

# On- and Off-Ball Defense

**Coach** Elaine Elliott

## Purpose

To teach defenders on- and off-ball defensive positions.

## Organization

Two offensive players, two defensive players, two coaches, one ball, and a 30-second shot clock.

## Procedure

1. One offensive player is at each wing position. Two coaches are at the top of the key with a ball. One defender is on each offensive wing player.
2. Position the defense according to where the ball begins. In diagram 1, the ball is with the left coach. Therefore, the left wing defense is one pass away in deny stance. The other defender is two passes away, so she should be in an open pistol stance, one foot in the lane and pointing to see both her player and the ball.
3. Defense shifts position when offense passes the ball. If the ball is passed to the right coach,  $X_1$  will move over into an open stance, one foot in the lane, because she is now two passes away.  $X_2$  will sprint into a denial stance on her offensive player, because she is one pass away (see diagram 2).
4. If offense then passes the ball to the  $O_2$  player, the defender must move from denial to on-ball stance. The other defender must sprint to the middle of the lane, still in pistol stance (see diagram 3).
5. Offense passes the ball around the perimeter for the duration of the 30-second shot clock.

## Coaching Points

- Emphasize defenders moving when the ball is in the *air*, not after the pass is made.
- Defenders must stay low in their stances and be able to see their players and the ball.
- Have the offensive players and managers hold the ball for a few seconds so defense can adjust.

## Variations

- Offensive players may drive to the basket or shoot on the catch. Defenders must prevent the drive or contest the shot, block out, and rebound.
- Add skip passes for defensive closeout work.
- Add more time to the drill for conditioning.

