

31 BASKETBALL DRILLS & GAMES



For Kids

C O A C H M A C

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Introduction

Hey there,

I'm Coach Mac and I want to take a second to thank you for downloading a copy of 31 Basketball Drills and Games for Kids eBook.

I want to let you get to the basketball drills and games as soon as possible, so I'll keep this quick...

On the following pages are the drills I use most often when I'm coaching or training a youth basketball team.

Although many these drills can be used for basketball players of all ages, all of them are perfect for teaching kids the game of basketball and assisting them to improve their skills.

I encourage you to spend some time going through this eBook, find the drills that you think would work best for your team, and then implement them at your next practice.

For each drill I will explain how the drill works, its purpose, how to set it up, the instructions behind running the drill, different variations you can use, and coaching points for each drill.

With a total of 31 great drills in this book, you should always have fresh drills and games that your players will love and that will help them improve.

I truly hope this eBook will assist you at improving your practices and will also help you become a better coach.

Good luck!

- Coach Mac

Shooting Drills





PERFECTS

How the Drill Works:

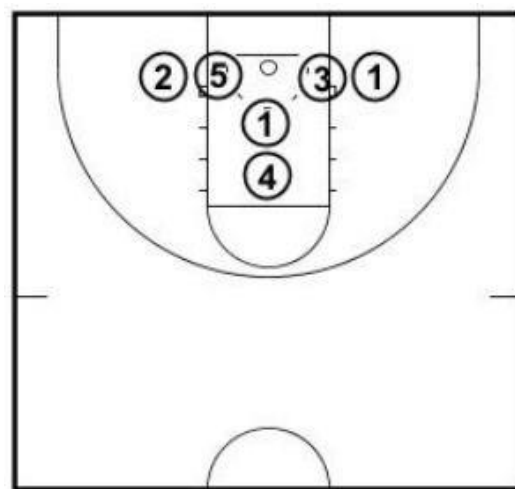
The drill begins with three lines a few feet out around the basket. Players shoot focusing on form and aiming to swish the ball through the hoop, then rotate to the next line.

Purpose:

A great shooting warm up drill that allows players to work on shooting with the proper form and allows coaches to watch each player and then provide feedback about how they can improve their technique.

Setup:

- Every player needs a basketball
- Set up three lines around the basket. On both sides and at the top.
- Even number of players in each line.



Instructions:

1. The first player in the first line shoots the ball, rebounds their shot, and joins the next line.
2. As soon as the first person's shot has been made or missed, the first person from the second line shoots, rebounds, and joins the third line.



3. Then the first person from the third line shoots, rebounds, and joins the first line.
4. This cycle continues so that no one will ever be shooting at the same time.

Scoring System:

- Everyone counts their individual makes and misses.

or

- The team counts number of makes and misses together.

or

- Team makes a certain amount of swishes.

Variations:

Distance - As the players develop you can start moving them further away from the basket. Form must always be perfect though.

No Line Rotation - I've used this drill with some young players that keep getting mixed up with when to change lines and which one to change to. If you'd prefer you can have the players return to the same line after each shot to make it easier.

One Hand Shooting - Can run this drill using one hand only to shoot the ball. This ensures that players aren't pushing the ball with their off-hand as well.



Coaching Points:

- Players must be shooting with perfect form every time.
- Hold follow through until the ball has made it through the hoop or missed.
- Coaches should be viewing each players shooting form from different angles.
- Ask players to hold the basketball unless they're shooting.
- Emphasize to your players how important it is to develop good form on your shot!



21 CONES

How the Drill Works:

Place 21 cones at the baseline of one end of the floor and split the players up into two teams at the other end of the floor. Players shoot and are 'rewarded' a cone if they make the shot which they must sprint to the other end of the court to receive. The team with the most cones at the end of the game wins.

Purpose:

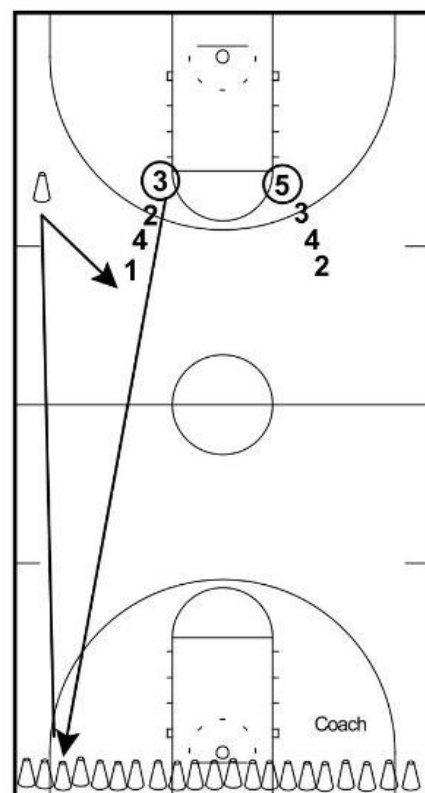
It's a fun variation to a normal shooting drill that keeps players interested and excited. Also works on shooting under pressure.

Setup:

- Place 21 cones at the opposite end of the court.
- Split your group up into two teams.
- One basketball per team.

Instructions:

1. Players start shooting on the coach's whistle.
2. On every make by a team, the person who shoots must rebound the ball and pass it back to the next person in line before running down to the other end to receive a cone for their team.





3. The player then places the cone in their teams 'safe-house' near their line and joins the end of the line.

Scoring System:

- The team that finishes with the most cones at the end of the game wins!

Variations:

Increase or Decrease Cones - I've used this drill with both 13 or 33 cones as well. Use any number of cones as long as it's an odd number so there's a winner.

Shooting Position - Usually adults will shoot three-pointers but youth teams can shoot from the elbow or anywhere else on the floor.

More Groups - Instead of playing with only two groups, you can create up to 4 groups and place the cones in the middle of the court instead.

Coaching Points:

- Make sure players rebound the ball after a make instead of running straight away to get a cone!
- Don't allow teams to just let their best three-point shooters shoot. Everyone has to take it in turns.
- Take note of who your best shooters under pressure are! You'll need to know come game-time!
- If you don't have cones, you could use tennis balls or anything else similar.



PIVOT SHOOTING

How the Drill Works:

Players start in two lines on the baseline. Each player takes it in turns passing their ball out to a coach or parent and then following the pass to receive the ball back in a jump stop. The players then square up to the basket before taking a variety of shots.

Purpose:

Teaches players to square up to the ring, works on pivoting, and also allows the players to put up a lot of shots.

Setup:

- Two lines of players on the baseline.
- One coach or parent at the top of each line.
- Every player has a basketball.

Instructions:

1. The first player in each line passes their basketball out to the coach in front of them.
2. As soon as the coach catches it, the player cuts hard straight out to them and receives the pass in a 2 foot jump stop facing the passer.





3. The players then must pivot and square up to the ring before shooting or driving to the basket.
4. After rebounding their own shot, the player joins the opposite line.

Variations:

Different Shots - Jump shot, layup, one-dribble pull-up, step-back, pump fake and drive, etc.

Catching Position - Decide the catching position depending on the age/skill level of your players. Really young players can catch as close as the block and older players can catch at the high post or the wing.

One Group - If you have less than 5 players use one group instead of two.

Coaching Points:

- Players must catch the ball in a two-foot jump stop so that they can pivot with either foot.
- Remind the players that the higher they jump before the jump stop, the more off-balance they're going to be when they land.
- Watch out for travels. This is a shooting footwork drill.
- Players must call for the basketball and show target hands when approaching the elbow to receive the pass back.
- When pivoting, players shouldn't come out of their low stance.



CHASE DOWN LAYUPS

How the Drill Works:

Two lines of players on the baseline at each end of the court. The offensive player starts with an advantage and sprints the court and must lay the ball up while under pressure from the defensive player.

Purpose:

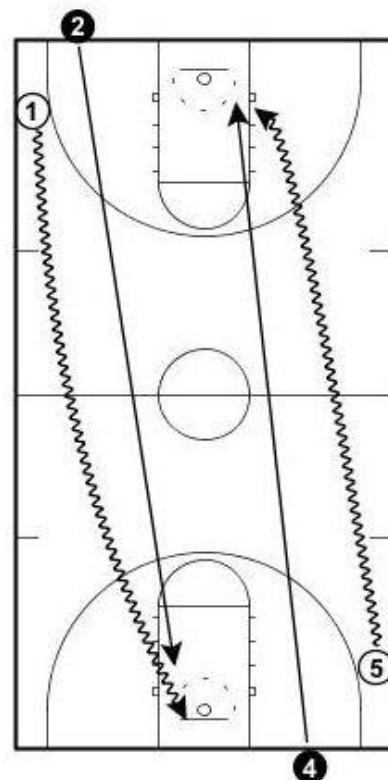
To allow players to practice layups at full speed while under pressure from a defender. This drill also works on chase-down defense.

Setup:

- Two lines of players on the baseline at each end of the court.
- Players in the offensive line all have a basketball.
- A coach at each end of the court to start the drill.

Instructions:

1. Coach starts by bringing the offensive player out a few steps depending on how fast they are compared to the defense to give them the fast break advantage.
2. On the coach's call, the offensive and defensive players sprint the floor.





3. The offensive player's goal is to make the layup and the defensive player's goal is to challenge the layup without fouling.
4. After the make or miss, both players join the end of the lines at their current end of the floor.

Variations:

Opposite Side of the Floor - Perform the drill from the other side of the floor so that the players have to dribble and make a layup with their left hand.

Competitive - Play until a player makes a certain amount of layups.

Coaching Points:

- Offensive player should be taking long steps on the layup to be under control and balance, and then jumping high on the second step before laying the ball in.
- Offensive player must drive in at the correct angle and not be fading away towards the baseline because they're scared of contact or getting blocked.
- All teams must be practicing this drill on both sides of the floor so that your players are working on their opposite hand.
- Defensive player shouldn't be flying out of bounds. If they challenge and offense misses the layup, they should be there for the rebound.
- The defensive players must do their best to avoid contact.



PRESSURE

How the Drill Works:

Players take it in turns shooting free-throws. If the player before you makes the free-throw you are under pressure and must make the shot or you are out of the game.

Purpose:

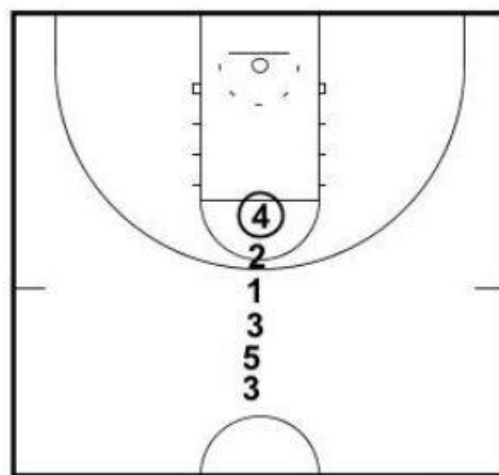
As the name suggest, pressure is designed to put the players under pressure at the free-throw line to simulate the pressure of an in-game free-throw.

Setup:

- All players participating lining up in a straight line from the free-throw line.
- One basketball at the front of the line.

Instructions:

1. When the player in front of you makes a shot you are under pressure.
2. If you miss a shot while under pressure you're out.
3. If you make a shot while under pressure, the pressure continues on to the next person until someone misses.





4. Once someone misses the pressure shot and goes out, there is no pressure until someone makes another shot.

Variations:

Jump Shots - While this was created as a free-throw drill, there's no reason you can't use it to put pressure on other shots on the court. You can use this drill on any shot.

Pressure Continues - Traditionally, when the player under pressure makes the shot the pressure is cancelled out. A way to make the game quicker is once someone makes a free-throw the pressure never cancels. The first person to miss is out.

Coaching Points:

- Make sure the players are going through their full free-throw routine.
- Don't allow players to put each other off at practice. I find this leads to players getting angry at each other and ruining the game.
- Keep in mind this drill involves a long line which we're against for youth basketball practice. I don't recommend using this in the middle of practice but just at the end as something fun as the players cool down.



31

How the Drill Works:

Each group will be competing against each other to be the first group to reach 31 points. The players will each take three shots - one from the 3-point line, one from outside the key, and one inside the key - and have the potential to score 6 points before passing to the next player in the group.

Purpose:

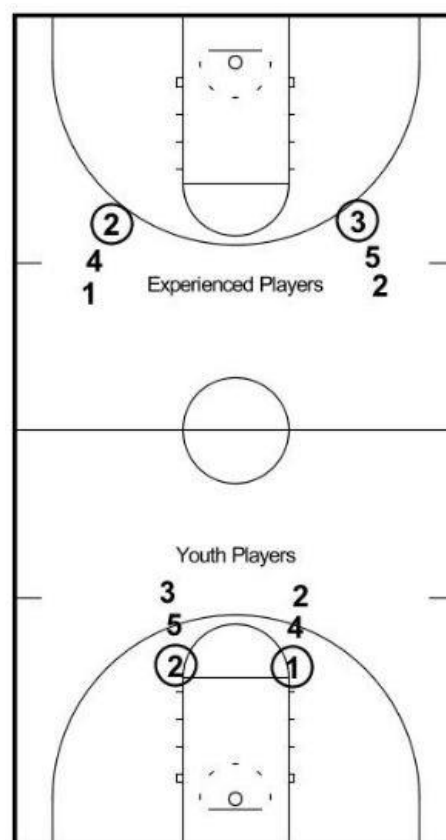
To work on shooting from all different spots on the basketball court while under pressure and at game speed.

Setup:

- Split the players you have up into 4 even groups and get them to form a line outside the 3-point line on each wing.
- 3 - 5 players in each team.
- First person in each line needs a ball.

Instructions:

1. On the coach's whistle, the first person in each line will take a shot from the three-point line. If they make it, their team receives three points.





2. Irrelevant of whether the shot is made or not, the shooter will get the rebound, retreat outside of the key, and take another mid-range jump shot. This shot is worth two points.
3. The player will again rebound their shot, and this time they're allowed to take a shot inside the key. This shot is worth one point.
4. They then rebound the ball once more and pass it to the next player in the group who repeats the same process.

Scoring System:

- The game has no time limit. The goal is to score 31 points as a group. When a group reaches 31 points they call out '31' and are the winning team.
- The points are scored as follows:
 - Three-point shot - 3 points
 - Outside the key - 2 points
 - Inside the key - 1 point
- Each player has a maximum of three shots each time it's their go.

Variations:

Youth Players - Instead of shooting from the three-point line, have each group start on the elbow. This means the first shot is from the elbow (worth 3 points), the second shot is from outside the key (worth 2 points), and the third shot is from inside the key (worth 1 point).

Different Target Amount of Points - Instead of playing to 31, you can play till 11, 21, or even 41.



Coaching Points:

- The players shooting form is paramount. Make corrections to any poor technique you see.
- Assign a designated player from each group to be the score keeper. I've noticed in the past if you don't they'll likely get mixed up. But when someone is given the role it makes it more important and they pay attention.
- Groups will rotate positions after a team wins that round. I usually get my teams to play four rounds so they will shoot from each wing on the court.
- Make sure players are hustling after each rebound so their teams gets to take as many shots as possible.

Dribbling Drills





DRIBBLING LINES

How the Drill Works:

All players start on the baseline with a basketball. The coach then instructs them to perform different dribbling moves as they dribble up and down the court.

Purpose:

This is a simple drill to teach the basics of dribbling to new players.

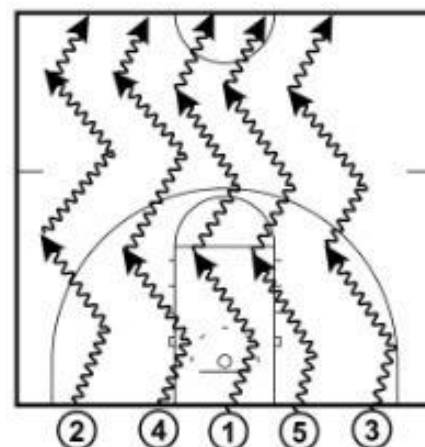
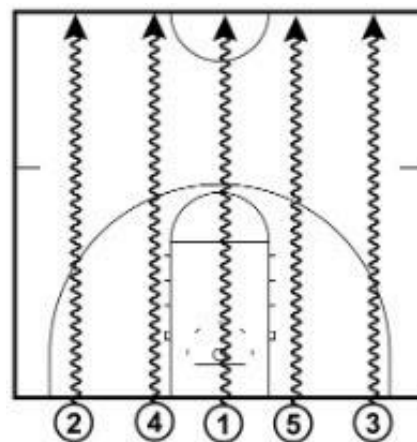
It's a good way to introduce new moves without overwhelming them and will also help to improve the technique of the movements players already know.

Setup:

- Every player must have a basketball.
- All players lining up along the baseline. If you have more than 8 players, create two lines.

Instructions:

1. The first thing you must do is explain the dribbling move you want them to perform. The best way is by demonstration.
2. Then the coach calls out 'go' and the players either dribble to half-way or full-court and back performing the dribble move.





3. Each trip down the floor, change which type of dribble move the players use.

Variations:

Dribbling Moves - Here are a few of the different dribbles I like to use with beginner players...

- Right hand up, left hand back
- Crossovers
- Behind-the-back
- Through-the-legs
- Dribble low
- Dribbling backwards

Coaching Points:

- Players must keep their heads up at all times.
- Once they develop good technique, focus on the players pushing off with their outside foot when making a move.
- Write down the dribbling moves so that you don't forget them. I always do!



DRIBBLING KNOCKOUT

How the Drill Works:

All players dribble around in a small area and the goal is to knock other players' basketball out of the area while keeping your own basketball alive.

Purpose:

A great drill to work on dribbling skills and protecting the basketball all while evading other players in a tight space.

Setup:

- The first thing the coach must do is determine the area the players will be dribbling in. This will depend on the amount of players you have but will usually be the three-point line or the 1/3 court line.
- All players must have a basketball.

Instructions:

1. On the coaches call, all players try and steal the ball away from each other while keeping their own dribble alive.
2. When a players ball is knocked away out of the designated area, they are then out and must go and stand on the sideline and wait till the rest are finished.





3. Coaches must watch and if a player either travel or double-dribbles, they are automatically out.
4. As the group gets smaller and smaller, you should move them to a smaller space like only the key area.
5. The last one in wins!

Variations:

Weak-Hand Only - To make this game much harder and to work on weak-hand dribbling, play a game of dribble knockout in which all players are only allowed to dribble with their non-preferred hand.

Coaching Points:

- If a player fouls someone else, travels, or double dribbles, they're out. It's the coach's job to keep an eye out for these things.
- Constantly remind players to keep their head up.
- Have a designated area for players that get out or you'll end up with kids everywhere!



COLLISION DRIBBLING

How the Drill Works:

Players are all in a small playing area and must dribble around dodging each other without losing their basketball and without accidentally hitting someone else's basketball away.

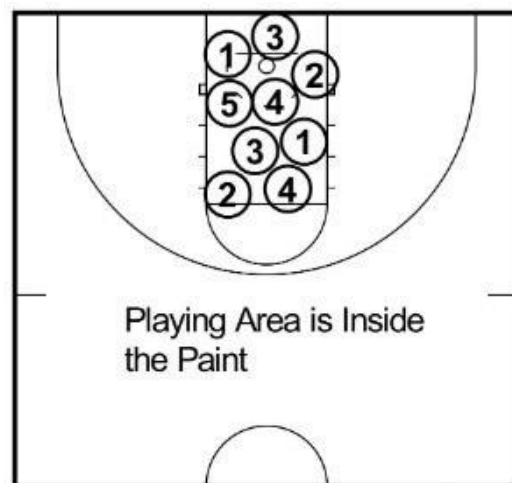
Purpose:

This drill is used to teach players to dribble in confined spaces and to keep their heads up. Players also learn to be creative with their dribble since there's not much space to dribble.

Setup:

All players have a basketball.

- The coach decides on the playing area depending on the size of the group. The playing area could be the key area, an area set out by cones, the three-point line, etc.



Instructions:

1. On the coach's call, all players will start dribbling around each other in the small space aiming to keep their dribble under control.
2. If anyone loses control of the basketball, they simply retrieve it and enter back in the game.



Variations:

Competitive - You can allow players to try and knock each other's basketballs out of play. This variation is known as 'Dribble Knockout'.

Weak Hand Only - One way to increase the difficulty of this drill is to only allow players to dribble with their weak hand.

Coaching Points:

- Don't allow players to all dribble in the same direction or it will be too easy.
- Keep reminding the players to keep their heads up!
- Encourage players to use both hands. Not just their strong hand.



SCARECROW TIGGY

How the Drill Works:

Players all start in the half-court. There are one or two taggers and everyone else has a basketball. The taggers must run around trying to tag players dribbling. If tagged, the dribblers must stand as 'scarecrow' until another dribbler frees them by rolling a basketball through their legs.

Purpose:

This drill is great for developing dribbling skills because the players must keep their heads up and focus on the taggers and not put their head down and watch the dribble.

Setup:

- The coach selects one or two players to be the taggers depending on the size of the group.
- Preferably these taggers have different coloured singlets on so that other players can quickly identify them.
- All other players have a basketball and are standing in the playing area.

Instructions:

1. When the coach calls out 'Go', the game begins.





2. The taggers must run around and attempt to tag all the players dribbling a basketball.
3. When tagged, the dribbler must stand with the basketball on their head and their feet apart.
4. When a player is tagged, other dribblers must attempt to free them by rolling their basketball through the tagged players legs.
5. Scarecrow Tiggy never has a winner unless the taggers happen to get everyone out at one time (this doesn't happen often).
6. Every couple of minutes change who the taggers are until everyone has had a turn.

Variations:

Elimination - To make this game more competitive, you can try the variation where once players are tagged they're out and must sit on the sideline until there is one dribbler left who is the winner.

Coaching Points:

- Players are not allowed to throw the ball between a teammates legs, the ball must be rolled.
- Dribblers are not allowed to travel, double dribble, or any other violation. If they do, they're out.
- Change up the amount of taggers and the size of the playing space depending on how many players you have.



DRIBBLE TAG

How the Drill Works:

Every player starts the game with a basketball. The coach selects one or two players who are the taggers and they must attempt to tag everyone out. When you've been tagged, you must sit on the sideline or the baseline and wait until the next game.

Purpose:

Similar to scarecrow tag, this drill is great for improving dribbling skills because the dribblers have to focus on the taggers and not their dribble.

Setup:

- The coach first decides on the playing area which will depend on the amount of players you have.
- All players start the game with a basketball.
- The coach selects one or two players to be the taggers.

Instructions:

1. On the coach's call, the taggers must dribble around the playing area attempting to tag the other players.
2. The other players must dribble around without committing a dribbling violation and avoiding getting tagged.





3. If a player does get tagged, they are out and must sit down out-of-bounds and wait for the next game.

Variations:

Taggers Don't Dribble - If the taggers are having a lot of trouble getting other players out, consider allowing them to run around without dribbling.

Two Balls - If you have enough basketballs for two each and your players are skilled enough, give each player two basketballs that they must dribble while the taggers only have to dribble one.

Coaching Points:

- If the taggers are struggling to tag anyone, consider allowing them to run around without having to dribble a basketball.
- Vary the size of the court and amount of taggers depending on the amount of players you have.
- If a dribbler commits a dribbling violation, they are automatically out.



SHARKS AND MINNOWS

How the Drill Works:

Sharks and Minnows is one of my favorite drills for youth basketball. The aim of the game is for the minnows (dribblers) to dribble from baseline to baseline without getting tagged by the sharks (taggers).

Purpose:

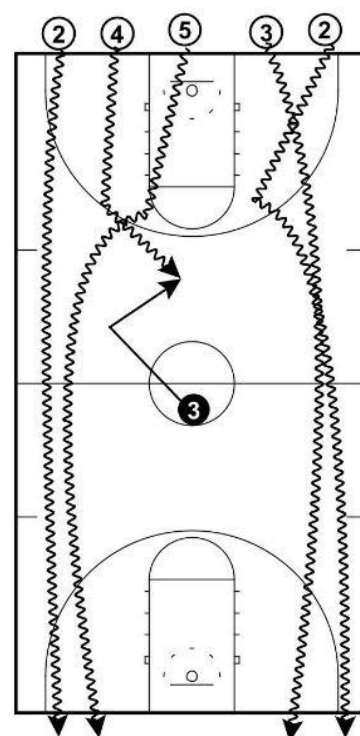
A super fun drill that forces the dribblers to keep their heads up and dodge the defenders in front of them.

Setup:

- All players have a basketball and line up along the baseline.
- The coach selects one or two players to be taggers. Taggers don't have a basketball and are preferably in a different coloured singlet.
- The taggers stand in the middle of the court.

Instructions:

1. The game starts when either the taggers or coach call out 'go'. On this signal, all the minnows (dribblers) attempt to dribble from one side of the court to the other without getting tagged by the sharks.
2. If a shark does tag them, they must stand in the spot they were tagged, place the basketball between their feet, and





now are scarecrows. If a minnow comes within reach of them, they can tag them to get them out.

3. The last minnow that hasn't been tagged is the winner.

Variations:

Taggers Dribbling - Depending on the age and skill of your players, decide whether you want the sharks to be dribbling a basketball or not.

Number of Sharks - Adjust the number of sharks to the skill level of your team and who you're selecting as the sharks.

Coaching Points:

- As always, if there's a dribbling violation by a minnow they are immediately out.
- Scarecrows must hold the ball between their feet at all times and stay on balance. This stops them moving too far and cheating.
- Implement a time limit if players are taking too long to get from one side to the other.



FOLLOW THE LEADER

How the Drill Works:

Players will form one line and follow a leader as they dribble around the lines of the court. The leader will change every couple of minutes so that everyone has a turn at being the leader.

Purpose:

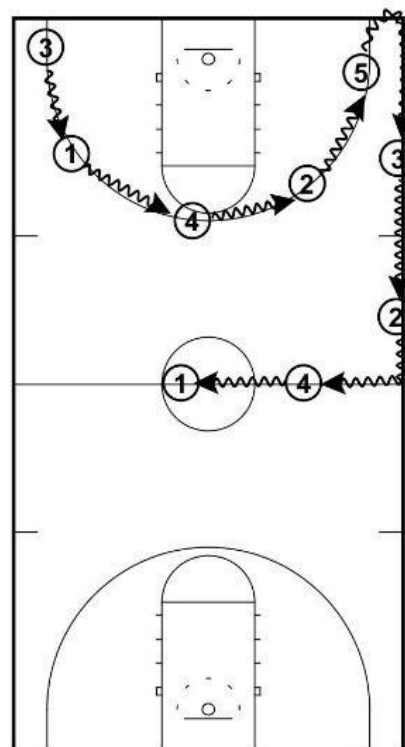
This is a great drill for players first beginning to learn how to dribble a basketball. This game makes it easy to teach the basics while still holding the player's attention.

Setup:

- Everyone starts with a basketball and all players line up in a straight line along the baseline.
- When everyone's lined up, the coach picks a direction (either right or left) for the whole group to face. This will be the direction the group dribbles and the first player in line becomes the first leader.

Instructions:

1. The leader of the group starts the drill off by dribbling anywhere they want on the court as long as they stay on the lines.





2. The other players must follow the leader as they dribble around the court while staying in a single file.
3. After a minute or so, send the leader to the back of the line and the next player in line becomes the new leader.
4. The drill is over once all players have had a turn at being the leader.

Variations:

Two Basketballs - If your team is advanced enough and you have enough basketballs to accomodate everyone, you can give each player a second basketball to dribble.

Dribble Moves - If your team finds dribbling on the lines too easy, incorporate dribbles moves each time the players turn. The leader performs any type of dribble move and the rest of the players must perform the same one at the corner.

Coaching Points:

- If the player that's leading is better than their teammates, ask them to slow down so the others can keep up with them.
- No overtaking another player unless they lose their basketball and leave the line.
- Make sure the players are dribbling with their opposite hand too!

Passing Drills





PARTNER PASSING

How the Drill Works:

Each player finds a partner and has one basketball between the pair. They line up on lines opposite each other and must practice performing different kinds of passes.

Purpose:

A great drill for teaching the absolute basics of passing. Allows the coaches to easily evaluate and make corrections to the form of different players.

Setup:

- Everyone starts by finding a partner.
- Once in partners, grab one basketball between two.
- Designate two parallel lines that all players should line up on.

Instructions:

1. The coach tells the players which pass they'll be practicing first and then tells them to start passing.
2. Coaches must now go around and check the technique of each individual player and make corrections when it's necessary.
3. Every couple of minutes the coach should call out a different kind of pass and all the kids change.





Variations:

Different Passes - Here are the basics to start with

- Chest pass
- Bounce pass
- Overhead pass
- One-handed push pass - right hand.
- One-handed push pass - left hand.

Distance Apart - If your players are strong enough, get one of the pair to take a couple of steps back so that the pass must be made further.

Coaching Points:

- Make sure you mix up which type of pass you want them to perform (bounce pass, chest pass, one-handed push-pass, ect).
- Don't allow players to be silly and throw the basketball too hard at their partner. It will end up with blood noses.
- Make sure all coaches are teaching the same passing technique so the kids don't get confused.



STATIONARY KEEPINGS OFF

How the Drill Works:

Players are stuck in stationary positions spread out around the playing area and must pass it to one another without letting the defenders get a steal or deflection.

Purpose:

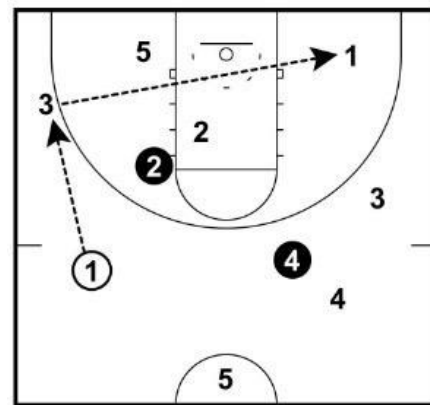
The purpose of this drill is to teach the importance of spacing to players by not allowing them to sprint at the basketball. It also teaches quick decision making on the catch.

Setup:

- All players should spread themselves out within the playing area. The size of the playing area will depend on how many players you have. Usually half court.
- The coach is the only one that needs a basketball.
- The coach then selects one or two players to be the defenders.

Instructions:

1. To start the drill, the coach throws the basketball to one of the offensive players.
2. Now the offensive team must pass the basketball around trying to keep it away from the defenders who are allowed to run around attempting to get a deflection.





3. If the defenders get a deflection the ball goes back to the offensive team and they start again.
4. After a minute or so change the defenders until everyone has had a turn at defending.

Variations:

Offensive Players Can Move - You can allow the offensive players to move to see how it goes. If the group is young and inexperienced, it will be a good teaching point because everyone will run towards the basketball and it will be much harder.

Coaching Points:

- Allow the defenders to sprint around wildly. They'll have fun.
- Encourage the offensive team to make quick decisions when they receive the basketball.
- Make sure everyone is getting a turn to pass on offense. If they're not, join in the game and pass them the basketball.
- Players must be calling for the basketball.



PIGGY CIRCLES

How the Drill Works:

Piggy circles is similar to piggy-in-the-middle except we use the three circles on the court as the boundary. In groups of 4, there are 3 passers outside the circle and 1 defender inside the circle. The offensive players must pass to each other without letting the defender deflect the basketball.

Purpose:

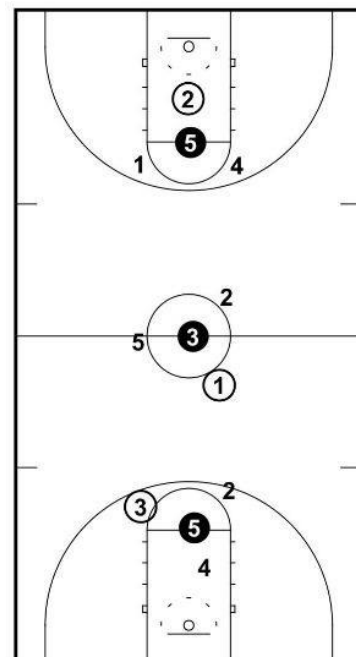
This drill will develop passing skill and will teach your players the importance of pass fakes and how to execute them properly.

Setup:

- Start by getting players in groups of four players. The maximum amount of players that can run this drill on one court is 12 at a time.
- The group of four will only need one basketball.
- Each group of four is designated a circle and must decide the 3 offensive players and 1 defensive player.

Instructions:

1. The drill starts with the 3 offensive players passing the basketball to each other. They must stay stationary in their spots.





2. The defender is allowed to move around the circle but cannot tap the basketball from a player's hands.
3. After one minute, each group switches to a new defender until each player has had a turn at being the defender.

Variations:

4 Offensive Players – You can try running this drill with 4 offensive players. Whether it will work or be too easy depends on the age and skill level of your players.

Coaching Points:

- Be careful about kids being silly in this drill. Since it's such a short distance, passing the basketball too hard could lead to injuries if players can't catch well.
- Make sure the offensive team is utilizing pass fakes to put off the defender.
- The defender must be active with high hands and quick feet.



COUNT 'EM UP

How the Drill Works:

This drill involves two even teams competing against each other in a game of keepings off. This is a more advanced drill of the keepings off game. Players are allowed to move around within a specific playing area and the goal is to make a certain amount of passes. No dribbling or shooting is allowed.

Purpose:

This drill works on getting open using change of pace and change of direction, denying the offensive player, and making smart passes to limit turnovers.

Setup:

- First you must split your group up into two teams as even as possible. If possible, these teams should be wearing different colours.
- The drill only requires one basketball and should start with the coach.
- Depending on the amount of players you have, set a playing area and decide how many passes are required to be awarded a point and explain that to both teams. Usually this will be played in the half court.



Instructions:

1. To start the drill, all players must match up against someone from the opposition.



2. When everyone is matched up, the coach passes the basketball to one of the players on the floor and the game begins immediately.
3. For this example we'll say the offense is trying to make 15 consecutive passes. If they reach this goal, they receive one point and then it becomes the opposition's turn.
4. If the opposition gets a deflection or the ball out of bounds or gets a steal, the offensive team does not receive a point and now the defense has the basketball.
5. This continues until a team reaches a certain amount of points.

Variations:

Beginner Version - The beginner version of this drill is called 'Stationary Keepings Off' and it's on page _____. The difference is that there are less defenders and the offensive players can't move.

Less Defenders - If you want to make the game a bit easier, take away a defender or two so that the defense is scrambling and there is always one offensive player open. This forces the offense to space properly.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage players to set screens for each other and use body fakes to get open.
- Encourage the best players to play against each other and challenge each other.
- Spacing is of the utmost importance. Don't allow players to sprint at the basketball.



CONTINUOUS 3 ON 2

How the Drill Works:

This is a full court continuous 3 on 2 drill. Three players attack two defenders and regardless of if the offensive team scores or turns the basketball over, the two defenders outlet the basketball to a line at mid-court and then attack three on two at the other end of the court.

Purpose:

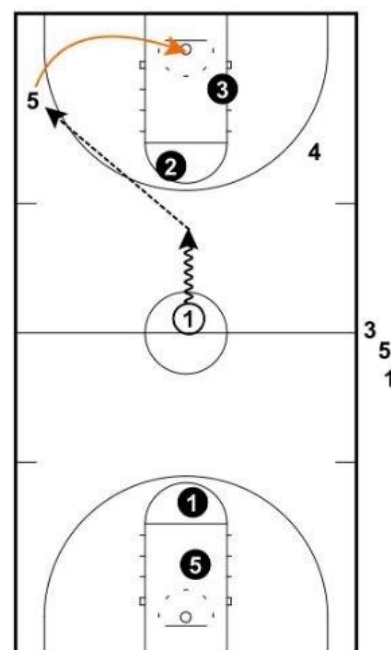
By always having an extra offensive player the players learn that they must space the court well to get an open shot each trip down the floor. This is one of my favourite drills for improving decision making.

Setup:

- The drill starts with 3 offensive players in the middle of the court, 2 defenders in each half court, and the rest of the players standing in one line out of bounds at the half court line.
- Only one basketball is needed for this drill.

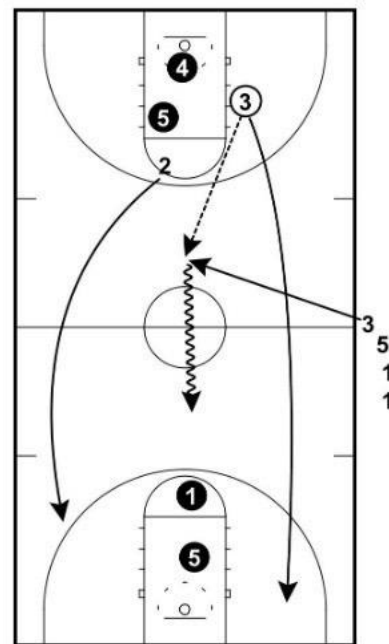
Instructions:

1. The three offensive players attack two defenders at one end of the court and will either score or the defensive players will get the basketball.





2. Once the two defensive players get the basketball (either by steal, rebound, or because the offensive team scored), they outlet to the next player in line at half way who sprints in to help advance the ball.
3. The two defenders now become offensive team and they get an extra player from the sideline to give them 3 players. They now attack towards the other end of the court 3 on 2.
4. As for the 3 previous offensive players, 2 of them become the next defenders and 1 of them joins the end of the out of bounds line.
5. This process repeats for a set amount of time.



Variations:

Continuous 4 on 3 - The exact same process as what's written above except that instead of 2 defenders there are 3, and instead of 3 offensive players there are 4.

Coaching Points:

- Make sure the offensive players are staying spaced on the floor so that they can get open looks.
- There's no reason the offensive team shouldn't be taking an open shot.
- If you want to make the drill more advanced, don't allow the players to dribble the basketball.



FOUR CORNERS

How the Drill Works:

The coach will create a large square using four cones and assign a line of players to each cone. The players then dribble in, jump stop, pivot, and pass to the next line before joining the end of it.

Purpose:

This is a great drill for working on jump stops, pivoting, and passing. It will also allow the coach to watch closely and give feedback on all footwork movements.

Setup:

- The coach must first create a large square in the half-court by placing four cones an even distance apart. There must also be another cone or D-man in the exact middle of the square. You can see where I recommend placing these cones in the diagram.
- Split your team up into four groups and send each group to a cone. The cones will be the starting position for each line.
- The person at the front of each line has a basketball.



Instructions:

1. The first thing the coach must do is tell the players which way they'll be passing (either right or left) and which kind of pivot they should use.



2. When the coach calls out 'go', each player with a basketball dribbles in towards the middle cone, performs a jump stop a couple of feet away, pivots, and then passes to the next line before joining the end of it.
3. The next player in the that catches the basketball does not start until the coach has called out 'go' again.

Variations:

Different Pivots - Teach both front and reverse pivots to your players and get them to practice using both of them under control.

Different Passes - You can use different types of passes throughout the drill to change things up.

Coaching Points:

- Each player must be pivoting the same direction so that two balls don't end up being passed to one line. Do make sure to reverse the direction half way through the drill.
- Use front and reverse pivots and make sure players aren't traveling.
- Explain to the players it's better to jump stop with a small hop. The higher they jump, the more off-balance they'll be when they land.



RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

How the Drill Works:

This drill involves players dribbling up and down the court and the coach calling out 'Go' and 'Stop'. When the coach calls out go, the players dribble. When the coach calls out stop, the players perform a jump stop. Can also add pivots.

Purpose:

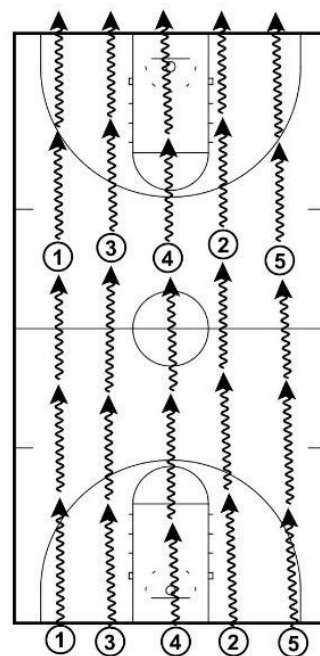
This is a perfect drill for teaching the jump stop and pivoting. It's one of the few drills I use with all youth basketball teams.

Setup:

- The drill starts with every player line up along the baseline holding a basketball.
- If you have more than 10 players, I recommend creating two lines.

Instructions:

1. Everyone starts on the baseline in triple threat position.
2. The coach will then lead the players up the court by calling out 'go' and 'stop'. On go, the players begin dribbling at a comfortable pace towards the opposite end of the court. When the coach says stop, the players must immediately perform a jump stop.





3. This continues until the players reach the other end of the court.
4. Once your players are comfortable with the jump stops and are performing them correctly, you can make the drill more advanced by adding pivots.
5. You can either say 'pivot' and allow them to pivot either way. Or you can be specific and say 'right foot pivot' or 'left foot pivot'.

Variations:

Pivots - Once the players have got experience using the jump stop, consider adding both front and reverse pivots to the drill.

Stride Stop - Instead of using the normal jump stop, have your players stride stop.

Coaching Points:

- Players must not jump too high on the jump stops.
- Make sure players in good stance when they land after the jump stop. Knees bent and head up.
- If adding pivots, make sure players don't raise out of their stance when pivoting.



EXPLODE, PIVOT, PASS

How the Drill Works:

The drill involves players starting on the sideline, taking 2 hard dribbles away from the sideline, performing a jump stop and a pivot, and then passing back to the next player in line.

Purpose:

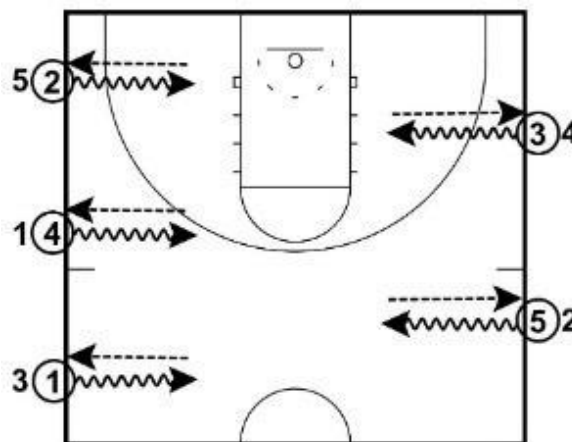
This is a great drill to work on a number of different key footwork skills from exploding off the dribble, to jump stops on balance, to learning how to stay low while pivoting.

Setup:

- Players get into groups of 2 or more. I prefer 3 players in each group if possible.
- Each group has one basketball and should start in a straight line behind either the sideline or the baseline.

Instructions:

1. The player starting with the basketball must begin the drill behind the line in triple threat stance.
2. Their first action is to take two explosive dribbles out from the line and then perform a controlled jump stop.





3. After the jump stop, the player pivots 180 degrees until they're facing their group and makes a strong chest pass to the next person in line. They then jog to the end of the line.
4. The three main things coaches are looking at are:
 - No traveling when exploding off the dribble.
 - A controlled jump stop.
 - A controlled pivot.
5. This process continues for a set amount of time.

Variations:

Amount of Players in Group - The amount of players in each group can vary from 2 - 5.

Coaching Points:

- The player receiving the basketball should be starting in a low stance and showing target hands.
- Players must explode out with the dribble. Don't allow them to go half-speed.
- Switch up which kind of pivot the players use. It can be forward or reverse, and with their left or right foot.

Defense Drills





DEFENSIVE MIRRORS

How the Drill Works:

Two players line up on two parallel lines and then the defensive player must mimic their offensive partner's movements by sliding up and down the line. The offensive players attempts to evade the defender.

Purpose:

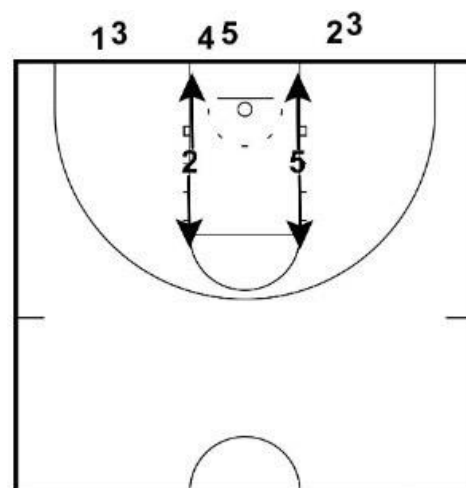
A drill that works on reaction times, will teach your team that they are quicker in a low defensive stance, and will help them with their defensive footwork.

Setup:

- Everyone starts by finding a partner and standing in pairs behind the baseline.
- If you have another coach, it's best to use both ends of the court.
- For this example, we'll use the parallel lines of the key, but if you have two other parallel lines on your home court, you can use them too.
- Coach should have something to keep time during the drill.

Instructions:

1. The first pair comes out and sets themselves up directly opposite each other on the two parallel lines of the key.
2. The coach then assigns one of them the offensive player and the drill begins immediately.





3. The goal of the defensive player is to stay directly in line with the offensive player. The offensive player must work hard to try and separate themselves from being in line with the defender by sliding up and down the line of the key.
4. After 15 seconds, the coach calls out 'switch' and the two players swap roles.
5. After 30 seconds they step behind the baseline and two new players come in.

Variations:

Duration – Instead of 15 seconds each, you can make your players slide for more or less time.

Coaching Points:

- Players must stay in a low defensive stance with their hands out wide the entire time of the drill.
- Encourage the offensive player to use head fakes and quick changes of pace to throw the defender off.
- Make sure you cover what good defensive stance is before running this drill.



DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST

How the Drill Works:

Defensive Specialist is a continuous drill that works on the different defensive movements players will make on defense including closeouts, defensive sliding, back-peddalling, and sprinting.

Purpose:

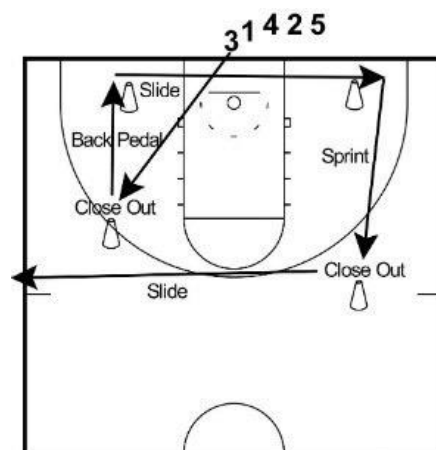
Since this drill covers all the most frequent movements players will make on defense, it's a great drill to get them used to these different movements.

Setup:

- Since it's hard to explain where the cones and movements are by writing, I encourage you to take a look at the image associated with this drill for better comprehension.
- You will require four D-men or cones for this drill.
- All players begin in a straight line on the baseline.

Instructions:

1. Players perform this defensive course one-by-one.
2. The first movement is a sprint and then close out to the cone in front. The player then back-pedals around a cone directly behind them, and then slides across to the other side of the court.





3. When the first defender slides past the line, that triggers the next player in line to start the drill.
4. When the first defender has slid around the cone on the other side of the court, they again sprint to close out, and then once again slide to the opposite side of the court before returning to the end of the line.
5. Depending on the amount of players you have, run this drill for 3 – 5 minutes.

Variations:

Different Course - You can easily change the course by differing the placement of the cones. Make sure to focus on the main defensive movements.

Coaching Points:

- Players must be sprinting and sliding at 100% effort throughout the entire drill.
- Hold the close out for a second or two before moving on.
- Make sure all defensive footwork is done well since this is a very important part of the drill.



ONE ON ONE

How the Drill Works:

Players compete against each other one-on-one from either the free-throw line or the three-point line. The offensive team are only allowed a certain amount of dribbles so that they're effective with the basketball.

Purpose:

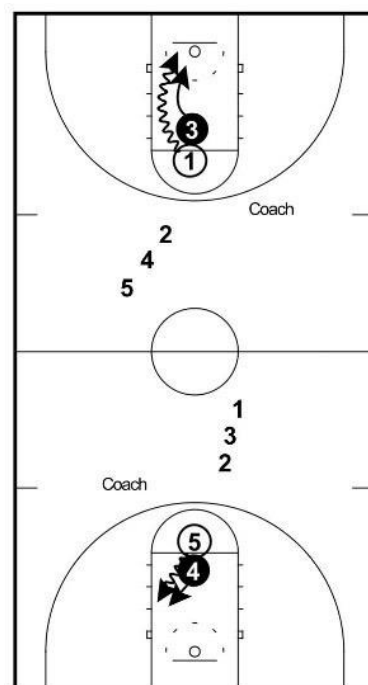
By playing one-on-one, we're forcing the on-ball defender to have to 'guard their yard'. There's no help defense coming. They're on their own and must stay in front and challenge the shot.

Setup:

- One offensive player on the three-point line.
- A defender with a basketball standing between the offensive player and the basket.
- The rest of the players forming a line at the top out of the way.

Instructions:

1. To start the drill, the defender hands the basketball to the offensive player. By handing the basketball to the offensive player, it ensures that the defender is challenging themselves by starting up close to the offensive player instead of standing back playing lazy defense.





2. The offensive player then has a maximum of 2 or 3 dribbles to attack the ring and get a clear shot.
3. After either a make or a miss, a new offensive player comes in, the previous offensive player switches to defense, and the previous defender joins the end of the line.

Variations:

Distance From Basketball – Whether you start the drill at the three-point line or the free-throw line will depend on the age of your players. If they can't shoot three's yet, start on the free-throw line.

Coaching Points:

- Make sure you enforce the rule of 2 or 3 dribbles maximum depending on which you decide. We don't want to allow the offensive player to waste dribbles and time.
- Encourage the defensive player to get up close and play hard defense. It doesn't matter if they get beat a couple of times while they're working on defending.
- Make sure players are using good footwork and good fakes.



ZIG ZAG SLIDES

How the Drill Works:

Players are required to slide from side to side up and down the court. They do this using drop steps and defensive slides.

Purpose:

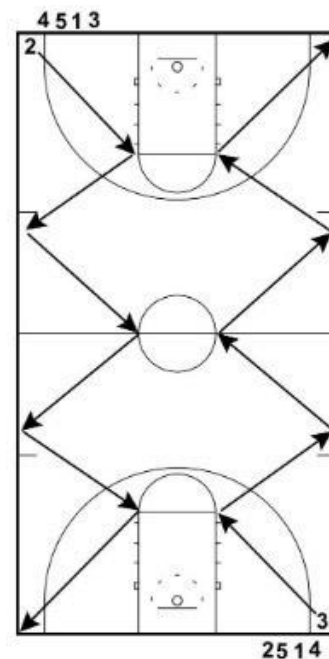
To teach players the basics of defense. This involves learning how to defensive slide properly and also using the drop step to change direction.

Setup:

- The drill begins with all players on the baseline lining up on one of the corners. No player should have a basketball.
- No player should have a basketball.

Instructions:

1. The first player will defensive slide from the corner to the high post and perform a 90-degree drop step so that they are now sliding back to the opposite sideline.
2. This process of sliding from one side to the other and drop stepping continues until the player reaches the opposite baseline.
3. They come back down the opposite side of the court using the same principles.





Variations:

Add an Offensive Player - To make the slides more game-like, add an offensive player who must dribble from side-to-side and the defensive player must stay in front of them using slides and drop steps. They're not allowed to steal the basketball.

Compete at Half Way - If you do decide to add an offensive player, if the players are used to sliding and have the correct technique, allow them to play one-on-one from half way. The defense must use the defensive principles taught in the drill.

Coaching Points:

- Teach all players how to defensive slide and drop step at the beginning of the drill.
- Make sure players are in a low stance and don't have their legs straight.
- Players should never cross their feet!

Fun Drills





WAR

How the Drill Works:

War is a great drill to incorporate fun small-sided games into your practices. It's a series of small-sided games between two teams that can be played in both the full court and half-court.

This is always one of the most favorite drills no matter what level I'm coaching.

Purpose:

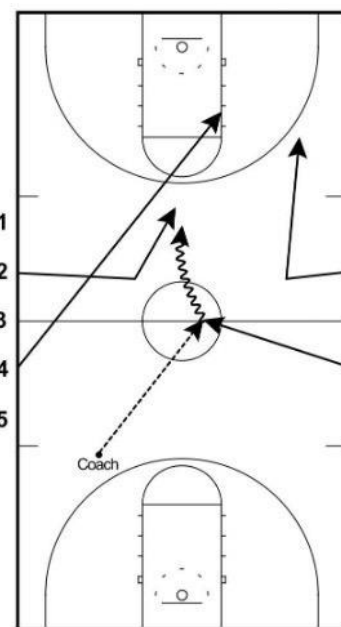
Small-sided games are awesome for developing youth players. They get more opportunities to score, more touches, etc. And this game is lots of fun!

Setup:

- The drill is set up by splitting your group into two teams and lining each half up along opposite sidelines.
- For example, let's say there are 12 players total and 6 players on each team. You will give each individual player on each team a number from 1 – 6.
- The drill requires one basketball and it always starts with the coach.

Instructions:

1. The drill begins with the coach throwing a basketball out into the middle of the





court and calling out a few numbers between 1 and 6.

2. If the coach wants to play games of 3 on 3, they might call out "1, 4, and 5!" If this happens, numbers 1, 4, and 5 from both teams come out and play a game of 3 on 3 until a score occurs.
3. The coach can play games with any number of players from 1 on 1 to 6 on 6.
4. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins!

Variations:

Amount of Players in Each Game - You don't have to stick with a certain amount of players each time. Throw in some games of 1 on 1 and 5 on 5 as well. Keep them guessing and having fun!

Two Half-Court Games - Instead of playing one full court game with your whole team, split them up and play two games, one in each half. This is a great variation for large teams.

Coaching Points:

- Try to match the best players up against each other.
- Throw the basketball out to the advantage of one side each time because you don't want players running into each other as they scramble for the basketball.
- The coach calling out the numbers must keep a fair idea of how many turns each kid has had to make it even.
- Finish off the drill by calling everyone in!



GOLDEN CHILD

How the Drill Works:

Players are split into two even teams. One shooting team and one dribbling team. The dribbling team's goal is to try and make as many home runs as possible while the shooting team's goal is to make shots to stop the running team.

Purpose:

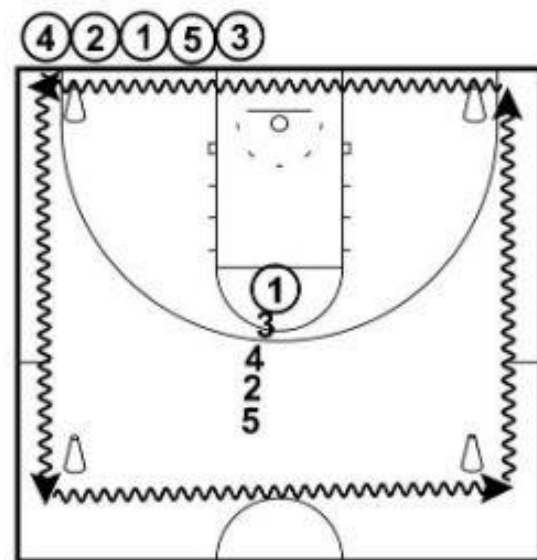
A drill that will inject a lot of fun into any practice while working on shooting with pressure and dribbling at a high speed.

Setup:

- Split the team up into two even groups. One starting on the corner (dribbling team) and one starting on the free throw line (shooting team).
- All of the dribbling should have a basketball. One basketball for the shooting team.
- Place cones to mark where the dribbling team must run around.

Instructions:

1. When the coach says to start, the first player on the dribbling team starts dribbling around the bases while the first shooter puts up a shot.





2. If the shooter makes the shot, the dribbling player must immediately freeze where they are and the next dribbler in line starts running around the bases. If the shooter misses, they must rebound their own shot and pass it to the next player before joining the back of the line.
3. For every dribbling player that gets around all the bases and to the finish line, their team receives one point.
 - This process continues until the last player who is known as the 'golden child'.
 - When the golden child starts dribbling everyone they pass who has been frozen is allowed to continue dribbling behind them and potentially make it home to receive a point. This is added pressure to make the final shot.
4. After the golden child has run add up the points the dribbling team made and swap over.

Scoring System:

- The only time a team can earn points is when they're the dribbling team.
- The dribbling team receives one point for every dribbler that makes it all the way around and back to home base.

Variations:

No Basketballs for Dribbling Team - If you have a young team and are just looking to have fun, the dribbling team can just run around the bases and try to get home without dribbling a basketball.

Two Lines of Shooters - If the players are having a hard time making a shot and getting people out, create two lines of shooters instead of one and double their chances.



Vary Shooting Distance - Change the shooting distance depending on the age and skill of your team. Young players might shoot from only a few feet out while older players can shoot three-pointers.

Coaching Points:

- Players must rebound their own shot and pass it back to the next person in line. No cheating by having a rebounder.
- Make sure the frozen dribbling players move to the side so that they don't trip the next dribbler or get in the way.
- Vary who is the golden child because all players will want to be it!



ELIMINATION

How the Drill Works:

Everyone lines up in a single line. The first two players have a basketball. Players must shoot until they get it in. If the person behind you scores before you, you're out.

Purpose:

Practice shooting the ball under pressure and following the shot for a rebound while having a lot of fun. This is a great drill I usually run at the end of practice because the players love it.

Setup:

- For this drill all you need is two basketballs.
- Designate a spot the players will take their first shot from.
- You can have as many players as you want. There is no limit. The more players you have, the funner the game will be.

Instructions:

1. To begin the drill, the first player in the line shoots from the designated spot.
2. As soon as the ball leaves the shooter hands, the second player can shoot the ball.





3. If the second player gets a basket before the first player, the first player is out.
4. If the first player makes a shot before the second player, then they quickly rebound the ball and pass it back to the next person in line.
5. The goal of the game is to receive the ball and make a shot before the person in front of you.

Scoring System:

- If the player behind you scores before you do, you're out.

Variations:

Shooting Spot - Change the spot the first shot is taken from. Free throw for younger players and you could make it the three point line for older players.

Coaching Points:

- If the player misses and gets the rebound, make sure they're using their correct hand to make the layup.
- Don't allow the players to intentionally miss the first shot so they can get a quick rebound and put it back in.
- The person next in line should be down in a stance and ready to receive the ball.
- This drill is meant to be fun for the kids, keep it entertaining!
- As the coach, don't be afraid to join in! Or even the parents.



CORNERS

How the Drill Works:

Players start in two even lines on opposite corners of the court. There are no teams. The first players in each line are against each other to be the first to make two layups at opposite ends of the court. The player that loses is out.

Purpose:

A fun game that all players love. Works on layups and dribbling at full speed while under pressure.

Setup:

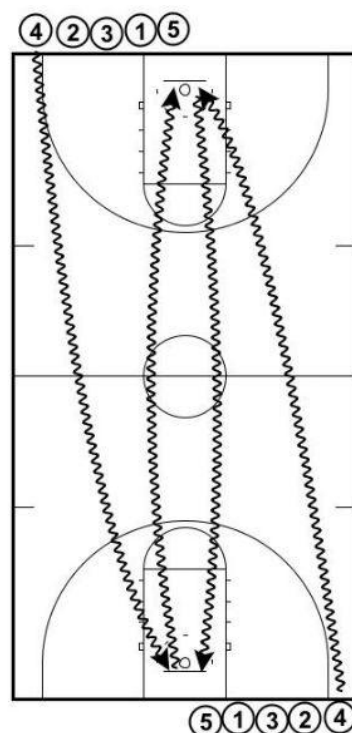
- Split the team up into two groups and send each group to an opposite corner of the court.
- One basketball at the front of each line.
- Coach has a whistle or a loud voice.

Instructions:

1. When the coach blows the whistle, both players dribble as fast as they can to the opposite end of the floor to make a layup.
2. After they make the shot, they must rebound their own shot and dribble to the opposite end of the floor again and make another layup.
3. The first player to make two layups is the winner and joins the end of the line. The player that loses is out and must sit in the middle of the court and wait for the others to finish.

Variations:

Opposite Hand - Switch the sides of the court for each time and then they must dribble and perform a layup with their left hand.





Different Shot - Instead of layups players must make a shot from outside the key. For older players they might have to make a shot from outside the three-point line.

More Layups - For the last two players (the grand final), sometimes I've had them make 3 or 4 layups instead of 2.

Coaching Points:

- The biggest problem with this drill is the amount of standing around the players do when there's a large group. But since every practice the players beg me to play this game, I figured I better include it!
- I've occasionally had a silly kid who's out and while sitting in the middle tries to trip or steal the ball from one of the players dribbling. Watch out for that.
- Don't allow players to throw the ball out in front of themselves or else the dribbling part of the drill will be pointless.
- Encourage players to slow down on the layup and jump up high while under control instead of sprinting too fast and throwing it hard off the backboard.



SMALL SIDED GAMES

How the Drill Works:

Depending on the amount of players you have, create small-sided games of anything from 2 on 2 to 4 on 4. Then let the kids play and learn!

Purpose:

There are many benefits to small-sided games that are listed here (<http://www.basketballforcoaches.com/reasons-small-sided-games/>). To share some of the major benefits: More touches, more opportunities to shoot, easier decision making, etc.

Setup:

- Use both halves of the court and create two small-sided games depending on how many players you have.
- Explain to each team that they must advance the ball to a certain line (either half-court or the third line if you have one) before they can score.
- One basketball per game.

Instructions:

1. Start the game and let them play!
2. Make adjustments and team changes when you need to, but I recommend trying not to interrupt too much.





Let the players learn from their own mistakes by experience.

Variations:

Games of Different Sizes - Make sure to vary the sizes of the games to give kids exposure to different scenarios.

Coaching Points:

- Let them have fun!
- Stop the game if you see a mistake 3 times in a row. Until then let the kids experiment and learn on their own as much as possible.
- Stress the importance of spacing.



GAME WINNER

How the Drill Works:

Every player takes a single shot from a distance far outside their comfortable shooting range. Players that make this shot get a reward.

Purpose:

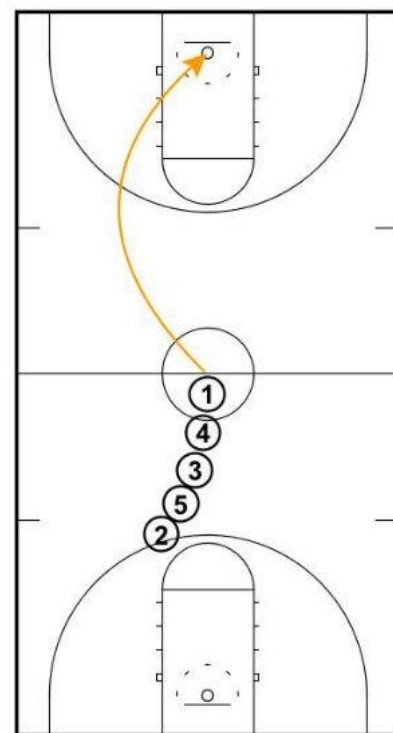
A great drill to finish off practice with. The players always look forward to this drill in practice and it always causes everyone to finish practice laughing and with a smile on their face.

Setup:

- All players line up in one line far out from their comfortable shooting range.
- All players have a basketball.

Instructions:

1. One by one, the players take it in turns taking one shot each from this distance.
2. Players that make the shot are entitled to a reward of some sort.





Variations:

One Winner - If two or more players make the shot and you only want one winner, have them shoot again until one of them makes the shot.

Distance of Shot - For older players we usually use the half-way line. For youth players, it varies. Really young players can shoot from the three-point line if they'll struggle to get it in.

Coaching Points:

- This drill is meant to be fun to conclude practice. Make sure you're joking around with the players.
- Make sure there's no one under the ring that will get hit from a wild shot attempt.
- Make sure you take a shot too!



Conclusion

Thank you again for taking the time to check out 31 Basketball Drills and Games.

I hope what you've read in the previous pages will assist you in improving your youth basketball practices.

Feel free to print off the drills and take them to your practices.

It's my wish that these drills to help as many players and coaches as possible.

If you did come across this eBook without subscribing to my email list, please head over to www.basketballforcoaches.com and subscribe to my email list there (I'll send you heaps of cool basketball coaching advice!).

If you have any questions on anything contained in this email feel free to reach out and contact me.

The best way to get in contact with me is on Twitter at @bballcoachmac. Shoot me a tweet and I'll be sure to get back to you soon!

If you'd like to contact me directly, you can send me an email at coachmac@basketballforcoaches.com. I personally read and reply to every email I receive :)

Thanks for reading and I look forward to connecting with you in the future.

- Coach Mac