3.3.2 PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - ACTIVE RECOVERY

"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).

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.

3.3.3. COMPRESSION CLOTHING

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.

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.

3.3.4. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - HYDROTHERAPY

There are a number of different types of hydrotherapy, and many are currently used in sports.

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.

3.3.5. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - MASSAGE

Massage is another technique commonly utilised to enhance recovery from training and/or competition and is suggested to have numerous benefits including:

- 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.

3.3.6. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - SLEEP

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

3.3.7. PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - STRETCHING

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.

3.3.8.   PHYSICAL RECOVERY TECHNIQUES - PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

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.

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 (38-40ºC): 1 min Cold (12-15 °C) - repeat 7 times OR
  - 2min Hot (38-40ºC): 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

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on contemporary recovery techniques can be found in the following articles:

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3.4 INJURY MANAGEMENT

3.4.1 INJURY MANAGEMENT

This chapter contains general information, individuals should not rely upon this information without seeking further advice from appropriately qualified individuals.

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.

FOLLOW-UP

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?

PLAYER

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

CHAPTER 4

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

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.[6]

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.

6   Australian Sports Commission (2003), Junior Sport Guidelines

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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 and 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.
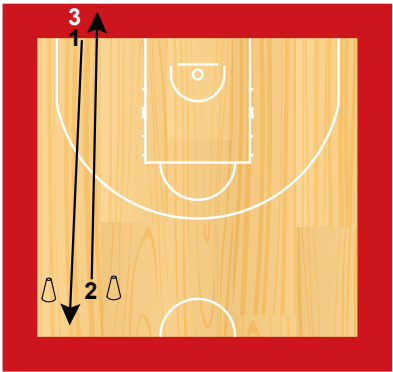
RELAY 3

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.
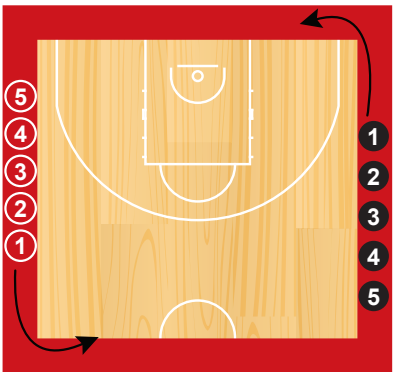
TEAM PURSUIT

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.
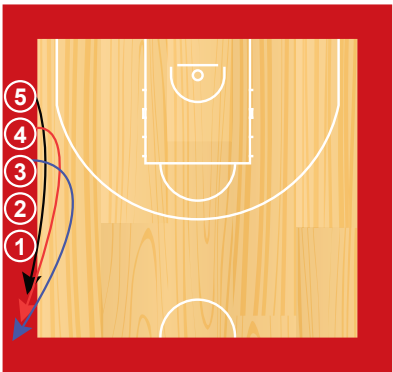
Coach can either have the team run as a group (and it is up to the team to stay together) or they can run it as a "pursuit" (which is a type of race used in cycling).

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.
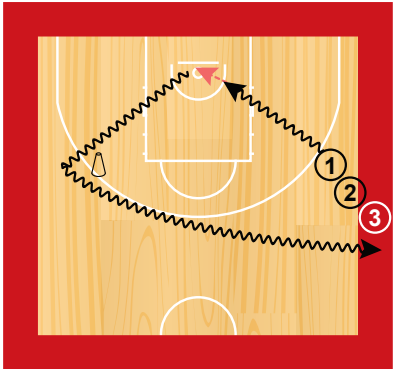
LAY-UP CIRCUIT

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.
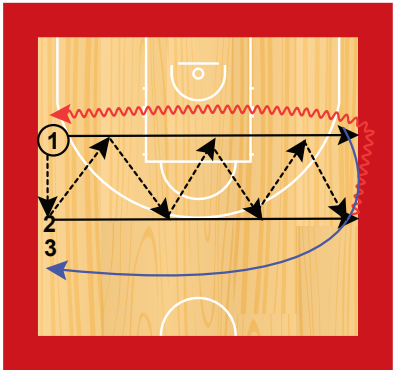
PASSING GAME

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.
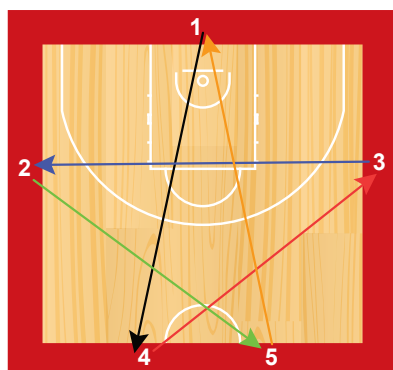
STAR RUNS

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.

"NEXT PLAY"[7]	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. 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.
"RELEASE" THE MISTAKE	For some athletes having a physical "release" can help to refocus their back to the present. Two common techniques are: • Clenching their fist as hard as possible and then throwing the mistake away; • Flicking a wrist band against their wrist. 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.
ACKNOWLEDGE A BETTER PLAY	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.
FOCUS ON SMALL GOALS	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. 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.
"CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLE"	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.
ACCEPT THE MISTAKE	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. 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: What to do with a mistake? Recognise it, admit it, learn from it, forget it.

7 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 player's 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.

4.1.3 CONTROLLING EMOTIONS

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!

FOLLOW-UP

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?

LEVEL 2

TEAM

CHAPTER 1

DEFENSIVE TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 1

DEFENSIVE TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

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.
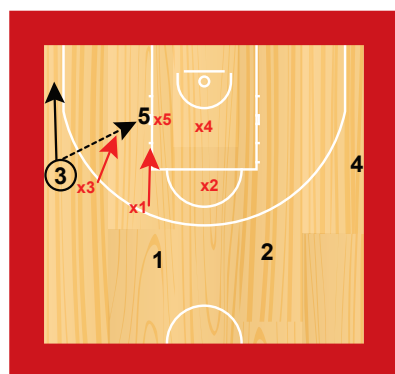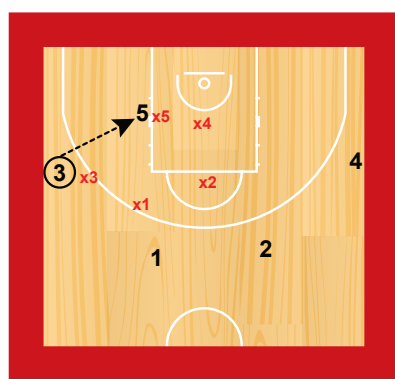
If the post player does receive the ball, the perimeter defenders should be ready to "help" — either full help ("double team") or help and recover.
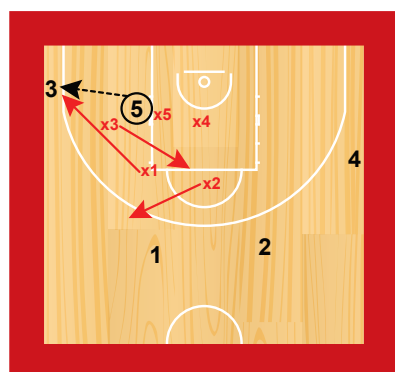
If the perimeter player closest to the post (x3) double teams, the post player's most likely pass is back to the perimeter player. Defender's rotate on that pass to ensure there is no open perimeter shot.

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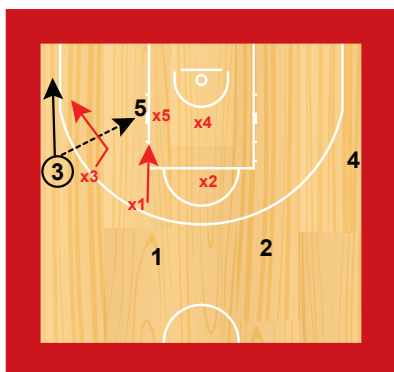
Alternatively, perimeter players may "help and recover" by stepping towards the post player to pressure their decision, but then returning to their own player (e.g. x3).

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.
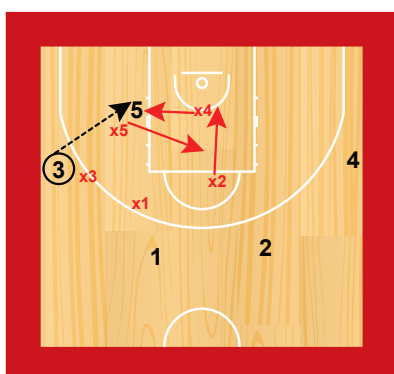
HELP WHEN FRONTING LOW POST

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.
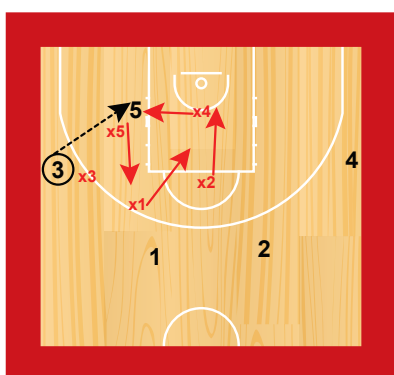
Once a pass is made to the post player, x1 may also rotate into the keyway to "help the helper" as x4 has moved to intercept the pass ("first rotation") and x2 has rotated to the basket ("secondary rotation").

x5 can either stay to pressure the post player or can rotate to defend 1.
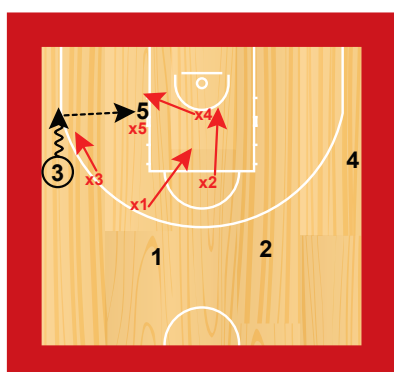
Often teams double team the low post player when they receive the ball. Where that double team comes from depends upon how the low post player is defended.

If the post defender (x5) is on the high side, the help comes from the low defender (x4) on the split line.
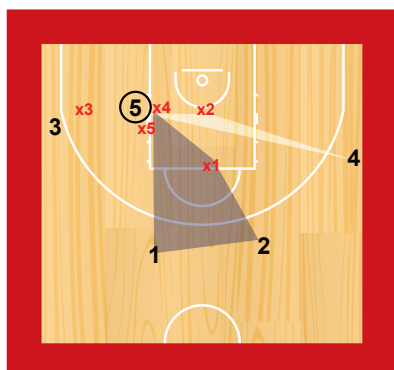
As x4 rotates to double team, x2 rotates down and is now defending 4 and must keep sight of them.

Similarly, x1 rotates to the top of the key and is responsible for both 1 and 2 (and must keep vision of them).
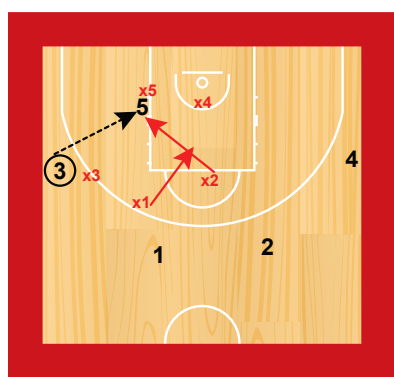
If the post defender is standing on the baseline side of the post player, the help or double team comes from the high "split line" defender (x2).

Again, x1 rotates to the top of the key.
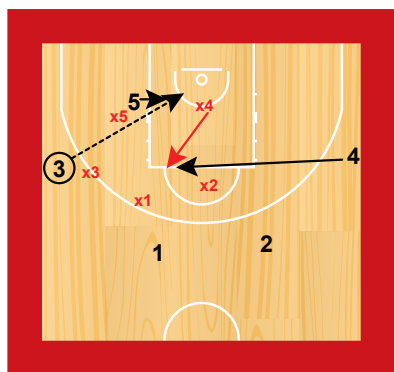
In order to prevent help coming from the split line, some offences will attempt to move defenders from the "split line". Here 4 cuts to the high post. If x4 stays at the basket, 4 would be open to receive a pass and could shoot or pass to the low post player.

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.
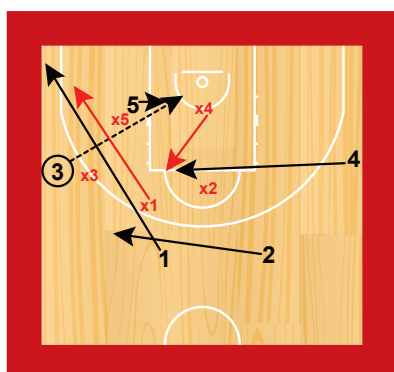
Similarly, 1 & 2 may cut to the "strong side" in order to force x1 and x2 to move away from positions where they can help.

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.

FOLLOW-UP

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.
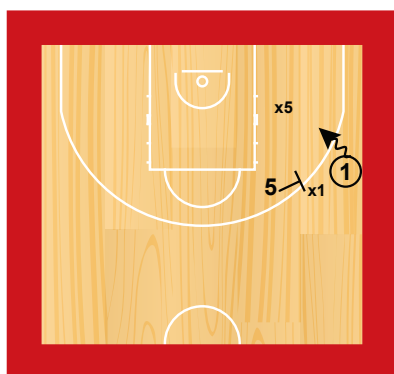
As the ball screen is set, the defender of the ball handler steps in front of the screen, preventing the ball handler from using the screen.

The screener's defender steps away from the screen, towards the baseline, to pressure any drive by the ball handler.
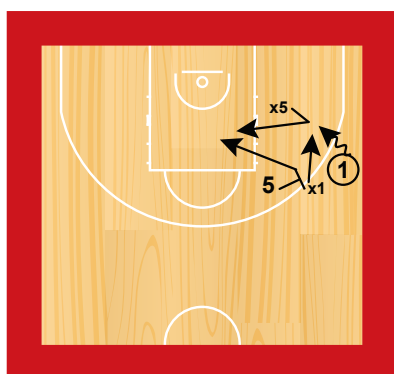
If the dribbler does drive to the baseline, their defender should force them towards the corner.

x5 may "help and recover", enabling x1 to recover position against the ball hander.
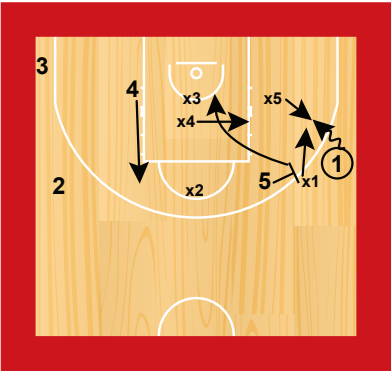
Alternatively, x5 and x1 may double team the ball handler. Doing this will require help from the "split line" to guard 5's cut to the basket. This can come from either x4 or x2, who must get between 5 and the ball handler.

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.
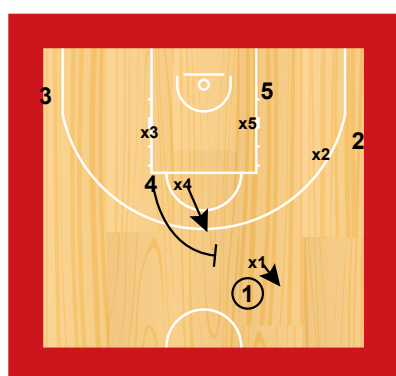
The defender must move to one side to prevent the dribbler moving in that direction. The defender must not allow the offensive player to drive straight either, so the defender needs to be "on the hip" of the offensive player.

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).
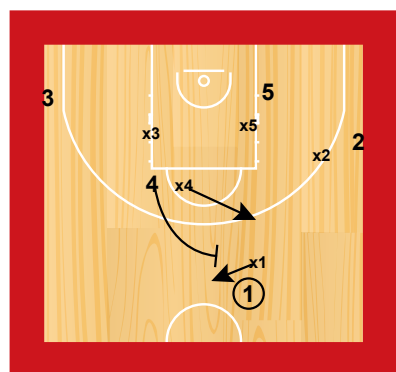
In "Weak", it may involve forcing the offensive player to use the screen (dribble towards the screen) or it may force them to dribble away from the screen. The determining factor is that the defence does not allow the offensive player to move in their preferred direction.

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.

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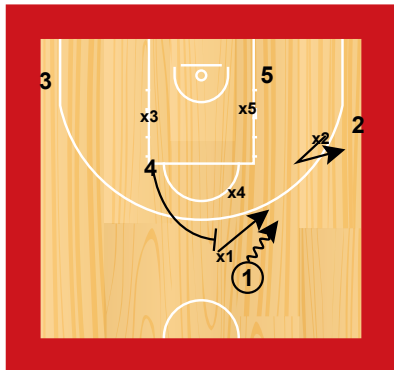
In whichever direction the dribbler is forced to move, a perimeter player on that side (e.g. x2) may "help and recover" (or "stunt") to put additional pressure on them.

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.
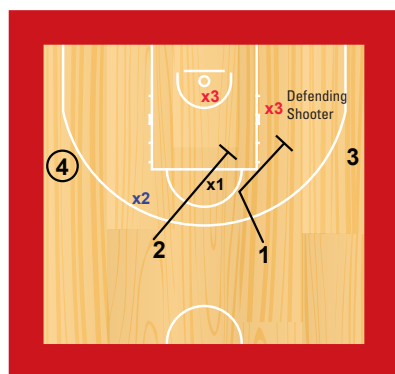
x1, x2 and x3 come from quite different positions when the staggered screens are set. Often if Player 3 is a good perimeter shooter, x3 may not be on the split line initially, but may be closer to Player 3.
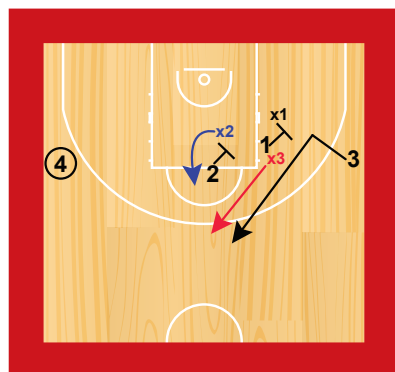
- x1 stands on the "low" side of the first screen to stop 3 cutting directly to the basket.
- x3 moves to meet the cutter as the cut past the first screen, stopping them from curling to the basket.
- x2 moves to the ball side of the second screen to put pressure on the passing lane.
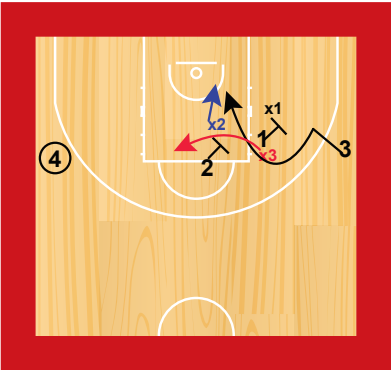
If the cutter (3) does curl to the basket, then x2 can guard that, and x3 can move into position to guard 2 (second screener).
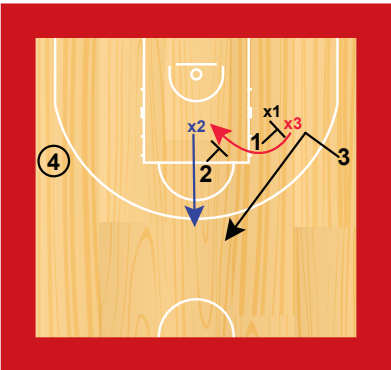
Another common tactic is for x2 (guarding the second screen) to switch onto the cutter (3) and x3 switches onto x2.

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.
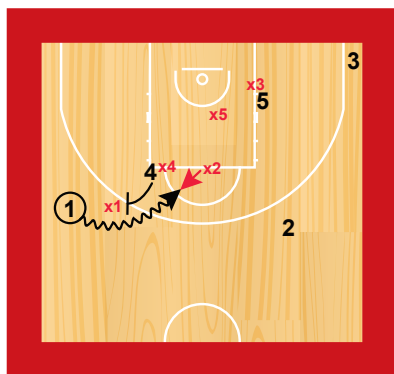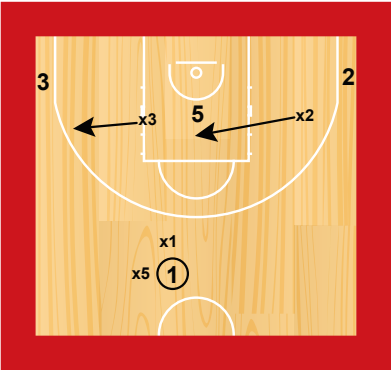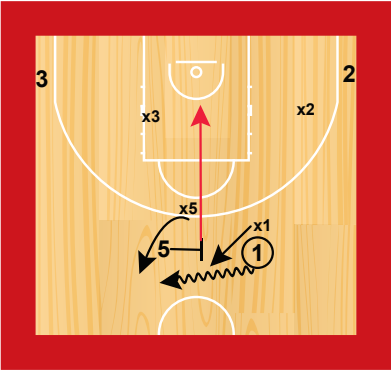
"Help Defence" may be directed towards stopping the dribbler from penetrating into the keyway. Such help must come from "below the ball" as shown here with x2 stepping across to help.
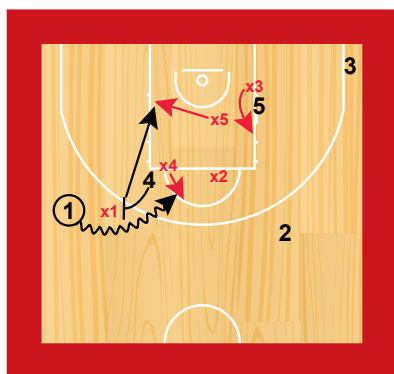
Alternatively, "help" may be directed towards guarding the screener as they roll or "dive" to the basket. This "help" enables the defender of the screener to be more aggressive against the ball handler.

Here x5 steps across to guard the screener, and x3 "helps the helper" and rotates to the split line to guard 5.

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"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.

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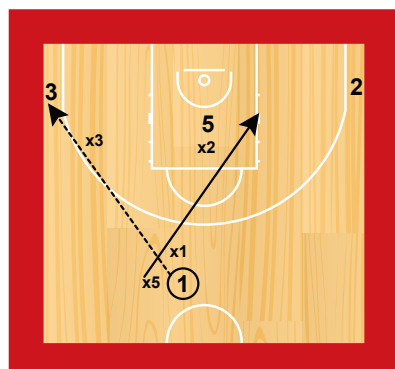
As the ball is passed to 3, x5 rotates towards the basket and can move to defend 2.
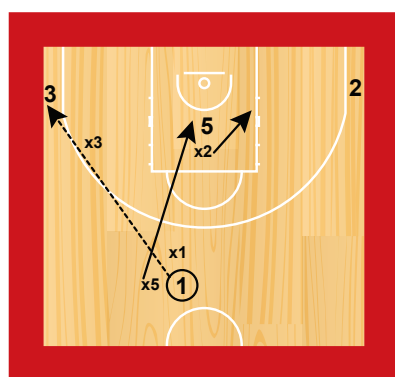
Alternatively, x2 can return to guard 2 and x5 moves to defend 5. However, x2 should not leave 5 until x5 is in position.

"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:

(a) 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;

(b) 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.
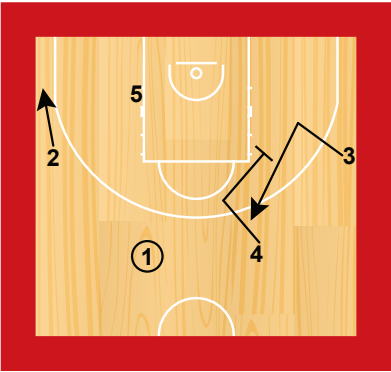
Start with a down screen on the weak side, 4 screening for 3. A straight cut is shown here, however, 3 should read the defence and make an appropriate cut.
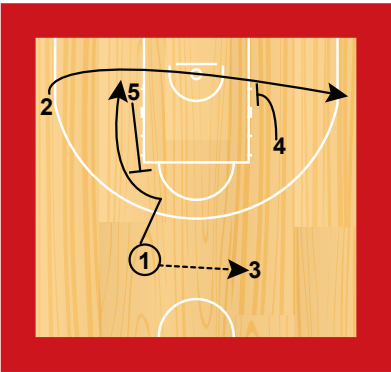
After the ball is "reversed" (passed across the key, 1 to 3), 5 sets an up screen for 1. At the same time, 2 cuts across the key, coming of a screen from 4 – this is an example of a "turn-out" cut.
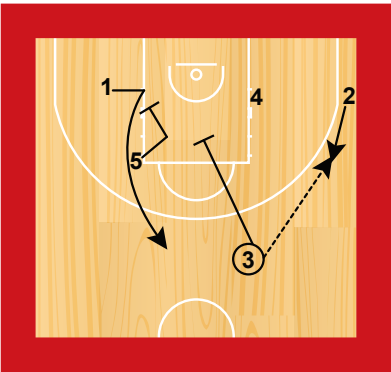
After the ball is passed to the wing (completing the ball reversal), 3 and 5 set a staggered double for 1.
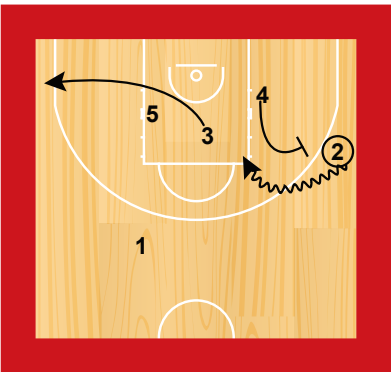
The action concludes with a ball screen on the wing.

Within the framework of this structure, there are many screening actions and options.

FOLLOW-UP

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.
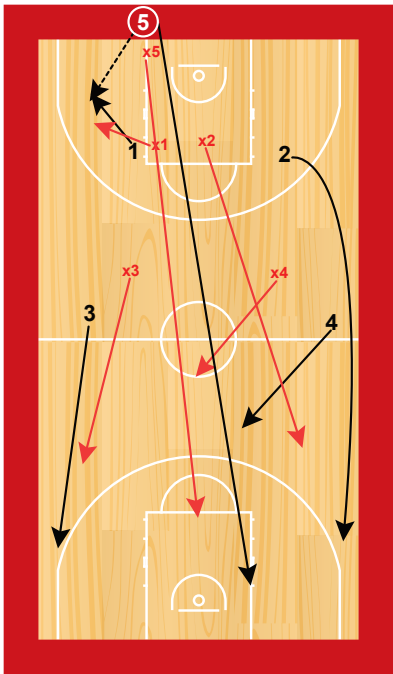
Many teams will beat full court "man to man" defence, by either:

- 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.
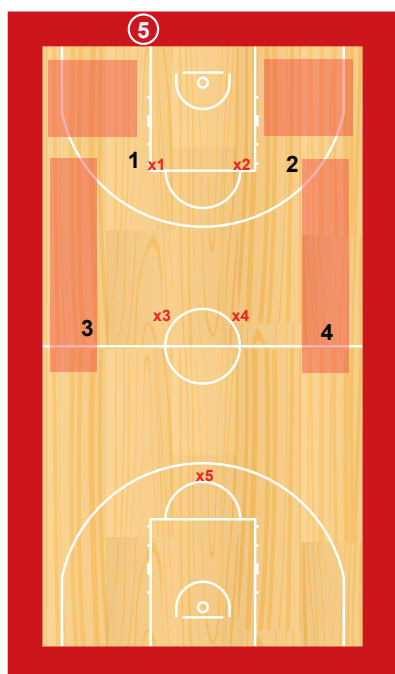
"2 – 2 – 1 TRAP" – INITIAL ALIGNMENT

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.
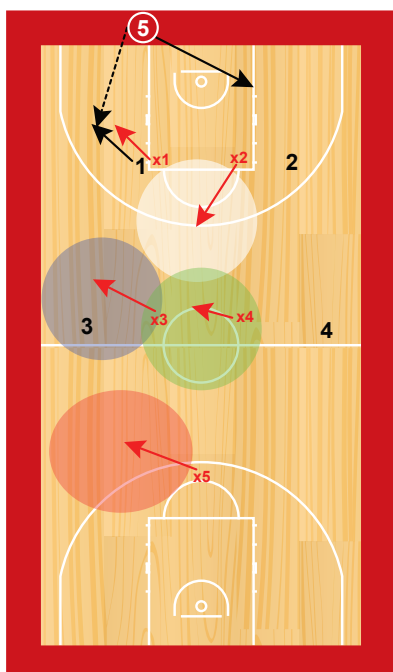
MOVEMENT AFTER FIRST PASS

- 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" priciples, with x2 and x4 moving along the split line.
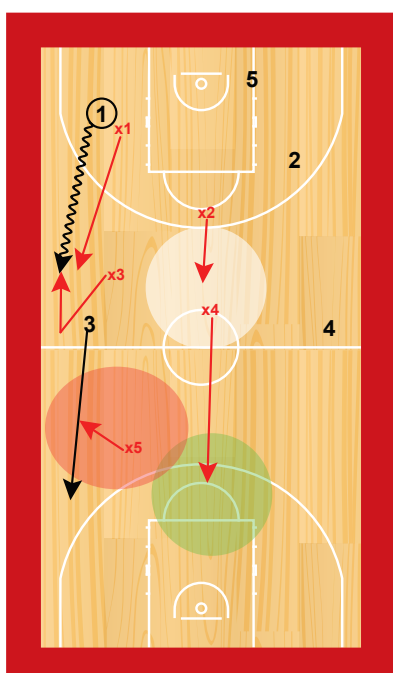
TRAPPING A DRIBBLER

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.
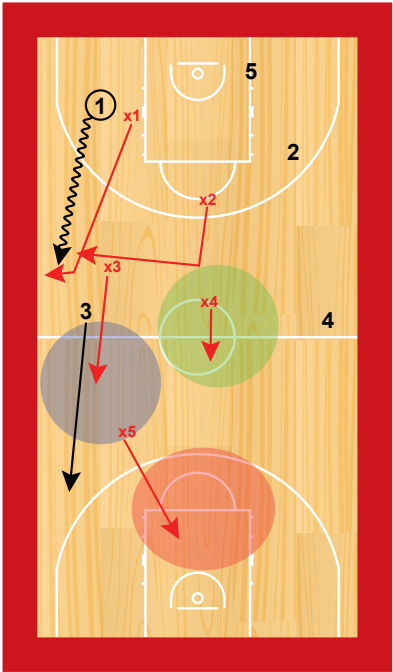
If x1 "turns" the dribbler toward the middle of the court, x2 can move to double team (or could "jump", which is to switch with x1).

On this double team, x4 stays in a position to intercept any pass across the court and x5 rotates back to defend the basket.
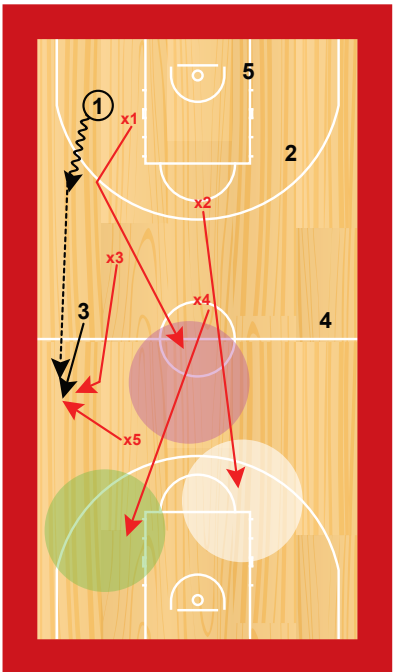
On a pass along the sideline, x3 and x5 can trap the receiver. x5 must at least move across until x3 recovers to the ball. x4 continues to rotate to the basket and x2 and x1 must get below the line of ball.
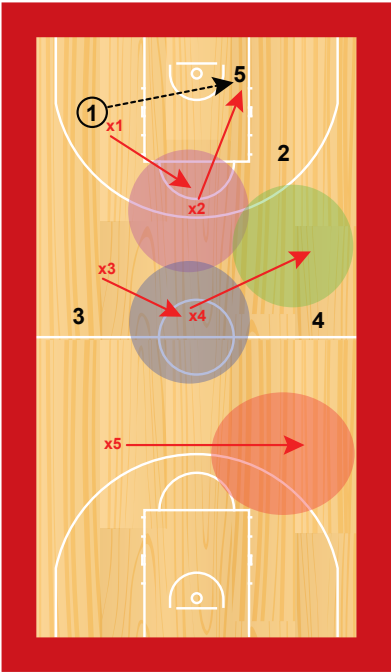
DEFENDING REVERSAL PASS

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.
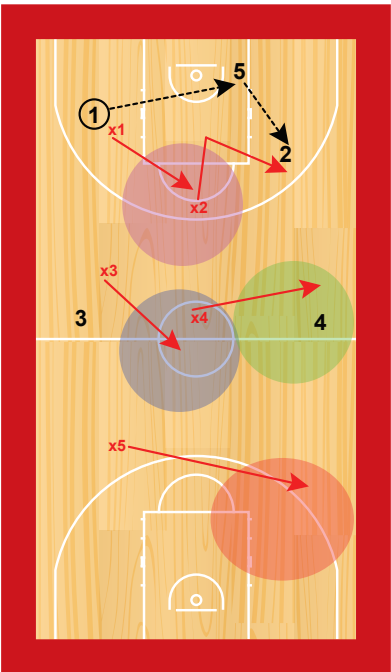
If 5 passes quickly to 2 and x2 had hedged but not closed out to 5, they rotate across to the ball.

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.
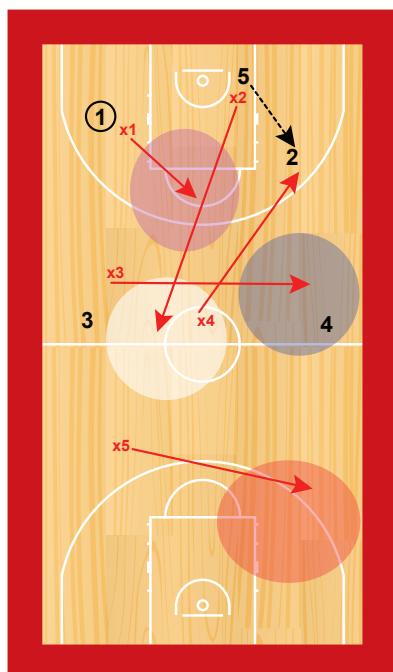
Where x2 had closed out to 5, x4 (as the closest defender) would rotate to defend 2, x3 would deny the sideline and x1 again drops to defend a pass across the court.

x2 drops to defend the centre of the court.
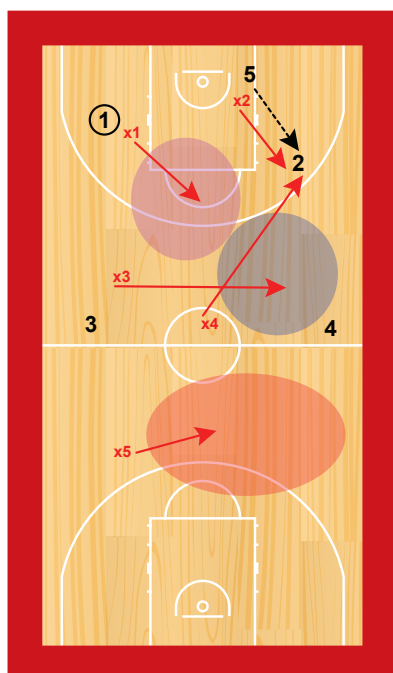
If 5 does quickly pass to 2, a double team may be viable particularly if x2 is coming from "below" Player 2 or Player 2 is not a strong dribbler.

Other defenders move into position to intercept passes.

1.3.2   HALF COURT TRAP
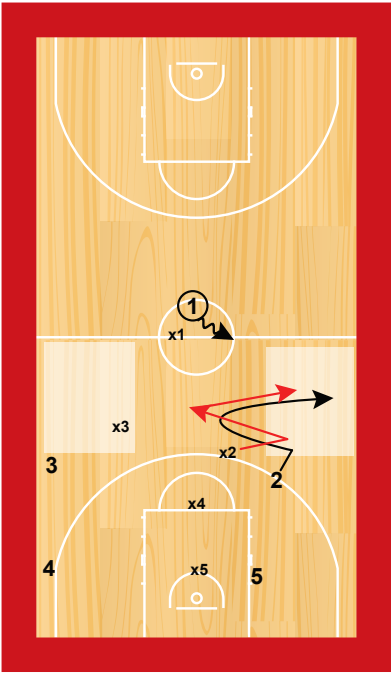
TRAP FIRST PASS

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.
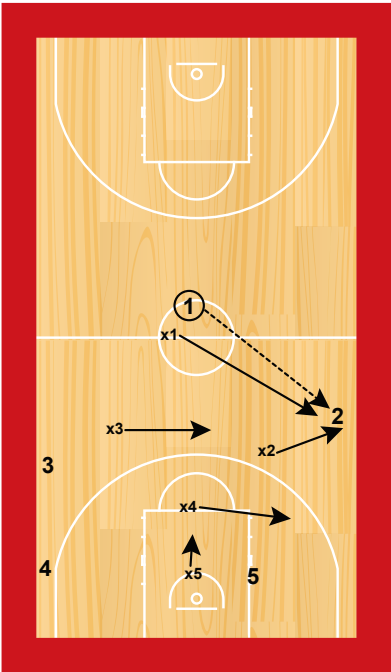
x1 follows the pass to double team., or if x3 is closer they can double team, and x1 would rotate down the split line. Indeed, x3 is likely to be in a better position to double team as they are probably below the "line of the ball".

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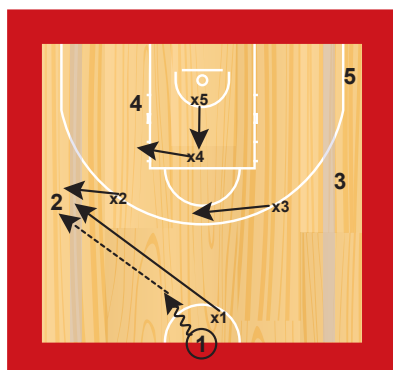
However whether or not x3 is in position to double team will depend upon if they are close to the "split line" or nearer the other side of the court.
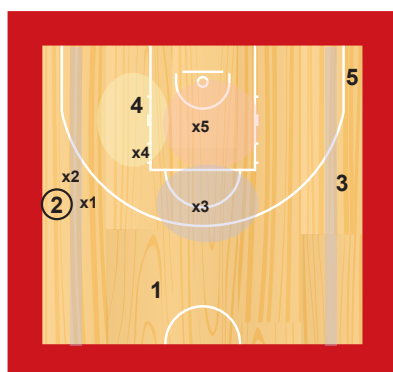
If the double team is set, x4 moves toward the sideline to deny any pass. x3 (or x1) and x5 are in "split line" position and should anticipate the pass that may be made and attempt to get in position to intercept.
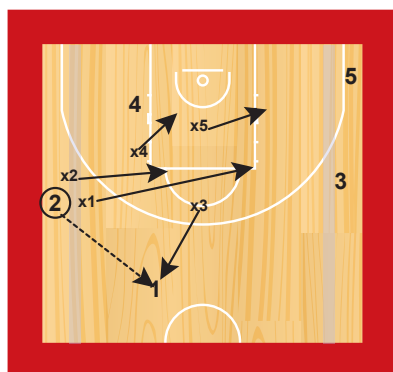
If the ball is passed out of the double team, x3 rotates to the ball (and can be relatively passive, ensuring that Player 1 cannot penetrate) and other players either move into "man to man" or zone position.

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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.
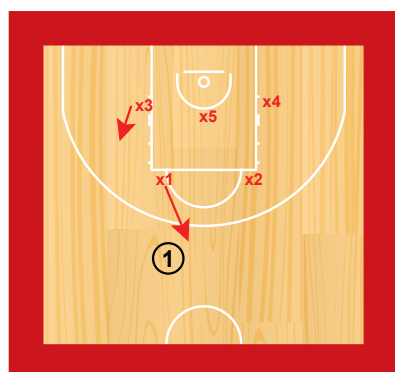
INITIAL ALIGNMENT

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.
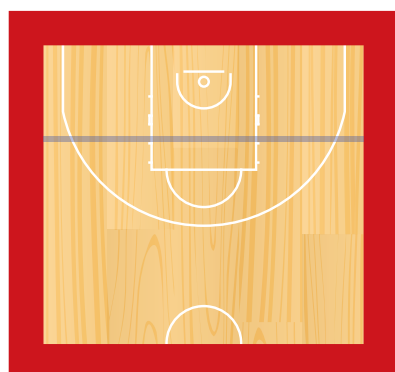
The coach should determine the "pick up line", which determines whether it is the guard (from the front of the zone) or the forward (from the rear of the zone) should defend a perimeter player that has the ball.
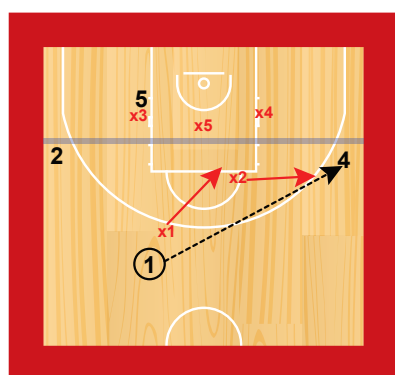
4 receives the ball above the "pick up line", x2 moves to defend them. x1 rotates back to the foul line and must deny any pass to a high post player.
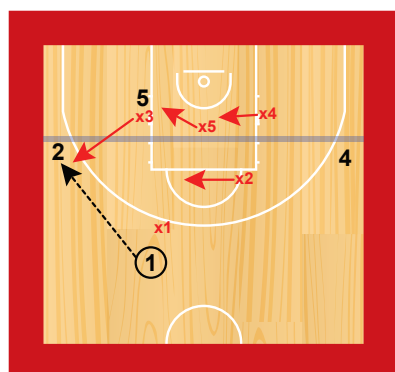
Because 2 is above the "pick up line", it is the responsibility of x1 to defend them when they have the ball. However, with x1 defending the ball, it is a long close-out for them to move to defend 2 as the ball is passed.

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.

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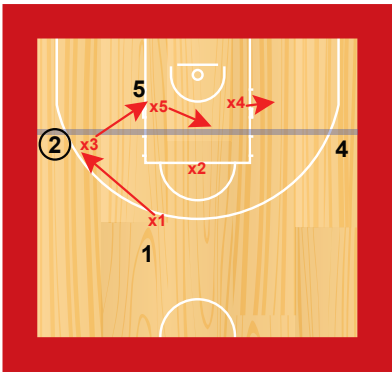
However, once x1 gets to the wing, x3 moves back to their position as does x4 and x5.

x2 also moves across the keyway to stop any pass to the high post.
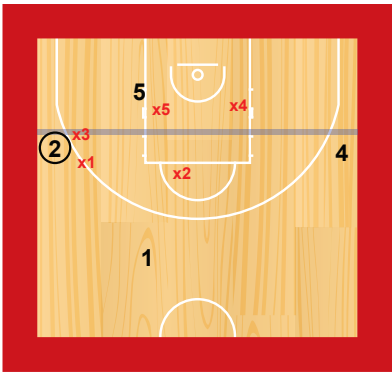
x3 and x1 could double team the wing if they wish. x2 and x5 are in help positions – denying any passes into the keyway.
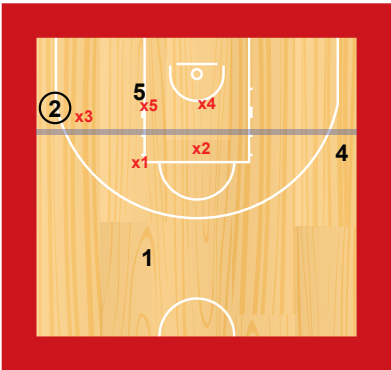
When the ball is with a perimeter player below the imaginary line, the forward defends the ball and other players balance – generally, with two players on the side of the keyway and two players on the "split line".

x1 denies a pass to the high post.

x5 could front the low post player, subject to the team's defensive scheme.
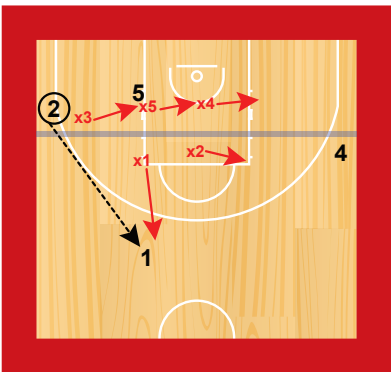
When the ball is passed back to the guard, it may be defended:

If the back defender (x3) was guarding the perimeter player, then the front defender (x1) defends the ball;
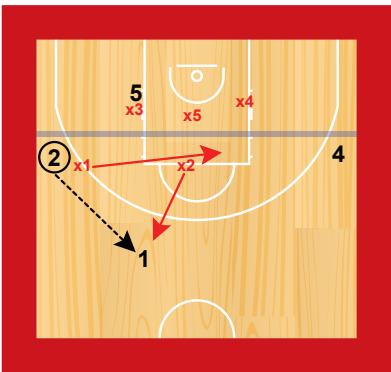
If the front defender (x1) is defending the wing, then the other front defender (x2) moves to guard the ball. In this situation, the front defenders may swap sides.

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.
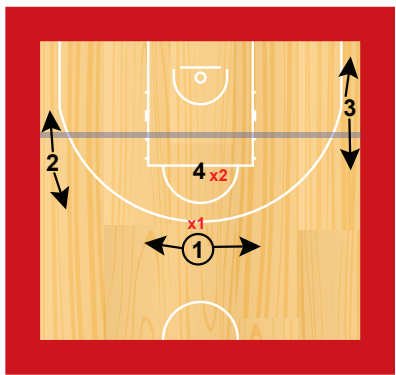
PRACTICING MOVEMENTS OF ZONE DEFENCE

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.
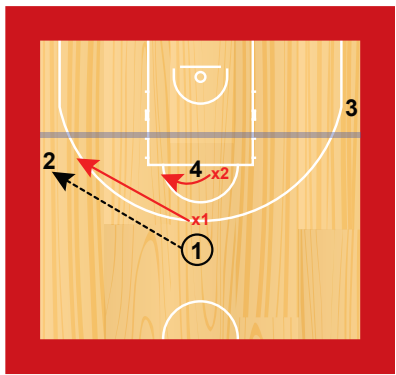
Player 4 must stay above the "pick up line", and one of the defenders must be in a position to interfere with any attempted pass.
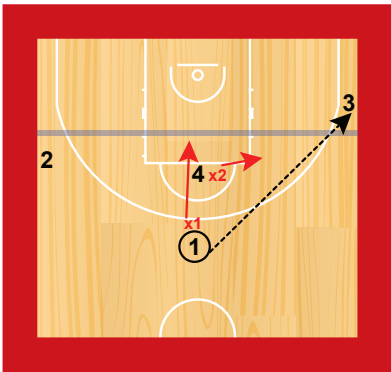
The two defenders move as per their zone responsibilities. When the ball is below the "pick up line", the defenders do not defend it, but move to their required position.

The offence cannot score from below the "pick up line".
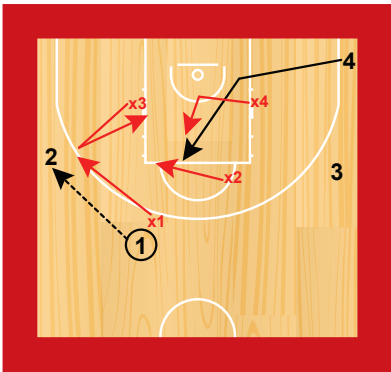
The activity can then be done with the four "outside" defenders working together to defend the ball.

Initially, the offence score if they get the ball into the keyway (either by pass or dribble penetration). Progress to fully contested.
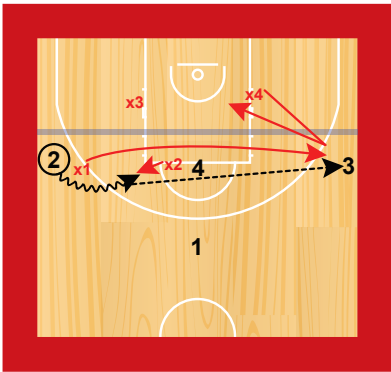
DEFENDING PENETRATION

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.
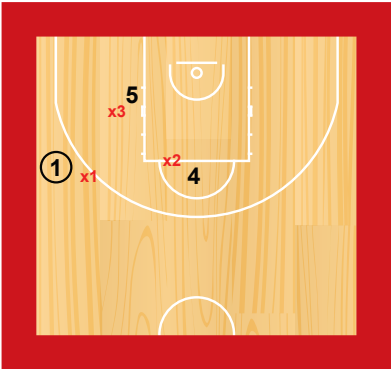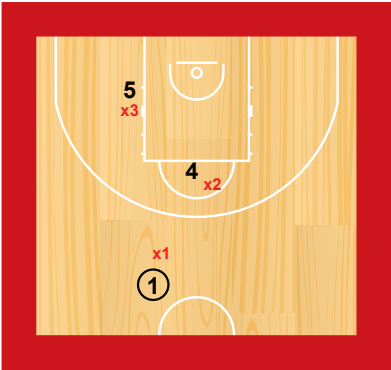
DEFENDING POST PLAYERS

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.
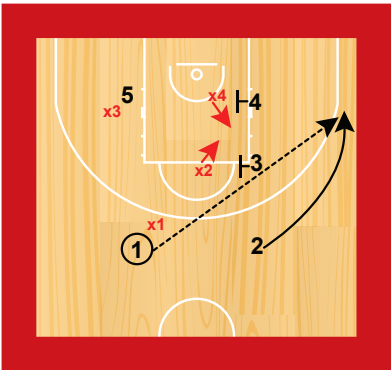
AVOIDING SCREENS

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.
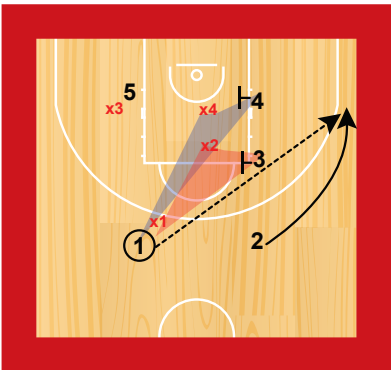
Another key is for the "weak-side" defenders to keep vision of both the ball and any players that are in their area of the court.

This is best achieved by adopting an "open stance" as when playing "man to man" defence.

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FOLLOW-UP

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
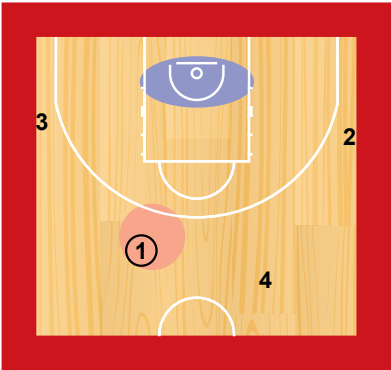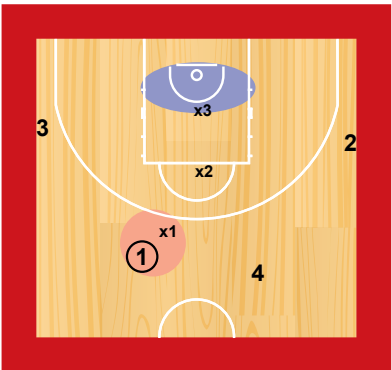
There are many times when a defensive team may be in a situation of disadvantage (e.g. 2v1, 3v2 or 4v3), such as:

- 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.
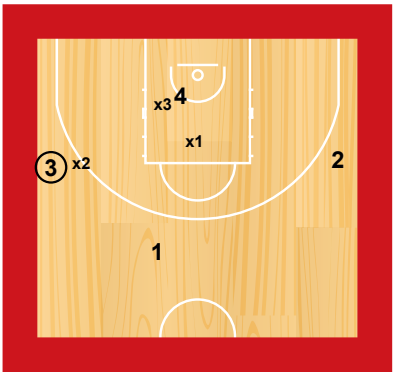
The defender on the low split line (x3) must deny any post player, whether they have run to the "rim" or are in the low post.

x1 can also hedge towards the basket to assist in defending that area.

Where 4 has run to the "rim", x1 can remain high.
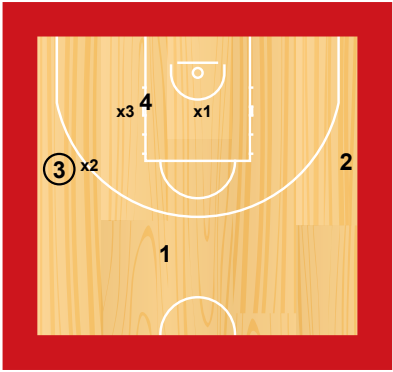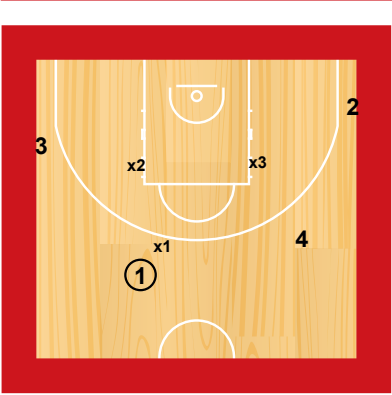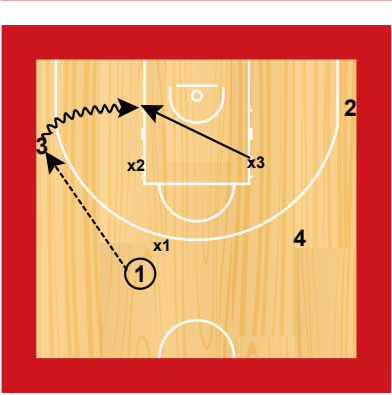
However, if 4 is in the low post, x3 must front and x1 must "sink" to stop any lob pass.
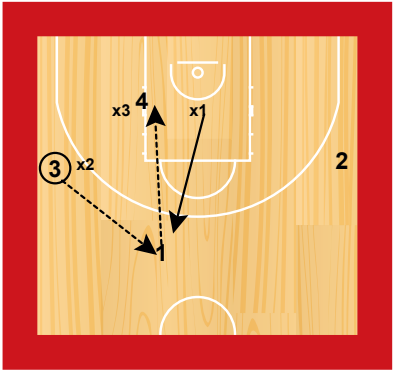
When the ball is passed to 1, x1 should not close out to the ball. If they do, 4 may "seal" x3 and receive an easy pass for a lay-up (as x3 is on the "outside" of 4).
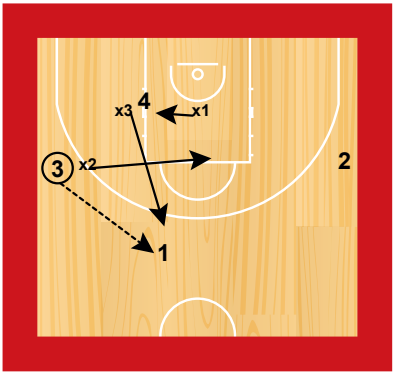
Instead, x3 closes out to 1, x1 rotates across to stop any pass to the low post and x2 drops to the high split position. All defenders must move with urgency.

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.

FOLLOW-UP

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
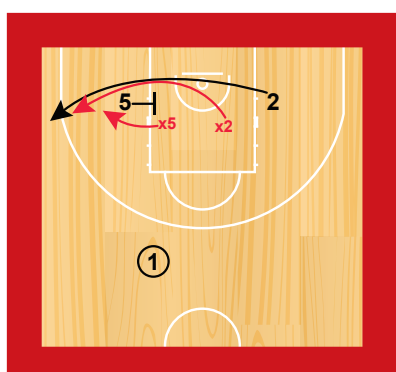
"OVER"

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.
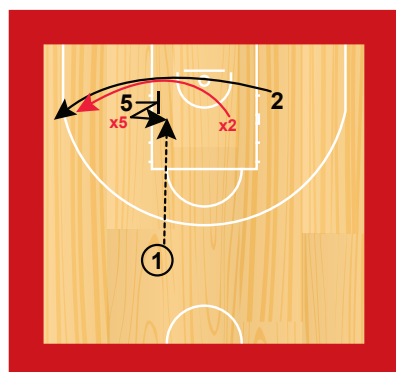
However, x5 must be careful not to step too far toward the sideline, as this would give the screener an opportunity to establish position on the "basket" side.
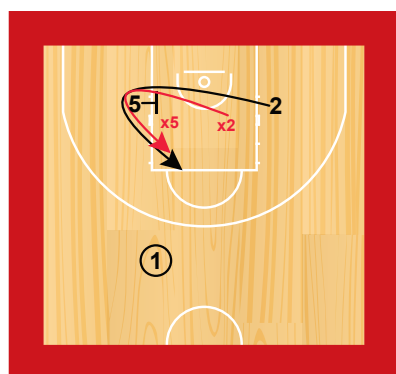
"TRAIL"

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.
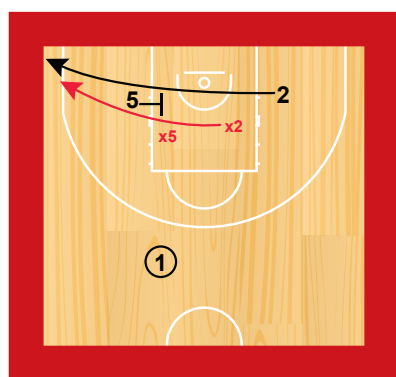
"THROUGH"

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.
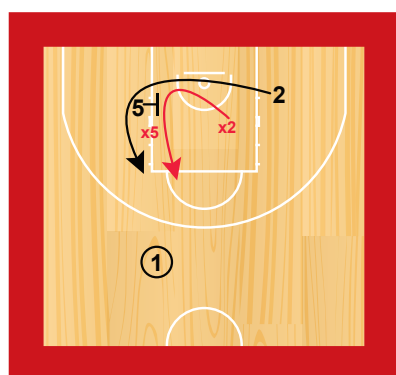
x2 may choose to stay inside the key, particularly if 2 is not a good perimeter shooter but prefers to curl cut.

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).
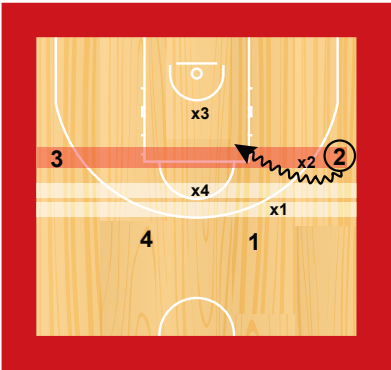
Both x1 and x4 are above the "line of the ball" (which is shaded pink). From these positions, they are not able to stop 2 from getting into the key. Only x3 is in a position to help. x4 and x1 may "hedge" to apply some additional pressure but are not in position to stop the dribbler.

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!
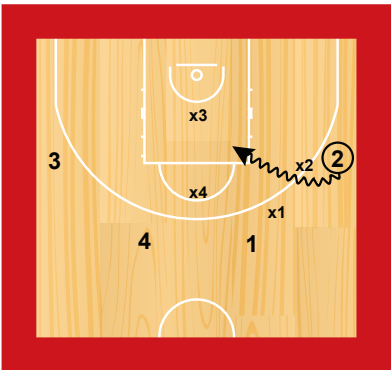
DEFENDING MIDDLE PENETRATION FROM THE WING

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).
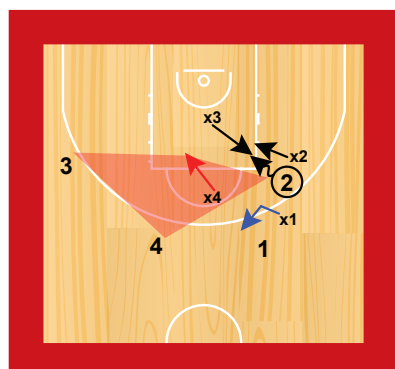
The first priority is for help defence to "rotate"and to stop the initial penetration.

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.
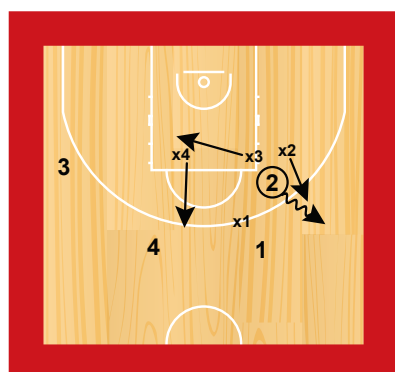
If 2 kept their dribble alive and retreated, x2 could re-establish position to defend them and x3 and x4 would return to their initial opponents.
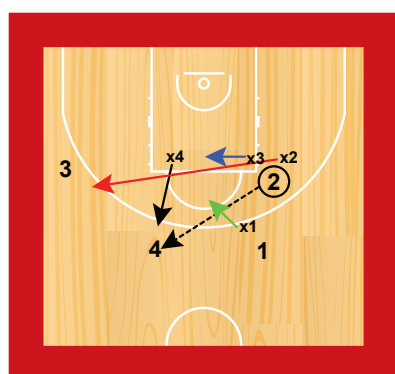
Once x3's rotations stops the drive, they and x2 can double team the ball, particularly if 2 picks the ball up.

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
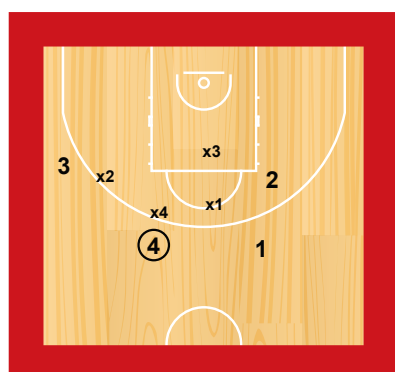
The defence has now re-established position. This emphasizes the importance of all players developing both post and perimeter skills (offensively and defensively) because in a rotation they may end up playing out of position.
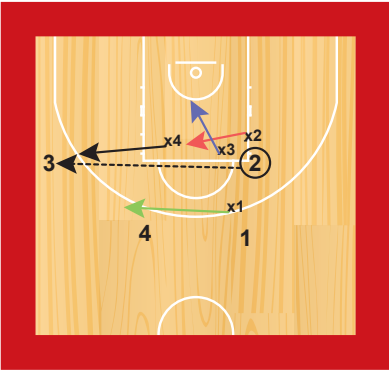
If 2 passes to 3, the rotation is slightly different:

- 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.
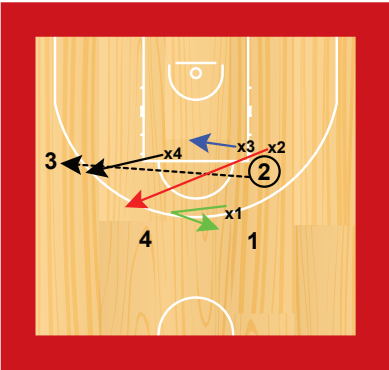
If 4 is unlikely to shoot from the perimeter, x1 may "hedge" toward them and then recover to guard 1, giving x2 time to get to 4.
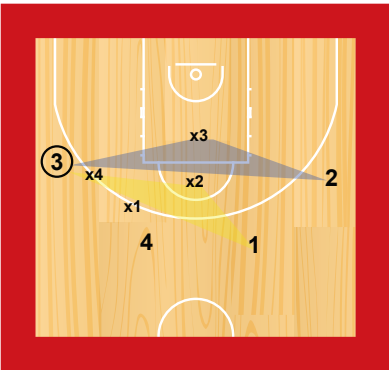
The defence is now re-established.

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".

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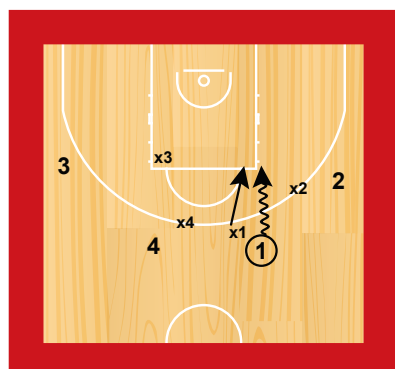
DEFENDING "SEAM" PENETRATION

"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.
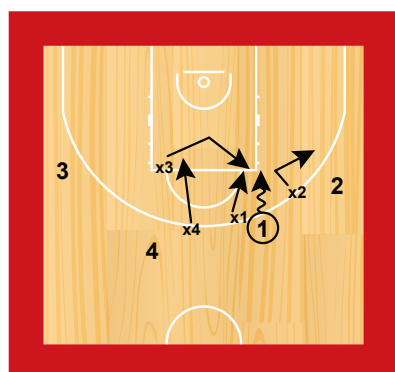
The initial rotation to guard seam penetration is the same as for penetration from the wing:

- 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.
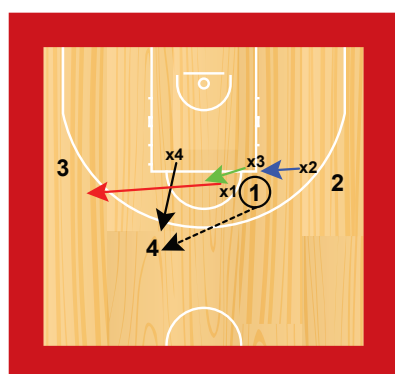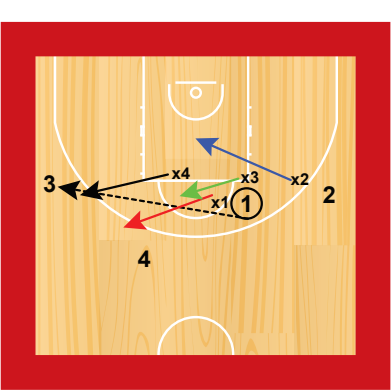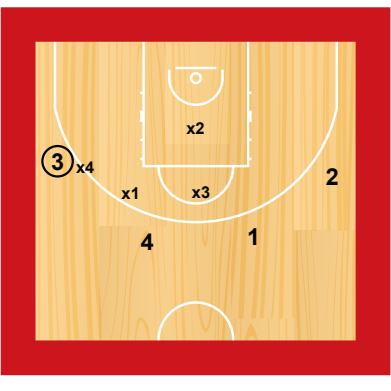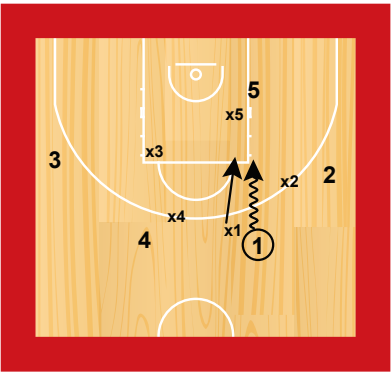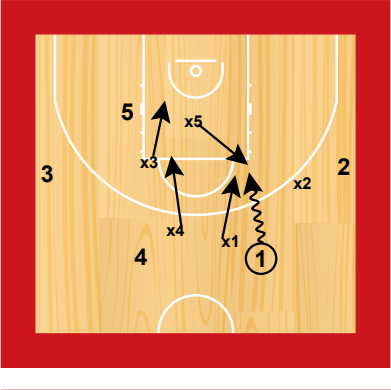
As with penetration from the wing, the rotation that occurs when a pass is made, depends upon where it is passed.

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)
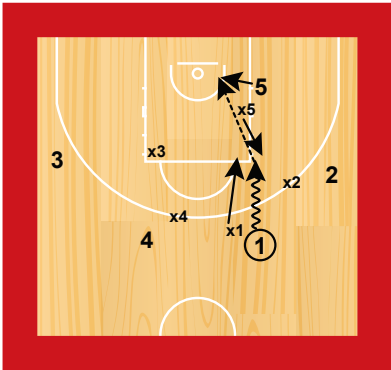
Having the post defender rotate, presents an opportunity for a pass to the post player for a lay-up.

This pass is particularly effective as a lob pass, which may result in a dunk with older, athletic players.
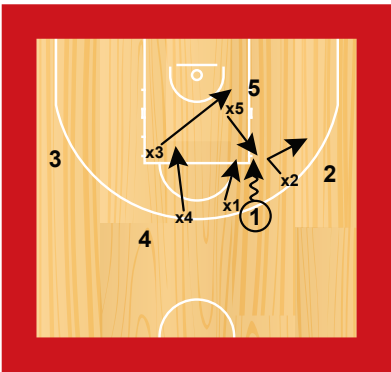
If coaches do use the post defender (x5) to rotate and stop the seam penetration, the nearest help defender (x3) must rotate quickly to the post player to stop any pass.
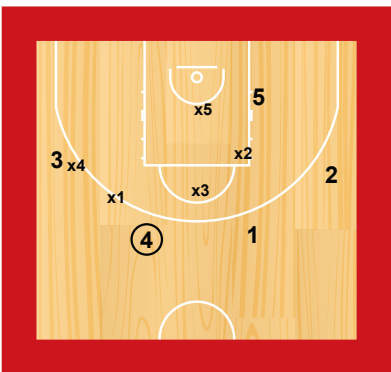
Once the penetration has been stopped, most coaches will have x5 rotate back to defend the post player once a pass has been made.

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.
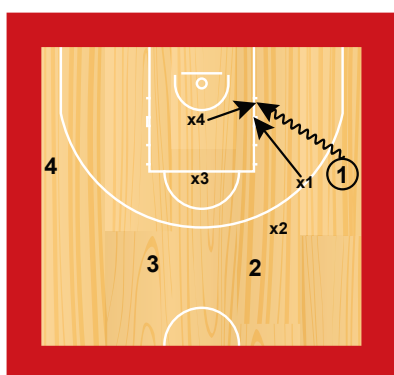
When 1 beats their player off the dribble, x4 rotates across to stop any penetration into the key.
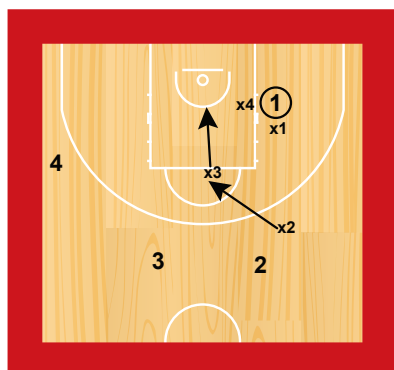
Initially we teach how x3 made a "secondary" rotation, and now assumes responsibility for guarding 4. Whilst. x2 also rotates into the key, having responsibility for both 3 and 2.
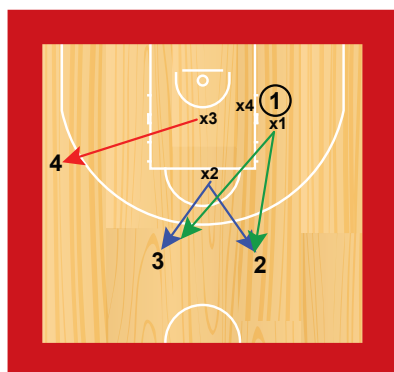
These responsibilities are shown here – with x2 and x1 potentially guarding either 3 or 2, depending upon where a pass is made.
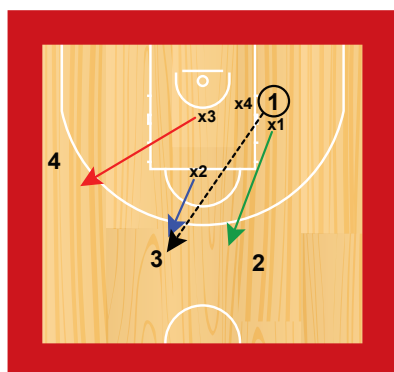
If the ball is passed to 3, x2 takes the ball and x1 moves to 2.
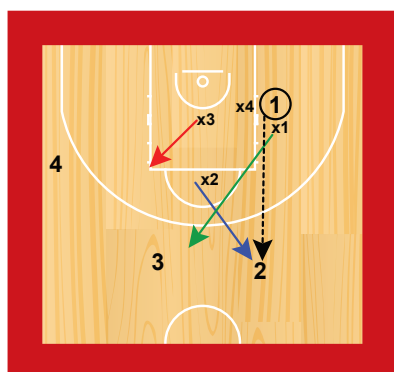
Similarly, if the ball is passed to 2, x2 defends them and x1 rotates to defend 3. x3 continues to defend 3.
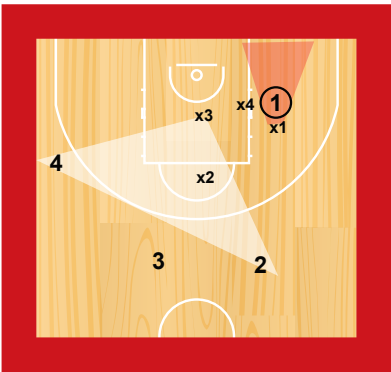
One problem with the traditional rotation is that x1 does not have good vision of the perimeter offensive players – effectively facing the baseline.

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.
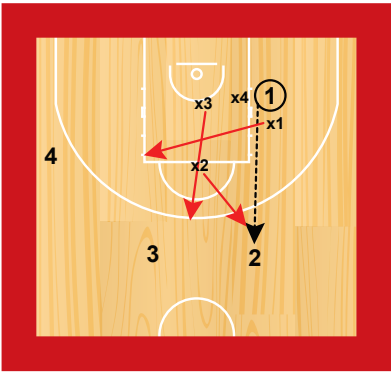
ROTATION AGAINST PERIMETER SHOOTING TEAM

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.
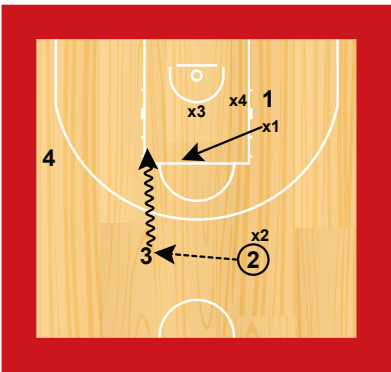
Another issue that can arise for x1 is that they have poor position to defend dribble penetration by 3 if they move as soon as they receive the pass.

x3 is in a better position to stop this penetration, as they are in the "driving lane" between 3 and the basket.
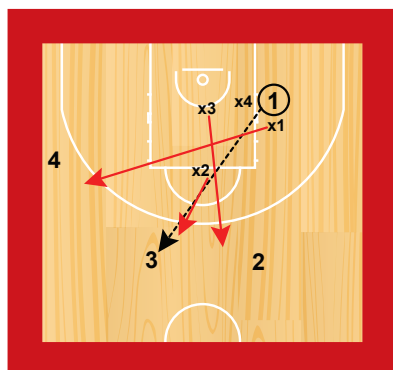
When the ball is passed from the double team to 3, x3 can move to player 2, x2 moves to defend Player 3 with x1 moving to guard 4.

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.
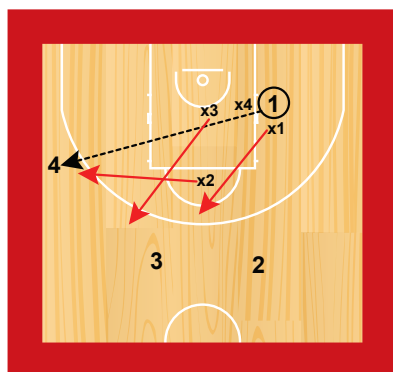
Another rotation that can be considered is that x2 is responsible for whoever gets the ball between 4, 3 and 2 (as they are closer than either x3 or x1 is to them).

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.
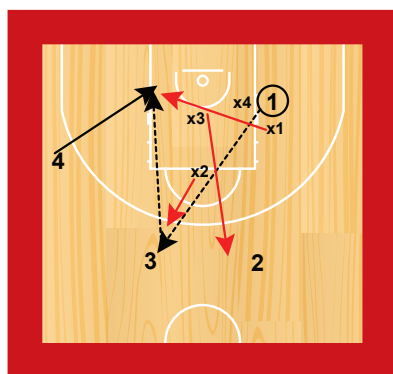
The risk in having x3 rotate away from the basket (rather than defend Player 4), is that 4 may move to the basket and get there before x1 can get into a position to stop them. If an offensive team is likely to do that, then the initial rotation should be used.

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.

FOLLOW-UP

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?

CHAPTER 2

OFFENSIVE TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 2

OFFENSIVE TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

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.
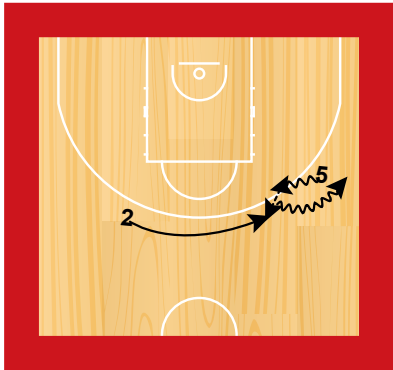
Often instead of a hand off, the player will throw a short pass to their team mate, however this should be discouraged.

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.
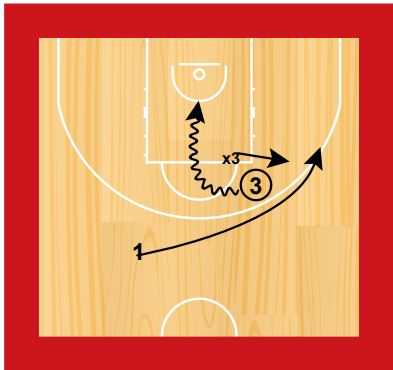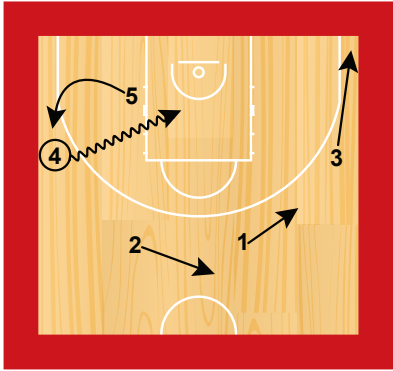
Where the player making the hand off has not dribbled, they may also be able to fake the hand off action.

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, I 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.
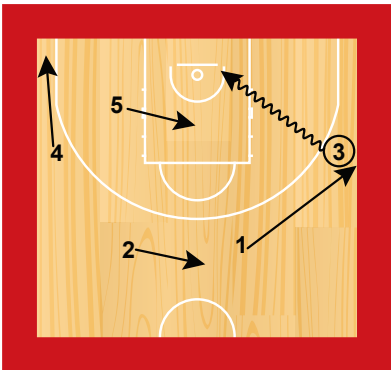
"4 OUT, I IN" PRINCIPLES CONT...

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.
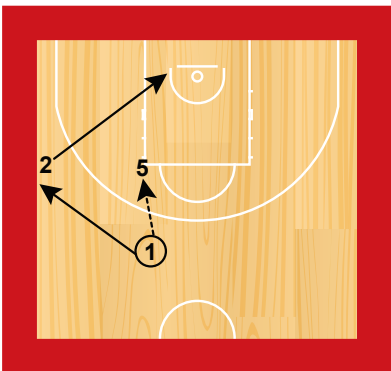
"HIGH POST PRESSURE RELEASE"

A pass to the high post can be effective where the perimeter player is denied.
The perimeter player can cut straight to the basket.
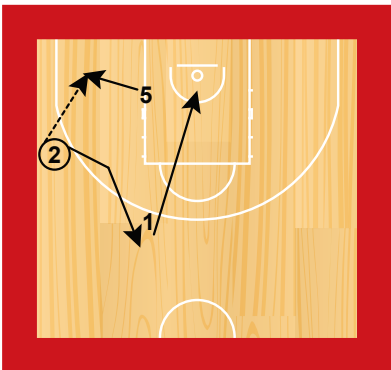
"LOW POST PRESSURE RELEASE"

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.
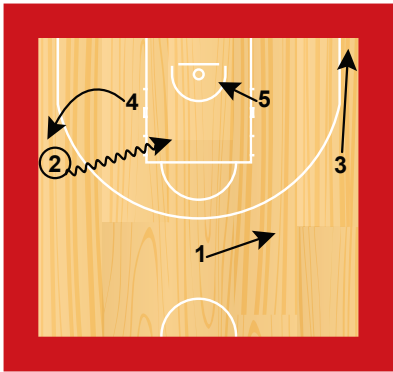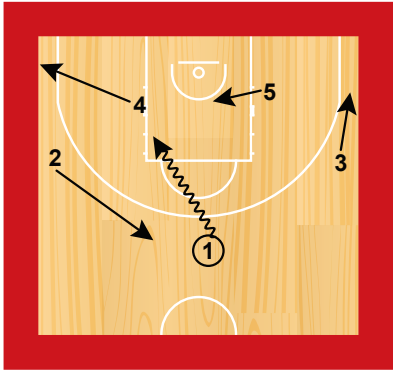
"3 OUT, 2 IN" RECEIVER PRINCIPLES

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.
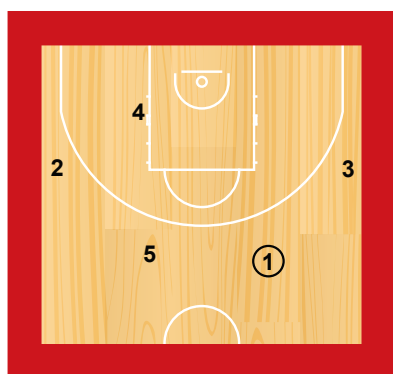
A "4 Out" alignment provides room for players to drive into the key. The alignment can have 2 wing players and 2 players at the top of the key.

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.
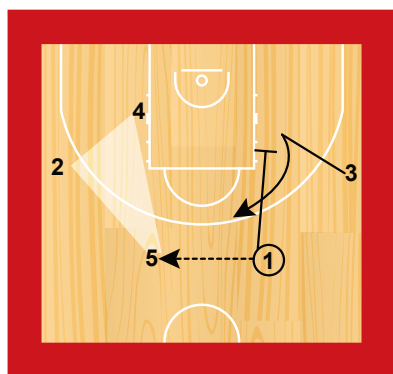
This provides the opportunity for 3x3 on one side of the floor (the shaded triangle) as well as providing opportunities for off-ball screens.

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.
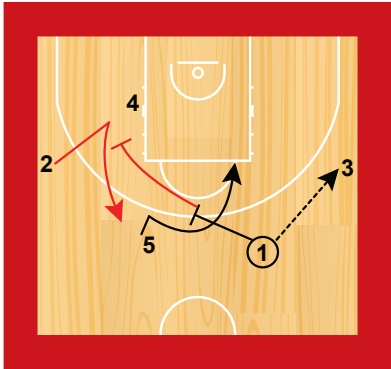
Any time a guard passes the ball (regardless to which side), they screen away, setting screens for all outside players on the other side of the court.

1 screens for both 5 (shown in black) and 2 (shown in red.)
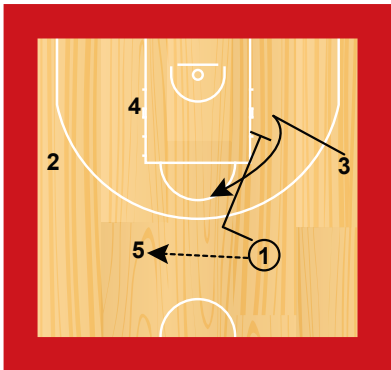
After reversing the ball, 1 screens for 3 who is on the opposite side of the ball.
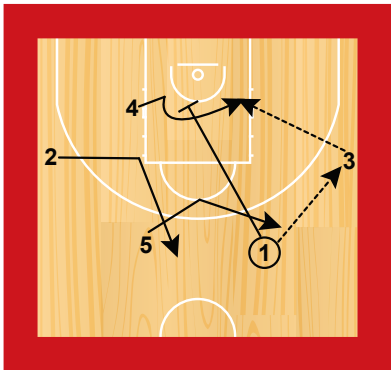
Instead of screening for the perimeter players, 1 can set a screen for the post player on the weak side and the other perimeter players move to balance the floor.
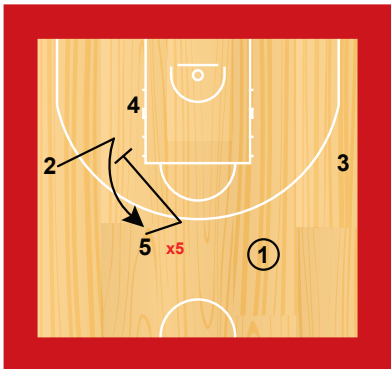
If a player in the guard position is denied the ball, they move away to screen the perimeter players on their side of the floor.

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).
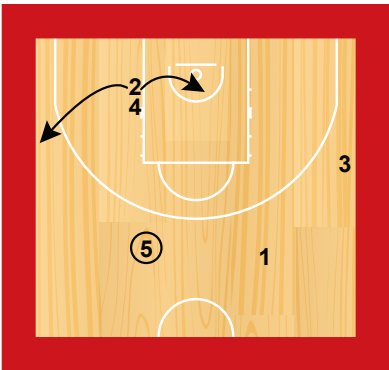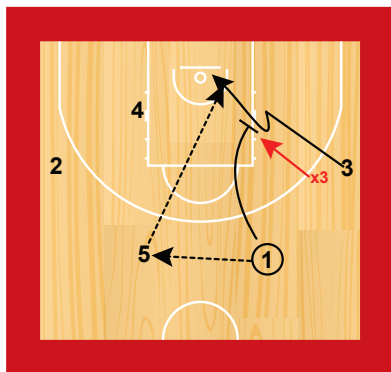
A wing player that is on the post side of the court, may use the post player to get open.
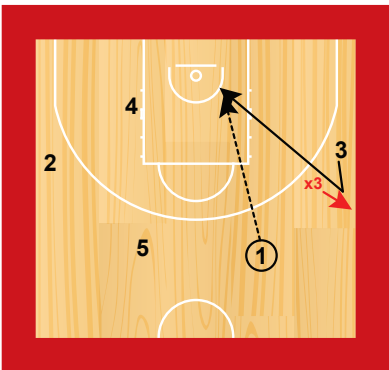
Players on the opposite side of the floor to the post player, may cut back door to the basket if they are denied the ball.
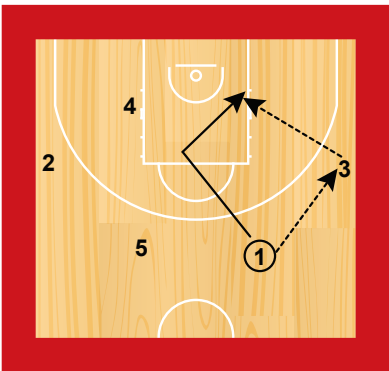
They may also use a change of direction and/or change of pace to get open to receive a pass in the open post area.

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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.
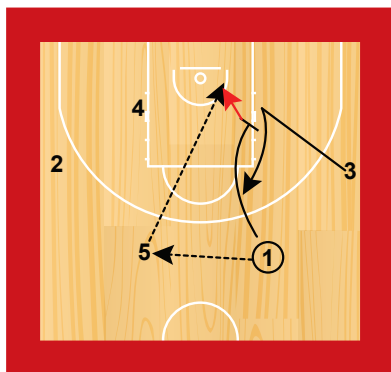
In any screening situation, the screener must also look for opportunities to receive a pass. If the cutter goes high, the screener should go to the basket. If the cutter goes to the basket, the screener should "pop" and move high.

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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.
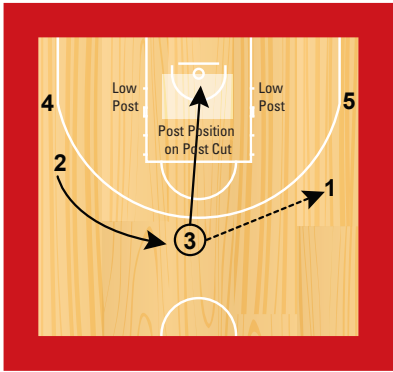
POST UP AT THE BASKET

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.
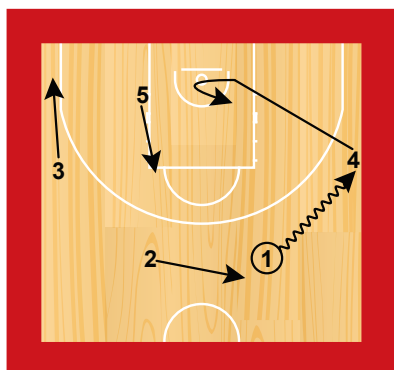
POST UP CUT – "4 OUT, 1 IN" FROM DRIBBLE ENTRY

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".
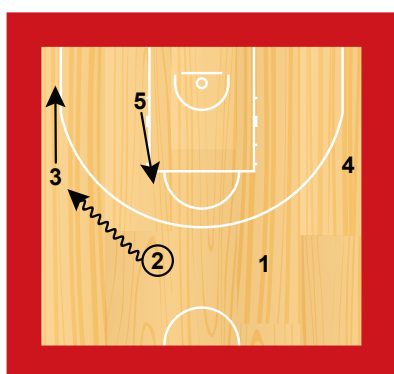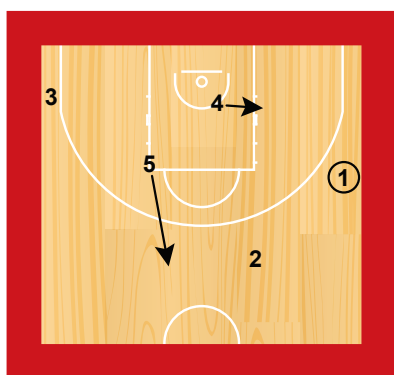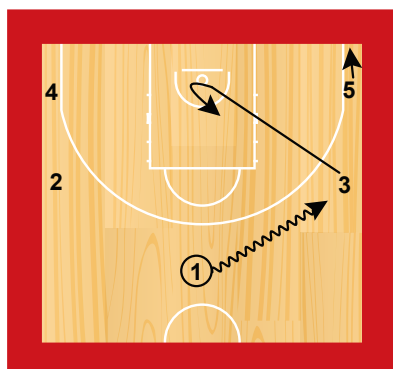

POST SIDE

- 2 dribbles at 3, because 3 is denied.
- 3 initially moves towards the corner.
- 5 lifts to the elbow or higher.
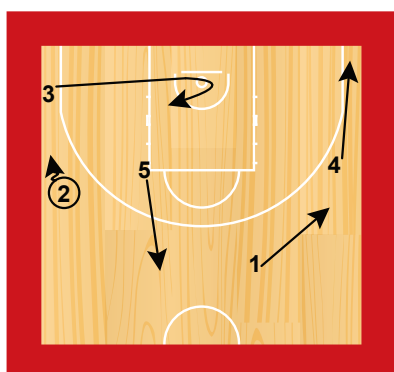
- 3 then back cuts to the basket, getting their head under the basket before posting inside the key way. This cut can also be effective if the ball is passed to 5 on the high post.
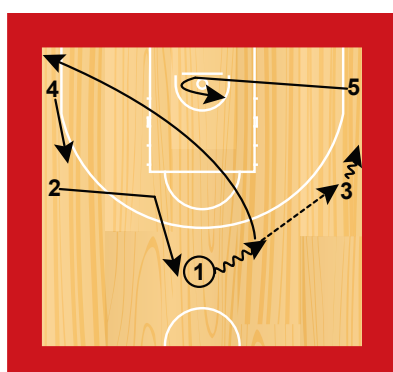- 4 moves to the corner and 5 can move to the perimeter.

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
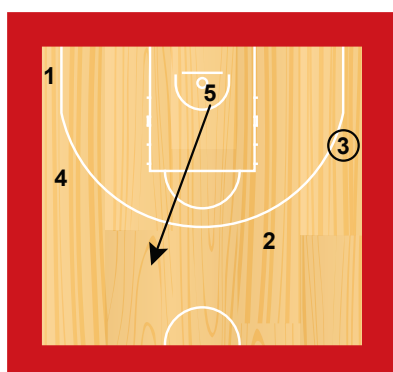- 3 gets their head under the basket and then posts in the key
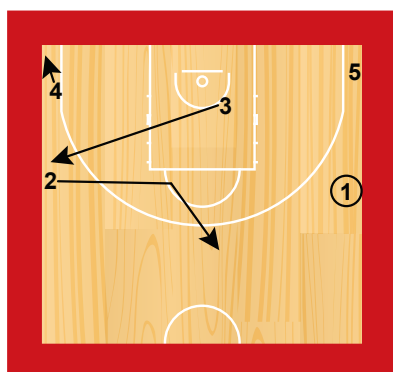
- 4 also gets to the corner and 2 "balances" to the top of the court.
- 3, may move to the perimeter (replacing 2 at the wing) to return to "5 Out"


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.

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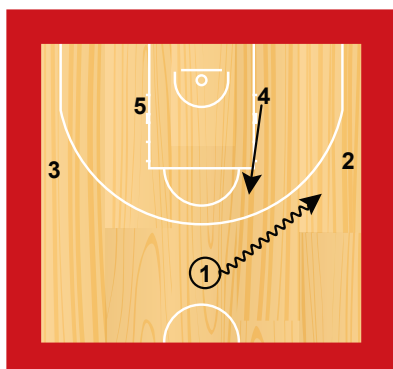
## POST UP CUT "3 OUT, 2 IN" – FROM DRIBBLE ENTRY

- 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.
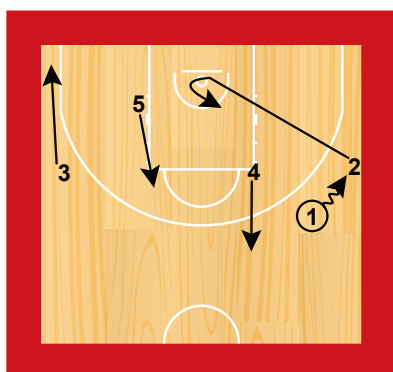
- 2 back cuts to the basket, getting their "head under the basket" before posting up in the key.
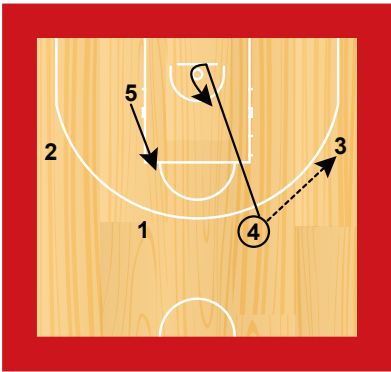- 5 may lift to the elbow and if they do, 3 gets to the corner
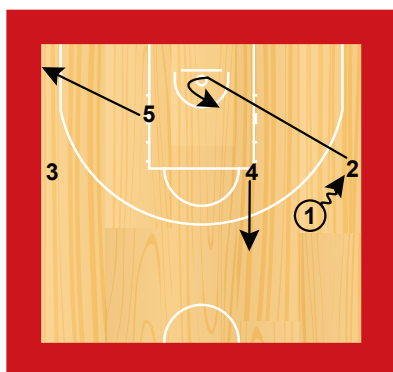
Alternatively, 5 may step to the corner and 3 would remain at the wing.

2. Offensive tactics and strategies
2.1. Offensive movement
2.1.4. Post up cuts
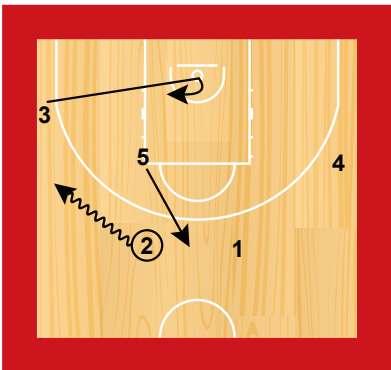


POST UP CUT – "4 OUT, 1 IN" – HIGH POST

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.
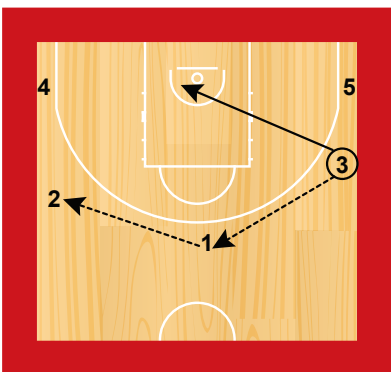
POST UP CUT "5 OUT" – FLASH CUT

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.

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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 defenders 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.
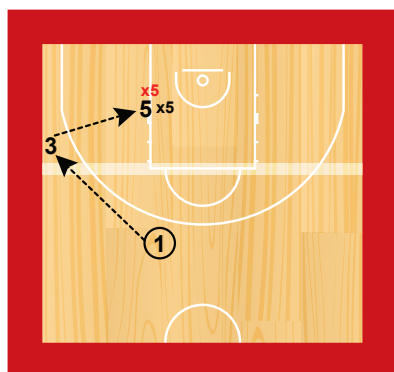
PASSING TO THE LOW POST

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.
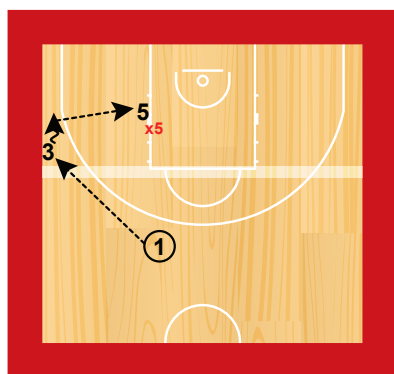

The wing player may adjust their position to meet the conditions. For example, 3 dribbles
toward the baseline, so that the defender is on the other side of the post player.

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.
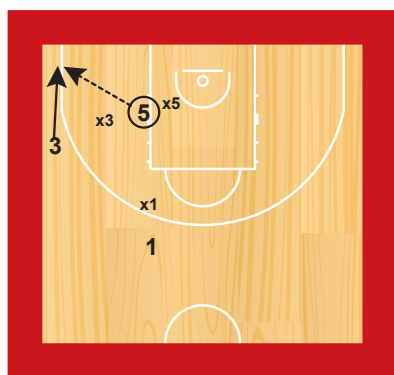
LOW POST'S DECISIONS

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"!
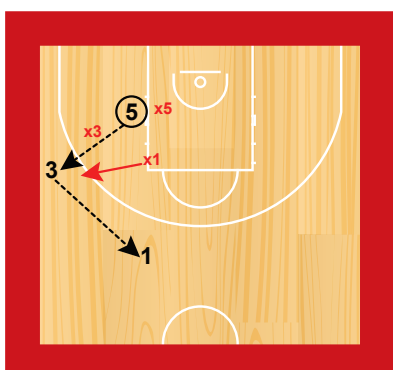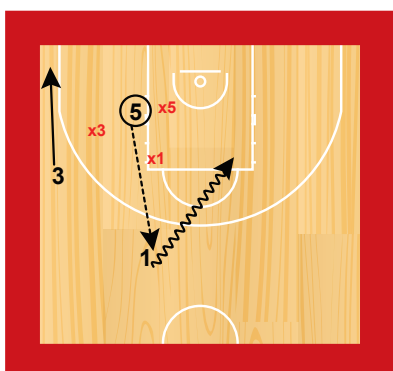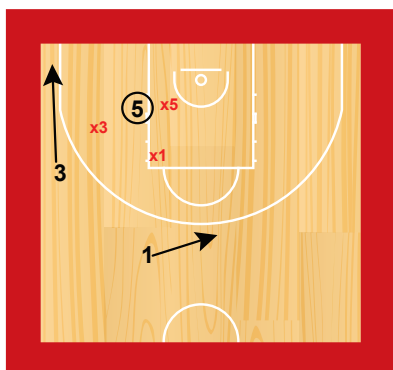
PERIMETER DECISIONS

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 be 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.
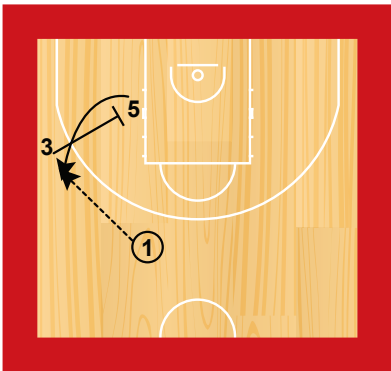
Coaches may allow some further variations in player movement to make the activity less predictable:
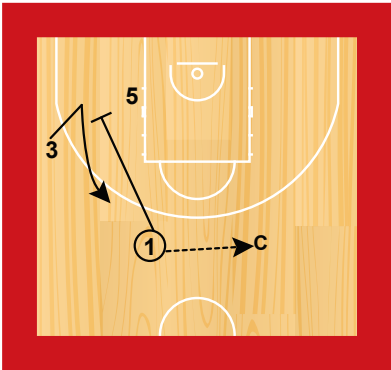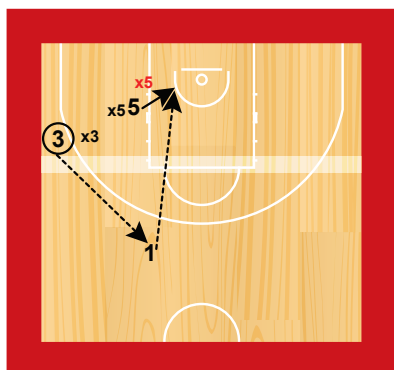
Perimeter players may pass to a coach and then switch positions
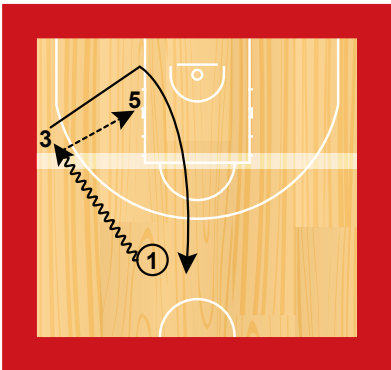
The guard may use a dribble entry, dribbling to below the free throw extended and the forward cuts behind the post to replace the guard.

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 ¾ 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.

They 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.
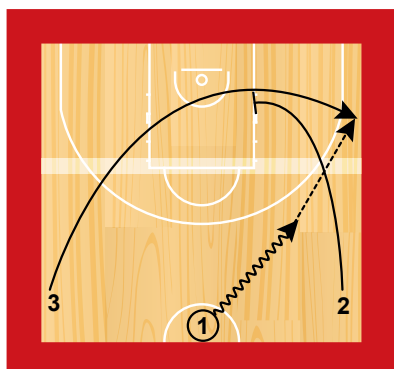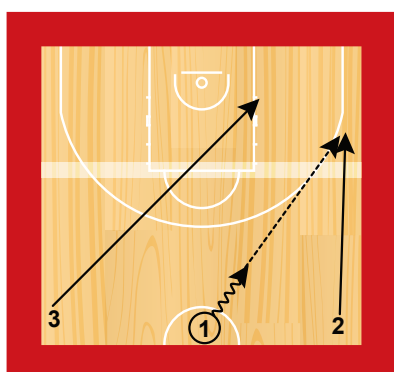
"3X3 FROM HALF WAY"

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.
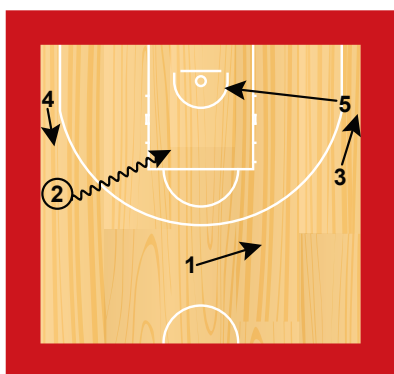
As 2 dribbles into the key, the other players move to "receivers" positions.
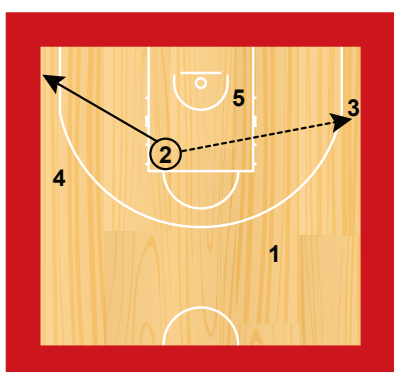
The pass to 2 may create a perimeter shot, however in junior players this may not be a high percentage shot. It may also create an opportunity to drive.

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