

New Berlin Athletic Association
P.O. BOX 51123 New Berlin, WI53151-0123

**MINIS
BASKETBALL
CLINICS**

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1 OVERVIEW

The NBAA minis division basketball program is for boys and girls in grades 1 and 2. The program consists of nine one-hour Saturday sessions. The first three sessions are “clinics” in which a team practices age appropriate drills in passing, catching, ball handling, defense, rebounding and shooting. NBAA basketball coordinator(s) will be on-site during the clinics to manage start/end times, traffic flow, spacing of the on-court drills, and all other administrative issues. NBAA hired instructional aides will lead the athletes in basketball drills.

The objective of the clinics is to (1) build the players’ fundamental basketball skills and (2) to introduce volunteer coaches to the players they will be coaching for the remainder of the season – and the associated skill level of those players. There is no scrimmaging during these three clinics.

The remainder of this document provides explanation of the drills to be used during the first three weeks of clinic instruction. The drills are categorized in five skill segments. During the clinics, players will spend approximately 10-12 minutes working on each skill segment. Instructional aides will lead the drills for each skill segment, or station. An entire team will participate in the drills at a station, then rotate through the other skill segments or stations as a team.

The drills are rated as beginner (1), intermediate (2), and advanced (3). One or at most two drills should be used for each particular skill segment during any particular clinic. An emphasis should be placed on making the experience participatory and fun for the athletes.

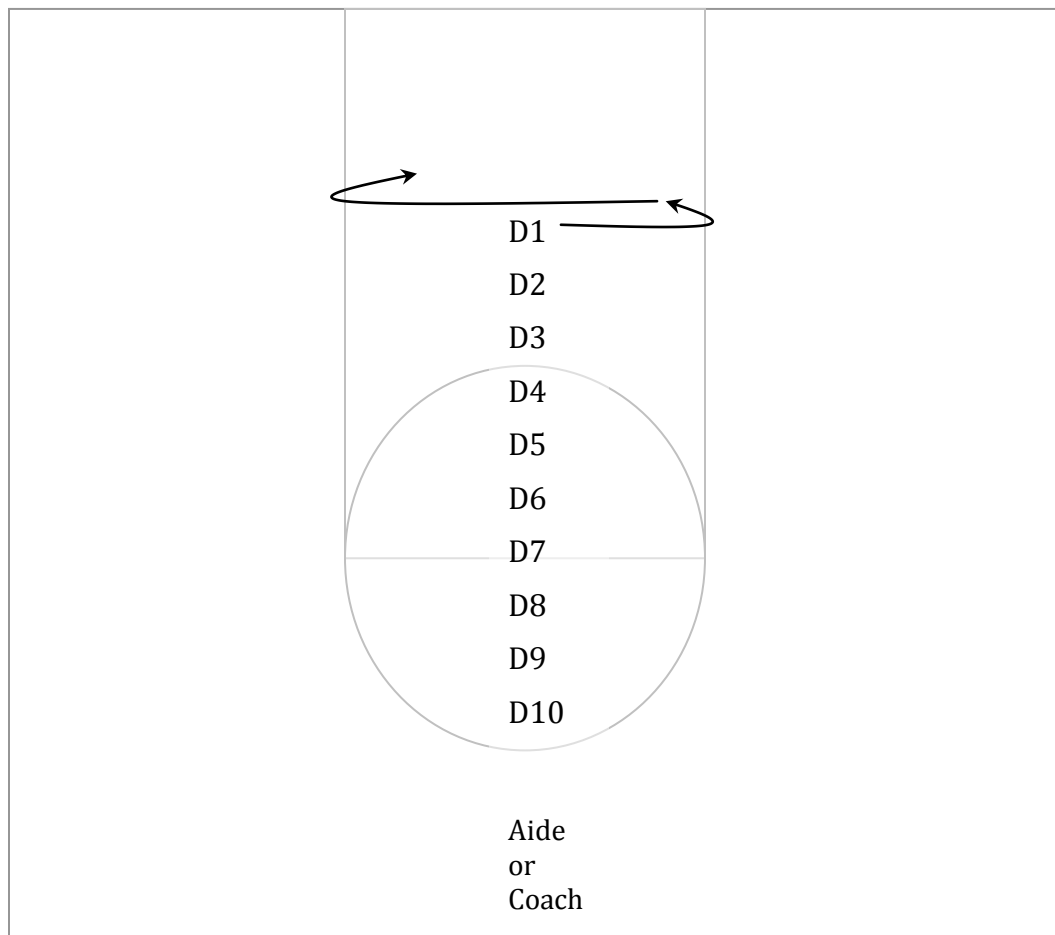
2 DEFENSE

2.1 Shuffle Slide

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 down the center of the court with their backs to the basket they are defending and facing you, the coach.

When the coach says "Defense!" the players drop into their defensive stance. When the coach says "This way!" the players shuffle slide to the side of the lane the coach pointed to, 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. Do it several times.



DEFENSE

2.2 Mirror Drill

Level: Beginner

Have the players get in their 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. Then finish with a “butt-in-the-gut” box out and rebound.

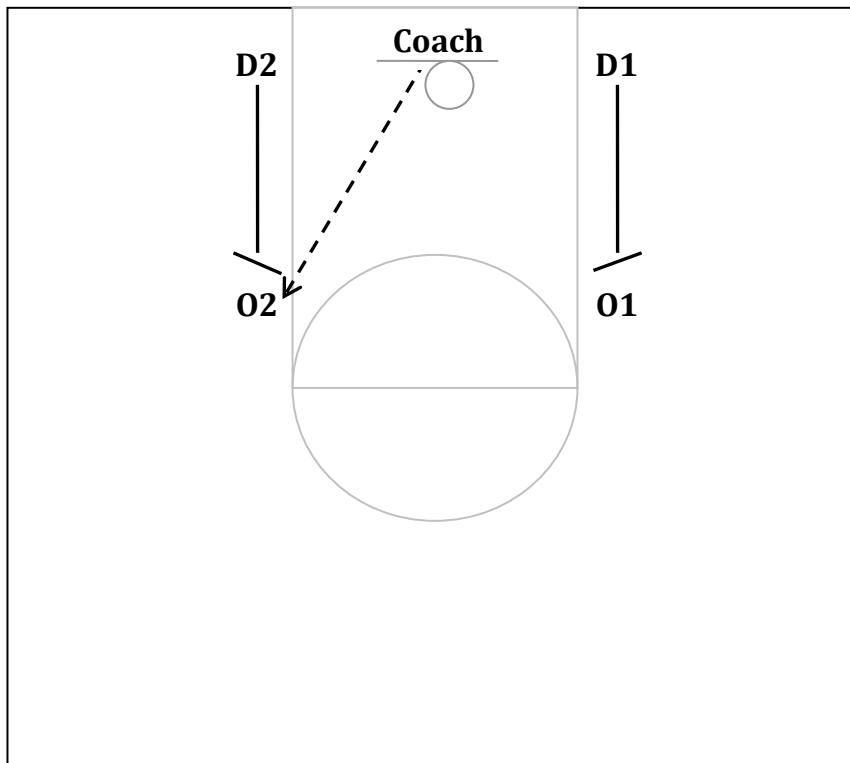
If you have an assistant, do it in two groups of five, or in groups of three athletes at a time.

DEFENSE

2.3 Close-out / Box-out Drill

Level: Intermediate

Have two offensive players stand about 10 feet from the basket in a “catch-and-shoot” ready position. The drill starts when the coach passes the ball to one of the offensive players. When the coach makes the pass the defenders must “close-out” on the offensive players. The offensive player puts up a shot immediately after making the catch. The defender on the shooter tries to get a hand in the face of the shooter, then boxes out. The off-ball defender boxes out on the other offensive player. If the offense gets the rebound they try to score. If the defense gets the rebound the drill ends.



3. PASSING / CATCHING

3.1 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.

PASSING / CATCHING

3.2 Wall Pass

Level: Beginner

This drill is to practice making the chest pass to wall, then catch the return. Have a player stand about 10-15 feet from a wall.

Points of emphasis

- ➔ Hands evenly spaced on either side of the ball,
- ➔ Step into the pass,
- ➔ Flick hands out forcing thumbs to point down (avoid the one-handed push pass),
- ➔ Get it there quickly on a line, no lobs!!!,
- ➔ Catch the return bounce with two hands
- ➔ Swing the ball away from the defender and return to triple threat position.

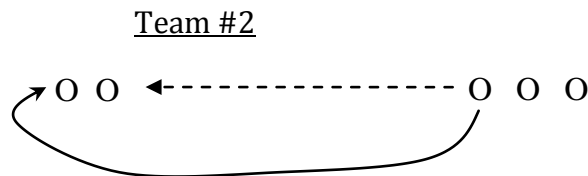
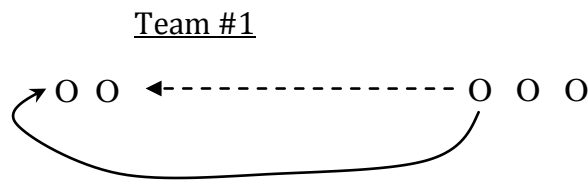
PASSING / CATCHING

3.3 Relay Race Passing

Level: Beginner

Form two teams, each with five players. The teams will race to complete 10 successful chest passes without a drop. The first team to do so wins. In the case of a drop the team has to start over from zero.

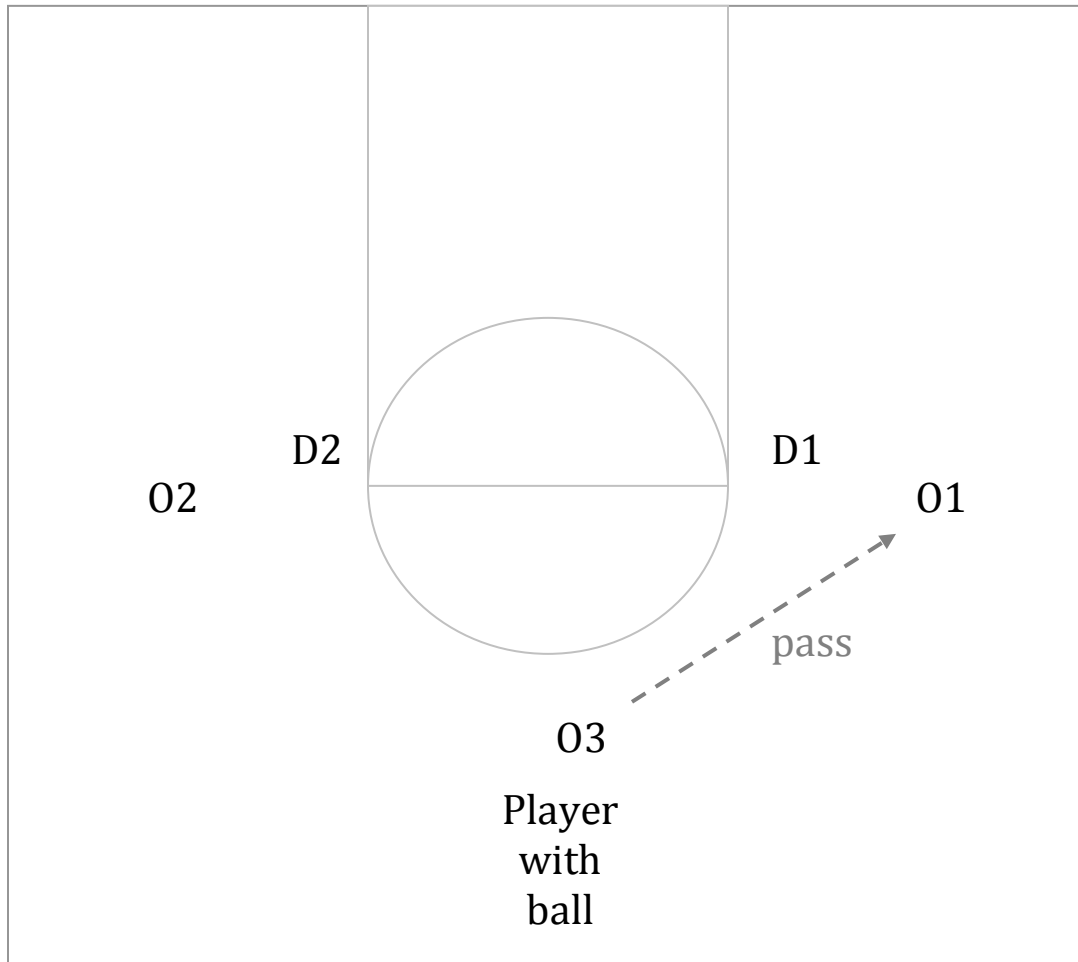
Each team has one ball. The players on each team are spaced 10-12 feet apart. Begin on coach command and player with the ball passes to the opposite teammate, then runs to the end of the opposite line. Repeat in the opposite direction. Players count each successful pass and catch "one" "two", and so on. In the diagram below dashed lines represent the pass and solid lines represent the player running.



PASSING / CATCHING

3.4 Ball Fake

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.

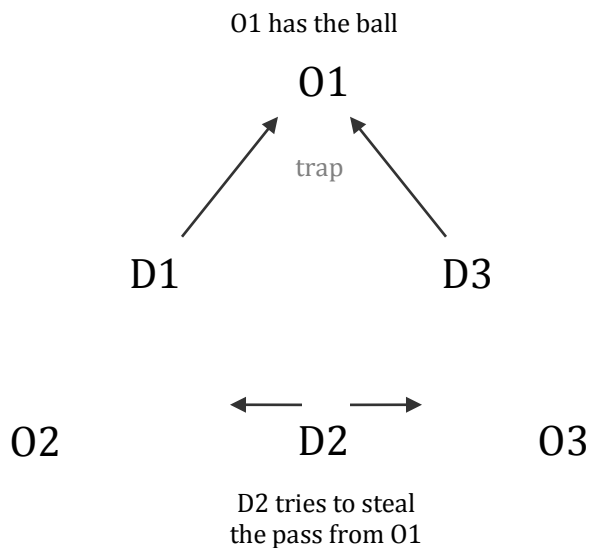
PASSING / CATCHING

3.5 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.



4. BALL HANDLING

4.1 Stationary Dribbling Drills

Level: Beginner

Each player should have a ball.

Look Away

Have each player, from a standing still position, practice dribbling the ball with their stronger hand. Teach them to protect the ball from the defender with the other hand and the body. Teach them to avoid looking at the ball. The coach should hold up fingers so that the dribbler has to see how many and call them out. Repeat with the other hand. Next, do this drill by dribbling the ball in a “V” pattern alternating hands.

V Dribble

Dribble in the “V” pattern with the right hand only (very difficult) in order to practice fingertip control. Then with the left hand only. Repeat the “V” pattern dribble keeping the ball at or below knee level, and increasing the tempo of the dribble.

Low Dribble

Have the players practice dribbling the ball as low to the ground as possible. Have them count how many times they can dribble the ball in a 15 second span. Then try again to see if they can do more. Try it with the other hand.

Advanced Variations

Wall dribble, figure 8, flag pole, quick hands, pass-through, double ball dribble, etc.

Points of emphasis

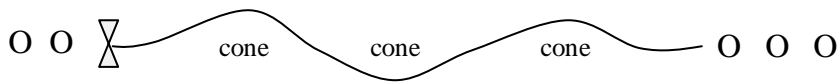
- fingertip control,
- keep the head up,
- protect the ball.

BALL HANDLING

4.2 Cone Dribble / Jump Stop

Level: Intermediate

Align the players 30 feet apart from each other. Set up two or three cones between them. Have one player dribble through cones, crossing the ball over between hands and keeping the ball in the hand opposite the cone. Instruct the players to come to a two footed jump stop when they get to the opposite group of players and execute a hand off to the first player in that line. Repeat in the opposite direction. Set up two groups working simultaneously so that players are getting plenty of opportunities.

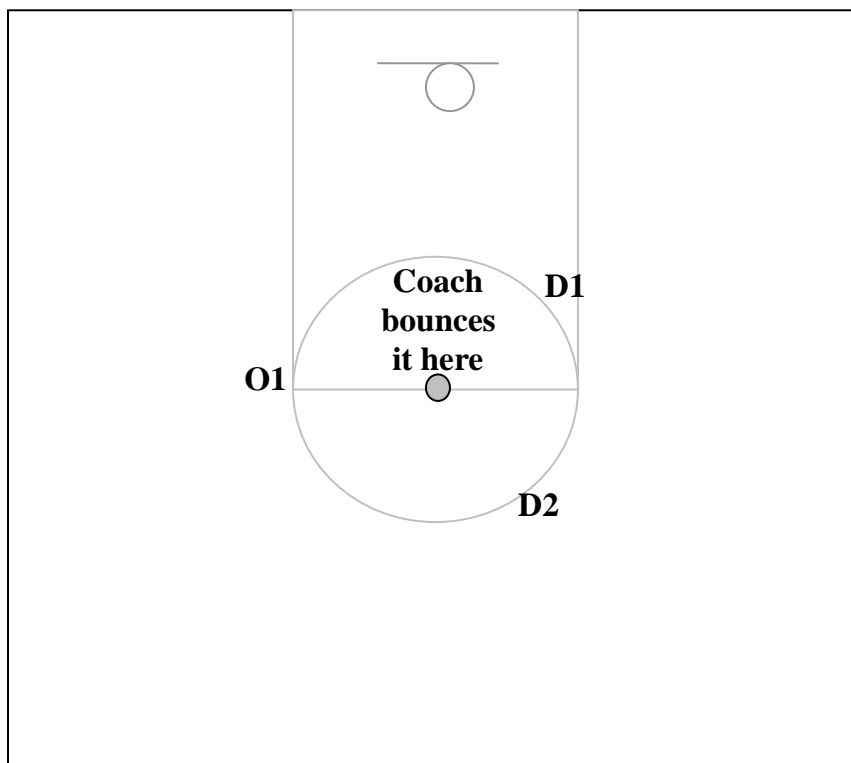


BALL HANDLING

4.3 Pivot Drill

Level: Intermediate

This drill begins in a manner very similar to “high bounce” rebounding drill. Three players participate in the drill at a time; one offensive player and two defensive players. The coach bounces the ball high, and the offensive player comes in and rebounds it, turns away from the defense with ball held securely in both hands, and elbows wide. After the offensive player secures the ball, the defenders approach and try to steal it without fouling. The offensive player may not dribble and must try to protect the ball using only their pivot.



BALL HANDLING

4.4 Moving Dribble / Jump Stop / Pass

Level: Intermediate

Align the players in two lines on opposite sides of the court, 30-40 feet apart from each other. Player with ball dribbles across court, comes to two-footed jump stop about 10-15 feet away from the opposite line of players, makes bounce pass to first player in that line. Goes to the end of the line. Repeat in the opposite direction

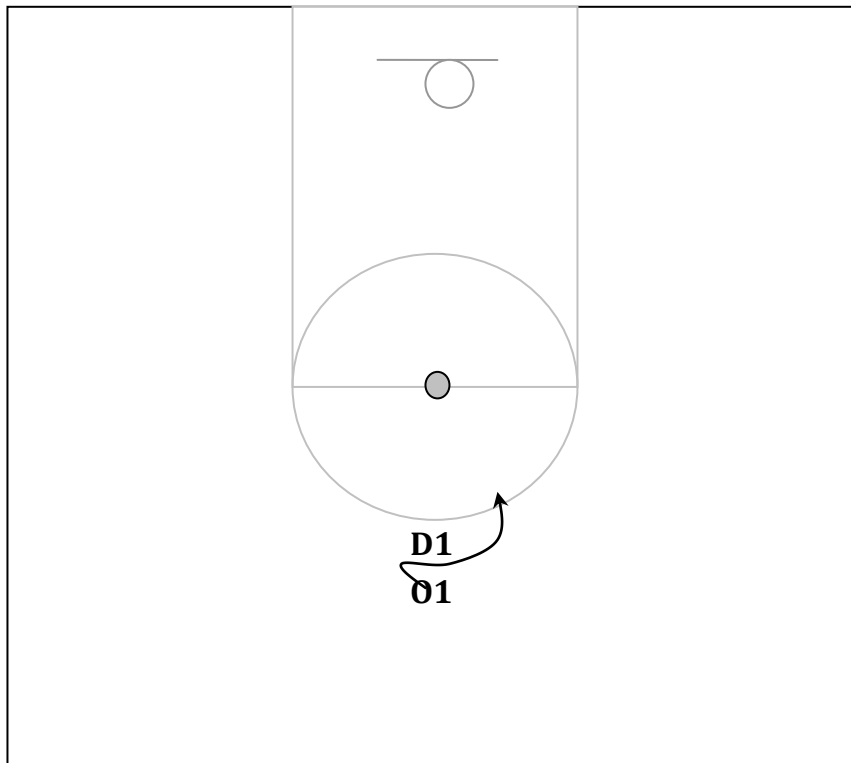


5. REBOUNDING

5.1 Butt-in-the-Gut

Level: Beginner

This drill is to teach defensive box-out positioning for rebounding. Place a ball on the ground at the free throw line. A defensive player D1 starts with his back to the basketball (heels on the arc) and with his face toward the offensive player, O1, who is facing the basketball. When the coach calls "Go" the defensive player turns his back to the offensive player (either front pivot or reverse pivot, whichever is more comfortable) and puts his "butt-in-the-gut" of the offensive player in order to box-out. It is important to emphasize making contact with the defensive player. The offensive player tries to get around the defensive player and make progress toward the basketball. The defensive player must feel where the offensive player is moving and adjust accordingly in order to maintain the box-out. The coach begins counting slowly after calling "Go." The offensive player "wins" if he touches the ball before the count of five, otherwise the defensive player wins.



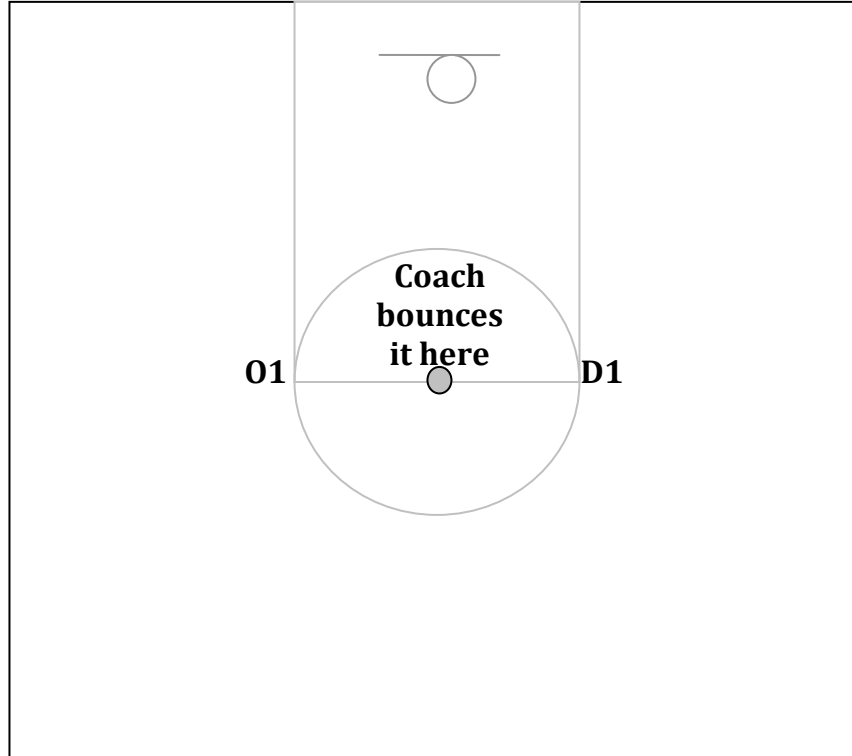
REBOUNDING

5.2 High Bounce

Level: Beginner

Have a single player, O1, start on one side of the circle. The coach stands at the center of free throw line and starts the drill by throwing the ball down hard in order to make it bounce high, straight up. As soon as the ball hits the ground, the player moves into the middle of the circle, and times her leap in order to catch the ball with two hands at its highest point. This drill gives players practice at timing their leap to jump for the rebound and catch the ball while airborne. It is difficult for many young players. Often, they want to let the ball come to them.

A slightly more advanced version of this drill is to have two players compete for the rebound. No boxing out, just jumping high. Start with one player on each side of the circle. They may advance toward the center as soon as the ball is bounced by the coach.



REBOUNDING

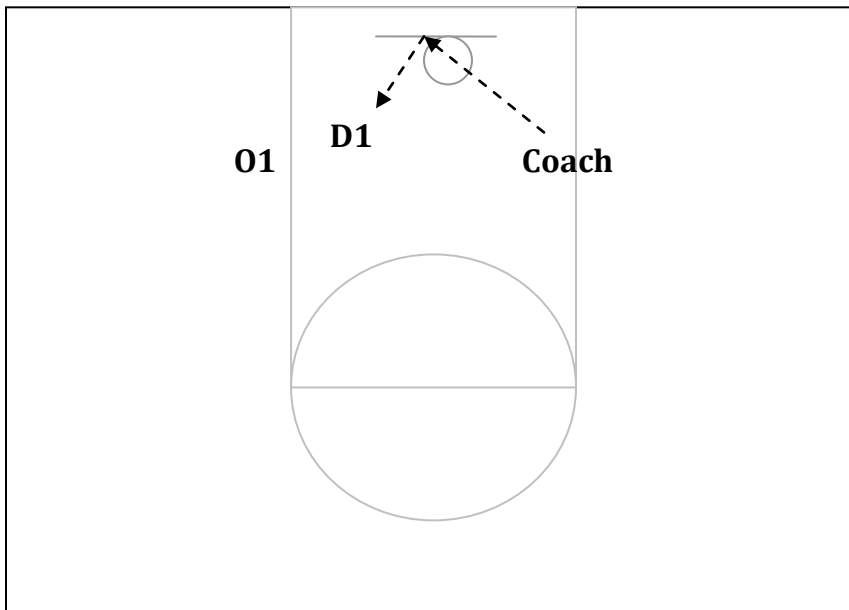
5.3 Rebound off the Board

Level: Intermediate

Have the player stand in defensive “help” position about 4-5 feet away from the basket. The defender should see both the player they are guarding and the ball. The coach should put a missed shot that goes over the rim and off the backboard. When the coach goes into the shooting motion, the defensive player should turn to face the basket. The main point of this drill is to get the player to jump for the rebound, and catch the ball while airborne. Timing the leap to get a rebound off the board is more difficult than timing a bounce off the floor (as in drill 5.2). Emphasize jumping to get the ball at its highest point. Make it an easy catch, don’t have the ball hit the rim.

Point of emphasis

→ catch the ball while airborne.



As players improve, it is a good idea to have them get in the habit of making box-out contact with the offensive player when the coach goes into the shooting motion. Then, go airborne for the rebound.

6 SHOOTING

6.1 Set Shot – Shooting Stroke

Level: Beginner

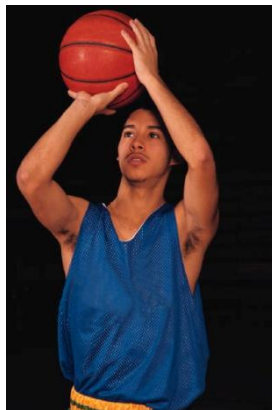
Explain to the players that on the set-shot, unlike the lay-up, they should take-off from two feet. The set-shot is used when we do not have a clear path to the basket, or our momentum has been stopped. The coach will need to clearly differentiate the set-shot from the lay-up techniques, as well as the situations when each should be used.

Each player should have a ball, but we're not shooting at the basket. The idea is to practice set shot form by shooting the ball straight up in the air to a point about 12 feet above the ground. Tell the players to try to get a **perfectly straight backward rotation** along one of the ball's seams.

Points of emphasis:

- ➔ bend at the knees and waist,
- ➔ power hand is the shooting hand behind and underneath the ball,
- ➔ other hand is the guide on the side of the ball,
- ➔ shooting arm should start parallel to the ground from the armpit to the elbow,
- ➔ when taking the shot extend shooting arm straight out and up to the basket,
- ➔ flop the wrist over the top at release,
- ➔ feel the ball leave the index (pointer) finger last.

Many young players want to shoot the ball in a manner similar to the chest pass. Often, they will point both elbows out to the side, and flick the ball with two hands using thumbs as leverage points rather than developing a shooting stroke with the power hand underneath the ball. One technique to coach them out of this habit is to tell them “no chicken wings.” Instruct them to “make a shelf” by keeping the upper arm of the power hand arm parallel to the ground (from the armpit to the elbow) at the start of the shot.

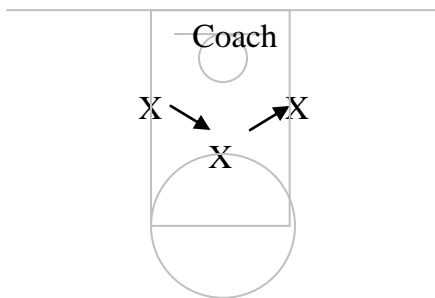


SHOOTING

6.2 Catch and Shoot

Level: Beginner

One player participates in this drill at a time. Player runs to the first X, gets in “catch-and-shoot” position, catches pass from coach and shoots, coach gets the rebound. Player quickly runs to next X, and so on. After the third shot, player reverses direction. A total of five shots per player. Emphasize the speed of running to position and being ready to shoot before the pass is made.



SHOOTING

6.3 Lightning

Level: Beginner

Lightening is a shooting game where the players start by taking a “long” shot (from about the free-throw line), and if they miss, they get their own rebound and continue shooting from anywhere on the court they wish until they make a shot. During each round, two players are paired off in a mini shooting competition. Let’s say Players 1 and 2 are paired off. Player 1 takes her long shot first, and let’s say she misses. Player 2 takes her long shot and she also misses. The two players get their own rebounds and each continues to shoot (from anywhere) until one player makes a shot. If Player 2 is the first to make a shot, then Player 1 is knocked out of the competition. If Player 1 is the first to make a shot, then both players remain in the competition. Only the player shooting first can be knocked out of the competition. Let’s say that in our example that Player 1 was the first to make a shot. She remains in the competition and goes to the end of the line. The next pairing is Player 2 vs. Player 3 with Player 2 shooting first. And so on.

This game seems to work well with a grouping of about five or six players. You can have two games of Lightning going on opposite sides of the court. The kids love this game.

SHOOTING

6.4 Lay-up Progression

Level: Intermediate

The most important concept in teaching the lay-up is to have the kids master the one-footed take-off. In games, the players who have mastered the one-footed take-off will score many more points than those who have not. The reason is that the one-footed take-off allows a player to maintain their momentum when moving into the shot, and if they get a step advantage on the defender, the defender can never recover. The players who gather to a two-footed take-off need to slow down then come to a stop, and this allows the defender to recover and contest the shot.

Teaching the one-footed take-off is much more difficult than it may appear. For many young players, it is best learned in slow deliberate steps, over the course of four separate practices.

Practice #1

- One-footed hop. Have the kids hop up and down on one foot. Tell the right handed players to hop on their left foot. Tell the left handed players to hop on their right foot. Have them drive the knee of the non-jumping leg up toward their chin with each hop. Then explain that this is the take-off foot for the lay-up.
- Air lay-up. No ball – it only messes them up at this point. We're concentrating on footwork. Have the player stand about eight feet away from the basket on the side of the lane. For right handed players, have them take one step toward the basket with the left foot. Have them drive the right knee high into the air and leap off the left foot toward the basket. Put the right hand behind the imaginary ball and "shoot" it off the backboard while airborne. Land on two feet. Left handed players reverse the process, and work on the opposite side of the basket.

Practice #2

- Air lay-up. Same drill as the first practice. You need to remind them what foot they will take-off from.
- One step lay-up. They get to use a ball but no dribble. Have the kids start about eight feet away from the basket. Have the right handed kids take one step with their left foot, drive their right knee up in the air, jump off of the left foot, shoot the ball while in the air, and then land on two feet. For left handed kids, reverse the process. The main thing is footwork, don't worry if the ball doesn't come close to going in the basket at this point. Some 3rd graders may not be able to do it, but most 4th graders should. Really emphasize the one-footed take-off.

SHOOTING

Lay-up Progression

Level: Intermediate

Practice #3

- One step lay-up. Same drill as the second practice.
- Running air lay-up. No ball. Have the kids get in a line about 20 feet away from basket. Have them take turns running toward the basket pretending as if they were dribbling the ball, then take-off of one foot shooting an imaginary lay-up, then landing on two feet. Emphasize height on the take-off. Often, young players jump out rather than up, and shoot the ball too low as a result.

Practice #4

- Running air lay-up. Same drill as the third practice.
- The real thing. Ball, dribbling, everything. By now, they are really ready to show you that they can do it. Have the kids get in a line about 20 feet away from basket. Have them take turns dribbling to the hoop, jumping off of one foot and shooting the lay-up. Don't worry that the shots don't go in. The main thing is to continue to emphasize the one-footed take-off. With regular practice, the shots will start to fall.

Of course, not every kid will have the one-footed take-off mastered by the end of the fourth practice. As the season progresses, it is important to keep working on the lay-up. The kids who are having success at the lay-up should be encouraged to increase the tempo to game speed when practicing, and incorporate some of their individual moves (hesitation, cross-over, etc...) into lay-up practice. For the kids who are in the earlier stages of mastering this skill, it may be helpful to spend a couple of practice sessions with them reviewing some of the earlier drills such as the one-footed hop, the air lay-up, the one step lay-up, and the running air lay-up.