



***Special  
Olympics***  
*Leinster*

# **Basketball Drills**

## Introduction

Dear Coaches,

Following on from our Basketball Coaches workshop we have created a coaching booklet detailing various basketball drills that we hope can aid and develop your current basketball sessions. The drills are designed to be simple & practical to enable easy setup & implementation for you and your athletes. The drills are set out in a format that focuses on three of the main elements of basketball.

- Dribbling
- Passing
- Shooting

The drills in this booklet are designed as a coaching aid to help provide fresh ideas. As coaches you have a responsibility to set up your sessions in a way that gets the best out of your athletes, therefore, flexibility and adaption of these drills and any others you may undertake is very important. Coaches should use this document as a guide when planning a training session. We would encourage coaches to continually adapt, progress and advance any of the drills listed whilst also incorporating their own.

We hope you find these drills both useful and fun and we wish you all the best with your training.

*The Special Olympics Leinster Team*

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## Coaching Principles

As mentioned, the drills provided in this booklet are designed to be a coaching aid to accompany your training sessions. You, the coaches, ultimately have the discretion to coach, adapt and progress your training sessions where you see fit. That being said, here are some very useful coaching tools which can add greatly to your training sessions.

- The first is the **IDEA Principle**, a tool designed to help break down the coaching of a skill to an athlete.

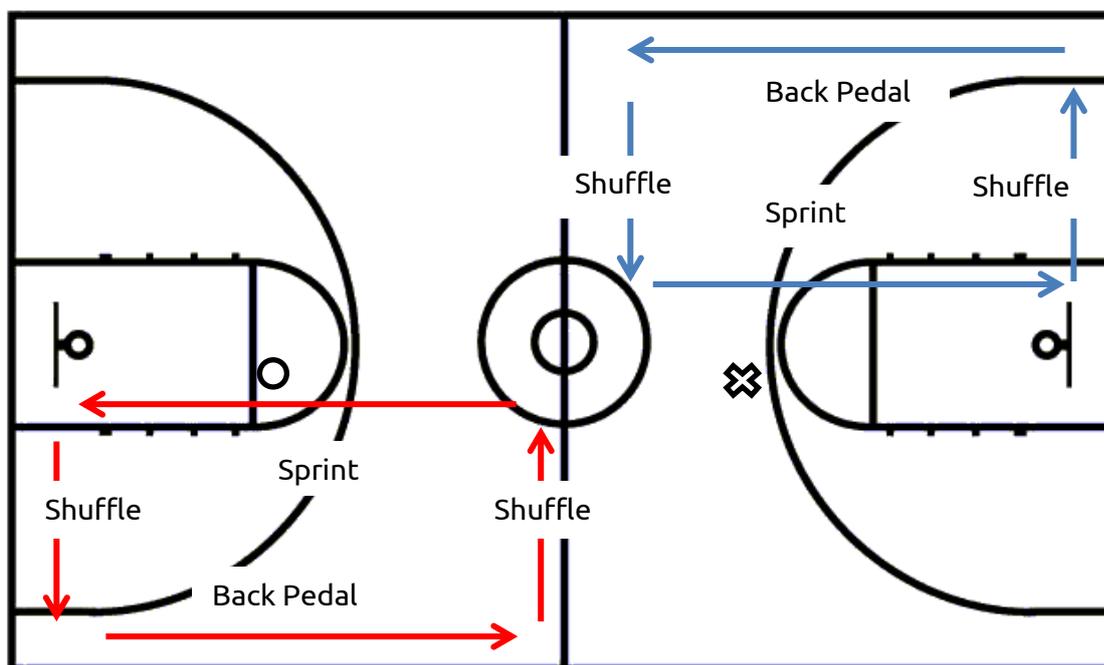
<b>Introduce</b>	Verbally introduce the skill, providing a brief description. Outline the Key Teaching Points.
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Demonstrate the skill; perform it in full a number of times. Use an athlete to help demonstrate.
<b>Explain</b>	Verbally and visually explain how you want the skill practised, i.e. the organisation of the drill or activity.
<b>Attend</b>	Observe the players performing the skill a number of times. Provide feedback on how to correct any errors

- The second is **STEP**, a tool designed to help guide coaches in adapting/progressing their training sessions.

<b>Space</b>	Changing the amount of space available may reduce or increase the difficulty. More space means less pressure, but more running! Use zones, or restricted areas, to prevent all the players chasing the ball (beehive play) or to encourage width or to aid the defensive or attacking players.
<b>Task</b>	Change the task that the players are required to perform, e.g. choosing a more difficult technique to perform, or increasing the pace from a walk to a jog, or changing the target from a fixed to a moving target, or varying the playing or scoring rules for all or selected players.
<b>Time</b>	Changing the time that each player performs the activity for will increase or decrease the physical challenge to the player. Increasing the time forces the player to perform the task more often; decreasing the time allowed encourages the player to perform the task quicker.
<b>Equipment</b>	Change the equipment used, e.g. from using a big ball to a smaller ball, or from using a wall to a partner. Note: Small balls are easier to throw but harder to catch, whereas big balls are easier to catch and harder to throw.
<b>Players</b>	Introduce opposition, firstly in token form, before progressing gradually to full opposition (where the possession is contested in a game-like manner). Change the number of players to give an advantage to the attacking or defending players.

## Warm ups

### 1. Box runs



**Equipment needed:** court or large space, cones or markers

#### Instructions:

- Divide athletes into equal manageable numbers
- Set up cones or use the court markings to line up a box shaped area
- Line up the athletes in their teams and begin the drill

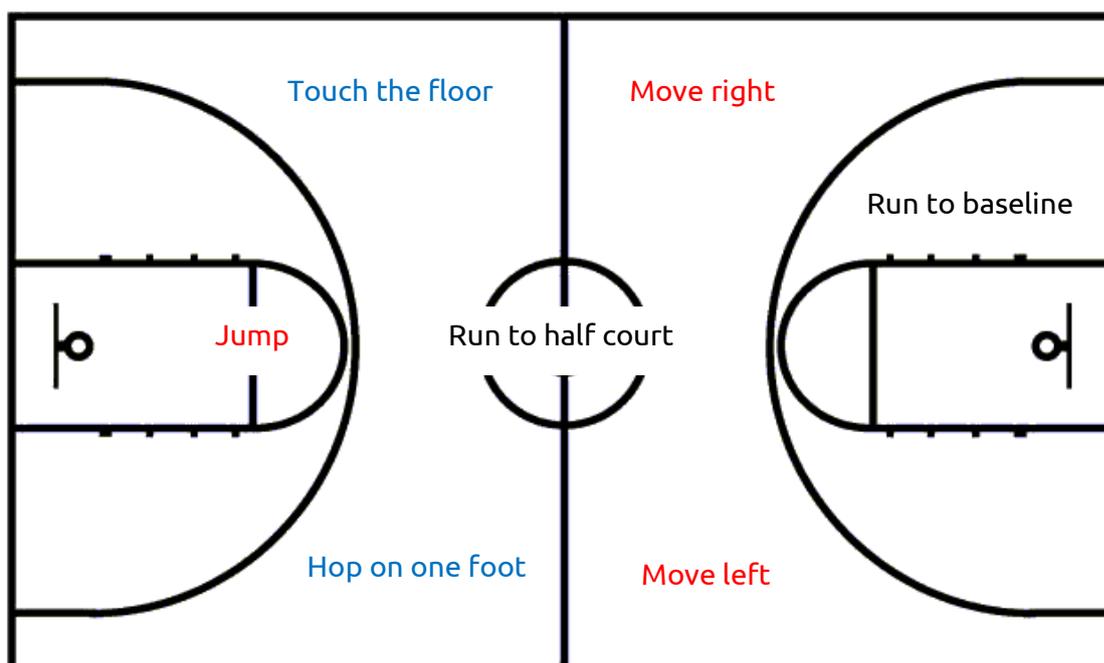
#### Learning

This drill involves very little set up but allows the athletes to sufficiently warm up prior to the training session. Above are examples of moves that can be include in each stage but use your knowledge of the game to add in your own moves to challenge the athletes.

Keep in mind that this drill is included as a warm up therefore athletes should not be over exerted. Alternatively if you wish to add this drill into your training session the tempo may be increased.

**TIP!** Vocally describing drills with multiple elements involved i.e. Shuffle, back pedal, sprint can become confusing to athletes. It is useful and important to demonstrate the drills to describe exactly what you want the athletes to do in a more complicated drill.

## 2. Coach Says



**Equipment needed:** court or large space, balls if advancing the drill

### Instructions:

- Begin by asking the athletes to find a space on the court, double arms distance from the person closest to them.
- As the coach, inform the athletes that they should react to your commands but only if you say 'coach says' before the instruction i.e. if 'coach says' run to baseline then athletes run to baseline but if the words coach says are omitted then athletes should continue as the previous command, similar to the popular playground game 'Simon Says'.
- Continue until athletes are sufficiently warmed up or if used as a fun game until the last athlete is left.

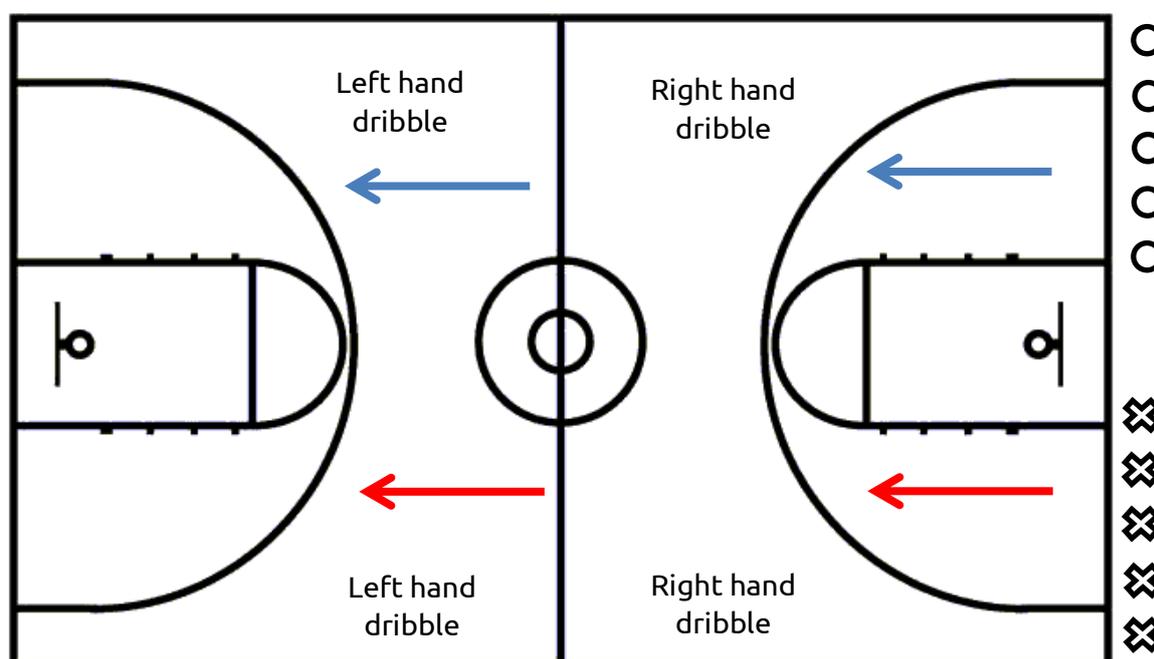
This is a fun exercise to get everyone warmed up, moving and laughing. It also acts as great drill to teach players to listen, pay attention and to quickly react to instructions.

### Advancement

The drill can be progressed for more advanced athletes by introducing balls and instructions such as left handed dribble, right handed dribble, jump with ball etc.

## Dribbling Drills

### 1. Righty – Lefty



**Equipment needed:** balls, court

#### Instructions:

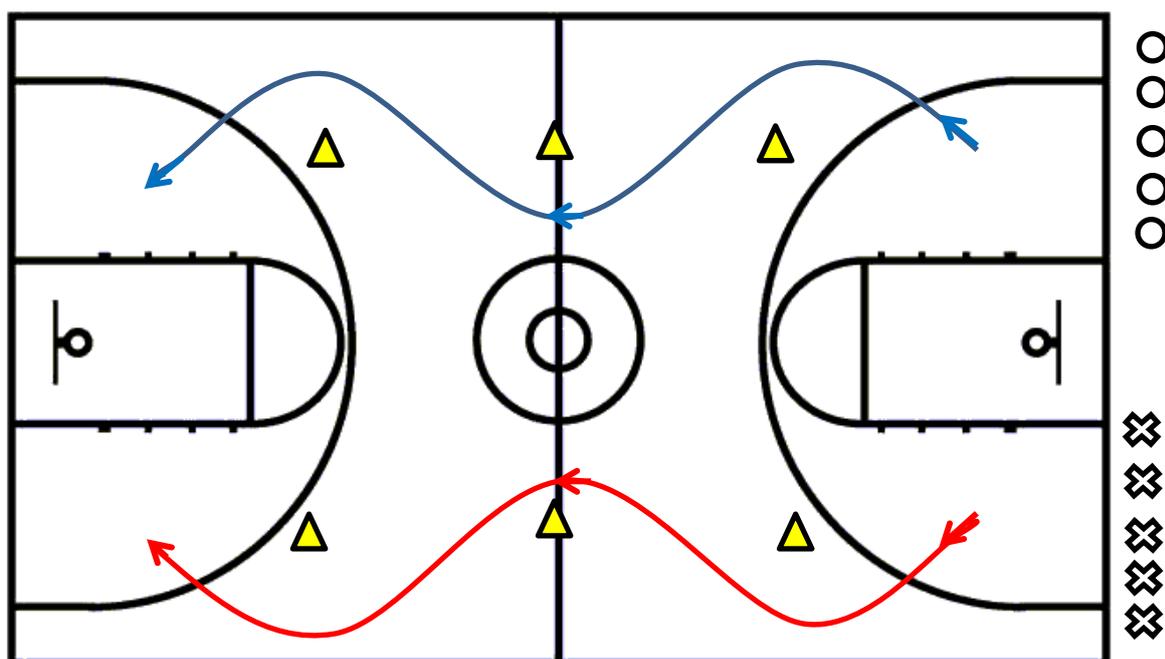
- Athletes should be lined up at the base line each with a ball
- On the coach's command athletes are to dribble to half court with their right hand.
- Once the athletes reach the half court line they should switch and dribble with their left hand.

This is a very simple drill to encourage the athlete to dribble with both hands in a controlled manner. The key to controlling the ball is to keep the ball at a close distance while running in the desired direction.

#### Progression

If there is enough equipment available this drill can be done as a team challenge or race to increase competition. If space is an issue, athletes can turn at the half court line and return to the base line dribbling with the opposite hand. If equipment is an issue, this drill can be done individually or in teams passing the ball to the next player once they return.

## 2. Around the Cones



**Equipment needed:** balls, cones, court.

### Instructions:

- Coaches should align cones every 2metres or with enough space to execute the drill
- Athletes should line up along the base line. Depending on numbers and equipment available, athletes can be split into groups or perform the drills individually.
- On the coach's command, athletes dribble from the base line, around the cones and back again.

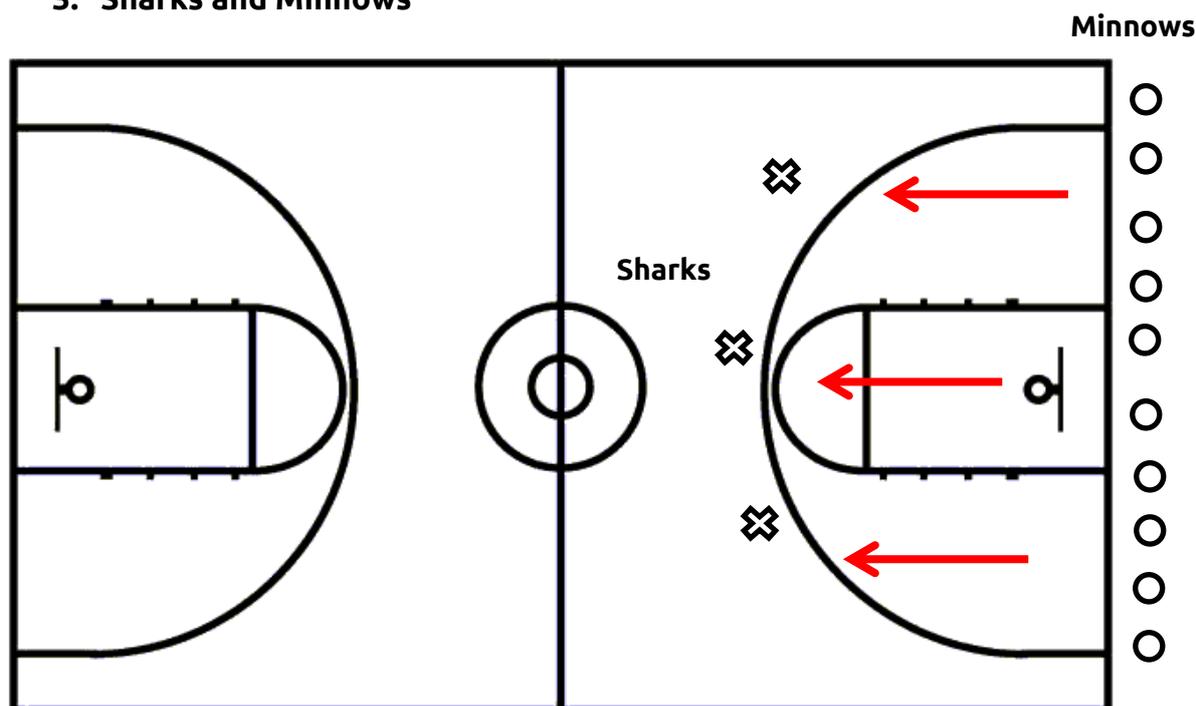
### Progression

This drill can begin very simply focusing on dribbling, control and coordination. The drill can be easily be adapted by;

1. Encouraging athletes to dribble with both hands,
2. To add an element of competition the drill can be made into a race or relay
3. To add an element of pressure as your athlete's progress, the cones can be replaced with athletes attempting to dislodge the ball from the dribbling player. The opposing athletes can use their hands but must keep their feet stationary.

**TIP!** Coaches should continually observe to ensure athletes are executing the skill correctly.

### 3. Sharks and Minnows



**Equipment needed:** balls, bibs, court.

#### Instructions:

- All athletes except for one (the shark) line up at the base line with a ball each.
- The shark will be within the designated area (usually half court) and can wear a bib to distinguish them from the minnows.
- The minnows aim is to reach half court line without the shark intercepting their ball
- If a ball is intercepted and goes outside the designated area, the minnow becomes a shark and joins in the defence.

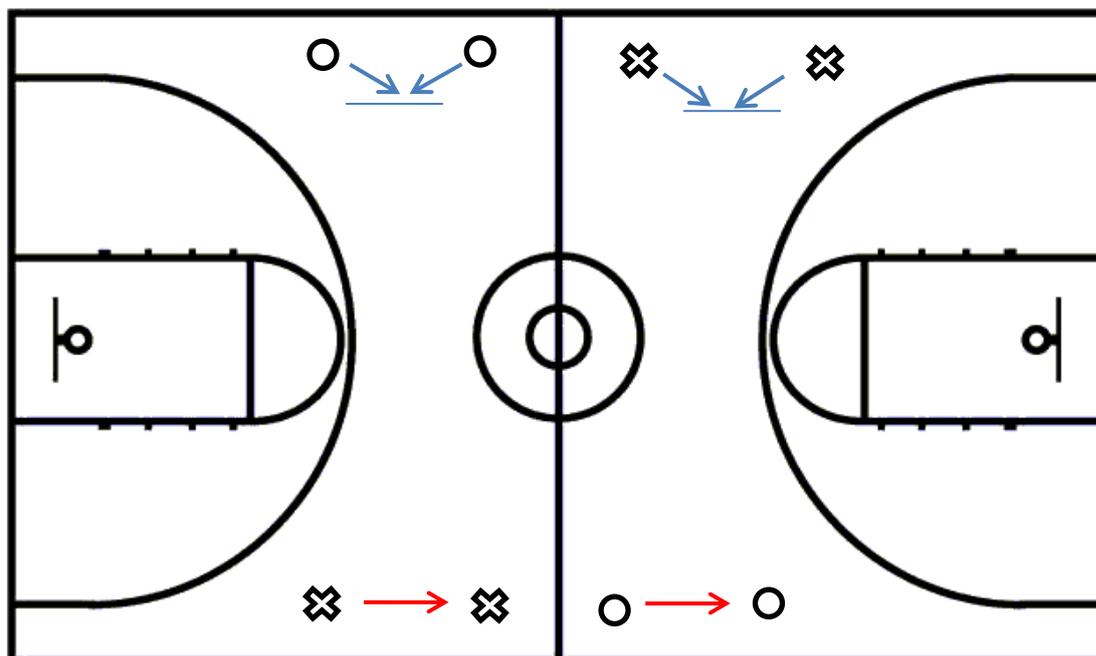
#### Learning

This drill can be a lot of fun but because of its erratic nature may suit smaller or more advanced groups. The emphasis on skills should be to dribble with control and coordination but it can also be used to teach defence.

**TIP!** When selecting a training drill, be aware of your athlete's abilities. You can imagine that 8-10 athletes dribbling balls at once can quickly become a lot to manage. It is important to select a drill that caters best for you and also to gives the athletes the best opportunity to learn.

## Passing Drills

### 1. Partner Pass



**Equipment needed:** court, balls

#### Instructions:

- Partner athletes in pairs with adequate space between them to execute a pass successfully. The distance can vary with athlete's ability.
- At the coach's whistle, instruct the athletes to start with a designated pass e.g. chest pass, bounce pass or overhead pass.

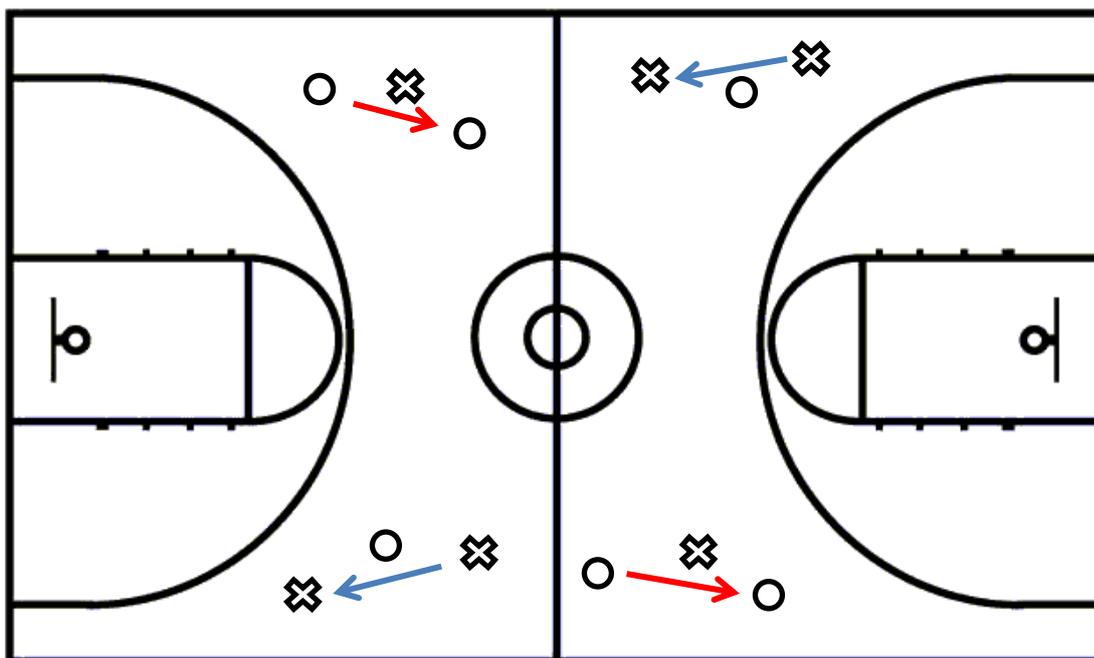
#### Progression

As the athletes advance in their passing skills, groups can be increased to three players stationed in a triangular shape passing amongst each other. Here athletes could pass clockwise, anti-clockwise or as they please to help focus and reaction times.

As the coach, continually ensure good passing fundamentals are being followed. It is also important that all athletes get equal training so be sure to mix up partners and to adapt your training sessions to accommodate uneven numbers or abilities.

**TIP!** The use of cue words can help athletes when focus begins to fade e.g. on a chest pass, 'step' into the pass, or 'snap' the ball to your team mate in a pass.

## 2. In the Middle



**Equipment needed:** court, balls

### Instructions:

- Split athletes into groups of at least three with one athlete designated to start the drill in the middle
- The outside players aim will be to execute passes (chest, bounce, overhead) to each other without being intercepted by the player in the middle
- If the middle player succeeds in intercepting a pass then they will move to the outside and an outside player will take their turn in the middle

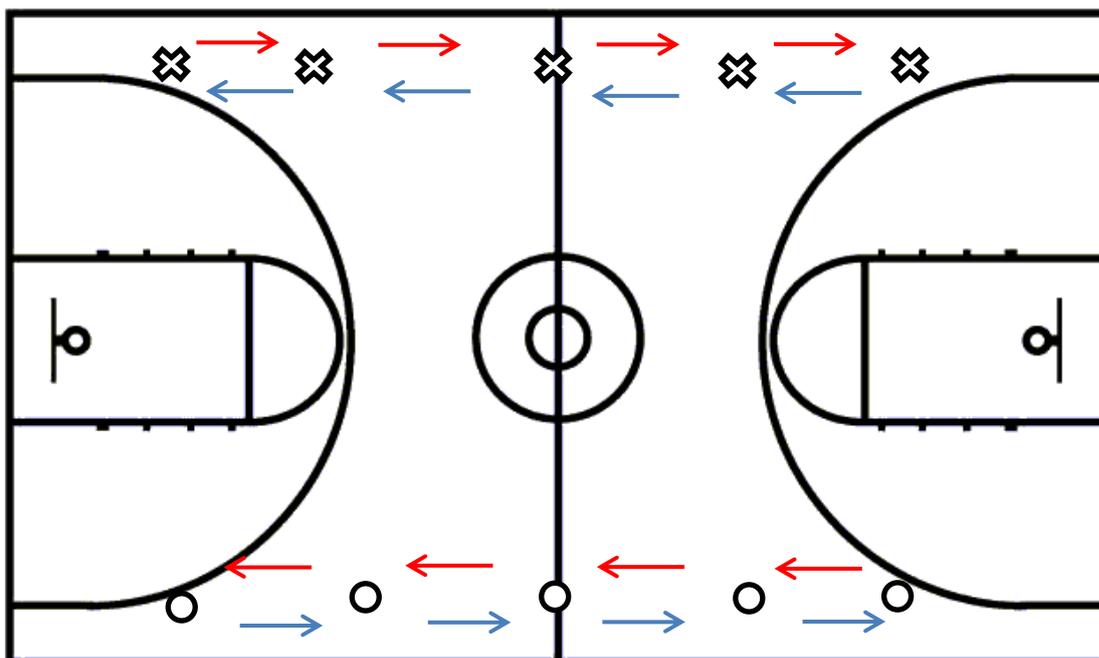
### Learning

This drill encourages the athletes to make and receive passes in a pressured situation. It also gives a situation of added pressure in not allowing their pass to be intercepted. For the player in the middle it works on their defensive skills and footwork.

To accommodate larger numbers and differing abilities you can add extra athletes to either the outside or middle.

**TIP!** It is important to observe that the middle player does not become isolated during this exercise. To ensure every athlete gets time in both the middle and outside positions consider adding time restraints where athletes can switch positions.

### 3. Relay



**Equipment needed:** court, balls

#### Instructions:

- Divide your athletes equally and align them along the court in a straight line from baseline to baseline
- At the coaches call, the athlete at the baseline will pass to the next player and so on until the ball reaches the end of court
- The ball should then be passed back along the line until it reaches the beginning
- The team to finish first i.e. complete all passes and reach the end first wins

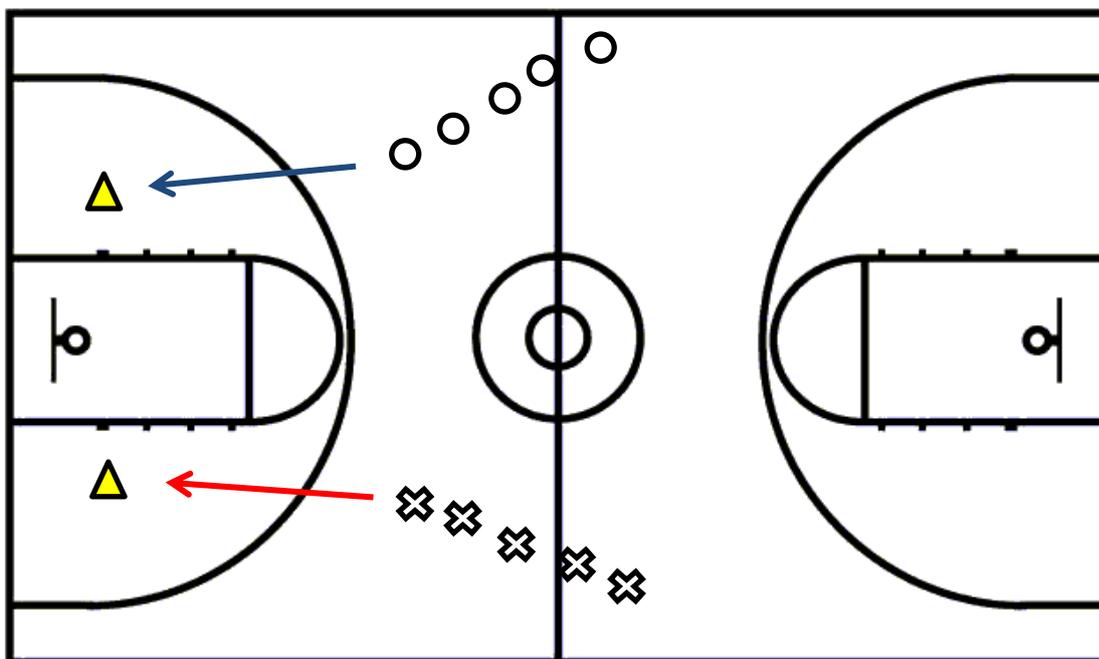
#### Learning

This is a really fun exercise that puts emphasis on athletes passing as well as focus and attention under pressure

Coaches can adapt the drill to focus on various types of passes and even add in a basket shot at the end.

## Shooting Drills

### 1. Dribble and Shoot



**Equipment needed:** court, balls, and cones

#### Instructions:

- Line up athletes in two groups outside the 3 point line facing the basket
- At the coaches whistle, the first athlete will dribble the ball towards the marker and take a shot (layup, jump shot, coach decides)
- After the shot or multiple shots if permitted, the athlete retrieves the ball, dribbles back their team and passes to the athlete next in line.

#### Adaption

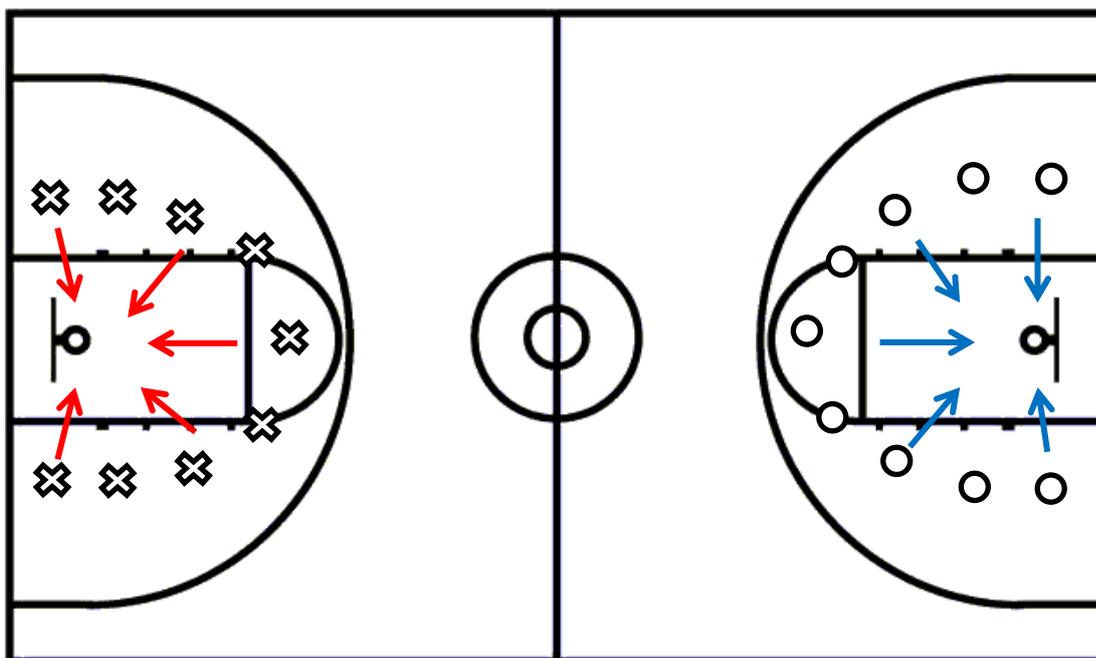
This is a nice active shooting drill which combines dribbling and passing. The coach has a lot of control in the drill in that multiple elements can be altered to adapt for various abilities and progression. The distance of dribble can be lengthened and the marker can be moved to harder distances or angles.

#### Learning

This drill includes multiple elements and so depending on the athlete's abilities and knowledge it may need to first be broken into separate pieces e.g. the athletes may just line up at the cones to take jump shots or layups before you add dribbling.

**TIP!** It is great to challenge and push your athletes but drills should always be within their capabilities, you want you athletes to succeed and to have fun while learning.

## 2. Around the World



**Equipment needed:** court, balls, and cones

### Instructions:

- Use the court markings or create your own with cones to map out various positions around the basket from which your athletes will shoot from.
- Align athletes at the markers and allow each to take a shot from the position they started.
- When all athletes have taken a shot from their starting position they move around to the next position and take a shot from there until they have taken a shot from all designated positions

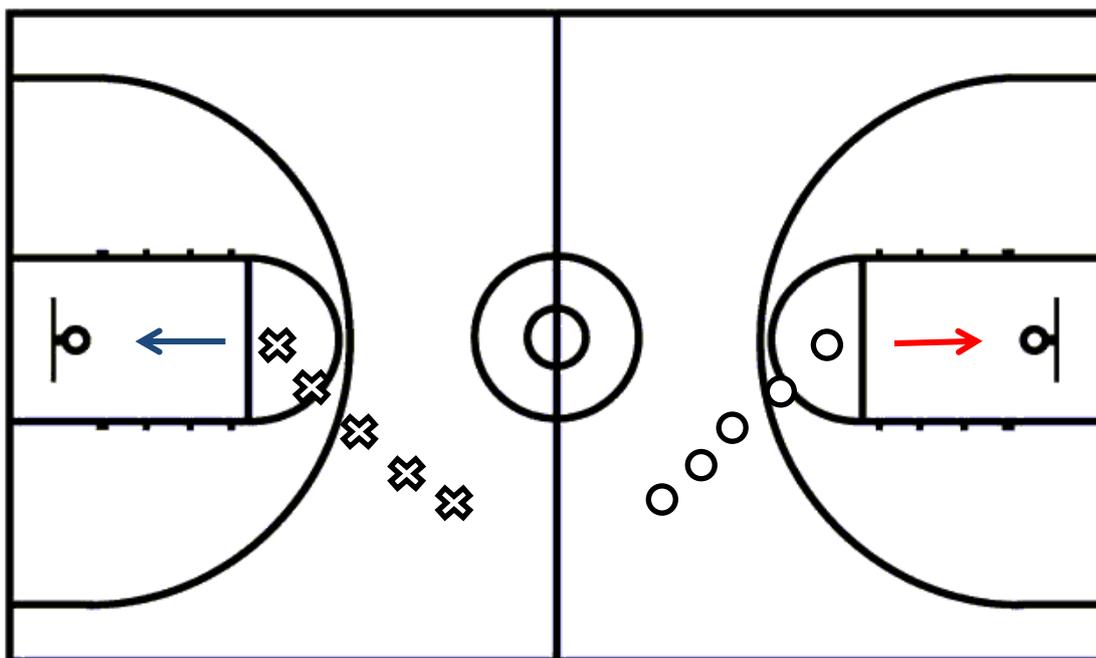
### Adaption

This drill allows athletes to practice shooting from a range of positions around the key. The distance from the basket can be modified to make the drill more challenging. To increase competition the coach may put time restraints in place or count baskets scored.

### Learning

This drill can be done individually or as a group. As the coach, the importance will be ensuring that all athletes get to shoot from every position and to encourage your athletes to use alternating hands and different types of shots.

### 3. Free Throw Team Shooting



**Equipment needed:** court, balls

#### **Instructions:**

- Athletes line up behind the free throw line
- On the coach's call the first athlete will take a free throw shot and so on until each athlete takes a shot.

#### **Learning**

This drill allows the athletes to practice free throw shooting with an added element of pressure of competing against another grouping. While implementing this drill the coach should ensure that free throw rules are adhered to.

#### **Adaption**

The coach also has the opportunity to mix this drill up and implement fun forfeit tasks to the losing team or for missed shots. If doing so, it is important that athletes are not alienated and that any forfeit should be in good humour and in consideration of the athletes best interests.

## Resources

The following are some useful online resources where you can find many more drills to use in your coaching sessions. Many of the sites include video tutorials and detailed descriptions of drills and are a great go-to resource if in need of freshening up your training sessions and furthering your coaching knowledge.

[www.basketballcoaching101.com](http://www.basketballcoaching101.com)

[www.coachesclipboard.net](http://www.coachesclipboard.net)

[www.teachpe.com/basketball](http://www.teachpe.com/basketball)

[www.coachyouthbasketball.com](http://www.coachyouthbasketball.com)

[www.online-basketball-drills.com](http://www.online-basketball-drills.com)

[www.betterbasketballcoaching.com](http://www.betterbasketballcoaching.com)

[www.guidetocoachingbasketball.com](http://www.guidetocoachingbasketball.com)