

A close-up photograph of Stephen Curry's torso and head. He is wearing a dark blue t-shirt. His right hand is resting on a brown basketball with a black Under Armour logo. He has a beard and is looking slightly to his left.

MasterClass

# Stephen Curry

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Teaches Shooting, Ball-Handling,  
and Scoring





## ABOUT **STEPHEN CURRY**

Stephen Curry was born in 1988 and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA. Stephen's father, former National Basketball Association (NBA) player Dell Curry, imbued him with a love for basketball and inspired Stephen to pursue the game professionally. After a meteoric rise during his college basketball career, Stephen was picked seventh overall by the Golden State Warriors in the 2009 NBA draft. Stephen exceeded expectations for a player of his size, shattering numerous NBA records during his first five years in the league. He scored more three-point field goals during the 2012–13 season than any individual player in league history and broke this record again during the 2014–15 season, working to become one of the most accurate and consistent shooters in the sport. He won his first NBA championship in 2015, his second in 2017, and earned back-to-back Most Valuable Player awards in the 2014–15 and 2015–16 seasons, the latter by unanimous vote—a first in NBA history.



1.

## INTRODUCTION

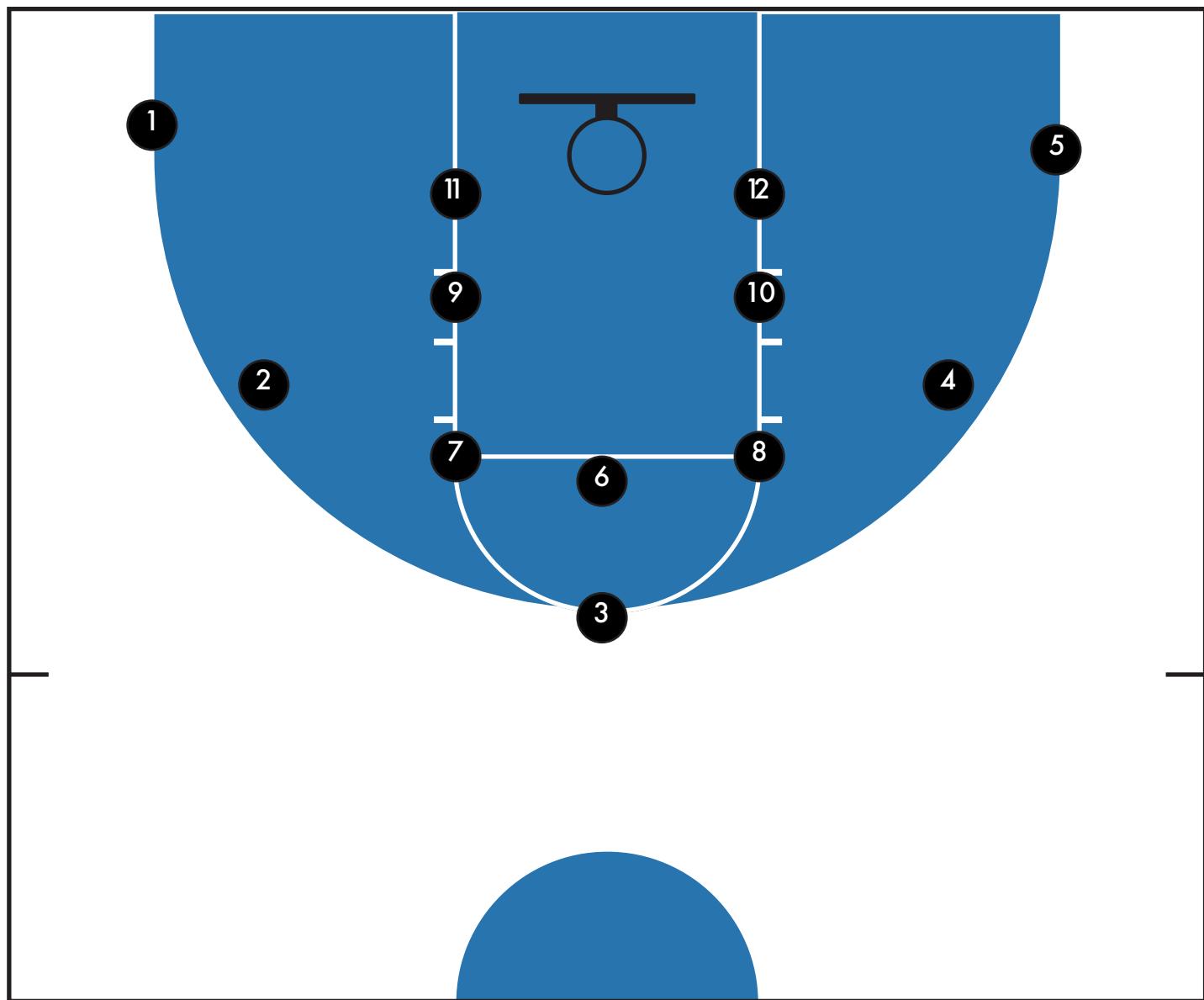
### ABOUT THIS CLASS GUIDE

The MasterClass team has created this Class Guide as a supplement to Stephen's class. Chapters are supported with reviews, opportunities to take your learning further, and a training regimen.

### SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Find a basketball court near you where you can practice Stephen's lessons. Or practice at home if you've got a basketball hoop. You'll also need a way to record yourself on the court, a mirror, and a chair. Advanced chapters require a second basketball and a tennis ball.

# COURT GLOSSARY



## KEY

- |   |                          |    |                   |
|---|--------------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | - Left corner            | 7  | - Left elbow      |
| 2 | - Left wing              | 8  | - Right elbow     |
| 3 | - Top of the key         | 9  | - Left lane line  |
| 4 | - Right wing             | 10 | - Right lane line |
| 5 | - Right corner           | 11 | - Left block      |
| 6 | - Free-throw line / nail | 12 | - Right block     |

# CLASS TRAINING PROGRAM

This Class Guide contains a training program that builds on the concepts Stephen teaches, divided into 12 phases. Each phase contains a structure for daily training, building on the one before it and increasing in difficulty and volume. We recommend you practice five days a week and get plenty of rest. You can use your off days to recuperate and watch game film.

Each phase of training corresponds to the skills that Stephen teaches in the videos. We recommend you spend one to three weeks on each phase before moving to the next one, so you'll naturally advance through the videos more quickly than you'll advance through the training program. Complete each phase at your own pace and rewatch the videos as needed. We've created a spreadsheet for you to track your improvement over the course of your training.

When you feel like you've mastered the concepts in each phase of training, it's time to move on to the next one. Remember, it's not about advancing quickly. It's about taking whatever time it requires to get your mechanics perfect.

We've provided individual Shot Tracker spreadsheets for each phase of training represented in this class. These sheets are based on the sheets that Stephen uses to track his training. Track your workouts each time you hit the court and try to improve your shooting percentage whenever you train. Each spreadsheet is preloaded with an instructions tab (at the bottom of the sheet) and five days of training. To add more days, click the little arrow on the tab at the bottom of one of the sheets, and select "Duplicate." You can add as many sheets as you need to finish that phase of training, and can personalize the sheets to suit your workouts.



## 2.

# SHOOTING: STANCE, ALIGNMENT, AND MECHANICS

*"As a shooter, it's all about doing your work early. That's kind of my philosophy.... It all starts from the ground up."*

—Stephen Curry

## SUBCHAPTERS

- Shoot From the Ground Up
- Load Your Lower Body
- Lower Body: Common Mistakes
- Hand Positioning
- Where to Aim
- Release
- Release: Common Mistakes

## CHAPTER REVIEW

Great shooters rely on solid mechanics. Every part of their bodies works together to become the foundation of their shots.

For Stephen, every good shot begins in the lower body. Begin by pointing your toes in the same direction, first squaring them with the rim and then working through practice to find the most natural stance for your body. Your legs, not your arms, give you power and consistency, so load your lower body by pushing the arches of your feet into the floor. Keeping your knees behind your toes, concentrate on letting power and energy flow from your feet up through your hips and glutes. Square your toes, knees, and shoulders, and remember to flex your legs on every shot.

Hand positioning is key to becoming a consistent shooter: it affects feel, proper spin, connection, and control through your release. To find proper hand position, place the index finger of your dominant hand on the air valve of the ball. Take a few form shots to get used to the centered feel of this position. Always hold the ball with your finger pads, being sure to leave some breathing room between the ball and your palm. As you line up your shot, aim your eyes at the two or three rim hooks that are facing you, and think about dropping the ball just over the front of the rim. Don't release too low! A higher release point makes it harder for a defender to interfere with your shot. As you release the ball, keep your elbow and wrist in line with the basket, extending your arm fully so that at the point of release your elbow ends above your eye.

A real game's complex moving parts might make it difficult to recall these steps, but remember that improvement comes with sustained practice. Stephen spent an entire summer restructuring the mechanical foundation of his shot in high school, and he hasn't stopped perfecting it since!

2.

## **SHOOTING: STANCE, ALIGNMENT, AND MECHANICS**

### **TRAINING PREP**

- Without a ball, practice your form in front of a mirror. Focus on your foot positioning and lower body alignment, loading your hips, bringing your shooting hand up through your eyebrow in a clean line, and releasing with your elbow above your eye and a gooseneck finish.
- Spend 15 minutes walking around the basketball court, keeping your eyes on the rim. Familiarize yourself with the rim hooks and how many hooks are facing you from different angles or distances. Without a ball, practice running to a random spot on the floor, stopping, and finding the rim hooks with your eyes as quickly as possible.
- Practice your hand alignment on the ball. Put the index finger of your shooting hand on the basketball's air valve, like Stephen does, and let the ball rest in your hand to feel the center of the ball. Standing just a few feet from the basket, take 10 shots by finding the air valve first. Then take 10 more just by finding the center of the ball with your hand, not searching for the air valve.
- Take a look at the included Shot Tracker spreadsheet. Start to familiarize yourself with it, and pick a date to begin your training (maybe that day is today!).

3.

## FORM SHOOTING PRACTICE

*"You wanna be as detailed as possible on your mechanics right here in front of the basket because it takes 10 perfect makes to undo just one bad mechanic shot."*

—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Set High Expectations for Accuracy
- Start Close to the Basket
- Build to 100 Makes
- How to Practice Alone
- Learn From Your Misses

### CHAPTER REVIEW

The only person you should compete against is yourself. Resist the urge to compare yourself to others, and instead, focus your mind and body on improving upon your previous training session. Set reasonable goals for yourself before each workout, and be sure to track your accuracy so you can watch your stats improve.

Stephen wants to start his workout with perfect makes to build up confidence. He suggests focusing on reps close to the basket, which will build your range and confidence and help you identify problems with your shot. Begin each practice by shooting easy baskets from the paint, concentrating on your mechanics. Every time you miss the basket, diagnose what went wrong with your mechanics, adjust accordingly, then try again. For Stephen, shots that come up long or short tend to be a matter of finding his rhythm through more reps and regaining his feel for the ball. However, missing left or right usually indicates a problem with his core mechanics, requiring a more detailed analysis and adjustment of his shot to correct it.

As practice goes on, gradually increase your distance from the basket, taking different and more difficult shots until you're shooting from the three-point line. Stephen encourages you to keep building up your endurance until you're able to make 100 perfect shots over the course of a single practice session. Persist through fatigue and do your best to prevent it from altering your shooting mechanics.

### TAKE IT FURTHER

- Film yourself shooting from the front and from the side. Play back the video, studying your form and mechanical foundation. Are you making any common mistakes? How can you fine-tune your mechanics to make your shot more efficient?

3.

## FORM SHOOTING PRACTICE

### TRAINING: PHASE 1

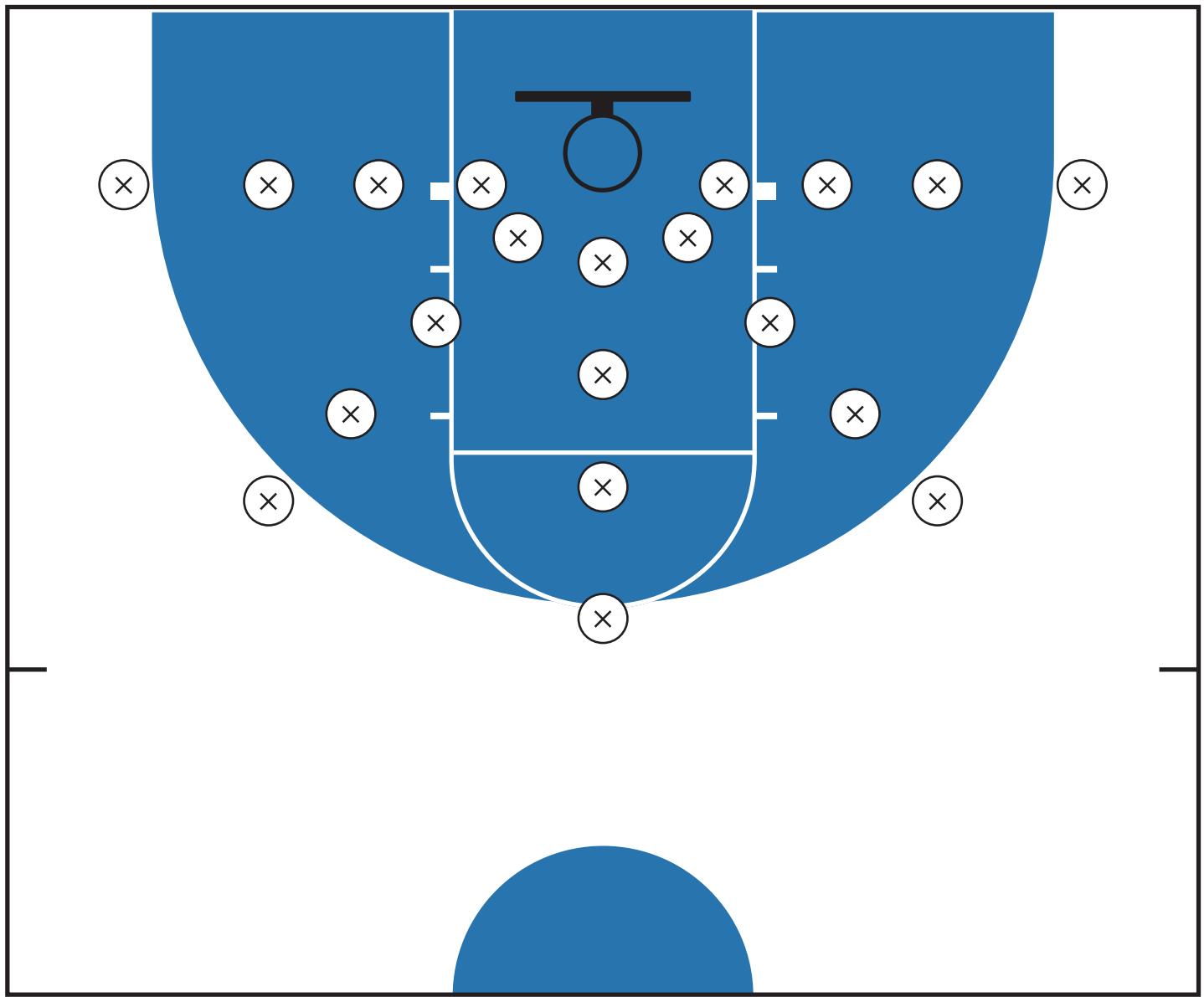
Welcome to training! Phase 1 starts with form shooting. This is how Stephen recommends you begin every single workout. As you progress through the training program, you'll add other components to your daily training, but you'll do form shooting at the beginning of every single workout. Record your shots in the Shot Tracker spreadsheet.

- Start just a few feet from the basket and shoot until you hit five perfect makes. Record how many shots it takes for you to get to five. Then take a step back, to the middle of the lane, and shoot until you hit five more perfect makes. Repeat twice more, moving backward after making five in a row.
- Once you've hit five perfect makes from each of the four spots in front of the basket, start adding the other spots on the above diagram to your form shooting practice.
  - First, shoot five form shots from each of the 20 spots and record your makes. Once you can comfortably shoot 100 total form shots in a training session, you can move on to Phase 2 of the training.
  - Then, push yourself to take as many shots as it takes to hit five perfect makes from each of the 20 spots. This may take a few weeks, or even months. But stick with it!

As you progress through the class, you'll add other components to your daily training, but you'll do form shooting at the beginning of every single workout.

- Use the Shot Tracker to record your makes and track your improvement over time. Push yourself to improve every time you're on the court.
- Remember, when form shooting, if you're not perfect directly in front of the basket, it's going to be impossible to be perfect as you move away from the basket. Each time you miss, pause, and notice whether you missed short, long, or to one side. What can you do to correct your misses?

## FORM SHOOTING SPOTS



## 4.

# SHOOTING OFF THE CATCH

*"The art of shooting is—honestly, to its core—a very complex science. There are so many different variables that go into it."*

—Stephen Curry

## SUBCHAPTERS

- Catch the Ball Shot-Ready
- Move Your Body to the Ball
- Maintain a Consistent Ball Path
- Catch and Shoot:  
Common Mistakes
- Four-Way Form Shooting
- Film Session: Catching Shot-Ready
- Misses Happen

## CHAPTER REVIEW

For Stephen, a shooter's number one goal is to be a persistent threat in the eyes of the defense. Whenever he's on the court, Stephen makes it a priority to be shot-ready, so that he's set up for successful makes, even before he has his hands on the ball.

To put yourself in a shot-ready position when catching a pass, keep both hands open with all 10 fingers spread. This position lets your teammates know you're ready to take the ball. Rather than extending your arms to catch an imperfect pass, move your whole body to the ball so you can catch it inside the frame of your body. Once you have the ball in your shot pocket, immediately square your toes with the rim, then bring the ball into a straight line from your hip to your eyebrow through your release.

Keep in mind that even Stephen misses some shots. With a willingness to learn from your mistakes and move beyond them, you can overcome your misses.

## TAKE IT FURTHER

- Find a game clip online and watch it 10 times, paying attention to a different player each time. What is each player focused on? What are they trying to do as individuals? Where are they looking? What don't they see? How do the players interact and fit together?

4.

## SHOOTING OFF THE CATCH

### TRAINING: PHASE 2

Add four-way form shooting to your practice. Continue the 100 form shooting shots from Phase 1 in your practice every day. Form shooting and four-way form shooting are the two foundational elements of the training program, and you'll repeat them every single practice. Track your practice and improvement in the Shot Tracker spreadsheet.

- During Phase 2, continue the 100 form shooting shots from Phase 1 in your practice every day. Track your practice and improvement in the Shot Tracker.
- Add some catching practice. Get a friend to pass you the ball and practice moving to the ball so you can catch it shot-ready. Remember not to reach for the ball.
- Also add four-way form shooting to your practice. Starting at the free-throw line, move into space, catch, and shoot. Take five shots in each of the five directions on the Shot Tracker, and use the Shot Tracker to track your makes and improvement.
  - So, your training should look like this:
    - Warm-up and stretching
    - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
    - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
      - 1-2 step (straight up and down): five shots
      - Toward the basket: five shots
      - Away from the basket: five shots
      - Lateral left: five shots
      - Lateral right: five shots

As you progress throughout the class, you'll add different components to the workout but will continue to do form shooting and four-way form shooting every single practice.

## 5.

# BALL-HANDLING: FOUNDATIONS

*"The keys to becoming a great ball-handler...are very similar to those of being a great shooter, because your foundation is the same."*

—Stephen Curry

## SUBCHAPTERS

- Ball-Handling Mechanics
- Dribble Height
- Master the Three Basic Moves
- Dribble With Force
- Ball-Handling Practice
- Common Mistakes
- Review: Ball-Handling Concepts

## CHAPTER REVIEW

Mastering the art of ball-handling is essential to becoming a great shooter. Luckily, all you need to fine-tune your ball-handling is a solid surface and a basketball. Practice one-ball pounds with each hand and the three basic moves: crossover, between the legs, and behind the back. Once you build a solid foundation with them, start creating combination dribbles that you can utilize during games. Most of Stephen's ball-handling is simply a collection of combinations of those few simple moves.

The key to ball-handling is balance. Start in a centered athletic position: keep your nose behind your toes and your hips loaded, being careful not to lean forward. To maintain balance, keep your body static and in an athletic position, and move the ball around your body—don't move your body around the ball. When handling the ball, dribble aggressively and to the side of your foot, maintaining a bounce height that reaches between your knee and hip. Dribbling at that sweet spot keeps the ball near your shot pocket, helping you become a more efficient shooter. Keep in mind that the more power you put behind each dribble, the more control you'll have over the ball. The idea behind aggressive dribbling is to minimize the ball's airtime so you can prevent defenders from deflecting or stealing it.

If you're struggling with ball-handling, you can make positive adjustments to your foundation by asking yourself, "Can I take a shot from my current position?" If you can't, then you need to concentrate on correcting your stance, dribbling, or foundation. Remember, don't be loose when ball-handling and always take a position that lets you maneuver the ball into your shot pocket at a moment's notice.

5.

## BALL-HANDLING: FOUNDATIONS

### TAKE IT FURTHER

- Watch some of Stephen's highlights, paying attention to his simple yet effective dribble combinations. What basic moves do you notice?
- Who are some of your favorite NBA ball-handlers? Watch some of their game highlights and observe how they effectively handle the ball. What dribble combinations do they use? Try breaking down their dribble combinations into the individual moves that they most commonly use and stack together.
- As you practice your ball-handling, film yourself dribbling and note parts of your form where you can improve.

### TRAINING: PHASE 3

*Add ball-handling into your training.*

- Continue your form shooting progression and four-way form shooting from the previous phases. Are your percentages going up?
- Add ball-handling into your training. Set a timer for 30 seconds for each move: one-ball pound, crossover, between the legs, and behind the back. Don't worry about counting reps, just focus on your form for those 30 seconds.
- If possible, spend some time practicing your ball-handling in front of a mirror. Notice your stance, ball position, and dribble height. Remember to keep your eyes up and don't look down at the ball.

5.

## BALL-HANDLING: FOUNDATIONS

### TRAINING: PHASE 3 (CONTINUED)

- During Phase 3, your daily training should look like this:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit:
    - One-ball pound right: 30 seconds
    - One-ball pound left: 30 seconds
    - Crossover: 30 seconds
    - Between the legs (alternating): 30 seconds
    - Behind the back: 30 seconds
      - 1-2 step (straight up and down): five shots
      - Toward the basket: five shots
      - Away from the basket: five shots
      - Lateral left: five shots
      - Lateral right: five shots
  - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit
  - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit

## 6.

# SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE, PART 1

*"In order to have complete and utter confidence in your shot...you have to get that muscle memory that you need, and the only way to do that is to just live in the gym. Get those reps in, put the time in to make yourself better. Challenge yourself."*

—Stephen Curry

## SUBCHAPTERS

- Pickup Shooting Form
- Dribble Hard Into Your Shot Pocket
- Bring the Ball Across Your Body
- Pickup Form Shooting
- Good Mechanics Create Confidence
- Review: Pickup Shooting Concepts

## CHAPTER REVIEW

When shooting off the dribble, the goal is to be as efficient as possible. Confident shooters rely on strong mechanical foundations. All the work their bodies do to make successful shots is second nature and embedded within their muscle memory.

Keep your eyes trained at the basket as you move your body into shot-ready position. Remember your ball-handling foundations. Be aggressive when you pound the ball into your shot pocket. If you're dribbling with your nondominant hand, never reach for the ball with your shooting hand to bring the ball into your shot pocket—that's inefficient. Instead, bring the ball across your body with your nondominant hand into your shot pocket. Let your mechanics take over from there!

Every shooter experiences bouts of disappointment in their career. The key is to not let a streak of misses damage your confidence as a player and to remember that you're only as good as the amount of training you put in to fine-tune your mechanics.

## TAKE IT FURTHER

- Film yourself pickup shooting from the front and the side, off of a left-hand dribble and a right-hand dribble. Review the recording and mark any mistakes you made. Did you bring the ball across your body into your shot pocket, or reach for it? Did your ball path from your shot pocket through release stay consistent across the shots?

6.

## SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE, PART 1

### TRAINING: PHASE 4

Add pickup shooting to your training. As always, you'll continue with form shooting and four-way form shooting, and you'll progressively add different types of pickup shots.

- Pickup shooting: Start at the free-throw line and shoot five pickup shots off of a dribble with your left hand, then five off of a dribble with your right hand. Repeat from the left corner, left wing, right wing, and right corner. See the included diagram for clarification.
- In Phase 4, follow this training structure:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit:
    - One-ball pound right: 30 seconds
    - One-ball pound left: 30 seconds
    - Crossover: 30 seconds
    - Between the legs (alternating): 30 seconds
    - Behind the back: 30 seconds
    - Combination: 30 seconds
  - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit
  - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
  - Pickup shooting:
    - One-ball pound left + shoot: five shots
    - One-ball pound right + shoot: five shots
    - Repeat from each of five spots around the basket, for a total of 50 shots (see diagram for clarification).

## 6.

# SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE, PART 1

## TRAINING: PHASE 5

Add ball-handling combinations to your pickup shooting. As always, you'll continue with form shooting and four-way form shooting.

- Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts: When you incorporate dribble moves into the pickup shooting, focus on a single move each day. So, you might have a crossover day, or a between-the-legs day, or a combination day. We don't prescribe specific combinations, but encourage you to get creative.
  - Combinations are things like:
    - Crossover + between the legs + behind the back
    - Between left + between right + behind the back left + behind the back right
    - Get creative!
  - In Phase 5, add the ball-handling concepts:
    - Warm-up and stretching
    - Stationary ball-handling circuit (three minutes total):
      - One-ball pound right: 30 seconds
      - One-ball pound left: 30 seconds
      - Crossover: 30 seconds
      - Between the legs (alternating): 30 seconds
      - Behind the back: 30 seconds
      - Combination: 30 seconds
    - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
    - Stationary ball-handling circuit
    - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
    - Pickup shooting:
      - One-ball pound left + shoot: five shots
      - One-ball pound right + shoot: five shots
      - Repeat from each of five spots around the basket, for a total of 50 shots (see diagram for clarification).

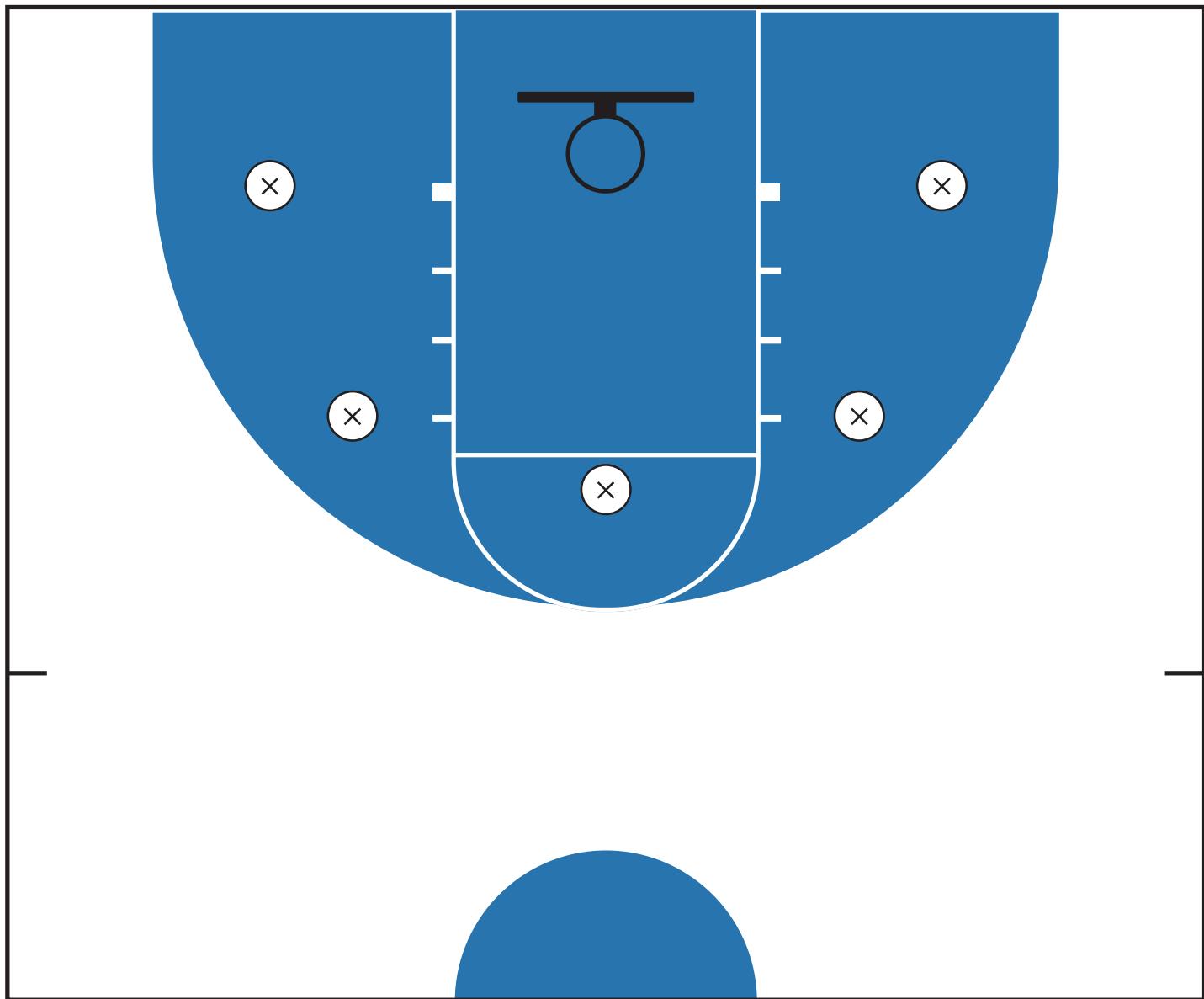
6.

## SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE, PART 1

### TRAINING: PHASE 5 (CONTINUED)

- Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts:
  - Crossover left to right + shoot: five shots
  - Crossover right to left + shoot: five shots
  - Each day, focus on a different move—Monday might be crossover; Tuesday, between the legs; Wednesday, behind the back; and Thursday and Friday, a different combination each day.

## PICKUP SHOOTING SPOTS



## BALL-HANDLING: ON THE MOVE

*"The fun thing about ball-handling—and the one thing that you should take to the bank is—it doesn't matter where you are, what kinda surface you're on, whether you have a basketball hoop or not. You can always work on your dribbling."*

—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Ball-Handling:  
On the Move Concepts
- Get Better Every Day
- Practice:  
Ball-Handling on the Move

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Becoming a confident ball-handler will give you the skills to create space from your defenders, pave driving lanes to the basket, take contact from any defender, and make effective shots at the rim without losing your grip on the ball. Controlling your body in tandem with the basketball is key when ball-handling on the move.

Once you build a solid stationary foundation, begin introducing simple footwork drills into your workouts to practice ball-handling in motion. Keep your heels lifted and remember to step on the balls of your feet to make yourself as mobile as possible. To avoid hitting your foot with the ball, avoid dribbling too close to your feet. Instead, push the ball out in front of you and follow it with your body. Remember to keep your eyes up at all times to continually survey the court, and train yourself to resist the urge to glance at the ball in your hands. Above all, when in motion, always let the ball guide your footwork: lead with the ball and follow it with your feet.

## BALL-HANDLING: ON THE MOVE

### TRAINING: PHASE 6

*Add movement to the ball-handling concepts from previous phases.  
Then angle the movement.*

- Moving ball-handling circuit: Start at the baseline and walk while dribbling the ball to the free-throw line. Then walk backward as you return to the baseline.
- Angled ball-handling circuit: Starting at the baseline, zigzag toward the free-throw line. Take two steps at an angle to your right, then two steps at an angle to your left. When you reach the free-throw line, walk backward at an angle to the baseline.
- Only add the angled movement circuit when you can comfortably move forward and backward in a straight line for the entire moving ball-handling circuit.
- During Phase 6, your training should look like this:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit (three minutes total)
  - Moving ball-handling circuit:
    - One-ball pound left, forward and backward:  
30 seconds
    - One-ball pound right, forward and backward:  
30 seconds
    - Crossover, forward and backward: 30 seconds
    - Between the legs, forward and backward:  
30 seconds
    - Behind the back, forward and backward:  
30 seconds
  - Angled ball-handling circuit:
    - One-ball pound left, forward and backward:  
30 seconds
    - One-ball pound right, forward and backward:  
30 seconds
    - Crossover, forward and backward: 30 seconds

## BALL-HANDLING: ON THE MOVE

### TRAINING: PHASE 6 (CONTINUED)

- Between the legs, forward and backward:  
30 seconds
- Behind the back, forward and backward:  
30 seconds
- Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
- Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
- Pickup shooting:
  - One-ball pound left + shoot: five shots
  - One-ball pound right + shoot: five shots
  - Repeat from each of five spots around the basket, for a total of 50 shots.
- Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts:
  - Crossover left to right + shoot: five shots
  - Crossover right to left + shoot: five shots
  - Each day, focus on a different move—Monday might be crossover; Tuesday, between the legs; Wednesday, behind the back; and Thursday and Friday, a different combination each day.

## 8.

# SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE, PART 2

## CHAPTER REVIEW

*"Here we're just starting to combine all of our mechanics from the class so far. Stay centered, push that ball out in front of you, and go right up into your shot."*

—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Four-Way Pickup Shooting
- Film Session:  
Between the Legs Step-Back
- Transition Jumpers
- Film Session: Transition Jumper
- Review: Four-Way Pickup Shooting Concepts

Stephen is a dynamic and versatile scorer because he combines the fundamentals of ball-handling and footwork with his shooting mechanics, creating a set of techniques to help him get a clear opportunity to take the ball to the basket.

As you begin to combine your ball-handling and shooting foundations, Stephen advises you to remain in control and maintain confidence. Don't whip your body around when you move sideways—instead, keep your hips and shoulders squared up in a straight line to maintain balance. When moving laterally, never move toward your defender, this will affect your driving angle. When stepping backward, keep your nose behind your toes. Most importantly, when you have the ball in your hands never take your eyes off the basket to look at the ball. A confident shooter instinctively knows where the ball is at all times and can coordinate it without watching it.

## TAKE IT FURTHER

- Watch how some of your favorite players shoot off the dribble, paying close attention to their footwork and shooting mechanics, and how they combine the two. Do their mechanics change when they shoot off the dribble versus when they shoot off the catch? Can you notice ways they could become more efficient ball-handlers to develop a quicker release?

## SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE, PART 2

### TRAINING: PHASE 7

*Add movement and ball-handling to pickup shooting.*

- Four-way pickup shooting: Move into space while dribbling into your pickup shot. Start by adding moves with single-pound dribbles: toward the basket, away from the basket, and laterally. Then start to incorporate the basic ball-handling moves and various combinations as you move to your shot.
- As you add ball-handling concepts to the four-way pickup shooting, continue to pick a concept to focus on each day. One day you might focus on the crossover for both stationary pickup shooting and four-way pickup shooting; another day you might focus on a dribble combination for each.
- For Phase 7, your daily training should look like this:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit (three minutes total)
  - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
  - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
  - Moving ball-handling circuit
  - Angled ball-handling circuit
  - Pickup shooting (at free-throw line): 20 total shots
    - One-ball pound left + shoot: five shots
    - One-ball pound right + shoot: five shots
    - One-ball pound left + shoot: five shots
    - One-ball pound right + shoot: five shots
  - Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts (at free-throw line): 10 total shots
    - Crossover left to right + shoot: five shots
    - Crossover right to left + shoot: five shots
    - NOTE: Each day, focus on a different move here—Monday might be crossover; Tuesday, between the legs; Wednesday, behind the back; and Thursday and Friday, a different combination each day.

8.

## SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE, PART 2

### TRAINING: PHASE 7 (CONTINUED)

- Four-way pickup shooting (at free-throw line/top of key): 30 total shots
  - Right-hand pound toward basket: five shots
  - Left-hand pound toward basket: five shots
  - Right to left crossover step-back: five shots
  - Left to right crossover step-back: five shots
  - Lateral right pull dribble: five shots
  - Lateral left pull dribble: five shots
  - NOTE: Similarly, work on different ball-handling moves or combinations each day, focusing intently on your mechanics.

9.

## CREATING SPACE FROM YOUR DEFENDER

*"When a defender tries to crowd your space and take away your angles of attack...you gotta create that space on your own. You gotta really be the aggressor and go right back at your defender."*

—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Read Your Defender's Feet, Hands, and Nose
- Drop Your Defender's Lead Foot
- Read Your Defender's Hands
- Shift Your Defender's Weight
- Creating Space From Tight Defenders
- Make Your Defender React

### CHAPTER REVIEW

*Scoring against a defender is all about forcing them to make a decision, then reacting according to what the defender decides.*

Pay attention to your defender's feet, hands, and nose: their positions can indicate how you should handle the ball and give you opportunities to create space using jabs, jab steps, and crossovers. Use your shoulder against your defender's chest to leverage more space, making your body a shield between your defender and the ball.

The pull dribble is a simple tool for making defenders react, so you can read them and counter. If, when you pull dribble, your defender doesn't guard you tightly enough, you can use a plyo step to explode past them. If the defender squares you up, you can step back into space to shoot. If the defender overcommits, you can counter and beat him or her in the opposite direction.

When creating space from a tight defender, Stephen has three main goals: disrupt their balance, protect the ball, and create a driving lane to the basket.

### TAKE IT FURTHER

- Play some one-on-one with a partner. When your partner is defending you, pay close attention to his or her feet, hands, and nose. Practice the techniques Stephen teaches in the video lesson for this chapter to try to get your partner to drop a foot or a hand, or move his or her nose outside the center of the body. Practice making your defender react and countering to create space.

9.

## CREATING SPACE FROM YOUR DEFENDER

### TRAINING: PHASE 8

*Phase 8 includes the same circuit as Phase 7, but the volume increases. Push yourself to get tighter with your mechanics, increase your accuracy, and try new combinations with your four-way pickup shooting.*

- For Phase 8, your daily training should look like this:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit (three minutes total)
  - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
  - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
  - Moving ball-handling circuit
  - Angled ball-handling circuit
  - Pickup shooting (at free-throw line): 20 total shots
  - Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts (at free-throw line): 10 total shots
  - Four-way pickup shooting (at free-throw line/top of key): 40 total shots

10.

## FILM SESSION: CREATING SPACE AND BEATING YOUR DEFENDER

*“Basketball is such a fast-paced game. But there’s a poetry about it and there’s a rhythm to it.”*  
—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Drop Your Defender’s Lead Foot
- Read the Defender’s Hands
- Creating Space From a Tight Defender
- Reading Feet in Transition
- Use Your Shot Mechanics to Create Space
- Watching the Clock
- Have an Appropriate Fear of Your Defender

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Stephen reviews game footage to show how he and his teammates create space from their defenders during games. You can’t direct your defender—basketball isn’t choreographed—but you can watch for cues to predict what they might do next. Learn to read your defender’s balance, position, and intention. Knowing how to identify what they’ll do next in order to exploit it will make you a more versatile and strategic player.

Basketball IQ is a measure of a player’s intelligence on the court. A well-nurtured one can help any player analyze and predict what their opponents will do and how they’ll do it, helping gain the upper hand on the court. As a shooter, Stephen relies on his and his teammates’ basketball IQs to read and break down the defense’s strategy so they can create opportunities to get the ball in the basket.

If you find yourself the target of a disrespectful defense on the court, don’t let them frustrate you. Stephen emphasizes the importance of confidence on the court. Being positive and not letting a cruel and disrespectful defense eat away at the faith you have in yourself is crucial to a winning strategy. Remember that if the defense disrespects you, that means they consider you a threat to their success. Wear that disrespect like a badge, keep on playing the game that you love, and continue to improve every day.

### TAKE IT FURTHER

- Review NBA game clips to see how some of your favorite shooters beat their defenders. Can you identify any of the techniques Stephen mentions like jabs, crossovers, and pull dribbles? What are their favorite tactics to create space from defenders? Write down the combinations that you see players use and try building your own combinations based on their moves.

## 11.

# BALL SCREENS

*"An important key to creating that leverage off the pick and roll is for me, as the ball-handler, to go as tight to my screener as possible so there's no room in between me and the screener for my defender to get through."*

—Stephen Curry

## SUBCHAPTERS

- Start at the Level of the Screen
- Stay Tight to the Screen
- Rejecting the Screen
- Survey the Floor
- Practice With a Chair
- Create a Driving Lane

## CHAPTER REVIEW

Every basketball player should master the ball screen, a key component to a successful offensive strategy.

As the ball-handler, it's your job to set up the screen by directing your teammate to a specific location on the court. Keep level with your screener's position to prevent your defender from shooting the gap between you and your screener. As you initiate the screen, stay tight to the screener by staying low and touching their shoulder or calf. Reject the screen if your defender shoots the gap around the screen. Alternatively, curl to the basket if your defender follows you through the screen.

As you exit the screen, keep your eyes up and survey the floor to decide whether you should pass the ball or drive it to the basket. Look for your screener to be open for a pass if he or she rolls to the basket. If you decide that driving the ball to the basket is your best choice, avoid drifting laterally on the court. Keep your shoulders squared with the basket to protect the ball from shot-blockers, and don't take your shot underneath the net. Instead, take off from a healthy distance in front of the basket so that defenders can't reach the ball from behind, then lay it in.

## TAKE IT FURTHER

- Practice reading defenses with a partner. Set up a chair as a stand-in for a screen and, with a partner, alternate playing defense and handling the ball. The person who has the ball should start at the level of the screen and drive the defender toward the chair. Then, the defender decides to either run into the screen, fight over the top of the screen, or shoot the gap, and the ball-handler can read and react according to Stephen's advice. See if you can notice any subtle clues in your partner's body language that help you know which way he or she is headed earlier in the play.

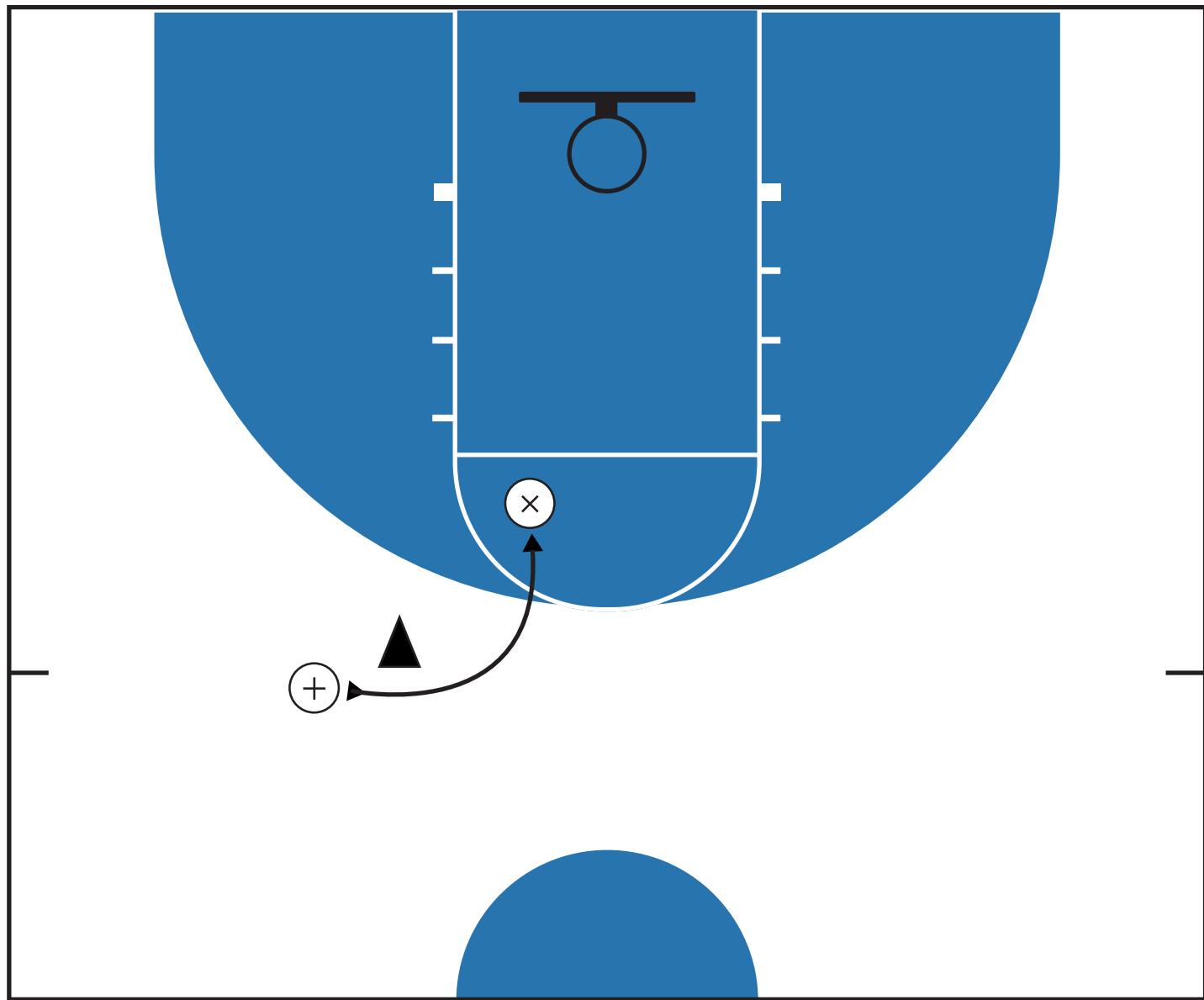
## BALL SCREENS

### TRAINING: PHASE 9

Add 10 minutes of ball screen work to the training from Phase 8.

- Ball screen work: Use a chair to stand in for the screener and practice scoring off of the screen. Practice starting at the level of the screen, imagining different defensive reads, and:
  - Stepping back into a jumper
  - Going around the screen for a jumper from the elbow or nail
  - Rejecting the screen and shooting
  - Scoring at the rim
  - (See diagram for chair placement suggestions.)
- For Phase 9, your daily training should look like this:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit (three minutes total)
  - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
  - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
  - Moving ball-handling circuit
  - Angled ball-handling circuit
  - Pickup shooting (at free-throw line): 20 total shots
  - Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts (at free-throw line): 10 total shots
  - Four-way pickup shooting (at free-throw line / top of key): 40 total shots
  - Ball screen work: 10 minutes total (five minutes left side and five minutes right side)

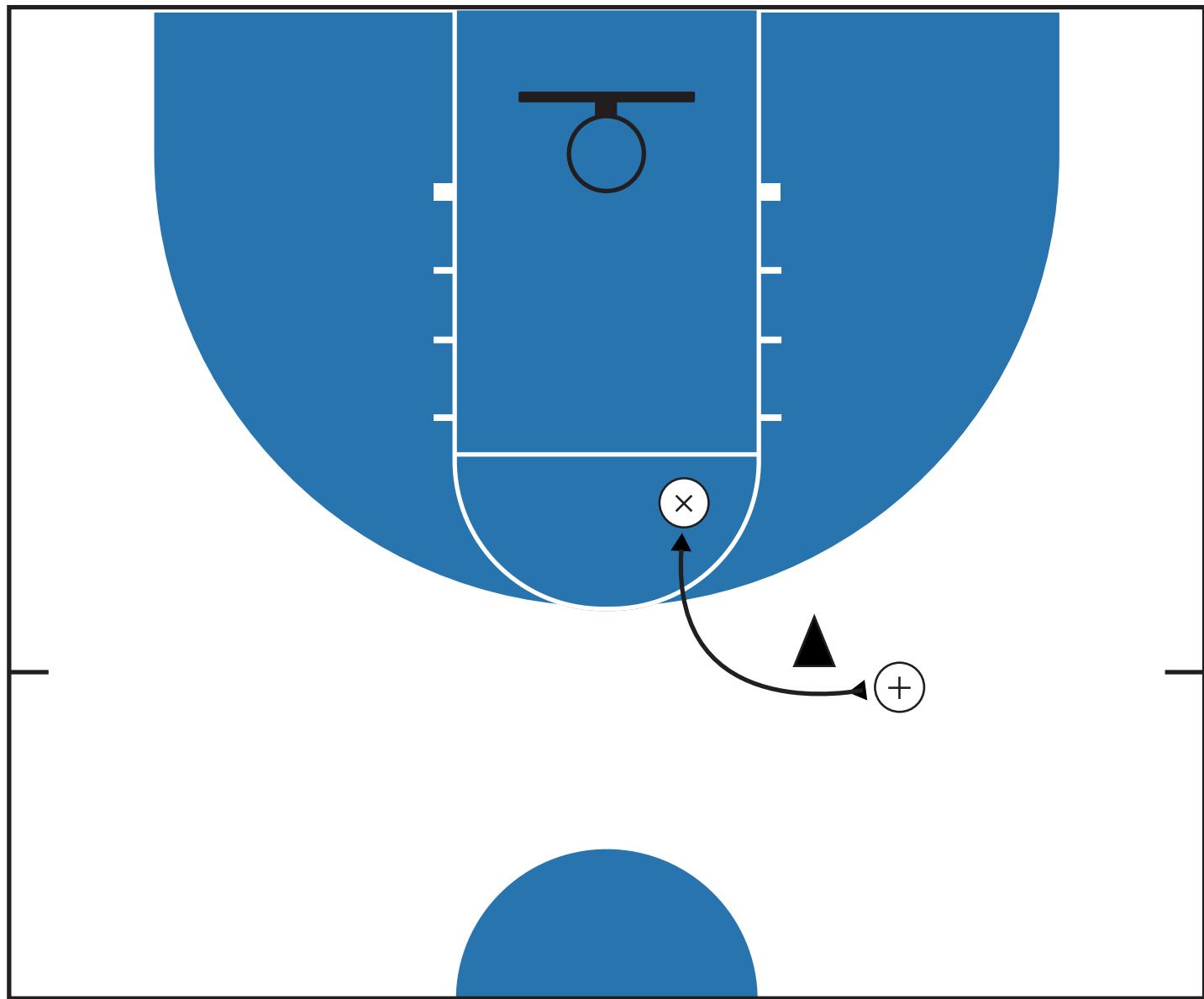
## BALL SCREENS SETUP LEFT



### KEY

- (I) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- ▲ Stationary Object

## BALL SCREENS SETUP RIGHT



### KEY

- (I) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- ▲ Stationary Object

12.

## FILM SESSION: BALL SCREENS

*"There's always the need to kind of assess how teams are defending me from year to year, so that I can hopefully stay ahead of the curve."*

—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Start at the Level of the Screen
- Survey the Floor
- Getting the Matchup You Want
- Stay Tight to the Screen
- Adjust to Evolving Defenses

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Stephen reviews game footage to show the screening tactics he and his teammates use to score against strong defenses. To dominate the court with effective ball screens, it takes the quick decision-making and keen awareness of an entire team, not just a single player.

As a ball-handler, the bulk of the work is on you to ensure a successful screen and driving lane to the basket. Simple tactics like pull dribbles and plyo steps can get your defender off balance, giving your screener a better chance at blocking them and opening up a lane for you to drive the ball to the basket. The dribble handoff is another screening technique, in which the screener starts with the ball and hands it off. Approach the dribble handoff like a ball screen: stay close to your screener as they hand you the ball, giving them the best chance to block your defender. After exiting the screen, use your opposite shoulder to shield the ball from your defender as you finish at the rim or prepare to take your shot from further out in the field.

A successful pump fake hinges on timing. Once your defender jumps—fooled by your initial pump to the basket—take your real shot as they start to fall back down. Since you're on your way up as your defender is on the way down, there's no way your defender can guard against your shot.

Stephen's relatively short stature makes him a more nimble player, so he likes to match himself up against larger defenders who are less agile than he. Learning to read the defense to match yourself against defenders who can't effectively guard against your strengths will help make you a more strategic and successful player overall. Keep in mind that you may have to adapt your winning strategy in the face of a dynamic defense. Defensive tactics may change over the course of an entire career, season, or game. Don't let yourself and your team stagnate—adjust your offense accordingly to effectively beat an evolving defense.

12.

## FILM SESSION: BALL SCREENS

### TAKE IT FURTHER

- Watch how ball screens unfold during real NBA games and be on the lookout for them the next time you watch a game. Can you spot the techniques Stephen teaches during a live game? Look out for ball-handlers starting at the level of the screen, getting low and grabbing the screener's calf, surveying the floor after coming around the screen, and rejecting the screen.

13.

## SCORING AT THE RIM

*"The ball, me, and my [defender] is always the principle that I wanna keep whether I'm dribbling, shooting, or trying to finish at the rim."*

—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Layups: Protecting the Ball
- Film Session: Protecting the Ball
- Film Session: Protecting the Ball With Your Shoulder
- Film Session: Floater
- Two-Foot Floater
- One-Foot Floater
- Film Session: One-Foot Floater
- Sidestep Floater
- Film Session: Reading the Help Defense

### CHAPTER REVIEW

To be a versatile and dominant scorer, you must have the ability to shoot with both your right and left hands. The rules for scoring are simple but require robust foundational skills and muscle memory that only come from dedicated and persistent practice:

- Rely on strong shooting mechanics.
- Be under control.
- Always be shot-ready.
- Protect the ball with your opposite shoulder.
- Check the game clock—the amount of time left on the countdown will determine the pace at which you should develop the play.
- Cultivate a proficient basketball IQ that helps you overcome the defense's strategy.

Remember, don't develop the play without first accounting for and working around the defense's position. If tall defenders are crowding the key, you might try shooting a one-foot floater to quickly release the ball before they have a chance to guard against your shot. The defense's position will often determine if you should attempt a layup or a floater.

On the two-foot floater, keep your feet shoulder-width apart. Stop your body's forward momentum completely before you launch upward to avoid fouling a defender. The one-foot floater, similar to its two-foot counterpart, is more fluid and generally taken at a farther distance from the basket. The sidestep floater is a clever tactic to create space from your defender. To practice it, hard-pound dribble the ball into your shot pocket, sidestep, then shoot. With all floaters, remember to square your body with the basket.

13.

## SCORING AT THE RIM

### TRAINING: PHASE 10

*Add finishing at the rim to the training concepts from Phase 9.*

- Finishing at the rim: starting at the top of the key, practice different finishes from each side of the basket.
- For Phase 10, your daily training should look like this:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit (three minutes total)
  - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
  - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
  - Moving ball-handling circuit
  - Angled ball-handling circuit
  - Pickup shooting (at free-throw line): 20 total shots
  - Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts (at free-throw line): 10 total shots
  - Four-way pickup shooting (at free-throw line / top of key): 40 total shots
  - Finishing at the rim: 60 total shots
    - Right-handed layups: 10 shots
    - Left-handed layups: 10 shots
    - Right-handed, cross-the-lane layups: five shots
    - Left-handed, cross-the-lane layups: five shots
    - Two-foot floater right: five shots
    - Two-foot floater left: five shots
    - One-foot floater left: five shots
    - One-foot floater right: five shots
    - Sidestep floater right: five shots
    - Sidestep floater left: five shots
  - Ball screen work: 10 minutes total (five minutes left side and five minutes right side)

14.

## OFF SCREENS: CURL, POP, AND FADE

*"All that footwork and that preparation going into it [to] allow me to create the space with my mechanics and my shot are all the same—no matter what the lead up to it was."*

—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Film Session: Curl to the Rim
- Curl to the Rim
- Curl to Floater
- Film Session:  
Unorthodox Screen Angles
- Curl Jumper
- Straight Line Pop
- Corner Fade
- Film Session: Corner Fade

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Stephen shares five methods he uses to create space from his defenders and take shots after exiting screens. You can practice all of these techniques at home with a chair. Remember, you initiate each play by standing underneath the net.

On the curl to the rim, hug your screener as you power forward with your inside foot, meet the ball with all 10 fingers, curl back to the basket, then finish with a layup.

On the curl to floater, curl then align your knees to the basket while inside the key—stop your forward momentum, then jump straight up to avoid fouling a defender. Finish high and get a good spin on the ball as you release it.

On the curl jumper, remember to square your feet with the basket after catching the ball.

On the straight line pop, square your body to the basket, load your hips, and lead with whatever foot lets you take shot-ready position with the least amount of footwork (usually your outside foot), then shoot.

On the corner fade, push off your screener's body to get leverage to change your direction as you exit the screen. When you practice these moves, focus on your footwork.

14.

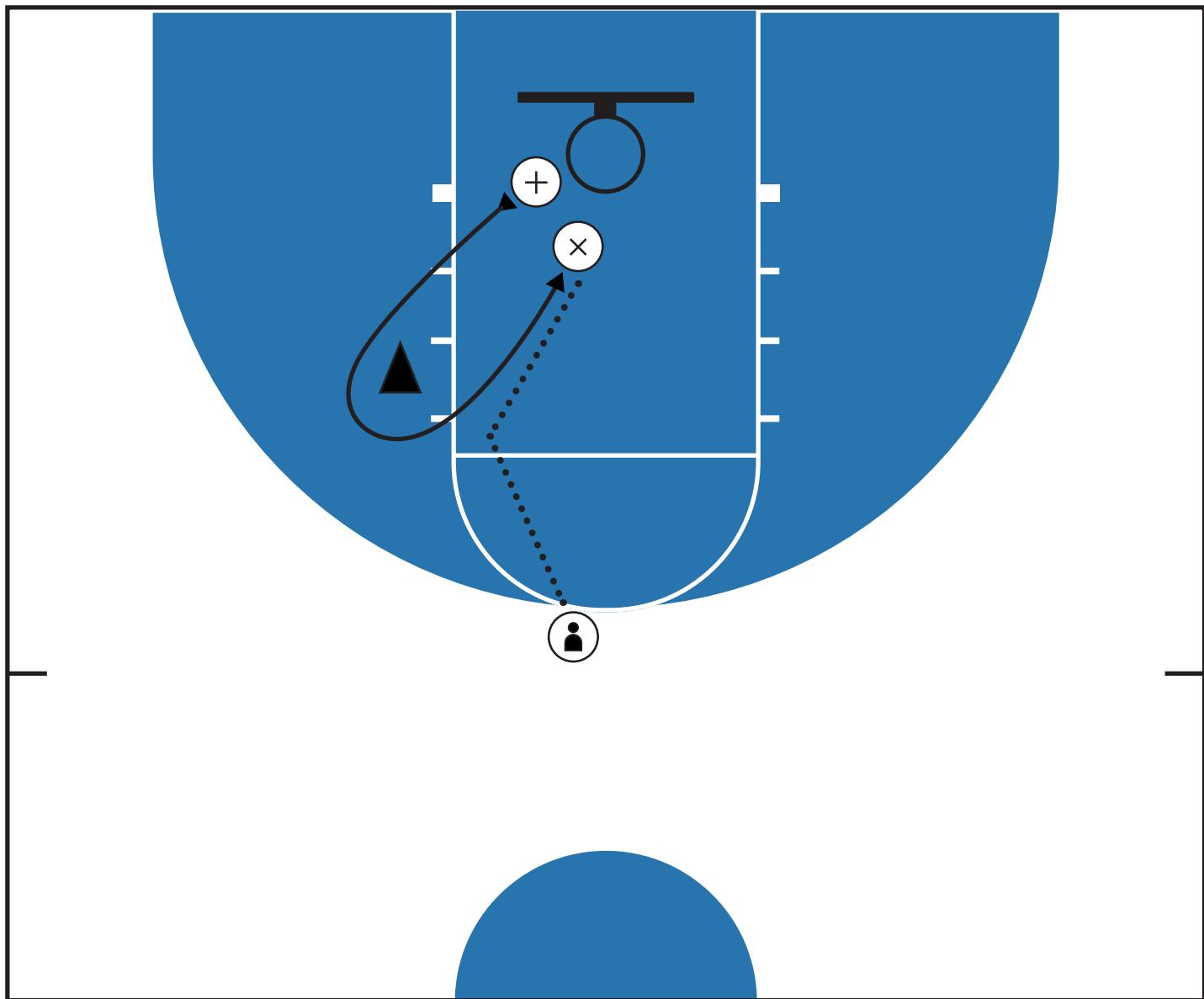
## OFF SCREENS: CURL, POP, AND FADE

### TRAINING: PHASE 11

Add curl, pop, and fade concepts to your training from Phase 10.

- Curl, pop, and fade: set up a chair as the screener and make sure you have a partner to pass the ball to you as you come around the screen. Focus on your footwork and catching the ball in a shot-ready position.
- For Phase 11, your daily training should look like this:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit (three minutes total)
  - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
  - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
  - Moving ball-handling circuit
  - Angled ball-handling circuit
  - Pickup shooting (at free-throw line): 20 total shots
  - Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts (at free-throw line): 10 total shots
  - Four-way pickup shooting (at free-throw line/top of key): 40 total shots
  - Finishing at the rim: 60 total shots
  - Curl, pop, and fade: 50 total shots
    - Curl to basket right: five shots
    - Curl to floater right: five shots
    - Curl to jumper right: five shots
    - Straight line pop right: five shots
    - Corner fade right: five shots
    - Curl to basket left: five shots
    - Curl to floater left: five shots
    - Curl to jumper left: five shots
    - Straight line pop left: five shots
    - Corner fade left: five shots
  - Ball screen work: 10 minutes total (five minutes left side and five minutes right side)

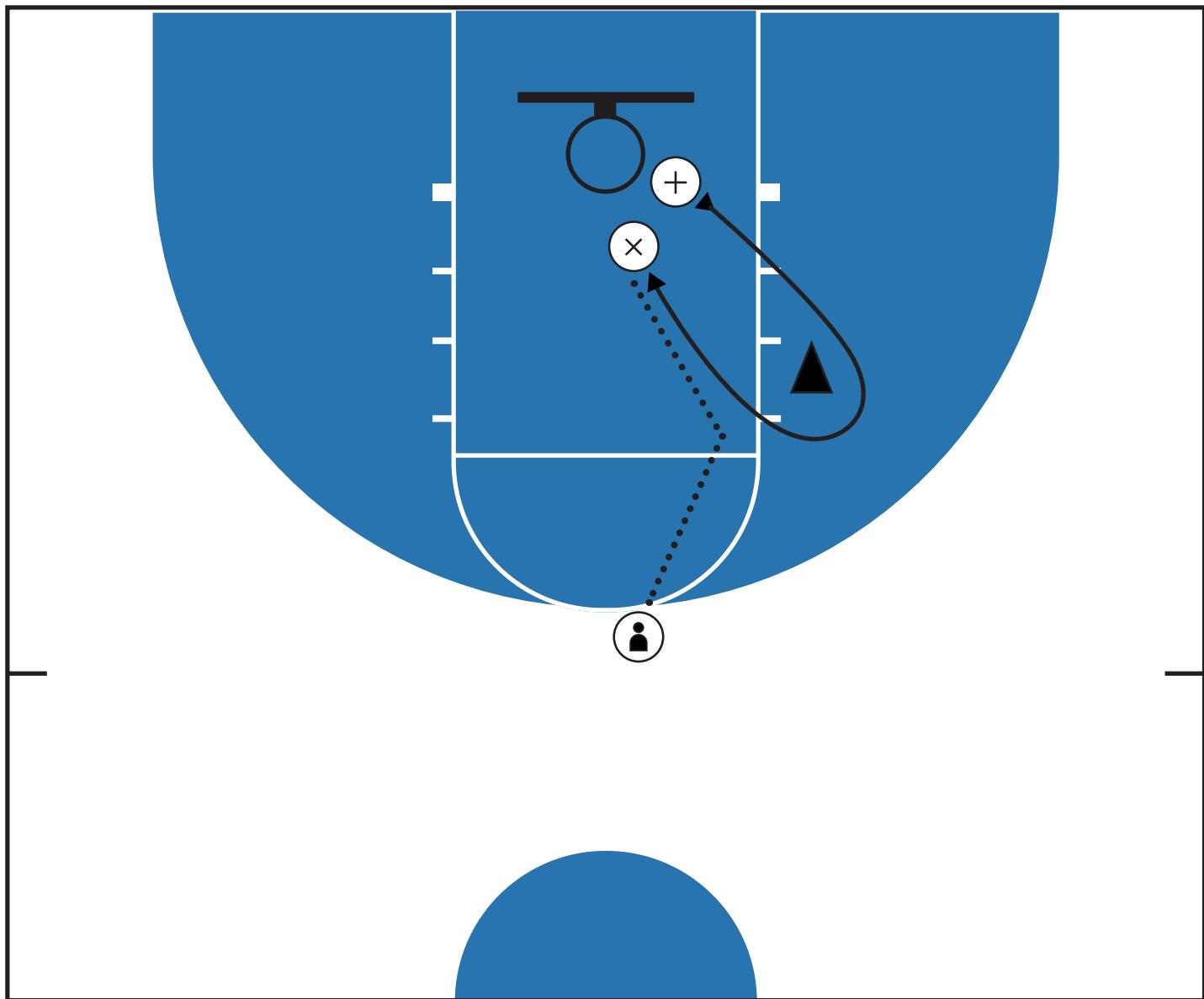
## CURL TO RIM LEFT



### KEY

- (+) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (●) Teammate

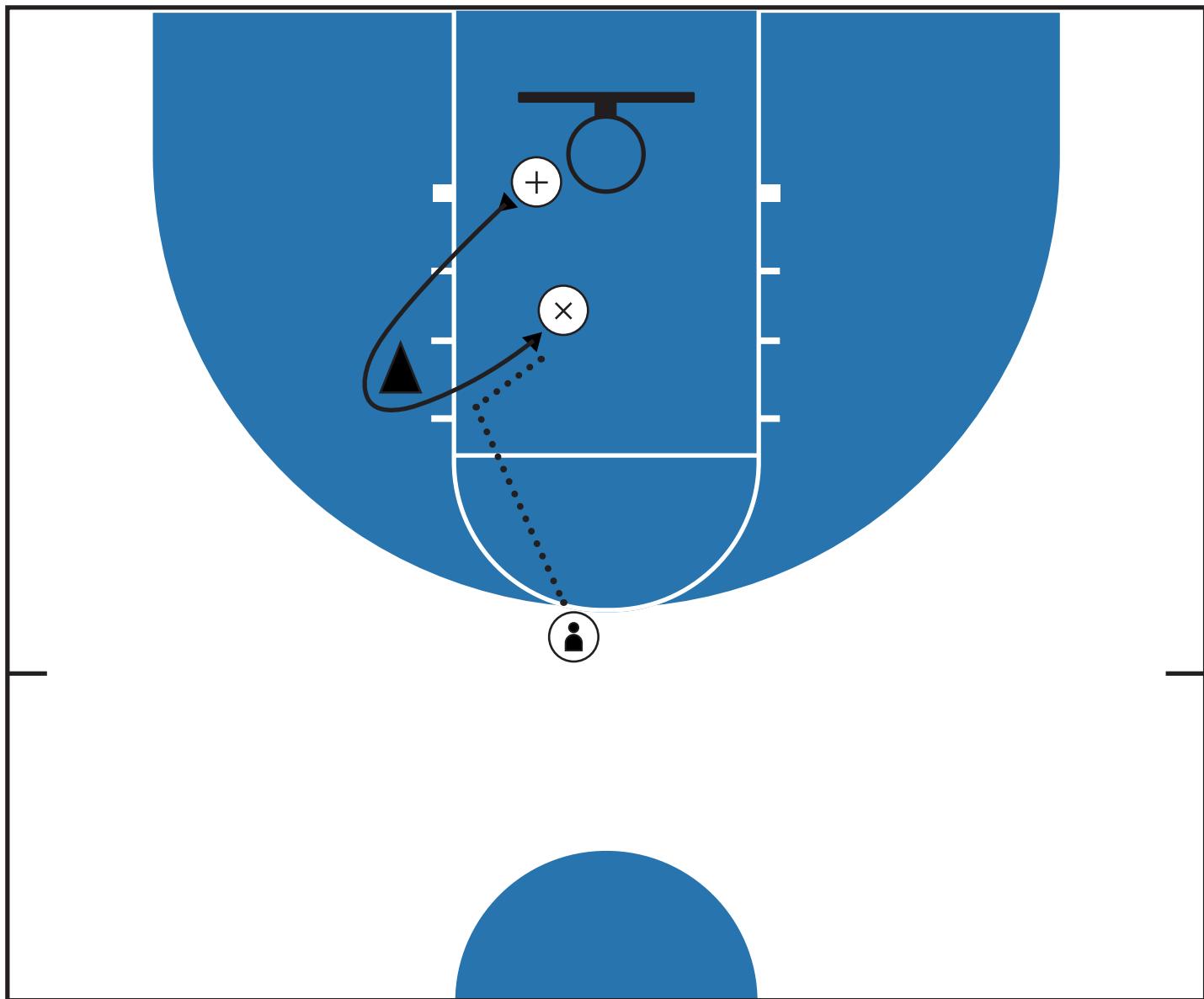
# CURL TO RIM RIGHT



## KEY

- (I) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (P) Teammate

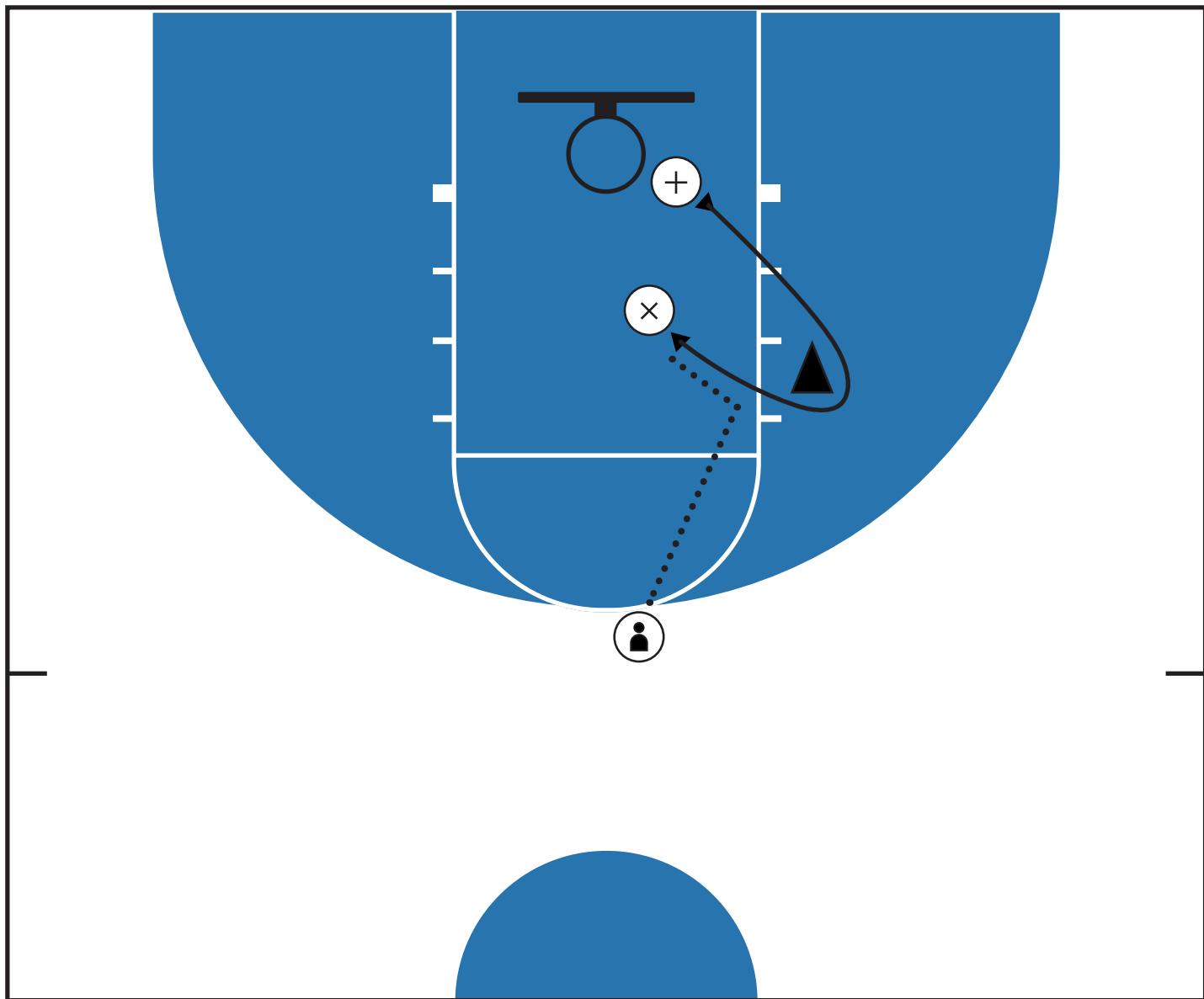
# CURL TO FLOATER LEFT



## KEY

- (+) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (person) Teammate

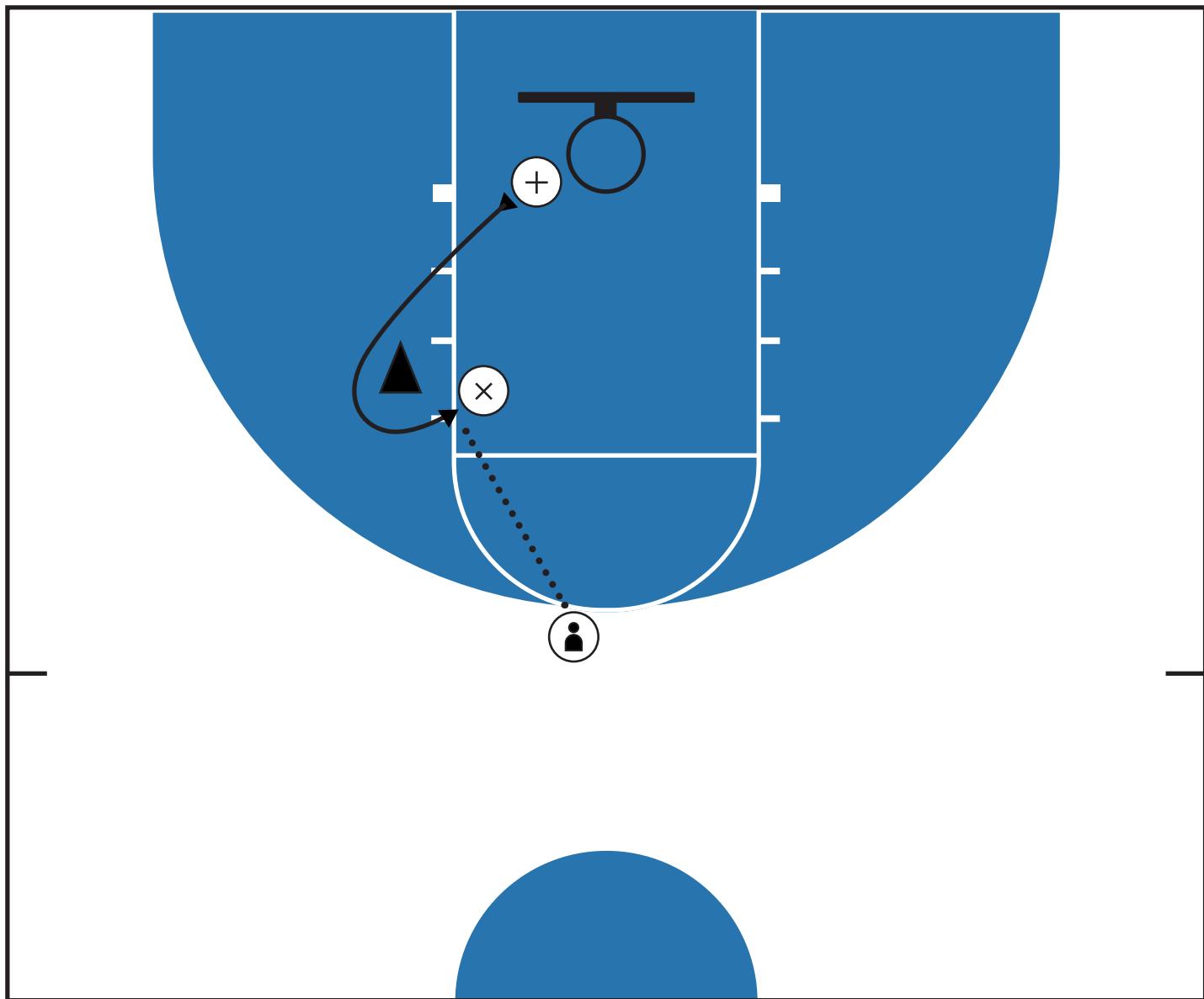
# CURL TO FLOATER RIGHT



## KEY

- (I) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (P) Teammate

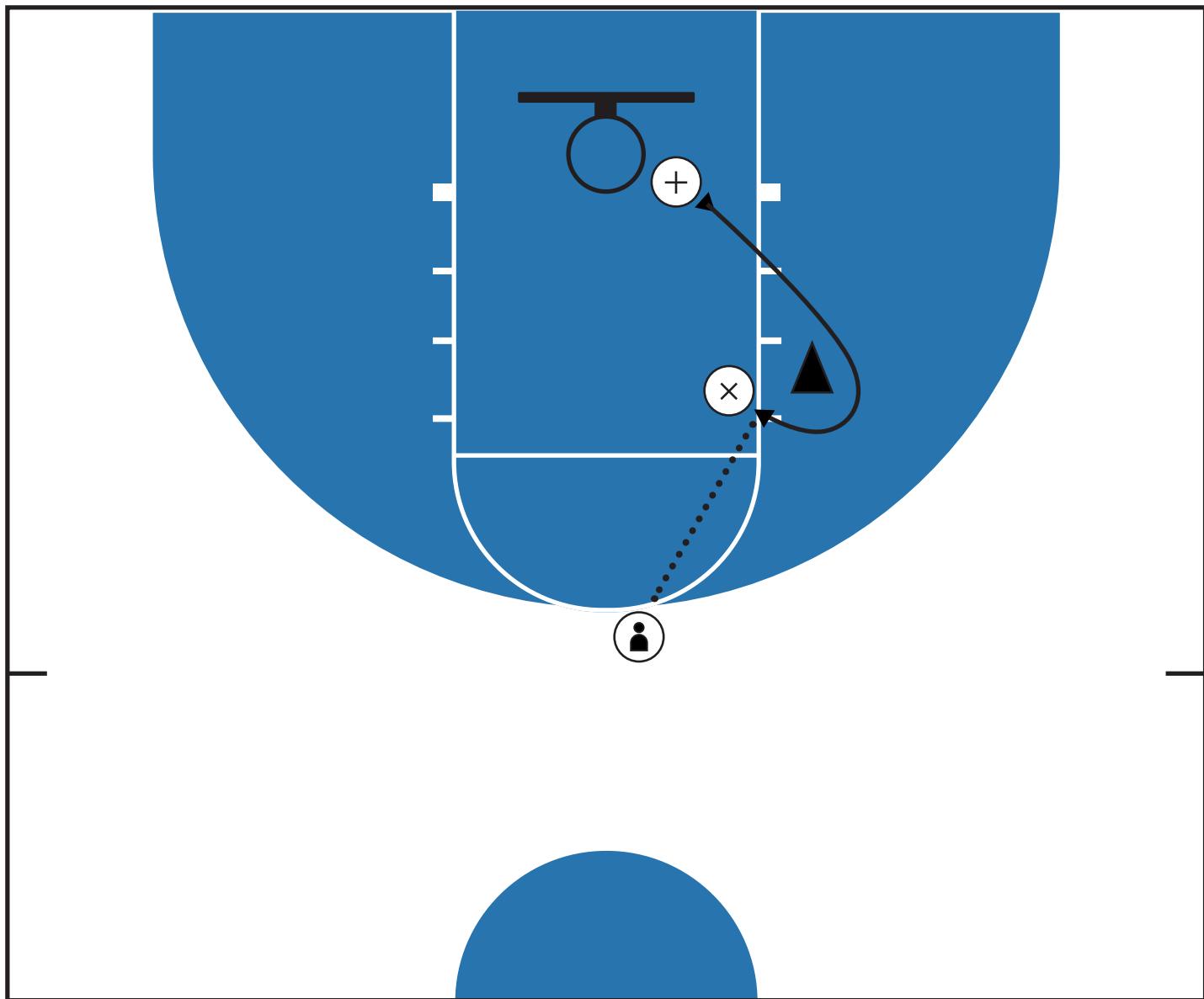
# CURL TO JUMPER LEFT



## KEY

- (+) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (person) Teammate

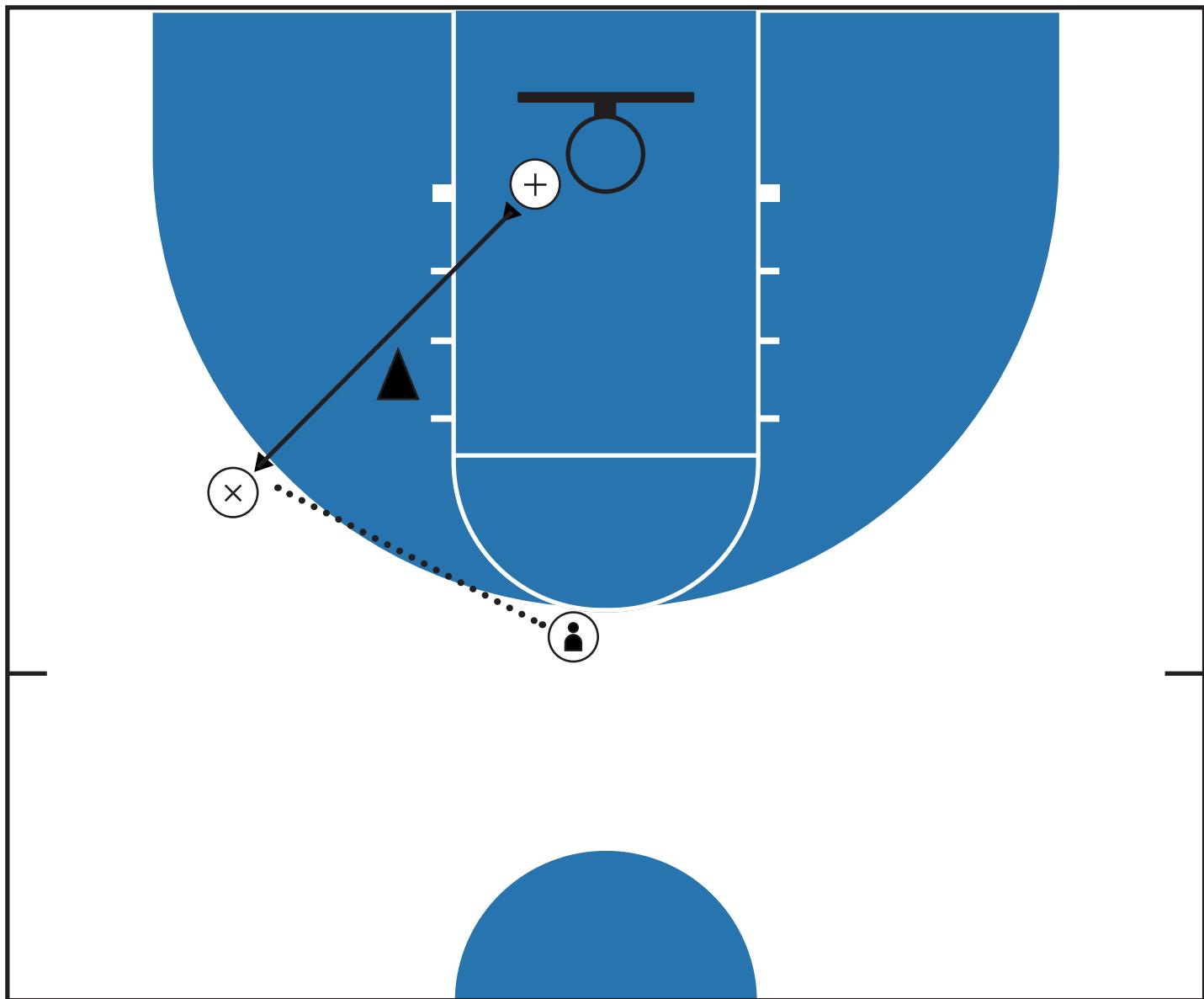
# CURL TO JUMPER RIGHT



## KEY

- (|) Start
- (x) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (●) Teammate

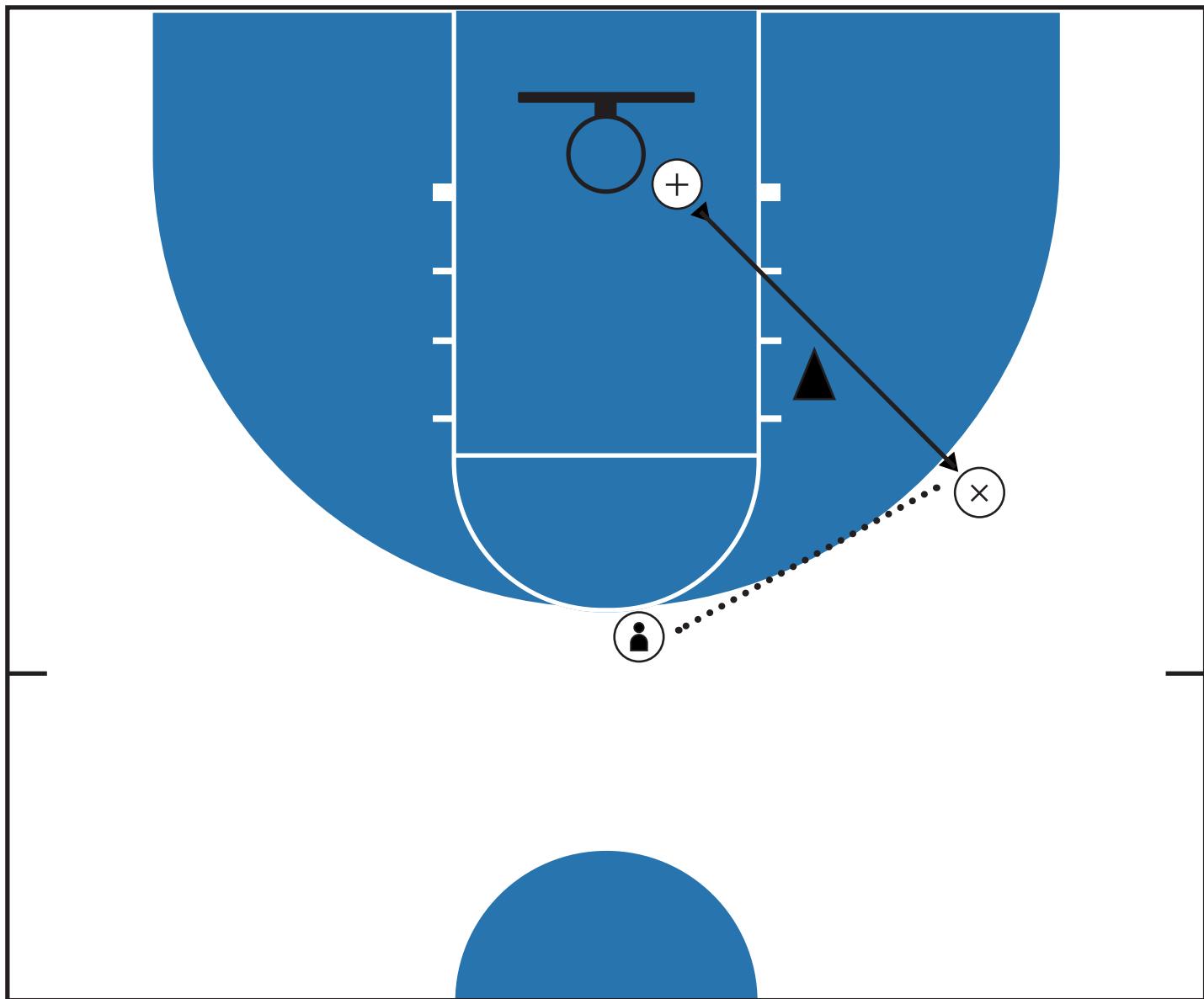
# STRAIGHT LINE POP LEFT



## KEY

- (+) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- ( silhouette ) Teammate

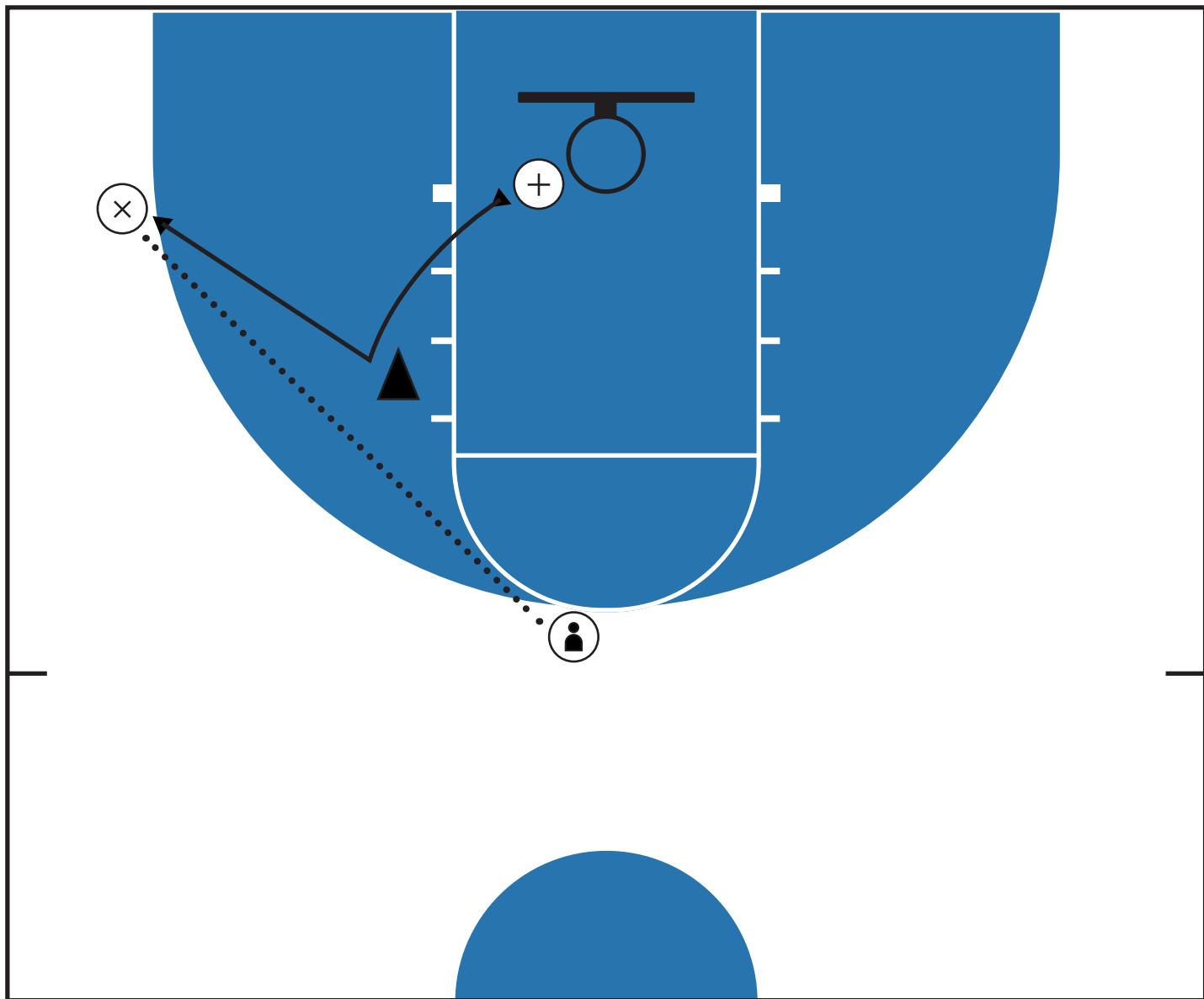
# STRAIGHT LINE POP RIGHT



## KEY

- (+) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (P) Teammate

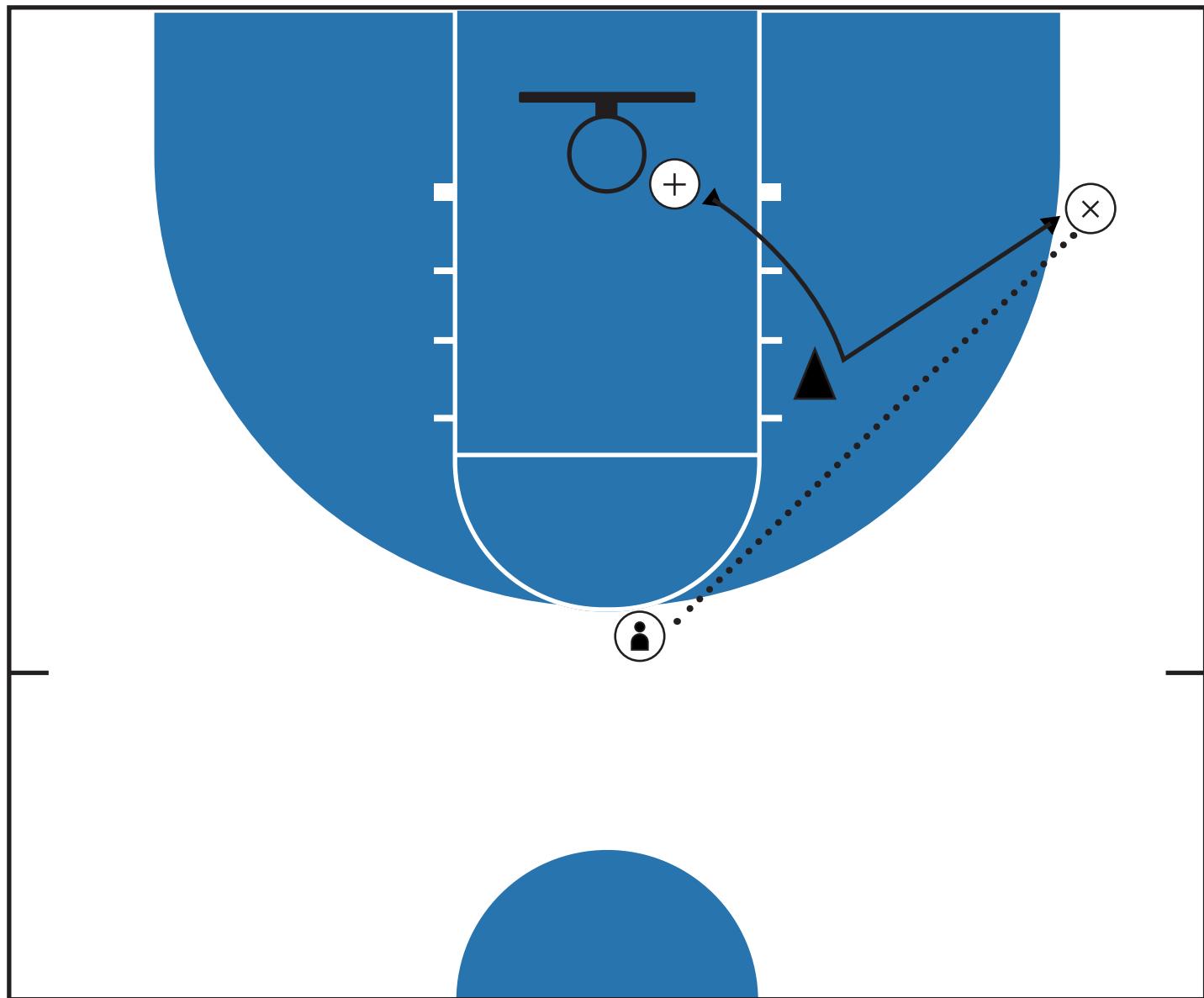
# CORNER FADE LEFT



## KEY

- (I) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (P) Teammate

# CORNER FADE RIGHT



## KEY

- (+) Start
- (X) End
- Player Path
- Ball Path
- ▲ Stationary Object
- (P) Teammate

15.

## BALL-HANDLING: OVERLOADING

*"When it comes to ball-handling, the responsibility is on you to...take those drills to the next level... whether it's taking a drill you do with one basketball to two basketballs, adding a tennis ball—maybe even throw in a heavy ball."*

—Stephen Curry

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Push Yourself and Assess Yourself
- What to Watch For
- Two-Ball Dribbling Concepts
- Stationary Tennis Ball Concepts
- Two-Ball and Tennis Ball on the Move
- Look Beyond the Drill
- Get Creative to Get Better
- Review: Stationary Two-Ball
- Review: Stationary Tennis Ball
- Review: Two-Ball and Tennis Ball on the Move

### CHAPTER REVIEW

To become a better ball-handler, Stephen relies on drills that not only increase his physical endurance but also overload his brain cognitively. Such overloading exercises, like practicing with two basketballs instead of one, or handling a tennis ball in one hand and a basketball in the other, make dribbling a single basketball during games seem easy by comparison. When overloading, Stephen never sacrifices his mechanics for speed.

Stephen looks beyond the physical drill itself when doing overloading work. Sometimes, when Stephen stresses his brain trying to focus on the overloading exercise, he forgets to breathe. Making mistakes is natural and overcoming them is a sign that you're pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone and becoming a better player. If you're never making mistakes or if you don't feel challenged by your workouts, you're probably not improving or extending your abilities as substantially as you can and should.

### TRAINING: PHASE 12

*Incorporate overloading into your ball-handling work. Only spend about three minutes per workout on overloading concepts, and remember to pay attention to your limits. If you start sacrificing form, scale back and work up to an overloading concept again.*

- Ball-handling overloading work: combine the following concepts to create your own overloading circuits, both stationary and on the move:
  - Two-ball pound
  - Two-ball alternating pound
  - Two-ball crossover, between the legs, and behind the back
  - Tennis ball toss-and-catch
  - Tennis ball bounce-catch, toss-catch
  - Tennis ball + ball-handling concepts (crossover, between, and behind)
  - Tennis ball off-the-wall

15.

## BALL-HANDLING: OVERLOADING

### TRAINING: PHASE 12 (CONTINUED)

- For Phase 12 and beyond, your daily training template can be based on this outline:
  - Warm-up and stretching
  - Stationary ball-handling circuit (three minutes total)
  - Form shooting progression: 100 total shots
  - Four-way form shooting: 25 total shots
  - Moving ball-handling circuit
  - Angled ball-handling circuit
  - Pickup shooting (at free-throw line): 20 total shots
  - Pickup shooting + ball-handling concepts (at free-throw line): 10 total shots
  - Four-way pickup shooting (at free-throw line/top of key): 40 total shots
  - Finishing at the rim: 60 total shots
  - Curl, pop, and fade: 50 total shots
  - Ball screen work: 10 minutes total (five minutes left side and five minutes right side)
  - Ball-handling overloading work: three minutes total
    - Stationary ball-handling circuit

Wow! You've now progressed to a highly sophisticated set of workouts. From here on out, use this workout progression as a template suggestion for your training and take creative liberties as you progress. What do you need to focus on? How can you adjust your workout to calibrate your shot or your ball-handling? Remember to continually assess yourself, challenge yourself, and adjust to improve. There's always something you can do to get better.

## 16.

# PREGAME PREPARATION

*"When I'm in the gym preparing myself and workin' on my game and practicing, there's always that element of competing with myself that helps me not stay complacent, helps me keep pushing myself to new heights."*

—Stephen Curry

## SUBCHAPTERS

- Prepare Like a Professional
- Activate Your Body and Mind
- One-Ball Warm-Up
- Two-Ball Warm-Up
- Hard Work Calms Nerves
- Be Your Own Fiercest Opponent
- Visualize the Game
- Treat Every Game the Same

## CHAPTER REVIEW

Whether it's a preseason game or the championship game, Stephen's pregame preparation is the same. Off the court, he studies his opponents' style by watching film of their games and practices mindfulness exercises, like visualization and deep breathing to anticipate every outcome and foster a positive outlook. On the court, Stephen starts with a two-ball dribble sequence to lay out his ball-handling foundation, knowing that he'll be dribbling the ball far more than shooting it.

As you create your own pregame ritual, remember that a good warm-up activates your body, connects your body and mind, and primes you to play. Stephen encourages you to be creative and develop your own pregame preparation, using his techniques as a starting point.

## TAKE IT FURTHER

- Develop a personalized warm-up that primes your body and mind.
- As you prepare for your next game, take some time to visualize the game unfolding before it even happens. Imagine high-pressure situations and visualize yourself relying on your mechanics and practice to carry your team through them.

17.

## CONCLUSION: THE JOURNEY TOWARD PERFECTION

*"I hope you learned a lot about the game, about me, and my journey. And I hope that you can take the knowledge, apply it to your own goals, set goals for yourself. Know that you can achieve it, know that you need to put the time in, and it's gonna be some hard work.... It's a never-ending journey. And I'm still on it."*

—Stephen Curry

### CONGRATULATIONS!

You've finished your MasterClass with Stephen! We hope you feel inspired and well-equipped to become a more strategic shooter and offensive basketball player. Remember, maintaining a healthy outlook is just as important as training your body. Moving forward, find ways to center your mind, to be positive and realistic about the training you'll have to put in to be a successful player, and to continue loving the game.

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Own Your State of Mind
- Find People Who Are Better Than You
- Be Your Own Biggest Fan
- Love What You Do
- Keep Pushing Your Potential



## MASTERCLASS

STEPHEN CURRY TEACHES SHOOTING,  
BALL-HANDLING, AND SCORING

58/77