



22 SMALL SIDED DRILLS & GAMES

C O A C H M A C
basketballforcoaches.com

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HOW TO READ THE DIAGRAMS

1

This symbol indicates an offensive player that does not have possession of the basketball. The number will be between 1 and 5.

1

When a number is surrounded by a black circle this indicates that they are on the defensive team. The number will be between 1 and 5.

1

This symbols indicates an offensive player that does have possession of the basketball. The number will be between 1 and 5.



A straight, full-coloured line indicates a player is making a cut.



A dotted line indicates a player is making a pass.



A zig-zag line means a player is dribbling the basketball.



A line that ends with another line indicates a player is setting a screen.



This symbol similar to a hash indicates a hand-off between two players.



This symbol will represent either a cone or a chair depending on what you have available to you.

INTRODUCTION

Hey there,

Thanks for checking out these **22** Small-Sided Drills and Games of the '*Championship Coaching Course*'.

Whenever I recommend the use of small-sided games, I'm usually met with a variation of the following question...



Why are small-sided games so important? If the players play 5 on 5 in a game, wouldn't it be silly for them to practice with fewer players? ”

Briefly, here are the 8 reasons why it's important to use small-sided games and game situations during your practices...

1. More Touches
2. Easier Decision Making
3. More Opportunities to Score
4. Increased Space
5. Involves All Players
6. Breaks the Game Down into Chunks
7. Eliminates Defensive Presses and Zones
8. Teaches Players When to Use a Skill

If you'd like to read an article with me breaking down each of these points in further detail, please check out this article - [8 Reasons You MUST Use Small-Sided Games](#)

To be clear, many of the small-sided drills and games listed in this eBook can be played 5-on-5 as well (which would make them NOT a small-sided game). In fact, many of them even use the 5-on-5 situation as the example.

The reason I decided to do this is because many coaches do not have the court space required to run small-sided games without leaving players out of the drill which we do not want to happen.

For example, if you have 12 players and you're running a full-court game, it's better to play 5-on-5 and have 2 subs instead of playing 3-on-3 and having 6 players off the court.

Make sure to keep in mind the amount of players you have at practice when determining which drills will best suit your team.

Good luck!

— Coach Mac

1-on-1 Limited Dribbling

How the Drill Works:

Players play 1 on 1 from the three-point line. For experienced players, they have two dribbles to make a move and shoot or do a layup. For youth players, they must attack the ring and shoot (dribbles don't matter). The defense must work on keeping in-between the player and the basket and contesting the shot without fouling.

Purpose:

One-on-one is great to develop both offensive and defensive skills. The cones keep the players in the lane so they're attacking the defender without dribbling too wide.

Setup:

- Players line up at the half court line.
- One offensive player with a basketball on the three-point line.
- One defender guarding closely.

Instructions:

- 1.** The offensive player starts with the basketball and the defender must be guarding them within arms length.
- 2.** The offensive player must now attempt to score on the defense with a maximum of two dribbles.
- 3.** After the shot, the drill doesn't finish until the defender has secured the rebound.
- 4.** Offense then becomes the defender on the next possession, the defender returns to the end of the line, and a new offensive player comes in.



Variations

- The coach starts on the wing with the basketball and the offensive player must v-cut to get open and receive the pass before attacking the defense.
- The offensive player starts with the basketball at half court and gets a running start at the defensive player.

Coaching Points

- Make sure to frequently change the order of the players so that they're not always competing against the same people on offense and defense.
- It's important that the defense learns how to tightly guard without fouling.
- Shot fakes, jab steps, and other fakes need to be utilised to create space with limited dribbling.
- If a player takes more than their allowed amount of dribbles, move onto the next pair.

2-on-2 Ball-Screen

How the Drill Works:

The drill starts with 2 players on offense and 2 on defense. The offensive team will attempt to score out of the pick and roll while the defense will attempt to get a stop without switching on defense.

Purpose:

This drill works the basics of both pick and roll offense and pick and roll defense.

Setup:

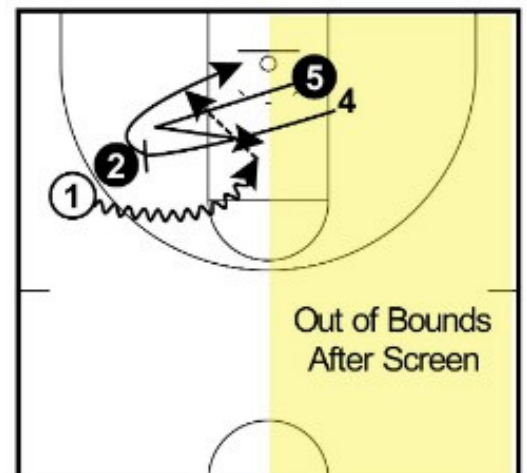
- An offensive and defensive player on the wing.
- An offensive and defensive player on the low block.
- The rest of the players wait on the baseline.
- The offensive player on the wing starts with the basketball.

Rules:

1. The offensive team must stay within the quarter of the court. Crossing the split line is out of bounds.
2. The offensive team must start each possession with a pick and roll.
3. The defensive team is not allowed to switch.

Instructions:

1. The drill begins with the offensive player on the low post sprinting out to set a screen.
2. The offensive player with the basketball must use the screen and attempt to create a scoring opportunity.
3. The defense can defend the pick and roll any way they want, but they must not switch.



4. If the offensive team scores, they stay in and the defenders rotate. If the defensive team gets a stop, they become offense and new defenders must come in.
5. Continue this drill for a set amount of time.

Variations:

Change the Screen Location - You can also have the players set the screen at the top of the key or on the opposite wing.

Coaching Points:

- You must talk with your players before starting about how to set a screen. Make contact, correct angle, etc.
- Make sure all your players practice being both the ball-handler and screener. We need to create positionless players!
- Coach your players on making the right read off the pick and roll. Eg. If the defender goes under, shoot. If they go over, attack.

2-on-1 Half-Court

How the Drill Works:

The two outside lines are on offense and the middle line is on defense. The coach passes the basketball to an offensive player and all 3 players sprint up and around the cones and then compete in a 2 on 1 transition situation.

Purpose:

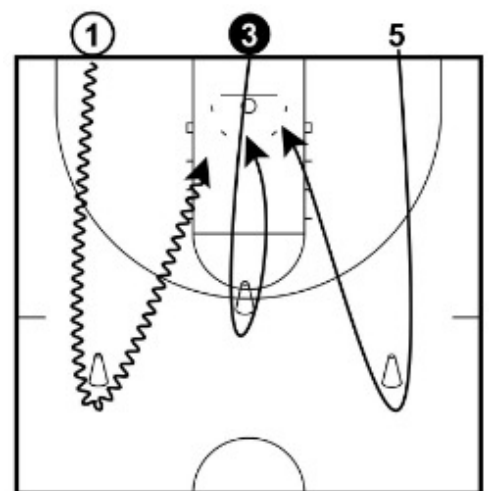
Allows the offensive players to work on decision making on the fast break and the defender to work on defending at a disadvantage.

Setup:

- One cone in the middle of the court on the three-point line for the defensive line.
- Two cones on the wings at the 1/3 court line (or half-way between half-court and the three-point line).
- Three lines of players on the baseline in line with the cones.
- The coach has one basketball.

Instructions:

1. The coach begins the drill by passing to one of the offensive players. As soon as they catch it, all three players sprint up and around the cones.
2. Players now compete in a live 2 on 1 situation.
3. The drill doesn't stop until either a made basketball or the defender gets possession of the basketball from a rebound or steal.
4. Players then pass the basketball back to the coach and join a different line.



Variations:

Distance of Cones - You can adjust the distance of the cones to be further away or closer to the basket.

3 on 2 Transition - Instead of 2 on 1, you can add an extra two cones and make it a 3 on 2 transition.

Coaching Points:

- The offensive players must be attacking fast. Remind them that it's a fast-break situation.
- Offensive players should keep it simple. If the defender doesn't step into your lane, score. If they do, pass.
- The defender must protect the rim and try and cause confusion for the ball-handler.
- Correct spacing is most important for the offensive team!

2-on-2 Frenzy

How the Drill Works:

The drill begins by playing 2 on 2. On either a score or a stop, the offensive team must transition quickly to defense while the defense outlet passes to two new offensive players on the closest free-throw line extended. They then attack two on two and this routine repeats.

Purpose:

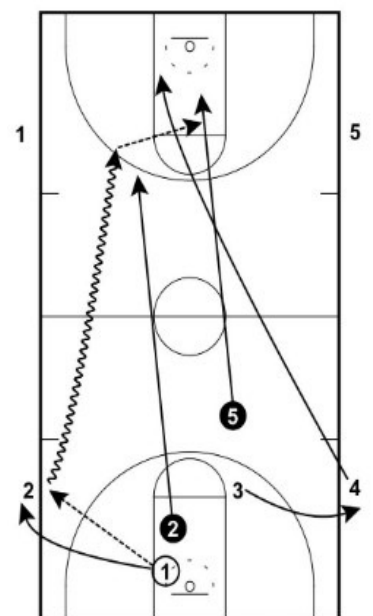
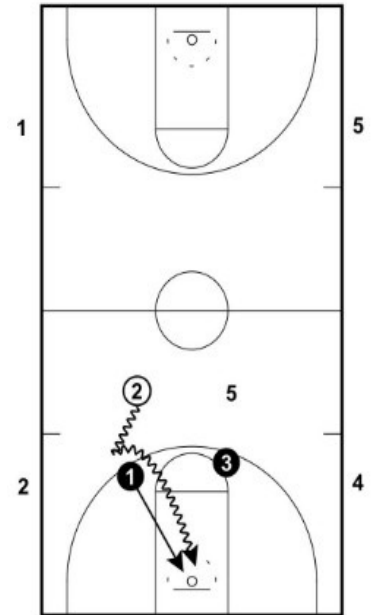
A great transition drill to work on player conditioning as well as offensive and defensive transition. The offense and defense will be faced with a new situation each time.

Setup:

- This drill is performed best with 8 or more players, but you must have at least 6.
- 2 players begin on defense, 2 players begin on offense, and then you must have at least 1 player on each free-throw line extended.

Instructions:

1. The drill begins with the 2 offensive players attempting to score against the two defenders in the half court.
2. On either a stop or a score, the defenders outlet the basketball to one of the two players on the closest free-throw line extended while the two offensive players quickly transition to defense.
3. On the catch, the two new offensive players sprint down the court and attempt to score quickly in transition.
4. They then become the new defenders as the sequence continues.
5. There is no scoring system and the stops when the coach decides.



Variations:

Fewer Players - If you only have 6 or 7 players (less and the drill won't work), instead of 4 groups starting on each extended free throw line, have 2 groups start at the mid-court line.

Coaching Points:

- Remind your players that it's a transition drill, we don't want players slowing the basketball down too much.
- Depending on the number of players you have, this drill is great for conditioning. Use it for short spurts during training.

3-on-2 Continuous

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:

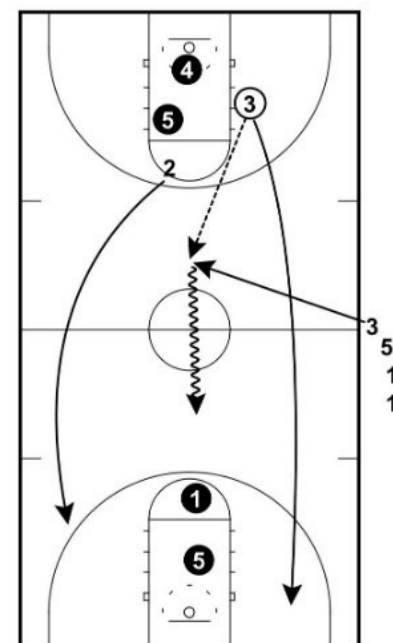
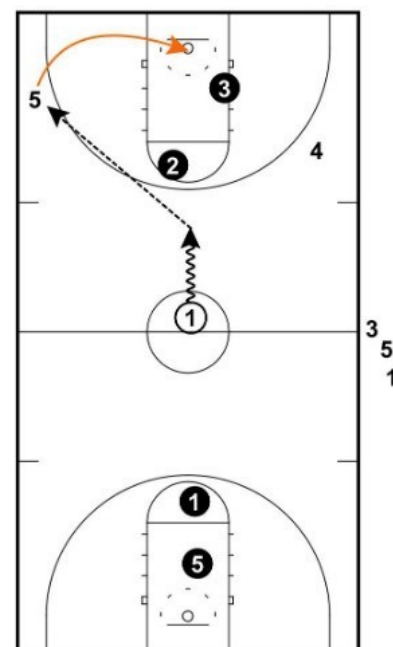
By always having an extra offensive player the players learn that they must space the court well to get an open shot each trip down the floor. This is one of my favourite drills for improving decision making.

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.

3-on-3 Flow

How the Drill Works:

Players start on 2 teams. The drill begins with one team attacking 3 on 3. On a score or stop, the defender that gets the basketball outlet passes to one of the two outlet players and then they attack 3 on 3 as the previous offensive team transitions to defense.

Purpose:

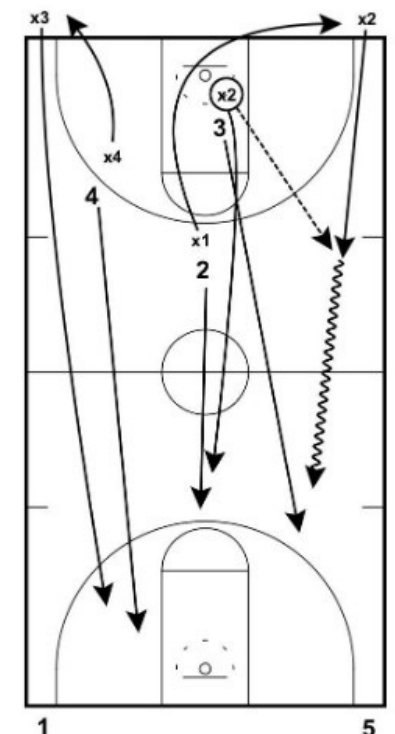
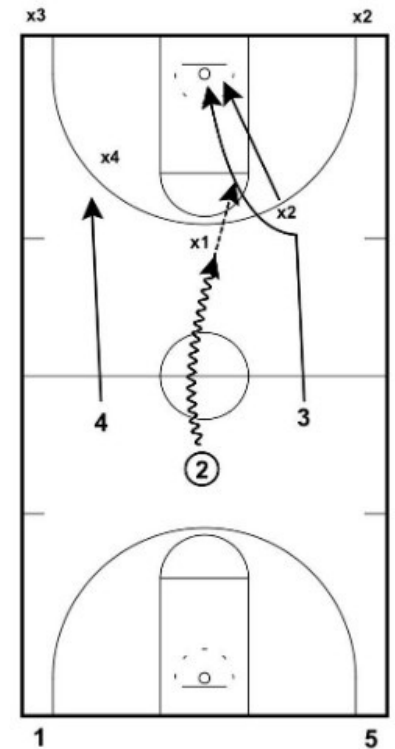
This is one of my favorite drills. It's a great small-sided game that works on all aspects of the game while keeping all players involved and working on conditioning.

Setup:

- To run this drill you must have at least 10 players. 5 on each time.
- Each team begins with 3 players on the court and the rest of the players on either baseline corner.
- One team starts with the basketball.

Instructions:

1. The team that starts with the basketball attacks the defensive team 3 on 3 in the half-court.
2. On any stop, the defender who gets the basketball (off a rebound, steal, etc) must outlet pass to either of the two corner player who lead out and then join them to make the 3.
3. The previous offensive players all immediately transition to defense.
4. Both teams then play 3 on 3 down the other end of the floor.



5. On each change of possession, the same thing happens. The defender that took possession of the basketball joins the two new players attacking the other way and the other two offensive players join the corners.

Scoring System:

- The two teams play to 11 points by 2's and 3's.
- After the final score, the scorer must make a free throw to validate the win. If they miss, their team loses 5 points and play continues.

Coaching Points:

- Your players will be sprinting hard so make sure they're warmed up before using this drill.
- The outlet pass players must always be ready to go and sprinting out on the change of possession. Beat the defenders down the floor.

3-on-3 Outlet

How the Drill Works:

This drill involves two teams playing continuous 3-on-3 full-court with at least two additional players for each team on the sideline as outlet players. Each time there's a score or a defensive stop, the basketball is passed to the outlet player and the passer fills their spot. The receiver then quickly transitions down the court with the other two players on their team while the three players previously on offense must quickly transition back on defense.

Purpose:

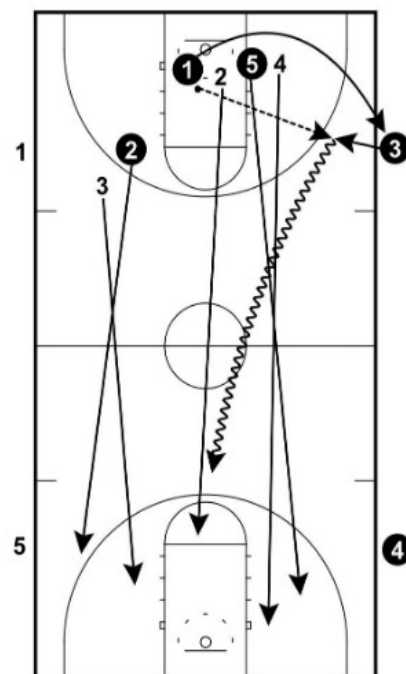
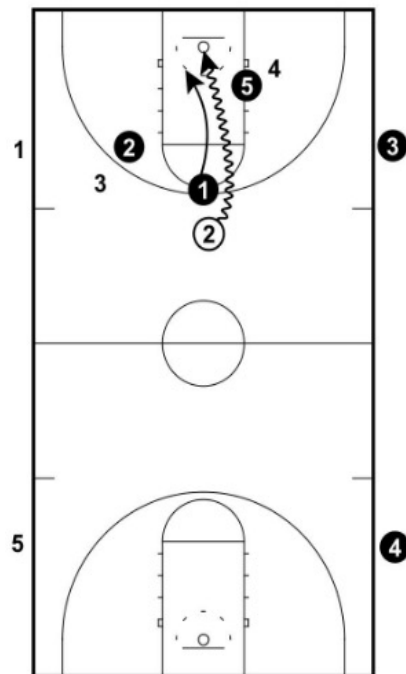
This is a high-intensity small-sided game which emphasizes the importance of both offensive and defensive transition. The offense must take advantage of the outlet player and the head-start in transition while the defense works on quickly transitioning back and preventing any easy scores.

Setup:

- The drill requires at least 10 players. 5 on each team.
- Each team outlets to one side of the court. There should be at least 1 player at free-throw line extended on both ends of the court.
- 3 players from each team start on the court.
- Coach starts with a basketball.
- Additional players can line up behind the outlet player on their team.

Instructions:

1. The drill starts with a jump ball in the middle of the court.
2. One team will take possession and transition into their front court and attempt to score the basketball.



3. On either a score or defensive stop, the defender who comes up with the basketball quickly passes to the outlet player and then fills their position.
4. The outlet player will receive the pass and then quickly transition down the court looking to create a quick scoring opportunity with the other 2 players on their team.
5. The other team must immediately transition back on defense to prevent the other team from scoring.
6. This rotation and transition happens on any score or defensive stop.
7. The game concludes after a certain amount of time or when a certain amount of points have been reached from one of the teams.

Scoring System:

- The game is played to 11 points and counted by 1's (all shots inside the perimeter) and 2's (all shots outside the perimeter).
- On all shooting fouls, the shooter will receive one free-throw. If made it's worth 1 point.

Variations:

Number of Players - This drill can also be run 4-on-4 or 5-on-5 if you have a larger group of players. Though I believe 3-on-3 is most beneficial for the players.

No Teams - You can run this drill continuously and without teams by only having one side of the court to outlet the basketball to. Both teams outlet to the same lines so that all players will filter through and play with each other.

Coaching Points:

- The player in the outlet position is not allowed to move off their spot until a score has been made or their team has secured the basketball. Don't allow them to leak down the court or it will be impossible for the defense to catch them.
- Outlet passes should be made as quickly as possible.
- Make sure to constantly emphasize the importance of transitioning quickly between offense and defense for both teams.

- On defensive transition, players must first sprint back before picking up a player from the opposition. Remind the players they defend as a team and may not always pick up the same player as they scramble to prevent a score.
- After a shot is attempted, players should either be crashing the boards or transitioning back on defense. Don't get stuck in 'No Man's Land' by standing and watching.

Bad Blood

How the Drill Works:

One player starts with a basketball in the back court. The rest of the players start in the middle circle. As the dribbler crosses half court, one defender sprints out of the middle circle and the two play one-on-one. On a score, the offensive player continues. On a stop, the defender becomes the offensive player and continues to the other end of the court repeating the process. This continues for the coach's desired amount of time.

Purpose:

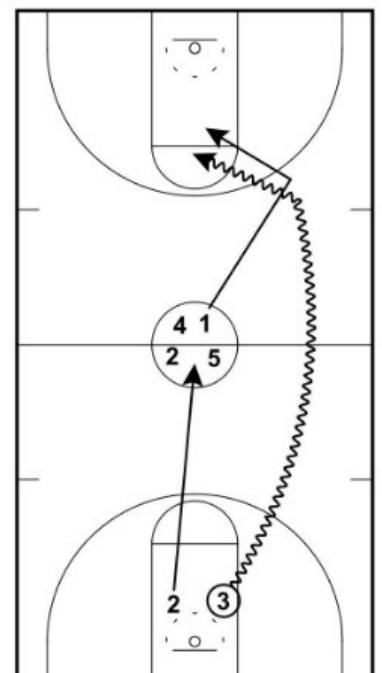
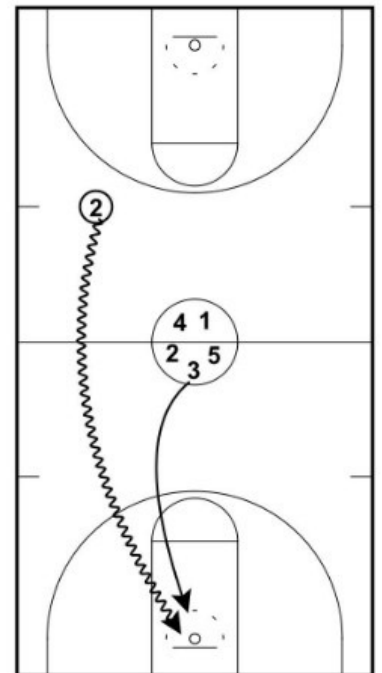
This drill simulates dribbling at a high speed and finishing at the rim just like a player would during transition in a game. This is a great drill to practice offensive and defensive transition.

Setup:

- One player in the back court with a basketball.
- The rest of the players in the middle circle.

Instructions:

1. The player with the basketball will start dribbling down one side of the court on the coach's call.
2. As soon as the offensive player crosses half-court, the defender immediately sprints out and attempts to stop the basketball.
3. The offensive player will take their shot. If they make it, they keep it. If they miss, the defender becomes the offensive player.
4. The player with the basketball then dribbles down the other side of the court and the process repeats.
5. There is no scoring system and the drill continues until the coach stops it.



Variations:

Switch Directions - Ensure that you switch the direction half way through the drill so that players are practicing on both their left and right hands!

Two Basketballs - You can have two players with a basketball on opposite sides of the floor. This will double the amount of activity, but can be a problem when the two get too close together.

Coaching Points:

- Best run with 6 - 10 players. Many more than this and there will be too many players standing around for too long.
- Make sure the defender in the circle isn't leaving too early.
- Continually remind your players that this is a fast-break drill. Don't hold the basketball up... attack!

Ball Drop

How the Drill Works:

Two teams play a regular game of 5-on-5. Whenever the coach blows their whistle, the team with the basketball must place the basketball on the floor and quickly transition back on defense. The team that was on defense immediately recovers the basketball and transitions to offense looking to score.

Purpose:

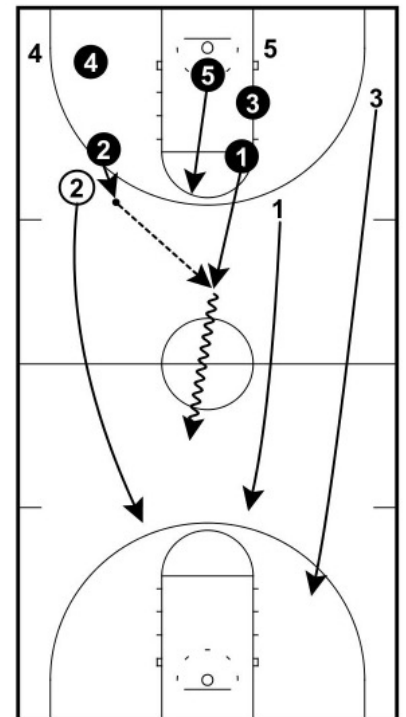
This is a fantastic drill for teaching both teams to transition from offense to defense or from defense to offense as quickly as possible. This is crucial during a game whenever there is a change of possession and often players are too slow when making the change.

Setup:

- Divide the group up into two teams of 5 players.
- The two teams play a regular game of basketball.
- Coach has a whistle.

Instructions:

1. The game starts off regularly with the two teams playing a regular game of 5-on-5.
2. The coach will then blow their whistle at different times throughout the game (I suggest approximately every 3 possessions) and the offense must immediately place the basketball on the floor and sprint back on defense.
3. One of the defenders immediately picks up the basketball and transitions down the court on offense looking to get a quick score.
4. The game continues like this for a set amount of time.



Scoring System:

- Play first team to score 11 points.
- Shots inside the three-point line are worth 2 points and shots outside the three-point line are worth 3 points.

Variations:

Transition to Advantage - In this variation, the player who has the basketball when the whistle is blow places the basketball on the ground but does not transition back on defense. Instead, they stay down the offensive end of the court while the others transition back 5 on 4. These are great learning opportunities for both the offense and defense and then requires the opposition to quickly transition back on defense to prevent the fast break score from the player who didn't play defense.

Small-Sided Game - Instead of playing 5-on-5, this drill can also be ran effectively playing 3-on-3 or 4-on-4.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage the team who transitions back on defense to first focus on sprinting back to the paint before picking up an opposition player.
- It's important that the coach does their best to be fair with how often they blow the whistle on each team. I often blow the whistle a little more on the winning team to keep the game fair, but don't go over the top with this.
- Watch that the offensive player with the basketball isn't throwing or rolling the basketball away on the whistle. They must place the basketball directly on the ground where they are.
- Don't blow the whistle when the player with the basketball is running at full speed.

Basic SSG

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:

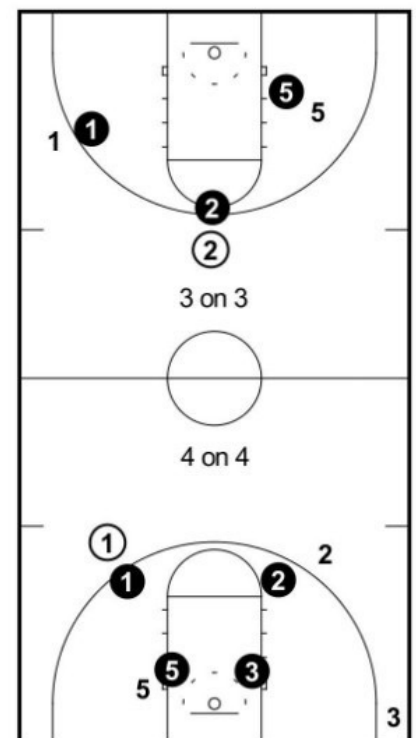
- Use both halves of the court and create two small-sided games depending on how many players you have.
- Explain to each team that they must advance the ball to a certain line (either half-court or the third line if you have one) before they can score.
- One basketball per game.

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.

Cardinal

How the Drill Works:

Players are in the 4 corners of the half court with the basketball in one baseline corner. The pass is made up the sideline and then across court. The two player on the half-court corners then attack the defender 2 on 1. The shooter becomes the next defender and the defender outlet passes.

Purpose:

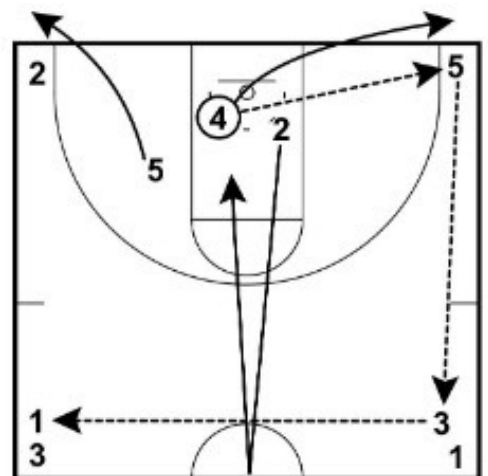
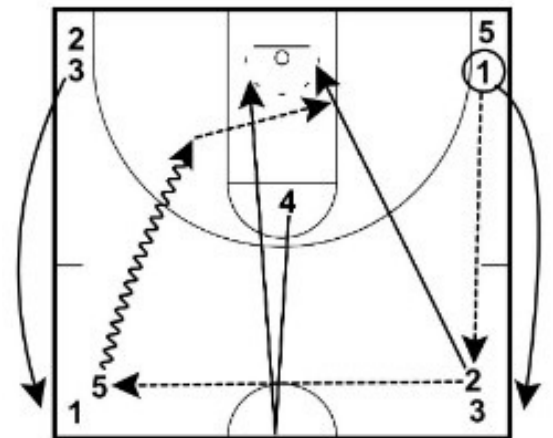
This is a great drill to use when you have a large number of players and only the half-court to practice in. It keeps everyone moving and alert. A fantastic warm up drill.

Setup:

- You must have at least 7 players to perform this drill. Preferably more.
- Start with 1 defender on the free throw line, at least 2 players at the half-court corners, and at least 1 player in the baseline corners.
- One of the baseline corner players must have a basketball.

Instructions:

1. The player with the basketball begins the drill by passing up the sideline to the player at half court. The player who receives the basketball immediately skips the pass to the player opposite.
2. After passing down the sideline, both player at the front of the baseline corner lines sprint up to the half court corner and replace.
3. Also as this initial pass is made, the defender at the free throw line sprints and touches the half court line and then gets back on defense.



4. Once the skip pass has been made, the skip passer and the player who receive the basketball attack the defender in a 2 on 1 situation.
5. On either a score or stop, the player who shot the basketball immediately becomes the new defender and sprints to half way.
6. The defender or non-shooter outlets the basketball to either baseline corner and then join opposite lines.
7. We're now back to the start and the pass is made up the sideline again.
8. This drill has no scoring system and continues until the coach stops it.

Coaching Points:

- The passes around the key must be flat and made quickly. Make the defender work hard to get back in time.
- Talk to your players about 2 on 1 transition offense before you start. Keep it simple. If the defender steps in your path, pass. If they don't, lay the basketball up.

Corner Recovery

How the Drill Works:

The drill starts with a 4-on-4 scrimmage in the half-court. After each change of possession (rebound, score, etc), the offensive player who took the shot or turns over the basketball must sprint around a cone on the baseline before recovering back on defense. This gives the new offensive team a head start in transition looking for a quick score in an advantage situation.

Purpose:

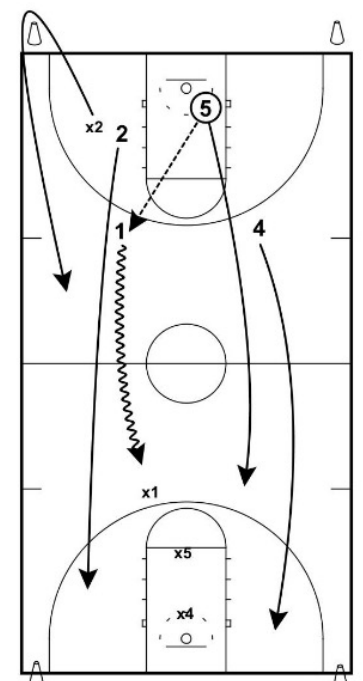
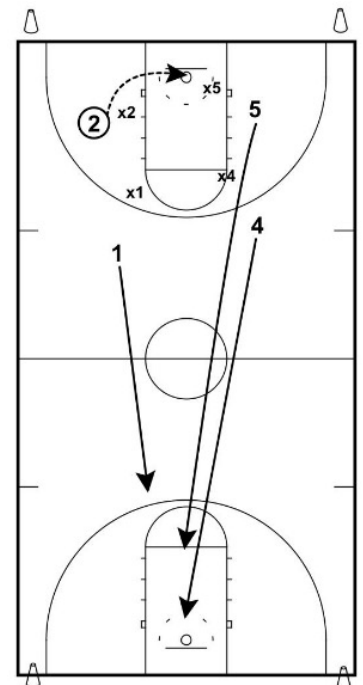
Great drill for working on both defensive and offensive transition skills. The offensive team must communicate and space the floor in order to get a quick score, and the defensive team will learn how to play in a disadvantage situation.

Setup:

- Two teams of 4 players are in the half-court.
- 4 players are on offense and have one basketball.
- 4 players are on defense.
- A cone in the baseline corner of all 4 corners of the court.

Instructions:

1. The drill starts with a regular 4-on-4 scrimmage in the half-court.
2. On a change of possession (rebound, steal, etc), the defense quickly transitions to offensive transition. If a basket is scored the defense must quickly inbound the basketball.
3. The shooter (or the player who turned over the basketball) must sprint around the closest baseline cone before sprinting back down court to recover.



4. The offense must do their best to take advantage of the 4-on-3 situation on each change of possession.

Scoring System:

- The scrimmage is played in 3-minute intervals. The 3-minute intervals give the players a quick break and gives the coach an opportunity to address anything they want changed.
- Each regular basket is worth 1 point. Three-pointers are worth 2 points.
- The team that wins the most intervals (usually out of 3 or 5) is the winner.

Variations:

3-on-3 or 5-on-5 – The drill can also be ran with teams of 3-on-3 or 5-on-5 depending on the amount of players you have at practice.

Coaching Points:

- The defender who runs around the cone must sprint back to defense to help their teammates. Don't allow any player to jog back.
- Since they'll be at a disadvantage, all defenders must sprint back and then communicate to figure out the best way to stop the offensive fast-break.
- The defender closest to the basketball should attempt to slow down the basketball.
- The offensive team must push the ball down the floor as soon as possible to take advantage of the mismatch. The quickest way for the basketball to get down the floor is with passing, not dribbling.
- The offensive team must stay spaced throughout the possession to make it difficult for the fewer defensive players to guard them.

Plus One

How the Drill Works:

The group of players is split into two teams and each time starts on one baseline. The drill starts with a 2 on 1. Each time there is a change of possession, a new players from the defensive team enters the drill. This continues until the drill finishes with 5 on 5.

Purpose:

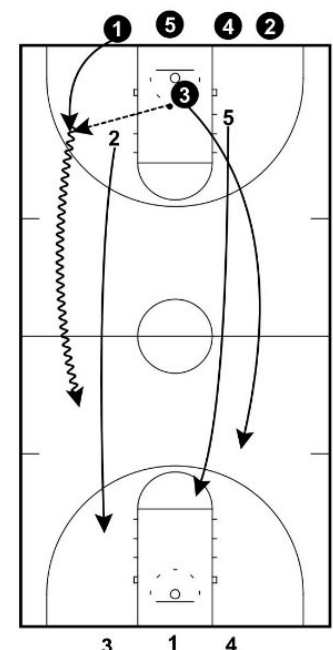
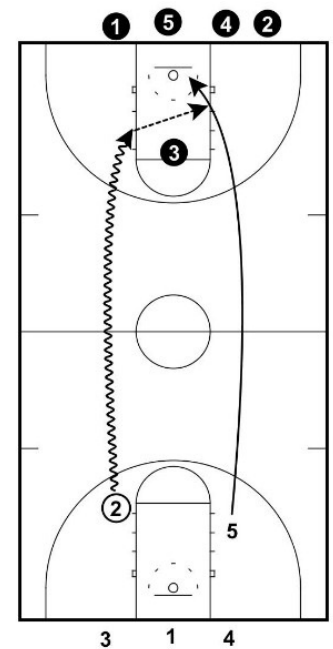
This is a great drill for simulating real advantage/disadvantage situations that happen during games. It's also great for conditioning and developing basketball IQ.

Setup:

- Split the group up into two teams. Each team starts on one baseline.
- The advantage team starts with 2 players on the court and a basketball.
- The disadvantage team starts with 1 player on the court.
- The rest of the players start behind the baseline.

Instructions:

1. The two offensive players attack the single defender in an advantage situation.
2. On a change of possession (score, steal, rebound, etc), another player from the defensive team joins the game and the drill becomes 2 on 2 down the other end of the floor.
3. On the next change of possession another defender is added to make the drill 3 on 2.
4. This continues until both teams have 5 players on the court.
5. Then the teams swap over who starts with the basketball so both teams have the advantage.



Scoring System:

- Normal scoring. Two points and three points.
- Remember that you must play an even number of games so that both teams have been the advantage team an even number of times.

Coaching Points:

- This is a transition drill so encourage the players not to slow down too much. I usually play with a 15 second shot clock on each possession.
- When in advantage, teams should always get an open shot if they have good spacing on the floor!

Positionless Transition

How the Drill Works:

Positionless Transition can be played either 3 on 3, 4 on 4, or 5 on 5. The game is played as normal except that on a change of possession (steal, rebound, etc), the player with the basketball must dribble the basketball across half-court before they can pass.

Purpose:

This rule allows players who don't usually have the opportunity to dribble to advance the basketball up the court. This will often end up with guards sprinting the lanes and post players dribbling the basketball which will assist you in developing positionless players.

Setup:

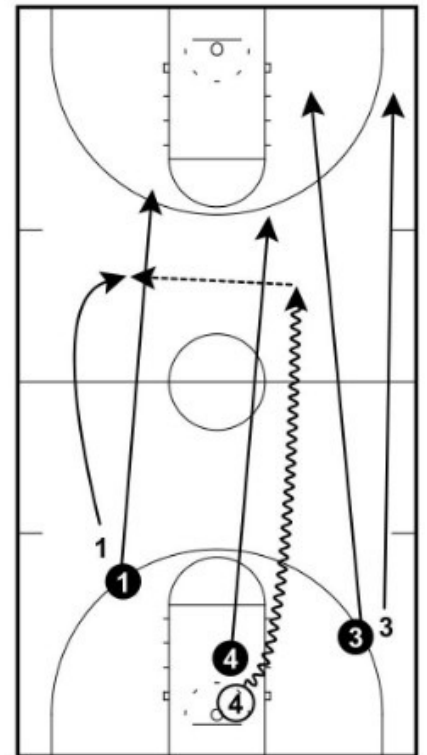
- Split the players up into two even teams.
- You will need a full court to perform this drill.
- One basketball.

Rules:

- On a change of possession in the back court, the player with the basketball must advance it over half-way before they can pass.
- The basketball does not need to be taken out after a score. The team that was defending immediately grabs the ball and advances it up court. This encourages quick transition.

Instructions:

1. The game begins with a jump ball and then play is live.
2. The two teams will then play a regular game of basketball while playing by the two rules of Positionless Transition.
3. The first team to reach a certain amount of points set by the coach wins the game.



4. The player that scores the final basket for the winning team must validate the win by making 1 free throw. If they miss, the team loses 3 points and play continues.

Scoring System:

- The game is be scored by 2's and 3's.
- The game can be played to any number of points but is usually played to either 7, 11, or 21 depending on the age of the players.

Variations:

No Free-Throw Validation: While I highly recommend using free throw validation for all small-sided games, it's not compulsory.

Inbound Basketball after Made Shot: Regular Positionless Transition allows the defensive team to take the ball out of the basket and advance immediately to encourage quick transition, but you can remove this rule to slow down the game.

Coaching Points:

- The player that rebounds the basketball must advance the ball down the court as quickly as they can.
- The other players must sprint the lanes on every possession.

Relentless Transition

How the Drill Works:

Players start on 2 teams. The drill begins with one team attacking 3 on 3. On a score or stop, the defender that gets the basketball outlet passes to one of the two outlet players and then they attack 3 on 3 as the previous offensive team transitions to defense.

Purpose:

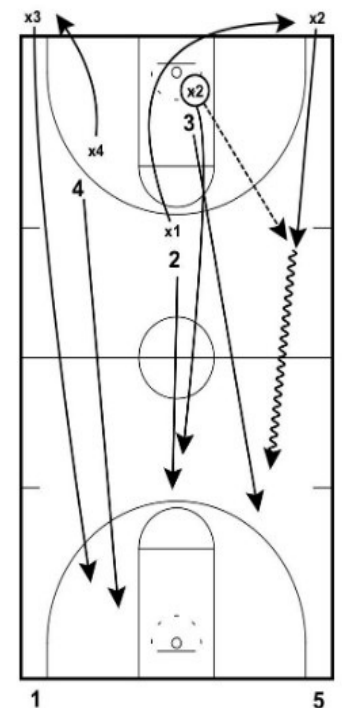
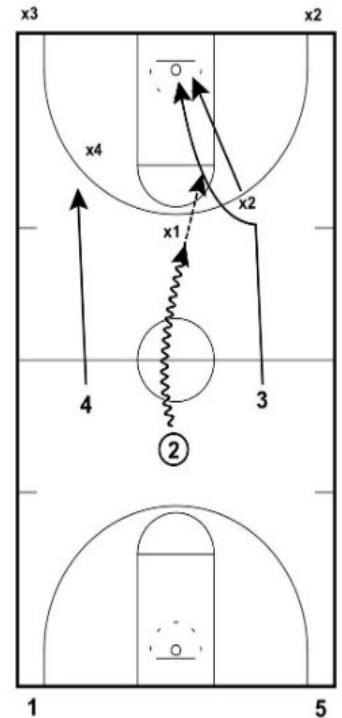
This is one of my favorite drills. It's a great small-sided game that works on all aspects of the game while keeping all players involved and working on conditioning.

Setup:

- To run this drill you must have at least 10 players. 5 on each time.
- Each team begins with 3 players on the court and the rest of the players on either baseline corner.
- One team starts with the basketball.

Instructions:

1. The team that starts with the basketball attacks the defensive team 3 on 3 in the half-court.
2. On any stop, the defender who gets the basketball (off a rebound, steal, etc) must outlet pass to either of the two corner player who lead out and then join them to make the 3.
3. The previous offensive players all immediately transition to defense.
4. Both teams then play 3 on 3 down the other end of the floor.
5. On each change of possession, the same thing happens. The defender that took possession of the basketball joins the two new players attacking the other way and the other two offensive players join the corners.



Scoring System:

- The two teams play to 11 points by 2's and 3's.
- After the final score, the scorer must make a free throw to validate the win. If they miss, their team loses 5 points and play continues.

Coaching Points:

- Your players will be sprinting hard so make sure they're warmed up before using this drill.
- The outlet pass players must always be ready to go and sprinting out on the change of possession. Beat the defenders down the floor.

Shake Out

How the Drill Works:

Two teams jog around randomly inside the key. A coach stands at the top of the key with a basketball. After a certain amount of time, the coach drops the ball and calls out either a team or a player's name who must sprint up and grab the ball. The offense must spread out and look to attack quickly while the defense must scramble to recover and get in the best defensive positions.

Purpose:

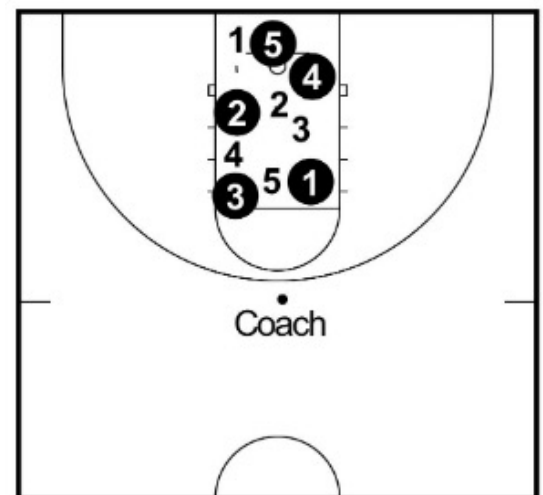
This is a great drill because players will start in random positions and will have to quickly think about where to move on both offense and defense much like a game situation.

Setup:

- Two teams of 5 players start inside the key.
- The coach starts at the top of the key with a basketball.

Instructions:

1. On the coach's call, all 10 players start jogging randomly around the key.
2. After approximately 5 seconds, the coach will call out either a team or a specific player's name and drop the basketball.
3. The person called out must sprint to the top, grab the basketball, and quickly transition into offense at the same end of the floor.
4. The other offensive players on the court must immediately space themselves out while the defensive players must talk to each other and quickly match up.
5. The offense then looks to attack quickly to take advantage of the defensive players scrambling to match up.



6. After a score or defensive stop the basketball is returned to the coach at the top of the key and the players get back in the key to start again.

Variations:

Up-and-Back - After the score or defensive stop after the initial set, the defensive team transitions up the other end of the floor and then the first team who had possession transitions back again on offense. This is a great variation to extend the game-like situations.

Shot Clock – Give the offensive team a specific amount of time in which they must shoot the basketball. I recommend 8 - 10 seconds for a challenge but this can be adjusted depending on age and skill level of the team.

Number of Players - This drill can be run 3-on-3 or 4-on-4.

Coaching Points:

- Players can not follow around the player they expect to be guarding when they're jogging inside the key. Must be random.
- Communication is super important in this drill for both the offense and defense. Offense must talk to each other to spread out and defense must talk to each other as they scramble to pick up the offensive players.
- Encourage the offense to attack immediately before the defense has the chance to set up.
- Again, offense must focus on immediately creating good spacing to give themselves the best chance to score quickly.

Tip Transition - Transition Drill

How the Drill Works:

Players are separated into two teams and then form one line mixing up the order of the players. They then perform the 'tip rebounding' drill until the coach calls out 'Go!'. When this happens, the team with the basketball becomes offense and the teams go up and back before the drill restarts.

Purpose:

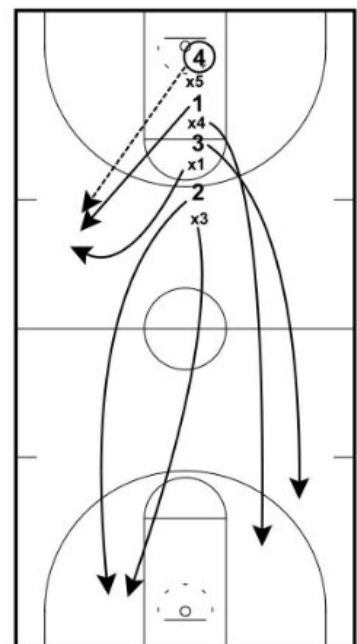
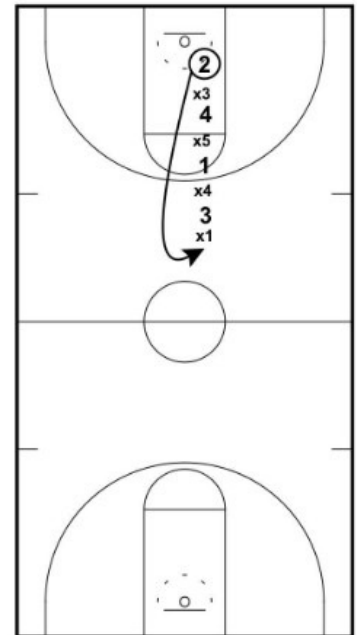
By having players perform the 'tip rebounding' drill before starting, when the coach calls out 'go' the players will be out of position and talk to each other and make decisions to get to the right spots on both offense and defense.

Setup:

- This drill can be run 3 on 3, 4 on 4, or 5 on 5.
- Separate the players into two teams.
- The players then form one line (making sure the teams are mixed up) down the court facing either side of the backboard.
- The player at the front of the line starts with a basketball.

Instructions:

1. The drill starts with the first player in line passing the basketball lightly off the backboard and then sprinting to join the end of the line.
2. The next player in line will then catch the basketball in the air and pass it back off the backboard before joining the end of the line also.
3. This continues until the coach calls out 'Go!'



4. When they do, the team that has the basketball becomes offense and must transition quickly down the court looking to score while ensuring proper spacing.
5. The defense must talk to each other and make each player gets a player on defense.
6. After the score or stop, the offense becomes defense and the defense becomes offense. They transition back down the court as normal.
7. The drill stops after two trips and drill starts again.

Scoring System:

- I don't usually score during this drill. But you can play a simple game to 11 by 2's and 3's. If so, make sure to rotate which team starts with the basketball off the rebound.

Variations:

Number of Players - This drill can be used with either 3 on 3, 4 on 4, or 5 on 5.

Backboard Side - Change which side of the backboard players are passing off.

One Trip Down the Floor - Instead of coming back in a normal 5 on 5, the teams can stop after each trip and set up the tip rebounding drill again.

Coaching Points:

- Some players will pass the basketball off the backboard too hard. Make sure it's only a light pass so that the next player can get it!
- The defense must talk to each other as they're transitioning back.

Transition Advantage

How the Drill Works:

Offensive team lines up along the baseline and the defensive team lines up on the free-throw line extended in front of them. Coach passes the basketball to one of the offensive players and the defender in front of them must touch the baseline before recovering back into the play.

Purpose:

To put the offensive team in an advantage situation where they must make quick, smart decisions, and keep good spacing to get an easy score. The defense also works on being at a disadvantage.

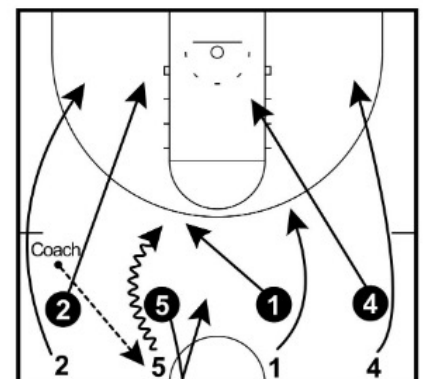
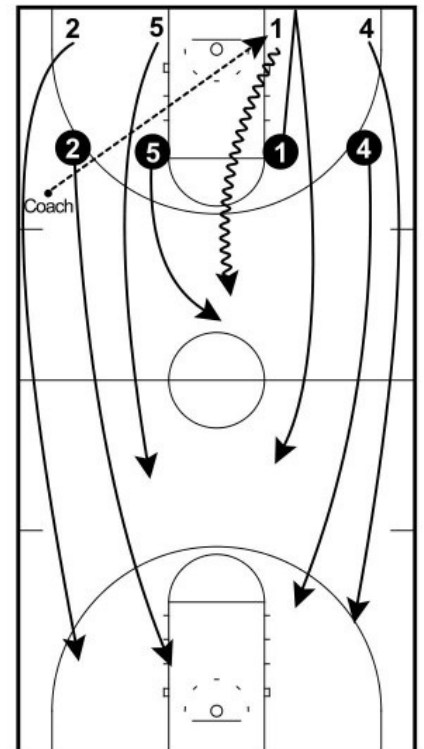
Setup:

(Example is a 4-on-4 full-court drill).

- Line 4 offensive players an even distance apart along the baseline.
- 4 defensive players line up in front of the offensive players on the free-throw line extended.
- Coach has a basketball.

Instructions:

1. The drill starts with the coach passing the basketball to one of the four offensive players (1).
2. As soon as the pass is made, the defender in front of the offensive players must sprint and touch the baseline before recovering back into the play (x1).
3. The offensive players must advance the basketball up the court immediately to take advantage of the extra player.
4. Play until a score or the defense gets the basketball.



Variations:

Number of Players - You can run this drill 2 v 2, 3 v 3, 4 v 4, or 5 v 5.

No Dribbling Allowed - Make it more difficult for the offensive team by not allowing them to dribble the basketball. This is one of my favorite drill variations.

Half-Court Advantage - Exactly the same drill but in the half-court instead of full-court. Offense lines up along the half-way line and defense lines up 2m in front of them.

Coaching Points:

- The recovering defenders must sprint hard to get back into the play.
- Encourage the offensive team to attack quickly so that they take advantage of the extra player.
- If the offensive team keeps good spacing on the transition, they should get an open shot or layup every time down the floor.

Triple Split

How the Drill Works:

3 pairs of players participate in 1-on-1 play on each half of the court. The first pairs inbound the basketball, the second pair compete one-on-one to advance the basketball up the court, and the third pair compete from the wing as the offensive player looks to score. Teams then switch roles and the basketball is advanced by the other team.

Purpose:

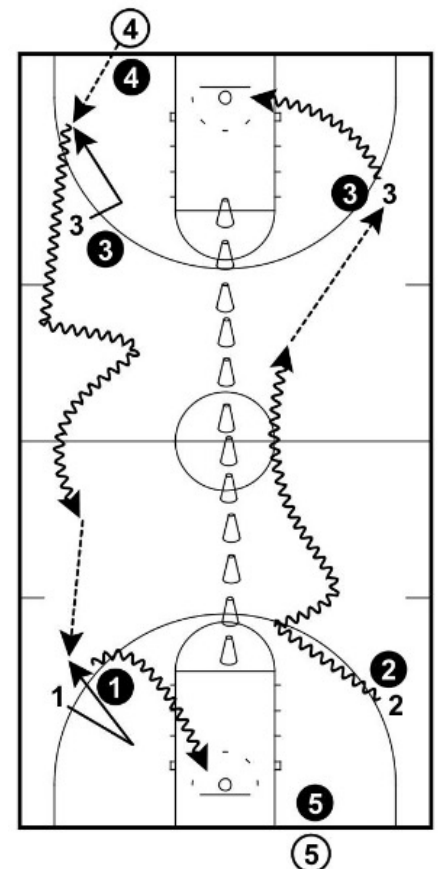
This multi-purpose drill simulates different game scenarios and works on a variety of offensive and defense skills incorporated into a fun game. Players will practice scoring and defending one-on-one, advancing and defending the basketball up the court, as well as defending the inbounds and passing in to a teammate.

Setup:

- Line cones up down the middle of the court to split the court into two.
- 6 players are required per game. 3 offensive players and 3 defensive players.
- One basketball per game.

Instructions:

1. The drill starts with an offensive player inbounding the basketball to a second offensive player who dribbles down the court.
2. Both of these players are being defended and the defense should be playing tough defense and looking to steal the basketball.
3. When the dribbler advances the basketball over half-way, they can now pass to the third offensive player located on the wing.
4. After the wing player gets open and takes possession, they now compete one-on-one against their defender and attempt to score.



5. After a score or defensive stop, all player switch roles from offense to defense and defense to offense.
6. The other team will now advance the basketball down the court in the same way.
7. Once a team reaches a specific score or after a certain amount of time, all players rotate positions and the game commences again.

Scoring System:

There are two ways to score this drill:

- Points - Players switch positions after a certain amount of points.
- Time - Players switch positions after a certain amount of time.

Variations:

2 Pairs - If you only have enough players for 4 players in each game, you can remove the inbounds pass. After a score, the new offensive player is allowed to immediately dribble the basketball up the court. This will mean each pair will compete in their own half.

Coaching Points:

- The drill must be run at game pace and every player must understand their role during each phase of the drill.
- There should never be any double teams in this drill. All players compete only against their direct opponent even though the drill is played as a team.
- Ensure that all players are practicing all positions. This includes allowing your post players to practice bringing the basketball up the court.

Triple Stops

How the Drill Works:

Two teams compete in a game of 3-on-3, 4-on-4, or 5-on-5. A team receives one point if they get three consecutive stops on defense. No points are counted for scores on offensive end as their benefit is to prevent the opposition from making three consecutive stops.

Purpose:

A fun small-sided game variation that puts a large amount of focus on the defensive end of the floor. This will result in a highly intense game with every possession being important.

Setup:

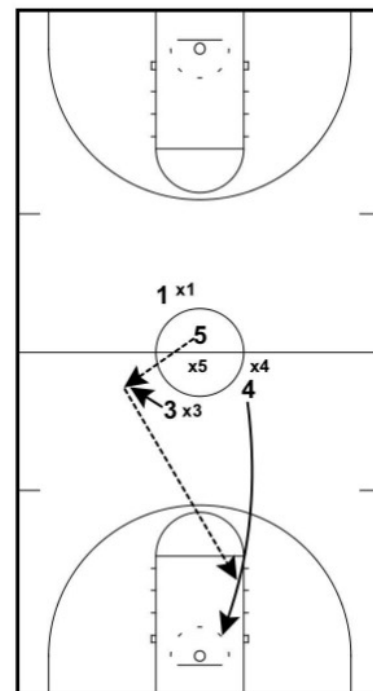
- Split your group up into even teams of between 3-on-3 to 5-on-5.
- Each team should have different coloured singlets.

Instructions:

1. The drill starts with a certain amount of time on the clock (6 minutes).
2. The teams play a regular full-court game competing on every possession.
3. A team will only receive a point when they stop the opposition from scoring for three consecutive possessions.
4. At the end of the game, the team with the most points from stops wins.

Scoring System:

- 1 point every time a team makes 3 stops in a row.
- The teams can play first to 3 - 5 points or player for a certain amount of time.



Variations:

Count Scores - If you want to count points scored as well, give teams 1 point for a 2-point shot and 2 points for a 3-point shot. When a team makes three consecutive stops in a row they get a bonus of 5 points for their team.

Two Stops - If the teams are having trouble getting three stops in a row, you can give them points for making two consecutive stops instead. Conversely, if the team is finding it easy getting 3 stops in a row, increase the amount to 4 stops.

Coaching Points:

- Taking possession of the basketball without allowing a score is classified as a stop. This could be from rebounding a miss, stealing the basketball, blocking a shot and gaining possession, etc.
- Each time a player is fouled, they receive the opportunity to shoot one free-throw. This will discourage the defense from making any silly plays in an attempt to take possession.
- Make sure players are talking to each other and know exactly what number stop they're up to as they're running back on defense.
- This is a great drill for teams that keep statistics of getting 3 stops in a row during a game.

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:

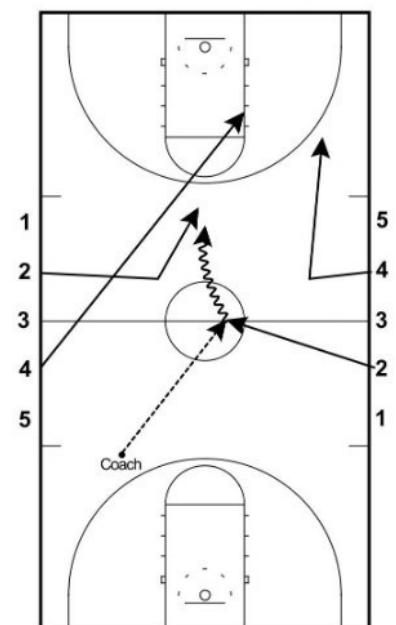
Small-sided games are awesome for developing youth players. They get more opportunities to score, more touches, etc. And this game is lots of fun!

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 the 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!

West Virginia Transition

How the Drill Works:

Teams line up at half court. The coach passes to a player on either team and their direct opponent will sprint forward into the front court instead of playing defense. The two teams will now play 4v5. When the defense gains possession, they look to quickly advance the basketball to the player in the front court for the quick score. The defense must focus on removing this option with quick transition defense.

Purpose:

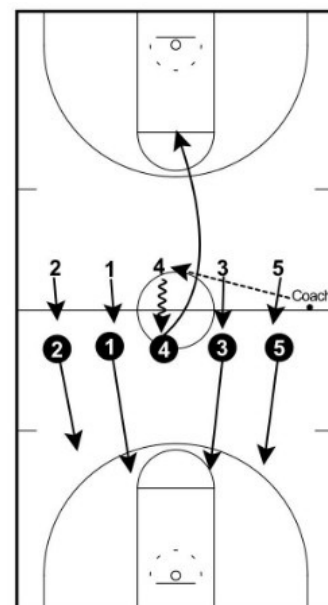
The purpose of the drill is to work on transitioning from offense to defense quickly. There are also added benefits of finding the open player in an advantage situation on offense.

Setup:

- Split your team up into two teams of either 4 or 5 depending on numbers.
- Coach begins with a basketball.
- Teams line up opposite sides of half-way line.

Instructions:

1. The drill begins with the coach passing the basketball to one of the players on either team.
2. When this happens, the defender of the player who received the basketball will sprint forward into their half-court.
3. The rest of the team then play 5 vs 4 until a score or a stop.
4. Once the defense gains possession, they immediately look to pass ahead to their loose offensive player while the defense scrambles to get back on defense.



5. If the pass can't be made, the two teams play 5 on 5 until a stop or a score.
6. One the defense gains possession, the basketball is returned to the coach and the two teams set up again.
7. The coach then switches which team he makes the initial pass to.

Scoring System:

- Game is played to 11 points.
- Scoring is normal (2pts and 3pts) as long as the coach switches starting sides after each possession.
- A 'home run' (a score within the first 7 seconds by advancing the basketball to the front-court player) is worth 5 points.

Variations:

Scoring System - Change the amount of points given for each score depending on the section of the drill.

Number of Players - The drill can be played with 4 on 4 or 5 on 5. I don't recommend using 3 on 3 or smaller although it can be done.

Coaching Points:

- One of the players on the team starting on offense should be retreating and calling out 'safety' when a shot is put up.
- When the defensive team does gain possession, they must immediately be looking to advance the basketball to the loose front-court player.
- Ensure the first offensive team is spaced out to make the most of their extra player. There is no reason for the offensive team to not get an open shot.

CONCLUSION

I hope you enjoyed the 22 Small-Sided Games and Drills eBook and that they can assist you to improve your team's play on the court.

Two more things before you go...

- 1.** If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, feel free to reach out to me at coachmac@basketballforcoaches.com. I welcome all feedback and love hearing from the readers of BFC.
- 2.** This PDF is part of the '*Championship Coaching Course*' program from the team at Basketball For Coaches. If you're reading this PDF without having purchased the program, please send us an email at coachmac@basketballforcoaches.com and let us know where you accessed it. We put a lot of work into these PDF's and would like to keep them exclusive for those who purchased.

Thanks!

— Coach Mac