



Jim Huber

MAN TO MAN DEFENSE

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Introduction: About Jim Huber



Jim Huber is currently the Director of Coach Development and a Camp Director at Breakthrough Basketball.

Jim has developed and coached NBA players as well as elite prospects who have attended the nation's top college basketball programs, including Duke and Kentucky.

Featuring 20+ years of basketball coaching experience at the youth, high school, and college levels, Jim's resume includes 45 championships, 13 runner-up finishes, and 26 final four appearances at regional and national tournaments.

He served as the head coach for Mogan Basketball, a Nike sponsored team. Mogan reached the Final Four at the 2012 Peach Jam, which was made up of the top 24 teams from the Nike Elite Youth Basketball League.

In 2013, Jim coached his team to a 1st place finish at the 2013 Nike Global Challenge.

Chapter One: Introduction to Jim Huber's Man to Man Principles

Basic Philosophy

Positives of teaching man to man defense at the youth level.

- Helps with athletic development through movement.
- Sets players up for success in the future.
- Players will be able to adapt to playing different defenses in the future.
- Have patience and focus on developing the players.

Negatives of teaching Zone defense at the youth level.

- Just stand in certain areas or spots.
- Don't develop the correct movements.
- Can develop bad habits.
- Don't understand how to get through screens as well.
- Don't understand how to help and recover.
- Gives immediate success only because it takes advantage of players who lack strength.
- Short term success over long term development.

Chapter Two: Stance and Development

Importance of Stance

- Proper stance is crucial on offense and defense to have success.

Proper Defensive Stance

- What does it look like?
 - Feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart.
 - Feet aligned with each other.
 - Sit down as if you are sitting in a chair.
 - Should be able to sit down for 30 seconds to a minute.
 - Practice wall sits to strengthen legs.
 - Back should be straight.
 - Hands need to be active.

Goal of Man to Man Defense

- Guard your yard!
 - Stay chest to chest when guarding the ball.

Practicing Getting into Defensive Stance

- Mirror Drill
 - Players run in place with quick feet.
 - Coach yells, "Defense" and players get into stance.
 - Players need to yell, "Defense!"
 - Where the coach goes, the players go.
 - Players push off the opposite leg and step reaches.
 - Stay low.
 - Don't bring your feet together.
 - Push off with right foot if going right.
 - Push off with left foot if going left.
 - Reach out with the arm that is on the side of the direction going.

- Quick Turn Drill
 - If the player gets beat, push stepping will cause a foul.
 - Execute a quick turn instead.
 - Both feet barely come off the floor.
 - Both feet should be in the air at the same time.
 - Hips and shoulders turn creating the needed angle to catch off the driving player.
 - Start with quick feet.
 - Coach will point to a shoulder.
 - Players will execute a quick turn towards the direction the coach pointed then they will turn right back and face up.
- Quick Turn → Push Steps
 - Start with quick feet.
 - Coach will point to a shoulder.
 - Players will execute a quick turn towards the direction the coach pointed.
 - Now players will take two push steps at a 45 degree angle.
 - When push steps are finished, sprint back and face up.
- Quick Turn → Step Through
 - A step through is used to recover and get in front of the ball.
 - Run to where the offensive player is going, not where he is.
 - Use a crossover step, sprint to cut off the offensive player, and break down into defensive stance.
 - Emphasize eyes, should be looking at the offensive player, not the ground.
 - Start with quick feet.
 - Coach will point to a shoulder.
 - Players will execute a quick turn towards the direction the coach pointed.
 - Players turn and cross and execute three sprint steps and break down.
 - After the break down, sprint back to face up.

Closeouts

- When needed?
 - Ball gets skipped from weak side to strong side.
 - Player is in help position.
- Technique
 - Turn and sprint towards the ball.
 - Throw hands up the last ½ way.
 - Helps to get weight back.
 - Also distracts the offensive player.
 - Chop steps the last ½ way.
 - Bring hands down to trace the ball.
 - Stance should be foot to foot with the offense.
 - Closeout faster to a good shooter to run them off the 3-point line.
 - Use a half closeout on a weaker shooter to prepare for a drive.
- Team Closeout Drill
 - Start in a defensive stance.
 - Turn towards the side the ball has been skipped to.
 - Sprint out to the ball.
 - Halfway there throw hands up in the air.
 - Begin chopping steps and exaggerate getting low.
 - Needs bent and butt down.
 - Back and butt facing the basket.
 - Sprint back to defensive stance and repeat to the other side.
 - Continue to build speed each time.

Guarding Jab Steps

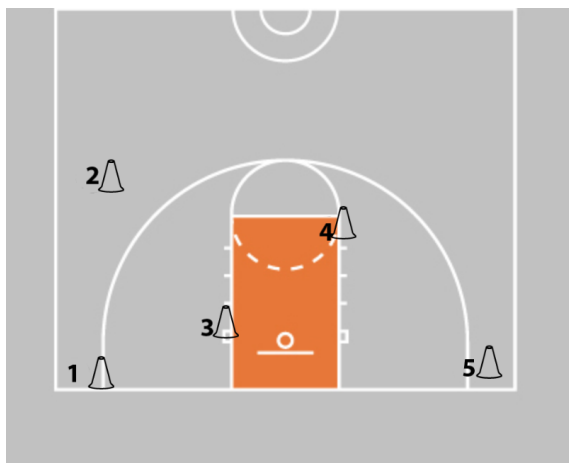
- When needed?
 - Offensive player makes a jab step.
 - Defensive player drop steps.
 - When offensive player comes back, the defensive player usually overcorrects and is off balance.
- Technique
 - Offensive player comes back from a jab step.
 - Defender brings that lead foot back and evens up.
 - If offensive player gives a ball fake, defensive player needs to stay down but hands remain up.
 - Getting a hand in the shooter's face will lower their shooting percentage.
 - When the player shoots, the defender yells, "Shot!"
- Team Contested Shot Drill
 - Coach starts with the ball.
 - Coach jab steps one direction.
 - Defender drop steps in that direction.
 - Coach squares up.
 - Defender evens up.
 - Coach pump fakes three times with defender mirroring the ball with his hands.
 - Coach shoots, and all players yell, "Shot!"
 - Variation
 - Could add one dribble forcing the defender to cut the coach off.

Chapter Three: Individual Defensive Drills

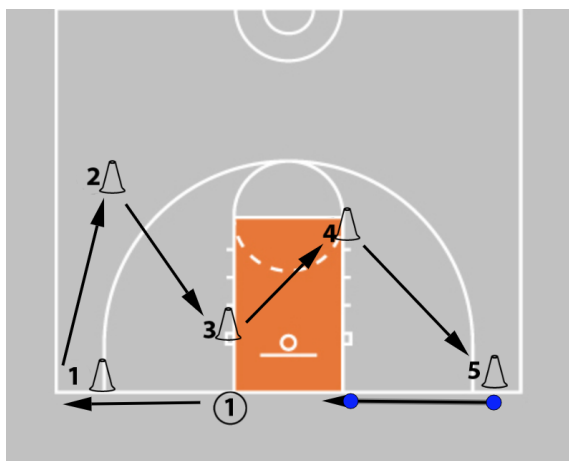
1 v 0 Cover the Court

Purpose of the Drill

- Defensive players are getting use to defensive movements.



1. Player one push steps to cone one.
2. Player one then sprints and closes out on cone two.
3. Player one then quick turns and push steps to cone three.
4. Player one turns, sprints, and closes out on cone four.
5. Player one quick turns, steps through, and sprints to cone five to cut off the offensive player.
6. Player one ends by push stepping to finish.



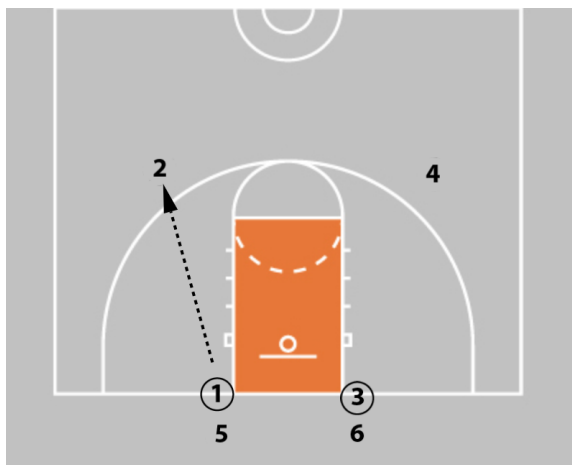
Coaching Tips

- Player two begins as soon as player one is past cone one.
- Have the players complete this drill going both directions.
- Have them go through twice in each direction.
- When the players are not in the drill, they should be clapping and encouraging their teammates who are in the drill.

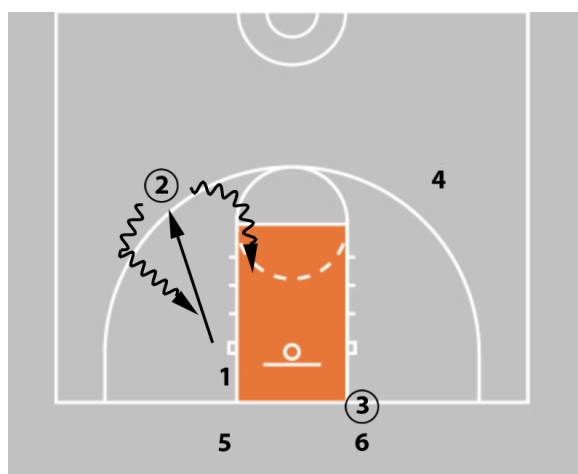
1 v 1 Closeouts on Touch

Purpose of the Drill

- The defender is working on closing out and cutting off penetration.



1. Player one starts with the ball.
2. Player two calls for the ball with hands in proper position.
3. Player one passes player two the ball.
4. Player one sprints to player two and closes out.



5. Player one touches player two.
6. Player two now has four dribbles to get into the lane.
7. Player one push steps, quick turns, and steps through preventing player two from getting to the lane and scoring.

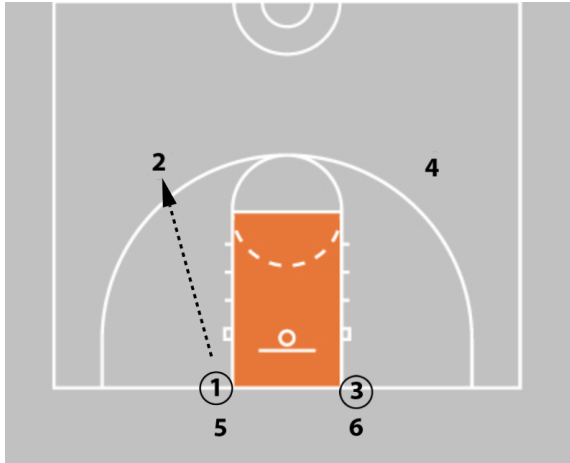
Coaching Tips

- The goal is to keep the offensive player "outside our house".
- Make sure the entry pass is a quality chest pass.
- Scoring
 - If the offensive player gets in the lane, it is one point.
 - If the offensive player scores, it is two points.
 - Players keep track of their scores.
- As soon as the first group finishes, players three and four begin.
- Players switch positions and begin the drill again.

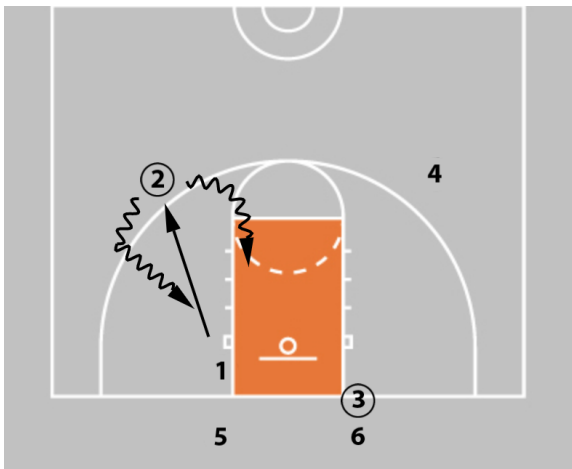
1 v 1 Closeouts

Purpose of the Drill

- The defender is working on closing out and cutting off penetration.



1. Player one starts with the ball.
2. Player two calls for the ball with hands in proper position.



3. Player one sprints to player two and closes out.
4. Player two now has four dribbles to get into the lane.
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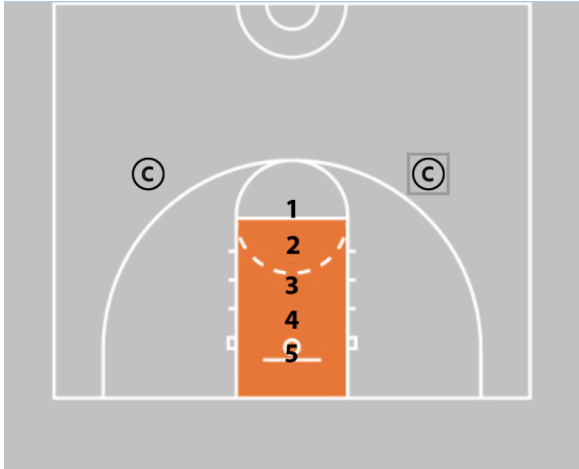
Coaching Tips

- Same goals and rules as before.
- Players receiving the pass **do not** have to wait for the touch.
- Encourage the defenders to close out at an angle forcing the offensive player to dribble to the corner, rather than right to the lane. Go foot to foot on the high side.
- Player with the most points wins. A consequence can be given to those who did not win.

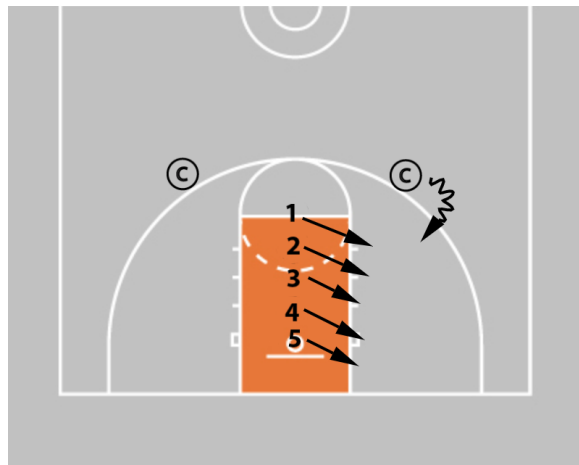
Weakside to Helpside Closeout

Purpose of the Drill

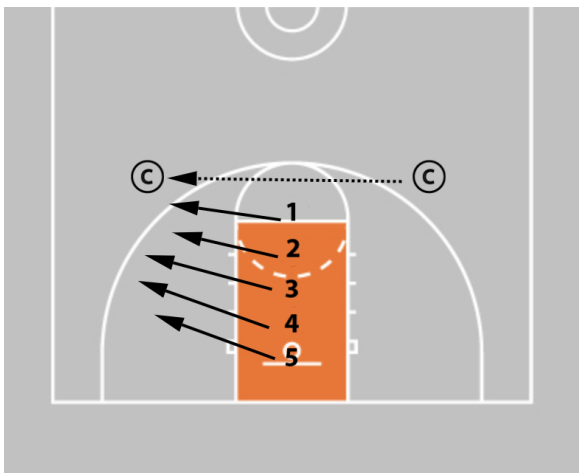
- The defenders are working on defensive help position and movement.



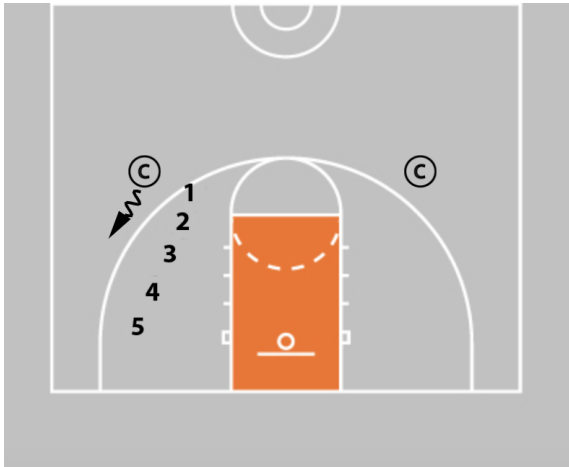
- As many as 10 players can participate in this drill.
- This drill focuses on closing out and helpside defense.
- Focus on ball pressure.
- Players start in the middle of the floor, on the “equator”.
- Players should always see the ball and man.



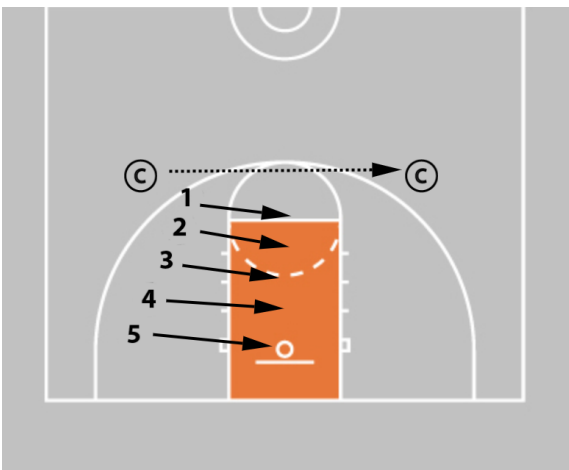
1. Coach starts with the ball.
2. He takes two dribbles towards the basket.
3. Players push steps in his direction twice to provide help defense.
4. Coach dribbles back to original spot.
5. Players push step back to the middle of the lane.



6. Coach skip passes to the other coach.
7. Players respond by sprinting over and closing out.
8. Players focus on chopping steps and having hands up.



9. Coach dribbles towards the basket.
10. Players push step twice to cut him off.
11. Coach picks up the dribble.
12. Players use hands to mirror the ball yelling, "Dead!"



13. Coach reverses the ball to the other coach.
14. Players sprint to the middle of the lane and it starts all over again.

Coaching Tips

- Make sure defenders stay low in a defensive stance.
- Defenders should yell help when they are in the middle of the lane.
- Make sure defenders sprint to each position. Some defenders have a tendency to walk, jog, and stand up.
- Coaches can immediately skip pass it back it back and forth.
- Defender should not overrun the "equator".

Ball Pressure

Positives of Putting Pressure on the Ball

- Ball pressure can disrupt the opposing team's offense
- Staying lower than the offense will help eliminate penetration

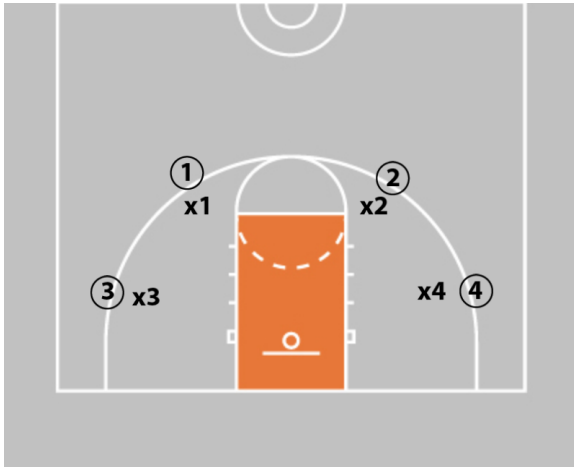
How to Apply Ball Pressure

- keep an arm's-length away from the offense when in triple threat position
- stay in a proper stance
- active hands
- move tighter if the ball goes above their head
- foot to foot with the offense to take away driving angles
- If the player can dribble, the defender should yell, "Ball!"
- If the player has picked the ball, the defender should yell, "Dead!"

4 Second Ball Pressure Drill

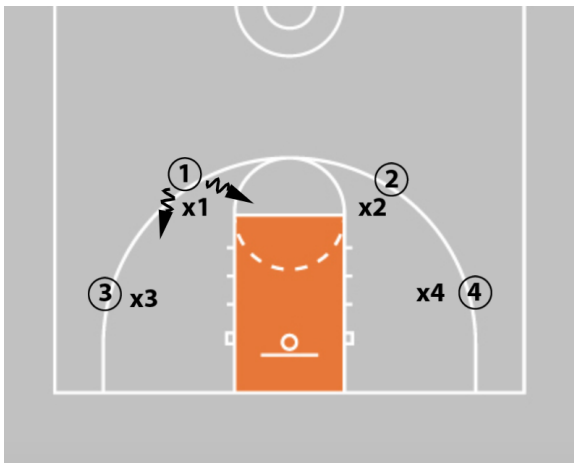
Purpose of the Drill

- The defender focuses on ball pressure when the offensive player is in triple threat.
- The defender tries to cut off the offensive player when he drives.
- The defender focuses on ball pressure when the ball is dead.



1. The drill starts with the player with the ball passing to himself with his back to the basket.
2. He catches it and pivots to face the basket.
3. The player guarding him pressures the ball for 4 seconds.
4. The offensive player dribbles for 4 seconds while the defender tries to cut him off.
5. The offensive player then picks up the ball, and the defender pressures him.
6. Defender yells, "Dead," repeatedly.

(All groups can be going at the same time.)



Coaching Tips

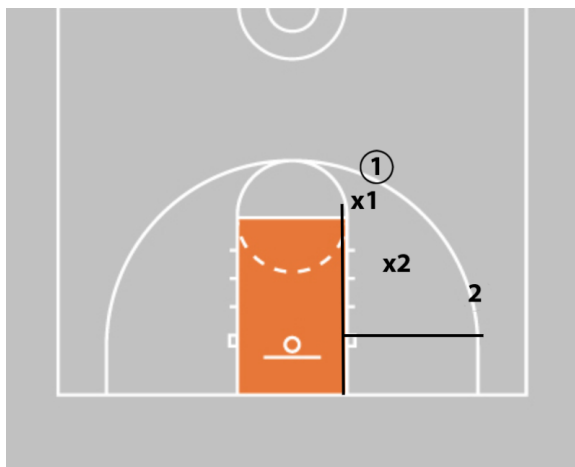
- Make the defenders stay low.
- Remind the defenders to keep the offensive players out of the lane.
- Defenders should be active with their hands.
- It is a great time for the offensive players to work on moves as well.
- Don't be afraid to instruct if you see something wrong.

Chapter Four: 2-Man Drills

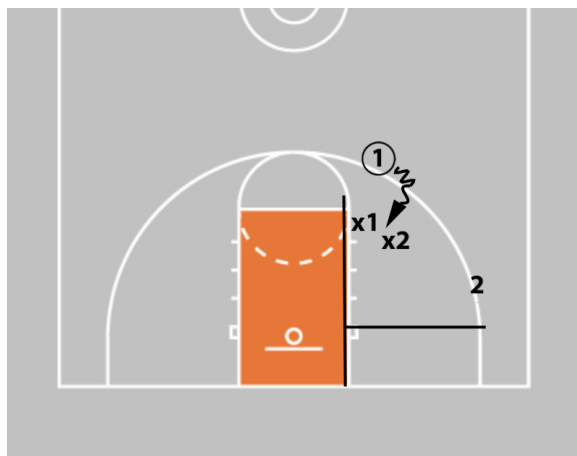
2 v 2 Defense

Purpose of the Drill

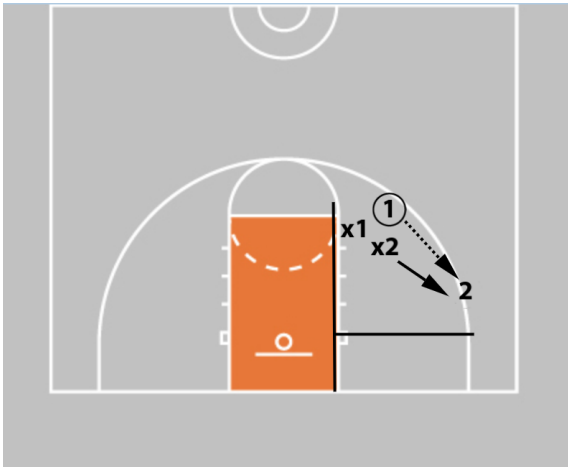
- The offense is trying to score by driving to the lane by splitting the gap.
- The defense is trying to prevent them from driving using help defense.



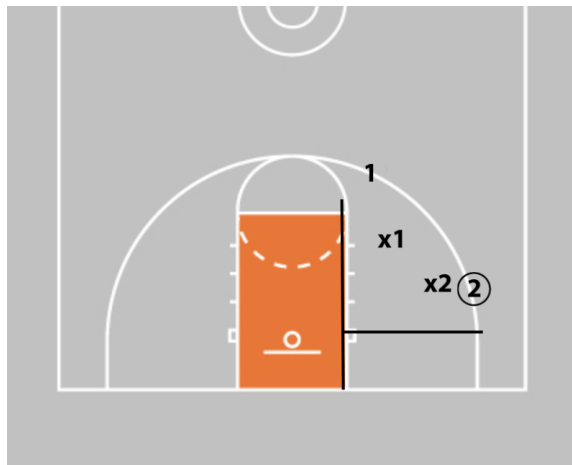
1. Player one has the ball. He can either start with a pass or a dribble drive to his left. He cannot dribble to his right to get to the lane.
2. Player four is providing help defense.



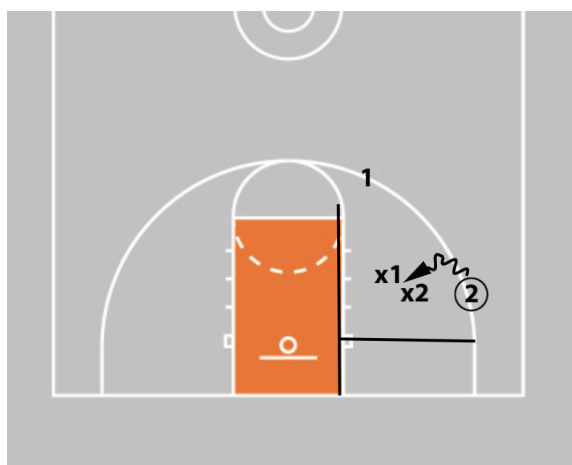
3. When player one drives, player four provides help defense and cuts off player one.



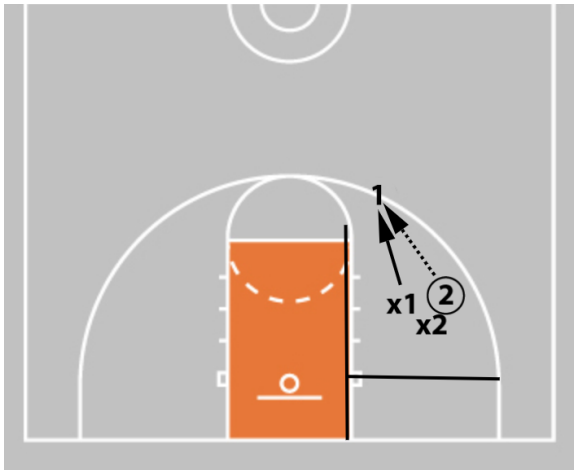
4. Player one passes the ball to player three.
5. Immediately, player four sprints to close out on player three.



6. Player two now steps into the seam to provide help defense.



7. When player three drives, player two provides help defense and cuts off player one.



8. Player three kicks back out to Player one.
9. This keeps repeating until the offensive team scores.

Coaching Tips

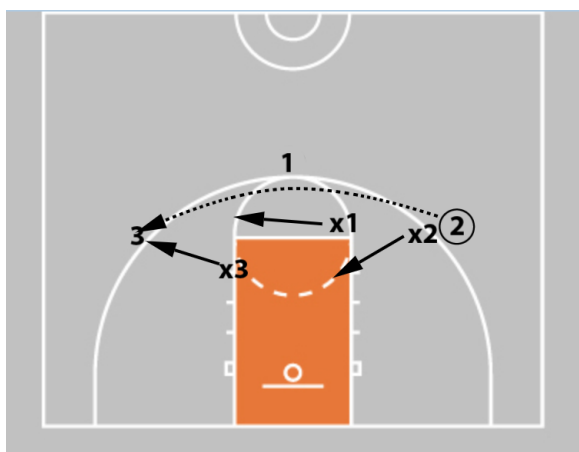
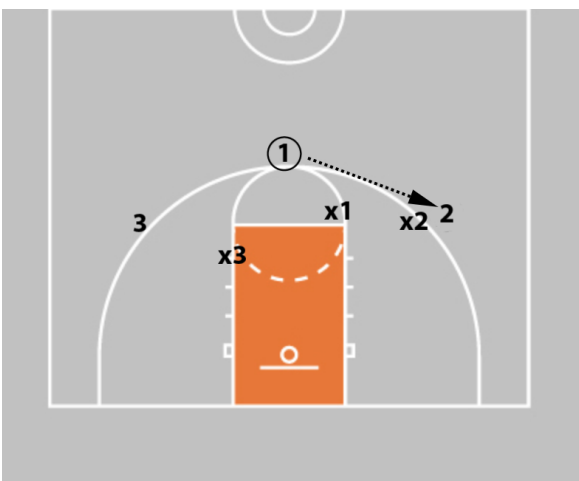
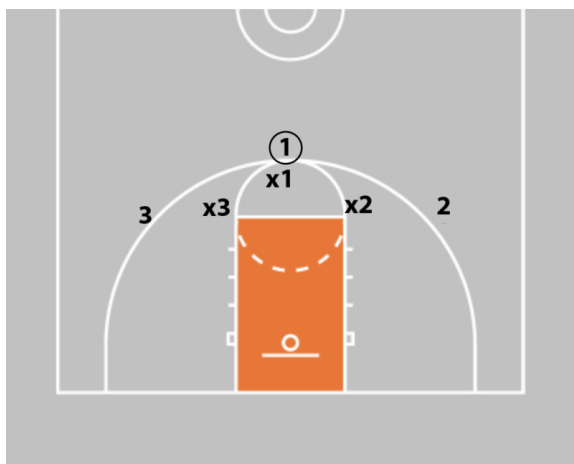
- The lines drawn on the court show the area of the court that is off limits for penetration. The purpose of the drill is to force the defense to help.
- The offense must drive towards the help defender in this drill.
- The off ball defender should be in a defensive stance halfway between the two offensive players because he is one pass away.
 - This helps to seal the seam. It takes away the driving lane to the basket.
 - The defender does not want to over extend. This leads to getting beat by a backdoor cut.
 - A flat triangle should be formed with the two offensive players and the off ball defender.
 - The off ball defender should be able to see the ball and his offensive players at all times.
- The players should talk each time they relocate on defense.
 - The off ball defender can yell, "Gap or help!" repeatedly.
 - The on ball defender should yell, "Ball!" repeatedly.
- Good spacing by the offense will make this drill more challenging for the defense.
- Four more players could be running the drill on the other half of the court.

Chapter Five: 3-Man Drills

3 v 3 Defense

Purpose of the Drill

- The defender is working on providing help defense one and two passes away.



1. Player one starts with the ball at the top of the key.
2. Off ball defenders should be in the gap providing help defense.
3. When player one passes to player two, the defenders rotate.
4. Player six is now providing on ball defense.
5. Player four is in the gap providing help defense.
6. Player five, who is two passes away, is now in the lane providing help defense.
7. Player two skip passes the ball to player three.
8. Player five closes out and plays on ball defense.
9. Player four sprints to the gap and provides help defense.
10. Player six, who is two passes away, is now in the lane providing help defense.
11. Continue skip passing the ball, so defenders work on transitioning defensively.

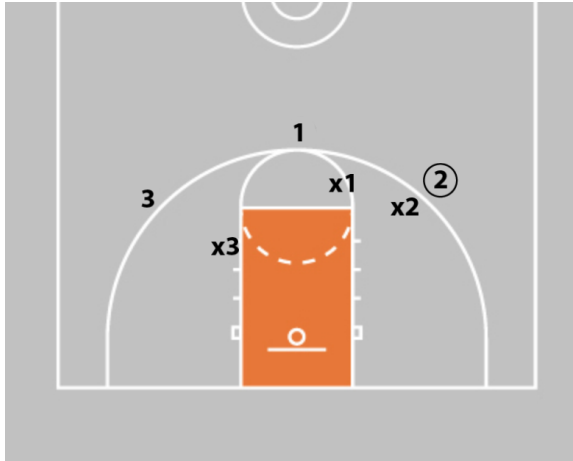
Coaching Tips

- Continue to skip pass the ball back and forth forcing the defenders to work on help defense.
- Rotate the offensive players and defenders, so they have to play all positions. Rotate the players clockwise as well.
- The defense does not want passes going through them.
 - The passes go around.
 - The passes go over.
- On ball defenders want to pressure the ball and force the offensive player to turn.
 - This forces passes to be further away from the basket and weaker.
- The defense should be moving when the ball is in the air.
- When the defender is two passes away and moves to the lane, he needs to sprint.
- Defenders need to communicate.
- The defender in the gap needs to have his top hand up to steal or deflect the ball.
- Remind the defenders to see their man and the ball.

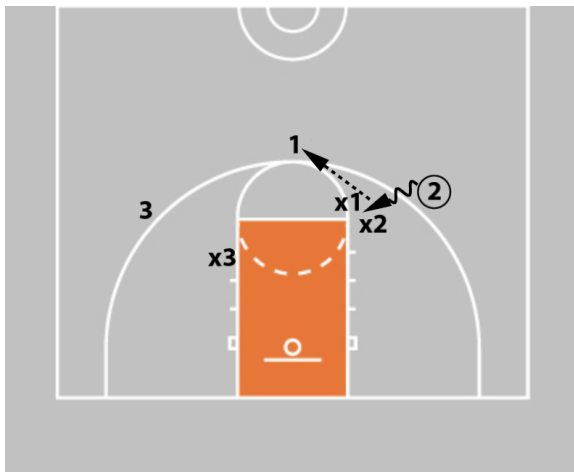
3 v 3 No Paint Touches Drill

Purpose of the Drill

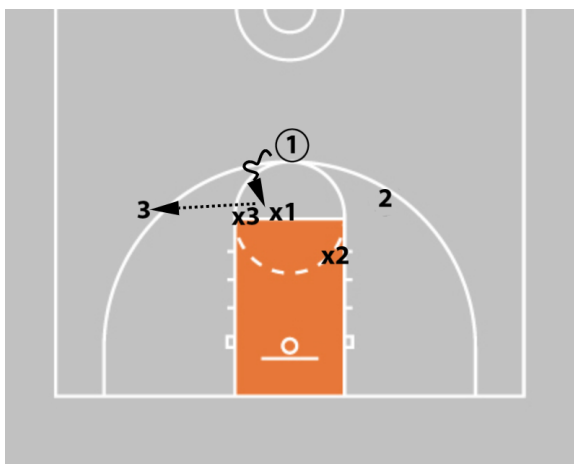
- The defender is working on providing help defense one and two passes away.



1. Offensive players try to penetrate to the paint while the defense tries to prevent this using help defense.



2. As soon as the offensive player penetrates the lane, he kicks it out to another player.
3. The defense rotates and prepares to provide help defense on the next attempt to penetrate the lane.

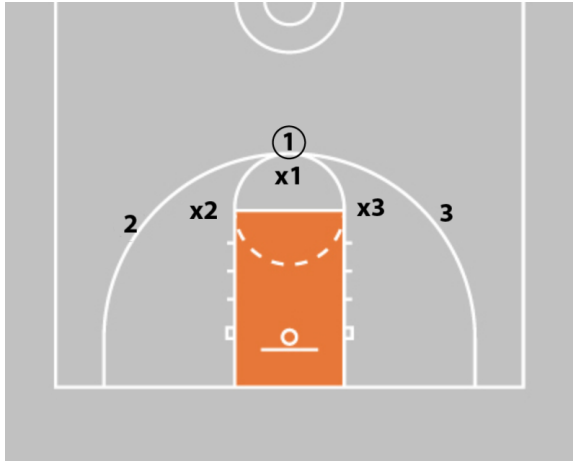


4. The next offensive driver immediately penetrates while the defense provides help trying to cut them off before reaching the lane.

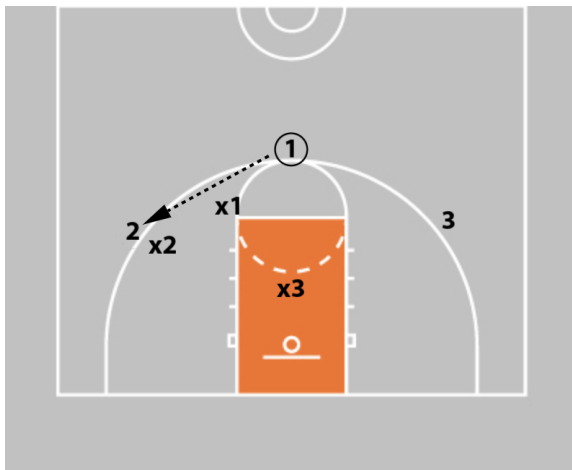
3 v 3 Live

Purpose of the Drill

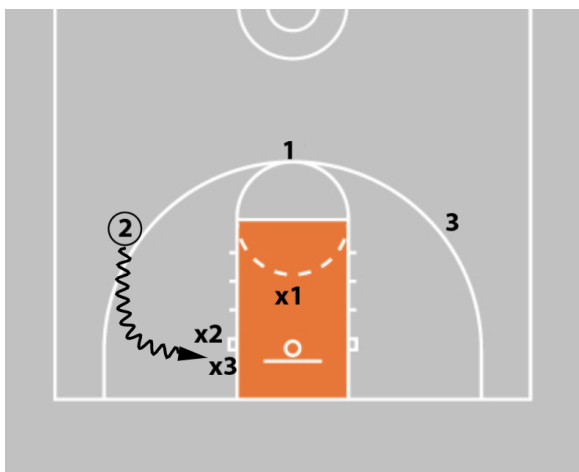
- The defender is working on providing help defense one and two passes away.



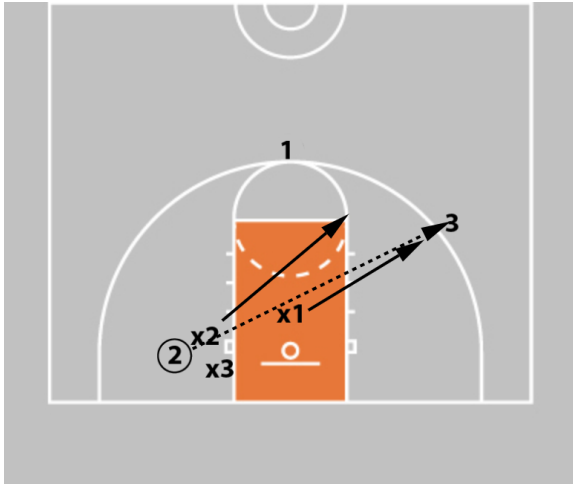
1. The drill is set up the same as the previous two drills.
2. The players begin by only passing it around the perimeter using skip passes.



3. Once the coach yells, "Live," the players can penetrate to the basket.
4. The offensive player can either try to score by driving through the gap or by baseline. He can also pass.



5. If the offensive player does penetrate along the baseline, the backside defender drops down and must cut off the drive.
6. The top of the key defender must drop down to the middle of the lane.



7. If the offensive player gets cut off and passes it, the defender in the lane closes out to whoever catches the ball.
8. The next closest defender runs to the next closest offensive player.

Coaching Tips

- Continue to encourage the defenders to talk.
- The defenders will continually improve their help defense and court movement the more you run this drill.

Chapter Six: 4-Man Drills

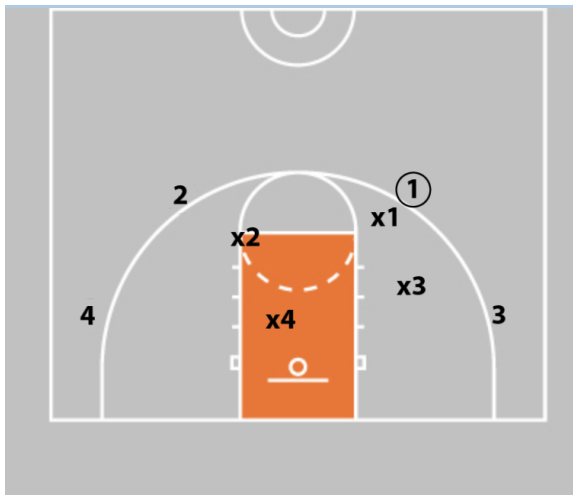
4 v 4 Shell Stationary

Purpose of the Drill

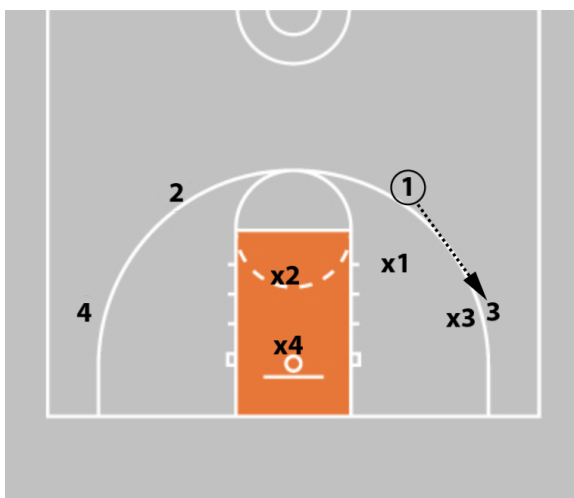
- The defense is working on providing help defense one, two, and three passes away.

Helpside positioning

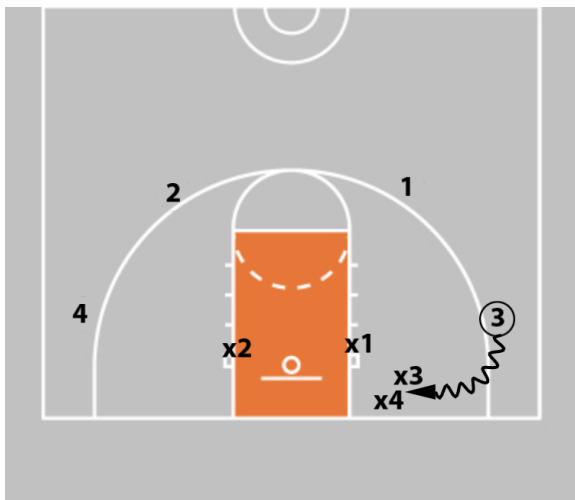
- 1 pass away = halfway between man and ball
- 2 passes away = 1 foot in the paint
- 3 passes away = rim line



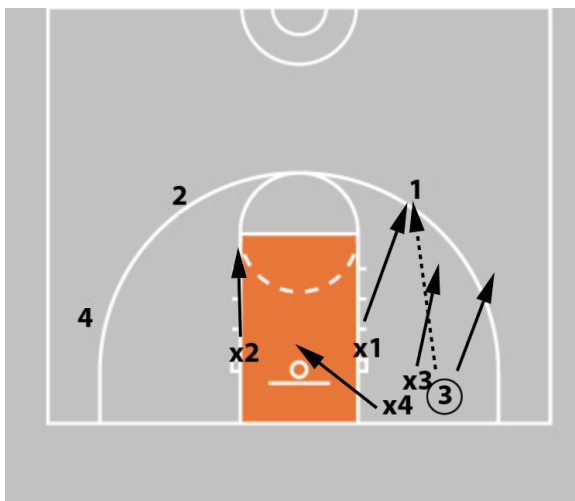
1. Player one starts with the ball, and the defense gets into position.



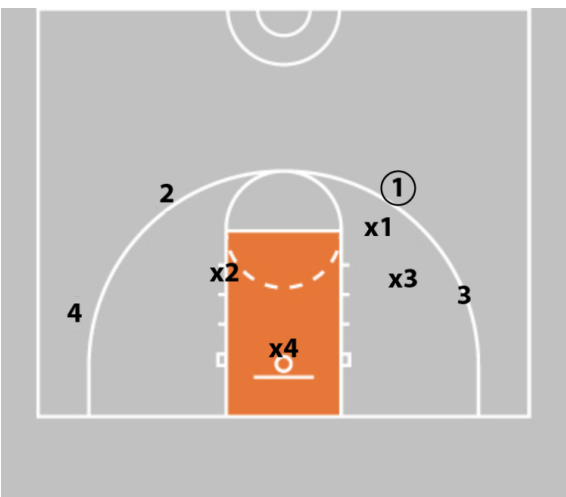
2. Player one will pass to player four and allow the defense to rotate defensively.



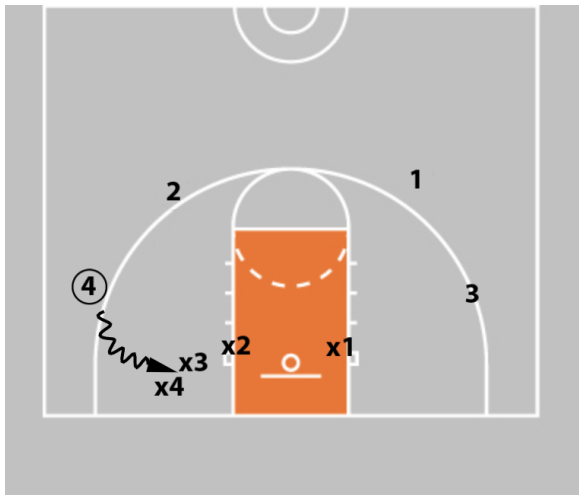
3. If player four drives baseline, help defense is provided by player number seven.
4. Defenders must try to keep the ball on one side of the floor or the defense may break down.
5. Ball side defender needs to drop to ballside block.
6. Weak side help defender drops down to the weak side block.



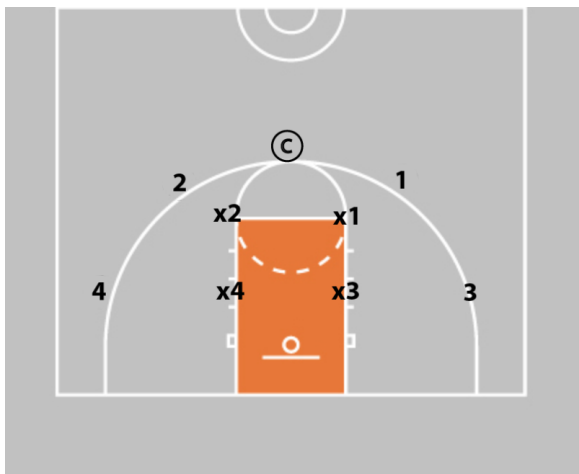
7. Player four passes back to player one, and the defense rotates back to their original defensive positioning.



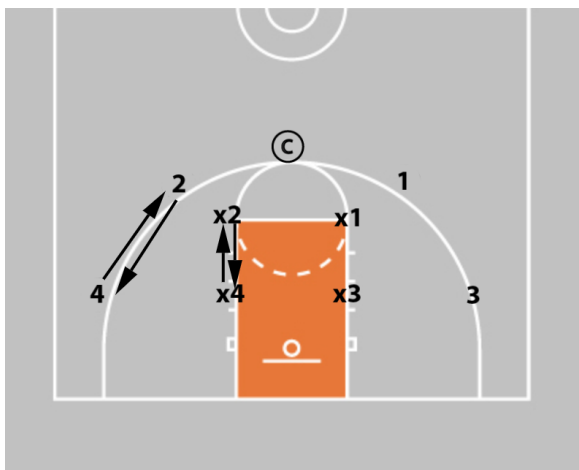
8. Once the defense gets into position, the offense should pass the ball around the perimeter. This allows the defense to practice positioning for help defense.



9. Allow for the ball to rotate to every position, so all players can work on positioning for help defense.



10. Placing a coach at the top of the key allows the players to also work on being one and two passes away.
11. The players two passes away should be straddling the lane line.



12. The coach can call out, "Interchange."
13. The wing and the baseline player then interchange putting the defenders in a different position.
14. The two defenders switch along the lane line.

Coaching Tips

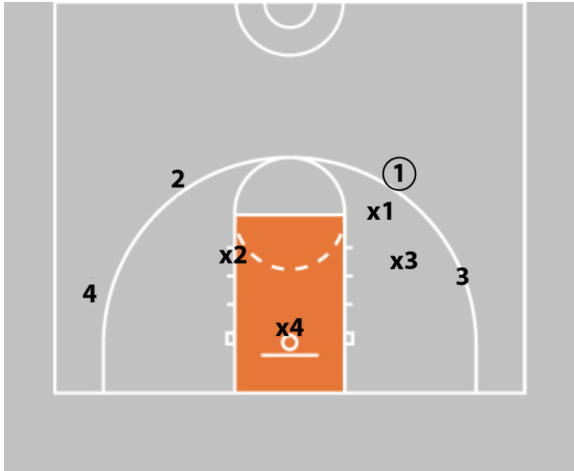
- Teach players only to help when it is needed.
- Reinforce seeing the ball AND man during defense.

- Defenders should move when the ball is in the air.
- Defenders should sprint to the new help location on the pass.
- Help defenders should have their butt and back to the basket.
- Offense and defense should switch.
- After practicing the defensive position over and over, the drill can become live.
- Be careful not to go too fast. In this learning phase, defenders need time to get into the correct positioning.
- Don't let the players develop bad habits in shell by letting them make mistakes.

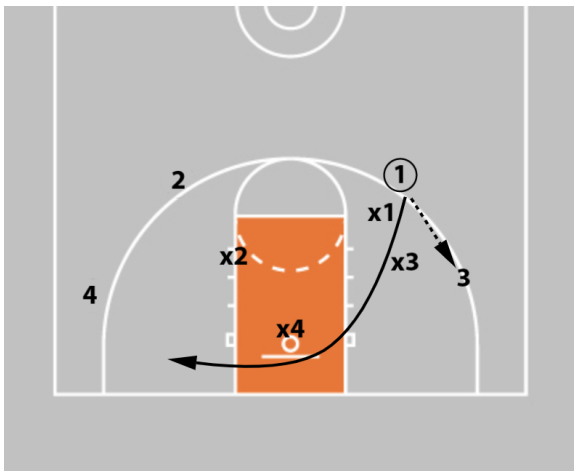
4 v 4 Cutters

Purpose of the Drill

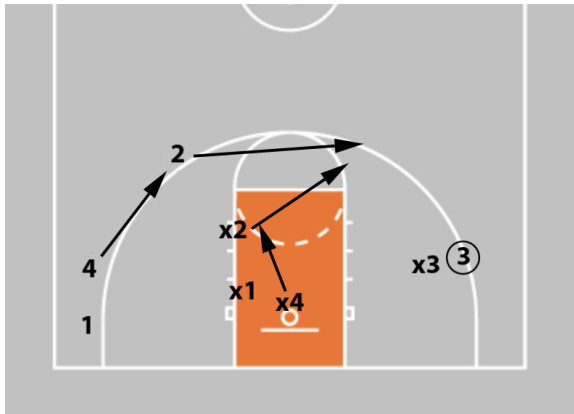
- The defense is working on providing help defense one, two, and three passes away.
- Now the defense is also working on defensive movement with offensive players cutting to the basket.



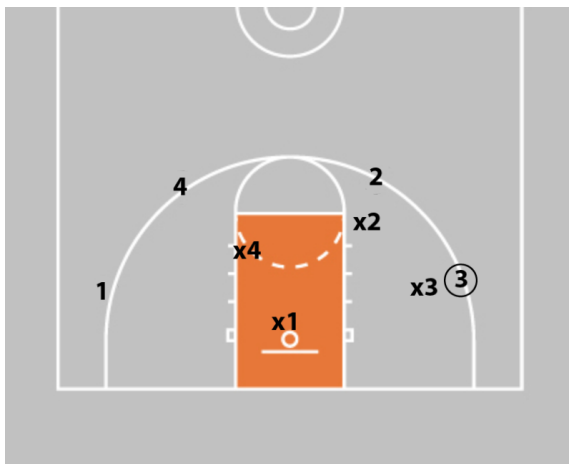
1. The drill starts the same way as the shell drill.



2. After an offensive player passes the ball, he will cut to the basket.



3. The offense will fill the vacated spot of the cutter.



4. Swing the ball around the perimeter and allow the defense to rotate.

Coaching Tips

- Be patient when teaching shell and gradually introduce offensive concepts.
- Make teaching defense a priority in practices early in the season.