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KEY TO DIAGRAMS

- Offensive Player
- Defensive Player
- Basketball
- Cutting or Moving without the Ball
- Passing the Ball
- Dribbling the Ball
- Setting a Screen
- Shooting the Ball
Guarding the Ball
Step And Slide Drill

**Purpose:** This is a great drill to critique the player’s defensive form and make sure everybody is using the proper defensive stance while sliding. It is also great for strengthening the leg muscles used for defense.

1. Have your players push off their back leg and take a step with their lead foot at the same time. Pause. Then slide their back foot. Take a step. Pause. Then slide.

2. As soon as the first player starts sliding (and sliding properly), you can let the next player start.

   We would suggest that the first player be someone who you think will set a good example.

3. Each player steps and slides all the way to the finish line.

4. Once everyone is finished, have your players rest for a minute.

5. Have them repeat in the opposite direction.

*You’re going to want to go slow when you’re doing this, especially if this is the first time that your team has ever done it.* You have to make sure that they do it properly from the very beginning. Once you’ve accomplished that, they should get the idea of how to do a simple slide.

In step 1, notice that we said push with the back leg and take a step forward with the lead foot. In order to get any explosiveness and momentum while sliding, you need to push/explode off that back leg. Most coaches teach step and slide. They often forget to emphasize the push, which is vital to a good defensive slide.
Sideline to Sideline Slide Drill

**Purpose:** This drill is great to emphasize proper defensive stance and slide. It is also used to progress the slide to full speed while emphasizing form. This will strengthen your leg muscles and improve speed.

1. Line everybody up on a sideline.
2. Have everybody get in the proper defensive stance.
3. Next, have them push, step, and slide until you’re satisfied with the way everybody is doing it. Then have them jog to the opposite baseline the rest of the way.

Be vocal when doing the push, step, and slide. They should push and step on your command “Step.” When you say “Slide,” they slide their back foot back to the proper defensive position. So, you will be saying “Step. Slide. Step. Slide. Step. Slide.” Don’t say it too fast until everybody is doing it correctly.

For players 15 years and older, have them step and slide most of the way. For youth players, I wouldn’t go much further than half way.

4. Next, we have them go at 50% speed when sliding. Make sure they are focusing on form rather than speed. This time, they slide all the way across the court.
5. Next, they go back at 75% speed.
6. The final time across the court, they go at full speed.

The first time running this drill with youth kids, it is a good idea to have them go a couple at a time to make sure everybody is using great form.
Partner Sliding Drill

**Purpose:** This drill emphasizes the swing step, also known as the defensive drop step. It forces the defensive player to practice the correct defensive slide up and down the court.

1. Have your players partner up and form a line on the baseline.
2. Each group should have one basketball.
3. One player has a basketball and the other will be on defense.
4. The offensive player dribbles at an angle while the defensive player slides to beat the player to the spot and turn the offensive player. The defensive player does a “Swing Step” and continues to slide in the other direction.
5. Once, they reach half court, the next group in line can start.
6. Once you reach the opposite side, you stop and wait for every other group to finish.
7. Once everybody is finished, the partners switch and go back down the court. The player who was dribbling should now be on defense.
8. First time through, we usually go at 50% speed. Second time, we go at 75%. Third time, we go at full speed. Make sure they have their hands out.
To speed things up, we usually split the court in half and have two groups go at once.

However, the very first time you do this, I would advise you to stick with one group at a time so that you can concentrate on each defender and make sure each one is doing it correctly.
One-on-One Drill

**Purpose:** This drill is great to use for on-ball defense in the half-court setting. You can also emphasize how you want your players to shade the ball.

1. Start an offensive line at the top of the key with a defender on him.
2. The offensive player is allowed 3 dribbles (this can vary).
3. If the defensive player gets a stop by rebounding a shot or forcing a turnover, he gets two points. If the offensive player scores, he gets one point.
4. Offense rotates to defense. Defense goes to the back of the line.
5. After everybody has gone through 4 or 5 times, add up the totals and see who wins.

If space allows, split up the groups so that you get more repetitions per time frame. You can also position them on different parts of the court (wing, corner).

**Variations:**

*Half Court or Full Court* – For advanced players, you could start at half court or use the whole court.

*Make It, Take It* – You could also match up your players according to skill level, the best player with the second best player and so forth. Have them play to 7, and they get 1 point for every basket scored. The only way to get the ball on offense is to get a defensive stop (turnover, rebound). If the offensive player scores, he gets the ball again.

We really like this variation, because it forces the defense to play defense. If they don’t play hard, they won’t even get the ball back. And we know everybody loves to play offense.
**Fresno Drill**

**Purpose:** This next drill is great for working on defensive fundamentals such as stance, communication, defensive slide, defensive drop step (swing step), and taking charges. It also improves foot quickness. If energy is lacking, it also wakes up the players rather quickly. It only takes a couple of minutes to review all of these concepts.

1. The players spread across the court (enough space so they can slide). The players face you. You (Coach) should be positioned underneath a goal so that there is the maximum room for the players to slide down the court.

2. The Coach (You) will have the ball.

3. The Coach slaps the ball.

4. Players will yell, “Ball.”

5. Coach dribbles the ball with his right-hand at a 45% angle towards the players.

   The players do a defensive drop-step with their left foot and slide to their left with the Coach as if they were guarding him.

6. Coach crosses over to his left-hand.

   Players do a defensive drop-step with their right foot and slide to their right.

7. Coach picks up the ball.

   Players jump-forward and yell “dead, dead” or “ball, ball.” Choose whatever you feel is appropriate.

8. Coach takes a step towards the players.

   Players yell “UHHHH!” and fall backwards as if they took a charge.

9. Repeat the drill a few more times.

Make sure that the players are yelling “Ball” and “Dead, Dead,” etc. This prepares them for game-like situations when the crowd is noisy and they need their teammates to hear them.

Make sure they are also using the proper defensive technique.
Before Step 3, you could have the players start out with a foot-fire (while in a defensive stance, moving their feet as quickly as possible while on the fronts of their feet).

Also, when you pick up your dribble, the players could shield or mirror the ball with their hands. (ex. If you have the ball on your right-side, the player should have his right-hand straight up, and his left-hand shielding the ball).
Defensive Slide

Purpose: This drill will improve defensive form and quickness.

1. Have the desired number of players line up on opposite sides of the lane, with the same number of players in each lane, if possible.

2. When the whistle blows, the first player in each line sprints to the free throw line and makes a 180 degree turn, thus facing the baseline. He will then do foot fires (tap his feet in place) as fast as possible until the whistle is blown again.

3. When the whistle is blown again, the first group slides to the sideline closest to them. The second group repeats what the first group did in step 2.

4. The whistle is blown again, and the first group slides to the mid-court line. The second group repeats what group 1 did in step 3, and group 3 does what group 2 did in step 3.

5. Repeat this process until all groups arrive at the mid-court line, and then start all over again if deemed necessary.
No Baseline!

**Purpose:** This drill teaches players how to prevent baseline drives. Many defensive schemes depend on shutting off the baseline, even if that means that there will be more vulnerability in the mid-lane area. The idea in these schemes is that there is more help available in the middle than along the baseline.

1. Place a defensive player a little ways outside each low block, and place an offensive player with a ball at each corner. Other players are in line. The offensive players dribble to the baseline, and the defensive players cut them off with baseline foot forward and almost touching the baseline.

2. After the rotation, the defense goes to the end of the line, the offensive players become the defensive players for the next rotation, and the next players in line step up to the corner positions. The drill continues until all players have had at least five reps. Then, switch sides to practice the mirror footwork.
Perimeter Defense
One Pass Away Drill

Purpose: This drill emphasizes perimeter defense when the ball is one pass away. It’s great to use if you’re teaching positioning or if you want to work on denying the pass. It helps teach defensive awareness and promotes quickness.

1. An offensive player is on the wing. A defensive player is guarding the wing player. A coach or player is at the top of the key with the ball.

2. The offensive player cuts back and forth on the wing and the defensive player slides back and forth maintaining the proper position while one pass away.

This drill will vary upon what type of defense you want to use. If you want to deny the pass, the player/coach will want to attempt passes to the offensive player. If the pass gets through, the defensive player needs to work harder to deny the pass. So, he’ll be working on positioning and denying the pass.

If you are playing “Wolf Pack” defense to deny penetration, you are not emphasizing the denial of the pass, so it wouldn’t matter if you could make the pass or not. You want to focus solely on positioning.

You can also pass the ball and let the players go one-on-one to emphasize “On-Ball” defense as well.
One Pass Away Drill – Help and Recovery Variation

Purpose: This drill will tremendously help your team improve upon ‘help and recover’ along the perimeter.

1. Perform the drill just like “One Pass Away Drill” on the previous page.

2. Have the player/coach fake a dribble drive to make sure that the player is watching both the ball and the player he is guarding.
Two-on-Two: Defending the Perimeter Pass Drill

Purpose: Here’s a great breakdown drill to use when defending the perimeter pass.

1. There are two offensive players and two defensive players. An offensive player is on the wing and the corner of the same side. A coach/player is at the top of the key with the ball.

You’ll notice that the defensive player guarding the offensive player in the corner is two passes away. With the ball at the top of the key, he should be near the lane or with a foot in the lane as shown in the diagram.

2. At first, just have the two players cut back and forth.

3. After they have done this a few times, begin to have the offensive players cut into the lane and exchange positions. The defensive players will get to cover both positions.

Variations:

*Live:* Eventually, you can pass the ball to the wing and allow the players to go 2-on-2.
Fake Penetration:

1. The coach or passer should take 1 or 2 dribbles towards the player one pass away.
2. The defender should flash towards the ball to stop the dribble penetration. This will indicate whether or not they are watching the man and the ball.

Set Screens:

1. You can allow the players to set down screens and back screens for each other.
Basic Shell Drill (Progression 1)

**Purpose:** This drill is great to get a high number of valuable repetitions from different defensive positions on the floor. It also is great drill to teach team defense and moving on the pass.

**Shell Positioning**

1. Four offensive players will be lined up outside the three-point line. You should have four offensive players and four defensive players. Two offensive players will be on the wings, and two offensive players will be near the corners with a defensive player guarding each of these players.

2. Give one of the offensive players the ball, and then demonstrate how the defense should be positioned.

3. At first, tell your players when to pass the ball. You can either yell “pass” or blow the whistle. When the pass is thrown, your defensive players should be moving to their new position. This move should be while the ball is in flight.

   The first time showing them these positions, explain where they go and why. Go to each defender and position him exactly where he needs to be. If the players understand why they are doing something, they are more likely to do it.

   Make sure everybody keeps their knees bent in a good athletic stance.

4. After explaining the positions, you can take a step back and start this pattern:
   a. “Pass,” wait 3 seconds (and if needed, correct their positioning).
   b. “Pass,” wait 3 seconds, and repeat this about 5 or 6 times.
   c. After they get the hang of it, you can allow the offense to pass the ball when they want.
5. You should make the defense work hard for 15 to 20 seconds.

6. After that, have the players on the wings flip flop with the players near the corners. This way everybody will cover all the defensive positions.

   You will progress from “Pass,” wait 3 seconds to letting the offense pass when they want.

7. After you have done that, get an entirely new defense in there. Rotate your players until everybody has participated.
Shell Drill – Dribble Drive (Progression 2)

**Purpose:** This drill emphasizes defending the dribble drive. You also work on positioning and rotations.

1. You can allow the offensive players to dribble drive. Do not allow your defensive players to use their hands. If you have to, make them put their hands behind their back.

2. Stop the drill and show the defender one pass away how to help and stop the drive, if the player did not do so. If the player stopped the drive, stop practice and applaud it. Tell the rest of the players what he did and how he did it.
Shell Rotation Drill

**Purpose:** This drill will help your players improve their awareness on defense. It also is a quick way for all of the defensive players to cover all positions on the floor.

1. Same alignment as the Shell Drill.

2. The only difference is that when you yell, “Rotate,” the offense rotates and the defensive players have to follow their man and adjust to their new positions.

3. You yell, “Pass” as many times as you desire and yell “rotate” again.

4. On the rotation, it’s very important that all of the players go to the correct spot and don’t follow the players they are guarding.

For example, player 3 goes straight to the rim line, instead of following the player he is guarding all the way to the opposite wing.
Baseline Drive Rotation Drill

**Purpose:** This drill is great to practice defensive rotations if the offensive player beats the defender baseline. It is also great to work on defensive positioning.

1. Line up four players around the perimeter.

2. Players move to the new position when you yell “Pass”

3. When the ball is passed to the bottom wing player, the two offensive players on the opposite side switch positions.

4. When you want a bottom wing player to drive baseline, yell “Drive.”

In this drill, you do not want the players to steal the pass. This is all about positioning.
5. When the offensive player is trapped along the baseline, he will throw the pass back out to the perimeter. “On the Pass,” the defensive players will rotate back to the players they were guarding and continue the drill.

6. Put one player in the post. You can either practice with one in the high post or low post.

When we have a player in the low post, we usually have them stay on one side. That way you get the different rotations; baseline drive with a post player on the side of the ball and also on the opposite side.

You could also add a rotation twist to it. When you yell “rotate,” all the players rotate counter-clockwise to the right, exactly like the “Shell Rotation Drill.”
Complete Man to Man Drill

Purpose: This is a great drill to cover the aspects of: one pass away defense, defending the cutter, low-post defense, defensive awareness, and on-ball defense.

1. You will put your players in many different situations in this drill. You should spend a few seconds for each situation to make sure the defender is in the proper position. The first situation will be defending the passing lane and helping out with penetration.

2. Next, the wing offensive player goes down to the post as the point guard dribbles to the wing, and the defender works on post defense.

3. The offensive player then rotates to the other wing, and the defender gets to the rim line. It is very important that the defender does not follow the player he is guarding out to the wing. It’s a hard habit to break, so this is very important to drill.

4. The ball handler then throws a skip pass to the offensive player and the defensive player closes out and defends the ball.
5. The offensive player passes the ball back to the point guard from the wing and the defender returns to the rim line position.

6. After he makes the pass, the offensive player flash cuts to the middle. The defender steps up to deny the pass.

7. The offensive player pops out to the top of the key area. The defender allows the pass from the wing. To finish the drill, they can go back to one-on-one defense.

Make sure to have the person with the ball fake penetrating a few times so that you can determine whether or not the defensive player is watching the player he is guarding and the person who has the ball.
Post Defense
Post Drill – Pass From the Top of the Key to the Wing

**Purpose:** This drill focuses on great post position and transitioning as the ball is passed back and forth between the top of the key and the wing.

1. Have a player or coach at the top of the key. Have another coach or player on the wing. You want a player on the block on offense and another player on the block on defense.

   First, explain how you want your post defenders positioned when the ball is at the top of the key.

   You can either demonstrate it yourself or have a player demonstrate it.

2. Pass the ball to the wing. Show them how you want to defend when the ball is on the wing or below the free throw line extended (3/4 front or full front).

3. Pass the ball back and forth a few times, then rotate other players into the drill. I usually rotate from top of the key, to the wing, to the post offensive player, to the defensive post player, with a line starting at the top of the key.
Shell Drill w/ Low Post

**Purpose:** This drill adds a fifth player into the Shell Drill, which allows your team to work on defending players in the post area under normal half-court conditions.

1. Have the players assume their shell positions.

2. Progression should go:
   - Pass on Coach (You)
   - Pass on their own
   - Rotate all players
   - Allow Dribble Drive
   - Practice Baseline Rotation Drill w/ Low Post on ball side
   - Go “Live”

Here is a review of the baseline drive rotations:
3. Make sure to rotate the players every 15 seconds or so. That way, everybody gets repetitions in the post area. If short on time, you may only rotate the post players into the post area. Everybody needs to practice in the post, so it is important to get everybody repetitions at one time or another.
**Post Drill – One-on-One In the High Post.**

**Purpose:** This drill will teach high post defense positioning and transitioning when a pass is made.

1. Show your players the proper position when the ball is at the top of the key.

2. Have the player pass the ball to the wing. Show your players the proper transition behind the post. Demonstrate the defense from the high post which should be a 3/4 front.

3. When everybody understands this new concept, you can pass the ball back and forth a few times to drill this.
**Shell Drill – High Post**

**Purpose:** This incorporates the high post into the shell drill.

1. **Progression:**
   - Pass on Command
   - Pass when they choose
   - Rotate
   - Dribble Drive
   - Baseline Drive
   - Go “Live”

**Review on Rotations for Baseline Drive:**

- Notice how all the rotations are the same for the 4 perimeter defenders as in the Baseline Drive Drill.

- Player 5 shuffles in front of the offensive player in the high post to deny him the pass and stop him from cutting to the basket.
**Transition Drill: Low Post to High Post, High Post to Low Post**

**Purpose:** This drill helps teach the proper way to transition when the offensive player goes back and forth between the high and low post areas.

1. When first showing this drill, make sure to go step-by-step as you display the transition you prefer, which is either behind or in front of the offensive player. Start with the transition from the low post to the high post.

2. Next, drill this transition with all your players.

3. You need a coach or player on the wing with the ball. When the player with the ball slaps the ball, the offensive player makes a cut to the high post. The player on the wing should make an entry pass if it’s open. That way, it pressures the defensive player to properly deny the ball.

4. After everybody does this correctly, show them the proper way to transition from the high post to low post. I recommend to transition in front of the post player.

5. Drill this transition until everybody is doing it right.

6. After that, you can have the offensive players cut back and forth between the low post and high post on your ball signal.

7. After that, let them go live and have the offensive player cut back and forth trying to establish position to get the ball.

**Progression:**

- Low Post to High Post
- High Post to Low Post
- Back and Forth on your command
- Live
Shell Drill – Two Offensive Post Players

Purpose: This helps the defense face a different situation in which there may be 3 wing players and 2 post players. It’ll help them work on their positioning and rotations.

1. Progression:
   - Pass on Command
   - Pass when the players choose
   - Rotate
   - Dribble Drive
   - Baseline Drive (All these rotations can be seen in the tactics section)

2. You can also run this drill with two players in the low post and two players in the high post.
Post Double Down

**Purpose:** This drill teaches players how to properly double down on the post player.

1. The coach (or a player) starts on the wing with a basketball.
2. An offensive and defensive player are on both the block and the free throw line.
3. Another offensive and defensive player are on the opposite wing of the coach (optional).
4. The coach (or player) throws the ball to the offensive player on the block.
5. Then the defensive player at the free throw line goes down and double teams the post player.
6. If you choose to have the offensive and defensive players on the opposite wing, the defensive player rotates and guards the offensive player at the free throw line, taking over the spot vacated by the double-teamer.
7. Repeat and rotate at your discretion.
Transition Defense
Whistle Drill

**Purpose:** This drill helps improve transition defense, which we all know is a very important aspect of great defense.

1. Divide your squad into teams of five. The teams should be scrimmaging like normal.

2. When the coach blows the whistle, the offensive player with the ball sets it down. This will be treated as a turnover, and the offense hustles back to play defense. They should sprint back to the lane and locate the man they are guarding.

3. The defender closest to the ball picks it up and gets it to the point guard. The point guard pushes the ball up the court and tries to get a quick fast break basket.

4. If a basket is scored, play it like a regular game. If not, set up the offense and repeat the first three steps.

**Variety** - Make sure to vary who has possession of the ball and the location of the ball when you blow the whistle.

**Communication** - Make sure your players are talking when getting back on defense. “I got him!” “I got Jimmy.” To make sure they communicate, you can also mix it up by telling them they have to guard somebody different every time you blow the whistle. This will force them to talk!
3-on-3 Transition Drill

**Purpose:** This is great drill that adds fun and competition to your work on defensive transitioning. From an offensive perspective, it helps you work on the fast break as well.

1. Have three players on defense lined up across the free throw line extended.

   Have three offensive players across the baseline, middle person with the ball.

2. On the whistle, the three offensive players start a fast break towards the opposite goal.

   The defender in the middle sprints all the way back to the lane to become a safety valve on defense. The defensive player on the left wing sprints toward the 3-point line with the intent of stopping the ball. The defensive player on the right wing sprints to touch the baseline and has to sprint back on defense. Initially, the defense is at a disadvantage.

3. If the offense scores or a change of possession occurs, the offense and defense switch roles and continue the drill in the opposite direction.

*To add competitiveness,* you can use a point system. If the offense scores before the third defender hustles back, they get 3 points. If they score after the third defender gets back, they get 2 points. You can reward the defense 3 points for any stop.
Recovery Drill

**Purpose:** This drill is designed to build defensive speed, help your team recover quickly, and stop the offense from getting an easy bucket. An indirect benefit from this drill is getting your players in better physical condition.

1. Divide the court into three lanes, positioning cones on each side of both free throw lines and the mid court line.

2. Players will be positioned on the corners of the baseline, and, on the whistle, the first player in each line will sprint to the first cone.

3. Once this player reaches the first cone, the next in line starts.

4. After reaching the first cone, players slide step to the sideline, ending half way between the first and second cones. Then they start sprinting and repeat this process until they reach the other baseline.

5. Once players reach the far end of the court, they go to the center lane (in between the cones) and back-pedal to half court.

6. Once to half court, they turn around and sprint back to the opposite line they started in.
Three-on-Two, Two-on-One Break

Purpose: This drill teaches players how to defend when at a disadvantage. It also teaches the offense how to execute with an advantage.

1. Put two players at one end of the court, and three at the opposite end. The group of three should have a basketball.

2. On the whistle, the player with the ball dribbles toward the defense, and the other two offensive players sprint ahead of the dribbler, spreading out on each side. You can also pass the ball between the three players.

3. The player with the ball dribbles until one of the defenders commits to him.

4. Then he passes the ball to one of the open offensive players on either side, ideally, for a lay-up. If an extra pass is needed, tell your players to make that pass.

5. The intelligent defensive strategy is for the defender at the top to take on the dribbler no higher than about the free throw line. The back defender should cover the first pass, and the top defender should open up to the ball and sprint down the lane to prevent the second pass to the offside cutter. Otherwise, there will be nothing but easy lay-ups.
6. The player who starts in the middle sprints back on defense. The other two offensive players stay on that end of the court to play defense against the next group of three that come down the court.

7. The two original defenders become offensive players and execute a two-on-one break.

8. After, the two players score or the new defender secures a rebound or forces a turnover. The next group of three starts the other way.
Pride Drill

**Purpose:** This drill builds intensity into the defensive transition game. It corrects the tendency some players have to linger around after a possession change trying for unlikely steals.

1. This is a full-court drill. It starts with five players close to the basket. A coach shoots, the players rebound and repeatedly put the ball in the hoop. There is another coach with a ball near the half-court line.

2. On the coach’s whistle, the players immediately turn and sprint to the opposite basket. As they clear, the coach gets the ball for the next rotation.
3. The first player down yells "Basket!" and takes up position rim line. The second player down yells "Ball" and finds the coach, who by this time has begun dribbling into the half-court from his position near the half-court line shown in the last sequence. The rest of the players continue to sprint into the key area and turn, assuming a defensive stance. The coach puts up a shot to end the rotation.

On the opposite end, the next group is in position ready for the next rotation, which begins when the coach puts up a shot.

You can make this more interesting by assigning a score for the overall rotation. Give up to two points for the energy of the put-back phase, a point each for the proper position and yelling for the 'basket' and 'ball' players, and up to two points for everybody sprinting hard right on the whistle and all the way to the opposite key. Establish an overall point goal and repeat the drill until the total is reached.
Close Out Drill

**Purpose:** This drill is great for working on proper close outs and on-ball defense.

1. First, demonstrate proper close out technique for your players. The defensive player starts out on the block with the ball, and then passes the ball to the offensive player on the wing.

2. The defensive player sprints halfway to the offensive player and then breaks down into short, choppy steps to slow his forward momentum and close out.

3. The offensive player fakes a shot, and then brings the ball down. The defensive player has his arms raised to contest the shot. If the offensive player is left-handed, the defensive player raises his right hand to defend the shot, and extends his left hand out to defend the pass or dribble.

4. At this point, the offensive player dribbles twice to one side or the other, and the defensive player’s goal is to prevent the dribbler from getting by.

5. Rotate every two or three repetitions.

6. You can also have a coach or player throw a pass from the opposite wing.
Baseline Close Out Drill

**Purpose:** If you are short on time or just want to go through a brief review on close outs, this drill is great to get a lot of repetitions done in a short amount of time.

1. Line up the defensive players on the baseline with the ball. Line up the offensive players at the free throw line extended or a little farther back.

2. The defensive players pass the ball to the offensive players.

3. As soon as the defensive player passes the ball, he sprints and, when within 7 to 9 feet of the offensive player, he uses short, choppy steps to slow his forward momentum and close out.

4. Have the offensive players take the ball to the baseline and repeat the drill as the defensive players. Keep rotating in this manner.
2-on-2 Closeout Drill

**Purpose:** This drill enables you to work on rim-line defense when the ball is two passes away, close outs, and on-ball defense.

1. One player has the ball on the wing. A defender should be guarding him. Another offensive player is on the opposite wing with a defensive player guarding him.

2. The offensive players pass the ball back and forth a few times. One defensive player will close out while the other ones sprints to the rim line.

3. After a few passes, you can let them play 2-on-2. Do not allow the defense to steal the initial passes until you give them permission to go “Live.”

**Variation:** You can also add a cut to the line after each pass to practice defending the cutter.
Shell Closeout Drill

**Purpose:** This is a great way to incorporate close outs into the Shell Drill.

1. Line up four defensive players underneath the hoop. Line up four offensive players on the perimeter.

2. Coach will stand between the defensive players under the hoop. Coach passes the ball to one of the offensive players and everybody sprints to the appropriate position.

3. From there you go live into the Shell Drill.

   Make sure that the defensive players are lined up appropriately, so they don’t have to cross each other to get to their men. Otherwise, the drill becomes a mess.
**Corner Close Live**

**Purpose:** This drill provides practice in closing from a distance at the baseline angle and playing effective one-on-one defense. Emphasis is on not getting beat on a drive for a lay-in, and you can add your own defensive emphasis if you wish. For instance, you could insist on not giving up any base line drives.

1. The drill starts with the defender throwing a pass to a player at the top of the key, who then throws a pass to an offensive player in the right corner area. As soon as he throws to the top of the key, the defender sprints to close on the offensive player in opposite corner.

   They should play one-on-one live. The offensive player is limited to four dribbles. After the initial shot, the ball remains live until the defender gets the rebound or the offense scores, but the offense is limited to a single dribble per rebound.

2. The rotation through the drill is as follows: Defender goes to the passing line at the top; Passer at the top joins the shooting line; and the Shooter joins the Defender line. The diagram shows the second rotation of the drill with players in proper lines.
Rebounding
One-on-One Rebounding

**Purpose:** This drill is used to focus on each player and his rebounding technique. It gives you an opportunity to watch and perfect each player’s technique.

1. Player 1 is facing the offensive player – about 2- to 3- feet of separation is appropriate.

2. A ball is placed about 5-to-10 feet behind Defensive Player 1.

3. When you say “Go” or blow the whistle, Player 1 tries to keep the offensive player from getting the ball for 3 seconds.

   **Instruct players not to dive for the ball. They can break a wrist or lose a couple of teeth.**
Shell Rebounding Drill

**Purpose:** This is another great way to incorporate more defensive principles into the shell drill. I like this because it is more game-like and presents similar positions and scenarios the defensive players will face.

1. Do this just like the shell drill. Have the players pass the ball either on your command or when they choose.

   For this drill, do NOT allow any dribble penetration.

2. When you yell, “Shot!” (You could also blow your whistle) the offensive player with the ball will shoot. Each defensive player needs to locate the player he is guarding and block him out.
Three-on-Three Block Out Drill

**Purpose:** This drill is great to use if you don’t have enough players to work on Shell Drill Rebounding. It is also a nice variation to use to keep the players motivated.

1. Split your players into groups of three.

2. Have one group on offense, the other on defense.

3. The offensive players should scatter around the 3-point arc area. The defensive players should be about 5 or 6 feet away.

4. A coach/player can be positioned with a ball somewhere else on the court. When the coach/player shoots the ball, the three defensive players attempt to block out the three offensive players. Everybody goes for the rebound.

5. If the offensive team gets the rebound, they get 1 point. If they get the rebound and score, they get 2 points. The defensive team gets 1 point for the rebound.

6. You can have them play to whatever point total you feel is appropriate. The losers do pushups or run sprints. You can either have offense and defense switch after every shot or have one team on defense until they get a defensive rebound.
**Close, Contest, Board, Outlet**

**Purpose:** This drill provides practice in interior defensive, rebounding, and transition skills. Basic correct habits are reinforced, and you can keep several players active simultaneously. Closing under control, contesting shots by jumping straight up, turning and boxing out, rebounding with explosion, and performing an outside pivot to deliver an outlet are specifically addressed.

1. Two offensive players, each with a ball, are near the elbows. Two defenders are in the low blocks. Two coaches are in front of the rim about three feet out, each with a ball. Two players occupy the outlet pass positions on each side of the court. Players 5 and 6 are in line.

2. The drill begins with the defenders closing on the players at the elbows, who pretend to do a jump shot. The defenders contest the shots. Then, turn and box-out.
3. Then the coaches toss the balls up off the backboard, and the defenders leap to gather the rebounds, using proper form (ball gripped firmly with elbows spread). They forward pivot to the outside and make an outlet pass to the players in outlet position, who are yelling "Outlet, Outlet!"

4. The two fake shooters give their balls to the coaches and head down to the low block as defenders for the next rotation. The outlet players dribble to just inside the elbows as the next fake shooters. The players in line become the new outlet players, and the defenders head to the back of the opposite lines (Notice that they take the long way). Repeat the drill until all players have gone through both sides five times.
Defending Cuts: Perimeter & Post
1-on-1 Cutting – Top of the Key

Purpose: This drill helps teach the fundamentals of defending the cut.

1. You can do this by having one player at the top of the key with a ball, one player guarding the ball, and one player on the wing.

2. Have the player at the top of the key pass the ball to the wing. As soon as the ball is passed, the offensive player at the top of the key will make a basket cut in front of the defender.

3. The defender should have already placed himself between the ball and the player he is guarding. This way, he denies the entry pass. The defensive player should already be in ideal defensive position if he “Moved on the Pass.” This would make an open cut to the basket very difficult. All your player would need to do is shuffle down with them all the way through the lane to prevent an easy pass.

4. The offensive player should clear out to the opposite wing. The defensive player should stay on the rim line.

A variation you could add is to fake the dribble drive to make sure that the defensive player is watching the man and the ball at all times.
1-on-1 Cutting – Wing

Purpose: Here’s another great drill that teaches the defender to guard a cutter from the wing.

1. Start with the offensive player on the wing and a coach or player on the opposite wing with the ball. Position a defensive player on the rim line guarding the offensive player without the ball.

2. On your command or when the players are ready, have the player from the opposite wing cut to the free throw line. The defensive player should step up to deny this pass.

3. The offensive player has three choices: Cut to the top of the key, back cut, or do a face cut.

4. The defensive player’s goal is to take away all three options. This also a great way for your offensive players to work on their cuts.
Fogler Drill

**Purpose:** Defending the cut within the Shell Drill.

1. You need four offensive players and four defensive players. This is just like 4-on-4 Shell Drill except a basket cut is being added.

2. On your command, the offensive players passes the ball around the arc. Whenever the ball is passed to the corner (Player 3 or 4 in the diagram to the right), the person throwing the pass cuts to the basket. After the cut, the player clears out to the opposite side and the other players rotate over.

Do not allow defenders to steal passes made around the arc. Allow them to steal any penetrating passes to the cutters.

3. After the offensive player clears the lane and cuts to the opposite side, 99% of the time the defensive player will instinctively follow his man to the other side of the court. You do not want your players to do that. You want them to stop in the lane and get in their help position in an open stance that allows them to see their man and ball.

4. Continually pass the ball around the arc until you are satisfied that your players understand how to defend the cutter on the off-side.
Post Cuts – Weak Side Post to Ball Side Post

Purpose: Another great drill used to teach how to defend post cuts from the weak side to the strong side.

1. Have a coach/player on the wing. You need one offensive post player and one defensive post player.

2. The offensive post player starts on the opposite block. The defensive player starts in proper defensive position. One step away near the rim line with the front foot and arm in the passing lane.

3. When the wing player slaps the ball or gives the offensive player a wink, the offensive player cuts across the lane.

4. The defensive player slides into 3/4 front or full front depending on what you choose to teach. It’s usually easier to go from a full front to a 3/4 front.

5. Do this a couple of times, then rotate.
Post Cuts - Diagonal Cut: Low Post to High Post

**Purpose:** This is another post-cut drill that emphasizes how to defend diagonal cuts in the post.

1. The offensive player starts on the opposite block.
2. The defensive player is in proper position.
3. The offensive player cuts to the high post, ball side.

   When guarding the cutter, the defensive player should use an arm bar and his body to make the offensive player curve the cut. The diagram above shows the curved type of cut you want the offensive player to make.

4. Do this until the defensive player is guarding the cut correctly.
Post Cuts – Fake High, Go Low Cut

**Purpose:** Another post-cut drill that shows how to defend the cut when the offensive player fakes high, then makes a cut to the opposite block.

1. Start with an offensive player on the opposite block and defender in proper position.

2. The offensive player fakes high.

3. After this, he cuts below to the opposite block. As this happens, the defensive player should turn his head and body toward the cutter and establish denial position by using what was his back leg as his front leg, his previous arm bar as his new defending arm, and his previous defending arm for his new arm bar.

4. The defender, denying the entry pass, slides over to the block with the offensive player.
1-on-1 Live Post Defense Drill

• After teaching how to defend the post cuts, you can go live into a drill where the offensive player starts on the opposite block and does whatever he wants. The defensive player has to react appropriately.

• You can also incorporate a fake dribble drive to make sure the post defender is keeping his eye on the man and the ball.
Defending Screens
Ball Screens: Two on Two

**Purpose:** This drills the players on proper technique to use on screens set on the ball.

1. First, you’ll show them the technique you want them to use when defending ball screens:
   - Underneath
   - Hedging
   - Switching

2. You need two players on offense and two players on defense.

3. The offensive player without the ball sets a screen for the player with the ball.

4. The offensive player dribbles off the screen.

5. The defensive players defends the screen appropriately depending on your coaching philosophy. In the diagram sequence on the right, we are demonstrating hedging through the screen. Defensive Player 2 steps out to stop the ball, then recovers back to the player he was guarding.

6. After they have defended it properly, rotate so the player with the ball is now the screener. The screener is now the ball handler.

7. After that, switch offense and defense and repeat the sequence.

Make sure the defensive players are communicating. The defensive player guarding the screener needs to yell “Screen right” or “Screen left,” depending on where the screen is coming from.
3-on-3: Doubling Screens

**Purpose:** This drill is great to use to practice trapping or doubling screens on the ball.

This is very similar to the 2-on-2 drill. Now, instead of just hedging the screen, the player guarding the jumps out and double-teams the ball along with the player guarding the ball. The third player’s responsibility is to get near the lane to take away the pass to the player left unguarded.

1. You can have a player on top, on the wing, and in the corner like in the diagrams to the right. You could also have two players on opposite wings with a player on top.

2. The middle offensive player will always have the ball.

3. Designate which player you want to have set the ball screen. In the first diagram, the player from the corner sets a screen on the ball. Players 2 and 3 double team the ball. Player 1 drops back into the lane to defend the roll by the screener.

4. In the second diagram, the screen comes from the top of the key. Players 1 and 2 trap the ball. Player 3 drops into the lane to defend the roll by the screener.
Shell Drill: Ball Screens

Purpose: Here is an easy way to incorporate ball screens into the Shell Drill.

1. On every pass, the offensive player follows the pass and sets a screen for the player that receives the pass.

Sometimes, the players setting the screens gets in a rush to set the screen. It isn’t a race and let the offense know this. If they are setting sloppy ball screens, the defense doesn’t get realistic practice. Moving screens are violations, too.
Shell Drill: Screens Away From the Ball

**Purpose:** Here, we show you how to incorporate screens away from the ball into the Shell Drill. Drill each type of screen individually before you start using the combination drills.

**Away Screen (4 Wings, No Posts):**

1. Show them the proper way to defend a screen away from the ball.

2. After every pass, the offensive player sets an away screen.

3. There is only one time an away screen is NOT set -- when the player in the corner passes the ball.

   Do not allow the defense to steal any passes in this drill.

   To prevent confusion, do not allow skip passes.

**Down Screen (3 Wings, 2 Posts):**

1. Show them the proper way to defend a down screen.

2. After every pass to the top of the key, the wing player will set a down screen.
**Back Screens (4 Wings, 1 Post):**

4. Show them how to defend a back screen.

5. After every pass to the opposite side of the court, the player in the post sets a back screen on the corner.

When to set back screen:
- Wing to Opposite Wing
- Corner to Opposite Wing
- Wing to Opposite Corner
- Corner to Opposite Corner

**Post Screens (3 Wings, 2 Posts):**

1. Show the players how to defend post screens. We switch on all post screens.

2. On every pass to the wing, have the post player on the side of the ball go set a screen for the opposite post.
You can also use combinations of screens within the shell drill. Here are a couple of examples:

**Combo Screens: Post and Away**

1. After every pass to the wing, an away screen and a post screen is set at the same time.

**Combo Screens: Away and Down**

1. After every pass to the wing, an away screen.
2. After every pass to the top of the key, a down screen is set.

After this, you could go live and let the offense choose what type of screens they are going to set.

You could also grab the offense to the side and say “Only set down screens, and when I blow the whistle, go to 4 wings and 1 post and set back screens.” That way the defense has to react and doesn’t know what’s coming right away.
Back Screens Breakdown Drill:

**Purpose:** This is a great breakdown drill to work on back screens.

1. You need two wing players and one post player. The post player starts on the same side as the player with the ball.

2. The player with the ball throws a skip pass to the other wing.

3. The offensive player in the post sets a back screen for the offensive player who just threw the pass.

4. The wing player cuts to the block on the ball side.

5. The player with the ball will try to throw an entry pass to either the screener or the cutter to make sure the defensive players are defending it correctly.

6. After this, the player with the ball throws a pass across the court to the other wing player and the same motion is run again. You can run this over and over until you are satisfied with the way the group is defending back screens.
Jump Switch Drill

**Purpose:** This drill provides practice in an aggressive version of switching on screens. Instead of allowing the offensive dribbler to establish any momentum beyond the screen, the screener’s defender jumps out in the dribbler’s path and attempts to get him to pick up his dribble or, at the least, to head back in the other direction so that defensive help has time to react. The weak link in this strategy is that the screener will have a step on the dribbler’s initial defender, and could receive a pass for a lay-in if the dribbler is a great passer or the dribbler’s initial defender doesn’t hustle hard enough to get in the passing lane. It is a useful strategy to use occasionally to keep the offense off balance. Practice in all four drill positions provides valuable development for your team members.

1. The drill involves a typical pick-and-roll situation on the wing. Two offensive players and two defensive players are in the drill, and Players 3 and 4 are in line. The rotation through the drill is Wing Offense to Wing Defense to Low Block Offense to Low Block Defense to the back of the line. The drill starts with Player 2 coming up from the low block to set a screen on Defender 1. The defense is going to make an aggressive response to this development.

2. The jump-screen strategy is for Defender 2 to call out "Screen left!" as his man heads to set the screen. Defender 1 will understand that if Player 1 uses the screen, he should let Player 1 go and head toward the hoop to guard the passing lane from Player 1 to Player 2, who will be open because Defender 2 is going to jump the screen by moving out hard around the screen to meet the dribbler. The difference between this and simply switching on the screen is that Defender 2 will anticipate the drive and meet Player 1 aggressively and before he has a chance to establish any separation or advantage. If Player 1 cuts back to the left, there should be enough help in the area by that time to prevent easy looks or passes. Player 1 might commit a charging violation, too.
Offensive Fouls (Taking Charges)
Beginner Charge Drill

**Purpose:** This is a great drill to teach your players how to take a charge with great form.

1. Have your players line across any line (half-court, sideline) on the court, side-by-side.

2. You (Coach) will walk down the line to every player and gently push them.

3. The player will then fall backwards like he is taking a charge. If he does not properly fall and yell when taking the charge, make him do it again.

You can also put a mat behind the players so they do not hurt themselves until they have improved their form. After you have done this, you can progress onto the more advanced charging drills.
Baseline Drive Charging Drill

**Purpose:** This practices taking a charge when helping on the baseline drive

1. You will have a line of players on the wing.
2. The defensive player will be underneath the hoop. He'll pretend that he is guarding a player on the opposite wing. The defensive player should be in proper help side position. We prefer to have my player on the rim line in this situation. Others like their players with one foot in the lane.

3. The player with the ball on the wing (Player 2) will drive baseline. To make it more realistic, we also place a player on the opposite wing (Player 1).
4. The defensive player should slide to stop the ball. The player needs to be in good defensive position, so he can take the charge.
5. The offensive player bumps into the defensive player. The defensive player should let out a yell "Uh!!!" and falls under control backwards onto his butt. **Emphasize not using the hands to buffer the fall.**

If you are not satisfied with the way the player takes a charge, make him do it again until it has been done properly. Teach him how to do it correctly.
Full Court Charge Drill

**Purpose:** This is a great combination drill that teaches your players to hustle back on defense and also take a charge.

1. Have your players partner up. The first time through, use only one line so you can watch everybody do it. After you’ve done it a few times, you can line up partners on the opposite side of the court so you get more repetitions.

2. Have the defensive player line up on the free throw line facing the baseline.

3. On the whistle or when you command, have the offensive player start dribbling towards the opposite basket. The defensive player will turn around and try to beat the offensive player to a spot.

4. Once the defensive player gets to a spot on the floor, he needs to turn around and get set to take a charge. The spot on the floor is usually a place where the defender can get back and get set in time to take a charge.

5. You can instruct your offensive player to go hard until right before contact.
Rotations
Lob Pass Drill

**Purpose:** This is a great drill to practice rotations on lob passes into the post.

1. Line up players in either a “3 wings, 2 post” or “4 wings, 1 post” formation.

   No stealing of any type of pass. The offense can only pass. If a catch is made in the post, the player should pause for a second and then pass it back out.

2. After you see they have proper rotations on the lob pass, rotate. You can usually do this after 1 or 2 passes on each side.

3. After everybody has rotated in, you can allow dribble drives and shot attempts. At this point, you can steal all passes into the post. Perimeter passes are still not contested, though.
Overload Drill

**Purpose:** This is a great breakdown drill to work on positioning for defensive overloads that may occur. The defender guarding the player near the top of the key has to recognize an overload and sink down into the lane.

1. Have one player at the top of the key. One player in the post. A coach or player on the wing with the ball. Normally, during a game, the three offensive players may be scattered on the right wing or two offensive players will be on the right wing with another player in the high post. There is not a need to have ten players on the court to practice this drill.

2. The coach will either pass the ball into the post or back to the top of the key.

3. When the ball is passed into the post, the defensive player needs to be low enough so he can get there to double team or knock away that pass.

   When the ball is passed to the top of the key, the defensive player needs to rotate over. Make sure the post is transitioning over into a 3/4 front.

   After a few passes, you can have the players go live.
4-on-3, 5 on 4 Shell Drill

**Purpose:** If you are having problems with communication and rotating, this drill will force your players to do so. This also pushes your players to play extremely hard, and when they go back to the normal 5 on 5 defense, it will seem easy. It can also be useful to practice rotations that may occur after a ball is passed out of a trap.

1. Have four offensive players around the perimeter and three defensive players in the lane.

2. A coach will pass the ball to one of the perimeter players and the defensive players have to sprint to a player and match up.

3. The offense will instantly try to score.

   The same defensive player can not guard two passes in a row.

**Progression:**

- 4 on 4 Shell
- 5 on 4 Shell
- 5 on 5 Shell
Agility and Quickness
Line Jumps

**Purpose:** This drill improves foot quickness and leg power.

The player will find a line and jump over the line as quickly as possible some of the basics are:

- **Side to Side**
- **Front to Back**
- **Diagonals**

![Diagram of line jumps](image)

There are many different combinations to do for line jumps, but hopefully these examples got you on the right track.
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Lane Slides

**Purpose:** This is a great drill to work on defensive quickness, speed, and agility. It’s also great for conditioning and has a competitive aspect to it.

1. You start with your outside foot touching the line anywhere from the block to the elbow in the free-throw lane.

2. Get into a defensive stance.

3. Then, slide across the lane and touch the opposite line with your outside foot.

4. Once you touch the opposite line, slide back and touch the line where you started.

5. You should do this as quickly as possible for 20-30 seconds.

**Great for Conditioning** – You could have them do 3 sets of 30 seconds at full speed with 30 second breaks. While one group is on a break, you could have another group going.

**Competitive Aspect** – Whoever does the most can stop early during a conditioning drill or can receive some other reward.
Defensive Slides – Yo-Yo Race Variation

**Purpose:** This provides a variation to lane slides that has fun, competitive aspect to it as well. It also provides conditioning.

1. Line up your players along the lane. You can have them do this on both halves of the court if you’d like.

2. On the whistle, have the players do a defensive slide to the opposite lane line and slide back to the starting position.

3. Once, they get back they switch directions again and slide to the end line.

4. Once they get to the end line, they slide all the way to the other end line.

You could also have the race in two different groups. As soon as the first one is finished, the next group goes. And keep running this pattern until you feel like you’ve provided enough conditioning.
Stance Stamina Drill

**Purpose:** This drill is intended to build up the leg and lower abdominal muscles that get used in a good defensive stance. Like any type of exercise, build up gradually rather than with drastic and sudden increases that lead to excessive soreness and even serious injury.

1. Have your players line up along a wall and squat down into a good, low defensive stance with the wall providing slight support for the back, but with most of the weight supported by the legs.

2. Maintain this stance for a set period of time, say three 15-second reps to start with, and build up gradually. Keep hands raised at shoulder level throughout the reps. Coach should monitor form to make sure players aren’t leaning excessively against the wall.
Special Tactics & Competitive Drills
**Twelve Game Defensive Drill**

**Purpose:** This is a competitive drill that will help your defense get more deflections, take more charges, and force more turnovers.

1. This is played similar to a regular five-on-five game, but the scoring and possession rules are a little bit different.

2. Two points are awarded for a two-point basket, three points are awarded for a three-point basket, and one point is awarded for being fouled by the defense.

3. On defense, one point is awarded for a defensive stop which includes pass deflections, rebounds, steals, or forcing turnovers. Two points are awarded for taking a charge.

4. If the offense scores a basket, it retains possession of the ball. However, if the defense forces a turnover or gets a rebound, offense and defense switch.

5. Continue this game until one team reaches twelve points.
Double Trouble

**Purpose:** This drill is designed to put pressure on the basketball so that the defense learns how to create turnovers and the offense learns to move the ball quickly to avoid pressure.

1. This drill only requires one half of the court, so you can have two sets running at the same time.

2. The defensive players outnumber the offensive players by one. The extra defensive player should double-team and trap the player with the ball.

3. The object of the drill is to be the first team to get to six points. Each basket the offense makes is worth two points, and the defense receives two points for each defensive stop.

4. After a predetermined number of turnovers, points, defensive stops, etc., the offense and defense should switch so that everyone gets a chance to be on both offense and defense.
Baseline Trap

**Purpose:** This drill teaches players how to trap on the baseline. Some defensive schemes invite baseline drives and then trap players at very poor angles to the hoop so that they have no shot option. The baseline acts like a defender and they are being swarmed.

1. Place four offensive players as shown, each defended. The corner offensive player has a ball, and his defender invites a baseline drive by having his high foot forward and being a little out of position high.

   The intention is for the corner player to take the bait. Defender 2 is ready to sprint down if there is a baseline drive, and Defender 3 is ready to step in front of Defenders 2's man. Defender 4 is also on alert for a rotation down the lane.

   Defender 2 leaves his man to cut off the baseline drive, and Defender 1 is right there for the double-team. Defender 3 steps in front of Defender 2's man, and Defender 4 has rotated down to cover Defender 3's man. If all has gone well, the dribbler has picked up his dribble and is pinned on the baseline without an easy outlet. Of course, in a real game situation, there will be another offensive player on the court somewhere, but this drill covers the basic techniques and rotations involved in the actual trap.
Corner Trap

**Purpose:** This drill teaches your players how to invite and execute a corner trap. Corner traps are especially good because the baseline and sideline act as defenders. It’s like playing seven-on-five! Not only that, but the trapped player is far from the hoop and in a very poor position to beat the trap with a pass to a teammate in scoring position. This type of trap work really well against dribblers who strongly favor one hand.

1. The trap begins with Defender 5 playing off the passing lane to invite a pass to his man. When the pass is made, Defender 1 heads to the corner for the trap. Defender 4 moves to full front on his man, Defender 2 heads over to cover Defender 1’s man on a cut to the hoop, and Defender 3 drops into the lane. If the trap is sudden and well-executed, Offensive Player 5 will not be ready for the return pass to Player 1 before Defender 2 gets there for a steal or, at least, to cover him. Once that step is over, Player 5 is in trouble in the deep corner with maximum pressure and no easy outlets.

2. This diagram show the ideal situation. If Defender 2 is athletic, he is in great position to intercept desperation passes thrown by Player 5 hoping to outlet to Player 3 or Player 2. The trappers should have their hands raised and should be yelling something to put additional pressure on the trapped player.
**Stunner**

**Purpose:** This drill prepares your players for a special tactic that you can employ a few times a game. Its effectiveness depends on the element of surprise. It can have the effect of distracting the other team because they know it might be coming, giving them one more thing to worry about.

1. Defender 2 invites a drive into the key by playing out of position. Other defenders are alert to the strategy because of some signal developed during a time out or in practice.

2. Once Player 2 drives to the key, all defenders except Defender 5 suddenly leave their men and swarm Player 2, hands raised and yelling, hoping he will panic and turn the ball over. Defender 5 guards the basket in case Player 2 somehow gets a pass off.
Defensive Challenge Drill

**Purpose:** This drill emphasizes the value of defense and the importance of quality offensive possessions. It builds the mental toughness necessary when playing from behind, and it builds great intensity. Run this drill with one group at the disadvantage one day and alternate rolls the next day.

1. Start with the ball in the half court, the team of emphasis is on defense (Red team). Blue team is on offense. Blue plays offense in the half court. If they score, they get a point. If they get fouled, they get a point, and they start the play again at half court. If they turn the ball over into a dead ball (travel or throw a pass out-of-bounds), it is still Blue ball. The **only way Red gets the ball is a defensive rebound or a steal.**

2. If Red gets a rebound or a steal, they go in transition to the other end. If they do not score for any reason, it becomes Blue ball in the half court, and they start again. If Red scores, Blue comes up in transition. If they score, Blue gets a point. If Red gets another stop, they finally get a point.

3. In a nutshell, series always starts with Blue ball in the half court. Any dead ball starts a new series. Any miss by Red that is rebounded by Blue becomes a dead ball and starts a new series. Any turnover by Red becomes a dead ball and starts a new series. Any point earned by Red starts a new series.

4. **Scoring:** Play to 3 or 4 points. A game to 5 takes quite a while. Any basket by Blue scores a point. For Red to score a point, they have to get a stop, score at the other end, and then get another stop. That = 1 point. The deck is really stacked against the Red team. But, they will learn the value of defense and the importance of quality offensive possessions.
One-on-One Full Court Zig-Zag

**Purpose:** This drill provides practice in full-court, one-on-one pressure defense. It is a competitive drill that can be won without scoring a basket. It encourages smart and hard defensive effort.

1. The offensive player dribbles up the court. The defender repeatedly turns the dribbler on the way down the court and plays hard defense until he steals it, makes the dribbler pick up his dribble out of shot range, deflects the ball out of bounds, causes a violation, or gets a rebound.

2. If the offense makes a basket or gets fouled, he gets a point. If the defense steals the ball, makes the dribbler pick up his dribble out of shot range, causes any kind of violation, or gets a rebound; he gets a point.

3. Both players are out after one rep and go back to join the lines. Next time they will trade roles. Partners play games to five.
Two-on-Two Full Court Zig-Zag

**Purpose:** This drill adds a wing player and defender to the last drill, and thus provides an opportunity to practice wing denial, coping with screens, communication, and staying in position on cutters in addition to fostering the defensive intensity of the one-on-one version. The rules for scoring are the same.

1. The offensive player dribbles up the court. The defender repeatedly turns the dribbler on the way down the court and plays hard defense until he steals it, deflects it out of bounds, makes the dribbler pick up the dribble in the back-court, causes a violation, or gets a rebound.

2. If the offense makes a basket or gets fouled, he gets a point. If the defense steals the ball, deflects it out of bounds, causes the dribbler to pick up the ball out of shot range, causes any kind of violation, or gets a rebound, he gets a point. Both sets of partners are out after one rep and go back to join the lines. Next time they will trade roles. Partners play games to five.

3. Partner sets compete against one another just as individual partners competed in the one-on-one drill. In addition to switching the offensive and defensive orientation on each rotation, the partners should rotate between being the dribbler and the wing man, keeping the corresponding defender. That way, you won’t end up with a post player bringing the ball up against a guard (unless that’s something you want to practice).

4. The wing player can do a back-cut or a V-cut to get open. The dribbler can use the wing for a screen. It’s live and unlimited in that half of the half-court.
Three-on-Three Full Court Zig-Zag

**Purpose:** This drill adds another wing player to the drill and opens up the entire half-court to defensive challenges. Both wing defenders will try to deny the wing pass, and all defenders might have to deal with screens and cutters. This drill promotes complete court vision and a sound understanding of defensive principles involving covering the ball, dealing with screens, maintaining proper position on cutters, and communication.

1. The offensive player dribbles up the court. The defender repeatedly turns the dribbler on the way down the court and plays hard defense until he steals it, deflects it out of bounds, makes the dribbler pick up the dribble in the back-court, causes a violation, or gets a rebound.

2. In this version of the drill, simply place another player and defender at the opposite wing for three-on-three in the half-court. The wings are free to do whatever they want in an effort to score. Defensive rotations and communication demands are more challenging, and the drill provides practice opportunities for most situations that defenders will have to deal with in games.