



RELENTLESS PRESSURE SYSTEM

with Mike Hilmer

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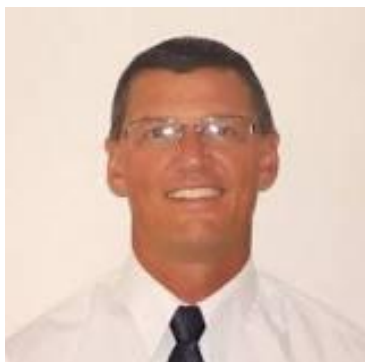
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Introduction: About Mike Hilmer



Coach Mike Hilmer is the longtime boys' basketball coach at North Linn High School in Troy Mills, IA. He is going into his 25th year as head coach for the Lynx. His credentials include two state championships and six state title appearances.

Prior to his run at North Linn, he served as the Head Boys' coach at Lincoln Central in Gruver, IA, followed by a six year tenure at Lincoln Central in Estherville, IA.

In November of 2023 he recorded his 500th win as a head coach!

Chapter One: Intro To Pressure System

Introduction

Coach Hilmer introduced this fast-paced system back in 2015, where he led North Linn to a 21-2 record. They pressed off made or missed shots.

Their goal was to increase the number of possessions per game by at least 20. They always tried to make teams play at a pace that they are not comfortable with.

His system's credentials speak for themselves:

- 208-8 record last 8 seasons
- 6 straight championship game appearance
- 2 state titles
- Averaged 80+ points per game for the past 8 seasons

And in last season's state tournament, the proof was in the pudding. The uptempo pressure system can even wear down good opponents. North Linn had a 22-2 run to end the state semifinal game. They rallied from an 18-point deficit to win 52-50 to qualify for the Championship Game. Their opponent had made the state tournament for six consecutive seasons prior to that matchup.

Rationale Of Uptempo Pressure System

There is a clear method to the system's madness. Not only is it miserable for opposing teams to constantly face pressure. It is also NOT miserable to play pressure defense. It is fun to hound opposing offenses into turnovers and rushed shots.

Coach Hilmer identifies some key points in why he uses this system.

1. It is FUN for players and fans
2. Forces the pace of the game
3. Mental edge by fatiguing opponents
4. Creates lots of turnovers and points
5. Unpredictable and tough to prepare against

Concepts

These concepts are integral to the success of this system.

1. Constant ball pressure
2. Trap dribbler from blind side
3. Sprint mentality
4. Try to stay even or in front of the ball
5. Floor positioning — the further your man is from the ball, the further you are from your man

Absolutes

Pressure also requires limitations.

1. Limit lay ups
2. Limit fouls
3. Limit offensive rebounds
4. Limit thinking — allow kids to play free and fast

Benefits

There are not just drawbacks for the opposing team. There are countless benefits to running this system!

- Defense creates a lot of offense
- Balanced scoring
- Increase in points per game
- Limits thinking — allows kids to play free and fast
- Fun high scoring offense
- Allows you to play athletic, less skilled players
- Creates large runs
- Can wear opponents down
- Can decrease turnovers
 - Averaged over 12 turnovers per game in his first 16 seasons as coach
 - But in the last 8 years, they had 8 or less turnovers!
- Rather get a shot attempt up instead of overpassing and having a turnovers
- Opponents focus on what we do instead of what they do
- No need to condition at the end of practice
- Team cohesion — play a lot of kids
- Forces younger players in system to improve
- Multiple variations of the pressure (red, yellow, green)
 - 3 variations of the press can keep opponents off balance and are easy to switch in and out
- Makes opponents indecisive
- Take times off shot clock for opponent

Keys To The Uptempo Pressure System

Here are the keys to the pressure system.

The Trap

- Block ball handler's vision
- Overlap feet
- Don't let the trap be split
- Make them throw around the trap

Good Anticipators

- Some kids are better than others
- Anticipation can be drilled and taught

Back Of The Press

- Great at anticipating
- Good decision maker
- Great at taking charges

Develop several kids who can play the back of the press — allow those players to play the front two rows occasionally as well.

Chapter Two: Overview of Presses & Pressing a Missed Shot

Red

- Goal of the Red Press is to force the pace of the game, but take away any chance of giving up an easy bucket
- Typically, this is run when the team has a lead or if the other team has broken the press a few times
- Try to force the ball to be caught between the free-throw line and baseline
- Defenders must keep the ball in front of them.
- The player guarding the inbounder stays back around the free-throw line
- Once the ball is inbounded, it becomes a full court man without trapping — players can stunt at the ball though
- The defender that is deep should stay tighter to their man and gamble less in the Red press
- Red is trying to get your opponent to make an error you can take advantage of

Yellow

- Normally, the inbounder is guarded tight, but if the guards are too good you can back the inbound defender up - either option work with the yellow press
- Goal is to guide the inbounds pass to as close to the corner as possible
- Try to get the ball handler to dribble up the sideline and trap with the on ball defender and middle defender
- Burying the dribbler is ideal! That means to keep a tight trap where they can't see the rest of the court - try to block their vision!
- The only pass that is left open is the deep pass that they shouldn't be able to make
- If the ball is dribbled to the middle there is a run and jump switch and then you try to force to the sideline again

Green

- Green Press is all out pressure — trying to steal the inbounds pass
- The best guard is double teamed by the person who is matched up with the inbounder
- Switch if the two offensive players at the elbows screen away
- The person guarding the inbounder must yell ball as the ball is passed in
- The person in the middle must take away and pass over the top as well as deny any pass to someone cutting to the ball
- Once the ball is inbounded, then it becomes Yellow Press with a goal of getting a trap down the sideline

Pressing A Missed Shot

- Two players in the front row — one takes the ball and one shades towards the ball
- Try to keep your best on ball defenders in the front row
- Second row will go the sideline and to the deep middle
- Players go to designated areas and then match up from there
- Designated deep defender gets back **as soon as the shot goes up**
- Front Row = best on ball defenders
- Second Row = Good anticipators
- Back Defender = Tough, smart defender, and must take charges

Pressing Off A Made Basket

- Quickly determine who should be placed where
- On a made basket the defense must know who they are guarding as well

Chapter Three: Whiteboard — Keys To Trapping

A lot of what this pressure system does is predicated on getting a good trap. Oftentimes when it is not being as successful as you want, it is simply because the traps are not good.

Below are some keys to trapping the basketball.

Keys To Trapping

- Come from the blindside
- Can jump only once to try for a tip
- Don't go to trap when the ball is passed out of a trap
- Trappers block the vision
- Anticipators get the steals
- Stunt at secondary ball handlers - this may get them to pick up their dribble

Chapter Four: On Court Walkthrough of Presses

Scenarios

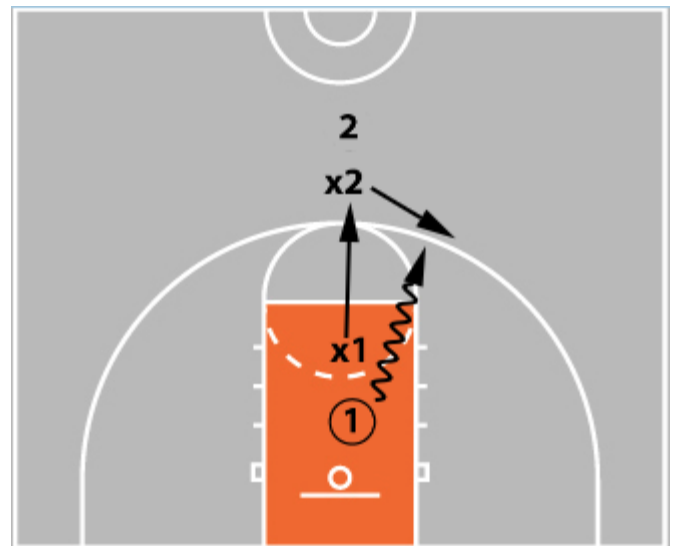
Everything should be taught whole first, then breakdown parts of it, then bring it back whole and go live with it. One reason this press is so effective is because it teaches concepts and not rules. Here are scenarios that this defense will often face over the course of a game.

3 Common Actions

The 3 most common actions of the press are Run & Jump action that looks to force the ball up the sideline, the Sideline Trap which is a blindside trap that comes from the side, and the Sideline Rotation, which leads to a sideline trap that comes from in front of the ball handler.

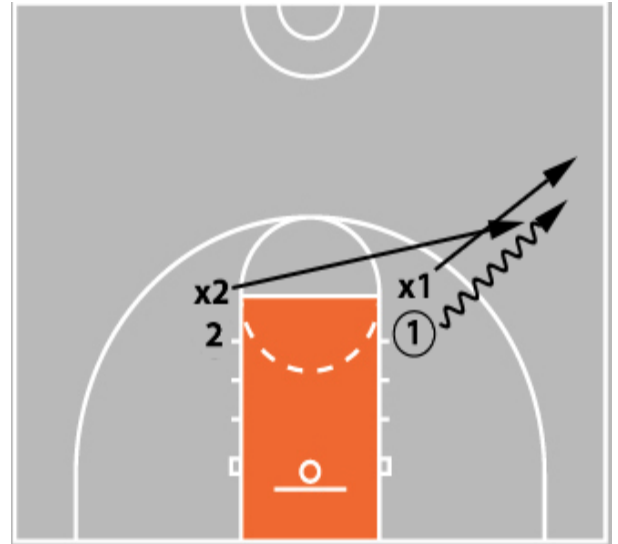
Run & Jump

- Want to try and keep the ball out of the middle of the floor
- The deep defenders stay between their man and the ball — the further their man is from the ball, the further they can be away from them
- After switching, the player off the ball should move slightly toward half court and away from his man



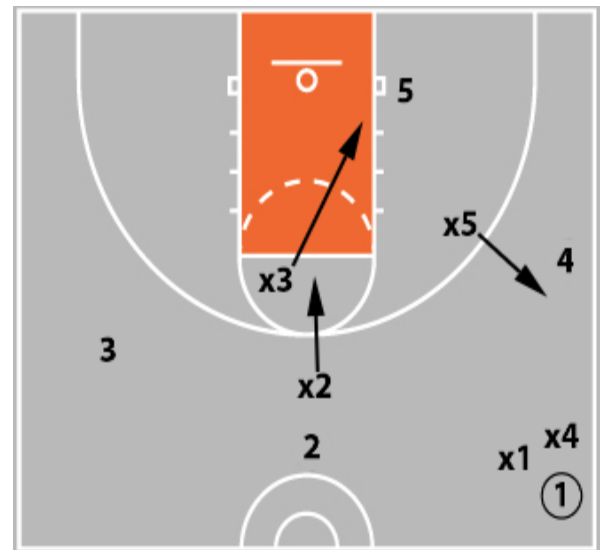
Sideline Trap

- Crucial that a hard and tight trap is made
- x1 MUST beat 1 to the sideline spot
- x2 waits until 1 puts the ball on the floor before sprinting over to trap
- The main priority is to cut off the sideline pass up the court
- This trap is a blindside trap that can be very devastating to the offense



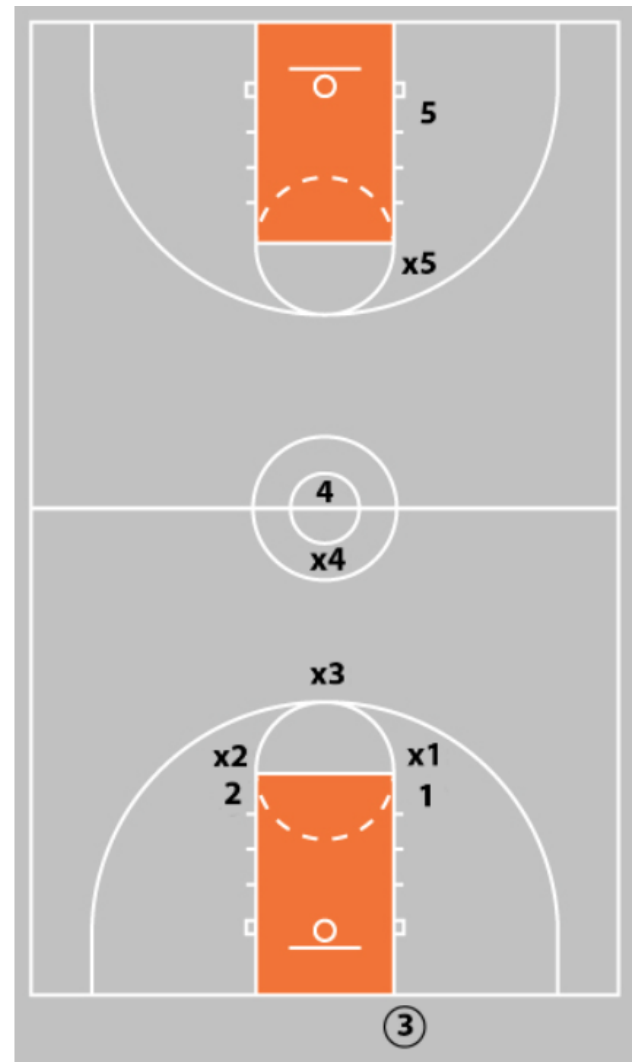
Sideline Rotations

- If the deep defender (x5) can't make the steal on the sideline pass, they need to retreat and cover up the basket
- x1 and x4 trap the ball
- x5 can either deny the pass to x4 or retreat to guard x5
- x2 and x3 slide down to cover up the basket if the ball goes to 4



Red

- The Red Press should NEVER give up an easy basket
- Red Press is lighter pressure that is simply trying to force them into a mistake and speed the pace of the game up
- One goal is to force a 10 second violation
- Don't deny passes or guard inbound player when in Red
- Look to stunt at the ball handler to slow them down
- If they dribble directly at defender, players can run at jump but would not trap
- Defenders may want to stunt at the ball and then retreat towards their man to intercept the pass
- When the ball is with the ball handler, you can stunt at them to get the ball out of their hands

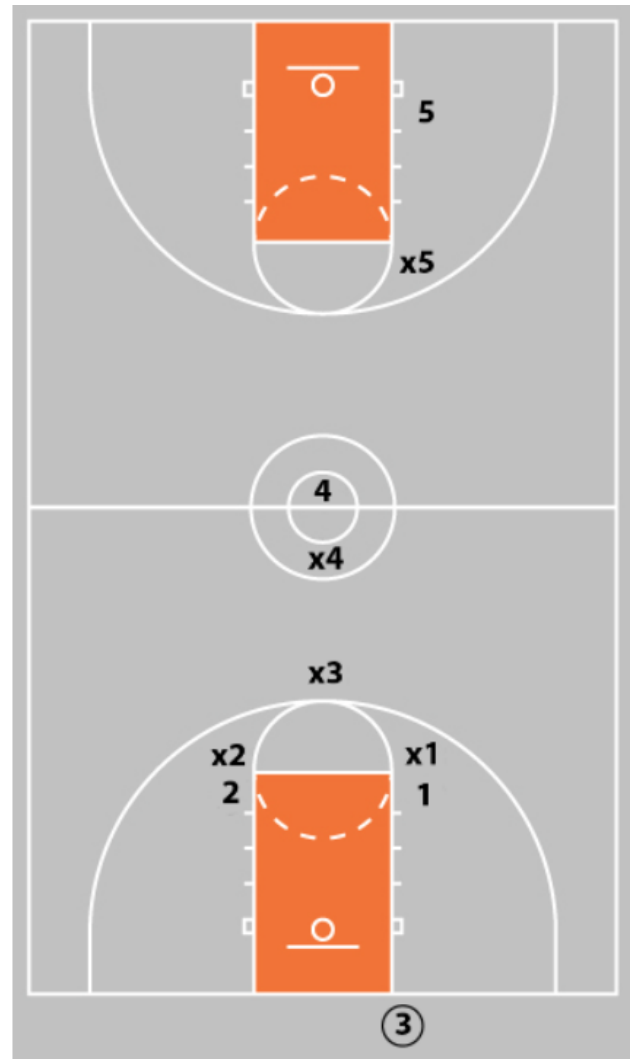


When to use the Red Press

- Ahead late in the game
- Force more time off the clock
- When your team is in foul trouble

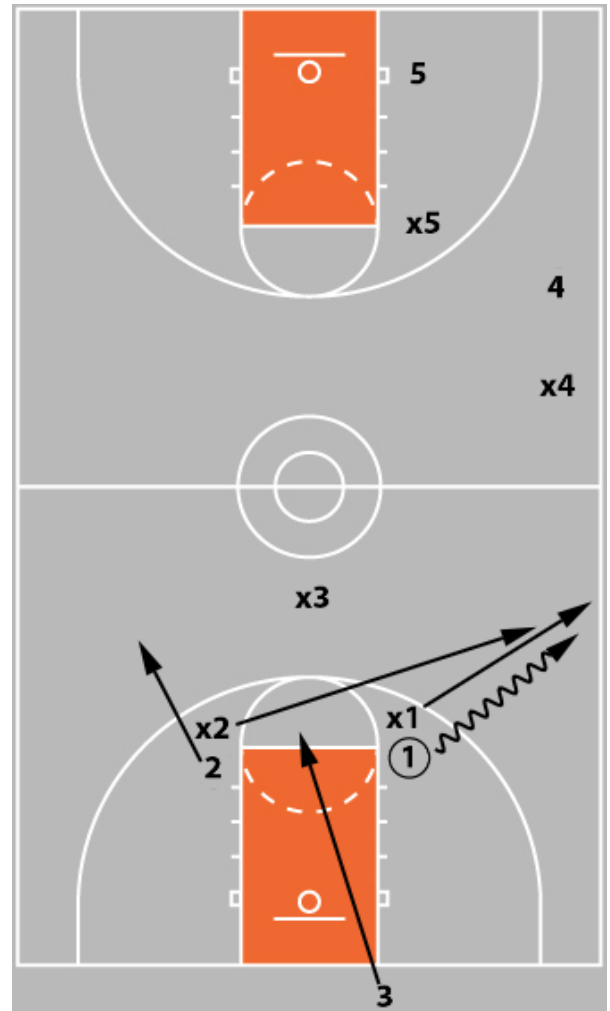
Yellow

- The defense (x1-x5) should be initially aligned like this
- The offense will most likely have their two most reliable ball handlers up top (1 and 2 in this scenario)
- x1 and x2 should force the ball to be passed as close to the corner as possible
- x4 and x5 should be between 4 and 5 respectively
- Most inbounders are not going to be able to make that long of a pass accurately



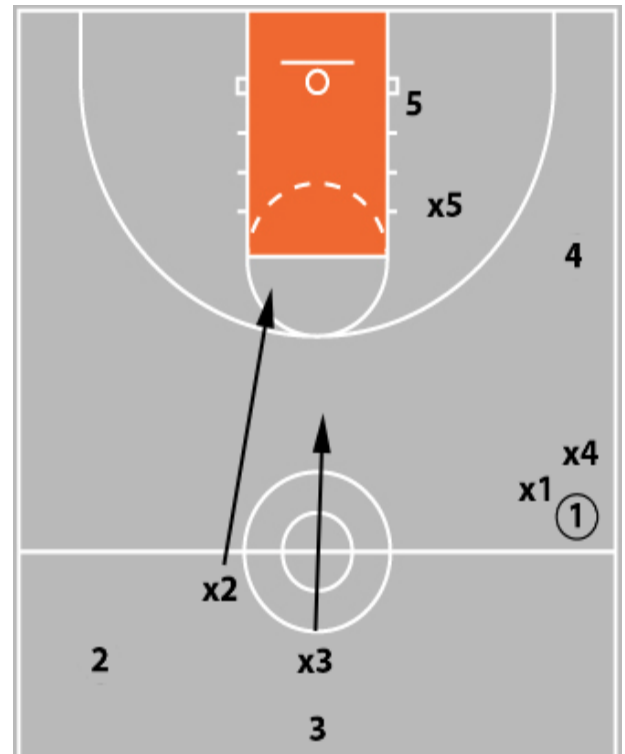
Sideline

- One goal is to get the ball dribbled up the sideline
- The trap should come from the side and not from the front
 - x1 MUST cut off 1 as the ball gets to the sideline
 - x2 sprints over to trap
 - x3 stays between 2 and 3 but prioritizes denying the pass to 2
- Most important pass to take away is the sideline pass
 - x4 denies the pass to 4
 - x5 cheats up to help on that pass
- #1 goal of trappers is to block the vision of the ball handler
- If the ball handler is buried with a good trap, they should not be able to throw deep



(Sideline continued)

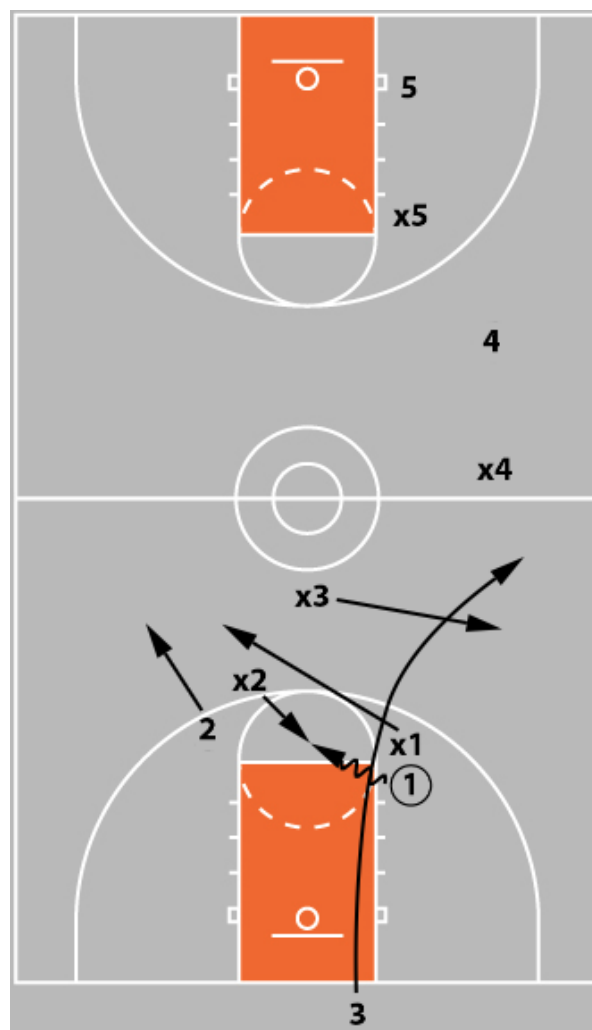
- If the defender can't get in front, the trap must come from the front
- x4 comes to trap the ball since x1 was unable to beat 1 to the sideline
- The trapper from the front cannot allow a direct pass — it must be around or over the top
- Once the ball handler crosses half court, the other defenders can retreat over half court as well
 - x2 and x3 in this example



- If the pass goes up the sideline, the defender should cover up the basket first
 - x5 has to decide between denying the pass to 4 or covering up the basket
- Defense must sprint back when the press is broken and look for a steal as they scramble to match up
- Good teams will break this press on occasion, that's ok, one goal is to speed them up
- Deep player must be good at taking charges
- Second row player must be good reading the pass and then dropping to take away easy dump off

Run & Jump

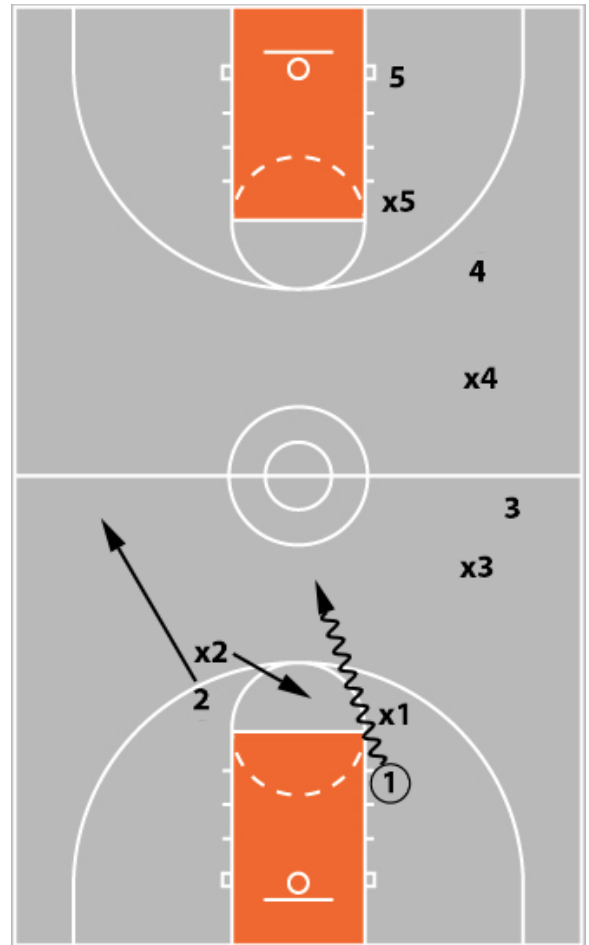
- The trapper from the front cannot allow a direct pass — it must be around or over the top
- After the run and jump try to force them up the sideline for a trap
- In this example, 1 dribbles middle
- x2 jumps to 1 while x1 drops back to guard 2
- x3, x4, and x5 all deny any passing lanes up the sideline
- Ideally, 1 passes to 2 then x1 and x2 end up trapping the ball on the left side



- Players should be sprinting out when they see a pass coming out of a trap
- Goal is to speed the opponent up by forcing them into quick shots — this means more possessions and more opportunities for steals

Split

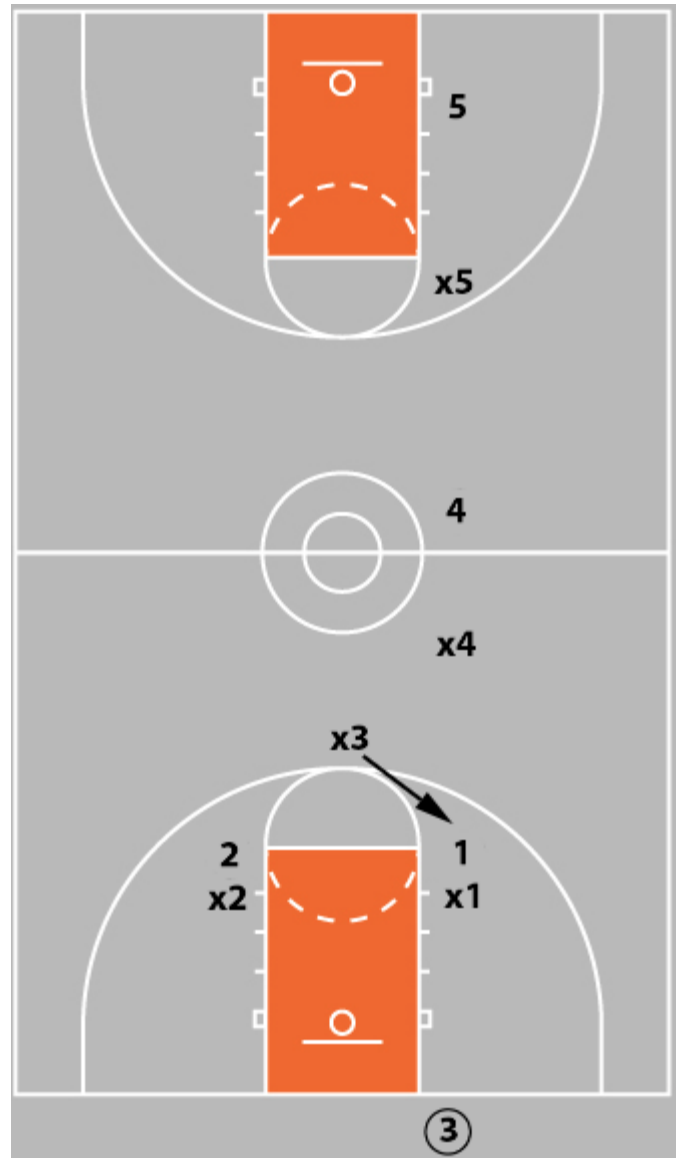
- Goal is to avoid this scenario when possible
- If you get split, there should be two guards digging from behind — everyone in front stays with their man
- If one player reaches and you get beat, then it becomes a scramble situation in the half court
- Always prefer to have the ball dribbled and not passed up the court
- 1 dribbles past both x1 and x2 in this scenario



Green

This press means **maximum pressure**. Don't allow the ball to be inbounded. Great for surprising teams after a timeout.

- Defender who is matched with inbounder should double opponent's best ball handler
 - example: x1 and x3 double 1
- Defender (x4) at half court takes away any over the top passes and also must deny their man the ball
- Deep defender can cheat up and steal any pass overtop that they can get to
- Trap the ball as soon as the ball is inbounded
- Important that the player guarding the inbounder yells "ball" as soon as a pass is made
- Never reach across the body when digging from behind
- If there isn't a steal on the inbounds then the press follows the same pattern as the Yellow Press

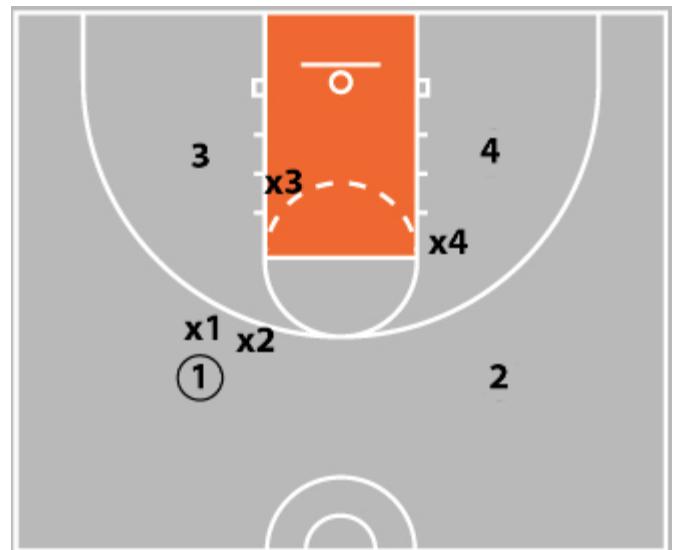


Chapter Five: Press Breakdown Drills

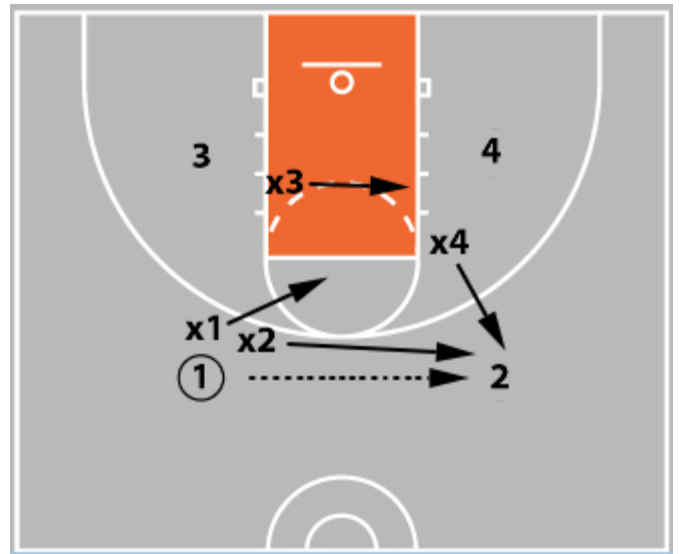
Four Corner Trapping

Trapping is a huge part of the press and must be worked on daily. Teams with bad spacing are easier to trap. Bury the player you are trapping by getting your bodies all over them and getting your hands in the face to block vision.

- Allow the trap in this drill
- Defenders should lock or overlap feet when possible to avoid being split by the offense
- Do not jump unless the offense has jumped first
- The other two defenders (x3 and x4) space between the three offensive players
- Do this for 30 seconds and see how many tips and steals the defense can get



- 1 passes to 2
- 2 waits until defense comes over to trap before passing ball again
- x2 and x4 trap the ball now
- x1 and x3 slide to the middle to anticipate any passes
- The majority of passes in this drill were thrown to the opposite corner



Variations

5 Feet Pass

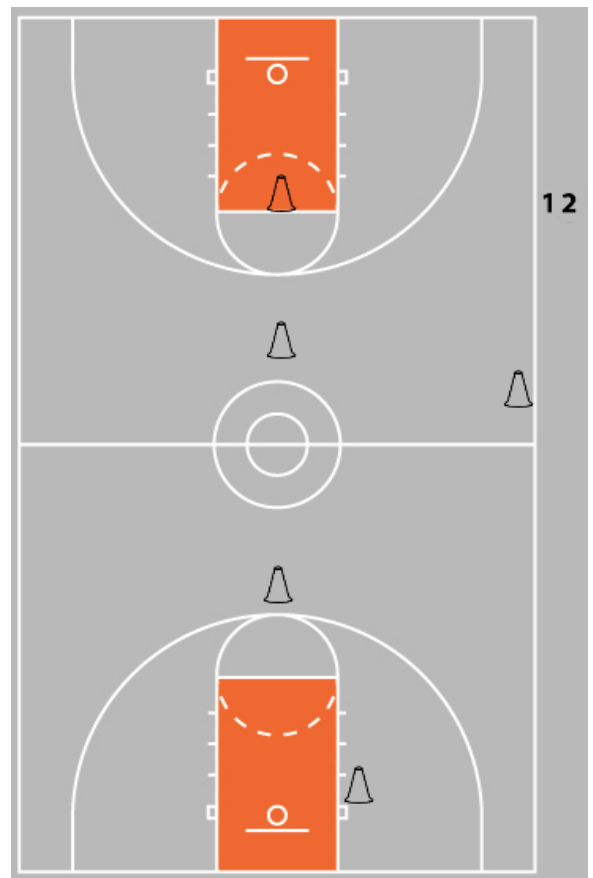
- Offense does not have to wait until the defense traps the ball
- Instead offense must wait until the defenders get within five feet of them

Wider Space

- Spreading the offense out makes it more challenging to get a good trap

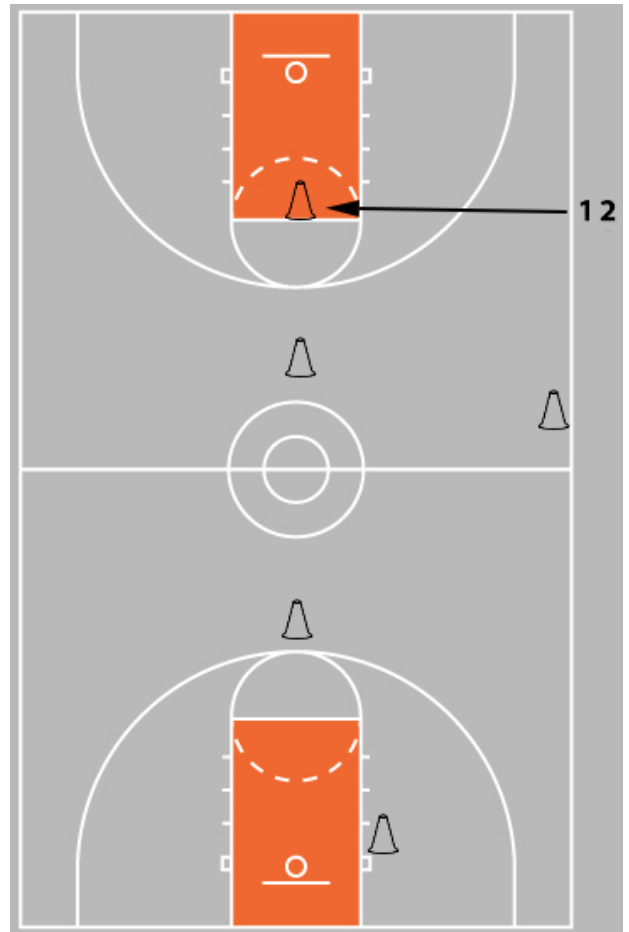
Run & Jump

- This drill focuses on technique for sprinting out of traps, and proper trapping angles
- Players simulate the most common actions they will make in the press
- Always open up to the basketball
- Be vocal in this drill!

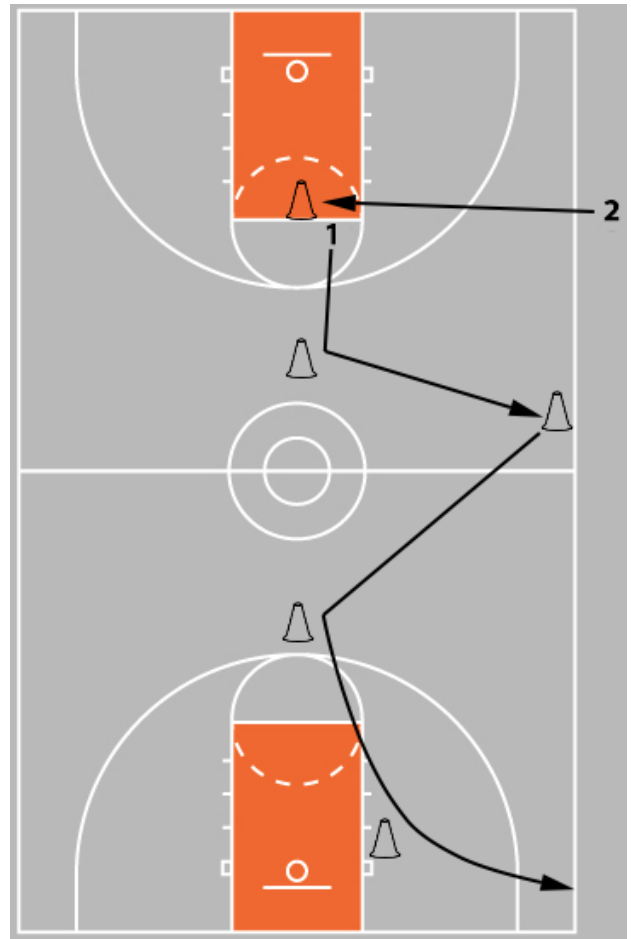


(Run & Jump Continued)

- 1 starts the drill by sprinting to the first cone
- 1 closes out to the corner, simulating a run & jump scenario
- 2 goes when 1 reaches the first cone

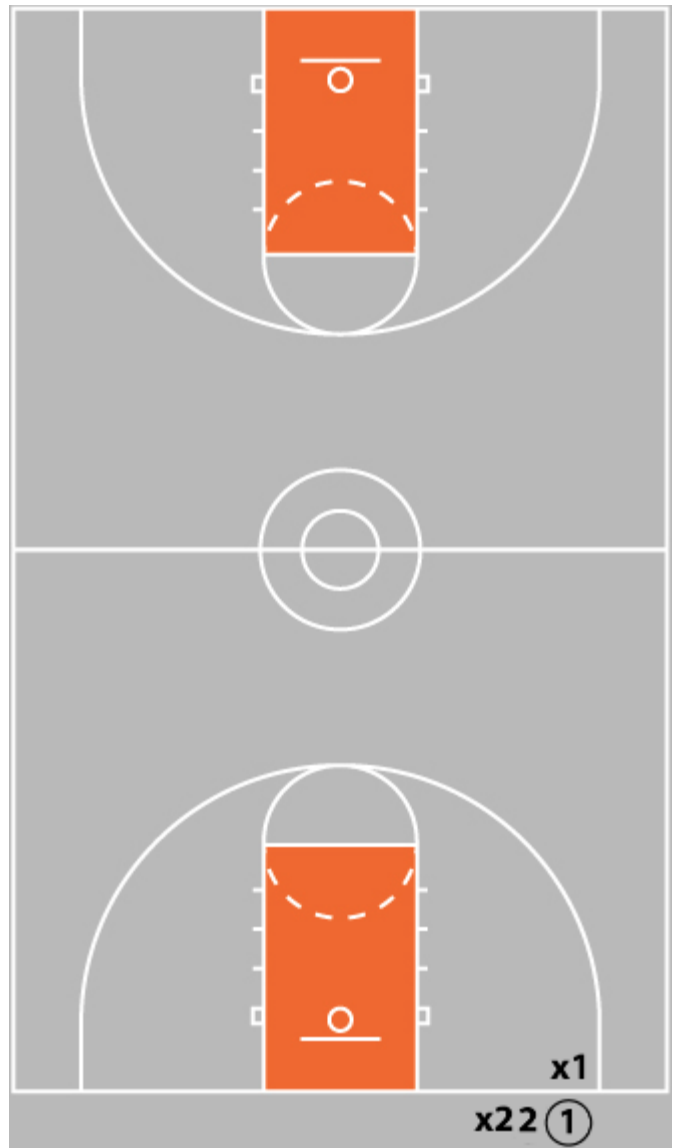


- 1 goes as shown in this diagram
- 1 closes out hard to the opposite side corner at the top of the key then runs to the opposite corner
- 1 will run to the end of the line and start the drill all over again
- 2 repeats 1's pattern

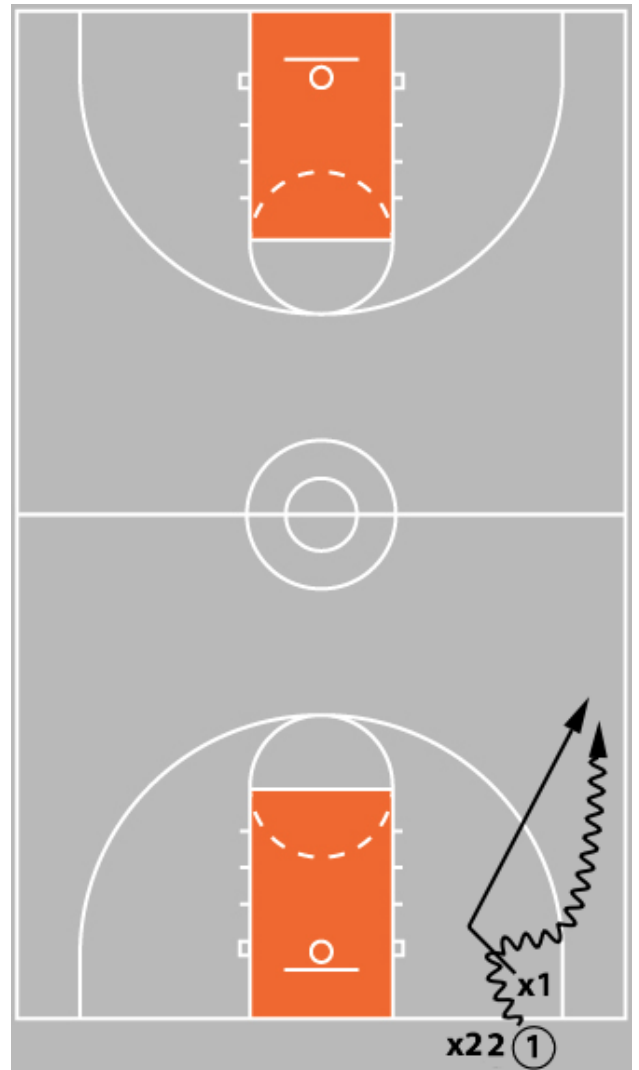


Space & Run

- Good offensive teams will try to draw fouls when there is contact
- This drill focuses on creating space and running to get the ball cut off
- Players release from the contact to get the ball cutoff and to make sure they aren't called for a foul
- Hands should go up as soon as players feel contact
- This drill can be done from the middle $\frac{1}{3}$ of the court as well
- 1 is on offense, x1 is on defense
- 2 and x2 are waiting in line

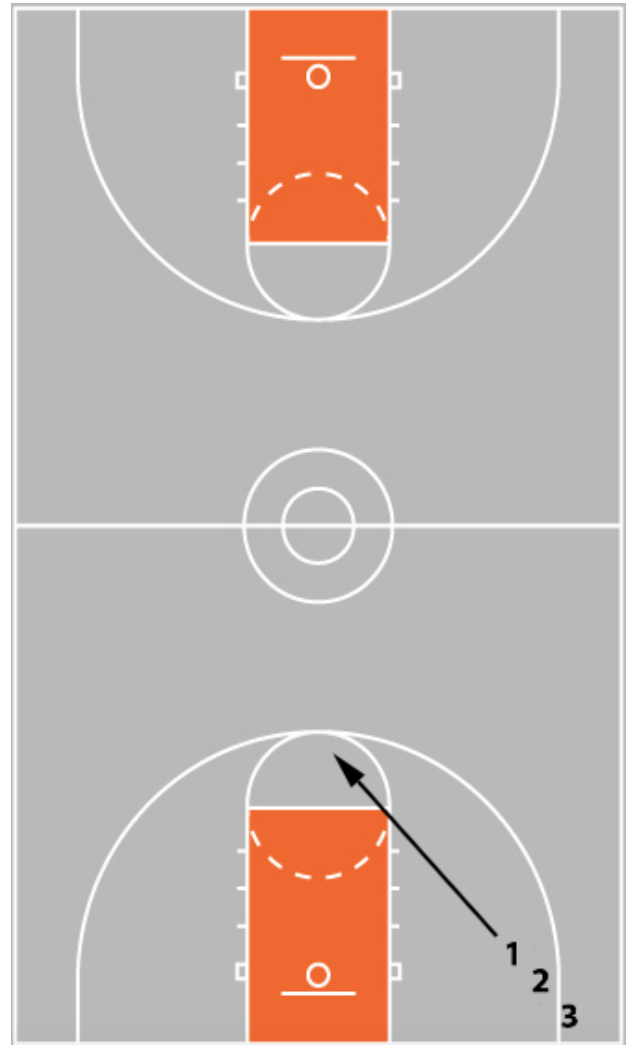


- 1 initially goes left and makes contact with x1
- x1 "spaces" away from 1 and has to sprint back to cut off 1's dribble
- The drill ends shortly past half court and then the next group goes

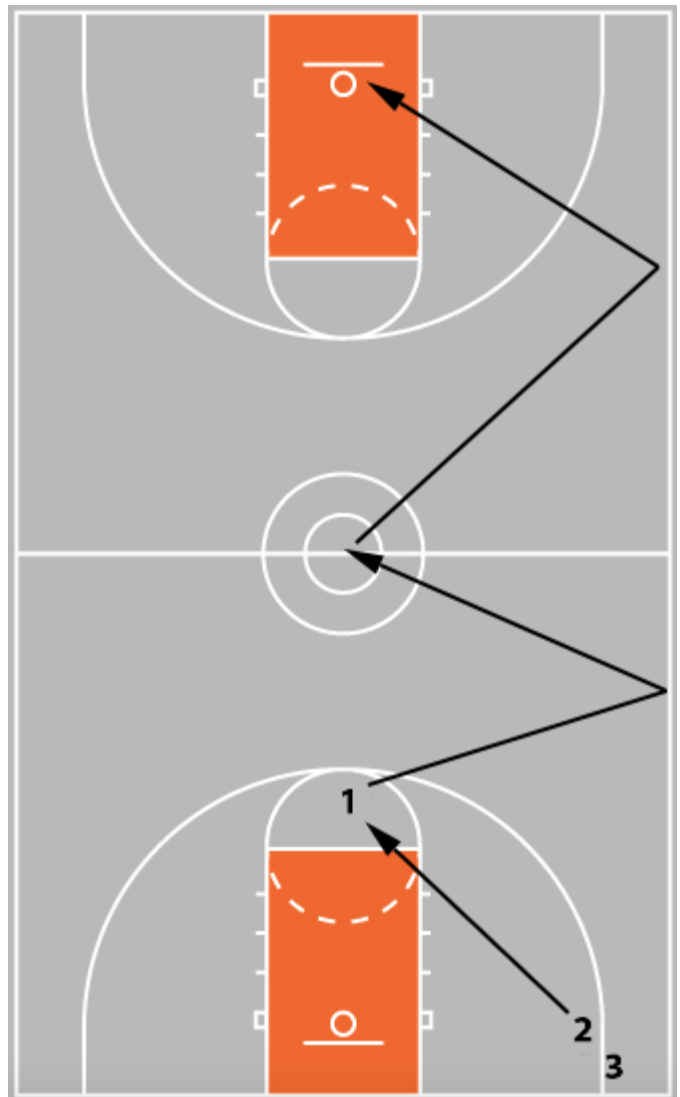


Shuffle, Shuffle, Sprint

- If not guarding the ball, players should be sprinting to spots and not shuffling
- Hands always come up high when simulating the trap
- Foot is on the sideline and shoulders are square to the baseline
- Everyone starts in the corner
- 1 starts the drill by shuffling his feet twice then sprinting to the top of the key

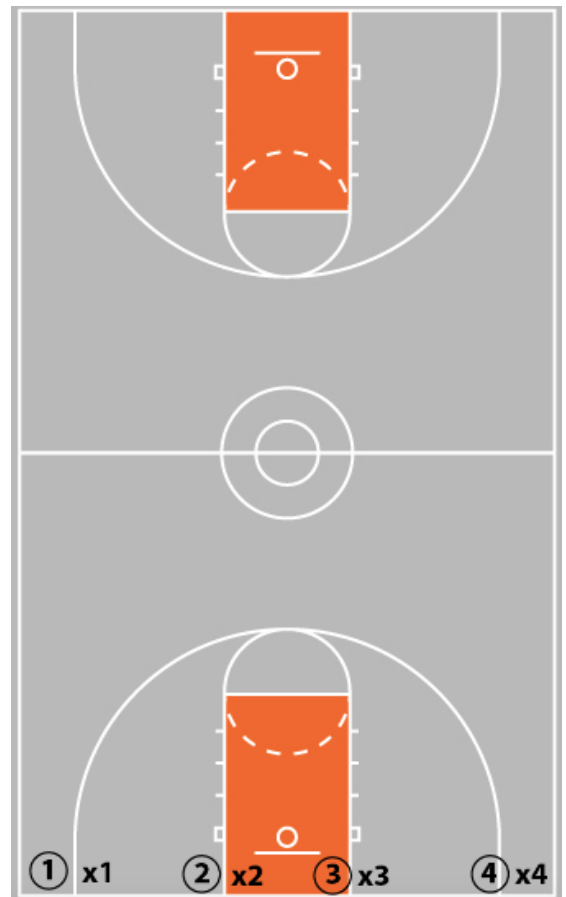


- As soon as 1 closes out to the imaginary spot, 2 goes
- 1 takes the following path down the court and stops on the opposite corner

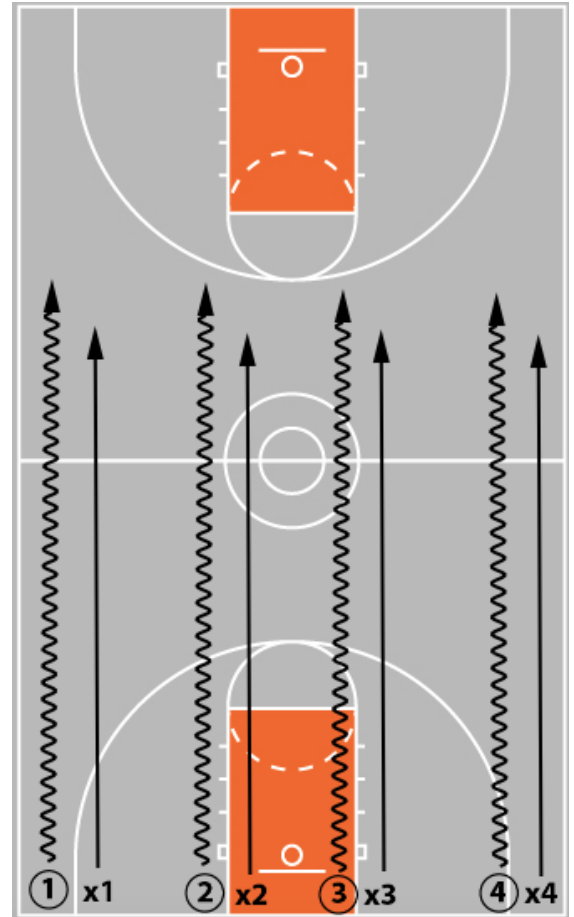


Tip from Behind

- Partner up and spread out
- 1 and x1 are partnered up, 2 and x2, etc.
- Defense should line up on the side where the offensive player will be dribbling
- In this case, every offensive player is right-handed

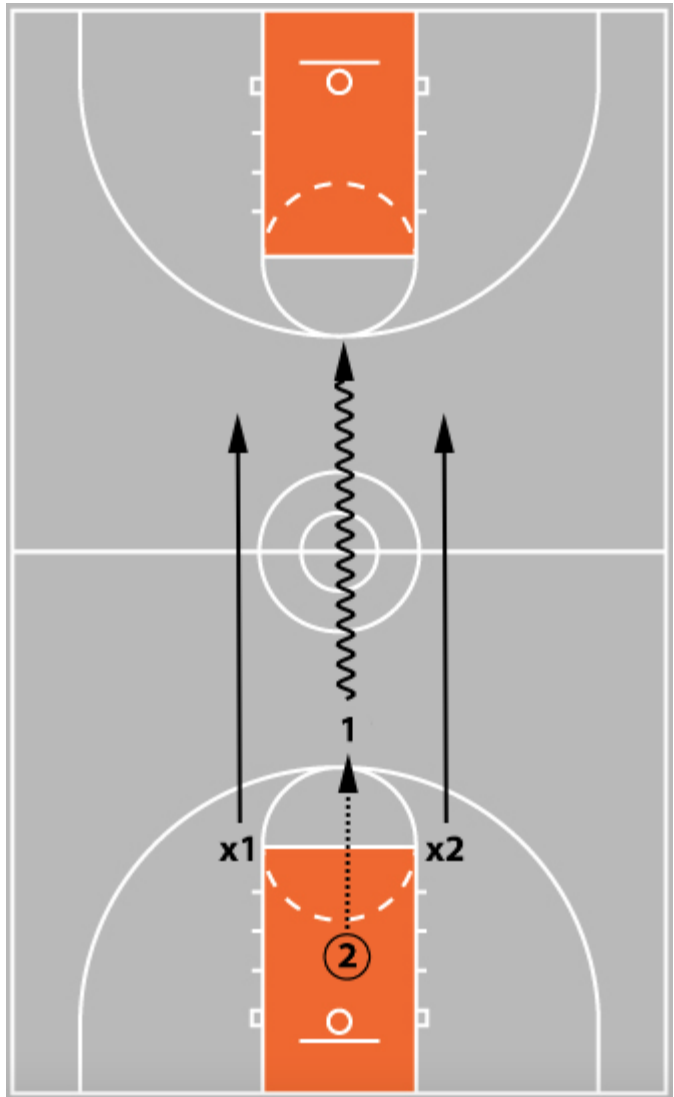


- If the ball handler switches hands with the ball, either switch sides you are running on to get the ball or wait for it to come back to the original hand
- The defense is trying to tap away the ball from the offensive player
- It is crucial to avoid going across the offensive player's body to tap the ball or to swipe down
 - Both of these will be called fouls!
- Ideally players tip the ball softly and then they turn and receive a pass for a layup after a steal



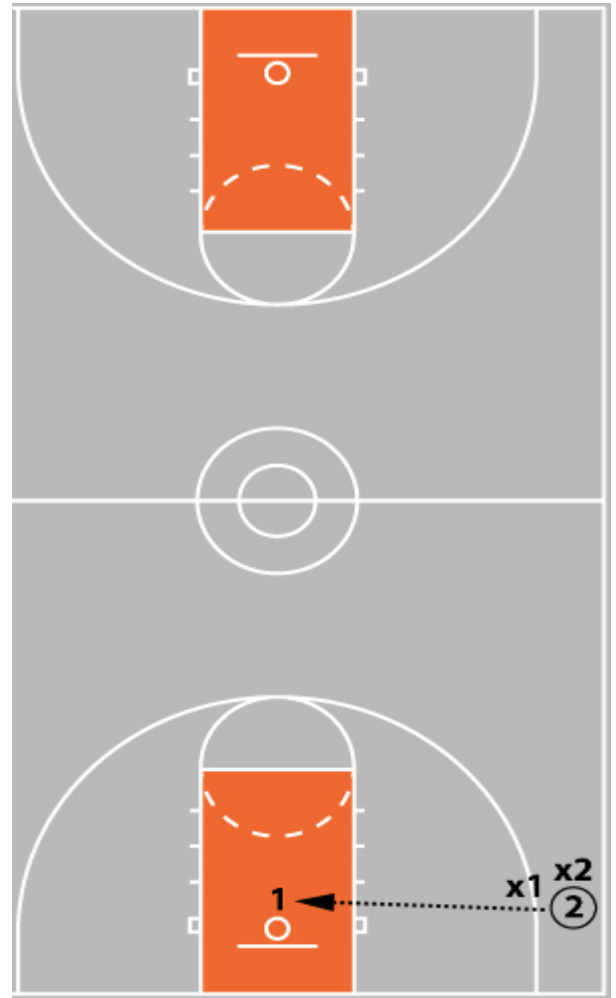
2 v 1

- 1 and 2 are on offense
- x1 and x2 are on defense
- 2 passes to 1
- 1 tries to make a layup before x1 and x2 can tip the ball away
- If the ball handler is worried about pressure from behind, they won't be focused on looking down the court



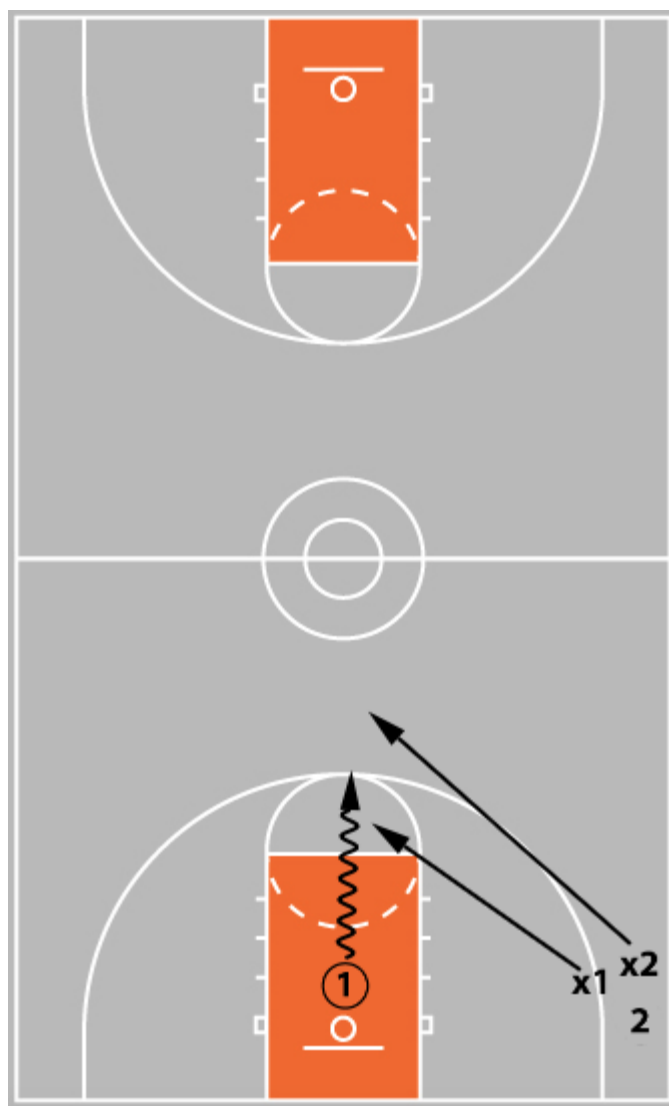
Trap To a Tip

- 1 and 2 are on offense
- x1 and x2 are on defense
- 2 starts with the ball
- x1 and x2 trap the ball but allow the pass to 1
- 2 starts the drill by passing to 1



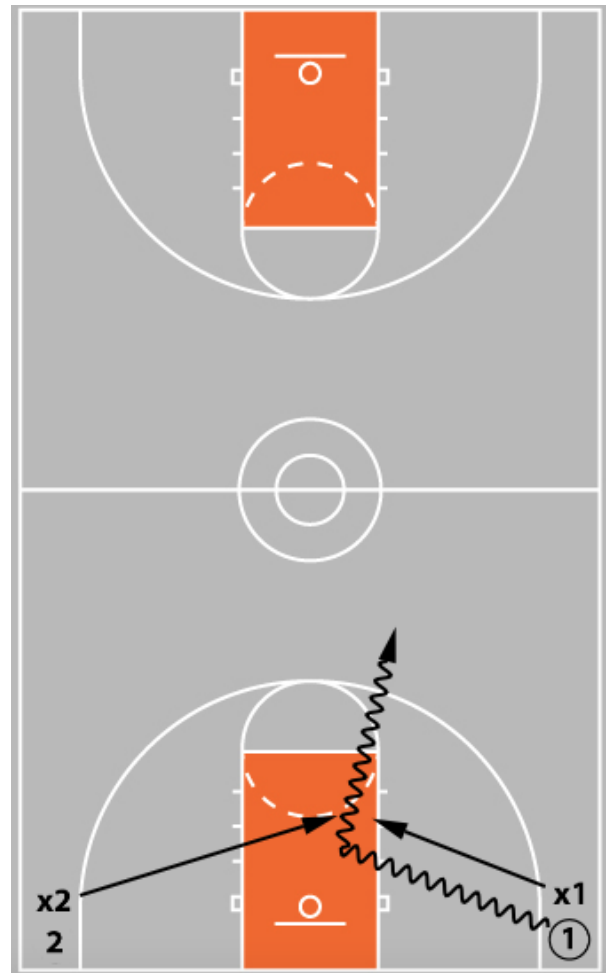
Trap To a Tip (continued)

- 1 dribbles the ball up the court
- x2 gets depth and tries to cut off 1
- x1 comes from behind and tries to tip the ball if 1 tries to split the defense
- 1 tries to score



Split & Tip

- Avoid reaching across the ball handler's body — this is almost always a foul call
- You need to practice real situations that occur in the games even if they are situations you DON'T want to occur
- In this drill, 1 tries to dribble past x1 and x2 by splitting the defense
- If 1 is successful, x1 and x2 must try to tap the ball away

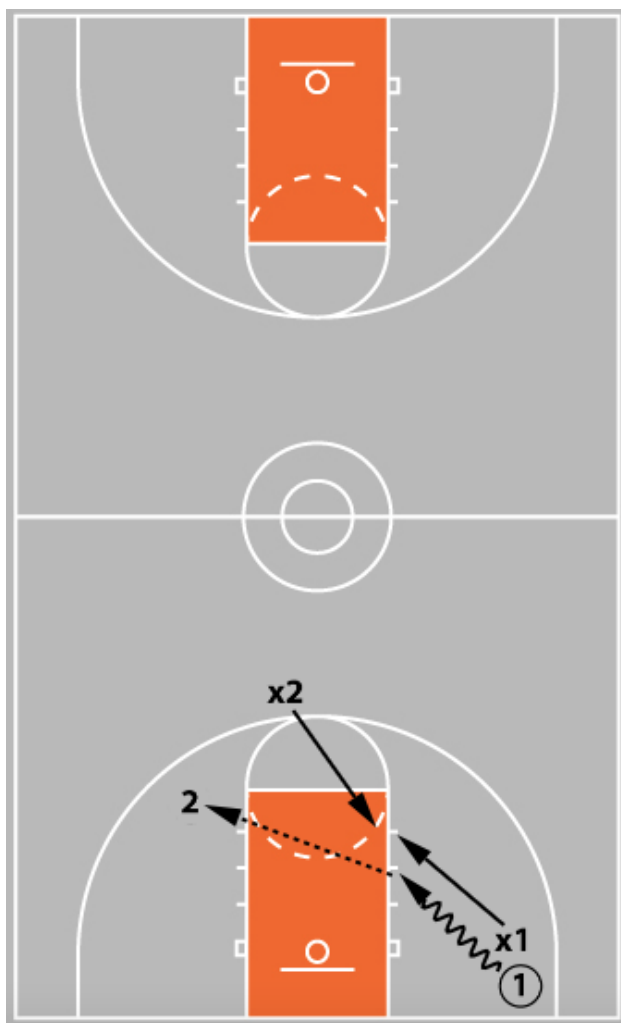


Lane Line — Turn The Dribbler

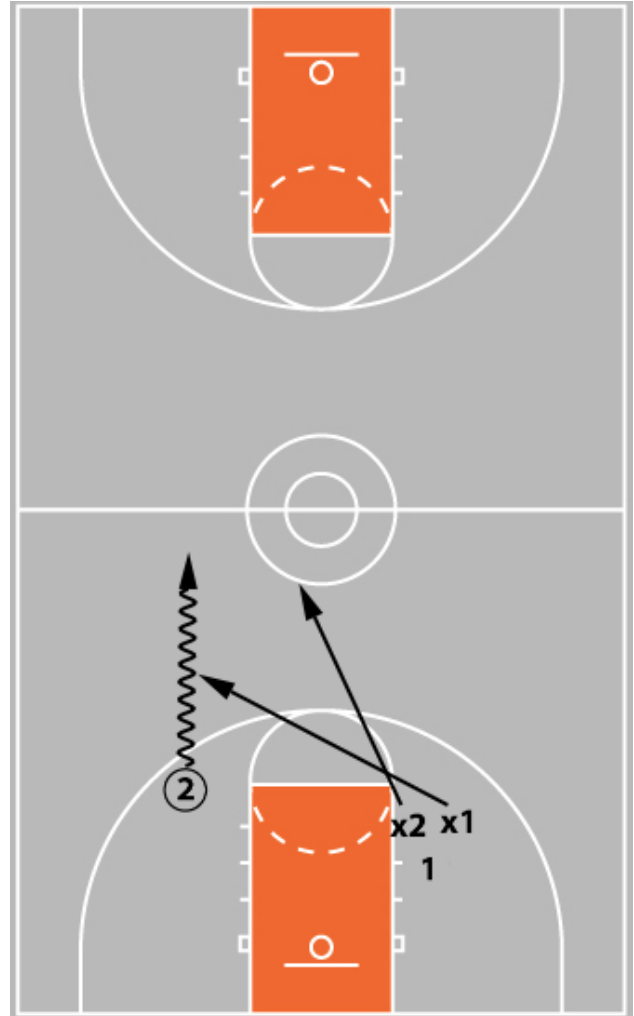
- For the press to be effective, you need to pressure the ball and get the ball handler to change directions
- Players can reach if the ball is crossed over in front of them
- The offensive and defensive player starts at the right corner
- They go to the end of the court — switch going back
- Goal of the drill is to turn the dribbler as many times as possible
- As the season progresses, increase the width that the offense can dribble to make it harder on the defense to get them turned

2v2 Middle

- Drill starts with 1 faking sideline and attacking the middle
- x1 must pressure the ball
- x2 must jump from the front with hands high anticipating stopping the ball or tipping a pass

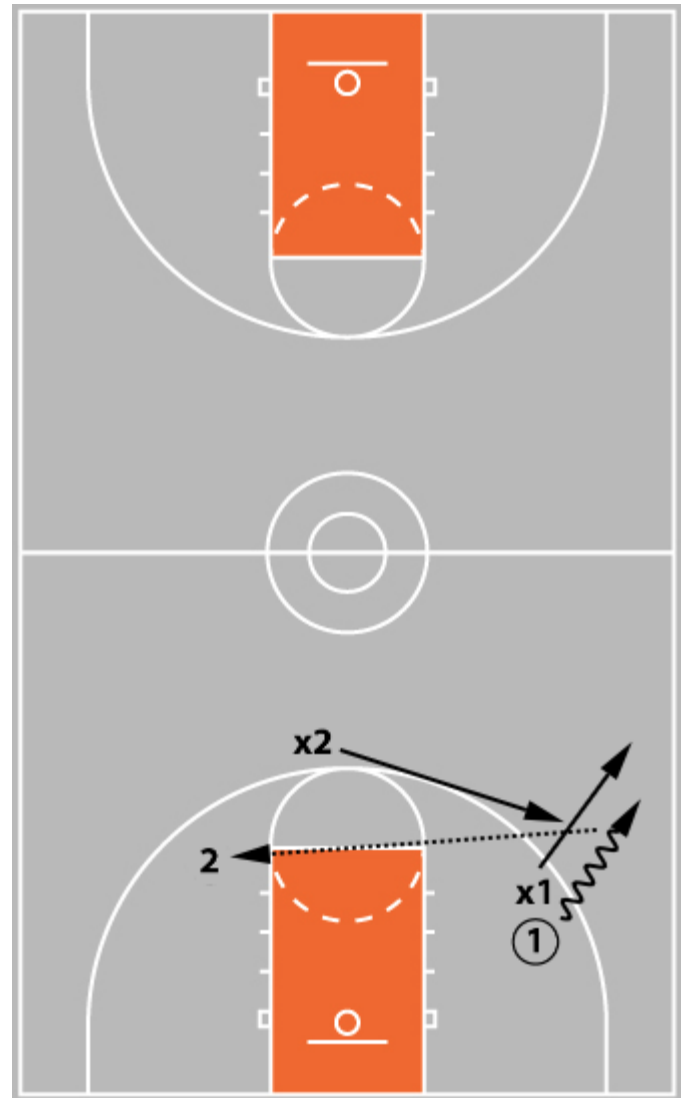


- As x2 stops 1, x1 will execute a run and jump switch taking a great angle to cut off 2
- 2 tries to dribble up the court before x1 and x2 can trap the ball
- The person making the switch cannot leave until they see the ball being picked up by the ball handler
- The player starting on the ball must drop toward mid-court and get depth so they can get the second player cut off as they receive the pass and attack



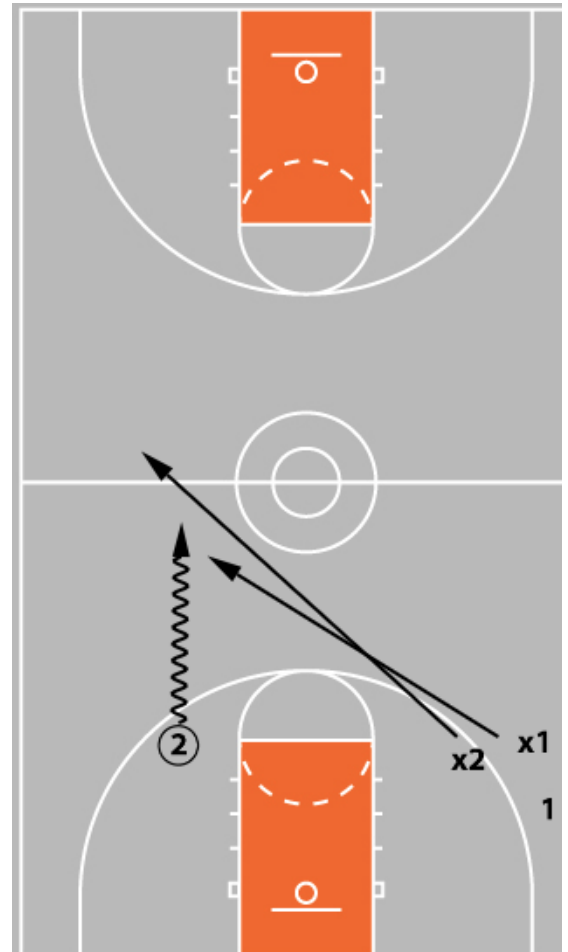
2v2 Sideline

- Drill starts with 1 attacking sideline
- x1 must sprint to cut off the ball on the sideline
- The player that cuts off the sideline is the one who peels out on the pass and matches up with the ball
- 1 gets trapped and then passes to 2



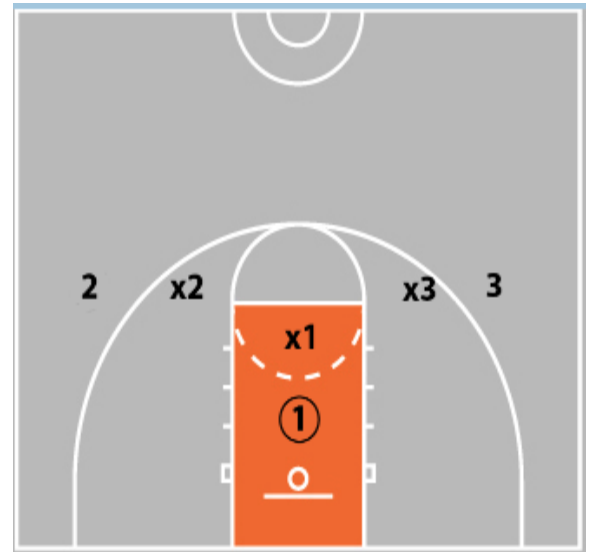
(2v2 Sideline Continued)

- 2 dribbles up the sideline
- x1 will execute a jump switch type technique to guard 2
- x2 will reposition to the middle gap
- x1 and x2 then try to trap the ball
- Drill is reset for x1 to pressure and force 2 up the sideline
- 1 must drop to be a release pass receiver for 2
- You may want to simplify the drill earlier in the season with just one trap on the sideline instead of continuous

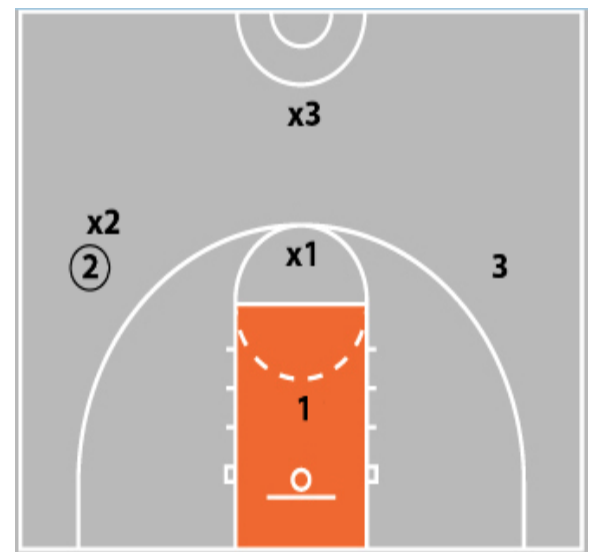


3v3 Positioning

- When the ball is in the middle, the players on either side should be in the gap and off of their man
- 1 has the ball
- x1 is guarding the ball
- x2 and x3 are in the gap between the ball and their man



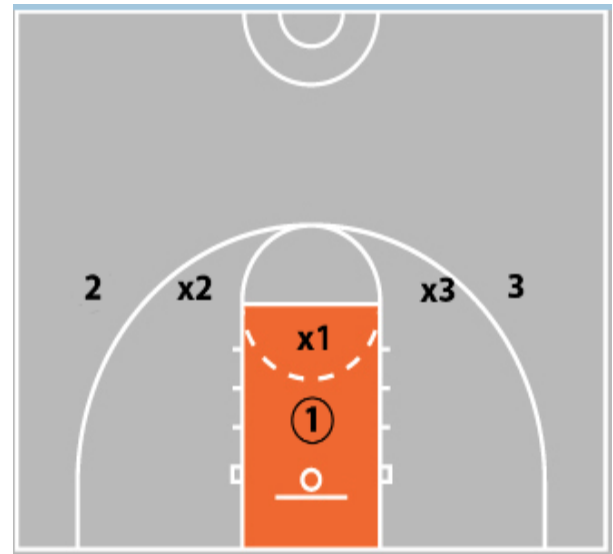
- When the ball is on the sideline, there should be a middle and a deep middle player
- In this example, 2 has the ball
- x2 is pressuring the ball
- x1 is middle
- x3 is deep middle



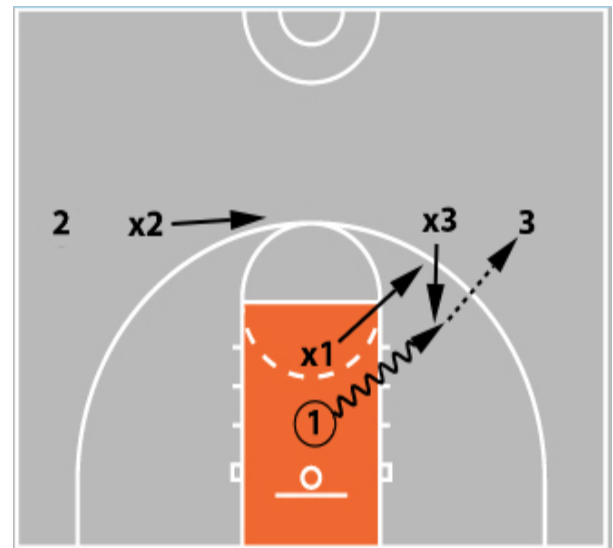
- The ball is advanced to half court and then the next group goes
- This drill works on defending teams that play three guards in the backcourt and forcing a pass overtop that could be stolen

3v3 With Dribble

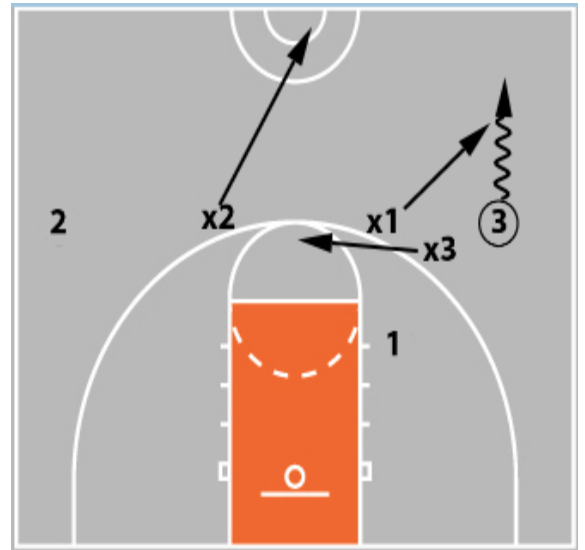
- You can counter teams that want to keep the ball in the middle by running someone at the ball handler to force them up the sideline
- Trap the second time it goes to the sideline in this drill



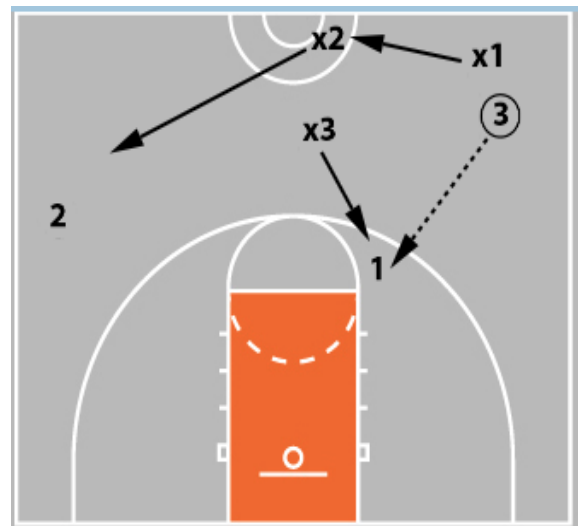
- 1 dribbles up the sideline
- x1 and x3 execute a run and jump switch on the ball
- 1 passes to 3
- x2 goes middle



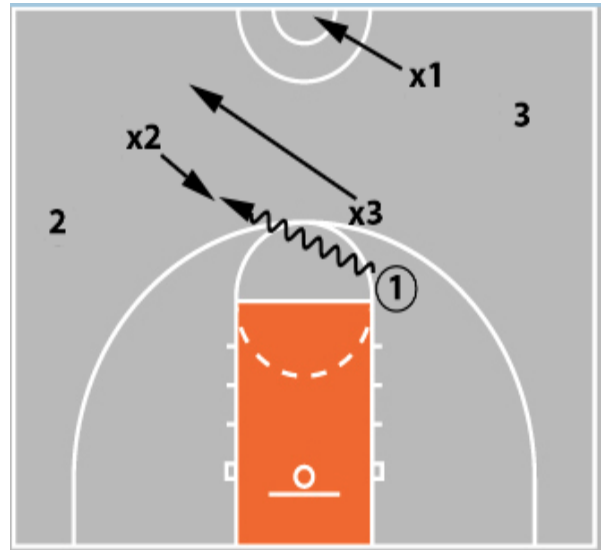
- 3 dribbles up the right sideline
- x1 must sprint ahead and then pressure 3
- x3 must sprint ahead after the ball is passed to 3
- x2 must get to the midline ahead of the basketball



- After x1 cuts off 3's sideline dribble, 3 passes it to 1



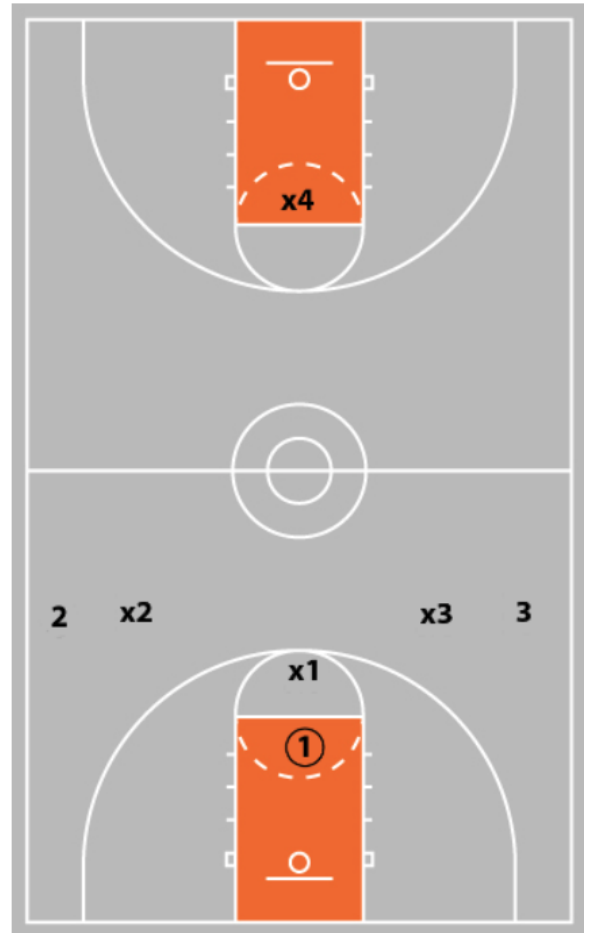
- 1 dribbles up the court
- x2 and x3 execute a jump switch on the ball
- x1 goes deep middle
- The 3rd offensive player who is near the basket would be covered up by the two other defensive players if this were 5v5



- The drill continues until the offense reaches half court

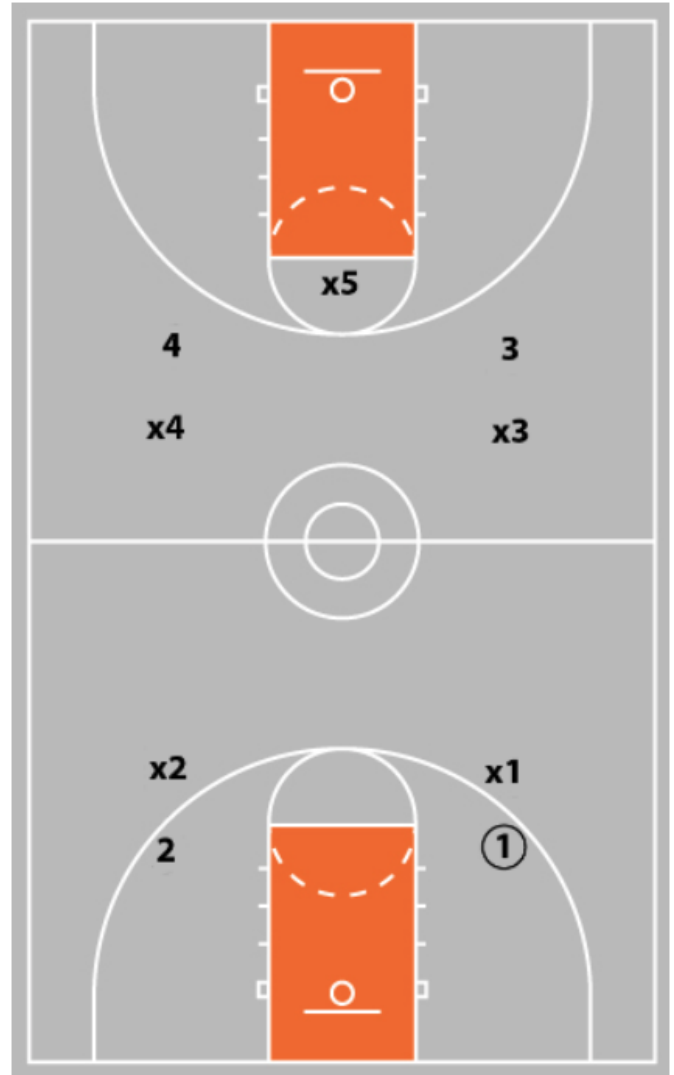
3v3 Live

- Defense has an extra player deep who is allowed to pick off any deep, over the top passes
- x4 is far back
- Offense tries to advance the ball up the court
- The drill stops when the offense successfully reaches half court or when there is a turnover forced
- This pressure system is so effective because it isn't predictable
- By limiting rules for the defense, it makes it harder for the offense to prepare
- Against a pressure defense, small bobbles or mistakes often result in turnovers
- You can have a manager run a clock or an assistant coach count to keep players aware of 10 second violations

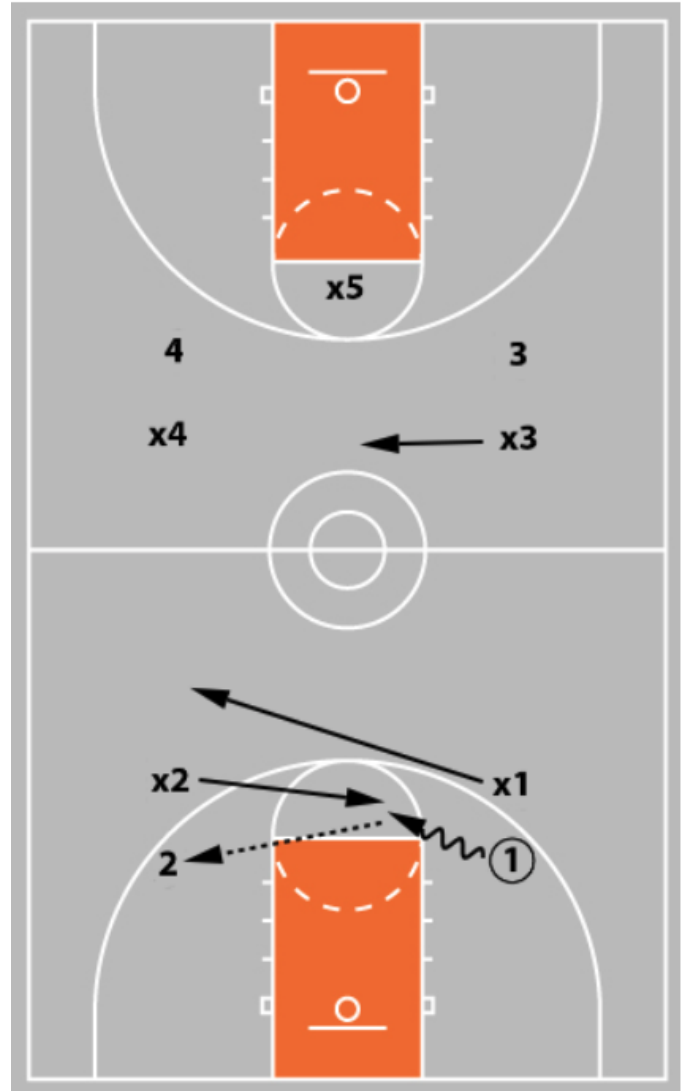


4v4 Box Middle

- 1 starts with the ball
- x5 (the extra defender) is just there to steal a deep pass in this drill and keep this more game-like
- If the ball is picked up in the back court, any midline defenders should be between their man and the ball
- The deep defender is reading eyes and ready to make a steal on any pass over top
- Goal is to make teams throw long, over the top passes that can be stolen
- This press is great for speeding teams up and getting them out of their comfort zone
- Even when the teams break the press, it is work and can be mentally fatiguing on players

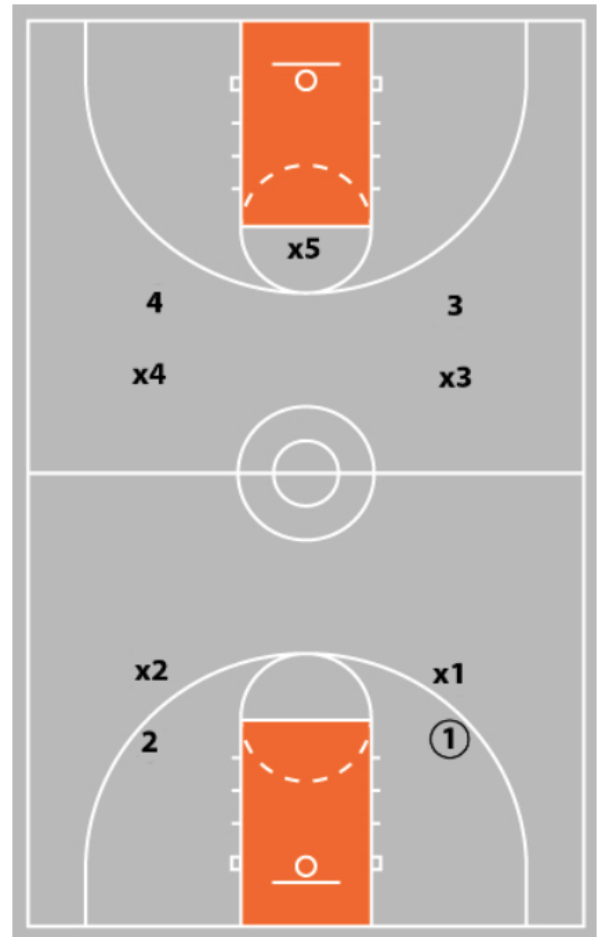


- The drill starts with a run and jump and then is played live with the defense looking for trap opportunities
- 1 dribbles middle
- x1 and x2 execute a jump switch in the middle
- x3 slides over to the middle
- 1 passes to 2
- The drill continues all the way down the court
- Stunting at the ball to keep the offense off balance can be an effective tactic

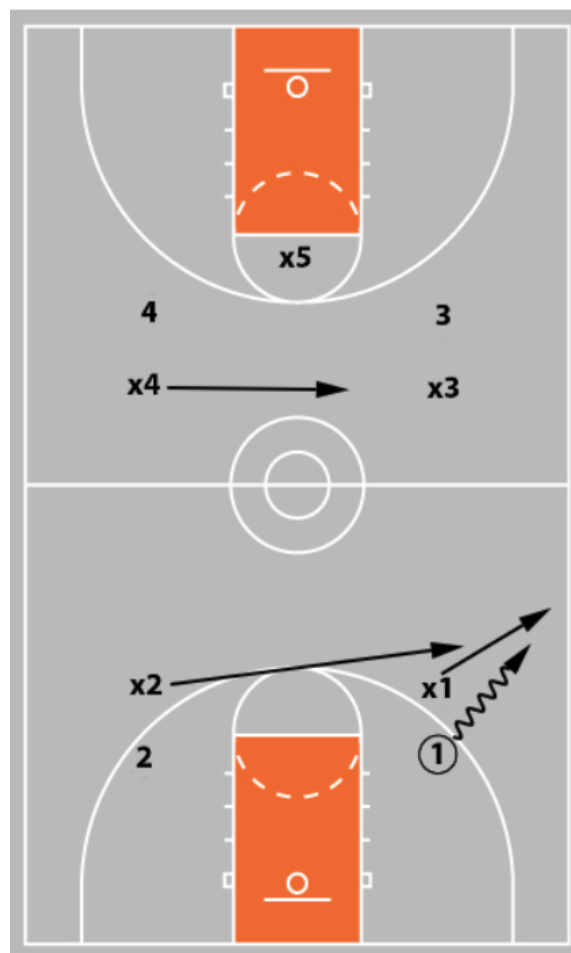


4v4 Box Sideline

- The drill is setup in the same way as 4v4 Box Middle but instead the offense goes to the sideline
- If getting beat off the dribble when pressing lessen the pressure up front
- Lessening the pressure forces them to make more decisions since the defense isn't dictating as much
- One goal of the pressure system is to speed teams up and create more offensive possessions

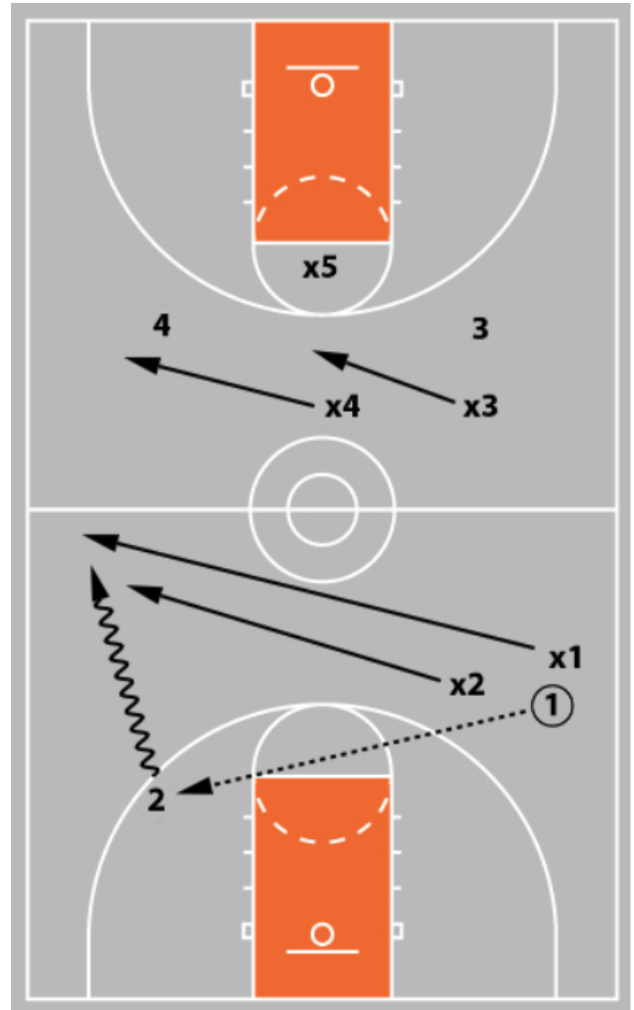


- 1 will fake dribble to the middle and take it up the sideline
- After the sideline trap, play is live
- x1 will cut off the dribbler on sideline and x2 will come trap
- x3 will take away the pass up the sideline
- x4 rotates to the middle and forces a possible long pass to 4



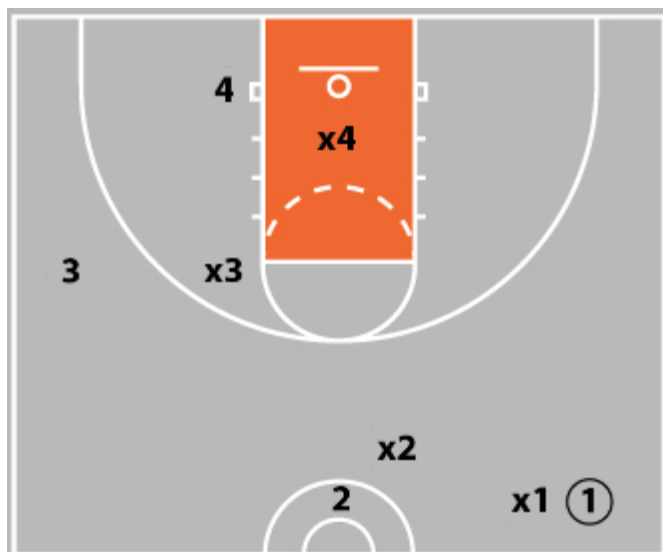
As 1 reverses the ball to 2:

- x1 peels off the trap and covers 2
- x2 rotates to get depth in the middle gap
- x3 and x4 rotate to stay between their man and the basketball

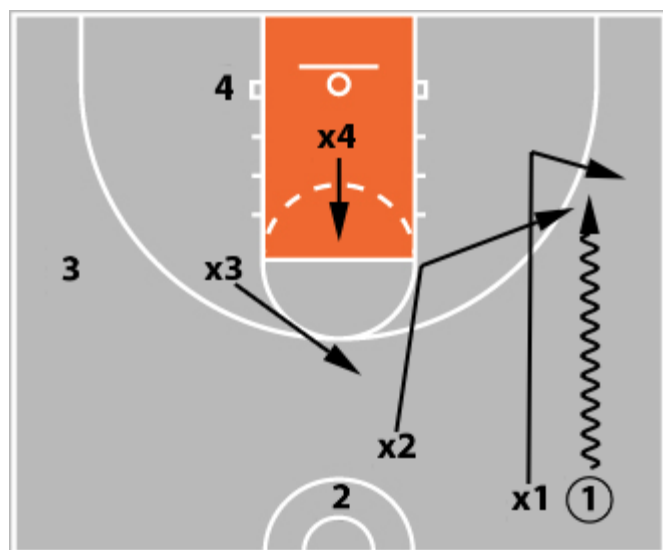


Deep Corner Trap

- This drill simulates missing the sideline trap — therefore continue to force to the baseline corner for another trapping opportunity
- Players trapping must sprint out as soon as the ball is thrown overtop
- Take away the layup first and then close to the ball on the perimeter
- 1 starts the drill with the ball

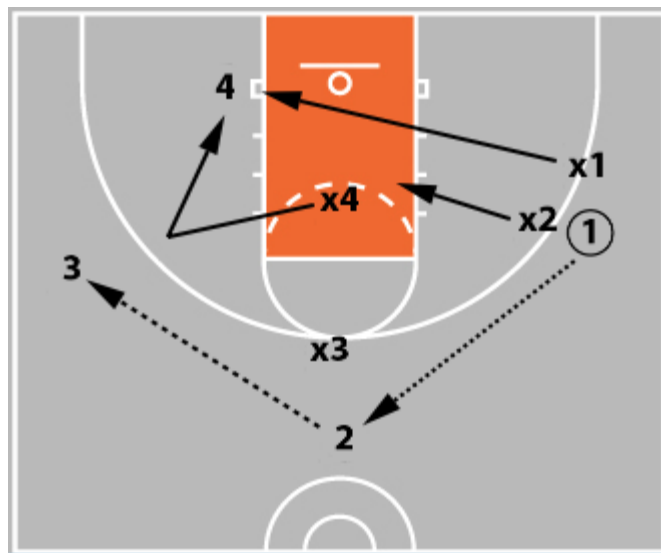


- 1 dribbles up the sideline
- x1 will create space & run to cut off defender
- x2 will trap from the side
- x3 will rotate to 2
- x4 may rotate out of post, stunt, or play between 3 & 4



Once the ball gets to 3:

- x1 should have sprinted to basket
 - x2 should be back in gap guarding 1
 - x3 should have taken 2 and gapped after pass
 - x4 must take 3 or stunt at 3 until x1 gets to 4
-
- If your traps aren't effective, it's probably because players aren't "burying the ball" when trapping
-
- "Bury the ball" by applying extreme pressure and defenders using their hands to block the vision of the passer



3v3 Inbound Positioning

Red = Allow the ball in easily

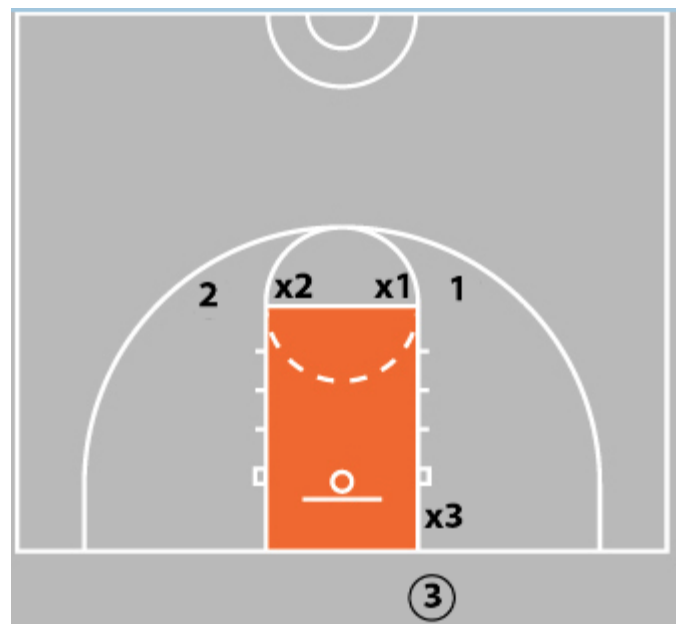
Yellow = Force the ball inbounded toward the baseline

Green = Hard denial of the inbounds pass

- The backboard can act as another defender to make the inbound pass difficult at certain inbound angles
- Many times the inbounder doesn't look deep when there is pressure up front
- The next level of defenders should be able to steal anything that is thrown in overtop of the 3 point line
- Guards up front should be tight to their guys and switch any screening action
- One option is to get the ball out of the hands of the best ball handler immediately

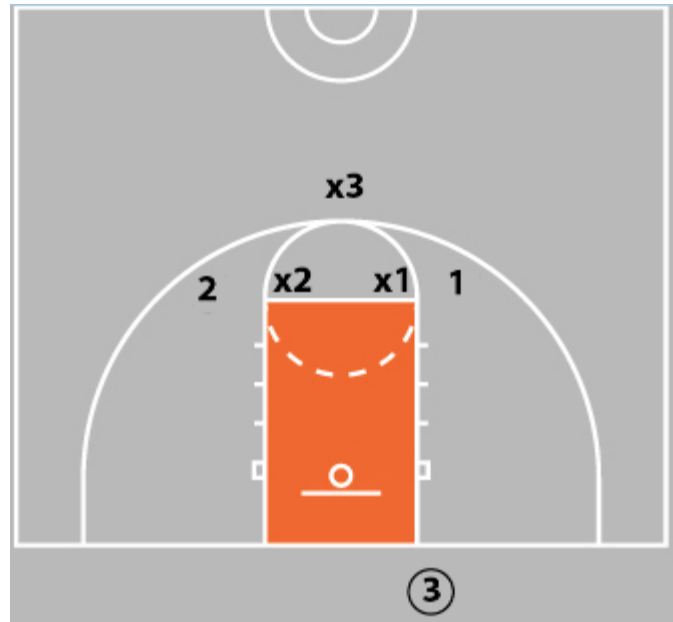
Red Press

- Man on the ball
- Limited trapping
- Trying to speed game
- Trying to wear opponent out
- Not taking chances in full court
- Force guards to come toward the ball to catch it and then simply match up and guard full court

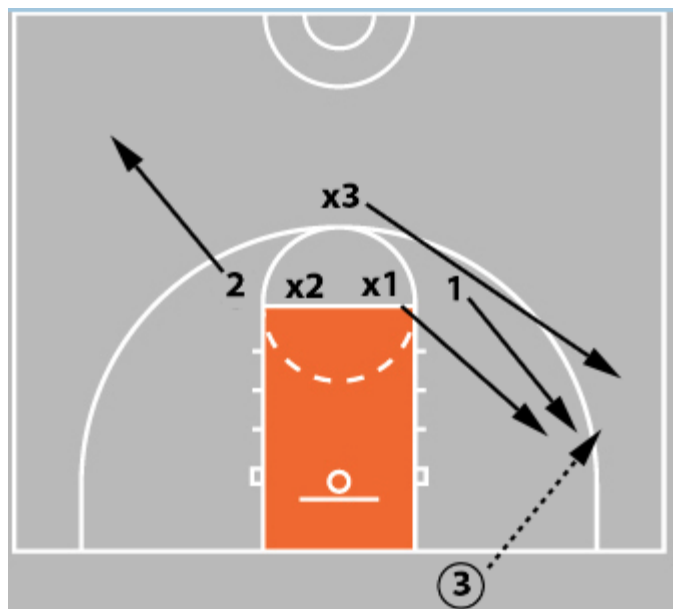


Yellow Press

- Force the ball to be caught in the baseline ballside corner
- Typically man guarding inbounds stays off the ball
- x1 & x2 play side by side (or behind offense)

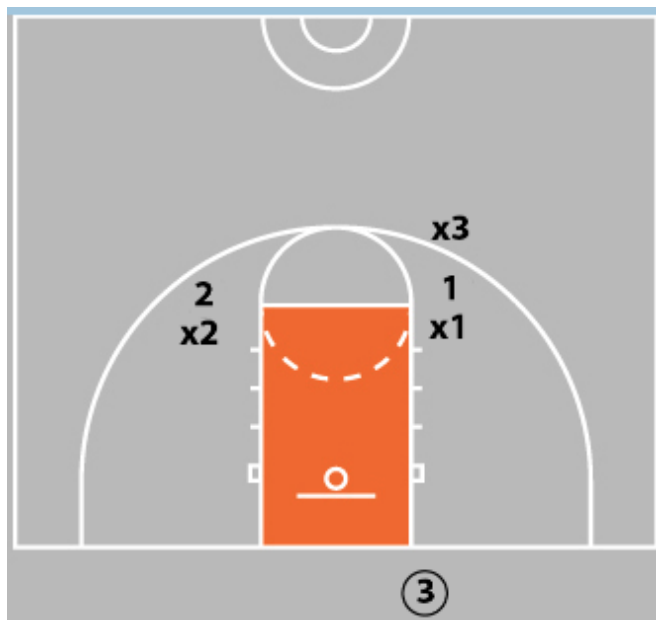


- x3 will pressure the inbound pass & look to trap
- This press is great against teams that try to clear out
- 3 passes to 1
- x1 and x3 trap the ball
- If 3 clears out, x3 can go with 3 for a count or two, then come back to trap 1 (in this case, x2 can rotate to 3)
- x2 can either deny the pass to 2 or rotate to 3

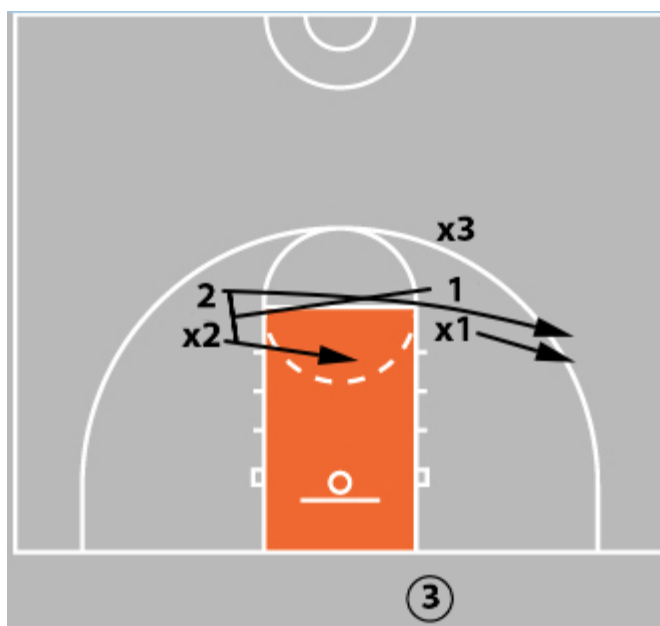


Green Press

- Face guard
- Make sure best player doesn't catch
- Great for FT and dead ball situations



- x1 & x2 face guard while x3 is helping off the ball to deny 1 the inbound pass
- x1 & x2 will switch any screen
- x3 may anticipate the inbound pass & look to trap
- x1 & x2 must be aware of diagonal cut from opposite guard once ball is inbounded



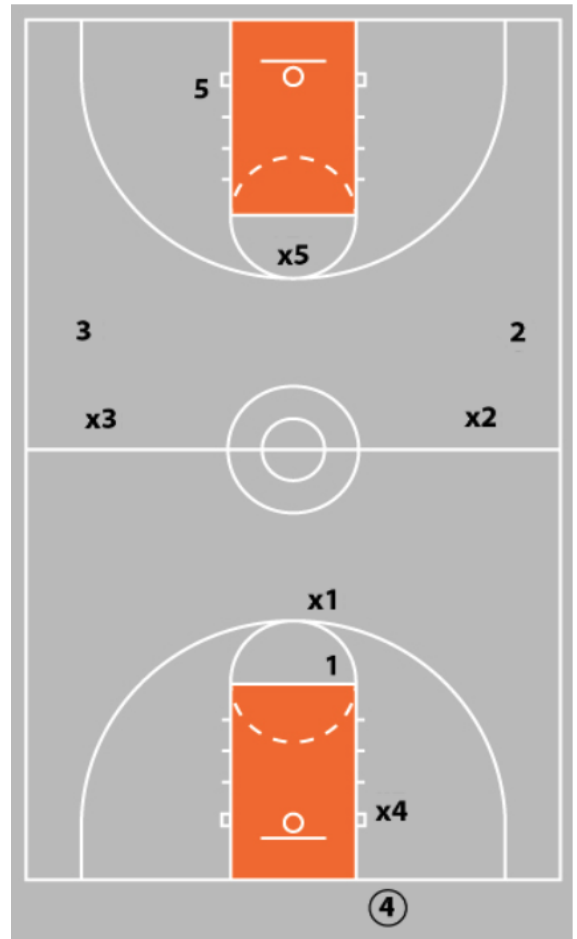
Chapter Six: Press Breakdown Drills vs Clear Outs

Clear Out

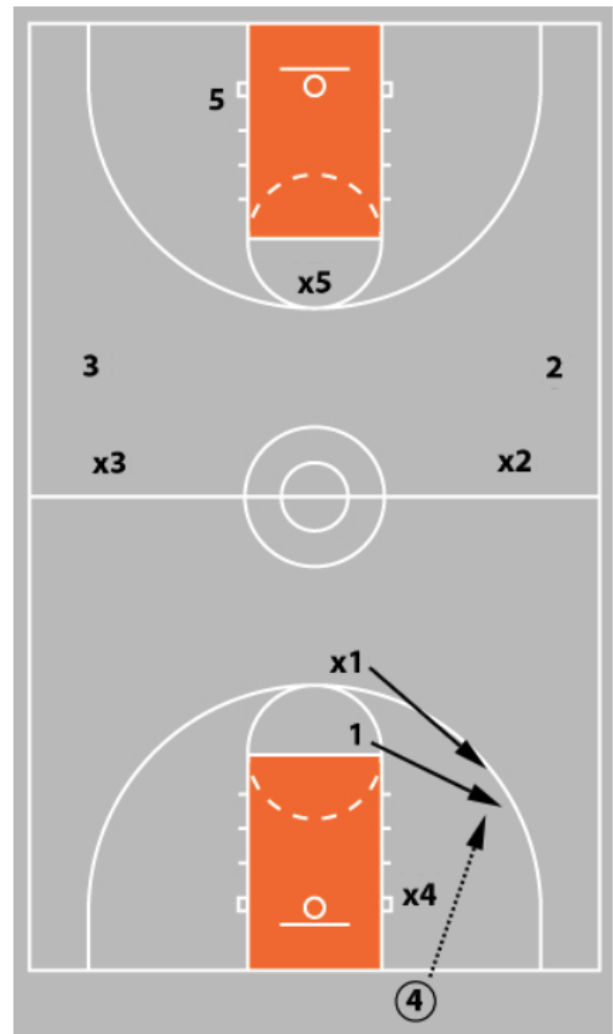
- Go with the inbounder as they clear out until you know a teammate can cover them
- Guard must have good pressure on the ball to limit their ability to survey the court
- If they try to clear out, it is because they have a ball handler that they think is good enough to break the press — so get it out of their hands
- Even if you give up some good shots with the pressure, the goal is to speed up the pace of the game

Clear Out Option #1

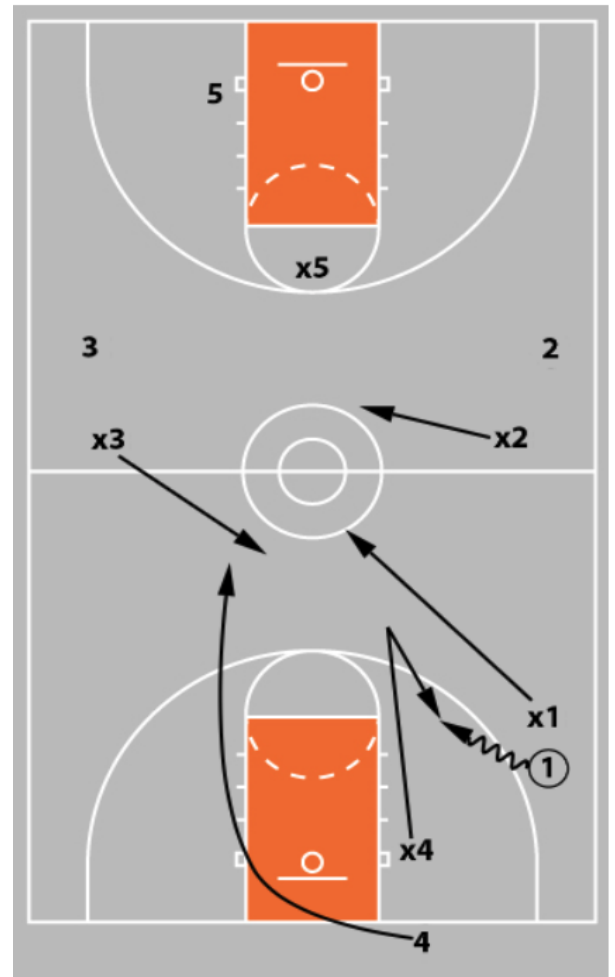
- 4 will throw inbound and attempt to clear out
- x1 will defend 1
- x2, x3, and x5 are behind half court anticipating any long pass



- Ball is inbounded to 1
- The drill starts as soon as 1 catches the ball



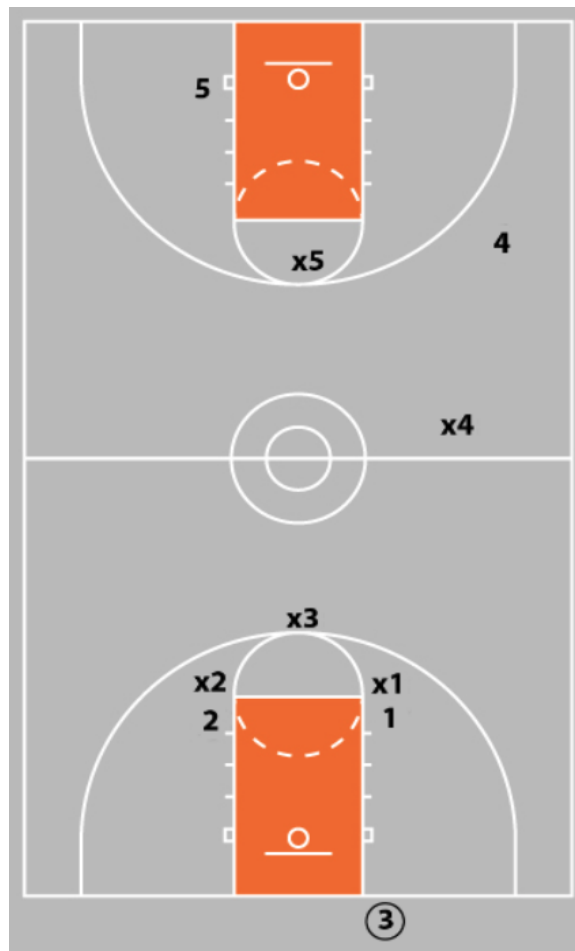
- x1 will guard 1
- x4 will come back to trap
- x3 will rotate to 4
- x5 will rotate to 3
- x2 will play both 2 & 5
- You may give up layups occasionally — just don't make the same rotation the next time and allow another layup
- You want your kids to take chances, so don't call it a mistake if they miss



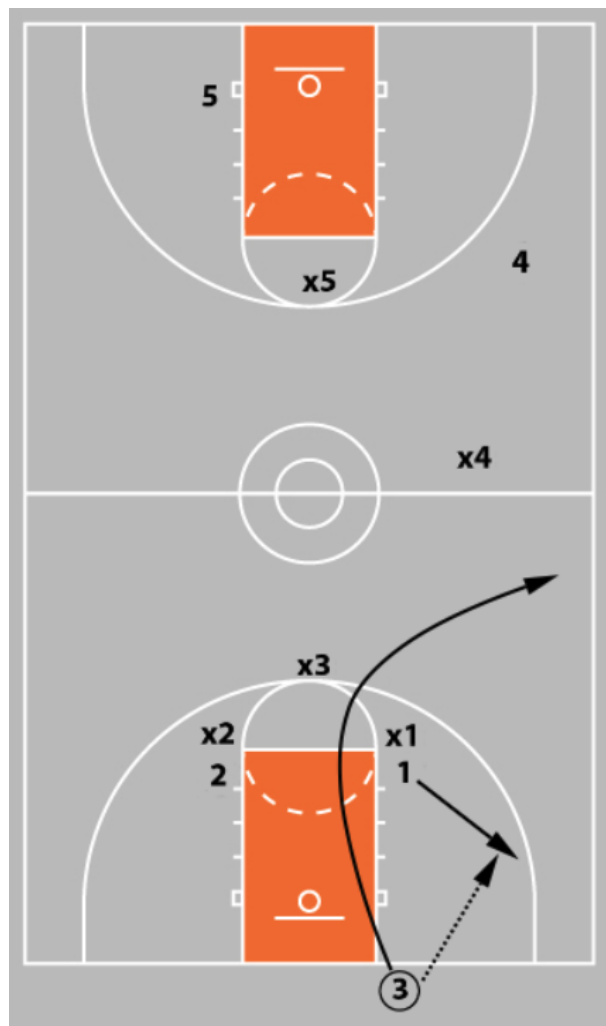
Clear Out Variations

Diagonal Cut

- Must take away the diagonal cut of the inbounder
- Some teams try to clear things out for their three ball handlers and put two players in deep corners
- Try to keep the ball on the side that has the extra defender down the sideline
- The deep defender is going to split the two offensive players but shade toward ball side
- With this inbound situation, the guard must play on the side of the ball handler so they can't reverse the ball to the middle
- Players get steals by running in front of the offensive player and NOT to the defensive player

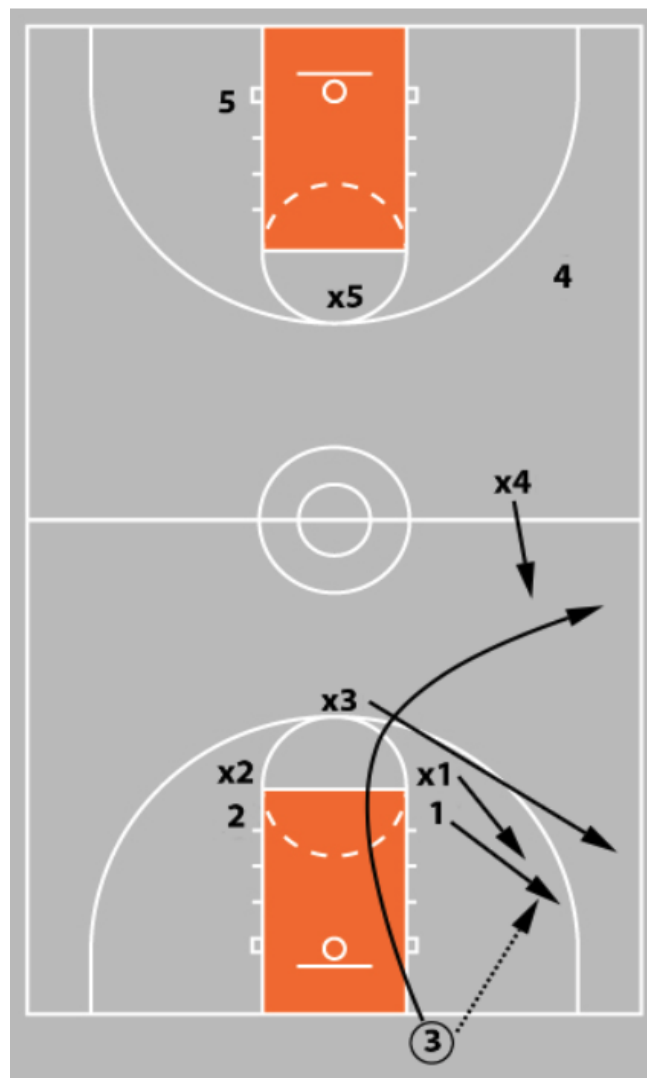


- 3 passes to 1 then makes a diagonal cut to the right sideline
- x1 pressures the ball



Diagonal Cut with Quick Trap

- x1 and x3 trap as soon as 1 receives the inbounds pass
- x2 stays on 2
- x4 cheats up to intercept the pass to 3
- At times teams may dribble through pressure, but if players hustle back in transition you should be able to limit easy buckets

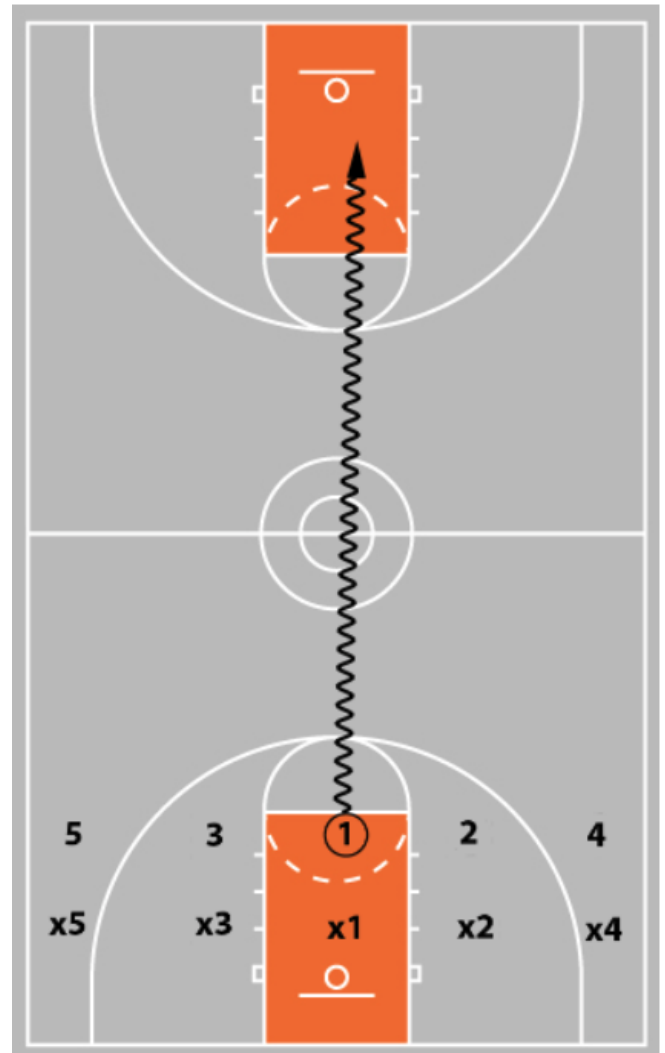


5v5 Live Diagonal

- The last player in the press must take away layup first and only leave the basket when teammates are coming over to cover the hoop
- 1 starts with the ball and will dribble all the way to the basket for a layup

As the layup is made:

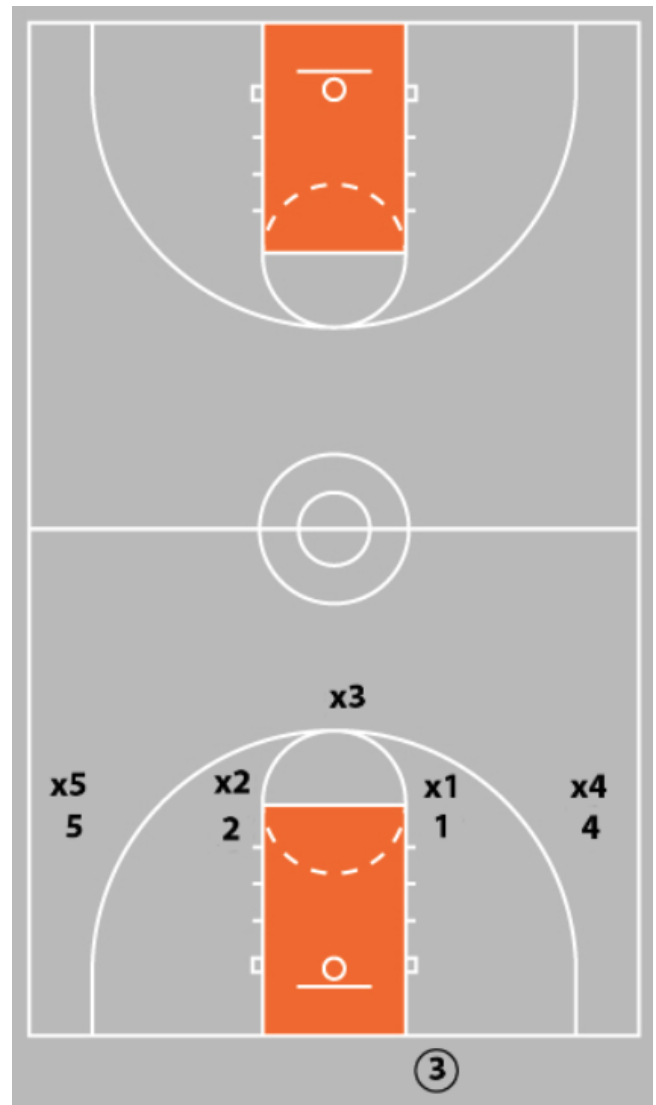
- x1, x2, x3, x4, and x5 become the offense
- 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 become the defense
- Work on run & jump with 4 cutting or stepping in
- Coach will have the offense inbound passer alternate between cutting through and stepping in as a release!
- Communication between x2 and x4 is very important



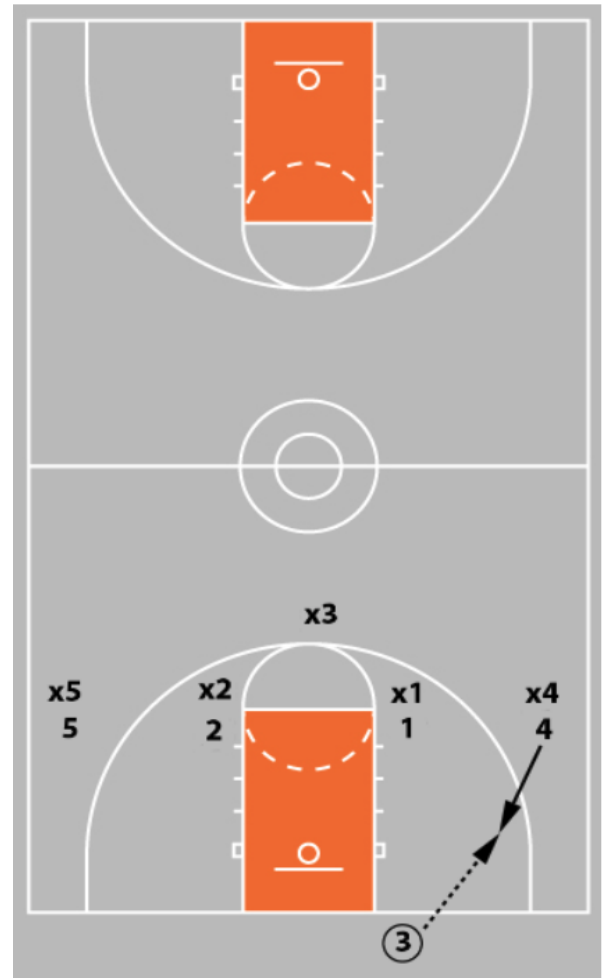
Chapter Seven: Press Breakdown Drills vs 1-4 Press Break with Diagonals

1-4 Diagonals

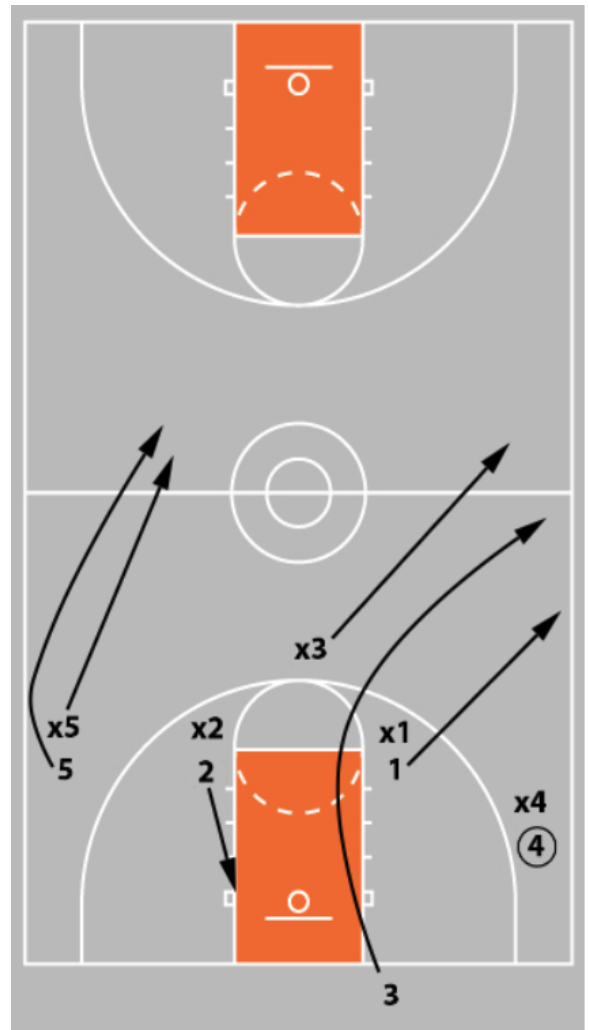
- Drill simulates actions from teams that start with a 1-4 press break
- If one side of the court is cleared out, guard needs to force the ball up the sideline where there is help
- 3 inbounds the ball
- x3 covers the middle
- Try to deny all diagonal passes and player guarding ball can give a slight cushion until the first diagonal cut is made



- 3 passes to 4
- Typically, the ball will be inbounded to the player closest to the corner (4 in this case)
- Force the ball to the sideline where there is help
- Even when the offense breaks the press, there are several close tips and steals by the defense which puts pressure on the offense to make perfect passess



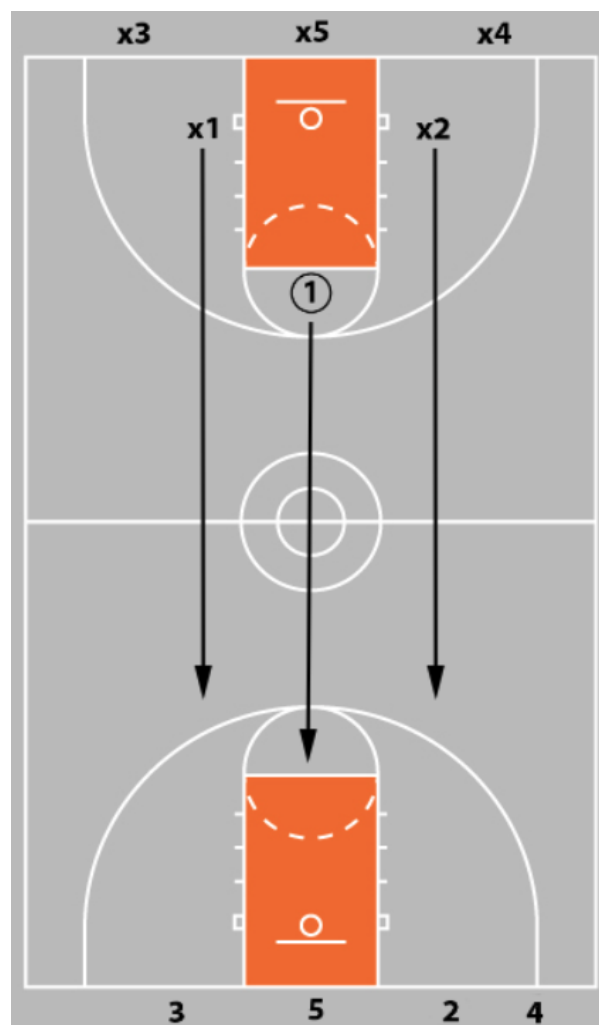
- 1, 3, and 5 all make diagonal cuts
- x1, x3, and x3 all follow their man
- 2 acts as a safety valve
- x2 and x4 look to trap



Chapter Eight: Disadvantage Drill

Build Up

- This drill can be broken down into smaller drills instead of all the disadvantage situations being done consecutively
- The drill starts out 2v1, 3v2, 4v3, 5v4, and then 5v5
- After it is 2v1, 1, 2, and 3 will be on offense next possession while x1 and x2 will be on defense
- x3 and x4 become offense going back down the court again
- It keeps going until it becomes 5v5
- The first player starts the drill by shooting a free-throw
- Ball must be inbounded if the offense scores (including if the first player makes the free-throw)
- You can continue to play 5v5 for a set number of possessions or a set amount of time
- This drill is great for offenses to work on scoring with an advantage and defenses learning to stop an advantage



Chapter Nine: How to Press a Miss & Breakdown Drill

Pressing a Miss

- First row should have two of your best on ball defenders
- Player going deep to the third row is not allowed to go after offensive rebounds, they must sprint back when a shot is taken
- Even though it looks like a zone setup, players are talking and matching up as the play unfolds

Players Must Know:

On a made shot

- Who they are guarding
- Which row they are in

Front Row

- One on ball; one in the middle

Second Row

- Cut off sideline and one in the deep middle

Deep Player

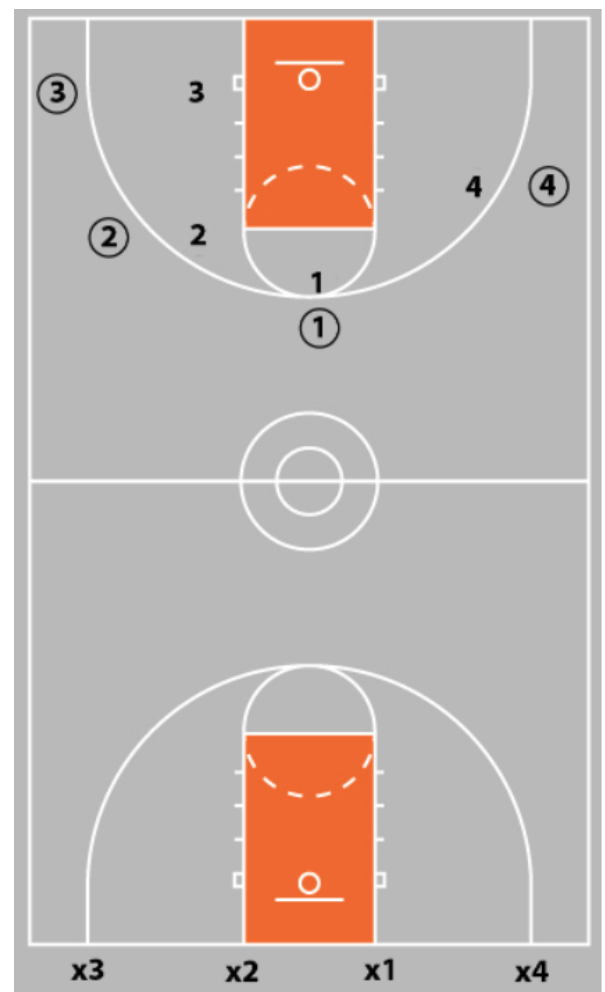
- Try to stay above three-point line to steal any pass over the top

Make or Miss

- If you are pressing on makes and misses, players must know who they are guarding as well as which row they are in on a miss
- Great drill to force players to communicate with each other
- This drill is great for getting 12-15 players involved and also challenging for the defense to quickly get the press set up

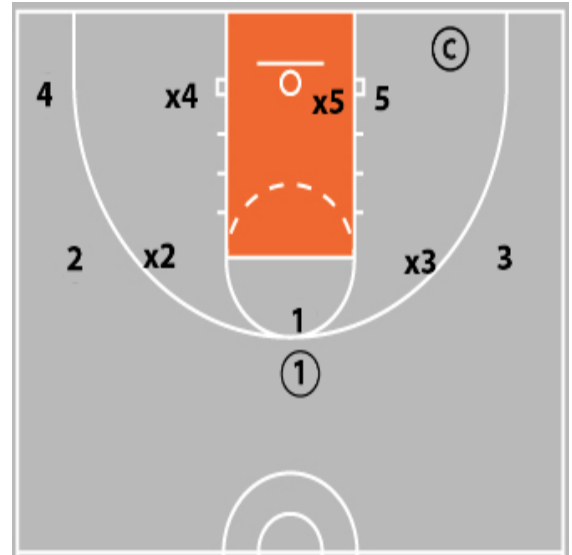
In this drill:

- 1-4 who are circled start on offense
- 1-4 start on defense
- x1, x2, x3, and x4 will be on defense as soon as the offensive team going back crosses half court
- If the defense gets the rebound, offense becomes defense and presses them immediately
- Once offense reaches half-court, the new defense is on and the previous defense stays on their side of the court
- Teams that want to walk the ball up the court are unable to do this because it would allow your press to be more effective
- The team waiting to play defense can only pick off the pass if it is a deep pass



Pressing a Miss

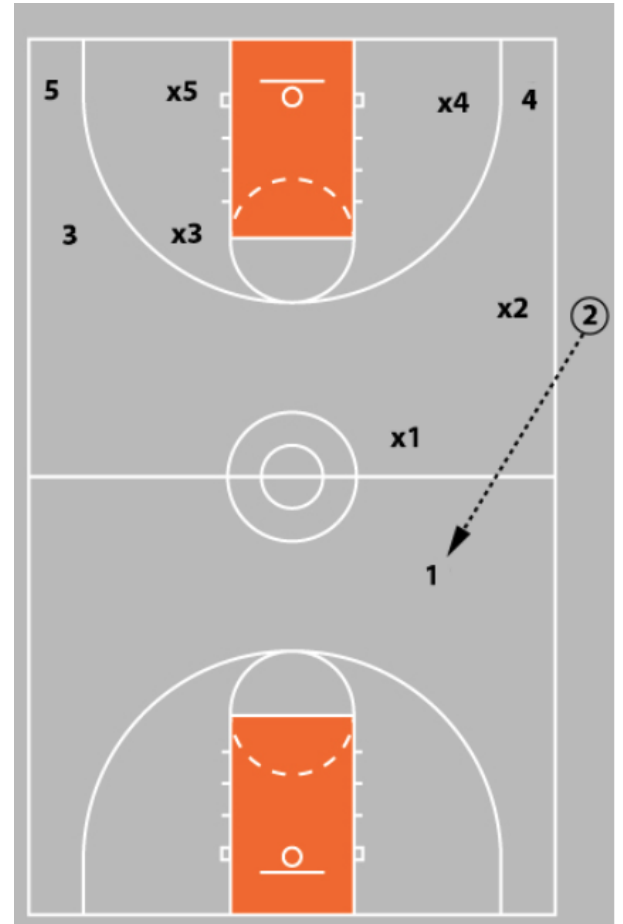
- On the whistle, the ball is dropped or passed to the coach and the press must be set up immediately
- Throwing it to a coach simply allows for the drill to begin efficiently as players begin to learn how to press a miss
- In this example, x1, x2, x3, x4, and x5 is the offense going back
- Progress the drill to an actual shot and rebound to continue to make it more game like
- The pressure is often very effective because most teams only see this type of pressure a couple of times a year and aren't prepared
- Goal from this pressure system is to increase possessions per game from an average of 54 PPG to 75+ PPG



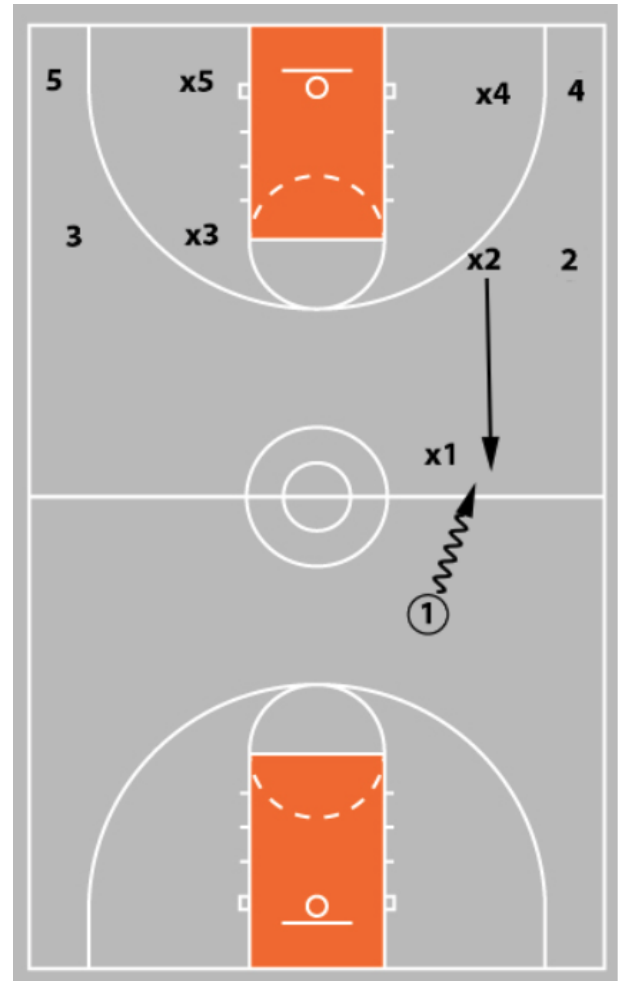
Chapter Ten: How to Trap Sideline Out of Bounds (SLOB)

Trap SLOB

- Throwing it to a coach simply allows for the drill to begin efficiently as players begin to learn how to press a miss
- Allow the ball to be entered into the backcourt (as shown in this diagram)
- 2 starts the drill by inbounding it to 1



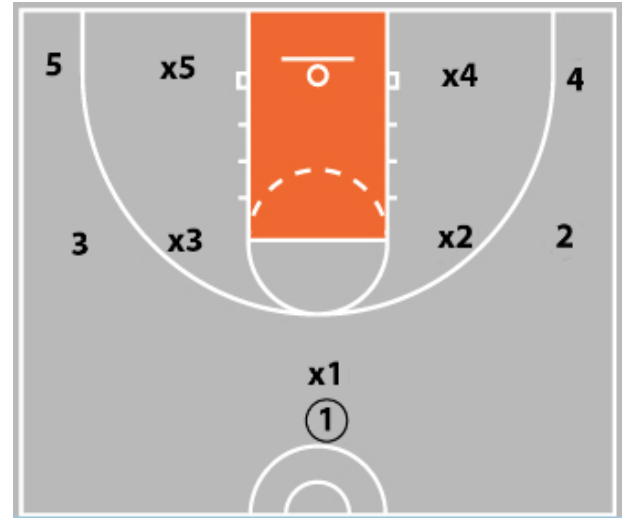
- After a “1 count”, the two nearest players sprint to trap the ball (x1 and x2)
- Deny the pass to anyone who comes towards the ball
- Ideally, x1 and x2 would want to trap the ball as soon as 1 crosses half court
- Traps prevent other teams from running their offense



Chapter Eleven: Trapping in Half Court Setting

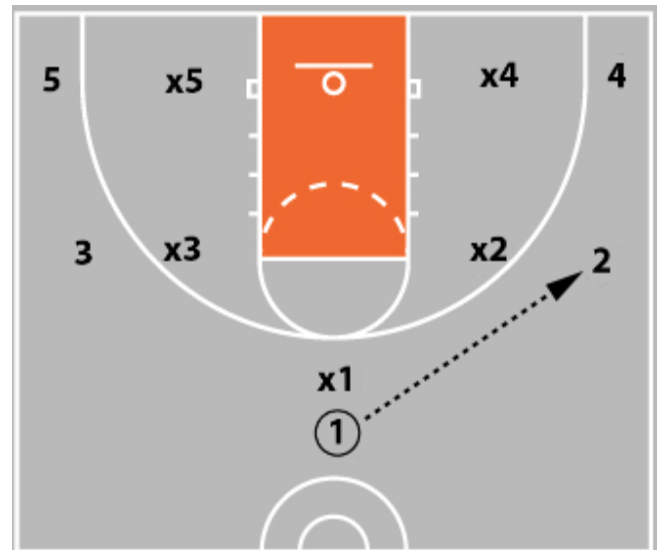
Half Court Trap

- Run & Jump can be done in the half court setting as well
- Anytime someone turns their head and leaves the play, the ball should get trapped
- Even if you don't get a steal, the opponent is often taken completely out of their offense
- In practice, allow your team to transition to offense and finish off of a turnover

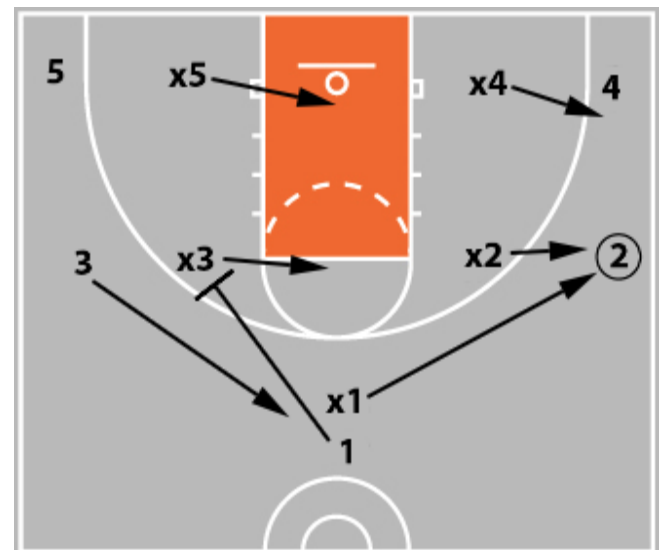


Pass And Screen Away

- 1 starts the drill by passing to 2

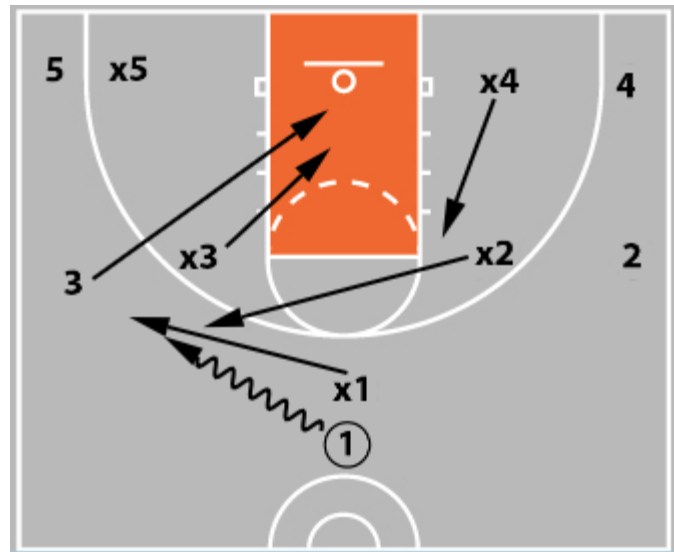


- 1 sets a screen for 3
- x1 and x2 trap the ball
- x3 and x5 slide over to the middle
- x4 denies the pass to 4 in the corner



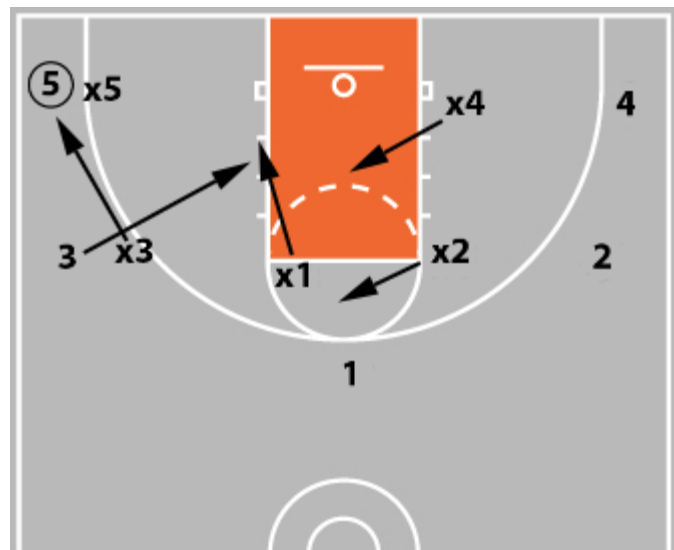
Trapping off a backdoor cut

- 1 dribbles left
- 3 back cuts
- x3 follows 3
- x1 and x2 come over to trap 1
- x5 denies the pass to 5 in the corner
- x4 bridges the gap between 2 and 4
- If you can't get a steal, make sure the basket is protected



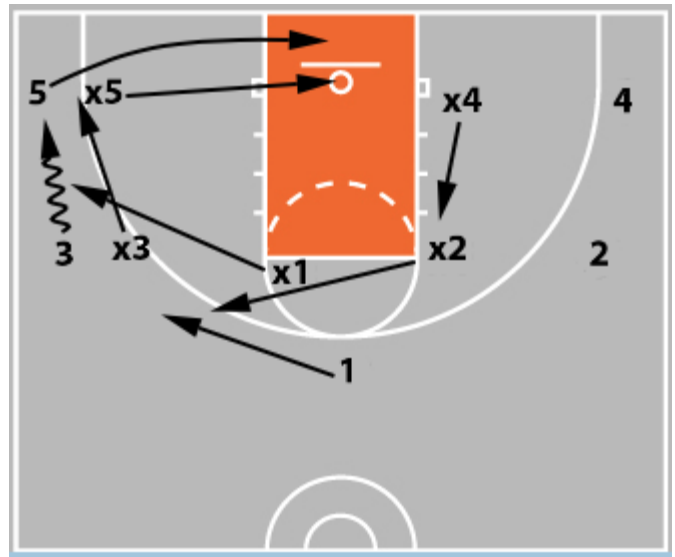
Trapping when the ball is in the corner

- 5 has the ball in the left corner
- x3 and x5 trap the ball
- If 3 cuts, x1 must slide down to deny that pass
- x2 and x4 slide to the middle to gap up on 1, 2, and 4

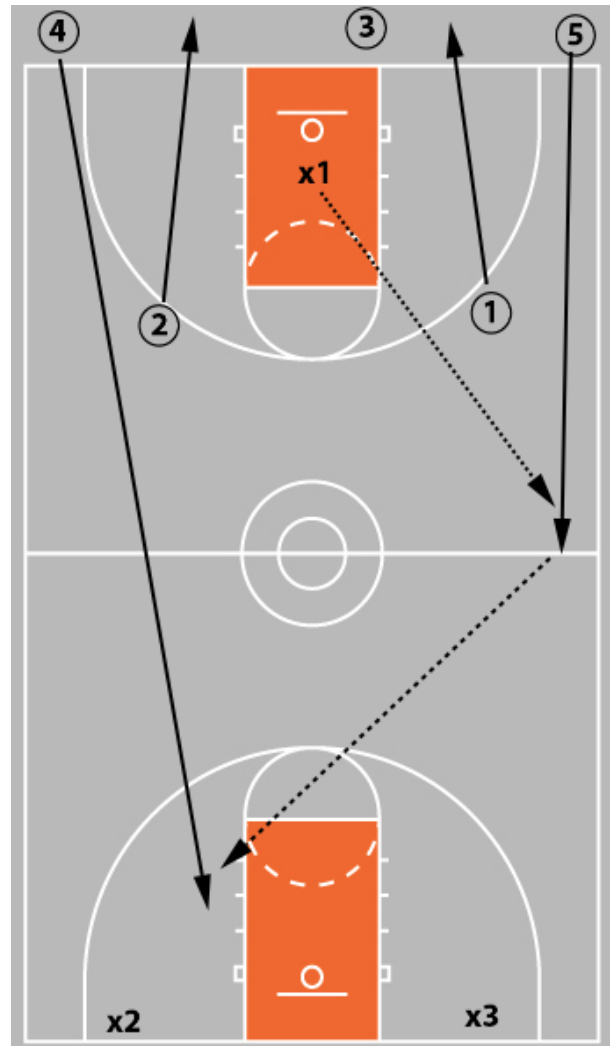


When player in left corner back cuts

- 3 dribbles to the left corner
- 5 backdoor cuts to the basket
- x1 and x3 come over to trap
- x2 denies the pass to 1
- x4 bridges the gap between 2 and 4
- You can choose which players you would trap based on your scouting report

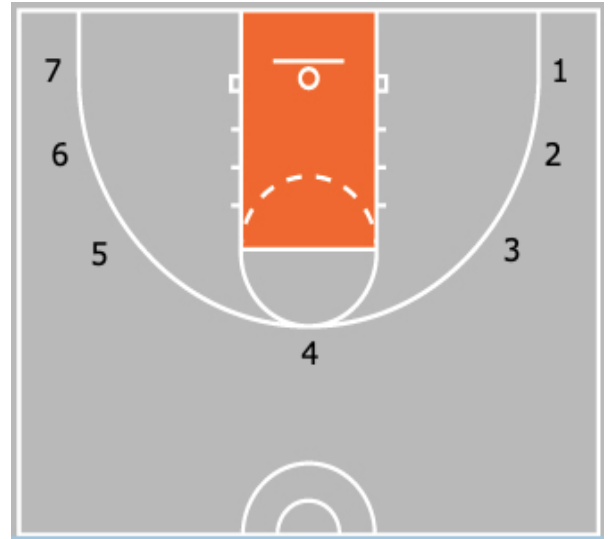


- x1 rebounds for 3 and goes the other way with 4 and 5
- x2 and x3 will be on the opposite side to pass it to x1 and 5
- 4 gets a layup
- x1 and 5 get open three-pointers
- The drill continues until two minutes are up



14 in 90

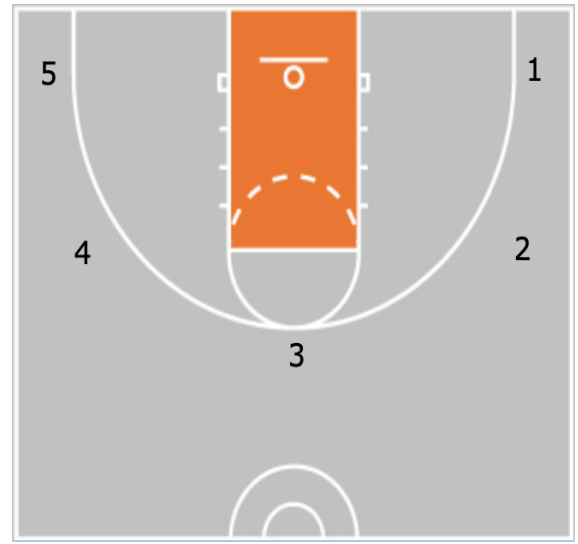
- Players must make two in a row to move to the next spot
- Players should start at the right corner where it says "1"
- If players get through all 7 spots, they shoot from the top of the key and add any makes to their total
- The diagram shows where the seven spots are located throughout the court



- Use all the baskets you have available in the gym
- You can have two groups start at each basket to avoid kids sitting, just start them from opposite sides of the baseline

20 Shooting

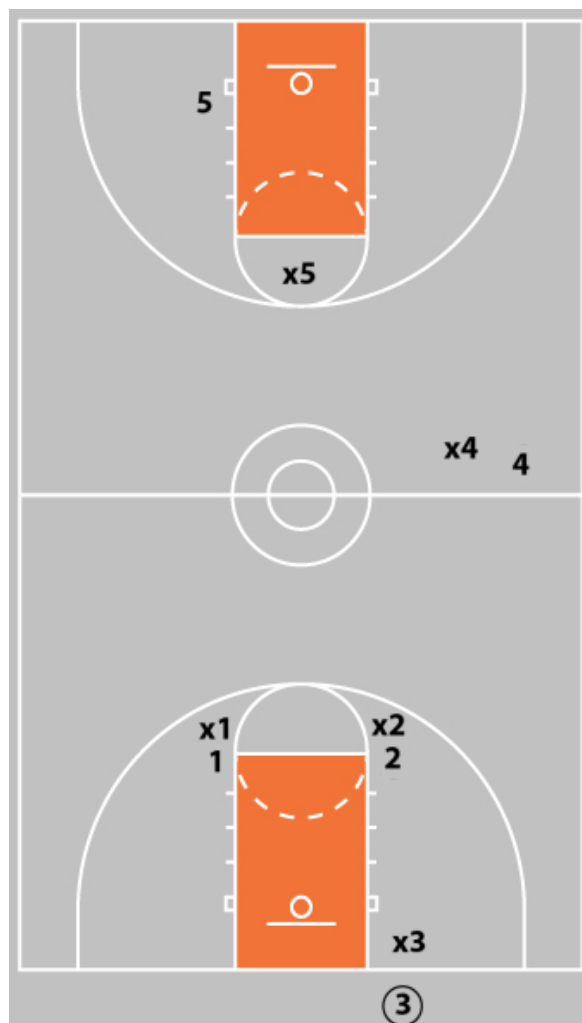
- Must make 3 in a row from each of the 5 spots and then 1 in a row from each of the 5 spots on the way back — all in 2 minutes
- This is a VERY challenging shooting drill
- Try to get through all 5 spots
- Start at the right corner (1) and finish at the left corner (5)



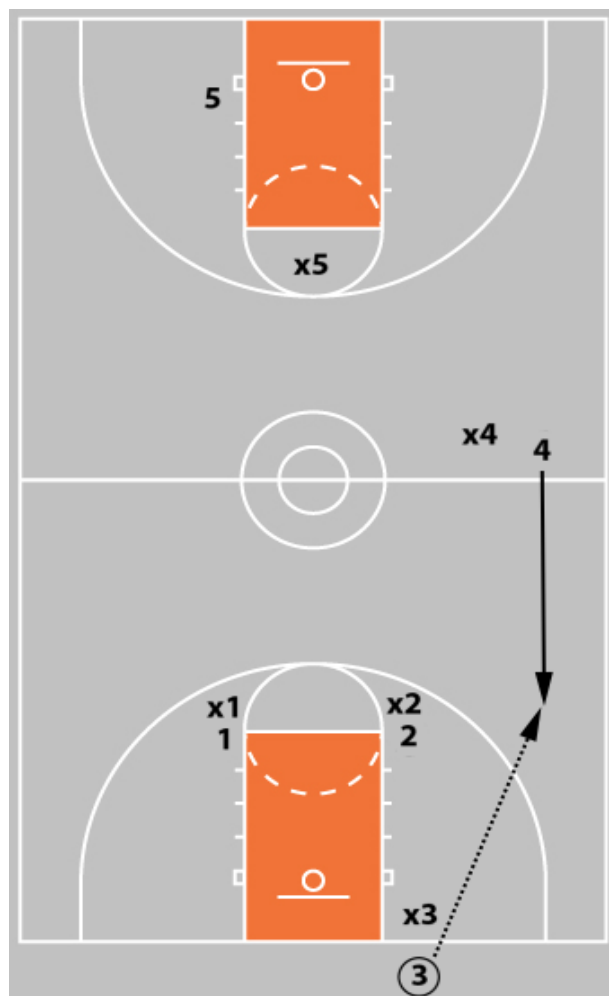
Chapter Thirteen: How to Cover Deep Inbounds Passes

Yellow

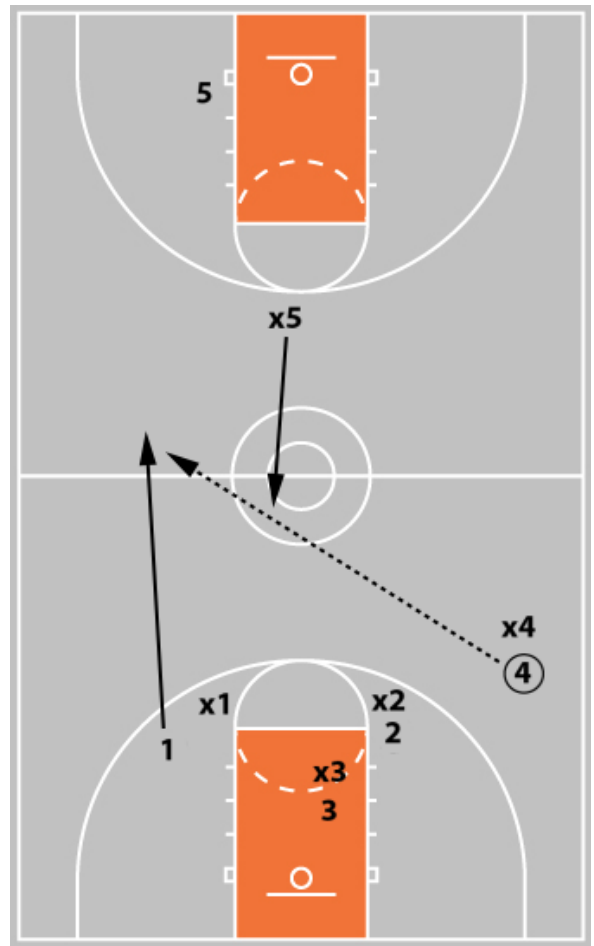
- Person at the back of the press should be good at anticipating passes as well as taking charges
- For player in the front row, if their man is one pass away and they are a reversal man, they must cut off the middle
- Force teams to beat you with a deep pass at least once, otherwise continue to cheat up and overplay everything
- Under this scenario, Yellow may initially be set up like the following diagram
- 1 and 2 represent the two best ball handlers on the other team
- 3 is the inbounder



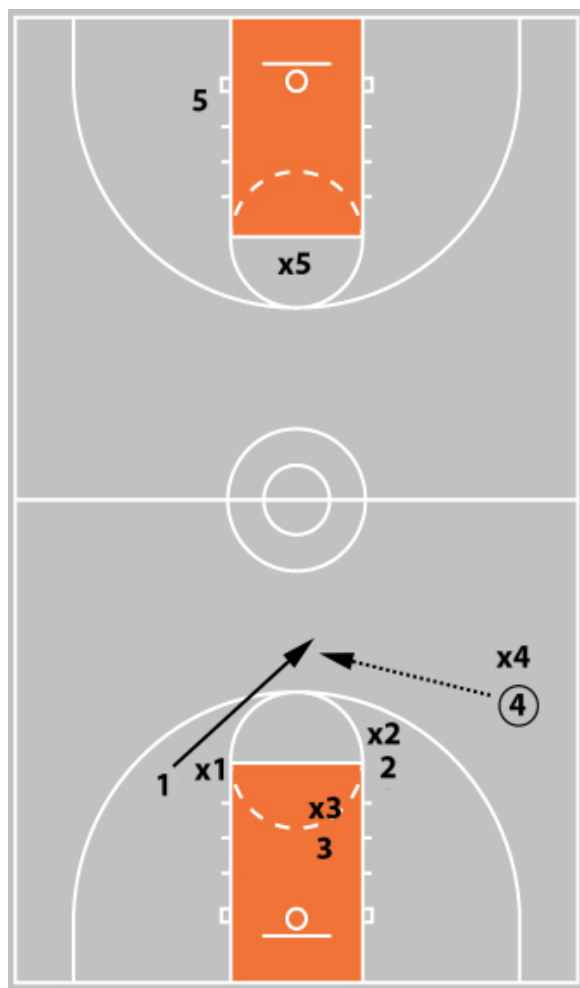
- If x4 allows it, 3 passes to 4 on the right sideline
- This should NOT happen if the press is run correctly but it will happen from time to time
- Well coached teams will break the press occasionally — you need to be able to adjust when they do



- Ideally, x5 can anticipate the long cross-court pass 4 makes to 1
- x5 must be able to determine if 4 is throwing it long to 1 or 5



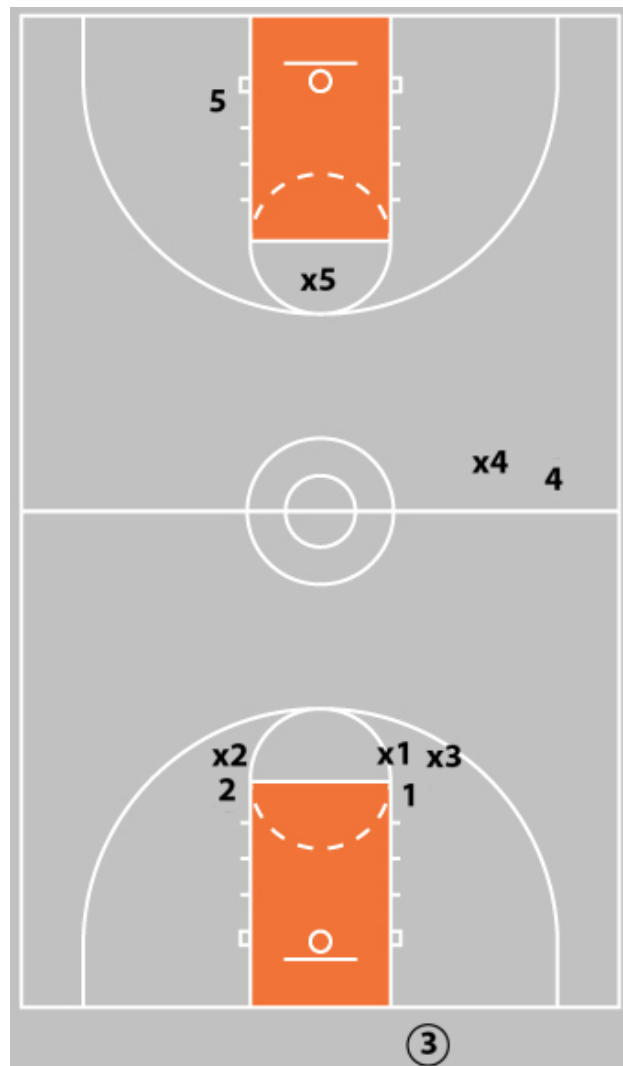
- While that pass is very risky, smarter teams will have 1 cut middle to create pressure on the press
- When this happens, x1, x2, x3, and x4 can all try to tip the ball from behind as 1 is dribbling the ball up the floor



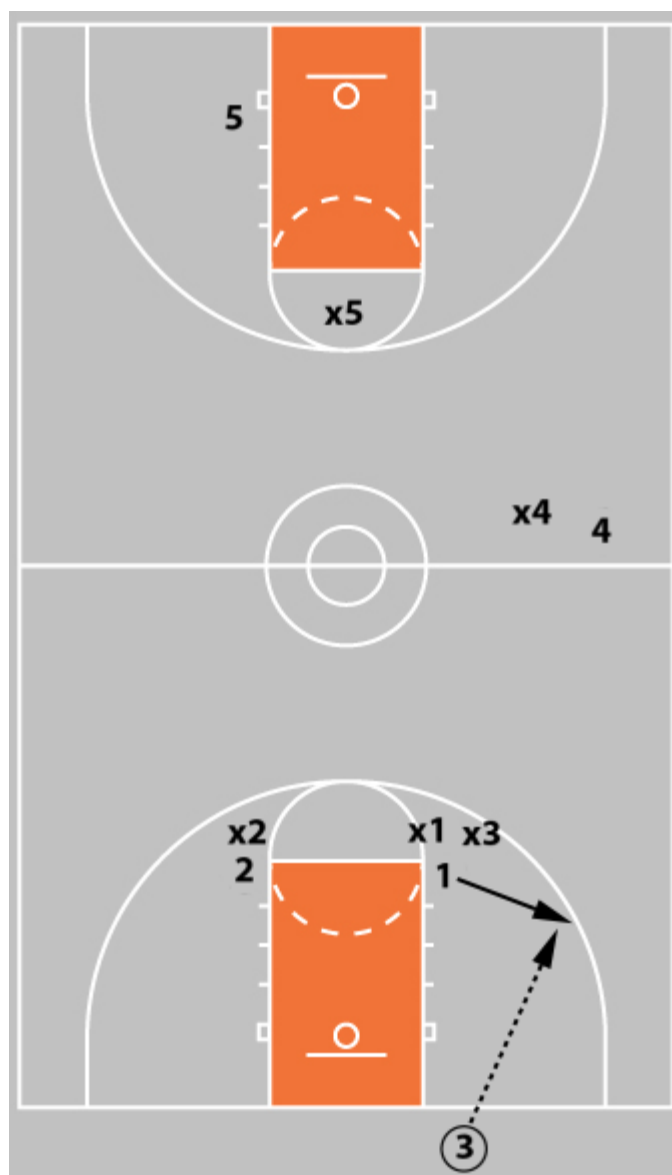
Chapter Fourteen: How to Control a Dominant Player

Dominant Player

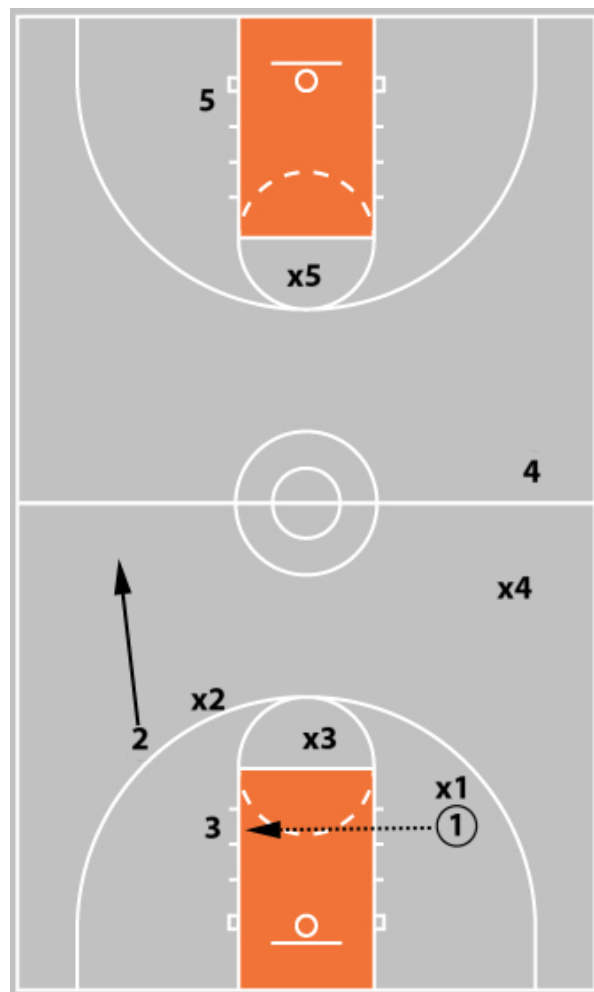
- This pressure system is designed to take away the top opposing players and make someone else beat you
- Green on their best player means to deny that person the ball
 - Example: x1 and x3 deny 1 the ball
- Once the ball is inbounded, the goal is to not let the best player touch it again
- Press becomes 4v4 now since one defender takes the best player out of the equation and that defender doesn't run and jump or trap
- Teams that truly have a dominant player always rely on that player to control the offense for them



- In this instance, the dominant player is able to get past x1 and x3 to receive the inbounds pass



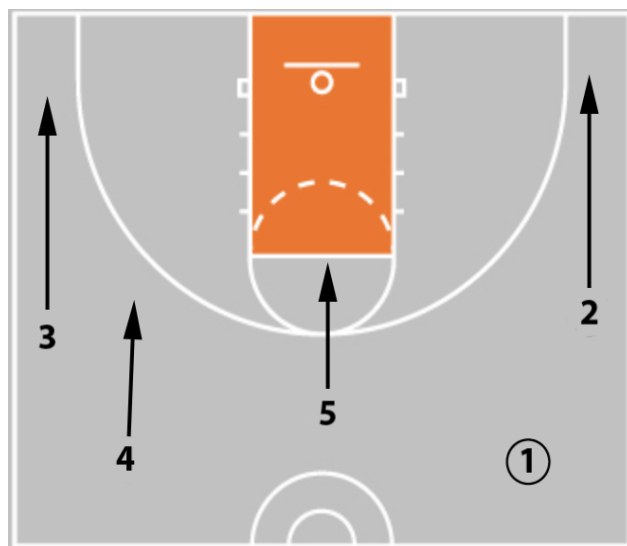
- If the dominant player catches the inbounds, give a cushion and your middle help should really shade toward the dominant player
- x3 in this case overhelps in the middle so 1 has no choice but to pass it to 3
- When 3 receives the pass, x1 faceguards 1 and does not worry about playing any help defense
- The goal is to make it 4v4 on defense



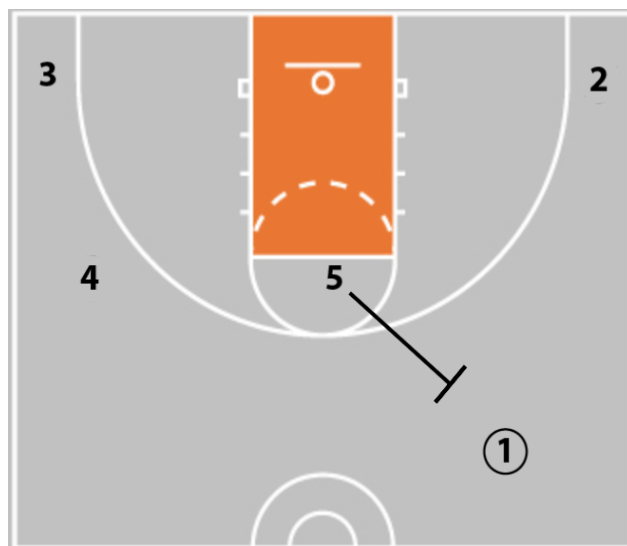
Chapter Fifteen: Transition Offense

Secondary Break

- Secondary break is off of FT's or TO's or called in advance by the coaches
- Goal is to be in a primary break with point guard attacking and creating as much as possible
- 1 pushes the ball on one side of the court
- 2 and 3 are interchangeable and fill the corners
- 4 trails the play and is on the opposite side of 1
- Rim runner (5) heads to the free-throw line area
- Players are given the option of how they want to roll to the basket
- Goal is to not clog up the lane



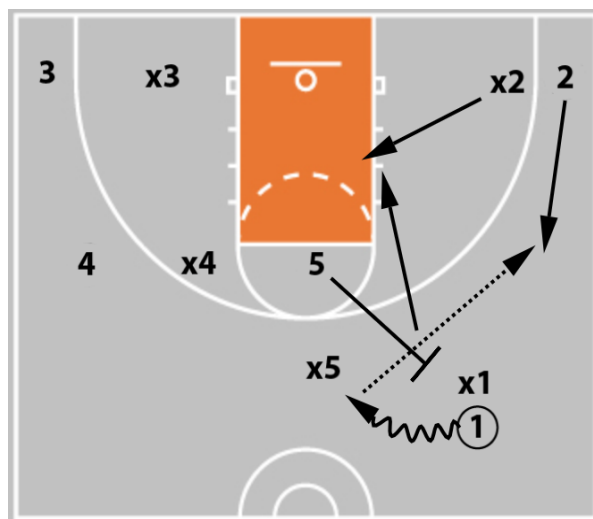
- 5 sets a ball screen for the PG as soon as they realize they won't receive a pass overtop



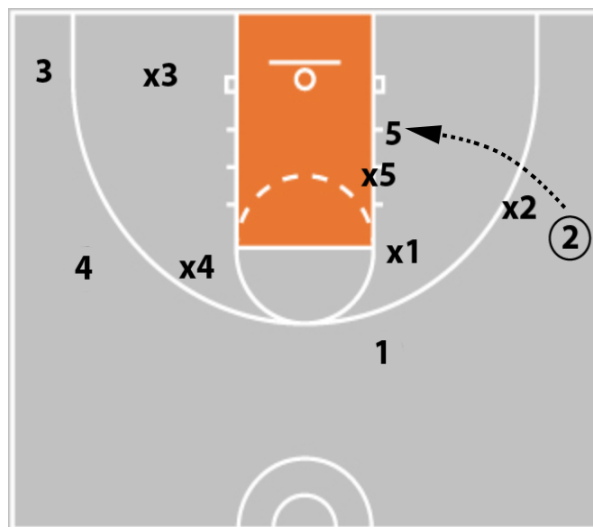
-
- A diagram of a basketball court showing the positions of five players and the ball. The court is represented by a gray rectangle with white lines for the three-point arc, free-throw line, and key. The key is shaded orange. Player 1 is at the bottom right, Player 2 at the top right, Player 3 at the top left, Player 4 at the bottom left, and Player 5 at the center. The ball is at the top center. Arrows indicate the ball's path from Player 1 to Player 5, labeled x_1 and x_5 . Other labels include x_2 , x_3 , and x_4 .

-
- A diagram of a basketball court illustrating player positions and movement paths. The court is divided into several regions labeled with numbers and variables:
- Regions:** 3 (top left), x3 (top left), x2 (top right), 2 (top right), 4 (bottom left), x4 (bottom left), 5 (center), x5 (bottom center), x1 (bottom right), and 1 (bottom right).
 - Player 1:** Represented by a circle with a wavy line, moving from region 1 towards region x5.
 - Player 2:** Represented by a circle, moving from region 2 towards region x2.
 - Player 3:** Represented by a circle, moving from region 3 towards region x3.
 - Player 4:** Represented by a circle, moving from region 4 towards region x4.
 - Player 5:** Represented by a circle, moving from region 5 towards region x5.

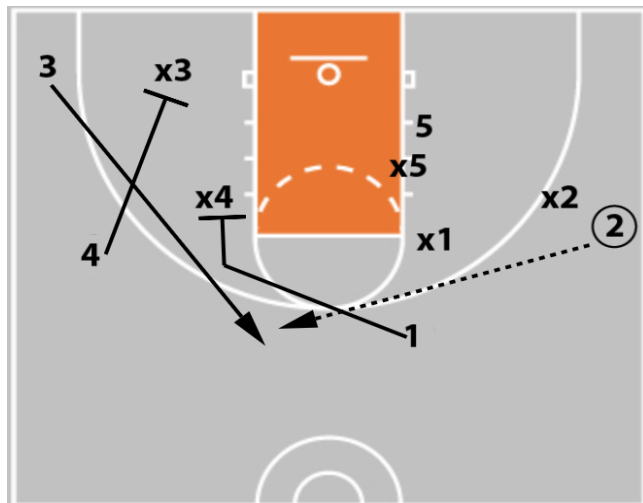
- If x2 drops down to cover 5's roll to the basket, 2 should lift to the free-throw line extended
- Option #3 is for the wing to enter into the post who is sealing



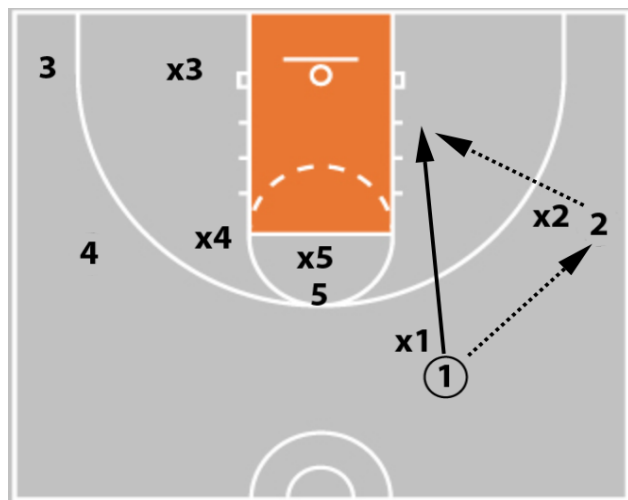
- Option #3 (continued): 2 passes to 5 who seals x5 in the low post



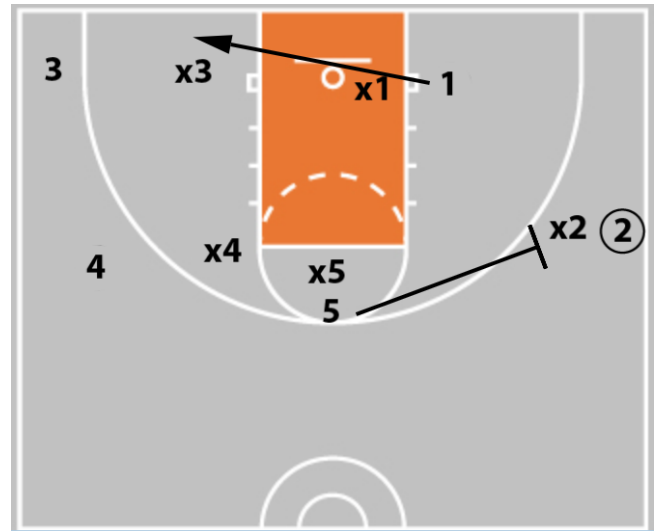
- Option #4 is to hit the backside wing (3) coming off a double stagger screen



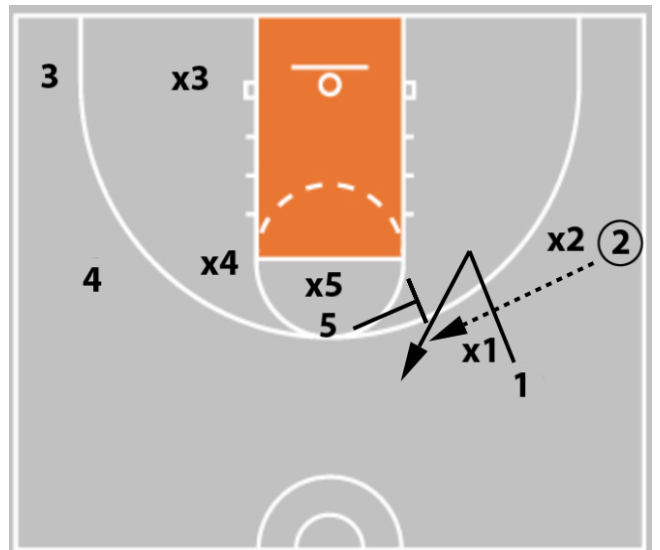
- Option #5 is to for the PG to advance the ball to the ballside wing and make a basket cut



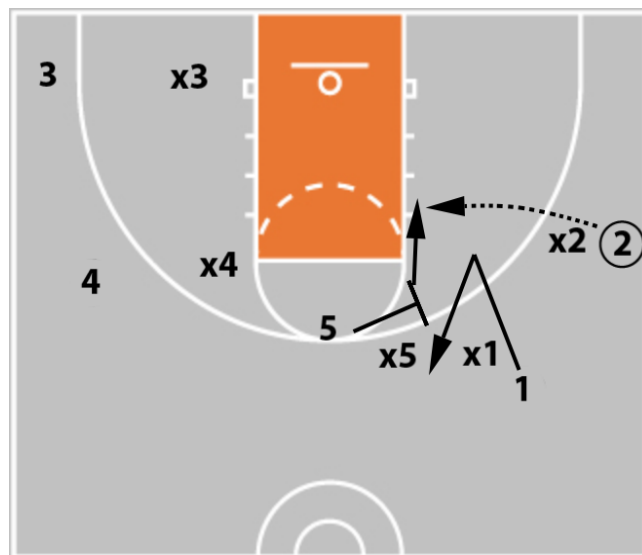
- Option #6 is a screen and roll for the ball side wing



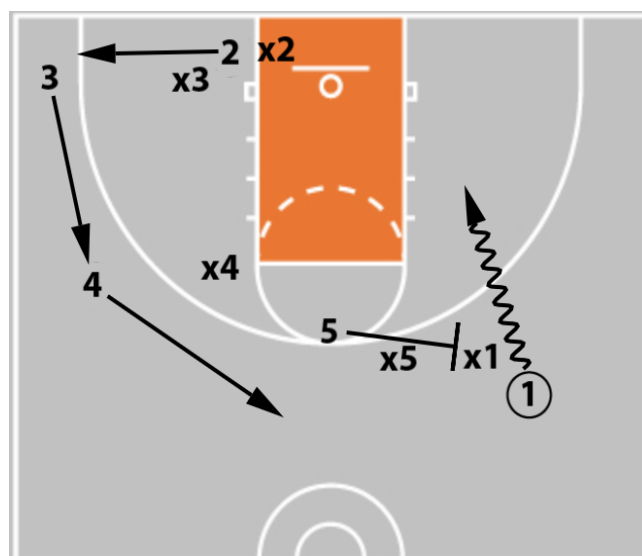
- Option #7 is a flare screen for PG off of a partial basket cut



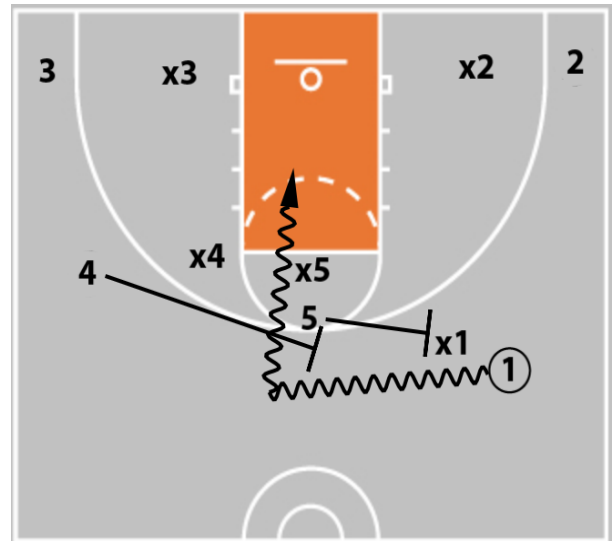
- Option #8 is for the post to slip off the flare screen for the PG



- Option #9 is overload weakside and PG refuses the ball screen
- 2 must clear out before 5 comes over to set the screen



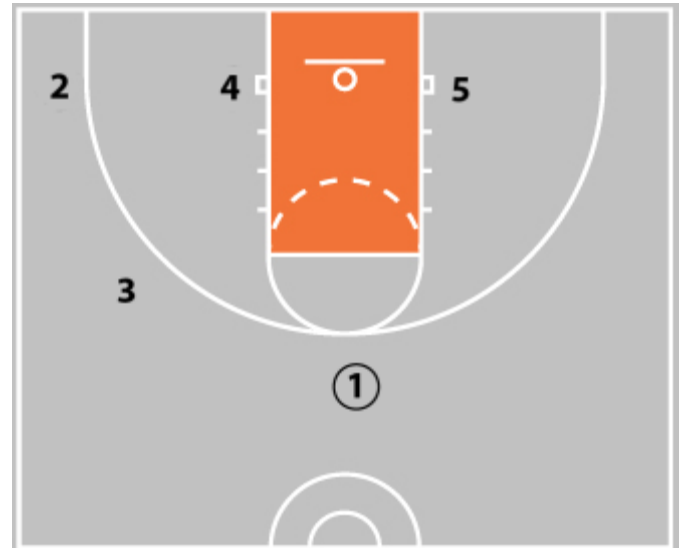
- Option #10 is a double ball screen for the PG
- This option is great if the defense is snuffing out the initial offensive options presented above



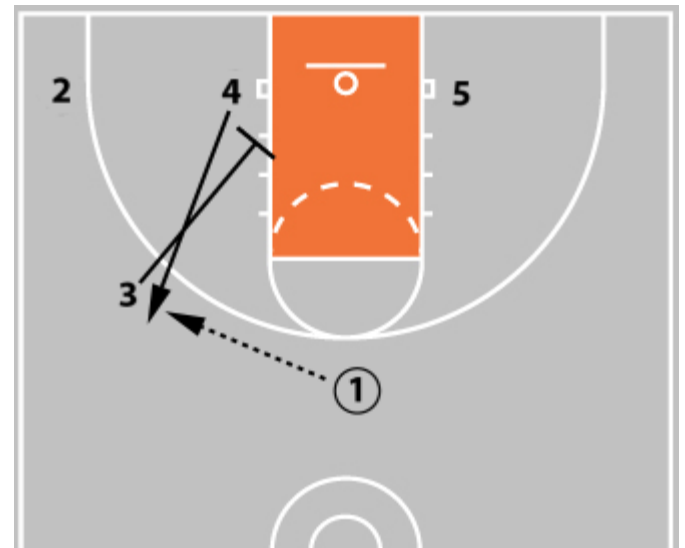
Chapter Sixteen: Half Court Sets

Michigan

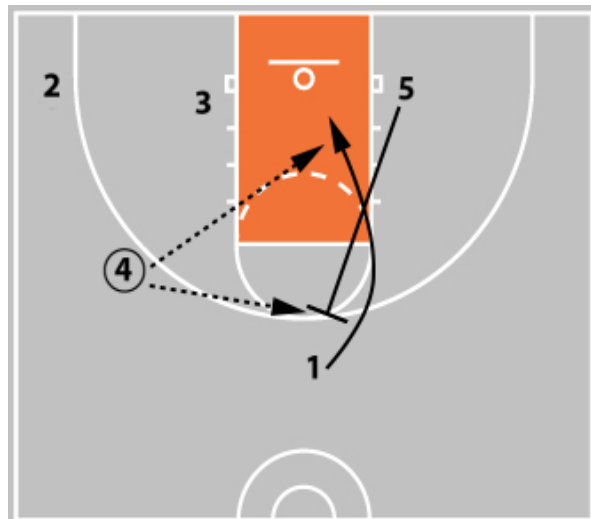
- The offense starts in an overload-type set
- Important to keep well spaced for this set



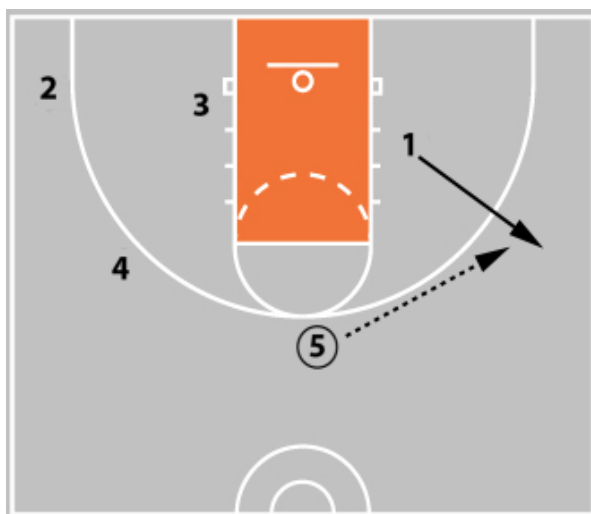
- 3 starts by setting a down screen for 4
- 1 passes to 4 on the left wing



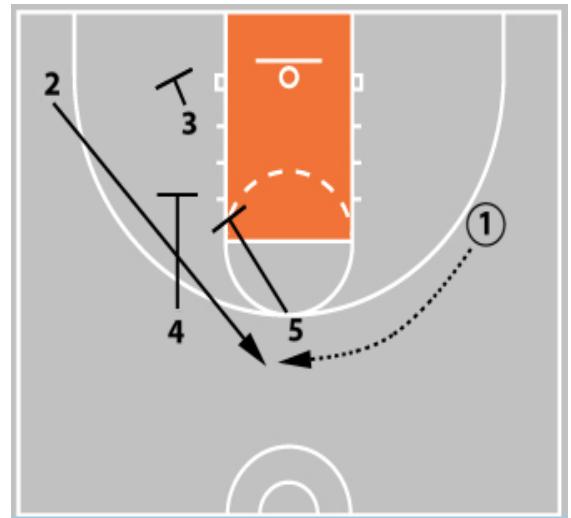
- 5 sets a back screen for 1
- 4 has the option to either pass to 1 or 5 if 1 is not open



- If 4 passes to 5, 5 should swing it to 1 on the right wing

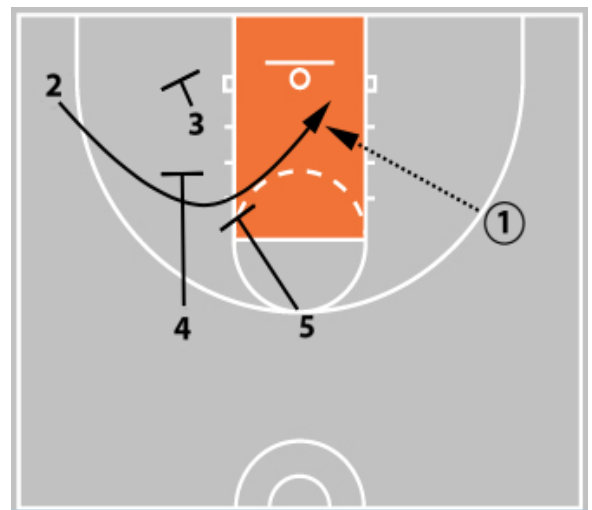


- 3, 4, and 5 set a triple screen for 2
- 2 should look to shoot the 3PT shot
- It is important to set all three screens correctly in Michigan

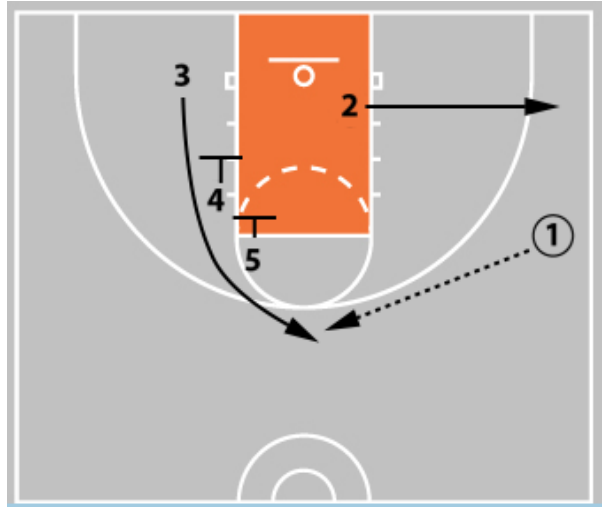


Wolverine

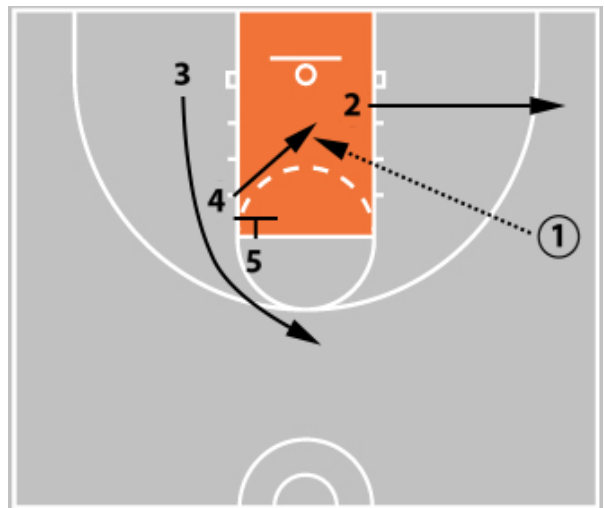
- Wolverine is a wrinkle in Michigan
- The play is setup exactly like Michigan except 2 curls off 4 to cut to the basket



- If 2 is not open, 4 and 5 set a double screen for 3
- 1 passes to 3 for the open 3

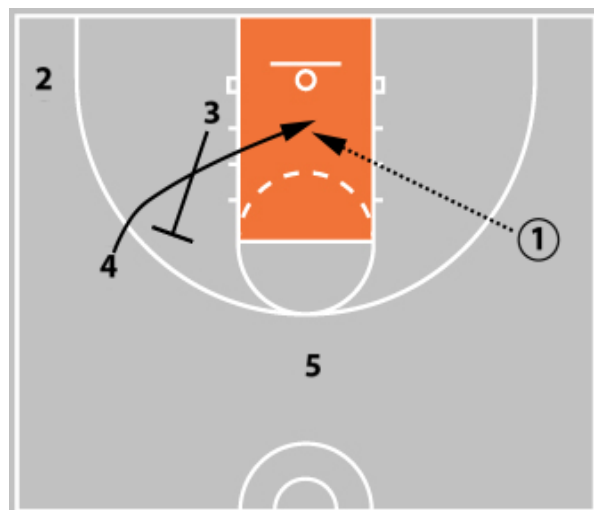


- If the defense switches, 4 should slip the screen and cut to the basket

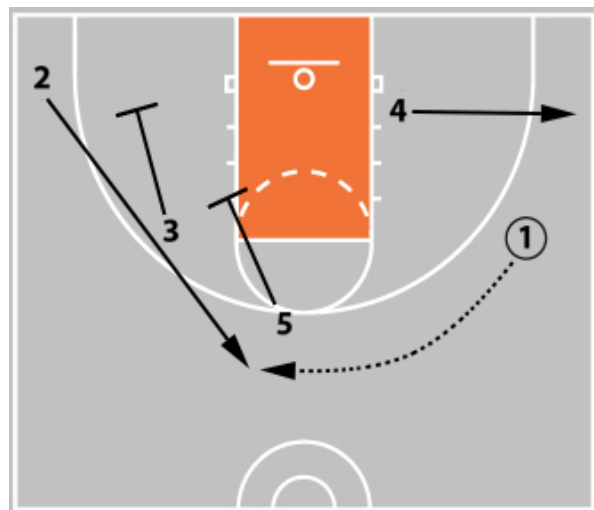


Michigan State

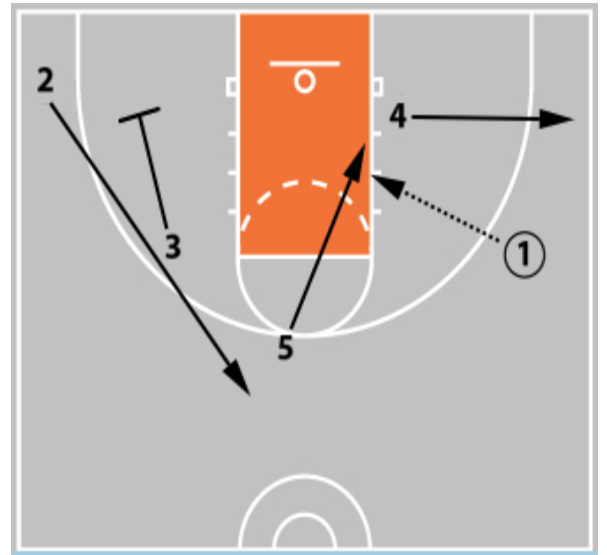
- Michigan State is effective against teams that do a lot of switching
- The play starts in the exact setup as Michigan
- 3 sets a flex screen for 4
- First option is for 1 to pass to 4 for a layup



- If 4 is not open, 2 comes off a double screen for an open 3
- 4 keeps moving to the right corner to open up the paint



- Another option is for 5 to slip the screen
- 1 passes to 5 for the layup
- The slip will be open a lot against teams that do a lot of switching

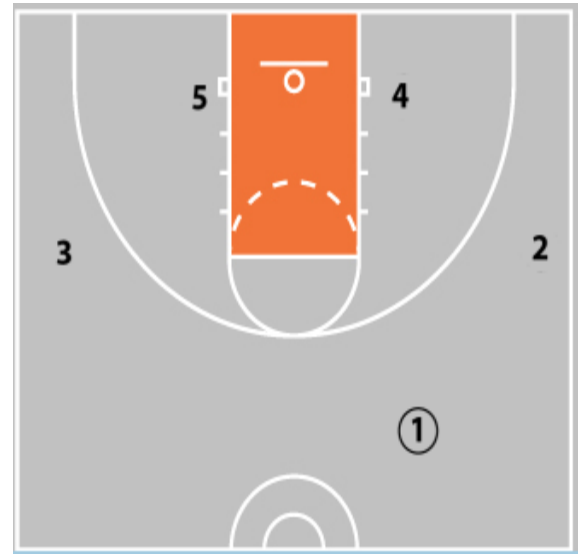


- All 3 sets go together and counter one another

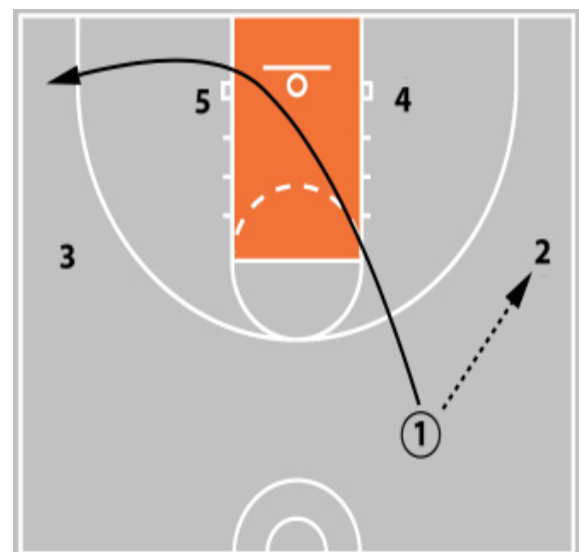
Chapter Seventeen: Half Court Sets vs Zone

Iowa

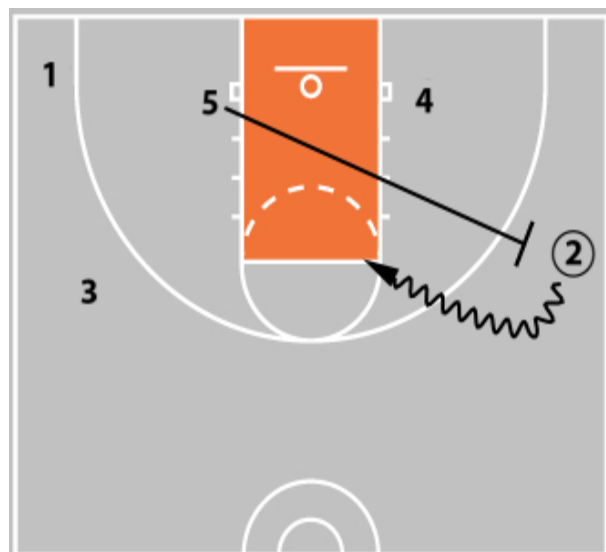
- This offense provides great rebounding opportunities as well
- 1 starts by bringing it up on one side of the court



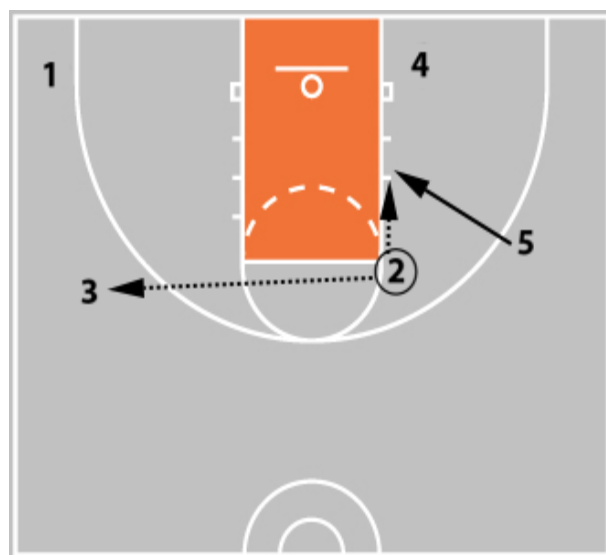
- 1 passes to 2 then cuts to opposite corner
- Teams typically play screens in zones differently than they would play them in a man-to-man defense



- 5 screens for 2
- 2's goal is to get to the elbow to make the opposite guy up top commit to the ball

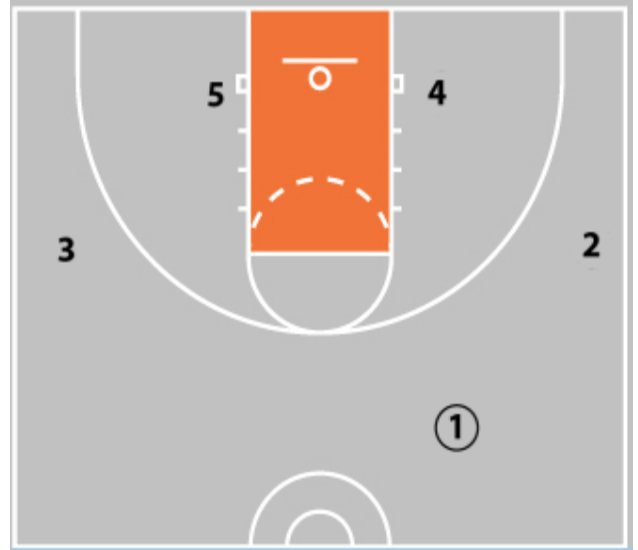


- 2 can pass to 5 on the short roll
- 2 can also kick to 3 for an open 3
- This offense provides great rebounding opportunities as well

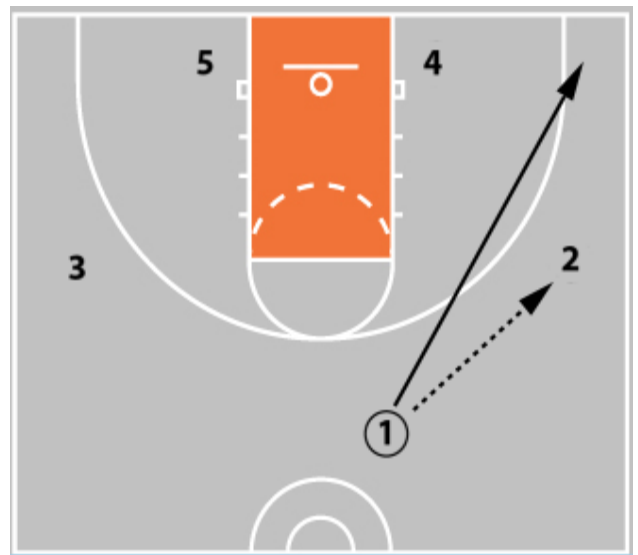


Walker

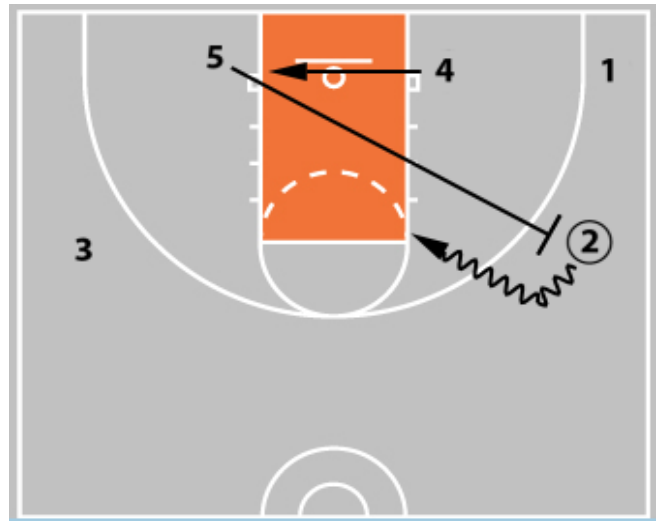
- Walker is a great counter to lowa - once the ball screen defender starts staying with the ball you can run Walker effectively
- The offense starts out in the same formation as lowa



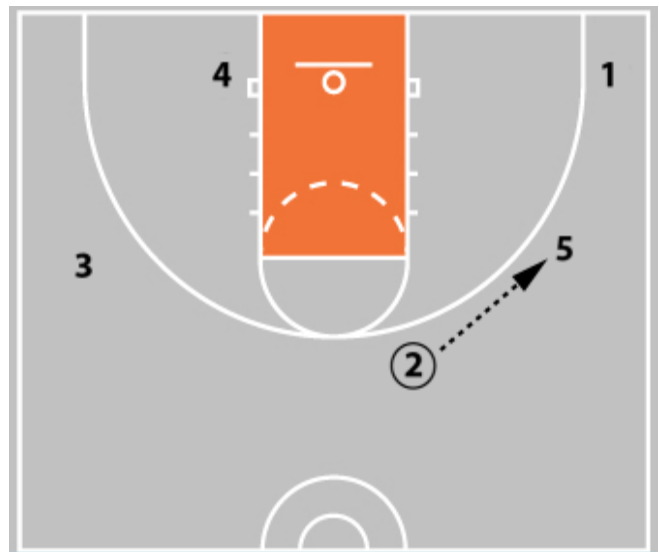
- 1 passes to 2 and then cuts to strongside corner



- 5 sets a screen for 2 and then stays at the three-point line
- 4 cuts to the opposite side block
- 2 tries to attack the elbow



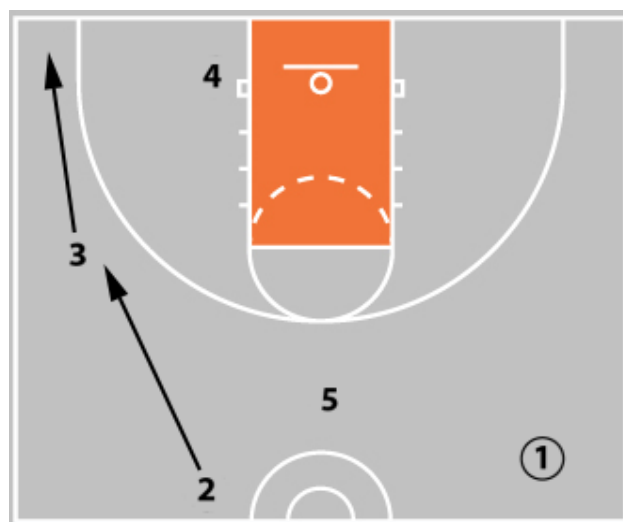
- 2 passes to 5
- 5 can either shoot the 3 or pass to 1 depending on how the defense plays
- Back side post can look to flash into the middle off of the ball reversal



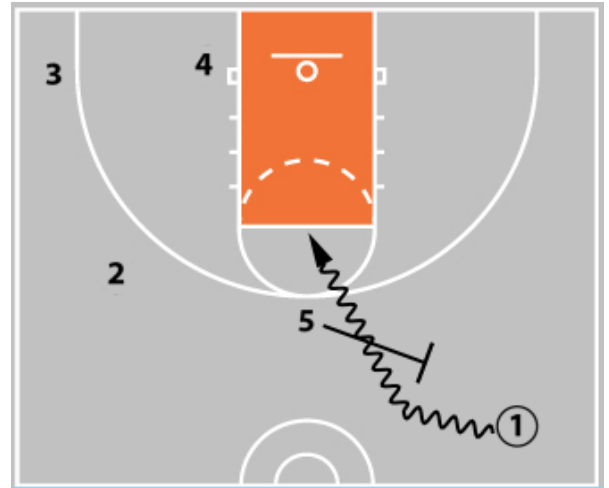
Iowa - Fast Break

- Iowa and Walker are normally run straight from transition
- When running Iowa off of a fast break, there must be two guards overloading the weak side in transition
- The goal is to make one defender have to guard two offensive players

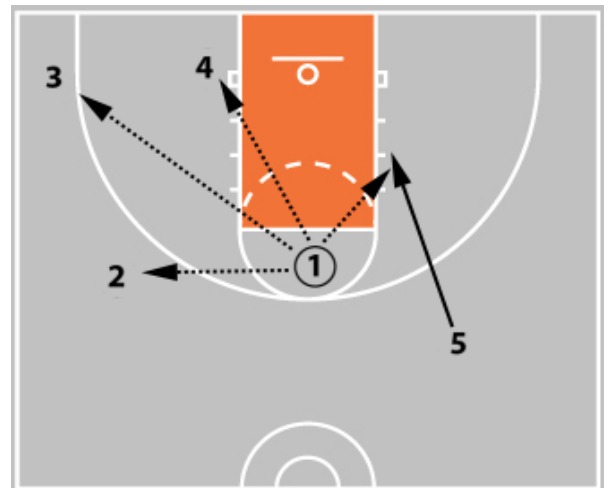
- 1 pushes the ball up the right side
- 2 and 3 run the left side of the floor
- 4 is stationed at the left block
- 5 is at the top of the key



- 5 sets the screen for 1
- 1 attacks downhill to the FT line area

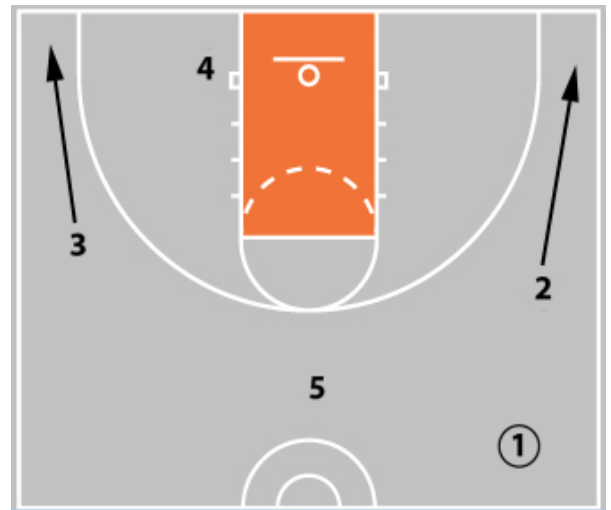


- 1 has several options
- 1 can either shoot it or pass to 2, 3, 4, and 5 depending on where the defense is located

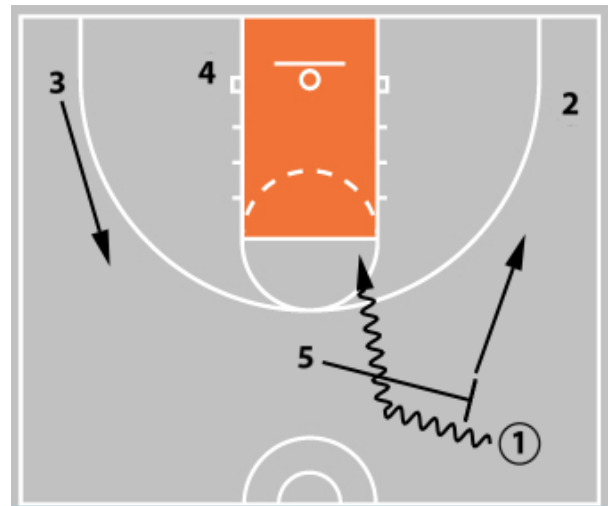


Walker - Fast Break

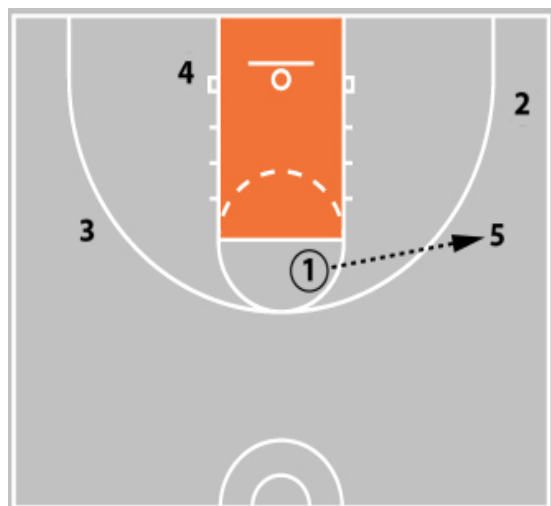
- 2 and 3 sprint to the corners in Walker
- 1 is pushing the ball up on the right side
- 4 is at the left block
- 5 is at the top of the key



- 5 screens for 1 and then cuts to the three-point line area
- 1 attacks the elbow
- 3 flashes to the left wing to draw some of the weak side help away from the main action
- Any time a defender goes under a screen, take an extra dribble to pull them further out of position



- 1 passes to 5 for the 3
- If the defense closes out well on 5, 5 swings it to 2 for the open 3
- Players need to slow down instead of just going through the motions — this will help sell the play



Chapter Eighteen: Live Scrimmages

Scrimmage #1:

Yellow

- Almost always have top players going against 2nd tier players in scrimmage
- It will make your second tier players better by having to go against this every day in practice
- Try to do 3-4 8 minute quarters every practice

Green

- Green press is trying to deny the inbounds pass

Scrimmage #2:

Soft Yellow

- Soft yellow forces the offense to make more decisions
- Back off a little bit and slightly change the pressure
- Looking for 10 second counts
- Player must know where they are on a miss and who they have on a make — communication is crucial to success of the press

Chapter Nineteen: Q & A

Where would you start for implementation?

- Give the whole-part-whole method
- Get 5 guys out there and show them:
 - What a sideline trap would look like
 - What a run-and-jump switch looks like
 - Rotations
- Make all these implementations in the same day

What do your practices look like?

- We do a lot of scrimmaging once the season starts
- A ton of 4 on 4 and 5 on 5 drills
- They only have two weeks to prepare for the first game in Iowa so lots of scrimmaging can bring the players up to speed on their system

Would you introduce Red, Yellow, or Green press first?

- Introduce the Yellow press first since that is a middle ground

Would you use Red, Yellow, or Green press in the same game?

- Yellow press will typically go first
- If they jump out to a lead, they will typically stick with yellow
- Red might be used against better teams so they can let their guard down when Yellow is run
- Against equally-skilled teams, you will find running all three presses makes sense

When can you start to implement your pressure system?

- It is generally doable at the middle school level
- Depends on the size of the program and how involved you are at the lower levels

What if your players are not very athletic?

- Typically, the best place to put the unathletic players is at the back of the press
- If not at the back, put them in the second row
- The most athletic players should be in the first row

How long will it take for this pressure system to start working?

- You will be surprised how much better they get from day 1 to day 2
- You will also start to put in tweaks that will make your team's press much more effective
- It will not only help them defensively but also offensively

How do you teach players that this system has concepts and not rules?

- Certain kids are very cerebral and want an answer to everything - they want a rule to everything they do
- The way to handle this is to teach them that playing hard and staying within the concepts is okay
- The other team is going to score sometimes through no fault of the defense
- Wean them off of that as the season goes on

Does this furious pace help or hurt your offense?

- The philosophy on offense is the same as on defense: don't think!
- If it's a good shot for you, take it!

- Example: player took a wide open 3 while up 6 with about a minute to go - no one wanted him to shoot it but he made the shot!
- No restrictions on where players shoot from as long as it is a decent shooting percentage

What happens when you get forced into a half-court game?

- No matter how well the press is working, you will run into a team that will break it!
- At some point, they practice their half-court sets in case this happens!

Chapter Twenty: Closing

Hope this video and eBook will help you and your team out this upcoming season!

You may email Coach Hilmer at mhilmer@northlinncsd.org