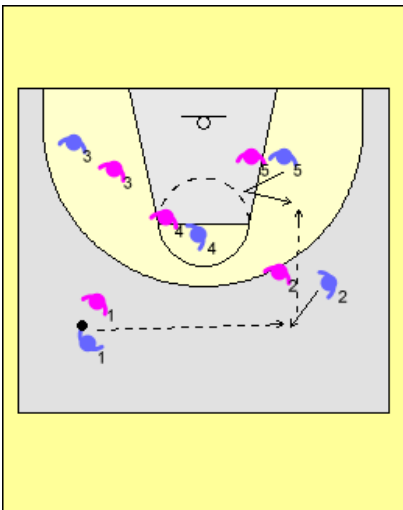


Mike McKay - Manager of Coach Education and Development

Loading

One of my most asked questions is; “How do you load various games a drills to keep the players interest and development progressing.” What I want to do is show you a game and a drill and the types of progression s that can be used to load the activity.

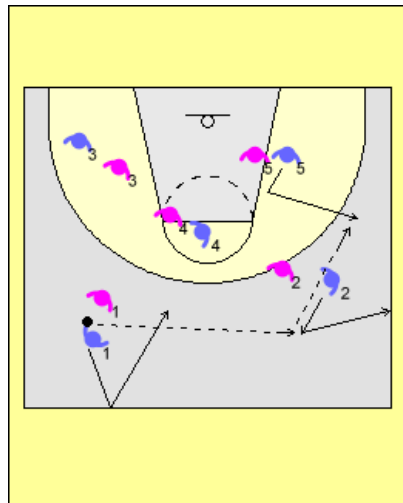


10 passes

The basic game starts by dividing the group into two separate teams. Note: A way to add leadership is to allow one of the players to pick the teams.

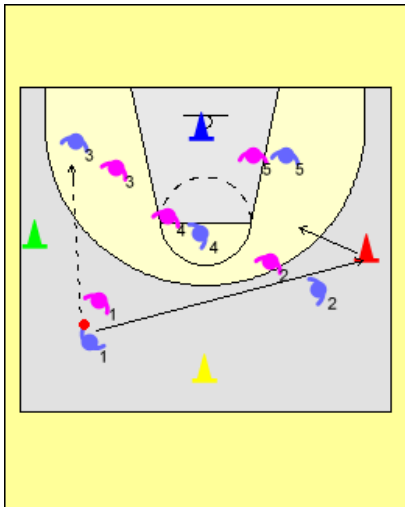
Define the boundary lines for the game. The larger the boundary the more the advantage goes to the offence. In this example it is the $\frac{1}{2}$ court. The object of the game is to successfully complete 10 passes in a row without a fumble or travel. Players without the ball can move. If the ball goes out of bounds, is incomplete or there is a violation the ball immediately turns over to the other team.

Vary the number of successful passes. With younger players you may want to use a softer ball that is easy to catch.



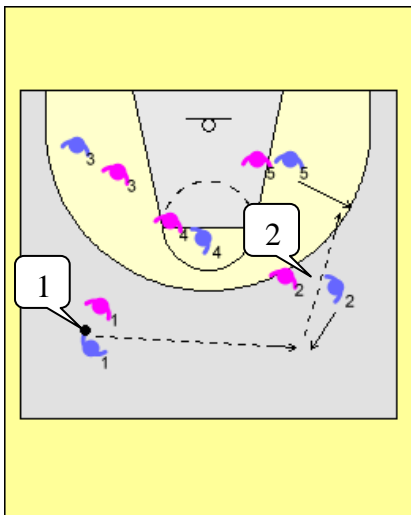
Move after passing

The first load added is a mental and physical challenge. After passing the player must immediately run and touch a sideline or end line before being allowed back into the game. This promotes moving after passing and also encourages more players to be involved in passing and receiving.



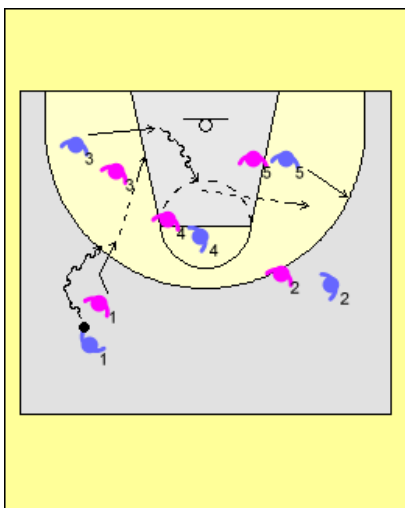
Use of colors

I have purchased a ball designed just for younger players (Rookie Gear by Spalding, it is 25% lighter than a regular size 5 ball. The children shoot it higher and pass and receive it better). There are four bright colours on the ball; red, yellow, blue, and green. Four pylons of matching colours are placed around the boundary lines. When the ball is received the players must call out the colour that the tips of his/her right (left) fingers are touching. This encourages the player to watch the ball into his/her hands. After passing the player runs and touches the pylon of the colour called. This encourages scanning and moving with a purpose. You can also mark numbers on a rubber ball and have them call out the number and touch a corresponding numbered pylon.



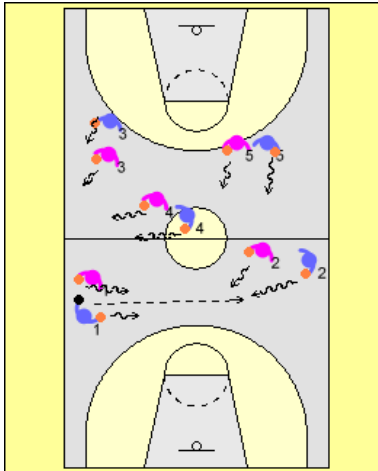
Call out the number of passes

A mental load that encourages communication is having the player who makes the pass call out the number of the pass. We want everyone to have a voice. Very often only the loudest players will talk. Each player needs to learn when it is his/her time to lead with a leadership voice. If the number is not called with a leadership voice, it is a violation and the other team takes over possession.



Pass off the dribble

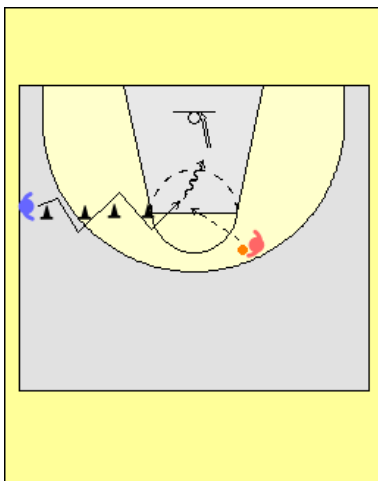
The physical load is added that the player who receives the pass must immediately dribble within one second of catching the ball. The player must also pass the ball within one second of picking it up. This encourages scanning while dribbling and making passes off the dribble. The other players must move in space in relation to the dribble.



Everyone dribble

Every player is dribbling a basketball. The team must still complete the ten passes without a fumble or travel. At first use a ball that is easy to catch with one hand. As the skill improves move up to a real basketball.

You can load the passer by making him/her have to dribble both balls at the same time.

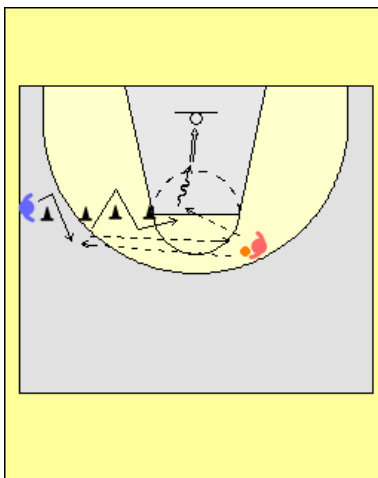


Four pylon drills

I will use this simple agility drill to show how you can load one activity to the point of working on advanced basketball concepts.

Line up four pylons as shown in the diagram. One player starts at the front of the line near the sideline. A partner has a ball somewhere on the court ready to pass. The player without the ball zigzags through the pylons. Once exiting the pylons he/she receives a pass and goes and scores a layup. The partners switch places.

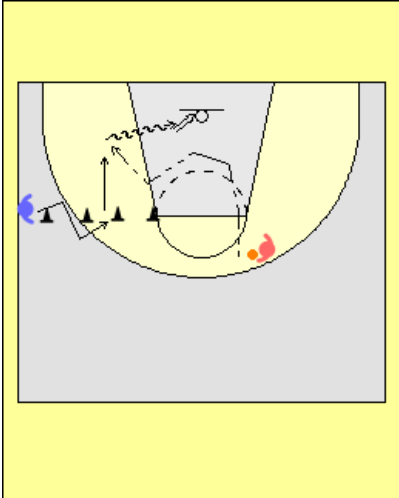
You may want to start by deloading the drill. You may find that you have to isolate the exact footwork required to manoeuvre through the pylons. I prefer to have the players work on sharp v-cuts or icky shuffles. You can use any footwork that you want to emphasize. The same is true of the finishing move. You can use various types of lay ups, shots or creative finishes. This is how a coach can individually challenge each player to meet his/her stage of development or learning.



Keeping the eyes up

Once the player has reached the consolidation stage of learning the footwork you can begin to load the player mentally and physically. In order to force the player to keep the eyes up make random passes. After receiving the ball the player passes it immediately back to his/her teammate.

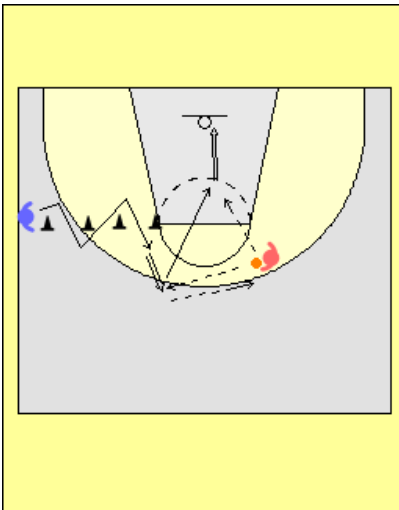
You could have the player dribble through the pylons after receiving the pass.



Find the ball

Now instead of a pass, the partner tosses the ball to some place on the court. The player doing the footwork must explode from the pylons and get to the ball before the second bounce. In this example the player scores a layup after receiving the ball.

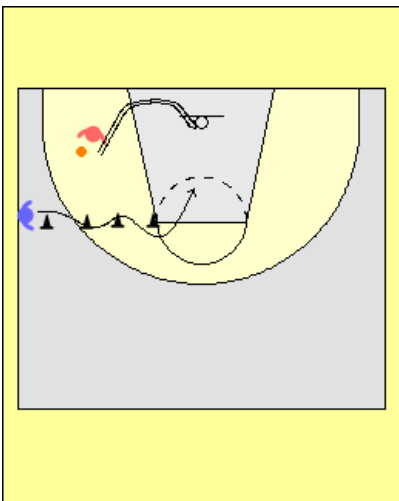
You could require a pass and cut before scoring.



Hustle

One common theme I hear from coaches is that they want their players to give effort. Often we do not define it for the players or make it a verb, an action.

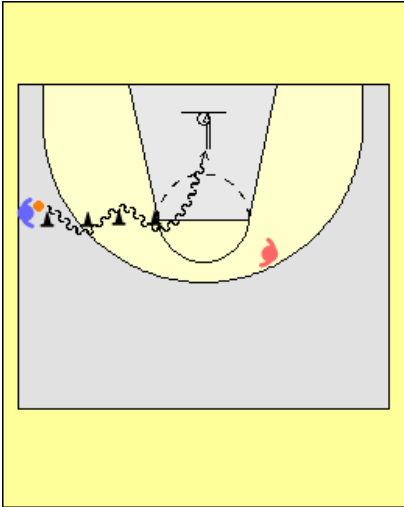
In this example we have loaded in the ball being rolled on the floor. The player must break off his/her footwork and dive to regain the ball. It is immediately passed to the partner. The diving player must now quickly regain his/her feet and cut to score the basket.



Rebound

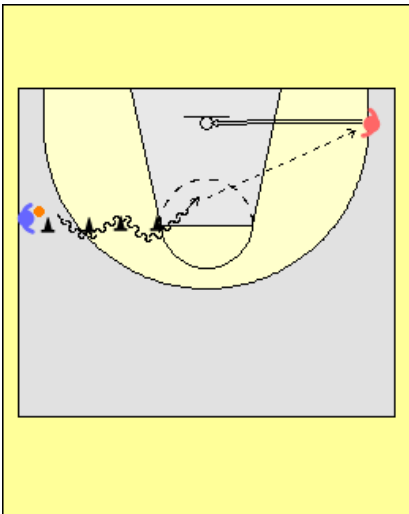
Here the partner shoots the ball at the basket. The player must go and jump to get the ball at its highest point.

Notice that the partner has moved to a new position. By having the partner vary his/her position you create different loads for the player.



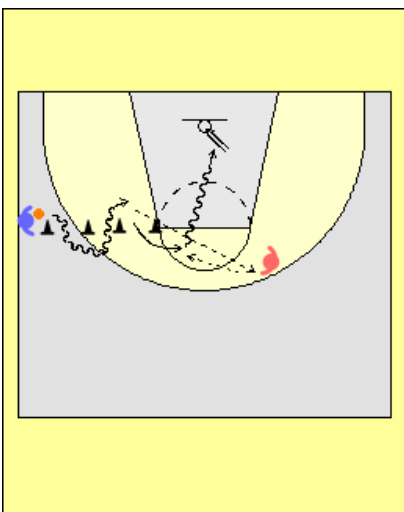
Dribble through the pylons

Now we load in the ball. Can the player's keep the same crisp footwork while dribbling? It is best to deload the other options when first adding the ball.



Show 10 fingers

Here the dribble passes the ball to the partner when a target hand is shown.

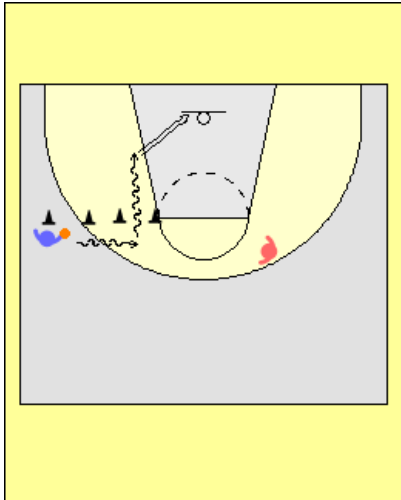


Dribble pass cut

As the player is dribbling the ball is passed when 10 fingers are shown. The player continues to execute the good footwork until the end of the pylons. He/she receives a pass back for a score.

Note: for advanced players the partner could dribble at the cutter. This would initiate circle movement of penetration.

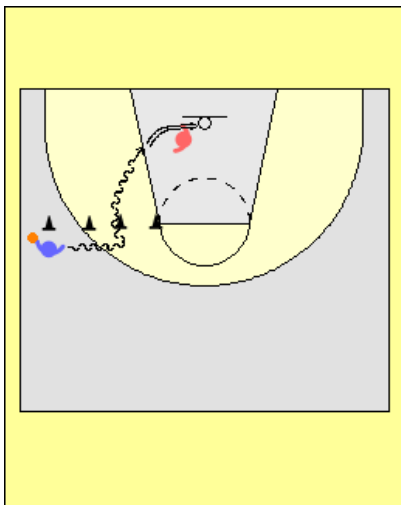
All we are using the pylons for is a way to begin a two player action. It allows us to teach a fundamental movement, basketball skill and basketball concept at the me time. Have fun and be creative.



Lateral dribble

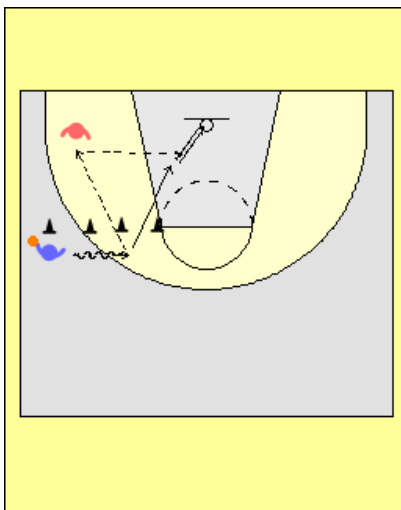
We now use the same set up to teach a specific basketball skill, the lateral dribble. By using the same set up the players do not waste time in learning the format of the drill. They are able to concentrate on the key learning points of emphasis.

The dribbler uses a bouncing lateral dribble. At anytime he/she explodes through one of the holes to score a layup. Note the dribble should be practiced with the ball in either hand.



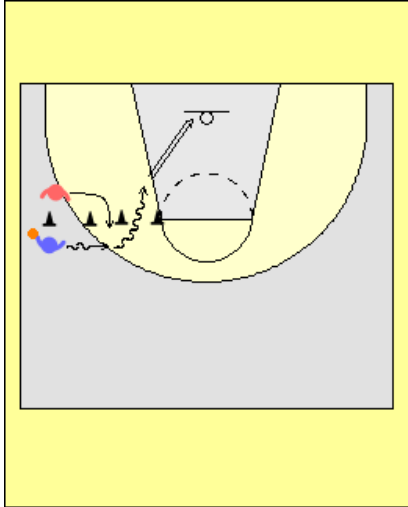
Load the finish

Here the partner stands in the most direct drive line to the basket. The player driving must execute a inside outside power lay up or a creative finish (zigzag). This is also a good position to watch the eyes of the dribbler.



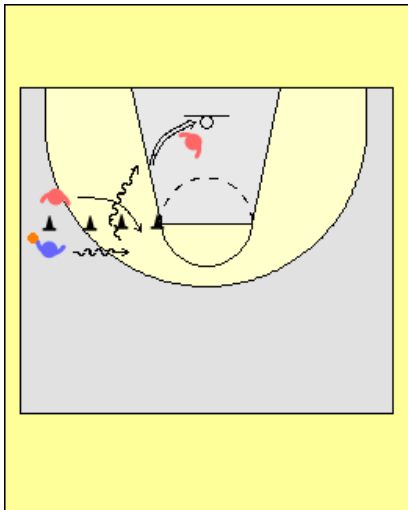
Ensure vision

The partner calls for the pass by showing 10 fingers. The lateral dribbler must throw a pass and then cut.



Guided defender

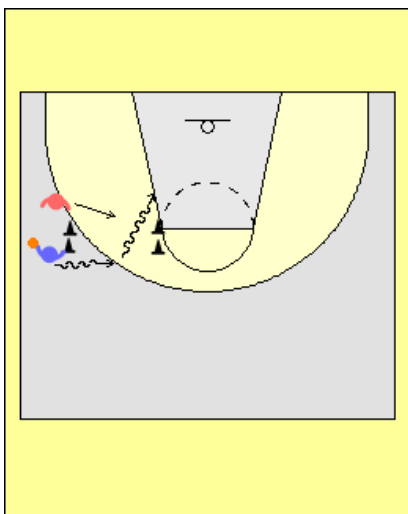
Now the partner slides along with the offensive player. The guided defender gives a read by stepping up into one of the holes. The dribbler must read this action and chose the open space to attack.



Two guided defenders

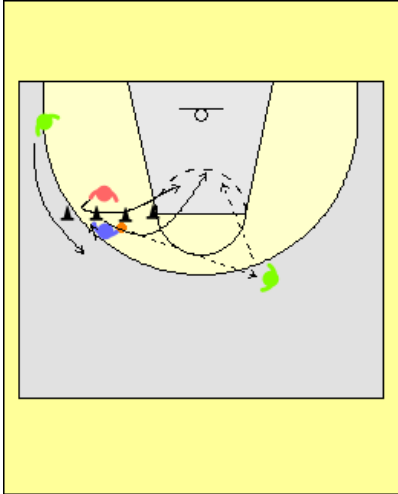
Here the dribbler must read and beat the first guided defender and then read and beat the simulated help defender.

Sometimes you want to have an offensive player with the help defender. We do not want to encourage bad shots. The driver must decide to score, draw a foul or make the pass to an open teammate.



Live one on one

We know let the players play live in a confined space. You can always load in the other players for decision making purposes. This may also be the way you initiate your 5 on 5 or 4 on 4 play.

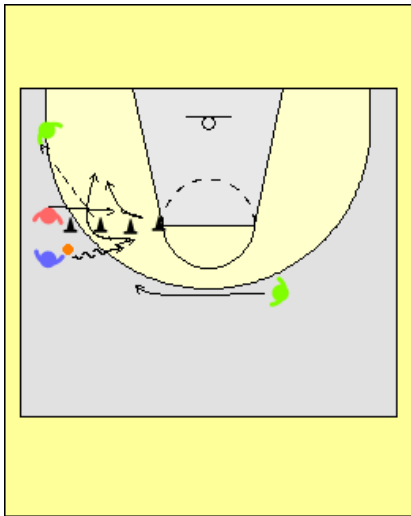


Attacking off the curl

We can also use the same four pylons to work on another basketball concept. An offensive player and defensive player start in front of the middle two pylons. To unguarded offensive players are ready to receive pass.

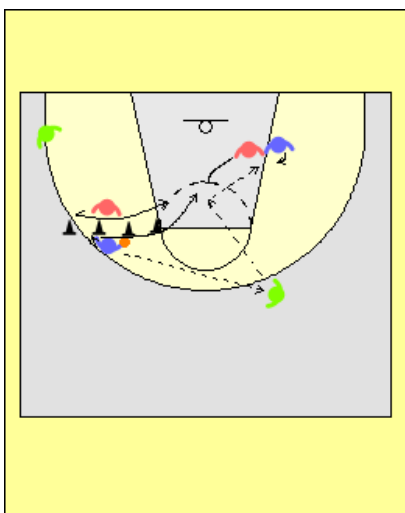
On the pass the offensive player must touch the first pylon away from the direction of the pass. The defender must touch the second pylon. As the offensive player cuts back he/she must decide if a one second advantage has been created. Should he/she curl or straight cut for a shot.

Notice that the other perimeter player is also working on filling space after the cut occurred.



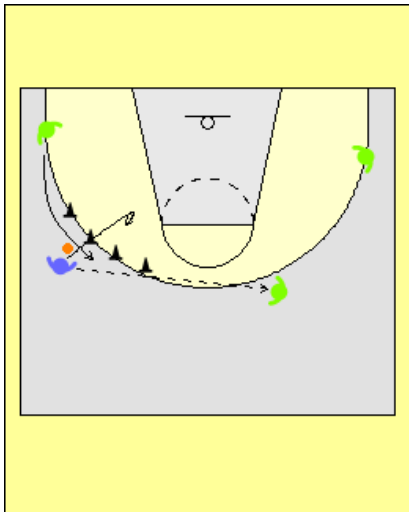
Initiate with a lateral dribble

Here the same action is started with the lateral dribble. After passing the offense touches the first pylon opposite the pass the defence touches the second.



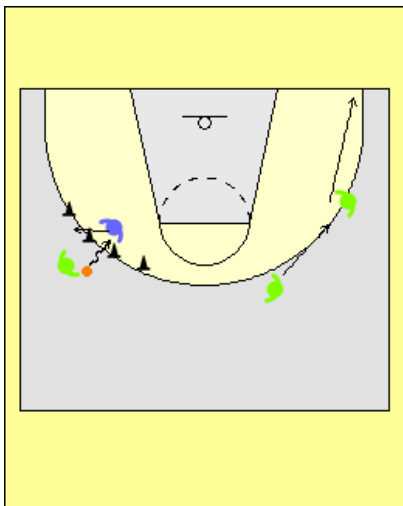
Reading help

Here we have placed another offensive pair in the low post position. The player who decides to curl must read the help and make the pass to the open teammate.



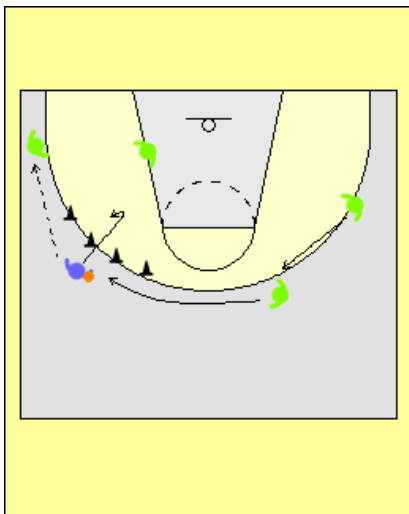
Initiate penetration

Here we use the same four pylons to initiate a drill to work on penetration principles. The player behind the pylons passes the ball and cuts. He or she only goes until inside the pylons. The others players fill the open spaces.



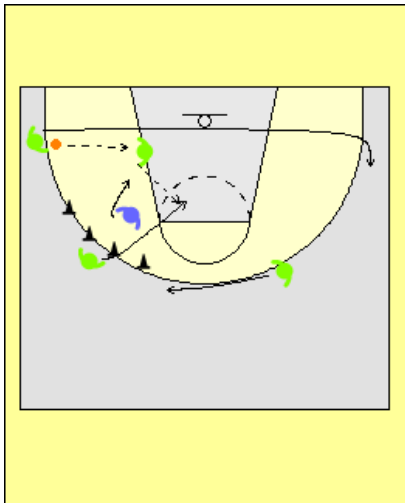
Cutter penetrates

The player who cut receives a return pass and immediately reads the first cutter, who is acting as a guided defender. The other two offensive players must respond to the penetration with the appropriate circle action.



Post penetration principles

We begin with the same action. The first passer becomes a guided defender.



We now feed the post player. The other players must make their appropriate movements off post penetration. The player at the pylon gets to work on secondary cuts based on the read of the guided defender.

You can load in as many defenders as you wish.

To summarize, the idea behind loading is to match the skill to the challenge. By continually loading the athlete mentally, physically and social/emotionally we can continue to set the appropriate challenge without wasting time in building new drills.