

BASIC DEFENSIVE SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

DESCRIPTION: EVERYONE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO PLAY GOOD DEFENSE, REGARDLESS OF TALENT OR AGE LEVEL. DEFENSE IS ABOUT HEART, HUSTLE, AND ATTITUDE. EACH PLAYER ON YOUR TEAM HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE TEAM BY PLAYING GOOD DEFENSE.

DEFENSE TEACHING POINTS:

- **PROPER DEFENSIVE STANCE**
 - STAND WITH FEET SLIGHTLY WIDER THAN SHOULDER-WIDTH APART
 - KNEES BENT, WITH WAIST SLIGHTLY BENT FORWARD
 - GOOD BALANCE – READY TO MOVE AND SLIDE
 - PLACE WEIGHT ON THE INSIDE FRONT OF THE FEET BUT NOT ON THE TOES
 - EXTEND ARMS TO THE SIDE, SLIGHTLY BENT
 - OPEN HANDS, SO PALMS FACE THE OFFENSIVE PLAYER
 - EYES ON THE OFFENSIVE PLAYER'S CHEST OR "HEAD ON THE BALL"
- **BALL/YOU/BASKET PRINCIPLE: DEFENSIVE PLAYER SHOULD STAY BETWEEN THE ASSIGNED OFFENSIVE PLAYER WITH THE BASKETBALL AND THE BASKET**
- **SEE THE BALL AT ALL TIMES**
- **SPRINT DOWN THE FLOOR ON A CHANGE OF POSSESSION, STOPPING ANY FAST BREAKS**

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

1. DEFENSIVE SLIDE DRILL

DESCRIPTION: FOCUS ON PLAYERS' FEET SLIDING (RATHER THAN HOPPING OR SKIPPING) AND PLAYERS MAINTAINING A PROPER DEFENSIVE STANCE. HAVE FUN WITH THIS DRILL! ALLOW PLAYERS TO EXPRESS ENTHUSIASM AND DESIRE BY SLAPPING THE PLAYING FLOOR AND YELLING "DEFENSE" ON COMMAND. DRILL SHOULD LAST 20-30 SECONDS. ALLOW SHORT REST AND REPEAT AS DESIRED.

- ALLOW PLAYERS TO SPREAD OUT IN PRACTICE AREA, AT LEAST FOUR TO FIVE FEET APART
- ON COMMAND, PLAYERS YELL "DEFENSE" AND FREEZE IN THE DEFENSIVE STANCE
- ON COMMAND (EITHER VERBAL OR HAND SIGNALS), PLAYERS WILL SLIDE LEFT, RIGHT, UP, AND BACK

2. ZIG-ZAG DRILL

DESCRIPTION: FOCUS ON PLAYERS MAKING A DROP STEP EACH TIME THEY TURN (RATHER THAN CROSSING THEIR FEET) AND ON PLAYERS SLIDING CORRECTLY WHILE MAINTAINING A PROPER DEFENSIVE STANCE.

- FORM A LINE OF PLAYERS AT ONE END OF YOUR PRACTICE AREA
- SET-UP CONES OR CHAIRS IN A ZIGZAG PATTERN, SPACED 10-12 FEET APART (MINIMUM 3 SPOTS)
- ON COMMAND, THE FIRST PLAYER IN LINE WILL ASSUME THE CORRECT DEFENSIVE STANCE AND WILL SLIDE IN A ZIGZAG PATTERN AS DICTATED BY THE CONES OR CHAIRS
- NEXT PLAYER IN LINE STARTS AS THE PRECEDING PLAYER LEAVES FIRST SPOT
- AS EACH PLAYER REACHES THE FINAL SPOT, HE OR SHE SHOULD SPRINT BACK TO THE END OF THE LINE

VARIATIONS (PAIR UP PLAYERS):

PARTNER ZIGZAG (NO BALL) - OFFENSE DRIBBLES IMAGINARY BASKETBALL FROM SPOT TO SPOT AND GOES HALF-SPEED. NEXT PAIR IN LINE STARTS AS PRECEDING PAIR LEAVES FIRST SPOT.

PARTNER ZIGZAG (WITH BALL) - OFFENSE DRIBBLES FROM SPOT TO SPOT AND GOES HALF-SPEED. DO NOT ALLOW PLAYERS TO STEAL THE BALL. NEXT PAIR IN LINE STARTS AS PRECEDING PAIR LEAVES FIRST SPOT.

ENCOURAGE DEFENSIVE PLAYERS TO KEEP THEIR "HEAD ON THE BALL." THEY MUST FORCE THE OFFENSIVE PLAYERS TO TURN AT EACH SPOT. PLAYERS SHOULD ROTATE OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AFTER EACH REPETITION.

3. COACH K DRILL

DESCRIPTION: ENCOURAGE YOUR PLAYERS TO GO AS HARD AS THEY CAN FOR 30SEC. REENFORCE THE DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES THAT YOU HAVE TAUGHT AND USE THIS AS A QUICK REVIEW. PLAYERS SHOULD SLIDE CORRECTLY, SPRINT, AND PIVOT WITHIN THIS DRILL

- PAIR UP PLAYERS, DESIGNATING THREE PLAYERS PER SET OF CONES
- ARRANGE CONES SO THAT IT RESEMBLES A BOX
(2 ON THE BOX - 2 ON THE CORNERS OF THE FREE THROW LINE)
- DEFENSIVE PLAYER BEGINS BY SPRINTING TO THE CONE AND BREAKING DOWN IN A DEFENSIVE POSITION
- PLAYER WILL THEN PIVOT BACK TOWARD THE OPPOSITE BOX AND USE THEIR DEFENSIVE SLIDE TO GET THERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE (BE SURE TO STRESS THE CORRECT TECHNIQUE)
- ONCE AT THE CONE, THE PLAYER WILL ONCE AGAIN SPRINT TO THE CONE DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THEM AT THE CORNER OF THE FREE THROW LINE
- PLAYER WILL THEN PIVOT BACK TOWARD THE ORIGINAL BOX THEY STARTED AT AND REPEAT THIS SEQUENCE FOR 30SECONDS

4. STAGGER DRILL

DESCRIPTION: ENCOURAGE DEFENSIVE PLAYERS TO KEEP THEIR “HEAD ON THE BALL” AND REMIND THEM OF BALL/YOU/BASKET PRINCIPLE. DO NOT ALLOW DEFENSIVE PLAYERS TO STEAL THE BALL. OFFENSIVE PLAYERS SHOULD USE THEIR ARM BARS AS THEY DRIBBLE. DRILL SHOULD LAST 20-30 SECONDS. PLAYERS SHOULD ROTATE OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AND REPEAT AS DESIRED.

- PAIR UP PLAYERS, DESIGNATING ONE PLAYER ON OFFENSE AND ONE PLAYER ON DEFENSE
- USING THE LONGEST PART OF THE PRACTICE AREA, SPACE EACH PAIR ABOUT FIVE FEET APART
- OFFENSIVE PLAYER DRIBBLES THE BASKETBALL LEFT AND RIGHT IN RANDOM MOVEMENTS, STAYING ON THE SAME IMAGINARY LINE
- DEFENSIVE PLAYER ASSUMES PROPER DEFENSIVE STANCE AND SLIDES WITH THE OFFENSIVE PLAYER