



WORLD ASSOCIATION OF  
**BASKETBALL  
COACHES**

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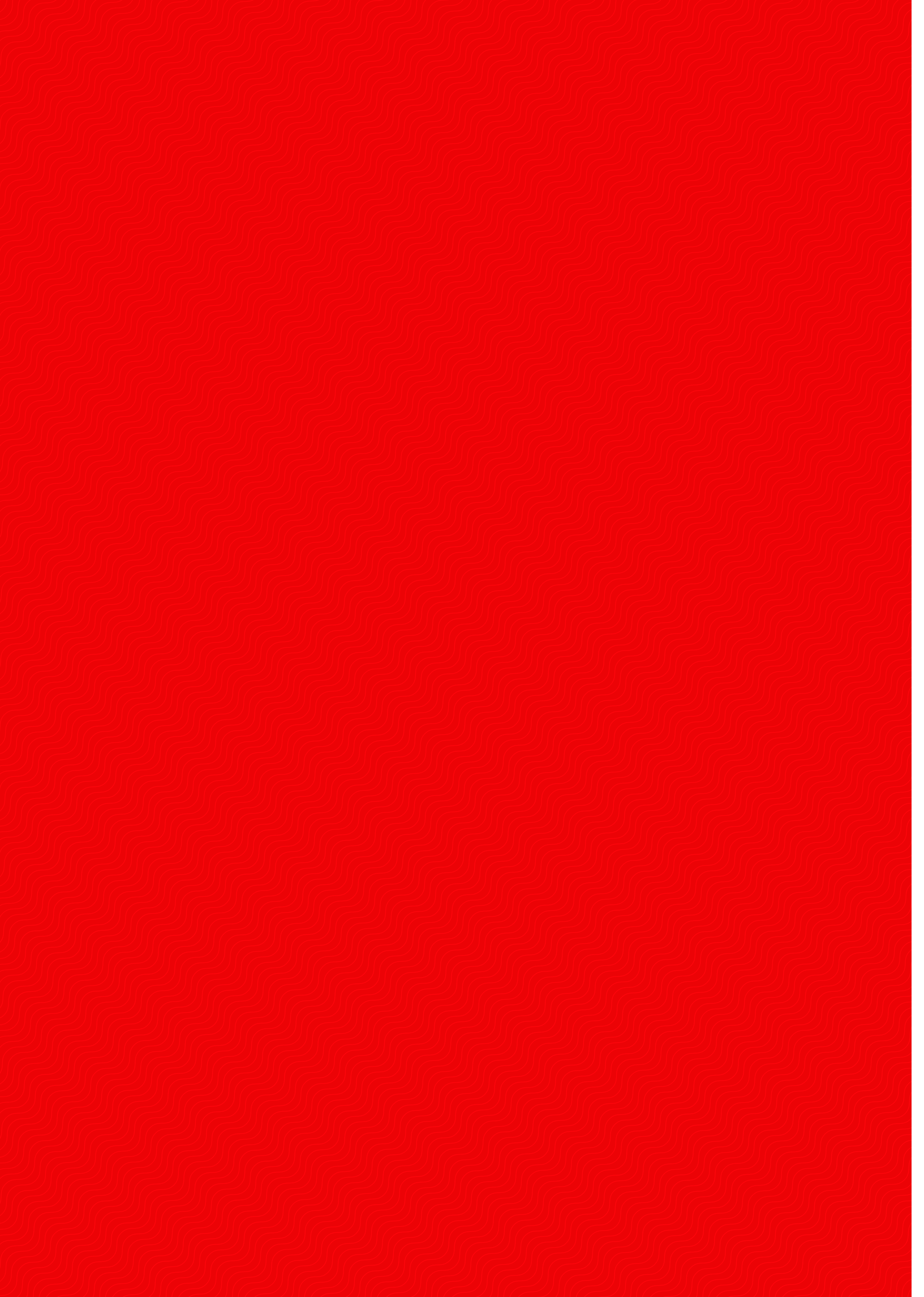
**COACHES MANUAL**

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**LEVEL 2**

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**WORLD ASSOCIATION OF BASKETBALL COACHES**

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**COACHES MANUAL**

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## LEVEL 2

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**LEVEL 2**

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# **COACH**

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**CHAPTER 1**

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# **ROLES AND VALUES**

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## CHAPTER 1

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# ROLES AND VALUES

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# 1.1 LEADERSHIP

## 1.1.1 INCORPORATING SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS

*Coaches should encourage athletes to “dream big” and to have ambitious goals (e.g. playing professionally).*

Similarly, the coach should have ambitious goals for the team to achieve, which may extend beyond the time when the coach is with the team (e.g. a coach of a junior team may have a goal that the players all progress to the club’s senior squad).

A limiting factor in regards to ambitious goals is that they may seem unattainable or players may get discouraged when they do not achieve them – in either event, the player is unlikely to continue to strive toward reaching that objective.

The coach therefore should help the athlete to “break down” the larger (or longer-term) goal into a series of smaller (or shorter-term) goals that are important to ultimately achieving the larger goal.

These smaller (or shorter term) goals have the advantage of:

- providing a mechanism to measure progress toward the ultimate goal – this enables the player to experience success as they achieve each goal, which both rewards effort made to date and can motivate the athlete to continue working toward the next goal (and the ultimate goal);
- helping the athlete cope with disappointments (e.g. non selection to a team);
- enabling the athlete to realise when they reach the point where the ultimate goal may be out of reach but to still have a sense of success for what they achieved along the way;
- allowing the athlete to reassess their ambitious goals (e.g. a player that aspires to play at the Olympics may realise that is unlikely and then work toward becoming a coach or official).

There are situations where short-term goals may be contrary to long-term goals, and for coaches these are most likely to occur in regards to team selection and substitution patterns and style of play.

In considering players for selection, a coach will often be presented with a situation where one player may make an immediate impact upon the team, and another has greater potential in the long term but would have little impact immediately. This can happen with senior teams (choosing between “veterans” and “rookies”) but is perhaps more commonplace with junior teams.

The decision a coach makes will depend upon both their own philosophy and that of the club. With junior athletes, coaches should certainly consider that “single measures or judgments about someone’s athletic potential, especially before puberty, are likely to be influenced by factors such as physical maturity that could change over time”.<sup>1</sup> Players that physically mature earlier (and are taller or stronger) than their teammates at the ages of 10-12 may not have that advantage a few years later and are often not the players that progress the most.

With young players, coaches should be as inclusive as possible and should encourage clubs to have other programs available for players that are not selected to teams.

The other decision where there may be a conflict for the coach between short and long term goals is in how a team plays. With young players (ages 10-14), some coaches make the mistake of focussing on structured play and early on this may lead to games being won. However, without a good understanding and development of individual skills and basic team concepts, these players (and teams) often do not experience success as they get older.

Coaches of young teams should forsake the goal of winning in the short term and instead concentrate on the development of players so that they are better equipped for winning later in their teen years. The coach’s focus must be on success, which is measured in terms of development rather than simply games won.

<sup>1</sup> US Anti-Doping Agency, True Sport: What We Stand to Lose in Our Obsession to Win, 2012, p47



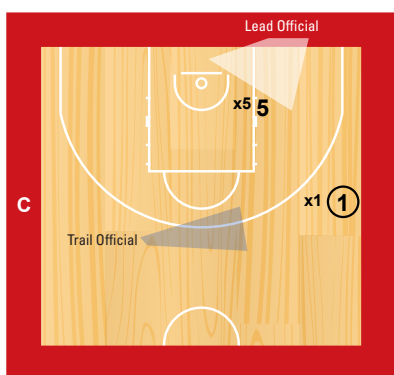
# 1.2 WORKING WITH OFFICIALS

## 1.2.1 REFEREE RESPONSIBILITIES

### COURT COVERAGE

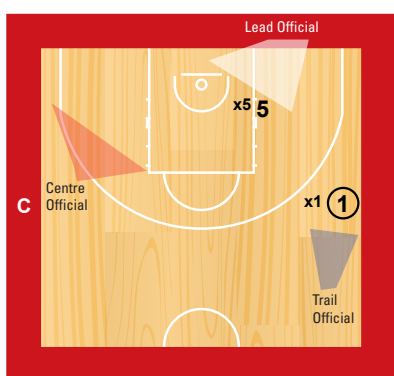
Whilst coaches do not need to have in-depth knowledge of the responsibilities that referees have, it is important that the coach understand that between them the referees are responsible for covering the whole court.

Accordingly, they may be looking at different areas of the court at any particular time and they both could be focussing on a different area than where the coach is looking.



In this situation the lead official is focussing on the post players (and the key) and the trail official is focused on the ball, which is in the wing position.

If the coach asks the trail official about something that happened in post, the trail official is probably unaware of what was happening – it is not their area of responsibility.



In “3-man officiating” the centre official (who is positioned closest to the coach) is responsible for what is happening off the ball, on their side of the court.

Accordingly, if the coach asks the centre official about what was happening in the ball-side low post, or on the ball, the centre official is probably unaware of what was happening.

Most importantly, coaches must appreciate that they are in a different position to the referees so will have a different view of what is happening on court. Not only will what they see be affected by where they are standing but also by the position of other players on the court, which may obscure what they can see.

A coach may therefore see something that the official misses just as often as the official will see things that the coach misses. Both coach and official have their job to do and they should support each other.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MECHANICS

Officials are taught specifically how to move around the court and these “mechanics” (or rules of movement) are designed to ensure that:

- there will be one official who has a view of any particular action that is occurring on the court (whether it is on ball or off the ball);
- that official will be in the best position to see the action and particularly to officiate:
  - who has caused any contact;
  - whether players are in a legal or illegal position.

The mechanics are a guideline for the official to help them to perform their role and to do so working in partnership with other officials. Officials are required to make hundreds of decisions every game – not just when to “make a call” but also when to “hold their whistle”. They are officiating all ten players – moving in a relatively small area of court sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly.

They will undertake this role better if they are not also having to deal with coaches yelling and screaming on the sideline!

# 1.3 SPORT INTEGRITY COMPLIANCE

## 1.3.1 COACHING A CLEAN GAME

*“Sometimes, the temptations must be talked about for them to remain only temptations.”*

**RUDY FERNANDEZ, SPANISH INTERNATIONAL**

### COACHING A CLEAN GAME

In line with the IOC movement and since 2004 with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), FIBA has been actively engaged in the fight against doping in basketball. Since 1989, doping controls are regularly and increasingly performed at FIBA events.

In 2009, FIBA began implementing its own Out-of-Competition testing programme.

As more and more countries are ratifying the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport, FIBA's cooperation with its own National Federations and the National Anti-Doping Organizations in these matters has been constantly reinforced.

The Medical Corner on FIBA's website ([www.fiba.com](http://www.fiba.com)) is a very helpful tool for communication and cooperation with all stakeholders, giving access to detailed and up-to-date information on FIBA anti-doping activities.

While there is generally a good awareness of the wrongs of doping, there is often a knowledge gap in terms of the dangers faced by athletes and the importance of cultivating a healthy lifestyle. FIBA has included a series of short videos on both its YouTube page and its website ([www.cleangame.fiba.com](http://www.cleangame.fiba.com)); players of all ages and all levels will benefit from the insights provided there by some of basketball's biggest stars.

Coaches have a responsibility to promote to their athletes the importance of participating in sport, without resorting to doping or banned substances. They must also make sure that their athletes understand that there is a process whereby the use of an otherwise banned substance can be approved on medical advice (a Therapeutic Use Exemption). Athletes can get more information on the FIBA website and should discuss any concerns with their medical practitioner.

*“The best part of being an athlete is rising to the challenge, doing your best under the circumstances, and enjoying the process. The celebration of the human spirit, body and mind, is what we call the ‘Spirit of Sport’, and is characterized by health, fair play, honesty, respect for self and others, courage and dedication...”*

*“...Doping in sport is the complete antithesis of the Spirit of Sport. Doping destroys all that is good and noble about sport. It jeopardizes the health and well-being of athletes and erodes public confidence. In addition to risking serious health consequences, athletes who test positive for doping, ruin their good name and reputation and may lose their employment.”<sup>1</sup>*

### **HOW DOES THE WADA ANTI-DOPING SYSTEM WORK?**

The World Anti-Doping Agency maintains a List of Prohibited Substances and Methods and a substance may be placed on it if it meets two out of these three criteria:

- it is performance-enhancing;
- it poses a danger to athletes' health;
- its use is against the spirit of sport.

A two year ban from competition is imposed on an athlete who is found to have violated the Anti-Doping Code. A rule of “strict liability” applies so that a violation occurs if a banned substance is found in a specimen (e.g. blood, urine) given by an athlete.

Whether or not the athlete intentionally or unintentionally used the substance is irrelevant.

Coaches should not give advice to players about what medications or supplements they can use or cannot use.

Coaches should ensure that players are aware of their responsibility under the Anti-Doping Code and that players know where they can seek advice if they need it.

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Hunter, Anti-Doping: It's a Global Campaign, FIBA Assist

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Discuss with your players their long-term goals.
  - a. Do you believe those goals are realistic;
  - b. Have they identified some shorter-term goals that will contribute toward achieving the long-term goal?
2. Have your players considered goals within the sport other than playing (e.g. officiating or coaching)?
3. Discuss with a coaching colleague (from basketball or another sport) what education (if any) your athletes have had about drugs in sport? How would you get more information for them?
4. Watch a game of basketball with a referee and discuss with them what the referees are looking for or considering at various points in the game.



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**LEVEL 2**

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# **COACH**

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**CHAPTER 2**

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# **KNOW-HOW**

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## CHAPTER 2

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# KNOW-HOW

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# 2.1 PLANNING

## 2.1.1 REVIEW - EVALUATING PRACTICE SESSIONS

*Effective coaching is not only about helping your athletes to improve, it is also about constantly improving as a coach. Good coaches build on the things they do well and learn from their mistakes.*

### BROGAN BUNT<sup>2</sup>

Just like a team's performance at games, some practice sessions will be better than others and the coach should review each session to determine what worked well (and do it again) and what was not as effective (and vary it for next time). This is part of a coach's reflective cycle.

At the end of each practice session, coaches should make a brief evaluation of the session, which may include recording:

- performance in particular activities (e.g. number of lay-ups made in a certain time in an activity). This can be used from session to session to track improvement;
- any variations to an activity that the coach used, particularly if the activity had been too easy or too hard for the team;
- any particular areas that the coach believes need further work. It is very important in a training session to resist continuing with an activity until it is "perfect" – i.e. going for longer than planned. This will reduce the time available for other parts of the session. Instead, the coach can record what else needs to be done at the next practice session;
- where particular activities worked well, or did not work well;

- any observations regarding the performance of individual players and areas for continued work or progression of their skill learning;
- possible goals to emphasise at the next game;
- thoughts on particular activities or skills that need to be a focus in the next practice.

It can be very effective to film a practice session and to review the video. Obviously, this will help the coach to identify skill areas that may need to improve (individual and team); but more importantly, it can help the coach to identify:

- how well players were involved in the practice – were they standing around too long?
- how effective the coach was in giving instructions – could all players hear? Where all players listening?
- whether the players were given sufficient opportunity to practice – or did the coach talk for too long?

Many coaches will not have the luxury of being able to film practice sessions, but having a colleague watch a practice session, or asking players for feedback, can be just as beneficial. This person watching does not necessarily need to understand the specific basketball activities or skills as their observation

<sup>2</sup> Brogan Bunt, Video Self Analysis – A Lens on Coaching, Australian Sports Commission

as to how the session was conducted is not basketball-specific.

The coach should also keep a record of who attended the session and any injuries or restrictions on players being able to participate.

The coach may want to look specifically at their own performance rather than just the overall practice session and to do this it is very helpful to have video footage of the session, or have a colleague observe the session. The aim of this detailed analysis is to determine:

- what coaching task the coach is performing;
- what were their specific coaching actions?
- what is the context?

### COACHING TASKS

There are 3 main coaching tasks. The degree to which a coach will do each task in any given practice will depend upon the goals of that practice and the resources available.

### MANAGING

This is the organisational side of coaching. It is all the practical things that a coach does to make sure the training session runs smoothly.

Sometimes a coach may delegate tasks to an assistant or even the players.

### TEACHING

Is what coaches do to develop the skills and strategic understanding of their athletes.

### COMMUNICATING

This refers to the human relations dimension of coaching. It is how the coach relates to the athletes and the type of social climate that the coach's style of coaching fosters.

Coaching tasks often overlap. Teaching and managing are closely linked and communicating is a broader task, relating to almost everything that you do. Below are some examples of coaching tasks:

#### Managing:

*"Give me 3 groups on the baseline, each group needs a ball."*

#### Teaching:

*"Chin the ball, never bring it below shoulder height when you are in the key"*

#### Communicating:

*"Happy birthday Jaz, did you get some good presents?"*

*In analysing their performance, a coach must look at how much time they spend on each type of task. Often, coaches spend more time managing activities (e.g. telling players where to run, where to pass etc.) than on teaching.*

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## COACHING ACTIONS

Coaching actions are all the observable things that a coach does when they are performing their role as a coach, whether those things they are verbal or non-verbal.

ACTION	EXAMPLE
<b>EXPLAINING</b>	"This session we are going to work on our defensive footwork against a post player."
<b>INFORMING</b>	"You need to straighten your arm as you shoot the ball."
<b>PRAISING</b>	Patting a player on the back after a good performance.
<b>CORRECTING</b>	"You need to pass to your left, with your left hand. If you use your right hand, the defender will be able to easily deflect the pass."
<b>QUESTIONING</b>	"When you move toward the basket, which foot should you move first?"

## COACHING CONTEXT

The final factor that is relevant when evaluating a coach's performance is the context, which is the background to the coach's actions. The coaching context will often impact what the coaches want to do, how they do it and how effective it is.

Clearly, the same action taken in different contexts can lead to very different results. For example, the coach raising their voice and yelling may be OK when coaching an experienced team of older players but may have a very detrimental effect on very young players.

However, the coaching context for this purpose is more about the context that impacts upon the coach. For example:

**What** is happening?

**Who** are the participants?

**When?** What part of the season?  
What part of the training session?

**Where?** Does the space/location and equipment affect your coaching?

**Why?** Are there any other factors to explain aspects of the coach's behaviour?

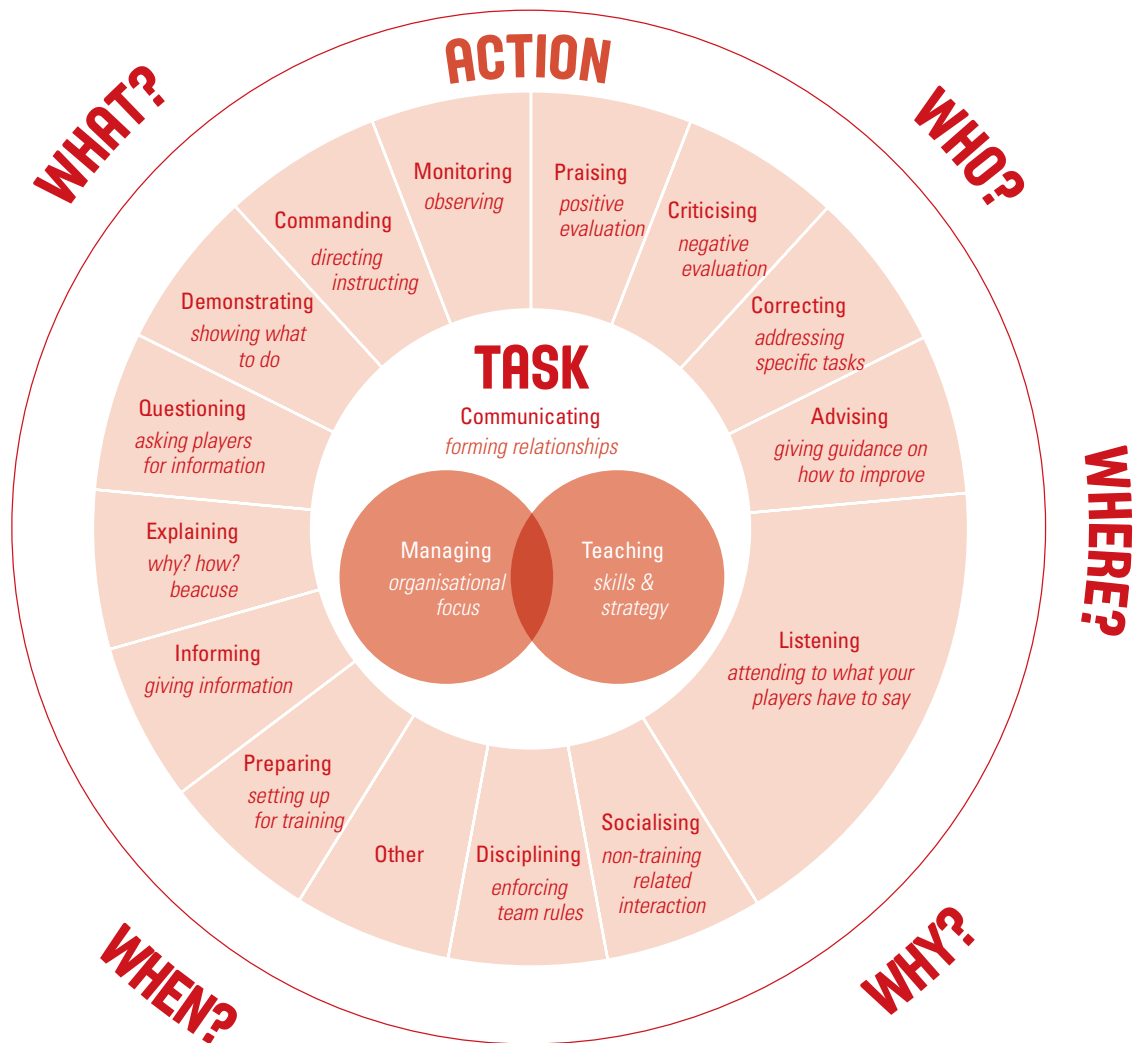
In some practice sessions the coach may do very little teaching because the focus of the session may be on having players execute skills that they can already perform well in training and need to improve under "game-like" pressure.

### COACH EVALUATION MODEL

The following model maps out the relevant features of actions, tasks and context which are considered when evaluating coaching. The three coaching tasks are placed at the centre – with managing and teaching overlapping, and communicating being a broader function that includes the other two. Of the various coaching actions, listening is deliberately the largest and this reflects its critical importance.

The coach should try to be objective when analysing their coaching – this could simply be looking at what they are doing and not considering whether or not it is being done well. This will help the coach to ensure that they don't overlook the various aspects of what they are doing.

In identifying what they were doing, a coach may identify that they did not undertake certain coaching actions. This is quite normal, as not every action will be involved in every session. And some actions (e.g. preparing) may be mostly done prior to the session.



However, subject to any particular context, the coach should expect to spend most of their time teaching, rather than managing. If they find that they are doing a lot of managing tasks then they may wish to identify if some tasks could:

- be delegated to someone else (e.g. assistant coach, team manager, players or parents);
- be done more effectively by conducting a smaller number of activities but varying the activities to increase complexity and to address different teaching points;
- allow more time before stopping an activity – observe and see if the players can figure out how to do the activity;
- use cue words more effectively;
- be planned differently – e.g. by designating which groups players will be in before training, or having a team rule that half the team must wear white and half a different colour shirt (to help dividing into groups);
- use similar activities from one training to another so that they are not constantly needing to explain how a new activity works.

## 2.1.2 MANAGING PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL LOAD FROM ONE SESSION TO THE NEXT

*It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that players get sufficient recovery time between sessions; this is just as important from a psychological viewpoint as it is from a physical viewpoint.*

The aim is to keep players fresh so that they can give an optimal performance each time.

The first step is to understand what load the players are coping with, which will obviously be affected by activities outside of the team environment and over which the coach may have no control.

For example, physical load may be affected by commitments to other teams or school/work and psychological load will be impacted by what is happening at school/work or in their family life.

To help to understand the load that players are experiencing, the coach can:

- have players keep a diary of their activities and regularly review it with the player;
- have players keep a calendar where they include key dates (e.g. exam dates, holidays, when presentations/work is due). The coach should review this particularly to identify times that are likely to be particularly stressful and to reduce commitments during these times if possible;
- liaise with other coaches to determine what their requirements for the athlete are. Can anything be consolidated so that the athlete does not have to duplicate training?
- assess at training the physical load of each activity, which is both a factor of the activity itself (e.g. sprinting full court in a lay-up drill or short sprints in a "close-out" drill) and also the number of repetitions that a player does;
- have the player record in the diary how much sleep they got each night and assess how they feel – an example of some checkboxes is given below.

### TODAY I FEEL...(TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

<input type="checkbox"/> Awful	<input type="checkbox"/> Tired	<input type="checkbox"/> Sore	<input type="checkbox"/> Upset	<input type="checkbox"/> Angry	<input type="checkbox"/> Sick
<input type="checkbox"/> Alright	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Great	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Happy	<input type="checkbox"/> Motivated

In preparing the plan for the season, the coach should be prepared to schedule breaks at times of heavy physical load, and this may include resting some players but not others (e.g. players that are involved in national programs as well as the club program may be given some rest after a national program commitment).

The coach should continuously assess during the season how players are coping with physical loads and be prepared to make alterations if there are signs of physical fatigue (which may be caused by other factors, not just the coach's program). Changes might include reducing the length of practice sessions, changing the content of sessions (to less physically stressful activities) or cancelling a session.

Coaches should ensure that players understand the importance of physical recovery and may need to schedule aspects into their program such as doing a pool recovery session as a group.

Psychological fatigue can have just as serious an impact upon performance, although it is not necessarily as easy to predict or detect. Stress from work, school or family will impact performance and coaches may need to make adjustments to the program for individual athletes at these times (e.g. players may not train in the week of school exams).

Players may need "downtime" or a break from the coach or from the program altogether, particularly during a long season. There are many ways that a coach can address this, such as:

- have some sessions taken by assistant coaches so that the players are not only hearing the coach's voice. It can also be worthwhile to have a coach from outside the program take a session from time to time (e.g. the senior club coach taking a session with a junior team);
- use "cross training", where practice involves other sports. This is particularly common when working on fitness, however can also work for technical skills (e.g. "pass and cut" and "screening" are effective in soccer as well as basketball);
- schedule a social event (e.g. team dinner) instead of practice from time to time;
- have players lead activities in practice – this could be them choosing activities that they wish to do (from a list provided by the coach) or a free choice of activities.

## 2.1.3 CONDUCTING INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

It is often difficult in team practice sessions to improve the skills and techniques of each individual athlete and this is often best done in an individual session with the athlete or in small groups of 3 or 4 athletes.

Some coaches will set aside some team practice sessions to focus on individual skills, however unless there are a number of assistant coaches it can still be difficult to provide sufficient feedback to each athlete.

Individual sessions are generally much shorter than a team practice session (45 minutes to one hour) and should include both offensive and defensive techniques. Coaches may use the sessions to introduce new skills or to refine and develop existing skills.

Some guidelines to assist with preparing and conducting individual sessions are:

1. Make it contested or as “game-like” as possible

The ultimate aim of any practice is for players to transfer the skills practiced into a game environment and this is maximised by the practice having “game-realistic” factors included (for example, having a defender stand in front of a player learning to shoot). These may include:

- Playing against the coach or other players;
- Specific game situations (e.g. rather than shooting 10 free throws in a row, players shoot 2 or 3 and then run sprints before shooting another 2 or 3);
- Having specific consequences at times (e.g. if the third shot is missed the player’s score returns to zero);
- Have an offensive effort followed by a defensive effort (e.g. player takes a shot, rebounds their shot, passes to another player and “closes out” to pressure that player’s shot);

- Keep score. This can be done between players or against an imaginary opponent. For example, a player takes the following shots, rebounding their own shot and moving to the next shot. Their opponent scores points every time the player misses. Continue for a set time or until the player (or their opponent) reach a set score:

- Free throw (opponent gets 4 points if missed)
- Lay-up (opponent gets 3 points if missed)
- 2 point shot outside key (opponent gets 2 points if missed)
- 3 point shot (opponent gets 1 point if missed).

2. Change what needs to be changed and leave the rest alone. Many athletes will develop technique that is not “textbook” but may well be effective in a game. Changing any habit is difficult and coaches should prioritise the importance of any changes that they are considering.
3. Repetition. An individual session is the opportunity for the player to develop their skills by executing them many, many times. Coaches should limit how much they talk and focus on ensuring the player gets a lot of repetitions. An individual session is a good time to establish a rapport with a player so coaches should take time before or after the session to speak with the player.
4. Intensity is more important than time spent. Players should operate at a game-like intensity throughout an individual session. Schedule breaks that are game-realistic (e.g. 1 minute).
5. Be specific – an individual session is the opportunity to instruct players on correct technique. Coaches must make sure that the players understand the “fine detail” (e.g. foot position, head position). Using video can help the player to understand changes that they need to make.



## 2.1.4 SEASON PLANS

The first step to creating a season plan is to start with a calendar and identify key dates, such as:

- when the season starts and finishes (including when finals or play-offs start and finish);
- when practice commences;
- when the team is selected (particularly if trials are being held);
- when practice sessions can be scheduled (this may depend upon court availability);
- game schedule (once known) and likely travel (which will often depend upon how the team travels – whether by bus, individual car, plane etc).

		MARCH															
		Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>PUBLIC HOLIDAY</b>																	
<b>SELECTION TRIAL</b>																	
<b>WEIGHTS</b>																	
<b>TEAM PRACTICE</b>							9am	7pm	9am	3pm		4pm	7pm				9am
<b>INDIVIDUALS</b>																	
<b>GAMES</b>															Away 7pm		Home 2pm
<b>PLAY-OFFS</b>																	
<b>TRAVEL</b>														9am		11am	

The coach can then include into the calendar other important dates that may impact when they or the players are available (e.g. representative commitments, school holidays)

APRIL																
	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>PUBLIC HOLIDAY</b>																
<b>SELECTION TRIAL</b>																
<b>WEIGHTS</b>																
<b>TEAM PRACTICE</b>	10am							9am	3pm		10am	11am				
<b>INDIVIDUALS</b>																
<b>GAMES</b>	Home 7pm	Away 5pm														
<b>PLAY-OFFS</b>																
<b>TRAVEL</b>		11am														
<b>SCHOOL HOLIDAYS</b>																
<b>U18 CHAMPS</b>																

Lastly, on the calendar, the coach may note other dates such as:

- other games that they wish to “scout”;
- venue availability (particularly if there are blocks of time when venues are unavailable);
- factors impacting upon game preparation (e.g. if a game is to be televised), teams may not be able to access the court at certain times or may have to do additional media commitments);
- “Pre-season” or “Off-season” dates (particularly if players are given programs or monitored during these times).

From the calendar, the coach can determine:

- how many practice sessions they have;
- conflicting commitments (either for the coach or the player);

- the likely physical load that players will have throughout the season.

The coach then needs to determine the “technical program” for the team and individual players – what they want to teach and when it will be introduced. Whilst a coach might like to have everything in place prior to the first game, this is often not possible and the coach must prioritise when they introduce the various tactics and strategies.

Whenever possible, the coach should work with other staff (e.g. conditioning coaches) to finalise the season plan. As with any plan, the coach needs to review the plan as the season progresses and make variations as required.

## 2.1.5 SAFETY WHEN TRAVELLING

In many programs, coaches will have assistance in making travel arrangements or the coach may not be involved in this at all – whether because parents plan travel for their children or because the team has a manager that makes the arrangements.

However, all coaches need to understand the basic considerations that should be taken into account when teams are travelling:

1. Physical Safety
2. Safe Food and Drink
3. Safekeeping of Documents

### 1. PHYSICAL SAFETY

Travelling to other cities or countries can be an exciting part of being involved in sport, particularly a sport as popular as basketball is throughout the world. Whenever travelling, the physical safety of all members of the team must be paramount. Accordingly:

- Many governments issue “Travel Advisory” notes regarding travel to certain countries. Coaches should be familiar with these and seek further information from the club or competition organisers;
- When travelling overseas, check with a doctor whether particular vaccinations or other precautions are advised;
- All cities have areas that are not as safe for tourists. Before booking hotels, find out which areas of the city are recommended to avoid. Speaking with coaches of other teams (that either live in the city or may have played there before) can help;
- Players should never leave the hotel by themselves and should always make sure that others know when they are leaving and where they are going;
- Take the time to find out about specific customs that exist. This can avoid the team being involved in an embarrassing situation! Travel websites are often a good source of information;

- If travelling by car or mini-bus, coaches must take care to know distances to be travelled. Fatigue is a very common cause of road accidents and coaches should avoid driving long distances overnight. Wherever possible have at least two drivers and if travel is more than 4 or 5 hours factor in a specific “travel day” rather than travelling after the game;
- Assign players “buddies”, with each having responsibility to make sure their “buddy” knows important logistic arrangements (e.g. when the bus leaves) and that they are on time.

### 2. SAFE FOOD AND DRINK

There are many instances where a team’s performance has been adversely affected by players being ill due to something they have eaten or drunk when travelling. An equally common problem, but less recognized, is when athletes find the food when travelling unpalatable and simply do not eat enough.

Accordingly, precautions need to be taken:

- Find out whether or not tap water is safe for drinking and if in doubt use bottled water. Bottled water should also be used when brushing teeth;
- Identify restaurants that have food similar to what the players are used to. Other coaches may be able assist with this. Many cities also have a tourist advisory service (often available through the internet) which may be able to assist;
- If possible, take some food items with you (e.g. many Australian teams take Vegemite);
- Monitor how much food players are eating at meals.

### 3. SAFEKEEPING OF DOCUMENTS

Passports and visas are critical documents when travelling, which may not be easily replaced and must be kept safe at all times. At tournaments, the accreditation that enables team members to access the playing venue and accommodation are equally important.

These documents (and other valuables such as phones, watches etc.) need to be kept safe from being stolen but equally need to be kept safe from simply being left behind inadvertently. Some steps that can be taken are:

- Take copies of all passports and visas. These can be kept electronically as well as a team manager or coach keeping copies;
- Team manager or coach collects all passports after arrival in a country and keeps them together (using hotel safes where possible);
- Don't leave valuables (including accreditation cards) in changing rooms at the playing venue. Instead, have them collected by a coach or manager and kept in a bag that is with them all the time;
- Pack away computer equipment when it is left in hotel rooms (e.g. in the bottom of a bag);
- Have a checklist of all equipment that the team has (e.g. balls, cameras, first aid kit) and have someone check that all items have been collected before leaving a venue.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Discuss with a coaching colleague how they review their practice sessions. Are there elements that they include that you would like to incorporate?
2. Plan a week of training sessions and assess what you think are the physical and psychological loads of each activity. Discuss with your players how they felt after each session. Discuss with the players any discrepancy between your estimate and their assessment.
3. Watch another coach conduct a “skills-based” small group (or individual session). Write down what you think were their important teaching points and then discuss with the coach.
4. Do you have a plan spanning a complete season? Are your athletes progressing to that plan?

## 2.2 TEACHING

### 2.2.1 ADVANCED PRINCIPLES OF SKILL ACQUISITION

*This chapter has been prepared by:*

**DR ADAM D. GORMAN,**  
University of the Sunshine Coast  
(Australia).

#### SKILL ACQUISITION

The advice of a suitably qualified person should be sought before anyone uses or relies upon the information contained in this chapter. The chapter offers general information only and is not specific to any individual or team.

The content may require a certain level of skill and expertise, and may need to be adapted and/or modified to suit the needs of different individuals and different teams. The content may not be suitable for all individuals.

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#### KEY PRINCIPLES OF SKILL ACQUISITION

The highly dynamic and fast-paced nature of the sport of basketball requires competitors to be able to perform a range of different skills. This section provides an overview of some of the key principles from the discipline of skill acquisition that can be used to guide the design and implementation of practice sessions to help facilitate skill learning and performance.

It is important to acknowledge that the content within this section may require a certain level of skill and expertise and may not be suitable for all individuals. The content may need to be adapted and/or modified to suit the needs of different individuals and different teams.

#### STAGES OF SKILL ACQUISITION

There are various stages through which performers will progress as they increase in skill level.<sup>1</sup> Outlined below is a summary of some of the main components that are included in Newell's<sup>2</sup> model of motor learning (see also<sup>3,4</sup>).

#### THE FIRST STAGE: COORDINATION

During the first stage of skill acquisition, the learner typically attempts to explore a range of different methods for achieving a particular outcome.<sup>2-4</sup> As a result, this stage is often characterised by frequent changes from one movement pattern to another.<sup>2-6</sup>

For example, when first attempting to execute a basketball shot, beginner players may initiate their shot from around waist height during their early attempts, but suddenly transition towards an overhead shot when competing against a defender (see <sup>3,7,8</sup>).

This exploratory process is believed to be important for allowing the formation of a movement pattern that is most suited to the individual.<sup>3,9</sup> That is, the learner's previous experiences and current movement capabilities will tend to influence the way in which the pattern is formed.<sup>3,10</sup>

The role of the coach is therefore important in helping to shape the learning environment in such a way as to allow the learner to (safely) experience a broad array of situations<sup>9,11</sup> (see also the section in this chapter on exploration and self-organisation), rather than restricting the search process by teaching players to use a predetermined or idealised technique that assumes all players are identical.<sup>7,12</sup>

The use of highly prescriptive technical instructions may restrict the search process, encouraging the learner to explore only a narrow subset of possible movement patterns.<sup>7,12</sup>

### THE SECOND STAGE: CONTROL

In the second stage of skill learning, the individual has typically acquired the underlying movement patterns and is now attempting to learn how to adjust those patterns to better suit changes that occur within the environment.<sup>2,4</sup> In essence, learners attempt to adapt their movements to accommodate for the diversity of situations that may occur during different situations in games and practice sessions.<sup>3</sup>

For example, basketball players at the control stage may learn to successfully adjust the speed and force of a pass so that it can be accurately delivered to team-mates positioned at different distances.<sup>2,4</sup> Players may also learn to recognise certain cues within the environment, such as the proximity of a defender, allowing them to adjust their movement accordingly.<sup>2,13,14</sup>

It is therefore important to use practice tasks that resemble the demands of competition so that players learn to recognise and understand the key sources of information that exist in the typical competitive environment.<sup>11,15,16</sup>

### THE FINAL STAGE: SKILL

The skills of experts are often described as being energy efficient, highly consistent, and extremely adaptable.<sup>2-4,17</sup> In the dynamic environment of basketball, adaptability is likely to be a particularly important quality because it can allow a player to adjust to a vast array of different game situations.<sup>4,10,16,18</sup>

For instance, a basketball player who can maintain shooting accuracy under varying intensities of defensive pressure is likely to be better able to cope with the demands of most game scenarios, including those experienced in higher level competitions.<sup>7,10</sup>

Research has highlighted many other

qualities that provide experienced players with a distinct advantage over their less skilled counterparts (e.g., see<sup>19</sup>). For example, the use of visual-perceptual information (i.e., information that the player sees) may be an important quality that allows an expert player to predict the play.<sup>20-24</sup>

By recognising critical cues such as the locations of certain team-mates or the foot position of an immediate defender, the experienced player is able to accurately determine the best possible course of action.<sup>14,25,26</sup> Many of these cues may be quite subtle<sup>27</sup> and it is likely that repeated exposure to the cues is required before the performer can fully appreciate their meaning.<sup>28</sup> These factors highlight the importance of using appropriate practice tasks that contain opportunities for players to experience the types of variables that may be encountered during games.<sup>16,29</sup>

Another prominent quality of expert performance is related to the use of what are typically termed “situational probabilities”.<sup>29</sup> Based upon prior knowledge of a particular team or individual player, experienced performers are better able to predict the likelihood of certain events<sup>30</sup> (see also<sup>29,31</sup>).

This knowledge is often acquired during previous games against a certain team, or after competing against a specific player.<sup>29</sup> These situational probabilities typically form the basis for team scouting meetings where players are given information on an upcoming opponent, often using edited video clips showing specific patterns of play.<sup>29</sup>

However, this information could also be delivered within carefully designed on-court sessions where practice activities are structured in such a way as to allow players to gain first-hand knowledge of the likely scenarios they will experience against a particular team<sup>29</sup> (see also<sup>32</sup>). Given that expertise takes many years and many hours of dedicated practice<sup>33,34</sup> the judicious use

of carefully designed practice tasks may help to optimise the benefits gained from skill practice sessions.<sup>3,12,32</sup>

### **DESIGNING SUITABLE ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE SKILL**

There are many factors that should be considered in the design and implementation of skill practice sessions. The following section is aimed at providing an underpinning philosophical approach towards skill acquisition that can assist in the formulation of an appropriate practice environment. Thus, rather than providing an extensive repertoire of prescriptive drills, the following section is intended to provide coaches with the necessary tools to be able to create and refine their own activities, specifically tailored to the needs of their team.

### **EXPLORATION AND SELF-ORGANISATION**

As described earlier, the initial phase of skill acquisition is often characterised by an exploratory process whereby beginners attempt to explore a variety of different movement patterns<sup>4</sup> (see also<sup>2</sup>). Although this process is often associated with beginners, exploration can be beneficial for all skill levels, including experts competing at the highest level.<sup>3,4,16</sup>

It is therefore important for players to be given opportunities to safely search through a broad range of movement variations, allowing them to find and refine movement patterns that best suit their capabilities, as well as providing opportunities to learn when and how those patterns should be adapted.<sup>4,7,10,11,16</sup>

The notion of self-organisation is a critical part of the exploratory process because it suggests that learners are largely responsible for finding their own solutions, without constant direction from an external source such as a coach.<sup>3,35</sup> Practice activities that are excessively constrained or overly directed may restrict the search process and discourage players from finding

optimal and adaptable movement patterns.<sup>4,12</sup>

In the opposite extreme, practice activities that are completely random and/or excessively unstructured may be unsafe, and may also require large amounts of time before players find suitable solutions.<sup>4</sup> For these reasons, the role of the coach is critical in helping to design safe and appropriate practice tasks that guide players towards optimal movement patterns.<sup>4,16</sup>

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVING AND DOING (PERCEPTION-ACTION COUPLING)**

The relationship between perceiving and doing (termed the “perception-action coupling”) demonstrates that what a person perceives (via senses such as vision, hearing, and touch) will influence what that person does, and what a person does will influence what that person perceives.<sup>16,36</sup>

For instance, a basketball player standing on the 3-point line with the ball may use visual information to identify an open passing lane before delivering the pass.<sup>16,36</sup> In this situation, what the person perceived (an open passing lane) influenced the nature of the movement (the type and location of the pass).<sup>16,36</sup> Alternatively, if the perimeter player dribbles towards the baseline, the player may see a different passing lane.<sup>16,36</sup> Here, the player’s movement (dribbling towards the baseline) influenced the type of information that was perceived (a different passing lane).<sup>16,36</sup>

The coordination patterns exhibited when performing tasks that diminish or remove the relationship between perceiving and doing, often tend to be quite different to those that occur when the same tasks are performed in their natural state<sup>37,38</sup> (see also<sup>39</sup>).

For example, when the defender is removed from a basketball shooting task, certain aspects of the shooter’s action start to change, such as the release angle of the ball, compared to when the defender is present<sup>8</sup> (see also<sup>40</sup>).



Similarly, the common approach of breaking down a skill into smaller parts (such as learning to shoot a basketball by practicing the load phase in the absence of the extension and release phases) may alter many of the movement characteristics that are important for performance.<sup>15,16,41,42</sup>

While in some instances these changes may be relatively subtle, even small alterations to the coordination pattern in practice tasks may influence the extent to which the skill transfers into a game environment.<sup>8,15,16,41</sup>

It is therefore important for coaches to utilise a practice strategy that maintains the critical links between perception and action.<sup>43,44</sup> A useful approach for applying this strategy, while simultaneously reducing the complexity of a given task to make it easier for players to perform, is to use the concept of “task simplification”.<sup>3,16,43,45</sup>

As the name suggests, this strategy involves either simplifying the skill itself, simplifying the environment in which the skill is performed, or a combination of both.<sup>16,43</sup>

Typical approaches towards task simplification often involve reducing player numbers, constraining the roles of certain players, or changing the size of the playing area.<sup>16,46</sup> For example, rather than practicing completely uncontested shots, players could be asked to shoot against a defender who, depending upon the skill level of the shooter, could simply stand still with a hand raised into the air for the shooter to avoid, or for more skilled shooters, could advance towards the shooter from a specified distance to defend the shot.<sup>8,16,47</sup>

To teach offensive decision-making to inexperienced players, practice games could be simplified by including a greater number of attackers than defenders, thereby allowing players to execute their skills with reduced defensive pressure.<sup>16,48,49</sup> An alternative approach could be to constrain the

movements of certain players by creating a rule that only permits the defensive team to have two players inside the key at any one time.<sup>43,48,49</sup>

The important point is that wherever appropriate, practice activities should be designed to allow players to learn the critical links between perception and action, rather than breaking a skill into parts or removing important information sources such as defenders.<sup>8,15,16,41,43</sup> The ultimate aim is to help ensure that the skills acquired in practice sessions will transfer readily to a game situation.<sup>15,16,50</sup>

## VARIABILITY

One way to promote skill acquisition is to use increased levels of variability in practice.<sup>7,51</sup> In this context, variability may simply be considered as the number of variations and changes that occur within a given practice activity or practice environment<sup>52</sup> (see also<sup>51</sup>). Practice activities that are low in variability tend to be very stable, highly predictable, and often quite repetitive in nature.<sup>52</sup>

This creates a practice environment that is not only considerably different to that of a typical basketball game, but it is also likely to result in situations where there is very little impetus for players to explore or adapt their skills.<sup>18,53</sup>

Conversely, practice activities that are high in variability tend to be considerably less predictable and include more frequent changes.<sup>52</sup> In highly variable practice tasks, performers must continually adapt their skills to cope with the constant changes.<sup>18</sup>

Research evidence has revealed a phenomenon referred to as “functional variability” which basically refers to the capability of highly skilled performers to make ongoing changes to a movement as it unfolds, allowing the desired outcome of the skill to be achieved with greater consistency.<sup>16,54</sup>

In this instance, the variability within the movement allows the performer

to adjust the execution of the skill as required.<sup>54</sup> In the absence of functional variability, players would be likely to experience greater difficulty in adapting to changes in the environment, thereby leading to inconsistent (and probably inaccurate) outcomes.<sup>16,54,55</sup> This suggests that practice sessions should provide opportunities for players to learn how to adapt their movements to cope with the subtle changes that exist in the competitive setting.<sup>3,7,8,55</sup>

Variability can be implemented in a number of ways but the common approaches include varying the organisation of the repetitions of the skill itself or varying the environment in which the skill is performed.<sup>1,7,11,16</sup>

For example, if the goal of a given practice activity is to enhance the skills of shooting, dribbling, and passing, all three skills could be organised to occur in a highly variable manner by frequently changing between the three tasks (this is also an example of what is commonly referred to as “random practice”).<sup>1,56,57</sup>

The other approach is to vary the performance environment.<sup>11</sup>

For example, rather than having players shoot uncontested lay-ups, the coach could elect to include a defender within the activity so that the variable movements of the defender will act to increase the variability of the activity (as well as maintain the links between perception and action to improve the likelihood of transfer to a game context).<sup>8,13,16,58</sup> For inexperienced players, the defender could be replaced by the coach who simply stands inside the key to provide a “static” stimulus for players to evade.<sup>7,11,47</sup>

The use of variable environments in practice games may also prove to be a useful strategy for promoting the development of creativity.<sup>16,43</sup> The increased variability may encourage players to search for a wider range of decision-making options, thus promoting more creative solutions.<sup>59</sup>

Research has shown that while a variable approach may result in reduced

performance gains in the short-term, there are likely to be long-term gains to learning.<sup>57,60,61</sup> In contrast, practice activities that are low in variability, such as drills where players simply repeat the same solution over and over again with minimal changes (commonly referred to as “blocked practice”), may often result in better performance gains initially, but are less likely to provide long-term benefits that transfer into game situations.<sup>1,57,60,61</sup>

However, low variability activities may still represent an important practice activity<sup>62,63</sup> (see also<sup>7</sup>). For example, beginners who are attempting a skill for the first time may require more predictable and stable practice activities so that they can achieve a basic understanding of the skill without being overwhelmed.<sup>7,47,57,62,64</sup> The early gains achieved by low variability activities may also help players to increase their confidence, encouraging them to continue with the task.<sup>12,65</sup>

Once a certain degree of proficiency has been achieved, the amount of variability can be progressively increased so that the player can benefit from the enhanced learning that typically occurs with higher levels of variable practice.<sup>7,47,57,62,63</sup>

### **“CHALLENGE POINT” FRAMEWORK**

One of the approaches that can be used to guide the design and implementation of practice activities is to use the challenge point framework outlined by Guadagnoli and Lee.<sup>47</sup> The underlying premise of the approach is based upon finding the ideal balance between two factors: the current skill level of the performer and the relative difficulty of a given task.<sup>47</sup>

The framework suggests that optimal learning is likely to occur when the difficulty of the task is matched to the skill level of the performer.<sup>47</sup> A task that is too easy or too difficult may be less beneficial for learning compared to a task that offers an optimal balance in

*Evidence suggests that teaching players to use a pre-determined technique may not necessarily provide the best possible outcome for motor skill acquisition.*<sup>3,12,51,74-77</sup>

terms of its level of challenge for a given individual.<sup>47</sup> Thus, to optimise learning, one of the important roles for coaches is to design practice tasks that are ideally suited to the challenge point of the players in their team.<sup>7,47,48,66</sup>

The challenge point concept also provides a set of guidelines that can be used to help determine the appropriate amount of variability to be used in practice activities<sup>47</sup> (see also<sup>7</sup>). A performer who is at the beginning stages of the sport may be sufficiently challenged by low levels of variability whereas an Olympic level player may only be sufficiently challenged when exposed to higher levels of variability.<sup>7,47</sup>

However, if that same Olympic level player is attempting to change an existing technique or learn a new skill, the optimal challenge point may be similar to that of a beginner (e.g., relatively low levels of variability).<sup>7,47</sup>

While this concept appears to be rather intuitive, research evidence suggests that some coaches may devote a greater proportion of practice time to activities that are less likely to benefit competitive performance<sup>50</sup> (see also<sup>67</sup>). This information suggests that coaches may be well advised to critically evaluate the content and structure of their practice sessions to determine whether principles such as challenge point could be better utilised.<sup>12</sup>

### CONSTRAINTS-LED COACHING APPROACH

The careful manipulation of key constraints can be a versatile strategy that coaches can use to enhance skill acquisition<sup>43,46</sup>. Essentially, constraints are the features that guide the way in which coordination patterns are performed.<sup>3,68</sup> There are three categories of constraints:<sup>3,4,68</sup>

- task (e.g., rules, court boundaries, playing equipment)
- environment (e.g., playing surface, weather conditions), and
- performer (e.g., emotions, height).<sup>3,4,68</sup>

In a basketball practice setting, task constraints are arguably the easiest category to manipulate<sup>4</sup> in order to encourage certain types of outcomes to emerge in a practice setting.<sup>11,46,68</sup> For example, research has shown that simply reducing the mass of the basketball to 440 grams can significantly increase the number of one-on-one situations that occur in a junior basketball game.<sup>69</sup>

Varying another task constraint, in this instance, the diameter of the ring, has also been shown to influence shooting performance.<sup>70,71</sup> When the diameter of the ring was reduced during free throw shooting over a 10-week training program, research showed that players exhibited a significant increase in ball release angle and shooting accuracy compared to a training group who practiced using a normal sized ring.<sup>71</sup>

Other task constraints could also be varied by manipulating the rules or instructions used in a game.<sup>48,58,72</sup> For example, to encourage players to focus greater attention towards possible passing options in a practice activity, a new rule could be introduced that prevents players from dribbling the ball<sup>73</sup> (see also<sup>48</sup>). This simple change to a key task constraint could achieve a number of positive outcomes such as encouraging greater movement of offensive players, increasing the number of off-ball screens, helping to promote greater team-work, and/or reducing the reliance on dribbling.<sup>46,73</sup>

In a broader sense, the rule change may encourage players to explore different types of offensive and defensive solutions, helping them to find creative ways to achieve successful outcomes.<sup>7,16,59</sup>

### COACHING THAT CATERS FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND THE DEMANDS OF COMPETITION

Given the numerous variations in physical attributes and prior experiences that exist across each player in a basketball team, it makes sense for players to learn movement patterns that are best suited to their capabilities.<sup>3,7,54,74</sup> Evidence suggests that teaching players to use a pre-determined technique may not necessarily provide the best possible outcome for motor skill acquisition.<sup>3,12,51,74-77</sup>

This does not mean that coaches should avoid helping players to find a certain type of coordination pattern.<sup>4,9</sup> The coach's role is to guide the learner, providing suitable opportunities for players to explore a range of different movement forms so that the acquired movement pattern is optimal for the individual.<sup>3,7</sup>

An important characteristic of most, if not all techniques in basketball is that the technique holds up under a range of different conditions.<sup>10</sup> A "perfect" technique is only of value if it allows a player to consistently achieve a desired outcome in all of the potential situations to which that person is likely to be subjected.<sup>3,54,78</sup>

For instance, a technique should ideally be able to cope with factors such as high levels of defensive pressure, increased fatigue, heightened anxiety, and variability in game scenarios.<sup>10</sup> Anecdotally, one of the common features that can be observed in the shooting technique of inexperienced players is the tendency to adopt a relatively slow shooting action (see also<sup>8</sup>).

In the context of a game, the increased time required to perform a shot may severely restrict a player's shooting options. While undesired techniques may develop for a range of reasons, it is possible that a slowed shooting action may evolve as a result of performing large amounts of shooting

practice in the absence of a defender (see<sup>8,50</sup>). It is therefore important for coaches to allow players to refine their technique in game-like environments, where appropriate, so that skills can become more robust to the demands of competition.<sup>8,10,50</sup>

### FEEDBACK, INSTRUCTIONS, AND DEMONSTRATIONS

The information provided by coaches can have an extremely powerful influence on performance.<sup>79-81</sup> When given correctly, that influence can be highly beneficial; but in other situations, even relatively minor differences in the delivery of information can have a potentially negative impact.<sup>79-81</sup>

The following section is primarily aimed at providing coaches with a broad overview of the key considerations surrounding the use of feedback, instructions, and demonstrations when coaching basketball players.

### FEEDBACK

In general, it has been suggested that feedback should only be provided when the information is likely to be of use to the performer, and when the information cannot be obtained in some other manner.<sup>3</sup> In situations where the coach deems that feedback is appropriate, Magill and Anderson<sup>82</sup> suggest that one of the important considerations is to ensure that the feedback is meaningful to the player (see also<sup>1,3</sup>).

That is, irrespective of the skill level of the players, coaches should determine whether the provision of feedback will be useful in helping players to enhance their performance.<sup>82</sup> If the information is somewhat redundant, it may be better for coaches to offer no information at all.<sup>3</sup>

While this statement is relatively obvious, coaches will have no doubt observed many instances where information provided to players was either completely unnecessary, or it was delivered in a way that made it difficult for the players to understand.

Magill and Anderson<sup>82</sup> believe that another important consideration in relation to feedback is the amount of information that is provided. They propose that only one piece of feedback should be provided to the learner to avoid overloading the individual with excessive details<sup>82</sup> (see also<sup>53,83</sup>). The logical question for coaches is how to isolate a single piece of feedback from amongst the vast multitude that could be delivered after the performance of a skill.<sup>1,82</sup>

The suggestion is for coaches to identify and then prioritise the underlying core components for successful completion of the skill, and use that as the basis for selecting the type of feedback that is provided<sup>82,84</sup> (see also<sup>53,85</sup>).

For a task such as basketball dribbling, the list of core components may include features such as the following:

1. Ball is able to be controlled while moving at different speeds
2. Dribbler is able to avoid a defender
3. Ball is able to be controlled equally proficiently with either hand
4. Player keeps eyes up while dribbling
5. Stance is balanced

When feedback is provided to the player learning to dribble the ball, the information is directed towards the error that is associated with the highest priority component on the list.<sup>82</sup> This helps to ensure that the feedback is isolated to a single component of performance, and that the chosen component is the most important aspect for enhancing the overall execution of the skill<sup>82</sup> (see also<sup>86</sup>).

In terms of the content of the feedback, research suggests that providing the learner with information on the task goal to be achieved can be more beneficial for learning compared to specific information on the underlying movement patterns required to perform the task (i.e., the process)<sup>3,76,77,87</sup> (see also<sup>82</sup>).

For example, if the coach determines that players need to snap their wrist to

achieve greater backspin on the ball during the shooting action, the coach could simply ask players to shoot so that the ball spins backwards through the air (see<sup>76</sup>). To achieve this task goal, players must explore different movement patterns, thereby gaining valuable information regarding the underlying processes required to impart backspin on the ball.<sup>7</sup> The focus upon an outcome goal allows the learner to explore the necessary adjustments to the processes required to perform the coordination pattern, without being constrained by specific information on how those changes should be achieved.<sup>3,76</sup>

One of the critical issues surrounding the use of any form of feedback is the potential for dependency<sup>88</sup> (see also<sup>1,89</sup>). If players become overly reliant upon feedback, it is possible for performance to deteriorate when that feedback is no longer available<sup>88</sup> (see also<sup>1,89</sup>). In basketball, the excessive provision of feedback from coaches, in practice and in games, may encourage players to rely upon information that is not always available, rather than encouraging players to learn how to extract and utilise their own sources of information.<sup>12,50,88</sup>

For example, coaches who regularly call out the desired offensive structure to be employed by their team during the course of play in a basketball game, may be creating a situation where players learn to rely more upon the coach's interpretation of the game, rather than allowing players to learn how to "read" the game for themselves.<sup>12,88</sup>

Similarly, when performing a specific skill such as shooting, continuous feedback may create a situation where players become excessively reliant upon the guidance of the coach, thereby making it difficult for the player to correct the skill without the external assistance.<sup>1,12,88</sup>

While there are certain situations that are more likely to be susceptible to dependency than others, it is clearly

*Instructions should ideally be worded in a manner that explains the outcome that is desirable, rather than explaining the outcome that needs to be avoided (see <sup>80,101</sup>).*

important for coaches to consider the frequency with which they deliver feedback to determine whether they are inadvertently preventing players from learning how to self-correct their skills.<sup>12,82,88,89</sup>

One approach for avoiding dependency is to use the strategy of “self-selected feedback” which simply involves allowing players to select when they would like to receive feedback<sup>86,90</sup> (for other strategies, see<sup>1,89</sup>).

For example, the coach may explain to the team that feedback will only be provided during practice when players specifically request additional information (such as verbal feedback from the coach or visual feedback from a video replay).<sup>86</sup> This strategy is not only likely to help reduce the frequency of information provided during practice sessions, and hence reduce the potential for dependency, but it also has the added advantage of empowering players by engaging them in the learning process and giving them the opportunity to solve problems<sup>86</sup> (see also<sup>12</sup>).

However, when the player requires assistance, the coach is still available to help guide players to suitable solutions<sup>86</sup> (see also<sup>12</sup>).

### USING QUESTIONING TO ENHANCE LEARNING

The use of suitable questions is a strategy that can be applied to encourage players to detect and correct their own errors, thereby helping to avoid an over-reliance on the coach.<sup>12,73</sup> It can also be used to promote discovery learning and problem-solving.<sup>73,91</sup> By asking players to answer carefully constructed questions about a certain event or task, coaches can create opportunities for players to solve skill-related problems concerning a range of different factors.<sup>92</sup>

For example, coaches may ask players to briefly explain why a defender just blocked their shot, or why they chose to pass to the post player rather than reversing the ball (see<sup>73,91</sup>).

Questioning should consider the capability and skill level of the performer.<sup>7,47,93</sup> Players who are just starting to understand the basic concepts of the sport may require different types of questions compared to players with more experience.<sup>7,47</sup> Beginners may be sufficiently challenged by questions related to the basic principles of basketball, whereas experienced players may require questions that challenge them to consider the game at a deeper level<sup>47</sup> (see also<sup>7,93</sup>).

### USING TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

The increasing availability of technology such as video cameras and biomechanical measurement tools offers unique opportunities for coaches to provide highly detailed feedback to players.<sup>94</sup> However, there are some important considerations when using such forms of feedback.<sup>95</sup>

For instance, it is possible that the amount of information provided by video replays may be so vast that beginner players may be unable to discern many of the critical features that exist within the visual display.<sup>95</sup> Beginners are therefore likely to benefit from the support of a coach who can direct the attention of players to the most pertinent details required for enhancing performance on the given task.<sup>95-97</sup>

More experienced players are likely to be quite advanced in their comprehension of the skills and tactics of their sport<sup>98</sup> and so although these individuals are still likely to benefit from feedback, they may not require the same degree of involvement on the part of the coach as that required for a beginner.<sup>1,53,95</sup>

### INSTRUCTIONS

A large proportion of the information provided by coaches is categorized as being instructional in nature.<sup>50,67,99</sup> This section of the chapter discusses a number of the factors that can impact

the optimal use of instructions when coaching basketball players (for reviews, see<sup>81,100,101</sup>).

Research has shown that when an instruction asks a person to avoid performing in a certain way, the person may, under certain circumstances, perform in a manner that was contrary to the actual instructions<sup>80,101</sup> (see also<sup>102</sup>).

For instance, a basketball player who is asked to avoid passing the ball too high to a post player during a game may in fact execute passes to the post player that are too high (see<sup>80,101</sup>). This phenomenon suggests that instructions should ideally be worded in a manner that explains the outcome that is desirable, rather than explaining the outcome that needs to be avoided (see<sup>80,101</sup>). In the previous example, a better instruction may be to simply ask the player to “pass so that the post player can easily catch the ball” (see<sup>80,101</sup>). Although the difference is relatively subtle, it may nonetheless result in a better outcome (see<sup>80,101</sup>).

When instructions include quite specific details on the types of tactical decisions that should be employed within a game, players may fail to notice other potentially important information<sup>79,103</sup> (see also<sup>104,105</sup>). In fact, evidence has shown that people will often miss an obvious opportunity to pass to a teammate when their attention is focused towards specific tactical information, even if that information is intended to assist the player to identify available passing options.<sup>79</sup>

In basketball, an example of a specific tactical instruction could involve asking players to “look to pass to the player coming off the double screen” (see<sup>79</sup>). This may create a narrowed focus of attention, leading to situations where players fail to notice other passing opportunities.<sup>79</sup> The use of overly specific tactical instructions is believed to narrow the attentional focus of the performer, and this influences the capability to pick-up information that is

necessary for the performer to identify a broader range of appropriate options.<sup>59,79</sup>

Attention-broadening instructions tend to have the opposite effect by helping players to expand their attentional focus.<sup>59,79</sup> An example of an attention-broadening instruction could simply involve asking players to “look for open players in offence” (see<sup>79</sup>).

There is also evidence to show that broad instructions may help to enhance creativity.<sup>59</sup> By giving instructions that are based primarily upon the overall principles that govern decision-making, rather than instructions that are overly specific, players may be encouraged to explore a larger variety of possible solutions.<sup>59,79</sup> For instance, asking players to use broad tactical strategies such as “look for high percentage scoring opportunities”, may elicit more creative solutions compared to narrower instructions that ask players to “pass around the perimeter of the 3-point line and then look to make a pass to the post player”.<sup>59,79</sup>

Instructions that direct players to focus upon something that is external to their body, or that is associated with the outcome or effects of a movement, have generally been shown to be more beneficial for motor learning and performance compared to instructions that direct players towards the internal features or underlying mechanics of their movements.<sup>81,106</sup>

In basketball, examples of externally focused instructions could include asking players to direct their attention towards the ring while shooting,<sup>107</sup> or to monitor the flight path of the ball as it moves through the air when attempting to receive a pass (for an example in golf, see<sup>108</sup>). Examples of internally focused instructions include asking players to focus upon their wrist snap when executing a shot,<sup>107</sup> or to focus upon the location of their feet on the floor when defending the ball carrier (for an example using a balance task, see<sup>109</sup>). Basically, instructions that encourage players to focus on something that is

external to their body tend to be better than instructions that focus the attention of players towards their body movements.<sup>81</sup>

One of the easiest strategies for employing an external focus of attention in basketball is to provide players with instructions that emphasise the actual task goal of the skill<sup>81</sup> (see also<sup>76,110</sup>). That is, the instruction should ideally provide players with the objective to achieve, rather than the process to achieve that objective<sup>81</sup> (see also<sup>111</sup>).

For example, asking a player to shoot the ball so that it moves through the air in a high arc may be a better approach than instructions that focus the attention of the learner upon features such as elbow angles, knee bend, or wrist snap.<sup>81,106,107</sup>

### IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT LEARNING

“Implicit learning” generally refers to situations where information is acquired without the person being aware of the fact that something has been learned, and without being able to verbalise the information that was learned.<sup>112-118</sup> In contrast, “explicit learning” refers to situations where a person is aware of the information that has been learned, and the person is able to verbalise the information.<sup>113-119</sup>

Explicit learning often involves the provision of step-by-step information on the preferred movements of a task, such as delivering a series of detailed instructions to a player on how to perform a basketball free throw.<sup>120-123</sup>

Implicitly acquired information has been shown to have a number of advantages, including better performance of the skill under fatigue<sup>124</sup> and greater resilience of the skill when the performer is experiencing psychological stress.<sup>125</sup>

In contrast, researchers have suggested that explicit learning may disrupt the motor system by encouraging learners to consciously control their movements.<sup>116,117,119,126</sup>

One of the easiest methods that can be used by basketball coaches to promote implicit learning is to apply the strategy

of analogy learning where instructions are provided in the form of a simple analogy that summarises a vast amount of technical information.<sup>117,120,121,125,127</sup>

A common analogy used to teach shooting technique in basketball is to ask players to imagine that they are reaching into the top shelf of the pantry to take a biscuit/cookie from a jar.<sup>120,121,128</sup> This statement gives an approximate movement pattern that helps players to understand the ways in which the shooting arm and shooting hand should be moved during the execution of the shot<sup>120,121,128</sup> (see also<sup>125,127</sup>).

Importantly, such statements encapsulate much of the critical information required to perform the skill, but without delivering it in a highly explicit, step-by-step manner.<sup>125,127</sup>

### DEMONSTRATIONS

The use of a demonstration can significantly enhance skill acquisition (for reviews of this area, see<sup>77,111,129,130</sup>). However, there are certain situations where a demonstration may provide no benefit at all, or could even be somewhat detrimental to the learning process.<sup>77,131,132</sup>

In general, demonstrations may be of particular benefit when attempting to learn a task that requires a specific form of movement patterning, or a certain series of movements<sup>12,77,111</sup> (see also<sup>1,132</sup>). In situations where the task requires the attainment of a certain outcome goal, without necessarily requiring a specific form of movement patterning (such as successfully shooting a ball into a basket), a demonstration may be less effective<sup>12,77,111</sup> (see also<sup>1,132</sup>).

Demonstrations may also act to constrain learners by encouraging them to emulate the specific movement pattern employed by the demonstrator.<sup>12,76,77,87,131</sup> For instance, after observing a demonstration of a particular basketball shooting technique, the learner may attempt to exactly copy the observed technique, without attempting to engage in an exploratory



process to search for a technique that is more suitable to the learner's own movement capabilities.<sup>7,12,76,77,87</sup>

It has therefore been suggested that demonstrations should be interspersed with periods of actual physical practice so that learners are able to devote time to solving problems and trialing different variations of the demonstrator's movements.<sup>87,130,133,134</sup>

Another suggestion is for the quantity and timing of demonstrations to be self-selected by the learner which may reduce the overall volume of demonstrations, and may possibly fade the use of demonstrations as learning progresses<sup>135,136</sup> (see also<sup>130</sup>).

A different strategy that may encourage the learner to engage in greater problem-solving, and help to alleviate the tendency to imitate the exact technique of the demonstrator, is for coaches to focus the attention of the observer upon the intended outcome

goal of the task being demonstrated<sup>12,76</sup> (see also<sup>137</sup>).

For example, when players are observing a demonstration of a shooting action, coaches may highlight the way the basketball spins through the air, rather than focusing solely upon the specific mechanics of the movement<sup>12,77,138,139</sup>. This may help the learner to attempt to use the demonstrator's technique as a guide towards achieving a certain movement outcome, rather than simply copying the demonstrator's process for achieving that outcome.<sup>12,77</sup>

Finally, by using several different demonstrators, the variations that exist in each demonstrator's movements may further encourage players to try a variety of different techniques, rather than settling upon a single, idealised movement that may not be entirely suitable for the individual<sup>12</sup> (see also<sup>131</sup>).

*All reading references for 2.2 Teaching can be found on pages 44-51, at the end of this section.*

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## 2.2.2 CORRECTING TECHNIQUES ("BREAKING HABITS")

A coach will often have an athlete in their team who has poor technique (e.g. an individual skill such as shooting technique) or has a habit in how they play (e.g. a team skill such as not denying a pass on the perimeter). There may be a number of causes for a habit:

- The skill was developed through repetition without specific instruction (this is often the case with individual skills);
- Specific instruction from a previous coach (e.g. a previous coach may have specifically instructed not to deny passes on the perimeter);
- They are unaware of the "correct technique" or that their current technique is deficient;
- They lack the physical fitness to play to a certain style (arguably this is not a bad "habit").

The cause of the habit is less important than the fact that the habit exists, however. A habit is not simply "muscle memory"; it is a physical response in the brain – the connection between brain cells (the "synapse") strengthens and as we learn, the brain increases in size. The stronger the connection between cells, the more automatic is the performance of the skill until we reach the stage of "unconscious competence" when we are able to perform the skill without thinking.

Changing any technique is difficult and will take time. Below are some helpful tips on how to do it most effectively:

### 1. TEACH A NEW HABIT RATHER THAN CHANGE AN OLD HABIT

Rather than changing an existing habit (which, simply put, requires changing the physical connection between some brain cells and replacing it with a new connection) it will often be more effective to teach a new habit:

- Give the old technique a specific name (e.g. "Miss Shot");
- Give the new technique a specific name (e.g. "Good Shot");
- Teach the new skill as you would to a beginner;
- Use descriptive teaching points that are different to any the athlete previously used (e.g. "high elbow").

By teaching a new habit, you are creating new connections between brain cells rather than trying to change the existing (and strong) connections. Encourage the athlete in practice and in a game where appropriate (e.g. prior to a free throw) to say the new name or teaching point (e.g. "Good Shot" or "High Elbow") to themselves as this can help to change their mindset and focus them on using the new technique.

### 2. USE VISUALIZATION

When athletes use visualization to practice a skill it has the same effect on the brain (strengthening the connection between cells) as does physical practice. Particularly when trying to change an athlete's technique, visualization can be very effective as it enables the athlete to practice the skill without the old habit impacting upon their performance.

Effective use of visualization also helps the athlete to complete the high number of repetitions that are required to make anything a habit because it means they can do it at home, at school or anywhere that they have some time to do a focused visualization of the skill.

To help with visualization, have the athlete perform the skill with their eyes shut and concentrate on how their body feels, the position of their head, arms, legs etc. This practice will also help them to identify (by "feel") when they perform the skill incorrectly.

### **3. IF YOU MUST CORRECT AN OLD HABIT, CHANGE ONLY WHAT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY**

When working with an athlete to change how they perform a technique, change as little as possible and change whatever will give the best effect. For example, the best scorers in the world have a range of different techniques in how they shoot. Individual technique depends upon a number of factors, including flexibility and range of motion.

When trying to change shooting technique, the coach should focus on what is most important, not all the things that may be needed to replicate a "textbook" technique.

### **4. REASSURE THE ATHLETE THAT IT IS NORMAL TO "GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER"**

Often athletes experience great frustration when trying to change their technique (particularly an individual skill) because they may go through a period where they are not as successful. For example, with shooting technique, they may go through a period where the new technique feels very awkward and even where they have less accuracy.

Feeling "awkward" is perfectly normal and can be an indication that they are moving from "unconscious incompetence" (in the new skill) to "conscious incompetence". This is to be expected and is a part of learning any new skill. Having the athlete repeat the key teaching points (e.g. "High Elbow") or name of the new skill can also help them to get to a level of consciousness.

### **5. EXPECT ERRORS, PARTICULARLY IN GAMES**

To change or correct a technique takes a considerable number of repetitions. Some suggest that it takes 10,000 repetitions before a skill becomes "muscle memory". There is no precise calculation and it will differ between athletes.

A coach should not be surprised when an athlete is able to perform the new technique in a particularly activity but then reverts to the old technique in a game (or contested activity at practice). Learning a skill is always in context, and an athlete may reach "unconscious competence" in an isolated activity without pressure and at the same time be "consciously incompetent" in a pressured situation.

To assist the progression from executing the skill without pressure to doing so with pressure, the coach should introduce game-realistic factors as soon as possible as the athlete learns the new skill and also make contested situations in practice as "game-realistic" as possible.

### **6. USE VIDEO**

Some athletes will be assisted by seeing video of themselves performing the skill at various stages of learning the skill.

First, seeing video may assist them to appreciate that they are executing the skill incorrectly. This may be done by also showing them video of the skill being properly executed or discussing with them the important elements of a skill (e.g. "high elbow") and then comparing their performance to that.

Secondly, as the athlete is learning the new technique it may be useful for them to see examples (in practice or a game) so that they can see when they have done it correctly and when they have reverted to their previous habit. This can be particularly useful for team skills, which often involve positioning on the court rather than something the athlete can "feel" (e.g. elbow position after shooting).

### 7. SET "PROCESS" GOALS

As the athlete practices it is important that they experience "success". With shooting, this can be seen as whether or not the shot goes in, however in the context of correcting technique it should be more about whether the new technique was used (this is an example of a "process" goal rather than an "outcome" goal).

The coach must give feedback on the "process" goals, which initially may require a high degree of feedback. For example, when an athlete learns to shoot a lay-up with their non-preferred hand they may both have the footwork incorrect and shoot with the wrong hand! The coach may require them to complete 10 lay-ups with correct footwork, regardless of whether or not the shot goes in. At the early stages the coach may need to tell the athlete whether or not the footwork is correct and they will then progress to when they know they have done it wrong.

As the athlete becomes more proficient at the process goals, outcome goals can also be introduced (e.g. correct footwork is 1 point, correct footwork and score is 3 points, incorrect footwork is -1 point whether or not the shot goes in).

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Reflect on a particular skill (either an individual or team skill).
  - a. How did you learn that skill (as a player)?
  - b. How did you first learn to teach that skill?
  - c. Reflect upon how you now teach that skill and the extent to which it has been influenced by factors other than how you were taught.
  - d. Discuss with another coaching colleague how they teach the skill – are there any differences?
2. Choose 2 or 3 training sessions that you delivered recently. How “game-realistic” were each of the activities that you used? If upon reflection you believe some were not “game-realistic”, how well does your team perform those skills in games?
3. Discuss with a coaching colleague from another sport what steps they take when they want to alter a player’s technique. Discuss any discrepancy in approach from what you would do.
4. Review a recent practice plan. How would you alter the activities having now read the article on skill acquisition?

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## 2.3 EFFECTIVE PRACTICE SESSIONS

### 2.3.1 CONDUCTING THE SESSION - MAXIMISE SKILL TRANSFER BETWEEN ACTIVITIES

#### MAXIMISE SKILL TRANSFER

Most coaches will have experienced frustration where a team performs a particular skill well in a particular activity (e.g. passing) but then in a subsequent activity they perform the same skill poorly (e.g. poor passes in a shooting activity).

The transfer of skills from one activity to another (and from practice to practice and from practice to a game) is the coach's ultimate goal! When there is a lack of skill transfer it may indicate that the players are still at a stage of "incompetence" in learning the skill – it is important for the coach to remember that this is an important stage in learning any skill.

**This probably means that the coach needs to be explicit about the execution of the skill in the new activity by:**

- having a teaching point in regards to the skill (i.e. "good passes make good shooters");
- varying the rules to emphasise the skill (e.g. deduct a point if the pass to the shooter was poor, regardless of whether or not the shot went in).

**The following approaches can also help skill transfer to occur:**

- Progressively modify an activity to add elements to it;

- Conduct an activity that builds upon the skills from an earlier activity close to when the earlier activity was done;
- Use "cue words" in each activity, to remind players of the key teaching points of the earlier activity without needing to stop the latter activity;
- Do the basic activity (e.g. passing) for a short period of time, then move to a more complicated activity (e.g. shooting drill), then return to the basic activity. Then move to another complicated activity that uses the same basic skill;
- Ask players to identify what they did poorly in the more complicated activity and then have them identify what needs to be done better (directing their attention to the earlier activity as necessary);
- Set goals in the more complicated activity that specifically refer to the basic activity;
- Select players that performed the basic activity well, praise them for doing that and then use them to demonstrate the more complicated activity - again, praising them if (hopefully when) they perform the skill well in the demonstration.

What coaches should avoid is simply stopping the more complicated activity and speaking at length to the players about their lack of skill transfer. The coach's goal should be to focus the attention of the athletes on transferring the skill from one activity to another and then to provide lots of opportunity to do that.

### DEMONSTRATION RATHER THAN DICTATION!

Young players tend to learn through imitation – they will constantly strive to emulate their sporting heroes. For this reason, modelling is a very useful strategy both in strengthening the players' motivation to learn and also showing them what is to be learned.

Basically, modelling consists of presenting the player or the team with a role model as an example to imitate, emphasising or demonstrating the specific behaviour to be imitated.

**For example, the coach of a mini-basketball team teaching a chest pass could:**

1. Describe the skill:
  - start with your hands on the side of the ball, thumbs at the back pointing toward each other;
  - step forward;
  - at the same time, push both arms forward;
  - finish with straight arms (elbows locked), thumbs pointing to the ground and fingers pointing to the person you were throwing to.
2. Throw a chest pass themselves (using the technique described above) and emphasizing the specific teaching points (thumbs pointing at each other, step forward, thumbs down and fingers point);
3. Have one of the players perform the skill, whilst the coach describes each step.

Often, showing the players (and then giving them a chance to do it) will be the most effective way to teach.

When using role models to demonstrate a skill, a distinction should be made between two types of role models: expert models and mastery models. Expert models are prestigious players or teams. Mastery models are players or teams closer to the players themselves who, although not yet recognised experts, have a higher skill level than the players being coached.

**For example:** an international player could be an expert model, while a player on a cadet team (15/16-year-olds) who was on the 13/14-year-old team in the same club two years earlier, could be a good mastery model.

The example of an expert model can be very motivating at first, but if it is a superior player who is too distant, the players may consider imitation of this model impossible. For this reason, it is a good idea to use expert models to increase the players' motivation and at the same time, find mastery models that the players identify with. In this way, interest in imitating the model is linked with the perception that it is really possible to imitate.

Thus, before starting an activity, the coach can demonstrate a specific movement for the players to imitate indicating, at the same time, that this is one of the fundamentals most often used by a famous player (as long as this is true). This strategy can be very useful for young players.

Sometimes, models can be found within the team itself. In fact, many players learn by observing and imitating their teammates.

### KEEPING A RECORD

At times, it can be useful to record either the team's performance or the performance of individual players doing the activity. It can also help them concentrate when they know a record is being kept.

For example, the coach may record, on a board or a sheet of paper, the times that each target behaviour is performed during a drill (specific passes, blocks, shots, etc.). In order to achieve this positive effect, the criteria to be used for recording should be very clear.

When dealing with behaviours to be learned, the criteria selected should refer to the players' specific behaviour, rather than the results obtained.

For instance, a record can be kept of the number of times 15/16-year-olds screen correctly (behaviour), regardless of whether the screen results in a basket (the result of the behaviour). In this way, the players will concentrate more intensely on the target behaviour of the drill which, in this case, is screening.

However, when dealing with the repetitive practice of behaviours that have already been mastered, it might be more appropriate to record the results of such behaviours as a way of measuring their performance. However, any measurement should always be based on the result of the behaviour that the players are working on.



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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Have a coaching colleague observe 2 or 3 practice sessions and ask them to comment upon whether they believe there was a good level of skill transfer between activities and between training sessions.
2. Discuss with your colleague what you could alter to improve the level of skill transfer.

## 2.4 COMMUNICATION

### 2.4.1 COMMUNICATION WITH ADMINISTRATORS

Coaches are usually focused on the on-court performance of the team and the many factors that can impact that. In that focus, they often forget the importance of maintaining good communication with the administrators of the club.

Often, administrators relay messages that the coach is unhappy about (e.g. players are unavailable for practice because of sponsor commitments, a practice venue is unavailable, etc.), but having a good relationship with the club administrators is important.

The following are some considerations in developing a good relationship with administrators:

- Don't just speak to administrators when you want something. Take the time to get to know them. Often, administrators are involved in sport because they are passionate about the sport – if that's the case, talk to them about how the team is going;
- Say "please" and "thank you" and listen more than you speak;
- Understand that what is a high priority for the team or coach may be only one of a number of competing priorities that the administrator is dealing with – the better the relationship the coach has with administrators, the more likely that they will put other matters aside to assist the coach;
- When asked to do something, find ways to be able to do it rather than reasons not to do it;
- Understand that when an administrator has bad news it may be because there are factors that are out of their control. Take the time to understand what pressures they are under and discuss with them whether there are other options that could be explored;
- If incidents occur (or mistakes are made) notify administrators as soon as possible. It is far better that they hear about incidents from the coach than from parents or the media.
- In many clubs the administrators are volunteers who will have limited time, balanced around their other commitments. Give them as much notice as possible when you require something.

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## 2.4.2 REPRESENTING THE CLUB

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A coach may represent their club in many forums such as media interviews, presenting at coaching clinics and during games, and the coach's contract (or code of conduct when a volunteer) will often require that the coach does not bring the club (or the sport) into "disrepute".

As a representative of the club, that coach should not contradict decisions that the club has made and if the coach disagrees with any decisions they should raise that within the appropriate channels in the club. However, any public comments should support the decision that has been

made. Particularly if a decision is seen to be contentious, media will often ask questions designed to have the coach disagree and therefore create a controversy. Such questions can be answered by reiterating that the club has made the decision.

Coaches need to understand that even if they purport to give a personal view, people will often still link it to the club. This is particularly relevant on social media platforms (such as Twitter or Facebook) and coaches should recognize that whatever they post will be read as being by them as a representative of the club.

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## 2.4.3 CONTACT WITH SENIOR ATHLETES

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The relationship between a coach and adult athletes is similar to a manager and their staff in a workplace. A high-performing team will be characterized by respect and a sense of purpose being shared between the coach and the players.

This does not mean that the coach is necessarily friends with the players and they may not socialize with the players outside of team commitments. At some stage the coach may need to discipline, or even dismiss, players and this can test the strength of even the best of friendships. It is not that coaches and players cannot be friends, however many coaches prefer to keep the relationship on a more business-like level.

The players need the coach to care about them as people, not just as an athlete. Senior players usually want to hear news (particularly bad news) from the coach, not some delegate, and senior players usually want to have input into decisions about the team. The extent to which the coach is willing to do this will depend upon their coaching style and personality.

Increasingly, people connect and communicate electronically through social media platforms and the coach must decide whether or not they wish to do so with their athletes. Some coaches will do so as they feel it gives them an insight into the player's personality and lives. Other coaches choose not to do so, preferring not to mix social and business relationships.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. How well do you keep club administrators informed about your program?
2. If one of your athletes was injured at practice when they slipped in a puddle of water on the floor, who would you inform? How would you do this?
3. Discuss with a coaching colleague to what extent you would communicate differently with senior players than you would with junior players.
4. Does your club have a code of conduct for coaches? What obligation does it place upon you in relation to speaking about the program?

## 2.5 REVIEWING THE TEAM

### 2.5.1 ESTABLISHING AND EVALUATING KPIs

It is impossible to know when a journey has ended unless you know what your destination was. Similarly, a team's success depends upon the goals that are set for a team to achieve.

A coach must clearly articulate and communicate the goals they have for a team so that their performance can be assessed according to these criteria.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are simply the criteria by which success (and progress) can be measured. It is unrealistic to simply adopt a singular KPI of winning the championship. Only one team will win the championship and failing to do so does not mean that the team did not experience some success.

Where a team does not win the championship, having other KPIs will enable the coach to evaluate whether the team is on the right path and can legitimately contest for a championship in the future or whether changes need to be made.

The coach should select KPIs that measure the effectiveness of the game style utilized by the team. For example:

- Shot selection – where on the court shots are being taken, where is the opponent shooting from, are the team's "key scorers" the players taking the most shots;
- Tempo of game – number of shots taken, time taken to get the ball into front court;
- Ball movement – number of assists, number of "score involvements"<sup>3</sup> and "scoring opportunities"<sup>4</sup>;
- Responding to trends – how well does the team defend common offensive patterns of play used by opponents;
- Defensive assists – number of times the team stops their opponent from scoring (either a missed shot or a "non shot") through team defence (double-team, defensive rotation etc);
- Open shots – how often do opponents take "open" or uncontested shots;
- Effective ball use – when in the shot clock is the team shooting, how many shots are taken in "broken play" (e.g. following an opponent's turnover or an offensive rebound) compared with how many shots result from use of the team's offensive rules.

<sup>3</sup> "Score involvement" is a pass that contributes to the team scoring. For example, a player who is double-teamed may pass to a teammate who then makes a second pass to a teammate who scores. Only the second pass is regarded as an assist, but the first pass is a "score involvement"

<sup>4</sup> "Scoring opportunity" is when the team takes a "good shot" (as defined by the coach) regardless of whether or not the shot is made. This can be contrasted with the total number of shots taken.

Often the official game stats are not sufficient for assessing the team's performance, and the coach will also need to determine how they will obtain the data that they are looking for. They may delegate collecting or recording the information to an assistant coach (or even a parent) and in doing so must make it as objective as possible.

It is not simply a matter of measuring a statistic, the coach must have a benchmark that the team is trying to achieve and this benchmark will need to be relative to what the teams that are contesting for championships achieve. It does not mean that the team must play the same game style as those teams, however ultimately the team must be able to:

- ensure that games are played to its preferred game style;
- defeat opponents with their preferred game style.

The KPIs will also enable the coach to evaluate whether there are gaps in the skills of their players. For example, a team may be able to create open 3 point shots but shoot a very low percentage. The coach must then determine whether existing players can improve this ability or whether they need to recruit better shooters.

With junior teams, the coach should focus more on KPIs that indicate how well the players are developing their overall skills (both individual and team skills) that will stand them in good stead in the future, in preference to what is required to win a championship in that particular year. Understanding what the team needs to improve to win games remains important but not at the expense of long-term development of junior players.





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**LEVEL 2**

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**COACH**

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**CHAPTER 3**

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**DEVELOPMENT**

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## CHAPTER 3

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# DEVELOPMENT

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# 3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE GAME

## 3.1.1 UNDERSTANDING TRENDS

*Basketball has changed significantly over the years, indeed dribbling was not allowed in the original rules created by Dr James Naismith.<sup>5</sup>*

Changes are influenced by a number of things:

- Athleticism and skill level of players – as offensive skills change, so too do the defensive tactics employed to counter them;
- Team tactics – e.g. the “pack line defence” was developed to stop dribble penetration.

Coaches should resist the temptation to constantly change what they do with their teams based upon trends that they see. Junior players need to have a foundation of basic offensive and defensive skills, which can then be applied to any particular pattern or team concept.

<sup>5</sup> The rule allowing dribbling was included in response to the tactic employed by players of dropping the ball, moving their position and then picking up or catching the ball.

**HOWEVER, IT CAN BE INSTRUCTIVE FOR COACHES TO OBSERVE THE VARIOUS TRENDS IN BASKETBALL AND THIS CAN BE DONE IN A NUMBER OF WAYS.**

1	Observe games. It is possible to watch games from various leagues and championships both through FIBA's YouTube channel ( <a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/FIBAWorld">http://www.youtube.com/user/FIBAWorld</a> ) and also FIBA's partner <a href="http://www.livebasketball.tv">www.livebasketball.tv</a> .
2	Review trends evident at the Olympics and World Championships. In addition to watching games, FIBA has a statistical analysis prepared from each tournament and also "scouting" reports on each of the teams. This information can be accessed through FIBA's website ( <a href="http://www.fiba.com">www.fiba.com</a> ).
3	Attend coaching clinics. FIBA's World Association of Basketball Coaches regularly conducts clinics in each of the FIBA zones and these are also available to watch online. The WABC website also has information on upcoming clinics ( <a href="http://www.fiba.com/wabc">www.fiba.com/wabc</a> ).
4	Observe other coaches coaching. Many coaches are happy to allow coaches to observe their practice sessions – you just have to ask! When watching another practice session, remember that the teaching points that the coach uses are the most important thing to focus on. Rather than spend time trying to diagram a particular activity, watch the activity and then note the teaching points.
5	Go online. There are many sites that contain a wealth of coaching information. Some sites offer paid services, however there is also a considerable number of sites offering free information.
6	Books/DVDs. There are many books and DVDs available, featuring many Olympic and World Championship winning coaches.
7	Coaching Association. There are many coaching associations, some of which are conducted by national federations, whilst others are independent bodies. Associations may also conduct coaching courses or have information regarding general issues in coaching.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. How do you measure the success of your programme? What data or statistics do you use?
2. Discuss with a coaching colleague how they assess the success of their program.  
Discuss with them what data they use.
3. List what steps you have taken in the last 12 months to inform yourself of trends in basketball.
4. Discuss with a coaching colleague what you can do over the next 12 months.

## 3.2 COACHING STYLE AND PHILOSOPHY

### 3.2.1 WHAT IS A COACHING PHILOSOPHY?

*What is a coaching philosophy? There is much discussion about the importance of having a coaching philosophy and the varied factors that will influence it, but there are few definitions given for what a coaching philosophy is.*

*It can simply be defined as “an attitude held by a coach that acts as the guiding principle for the training and development of a team”.*

#### WHAT IS A COACHING PHILOSOPHY?

A coaching philosophy includes extrinsic factors such as:

- how the coach wants their team to approach and play the game;
- how the coach wants players to interact with each other both formally (e.g. leadership groups) and informally (e.g. in the locker room).

A coaching philosophy also includes intrinsic factors such as:

- how the coach communicates with players, team management, parents etc.;
- the relationship the coach has with players;
- the coach’s core values.

#### FACTORS THAT IMPACT UPON A COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Arguably, a coach does not develop a coaching philosophy, they discover what their philosophy is through conscious reflection. The starting point should be to ask themselves “why do you coach?” Once a coach understands this, they are on the way to developing (or discovering) their own coaching philosophy.

A coach’s general approach or philosophy towards coaching should ensure a consistent, positive impact on their players. A coaching philosophy is individual and reflects both the coach’s personality and their coaching objectives.

A coaching philosophy incorporates aspects such as teaching style, communication, strategy, leadership style and managing the group dynamic. There are a number of factors that will influence a coach’s philosophy, including:

#### *Experiences*

- experience as a participant in sport (whether basketball or another sport);
- coaches that they have had;
- the level they reached as a player;
- the influence of coaches and mentors when an assistant coach;
- opportunities to observe experienced coaches and experience different styles of play.

*Training and Education*

- attendance at coaching courses or clinics;
- formal qualifications such as degrees or diplomas;
- professional development opportunities – observing other coaches, observing other sports.

*Mentors*

- the influence of “coaches” who have had a profound impact during their life (including school teachers and managers in business);
- learning from a mentor in a formal setting (e.g. working with a more experienced basketball coach).

*Personality*

- the coach’s natural communication style;
- the coach’s approach to the game – e.g. conservative, aggressive, risk taking.

The following principles may assist a coach to develop their overall coaching philosophy:

1. Be yourself
2. Be consistent
3. Define coaching objectives – why do you coach? Why do your players play?
4. Establish rules
5. Build and nurture relationships with athletes
6. Be organized
7. You will need help – how do you involve assistant coaches, team management, club administration
8. Help athletes manage stress
9. Focus on the big picture

**DOES YOUR PHILOSOPHY DIFFER BETWEEN TEAMS?**

A coaching philosophy should be reasonably constant over time and apply equally to different groups of players. The goals of each player or group may vary and the strategies developed to achieve those goals may also vary, but the underlying philosophy of your coaching is likely to be the same.

An area where the philosophy may seem different is that with junior teams the philosophy may be to focus on development and with senior teams winning is more of a focus.

However, the coach’s philosophy is not changing, just the context in which they are coaching.

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## 3.2.2 HOW ARE COACHING STYLE AND PHILOSOPHY LINKED?

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A coach's style and philosophy are certainly linked and both will be a reflection of the coach's personality. The philosophy is focused more on the team:

- (a) how the team plays on court;
- (b) how the members of the team (players, coaches and officials) work together off the court;
- (c) how the team rules are enforced.

The coach's style will dictate how they make decisions and how they provide feedback to players, and the coach may certainly use different styles in different situations or between different players. The coaching philosophy does not change from one situation to another, although a coach may approach teams differently according to their context (e.g. development of players is the objective with a junior team whereas winning may be the focus of a senior professional team). Similarly, they may approach a junior representative team differently to a junior club team.



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## 3.2.3 DEVELOPING A COACHING PHILOSOPHY

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A coach will develop their coaching philosophy over a number of years and initially it will be very much impacted by their experiences as a player (if applicable), of other coaches that they have observed or worked with (including from other sports) and of successful teams that they have observed.

With young teams, the coaching philosophy should focus on long term development of players – giving them all the opportunity to play “post” and “perimeter” and focusing on principles of offensive and defensive movement and spacing rather than “set plays”.

However, with adult teams the coach must consider factors such as:

- (a) What tempo do they prefer the team to play (offensively and defensively)?
- (b) Do they wish to utilise post play?
- (c) How do they wish to defend specific situations (e.g. “pick and roll”)?
- (d) What “risk profile” do they want for the team (e.g. pressure defence will at times present the opponent with open lay-ups)?

The skills and attributes of players on the team will impact upon the team’s playing style. If the coach has the ability to recruit specific players they can recruit toward being able to play a certain style, however it may still take a number of seasons before they have the team they fully desire.

Other factors that will influence a coach’s philosophy are:

- how comfortably they are able to teach various aspects of the game;
- the degree of control they want over what their team does;
- the development stage of the players they are coaching;
- how the coach was taught to play themselves.

Some coaches adopt a defensively-minded philosophy – preferring to focus first on restricting an opponent from scoring. Other coaches have an offensively-minded philosophy, focusing on the team’s ability to score. Neither philosophy is right or wrong and what is most important is the coach’s ability to instruct their team in how they want the game to be played.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. How would you describe your coaching style? Discuss with a colleague who is familiar with your coaching (e.g. a previous assistant coach) how they assess your style.
2. Ask a coaching colleague (from a sport other than basketball) to observe a practice or game. Discuss with them any discrepancy between how you describe your coaching style and what they observed.
3. Reflect upon a coach that you have played under or worked with and describe their coaching style and philosophy – how does it compare to yours?
4. How would you describe your coaching philosophy? What do you think has influenced that?

## 3.3 OWN COACHING DEVELOPMENT

### 3.3.1 WORKING WITH A MENTOR

*A mentor is a confidant, a teacher, a guide, a listener and a problem solver. Most most people have mentors in their lives, even if they do not formally recognise the relationship as such.*

A coach's mentor may understand basketball or may be someone who has never even seen a game. However, if the relationship is to work there will be a high degree of trust and respect between a coach and their mentor.

A mentor can be of assistance in many different situations, for example where a coach:

- lacks self-confidence (e.g. losing a series of games, being sacked or having conflict with a player);
- may be unsure of how to deal with a situation (e.g. discipline of a player, choosing whether or not to accept a job);
- may be unaware of how they should act or what role they need to perform (e.g. starting a new role or at a new club);

- needs guidance on how to act or behave (e.g. curbing abuse toward referees) and may or may not be aware of how they are currently viewed;
- is unaware of matters of ethics or etiquette (e.g. whether or not to continue with pressure defence once a significant lead is established);
- would benefit from technical instruction or development.

In some of these situations, the coach may have a question that they wish to discuss and can raise that specifically with a mentor. At other times (e.g. where the coach's behaviour is at issue) it may be that the mentor makes the coach aware that their behaviour may need to improve.

A mentor may be formally appointed (e.g. when a coach is first appointed to a national team they may be assisted by a former national team coach) or may simply be someone within the coach's network that the coach is comfortable talking with.

However a mentor is found, to get the most out of the relationship the coach should:

- keep in contact with their mentor regularly, not just when they need to discuss something. Having regular contact builds the personal relationship;
  - listen to the mentor – remember that a mentor is not someone that will always agree with you – and be prepared to try something different or to view a situation differently;
  - acknowledge and thank mentors;
  - not expect the mentor to solve all problems – ultimately, it is for the coach to make their own decisions. Similarly, the coach should not blame a mentor if something goes wrong. The coach must take responsibility for what they do and any consequences that follow;
  - be honest and open;
  - ask about them – take the time to learn about the mentor’s experience as this not only builds the personal relationship but may help the coach to see other areas for their own development;
- be prepared to ask for help. There are often people that can help or provide a useful perspective to situations that the coach is grappling with, although they may not offer help until asked. They may not be able to help but may be able to introduce the coach to someone else who can;
  - not abuse the relationship. A mentor may be willing to assist a coach but may not want to have other of the coach’s colleagues contact them. A coach should not then share the mentor’s details unless the mentor agrees for them to do so.

Many mentor relationships are informal and can come about simply through sharing information and experiences and this can often be done at clinics or conferences or simply by attending practices of other teams within their own club. The more open a coach is to working with other coaches, the stronger will be their network of mentors.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Do you have people that you consider mentors? If so, how often do you speak with them?
2. How approachable are you to other coaches in your club?
3. With whom do you discuss the performance of your team? How do you feel after speaking with them?
4. Whom would you speak with (if anyone) if you had players fighting with each other to the extent that you believed it was affecting overall team performance? Can you identify anyone else that you could discuss this situation with?



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**LEVEL 2**

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# **COACH**

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**CHAPTER 4**

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# **MANAGEMENT**

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## CHAPTER 4

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# MANAGEMENT

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# 4.1 COACH'S RESPONSIBILITIES

## 4.1.1 WORKING WITH ASSISTANT COACHES

It is important that a head coach define their expectations for their assistant coaches and players. Assistant coaches ought to be given meaningful roles (within their skill and expertise).

Roles that an assistant coach may perform are:

- scouting upcoming opponents;
- complementing the coach's areas of strength (e.g. a head coach may be particularly good at teaching "point guard play" and an assistant may be a good "post coach");
- arranging logistics in regards to practice (e.g. sourcing venues, setting up for practice, communicating with players);
- focusing on particular areas during a game (e.g. one assistant coach may focus on an opponent's offence and another focuses on the opponent's defence) and reporting information to the head coach. Some head coaches will simply ask for information and others will require the assistant coach to make recommendations;
- keeping statistics during games;
- conducting individual or small group sessions with players;
- keeping in touch with players and reporting to the head coach if there is dissatisfaction or unhappiness.

Whatever roles a head coach wants an assistant to perform need to be clearly defined, as does the level of responsibility that the assistant coach has.

For example, if an assistant coach is scouting upcoming opponents, will they present that information to the team? Do they need to discuss specific recommendations with the head coach first?

The level of responsibility that an assistant coach has will depend both upon their skills and experience and also the head coach's preference. In determining roles, the head coach should consider that:

- the less they (the head coach) delegate, the more the head coach has to do;
- assistant coaches with low levels of responsibility may become disenchanted with the role and look to move;
- assistant coaches may have expectations of what the role will involve which may differ from what the head coach wants. If any difference in expectations is allowed to continue it is likely that neither the head coach nor the assistant coach will be happy.

It may not be possible for the head coach to exhaustively define everything they want from the assistant coach and instead (like any relationship) it may evolve over time. Some considerations that the head coach can address:

- If possible, meet with assistants prior to practice (or at least provide them with a copy of the practice plan) so that they understand the objectives for practice and what activities are to be done. Involving assistant coaches in planning practice increases their understanding of what the head coach wants to achieve;

- Having assistant coaches present parts of practice enables the head coach to observe players from a different perspective. It will also increase the "credibility" of the assistant coach with the players;
- Debrief with assistant coaches following practice and games. Seek their opinion, do not just present your own opinion;
- Be honest. If you were unhappy that an assistant coach communicated a defensive switch directly to players during the game, address that with the assistant coach. Be precise – are you unhappy because you want the assistant coach to communicate suggestions to you rather than directly to players? Or, are you happy for them to communicate directly to players but you believe that particular decision was a mistake?
- Seek opinions from the assistant coaches and be prepared to consider something that they suggest which is different to your own opinion. When assistant coaches believe that their opinions are valued by the head coach, they will more willingly contribute. Ultimately, the head coach makes the decisions and assistant coaches must understand that they will make some suggestions that are not accepted by the head coach.

## 4.2 HELPING ATHLETES MANAGE THEMSELVES

### 4.2.1 COACHES OF OTHER TEAMS

#### WORKING WITH OTHER COACHES

One of the roles of a coach is to prepare their team to perform as well as possible against opponents and in this context the coaches of the two teams are opponents. However, there are many contexts where it is beneficial for coaches to share information and work with other coaches.

When coaching a representative team (whether regional or national) a coach is working with athletes who probably spend more of their time with another team and another coach. In this situation the two coaches should discuss:

- workload and injury management for the player – both coaches should make the welfare of the player the paramount consideration;
- conflicts in schedules – whether or not they can be avoided and, if not avoided, how are they best managed;
- the player's role in each of the teams – is there an opportunity at club level to work on skills that will be needed in the representative team (if the player's role is different for each team);
- the current form of the player.

It will not always be possible to avoid conflicts between a representative team and a club team, however, if the coaches can speak with each other differences can at least be both understood and minimised.

There are also other ways that coaches can work together, for example:

- sharing information about other opponents;
- sharing information about accommodation, travel or other logistics;
- working together in scheduling games (e.g. pre-season or exhibition games);
- participating in coaching clinics or other education and development activities;
- discussing common issues or pressures that they face in their coaching.

Finally, having a friendship with other coaches provides a colleague with whom you can discuss trends in the game, different tactical approaches to the game and key factors in development (amongst many other things).

## 4.3 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### 4.3.1 BUDGETS

*The level of financial responsibility that a coach has will vary from team to team, from club to club and from coach to coach.*

Some coaches may be conducting a business and therefore need to keep accurate accounts and have ultimate responsibility for the finances. Other coaches may be given a Programme budget to administer, requiring approval from management for any variations.

#### BE CONSCIOUS OF COST

Many coaches of junior teams will not have an involvement in the budget but should still be conscious of the cost that the players and their families incur to play with the team. The coach may want to schedule extra trainings or travel to play an extra game and these will probably cost the players something (if only in their time).

#### PREPARING BUDGETS

In preparing a budget coaches should:

- obtain specific information about expenses, not make assumptions. For example, flights vary in cost depending upon the time of year. If possible, written quotations should be obtained (which may simply be an email from a provider);
- if specific information is not available, make the best estimation based upon as much information as is available. Keep a record of what information was available, so that parameters that may change are easily identified;

- list everything that they can think of and have someone else check the list to see if something has been overlooked;
- even items that are not currently an expense (e.g. uniforms may be provided by a sponsor) should be listed, with it noted that it is a currently a nil expense;
- make an allowance for unforeseen increases in cost or unforeseen expenses. This should be clearly identified and the aim should be not to spend it;
- make clear all assumptions that are a part of the budget (e.g. income may be dependent upon number of players);
- obtain more than one quote for expenses where appropriate (for example, the fee for entry of a team into a competition will be fixed);
- document any reasons for the choice ultimately made. The cheapest quote is not necessarily the best for the programme. It also helps to have criteria (e.g. minimum facilities for a hotel when travelling with the team) and the criteria may demonstrate why a cheaper quote was not preferred;
- the budget should also identify at what point it is expected that money will be received or spent.

## MANAGING THE BUDGET

To effectively manage a budget (or to assist with management of the budget if the coach is not directly responsible for its management), coaches should:

- keep receipts and note on each receipt specifically what it was for (if the receipt itself does not identify this). Receipts should also be kept in an organised manner (e.g. by month) or submitted to the relevant manager as quickly as possible;
- check the budget before spending money to make sure sufficient money was allocated;
- review the budget regularly, including not just the specific numbers but any assumptions upon which the budget was based. For example, are the number of players assumed in the budget actually participating in the Programme? A coach should set aside time every month for this purpose;
- document any changes to a budget and make sure that whatever approvals are needed are obtained.

The coach also needs to understand that “cash flow” is very different to a budget. “Cash flow” is simply when an organisation receives money, whereas many budgets only identify what will be received and spent but not necessarily when.

Sometimes expenses will be incurred before money is received. Coaches should check that there are sufficient funds at the time the expense is to be paid.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Have your assistant coaches list (a) their strengths and (b) their weaknesses. Discuss their assessment with them and, in particular, any differences in how you would assess them.
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a coach? How does this compare with the strengths and weakness of your assistant coaches – do they complement your skill set?
3. Do you share information with coaches from other teams? If not, why not?

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**LEVEL 2**

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# **PLAYER**

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**CHAPTER 1**

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# **DEFENSIVE BASKETBALL SKILLS**

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## CHAPTER 1

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# DEFENSIVE BASKETBALL SKILLS

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### 1.1 INDIVIDUAL DEFENSIVE MOVEMENT AND POSITIONS

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# 1.1 INDIVIDUAL DEFENSIVE MOVEMENT AND POSITIONS

## 1.1.1 ADVANCED CLOSING OUT TECHNIQUE

### ADVANCED CLOSING-OUT

When players are first introduced to the skill of “closing-out”, the key principle is for them to get into a good defensive position to guard their opponent as they catch the ball. Typically, they should be within arm’s length however they must be balanced to ensure that they can move laterally to contain the dribbler.

It is recommended that at the end of the “close-out” the player lifts both hands as this will help to centre their balance.

With more experienced players they may adjust their close-out depending upon whether the opponent is a “shooter” or a “driver”, based upon either a pre-game “scout” or their performance earlier in the game. A pre-game scout should identify for each of an opponent’s players:

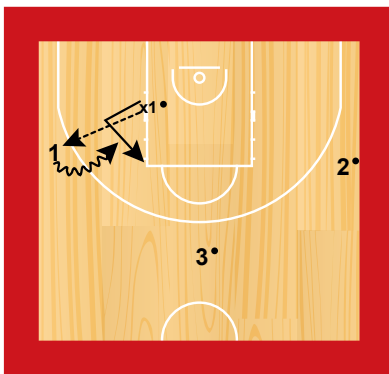
- a) Whether they tend to drive or shoot when catching the ball on the perimeter
- b) Which hand they shoot with
- c) Which side they prefer to dribble (sometimes a right hand dribbler will tend to drive left first)
- d) Which hand they prefer to dribble with
- e) Whether they prefer to drive to the basket and shoot or tend to drive and pass

## CLOSING-OUT A DRIVER

If the opponent is a driver, the defender will close out "short", giving themselves more room to move laterally to stop the dribbler's penetration. The defender should move to a position that is

consistent with the team's defensive rules (e.g. the team may "force middle" and so the defender should close out to a position that is outside the opponent's baseline foot).

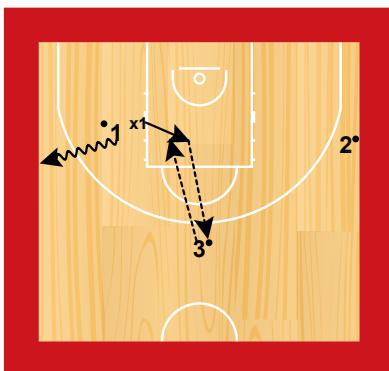
## TO PRACTICE CLOSING OUT A DRIVER



### CLOSE OUT 3

3 offensive players and one defender (x1). x1 passes the ball to 1, and must start with their feet in the key. 1 may start anywhere and must penetrate when they receive the ball (max 3 dribbles).

Offence attempt to penetrate into the key using a 2 foot stop. If they do not get into the key, x1 receives 1 point.



Once 1 has finished dribbling (whether or not in the key), they dribble back to the perimeter. x1 receives the ball from one of the perimeter players and then passes it back and closes out. Again, the offensive player must penetrate.

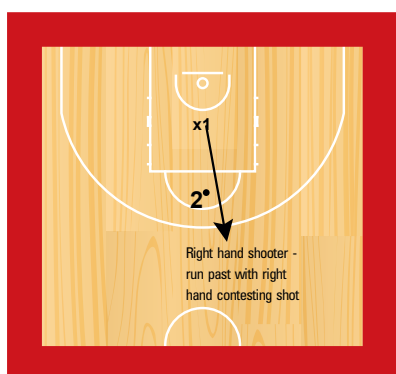
Activity can be played with each player on defence for a certain amount of time (e.g. 1-2 minutes) the winner being the player with the most points. Importantly, the defender scores points equally whether it was "bad offence" or "good defence".

Alternatively, play for a set time (e.g. 3 minutes) where if the offensive player makes the key, they become the next defender and remain on defence until another offensive player gets into the key.

## CLOSING OUT A SHOOTER

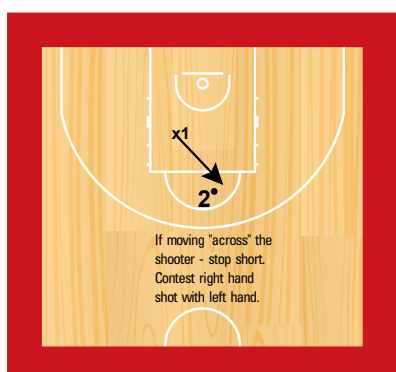
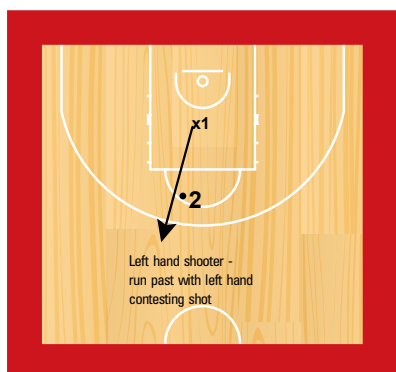
When closing out a shooter, the defender will sprint toward the offensive player reaching with one hand to put pressure on the shot. The defender may even run past the shooter. By having one hand outstretched the defender is likely able to put more pressure on the shot than with a close-out where they have two hands in front.

However, the drawback of reaching on a close-out is that the defender's balance is affected and they will not be able to quickly move laterally to defend a drive. This technique is also called "running at the shooter". In doing this, the defender must ensure they do not foul the shooter.



The defender should run past the "shooting shoulder" reaching with the hand closest to the shooter (i.e. have the right hand extended when running at a right handed shooter).

This ensures that the defender's body will run past, not into, the shooter. When closing out on a shooter it is important not to foul the shooter.



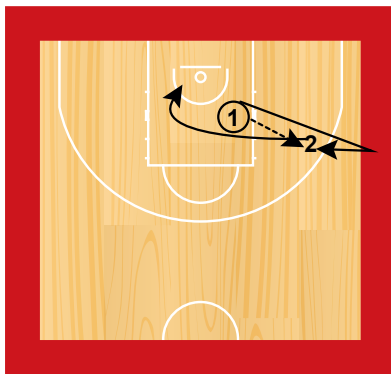
If the defender must move across the body of the shooter (for example, if they are closing out from opposite the shooter's hand), they should reach with their opposite hand (i.e. if it is a left handed shooter, reach with the right hand).

This turns the defender's body away from the shooter which again reduces the likelihood of contact.

Every shooting activity that is done in practice also presents an opportunity to practice closing out a shooter. This will both help create the habit in the

defence to contest every shot and will as well as the offensive player's ability to concentrate on the basket when they are shooting.

**TO PRACTICE CLOSING OUT A SHOOTER:**



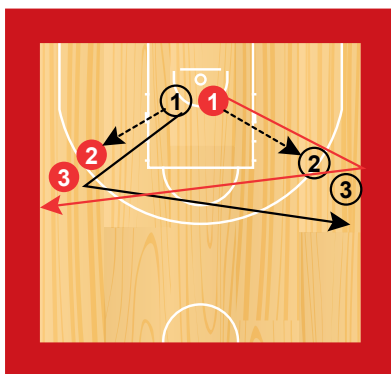
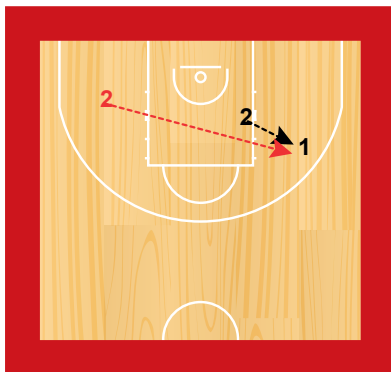
**CLOSE OUT SHOOTER**

This can be done in groups of 2 or 3. One player passes the ball to the shooter and then runs at them to contest the shot. They get a point if they can "tip" the shot or if they can cause a "shot fake".

The defender runs past the shooter and touches the sideline to return to be the next shooter. The shooter rebounds their shot and passes from wherever they receive the ball.

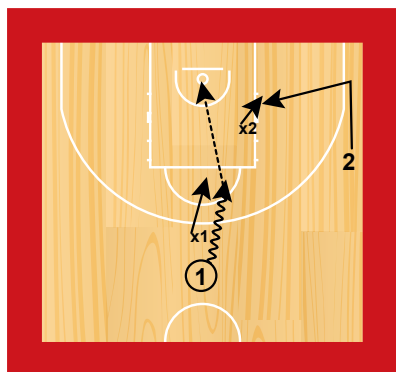
Shooters are encouraged to use a shot fake if necessary, rather than take a bad shot. By making their shot, it keeps the score even. Deduct one point for any bad pass to the shooter.

The pass to the shooter is made from wherever the rebounder got the ball. This may mean that they are very close to the shooter, and the shooter will need to fake (shown in black) or that they are a significant distance away but must still "hustle" to get in to their next shooting position (shown in red).



The same activity can be done with two groups. The shooter rebounds their ball, then passes it to the next person in the other group and runs at them to contest the shot.

Scoring is the same. Continue for a set time or until one group has reached a particular score. Teams can win either by making a basket or by getting a defensive point.

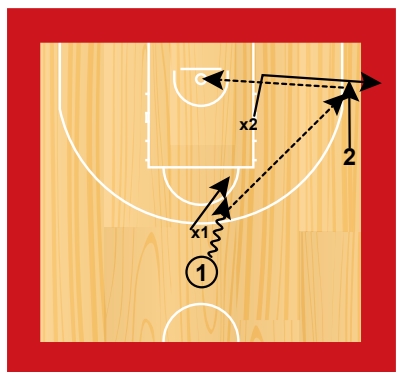


### CLOSE OUT – BOX OUT

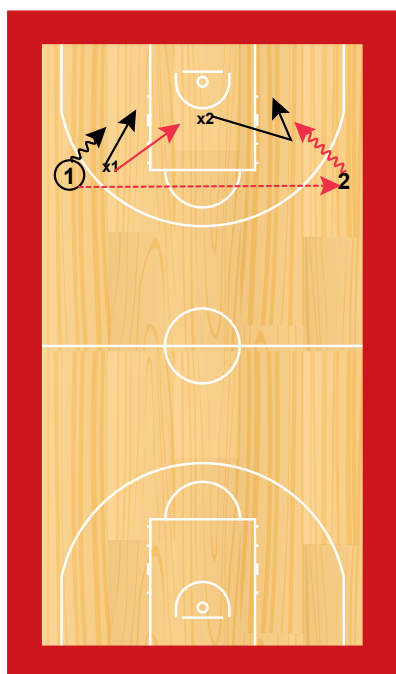
x1 defends the ball and x2 must have at least one foot in the key.

If 1 is able to dribble into the key, they shoot and 2 must contest the rebound.

x2 must “box out” 2.



If x1 is able to contain 1, then 1 passes to 2, who is sliding to the corner and will catch and shoot. x2 closes out the shooter, making sure that they run past the shooter's hand.

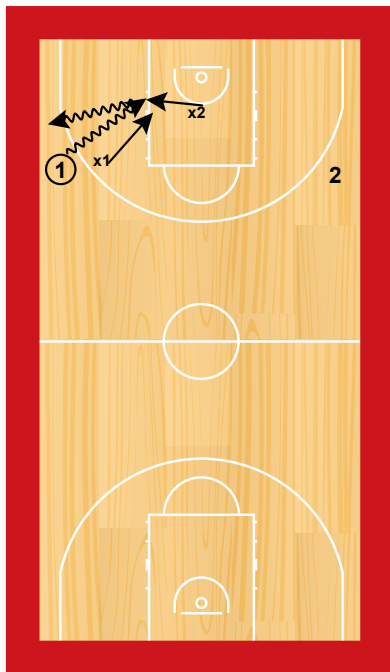


### CLOSE OUT – BOX OUT, 2V2

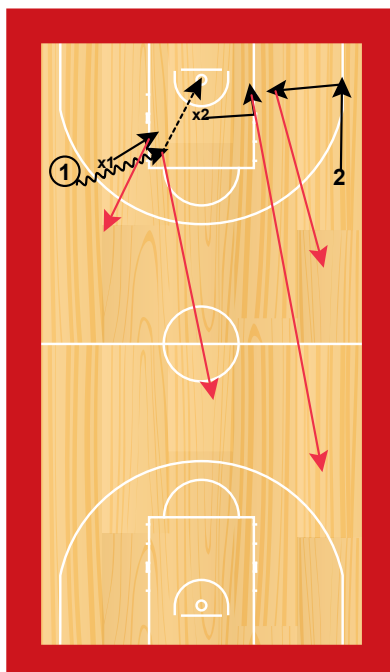
1 starts with the ball on the wing and 2 is on the other wing. The two defenders adopt the usual position.

1 can either drive or pass the ball to 2, who drives.

x1 and x2 defend accordingly.

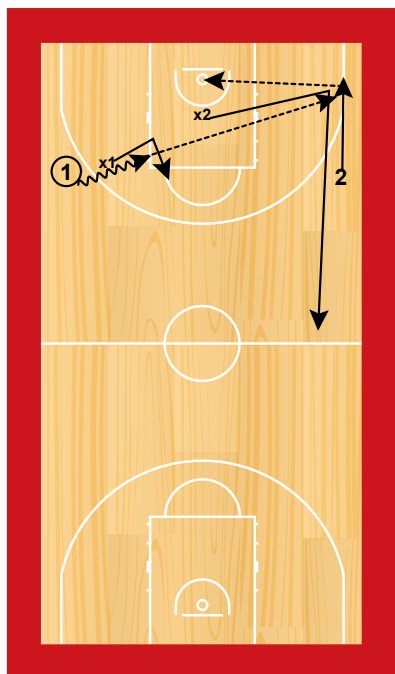


If 1 is able to beat x1 to the baseline, x2 must rotate to stop any penetration into the key. 1 should then retreat to the perimeter, and x2 returns to the split line (although the coach could allow the defenders to switch).



If 1 is able to beat x1 to the middle, x1 shoots as they penetrate the key. x2 must box out 2. If the offensive players rebound the ball, they may shoot again.

Once the defenders secure the ball, they push the ball down the floor looking to get an advantage. The teams play 2x2 in transition.



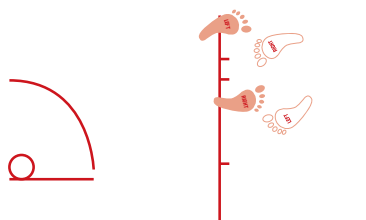
Another tactic when closing out the shooter is to “hit and run”. In doing this the defender runs toward the shooter and stops without running past them. Once the shot has been made (and the shooter has landed), the defender “checks” or “hits” them with an arm bar and then sprints the floor.

The “check” or “hit” is to stop that player getting to the rebound contest. Importantly, it is done by stepping into the shooter and making contact with an arm bar.

The defender should not reach beyond their cylinder nor hit the shooter before they have landed, as both will result in a foul.

This technique can be practiced using the same activity as above.

## 1.1.2 OFF-BALL DEFENCE - FRONTING THE POST

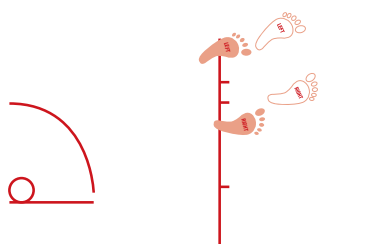


### POST DEFENCE – FRONTING (TOES IN)

“Fronting” the post player means that the defender stands between the post player and the perimeter player that has the ball. There are two methods – “toes in” and “toes out”.

With toes in, the defender’s back faces the potential passer. This position potentially makes it easier to adjust position if the ball is passed to another teammate on the perimeter. The defender puts their “chin to shoulder” so that they can see the passer and the post player.

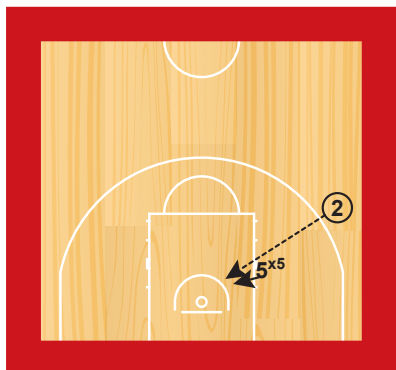
“Fronting defence” requires both good pressure on the person with the ball and also “split line” help, which is a defender standing near the basket that can intercept any attempted lob pass.



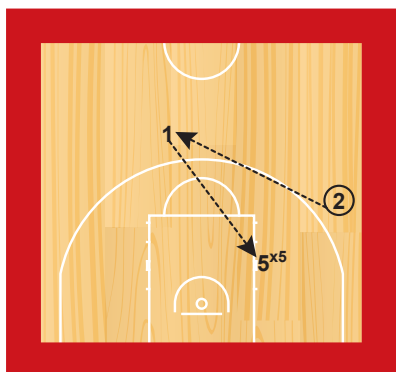
### POST DEFENCE – FRONTING (TOES OUT)

Toes Out fronting is where the defender faces the perimeter player that has the ball. The defender needs to keep a low, balanced stance – keeping contact with the post player with shoulders and elbows.

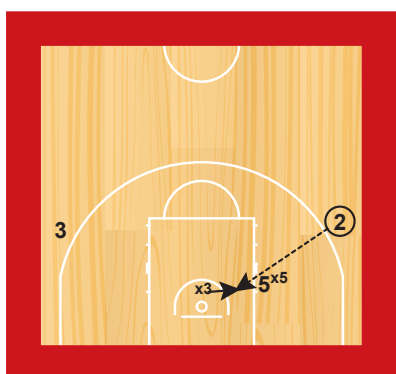




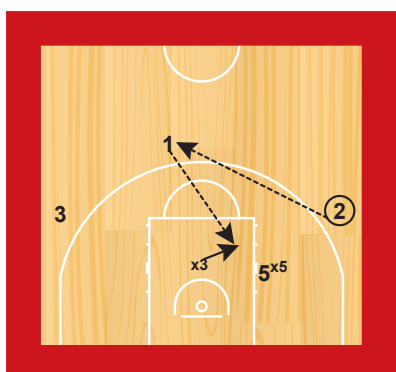
When the defence “fronts” a low post player, the offence can make a lob pass over the head of the defender.



The offence can also “reverse” the ball to a player that can then pass to the low post player.

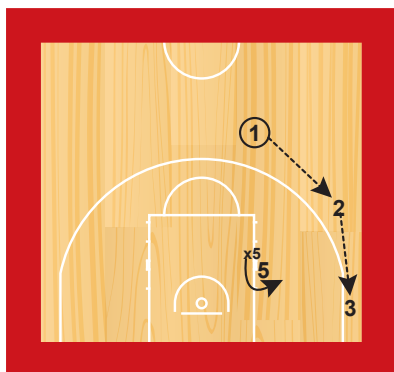


Having a split line defender (x3) is key to stopping passes to a low post player that is “fronted”. x3 must be ready to move and intercept the pass if possible

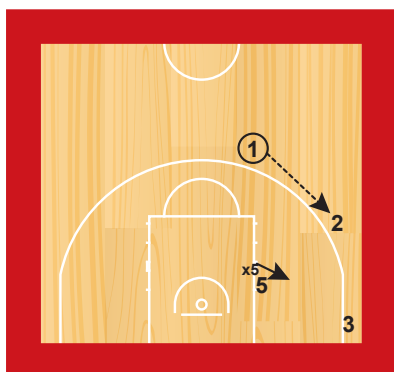


On a reversal pass, x3 may hold in the key so they are able to intercept a pass to the low post player. x3 does not move to deny their own player until the post defender has re-established position (or another defender has rotated into the key).

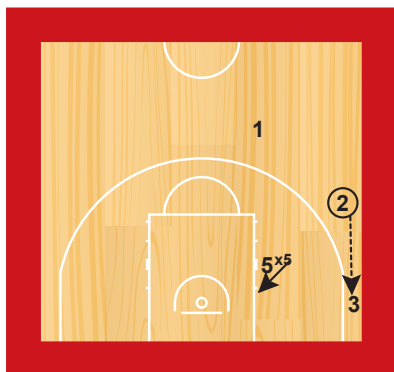
If 3 is a good shooter, they may have to move earlier and the defence need to have another player rotate to the key.



Many teams do not “front” the low post and instead a defender will move behind the post defender as they move from denying a pass by 1 (playing on the high side) to denying a pass by 3 (playing on the low side).



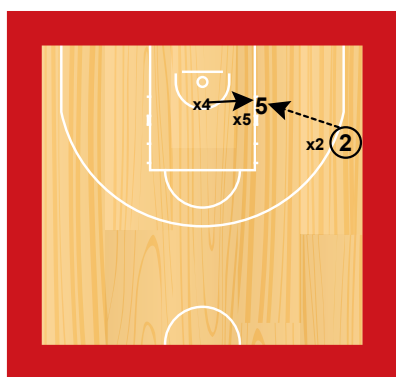
“Fronting” the post is often done when the passer is at the wing, denying passes from the top or the corner.



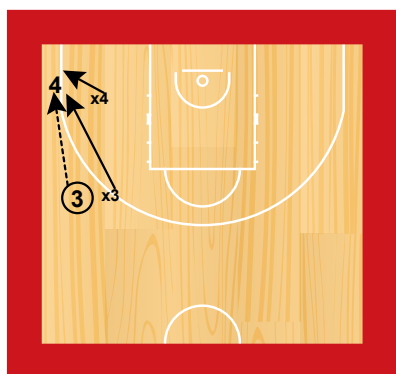
## 1.1.3 DEFENDING THE BALL - DOUBLE TEAM TECHNIQUE

There are many different situations where a defensive team may use a "double team" (where two defenders will defend the player with the ball). Generally situations fall into three categories:

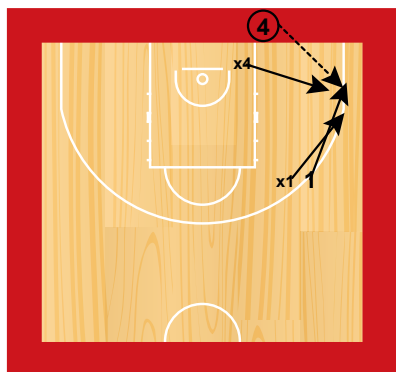
- Double team a player as they catch the ball;
- Double team a moving dribbler;
- Double team the dribbler in a ball screen.



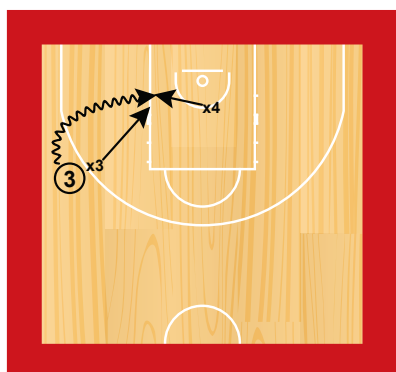
Teams will commonly double team a low post player as they receive a pass.



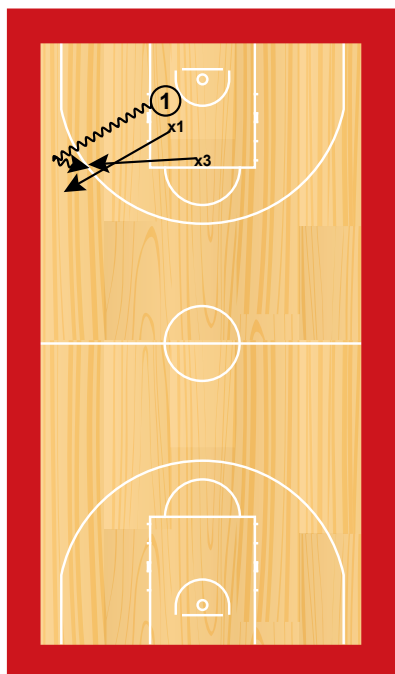
In both zone and man-to-man defences, teams often double team players when they receive the ball in the corner.



When applying full court pressure, teams may double team as the ball is passed into the court. Here, x1 forces 1 toward the sideline and then moves from beside them to behind them. This movement is important as it allows a space for x4 to move across and set the double team.

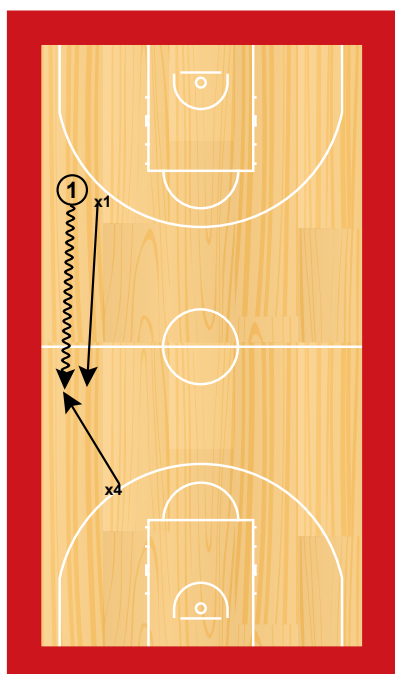


A double team can also be used to help a defender that has been beaten, with x4 moving from the split line to stop 3 from penetrating in the key. Although beaten, x3 runs beside 3 to form a double team.



When defending full court the dribbler may be forced toward a sideline by x1 and then “turned” (made to change direction). A second defender (x3) may move from the split line to “trap” or double team the dribbler as they attempt to change direction.

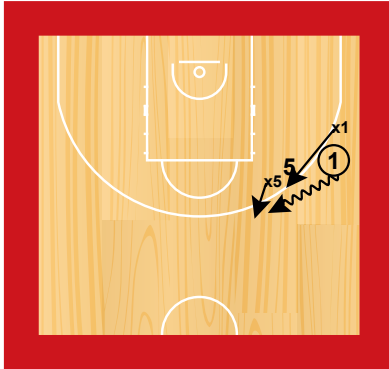
This is most effective when the dribbler uses a “reverse spin” dribble, momentarily losing sight of the help defender.



Another technique utilised in full court defence is to “channel” the dribbler along a sideline and for a help defender (x4) to move up the court to double team them.

Again, the double team might be effective if the dribbler is looking down and does not see x4.

x4 must move quickly to set the double team. Teams will often “trap” (or double team) near the half way line, as this places additional pressure on the dribbler (as they cannot move back).



Many teams opt to double team a dribbler as they use a ball screen which can negate their ability to shoot, penetrate or pass.

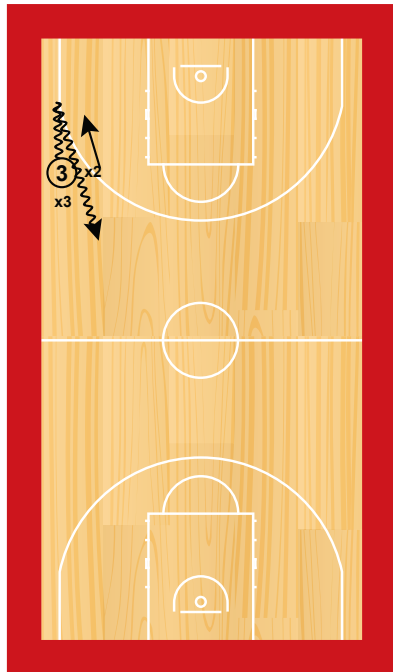
The most important thing when setting a double team is for the two defenders to move decisively and in unison. A double team against a player receiving a pass is most effective when it is set as they catch the ball, which requires the defenders to move into position as the ball is in the air. This prevents the offensive player from taking “evasive” action (e.g. passing, dribbling or shooting).

Similarly, when setting a double team against a dribbler, the defender must move quickly to get to position, otherwise the dribbler can change direction or pass the ball.

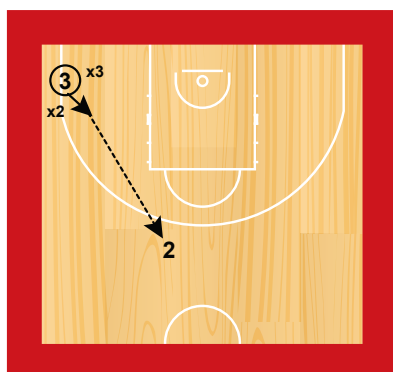
One of the most effective passes that an offensive player can make when they see that a double team is coming, is to pass to their team that was being defended by the defender now moving to double team.

Double teams are often most effective when set near the sideline, baseline or half-way line as this can act as another defender restricting where the player with the ball can move. The two defenders should stand close enough to each other so that the offensive player cannot step through any gap. The defenders should also keep their hands high and active, but not reaching for the ball. If they reach for the ball it will often result in a foul being called on the defender. The purpose of a double team is to apply pressure on the defence and possibly create a turnover through the offensive player:

- committing a 5 or 8 second violation;
- throwing a pass that is intercepted (by one of the other defenders, not the defenders in the double team);
- stepping out of bounds or committing a backcourt violation (if the double team is near half way).



If the offensive player does dribble away from the double team it is important that both defenders move because if only one defender moves it can create a gap that the offensive player can move through.



Similarly, the defenders setting a double team must ensure that they remain close to each other, so that the offensive player cannot "split" them or step between them

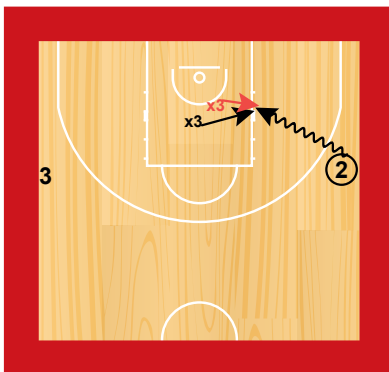
Whenever a team double teams it leaves one offensive player undefended or a situation where a defender is responsible for defending two offensive players.

The coach must ensure that the players clearly understand the rotations required.

## 1.1.4 PRESSURE DEFENCE - ANTICIPATING OFFENSIVE MOVEMENT

“Quickness” in defence is often very different to the speed at which a defender can move. More important is the defender’s ability to correctly

anticipate what will happen and to move in anticipation before it has actually happened.



x3 starts on the “split line” and is responsible for rotating and stopping any dribble penetration by 2. If x3 remains in the middle of the key, it will take 2 or 3 steps and if they do not move until 2 starts to dribble, x3 may struggle to stop them.

However, if x3 anticipates that 2 is going to dribble and moves toward that side of the court (shown in red) then they will be quicker to stop the rotation as they don’t have to move as far.

Coaches should give players many opportunities to practice anticipating what the offence will do and adjusting their position accordingly. Coaches must accept that the players will get it wrong sometimes, for example:

- moving too far (and leaving their own opponent open);
- not moving enough (and then not being able to get into position when the offence do move).

Making these mistakes is an important part of learning about optimal positioning. Where a player makes a mistake the coach should use questions to help the player identify what they could have done differently. If the coach simply tells the player what they should do, then the player does not develop their own ability to “read” the situation (and move accordingly) and really only learns that they should not trust their own instincts.

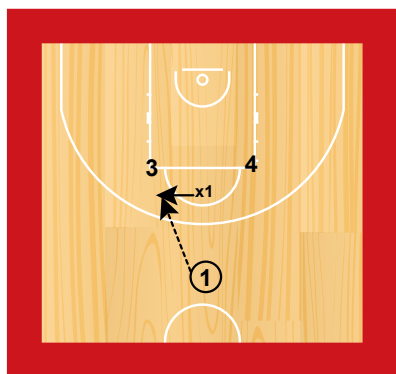
The coach can help the player to understand some “cues” that will help them to correctly anticipate what the offence may do, such as:

- Ball position – if the player holds the ball at chest level or above, they are more likely to pass than dribble;
- Chest position – the direction that a player’s chest is facing is most likely where they would pass or move;
- Stance – if a player has straight legs, they are more likely to pass than dribble;
- Ball side – whichever side a player is holding the ball is the side to which they are likely to pass or dribble;
- Defender’s position – the offensive player is likely to move away from wherever their defender is standing (e.g. if a defender is on the right hand side of the offensive player, the offensive player is likely to pass or dribble to their left).



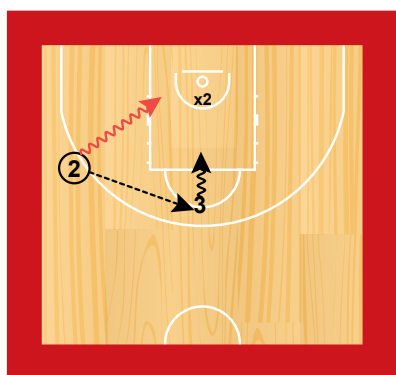
The defender may only move one or two steps in anticipation, but this can make a significant difference to their ability to “quickly” get to the next position. When the defender moves in anticipation they must move both feet, not simply lean to one side. Leaning makes them slower to act, as they first must return to a balanced position.

Some activities that help provide players with practice to anticipate the offence are set out below.



Players 3 and 4 must stand still and be ready to catch a pass from 1. 1 can pass to either player and x1 must try to deflect the pass. x1 should be prepared to move one way or the other in anticipation of where the pass is going.

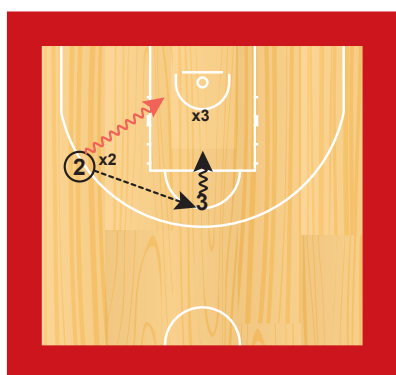
A defender can also be added on the passer.



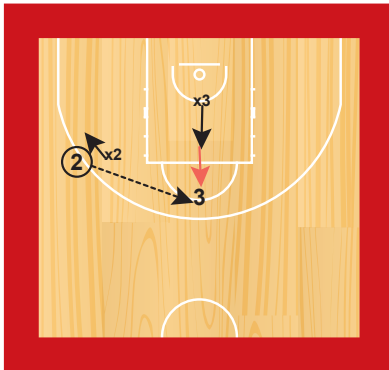
2 can either dribble into the key or may pass to 3 who attempts to dribble into the key. x2 attempts to stop both players from dribbling into the key:

- If x2 believes that 2 will dribble, they should move 1 or 2 steps toward 2;
- If x3 believes that 2 will pass to 3, they should move 1 or 2 steps toward 3.

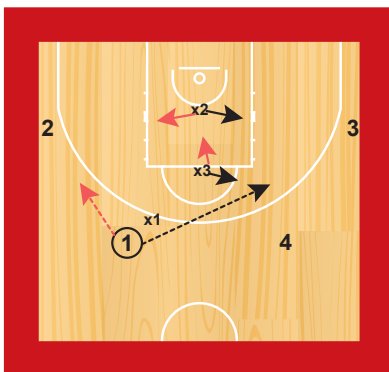
2 is limited to 2 dribbles and 3 is limited to 1 dribble.



A defender can then be added to defend 2, which is an additional factor for x2 to take into account.

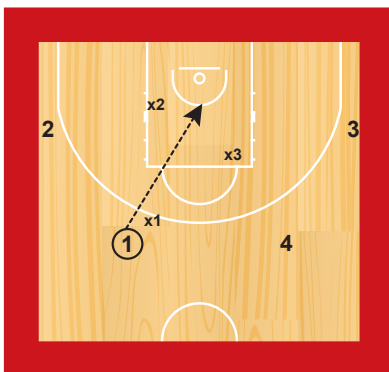


If x2 moves to stop 2 from dribbling toward the baseline, x2 can move towards 3, reducing the distance they need to move when the ball is passed (shown in red).



The defenders (x1, x2 and x3) must always have someone defend the ball – the other two defenders start in the key, but can then choose their own position. The offensive players simply try to dribble into the key but can only start to dribble if there is no close defender (have the defenders touch the offensive player to demonstrate they are there).

The defenders in the key are encouraged to anticipate where the ball will be passed and take a step or two in that direction, so that they are then close enough to close out and stop any dribble. Shown on the diagram are movements the defenders might make if they anticipate different passes (movement is shown red and black).



The coach may stand under the basket to provide a passing target for the players. This requires the defenders to move together.

For example, x1 is standing to force the pass toward 2 and x2 moves toward them in anticipation. However, if x3 moves toward a pass across the key, this enables a pass to be made to the coach.

Instead, as x2 moves toward 2, x3 may move down toward the coach to pressure the pass.

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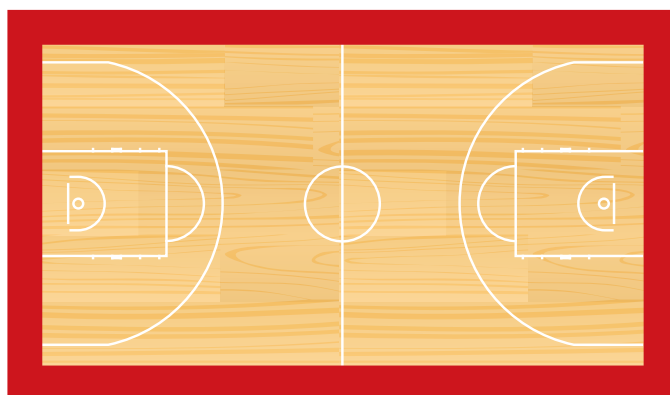
## FOLLOW-UP

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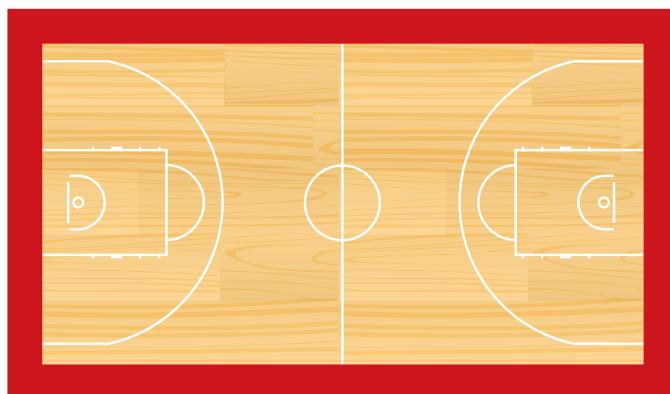
1. Assume that you are playing an opponent this week that has a dominant low post player:

- Would you consider “fronting” that post player?
- What factors did you take into account in reaching that decision? Discuss with your assistant coaches what they think.

2. Show the areas on the court where your team will try to double team opponents (when playing pressure defence):



3. Describe an activity that you use to teach double team technique? What teaching points would you give offensive players?



4. Discuss with a coaching colleague how you can improve a player’s ability to anticipate what the offensive team is going to do.



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**LEVEL 2**

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# **PLAYER**

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**CHAPTER 2**

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# **OFFENSIVE BASKETBALL SKILLS**

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## CHAPTER 2

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# OFFENSIVE BASKETBALL SKILLS

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### 2.6 OFFENSIVE MOVES

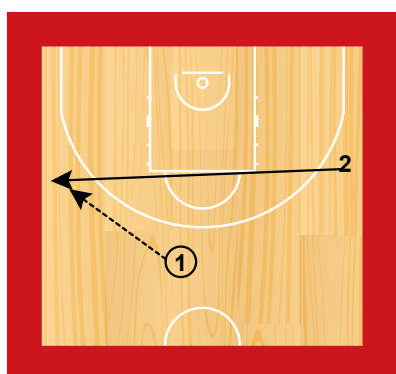
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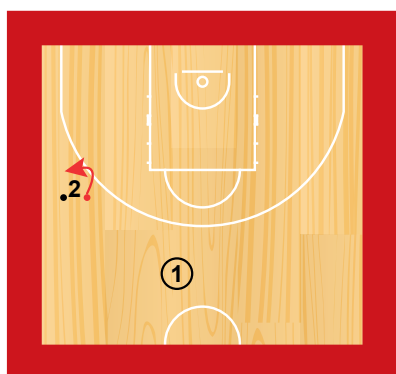
## 2.1 GETTING OPEN FOR THE BALL

### 2.1.1 HORIZONTAL CUTS

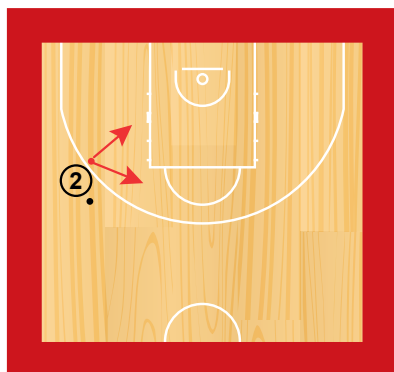
*Players are initially taught to receive the ball either as they cut towards the ball or as they cut towards the basket. On a cut towards the ball, facing the basket is usually done with a forward pivot. More experienced players and teams will utilize “horizontal” cuts, often from one wing to the other wing.*



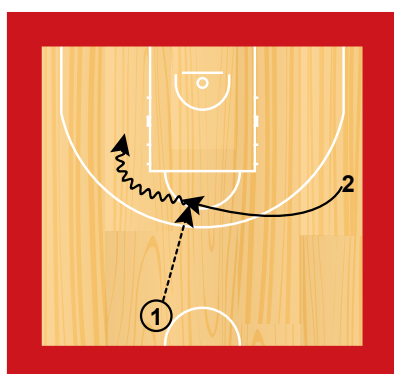
2 performs a “horizontal” cut from one side of the court to the other side.



On catching the ball, players need to be able to reverse pivot in order to face the basket.



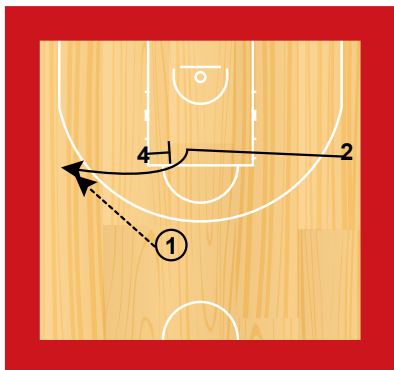
The player can then attack to either side. An attack to the baseline side must attack the basket and not move sideways. Often the player will catch the ball and “rip” the ball as they attack the baseline. They may also use a “throw down” dribble.



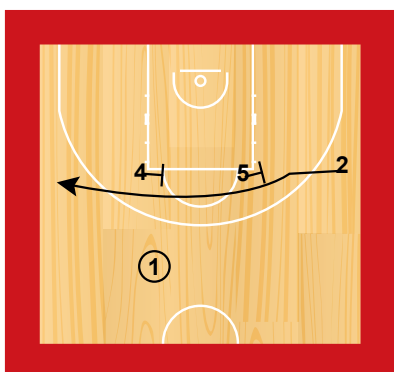
The offensive player also needs to be able to catch the ball and immediately dribble, heading in the direction of their cut.

It is most effective when the defender is trailing the cutter and the passer is ahead of the cutter. The cutter will often curl and dribble to the basket.





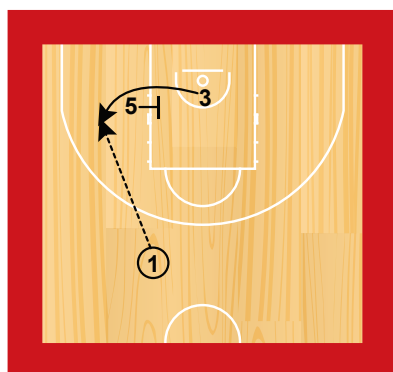
Commonly, a screen is set at the elbow on a horizontal cut.



Staggered screens may also be set at both elbows.

## 2.1.2 TURN OUT CUTS

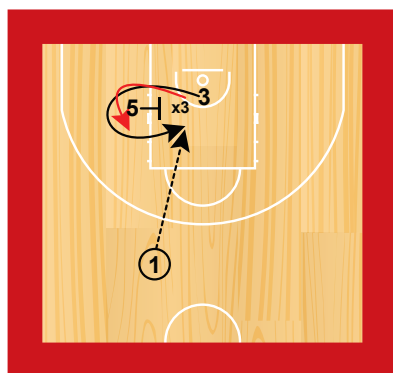
### “TURN OUT” CUTS



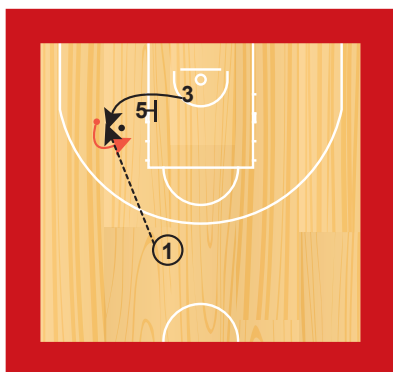
#### WHAT IS A “TURN OUT” CUT?

A “turn out” cut is used off a screen that is set at the side of the keyway, with the screener having their back facing the sideline, away from the keyway. This screen is also called a “Pin Down” screen.

The cut may go towards the perimeter.



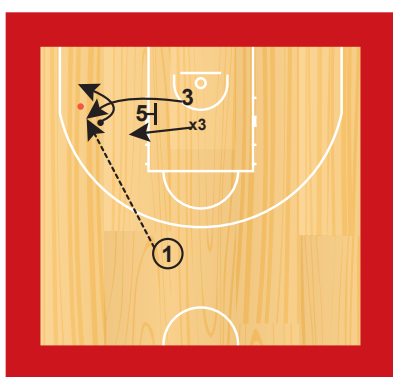
If the defender “trails” (running behind the cutter) then the cutter should curl back into the keyway.



### FOOTWORK – FORWARD PIVOT

Players need to be able to execute different types of footwork, coming off the “turn out” cut.

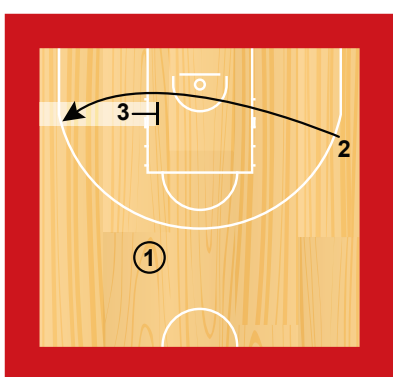
First, they must be able to do a “forward” pivot as they catch the ball to face the basket. They land and pivot on the foot closest to the basket (black) and then turn to face. This footwork is very effective for an immediate shot.



### FOOTWORK – REVERSE PIVOT

Players must also be able to “reverse pivot” as they catch the ball. They pivot on the foot closest to the sideline (red) and “rip” the ball quickly toward the baseline as they reverse pivot. This footwork is effective when the defender has moved over the top of the screen, and the offence is catching the ball and looking to drive along the baseline.

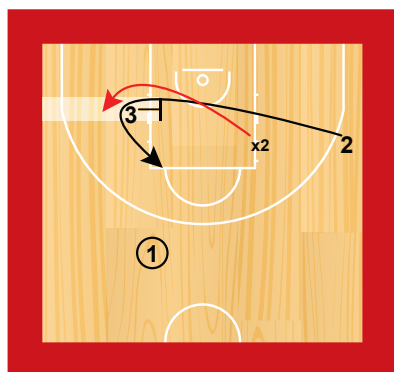
## “READING” THE DEFENCE – DIFFERENT CUTS



### “STRAIGHT CUT”

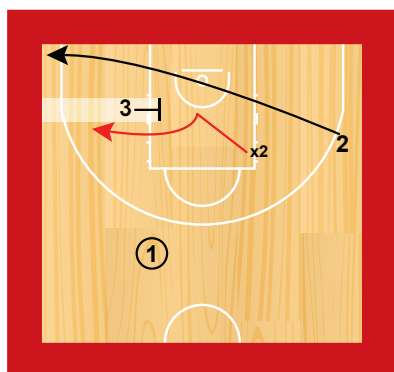
The initial cut is a “straight” cut, where the defender is “caught” on the screen and the cutter moves into the “shadow” of the screen – directly behind the screen.

The screener must be in a low, balanced stance and the cutter cuts close to the screener, making sure that there is no gap which the defender can move through.

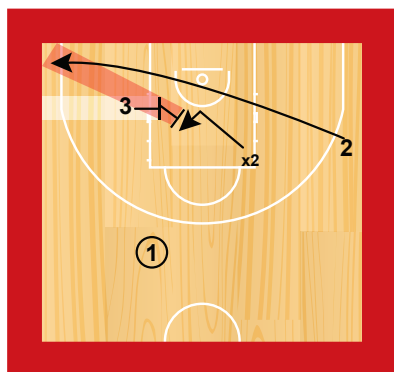
**“CURL CUT”**

The curl cut is used if the defender is “trailing” the cutter (i.e. staying behind them in order to avoid running into the screen).

The cutter may curl tightly into the middle of the key or curl towards the elbow.

**“FLARE CUT”**

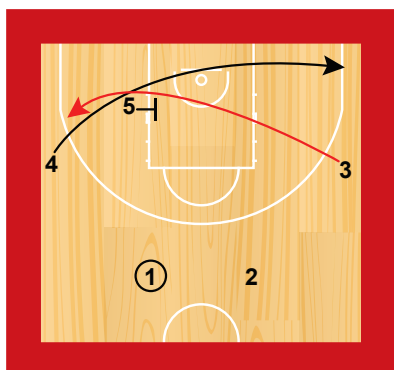
If the defender moves to go over the top of the screen or stays inside the key anticipating a curl cut then the cutter should “flare” to the corner.



The screener can turn and “re-screen” so that their back faces the baseline corner – creating a “shadow” where the cutter moved to.

## INCORPORATING TURN OUT CUTS IN OFFENCE

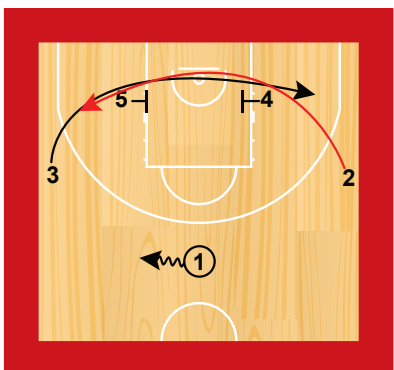
The "turn out" cut can be used in a variety of circumstances, such as:



### "4 OUT, 1 IN" - "SWING THE WINGS"

Players 3 and 4 cut across the key, swapping positions. This movement is also called "Swing the Wings".

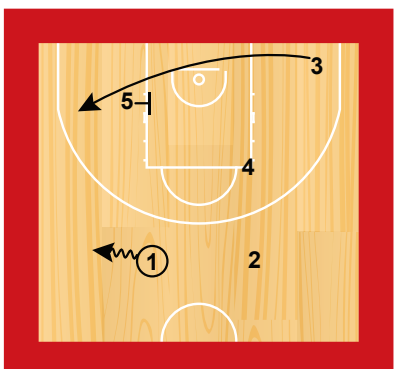
Player 3 makes a "turn out" cut of the screen by Player 5. Player 5 could also set a back screen for Player 4.



### "3 OUT, 2 IN" - "SWING THE WINGS"

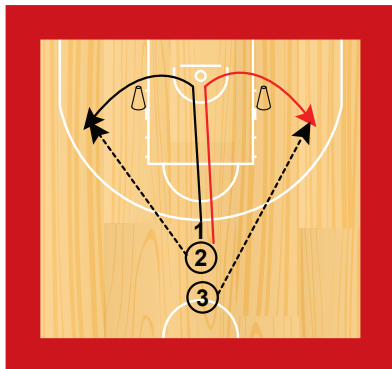
Again, this involves perimeter players swapping positions by cutting across the key ("swing the wings").

Both of the cutters makes a "turn out" cut. Player 3, cutting off a screen by Player 5 and Player 2 cutting off a screen by Player 4.



### "3 OUT, 2 IN" - STAGGERED HIGH / LOW POSTS

Player 1 dribbles away from Player 3, who cuts across the key towards the ball.



### ACTIVITY TO PRACTICE "TURN OUT" CUTS

This shooting activity is a great way to practice "turn out" cuts, and in particular the footwork. The first player cuts to the basket, and then does a "turn out" cut to one side. They receive a pass and then the passer cuts to the basket, and does a "turn out" cut to the other side.

The coach can designate whether to use a forward or reserve pivot. Defence (either passive or aggressive) can be added to make the cuts "more realistic" and / or make the activity contested.

## 2.2 CATCHING

### 2.2.1 SHOOTER'S CATCH

*There are two situations which require a particular type of catch, which all players should be introduced to – a “shooter’s catch” and a “post catch”.*

There will be many times in a game where a ball is passed to a player who must be ready to shoot immediately. The most common examples are:

- (a) Catching a pass on the perimeter after the ball has been penetrated into the key;
- (b) Catching the ball when coming off a screen.

#### **HANDS**

Initially players are taught to catch the ball with two hands behind the ball, however this is not the correct grip for shooting. A shooter's catch is where the player's shooting hand is behind the ball and their other hand is on the side of the ball. This is the correct position to move immediately into the shot.

#### **FOOTWORK**

The power for a shot comes from a player's legs and footwork when shooting (whether off the catch or the dribble) is of the utmost importance. Having good footwork when catching the ball can give the player momentum for a quick shot. Importantly, players do not need an exaggerated “knee bend” as this will slow down their shot.

The question of whether a shooter should use a “jump stop” (both feet landing at the same time) or a “stride stop” (one foot landing before the other) leads to considerable debate between coaches. It is recommended that players should be introduced to both techniques and as players specialize

they may choose to use one technique over the other.

Particularly for young players, catching the ball “in motion” on the perimeter can help to give power in the shot. This can be as simple as catching the ball in the air, then landing with a jump stop or stride stop and then shooting. If the player catches the ball while stationary they will often have to “dip” to get momentum and this slows down the shot. When players use a stride shot, the coach should emphasise that as the second foot hits the floor, the player should immediately shoot.

#### **THE PASS**

Equally important to the shooter's hands and footwork is the accuracy of the pass. The pass should be received at approximately hip height. If it is higher or lower it will disrupt the player's natural shooting rhythm and will also be difficult to catch with the shooting hand behind the ball.

The pass also needs to allow the shooter to have momentum moving into their shot. On the perimeter, the pass must be in front of the player, not to their side. Often a player on the perimeter is moving laterally before catching the pass.

When passing to a player cutting off a screen, the ball should be passed to the hip of the player (and away from any defender) and not too far in front of the player.

Player's need to practice shooting (and passing) under game-like conditions and pressure to create good habits that will be repeated in games. Accordingly, coaches should avoid:

- Being the passer – as much as possible in shooting activities use players as the passer so that they get to understand the concept that “good passers make good shooters”
- Shooting without defence – both shooting and passing technique will be better if there is a defensive presence. The defender may be relatively passive at times but them being there will assist with technique.



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## 2.2.2 POST CATCH

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A post catch is again an example where one hand is behind the ball (the “target” hand) and the other hand is often holding position. As the ball hits their target hand, the post player quickly moves the other hand to get two hands on the ball. This style of catch works well when the post player is using their upper body to “seal” a defender and moving their hands too early would allow the defender to move to intercept the pass.

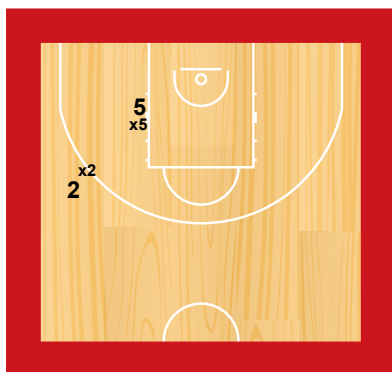
A general guide for the passer is to pass away from the defender’s head as this will minimise the chance of the pass being intercepted.

The post player should also move their feet so that they are not reaching too far away from their body to catch the ball. If they then land in a jump stop, they have the choice of pivot foot, which can be important to then making a move to the basket.

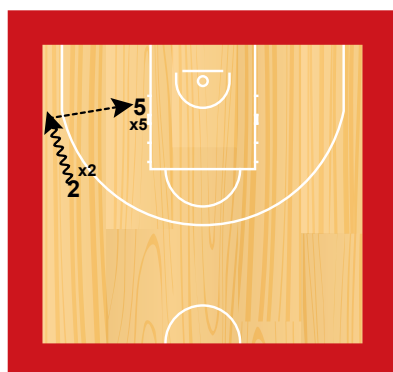
## 2.3 PASSING

### 2.3.1 ADVANCED PASSING - ONE HAND CURL PASS

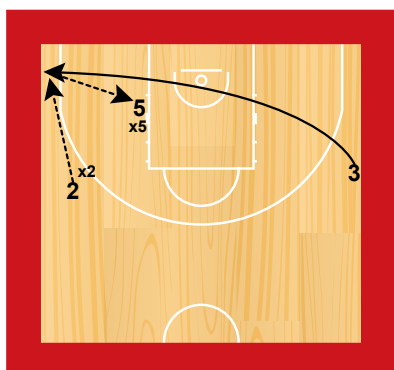
*When passing to a post player the passer must pay particular attention to the position of the post defender and a good teaching cue is to pass “away from the defender’s head”. For example, if the defender is standing so that their head is to the left hand side of the post player, the pass should be made to the right hand side.*



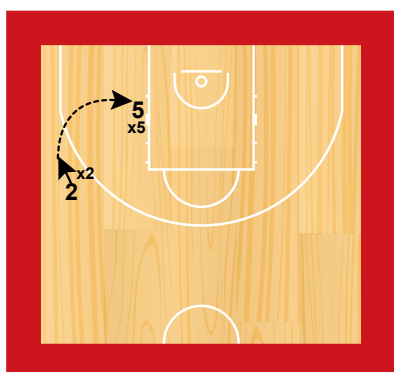
Often to be able to pass to a post player, the passer must move their position. The post player establishes position based upon where their defender is. It is the passer’s responsibility to then get the ball to them. Given x5’s position, a pass to the post needs to go to the baseline side. 2 is not able to make this pass from their current position.



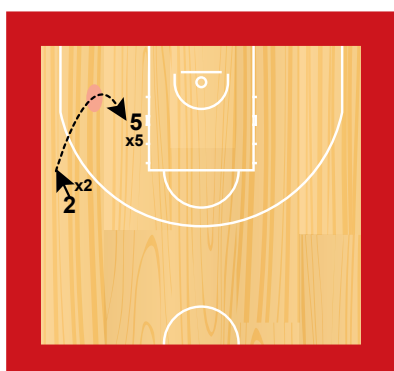
2 can create the correct passing angle by dribbling and 5 would hold their “seal” trying to keep x5 from establishing a new position. However, if 2 has a “dead ball” (i.e. they have already dribbled) they cannot create the passing angle.



If 2 has a “dead ball”, they may be able to pass to a team mate that has a better “passing” angle to pass to 5.



Another technique that 2 can use is a “curl pass”, where 2 steps to the side (in this case toward the baseline) and extends their arm (in this case their left arm) and passes the ball in a curling motion. It is often easier to catch if this is a bounce pass.



Often a curl pass will be thrown as a bounce pass, and 2 will spin the ball as they release it so that it hits the floor away from 5 (at the point marked in red) and then spins into 5. To do this, the ball needs to spin in a clockwise direction (spinning toward the post player).

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## 2.3.2 ADVANCED PASSING - BASEBALL PASS

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*A “baseball” pass is a one handed pass that is used to throw the ball long distances. When throwing the pass the person stands side on to their target and lifts the ball to just above their shoulder. Their passing hand is behind the ball, with their elbow pointing to the ground and the other hand on the side of the ball.*

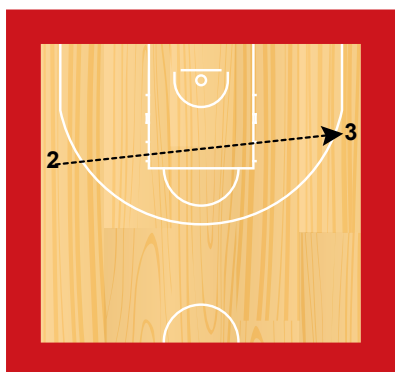
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The player steps toward their target and throws the pass across their body, twisting their body so that their chest faces the target as the ball is released.

Young players will often start a long pass at their hip and their hand underneath the ball and then throw it by moving their arm in a circular motion. This technique will usually be inaccurate and should be discouraged.

As with any pass, taking a small step forward as the pass is thrown helps to give power to the pass.

## 2.3.3 ADVANCED PASSING - SKIP PASSES



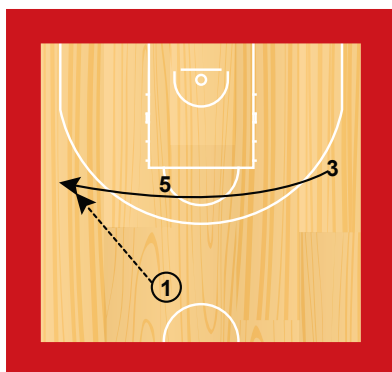
A “Skip” pass is used to pass the ball from one side of the court to the other and players should be discouraged from attempting this pass until they have the strength to throw the pass.

A “skip” pass should start from above the player’s heads, holding the ball in two hands. The pass should then be “flat”, to be caught by their team mate above their head. It is a difficult pass to throw as it uses the triceps, which are a relatively small muscle group. The player should also step forward as they pass which will help to give power to the pass.

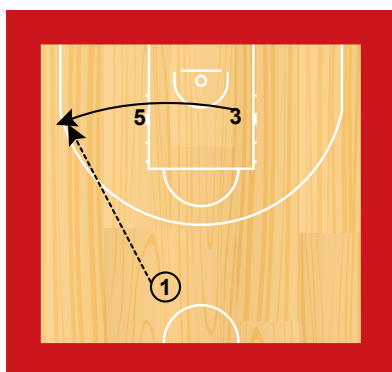
If a player attempts to throw a “skip” pass from their chest, it will be more easily intercepted as the pass will go in an arc, which gives the defender more time to move to try and intercept.

## FOLLOW-UP

1. When would you introduce “skip passes” and “baseball passes” to junior teams? What would you do if you had players in a junior team trying to throw those passes before you had intended to introduce them to the team?
2. Discuss with a coaching colleague what footwork you would teach when a player is using a horizontal cut across the top of the key



3. Compare the footwork on a horizontal cut to the footwork you would teach on a turn out cut.

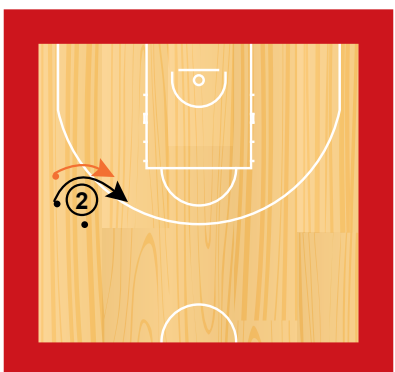
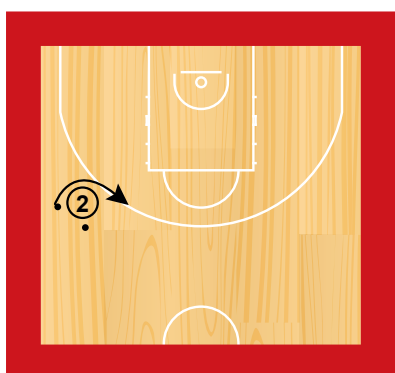


4. Discuss with your players the most important factors to consider when passing the ball to a low post player. Do your players understand the importance of the “passing angle” and when to utilise different types of passes?

## 2.4 DRIBBLING

### 2.4.1 ADVANCED DRIBBLING - REVERSE SPIN DRIBBLE

*A reverse spin dribble is a technique used to change direction and, when done correctly, protects the ball from the defender by keeping the dribbler's body between the defender and the ball.*



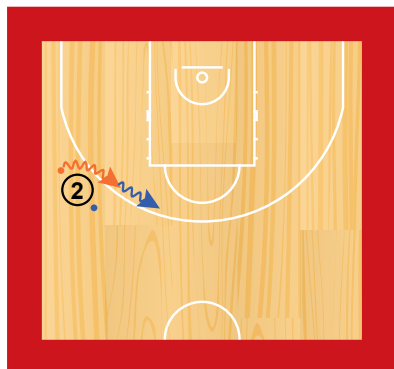
The footwork on a reverse spin dribble is simply a reverse pivot.

Here 2's left foot stays on the ground (as their pivot foot) as they step with their right foot (which is closest to the sideline).

It is very important that 2 puts their "chin to shoulder" so that they can see behind them, before stepping. A reverse spin is often a cue for defenders to trap ("double team") and the offensive player needs to see whether or not that is happening.

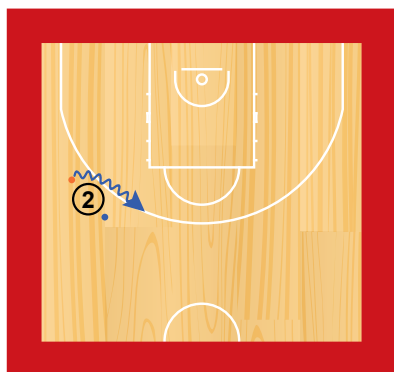
As the player takes their reverse pivot, they pull the ball across their body in one motion, as they continue their dribble. This will ensure that their body stays between the ball and their defender.

They must keep their hand on top of the ball so that it is a continuous dribble – they are not picking up the ball (as they then could not continue to dribble).



As the dribbler is changing direction they should also change the hand they are dribbling with.

Shown here, the dribbler is using their right hand as they move to the sideline and then continue to use their right hand as they reverse pivot and drag the ball across. After they have finished the reverse pivot and are moving in the new direction, they change hands.

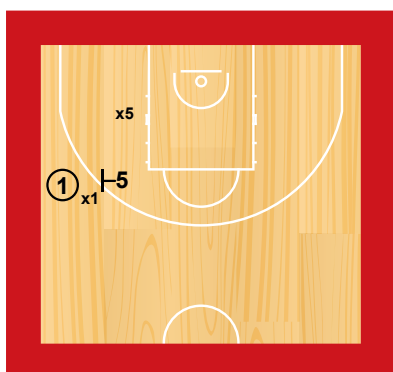


A common mistake is to reverse pivot, but to change hands immediately. This usually means that the ball is unprotected as it is not “dragged” across as they step.

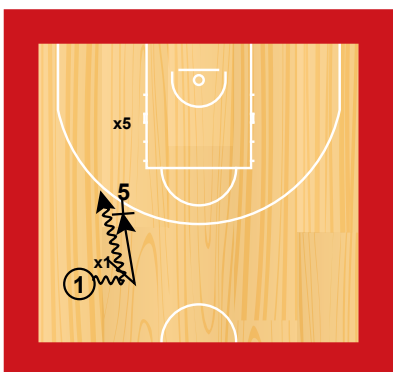


## 2.4.2 ADVANCED DRIBBLING - SNAKE DRIBBLE

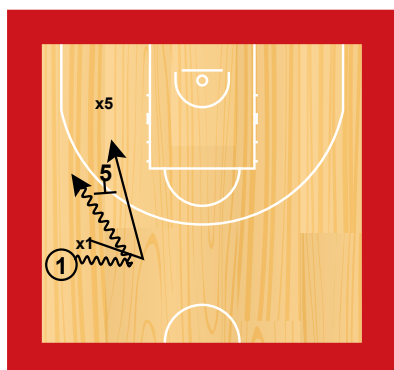
*A “snake dribble” is used when the offensive player has beaten their opponent and is simply moving across into their path. The most common use of a “snake dribble” is off a ball screen.*



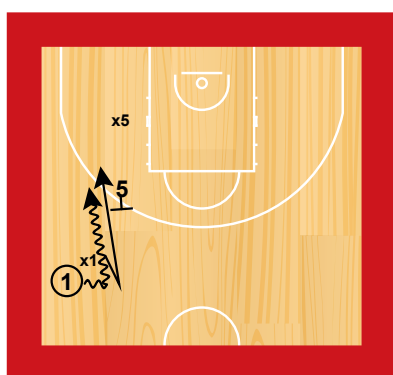
A common tactic to defend a ball screen is “Ice” or “Push”, which is where the defender (x1) moves to a position where the dribbler (1) cannot use the ball screen. The screener’s defender (x5) moves toward the key to a position to stop any dribble to the baseline. This is most common when the ball screen is on the wing.



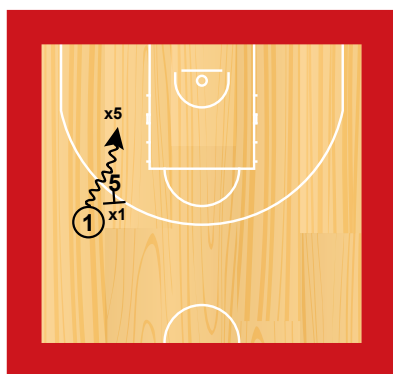
In response to this defensive tactic, offensive teams may change the angle of the ball screen so that it is set with back to the baseline (similar to an up screen – which is called a “flat” screen) or even on the side of the defender nearest the sideline. The dribbler must take their defender to the screen, moving to a position on the court where they are in line to hit the screen.



Here, 1 moves too far across the screen so that x1 will be able to move behind 5, rather than moving into 5.



Here 1 has not moved far enough across the court, so that x1 will move easily pass the screen. The screener cannot continuously move (as this will be a blocking foul) so that once the screen is set, the offensive player have to move their defender into the screen.



As 1 gets to the screen (and x1 moves into the screen), 1 must attack x5, looking to take advantage of the mismatch. 1 must use a "snake" dribble to crossover and be behind the screen, to ensure that x1 cannot get back into position to defend them.

## 2.4.3 ADVANCED DRIBBLING - THROW DOWN DRIBBLE

### “THROW DOWN” DRIBBLE

When a player has the ball but has not dribbled they can use either an “on side” step or a “cross-over” step.



#### ONSIDE STEP

Initially athletes are taught that if they make an “on side” step, they keep the ball on the same side of the body as they are stepping with, and then bounce the ball on the floor ahead of their foot – the ball and the foot they are stepping with landing on the floor at the same time.



#### CROSS-OVER STEP

With a cross-over step, the athlete is taught to swing the ball from one side of their body to the other (as they step), so that it is bounced on the other side of their body. When moving the ball they should “scrape” the ground, emphasizing to keep it low. However, coaches must make sure they are getting low by bending their knees not just bending over

### “THROW DOWN” DRIBBLE

With a “throw down” dribble, the player is using an onside step – i.e. they are stepping with their right foot to move to their right (or left foot to move left), however the player starts with the ball on the opposite side of their body.

Rather than move the ball across their body and bounce it on the floor on the other side of their body, the player throws the ball into the ground so that it bounces to the other side of their body.

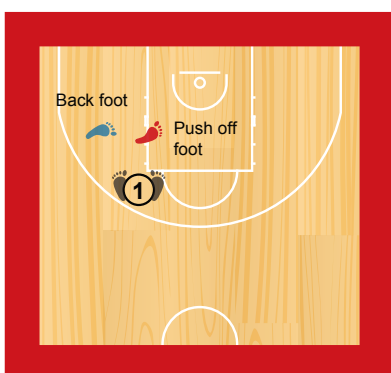
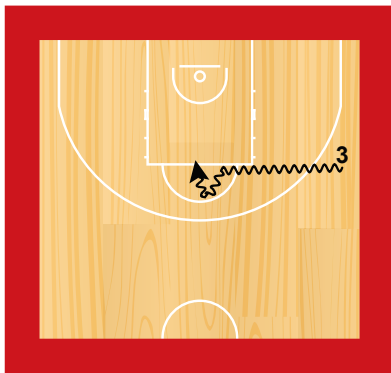
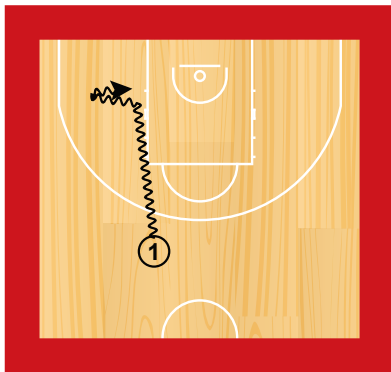


The “throw down” dribble originated because players were often called for a travelling violation when using an onside step and having the ball on the same side of their body (it is a travel if the pivot foot is

lifted before the ball leaves the hand to dribble).

The “throw down” dribble ensures that the ball leaves the hand early.

## 2.4.4 ADVANCED DRIBBLING - STEP BACK MOVE (OFF THE DRIBBLE)

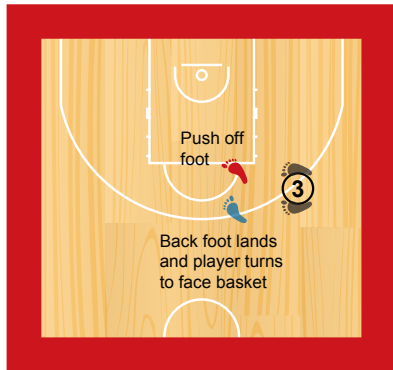


### STEP BACK MOVE (OFF THE DRIBBLE)

The “step back” move is used by a player with the ball to create space for their shot. It is generally performed by a player that is dribbling “side-on” to the basket and then steps away from the basket to create the space.

The dribbler pushes off the foot that is closest to the basket (shown in black) and then jumps back, turning their body to face the basket. As they land on their back foot, they jump to shoot. It is important that the player does not lean their head back as they jump backwards as this will affect their balance.

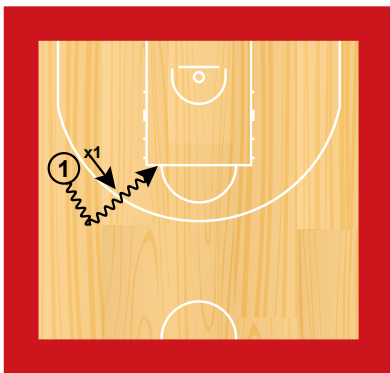
They should keep their head between their feet so that their balance is not affected. When they shoot, the player should be jumping straight up into the air not backwards. If they shoot while they are moving backwards then it is likely that the shot will be short of the basket.



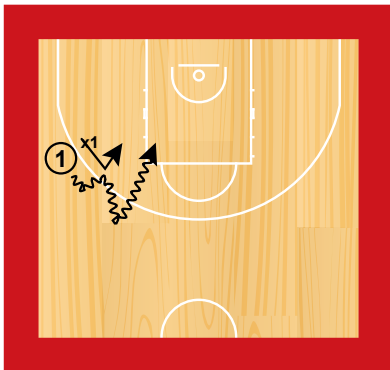
Players may also use a step back move to put the defender at a disadvantage. As they land on their back foot they keep the dribble alive, but lift their shoulders and head, as if they are stopping. If the defender lunges at them, they can then dribble past, pushing off strongly from their back foot.

## 2.4.5 ADVANCED DRIBBLING - HORIZONTAL DRIBBLE

*A perimeter player can use a variety of fakes (drive fakes, shot fakes) to attempt to beat their opponent, from a stationary start. Offensive players also need to be able to beat their opponent "off the dribble" and may move sideways ("horizontal") whilst looking for an opportunity to drive past the opponent.*

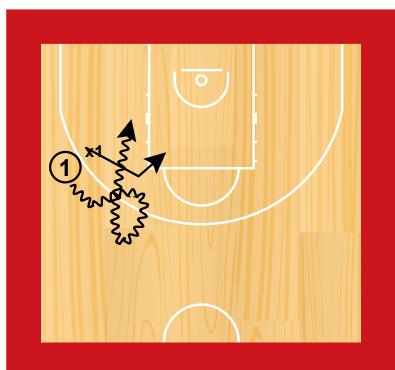


There are two techniques that the dribbler can use. From the wing or corner, they will usually face the basket, moving sideways and looking for the opportunity to "attack" the basket and dribble forwards.

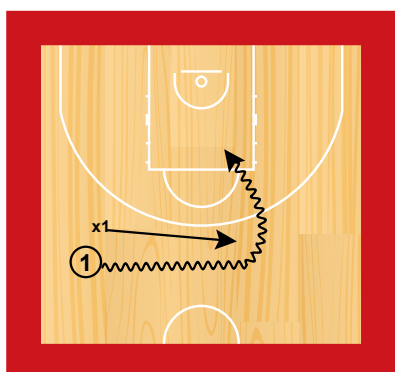


If the dribbler just moves sideways, they are unlikely to get past their opponent. Instead they use a variety of moves such as:

- Hesitation Dribble: stopping and then starting again
- Punch Dribble: pushing forward and then retreating if the defender is able to defend the drive
- Crossover Dribble: changing direction using a variety of crossover dribbles (in front and behind)
- Fake Crossover: moving as if to change direction and then returning to the original direction.



A change of direction is often most effective when it follows a retreat dribble, taking advantage if the defender lunges forward.



A second technique (most commonly used when moving across the court) is to turn and face the direction they are moving. The offensive player is now side on to their opponent and the basket.

Again, the offensive player may use a variety of dribble techniques in order to beat their opponent. They can also use ball screens or hand-offs. The disadvantage of this technique, is that the player has their back to one side of the floor and may not be able to see both opponents and team mates.

The best way to introduce the use of these skills is to have players practice in contested situations, whether that is 1v1 or with more players. Young players often use the dribble too much, instead of passing and using space and coaches may prefer offensive players pass. However, the ability to beat an opponent from the perimeter is important, as it does then create a situation of advantage.

It is recommended that coaches vary rules used in scrimmages so that teams learn to create opportunities of advantage by:

- Moving the ball by passing (e.g. "reversing" the ball and creating a "long close out", where an offensive player can drive)
- Beating a defender whilst dribbling, emphasizing other players adjusting their position to create space for the dribbler.
- Limiting the number of dribbles, the time that a player may have the ball (e.g. 3 seconds at a time)
- Restricting the offensive team allowing only one player to dribble (after that only passes can be made) or that after a player dribbles the next offensive player cannot dribble (however the player after them can).
- It is important that players learn to understand how to beat defenders using a dribble but not to over use the dribble.

## 2.4.6 ADVANCED DRIBBLING - PUSH DRIBBLE

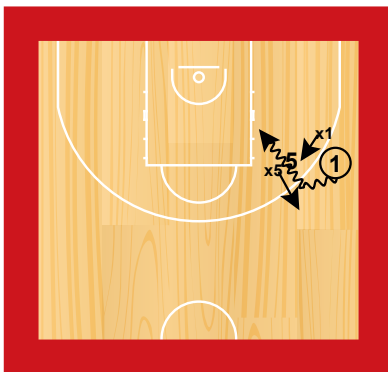
*A “push dribble” is another move made whilst the offensive player is already dribbling and it is a skill best developed (and practiced) in contested situations. Players that utilize such moves are unlikely to have been directly “coached” in how to perform the skill and instead have developed it as a method to beat defenders.*

The coach’s role is to encourage and allow players to play in contested situations (from 1v1) and to discuss with the players “cues” that indicate when they may be able to beat the defender.

A “push” dribble is similar to a throw down dribble - a throw down dribble is used as the players starts their dribble, whilst a push dribble is used if they are already dribbling.

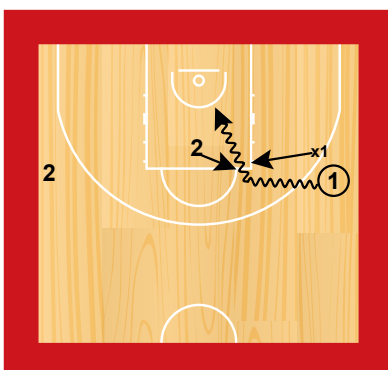
With the push dribble, the dribbler is pushing the ball into an open space and then moves after the ball. Obviously, if they push the ball too far away from their body it may allow defenders to intercept it.

The position of the defender’s head is often important as it will affect the defender’s balance.



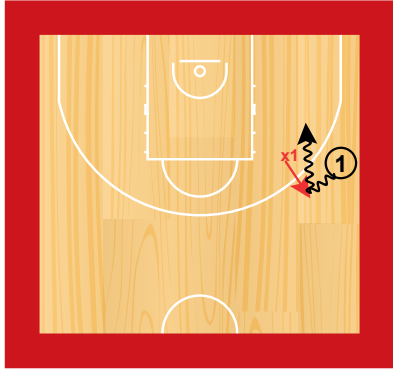
In defending a ball screen, the screener’s defender may move into the path of the dribbler. Whether this is simply a “show” or a double team, the dribbler will look for an opportunity to “split” the two defenders (i.e. dribble between them).

The dribbler, pushes the ball between the defenders and then moves their body through the gap.



Another opportunity to “split” defenders is when a help defender comes across to stop dribble penetration. The offensive player may pick up the ball and jump through the gap or they may push the dribble through and then follow.





A push dribble can also be used where a defender moves across to stop a dribbler. Here 1 has to change direction and could use a cross over dribble, however that tends to keep the ball near the defender.

The "push" dribble moves the ball away from the defender, and then 1 moves to it.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Discuss with a coaching colleague whether or not you agree with the following statement:

Ball handling techniques do not need to be taught. Just put the kids in a competitive situation and let them play – they will work out the “moves” that work best for them.

2. Assess how well each of your players beat opponents off the dribble (creating scoring opportunities for themselves or a team mate). Have your players rate their “ball handling” skills? Do the player ratings agree with your assessment?

## 2.5 SHOOTING

### 2.5.1 ADVANCED LAY-UP TECHNIQUES

Players should initially be taught two techniques for lay-ups:

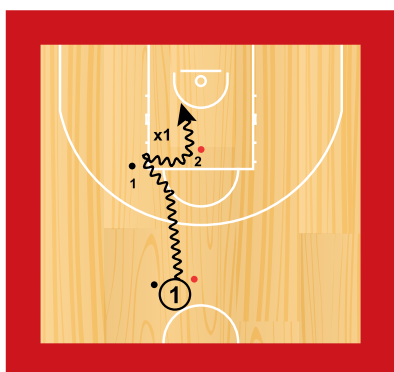
- Jump stop and then shoot
- Moving (or “two step”) lay-up.

With a moving lay-up players should be taught to shoot with their left hand on the left hand side and with their right hand on the right hand side.

The footwork is also different on each side – jumping off the right foot when shooting with the left hand and jumping off the left foot when shooting with the right hand.

With the moving lay-up, the hand the player shoots with should reach as high as possible. They will also lift the knee on that side, which will help them to jump up at the basket. Even young players should be encouraged to jump up high, rather than a “long jump”.

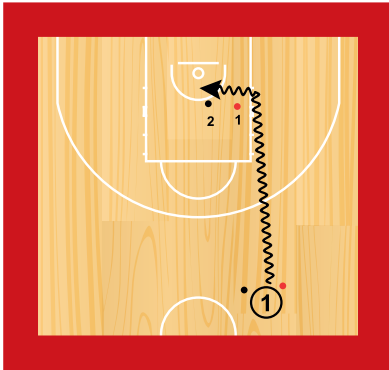
As players become more experienced and play at higher levels, they must develop the ability to “get to the rim” and make a lay-up, even if it is not the conventional footwork that is initially taught. Below are examples commonly seen.



#### EURO STEP

A “Euro Step” lay-up incorporates a change of direction as the player takes their “two steps”. The steps may also be slower.

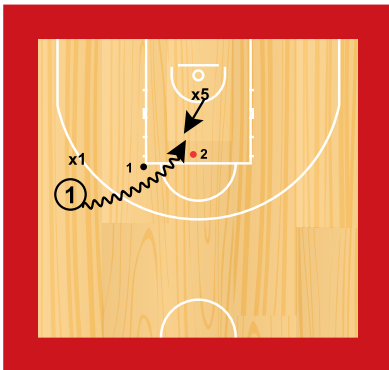
Here, the player takes their first step to their left (black dot). With their second step they step past the defender to the right hand side (red dot). They should also lift the ball and move it from one side of their body to the other.



### OUTSIDE FOOT, INSIDE FOOT

The offensive player uses their lay-up footwork to move laterally to get to the basket. Typically, they may dribble down the “seam” at the side of the key, landing their “outside foot” (furthest from the basket - shown in red). They then land their “inside foot” and jump off both feet to the basket.

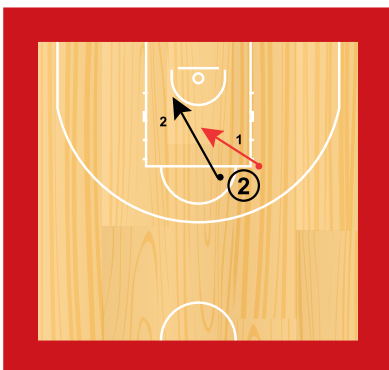
The move is done in motion, enabling the player to move from the side of the key to the basket.



### FLOATER OR “TEAR DROP”

This is also called a “long lay-up”. The offensive player penetrates to the top of the key and shoots before getting to the help defender.

The footwork is the same as “motion lay-up”, however the player shoots from the top of the key rather than at the basket. They must jump high so that they can shoot over the defender.



### WRONG FOOT LAY-UP

Players must be able to shoot jumping off the same foot as they are shooting with. The need may arise for a number of reasons:

- Choice of pivot foot. The example shown, the left foot is the pivot, so the first step must be with the right foot (shown red). The second step is with the left and as they are on the left side they may shoot with the left
- At the end of a “Euro Step”;
- Taking only one step instead of two, to avoid defenders.



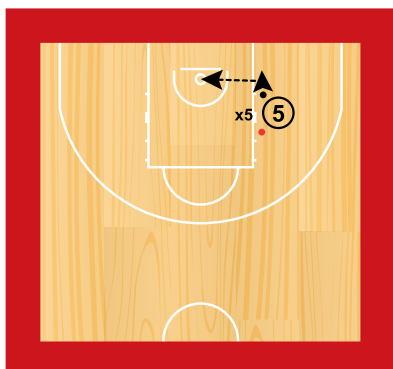
### HOOK SHOT

The hook shot is taken side on to the basket, with the offensive player's body separating them from their defender. The most renowned exponent of this shot was Kareem Abdul Jabbar, who would shoot equally adeptly with left and right hand.



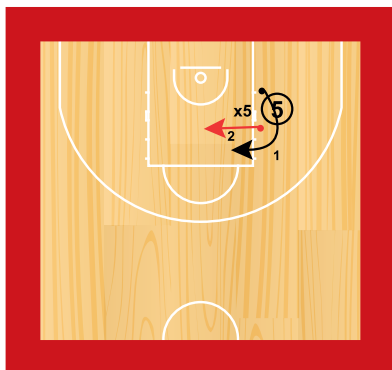
Importantly, players often move their arm in a circular motion, releasing the shot very differently to normal shot technique. This is incorrect.

The release of a hook shot should be the same as any shot. The player should lift the ball to their shoulder and then reach upwards to shoot the ball. Players often incorrectly start with the ball at their hip - this should be discouraged.



A hook shot can be done from a jump stop, which often will happen at the end of "drop step" from the low post. However the "sky hook" made famous by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, is a moving lay-up.

It may be done with one step (without dribble), where the player takes a step (shown here toward the baseline) and then lifts their pivot foot as they jump and shoot.



It can also be done with two steps, which will require the player to dribble. Shown here, a post player “backs in” toward the basket and then spins to the middle to shoot a hook shot.

A hook shot may be taken any time. They step first with their baseline foot (shown in black) and take the second step with their other foot (shown in red), an offensive player moves across the basket.

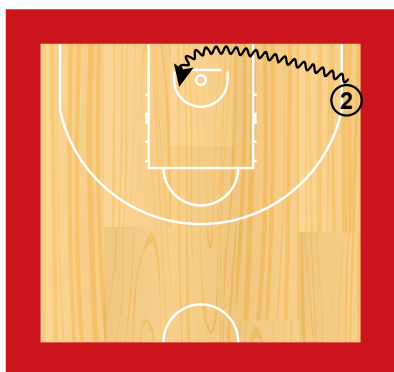
### SCOOP SHOT

Initially players are taught to jump up at the basket whenever shooting a lay-up and to reach as high as possible when releasing the ball. More experienced players may reach ahead of their body and “scoop” the ball at the basket, when avoiding defenders.

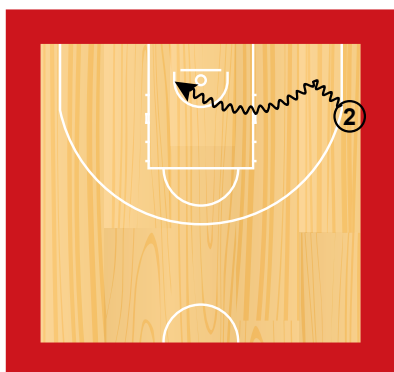
As with most of these advanced lay-ups, players will develop skills instinctively as they find a way to score against defenders. When shooting a reaching or “scooping” lay-up, players should be encouraged to hold the ball in two hands as this gives them more control of the ball. It also enables them to keep control if a defender does knock the ball.

## 2.5.2 REVERSE LAY-UP

*A “reverse” lay-up is where the offensive player drives from one side of the basket, and shoots from the other side of the basket. Particularly for older athletes, the basket can help to protect the shot from being blocked by the defender.*



When the offensive player drives baseline, they may come from behind the backboard. Here the reverse lay-up is shot with the back to the baseline and releasing the ball above their head.



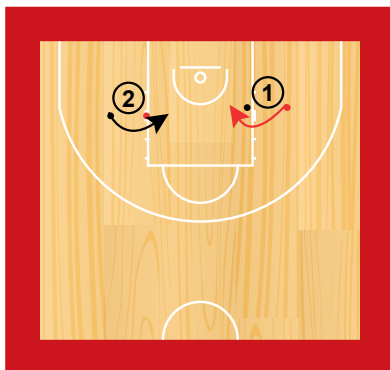
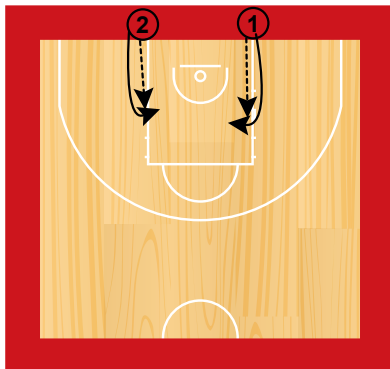
When the offensive player drives in front of the basket, the reverse lay-up may be shot with back to half way. It is similar to a hook shot, although is taken closer to the basket.

## 2.5.3 ADVANCED SHOOTING - SHOOTING FOOTWORK

Initially, players should be instructed to be “balanced” before shooting and should be instructed how to use both a “jump” stop or “one count” – both feet landing at the same time and a “stride” stop or “two-count” – one foot lands and then the other. With a stride stop, players should be able to use either foot as their pivot foot.

Whichever footwork a player uses they should be instructed in the habit of catching the ball “in the air” – with both feet in the air. This should not be an exaggerated jump, however by catching the ball “in the air” the player will be able to:

- Correctly establish a pivot foot or have a choice of pivot foot if a jump stop is used;
- Generate greater power from the legs in the shot;
- Have a quicker “shot release” as they do not need to “dip” down to generate power.



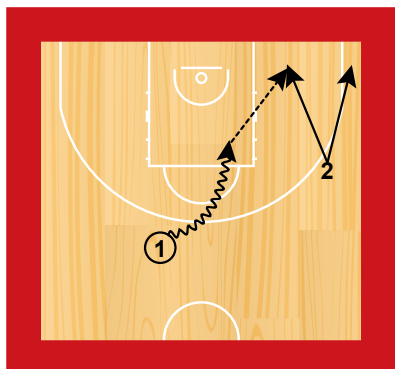
This simple activity is a good way to practice “stride stop” shooting footwork. Players stand on the baseline with a ball and spin the ball to approximately the “low block”. They move after it, catch it with feet in the air and land in a stride stop.

The first foot to land should be the “inside foot” (closest to the basket) and:

- land on the heel and turn the foot to point at the basket;
- bend the knee to drop their weight down (and stop forward movement or over-rotation).

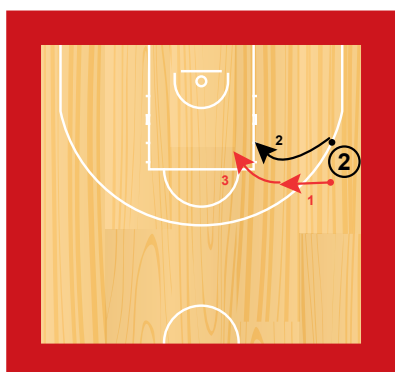
As the second foot lands the player should immediately jump into their shot. This is an explosive movement. By practicing on both sides of the basket the players will develop the skill to pivot on either foot.





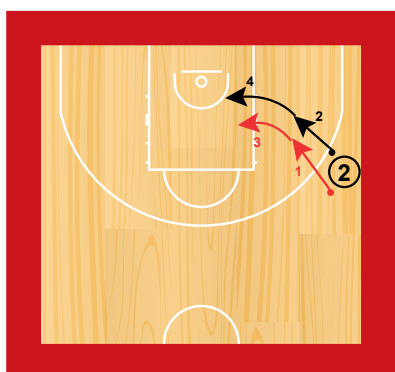
An activity to practice “jump stop” footwork is to have the shooter start at the wing. As their team mate dribbles into the key, the shooter moves sideways to their shooting position. As the pass is thrown to them they jump-slightly forward, catch the ball in the air and as they land they immediately shoot.

The player should move to a position that is within their shooting range.

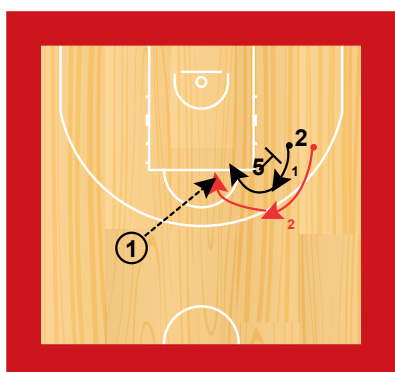


Players also need to be able to shoot off the dribble. When they dribble in the opposite direction of their pivot foot, they should be able to shoot with only one dribble.

Here the right foot is the pivot foot so the player takes the first step with their left foot. As this foot lands, the dribble should also hit the floor. After the dribble the player catches the ball (with feet in the air) and either stops in a stride stop (shown) or jump stop to shoot.



If the player dribbles in the direction of their pivot foot, they may need to take two dribbles, because their first step is across their body. Again, here is shown a stride stop.



When cutting off a screen the offensive player must step past the screen with the foot that is closest to the screen. This has the effect of “sealing” the defender so that they cannot squeeze past the screener.

## 2.5.4 ADVANCED SHOOTING - INSIDE SHOOTING

*The opportunity for players to practice in contested situations is very important for them to develop the ability to be a scorer from both the perimeter and post position. In practicing in contested situations, players will develop ways to score and stop scorers and the coach should only correct when absolutely necessary.*

There are some techniques that may help players to be more successful inside “the paint” and the coach may provide feedback to players on these techniques at an appropriate time. This type of instruction is usually most effective in response to situations that the player has been involved in.

### “HIGH 5” FOLLOW THROUGH

Around the basket players will often shoot from various angles and positions. They need to be proficient with both left and right hand but literally will shoot sometimes facing the basket, sometimes side-on to the basket and at times with their back to the basket.

Some players struggle with the release of their shot, which we traditionally teach as a “snap” (where the wrist bends and fingers point down). Instead, around the basket, players may find it easier to release the ball with their fingers pointing up and their wrist finishing straight.

This type of release (a “High 5” follow through) should still put backspin on the ball, as this is important to “soften” the shot. It is particularly useful when not directly facing the basket.

### SHOOTING OFF WRONG FOOT

The key is often a congested area and the less dribbles and steps a player makes will often lead to a better result.

This also means that sometimes they are not able to use “perfect” lay-up footwork and instead need to jump off the same foot as they are shooting with.

Coaches should not automatically correct an athlete for incorrect footwork, although should check that the footwork was legal. Similarly, a player may shoot with their right hand on the left hand side of the basket and although we do not teach this, it may have been the appropriate shot to make having regard to their position on the court and the position of any defenders (for example, on a baseline drive, the player’s left hand may be behind the backboard!).

If the coach believes that the technique has disadvantages they can speak to the athlete about that or may even design an activity to “test” the technique. For example, a player may reach around a defender with their arm to release a “scoop” shot, which would be unlikely to be successful if there were a second defender nearby. The coach could design an activity that has a second defender, without telling the players. If the offensive player attempts again to use the move and is blocked the coach can speak to the defender about why it was unsuccessful the second time.

If the player learns that it will work in one circumstance (no help) but not in

another (with help) and they learn how to identify each situation, then they should be allowed the freedom to use the choose as necessary.

### **PIVOTS, FAKES AND ONE FOOT SHOOTING**

One cause of needing to shoot off the “wrong foot” is the pivot foot which the player started on may not enable the player (in the congestion of the key) to take the same number of dribbles/steps to do the correct footwork.

It is very important that offensive players learn the importance of using pivots and fakes to create space to shoot (or pass). Often pivoting on the heel and turning the foot, will make it easier for the offence to step past a defender. Being able to shoot off one foot is very important once the player has a dead ball, as they may still take one step past the defender. In the confined space of the key they may not have the opportunity to bring their feet together as they normally would before shooting.

When pivoting or stepping, the offensive player should keep their upper torso high and not crouch down. This keeps their vision up (which is important for identifying possible passes). It is equally important that they keep their knees flexed and their weight down. If they straighten their legs they will not be as balanced nor can they take as big a step in order to get past a defender.

### **MOVING AWAY FROM THE BASKET**

Often pivoting away from the basket will help to create space to be able to shoot because they are now side-on to the defender (so the “width” of their body separates them from the defender) and it is very important that they are able to shoot with either hand from within the key.

Defenders in the key may also “chase” or reach for the ball when the defender pivots away, and this creates an opportunity to then step past them (often using a reverse pivot).

### **FAKE SLOWLY, MOVE FAST**

Shot fakes in particular can be very effective inside the key as the defenders are often keen to attempt to block the shot and will jump to do so. Once they have left their feet, they are no longer able to defend the player. A common mistake though is to make the shot fake:

- Too fast – moving into their next move before the defender has had time to react to the fake.
- Too small – not lifting the ball above their head (which becomes obvious to the defender!). If the fake is too small it may not be seen by the defender and accordingly they will not react to it.

### **KEEP THE BALL HIGH**

Perhaps the most important thing in the congestion of the key is to keep the ball high. Having the ball at shoulder height (or at the forehead) will ensure that it is difficult for defenders to slap the ball away or get a joint possession. If the ball is held high, it will also tend to make the offensive player’s elbows stick out, which will help to keep defender’s away.

Importantly, the offensive player should not throw their elbows and attempt to make any contact, however having them up (and in their cylinder) is legitimate and will help to relieve pressure.


Without doubt, the more coaches create contested situations at practice the better the players will develop their skills of inside shooting. That pressure may be relatively passive (standing in front of a player so that they must step past) through to “game-like” pressure.

## 2.5.5 CORRECTING SHOOTING TECHNIQUE - FLAT SHOT

### COMMON SHOOTING PROBLEMS

Coaches should take time to observe a player shooting before rushing in to try to change their shooting technique. To be most effective, the coach should try to make only a small number of changes, and therefore should evaluate what they believe will make the most difference.

Following are four common problems, with some suggestions as to how to rectify the technique. Sometimes the most important thing to do is to describe to the athlete what you want (e.g. a high arc) and then let them “explore” how to produce that.

Problem Observed	Potential Causes	Suggested Change
<p>“Flat shot” – with a low arc.</p> <p>The shot has a lower probability of going in and if it hits the ring is likely to bounce away, rather than bounce up and potentially still go in.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low release point (elbow below eye).</li> <li>2. Narrow stance – with one foot too far in front of the other (sprinter’s stance)</li> </ol>	<p>To raise the release point:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have athlete look underneath the ball to see their target.</li> <li>2. Have them stand in front of the basket (top of the no-charge circle) and shoot. Only “swishes” count (i.e. the ball does not hit the ring or the net).</li> <li>3. Have athlete stand in front of a wall and shoot to hit a particular point on the wall:</li> </ol>  <p>To broaden stance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. May need to practice stopping in a broad stance. Start with ball spin it to themselves, and step forward to catch it. Catch in the air and land in balanced stance.</li> <li>2. When practicing free throws, have athlete look at floor and place their feet a certain number of floor boards apart (whatever is comfortable). Making this conscious will help make it a habit!</li> <li>3. Have the player try using a jump stop rather than a stride stop (when player “over stride” which puts their feet too far apart).</li> </ol>

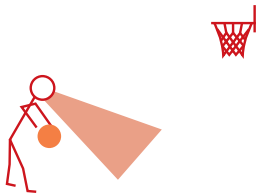
## 2.5.6 CORRECTING SHOOTING TECHNIQUE - OFF-LINE SHOT

Problem Observed	Potential Causes	Suggested Change
"Off-line shot" – it does not hit the target.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They are not getting power from their legs but are "pushing" with the arms / shoulders.</li> <li>2. Twisting their body as they shoot – particularly if their non-shooting hand is "pulling away"</li> <li>3. Elbow not being under the ball, so that arm pushes across their face.</li> </ol>	<p><b>To engage LEG power:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make sure their stance is not too wide</li> <li>2. Have them shoot inside the keyway, start with the ball at their waist and hand behind the ball – have them push up with their legs, finishing on their toes and their hand underneath under the ball.</li> </ol> <p>Initially, don't release the shot, just practice lifting the ball up as the legs push. Progress to shooting.</p> <p><b>To stop body twisting:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have player "hold" their follow through, keeping both arms in the air.</li> <li>2. Stand behind the player (or have them stand in front of a wall), so that if they twist their body, they will contact the coach/wall.</li> </ol> <p><b>To get elbow under the ball:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dribble ball with shooting hand, and then bring other hand across to pick the ball up and bring it to a "cocked" position (hand and elbow under the ball).</li> </ol>

## 2.5.7 CORRECTING SHOOTING TECHNIQUE - SIDE SPIN

Problem Observed	Potential Causes	Suggested Change
<p>Side spin on the ball.</p> <p>This is likely to affect the arc of the shot and may also affect the direction of the shot.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The non-shooting hand twisting to push the ball.</li> <li>2. Their shooting hand twisting on release, as the fingers of the hand come together</li> </ol>	<p>To get backspin on the ball:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold the follow through of the shot and check that the non-shooting hand has not twisted. If the palm of the non-shooting hand is facing the basket then it has most likely pushed the ball putting side spin on it.</li> <li>2. Have athlete stand at the elbow and "shoot" the ball, trying to land at the other elbow. If the shot has "backspin" the ball will bounce back toward the player.</li> </ol>

## 2.5.8 CORRECTING SHOOTING TECHNIQUE - SHOOTING SHORT

Problem Observed	Potential Causes	Suggested Change
Shooting Short – hitting the front of the ring.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insufficient “power” in the shot.</li> <li>2. Fading backwards, which may be caused by:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Head going back, watching the ball in flight</li> <li>b. Jumping backwards – often landing on one foot, whilst the other foot kicks forward.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>To engage LEG power:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make sure stance is not too wide</li> <li>2. Shoot inside keyway, start with the ball at chin, hand underneath – have them push up with their legs, finishing on their toes.</li> </ol> <p>To Stop the Fade Away:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep vision on target – teach players to have a target.</li> <li>2. If they are looking down as they catch the ball or pick it up off the dribble, the movement of their head to then see the basket can be enough to have them jump backwards. Have them able to see the basket as they catch the ball.</li> </ol>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. If they are fading back and landing on one foot, have them shoot behind a line or towel. At the end of the shot they should land both feet at least on, or in front, of the line/towel. Both feet should land at the same time;</li> </ol>

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Reflect upon the top scorers in a league or tournament that you have watched and are familiar with the players:
  - a. Describe the shot technique of each of the scorers;
  - b. What elements are common to most, or all, of the top scorers;
  - c. Discuss with a coaching colleague what changes (if any) you would try to make regarding the shooting technique of any of these players
2. What is your team's shooting percentage when shooting from inside the key? Have a coaching colleague watch your team play and discuss with them what your players could do to improve their shooting percentage inside the key.



## 2.6 OFFENSIVE MOVES

### 2.6.1 POST MOVE – “BACKING IN”

Players are initially taught in the low post to either:

- Turn and face the basket; or
- “Drop-step”

The “back in” move is used to dribble into the key, while keeping the player’s back to the basket. It is most effective when the defender has their feet too far away so that a drop step will not work. By dribbling in, the post player tries to get to a position where they can step past the defender, or they are close enough to shoot.

When “backing in” the post player:

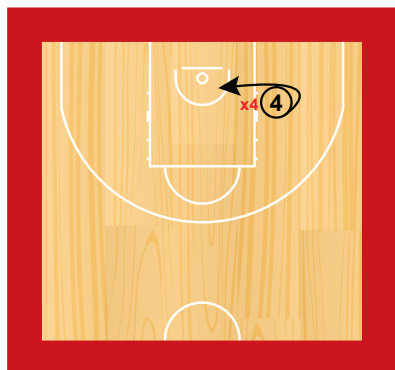
- Angles their body slightly so that one shoulder is closer to the defender – this creates some space to protect the ball;
- Dribble close to their body and between their feet. If the right shoulder is closest to the defender, dribble with the left hand (and vice versa);
- Turn their “chin to shoulder” so that they can see the defenders – whichever shoulder is closest to the defender is the direction they should look;
- Keep vision of the defender of any perimeter player on their side of the floor – these defenders will often “hedge down” to steal the ball;
- Limit the number of dribbles – the more dribbles they take, the more likely another defender will come to steal the ball.

The post player will often take a hook shot once they have moved closer to the ball. They should be trying to get position in relation to the defender’s feet.

The post player may also “hesitate” on their dribble (bouncing the ball higher and lifting their shoulders as if standing up) and then attack with an aggressive step.

This move is not encouraged for young players as they will tend to dribble too often and not have vision of defenders that will come to attack the ball.

## 2.6.2 POST MOVE – “FORWARD SPIN MOVE”

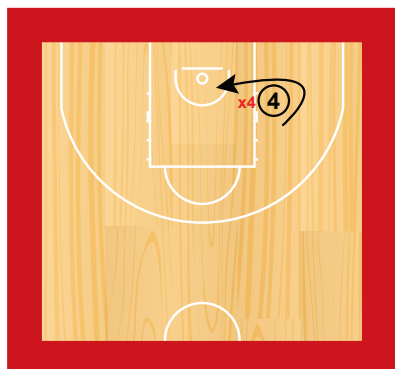


### FORWARD SPIN FROM LOW POST

The forward spin from the low post is used where the defender is playing behind but close to the offensive player.

The offensive player may fake to the middle (keeping their feet still) and then, pivoting on their baseline foot, quickly spin past the defender. It is easiest if they pivot on the heel of their foot, turning their toe towards the baseline.

The post player steps with their “high foot” closest to the half way and it lands well behind the defender. They should turn 180°, stepping to the basket not towards the baseline.



## 2.6.3 BEATING OPPONENTS

*There is one skill, above all others, which players need to learn (and coaches need to learn to teach). It applies equally to offence and defence. Simply, it is the ability to gain an advantage in order to “beat their opponent”.*

### CREATING AN ADVANTAGE

There are many highly skilled players who literally seem to have the ball “on a string” but who lack the ability to beat their opponent. Whether it is getting open to receive a pass, avoiding a defender’s “block out” in order to get an offensive rebound or dribbling past a defender, winning the 1v1 contest within basketball is fundamental to success.

For example, an offensive player may use a dribble move in order to shift the defender (or get them to shift their weight in one direction). If successful, this gives the offensive player an advantage that they can “exploit” by now going past the defender in the other direction.

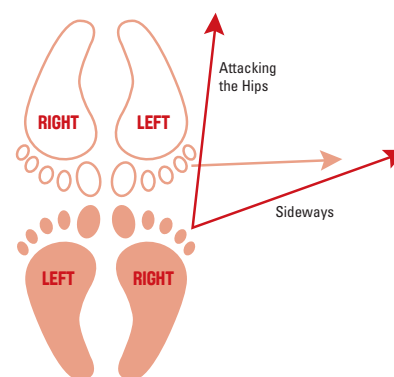
Accordingly, coaches must include “contested” elements even if they are within the context of a fun activity in each practice so that players can develop this necessary skill. It is as much a “mindset” as it is a physical skill.

### “FOOT ADVANTAGE”

Whether offensively or defensively, whichever player gets their foot in front of the opponent has the preferable position. Particularly in post play, it is common to see players pushing/holding with their arms and upper body trying to get position. However, it is getting “foot advantage” that is key to winning the contest.

### TAKING THE ADVANTAGE “ATTACK THE HIPS”

Offensively players want to get past their opponent and their best way to do this is to “attack the hips”. Many players will move to the sideways, which gives the defender the chance to recover. When the offensive player “attacks the hips” the defensive player cannot recover easily, as shown below:



### COMBINATION MOVES

A skilled opponent may be able to react in time to an initial move, however the player can still beat the opponent by making a second move – combining a “fake crossover” dribble with an actual crossover. The key is to not perform the combination moves too quickly. Give the opponent time to react to the first move, and then beat them with a second move!

### CHANGING PACE

A player that moves at the same pace all the time is much easier to defend, mostly because it is predictable. Even if they are fast enough to beat one opponent, the team can counter this by switching. However, using a change of pace is a very effective way to beat an opponent.

Often when a player slows, their opponent may relax (and move out of a good stance), and can then be beaten by quickly moving again.

### MOVE BACKWARDS TO GO FORWARDS

Similar to changing pace, changing direction is also a good way to beat an opponent. In particular, when dribbling often dribbling backwards will result in the defender "lunging forwards", which provides an opportunity to get past.

To many players keep dribbling forwards, which makes setting "traps" or "double teams" much easier.

### CONTACT!

Basketball is a contact sport. Often contact results in a foul, however incidental contact is not called a foul. Offensive players (particularly when doing a lay-up) too often try to avoid contact, which results in being off balance and missing the shot.

Obviously, if a defender has good defensive position in front of the offensive player, the offensive player must avoid any contact. However, when attempting a lay-up (with defenders on the side), the offensive player's focus should be on "attacking" the basket and scoring the basket, not worrying about avoiding contact.

### "WALK AWAY FROM THE FIGHT"

With older athletes it is common to see them fighting for position, particularly in post play, although it also happens when players are cutting or using screens. Sometimes it is more effective to "walk away", almost as if you are not going to be involved in the play.

This will often result in the defender turning their concentration to being a "help" defender. Once they do this, is the perfect time to attack! The offensive player should particularly remember that if they can see the back of their opponent's head, their opponent cannot see them!

### "READS NOT RULES" – "THE DEFENDER TELLS YOU WHAT TO DO"

A common mistake with young players is that they will decide what they are going to do (e.g. pass in a 2x1 situation) well before the decision needs to be made. Where a team has set offensive rules (e.g. Player A passes to the wing and then cuts to the corner), inexperienced players will follow that rule without exception.

However, an offensive player must remember that the "defender tells them what to do". This is an example of a player reacting to what their opponent does and coaches should be careful that they are not too strict in requiring "set plays". For this reason, "motion" offence is the preferred offence initially with junior athletes.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Who are your most effective players in regards to scoring in the low post? Does your team actively create shots for that player in the low post?
2. Discuss the following statement with a coaching colleague:  

The most effective post play is often when a guard posts up their defender. Most coaches don't teach guards how to defend the low post, so a guard that has basic post moves can score easily.
3. How would you defend a low post player that was effective at using a forward spin move?



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**LEVEL 2**

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# **PLAYER**

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**CHAPTER 3**

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# **PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

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## CHAPTER 3

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# PHYSICAL PREPARATION

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# 3.1 STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

## 3.1.1 PREPARING PLAYERS PHYSICALLY TO PLAY BASKETBALL

*Basketball requires players to display high levels of speed, strength, power and flexibility and then repeat efforts time and time again during the game.*

*This section has been contributed by:*

### **JULIAN JONES & JAN LEGG**

Australian Men's & Women's Basketball Team's Strength & Conditioning Lead's, Strength & Conditioning Discipline, Australian Institute of Sport

### **INTRODUCTION**

Basketball requires players to display high levels of speed, strength, power and flexibility and then repeat efforts time and time again during the game.

Players of the game at the highest levels train their body's physical capacities to their highest levels. No longer is it good enough for the player to rely on their natural skill level as a player to excel in the sport.

This section is designed to help Basketball coaches to determine what physical qualities each of their players need to be developed. These qualities can cover both strength and fitness capacities and need to be planned for over the season.

To optimize the physical preparation of players, coaches must have an understanding of what the qualities are and when to prescribe them. Once past the base level, Basketball Coaches must consult a Strength & Conditioning coach to optimize this area of training and development for the player to attain the highest level.

### **PHYSICAL QUALITIES**

The following physical qualities need to be factored into every player's programme to enable them to excel in all physical facets of the game.

### **Strength –**

the ability of the body to create a force or overcome a resistance. This quality is a key component in injury prevention as well as being one of the building blocks to the player becoming more explosive or powerful.

### **Power –**

is the combination of speed and strength together. It is the ability of the body to exert a big force in a very short period of time.

### **Muscular Endurance –**

is the ability of the body to perform at a specific level of play or display a maximal effort for extended periods of time.

### **Range of Motion –**

is the ability of the body to move across the appropriate full range of movement to optimize the skill being performed. We usually consider this in the context of a particular joint (e.g. shoulder, hips). For example, a player may find it difficult to get their elbow under the ball when starting a shot due to limited range of motion in their shoulder. This includes flexibility for those players that cannot attain the required full range of motion to effect the optimal skill execution.

**Coordination –**

is the body's ability to perform efficiently with all muscles of the body working together for optimal performance within whole body movements to execute the required movements and skills of the game. An example of this is shooting – where the legs provide the power for the shot and must work in coordination with the upper body.

These physical qualities fit together to make the player move as efficiently as possible. Coaches must assess how a player performs the skills of the game so that they can identify the appropriate training methods and activities to accomplish the performance shifts needed for each player to perform at a higher level. This chapter is a general guide on how to undertake this at a beginner level.

Designing a programme for basketball involves planning both your team's and the individual players training to produce the highest possible results in the required physical qualities at the appropriate times. Ideally, this means that a yearly plan must be produced to enable the appropriate training modalities to be assigned at the right time. In situations where the coach may work with the players for less than a year, the plan should also take into account work the athletes may be doing in other programs.

The plan will also enable you to split the year into training periods of time that will address the appropriate performance aspects. Each of the qualities that you identify to improve will take different periods of time to adapt. This must be catered for in the time allocated and the improvement levels expected.

**MYTHS ABOUT STRENGTH TRAINING**

Some players may question the appropriateness of undertaking certain types of training and there are many myths as to what are appropriate training modalities exist.

Some common misconceptions are:

**Strength Training will make me muscle bound and slow**

This has no scientific basis as an element of improving speed is for the player to be able to produce more force. To increase the muscles ability to produce force, a player has to train with increased resistance in the activities they undertake.

**Strength Training will affect my shot**

As the player's muscles develop and can create greater force, the muscles requires a lower percentage of its overall capacity to undertake the same activities that they have always done.

For example, if shooting a three point shot initially required all the force a young athlete has, then as they get stronger, it may only take 80% of what their muscles are now capable of. The player's body will adapt to this quite quickly, although for a short time they may feel "different" when shooting. The benefit of having increased strength is that taking shots will now be less fatiguing, which will see an improvement in the player's performance.

**Strength training will make me lose flexibility**

This is not the case provided that a suitable programme to maintain flexibility is followed at the same time. Strength training does require a player use "maximal" contractions of the muscles. Accordingly, it is also very important to let the muscle fibres return to a relaxed state and length. To ensure flexibility is not compromised, players should perform some stretching during cool-down in order to maintain their initial range of motion

**I will lose speed if I undertake too much aerobic training**

This can happen if the training plan involves too much aerobic work. It is therefore important that coaches plan to work on both speed and aerobic capacities.

### **I can undertake the same programme all year round.**

The body adapts to different training stimuli at different rates. Once the body gets used to the type of training the adaptation rate decreases and can get to the point where the body stops any adaptation. Applying this principle means that for the best results from a training programme, it must be changed before the body stops adaptation. This requires the players training programme to be changed every four to six weeks to maximise the adaptation rate.

### **MOVEMENT EFFICIENCY**

This is the basis of any strength and conditioning programme and is defined as making the player as efficient as possible in performing the skills of the game. This is achieved by enhancing the physical capacities and ranges of motion that are required to undertake the skill.

These skills from a physical perspective can consist of activities such as running, jumping, shooting and passing. Each of these activities has a capacity and range of motion required for the player to be able to perform the efficiently.

To do this effectively, coaches need to have an idea of what is a good example of the right skills being performed and how these players are able to do this. Using video to gain a mental model of what is “best practice” is a good way to enhance your ability to assess if your players have good movement efficiency or not in the major skills of Basketball.

### **DESIGNING A PERIODISED PLAN**

Coaches must outline a plan in which these qualities will be trained and at what time of the year. These periods of training can be put together so as to optimise the stimulus you can provide the player and limit the effect of fatigue. It will also enable you to prioritise certain types of training during the off, pre and post season. During competition it is advisable to plan to maintain the physical capacities of the player, as it is their performance in the game that is the priority.

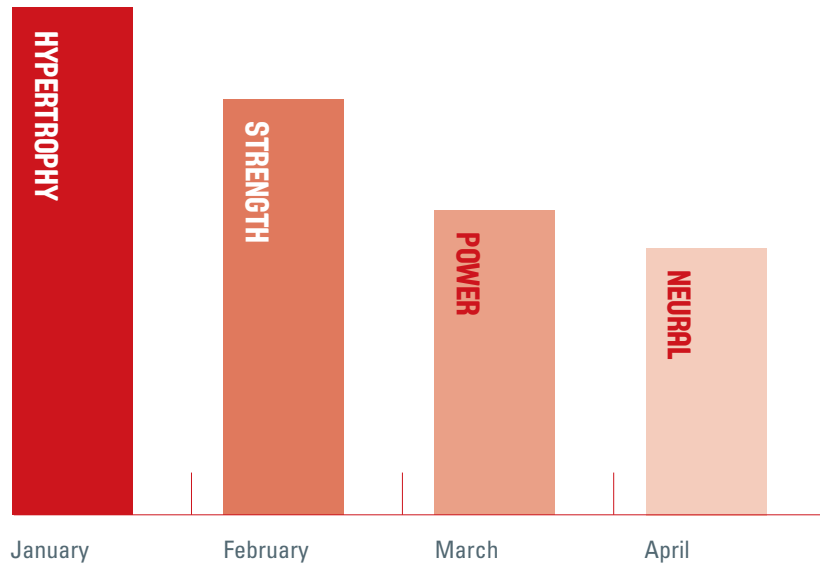
Coaches may seek assistance from trained strength and conditioning coaches, however the basketball coach still needs to understand the physical capacities required for basketball and the importance of sequencing the training.

A major consideration in putting a periodised plan together is understanding that certain physical qualities take longer to adapt than others and that some qualities can hinder the adaptation rate of other qualities if they are performed out of sequence. It is also important to understand that when you stop training certain physical qualities they will start to detrain at different rates.

Splitting a training plan into different segments or periods to target particular physical qualities is known as periodising. Putting the periods together creates an overall periodised plan for the year. There are many ways to approach creating a periodised plan. The most common used by coaches with little strength and conditioning experience is a linear model. When you progress to a more complex periodised plan, the preferred method in high performance sport currently is a conjugated model.

The difference between a linear and a conjugated model is that the linear model moves from training one quality to the next in a sequential order as the player progresses to the competition. The conjugated model works on all of the qualities all of the time but the percentage of training time against each quality changes as the player progresses to the competition.

### LINER MODEL EXAMPLE

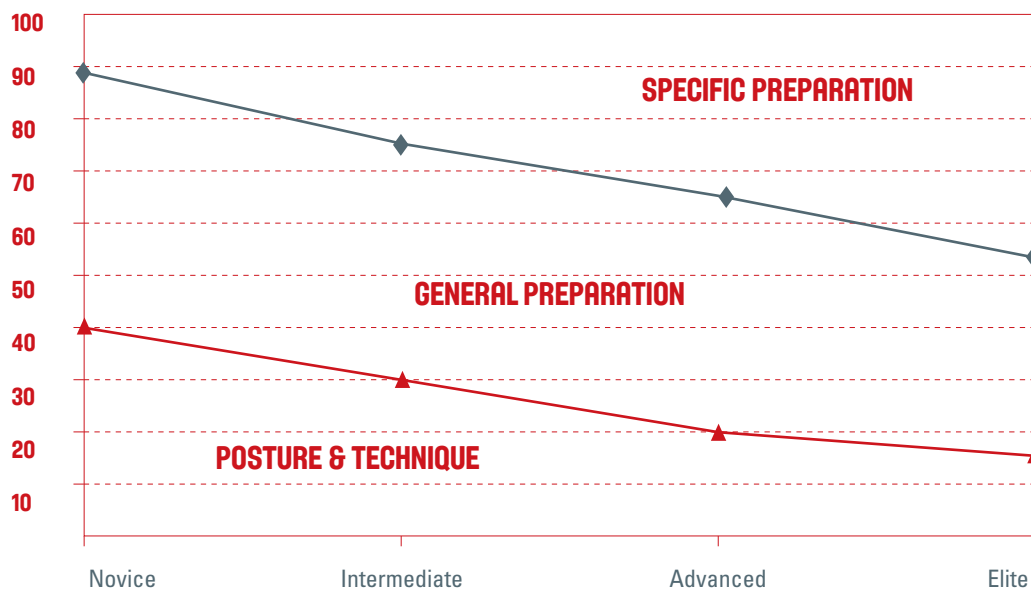


The Linear Model assumes that the quality worked on first will remain whilst progressing to the next quality and this can be achieved by including appropriate activities as part of team practice sessions.

### CONJUGATED MODEL

The alternative to the linear model is the conjugated model.

In the Conjugated Model qualities are worked on concurrently, such as:



Whichever model is used, the continual prescription of training is needed to either maintain or improve the physical qualities of the player. If there is not enough training load to stimulate these qualities, a detraining effect will occur.

This means that the developed qualities will decrease – the player loses strength, or aerobic capacity or whatever has been worked on.

These qualities can start to decrease within as little as 5 days if no training is prescribed.

### THE BELOW TABLE OUTLINES THE GENERAL DETRAINING TIMELINES

DAYS	DETRAINING EFFECT
<b>3-5</b>	Aerobic capability drops by 5%
<b>7-9</b>	Body's ability to use oxygen drops by 10%
<b>10</b>	Body's metabolic rate drops
<b>14-16</b>	Energy production in muscle cells begins to decrease rapidly. Loss of muscle mass, strength and tone
<b>20-21</b>	Body's ability to use oxygen drops by 20%
<b>22-25</b>	10-15% loss of muscle mass
<b>27-29</b>	Muscle strength drops by as much as 30%

The above timelines should be factored into the overall planning of a player's training year. The table represents figures based on completely stopping training and the timelines will vary depending on the player.

### ASSESSING ATHLETES (MOVEMENT SCREEN INFORMATION)

Athlete assessment is an important element to all periodised athlete preparation plans as it assists coaches to monitor the training programs and make adjustments when required. Important considerations when making an assessment of an athlete are to determine what elements of performance are being considered and which movement do you wish to assess?

Typically, movement screenings are used as part of an initial assessment of athletes. Movement screenings can be of great value to identify basketball players at risk of injury through use of poor movement patterns as a result of insufficient range of motion, strength or stability. Program design can then be tailored to improve fundamental

movement patterns with individual player's progress easily monitored and programme design validated.

Movement screenings are different from performance testing which might involve speed, strength or endurance testing. One of the most popular movement screens in the literature to date was developed by Cook termed The Functional Movement Screen (FMS). The FMS attempts to allow professionals to screen a range of fundamental movement patterns as listed below;

Sample of a basketball specific movement screening:

Movement Patterns Assessed:

- Squats – Do they favour one leg more than another, are they not symmetrical
- Overhead Squat – Do they use one arm more than another, is their balance incorrect
- Lunges – Are they better on one leg over the other. Do they maintain balance
- Landing Technique – do they absorb shock well? Do they land on locked joints
- Single Leg Jumping and Landing – are there imbalances or biases

- Repeat Effort Jumping and Landing – do they have good endurance or not

Coaches may then wish to assess the capacity of the athletes within specific movements: for instance, whether the athlete can complete the following exercises with good technique and achieve the desired repetitions:

- Single leg hamstring bridges 12/leg
- Pushups 12
- Prone Hold 1min
- SL Calf Raise (on floor) 20/leg

It is suggested that movement screenings be filmed to allow the coach to more easily assess the athletes. Athletes can then be graded and scored on each movement allowing for easy tracking of progress over time. An example of a simple scoring system is outlined below:

- 1 - Cannot complete exercise without major flaws
- 2 - Can complete exercise but with some minor flaws
- 3 - Can execute exercise with technical proficiency

### WARM-UP FOR TRAINING

A warm-up is a popular practice that is considered by the majority of basketball players and coaches to be an essential part of any training session. A warm-up is believed to improve the players ability in the subsequent exercise performance and reduce the incidence of sports-related musculoskeletal injuries. A warm-up not only prepares the athlete for the training session to follow but can also improve the athletes' performance through mechanisms such as increased nerve conduction rate, improved force production and increased anaerobic energy provision.

The primary purpose of the warm-up is to elevate the core temperature but coaches can also use this time to reinforce movement patterns and complete injury prevention work. Warm ups will generally follow a pattern of general movement and mobilization followed by a more sport-specific intensive warm-up.

General movement involves the use of light exercise to increase heart rate, blood flow, respiration and core muscle temperature. This is usually followed by dynamic stretching to increase Range Of Movement and then introduce sport-specific movements. For example athletes begin with stationary shooting, progress to jump shots and finally player contact.

An example of warm-up for a basketball training session is outlined below incorporating the movement skills discussed in earlier chapters:

- Jog court and back x 2
- Walking lunges to half court:
  - Toe and knees point forward
  - Hips square, chest up
  - Gradually increase length of lunge with each step
- Single leg hamstring bridge  
2 sets of 8/leg:
  - Hips square
  - Full range of motion
- Side lunge back to baseline
  - Increase range with each step
  - Feet to point forwards throughout
- Knee to wall calf mobility 10/leg
  - Heel remains on ground and player bends leg to touch knee to the wall, try to increase distance between toe and wall.
- Squats 10
  - Feet just wider than shoulder width
  - Chest up
  - Hips back, knees forward over toes
  - Depth
  - Heels down
- Step to vertical Jump 3/leg
  - Soft landing, absorb
  - Strong position – can you move in any direction from your landing point?

## 3.1.2 PREPARING PLAYERS PHYSICALLY - WARM-UP FOR TRAINING

### WARM UP FOR TRAINING

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- Squats 10
  - Feet just wider than shoulder width
  - Chest up
  - Hips back, knees forward over toes
  - Depth
  - Heels down
- Step to vertical Jump 3/leg
  - Soft landing, absorb
  - Strong position – can you move in any direction from your landing point?
  - Knees remain over feet (don't come in or out)
- Partner jump to bump 5 each
  - Jump into air and upon landing partner will bump you.
  - Still land softly, absorb but be ready for impact...don't get pushed over, be in position to move.
  - This can be progressed to getting bumped whilst still in the air
- Single leg ½ Hop + Stick in 3 different directions
  - Lateral left, lateral right and forward in directions
  - Soft landing
  - Knees remain over feet

## 3.1.3 PREPARING PLAYERS PHYSICALLY - WARM UP FOR GAMES

### WARM UP FOR GAMES

A warm-up for games should not vary significantly from the warm-up used in training apart from the duration. The athletes must still ensure that core temperature is elevated and range of motion is established. A gradual progression from low intensity to high intensity activities should be followed. It is important that all players engage in activities that simulate game like movement and intensities prior to the commencement of the game. This ensures that players who may not start the game are adequately prepared to compete when entering the game.

- 3-4mins general aerobic warm-up:
  - jogging, skipping, side steps, low high knees etc.
- 2-3min mobility work
  - Walking lunges, crawls, hamstring walks, side lunges, cat stretches etc.
- 1min static stretching any particularly tight areas (hip flexor/hamstring)
- Run throughs to half way building up intensity 50%, 75%, 85%, 95%, 100% walk back.
- Step accelerations walk back x 2
  - Walk, accelerate 3 steps, cruise through to halfway x 2
- Defensive slide (lateral defensive movement) from baseline to free throw line and back x 2/dir
- Jump to backboard, slide and jump to backboard again x 2/dir
- Jump + bump in the air with partner 5 each.
- Partner mirror 2\*10each as lead.
  - In pairs, one partner moves (e.g. run to the side, jump) and their partner must mirror the moves.



## 3.1.4 PREPARING PLAYERS PHYSICALLY - STRENGTH TRAINING

### STRENGTH TRAINING

Strength training increases a player's ability to "apply force" while performing the skills of the game. For example, a player may build up strength so that they can hold a post position without being pushed by the defender or they may jump higher as a result of getting stronger.

To increase a muscle's ability to apply force, "resistance training" must be used and this must be increased in a progressive fashion for the body to optimally adapt. The most common example of resistance training is "lifting" weights.

Strength can be referred to as an absolute or relative quality. In regard to players in Basketball, where strength qualities need to be utilised with other qualities, it is predominantly the relative quality that you want to increase.

The relative quality is expressed as strength per kilogram of bodyweight. The player is not necessarily trying to increase the size of the muscle, just the force that the muscle can apply.

Accordingly, the coach needs to make sure that the strength increase occurs with as little muscle size increase as possible. To do this a good understanding of what resistance training sets and repetitions optimise what qualities.

The following table outlines which repetition ranges optimise which training response;

QUALITY	REPETITIONS	SETS	INTENSITY
Strength endurance	15-20	2-4	40-70%
Hypertrophy (increasing muscle size)	8-12	3-6	65-80%
Maximal strength	1-6	3-4	85-100%
Power	1-3	2-6	95-100%

Strength training can improve both maximal strength and hypertrophy. Hypertrophy training refers to increasing the muscle size whilst maximal strength training refers to increasing the muscles contraction force. For basketball athletes, maximal strength training is usually the priority.

For a beginner to strength training, a small amount of training volume will result relatively quickly in the body adapting and the muscles being able to produce a greater force. As the player becomes well trained, training volume needs to continue to increase to get continued increases in muscle force.

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## 3.1.5 PREPARING PLAYERS PHYSICALLY - POWER TRAINING

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### POWER TRAINING

Power training increases a player's ability to apply force in the shortest amount of time. In this type of training, speed of movement is the priority and strength is a secondary priority. This is known as being velocity dependent. The player should try and maximize the amount of resistance used without sacrificing the speed of the activity or exercise.

This type of training will increase the amount of fast twitch muscle fibres the player will be able to activate and use. The player's nervous system will also work to recruit larger amounts of fast twitch muscle fibres as the speed of contraction required by appropriate exercises prescribed is increased. This is important, for example, in working on leg strength and jumping ability.

Players need longer rest periods between sets in power training compared to strength training because power training also utilises the nervous system.

For power training to be effective, player's need to have established a minimum strength level first. Therefore strength training needs to be initiated prior to power training.

## 3.1.6 PREPARING PLAYERS PHYSICALLY - CONDITIONING

There are three primary energy systems that can be trained for basketball:

- Aerobic,
- Lactic, and
- Alactic.

These systems can then be further broken down into two categories each of power and capacity. In this instance, power refers to the absolute performance measure for that energy system when completing a standalone effort. Capacity refers to the ability to repeat that effort on numerous occasions whilst minimising performance decline.

### **ALACTIC SYSTEM:**

The alactic system is anaerobic (without oxygen) and supplies the primary energy for the first 10-15 seconds of exercise. For example, sprinting the length of the court or jumping for a rebound draw primarily upon the alactic system.

Many of the physical demands of basketball draw upon "alactic energy" and training for this capacity requires short, intermittent bursts of maximal activity with medium to long recovery periods. By manipulating the work to rest ratios and the time length of work specific components can be targeted.

Ratios of 1:8 with efforts of less than 7 seconds and low reps (5-10) place a significant stress on the alactic power system while more reps (8-15) with a shorter ratio to 1:6 and using efforts of 4-10 seconds promotes training of the alactic capacity system.

As a practical example, having athletes jump to touch the backboard, land and immediately jump again for 6 seconds and then resting for 40 seconds before repeating 8 times is training the alactic capacity system.

### **LACTIC ACID SYSTEM:**

The production of lactic acid is a by-product of the body producing energy anaerobically. The aim of lactic acid system training is to improve the body's ability to metabolize and remove lactic acid. As lactic acid builds up, athletes will feel a "burn" in their muscles and it restricts the muscle's ability to work. Accordingly, the more efficiently an athlete is able to remove lactic acid and its by-products will increase the duration the body can work at maximal intensity.

To target training towards lactic acid capacity requires a work to recovery ratio of 1:3 ensuring a build-up of lactic acid in the system. The recovery period is not stopping altogether, it is continuing movement but a less than maximum effort. A larger recovery of 1:4 as seen in lactic acid power training allows greater lactic acid removal.

During capacity training, efforts will range from 6-30 seconds and recovery must be completed at 50-70% intensity. It should be noted that lactic acid system training places a significant stress on the bodies systems and as such should be used carefully and generally less than the other types of energy system training.

As a practical example a player can undertake "Temp" runs (not an all-out effort) over 200m and have a walk back as recovery.

**AEROBIC SYSTEM:**

Traditionally, training the aerobic system involved numerous hours of jogging (or other activity), which is time consuming and resulted in large wear and tear on the body and is not recommended for basketball players. This type of training can also result in reducing the player's speed (as the number of fast twitch fibres decrease), which is clearly not optimal for basketball.

Aerobic interval training has a much greater crossover to basketball performance and allows for a greater intensity of efforts. Simply, interval training could include sprinting, and then jogging, sprinting again etc.

Coaches can assess their athletes, maximal aerobic speed using the Yo Yo Intermittent Recovery test and therefore target training specifically to each athlete. Another test is the 12 minute test – to determine how far an athlete can run in 12 minutes.

Training at a %Maximal Aerobic Speed (MAS) at or slightly above maximum with an active recovery (50-70% MAS) will train the aerobic capacity with a work to active recovery ratio of 1:1. Efforts in capacity training will range from 15-30 seconds with high duration (e.g. sprinting) followed by 15-30 seconds at 50-70% of effort (e.g. jogging) – in total going for >15reps and a duration of at least 10 minutes.

To train aerobic power %MAS is again above maximum but passive rest is allowed with a work to rest ratio of 1:1 employed. Aerobic power sessions typically require 10-15 seconds work for between 8-16 reps [6].

**GAME BASED CONDITIONING:**

Small sided games (e.g. 3x3) and game based conditioning has been validated by recent research as being effective for its demands on skill as well as endurance. It is essential however that this type of training is carefully designed to evoke the desired training effect.

It can be difficult to consistently achieve and maintain the required intensity resulting in a poor or zero training effect during prolonged drills. Often athletes will also have the ability to "hide" in these type of sessions and it has been proposed that better players who possess more natural skill are not required to move as much as lesser skilled athletes and therefore do not achieve the desired training volume or intensity. There is an almost endless variety of activities available to the coach, and precise and planned variations can maximise training efficiency while minimising unnecessary stresses.

## 3.1.7 PREPARING PLAYERS PHYSICALLY - FLEXIBILITY

### FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility is the measure of the range of motion around a joint or series of joints. Flexibility can be limited by the joints physical structure, including bone, connective tissue or muscle.

It is important to include flexibility training as part of your players' regular training. Improved flexibility can enhance performance in aerobic training and muscular conditioning as well as in sport. There is scientific evidence that the incidence of injury decreases when players include flexibility sessions into their training because of their enhanced ability to execute movement skills through a wider range of motion. The only exception to this would be when there is an excessive or unstable range of motion, which may increase the likelihood of injury.

Once the player's training is finished, they can focus on their body's range of motion across a number of joints to ensure it returns to what it was prior to the session. This is an excellent time for flexibility training because the muscles are warm and pliable, allowing them to stretch farther.

Following are some of the major benefits of flexibility training:

- Reduces the risk of injury during exercise and daily activities because muscles are more pliable.
- Improves performance of everyday activities as well as performance in exercise and sport.

Flexibility work can be classified into the following types of stretches;

### STATIC STRETCHES

Is when a stretch is held in a challenging but comfortable position at the end of range of the muscle for a period of time. The stretch is usually held for somewhere between 10 to 30 seconds. Static stretching is the most common form of stretching found in general fitness and is considered safe and effective for improving overall flexibility.

When done properly, static stretching slightly lessens the sensitivity of tension receptors, which allows the muscle to relax and to be stretched to greater length.

Where static stretching is done sitting or lying on the floor, athletes may consider using a towel or a mat to ensure that the muscles do not cool-down too quickly.

### DYNAMIC STRETCHES

Is a form of stretching that utilizes sport specific movement patterns and uses movement in an effort to allow the muscle to extend its range of motion not exceeding one's static-passive stretching ability.

### PROPRIOCEPTIVE NEUROMUSCULAR FACILITATION (PNF)

Combines the alternating of contraction and relaxation of both the agonist and antagonist muscles. For example, pushing down with the leg (which causes the hamstring to contract) and then relaxing and lifting the leg (to stretch the hamstring). This type of action causes the nervous system to stop contracting the muscle targeted to extend its range of motion.

## 3.1.8 PREPARING PLAYERS PHYSICALLY - BASIC STRENGTH TRAINING PROGRAM

### BASIC STRENGTH TRAINING PROGRAM

All beginner level players will benefit from a basic strength training programme that caters for increases in strength over the whole of their body. Exercises must be sequenced to make sure that the right muscle groups are addressed in the right order.

As a general rule, larger muscle groups are worked first before smaller muscle groups, and multi joint exercises are prescribed before single joint exercises. The number of sets for each exercise should start at three and progress as the training age of the player increases.

In order training sessions to help the body adapt as much as possible, a minimum of three sessions per week should be scheduled for beginners. This allows enough stimuli to optimise the adaptation by the players. The sessions should be spaced out over the week to allow for recovery between sessions, but often enough to have the body to continually adapt to the training prescribed.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
X		X		X		

Above is an example of a well-spaced weekly strength training plan.

The number of different sessions per week should be limited to two initially. This enables the exercises prescribed to have enough effect on the body to stimulate adaptation.

If you constantly change the exercises the body does not have enough time to adapt to the load effect of the prescribed exercise and thus shortens the time that the body will adapt to it.

SESSION 1	REPETITIONS	SETS
Bench Press	6	3
Seated Row	8	4
Squats	5	3
Lateral Pull downs	8	4
Cable Trunk Rotations	8	4
SESSION 2	REPETITIONS	SETS
Dumbbell Shoulder Press	6	4
Bench Pull	8	3
Dumbbell Lunges	6	4
Triceps Press	8	3
Dumbbell Curls	8	4

This programme should be followed for 4-6 weeks and then changed to ensure continued adaptation. Rest periods of 2 minutes should be taken between each set.

Each exercise should be undertaken with a load that enables the player to achieve all of the repetitions without failure whilst being very hard to complete the last 2 repetitions.

### BASIC BODYWEIGHT PROGRAM

The following sessions are examples of bodyweight exercises that can be completed on a basketball court with minimal equipment. Depending on the time allowed for training, these sessions can be implemented separately throughout a training week or incorporated into skills training.

A simple method if highly restricted for time would be to include some of these exercises as part of the athletes, warm-up for training.

The exercises in these tables are done in sets so that those with the same letter are repeated together, i.e. one set of A1, and then one set of A2, brief rest, and then repeat until the described number of sets is achieved. This programme should be maintained for 4-6 weeks and then progressed with an increase in sets and/or repetitions.

See below for further information on the various exercises. Coaches should pay particular attention to athletes keeping their body as shown in the photographs.

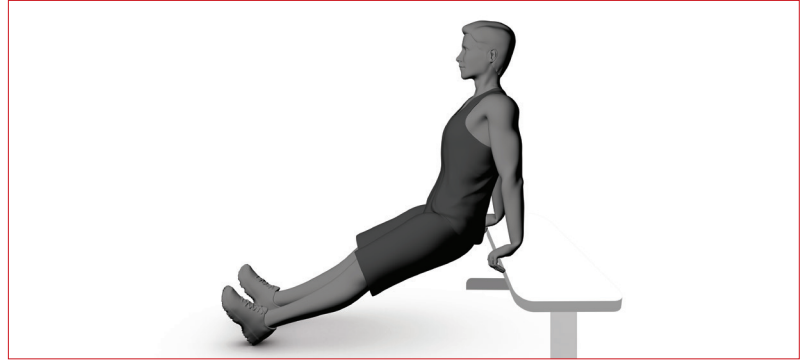
SESSION 1	SETS
1A Backboard Tips – rebound off ground quickly	3*5
1B Clap Push Ups	3*5
2A Single Leg Hamstring Bridge	4*8/leg
2B Push Ups (vary grip, narrow, offset, close)	4 * max
3A Bulgarian Lunge	4*8/leg
3B Bench Tricep Dips	4*12
4A Prone Hold	2*1min
4B Side Hold	3*30sec/side
SESSION 2	SETS
Circuit 1	2-3 sets
Squat (pause at bottom)	x10
Perfect pushups	x10
Crunches	x20
Single leg hamstring bridge	x10/leg
Side double leg lift	x20/side
Circuit 2	2-3 sets
Forward and back lunge	x6/leg
Bench dips	x10
Prone hold	x30sec
Single leg calf raise	x20/leg
Bent knee feet to ceiling	x20
Circuit 3	2-3 sets
Lateral lunge	x8/leg
Push up hold arm lift	x10/arm
Side hold	x30sec/side
Single leg squat to box	x10/leg
Crunch hold 5 sec foot change	x1 minute



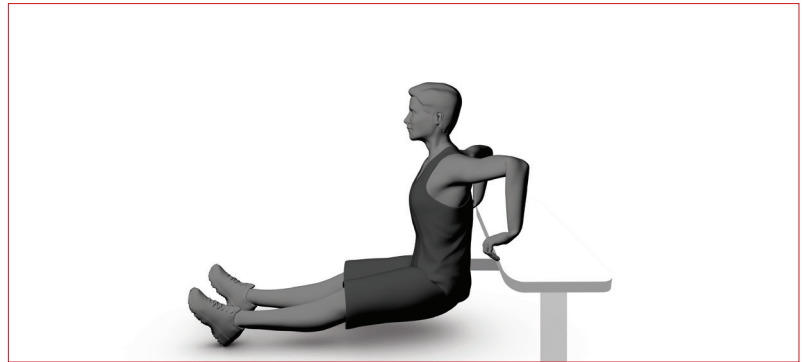
Below are descriptions of each of the exercises listed above.

### **BENCH TRICEP DIP**

Starting Position



End Position



### **BRIDGED HIP EXTENSION - SINGLE LEG**

Starting Position



End Position



### BULGARIAN LUNGE

Starting Position



End Position (left)

Extended End Position (right)



### HIP EXTENSION

Starting Position

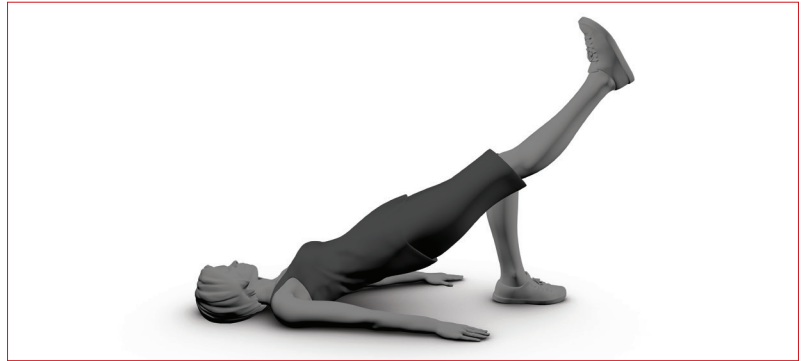


End Position

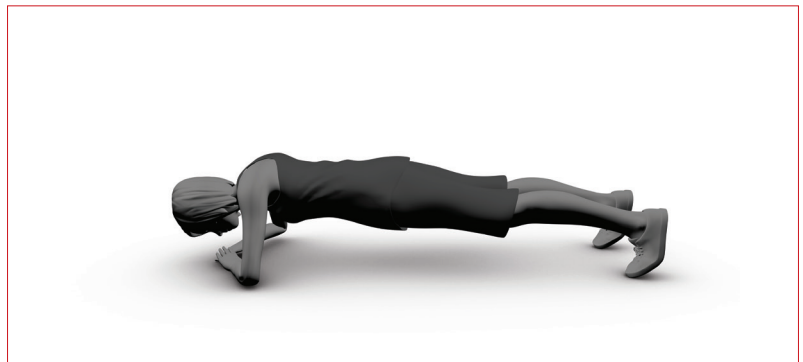


**HIP EXTENSION CONT...**

End Position - single leg

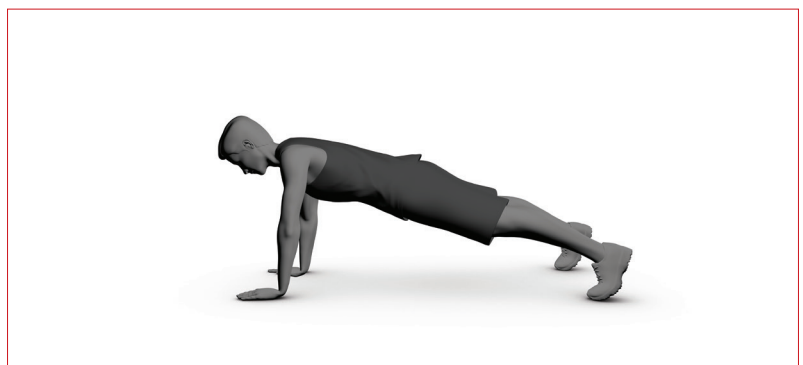


**PRONE HOLD**

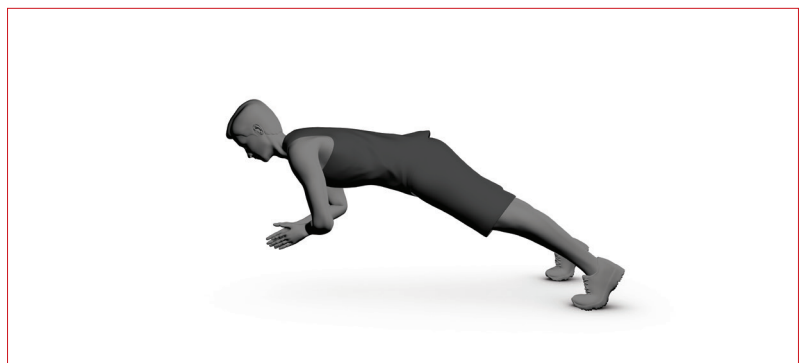


**PUSH UP WITH CLAP**

Starting Position

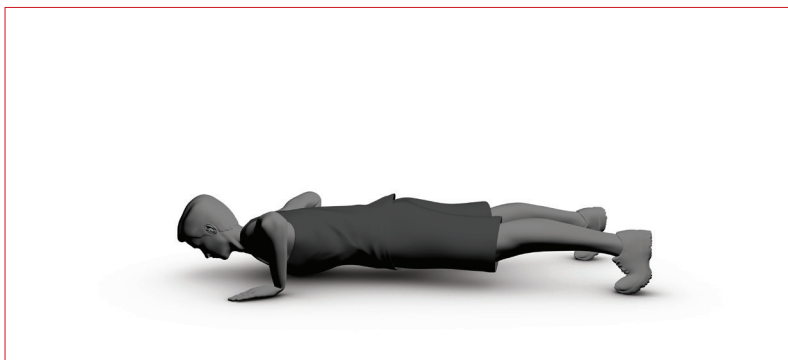


Clap



**PUSH UP WITH CLAP CONT...**

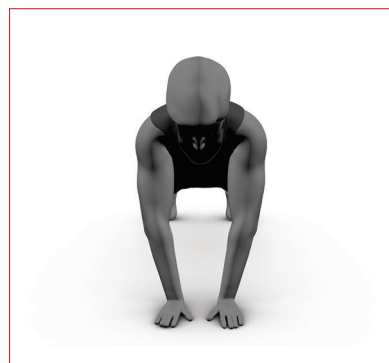
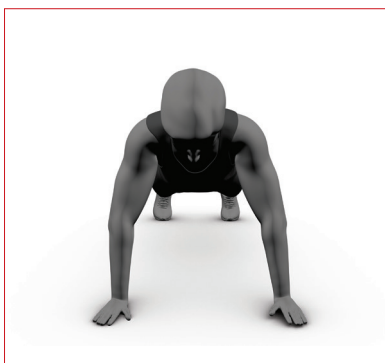
End Position



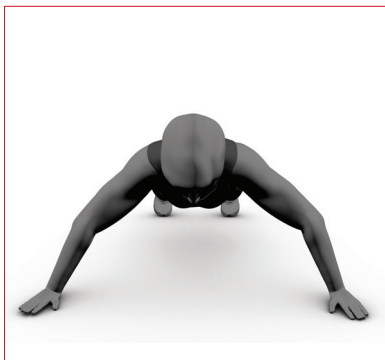
**PUSH UPS**

Standard Position (left)

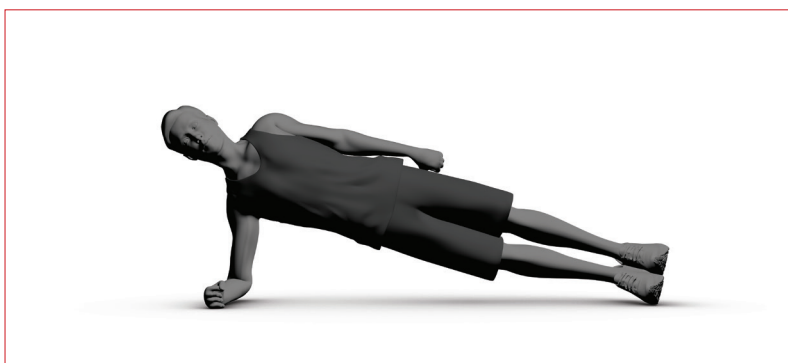
Narrow Position (right)



Wide Position



**SIDE HOLD**



### **RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING**

For further information on the topics listed above, the follow reading list is recommended;

- Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning – Baechle T.R
- Designing Resistance Training Programs – Fleck S & Kraemer W
- Strength Training for Basketball – Pauletto B
- High-Performance Training for Sports – Joyce D & Lewindon D

## 3.1.9 BASIC OFF-SEASON PREPARATION

*To play basketball at the highest level it is necessary for you have a high level of physical and mental fitness. A “fitter” player will be able to execute skills better at the end of a game than a player that is not as fit. Similarly, a “fitter” player will make better decisions at the end of a game than a player that is not as fit.*

Below is an example of an “off-season” programme that could be given to junior athletes. It is a generic programme, and is not tailored to any particular athlete. This is not provided as a “definitive” programme that coaches must follow and instead is provided as an example. Coaches are encouraged to develop their own programs and to seek advice or assistance from appropriate experts.

There are 3 aspects to the fitness programme:


- (a) Aerobic Fitness;
- (b) Basketball Skills and Ball Handling;
- (c) Other Fitness.

ACTIVITIES	FREQUENCY	GUIDELINES
(A) AEROBIC FITNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do <b>3</b> activities each week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only do <b>1</b> aerobic activity a day and allow one day of rest between sessions (eg do aerobic sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday).</li> <li>• Don't do any of the speed activities in the first month of training (you need to improve your general aerobic fitness before doing these).</li> </ul>
(B) BASKETBALL SKILLS & BALL HANDLING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do <b>3</b> activities each week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must do at least one shooting activity per week but you cannot do one activity more than twice.</li> <li>• Do no more than <b>2</b> basketball skills/ball handling sessions a day.</li> <li>• Do not do on any day when you are doing an aerobic fitness <b>and</b> other fitness activities.</li> </ul>
(A) OTHER FITNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do <b>3</b> activities each week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not do on any day when you are doing an aerobic fitness <b>and</b> basketball skills/ball handling activities.</li> <li>• Only do <b>1</b> of these activities a day.</li> </ul>

**AEROBIC FITNESS**

Make sure you warm-up before the session.

- 20 push ups (on knees)
- 20 squats
- Jog a lap of the court
- 20 “crunches” (a sit up, but only come about half way up to your knees)
- 20 lunges (each side);
- Jog a lap of the court
- Stretching as required (no more than 5 minutes).

ACTIVITY	NOTE
4km run	Run on grass or an oval rather than on concrete/road.
15minute run	Run continuously for 15 minutes and record how far you run. Your target is to run: <i>Guards</i> 3.7km in 15minutes <i>Forwards</i> 3.5km in 15minutes <i>Centres</i> 3.2km in 15 minutes <b>NB:</b> Walk when necessary for 30 seconds and then jog again.
1km swim	To help keep your intensity during the session, count the number of strokes it takes you to do one lap. Then count your strokes for each subsequent lap. If a lap takes more strokes than “normal” for you, then you need to go a bit harder the next lap.
5km cycle	This can be done on a stationery bike or outside. If riding outside, use bike paths whenever possible and make sure that you wear a helmet. Use a low gear and make sure that you always pedal.
Court Run	Do the following set of exercises continuously for 15 minutes. Record how many times you repeat the set: 1. Start on baseline, complete 10 push ups 2. Sprint to other end of basketball court; 3. Lie on floor, complete 10 full sit ups; 4. Jog 2 laps of the court.
Speed 1 <b>NB:</b> Build aerobic fitness before doing speed activities.	<b>NB:</b> Build up aerobic fitness first before doing these activities. Do the following 3 activities:  1. Run the first 7 metres at 50%, the second 7 metres at 75% and the last 7 metres at 100%. Walk back and repeat 5 times. 2. 5 x 50 metre sprints (start each rep at 50 second intervals). Jog back to start. 5 x 30 metre sprints (start each rep at 40 second intervals). Jog back to start. 5 x 20 metre sprints (start each rep at 30 second intervals). Jog back to start. 3. Slide A to B, Slide B to C, Slide C to A and Sprint A past D. Repeat 5 times, walking back to the start for recovery.

ACTIVITY	NOTE																																																																																																									
Intensity Runs	<p><b>Set 1 at 60% max speed</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>acceleration</th> <th>steady pace</th> <th>deceleration</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1)</td> <td>10m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>10m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2)</td> <td>9m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>9m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3)</td> <td>8m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>8m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4)</td> <td>7m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>7m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5)</td> <td>6m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>6m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6)</td> <td>5m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>5m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Set 2 at 75% max speed</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>acceleration</th> <th>steady pace</th> <th>deceleration</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7)</td> <td>10m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>10m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8)</td> <td>9m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>9m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9)</td> <td>8m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>8m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10)</td> <td>7m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>7m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11)</td> <td>6m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>6m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12)</td> <td>5m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>5m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Set 3 at 90% max speed</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>acceleration</th> <th>steady pace</th> <th>deceleration</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>13)</td> <td>10m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>10m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14)</td> <td>9m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>9m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15)</td> <td>8m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>8m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16)</td> <td>7m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>7m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17)</td> <td>6m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>6m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18)</td> <td>5m</td> <td>20m</td> <td>5m</td> <td>x 3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		acceleration	steady pace	deceleration		1)	10m	20m	10m	x 3	2)	9m	20m	9m	x 3	3)	8m	20m	8m	x 3	4)	7m	20m	7m	x 3	5)	6m	20m	6m	x 3	6)	5m	20m	5m	x 3		acceleration	steady pace	deceleration		7)	10m	20m	10m	x 3	8)	9m	20m	9m	x 3	9)	8m	20m	8m	x 3	10)	7m	20m	7m	x 3	11)	6m	20m	6m	x 3	12)	5m	20m	5m	x 3		acceleration	steady pace	deceleration		13)	10m	20m	10m	x 3	14)	9m	20m	9m	x 3	15)	8m	20m	8m	x 3	16)	7m	20m	7m	x 3	17)	6m	20m	6m	x 3	18)	5m	20m	5m	x 3
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Fartlek Pyramid	<p>Complete this on grass or a softer surface; it can be completed around an oval, on a track, or on straight lines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 seconds hard, 15 easy; 30 seconds hard, 30 easy; 45 seconds hard, 45 easy, 60 seconds hard, 60 easy (5 minutes total - continuous).</li> <li>• Once you have completed one Fartlek Pyramid perform an active recovery (walk, jog, abdominal work) for three minutes.</li> <li>• Repeat the Fartlek Pyramid and active recovery protocol two more times (therefore a total of three sets).</li> </ul>																																																																																																									



## BASKETBALL SKILLS & BALL HANDLING

Do **1** of the sessions described below **3** times each week. You must do at least one shooting activity each week and you cannot do one activity more than two

times in a week. Record which activity you did and, where relevant, your score. Do not do more than **2** of these sessions in a day and don't do any on a day when you are doing an aerobic fitness session **and** another fitness activity.

ACTIVITY	
1. Passing	<p><b>Against the Wall</b></p> <p>Do <b>30</b> of each pass against a wall (or with a partner). Stand 3-4 metres away from the wall/partner. Alternate which foot you step forward with as you pass the ball. With one-handed passes, also step to the side (as if passing around a defender).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 handed chest pass</li> <li>• 2 handed bounce pass</li> <li>• Right handed push pass</li> <li>• Left handed push pass</li> <li>• Behind the back (both right and left hand)</li> <li>• Pass off the dribble. Dribble 5 times, then pass. Do 30 right hand and 30 left hand.</li> </ul> <p><b>2 Balls Against the Wall</b></p> <p>Stand 2-3 metres away from a wall, dribbling two balls. After 5 dribbles, pass one of the balls against the wall. Keep dribbling the other ball. Catch the ball you passed and dribble it. After another 5 dribbles, pass with the other hand. Go for 3 minutes.</p> <p><b>Hit the Target</b></p> <p>Pick a brick on the wall that is about chest height and mark it with some chalk. Start about 10 – 15 metre away from the wall and dribble to the wall. Come to a jump stop and pass at the brick you have marked. If you hit it, you get 1 point. If you miss it, you lose a point. Continue until you have 25 points.</p>
2. Dribbling	<p><b>Stationery 1 Ball Dribbling</b></p> <p>Do <b>30</b> seconds of each dribble move. Don't pick the ball up between moves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front (Cross-over)</li> <li>• Back (Cross-over)</li> <li>• Right/Left. Dribble in a "V" on the side of your body. 30 secs each hand.</li> <li>• Right/Left Fake Crossover - in a "V" with one hand, in front of your body. 30 seconds each hand.</li> <li>• Right/Left Round. Dribble around your right leg with your right hand for 30 seconds. Then around your left leg with your left hand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Stationery 2 Ball Dribbling</b></p> <p>Do <b>30</b> seconds of each dribble move. If you lose one ball, keep dribbling the other one while you retrieve the one you lost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front. Dribble both balls in front and keep changing hands (so you are doing a crossover with each ball).</li> <li>• Side. Dribble both balls in a "V" at your side.</li> <li>• Side Alternate. Dribble both balls in a "V" at your side. As one goes forward, the other goes backward.</li> <li>• Dribble Hard/Low. Do 5 dribbles (with each hand) as hard as you can (keeping ball no higher than the top of your shorts), and then do 5 dribbles with the ball no higher than your knee.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	
	<p><b>Full Court Dribbling</b></p> <p>Dribbling up and back 2 times, with the following dribble moves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Cross over</li> <li>&gt; On-side</li> <li>&gt; Retreat and cross over (or fake cross over)</li> <li>&gt; Between the legs</li> <li>&gt; Hesitation</li> <li>&gt; Fake Cross over</li> <li>&gt; Behind the back</li> <li>&gt; Combination moves</li> </ul>
3. Footwork	<p><b>"2 Slides"</b></p> <p>Get in defensive stance. Take 2 slides to your left and then 2 slides to your right. Wait (in defensive stance) for 3 seconds, then repeat. Do for <b>30</b> seconds and then rest. Repeat <b>5</b> times. Make sure correct footwork is used – "big" to "bigger".</p> <p><b>"Slide-Run-Slide"</b></p> <p>Get in defensive stance. Take 3 slides, then 3 running steps then 3 slides. Repeat <b>30</b> times on each side of the basket. Rest for 30 seconds after each 5. When going from slide to run do not bring your feet together – you still go from a "big" stance to a "bigger" stance.</p> <p><b>"Square Up"</b></p> <p>Stand in the low post position and spin the ball to the 3 point line. Cut out, catch the ball and square up to the basket. Shot fake, drive fake and then drive to the basket for a lay-up. Do <b>30</b> times on each side. Make sure you use the baseline pivot foot.</p>
4. Shooting	<p>A) Inside the key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jump shots (X 10)</li> <li>• Layups (X R 10 and L 10)</li> <li>• Mikan shots (X R 10 and L 10)</li> </ul> <p>B) Jump shots from 15- 20 feet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make 10 from right wing, from the point and from left wing</li> </ul> <p>C) One bounce jump shots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make 10 from right wing, from the point and from left wing</li> </ul> <p>D) Two/Three bounce jump shots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make 10 from right wing, from the point and from left wing</li> </ul> <p>E) Pull up jump shots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make 10 from right wing, from the point and from left wing</li> </ul> <p>F) Post moves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drop step power layup (X 10)</li> <li>• Dropstep hook shot (X 10)</li> <li>• Dropstep, shot fake, step through (X 10)</li> <li>• Turn and face shoot (X 10)</li> </ul> <p>G) Three point shots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make 10 shots from 5 spots</li> </ul> <p>H) Foul shots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make 30 free throws in groups of 2 (jog up and back in between groups)</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	
<b>5. Hand-Eye Coordination</b>	<p>Use a tennis ball and stand 1 – 2 meters from a wall.</p> <p><b>Same hand, same catch</b></p> <p>With 1 hand, throw the ball against the wall and catch it using the hand you threw with. Complete one set throwing with the left hand and then right hand once, followed by one more set on your non-preferred hand. 30 throws per hand.</p> <p><b>Opposite hand, opposite catch</b></p> <p>Same as above but throw the ball with one hand and catch it with the other.</p> <p><b>Wall dribbling</b></p> <p>Face the wall 1 meter away, begin dribbling against the wall using an OLD basketball or tennis ball. Have the arm extended and ball about 10cm from the wall and use left and right hand and dribble combinations (side to side, up and down, crossovers). Dribble for 2 minutes and rest for 1 minute. Repeat 4 times.</p>

## OTHER FITNESS ACTIVITIES

Do **1** of the activities described below **3** times each week. Do not do any of these activities on a day when you are doing an aerobic fitness session **and** a basketball skill/ball handling activity.

ACTIVITY	
<p><b>1. Body Weight Strength Program</b></p>	<p>Go through each of the following exercises three times in the order they are shown, with no more than 1 minute break between each series of exercises.</p> <p><b>Repetitions</b></p> <p>To determine how many exercises you should do in each set, find out how many you can do without stopping. Work out 60% of this amount and this will be the number of exercises you should do in each set. e.g. If the maximum number of crunches you can do is 15 (without stopping), then 60% of 15 is 9, so you will do 9 crunches each set.</p> <p>After commencing the programme allow yourself time (1 – 2 weeks) to allow your body to adjust to the increased work levels. When you find yourself completing exercises easily add one or two more exercises to each set i.e. using our crunch example go from 9 crunches to 11 crunches each set.</p> <p><b>Push Ups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hands slightly wider than shoulders width apart</li> <li>- chest straight to ground before pushing up</li> <li>- body straight             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Stage 1 – Knees on ground i.e. feet off ground (use this method until strength improves)</li> <li>o Stage 2 – Toes touching ground (use when strength has improved)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Lunge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- feet together then step forward with one leg keeping other leg in the same position as the start</li> <li>- keep your back straight and make sure your front knee is not ahead of your toes</li> <li>- bring the leg back to start position. Lunge forward with the other leg</li> </ul> <p><b>Crunch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lie flat on floor, with your legs bent at a 90° angle</li> <li>- keep your hands in contact with the side of the head and keep your neck to your chin</li> <li>- raise the torso to the ½ way point between flat and fully curled, then return to flat</li> </ul> <p><b>Dips</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- face away from a medium height bench, wall, or chair</li> <li>- hands on the bench, arms straight, legs in front, feet flat on floor</li> <li>- keep the legs still, bend the arms, allowing the body to lower in front of the bench, straighten the arms to return to start</li> </ul> <p><b>Defensive Squat Jumps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- start in defensive stance (low!)</li> <li>- bring feet together quickly and jump (explode) up, bringing hands high above your head</li> <li>- land and return into stance</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	
<b>2. Skipping Rope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do 2 minutes of continuous skipping at medium pace.</li> <li>• Do 30 skips at maximum pace followed by 20 skips at medium pace. Repeat 10 times.</li> <li>• Do the following rope skipping exercises for one minute each:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alternating right and left feet</li> <li>- Two feet – jumping in a box (forwards, sideways, backwards, sideways)</li> <li>- Right foot – jumping in a box</li> <li>- Left foot – jumping in a box</li> <li>- Heel/toe</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>3. Plyometric Jumps</b>	<p><b>Repeat the following three activities 3 times</b></p> <p>A. Stand in front of the backboard (or a wall). Jump off two feet and touch the net/backboard/wall (as high as you can) with your right hand, land and jump immediately to touch with your left hand. Continue until you have touched 8 times with each hand. Repeat 10 times, allowing 2 minutes between each set of 8.</p> <p>B. Stand in front of the backboard or wall. Take one step forward with your left foot and jump to touch the backboard/net/wall (as high as you can) with both hands. Next time step forward with your right foot. Repeat until you have done 20 jumps (10 stepping forward with the right and 10 with the left).</p> <p>C. Stand one metre from the backboard/wall, take two steps and jump off both feet to touch the backboard/net/wall (as high as you can) with two hands. Repeat 10 times.</p>

## 3.2 NUTRITION

### 3.2.1 NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ATHLETES

*This chapter contains general information, and individuals should not rely upon this information without seeking further advice from appropriately qualified individuals.*

*This chapter has been contributed by:*

**DR LOUISE BURKE,**  
Head of Sports Nutrition,  
Australian Institute of Sport;  
Chair of Sports Nutrition,  
Australian Catholic University

**BECCY HALL, APD, ACCSD**  
Australian Institute of Sport,  
Sports Nutrition Fellowship

There are two further aspects in which coaches can assist their players to be prepared to perform at their highest level:

- (a) Nutritional strategies;
- (b) Recovery strategies.

To perform, athletes need to be adequately “fuelled”, and whilst coaches are not expected to be “experts” in regards to nutrition, they should be able to give some general advice to players and also to assist them, if necessary, in seeking more detailed advice.

“Recovery” is simply the ability of an athlete to get their body ready for the next training/game following physical exertion.

#### TRAINING NUTRITION

The role of an athlete’s everyday diet is to promote good health and maintain the enjoyment of favourite foods and social eating opportunities, as well as to support the special needs of their sporting commitments.

Regular training increases the body’s demand for energy and a variety of nutrients that allow it to complete and adapt to the exercise tasks. Combining these with the additional requirements for growth and development during adolescence presents a challenge for the young basketball player and their family.

Good food knowledge must be matched by practical nutrition skills and careful organisation to assist the junior athlete to fit in the necessary meals and snacks

around their school, sport and social commitments.

However, with a few key strategies it is possible to meet these requirements and to prime the body for optimum performance.

#### CARBOHYDRATE INTAKE SHOULD REFLECT DAILY TRAINING DEMANDS.

Carbohydrate is the preferred muscle fuel for high intensity exercise as well as an important brain fuel. It is obtained in the diet from grains and cereal-based foods, fruit, starchy vegetables and legumes.

Since basketball is a sport that incorporates many short bursts of high intensity activity around skill execution and decision making, it makes sense to have adequate carbohydrate supplies on board for each practice. The flip side is that insufficient carbohydrate supply can impair performance with signs including early fatigue, poor skill execution and a reduced ability to concentrate.

Daily carbohydrate intake should track with the demands of training – increasing on days with hard practice and decreasing on rest days or during a break. An easy way to achieve this, which also ensures that fuel intake is centered on the time it is most needed, is to incorporate extra carbohydrate containing snacks before and perhaps after the training session, while forgoing those snacks on days without training or when the session is easy or skill-based.

### HYDRATION AND FUEL AROUND PRACTICE

Good hydration habits contribute to sustained performance and concentration during training sessions. Many young people are not good at staying well hydrated over the day, either because their thirst does not fine tune their drinking behaviour or because their busy lifestyle doesn't provide enough access to fluids.

Although there is some debate over the level of dehydration associated with an impairment of sports performance, it is usually recommended to keep fluid losses to less than 2% of body mass (e.g. 1 kg for 50 kg athlete, 1.5 kg for 75 kg player). Some studies in basketball have shown that fluid deficits of this volume can interfere with skill and endurance, as well as increase the perception of how hard an exercise task feels.

Training sessions are the time to develop good drinking habits; each player should check that they consume adequate volumes of well-chosen fluids over the day so that they arrive to the session well-hydrated, and then drink appropriately during practice. A good drinking plan should allow fluid intake to track with sweat losses over the session, neither allowing a large deficit to occur nor excessively over-hydrating. The coach should play a role in enabling and encouraging these practices (see checklist).

Water is sufficient to meet rehydration goals for easy or skill based training sessions, although carbohydrate containing drinks (e.g. sports drinks, cordial/Kool-Aid or juice) may provide high-energy consumers with another contribution to their daily Calorie/ kilojoule targets. Fuel-containing drinks or snacks consumed just before and during practice may promote endurance and concentration over long sessions of higher-intensity work, and should be factored into the daily carbohydrate targets. (see checklist).

### RECOVERY AND ADAPTATION TO TRAINING

Recovery after a hard practice calls for intake of the key nutrients for rehydration (water and electrolytes), refueling (carbohydrates), repair and adaptation (protein and vitamins/ minerals). In many cases, there is value in promoting early recovery by consuming these nutrients soon after the session (e.g. within a 30-60 min window). This may be as simple as following the session with the next meal, but may also need the preparation of a well-chosen snack.

Adolescent athletes who must travel long distances to and from training may need to plan ahead with ready-to-eat snacks or meals that can be consumed while travelling. When all members of the team are in the same situation, a recovery table can help everyone recover quickly to restore performance for the next session.

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## 3.2.2 NUTRITIONAL NEEDS FOR GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

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*The body requires energy for growth, and other incidental exercise and for the healthy functioning of many body systems.*

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The body requires energy for growth, sport and other incidental exercise, as well as the healthy functioning of many body systems. When a player fails to achieve their energy budget, either because energy intake is restricted (for example, with excessive weight loss diets or fussy eating) or high volume training is undertaken without adequate energy replacement, some of these processes miss out.

This can lead to reduced growth and development, delayed menarche (the first occurrence of menstruation), increased risk of illness and injury and reduced performance gains. Planning meals and snacks around needs can help to avoid this problem.

Protein provides a source of energy in the diet, but more importantly, it provides the building blocks for new tissues for adolescent growth and development, as well as repair and adaptation to exercise. Protein is found in both animal-derived foods (meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy) and vegetable sources (e.g. legumes, nuts, cereals, soy product), with the animal sources being considered higher quality.

Although many athletes think that high-protein diets are needed for sport, in fact, the best way to meet additional protein needs is to include a modest serving of protein in the post-training/game meal, as well as 3-5 meals and snacks over the day. There is no need for expensive protein supplements. Excessive consumption of protein can

be detrimental if it displaces other important nutrients in the player's diet or requires excessive costs to the food bill.

Minerals also play a role in the development of new tissues as well as the regulation of body metabolism. Iron is important for the development of red blood cells and the brain, while calcium is essential for the formation and maintenance of healthy bones and teeth. Foods rich in these and other minerals (see checklist) should be regularly included in meals and snacks.

Vitamins and other more recently identified chemicals can be found in a range of plant foods (fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and legumes) and animal sources. Dietary variety and a focus on nutrient-rich foods at each eating occasion will ensure that the player receives the health benefits of these products without the need for dietary supplements.

Indeed, since many foods are excellent sources of several key nutrients (see checklist), or can be mixed and matched with other choices at meals and snacks, good menu planning will allow players to meet all their nutrient needs, including additional requirements arising from their exercise programme.

Adolescence is a time of growing independence in many areas including social eating and food habits. Indeed, it is ironic that the player may have greater need for family support to meet their special nutritional needs for basketball within a busy lifestyle, just as



they are trying to become responsible for their own choices and outcomes. It is an important time to help the young player develop the knowledge and practical skills to manage their own nutritional needs.

It is sometimes challenging to develop an interest in exploring the range of colour, texture and tastes of wholesome food choices - particularly fruit and vegetables - in children and adolescents.

Nevertheless, it is an important feature to develop in the player's nutrition plan. Not only does it enhance the nutrient density of the diet, but it helps to develop the flexibility in eating patterns that is necessary to survive the rigour of travel that becomes part of the life of a high performance athlete.

### CHECKLIST OF FOOD SOURCES OF KEY NUTRIENTS

CARBOHYDRATE RICH FOODS	PROTEIN RICH FOODS	IRON RICH FOODS	CALCIUM RICH FOODS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breads</li> <li>• Rice, pasta, noodles and other grain foods</li> <li>• Oats &amp; breakfast cereals</li> <li>• Potatoes, yams and starchy vegetables</li> <li>• Fruit</li> <li>• Flavoured milk and yoghurts</li> <li>• Honey and jam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish</li> <li>• Chicken</li> <li>• Beef &amp; lamb</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Milk, cheese &amp; yoghurt</li> <li>• Legumes</li> <li>• Tofu and soy products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beef</li> <li>• Lamb</li> <li>• Chicken</li> <li>• Legumes</li> <li>• Tofu</li> <li>• Iron fortified breakfast cereals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Cheese</li> <li>• Yoghurt</li> <li>• Calcium fortified soy milk products</li> <li>• Fish with soft bones</li> <li>• Leafy green vegetables</li> <li>• Almonds</li> </ul>

## 3.2.3 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE HYDRATION AND FUELING

*Ultimately, athletes should take responsibility for their own hydration and eating, however, particularly young athletes may not be aware of how to best do this.*

Below are strategies that a coach can implement during practice (“training table”) and after practice or games (“recovery table”). Coaches do not have to provide the fluid or food, this could be done by the athletes or their parents

however the coach should emphasise the importance of athletes eating properly and being aware of their nutritional needs given their level of exercise.

TRAINING TABLE CHECKLIST	RECOVERY TABLE CHECKLIST
<p><b>SUPPLIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chilled fluids – especially in hot conditions</li> <li>• Sports drink or cordial / Kool-Aid may be useful for longer training sessions</li> <li>• Perhaps carbohydrate rich snacks for pre-game “top up” (e.g. fresh fruit, jam sandwiches, cereal bars)</li> <li>• Individual drink bottles for hygiene and to allow player to monitor how much fluid has been consumed</li> </ul> <p><b>BEHAVIOURS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate regular drink breaks during practice</li> <li>• Encourage good hydration practices</li> <li>• Consider occasional monitoring of hydration success by weighing pre- and post-training (1kg change = 1 litre fluid) or checking use of drink bottles</li> </ul>	<p><b>SUPPLIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chilled fluids</li> <li>• Easy to eat snack options that provide both carbohydrates and protein (e.g. chicken and salad sandwiches, fruit and yoghurt, flavoured milk, breakfast cereal and milk)</li> </ul> <p><b>BEHAVIOURS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support healthy choices at canteens and shops at basketball arenas</li> <li>• Encourage well-chosen eating by team members</li> <li>• Provide resources (e.g. fridge or kitchen area) where players can store / prepare their own snacks</li> </ul>

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## 3.2.4 DEALING WITH ISSUES OF PHYSIQUE

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*In many sports, including basketball, aspects of player physique (height, weight, lean mass and body fat levels) can influence performance. One of the goals of an athlete's training programme and diet is to gradually achieve the physique that will optimise their performance. This is, however, a long-term goal that is achieved over many years of maturation and conditioning.*

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Adolescence is a time of growth and change in body composition which includes a differential increase in muscle mass in males and fat mass in females. It is also a time of social and emotional change which can see the player develop body image concerns that are unrelated to their sporting activities, and particularly in the case of females, may cause unhelpful "dieting" behaviours.

It is important to support young players during this period so that they can take ownership of sound eating practices that will support their athletic goals as well as long-term health. In some cases, players will need to engage special strategies to assist with increasing energy intake to support growth, or to reduce unnecessary energy intake to assist with sensible weight control or to adjust to a period of reduced training (e.g. injury or a break).

### STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HEALTHY ATTITUDES TO PHYSIQUE

- Encourage athletes to feel comfortable about their physical changes during adolescence
- Avoid or prevent practices that place unnecessary focus on normal physical changes, particularly when it is unconnected to performance (e.g. recording player weights in a punitive way)
- Be sensitive to situations where players may feel uncomfortable in minimal/tight clothing (e.g. wearing lycra suits or playing "skins/shirts" drill).
- Be aware of problems of restrictive dieting or unhealthy fat gain and assist the player to seek professional help at an early stage

### EATING STRATEGIES TO ASSIST WITH A HIGH ENERGY INTAKE

- Plan a series of wholesome meals and snacks over the day to allow regular intake of energy and protein - don't mistake the need for extra energy as permission to overeat "junk foods"
- Be organised to have portable snacks and meals that can travel in a busy lifestyle
- Make the most of compact nutrient-packed drinks that are simple to consume: fruit smoothies, milkshakes, juice, liquid meals
- Don't overdo high fibre or bulky food choices – when appetite or stomach space seems limited, let vegetables, salads and wholegrain choices accompany the meal rather than cause over-filling
- Keep a record every once in a while to see how well the eating plan is being achieved or to identify times where meals/snacks are skipped

### EATING STRATEGIES TO ASSIST WITH A REDUCED ENERGY INTAKE

- Plan a series of filling meals and snacks over the day to allow regular intake of energy and protein and to avoid hunger or fatigue spots
- Don't skip meals or over-restrict intake - hunger is likely to lead to over-eating
- Minimise the intake of energy-containing drinks so that most of the day's energy intake needs to be chewed and consumed more slowly
- Make meals and snacks filling by adding plenty of fresh salads and vegetables or watery fruits (e.g. berries and melons), and by choosing wholegrain forms of cereal foods. Note that protein added to these eating occasions also helps to make the meal more satisfying
- Keep a record every once in a while to see how well the eating plan is being achieved or to identify times where problem behaviours are occurring (e.g. boredom eating, overeating)

## 3.2.5 OPTIMISING GAME PERFORMANCE

*Competition nutrition involves an understanding of the factors that can cause fatigue and loss of performance over the course of a basketball game.*

Dehydration and fuel depletion are potential factors of reduced performance, and even if these do not occur over the course of a single game, they may accumulate over a road trip or tournament scenario where the player has not achieved full recovery from one match before the next tip-off.

Eating strategies before, during and after/between games should try to address the potential causes of fatigue, reducing their impact or delaying their onset.

### PRE-GAME MEAL

A carbohydrate-rich meal is encouraged for the pre-game menu, particularly to allow players who have lots of court time to top up muscle stores of this important fuel. It is generally recommended to consume this meal 2-4 hours before the start of the game, from a selection of foods that are familiar and known to be well tolerated.

Foods that are hard to digest or likely to cause gut distress (e.g. rich or spicy foods, foods high in fats or fibre) should be avoided. Typical choices according to the time of day are suggested in the checklist but can be altered according to the preference and experience of each player.

Some players also like to consume a light snack even closer to game time, and fluids consumed during this period can ensure that good hydration levels are achieved for the game. Scenarios which provide the opportunity for a team pre-game meal can be used to ensure that all players achieve their nutrition goals as well as to commence other aspects of match preparation.

### Examples of pre-game meal options (eaten 2-4 hours prior)

- Crumpets/crumpets with honey
- Cereal with low fat milk
- Pasta with light sauces
- Fruit yoghurt with untoasted muesli
- Baked potato or starchy vegetables with accompaniments
- Bread rolls/sandwiches with meat and salad fillings

### FUEL AND FLUID DURING THE GAME

Actual fuel and fluid needs during a game will be individual to the player, their game patterns and court-time. The fast paced nature of the game and enclosed court environments often mean high sweat rates for active players.

However, there are usually opportunities during time-outs, breaks on the bench or time between halves/quarters to regularly replace fluid losses. As at practices, individual drink bottles should be kept courtside to provide players with ready access to fluids and an opportunity to gauge how much they have consumed.

Even when it is not necessary to consume additional carbohydrate as a muscle fuel during the game, there is emerging evidence that regular intake of carbohydrates during shorter/high intensity sports stimulates the brain to feel energised. Although research hasn't investigated the performance benefits of this tactic in a basketball scenario, it could help to sustain running and concentration over the duration of the game. This can be achieved by the choice of sports drink or cordial/Kool-Aid as the game fluid.

### POST-GAME RECOVERY

Optimal nutritional recovery involves the same processes as described in the section on training nutrition. These strategies may become particularly important during a tournament or a road trip when several games are to be played over a day or two.

Recovery snacks or a meal should be organised so that they can be eaten soon after the game according to practical issues such as travel times to the home base or team accommodation, and facilities at the game arena. This also often provides an opportunity for team eating to promote camaraderie or game analysis.

EXAMPLES OF RECOVERY SNACKS	EXAMPLES OF RECOVERY MEALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit yoghurt and cereal bars</li> <li>• Ham and cheese toasted sandwich</li> <li>• Low fat flavoured milk</li> <li>• Chicken and salad wraps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasta meal</li> <li>• Healthy pizzas with meats and vegetable toppings</li> <li>• Rice based meals – e.g. risotto</li> <li>• Mexican burritos with meats/beans and salad</li> </ul>

### EATING “ON THE ROAD” - COPING WITH TRAVEL

Travelling to games and tournaments calls for special eating skills.

The challenges include disruption to normal eating routines, limited access to familiar foods, unpractised exposure to group eating and less suitable food choices, and the loss of normal supervision around eating.

It is also important to consider food/water safety and the risk of getting sick on the road. The principles of travel nutrition start with preparation before the trip to plan and organise a suitable meal schedule and may include bringing supplies of important foods on the trip to supplement local fare.

Achieving an eating plan that meets nutrition goals instead of haphazard intake requires input at the team level as well as individual responsibility (see checklist).

### SPECIAL STRATEGIES FOR COACHES

- Plan for travel - try to find out what food is likely to be available, location of shops etc
- Educate players on food safety and good hygiene practices prior to departure
- Encourage athletes to plan snacks in advance to reduce the need to rely on roadside / airport stops
- Encourage optimal hydration by providing players with individual travel drink bottles
- Provide distraction and other activities to help reduce boredom eating
- Schedule regular meal and snack breaks around flights / road trips to limit disruption to eating patterns

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## 3.2.6 BASIC SPORT FOODS AND SUPPLEMENTS

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*The sports world is filled with specialised foods and supplements that promise a winning outcome. Only a few of these supplements are supported by scientific evidence to meet their claims and it is beyond the scope of this section to discuss them further.*

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Indeed, best practice guidelines generally discourage the use of such ergogenic supplements by individuals under the age of 18 years. Although many sports foods are tailor-made to assist an athlete to meet nutritional goals around exercise, the cost of these products needs to be considered against the practicality they offer. Further information on supplements and sports foods can be found at [www.ausport/ais/nutrition/supplements](http://www.ausport/ais/nutrition/supplements) or by consultation with an accredited sports nutrition expert.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional facts on sports nutrition can be found at:

- Australian Institute of Sport, Sports Nutrition  
[www.ausport.gov.au/nutrition](http://www.ausport.gov.au/nutrition)
- Sports Dietitians Australia  
[www.sportsdietitians.com.au](http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au)
- “The Complete guide to food for sports performance” 3rd edition, Louise Burke and Greg Cox, Allen and Unwin, Sydney Australia, 2010

## 3.3 PHYSICAL RECOVERY

### 3.3.1 PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - OVERVIEW

*This chapter contains general information, and individuals should not rely upon this information without seeking further advice from appropriately qualified individuals.*

*This chapter has been contributed by:*

**DR SHONA HALSON PHD**

Senior Recovery Physiologist  
Australian Institute of Sport

Professionalism in sport has provided the foundation for elite athletes to focus purely on training and competition. Athletes and coaches continually seek to improve performance, and optimal recovery from training and performance provides numerous benefits during repetitive high-level training and competition.

**WHAT IS RECOVERY?**

“Recovery” is a word commonly used in sport but is not necessarily well understood.

“Recovery” is the restoration of physiological and psychological processes, so that the athlete can compete or train again at an appropriate level. Recovery is complex and involves numerous factors. Coaches of junior athletes do not need to be experts in recovery but do need to have an understanding of the factors that can affect performance and the techniques that can help athletes to recover.

**FACTORS AFFECTING ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE**

There are many factors that can affect an athlete’s performance, such as:

<b>TRAINING/COMPETITION</b>	Volume, intensity, duration, type of training, degree of fatigue, recovery from previous training/competition
<b>NUTRITION</b>	Carbohydrate, protein and other nutrient intake, fluid and electrolyte balance
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS</b>	Stress from competition, home-sickness, anxiety
<b>LIFESTYLE</b>	Quality and amount of sleep, schedule, housing situation, leisure/ social activities, relationship with team members, coach, friends and family, job or schooling situation
<b>HEALTH</b>	Illnesses, infection, fever, injury, muscle soreness and damage
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	Temperature, humidity, altitude



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## 3.3.2 PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - ACTIVE RECOVERY

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*“Active recovery” (low intensity exercise) is an integral component of an athlete’s recovery. It usually involves walking, jogging, cycling or swimming at a low intensity. Anecdotal evidence suggests that active recovery reduces post-exercise muscle soreness and Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS).*

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Coaches should try to include time for “recovery” immediately after a game, staying at the venue rather than getting onto the team bus straight away.

Players may be able to walk and undertake some static stretching on court, although if there is another game scheduled the coach may need to find another venue.

During this “active recovery” period, players should also be encouraged to hydrate and also to consume some carbohydrate rich food.

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## 3.3.3. COMPRESSION CLOTHING

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*Athletes commonly wear elastic compression garments during long air travel, and recently it has become popular to wear them during or after games or practice. It is recommended that medical grade compression garments be worn when travelling, and using compression garments after exercise is considered most effective.*

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### THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE BASED ON CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND PATTERNS OF USE

- **Duration:** generally the longer an athlete can wear compression after exercise, the better
- **Sizing:** garments must be fitted correctly to ensure best fit
- Current research suggests that full length tights or lower limb-garments are the most effective
- **Garment care:** Place all compression garments in a laundry bag or hand wash, do not use a hot water wash or fabric softener, do not put compression garments in a dryer, and take care putting the garments on – work them up the leg rather than just pulling from the top

There are a lot of apparel that markets itself as “compression” but is has little compressive effect. These may “feel” tight, but that does not mean it is compressive.

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## 3.3.4. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - HYDROTHERAPY

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*There are a number of different types of hydrotherapy, and many are currently used in sports.*

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### COLD WATER IMMERSION

Cryotherapy (meaning 'cold treatment') is the most commonly used strategy for the treatment of acute soft tissue sports injuries, due to its ability to reduce the inflammatory response and to alleviate spasm and pain.

Cold water immersion is particularly effective at reducing the symptoms associated with DOMS, repetitive high intensity exercise, and muscle injury.

### HOT WATER IMMERSION (SPA)

Hot water immersion can assist the rehabilitation of soft tissue injuries (but not within the first 24-48 hours after the injury is sustained) and recovery and is usually performed in water greater than 37°C, resulting in a rise in muscle and core body temperature. A 20 minute immersion is typical.

### CONTRAST WATER THERAPY (HOT/COLD)

"Hot/Cold" therapy is perhaps the most common, whether done in the shower (alternating hot and cold) or going from a cold bath/pool into a warmer one.

Temperatures for contrast water therapy generally range from 10-15°C for cold water and 35-38°C for warm water.

### POOL RECOVERY

Pool recovery sessions are commonly used by team sport athletes to recover from competition, generally as a form of "active recovery".

These sessions are typically used to reduce muscle soreness and stiffness, and often include walking and stretching in the pool as well as some swimming. This is an example of active recovery.

### HYDROTHERAPY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Where possible, full body immersion (excluding head and neck) should be implemented.
- Recovery interventions should aim to be practical and time efficient. Hydrotherapy interventions of 10-15 min duration appear to be effective.
- Current knowledge suggests water temperatures of 10-15°C (cold) and 38-42°C (hot) are effective. If athletes are performing a continuous cold water immersion protocol it is recommended to use a slightly warmer temperature (e.g. 15°C). This is more comfortable (enhancing compliance), and has been shown to enhance the recovery of performance. However, if an athlete is performing an intermittent cold water immersion protocol, a cooler temperature (e.g. 10-12°C) may be more effective given the shorter exposure time.
- It is currently recommended that during "hot/cold" therapy, athletes should avoid having more hot water exposure than cold water exposure.
- Individual responses to recovery will vary and not every athlete will find them beneficial.

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## 3.3.5. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - MASSAGE

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*Massage is another technique commonly utilised to enhance recovery from training and/or competition and is suggested to have numerous benefits including:*

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- decrease in muscle tension and stiffness;
- increased healing rate of injured muscles and ligaments;
- reduced muscle pain, swelling and spasms;
- increased joint flexibility and increased range of motion;
- decreased anxiety and increased relaxation;
- enhanced immune and endocrine function.

Many athletes build regular massage into their weekly routines, which have the benefits noted above as well as being an effective relaxation technique.

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## 3.3.6. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - SLEEP

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*Elite athletes and coaches often identify sleep as a vital component of the recovery process. In a recent study, athletes and coaches ranked a lack of sleep as the most prominent problem when they were asked about the causes of fatigue/tiredness. Sleep characteristics ranked first when athletes were asked about the aspects of the clinical history that they thought were important.*

---

### THE EFFECT OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION

From the available data it appears that two phenomena exist. First, the sleep deprivation must be greater than 30 hours to have an impact on performance, and secondly, sustained or repeated bouts of exercise are affected to a greater degree than one-off maximal efforts.

Most athletes are more likely to experience acute bouts of partial sleep deprivation where sleep is reduced for several hours of consecutive nights.

From the available literature it appears that performance in maximal efforts may be unaffected by partial sleep deprivation, however, repeated sub-maximal efforts may be reduced, which is of concern for a basketball athlete as basketball includes repeated "sub-maximal" efforts.

### THE BENEFIT OF NAPPING

Athletes suffering from some degree of sleep loss may benefit from a brief nap, particularly if a training session is to be completed in the afternoon or evening. Napping may be beneficial for athletes who routinely have to wake early for training or competition, and for athletes who are experiencing sleep deprivation.

There is data to support the theory that increasing the amount of sleep an athlete receives may significantly enhance performance.

### PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain a regular sleep-wake cycle/routine
- Create a comfortable, quiet, dark and temperature-controlled bedroom
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, large meals and large volumes of fluid prior to bedtime
- Utilise a 'to-do' list or diary to ensure organisation and unnecessary over-thinking whilst trying to sleep

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## 3.3.7. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - STRETCHING

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*Stretching is one of the most commonly used recovery interventions post training. It is primarily used to reduce muscle soreness and stiffness, to prevent injury and to relax the muscles.*

*A very small amount of evidence suggests that stretching may reduce the sensation of pain after eccentric exercise.*

---

Many teams incorporate stretching into the pre-game or pre-practice routine, which can be beneficial both to “warm-up” but also to help the athletes focus on the task ahead.

Dynamic stretching, which takes joints through a range of motions are preferred for pre-game or pre-practice stretching.

After a game or practice, dynamic stretching can be incorporated into “active recovery”.

Stretching can also be used to improve flexibility, and gains in this regard may help to reduce the chance of injury.

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## 3.3.8. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

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*From a recovery perspective, sporting competitions provide many unique challenges, often resulting in recovery becoming a blend between recovery science and practicality. This section of the review provides typical real-life scenarios to illustrate some potential difficulties with prescribing and implementing recovery during sporting competitions and offers practical guidance and suggestion to counteract these challenges.*

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### COMPETITION SCENARIO:

In a tournament, teams will often have a number of consecutive days of playing games with possibly less than 24 hours between the finish of one game and start of another. They may also have a light “shoot-around” on the day of the game, although these sessions are not usually physically demanding.

Possible Post-Game Recovery Session:

- Active Recovery (5-10 min at a low intensity)
  - Cycle Ergometer
  - Strictly low intensity
- Static stretching
  - Objective of static stretching is to return recruited muscles to resting length not to gain flexibility
  - Recommendation: 10-15 sec holds repeated 2-3 times on major muscle groups recruited during competition
  - For recovery, the primary purpose of post-exercise static stretching is to relax the muscle, as opposed to gain flexibility.

- Cold Water immersion
  - 5-6 x (1 min cold: 1 min out)
  - Optimal temperature 12-15°C
  - Where possible utilise full body immersion
  - Complete post-game shower before cold water immersion session
- Compression
  - Wear full length compression tights or medical grade compression socks
  - Wear compression garment immediately post cold water immersion; continue to wear for as long as possible, removing prior to the warm-up of next game.

In most circumstances accessibility to inflatable ice baths, chilling machines, pools and cycle ergometers is unlikely at competition venues. Importantly, rather than neglecting recovery altogether, consideration needs to be given to alternate resources which can achieve a similar outcome and still provide a competitive advantage.

### ALTERNATIVE RESOURCES FOR PERFORMING COLD WATER IMMERSION

- Showers
- Plastic tubs / wheelie bins managed with ice
- Neighboring facilities (swimming pool, ocean) or hotel facilities

### ALTERNATIVE FOR ACTIVE RECOVERY

- Incorporate active recovery/static stretching on field immediately post-game

### COMPETITION SCENARIO TWO - PLAYED IN HEAT

Whilst basketball tournaments may be played in air-conditioned facilities, particularly at junior level this may not be the case. The stresses of physical exertion are often complicated by hot/humid environmental conditions.

Although the body can effectively thermoregulate in neutral conditions, the mechanisms of thermoregulation can be inadequate when athletes are exposed to extreme conditions. Competing under such conditions necessitates specific post-competition recovery attention to dissipate the heat gained from the environment, along with the heat produced by the active muscles.

### PURPOSE OF RECOVERY SESSION

- Decrease core body temperature
- Decrease sweat rate
- Enhance thermal comfort
- Enhance onset of sleep
- Reduce sensations of pain and fatigue

### POSSIBLE PROTOCOLS

- 10 min ice bath - full body
- 10 min pool / 5 min cold shower 25-28°
- 5 min cold shower - full body x 2
- 20-30 min pool / ocean - full body
- 3-5 min cold shower

### POST RECOVERY SESSION

- Do not have a hot shower immediately post-recovery
- Dry off, put sufficient clothing on and try to stay in an air conditioned environment
- Maintain hydration

### TRAINING CAMPS

Often teams will come together for intensive periods of preparation, with or without competitive games being played. This can involve repetitive phases of high load strength and conditioning training and recovery.

Intense training with inadequate and/or inappropriate recovery builds an accumulation of fatigue rather than optimal performance and adaptation. Importantly, athletes need to frequently undertake recovery during a training week to allow for adequate physiological and psychological restoration in order to achieve super-compensation and minimise the risks associated with overtraining.

### POSSIBLE POST-TRAINING RECOVERY SESSION:

- Active Recovery Options (5-10 min low intensity)
  - Cycle Ergometer
  - Whirlpool / Swimming Pool / Beach
  - Walking / Light Jogging
- Static Stretching
  - Objective of static stretching is to return recruited muscles to resting length, not to gain flexibility
  - recommendation: 10-15 sec holds repeated 2-3 times on major muscle groups recruited during training session
- Contrast Water Immersion Options
  - 1min Hot (38-40°C): 1 min Cold (12-15 °C) - repeat 7 times OR
  - 2min Hot (38-40°C): 2 min Cold (12-15 °C) - repeat 3-5 times OR
  - Contrast Shower - 1min Hot: 1 min Cold - repeat 3-7 times
- Compression
  - Wear full length compression tights or medical grade compression socks



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on contemporary recovery techniques can be found in the following articles:

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## 3.4 INJURY MANAGEMENT

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### 3.4.1 INJURY MANAGEMENT

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*This chapter contains general information, individuals should not rely upon this information without seeking further advice from appropriately qualified individuals.*

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Coaches should be guided by medical professionals regarding the rehabilitation of injured players, and coaches should not place any pressure on a player to participate until medical clearance has been given. The coach should be clear as to whether injured players are expected to attend practice, meetings and/or games.

Often, a player's injury may stop them from full participation but will enable them to have some involvement. Subject to medical confirmation, an injured player may be able to:

- Participate as a passer in activities;
- Rebounding during shooting activities;
- Work on their fitness (e.g. riding on a stationary bike);
- Practice individual skills (e.g. dribbling, passing or shooting);
- Be a passive defender in dribbling or shooting activities (i.e. standing in a defensive position).

Even if the injured player cannot participate in any physical activities they could still be involved through:

- Recording statistics during practice;
- Acting as an assistant coach, providing feedback to other players (this can be particularly effective when it is a more experienced player that is injured);
- Helping players by getting drinks, towels etc as they are required;
- Standing with the coaches to ensure that they hear the feedback provided by the coach, also giving the coach an opportunity to question the player about aspects of play.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. What recovery techniques do you incorporate with your team? Discuss with a coach from another sport the recovery techniques they use.
2. Do you think that your players are well hydrated? How could you check? If they are showing signs of dehydration what can you do to improve it?
3. Record for a week:
  - a. How many hours' sleep you get;
  - b. How you feel each morning (when you first get up);
  - c. How you feel during the day (at mid-morning and mid-afternoon).
4. Based on the data in question 3, do you think you are getting enough sleep? Have your players do the same activity.
5. Discuss with a coaching colleague the extent to which they incorporate strength and fitness training in their programs. Is this different to your practice?

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**LEVEL 2**

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**PLAYER**

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**CHAPTER 4**

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL  
PREPARATION**

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## CHAPTER 4

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# PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

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### 4.1 ATHLETE MINDSET

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# 4.1 ATHLETE MINDSET

## 4.1.1 DEVELOPING AN ATHLETE'S MINDSET

*"Every day is a new opportunity. You can build on yesterday's success or put its failures behind and start over again. That's the way life is, with a new game every day, and that's the way [basketball] is."*

**BOB FELLER**

*"You can't win, unless you learn how to lose."*

**KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR**

### WHAT IS THE ATHLETE'S MINDSET

Involvement in sport is widely regarded as having many benefits, particularly for young people. In addition to health benefits that may flow from involvement in sport, junior sport participation can have many important social benefits such as developing life skills (e.g. communication, concentration, commitment)

- learning responsibility and discipline
- learning how to work with others in team environments
- learning to cope with success and failure
- developing a sense of community, loyalty and cohesion
- helping some gifted young people become aware they are role models for others.<sup>6</sup>

However, the extent to which a young person will experience any social benefit depends upon the experience that they have with their involvement in sport.

A successful athlete's "mindset" can probably be characterized by three things:

- confidence in their ability to perform;
- understanding that losing is an inherent part of sport and that failure to achieve one goal doesn't mean that the overall goal cannot be achieved;

- belief that if they "do the work" they can improve their performance.

Such a mindset can be immediately linked to some of the social benefits described above.

Coaches can accordingly enhance the "mindset" of their players in a number of ways.

### COPING WITH SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Both winning and losing are an inevitable part of sport. As a team sport, winning or losing (or success and failure) applies in the following contexts:

- the end result (winning or losing games);
- individual contests within a game (e.g. scoring or rebounding against an opponent);
- learning the skills and tactics of the games and being able to perform them in games.

Whilst it may seem that "winning" is very easy to cope with, there are a number of characteristics that the coach should still impart:

- respect for the opponent – the coach must ensure that the team shows respect for their opponent;
- winning can also bring the pressure of expectation of further success, which athletes may struggle to cope with.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Sports Commission (2003), Junior Sport Guidelines

Whilst winning a game should be celebrated, the approach to winning and losing should be the same – what does the team know need to work on to further develop?

“Losing” is an adversity that is unavoidable in sport. It may be in relation to a particular aspect of play (e.g. your opponent drives past and gets an easy shot), it may be the outcome of a particular game or it may occur off the court, such as not being selected for a team.

Athletes of course strive to win but the reality for almost all athletes is that they will lose just as many times, if not more, as they win. In losing, coaches should be prepared to acknowledge that the other team was better (at least “on the day”) and then identify areas for improvement and start to address those.

With this “mindset”, losing does not mean that a player or a team is “no good”, it simply means that another team was better, which may identify areas to improve. This is a positive message to give to athletes, who at the time of losing may and probably will have negative thoughts about their performance. If the coach can foster an attitude or mindset that after a loss that “I am not yet successful”, it can motivate players to continue to develop.

However, if the coach simply berates players for “lack of effort” or shakes their head in dismay “I don’t know how we lost that game”, their players are unlikely to see how the situation can improve. The coach must be both specific and realistic – simply saying “we’ll beat them next time” will soon ring hollow with athletes.

The “mindset” equally applies to when a team wins. A win does not mean that the team does not have areas to improve. Indeed, many times a team plays poorly but wins and on other occasions plays very well, but loses.

With an athlete’s “mindset”, players and coaches ultimately derive satisfaction from knowing the effort and improvement they have made and the level of expertise which they reach.

## LOSING IS DIFFERENT TO FAILING

One way that coaches can help develop a player’s ability to “cope” with losing is to keep perspective of what the failure was. Only one team can win the championship, only one athlete wins the gold medal in a race. The coach should have other criteria by which the team, and each player, can evaluate their performance.

The criteria can then form an important part of identifying both improvement (which is a success) and in motivating the athlete to continue to strive to develop further. The criteria might reflect upon what they have learnt during the season, other statistics (e.g. reducing turnovers, shooting percentage, rebounding) or comparative to a rival particularly if they were easily beaten early in the season and became more competitive.

Most importantly, coaches must recognize that players will be understandably disappointed when they lose, particularly if they lose a championship game. Coaches should emphasize that disappointment is natural but should not affect the player’s overall self-esteem.

## TAKING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Coaches must foster an environment where players and coaches take responsibility for what they can control. If the coach blames the referees for a loss, how can they expect that players will take responsibility for their actions?

Instead, coaches should focus on what the team, and individuals, need to do better and the message must be positive – if individuals do better on each task, the team’s performance will improve.

Personal responsibility also comes from each player being accountable for the role that they have on the team. Coaches can enhance this by setting goals and then measuring whether or not they are achieved. Receiving this feedback, and accepting the role that they have, is an important aspect of an athlete’s mindset.



### **LONG RACES ARE WON BY LITTLE STEPS**

Most teams will want to win the championship, however the coach (and each player) must understand there are many smaller goals that need to be achieved in order to be in a position to win a championship.

This approach is both motivating (as the attainment of a goal is a great motivator to pursue the next goal) but also provides a basis upon which to judge success, in the event that the ultimate goal (championship) is not achieved.

As coach Bob Knight reminds us, “most people have the ‘will to win’, few have the will to prepare to win”. Focusing on each of the steps toward an ultimate goal will test whether or not the will to prepare to win exists.

### **LEARNING TO TRAIN “HARD”**

One characteristic of elite athletes is how “hard” they practice – as Magic Johnson reminds us “with few exceptions the best players are the hardest workers”.

However, young players often underestimate what they can achieve. Their view is often limited by their own experiences up to that time and those of friends and family.

For example, if a student comes from a family where nobody has ever attended university, the student often will not believe that they can. They may hold this view irrespective of their school grades which indicate they could go to university.

Such limitations are perhaps most commonly seen when working with athletes on their fitness or conditioning. Ask an athlete to complete a physical task (e.g. sprinting full court) as many times as they can and most will stop running before reaching the point where they can physically run no more.

Some coaches will yell encouraging words at the athlete to extract as much effort as possible from the athlete, and this may work to some extent. Coaches must avoid making “threats” or negative remarks.

An elite athlete may not necessarily have any greater physical capacity than other athletes but what often sets them apart is that they are actually able to reach their capacity (or potential).

An important role for a coach is to help the athlete achieve more than what they initially thought they were capable of achieving. Setting realistic, but challenging, goals is important. As is breaking down a large goal, e.g. “I want to be selected to the national team,” into a series of goals that progress toward that.

There is no definitive measure of how “hard” an athlete trains, however it is influenced by both their level of “fitness” and also their mindset. When trying to improve the fitness of athletes the coach often has to change the athlete’s mindset.

Having players take their heart rate during training can give an indication of how “hard” they are working. To do this, have players count their pulse for 10 seconds and then multiply by 6 to get their heart rate.

A player’s maximum heart rate is approximately 220 minus their age. When players work “hard” they should be at 85% of maximum heart rate.

Humans are “pack” animals, simply meaning that we have the capacity for empathy and we generally prefer to be a part of a community. It is drawing upon this sense of wanting (or needing) to “belong” that coaches can use to help athletes to understand that they can work “harder”.

In the example above of the athlete being asked to run as many sprints as they can, irrespective of the coach “yelling” the following will usually get more effort from the athlete:

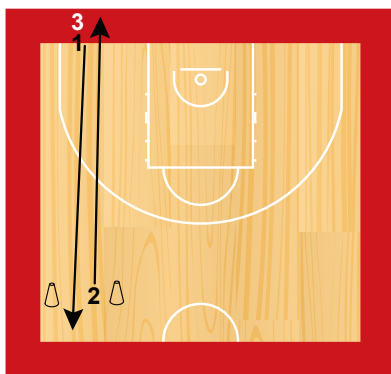
- other athlete’s encouraging them;
- an athlete running alongside them;
- playing “energetic” music (provided that it is music the athlete likes).

The power of human touch should also not be overlooked. When someone is upset, a friend will often comfort them by touching their arm or shoulder and this simple, physical connection will help the friend to feel better.

Similarly, a “high five” (clapping hands) between athletes or helping another athlete get up when they are knocked to the floor, can also be very effective ways for athletes to support each other.

It is common in basketball to see teams put “hands in” at the end of a time-out, however this is often half-hearted.

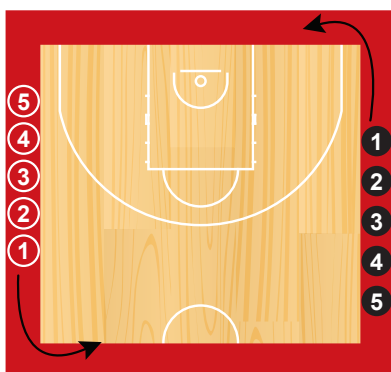
When it works best, is where the player's make a connection with each other. Below are examples of activities a coach can use to have their athletes work together and support each other, helping each individual to “push” themselves to achieve a level above what they would by themselves.



### RELAY 3

In groups of 3, athletes sprint a specified distance. They give their team mate a “high five” and that person then sprints the distance.

For longer distances, have 4 athletes involved, so that two are running and two are resting.

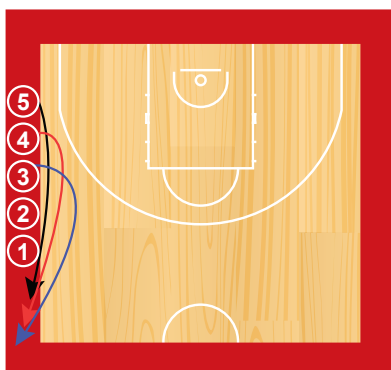


### TEAM PURSUIT

Have two teams start on opposite sides of the court or other area. They run around the designated area either for a set amount of time or specified number of laps.

All members of the team must cross the line for the team to finish. If one team overtakes the other team they automatically win. All five players must run past the five players of the other team to overtake.

Coach can either have the team run as a group (and it is up to the team to stay together) or they can run it as a “pursuit” (which is a type of race used in cycling).



In a pursuit, the coach has the teams run so that the last person in the group must sprint to get to the front. Once there, they call out and the next person sprints to the front.

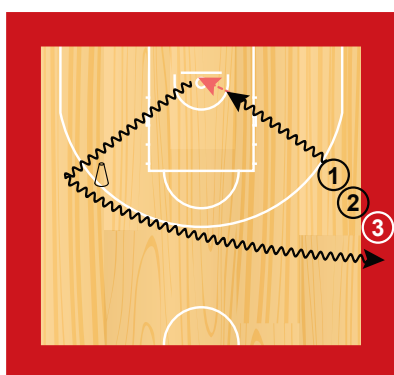
### WHEELBARROW RACE

Athletes work in pairs. One holds their team mates legs and the team "walks" using their hands, with their chest facing the ground. It can also be done, with the athlete having their back to the ground (this is harder as it uses the tricep, which is a smaller muscle.).

### GROUP RUNNING

Have the athletes run whilst holding hands with one or two other athletes. It can also be done with athletes standing behind each other, holding each other at the hips.

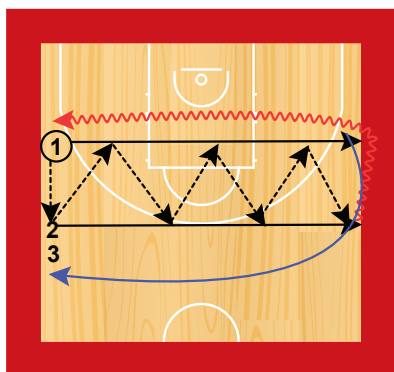
The key with this activity is that each group can only go as fast as the slowest member. The activity is most effective when done when athletes are tired, so that the athletes are working to keep up with their team mates.



### LAY-UP CIRCUIT

Athletes work in small groups (up to 5) taking a simple lay-up, rebounding their own shot and then returning to the lay-up line. Have players run around a cone, touch the sideline etc to increase the distance that they run.

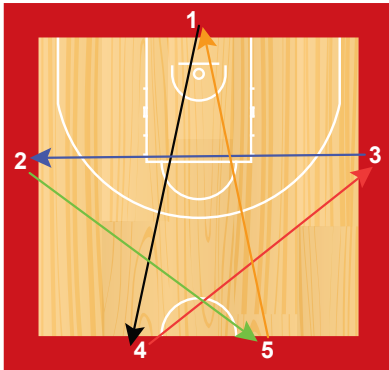
You may give the group an objective (such as make 20 in a row) which should be challenging for them considering their skill level. Players may rest at the start (if there is a player shooting in front of them) but must otherwise must keep running.



### PASSING GAME

Athletes are in group of 3. 2 athletes pass the ball between each other as they move a specified distance. This is a rest period for the 3rd athlete.

In the diagram, 2 must dribble back to the start and commence passing with 3, whilst 1 returns to rest.



### STAR RUNS

5 athletes sprint in a "star" formation. They must give the next team mate a "high five".

In the diagram, 5 will do two sprints (to position 1, and then to position 4, as there will be nobody at position 1). This is deliberate to make this more difficult than the other sprints.

Coach may set a specific time to complete each sprint.

### DEVELOPING THE ATHLETE'S MINDSET

Sport presents athletes (and coaches) with many situations of adversity such as losing games or missing selection to teams and sport can accordingly help athletes to learn to cope with such adversity and this can then help them in many situations outside of sport.

However, most coaches will have players that do not cope with such adversity, who put their heads down when they make a mistake or may get angry toward team mates that make mistakes. Accordingly, coaches need to be able to help their athletes to improve performance by developing a better mindset.

### GETTING BETTER BY MAKING MISTAKES

This may seem an unusual mindset to promote, but a key to coping with mistakes is to embrace the facts that:

- Every athlete will make mistakes; and
- Making mistakes is an important part of development.

For example, Magic Johnson averaged 11.2 assists per game and he averaged 3.2 turnovers per game. He also missed 6.3 field goals a game while making 6.9 field goals each game. However, his status as one of the best players of his era is undisputed. All champions are the same, they make mistakes but they learn from, rather than dwell upon, those mistakes.

## SOME STRATEGIES THAT COACHES CAN DISCUSS WITH ATHLETES TO HELP THEM TO DEVELOP THEIR ABILITY TO COPE WITH MISTAKES.

<p><b>“NEXT PLAY”<sup>7</sup></b></p>	<p>Having athletes focus on the “next play” is important as that is what they can influence. What has happened cannot be changed. Athletes can use “Next” or “Next Play” as a key word. Key words are used to focus attention on what the athlete can control not the mistake they have made.</p> <p>The athlete can say the word to themselves when they are having negative thoughts. Some athletes write key words on their wrist to look at when they have negative thoughts or the key word can be used by the coach or team mates when their team mate appears focused on negative thoughts.</p>
<p><b>“RELEASE” THE MISTAKE</b></p>	<p>For some athletes having a physical “release” can help to refocus their back to the present. Two common techniques are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clenching their fist as hard as possible and then throwing the mistake away;</li> <li>• Flicking a wrist band against their wrist.</li> </ul> <p>Both are a physical prompt to refocus their mind and could also be used in conjunction with a key word. They can be performed quickly without affecting the play.</p>
<p><b>ACKNOWLEDGE A BETTER PLAY</b></p>	<p>Being beaten whether in a game or a particular play only means in that game or play that the opponent was successful. It does not mean that the opponent will win the next game or play. A player can focus on the next game or play by acknowledging an opponent's good play. An example of this is often seen in tennis, when a player will applaud the play of an opponent.</p>
<p><b>FOCUS ON SMALL GOALS</b></p>	<p>Players in a team that falls behind early by a large margin in the game may “drop their head” and see the game as lost. In this situation, the coach should identify smaller segments to focus on, not just trying to outscore the opponent by a large margin.</p> <p>The segments may be trying to outscore the opponent in short periods of time (e.g. 5 minutes) or it might be process objectives such as boxing out, containing dribble penetration or scoring from a particular offensive play. Even if the team is unable to recover the large deficit, focusing on these smaller objectives can provide them with some “success” for the next game.</p>
<p><b>“CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLE”</b></p>	<p>Coaches should emphasise with their players to keep their attention focused on those things which they can control. Whether it is the decision of a referee, an exceptional play by an opponent or a mistake that a player has made. The coach requires their players to remain focused on what they can control and the coach should similarly not be distracted by things that cannot be controlled.</p>
<p><b>ACCEPT THE MISTAKE</b></p>	<p>Players are unlikely to be able to do this unless the coach also demonstrates this. Coaches that immediately substitute players that make mistakes or berate players that make mistakes are likely to create an atmosphere where players are scared of making mistakes. Ironically, this may make them more likely to make mistakes.</p> <p>When a mistake is made the coach ought to demand that athletes learn from it and avoid repeating it but not dwell on the fact that it was made. As Dean Smith reminds us:</p> <p>What to do with a mistake? Recognise it, admit it, learn from it, forget it.</p>

<sup>7</sup> Coach Mike Krzyzewski at Duke University introduced the concept with his teams of focusing on the “next play”.

## 4.1.2 VISUALISING SUCCESS

### SEEING SUCCESS

Many athletes use visualization or mental imagery to enhance their performance coaches can also introduce some simple techniques to junior players that may improve their performance.

### AFFIRMATIONS

The simplest way to create a change in ourselves is by repeating an affirmation. An affirmation is simply a positive statement saying something that we want to be the case. Many players will have a negative self-image or lack self-confidence and this can impact upon their performance.

Repeating positive affirmations, both by saying it to themselves and displaying it in various places where they will see it (e.g. on the fridge, the back of their bedroom door, in their school books etc.) can change a person's self-confidence.

To be effective, affirmations must be:

- Expressed in positive, not negative, terms;
- In the present tense;
- Possible;
- About the person;
- Short and simple;
- Concrete and specific;
- Fit their goals.

Affirmations like "I am a good team mate", "I do my role" or "I constantly find ways to contribute to the team"

### VISUAL IMAGERY

Visualisation is the process of "seeing in your mind" the performance of a particular skill or situation and can be used to improve a player's execution of that skill or performance in that situation.

The use of visual imagery can result in an improvement in physical performance because the visualization creates neural patterns in the brain similarly to the neural patterns created when physically acting.

Visualisation is a skill that can be developed and that will improve the more that it is done. A coach may initially direct players in using such imagery and then those athletes may do it themselves.

To do a simple visualization with player's take them through taking a free throw. The players should be relaxed and comfortable.

1. Ask the players to see the basketball court and describe it to them in as much detail as you can. As they are familiar with it, they should be able to "see" the various things you describe.
2. Ask them to use as many of their senses as possible:
  - a. "hear the squeak of basketball shoes"
  - b. "feel the leather of the basketball"
3. Have the player's walk to the free throw line. Some players will find it easier to see themselves (as if watching a movie – so they see themselves) whilst others will find it easier to visualize as they would actually see it (and they will not see themselves).
4. Describe the situation to them. Describe where referees, teammates, opponents etc. are.
5. Ask them to visualize doing their normal foul shot routine – feeling the ball in their hands, hearing it bounce, feeling sweat on their arms. Again, be as descriptive as you can in asking them to see the situation.
6. Ask the athlete to feel the various parts of their body as they shoot, their legs, their arms etc. Have them take the shot and finish seeing and hearing the ball "swish" in the basket.

Some players may like to listen to some music to relax before doing a visualization.

The key things in doing a visualization are:

- Be comfortable and relaxed;
- Be specific about what is being visualized;
- Use as many senses as possible to make the visualization “real” (i.e. hearing, feeling, seeing, smelling);
- Describe in as much detail as possible (e.g. the location of specific team mates, colours, temperature, game situation, location and action by defenders).

With practice, players may be able to use visualization to:

- Rehearse principles of play (e.g. 2x1, screening action) as well as performing skills;
- Help relax prior to major games;
- Get to sleep.

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## 4.1.3 CONTROLLING EMOTIONS

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### USING RHYTHMIC BREATHING TO CONTROL EMOTION

Anxiety, nervousness and even panic are to be expected amongst athletes and are often characterized by breathing quickly and shallowly.

Rhythmic breathing is commonly used in Yoga and is a term that may mean different things to different people.

In the context of athletic performance, rhythmic breathing is a technique that players (and coaches) can use to control their arousal or emotional level – to “calm down”. Essentially, it is about taking deep breaths and setting a rhythm for our breathing that is disconnected from the “emotionally charged” rhythm of people around us, whether they are fans, coaches or other players.

As a relaxation technique, rhythmic breathing can be used when a player has time to do so. It can be as simple as synchronizing the length of time between breathing in and breathing out (e.g. 3 heart beats) – breathe in and hold for 3 heart beats then breath out waiting three heart beats before breathing in.

During a game or practice session though may not provide the opportunity for this, however if a player uses it often they may also be able to use it in a game. However, simply taking a slow breath or two can help an athlete “calm down”.

Perhaps the most common example seen is when a player is taking a free throw. Many players will take a measured breath as part of their normal routine, which helps to focus on the shot and not the consequence of missing or making the shot.

Coaches can help athletes by taking breaks during practice and making them take exaggerated and full breaths, not short breaths. Even if this is done in a break as short as 24 seconds, regular practice may help the athlete control their emotions.

It is also very worthwhile for the coach to practice too!



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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Assess each of your player's ability to cope with adversity during a game (e.g. incorrect calls by a referee, physical play from opponents). Have them also assess themselves – discuss with each player any discrepancies.
2. How well do you manage "stress" in a game? Ask some colleagues to observe you coaching in a game and discuss with them how they think you cope with stress.
3. Discuss with a coaching colleague how they would help an athlete that gets so nervous before a game that it affects their performance. What do you do?
4. Ask family members how well they think you control your emotions generally. Are you different when you coach?
5. Consider your upcoming opponent and visualise aspects of how you think they will play. Does this help you in preparing for the game?



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**LEVEL 2**

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**TEAM**

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**CHAPTER 1**

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**DEFENSIVE TACTICS  
AND STRATEGIES**

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## CHAPTER 1

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# DEFENSIVE TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

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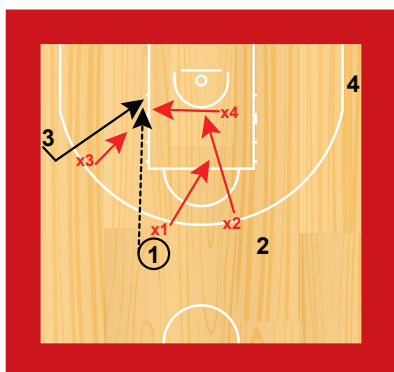
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# 1.1 MAN TO MAN DEFENCE

## 1.1.1 HELP DEFENCE - HELP TO DEFEND INSIDE PASSING

### HELP TO DEFEND INSIDE PASSING

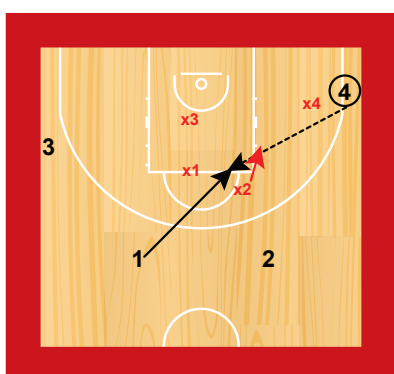
Defensive Help is also important to stop inside passing, both to perimeter players when they cut and to post players. There are two main examples where defenders may help:



### HELP DEFENDING BACK DOOR CUTS

The defender on the split line nearest the baseline (x4) must be alert and anticipate any possible pass to 3 cutting "back door". A visual cue for x4 to consider is how aggressively x3 is denying the perimeter pass. The more aggressive x3 is, the more likely that 3 will "back door" cut to the basket.

x4 reacts to the pass and either intercepts the pass, or defends 3 tightly as soon as they receive the ball. It is also important that the team "helps the helper", so x2 rotates to the basket and x1 rotates into the keyway.



### HELP GUARDING THE FLASH CUT

Defenders that are playing in a "floating" or open position one pass away from the ball may also be able to help defend a cut from the "weak side" towards the ball.

x2 is in an open position and can help to guard a cut by 1. Importantly, x2 must maintain sight of their opponent.

## 1.1.2 HELP DEFENCE - HELP TO DEFEND LOW POST

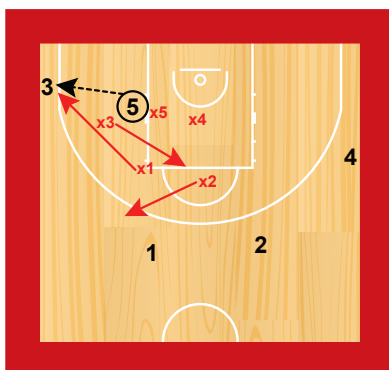
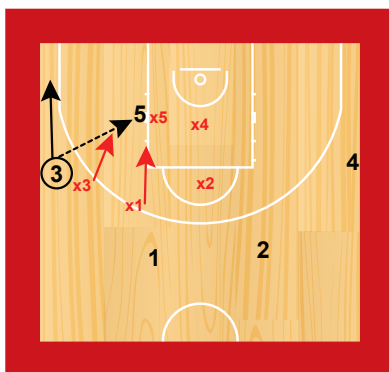
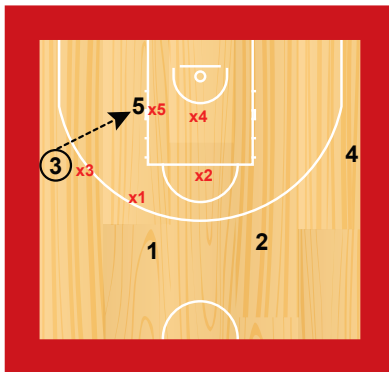
### HELP TO DEFEND LOW POST

Although post players have their own defenders, defending the low post must also be considered a team responsibility and it forms an important part of the team defensive scheme.

### HELP WHEN DEFENDING LOW POST FROM BEHIND

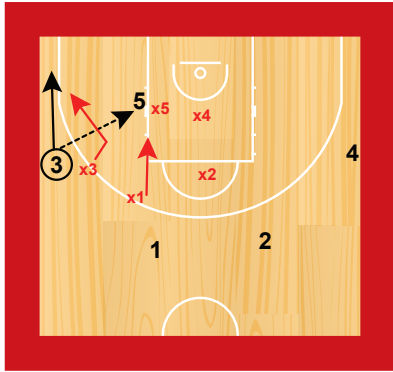
If the low post is defended from behind, help from teammates comes from the perimeter, in front of the post player.

Having good pressure on the person with the ball will make it hard to pass to the post. Also, x1 may "float" and be in a position to prevent or intercept the pass.



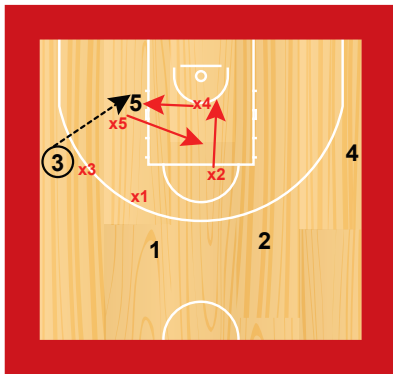
If the post player does receive the ball, the perimeter defenders should be ready to "help" – either full help ("double team") or help and recover.

If the perimeter player closest to the post (x3) double teams, the post player's most likely pass is back to the perimeter player. Defender's rotate on that pass to ensure there is no open perimeter shot.



Alternatively, perimeter players may “help and recover” by stepping towards the post player to pressure their decision, but then returning to their own player (e.g. x3).

In this situation x3 plays in an open stance, “butt to the baseline” – with their back to the baseline - so that they have sight of both 5 and 3.

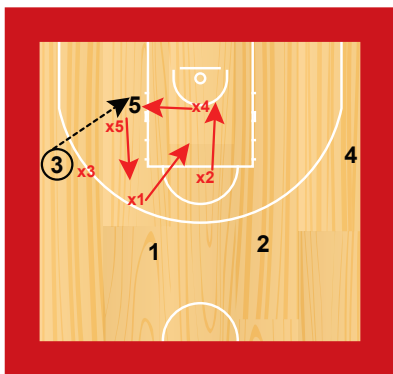


### HELP WHEN FRONTING LOW POST

Where the low post is being fronted (either from the side or fully from in front) help must come from the “split” line.

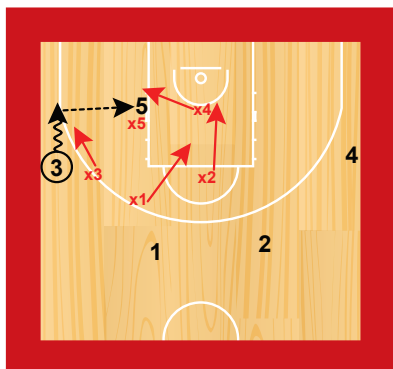
5 is being fully fronted by x5 (meaning the defender is between the passer and the low post player) and x1 is denying a pass back to 1. Therefore the most likely pass to the post is a lob pass.

x4 must be alert to move to intercept the lob pass. x2 would rotate to help x4 and x5 should recover into the keyway.



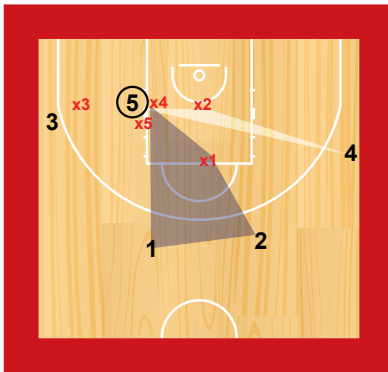
Once a pass is made to the post player, x1 may also rotate into the keyway to “help the helper” as x4 has moved to intercept the pass (“first rotation”) and x2 has rotated to the basket (“secondary rotation”).

x5 can either stay to pressure the post player or can rotate to defend 1.



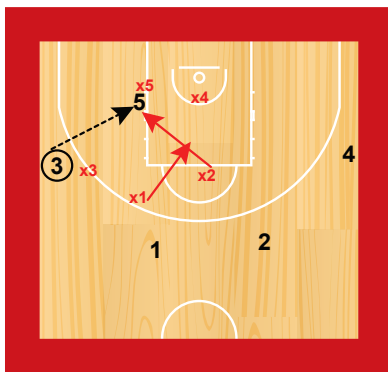
Often teams double team the low post player when they receive the ball. Where that double team comes from depends upon how the low post player is defended.

If the post defender (x5) is on the high side, the help comes from the low defender (x4) on the split line.



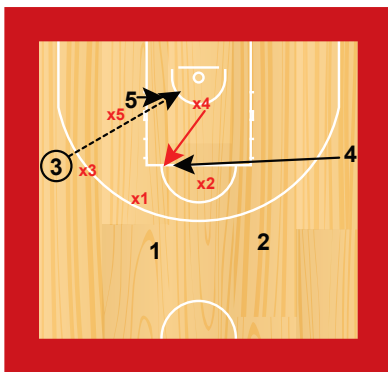
As x4 rotates to double team, x2 rotates down and is now defending 4 and must keep sight of them.

Similarly, x1 rotates to the top of the key and is responsible for both 1 and 2 (and must keep vision of them).



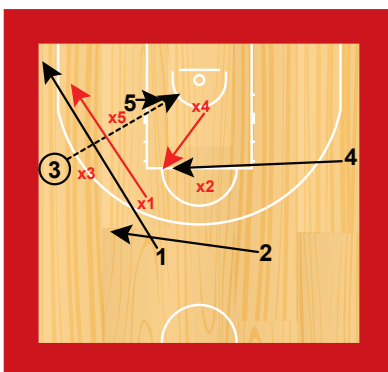
If the post defender is standing on the baseline side of the post player, the help or double team comes from the high "split line" defender (x2).

Again, x1 rotates to the top of the key.



In order to prevent help coming from the split line, some offences will attempt to move defenders from the "split line". Here 4 cuts to the high post. If x4 stays at the basket, 4 would be open to receive a pass and could shoot or pass to the low post player.

To combat this, x1 or x2 may move towards the keyway to be able to intercept any pass to 4, and x4 may make a small movement towards 4 so that they can still intercept a pass to 5. They are also closer to 4 and can move to them quickly if they receive a pass.



Similarly, 1 & 2 may cut to the "strong side" in order to force x1 and x2 to move away from positions where they can help.

To combat this, x4 may play a "floating" position, staying in the keyway and leaving Player 4 relatively open to receive a pass. x2 also may stay closer to the foul line to pressure the pass, but this will depend upon whether or not Player 2 is a perimeter shooter.

Alternatively, where an offensive team is proficient at "clearing the split line", the defence may opt for a different defensive scheme than fronting the low post.



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## FOLLOW-UP

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**1. Discuss with a coaching colleague the following statement:**

Having “help” defence only teaches players (particularly young players) to be lazy. It is better to focus on not getting beaten in the first place.

**2. How do opponents defend your low post players? Discuss with your players which opponents they find the hardest to play against in the post and they think that is.**

# 1.2 DEFENDING SCREENS

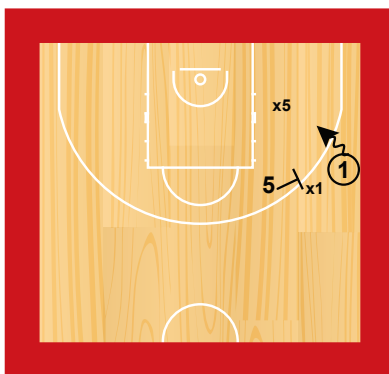
## 1.2.1 DEFENDING ON BALL SCREENS - PUSH

### “PUSH” – DEFENDING THE ON BALL SCREEN

Initially players are taught various methods to guard the on-ball screen:

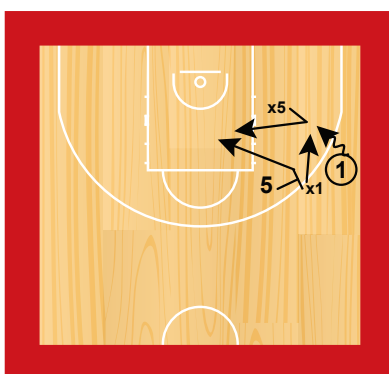
- “Over”;
- “Under”;
- “Through”;
- “Switch”;
- “Doubles”.

To this, we add “Push” (or “Ice”), which is where the defenders attempt to force the ball handler to dribble away from the screen.



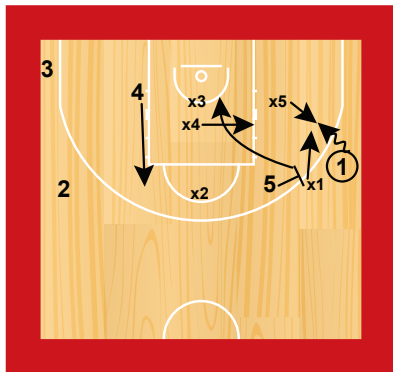
As the ball screen is set, the defender of the ball handler steps in front of the screen, preventing the ball handler from using the screen.

The screener’s defender steps away from the screen, towards the baseline, to pressure any drive by the ball handler.



If the dribbler does drive to the baseline, their defender should force them towards the corner.

x5 may “help and recover”, enabling x1 to recover position against the ball handler.



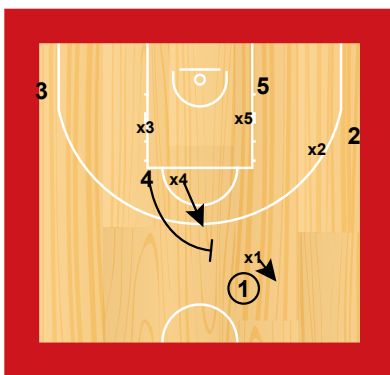
Alternatively, x5 and x1 may double team the ball handler. Doing this will require help from the "split line" to guard 5's cut to the basket. This can come from either x4 or x2, who must get between 5 and the ball handler.

## 1.2.2 DEFENDING ON BALL SCREENS - WEAK

Often a ball handler will have a preferred side that they prefer to attack and are more proficient when doing so. Often if they are a right-handed player they will be most efficient attacking to their right (and vice versa for a left-handed player). However, that is not always the case, as sometimes a right-handed player will attack best when they move to their left.

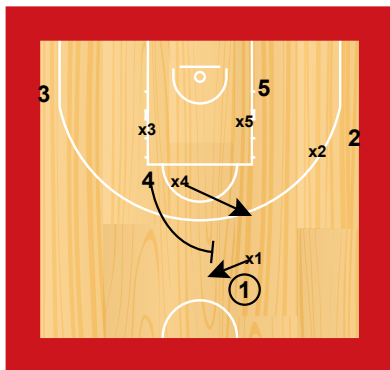
It is important that a team's "scout" identifies not only which hand a player shoots with but also with which hand they prefer to dribble.

"Weak" is simply a defensive scheme where an offensive player is forced to penetrate on their non-preferred. It can be used very effectively with an on-ball screen.



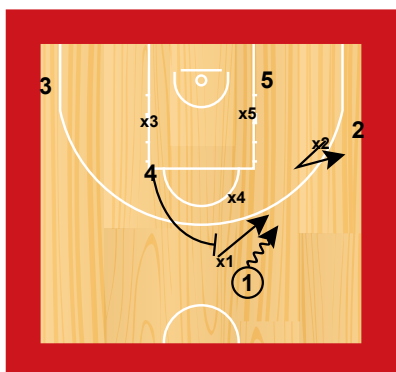
The defender must move to one side to prevent the dribbler moving in that direction. The defender must not allow the offensive player to drive straight either, so the defender needs to be "on the hip" of the offensive player.

The screen defender steps off the screen and moves so that they are in a position to pressure the dribbler (when they move in the direction the defence is forcing them).



In "Weak", it may involve forcing the offensive player to use the screen (dribble towards the screen) or it may force them to dribble away from the screen. The determining factor is that the defence does not allow the offensive player to move in their preferred direction.

If they are moving in the direction of the screen, the defender should go over the screen. If they were to go under the screen it would allow the dribbler to change direction and return to their preferred hand.



In whichever direction the dribbler is forced to move, a perimeter player on that side (e.g. x2) may "help and recover" (or "stunt") to put additional pressure on them.

The key to this strategy being successful is for the on-ball defender to move quickly into a position that does not allow the dribbler to move to their preferred hand.

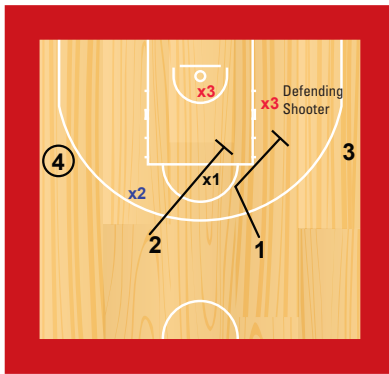
## 1.2.3 DEFENDING STAGGERED SCREENS

### DEFENDING STAGGERED DOUBLE SCREENS

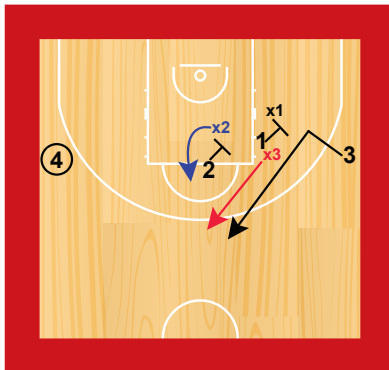
There are three defenders involved in defending this action:

- the person defending the cutter;
- the person defending the first screen;
- the person defending the second screen.

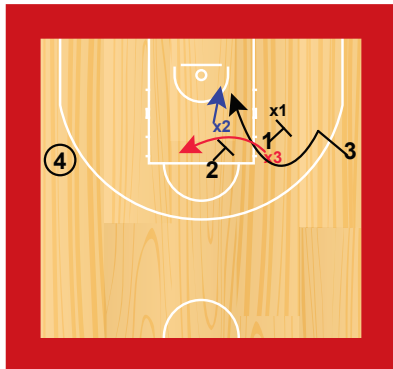
As with any defensive scheme, it is important that all three are aware of what their team mates are doing. The defence will always work more successfully where team mates are acting in unison.



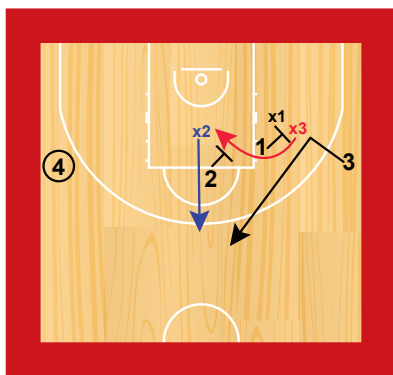
x1, x2 and x3 come from quite different positions when the staggered screens are set. Often if Player 3 is a good perimeter shooter, x3 may not be on the split line initially, but may be closer to Player 3.



- x1 stands on the "low" side of the first screen to stop 3 cutting directly to the basket.
- x3 moves to meet the cutter as the cut past the first screen, stopping them from curling to the basket.
- x2 moves to the ball side of the second screen to put pressure on the passing lane.



If the cutter (3) does curl to the basket, then x2 can guard that, and x3 can move into position to guard 2 (second screener).



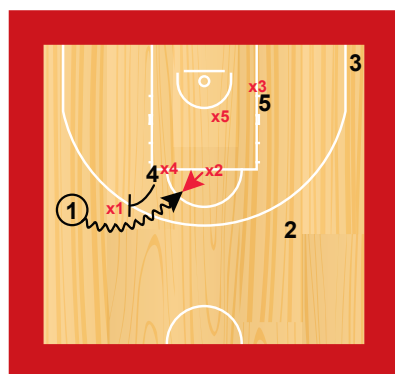
Another common tactic is for x2 (guarding the second screen) to switch onto the cutter (3) and x3 switches onto x2.

In this action, if 2 cuts to the basket before 3 is in position to guard them, x1 can rotate across to guard 2 and x3 guards 1.

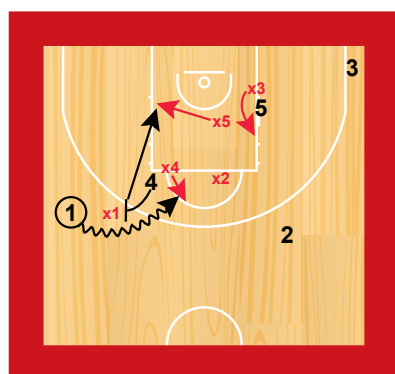
## 1.2.4 TEAM DEFENCE AGAINST PICK AND ROLL

Team Defence Against On Ball Screens Defensive help is crucial to successfully defending screens, particularly with the advanced offensive skills that many players have.

With an on-ball screen, it is important that the two defenders directly involved in the screen are coordinated as to how they will defend the screen. It is also important to develop a "team" approach to defending the screens. For the team to effectively guard the on-ball screen, all defenders must be ready to play their role.



"Help Defence" may be directed towards stopping the dribbler from penetrating into the keyway. Such help must come from "below the ball" as shown here with x2 stepping across to help.



Alternatively, "help" may be directed towards guarding the screener as they roll or "dive" to the basket. This "help" enables the defender of the screener to be more aggressive against the ball handler.

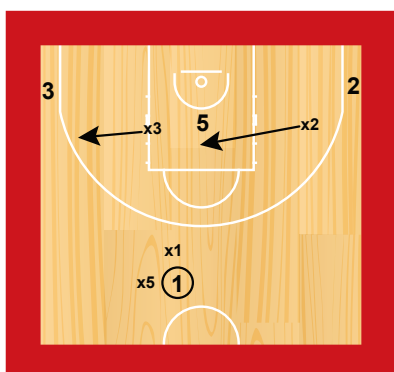
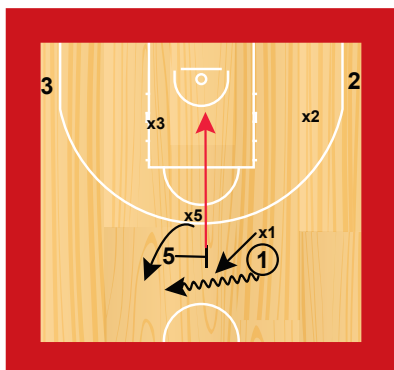
Here x5 steps across to guard the screener, and x3 "helps the helper" and rotates to the split line to guard 5.



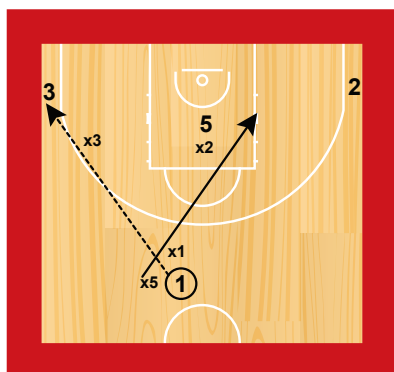
### "MID" BALL SCREENS

Commonly, teams will set a ball screen in the middle of the court at the point position, and the same techniques can be used to defend a screen in this position. Often the player defending the screener will stay to put pressure on the dribbler (not necessarily double team) and the screener will then "dive" towards the basket, which requires help to defend.

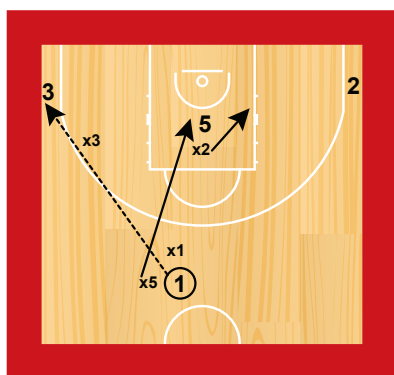
As x5 pressures the dribbler, 5 dives to the basket.



x2 rotates across to defend 5, as x3 closes to defend a pass to 3. If 1 were to reverse the direction of their dribble, x2 would close to 2 and x3 would rotate to 5.



As the ball is passed to 3, x5 rotates towards the basket and can move to defend 2.



Alternatively, x2 can return to guard 2 and x5 moves to defend 5. However, x2 should not leave 5 until x5 is in position.

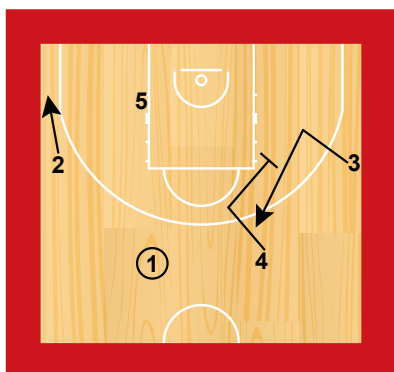
### “GO” – ACTIVITY TO PRACTICE DEFENDING SCREENS

Using “break down” drills (e.g. 2x2 or 3x3) is valuable when learning the various techniques to defend screens. However, some common difficulties are:

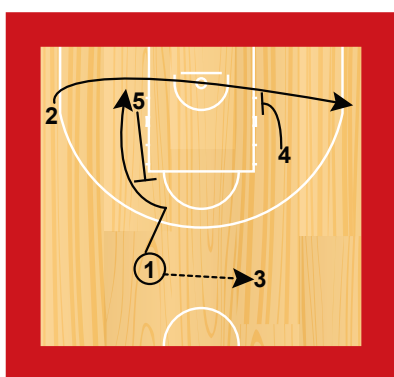
- the offensive players do not play authentically – if the “drill” is to curl cut, then they curl cut instead of “reading” and “reacting” to the defenders;
- the defensive players “cheat” – moving in a pre-determined fashion regardless of what the offensive players may do.

Below is a simple offensive structure, which incorporates many of the screening situations discussed above. Using this structure in scrimmages can be effective practice at guarding the various screens, particularly if the coach:

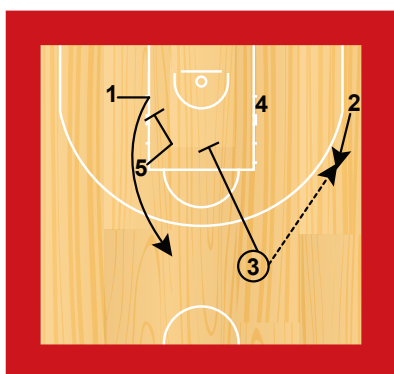
- at various times instructs one team on how to play, without letting the other team know;
- emphasises the importance of making good decisions, rather than just whether or not a basket was scored – give the defence (and the offence) points for good execution;
- “coaches on the run” – don’t stop the activity continuously to correct mistakes.



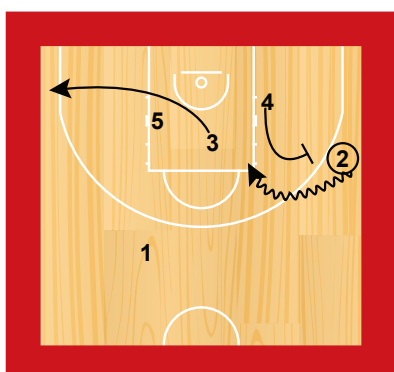
Start with a down screen on the weak side, 4 screening for 3. A straight cut is shown here, however, 3 should read the defence and make an appropriate cut.



After the ball is "reversed" (passed across the key, 1 to 3), 5 sets an up screen for 1. At the same time, 2 cuts across the key, coming off a screen from 4 – this is an example of a "turn-out" cut.



After the ball is passed to the wing (completing the ball reversal), 3 and 5 set a staggered double for 1.



The action concludes with a ball screen on the wing.

Within the framework of this structure, there are many screening actions and options.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Which opponents use ball screens and when do they tend to use them? Discuss with your players what the most effective way to defend those opponents is.
2. Discuss with a coaching colleague what an opponent is likely to do if your team adopts the tactic of "Push" to defend on-ball screens.
3. What is your preference for defending staggered screens? Discuss with a coaching colleague how they prefer to defend staggered screens and, in particular, discuss the likely reaction opponents will have to how you each prefer to defend.

# 1.3 ZONE DEFENCES

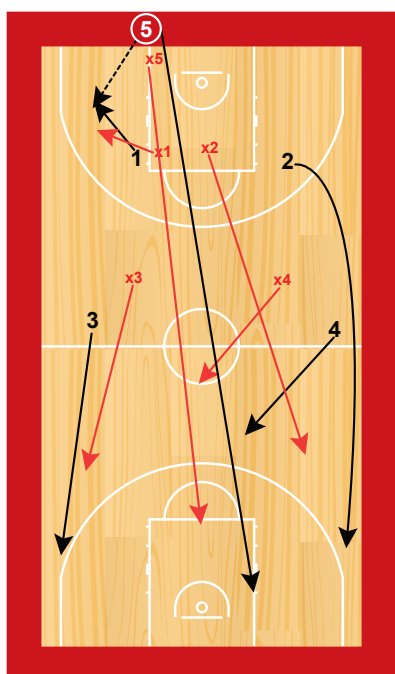
## 1.3.1 FULL COURT TRAPPING ZONE (2-2-1)

### FULL COURT TRAPPING

The key to a successful full court “trap” is that players act decisively and aggressively. They are unlikely to make the right decision all the time, but if they communicate well and move with purpose they are likely to be successful. A full court “trap” is often used to change the tempo of the game, which it can do in two ways. First, if they are successful in causing the offence to commit turnovers, the defensive team will create a lot of fast break situations.

Secondly, it can also increase the tempo of the game by forcing the offence to take longer to get into their “half court” offence, then having to rush their shot.

This “stealing time” can often be as valuable as stealing the ball itself, as it may cause the offence to rush their shots or to make poor shot decisions.



Many teams will beat full court “man to man” defence, by either:

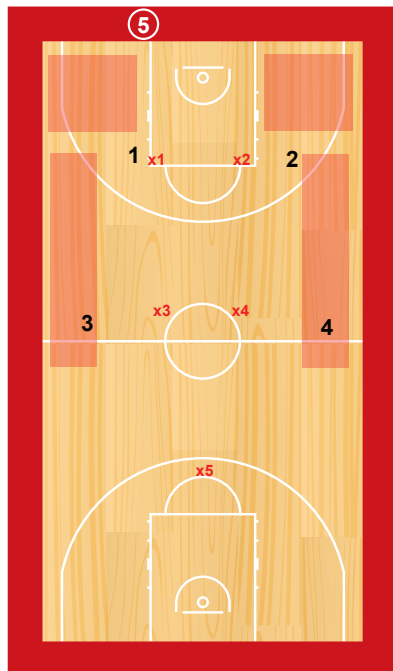
- Having four players move into the front court, leaving a 1x1 contest in the back court as there is no “help” defender in position to double team, or “jump” (switch);
- Having a player other than the point guard bring the ball up – often a forward whose defender will be less proficient in defending in the full court.

A “trapping”, or zone defence, can counter both of these strategies as players defend assigned areas, based upon the position of the ball, not individual offensive players.

Accordingly, even if four offensive players moved into the front court, there would still be 2 or 3 defenders in the back court. Similarly, even if a forward was used to dribble the ball, there would be defensive guards in the back court.

There are a number of alignments that can be used for full court “traps” (or zone presses).

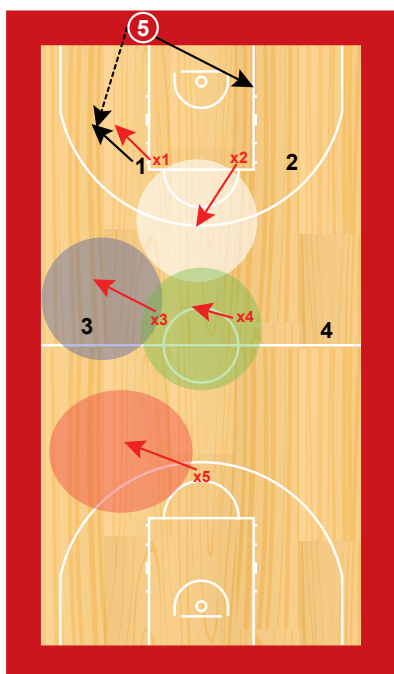
The principles of each are essentially the same, although the alignments differ. Once players understand and are able to implement those principles in one alignment, they can relatively quickly adapt to a different alignment.



### “2 - 2 - 1 TRAP” - INITIAL ALIGNMENT

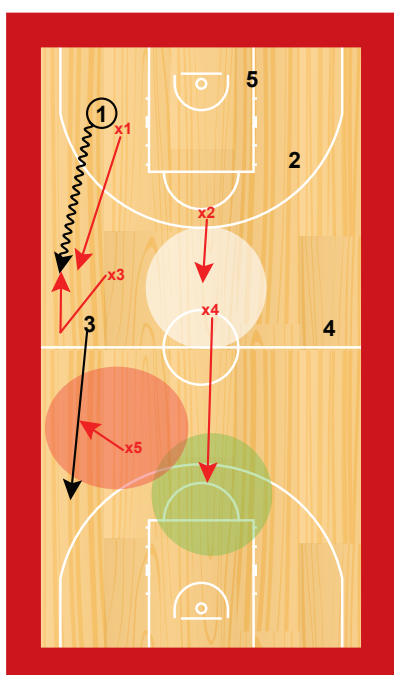
It is common for the two guards to play in the front line of the trap. However, if there is a forward that has good foot speed, the extra arm length can be useful.

The defence want the first pass to be caught towards the sideline and not in the middle of the court. They also want it caught close to the baseline. Accordingly x1, x2, x3 and x4 deny cutters in an attempt to influence them to receive the first pass in one of the shaded areas.



### MOVEMENT AFTER FIRST PASS

- x1 (or x2 on the other side of the court) immediately pressures 1. Containing the dribbler is crucial.
  - x2 moves to the middle of the court and guards the white circled area. They must not be “face cut” (i.e. an offensive player getting between them and the ball).
  - x3 moves to the sideline and must be in the passing lane – able to prevent a pass to 3, defending the blue circled area.
  - x4 moves to cover the middle of the court. Again, no face cutters – defending the green circled area.
  - x5 is the “safety”. They move to the side of the ball, but must be conscious of any offensive player moving to the basket. They defend the red circled area.
- These positions are consistent with “man to man” principles, with x2 and x4 moving along the split line.

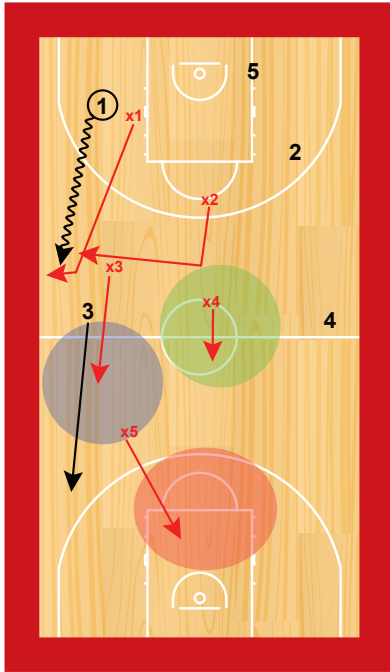


### TRAPPING A DRIBBLER

Teams can look to double team the dribbler in the back court (particularly close to half way) where possible. This can be done by x1 “channelling” the dribbler towards x3 or “turning” the dribbler and x2 double teams.

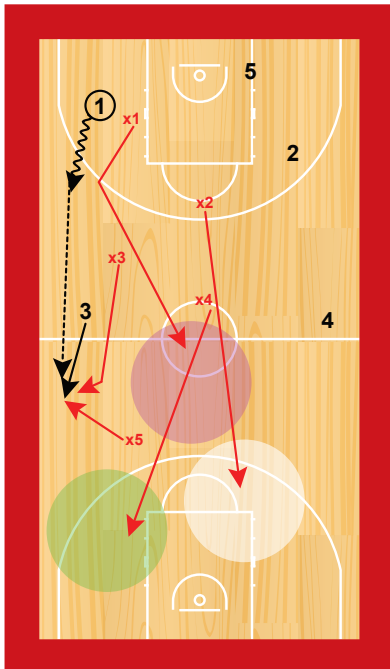
- x3 can also “help and recover” to put pressure on the dribbler. They should only trap if the dribbler is not in control.
- x2 must stay with the “line of ball” to ensure that they are in a position to pressure any dribble to the centre of the court and to double team if necessary.
- x4 similarly moves back toward the basket. x5 moves further to the sideline to deny any pass along the sideline, particularly as x4 moves back toward the keyway and can guard the basket.

If x3 does double team, the x5 is responsible to intercept any pass along the sideline.



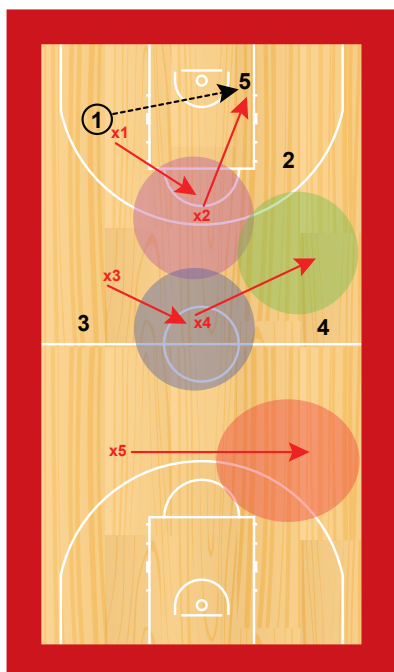
If x1 “turns” the dribbler toward the middle of the court, x2 can move to double team (or could “jump”, which is to switch with x1).

On this double team, x4 stays in a position to intercept any pass across the court and x5 rotates back to defend the basket.



On a pass along the sideline, x3 and x5 can trap the receiver. x5 must at least move across until x3 recovers to the ball. x4 continues to rotate to the basket and x2 and x1 must get below the line of ball.



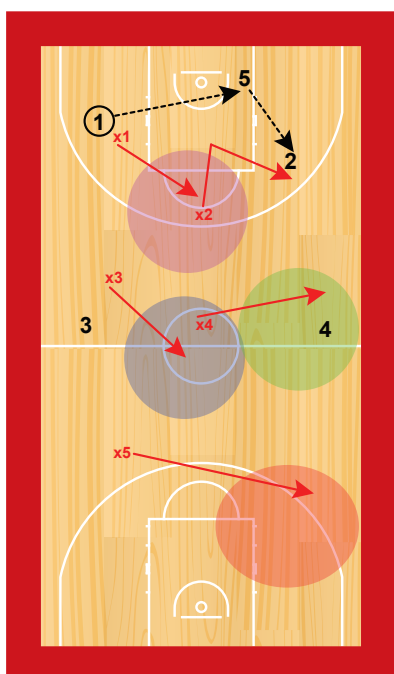


### DEFENDING REVERSAL PASS

If the ball is reversed, x2 moves to guard the ball, and x1 must get to the split line as quickly as possible.

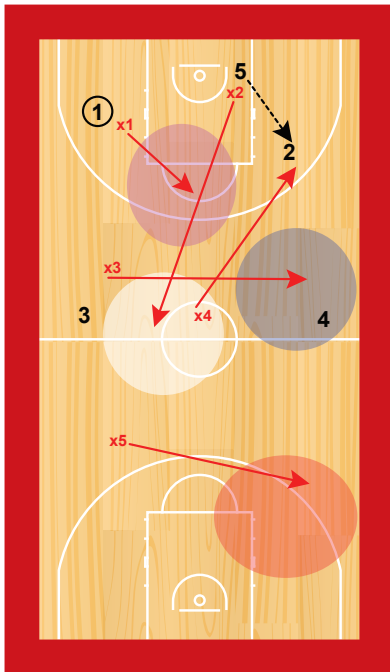
x2 may hedge at 5 if they anticipate that 5 will quickly pass to 2.

x4 moves to the sideline and x3 moves into the centre of court.



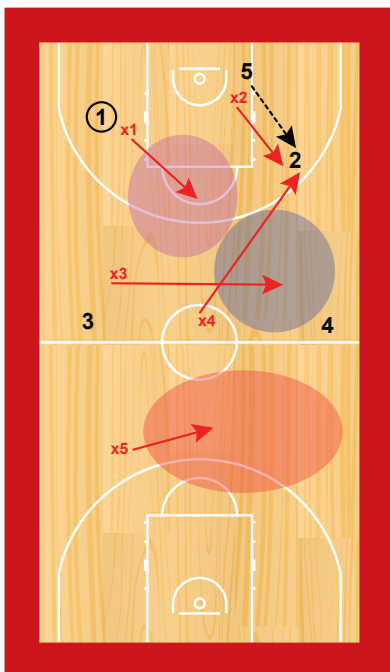
If 5 passes quickly to 2 and x2 had hedged but not closed out to 5, they rotate across to the ball.

x1 drops to the centre of the court to defend a pass across the court, x4 denies the sideline and x3 defends the middle of the court.



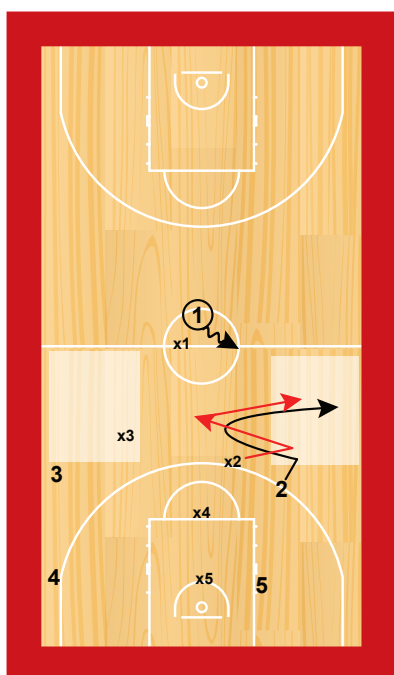
Where x2 had closed out to 5, x4 (as the closest defender) would rotate to defend 2, x3 would deny the sideline and x1 again drops to defend a pass across the court.

x2 drops to defend the centre of the court.



If 5 does quickly pass to 2, a double team may be viable particularly if x2 is coming from "below" Player 2 or Player 2 is not a strong dribbler. Other defenders move into position to intercept passes.

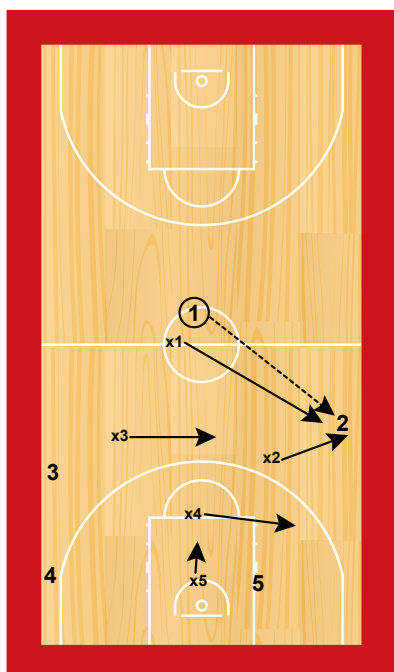
## 1.3.2 HALF COURT TRAP



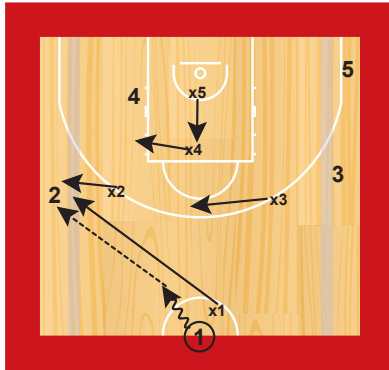
### TRAP FIRST PASS

A trap can also be used to attempt to double team the ball in the front court – in particular to double team the first pass.

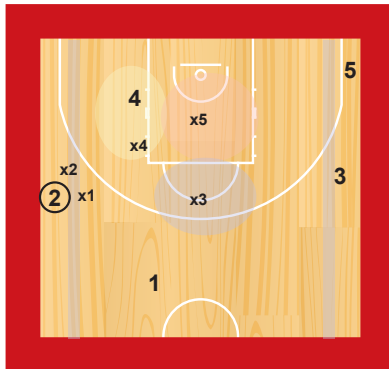
x1 defends the dribbler and attempts to make them pass the ball. x2 and x3 deny players in the middle of the court, but allow a catch on the sideline.



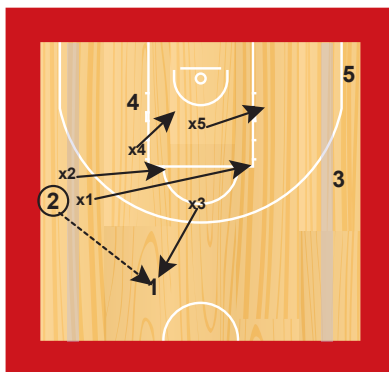
x1 follows the pass to double team., or if x3 is closer they can double team, and x1 would rotate down the split line. Indeed, x3 is likely to be in a better position to double team as they are probably below the “line of the ball”.



However whether or not x3 is in position to double team will depend upon if they are close to the "split line" or nearer the other side of the court.



If the double team is set, x4 moves toward the sideline to deny any pass. x3 (or x1) and x5 are in "split line" position and should anticipate the pass that may be made and attempt to get in position to intercept.



If the ball is passed out of the double team, x3 rotates to the ball (and can be relatively passive, ensuring that Player 1 cannot penetrate) and other players either move into "man to man" or zone position.

## 1.3.3 HALF COURT ZONE DEFENCE

### HALF COURT ZONE DEFENCE

There are a number of alignments that can be used in zone defence, however, it is recommended that players are initially taught a 2-1-2 or 2-3 alignment. The reasons for preferring these alignments are:

1. They are very simple and players can learn the basic movements ("zone slides") quickly;
2. They have the same structure (four outside players) as is recommended for developing "man to man" defence, and is also used in teaching "motion offence";
3. They are the most common alignments used by teams.

### KEY POINTS

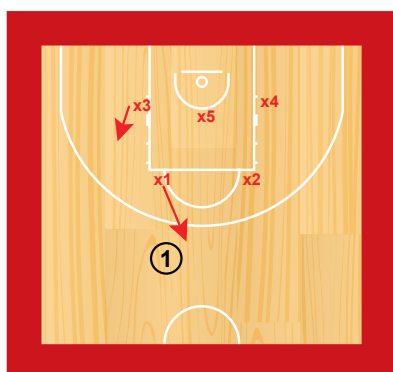
When zone defence is introduced, players must understand that playing according to this strategy does not mean making less effort or having less individual responsibility. Unfortunately, many teams are poorly instructed in zone defence which results in less effort from team members.

The role of the coach is to teach the basic movements ("slides") of the zone and to clearly point out the specific responsibilities for each position within the zone defence. Each player should understand the principles for each position.

In whatever zone defence a coach wants to use, the coach must clearly point out:

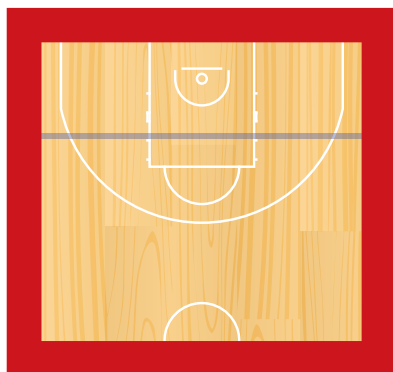
- Who defends the player with the ball (and what are the movements of defenders on each pass);
- Who is responsible to stop penetration by the dribbler;
- When do players "help and recover" and when do they "help";
- What rotation is made when a player "helps" – who "helps the helper";
- Who is responsible for stopping passes into the keyway;
- Who to "box out" – given that they do not have a direct individual opponent.

These questions also need to be answered in relation to "man to man" defence, although some are answered simply because players have direct opponents.

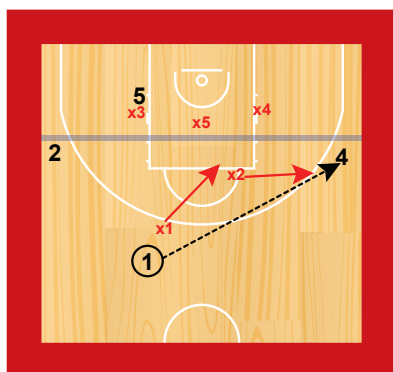


### INITIAL ALIGNMENT

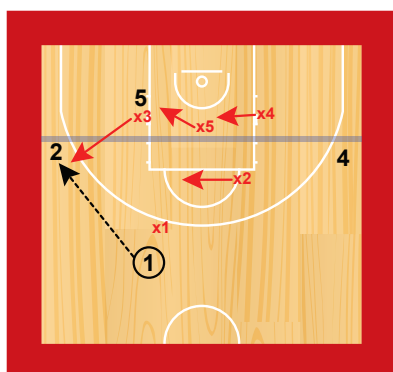
The guards at the front of the zone must determine who will pick up the ball. Here, x1 defends the ball. Whichever forward is behind the defender guarding the ball must also move slightly forward, since the likelihood is that if the ball is passed to their side the forward will need to move to the ball.



The coach should determine the “pick up line”, which determines whether it is the guard (from the front of the zone) or the forward (from the rear of the zone) should defend a perimeter player that has the ball.

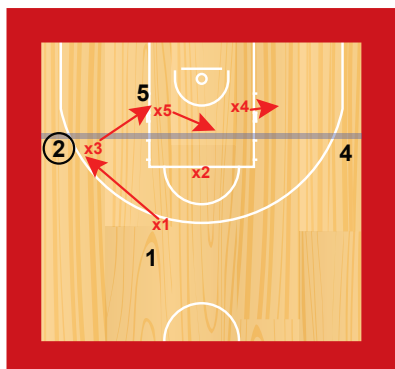


4 receives the ball above the “pick up line”, x2 moves to defend them. x1 rotates back to the foul line and must deny any pass to a high post player.



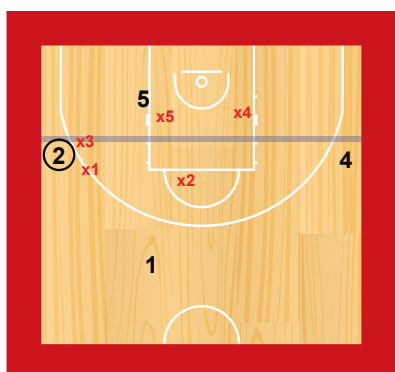
Because 2 is above the “pick up line”, it is the responsibility of x1 to defend them when they have the ball. However, with x1 defending the ball, it is a long close-out for them to move to defend 2 as the ball is passed.

Accordingly, x3 initially rotates to defend 2 and as they move to the wing, x5 “helps the helper” and moves toward 5 who is in the low post. This is why x3 “hedged” toward the wing when x1 first moved to defend 1.

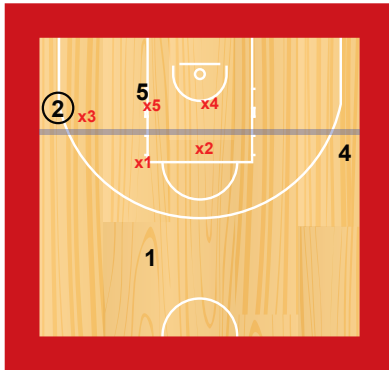


However, once x1 gets to the wing, x3 moves back to their position as does x4 and x5.

x2 also moves across the keyway to stop any pass to the high post.



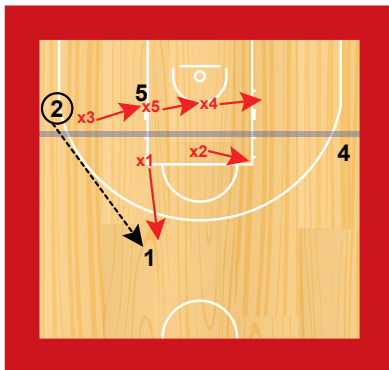
x3 and x1 could double team the wing if they wish. x2 and x5 are in help positions – denying any passes into the keyway.



When the ball is with a perimeter player below the imaginary line, the forward defends the ball and other players balance – generally, with two players on the side of the keyway and two players on the “split line”.

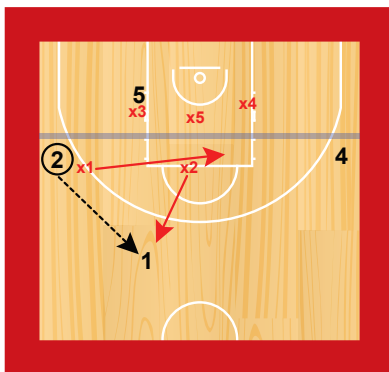
x1 denies a pass to the high post.

x5 could front the low post player, subject to the team’s defensive scheme.



When the ball is passed back to the guard, it may be defended:

If the back defender (x3) was guarding the perimeter player, then the front defender (x1) defends the ball;

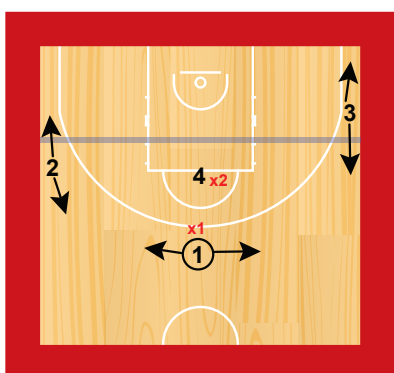


If the front defender (x1) is defending the wing, then the other front defender (x2) moves to guard the ball. In this situation, the front defenders may swap sides.



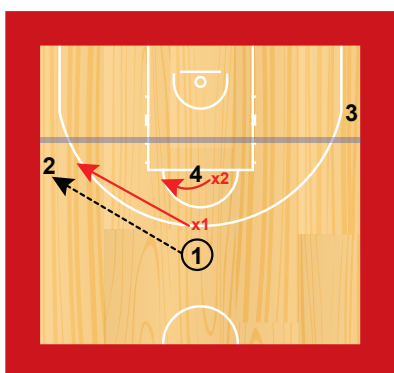
### OTHER KEY PRINCIPLES FOR THE ZONE DEFENCE:

- Defenders must learn to anticipate the next offensive pass, and move as soon as the ball leaves the hands of the passer to get to their next position as the ball is caught (this is the same in “man to man” defence);
- Defenders must keep sight of both the player with the ball as well as the offensive player who might be their next responsibility;
- Defenders should keep their arms “up and active” to interfere with the “passing lanes”;
- “It’s only wrong if you don’t bring your team mates along”! Regardless of zone movements taught by the coach, and whether or not they are executed correctly – if the players communicate to their team mates what they are doing, the zone can continue to be effective by moving in a coordinated fashion;
- When a shot is taken, each player must look and find an opponent to “box out”;
- As a general principle, whoever is closest to the ball moves to guard it;
- Defender’s should “front” any low post player that is on the ball side.

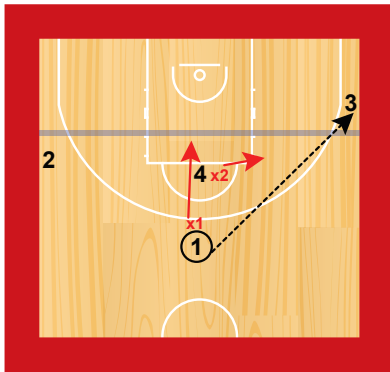


### PRACTICING MOVEMENTS OF ZONE DEFENCE

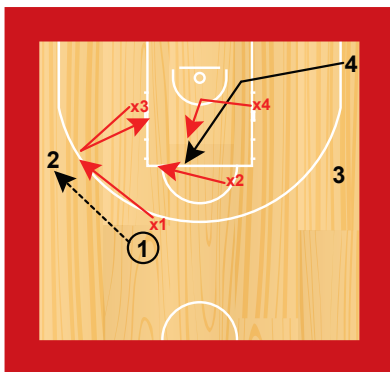
Players 2 and 3 move above and below the “pick up line”, however they cannot shoot or dribble if below the line (as the guards would not have responsibility to guard them). Offence must have at least 4 passes before shooting.



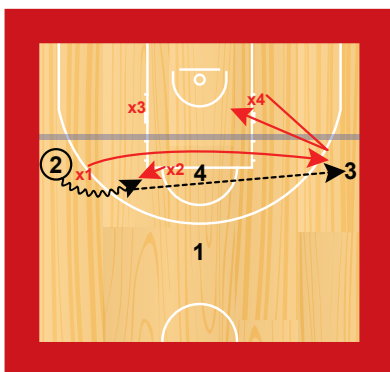
Player 4 must stay above the “pick up line”, and one of the defenders must be in a position to interfere with any attempted pass.



The two defenders move as per their zone responsibilities. When the ball is below the “pick up line”, the defenders do not defend it, but move to their required position. The offence cannot score from below the “pick up line”.

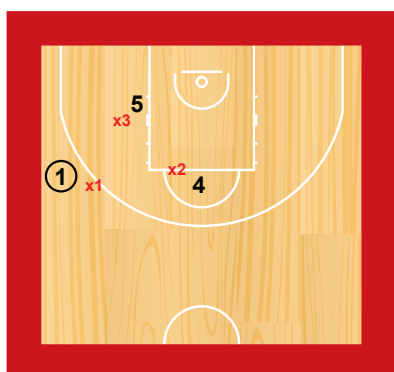
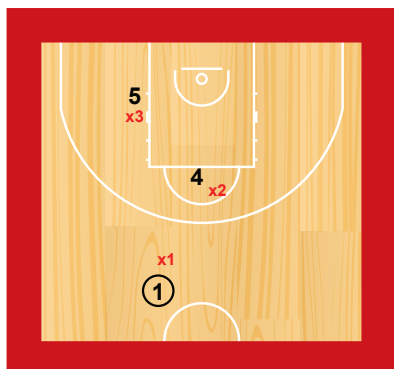


The activity can then be done with the four “outside” defenders working together to defend the ball. Initially, the offence score if they get the ball into the keyway (either by pass or dribble penetration). Progress to fully contested.



**DEFENDING PENETRATION**

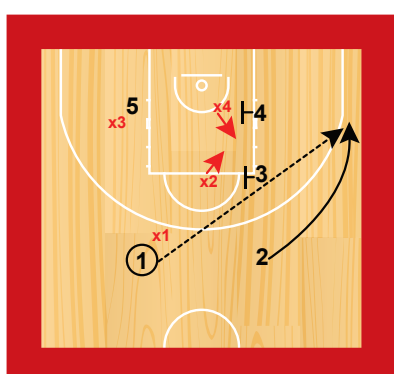
On any dribble penetration, whoever is the closest defender rotates to stop that penetration. Here x2 rotates to stop the dribbler. On a pass to 3, x4 initially rotates to defend even though 3 is above the “pick up line” and should be defended by either x2 or x1. As x2 is defending the dribbler, x1 rotates across to 3, pushing x4 back down.



### DEFENDING POST PLAYERS

A pass to a high post player (Player 4) must be pressured by either x1 or x2. They do not have to fully front, but should at least have an arm in front of the post player.

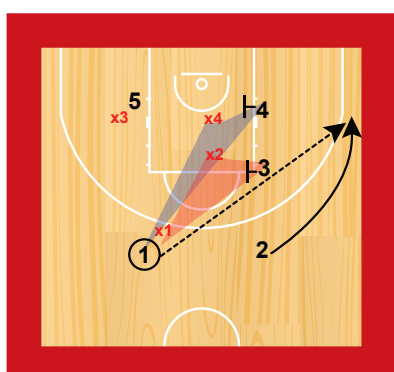
x3 moves to deny any pass to the low post player, which is important to ensure that x3 can rotate to the perimeter as required.



### AVOIDING SCREENS

A common offensive tactic against a zone defence is to screen the "outside" of the zone.

Defenders should adjust their position so that they can move past any screen, before the ball is passed.



Another key is for the "weak-side" defenders to keep vision of both the ball and any players that are in their area of the court.

This is best achieved by adopting an "open stance" as when playing "man to man" defence.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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**1. Discuss the following statements with coaching colleagues:**

You cannot effectively play zone defence unless you understand the principles of “help line” man to man defence.

It is important for young players to develop the ability to beat their player and to drive to the basket, and to then make the lay-up. That’s why zone defence should not be played with young players.

When a trapping defence gets beaten it usually results in a lay-up. That’s why teams should not play trapping defences.

**2. Do you prefer for your teams to play a trapping defence in the full court or in the half court?  
What are the reasons for your preference?**

# 1.4 DEFENDING SITUATIONS OF DISADVANTAGE

## 1.4.1 DEFENDING 4V3

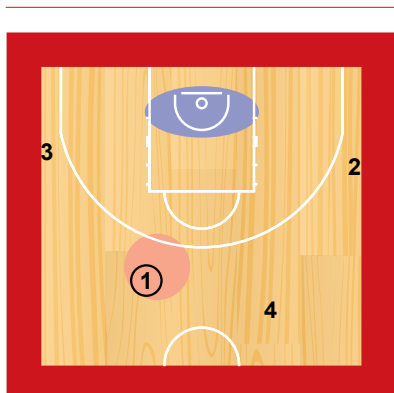
There are many times when a defensive team may be in a situation of disadvantage (e.g. 2v1, 3v2 or 4v3), such as:

- Defending a fast break (or transition);
- When the offence pass out of a double team;
- After a defensive rotation to “help the helper”.

Whenever outnumbered by the offence, the defenders must try to:

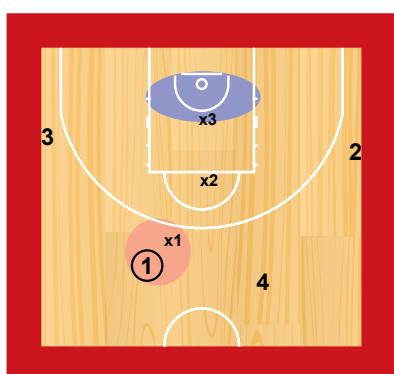
- Delay the offence (to give time for additional defenders to arrive);
- Deny high percentage shots and force the offence to take lower percentage shots;
- Pressure the player with the ball into making a poor decision.

4v3 is best illustrated in the context of transition.

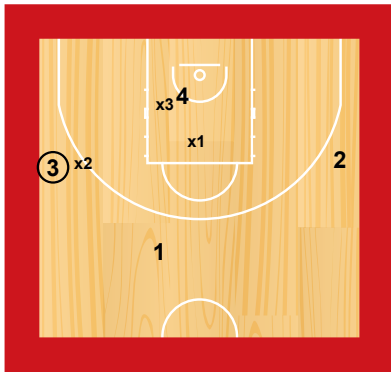


When defenders are outnumbered 4v3, they must:

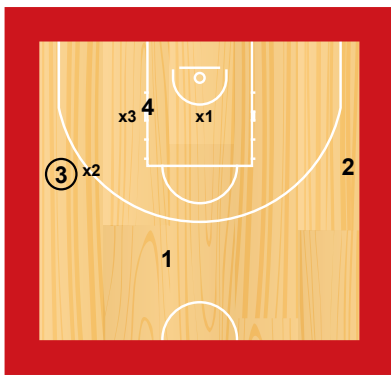
- Put pressure on the ball;
- Deny any lay-up or shot from near the basket.



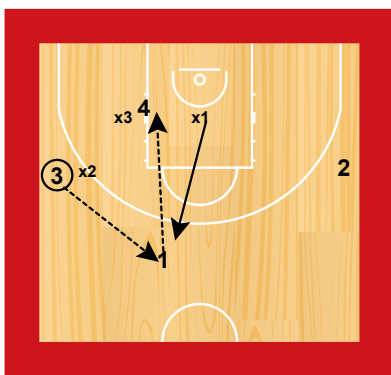
Most teams will align with 1 player on the ball and the other two players on the high or low split line.



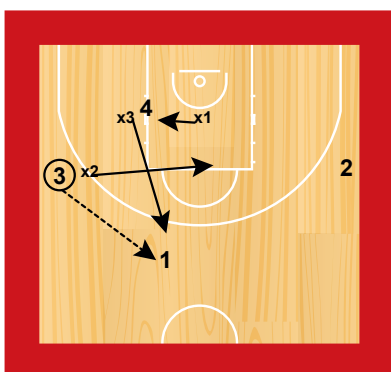
The defender on the low split line (x3) must deny any post player, whether they have run to the "rim" or are in the low post.  
 x1 can also hedge towards the basket to assist in defending that area.  
 Where 4 has run to the "rim", x1 can remain high.



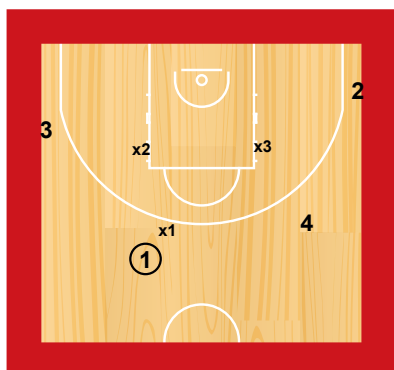
However, if 4 is in the low post, x3 must front and x1 must "sink" to stop any lob pass.



When the ball is passed to 1, x1 should not close out to the ball. If they do, 4 may "seal" x3 and receive an easy pass for a lay-up (as x3 is on the "outside" of 4).

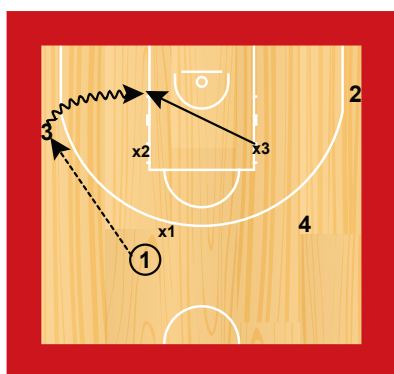


Instead, x3 closes out to 1, x1 rotates across to stop any pass to the low post and x2 drops to the high split position. All defenders must move with urgency.



Where an offensive team does not send a player to the basket but instead has a strength in perimeter shooting, the defenders may align differently.

The ball must still be pressured, however x2 and x3 may align horizontally which will enable them to cover perimeter shots more easily.



If a team adopts this type of defence the offensive team may:

- Drop the perimeter players into the corner in an attempt to separate from the defender. The defenders may drop down the key, but should both sink to the basket;
- Drive from the perimeter. If they do this the ball side defender (x2) does not have a good position to stop the drive to the basket. Instead x3 must sprint across to stop the penetration.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Discuss with a coaching colleague whether you think it is more important to put pressure on the ball or defend the basket in a situation of disadvantage.
2. What activities do you use to practice defending situations of disadvantage?
3. Have an assistant coach record how many times your defenders are in a situation of disadvantage. On how many occasions did the offence get a good shot? Discuss with your assistants where your team needs to improve.



# 1.5 ADVANCED DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

## 1.5.1 DEFENDING TURN OUT CUTS

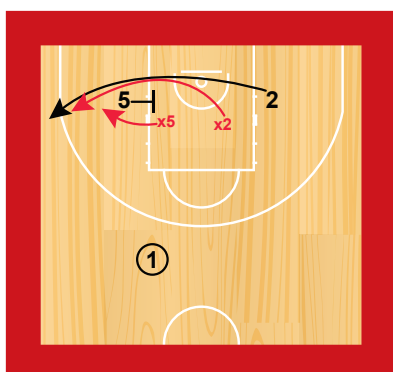
*The options for defending a “turn out” cut are similar to defending other types of screens. A key emphasis must be communication between the two defenders, which involves both speaking and (perhaps more importantly) listening.*

Many players in a game are so focused on what they are doing that they do not listen (and react) to what team mates are saying. This is especially the case if a team has a particular rule that is usually applied (e.g. going “over” screens) where a teammate may communicate that they are doing something else, but the first teammate simply continues to play as if the rule is being followed.

The best way to develop “listening” skills is to ensure that players are communicating at training, and from time to time to give some team members one instruction and the rest of the team a different instruction.

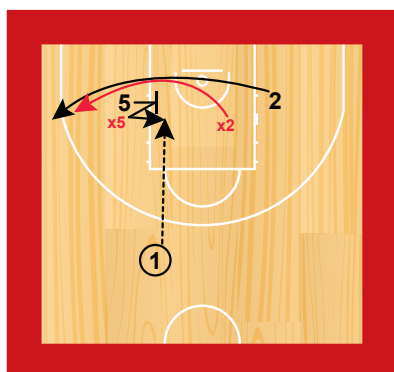
There are four main ways of defending a turn-out cut:

1. “Over”
2. “Trail”
3. “Through”
4. “Under”

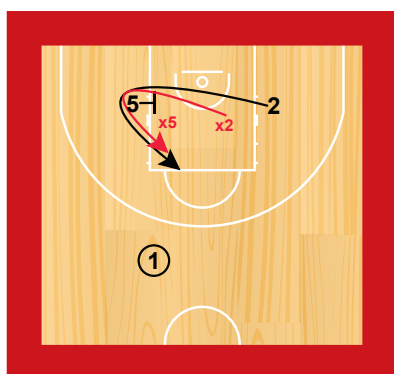


### “OVER”

Here x2 (defending the cutter) will go “over” the screen, at the same time as the cutter. x2 should move into the hip of the cutter to force them wide so that x2 can avoid the screen. x5 can extend their hand in the passing lane, and take a step towards the sideline, to help to make a pass to the cutter difficult.



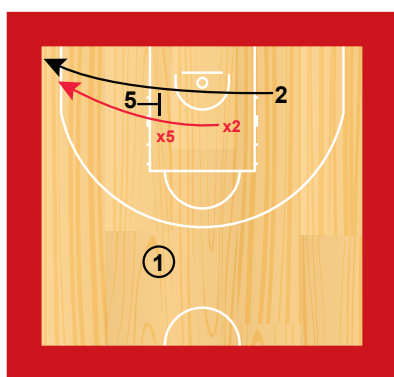
However, x5 must be careful not to step too far toward the sideline, as this would give the screener an opportunity to establish position on the “basket” side.



### “TRAIL”

x2 will follow hard and aggressively in the footsteps of the cutter, whether they cut toward the sideline (“straight cut”) or “curl cut” back into the key.

x5 should step into the path of the cutter if they try to “curl”, forcing them to go higher and giving x2 more time to get around the screen and establish defensive position.

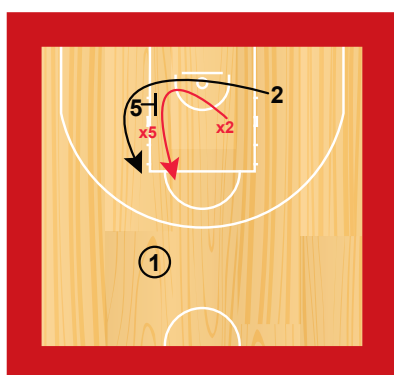


### “THROUGH”

x5 (guarding the screener) steps towards the passer, allowing room for x2 to cut “through” the gap and aggressively deny a pass to the cutter.

### “UNDER”

If x2 is to go “under”, x5 may move close to 5 and x2 would move past the screen moving between x5 and the ball.



x2 may choose to stay inside the key, particularly if 2 is not a good perimeter shooter but prefers to curl cut.

x5 guarding the screen steps closer to the screener (and may step “up the line” toward the ball). x2 cuts inside the key, “under” their teammate.

This can be particularly effective if the cutter looks to curl either tightly (into the keyway) or towards the free throw line. If 2 does cut to the corner, x5 may move out to defend 2, and x2 will defend the post player.

## 1.5.2 DEFENDING MIDDLE PENETRATION

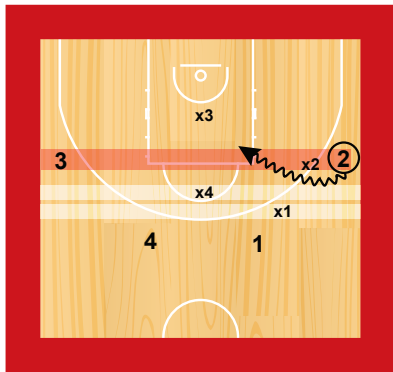
*Penetration of the dribble is an important aspect of many team offences.*

Initially, we teach players how to defend a drive from the wing to the baseline, and we also instruct players to force the offensive player to the baseline. However, just as common is penetration through the top of the key, either:

- from the wing;
- from the top of the key – “down the seam” or side of the key.

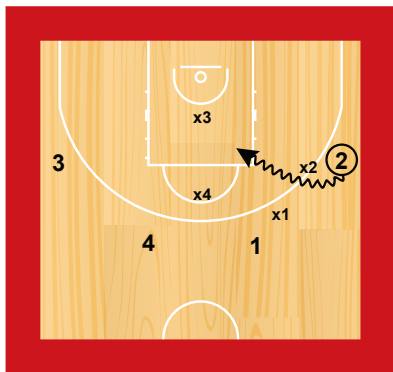
### HELP FROM BELOW THE LINE OF THE BALL

As with any situation where a teammate rotates to put pressure on a dribbler, and (if their teammate is beaten) to stop the progress of the dribbler, any help must come from “below the ball” as this is the only position from which a defender can be between the dribbler and where they are trying to go (i.e. the basket).



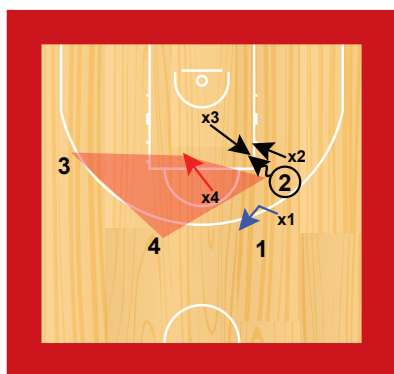
Both x1 and x4 are above the “line of the ball” (which is shaded pink). From these positions, they are not able to stop 2 from getting into the key. Only x3 is in a position to help. x4 and x1 may “hedge” to apply some additional pressure but are not in position to stop the dribbler.

Where a team is particularly good at dribble penetration, a coach may have defenders sag more into the key, to be in a position below the “line of the ball” so that they can provide more assistance. However, this approach must be balanced with the opponent’s ability to shoot from the perimeter!



### DEFENDING MIDDLE PENETRATION FROM THE WING

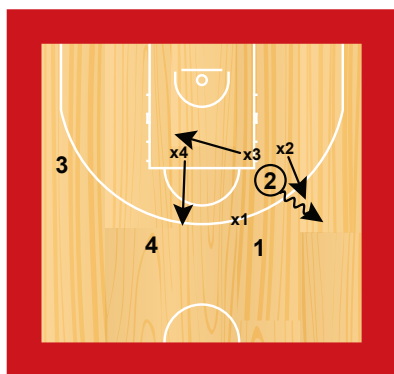
Middle penetration from the wing provides good opportunities for the offence to get open perimeter shots (e.g. “penetrate and pitch”) and also shots in the key (e.g. a “runner” or feed to a low post).



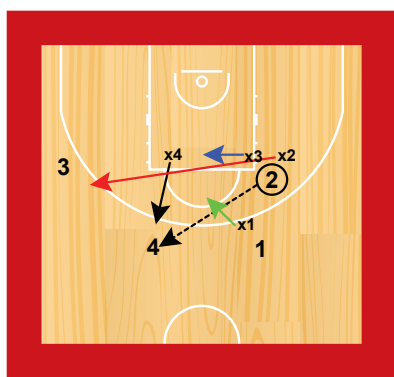
The first priority is for help defence to “rotate” and to stop the initial penetration.

**ON PENETRATION FROM THE WING:**

- x3 makes the first rotation to stop 2 getting into the key;
- x1 may “hedge” (take a step or two) towards the ball, but then recovers to deny any pass to 1.
- x4 drops into the key and is now responsible for the two perimeter players – 3 and 4. They must establish sight of both players, as well as being aware of the ball’s position.



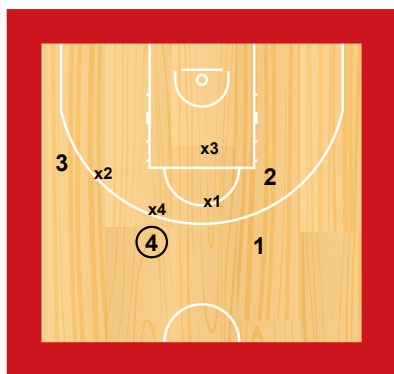
If 2 kept their dribble alive and retreated, x2 could re-establish position to defend them and x3 and x4 would return to their initial opponents.



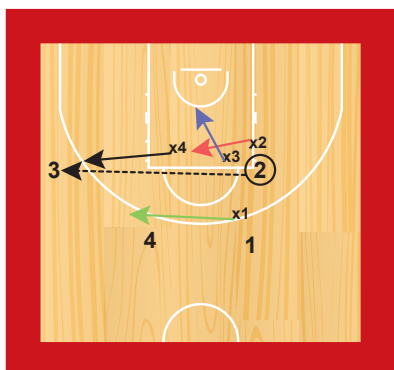
Once x3’s rotations stops the drive, they and x2 can double team the ball, particularly if 2 picks the ball up.

If 2 passes the ball, the defensive rotations will depend upon where the ball was passed. If it is passed to 4:

- x4 closes out to defend the ball;
- x2 moves away from the double team to defend 3
- x1 remains on 1
- x3 remains on 2



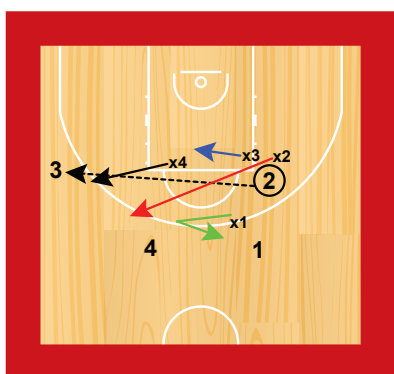
The defence has now re-established position. This emphasizes the importance of all players developing both post and perimeter skills (offensively and defensively) because in a rotation they may end up playing out of position.



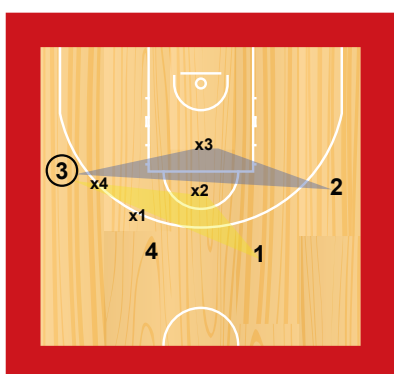
If 2 passes to 3, the rotation is slightly different:

- x4 still moves to guard the ball (3);
- x1 now moves across to guard 4;
- x2 becomes responsible for 1;
- x3 remains responsible for 2

The reason for the different rotation is that it would be difficult for x2 to quickly get to defend player 4, given that they would have to move past x3 and 2.



If 4 is unlikely to shoot from the perimeter, x1 may "hedge" toward them and then recover to guard 1, giving x2 time to get to 4.

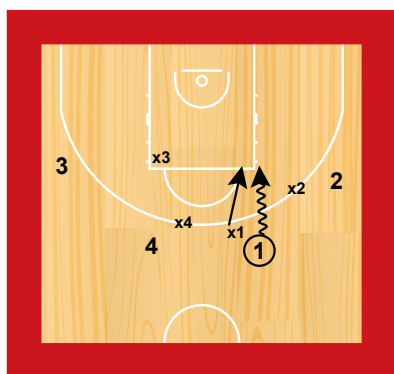


The defence is now re-established.

Teams can practice these rotations by having the offence penetrate from one wing and then pass.

Then penetrate from the other wing and pass.

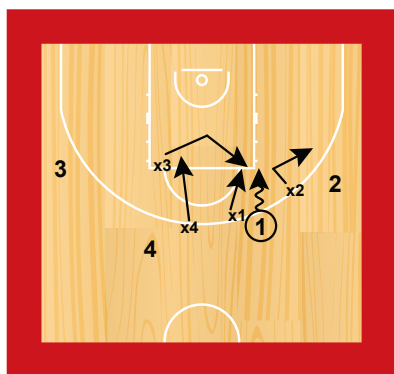
At first the defence can be "passive" (allowing the penetration) and then play contested. The coach may require 3 rotations and then to play "live".



### DEFENDING "SEAM" PENETRATION

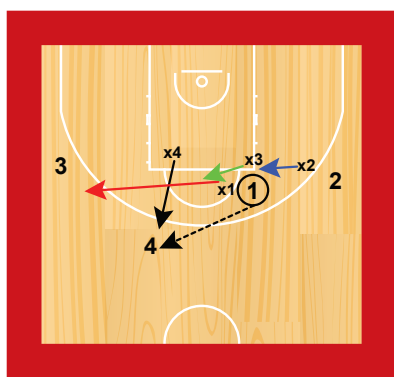
"Seam" penetration is where a player drives into the keyway from the top of the key, usually moving through the "elbow". As seen in a 4x4 activity, this is harder to defend as there is no defender on the split line.

This is particularly so if 3 is a good perimeter shooter, as this will require x3 to be closer to them.



The initial rotation to guard seam penetration is the same as for penetration from the wing:

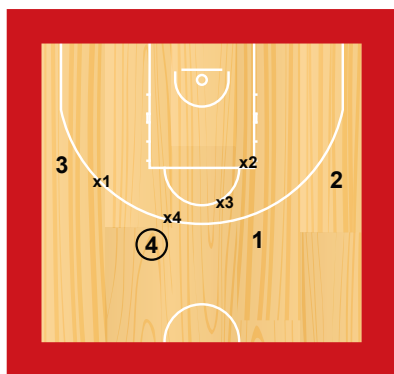
- x3 steps up to stop the dribbler getting into the key. To do this effectively, x3 needs to "hedge" closer to the middle of the court if they believe 1 is likely to dribble.
- x4 drops to the key and is now responsible for "guarding two" (4 and 3).
- x2 denies the pass to 2.



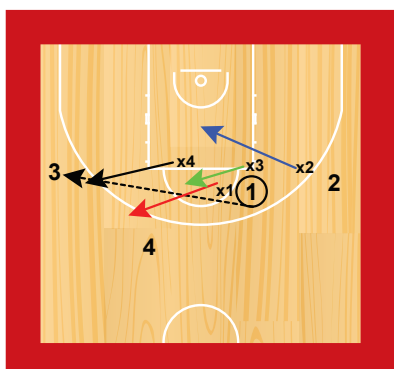
As with penetration from the wing, the rotation that occurs when a pass is made, depends upon where it is passed.

If the pass is made to the top of the key:

- x4 moves to guard the ball;
- x1 moves to guard 3;
- x2 remains guarding 2;
- x3 has now switched to guard 1.

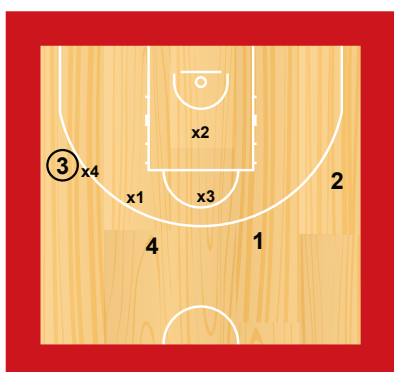


The defence has now re-established position.

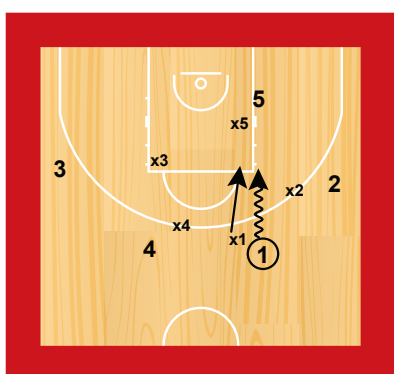


If the ball is passed to the opposite wing:

- x4 moves to guard the ball
- x1 moves to guard 4
- x3 switches to guard 1
- x2 remains guarding 2

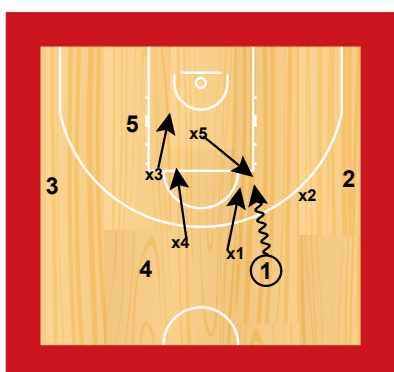


Again, the team has re-established its defensive positions.



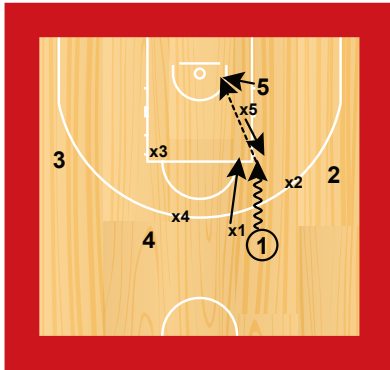
Where there is an offensive low post player, coaches may opt to have that defender rotate to stop the seam penetration.

The defender (x5) is in a better position to stop seam penetration, although rotation to "help the helper" is difficult and this may leave a pass to 5 open.



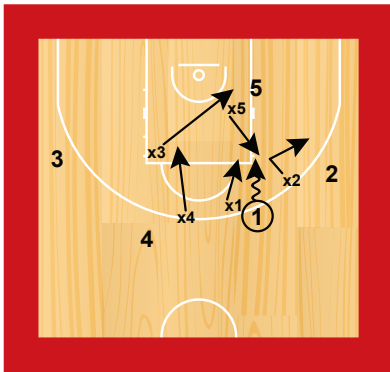
Where the low post is on the opposite side, this rotation is a little easier, with:

- x5 moving to defend the dribbler
- x3 rotating to defend 5
- x4 rotating to "defend 2" (3 and 4)

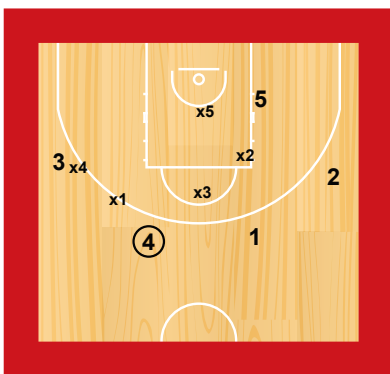


Having the post defender rotate, presents an opportunity for a pass to the post player for a lay-up.

This pass is particularly effective as a lob pass, which may result in a dunk with older, athletic players.



If coaches do use the post defender (x5) to rotate and stop the seam penetration, the nearest help defender (x3) must rotate quickly to the post player to stop any pass.



Once the penetration has been stopped, most coaches will have x5 rotate back to defend the post player once a pass has been made.

The defenders have now re-established position, with x5 returning to defend the post player, although other players may now be defending different players depending upon where the ball was passed.



## 1.5.3 CHANGING DEFENCE DEPENDING UPON OPPONENT

*One of the main purposes of “scouting” an opponent is to determine patterns in how they play in order to devise an appropriate strategy to combat this.*

### BASED ON THE SCOUT

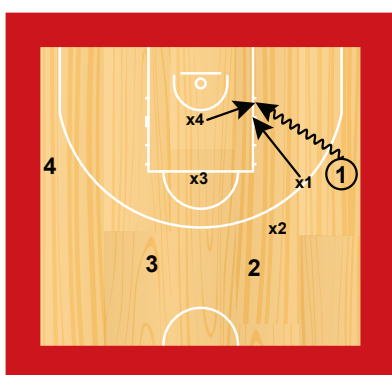
Once a team has a good understanding of fundamental skills (both team and individual), it may be possible to alter your game plan in response to how you expect an opponent to play.

Sometimes, you may have prepared more than one way of playing (e.g. practising both full court and half court defences) and you simply choose which style of play to emphasise for a particular opponent.

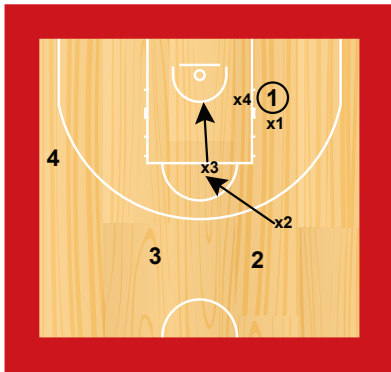
Other times, you may want to devise a particular system for playing against an opponent. In doing this you must:

- (a) be clear about the circumstance when the “new” system will be used;
- (b) give the team ample opportunity to practice the “new” system in contested situations – “walk through” can be valuable but a team (particularly a junior team) is unlikely to be able to execute it under game pressure unless they have practiced it in “game-like” conditions;
- (c) focus on what you want your team to do and don’t dwell on what the opponent is doing. A common mistake is to spend too much time describing what the opponent is doing and not enough time on what your team is going to do.

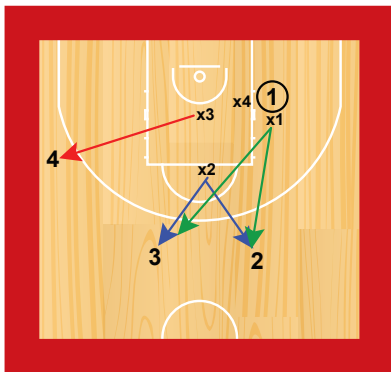
An example of this approach is to look at defensive rotations on dribble penetration and, in particular, at the rotation when the dribble has been stopped and is then passed.



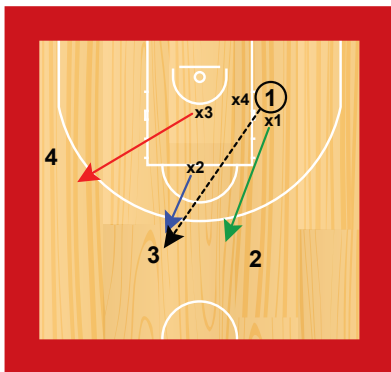
When 1 beats their player off the dribble, x4 rotates across to stop any penetration into the key.



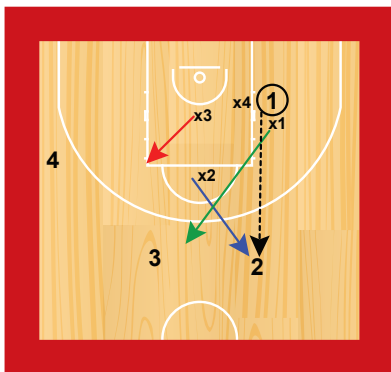
Initially we teach how x3 made a “secondary” rotation, and now assumes responsibility for guarding 4. Whilst x2 also rotates into the key, having responsibility for both 3 and 2.



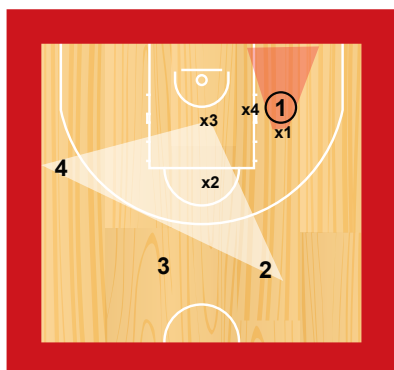
These responsibilities are shown here – with x2 and x1 potentially guarding either 3 or 2, depending upon where a pass is made.



If the ball is passed to 3, x2 takes the ball and x1 moves to 2.



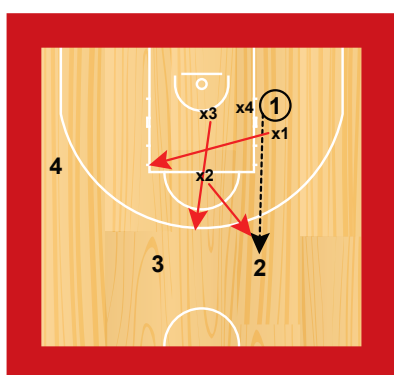
Similarly, if the ball is passed to 2, x2 defends them and x1 rotates to defend 3. x3 continues to defend 4.



One problem with the traditional rotation is that x1 does not have good vision of the perimeter offensive players – effectively facing the baseline.

x3 has good vision of all perimeter players as they have their back to the baseline.

Commonly, offensive teams will quickly pass the ball on the perimeter, with the team looking to get an open outside shot. This “second pass” can be very effective to get a shot, particularly if x1 has responsibility for moving to 3.

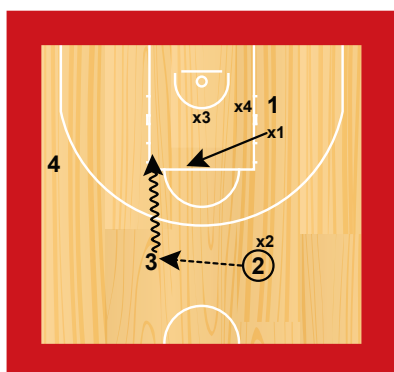


### ROTATION AGAINST PERIMETER SHOOTING TEAM

An alternative rotation (when the ball is passed to 2), which provides better coverage of shooters is if x3 moves to 3 and x1 moves across to 4.

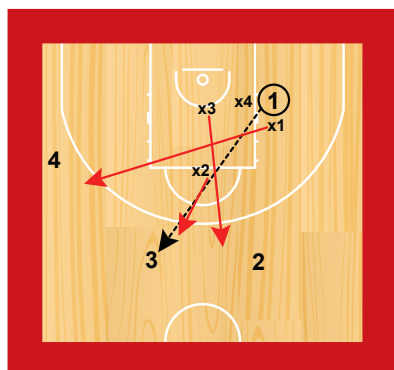
This will defend a shot and a quick pass to 3 more effectively than if x1 moved to defend 3.

Importantly, x1 still has a good angle to stop any penetration by 4 if they receive the ball.



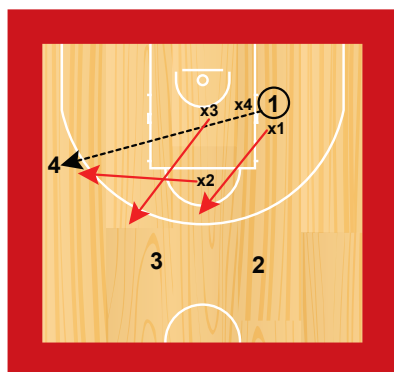
Another issue that can arise for x1 is that they have poor position to defend dribble penetration by 3 if they move as soon as they receive the pass.

x3 is in a better position to stop this penetration, as they are in the “driving lane” between 3 and the basket.



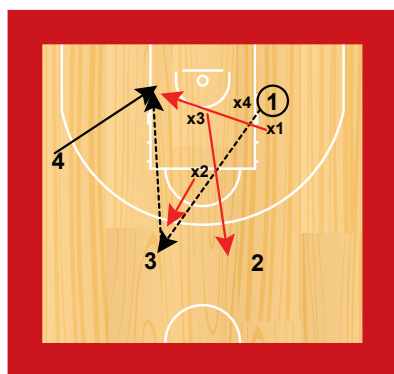
When the ball is passed from the double team to 3, x3 can move to player 2, x2 moves to defend Player 3 with x1 moving to guard 4.

This rotation assumes that 2 is a greater threat from the perimeter than 4. If 4 was the greater threat, x3 could rotate to defend them and x1 would rotate to defend 2.



Another rotation that can be considered is that x2 is responsible for whoever gets the ball between 4, 3 and 2 (as they are closer than either x3 or x1 is to them).

x3 rotates to the next "threat" and x1 rotates to the remaining player. Communication is critical to this working, and x3 must be decisive and communicate early which player they will defend.



The risk in having x3 rotate away from the basket (rather than defend Player 4), is that 4 may move to the basket and get there before x1 can get into a position to stop them. If an offensive team is likely to do that, then the initial rotation should be used.

A team may also have one outstanding shooter, in which case the coach may designate who rotates to them (either x2 or x3).

When designing and implementing a defensive scheme, the most important factors to consider are:

- (a) players need to know what system they are using in any given situation;
- (b) if defenders communicate effectively with each other, then almost any rotation can succeed;
- (c) players need time to practice the scheme before expecting they do it in a game.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Reflect upon your last few games. Are there areas where your defence is consistently being beaten? Discuss with your assistant coaches what adjustment you could possibly make to avoid this.
2. Discuss with a coaching colleague what contested activities they use to practice defence. What change would you make to the activity to specifically teach defending middle penetration?
3. Have a colleague watch your team play and then discuss with them what defence they would employ against your team. Would you use the same defence against their team?
4. What are the main teaching points defending a turn-out cut? How can you teach and practice this?



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**LEVEL 2**

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**TEAM**

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**CHAPTER 2**

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**OFFENSIVE TACTICS  
AND STRATEGIES**

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## CHAPTER 2

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# OFFENSIVE TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

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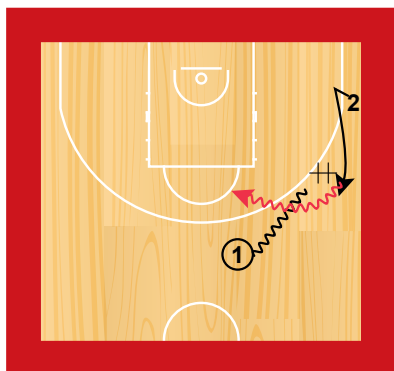


# 2.1 OFFENSIVE MOVEMENT

## 2.1.1 MOTION OFFENCE - 5 OUT - DRIBBLE ENTRY - HAND-OFF

### DRIBBLE HAND OFF

Dribble hand offs are increasingly part of a team's offensive scheme both as a pressure release (e.g. when the ball cannot be passed to the wing, the player will dribble towards the wing and "hand off") and also as an aggressive offensive move.

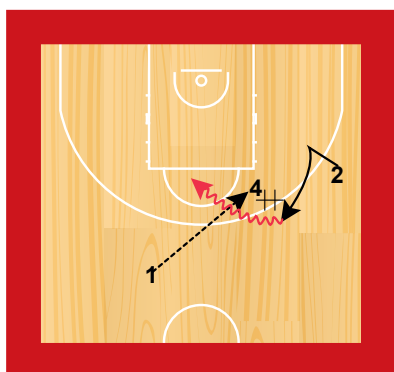


The dribbler moves towards the defender and then executes a jump stop, holding the ball on their hip. They hold the ball with hands on the top and bottom of the ball, to make it easier for their team mate to grab the ball.

The team mate takes the ball on the move and looks to attack off the dribble towards the key. They will often initially move away from the ball and then cut back towards the ball.

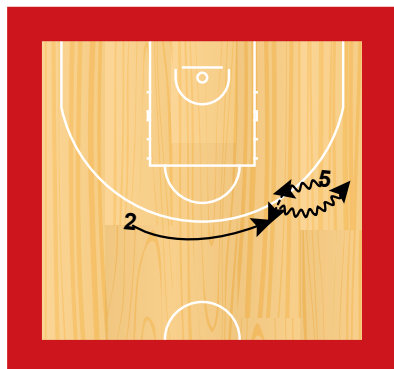
Increasingly, the player passing the ball will pivot to obstruct the path of the defender.

Whilst the hand off is often done dribbling from point to the wing, it can be executed anywhere on the court.



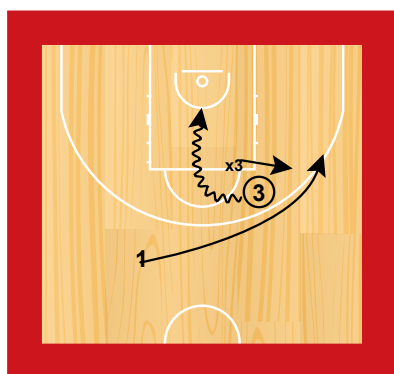
Alternatively, a hand off can be executed from a player that is standing still, and this is often done when a post player has the ball.

Before the hand off, the post player (4) pivots so that their back is facing the player that will take the ball, which will also make them "wider" and better able to obstruct the path of the defender.



Often instead of a hand off, the player will throw a short pass to their team mate, however this should be discouraged.

The hand-off works best when the two offensive players come together, as this is similar to a screen, where the player passing the ball also gets in the path of the defender.



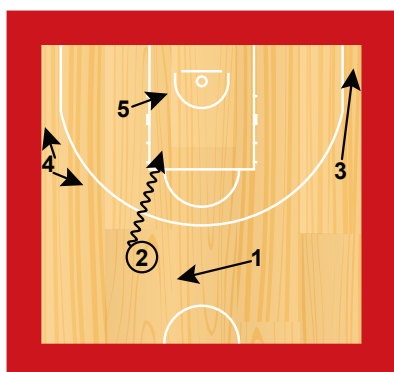
Where the player making the hand off has not dribbled, they may also be able to fake the hand off action.

Here, x3 anticipates a hand off and moves to help to defend 1 as they start their dribble. 3 fakes the hand off and then spins to attack the basket, having x3 now on their back.

## 2.1.2 RECEIVERS PRINCIPLES WITH POST PLAYERS

### INTRODUCING POST PLAYERS

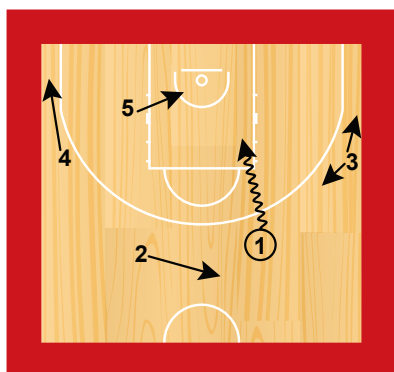
The Receivers' Principles also provide an offensive framework with post players, whether the offence has one post player ("4 Out, 1 In") or two post players ("3 Out, 2 In").



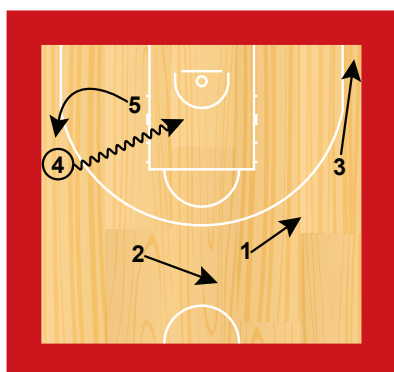
### "4 OUT, 1 IN" PRINCIPLES

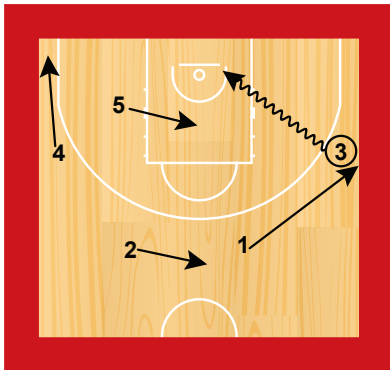
With dribble penetration to the top of the keyway, a low post player steps to the basket and a perimeter player spots up opposite the ball to receive a pass for a shot.

One player moves to the safety position and the other perimeter player moves into a position to receive a pass – which may be behind the dribbler.



If there is a low post player when the dribbler goes to the baseline, the post player "circles out" to the perimeter. Perimeter players opposite the dribbler move to shooting positions.

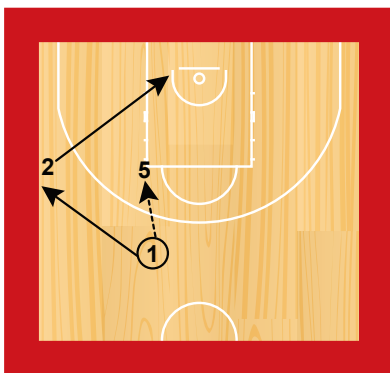




### “4 OUT, 1 IN” PRINCIPLES CONT...

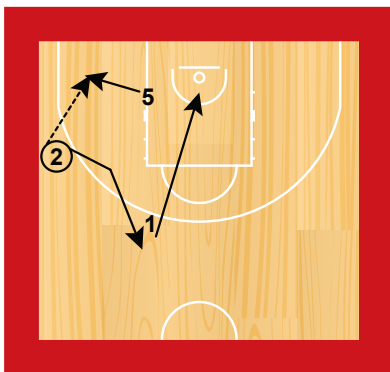
If the dribble penetration is opposite the low post player, the post steps into the top of the “no charge” circle.

Often the defending team will aggressively attempt to stop the offence from passing the ball on the perimeter. In this circumstance a pass into the post player can also be used to help break the pressure.



### “HIGH POST PRESSURE RELEASE”

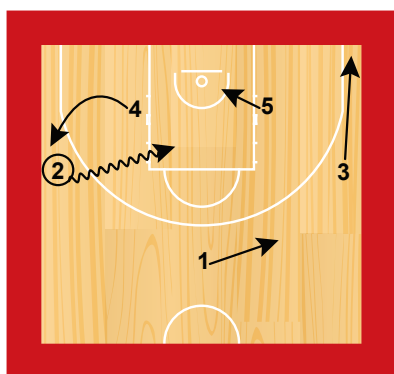
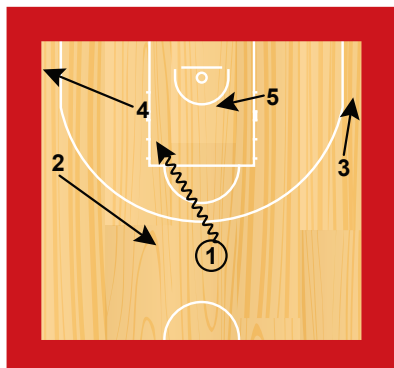
A pass to the high post can be effective where the perimeter player is denied. The perimeter player can cut straight to the basket.



### “LOW POST PRESSURE RELEASE”

The low post player can step to the “short corner” to receive a pass if “ball reversal” is denied.

The Perimeter player can back cut to the basket.



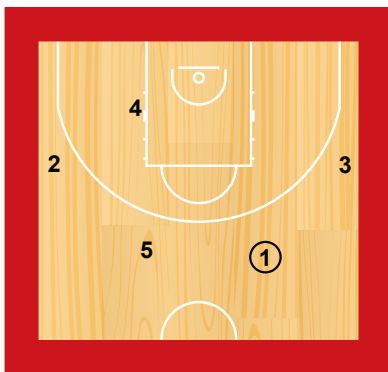
### "3 OUT, 2 IN" RECEIVER PRINCIPLES

Receiver principles also apply, where there are two post players:

The principles with two post players is the same as with 1 post player, with one post player (on the same side as the dribbler) stepping to the perimeter and the other post player stepping to the basket.

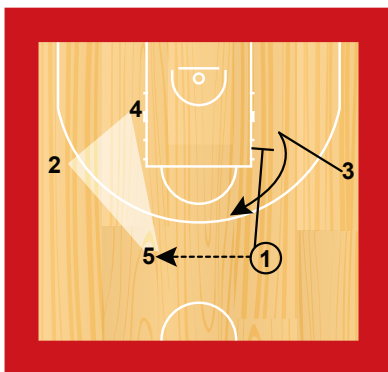
## 2.1.3 MOTION OFFENCE WITH POST - 4 OUT, 1 IN

*With 15-16 year olds it may be appropriate to have an offence with four outside players and one inside player. Furthermore, it is advisable that no player is limited to playing back to the basket (in the post) and all players should play both on the perimeter and in the post.*



A "4 Out" alignment provides room for players to drive into the key. The alignment can have 2 wing players and 2 players at the top of the key.

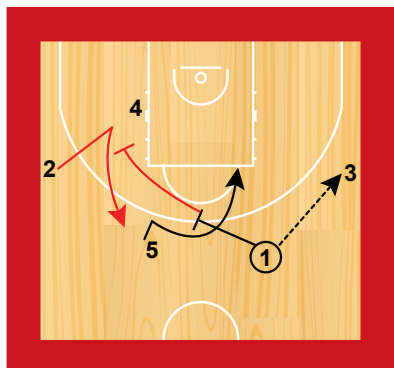
In this alignment, a post player (e.g. 4 or 5) will be required to play on the perimeter. All players should be taught the fundamentals of both post and perimeter play.



This provides the opportunity for 3x3 on one side of the floor (the shaded triangle) as well as providing opportunities for off-ball screens.

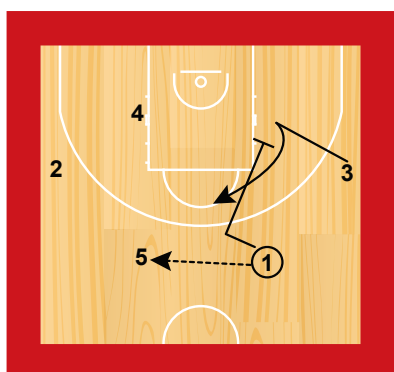
There are many options for movement and inexperienced players may have difficulty choosing what to do or how to read the defence. To avoid this, the coach may introduce some general rules that can be applied.

If players make a "read" that is different to the rules, the coach should not automatically criticise them and instead should speak to the player about why they did (what "read" they make) and suggest other factors that the player should have considered if necessary.

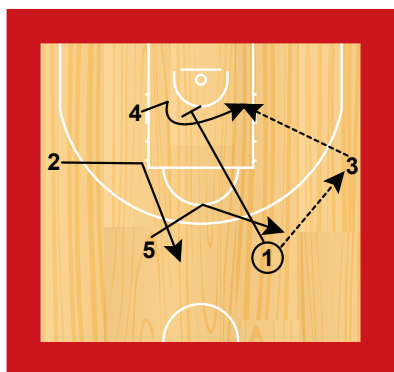


Any time a guard passes the ball (regardless to which side), they screen away, setting screens for all outside players on the other side of the court.

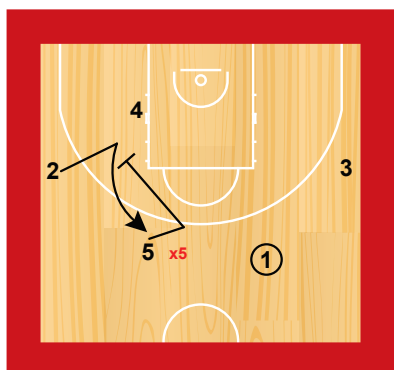
1 screens for both 5 (shown in black) and 2 (shown in red.)



After reversing the ball, 1 screens for 3 who is on the opposite side of the ball.

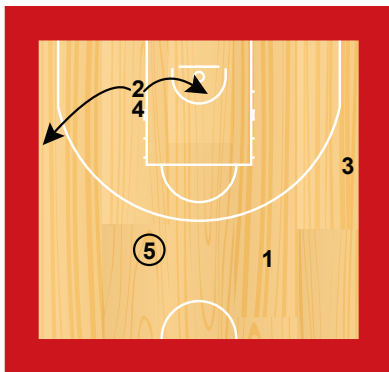


Instead of screening for the perimeter players, 1 can set a screen for the post player on the weak side and the other perimeter players move to balance the floor.

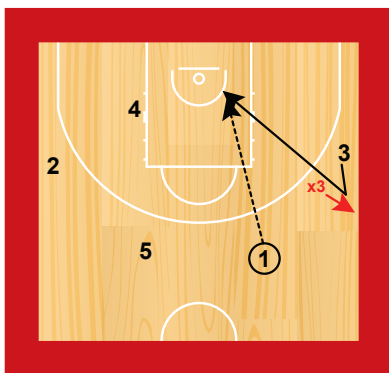


If a player in the guard position is denied the ball, they move away to screen the perimeter players on their side of the floor.

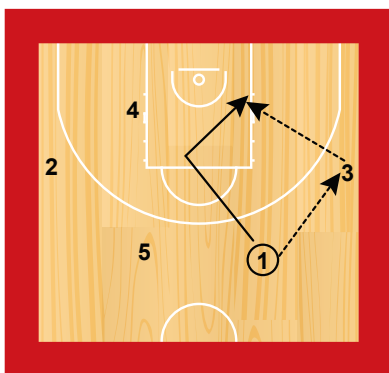
There are many options for movement of players in accordance with these rules and players need to be given many opportunities in practice to develop familiarity with the rules and also their decision making in playing to these rules (i.e. when not to follow the rule).



A wing player that is on the post side of the court, may use the post player to get open.

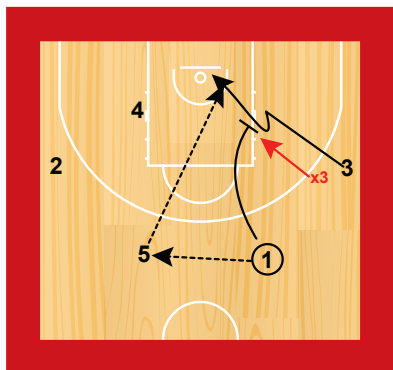


Players on the opposite side of the floor to the post player, may cut back door to the basket if they are denied the ball.

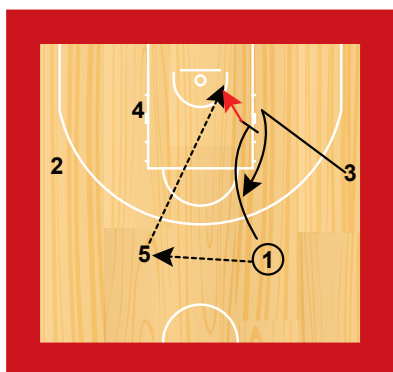


They may also use a change of direction and/or change of pace to get open to receive a pass in the open post area.





The use of off-ball screens also provides many opportunities. 3 may move toward the screen and if their defender is on the high side of the screen, 3 may cut straight to the basket.



In any screening situation, the screener must also look for opportunities to receive a pass. If the cutter goes high, the screener should go to the basket. If the cutter goes to the basket, the screener should “pop” and move high.

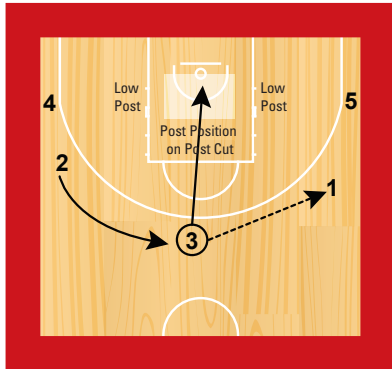
## 2.1.4 POST UP CUTS

### “POST UP” CUTS

Too often with junior teams one player steps into a post position and then stays there throughout the offence, and this is repeated time and time again.

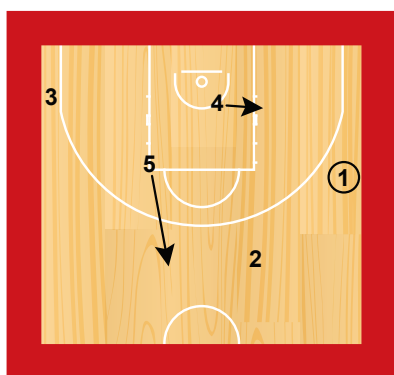
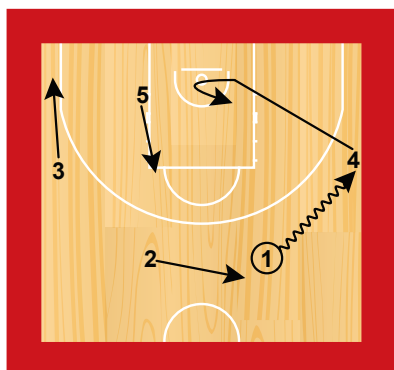
All players must be introduced to basic principles of post play and should be encouraged to look for opportunities to play in the post. A guard that can play effectively in the post is particularly hard to defend. Furthermore, players that may initially establish a post position need to be able to step to the perimeter.

A “post” player that can play on the perimeter is much harder to guard than one limited to only being able to play in a post position.



### POST UP AT THE BASKET

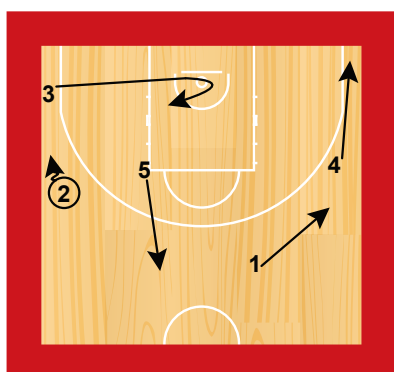
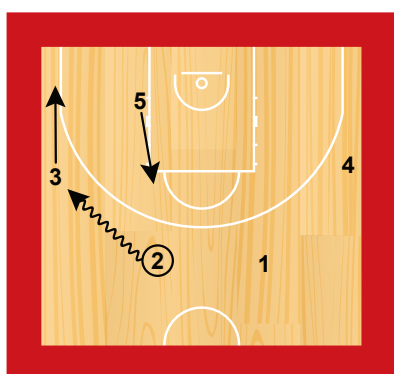
Whilst the low post position is on the side of the keyway, players on a post up cut should cut to the basket – getting their head under the basket. From here, they post in the keyway. Players do need to be conscious of the 3 second rule, however referees will usually warn a player to vacate before calling a violation. The 3 second period is also longer than most players realise.



### POST UP CUT – “4 OUT, 1 IN” FROM DRIBBLE ENTRY OPEN SIDE

- 1 dribbles toward 4 because they are denied (and a pass cannot be made).
- 4 back cuts, getting head under the basket and then posts in the keyway.
- 5 lifts to at least the elbow.
- 2 replaces 1.
- 3 can move to the corner or can stay in the wing position.

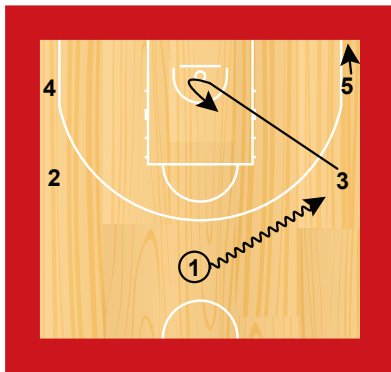
5 steps to the perimeter and 4 steps to the low post to return to “4 Out, 1 In”.



### POST SIDE

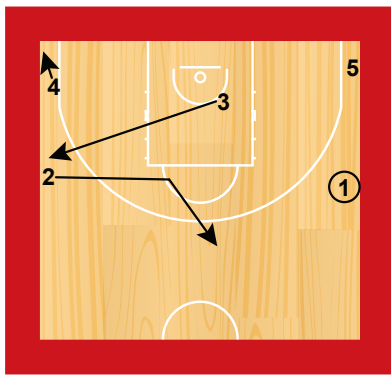
- 2 dribbles at 3, because 3 is denied.
- 3 initially moves towards the corner.
- 5 lifts to the elbow or higher.

- 3 then back cuts to the basket, getting their head under the basket before posting inside the key way. This cut can also be effective if the ball is passed to 5 on the high post.
- 4 moves to the corner and 5 can move to the perimeter.

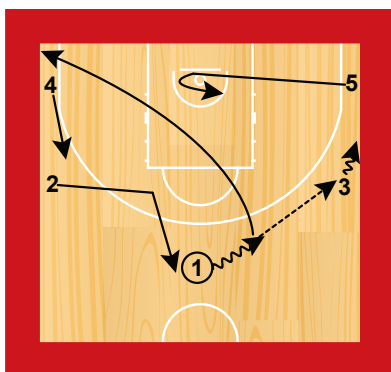


### POST UP CUT "5 OUT" – FROM DRIBBLE ENTRY FROM POINT

- 3 is denied so 1 dribbles to the wing.
- 3 back cuts to the basket and 5 steps to the corner
- 3 gets their head under the basket and then posts in the key

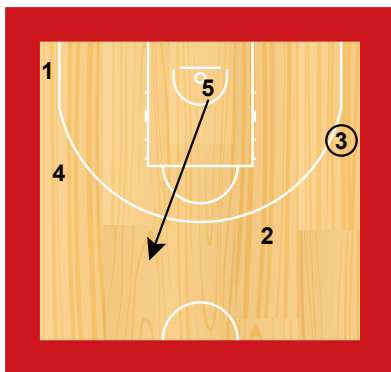


- 4 also gets to the corner and 2 "balances" to the top of the court.
- 3, may move to the perimeter (replacing 2 at the wing) to return to "5 Out"

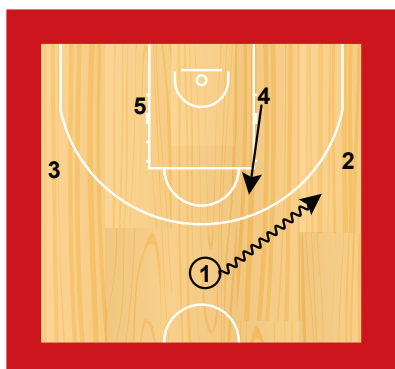


### FROM WING

- 1 passes to 3 and cuts to the opposite corner.
- 4 and 2 "balance" the floor
- 3 dribbles at 5, who back cuts to get their head under the basket" before posting inside the keyway.

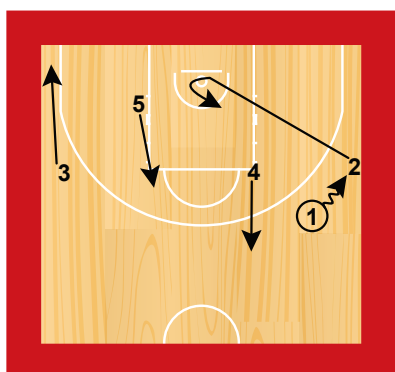


- 5 can move to the perimeter to return to "5 Out"
- The same action can be played by dribbling to the other side of the floor.

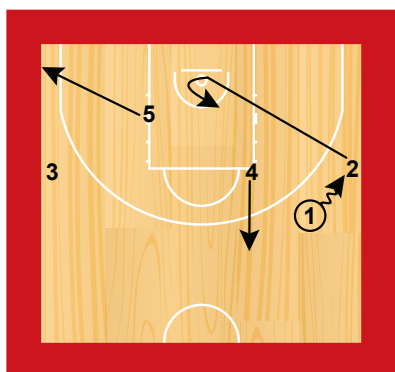


### POST UP CUT "3 OUT, 2 IN" – FROM DRIBBLE ENTRY

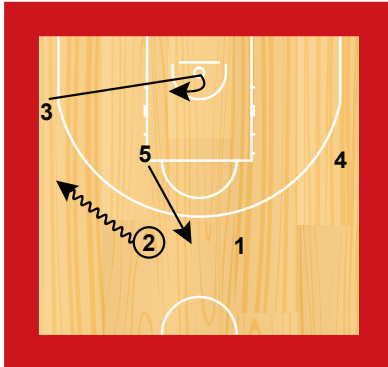
- 1 dribbles at 2, because 2 is denied and a pass cannot be made.
- 4 lifts to the top of the circle opposite the elbow – replacing 1.



- 2 back cuts to the basket, getting their "head under the basket" before posting up in the key.
- 5 may lift to the elbow and if they do, 3 gets to the corner

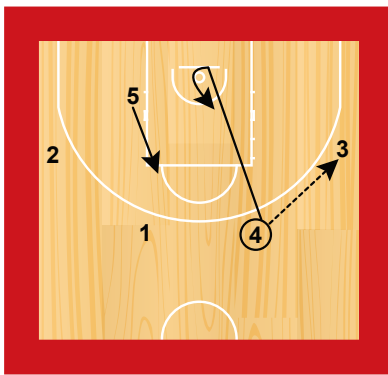


Alternatively, 5 may step to the corner and 3 would remain at the wing.



### POST UP CUT - "4 OUT, 1 IN" - HIGH POST

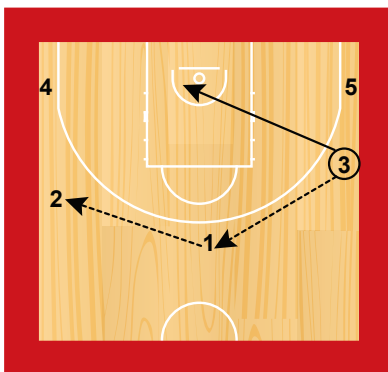
As 2 dribbles to the wing, 5 lifts to the perimeter and 3 cuts to the basket.



### POST UP CUT - "4 OUT, 1 IN" - FLASH CUT

Players may also perform a post-up cut after passing. This may be done if the coach wants particular players to be exchanging in and out of the post. Or it may be done, where a player "reads" that they have an advantage on the post over their defender.

The low post player (5) lifts to at least the elbow, as the basket cut is made. From the free throw line, 5 may be able to make a "high-low" pass to the posting player, or they move to the perimeter and the exchange is complete.



### POST UP CUT "5 OUT" - FLASH CUT

Player may also perform a post-up cut after making a pass, particularly when they "read" that they have an advantage on the post against their defender.

## 2.1.5 DEVELOPING DECISION MAKING - PUTTING PERIMETER AND POST TOGETHER

*The principles of motion offence enable players to adapt to any offensive system and coaches must provide players with activities that will develop tactical decision-making.*

In “motion offence”, offensive players need to “read” the defence rather than moving based upon a pre-determined set offence. Coaches should guide players in understanding the key criteria for making decisions – what makes a decision good or bad? For example, in a 2 on 1 situation the player with the ball has to decide between passing to their team mate or continue dribbling for a lay-up. What is the criterion for making this decision?

In the case of 2x1, it is mainly related to the action of the defender. For instance, if the defender moves to guard the dribbler, the best decision is to pass but if the defender does not commit to guarding the dribbler and leaves enough room to reach the hoop, the appropriate decision is to keep dribbling for the lay-up.

Coaches should identify key criteria (or key signal stimulus) that can be used to determine what decision to make, and can be made to evaluate a decision that is made. Once the coach establishes this criteria, rather than tell players what they should have done, the coach can ask questions related to the criteria, so that the player learns how to make the decision.

For example, in a 2x1 situation, rather than telling the player they should have passed the ball, they could:

**Coach:** *“Where was the defender positioned?”*

**Player:** *“They started in the key, and then came to guard me.”*

**Coach:** *“What should your decision be when that happens?”*

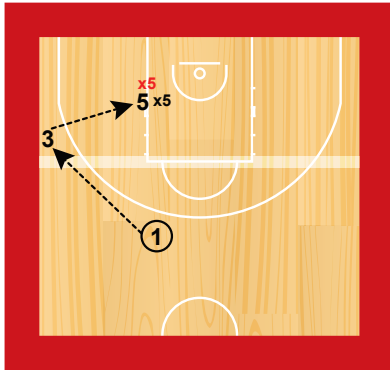
**Player:** *“If the defender commits to guarding me, I should pass.”*

**Coach:** *“Where exactly did the defender move?”*

**Player:** *“I thought I could still get past, however they did get in front of me so I should have passed.”*

In this example, the player knows the correct rule to apply and it was their judgment about whether or not the defender had “committed” that was wrong. By using questions the coach has let that athlete reflect on the situation and realise the error they made (thinking the defender had not “committed”). If the coach had just said “you should have passed the ball”, the player may ignore the feedback because their initial thought was that the defender had not committed.

We will use, as an example, a 3x3 framework, to consider the tactical offensive decisions that need to be made. The difficulty of activities should increase progressively.



## PASSING TO THE LOW POST

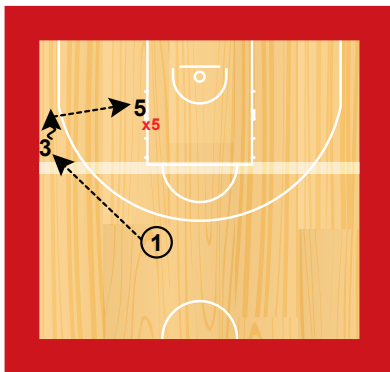
### DECISION

- Perimeter player determines whether or not to pass to the low post

### CRITERIA

- The pass should be from below the extended free throw line
- Low post defender must be either behind (shown black) or playing a three-quarter fronting defence on the opposite side of the passer (shown red).

A pass to the low post that does not meet these conditions (i.e. from above the extended free throw line or with the defender in front) would be an incorrect decision.

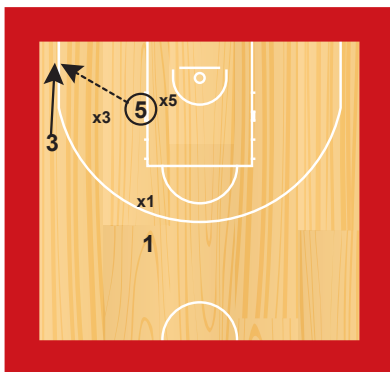


The wing player may adjust their position to meet the conditions. For example, 3 dribbles toward the baseline, so that the defender is on the other side of the post player.

### COMPETITIVE ACTIVITY

Simply demonstrating the rules to the players is unlikely to be effective. Instead, the player's need to be given opportunities to practice, with the coach providing feedback.

- 3x3 with the following rules:
  - the team that scores keeps playing offence
  - offence can only score if the low post receives that ball because of a correct decision – once the ball has gone to the low post, any score can be made. If a score is made without a pass to low post, the other team get the ball
  - to increase opportunities for correct decisions, defence can be instructed not to front or not to intercept the pass.



## LOW POST'S DECISIONS

### DECISION

- Upon receiving the ball, the post player must decide whether or not to play 1x1 or pass the ball to a team mate

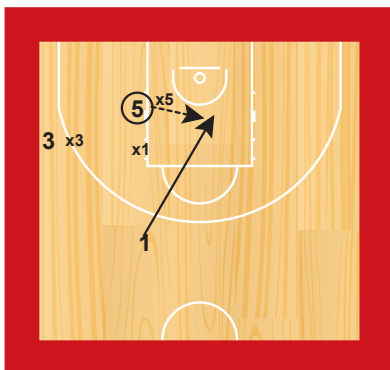
### CRITERIA

- As the post defender is behind the post player, the action of the perimeter defenders is the key factor ("key signal stimulus"):
  - If a perimeter defender helps to pressure the post – the post should pass to the team mate who gets open
  - If perimeter defenders do not help, the post player should play 1x1

### COMPETITIVE ACTIVITY

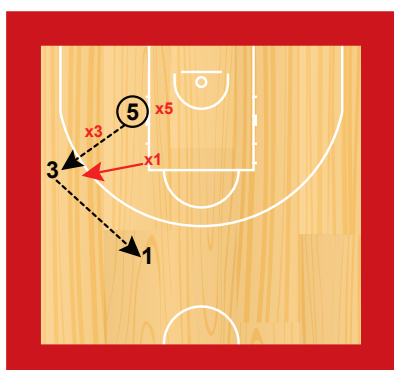
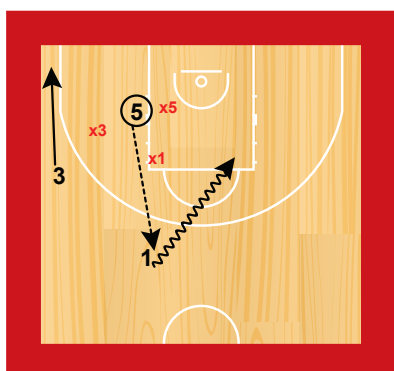
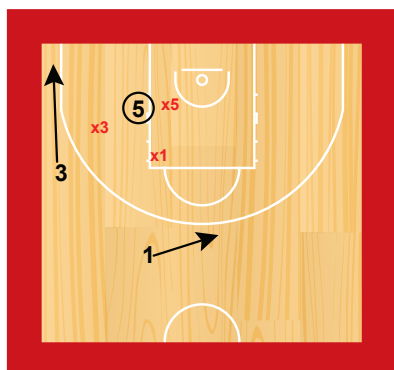
Play 3x3 with the following rules:

- Offence can only score if the low post has first received the ball on a correct decision to pass;
- Every time the post player makes the correct decision (play 1x1 or pass) offence score a point and lose a point for an incorrect decision by the post.
- to increase opportunities for correct decisions, defence can be instructed not to front to intercept the pass.





Coaches must resist the temptation to just tell players what they should have done and instead should ask questions about the key factors (e.g. position of defenders). For this reason, some coaches use a teaching point with offensive players that “the defence will tell you what to do”!



## PERIMETER DECISIONS

Using the same 3x3 framework it is possible to also develop the decision making of perimeter players.

### DECISIONS

Perimeter players may need to make two decisions:

1. When the low post receives the ball and the perimeter player's defender moves to help, the perimeter player has to decide whether or not to move to another spot to receive a pass back.
2. Upon receiving the ball back from the low post, the perimeter player must decide whether to shoot, drive inside or pass to an open team mate if their defender rotates

### CRITERIA

#### DECISION 1 (DEFENDER HELPING ON POST)

- The “key signal stimulus” is the position of the perimeter player's defender. The player should try and move away from their defender's eye line

#### DECISION 2 (RECEIVING PASS BACK FROM POST)

- Again, the key signal stimulus is the action of the defenders. The perimeter player should catch the ball balanced, ready to shoot.
- If their defender does not come back (or no defender rotates), they should shoot
- If the defender comes back, pump fake and then drive
- If a defender rotates to them (leaving a team mate open) they should pass to their team mate.

### COMPETITIVE ACTIVITY

The same 3x3 activity as above can be used, with the following rules to reward good decision making:

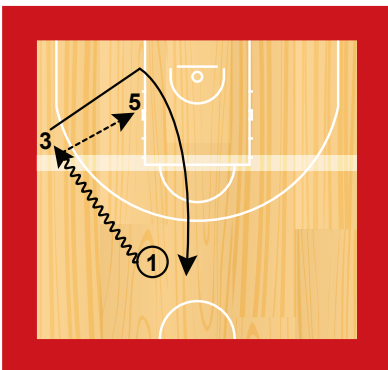
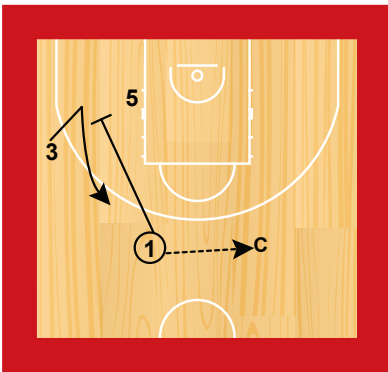
- They can only score if the low post receives a pass from below the extended free throw line;
- Each time a perimeter player makes a correct decision (whether Decision 1 or Decision 2) the team receive an extra point
- If perimeter player makes a wrong decision the team loses a point
- Perimeter defenders must help on the post, otherwise their team loses a point
- Can restrict post defender to only playing behind or to play behind or ¾ front

### LOW POST AND PERIMETER PLAYERS' DECISIONS

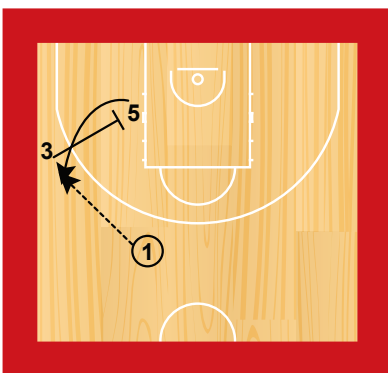
The next step is to work on both the decisions of the low post player and perimeter players at the same time. The same 3x3 framework can be used with perimeter players making a decision of whether or not to help against the post player.

Coaches may allow some further variations in player movement to make the activity less predictable:

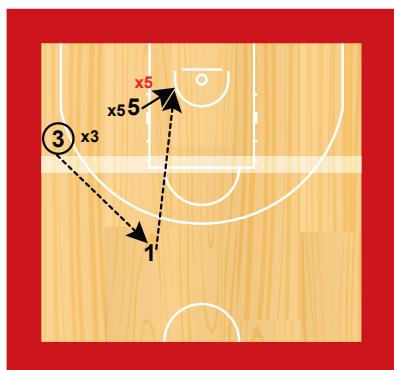
Perimeter players may pass to a coach and then switch positions



The guard may use a dribble entry, dribbling to below the free throw extended and the forward cuts behind the post to replace the guard.



The forward may screen the post player and switch positions.



A pass to the post from above the free throw extended line is allowed where:

- The ball has been passed from below the extended free throw line back to the point position (the start of ball “reversal”)
- The post defender was either playing behind (shown black) or was  $\frac{3}{4}$  fronting from the baseline side of the post player (shown red)
- The post player has been able to “seal” their defender.

In this situation the key signal stimuli is:

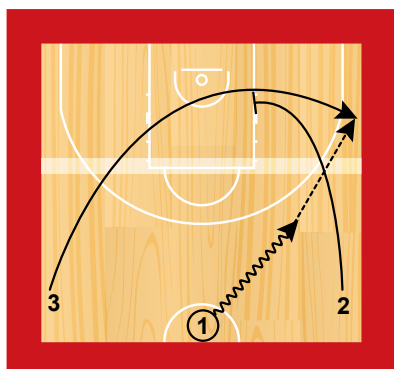
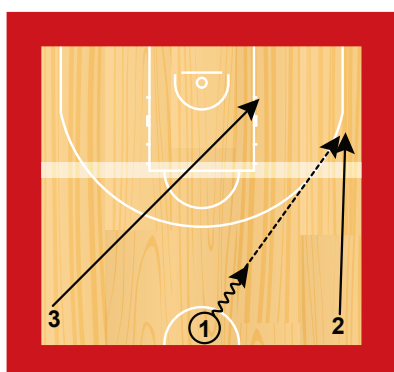
- The position of the post defender – indicating the ball should be reversed
- The position of the post player establishing a “seal”.

### ALLOW CREATIVITY IN DECISION MAKING

It is important that players learn to make their own decisions and not simply do what the coach has instructed. Accordingly the coach must create the situations in which a tactical decision has to be made and at times the players may choose options that are different to what the coach would do.

The coach observes how the players perform and provide information to the player about options that existed (and the player did not choose) or factors that meant that what the player did was unsuccessful (e.g. position of a “help” defender).

Again, questioning players will be more beneficial than the coach always giving them the “answer”. In a game, players make decisions and the coach’s role at practice is to teach them how to make the best decision.



### “3X3 FROM HALF WAY”

A similar 3x3 activity can be used with players starting at half way so that they must move and get organized and then make decisions according to the criteria previously discussed.

The coach could add to the complexity by passing the ball to one offensive player to start the activity while the other players must progress into offence making sure that they have a low post and a perimeter player below the extended free throw line.

The coach can add further rules, such as:

- The players cannot use the same option twice in a row to get into their initial offensive positions;
- Offence cannot have the same person at the post player twice in a row;
- Offence cannot play on the same side of the floor three times in a row;
- Offence must include specific aspects – e.g. they have to set a screen, dribbler cannot dribble below extended free throw.

These rules can be enforced by giving the ball to the defence should the rules be broken.

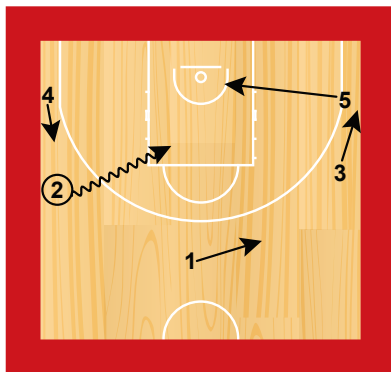
This activity can also be done full court.

## 2.1.6 CREATING SCORING OPPORTUNITIES WITH A SECOND PASS

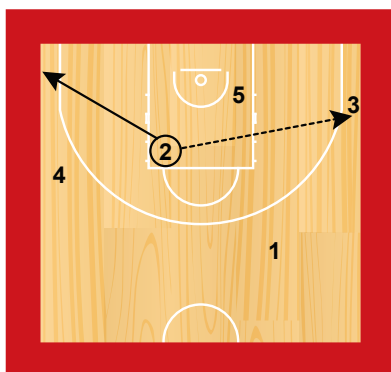
### CREATING SCORING OPPORTUNITIES WITH A SECOND PASS

One of the key concepts in the “receiver’s principle”, is to create an option to receive a pass on the perimeter from the dribbler. When successful, this can create a perimeter shot (usually a 3 point attempt) however with junior players this may not be as good an option because of their inconsistency when shooting from this distance.

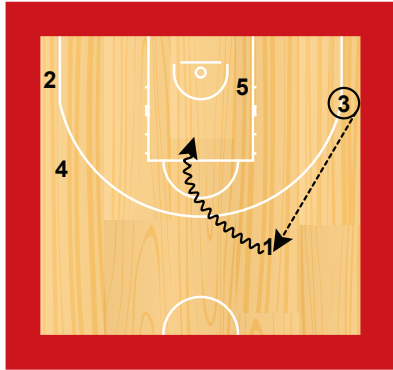
However, coaches should still encourage the “receivers principle” because a quick second pass will often create a good opportunity for further penetration into the keyway.



As 2 dribbles into the key, the other players move to “receivers” positions.



The pass to 2 may create a perimeter shot, however in junior players this may not be a high percentage shot. It may also create an opportunity to drive.



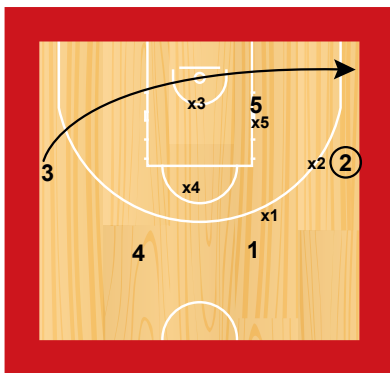
A quick second pass, may also create an opportunity for 3 to drive into the keyway, as the defence scramble.

3 may also be able to step closer to the basket to receive the pass, making for a higher percentage shot. 2 should also look to see if 5 is open on the post.

## 2.1.7 MOVING THE HELP DEFENDER AWAY FROM A HELP POSITION

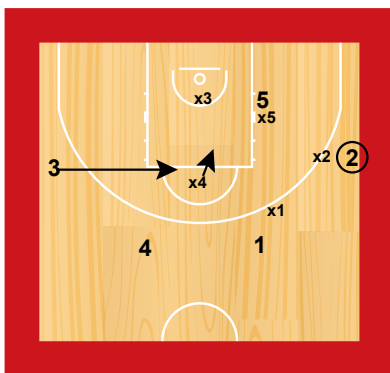
### MOVING HELP DEFENDER

In many situations basketball is not a 1v1 contest, with “help” defence designed to place added pressure on the offensive players (before they make any move) and to also provide help to a defensive team mate. Whether the defensive is double teaming, switching or rotating the effect is that “help” defence can stifle offensive opportunities. Accordingly, offensive movement is often designed not to directly create a scoring opportunity but to move help defenders to relieve pressure and/or create an opportunity for a 1v1 contest.

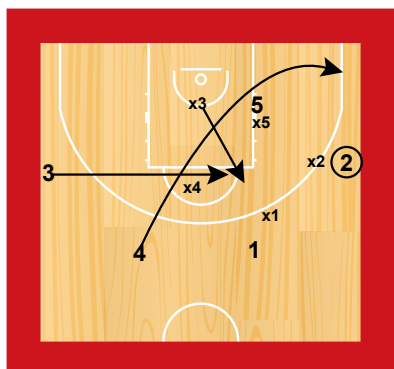


x3 is in the low “split line” position explicitly to be able to help other defenders. They may both help to defend the low post player (double teaming, intercepting a lob pass) and may also help to defend dribble penetration.

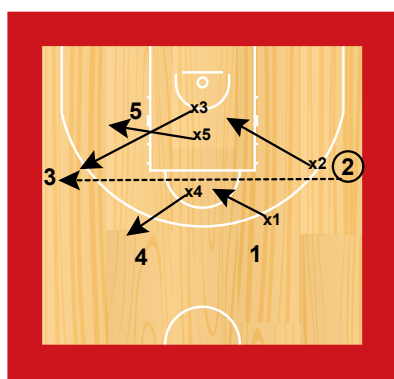
As 3 cuts to the ball side corner, x3 must now make a decision. If they remain on the split line, 3 will be open. If they move to defend 3 in the corner, they are no longer in a position to help against the low post player.



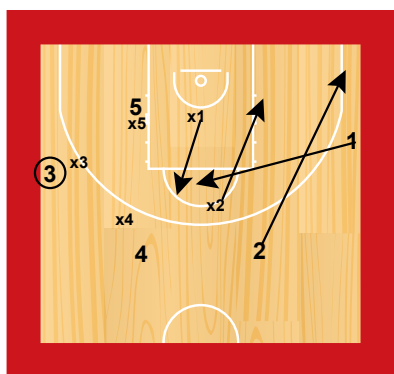
If 3 cuts to the high post, this may be defended by x4, which enables x3 to remain in the low split line position.



However, if 4 cuts to the ball side corner, x4 needs to move with them or else 4 will be open. If x4 follows the cut, x3 would then need to move from the low split line to defend a flash cut made by 3.



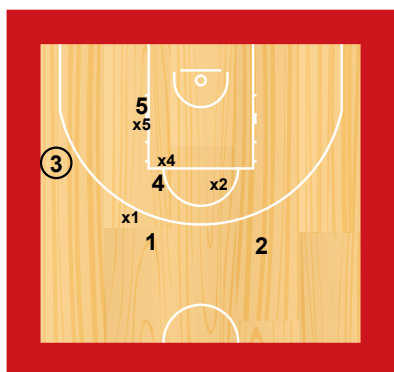
By reversing the ball from one side of the court to the other, the offence force the defensive players to adjust position. This can create a situation where help defence has not got into position when the pass is made.



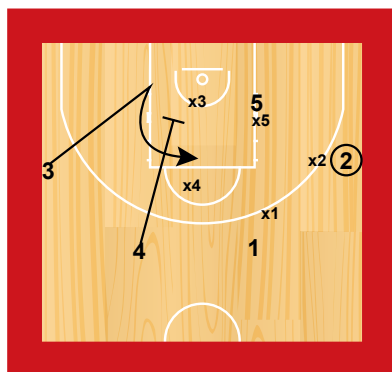
Some teams will opt to move away from the split line to provide better coverage against good shooters. If the offence know that this is part of the defensive scheme, they can move the shooter so that the defence are no longer in a help position.

Here, 2 is an excellent shooter and when they cut to the corner, x2 will not adopt a split line position but will hedge towards the corner. 1 cuts to the free throw line to draw x1, and then there is no split line defender behind 5.

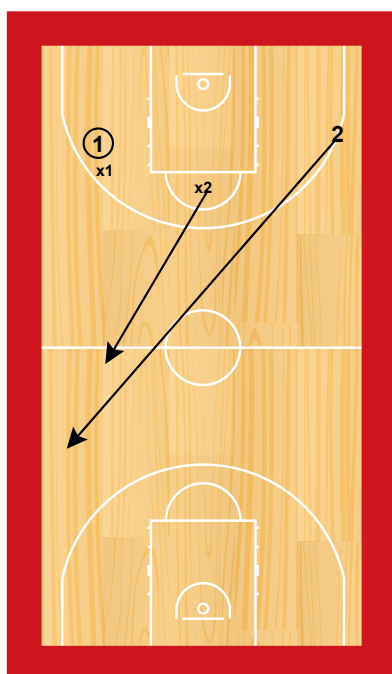
If x1 stays then 1 is open at the free throw area.



Having a high post player (particularly if they are also ball side) creates an offensive alignment that does not have an easy low split line defender.



Screening action can also be used to move the split line defenders. As 4 sets a down screen for 3, x3 and x4 will adjust position to defend the screen, which may divert their attention from (or cause confusion regarding) help line responsibility.



In a full court context, x2 is able to pressure 1's dribble (hedge and recover or "run and jump") and is also in a position to double team.

However, when 2 cuts it will move x2 from this position. 2's cut is most effective if it moves to the ball side as this draws x2 away from the split line.



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## FOLLOW-UP

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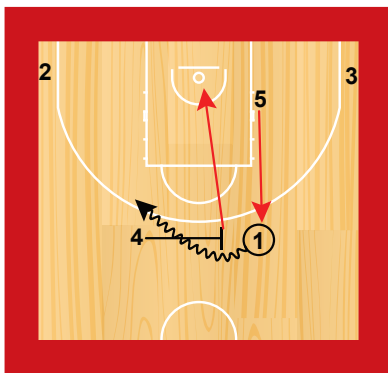
1. How do you vary Receivers Principles when the team is playing with a post player?
2. Discuss with your players
  - a. What cues should a perimeter player consider when they have the ball;
  - b. What cues should a perimeter player that does not have the ball consider?  
Did the players identify all relevant cues?
3. Watch a colleague's team play a game and assess their ability to pass the ball to create open shot opportunities. Discuss with the coach:
  - a. How the team practices creating open shots;
  - b. What changes could be made at practice to improve their passing;
  - c. What understanding do the players have of how to create opportunities?
4. At practice, set up a contested half court activity and instruct your offensive players to focus on moving split line defenders from the split line. What methods did they use?

## 2.2 SCREENING

### 2.2.1 ON BALL SCREENS - MIDDLE PICK AND ROLL

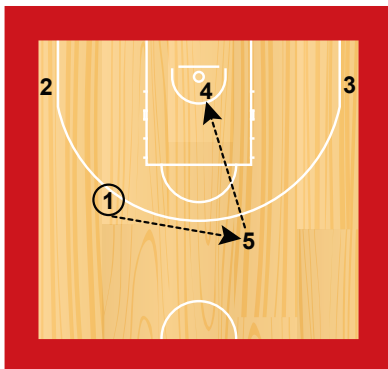
#### MIDDLE PICK AND ROLL

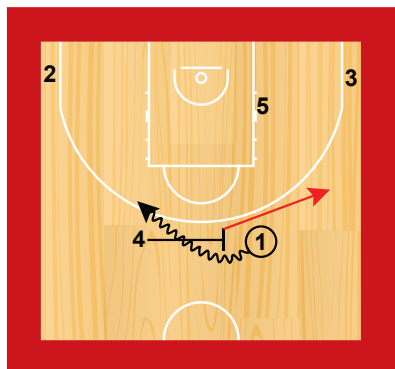
Commonly, teams are setting early on-ball screens for guards to create action from the middle of the court. Sets should not be "terminal" and need to lead to other action. Screener must have ability to roll/dive to the basket, flare and make plays off the dribble.



#### "MIDDLE PICK AND ROLL - LIFT OPPOSITE POST"

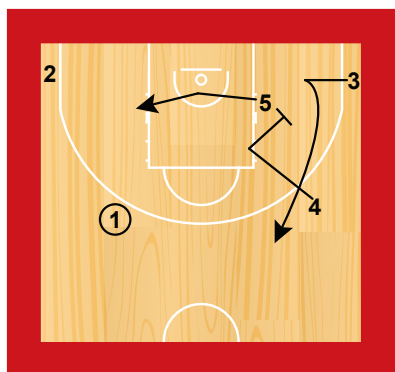
After the dribbler comes off the screen, the screener moves to the basket and the low post (5) lifts. Reversing the ball to 5, creates the opportunity for "high/low" post action.



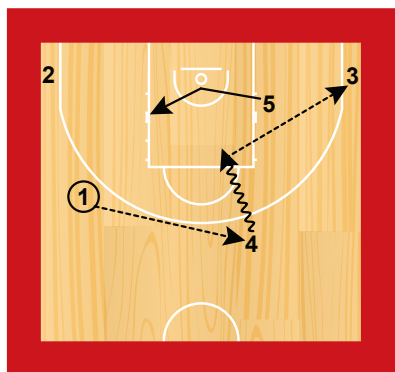


### “MIDDLE PICK & ROLL – INTO TRIANGLE AND 2”

4 sets the screen for 1 and then flares to the wing.



5 cuts across to the low post – forming a post triangle with 1, 2 and 5.  
4 can down screen for 3.



If ball is reversed to 4, 4 must have the ability to shoot, or dribble into the key for a shot or pass.

## 2.2.2 ON BALL SCREENS - RE-SCREENING

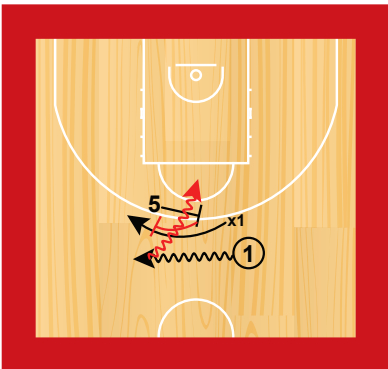
### RE-SCREENING (ON BALL SCREENS)

Re-screening can also be effective with ball screens, particularly a screen set in the middle of the court.



Here X1 goes “under” the screen set by 5 and is able to stop the dribbler from penetrating. 5 turns around and sets another screen, so that 1 can change direction.

It is important that the screener establishes a stationary position on the new screen before 1 attempts to move past. If the screener is moving at the time of contact with the defender it is likely to be an offensive foul.



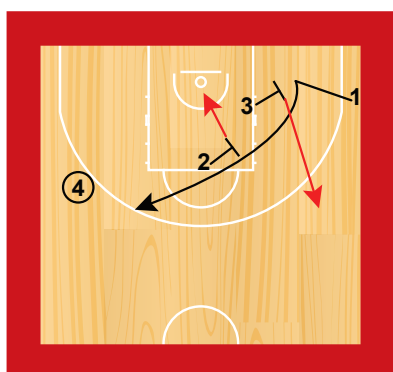
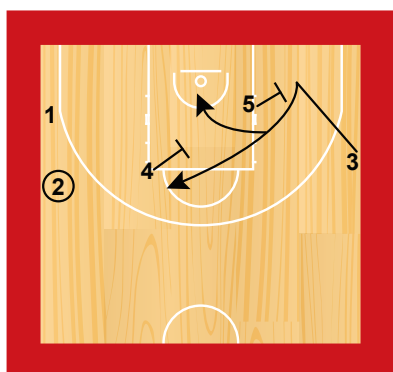
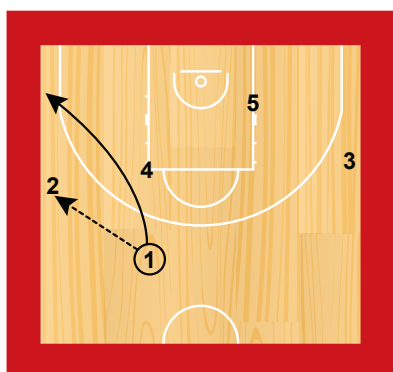
The re-screen is equally effective if the defender goes “over” the initial screen. Once the dribbler has taken a step or two past the screen, the screener turns around to set a new screen.

## 2.2.3 OFF BALL SCREENS - STAGGERED SCREENS

### CUTTING OFF STAGGERED SCREENS

A "Staggered Screen" is where two offensive players set a screen for the one cutter. With a "double screen" the

two players stand next to each other, with a "staggered screen" the offensive players are progressively in the path which the cutter intends to cut along.



In this example, the staggered screens will be set by the two post players – there are many ways that a staggered screen can be incorporated into offensive movement.

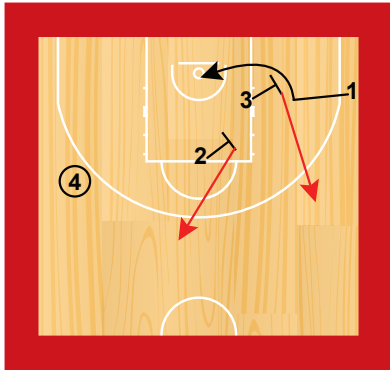
As 3 cuts off each screen, they "read" the defence. If, for example, their defender "trailed" (followed behind) as they cut off 5's screen, they would curl to the basket.

Similarly, if the defender goes "under" one of the screens, 3 may flare to the perimeter (not shown).

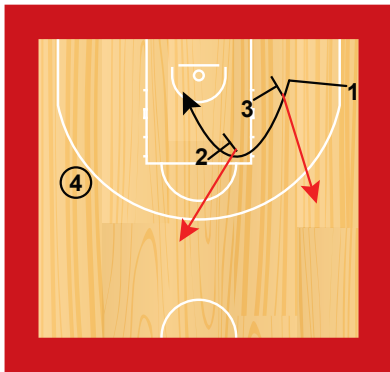
The two screeners move to positions to also receive the ball after the cutter has moved.

Here, 1 makes a "straight cut" and:

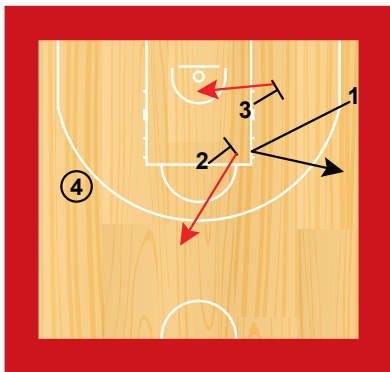
- 3 (first screen) – "pops" to the perimeter
- 2 (second screen) – "dives" to the basket



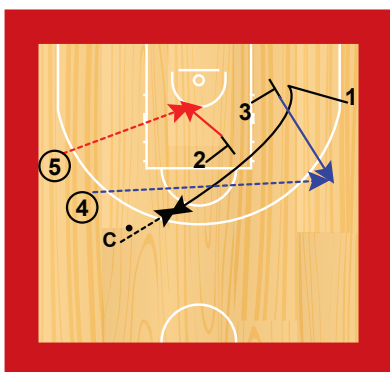
Here, 1 makes a "back cut", so neither screener cuts to the basket. Instead, both "pop" to the perimeter.



Similarly, if the cutter "curl cuts" (whether on the first or second screen), both screeners "pop" to the perimeter.



The first screener can also cut to the basket, particularly if the cutter flares to the wing (as there is no space for the screener to "pop").



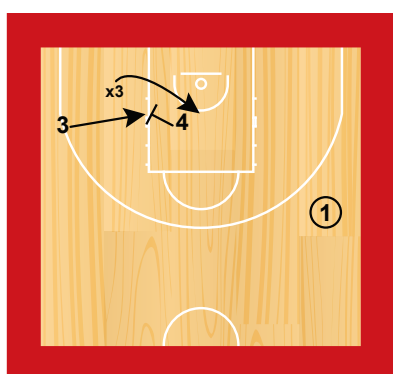
### 3 PASS DOUBLE SCREEN ACTIVITY

A good activity to practice cutting off staggered double screens is to have 3 passers and either 0, 1, 2 or 3 defenders. Each passer is assigned someone to pass to, regardless of whether that person cuts to the basket or the perimeter.

## 2.2.4 OFF BALL SCREENS - RE-SCREENING (OFF BALL)

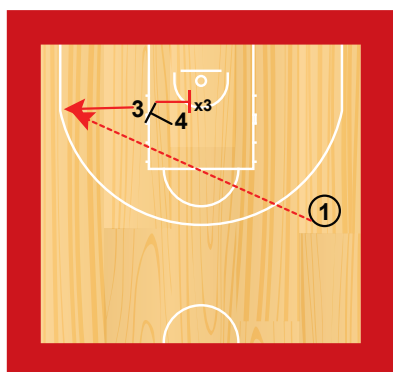
### "RE-SCREENING" (OFF BALL SCREENS)

Sometimes when a team sets off-ball screens, the defence will "cheat" or move to a position anticipating where the cutter will go, but before the cutter has actually cut off the screen. In this situation, the screener may need to adjust their position (or "re-screen") in order to be in a position to get their team mate open.

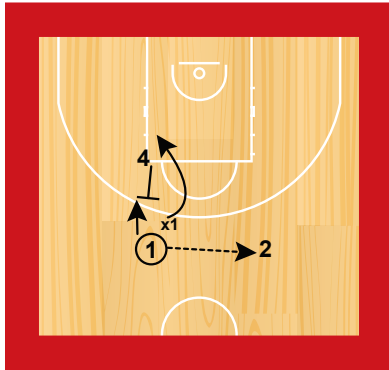


### "RE-SCREENING" - DOWN SCREEN

4 sets a screen for 3 who moves toward the screen. Anticipating that 3 will cut into the keyway, x3 moves into the middle of the keyway.

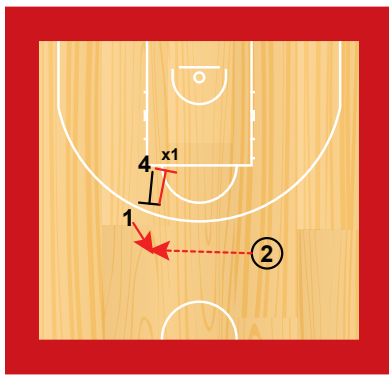


4 turns to face x3, establishing a new screening position. 3 flares to the perimeter, getting into a position behind 4.



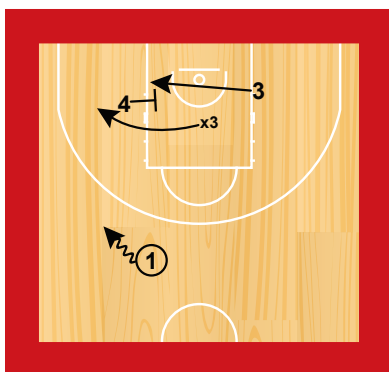
### “RE-SCREENING” – BACK SCREENS

4 sets a back screen for 1, who again moves toward the screen. x1 anticipating that 1 will cut to the basket, avoids 4 and moves into the keyway.



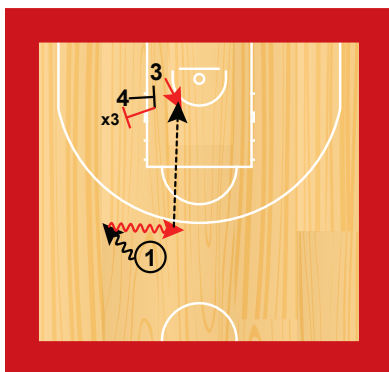
4, turns to face x1 and establishes a screening position. With the initial back screen, 4 had to give x1 at least one step (because x1 could not see them). With the re-screen, 4 can get as close as they want.

1 moves back to the perimeter



### “RE-SCREENING” – TURN OUT CUTS

4 sets a screen, for 3 to make a “turn out” cut. 1 is on the move to make a pass. x3 anticipates that 3 will cut to the perimeter and moves to the outside of 4.



4 turns to face x3 and establishes a new screening position.

3 steps to the basket, or steps toward the middle of the keyway to receive a pass, with 4 now in the way of x3. 1 may change position to create a better pass.



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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Have an assistant coach record how many offensive sets in a game involve screens, specifically:
  - a. Off Ball screens;
  - b. On Ball screens.
2. Discuss with your assistant coaches which screens were used most effectively and which screens were used less effectively. What activities could you use to improve this?
3. How do your opponents tend to:
  - a. Defend on ball screens
  - b. Defend off ball screens
4. Discuss with your players how your opponents tend to defend screens, what strategies do they think should be used in response to those tactics? Have the players practice this and then discuss with them whether or not they were successful.

## 2.3 TRANSITION

### 2.3.1 STRUCTURED FAST BREAK - SECONDARY BREAK

#### SECONDARY BREAK (OFFENSIVE TRANSITION)

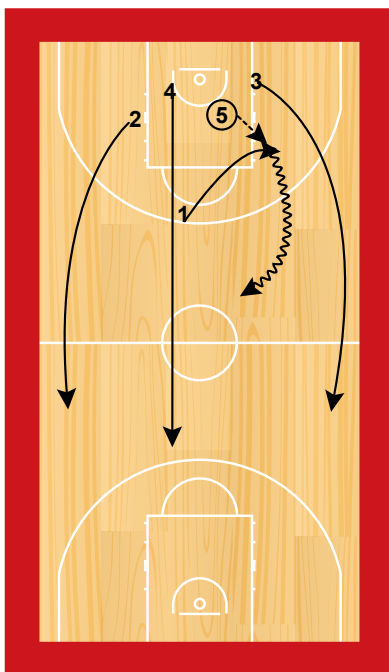
The initial intent of a “fast break” is to get an open lay-up or a situation of advantage (such as 2v1 or 3v2) leading to a high percentage shot. A “secondary break” is how a team moves into half court offence if they were unable to create an initial shot.

The most famous “secondary break” may be the North Carolina Secondary Break which was introduced by coach Dean Smith and is still used by the University of North Carolina teams under coach Roy Williams. However, in designing or implementing any offensive system coaches must consider the

limitation of the 24 second shot clock and also the skill level of their own players. Many well-known offensive structures were first designed with a shot clock of 30 seconds or longer (a 35 second shot clock applied in NCAA basketball when the Carolina Break was devised).

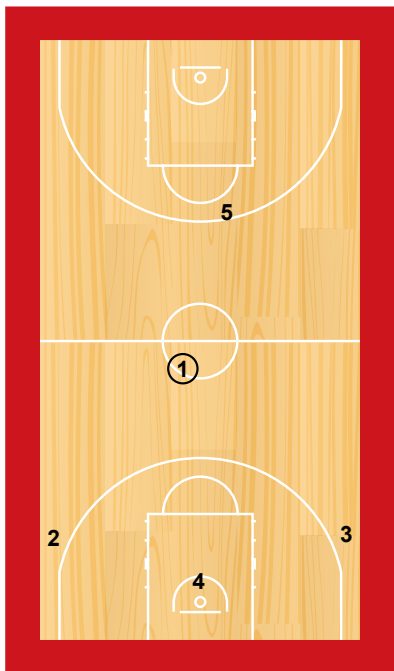
#### Numbered Fast Break

Many coaches will use a “numbered” fast break as a basic structure, which simply allocates different roles by number. When coaching a junior team it is important that each player understands all 5 roles and gets the opportunity to practice and play each role.



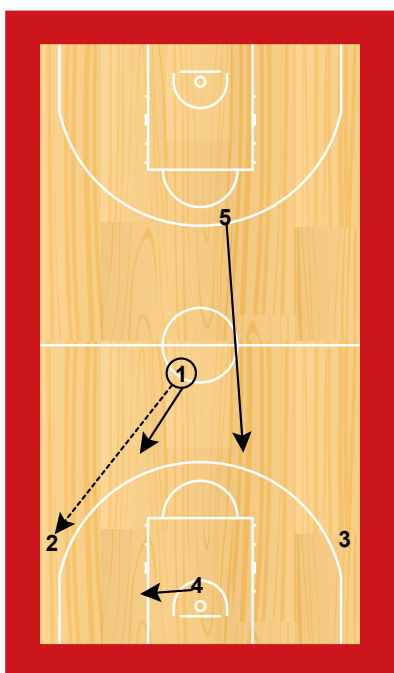
The coach may designate the following roles:

- 1 – receive the ball and bring it up court. If a team mate is ahead of them they should pass the ball, otherwise dribble
- 2 – runs on one side of the court (“lane”). The coach may designate a specific side of the court (e.g. run the right lane). They should be as wide as possible, to make receiving a pass from 1 easier
- 3 – runs the other side of the court
- 4 – sprints to the basket
- 5 – is the outlet pass. Is last to move up the court as a “trailer”

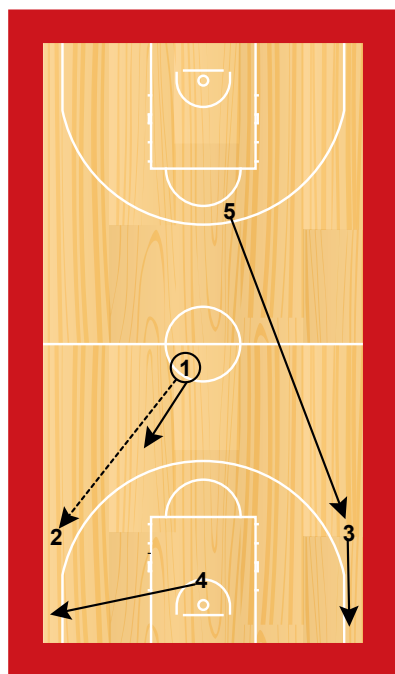


Passing the ball up the court will usually be quicker than dribbling and is more likely to create a 2v1 / 3 or 2 opportunity or to create an opportunity for 4 to receive a pass at the basket for a lay-up.

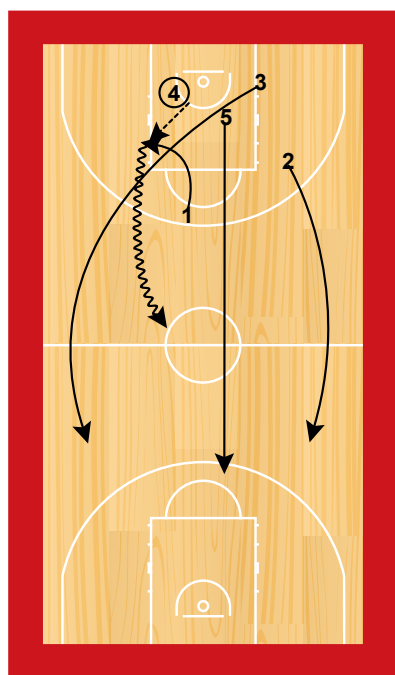
The wing players (2 and 3) should be below the free throw line while 4 runs to the basket, not the side of the key. 2 and 3 may “bounce off the baseline”, meaning that they run to the baseline and then lead back to the wing.



The team can then move into an offensive structure (e.g. 4 Out, 1 In) and then play with whatever rules they wish (e.g. from this alignment the team could play Motion or Flex).



With junior teams, coaches may prefer to play a 5 Out alignment and this can similarly be the end of the “numbered” break.



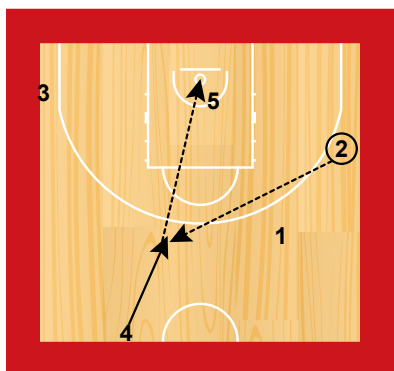
The “numbered” break is easiest to use from an inbound pass, as players can move to their designated role. On a defensive rebound, this may be harder as it cannot be predicted where the player might be on the court.

To allow for this, the coach may regard the “4” and “5” roles as interchangeable and similarly the “2” and “3” roles as interchangeable. For example:

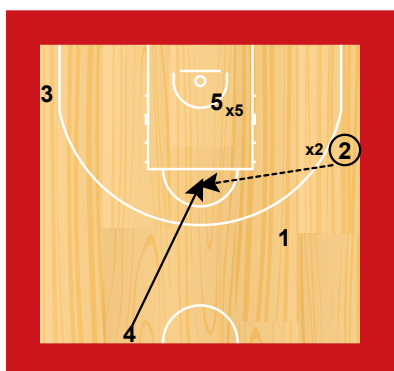
- If 4 rebounds, 5 sprints to the basket.
- 2 and 3 are to sprint on the side to which they are closest. If they are on the same side, then whoever is behind (shown as 3) moves to the other side of the court.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE "TRAILER"

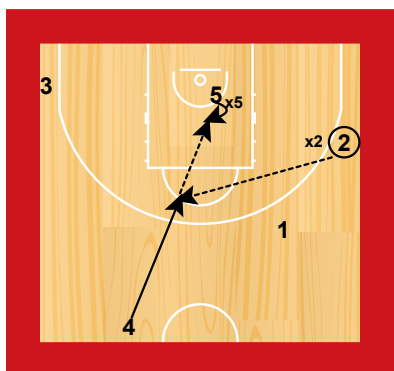
In most situations the player that rebounded the ball (or made the inbounds pass) will be the last offensive player up the court and accordingly is called the "trailer". There are a number of roles that can be given to the "trailer":



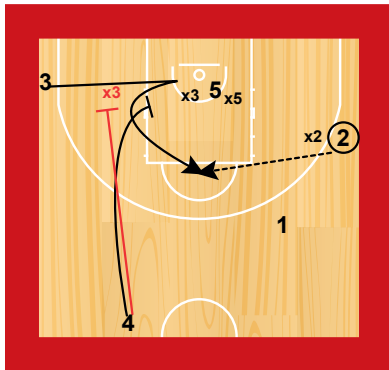
Increasingly, the "trailer" will look to shoot from the perimeter after receiving a pass. This is often free because they do not have a designated defender at this stage. With junior players it is important to "multi-skill" players because as at senior level the "trailer" is often a "big", however will be proficient at shooting a 3 point shot.



The "trailer" may also cut to the free throw line for a shooting opportunity.

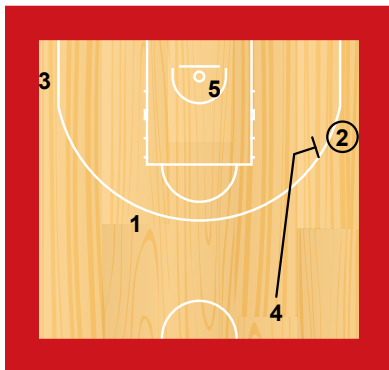


This position can also provide an excellent opportunity to pass from the high post to the low post position, particularly if the defender (x5) was in a position to deny a pass from the wing.

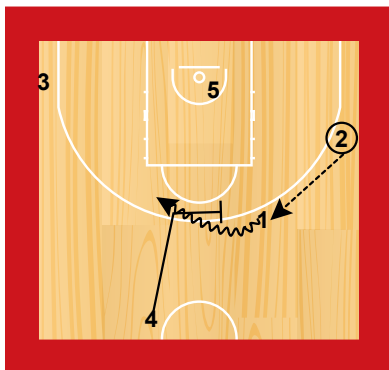


Another role commonly played by the “trailer” is to set a screen, here shown as a screen for the opposite wing player. Importantly, the screen should be set relative to the defender.

For example, if x3 is playing “help line” the screen may be set as a “pin down” screen (shown in black). If x3 is playing closer to their opponent, a down screen may be more appropriate (shown in red.)



The “trailer” can also set a ball screen – shown here on the wing.



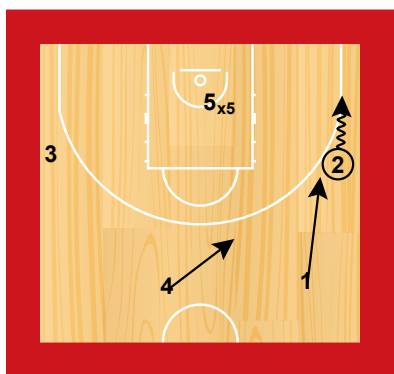
Equally, the screen could be set at the point position.

### STRUCTURED SECONDARY BREAK

The structure of a secondary break is a decision for the coach. Many teams simply move into their normal offensive alignment, particularly if it is a "motion" style offence. Commonly a secondary break will involve:

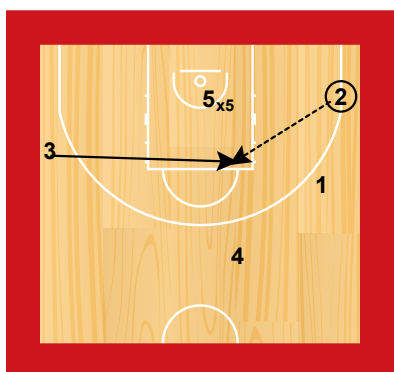
- "Ball reversal" – moving the ball from one side of the floor to the other;
- Screening.

For the purposes of illustration a structure for secondary break is set out below, however coaches are encouraged to determine what will best work for the skill level, experience and attributes of their own team.



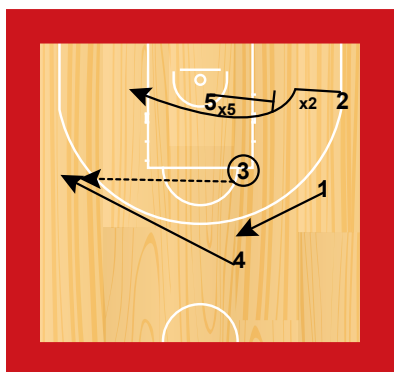
The initial goal of the offence is to get the ball to "below the free throw line" as quickly as possible. 2 dribbles to try to get a better passing angle to 5.

1 and 4 move into position on the "strong" side of the floor, leaving 3 on the "weak side".



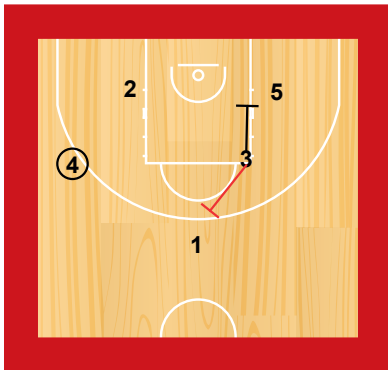
3 cuts to the free throw line and from here their initial options are:

- Pass to 5
- Shoot
- Drive



As 3 receives the ball, 4 moves across to the wing, and 1 replaces him at the point.

If 3 passes to 4, 5 sets a back screen for 2. This is an example of a "Flex" cut.

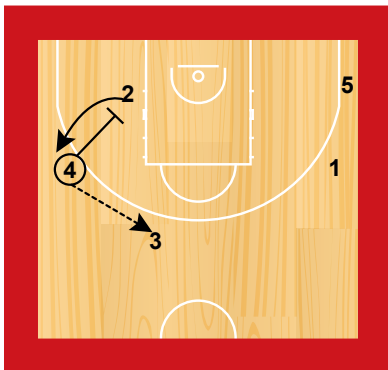


After passing, 3 can either:

- Screen for 5
- Screen for 1

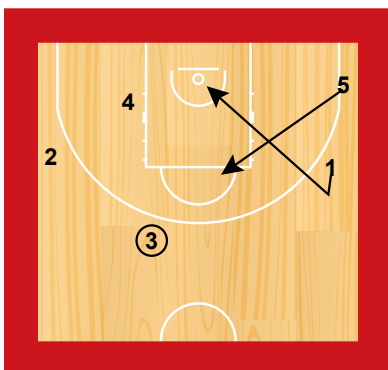
Setting a screen for 5 is part of traditional “flex action”, although the screen is coming from a slightly different position on the floor. If 3 screens for 5, 1 would move to receive a pass from 4.

If 3 screens for 1, 5 would move the perimeter.



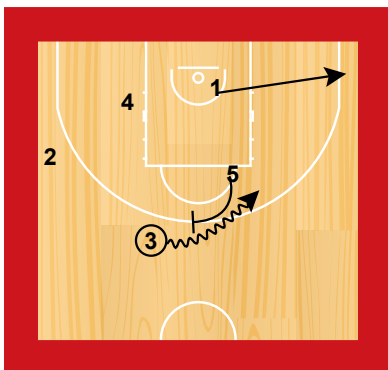
After screening for 1, 3 moves to the perimeter. If 3 had screened for 5, 1 would move to this position.

4 passes to 3 and sets a screen for 2.



In this situation, teams will often reverse the ball again, for a shot from the perimeter. 1 can show strongly to receive a pass and then cut back door.

5 cuts “on the back” of that cut to the elbow.



Coaches must be cognizant of the shot clock and how quickly their players can execute the “secondary break”.

By this time, the shot clock is likely to be under 10 seconds.

5 can set a ball screen for 3 as 1 moves to the perimeter.



## 2.3.2 USING THE 3 POINT SHOT IN TRANSITION

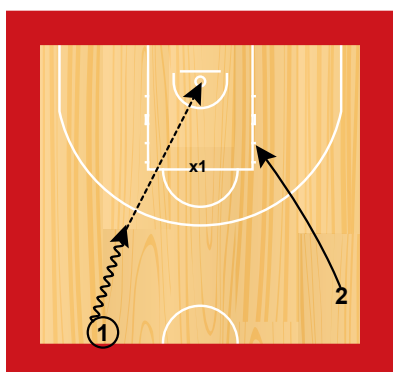
### USING THE 3PT SHOT IN TRANSITION

Increasingly teams include the 3 point shot as a specific aspect of their offensive play, including taking 3 point shots in transition. This tends to increase the tempo of the game and often requires each player in a team to be able to shoot from this range.

Whilst it is not a tactic necessarily suited to junior teams (that do not shoot as effectively from range), with older athletes it can help the team to

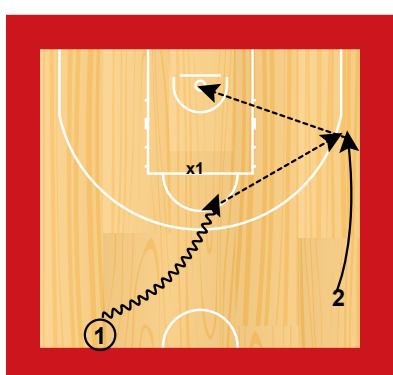
score quickly. Coaches that encourage this style of play must ensure that the team understands how to determine situations when the shot should be taken in transition.

For example, if an opponent has scored on a number of consecutive possessions the coach may wish to slow the tempo of the game and accordingly not shoot "quick 3s". Whereas the coach may deliberately want to increase tempo if they are down late in the game.

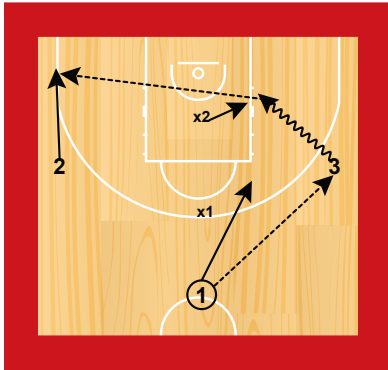


Sometimes the guard will take a 3 point shot in transition when the defender does not come to attack the dribbler.

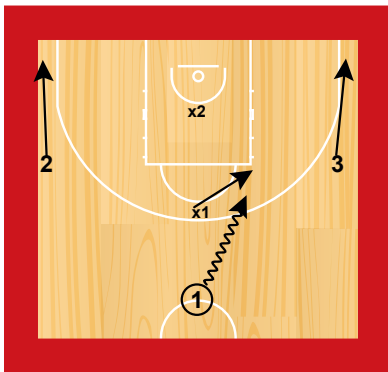
This shot can be most effective if a second player is running into a rebounding position.



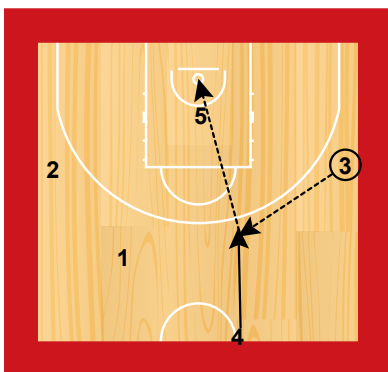
In a 2v1 situation, the dribbler may attack the basket and then pass to a team mate who "spots up" for a 3 point shot, rather than attacking the basket for a possible lay-up.



In 3v2, the opposite wing (2) may sink to the corner rather than moving towards the basket. As x2 rotates to stop penetration by 3, 3 can pass to the corner for a shot. 1 still moves to the ball side elbow to force x1 to make a decision as to whether to defend 1 or sag into the key.



If 1 keeps their dribble (rather than passing ahead), 2 and 3 may both sink to the corner to receive a pass from x1. If x2 hedges toward one corner, 1 would pass to the opposite corner. Additionally, if x2 closes out to the corner player (when they receive the pass), the corner player can attack the basket and pass to the opposite corner if they cannot get a lay up.



A quick 3 point shot can also be taken by the "trailer" as the ball is reversed at the start of a secondary break.

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## FOLLOW-UP

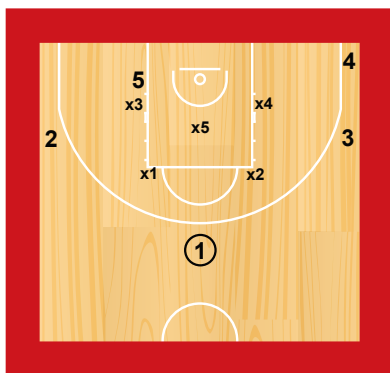
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1. What are your rules regarding offensive transition? Have a coaching colleague watch your team play a game and discuss with them (don't tell them the rules beforehand):
  - a. What did they guess your rules were regarding transition;
  - b. Did your team or the opponent dictate the tempo of the game?
2. Which players on your team (if any) are you comfortable with taking a 3 point shot whilst in offensive transition? Ask your players the same question – do they identify the same players?

## 2.4 OFFENCE AGAINST ZONE DEFENCE

### 2.4.1 MOTION PRINCIPLES AGAINST ZONE

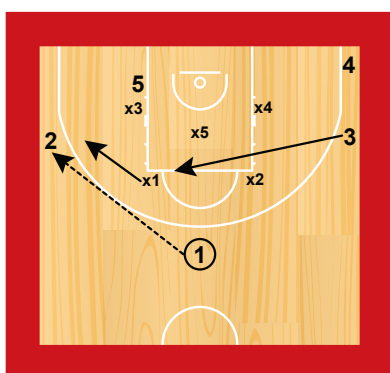
*Junior players should not be introduced to zone defence until the age of 14. Accordingly, there should be no need to introduce any offensive principles to use against a zone until the players are more experienced.*



#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

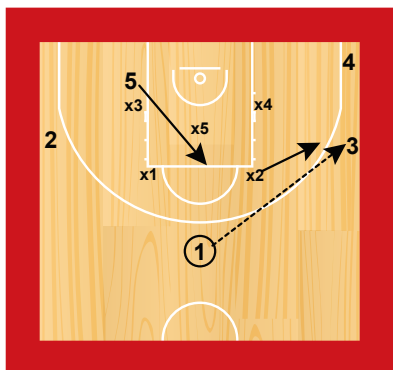
There are a number of key principles when playing against a zone defence:

1. "Gap the Zone". Simply, stand in between two defenders rather than directly opposite one. For example, 3 is between x2 and x4.
2. "Posts Behind the Zone". For example 5 is in the low post, and 4 is in the "long corner"
3. "Flashing from behind the Zone"
4. Use dribble and Post Play against the zone
5. Screening the Zone.

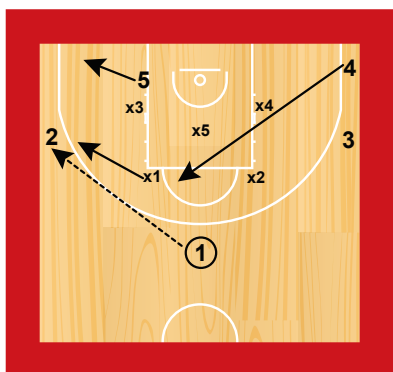


#### FLASH CUT FROM BEHIND THE ZONE

- "Behind the Zone" is simply further away from the ball than the defender. For example, 5 is "behind" x3.
- Often defenders in a zone, will turn to focus on the player with the ball, and this is a cue for a player to "flash" or cut towards the ball – the key to remember is that if you can see the back of a defender's head, they cannot see you!
- Here 3 cuts from behind the ball to a gap at the free throw line.

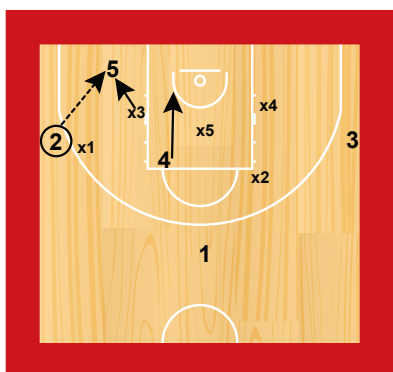


Similarly, 5 cuts to the free throw line.



### USING THE SHORT CORNER

- Having a post player step to the short corner can help to “stretch” the zone and create gaps inside.
- 4 flashes from behind the zone as 5 steps to the short corner. A rule for the post players is “one gets the ball, one goes to the basket”.



- This “rule” is shown here, as 5 receives the ball in the short corner (drawing x3 towards them), which creates a space for Player 4 to cut to the basket.

## 2.4.2 USING DRIBBLE AGAINST THE ZONE

### USING THE DRIBBLE AGAINST THE ZONE

There are three concepts for dribbling against a zone that all players should understand:

- “Gap Dribble”
- “Freeze Dribble”
- “Entry Dribble”

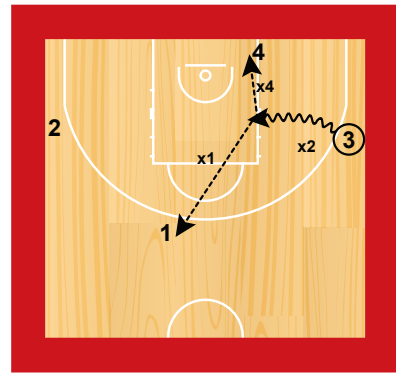
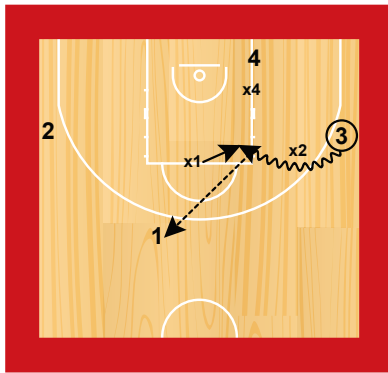
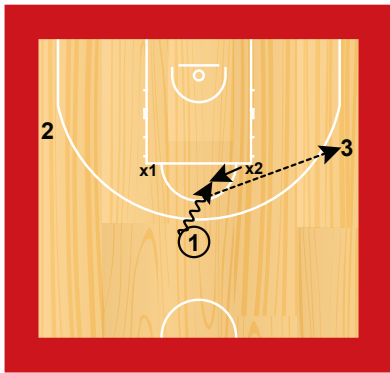
### USING THE “GAP DRIBBLE”

A “Gap Dribble” is simply dribbling between two defenders in the zone.

By dribbling into the gap between x2 and x1, 1 may cause doubt as to which defender will guard them. If x2 steps toward 1, they may pass to 3.

3 attacks the gap between x2 and x1. If x1 moves to guard the dribble, 3 can pass to 1.

3 attacks the gap between x4 and x1. Whichever defender moves to guard the dribble, leaves an offensive player open - either 4 (if x4 moved) or 1 (if x1 moved).

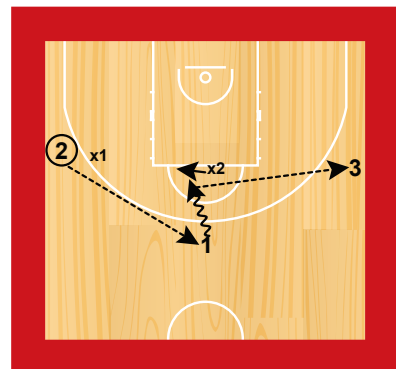
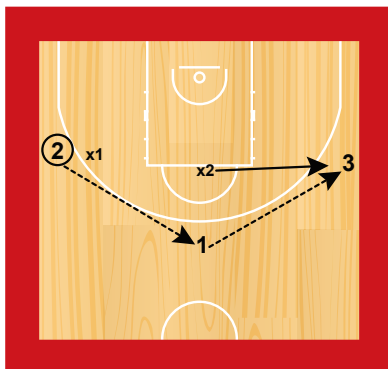


### USING A “FREEZE DRIBBLE”

A “Freeze Dribble” is where the offensive player dribbles at a particular defender in an effort to commit that defender to guarding the ball, which will stop them from moving to guard another player.

If the offence quickly “reverse” the ball (pass from one side of the court to another) it may be defended by x1 and x2, “sliding” across the court

However, if 1 dribbles at x2 to “freeze” them, it means that they cannot slide across to 3. This can leave 3 open, or require a baseline defender to step out to guard 3.



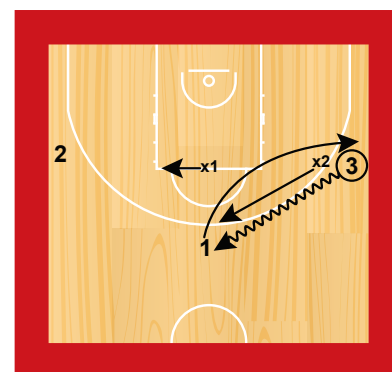
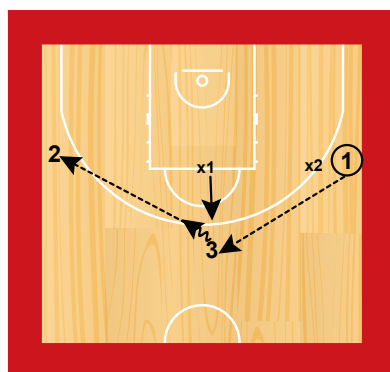
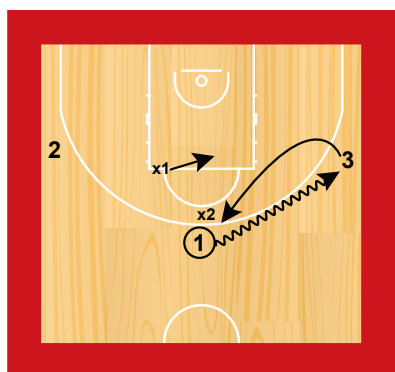
### USING "DRIBBLE ENTRIES"

The player with the ball will almost always have a defender. By using a dribble entry (dribbling to the wing) can "drag" that defender which will distort the zone.

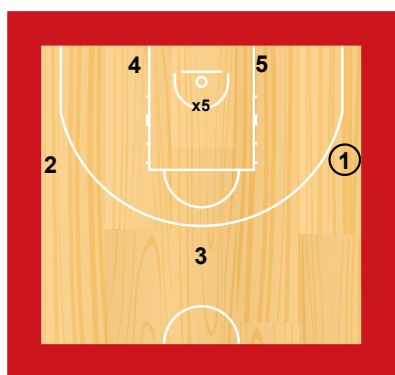
1 dribbles to the wing, guarded by x2. x1 steps towards the ball. 3, shallow cuts to move to the point position.

The ball is reversed to 3, and x1 must guard 3. 3 can ensure this by using a "freeze dribble", before passing to 2 who is now open.

3 dribbles to the point being guarded by x2. 1 replaces 3 at the wing. x1 is likely to step across the key. If the ball was now passed to 1 (at the wing) they would be unguarded.

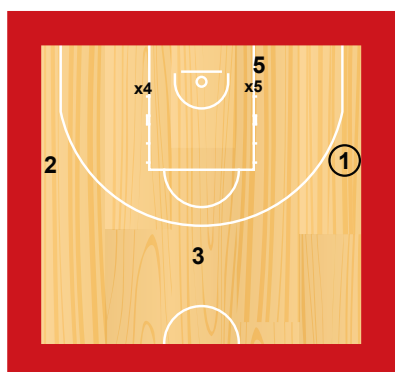


### ACTIVITIES TO TEACH OFFENCE AGAINST A ZONE (WITHOUT SCREENS)



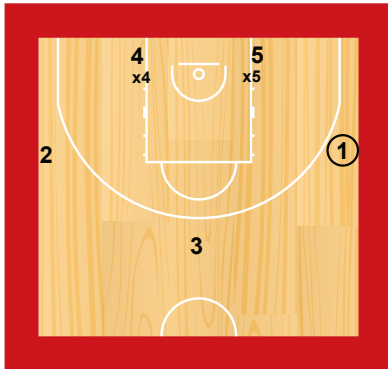
#### 2X1 (+ PERIMETER PASSERS)

- 4 and 5 are playing against the baseline defence of x5 (as in a 1-3-1 zone)
- 1, 2 and 3 are passers and try to get the ball to either post player
- x5 reacts to the ball movement
- Either 4 or 5 can score if they receive in the low post



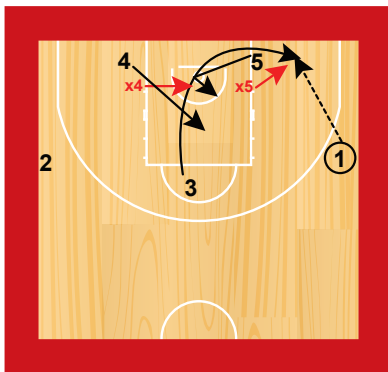
#### 1X2 (+PERIMETER PASSERS)

- 5 is playing against an "odd front" zone (3-2 or 1-2-2) and looks to "seal" a defender in the keyway
- 1, 2 and 3 are passers
- Both defenders react to ball movement according to their zone defensive responsibilities



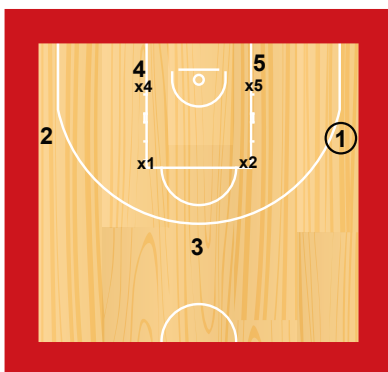
### 2X2 (+ PERIMETER PASSERS)

- 4 and 5 are playing against the baseline defence of an “odd front zone” (3-2 or 1-2-2) and can score from the low post, short corner or middle of the keyway.
- 1, 2 and 3 are passers



### 2X2 (+ PERIMETER PASSERS AND SHOOTER)

- 3 starts at foul line and then cuts to corner.
- Either 3, 4 or 5 can shoot. 1 and 2 are passers
- Here, 5 steps in to seal the defender (x4), as 3 catches pass in the short corner.
- 4 cuts high



### 2X4 (+ PERIMETER PASSERS)

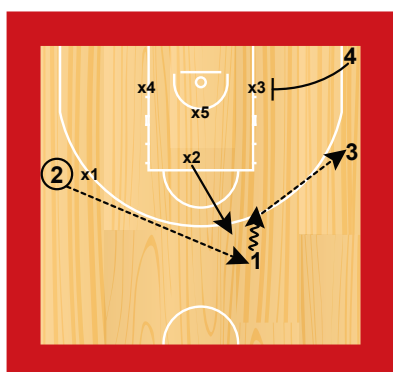
- 1, 2 and 3 are passers and can also use dribbling options
- 4 and 5 may shoot from low post, short corner or mid-keyway.



## 2.4.3 SCREENING THE ZONE

### SCREENING THE ZONE

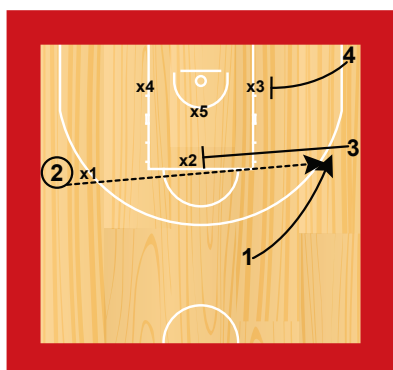
Screening the zone can be particularly effective at getting players on the perimeter open to receive a pass. However, a common mistake that teams make is to only shoot from the perimeter against a zone. After screening, the offensive player should look to receive a pass and the team should look to penetrate the ball into the zone.



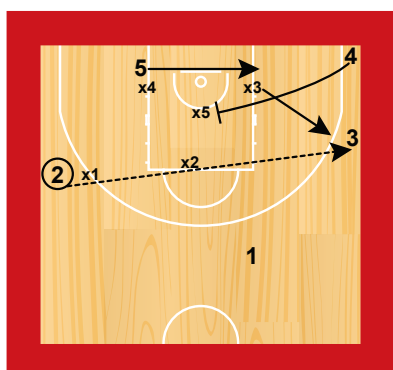
### SCREENING BEHIND THE ZONE

Screening behind the zone is most commonly setting a screen on the opposite side of the floor to where the court is.

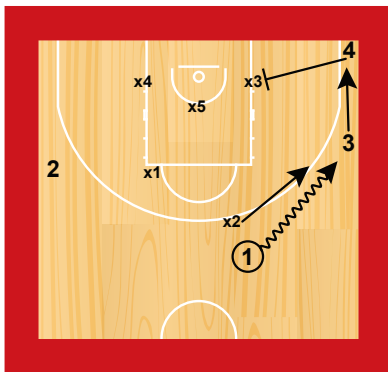
4 sets a screen to free 3. If x3 fights to get to 3, 4 should step into the keyway and seal x5.



Here both 4 and 3 screen the "back" or "outside" of the zone. 1 relocates to the wing to receive the pass.

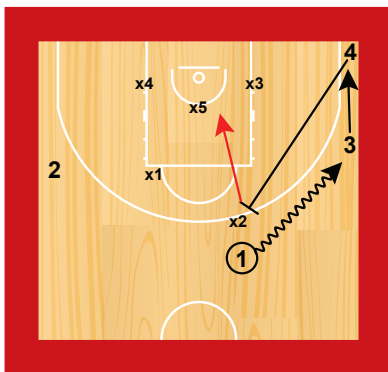


Instead of screening x3 (in order to free 3), 4 steps into the keyway to screen x5. 5 flashes to the short corner forcing x3 to decide whether to guard 3 or stay and guard 5.



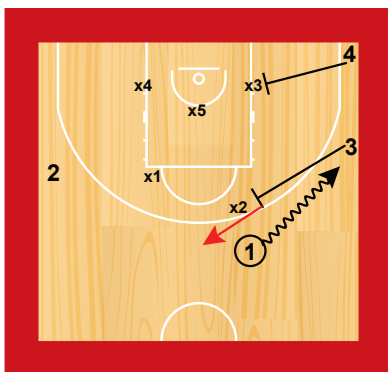
### SCREENING THE BALLSIDE.

- 1 dribbles to the wing, being guarded by x2
- 3 sinks to the corner, and 4 steps in to screen x3
- 3 will be open to receive the pass. If x3 fights over the screen, 4 steps into keyway to seal x5.



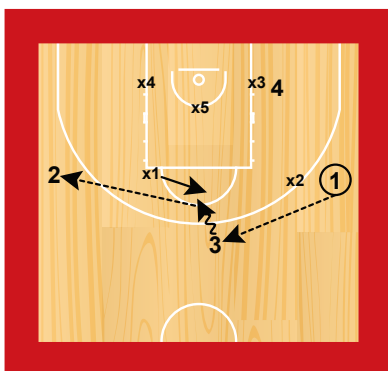
In similar movement to above:

- 4 screens x2, which may free 1
- 3 sinks to the corner. 1 can either look for their shot, or pass to 3.
- If x3 comes to defend 1, then 3 will be open as will 4 as the roll to the basket.

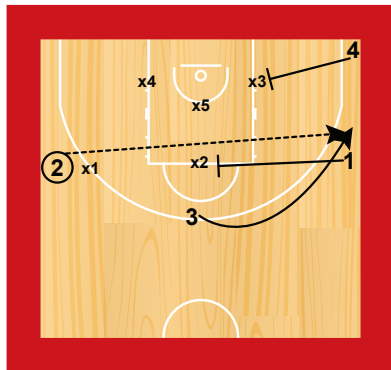


### COMBINATION OF SCREENS AND DRIBBLE

- 1 dribbles to the wing and both 3 and 4 screen the outside of the zone – 1 may be open for a shot
- 3 steps to the top of the key to receive pass the from 1



- 3 "freezes" x1 and then reverses the ball to 2



### COMBINATION OF SCREENS AND DRIBBLE CONT...

- 4 and 1 screen the back of the zone, as 3 relocates to the wing to receive pass. This pass (a "skip" pass) is difficult for many players to throw accurately. These screens could be just as effective if 2 dribbled towards the key.

### ATTACKING ZONES

Teams playing against a zone should also consider:

- "Ball Reversal" – can move the zone "out of shape". It is often most effective, where
  - Screens are used on the back of the zone;
  - Dribble penetration is used to "freeze" defenders;
- Having a player opposite the ball on the 3 point line will often present a scoring option
- Before passing the ball back to a player on the same side as the ball, the ball should cross the split line (either by dribble or pass). This will help to move the zone "out of shape"
- In order to get a shot for a particular player, take the ball away from them, and then bring it back to them.
- Dribbling the ball can drag defenders, passing the ball back will often find a free player
- Use pass fakes to move zone defenders (who may move in anticipation) and then attack the gap created.

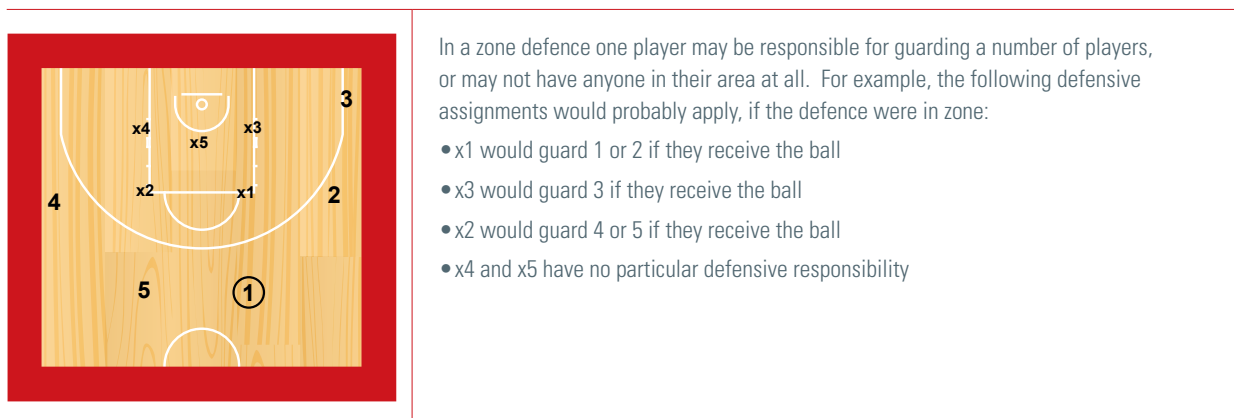
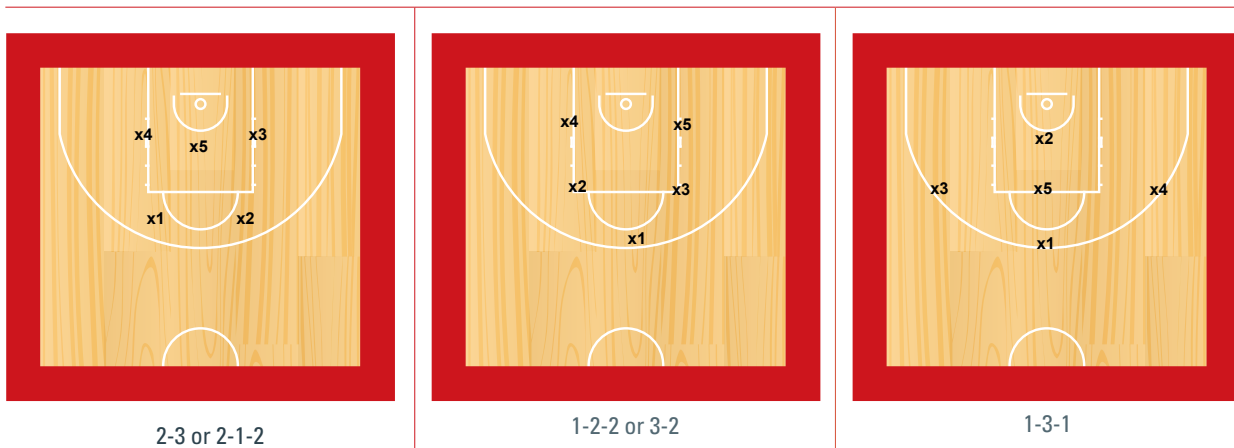
## 2.4.4 PROVING AN OPPONENT IS PLAYING ZONE DEFENCE

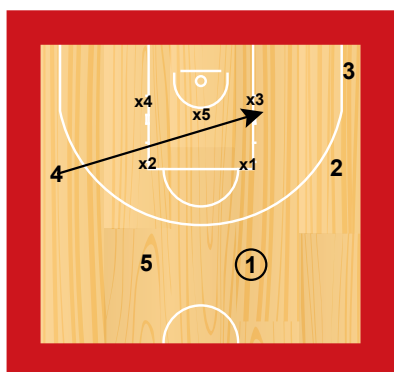
FIBA recommends that zone defence is not allowed until players reach the age of 15. Zone defence certainly is an important aspect of basketball and young players need to be instructed in how to play zone defence.

However, to ensure the development of good offensive and defensive fundamentals, young players should first be instructed in the principles of “man to man” defence.

Zone defence is a form of team defence where each player becomes responsible for defending both an area of the court, and any opponent who may be in that area. When five players work together in a zone it can become a very formidable defence.

Zone defences are primarily designed to protect the area near the basket. This essentially means that the offensive team will be forced to take lower percentage, perimeter shots”. There are a number of common zone defence alignments, such as:





It would be particularly obvious that x4 is not guarding a specific player if 4 were to cut and x4 stayed in the same position.

We will come back to the importance of offensive movement in determining if a zone defence is being played.

Where a “no zone defence” rule is applied, the onus is with the offensive team to pass the ball and move so that it is demonstrated that the defence are playing zone. The benefit of any doubt is given to the defence as the rule is not to penalize:

- Players that make a mistake in “man to man” (for example lose sight of their opponent incorrectly “rotate”);
- Players that are tired or lazy in playing “man to man”.

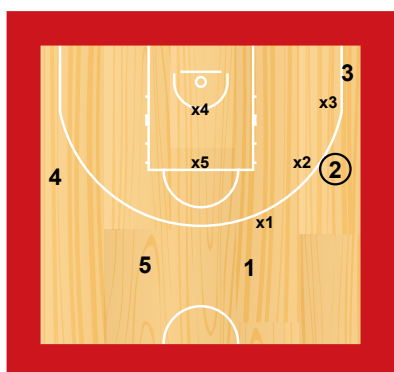
The rule is also only concerned with playing man to man principles in the quarter court (effectively the three point line). Teams can play any defence they want on the full court. Just because a player or a number of players run back to their defensive key does not make it a zone defence.

Teams may trap in the quarter court and may stay in a “zone” alignment for one pass, after which all players must resume man to man positions. For example, on the trap, 2 players are on the ball and the remaining 3 players may rotate to protect the basket. As 3 players are now guarding 4, they need to “zone” for a short time.

### THE XS AND OS OF PROVING A ZONE DEFENCE

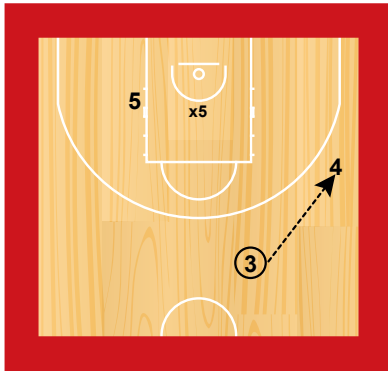
#### Moving a Split Line Defender

A basic principle of man to man defence is that the closer the player you are guarding is to the ball, the closer to them you need to be. Conversely, the further away they are from the ball, the further away you can be.



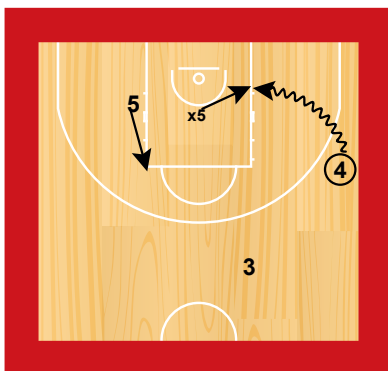
When players are on the weakside (opposite to the ball) a man to man defender will adopt a split line (or “help” line) position – in the middle of the court. In the diagram below, both x4 and x5 are playing on the split line.

Below are some examples of situations, where it might look like the defence is playing zone, but the offence has not yet done enough to "prove" zone.

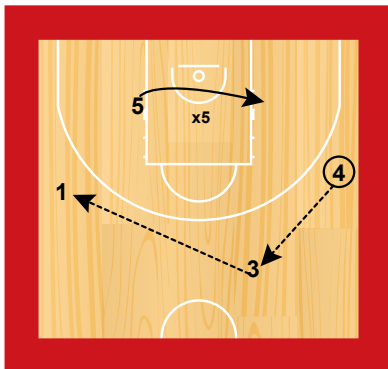


When 3 has the ball, x5 can adopt a "split line" position in the middle of the key. If the ball is passed to 4, x5 can maintain this split line position.

If the ball stays on one side and 5 stays still, X5 is adhering to man-to-man principles even though they are just staying in the middle of the key.



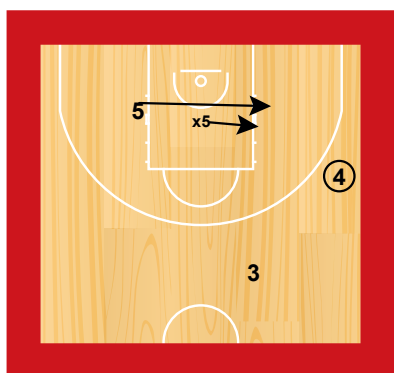
Having 5 cut from low to high can be a useful way to prove a zone. However, the timing of the cut is important. If 4 has already started to drive to the basket, x5 can rotate to help and not react to the cut by 5.



Similarly, moving the ball from one side of the court to another can be effective to establish that it is a zone defence.

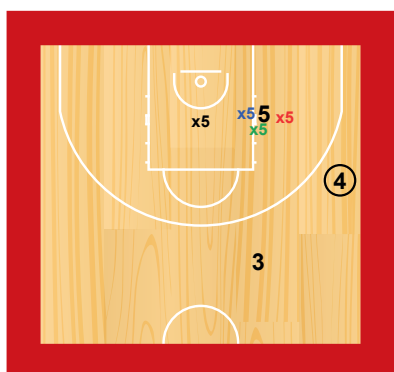
However, if 5 also cuts from one side to another, x5 can maintain a "split line" position in the middle of the key although x5 should make some movement in reaction to the cut (e.g. bump the cutter).

To prove a defender is playing zone defence, specific movement from the offence is required. Here are some ways to do it:



### CUT TO THE BALLSIDE

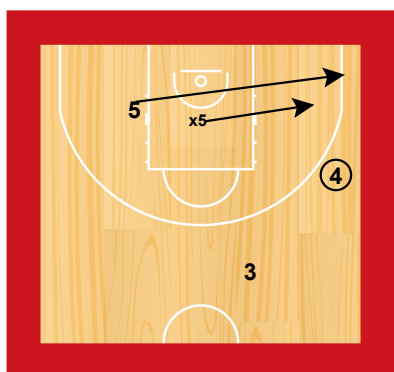
When 5 cuts to the ballside, x5 should react and cannot stay on the split line.



Importantly, x5 may adopt various defensive positions, depending upon the team:

- Behind the post (blue);
- Fronting the post (red);
- "Side Front" (green).

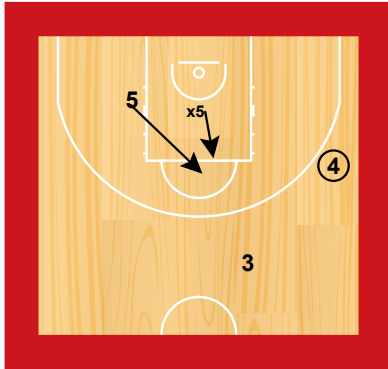
If x5 stayed on the split (black line) it would appear that the defence is playing zone.



### MOVE TO THE PERIMETER – BALLSIDE

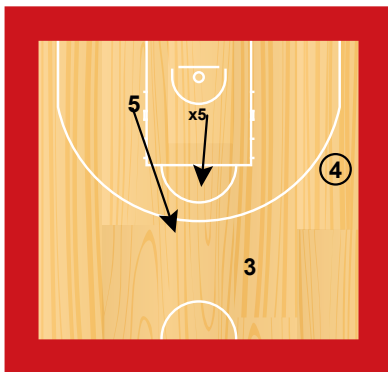
If the offensive player cuts to a post position, it may still be difficult to determine what defence x5 is playing as many teams guard a post player from behind.

By moving to the perimeter, x5 must leave the key – they do not have to be in a denial position, but they must be outside the key.

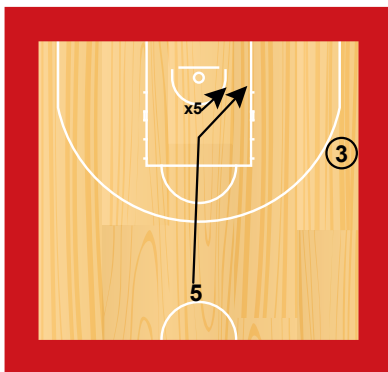


### CUTTING FROM LOW TO HIGH

Having a player cut above the foul line forces the defender to step away from in front of the basket. Although the defender may stay on the split line.



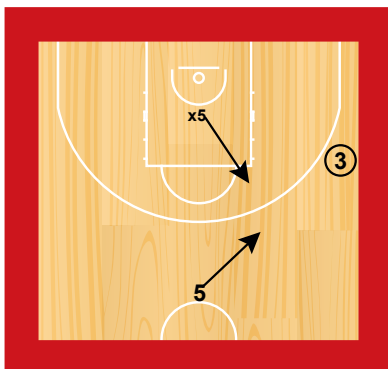
If the offensive player cuts as high as the top of the circle, the defender must clearly react to the cut and would be expected to be at least at the free throw line.



### TRAIL HIGH IN TRANSITION

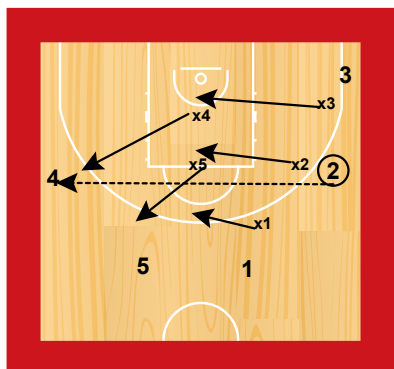
Quite commonly, a team's centre (x5) will run to the basket once their team has lost possession. Coaches will often say that this player is playing zone defence, but that is not necessarily the case.

Particularly, if the player they are guarding also runs straight down the court into a post position, then x5 can stay in the key!



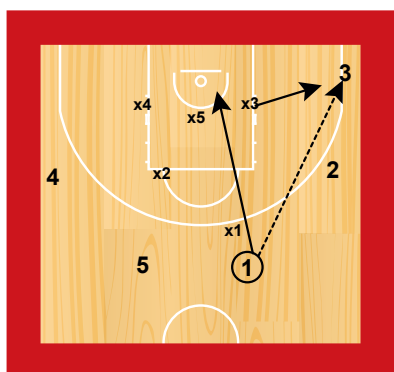
However, if 5 "trails" the break and stays high then once the ball reaches the wing, x5 must move away from the basket.





### REVERSE THE BALL

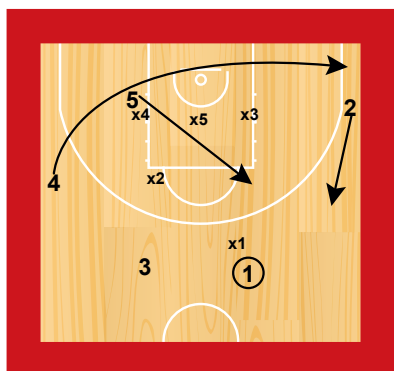
Reversing the ball from one side of the court to the other requires all defenders to move. This movement can help to identify who each defender is guarding (and whether or not they are playing a zone defence).



### PASS AND CUT

If the person passing the ball then makes a strong cut to the basket, it will quickly be obvious if their defender does not follow them.

Here if x1 stays at the top of the key after 1 "passes and cuts", it would indicate x1 may be playing a zone.



### OVERLOAD THE BALL SIDE

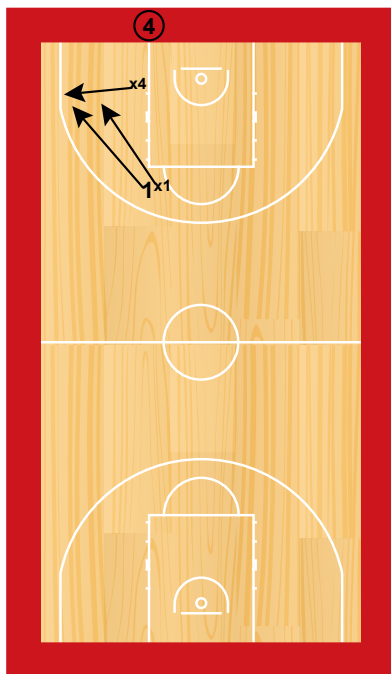
Having players cut to the ballside, requires the defence to adjust.

For example, if x4 was to stay where they are, it would not be apparent who they were defending!

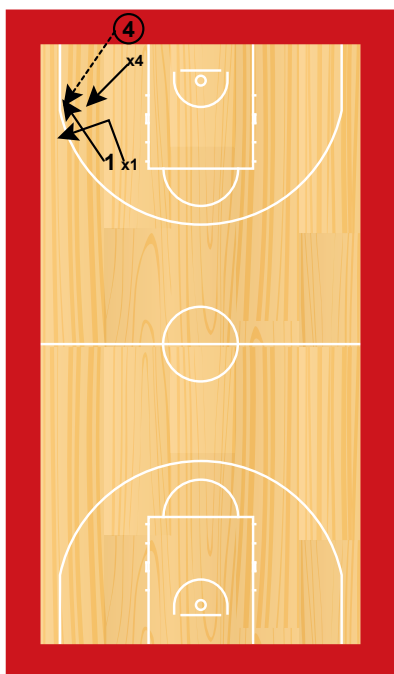
# 2.5 OFFENCE AGAINST FULL COURT PRESSURE

## 2.5.1 POINT GUARD INBOUND

In full court defensive pressure teams will often employ different tactics to place pressure on the point guard:



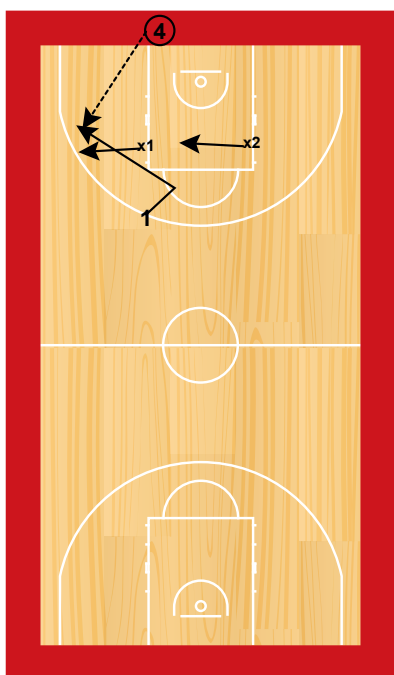
Deny the point guard the ball with x4 stepping away from the inbound passer to help to deny the point guard.



Double team the point guard once they have the ball, with x4 moving immediately to double team.

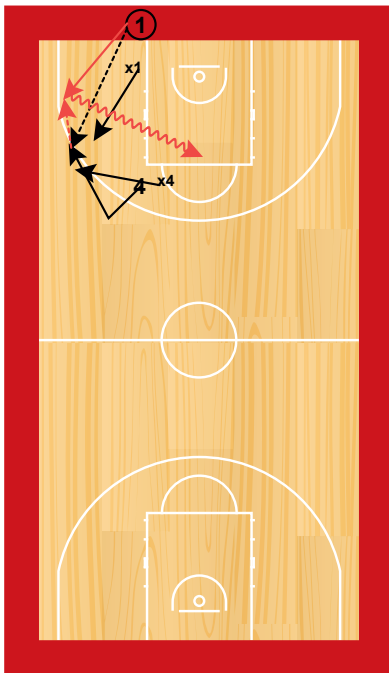
x1 initially stops the point guard from cutting into the middle of the court, and then allow the pass to be made and move in front of them. This both stops the point guard from immediately dribbling towards their basket and also provides an angle for x4 to be able to double team.

This is most effective, the closer it is to the sideline and baseline and each line acts as an additional "defender" – stopping the point guard from moving.



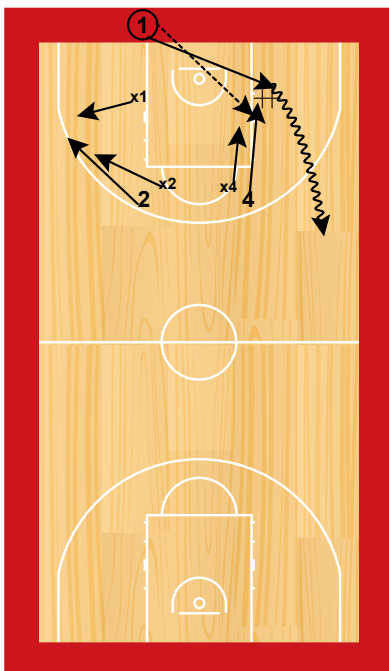
In a full court zone defence, x2 moves to the split line position so that they can pressure the point guard. They may "hedge and recover", "run and jump" (switch) or double team the point guard (particularly if they use a reverse spin dribble).

A tactic that can be used to relieve some of the pressure on the point guard is to have the point guard make the inbound pass. This may cause initial confusion amongst the defenders if their defence was specifically attempting to pressure the point guard.

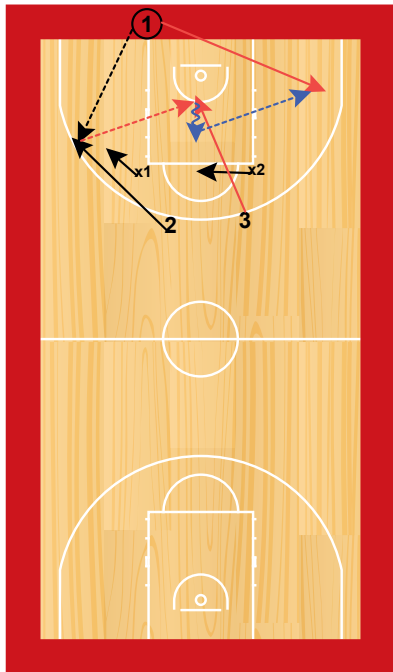


If x1 moves to immediately double team 4 as they catch the ball, the point guard (1) can step into the court to receive a pass back and then immediately dribble away from the area of the double team.

This works best if 4 receives the pass 2-3 metres away from the baseline and accordingly, 4 initially cuts away from the passer.



If x1 denies one player from receiving the ball, 1 can pass to the player that is not being denied and then run to receive a hand-off. x1 is not in position to defend the hand off, as they were denying the pass on the other side of the court.



If the defenders are playing a full court zone defence, 1 passes to whichever player gets open (here 2). 2 passes to 3, who dribbles at x2 to commit them to defending. 3 then passes to 1 who steps onto the court on the side opposite where the ball was initially passed.

## 2.6 CHANGING TEMPO

### 2.6.1 SUBSTITUTIONS AND TIME OUTS

“Game coaching” requires coaches to be able to adjust to what is happening in the game, regardless of the “game plan” that was prepared prior to the game.

Coaches may need to react to:

- The opponents adopting different tactics than anticipated (including match ups as well as offensive and defensive patterns of play);
- Players getting in foul trouble (either an opponent or their own team);
- The opponent having an “unanswered scoring run” (i.e. the opponent scoring a number of possessions in a row without the team scoring);
- The opponent successfully countering the tactics that the coach prepared.

A time-out (a 1 minute opportunity to speak with the team) is perhaps the best opportunity to change tactics, although the coach has a limited number to use during the game. To be most effective, the coach should limit what they say at a time out to two or three key things.

Because a time out is an extended break in play it can be used to break the “momentum” of a game, even if the coach does not change any specific tactics. Indeed, the time out may be used to reaffirm the tactics to be used. Many coaches prefer to retain the time outs until later in the half, particularly in the second half so that they can be used to give specific instruction towards the end of the game. If a team that has to inbound the ball (e.g. after an opponent scores) calls a time out in the last two minutes, the ball is actually thrown in from half way.

However, more commonly coaches make most changes during play not at a time out:

- Making a substitution;
- Changing team tactics (e.g. changing from zone defence to man to man defence);
- Changing individual tactics (e.g. changing from fronting a low post player to double teaming the post player).

Communicating the change can be done through a substitution, by speaking to a player during a break (e.g. speaking to the point guard while foul shots are being taken) or using pre-determined signals (e.g. hand signals such as a fist or naming different tactics by number of colour).

The tempo at which the game is played is often a good indicator of which team is controlling the game. Most teams have a preference for the tempo at which the game is played, although champion teams may have a preference but are usually able to play successfully at another tempo.

Influencing the tempo of a game is often the purpose behind a substitution, a change in tactics or a time-out and some coaches will include specific rules in their game plan aimed at influencing the tempo of a game, for example:

- Not taking a shot from outside the key unless the ball has first been inside the key (either by a pass or dribble) – this tends to slow the tempo of the game;
- Using a certain offensive structure or play if the opponent has scored three unanswered baskets – this is often used to slow the tempo;
- Designating who is to inbound the ball after a score – this can quicken the tempo as that player will move straight to the ball;

- Team rule as to which players can shoot quickly in transition (e.g. a 3 point shot) – this may quicken the tempo when they are on the floor and slow the tempo when other players are on the floor;
- Using full court pressure after taking free throws – this can quicken the tempo.

Substitutions can also affect the tempo if the game style is changed according to which players are on the floor. For example, a team may prefer a half court offence (slower tempo) when their starting centre is on the floor but play a quicker up-tempo game when a substitution is made (if the replacement centre is quicker).

Similarly, one point guard on the team may be stronger at pushing the ball and playing up-tempo, where another is better suited to a half court game.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. What are the key principles for offence against a zone?
2. Discuss with a coaching colleague what you would teach when initially introducing a team to offence against a zone? What activities would you use to teach it?



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**LEVEL 2**

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**TEAM**

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**CHAPTER 3**

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**MANAGEMENT**

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## CHAPTER 3

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# MANAGEMENT

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# 3.1 TEAM RULES AND DISCIPLINE

## 3.1.1 ENHANCING TEAM CULTURE THROUGH TEAM RULES

The “culture” of a team is a major factor in whatever level of success the team may enjoy. “Culture” can be a strong foundation that ultimately creates peak performance on a consistent basis, thus placing the team in the best position to perform. The success of winning a championship, in this context, is almost a byproduct of that “championship culture”.

The foundations of a strong culture are:

- Commitment – to a higher cause or purpose – beyond simply the performance of the individual;
- Responsibility – each team member (not just the players) accepting, and performing, a role within a team;
- Accountability – being accountable to perform their own role and holding others accountable to perform their role. Accepting and giving constructive critique is important within any team;
- Integrity – there being no gap between what you say and what you do;
- Respect – demonstrating respect for self, team mates, opponents and the game itself;
- Trust – between team mates that each will act to achieve the broader goal;
- Leadership – everyone must be involved;
- Humility – acknowledging contributions of others, gratitude and gratitude;
- Courage & Sacrifice – doing what is required not what is preferred’
- Compassion – empathy and support, understanding what impact their actions have on others.

Team rules can enhance the development of habits, which may become part of a strong culture. However, where the coach dictates all team rules they often become responsible for the enforcement of those rules, with players taking little responsibility for them.

What is preferable is for the players to be involved in setting of team rules and it is the discussion that often sets the cultures moreso than the “rules” that may result. When developed by the coach and the players, the “rules” become reminders of the expectations for behaviour. The culture is the “enforcement” of those behaviours by the players holding each other accountable to acting in accordance with the culture.

The most effective enforcement of team rules is not the coach standing the team on the baseline and making them run sprints. What is effective is players holding each other accountable. With junior players in particular, the coach needs to monitor how that is done to make sure that players do not ridicule or bully team mates particularly if they are less skilled.

## 3.2 GAME PREPARATION

### 3.2.1 TEAM GOALS FOR JUNIOR PLAYERS (UNDER 20)

#### PLAYERS AGED 15-18 YEARS OLD

At this age group, the results of the competition are important without losing sight of the educational perspective that should still be present. Therefore, there are two types of games:

- games in which the main objective is to win. This should generally not be more than 25% for 15/16-year-olds nor more than 40% for 17/18-year-olds;
- games in which the main objective is to consolidate the formative work carried out during training.

Games in which the main objective is to win, if used well, are also part of the formative work of young players, because they must learn to face the stress of such games.

And they also need to learn to deal with adversity of losing and the importance of sportsmanship when winning.

However, the existence of these games does not mean that the main priority of the training plan should be to prepare the team to win them (contrary to what happens with professional teams).

When preparing for practice it is important that the coach take into consideration the opposing team and:

- If these are games in which the main objective is winning, the coach must prepare the players so that they have a better chance of achieving that goal and so that they can get used to such a situation.
- And for all other games, the coach must prepare the players so that they learn from them.

For example: if the coach knows that an upcoming opponent uses full-court man-to-man defense, even if their main objective is not to win this game, it provides an excellent opportunity to work on contents related with offense against this type of defense.

Therefore, when planning the training sessions, they should keep this in mind.

The reality is with many junior teams, the coach will have limited information about the opponent, so often the focus will be on the strengths of their own team and how they want the game played (tempo etc.)

For those weeks in which games to win are to be played, the coach can devote one or two practice sessions to preparing specifically for those games. The rest of the time, the coach should not use practice time for preparing for games.

Whatever the main objective of the game, the coach should establish performance goals for all of them. For those games in which the main objective is winning, performance goals increase the probability of achieving this result. And for other games, performance goals related with the players' individual or collective progress, help to achieve improvement.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. Discuss with a coaching colleague the extent to which they involve players in determining and enforcing team rules? Identify any difference to what you do.
2. How do goals that you set for an U20 Junior Team differ from goals you might use with a young team (e.g. U12)?

## 3.3 COACHING IN A (SHORT) TOURNAMENT

### 3.3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF SHORT TOURNAMENT PLAY

*Many teams, particularly at junior level, will enjoy playing in short tournaments that are typically played over 3 or 4 days.*

Representative teams with players chosen from a range of other teams may also play short tournaments, which is often part of their preparation for a longer tournament, for example national teams may play in tournaments such as the Albert Schweitzer tournament or William Jones Cup in preparation for playing a zone championship. Representative teams may also play in friendlies, where 4 or 6 teams arrange to play against each other.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF "SHORT TOURNAMENT PLAY"

Playing in a "short tournament" is characterized by:

- playing more than one game each day
- losing a game in the early stage often means a team is out of the tournament (e.g. in some tournaments only the top team in each pool progress to finals)
- limited opportunity to "scout" other teams as there may be more than one game played at a time
- limited time between games, possibly as little as 2-3 hours
- game timings may be adjusted to allow for multiple games per day
- fatigue has more effect on player performance than perhaps any other competition format.

#### REST AND NUTRITION ARE KEY!

Because of the short time frame between games and the number of games played in a small number of days, it is vital that coaches allow for the players to get appropriate rest. It may be easiest to do

this by staying at the stadium, rather than driving back and forth to a hotel and players should be encouraged to take shoes and socks off between games. Having a new pair of socks for each game is also important.

Similarly, hydration and nutrition are particularly important in the context of a "short tournament". Teams may need to arrange to take food to the stadium, rather than rely upon what a canteen may have for sale. In addition to drinking water, it may be worthwhile for athletes to have some sports drink during the day, however water should still be the primary source for hydration.

It is worthwhile for the coach (or team manager) to plan for when and how meals will be taken prior to the tournament starting. Often the tournament organisers are able to provide information about local places to eat, accommodation etc.

#### SETTING OBJECTIVES FOR THE TOURNAMENT

The objectives that a coach sets for the tournament will be influenced by the nature of the team. If it is a representative team (e.g. a national team) playing as part of their preparation for another tournament, the coach may:

- focus on playing all players, so that they can see what combinations work well and the level of understanding players have of the style of play the coach wishes to play. This would be particularly so if the team was still at "squad" stage and a final team had not yet been selected.

- use a variety of tactics in order to work through the team's "playbook". This may mean changing tactics at a time in the game where if winning was the sole focus, they would not make the change.

Where it is a club team, the coach should set objectives that are also related to what they have been regularly doing in practice and in other competitions that they are playing.

### ROTATION OF PLAYERS

Again, because they players will be playing a number of games in a short space of time, all players should have an opportunity to play in each of the games ensuring that all players are rested.

Indeed, one of the benefits from having teams play in such tournaments is to give players that may not play as much in league play the opportunity to play a greater role.

Playing only a small number of players will greatly increase fatigue, which also increases the likelihood of injury to the player. It may also impair their performance, particularly in the latter games of the tournament.

### UNDERSTANDING THE TOURNAMENT FORMAT AND RULES

There are many formats that tournament organisers may use and the coach must familiarize themselves with:

- any variations to game rules: e.g. reduced game time, reduced number of time-outs, restrictions on when substitutions/time-outs can be called
- how progression to the finals is determined.

### USING ASSISTANT COACHES

A short tournament may provide an opportunity to give an assistant coach different roles than during normal league play, which can be good for their development. For example, the coach may let the assistant coach take charge of the team whilst the head coach scouts a game that is being played at the same time. Equally, the assistant coach could scout the game.

### SCOUTING OTHER TEAMS

There may be limited opportunity to scout other opponents and, even if coaches have been able to do so, there are limited opportunities to provide information to their own team.

Typically in a short tournament, the coach's focus should be on what their team will do, making tactical adjustments during the game (as they

would in any game) but without attempting to specifically prepare for an opponent.

If the coach has not been able to watch an upcoming opponent they may at least be able to get a copy of the scoresheet and statistics if they are available. Particularly if they are able to see scoresheets from a number of games, it will provide information on:

- the opponent's likely starters (starters are marked with an "X" next to their name)
- distribution of scoring
- identifying players that may be foul prone

Again, if the coach has not been able to watch an upcoming opponent, the warm-up provides an opportunity to scout the team, particularly enabling the coach to identify:

- the preferred hand of each player
- likely position each player plays (particularly important to allocating defensive roles at the start of the game)
- whether or not the player is a good perimeter shooter.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. What factors are different between coaching a team in a short tournament and coaching a team in league play? What do you do differently in preparing for games, having regard to those differences?
2. Discuss with a coaching colleague how you would act in the following scenario:
  - a. Your team loses its first game in a short tournament, by a large margin;
  - b. Your team's next game is 4 hours away;
  - c. Your team did not achieve any of its pre-game objectives in the first game;
  - d. One of your starting players sustained a minor injury and the first aid officers at the tournament suggest that they do not play until the following day.



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**LEVEL 2**

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**TEAM**

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**CHAPTER 4**

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**GAME REVIEW  
AND ANALYSIS**

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## CHAPTER 4

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# GAME REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

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# 4.1 PRACTICE PREPARATION

## 4.1.1 INCORPORATING GAME PERFORMANCE INTO NEXT PRACTICE

*After each game the coach should take time to reflect upon the team's performance, comparing it to the goals that were set before the game. The coach's reflection should also consider more generally any identified areas of improvement.*

The coach should resist any immediate temptation to address aspects of the game in which the team struggled. For example, the opponent may have successfully used ball screens in the game and so the coach believes that their team needs to improve how they defend ball screens. However, the coach needs to consider this in regard to the overall priorities they had identified for the season.

The coach may have identified that defence on ball screens was something to be done later in the year and, if so, the fact that one opponent used them to good effect may not mean that the coach now changes their overall priorities. Instead, the coach should consider whether or not to change the development priorities.

If the coach does want to focus on aspects at practice because of how they were performed in the game

(e.g. the team may have been poor in "blocking out" offensive rebounders), the coach should not dwell on what happened. The next practice session may be a number of days after the game (particularly with junior teams) and the team may not recall with the same clarity as the coach what happened in the game. It will usually be enough to simply do the activity, focusing on what they want the team to do rather than referring back to the game.

There may be specific contexts from the game that prompt the coach to want to work on something at the next practice. For example, rebounding in zone defence may have been poor, or players may not have cut effectively when the opponent double teamed the low post player. However, the coach still does not need to spend time talking about what went wrong and can simply use activities with those scenarios.

If the coach does want to refer particularly to aspects of the game, then they could:

- Use video of the game at the start of practice (to remind players of how they performed);
- Provide information to the players (e.g. a written report) prior to practice, which highlight the aspects of play upon which they want to focus;
- Have the players discuss the game and identify areas that they believe need improvement.

Senior players may be more interested to specifically review aspects of the game and within a professional team there is more scope to specifically review games (because the coach has more time with the players). However, with junior teams the focus generally should be on what you want the players to do. If individual players seek more information the coach should certainly provide that.

## 4.2 REVIEWING TEAM PERFORMANCE

### 4.2.1 TEAM PERFORMANCE - STATISTICAL REVIEW

*Any analysis of a game should start with the goals and objectives that the coach set out for that game. If those goals were achieved then the game should be regarded as a “success” regardless of the final score.*

#### START WITH PRE-GAME GOALS

If the coach does not review whether the pre-game goals and objectives were met, the team will quickly come to see those goals and objectives as irrelevant. It also means that the coach must have a method to enable them to review performance, which may mean collecting “statistics” that are not recorded on the scoresheet or in game statistics.

This may require having an assistant coach, a colleague or a parent recording “statistics”, which the coach should make as objective as possible. For example, a statistic such as how many times a team went three possessions without scoring, is easy to identify. Whereas a statistic such as how many “good” passes the team made (irrespective of whether a shot was made) is much more subjective.

If a subjective measure is being used it may be better if that is collected by one of the coaches to avoid any dispute about whether or not they are correct.

#### FACTS NOT IMPRESSIONS

As much as possible the coach’s review of the game should be based upon statistics collected, not just the impression that the coach has after the game. The coach’s immediate

impression after a game will often be influenced by how the game finished, rather than what happened throughout the game.

In collecting statistics it is good to identify the performance each quarter, so that a comparison can be made of performance during the game. If possible, noting when time-outs were called can also be useful as this will enable the coach to see how performance changed at the various times in the game.

The coach will no doubt have impressions about the game that are not related specifically to statistics being or to the specific pre-game objectives and goals.

For example, during the game a coach may notice that their players are not “jumping to the ball” in defence and identifies this as something that they need to work on in practice. As soon as they identify this the coach should note it down (often asking an assistant coach to make a note).

These notes are useful both for planning the next practice as well as giving feedback to the team.

### **ALLOW TIME**

It is preferable for coaches to set aside time for reviewing the game with the players, rather than making lengthy speeches immediately after the game. Immediately after the game, the players need to focus on physical recovery, re-hydration and time for their own reflection.

The coach should also take time to review any notes taken, statistics kept and (if available) video of the game, before providing too much feedback.

### **STATISTICS DON'T TELL THE FULL STORY**

Whatever statistics are taken give only an indication of what happened in the game. Factors such as the tempo of the game (and who "dictated it"), substitution patterns (whether as the result of coaching decisions, injury or foul trouble), patterns of play being used etc. may not be reflected in any specific statistics.

Accordingly, coaches need to reflect upon the team's performance and to encourage the players and assistant coaches to do the same. Letting the athletes lead a discussion about the performance of their team can be very useful.

Athletes may be overly negative (in which case the coach can highlight positive aspects) or the players may focus only on the score (in which case the coach can direct their attention to other things). Through using open ended questions, the coach can generate discussions amongst the team, particularly when the athletes are older.

## 4.2.2 TEAM PERFORMANCE - VIDEO REVIEW

*If a video of a game is available it can provide a coach with a very good tool for reviewing the team's performance, however, it can also be very time consuming.*

### GENERAL APPROACH

As with a statistical review, the coach should start by reviewing the pre-game goals and objectives before watching the game to see how effectively they were met. This may involve recording some "statistics" while they watch.

They should also consider:

- Tempo of the game - Which team was "dictating" the tempo? Was the coach able to change tempo through substitutions or time-outs?
- Defensive structures – What worked to stop their opponent? Was there any common area "breaking down"?
- Offensive structures – Did the team get "good shots"? Did they react to any changes their opponent made to defence?
- Individual match-ups – Identify where they had an advantage in a match-up. Did the team exploit that advantage? How did they "cover" for a match-up where the team was at a disadvantage?
- Was the scout correct? - were the tactics of their opponent as they expected? What did the opponent do in response to tactics the team used?

### USING TECHNOLOGY

There is a wide range of technology available to assist coaches to review performance. Broadly, these fall into the following categories:

- Game analysis
- Skill analysis
- Organisation

### GAME ANALYSIS

Various software and "apps" are available to will help the coach record what happened during the game. Simply, these enable the coach to "code" or identify what has happened in the game. For example, when a particular play was run, the type of defence that was played etc can be identified.

This coding can include multiple classifications, depending upon the detail the coach wishes to capture. For example, a play may include the following classifications:

- "Horns Play"
- 3 point shot attempted (but missed)
- Opposition takes defensive rebound
- Shot taken by #5
- Defence in ½ court "man to man"
- Play went to the right hand side of the court
- Shot taken in the last 10 seconds of "shot clock"
- Coach classified it as a "good shot option"

The level of classification is limitless, however, the more complexity a coach wants to capture, the longer it will take.

As a simple method, the coach pre-defines the characteristics they which to record and then as they watch the game (on a computer) they identify (through key-strokes or mouse clicks) what is happening.

The software will then enable the coach to recall portions of the game based on those characteristics. For example, enabling a coach to see each instance where #5 shot the ball.

Some of the software will then let the coach edit these video sequences (to add highlights, freeze frame etc.), which can also be done in generic video editors.

### SKILLS ANALYSIS

Skills analysis software is designed to show either a picture, series of pictures or video of an athlete performing a skill (e.g. free throw).

The software will enable:

- Comparison – putting two videos side-by-side, which might be used to compare a player's technique with an expert, or to compare two examples of the player's technique.
- Analysis – recording angles (e.g. elbow relative to the ball, or shoulder relative to the elbow) that can help to show where improvement is required.
- Freeze frame – stopping the video at points to identify the cause of problems (e.g. "flat" shooting technique).

This analysis is best suited to closed skills (such as "free throw" shooting), although the functionality could also be used with team skills. For example, the coach could show the team running the same play on two different occasions, comparing floor positions between the two examples.

### ORGANISATIONAL

Much of coaching is collecting information, whether that is video of games, video clips or statistical information on players, amongst many other things. There are various software programs that will help to organise this information and it is possible, for example, to upload it "to the cloud" so that the coach can access it from wherever they are in the world.

Some of these are specifically related to sports but many are generic and would require some customisation by the coach.

### COST OF TECHNOLOGY

Coaches can literally spend as much, or as little time, as they wish on these types of technology. There are free apps available for video analysis, and even generic video editing software can be used to prepare clips for the coach to use.

The more dedicated the functions of the programme, the more likely it comes at a cost, with some systems costing thousands of dollars and out of reach for many coaches.

Some clubs or federations will have access to software and the coach should familiarise themselves with what might be available through that avenue.

Regardless of the technology used, the most important thing is for the coach to provide constructive feedback, with a focus on how to progress. Showing players lengthy clips of what was done wrong can drastically reduce their confidence.



## 4.3 SCOUTING

### 4.3.1 WATCHING GAMES

*Watching games is a good way for coaches to prepare to play upcoming opponents and is also a good way to learn and get ideas from what other teams and coaches are doing. Watching games with a colleague (e.g. an assistant coach) can also be beneficial as coaches can discuss the game. Invariably, different coaches will notice different things during a game.*

It is certainly useful to make notes when watching games, however, wherever possible make them during breaks in play (e.g. during time-outs, free throws or periods between quarters) so that you can focus on the game while it is playing.

It can also be useful to have a coaching whiteboard so that you can quickly diagram what teams are doing – it is often useful to focus on one team at a time, rather than try and capture everything that is happening. If watching with a colleague, each pick a team that you are watching and then compare and discuss the game.

Many coaches like to sit away from courtside if possible, as an elevated view allows you to see all the action. An advantage of being courtside though (particularly when scouting an upcoming opponent) is that you may be able to hear what the players say (e.g. what calls are used to designate particular offences and defences).

In addition to watching for the offensive and defensive tendencies of the team and individual players, coaches may wish to watch for:

- Temperament of players – how well do they cope with adversity (e.g. bad calls or mistakes) or physical play?
- Referee tendencies (as a group and as individual referees) – what level of contact do they allow, how do they manage conflict (are they quick to call technical fouls)?
- Who controls their offence – often, but not necessarily, the point guard - what role do other players play?
- What tempo do they prefer to play – does this change with different player combinations?
- Which player takes shots when the shot clock is running out?
- Do they tend to change tactics after a time-out – do they tend to run particular structure after a time-out?
- What are the substitution rotations?

- What tendencies does their offensive play have (e.g. “screen the screener”, “on ball screen”, “back door” cuts)?
- Do they rotate defensively to “help the helper”?
- Which players are prone to fouling – in what circumstances do they tend to foul (reaching for the ball, rebounding contests, post contest)?

It is often better to obtain video of teams if a coach wants to see what specific offensive sets they use. Many sets that teams use are complex, having a number of options. Accordingly, it can be difficult to discern whether a team is running different options of one offensive set or varying sets. Watching on video can help to identify this.

## 4.3.2 TEAM PERFORMANCE - PRESENTING INFORMATION TO THE TEAM

*After reviewing the game, the coach is likely to have a lot of information about the team's performance. The essence of being a coach is to "filter" this information and determine what needs to be presented to the team.*

### HOW MUCH INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TO THE TEAM?

The coach needs to present as little information as possible and to ensure that the information is directed at specific teaching points or actions.

The coaches should always refer to any pre-game goals or objectives and then identify three or four key things about the game.

### PROVIDE A CURE NOT A DIAGNOSIS

The feedback after a game should be focused on what the team is going to do, rather than listing each negative thing that the coach observed or that the statistics show. The past cannot be changed but referring to it can change a player's level of self-confidence.

Particularly junior players may be prone to thinking negatively about their performance, and the coach giving a long list of what was done wrong will quickly overshadow any positive comments that the coach may make.

The most important information is what the coach wants the team to do, not the coach's reasons for choosing that course of action. For example, the team may have been outrebounded by their opponent, which the coach identifies was because of the team's failure to "block out".

Further, the coach may consider a number of tactical responses - changing defence (from zone to man to man), giving specific instructions (zone slides to emphasise defending rebounding coverage) or design contested activities for practice to emphasise the importance competing for rebounds.

All of this information is by and large irrelevant to the players. Instead, what they need to know from the coach is what action is being taken, perhaps with some supporting evidence.

For example:

- The coach may inform the team that their opponents had 22 offensive rebounds (supporting evidence);
- The coach may repeat the teaching points for blocking out ("this is what we need to do");
- The coach may then have them doing a physical, contested rebounding activity at practice, where points are awarded for blocking out (even if the rebound is not taken) and points are deducted if players do not block out (even if they got the rebound).

### DON'T OVERRATE OPPONENT

Particularly in league play, the team may face the same opponent again. Accordingly, the coach's feedback after a game should not make the opponent seem unbeatable. The feedback should be balanced, presenting positive and constructive information.

### DIFFERENT WAYS TO PRESENT THE INFORMATION

The coach must determine how they want to present the information to the team. This will be very much influenced by how much time they have and the athletes that they are coaching.

Some methods that can be used are (either separately or in conjunction with other methods):

- Written report
- “Chalk Talk”
- Individual meetings
- Team video sessions
- Video clips
- On court

### WRITTEN REPORT

Coaches may provide the players with a written summary of the game, which can be particularly useful if there is a lot of statistical analysis. However, the coach should avoid just having a long list of statistics.

The coach should not assume that players understand all of the information. They should also discuss the information either formally or informally with the athletes.

Giving a written report can also be an effective method to educate the parents about the factors that are important for the development of the team. This may give the parents a basis (other than the final score) to see improvement in the team.

### “CHALK TALK”

This is simply the coach speaking to the team, using a whiteboard to show diagrams or statistics. For a kinaesthetic learners (as many players are), such sessions can be excruciating!

Once a coach speaks for more than 5-10 minutes, many players will struggle to keep attention on what the coach is saying. The longer the coach speaks, the more likely that players will not retain the key information the coach wanted to deliver.

Giving the athletes diaries so that they can write their own notes in a session such as this may help to keep the players focused.

### INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK

Coaches may opt to provide specific information to each player, although this obviously requires significantly more time for both the athlete and the coach. This can be done in a meeting, in writing or by providing a video.

If a video is used it should still look to show the athlete what to do, rather than focus endlessly on what was done wrong. This might be a very specific technical instruction (e.g. the player may need to adjust stance to maintain position of their opponent) or it could be reinforcing specific teaching points.

With young players, their parents should also be given the opportunity to attend any individual meetings, or the meeting should be conducted in public view.

The coach should be careful with comparisons with other athletes in the team and should assume that whatever the coach says will be repeated at some stage to the other player.

Identifying a team mate as a positive role model can be very positive and lead to an improvement in performance by both players. However such comparisons can equally reduce the confidence of the player because they are not as “good” as their team mates.

### VIDEO SESSION

Depending upon the resources available to the coach, video feedback is likely to require a lot of time to prepare. The video should not be a highlights package (showing only the good) nor should it be only negative (e.g. showing where the team made mistakes).

If possible, showing video footage of the team doing what is correct is more likely to help them to understand what they need to do, rather than showing it being done incorrectly and then explaining what should have occurred.

### ON COURT

Sometimes the coach may just focus on getting on the court at practice and doing activities that highlight the various teaching points that the coach identified. The coach may briefly provide some statistical evidence of where improvement is needed but the focus must be on opportunities to develop the necessary skills.

### WHEN TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

Immediately after the game is not the preferred time to provide feedback, although, particularly with young players, the coach may have limited contact. The coach's limited time should be used for either development of specific skills or work towards the team's goals.

The feedback does need to be provided in a relatively timely fashion, particularly if it does not include video. Each player will have their own feelings and thoughts about the game and recollections may differ to that of the coach.

If the coach is speaking about a particular play or moment in the game, the more time that has elapsed since the game, the more likely that recollections will differ. The coach's feedback, therefore, will be interpreted according to the memories of each player.

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## FOLLOW-UP

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1. How do you present “scouting” information to your team? Ask your players how they prefer to receive “scouting” information – is there any difference between your approach and their preference?
2. Make detailed notes immediately after a game regarding your team’s performance and things that you want to improve through practice. A few days later, conduct a statistical review of the game and/or watch video of the game. Make notes regarding team performance and things to improve. Is there a difference between the two assessments?
3. Discuss with coaching colleagues the extent that they use video or statistical reviews to evaluate performance. Identify important differences between the different practices.

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