** This drill gives players an opportunity to practice the drop step and the defensive slide *without being distracted by an offensive player.*

Players perform this drill (Figure 8.7) as follows:

- Spread out in a scatter formation and face the coach.
- Assume the defensive ready position. All players are open to the same side, for example, have the right foot in front.
- Drop-step on a signal from the coach and perform three defensive slides. Players slide in unison and count out loud - one, two, three - while sliding.
- Drop-step after the third slide and then perform three more defensive slides.
- Perform three forward defensive slides.
- Jump in a controlled fashion with one hand up to simulate defensive pressure on a shot, and yell "Shot."



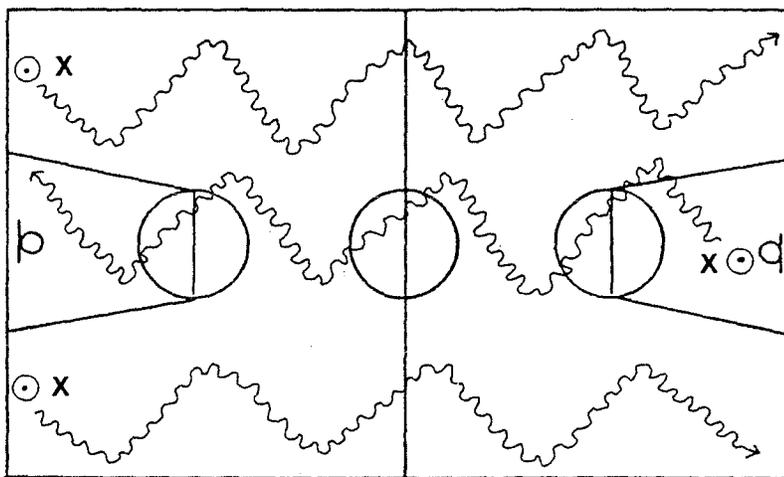
**Figure 8.7**  
**"Shot" Drill**

It is recommended that players perform this drill several times from one starting position, and then switch positions so that they can practice drop steps and slides from the opposite side. It is also important that players initially do this drill *slowly* and constantly strive for proper technique. Once their technique reaches a certain level, players can increase the speed with which they perform this drill. However, even at higher speeds, players must continue to maintain a low defensive stance, as the tendency is to straighten up as they become tired.

**Zigzag Drill.** This drill allows players to practice both offensive *and* defensive concepts; defending the dribbler, and the crossover dribble in particular.

Recommended form for this drill (Figure 8.8) is as follows:

- Existing lines are used to divide the court into three corridors. These corridors should be far enough apart that collisions among players cannot occur.
- Players form pairs: one offensive and one defensive player. The offensive player dribbles the length of the court in a zigzag pattern while the defensive player uses drop steps and defensive slides.
- When players reach the baseline, they advance to the next corridor, reverse roles, and continue the drill.
- Dribblers must stay between the lines defining the corridor.
- Defensive players should stay one arm's length away from the ballhandler.



**Figure 8.8**  
**Zigzag Drill**

It is important that players become aware of the need to emphasize defence in this drill. For example, offensive players should work on their dribbling technique *while helping defenders practice*.

The general progression for this drill is as follows:

- Trying to beat the defender is not permitted, nor is trying to steal the ball, and the offensive player dribbles at approximately half-speed.

- Trying to beat the defender is not permitted; however, trying to steal the ball is, and the ballhandler may dribble at full speed.
- Both trying to beat the defender *and* trying to steal the ball are permitted.

### 8.3 Defending the Player with the Ball

Defending the player with the ball consists of the following defences:

- Defending live-ball situations, that is, defending players who have not used their dribble
- Defending the dribbler
- Defending in dead-ball situations, that is, defending players who have lost their dribble.

#### Defending in Live-Ball Situations

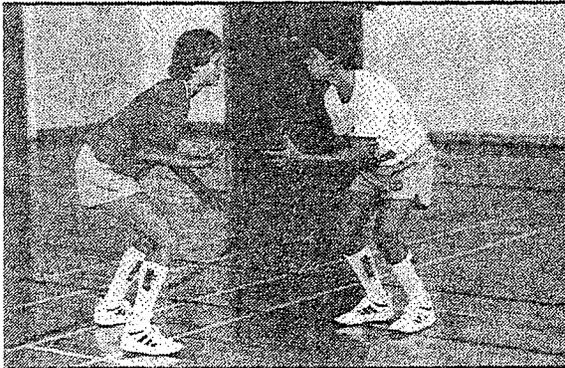
Defensive players need to be able to defend two types of live-ball situations: those in which the offensive player is *outside* shooting range, and those in which the offensive player is *within* shooting range.

It is recommended that the following steps be taken to defend offensive players outside shooting range (Figure 8.9):

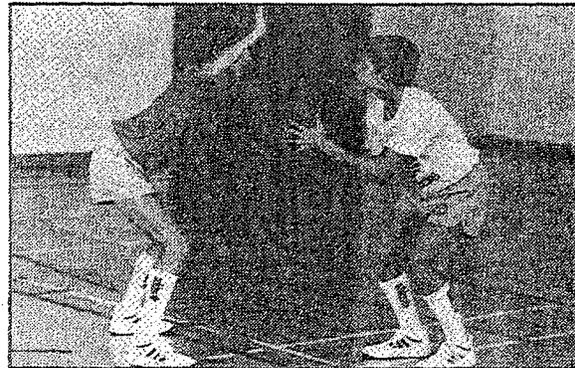
- Assume the defensive ready position at arm's length from the offensive player.
- Get directly between the ball and the basket.
- Keep the feet basically parallel, but slightly advance the foot on the strong side to try to influence offensive players away from their strong hand.
- Once the offensive player has started to dribble, drop-step and perform defensive slides to maintain proper defensive positioning.

Defenders are advised to do as follows when offensive players are within shooting range (Figure 8.10):

- Assume the defensive ready position at arm's length from the offensive player.
- Get directly between the ball and the basket.
- Keep the feet basically parallel, but slightly advance the foot on the strong side to try to influence offensive players away from their strong hand.
- Keep the hand on the side of the advanced foot elevated to pressure the shooter.
- Keep the other hand low and to the side - it discourages a drive to the basket.
- If the offensive player attempts a shot, keep the feet on the floor until the offensive player's feet *leave* the floor.
- Do *not* swing the arms to block the shot, for a foul will almost inevitably result.



**Figure 8.9**  
**Defending Live-Ball**  
**Situation outside**  
**Shooting Range**

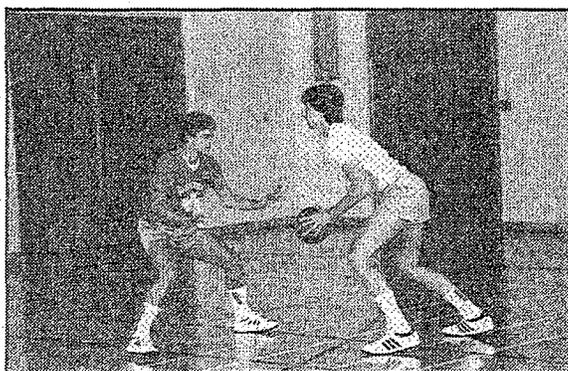


**Figure 8.10**  
**Defending Live-Ball**  
**Situation within**  
**Shooting Range**

## Defending the Dribbler

It is recommended that players defend the dribbler (Figure 8.11) as follows:

- Assume the defensive ready position at arm's length from the dribbler *and* directly between him or her and the defensive basket.
- Take a drop step, and slide in the new direction if the dribbler reverses.
- Maintain sound defensive positioning by staying between the check and the basket.
- To block the crossover dribble, position the trail hand - the hand opposite the direction of movement - inside the dribbler's trail knee.
- Try to force the dribbler to either reverse direction or pick up the dribble.
- If beaten, turn, and sprint to regain position between the dribbler and the defensive basket.



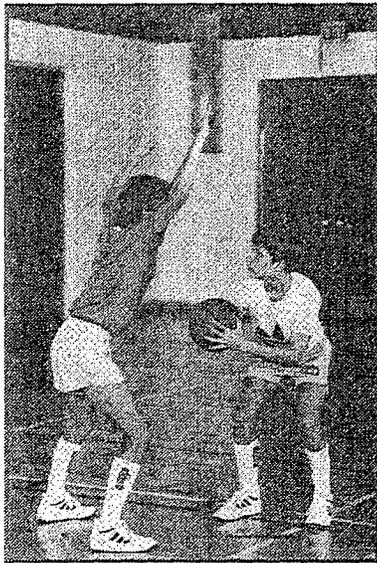
**Figure 8.11**  
**Defending the Dribbler**

## Defending in Dead-Ball Situations

There are two types of dead-ball defence: defence where the offensive player is *outside* shooting range, and defence where the offensive player is *within* shooting range.

The principal goal of defence in dead-ball situations where the offensive player is outside shooting range and must pass, is to *harass* the potential passer. The technique recommended for this defence is as follows:

- Move quickly to a position close to the passer.
- If the passer has or puts a foot forward, straddle it.
- Keep the knees slightly flexed.
- Maintain good balance.
- Mirror the movement of the ball with the hands to block or deflect a pass (Figure 8.12).
- Do *not* reach in or try to steal the ball.
- Use an audible - for instance, "Dead" - to let teammates know that the dribble has been used.



**Figure 8.12**  
**Defending the Passer in a Dead-Ball Situation:**  
**Mirroring the Ball**

In dead-ball situations where the offensive player is inside shooting range (Figure 8.13), the recommended defence is the following:

- Assume the ready position no more than an arm's length from the shooter.
- Raise one hand to discourage the shot; keep the other hand on the side to discourage a pass.
- Keep the feet on the floor until the offensive player has jumped.

- Maintain a balanced position, and move to stay *between* the offensive player and the hoop.
- Jump to the ball on a pass.



**Figure 8.13**  
**Defending the Shooter in a Dead-Ball Situation**

### Drills

**Zigzag Drill with Freeze.** This drill is a modification of the zigzag drill described earlier:

- Players perform the zigzag drill, but dribblers pick up their dribble *twice* on each trip down the floor.
- When the dribble has been used, the defender calls "Dead" and - to mirror the ball - assumes a defensive stance.
- The offensive player pivots at three-second intervals, and the defender reacts to this movement.
- Offensive and defensive players reverse roles.

### 8.4 Team Defence

Team defence refers to two strategies:

- Preventing the offensive team from advancing the ball to an advantageous position on the floor
- Denying the offensive team a good opportunity for a shot.

Each player is an integral part of team defence, and is therefore responsible for two corresponding categories of action:

- Preventing his or her check from scoring
- Helping a teammate who has been beaten.

These strategies and actions are consistent with a broad range of successful team defences. Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended that coaches teach only *one* defence at Level 1 and that the defence taught be half-court sagging man-to-man. There are several reasons for these recommendations:

- Learning appropriate *principles of offence* is more important at Stage 1 and 2 than learning team defence. Furthermore, if undue pressure is put on offensive players, they will have difficulty learning the offensive skills necessary at Level 1. Restricting the emphasis on team defence by minimizing the number of team defences taught ensures that the desired focus on offence is retained.
- Man-to-man defence facilitates the motor learning of Stage 1 and 2 players more than any other defence.
- Man-to-man defensive skills form the basis for *all* defences.
- Players can make the transition from a man-to-man to a zone system more easily than the reverse.
- Zone defences stifle learning and slow the game.

### **Sagging Man-to-Man Defence**

Sagging man-to-man defence may be characterized by principles that apply to specific aspects of play, namely,

- Defence on the ball
- Defence away from the ball
- Ball-side and help-side defence
- Positional change with movement of the ball
- Positional change with movement of offensive players
- Communication.

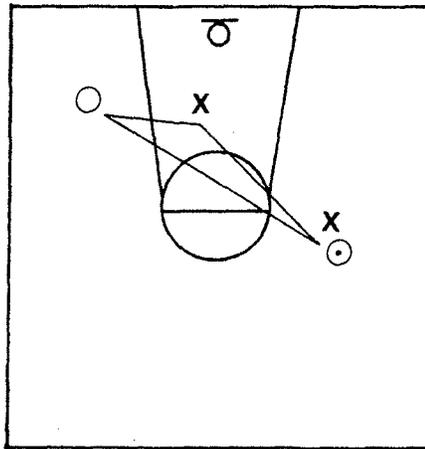
### **Defence on the Ball**

The defender checking the player with the ball must use defensive techniques appropriate to the situation (live-ball or dead-ball, for example); these techniques are described in section 8.3.

### Defence away from the Ball

Players guarding offensive players away from the ball play a man-to-man defence in which they sag to the basket. The purpose of sagging is to help teammates, and the quicker defensive players are, the more they can sag to the ball. Recommended technique for sagging is as follows:

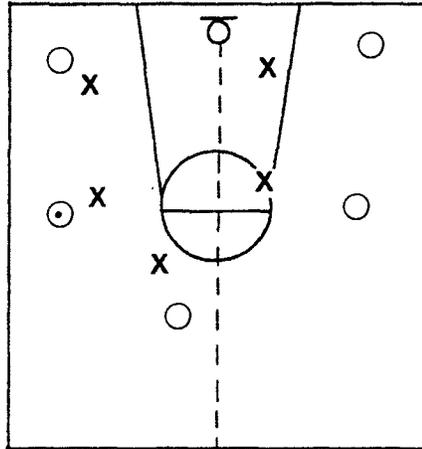
- Assume a ball-you-man relationship with the player being guarded *in which the defender is between the ball and the player being guarded* (Figure 8.13).
- Form a flat triangle by pointing one hand toward the ball, one hand toward the check.



**Figure 8.13**  
**Relationship between Defender and Ball**

### Ball-Side and Help-Side Defence

An imaginary line down the middle of the court divides the court into two "sides," ball-side and help-side (Figure 8.14). Ball-side refers to the side of the court the ball is on, help-side to the side away from the ball.



**Figure 8.14**  
**Ball-Side and Help-Side**

Defensive players on ball-side are responsible for preventing penetration of the ball - whether by pass or dribble - and for challenging all shots.

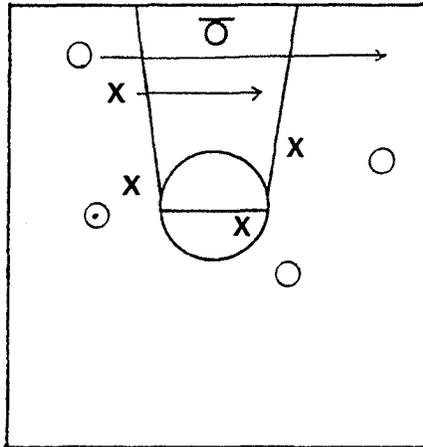
Defensive players on help-side are responsible for helping when a player on ball-side has been beaten and for trying to prevent their check from receiving the ball. When players are sagging on help-side, they should have at least one foot in the lane.

### Positional Change with Movement of the Ball

Players must alter their defensive position *every time the ball changes location*. In particular, players must make defensive changes *by the time the ball reaches its new position*. For example, on a pass, positional change occurs while the ball is in the air.

### Positional Change with Movement of Offensive Players

As offensive players move, the position of defensive players relative to the ball changes; consequently, defensive position must change each time an offensive player changes position (Figure 8.15). The most extreme example of such positional change occurs when a player goes from ball-side to help- side or vice versa.



**Figure 8.15**  
**Positional Change with Movement of Offensive Players**

### Communication

Talking while on court is essential to successful team defence.

Communication both increases enthusiasm for playing defence *and* keeps players informed about important aspects of play, for example:

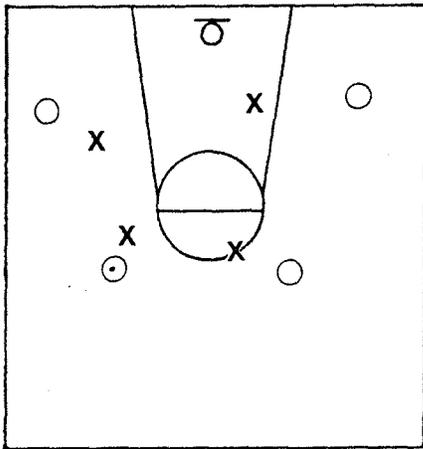
- Who is guarding the ball in a breakdown situation
- Whether help is needed
- Whether help is available
- When a shot is taken.

Communication is facilitated when players know *exactly* what to say in particular situations. It is therefore important that players work out with their teammates what terms to use in specific situations. For instance, the player guarding the ball might say "Help" to indicate that he or she is being beaten, the help-side defender might use "Alone" to indicate that no help is near, or everyone who sees a shot might call "Shot" to indicate that the other team has taken a shot.

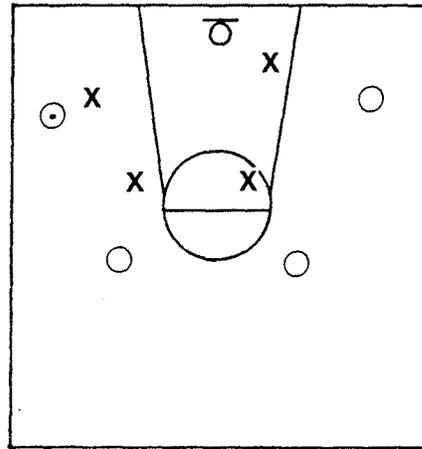
## Drills

**Shell Drill.** This drill teaches players about positional change by forcing them to react to movement of the ball. In this drill,

- Four offensive players and their defenders line up (Figures 8.16 and 8.17)
- No movement or dribbling is allowed
- No diagonal passes are allowed
- Passes are made *only on the coach's signal* - which allows the coach to check the position of each defensive player before play continues
- Defenders do not try to steal the ball or intercept passes
- No shots are permitted.



**Figure 8.16**  
**Shell Drill:**



**Figure 8.17**  
**Shell Drill:**

Once players have learned these basic positions, the following modifications may be introduced:

- Allow one or two dribbles while maintaining the basic 2-2 offensive formation.
- Allow diagonal passes.
- Allow shots.
- Add more defensive pressure on the ball.
- Allow offensive movement, for example, dribbling or ball cuts.

## Chapter 12 Planning

### 12.0 Introduction

Planning is one of the most important areas with which beginning coaches must become familiar. By planning the season, practices, and games to meet their team's needs, coaches can take a significant step toward using both their talents and those of their players most effectively. Moreover, by planning what they would like to do in a particular season, practice, or game, coaches can accomplish far more than they would without such planning.

It is imperative that planning take place before, during, and after the season. By the time you have worked through this chapter, you will be better prepared to make plans for the following:

- The preseason
- The season
- Microcycles
- Practices
- Games
- The postseason.

### 12.1 The Preseason

The focus of preseason planning is the first meeting with prospective players. It is strongly recommended that this meeting be held *before* the first practice, and that coaches explain their coaching philosophy, distribute a schedule of games and practices, and answer any questions players might have.

The following checklist will help you prepare for the first meeting:

- Reserve a meeting room.
- Publicize the meeting.
- Prepare a schedule of games and practices for distribution.
- Prepare a registration form, and have each prospective player fill it in. This form should ask for the player's name, address, phone number, age, grade in school (where applicable), height, weight, and basketball experience; the phone number of the player's parent or guardian; and the name of another player who might like to play.
- Prepare an information sheet for distribution to *all* prospective players. This sheet should specify how much it will cost to play with the team, how and when players will be cut, and when practices and games will take place.

Be prepared to discuss any rules you plan to enforce; for example, you might regard attendance at practice as mandatory. In addition, make it clear that these rules hold until they are *formally* modified, for instance, following a team meeting.

## 12.2 The Season

Preparing a plan for the entire season - a master plan - can be a lengthy process. However, if your first plan is *thorough* enough, you need only *modify* it in subsequent years.

The starting point in planning for the season is to determine where you are and where you want to go. Check records, watch players closely during free gym time to determine the present status of the team and players, and watch local teams at a similar level to assess the team's potential. Use the information gathered to develop a plan to get the team where you want it to be.

The next step is to develop a list of skills suitable for the age group you will be coaching. Refer to the *Basketball Development Model* (Basketball Canada, 1983) for suggestions, and take your own basketball philosophy into consideration when drawing up this list. If you are a beginning coach, it is suggested that you be conservative in your planning - don't try to do too much too quickly!

Finally, for *each* activity in this list of skills, decide the week during which you plan to introduce the skill and *write your plan down*. Choose a format that you are comfortable with and review the master plan several times a year to check your progress and make necessary adjustments.

### 12.3 Microcycles

You may wish to plan practices one week at a time, for doing so allows you to better integrate practices with competitions. A one-week planning period is sometimes referred to as a *microcycle*.

Coaches usually plan microcycles by first preparing the season plan, next dividing the season into smaller, more manageable periods, and then planning these smaller periods in detail. Asking yourself the following questions should help your planning in this area:

- Are any games scheduled for during the week?
- Is it early in the season? midseason? late in the season?
- Are there events - for instance, exams or other school activities - that might conflict with team activities?
- Would it be useful to review what players have already learned before teaching new material?

### 12.4 Practices

Since the majority of instruction will occur at practices, it is essential to carefully plan *all* aspects of *each* practice. One of the most important steps in this process is to decide on drills to teach the skills included in the master plan.

When making decisions about drills, remember that many skills can be introduced and taught with very *simple* drills that focus on one particular skill. Moreover, note that using a large number of complicated drills takes up a considerable amount of teaching time. Nonetheless, it is suggested that you be familiar with *at least one* complex drill that calls for passing, dribbling, and shooting in a competitive situation. Then, as players learn skills, review them with one of these more complex drills and add competition - to keep players interested.

It is important to consider the following when planning practices:

- Careful progression in drills is necessary.
- Drills must include situations that occur in games.
- New material should be presented early in practice, when players are still fresh.
- Repetition is an essential element of motor learning.
- Practices should start with warm-up activities.
- Stretching should occur *before* practices.
- Drills should keep as many players as possible active.
- The format of practices should change from time to time.
- Less intense drills should follow physically demanding drills.
- Variety is essential; for example, change some of the simpler drills, or modify more complex drills.
- All drills should have names to reduce the amount of time to explain a drill.
- Offence and defence should be emphasized on alternate days.
- Team meetings should take place either before or after practice.

It is strongly recommended to record the details of each practice on a practice plan form and review each practice. Such reviews are important in preparing for future practices. Using practice plan forms facilitates this exercise.

By doing the following, coaches can ensure that practices run smoothly:

- Always arrive early.
- Establish *clear* rules about being late or absent.
- Have all equipment ready *before* the practice.
- Hold a short meeting before or after practice to give players direction and facilitate administration.
- Establish signals for asking all players to stop where they are (for example, saying "Freeze"), and come together in a group (for instance, a whistle ).
- Explain each drill as clearly as possible.
- Regularly refer to drills by name - and use the same name *every* time.
- Record any changes in your practices on the practice plan form.

## 12.5 Games

It is essential that you do the following when planning games:

- Make *all* arrangements well in advance.
- Arrange transportation, and make sure that insurance coverage is adequate.
- Make sure that any equipment necessary is transported to the game.
- Allow *more than enough time* for travel.
- In the case of home games, make sure that the facility is booked. In addition, make sure that scorers, timers, and the appropriate material and equipment are available.
- Advise the assigning official of any changes in the game's time or location.
- If you use certain forms to keep statistics on the game, have such forms on hand.
- Determine the form and content of the warm-up.
- Discuss strategy in a short pregame talk with players.
- After the game, hold a *short* meeting, and review significant results with players.

## 12.6 The Postseason

After the season, make sure that *all* administrative details associated with your team are attended to:

- Collect and store equipment (if applicable).
- Use any data gathered during the season to create a statistical summary of the season, and distribute this summary to players.
- Assess the season by reviewing your plans - both master plans and practice plans - *and* the results achieved.
- Prepare a list of recommendations for the following season.

