



WORLD ASSOCIATION OF
BASKETBALL
COACHES

COACHES MANUAL



MINI-BASKETBALL

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1 MAKING IT FUN

1.1 COACHING 5-7 YEAR OLDS

When coaching this age group both games and practice sessions should be positive experiences in the players' sports and human development.

Winning should not be the fundamental objective. Instead, the players should learn to be good sports, respect the rules of the game, the referees and the opposing team, and to try their best. Most of all, the focus should be on having fun!

To make activities fun, the coach must first be having fun themselves! Kids have fun when:

- They are with friends
- They are active, not spending a lot of time watching or listening to the coach
- They are learning new things

In regards to learning, it is important that activities are at a level where the kids think that they can do it, that it is "close enough" to their current level of skill that it is achievable. Not spending too much time on an activity will also help to keep the players interested.

Coaches should avoid constantly dictating exactly how something is to be done, and instead should describe what they want done and let kids explore how to do it.

An example would be telling the kids to throw the ball up into the air and catch it behind their back. Even if the coach cannot do it themselves, they can describe it and kids will have fun trying to do it.

This approach equally applies to teaching skills of the game - for example telling the players to throw the ball as high as possible when shooting.

Teaching points such as "lock and snap" or "high elbow" can be introduced at a later stage. Asking the players to throw the ball as high possible will lead them naturally to push upwards and have a high release point.

COACHING 5-7 YEAR-OLDS

At the age of 5-7, children's sensory-perceptive abilities are largely unrefined. Fundamental movement patterns such as jumping, changing direction and running need to be developed by playing games with the body and often with different equipment. Size 3 or Size 5 basketballs are preferable and rings as low as 6'–8' make basketball more accessible.

The more actions and movements that are introduced the more a child's motor skills will improve. Games must be presented in a general form, asking the players questions like "let's see who can tag the most players?" Games do not have to replicate basketball and many fun games (that will help to develop skills such as changing direction) may not involve either basketballs or rings.

The practice must be held in a tranquil and relaxed fashion, with safety being of the utmost concern. Children must make their own "guided" discoveries rather than being "drilled" in a repetitive or monotonous manner. Music helps a lot and can facilitate learning.

Whilst there may be "winners" in activities, the overall focus should not be on winning, but on having fun and developing new skills. "Success" should be defined as being able to do something that you couldn't do before!

The analytical teaching of basketball fundamentals should be avoided at all costs at this age, instead the focus should be on games that involve skills such as:

- Running
- Jumping
- Changing Direction
- Throwing and catching etc.

1.2 COACHING 8-9 YEAR-OLDS

At this age, it is necessary to continue training and developing basic motor patterns (perfecting techniques) so that they can be (gradually) transformed into more specific basketball abilities.

The training and development of motor abilities (especially coordination capacity, joint mobility capacity, and overall fitness) remain more important than specifics of basketball. At this age group, fun must still be the dominant focus as the children start to learn the game.

Games that involve dribbling, passing, shooting, defending; can be introduced but without rigorous "drilling".

Instead these activities should be presented by the coach in a general form that may be different to the playing rules of basketball.

The players should be introduced to basic rules such as:

- the movements they can perform in space and time;
- the space available to play;
- what they must do when playing offence;
- what they have to do when playing defence;
- the rules of the game.

When a child is "ready", playing rules can be presented, from which basketball fundamentals can later be drawn:

- ✓ "You cannot walk or run while holding the ball; so in order to move on court you must dribble".
- ✓ "To win the game you must score more baskets than your opponents; therefore you have to shoot in the opponent's basket".
- ✓ "You cannot always play alone against everybody, but having teammates; you need to pass them the ball".
- ✓ "The opposing team must not score more baskets than your team, therefore you have to defend your own basket".

Practice must provide each player with many opportunities to practice the various skills and there should be a balance between practicing skills in a contested situation and a non-contested situation. All situations though, must be fun!

1.3 COACHING 10-12 YEAR-OLDS

At this age the players' training and development of motor abilities continues, with more emphasis on basketball fundamentals. Feedback should now be more analytical in nature, refining the foundation skills taught previously.

It remains important at this stage, to give athletes the opportunity to do contested activities as they develop their skills but to return to non-contested (but still fun!) activities.

However, specialist roles must not be established, gestures and movements must not be extremely technical yet, the game must be in a free form, the playing ideas (in offence and defence) presented by the coach should be simple at the beginning.

The final aim should be that of bringing children to play 5 on 5 in a slightly more organised way, however the next chapter sets out a range of rule variations that can be utilized to maximize the involvement and enjoyment of the players.

Often "small sided" games such as 3 on 3 and 4 on 4 are better for children at this age as it gives players more opportunity to be involved in the play and more space to play in.

1.4 COACH TO THE SKILL LEVEL OF EACH PLAYER

The age groups noted earlier are a guideline and it is quite likely that when coaching 10-12 year olds there may be a player that has no experience with basketball and accordingly is at the stage of a much younger player.

Similarly, there may be an 8 year old player that has been involved in basketball for 3 or 4 years and has skills that are more advanced than older players.

Accordingly, it is important that the coach make an evaluation of the skills of each player and be prepared to make variations to include all players in activities to their level of skill and experience.

This may require different players to participate in activities differently - for example, some players may use their preferred hand when dribbling and others may be challenged to use their non-preferred hand.

2 USING "GAME-BASED" TEACHING

2.1 TECHNIQUE CENTERED TEACHING

A traditional approach to coaching is "technique centered" and is based upon analysing skills and techniques needed to play a game and to teach those skills until they are performed well enough to be able to play the game.

A technique centered method assumes that there is only one way to perform a skill and teaches the skill isolated from the game – developing the technique first and then putting it into "practice" playing the game of basketball.

An assumption that there is one perfect technique for basketball skills is flawed, with the best basketball players displaying a range of individual techniques whilst still being successful in performing the skills in games.

Other problems with a technique centered coaching approach are:

- repetitive execution of skills, without the context of a game, is boring and will lessen motivation and enjoyment of players (and particularly children);
- the "thinking and problem solving" aspects required for a successful game performance are not central to the initial learning because the technical requirements are isolated from the game in skill drills when technique is developed in "isolation" (e.g. shooting with no defender) players may develop habits that are unlikely to be successful under defensive pressure. Accordingly, having a defender present (for example) early in technique learning provides for a better outcome.

2.2 WHAT IS “GAME-BASED” TEACHING?

An alternative approach to the traditional technique-centered is to adopt a “game-based”¹ approach to coaching, where the focus is placed on “game centered” activities rather than “technique centered” activities.

The central strategy for using a game-based approach is:

- use activities that teach the “nature” of the game first with the skills of the game added at a pace manageable by the participants;
- questioning players to stimulate their thinking about the “game” or activity – allowing them to discover how and when to execute skills within the context of the game.

An approach of questioning players can be particularly challenging for coaches that are quick to “substitute” their own judgment and simply tell players what was done wrong. Coaches that persist with this style of teaching will be rewarded with players that are better able to “read” the game and reflect upon their own performance.

Some benefits for players when the coach adopts a game-based approach are:

- It promotes maximum participation and “long-term” learning
- Players become skilled in having a broader sense of understanding of the game rather than simply being skilful at the game
- The various ability levels of the players are catered to through activities being varied in complexity at a pace dictated by the players
- Encourages the players’ understanding of the need for rules

¹ Also known as “Game Sense” or “Teaching Games for Understanding”

2.3 HOW TO USE A GAME-BASED APPROACH

First, coaches should get players participating in an activity as quickly as possible. Set out the basic rules and let them play!

After players have been active in an activity for 4-5 minutes, the coach asks questions to guide the conceptual, strategic and tactical requirements of the game. The coach then makes any modifications they want to the activity. This approach also enables the coach to identify areas where the players may have misunderstood the activity or "rules" that are important for "success" in the activity.

Importantly, the coach may stop the whole activity to ask questions of the group or may take a player from the activity to work with them specifically. This is also an opportunity to work with the player on skill execution as necessary.

Through this approach as the players develop skills they do so within the context of the game, which enhances their ability to perform the skill under "game-like" pressure.

An example of how to introduce basketball using a game-based approach:

ACTIVITY - PASSING GAME

- Two teams (with the same number of players) have one ball each.
- Players must stand within a set area of court (e.g. within 3 point line, half court etc.) – the more players there are the bigger the space needs to be
- Players cannot pass to the person that passed to them
- Teams count each pass to see which team gets to the set target first (e.g. 20 passes)
- If the ball touches the ground, the team lose one point

After 3 or 4 minutes, the coach stops the activity to ask:

- What do you have to do with your body to catch the ball (possible answers – hands up, keep watching the ball, let the ball come into your hands)
- How do you make sure that your pass reaches the person and does not touch the ground (possible answers – not try to pass too far, step forward when passing, pass from chest not above the head)

The coach then varies the rules of the activity to:

- Players must now move and catch the ball
- Players must stop when they catch the ball

After a further period of playing, the coach asks other questions (and during this questioning is when the coach may provide some technical instruction):

- What do you need to look at to make a successful pass (possible answer – position of all players on court)
- Where do you throw the ball (possible answer – in front of the team mate)
- What do you need to get the ball (possible answers – move to the ball, hands up, call for the ball)

The coach could then make a further variation to the activity:

- Only one ball and the team without the ball attempts to intercept passes (they cannot take the ball from a player's hands)
- If the ball hits the floor, or is intercepted, the other team immediately make passes to attempt to reach the target

At the conclusion of the activity the coach asks further questions:

- What can you do to avoid someone that is putting pressure on the person with the ball (possible answers – pivot, pass fake, move towards the teammate or even behind them)
- What is the best position to try and intercept the pass (possible answers – distance from opponent, staying between them and the ball)

Another advantage of the game-based approach is that skills are not learnt in isolation or a "closed" context but are learnt under some game like conditions.

3 FUN ACTIVITIES FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 GENERAL MOVEMENT AND BALL CONTROL

It is important to help children to get to know their body and the movements they can perform with each part of their body (standing still, on the move, with and without the ball).

DEVELOPMENT OF "BODY MOVEMENT" PATTERNS

Players will enjoy learning movements they are not yet familiar with. Such activities are often best done initially with a size 3 ball or even a tennis ball. Example activities are listed below.

You would not do all the activities in one session, however you can use selected activities for a short time each training. Some of the activities are difficult, however if you set the "challenge" to see who can do them, you may be surprised at how many are able to do so.

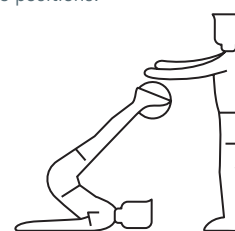
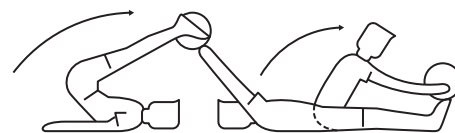
No activity should go for too long though, as players that are having difficulty may become disenchanted and players that are able to do them will quickly become "bored".

GENERAL MOVEMENT AND BALL CONTROL

1. All types of walking (on heels, tip-toes, on the inside and outside of foot).
2. Walking forward or running forward, walking backwards and sideways, holding the ball high, low, behind the back.

3. Run, lifting heels so that they hit their bottom, or so that they hit the ball when holding it behind their back.
4. Run lifting knees high holding ball in front. Players may hit the ball with their knees (and if they keep their elbows bent they will need to lift their knees higher!)
5. While walking or running, pass the ball around the head, the trunk, lower limbs, or roll it along the floor or toss it from one hand to another. Encourage the players to keep "looking up" so that they can see the coach. This often means bending their knees to get low rather than bending at the waist.
6. Walk or run in the middle of the court holding the ball while music is playing. When the music stops, each child must stop. Then start the music again.
7. The same as activity #6, but dribbling freely in the court. Players may dribble with one hand or two hands (players with better skills should be encouraged to dribble only one hand), and may stop the dribble and start again.
8. Walk holding the ball with the hands, roll it without letting go around body, squeeze it, and throw it in the air and catch.

9. Walk holding ball between ankles.
10. Jump holding ball between ankles.
11. Crawling: carry ball between ankles, under tummy, roll over ball.
12. Sitting down, raise legs and pass ball under knees from one hand to another.
13. Lying on ground, pass ball under knees from one hand to another.
14. Lying on back, hold ball between ankles: lift ball to touch the ground behind head and return back.
15. Lying on tummy, bounce with right and left hand.
16. Squeeze ball with two hands for about 5 seconds.
17. Standing up, legs apart, hold ball high: bend waist and touch right foot and left foot with ball.
18. Lying on back, ball above ankles, raise legs and roll ball towards chest.
19. Start with the ball on the ground: try to "lift" it by tapping with one hand.
20. Dribble ball with feet, knees, and head.
21. Raise ball high, let it drop and bounce on ground, touch it with head, shoulders, knee, and foot.
22. Hold ball between hands: rapidly change hand position.
23. Roll ball around feet moving around the court.
24. Push ball forward with head.
25. Place one hand on ground and use other to dribble and move.
26. Bounce ball on ground with fist, side of hand, back of hand, palm and palm and fingers (standing still and on the move). Then use two fists, two sides, two backs of hand. Coaches may ask the players after this activity which technique gave them greater control - most will identify using the palm and fingers of their hand, which is good dribbling technique!
27. In pairs sitting down "back to back". Pass the ball to each other by twisting the upper body.
28. In pairs lying on back: "A" holds the ball between ankles, raises legs and passes to "B" who receives with hands, repeat. Progress to "B" receiving with their feet.
29. In pairs: "A" with ball between ankles raises legs and passes ball to "B" who is standing; repeat and then change positions.



3.2 BALANCE AND COORDINATION

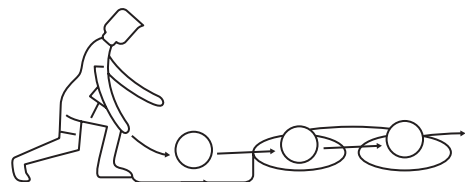
BODY ORIENTATION IN SPACE AND LATERALITY

The following activities can be done as a group, with each player having a ball or players working in pairs.

1. Game-drill exploring basketball court (side-lines, end-lines, circles), walking, running, jumping, dribbling along the lines. This can progress to a game of "Pac Man", where some players are designated as taggers and try to tag other players – all players can only run along lines on the court.
2. Stand inside the court and throw ball towards side-lines and try to catch it before it goes out of court; same towards end-lines.
3. Walk in the court with one eye closed and one open, (and then progress to both eyes closed), dribbling and then progress to jumping and dribbling.
4. Dribble following court lines, circles, and lanes.
5. Walk in court passing ball under legs.
6. Dribble standing still with preferred hand, walking, running.
7. Dribble standing still and jump with feet together, jump on one foot, with open legs, crossed legs.
8. Standing still dribble, with one hand and jump on corresponding foot.
9. Dribble against wall with one hand and then progress to dribbling with two hands.
10. Dribble high, very high, low, very low.
11. Dribble sitting down with one finger, two, three, four, five fingers.
12. Throw ball very high and catch with same hand, with opposite hand, with two hands (standing, kneeling, sitting, lying with back on ground).
13. Dribble and jump in a straight line.

SPATIAL-TEMPORAL PERCEPTION

1. Players move around the court avoiding objects (such as cones, drink bottles, bags) that are scattered on the court. Initially players roll ball with one hand (making sure they use both left and right). Can also have them use two hands, their feet and (finally) dribbling the ball.
2. Walk, throw ball forwards and grab it immediately after it has touched the ground.
3. Walk, throw ball backwards and immediately retrieve it; repeat.
4. Throw ball very high and catch it after having clapped hands several times in front of their body. Then clap behind the back and then in front and behind or even under their legs. Then, instead of clapping, have the players touch the ground with one or both hands or turn around in a circle.
5. Throw ball against wall and catch it.
6. Throw ball against wall, clap hands in front and catch without dropping: repeat clapping hands behind back, touching ground, turning around.
7. In pairs hold hands and dribble, with one player touching the ball and then the other. Start with players standing in place and progress to them moving.
8. Roll ball, run and catch it before it reaches an established mark.
9. Roll ball and turn around it.



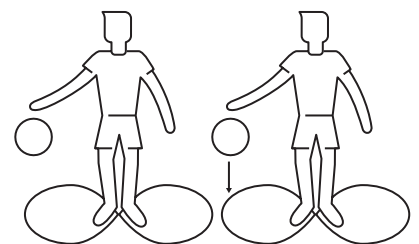
10. Throw ball high and clap hands every time it touches ground. Then, jumping with feet together every time it hits the ground and then try jumping on one foot.
11. Throw ball as high as possible and as far as possible.
12. Dribble, "beating" a rhythm. Have the coach clap a rhythm and then have players "dribble" it (this can also be done in pairs). First have them dribble the rhythm standing still and progress to them being on the move.
13. Back against wall, throw ball against wall, turn and catch ball.
14. Walk holding ball behind head, let it drop and catch it before it touches floor.
15. Spin ball on one finger.
16. Walk passing ball from one hand to the other.
17. Legs apart, bounce ball on floor between legs, turn and grab ball.
18. Standing with legs apart, ball held between legs with one hand in front and one behind: quickly pass from hand to hand.

BALANCE

1. Dribble jumping on one foot (in place and on the move).
2. Standing still, hold ball, legs apart: jump, turn around completely and land in same position (in one direction and then the other).
3. Dribble with eyes closed.
4. Jump on and off a bench without losing balance.
5. Run around court and stop immediately at a signal. Progress to dribbling
6. Run around court, stop at a signal, jump high and turn around, then start to run again.
7. Dribble in court, on the coach's signal roll on ground, stand up, grasp ball and start to dribble again.
8. Dribble in court and at the signal stop still, standing on one foot.

COORDINATION

1. Roll ball and try to hit a target (e.g. another ball that is moving, circle, clubs, numbers drawn on the wall, inside the squares of wall bars, etc.).
2. Run, with one arm forward and the other held above the head.
3. Throw ball and try to put it through a circle held by a teammate.
4. In pairs (one ball each): try to touch back, knees, ball (the one who manages to touch the other most times in a certain period of time wins).
5. Dribble with two balls alternatively. Start stationary and progress to running.
6. Walk backwards, dribbling with two balls and progress to running. When doing activities encourage players to have their "chin to shoulder" so they can see behind them and avoid any obstacles. Alternately, place them in pairs with the partner walking forwards and responsible for ensuring their partner does not run into any obstacle.
7. In pairs dribble with two balls and at the coach's signal exchange balls. Initially exchange balls by handing them to the other player. Progress to the other player simply taking over the dribbling.
8. In pairs both players dribble two balls. On the coach's signal they dribble their team mate's balls! Progress to one player dribbling 4 balls (dribble two twice, then dribble the other two twice).
9. Dribble a figure of "8" with legs apart.
10. Dribble figure of "8" in pairs.



11. In pairs, "A" dribbles towards "B" (who is standing with legs apart and extending arms) "A" passes under "B", turns around, returns to starting position, stops, turns and passes the ball to "B" who then repeats the same game-drill.

12. Standing up, ball held-in front with straight arms: let it drop, clap hands behind back and grab ball. Progress to holding ball behind back: clap hands and grab ball again. Then repeat with ball held in front of knee.

13. Dribble simultaneously with three balls.

14. In pairs (one ball each) "A" dribbles forward and "B" dribbles moving backwards; at coach's signal change. Coach's should sometimes use verbal signals and other times use a visual signal, which encourages the players to keep their "head up". Progress to "A" choosing whichever direction (including sideways) and "B" does the opposite

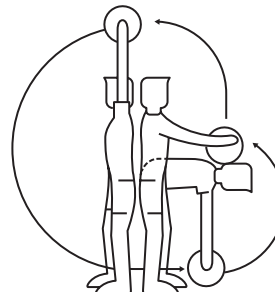
15. In pairs, one ball each: "A" bounce passes to "B" and "B" throws two-handed chest pass back to "A".

16. In pairs, "A" standing with ball and "B" sitting without ball. "A" passes to "B" and sits down, "B" passes to "A" and stands up.

17. In pairs players throw two-handed chest pass, bounce pass, side pass, side bounce pass and two-handed overhead pass back and forth.

18. In pairs, place a coin (or small rock) on the ground between partners. Partners throw bounce passes to each other, trying to knock the coin toward their partner.

19. In pairs, standing back to back: pass ball above head and below legs.



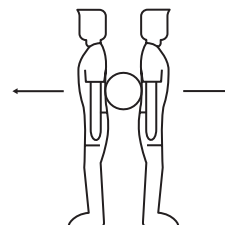
20. In pairs facing each other "A" rolls the ball to "B" and "B" passes a second ball at same time with feet.

21. In pairs, sitting facing each other, one ball each: exchange balls rolling, bouncing, and throwing.

22. Aim and throw ball against a target.

23. In pairs: "A" makes movements dribbling and "B" copies

24. In pairs ball between backs while standing: walk forwards, backwards, sideways, trying not to drop the ball. Progress to doing same activity with ball held between foreheads.



25. In pairs: "A" passes the ball to "B" and "B", before receiving it, must clap their hands.

26. In pairs: "A" throws the ball high in the air and "B" throws own ball trying to hit it.

3.3 ENDURANCE

ENDURANCE

1. Race dribbling 15-20 meters.
2. Race running in a slalom (moving in and out of cones) while dribbling.
3. Relay races and dribbling races.
4. Competition jumping, keeping rhythm.
5. Timed shooting competition: see how many shots can be made in a certain period of time. Lower rings may need to be used with young athletes, or a "goal" may include hitting the ring or hitting the net.
6. Timed passing (2, 3, 4, 5 players in teams): see how many passes can be made in a certain period of time. Initially do without defence and then add a defensive team. Emphasise players stopping as they catch the ball.
7. Timed simple circuits running around the court. Progress to performing various dribbling moves, changes of direction etc. as part of the circuit.

RAPID-STRENGTH

1. Dribble and jump at same time.
2. Relay races in pairs: "wheelbarrow" (hold onto partner's thighs as they "walk" on their hands).
3. Jump inside and outside of a circle.
4. High jump, long jump, jump backwards, low jump.
5. Throw ball forwards, backwards, sideways, sitting down, kneeling down, lying on back, lying on tummy.

3.4 SPEED

SPEED

1. Dribble running on court and change speed at the coach's signal (whistle, voice or visual) or have them follow lines of court.
2. Dribble starting from different positions (standing, sitting, kneeling, lying on back, lying on tummy, etc.).
3. In pairs (one ball each), dribble and try to touch partner's ball, knee, back; untie their shoe-laces, etc., all while dribbling!

JOINT MOBILITY

1. Rotation, twisting trunk, extension of lower limbs, extension of upper limbs, holding ball in hands.
2. Very easy circuits: passing under a bench, inside the wall bars, under a curved ladder on the floor, upside down.

SPATIAL-TEMPORAL AND DYNAMIC DIFFERENTIATION

1. Walk and run fast, slowly, jump slowly or fast. Progress to include dribbling.
2. Dribble slow, fast, bouncing ball high, low, and very high, very low.
3. Dribble two balls in alternate ways (standing still and on the move).
4. Dribble running, changing hands, direction, speed, reverse walking (at coach's signal).
5. Dribble at different paces.
6. In pairs, imitate the other's speed of dribbling.
7. The coach beats a rhythm and children try to imitate it with their hands, feet, with the ball.

3.5 ANTICIPATION AND CHOICE

ANTICIPATION AND CHOICE

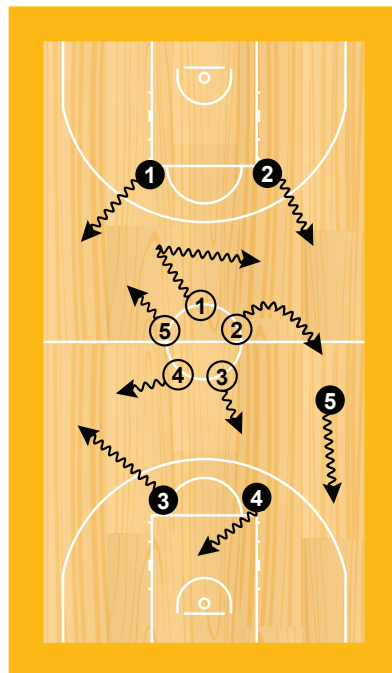
1. Passing in pairs with a defender in the middle. Progress to groups of three and five (with one, two defenders).
2. Games 1 on 1 in all positions of the court.
3. Games with uneven number of players on each team. Games can include "keepings off" (teams try to make a certain number of passes) or scoring by passing the ball into the keyway.

4 FUN ACTIVITIES TO TEACH BASKETBALL SKILLS

4.1 DRIBBLING

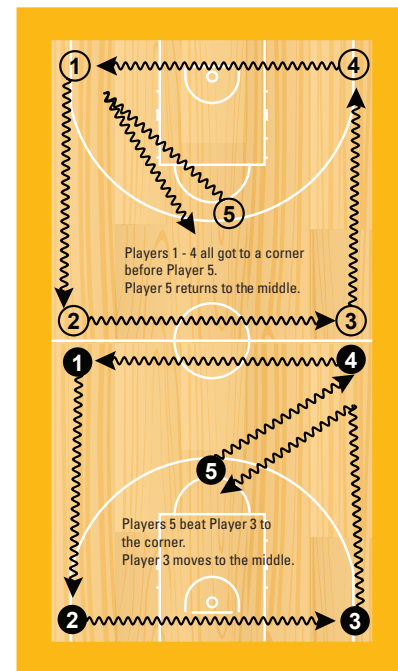
1. Dribble in the middle of the court responding to different directions from the coach (e.g. change speed, direction, reverse walking, change hands, etc.).
2. "Dribble Tag" – 3 or 4 players are designated as taggers. They must dribble around the court, chasing other players and try to "tag" them. Proceed for a set amount of time to determine how many tags they get or have players that are tagged stand still and they can only move again if another player runs between their legs. Proceed to all players dribbling!
3. "Dribble Tag – Lines" – same as dribble tag, however players can only run on marked lines on the court. This works best where a number of different sports are marked on the court.
4. "Dribble Gang" – similar to Dribble Tag, however when a player is tagged they join in trying to tag others.
5. Dribble with two balls, on the spot and then on the move.
6. "Statue Game": Each player has a ball and they dribble in the middle of the court and on the coach's signal must stop (those who do not stop lose a point). The coach can designate whether players use a jump stop (one count) or stride stop (two count). Players that use the wrong stop also lose a point.
7. "Dribble lines". Players dribble following the lines of the court, and when they meet another child they must change hand, reverse, change direction.
8. "The Jack-Hammer Game". One player is designated the leader and dribbles imitating a jack-hammer (dribbling high, low, slowly, fast). Other players copy.
9. "Car Game". Each player has a ball and start in either the keyway or the centre circle. As the coach yells instructions, the players dribble:
 - a. "Start your engine" – dribble standing still;
 - b. "1st Gear" – walk and dribble
 - c. "2nd Gear" – jog and dribble
 - d. "Top Gear" – sprint and dribble
 - e. "Reverse" – dribble backwards
 - f. "Red Light" – stop and continue dribbling
 - g. "Green Light" – start moving and dribbling
 - h. "Right" / "Left" – change direction (and change hands)
 - i. "Pit Stop" – sprint dribble to their starting location.
10. "Tail Game". Each child has a ribbon tucked into the back of their shorts, with enough of a "tail" so that it could be grabbed by another person. Each child has a ball and dribbles in a designated area (the fewer the players the smaller the area). One player does not have a tail and for a certain period of time tries to grab the tails of the other players. The player who manages to grab the most tails wins.

11. Free dribbling throughout the court and at the coach's signal players must stop and turn towards a basket, the side-lines or the baseline (depending on the coach's instruction). Coach can also indicate which foot the players are to pivot on and whether they should do a forward pivot or reverse pivot.
12. "Dog and Hare Game". Player are in two teams and each has a ball. One team are the "dogs" and they start in the centre circle. The other team ("hares") may start anywhere on court. When the coach says go, the dogs dribble and must try to touch the hares. Those who are tagged must stop and sit. The player that manages to touch the most hares" in a fixed time period wins.



13. "The Four Corners Game". 4 Players stand in a corner of the half court holding a ball. One player is in the middle. When the coach says "go", the players in the corners must sprint dribble to the next corner (the coach determines whether they move clockwise or counter-clockwise").

The Player in the middle tries to get to one corner, before the other player does. If they are successful, they now occupy the corner and the other player moves into the middle. This game can also be done running instead of dribbling.

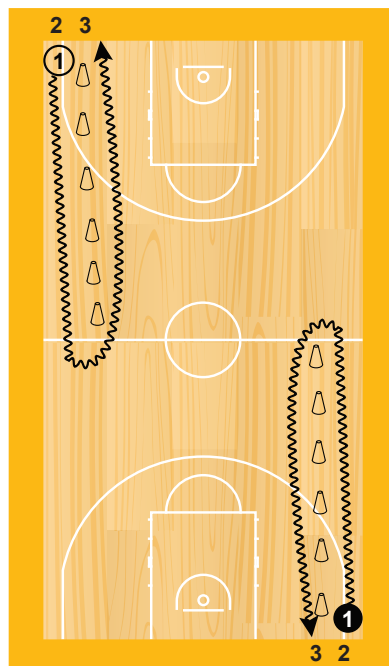


14. "The Fisherman Game". One player stands at half court ("the fisherman") and other players ("the fish") stand on the baseline. When the coach says "go", the "fish" must dribble and try to reach the other end of the court (beyond the end-line), without being tagged by the fishermen. Anyone tagged becomes a fisherman.
15. As an alternative to activity 13, the player in the middle tries to "tag" one of the other players before they get to a corner. Players that are tagged, stop and stand in the place, waiting for another "corner player" to touch them and then they can both dribble to the corner. This works best with at least 9 players.
16. "The Wolf and Sheep Game". Every player has a ball. One player "the wolf" starts in the centre circle. The other players "the sheep" start in a keyway. When the coach says "The wolf isn't here", the "sheep" can move freely dribbling anywhere on court (they cannot stay in the keyway) The "wolf" can move too, but cannot touch the sheep. When the coach says "Here comes the wolf", the wolf can touch any "sheep" that are outside of a keyway. Sheep who are touched outside of the circle become wolves and the game continues.

Alternatively, the child who is "It" must try to touch as many children as possible in a set period of time (e.g. 1 minute).
17. "1-2-3 Stop". Each player has a ball. One player stands at half court and the others stand behind the base line. The player at half-court faces away from the other players and calls out "1-2-3 Stop". As they call "1", players start to dribble toward the half way. When they call "Stop", the player at half way turns around and anyone they saw still moving must return to the baseline. The first to reach half-court without being seen by the child who is at half-court is the winner. The player in the middle as fast as they want, as long as they say each number out loud.
18. "The Signal Game". Players each have a ball and stand in a line facing the coach. Players dribble in the direction indicated by the coach.
19. "Relay Dribbling Races". There are many types of relays (forwards, forwards and backwards) without the ball (running, jumping), or dribbling, with one ball each or one ball per team. At a signal given by the coach, the first in line starts and follows the designated path (e.g. running around markers, on certain lines etc.).

When the player returns to the line they touch the ball of the second in line and the game continues. The team which arrives first after having completed the path wins.

20. "Relay Race with Pins". Players are in two teams, with one ball per team. When the coach says go, the first player in line starts dribbling with one hand while with the other must try to knock down the pins along the path, and then return quickly by dribbling to let the second in line start. The second player starts to dribble and while dribbling with one hand must try to stand the pins up again (the game cannot continue if the pins are not standing) and so on.



21. Dribble following the perimeter of the court and change direction, speed, hand, as indicated by the coach.
22. Each player has a ball and they dribble around the court. When they are near another player they swap balls and then continue to dribble with the new ball. Players do not pick up the ball, they just take over dribbling the ball of the team mate. Progress to players doing this whilst dribbling two balls. It can also be done as a relay race between two or more teams.
23. "Balance Ball". Players hold one ball and try to balance a second ball on top of the ball. Once they can do this, they let go of the bottom ball, grab the top ball and use it to "catch" the other ball, balancing it on the ball they are now holding. Initially, they "catch" the ball after it hits the floor but progress to "catching" it without it hitting the floor.
24. Place the players in groups of 3-5 along the baseline and set markers in the court at the two free throw lines and at half-court (other markers can be set in the court as well). On the coach's signal, the first player in line starts dribbling. At each marker they do the following a designated skill, such as:
- change hand;
 - retreat dribble;
 - change speed;
 - jump stop;
 - retreat dribble, change hand and dribble forward;
 - change direction.

4.2 SHOOTING

With Mini-Basketball players, coaches should not be overly concerned with the technique that the players use to try and “shoot” the ball.

FUN MATTERS MORE THAN FORM

Focus on:

- the player stopping; and
- being balanced before “shooting”.

VARY THE TARGET

There are a number of activities that can be used to practice shooting and many of them do not need a basket. To increase the “success” that player experience, coaches should use a range of activities, with different targets. For example, having the ball hit the net may be counted as a score in one activity.

If possible, the ring should be lowered. and using a smaller ball (size 5 or size 3) will also make it easier for young players.

It is best if targets are above the players so that they develop the skill of throwing the ball up. This can, for example, be having the players sit on the floor and throw into a bin on top of a bench.

Throwing at targets that are at the same height as the players is good for practicing passing, but do not encourage the players to push up!

KEEP THEM CLOSE

All children love to shoot the 3 point shot, even though it can be very detrimental to their technique. Accordingly, coaches should generally keep players shooting from close to the basket (inside the key) while they are developing the strength to shoot from further out.

Some fun activities are:

1. Throw balls of different weights and sizes (e.g. tennis balls, size 3 balls, size 5 balls, volleyballs, soccer balls) in containers (e.g. rubbish bins), circles, baskets at different heights and from different distances.
2. Shooting free, at the basket. For young players, hitting the ring, net or backboard can also be counted as a score.
3. Throwing the ball at spots on the wall, numbers drawn on the wall, in circles placed on the floor, or held by another player.
4. Shoot balls trying to knock down pins, hit other balls, different objects (in place or moving).
5. Shoot in larger-than-normal baskets (if available)
6. Shooting at basket: competition with different scores depending on the results (two points for a basket, 1 point if the basket rim is touched, half a point if the backboard is touched). The team which manages to reach a set score first wins.

7. "Shooting competition". Divide players into teams and have them shoot initially from in front of the basket, shooting freely (1 point for each basket). The team that manages to score the most baskets in a certain period of time wins. The competition can be carried out from different distances, from either side and with or without using the backboard.
8. Free throw competition (individual or in teams).
9. "Crocodile". Players shoot from a designated spot. If they make the shot, they rejoin the line. If the miss, they stand on the baseline, where they can be eaten by a "crocodile". If a player makes a shot, they rescue one person from the baseline (if anybody is there). If all players end up on the baseline, the crocodile wins! The game can also be played as one team against the other, with the winning team being the first to a certain score (a team automatically loses if all its players end up on the baseline).
10. "21". Divide players into two teams (try to make them even) and line them up at a designated spot. Each team has two balls. Players get 2 points if they can make the shot from the designated spot. After shooting, players attempt to rebound the ball. If they rebound the ball without it bouncing, they may have a second shot, which is worth one point if scored. The next player in line begins to shoot when the first has either made a basket or used up his or her two available shots. The team which first scores at least 21 points wins the game.
11. "Around the World". The coach chooses 6-10 shooting positions. Players start at the first spot. If the player makes the basket they move to the next position and shoot again. If the player misses the next player in line takes the next shot. The player who first manages to make one from each spot is the winner. Those who miss have three shots from each shooting position and if they miss all three they can still move on to the next position.
12. Shoot at the basket with one eye closed and one open.
13. Players stand around free throw line or suitable distance (one ball each) or other designated area, with their back to basket. At the coach's signal, they pivot (front or reverse) and shoot.
14. Players face the basket with the ball on ground. On the coach's signal they quickly grasp the ball and shoot.
15. Players face the basket, holding a ball behind them. At the coach's signal they bounce the ball from behind to their front (between legs), grab it and shoot.
16. Two players hold a ball, near the basket. When the coach calls "Go", they both try to get possession and whoever gets possession shoots. The player that loses possession does not guard the shot.
17. Players face basket, holding ball between ankles. On the coach's signal they jump, lifting the ball into the air. They catch the ball (initially after one bounce and progressing to catching it without it hitting the floor) and shoot.
18. One player (or the coach) throws the ball against the backboard and their team mate jumps to rebound it, lands and then shoots.

4.3 DRIBBLING AND SHOOTING

1. "All Together to the Basket"

Players are divided into two teams with each player having a ball. The players stand at the half way line, with the teams "back to back".

On the coach's signal the players dribble toward the basket that they are facing and take a shot. If they miss, they may take another two shots. After making a shot (or taking 3 shots) players dribble back to half way. The team that makes the most shots wins.

The activity can also be started from a sitting position, kneeling down or lying down. The same game can also include having the players perform an initial pivot (front or reverse) on the coach's signal. The players dribble and then shoot towards the opposite basket from their starting points.

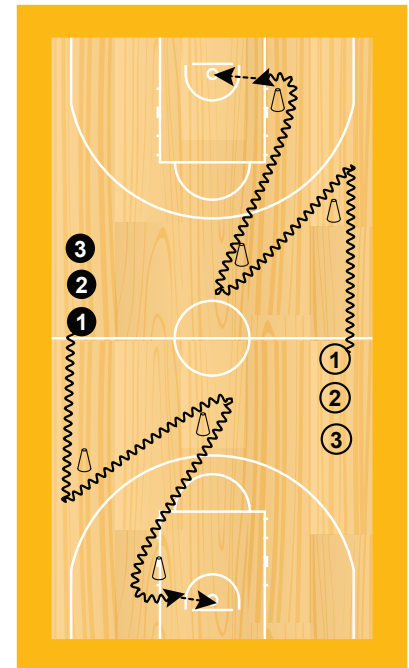
2. "Dribbling and Shooting Relay Race"

Players are divided into two groups and have a ball each. At the signal, the first player of each team begins to dribble, towards the basket stops and shoots. If the player scores a basket they quickly return to the line. If they miss their initial shot, they may have another two tries to make a basket.

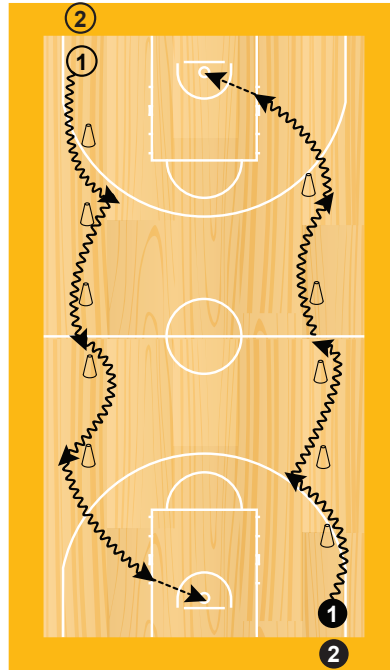
After the three tries have been used up, the child returns to the starting point. The team that manages to score the highest number of baskets in a set period of time wins.

3. The same relay race may be played allowing each player to have only one shot. The next player starts toward the basket once the player in front of them has shot.

4. "Dribble Slalom Relay Races". Players are divided into two teams and start at half way. They dribble around cones and then take a shot. Once they have shot, they return to the line and the next player dribbles. The team to make the most baskets in a designated time wins (or it can be up to a designated score).



5. "Dribble Slalom Relay Races" can also be done full court.



6. "Parallel Relay Race". Players are divided into three or four teams, with each team starting on the base line. When the coach says "go", the first player in each line dribbles towards the opposite basket, stops and shoots (three shots available), then returns after getting the rebound, and gives a "high five" to the second of the line who then starts.

The team which manages to score the most baskets in a set period of time wins. The shots may be either a jump stop, lay-up or a moving lay-up.

The coach should not have too many players standing and waiting at the one time, so should make the groups small. It is also possible to have a second player from each group start dribbling, once the team mate ahead of them crosses half way.

4.4 PASSING

Passing is one of the most important skills in a team game and teams that pass the ball well are hard to defend.

There are a number of “barriers” to young players passing the ball:

- they do not see their team mates (e.g. they are looking at the ball while dribbling)
- they cannot throw the ball far enough, when team mates are standing away from them
- they cannot pass past a defender (this is especially so when young players do not pivot properly and instead just turn their upper body).

Coaches should use a variety of fun activities to give players plenty of practice at passing and, in particular, address the barriers identified above.

For example:

- reduce the size of an area so that team mates are closer
- have more offensive players than defenders, so that it is easier to see an open player
- do not allow dribbling (either at all, or until a certain number of passes have been made)
- do not let defenders take the ball away from a player, however they can intercept passes

Below are a range of activities that can be used.

1. In pairs with one ball each, players exchange ball (standing, kneeling, sitting, lying on tummy). Progress to wrapping the ball in a “figure 8” around legs before exchanging balls.

2. “Paris Passing”. Players are in pairs, with one ball for each pair. The person without the ball takes one or two steps away from their partner and then cuts back toward them to receive a pass.

As they catch they must stop (coach can designate whether jump stop or stride stop) and pivot to face the basket.

They then pivot to face their team mate to make a pass.

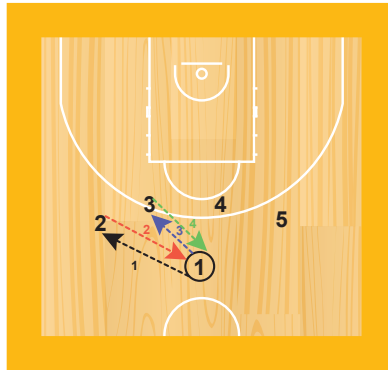
3. Similar to Pairs Passing, players are in groups of up to 5. Count how many passes can be made in a set period of time, with a player not being able to pass back to the person that passed to them.
4. In pairs, players run around a circle, passing the ball. On the coach’s signal they run in opposite direction.
5. Divide players into two teams (one ball for each team) and line them up. The first in line rolls the ball between the legs of team members, and the last retrieves the ball and dribbles it to the front of the line.

Continue until the player that was initially at the front has returned to the front.

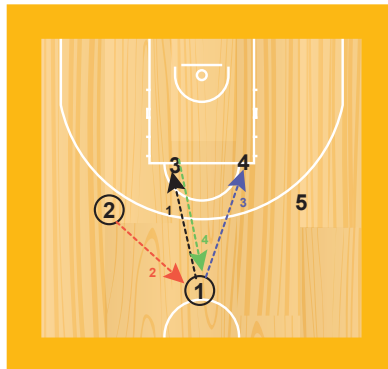
The first team to have the player who began the game return to the front of the line first wins.

The game can also be played with the players handing the ball to the player behind them turning their body sideways. This can be done both standing and sitting down.

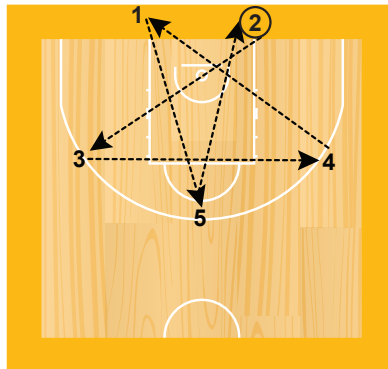
6. "Pepper Passing". Players stand in a circle with a passer in the middle. The ball is passed from outside to the centre who then passes the ball to the next person on the outside. Teams can compete against each other to see who can pass around the circle quickest.



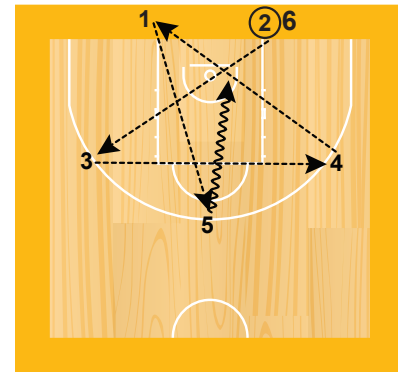
7. "2 Ball Pepper Passing". Same as the "Pepper Passing" drill except that two balls are passed back and forth.



8. "Star Passing". Players are in groups of 5 and are in a "Star" formation. On the coach's signal they pass the ball in a set pattern and the team which makes the most passes in a set period of time wins



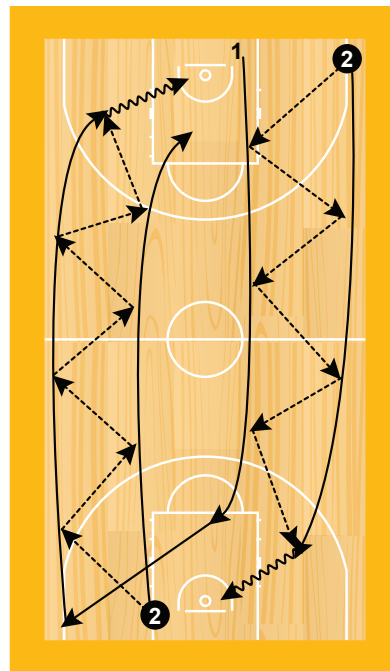
9. "Star Lay-ups". With groups of at least 6, each player "follows" their pass to stand behind the person that they passed to. 5 dribbles for a lay-up, which is rebounded by 2. After shooting 5 moves to the spot where 2 was.



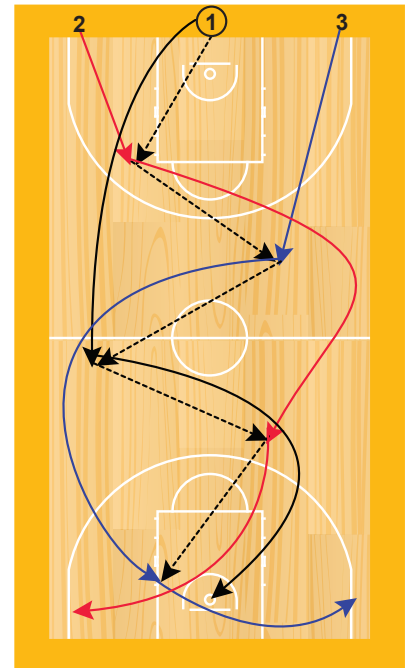
10. "Double Star Passing". Similar to "Star Passing" but players are divided into two teams (and each team has a ball). The teams pass the ball at the same time.
11. "Square Passing". Players stand in a square, passing the ball between themselves as quickly as possible. On the coach's signal they change the direction of the passes (clockwise and counterclockwise).
The activity can also be done "on the move" with passers "following their pass" to join the line at the next corner.
12. "2 Ball Square Passing". Similar to the Square Passing activity, except that there are two balls, being passed in opposite directions. Again, on the coach's signal, both balls must change direction.

13. Players are in two lines (or in pairs) and pass the ball back and forth whilst running to the other end of the court. They may pass the ball the full length of the court, or when they get to the other end the player on the outside can take a shot.

That player rebounds their own shot and the players then move to the other side of the court. The players swap lines on the way back.



14. "Weaves". Players are divided into 3 groups standing on the baseline with one ball. The person in the middle starts with the ball and passes to one of the outside players. They then sprint behind that person and move in front of them. As each player catches the ball the pass to a player on the opposite side of the court and then run behind that player – creating a weave pattern. The Weave can either finish with a shot or by players stepping off the court at the other end. Weaves can also be done as "up and backs" with players running a designated number of full court sprints.



15. Weaves can also be done with 4 groups (the first pass must always be to the side that has two players and is made to the closest player) or 5 groups (the first pass can go to the closest player either side and then sprint past both players on the side). In weaves with 4 or 5 groups, the pass is always to the closest person.

4.5 DRIBBLING, PASSING AND SHOOTING

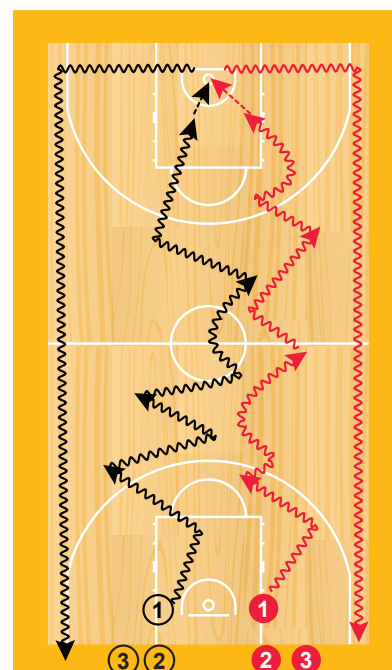
Basketball is a fast-moving and dynamic game and players learning to play need to learn to perform the skills on the move.

Using activities that involve a range of movement and skills is preferred (and usually more fun) to doing just “single skill” activities. “Single skill” activities may be done first (to remind players of technique) and then progress relatively quickly to a combination activity.

Below are activities that combine various basketball skills.

1. Players stay in a designated area of the court (e.g. half court or full court depending on how many players). Some players have a ball and dribble freely in the court. No player may stand still. On the coach’s whistle each player with a ball pass to another player who then dribbles.
2. In pairs, one player stands with their legs apart and stretches their arms. Their partner has a ball and is standing 3-4 meters away. On the coach’s signal, the player with the ball starts to dribble, moving under the arms of the standing player and then circles around them to dribble back to their starting point. Here they stop, pivot (front and reverse) and pass the ball to the other stationary player who repeats the activity.
3. In pairs, one player has the ball and the other is approximately 3-4 meters away. The player with the ball starts to dribble and stops (in a jump stop) in front of the other and gives a hand-off pass. They should have their hands above and below the ball, so that it is easy for their team mate to grab it. The other Player starts to dribble while the first player walks backward to the starting point and the exercise is repeated.
4. In pairs, one player dribbles simultaneously with two balls and on the coach’s signal passes them both to the other player, who dribbles them in turn. The activity may be performed walking and running.
5. Relay races where the player dribbles to a predetermined point, jump stops, pivots and passes back to the line (and then jogs to the line). Progress to passing on the run, without stopping and then to passing to the team mate who is on the move.
6. “Corner Passing”. Line up the players at the four corners of a half-court, one ball in each corner. At the signal, the first player of each team dribbles to the half-circle, stops, turns, passes the ball to the second in line and runs back. The team which in a set period of time makes the most passes wins.

7. The Corner Passing activity can progress to where players do not pass back to their line but pass to the next line (and run to that line). Pivots can be either to the left or right (and forward and back) and passes can be with either hand.
8. "Pair Shooting". One player shoots and the other goes for the rebound and passes the ball out (three shots each, then change). Pairs can compete against each other to be first to reach a certain score.
9. Two lines behind the end-line, one player rolls the ball forward and the other runs to retrieve it. Once they have it, they pass to the first player who has entered the court and plays a "give and go", or "pass and cut" (from right and from left, with the right and the left hand).
10. Combination of different types of dribbling, passing and shooting. Teams compete against each other to dribble to the other end, making various dribble moves along the way and scoring a lay-up. Once a player has crossed half way, the next team mate in line starts to dribble. To make the activity more realistic, have players from the opposite team stand on the court so that players are dribbling past them. These players must stand still, but can try to knock the ball away.



4.6 ADDING DEFENCE

Activities that are competitive are often the most fun, with players or teams racing each other etc. Adding a contested element usually means that players will be trying to execute the skills at a faster pace and also means that they are more likely to “transfer” the skills into game situations.

It is also important, to give players the opportunity to develop the skills in a “game like” situation, where there is an opponent that is trying to get the ball from them!

The coach can turn most of the activities into a “contested” activity by having an offence and a defence. Just like in a game a team will sometimes defend and sometimes be on offence. Therefore, if a player has the ball they must try to protect it (understanding the movements of one’s own body, good ball-handling, knowledge of space and time, etc.).

If the opponent takes the ball away, then the team must be able to get possession of it again (without fouling, therefore with good balance and coordination) and must also be able to defend the team’s basket.

These concepts are not clear to children in the beginning, so the coach must use logical game-drills, which are motivating and help children to understand:

- Players with the ball must protect it from opponents by moving the ball or pivoting. Often inexperienced players will turn their body, but not move their legs (i.e. they do not pivot) which makes it easier for the defence.
- When defending the player with the ball you have to do more than try to take the ball away. When defenders reach for the ball they will often foul or be beaten as they go off balance. Defenders need to learn that it can be just as important to stop the player moving to a certain position on the court.
- That if you are defending the player without the ball, you must stop them from receiving it (children instead try to grab the ball).

Many coaches are also quick to teach players to use “defensive footwork”, which is a lateral movement designed to take a charge. At this age, the emphasis should simply be on maintaining position in front of their opponent who has the ball (or between their opponent and the player with the ball).

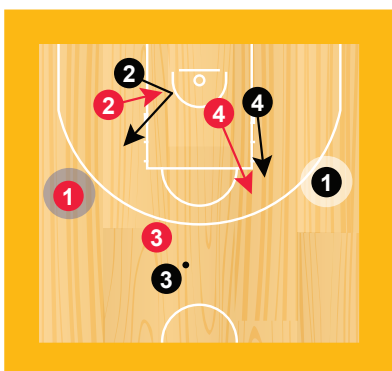
5 MODIFIED RULES

5.1 BASKETBALL ACTIVITIES WITH NO BASKETS

MODIFIED GAMES

These are games that include most of the skills needed in a game of basketball, but they are modified so that each player will get a chance to practice the skills in a “game like” environment.

These games also don't need a basketball ring, so can be played anywhere!



HOOP BALL

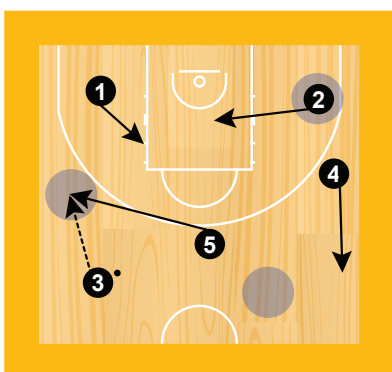
This is a game for two small teams. Shown is 4 players on each team, but you could play with 3-7 players per team. The size of the area should be adjusted depending on numbers.

Place two hoops at opposite ends of the court (shown as shaded blue and white circles). A player from each team stands in the hoop.

Players may dribble or pass the ball and the game provides an excellent opportunity to practice stopping and pivoting. Teams score by shooting the ball to their team mate who is standing in the hoop.

When a team scores, their opponent starts with the ball at half way and the two players that are standing in the hoop can swap with a team mate. If an opponent steals the ball, they can immediately try to score.

The game can be played for a specific time or up to a set score. Most importantly, don't leave the same player in the hoop all the time – the coach should change who is standing in the hoop regularly.

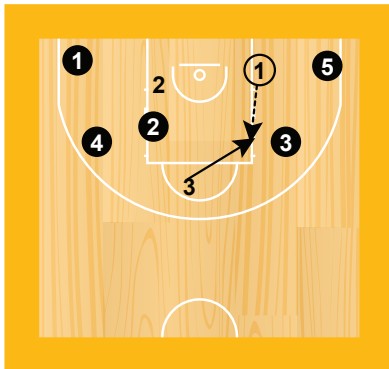


MUNNSY HOOPS

This game is ideal for teams of 3-5 (for simplicity, only one team is shown on the diagram). Place 3 hoops in the playing area (shown as shaded circles).

Similar to Hoop Ball, teams score by passing to a team mate who is standing in a hoop. However, a player can only stand in a hoop for a maximum of 2 seconds before they must step out. Any player can stand in a hoop.

When a team scores, they keep the ball! The defence can only get the ball by intercepting a pass or stealing if from someone that is dribbling (initially do not let them take the ball out of an opponent's hands). Play the game for a set time or up to a set score.

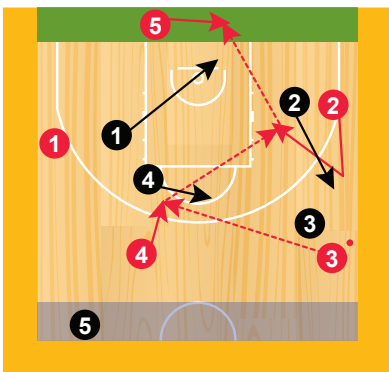


4X3 PASS TAG

In this game, 3 players are the “taggers” and the other 4 players move around a defined area (e.g. inside the 3pt line) and try to avoid being “tagged”.

The taggers pass the ball between themselves (and the coach may allow dribbling) and attempt to touch an opponent with the ball. The tagger must hold the ball in their hands – they do not throw it at their opponent.

Continue the game for a set time and see how many “tags” the taggers can get. Then play again with different taggers.



5 POINT PASSING

Two teams with the same number of players. One player from each team stands in a defined “5 point” zone (shaded in blue and green). The player can move anywhere in the zone.

The team with the ball passes between themselves, earning one point for every successful pass. If a pass is made to the teammate in the “5 point” zone, the team get 5 points!

The opponents try to intercept passes. If they do, they place the ball on the ground, for the passing team to pick up. You can play for a set time and see how many points the team can score.

The coach should regularly change who is standing in the 5 point zone. The activity can be done with no person designated to be in the 5 point zone, but allowing players to move into the zone whenever they want (as long as there is only one player in the zone at any one time).

VARIATIONS

- Whenever a ball is intercepted the passing team lose points
- If a pass is dropped or thrown away, the passing team lose points
- If the defending team intercept the pass, they now become the passing team. See which team has the most points at the end!

5.2 MODIFIED RULES IN COMPETITIONS

There are a number of rule modifications that should be considered with Mini-Basketball players.

These modifications can help to:

- Ensure that all players are involved in the play, not just “dominant” players;
- The focus is on Fun;
- That all players get to experience “success” (e.g. being able to perform a skill), regardless of whether or not their team won or lost.

EQUIPMENT

- Vary the height of the basket if possible - standard height is 10’ (3.05m)
 - U10 – 8’ high (2.43m)
 - U6 – 6’ high (1.83m)
- If the height of the basket cannot be varied, consider giving points for shots that hit the ring, the backboard and/or the net.
- The size of the ball should be varied:
 - U12 – Size 5
 - U8 – Softer size 5 ball
 - U6 – Size 3

COURT

If possible, the size of the court should be varied for players under the age of 8. Having baskets at either side of the court enables the game to be played across the court instead of along the full length of the court.

If playing across the court is not possible, playing the game in the half court can be also be effective if a portable basket can be placed at half way as this can also allow for more games to be played at the one time.

The downfall of playing a half court game with only one basket is that players lose the transition from offence to defence that is inherent in the “full court” game.

Accordingly, playing in the half court with one basket is not preferred, unless necessary to enable more games to be played at once.

SUBSTITUTIONS

- All players in Mini-Basketball must play in, at least, each half of each game. Other rules that should be considered are:
 - Stopping the game half way through each quarter for a mandatory substitution
 - Players that score 10 points are substituted off (but are allowed to come back on)
 - Players are not “fouled out” if they have 5 fouls, they may continue in the game. However, if a player is being too rough, the referees may substitute them off.
 - Allowing substitutions to be done whilst the game is being played rather than having to wait for a break in play. Alternatively, let the referee stop the game at any time for a substitution.

SCORING

The following rules should be considered

- Shots from outside the 3pt line only count for 2points (young players often don’t have the technique or strength to shoot from distance) – this removes the “incentive” for shooting long shots. To really discourage players shooting from this range, it could be made to count for only 1 point or not count at all.
- Shots from inside the keyway may count for 3 points and shots outside the keyway count for 2 points
- A shot that is made after 5 passes is worth 3 points

- At quarter, half and three-quarter time, any player that has not scored, takes one or two free throws which count towards the team's score if made
- A player taking an offensive rebound must pass to a team mate that is outside the keyway before the team can take a shot
- A player that is fouled while shooting, is awarded one point and the team get the ball back from half way. No free throw is taken.

RULE VARIATIONS

It is not suggested that all of these variations be made, however consideration should be given as to how to make the games enjoyable and engaging for all players.

- "No grab" Rule. Defensive players are not allowed to grab the ball out of the hands of another player. Defensive players may steal passes in the air.
- "Fast Break and Possession". A team that scores a basket on a fast break gets those points and then gets the ball back at half way.
- Zone defence should not be allowed until the U16 age group.
- The shot clock should not be introduced until the U14 age group. In the U14 age group, the shot clock does not start until the offensive team has possession of the ball in their front court (giving them a maximum of 32 seconds).
- "No Double Team". Only one person can guard the player that has the ball.
- In U10, the travel and illegal dribble rules should be applied sparingly. Instead, referees should give feedback to players about their footwork, even stopping the play to tell them that they committed a violation, but then awarding that team the ball back.
- "No 5 Second". No 5 second violation is called and instead, the whistle is blown and the offensive team are given the ball to throw in.
- "No Throw In". Instead of teams throwing the ball in from the sideline, the player with the ball stands in the middle of the court. They must pass the ball and cannot dribble.
- "No 8 Second". – No 8 second violation (when the offence has not moved the ball into their front court) is called. Instead, the time can be extended or the whistle is blown (so that players become aware of the rule) but the team retains the ball, with a throw in from half way.
- "Pass before a Shot". This is a common rule used in practices but can also be included in the games. A team must have passed the ball a minimum number of times (1-3 times) before being able to attempt a shot. This stops the temptation for players to rebound the ball and then dribble full court without looking for team mates. The rule can also be applied on an offensive rebound, or a player that takes an offensive rebound can be allowed to shoot straight away.
- "Points for a Pass". A team is awarded 1 point for passing the ball to a player that is in the key. Or a team may be awarded 1 point if a shot is taken after a player caught a pass.
- "Don't Guard the Throw In". Instead of being able to stand in front and defend the person throwing the ball in, their defender must stand next to them. Once the ball has been passed, both the passer and their defender step into the court and play normally.

5.3 SMALL SIDED GAMES - 3X3

BENEFIT OF "SMALL SIDED" GAMES

The modified rules discussed earlier can be applied in the traditional format of the game – using a full basketball court and with 5 players from each team on the court at a time.

Coaches should also consider using "small sided" games with young players as a way to increase their development. In either 3x3 (3 players on the court for each team) or 4x4 (4 players on court for each team) players get more opportunities to have the ball and accordingly there are more opportunities for them to practice the skills of the game.

Another advantage of "small sided" games is that there is more "space" on the court (as there are not as many players), which provides more opportunities for players to drive to the basket and to see open team mates if they are under defensive pressure.

3X3

3x3 is growing in popularity for players of all ages and there is now a World Tour and World Championships for 3x3 basketball². 3x3 is regarded as the number one urban sport in the world and provides an excellent opportunity to introduce new people to basketball. 3x3 has quickly become a recognized "discipline" of basketball, very similarly to Beach Volleyball and its relationship to Volleyball.

However, we are discussing here the benefits of using a 3x3 format to teach and develop young players not as part of an "elite pathway".

Benefits of using 3x3 for development are:

1. Emphasis on 1x1 skills
2. Develop understanding of "space" and "movement"
3. Develop understanding of man to man defensive positioning
4. "More touches" – more involvement in the play

² For more information on FIBA 3x3 events see www.fiba.com/3x3 or www.3x3planet.com

EMPHASIS ON 1X1 SKILLS

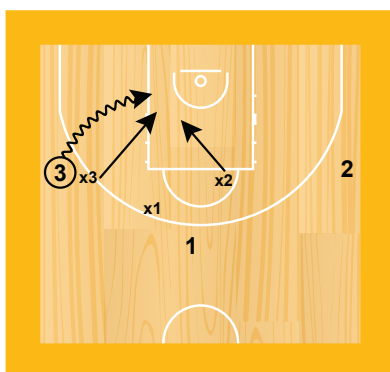
Earlier we indicated that Zone Defence (in the quarter court) should not be allowed until the U16 age group. The reason for this is that the zone defence (particularly with young players) tends to:

- limit opportunities to drive to the basket (as there are 2 or 3 defenders in position at the keyway);
- limit opportunities to pass to players cutting into the key (as there are 2 or 3 defenders in the keyway, young players often struggle to “see” the pass or to make the pass);

- force players to shoot from outside before they have developed the strength and technique to do so.

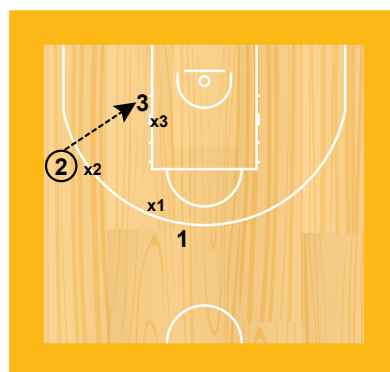
By having teams play “man to man” defence provides greater opportunity for offensive players as there will often be less defenders in position directly near the basket.

Similarly, the use of 3x3 provides more scope for players to develop their individual skills, both offensively and defensively. Some examples of this are:

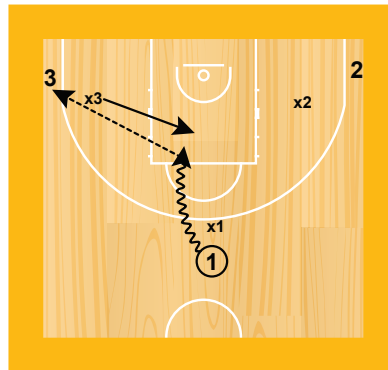


With players spaced widely, there is more opportunity for an offensive player to drive.

For example, if 3 is able to beat their opponent they can attack the basket. x2 may be in a position to help, but this would leave an open pass to 2.

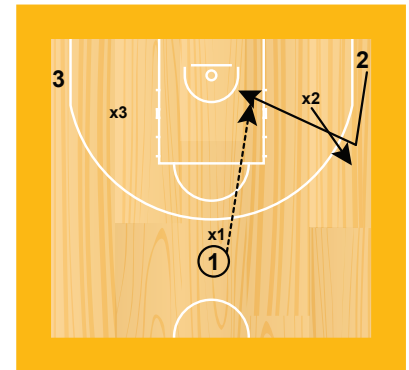


Similarly, as 3 receives the ball, neither x1 nor x2 is in a position to help so 3 has more opportunity to play.



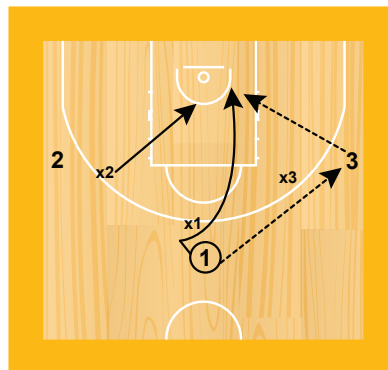
Again, with good spacing between the offensive players, 1 has a good opportunity to drive to the basket.

If x3 moves to help, it creates an easy pass to 3.

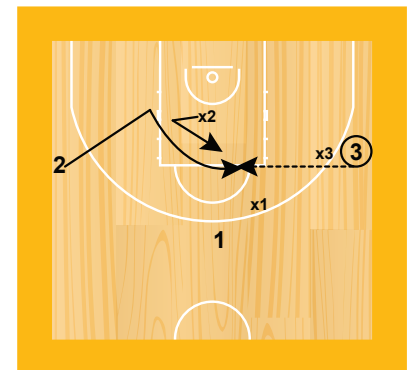


The good offensive spacing on the perimeter also provides opportunities for players to cut.

Here O2 cuts toward the ball and then "back door" cuts to the basket.



3x3 spacing gives greater opportunity for a "pass and cut", because x2 is unlikely to have moved into a position to guard 1 as they cut to the basket.



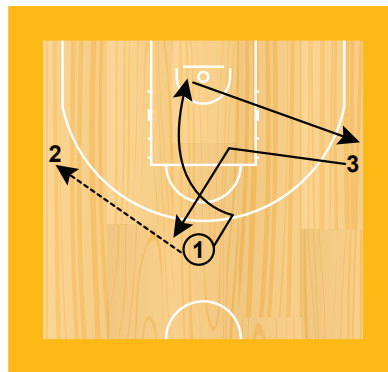
Spacing on the perimeter provides an opportunity for the defence to practice a "split line" position (x2). This provides more room for 2 to cut into the keyway.

DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF "SPACE" AND "MOVEMENT"

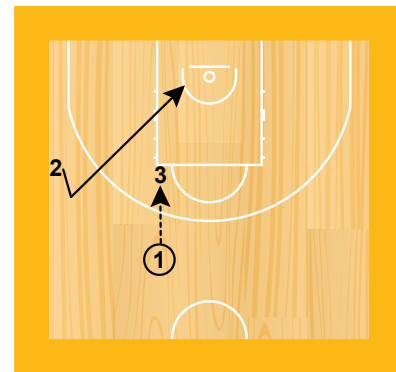
As shown in the examples earlier, 3x3 provides an excellent opportunity for players to learn, and practice, basic principles of motion offence such as:

- pass and cut;
- pass, cut and replace;
- "flash cut" to the ball;
- "back cuts" when overplayed by the defence.

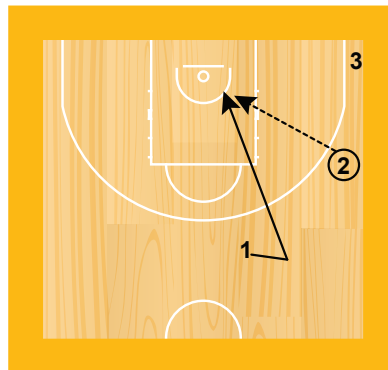
PASS, CUT & REPLACE



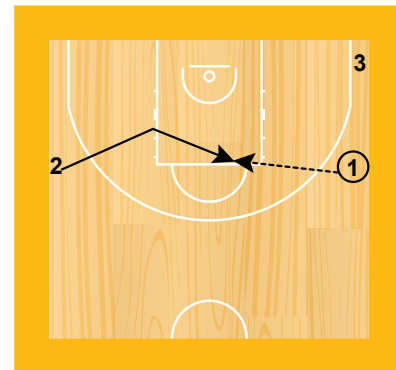
BACK DOOR CUT



BACK DOOR CUT

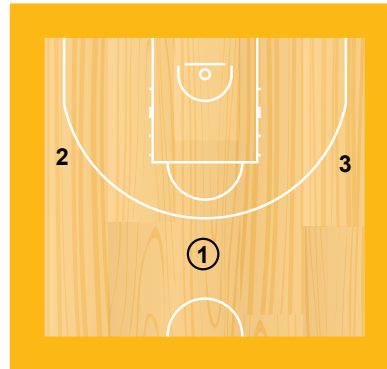


FLASH CUT



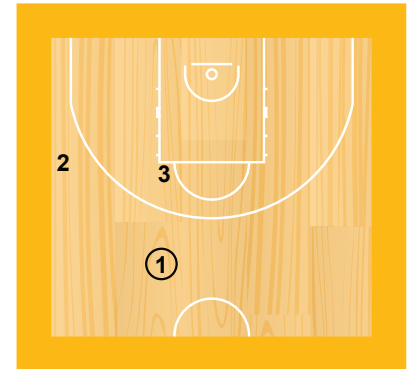
Young players in particular will commonly move closer to the ball instead of “spacing” themselves around the court.

Various alignments can be used in 3x3, which will help to emphasise good spacing, in line with “motion offence” principles that are fundamental to good team play.



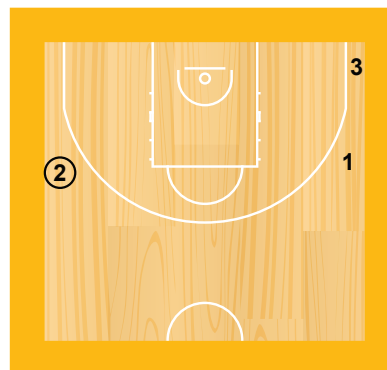
This alignment works well:

- Pass and cut;
- Back door cuts;
- Driving from the wing.



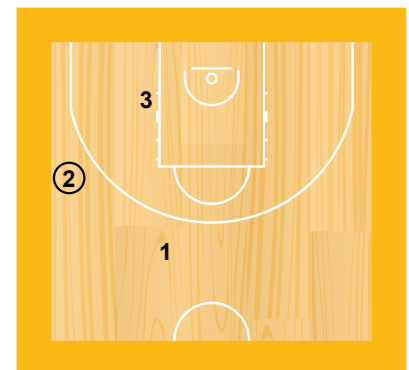
This alignment works well:

- Back door cuts;
- High Post practice;



This alignment works well:

- Flash Cuts;
- Back door Cuts;
- Driving from the wing;
- “Drive and dish”:



This alignment works well:

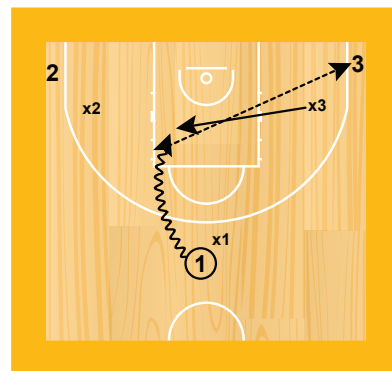
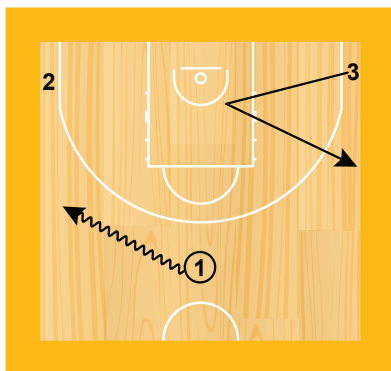
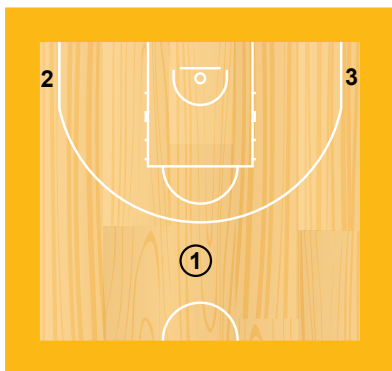
- Low Post practice;
- Back door cut

One of the reasons that young players will often “crowd” the ball (or move toward it) is that they can only confidently throw the ball a short distance so that they get closer and closer to the ball in the hope of being passed the ball.

The initial alignment shown below (player with the ball at the top of the key and the other two players in the “deep corners”) provides great opportunity for players to beat their opponent and drive to the basket as there may be little help defence.

The drawback of this alignment is that the distance between players is too great for them to be able to pass – however it does provide an opportunity to either cut or to remain in position to receive a pass from a player driving to the basket.

In whatever alignments that are used, coaches should emphasise to players the need to move with “purpose”. Rarely, should a player cut and then stand still. The principles of “motion offence” should be applied in 3x3.



This spacing is challenging for young players as the distance to pass is large. 2 and 3 are also not in a good position for a lay-up as it is hard to use the basket.

Whilst this alignment is common with more senior players it should be used sparingly with younger players.

1 does have a good opportunity to drive or to adjust their position using a dribble entry.

3 cuts and then moves back to a perimeter position if they do not initially get the ball.

If 1 drives to the basket, it provides an opportunity for 3 to receive a pass if their defender goes to help.

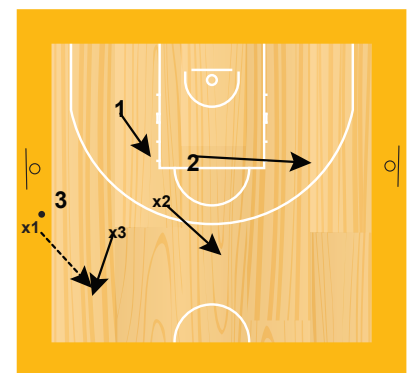
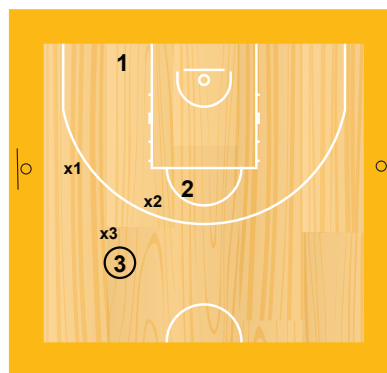
USING 3X3 WITH TRANSITION

In international 3x3, the game is played on a half court with one basket only, however with young players it is important that they also experience the transition from "offence to defence" in a full court context.

This can obviously be done on a full sized court, although with very young players that can be a significant distance, particularly with only 3 players on a side.

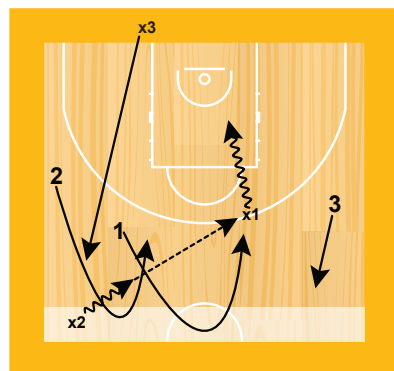
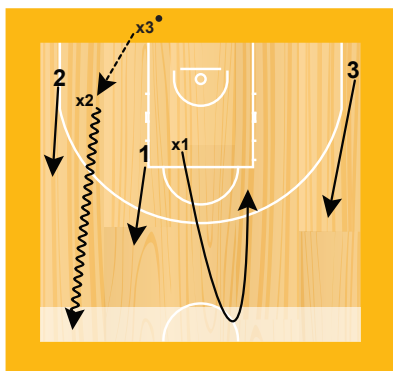
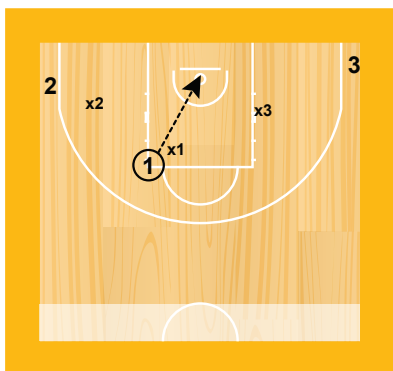
However, if a court has "side baskets", then 3x3 can be used very successfully playing across a half court, with baskets at each end. In this format, basic principles that apply in full court basketball can be applied, such as:

- Defending "Basket" and then "Ball" in transition;
- Turning or Channelling the dribbler;
- Trapping the ball as it crosses enters the front court
- Passing the ball ahead (rather than dribbling full court)
- Running wide "lanes"
- "Driving Lane" and "Passing Lane" principles of 2x1



If there is only a half court available, then coaches can simulate "transition" by including a rule that on any change in position (whether a score, defensive rebound or a steal) that all players must touch the half way line (or some other marker) before being able to play.

Importantly when using this rule, players don't have to wait for all their teammates or opponents to touch half way.



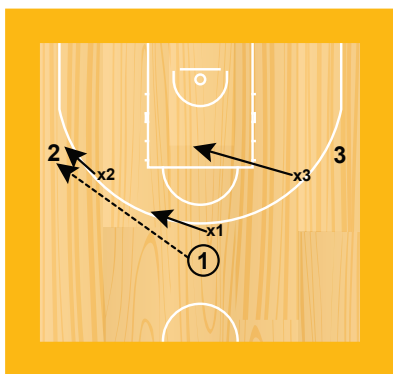
On any change of possession, each player must get both feet into the shaded area before they can participate in the next play.

After 1 scores, x3 inbounds to x2 who dribbles towards half way. All other players start to move to half way.

x1 gets to the shaded area first. Once x2 has got to the shaded area they can pass to X1 who will get an open shot. As 1, 2, 3 and x3 have not got to the shaded area they are not in the play.

DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF MAN TO MAN DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

Just as 3x3 is a great mechanism for offensive players to develop their skills, it is equally a great teaching tool for defensive skills. The ability to defend the player that has the ball and contain their penetration is very important in 3x3 as there is less “help” by virtue of their being more space and less players.



Off ball positioning (“one pass away”, “two passes away” etc.) equally applies in 3x3, as do concepts such as “jumping to the ball” (i.e. adjusting defensive position every time the ball moves).

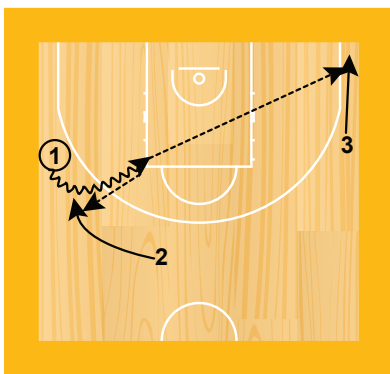
MORE "TOUCHES" – MORE INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLAY

With less players on the team there are more opportunities for each player to get the ball (or to be defending the player who has the ball). This is very much where the "fun factor" is!

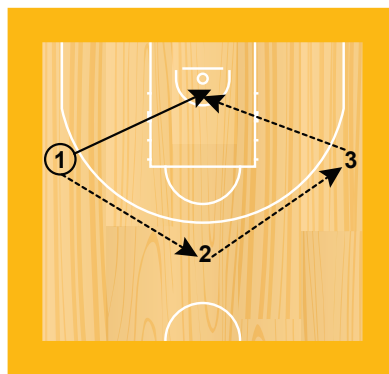
The principles of "motion offence"³ can be applied in a 3x3 context.

Coaches need to make sure that the spacing and skills is appropriate to the level of athletes. For example, "skip passes" (from one side of the court to the other) may not be suitable at this age group, but "reversing the ball" (passing it from one side of the court to the other through a number of players) achieves the same result.

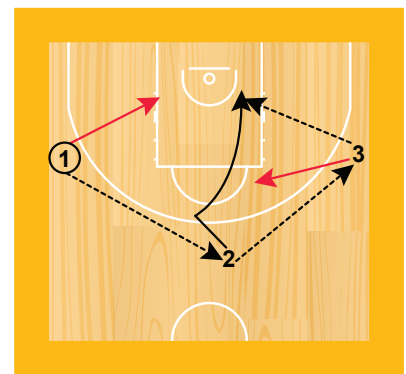
SOME EXAMPLES OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES IN A 3X3 CONTEXT ARE:



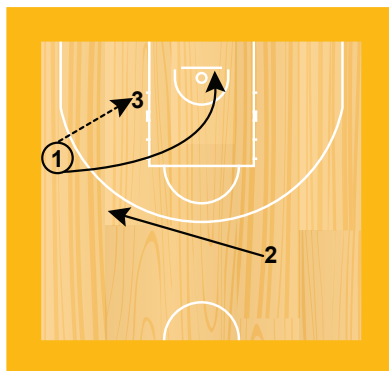
1 penetrates into the key. 2 and 3 move to a position to receive a pass.



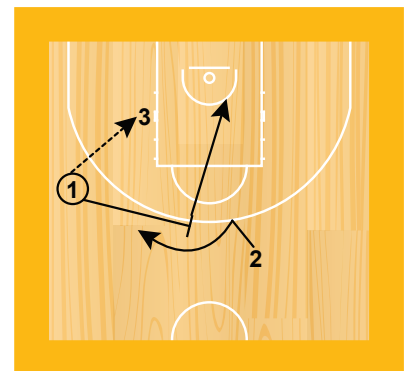
The ball is passed from one side of the court to the other. Once 3 has the ball, 1 cuts into the keyway. This is excellent to teach patience and waiting until the appropriate time to cut - 1 should wait until 3 has the ball before cutting to



Here, 2 cuts once 3 has the ball. 1 holds their position until 2 receives the ball, and then moves to a position to receive a pass.



When the ball is passed into the low post (3), 1 cuts to the basket and 2 relocates.



An alternative movement is that 1 screens for 2 after passing to the post, and then dives to the basket.

5.4 SMALL SIDED GAMES - 4X4

4X4

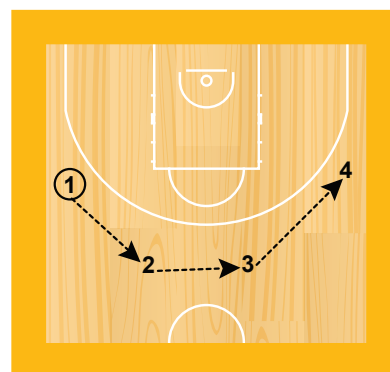
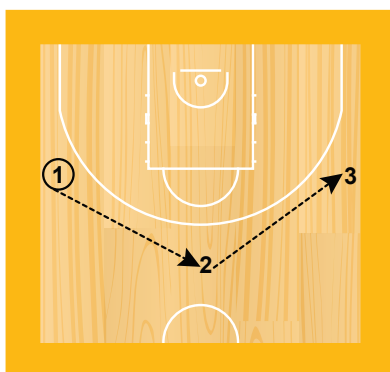
Similar to 3x3, using 4 players on each team is another great tool to help young players to develop their individual skills as well as their understanding of team concepts, such as “motion” offence or man to man defensive positioning.

INTRODUCE POST PLAY

In 4x4 there is more scope to introduce post play and all players should have the opportunity to play in both post and perimeter positions. Defensively, there is scope for using “double teams” (when two defenders guard the ball), particularly in the context of “full court” defence.

BALL REVERSAL

4x4 can also be preferable with very young players as the width of the court can be covered, with the passing distance between players being smaller, and this will encourage “ball reversal”:



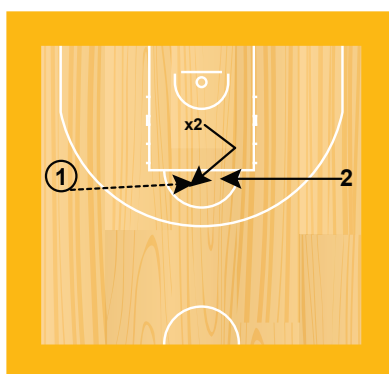
“Reversing” the ball (passing from one side of the court to the other) is an important concept. Very young players may find that easier to do in a “4 Out” alignment rather than “3 Out” alignment, as the passes required are shorter when there are 4 players.

Again, if side baskets are available, you can play “full court” but over the shorter distance across the court, rather than the length of a normal court. It is important that players learn the importance of “transition” between offence and defence.

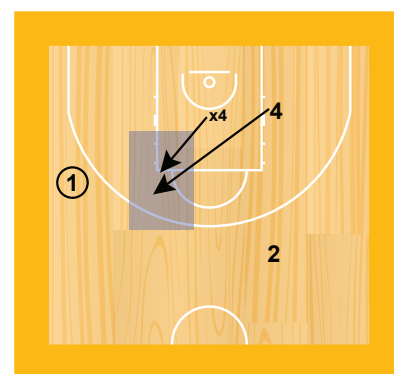
“SPACE” AND “MOVEMENT”

Again, one of the key reasons to use 4x4 with young players is that it is an excellent tool for teaching the importance of “space” and “movement” and also how to move together as a team. Without instruction, many young players will move closer to the ball, not realizing that if they then stay close to the ball it:

- (a) is easier for a defender to intercept the ball (a defender on the move will often steal the pass when their opponent is standing still); and
- (b) makes it harder for their team mates as there is no “space” to move into to try and receive a pass.

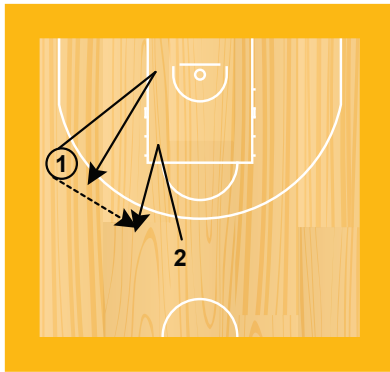


2 cuts towards the ball and then stops, waiting for 1 to pass. x2 continues to move and is able to intercept the pass

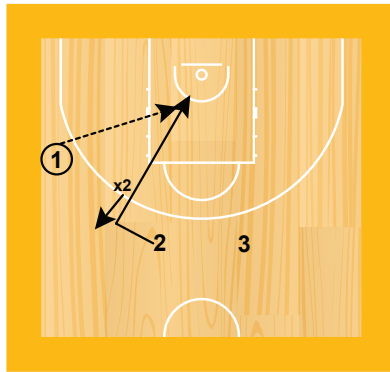


4 cuts to the ball and then stops after passing the free throw line. Their defender also adjusts their position. The shaded area is now “occupied”, limiting options where 2 could cut.

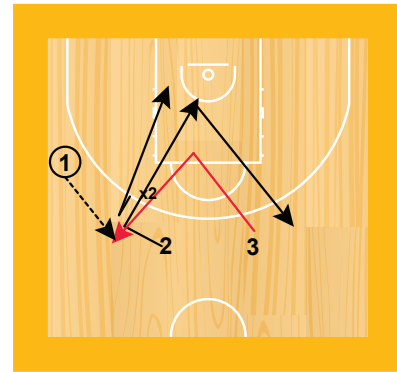
Like 3x3, 4x4 can develop an awareness of purposeful movement, as a team. The following progression can be used to introduce players and then give them plenty of practice using 4x4.



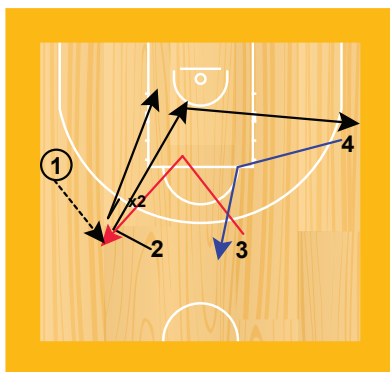
2 leads for the ball and faces the basket after catching it. 1 cuts after passing.



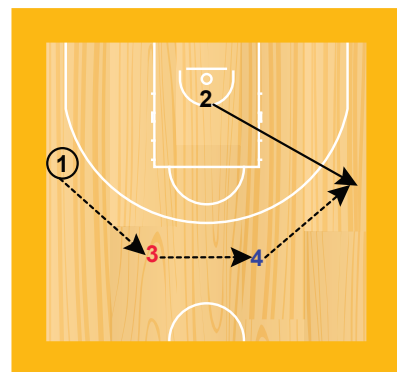
A defender is now added and 2 is encouraged to "back cut" when they cannot receive the ball on the perimeter.



After 2 back cuts to the basket, 3 can "replace" – cutting to the perimeter position. 2 then moves to the perimeter position where 3 started.



After the initial "pass-cut-replace" movement by 2 and 3. 4 now "replaces" 3 and then 2 moves to the perimeter position where 4 started.

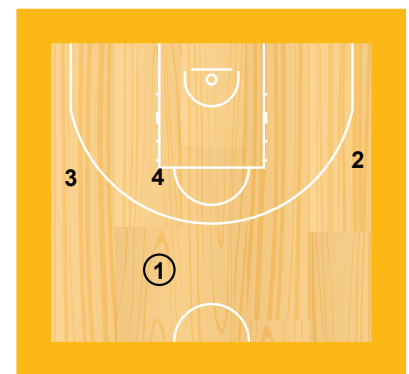
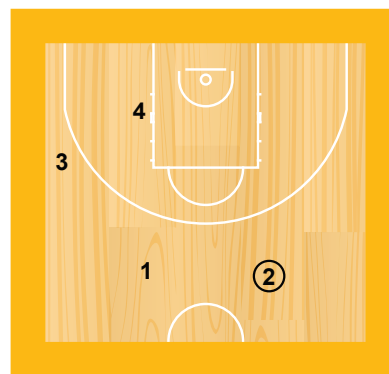
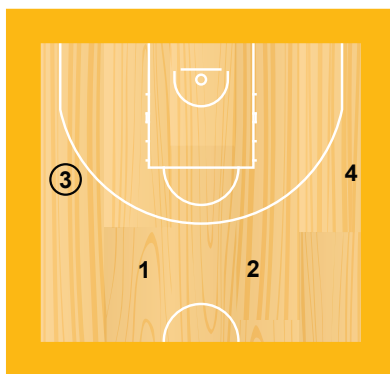


The series can be concluded by having players "reverse" the ball (pass it from one side of the court to the other)

Although the concept of purposeful movement may initially be shown without a defence or a small number of defenders, it is important to progress to and let the players “play” and, give instructions as much as possible:

- (a) “on the run” – without stopping the whole activity;
- (b) no more than a minute – which simulates a time-out.

There are various alignments that can be used with young athletes in 4x4:



“4 OUT”

This is an “open post” alignment, without a designated post player. Player may “post up” following a cut to the basket, and then move to the perimeter.

This emphasizes:

- “pass and cut”
- “flash” cuts
- “back” cuts

“LOW POST TRIANGLE”

A post player can be introduced but when working with young players, all players must have the opportunity to play in the post and on the perimeter.

This emphasizes:

- passing to the post
- cutting off the post
- back cuts (2)

“HIGH POST TRIANGLE”

Bringing the post player to a high post position helps to emphasise:

- back cuts (2 and 3)
- post moves – facing basket
- cutting off the post
- driving to the basket from the wing

