



JIM HUBER'S 11 DEFENSE DRILLS



ebook

Introduction



In the following ebook, you will find eleven great defensive drills to build a better defense from coach Jim Huber.

- 11 Defensive Drills
- Special Bonus: Step By Step Outline For Developing Your Defense

If you want to learn how to develop a man to man defense step by step from the ground up, check out [Jim Huber's Man to Man Defense](#).

The video and ebooks will give you the defense, details, and explanations that you need before teaching your defense.

<https://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/pr/huber-defense.html>

About Jim Huber



Some of Jim Huber's credentials include:

- Over 20 years of basketball coaching experience at the youth, high school, and college levels.
- Coached a team to a 1st place finish at the 2013 Nike Global Challenge.
- Coached at the Nike Elite 100 Camp which selects the top 100 high school players.
- #1 Team Defense at 2013 Nike EYBL which has the top 40 Nike High School teams from North America and consists of 18 regular season games. Qualified for 2013 Nike Peach Jam.
- A head coach for Mogan Basketball. Mogan is a direct Nike sponsor program. In 2012 when Coach Huber was Director of Basketball Operations, Mogan reached the Final Four at the Peach Jam, which only selects the top 24 teams from the Nike Elite Youth Basketball League (EYBL).
- 45 Championships, 13 Runner-up Finishes, and 26 Final Four Finishes at regional and national tournaments since 2004.
- 42 Collegiate players and 22 at Division 1 level.

Progression 2: The offense goes “live” immediately on the catch.

Points of Emphasis:

- **Sprint To Eliminate Offensive Advantage** – Defensive players should sprint on the close outs. The quicker you can contest a shot and immediately get into a balanced position to eliminate dribble penetration, the less of an advantage the offense will have.
- **Hands Up** – Depending on your preference, either have one hand or two hands up to contest the shot and immediate entry passes from the offensive player.
- **Position Appropriately** – Whether you believe in getting the defender’s butt to the basket or forcing the offensive player in a particular direction, be sure to position yourself appropriately. Bad positioning will create easy driving opportunities for the offense.
- **Practice Good Offensive Habits** – Make sure we emphasis the little things in every drill. Is the offense coming forward to catch the pass? Or are we being lazy, standing still waiting on the pass? Just because the focus of a drill is defensive, don’t let little things slide with the offensive players. If you let little things slide in practice, you’ll end up getting beat by little things in games.

Variations:

Loser Stays On Defense – If the offense scores, the defender must stay on defense until they get a stop. You can rotate the offensive player each repetition.

Add Passer – So the defender doesn’t know when the pass is going to occur, you can have the coach, manager, or other players pass. This will improve anticipatory skills and reaction speed for the defender as it emulates what will happen during a game.

Vary The Passing Position – You can also pass from different positions on the floor to close out from different angles and positions like you would during a game. You can also have coaches, managers, or other players act as passers.

Time Clock / Limited Dribbling – You can also have dribble limits and time clocks, so the offense also has to practice good offensive habits.

Coaching Tips:

- **Alternate Sides** – Go side to side for efficiency. When one pair is running live, another pair should be ready to go on the other side.
- **Make Drills Competitive** – Make the drills competitive by having players keep score. Create accountability.

Man In The Hole



Purpose:

Even if you play half court or quarter court defense, this should be a staple for every coach. This is a great 1 on 1 transition drill that works on your ability to stay in front of a ball handler in the open court. You work on the shuffle, the quick turn, running, and the turn and sprint to recover.

Additionally, it's great for conditioning and building mental toughness.

It not only improves your 1v1 full court defense, it improves overall athleticism and conditioning. When you have to shuffle, sprint, change directions over and over, you're going to improve athleticism and reaction time.

Even zone defense coaches use drills like these because of the tremendous benefits that they produce.

Setup:

The ball handler (2) has the ball on the baseline.

The defender (X1) is standing in front of the offensive player ready to play defense.

Instructions:

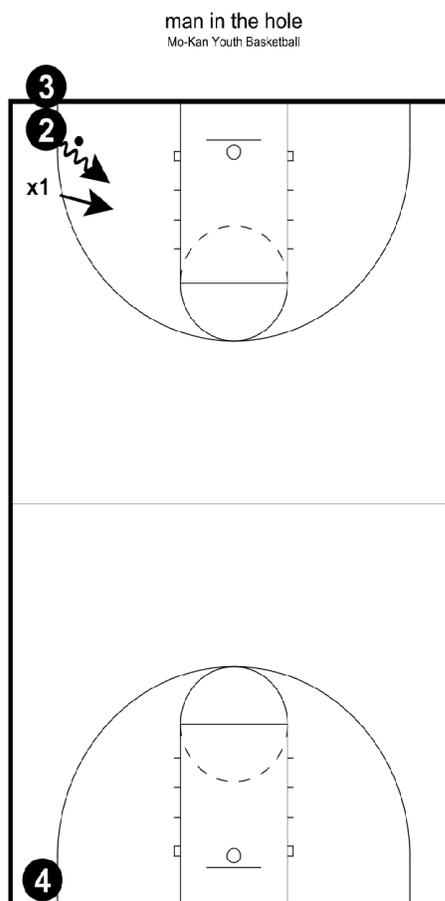
The offensive player (2) tries to beat the defender (X1) down the floor.

The defensive player tries to stop the ball handler from advancing the ball.

After the ball handler (2) makes it to the other end, they will hand off to 4, who will be facing the same defender X1, back up the court towards player 3.

3 is the last ball handler. X1 defends for the third and final time.

X1 is now "out of the hole" and you rotate to the next defender. X1 is now the next ball handler.



Points of Emphasis:

- **Stop The Ball** – The number one goal is to stop the ball from advancing.
- **Push Step & Sprint** – The defensive player should push step (shuffle) and sprint to contain the ball handler. If the defender gets beat, they need to turn and sprint to a spot to cut off the ball handler.
- **Offense Practices Good Habits** – The offense also needs to focus on good habits of protecting the ball and using effective change of pace and change of direction moves.
- **Go Back To Where Defender Was Beat** – If the offense gets by the defender, don't let them just turn and jog to the other baseline. Have the defender and offensive player go back to where they got beat. This will ensure focus and effort to stop the ball.

Coaching Tips:

- **Encourage Players** – Encouragement and energy from the Coach can help keep a player going in a drill like this. Get involved and work with them!
- **Split The Court** – Be sure to split the court into alleys. You can set up three to four alleys on each court. This allows you to work the entire team with this drill. You can use cones or other lines on the court.

1 On 1 To 3 On 3 Full Court



Purpose:

Being able to defend the ball in a one on one situation is vital. However, you need to have the capability to transition into help defense in a team setting!

This drill is about building great 1on1 full court defense habits and transitioning into a half court setting. Then you work on all other aspects of your defense. Defending cuts, screens, getting into help position, stopping dribble penetration, etc. 3v3 defensive drills are also great because it's tougher to defend the entire court with three players than with five players like during a game.

Additionally, the offense learns how to handle the ball under pressure and improve passing.

Setup:

You have the ball handler start on the baseline. You have the defender guarding them.

Two offensive players and two defensive players are set up on the opposite end of the floor.

Instructions:

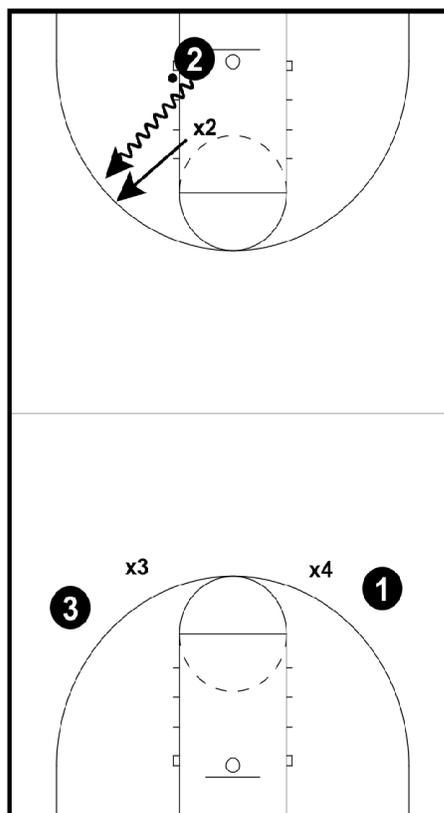
The defense's goal is to get a stop. Their goal is to only allow one shot each possession. The offense's goal is to score.

The ball handler (2) advances the ball and tries to beat the defender (X2).

Once the ball is dribbled past half court, it is a "live" 3 on 3 situation.

After each possession, the defense turns to offense. Then they check the ball on the baseline and start over.

man in the hole
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Points of Emphasis:

- **Contain Ball** – Your goal as a defender now is contain the ball. You do not allow straight line drives. You want to stay between your player and the basket!
- **Wing Defenders Deny Pass** – Defenders X3 and X4 are going to deny the pass on the wing and make it difficult to catch.
- **Help And Recover** – The defenders have to be ready to help and recover should the ball handler get past the initial defender.
- **Help Across Not Up** – If the ball handler beats the initial defender, the other defender, X3, is going to have to find a way to help slow the ball to give the recovering teammate time to get back. They should help “across” from their own player and keep the ball and their player in their line of sight. Try to stop the ball on the same level as your own player if possible. Helping “up” the court from your player in this situation will lead to the easy bucket on the lob ahead.
- **Force Contested Jump Shots / No Lay Ups** – Your Goal? Do not let the other team score! You do that by keeping the ball as far away from the basket as possible. Lay ups are NOT allowed! You want a contested jump shot as far from the basket as possible, with as much pressure and difficulty as possible.

Variations:

Force Turns Prior To Half Court – If you want to make the drill really challenging for the full court defender, you can reward them for the number of times that they force the ball handler to stop and change directions. Each change of direction is worth one point. Once they reach half court, it goes back to playing defense straight up.

Also, this can be a similar strategy to use against teams that lack effective ball handlers or if you have some superb 1 on 1 full court defenders.

Defense Stops – One effective tactic to get players to focus on the defensive end is to only allow them to transition to offense by getting a defensive stop. If they don't get a stop, a new group of defenders comes in to stop the ball. If you score on offense, you stay on the court.

Winner Stays – You can set up teams of three and play to a determined amount of points. The winners stay on the court.

4 On 4 Shell Drill



Purpose:

The shell drill is a great tool for teaching your defense. From a big picture perspective, you can quickly teach your players exactly what your team defense should look like.

You can practice all of your defensive concepts in a team situation. You work on ball defense, being in a great stance, closing out, jumping to the ball, sprinting areas, and other key defensive concepts.

You can practice defending any situation. You can practice defending all types of cuts, screens, and offensive actions. You can practice defending basket cuts, backdoor cuts, flare cuts, down screens, ball screens, back screen, staggered screens, horns sets, Princeton sets, etc.

It's also great because it allows you to be efficient with your team. You can have four or five defenders practicing defense all at once.

You can also use the shell drill to work on specific defensive techniques. That way, if you're struggling with a particular offensive action, you can break it down and make sure your players understand how to defend in that situation. Also, you can get a bunch of reps in a short amount of time to solidify their learning.

The following is a beginner progression for teaching the shell drill. You can also see progressions for teaching how to defend down screens and back screens.

Set Up:

You position four or five offense players on the court.

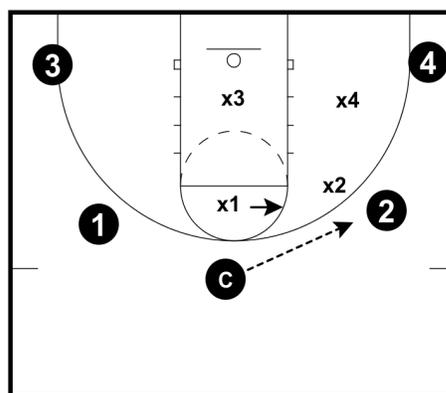
You position a defender guarding each offensive player.

4 on 4 Shell Drill
Man to Man Defense - Huber

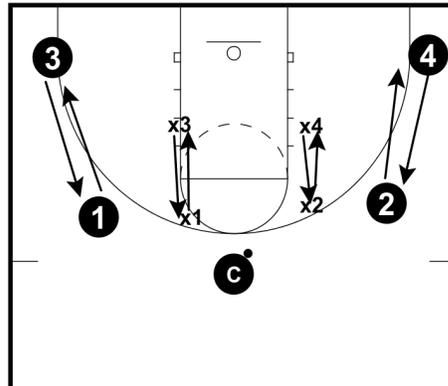
Instructions:

Progression 1 – Positioning

When you instruct, "Pass." Offense passes the ball. You look for correct help positioning, proper close outs, appropriate on-ball defense, and necessary effort.



4 on 4 Shell Drill
Man to Man Defense - Huber

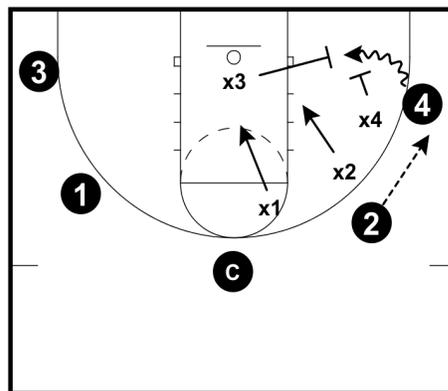


Progression 2 – Interchange

This is the same as progression 1, except now you have the players interchange positions from corner to wing when you instruct, “Interchange.”

This is a great way to get players defending more positions and situations.

4 on 4 Shell Drill
Man to Man Defense - Huber



Progression 3 – Baseline Drive

Now you instruct, “Pass. Skip. Beat Them. Pass Out.”

“Pass” indicates that you pass to the person next to you.

“Skip” indicates you pass to the player two people away from you.

“Beat Them” means that you drive baseline to force help. At first, the on-ball defender will let the ball handler go to practice rotations.

“Pass Out or Kick Out” means that after the baseline drive, the ball handler turns and passes the ball back out to a perimeter player.

Progression 4 – Live

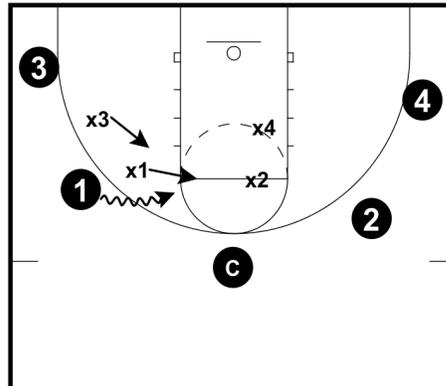
You take the defense through the same baseline drive routine as progression 3.

You now instruct, “Live!” This means that the offense and defense play basketball.

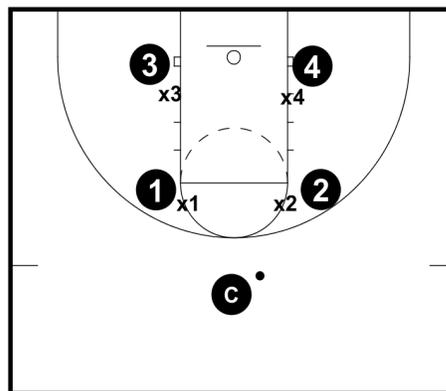
Rotate defense to offense after a predetermined number of “stops” by the defense.

The drill can also progress to allowing the offense to rotate and have basket cutters.

4 on 4 Shell Drill
Man to Man Defense - Huber



In Close 4 on 4 Shell Drill
Man to Man Defense - Huber



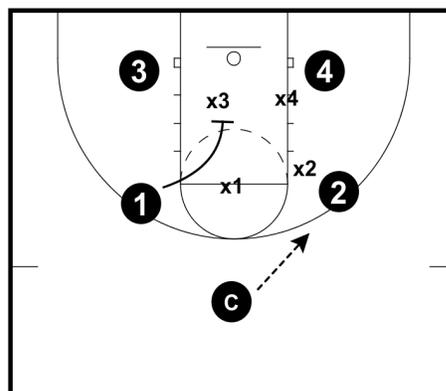
In Close 4 on 4 Shell Drill
Man to Man Defense - Huber

The coach will start the drill by passing to one of the players at the elbow.

The help side offensive players will set a predetermined screen.

The defense will jump to the ball and work to defend the screen correctly.

Once screens are consistently being defended correctly, the drill can be moved to a “live” scenario.



Progression 6 – Back Screens

The drill is set up with 4 offensive players on the outside and 4 defenders on the inside. Coach is up top with the ball.

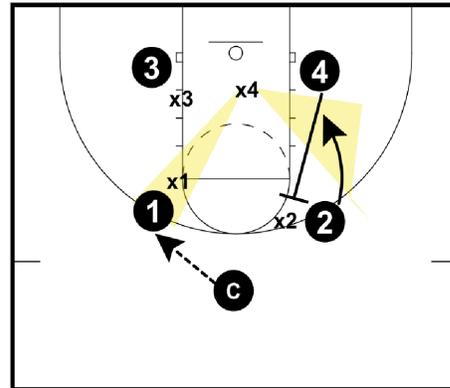
Coach starts the drill with a pass to the elbow.

The offensive player on the weak side block will set a back screen for their teammate on the weak side elbow.

Defender X4 will hang back and become “goalie” and defend the lob, seeing cutter and the ball (yellow areas).

Once the player who was back screened gets through and recovers, the “goalie” can close out on their player.

Defending Back Screens
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Points of Emphasis

- **Jump To The Ball** – Make sure we are anticipating the pass and jumping with ball, not reacting to the pass being caught. Move with the ball like you have a magnet in your chest.
- **No Layups** – Seal the seams and force the ball outside the scoring area, the area that we consider our “house”.
- **Don’t Hug Your Player** – Don’t hug your player when they are going to set a screen. If you hug the player, play too closely, the screener might be able to set a “double” screen and screen you and a teammate at the same time. Stay up the line, on the line from the ball and give the player being screened enough room to get through.
- **Ball Side Of Down Screen** – Jim teaches the defenders to go “ball side” of the screen, so we are coming up the middle in a help position. In the bottom diagram, X3 would fight to get around the screen on the ball side where the offense, 1 in black, has received the ball.
- **No Lobs** – Non Negotiable on Defense – We do not allow LOBS on back screens.
- **Get Skinny On Screens** – When your player calls out the screen, get “skinny”. Turn at an angle that makes you more difficult to screen and be ready to move. If you get caught “fat and flat” by that back screen, you are going to have a difficult time recovering and getting round the screen.

Coaching Tips

- **Demand Great Effort** – Be sure they sprint to areas and give maximum effort. Often players think they are giving maximum effort, but they are not. Immediately correct and rep out until the player does this correctly. Playing with great effort can help you overcome a lot of mistakes.
- **Master The Basics / Don't Rush** – When it comes to youth and high school basketball, don't worry about progressing until you master the basics of positioning, help defense, communication, and effort. If you do these things, it can counter many things that the offense throws at you.

4 On 3 Overload Drill



Purpose:

In the game of basketball, there are many situations where you have to scramble and match up with players; like rotating out of help defense and in transition. This is one of the best drills to improve your ability to scramble and match up.

Your defense is at a constant disadvantage and it forces them to hustle, communicate, and rotate.

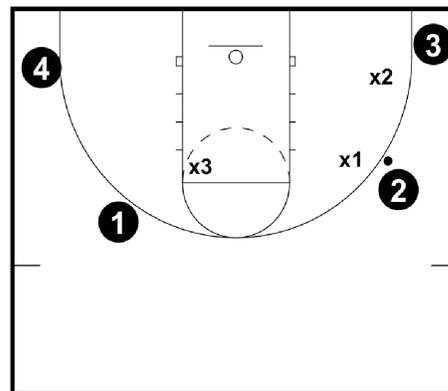
In this 4 on 3 situation, someone will always be open, but with good positioning and effort you can keep things under control. This drill can also be done as a 5 on 4 type of drill.

Set Up:

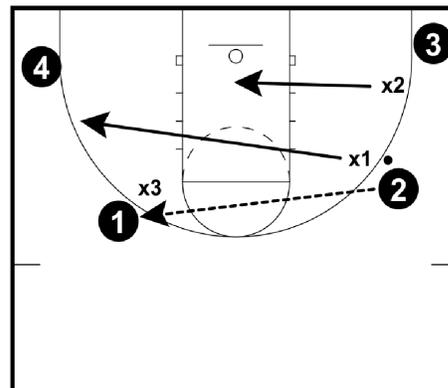
You start with three defenders and four offensive players.

The ball starts on the wing.

4 on 3 Drill
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



4 on 3 Drill
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Instructions:

As the ball is passed, defenders have to leave their player, scramble to cover the ball or be in a good help position.

The ball can be skipped and players are allowed to dribble penetrate in their areas (but are mostly stationary early on as you learn rotation).

After you get the hang of rotating and scrambling, you go "live" and the offense looks to score.

Points of Emphasis:

- **Effective Close Outs** – If you are not going all out on our close outs in this drill, you will be exposed pretty quickly. You are already down in numbers, if someone isn't closing all out and under control, you are beaten before you even start.
- **Sprint To Areas / Effort** – Hold people accountable on effort. Make sure they are sprinting to areas.

Coaching Tips

- **Progress To More Situations and Increase Difficulty** – After you are satisfied with the concepts sinking in, you can allow the offense free movement, interchanges, screens etc.

No Paint Drill



Purpose:

This is one of the best drills at eliminating penetration into the paint! It really develops a mentality of protecting the paint and not letting anybody get in there.

If you believe that penetrating via the pass or the dribble is one of the best offensive weapons, this drill is a must!

It's also a great all around defensive drill for practicing proper defensive habits.

Set Up:

You have four offensive players.

You have four defensive players matched up with the offensive players.

A coach or manager is positioned at the top.

Instructions:

Coach starts drill with a pass from the top. The object of the game is to keep the ball from penetrating the paint (lane).

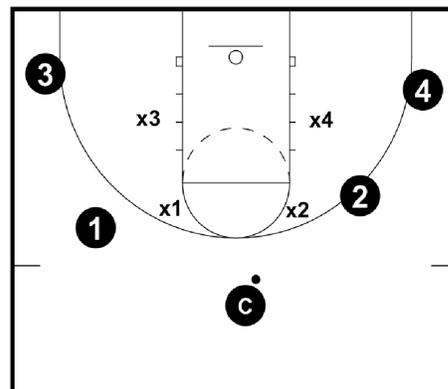
You can put tape on the floor to extend the lane.

Offense gets a point for penetrating the paint on the dribble drive or pass.

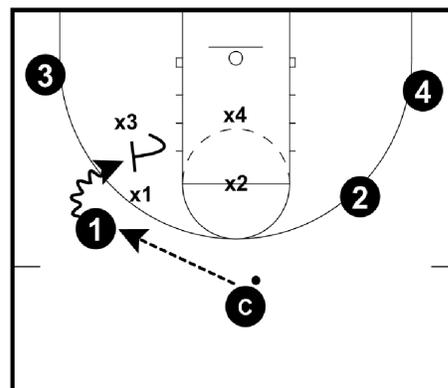
You can change possession on points scored (in the paint), turnovers, and defensive rebounds. It's just a like a regular half court game, except the only way to a point is to the in the lane.

The first team to 3 wins. Playing to a low number (like 3) makes it really competitive and keeps the intensity at the level you want.

No Paint
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



No Paint
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Variations:

3-Point Shot Hits Rim – A progression would be to add that the offense can score another point by taking a three point shot that hits the rim. This forces defenders to maintain intense ball pressure.

Excessive Fouling – You want our players playing hard on defense, but playing smart. Fouling and putting people on the free throw line is unacceptable. It's not playing smart. The next progression in the drill is to begin awarding points if you are seeing excessive fouling and hand checking to stop the penetration. Make them stop the ball with their feet moving, not their hands reaching.

5 On 5 Whistle Change



Purpose:

This drill works on your defenders' ability to scramble and pick up a different player when a game situation forces them to do so. This often happens in transition and rotating out of help defense. Communication is a must in this drill and your players will be forced to improve.

Set Up:

You start with five offensive players and five defensive players.

They are matched up five on five.

Instructions:

You start playing five on five live.

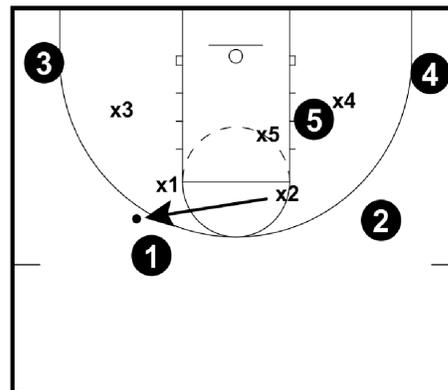
On the whistle, the offense will set the ball down on the ground.

Someone on defense (anyone but the player who was guarding the ball), has to pick the ball up. X2 is picking it up in the diagram.

When the X2 picks the ball up X2's team is on offense.

The team that sets the ball down (in black) must scramble to guard someone. They cannot pick up the player that was guarding them. Example, 1 in black could not pick up X1.

5 on 5 Whistle Change
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Points of Emphasis:

- Communicate!** – Players must communicate in this drill. If they don't, they will fail. Forcing players to talk and think on their feet as they scramble is making practice harder than what they will likely face in a game situation. Anytime you can do that in a drill, your team stands to benefit in the game.

- **Stop the Ball** – Even though players are matching up in the drill, they must be aware of the ball handler. The ultimate goal is to stop the offense from scoring, so help defense must be alert and stop the ball when necessary.

Variations:

Full Court – You can also play the game full court as a variation. You don't even have to start in a half court setting. Make sure to keep the team's baskets the same, though.

Coaching Tips:

- **Variety** – Make sure to vary who has possession of the ball and the location of the ball when blowing the whistle.
- **Keep Coaching Defense** – Keep coaching proper defensive fundamentals throughout the drill. Make sure that they close out properly, maintaining good position, rotate on help, defend screens properly, etc.

4 On 4 With Baseline Drivers



Purpose:

This drill is great for improving your team defense. Specifically, it improves your communication and your team's ability to help and recover on dribble penetration. Your players have to give 100% effort and focus in order to succeed in the drill.

This is a classic example of making practice more difficult than the games. If you can stop the opponent when you're playing 6 on 4, you know that you can stop them playing 5 on 5. Since you succeed this during practice, you will have the confidence to lock down the opponents during games.

Set Up:

There are four offensive players and four defensive players.

Additionally, there are two designated baseline drivers (BD) who are positioned in the corners. They are not actively guarded.

The baseline drivers can be coaches, managers, or players.

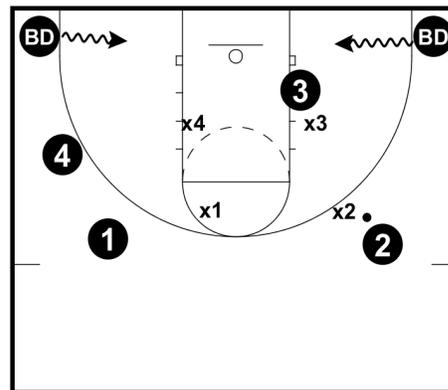
Instructions:

You start the drill. The four offensive players try to score and the four defensive players try to stop them.

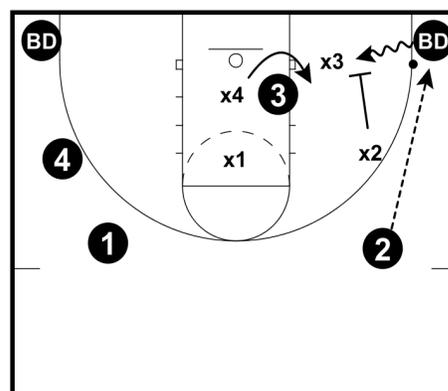
The baseline driver can choose to drive or pass the ball immediately. If the baseline driver catches and holds the ball, no help is needed. If the baseline driver dribbles to the basket, the defense must stop the ball, communicate, and rotate.

As your players begin to understand the rotations and are scrambling well, you can allow the offense to dribble penetrate, do interchanges, etc. This will make the drill much more challenging.

4 on 4 with Baseline Drivers
Man to Man Defense - Huber



4 on 4 with Baseline Drivers
Man to Man Defense - Huber



Points of Emphasis:

- **See Your Player and the Ball** – You must see your player and the ball at all times. If you take your eye off either one, it can result in an easy scoring opportunity for the offense.
- **Help Early & Quick** – You must sprint to spots and immediately move once you see the players dribble drive to the basket. If you wait for a split second, it's too late.

Coaching Tips:

- **Teach When NOT To Help** – If one of the guarded players attack the basket, teach your players when they should and should not help. Some coaches teach to help the player when they have a straight line advantage to the goal. If the defensive player is positioned between the player and the basket, don't help. If the offensive player is not driving directly to the basket, don't help.
- **Mix Up Drive & Pass** – Encourage the baseline driver to mix up between shooting and passing. This will make it more game-like and keep the defense alert and challenge them more.

5 On 2 Weak Side Help



Purpose:

This defensive drill improves your defensive positioning, your ability to defend flash cutters, and communication on interchanges. It's a great way to isolate two defensive players and take them through a variety of situations.

Also, sometimes it can be difficult to see everything when you have four or five players on the floor. This is especially true for new coaches and even seasoned vets can't see everything. This is a great way to isolate your players, so you can see precisely what they're doing and enforce good defensive habits.

Set Up:

There are five offensive players on the perimeter.

There are two defenders that are matched up man to man. X1 is guarding 2 and X2 is guarding 3.

Instructions:

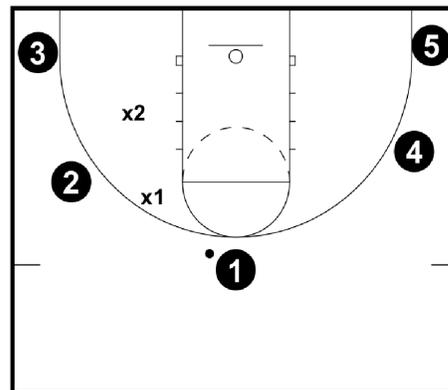
When the ball is passed to the wing, you are jumping to the ball. X1 is applying ball pressure and X2 is ready to help seal the seam on the dribble drive (bottom diagram).

The ball can be skipped across, in which case the defenders would be jumping with the ball into a help position on the midline, head on swivel, looking for flash cutters.

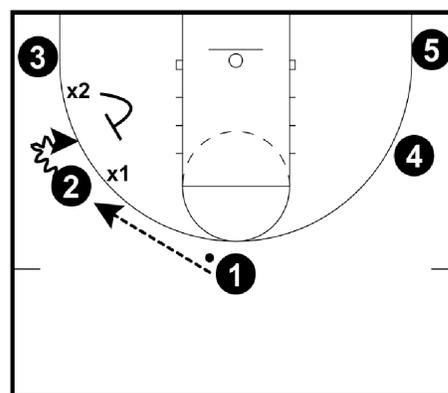
After the skip, the offensive players may flash cut the lane and look for the ball.

The offensive players (2 and 3 in black) are allowed to interchange as well.

5 vs 2 Weakside Help
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



5 vs 2 Weakside Help
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Points of Emphasis:

- **Constant Communication** – The two defenders should be in constant communication. That way, they know how to help, recover, and rotate properly. You don't want two players guarding the ball.
- **Sprint to Areas!** Anything less than 100 percent is unacceptable. Get in the habit of going all out in sprinting to where you need to be.
- **Move with the Pass, Not on the Catch** – Be anticipatory in movement. Move with the ball as though a magnet was in your chest.

Complete Man To Man Drill



Purpose:

This defensive drill is superb for transitioning between the different positions on the floor to defend many situations. You transition from 1 pass off the ball, 2 passes off the ball positioning, defending the post, defending flash cutters, closing out, and helping on dribble penetration.

Also, as a defender, you can't hide in this drill. You are out on an island and you must fully understand where you should be positioned at all times.

Set Up:

A coach, manager, or player is positioned at the top of the key.

A defender (X1) is guarding a player on the wing (2).

Instructions:

Coach starts up top with the ball. Defense X1 is in 1 pass away position on the line, up the line.

Coach will dribble to the wing and the offensive player 2 will rotate into the post. X1 will take them on in a $\frac{3}{4}$ front in the post.

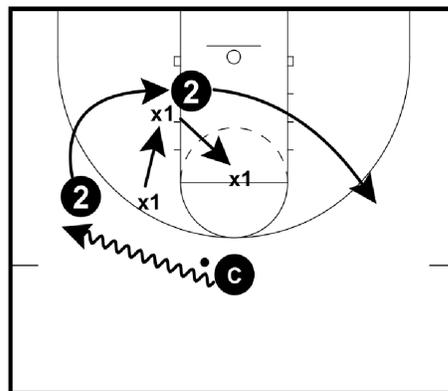
Offense 2 will vacate the post and move the weak side wing. X1 should be in a 2 pass away help position with ball on the opposite wing with Coach.

Offense will flash cut, defense will pick them up and try to force them up the lane to catch away from the paint.

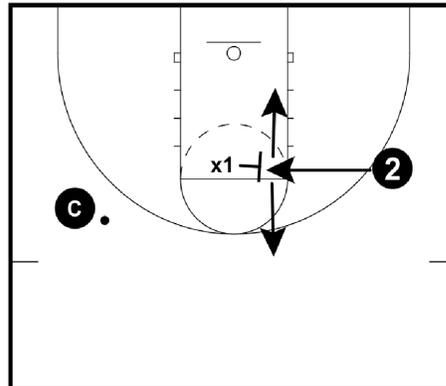
If the offense goes back door on the cut, we swivel and pick them up, hand in the passing lane.

Once the offense catches the ball, you are live one on one.

Complete Man to Man Drill
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Complete Man to Man Drill
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Points of Emphasis:

- **Up the Line, On the Line** – Up the line, on the line means forming a flat triangle, halving it between ball and the player they are guarding. Have a hand on the imaginary string between the ball and your player. Not past the string, ON it. Past it will get you beat back door, as your body will be too high and out of position.
- **See Player & Ball** – When positioned, you should always have your eye on the player with the ball and the player you are guarding. You have to be aware of the ball, so you can position yourself properly to help on defense. You also need to be in the right position, so you can defend your player if a pass is received. If you just watch the ball, it's easy for your defender to cut to an open spot on the floor for a scoring opportunity.
- **Step In Front Of Cutter** – Don't let the flash cutter receive the pass. Be sure to cut them off. You don't want any penetrating passes within the 3-point arc.

Variations:

Mix Up Cuts & Positions – You can also tell the offensive player to randomly give the defensive player different looks. This is a good progression because it is more game-like as the defender has to react similar to a game rather than just learn the sequence. You might tell the offensive player to choose three or four different cuts and positions at random.

Coaching Tips:

- **Fake Dribble Penetration** – Make sure that the person with the ball fakes dribble penetration periodically throughout the drill. This ensures that the defender is watching the ball and the player they are guarding at the same time.
- **Don't Depend On Drill** – You shouldn't depend on this drill as a way to defend. The real test is when you are defending with other players on the court. However, it is a good variation to use in practice to initially learn defensive habits. You can also use it as a variation to quickly review defensive principles.

2 On 2 Ball Screens



Purpose:

When it comes to the on ball defender and the defender guarding the screener, this is one of the best ball screen drills that you can use. Why? The defenders don't have any help defense! This makes it way more challenging than during the game. If they can adapt and have success in this situation, your team defense will be that much stronger.

Set Up:

There are two offensive players and two defensive players. You are playing 2 on 2. If desired, you can also play 3 on 3.

In this diagram, the player with the ball starts at the top of the key. However, you can start from the wing as well.

Instructions:

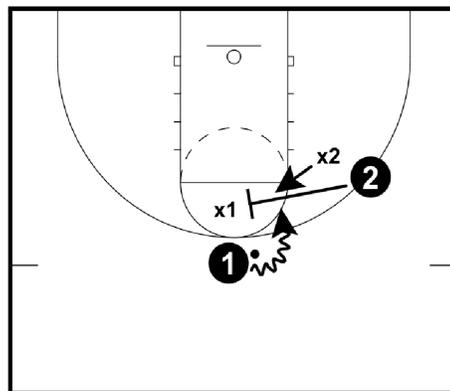
The first action at the start of every possession is a ball screen. In this scenario, 2 sets a ball screen.

Defender X2 is calling out the screen and jumping to the high side to "hedge" the ball handler east-west.

Defender X1 is trying to fight over the top of the screen, and only going underneath if they are caught up in the screen.

Next progression is "dribble handoff". You "switch" on all dribble handoffs as they are normally a guard to guard play. 1 in black would simply dribble to 2 in black and handoff while using the body to shield the ball. Defenders switch on all handoffs.

2 on 2 Defend the Ball Screen
Mo-Kan Youth Basketball



Points of Emphasis:

- **Hedge the Screen** – As the player guarding the screener comes up to “hedge the ball screen” (attempt to stop the ball handler from getting north – south), they want to make sure they don’t jump too high over the screen, as this will lead to them being “split” by the ball handler and beaten to the hoop. Stay tight on the screener, step through with your bottom foot over the screener’s top foot and try to force the ball handler up high, away from the hoop.
- **No Straight Lines For Screener** – The defender does not allow the screener to easily go where they want. If you can knock the screener off their path, they may not be able to go set the screen. Put a forearm up and stay balanced. Be ready for the screener to initiate contact if they try to continue in a straight line.
- **Beat the Screen** – The player guarding the ball needs to stay low. If you are quicker than the ball handler and can avoid the screen, you should try to push the ball handler out without help. If you get caught by the screen and have to go behind, you need to communicate with your helping teammate, let the player know you’re recovered and push your way through to get back on your player.
- **Quickly Reposition On Handoffs** – If you’re not aware of your position on the switches for dribble handoffs, you can provide an easy dribble drive opportunity for the ball handler. Make sure to quickly reposition yourself, so your butt is to the basket and you are directly between the ball handler and the basket.

Variations:

3 on 3 and 4 on 4 – Like mentioned previously, you can play 3 on 3 or even 4 on 4 and start every possession with a ball screen. This is a great way to practice your help defense when it comes to ball screens as well.

Offensive Advantage – You could even allow the offense to have an initial advantage on the ball screen to practice scrambling out of help in ball screen situations.

Implementing the Man to Man Defense – Step by Step



There are a variety of ways you can implement the man to man defense. You should experiment to find a method that works for you...

Jim Huber implements the man to man defense by first selling the players on the importance of man to man defense, then showing the "whole" defense before breaking it down into pieces.

Here's a step-by-step summary of how Jim presented it to the players:

Note: This certainly is not the only way to develop the defense. This is just the way that Jim progressively teaches it to his teams. If you are more comfortable with a different approach, by all means, do it.

Foundational Stages

The first six stages are the foundation for a good half-court man to man defense. You should be proficient in these stages before spending more time on the more advanced stages.

Stage 1 – Get the players on board and introduce the defense.

Stage 2 – Teach players how to play defense on the ball. Show them the proper defensive stance, how to push-step, quick turn, sprint, contest shots, and pressure the basketball.

Stage 3 – Show players how to properly close out on the ball.

Stage 4 – Practice blocking out and rebounding. This is vital to every great defense. One and out.

Stage 5 – Introduce how to position your players when the ball is one or two passes away.

Stage 6 – Combine on-ball defense and help defense with the variations of the shell drill.

Intermediate Stages

Once you developed a foundation for your man to man defense, you can spend more time on the intermediate stages which include stages 7 through 9.

Stage 7 – Teach the players how to sprint the floor and transition to defense.

Stage 8 – Introduce hustle plays such as taking a charge and diving after loose balls.

Stage 9 – Show players how to defend in the post area.

Advanced Stages

Now that you have a great core for your man to man defense, you can spend more time on the advanced stages for a great man to man defense.

Stage 10 – Practice defending down screens and back screens.

Stage 11 – Teach the players how to defend ball screens and dribble hand-offs.

Stage 12 – Teach players how to defend cross screens.

Stage 13 – Show players how to defend against inbounds plays.

Stage 14 – Practice rebounding out of free throw situations.

Putting It all Together

After stage 14, practice everything together and practice in live scrimmage situations such as defending against different sets including the 5-out, 4-out 1-in, and the 3-out 2-in. There are plenty of different drills in the DVD 4 that you can use to make things more difficult or work on weaknesses.

Adjustments and Situations

In this section, you learn how to pack the defense in the lane against dribble drive oriented teams, how to defend poor shooting teams, and how to handle great post players.

Extending Your Defense

Practice how to extend to your defense if your team is blessed with speed and athleticism or your team needs to pressure for certain game situations. This includes trapping off the dribble and trapping off the pass.

Advanced Defensive Strategies

This includes defending great shooters with the hip pocket strategy and variations for defending ball screens including switching and double teams.

More Breakthrough Basketball Resources



If you would like to see more of the products Breakthrough Basketball has available, you can visit:

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/store/>

Some of the topics include:

- Motion Offense
- Flex Offense
- Transition Offense
- Match Up Zone Defense
- Zone Defense
- Developing Shooters
- Competitive Game-Like Skill Drills
- Fun Drills
- Rebounding
- Player Development
- Post Play
- And more...