

HOW TO DRILL

We use these five drills as our staple drills to teach the offense. All of these drills were creations from scratch to help our players learn the offense in different phases and in-grain the habits we want them to form. As a coach, creating your own set of drills to teach your schemes is a key skill. It will help your players understand the nuances of the things you do, so be creative.

3v3 Small Sided Games

We use this drill as a starter drill for the offense and mostly in the off-season. All we do is have a coach pass from the wing, and a 3 on 3 set up on the weak side, filling the top of the key, wing and corner. We have the players make the Circle Motion cuts, and pass to the open player. Once the ball is passed in, the drill is live to the conclusion of the possession - a defensive rebound, a turnover or a score. This teaches the players to make the basic cuts and reads of the offense while allowing them to play basketball in a more structured setting than an open gym.

Tennessee Shooting

This is a dry drill, meaning there is no defense. We have four lines of players and three passers. The passers rotate in the drill, and each have a specific place they will pass to, avoiding confusion of two passers passing to the same player. We run through our Circle Motion cuts with each player receiving a pass at the end of their cut for a shot. Once we make all three shots on one rotation, we move to the next series of cuts. We usually have one line of cutters used as a passer within the drill, meaning they may catch, drive, and kick from the top of the key to the corner, or they may catch on a curl and pass to the corner. It reinforces the habit of creating from collapsing the defense, and keeps more players involved in the drill.

Tennessee vs Deny

With this drill, we spot start the offense and have the defense play denial defense. We instruct the offense to use their pressure release tactics (back cut, dribble at, down screen, dribble clear, etc) to find a shot. We only want the offense to drive the ball at sharp downhill angles to the basket. This is pure training to maintain the offense through teams that are dead set on disrupting it through their style of defense. Once we learn to use the defenses pressure against them to create shots, we are in business against pressure defenses. Often times, teams that present heavy pressure try to keep us away from getting the ball to the wing to make our Circle Motion cuts. With this drill, we learn to stay in the offense against pressure, and use the defenses pressure against them.

Pressured Passing

This drill is focused on teaching the passer to recognize what's happening and make quick decisions. The drill is 4 on 3 with the offense having the advantage. The passer starts on the wing with the ball. He has no dribble. He has a defender an arm's length away, working on mirroring the ball with his hands, trying to get deflections, and jumping to the ball once a pass is made. We start the other 3 offensive players in our Circle Motion spots, with one at the top of the key, one on the weak side wing, and one in the weak side corner. We have two defenders line up on the weak side lane line. We instruct the offense to run their Circle Motion cuts. We instruct the defense ahead of each possession to lock on to a specific defender. The result is two players guarded on their cut and one player wide open. We want the passer to recognize quickly who the open player is, and then throw a pass on time and on target. I love the drill for teaching better awareness as a passer, but it uses a lot of resources to do so. We usually have each of our varsity players take 3-5 reps as the passer to get through the drill.

Whole Method (5v5)

While I know many coaches love a good breakdown drill, drilling in the whole method is where we spend the vast majority of our time sharpening the offense. When we drill 5 on 5, it's important that we are guiding the defense and changing their principles. If we don't, we will only understand how to run the offense against the style of our base defense. While it may not be the best look having the defense use unfamiliar schemes in practice, it will get the offense used to playing against different styles. If your team usually switches off the ball screens, you still need reps working against teams that get through screens. If your team usually plays denial defense, you still need reps playing against teams that are in the gaps one pass away. If you help off the corner on a drive from the wing, you still need reps rotating to from the baseline on penetration and sticking to the player in the corner. My first tip is to guide the defense to get reps against various types of coverages. Secondly, we like to start the ball at different spots (top of the key, wing, corner) in the to get reps at certain features within the offense. For example, we will start the ball on the wing, instruct the offense to pass the ball to the corner, triggering the corner option, and then we play live from there. Additionally, we may start the ball at the top of the key, and then tell the offense they can enter to either side, and then play live from there. Move the starting spot around, and move players into different starting positions because they need to be comfortable playing from any position. This is especially true if we are going to be using down screens and back cuts to get open which mixes up our positioning.