



New Berlin Athletic Association  
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## **DEFENSE**

## **BASKETBALL DRILLS**

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## **4 DEFENSE**

### **4.1 Mirror Drill**

Level: Beginner

Teach the players the defensive stance. Feet shoulder width apart, bent at the knees and hips, with hands out. Have them spread out across the width of the court in two rows, with their backs to the basket they are defending and facing you, the coach.

Take the ball and dribble from side to side. Then forward and backward. Have the players move defensively mirroring your dribble. Teach them to point the toe in the direction they are moving and to slide their feet from side without crossing. Have them continue to “mirror” the ball.

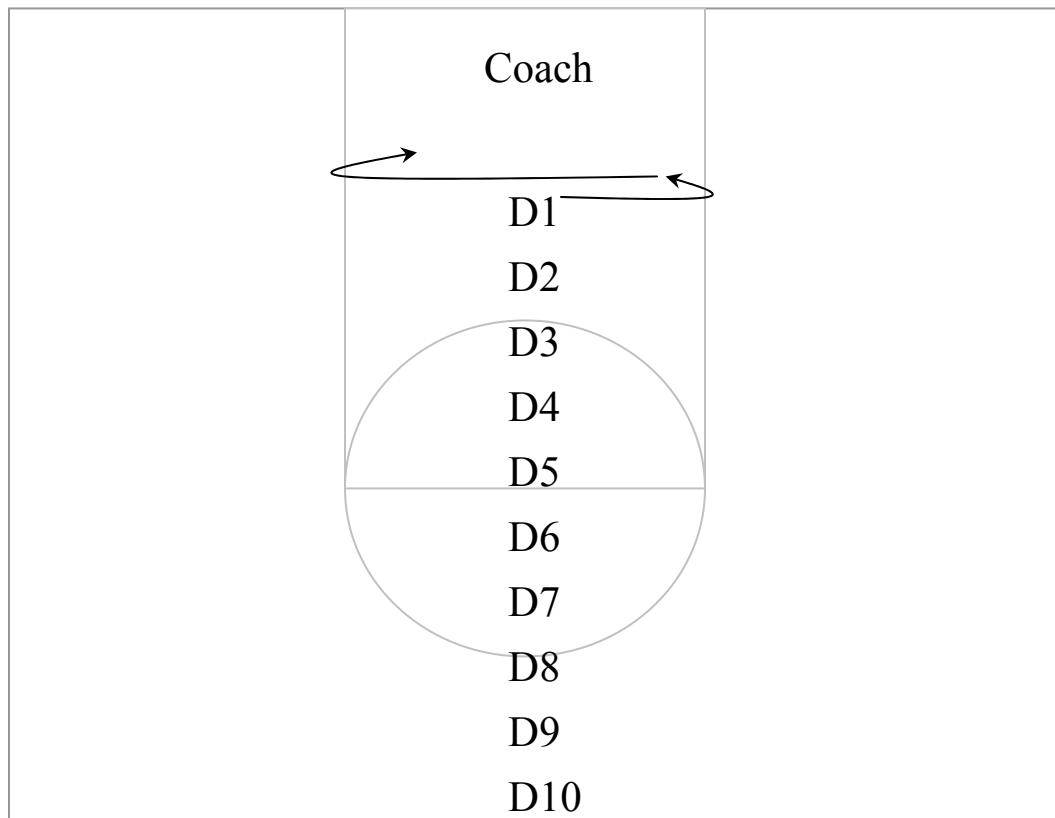
Finish the drill by grabbing the ball with two hands and gathering as if to attempt a shot. Teach the players to “close-out” on the shooter by approaching you and raising one hand in an attempt to block your shot.

## DEFENSE

### 4.2 Shuffle Slide

Level: Beginner

Have the entire team line up down the center of the court facing the coach who is standing under the basket. When the coach says “Defense!” the players drop into their defensive stance. When the coach says “Go!” the players shuffle slide to the side of the lane, then to the other side of the side of the lane, then back to the middle as fast as they can without crossing their feet. Next, do the same drill, but have them shuffle slide a little farther. You may have to set up cones, or use other markings on the court. This drill works on improving the defensive shuffle slide and on improving change of direction speed .



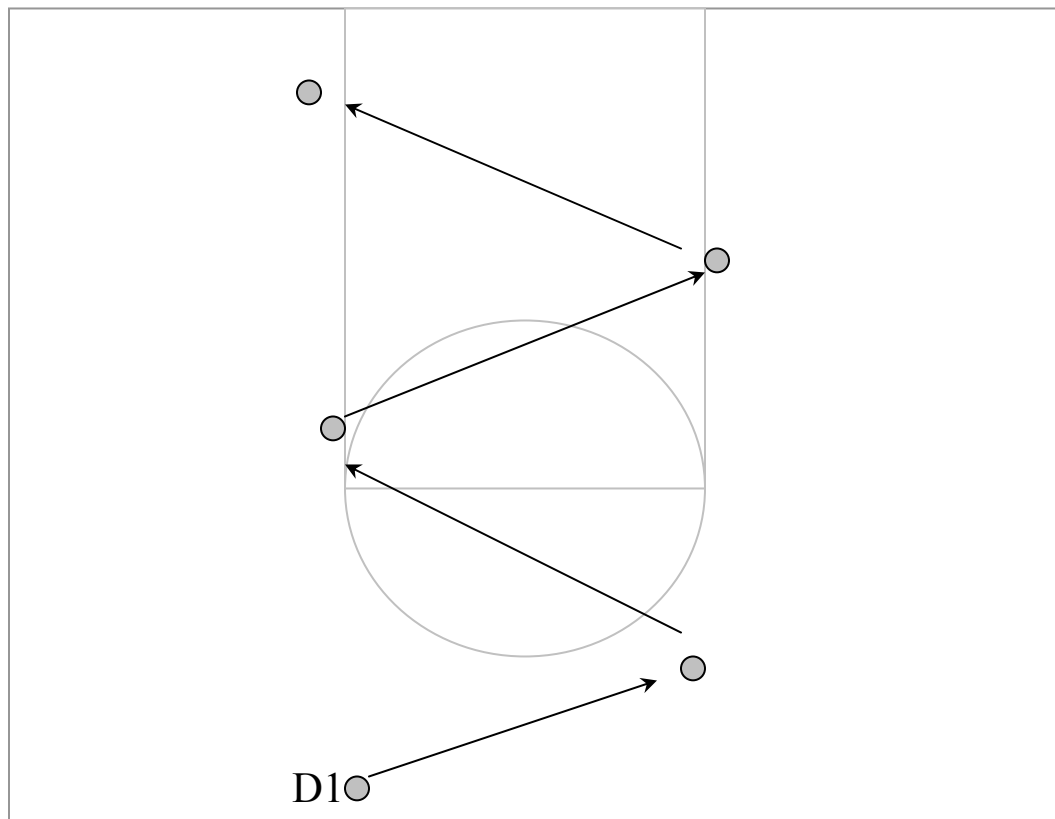
## DEFENSE

### 4.3 Zig-Zag

Level: Beginner

Have the players get in a line at midcourt. Set up cones or markings on the court which they will shuffle slide to and from as shown on the diagram below. The main thing to emphasize is that they need to shuffle slide in a backward (or retreat) direction, keeping their back to the basket they are defending, and facing the ball. Some young players may need the coach to dribble the ball up the court at these angles while they shuffle slide backwards in order to understand. At each cone or marking the player has to slap the floor and change direction of the shuffle slide. This drill teaches them to move their bodies in a retreat technique while sliding and staying low to the ground. It improves their feel for how to move on the court defensively. As the players get better at this drill you can introduce a dribbler.

Defender must face in this direction (⇩), while moving in this direction (⇧).



# DEFENSE

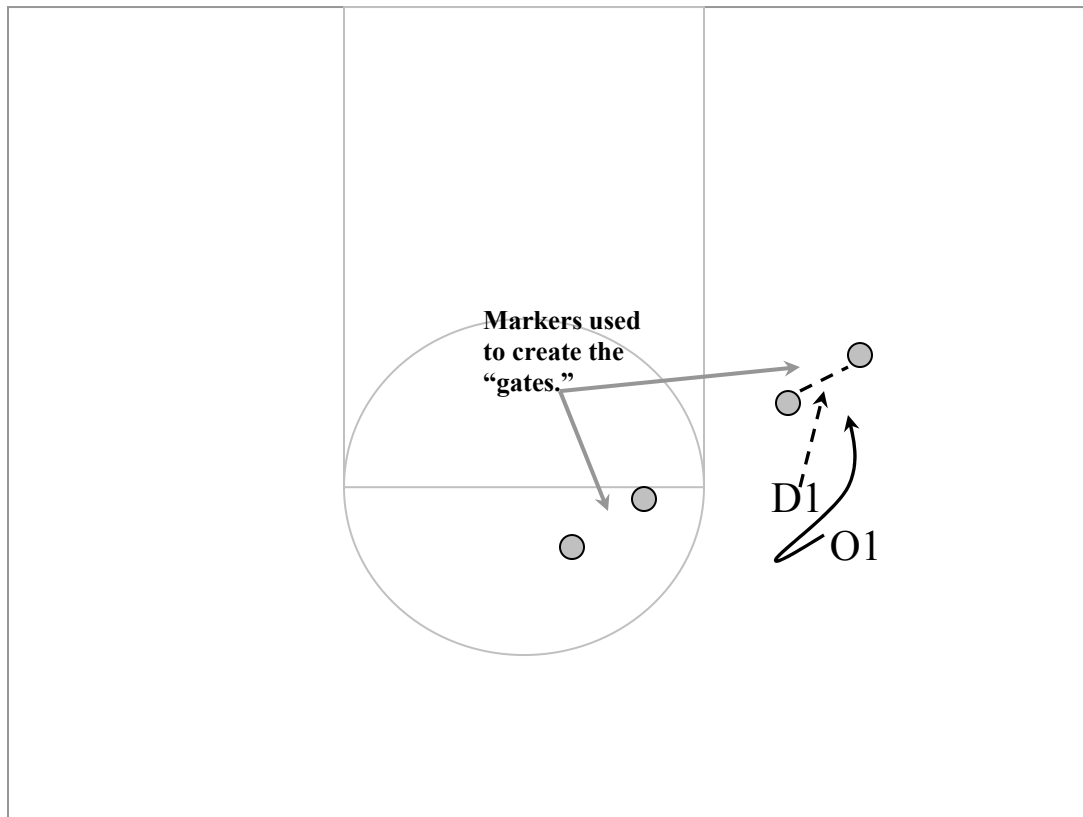
## 4.4 Close the Gate

Level: Beginner

Set up two “gates” with floor markers. This is a simple one-on-one drill where the offensive player can use a rocker step, crossover, spin move, or a quick burst to get past the defender and to the hoop, and the defender tries to stop him. The drill starts when the defender gives the ball to the offensive player. The defender should start one arm length away from the offensive player. The offensive player tries to go through one of the “gates” in route to the basket. The offensive player is limited to three dribbles.

Points of emphasis for the defensive player are to move their feet, keep on balance, and not foul. The defender should try to beat the offensive player to the “turning point” and close the gate. The defender is to stay low, keep the offensive player in front, and get a hand up when the offensive player shoots. When the ball goes up to the rim, the defender should make contact with the shooter and try to block out to get the rebound.

As the players get more experience, the coach can remove the “gates.”



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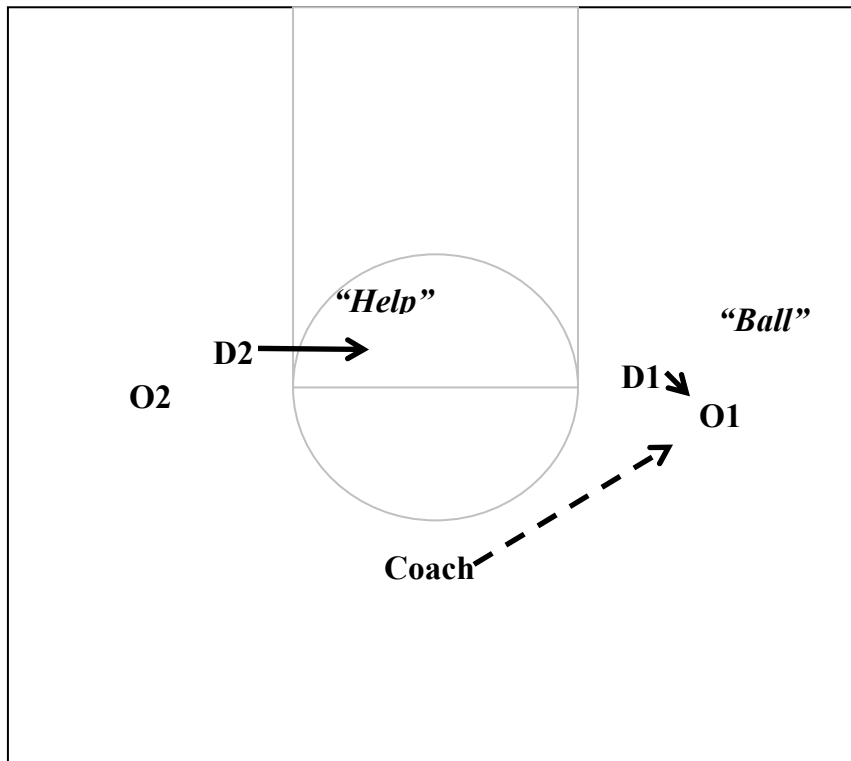
## 4.5 2 on 2 Help Defense

Level: Beginner

The purpose of this drill is to start to teach the basic concepts of team defense. The idea is that defense is situational. The manner in which we play defense depends on where the ball is located on the court *and* where the player is that we are guarding.

Offensive players O1 and O2 start on the wings. Defensive players D1 and D2 cover them in “Deny” position. Pass goes from coach to O1. Defensive player D1 gets right on top of O1 and yells “Ball!, I’ve got the ball!” Defensive player D2 slides into the lane and yells “Help!”

Ball comes back to coach. Both defenders return to deny position and say “Deny.” Rotate pass from side to side a couple of times to make sure they understand. Finally, coach puts up a missed shot. Defensive players box-out and work for the rebound.



# DEFENSE

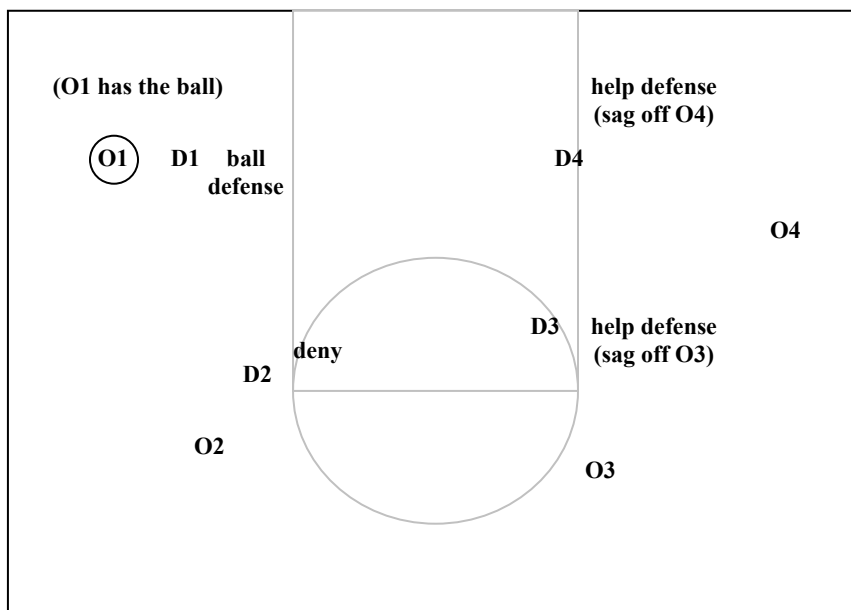
## 4.6 Shell Drill

Level: Intermediate

The shell drill is designed to teach team defense. The basis of this drill is to have the defense move as the ball moves. The offense remains stationary, and their role is to stay in their positions and pass the ball around the perimeter. As the ball is passed around the perimeter, each defender moves with it. The drill can be done with three, four or five players on each team.

Stress these concepts:

- The player guarding the **ball** should yell, “I’ve got the ball,” and guard that player, pressuring the ball, staying low, and being active. In the example below, O1 has the ball, so D1 has “on ball” defense.
- The players one pass away (D2 in the example below) is in “**deny**” position, with a hand in the passing lane (the lane where if the ball were passed, it would be intercepted), and in a low defensive position.
- Any player more than one pass away (a skip pass from corner to corner, for example) is in “**help**” position. In the example below, defenders D3 and D4 are in help position. The help position defender should have one hand pointed to the player they are guarding, and one hand pointed toward the ball. The help position defender should sag off the person they are guarding, toward where the ball is. If the “on ball” defender were to get beat, the help defenders should stop the player with the ball.



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### 4.7 Defensive Stop Game

Level: Intermediate

Start your players on a three-on-three offensive/defensive half court game where the only way they can score is by getting a defensive stop – the offense doesn't score. Start the game by passing with a screen away – after that the players can do what they wish. Emphasize to the offensive players that if a person isn't open, the need to back-cut and be aware that the defense is trying to stop them. Don't count baskets – count stops to develop pride in the defense. The team that is on defense stays on defense until someone makes a basket.

This game works perfectly if there are nine players at practice. If there are more or less, you will have to improvise.

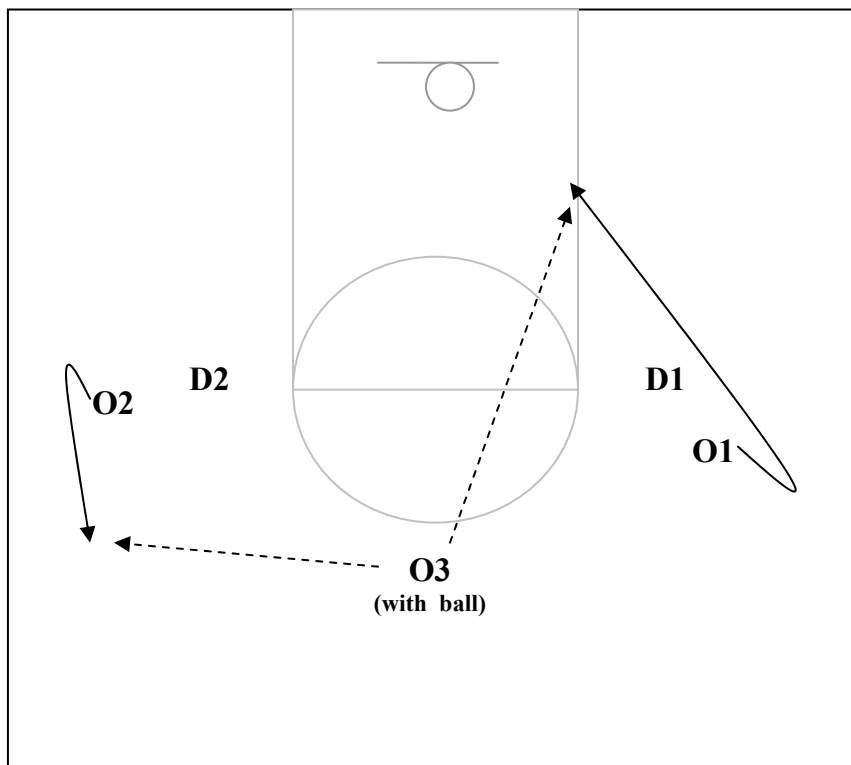
Team A has the ball, Team B is on defense, and Team C is out-of-bounds. If Team B stops Team A, Team B stays on defense, Team A goes out, and Team C now has the ball on offense. If Team A gets a score, it moves to defense, and Team C is the offensive team. After there is a stop and you blow the whistle to change teams, you can go over what the teams are doing right or wrong defensively. Make sure the teams that are making a transition on and off the court are running enthusiastically and with energy. If a team doesn't get off the court quickly, they lose a turn. If a team doesn't come on quickly then they go back off the court and lose their turn. Remind your teams to communicate which player they are guarding and where they are positioned on the court.

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### 4.8 3 on 2 Drill

Level: Advanced

This drill is a progression of the “Ball Fake Game” covered in section 2.7. In that drill, the offensive players needed to remain stationary. In this drill, we allow the offensive players on the wings to either “pop-out” to accept the pass (player O2), or fake a pop-out and make a back-door cut (player O1). Defenders cover the offensive players on the wings starting in deny position. A third offensive player, O3, starts with the ball at the point and if he can not make a pass to the wings he may dribble-drive down the lane for a shot attempt. Limit him to a maximum of two dribble-drives during the course of the game. This game is played until one team “scores” five points. The offense scores for a completed pass, or for a made basket. The defense scores by stealing the ball, blocking a shot, or securing a rebound. This drill is really good at forcing the defense to address both their player and the ball. It also rewards the offense for being active and working to get open.



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