

## 5.4 SMALL SIDED GAMES - 4X4

### 4X4

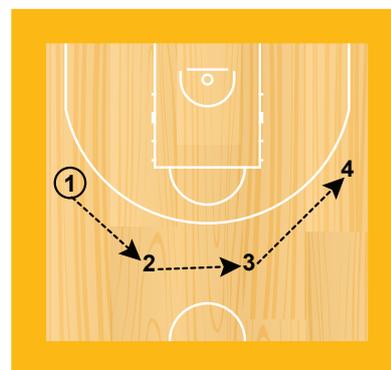
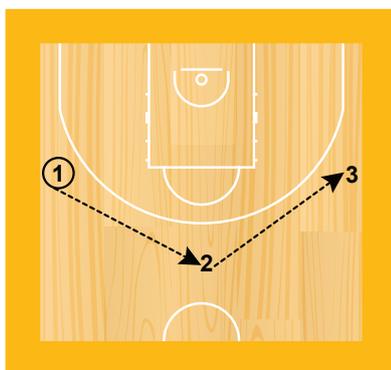
Similar to 3x3, using 4 players on each team is another great tool to help young players to develop their individual skills as well as their understanding of team concepts, such as “motion” offence or man to man defensive positioning.

### INTRODUCE POST PLAY

In 4x4 there is more scope to introduce post play and all players should have the opportunity to play in both post and perimeter positions. Defensively, there is scope for using “double teams” (when two defenders guard the ball), particularly in the context of “full court” defence.

### BALL REVERSAL

4x4 can also be preferable with very young players as the width of the court can be covered, with the passing distance between players being smaller, and this will encourage “ball reversal”:



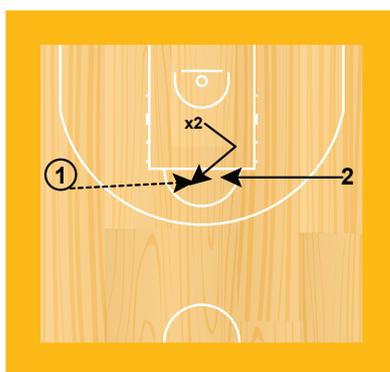
“Reversing” the ball (passing from one side of the court to the other) is an important concept. Very young players may find that easier to do in a “4 Out” alignment rather than “3 Out” alignment, as the passes required are shorter when there are 4 players.

Again, if side baskets are available, you can play “full court” but over the shorter distance across the court, rather than the length of a normal court. It is important that players learn the importance of “transition” between offence and defence.

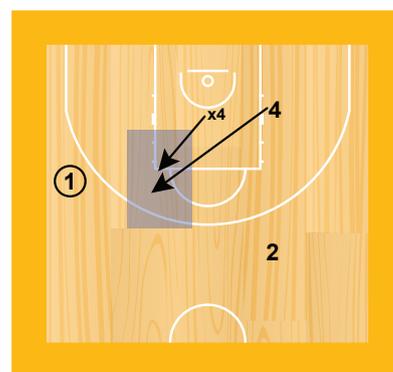
**“SPACE” AND “MOVEMENT”**

Again, one of the key reasons to use 4x4 with young players is that it is an excellent tool for teaching the importance of “space” and “movement” and also how to move together as a team. Without instruction, many young players will move closer to the ball, not realizing that if they then stay close to the ball it:

- (a) is easier for a defender to intercept the ball (a defender on the move will often steal the pass when their opponent is standing still); and
- (b) makes it harder for their team mates as there is no “space” to move into to try and receive a pass.

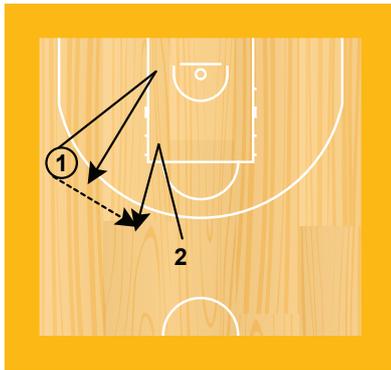


2 cuts towards the ball and then stops, waiting for 1 to pass. x2 continues to move and is able to intercept the pass

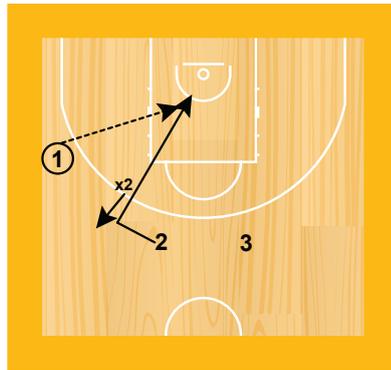


4 cuts to the ball and then stops after passing the free throw line. Their defender also adjusts their position. The shaded area is now “occupied”, limiting options where 2 could cut.

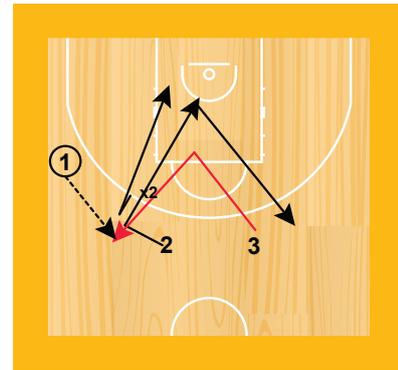
Like 3x3, 4x4 can develop an awareness of purposeful movement, as a team. The following progression can be used to introduce players and then give them plenty of practice using 4x4.



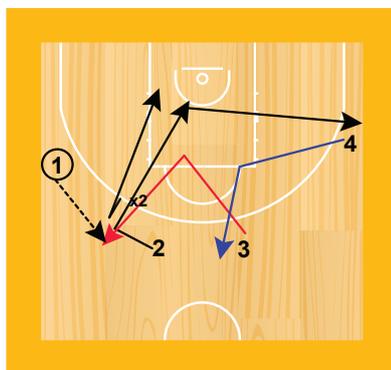
2 leads for the ball and faces the basket after catching it. 1 cuts after passing.



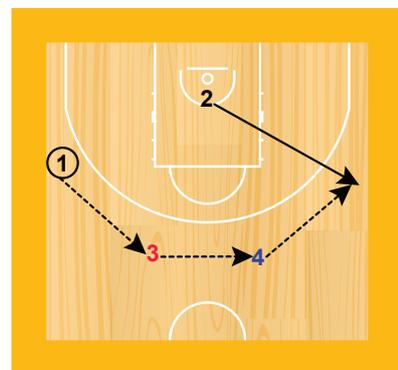
A defender is now added and 2 is encouraged to "back cut" when they cannot receive the ball on the perimeter.



After 2 back cuts to the basket, 3 can "replace" – cutting to the perimeter position. 2 then moves to the perimeter position where 3 started.



After the initial "pass-cut-replace" movement by 2 and 3. 4 now "replaces" 3 and then 2 moves to the perimeter position where 4 started.

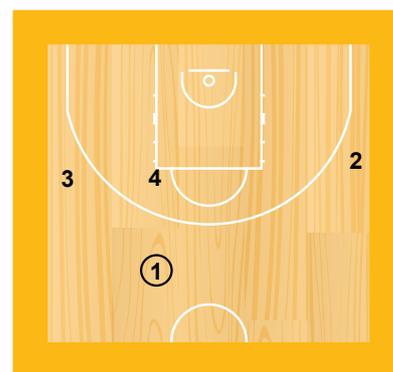
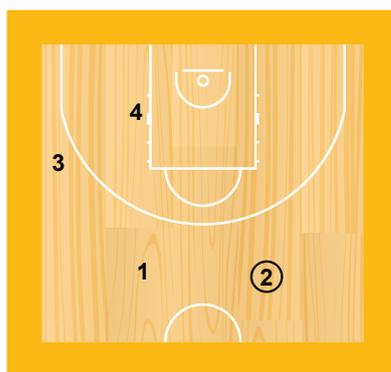
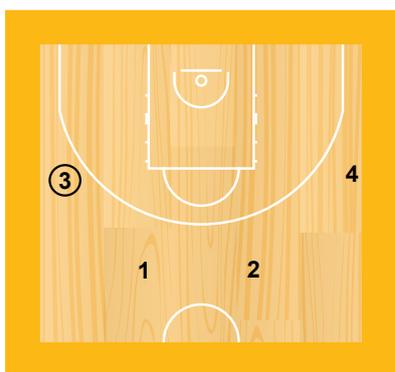


The series can be concluded by having players "reverse" the ball (pass it from one side of the court to the other)

Although the concept of purposeful movement may initially be shown without a defence or a small number of defenders, it is important to progress to and let the players “play” and, give instructions as much as possible:

- (a) “on the run” – without stopping the whole activity;
- (b) no more than a minute – which simulates a time-out.

There are various alignments that can be used with young athletes in 4x4:



### “4 OUT”

This is an “open post” alignment, without a designated post player. Player may “post up” following a cut to the basket, and then move to the perimeter.

This emphasizes:

- “pass and cut”
- “flash” cuts
- “back” cuts

### “LOW POST TRIANGLE”

A post player can be introduced but when working with young players, all players must have the opportunity to play in the post and on the perimeter.

This emphasizes:

- passing to the post
- cutting off the post
- back cuts (2)

### “HIGH POST TRIANGLE”

Bringing the post player to a high post position helps to emphasise:

- back cuts (2 and 3)
- post moves – facing basket
- cutting off the post
- driving to the basket from the wing