

6-9 YEAR OLDS

COACH:

LEAD IN

"KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS... LEADER OF LIFE!"

HEBREWS 12:2

WINTER LEAGUE 2026



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MISSION



In 1995, Dave and Leslie Davies played on the stateside basketball tour for Athletes in Action. They dreamed about leading a similar organization, a **non-denominational Christian sports ministry, that would combine their passion for kids and basketball.**



Five years later, Dave and Leslie welcomed young hoopers to summer camps in Georgia and eventually in four other states. The Davies settled in Wilmington in 2004 and, with the support of Masonboro Baptist Church, established the Halo Hoops Winter League. Over the next twelve years, Halo Hoops grew to include year-round programs for kids ages 5-18 years old, all based in Wilmington.

At Halo Hoops, **we're committed to helping young people have a positive youth basketball experience and encouraging people to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.**

STAFF



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“The power of God will take you out of your own plans and PUT YOU INTO THE PLAN OF GOD.”

- W. Wigglesworth

WINTER LEAGUE OVERVIEW



Playing on a basketball team parallels the situations young people face in real life. They encounter a great deal of hardship as well as success in competition, and we want to help them learn to experience both in God-honoring ways. We surround them with positive coaches, age-appropriate rules, and encourage them to build strong relationships with coaches, teammates and competitors. Many teams grow up playing together season after season, forging lasting friendships and joyful memories.

The Halo Winter League offers a season of exciting competition for 5-18 year olds from January through February. Halo teams are custom-built to give young players a positive experience. We place players on teams according to the parent's requests and by their regional location within the city to support the community experience.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- **ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE** young players
- Develop as a positive, engaging and faith-focused coach
- Respectfully cooperate with staff, referees and parents

Our staff provides accountability for anyone not complying with the Code of Conduct. We begin with a conversation, and if poor behavior continues, we will take further action such as suspension or dismissal. Unacceptable behaviors include using bad language, demeaning players and treating referees disrespectfully.



PRACTICES

The 5 year old teams conduct a 30-minute practice prior to their games. All other teams practice once a week at various gyms throughout Wilmington. Coaches select their practice time and location on a first-come, first-served basis.

GAMES

At Halo games, players and their families are encouraged to be competitive while keeping a healthy perspective and showing sportsmanship. Our games are run by the Halo Rules, designed especially for young players to grow with the game. Teams usually play at the same one or two gyms on Saturdays. The 5-9 year olds cap the season off with a high-powered Celebration at Trask Coliseum. The 10-18 year olds compete in a thrilling single-elimination tournament.

BREAK THE ICE

Coordinate a team get-together before the first game. Introduce families to one another and express your belief that, together, you'll help each other **POWER UP** this season!

CONNECT

Take a few minutes each practice to ask the team a question and **discuss their experience**.

WEEK 1: How did you get on this team?

WEEK 2: What basketball skills do you bring to the team?

WEEK 3: How do you get ready for practices and games?

WEEK 4: Are you nervous or scared before playing?

WEEK 5: What do you do when things get hard?

WEEK 6: What happens when you get mad or frustrated?

WEEK 7: How do you celebrate?

WEEK 8: How have you improved this season?



PRAY

Pray with your team or invite a player to pray - many of them love to do it! Ask for God's help for anything your team is struggling with.

CELEBRATE!

Join the entire league for the season-ending Celebration at UNCW's Trask Coliseum. It's a well-deserved time of partying! In addition, host a team party and take a few



“The purpose of God and the POWER OF GOD is available for EVERY MAN.”

- G. Campbell Morgan

PRACTICES

Plan every practice. Keep it simple by using only a few drills to help your players master the fundamentals.

Use your space wisely. In order to get more repetitions for every player, split your team into 2 groups. (Ex: one group dribbling, one group shooting)

Teach drills using key words. Players need to hear a simple, repetitive explanation of the skill. (Ex: “ready, aim, fire” for shooting technique)



GAMES

Compete with perspective. Be passionate - but not at the expense of losing control of your emotions.

Pay attention to your body language. Young people imitate you! If you're positive, they'll learn to react to situations with confidence and courage.

Emphasize effort and response. These are things your players can control!

Team up with the referee and the opposing coach. Remember that you're all in it for the kids.

Keep the game flowing. Help your players line up quickly during substitutions and free throws. Enlist the help of a parent to sit on the bench, care for injured players and get subs ready.

Give your players fairly equal playing time and rotate their positions. If you're short some players, divide the playing time evenly rather than keeping your superstar in the whole time.

Teach your players to start on their man. After the initial setup, defenders can help momentarily but not stay to double-team. **(6-7 yr olds: Head coaches are allowed to help position the players on the court without interrupting the flow of the game.)**

Give everyone a chance to touch the ball. Rotate the players to pass the ball inbounds and bring the ball up the floor.

Use a blowout as a teaching opportunity. If your team is winning, you can require 5 passes (after crossing half court) or pass the ball to a player who hasn't scored yet. If you're losing, stay positive and cheer their good efforts.

Look for the little wins. There are many more wins than just the one on the scoreboard. Celebrate small improvements and successes every game.

MAN-TO-MAN OFFENSE

1. KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

Teach your players to be aware of their location.



2. KEEP IT SHORT

Emphasize short passes and short shots

8-9 YR OLDS:

2. DO YOUR JOB

Explain the responsibilities of each position. Let your players try all of them, no matter their size or skill level.

The point guard (1) dribbles the ball up the court and starts the offense with a pass, dribble drive or shot. They attack from the top. The wings (2, 3) run up the side of the court and attack mainly from the side areas with a pass, dribble drive or shot. The post (4) runs up the middle of the court and stays near the basket, moving in and out of the lane.

MAN-TO-MAN DEFENSE

1. FIND YOUR MAN QUICKLY

Constantly remind your players to hustle back on defense.

2. MAN-ME-BASKET

Teach your players to face the offense with their tail to the basket. Always stay between them and the basket.

8-9 YR OLDS:

3. HELP & RECOVER

On the drive, players can help briefly and get back to their man.

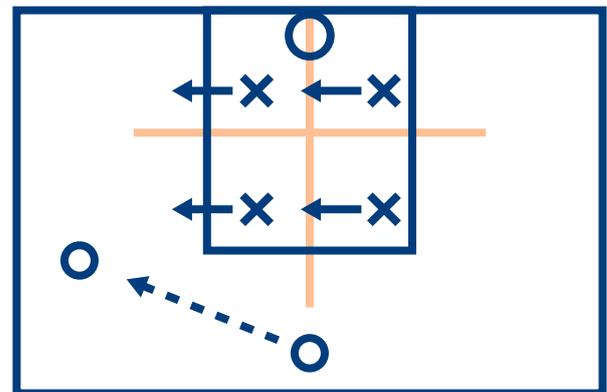
4. SLIDE UNDER SCREENS

Since young players don't shoot consistently from long range, going under is the best way to defend screens.

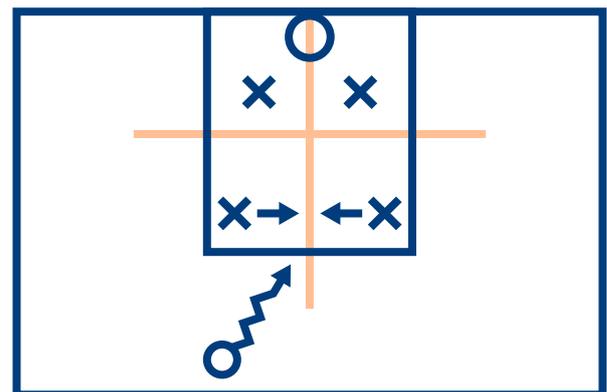
ZONE DEFENSE **8-9 YR OLDS**

Teach players to shift and pinch.

SHIFT ON A PASS



PINCH ON A DRIBBLE



1

READY POSITIONS

OFFENSE

"Shooting foot forward, tail out, face forward"



DEFENSE

"Face your man, tail to the basket"



Arm's length

OFF-BALL DEFENSE

"See man & ball"



Finger pistols point to man & ball

2

HOP STOP

"Quick, low hop"



Land in Ready

3

SHOOTING

"Ready"

"Aim"

"Fire"



Hold with two hands, push with one

4

LAYUP

"Scoop it"



Hand under the ball

5

SCREENING

"Make a wall"



For boys



For girls

6

PASSING

"Push it"



Step around the defense

7

STEALING

"Dig it"



Don't chop down or slap at the ball

SKILLS PROGRESSION



Use this chart to guide your players' development.

AGE:	OFFENSE	DEFENSE	CHARACTER
 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Basic rulesReady positionOne-hand dribbleDrive to the hoopPass to open man	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ready positionHustle to the ballDon't foul	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Obey coachPay attentionUse teamwork
 6-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Take shots in the laneDrive to the hoopUse on-ball screensRebound	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Find man quicklyStay with manDig for steals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop self controlUse teamworkDisplay sportsmanship
 8-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read & attackUse on/off-ball screensRun plays (man & zone)use 4-second lane ruleMake layups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep offense out of laneGo under screensSee ball & manHelp in man defensePlay 2-2 zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop self controlUse teamworkDisplay sportsmanship
 10-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use 5-man positioningExecute playsUse 3-second lane ruleBreak full-court pressBeat half court trapKnow special situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep offense out of lanePlay 5-man zoneHelp & recover quicklyTrap in half courtPress in full court	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CommunicateGive full effort

COPYCAT

Work on stationary ball handling.

Players copy the coach while dribbling in place. Players call out the number of fingers the coach holds up.

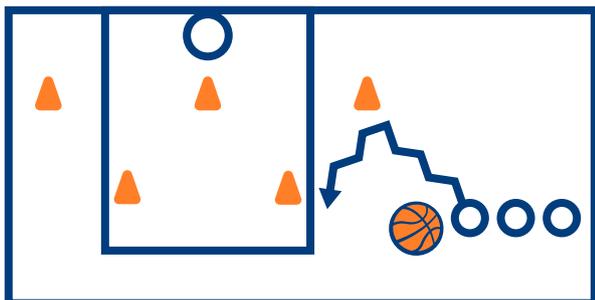


- Ready dribble, right and left
- Crossover
- 1 hand crossover
- Behind-the-back

ZIG ZAG DRIBBLING

Practice changing directions with the dribble.

Players dribble, using a crossover in front of each cone. When dribbling toward the left, players should use a left-handed dribble and vice versa.

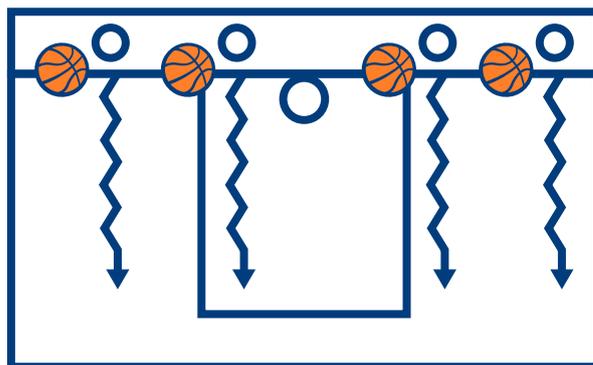


- Crossover
- Behind-the-back
- Spin

CHANGE OF SPEED DRIBBLING

Work on dribbling using two speeds.

Players dribble to half court and back. The control dribble, which is galloping sideways, is used when closely guarded. The speed dribble is used when dribbling in the open court.

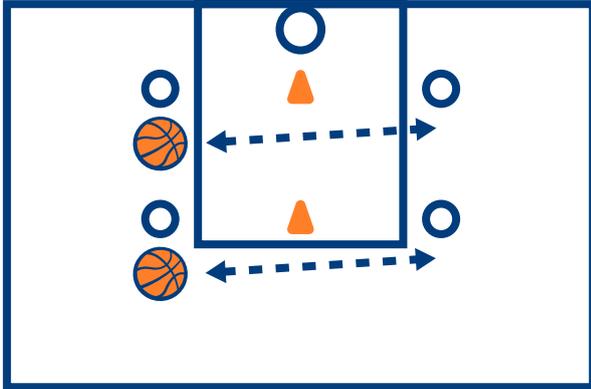


- Control
- Control to speed
- Speed

CHAIR/CONE PASSING

Work on passing with fakes & pivots.

Players pass back and forth, stepping around to pass.

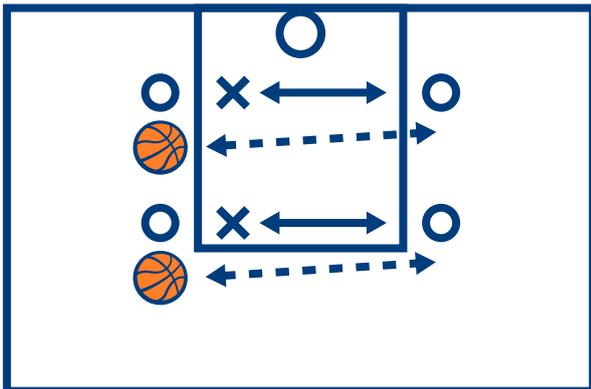


- Bounce pass, right and left
- Fake high, bounce pass

MONKEY IN THE MIDDLE

Work on passing around defense.

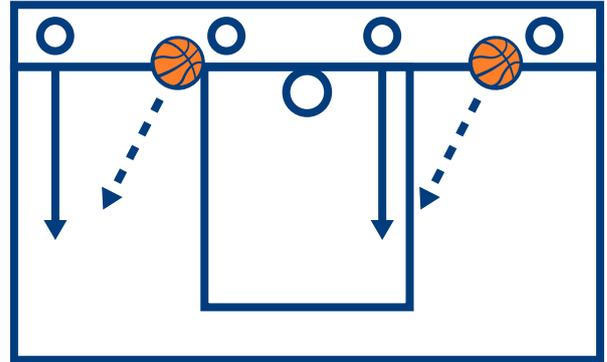
Players pass back and forth, pivoting to pass around the defender. No dribbling allowed. Make sure players wait for the defender to get on-ball. Rotate after one minute.



PARTNER PASSING

Use lead passes to move quickly up the court.

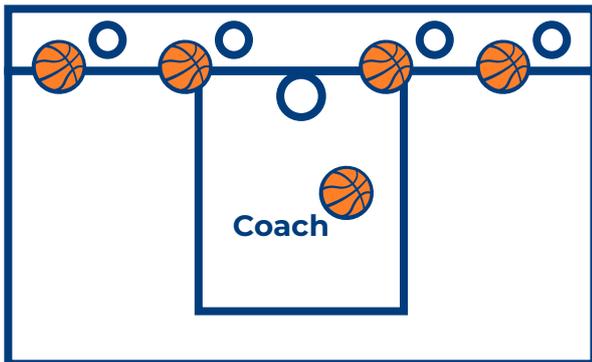
Players pass the ball back and forth, leading their teammate, as they run up the court. No sliding, only running.



- Bounce pass
- Air pass

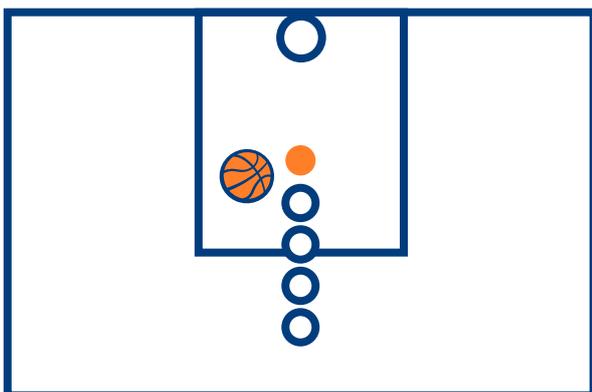
FORM SHOOTING

Work on the 3 phases of shooting.
 Players set their shooting foot on the baseline, slightly ahead of the other foot. Players freeze at each phase as the coach calls out, "Ready, aim, fire!" Repeat 5-10 times.



SPOT SHOOTING

Use the 3 shooting phases to score.
 One at a time, players place their shooting foot on the spot and shoot on command, "Ready, aim, fire!" After two attempts, rotate to a new spot.



DRIBBLE ATTACK SERIES

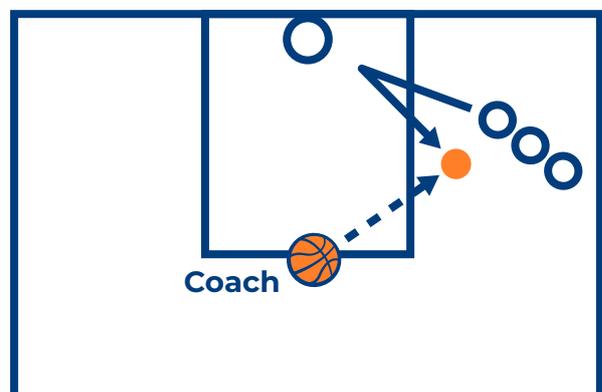
Score off the dribble.
 Players dribble up, make a move to get by the defender, and shoot on the left side. On a miss, they have one chance for a putback. Players perform each move twice, then attack to the right side.



- Crossover
- Hesitation
- Double Crossover

CATCH ATTACK SERIES

Attack the hoop after receiving a pass.
 Players cut into the lane and back out, catching the pass on the spot. They make an attack move, dribble to the basket and shoot. On a miss, they have one chance for a putback. After two rotations, move to the left side.



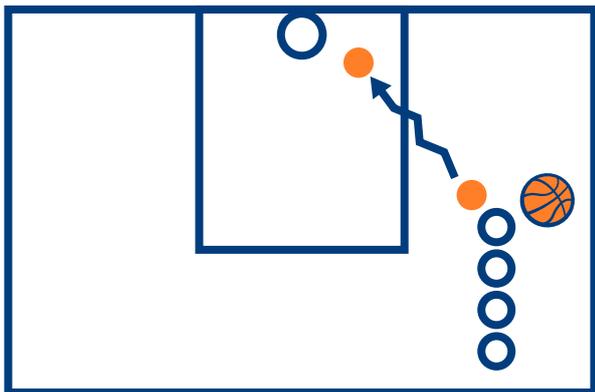
- Rip through
- Jab
- Shot fake

SPOT-TO-SPOT SHOOTING

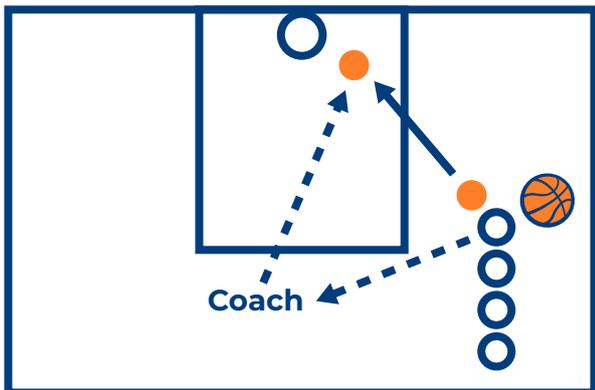
Work on offensive attacks.

Players attack the basket and shoot quickly. On a miss, they have one chance for a putback. After two attempts, move to the top or the other wing.

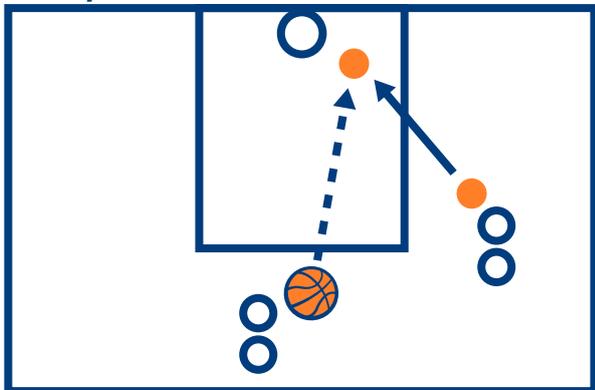
Dribble up



Give and go



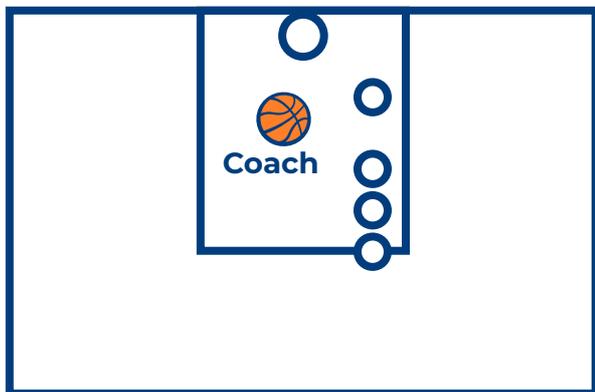
Lead pass



PUTBACKS

Work on rebounding technique.

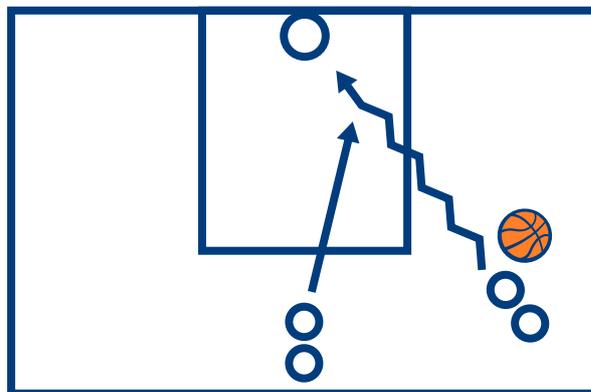
The coach tosses the ball off the backboard and the player rebounds and shoots quickly.



PRESSURE FAST BREAK

Attack the basket with defense chasing

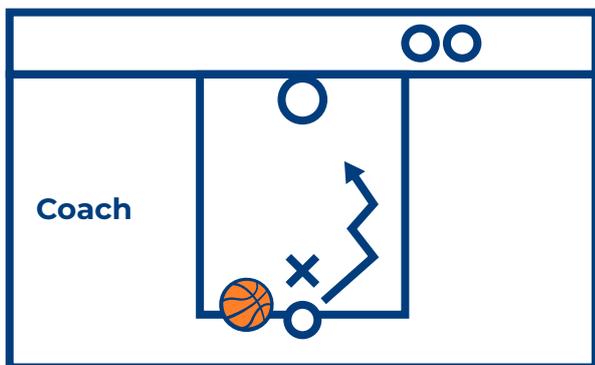
The offense shoots a full-speed layup or jump shot. The defense tries to pressure or turn the offensive player.



KING/QUEEN OF THE COURT

Work on attacking skills.

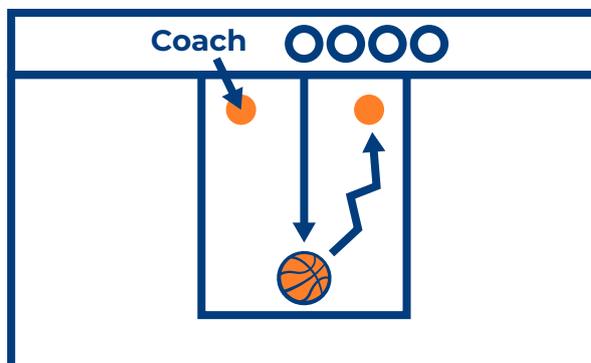
Players have 3 dribbles to score. They can pass to the coach and refresh their 3 dribbles. Offense stays on if they score or get fouled on a shot.



ATTACK THE OPEN SPOT

Work on reading and attacking

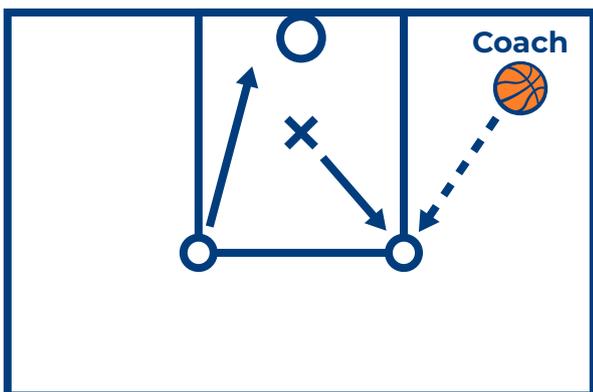
Coach tosses the ball out and cuts to a spot. The player grabs the ball, pivots and attacks the open spot to score.



2-ON-1

Pass to the open player in scoring position.

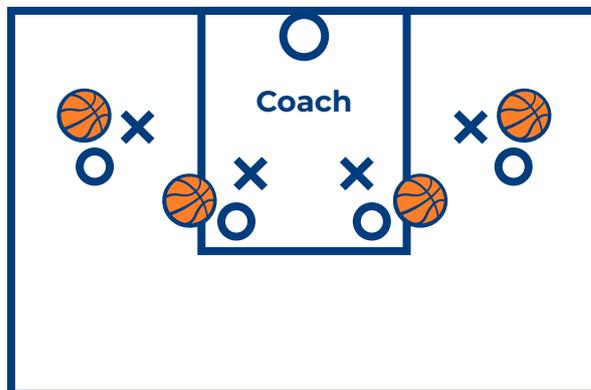
The coach passes to one of the offensive players and the defender pressures the ball. The other offensive player cuts to scoring position.



PARTNER PIVOTS

Work on pivots with light defense

Players pivot around while keeping the ball away from the defender. Add pass fakes.

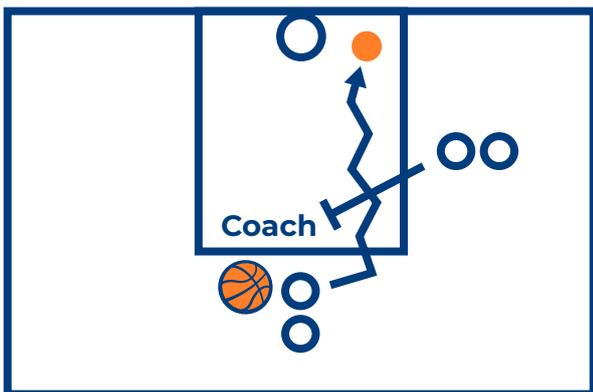


SCREEN SERIES

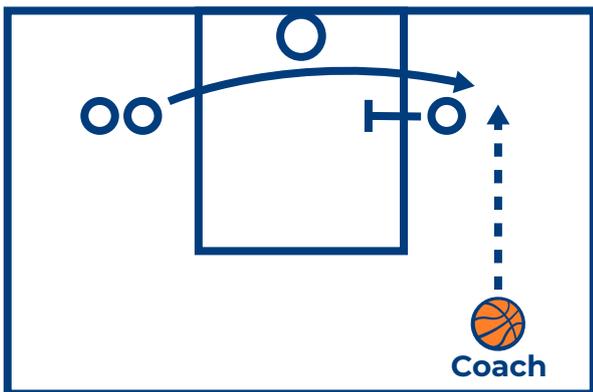
Use on-ball and off-ball screens.

Players use screens to score off a dribble or shot. To rotate, the shooter becomes the screener.

On-ball screen



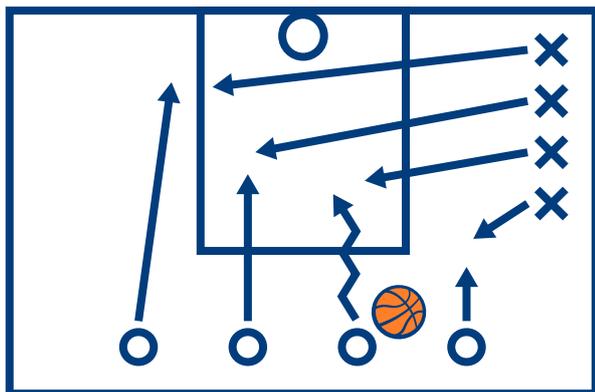
Off-ball screen



FIND YOUR MAN

Work on matching up quickly.

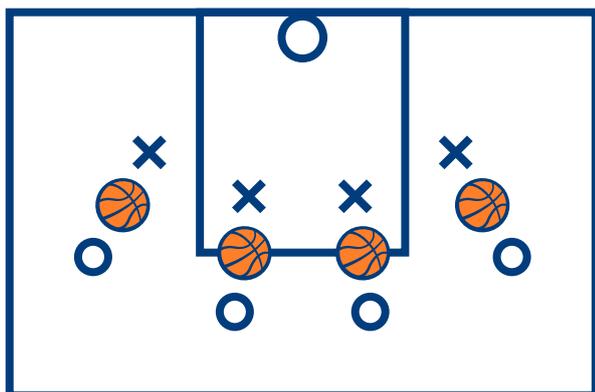
Defenders select a man, then turn their backs to the court. On command, the offense attacks and the defenders turn and run to their man as quickly as possible.



RIP-AWAYS

Grab the ball quickly and on balance.

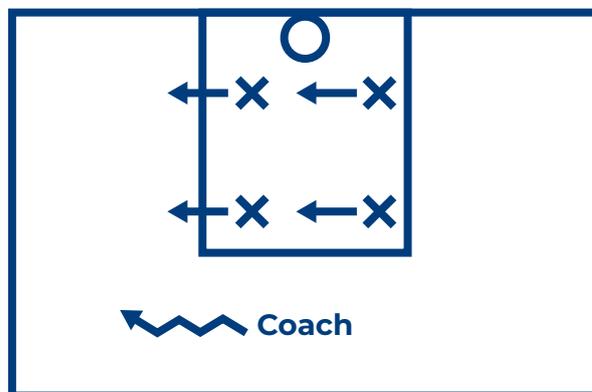
Players start with their hands on the ball. On command, they rip the ball away while keeping their balance.



SHADOW SLIDES

Use proper footwork on defense.

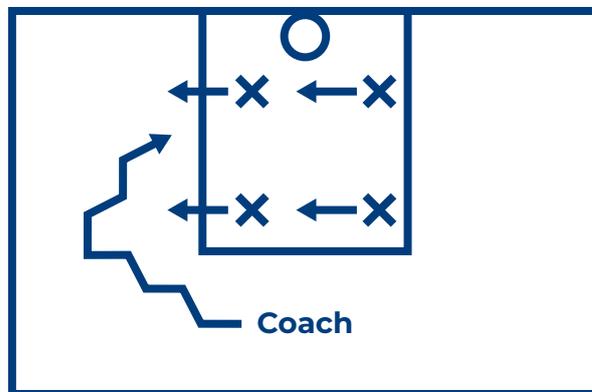
Players slide left and right, following the coach.



SHELL DRILL

Work on zone defensive positioning

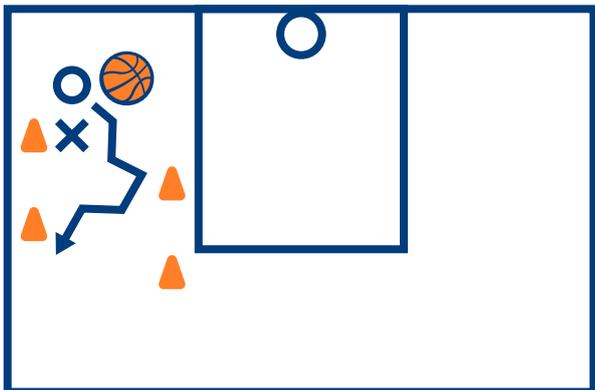
Move the ball around, waiting for the defense to shift or pinch.



ZIG ZAG SLIDES

Use correct footwork and spacing in on-ball defense.

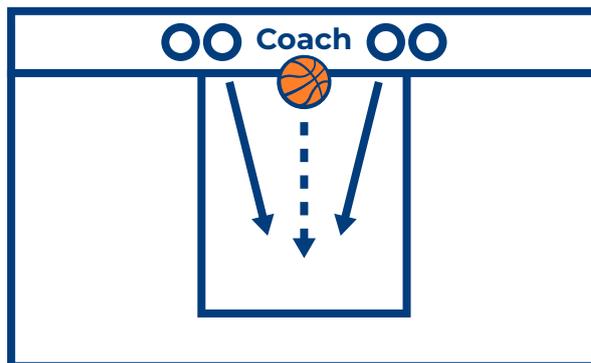
The defender zig-zag slides with the ball handler, staying an arm's length away, hands behind the back.



LOOSE BALL CHASE

Develop hustling to a loose ball and attacking quickly.

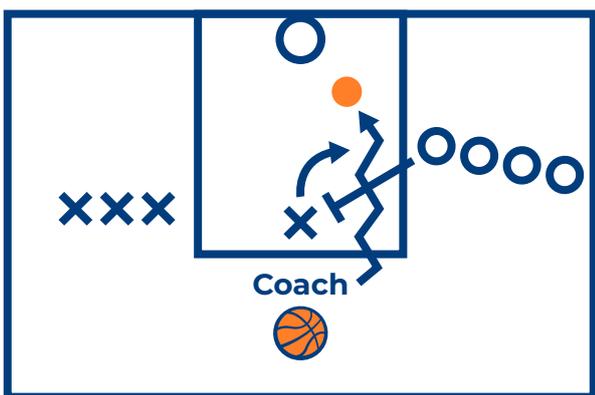
The coach tosses the ball out in the court. The first two players in line run to get the ball first. The person who gets it becomes the offense. The other person plays defense. Allow 45 seconds to a minute of 1-on-1 play before rotating.



SLIDE UNDER THE SCREEN

Work on the defending on-ball screens.

Going half-speed, the wing sets an on-ball screen for the point guard. The defense slips under the screen and stays with the ball handler. Rotate by having the screener become the defender and a new player sets the screen.



SAMPLE PRACTICE PLANS



These 3 practices will prepare your players for the first game.

PRACTICE #1

TIME	DRILL	NOTES
10 min.	Introduce team, Discuss practice rules	Rules: bathroom permission, pay attention
5 min.	Copycat Dribbling	Explain: double dribble, traveling
5 min.	Form Shooting	
5 min.	Team Time / Water Break	Discuss: How did you get on this team?
5 min.	Chair/Cone Passing	
10 min.	2-on-1	Explain: fouls
20 min.	Controlled Scrimmage	Explain: Positions, scoring, boundaries, passing inbounds, no pressing

PRACTICE #2

TIME	DRILL	NOTES
5 min.	Sharks and Minnows Tag	
5 min.	Zig Zag Dribbling	
10 min.	Form Shooting, Spot-to-Spot Shooting	
5 min.	Team Time / Water Break	Discuss: What basketball skills do you bring to the team?
10 min.	Chair/Cone Passing, Partner Passing	
5 min.	2-on-1	Explain: stealing
20 min.	Controlled Scrimmage	Explain: free throw lineup, defensive positioning Introduce: inbounds play and play #1 vs. man

PRACTICE #3

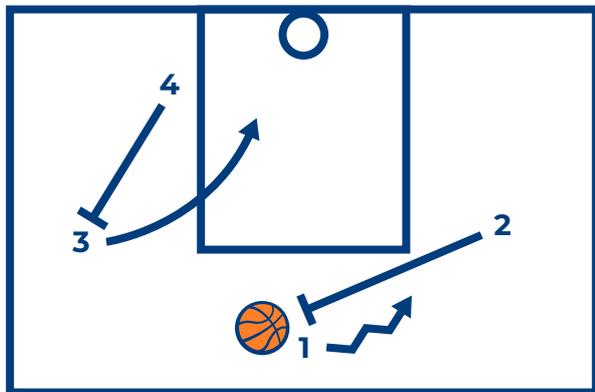
TIME	DRILL	NOTES
5 min.	Sharks and Minnows Tag	
5 min.	Shadow Slides	
10 min.	Form Shooting, Dribble Attack Series	
5 min.	Team Time / Water Break	Discuss: How do you get ready for practices and games?
10 min.	Chair/Cone Passing, Partner Passing	
5 min.	King/Queen of the Court	
20 min.	Controlled Scrimmage	8-9 yr olds: Introduce play vs. zone, 2-2 zone defense

PLAY #1 VS. MAN

The point guard takes it to the hoop or passes off.

Option #1: 1 drives to hoop

Option #2: 1 drives and passes to 3

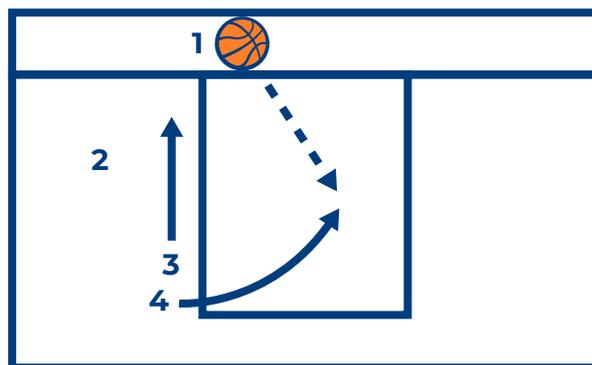
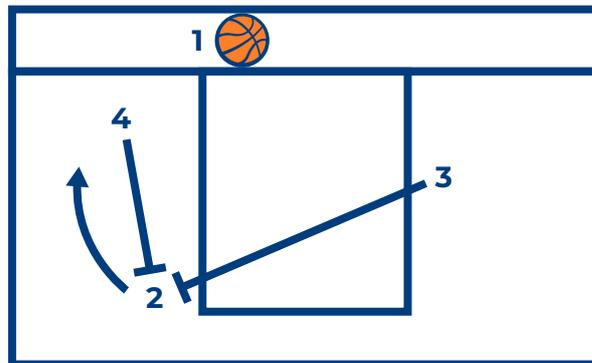


"SCREEN-THE-SCREENER" INBOUNDS PLAY VS. MAN

Screen the screener for a close shot.

Option #1: 1 passes to 4

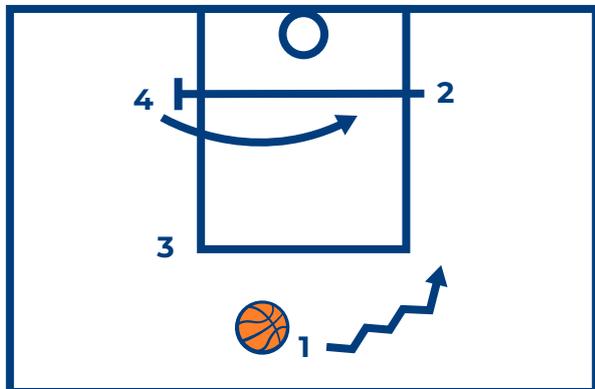
Option #2: 1 passes to 3 or 2



PLAY #2 VS. MAN

Deliver the ball to the post player

Option #1: 1 passes to 4

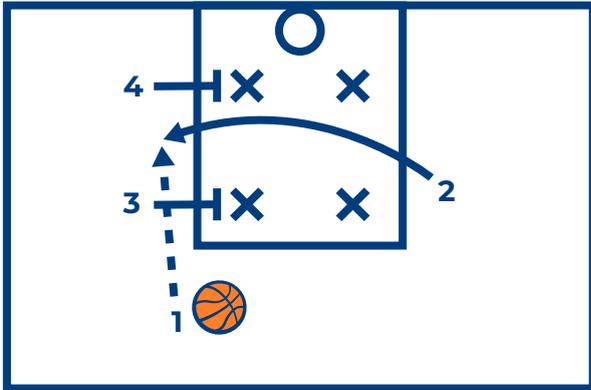


PLAY VS. ZONE

Screen one side of the defense for a quick shot.

Option #1: 1 passes to 2

Option #2: 1 drives or passes to 3

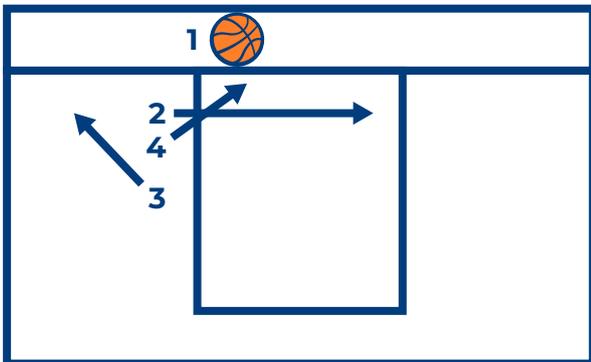


“STACK” INBOUNDS PLAY VS. ZONE

Use the stack setup to get a close shot

Option #1: 1 passes to 2 or 4

Option #2: 1 passes to 3



The Halo Rules are modifications from high school rules to help young players grow with the game.

6-7 YRS

8-9 YRS

GENERAL

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 4-on-4 games▪ Junior 27" ball▪ 60' x 40' court▪ 8' hoop height▪ 10' free throw line▪ Recommended 8 players per team▪ Guaranteed 20 min. playing time▪ Head coach allowed on court▪ Home team listed first on schedule | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 4-on-4 games▪ Junior 27" ball▪ 60' x 40' court▪ 9' hoop height▪ 12' free throw line▪ Recommended 8 players per team▪ Guaranteed 20 min. playing time▪ Home team listed first on schedule |
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TIME

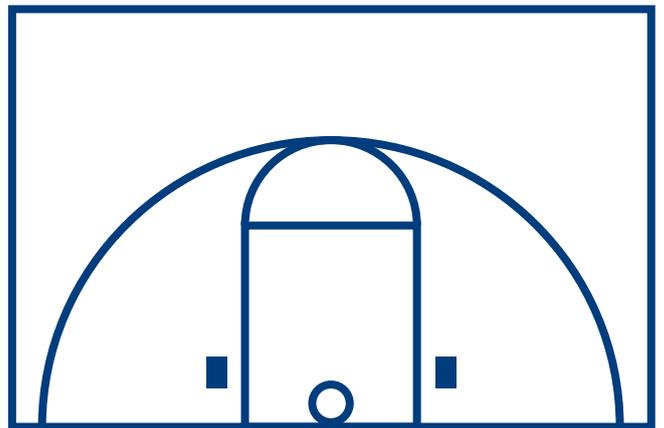
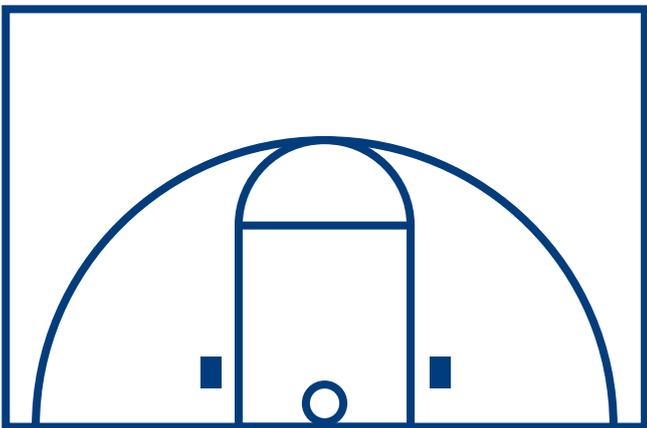
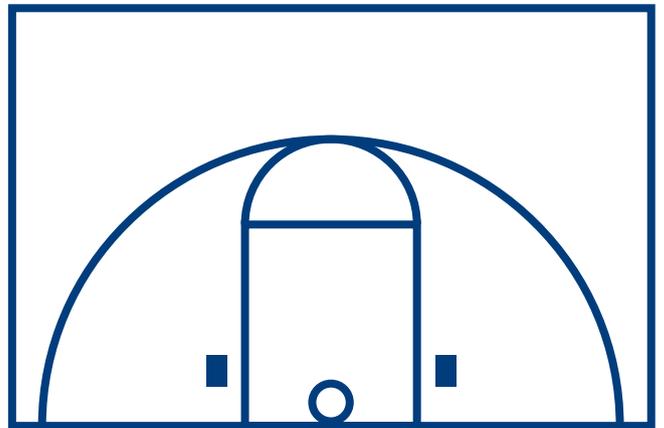
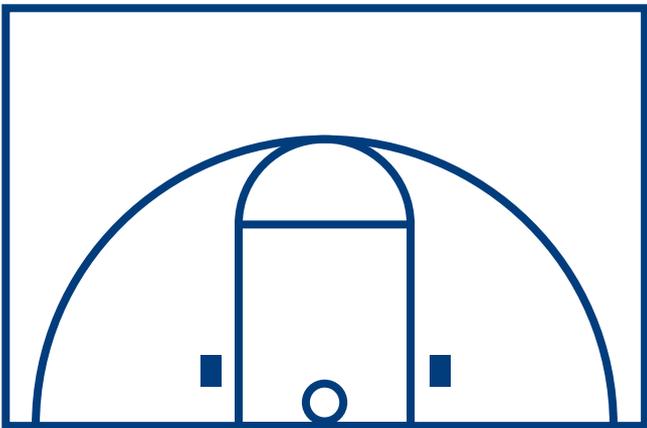
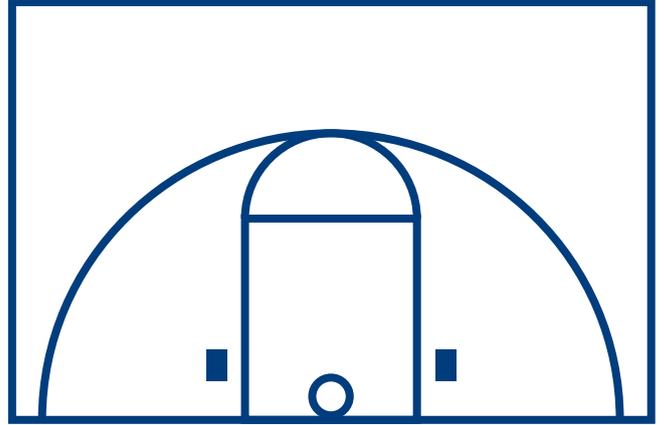
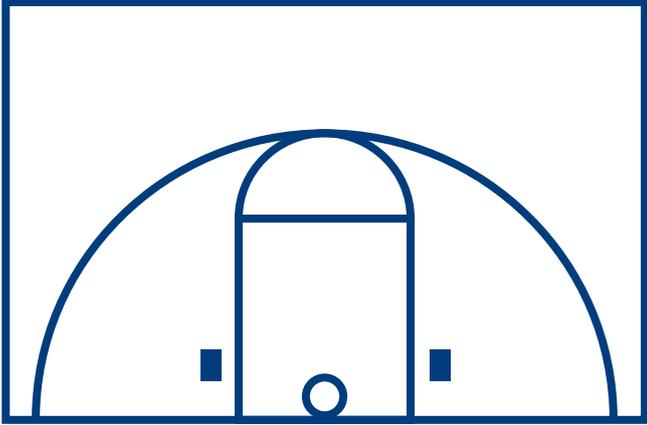
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 10-minute quarters▪ Running clock, inc. during timeouts▪ Clock stops for subs at 5 min. mark▪ (1) 30-second timeout per half before last 2 min.▪ No overtime | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 10-minute quarters▪ Running clock, inc. during timeouts▪ Clock stops for subs at 5 min. mark▪ (1) 30-second timeout per half before last 2 min.▪ No overtime |
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OFFENSE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No 3 pt. shot▪ Foul on missed shot: 1 FT for 2 pts.▪ Halftime FT: 1 FT for 2 pts.▪ No lane violation▪ Traveling: called if no attempt to dribble▪ Double dribble: called if continuous▪ Mercy Rule for 20+ pt. lead at half: reset score 0-0 before Halftime FT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No 3 pt. shot▪ Foul on missed shot: 1 FT for 2 pts.▪ Halftime FT: 1 FT for 2 pts.▪ Lane violation: 4 sec.▪ Traveling: called loosely when stopping▪ Mercy Rule for 20+ pt. lead at half: reset score 0-0 before Halftime FT |
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DEFENSE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No full ct. press▪ No double-team or trap▪ Man-to-man: help & recover allowed | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No full ct. press▪ 1st qtr. 2-2 zone in lane: pinch allowed, no double-team or trap▪ 2nd qtr. Man-to-man: help & recover allowed▪ 2nd half 2-2 zone in lane or man-to-man: pinch allowed, help & recover allowed, no double team or trap |
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**“God is the source of power,
but we are the instrument He uses”**
- C. Stanley

THANK YOU SPONSORS!

