

# **The Crab Dribble**

**By Mike McNeill, Coaching Development  
Basketball BC**

The most overlooked dribble maneuver is what is called a crab dribble. What is a crab dribble? It is when the dribbler has their back to a defender and dribbles the ball between their feet with step-slide footwork.

## **Why use a crab dribble?**

1. To protect the ball by keeping the body between the defender and the ball. It is the most common dribble used by post players; the back-down move that is so common is a crab dribble. For perimeter players it is especially effective when the dribbler is bringing the ball up-court against an extremely quick, ball-hawking defender.
2. To set the pace at which the ball is brought up the floor. Often the coach will instruct the ball-handler to slow the pace of the game down, but if the dribbler is being pressured, the only way to relieve pressure is to attempt to go by the defender.
3. To change sides of the court when being pressured, without exposing the ball to the defender. This is usually done with a spin dribble but may also be done with a pop back move and then a change of hands dribble (crossover, behind back, between leg).

## **Technique:**

1. Footwork
  - a. Point the lead toe in the direction you want to go.
  - b. Step with the lead foot, then push with the back foot and get airborne; it is extremely important for the ball-handler to cover ground (I always tell players to make a bad defensive slide).
2. Torso
  - a. Turn your torso at a 45-degree angle when you are moving up the floor.
  - b. Keep your body between the defender and the ball.
3. Head
  - a. Look over the shoulder corresponding to the lead foot.
  - b. Keep your eyes up and be aware of potential traps and run and jumps.
  - c. Use your peripheral vision to see defenders coming from behind you.
4. Dribble
  - a. The ball should be dribbled directly between your feet.
  - b. As the player dribbles the ball they should use an inside-out action, this will allow the dribbler to progress forward with the ball, but still keep it between the feet.
  - c. When the defender cuts the dribbler off, use a spin dribble to change directions.

## **Moves out of a crab dribble:**

1. Go – when the dribbler lands and does not see the defender's chest in the path they will often want to pivot on the lead foot and go hard to the basket.
2. Spin dribble – when the defender's chest is in the path the dribbler should use a spin dribble to change direction.
3. Fake spin dribble – when the defender is moving along with the dribbler, the dribbler may use a fake spin dribble and continue in the same direction. The dribbler fakes with the ball, head and shoulder all going back as if doing a spin dribble. The dribbler will then pivot on the lead foot and go.