

DON'T LET THE BALL TOUCH THE GROUND WHEN RUNNING 3-ON-0

BASKETBALL COACH WEEKLY

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COMBINE CONDITIONING, HOOPS DRILLS

USE SMALL NUMBERS
IN FULL COURT

INSPECT GYM
FOR POTENTIAL
INJURY HAZARDS

LENGTHY FREE-
THROW ROUTINES
AREN'T NECESSARY

QUICK PASSES,
FASTER FEET FUEL
2-ON-0 DRILL



< RUSSELL WESTBROOK
IS ONE OF THE FASTEST
END-TO-END PLAYERS
IN THE LEAGUE

HOOPS KNOWLEDGE IS GENDER-NEUTRAL - SPURS PAVE THE WAY

Inspect Your Gym For Dangers



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Sideline Stories

I haven't watched the video and don't plan to do so. The leg injury sustained by Paul George during a Team USA event reads like something out of a horror story. The initial speculation was that George's injury partly was to blame on a basket stanchion closer to the court than those in NBA games.

"Teenagers love climbing where they aren't supposed to be..."

Opinion seemed to swing in the days following with the consensus believing this injury could not be avoided. Regardless, it got me thinking - how often do coaches inspect their gymnasiums for potential dangers?

Sure, it's August, and there are some things you'll want to check before your season. But, here are some areas to inspect to better ensure player safety.

- **THE FLOOR.** The basketball court gets a workout during the course of a school year - well beyond just basketball practices and games. Think about all those indoor physical education classes. You know every teenager stepping onto the floor isn't wearing proper foot attire. Also consider how other fall sports may use the court in inclement weather. Sure, the football coach may insist on players not wearing cleats inside during a walk-through but does that happen 100 percent of the time?

- **BOUNDARIES.** Make sure the bleachers still extend as far as you expect and fold up the proper way as well. You don't want to show up the first day of practice only to find an entire bleacher section stuck in the extended position. Make sure doors to the gym still can be secured as well as any other access points to the court. A lot has happened in the gym since your team packed up its equipment in February and March.

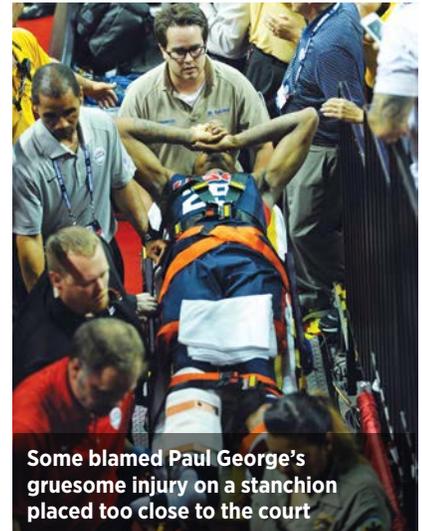
- **BASKETS/RIMS.** Teenagers love climbing where they aren't supposed to be. You'd be surprised how many teenage boys can grab the net and pull up to the rim. Before your season, check for proper height and levelness, and also inspect for any loose rims or backboards not secured.

- **PADS.** If your gym walls are close to the court and require some padding, are the pads where they are supposed to be? Do they still hold the proper cushion to keep players safe? Again, when it comes to non-basketball teenagers in the gym, you never know how they are treating the equipment you may take for granted.
- **LIGHTING.** Look up - do the lights all work? Are any broken? Is it possible something could fall from above and injure a player?

Now that school is starting up again - do a check now, then another within a week or two of the season to give you and the school enough time to make any necessary changes.



Michael Austin
Michael Austin
Editor-in-chief



Some blamed Paul George's gruesome injury on a stanchion placed too close to the court

In this issue...

3 DISGUISE CONDITIONING DRILLS WITH HOOPS SKILLS

Improve stamina, as well as passing and shooting skills when you build conditioning into small-numbers, full-court drills

4 2-ON-0 DRILL PUSHES PLAYERS LIMITS

Stress fast passes and quick feet as two players make their way up the court without the help of a dribble

5 3-ON-0 DRILL TARGETS ACCURATE PASSES

Three players are expected to fill the proper lanes and fire on-target, long passes so the ball is pushed up the floor

6 DITCH THE MINDLESS FREE-THROW ROUTINE

Teach players to spend more time on their free-throw preparation rather than a mindless free-throw routine

QUICK HITTER IT'S ALL ABOUT BASKETBALL I.Q.

The San Antonio Spurs continue to stay ahead of the curve. After securing another NBA title in June, Gregg Popovich has added another bright, young mind to his coaching staff - Becky Hammon. Yes, Becky. She's a woman who now will be coaching at the highest level of men's basketball.

This is a lesson for all those male coaches at the youth and high school

level. Get the best people coaching in your program, regardless of gender. Think teenage boys won't respond to a female authority voice? Well, then that's just another life lesson you will be teaching them. Head coaches love to expound about gearing players for life's journey after basketball. Guess what? Many of your players will be working for female supervisors someday.

Popovich ended up hiring Hammon after inviting her to sit in on Spurs' practices after she went down with a knee injury last year. If Popovich is forward-thinking enough to invite, and eventually hire, a female to his coaching staff, then you should do the same. Keep all options open and do the best for your team.
- Michael Austin



Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook averages 20.1 points per game (career) and scores many of those buckets ahead of the defense in transition

Disguise Conditioning Drills With Hoops Skills

Build conditioning into your basketball drills for the best of both worlds - improving stamina as well as passing and shooting skills

It's an old trick but it works. Line up players on the baseline. Designate half of them to dribble the length of the court while the others pass ahead to people stationed at mid-court and the opposite baseline. You know how this turns out.

Despite players loving to pound the ball into the ground, the fastest way up the court is with crisp passes. Once the ball touches the floor, it instantly slows down. While your players may understand this, run through this exercise a few times to show them.

Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook is a notorious dribbler. He over-dribbles at

times. But, watch him when the game speeds up. He can throw a killer **outlet pass** and also knows how to follow his initial fast-break pass for the **potential of a return toss and layup** opportunity.

Time with players is precious. Generally, during the season, you have two to three hours a day to work on skills, game plans, motivation, installing offense and defenses, running through special situations, taking breaks for water and having some fun. So, lining up to run sprints may not be the best use of time.

Instead, work conditioning into your drills. Sure, players love dribbling the ball

... but they love scoring more. Hammer home the point that if the ball moves in the fastest way possible down the floor, then players have many opportunities for easy baskets.

Do this by running small-number, full-court drills. You'll find two on the following pages. Run only two players the length of the floor and back to work on short, quick passes while having three players run the break stresses the importance of long, accurate passes.

Rather than just running for the sake of doing it - build in some basketball skills as well and score more easy buckets come game day.

Words and Activities by:
Michael Austin

2-On-0 Drill Pushes Players Limits

This is a perfect conditioning drill utilizing basketball movements requiring accurate passes, sprinting to position and scoring on the move

WHY USE IT

Rather than simply having players execute up-and-backs with no basketball skills, run players 2-on-0 to boost conditioning and force them to work on passing and scoring in a full-court setting.

SET UP

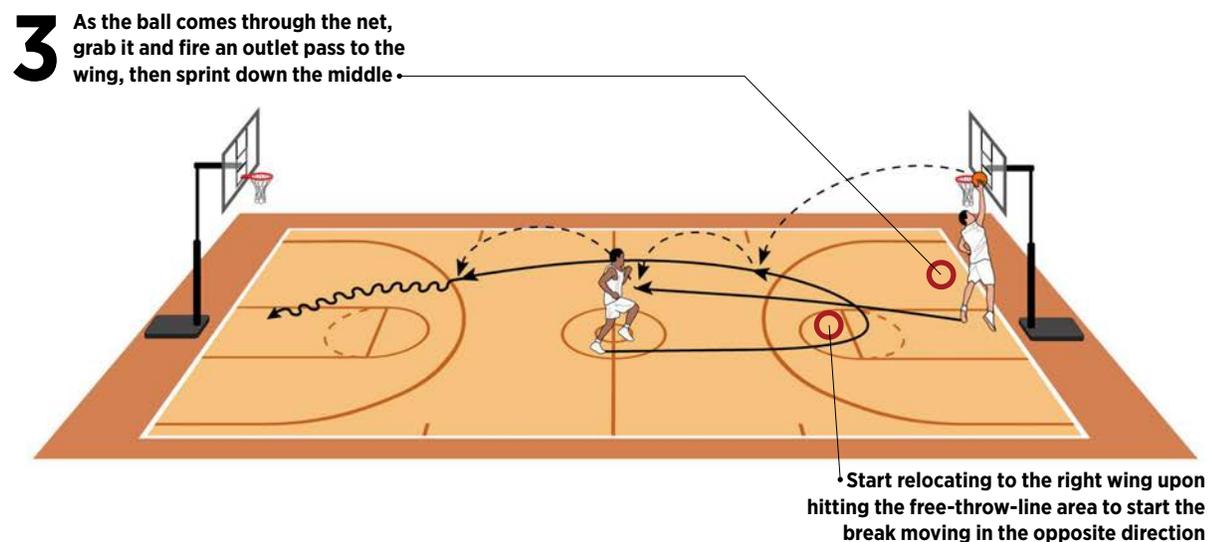
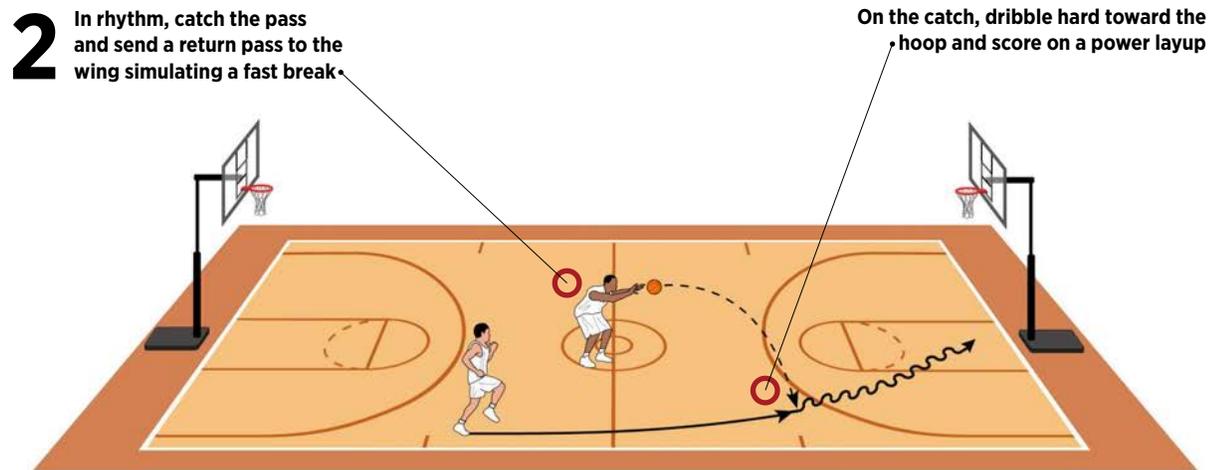
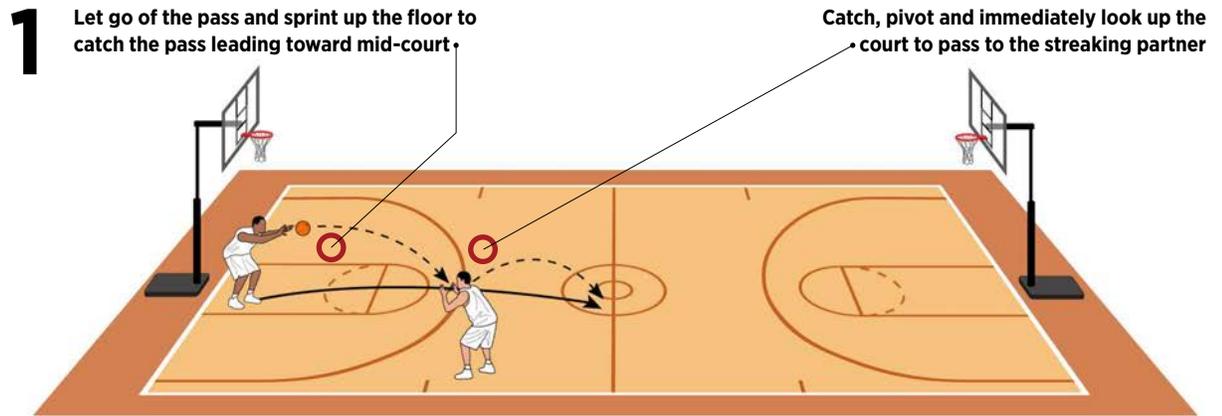
One player starts with a ball under the hoop while another is positioned on the wing.

HOW TO PLAY

The player with the ball outlets to the wing then sprints down the middle of the floor. On the catch, the wing pivots and passes ahead to the streaking partner [1]. After making the pass, the wing sprints up the floor and receives a pass back from the middle. On the catch, the wing dribbles hard and scores at the rim [2]. After the layup, the shooter grabs the ball and outlets to the partner who has relocated to the right wing. After passing, the original shooter sprints up the middle of the court and receives a pass from the wing. He then pivots and looks up the floor and passes ahead to the wing. The wing catches the ball, dribbles and scores at the rim [3].

TECHNIQUE

Players must hustle. Make them run it again if they jog or slow down. This is an up-tempo drill.



3-On-0 Drill Targets, Accurate Passes

Fill the lanes on the fast break while passers execute long yet on-target throws to help simulate the speed, hustle and accuracy needed to complete a fast break

WHY USE IT

Here is another conditioning drill disguised as a basketball one. It also teaches players how to throw long passes on a line rather than simply lofting them over the top for a possible turnover.

SET UP

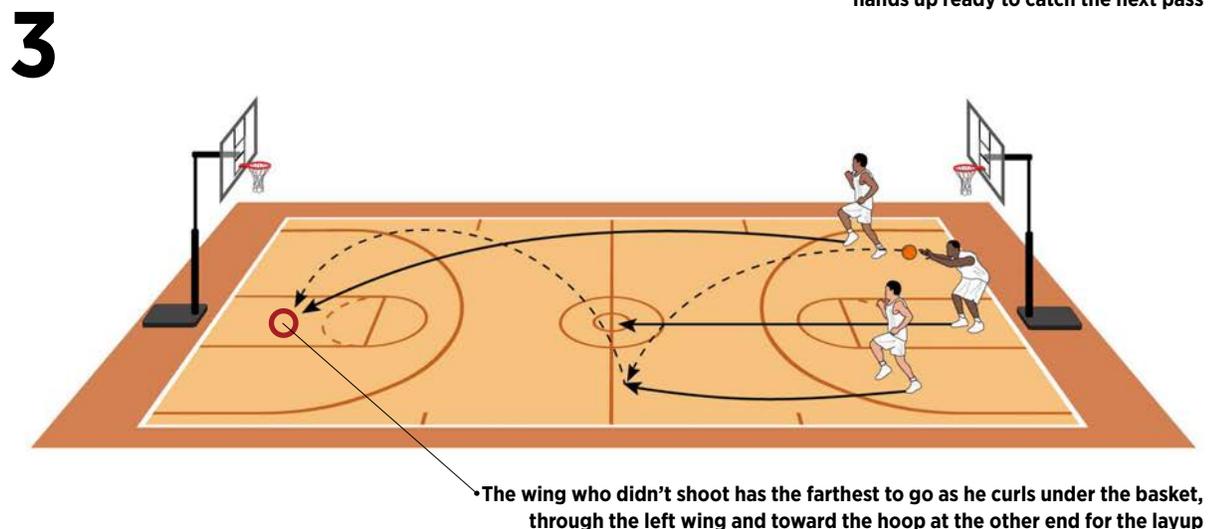
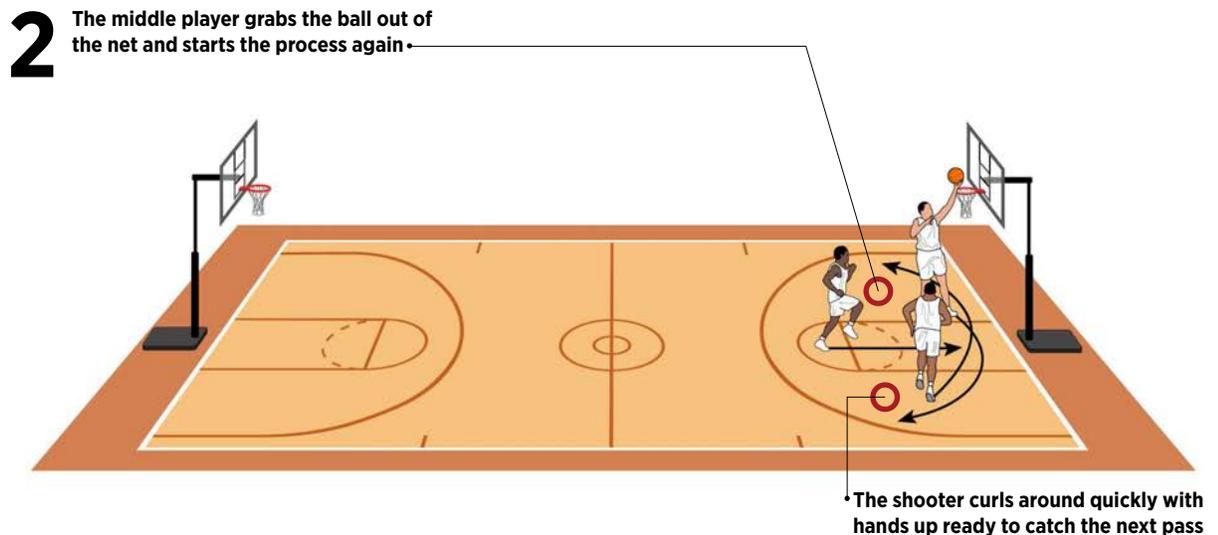
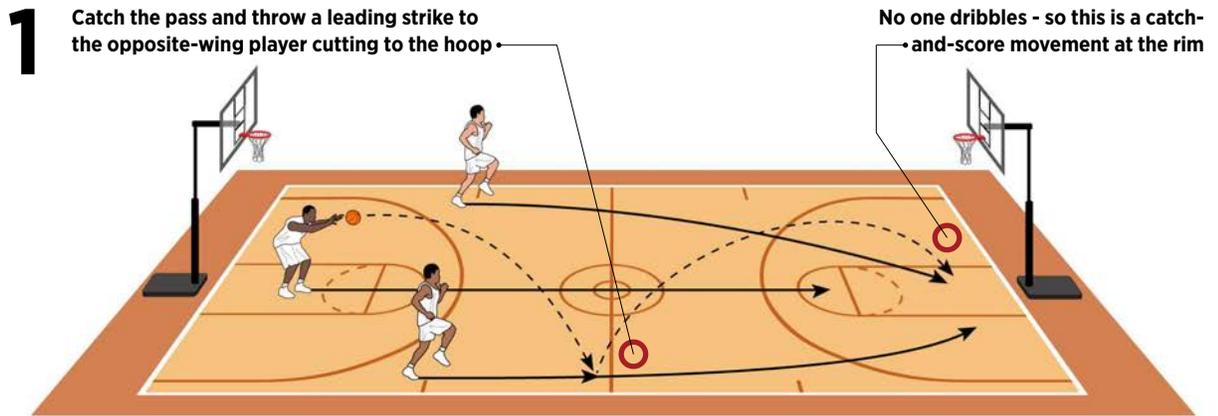
One player starts with a ball under the hoop while two players fill opposite wings.

HOW TO PLAY

The player with the ball outlets to the right wing then sprints down the middle of the floor. The right wing catches the ball in stride and looks up the floor. He then fires a long pass to the left wing who is cutting toward the hoop [1]. The left wing scores and runs to the left wing heading in the other direction. The middle player grabs the ball and the right wing circles through to the opposite side [2]. Action continues with a pass to the left wing, who then fires the long pass to the opposite wing. That player catches the ball and scores without needing a dribble [3].

TECHNIQUE

There are no hesitations in this drill - everything is in rhythm meaning players are sprinting, catching and passing - the ball never hits the ground.



Player movement → Ball movement - - - → Dribble ~~~~~ → Shot →

If players must have a free-throw routine, keep it short and simple - a lot of dribbling, spinning the ball and movement isn't necessary



Ditch The Mindless Free-Throw Routine

Doing too much at the free-throw line allows for extra time when feelings of self-doubt and negative thoughts enter the brain - keep it simple

Don't allow your players solely to rely on a pre-shot routine when stepping to the free-throw line. All too often, this routine becomes a crutch for faulty technique.

The best free-throw shooters are present in the moment rather than simply performing a great deal of mental activity. Great shooters have a game plan that works. They don't have to psych themselves up or numb themselves into a robotic state. They know where their power comes from, they know how to set and align the ball for the greatest accuracy and know how to use the flow of inertia to aid the shot.

Teach shooters to have a release that's accurate, consistent, predictable and repeatable. Not much more is needed. Most players, however, are in a guessing game. They don't have a stroke they can count on all the time so they resort to mental games

and pre-shot routines hoping to tame the beasts of doubt and fear that drive them wild.

The answer to this is physical and it all comes down to technique. It seems to be helpful to have some process to quiet the mind and get a player ready to shoot. While all players need to figure out what works best for them, here are some tips:

1 CENTER YOURSELF.

Have the player align on the painter's nail in the middle of the free-throw line. It's in the exact middle of the line because it was used to paint the key's half circle. Being in the center means bounces are straight back and most favorable.

2 TAKE AN OPEN STANCE, FIND FOCUS.

Have the legs straight to start. As the player gets set physically, he or she mentally settles in the present moment. Some players use a wide focus seeing all the players, fans and

coaches in the building, then settling into something more narrow. Others choose to start narrow with a simple focus on the ball, basket and body. Have players try both and see what works best for them.

3 RELAX, BREATHE, LET GO.

Take a dribble or two, then a breath or two. The player lets go of worries, doubts and fears as much as possible. Have the player quickly understand he or she is prepared for this moment. Some players exhale as they begin the stroke. Focus on the target and trust the process. Allow the downward action of the legs to start the motion and set off a chain reaction of automatic physical moves.

No matter what - make sure all pre-shot preparations are working toward the physical motion of shooting the ball properly and not just going through the motions for the sake of doing so.

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