

Improve our help-side defense

DRAFT

Thursday, Mar 12, 2026 | 75 min

Commitment

This session addresses the breakdown in help-side rotations from the previous game. We will emphasize proper stance, off-ball positioning, and loud communication to ensure every player knows their help responsibility.

Session Plan

Defensive Slide Mechanics

10 min

High-intensity lateral movement and stance maintenance drills.

Setup: Full court. Players lined up in two rows at the baseline in a low defensive stance.

1. Slide laterally from baseline to free-throw line extended, keeping eyes on a designated coach.
2. Execute controlled 'sprint-stop-slide' transitions on whistle commands.
3. Maintain 'nose-to-chest' alignment with an imaginary offensive player.
4. Perform 3 full-court lengths of slide-sprint intervals.

Establishes the physical foundation and 'low' mindset required for consistent defensive pressure.

Equipment: Basketballs

- Keep your butt down and chest up – don't lean into the slide.
- If you're not sweating, you're not in a low enough stance.

Close-out & Contain

15 min

Drill focusing on closing out to the shooter with high hands and 'no-drive' footwork.

Setup: Half court. Offensive player at the wing, defender at the basket.

1. Defender sprints out to the wing shooter, chopping feet on the final two steps.
2. Defender arrives with high hands to contest, while staying balanced.
3. Offensive player attempts one aggressive drive; defender must cut off the angle.
4. Rotate offense/defense after every 2 reps to keep intensity high.

Eliminates easy blow-bys and ensures we aren't giving up uncontested shots.

Equipment: Basketballs

- Don't get 'stuck' reaching – trust your feet to beat them to the spot.
- Chop your feet! Arriving out of control is what allows them to drive by you.

4-on-4 Shell: Help & Recover

30 min

Controlled shell drill focusing on weak-side rotations and 'sink-and-recover' movements.

Setup: Half court. 4 offensive players on the perimeter, 4 defenders in their respective spots.

1. Offense passes the ball around the perimeter at game speed.
2. Off-ball defenders must point at their man AND the ball at all times.
3. When the ball is one pass away, defender must be in a denial stance.
4. When the ball is two passes away, defender must be in the paint ('help' position).

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5. On any drive, the nearest help defender MUST step up to stop the ball.

Trains players to see the 'big picture' rather than just their own defender.

Equipment: Basketballs

- Communicate! The weak-side defender needs to call 'Help!' the moment the ball handler puts the ball on the floor.
- Stop play immediately if a defender is ball-watching and forgets their help assignment.

Competitive Transition Scrimmage

15 min

Scrimmage with specific scoring rules to reward defensive rotations.

Setup: Full court.

1. Divide into two teams of 5.
2. Defensive points: +2 for a forced turnover, +1 for a contested miss, +3 for a charge taken.
3. Play to a score of 15; losers must run 'defensive slides' (the warm-up sequence).
4. Emphasize that the defense is only finished once a clean rebound is secured.

Forces players to apply the shell drill concepts in a game-like environment.

Equipment: Basketballs

- Communication during the transition from offense to defense is key here.
- Reward the effort in the rotation even if the offense eventually scores.

Cool-down & Commitment Huddle

5 min

Static stretching and team reflection on defensive accountability.

Setup: Center court circle.

1. Guided static stretching focusing on quads, hips, and calves.
2. Coach highlights one 'help rotation' that exemplified the team's commitment today.
3. Brief team discussion: 'How does helping your teammate make us a better team?'

Reinforces the culture value of Commitment and aids physical recovery.

- Encourage players to call out a teammate who helped them on defense today.

Equipment Needed

Basketballs