



Sideline Interactive's Basketball Drills Smorgasbord

We have been working with basketball coaches for more years than we want to admit. OK, it's been 38 years, but please keep that to yourself! 😊

During that time we have learned a lot of basketball and been exposed to GREAT coaching resources. With Thanksgiving upon us, we want to shout out a **HUGE THANK YOU** to the many coaches and athletic directors who have been so good to us through the years. Our Thanksgiving feast for you is a smorgasbord of some of the best drills we have seen over those four decades!

Even if you can't use these exact drills, we hope that they will stimulate you to think about changes that you can make to what you currently do to make them better!

Make any change in rules, structure or scoring that will help you meet the ultimate goal for all of your practice drills—helping your players improve!

As we always do, there is a link to download the entire article at the end of this post.

If you don't have time to read the entire article, but are looking for a specific type of drill, just click the link below that interests you and you will be able to see the drills for that category.

This article contains drills in the following categories:



Shooting & Scoring Drills The best shooting teams shoot a lot in practice with great technique at game pace and at the spots where they shoot in games.



Defensive Drills Our philosophy regarding defensive drills is to be able to play with perfect defensive effort, technique, spacing, and intensity



Sideline Interactive



for a given amount of time, or give an advantage to the offense. We have some examples in this section.



Rebounding Drills We only use rebounding drills to teach rebounding concepts and techniques. To really be a great rebounding team, it is important to finish all drills with the offense carrying out their offensive rebounding assignments, and that the defense always blocks out, pursues the basketball, and chins the defensive rebound EVERY TIME.



Ball Sureness Drills Coach Dick Bennett used the term “sureness” for taking care of the basketball. Here are some drills to work with your players on valuing the basketball until you can get the shot that you want.



One on One Drills Good teams have players who can beat their defender off the dribble for the good of the team. That is to say to get to the basket to score under control or get fouled, or to draw help and create an open shot for a teammate.



Passing Drills These drills also work on other areas of basketball in addition to passing and catching the basketball.



Transition/Conversion Drills To make it clear to our players which area I am referencing, I refer to going from offense to defense as conversion and going from defense to offense as transition.

Shooting & Scoring Drills

Count the number of times that your players shoot in all of your other drills and scrimmage situations each practice. That number is more than likely



going to be much less than how many shooting repetitions that you believe your players will need to have to become game proficient shooters.

Regardless of what drills you use, make sure that you are charting their shots and makes for each type of shot and that you have either a team or individual standard that your players know they are accountable to.

Here are some ideas for both individual and team shooting drills.



The Two Minute Shooting Drill

To run the drill, you need one timer for each shooter as each shooter will run the drill at their own pace.

Have the timer put 2 minutes on a stopwatch or on their phone—whatever they are using to time the drill. The timer starts the watch on the first movement of the shooter. The shooter starts 5 feet beyond the three point arc.

The shooter must make three shots as quickly as possible while the time is running down from the initial starting time of two minutes.

There are two ways to run the drill. You will need to decide on an individual basis for each player which version they will use.

The first version is that the three shots are #1 a finish at the basket, #2 a three point shot, #3 another three point shot.

The second version is #1 a finish at the basket, #2 a midrange shot, #3 a three point shot.



The players can make the shots in any order. The coaching point for the finish is that it needs to be game-like. Just shooting a shot right at the basket doesn't help your players. Make sure that the drive and use one of their at the basket finishing moves that you teach.

The coaching points for the three point shots and midrange are that they also need to be game-like. It is ok to shoot a pull up off the dribble if that is what you teach and give players the green light to shoot in games. Have the players spin the ball to themselves to simulate a catch and shoot.

Once the countdown starts from 2 minutes, the shooter needs to make the three shots mentioned above as quickly as possible. Players shoot and rebound their own shot—make or miss until they have made the three shots. It might take them ten shots to make the three assigned shots, it might take them three shots to make all three. Once the final make of the three shots goes through the basket, the timer stops the watch. Whatever time is shown on the watch is where the player will start on the next rounds.

After the three shots are made, the player must go immediately to the free throw line while they are winded. To complete this "Level" of the drill, the player must make two consecutive free throws. Only two tries each time the player shoots free throws. If the player makes both free throws, they

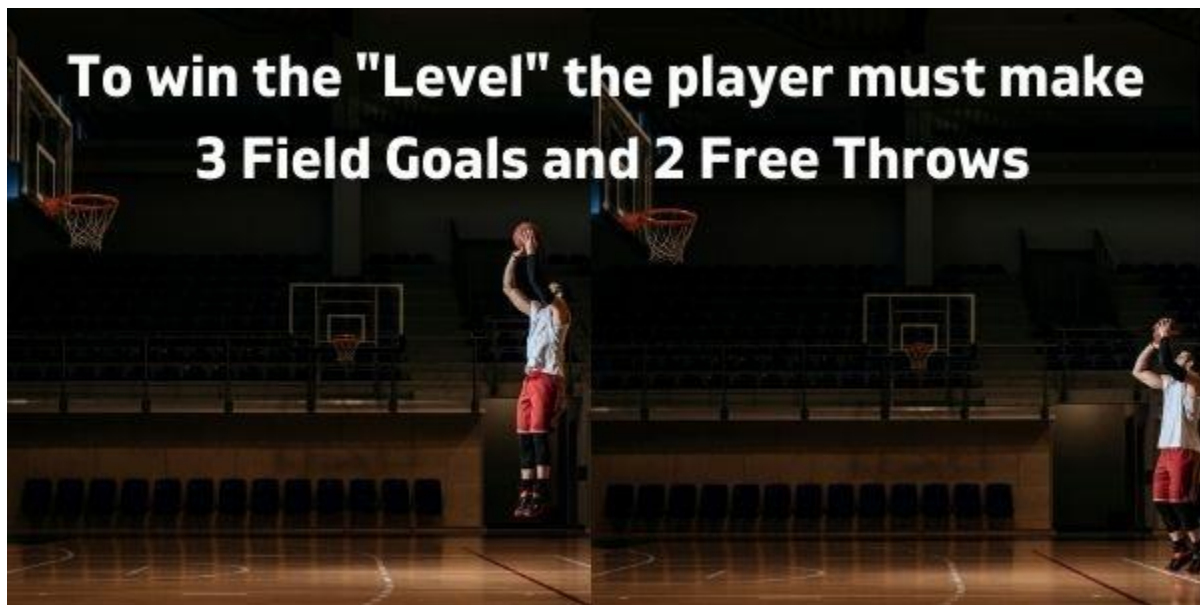


Sideline Interactive



have one level in the bank. If they miss either of the free throws, they do not get credit for that level.

The watch does not run during the free throws. However, the free throw shooter should complete each free throw in ten seconds, just like they have in a game.



Once the free throws are completed, the shooter again takes the basketball five feet beyond the arc and completes the same process. The timer again starts the watch on the players first movement to begin shooting. The watch is started from the time that was remaining on the watch when it was stopped after the previous three shots were made.

Once a level is accomplished and “In the bank” the player cannot lose it. To complete the level, the player must make the three shots and 2 free throws. If they don’t make the free throws, then the level is not completed and they must make the three shots again, starting from the time that is remaining on the watch.

The shooter continues to try and turn rounds into levels in the bank until the two minutes expires. At that end of the drill, the score the player receives

is how many levels they banked. Players can compete against teammates, or their own personal best score from previous attempts at the drill.



Green Light Shooting License **The Green Light Shooting License** is more of a concept than a specific drill. You should modify it depending on your needs and your philosophy.



Once a week during the shooting or individual skill development portion of practice, have three of your own shooting drills ready along with scores or times needed to complete the drill successfully. For each shooter who wins all three drills, they are a green light shooting license. Players who win two of the three get a yellow light. Players who complete one or none successfully have a red light.

You can define what each of those licenses means to you. Here is a place to start:

Green light: Player can shoot any shot in practice that they feel they can make for the good of the team

Yellow light: Can take open shots in practice if the time and score indicate it is a good shot.

Red light: Can only shoot shots in practice that they have a high percentage of making. You determine what that percentage is for your level; 50%, 60%, 75% or whatever you are comfortable with.

Some of the decisions that you will need to make if you install this procedure in your program are:

- 1) How long does a license last? A week, a month, longer?
- 2) Are there times outside of practice that a player can use to qualify?
- 3) How does the license for practice translate to the games?

4) What are you going to use to measure the contributions of players who are not scoring Ideas such as assists, hockey assists, block out percentage, turnover percentage, screens set, defensive benchmarks.



Defensive Drills

Our philosophy regarding defensive drills is to be able to play with perfect defensive effort, technique, spacing, and intensity for a given amount of time, or give an advantage to the offense. We have some examples in this section.



3 on 3 Guts Defensive Drill

This example shows three on three, but you can play four on four, or even five on five. The fewer the players in the drill, the more you overload the defense because there is less help.

To earn the right to play offense, the defensive team must get four consecutive stops.

Again, the defense must string together **consecutive** stops. If the defense gets three stops in a row and then the offense scores, the consecutive defense goes back to zero stops. Also, a defensive foul resets the consecutive stop count back to none.

A stop means that the offense turns the ball over or misses a field goal attempt that the defense secures the rebound.

The normal rule is that if the defense gets a stop by taking a charge, that is worth four stops and that team is off the floor. You can make a charge worth two stops, the idea behind the multiple stops for taking a charge is to motivate and reward players to take charges.



This is a full court drill. As you can see in the diagram at the left, the gray team is attacking the red team. At the end of that possession, turn it around so that gray is still on offense and red on defense, but you will be going back toward the end where gray is starting in the diagram.

When grays two consecutive offensive possessions are over, black becomes the offense and has two trips with the basketball—one down and one back. Red must stay on defense until they achieve 4 stops.

The drill is named GUTS for a reason—it is very difficult. It is physically demanding even if the defense gets stops on the first four possession. It can become grueling if they are not able to get four consecutive stops quickly.

The 3 on 3 Guts Drill can be used to generate a sense of pride in a defensive effort and definitely develops toughness. Players frequently become frustrates if they are unable to get the necessary stops. Coach your players on how to deal with frustration and use it as motivation to improve, rather than allowing it to get the best of them and hurt their performance



30 Second Shot Clock Defensive Drill

The 30 Second Shot Clock defensive Drill is designed to get your players to work together as a 5 player unit. If your level does not use a shot clock, still run the drill for 30 seconds by using the [scoreboard](#) clock. You could call it Last Possession Stop Drill or something similar.

To run the drill...

You will need to have a manager sit at the scorers table and run the scoreboard. Start the clock when the offense begins the possession and play until there is a score, a foul, or a defensive stop—even if it didn't use up the whole 30 seconds that are on the clock.

If the offense scores, gets an uncontested shot, is fouled by the defense, or gets an offensive rebound, the clock resets to 30 seconds and you play again.

If the defense gets a stop (if it is a missed shot, the defense must secure the rebound), the clock stops. The offense is then given the basketball to start another possession, but the clock does not reset. It continues from where it stopped at the end of the initial possession.



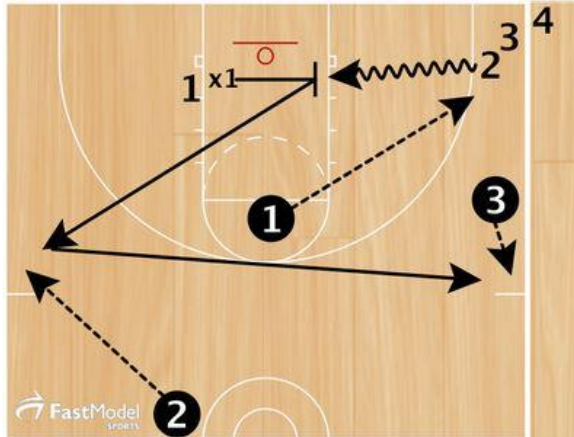
Depending upon your objectives for running the drill, you can take two or three seconds off the clock for things like deflections, forced turnovers (not simply an error committed by the offense, or taking a charge).

A good defensive team can accomplish this twice in eight to 10 minutes of real time, so if your team is able to accomplish the drill and you are looking for ways to challenge them even more, you can consider adding rules to make the drill harder on the defense such as:

1. A cutter or a post player catching the ball in the lane.
2. Not communicating to your satisfaction
3. Giving up an offensive rebound.



Defensive Hustle Drill



X1 is the lone defender in the defensive hustle drill.

Black circles 1, 2, and 3 in the diagram are coaches.

Black Circled 1 at the free throw line is a Coach who has the basketball to begin the drill.

X1 is guarding player 1 the post.

Coach then passes the basketball to player 2 in the corner who drives to the basket.

X1 takes a charge. To save injuries, a good way to do that in practice is to have the offensive player execute a 2 foot jump stop in front of the defender and gently push the ball into X1's chest. X1 can then take the charge. Key teaching point, keep your hands up when taking a charge so that you don't use your hands to break the fall and potentially receive a wrist injury.

Coach 2 immediately rolls another basketball toward the sideline. X1 should get up after taking the charge to dive and save the ball from going out of bounds.

Coach 3 throws a ball going out of bounds on the opposite sideline. X1 runs to jump save that ball.

The drills is demonstrated in the video below. Even the video is several years old, it is worth a watch as it demonstrates this version of the drill. The best version of the drill will be the one you create with tweaks that create a drill that will help your players improve the most.

Rebounding Drills



1 vs. 2 Rebounding Drill

The purpose of this drill is for the defensive players to work on block out technique when a shot is taken and for the offensive player to work on fighting through blockouts without fouling to get offensive rebound positioning.

The idea for the drill is to reward effort as opposed to giving points to the player with the rebound—which sometimes is simply due to having a size advantage.

One of the challenges of coaching is to get players to block out and pursue the ball aggressively, without fouling. You will need to blow the whistle to call fouls for anything that happens in the drill that you believe would be called a foul in a game. Each time you call a foul, award the other team one point.

To run the 1 vs. 2 rebounding drill:

Split your squad into two teams with the same number of players on each team. The diagram shows 6 defensive players, and 3 offensive players as an example. Each team will be on offense for two minutes and defense for two minutes.



The coach shoots the basketball to make a game-like miss that is soft of the iron or the rim. As the ball is in the air, the



Sideline Interactive



defenders in the front of each line sprint to get a good blockout on the offensive player.

The offensive player works to get through the blockouts to put themselves in a position to get an offensive rebound.

How the defense (red players with xs in the diagram) can score in this drill:

The defensive players do not go after the ball—they work to hold their blockouts that they have on the offensive player. They succeed if they are able to keep the offensive player away from touching the basketball until it has bounced twice. If they succeed, the defensive team (red players with xs in the diagram) receives a point.

How the offense (black numbers in the diagram) can score:

If the offensive player rebounds the ball out of the air and is able to score, his/her team receives three points. If they touch the basketball before it hits the ground, the offense is awarded two points. If they touch the basketball on one bounce, they get one point.

The winning team is the team with the most points after each team has gone on both offense and defense.

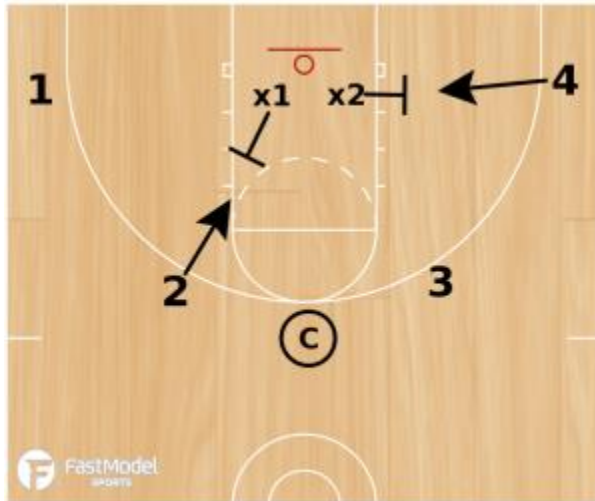


Numbered Rebounding Drill

The players behind the three point arc in the diagram are on offense. (larger numbers 1-4). x1 and x2 are on defense.

The coach in the diagram shoots the ball attempting to miss and create a rebound that is realistic for a game. At the same time the coach shoots, he or she calls two numbers from the offensive players. The two offensive players whose numbers were called go after the rebound. The two defensive players have to each block out one of the two offensive rebounders.

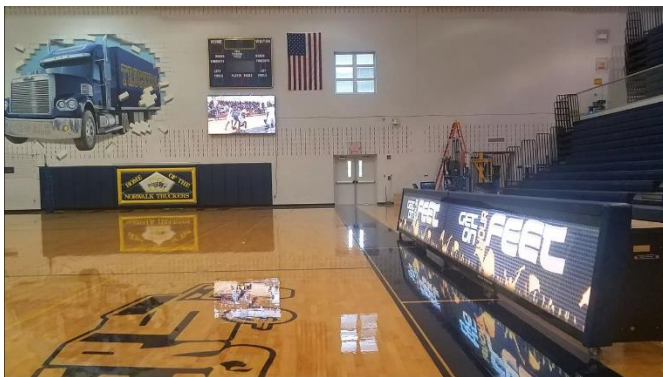
Sideline Interactive



One way to make the drill competitive is to have 1 and 2 be a team, 3 and 4 a team, and x1 and x2, the third team. The team that takes the most defensive rebounds is the winner. As with all drills that are designed to teach physicality and toughness, you need to blow the whistle to stop play if anything happens during the drill that would be called a foul in a game.

Another version of the drill is to have 3 defenders and call three numbers. You can develop a different scoring system if you decide to use this version. Another variation, regardless of how many defensive rebounders you have is to have the offense move as they would in a game before the coach calls the numbers.

Create Excitement and a homecourt advantage in Your Gym on Gameday



A scorers table or LED video board from Sideline Interactive can help you:

- * Promote your players on game night
- * Generate excitement in your gym
- * Help you raise \$10,000 or more

each year to improve your budget

And, if financing is a problem, we offer two school year, no fee, no interest financing to allow you to get your fundraising technology going and raise the money to pay for it before your final payment is due.

When we deliver your scorers table or video board, we also deliver a done for you advertising plan to help you reach your advertising revenue goals!



For a no hassle consultation on how we can help you, call **Click (832) 786-0302** or click:

[Fundraising, Excitement Generating Scoring Tables](#)

[Fundraising, Excitement Generating Video Boards](#)



Here are a couple of ways to play one on one in practice that improve both of those abilities. We do not allow our players to take bad shots in one on one drills that they would not shoot in a game. We always have a third player as an outlet that the offensive player can pass to and then cut to get the ball back to keep them from taking a bad shot. If you play with a shot clock, you will need to decide if you want to have them go ahead and get a shot, even if it is not the shot you want, if they have to beat the shot clock.

We allow five dribbles on each possession before they must pass to the outlet teammate. We have considered, but not implemented, allowing two back dribbles after the 5 attack dribbles to simulate backing out of trouble. Might be something to experiment with in your one on one drills.



Continuous One on One Drill

Continuous one on one is designed to make one on one games more like 5 on 5 games without the “checking it up top” after a basket. It is a fast moving drill with no down time.

The player who will have the ball first starts at the free throw line with their back to the basket. The defensive player can position themselves anywhere they want. The offensive player must toss the basketball beyond

the three point arc and then go and retrieve it. The defense can steal the ball as it is being tossed beyond the arc, so the offense must pass it away from the defensive pressure and move quickly to “meet the pass.” If the defense steals the pass, they are now on offense.



Once the offensive player has the ball, they face the basket and play one on one with the five dribble limit and the outlet player available as described above.

Rules for play.

- 1) As soon as there is a change of possession on a made basket, a defensive rebound, or a turnover, the player gaining possession always spins the ball out beyond the arc and retrieves it to start their possession. The spin out is a live ball, so the other player can steal it if they are in a position to do so.
- 2) Play to 10 points with baskets scored like a game—3s and 2s. Shoot free throws on shooting fouls.
- 3) Common fouls are 1 free throw for the player who was fouled and that player retains possession of the basketball.

For another variation, you can play the drill with “make it take it” rules. If a player scores, they retain possession to try to score again (after tossing the ball behind the arc) until they are stopped.

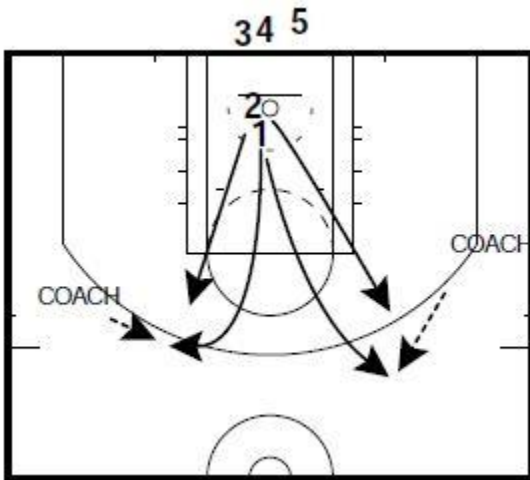


Louisville One on One Drill

The NBA 3 point arc is used to illustrate where the players should cut to catch the basketball.

The drill begins with 2 players (one behind the other) starting underneath the basket. The player in front is the offensive player (#1 in the diagram) and the player behind (#2) is on defense. There is a coach on each side of the floor at the free throw line extended. Both coaches have a basketball.

#1 cuts to either “NBA slot” (the spot illustrated in the diagram by where the cut arrow ends). 2 trails to be ready to play defense. When #1 arrives at the slot, the coach on that side of the floor passes that player the basketball and they play live one on one from that point.



Rules for Louisville One on One Drill

- 1) The players are only allowed three dribbles each time they have the basketball on offense.
- 2) The player on offense can pass to either coach and cut to get the ball back from that coach.
- 3) Dribbles do not start over after a pass to a coach. Example: if the player with the ball dribbles once, picks it up, passes to a coach and cuts. They now have two dribbles remaining once they get the ball back from the coach.
- 4) The offense gets one point if they score, are fouled (either a common foul or a shooting foul), or get an offensive rebound. If any of those things happen, the defense goes to the back of the line and the offense starts again with the next defender up.
- 5) The defense wins (and gets a point) on a stop where no foul occurred.

First player to five points wins the drill.

Passing Drills



Argentine Passing Drill

In addition to working on passing and catching while moving, this drill is a good way to condition using the basketball.

The drill has 2 versions—half court and full court. The diagram is of the half court version of Argentine Passing.

To run the drill, 8 players are paired to create 4 groups of two. In the diagram x1 and 1 are a pair, x2 and 2 are another pair, and so on. You need two basketballs to run the drill. X1 and 1 are circled in the diagram because they each start off with one of those basketballs.

To start the drill, put 1:00 on your scoreboard clock.

#1 and X1 pass their basketballs to their right to #3 and to X3. This is when the clock operator starts the clock. They then sprint and change places with each other (See the diagram). 3 and X3 then pass the basketball to the players on their right (2 and X2 in the diagram.). 3 and X3 then sprint across the floor to change spots. The process is repeated (until the one minute runs off the clock) with players catching, passing to their right, and then sprinting to the spot across the floor from them.



Each player's goal is to run hard enough to make it to the spot across from them before the basketball arrives.

Your job as a coach is to watch for how the passes are being thrown and being received. If passes are fumbled, players are not beating the ball to their new position spot, or anytime a ball touches the ground, put everyone back in their starting spots, put 1:00 back on the clock, and run the drill again.



Dawg Passing Drill

This passing drill was used by Mike Neighbors when he coached at Washington—hence the name of the drill. He is currently the head coach at Arkansas.

Not sure if he has a “Hawg Passing” version of the drill in use there.

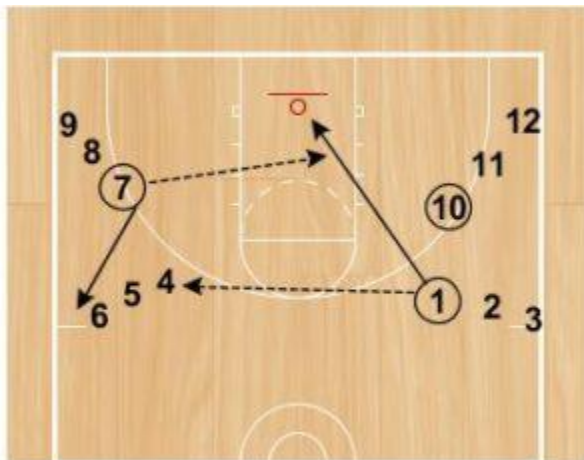


Diagram 1

The circled players in the diagram have basketball to start the drill.

Player 1 passes to player 4, then basket cuts to receive a pass from player 7. 1 shoots a layup after receiving the pass.

After passing to one, player 7 goes to the end of the line that caught the initial pass from 1 (see diagram)



Sideline Interactive



Start the drill with 3:00 to go on the game clock and 30 seconds to go on the shot clock. If you don't have a shot clock in your gym, have an assistant coach or manager count out loud.

Both game and shot clocks start running when the ball is put in play. When a team scores, they get the same number of points as there are remaining on the shot clock. Example: Shot clock started counting down from 30 seconds when the play started. The offense scores after 7 seconds have run off. They get 23 points on the scoreboard. The defensive team takes the ball out quickly and pushes up the ball up the court.

Just like a game, the 30 second shot clock starts over each time a change of possession occurs. The game clock continues to run as the basketball is in play.

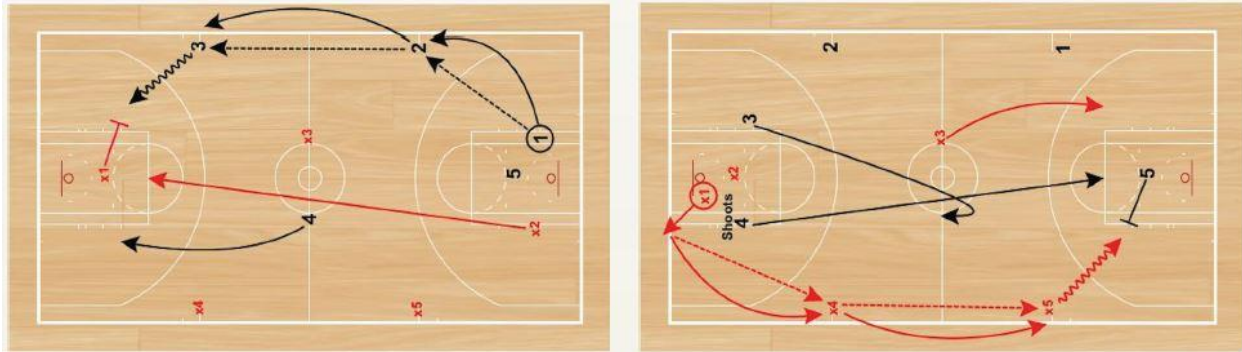
If the player is fouled in the act of shooting and makes the free throw, they get all 30 points for that possession. If a player is fouled in the act of shooting, they get to shoot one free throw. If they make it, they score the amount of points that are remaining on the shot clock.

During the video, Coach Neighbors makes the point that an offensive rebound resets the shot clock. At the time he recorded this video, that was the rule. You might consider doing a full reset to reward an offensive rebound, or just following the rule for your level of how much time goes back on the shot clock for an offensive rebound.

If a team draws two common fouls during one possession, they get the full 30 points for that possession, regardless of where the shot clock is. The purpose of this rule is to promote defending without fouling for your team.



We Need You Back Conversion Drill



Divide your team into two squads for this drill

The red squad begins with the following positions. (Refer to the left diagram above for illustrations)

- x1 is the defender (starts in the left end lane)
- x2 is the trailing defender (starts on the block on the right half court)
- x3 is ready to become the second player in 2 on 1 (positioned at half court)
- x4 is an outlet player
- x5 is the attacking guard

The beginning spots for the black squad. (Refer to the left diagram above for illustrations)

- 1 is the rebounder
- 2 is the outlet player
- 3 is the attacking guard
- 4 is at half court ready to enter the drill in transition 2 on 1
- 5 is ready to be a defender

The drill begins (see left diagram for the visual) when black 1 outlets the ball to black 2. Black 2 then passes to black 3. Black 3 and 4 attack x1. Red x2 begins to sprint back as soon as black 1 outlets the ball. X2 is sprinting to turn the 2 on 1 into a 2 on 2. This is also a good teaching point that the quickest way to move the basketball is by passing it.



Sideline Interactive



Since this is a transition/conversion drill, the offense gets 1 attempt to score.

Whichever black team offensive player ends the possession, whether with a shot or by a turnover, will be the defender who runs back on defense to join black 5 at the other end.

Whichever red player (x1 or x2) retrieves the ball after a turnover (live ball or dead ball—it doesn't matter), by means of a rebound, or gets the ball out of the net if the black team scores, will pass the ball to x4.

x4 makes the advance pass to x5 . As soon as the basketball crosses half court, x3 joins x5 in attacking the basket as the black player (either 3 or 4 whoever made the play that ended the possession) retreats to defend them.

The black team player that did not sprint back on defense rotates to the half-court waiting position. Player Black 4 in the diagram. The red player who made the initial outlet for the red attack rotates to the outlet line. The other red player who was just no defense will become the defender who will wait in the paint for the next 2 on 1.



3 on 3 Seven Seconds to Score

The setting for this drill is to simulate the first few seconds of your secondary break. Put your own actions that you like to run in early offense and the actions that you need to defend into the drill.

The offense is working on screening, quick but under control catch and shoot, and reading the defense. Defense is working on bumping cutters and defensive communication.

The offense has seven seconds to score each possession. Rotate offense and defense each possession. First team to 7 wins.

Version 1 (See first two diagrams)



Drill starts on the side of the floor that is #1's non-dominant hand.

1 dribbles at 2.

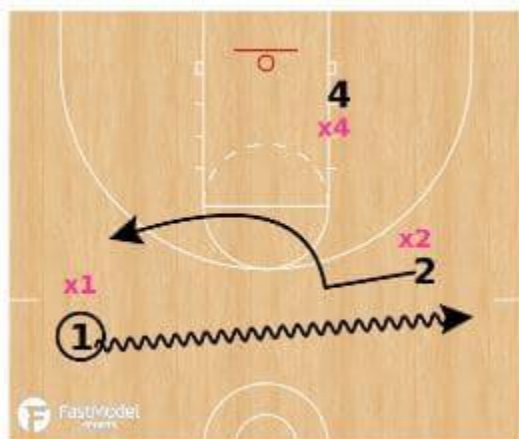
2 back screens for 4 by cutting into the lane and then up to screen x4.

4 basket cuts off the screen while 2 pops beyond the arc.



If the defense switches, you have a couple of options for mismatches to exploit.

Version 2



The seven seconds to score count starts with 1 dribbling at 2. See the diagram for the positioning.

2 sets a Ghost On Ball Screen, and empties to the opposite side.

1 passes to 2. The diagram shows a defensive switch, but that does not have to be the way that you run the drill.



2 has options: catch and shoot, catch and go, or hit 1 cutting off 4s back screen.

After 4 sets the screen he or she should pop behind the arc and be ready to catch and shoot or catch and drive

Version 3



4 sets a ball screen for 1 and then throws back to 4 who pops.

On the catch 2 sprints out the the 3-point line and then cuts backdoor.

There are 17 high level and competitive drills that you can change to make your own and add in as the season unfolds to give you some variety in your practice plans.