A background image of a basketball game in progress, showing a basketball hoop and a player's hand reaching for the ball. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the hoop.

Game Time!

From pregame meal to postgame talk, suggestions and ideas on helping your team prepare mentally and physically for battle!

**Pregame Nutrition * Warm-up Drills
Scouting Report * Pregame Speech
Half-time Talk * Hustle Board
Game Stats * Postgame Wrap-up**

by Jamie Angeli

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I. Introduction

Over the past twenty years in coaching I have had the opportunity to be around just about every method of game preparation imaginable. Finding what is right for YOU based on the information YOU believe to be true is the key in developing your pregame plan for nutrition, scouting, drills and rituals.

I think it is important to spend adequate time on your game preparation for several reasons:

1. You spend time preparing your players each day in practice, why would you value game preparation as any less important?
2. What others see from your team on the floor is a direct reflection on you as a coach. If your players lack discipline in their game preparation, then it is assumed you lack discipline in your basketball program.
3. I know several NBA and College Scouts who make an extra effort just to get to the game early to see how their "prospect" warms up before a game. They are looking for his discipline, mental toughness, sincerity and value for the game, and his overall ability to prepare himself to compete.
4. In a game of seconds, isn't it important to have your players prepared to make the best decision possible in a split-second? Proper game preparation will help your players make the right decision when it counts.
5. Pregame warm-up drills is a great time for you as coach to remind your players through a series of set drills what is fundamentally important to the success of your program.

It is my hope that you value your game preparation as much as I do. I'm assuming you do or you would not have purchased this book. I also hope this information will give you some good ideas to add to your current game preparation.

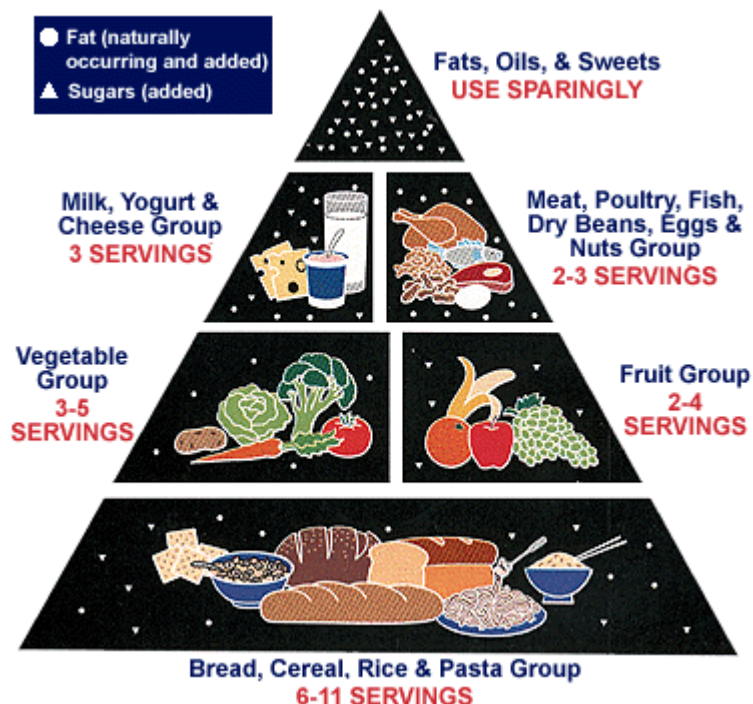
II. Pregame Nutrition

What you eat on a regular basis can certainly have an effect on how you perform on the basketball floor. Just as important, what you eat prior to competition can often times mean the difference between giving it your ultimate best or falling short when your best is needed. Making the right choice on your pregame meal can give you that competitive edge over your opponent.

While it is important to eat the right foods before your competition, it is also important to note that this pregame meal will not supply all the energy you will need for the event. Your body needs a key energy source called Glycogen. Although the pregame meal won't cause large increases in muscle glycogen, it will:

- Help avoid hunger during the event
- Stabilize blood-sugar levels and add some food energy to complement existing energy stores of muscle glycogen
- Hydrate the body (supply water to the body's cells)
- Provide a relatively empty stomach at game time
- Prevent gastrointestinal upset or other adverse reactions to food

It is important to know that your body stores energy as glycogen, and when playing, this stored energy will deplete. In order for you to keep going, it is essential to restore your glycogen levels by eating more carbohydrates. Restoring your body's glycogen shouldn't only be limited to pregame meals, but also it should be an important part of your post-game, practice, and gym routines. Keeping your energy levels up will help you perform better and more consistently as an athlete. Here is a list of foods that will help you prepare a sensible diet:



It is also important to note that no one pregame meal is right for every athlete or every event, but some food choices are much smarter than others. Some athletes actually prefer to eat close to game time or not at all before an early game. Sometimes preference is the best choice (as long as you are getting the proper fuels to your body and you are getting them in time). Keep a food diary. Track which foods or meals helped you perform better. If you find a meal that works stick with it. In any event, make sure your pregame meal plan follows these guidelines:

- Allow enough time for digestion. Eat the meal at least three to four hours before an event.
- Choose a meal that's high in starch. Starch is easy to digest and helps steady the levels of blood sugar.
- Consume only moderate amounts of protein. Protein foods take longer to digest than starch. And high-protein meals may lead to increased urine production, which can add to dehydration.
- Limit fats and oils. They take too long to digest.
- Restrict sugary foods. Sweets can cause rapid energy swings in blood sugar levels and result in low blood sugar and less energy.
- Avoid foods and drinks that contain caffeine. Caffeine stimulates the body to increase urine output, which can contribute to dehydration problems, and a full bladder can be uncomfortable.
- When choosing a pregame meal, eat things that your body and you enjoy (within reason). Choosing foods that are hard to digest or that you are not familiar with may hinder your performance. They can also make you uncomfortable.
- Watch out for foods that produce gas. Certain raw vegetables, fruits, or beans may cause problems for some young athletes. Be aware of the foods that cause you problems, and avoid them just before an event.
- Within these guidelines, choose foods you like to eat.
- Remember to drink plenty of fluids with your pregame meal.

Supplements

Supplements will provide you with the necessary vitamins, but they won't give you energy or some other essential minerals found in foods. Any pills should not be a replacement for food. A meal replacement shake is good if you are in a crunch, but they don't do anything more than an easy breakfast or lunch can do. Generally speaking, supplements and replacements are more expensive alternatives to a well-balanced meal.

A well balanced diet will do more than a pregame meal. Although eating well before a game is essential, your overall performance will improve the most with a well balanced diet. Eating well throughout the week will help you perform well for games and will also ensure that you are always restoring your glycogen levels.

III. Pregame Rituals / Preparation

Just like it is important for your players to have “rituals” at the free-throw line, I believe it is important for your players to have a pregame “ritual”. Your players should know what to expect each time they prepare for a game. The key is to avoid distractions and by having a “ritual” players can spend less time focusing on what to expect and more time focusing on their mental and physical preparation, and of course, their opponent. It is your job to remove the distractions from your team environment. I can’t help but think about the scene in the movie “*Hoosiers*” where Gene Hackman had the players measure the height of the basket before their big title game. He used a visual example to remove the “distraction” or “stigma” these players were feeling towards this big game. Reminding the players that the baskets were the same height of all the other baskets they have played on up until that point removed one of the distractions of this big game. By eliminating a mental “distraction”, it brought them closer to focusing on the real task at hand (the game plan, their mental and physical preparation, their opponent, etc). Again, it is your job as a coach to help remove some of these distractions centered around the actual competition.

Pregame Talks / Speeches

The pregame talk is an important last reminder of what you want your kids to focus on in the game. With that in mind, it is important to be short and concise. Believe me, your players have enough going on in their heads before the game to remember a long pregame speech including many “pearls of wisdom”.

I cannot tell you how many times we have drawn up things in the team lockerroom before the game on our starting defensive or offensive strategy, only to have several players ask just before tip-off “now what are we in to start the game?”. That is why it is important to have a few different visual and audio reminders before the game. Have your game plan on the board the minute your players enter the lockerroom. Don’t include too much information on this board, but have the key nuggets highlighted. You don’t want to create, as many coaches say, “paralysis from analysis”. Jerry Tarkanian once said, “The more you give them to think about the slower their feet get.”

I like the idea of giving your players a written or video scouting report to look over either the night before the game or on the trip to the game. They can look at it when they are “ready” to receive the information. Again, this “ritual” is developed early on and is adhered to throughout the season.

Each team is different and only you know what they can handle. In any event, be careful of how much information you give them to absorb just before the game.

IV. Scouting Reports

Again, with the emphasis on not giving your players too much to remember, I think the scouting report below is all they would need before the game. Hopefully, if the opponent ran some things offensively that you needed to work on covering defensively, that would have and should have taken place in practice before the game. Try to include information on the opponent's top 7 to 8 players.

Player Name	Ht., Wt. Pos.	Key Stats	Description

Offensive Keys to the Game

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**
- 4.**
- 5.**

Defensive Keys to the Game

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**
- 4.**
- 5.**

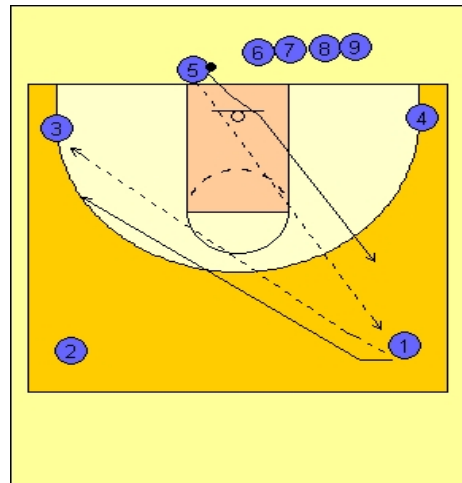
V. Pregame Warm-up Drills

I have included a series of drills for your consideration. Each drill contains a point of emphasis as well as a detailed description of each player's assignment.

Four Corner Lay-ups

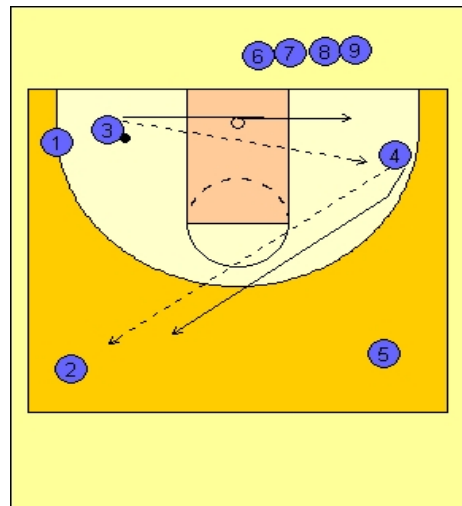
(**Emphasis:** passing, catching, right / left hand lay-ups). One player is in each of the four corners. The rest line up under the basket. The drill starts when the ball is passed to a half court corner player. This drill can go in either direction, depending on which half court corner player (#1 or #2) receives the ball. Run the drill so each player gets a couple of right hand lay-ups and a couple of left hand lay-ups.

The only rule to remember is to take the place of the person you pass to. Here we see #5 passing to #1 and then #1 passing to #3 in the opposite corner. #5 follows his pass and replaces the person he passed to (#1) and then #1 follows his pass and replaces the person he passed to (#3).



Four Corner Lay-ups (con't)

Players should anticipate the pass a little and start running towards the pass before they receive it. Here, #4 has left the corner a little early to get the pass from #3. When #4 passes to #2, #2 should be on the move to the basket.

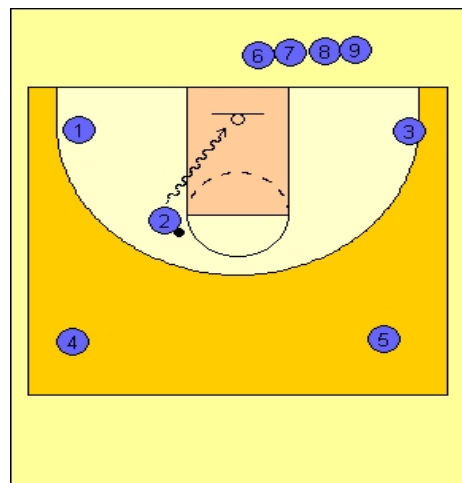


Four Corner Lay-ups (con't)

After #2 makes the lay-up, he/she goes to the end of the line under the basket. #6 now takes the ball and passes to #5 and the action starts all over again.

When the players are comfortable with the drill, add a second basketball. When the rebounder passes the ball to the half court corner to start the drill (#6 to #5 in this diagram), the next man in line has a ball (#7). As soon as the passer of the ball (#6) is in position replacing #5, the next ball would be introduced.

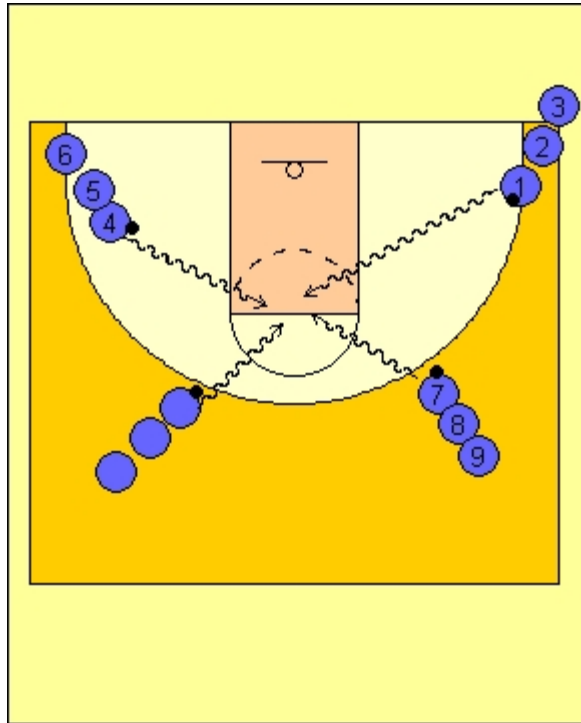
The drill does not change, but now there is one ball chasing the other.



Four Corner Passing

(**Emphasis:** right / left hand dribbling, jump stops, pivoting, passing, catching). This is a "classic" in the coaching profession. It has stood the test of time and remains a staple in pregame drill preparation. This is especially effective for younger programs.

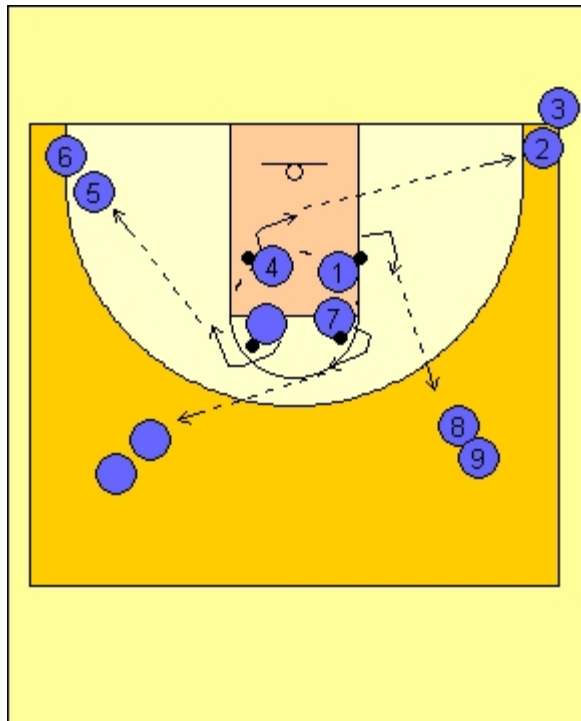
Four corners with the team divided up equally. The first person in each line has a basketball. To start, they all begin dribbling towards the middle. They all come to a two foot jump stop when they meet in the center.



Four Corner Passing (con't)

They will then execute a reverse pivot and pass to the line to their right of left (determined before starting drill).

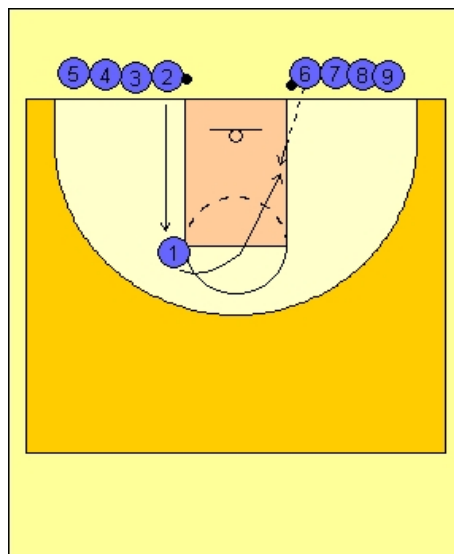
They will then follow their pass to the end of the line they just threw the ball to. The person who received the pass drives the ball towards the middle and executes the two foot jump stop with the reverse pivot and pass, just like in the beginning. Change direction after each person has gone through once or twice.



Two Lines, Two Balls

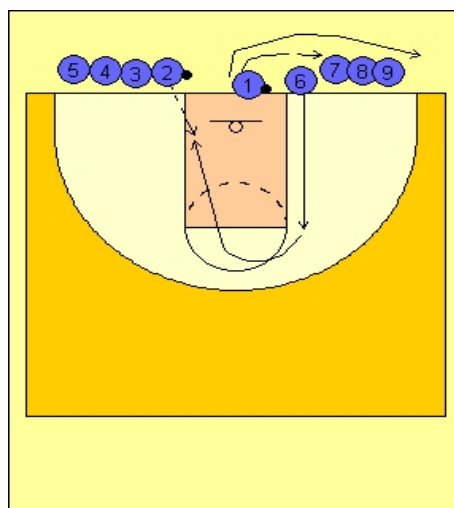
(**Emphasis:** jump stops, pivoting, passing, catching, right / left hand lay-ups). This is a fast-paced lay-up drill. Each line has a ball. In the left line, the ball is held by the second player (#2), not the first player (#1).

#1 starts the drill by running out to the free throw line elbow and coming to a jump stop and a screening position. He then executes either a reverse pivot or a front pivot (your choice) and attacks the basket looking for a pass from #6 and the lay-up. This action simulates setting a screen and then popping to the basketball for a shot.



Two Lines, Two Balls (con't)

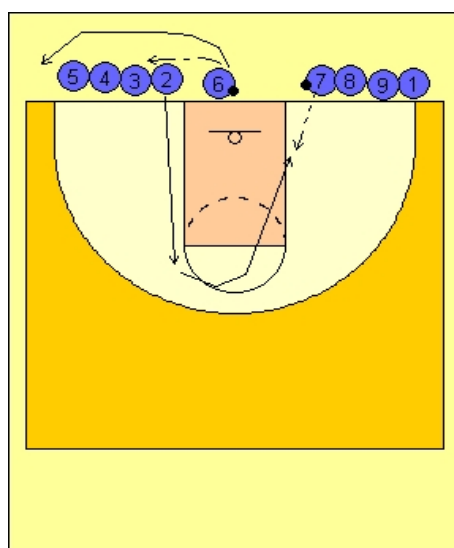
After #1 shoots the lay-up he passes the ball to the next person in line (#7) and then runs to the back of that line. #6 quickly runs out as #1 is shooting the lay-up and executes the same jump stop screen action on the other free throw line elbow. He then rolls back (off the front pivot or reverse pivot) to the ball and receives a pass from #2 for the lay-up.



Two Lines, Two Balls (con't)

#6 then passes to the next person in line (#3) and then runs to the back of the line he passed to. #2 now breaks out and executes the same action to receive the pass from #7 for the lay-up.

Great drill because of all the things you are working on: Passing, jump stops, pivoting, left and right hand lay-ups.

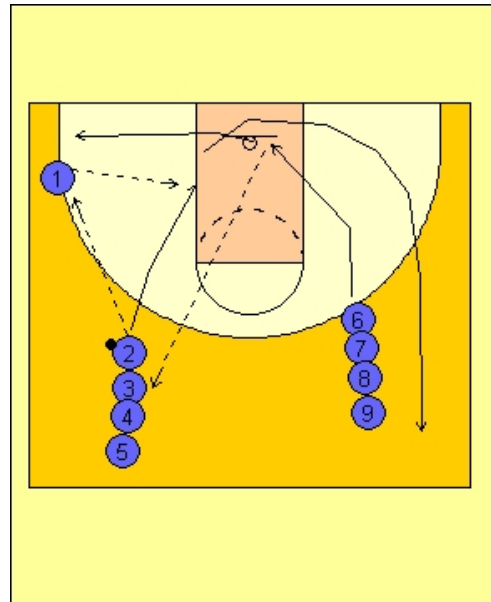


Two Lines, Half Court Lay-ups

(**Emphasis:** passing, cutting, catching, rebounding, outlet pass, right / left hand lay-ups). An adjustment to your ordinary two line lay-ups with good give and go action added.

In this drill, the left hand line man, #2, passes to the corner man #1 and then cuts to the basket and receives the pass back for the lay-up.

#6 comes in to rebound. Once #6 rebounds he outlet passes to the next person in line, #3. The person who shot, #2, runs out underneath and out to the other line.

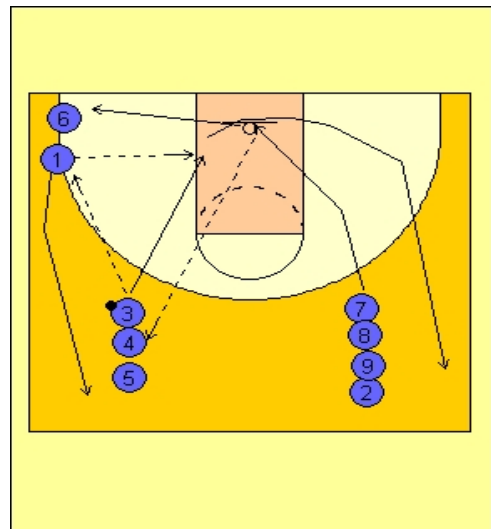


Two Lines, Half Court Lay-ups (con't)

I like to hold #1 for the first two passes. This allows you to always have a man in the corner ready to receive a pass. The lay-ups are much quicker with many more reps.

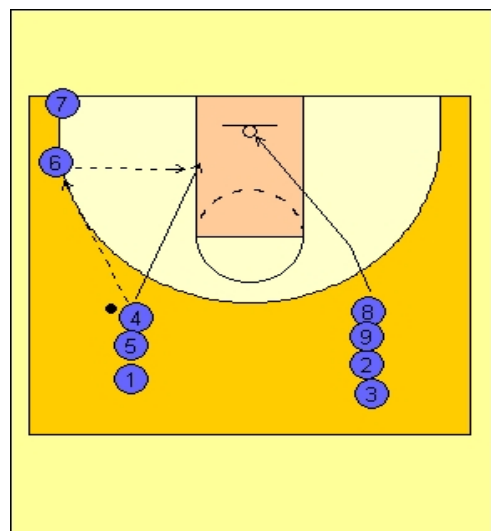
Here we see #1 hold for the second pass from #3. He passes back to #3 for the lay-up. #6 is standing behind #1 ready to step up and be the next receiver.

#1, after passing to #3 for the lay-up, runs to the end of the lay-up line. Again, the opposite line player, #7, gets the rebound and passes to the next person in the lay-up line, #4. #7 then runs to the corner to be the next receiver. The person who just shot the lay-up, #3, runs out to the back of the rebounding line.



Two Lines, Half Court Lay-ups (con't)

#4 now quickly passes to #6 in the corner and receives the pass back for the lay-up. #8 rebounds and the rotation continues. After each person has shot a couple of left hand lay-ups, switch to the right side for right handed lay-ups.



Peer Pressure (1)
Speed Lay-ups

(**Emphasis:** passing, catching, cutting, jump stops, pivoting, right / left hand lay-ups). Three groups here: **Passing Line**, **Receiving Line**, and the **Sprint Line** (or lay-up line).

The **Passing Line** only will have two people at all times. The rest of the team should be divided equally between the **Receiving Line** and the **Sprint Line**.

You must set a goal before beginning each Peer Pressure series. The goal is for amount made in a row before moving on to the other hand. You can also put the score back to zero for bad passes, poor effort, not calling players name out on pass, etc. You decide what the criteria will be.

You will do both right and left hand lay-ups to complete this Speed Lay-up series. The drill is setup here for right hand lay-ups. After you complete your goal (if used as a practice drill) 10, 20 or 30 made lay-ups in a row, move the passing line over to the right side underneath the basket and switch your Sprint Line and Receiving Line for the left hand lay-ups. If being used as a practice drill, the goal should be set again for the left side (10, 20 or 30 in a row).

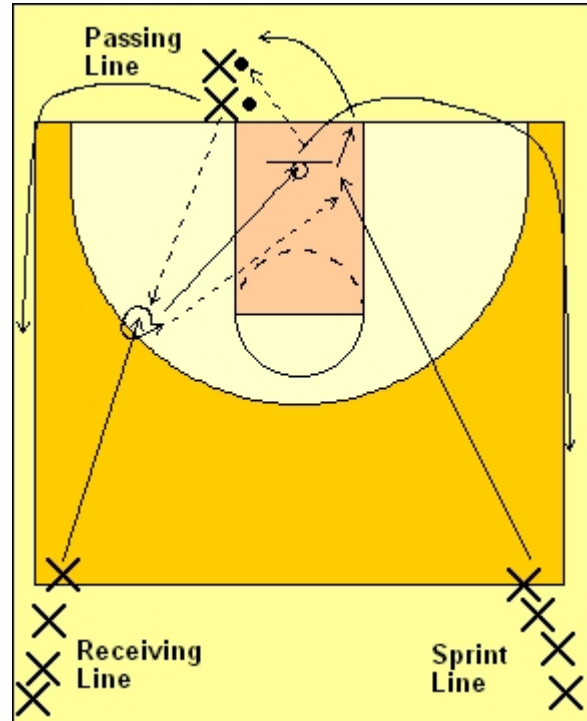
The drill starts with the first person in the receiving line running out to receive the pass from the passing line man about FT line extended or a bit higher. The first person in the Sprint Line **waits until the pass is in the air** to the man in the Receiving Line and then is running hard to the basket looking for the pass from the Receiving Line man. The Receiving Line player catches the pass on a jump stop, reverse pivots, and throws a direct pass to the cutting man from the Sprinting Line. Do not bounce pass anything here. The ball does not touch the floor in any of these drills.

The rotations are pretty easy:

Receiving Line follows his pass and rebounds the lay-up and throws it to the second person in line in the Passing Line. He then jogs to the outside of the floor and to the end of the Sprint Line.

The **Sprint Line** receives the pass and shoots the lay-up without dribbling. After he shoots he goes behind the last person in the Passing Line and waits for the Receiving Line man to pass him the ball.

The **Passing Line** passes the ball to the man cutting at him from the Receiving Line. Once he passes the ball he jogs to the outside of the floor to the end of the Receiving Line.



Peer Pressure (2)
Split Left and Split Right

(**Emphasis:** passing, catching, jump stops, pivoting, right / left hand lay-ups, rebounding).

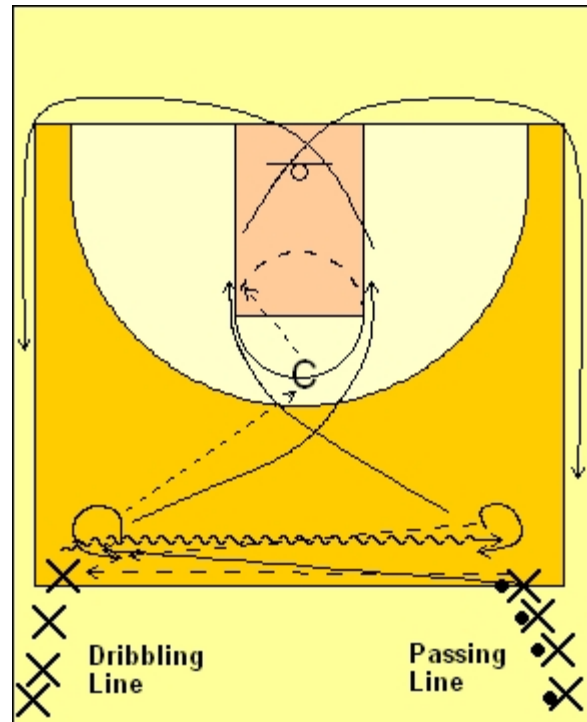
Don't let these lines confuse you, I will clear it up quickly here. Three groups involved in Peer Pressure (2) Split Left and Split Right: **Dribbling Line, Passing Line, and the Coach.**

The team is divided into two groups and placed evenly in the Passing Line and the Dribbling Line. The drill starts with the **Passing Line** man passing to the first man in the **Dribbling Line**. As soon as the dribbling line man catches the ball, he dribbles towards the passing line and comes to a jump stop near the front of their line. He reverse pivots and passes to the man that just passed to him, because, while he was dribbling towards the front of the Passing Line, the other man who originally passed to him ran towards the front of the Dribbling Line, came to a jump stop, reverse pivoted, and waited for the pass from the man in the dribbling line. Once that man catches the ball, he immediately throws the ball to the **Coach** and the two players in the drill "X" cut around the coach. The coach passes the ball to the player cutting around his left side for the left hand lay-up. Again, the coach does not bounce pass nor does the player need to bounce the ball going in for the lay-up. The other player should have his arms up in a rebound position should the player miss the lay-up he will quickly tip the ball in.

The players quickly jog out to the opposite sides and get in the back of the line.

Again, if used as a practice drill, you must set a goal before beginning each Peer Pressure series. As a reminder, the goal is for amount made in a row before moving on to the other hand. You can also put the score back to zero for bad passes, poor effort, not calling players name out on pass, etc. As the coach, you decide what the criteria will be.

You will do both right and left hand lay-ups to complete this series. The drill is setup here for right hand lay-ups. After you complete your goal (10, 20 or 30 made lay-ups in a row), switch the balls over to the other side and start with right hand lay-ups. A new goal begins.

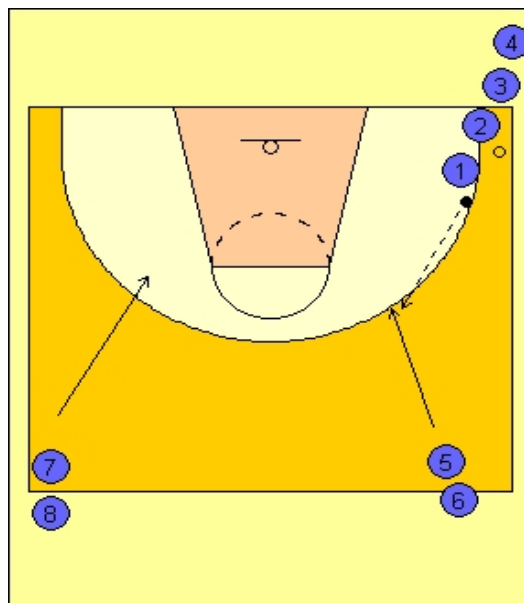


Lay-up / Outlet Drill

(**Emphasis:** passing, catching, cutting, right / left hand lay-ups, possible jump shots).

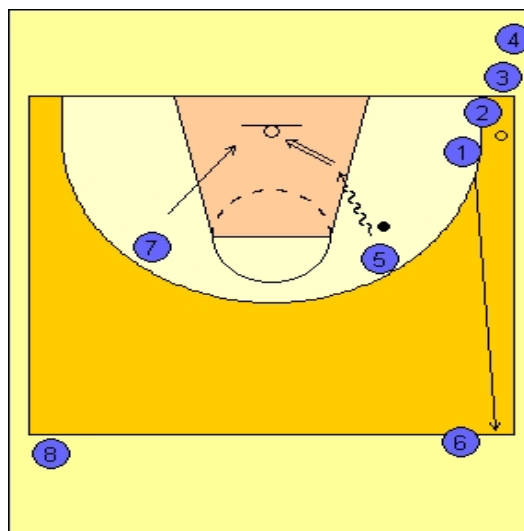
8 or more players. 2 to 3 basketballs.

Player #5 gets a pass from player #1 and goes for the basket. Player #7 goes for the rebound.



Lay-up / Outlet Drill (con't)

Player #1 goes to the mid line while player #5 makes his lay-up.



Lay-up / Outlet Drill (con't)

Player #7 takes the rebound and gives an (outlet) pass to player #3. He continues after his ball to the baseline corner.

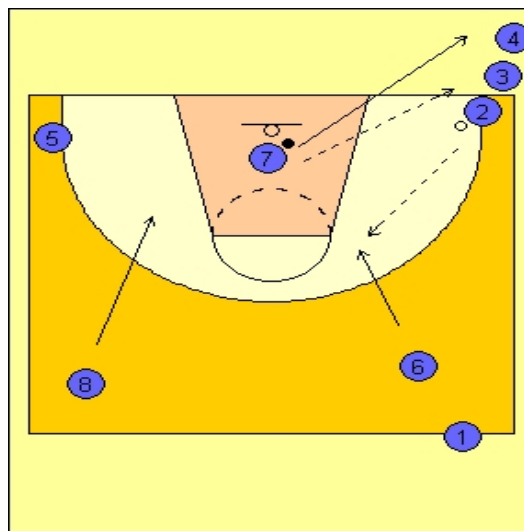
Player #5 goes to the mid line behind player #8.

Player #2, #6 and #8 start with there rotation.

Variations:

Left lay-up

Jump shots instead of lay-ups.

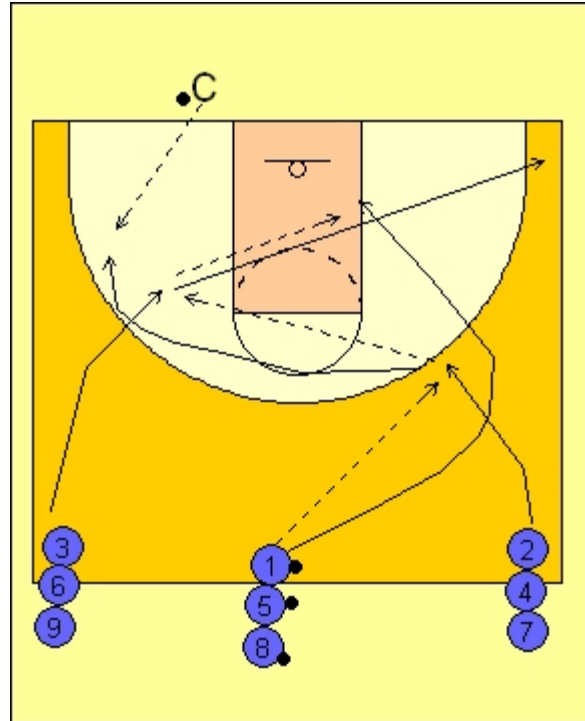


Three Man Weave Shooting

(Emphasis: passing, catching, cutting, right / left hand lay-ups, power slide lay-ups, jump shots). The drill starts with your typical three man weave action (pass and go behind the person you passed to).

#1 passes to #2. #1 cuts behind #2 and to the basket. #2 then passes to #3 on the left side and cuts behind #3. #3 passes to #1 for the lay-up.

#2 catches a pass from the coach or manager for a shot. #3, after passing to #1 for the lay-up, cuts to the right corner.

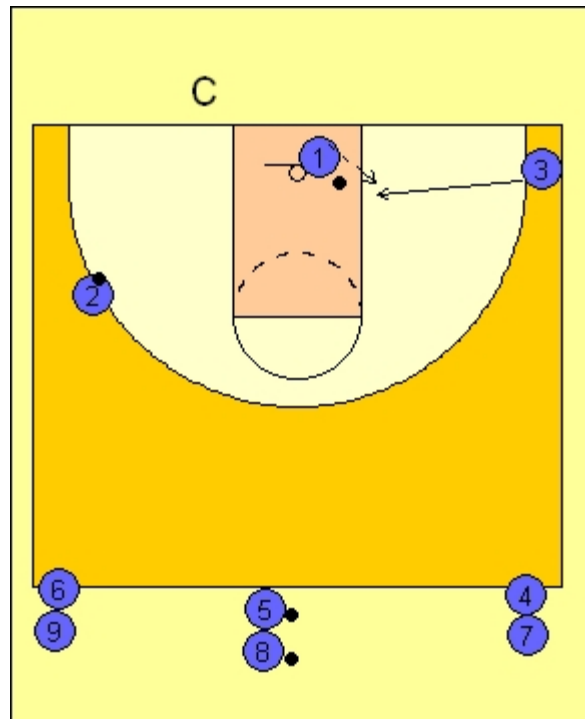


Three Man Weave Shooting (con't)

#2 takes the jump shot off the pass from the coach or manager. #1 shoots the lay-up and grabs his own rebound. He then looks for #3 cutting to the basket for the two-foot power slide lay-up along the baseline (your choice as to the type of lay-up you would like him to shoot).

Players give one ball back to the coach and the next three begin. Three players that already shot find a different line.

The action continues. After awhile, the middle man can pass to the other line to start the action. Coach or manager must move over to the other side to make the pass for the jump shot.



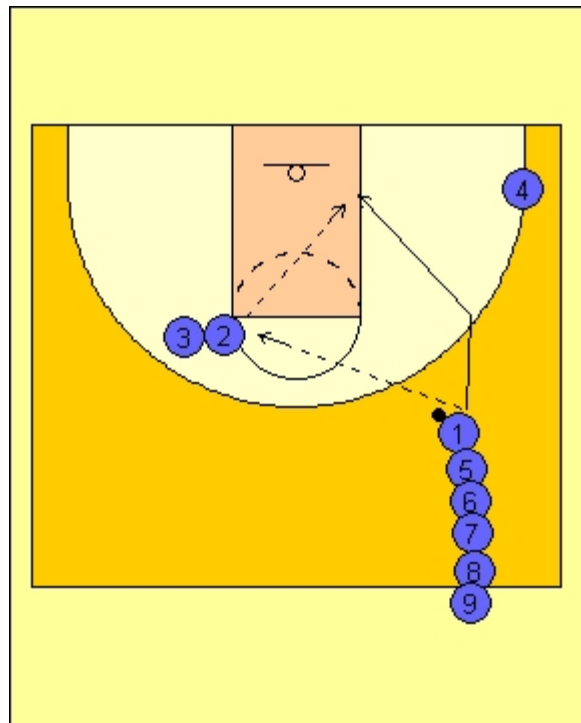
Three Line Lay-up Drill

(**Emphasis:** passing, catching, cutting, right / left hand lay-ups, possible jump shots). The pregame warm-up drill helps to improve player's passing, cutting, receiving and ability to make lay-ups.

Two players start at the top of the key, one player in the right corner, and the rest of the players' lineup at half-court near the right sideline.

The first two players in line have basketballs.

Player #1 passes to player #2 and cuts down the right sideline, then makes a sharp cut to the basket. Player #2 passes the ball back to #1 who shoots a lay-up. After shooting, #1 goes to the top of the key line.

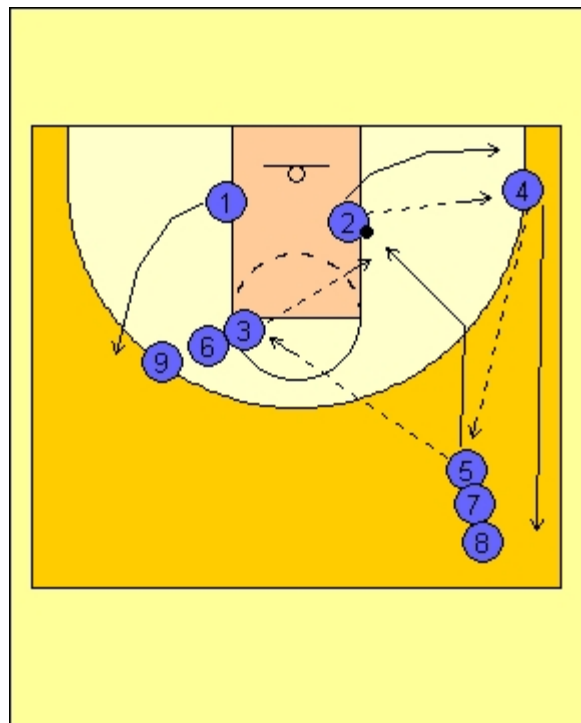


Three Line Lay-up Drill (con't)

Player #2 rebounds the shot from #1 and then passes to #4 in the corner. Player #2 then follows his pass and goes to the corner. Player #4 passes to the next player in line (#5), and follows his pass, going to the end of the line at half-court.

#5 then starts the action again by passing to #3 near the free throw line, cuts straight towards the baseline ob line and then cuts toward the basket for the pass back and the lay-up. All rotations remain the same.

Variations:
Jump shots instead of lay-ups.



Dribble Drive / Retreat / Attack

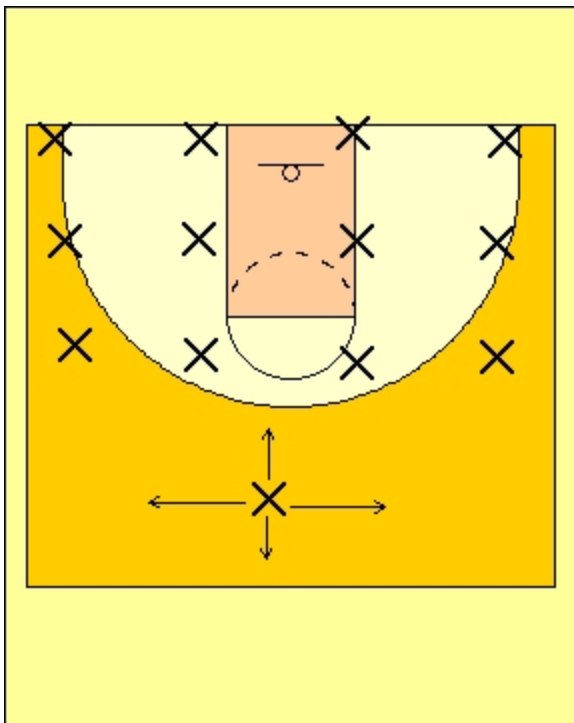
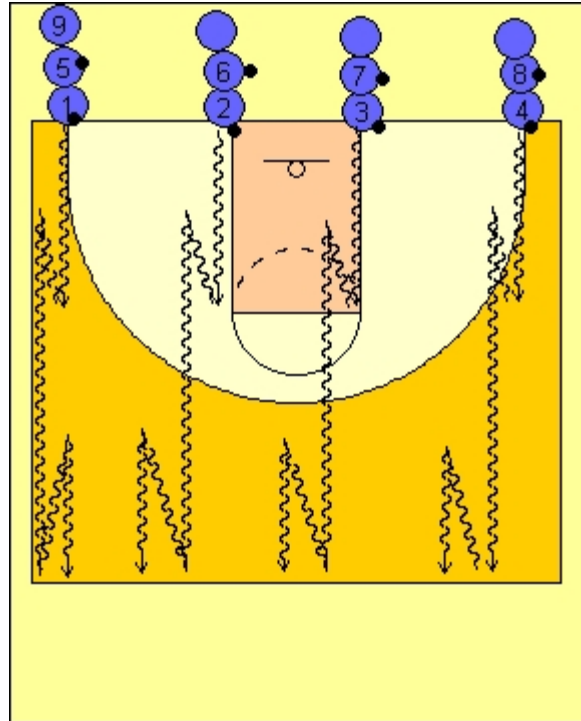
(Emphasis: dribbling, crossover move, protect ball, right / left hand). Each person in line should have a ball, or at the very least the first two in each line.

To start, the first person drives hard towards the free throw line. Dribble should be a straight up speed dribble. When they get to the free throw line they break down in a protective stance with the dribble still alive (protector arm up, ball is back, good low stance).

They then retreat straight back three dribbles with the protector arm up and the ball behind them. When they get to the third dribble they crossover the ball to the opposite hand (nice and low, below the knees) and then attack dribble as hard as they can to the half court line with the opposite hand they started with. When they get to the half court line they repeat the steps they just completed at the free throw line. This time they only attack dribble a few dribbles to the half court line.

Next group starts while the group that just finished jogs down to the end of the lines.

If you have enough balls for everyone to have one, have the group wait at half court and then have them dribble back when all the lines are completed.



Leader of the Pack

(Emphasis: defensive stance and technique, intensity, team togetherness). This drill goes by many names. It is great for the last quick drill before going into the locker room or heading to the bench for the start of the game. It really gets the blood pumping (and if you are at home) the crowd fired up.

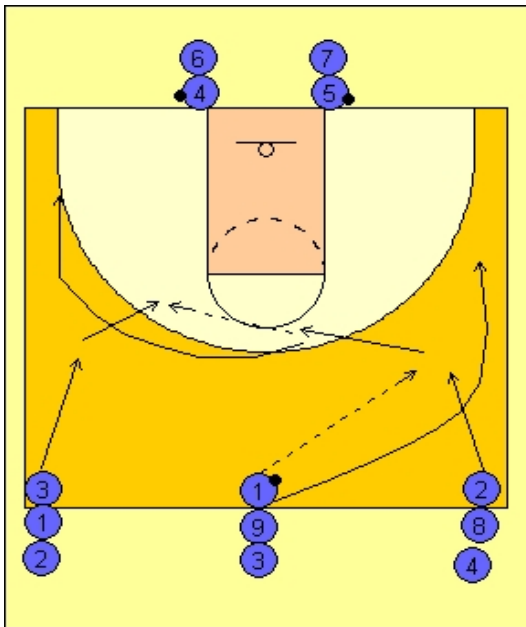
One leader (could be a captain or rotate each game). Defensive stance throughout drill. Leader gives the team direction as to where to shuffle and when to hit the floor. Players will simulate the following directions by watching the leader:

- Footfire (shuffle in one place)
- Shuffle to the right
- Shuffle to the left
- Loose ball (dive on floor)
- Charge (fall back and get up quickly)

Drill should only last a few minutes maximum. It should be short, intense, energetic and probably loud.

Technique on stance and shuffle should be adhered to. When sliding, make sure lead foot is pointed in direction you are shuffling. Push off of back foot. Outside arm (direction you are shuffling) should be up and out (deflecting passes). Inside arm should be down low between legs "digging" at the dribbler.

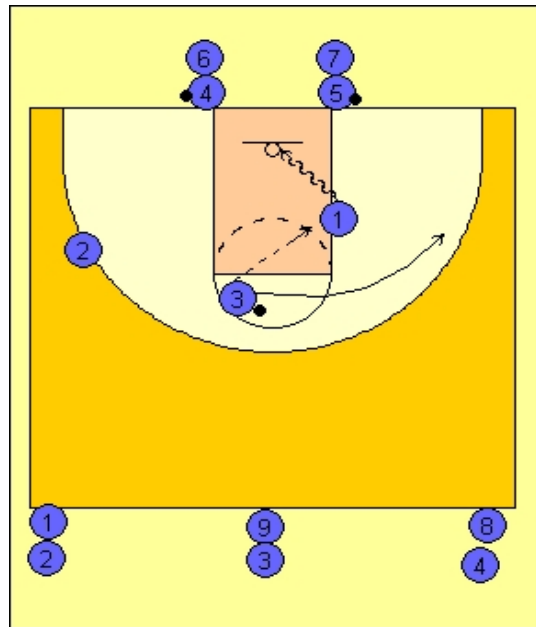
Leader can yell "switch" and change direction of shuffle. Follow shuffle rules above now in opposite direction.



3 Man Weave Shooting w/ Defense

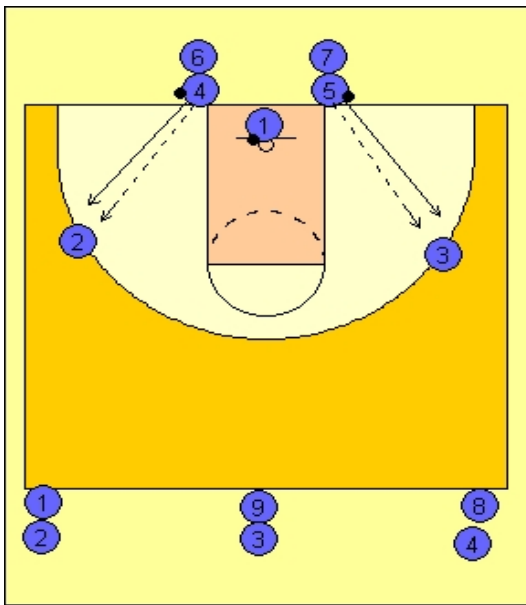
(Emphasis: Passing, cutting, lay-ups, shooting, close-outs, stance, contest shot)

#1 passes to #2 on the right wing and cuts behind #3 while #3 moves out to complete the 3-man weave action. #2 passes to #3 and cuts behind #3.



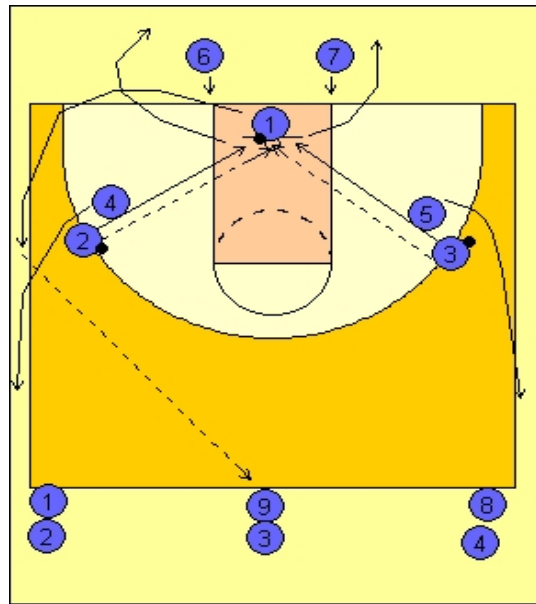
3 Man Weave Shooting w/ Def. (con't)

#3 passes to #1 for the lay-up. #1 shoots the lay-up and gets his own rebound. After passing to #1 for the lay-up, #3 continues on his pattern to the right wing area, on the opposite side as #2.



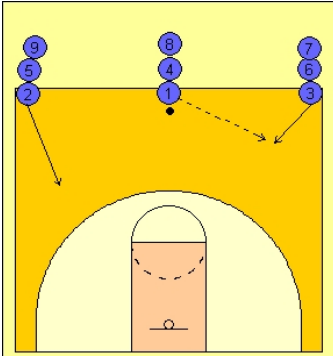
3 Man Weave Shooting w/ Def. (con't)

As #2 and #3 get to their respective spots on the wings, the players underneath the basket (#4 and #5) are holding basketballs. They pass the ball out to #2 and #3 and then close-out on the person they passed to trying to contest the shot



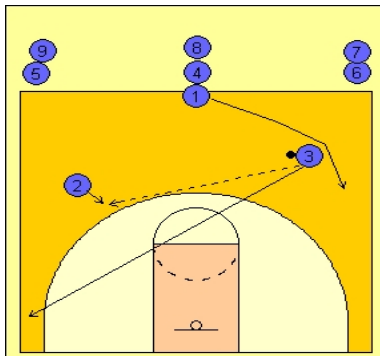
3 Man Weave Shooting w/ Def. (con't)

#2 and #3 take the shot with defense from #4 and #5. #2 and #3 follow their shot, rebound the ball and go to the end of the passing lines underneath the basket. The person who shot the lay-up, #1, takes the ball back along the sideline and passes to the next middle man, #9, and gets in behind a weave line. The closeout defenders, #4 and #5, go to the end of the 3-man weave lines.



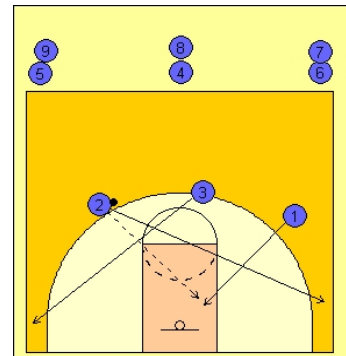
3 Pass / 3 Lay-up Drill

Three passes and three lay-ups. #1 passes to #3. #2 starts out as well.



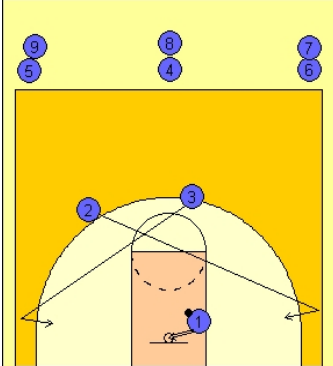
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#1 goes behind #3. #3 passes to #2 and cuts to the left corner area.



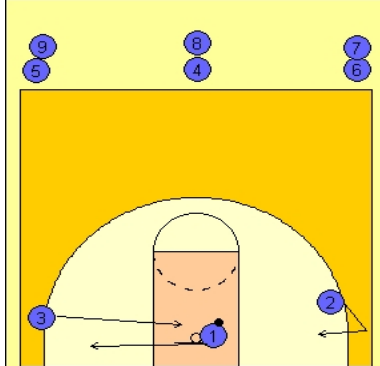
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#2 passes to #1 for the lay-up. #2 cuts to the right corner area.



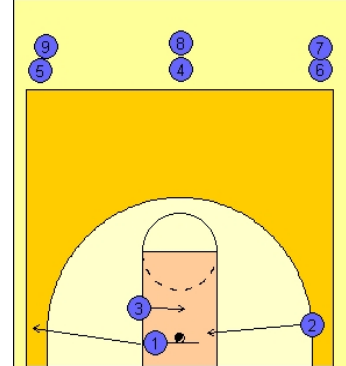
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#1 shoots the lay-up. #2 and #3 touch the sideline and cut back to the basket.



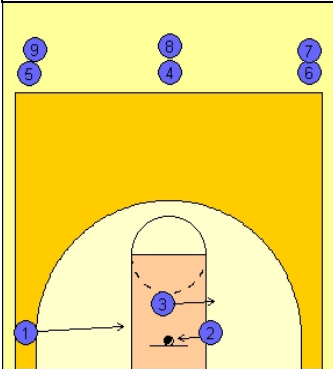
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#3 must run and get the rebound from #1's shot before it hits the ground. #1 runs out to the left corner.



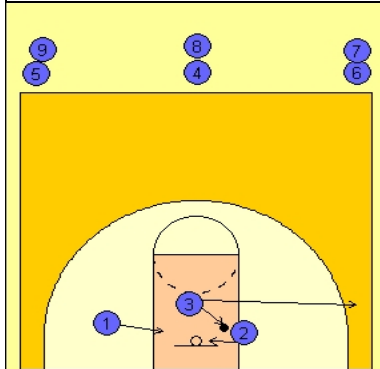
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#3 passes to #2 for the lay-up. #3 continues running out to the right corner.



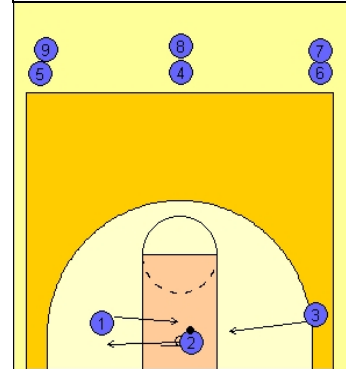
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#2 shoots the lay-up while #1 touches the sideline and cuts back for the rebound before the ball touches the floor.



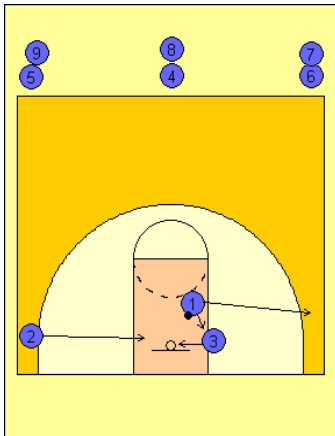
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#3 after passing to #2 cuts out to the left sideline while #2 shoots the lay-up and #1 rebounds.



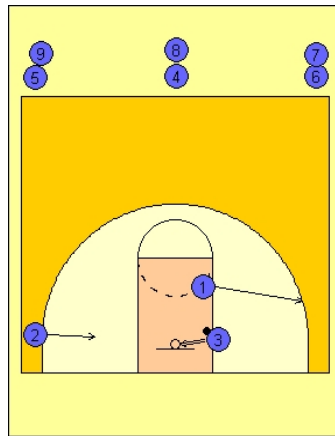
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#1 gets the rebound and #3 has started his cut back towards the basket. #2 sprints out to the left corner.



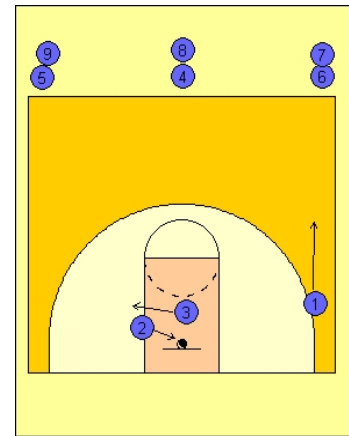
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#1 passes to #3 for the lay-up and cuts out to touch the right corner sideline. #2 has touched the sideline and is cutting back towards the basket.



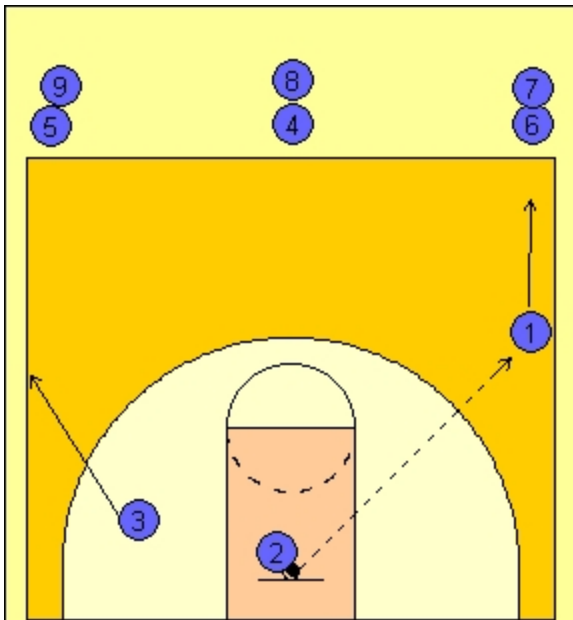
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#3 shoots the lay-up while #2 sprints in for the rebound.



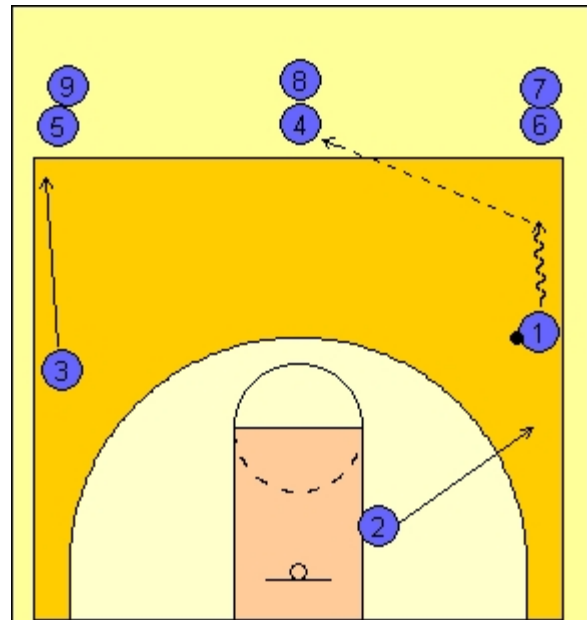
3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

#3, after shooting, runs out to the left corner area while #1 sprints up the right sideline. #2 gets the rebound.



3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

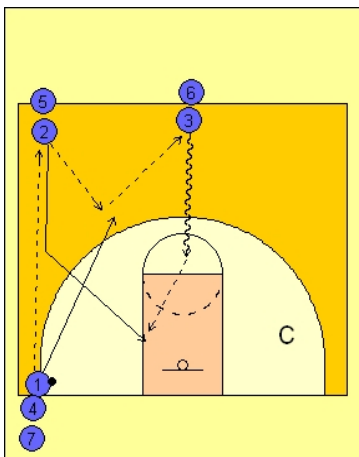
#2 gets the rebound and outlets to #1 on the right sideline. #3 runs up the left sideline. The next man in line, #4, can have a ball ready to start the next series.



3 Pass 3 Lay-up (con't)

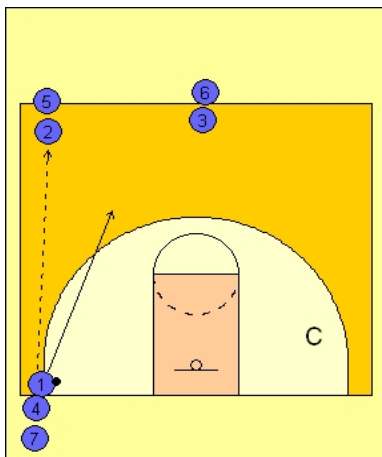
#1 can pass to the next man in line if you want to use only one basketball. #1, #2 and #3 take the end of a different line (rotating clockwise).

(Emphasis: Passing, cutting, spacing, lay-ups. Do not let the ball touch the floor!)



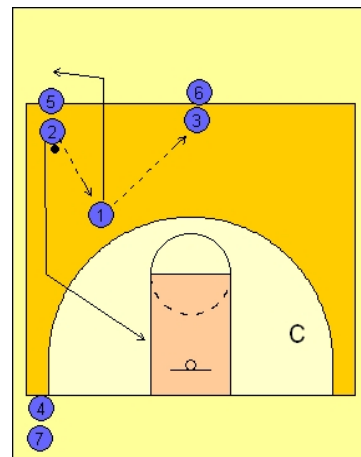
Mascot Drill

(**Emphasis:** Passing, cutting, spacing, lay-ups, high spirited drill). Name drill after your team mascot. Note position of coach. Provide encouragement and positive reinforcement throughout the drill.



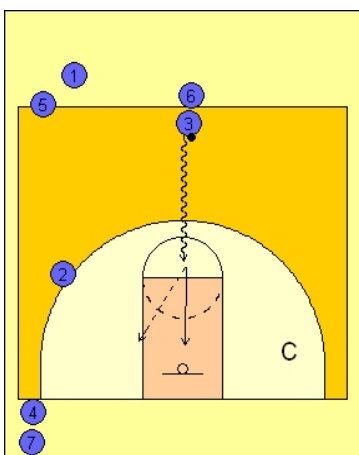
Mascot Drill (con't)

#1 passes to #2. After passing to #2, #1 moves in the middle between #2 and #3.



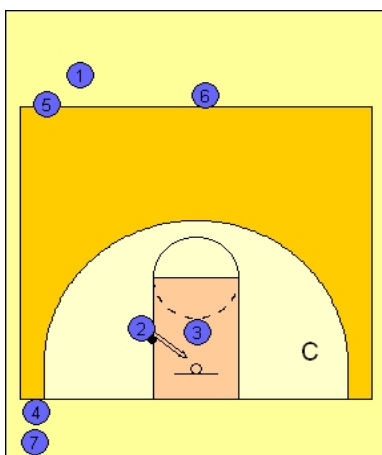
Mascot Drill (con't)

#2 passes back to #1, #1 then passes to #3. #2, after passing to #1, cuts down the sideline and breaks toward the basket at the free throw line. #1 leaves the drill and gets behind the sideline line on top.



Mascot Drill (con't)

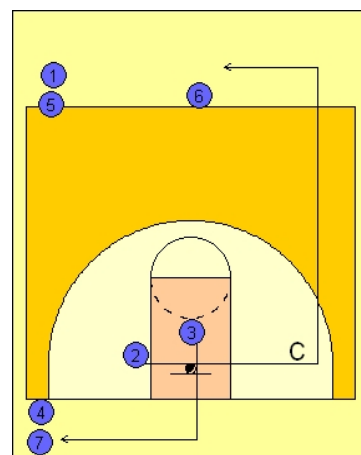
#3 dribbles to the top of the key area and looks to hit #2 cutting to the basket for the lay-up. #3 follows his pass to #2 and goes in for the rebound.



Mascot Drill (con't)

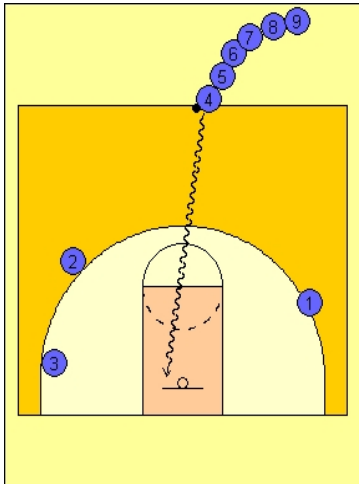
#2 shoots the lay-up with #3 ready to take the ball out of the net.

Have some type of team hand clap for every made basket (2 claps on each made basket, etc.).



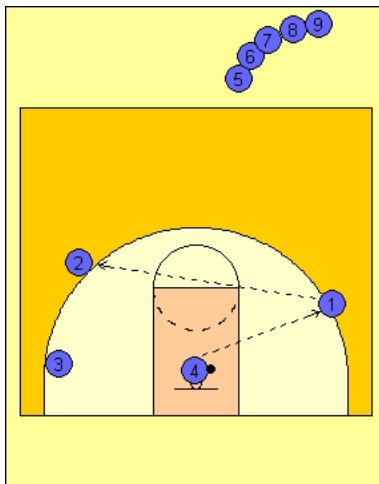
Mascot Drill (con't)

#3 gets the ball out of the net and waits behind the row on the left baseline. #2 runs out past the coach on the right sideline and to the end of the line in the middle at half court. Note each player runs by the coach after taking the shot. Here is where you deliver positive encouragement for each player.



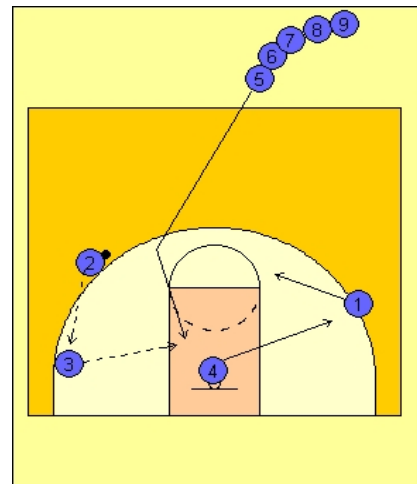
Pass, Skip & Cut Drill

Drill starts with #4 dribbling the ball at the basket for the lay-up.



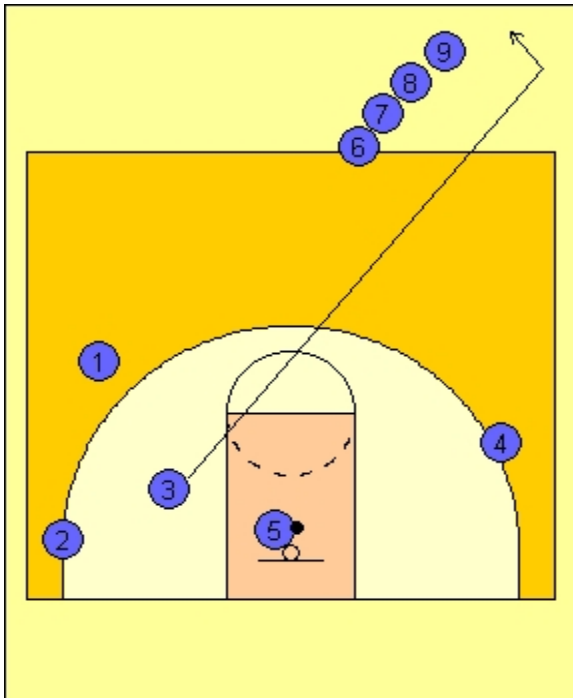
Pass, Skip and Cut (con't)

#4 gets his own rebound (hopefully out of the net) and outlets to #1 on the right wing. #1 quickly skip passes to #2 on the left high wing area. Each passes follows the ball.



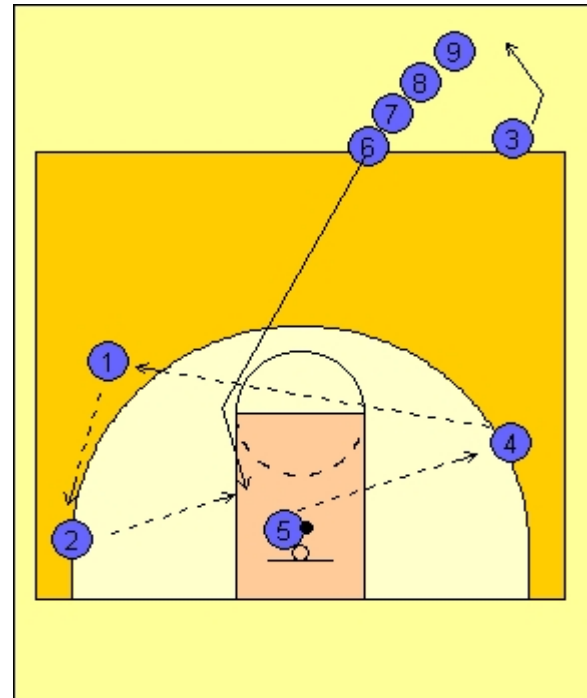
Pass, Skip and Cut (con't)

When #2 receives the ball, and NOT before, #5 makes his cut to the free throw line elbow area. #2 makes a chest pass to #3 who then makes a nice bounce pass to #5 cutting to the basket for the lay-up.



Pass, Skip and Cut (con't)

Everyone follows their pass. As #3 passed to the cutter #5, he runs to the end of the line at half court.

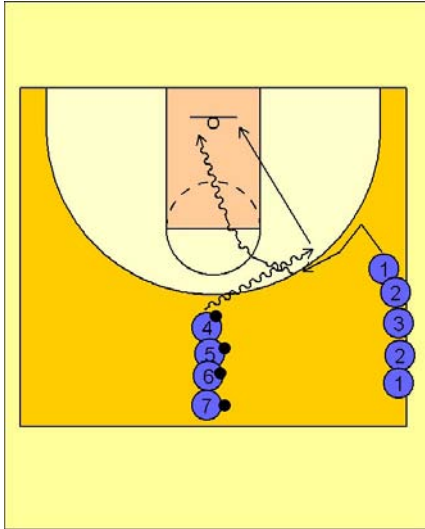


Pass, Skip and Cut (con't)

The drill now repeats itself with #5 getting the ball out of the basket and outletting to #4 who skip passes to #1. Once #1 receives the ball, #6 cuts hard to the free throw line elbow area while #1 passes to #2 in the right corner. #2 delivers the bounce pass to #6 for the lay-up.

Warming up

Dribble hand off



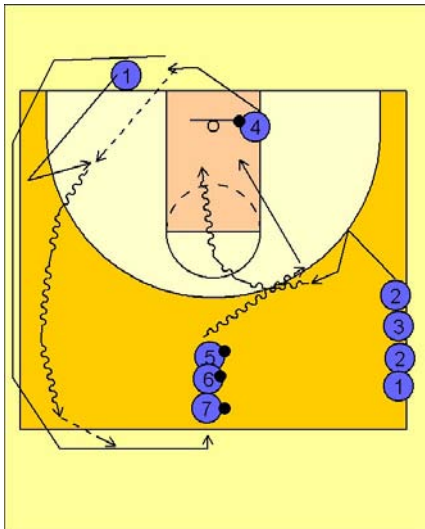
1

Dribble Hand Off (Pregame Warm-up)

All of your post players are lined up in the middle with your guards and wing players on the right side. The post players will each have a ball.

The warm-up drill starts with #4 dribbling at #1 to execute a dribble hand-off. #1 comes hard over the top and takes the hand-off from #4. #4 comes to a solid jump stop realizing that he must not only hand the ball off but set a screen for #1 in the process.

#1 takes the ball down the middle of the lane and scores the nice two-foot power lay-up on the left side of the rim. #4, after handing off, cuts to the basket with his hands up looking for the pass back and / or the offensive rebound. If the lay-up is missed, #4 will tip the ball in.

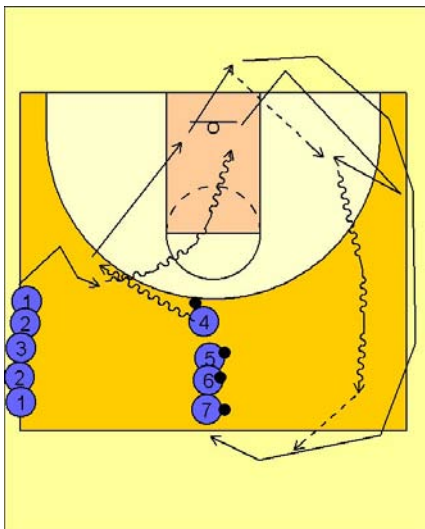


2

Dribble Hand Off (Pregame Warm-up)

#4 takes the ball out of the net while #1 breaks out to the wing and then back to the ball to simulate receiving the inbounds pass. #4 passes to #1. #1 takes the ball on the dribble up to half court with #4 trailing behind up the sideline. When they reach half court, #1 gives the ball back to #4 while #1 lines up on the left side ready to begin the drill in the opposite direction.

Once #4 and #1 began the first hand-off, the next two players, #5 and #2 would begin the dribble hand-off series. The post players would continue the dribble hand-off action on the right side until the guard and wing player line is empty.



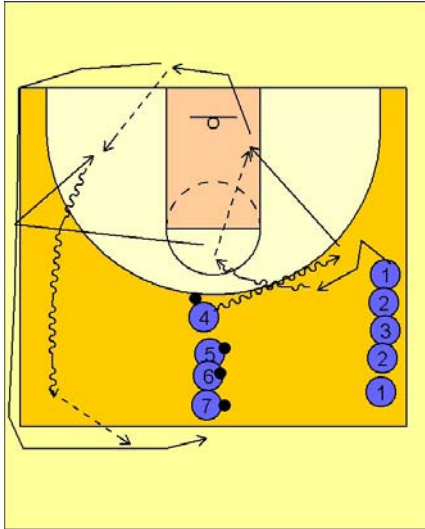
3

Dribble Hand Off (Pregame Warm-up)

Now you quickly begin the same action on the left side of the floor.

Warming up

Dribble hand off



4

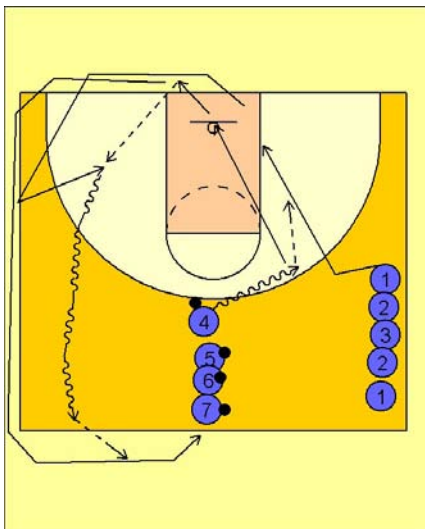
Dribble Hand Off (Pregame Warm-up)

Once each player has executed the dribble hand-off from each side once, the drill continues again on the right side of the floor. This time, #4 will execute the dribble hand-off with #1 and then get the ball back from #1 as #4 rolls to the basket.

#4 takes his own shot out of the net and looks to outlet again to #1 on the left side of the floor who has touched the sideline and broken back to the basketball.

Again, this hand-off and pass back to the rolling post player is done on the right side until the guard and wing player line is empty.

The warm-up is continued on the left side, again, with the post player rolling to the basket and getting the ball back from the guard or wing player. One time on each side.



5

Dribble Hand Off (Pregame Warm-up)

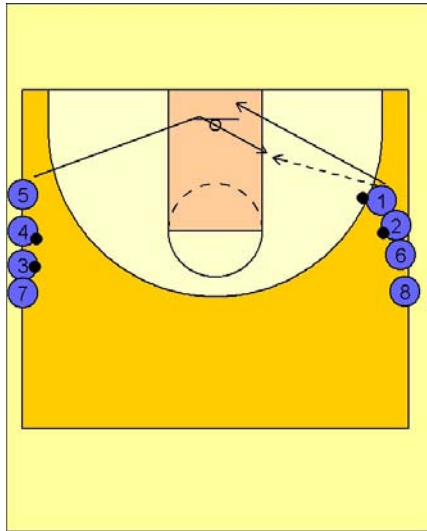
The last warm-up in this series has #4 dribbling at #1 on the right wing. #1 steps toward the dribbler and then executes a backdoor cut to the basket. #4 makes the nice bounce pass underneath the defense for the lay-up.

As in the previous warm-up drills, #4 will follow the guard or wing player to the basket with his hands up looking to tip in any missed shots. He will then take the ball out of the net and outlet the ball to #1 who has touched the sideline and cut back to the ball.

One time on each side.

Warming up

Cross-cross shooting



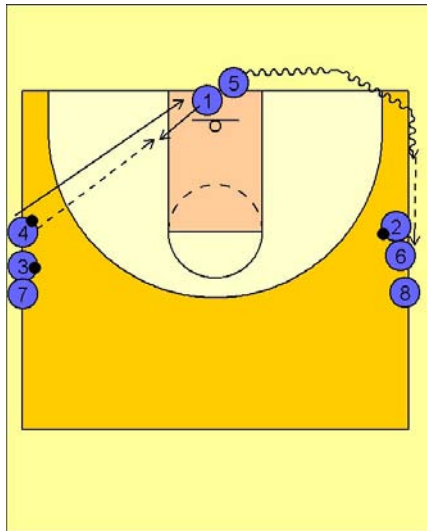
1

Criss-Cross Shooting (Pregame Warm-up)

Drill starts with post shooting and gradually moves out.

The right side has two basketballs, one in the hands of the first two players. The left side line has two basketballs also, but the first person in line does not have a ball.

The drill starts with #5 cutting down under the basket and then out to the right low block calling for the ball. #1 passes the ball into #5 who catches and executes a post move to score. As soon as #1 passes the ball into #5 on the low block, he begins his movement underneath the basket.

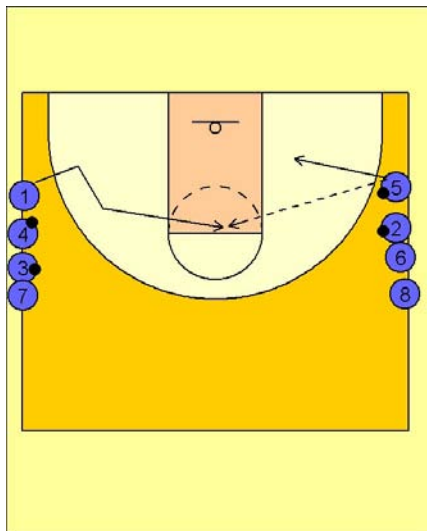


2

Criss-Cross Shooting (Pregame Warm-up)

The first shooter, #5, gets his own rebound and takes the ball on the dribble along the baseline and up the right sideline and gives the ball to the next available player.

#1 is now underneath the basket and begins his cut out to the left low block calling for the ball in the post. #4 passes the ball inside to #1 and then begins his cut underneath the basket.



3

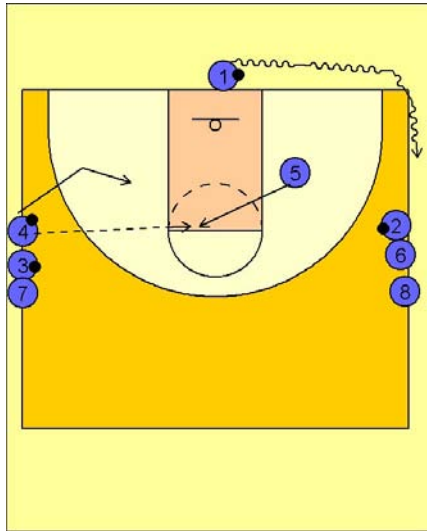
Criss-Cross Shooting (Pregame Warm-up)

After each player has taken two shots on each side of the floor, the players move the line back to the free throw line area.

Same action and rotation. #1 cuts down and then over to the free throw line for the mid-range jump shot. #5 passes to #1 and then begins his cut down and into the free throw line area.

Warming up

Cross-cross shooting

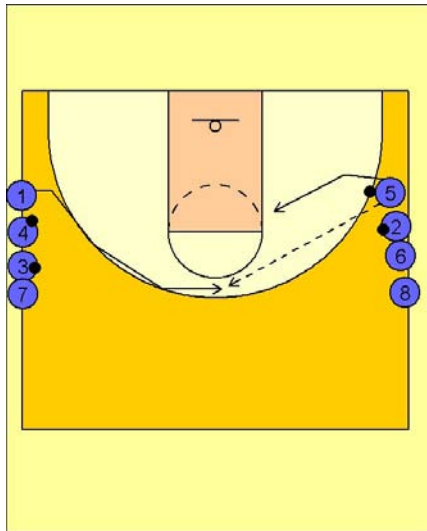


Criss-Cross Shooting (Pregame Warm-up)

4

#5 comes to the ball with hands up calling for the ball. #5 catches and faces and shoots the mid-rand jump shot. While this is going on, #1 from the previous shot, has rebounded his own shot and taken the ball underneath and off the court, up the right sideline.

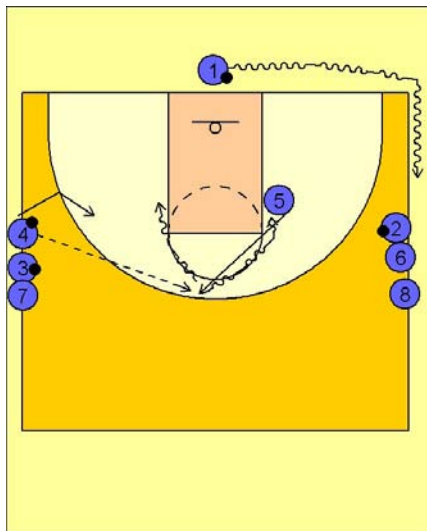
#4 passes to #5 and then begins his cut down and into the free throw line area.



Criss-Cross Shooting (Pregame Warm-up)

5

The last stage of this drill is to move the shots back to the 3 point line area. Again, you should move back to the next area after each player has taken two shots coming from each side of the floor.



Criss-Cross Shooting (Pregame Warm-up)

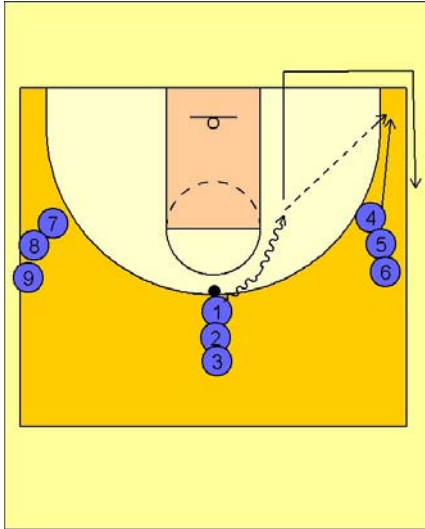
6

If you have players who you DO NOT want shooting the 3 point shot, have them catch, face and shot fake and attack the right or left elbow area on the dribble drive (one or two dribbles) for a pull-up 15 foot jump shot. You could also have them attack the basket for a two foot power lay-up.

Warming up

Drive and kick

1



Drive and Kick (Pregame Warm-up)

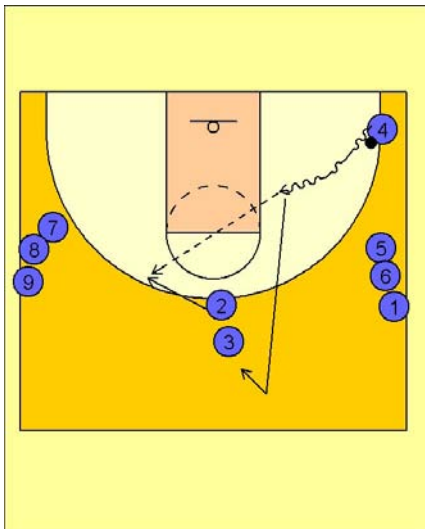
Great warm-up drill to get your kids thinking about dribble penetration, "sitting down" or jump stops after the drive, passing, catching and shot fakes. This drill works on both right and left hand penetration.

Three lines with your captain, #1, in the middle with the ball. Does not matter who is in the other lines, in terms of guards, forwards or centers, just that the lines are even.

The warm-up drill starts with #1 driving in the gap with about two dribbles, really concentrating on covering some distance with those two dribbles, knowing the hard penetration creates a help situation which creates the drive and kick out opportunity.

As #1 drives in the gap, #4 slides down to the corner area and "spots up" for the shot with his hands up in a ready position to catch and shoot the ball. #1 passes to #4 and then runs directly straight ahead off the court and behind the right wing line.

2



Drive and Kick (Pregame Warm-up)

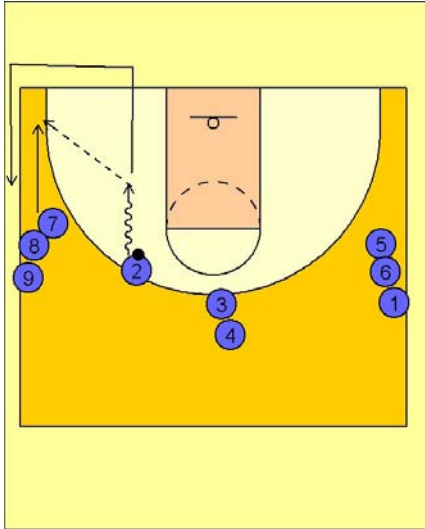
#4 catches the ball, makes a good, solid shot fake, and drives the ball with his left hand into the gap with at least two hard dribbles.

As #4 drives, #2 slides to the left side of the floor and "spots up" to receive the pass from #4. #4 makes the pass to #2 and then runs behind the center line.

Warming up

Drive and kick

3

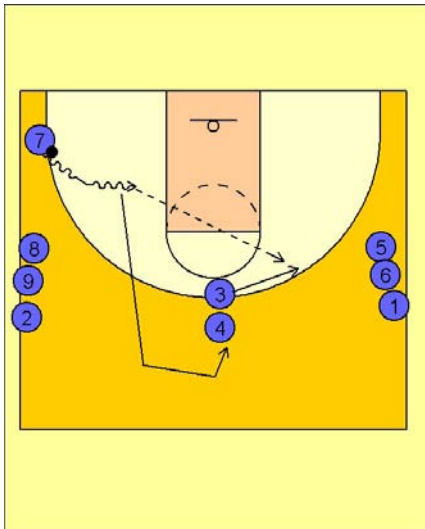


Drive and Kick (Pregame Warm-up)

#2 now catches and makes a good shot fake and then attacks the left gap with at least two hard dribbles. As #2 drives, #7 is spotting up in the corner to receive the pass from #2.

#2 passes to #7 and runs directly straight off the court and around to the back of the left wing line.

4



Drive and Kick (Pregame Warm-up)

The drill now continues going to the right.

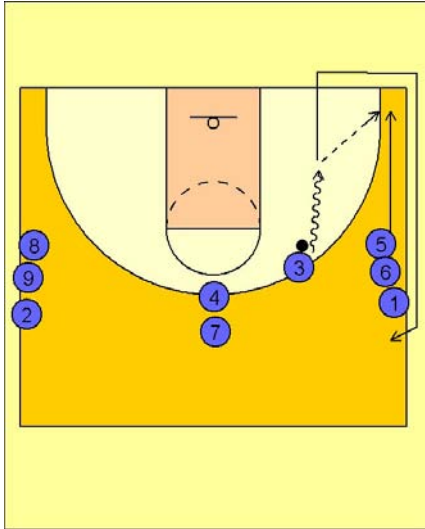
#7 catches the ball, shot fakes, and drives hard in the gap while #3 slides to the right and spots up to receive the pass from #7.

#7 then moves to the back of the center line.

Warming up

Drive and kick

5



Drive and Kick (Pregame Warm-up)

#3 catches, shot fakes, and drives hard in the gap and kicks out to #5 spotting up in the right corner.

#3 runs directly straight off the court and to the back of the right wing line.

The drill now continues back to the left side of the floor.

I like to run this drill until your captain, #1, gets back to the front of the center line. You may want to run it longer (perhaps until your captain, #1, gets back to the center position for a second time) depending upon the amount of time you have or the number of players in the drill.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS:

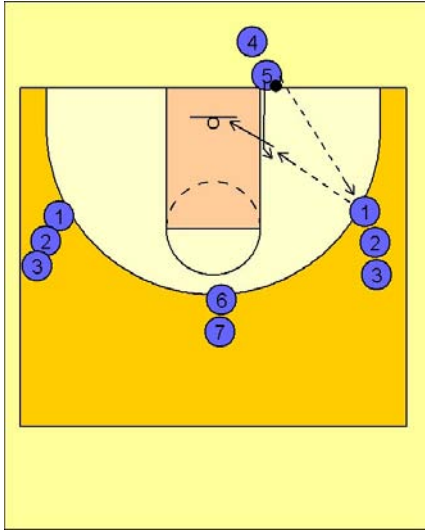
Great passes, right in the shooters "shooting pocket" each time.

Quick penetration with the ball with the goal of getting two defenders to guard them, creating a "help" situation and the kick out for the open shot. Solid jump stops after driving with the ball. I call it "sitting down", avoiding the charge and being under control.

Fundamentally sound shot fakes, about six inches with the ball and arm only, while offensive player remains in his stance. Should not put his entire body into the shot fake.

Warming up

Post ready drill



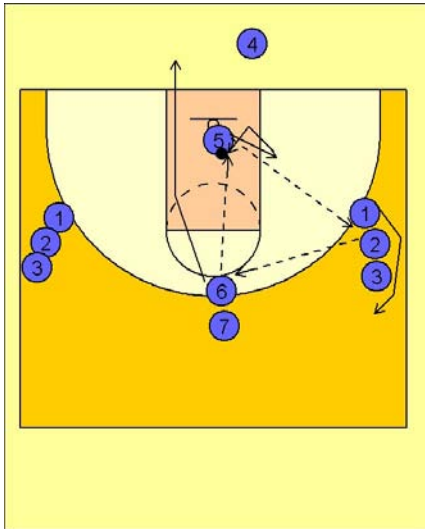
Post Ready Drill

1

This is a great, quick hitting drill that will get your post players ready to receive the ball in the low post and score. It will also give your perimeter players a chance to work on post entry passes.

Your team will be divided into two sets (post players and perimeter players) with your post players broken up into two groups, one group underneath the basket and one group at the top of the key. Your perimeter players will be divided on each wing.

The drill starts with #5 underneath the basket throwing the ball out to the wing player #1. #5 will get in a good, wide, low stance and move up the lane calling for the ball. #1 will pass the ball back to #5 who will look to score on one of his power post moves to the basket. #1 will then go to the end of his line.



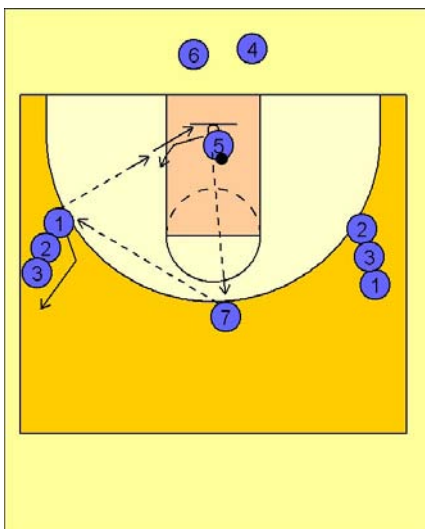
Post Ready Drill

2

#5 will get his own rebound out of the basket and throw the ball back to #2 on the right wing. #5 will then repeat his prior action and cut hard to the ball, moving up the lane looking for good post position on the right low block.

Now #2 will throw the reverse pass to the top of the key post man #6. #5 will turn and seal and look for the high / low entry pass from #6.

After #6 passes the ball into #5, he will cut to the basket and get to the end of the post line underneath the basket.



Post Ready Drill

3

#5 will again get his own rebound out of the net and throw the ball out to #7 on top.

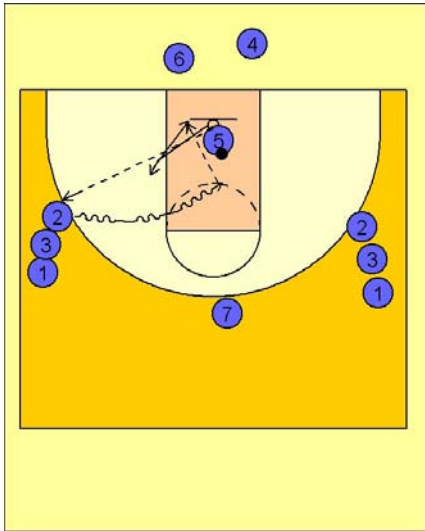
Again, #5 will move up the lane looking for good post position while #1 makes the post entry pass to #5. #1 will then move to the back of his line after passing to #5.

#5 will catch and execute one of his power post moves to the basket.

Warming up

Post ready drill

4

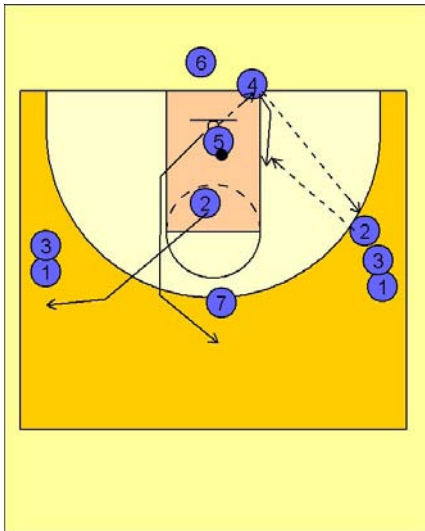


Post Ready Drill

#5 once again rebounds his own shot out of the net and passes the ball back to #2 on the left wing. Again, #5 moves up the lane for good post position.

This time #2 will penetrate in the lane and look to dump the ball off to #5 for the layup. #5 must have his hands up and ready to receive the ball for the quick shot.

5



Post Ready Drill

This is the last shot in the series for this particular post player.

#2, who just drove the ball in the lane and passed to the post player, will return to the end of his perimeter line.

#5 will get his own shot out of the net and pass the ball to the next post player underneath the basket. #5 would then go to the end of the post line on the top of the key.

#4, waiting underneath the basket now with the ball, would pass the ball out to the right wing player #2 and the next post series would begin.

You should be able to get through all of your post players in a few minutes time. Repeat if time or if you feel necessary.

VI. The Hustle Board Concept

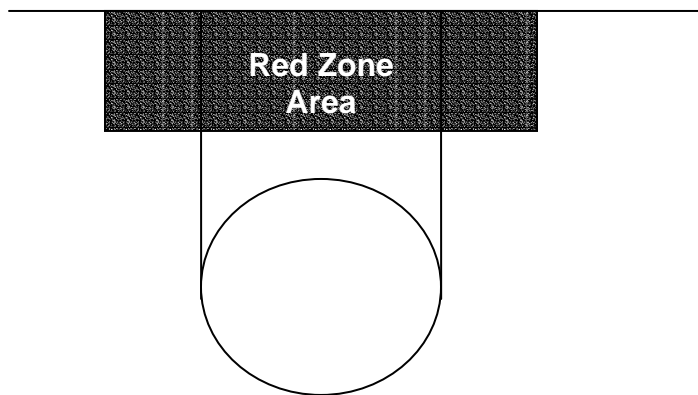
I think this one started in the NBA. Various arenas had “tote boards” that depicted how each team was doing in the particular “hustle” categories. Usually the hustle board charts these statistical categories:

- Rebounds
- Charges
- Deflections
- Loose Balls

At UCLA, in addition to the above statistics, we charted (which I will explain):

- Red Zone
- Mini Battle
- Transition Points

The “Red Zone” concept is similar to that in football. Many football teams chart how they do offensively and defensively in this area (20 yards to the goal line). The “Red Zone” concept in basketball is no different. We chart how well our team does offensively and defensively in the area around the basket. Below is a diagram depicting the “red zone” area on the basketball floor.



The “mini battle” refers to those 5 minute battles in a game (at least at the college level) that can often make or break the game. You hear coaches talk about how important the first five minutes of the game are or the first five minutes of the second half are, well here is a way to chart how you are doing throughout the game. It is important to know how you are doing by looking at the scoreboard, but it is just as important to know what the score is during the last 5 minutes. This is extremely crucial when you are behind by a lot of points and you are encouraging your players to comeback gradually and not all in one possession (trying not to make them force things). This “mini battle” stat will let them know that they are slowly climbing back into the game and can overtake them the last 5 minutes of the game.

The Hustle Board Concept (con't)

Transition points are simply that. Points each team scores in transition (often called "fast break points"). This stat is crucial when trying to dictate tempo while limiting opponents to very few easy baskets.

Below is a sample Hustle Chart that we used at UCLA. We called it the "Battle Board". Each time-out the accumulated stats in each category would be placed in the empty boxes and the stat sheet would then be dropped on the floor in the team huddle. It would be there for the coach to call attention to any lack of effort in a particular area. Often times nothing needed to be mentioned and it was just a quick glance from the staff and team to see where they stand in the various hustle categories.

Bruin Battle Board

UCLA		ARIZONA
<input type="text"/>	RED ZONE	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	BOARDS	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	LOOSE BALLS	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	CHARGES	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	DEFLECTIONS	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	MINI BATTLE	<input type="text"/>
TRANSITION PTS. _____		TRANSITION PTS. _____

VII. Half-Time Meetings / Postgame Gatherings

The part of the half-time intermission should be for your players to reflect on the first half as a team in the locker room alone. This time should also be used to go to the bathroom if necessary, attend to any injuries or equipment issues, etc. While the players are alone in the locker room, the coaching staff should meet outside the locker room to discuss their observations from the first half. All changes should be agreed upon (at least by the head coach) before entering the locker room.

A good idea is to put a section on your grease board that contains certain key stats you will be looking at in the game. Once you receive the half-time game stats, you can fill in the appropriate spaces on the board for the entire team to see. Before the game indicate which stats you will be looking at closely as keys to success (it could be the same for each game). To take it even further, think about putting up goals in each statistical category you feel is important to achieving victory. A quick glance from the team to the grease board at half-time will show them how they have or have not reached certain goals.

Postgame Gathering

This time is critical to how well your team prepares for your next practice and / or opponent. It can mean the difference of how well they “bounce back” from a tough loss or how they are able to “stay focused” after a big victory. In any event, I believe your postgame talk should include the following:

1. A quick review of whether or not you reached your game objectives, statistical goals, etc.
2. Praise for exceptional team or individual effort.
3. A breakdown of areas of deficiency in the game.
4. Areas of improvement for next practice (based a lot on #3's deficiencies).
5. Any special meetings for individuals, groups, etc. with the coaching staff.
6. Announcements, practice / travel / video times, academic responsibilities, etc.

VIII. Conclusion

In summary, I believe it is important for the success of your program to spend adequate time on game preparation. You and you alone are responsible for the “product” you put on the floor each night. I believe to adequately prepare yourself and your team for battle each night you need the following:

- Not only a smart pregame meal, but a sensible balanced diet throughout the week containing the right amount of carbohydrates that will replenish your Glycogen levels in the body.
- In a crunch, a meal replacement bar or shake will do but never get in the habit of using pills or additional supplements as a substitute for good, healthy food.
- It is your job as the head coach to set and adhere to a pregame routine that the players are comfortable with. Keeping their focus on the game, opponent, scouting report are your number one objectives.
- Eliminate distractions before a contest. Avoid surprises, delays, or any additional problems not associated with preparing for your opponent.
- Be sensitive to how much information you give your players before a contest. Make your pregame talks short and concise.
- The “meat and potatoes” of any scouting report should always contain the opponent’s players, their height and weight, position, key stats, a short description, and offensive and defensive keys to the game.
- Make sure your pregame warm-up drills reflect the fundamental skills you believe in as a coach. Use this time as rehearsal for your game, emphasizing the skills necessary for success on the basketball court.
- People are watching. Your pregame warm-up time is a direct reflection on you as a coach and your overall basketball program.
- Have managers or stats people chart key “hustle” areas in the game that are important to you as a coach. Remind players throughout the game how they are doing on certain game objectives through statistics (not just the score).
- Breaking the game up into smaller “mini battles” is a great way to help your kids look at the game from a proper perspective. How are we doing right now? What have we accomplished in the last five minutes? The “big picture” isn’t always the best view, especially when you are behind by what would seem as an insurmountable lead.
- Be prepared to talk about specific areas of improvement at halftime. Talk with your staff to make sure you are all on the same page before talking to the team. Use of game statistics or “hustle board” totals to backup your point is always effective.
- Your postgame message should again be short and concise while communicating strengths and weaknesses, praise and constructive criticism, and the plan of action from here.
- And finally, treat your game preparation as a key component to your team’s success. Provide sufficient time and energy towards preparing for game day so that you may give your program the best opportunity for success.



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