

A Games Approach to Teaching Skills (Part 2)

Mike MacKay

- Mike starts clinic with a quick story about a dog. A dog has 4 legs, but someone says the tail is also called a leg. Does that mean the dog now has 5 legs? Answer is no - just because someone calls a tail a leg, it doesn't make it a leg. But that's what happens with basketball. Everyone has their own opinions in basketball and youth sport, which is why we have to make sure we use research. The approaches and teaching styles advocated don't come from opinions, but research.
- Zones are like steroids. They're bad for you but good in that you'll win!
- Ball screens (picks) and zone shouldn't occur at the youth level, because as soon as that happens you're labelling players big and small.
- Ball screens make it too easy to penetrate, and players then don't learn how to penetrate well, use both hands, have their head up and beat their defender. Players also just use the ball screen to penetrate instead of understanding how to use a pick to create advantage.
- Who + Why = What + How
- 5 Stages of Skill Development:
 - Initiation = first time players have ever seen a skill (analogy = baby walking for the first time. Parents don't stay anything and instruct, but support the child if they fall. We have to let them wobble. Parents don't say faster, quicker, but they let them figure it out. That's what we have to do at this stage.
 - Acquisition = this is the more repetitive stage to build technique. Can be Phrase A. Start slow and build up to quicker speed.
 - Consolidation = most important but most neglected. This is the decision-making component of when to use that technique. Can be Phrase B.
 - Refinement = using the skill in Phrase C & D. Can they use that skill in competition?
 - Creative = when players start building and putting their own spin on a particular skill.
- Mike used analogies of counting from 1 to 10 to show the above. First time it was easy and could go to refinement and competition straight away. Then went backwards 10 to 1, then alphabetically. Didn't give players a chance to wobble as it got harder. We often do this with skills and expect it to hold up in Phrase D in the storm of a game.

Pylon Exchange

- Grid fairly big
- Boring game if players don't take risk. Players have to exchange spots on the outside, player in the middle has to try and steal a spot. Mike had a cone laid out for the defender in the middle.
- Players have to learn to try and 'ghost cut' and exchange at the back of the defender's head (whoever defender isn't looking at).
- 'Playing on the edge.' Outside players have to try and 'engage' the defender by faking, playing in the middle of the pylons etc.
- Players can connect with voice and names.
- Make it 5 sides on the outside if need to for uneven numbers.
- **Load** = could put two defenders in the middle too for this.
- **Load** = add a basketball each. So important with dribbling to do something where they don't focus on the ball but have to keep their eyes up as a result of the task.

- Players have to learn to make things happen and set their own games up. Can't always rely on the coach.

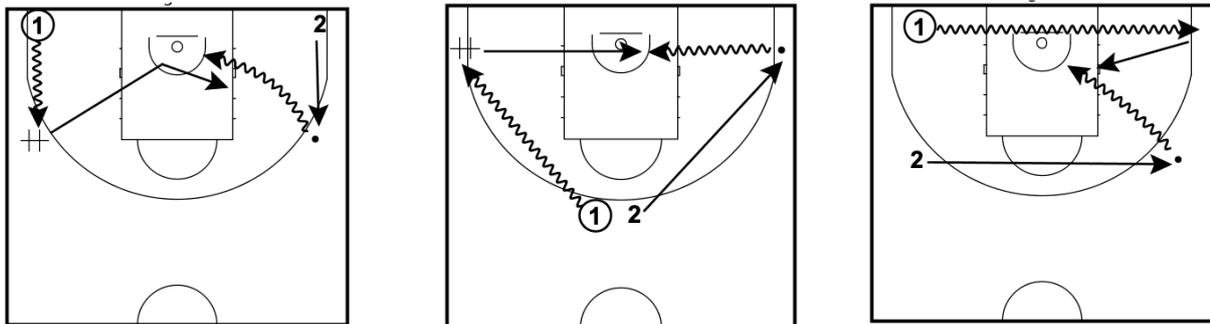
Stride Stop Lay-Ups

- Mike demonstrated whole first. Slow, gave context of defender outside.
- Asked the why. Why outside-inside?
- When players asked the why, showed the context with the defender too. Can't go off one leg if no advantage and with defender on-side as can get bumped off the line.
- On balance, can initiate the contact. Can also 'KOB' the defender.
- Players get the rhythm of it first. Coach can clap to help give a cue.
- Coach don't even watch, let them wobble. Take away the outcome and stress of scoring.
- KPI = second step is side-ways not in front. Ball is up.
- Can't always move whole group on. If only x6 are ready, move on with them and let others get some more practice.
- **Load** = do on a basket. Mike had players in two lines doing it static start. Doesn't matter not going at speed at beginning. Coach can start to guide by standing next to players, doesn't influence decision. Football shield is good for this to make contact.
- **Load** = self-toss, catch and drive from wing. More dynamic start. 'Parallel to rim.' Once comfortable start to guide, 'I'm a help defender.'
- **Load** = add in pump fake.
- **Load** = now 'imagine' bigger defender. Have to pivot out of it. Demonstrate why you can't land inside, outside, as pivot foot can't create space from defender. Have to pivot all the way around like a 'T post' so you have PVAD. Fake, pivot into 'T Post position', then pivot back for a score.
- KPI = straight two foot jump stop is very difficult at speed, difficult to stop while going fast and not travelling/ remaining on balance.
- KPI = ball placement is loose. Should eventually be outside the body.
- When Mike demonstrated, player didn't know what square-up meant. That's not the players fault - in this case coach has to give a visual cue or instruct more implicitly/ provide a visual cue.
- **Load** = 1v1 behind back (ball not touching). Have to twist hips in direction you want to go before going. Like a sprinter going in that direction. Rotation was two in, two out.
- You still have responsibilities when you're in line to be ready and be quick as a sub. Other job is to give energy to the group on.
- **Load** = same 1v1, but start is defender side on (t position with offense in between defender's legs). Still an advantage but not as big.

1v1 Wing Put Down

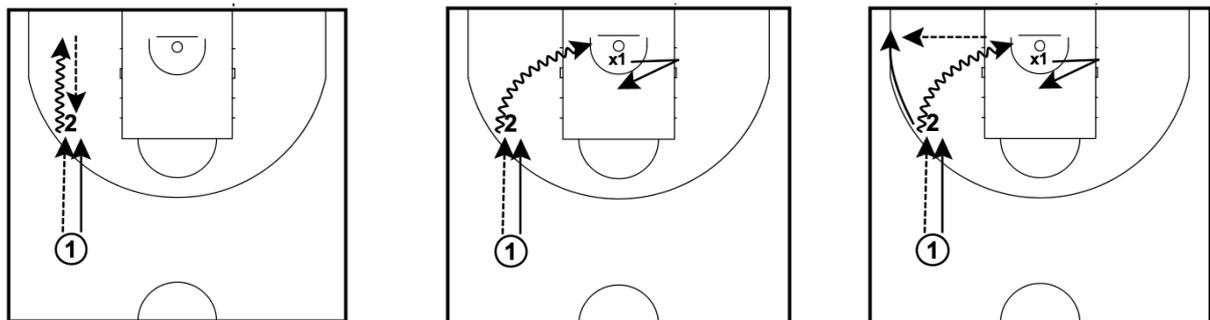
- Defense starts with the ball on the baseline, in line with the wing position. Offense has no ball and starts on the opposite side of the baseline, also in line with the wing. As soon as defense starts dribbling, offense is aiming to sprint, pick the ball-up, and score a lay-up. Defense will place the ball down on the wing, and then try to stop offense from scoring. This means the lay-up angle alternates each time.
- During all of these, girls have the option to pass to the coach if they pick the ball up and there's a shot they don't like.
- Load = flip the angles (e.g. start at top, balls in corner).
- Load = both players start dribbling the ball. When coach gives relevant cue, both players have to dribble to wing. Then the player who is indicated as offense from the cue (e.g. name) keeps the ball, touches the 3PT line, and tries to score. The other player puts their ball down.
- De-Load = defense must defend with the ball (makes it easier for offense to score).
- Load = to encourage jump shots, move offense further away or move offense in. Can alternate the start.
- Can always pass to coach instead of taking a bad shot.
- KPI = defensively, sometimes have to guard the basket first. "She ran to where the ball was, not to where it was going to be." First job is to protect the line of the basket, instead of running to the ball on then chasing. The ball on the wing will not be there long, and by the time the defense gets there it's too slow. Basket first, then up the line if needed.

- Load = if pass to coach off stride-step, post-up seal or come opposite black. Second coach stands on opposite wing for coach to skip to and make post entry from there.
- Load = change angles. One line on left wing, one line on left baseline. Ball is in right wing. Left wing is offense picking up ball on the wing and trying to score. Defense have to set ball down in right corner and then play defense. Manipulating the angles.
- Load = straight to 3v3 with Hi-5 (Pasquali) advantage. Must include transition if U14 or less. Can award bonus points for using the stride stop.
- “There was a rule session last night, and the committee decided there’s a brand new rule that you have to inbound it when you score.”
- When rotations are bad, this is when I would stop practice and talk about leadership.
- Example of PVAD is dribbling with your head down. Another example is in transition and being in line with the ball, as you can’t see both the ball and other basket. This means when in the line with the ball on the wing, the receiver will often have their back to the other basket and not see defense if they’re facing the ball. This is why it’s important the ball handler dribbles towards middle.
- Trying to get to the stage now where actions overlap each other. When one action is finishing, another is starting. The actions overlap.
- One reason we don’t get touch passes now is because we’re not teaching kids how to anticipate.



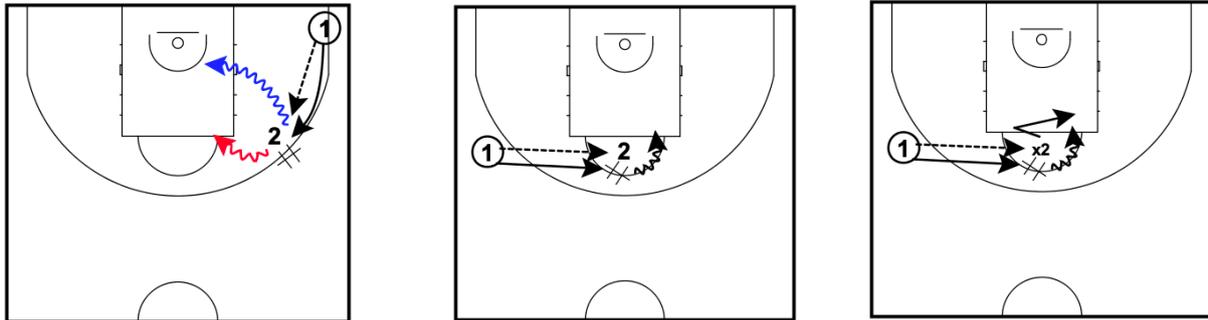
Cross-over Steps

- In pairs, one ball. Pass to partner, run in and stride stop / jump stop. Pick up ball, crossover step, ‘clip the hip.’ Take two dribbles out, stide/ jump stop, pivot repeat. Then partner goes.
- Load = dribbling stationary, pass off dribble when partner makes connection.
- “Twist and go” on cross-over step.
- Load = change the pivot type.
- Load = add in finish at the basket.
- Load = 1v1 finish at rim. Defender has to get two feet outside the key/ run around a cone etc. Offense attacks whatever direction partner places ball in.
- Load = 2v1, partner joins offense after handing ball off.
- Load = 1v2, partner plays trail D after handing ball off.



Curl Footwork

- In pairs, offense starts with ball in corner. Pass to partner, place ball out (back to basket). Work on the curl, KPI catching on outside foot then 1-2 step footwork.
- Load = for more random practice, if partner places ball on inside hip (instead of placing out for curl), catch on hockey-step and play 1v1.
- Load = practice two or three dribbles off the curl.
- Load = change the angle (e.g. middle for the screen-away action).
- Load = 1v1 after the exchange. After handing-off, play defense.
- Load = 1v1 but against a help defender waiting in the key. Decision to shoot off the curl or attack and turn the corner. Can also do this practicing against guided defender (rush towards = turn corner, stay = shot). Can also load into 2v2, 3v3 etc.

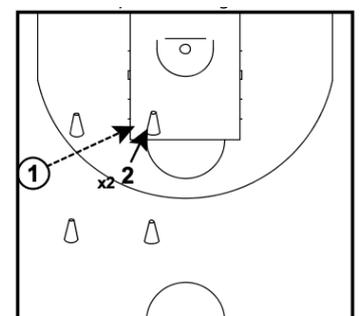
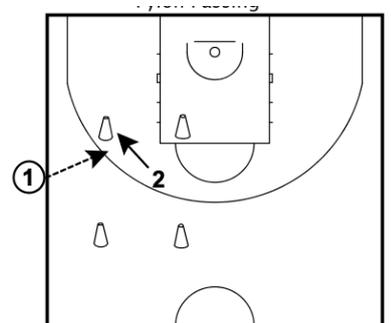


Passing

- 3 in a row passing. Kids must learn to fake to make the passing window bigger.
- Little step gives balance, as opposed to leaning forwards with the ball.
- “Defender is a tree.”
- Pass and replace, defender takes offense, passer plays defense.
- Load = can take a dribble to create the angle.
- Load = can move in angles to break three in a row.
- Must pass to a small target (hands) not a big target (the player). Sometimes the target is not on the body. E.g. if inbounding the ball and a defender is denying, the target could be over the head of the defender.
- Problem with just doing stationary passing is kids don't learn to pass away from the body. In soccer and hockey, kids get the idea of passing into space. Need to create situations in your practice which results in this skill being developed.

Pylon Passing

- Inbounder sideline or baseline. Receiver is standing inside a rectangle with 4 pylons. Inbounder must pass to a pylon, based on where the receiver connects towards.
- Load = add a defender. Figure out what the best pylon is (e.g. if defender is in front, the best pylon is a back one). If the defender is standing behind, best pylons are in front.
- KPI = talk about maintaining contact until the ball leaves the passer's hands.
- If pushing on the defender, throw a bounce pass instead of an air pass. This is because don't know when to lead. Anytime there's pushing (e.g. post entry), bounce pass is better.
- Load = same game, 1v1 in the post. Figure out what pylon is best.
- Load = 2v2 (same-side and weak-side). Defender could dig or stay, work on some off-ball movement off post entry. Lead to 3v3 to teach other actions.
- The worst debrief at the end of practice is are there any questions.



Players know if there are no questions they get to go home! But with adults in the clinic, sometimes I have to do that.

- "I want to thank you for coaching." Post Clinic.
- We can solve social issues through sport.

