Chris Oliver's

BASKETBALL DECISION TRAINING

BREAKTHROUGH BASKETBALL™

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INTRODUCTION

For your convenience, the following contains diagrams, explanations and the concepts of Basketball Decision Training.

This eBook is only meant for reference and to assist your implementation of the skill development. We strongly recommend watching the entire DVD before reading this eBook. The DVD provides detailed explanations and teaching points for each step of the implementation process. This eBook is intended to provide a quick reference guide to supplement your viewing experience.

ABOUT CHRIS OLIVER

Chris Oliver's coaching credentials include:

- Head Men's Basketball Coach, University of Windsor

  - 3-Time Ontario University Athletics (OUA) Coach of the Year
  - Five OUA West Conference Regular Season Titles
  - Two OUA West Playoff Championships
  - Ranked in the Canadian Interuniversity Top 10 for 9 straight seasons
  - Conference Winning Percentage over .750
  - Qualified for the Interuniversity Canadian National Championships (2010, 2015)

- Founder of Basketballimmersion.com

- 12 former players continued their careers at the professional level in leagues around the world

Chris Oliver has served as the Head Coach of the Windsor Lancers Men's Basketball program for 12 years, and has been coaching basketball for over 20 years. His Windsor teams have beaten four NCAA Division-I teams while competing against programs like the University of Kentucky, Ohio State University, and Virginia Tech University.

Coach Oliver has been honored with numerous coaching awards including the Fox 40 OUA Coach of the Year Award, the OUA Men's Basketball Coach of the Year Award, and the Gino Fracas Award as the University of Windsor Coach of the Year.

Coach Oliver is the founder and operator of Basketball Immersion – a one-stop website dedicated to all aspects of playing and teaching the game of basketball. He is also the founder of COBA Basketball Camps and is a camp director for Breakthrough Basketball.

Prior to arriving in Windsor, Coach Oliver served as the Head Coach at Queen's University for three seasons. He was also an assistant coach at McMaster University and the University of Victoria. Prior to coaching at the university level, Oliver won an OFSAA Provincial Championship at Hamilton St. Mary's and coached boys and girls teams at the high school, club, provincial, and AAU levels.

Coach Oliver graduated with a Bachelor of Kinesiology from McMaster University, a Bachelor of Education degree from Brock University, and a Master's in Physical Education and Coaching Studies from the University of Victoria. Oliver is also an NCCP Level Four coach. He has been a clinician and camp speaker throughout the world and is dedicated to sharing the game.

Through clinics, camps, and his video membership website, Coach Oliver helps coaches improve player development, transfer from practice to games, and decision-making. He is passionate about sharing the game and stimulating the development of coaches around the world.

You can follow Coach Oliver on Twitter @Basketballimmersion or contact him by email at COliver@Basketballimmersion.com

INTRODUCTION TO BASKETBALL DECISION TRAINING

In this DVD, we will teach you how we develop our players in a random practice environment with a games approach to coaching. We combine these concepts together in a program we call **0-Seconds Basketball Decision Training**. We will demonstrate how to develop critical basketball skills including shooting, ball pick-up, footwork, and more. We will also show how we train players to apply those skills in 1-on-1 and 3-on-3 situations.

Player development is critical to helping you and your team improve. In this DVD, we will take you through our unique and fun approach that mixes various drills together to challenge your skills, and adds layers to your training so that you never practice in your comfort zone.

We begin the DVD with a segment describing our **Mix Drills**. These exercises combine the fundamentals of ball pick-up and shot preparation with randomized ball-handling sequences to add variability and challenge prior to shooting.

The next chapter will build upon the principles of ball pick up and apply them to a concept we call **Fight for Your Feet**. In this section, we will challenge the shooter's pre-shot footwork to find balance and coordination necessary to develop a consistent shot in all situations.

Our **Dribble Attack Series** will add another layer of complexity to our pre-shot drills by practicing various shots off the dribble. We will demonstrate the scoring moves we teach our players at the University of Windsor including the pull-up, the wide layup, the reverse lay-up, the floater, and the back pivot.

Once players become accustomed to our Mix Drills we introduce **Basketball Decision Training** (BDT). Decision training is our way of incorporating perception and variability into a shooting workout. Players may also add Mix Drills and Fight for Your Feet concepts to layer their BDT workouts.

Based on the training habits of NBA stars Jimmy Butler and Dirk Nowitzki we will discuss unique ways to develop a stronger, more coordinated base for your shot by using **Dynamic Form Shooting**. In this section, we will add one-foot jumps and other dynamic movements to a traditional form shot to improve your balance, coordination, and core stability.

After explaining each of these concepts, I will discuss how to **Build Your Individual Workout**. The beauty of this player development system is it provides players with the knowledge and freedom to create their own workouts in random and variable ways. We will discuss using one-minute increments to incorporate ball-handling, shooting, and footwork into a different routine every time you workout.

Finally, we will demonstrate a number of **Competitive Situations** to practice basketball decision-making in a game-like setting. These 1-on-1 and 3-on-3 games are a staple of our practices at the University of Windsor. They allow our players to compete in a live setting while using the fundamental skills developed in our player development system.

We have also added a special section at the end of the DVD to explain our **Coaching Philosophy** in greater detail. How we do what we do is important. However, we also want to explain why we believe this system is effective. In this section, I will unpack the reasoning behind our approach to player development so you can better understand why we do what we do.

CHAPTER 2: MIX DRILLS

The overriding goal of Basketball Decision Training is to make our activity as game-like as possible. This is why we use **Mix Drills**. Basketball is not a game where one skill is isolated from another. We don't train dribbling or shooting in isolation from other skills, we try to mix them together as much as possible.

We combine skills together because it increases retention. **Retention** refers to the ability to execute a skill consistently over time. By weaving multiple skills together in a single drill, players must take into account a number of variables that influence the decision of how and when to use their skills. Players must consider the type of shot that is most appropriate for their location on the court, what movement is required before the shot, where defenders are positioned, etc. We want our training to simulate the use of skill combinations such as dribbling into ball pick up because that is how skills are used in a game.

Ball Pick Up

We use the phrase **Ball Pick Up** to describe how to pick the ball up efficiently and effectively so that you duplicate your shot over and over again with very little variation in how you prepare to shoot.

A player does not shoot quickly they prepare to shoot quickly. Being able to pick up the ball the same way every time helps you to do that.

When dribbling with the dominant hand – bring your opposite hand to the ball to pick up the ball. We practice this initially by using three dribbles prior to the ball pick up. As demonstrated in the video, when you bring the off-hand to the ball you should hear a distinct popping sound.

We want players to "pop" the ball because it provides strength when picking up the ball, and it delivers the ball as quickly as possible to your shooting position.

When picking the ball up with the weak hand keep the shooting hand on the shooting side of your body so you don't have to move as many things back-and-forth prior to the shot. When dribbling with the weak hand, don't bring the shooting hand to the ball because that would mean bringing the ball all the way back across your body to be able to shoot. Instead, quickly bring the ball across your body with the weak hand to the shooting hand. The ball should stay as close to the body as possible when transferred from one side to the other.

It is important to bring the ball to your natural shooting pocket when bringing it across your body prior to the shot. The shooting pocket may be slightly different for each player. Regardless, move the ball as quickly as possible across your body so the ball is not exposed to the defender, and so that you prepare to shoot quickly.

We break the shooting motion down into three distinct positions:

> **Position 1** – The ball on the hip

> **Position 2** – Bringing the ball up to load your shot

Position 3 – The release of the ball at the top of your shot

We teach our players to pick up the ball at the hip in Position 1. When playing on the perimeter we focus on being **Ball Tough** with the ball on the hip. To move the ball from one hip to the other we use a **Tummy Rip**. This maneuver moves the ball across your body as tightly as possible from one hip to the other. We apply this principle in our ball pick up drills.

After introducing the concept of ball pick up, we want to make the drill more game-like by moving the ball from Position 1 to Position 2 as fast as possible immediately after picking up the ball.

In a game situation, a player's feet would normally be in the air when gathering the ball off the dribble. Consequently, we want to incorporate this into our ball pick up by encouraging players to fight for their feet. **Fight for Your Feet** is a term we use to describe getting your feet set on the ground as quickly as possible prior to shooting the ball.

When combining this concept to ball pick up we want players to **Hop & Pop**. As demonstrated in the video, on the last dribble your feet should leave the ground while simultaneously "popping" the ball.

Rhythm Claps help players understand the proper timing of a sequence or skill. We use rhythm to challenge our players to add an extra layer to their training. Rhythm claps are an excellent way to assist players in speeding up, or slowing down, a particular action. We demonstrate a rhythm by using claps. Each clap represents a dribble – with the final clap being the loudest because it represents the Hop & Pop.

In order to use Rhythm Claps effectively, allow players to hear the rhythm first. Then clap along with their execution of the drill. This is an effective way to challenge players to execute a particular skill at a faster speed, or to explore the nuances of a sequence by slowing the tempo dramatically.

After initially teaching the basic components of ball pick up, we want to get as many repetitions as possible where the player actually shoots the ball. Our goal is to avoid practicing skills in isolation where you simply dribble in space. Rather, we want players to dribble and shoot whenever possible because it's more game-like and more fun! In everything we do we want players to have a ball in their hands as much as possible and to shoot on every repetition they get.

Ball Pick Ups → No Shot

There are hundreds of variations of ball pick up. As you begin to explore the many options in our training system we encourage you to create your own combinations to infuse your own identity into your drills. A number of our staple combinations are demonstrated in the video including:

- Dribble Between the Legs → Ball Pick Up
- Stab Dribbles

If you start a three-dribble sequence on your dominant side then you will have to bring the ball to the shooting hand after the last dribble. If the first dribble is with the weak hand you will bring your guide hand to the ball.

We prefer to use one-dribble or three-dribble sequences because it's best for understanding rhythm and timing. As you progress in your training you can add variability by changing the number of dribbles prior to your ball pick ups. That could be as simple as changing the number of dribbles on each repetition.

Another variation is to utilize one **Stab Dribble**. In this example, the ball is bounced with the dominant hand directly in front of the toe on the same side. The ball is gathered by bringing the guide hand to the basketball. When doing a Stab Dribble with the weak hand, the ball is gathered by bringing the basketball to the shooting hand.

The goal of using one dribble is to do it as fast as possible. We want to get into your shot preparation, bringing the ball from Position 1 to Position 2, as quickly as possible in each ball pick up drill.

Another important emphasis of Ball Pick Up drills is to get your feet into set position as quickly as possible. We call this **Fight for Your Feet**. Fight for Your Feet refers to the challenge of getting your feet to the ground as fast as possible. Players learn to fight for their feet in every ball pick up drill that we do.

You can create your own drills by incorporating any number of the following dribbles:

- Between the Legs
- Behind the Back
- Crossover
- In & Out

Any of these dribbles done within the frame of your body are called **Quick-Quicks**. These are dribbles that do not utilize the shoulders, and they do not get outside the frame of the body. The purpose of Quick-Quicks is to manipulate the defender into an unbalanced position by how quickly you can change direction.

In the video, we also demonstrate how to add challenge by combining these different dribbles into random combinations to your ball pick up. Once you master one sequence we add different layers to the training. Some of these layers would include:

- In & Out, Cross-Cross
- In & Out, Cross-Cross, Between-Between
- In & Out, Cross-Cross, Between-Between, Behind-Behind

Each time we return to the ball pick up, we want to mix the training so it's not just a dribbling drill, but also works on footwork and shooting once we progress to adding your shot after the ball pick up.

In the video, Mike mishandles the ball during one of the more complex sequences. As a coach, when my players make mistakes I actually feel better about our training because one of my primary responsibilities is to challenge them and to create an environment where it's okay to make mistakes. Our players make numerous mistakes throughout the video. This affirms to us as coaches that we are creating an appropriate challenge for our players.

Ultimately, we want our players to be comfortable approaching us when their training becomes too easy or mundane. We encourage our players to ask for new layers so they are continually challenged in their workouts.

When players understand the value of mistakes and struggle to their learning they are more likely to work outside of their comfort zone. This is where their improvement will be maximized – when they are practicing their skills just outside of their current ability.

Ideally, our goal is not to perform a sequence in a blocked way. In other words, we want to avoid doing the same sequence over and over in the exact same way. Rather, the ultimate goal is for players to challenge themselves by altering the dribble sequences randomly on each repetition as Mike demonstrates in the video.

Ball Pick Ups → Live Shooting

Once players understand the fundamental mechanics of our ball pick up drills we add live shooting to the end of our sequences. Initially, players will perform a dribble sequence from the same spot each time. However, as they progress we add variability by performing our ball pick up drills from a different location every time. You can also add variability by varying the distance from which you shoot. We don't want players shooting the same shot from the same distance on every repetition.

We encourage all of our players to practice within their shooting range while progressively moving farther away from the basket as they develop.

It is important to practice your ball pick up with both your strong and weak hand throughout your workouts.

Note #1 – In the video, I rebounded for Mike during his workout. However, having a rebounder is a luxury, not a necessity. You can just as easily improve your conditioning and endurance by chasing your own rebound and relocating to a different spot each time. One of the advantages of using Mix Drills is that you do not need a coach or training partner to complete benefit from these workouts.

Note #2 – During the workout you see me script each of Mike's repetitions by calling out a sequence for him to perform two times (he begins the first with the strong hand – then the second with the weak hand). However, Mike is also capable of randomizing his own workouts, and ultimately, we would encourage him to come up with his own challenging sequences without the guidance of a coach, parent, or partner so that he becomes responsible for his own learning.

Note #3 – Initially we don't care if a player looks down as long as they are doing the dribbling sequences as fast as they can while working on their shot preparation. The final segment of this chapter will feature ball pick up coupled with Basketball Decision Training (BDT). BDT is covered in greater detail in Chapter 5.

The dribbling sequences we use prior to Mike's shot are similar to those used during the ball pick up phase of training. These can be done in any order and with different combinations. Below are the sequences Mike demonstrated:

- In & Out, Cross-Cross
- In & Out, Between-Between
- In & Out, Behind-Behind
- In & Out, Cross-Cross, Between-Between
- In & Out, Cross-Cross, Between-Between, Behind-Behind
- Random Combinations
- Ball Pick Up into BDT

Adding Shot Variability

If we do the same thing over and over again, we get good at just that one thing.

Variability is a critical element of mental engagement and motor skill development. Consequently, we want to add variability to our drill construction to challenge a player's ball handling, ball pick up, and scoring ability. We have already discussed randomizing your dribble sequences and shot locations. Next we will employ different types of shots to add variability to your finishes.

Mike demonstrates a number of different shots and finishing moves in the video including:

- Pull Up Jump Shot
- Finishes at the Basket
  - Regular Layup
  - Wide Layup
  - Reverse Layup
- Back Pivot
- Push Shot

When attacking the rim you can incorporate many different kinds of finishing moves. We teach our players to score from a variety of angles off the glass (wide layup, reverse layup) but you can certainly add to your repertoire by including other finishes that you want to improve or that your coach recommends.

We want players to develop a range of finishing moves and shots off the dribble because we assume that when playing against the best teams they will have to score against help side defense.

In this section, Mike demonstrates some of our favorite finishing moves. Prior to each shot he creates a random dribbling sequence using the various combinations previously described.

Regardless of what shot or finishing move is used – we emphasize the same principles of ball pick up.

Random Combination → Pull Up Jump Shot

When shooting a pull up jumper, we continually emphasize that players must fight for their feet. We teach this using the term **Drive Slide**. This refers to driving the plant foot into the ground and sliding the other foot forward to get your feet set. This technique helps to create consistent footwork during ball pick up.

Random Combination → Wide Layup

A Wide Layup is useful when the defender takes away a direct line to the backboard or the rim. To practice this finishing move players should finish using unconventional angles off the backboard. Mike demonstrates widening his path to the rim on his first attempt (so that his release is actually outside the lane), and shooting a running layup through the middle of the lane on his second attempt.

This move is essential for avoiding help side defense when attacking the rim.

Random Combination → Reverse Layup

A Reverse Layup involves finishing on the opposite side of the basket. Here the offensive player uses the rim to shield the ball away from the defender. Mike demonstrates shooting the Reverse Layup off of a two-foot stop and by leaping off of one foot. Both can be useful in games to evade help side defenders.

Random Combination → Back Pivot

The Back Pivot uses a forward pivot with your back foot (the foot farthest from the rim) as the pivot foot. The offensive player turns away from the defender to create space to shoot. This move is also known as "The Rondo" after Rajon Rondo used it extensively during his career. It's an excellent move to use when a defender is between you and the basket.

There are also a number of different shots that can be used following the forward pivot. Mike demonstrates a fadeaway jump shot in the video, but you can also turn into a regular jump shot. Another common move is to use a jump hook that places your inside shoulder as a barrier between you and the defender.

Back Pivot Counters

There are a number of counters that can also be used with the Back Pivot. Players may use a shot fake and step through by stepping across their body once the defender moves to contest their shot. This is often referred to as an **Up & Under**.

Another counter is to use a move made famous by Kobe Bryant that we simply refer to as **The Kobe**. When the defender jams you after using the back pivot, drop step back towards the basket. This reverse pivot is especially useful when the defender is too close to step through using the Up & Under.

The Back Pivot teaches players how to use *patient pivots*. All coaches teach players how to pivot using front pivots or reverse pivots. The Back Pivot is an example of how to apply effective pivots as you move closer to the basket.

Another variation of the Back Pivot involves what we call a **Third Pivot**. Essentially, players continue to utilize their front pivot to create a shot or a kickout pass to an open teammate.

Random Combination → Push Shot

The final finishing move that we emphasize is called a Push Shot. We use this shot when close to the basket to create a higher release point and to disrupt the timing of shot blockers around the rim.

The Push Shot combines our principles of Fight for Your Feet with ball pick up to drive the ball up in the air for a one-hand, push shot release. We emphasize shooting the Push Shot with the dominant hand. You can obviously practice using the weak hand as you improve, but we encourage even our best players to shoot the Push Shot with their strong hand because they will finish at a higher percentage.

Incorporating Mix Drills into a Workout

There are two ways to use Mix Drills to improve your basketball game.

1) Perform the same sequence over and over to achieve skill perfection.

2) Create random sequences on each repetition.

Ideally, you will progress as quickly as possible to using random sequences by changing the dribble move and finishing move on every repetition. This randomization adds a game-like quality to the workout because on each repetition players must decide which dribbling and finishing moves to use.

An added benefit to using Mix Drills is that players do not need a coach to direct their workout. Once players understand how to create different sequences they can create their own challenge as they vary their repetitions as Mike demonstrates during his randomized workout on the video.

When players train at a high level of intensity they should experience fatigue after completing a few minutes of performing Mix Drills. We advise players to shoot free throws or do form shooting between sequences to give themselves time to recover.

Note – Players will miss shots and make mistakes if they are training at full speed. This is to be expected and encouraged. Failure is evidence that you are training outside of your comfort zone and should be celebrated. The best players know how to

make mistakes, and that the road to improvement always includes struggle and failure.

CHAPTER 3: FIGHT FOR YOUR FEET

One of our concepts of footwork is called **Fight For Your Feet.** We want players to be able to drive their feet to the ground because the ground produces an equal and opposite force. This allows a player to be able to set their feet and be balanced so that they can get into their shot as quickly as possible in what we call **0-Seconds**.

We want players to be able to prepare to shoot as quickly as possible by learning to set their feet prior to the shot. We work on this using both **One Foot Hops** and **Figure 8 – No Dribble** prior to our ball pick up.

One Foot Hops

In this exercise, Mike hops on one foot three times. We start with the ball in Position 1. When Mike's feet hit the floor the ball moves from Position 1 to Position 2. During ensuing repetitions he alternates so that he practices hopping with a different leg each time.

The four-clap rhythm we utilize to help Mike coordinate his movement is demonstrated in the video. As a reminder, the last clap is the loudest because that represents his feet hitting the floor. With or without an audible cue (rhythm claps) – players should be able to hear the same rhythm as their feet hit the floor. This will help them understand the timing of the movement.

Once players are comfortable with the rhythm and movement of the One Foot Hop we move them into a shooting situation as quickly as possible. In the video, Mike demonstrates using three hops and a single hop into his shot. He will hop using both legs (separately) and will change his location after each shot.

Figure 8 – No Dribble

Another way to begin our shot sequences, or our dribble attack series, is to use **Figure 8 – No Dribble**. This movement forces players to start from a low position prior to their shot or their dribble attack.

In the video, Mike begins in a squat position where he moves the ball between his legs in a Figure 8 pattern as fast as he can. During initial learning, Mike goes from Figure 8 into his shot preparation using a hop while he moves the ball from Position 1 to Position 2.

As with One Foot Hops, this action can be done in random sequences by varying the number of Figure 8's prior to the shot or drive. This action also reinforces our ball pick up concepts as Mike moves the ball from Position 1 → Position 2 → Position 3.

Once players understand the initial movement, we move to the basket so that we get as many game-like repetitions as possible by adding a shot or dribble attack to the sequence. Players can incorporate all of the same shots and finishing moves previously demonstrated after using the Figure 8 – No Dribble movement.

In the video, Mike alternates between using two and four Figure 8's prior to his shot.

CHAPTER 4: DRIBBLE ATTACK SERIES

There are numerous ways to initiate a dribble attack into a shot or finishing move. This chapter will explain a number of dribble moves we emphasize with our players.

Skating

The first dribble move we utilize to beat a defender to the basket is called Skating. This move allows you to move side-to-side with the dribble while facing your defender in a chest-to-chest position. The ball is dribbled outside of your body to put the defender off-balance by using a slow and wide dribble to conceal the direction and timing of your attack. Skating can be used to create a shot or a dribble attack using a **Push Dribble**.

Notice that Mike takes more steps than dribbles when skating. There is only one dribble utilized with each side-to-side movement. Play close attention to the rhythm clap associated with this move. It's not meant to be a fast move – it's meant to be a deceptive move that sets up a change of pace.

The dribble is below the knees on the crossover, but as the ball goes outside of his body notice Mike extends his elbow and shoulder allowing the ball to hang. That simulates a hesitation prior to changing direction, pushing forward, or gathering the ball to shoot.

In order to maintain a square position with the defender, it is critical to point your toes in the direction of the dribble. This allows you to be able to keep your chest forward.

As we have demonstrated with previous moves, once Mike is comfortable with the initial movement we combine Skating with various shooting and dribble drive sequences that allows him to vary what happens after the Skate.

We begin by skating from a stationary position, but as he progresses, you can use an **Approach Dribble** prior to the Skate. This simply means that the offense dribbles toward the defense, but does not start to Skate until they are at the level of the defender.

A number of different dribble moves can be incorporated into the Skate. Mike initially utilized a crossover dribble, but you can also use a between-the-legs dribble, a behind-the-back dribble, or any combination when moving side-to-side.

Mike also demonstrated using two dribbles, and exaggerated the movement of the ball and his body during his lateral movement. However, as players progress we encourage them to use only one skate dribble before shooting or attacking.

The Stab Dribble

Thus far we have built our sequences by emphasizing ball pick up, the jump shot or using a **Push Out Dribble** to attack the basket. One important aspect of this process is utilizing a Stab Dribble. A Stab Dribble accompanies a **First Step**, or the first dribble used after receiving the ball.

Our **0-Seconds Basketball Decision Training** philosophy is to emphasize <u>ONE</u> threat: ***If you're open – shoot the ball!*** The first option for players is always to shoot (assuming they are at a range where they can be successful).

If a player does not shoot, then a decision is made based on the defender's coverage. We teach decision-making in this progression:

1. If the defender's arms are down, or if the defense is more than arm's length away → SHOOT!

2. If the defender is within arm's length → Drive or Pass

When an offensive player drives to the basket we teach them to use a **Stab Dribble**. This is contrary to how a first step is usually taught.

A traditional first step would have a player attacking with the right hand, use a jab step with the right foot, or a crossover step with the left foot stepping across the player's body to initiate the drive. Players are typically instructed to take a long first step with the goal of getting their head and shoulders past the defender. We feel that this movement is both unrealistic, and from a biomechanical standpoint, inefficient because players lose power going into their second step when they take a long stride to begin their drive.

We believe that the most valuable part of the first step is getting into the second step.

As quickly as possible, we want a player to get to their second step because the second step is where a decision is made off of the dribble. The goal of our first step is simple – get the ball to the floor as fast as possible. Our focus is not on the step itself, but on getting the ball to the ground as quickly as possible.

We often tell our players, **"*Get the ball to the ground and figure it out.*"**

"Figure it out" simply means we want players to make the appropriate decision based on how the defense reacts to the second step.

A **Stab Dribble** starts from the hip. The ball is driven to the ground using the shoulder, elbow, and wrist to generate power to drive the ball down. It's a powerful, strong dribble.

Mike also demonstrates how to use a Stab Dribble after a 1-Foot Hop. Mike jumps three times on the same foot as his dribble hand. Notice that he does not step when he makes his Stab Dribble. Instead, his focus is on getting the ball to the ground as fast as possible so that he could attack a defender off of the second step.

Stab Cross & Stab Jab

Similar to traditional teaching, we incorporate both a Stab Jab (a same side dribble) and a Stab Cross (where the ball crosses in front of the body). In your training you can incorporate both of these dribbles following a Figure 8 or One Foot Hop.

Mike demonstrates the following sequences in his randomized workout:

Figure 8 / One Foot Hop → Stab Jab / Stab Cross → Jumper or Finishing Move

One key teaching point that accompanies the Stab Dribble is how to use the second dribble and the second step. The Stab Dribble generates a significant amount of power from the action-reaction of the ball bouncing off of the ground along with a quick movement into the second step.

The goal of the second step is to create space and an advantage to attack the basket.

When executing the second step, we utilize a **Push Out Dribble**. A Push Out Dribble is a horizontal shot to yourself where your shoulder, elbow, and wrist extend to push the ball forward. In other words, the same mechanics used to shoot a vertical shot are used to push the ball out in front of your body in your attack.

Our dribble attack begins with a Stab Dribble followed by a Push Out Dribble to create space to make a decision off the dribble.

Ball Rips

A **Ball Rip** refers to the footwork used when a player initiates a dribble attack from a position where their shoulders are not already facing the basket. The move combines a pivot to square to the rim and a first step to begin the drive. A Rip is different from a first step because it begins with your shoulders not squared to the basket.

The goal of the Rip is to attack a defender who is arm's length away as quickly as possible without first having to square up. When the receiver squares to the basket *before* initiating a dribble attack the advantage is lost as the defender has time to recover.

If you have an advantage on the catch we want to use the Rip to attack as quickly as possible before the defender recovers into a defensive position. This will often happen when a defender over pursues the pass or when a defender gaps on the catch.

A traditional Ball Rip involves a front pivot through the defender with an extension of both legs so that the offense's head and shoulders drive past the defender's hip. This is excellent for ball protection and effectively puts the offense in a position to attack the basket.

A second traditional Ball Rip involves stepping with the lead foot with the goal of reaching as far out in front as possible to get the head and shoulders through the defender. This move utilizes a direct step with the outside foot rather than a step through (or across) the defender's body.

Both of these examples are useful for protecting the basketball, but we feel that they are too slow in getting to the second step as quickly as possible.

We teach a Ball Rip with the goal of getting the ball to the floor as fast as possible, similar to how we teach at Stab Dribble.

There are numerous ways to use a Ball Rip.

Ball Rip Options:

Good – Crossover Stab

Better – Between the Legs Dribble

Best – Behind the Back Dribble

We prefer the Between the Legs Dribble over of a Crossover Stab because we feel the ball is better protected when dribbled through the legs.

However, we feel that the Behind the Back Dribble is the most effective because you can get into your second step much quicker because the ball is thrown in front of you. The ball is also protected by the dribbler's body making it more useful than a Crossover Stab.

Self-Toss → Ball Rip

Mike demonstrates in the video how to address the ball using a self-toss. Upon receiving the ball, he initiates a drive using one of the Ball Rip options described above.

Note – Mike uses a variety of finishing moves after his ball rip to increase the variability of his workout.

CHAPTER 5: BASKETBALL DECISION TRAINING

Basketball Decision Training (BDT) is mind training. It creates an opportunity to train the minds of our players while simulating the decisions that they would make in a game while simultaneously training their skills.

Basketball Decision Training operates on the principle of "*Random Practice*". Random practice means that on each repetition our players have to think because each repetition is different than the one before. Players don't know what's going to happen next so each attempt requires them to interpret what to do in reaction to their partner's signals.

The opposite of random practice is *"Block Practice"*. Block practice describes repeating the same repetition in the same way. An example of block practice would be when a player shoots the same shot from the same spot over and over. In contrast, a player who shoots from a different spot each time, or uses a different type of shot (or finishing move) would be practicing randomly.

In our shooting practice, we manipulate many different variables to create random practice situations. This could include altering the distance from the rim, changing the angle of the shot, or using different release points for each shot.

Basketball Decision Training applies our 0-Second skills in a way that helps our players understand the decisions that are made in game situations.

The value of BDT is that it improves retention and transfer to performance. Because it involves practicing in a game-like way it is more likely that our skills and decisions will transfer to the actual game.

Decision Cues

The main component of BDT is that each player is presented with a decision cue that dictates the action for that repetition. These decision cues can come from anyone willing to help you improve including a coach, parent, sibling, or a teammate.

There is value for the shooter who becomes an active decision maker <u>and</u> the passer who becomes an active participant in the shooter's learning. The passer's skills will also develop as they provide cues for the shooter.

Below are examples of the decisions that are cued in response to the hand and body signals given by the passer.

<u>Decision Cues</u>

1. **Hands Out → Pass the Ball**
2. **Hands Down → Shoot the Ball**
3. **Step Toward → Drive**
4. **Side Step → Dribble Counter**

Each of these decisions relates to a game-like situation so it gives players a building block that leads to better decision-making against live, competitive defense. Below are examples of in-game decisions that mimic our decision cues.

Basketball Decisions

1. **Shoot the Ball IF:** The defender's arms are down, or the defense is more than arm's length away.

2. **Pass the Ball IF:** The defender is arm's length away.

3. **Driver the Ball IF:** The defender is running at you in a long closeout.

4. **Dribble Counter IF:** The offense attacks and the defender takes away the initial driving angle with a chest-to-chest position.

2-Player Basketball Decision Training

There are some simple ways to make a drill more random. Below are ways to randomize your feet prior to receiving a pass in BDT.

Randomize Your Feet

1. Dance Steps
2. Split Steps
3. Side Dancing
4. Side Split Steps
5. Runouts

Each of these repetitions represents a random way to move your feet prior to shooting. This can become more complex by having the player first move away from the ball, then sprint back into the catch to simulate a game action. There are many situations where players move prior to shooting such as when a shooter relocates after a post entry, or when a player receives a pass in transition.

Note – We encourage our passers to never throw a chest pass. We feel like the chest pass is rarely used in a game anymore. Instead, we encourage players to pass outside the frame of their body using a Hook Pass, a Behind the Back Pass, or some variation of those. We want both players to have fun during the workout by being creative with their passes.

The goal of the passer is to ensure that they challenge the shooter to make a unique decision on each shot so it's random and the shooter doesn't know what's coming.

BDT: Pass or Shoot

This is our simplest version of 2-Player BDT. The passer will give the shooter one of two signals:

1. **Hands Out** → Pass
2. **Hands Down** → Shoot

The passer will rebound for the shooter and initiate the next repetition followed by one of these two signals. You can change the shooter after any number of shots, but we generally like to switch roles after 2-3 repetitions.

BDT: Pass or Drive

Once players become comfortable with the initial drill, we change the decision cues to include the following signals:

1. **Hands Out** → Pass
2. **Step Towards** → Drive

BDT: Pass – Shoot - Drive

The next progression includes all three possible decision cues:

1. **Hands Out** → Pass
2. **Hands Down** → Shoot
3. **Step Towards** → Drive

BDT: Pass or Counter

After players become comfortable with these three signals we practice the fourth signal:

1. **Hands Out** → Pass
2. **Side Step** → Dribble Counter

This simulates that the defender got chest-to-chest requiring the dribbler to counter. When the defender is able to get into a chest-to-chest position it is to their advantage as the defender is positioned between the ball and the basket. In contrast, the offensive player should always work to get into a shoulder-to-chest position with the defender. The counter affords the offense the chance to regain a shoulder-to-chest advantage.

Players may use any type of dribble on the counter, but we prefer the Behind the Back Dribble because it allows the offense to maintain vision and to quickly run through their dribble so that there's no pause in the attack.

BDT: Pass – Shoot – Drive - Counter

Finally, we mix all four of those decisions into one drill to make it even more game-like. We encourage coaches and players to progress to this stage as quickly as possible.

We firmly believe in the concept of "Hard First Instruction" because a player will have a better representation of where they are going. By making it more difficult at first, players will have a better understanding of the game-like skills and game-like

decisions that they have to make. Though players may struggle initially, in the long run this helps retention and transfer to performance.

BDT with Relocation

We increase the game-like nature of BDT to add different decisions that you would make as an offensive player. In this example, we add relocation. Every time the shooter passes the ball back to their partner they move to a different spot on the court. This simulates moving off the ball in a game whether off a post entry, a penetration reaction, or a pass and cut opportunity.

BDT with Penetration Reaction

Another layer that can be added to BDT is penetration reaction. When a player is cued to drive with a step towards or a side step they can also be cued to pass the ball to an open teammate in a penetration reaction simulation.

In this example, when the passer makes the offensive player drive, the passer may relocate to the perimeter and call for the ball (hands out) to make the offensive player pass simulating a penetration reaction.

Note – The shooter is always the shooter. The passer never shoots. The ball will always return to the offensive player even if the passer receives the ball on the perimeter.

BDT: Start with Mix Drills

Basketball Decision Training has many different starting points. How you choose to begin BDT is limited only by your imagination. In this example, we begin BDT with Mix Drills to incorporate both ball pick up skills and different dribble attack moves.

There are numerous options one could use to begin BDT including:

1. Between the Legs Dribbles
2. Behind the Back Dribbles
3. In & Out Cross-Cross Series

Regardless of the dribble sequences you choose to begin with, BDT starts when the passer puts their hands out to cue the offensive player to pass the ball.

BDT: Start with a Ball Screen

The decision cues that create random practice in BDT can be added to any shooting drill that you use. We can also use BDT to get better at the common actions from your offense.

In this example, we demonstrate using a ball screen to initiate BDT. The screener becomes the passer that cues the decisions for the shooter. The screener / passer will not shoot. If the screener rolls or pops with their hands out, the offensive player

passes to the roller. If the screener rolls or pops with their hands down, the offensive player shoots the ball directly off the screen.

If the offensive player passes to the screener – the screener passes the ball right back to the shooter and regular BDT continues from that point.

Training with BDT makes it very game-like. The sequences, skills, and decisions simulate what often occurs in a game situation. More so, you don't need a coach or a teammate to use BDT to improve. A parent, sibling, or friend would be able to give the signals to help you improve as a basketball player.

3-Player Basketball Decision Training

The next step in our Basketball Decision Training is to add a third player. In 3-Player BDT more game-like situations evolve naturally that may include:

Game Situations in 3-Player BDT

1. Dribble Hand-Offs
2. Pass & Cut Action
3. Ball Screens
4. Down Screens

3-Player BDT: Pass or Shoot

We begin by demonstrating 3-Player BDT on one side of the court. We limit the players to two signals initially:

1. **Hands Out** → Pass
2. **Hands Down** → Shoot

Rules for 3-Player BDT

1. Only ONE player is allowed to shoot
2. Both non-shooters may give signals at any point
3. The shooter relocates after every pass
4. If two players give signals simultaneously, then the shooter decides which cue to follow

The 4th rule simulates a game-like decision just as one would have to decide between two open teammates in an actual game. Players will also improve their vision in 3-Player BDT because they must be aware of both decision cuers at all times.

3-Player BDT: All Signals

There are limited game-like situations that occur when doing 3-Player BDT with only two signals. Therefore, we want to progress as quickly as possible to more game-like sequences by allowing players to use the entire court and all signals.

As a reminder, we want to apply our 0-Seconds skills throughout our training. This includes an emphasis on

- Fight for Your Feet
- Stab Dribbles
- Ball Pick Up
- Shooting Form

All these skills apply in each situation generated in our Basketball Decision Training.

There are a number of natural movements that may occur during 3-Player BDT including ball screens, hand-offs, down screens, and the like.

Once again, we encourage players and coaches to emphasize the movements that you use most in your offense.

A Note About Down Screens

Down screens evolve when the offensive player is forced to drive and passes to a player on the perimeter (Figure 1). Any time the shooter is inside of another player – a perimeter player may set a down screen to bring the shooter back to the outside (Figure 2).
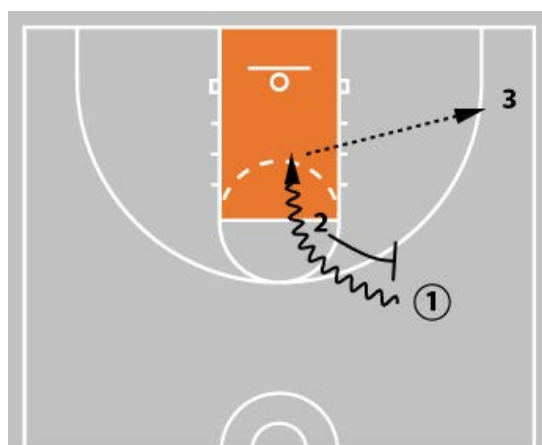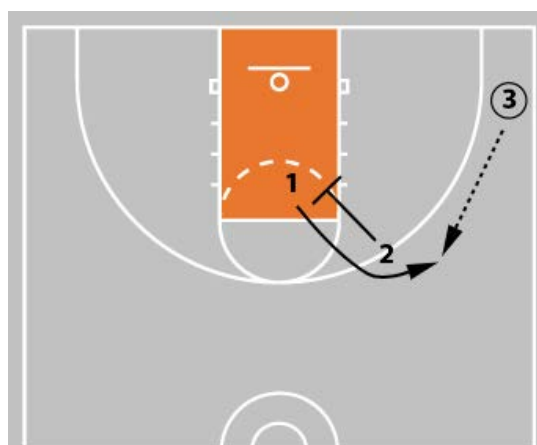

Figure 1   Figure 2

Triggering Pass & Cut Action

In order to simulate a give and go situation, the passer may run at the shooter with their hands up to signal a pass and cut action. The shooter will throw a bounce pass to the passer to trigger the give and go. After making the cut and receiving the pass, either decision cuer may give the offensive player another signal to read.
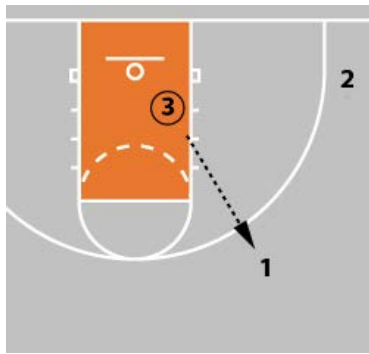
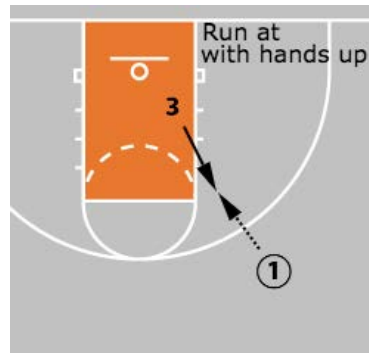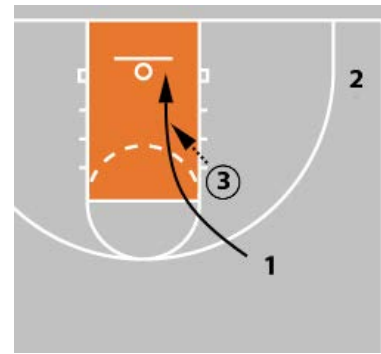Figure 3   Figure 4   Figure 5

Even in this situation there is a constant effort by the shooter to be aware of and respond to signals given by the decision cuers.

The Value of Basketball Decision Training

The value of Basketball Decision Training is that players are shooting unscripted shots. They never know in advance what shots they will end up shooting. All of their shots will be based on cues, decisions, and reads based on the signals that their partner gives them.

3-Player BDT becomes an even more complex process because there are two other players that the shooter must read. As you have fun with this and develop these concepts in your training, you can add another player by following the same guildelines in 4-Player BDT.

Basketball Decision Training can be added to any 5v0 drills as well.

CHAPTER 6: DYNAMIC FORM SHOOTING

Building on our 0-Seconds concepts we now shift our attention to our **Dynamic Form Shooting**. In 0-Seconds we emphasize that when you first catch the ball you should shoot the ball if you're open. Because of this philosophy we spend a lot of time on shooting.

We use Basketball Decision Training to develop game-like shooting, but we also use Dynamic Form Shooting to reinforce certain aspects of our shooting form. We believe that shooting technique is improved through individual attention. It is not a team workout. We don't focus on shooting as a group. Rather, we focus on our individual players and their individual needs. The majority of our form shooting is done by players working on their own, working with a coach, or in some cases, as part of our pre-practice routine.

Characteristics of Great Shooters

To be clear, this is not a shooting video, and we will not discuss every aspect of effective shooting. We spend a significant amount of time on helping our individual players make subtle adjustments to *their* form rather than imposing a universal technique on every player.

That being said, there are some common characteristics we believe that all great shooters share.

Characteristics of Great Shooters

1. **Confidence** – This is one of the reasons we emphasize shooting on the catch in our 0-Seconds philosophy.

2. **Hold a High Follow-Through** – Regardless of whether the off-hand stays high or drops to the side, all great shooters hold a high follow-through. We call this your signature and encourage our players to "*Sign Your Shot.*"

3. **Elbow Finishes Above the Eye** – Specifically, we prefer an 80° shoulder extension because we feel that gives the ball the best opportunity to go in the basket. Utilizing this angle helps players to engage their core so that players can move the ball from Position 1 → 2 → 3 to extend the ball.

4. **Bend and Extend** – Your shot should flow with no pause. All great shooters flow from a bent position to an extended posture in one segment that we call a *Kinetic Chain*. A kinetic chain means that your muscles work from the largest muscle groups to the smallest muscle groups. Your largest muscle groups are in your hips, then as you extend, the ball comes off your fingertips that are your smallest muscle groups. Your fingers and your toes will end your shot.

One-Hand Form Reps

We begin our form shooting workouts with One-Hand Form Reps with the off-hand on the side. The shooter assumes a low position in what we call a "bent position". The ball is in front of the body with the shooting hand under the ball.

The sequence begins by turning the shooting hand and lifting the ball so that it is balanced in Position 2. From there, raise the guide hand on the side <u>without</u> touching the ball. Finish the repetition with a one-handed form shot.

The reason we begin with the off-hand on the side instead of doing traditional one-hand reps is because a significant limitation we encounter with many of our players is the involvement of the off-hand in the shot. Therefore, we want to provide players with an excellent representation of where the guide hand should be throughout their shot.

An important reminder is that players should move to a different location for each shot to avoid block practice. This challenges the shooter on each repetition to correctly manipulate the angle, release point, and the distance from the basket on each form shot.

Also note, players may perform these repetitions without the aid of a coach or a rebounder.

One-Foot Reaches

To perform a one-foot reach, balance on one foot while extending the ball forward with both hands. Keep the back leg straight in line with the your back and with the back toe pointed down.

After reaching forward, return to an upright position in Position 2 while continuing to balance on one foot. Finish the shot by releasing the ball from Position 3.

Advantages of the One-Foot Reach

1. Practices lifting the ball from Position 2 → Position 3

2. Improves shoulder extension and high follow-through

3. Increases core stability to improve balance at the top of the shot

One-Foot Squats

The difference between the squat and the reach is where to position the body relative to your center of gravity. Both drills are as much about balance and stability as they are about shooting. In this case, we are targeting the ankle specifically to improve strength, balance, and stability.

When using the one-foot squat you should bend at the butt – meaning your hips will lower toward the ground as your knee bends. When performing the reach – your hips stay in the same plane as you reach forward with the ball while extending your back foot. Your hips will remain at a consistent distance from the floor during the reach, but will lower toward the ground during the squat.

This movement improves stabilization of the core, the lifting of the ball from Position 2 → Position 3, and the high follow through as you sign your shot.

Touch the Ball to the Ground

In this drill we transition to using both hands, and shoot off of two feet. This form shooting drill works on the concept of bending and extending to flow into your regular shot with no pause during the movement.

The initial movement is similar to a baseball catcher dropping into a stance. Lower the ball to touch the ground between your feet then rise up in one motion into your normal shot. You can leave your feet to shoot, and should shoot your regular shot.

We demonstrate these shots from close to the basket, but with our players at Windsor we progress all the way out to the 3-point line.

Again, the squat requires bending at the butt so that the hips lower toward the ground. We want to avoid bending at the waist. The head should not get outside of your center of gravity. Bending at the back often leads to a push shot rather than lifting the ball from Position 1 → 2 → 3.

This drill is particularly useful for players that have a tendency to fall forward, to the side, or backward after they shoot. The movement in this drill focuses on rising with balance and going straight up and straight down with their shot. This works if you flow from your largest muscles to the smallest muscles as you lift the ball from the ground to your release.

Dynamic Movements with Form Shooting

The next evolution of our workout is to add more dynamic movements prior to the form shot. The movements used in this section will include various jumps, turns, and dribbles to improve stabilization while incorporating more vigorous pre-shot activity.

Random Mikan

The traditional Mikan Drill is one most players and coaches have encountered at some point in their basketball experience. In the drill, players move from side-to-side under the basket while practicing a variety of shots around the rim including

- One Foot Layups
- Reverse Layups
- Two Foot Layups

These moves work on scoring around the basket and finishing at the rim. However, this drill is often performed by doing a certain number of the same shots consecutively. Though players may make fewer mistakes this way, it is still a form of block practice.

In contrast to traditional Mikan, we make our version of the Mikan Drill more random. Our players don't shoot the same shot over and over. Instead, each shot is unique. They might use the backboard – they might not. They might shoot off of one foot –

they might shoot off of two feet. They will shoot from different locations at different angles, both close to the basket, and from farther out. They will use different impact points where the ball banks off of the backboard. They will vary the arc of the ball as they get closer to the rim.

We want players to utilize these different variables to build their own random Mikan experience both at the basket and away from the basket to create their own unique workout experience.

One-Foot Jumps

One-Foot Side Jumps - This movement begins with a lateral jump from one foot to the other. The shooter lands by balancing on the plant foot to create stability. This also develops core stabilization as the ball is transferred from Position 1 → 2 → 3.

Another advantage of the One-Foot Side Jump is that players must fight for their feet prior to the shot. This movement works on the action-reaction of getting your feet to the ground so that you can quickly get into your shot.

Random One-Foot Jumps – Once players become comfortable with One-Foot Side Jumps we want to make their movements more random by adding different jumps in different direction such as

- Forward to Back
- Side to Middle
- Back to Front

Players are not limited to right angles. In fact, we encourage them to use many different angles to increase the variability in their workouts.

This is like a plyometric workout in that it is similar to jump training. As quickly as the landing leg finds the ground we want to push back to a different spot on the floor. This simulates moving in a basketball game without the ball prior to catching and shooting a shot.

One of our key teaching points is that *“You don’t shoot quickly, you prepare to shoot quickly.”* The process of using the plyometric step and jumping back to the spot should be done as quickly as possible. However, you should not rush the natural rhythm of your shot as you progress from Position 2 to Position 3. That rhythm should remain natural and flow the same every time so that every shot is consistent.

Jump Turns – This exercise involves jumping backwards while turning the landing foot at a 90° angle – still using one foot to leap and land. The player jumps off the landing leg to return to the original spot. This action engages the hip muscles that are used in many basketball movements throughout the game. This works on fighting for your feet and maintaining the natural rhythm of your shot.

360° Dance Step – To execute this maneuver, pivot all the way around in a full 360 while balancing on one foot. Upon returning to a square position with the rim, drive the

swing foot to the ground to regain stabilization. This works on fighting for your feet out of an exaggerated pivot action.

This builds on the concept that your feet are the first thing that matters when it comes to shooting. It's important to focus on getting your feet set on the ground prior to shooting. That doesn't necessarily mean that your feet have to be squared to the backboard, it simply means that balance must be produced in the action-reaction of getting your feet to the ground.

Quick Steps – This movement begins by jumping with both feet at a 90° angle then immediately jumping back to face the basket. We call this a "half-turn." The player returns to a square position and uses the action-reaction, fight for your feet concept to find balance prior to shooting the ball.

As players become comfortable with the movement they can add more than one quick half-turn.

Jump + Behind the Back – This action involves a quick two-foot jump while moving the basketball around the waist. The ball should POP as you bring it to your hand. It is important to jump in the air <u>before</u> going around your waist. We want this to be a dynamic, plyometric action as well as a shooting form repetition.

We also emphasize no pause on the landing so that you flow in 0-seconds into your shot. As with our other movements, layers can be added as players become more comfortable. For example, you could create a sequence of two or three jumps prior to shooting.

The ball should also go around the waist in different directions so that both hands are challenged with gathering the ball and flowing into your shot.

1 Dribble → Ball Pick Up – A dribble can be added to the movements above to create Mix Drills that precede your form shot. You can make the drill more random by moving in different directions and using different types of dribbles. We begin with one dribble, but you could also incorporate multiple dribbles in your pre-shot sequences.

Initially, we add one dribble while moving in different directions including backward, sideways, at an angle, or forward.

As with our previous ball pick up drills, you should hear the ball "Pop" when it reaches your hand prior to shooting.

Dribble Turns – Begin by facing away from the basket at a 90° angle. Jump to square yourself to the rim while using a single dribble during the movement. This simulates moving where you're not square to the rim and you have to turn your feet to catch the ball. This drill also works on ball pick up and shooting form.

Mixed Form Shooting – In order to make our form shooting as variable as possible players are encouraged to use all of the different dynamic movements in a random order.

Form Shooting with BDT – A final layer that can be added to form shooting workouts is to incorporate the signals from BDT. This requires you to work on footwork, shooting, and decision-making in response to your partner's decision cues.

In our initial example we utilize just two signals:

- Hands Up → Pass
- Hands Down → Shoot

To begin, the player will perform a dynamic form shooting repetition after which they will respond to their partner's cues as we described previously in Chapter 5: Basketball Decision Training.

CHAPTER 7: BUILDING YOUR INDIVIDUAL WORKOUT

In this section I want to take you through a process that you can follow to use the Mix Drills that our players from the University of Windsor demonstrated in this DVD to build your own workout.

Initially, you want to do segments of each drill for about one minute and then switch to another drill. Regardless of how long your workouts are, I would encourage you to begin with ball pick up drills for one minute each. As you become more comfortable with the process you can mix many different drills together where you do various drills within each segment to focus on different elements of player development.

Even more so, choose drills that specifically help you develop the skills you need to improve on, or that your team needs you to improve on.

Note – Although in this DVD we've demonstrated taking the same shot from the same spot in many of our drills, we would never train this way in actual practice.

Instead, we add variability to everything we do by incorporating the following:

How to Create Your Own Mix Drills

1. Never shoot from the same spot twice in a row
2. Never repeat the same dribble sequence
3. Vary the distance of each shot
4. Choose shots you get most often in a game
5. Incorporate BDT
6. Use different dynamic movements before each shot

For example, if I were to perform three dribbles between my legs with Hop-Pop-Shoot I would do that as one repetition from 15 feet, inside the 3-point line, then outside the 3-point line from different angles on the floor. That could incorporate one minute of my individual practice.

You could also incorporate many other dribble combinations into Hop-Pop-Shoot.

You can also change which type of finishing move that you use. Often, we focus on shooting jump shots. However, for you to get the greatest benefit from your workout you need to focus on the areas and types of shots that you get most frequently in your games. Again, that could be a jump shot, a pull-up jumper, a finish at the rim, or a certain type of layup. You should challenge yourself to include all of these in your one-minute segments so that you improve all aspects of your game using both your strong hand and your weak hand.

Finally, you can incorporate BDT into your Mix Drills. Once you have mixed the location of your shot and the type of finishing move you use, you can add different layers of BDT to include the elements of perception and decision-making in your workout.

Another aspect of your individual workout can include our Dynamic Form Shooting Drills. It is important to remember that those are focused on your individual form. These should focus mainly on some of the areas that you need to improve on, but you also need to challenge yourself so that you are not doing block repetitions.

For example, with your form shooting workout you can mix a jump-turn, touch the ball to the ground, one foot shots, and many others so that each successive repetition is unique. One repetition followed by a completely different repetition forces you to retrieve the prior information necessary to perform each unique repetition. This leads to better retention and transfer so that you become comfortable with these different aspects of shooting.

A significant part of our philosophy is to bring our Basketball Decision Training skills and drills together in our 1-on-1 drills. We want our players in competitive situations so they have the opportunity to compete and experience game-like decisions. We feel that our best shooting drills are our 1-on-1 games because they are game-like and they require players to make decisions in random circumstances.

We shape our players' learning by using constraints. A **constraint** is a condition, or rule, within a game that requires players to do a specific thing, or limits them from using certain actions. Examples include limiting the number of dribbles an offensive player may use or limiting the direction of type of dribbles that can be used. There are countless possibilities that can be created with constraints to shape what happens in the game. By governing our 1-on-1 games in this way, we can dictate what our players focus is on in terms of their learning.

3 Pass 1-on-1

This is a staple of our development drills and one that we use frequently in our practices. The three passes that lead to the 1-on-1 situation simulate a defensive closeout. One of the difficulties of playing 1-on-1 is simulating a game-like closeout. The three passes allow the defender to get arm's length away from the offensive player.

As we previously discussed, arm length is a key determinant of the decision that an offensive player will make.

Decision Cues

If the defender is MORE than arm length away → SHOOT!

If the defender is LESS than arm length → ATTACK!

We develop this decision process through all of our BDT 0-Seconds decision training, and now apply it in our 1-on-1 situations.

Set Up

3 Pass 1-on-1 begins with an offensive player on the perimeter. In the video, we placed that individual at the top of the key. However, you could have them start wherever you want provided they are within their range to shoot the ball.

The defensive player starts under the basket with a ball. Again, that player could start from any number of places on the floor depending on what type of closeout you want to simulate.

The defender begins by passing the basketball to the offensive player on the perimeter (Figure 6). The offensive player passes the ball back to the defender (Figure 7). Live play starts when the defender makes an underhanded pitch back to the offensive player (Figure 8).
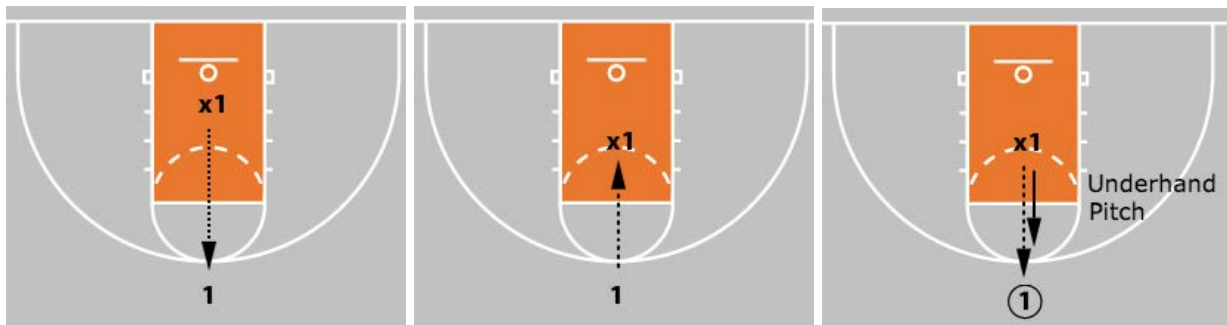
| Figure 6 | Figure 7 | Figure 8 |

We use an underhanded pitch because we want the offense to catch the ball with control to start the 1-on-1. The purpose of the three passes is to give the offensive player an opportunity to attack a live defender who is close enough to simulate a closeout.

This basic format creates a 1-on-1 situation against a live closeout. In this context, we want the offensive player to apply a number of the 0-Seconds skills that were discussed in previous chapters.

1-on-1 Points of Emphasis

1. Fight for your feet
2. Catch on a hop
3. Catch ready to shoot or drive
4. Make a decision off the dribble
5. Use various finishing moves and counters

We demonstrated the drill with only two players, but ideally we would include more players so that the match-ups change on every repetition. Additional defenders can be added on the baseline while additional offensive players can space on the perimeter as they wait for their opportunity to play.

Additionally, we often have our offensive players use a dance step to practice fighting for their feet when receiving the third pass. Remember, we want no pause on the catch. Players should immediately shoot or drive depending on the defender's closeout.

Adding Constraints

The constraints added here are rules that players must follow so that, as coaches, we can shape their learning.

Rules for Competitive 1-on-1

1. **Catch with a Hop** – Players begin by using dance steps prior to receiving the third pass. On the catch they must fight for their feet.

2. **No Pause on the Catch** – Players may not jab step or shot fake. They must make an immediate decision and act accordingly.

3. **Cannot Take Two Dribbles in a Direction NOT Towards the Basket** – In other words, they must attack in straight lines. If their first dribble is not towards the basket, they must change directions on their second dribble or they will lose possession. That could include an attack into the defender's chest or a counter dribble.

4. **No Spin Moves** – We want our players to attack with their head up so they can read the defender. We feel that when a player spins they lose their vision and consequently their decision-making suffers.

The offensive player immediately loses possession if they violate any of these four rules.

Coaching Notes

- One of the main things we emphasize throughout our drills is footwork and the fight for your feet concept. The most important part of the process is getting your feet down first to be prepared to shoot or drive.

- A hard stab dribble provides momentum for an attack.

- The shooter never chases their shot. We always want our players to shoot with confidence, and part of that includes signing their shot and holding their follow-through in the air. We prefer this finish to following their shot because it reinforces the notion that the ball is going in. We want the other four players to rebound so the shooter can focus on their shot going in every time.

- We often use questions to engage our players in the learning process. You will see this demonstrated throughout the competitive drills section.

- The purpose of the behind the back dribble is for players to "run through" the dribble with their feet so the defender cannot recover. Practicing the behind the back counter in BDT allows our players to learn the physical skill and to understand when to perform the skill so they can apply the skill in a live situation.

- Once again, I want to reinforce the notion that our competitive situations are designed for players to practice the skills we teach. Individual skill workouts are wonderful, but they are useless in terms of a game application if we never put our players in a position to use those skills in live play.

- Hold your players accountable to what you teach. You will get from them whatever you accept. If I teach something, but allow my players to do whatever they want in competitive situations, then whatever I taught was useless.

- Players must attack in straight lines. The reason we don't allow two dribbles in a direction not towards the rim is because in a game there are other players on the floor. If you are not attacking the basket you are likely to encounter help defense. We don't want to attack the help, we want to attack the basket.

A Note About Transitions and Time on Task

We pay close attention to how we transition from one repetition to the next in all of our drills because we want to maximize our time on task. **Time on Task** refers to the amount of time players are actively engaged in the learning process. We believe that players get better by doing. Consequently, we want them to go from one repetition to the next as quickly as possible.

To enhance our transitions in this drill, we can add additional offensive players to the perimeter. As soon as the first 1-on-1 concludes, the offensive player immediately becomes the next defender and can throw the ball to any of the waiting offensive players on the outside.
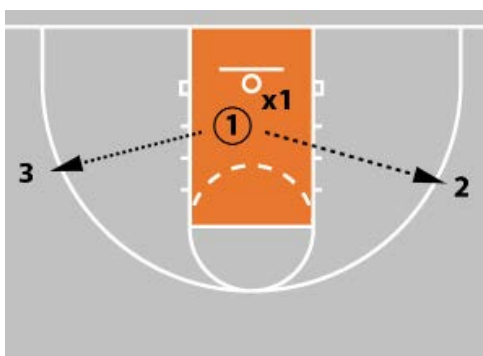
Figure 9

Figure 9 demonstrates a more efficient rotation in the drill. Once the offensive player (1) has completed their attack, they can immediately begin the next possession by throwing the ball to one of the waiting perimeter players (2, 3). The defender (x1) replaces an empty space on the perimeter to await their next opportunity to play offense.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter how many people you have in this drill. The goal for the coach is to keep the transitions moving as quickly as possible to maximize the amount of repetitions.

Teaching Commands

Throughout these competitive teaching situations we use certain commands to teach.

Hold – Players should hold the ball. They are not to shoot or dribble. This indicates that we are stopping the action to teach.

Foul – Indicates a mistake was made, or a rule was violated. Players know to expect that we will teach out of that situation. In our practices, this does not refer to a physical foul.

Recreate – Players will stop and rewind to recreate the situation that just occurred so that we can communicate specific information about what happened.

Ask Questions – We ask our players questions to engage their thinking. We often want them to consider what they did and why, as well as what other options they may have had.

These teaching commands allow us to quickly organize teaching situations then transition back into live play rapidly. Again, we are trying to maximize the amount of learning that takes place in a practice.

Players learn more through physical practice than they do from a coach's lecture.

3 Pass 1-on-1 with Basketball Decision Training

The reason we add BDT to a competitive drill is to create a more game-like situation. In this example, the offensive player must make a decision about whether to attack the basket or pass to an open teammate.

If the Decision Cuer has their hands out then the offensive player should pass the ball. After passing, the offensive player will always relocate back to space and the 1-on-1 will continue. The only player that gets to shoot is the original offensive player.
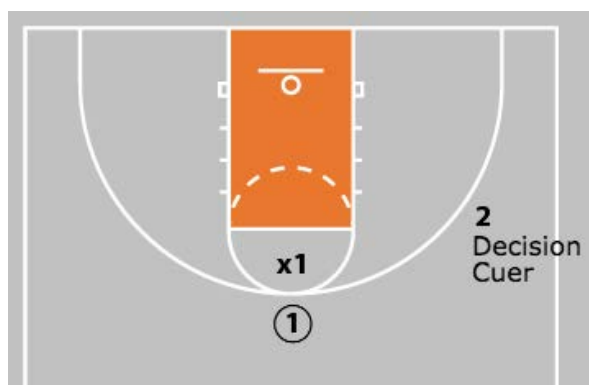
Figure 10

Decision Cues in 1-on-1 BDT

1. Hands Up → Pass
2. Step Towards → Ball Screen
3. Dribble At → Dribble Hand-Off

These cues create situations where the defender must negotiate various screening actions within the 1-on-1. Defenders are expected to recover to their help positions first as dictated by where the ball is on the floor. This requires them to move from help to ball side coverage on a closeout.

Coaching Notes

- Additional constraints can be added to any of these 1-on-1 situations. A common rule we use is that players are not allowed to shoot off the initial catch. This allows us to work on dribble-drive opportunities in a 1-on-1 situation, or with penetration reaction from the Decision Cuer.

- Have players relocate to the perimeter based on your penetration reaction rules. The Decision Cuer must move if the offensive player dribbles at them. Where they go is determined by the rules in your system.

- Encourage players to be creative with their passes off the dribble. Chest level passes will generally not get through help defense.

- Additional players can wait on the baseline with the next person taking the first available spot in the game. Quick transitions will maximize your team's repetitions even if you have limited baskets in your gym.

- Adding BDT to 3 Pass 1-on-1 enhances your players' vision as they must not only read their defender, but they must also see and react to the Decision Cuer.

- The second dribble of an attack should always be a push out dribble to create separation with the defender.

- In the video, many of the players simply back up to relocate to the perimeter. There are many different options to space after their drive and kick including running through to replace on the weak side, or even posting if that is part of your offense.

- The goal of the dribble is to score at the rim. The only way the drive does not conclude at the basket is if someone, likely a help side defender, has stopped you from getting to the rim. We do not want to dribble to pass, we want to dribble to score.

3 Pass 1-on-1 creates a number of unscripted opportunities for our players to shoot, drive, or score at the rim.

1-on-1 Left-Right

The drill begins with a passer at the top of the key behind two players standing shoulder-to-shoulder (Figure 11). When the passer says, "Go" the two players will jog side-by-side toward the rim.
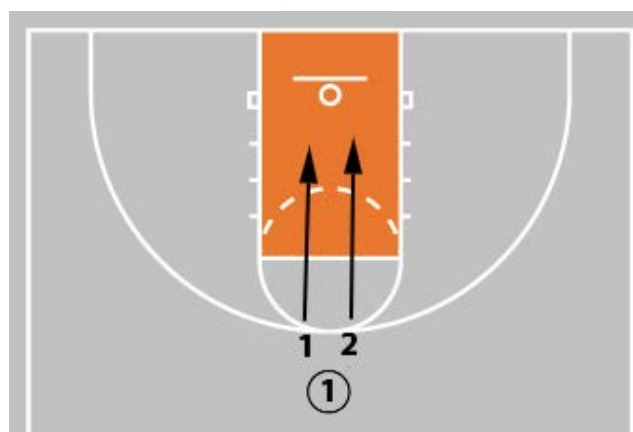

Figure 11

As they approach the basket, the passer will call out either "Left" (Figure 12) or "Right" (Figure 13). The player on that side pops out to the wing and becomes the offensive player. The other player becomes the defensive player. It becomes a live 1-on-1 situation on the catch.
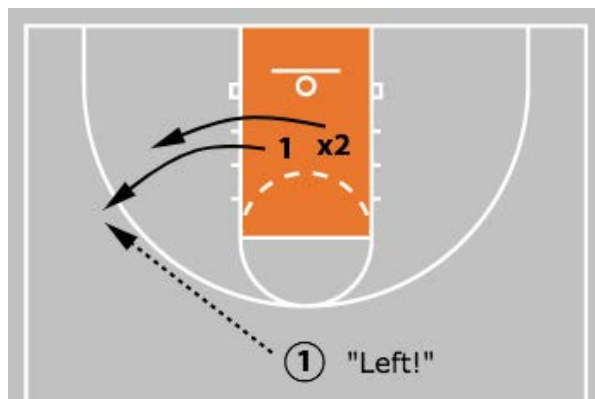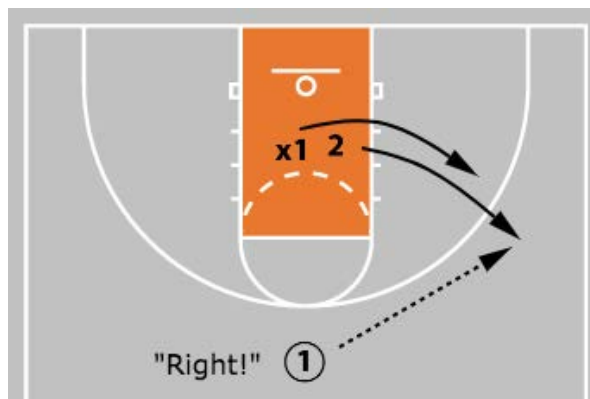

Figure 12

Figure 13

In this drill we emphasize that our players apply our rip concepts by putting the ball down as quickly as possible by using a stab dribble on a curl to the middle, or by using a behind-the-back dribble or between-the-legs dribble when attacking the baseline.

1-on-1 Down Screen

This 1-on-1 situation will be generated out of a down screen, but you can use any screen from your offense to initiate a 1-on-1 situation.

The screener (2) begins by passing the basketball across the lane (Figure 14).
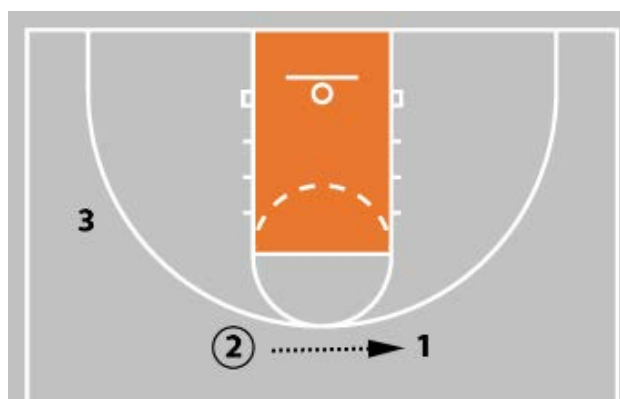

Figure 14

The screener then initiates a down screen for the offensive player (3) on the wing opposite the ball (Figure 14). The cutter will come off the down screen to receive the ball from the passer (1). As soon as the cutter clears the screen, the screener becomes the defensive player (x2) and the 1-on-1 begins (Figure 15).
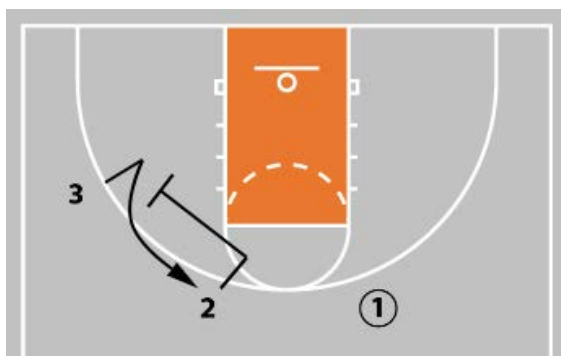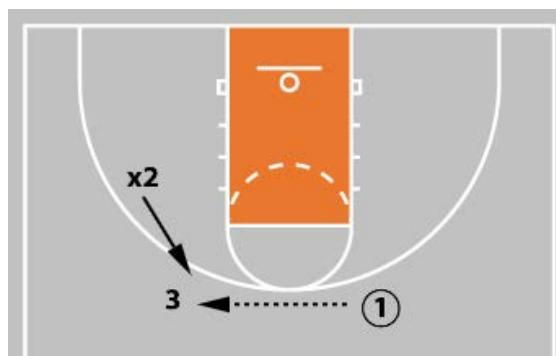
| Figure 14 | Figure 15 |

The Cutter's Options

1. The cutter may <u>NOT</u> tight curl
2. Flare
3. Short Curl
4. Straight Pop

This creates another decision-making opportunity for the player who catches the ball about whether they should shoot or drive. When they drive they must make another decision about whether or not to counter.

We use the same constraints in this situation that we utilized in our other 1-on-1 games.

Approach Dribble 1-on-1

This competitive drill works on the concept of Skating. If you recall, skating refers to a lateral movement with the dribble outside of your body to create an advantage. Skating is intended to create a shoulder-to-chest advantage. If the offense gains a shoulder-to-chest advantage with the defender then the next dribble will be a push-out dribble to create separation.

If the defender is chest-to-chest with the offense then a skate dribble is used to create an advantage.

The drill begins with an offensive player at half court and a defensive player with the ball under the basket. The defender will pass to the offensive player and run out to the 3-point line (Figure 16).

Starting at half court, the offensive player will dribble at the defender and then perform two skates to create an advantage (Figure 17).
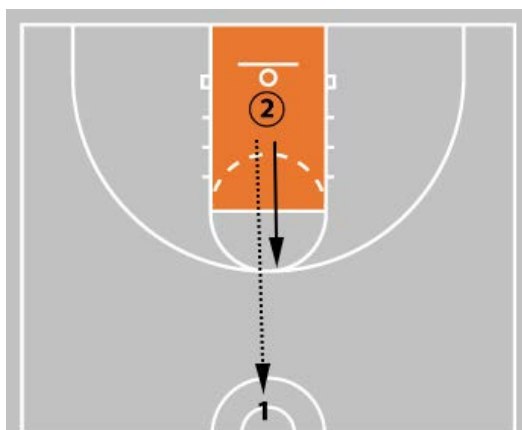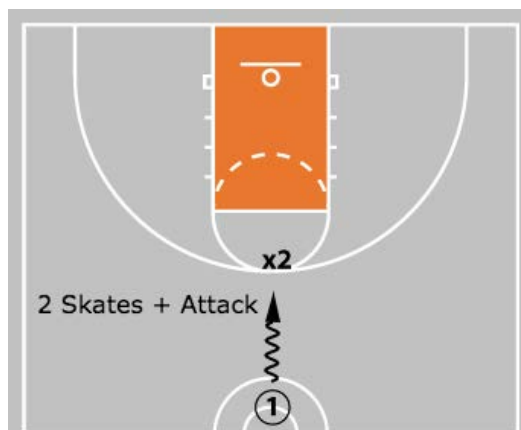
Figure16

Figure 17

Constraints

1. The defensive player must closeout all the way to the 3-point line.
2. The offensive player may NOT shoot a pull up – they must attack the basket.

Once players become comfortable with the drill, you can change the constraints to allow the offense to develop different skills. For example, you could allow the offense to vary the number of skate dribbles. You could also allow them to shoot off the skate or let them score using a pull up jump shot.

The same rules apply from our previous 1-on-1 situations.

CHAPTER 9: COMPETITIVE SITUATIONS: 3-on-3

We love our 1-on-1 drills to progress to 3-on-3. More importantly we love competing in competitive situations that involve offense and defense. The main reason we love that is because our players love it. Our athletes genuinely enjoy training and practicing in this way because they get to play the game. Ultimately, that's way more fun than just doing drills.

3 Pass 3-on-3

Earlier we introduced 3 Pass 1-on-1. Now we will take the same concept and show you how we incorporate it into 3-on-3.

We progress to 3-on-3 to create a more game-like situation to apply our 0-Seconds skills in a more complex situation.   Now, when you attack a defender, you must also recognize the help side defense and make an appropriate decision based on their coverage.
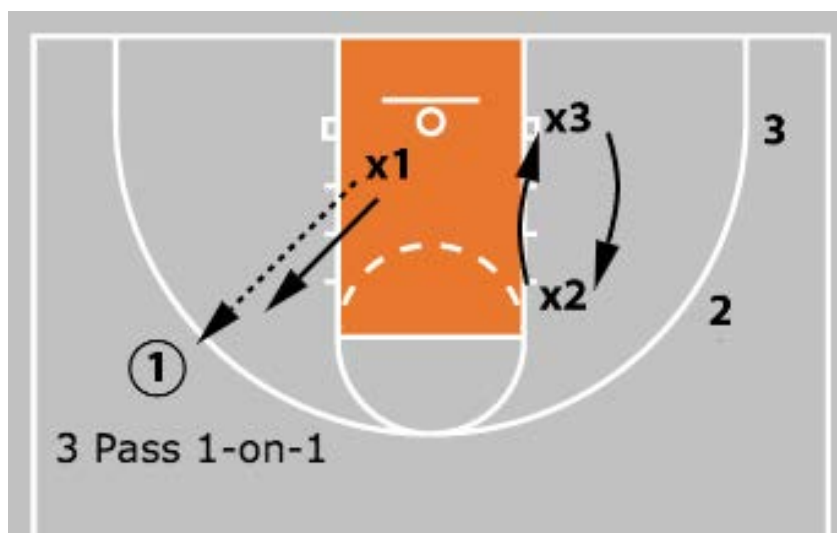

Figure 18

The drill begins with two players engaged in 3 Pass 1-on-1 (1, x1) as we demonstrated in Chapter 8. Two additional offensive players are positioned in the corner (3) and on the wing extended (2). The bottom defender (x3) is responsible for baseline help while the top defender (x2) is responsible for middle help.

In order to create some variability, the weak side defenders will exchange continuously prior to the 1-on-1 starting. This prevents the defense from cheating the drill by sitting in help as the initial drive occurs. Once the drive happens, the defenders will settle into their responsibilities.

Note – You can manipulate the location for each player in the drill to create whatever situation you want to practice.

There are numerous ways to rotate players through the drill. In the video we put the players in three groups. Our rotation is simple: Offense → Defense → Off.

Full disclosure, in our practices I don't talk about rotation at all. That's a place for our players to show some leadership. They need to communicate with one another and figure things out for themselves.

Additional Constraint – We will add one constraint for the offense: The player who receives a pass following a dribble penetration must pass or shoot. They may not follow a dribble penetration with another dribble penetration.

This is an important concept for our offense. We want players to apply our 0-Seconds concepts on every catch. If they are open we expect them to shoot. If not, we want them to move the ball to the next teammate who is open.

Another reason that we emphasize this concept is because consecutive dribble penetrations often result in bad spacing. We prefer to return to good spacing before driving the basketball again.

Coaching Notes

- These competitive situations also provide excellent opportunities to coach defensive coverages, rotations, and communication. Another reason why we love competitive situations as coaches is because it allows us to coach both offense and defense simultaneously.

- There are many ways you can manipulate the offensive constraints in 3-on-3. We will continue to apply the same rules that we used to govern each of our 1-on-1 games in Chapter 8.

- An important reminder to the offensive player engaged in the 1-on-1 is that their primary goal is to score. This is a 1-on-1 first before becoming 3-on-3 *only if* the offense does not score in the 1-on-1 situation. The offensive player's mentality should remain the same – score the ball! We don't want the offense to pass unless the defense stops the initial attack.

- Perimeter players may cut <u>only</u> when the dribble is dead. When the dribble is still live we want the other offensive players to space on the perimeter. Those players should be ready to shoot the ball or make an extra pass. If a player ceases their dribble we want to send a cutter to the basket and have the other offensive player move into space.

- Another situation that can develop out of 3-on-3 is what to do after a post entry pass. Our options are simple – players will cut or space. Again, have your players practice whatever post entry reactions you desire to reinforce the movements in your system.

- In all 3-on-3 situations we want to make sure players constantly change positions to develop a complete skill set. We want all players to develop the skills that will allow them to play multiple positions.

- Any 1-on-1 drill can be converted into a 3-on-3 drill to become more game-like. We use many different 1-on-1 drills to create 3-on-3 situations to practice our

decision-making in the initial attack <u>and</u> when the offense encounters help side defense. We believe this leads to better transfer to actual game performance.

- A game-based approach allows you to coach all situations at once. It allows me to coach the game of basketball the way it's played.

Keeping Score

We keep score in all of our competitive situations. The players should announce their score after every possession. The scoring system may be as simple as receiving a point every time your team scores the ball.

However, you can also make your scoring systems more complex to reward certain actions in your competitive situations. Examples of creative scoring would be:

- Offensive Rebound = 2 Points
- Taking a Charge = 3 Points

Develop a scoring system that emphasizes those things that are most important to your team's success.

Keeping score also empowers our players to lead themselves and communicate. They are responsible for keeping their own score.

3-on-3 Left-Right

As with all of our 3-on-3 drills, this drill begins with a 1-on-1 situation. As with 1-on-1 Left-Right, the offensive player must catch the ball and make a decision without pausing, and without predetermining a decision. Rather, they must decide whether to shoot it or attack based on the defender's position.

In the 3-on-3 variation of the drill we identify two distinct teams in the initial set-up. The passer at the top of the key (1), the first player in line to cut to the basket (2), and the first additional player on the baseline (3) are all on the same team. The other three players will guard their offensive counterparts (Figure 19).
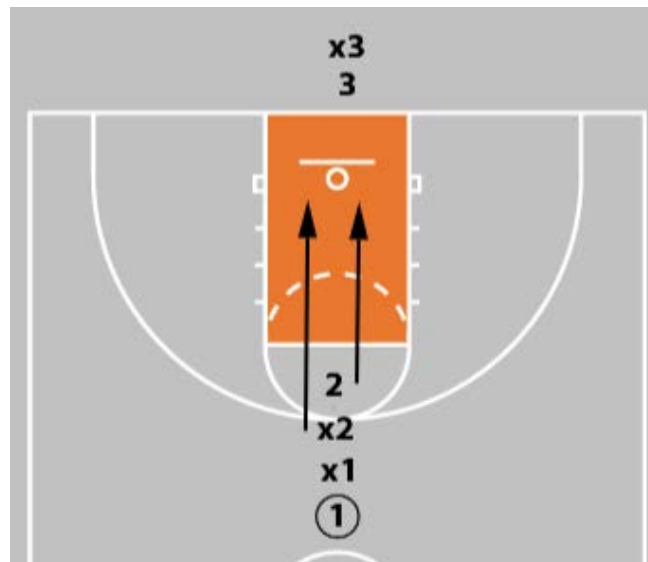
Figure 19

The drill begins with the offensive cutter (2) running forward towards the basket. The passer (1) calls out "Left" or "Right" to command the cutter to pop out to the wing on that side. The third offensive player (3) sprints to the opposite wing.
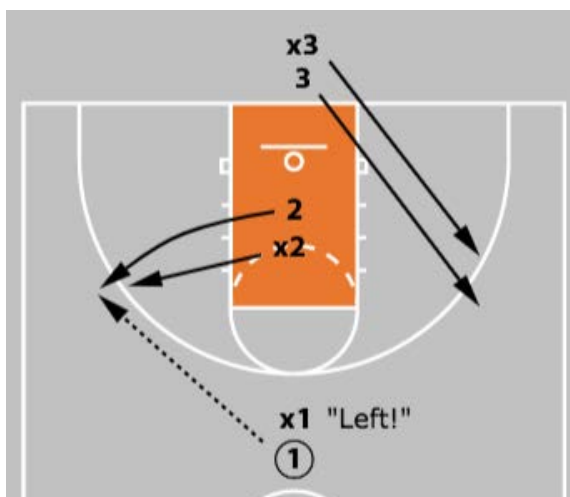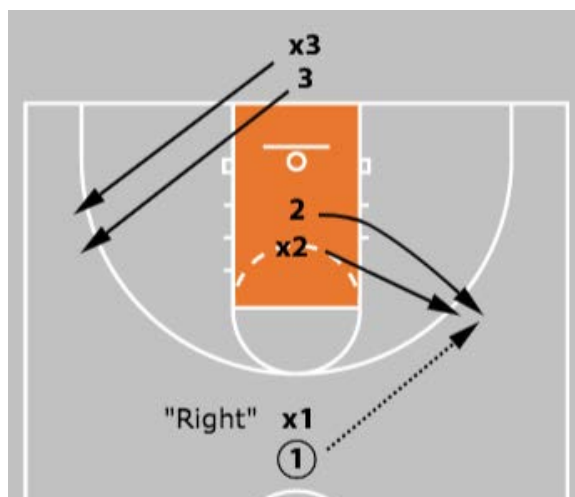

Figure 20

Figure 21

On the catch, the cutter plays 1-on-1 against their respective defender while the other two offensive players space to the opposite side of the floor.

Coaching Notes

- Begin the drill with the cutter (2) jogging forward without predetermining a direction. When exploding to the perimeter, plant on the foot opposite your cut, point your toe, and use a crossover step to begin your cut. The cutter must SPRINT the first few steps to create separation on the catch.

- From the wing, players should rip to the baseline with a behind-the-back or through-the-legs dribble. They should use a stab dribble if they have an advantage to the middle of the floor on the curl.

- When players get close to the basket on their drive they may turn it into a post-up to attack or wait for teammates to move into scoring position. Players should apply patient pivots in the post while they wait for teammates to cut or space.

- The passer must deliver the ball early for the offense to capitalize on their advantage. The passer knows where the cutter is going so they should anticipate the cut and throw the ball to lead them into a scoring position.

3-on-3 Down Screen

This drill begins with a 1-on-1 situation generated by a down screen. Again, you can initiate a 3-on-3 situation using any number of screening actions. You can also use these situations to teach your defense how to cover different screens.

The same constraints exist for the cutter as they did in Down Screen 1-on-1.

The Cutter's Options

1. The cutter may <u>NOT</u> tight curl
2. Flare
3. Short Curl
4. Straight Pop

Defensive Constraint – The defense may <u>not</u> switch the down screen. This is to work on a variety of situations that may evolve from having to fight through the down screen.

The drill begins with a 1-on-1 situation created off of a down screen. As shown in Figure 22, the screener (2) passes to the opposite side of the floor (1).
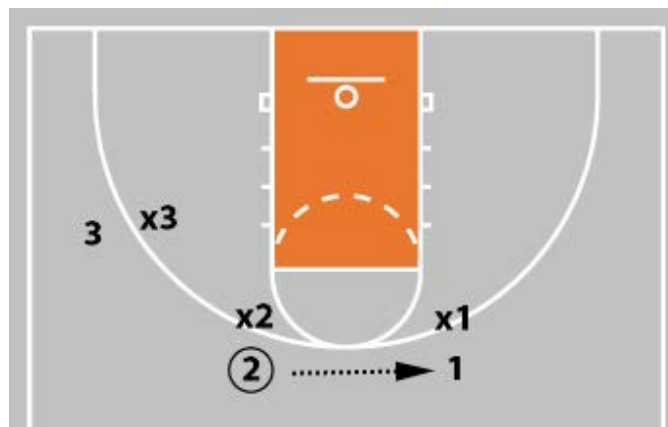

Figure 22

The screener then sets a down screen for the offensive player (3) to flash to the ball (Figure 23). The passer throws the ball to the cutter and spaces to the opposite side of the floor (Figure 24).
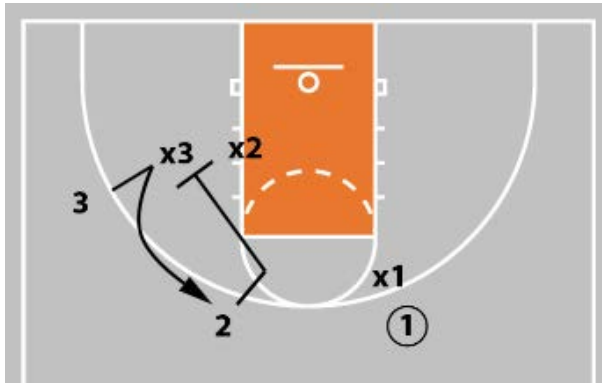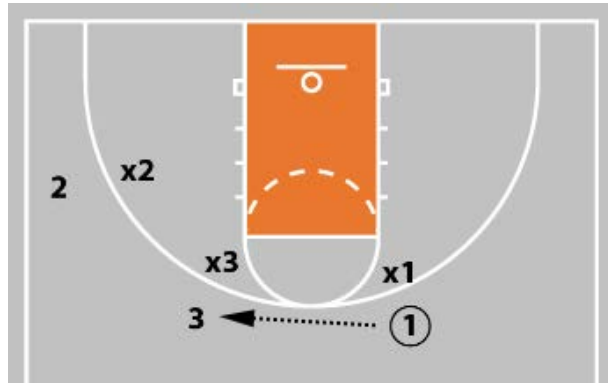
Figure 23

Figure 24

Note – The passer must SPRINT away from the pass to create space for the attack.

Approach Dribble 3-on-3

This drill begins with a pass from the defender under the basket (x1) to the offensive player at half court (1). The defender closes out to the 3-point line where the offense will utilize two skate dribbles to initiate an attack.

As shown in Figure 25, the players on the weak side will space and rotate exactly as we demonstrated in 3 Pass 3-on-3.
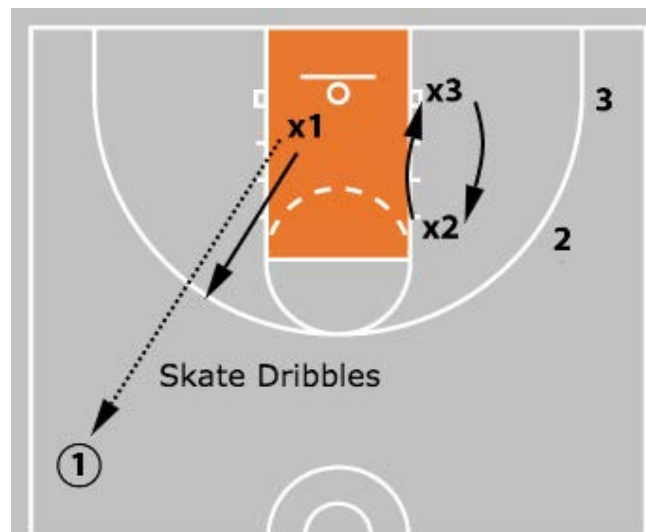
Figure 25

The skate dribble is meant to be a tease – it's a slow build-up to a change of pace. When done properly there's a pace to it that's slow to fast, not all one speed.

Chapter Conclusion

By using these small-sided games, and practicing with a games-approach, we maximize the number of opportunities our players get to make and apply our skills. In traditional drills, or regular practices, often there are too many times where players are standing around. They are rarely engaged while waiting in lines, and are not active participants in the learning process. In contrast, because we teach the game by

playing the game, our players get repetitions that are game-like throughout practice. They experience very little down time, and as coaches, we relish many teachable moments that result from this approach.

Coaches – we want to include a segment that explains how we implement this training with a team. In this section I will explain more about why and how we do what we do in a team setting. I will also address how we know that this training transfers from practice to games and helps us to become a better basketball team.

What We Emphasize

We have all heard the saying, *"It's not what you teach, it's what you emphasize."* This is what we emphasize daily in practice and in all of our competitive situations. We live by our 0-Seconds and Basketball Decision Training philosophy. 0-Seconds is physical skill training. BDT is mind training. When combined, this approach allows our players to play the game with freedom where they are able to make decisions as independent performers without a coach's guidance on every possession.

0-Seconds Basketball Decision Training is ONE concept. Though they may have been explained separately on this DVD, we consider there to be no separation between the two.

The Decision to Shoot

We don't believe in the traditional triple threat. We believe in ONE threat: Shoot the ball when you're open. The decision to not shoot the ball is determined by the read of the defender and the possibility that a teammate has a better opportunity.

We absolutely do not want the coach to take away a player's opportunity to shoot – we want players to be free and comfortable to shoot when they are open.

This philosophy relates back to the fact that it's really hard to score against any good defense these days. Defenses are better and much more aggressive than they used to be that we want to take advantage of every open shot we find. We don't necessarily want to work for another shot. We want to take the shot that's open.

We do have some players in our program that we do NOT want to shoot first. We teach our players as though they are all quarterbacks with different progressions to work through. Though they may not be identical, each player has a progression of reads upon receiving the ball. Some have a first option to shoot, while others may have the option to drive first. It all depends on their strengths as players. Our ultimate goals is that all of our players have the ability to shoot first, but the reality is that few teams will have five players on the floor at one time who can all shoot the ball.

All players must be able to shoot or drive. This is crucial so that every player on the floor is a threat whenever they catch the ball. This makes it so that the defense has to guard as much space as possible as every player is a threat to score on every catch.

Game-Based Learning is UGLY

I start all my Breakthrough Basketball camps with a disclaimer to the parents: Game-based learning is ugly. One of the first things I do is explain to the parents that this experience will be unlike anything they have encountered in the past. Our learning

will seem chaotic at times. We do not practice in perfectly organized lines, with one player shooting at a time, or with skill perfection being the goal because that's not the reality of how the game is actually played.

The same disclaimer should be shared with your players, parents, and administrators if you choose to implement some of our methods. They need to be content with your practices being ugly.

This approach is ugly because it's game-like. The game itself is ugly because you cannot perfectly predict what your opponent will do. We want those same conditions to be replicated every day in our practices. That's why we practice in as many competitive situations as we can.

0-Seconds Basketball Decision Training is the concept that helps us practice in a random and variable way. This does not mean that practice is disorganized. I spend a lot of time planning every aspect of practice.

The Value of Competitive Situations

Our role in the planning process is to create conditions that shape our players' learning within an actual competitive situation (3v3, 4v4, or 5v5). We may work on a specific game situation, but once we create that situation we allow just about anything to happen. The things that develop spontaneously in live play direct our coaching.

This naturally brings up situations that we actually need to improve rather than things I think we need to work on. Opportunities to correct and instruct often emerge within our competitive situations that guide our coaching for that day.

An Environment of Discovery

As much as possible, we try to create an environment of discovery. We want our practices to have a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere where we encourage players to seek possibilities that can help them be successful.

As a coach, I don't always have the right answer. Instead I have to give some of my power to the players to encourage them to seek their own outcomes based on what they read, and the decisions they make in a game. It forces me to trust them.

This process takes time. This process is not immediate. Early in the year we stop everything in practice. We stop situations to be able to question the players – to ask them what they saw, or why they made a certain decision. We also stop play to provide insight into what may have been a better opportunity for them. This results in our players having more freedom and less guidance from me as the coach.

Ultimately, we want our players to be active participants in their learning. We want them to have ownership over this process of learning, but also ownership of how they play and the decisions they make within the game.

Be a Challenge Coach

I'm very open with my players in telling them that I am a challenge coach, not a self-esteem coach. I'm not here to praise that which is not praiseworthy. I'm here to praise efforts that take their individual game, and consequently our performance as a team to another level. The things that our players are expected to do on a daily basis are not the things I should praise. Rather, I should praise them when they reach beyond their current level to improve. That doesn't necessarily equate to success, it simply means they put forth effort to reach toward a higher level.

The coach is a key part of this reaching process. If the coach does not create new layers of challenge then the player will never get better. The problem with many traditional drills is that there aren't many ways to be able to improve the drill to increase the challenge to your players.

The great part about playing offense versus defense for the majority of practice is that there are hundreds of ways to add challenge, or constraints that shape our players' learning while challenging them to grow. The process of challenging them to grow usually means that they struggle, they struggle, they struggle, and eventually they will improve and find success if they are determined. However, once they reach another level it's my job as the coach to add more struggle so that process of growth can continue.

How We Practice

I often get asked, "What do your practices look like?" The majority of our practice time is spent in competitive drills (5v5, 4v4, 3v3). These are not traditional, scripted drills. These are games where we create a situation (an offensive action), we determine the defensive coverage, and we compete.

We compete because we want it to simulate the game as much as possible, therefore most of our competitive situations resolve with winners and losers. We want our players to understand what winning feels like and why it's valuable. It's valuable because we find that we are happier when we win. Consequently, we want our players in situations in practice that requires them to constantly strive towards winning.

Shooting in Practice

In our practices, nearly all of our shooting repetitions incorporate Basketball Decision Training. We want our players to practice shooting the way we play. Most of our shooting is done in 2-player or 3-player BDT.

When we want to increase the volume of shots taken in a particular practice, we simply reduce the number of signals in BDT to hands up or hands down. If we want to make it more active we add other variables such as relocation, dribble attacks, counters, penetration reaction, or any other signals that make it more game-like.

The Importance of Decision-Making

Another reason we use a games approach to learning is because we feel the hardest part about making plays is making the right decision, and not simply performing the

physical skill. Regardless of how skilled a player is, if they can make good decisions for your team that's ultimately what's going to help your team be successful. As much as possible, we want to put our players in game situations where they have to make decisions.

Drills-Based vs. Games-Based

A games-approach to learning is different from a traditional, drills-based approach. Consider:

<u>Drills-Based Approach</u>

1. Teach the Skill
2. Drill the Skill
3. Put the Skill in a Game

<u>Games-Based Approach</u>

1. Start with a Game
2. Create a Situation
3. Identify the Skills to Work On

In a games-based approach we create a situation within a competitive game. Through that process we evaluate the skills that we need to work on.

Time on Task

One of the reasons I firmly believe in a games-based approach is because I believe our teaching progressions are often a waste of time. We place a high premium on the concept of **Time on Task**. Our goal is to maximize the amount of physical practice that our players can have during a practice. A games-approach helps us do that.

Progressions to learning often take away from time on task and active learning time for a variety of reasons:

1. The drill progression is too easy causing players to become disengaged
2. The drills used to teach a progression are too far removed from the context of a game that players don't transfer their learning to actual performance

As much as possible we want to make sure our players are playing the game in a competitive situation that transfers to performance.

Manipulating Constraints

Constraints are rules that govern a particular game. We use constraints to shape our players' learning. When we are competing in a live situation we may discover a specific skill or situation we need to improve. To target that skill we create constraints that will help shape our learning in that area. For example, in order to improve our dribble attacks we might restrict the offense from shooting until at least one dribble

penetration has occurred. A number of other examples can be found in Chapter 9: Competitive Situations: 3-on-3.

The constraints that we use are often planned prior to practice. I will have a plan prior to practice that targets areas of improvement for that day. In our games-approach, we will create game-like situations that develops an opportunity for our players to work on a certain skill.

The Value of Block Practice

Evidence-based research suggests there is one value to block practice – it provides new learners with a better representation of a skill. However, after initial learning there is very little value in practicing in a blocked way because the learner is not challenged to think on each repetition.

For example, if you went to the driving range to hit golf balls and just hit with your driver for 10 swings, eventually you would feel pretty confident about your driver. The problem is that doesn't always translate to when you go to play an actual round of golf because you are not practicing the way you play.

The other value of block practice is to build confidence for your players. There are times where my players don't lose their ability to shoot the ball, they lose their confidence in their ability to shoot the basketball. To boost their confidence, and allow them more opportunities to see the ball go through the basket, I will sometimes put them in a blocked environment where they will shoot repetitive shots from the same spot. Afterwards I will tell them, "What are you talking about? You can shoot the ball. You're a great shooter!"

The process of them shooting the same shot over and over is a powerful reminder that they can really shoot the ball. Often when we do random or games-based shooting, their success rates will go down naturally because they are playing against live, competitive defense.

Benefits from a Games-Based Approach

Ultimately, the most important evaluation is, "Does what we are doing transfer to a better performance?" In our experience, it does.

We feel that our players make better decisions, and are more confident. The other reason we have committed to this type of training is that it increases athlete satisfaction. Our players enjoy the process of training more. They enjoy practice more. They feel more confident in games because we've empowered them in practice.

I used to think the perfect practice was one where we didn't make many mistakes. I thought the perfect drill was one we could do without any errors. I thought the perfect shooting drill was one where we made a lot of shots.

Ultimately, what matters most is that we practice the way we play.

This doesn't refer to the system of play. It means that in every practice our players are replicating what happens in an actual game. Regardless of your system, to maximize your effectiveness in practice, you must simulate how your tactics will be utilized in a game.

Keys to Effective Training

We approach everything we do from the **3 F's of Training.**

FOCUS – Without focused repetitions of a skill or decision, you won't get better. The key to improving is doing these things over and over again. We simply prefer to do them in a game-like way in our practices and our training.

FUN – We want this to be enjoyable to our players. They will train better, practice better, and play better if they enjoy what they are doing on a daily basis. The outcome certainly comes from the process, but we want the process to yield athlete satisfaction and enjoyment everyday.

FREEDOM – The ultimate goal is that I make myself useless as a coach within the game. The greatest thing would be if my players could play independent of me in the game. The reality is that this doesn't happen. Players will always need a coach's guidance in some way.

However, in the flow of the game, I don't want to be on the sideline orchestrating every decision for them. I want to provide them insights and understanding that can help them make better decisions for themselves and for their teammates.

Conclusion

I hope we've added value to your coaching. My ultimate goal is to stimulate your thinking about what you do and how you do it. We presented some ideas about why we do what we do, and we hope this process of sharing the game with you will help you develop and improve as a coach.

1) How do you use this training to build an individual workout?

When building your own individual workouts begin with a 10-minute time frame. Choose 10 different Mix Drills to do for one minute. Each day choose different drills to help you work on the skills and drills you need to improve your game. As your training habits gradually increase you can add more minutes to your workout.

We want our individual workouts to be fun and exciting – so we encourage our players to incorporate music and to be creative in choosing the drills they do each day. As we have found, players who have ownership of their workouts will also see their commitment and enjoyment in the process increase while enjoying better results on the court.

2) How does basketball decision training help me to develop?

Basketball Decision Training can help you develop as a player because it features three essential components for growth. BDT is

- Game-like
- Fun
- Challenging

All three of these aspects help take your game to another level. Each repetition in BDT forces a decision and skill that is unique to that situation. Just like the game, BDT requires you to think and act differently each time you catch the ball.

This process causes players to struggle. Most people view struggle as a negative, but we view it as a positive because it challenges you to think on each repetition. When you play basketball you must not only react, but also think quickly to be successful.

Ultimately, BDT is a building block of decision-making. The skills that you trained in isolation are now being applied in a game-like way where you have to make decisions that actually relate to how the game is played.

3) What is the value of 0-Seconds Training?

0-Seconds Training can help you improve because it's skills training that focuses on

- No Pause on the Catch
- No Predetermined Movement
- One Threat on Every Catch: SHOOT!

We want a player's first threat to always be to shoot the ball. If you're open, and in your range, let it go! If a shot is not available, then your next action is based on how the defense is covering you, and whether or not a teammate has a better opportunity to score.

This gives our players the freedom to make decisions and empowers them to use the skills they have developed to be a better basketball player.

4) Why do you utilize "Mix Drills" instead of training skills in isolation?

First and foremost, Mix Drills are creative and fun!

Mix Drills allow you to simulate the game while practicing and working towards improvement. The problem with training in isolation is that individual skills are separated from the context of the game.

Basketball is not a game of one, isolated skill. As much as possible, we want to combine dribbling, shooting, footwork, ball pick up, and other skills that happen in a game so that you can practice in a manner that transfers more directly to performance.

5) Why do you encourage players to struggle in their workouts?

Our guiding principle in designing workouts for players is to create a context that mimics the game as much as possible. The game of basketball is often ugly, unscripted, and disorganized. Too often we practice in a very organized way. We create perfect situations where we train in isolation without any game-like simulation.

Instead, we want to focus on training the way the game is played. We want to put players in situations where they are going to struggle. My goal as a coach is to constantly add layers of challenge so that our players do struggle. I want them to experience failure in their individual workouts. This causes them to fight for their learning. Engaging in that process helps players improve more than anything else.

You might feel that making mistakes is negative. In reality, when you embrace the struggle and overcome new challenges you are rewarded by becoming a better basketball player. We encourage players to persevere through struggle, and value their mistakes as opportunities to learn. This path to improvement is not always comfortable, but it is necessary to train as effectively and efficiently as possible.

6) How do shooting form workouts align with your philosophy of game-like drills?

Clearly these drills are not game-like, in the sense that we would shoot like this in a game. However, there are a number of benefits to our Dynamic Form Shooting workouts including

- Adds variability to each shot
- Challenges shooters mentally to retrieve information for each unique repetition
- Increases the physical challenge by adding dynamic movements prior to each shot

These exercises are used by a number of professional players around the world, including NBA stars Jimmy Butler and Dirk Nowitzki. These players have incorporated a one-foot and dynamic movements to help them learn to repeat there from being consistently in different situations.

7) What are the core values that anchor your coaching philosophy?

Here are our core values that build the foundation of our program culture at the University of Windsor.

1) **Be an Earner.** Earn your success. Being successful is not cheap. You must earn it with deliberate practice with the intent to improve each day.

2) **Be Impactful** – Don't just be a basketball player. We want our players to exhibit excellence in everything that they do, on and off the court. We want them to be great people, great students, and make an impact on their community.

3) **Be Determined**. Without determination it will be very difficult to work through the process of daily improvement. You will struggle. There will be days that you don't want to train. Be determined. Show that you want to improve each day by fighting through those moments when you don't feel like it, and success will come your way.

4) **Be Grateful** – Be thankful that you have the opportunity to play basketball, to and to improve your game. There have been many people that have helped you along the way. I hope you show gratitude toward them. Remember to be grateful to yourself, that you have challenged yourself and put forth the effort to improve.

CHAPTER 12: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We want to thank you for taking the time to view this video. We hope that this was helpful to you. Best of luck to players, coaches, and parents. We hope that this player development system will provide you with a fun and enjoyable way to improve your game.

If you are interested in attending one of my camps in the future, please visit

BreakthroughBasketball.com/Camps

You can follow Coach Oliver on Twitter **@BBallimmersion** or contact him by email at **COliver@Basketballimmersion.com**

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