

Ettore Messina: My Favorite Drills

Purpose on Defense:

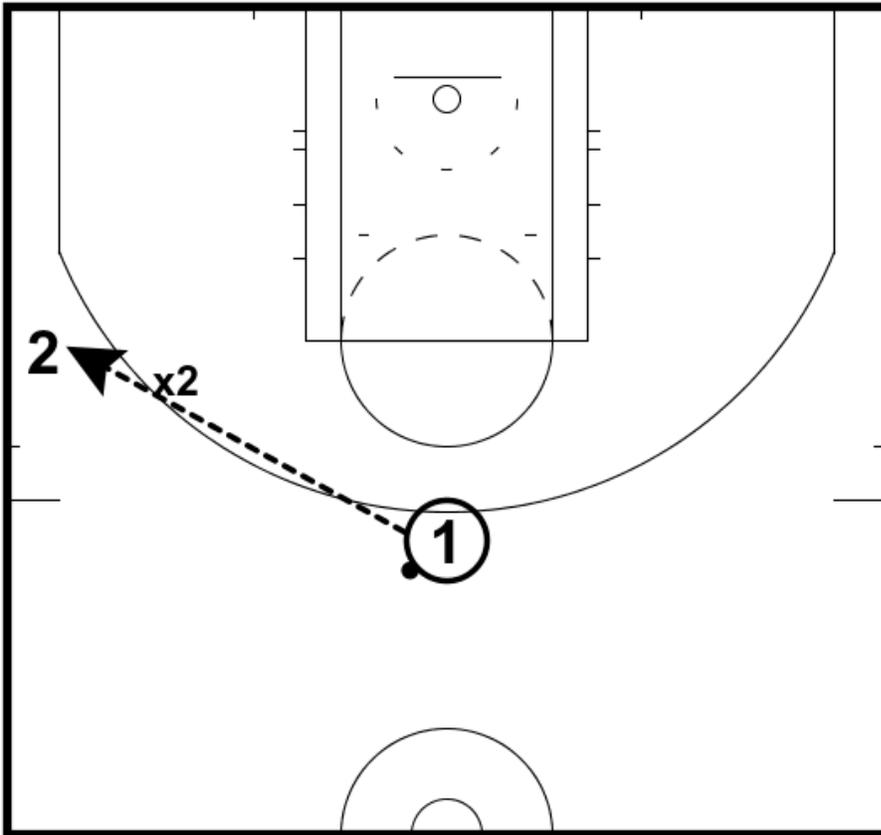
- “Don’t let the opponent do what they want to do”
- You must first understand and anticipate what the offense is going to do
- Understand that:
 - The offensive player will often look right at the person they are going to pass to
 - The offensive player doesn’t change direction well, so force them to crossover
- We talk about basketball IQ, what is it?
 - Understanding the game and anticipating the action
 - When developing the player, first develop their understanding of the game then develop their technical skills
- A few things Messina commits to defensively:
 - Don’t want to give up fastbreak points, especially layups.
 - “If you cut this off, you can hold teams to under 60 points”
 - Don’t want to give up offensive rebounds.
 - Don’t want to give up open 3PT shots.
 - Run players off the 3PT line and make them beat you with midrange pullup jumpshots.
 - Run players off the 3PT line, and make them pass to their teammates, which in Messina’s opinion is the weakest fundamental in modern basketball.

Off Ball Defense:

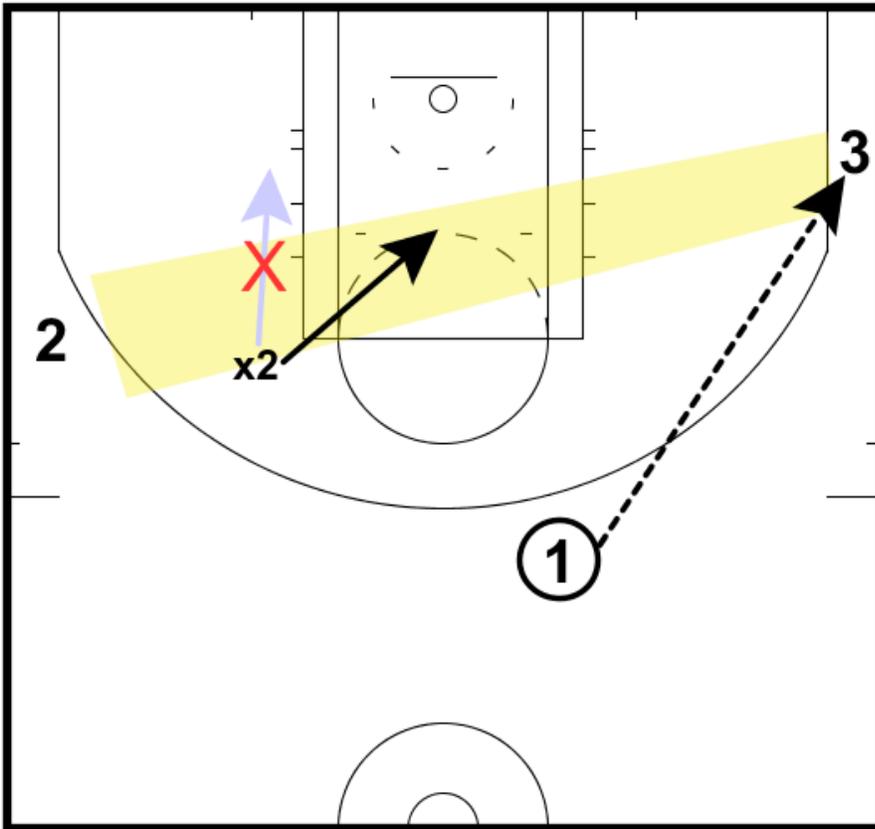
- Do you want “up the line” or “between the man and the basket”?
 - Must adapt your entire defensive system to that concept
- Messina wants his players to jump to the ball and play up the line, in a ball-you-man alignment.
 - Why play defense this way?
 - Prevent pass and face cut
 - Ready to accept a backscreen. You can see it coming better plus it allows you to go ball side of the backscreen to catch up with your assignment.
 - Ball cannot be easily passed to your man.
 - You don’t want your man to easily catch in an operational area and feed a post player sealing on the triangle pass.
 - “Defensively, we want to cut the triangle.”
 - If playing “up the line” the player has to catch the ball higher and now you disrupt their flow.
 - Discourages early penetrating drives.

- Players must move when the ball is in the air, so they get to their final, proper position when the ball arrives at the receiver.
- The line of the ball
 - Proper positioning = line of the pass + line of the ball (Diag. 1)
 - Drop diagonally, always staying close to the passing line. Don't drop straight back, it allows too easy of a skip pass and tough recovery. (Diag.2)
 - Make the player you are defending move to a new point higher on the court and closer to an area where you can recover faster in the event of a skip pass.

Diag.1- Proper Positioning
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Diag. 2 - Drop Diagonally
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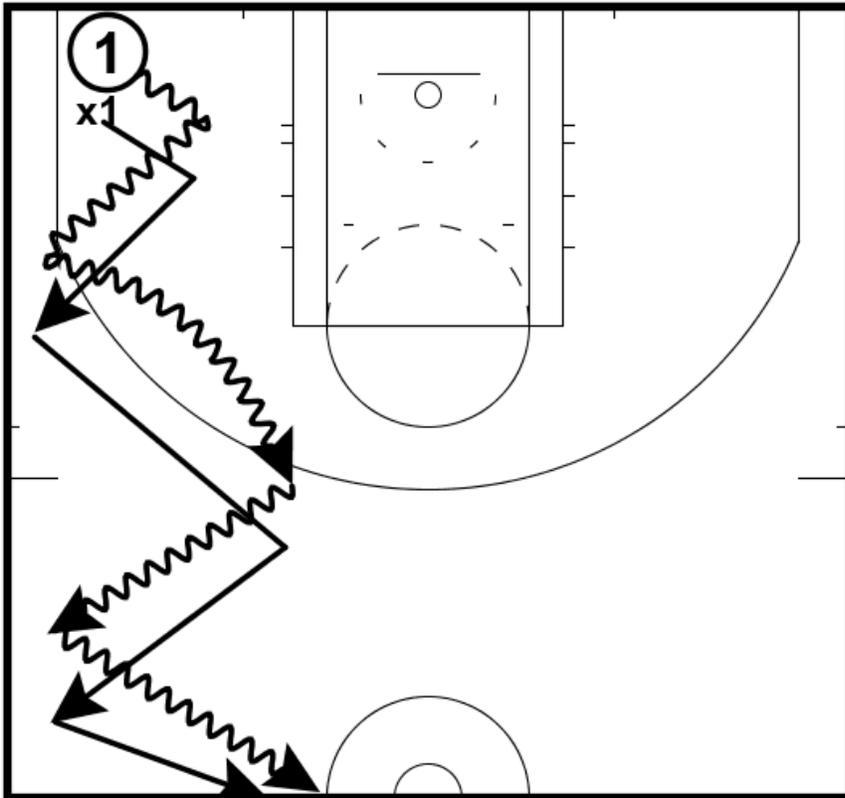
Teaching Points for Shell Drill:

- You can't watch everything as a solo coach, so stand on the baseline, underneath the basket.
- 1st Priority is to see at least one defender inside the paint at all times.
- Instruct them to freeze when you blow your whistle, allowing you to correct and check body positioning.
- 2nd Priority is to watch to see if the ball and the defender arrive at the same time
 - If defender is late they are susceptible to blow-bys
- You can't control 5 different things as a coach
 - Find in your system what your 2 priorities are
 - Choose two benchmarks that will tell you that your team is playing defense at a high level

Drill 1 – 2 man 1 Ball Zig Zag (Diag. 3):

- Start of the practice drill work
- Works on sliding, defending crossover moves, and closeouts
- This is the regular zig zag defensive drill to halfcourt and back.

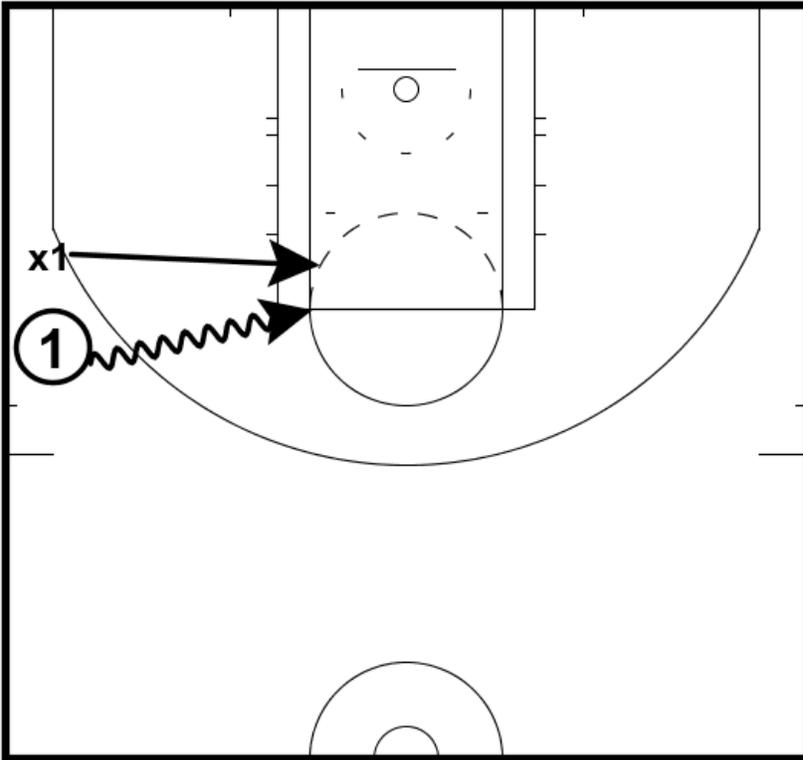
Diag. 3 - Zig Zag Drill
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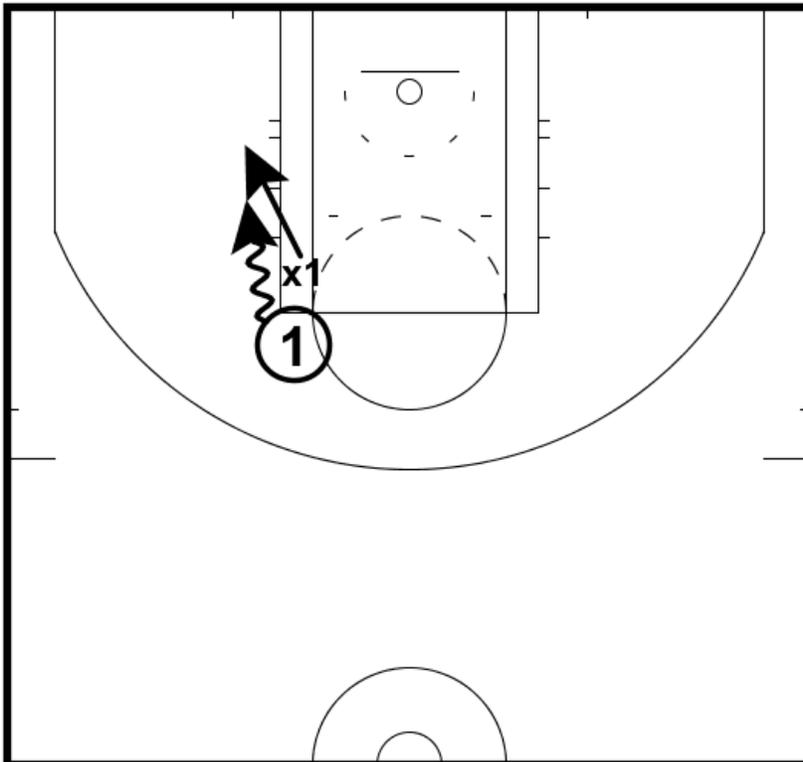
Drill 2 – Sprint Recover into Zig Zag (Diag.4):

- Players start shoulder to shoulder with one player holding a ball. That player begins dribbling straight ahead and the defender must sprint ahead, recover into his stance and then continue to zig zag defensive slide full court.

Diag. 5 - Defending the Crossover Drive
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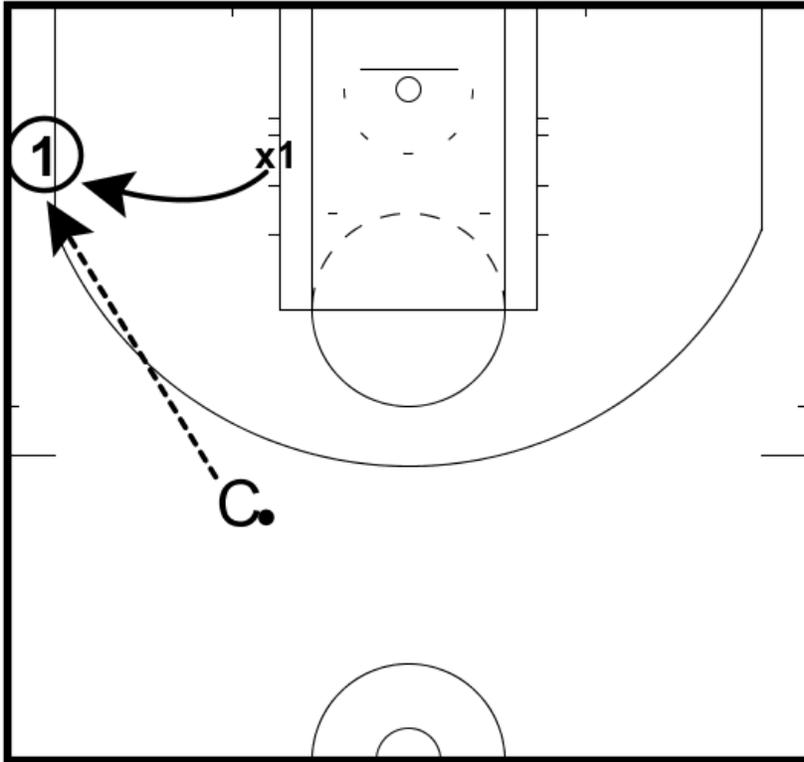
Diag. 5 - Defending the Crossover Drive
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Drill 4 – Closeout Drill (Diag.6):

- Coach passes to player in the corner
- Defender must closeout to a no middle stance
- Offensive player drives or shoots, can play live from the catch, up to you.

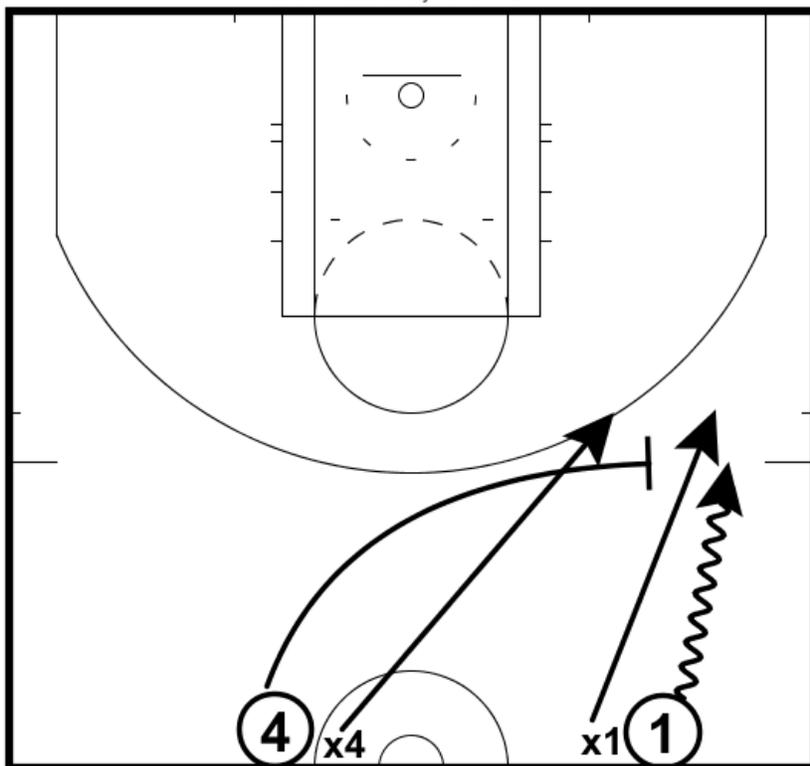
Diag. 6 - Closeout Drill
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Drill 5 – Drag Screen Defense 2on2 (Diag. 7)

- Messina believes in not giving an advantage to the offense in any transition PNR.
- Pick up the ball handler early, far from the 3PT line, so that if the drag screen occurs, the defender can easily go under the screen.
- If you let the ball handler get all the way to the 3PT line you cannot go under the drag on a good shooter.
- Hedge the drag with a little show, enough to make the ball handler dribble away from the basket. Also communicate “Under” to the player defending the ball handler.

Diag. 7 - Drag Screen Defense 2on2
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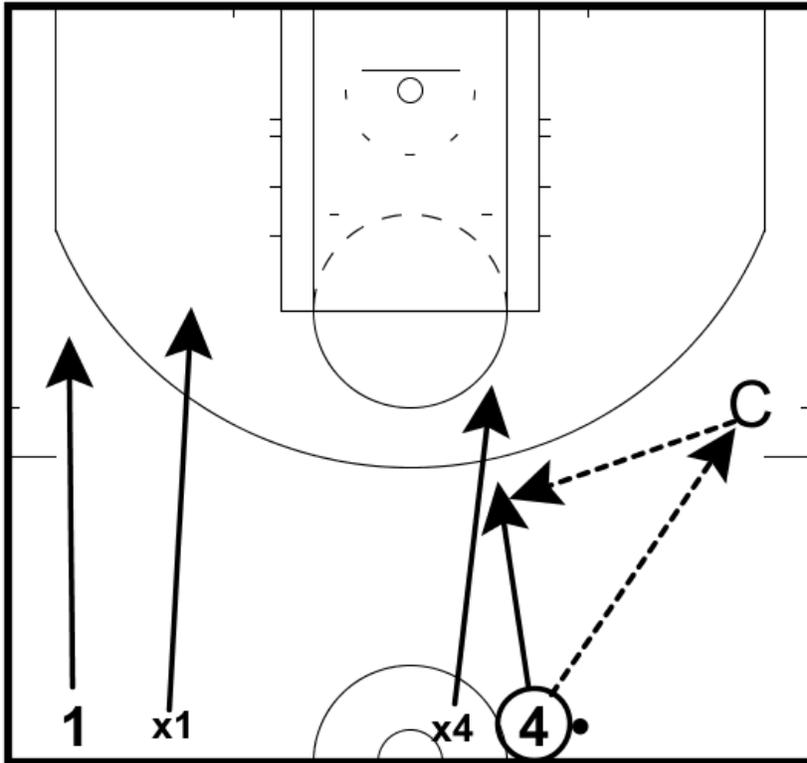


*To encourage talking amongst the players, have a silent portion of the practice where the coaching staff doesn't talk. This way they have to talk and you can hear what they are saying.

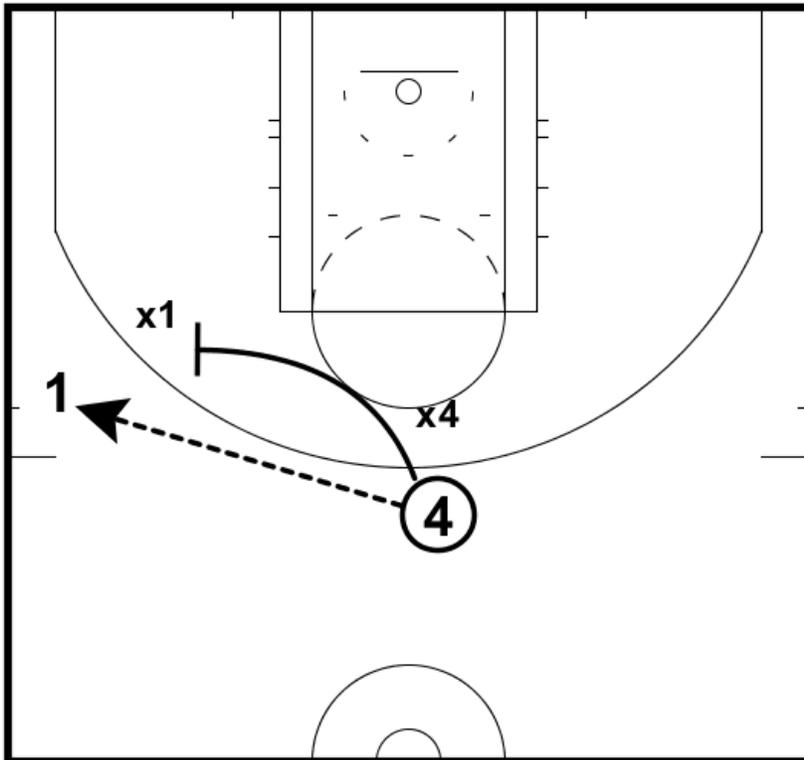
Drill 6 – Transition Side PNR 2on2 (Diag. 8)

- Messina usually switches this Side PNR
- Gives players 10 seconds to play 2on2 after defending the initial action.
- Messina believes in creating quick, dynamic drills where the players go 2on2, with a transition element added to it. Instead of having players standing around and always working in the half court.

Diag. 8 - Transition Side PNR 2on2
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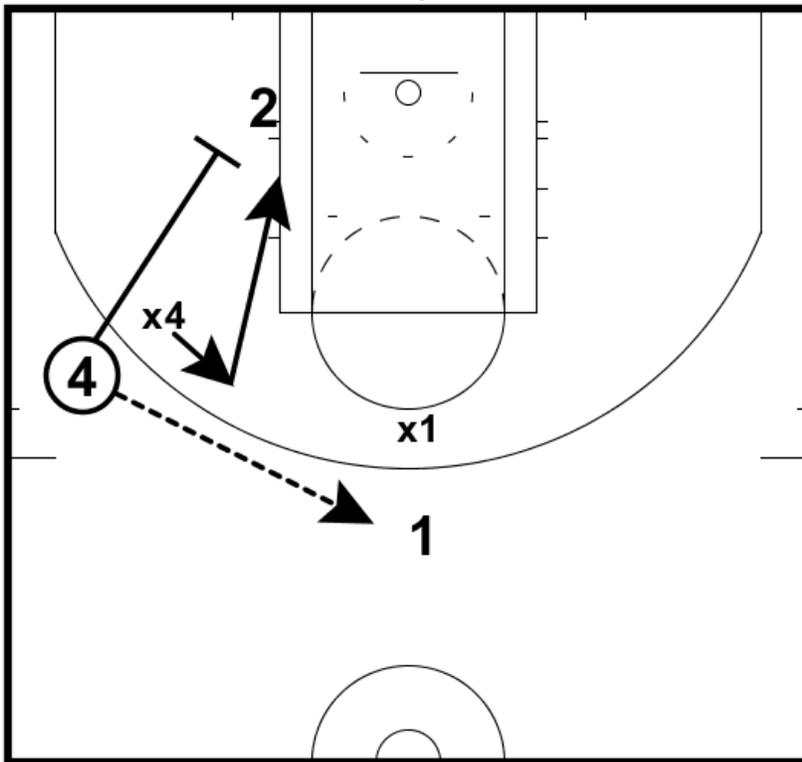
Diag. 8 - Transition Side PNR 2on2
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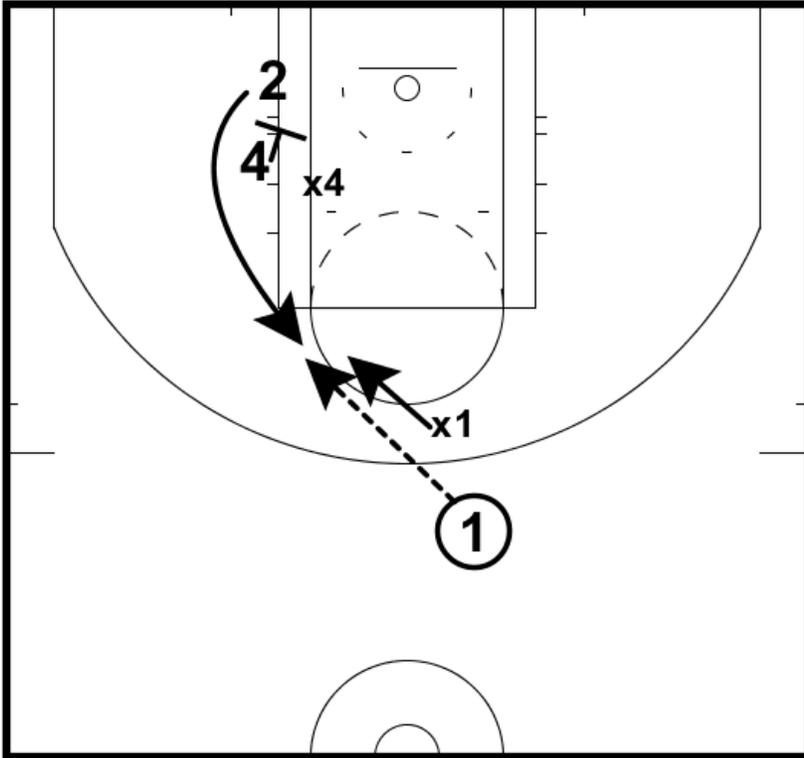
Drill 7 – 3on2 Defend the Curl /Weakside Rebounding (Diag.9):

- Start with player 4 passing to the top. X4 jumps to the ball and then gets ready to defend the curl.
- 4 screens down for 2, who doesn't have any defense on him. 1 passes to 2 curling to the elbow, because X4 showed on the screen.
- On the pass, X1 jumps to the ball and discourages the catch and shoot by 2.
- 2 makes a pass back to 1 who spaces out. 1 shoots while X1 closes out. Once 2 makes the pass he becomes a defender and helps rebound with X4.
- X4 and 4 battle for weakside rebounding position.
- If the defense gets a rebound, they go transition 3 on 2 the other way.

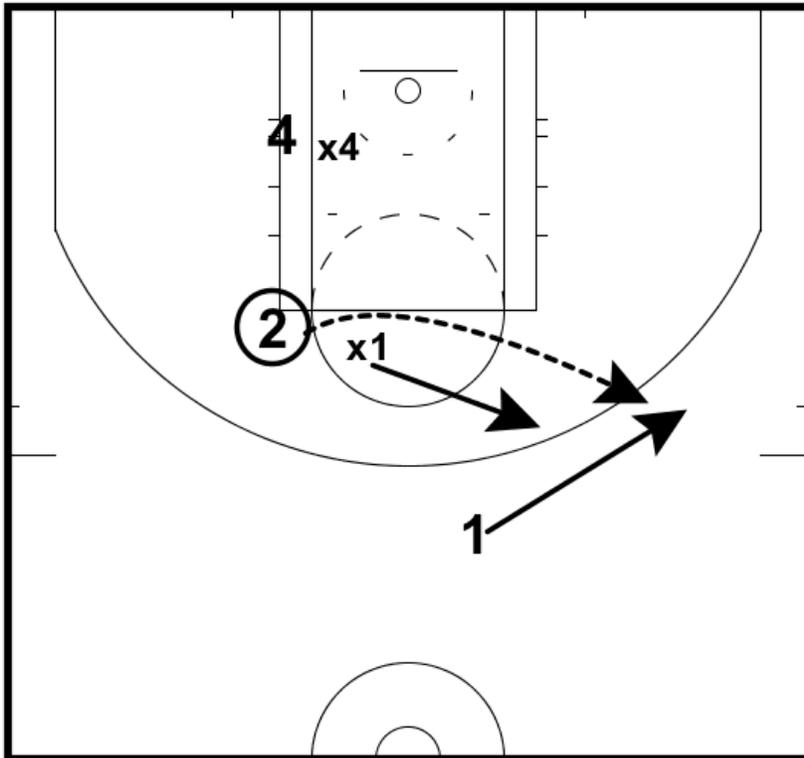
Diag. 9 - 3on2 Defend Curl/Weakside Rebounding
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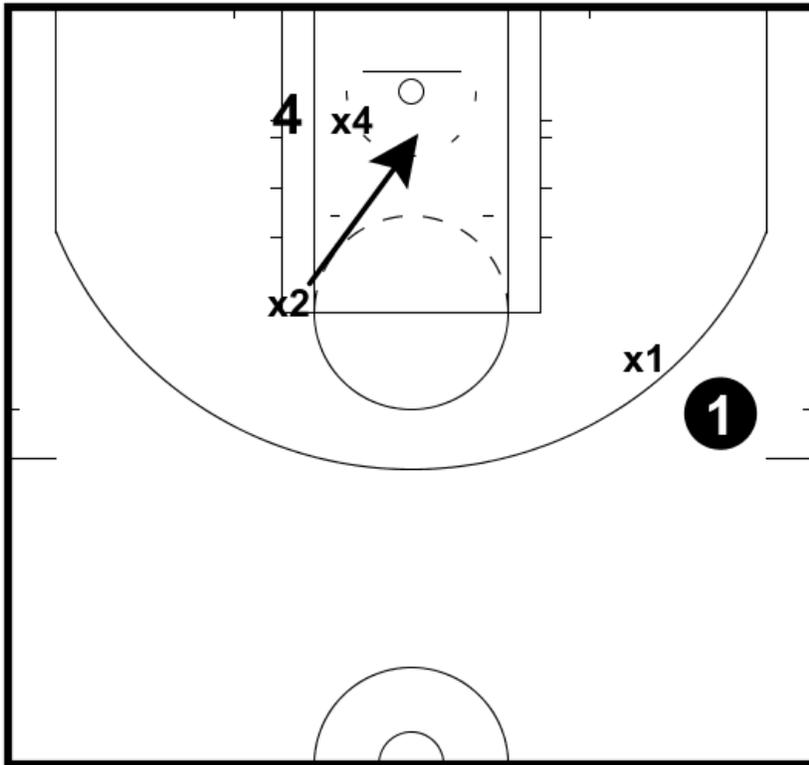
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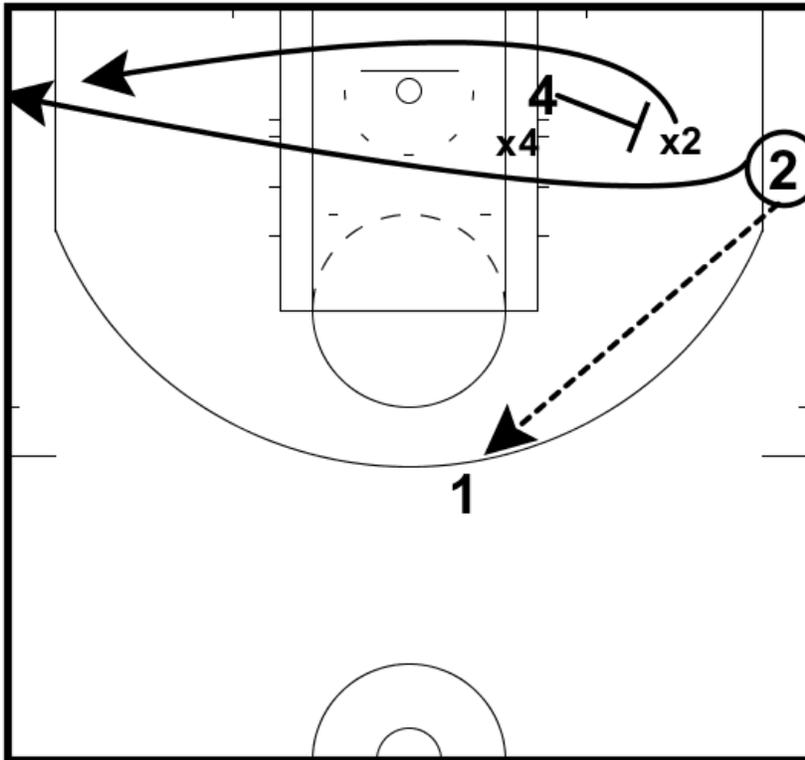
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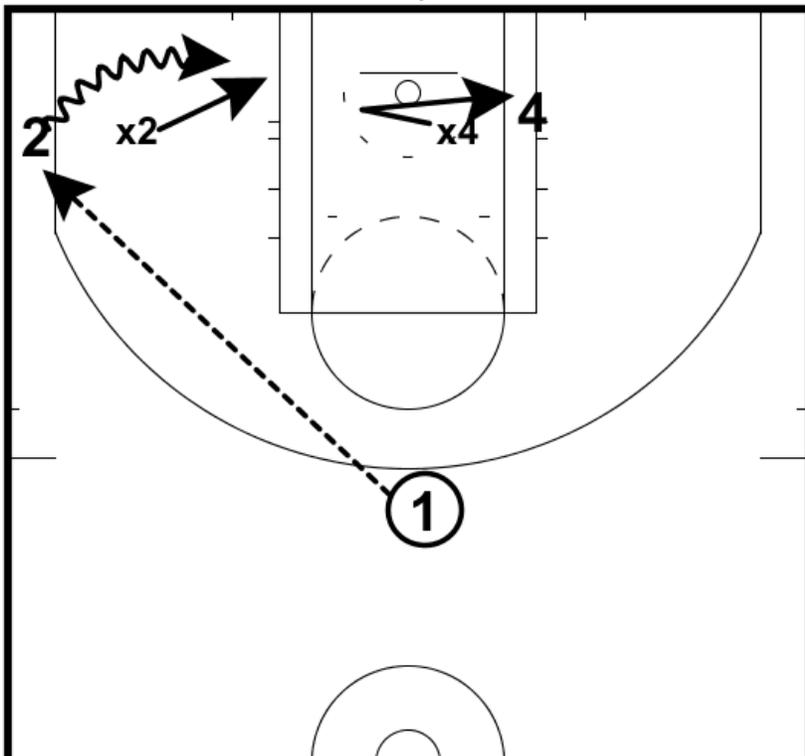
Drill 8 – Baseline Drive, Help and Recover/Weakside Rebounding (Diag.10):

- Player 2 has the ball and passes it up top to 1. 2 receives a backscreen from 4,
- 2 runs through to the other corner. X2 and X4 work to defend the backscreen.
- 1 passes to 2 on the wing. 4 stays weakside.
- 2 drives baseline and shoots a pullup. X4 must show himself a little on the baseline drive depending on how deep the offensive player gets.
- On the pass to 2, player 1 becomes a defender and drops into help .
- X4 and X1 work to rebound and then transition 3on2 the other way.
- Note:
 - If you get caught under the rim as a defensive rebounder, just box or push your man further out of bounds. You both will be out of the play and let the other guards rebound the ball and go.
- When conducting these sort of drills, don't let your players only focus on the end result of the action. The entire drill needs proper defensive and offensive execution like it's a game. Regardless if the emphasis is on help defense and weakside rebounding.

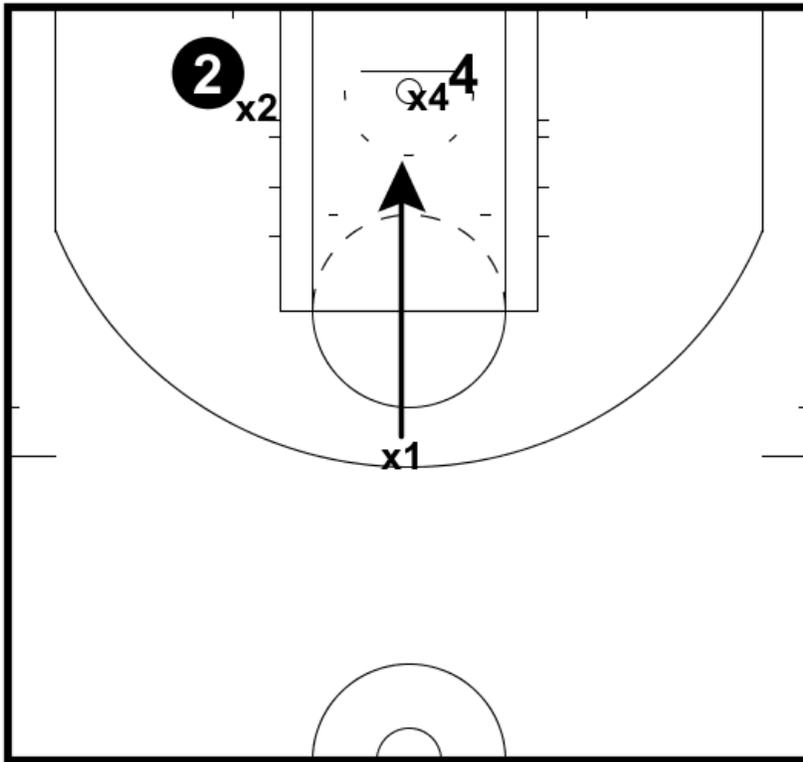
Diag. 10 - 3on2 Baseline Drive/Weakside Rebounding
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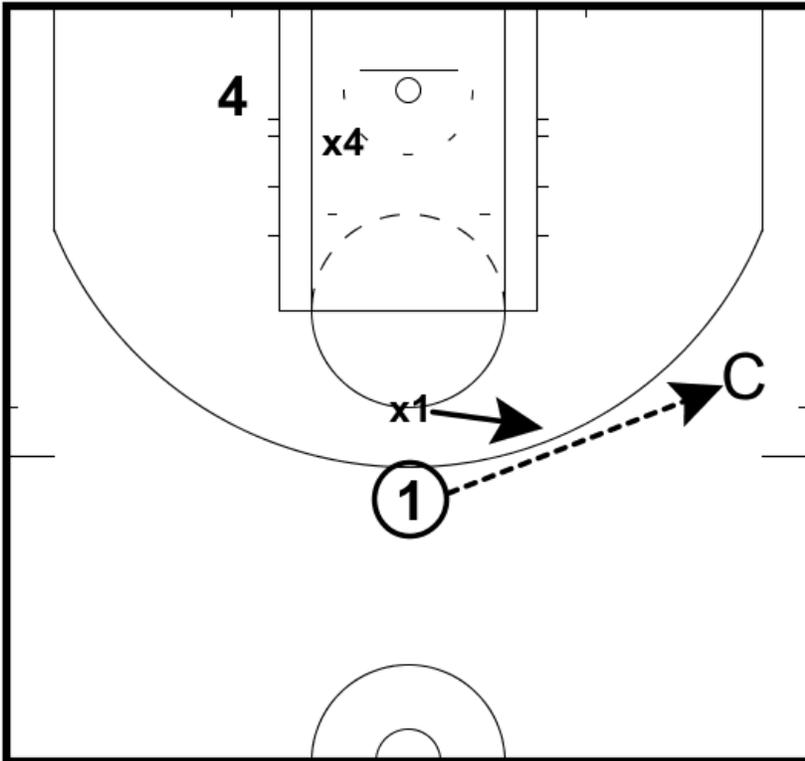
Diag. 10 - 3on2 Baseline Drive/Weakside Rebounding
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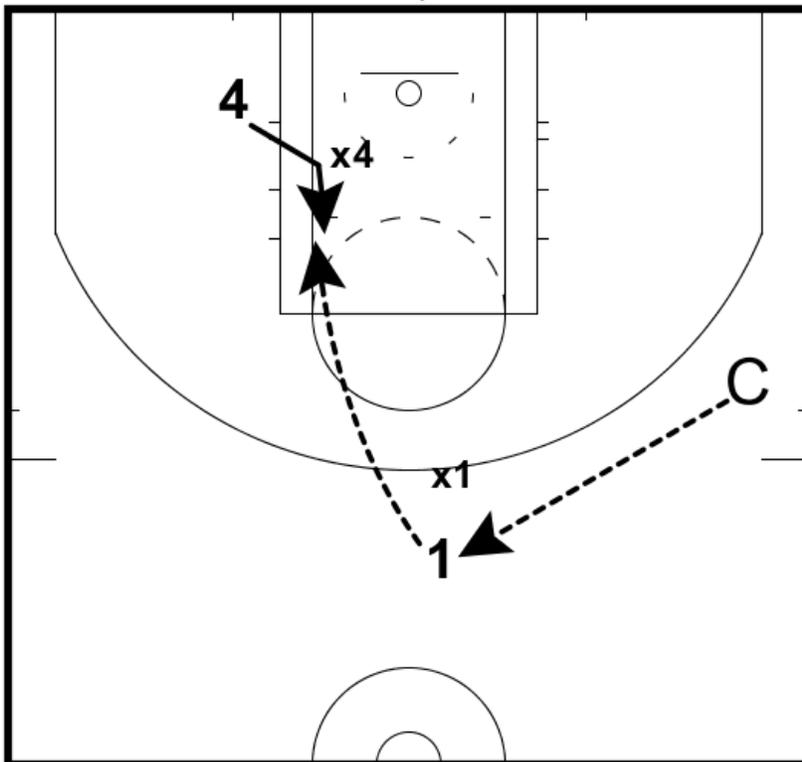
Drill 9 – Defending the Duck in/ Triangle Pass (Diag.11):

- Player 1 passes to coach on the wing. X1 jumps to the ball.
- Make player 1 catch out further. On air time of the pass back up top, the post player 4 ducks in.
- X4 must battle and play top side.
- If there is no pass into the post, play live 2on2.

Diag. 11 - 2on2 Defending the Duckin/Triangle Pass
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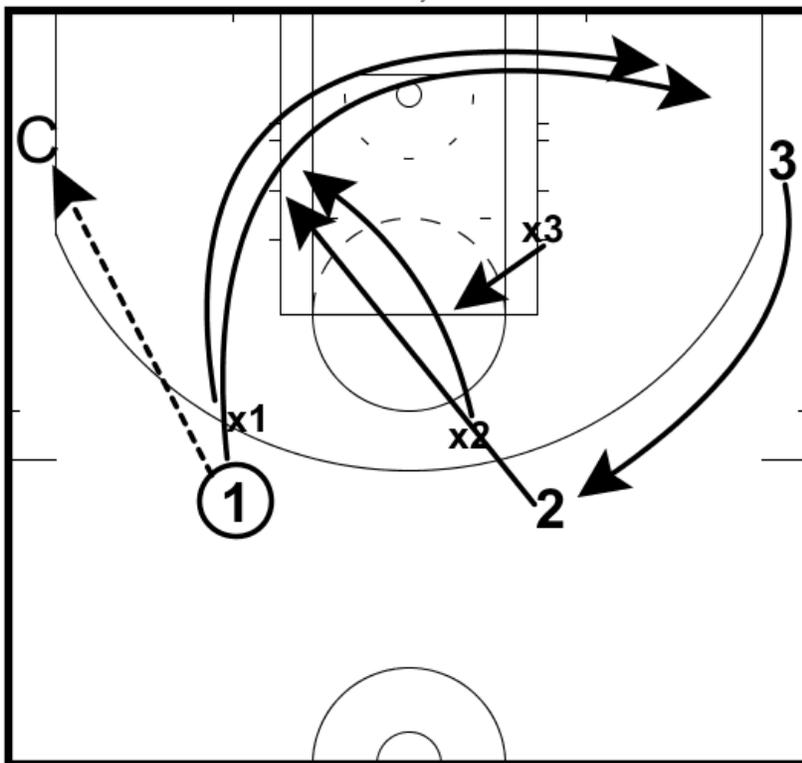
Diag. 11 - 2on2 Defending the Duckin/Triangle Pass
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Drill 10 – 3on3 Shell with Movement (Diag.12):

- First pass goes to the wing, everyone adjusts their positioning defensively.
- Then 1 cuts all the way through. Don't allow face cut.
- 2 flashes to ball side post.
- 3 fills up top.
- Coach makes any pass and then it is live.
- Same points of emphasis:
 - Have at least one defender in the paint at all times
 - Arrive at the same time as the ball
 - Anticipate the action by reading the body positioning of the player with the ball

Diag. 12 - 3on3 Shell with Movement
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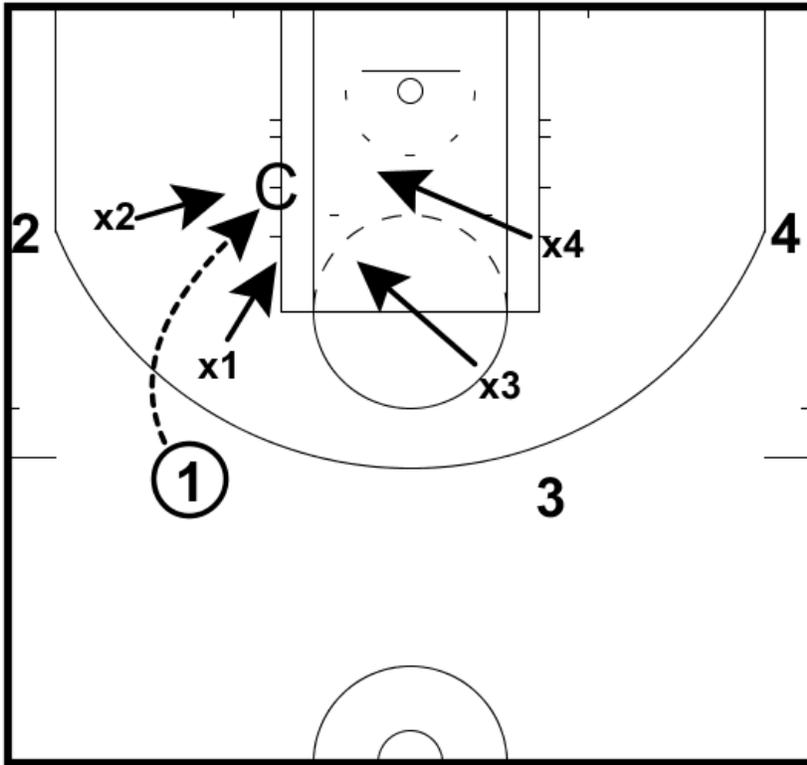


Drill 11 – 4on4 Shell Shrink and Spread (Diag.13):

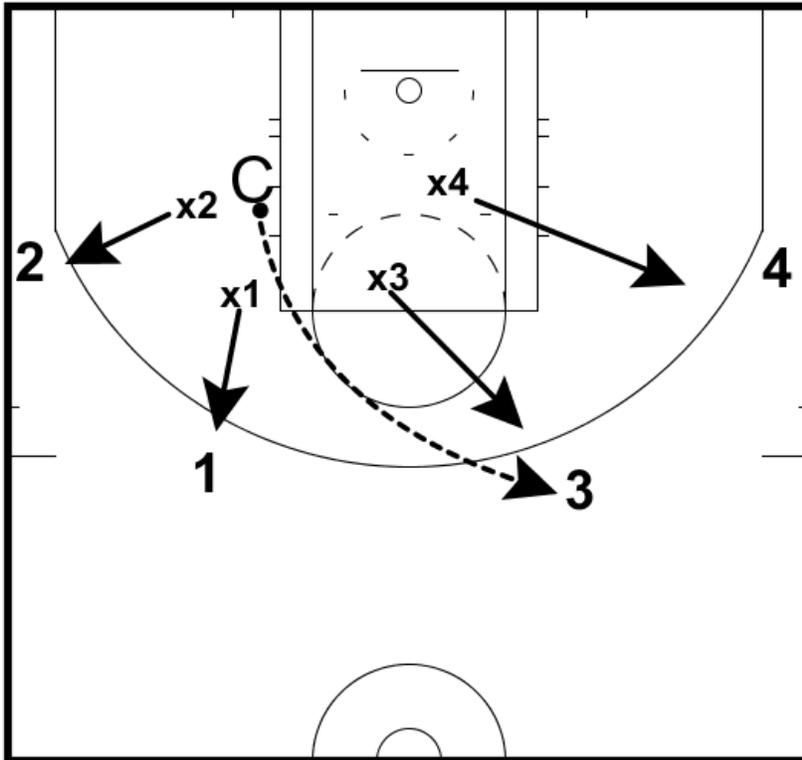
- Pass into coach in the post when he calls for it
- The entire defense must shrink and cover down on the post.
- Coach makes a pass back out to the perimeter; the entire defense must reposition and spread out. Live from there, must block out and rebound.
- Progression:
 - When coach passes the ball back out, the offensive player must make a pass to a teammate and that teammate must penetrate. Live action from there.

*"Good defense must know when to be aggressive and when to be containing".

Diag. 13 4on4 Shrink and Spread
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Diag. 13 4on4 Shrink and Spread
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Drill 12: 5on5 Stop-Score-Stop

- Regular full court 5on5 but the drill ends only when a team gets a defensive stop, then follows with a score or foul, then another stop.

Drill 13: 5on5 Defensive Validation

- Regular 5on5 full court.
- Play to 5 points or 7 points.
- The only way a team scores is if they make a free throw or field goal then get a defensive stop on the next possession after scoring.
- For example:
 - Team A hits a 3PT. The score is now temporarily 3 to 0. Team A now has to stop Team B on the next possession. If Team B scores, Team A does not get those 3 points.

*Playing scrimmage games like this automatically puts the emphasis on defense without telling the players directly we are working on defense today.