Task\_05\_Descriptive\_Stats — Phase 2

Advanced Reasoning (No Code) — Syracuse MBB 2023–24

This document provides advanced, coach-oriented reasoning and recommendations derived from the Syracuse Men’s Basketball 2023–24 box-score dataset. It builds on Phase 1 basics and focuses on strategy, roles, and decision-making without code or formulas.

# Executive Summary

* Prioritize possession control: improve defensive rebounding and reduce live-ball turnovers.
* Reallocate 3PT attempts to high-efficiency shooters (especially Chris Bell) via set actions.
* Anchor team defense and the glass with Maliq Brown; manage fouls to keep him on the floor.
* Center late-game offense around Judah Mintz with empty-side PnR and Spain actions as counters.
* Use Quadir Copeland as a secondary initiator and pressure-release valve versus traps/hedges.

# Advanced Questions & Answers

Q1. To gain two more wins next season, should we focus on offense or defense?

Defense first, then shot quality. Make the defense one-and-done by formalizing Brown as the defensive rebounding anchor and tightening guard/wings crack-backs. On offense, reduce empty trips by assigning Copeland as the middle flash and giving Mintz predefined release options under pressure. Shift 2–3 late-clock/low-EV shots per game toward Bell’s high-value catch-and-shoot looks.

Q2. Which single player should we develop as a game-changer?

Judah Mintz. Small upgrades compound quickly given his usage: pre-read decisions vs. ICE/hedge, a monthly finishing counter (inside-hand, wrong-foot, veer), and endgame FT routine consistency. On the other side of the ball, Brown is the defensive co-anchor; a modest improvement in verticality/foul discipline moves the team’s defensive ceiling.

Q3. What is our clutch (0:20–0:08) blueprint in a one-possession game?

Primary: Empty-side PnR (Mintz–Brown). Reads: rim, short-roll pocket, strong-side skip if nail help commits. Counter: Spain PnR with Bell as back-screener to force 2-on-ball and open either the roll or the arc. Keep Starling/Bell as safety valves for catch-and-shoot or late FT pressure.

Q4. How do we improve team 3PT output by ~5% without new personnel?

Script two extra Bell threes per half via pindown→DHO and flare re-screen sequences. On Mintz drives, assign Starling to the shake/lift window. In early offense (first 8 seconds), run drag screen into weak-side Hammer to pre-allocate a corner three for Bell.

Q5. How do we cut turnovers without dulling aggression?

Codify press-break roles: Copeland flashes middle, Mintz becomes the release, Starling stretches opposite sideline. Versus blitz, hit the short roll instantly; Brown’s first read is opposite corner before dunker spot. Add 3–4 ‘get-it-in’ ATOs (zipper DHO, circle back, stack) to neutralize five-counts and live-ball steals.

Q6. What’s the defensive rebounding plan and who is the anchor?

Anchor: Maliq Brown. Wings (Starling/Taylor) crack back on roll man; Bell tags from the corner and releases late to contest. Guards ensure inside position on their side before initiating transition D. Team goal: trim opponent OREB% to sub-25%.

Q7. What is our fast-break identity and lane discipline?

Advance with Mintz (steals+assists leader), with license to pitch-ahead. Copeland operates as secondary engine off outlets. Lanes: Bell sprints to the corner (gravity), Starling fills slot wing (rim or trail three), Brown runs the middle lane for deep seals.

Q8. Matchup plans: big drop-coverage vs. switch-everything teams?

Drop: Empty-side PnR to delay the low tag; short-roll Brown and lift Bell. Consider spot minutes for McLeod as rim deterrent. Switch all: pre-time slips (Brown), run Spain to force 2-on-ball, and use boomerang passes to attack mismatches; occasionally use Bell as the screener to generate switch-and-seal looks.

Q9. How do we manage foul risk without losing defensive bite?

Brown’s early fouls are costly. Emphasize first-contest verticality and rotate him out near TV timeouts after the first foul to avoid a cheap second. Use McLeod/Hima for 2–3 minute stints when the whistle tightens or opponents go deep paint.

Q10. Which bench roles add the most situational value?

Copeland for energy, steals, and secondary initiation vs. pressure. Williams for wing size and boards. McLeod for situational rim protection and size matchups. Cuffe/Taylor for spot-up spacing and off-ball defense when Bell needs a reset or for length toggles.

Q11. What KPIs should we track weekly to validate progress?

Possession control: Opponent OREB% (<25%) and Team TO% (<15%). Shot diet: share of team 3PA allocated to Bell/Starling and reduction of contested pull-ups by non-shooters. Advantage creation: paint touches per half and post-timeout points per possession. Free throws: late-game FT% and FTA from drives.

Q12. What are the key limitations of our data, and what should we collect next?

The box score lacks play-by-play, lineup/on-off, shot location, and opponent context—so we can’t precisely value actions or pairings. Next: lineup efficiencies, clutch splits, shot charts by shooter/location, and opponent tendencies. Use these to validate the ‘three lever’ thesis: one-and-done defense, turnover margin, and shot allocation.

# Appendix — Player Role Snapshot (from dataset tendencies)

* Judah Mintz — Primary scorer/playmaker; elite FTA volume; late-game initiator.
* Maliq Brown — Interior finisher; team leader in rebounds, steals+blocks; defensive anchor; foul management needed.
* Chris Bell — High-volume, high-efficiency 3PT spacer; priority target for scripted threes.
* J.J. Starling — Secondary scorer; reliable off catch-and-shoot; lift/shake target on drives.
* Quadir Copeland — Secondary initiator; energy guard; helps vs. pressure; adds steals and boards.
* Depth (e.g., McLeod/Hima/Williams/Cuffe/Taylor) — situational size, boards, defense, and spacing knobs.