

Development

I had the opportunity to attend the development men's training session the other night. Coach Leo Rautins and his staff, Sam Gibbs, Renato Pasquali and Steve Mix, are doing a wonderful job of preparing the players to play international basketball. The attention to detail is very refreshing. As part of the skill break down work coach Pasquali did some great drills to work on quickness, proper footwork, contested lay ups and recovery on defence. Also, because they were competitive and a little different they sparked the interest of the players. They are drills that can be used at the Learn to Train through Train to Win stages of our LTAD.

Sam Gibbs, who is the strength and condition coach for the Senior National team, started with a warm up game. The players played ball tag. Basically two players are "it". These two players can only move by passing the ball back and forth. In this way they attempt to tag the other players with the ball, while the ball is still in their hands. Once tagged that player becomes part of the group that is "it". Eventually you work it done to one player left. The players love it! It basically works to increase the body temperature, but importantly it is FUN! This was then followed by a movement prep warm up which was a combination of form running and dynamic stretching. Sam ended the practice with a proper cool down stretch. It brought a tear to my eye. For some of these players it was the first time they were involved in a proper warm up and cool down.

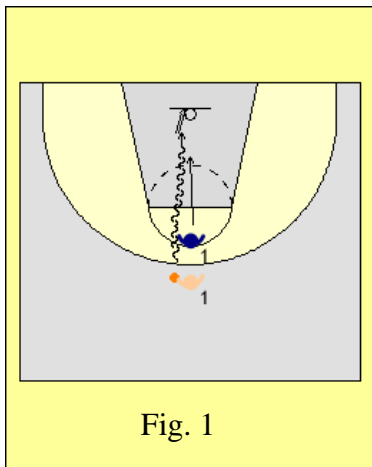


Fig. 1

Contested lay ups

The defensive player starts facing the basket somewhere inside the three point line. As a coach you can vary the distance and spots based on the player's abilities. The offensive player lines up behind the defender with a basketball. The offensive player starts in a good triple threat stance with the ball. The offensive player drives to score a lay up. The defender plays defense when he/she detects the offensive player with his or her peripheral vision. This gives the offensive player a distinct advantage if he/she

- Makes use of proper footwork,
- Goes by the hip of the defender,
- Cuts the defender off so he/she cannot recover and force a contested shot.

The defender may start to peak. As a coach you must decide if you want to allow this to happen. It does mean the offense has to be quicker and work on a fake first.

The development men were working on using a crossover step to start their drive. When playing internationally North American players very often get called for traveling when taking the long first step.

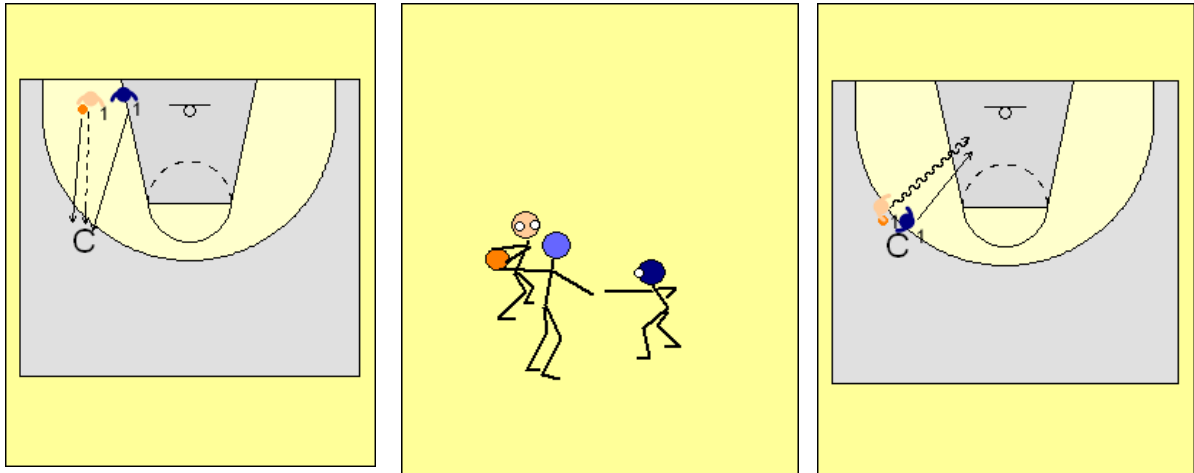
Attack the basket

This drill was great for:

- Making a quick cut to get the ball,
- Changing direction under control with proper footwork,
- Ripping the ball hard with a cross over step,
- Driving to the basket and cutting off the defender.

The defence is working on a quick change of direction and choosing an angle in which he/she can cut off the driver or at best contest the shot without fouling.

The coach (or another player) stands at the three point line. The offensive and defensive players line up beside each other on the baseline. The defender is closest to the basket. The offensive player has a ball. The offensive player passes the ball to the coach when the coach shows “ten fingers”. The offensive player runs out and takes the ball from the coach, rips it across his/her body and attacks the basket for a score. The defender must come out and slap the hand of the coach before recovering to play defence.



In closing, I want to send out a congrats to coaches Roy Rana and Kirby Shepp for the great job they did in having our Cadet men qualify for the World Championship next summer. I was privy to seeing the team practice and know the short time frame in which they had to prepare the team to compete. As those involved with basketball development in this country know, the success of the team also has a lot to do with those coaches in our Centres of Performance, Provincial teams, clubs and schools who have worked with these players. We are starting to see the results of an integrated system of player development that is focusing on athlete development rather than systems of play. We leave this week to head off to the Junior World Championship in New Zealand. Lets us hope for more success. The players and coaches are work smart!