

DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK

BASKETBALL COACH WEEKLY

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SHARPEN FUNDAMENTALS EARLY

▼ CHARLOTTE'S MICHAEL
KIDD-GILCHRIST EXCELLED
EARLY IN HIS CAREER DUE TO A
FUNDAMENTALS FOCUS

DRILLS FOCUS ON LAYUPS,
BALL PROTECTION

RUN A FAST
BREAK FOR A
3-POINTER AFTER A
MADE FREE THROW

COMPETITIVENESS
COMES ALIVE IN
'KING OF THE RING'

BLOW A RANDOM
WHISTLE TO PRACTICE
BAD CALLS

DEMAND PERFECTION IN 'AROUND THE WORLD' DRILL



Use A New Perspective



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9325 SW Iowa Drive
Tualatin, OR 97062

Editor-in-chief
Michael Austin
michael.austin@basketballcoachweekly.com

Contributors
Brian Baxter, Troy Culley,
Herb Brown

Illustrations
Mike Renwick

Pictures
Action Images

Design
Jamie Leeson

Publisher
Kevin Barrow
kevin.barrow@greenstarmedia.net

Customer Services
Duncan Heard
duncanh@basketballcoachweekly.com

Managing Director
Andrew Griffiths



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To subscribe to Basketball Coach Weekly please contact Duncan Heard at Green Star Media Ltd, Meadow View, Tannery Lane, Bramley, Guildford GU5 0AB, UK.

You can contact Duncan via Skype at basketballcoachweekly or via email at duncanh@basketballcoachweekly.com

Sideline Stories

I went to the dentist the other day for a routine cleaning and checkup. Amazingly, after almost 38 years, I'm told I'm brushing my teeth the incorrect way, which is leading to some sensitivity in my upper left quadrant of my mouth.

Instead of scrubbing side to side, the dentist says to hold the brush at a 45-degree angle and use small circles to brush the teeth so I'm actually massaging the gums as well, rather than just violently scraping away the protective tissue.

“Don’t be so stubborn to do it your way that you sacrifice the good of the team ...”

That night at bedtime, I tried it. My wife laughed and said, “why are you concentrating so hard on brushing your teeth.” Yes, something as simple as brushing my teeth now was foreign to me with a new perspective on it. In the long run, I'll be better off but the short term is going to be a struggle.

What does this have to do with basketball coaching? Everything.

Your season is on the horizon. And, while what has worked in years past very well may work again, it's always good to come into the new year with a fresh perspective. As a good coach, you've done your homework and research to figure out how to improve upon last year's

team, so go the extra step and make some big changes if needed.

Maybe you're a full-court pressing team that simply ran out of gas by the end of last season. Take a new perspective. Maybe you need to slow down a bit earlier in the year to save legs. Or, maybe you need to incorporate more conditioning into your basketball drills so players are fresh through the winter and into the playoffs.

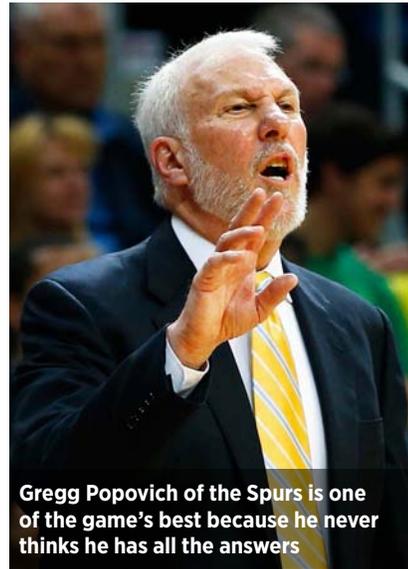
Also, take a fresh look at your personnel coming into the season. Apparently, my upper left teeth now are sensitive meaning I had to handle them differently. What about your players? Is your point guard inexperienced? Are your posts dominant? Give it some real thought and adjust your philosophy if necessary. Don't be so stubborn to do it your way that you sacrifice the good of the team.

Sure, incorporating wholesale changes early in the year makes for a slow start to the season. You're spending more time on shifting focus and teaching new skills. And, those first few weeks could be ugly in practice. As time passes however, and your players get used to the new expectations and roles, watch your team gel. See how the changes are making a positive impact.

Take a step back and assess how you are doing things before the season starts ... you may be surprised at how adjusting a simple habit (such as brushing your teeth) can make a lasting impact.



Michael Austin
Michael Austin
Editor-in-chief



Gregg Popovich of the Spurs is one of the game's best because he never thinks he has all the answers

In this issue...

3 EARLY-SEASON DAILY DRILLS

Focus on fundamentals as the season begins — layups, dribbling, defending — lock down these skills first

4 DEMAND PERFECTION IN 'AROUND THE WORLD'

The focus is on making high-percentage layups after fast-paced dribbling with a miss resulting in consequences

5 BE THE LAST PLAYER STANDING

Protective dribbling and quick defensive hands are the two factors in determining who is the 'King Of The Ring'

6 RUN BREAK OFF MADE FREE THROW

When you need a 3-pointer off an opponent's free-throw make, run this quick-moving break from the baseline

QUICK HITTER PRACTICE AGAINST BAD CALLS

Brian Baxter, MA in sports psychology, director of Sports Psychology Institute Northwest in Portland, Ore., works with youth, high school and collegiate athletes across all sports on their mental game, which typically gets overlooked.

He also coaches and knows players need practice working on unexpected situations, which don't seem fair.

“I randomly blow a whistle in the middle of practice,” Baxter says while adding he awards the ball to the other team during a scrimmage.

Baxter wants players not to react to referees and bad calls in games, so he drills it in practice. Players sometimes get angry, but he simply replies with, “Bad call by the ref. Better get back and play.”

It makes sense. Players today want to argue with officials when they think a bad call has gone against them as the other team streaks down the floor with numbers. Work on player reaction in practice and use it just enough so players never know when the bad whistle is coming.

- Michael Austin

Quick hands and ball security are important skills to master in the preseason.



Gain An Early Advantage

Those first few practices of the season set the tone, tempo and expectations for your team — focus on fundamentals to build a solid base before diving into philosophy-

Look at the 12 to 15 faces staring at you. They are looking at you for leadership, inspiration and guidance ... especially during the first few practices of the season.

You've spent the offseason tweaking your offensive game plan, adding sets into your playbook, studying other team's defenses and working with your coaching staff. You've put in the time and effort necessary to make this season a memorable one.

Hopefully, your players have done the same, but, no matter how much time they spent in the gym or on the playground courts, most likely fundamentals weren't the focus. They probably fired up a lot of shots, played countless pick-up games and believed they were getting better.

But, you know how it goes the first week of the season — confidence is high but

fundamental skills are not. It's your job to get them prepared.

Tailor your early practices with fundamentals in mind. Work on passing, dribbling, defending and knocking down layups. When you pinpoint these areas early, players know where you want their focus.

The following two pages contain a pair of perfect early-season drills. This first is Around The World. It uses all the baskets around your gym and works on conditioning, speed dribbling and scoring layups even when a player is becoming fatigued. There also is a small consequence built into the drill for the player who misses a layup (dribbling farther before advancing back to the basket and shooting again at the hoop of the original miss).

The second drill, King Of The Ring, adds

a competitive element into your early-season sessions. It's great to crown winners and losers right away and this drill lends itself to tracking through the season.

Five players enter the lane area at one end of the floor. Everyone has to maintain their dribble while attempting to poke away the ball of the others. Get a point for knocking away someone's ball and lose a point if it's your ball that is knocked outside the lane. The person with the most points at the end is the winner.

These two drills are perfect to use before you start installing complex offensive strategies and defensive concepts. Get players thinking about perfecting the basics so when the time comes to knock down an easy layup late in a game, the ball handler has done it hundreds of times in practice.

Words by:
Michael Austin

Activities by:
Troy Culley, Kent Crusaders U14 head coach, South West & South East England regional coach

Drill Perfection In 'Around The World'

Utilize all six baskets around your gym and force players to focus on making their high-percentage shots or face the consequences

WHY USE IT

Early in the season it's good to see where players stand when it comes to focus, concentration and mastering the fundamentals before jumping deep into strategy.

SET UP

Use as many players at a time as you like (the example shows two players). Utilize all six baskets around your court if they are available. Mark off a larger circle outside of the center circle while adding a smaller circle inside the jump area.

HOW TO PLAY

The players start by dribbling at a basket and shooting an aggressive layup (alternate between right and left hands to shoot) [1]. If the player makes the layup, he or she dribbles to the outside circle at mid-court (as shown by the right-side player). If the player misses, he or she dribbles all the way to the middle of the court [2]. Make the layup and continue to the next hoop, miss it and go back and shoot again at the same hoop [3].

TECHNIQUE

Once the basics are mastered, add in a progression where players execute certain kinds of dribbles before shooting a layup, such as crossover or behind-the-back. Also, progress into reverse layups and short pull-up jumpers.

1 Use all the baskets in your gym so players are forced to hustle through the drill

This example uses two players but you can go with up to six — keep in mind safety though as players may end up shooting at the same rim

2 This player has missed the left-handed layup and must return to the small red area in the middle of the court

This player has made the right-handed layup and is rewarded by only having to dribble to the outer circle before attacking the next basket

3

Due to the miss, this player returns to the basket and attempts another left-handed layup



Be The Last Player Standing

Protective dribbling and quick defensive hands are the two factors in determining who is the 'King Of The Ring' in this competitive half-court drill

WHY USE IT

Start figuring out your team's best ball handlers and on-ball defenders by placing five people in a tight space and seeing who comes out on top.

SET UP

Five players, all with basketballs, are placed in the lane. The lane lines are the out-of-bounds boundary along with the baseline and the free-throw line.

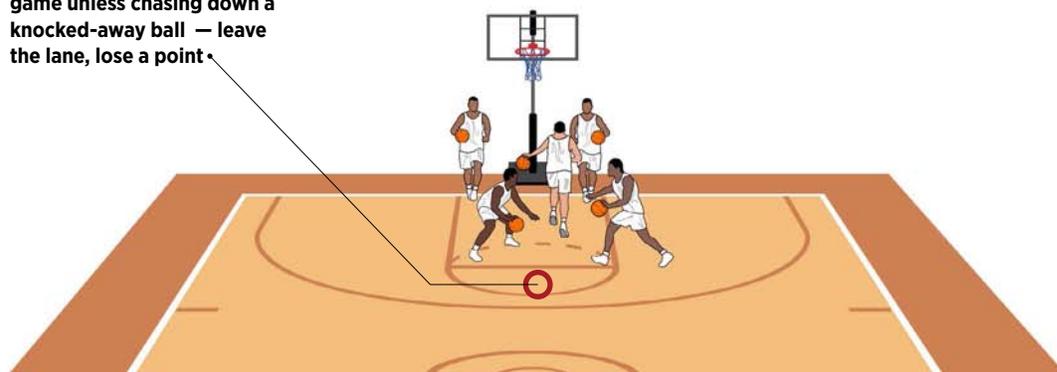
HOW TO PLAY

Players start dribbling with an eye on knocking away another person's ball while simultaneously securing their own [1]. Players start going after each other in an attempt to poke away someone's ball. Knock a ball out and get a point. Have your ball knocked out of the lane and lose a point [2]. If your ball is knocked out of the lane, chase it down and return as the others continue to battle [3].

TECHNIQUE

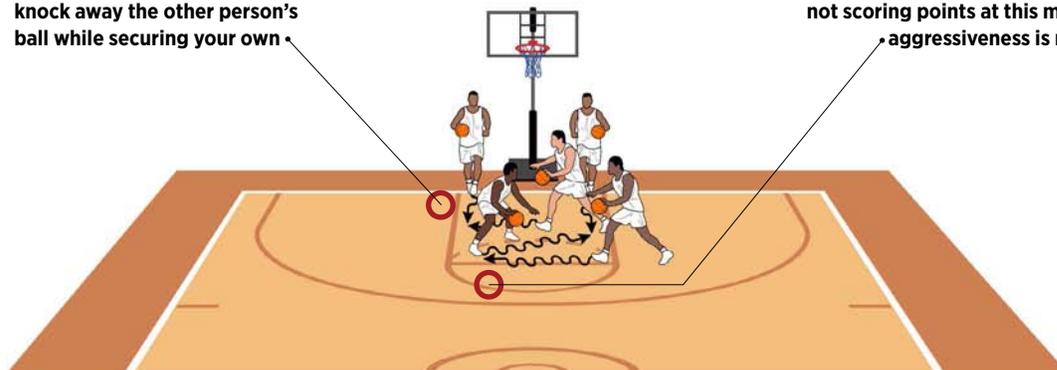
Play for 30 to 45 seconds, making this a fast-paced, competitive drill. The person with the most points is declared the winner. The other four players must complete a punishment (a couple pushups should suffice). Have everyone run through the drill again for the same length of time. Keep track of who is the King Of The Ring each day. See who has the most wins in the preseason.

1 All five players must stay inside the lane during the game unless chasing down a knocked-away ball — leave the lane, lose a point



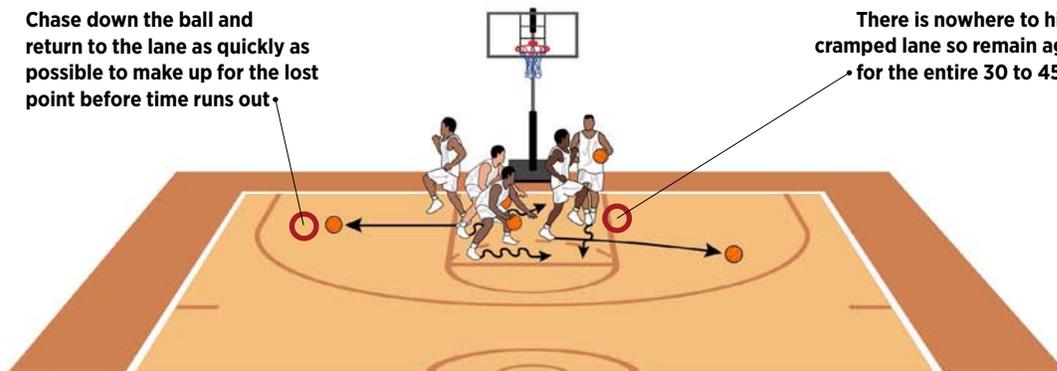
2 Two players go after each other with the key being to knock away the other person's ball while securing your own

The person is safe as the other two pairs battle it out but he or she also is not scoring points at this moment — aggressiveness is rewarded



3 Chase down the ball and return to the lane as quickly as possible to make up for the lost point before time runs out

There is nowhere to hide in the cramped lane so remain aggressive for the entire 30 to 45 seconds



Player movement →

Ball movement - - - →

Dribble ~~~~~ →

Shot →

Run Break Off Free Throw

When your team needs a 3-pointer in a short amount of time and is going the length of the floor off a made free throw, run these simple — yet effective — movements

WHY USE IT

Stretch a pressing defense by spacing out and pushing forward to attack rather than play into the opponent's hands.

SET UP

Only place three players on the lane. The high player is responsible for the shooter. Place another person near mid-court on the side of the high lane player. The final person is near the hoop at the opposite end.

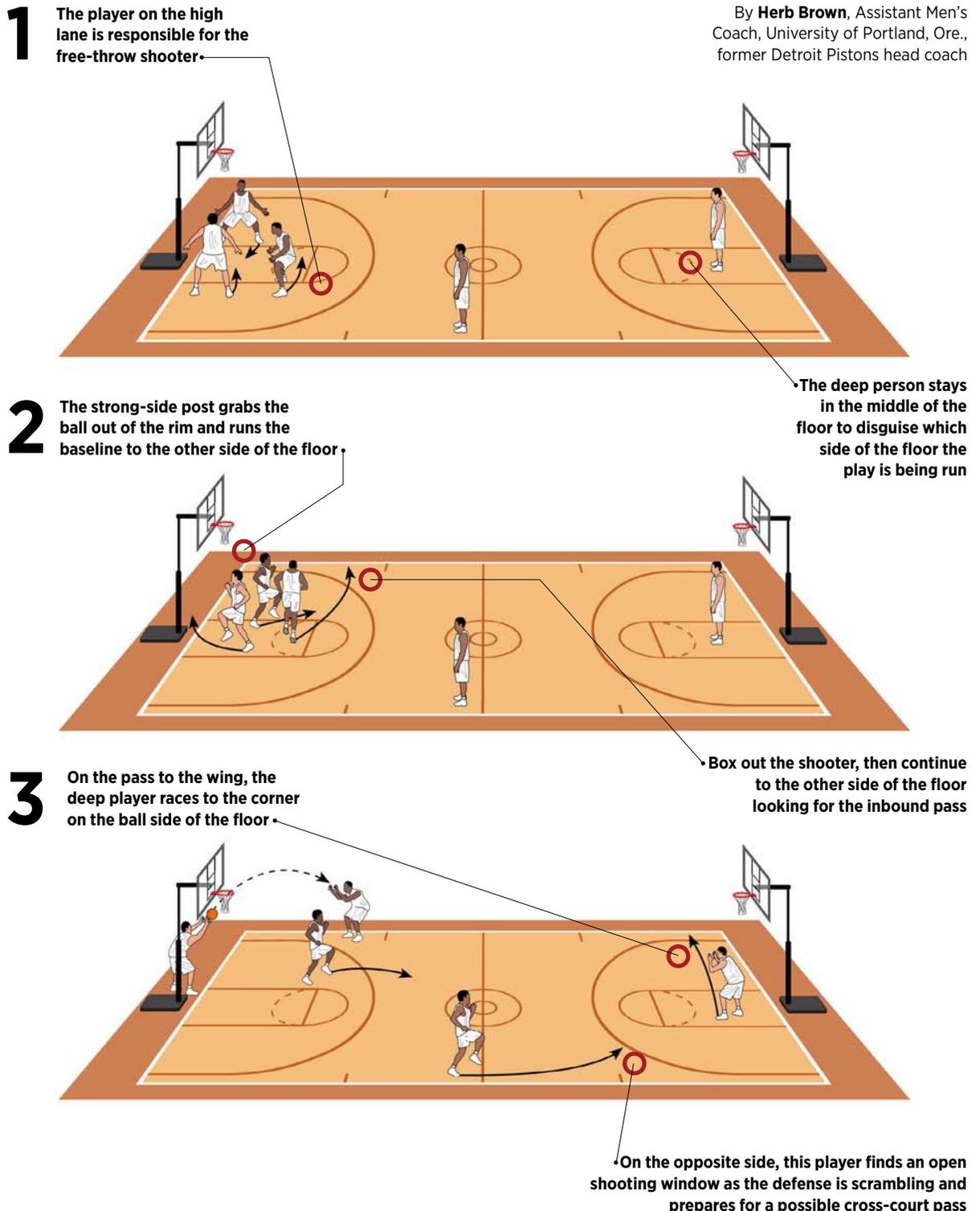
HOW TO PLAY

On the release, the two post players box out while the high lane player boxes out the shooter [1]. When the ball goes through the hoop, the strong-side post player grabs it and runs the baseline toward the initial weak side. The high lane player continues through the lane and to the opposite wing. The weak-side post starts running down the floor [2]. The pass is made to the wing. The far-end player then runs to the corner on the ball side. The player near mid-court finds an opening on the opposite side. The ball handler looks first to the corner then to the opposite side [3].

TECHNIQUE

A third option is to hit the high lane player streaking up the middle of the court if he or she is in space and has enough time to take a couple dribbles setting up a top-of-the-key 3-pointer.

By **Herb Brown**, Assistant Men's Coach, University of Portland, Ore., former Detroit Pistons head coach



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

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