



Discovery approaches to teaching on the ball defense

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Players are often over taught the details of defense to the point that they forget the basic concepts. Some of the basic concepts that we want to teach the players in on the ball defense:

- to mirror the offensive players movements
- to turn the ball handler in a new direction
- to channel the ball handler in one direction

This discovery approach method is to help the players discover the proper way to accomplish the two concepts mentioned above.



1) Grizzly bear stance

With young children allowing them to use their imagination encourages them to be more creative and have fun. By asking the children to assume a grizzly bear stance you are putting them in the universal athletic stance:

- feet shoulder width apart
- knees bent
- elbows bent
- hand up with the palms facing forward (show your claws)

Too many players will bend at the waist and therefore have a rounded upper back. They must pull the shoulder blades together. The waist is not a joint and should not bend. They must learn to activate their core muscles which lie under the abdominal muscles.

A good activity is to have the children move around in random movement. I call this making scrambled eggs. When you call stop they assume the grizzly bear stance. Growls add to the fun

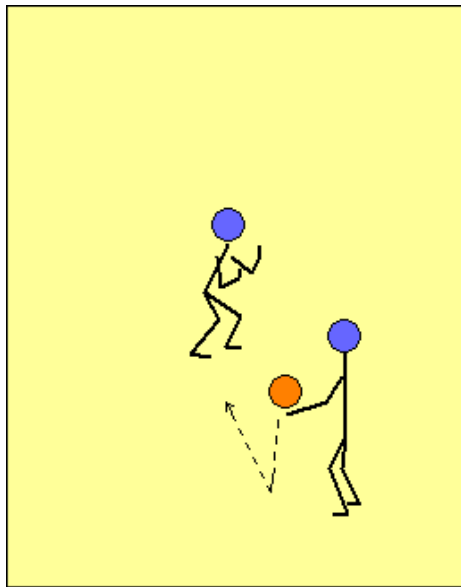
Moving from stance

It is important that the children learn to move quickly from their stance in all directions. The ball drop drills is a fun way to challenge the players. It is a discovery learning approach. Let them try it for a while. It is important that you observe their actions:

- do they get low
- do they always start moving one foot first
- do they use a "plyo" step

Bring them in and ask probing questions:

- How can we be quicker to the ball?
- How can we get lower to start?
- What can you do to push first in the direction you want to go?
- How can I move faster, by sliding or running?

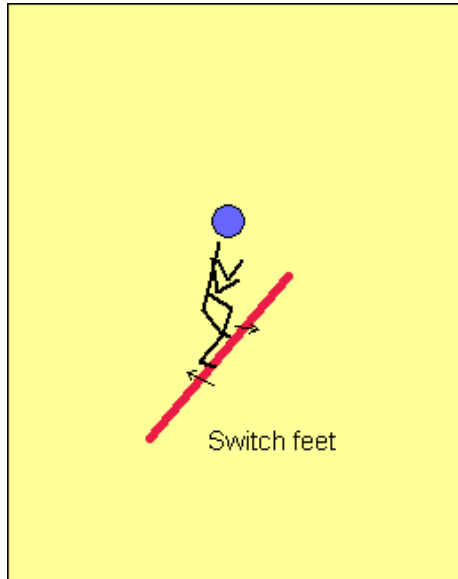


2) Ball drop drill

The player without the ball starts in the universal stance. This player must let the ball bounce once but not let it hit the floor second time. The ball can be bounced

- in front
- tossed to the side
- thrown over the head of the player

This causes the player to move in all directions.

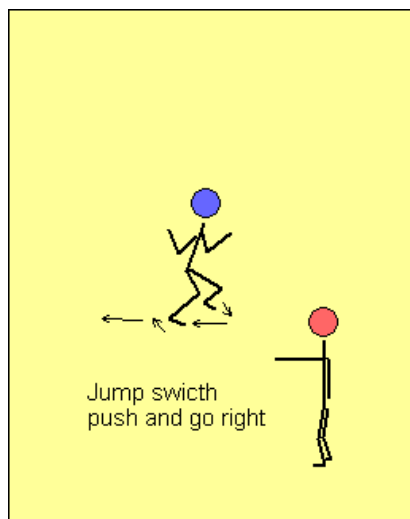


3) Plyo Step

Players need to work on creating a push foot by taking a quick "plyo" step with the foot opposite the direction he/she wishes to move. Here are some break down drills to work on this skill.

Jump Switch

Line up with the toes of one foot touching the far edge of the line and the other toes touching the edge closest to the player's body. When the coach says "switch" the players switch the position of the feet. They should keep the slight stagger. The coach now asks the players to go as fast as they can. When he/she says "stop" the players stop. Do they still have the slight stagger?



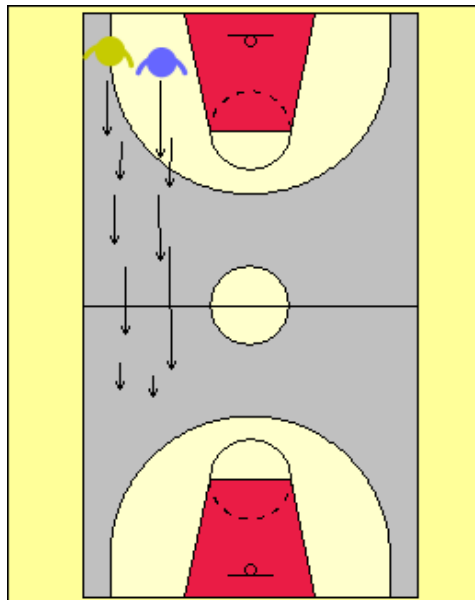
4) Jump switch and go

In this drill the coach points in a give direction. When he/she says go the player does the quick jump switch to push off with the foot in the opposite direction. Note the players can:

- slide
- run with a cross over step
- run leading with the same foot

Mirror the pace of the defender

Defenders must learn how to mirror the actions of the offensive player. This simple drill helps the player's discovery what is important. It is crucial in all of these drills that the coach takes the time to debrief the athletes to help them remember the key lessons learned.



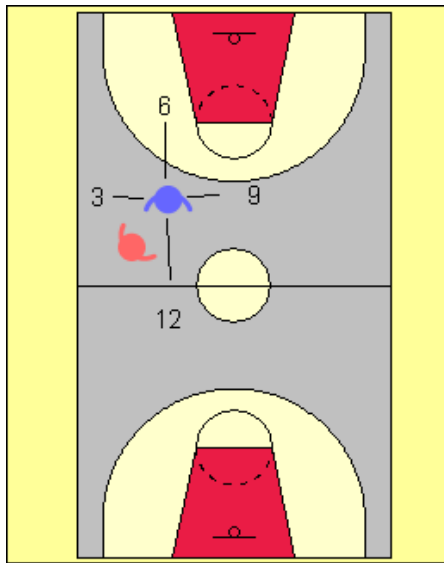
5) Cops and robbers

This is a great little game to teach players how to mirror the pace of the offensive player. It also works the offensive player on how changing pace can shake a defender.

The player chosen as leader move forward in a straight line By using the three paces (walk, jog run) and stopping he/she attempts to get the defender to pass in front. Every time this happens a point is scored. When the players get to the other end they switch roles.

Load

- run on the other side
- add the basketball
- monitor the speeds. Be sure the offense works on adding a variety of speeds.
- allow fakes
- allow changes of direction - you need lots of room be aware of others.

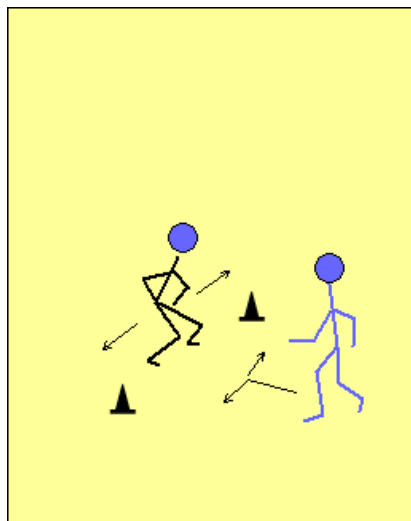


6) Stay in the clock

Visualize the offensive player standing on a clock. The defender wants to be in a good low stance and close enough to touch the lead hip of the offensive player. As the offensive player moves forward the defender must attempt to stay in the 1/4 of the clock from 12 to 3. The ideal is on the number 1 and 2. This is teaching the player to channel or force an offensive player to move in a certain direction. The drill is the same as cops and robbers. A point for every time the player leaves the quadrant.

Load

- work in the other front quadrant
- add the ball
- allow changes of direction



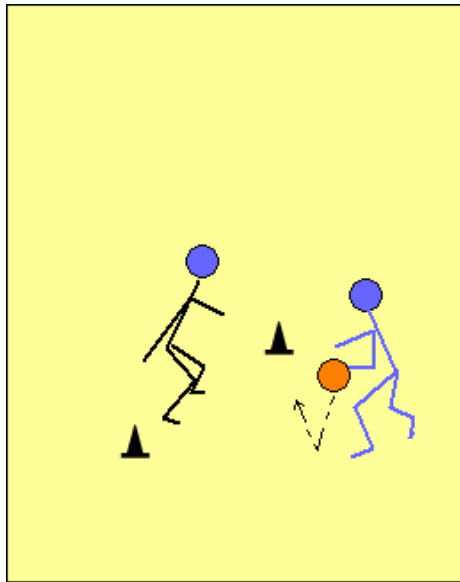
7) Turning

The player's partner up with two pylons (if you don't have pylons use a line on the floor. Badminton court lines work very well). The offensive player is working on change of speed, change of direction and fakes to get between the two pylons. The defense is working on keeping his/her chest in front of the offensive player. Make them change direction.

You can go for a length of time or a certain number of times. Score a point for the offense every time he/she gets two feet passed the pylon. Put a time limit on the offense to allow the defense to have another way to score.

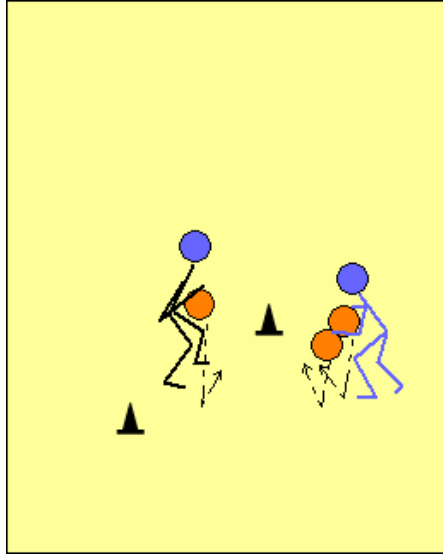
In this example we have made it even more difficult on the defense by having him/her grab onto their shorts.

It is important to use questions to guide the defender and the offensive player into discovering what works best.



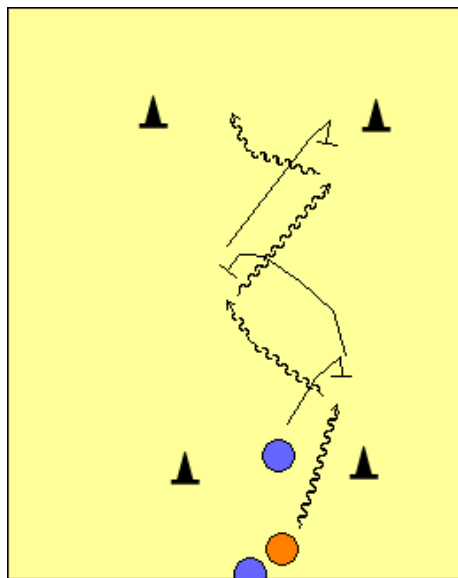
8) Loading the drill

The second progression is to add a ball to the offensive player. In this case the defender is not grabbing onto his/her shorts. Make the offensive player turn and change direction.



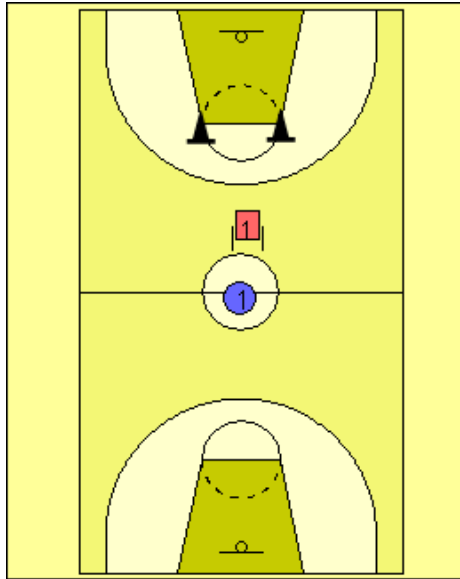
9) Improve ball handling

A great way to work on ball handling is to have the offensive player dribble two balls and the defender one ball.



10) Turn three times

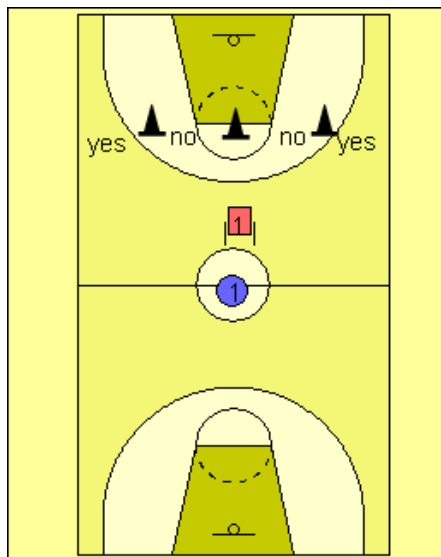
We now give the players a rectangle to dribble in. badminton courts work for this or the key. The defender is trying to turn the offensive player three times before he/she reaches the end of the rectangle. You can vary the number of turns required.



11) Channeling

We now take the drill full court. Player #1 starts in the centre circle. X1 starts on the perimeter of the jump circle. With no ball involved X1 must keep #1 from running between the pylons at the foul line (you can narrow the pylons if you wish). To make it harder on the defense make the players grab the shorts. The next progression is to add the ball.

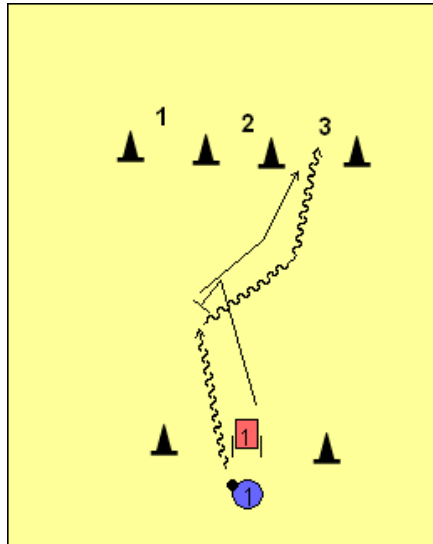
Ask questions to guide the players. They will eventually learn it is easier to start on an angle and allow the offensive player to start running in one direction. The defense needs to stay in front of the hip. The offense will also discover that changing speeds, changing direction and fakes makes them tougher to guard. In fact you can restrict the offense by only allowing change of direction or change of speed.



12) Channel

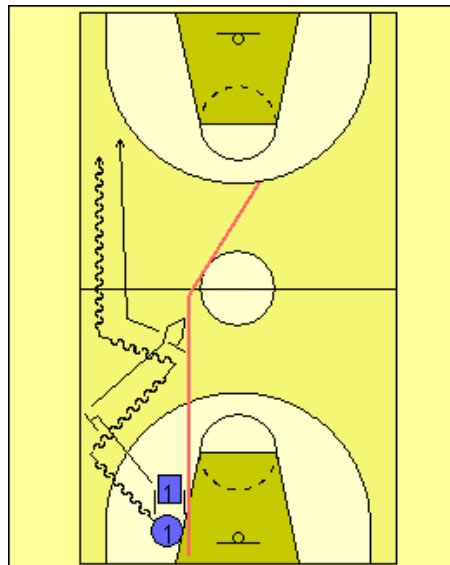
We now give the defense a reward for channeling the defense to the outside. Start with no ball.

Please note that this is a very difficult drill with out the ball, but players will gain confidence once the ball is added.



13) Channel plus turn

We now combine the two concepts. The coach tells the defense which hole he/she is to make the defense to go through. The offense does not know. Like a sheep dog the defender works to maneuver the sheep into the corral.



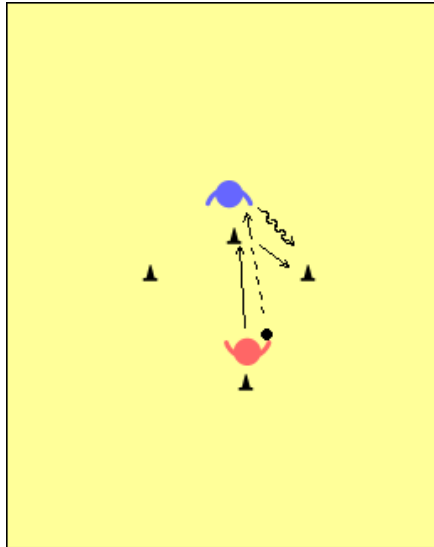
14) Turn two times channel to the side

The final piece is to move the drill to the full court. The goals are:

- to force the player to dribble to the sideline first
- to turn the dribble twice in the back court
- to make the dribbler cross half at the side line

- to make the offense attack the basket from the wing position not the middle of the floor.

The defense can score a total of four points each possession. One point for each of the goals.



10) Close out

This drill is used to help the defender learn to close out and turn the offensive player from moving forward. Force the offensive to move in circles not straight lines.

The defender passes the ball to the offense and sprints under control. Use a stutter to decelerate.

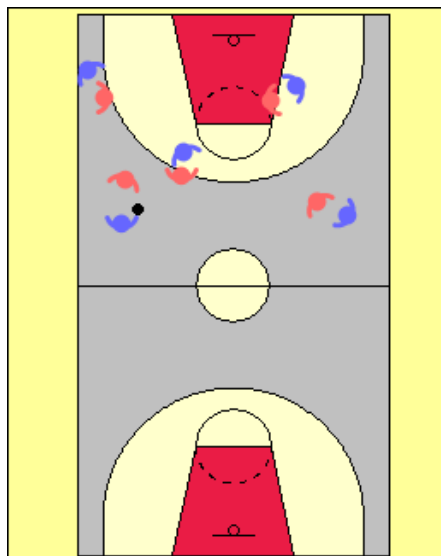
The offense then dribbles at one of the pylons. The defender mirrors this action

Load

- make it a game - the offense scores by getting between the pylons

- allow fakes

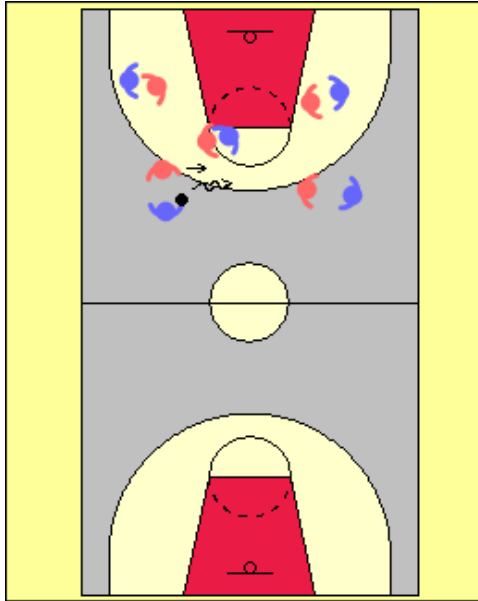
- have the defense channel the player toward one of the pylons



10) Games approach

One of the best ways to teach both offensive and defensive concepts is by playing the game of basketball with restrictions. Here we are playing 5 on 5. The rule is no dribbling. The offense can score a point every time they complete a pass and there is no immediate ball pressure within one second. If the offense is weak give them an advantage of an extra player. This forces the defense to rotate and communicate. Also the offense is working on finding the open player.

This is excellent also to teach control offense where players must work to get open and pass vs. pressure.



11) Games approach

In the second version the offensive player must make a decision within one second of catching the ball. The defense must still apply ball pressure immediately. This forces the defender to be able to react to the dribble from the close out. You may have to give the offense an extra player with younger kids until their passing and scanning skills improve.