



Additional Basketball Drills

Pivoting Away from Defender

1. Divide into equal-ability groups of two.
2. Coach hands ball to offender; begins counting seconds out loud.
3. Defender takes a position close to offender, pressures and tries to tap ball away.
4. Offender pivots and moves the ball up and down the court.

The goal is for the offender to keep the ball away from the defenders for 5 seconds. The drill can be made more challenging by adding a teammate with the offender.

- Teammate will move back and forth while passer pivots and moves the ball.
- After 3 seconds and on “Pass” cue from coach, the athlete passes to teammate. Offender learns to stay calm, keep head up, pivot, move ball and pass to teammate.

Getting Out of Double Team

A double team will occur during a basketball game. This drill teaches the double team as well as provides practice getting out of it. Offender learns to stay calm, to keep head up, to pivot and to move ball. Defense learns to apply pressure and go after the ball without fouling.

1. Divide into equal-ability groups of three.
2. Two defenders take positions in front of offender; they will pressure and try to grab ball or tap ball away. Close The Door: step to the offender and stand next to the other defender.
3. Coach hands offender the ball begins counting seconds out loud.
4. Offender pivots away from defenders and moves ball up and down the court. Go To The Open Door: move to an open space away from the defenders. The goal is to control ball for 5 seconds without losing it.

Key Words

- Close The Door
- Find The Open Door
- Pivot
- Keep The Ball Moving

Circle Passing

One team can play against the other, but at opposite ends of the floor. A lower ability team may pass the ball in and out of the circle in a particular direction. Coach counts the number of passes in 60 seconds. This activity is fun and can go faster as skill increases. It adds movement to passing that is more game-like.

1. Coach divides group into teams of four, five or six.
2. Each team takes a position around one of the circles.
3. One person from each team goes to the middle of that team’s circle.
4. A person on the outside of the circle starts with the ball. The ball is passed to the person in the middle. The passer follows the pass, moving into the middle.
5. The person in the middle passes to a teammate on the outside of the circle, follows his/her pass and takes that person’s place.
6. The circle passing and moving continues for a prescribed number of passes (25) or a prescribed amount of time (60 seconds).
7. If the ball goes out of control or out of play, it always begins with a person on the outside of the circle.

Key Words

- Face Your Teammate Before You Pass
- “Hands Up” – Give A Target
- Follow Your Pass



Four Corner Passing Drill

This is a good team activity where all work together. One ball is used first. As the athletes learn the skill, the coach can add more difficulty. For example: Add a return pass. Pass, follow, return pass and continue to follow, pass back and go to the end of the line. The ball and athletes must change direction when the coach cues Reverse. Add a second ball to activity. It must start in the opposite corner from the other ball. Add the cue Reverse to the activity with two basketballs.

1. In the drill's simplest form, the team lines up using the four corners of the half court. There will be at least two athletes in each corner.
2. One of the athletes starts with a ball. The ball is passed counterclockwise around the square. Specify either bounce pass or chest pass.
3. The team member will pass the ball, follow the pass and go to the end of that particular corner's line.
4. The person who just received the pass will pivot to his/her right, pass to that corner's first person, follow the pass and take a position at the end of the line. The ball continues around the square, as do the athletes.

Key Words

- See The Ball
- Hands Up
- Give A Target
- Go To Meet The Pass / Follow Your Pass
- Turn And Face Your Teammate Before Passing

Dribble, Shoot, Rebound, Pass Game

1. This is a transition game for lower ability athletes.
2. The coach divides group into two teams of equal ability (Team A and Team B).
3. Each team lines up along opposite sidelines and wears scrimmage vests of similar color.
4. Each team has one basketball, different in color from the other team's. An athlete can use only his/her team's basketball.
5. Coaches are at each end to officiate.
6. The coaches begin with each respective team's basketball and at opposite ends of the court.
7. At the same time, coaches hand balls to the first athlete on each team.
8. That athlete dribbles the full length of the court, takes one shot at the basket (preferably a lay-up), gets his/her own rebound, passes it to the next teammate closest to him/her at that end of the court and goes to the end of that line near mid court.
9. This athlete now dribbles full length of the court, takes one shot at the basket (preferably a lay-up), gets his/her own rebound, passes it to the next teammate closest to him/her at that end of the court and goes to the end of that line near mid court.
10. The game consists of four 6- to 8-minute running time quarters.
11. Scores are announced at the end of each quarter by the scorer.
12. A running total of made baskets is kept for each team.
13. At the half, the teams change sidelines; the score is announced, and play resumes.
14. When the game finishes, teams huddle together; the final score is announced. Teams line up to shake hands with their opponents. Team cheer is given.

Assistant coaches can note best dribblers, passers, rebounders and shooters. Encourage and enforce proper skills. In addition, this is a game in which parents, siblings and volunteers can all join. One condition for the non-Special Olympics athletes or basketball-experienced people is that they can only shoot from outside the lane.

Full Court Double Post Lay-up Drill

This is a continuous drill that lasts 2-3 minutes. It emphasizes passing and receiving on the move, taking a controlled lay-up or jump-stop lay-up and conditioning. Change posts every 60 seconds. Count the baskets made at each end. Do this drill periodically. It is the team against a goal, setting a personal best team mark.

Special Olympics Basketball Coaching Guide

Teaching Basketball Skills



1. Four “posts” take positions at the corners where the free-throw lines meet the lane lines.
2. Half the team lines up under one basket; the other half lines up under the opposite basket.
3. Moving counterclockwise will emphasize right-handed lay-ups.
4. The first person under each basket begins by passing (out letting) the ball to the post ahead.
5. After the pass, each continues up that sideline and receives a return pass from the post.
6. The athlete dribbles to the half court, passes to the next post and continues up sideline.
7. Once the athlete reaches the free-throw line extended, he/she cuts toward the basket.
8. The post bounce-passes the ball just in front so that the athlete can shoot a lay-up without dribbling.
9. The first person under the basket rebounds the ball and passes to the post on the other side, continuing the activity up court.

Key Words

- Grab The Ball
- Move Under Control
- Hands Up
- Give A Target
- Lay Up The Ball Softly

Go to the Ball

The drill continues for 2-3 minutes. A second ball can begin after the teammate in position #3 has the first ball. Coaches should be stationed at each of the positions to prompt the athletes. Count the baskets made at each end. Do this drill periodically. It is the team against a goal, setting a personal best team mark

1. The team is lined up in single-file order under one of the baskets.
2. Positions 2-3-4-5 are located on the hash marks opposite one another.
3. One person takes each of those positions on the court.
4. #1 passes to #2, who has moved toward the ball. #1 follows to take #2’s initial position.
5. #2 receives the ball and pivots, facing up court and #3.
6. When #2 locks up court, #3 cuts toward the ball.
7. #2 passes to #3 and follows to take #3’s initial position.
8. #3 receives the ball and pivots, facing up court and #4.
9. When #3 locks up court, #4 cuts toward the ball.
10. #3 passes to #4 and follows to take #4’s initial position.
11. #4 receives the ball and pivots, facing up court and #5.
12. When #4 locks up court, #5 breaks toward the basket.
13. #4 passes long to #5 and takes #5’s initial position.
14. #5 grabs the ball and then dribbles it in for a lay-up.
15. #5 gets his/her own rebound and dribbles the ball back outside the court to the line under the far basket.

Key Words

- See The Ball
- Hands Up
- Give A Target
- Go To Meet The Pass
- Grab The Ball
- Turn And Face