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THE SHUFFLE OFFENSE

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LET THE RULES BE THE GUIDE

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BUILDING A CHAMPION ON
AND OFF THE COURT

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CORRECTION

The article, "USA Team Strategy in Japan" (January-February 2007, pages 18-23) incorrectly noted that Team USA Head Coach, Mike Krzyzewski, was the author. We regret the error.

2007 FIBA CALENDAR

JUNE 2007

03 - 10.06 FIBA Asia Championship for Women in Incheon, Korea
29.06 - 08.07 FIBA U21 World Championship for Women in Moscow / Moscow Region, Russia

JULY 2007

12-22.07 FIBA U19 World Championship for Men
26.07 - 05.08 FIBA U19 World Championship for Women in Bratislava, Slovakia
28.07 - 05.08 FIBA Asia Championship for Men in Tokushima, Japan

AUGUST 2007

15 - 26.08 FIBA Africa Championship for Men in Benguela, Cabinda, Huila, Huambo and Luanda, Angola
20.08 - 24.08 FIBA Oceania Championship for Men in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, Australia
22.08 - 02.09 FIBA Americas Championship for Men in Las Vegas, USA

SEPTEMBER 2007

03 - 16.09 FIBA Europe Championship "EuroBasket" for Men in Alicante, Granada, Palma de Mallorca, Sevilla and Madrid, Spain
20 - 30.09 FIBA Africa Championship for Women in Dakar, Senegal
25 - 29.09 FIBA Americas Championship for Women in Valdivia, Chile
24.09 - 07.10 FIBA European Championship for Women in Ortona, Lanciano, Vasto, Chieti, Italy
26.09 - 29.09 FIBA Oceania Championship for Women in Dunedin, New Zealand

OCTOBER 2007

22 - 27.10 FIBA World League for Women Final Round in Ekaterinburg, Russia

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by Ryan Krueger

FIBA

We Are Basketball

THE PICK-AND-ROLL: ALL OF THE SOLUTIONS

Ryan Krueger has been the assistant coach of Virginia Commonwealth for a year and of Maine Central Institute for two seasons. For four years he has worked with the New Jersey Nets, at first as a video coordinator and, beginning last season, as assistant coach. He has written two books, "Yellow Brick Basketball Drills", whose proceeds go toward the social campaign "Coaches vs. Cancer". He has also been an instructor at Five-Star Camp.

PICK-AND-ROLL PHILOSOPHY

Guard Notes

The guard must set up his defender. If he wants to use the screen and get to the middle, then his setup is to fake to the baseline, the opposite if he wants to go to the baseline.

With the dribble I like to teach the inside-out move to get the defender leaning away from the screen. Now, with him off balance, I like teaching a quick crossover dribble to run the defender right into the screener in the direction he wants to attack. I want my players coming off "clean" in every pick-and-roll.

If a player is coming off "dirty" (where his defender is able to stay attached to him), the ball handler is now forced to attack two defenders (his defender and the screener's defender, since he was never screened), instead of one.

If the ball handler has not used his dribble, I teach two ways to set up his defender without a dribble. If the defender is crowding him, taking away his airspace, I teach the "step across." This move backs the defender off him, so he has space to manoeuvre and also get him leaning away from the screen. If the defender is giving him space, I teach a quick "rip-thru" away from the screen, a violent ball and foot fake away from the screen.

The ball handler must always come off shoulder to shoulder with the screener, as not to allow his defender any room to fight over the top of the screen.

Waiting for the screener to be set is vital. If he does not, he will get the screener called for an illegal screen. The ball handler should be setting his defender away from the screen (with an in-out dribble, a step across or rip-thru), exactly as the screener's feet are hitting the ground to set the screen. This insures that the big man is not moving when the guard comes off and that the big man will be able to set the best possible screen for the guard.

He must "turn the corner" like he is running downhill, picking up speed and cannot be stopped. He must run off the screen in attack mode!!! All he is thinking is attacking that big man, getting into the paint by either splitting the pick-and-roll or getting around the screener's defender outside shoulder.

When he comes off the screen, the ball handler must drive it at least two dribbles. He "bails out" the defense, if he takes one bounce and picks up his dribble. Even if the defense is "blitzing" him (trapping), he must "stretch" the defense by taking a minimum of two dribbles, and dragging the screener's defender as far as possible, so the distance he must recover is greater.

"Bingo" is a term I use to describe the ball handler beating his defender away from the screen.

I do not like backing his defender down to get into a pick-and-roll. Backing down a defender takes away the ball handler ability to quickly "bingo" the pick. To do so, he must spin away from the screen, which, in my opinion, is too slow. To

"bingo" a pick I want a crossover (or thru the legs) dribble, because it's the quickest change of direction move.

The first look in the pick-and-roll is always the ball handler. I want him to scoring or making a play 80% of the time. In any pick-and-roll the ball handler's first thought is "attack the big man". His options are always drive first, shoot second, and pass third. If you do not want the ball handler to shoot it, you should not be running the pick-and-roll with him. The ideal situation is to get the ball handler penetrating to the rim out of any pick-and-roll.

Pick-and-rolls "create offense". The ball handler must come off the pick-and-roll to score. He must go hard to the rim, with the chest facing the basket, as opposed to the sideline: he must go north-south, not east-west. If the ball handler has confidence in his reads, he can overcome a lack of quickness.

Big Men Notes

The key of a great pick-and-roll starts with how the big man sets his screen. I am a huge believer in drilling "screening angles" into the heads of our big men. If the center or the big forward "telegraphs" his route and saunters into it as a snail's pace, it makes the defense's coverage very easy. What is hard to guard is when the big man sprints into the screen and puts separation between himself and his defender. It's hard to give an aggressive "show" at the level of the screen, when you are trailing the play and cannot get there in time!

What is also hard to guard is when a defender does not know on which side of the pick to give his "show". The guard must help the situation by keeping the ball in the center of the floor. If he



declares a side, it's to the benefit of the defense, because now it is easy to know which side to give a "show". "Telegraphing" the screen is when everyone in the building knows which hand the defender is bringing the ball handler to. I like the big man starting with his head under the rim and coming up through the lane. Now no one knows which side the big man is going to set the screen. We call this "changing the angle late". The big man must run into the screen and set it with his back anywhere between the "flat to the baseline" and, at the very worst, "back to the corner". Setting the screen with his chest to the sideline, just make to easy to go under. I care less about "laying wood" on the ball handler's defender, than I do

make sure he goes over the screen. If the ball handler's defender has to go over the screen, he is no longer guarding our ball handler. That means that, for a short period of time, we have created a situation where our guard can play one-on-one with their screener's defender.

I want constantly put the defensive center or power forward in positions where they are unable to get a "show". It is much easier to attack a big man, who is "loose," than it is to turn the corner versus a hard show.

It is unacceptable for teams to go under your pick-and-roll. The job of your screener is to set the screen at such

angle as to force the ball handler's defender to go over the top. It is to the defense's advantage to go under and let you shoot a jump shot. They have kept you out of lane, kept you from getting the shot at the rim, and kept you from "sucking in" their perimeter defenders (which creates wide open spot up of the small forwards), all because we allowed them to go under. Pick-and-rolls should be great "attack" situations for your aggressive/athletic ball handlers (hopefully you have some!).

With flat angle high pick-and-rolls, we want to set a screen outside of the three-point line, because it gives the ball handler more room to manoeuvre and more space to get "a head of steam" and

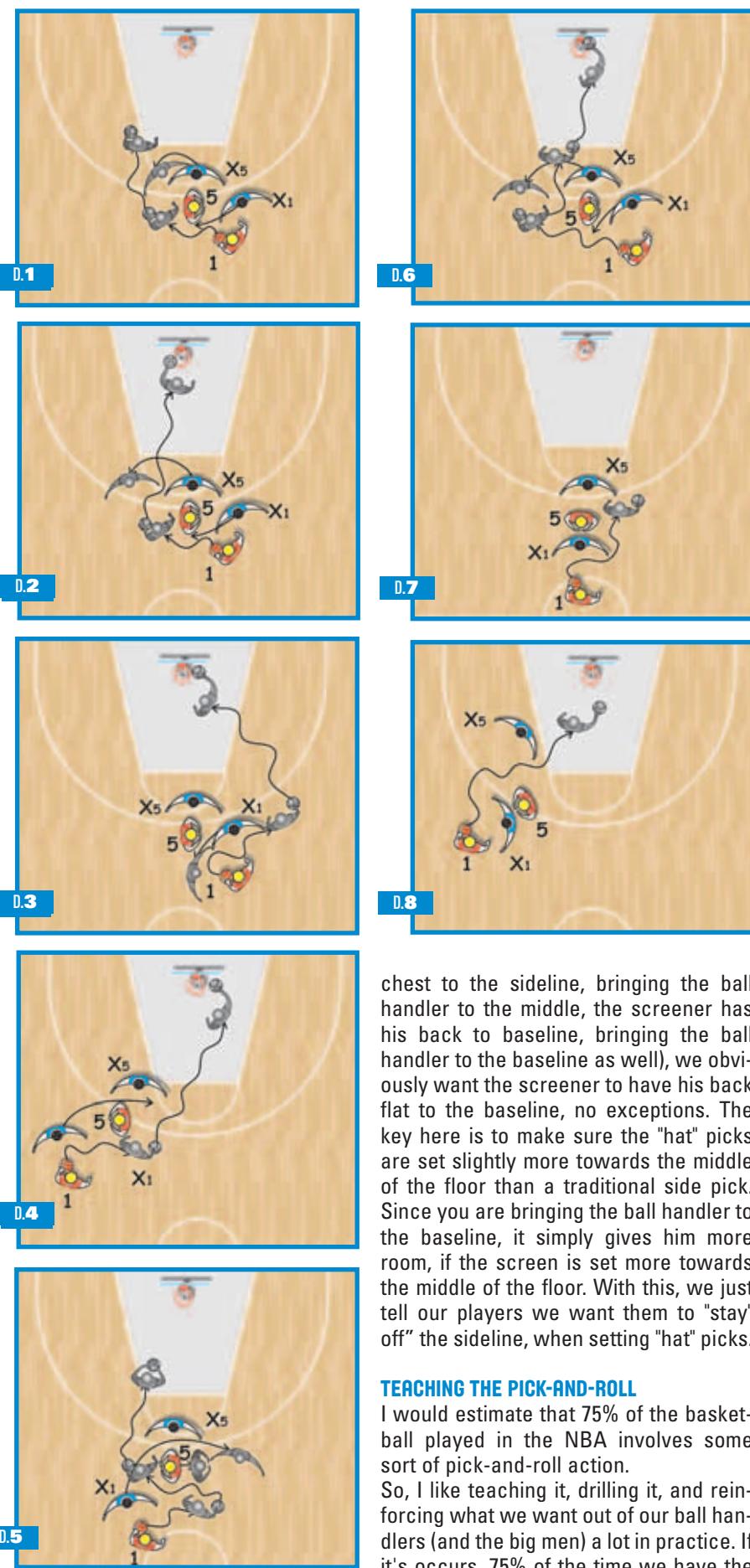
be in a dead sprint coming off the pick, as opposed to starting from a stationary position.

On traditional angle high pick-and-rolls, the big man should set the screen with his foot touching the three-point line. It's the guard's job to run his defender off the screen, not the big men's job to adjust to the guard. Whenever possible, I would prefer to set a flat angle pick-and-roll, as opposed to a traditional angle, because it causes a great deal of confusion for the defense, and consequently, much harder to defend.

A very tough situation to get a "show" on is when the big man starts on the right block, sprints up through the right elbow, and then changes the angle of the pick at the last minute, bringing the ball handler to his left hand. It makes very tough for your screener's defender to get a show, because they expect the pick to be set bringing the ball handler to his right hand. I call this coming up "thru the elbow" and setting a "banana screen."

On traditional side pick-and-rolls, I want my big men to be somewhere between setting the screen with their back to the corner and chest to the sideline (worst case scenario). This is easy when the big men start low (below the free-throw line), because of the path they take to set a screen. Where they run into a problem is in transition setting "drag" screens and when they are on the perimeter outside of the three-point line. When they run into a side pick-and-roll from the top of the key, their path ends up being a straight line to the ball, which means their back is to where half court and the sideline meet (the exact opposite angle of what we want!). In this situation, the angle the big man takes invites the under, which cannot happen. When the big man setting the pick-and-roll starts high, he cannot take a straight line path to the ball. He must take his path towards the rim and then veer out to set the screen at an acceptable angle. We tell our big men to "circle under the ball" in this situation. All this means is they must get even or below the ball, before they break off their route and go set the side pick-and-roll. Against the team that you know they will go over, chest to the sideline is ideal. When teams are going under against you, I teach setting the screen in the same spot, but adjusting the angle such that the center's back is facing more towards the opposite corner, as opposed to the sideline, forcing them over the top.

When setting a "hat" pick (a side pick, but instead of having the screener with his



chest to the sideline, bringing the ball handler to the middle, the screener has his back to baseline, bringing the ball handler to the baseline as well), we obviously want the screener to have his back flat to the baseline, no exceptions. The key here is to make sure the "hat" picks are set slightly more towards the middle of the floor than a traditional side pick. Since you are bringing the ball handler to the baseline, it simply gives him more room, if the screen is set more towards the middle of the floor. With this, we just tell our players we want them to "stay off" the sideline, when setting "hat" picks.

TEACHING THE PICK-AND-ROLL

I would estimate that 75% of the basketball played in the NBA involves some sort of pick-and-roll action. So, I like teaching it, drilling it, and reinforcing what we want out of our ball handlers (and the big men) a lot in practice. If it occurs, 75% of the time we have the ball, we should spend a lot of our practice time perfecting it! The most important

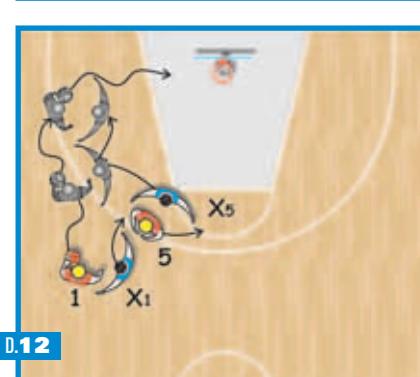
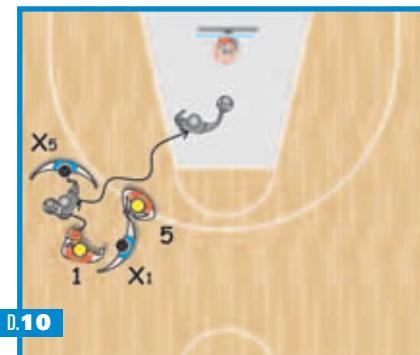
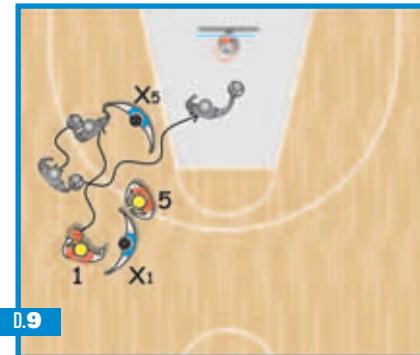


thing I want our guards to understand are our reads on how the defense is playing us. The pick-and-roll is very much a mental exercise. Many players are able to get away without having a great understanding of concepts, because of their amazing athletic ability.

If you can combine that with a basic understanding of how you want to attack, as a result of how they are playing you, it

would be a scary combination.

What happens though when we concentrate solely on our "reads" (how the defense is playing us) is that we lose track of the minor points of pick-and-roll. I remind our players of the "3 S's." Stay "square" (staying square as opposed to backing our defending down), "setups" (fake one way to come off another), and



"shoulders" (come off shoulder to shoulder with the screener). I spend most of my time reinforcing the reads, but I cannot allow the players to slack on these 3 "S's," especially the setups. They more often than anything else determine whether or not our guards are coming off "clean" or "dirty."

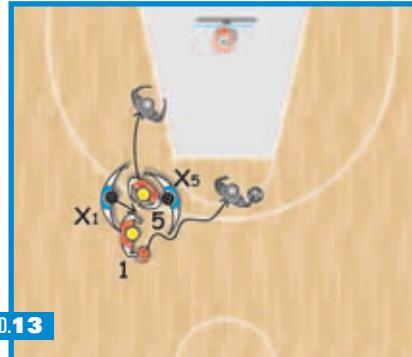
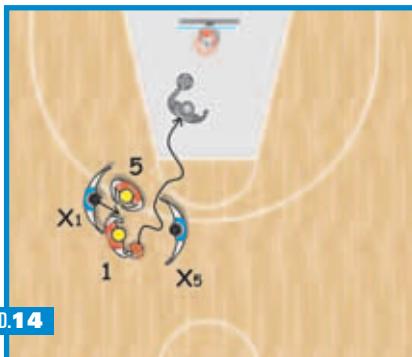
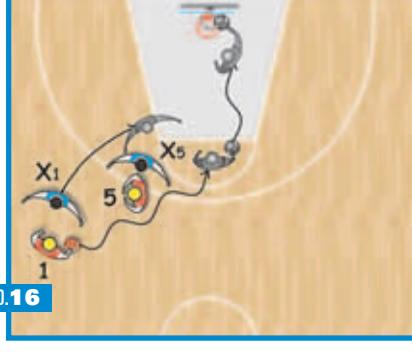
I have found that a routine works best when working on our pick-and rolls. For example, when working on side pick-and-roll reads, we go through the same reads



in the same order, with the same verbal commands each day. Our first read is versus "short show." When I say "short show", our players immediately understand that they must attack the big man, turn hard the corner with two dribbles, and get to the elbow of the free-throw area for a pull up jumper. I do not take time to explain every read. The first few weeks I do, because that is our time to implement our entire pick-and-roll philosophy. But, once they know what we want to get done, the commands become shorter, so that we can get more work done with less talk. Because we do the same reads in the same order everyday, it becomes a habit. I will reinforce having "good setups" or certain key points, but I keep the verbal commands to a minimum and I keep them consistent. Same reads, same order, same terminology every day. The simple commands I give to the players are in quotes. All I say is what's in the parentheses and they know what to do. I believe there must be defense in the drill. It is not enough to come off a coach, who is setting a screen and just to know that a defender hard showed, or went under. They have to see and feel it. We will have normally one coach involved in the drill or two coaches on the "red" situation on the high pick-and-roll. The following is the order of the reads we work.

READS ON THE HIGH PICK-AND-ROLL

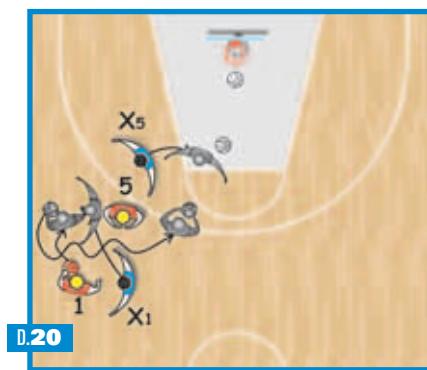
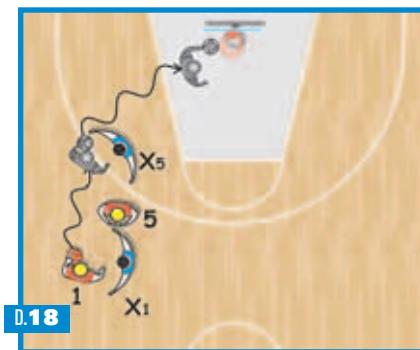
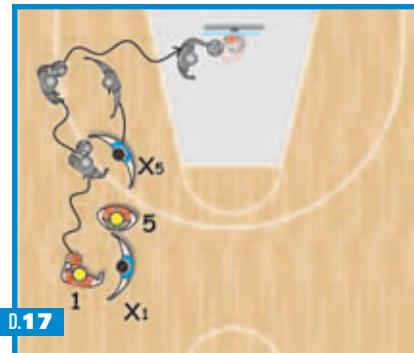
1. **"Soft Show."** When the ball handler sees that the screener's defender makes a soft show (when he makes a short and not aggressive step out) and his defender goes over the screen, this means that the screener's defender must totally contain him with his show. He must attack his shoulder, like a "snowball rolling out a mountain," with a minimum of two dribbles (diagr. 1).
2. **"Hard Show (and Over)."** To contain the ball handler, the big man's defender must show hard and lose contact with the screener. Any time the dribbler sees a "daylight, he takes it," looking to split the screen. The ability to consistently split the pick-and-rolls separates good from great pick-and-roll players. The ball handler throws the ball out in front of him and through the open space, and explodes through the tiny space to get a shot in the lane (diagr. 2).
3. **"Red-Quick Change."** When the two defenders show hard early, almost trapping (we call "red") the ball handler, as he gets at the level of the screen (the screener's defender is showing out hard and the ball handler's defender is running over the top of the screen), can make a quick

- change of direction and a spin dribble to go away from the show, and drives to the rim. The ball handler's defender will have a hard time stopping his momentum, changing direction, and containing the dribble.
4. **"Bingo."** When the ball handler's defender finds out that the screen is coming, he tries to force the dribbler to the screen. When he does this, he becomes vulnerable to the "Bingo", it means to be beaten away from the screen. The ball handler sets up his defender, as he was going to use the screen, and get to the middle, then he beats him to the baseline. The one caveat with going "bingo" is that if he does so, he must be able to get his own good shot, because there are very few other options as a result of his spacing (diagr. 3).
5. **"Under-Footrace."** Whether the screener's defender shows or not, if the ball handler's defender goes under the screen, he will be unable to gather and contain the ball handler on the other side of the screen. So, if the ball handler attacks hard the rim, there is nothing his defender can do to stop him. He can try to contain him on the other side of the screen, but he will not be able to get back in front of him and control his penetration. It is a footrace to the rim. The ball handler must attack the rim with the maximum intensity, with no more than two dribbles (diagr. 4). A stop and shot behind the screen is always an option in this type of action, but we only mention this option to our players, without using it in the drills, because we want them to attack the rim.
6. **"Under-Rescreen."** The screener's defender shows out and the ball handler's defender goes under the screen. In this case, the ball handler takes one hard dribble, coming off the screen, and automatically the screener rescreens the ball handler's defender, who went under the screen. The ball handler makes a cross-over dribble back to the outside. The screener's defender will not be in a position to show, and the ball handler will be able to turn the corner and drive to the basket (diagr. 5).
7. **"Under-Change Direction."** The defensive situation is the same of "show and under". The ball handler uses the screen, but, as soon as he comes off, he quickly changes the direction. He must attack his defender, who is either loose or on his heels.
8. **"Loose & Over-Attack the Big."** The defense must pay the choice to guard, even for a short period of time, the guard with a big man. The ball handler drives the ball hard at the outside shoulder of the screener's defender, getting him to slide, and then he spins back to the middle of the lane for a lay up (diagr. 6).
9. **"Flat Angle."** The screen must be set as high as possible, out of the three-point line, to give the ball handler more room to move with the ball. The dribbler must be in a straight line with the screener, because if he is off to one side of the court, the screener's defender can show out and help on that side. The dribbler must force his defender to lean on one side, and then make a cross-over dribble to change the side and attack the basket. Even if the defender tries to force the ball handler on one side (we call this defensive strategy "blue"), he will move on to that side, then spinning back off the pick (diagr. 7).
10. **"Blue-In & Out."** When the defender tries to force the ball handler to a certain side of the court (usually on the weak hand of the dribbler), often times the screener's defender is loose, far from the dribbler. The dribbler will fake a drive between the two defenders, and then he will go to the middle with a hard in-and-out dribble, attacking the outside shoulder of the screener's defender and turning the corner, because the dribbler's defender will not be able to defend or contain the dribble (diagr. 8).
11. **"Blue-Split."** When the defenders tries to force the ball handler on a certain side of the court (usually on the weak hand of the dribbler), often times the screener's defender is loose. The ball handler must attack the outside shoulder of the screener's defender to get him leaning, then he makes a cross-over dribble back to the middle, split him and get to the rim. The ball handler's defender will not be in a stance to guard him or contain his drive to the basket (diagr. 9).
12. **"Blue-Spin, Still Get Middle."** If the defenders try to force the ball handler on a certain side of the court - with the screener's defender at the same height of the screen - then that means there is no help on the opposite direction. The ball handler makes one dribble going to the screener's defender and then makes a spin back dribble to the middle and get and over the top of the screen (diagr. 10).
13. **"Blue-Go Early."** Same defensive situation, but many times the ball handler's defender changes its stance too
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- early, before the screener's defender is in position. The ball handler simply attacks the basket. His defender is not on the position to contain the dribble, and the ball handler will run past the screener defender, who will be going in the opposite direction (diagr. 11).
14. **"Switch."** Any time the defenders switch on the pick-and-roll, we want that the ball handler attacks the screener's defender off the dribble. We don't want to give the

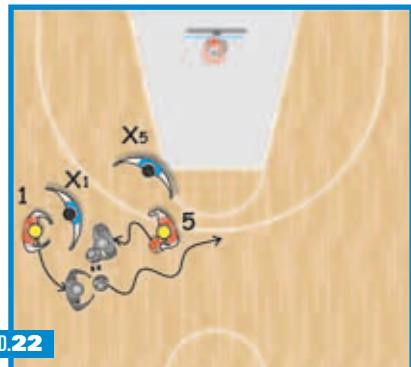
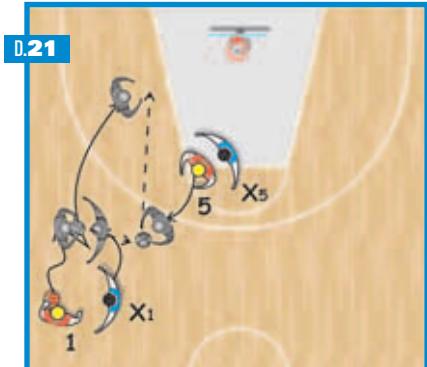
ball to the screener posting up a smaller defender down in a wrestling match. As the ball handler comes off the screen and there is a switch, the screener rolls into the post for creating space, while the ball handler takes his time, dribbles back outside the three-point line and then plays one-on-one with the screener's defender to finish with a lay-up, not with a jump shot (diagr. 12).

READS FOR THE SIDE PICK-AND-ROLL

1. **"Soft Show."** When the ball handler sees that the screener's defender makes a soft exit and his defender goes over the top of the screen, he must attack the outside shoulder of the screener's defender, like a "snowball rolling down a mountain" with a minimum of two hard dribbles (diagr. 13).
2. **"Hard Show."** To contain the ball handler the screener's defender shows out hard and loses contact with the screener. Anytime the dribbler "sees daylight, he takes it." He throws the ball out in front of him and through the open space and explodes through the tiny space to get a shot in the lane (diagr. 14).
3. **"Bingo."** Many times, when the dribbler's defender sees that the screen is coming, he tries to get into the ball handler and forces him into the pick. When it does this, he becomes himself vulnerable to the "Bingo." The ball handler sets up his defender as if he was going to use the screen and get to the middle, and then he beats him to the baseline. The one caveat with this solution is that the ball handler must be able to get his own good shot, because there are very few other options as a result of his spacing (diagr. 15).
4. **"Under-Footrace."** Whether the screener's defender shows or not, if the ball handler's defender goes under the screen, he will be unable to gather and contain the ball handler on the other side of the screen. So, if the ball handler attacks hard the rim, there is nothing his defender can do to stop him. He can try to contain him on the other side of the screen, but he will not be able to get back in front of him and control his penetration. It is a footrace to the rim. The ball handler must attack the rim with the maximum intensity, with no more than two dribbles. A stop and shot behind the screen is always an option in this type of action, but we only mention this option to our players, without using it in the drills, because we want them to attack the rim (diagr. 16).
5. **"Under-Change Direction."** Once the ball handler reads the "show and under", he uses the screen, but, as he comes off, he quickly changes direction and attacks his defender, who is either loose or on his heels.
6. **"Blue-Crossover & Split."** If the screener sets a "hat" pick, a pick with his back to the baseline, the ball handler will attack the screener's defender, creating a one-on-one situation. He will attack his outside shoulder, getting him leaning or sliding to the baseline, and then he will crossover/quick spin back to the middle and get to the rim, because the screener's defender cannot slide with him. (diagr. 17).
7. **"Blue-In & Out to the Outside."** Same "hat" pick. The ball handler will attack the screener's defender outside shoulder, with an in-and-out dribble, drives to the baseline and shots in the lane (diagr. 18).
8. **"Blue-Pocket Jumper."** Same "hat" pick. The ball handler takes one/two hard dribbles right at the screener's defender, and finds that pocket of space, where he can get a jump shot (diagr. 19).
9. **"Blue-Still Get Middle."** Even if the defense tries to force the ball handler to the baseline, it doesn't mean that he cannot try to drive to middle. Often the defender will allow a penetration in the middle. The ball handler dribbles to the baseline, and then spins back to the middle, attacking his defender on the outside shoulder (diagr. 20).
10. **"Blue, Pop, Backdoor."** On this option the ball handler can pass to the screener, who, after bringing the screen, has rolled out. When the ball handler sees that his defender comes out to guard him, but in a hard no middle stance, as soon as he passes the ball to the screener, he will make a quick back-door cut to receive the ball for a lay-up. His defender will be out of position to cover his cut (diagr. 21).
11. **"Blue, Pass & Follow Get."** The ball handler passes the ball to the screener who, after the screen, has rolled out. As the screener receives the ball, he will dribble at the guard to set a dribble screen on the ball handler's defender. The ball handler will drive and turn the corner. There will be no help by the screener's defender, because he is down too far to give any help on the drive (diagr. 22).
12. **"Switch, Drive the Big."** Anytime the defenders switch, we want the ball handler attacks the screener's



defender and we don't want him to pass the ball to the screener in low-post. As the dribbler comes off the screen and the defense has switched, the screener must roll to the post for spacing (not for receiving the ball). The ball handler should take his time and back his dribble outside the three-point line, then go one-on-one against the screener's defender, going to the rim, not making a jump shot (diagr. 23).





by Sergio Hernandez

ARGENTINA'S OFFENSIVE SYSTEM

Sergio Hernandez coached the Argentinean National Basketball League clubs Deportivo Roca Rio Negro, Regatas San Nicolas, and Estudiantes Olivarria, where he won two titles, one FIBA Pan-American Championship, and one South American League for clubs. He then moved to Boca Juniors, winning one title and one South American Championship title for clubs. He was also selected Argentinean Coach of the Year three times. In 2005, he started to coach the men's national team, finishing in fourth place at the 2006 FIBA World Championships.

OVERALL OFFENSE

We tried to flow into offense very quickly every time. We were also able to slow the tempo, based on the situation on the court. Both guards were able to alternate moving the ball on offense, while the power forward or the center were in charge of inbounding the ball.

The big man, who was not the inbounder, sprinted down the middle of the floor to take position close to the basket. The inbounder trailed behind his other four teammates.

We showed a very good transition from

the full court to the half court offense. The guard without the ball and the small forward sprinted the floor wide and deep on the outside lanes, looking to get ahead of the defense. We were able to get the offense flowing into offensive transition with the aim of playing a "high-low game" between 4 and 5. Getting the ball inside was a priority.

On-ball screens (pick-and-roll) were used in full court transition and the trailer 5 screened down for the wings, who often changed sides in "crossing" cuts. We often started the half-court offense with a high-low post set, or "horns" set.

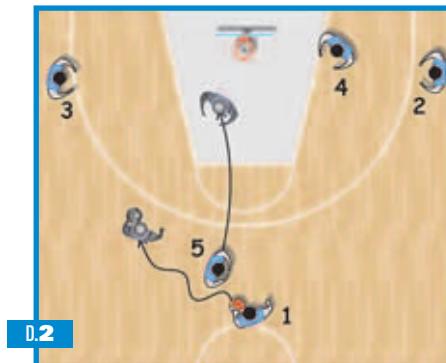
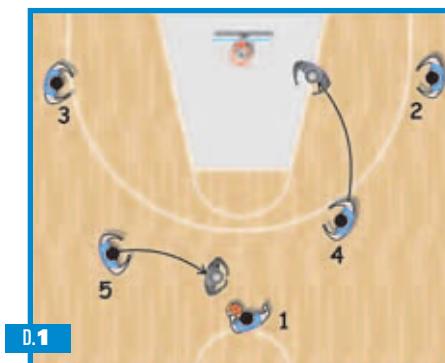
I will now describe some of the various plays designed to meet the specific roles for our players.

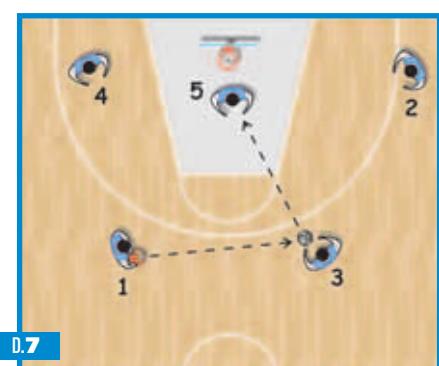
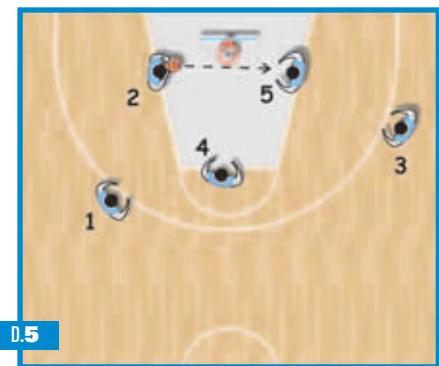
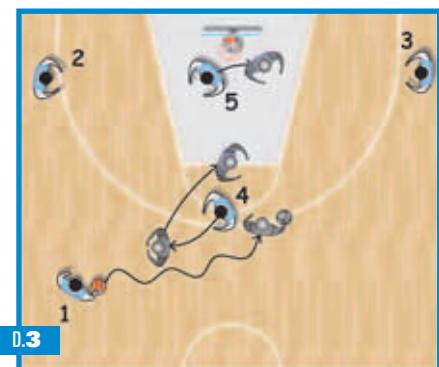
THE PLAYERS

GUARDS

All guards were excellent ballhandlers. Their main attacking moves were the hesitation, crossover, and change-of-pace dribble.

Each player could shoot well from the perimeter and were able to effectively





use the dribble penetration to get to the basket. Their ability to pass off the dribble was outstanding.

They were also very good at taking, and making, a "pull-up" jump shot, as well as driving hard to the basket and finishing it off "in traffic" with a layup. In short, they were excellent at reading the defense and knowing when to change the tempo of the play.

FORWARDS

The forwards were very athletic and ran the floor with great understanding of space and positioning. Each player passed the ball well in the half court and possessed an excellent ability to pass the ball to the open player, either inside or outside. The forwards had good range on their perimeter shots with the "catch and shoot" and pull-up jump shot. In addition, they had the skill, quickness, and strength to play inside and outside.

CENTERS

Outstanding rebounders under the offensive and defensive boards, our centers also had good medium-range jump shots and very effective moves inside. The jump hook was a favorite. In addition, they shot well from the low- and high-post position and passed well to teammates cutting to the basket from the perimeter.

TRANSITION OFFENSE

PLAYS FOR 5 OBERTO

5, Fabricio Oberto, the center, sets an on-ball screen for 1, while 4, the first trailer, cuts to the low-post position (diagr. 1). 1 dribbles off the 5's screen, who then rolls to the basket to receive the ball and shoot (diagr. 2).

If 5 is the first trailer and goes deep in the lane under the basket, 4 plays pick-and-roll on the ball for 1, and then 4 rolls to the free-throw area (diagr. 3). 1 dribbles toward the opposite wing 2, who cuts to the baseline (diagr. 4).

2 receives the ball from 1 on the low post and passes it to 5 for the shot (diagr. 5).

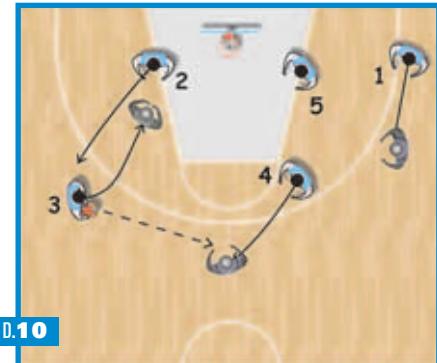
If 4 is the first trailer, he cuts in the lane to the opposite corner, while 5 delays his cut for a moment, and then goes deep in the lane under the rim.

1 is the ball handler on the left side of the court, in this case (diagr. 6). 1 passes to 3 and 3 passes to 5, who has sealed his defender in the lane, so he can now take the shot (diagr. 7).

MAN-TO-MAN OFFENSE

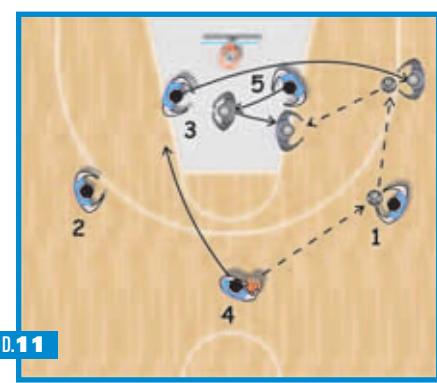
PLAY FOR 5 OBERTO

The set is a one-four formation on the free-throw line extension, with 4 and 5 at the elbows of the free-throw line, 2 and 3 at the wings, and 1, with the ball, in the middle of the court. 1 passes to 3 while 4 screens for 5, who goes to the low post on the other side of the court (diagr. 8).



D.10

After the pass, 1 cuts in the lane and goes off 5 on the other wing position. 4 then screens for 2, who cuts in the lane and looks to receive the ball from 3 (diagr. 9). 4, after the screen, pops out, receives the ball from 3, and 3 screens down for 2. 4 can pass to 2 (diagr. 10).



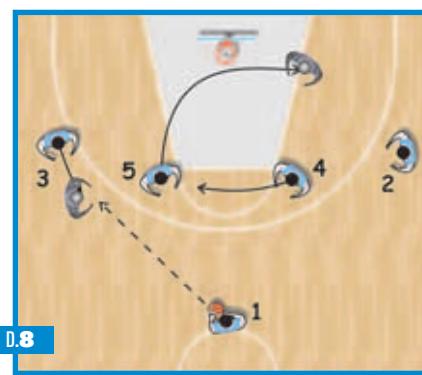
D.11

If 4 cannot pass to 2, he passes the ball to 1, and goes in the low-post position. In the meantime, 3, after the screen, cuts in the lane and goes off the screen of 5. 1 passes to 3 and 3 passes to 5 on the low post (diagr. 11).

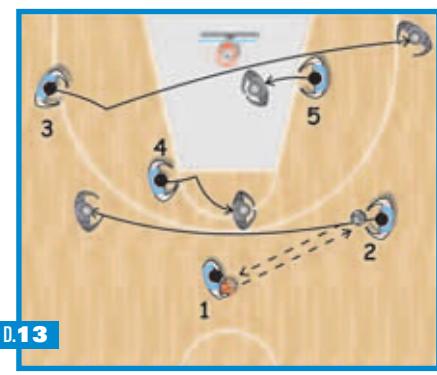


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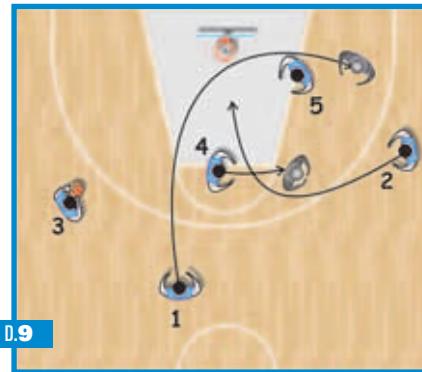
PLAYS FOR 4 SCOLA
4, Luis Scola, the power forward, and 5 set up high and low. 3 is in the corner, 2 at the foul-line extension, and 1 is the ball handler (diagr. 12). 1 passes to 2, 2 passes back to 1, and then cuts off 4's screen (diagr. 13). 1 passes to 2, 4 now sets an on-ball screen for 2, who then dribbles off 4. After the screen, 4 rolls to the basket and receives a pass from 2: if he cannot shoot, he passes to 5 if 5's



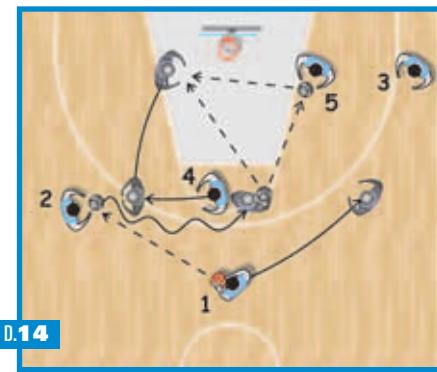
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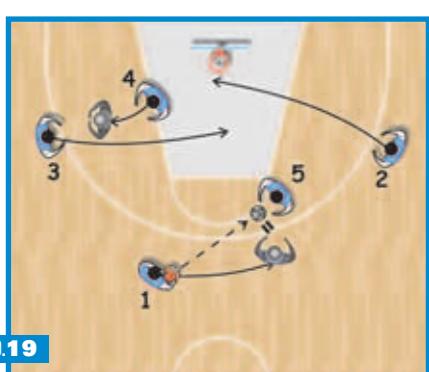
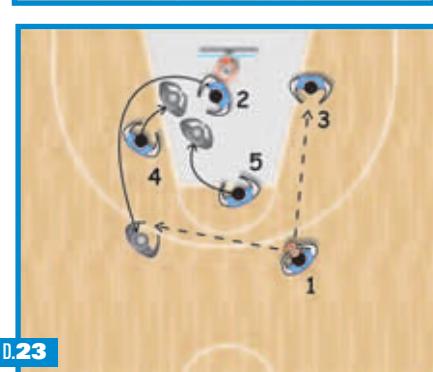
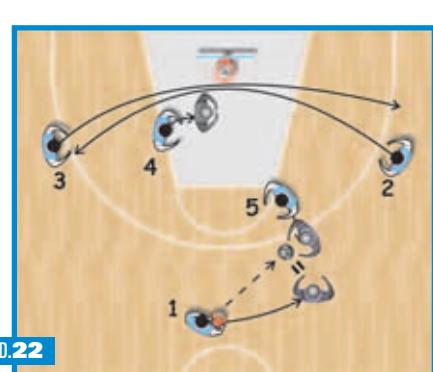
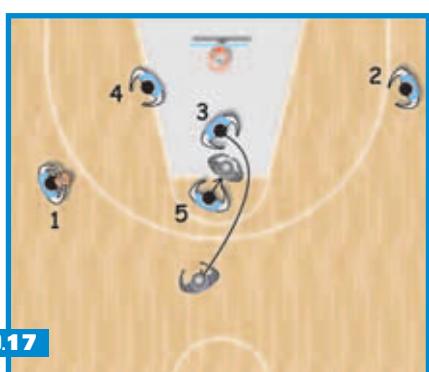
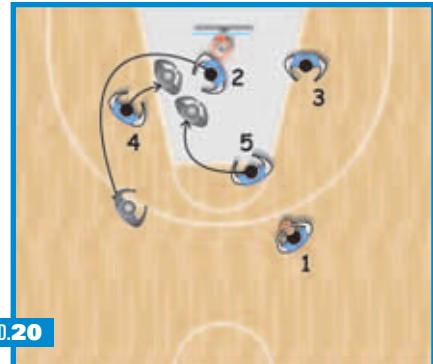
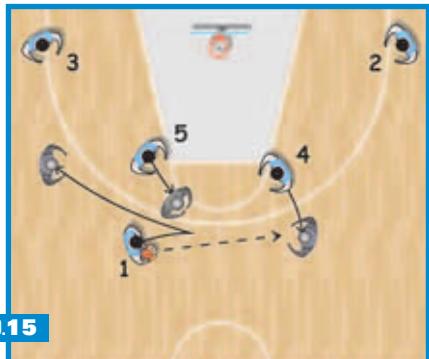
D.9



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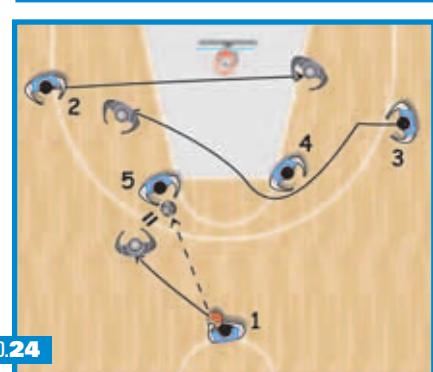


D.11



defender comes out to help. (diagr. 14). 5 and 4 are set at the high-post position, at the elbows of the free-throw area, 2 and 3 are in the corners, and 1 has the ball in the middle of the floor. 1 passes to 4 and cuts off 5's screen (diagr. 15). 4 passes back to 1, receives a diagonal screen from 3, cuts off 3's screen, and goes on the low post position (diagr. 16).

5 sets a down screen (screen-the-screener action) for 3, who cuts high (diagr. 17). 4



sets an on-ball screen for 1, rolls to basket, and receives the ball from 1, while 5 pops out to clear the lane (diagr. 18).

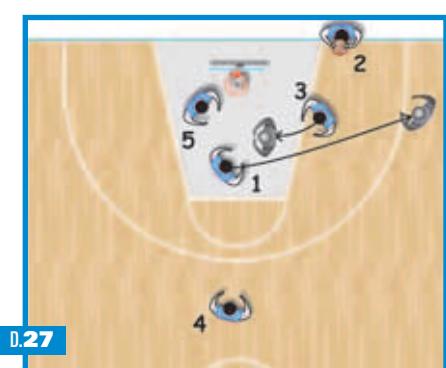
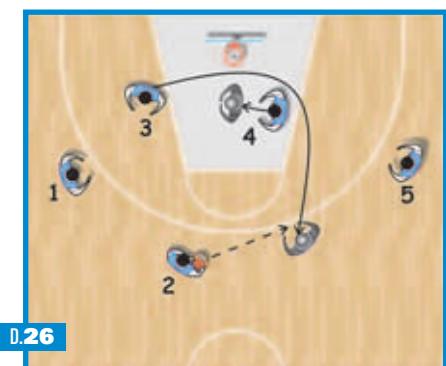
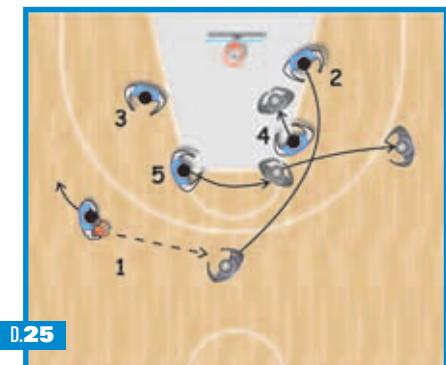
PLAY FOR 3 NOCIONI

5 is set at the elbow of the free-throw area, 4 at the low post on the opposite side, 2 and 3 (Andres Nocioni) are on the wings, and 1 has the ball. 1 passes to 5, follows the pass and receives the ball back with a hand-off pass, while 2 cuts in the lane.

At the same time, 4 steps out and screens for 3, who goes out on the other side of the court (diagr. 19). 4 and 5 set a staggered screen for 2, who comes out in the middle of the court (diagr. 20). After the screen for 3, 4 flares out in the wing position, while 5 screens again for 3. 2 receives the ball from 1, and passes to 3 (diagr. 21).

PLAYS FOR 2 GINOBILI OR 3 NOCIONI

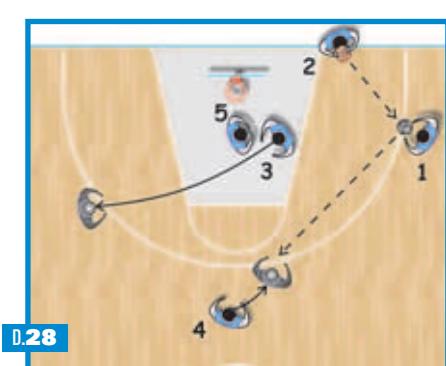
Using the same set as the previous one, except that after the pass from 1 to 5, and the hand-off pass from 5 to 1, 3 crosses in the lane and goes to the opposite side of the court. At the same time, 2 (Manu Ginobili) cuts in the lane (diagr. 22). Right after the hand-off pass, 5 makes a staggered screen with 4 for 2. 1 can now pass to 3 or else to 2, who comes off the staggered screen (diagr. 23).



4 and 5 are set at the elbows of the free-throw area, 2 and 3 at the corners, and 1 is the ball handler. 1 passes to 5, follows the pass and receives the ball back with a hand-off pass.

At the same time, 4 steps out and down-screens for 3, who cuts in the lane and posts down, while 2 cuts also in the lane on the baseline (diagr. 24).

4 and 5 set a staggered screen on 2, who comes off high. 1 can pass to him (diagr. 25). After the screen, 5 pops out of the lane and 4 makes another screen for 3, who comes high and receives the ball from 2 (diagr. 26).



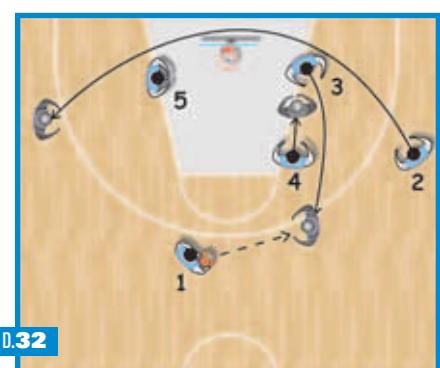
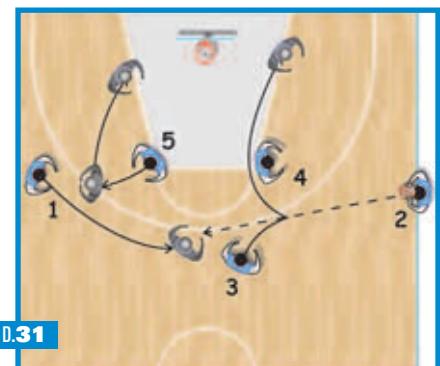
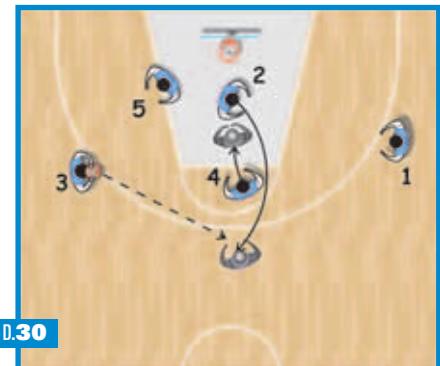
OUT-OF-BOUNDS

BASELINE OUT-OF-BOUNDS

This play is run for Ginobili, who is the inbounder. 5 is under the rim, 1 in the low post on the ball side with 3, while 4 is out of the three-point line. 3 screens for 1, who runs out off the screen on the ball side (diagr. 27).

2 passes the ball to 1 and 1 passes to 4, while 5 screens for 3 (diagr. 28).





After the pass to 1, 2 enters the court and screens for 5, who then posts down low, and 4 passes to 3 (diagr. 29).

4 down screens for 2 (screen-the-screener action), who runs out high and receives from 3 (diagr. 30).

SIDELINE OUT-OF-BOUNDS

1 is on the free-throw line extension, 5 and 4 at the elbows of the free-throw area, 3 faces 4 outside of the three-point line, and 2 is the inbounder. 5 steps out and screens 1, and then rolls down to the low post on the same side of the court. In the meantime, 3 cuts off the screen of 4 and posts down on the ball side (diagr. 31).

After the inbound pass, 2 moves off the screens of 3 and 5, while 4 screens down 3 (screen-the-screener action). 3 runs high to receive the ball from 1, who can also pass the ball to 2 (diagr. 32).

THE SHUFFLE OFFENSE



by Lindsay Gaze

After an excellent career as a professional player (he played at three editions of the Olympic Games and at two FIBA World Championships in the '60s), Lindsay Gaze has coached the Australian national team in four consecutive editions of the Olympic Games (1972, 1976, 1980 and 1984) and of three FIBA World Championships (1974, 1978 and 1982). In 1985, he became head coach of the Melbourne Tigers, where he stayed until 2005, winning two Australian titles and three titles of "Coach of the Year".

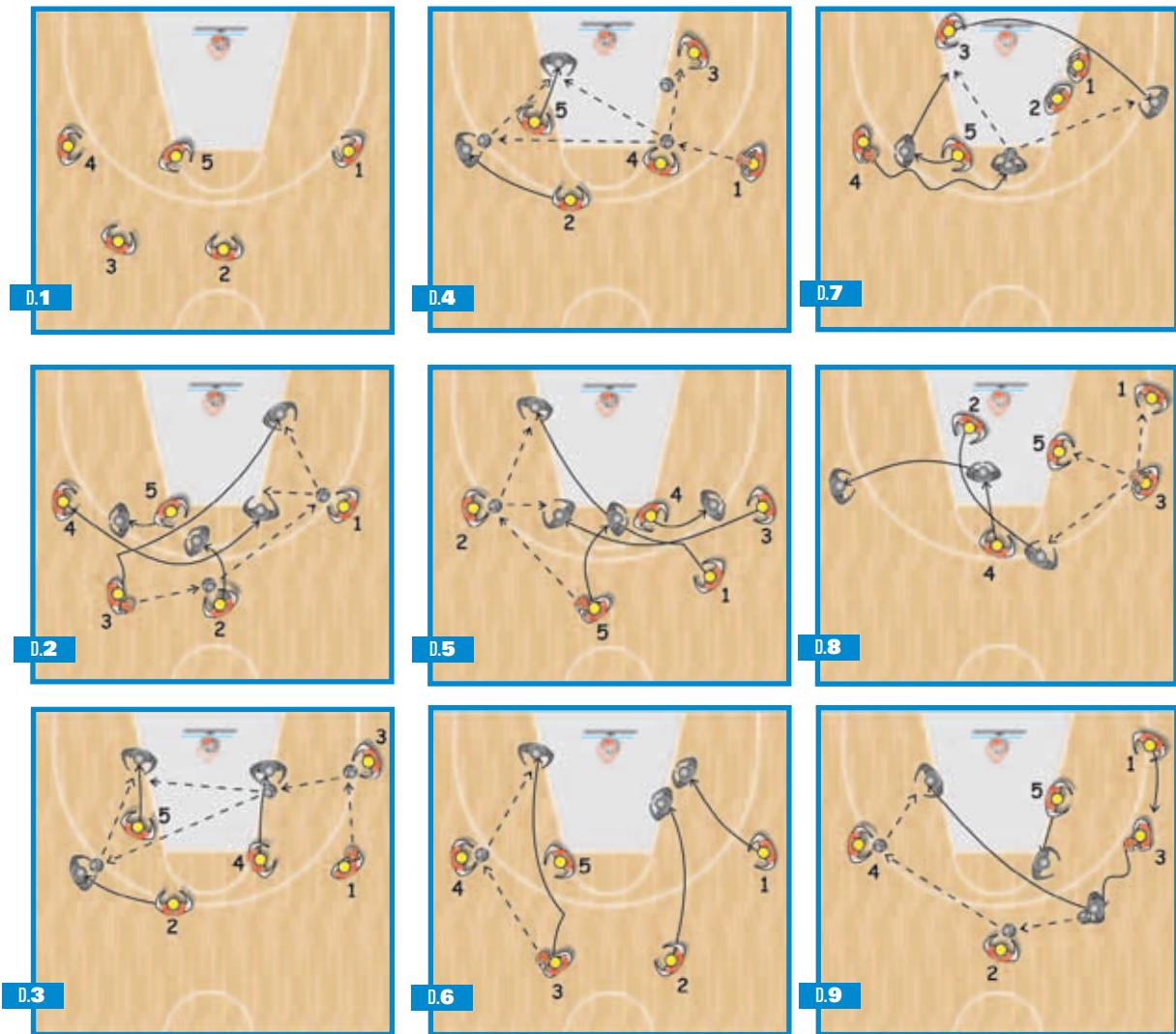
I had the chance to meet outstanding coaches, who have influenced my philosophy of the game and coaching methods. One of the most significant pieces of advice was to select a style of play, learn from others, who have similar points of view and stick with it.

When I took over coaching the Melbourne Tigers I adopted similar methods, although many refinements have been made as the skills and athleticism of players have developed incredibly since then.

The national teams I coached used the same methods as my club teams, but in each case the points of emphasis would vary depending on the talent available.

The Melbourne Tigers shuffle offense requires every player to be capable of playing every position and it is not unusual for the power forwards and centers to be playing the same roles usually reserved for guards. It has been argued that moving the big players away from the basket reduces their rebounding potential and high percentage scoring opportunities, but equally it can create problems for opponents, who, in many cases, is unfamiliar with defending on the perimeter. Similarly developing our guards to be effective post-up players provides numerous op-





portunities to exploit miss-matches.

One of the most important reasons why we used a "shuffle" offense is due to the fact that in our national league and internationally we have always given away size and height advantage to our opponents. If we were to play them at their own game we would be doomed to failure. It has only been in recent years that our national team has developed enough big men like Luc Longley, Mark Bradtke, Chris Anstey and a new generation, like David Andersen, Andrew Bogut and our 2003 World Junior champions, that we are starting to get on even terms.

When a club, or national team, uses the same methods for their offensive structure for many years and you teach your methods at camps and clinics, it is inevitable that opposing coaches will refine their defensive methods and apply different strategies to counter your play.

This has always been a learning process and as a result our club has been ex-

posed to just about every variety of defense imaginable. The defensive methods have varied from the standard 2-3 zones to the less conventional box-and-one, or triangle-and-two, alternating from man-to-man to zone etc. The great benefit of what we do is we are able to use the same basic principles of our offense, with only slight adjustments to timing and cuts, regardless of the defensive methods.

BASIC 3RD OPTION

The basic positions for all players are very important. Variation to positions will affect options that should be included to counter defensive over-plays (diagr. 1).

- ▼ 1 is the "feeder". He sets up with the inside foot close to the three point line at the free-throw line extended.
- ▼ 2 is the guard and takes up a position straight in line with the basket.
- ▼ 3 is the "first cutter", usually the play-making guard capable of posting up.

His starting position is in line with the post and the basket.

▼ 4 is the "second cutter", usually a strong perimeter shooter capable of making a strong drive and jump shot off the dribble.

▼ 5 is the "post man", a good screener and "posttarget."

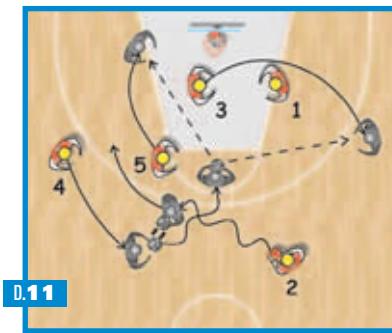
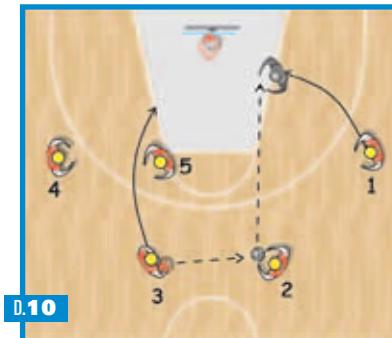
3 passes to 2 and sets up his opponent for a cut off 5.

Note: it is important that 3 does not cut until the pass is in motion to, or has been received by the feeder.

1 may feed 3 if open on the cut (early) or in the low post, or in the corner. If he doesn't



pass to 3, 5 screens second cutter 4 to prevent 4's man from fighting over the top. 2 sets effective double screen and aims to prevent 4's defender to slide through underneath. 4 has opportunity to receive pass for a jump shot around the free throw line, or to set up a high post target (diagr. 2). If the feeder passes the ball to 3 in the corner, 4 slides down to the low-post position for a possible pass and subsequent scoring options (diagr. 3).



Note: whenever a pass is made to a high post or low post position, the player in the 2 spot and the weak-side wing make cuts for scoring options (diagr. 4).

If the feeder does not make a penetrating pass, the players adjust to the basic positions on the right side of the floor and the same options can be repeated with 1 becoming the new 3 man (first cutter), 3 becomes the new 4 man (second cutter), 4 becomes the post and 2 becomes the feeder. 5 becomes the 2 man (diagr. 5).

FIRST OPTION

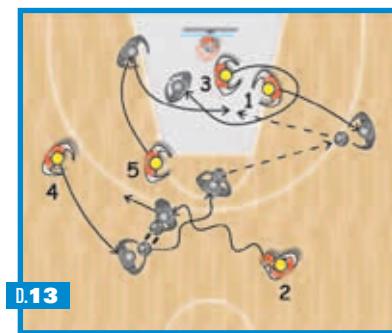
Players set up in the same positions as for a regular third option shuffle cut. 3 has the choice of passing to 2, which will signal a third option, but may choose to pass to 4, which signals a first option.



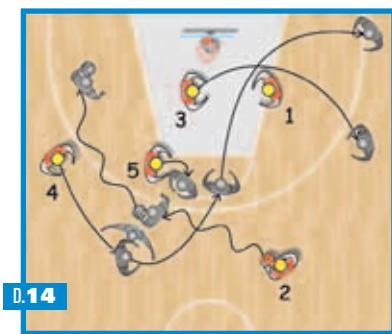
Note: In all cases the post will pivot on the foot closest to the direction of the first pass and will screen with his back to the cutter.

3 cuts using the screen set by 5 and looks to receive a return pass from 4 (and possible scoring option).

If he doesn't pass to 3, 5 sets inside screen for 4, who looks to make penetrating drive and possible jump shot around free-throw line, or screen-and-roll pass to 5 (diagr. 6).



If 4 does not shoot or pass to 5, he passes to 3, who has come off double screen set by 2 and 1. 3 may take short jump shot or look to 5 who comes off screen set by 2 (diagr. 7).



Note: 2 should stay on double screen until pass is in motion to 3, and then he crosses lane to set screen for 5. 5 must wait for screen to arrive before making a cut otherwise opposing defensive players can "zone" the inside area and make good scoring options more difficult. While 2 is setting screen for 5, 1 presents a low post target moving out just far enough from the key to force the defense to respect him. If 1 steps out too far, the defense may

choose to ignore him and concentrate on clogging the middle to defend 5.

3 may pass to 5 in low post or 1, who may have a short jump shot, as his man tends to help the post defender. However, 1 may feed post as well. 3 may also feed 2 coming off screen set by 4 (diagr. 8).

If 3 does not feed anyone, he balances the ball to the basic position and may choose to run a third option, or pass to 1, which will signal another first option on right side (diagr. 9).

REVERSE

When the feeder is overplayed, he may choose to run a back-door cut.

Note: this is the reason 3 should not be cutting, until the pass is on the way to the feeder. We do not want 3 and 1 to be cutting to the same area of the court at the same time.

If the back-door cut is not on, then 2 looks back to 3. This signals 3 to now make his cut (or look for kick back options, described later) 2 then concentrates on the 4 man's defensive opponent and starts a hard drive off the post screen set by 5. 2 aims to give 4 a hand-off pass and continues his cut around screen set by 1. After 4 receives the hand-off he may have jump shot option or a pass back to 2 (diagr. 10).

If there is no shot or pass to 2, then 4 passes to 3, who comes off screen set by 1.

Note: all of this action is similar to a regular first option, except the play is started with a drive to 4, instead of a pass, and 3 is coming off a single screen instead of a double screen. After 4 has made his drive 5 rolls to low post area on the left and waits for screen set by 1 (diagr. 11).

If 3 does not have a shot opportunity, he looks for 5 coming off the screen by 1, or a pass to 2 in medium low post area, or resets the offense to run any of the options from the right side (diagr. 12).

Variation: 3 may run a curl cut off 1 for possible jump shot, or continue to set screen for 5. 1 steps back after screening 3 and if he receives pass from 4 will feed 5 or take possible jump shot (diagr. 13).

REVERSE - VARIATIONS

If 4 is overplayed, 2 should not force the hand-off. 4 may just hold his position temporarily allowing 2 to continue his drive to about the level of the hash marks along the

lane. 2 may have a jump shot or he may look to 4 now after 4 has cut around screen set by 5 (diagr. 14).

If 2 does not have shot or pass to 4, he looks to 5, who has held his ground after the drive of 2. 5 makes a bounce drive for possible jump shot, but more likely to pass to 3, who is coming off a screen set by 1.

Note: an important rule for 3 is to wait on the screen until the ball gets to the middle of the free-throw line. This might be by way of a drive from 4 or from 5. The timing is critical, as there is no point for setting free 3 if the pass is not yet available (diagr. 15).

Alternatively, if 4 is overplayed, he may choose to make a back-door cut for possible pass from 2. If 2 does not make the pass to 4 on the back-door cut, he continues his drive for jump shot options or the same continuity as described above (diagr. 16).

Note: the options described here are useful when aiming to establish early jump shot opportunities or post up options for either guard.

KICKBACKS

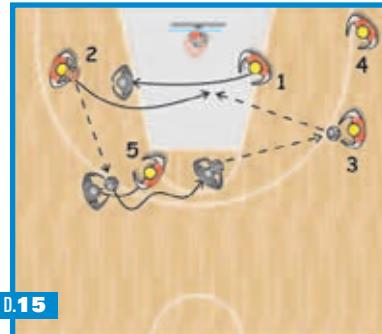
When the first cutter's defender "cheats" to clog the lane, 3 may elect to call for a "kickback" for potential shot aided by a screen set by 5. 5's opponent may try to help to prevent, or block the shot and therefore 5 rolls to the basket on all kick-back options (diagr. 17).

If 3 does not shoot or pass to 5, he hands-off to 4 and thus effectively generates another variation of a first option. 4 drives off a screen set by 3 and if he doesn't shoot or pass back to 3 on the roll off, he passes to 1 stepping out off screen set by 2. 5 always continues his roll to the low post on the right side. If 1 does not have shot, he looks to 3 coming off screen set by 2 or looks to 5 in medium low post position (diagr. 18).

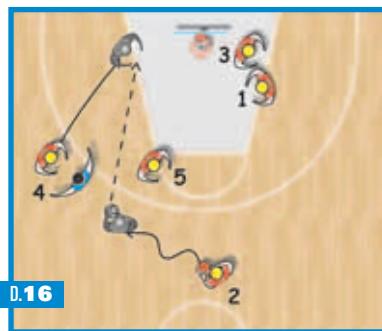
If there are no scoring options taken, 1 balances to new three spot on right side and prepares to run a regular third option or first option (diagr. 19).

The same rules apply if a kickback is run off a first option. 5 must roll on the pass back to 3. 3 may choose to feed 5 or to hand off to 4 or take a one bounce drive to the middle of the key and pass to 1.

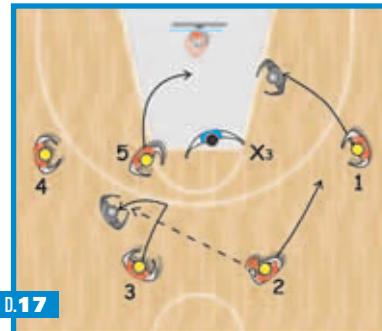
After 4 passes to 3, he waits just a moment



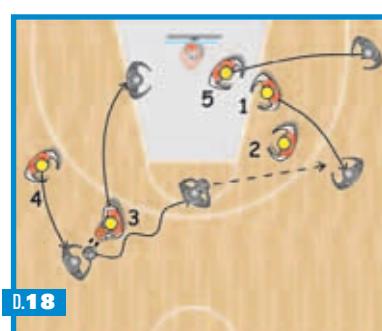
D.15



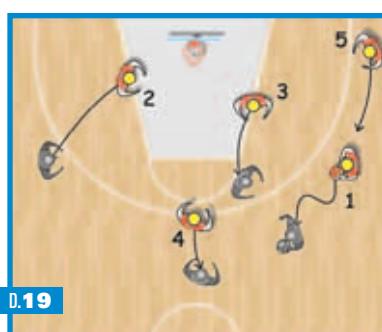
D.16



D.17



D.18



D.19

to assess 3's decision. If 3 drives to the middle, then 4 cuts to the baseline and waits for screen set by 2 (diagr. 20).

INVERSION

When both forwards are being over played guards look to post 5, who steps out to top of lane (or as far as necessary to release the pressure). Guards and forwards invert (diagr. 21).

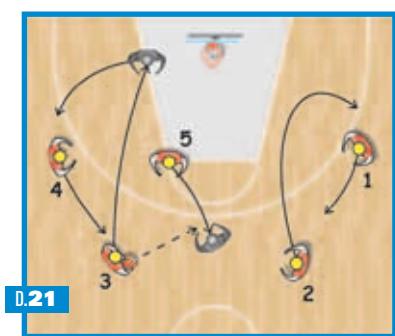
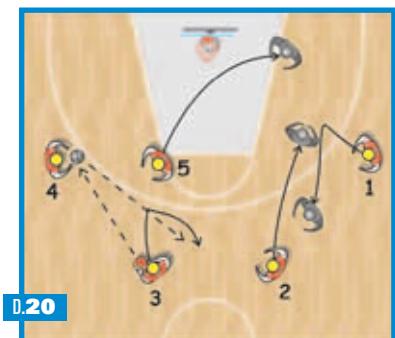
Sometimes cheap scoring options on a hand-off or bounce pass, or late back-door cut on feeds from 5 are available.

The guard, who makes the first pass, is the designated back-door cutter (we don't want both guards to clutter the low post area).

With no "sucker" plays, the rule is "whichever side the post passes the ball dictates the option." If he passes to the right side it will be a third option with 4 as

the first cutter and 3 as the second cutter. If 5 passes to the left side, it will generate a first option with 4 as the cutter and 3 as the driver (diagr. 22).

Note: as 3 is now in a much lower position than normal for the second cutter of a third option, the options vary slightly. 3 is told to wait low for the double screen set by 5 and 1. 3 looks for jump shot opportunity and if no pass balances to new 2 spot.

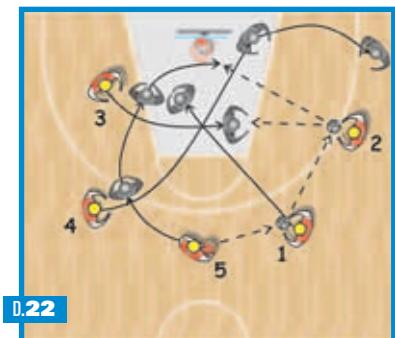


Usually, because of the attention given to 3, 5 becomes the next target as he will curl back inside after 3 cuts off his screen and presents a good option inside. 1 will balance to new feeder spot on left side.

If 2 does not pass to anyone he balances to run another regular third or first option (diagr. 23).

If 5 passes to left side, it will lead to a first option. 4 cuts off the screen set by 5 and 5 will then screen for 3, for screen and roll options or regular continuation if necessary (diagr. 24).

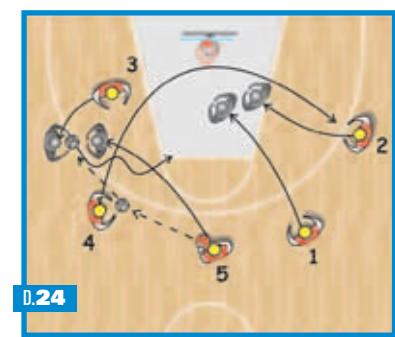
What has been shown here was the basic foundation for the Melbourne Tigers Shuffle offense. There are many other options included in our structure to deal with different types of defense, particularly pressure defense.



Also transition options that allowed us to exploit specific players and balance quickly into out halfcourt game, if necessary. The adjustment to the structure is minimal for zone defenses, although the timing of cuts and decisions for dribble penetration are important.

We always try to remind our players that it is not so much the structure, but how it is executed and why priorities are given to certain elements that will govern success. Trying to include too many options can lead to confusion and poor execution, while not having enough variety will invite strong defensive pressure and unless players are well prepared the structure will quickly break down.

Our methods require all players to have skills in every aspect of the game and it is almost impossible to "hide" inferior talent. It is not easy to teach and all players must be committed to the team structure and the team outcome. However, the satisfaction the players get when everyone contributes to team success is much more rewarding and team morale usually remains high.





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by Zelimir Obradovic

PANATHINAIKOS' OFFENSE

Zelimir Obradovic is the winningest coach in Europe. He has won 6 Euroleague (one with Partizan Belgrade, Yugoslavia, one with Badalona and one with Real Madrid, Spain, and three with Panathinaikos Athens, Greece). He also won one national and one Yugoslavian Cup with Partizan, two Saporta Cups (Real Madrid and Benetton Treviso, Italy), six Greek titles, and four Greek Cups with Panathinaikos. With the Yugoslavian, and then the Serbian National team, he won a silver medal at the 1996 Olympic Games, one gold medal and one bronze medal at the FIBA European Championships, and one gold medal at the FIBA World Championships.

I would like to introduce my starting five players, as well as thank our outstanding reserve players, who helped us to win the 2007 Euroleague.

This is how the players are numbered on the diagrams:

- 1- Dimitris Diamantidis, point-guard.
- 2- Sani Becirovic, guard.
- 3- Ramunas Siskauskas, forward.
- 4- Mike Batiste, power forward.
- 5- Demos Dikoudis, center.

If we cannot run in transition, we set up this half-court offense. I use this offense with all my teams. It has a lot of options for all the players and the play-makers must be able to read the situation and run the different and simple options.

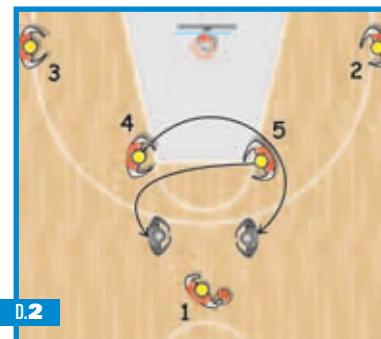
The premise of this offense is to give the ball to players, who are able to effectively play one-on-one.

We set with two players low and wide, and two posts at the high post position, where I need players, who are able to score from the three-point line and also read the defense. We start the play with one of the high post players, 4 in this case, faking a cut to the basket and then screening (diagr. 1).





D.1



D.2



D.3

Another way to start is to have the two posts cross and then screen (diagr. 2). In this offense 5, the center, is the player that I normally want in the three-second lane and 4, the power forward, usually a better shooter, who can pop out and pick. This way, we create a three-on-three play, where two players, 2 and 3, our good shooters, are in corners ready to shoot. On the screen for the ball handler, there are three passing options (diagr. 3).

If the ball is passed to 4 (which keeps the defense busy), we screen on the weak side for the player in the corner (diagr. 4).

1 passes to the guard 2, and then he receives a back screen by 5. 1 cuts off 5 and goes to the low post position on the ball side after the pass, while 4 and 3 start to go in the lane (diagr. 5).

4 screens for 1, who cuts baseline on the other side of the court. 4 then receives a back screen by 3 (screen-the screener action), and goes back on the other side of the court. 2 passes the ball to 5 and follows the pass for a hand-off pass, and then he drives to the other side of the court (diagr. 6). If 2 cannot pass to 5, 5 screens for 2 and the play is run in the same way.

2 can pass to 1 in the corner or to 4 in the low-post position. If he passes the ball to 1, but 1 cannot shoot, he receives a side screen from 4, who has popped out of the low-post position, and cuts in the lane to get a pass from 1 (diagr. 7).

If, on the screen in the lane of 3 for 4 (see diagr. 6), 3's defender helps on 4, 3 then cuts high, receives a screen from 5 and pops out to receive for a two- or a three-point jump shot (diagr. 8). In this play we have set a pick on the player that screens the screener.

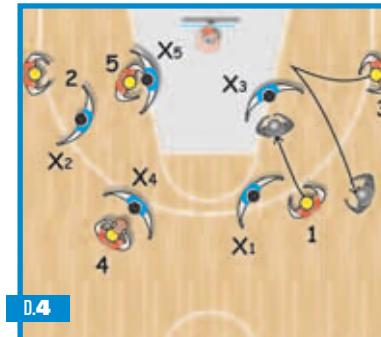
A mistake that usually occurs in this play is that a screener stays too long in the screen, pushing the defender. This is oftentimes called for an offensive foul. What needs to be done is to jump in front of the defender. One of my rules is that the player who screens the big man must be a shooter. After the screen, he is normally open for a shot and many of the best shooters of the teams I have coached have scored from this action. I would like to underline that on this action, if

the defender goes under the 5's screen, 3 will shoot. However, if the defender goes out aggressively, 3 will drive to the basket.

ENTRY PASS

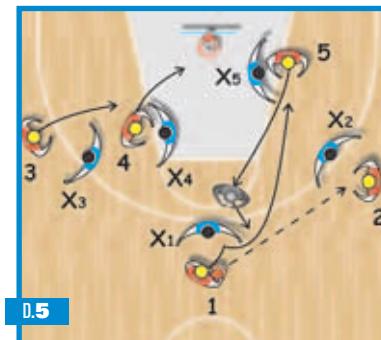
Let's now examine the situation in the case where 1 cannot start the entry pass to the wings or the posts. Here are three different solutions.

▼ 1 cannot pass the ball to 2 on the wing because 2 is aggressively overplayed. 5 can flash to the high post position at the corner of the free-throw area, and receive the ball from 1, while 2 makes a back-door cut and can get the ball from 5 (diagr. 9).



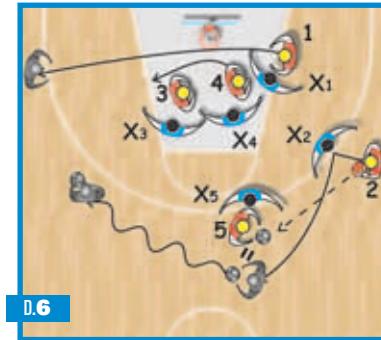
D.4

▼ 1 can also pass to one of the posts, 5, in this case, cut around the other post 4, and receive the ball from 5 since there is no help on the other side (diagr. 10). When the defense is punished a couple of times, in this way with two easy baskets, it will not be so aggressive anymore.



D.5

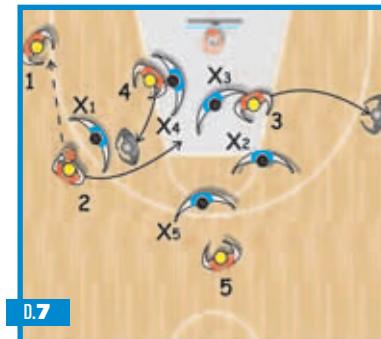
▼ If the ball cannot be passed to 5 at the high post, and 2 is also overplayed, 1 dribbles towards 2, who starts to cut in the lane to receive 4's screen (diagr. 11).



D.6

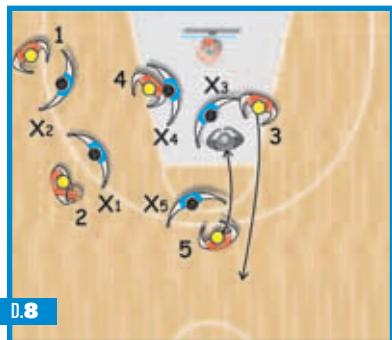
In these situations, the players must read what happens on the court and react to the reaction of the defense. I teach the guards that there should be no space between them and the defenders while playing pick-and-roll. After a screen and the defender pops out in front of the ball handler, the ball handler must take a step-back dribble, a difficult, but important move, and then, changing speed, drive to the basket.

Let's go back to the situation of 4, who is screened by 3. If the defense reacts to 3's screen and covers the cut back of 4, as described in diagr. 6, 4 can make a fake to cut back. He then goes high and runs off the screen of 5 (diagr. 12).



D.7

At Panathinakos (and other teams I have coached), I have many good shooters at the 4 and 5 position. Another important detail on the situation described is that when 3 sees 4, who rubs off 5's screen, he must roll quickly back to the ball to receive it in the lane. However, if he receives the ball outside, 2 screens quickly for



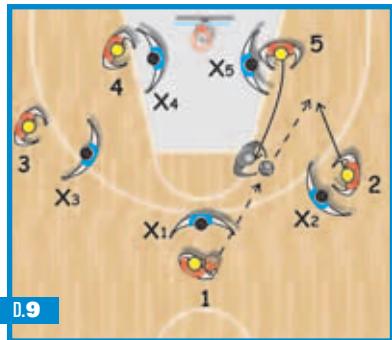
D.8



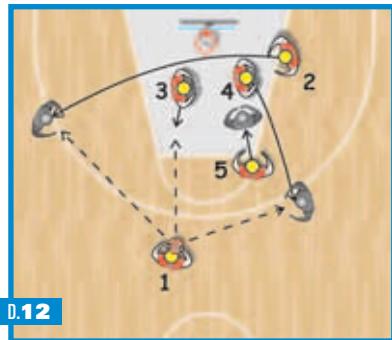
D.11



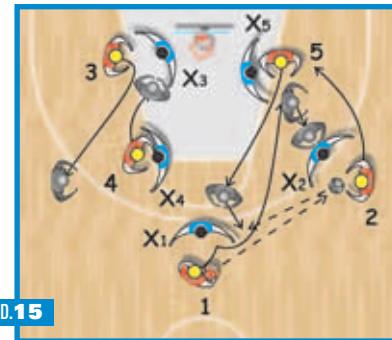
D.14



D.9



D.12



D.15



D.10



D.13



D.16

him right after the pass.

When 5 receives the ball on the low-post position (diagr. 13), the other post, 4, goes to the high post position on the other side of the court. He keeps moving in this area to keep the defense busy, while 5 plays one-on-one in the low post.

After a hand off and the drive to the other side of the court (see diagr. 7), the ball handler has three options: pass to the corner, pass inside the lane, or pass to the weak-side teammates, who have popped out of the post's screen (diagr. 14).

Lets go back to the situation of diagr. 5. Another option, after the back screen of 5, is that 1 goes down to the low-post position, 2 passes the ball to 5, who popped out after the screen, and then 1 runs out to back screen for 2. As soon as 4 sees this screen, he down-screens for 3, who has first made a strong fake as if he were going to move into the lane (diagr. 15).

Another option is that 1, instead of back screening 2, pops out of the the low-post position, screens high for 5, who cuts off

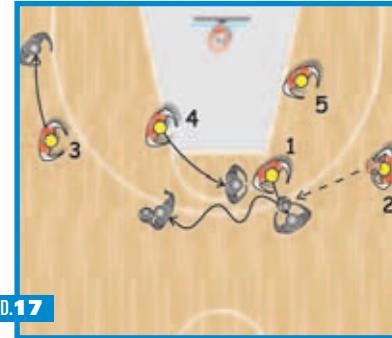
the screen and receives the ball from 2 (diagr. 16).

If the ball is not passed low to 5, but passed to 1, 4 fakes to cut in the lane and then runs high, screens for 1, and plays pick-and-roll (diagr. 17). On the pick-and-roll, the ball handler must be patient and read the defense. In addition, the screener must react to the reaction of his defender.

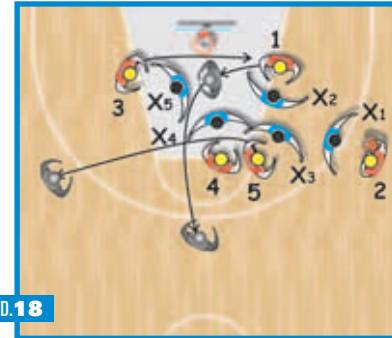
On this play, there are many options that your player can run. They have to be able to read and react to any defensive situation. As coach, it's your job to take care of every option and the details that go with them.

I will now describe this final option. The two posts, 4 and 5, set a double screen at the free-throw area, with the ball in the hands of 2. 1 screens for 3, who goes to the low post, and then 1 runs high off the double screen of 4 and 5.

Usually the defense on the double screen stays high to the ball side to delay the pass to the screened player. Therefore, in this situation, 4 screens for 5, cuts in the lane and 5 cuts off outside the lane (diagr. 18). This option can only be run when there are at least 16 seconds remaining on the clock.



D.17



D.18



Draft some real all stars

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by Raffaele Imbrogno

BILLY THE KID IS BACK (TO BACK)

Raffaele Imbrogno has been coaching since 1980. He is an Instructor for the Italian National Coaches Committee of the Federation and has been Director of the Italian Basketball Federation Study Center. Imbrogno is also the author of several technical basketball publications.

Billy Donovan has returned to the victor's podium with his University of Florida Gators for the second time in a row at the NCAA basketball championships in April. Billy the Kid, the head coach, is only 41 years old. Don't be surprised, but he expects to return again soon.

Donovan has been around basketball all of his life, first as a high school, college, and NBA player, and now as a head coach. After having played for St. Agnes High School on Long Island, Donovan accepted a basketball scholarship to attend Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island. His first two years at Providence were unremarkable. However, a new coach took over the program at the start of his third season, and Donovan's basketball career, and his future, took a different turn.

Rick Pitino was named the new Providence College coach and he liked what he saw in the very active Donovan. At the end of his third year, Billy the Kid was averaging 15.5 points a game.

The next year, with Donovan scoring 20.6 points a game, the team advanced to the NCAA Final Four. Their dream ended there, with a semifinal loss to Syracuse University, coached by Jim Boeheim. Still, Providence recorded a very respectable 25-9 record for the year.

Donovan spent the next year with the New York Knicks. His coach? Rick Pitino. He averaged 2.4 points and 2 assists a game. His career over with the Knicks after one year, Donovan soon accepted a job as a volunteer assistant coach at the University of Kentucky. His coach? Rick Pitino. Five years later, Donovan left Kentucky, at the age of 28, to become the head coach at Marshall University. Donovan was the youngest head coach ever in college basketball history.

In two seasons, Donovan's teams won 35 and lost 20 games, but he attracted the attention of many other universities. In 1996, he left for Gainesville,

In this section, we introduce the latest books, videos, CDs, and other tools that are primarily aimed at coaches, but certainly useful for all of our readers. Please send your suggestions and comments about our basketball-related media for review in this section.

Florida to become the head coach of the University of Florida. I met Billy Donovan in the summer of 1997, in Newport, Rhode Island, where the Boston Celtics were holding their training camp. Rick Pitino had left the University of Kentucky to take the head coaching job with the Boston Celtics. Seated at the table with me for lunch that afternoon was Donovan (who had arrived in a large car packed with all sorts of basketball gear and college scouting reports), Tubby Smith, who had just taken the University of Kentucky coaching job, Tim Welch, the coach of Providence College, and Pitino.

Donovan was one just "one of the guys." He was funny, lively, and ready to taunt his colleagues. But he clearly had ideas about basketball and about the methods to teach it. He exchanged ideas on offensive and defensive strategies with these great basketball minds, and he had a lot to say. I was very impressed with him.

Now Billy Donovan is at the top of the basketball mountain. He has many more years of coaching ahead of him and it will be interesting to see how many times he returns to the NCAA Final Four. Of course, there is a chance he may leave the University of Florida and take a head coaching job in the NBA. But, like Coach Dean Smith, who spent his entire coaching career at the University of North Carolina, leading the Tar Heels to numerous NCAA titles, Billy may take that same route. I wish Billy the Kid the best of luck. He is a great coach with an even greater future.

In the meantime, Championship Productions celebrates the back-to-back NCAA championships of Billy Donovan and his University team by offering the following DVDs:

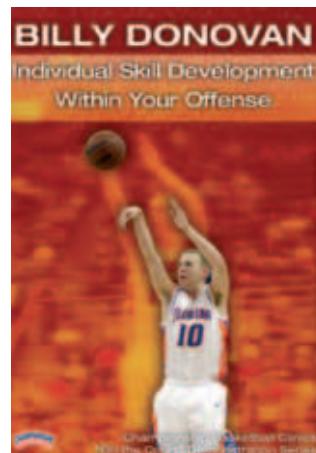
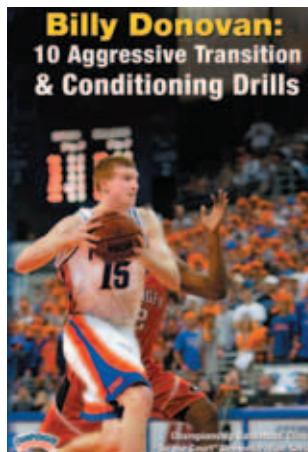
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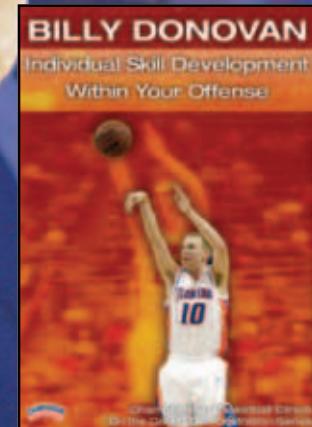
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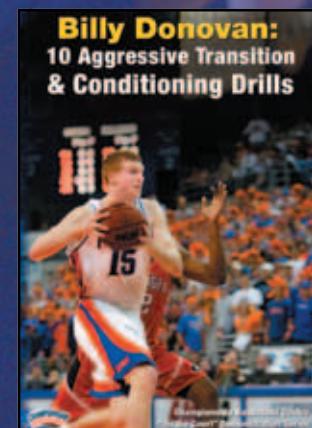
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We Are Basketball



LET THE RULES BE THE GUIDE



Peter Webb has been an IAABO (International Association of Approved Basketball Officials) basketball official for 44 years. Webb has officiated at the high school level (28 years) and collegiate level (32 years). He is a Past President of IAABO, has served as the Director of IAABO Officials' Schools throughout the USA and Germany. Webb just completed 16 years as the Maine State Commissioner of Basketball. He is a member of the State of Maine Sports Hall of Fame and was recently selected as an inductee to the NFHS National Hall of Fame.

Ray McClure has been officiating for more than 20 years, beginning locally in the middle school, then has continued on through the high school ranks, college basketball and ABA Pro basketball. He has developed the "Five-Star Basketball Official's Program," which includes classroom teaching, on the court training, with full rules and mechanics knowledge.

In today's "basketball world," we find various "approaches," "guidelines" and "versions," by which officials are being instructed to "call the game." Some have even gone so far as to create their own "philosophy"...their own "unique way" to "call the game."

One would like to hear the leaders instruct everyone to "call the game by the rules". Instead...we hear officials making statements like:

- ▼ "I wouldn't have called that."
- ▼ "I would have passed on that."
- ▼ "The game didn't need that call."
- ▼ "The game needed a foul called there."
- ▼ "If it's a foul on this end, let's make sure it's a foul on the other end."
- ▼ "He's not bothering me while he's out of the coaching box."
- ▼ "Let's make sure the fifth foul is a good one."
- ▼ "The coach is not going to like that."
- ▼ "Let's keep an eye on the foul counts."

And the justifying and rationalizing comments continue.

When leaders of organizations or individuals feel it necessary to create their own "version" by which to "call the game," one would have to question either their rules knowledge or their willingness to abide by the rulebook itself. Where are the instructions to simply "call the game by the rules of the game"? Where are the instructions to "care about the game" and "honour the codes" by which the basketball official is to be measured?

All too often, instructors, interpreters and/or supervisors teach that violations are to be called by the rules, but that rulings concerning contact are to be a "personal" thing, or an organization's "philosophical" approach. Is it any wonder coaches often ask officials, "How are you calling hand-checking tonight?" "How are you going to call over-the-back?" "How are you calling 3-seconds?" But they never find it necessary to ask, "How are you calling out-of-bounds?"

The purpose here is to make it clear, just as various rules bodies have done: "The rules pertaining to contact are just as rules-based as those pertaining to viola-

tions." They are very clear as to what contact is illegal and what contact is legal. Some may be surprised to learn that legal contact even has a name: "incidental" contact. Sometimes the most severe contact in the game is incidental, while at other times the slightest touch is a foul ... by rule!

THE RULES OF CONTACT

FOULS

A foul is defined in Article 32.1.2 as "An infraction of the rules, concerning illegal personal contact with an opponent and/or unsportsmanlike behaviour." Officials can easily recognize these infractions provided they know the rules which pertain to contact.

There are several types of fouls, but all fouls are categorized as either personal or technical.

- ▼ A personal foul is a player's contact foul with an opponent, whether the ball is live or dead.
- ▼ A technical foul is a player's non-contact foul of a behavioural nature, or a foul by a coach, assistant coach, substitute or team follower.

Incidental (legal) contact is permitted by rule and is therefore not to be ruled as a foul. Please don't refer to it as "Common Sense Officiating"; it is "incidental contact", and is covered in a rule. FIBA acknowledges an awareness of the reality of incidental contact in Article 32.1.1: "During a game in which ten (10) players are moving at speed in a limited space, personal contact cannot be avoided." As previously stated, it is possible that the strong contact in a game could be ruled as incidental, depending on the circumstances of that contact.

Included among examples of contact that would normally be judged as "incidental" are situations such as:

- ▼ Unintentional contact in attempting to reach a loose ball.
- ▼ Contact that occurs when opponents are in equally favorable positions to perform normal game movements.
- ▼ Contact which does not hinder the opponent from participating in normal game movements.
- ▼ Contact which is created as a result of a "blind screen", provided the contact doesn't cause traveling.

Additional support that the rules of the game are well-written as they define and describe what is legal contact and what is illegal contact, is documented in Articles 32 - 39. These articles provide a very detailed description of contact that is an infraction of the rules and therefore a foul.



CONTACT BY THE DRIBBLER

The rules of contact apply to a dribbler in the same way as they apply to any other player. A dribbler is not permitted to:

- ▼ Charge into an opponent.
- ▼ Contact an opponent in his/her path.
- ▼ Attempt to dribble between an opponent and a boundary line, unless there is enough space to avoid contact.
- ▼ Attempt to dribble between two opponents, unless there is enough space to avoid contact.

CONTACT BY THE SCREENER

Likewise, the principles involving legal and illegal contact also apply to a player, who is setting a screen. A player, who screens, shall not:

- ▼ Set a "blind screen" closer than one normal step.
- ▼ Make contact with the opponent when setting a "visual screen".
- ▼ Set a screen so close to a moving opponent that the moving opponent cannot stop or change directions.
- ▼ Move to maintain a screen.

If a screener violates any of these provisions and contact occurs which is not incidental, he/she has committed a personal foul.

CONTACT BY THE SCREENED PLAYER

The following guidelines apply to a player who is being screened:

- ▼ A player, who is screened, with a "visual screen" is expected to avoid contact.
- ▼ A player, who is screened, with a "blind screen" is permitted to make inadvertent contact with the screener. However, the screened player, upon contact, is to stop or attempt to stop.
- ▼ The screened player is not permitted to force his/her way through a screen by using arm(s), hand(s), hip(s),

or shoulder(s), or by holding the screener and then pushing the screener aside in order to maintain a guarding position.

GUARDING IS WELL-DOCUMENTED BY RULE

In learning the principles and guidelines pertaining to contact, officials are required to also know the rules, which describe in detail what the defender and the offensive player are permitted to do during a guarding situation. When officials apply these basic principles, their rulings are not only consistent, but consistently correct.

Four basic principles apply.

1. "Guarding is the act of LEGALLY placing the body in the path of an offensive opponent.."
2. "There is no minimum distance required between the guard and opponent.."
3. "Every player is entitled to a spot on the playing court, providing such player gets there first, without illegally contacting an opponent."
4. "A player who extends an arm, shoulder, hip or leg into the path of an opponent, is NOT considered to have a legal position if contact occurs."

"ESTABLISHING" A LEGAL GUARDING POSITION IS COVERED BY RULE

To establish an initial legal guarding position, the player taking that position must be facing his/her opponent and have both feet on the floor. This could occur "at the last split second," before contact. The assumption is that the guard got to that "spot" on the court without fouling anyone in order to get there.

Maintaining A Legal Guarding Position Is Covered By Rule

The rules are very clear as to what a guard is permitted to do or not do after establishing the legal guarding position. The guard:

- ▼ May legally have one or both feet on the court or in the air when contact occurs.
- ▼ Is not required to continue facing the opponent.
- ▼ May move in any direction, with one exception: he/she cannot be moving toward the opponent when contact occurs.
- ▼ May turn or duck to absorb the shock of imminent contact.

Therefore, officials must know that after establishing the guarding position and while in the maintaining mode, the guard can do anything except one: cause the contact. In each

block/charge contact situation, the covering official must ask, "Did the guard do anything wrong?" If not, then by rule the foul should not be charged to the defender.

CONCLUSION

Officials monitor the activities of everyone involved in the game and make rulings based on these activities. The question is: "How can officials consistently make accurate rulings on rules they don't know?" Answer: They can't.

Every time contact occurs, the covering official makes a decision. Sometimes that decision is accompanied by a whistle and sometimes it requires no whistle. This latter situation is incidental contact. Either way, with or without a whistle, the official has never the less made a ruling.

This ruling can be (and must be) based on the rules of the game. The official is not there to just "simply pass judgment," but to rule accurately. When officials know the rules, accurate rulings will more often be the consistent end result.

Therefore, officials must know the rules and enforce them, and refrain from any personal philosophies not substantiated by a rule. Everyone involved in the game must know that violations and contact rulings are all rule-based.

When it comes to violations and contact rulings, call the game by the rules.



RIGHT OR WRONG?

The following questions focus on the document, "FIBA Official Basketball Rules: Official Interpretations". A free download is provided on the FIBA website (www.fiba.com). For additional clarifications, explanations or examples, please consult this document.



QUESTIONS

1. Captain A4 fouls B4. This is A4's 5th foul. A7 substitutes for A4. During the same game clock stopped period, the coach of team A commits a disqualifying foul. There is no assistant coach for team A entered on the score sheet. Shall A4 now take over the duties of coach for team A?
2. During the first period, the scorer erroneously awards team B with two points scored by A3. The error is discovered during the interval between the first and second period. Shall the score sheet be corrected at this time?
3. Team A scores a field goal, after which A4 in the restricted area commits a foul. This is the third player foul committed by team A in that period. On the resulting throw-in, shall the thrower-in be permitted to run along the end line before releasing the throw-in?
4. A2 in the team A frontcourt attempts a pass to A4. The ball touches an official and is deflected into the team A backcourt where it is the controlled by A4. Has a violation occurred for illegally returning to the backcourt?
5. An alternating possession throw-in is awarded to A3 at a sideline in team A's frontcourt. Shall A3 be permitted to pass the ball to a team-mate who is in team A's backcourt?
6. With team A in control of the ball and ten seconds remaining in the 24-second period, play is interrupted because of a fighting situation. Play resumes with a team A throw-in. Shall team A have only ten seconds remaining in the 24-second period?
7. A team A player mistakenly scores a field goal in his own basket. Shall two points be awarded to the captain of team B?
8. During A4's unsuccessful attempt to dunk the ball, the ball rebounds from the basket ring, after which the 24-second signal sounds in error. Is this a jump ball situation?
9. In all alternating possession throw-ins, shall it be always the referee, who administers the throw-ins?
10. While team A is in control of the ball, B3 fouls A3. The B3 foul is the second team B player foul in that period. A2 and B2 then commit a double foul. Is this a jump ball situation?

ANSWERS

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1. Yes. | 6. Yes. |
| 2. Yes. | 7. Yes. |
| 3. No. | 8. No. |
| 4. Yes. | 9. No. |
| 5. No. | 10. No. |



by William Sutton

BUILDING A CHAMPION ON AND OFF THE COURT

William Sutton is one of the most respected Sports Marketing experts in the USA. He was vice president of the NBA Team Marketing. He's currently professor at the Central Florida University, De Vos Sport Business Program, and also founder and president of the Bill Sutton & Associates, consulting company for NBA, NFL, and Australia and New Zealand's rugby leagues. He is co-author of the books "Sport Marketing" (third edition, 2007) and "Sport Promotion and Sales Management" (second edition, 2007), both edited by Human Kinetics.

The Miami Heat won the 2005-06 NBA Championship. While this was a great accomplishment, credit should also be given to the Heat for transforming its business operations and practices into a model professional sport franchise. Over the past six years, the Heat have:

- ▼ Established a year-round presence in the Miami market.
- ▼ Led the NBA in season ticket sales.
- ▼ Created an innovative sales/service split and retention model.
- ▼ Developed some of the best game presentation and entertainment in the NBA.
- ▼ Enriched the Miami community through their community investment and Community Relation programs.
- ▼ Leveraged star personalities and team performance into lucrative and unique corporate partnership opportunities.
- ▼ Rated as the NBA's #1 Team Retailer.

How did this list of accomplishments begin? It began five years ago when the Heat senior leadership team under newly named President of Business Operations Eric Woolworth, faced with dwindling attendance and an under-performing on-court product, decided to make some significant changes in their business model. The goal was to build a sales/service model that could begin to stop the erosion of the Heat fan base and evolve into a revenue engine that could capitalize on opportunity when the basketball product began to improve.



Six short years ago, the Heat, sensing the need to re-build an aging and dwindling fan base, cut ticket prices and decreased arena capacity in an attempt to attract a younger and more diverse audience that would be willing to grow and develop with a team that was rebuilding.

As the account manager at the time representing the NBA's TMBO division, I can recall the discussions in Miami that not only decreased some ticket prices and froze others, but also resulted in cost-cutting measures such as wage reductions and freezes and a hiring freeze.

Eric Woolworth met with his entire organization promising that the changes would eventually benefit the organization and preserve jobs if everyone could work together to become part of the solution.

This solution began the season prior to drafting newly anointed NBA Finals MVP Dwyane Wade. The following outline provides an overview of how the Heat turned things around off the court. I have listed the names of the individuals involved so that the readership can reach out to these professionals for insight and additional information.

ENABLING LEADERSHIP AND AN INTEGRATED, FOCUSED DELIVERY SYSTEM

Eric Woolworth and CFO Sammy Schulman have worked to create a system of PPOs for the organization which served as the focus for each department to develop their supporting PPOs. This system insured that 5-6 established initiatives would be supported and funded as priorities. Thus the entire organization became focused upon organizational issues rather than departmental concerns and everyone worked together to move the organization forward in tough times. Incentives and bonus programs based upon the attainment of revenue production and cost containment goals were established providing some upside for virtually every staff member. The result - virtually no staff turnover, a sense of individual investment in the future of the franchise and an organization successfully achieving objectives and beginning to move forward.

According to Woolworth, "leadership is about building a culture of mutual respect and trust. This culture is dependent upon understanding how each and every part of the organization communicates, interacts and plays their role(s)".

CREATIVE, ENTERTAINING AND ENGAGING GUERRILLA MARKETING THAT CAPTURES THE HEARTS, MIND AND WALLETS

Under the leadership of Executive VP and CMO Michael McCullough, and VP of Marketing, Jeff Craney, the Heat have created an innovative guerilla marketing program designed to capture the imagination, curiosity and interest of the market - particularly younger, upwardly mobile and diverse segments. The Heat began by adopting a "If the people won't come to the arena to see us - then we will go to them" approach. This approach called Summer Heat, involved some very non-traditional approaches like purchasing an ice cream truck and refitting a fire engine to become Burnie's (mascot) Fireball Express and driving them throughout Miami distributing free ice cream, schedules and ticket plan information, as well as providing roving entertainment such as dancers and other characters to provide a sample of what people were missing by not attending a Heat game. As the team and financial fortunes both improved - the Heat leveraged these imaginative approaches to become sponsored playoff campaigns - Back in Black in 2004, the Red Zone in 2005 and White Hot in 2006. These same elements along with DJ Irie and Heat TV comprise the Heat game experience, widely considered to be among the top in the NBA. The game entertainment and presentation provides an outstanding pairing with an improving team providing something for everybody regardless of their level of interest in basketball.

A SALES ENGINE TO STRATEGICALLY ATTACK THE MARKET AND LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES

Adopting an aggressive revenue generation strategy under Sr. VP Sponsorship and Ticket Sales, Steve Weber, added for the first time, a telemarketing or inside sales department and dedicated group sales specialists to a core of season ticket account executives moving the number of ticket sellers to 20+. Weber is assisted by a data based marketing/research unit headed by Paul Simon and supported by Tony Coba, VP and Chief Information Officer, who developed a program called SmartSell - which was designed to ease the sales process, create better records and improve communication between the seller and the box office. Utilizing the "discounted tickets" as a vehicle for generating interest and making the phone ring - the sales team began growing the fan base by offering good seat locations at reasonable prices and in a variety of packages to appeal to every lifestyle



(budget and time) as new younger fans were attracted to the Heat messages. The result? Weber and his staff led the NBA in full season ticket sales in 2005-06, revenue is up significantly and the building capacity is back to 2003 levels as the balconies were reopened in 2004-05 and standing room tickets were sold. Weber's corporate partnership unit began capitalizing on attracting a younger more diverse audience, selling club sponsorships, creating new inventory and leveraging team success by selling presenting sponsorships for the



playoffs the past two seasons for new partners - Great Florida Bank and LaBamba Check Cashing.

ESTABLISHING A CUSTOMER CENTRIC APPROACH TO RETENTION AND SERVICE

Under the leadership of Sr. VP and Arena General Manager Kim Stone, and VP Jennifer Mallory, retention and creating long-term satisfied customers, has become an organizational priority. The Heat have a dedicated Fan Relations staff, whose responsibility is customer communication

and interaction. These personal account representatives have the responsibility for renewing season ticket accounts. As studies have shown that the cost of replacing a season ticket holder can cost 12-18 times as much as the cost to retain them - the Heat have utilized Ticketmaster technology to let their customers forward tickets or sell them on line - all through the Heat. Realizing that customer retention is the key to incremental growth - the Heat have renewed at least 86% of their accounts over the past two seasons - and

demand for the remaining 14% easily sells out the building. Innovative programs such as the Heat's Rookie Orientation program and season ticket holder appreciation activities and events have also increased perceived value and satisfaction among season ticket holders.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND PLAYER COMMITMENT TO REACH THE COMMUNITY IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

Effective community relations programs invest in what the community feels is im-

portant. Steve Stowe, Director of Community Affairs has an outstanding relationship with Coach Riley and his players. All Heat players, including their most prominent players (Shaq and Wade) are active and highly visible in the community. I witnessed two mandatory all player appearances in less than a 24 hour period (Saturday Night at a high end fund-raiser and Sunday afternoon at Heat Family Day) that generated more than \$1 million for Heat charities. Not only were the players in attendance, but were active participants enjoying themselves while being highly accessible to fans in a variety of roles and activities.

AGGRESSIVE AND CREATIVE RETAIL PROGRAMS

Andy Montero, Sr. Director of Retail Operations is a former NBA Retailer of the Year. Montero is also known as "Crazy Andy" - his on screen personality that reminds Heat fans each night to stop into the store and purchase the sale item of the night. Montero sold Miami Floridian Hardwood Classic jerseys, Black jerseys with white lettering - made visible in a limited edition poster and most recently an assortment of white clothing - as all fans were encouraged to wear white to support the White Hot playoff theme. Montero runs the Heat store in the arena, merchandise trailers outside the building and several mall kiosks. He is consistently among the top three retailers in the NBA and works seamlessly with marketing and other departments to capitalize on merchandising opportunities afforded through their respective activities.

SUPPORTIVE AND RESPONSIVE BASKETBALL OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

President and Head Coach Pat Riley understands the importance of involving basketball players and staff in sales and marketing activities. Riley regularly meets with Michael McCullough and his staff to discuss marketing strategies, promotional concepts and the role of players to support business objectives. Riley approved the video and player involvement in the Heat's video production of the very successful Hardwood Classics night which portrayed Heat players as members of the 1972 Miami Floridians of the ABA. Heat players are an essential element in the retention process appearing at special events for season ticket holders and also assist in sales activities. Finally, Micky Arison, Managing General



Partner clearly understands the role of the owner:

- ▼ Present and visible in the market place and realizes that an owner must demonstrate his commitment and interest in the team so that fans become "investors".
- ▼ Invests in good people and trusts their recommendations to move the franchise forward.

- ▼ Creates an environment where people can be successful and enjoy themselves.
- ▼ Recognizes contributions from people at every level.

This was a five-year saga, for some franchises it can be shorter and for others it can be longer, the key is building the right system and having it in place to capitalize on good fortune when it presents itself.

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FIBA

We Are Basketball

FIBA STUDY CENTRE AT SPORTACCORD 2007

The FIBA Study Centre was part of the FIBA delegation present at SportAccord 2007, the International Sport Convention held in Beijing from 23 to 27 April 2007

SportAccord is the annual international sports convention, which brings representatives from the 100 International Sports Federations, affiliated to GAISF (General Association of International Sports Federations), ASOIF (Association of Summer Olympic International Federations) and AIOWF (Association of the International Olym-

pic Winter Sports Federations), as well as the International Olympic Committee Executive Board, together with sponsors, bidding and host cities, architects, sports lawyers, broadcasters, games organizing committees, rights holders and other specialists to discuss the key issues facing the sports industry.



SportAccord encompasses the annual Associations' Congress and General Assemblies, while offering the sports community a powerful opportunity to come together in an exclusive and authoritative networking environment to build relationships, exchange knowledge and develop ideas. By attracting and connecting the key sports communities, SportAccord facilitates the discussions and relationships that drive organising committees, cities, federations and businesses to develop sport and make sporting events success stories.



The FIBA Study Centre was present at SportAccord for the fifth consecutive time. The large FIBA booth focalized major attention from the sport community. All the relevant Study Centre publications were displayed and distributed, a large plasma TV continuously showed the best basketball games and actions of the 2006 FIBA World Championship in Japan, hundreds of gadgets were given away, *inter alia*, the small size version of the Molten official basketball. Business meetings were held with Study Centre Partners, Associates and with new companies, in particular several from China, which were interested in the Study Centre work, its certification programme and in opportunities for future collaboration.



The FIBA delegation also visited the construction site of the Wukesong Cultural and Sports Centre, which will host the basketball tournament during the forthcoming 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. This visit was the follow-up of a major project started already some years ago, when, in agreement with the International Olympic Committee's Sport Department, the Study Centre prepared the guidelines for the basketball facility, drawing from its vast experience in the planning and implementation of major basketball halls projects, including the standards on safety, lighting, climatization, location, utilization of renewable energies sources, access for disabled persons.



FIBA

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by Jacques Huguet

INJURIES AFFECTING THE ABILITY TO PLAY

FIRST PART

Dr. Jacques Huguet was the doctor for the French National Basketball Team. He was President of the FIBA Medical Commission until 2006.

Over the past few years, the Medical Commission of FIBA has initiated statistical surveys on injuries resulting from the playing of high-level professional basketball.

The main aim of the modus operandi was to record the anatomical localisation of injuries and their frequency. Thus, it was revealed that the ankle sprain is still the most common injury (approx. 30%).

Studying the cause of accidents is mandatory for prevention.

In a recent study carried out during the World Championship in Japan, it was interesting to determine the mechanism of serious injuries that incapacitated players and caused them to withdraw from the competition.

This study, targeting the causes of serious injuries, can lead to preventive measures, from a medical perspective, and to material improvements in supplies and equipment (playing court, the area around the court, the baskets).

In the past, athletes wearing rings would fall victim to digital amputation when rings caught on the hooks of the basket rim and ring avulsion injuries occurred. The manufacturers of the baskets have since been encouraged to eliminate such risks. The FIBA Study Centre has also intervened in regard to accidental slipping in the painted area or on advertising stickers (easy-wipe surfaces).

The dangerous implications of certain movements could be left to the referees and officials to assess, resulting in incidents which cause intentional "blunt" injuries being sanctioned more severely.

In the 15-man game of rugby, the growing



number of spinal cord injuries resulting in paralysis led the international federal body (International Rugby Board) to revise the rules on introducing the ball in the scrum.

During a warm-up session at the FIBA World Championship, one key player was removed from the tournament after he fractured a finger. The distal phalanx affected became caught in the baggy and loosely-woven jersey of an opponent. In order to prevent this type of accident, consideration should perhaps be given to designing a tighter-fitting jersey with a more densely woven fabric?

LEGENDA

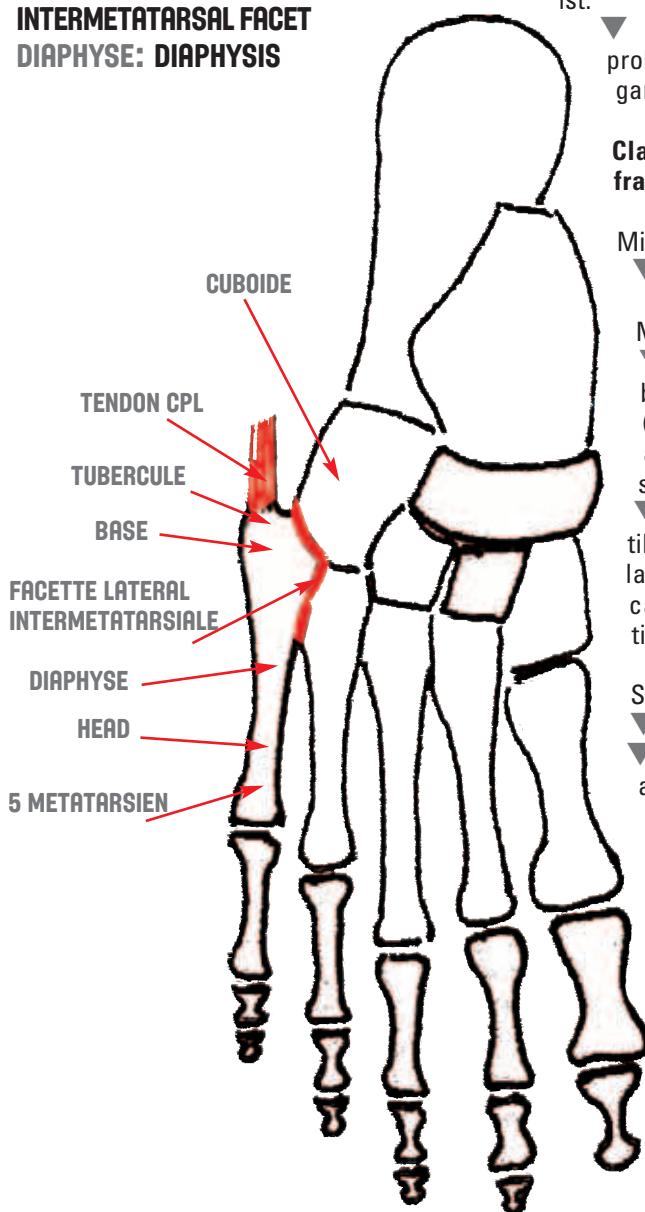
CUBOIDE: CUBOID

TENDON CPL: PERONEUS TENDON

FACETTE LATERAL INTERMETATARSIALE:

INTERMETATARSAL FACET

DIAPHYSE: DIAPHYSIS



In Japan, three different injuries which led to the removal of players from the competition were recorded:

- ▼ Nasal fracture.
- ▼ Peri orbital fractures.
- ▼ Fifth metatarsal fracture.

NASAL FRACTURE

Information provided in the questionnaire

- ▼ Player 1.85m tall. Position 1.
- ▼ Pyramidal structure fracture caused by lateral displacement, on 30th August 2006, following a blow from an opponent's elbow, on a rebound, foul called.
- ▼ 2nd nose fracture in sporting career.
- ▼ Imaging: diagnosis confirmed with x-ray (face - profile).
- ▼ Immediate treatment: ice-pack, NSAID (Non-steroid anti-inflammatory drugs).
- ▼ Surgical treatment: reduction by an ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) specialist.
- ▼ Return to competition: prolonged interruption of the game due to another injury.

Classification of nasal fractures

Mild:

- ▼ Without displacement.

Moderate:

- ▼ Upper third (osseous): by direct blow: crush (nasal lordosis); by lateral blow: luxation (nasal scoliosis).
- ▼ Lower two thirds (cartilaginous): by quadrangular cartilage rupture; by cartilage-vomer dislocation.

Severe:

- ▼ Comminuted fracture.
- ▼ With peripheric irradiations (ethmoid, lachrymal apparatus, base of the skull, canthus).

CLINICAL EXAMINATION

- ▼ Immediate observations: pain; nose-bleed.
- ▼ Later observations: tumefaction, swelling, ecchymosis, nasal obstruction, headache.

- ▼ Pending examination: facial deformities, nasal examination with a speculum, septum luxation, septal haematoma, possibility of abscess, to be drained through a surgical incision, subcutaneous emphysema, crepitance (pain makes it difficult to follow up on mobility).

IMAGING

- ▼ Simple fracture: plain-film based image of nasal pyramid (face - profile).
- ▼ Complicated fracture: Special incidences: Waters, Hirtz, CT scan, MRI.

PROGNOSIS

- ▼ Consolidation in 8-10 days.
- ▼ Non-reduced fracture may produce: facial deformation, deviation of the septum, nasal obstruction, requiring rhinoplasty, reposition of the septum.
- ▼ Reduced fracture may produce: possible callus formation, reduced nasal permeability.

TREATMENT

- ▼ Epistaxis: gauze packing, insertion of special plectret (Mérocel - Netsell)
- ▼ Non-steroid anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID), analgesics.
- ▼ In less than one week, reduction, brief intervention under "short" anaesthesia, splint for one week.

PROTECTIVE FACE MASK WHEN RETURNING TO PLAY

- ▼ Face protection is often used.
- ▼ Nasal shield, custom-made by orthopists, using transparent thermo-formable plastic or pre-cut splints.
- ▼ Material: polyester sheets (polyvinyl - polyisopren) to be cut using a pattern from foam or thin paper; soften in a hot water bath or oven at between 60 and 80° C (140-180° F); mould on the face.

PRINCIPLES TO OBSERVE WHEN USING A MASK

- ▼ Position supports on 3 rigid bone points (frontal bone and cheekbones).
- ▼ Do not apply pressure to the point of the fracture.
- ▼ Do not impair peripheral vision.
- ▼ Fasten by securing two circular elastic bands around the ears.
- ▼ Must be easily removable, to wipe away sweat.



FIBA

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ONE-ON-ONE

AUSTRALIA COACH STIRLING: "WE HAVE TO BE BETTER IN BEIJING!"

If you thought Jan Stirling could relax after finally leading Australia to a gold medal at last year's FIBA World Championship for Women, you'd be wrong. FIBA's Ben Collins learned in an interview with her. After finishing in the medals at every FIBA World Championship and Olympic Games since 1996, Stirling breathed a sigh of relief as the Opals finally captured gold in Brazil last September.

But almost as soon as the Opals had clinched Australia's first international basketball title, attention turned to whether they would be able to repeat that feat at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

Coach Stirling laughed at the suggestion that the Opals' breakthrough success has made her job more difficult, but only because she knows what expectations lie ahead.

"It's funny because, you watch when we get to Beijing, people will think 'gee, the Opals will probably win a gold because they won it at the Worlds', but they've got no idea what you're up against," she said.

"We had a bit of luck in Brazil because we didn't have any major injuries or sickness, things were pretty good for us, so I hope like hell we have all those bits and pieces come together again."

"It is a hard act to follow, but certainly a big challenge and I think the girls are pretty hungry for it, which is terrific."

Eight months on and Stirling has had time to reflect on the Opals' victory, pinpointing two factors she believes were fundamental to the team's success.

"I've been in the Australian program as a coach since about 1993, and this was the worst prepared team in relation to time together and access to competition," she said.

"But, where we made up for that was knowing, as a group, that every practice



had to be the best we could possibly make it. Every time we came away from practice we thought, 'Yep, we got through that really well', and that's a credit to the girls. They were so focused on making sure that our time together was the best quality we could produce, and I thought they did that with great efficiency."

"The other amazing thing at the Worlds was that not only did we have the highest points scorer of the tournament in Lauren Jackson, the MVP of the tournament was a different player, but still from the Opals, Penny Taylor. Penny is a world-class act in her own right, without question, and to have those two number-one rankings from our team was just amazing as quite often your number-one points scorer is your MVP."

"We certainly got the best out of our personnel, and I think what the Opals did for women's sport in this country, let alone for basketball, was fantastic."

The Opals' achievement was noted at the

Confederation of Australian Sport awards in February when Stirling was named Coach of the Year for 2006, while the Opals were named International Team of the Year ahead of the Australian men's soccer team, which reached the knock-out stage of the World Cup for the first time and almost beat eventual winners Italy.

"It was a very proud moment for me, but more so for the team," said Stirling. "It's great for our sport and great for Basketball Australia. I was really thrilled that the girls pipped the Socceroos, who were probably the sentimental favourites. It was wonderful recognition for them."

"Most of the girls were overseas, with their clubs, so it was a real shame they couldn't be there, but Jenny Whittle did a fantastic job in mentioning all the girls offshore in her acceptance speech. I emailed them and passed on some comments from dignitaries and so forth, just so they could get a little bit excited by it all."

"(Olympic gold-medalist swimmer) Dawn Fraser has always been a wonderful fan of the Opals and I spoke to her on the night. (Rugby World Cup-winning captain) John Eales also sent me a wonderful letter and I've shared their comments with the girls."

While the Opals have earned plenty of recognition amongst the sporting fraternity, perhaps only Olympic gold will see them become household names.

And should that happen, Stirling believes the Opals will act as perfect role models given the way they carried themselves throughout their World Championship-winning campaign.

"Within the sporting world of this country, I think what we've achieved is fairly well known, but probably in the general, broader community, it's still 'oh, who are the Opals?' she said.

"The girls have certainly made people sit up

and take notice, but also it's the way we go about it as well. I had nothing, but compliments from the hotel manager, the tournament manager and the media manager, who said that the Opals were professional, warm, friendly and very respectful. That said a lot to me about the way the girls go about their business and it was very pleasing to have that sort of unsolicited remarks made about the Opals team."

"So not only did they win and become world champions, they did it in a manner that represented our country really, really well - both on and off the court."

The plaudits keep coming, but Stirling is not getting complacent.

Instead, she is focusing on making sure the Opals remain the world's best in Beijing.

"Our system's pretty good here. But that's not to say we can't improve it - and we do need to improve it - we can't just sit back and say, 'we're number one now so we're OK,'" she said.

"There's a few areas I think we're down on. When you look at the statistics, we were the highest percentage shooting team there (in Brazil), but we don't want to rely on that all the time so I think our offensive rebounding and three-point shooting need to improve. Our mixing up of defense needs to be more flexible than it was in the past, and that's because other nations have scouted us and are catching up."

"We certainly have to be better than what we were at the Worlds if we want to be a legitimate medal contender for Beijing, there's no doubt about it. Everyone will improve."

With so many Australians based in Europe, Stirling is hoping to utilise the Australian Institute of Sport's base in Varese, Italy, in the build-up to Beijing.

"If we still have this many athletes in the European leagues early next year, it may be beneficial to take some athletes from Australia and over there into Varese and have a mini-camp," she added. "We're looking at options, in addition to making sure that all the athletes in Europe are aware of the medical back-up and other things they can access through Varese if need be."

The Opals already have a camp confirmed in Italy in June before Stirling visits China, the United States and Europe, scouting the European finals in October. The hard work starts here.

PAVLICEVIC: "EUROLEAGUE HAS GOTTEN BETTER AND BETTER."



Zeljko Pavlicevic has coached at Panathinaikos and most recently graced the international stage as the boss of Japan at the FIBA World Championship. The Croatian was at the Euroleague Final Four as a television commentator. He spoke with FIBA's Jeff Taylor.

FIBA: Hi coach. How have you been spending your time since coaching in Japan?

PAVLICEVIC: "After this long experience in Japan, I've been free this season. But I hope to after this season become a coach of a team in Europe."

FIBA: What kind of pressure the team of Panathinaikos was under at this Final Four as the hosts?

PAVLICEVIC: "I was coach of this team in '91, '92 and half of 1993 - two and a half years coach of Panathinaikos. I know what the pressure is like here. This coun-

try loves sport. Greek basketball is a top level. This big pressure, especially the first game against Tau, was very difficult. It was very special, the two coaches were special. There won't be any big surprises. Look at the statistics between the two, very similar. The game between them was like a final. In 40 minutes, one game - everything is complicated."

FIBA: How tough is this competition? Is it getting better and better each year?

PAVLICEVIC: "This competition has gotten better and better. And I would say that now, it's not the second division of the NBA. Here, in Europe, you have really

great players that you even export to America. Before, 15 years ago, 10 years - everyone thought the NBA was up and no one made comparisons between Europe and America. Now, it's different. Look at the results in Japan at the World Championship with the American national team. It's something that is very good."

FIBA: One question about Japan? How did you like coaching them at the FIBA World Championship?

PAVLICEVIC: "It was a challenge, something that was new in my life. After two European Cups, it was new and I had a nice experience. For me, almost everything was almost perfect. Yes, we were unlucky against New Zealand but look, New Zealand finished fourth at the previous FIBA World Championship."

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THE WORLD IN BRIEF



SABA WINS FIBA ASIA CHAMPIONS CUP

Iranian team Saba Battery achieved one of the most prestigious titles in Asia, winning the 18th FIBA ASIA Champions Cup for the first time in Iran's basketball history.

Samad Bahrami had 26 points and Garth Joseph added 18 points and 14 rebounds as Saba Battery trounced Syria's Al-Jalaa Aleppo 83-75 in the final on 20th May, in the Tehran Azadi Stadium.

Saba had defeated Al-Jalaa once more in the first round 92-64.

Saba made his way to the final, beating one of Asia's powerhouses Al-Rayyan of Qatar in a tug-of-war game, which finished 36-36 in the first half, but ended up with Saba's win 74-70.

Al-Rayyan stood third after beating San Miguel of the Philippines 95-75.

Saba celebrated their historical success, while they never had before any place among three top Asian teams since the team was formed.

Final Rankings:

- 1 - Saba Battery (IRN)
- 2 - Al-Jalaa (SYR)
- 3 - Al-Rayyan (QAT)
- 4 - San Miguel (PHL)

PATRICK BAUMANN PROPOSED AS IOC MEMBER

At its recent meeting in Beijing, the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), following a proposal by the IOC President Jacques Rogge, unanimously decided to propose FIBA Secretary General Patrick Baumann and three other sports leaders as candidates to the 119th

IOC Session for election as an IOC member. The IOC Session will vote upon these candidatures in Guatemala City, from 4th to 7th July 2007. This was announced by the IOC in a press release on 2nd May. Together with Mr. Baumann, the other candidates are International Equestrian Federation President HRH Princess Haya bint Al-Hussein (UAE), Colombian Olympic Committee President Andrés Botero (COL) and Indonesian Olympic Committee President Rira Subowo (INA).

"This proposal is a great honor for FIBA and global basketball", said FIBA President Bob Elphinston. "After the many years our Secretary General Emeritus Borislav Stankovic has served as IOC member, the nomination of Patrick Baumann would continue this tradition and guarantee a well-deserved representation of basketball within the IOC. I am therefore pleased that the IOC Executive Board accepted FIBA's proposal and our basketball family looks forward to a positive outcome in Guatemala."

Patrick Baumann, who is currently a member of the IOC's Coordination Commission for the London 2012 Olympic Games and was previously a member of the IOC's Evaluation Commission for the 2008 Olympic Games, was born in Basel, Switzerland, on 5th August 1967. Mr. Baumann first joined FIBA in 1994 and was appointed Deputy Secretary General in 1995. On 29th August 2002 he was unanimously appointed Secretary General by the Central Board of this International Basketball Federation. His term of office commenced on 1st January 2003.



U19 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WEBSITES LAUNCHED

FIBA has launched the official website for the FIBA U19 World Championship for Men (www.serbia2007.fiba.com) and Women (www.slovakia2007.fiba.com).

Both websites include all-event related information on the world's most prestigious



basketball youth championships for women and men and will feature, during the competition itself, live results and stats of all games.

The 7th edition of the FIBA U19 World Championship for Women will be played from 26th July to 5th August

2007. The championship will take place in Bratislava (Slovak Republic) from 26th July to 5th August 2007 with 16 teams comprised of players born in 1988 or after, in two arenas of Bratislava: the Sibamac Aréna NTC and the Inter Hala Pasienky.

The FIBA U19 World Championship for Women, which was first played in 1985 in Colorado Springs (USA), will be staged every two years, in odd years, as of 2007.

In the previous six editions of this tournament, the Soviet Union (1985 and 1989) and the USA (1997 and 2005) won the gold medal twice, whereas Australia (1993) and the Czech Republic (2001) each secured the title once.

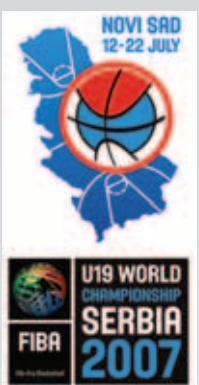
Some of the biggest stars of the game made their international debut in this championship: Janeth Arcain (Brazil), Margo Dydek (Poland), Lauren Jackson (Australia), Ilona Korstine (Russia), Lisa Leslie (USA) and Michele Timms (Australia), just to name a few.

The 8th edition of the FIBA U19 World Championship will be played in Novi Sad (Serbia) from 12th to 22nd July 2007 with

16 teams comprised of players born in 1988 or after, in two arenas of the Sport Center Vojvodina, one of the largest multi-sports complexes in the world. As of 2007, the FIBA U19 World Championship for Men will be played every two years, in odd years. The FIBA U19 World Championship, which was first played in 1979 in Brazil, determines the best basketball nation of the world in this age category. The USA has won the tournament's gold medal three times (1979, 1983 and 1991), while Australia (2003), Greece (1995), Spain (1999) and Yugoslavia (1987) have each captured the title once. Big stars like Vlade Divac, Arvydas Sabonis, Vince Carter, Toni Kukoc, Wang Zhi Zhi, Andrei Kirilenko and Pau Gasol started their international career at this championship.

HERNANDEZ HAPPY WITH EUROPEAN TRIP

Argentina coach Sergio Hernandez has returned home from what he describes as a "positive" trip to Europe, where he attended the Euroleague Final Four to meet some of his players ahead of the



Confederation (CABB) website, www.cabb.com.ar, Hernandez explained that he was happy with meetings held between himself, Pablo Prigioni, Luis Scola and Juan Ignacio Sanchez. "All the players I met showed no problems ahead of possible selection," he said. "We only have to wait until the end of their respective club commitments to know what sort of form they are in. The trip has highly positive results. Being at the Final Four allowed me to see the Argentineans in action and keep myself up-to-date. Besides, I have also been in Spain (Malaga and Vitoria)," added the former Estudiantes and Boca Juniors boss.

Argentina, who is the reigning Olympic champion, has been drawn in Group A for the FIBA Americas Championship, alongside Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Mexico and Panama.

NOWITZKI CAPTURES MVP AWARD IN NBA

German international Dirk Nowitzki has been named Most Valuable Player in the NBA, becoming the first European to win the prestigious award.

The German superstar forward of the Dallas Mavericks outpolled Steve Nash of the Phoenix Suns, who had won the title for the last two years.

"I'm still speechless about it," Nowitzki said at a news conference.

"When I first started playing this game at

13, 14, I was the biggest fan of this league. I would never have thought I could have played in this league." "I was a huge fan of Pippen," he said. "He was a great all-around player. That was always my goal - to be an all-around player." A perennial All-Star, Nowitzki rounded out his game in his ninth season, averaging 24.6 points, 8.9 rebounds and a career-high 3.4 assists. He was the only NBA player to shoot at least 50 percent from the field (.502), 40 percent from the arc (.416) and 90 percent from the line (.904).

Nowitzki finished no lower than 13th in scoring, rebounding, field-goal percentage and free-throw percentage. More important, he led the Mavericks to a 67-15 mark, which matched the fourth-most wins in NBA history. Nowitzki placed no lower than third on all 129 ballots from members of the media. He received 83 first-place votes and 1,138 points in balloting tabulated on a 10-7-5-3-1 basis.

TICKET SALES FOR 2007 FIBA AMERICAS CHAMPIONSHIP

FIBA Americas, with offices in San Juan, Puerto Rico, announced that the ticket sales for the 2007 FIBA Americas Championship started on May 15.

FIBA Americas along with USA Basketball announced the time for the games of the 2007 FIBA Americas Championship and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) announced that on May 15 the packages for the tournament will begin to be sold to the public. Individual tickets will start their sale on June 6.

The packages that include all the games start at \$149 (USD). One can buy the tickets online at www.unlvtickets.com or by phone at +1 (702) 739 - 3267. The 2007 FIBA Americas Championship will be played from August 22 until September 2 in Las Vegas, Nevada with the ten best teams in our zone playing to qualify the FIBA Americas champion and vice-champion 2007 for the 2008 Olympic Games in China.

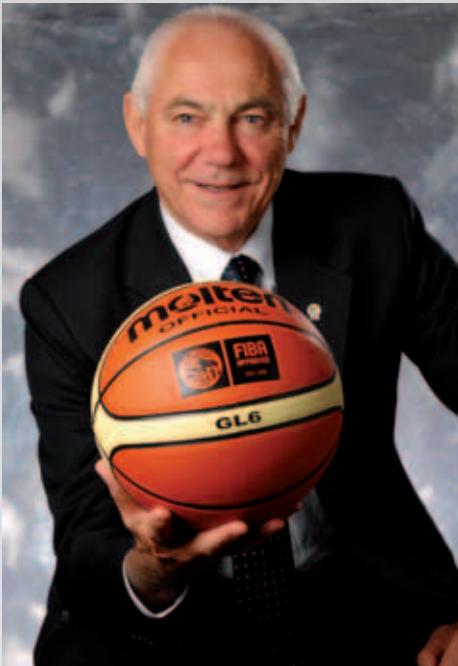
For more information please visit:
 FIBA Americas: www.fibaamericas.com
 USA Basketball: www.usabasketball.com.
 Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA): www.lvcva.com



FIBA Americas Championship.

The August 22 to September 2 tournament in Las Vegas hands two direct berths to the 2008 Olympic Games and the coach is focusing 100% on qualifying for Beijing. Speaking to the Argentinean Basketball





2014 COMMONWEALTH GAMES WITH BASKETBALL?

The FIBA Commonwealth Basketball Commission met on 8th May 2007 in London. Commission President Harish Sharma from India, FIBA President Bob Elphinston and FIBA Secretary General Patrick Baumann also used the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Commonwealth Games Federation. The Commonwealth Games Federation is currently evaluating the bids for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The bidding countries for 2014 are Nigeria and Scotland. The decision will be taken by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth Games Federation in November 2009. Basketball was for the first time included in the program of the Commonwealth Games in the 2006 edition in Melbourne, Australia, and proved to be a huge success.

YAO MAY TURN TO OLAJUWON

China international Yao Ming is hoping to work with former Rockets center Hakeem Olajuwon during the off-season following Houston's first-round NBA playoff exit last week.

Yao's boyhood hero led the Rockets to their first ever NBA championship in 1994 and averaged 27.8 points and 10.8 rebounds through his career.

Nigerian-born Olajuwon was part of the USA team that won the gold medal at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta and was selected as one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History. Olajuwon left the Rockets in 2001 to join the Toronto Raptors after 17 years and back-to-back championships in 1994 and 1995. "It would be a great chance for me if I can learn from him, one of the



best centers in NBA history, and particularly a legend for the Rockets," Yao told www.sohu.com. "I would love to. I'm working on it." Yao will undergo minor surgery on a toe to prevent a troublesome toenail from growing back before returning to Beijing in June for a training camp with the China national team. "It hurts me a lot so it's time to end it," said Yao, who was sidelined for five weeks during the 2005-2006 season with a similar injury. "It will take me three weeks to recover, but it won't hamper my training with the Chinese team. "This summer is very important for the national side in its preparation for the Beijing Games. I cannot miss it." The 26-year-old is set to play a series of exhibition matches with China, including the team's European Tour and the Stankovic Cup in Shanghai.

PANATHINAIKOS WINS EUROLEAGUE FINAL

Panathinaikos held off CSKA Moscow in Athens to win the Euroleague title. The Greens, with the majority of the 18,363 fans giving them an incredible home court advantage, prevailed 93-91. Lithuanian international Ramunas Siskauskas led the way with 20 points - 10 in the fourth quarter - as the Greek giants captured their fourth European crown.

Panathinaikos coach Zeljko Obradovic already owned the record with five Euroleague titles. His six are two more than

three legends in the game: Spanish great Pedro Ferrandiz, the late Russian legend Alexander Gomelsky and fellow Serb Bozidar Maljkovic, the Tau Ceramica coach Obradovic beat in Friday's semi-final.

Obradovic said: "I've told my players that this is not the first and the last, that we've got quality and that this win will inspire us to continue. I'm really proud of my players' performance and I'm extremely happy for the fans and the club." Panathinaikos made a record 38 of 46 free throws in the game, beating the previous mark of 34. Before the start of the campaign, most of the experts predicted these two sides would meet in the final and there was not much to separate them throughout the season.

CSKA had stunned two-time defending champions Maccabi Tel Aviv last year in Prague, and Theodoros Papaloukas had spoken of nothing else all season other than his desire to return home to Athens for this game. "I want to congratulate my national team-mates," said Papaloukas. "They played a great game. It was difficult to play having 20,000 fans against us, but I think the main reason why we lost was because of small details." Papaloukas, the FIBA Europe Player of the Year 2006 and the Most Valuable Player of the Euroleague this season, made nine of 10 shots from the floor and five of six at the line. Dimitrios Diamantidis, the Euroleague Defender of the Year, for the third year in succession, was voted MVP of the Final Four.





AYUSO AVAILABLE FOR PUERTO RICO
Once concluded his current participation in the Croatian league with the KK Split, which could be extended until late May, and without knowing for which team he will be playing in the Puerto Rican league, Larry Ayuso, announced his availability to play for the National Team in this summer's FIBA Americas Championship 2007 in Las Vegas. The sharpshooter declared that "I'm always available for the National Team and to represent our flag with all my heart, as usual". In regards to the nomination, and further selection, of the National Team's new head coach, Manolo Cintron, the player mentioned that "We know Manolo, and he knows us well", referring to the coaches' prior experience with Puerto Rico's National Team on the international level. When asked about his impressions on Cintron's latest comments about his plans of using Carlos Arroyo and Jose Juan Barea (both in the N.B.A.) as the starting backcourt, the player said, "The final decision is his (Cintron)... know what I am capable of. I'm in my peak looking forward, waiting for my chance".

FIBA VISITS BEIJING BASKETBALL VENUE

A FIBA delegation headed by FIBA Secretary General Patrick Baumann has visited the construction site of the Wukesong arena in Beijing, which will host the 2008



Olympic basketball tournaments.

The works at the Wukesong arena are well advanced and the delegation could gain a good impression of the exterior and interior of the future home of basketball during the Olympic Games in Beijing. The venue has been constructed following the recommendations of the FIBA Study Centre starting with the planning phase in early 2003, and is a fully functional basketball arena, that will ensure the legacy for the running of a world class basketball venue for Chinese basketball after the Games.

"We were very impressed by the progress made during the past 6 months and we look forward to the opening of the building, that is projected for October this year", said FIBA Secretary General Patrick Baumann after the visit. "We look forward to the Olympic test event in April 2008, where we can see the building in full function."

The venue will have a spectator capacity of 18.000, two fully equipped warm up courts, and state of the art facilities for the VIP's, media and competition management.

The FIBA delegation included, amongst others, Mr. Aldo Vitale from the FIBA Study Center, as well as FIBA Central Board member Ms. Mabel Ching. The tour was guided by Mr. Liu Zhong Yi, the General Manager for the Wukesong Culture and Sports Center, who is responsible for the construction of the venue.

VINCENT LEAVES NIGERIA FOR SENEGAL

Senegal have announced former NBA guard Sam Vincent will coach the country's national team at August's FIBA Africa Championship in Angola. The 43-year-old, who is the new head coach of the Charlotte Bobcats in the NBA, is the former coach of both Nigeria's men and women. Last year, he led Nigeria's men into the eight-finals at the FIBA World Champi-

onship where they lost to Germany and Dirk Nowitzki, 78-77.

Previously, he coached in South Africa and Greece, following a playing career during which he played for Boston Celtics, Seattle SuperSonics, Chicago Bulls and Orlando Magic in the NBA. Senegal are coming off a difficult year when they failed to win a game in World Championship Group D, losing to the United States, China, Slovenia, Italy and Puerto Rico.

The Lions' general manager Amadou Gallo Fall said Vincent had been "dazzled by the potential of Senegal's players."

The FIBA Africa Championship tips off on August 15 and runs through to August 26 and will qualify its champion for the 2008 Olympic basketball tournament for men.

Senegal are in Group B, alongside Egypt, the Ivory Coast and Mali.

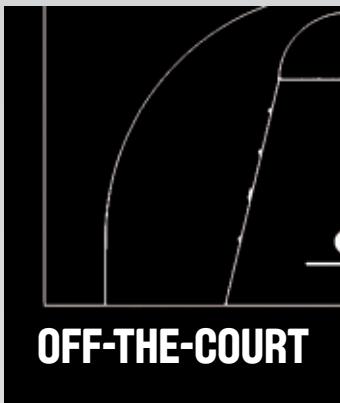


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THE ODD - THE FUNNY - THE UNUSUAL

BULLERI WINS COOKING CONTEST

Temperatures were rising as Armani Jeans Milano's Massimo Bulleri posted a 56-44 win over Eldo Napoli's Richard Mason Rocca in an unusual duel between the two giants. The Italian national team players have already shown on the basketball court that they are adept at pouring in the points.

And those pouring skills came in useful as they competed against each other in a steamy atmosphere in "La Prova del Cuoco" - an Italian TV cookery programme, hosted by Antonella Clerici, who started her career as a basketball journalist before moving on to cookery.

It was Bulleri, who won a contest that for a long-time was on a knife edge with Rocca left with the wooden spoon in an encounter that had plenty of spice in it. Bulleri, egged on by top Italian chef Gilberto Rossi, proved too good for Rocca, who had another top cook Martino Scarpa on his team.

Bulleri showed he was worth his salt as he produced a veal dish with sesame and chicory, a carrot risotto and an almond pastry as dessert.

Rocca went into his task with relish, rustling up veal with tomato and onions in a sweet and sour sauce, as well as a new potato and pasta dish.

All 100 members of the studio audience cast a vote and it was Bulleri, who brought home the bacon with 56 votes although Rocca was hardly panned, as he scored 44.



NO PLACE LIKE HOME FOR LEBRON

USA Basketball and NBA star LeBron James' new house in the Bath Township neighbourhood will contain a two-lane bowling alley, a recording studio, a casino, a theatre, a sports bar, an aquarium and a barbershop. The Akron Beacon Journal, the local paper in James' home town, has seen plans of the 35,440 square feet property, by far the biggest property in the relatively modest Bath Township neighbourhood near Akron and 20km south of Cleveland, whose NBA side, the Cavaliers, are his employers. Surprisingly, no basketball court or swimming pool have been included in the original plans for the property, which is due to be finished in 2008. Other features of the design are a six-car garage and a limestone sculpture of James. Some of James' neighbours are annoyed at some of the attention their hitherto quiet neighbourhood is getting. Tom Bader, told the Akron Beacon Journal: "People, who come to photograph the house, are disrespectful. They park their car in the middle of the street - with their doors open!" However, Bader is glad James is staying in the area. "He's great for Cleveland. I'm proud to have him. My children obviously think it's cool," says Bader, laughing. "They can hardly wait to go over and play basketball with him. I said: 'I don't think that's going to happen. Besides that, don't invite LeBron over to our house to play ball because he's going to twist his ankle and I will have my house eternally egged'."



ARGENTINEAN CHAMPIONS DONATE REVOLUTIONARY BACKBOARD

Reigning Argentinean League champions Gimnasia y Esgrima have donated the first audio backboard to a school for blind children. The world's first backboard with sound has been developed by Argentinian former basketball player Ricardo Molinari. Gimnasia y Esgrima, based in Comodoro Rivadavia, have made the donation in conjunction with Pan American



Energy to the local Escuela Especial No. 515. "Basketball as a sport for blind people does not exist and this is the first time this kind of backboard will have been used," Molinari, who owns FM Equipments, told Telam news agency. "I'm proud of achieving it in my country. This board allows blind children, teenagers and adults to play this game. I've already been instructing coaches and teachers how to use this invention." Molinari explained his invention, which took three years to perfect, works by calling out to the players as the game progresses: "When a blind player throws the ball and scores, a voice announces the free-throw, two-point or three-point basket and says the score. In this case, the board has a tape that announces, for example: 'Three-points for Comodoro!' But tapes should have the schools' names for each individual case. However, I have a lot of people asking me to make a tape saying 'Three pointer by Manu Ginobili!' because most children identify with Manu. The board also has six different sounds to help communicate where the basket is in relation to the players. In addition, Molinari developed special balls in yellow, orange and green, containing bells to help players identify where the ball is, and are brightly-coloured to stand out to the partially sighted."

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