



New Berlin Athletic Association
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PASSING / CATCHING

BASKETBALL DRILLS

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2. PASSING / CATCHING

2.1 Play Catch

Level: Beginner

Have the kids practice delivering and catching the three basic types of basketball passes: the chest pass, the bounce pass, and the overhead pass.

First have them practice the **chest pass**. Have partners stand about 15 feet apart. They should hold the ball at chest level with elbows out. Take one step toward the partner and “flick” the pass by quickly extending arms and pushing thumbs through the ball and down. Really try to put some “Zip” on it!

Next, practice the **bounce pass**. Identical to the chest pass, except that the ball takes one bounce in route. Often, beginners start this pass from their face and push the ball down into the floor instead out toward the receiver. Players need to be taught that the pass should travel *more* than half way to the receiver before it bounces.

Finally, practice the **overhead pass**. This is similar to the “throw-in” in soccer. The idea is to get the pass over the top of the defender. This type of pass is often used to outlet a rebound. Again, have the kids try to get the ball there in a hurry!

Receivers should practice giving the passer a two-handed target. When catching the ball, they should concentrate on seeing it all the way into the hands. Have them secure the catch and move into the ball into triple-threat position, away from the defender.

Points of emphasis

- get the ball there quickly,
- catch with the hands, not with the arms, belly or chest,
- protect the ball after catching it.

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2.2 Name Pass

Level: Beginner

This is a good drill for the first couple of practices when everyone is trying to learn each others names.

Have the kids form a big circle at mid-court. Using only one ball to start, the player with the ball calls the name of someone they wish to pass to. The receiver must “show” their hands to the passer, meaning they are ready to catch. Then the passer delivers a bounce pass. The receiver should secure the catch in their hands, and move the ball into triple-threat position. Then, this player calls the name of someone to pass to, and the process is repeated.

After a minute or two, add a second ball into the drill. If they can handle that, add a third ball. It’s a lot of fun and the kids will really enjoy learning the other players’ names.

Another variation of this drill is to break the players into two groups of five or six.

Probably best to stay with bounce passes and avoid the chest passes during this drill. We don’t want to have anyone get hit in the face with a ball.

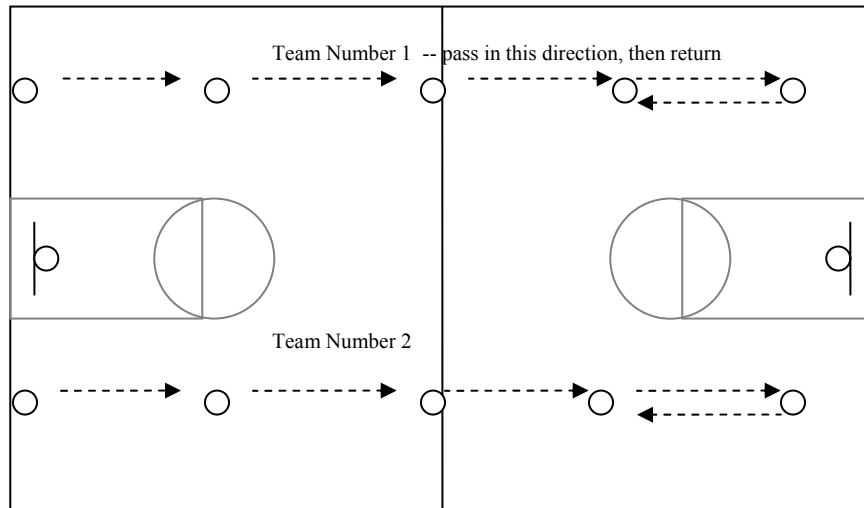
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2.3 Relay Race Passing

Level: Beginner

Form two teams, each with five or six kids. Have each team set up in a circle with players spaced about 15 feet apart. The idea is to pass the ball all the way around the circle without a drop. When a team successfully passes one ball all the way around the circle without a drop, a second ball is added to the mix. If there is a drop the team has to start over with one ball. When two balls make it all the way around the circle without a drop, a third ball is added. Remember, this is a race. The first team to successfully pass one, then two, then three balls all the way around the circle without a drop is the winner.

Another variation of this drill is to create two teams with players spaced across the length of the court. Again, the players remain stationary, but the two teams have a race moving the ball up and down the length of the court, say, three times – alternating the chest pass, bounce pass, and overhead pass.



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2.4 One Hand Catch

Level: Intermediate

Have the kids play catch with a partner. The receiver must put one hand behind their back. The passer should stand only about 15 feet away and deliver a soft bounce pass. The receiver should try to control the catch with only one hand. Try to avoid trapping the ball against the arm or body.

For players that can do this try backing up to 20 or 25 feet, and let the passer put a little more speed on the pass. Next, come closer again and have the kids try catching a chest pass (without a bounce) this way. Finally, try it with the weaker hand.

Points of emphasis

- ➔ concentrate on the ball,
- ➔ use the hand, not the body, to catch.

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2.5 Bad Pass

Level: Intermediate

Space partners about 15 feet apart and have the passer throw a pass that is too high, too low, too far left, or too far right (basically a bad pass). The receiver must react and catch the pass with their hands. They should secure the catch and move the ball into triple threat position.

Next, have the receiver turn their back to the passer. Just before throwing the ball, the passer should say “Turn.” The receiver has to locate the ball and make the catch. The passer should be careful not to hurt the receiver with the ball. After securing the catch always move the ball into triple threat position.

Reason for the drill

➔ learn to react to the ball where ever it is.

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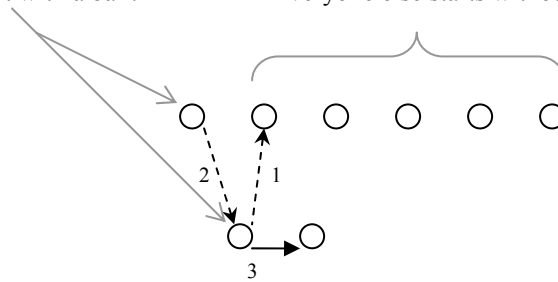
2.6 Rapid Fire Passing

Level: Intermediate

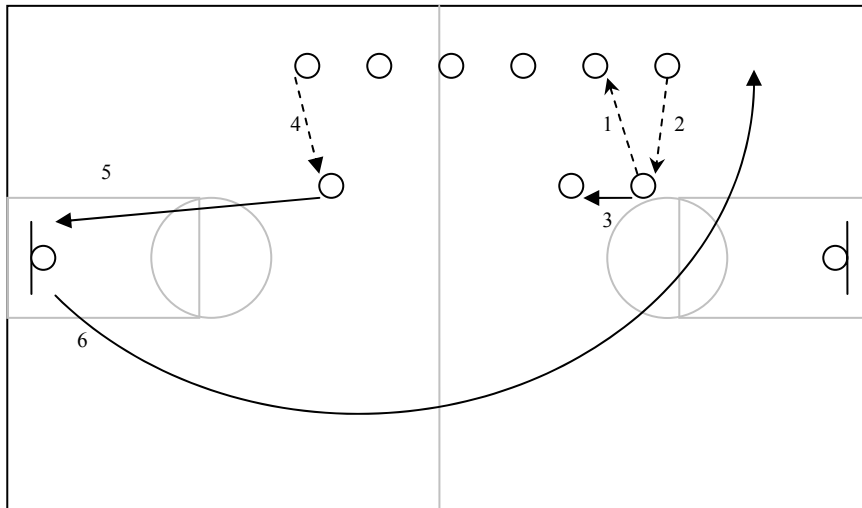
One player starts with a ball and shuffles in this direction (→). The shuffler passes to the first player in line without a ball (1). The girl at the end of the line that started with a ball (2) passes to the shuffler. The shuffler keeps moving (3) to the right and repeats the process all the way down the line passing to the next player in line without a ball.

These two girls start with a ball.

Everyone else starts without a ball.



Then, she does it back in the opposite direction as shown below. On the last catch (4), she does not pass. Instead, she dribbles to the basket and shoots a lay-up (5). She gets her own rebound and dribbles to the end of the line (6)

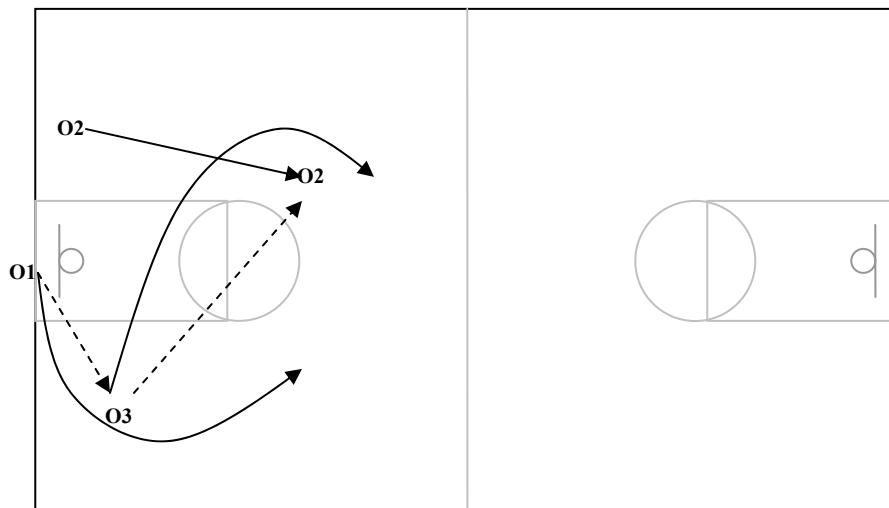


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2.7 Three Man Weave

Level: Intermediate

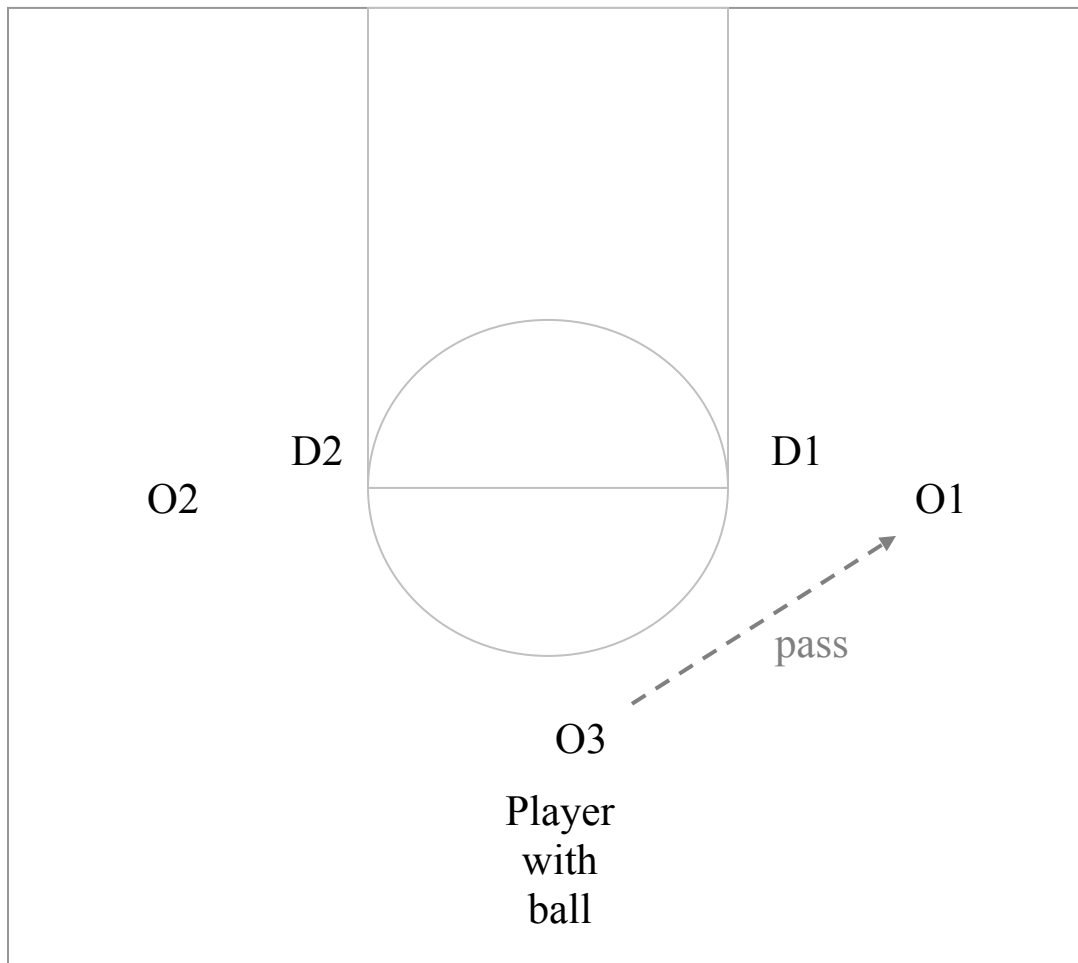
Three lines starting at one end of the gym. Player in the middle starts with the ball and passes to either player (in the example below O1 passes to O3), then runs around behind the player they passed to. All three players continue to weave to the other end of the court, passing, and running behind. As they approach the basket, the closest one shoots a lay-up and the others rebound. This group returns along the side of court while the next group does the drill.



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2.8 Ball Fake Game

Level: Intermediate



There are three offensive players in this drill and two defensive players. Two offensive players, O1 and O2, go to the wings. The defenders, D1 and D2 cover them in “deny” position. The coach may have to make sure the defenders don’t overplay the pass. The offense scores either by completing a pass from the point to the wing, or by getting the defender to lunge for a fake pass. The defense scores by deflecting or stealing the pass. This drill teaches the kids to give hard, realistic fakes. And they really enjoy trying to trick their teammates.

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2.9 No Dribble

Level: Intermediate

This is a great team drill for teaching the kids two very important points with regard to passing and catching:

- Work without the ball to get open.
- After catching, use the pivot to keep the ball away from the defender.

Set up five on five and start the ball with one of the players. They have to use the pivot to protect the ball from a defender while the other four try to get open. The defenders try to prevent the pass or steal the ball. The offense can not dribble. If an offensive player can get close enough to the basket they are allowed to shoot. A great drill for both offense and defense.

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2.10 Step-Through Bounce Pass

Level: Advanced

Have two players play catch with the coach as the defender in the middle. The coach should come up close to the passer, about one arm length away. The passer fakes a pass released from the “high right” in order to get the defender (coach) to raise his arms in that area, then “steps-through” with his right foot by turning his back side to the defender (coach) and makes a back-handed bounce pass released from the low left. It is difficult at first, so take it slow. Then, the coach plays defense on the other player and the process is reversed.

As the players get better at this skill, and they understand what you are trying to accomplish with this drill, have the kids play the role of defender. Have them play the role of defender passively at first, and then gradually more aggressively.

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2.11 Triangle Trap

Level: Advanced

Six players at a time participate in this drill, three on offense and three on defense. The offensive player must remain relatively stationary (one or two steps either side of a marker), but the defense does a lot of moving. The goal for the offense is to complete as many passes as possible and the goal for the defense is to steal the ball.

Space the offensive players in a triangle about 15 feet apart from each other. The defensive players start at the mid-point of each line between offensive players. The coach starts the drill by passing to any one of the offensive players, say O1. The two nearest defenders, in this case D1 and D3, must trap player O1, and try to steal the ball without fouling. O1 may not dribble. He may use his pivot to protect the ball. O1 tries to complete a pass to either O2 or O3. Player D2 tries to anticipate where the pass is going and attempts to steal it. Let's say the pass is completed to O3. Now players D3 and D2 must trap O3, and O3 tries to pass to either O1 or O2. And so on. A lot of fun.

