



# Coaches Manual



## Introduction

Most players who play basketball in Ireland will have limited access to courts and coaches and will likely play less than 10 hours per week. Coaches usually emphasise game tactics and tailor practices towards games rather than the long-term development of players. This means that players will rarely learn the importance of correct movement techniques. Basketball is a game which involves multiple impacts with the playing surface. These impacts come in the form of running, jumping, sliding, and cutting. The following exercises can be beneficial for developing athletes and allow their bodies to prepare for the rigorous demands of being a basketball player.

In order to play a fast-paced style of basketball, players must be in suitable physical condition. In this coaching manual we will discuss the correct technique that should be employed by coaches to ensure that young athletes reach their athletic potential. Employing the correct techniques and posture early in an athlete's development will also help to minimize injuries and early burnout.

We must consider inherent differences in children and how some children will inevitably take longer to learn a certain technique for many different reasons. They may need more cues, be it verbal, auditory, or kinaesthetic.

# Functional Movement

Athletes need to have their fundamental movements assessed before beginning strenuous training programmes. Proper technique in single leg/double leg squats, lunging and balance for example, are crucial to prevent injuries. Foot, ankle, knee, hip, shoulder, and spine alignment should be monitored and treated if necessary.

**The safety of players is always the primary goal of a good coach.**

Every coach must teach fundamental movements because basketball is constructed of functional movements such as bending, twisting, lunging, squatting, jumping, landing, throwing, catching, running, sliding, and hopping. The earlier we teach children fundamental movement skills, the faster they will progress through the developmental stages. Below are some basic exercises that can be beneficial for young athletes.

## Squat:

Teaching points:

1. Neck and spine should be neutral and braced.
2. Upper body should be neutral, slightly leaning forward.
3. Hips are at 90 degrees flexion.
4. Knees are at 90 degrees flexion. From the viewpoint of the athlete, the knees should never protrude past the toes. Knees should be stable and not wobble.
5. Feet and ankles should be stable and at least shoulder width apart.

For the standard back squat, we want players to achieve a correct squat which is pain free and in a functional range. For basketball players, the lowest they should go is “parallel.” No weight is needed for squats, but it is encouraged to use resistance bands. If there is any pain outside of normal muscle tension, or if the athlete is having any difficulty getting their form correct, then please refer them to a professional trainer or physiotherapist to correct their form. **Do not insist on correcting their form yourself.**

## **Lunge:**

### Teaching Points:

1. Neck and spine should be neutral and braced.
2. Feet should be placed shoulder width apart.
3. Keep your upper body straight, chin up, slightly leaning forward, with shoulders back and relaxed.
4. Step forward with one leg, lowering your hips until both knees are bent at about a 90-degree angle. Feet should always face forward.
5. From the viewpoint of the athlete, knees should never protrude past the toes.
6. Knees should be stable and not wobble. The back and hips should remain level and solid as you perform the push back movement.

## **Running & Conditioning:**

### Teaching points:

1. Hold head up, eyes looking forward.
2. Elbows at 90 degrees.
3. Drive arms backwards and forward in opposition to the legs.
4. Drive the knee forward for acceleration and power.
5. Kickback should be at 90 degrees.
6. Push off the ball of the foot.
7. Lean slightly forward to accelerate and back when slowing down.
8. Athletes should stay low in a low athletic stance to improve and quicken change of direction.

**Aerobic** – Meaning with oxygen, such as jogging or walking.

**Anaerobic** – Meaning without oxygen, such as sprinting at maximum capacity.

Basketball is a sport that uses both aerobic and anaerobic conditioning. In order to train athletes, we must be aware that basketball players cannot function and read the game while at full speed. Sprinting is part of the game and essential to ensuring that players are getting to the right spots on the floor, but on offence we must slow down to a speed that will ensure athletes can read the game and make productive decisions. There is a need to build an engine for players so that they can perform repeated anaerobic bouts such as rebounding and sprinting while also being able to recover in the aerobic phases. This will allow players to compete at high levels for longer periods of time.

### **Game:**

The coach will place cones or disks in a general straight line taking up half the court. Players will start on the baseline and run through the cones working on speed and change of direction. Athletes will plant their outside foot and push through the gap in cones while keeping their knees bent and remaining in an athletic stance. After running through the last cone, they will sprint at full speed to the opposite baseline. The athletes will then walk or jog back to the starting point using this as an opportunity to recover and stabilise their breathing.

### **Jumping:**

Teaching Points:

1. Landing is a prerequisite to jumping. It is essential that athletes learn to land softly.
2. Eyes are focused on the target and not looking at the ground.
3. Athlete will crouch with knees bent and push upwards.
4. Arms will swing forward and upwards in sync with the legs.
5. Athletes should spend equal time learning to jump using two feet and both the left and right foot.
6. Ankles, knees, and hips bend when landing to absorb the shock.
7. Landing should begin with toes and balls of feet first and heels second.

Jumping is the transfer of weight from one or two feet that will propel the athlete off the ground and into the air. Jumping can be divided into two categories: jumping for height or jumping for distance. Basketball employs both categories, and often there is no distinctive difference between the two. Young athletes will regularly use one or a combination of the two variations. During a game of basketball, an athlete must be able to jump repeatedly. Landing form is essential to the longevity of an athlete's career and will prevent injury and long-term problems.

### **Game:**

Have one or more athletes stand on a sturdy bench. The coach will stand 3-5 meters away from the bench with his/her eyes closed. The goal is for the athletes to jump off the bench and onto the ground without making any noise. This is a fun game that athletes will improve on with repetition.

### **ABC- Agility Balance Coordination:**

**Chicken Fights:** Players partner up and stand facing each other.

**Objective:** Touch the opposing player's knees without having your own knees touched.

### **Teaching Points:**

1. Players should be low in an athletic basketball stance.
2. Players should use an open hand. The goal is not to hurt your teammate but to tag their knee.

### **Variation:**

- Coach can instruct players to stand on one leg.
- Coach can change the target to calves, shoes or elbow.



- This game works on coordination, concentration, multidirectional movement, and reflexes. Chicken Fights can be used as an effective warm-up or ice breaker.

### **Foot Fire:**

- Athletes will get into a defensive stance, and rapidly raise and lower their feet about 4 inches off the ground. This drill develops foot speed, coordination, and overall conditioning.
- The coach stands in front of the group. It is important that all players have a clear line of sight to the coach.

### **Teaching Points:**

- Players must be low in an athletic basketball stance. Players will begin “Foot Fire” on the coach’s direction. The coach can instruct players to defensive slide left or right.

### **Coaching commands:**

- Defensive slide left or right.
- Quickly jump left or right and return to forward stance.
- Sprint to the baseline and back, or to predesignated spot.
- Push-up and return to “Foot Fire.”
- Athlete should be positioned on the balls of their feet while performing foot-fire.

### **Teaching Points:**

- Give clear and simple instructions before the drill. You can give each player a chance at being the leader; this should last for approx. 30 seconds to one minute. Players should continue to “Foot Fire” for the duration of the exercise.
- This drill works on conditioning, coordination, and agility while also preparing players for game-like defence.

## **Press-up:**

### **Teaching Points:**

1. Get on the floor on all fours, positioning your hands slightly wider than your shoulder.
2. Extend your legs back so that you are balanced on your hands and toes. Keep your body in a straight line from head to toe without sagging in the middle or arching the back.
3. Before beginning any movement, you should contract your abs by pulling your belly button towards the spine. It is vital to keep a tight core throughout the entire push-up.
4. Exhale as you begin contracting your chest muscles and push through the hands to the “UP” position.

Note\* Athletes should never lock elbows but instead, keep them slightly bent in “UP” position. If this exercise is too difficult, then it is possible for the athlete to place their knees on the ground until they gain the strength to complete the push-up.

## **Warm-up games ideas**

Coaches should always ensure that athletes are prepared and warmed up for the training session ahead. This will reduce the risk of injury and prepare athletes for the upcoming training session. As time is limited, coaches should ensure that the warm-up is relevant to the session and incorporates basketball movements. Games from the “Green Shoots, Green Coaching Manual” can be used as a warm-up. This can be a fun and dynamic way of preparing for a basketball training session.

**\*Closing the space:** All athletes will have a basketball and are instructed to remain within a predesignated area. The coach will instruct the athletes to run and dribble at a percentage of their max speed. Players must navigate through a crowded area and make a basketball-specific move to avoid contact with other players.



### **Objective:**

- Players will dribble around the designated area and work to avoid each other. Players must make a basketball move such as cross-over, behind the back, in and out, etc. to avoid banging into teammates.

### **Teaching points:**

- The coach will instruct players to spend equal time dribbling with both left and right hands.
- As time goes on, the coach can gradually reduce the size of the zone so that the athletes must work harder to avoid other athletes. Players may be instructed to only use their left or right hand respectively.

## **Creating and maintaining a confident culture**

Great leadership is needed to build great teams. Basketball coaches must be prepared to boldly make tough decisions, establish performance expectations, and make the needed corrections to meet these expectations. One thing that every successful basketball coach has is a sound culture; it is the glue that binds the team. The great leaders in the game of basketball all have this in common — they all have a defined, distinctive culture that is shaped by the leader. Sport and performance psychologist Dr Jim Taylor describes team culture as “the expression of a team’s values, attitudes, and goals about sports, competition, and relationships. It determines whether, for example, the team’s focus is on fun, improvement, or winning or whether it promotes individual accomplishment or team success.”

## Developing your Team Culture

There are many ways in which a coach can develop and define a team's culture. Bo Hanson, a former Australian rowing Olympic medallist, suggests that every coach should create a checklist to clearly define their own team's culture.

- The coach must be deliberate about creating the culture they want. They never just let it happen or emerge.
- Coaches define their values and behaviours, and these always match the team's goals.
- Coaches want to give their athletes ownership over the team's direction and goals.
- The team's culture and values are easy recognisable.
- Playing standards and effort are never compromised.

Young athletes must have confidence in themselves and in their abilities, both on and off the basketball court. A coach has the power to meaningfully impact young athlete's lives. A coach can encourage a culture of confidence in a number of ways:

1. Structure training sessions so that each athlete has ample time to work on a skill.
2. Offer positive feedback: coaches should know all their players on a first name basis and tell them something positive at least once per session.
3. Ensure that all athletes get equal playing time during training sessions.
4. The Steve Nash Youth Basketball training manual suggests that athletes should "Pay it Forward." When a player does something nice, the benefactor should not return the sentiment but instead "Pay it Forward" to another member of the team. For example, if a player shares water during a break or takes time to explain a drill or exercise, the recipient should then do something nice for another teammate.

### How to Avoid Team Failures

Failure	Solution
Lack of Clear Purpose and Goals	Communicate clearly and reiterate goals often. Focus on the details of your team's work to be able to change the methods as necessary.
Lack of Accountability	Delegate responsibility and make roles organized to avoid team members doing less than required or not knowing what actions they should be taking.
Lack of Trust Among Team Members	Support communication at all levels. Make it clear that players can talk to you confidentially. Ensure everyone feels united, not competitive.
Inability to Deal with Conflict	Be flexible with solutions. Make team members come to you with solutions, not just problems. Keep a respectful and open forum for discussion.
Lack of Creativity and Problem Solving	Make sure team members know that you value their ideas and encourage participation often. Do not give commands more than necessary.

Dr. Tim Rice explains that, in the end, your goal is to create a team culture that nurtures individual and team development, trust, and success. Remember that your team culture is your vision and/or philosophy put into action. Also, remember that every team and staff member is important to the team and plays an important role in the overall culture of the programme.

# Decision Making

## Pairing Up Skills with Smarts!

We want to encourage players to not only develop skills, but to make good decisions on the court so that they can put their skill to good use. Simply put, good decisions on offence reduce team errors and increase the team's overall efficiency. When teaching **decision-making** to young players, our starting point should be based upon a few premises:

1. Does the player understand basic spacing concepts?
2. Does the player understand the basic concepts of "help" defence?

If the answer to the above two questions is yes, then you've a head start when it comes to developing good decision-makers on the court.

When the ball is caught, the player has three choices, which is known as the triple threat position.

1. Pass
2. Dribble
3. Shoot

**Verbal Cue:** **"Catch & See"** - pivoting to a forward-facing position, so the player can assess what's in front of them. The player will only be able to make sound decisions once their **eyes are up** and they **see** what their options are.

### Passing Options:

1. **Existing Space to Pass** (both the player with the ball and their teammate are open for a pass and catch)
2. **Dribble to Pass** (closely guarded, the ball handler uses a separation dribble to create space and angle to make an uninterrupted pass to teammate)

3. **Dribble to Create Space to Pass** (the ball handler drives the ball towards the goal or area to "draw" help defenders towards them, creating space for a teammate to catch the ball)

### **Reading Closeouts:**

4. **Closeout** is the term used to describe the defender approaching the player they are responsible for defending. Because players are taught to play "team defence" and defend the ball first, the space between them and the player they're responsible for may be a short, medium, or long distance.
5. Good offensive players, with their eyes up, can make decisions on "attacking the closeout". Simply put, once the player receives the ball, their decision (pass, dribble, shoot) can be quicker if they see and correctly read the defender's closeout.

### ***"What Do You See?"***

**Slow Closeout or No Closeout = Shoot or Pass**

**Fast or Uncontrolled Closeout = Drive**

### **DRILL:**

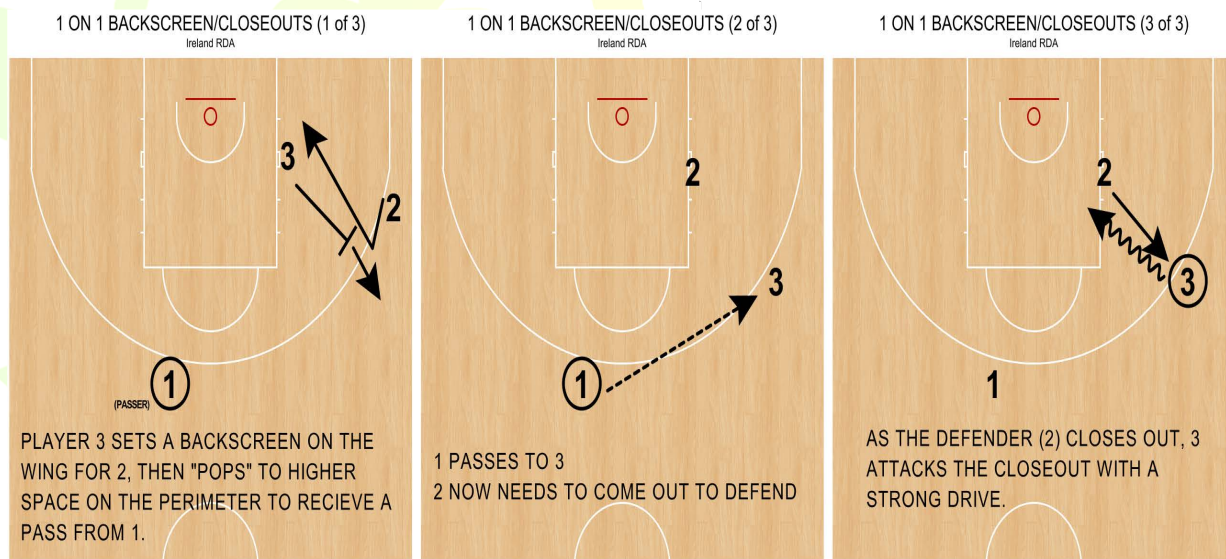
### **"1 ON 1 BACKSCREEN/CLOSEOUT"**

Set-up: 3 ON 0 DRILL - Passer at top of the key, 2 players on same side/wing.

1. Backscreen and Pop Action (in the diagram below, player 3 sets backscreen, player 2 cuts to basket).
2. Pass is made to player 3 after they "pop" out. Player 2 needs to then "become the defender", and close out to Player A to defend.
3. **The Decision(s):** Player 3 attacks the closeout (can also shoot if there is no closeout or a slow closeout).

**TIP:** *Attack the higher foot position on the drive when possible.*





**COACHES:** Mirror your drills - run this on both sides, so players are comfortable and capable from either side of the floor, and utilise/develop both left and right hands

## DRILL:

### "1 ON 1 BACKSCREEN/CLOSEOUT" + 2 ON A STRING

The progression drill from the 1on1 Backscreen/Closeout involves teaching players to "Read", how to space properly when their teammate drives towards the basketball.

Set Up: Same as Above, now add the following to the drill:

1. On the drive by player 3, the passer now **spaces** either **away** from the drive, or **follows** the drive (DIAGRAM A is Spacing **away**, DIAGRAM B is "**follow**") - **The synchronized movement between the two players is called "2 on a string")**.
2. Player 3 passes the ball out to 1 on the perimeter. 1 should be balanced and ready for a catch and shoot (or another rip-through drive, attacking an uncontrolled closeout).

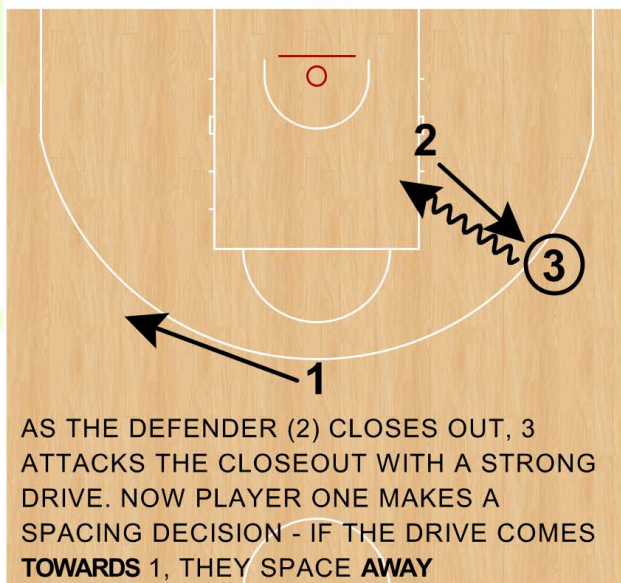
***In this drill, both offensive players are making decisions. Player 3 makes decision on attack (shot, drive left, or drive right) and player 1 makes decision on proper spacing.***



# Diagram A -

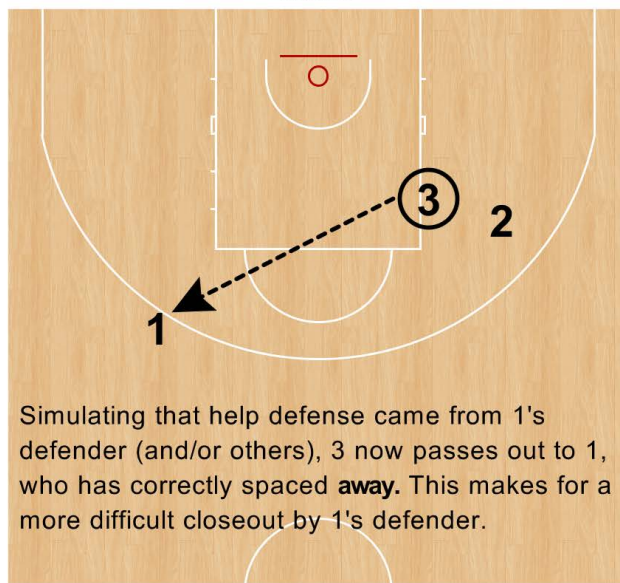
1 on 1 Backscreen/Closeout into 2 on a String (1 of 2)

Ireland RDA



1 on 1 Backscreen/Closeout into 2 on a String (2 of 2)

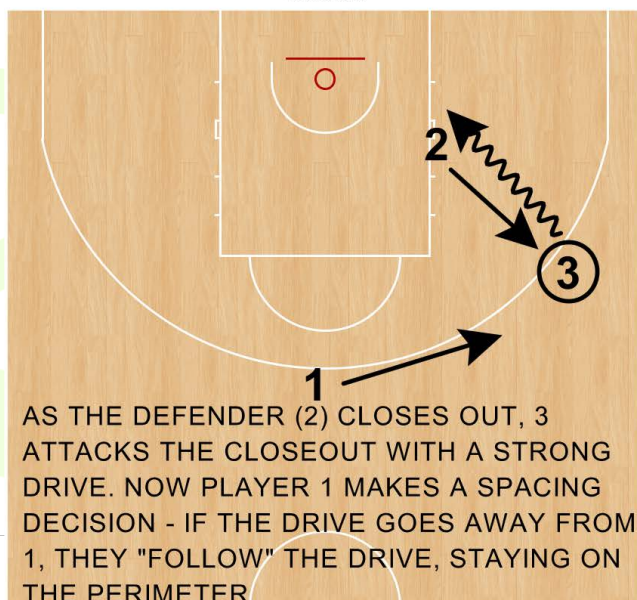
Ireland RDA



**COACHES:** Mirror your drills - run this on both sides, so players are comfortable and capable from either side of the floor and utilise/develop both left and right hands.

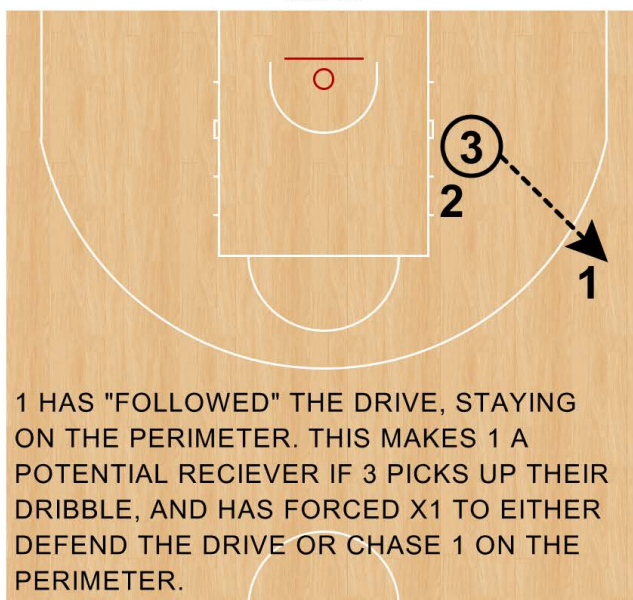
1 on 1 Backscreen/Closeout into 2 on a String -FOLLOW (1 of 2)

Ireland RDA



1 on 1 Backscreen/Closeout into 2 on a String -FOLLOW (2 of 2)

Ireland RDA



## DRILL:

### SPANISH SHOOTING

This drill teaches players to make a quick decision following a catch on the perimeter. The coach provides the prompts (such as hands up, hands down, or change of body position). Strong emphasis on:

1. **Good Footwork** - 1-2 step with lower foot first
2. **Balance** - Knees bent, with no drift
3. **Eyes Up** - SEE and make good decision **VERBAL CUE: "Catch & SEE!" (THIS IMPACTS DECISIONS)**



Next, the coach (as a defender) will change the emphasis - **change the body position to force middle or force outside (take one direction away from the driver).**

## TEAM SPACING & DECISION MAKING

Next, let's look closer at group decision making. The concept of "**leaving a spot and filling a spot**" assists with floor balance, adequate passing lanes/space, and forces defenders to make choices on their defensive positioning. This results in reduced turnovers, more pressure on the defending team, and longer closeouts by individual defenders. **Creating longer closeouts** is critical — it results in simplifying the decision making — there will be more catch and shoot, and more catch and drive.

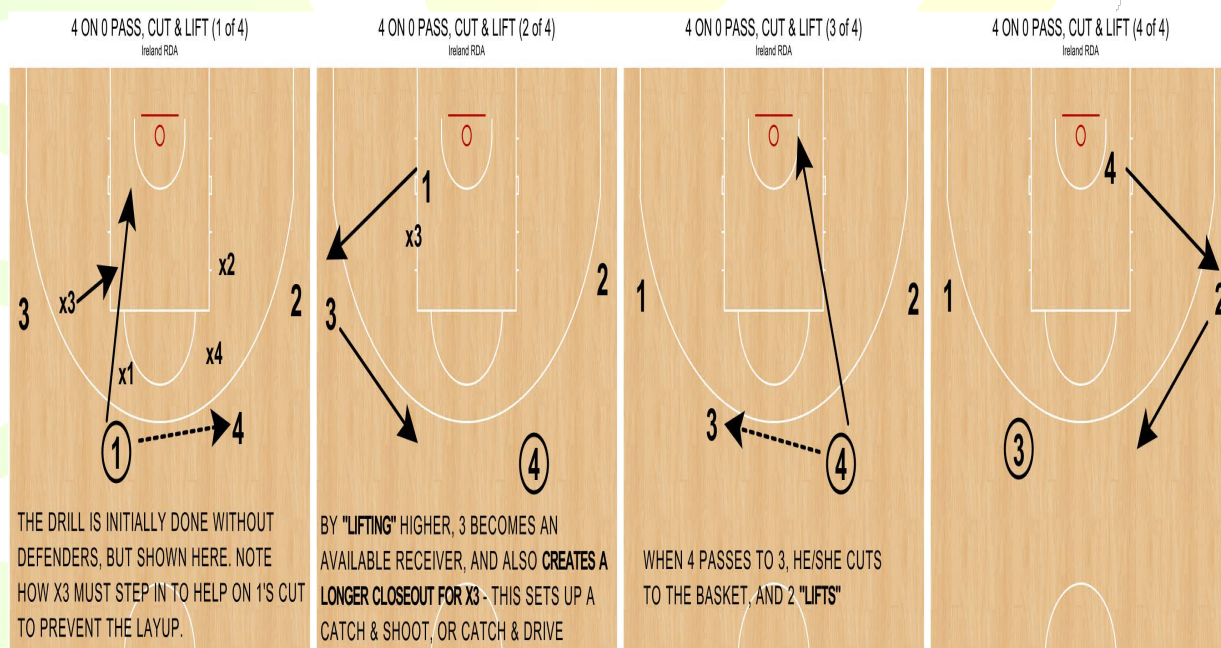


A general rule of thumb to follow when teaching simultaneous cutting and spacing:  
**"The first cutter moves *opposite* his defender. The second cutter moves *opposite* the first cutter."**

**This can be seen in the diagram below, with a basic 4-player drill on cutting and lifting (into space).**

### 4 on 0 PASS, CUT & LIFT

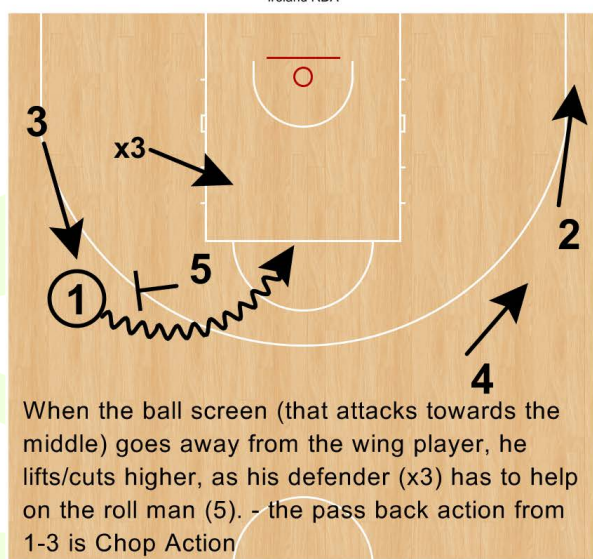
**Points of Emphasis:** Hard cuts, finishing your cut back on the perimeter (use cones or markers if necessary), showing your lead hand on your cut, and good footwork when "lifting", as it may result in a catch & shoot.



## Spacing in Ball Screen Situations

"Lifting" can also be used during ball screen situations, and is referred to as "**Chop**" Action. In the situation in Diagram C, similar to above action, the offensive player **(3)** "**lifts**" as the ball moves **away from them**. This is particularly important in the side-line ball screen (bringing ball towards the middle), as the ball-side wing defender often has the responsibility for guarding the "Roll" in a Pick & Roll.

Chop Action (1 of 2)  
Ireland RDA



Chop Action (2 of 2)  
Ireland RDA

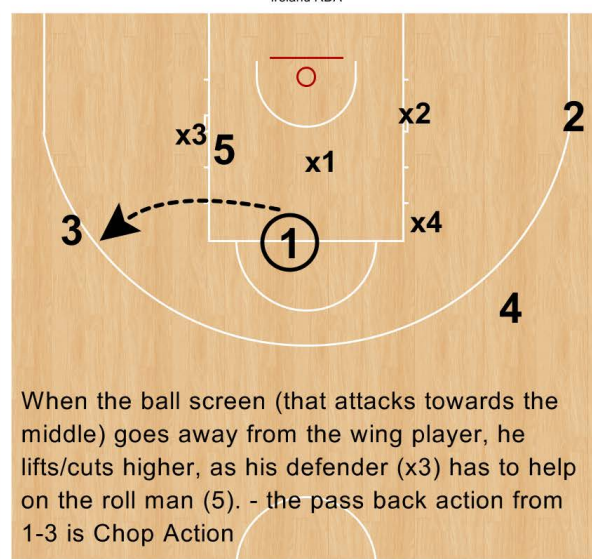


Diagram C

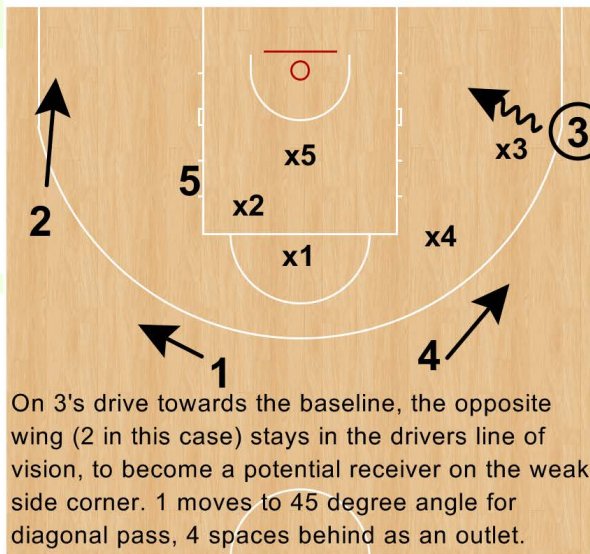
## BASELINE DRIVE SPACING

When the ball is driven to the baseline, we teach players to space to appropriate areas simultaneously so that we have multiple options available:

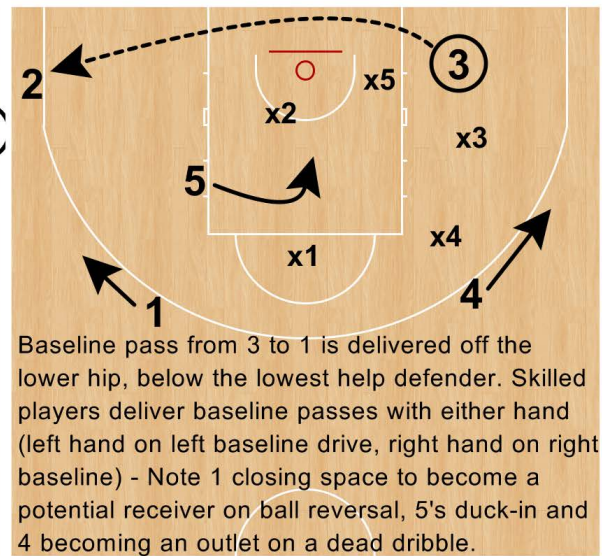
Diagram D (below) is an example of players moving in harmony, or in this case, "4 on a string," provide multiple passing options for the player **(3)** driving baseline.

**Verbal Cue:** *"Baseline Drive, Baseline Drift"*

Baseline Drift (or Show) (1 of 2)



Baseline Drift (or Show) (2 of 2)



*Diagram D*

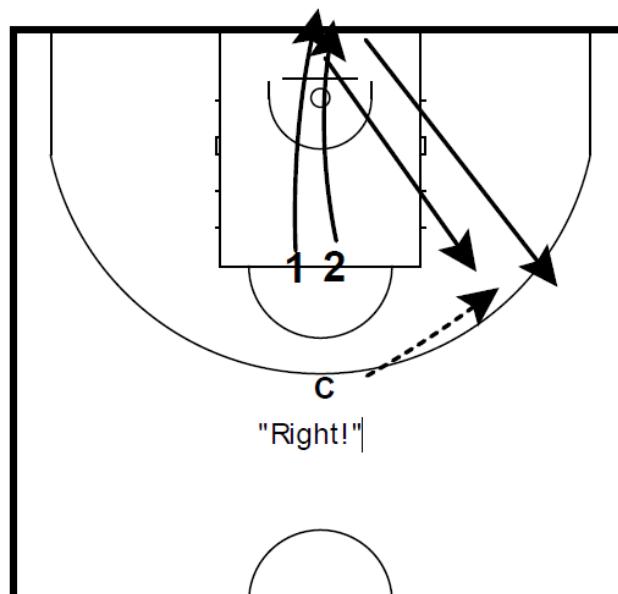
## Dynamic build up games

# 1v1

1v1 is a great way for players to work on their individual skills and techniques to get open.

## 1v1 Baseline Touch

Frame 1





Both players will start side by side on the free-throw line. On the coach's command, each player will sprint to touch the baseline. As the players race towards the baseline the coach will yell "Left or right." This command will indicate to the players which wing they must run towards to receive the pass from the coach.

### **Objective:**

- Each player is trying to receive the ball from the coach.
- A player is on offence once they receive the ball.
- The defensive player must then get in position to defend the basket.

### **1v1 with chairs**

This is a simple drill that will help athletes work on their offence and defence. Three chairs will be set up with basketballs on one side of the court. The defensive player will start on the block closest to the chairs with the offensive player on the opposite block. On the coach's command the offensive player will sprint to any chair that they choose and will begin their offensive possession. On the same command, the defensive player will sprint and touch their opposite block before closing out to the offensive player.

### **1v1 – Finishing with contact**

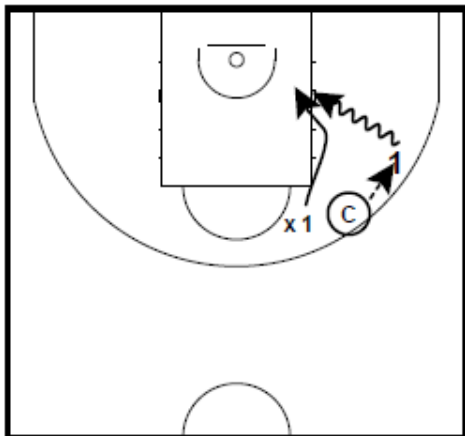
This drill is designed to help players finish at the basket through contact. The coach will position themselves with the ball (this can be done anywhere on the court) between the two players. The coach can either hand the offensive player the ball or hold out the ball. The play starts once the offensive player has possession of the basketball. The offensive player will drive to the basketball and finish with a lay-up. As soon as the offensive player has possession, the defender must attempt to stop the play. The offensive player should create contact with the defender without committing an offensive foul.



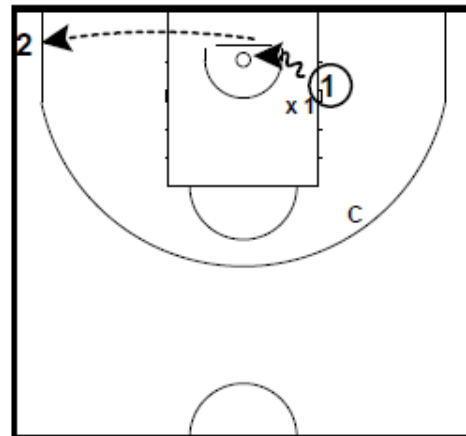
**Variation:** This drill can be modified by placing an offensive shooter in the opposite corner. The offensive player must drive to the basket and pass to the opposite corner through contact; this will encourage a drive-and-kick offensive style of play.

## 1v1 Finishing with Contact

Frame 1



Frame 2



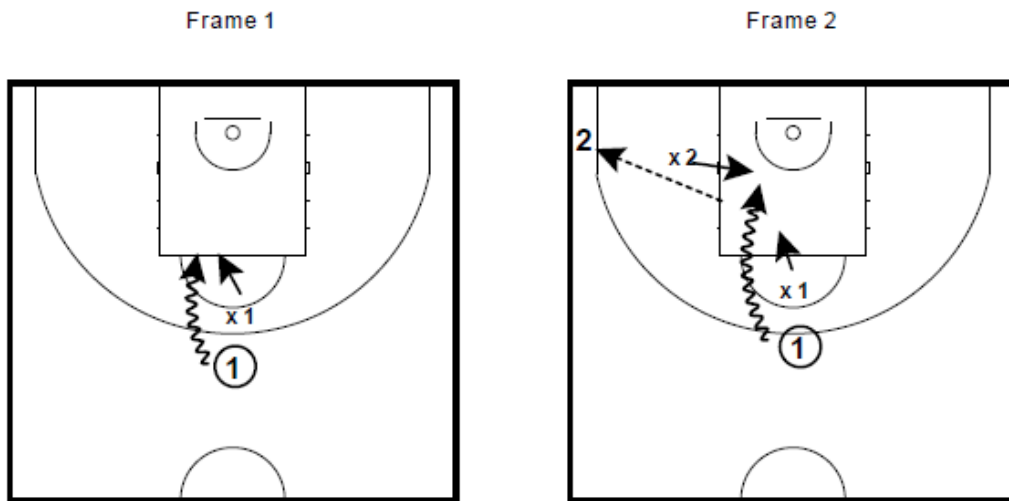
### Objective:

- The offensive player should finish the lay-up through contact.
- The defensive player must get in position between the basket and the offensive player without fouling.
- Help side defence must be alert and help on the drive.
- Players should be encouraged to use their two allowed steps to finish at the basket or pass to the corner.

### 1v1 - Advantage

This drill is designed to create a one second advantage for the offensive player. This will simulate when an offensive player beats their defender in the game or on a fast break. The offensive player must remain calm and under control while focusing on finishing the lay-up.

## 1v1 Advantage



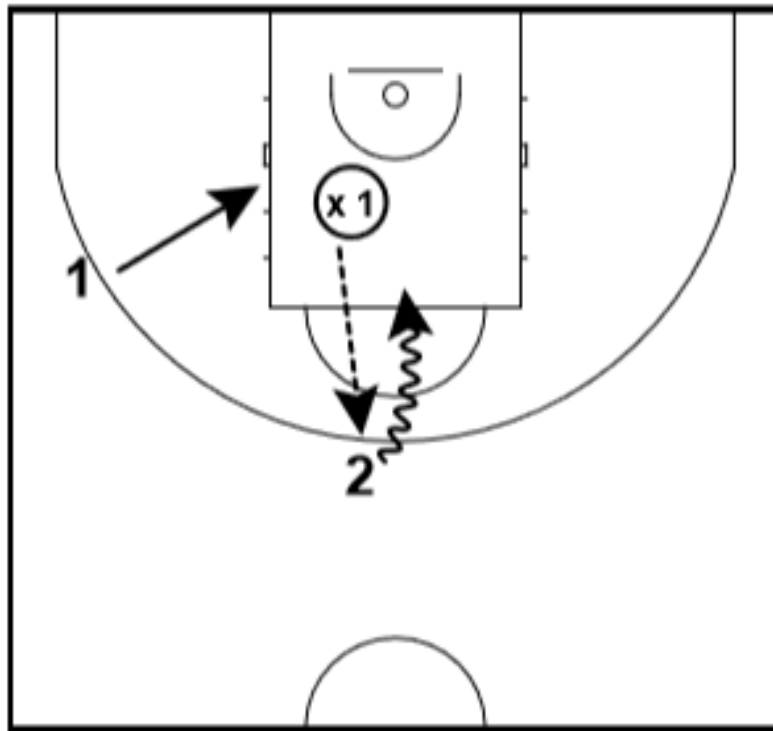
Player one starts on offence directly with the ball. Player two starts on defence and is facing the basket. Player two cannot move to defend until player one advances to their left or right. This will create a split-second advantage for the offence. This game can also be used as a defensive drill. This drill can also be loaded by starting as a 2v2. In this scenario, the only player with a disadvantage is the on-ball defender. The offensive player must drive and quickly decide if they should attempt a lay-up or pass to an open teammate once the help side defender helps across.

### 2v1

This drill is designed to create an advantage for the offensive players. The defender will start with the ball in the key and pass to either of the offensive players. The offensive players must then react quickly to take a viable shot. Coaches can load this drill by having a second or third defensive player start at the half way line or side line. Once the ball is passed, the second defender can enter the drill. It is important that coaches try to simulate game situations. Attacking players won't usually have the time to spread the floor and must operate quickly in small spaces before the help defence is engaged.

2v1

Frame 1



Note\* It is important that the lone defender does not overcommit to one attacking player. They should stunt at the player with the ball while remaining in the passing lane to intercept any potential passes.

### **Man-to-man defence**

Man-to-man defence should be the core defensive strategy of any team, irrespective of age and ability. In many countries, man-to-man defence is compulsory up to the ages of 14-16 to ensure that players develop this key fundamental. Coaches may decide to implement zones as part of their defensive scheme, but this will be more successful when it is utilised by players who are able to play effective man-to-man.

Playing excellent defence not only requires a player to understand the technical fundamentals but also that mind-set plays a large part in its success. Taking this determined attitude into practice and the game, coupled with technical efficiency, will ensure a much greater degree of defensive proficiency. This attitude is exemplified by the following can do statements: “I will play defence,” “I will stay in my defensive stance even when I am tired,” “I will pressure the ball at all times,” “I will always pick up the dribbler as early as I can,” “I will deny my man the ball if that is what the coach wants me to do,” “I will constantly encourage my team-mates to play defence,” “I will accept the challenge of stopping my man from scoring.”

Not every player can score but every player can play defence and contribute to their team’s success. The often quoted comment that “defence wins championships” requires the coach to constantly utilise practices to ensure their teams can maximise their potential in this area.

By the age of 12, players should be able to understand the following components of man-to-man defence:

1. Correct defensive stance. We can call it a player’s ‘base stance.’
2. Fundamental footwork against the dribbler.
3. An understanding of ‘closing out.’
4. Correct stance whilst guarding the ball and an understanding of how this can be used to influence the path of a dribble.
5. The distance the defender can play relative to the ball when considering the strengths of their opponent.
6. Defensive stance and positioning when guarding the player one pass away from the ball.
7. Defensive positions that deny the pass to their defender and allow them to give more help to the ball.
8. Defensive stance and positioning when two passes away from the ball.

9. An understanding that man-to-man defence is all 5 players on the floor playing it at the same time and how the failure of 'one' affects the whole team. This is the concept of 'help defence' with the realisation that the 'ball' scores not the man.

There are many drills that can be utilised for teaching man-to-man defence. However, although these drills can be effective in introducing the components, they have limitations when transferred to real game situations. Every action in the game "involves a decision (tactical dimension), an action or motor skill (technical dimension) that requires a particular movement (physiological dimension) and is directed by volitional and emotional states (psychological dimension)" (Oliveria, 2004). An excellent example of 'game play' is 3X3 which maintains the tactical integrity of the full game but allows the players multiple touches of the ball and the coach to intervene periodically to teach and make defensive adjustments.

Another advantage of 3x3 play is the utilisation of the 'games model' approach. If the correct technical components of man-to-man have been taught, the coach will have created a 'model' of playing defence and players will understand the correct actions within it. Both coaches and players can develop an understanding of when this model has been adhered to, and when it has broken down. Therefore, players are given the opportunity to increase their 'game sense' and coaches will be able to intervene in a more tactically explicit way.

### **1. Correct defensive stance or 'base stance.'**

The defensive stance can also be used on offence. Feet should be shoulder width apart, although this may be wider for young players who have narrower shoulders than adults. Knees are flexed and back is slightly bent forward with 'nose behind the toes.' Hands should be 'active' and vary depending upon the situation.

Diagram A) demonstrates the correct defensive stance.

Diagram A)



## 2. Fundamental footwork against a dribbler

The ability to control the ball ‘one on one’ is a vital building block of man-to-man defence. FIBA’s excellent series of coaching manuals highlights the necessary fundamentals.

Diagram B) illustrates the concept of “big to bigger” which is also called a defensive slide and occurs when moving right step with the right foot first (big). The second step with the left foot (bigger) enables the player to return to a balanced stance. A common mistake in this scenario happens when a player steps with their left foot first.

Diagram B)



Defending the dribble will mean a change of direction is often needed. The player will need to perform a reverse pivot, which is also called a drop step, with the foot in the direction that they are moving.

Diagram C) shows this action.



Diagram C)

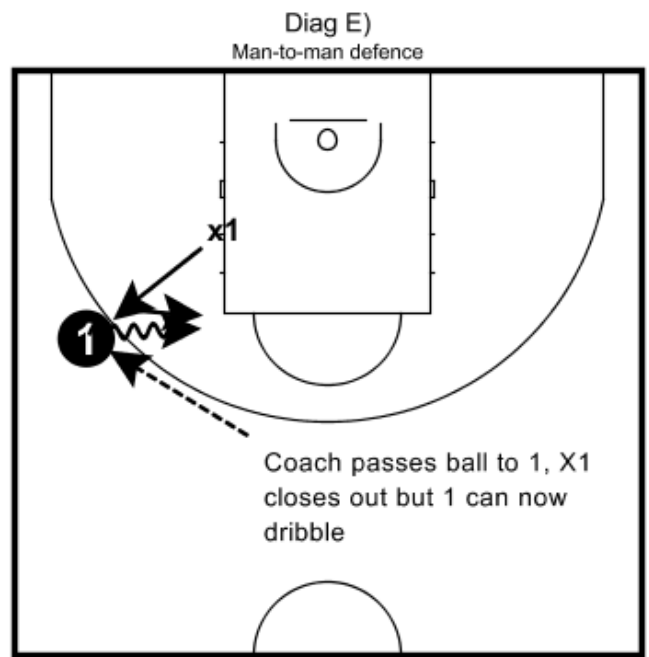
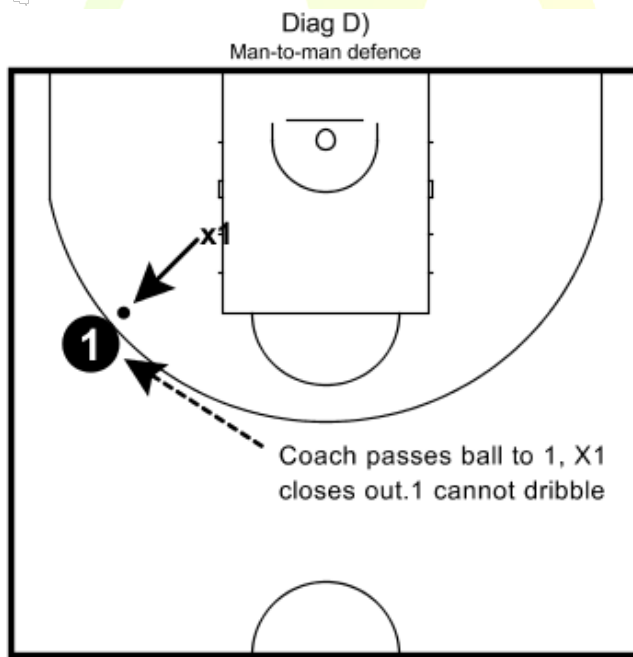


### 3. An understanding of 'closing out'

A close out refers to when an offensive player catches the ball and the defensive player must then close the space between them. The defensive player will need to 'close out' to the ball quickly but must realise that without slowing down and transitioning to a balanced 'on ball' position they can easily be beaten by the player with the ball 'off the dribble.' The below points are key to a good close out:

1. Move when the ball is in the air.
2. Sprint to the ball.
3. 'Chop' your feet when you are 10-12 feet from your man. Smaller choppy steps will slow the defender down and arrive 'on balance.'
4. At least one hand in the air to protect against a quick shot and assist with the balanced 'on ball' position.

When teaching this skill, there should be a quick progression from closing out to stationary player (Diagram D) to one where the player with the ball is able to dribble (Diagram E).

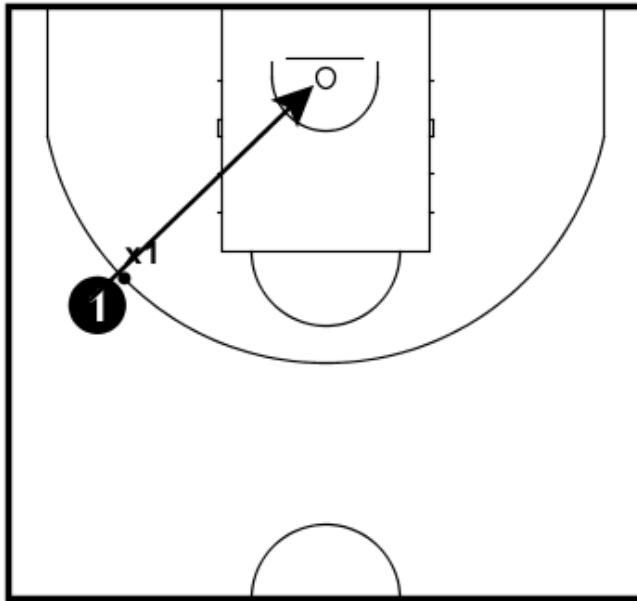


#### 4. Correct stance when guarding the ball and an understanding of how this can be used to influence the path of a dribble.

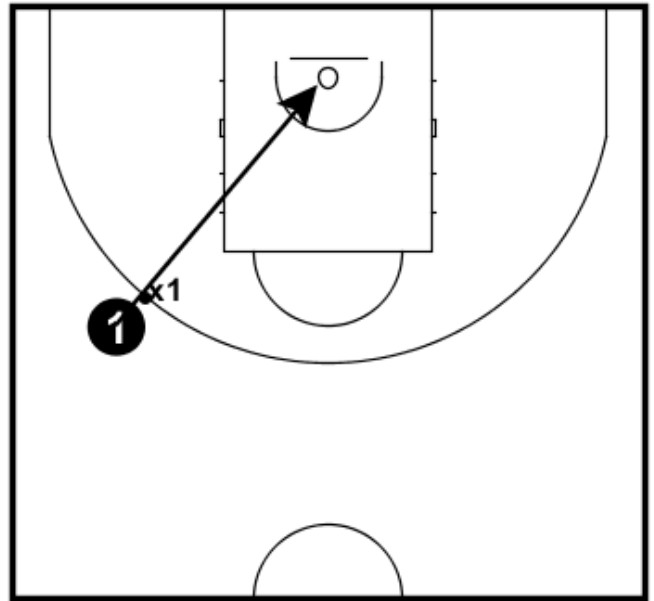
In Diagram F), the defender X1 is following the rule of ball-you-basket. He is playing his man 'chest to chest.'

In Diagram G), X1 is 'splitting' his man. His right foot is in line with the middle of his man and is therefore taking away his option to drive to the middle of the lane. Instead of 2 options, the offence only has one and that is to the baseline which is the defender's desired preference.

Diag F) Defence on the ball  
Man-to-man defence



Diag G) Splitting the man  
Man-to-man defence

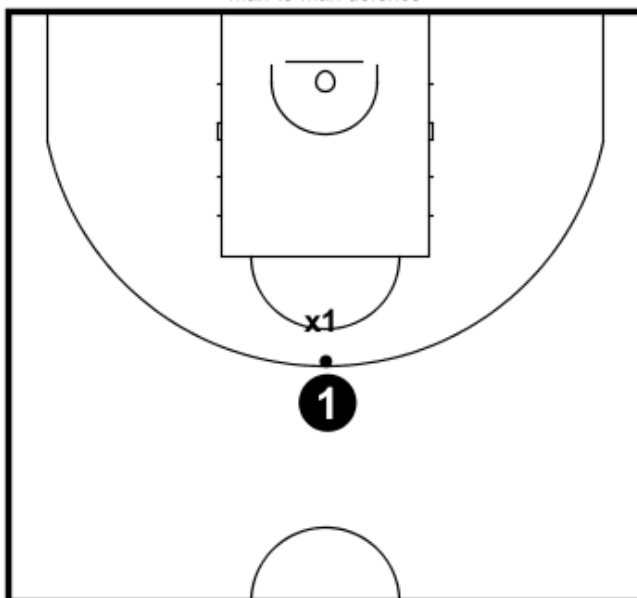


## 5. The distance the defender can play relative to the ball when considering the strengths of their opponent.

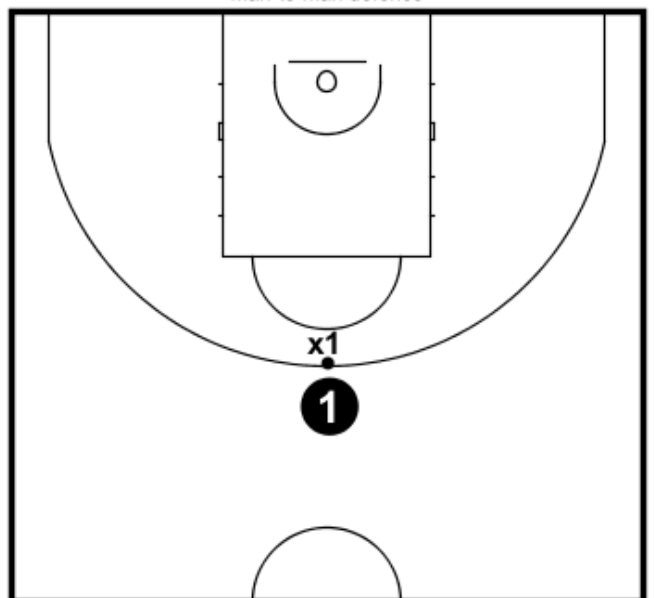
In Diagram H), X1 has taken a step off his man due to his ability to 'drive' to the basket.

In Diagram I), the player X1 is defending a proficient shooter therefore playing much closer.

Diag H) Defensive position against the driver  
Man-to-man defence



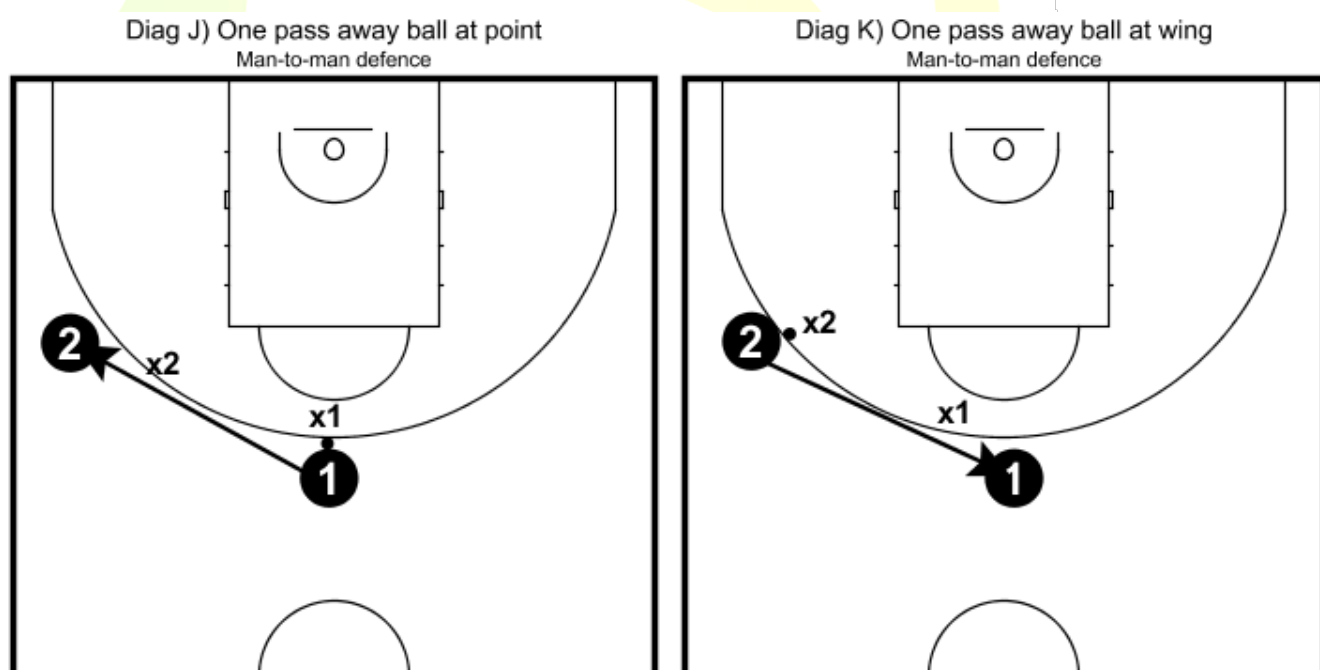
Diag I) Defensive position against the shooter  
Man-to-man defence



## 6. Defensive stance and positioning when guarding the player one pass away from the ball.

In Diagram J), X1 is playing 'on-ball' defence and X2 is playing 'one pass away' defence. X1 has taken one step towards the ball and is one step off the line of the pass. X1 should use their left arm to deny the pass and following the rule of 'see the man, see the ball.'

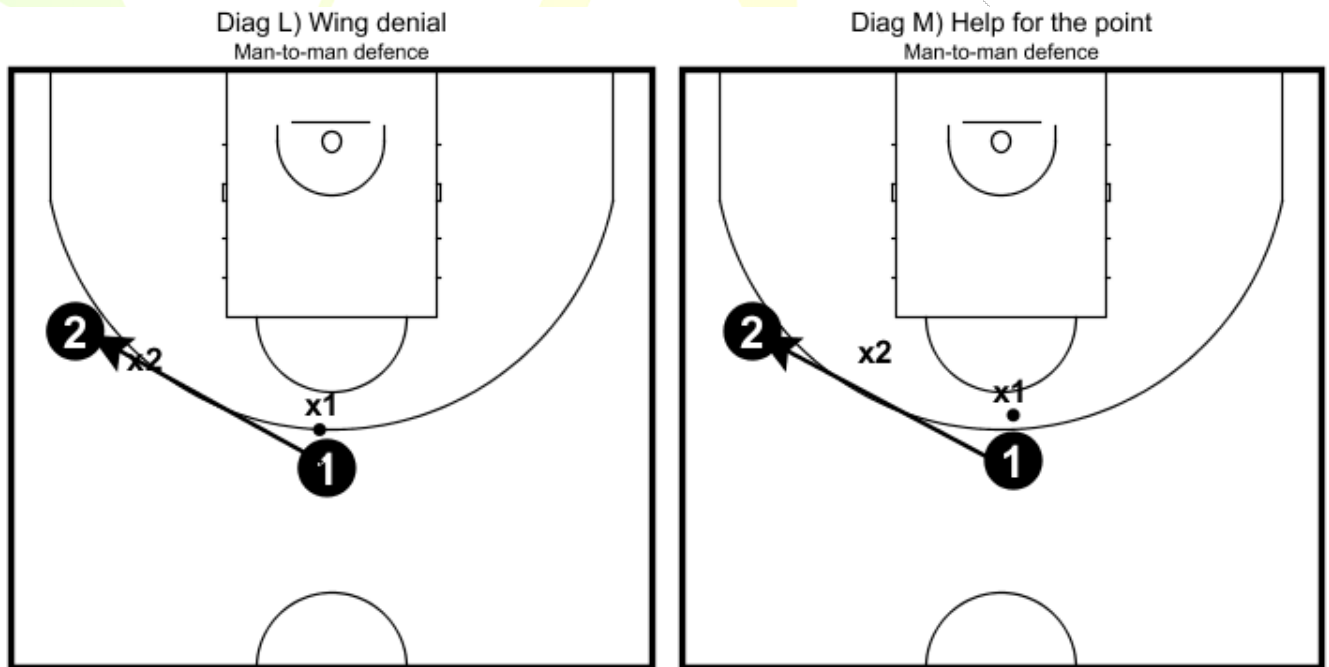
In Diagram K), X2 is playing 'on-ball' defence and X1 is playing 'one pass away' defence. X2 has taken one step to the ball and one step off the line of the pass.



## 7. Defensive positions that deny the pass to their defender when one pass away and help their defender when one pass away

In Diagram L), X2 is playing denial defence against his man. X2 is one step 'up the line' and 'on the line.' This a more aggressive way of playing defence.

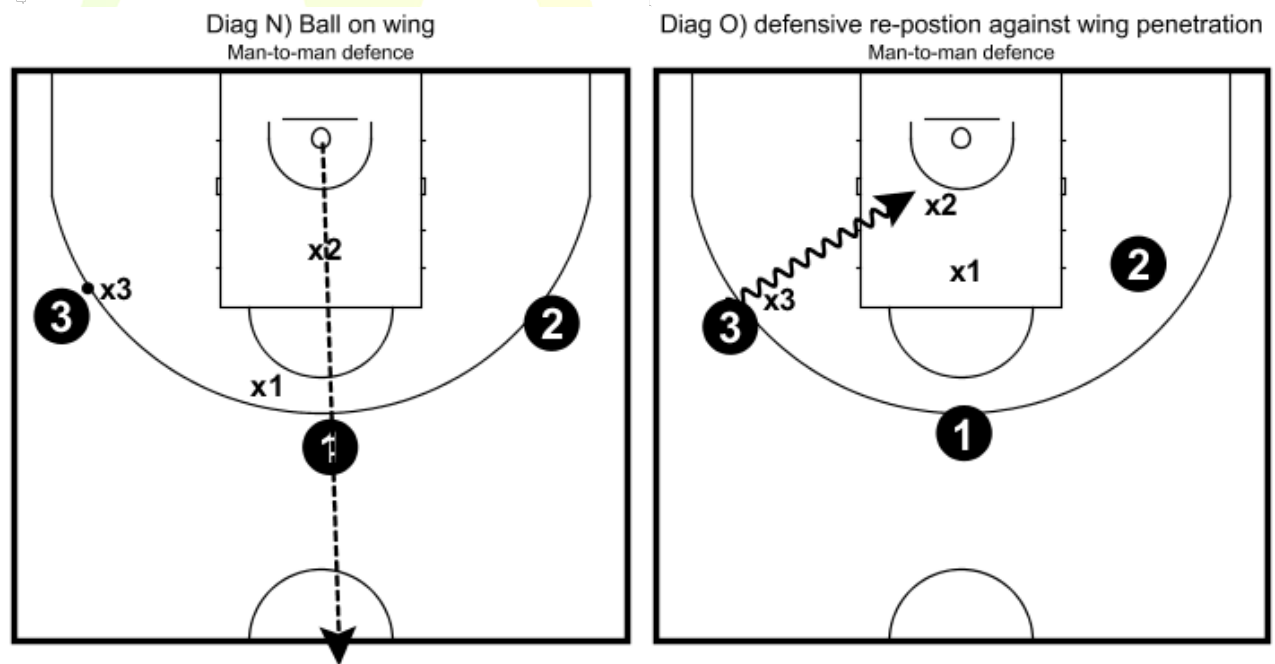
In Diagram M), X2 is playing mid-way between their man and the ball using, so called, pack line rules. X2 is in an excellent position to help against penetration from offensive player 1.



## 8. Defensive stance and positioning when two passes away from the ball.

In Diagram N), X3 is playing 'on ball defence' and X1 is playing one pass away defence. X2 is in the 'help' position two passes from the ball. X2 is on 'the wall' or 'split line' and should be in a position 'to see his man, see the ball.' X2 should be in an open stance thinking about a 'pistols' position.

In Diagram O), X3 has penetrated to the basket but X2 has 'helped' to prevent an easy lay-up. X1 has also dropped down to help.



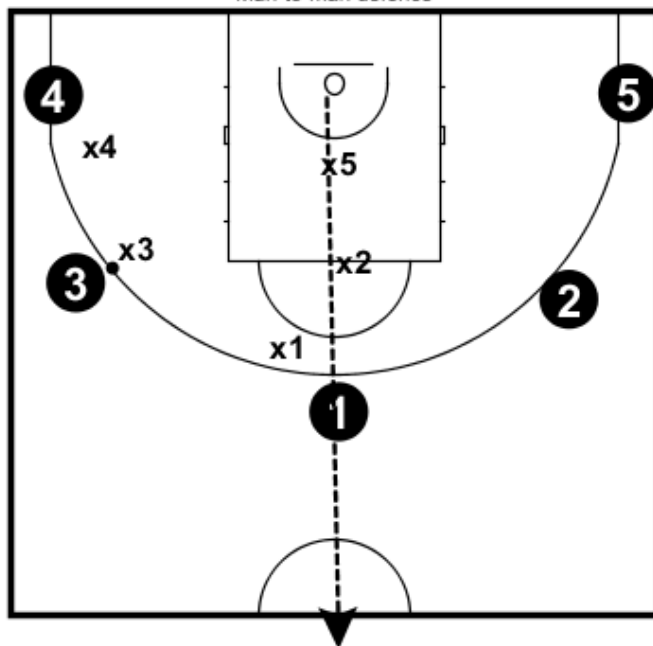
**9. An understanding that man-to-man defence is all 5 players on the floor playing it at the same time and how the failure of 'one' affects the whole team. This is the concept of 'help defence' with the realisation that the 'ball' scores not the man.**

In Diagram P), we see 5v5 man-to-man defence. X3 is playing 'on-ball' defence, X4 and X1 are playing 'one pass' away defence and X2 and X5 are in help positions on the 'split line.'

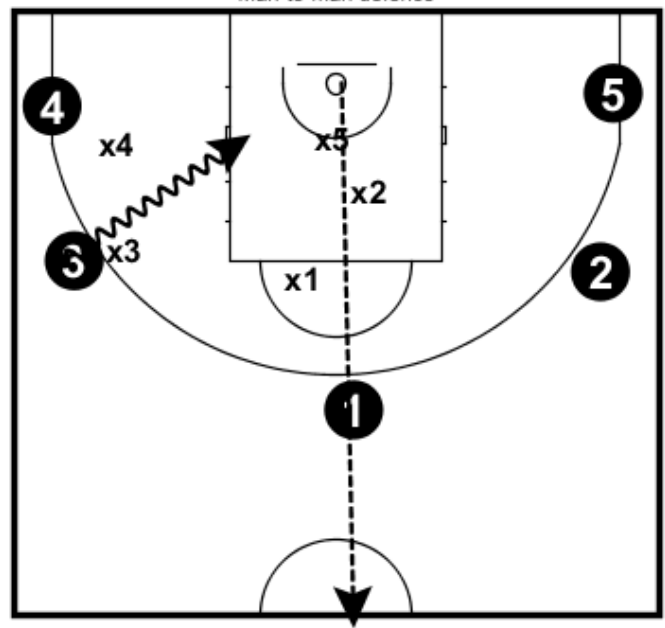
In Diagram Q), X3 has penetrated to the basket which has caused the defence to re-position. X2 and X5 have left their man as they must stop the ball. X5 can defend the drive with X2 and X1 dropping down to give further help. The defence is now in a scramble situation where close outs become important.



Diag P) 5 v 5 defensive positions-ball with 3  
Man-to-man defence

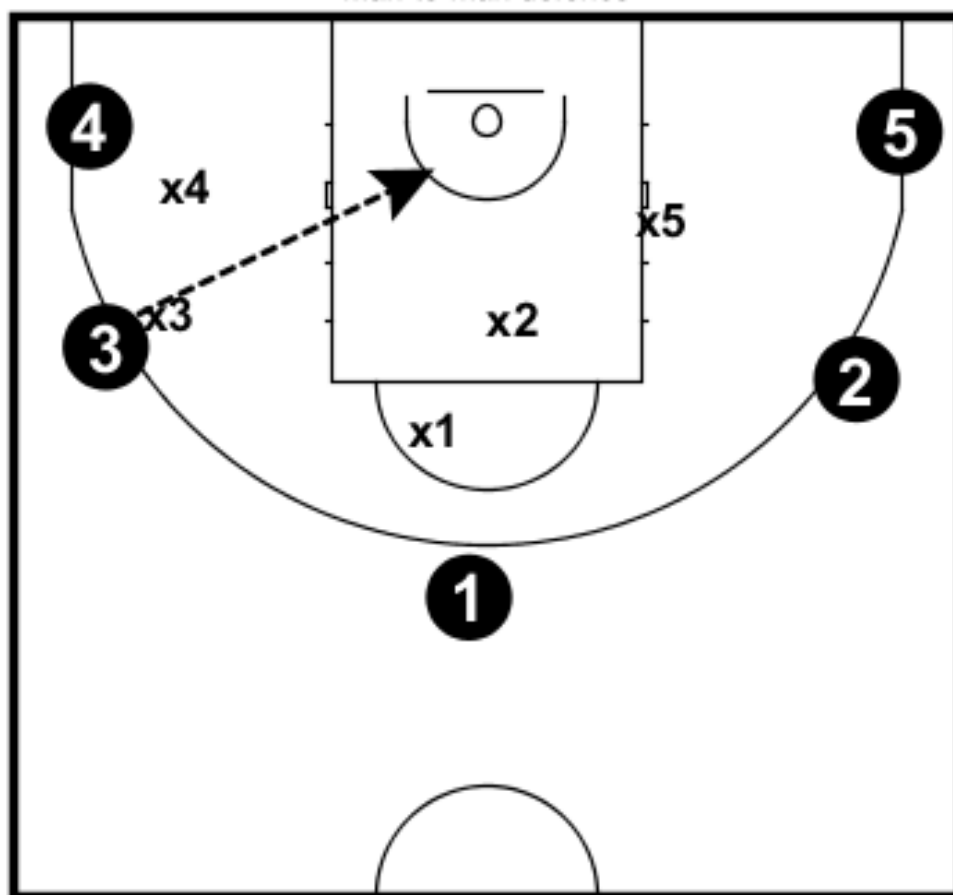


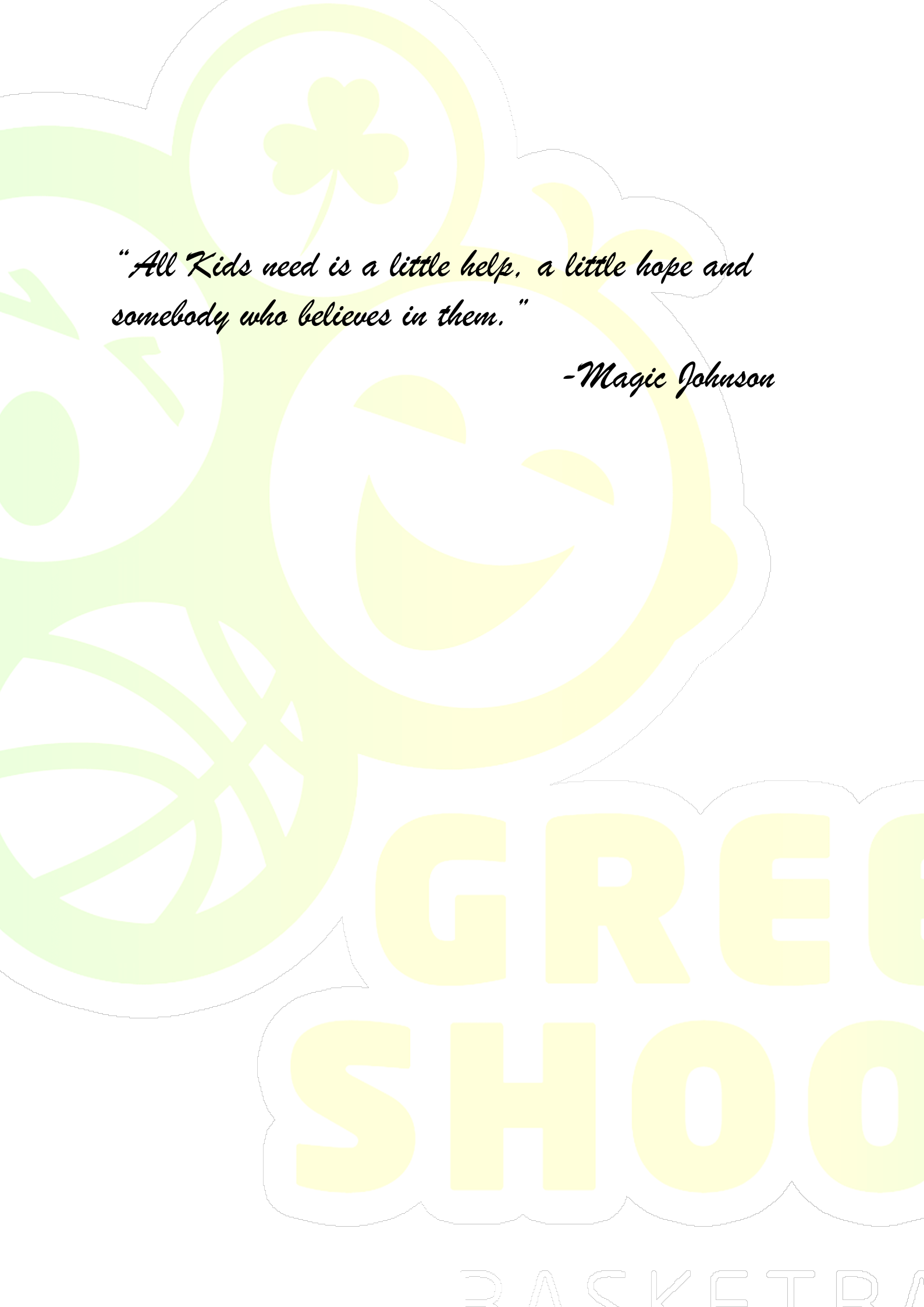
Diag Q) 5 v 5 re-posions after wing penetration  
Man-to-man defence



In Diagram R), we see the consequence of X5 and X2 not applying 'help' rules and not rotating off 2 and 5 to stop the dribble penetration. O3 can score easily.

Diag R) 5 v 5 breakdown after wing penetration  
Man-to-man defence





*"All Kids need is a little help, a little hope and  
somebody who believes in them."*

*-Magic Johnson*

GREEN  
SHOOT

BASKETBALL