

Level 2 Basketball Coaching Course Project – 10 Week Defensive Program

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Project: Option Two

Design a 10-week training program for an Under 16 team in Victorian Championship competition that has shown themselves to be deficient in defence.

Each week should include one hour of work on defence (other areas will be covered in the week, only detail each defensive activity and the time spent).

Obviously the coach would provide a warm up and stretching program as part of any training. For the sake of this exercise however, I have assumed such matters and provided only the actual defensive activities. I would also revise a number of the previous week's work or drills as part of the warm up.

As this program is designed for an Under 16 Victorian Championship Team, the time spent on any particular skill has been kept to a minimum as I am assuming that most of the skills need to be refined or honed rather than introduced. This allows me to cover a broader range of skills that I believe are necessary for a successful team at this level. Clearly, in the 'review' stage of each drill or skill application, the coach would assess the need for further work with the team or specific individuals within the team and would provide further work in identified areas.

The standard process I would use to teach each skill would be:

- Name the skill and drill (As listed in the following pages)
- Describe the skill / drill
- Demonstrate the skills and introduce the coaching points (As listed)
- Provide time for the team to practise the skills (Coach reinforces correct technique with individuals throughout drills)
- Review the skills with the team making refinements in technique as required.

I have created all diagrams using J. E. Smit's "Basketball Playbook" version 007.

General defensive philosophy

My defensive philosophy is to play man defence almost exclusively but to teach the basics of zone defence to allow flexibility in approaching teams with differing strengths or to change the tempo of a game. The basic rotation will be to rotate down therefore denying the middle and working on helpside support to deny baseline penetration. (Refer team defense later in article)

Stance and floor position. Major emphasis is placed on the player's stance and floor position. The emphasis of the player is on the ball while trying to keep good vision on the man.

Closed to open stance

When defending a backdoor cut the players remain in a closed stance until:-

1. The player they are guarding crosses the line between the ball and the basket, (or)
2. When an attempt is made by the player with the ball to throw a backdoor pass, (or)
3. When a backdoor attempt is made and the cutter gets closer to the line between the ball and the basket.

In all of these situations the defender should open to the ball.

Read and React

A major emphasis is placed on reading the defenders, especially the player with the ball and anticipating where the pass or dribble is likely to go. The whole defence adjusts quickly or reacts to the play.

WEEK 1 Skill Focus: Defensive Footwork & Closing Out

Coaching Points: (10 Minutes)

- Stance. The player defending the player with the ball should be in a wide low stance
- Hand Pressure. The ballside hand should be tracing the ball, with the other hand in the dig position to flick at it should the offensive player present it, whether dribbling or stationary.
- Footwork. When sliding the method to be followed is that the lead foot should always move first. The stance therefore adjusts from BIG to BIGGER with the trail foot pushing and the lead foot pointing in the direction of movement. The feet should never come any closer together than where they started.
- Change of direction. When executing a drop step the defender should swing the elbow opposite the pivot foot front to rear. This movement of the arm promotes a quick change of direction.
- Keep the players with the ball out of the middle of the floor.
- Pressure and turn the dribbler in the back court, and once the ball crosses the centre line, channel the ball towards the corner (deny penetration).
- When the dribbler picks up the ball, pressure the ball and shout 'dead' to alert other defenders to close down passing lanes.
- Once an opponent passes the ball, jump to the ball into a denial stance, and fight to maintain ball side position to force the lob pass.

Terminology: "Ball" Called out when the defender's oponent receives the ball to alert teammates that the defender has taken responsibility for guarding the player in possession.

"Dead" Called by the defender on the ball when the offensive player picks up the ball to alert teammates that pressure is being applied to the player in possession.

Closing Out (10 Minutes)

Concept defensive drill 1 x 0 (Diag. 1)

This drill can be set up with two groups on the baseline, as shown in Diagram 1.

The Close Out

The first defensive technique to master is the close out. Players are instructed to sprint and then close out to an imaginary offensive player on the 3 point line. The technique to be used when closing out is the stutter step. As the defensive player approaches the 3 point line, he/she must drop their weight down at the knees and their hips as they stutter their feet to close out on the 3 point line. Instruct players to close out with a hand on the shot, their feet angled to push the imaginary offensive player toward the baseline/sideline ensuring no penetration to the middle. Teach a "nose to the ball" approach to playing the man which results in the defender getting ½ a body across the dribble side. Players are also instructed to call out "Ball" once they have closed out. Note, once the players have mastered the stutter step, repeat the drill using the 'bunny hop' to close out. Rotation to the next line each time.

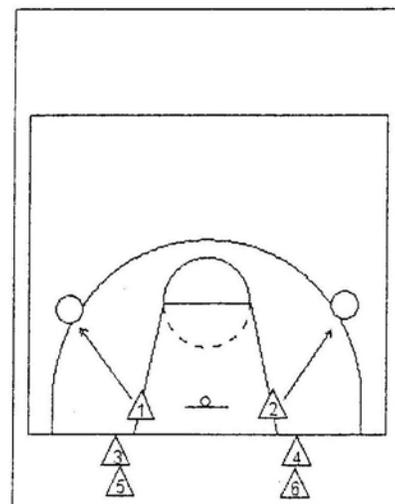


Diagram 1

Close Out and Slide for Two (10 Minutes)

Once players have mastered the close out, the progression is close out and slide toward the baseline for two. Once players have completed the two slides they call "Dead" with the players imagining mirroring

the ball. Make sure the defenders remain in a wide low stance, balanced with their weight evenly distributed. Keep a hand up in the passing lane and a hand on the ball. Once again, players rotate to the next line.

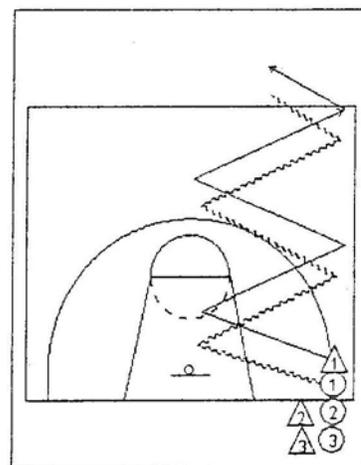
Drop Step

Using the Zig Zag drill (Diag 2), players are required to practise the drop step and slide to turn and channel a player with the ball. Stress “nose to the ball” stance then a drop step. After a drop step is made the defender must push hard off the pivot foot in order to gain nose on the ball position on the other side.

Zig zag drill (Diag 2) (10 Minutes)

The squad is divided into two groups on the baseline. Each group is then broken down into pairs. The first pair in each group steps onto the floor with one player being the dribbler and the other the defensive player. The offensive players dribble up the floor in a zig-zag pattern, each utilising half the courtwidth. Once they reach the end of the court, offence and defence swap and return. At first the dribbler should be encouraged to just make the defender work and not try to beat him, and the defence should not be allowed to use their hands so they can give all their concentration to getting their nose on the ball.

Diagram 2



Split line/Side line close out drill (Diag 3) (10 Minutes)

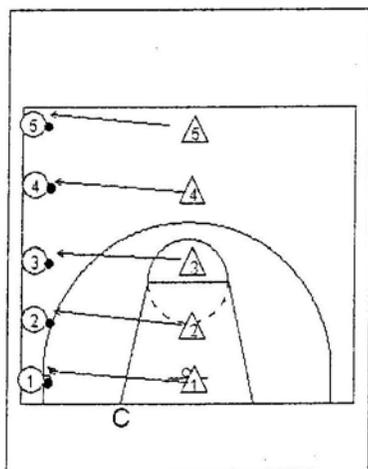


Diagram 3

Using this drill, players are encouraged to rehearse the various aspects of sprinting to the ball and establishing correct close out position and stance. The squad is divided into two groups, one forming along the length of the split line and the other along the sideline (with a ball), pairing up, opposite the split line players. All players face the baseline where the coach stands. On the call of “Stance!” from the coach, the split line players do a pitter-patter move on the spot until the coach calls “Ball!” The split line players (Defenders) sprint to close out their man on the sideline. Coach to check that the defenders are not too close on approach and complete correct stance, position and hand movement. After several practices, the players exchange roles. Once proficient at this drill, coach can introduce the offensive players to have the option of trying to dribble to the middle or baseline and the defenders must drop step / slide to deny middle and deny baseline penetration for at least two slides.

Note: If the coach feels a penalty is required for lack of intensity or poor skill application, rather than use suicides or laps, it is preferable to have the players complete a close out penalty. Players start on the baseline and sprint to the foul line close out and then sprint back to the baseline, again closing out.

Application: 1-on-1, 2-on-2 or 3-on-3 full court (10 Minutes)

References / Acknowledgements: Dale Waters (“Xs & Os” Vol 7 Issue 4)
Basketball Australia Level 11 Basketball Coaching Manual

WEEK 2 Skill Focus: Stance – Open, Closed & Denial

Coaching Points: (10 Minutes)

- Close Out – When moving out to guard a player who has just received the ball. Call “Ball”
- Denial stance – The stance taken to deny a player one pass away from receiving the ball.
- Sealing high or low eg. Ball at wing
- Open to the ball – The reverse pivot action the player makes when going from a denial position to an open stance.

Terminology: “Help” used by the defender on the ball to signify that he has been beaten and needs a team mate to assist.

“Pointing Pistols” Term used when a player is two or more passes away from the ball and signifies the action of one hand pointing towards the ball and the other hand towards their man.

Revise Close out stance and responsibilities.

Denial

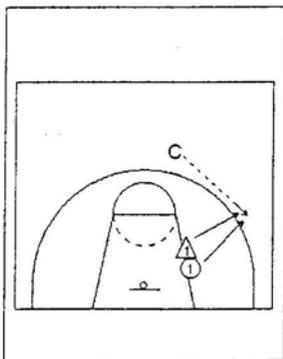
When defending the player one pass away from the ball, the defender should be in a closed denial stance (back partly to the ball), low and wide (ear to chest). The defender’s aim should be to maintain the elbow of the denial arm in the passing lane.

Open stance (Pointing Pistols or flat triangles)

When defending a player two or more passes from the ball, the defender should be in a low wide stance, and not more than one step off the passing lane. Their position on the floor will depend on the position of the ball. This defender should be in an open stance ‘pointing pistols’ – one hand towards the ball and the other hand towards their man.

Defending the Wing Drill (Diag 4) (5 Minutes)

Diagram 4



Coach stands at point and passes to forward lead to wing. Defender plays denial to prevent pass. If offense receives pass, play 1 on 1 to score. Rotation – Offence to defence to rest.

Defend Drive – Score or Dish Drill (Diag 5) (10 Minutes)

2 on 2 off forward leads. Coach stands at point and passes to forward leads on either wing. Defender plays denial to prevent pass. Weakside defender jumps off to split line. If offense receives pass, play 2 on 2 to score or dish off for teammate to score. Rotation – Offence to defence to rest.

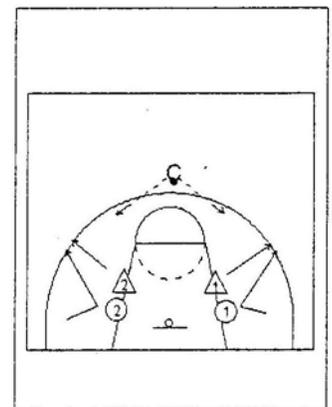


Diagram 5

Defending the perimeter Drill (Diag 6) (15 Minutes)

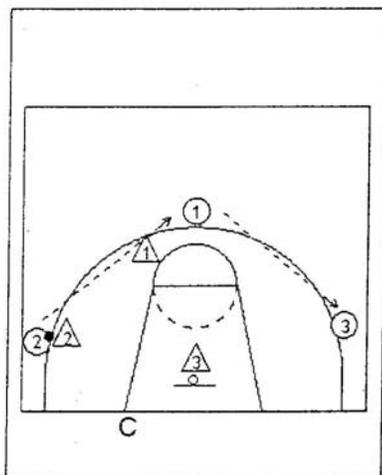


Diagram 6

Offensive players 1, 2 & 3 pass the ball rapidly around the perimeter. No dribble or penetration allowed but the offensive players should frequently fake a move or shot to keep defense honest. Defenders must close out on the ball, play denial if one pass away and take up an open stance on the split line if two passes away. Rotation – Offense to defense after two minutes.

Variation: Wing players 1 and 3 may cut through the key to opposite wing without the ball. The point player dribbles to the vacant wing while the other wing player replaces the point. In this case the defender on the split line must meet the cutter on the split line and endeavour to force him low by fronting him in an open stance then playing denial until the cutter is on the perimeter.

Later still the coach may allow the offense to take one or two dribbles to ensure the defense maintains intensity.

Turkey in the Ring Drill (Diag 7) (10 Minutes)

In this drill there are three outside passers and one offensive and defensive player. The passers each have one basketball. Two of the passers put the ball at their feet and the third ball is passed between them. The offensive player tries to get in an advantageous position to receive the pass from one of the passers while the defence attempts to deny the pass. When the offensive player receives the ball he goes 1 on 1 and tries to score (if he doesn't get in a scoring position, he can throw the ball back out to one of the passers). If the shooter misses the shot and the defence gets the rebound, or if the shot is made, or if the ball is stolen or forced out of bounds, the next ball that the passers have is activated and the drill continues until all three balls have been used and then players rotate. The offensive player should attempt to rebound his missed shots and keep the ball alive.

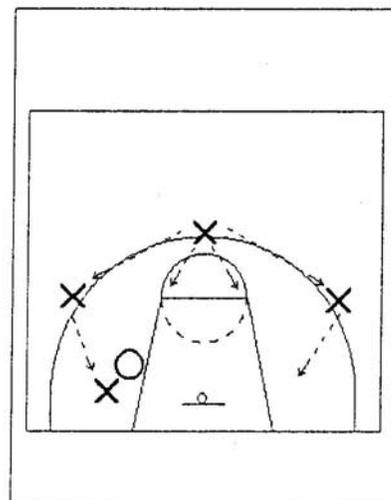


Diagram 7

Application: 2-on-2, 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 half court court (10 Minutes)

References / Acknowledgements: Basketball Australia Level 11 Basketball Coaching Manual
Drills from Fran O'Hanlin

WEEK 3 Skill Focus: Defending and turning a dribbler

Coaching Points: (5 Minutes)

- Footwork. When sliding the method to be followed is that the lead foot should always move first. The stance therefore adjusts from BIG to BIGGER with the trail foot pushing and the lead foot pointing in the direction of movement. The feet should never come any closer together than where they started.
- Change of direction. When executing a drop step the defender should swing the elbow opposite the pivot foot front to rear. This movement of the arm promotes a quick change of direction.
- Keep the players with the ball out of the middle of the floor.
- Pressure and turn the dribbler in the backcourt, and once the ball crosses the centre line, channel the ball towards the corner (deny penetration).

Zig Zag Drill (hip to hip) or overplay and turn dribbler – revise drop step (Diag. 2)

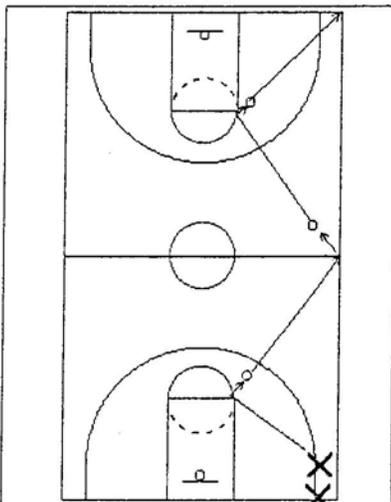


Diagram 8

Slide-run-slide drills (Diag. 8 & 9) (15 Minutes)

In these drills, the emphasis is on correct footwork, defensive intensity, wide to wider slide steps and turning the dribbler. (Diag 8) The defender must slide step in correct defensive stance from the corner of the baseline to the corner of the foul line, execute an effective drop step and then sprint to the sideline at the half court, making sure the outside foot is on or even over the sideline. The defender must again drop step and repeat the slide and sprint until he reaches the opposite baseline. The player sprints along the baseline and repeats the process down the opposite side of the court.

In a variation to this drill, the coach acknowledges that at times, an offensive player ‘burns’ the defense so the defensive player must quickly react by sprinting to regain position and then resume the slide motion. (Diag. 9) At each point, indicated by the ‘o’, the defender must change from the slide to a sprint and then at the next ‘o’ back to a slide. At each change of direction, an effective drop step move must be made.

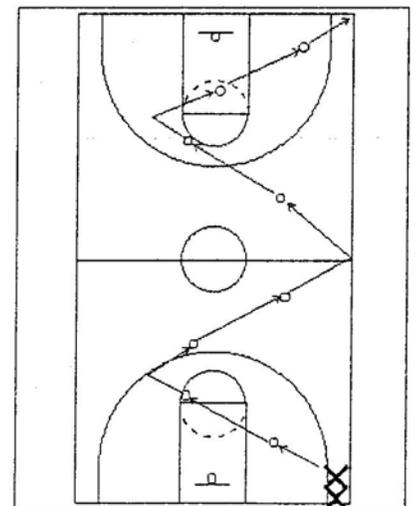


Diagram 9

1-on-1 From the Half Court (Diag 10) (10 Minutes)

Ball is passed from player 1 to the coach or nominated receiver. The defender is to implement correct defensive strategies, as already learnt, to deny successful scoring opportunities.

- Emphasise “Guard him with your feet”
- Defensive stance and footwork
- Denial stance once ball is passed and then maintain Ball-Man-Vision.
- Deny the pass and deny the middle by turning the dribbler away from the centre.

Offensive player must use effective dribble moves to flat out beat the defensive player to the basket and use cutting actions. Read the defense. This will create greater defensive intensity. Option is to rotate from offense to defense to rest or for defense to remain in defense until successfully preventing a score.

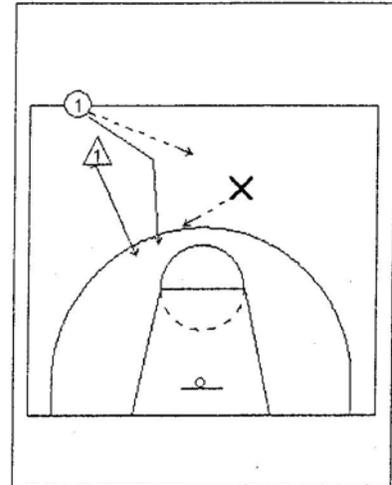


Diagram 10

To combine many of the defensive skills taught to date, I would finish this session with a close-out drill that also introduces boxing out, which will be developed in detail in the next session.

Duke Preparation and Close-out drill (Diag. 11) (15 Minutes)

This drill requires multiple defensive efforts and works on a variation of footwork and defensive technique. The ball starts on a wing, with the defensive player on the split-line help area. As 2 penetrates, 1 closes hard to stop the ball outside the key. When the ball is stopped, 2 passes to 3 at the top of the key, 1 has a long close out to contain. The ball is then passed to 4, who looks to shoot. 1 needs to close-out, carry a hand to the shooter and block out.

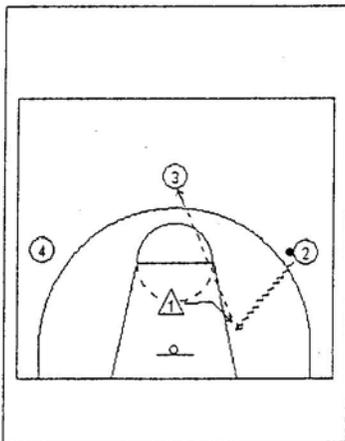


Diagram 11a

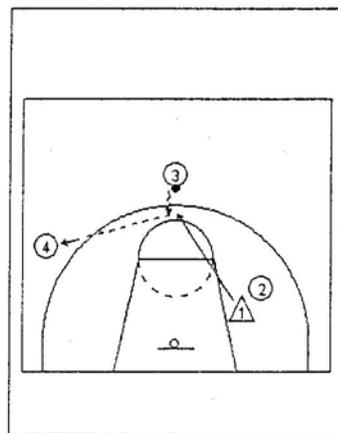


Diagram 11b

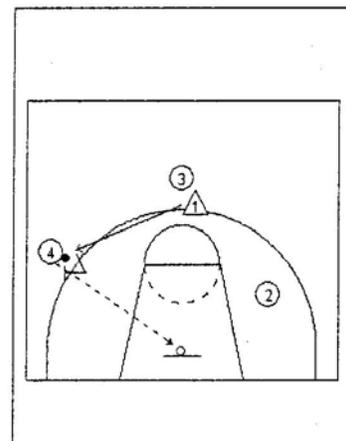


Diagram 11c

Application: 1-on-1, 2-on-2 or 3-on-3 full court (10 Minutes)

References / Acknowledgements: David Mitchell ITC Network Coach (“Xs & Os” Vol 8 Issue 2)
 Ross Wignell – ITCP Head Coach (Vic. Metro) (“Xs & Os” Vol. 9 Issue 4)

WEEK 4 Skill Focus: Defensive Rebounding

Coaching Points: (10 Minutes)

- Rebounding has two areas: Mental attitude and Physical commitment. The coach needs to stress this throughout this session and in future weeks.

Mental attitude

- Regardless of the size or position, it is expected that all players need to commit to rebounding the ball. This thought process must be in place to be consistently successful in rebounding. We have to move away from the thought that the taller players will do the work on the boards, as rebounding is a very important part of being a good all-round player. By committing to attempting to rebound, we are also going to be aggressive in relation to possession of the basketball.

Physical Commitment

- Again we stress aggression to the ball, which starts with being ready and in the frame of mind to go after the missed shot.
- Carry your hands and move your feet in preparation for good balance.
- Jumping and the timing of jumping to rebound is important. If this timing is out, the ball is difficult to rebound. With this, players need to go and meet the ball and not wait for it to come to them.
- Land in a low, wide stance ready to execute the next skill, whether it's to offensively power back up with the shot or to be able to effectively outlet the ball with a good pass to a teammate.

Defensive rebounding

- Try to incorporate blocking out (gaining front position and not being pushed too close to the ring) to start the process of successfully getting the rebound.
- Stress identifying the rebounding triangle areas so that if the ball rebounds to the left, right or middle, you are in a good position for possession.
- After gaining the ball successfully, encourage the players to make the outlet pass to move your team quickly into offence.

Boxing out drills

With the next two drills we work on the players blocking out first then going for possession. With both these drills, the ball has landed on the floor and we are trying to keep the offence out. You can then practise shooting the ball from different spots, so the defence position themselves, block out and then rebound the ball aggressively, usually before it hits the floor.

Circle Drill – Blocking Out (Diag. 12) (5 Minutes)

- Coach rolls the ball to the middle of the circle
- Count from 5 down to 1
- Defense should block out offence to count of 1 then gain possession
- Can add penalties if offence gets the ball

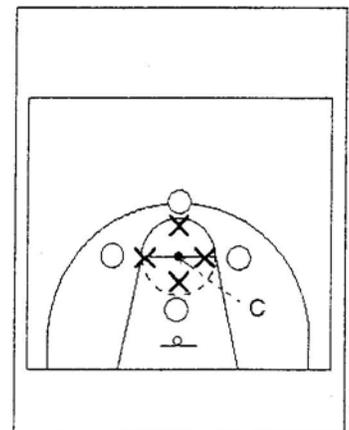


Diagram 12

Keyway – Blocking out drill (Diag 13) (5 Minutes)

- Coach can roll the ball in or place it off the backboard
- Defense to block out and go for possession

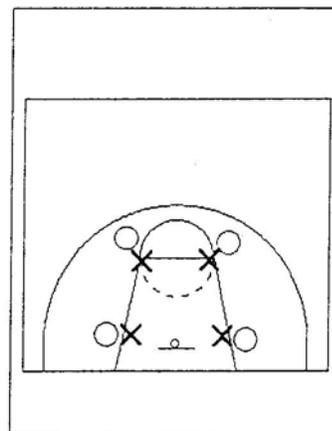


Diagram 13

From the Foul line – Rebound/Outlet drills (Diag. 14 & 15) (15 Minutes)

- Defensive player in front of offence
- Offensive player throws ball off the backboard
- Defence blocks out and moves to rebound, landing in a low, wide, balanced stance
- Offence pressures the defender who outlets the ball to the player on the 45 degree
- This drill can go both sides simultaneously
- Then add a defensive player who pressures the person waiting for the outlet pass
- Rebounder must outlet to the same side as was rebounded

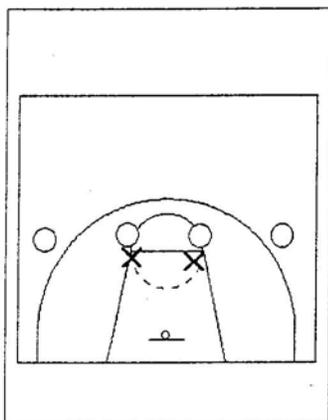


Diagram 14

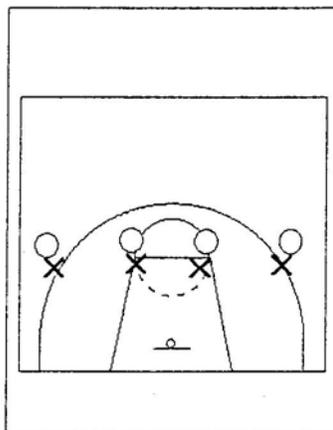


Diagram 15

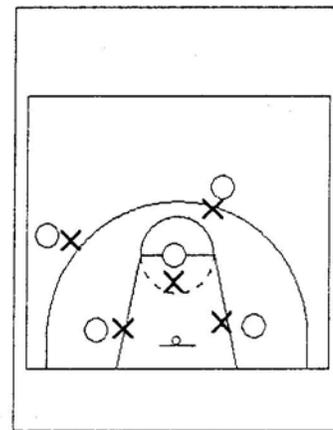


Diagram 16

5-on-5 drill (Diag. 16) (15 Minutes)

- Place 3 offensive players in rebounding triangle areas with one defender on each
- The other offensive and defensive players are on the 45 degree and the top of the keyway
- Coach shoots the ball from different positions and the defensive team blocks out, rebounds and outlets
- The defensive team initially goes 5-on-0 to the other end after the outlet pass and back up the court 5-on-5.
- Then move to 5-on-5 full court up and back.

Application: 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 half court (10 Minutes) (For variation and to maintain defensive focus, the coach may randomly call “Full court” to force the change from half to full court.)

References / Acknowledgements: Tracy York – Head Coach Woodville Warriors Men ABL

WEEK 5 Skill Focus: Defensive Transition

Coaching Points: (10 Minutes)

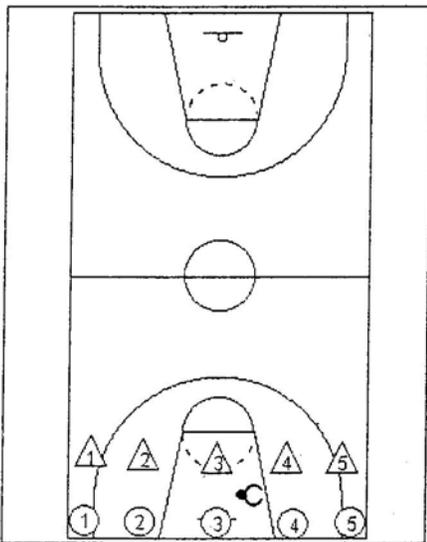
The key to successful defensive transition is mental toughness and hard work. Stress to all players that not everyone can be a tall player or a great shooter but everyone can be a great defender!

- Players must contain the ball in the backcourt. Deny the first pass and slow dribbler by turning him. Stop the ball at every opportunity.
- Deny the middle
- Meet the ball – don't let it come to you!
- Be assertive but not aggressive as this can lead to overcommitting which leaves your team vulnerable
- Defend from the inside to the outside or 'branch out'. Defenders must get back to the middle quickly then move out to meet the ball.
- Establish correct footwork and balance
- Work hard!

Find Your Man drill (Diag. 17) (10 Minutes)

The purpose of this drill is to teach defenders to quickly locate their own player and cover him or her, and get pressure on the ball as quickly as possible, and force the offensive team into a 5-on-5 situation in their half court.

Diagram 17



Offensive and defensive players set up as diagrammed. A coach is on the baseline with the offensive players and has a basketball. The defenders can only guard their direct opposite number, and when they know who that is they must turn their back to the offensive team.

On the command "change" the offensive players can re-position themselves anywhere they wish along the baseline. The coach then hands one of them the ball and on the command "Go" the offensive players attack to the other end of the floor. The defenders must turn, run and find their correct defensive assignment.

The drill can be run just end to end or up and back. When run up and back, possession can change on a defensive rebound or score, or it can be on a 'make it, take it' basis. Naturally, the closer the defenders are lined up to the baseline, the more difficult the drill becomes for them. This is something the coach adjusts as the players get better at finding their players. The players should be encouraged to take pride in being able to succeed when lining up close to the baseline.

Duke's Four Man Touch drill (Diag. 18) (20 Minutes)

This is different to the previous drill in that players will not retain their original match-ups, but will be required to adjust and switch to get pressure on the ball and help each other to delay the offense until the fourth defender gets back into play.

Players set up as diagrammed and the coach has a basketball. The drill commences when the coach passes the ball to one of the offensive players and they all react into offence.

However the player defending the receiver must touch the baseline before running into defense, creating a temporary numerical advantage for the offense.

In this case the ball goes to 2, so defender 2 must touch the baseline. Defender 3 must close out to the ball and attempt to contain and push the ball to the nearest sideline.

Defender 1 stays with his man and defender 4 gets into splitline and covers two players initially.

Obviously further adjustments will need to be made as any passes are made, bearing in mind the principles of getting pressure on the ball and keeping it out of the middle of the floor.

To ensure that the initial pressure on the ball influences it to the sideline, it is pre-determined who will defend the first receiver.

Players defending 1 and 4 will always stay initially with their own players unless those players receive the pass from the coach and they have to touch the baseline.

Defender 2 will guard 1 or 3 if either receives the first pass, and defender 3 will guard 2 or 4 if one of them is the initial receiver.

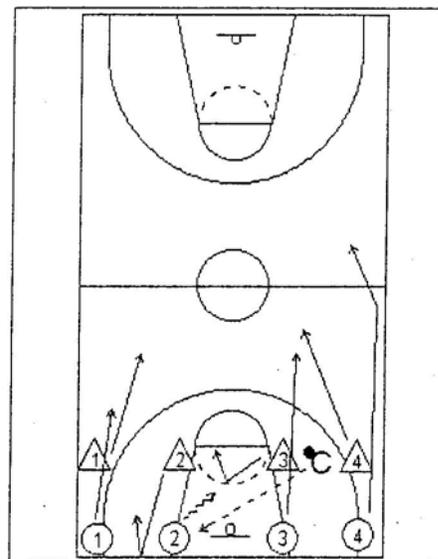


Diagram 18

It is important for the coach to vary the defensive transition to allow the team to determine the tempo of the game. To assist, it is useful to introduce the trap as a means of slowing the offensive movement down the court and offering the defensive team genuine opportunities for a turnover.

5-on-5 Trap drill (Diag. 19) (15 Minutes)

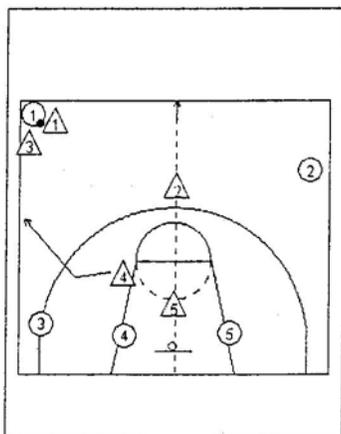


Diagram 19

Play full court 5-on-5 employing the trap as diagrammed.

To simplify matters it is useful to teach that regardless of where a trap takes place ie full court, half court, on the block etc. the following court balance takes place.

For instance, say the ball handler 1, is trapped at the centre-line by X1 and X3. Our rule is that the team has two defenders in the trap (X1 and X3) one defender (X4) providing ball side coverage and two defenders (X2 and X5) on the split line.

Pressure defence and extended defences make for a great deal of fun if you spend enough time and commitment to the cause. It is best to think of such defences as a style rather than a tactic if your team is to gain the necessary trial-and-error experience. Furthermore, if you practise such defences consistently your team becomes more proficient at managing pressure.

Application: 4-on-4 or 5-on-5 full court (5 Minutes)

References / Acknowledgements: Tom Maher – Head Coach Canberra Capitals (Xs & Os)
Neil Gliddon – Head Coach SA ITC Program (“Xs & Ox” Vol 10 Issue 2)

WEEK 6 Skill Focus: Forward Lead Denial & Defending the Screen

Coaching Points: (5 Minutes)

- Revise denial stance, head snap, arm bar and slash arm movement.
- When defending a screen, stress to players that we will look at four ways to do this - over, under, through and switch. With my defensive philosophy, defenders will be encouraged to fight over the screen in most instances. In this session we will focus on defending over and under the screen.
- Attention to correct footwork and court position is vital.
- Do not foul if successful in trapping a player low in the key.
- Communication between players is critical to successfully defending any screen.

Terminology:

Revise “Denial” and introduce “Bump” to signify the arm bar action a defender uses against a player attempting to cut through the key. The defender raises the forearm, bent at the elbow and parallel to the floor, making contact against the cutter to deny them the lane.

2-on-2 Full Court Drill (O’Hanlin) Diag. 20a & 20b (10 Minutes)

In this drill six or more players set up in diagram 20a. Offence is played at one end, defense at the other then rest at the other end. The coach starts with the ball and passes to either side. Players compete 2-on-2 with defender closing out on the ball and weakside defender jumping off to split line. On score or defence getting the ball the defence passes to the coach and steps out. The new team is ready to come in on offence.

Offence sprints hard to other end while coach relays the ball (Diagram 20b). They defend the wing lead made by new offence players 3 and 4 and play 2-on-2 and repeat the process. Defence gets the ball to the coach and steps off.

Offence sprints to play defence at the other end.

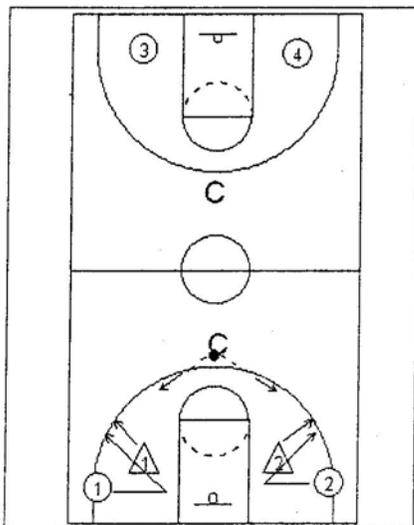


Diagram 20a

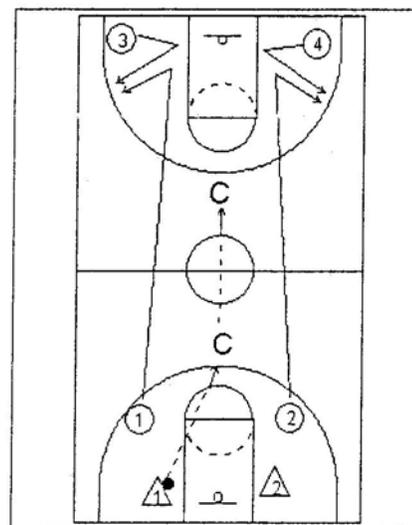


Diagram 20b

4-on-1 shell - Deny the lead and bump drill (Diag. 21) (15 Minutes)

Diagram 21

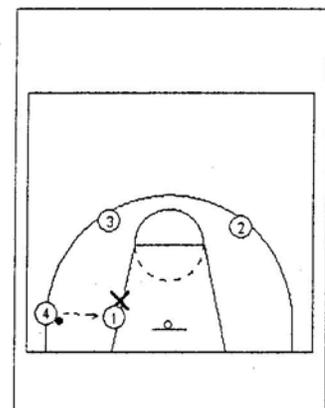
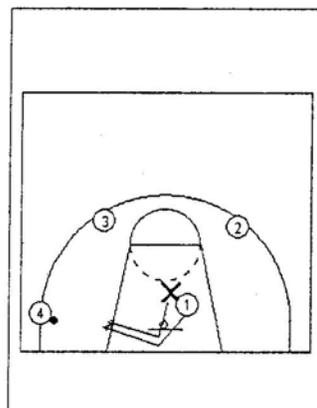
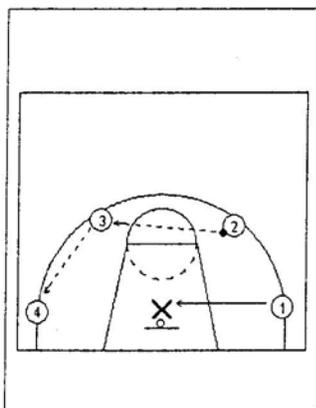
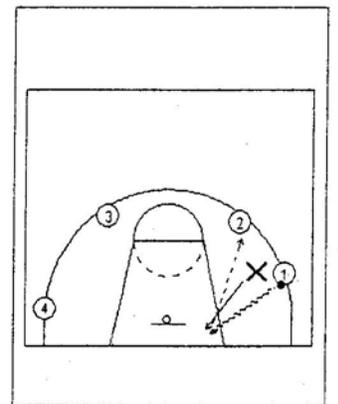
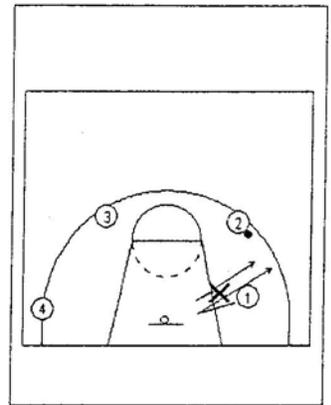
Players line up as diagrammed. Defensive player 1 denies offensive player's lead to the wing. After three successful denials of the lead pass, the pass from player 2 is allowed and player 1 attempts to drive low to the basket. (For the sake of this drill the offence may fake high but drive low while the coach ensures that the defender denies middle.)

The defender slides two to three wide steps to deny the drive and the offence accepts that the drive is stopped once one step inside the key below the block. (This would be caused as a result of weakside help in our defence.) The defender calls "Dead" and stives to deny pass back to player 2 while making sure not to foul!

The offense passes back to player 2 and cuts back to wing. Defender assumes open stance in on split line.

As player 2 passes the ball to player 3 and on to player 4, player 1 cuts the key. The defender uses a strong arm-bar to deny player 1 from cutting and receiving the ball. Defender forces the cutter low (in keeping with our defensive philosophy), demonstrates a strong head snap and seals the player high (below the block) in a half front denial stance to stop him from receiving the pass from player 4.

From here it becomes 1-on-1. If the defender overplays the offence, the ball can be swung back to player 3 and player 1 can effectively seal the defence out (by using a drop step move pivoting on his inside foot and a strong arm slash) to receive an inbound pass. Players rotate 1 to 2 to 3 to 4 to defence.



Defending the screen

In this drill we are focussing on teaching correct technique for defending 'over' the screen. Stress to players that in our defense, this is the preferred method in most instances and is critical in defending a player with a good shot.

As with any defence, talk is essential. The responsibility for calling the screen lies with the screener's defender. Unless told otherwise by the coach, it is also the screen defender's decision to get over, under, through or switch. The call must be clear and early.

Defending over (Show and Go!) the screen (Diag. 22) (10 Minutes)

X1 makes the call to “Get Over”

As O1 moves to set the screen, X2 must close off their stance and make contact with their man to reduce the effect of the screening angle.

As O2 makes a cut off the screen X1 must slide UP the lane to force the cutter away from the basket. This creates a gap between the screener and the cutter for X2 to get through.

X1 must now snap their arm and head, find their player and open up into stance.

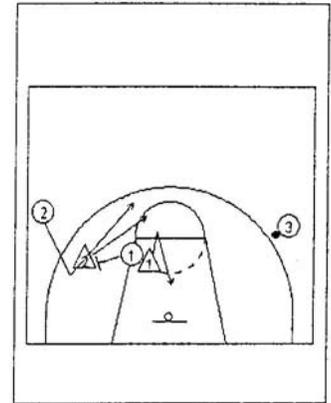


Diagram 22

Advantages:

- Ease of denying the ball
- Prevents shot
- Encourages responsibility to stay with your man

Disadvantages:

- Possible screen and roll
- Penetration over top of screen defence

Defending Under (Dive and Close out) the screen (Diag. 23) (5 Minutes)

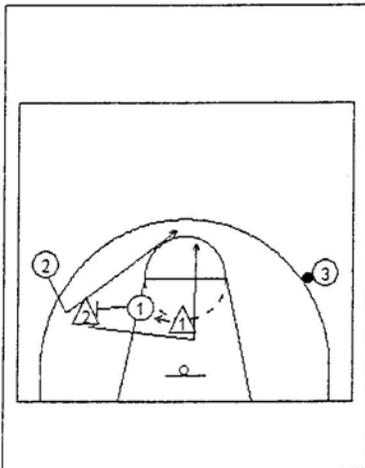


Diagram 23

X1 makes the call to “Get Under”

As O1 moves to set the screen, X2 must open up their stance to get shoulders square to the ball and dive to the basket to allow them to move under the screen.

As O2 cuts off the screen X1 must get a hand up in the lane and tighten up to their man to reduce the distance for X2 to get around.

X2 must now close out hard to get into denial or ready on ball stance. X1 opens on the help line low in stance.

Advantages:

- Prevents inside looks
- Prevents penetration

Disadvantages:

- Allows a shot
- Difficult to deny
- Can encourage laziness in defender on the ball

4 on 4 shell drill (Diag. 24 - 26) (15 Minutes)

On Guard to Forward Pass (Diag 24)

Players line up as diagrammed. Ball starts with player 1. Guard to guard pass and down screen.

Coaching points:

- Defend the down screen (Coach stipulates to defend over the screen)
- Work on jumping to the ball
- Work on recover from help

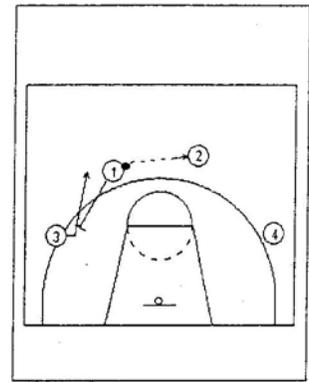


Diagram 24

On guard to forward pass, cut to ball side (Diag. 25)

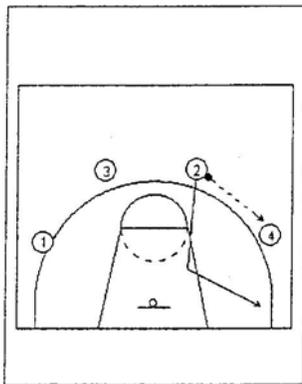


Diagram 25

Coaching points:

- Work on defending the pass and cut
- Work on jumping to the ball / split

Wing receiver dribbles up, replace man on wing with original cutter (Diag. 26)

Coaching points:

- Work on guarding penetration
- Help and recover by 3 defender
- Adjusting off the ball (by 2 and 1 defenders)

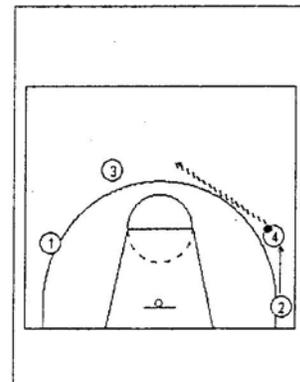


Diagram 26

References / Acknowledgements:

Drills from Fran O'Hanlin
Shawn McEachin – Development Officer – Newcastle Basketball
("Xs & Os" Vol. 9 Issue 2 Sept 2002)

WEEK 7 Skill Focus: Defending the Screen & Defending the Post

Coaching Points: (5 Minutes)

- Introduce defending the screen by playing 'Through' the screen and by 'Switching' on the screen.
- Introduce defending the post. When playing defence on the split line on help, maintain vision of the ball and man by stepping back toward the baseline, thus improving the line of sight through peripheral vision.
- When defending the post, step through stance and use a 'slash' arm motion. Teach how to defend the post from behind, 1/2 front, 3/4 front, and full front

Terminology:

"Split line" used by the defender supporting the player defending the post player, especially important when the defender fronts the post. This call lets the defender know that a teammate is supporting to deny the lob pass.

Defending through (Pull Through) the screen (Diag. 27) (10 Minutes)

X1 makes the call to "Get Through"

As O1 moves to set the screen, both defensive players must step to the ball (X1 stepping to the help line and X2 stepping behind the screen) to create space for X2 to get between O1 and X1.

As X2 makes their way through, X1 can grab X2 and pull them through to reduce the time taken.

As X2 closes out hard to get into denial or ready on ball stance, X1 opens on the help line low in stance.

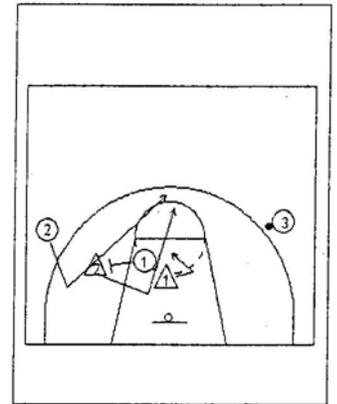


Diagram 27

Advantages:

- Shorter distance to close out

Disadvantages:

- Difficult to get through gap
- Can promote penetration or outside shots

Switching on the screen (Diag. 28) (5 Minutes)

X1 makes the call to "Switch"

As O1 moves to set the screen, X2 steps below the screen and forces O2 to use screen.

As O2 moves off the screen X1 slides UP the lane to force the cutter away from the basket. X2 must slash arm over O1 and get shoulders square to the ball, low in stance.

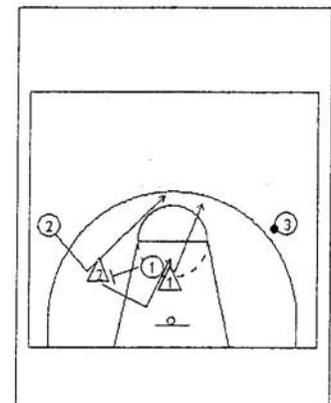
Advantages:

- In my approach to defence, I do not see the advantages and as such, I don't encourage this.

Disadvantages:

- Encourages younger players to take the easy option and take less responsibility for their man. This often results in mis-matches that suit the offense.

Diagram 28



On Ball Screen Drill – Wing on ball (Diag 29) (5 Minutes)

Players align as diagrammed. Coach determines to defend over, under or through the screens.

Player 1 passes to 2

1 runs diagonally to play defence on 3

2 passes to 3

2 runs diagonally to play defence on 4

3 passes to 4

3 sets onball screen for 4

Players 1 and 2 defend screen in line with coach's instructions

Diagram 29a

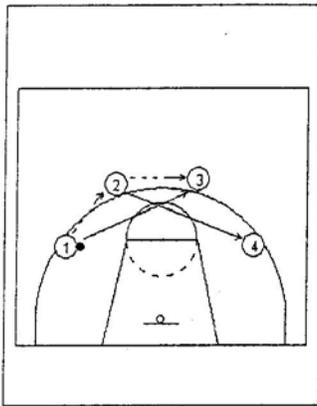
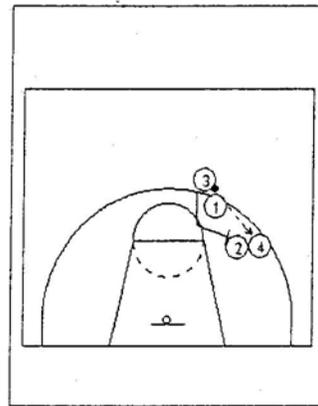


Diagram 29b



On Ball Screen Drill – Point on ball (Diag 30) (5 Minutes)

Players align as diagrammed. Coach determines to defend over, under or through the screens.

Player 1 passes to 4

1 runs diagonally to play defence on 3

4 passes to 3

4 runs diagonally to play defence on 2

3 passes to 2

3 sets onball screen for 2

Players 1 and 4 defend screen in line with coach's instructions

Diagram 30a

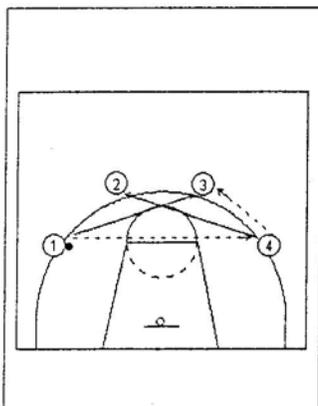
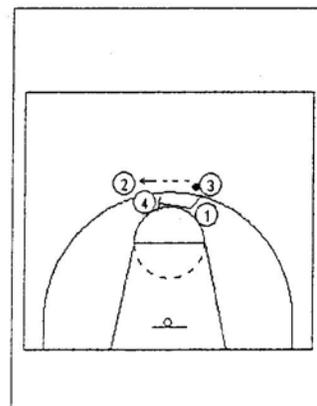


Diagram 30b



Defending the Post (10 Minutes)

Floor Position

The general rule of our post defence is to always be closer to the line between the ball and the basket than the post player. When the post player is on the line we must get into the full front position. This is demonstrated in diagrams 31 to 33.

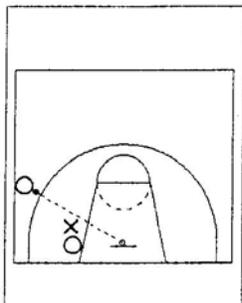


Diagram 31

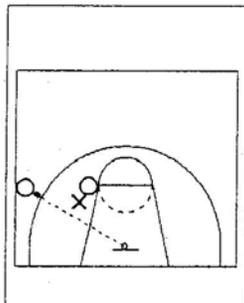


Diagram 32

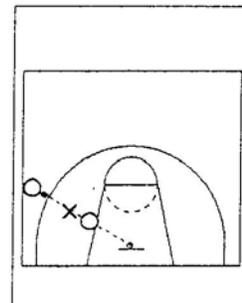


Diagram 33

Low and Mid Post Defence (Diag 34) (10 Minutes)

When defending in the mid or low post areas, the defender is always to help front in a denial stance when the ball is above the foul line extended. As the ball is passed to the wing, the defender is to step through and full front. How the defender goes from a side front to a full front is keyed on correct footwork, which basically involves getting the defender's feet ahead of the offence's feet. The rest of the body will follow. Should the ball go back to the top, the defender is to step through then regain their half front denial stance.

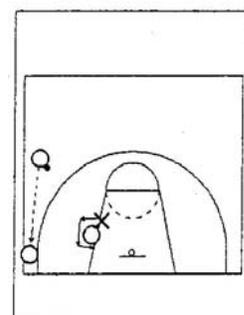


Diagram 34

High Post Defence (Diag. 35) (5 Minutes)

In defending a post man on the foul line when the ball is on the side, the defender should establish a half front denial stance. As the ball is reversed from one side to the other, the defender should move behind the post man. Moving in front of the post man high opens up the probability of a lob pass being successful, with the likelihood that help will not be available from behind.

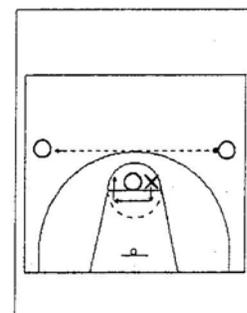


Diagram 35

Application: 1-on-2, 2-on-2, 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 half court (5 Minutes)

References / Acknowledgements: Drills from Fran O'Hanlin
Shawn McEachin – Development Officer, Newcastle Basketball ("Xs & Os" Vol. 9 Issue 2 Sept 2002)
Jack Thomas – Head Coach, I.T.C. – Vic Country
Ian Stacker – Head Coach, Townsville Cocodiles ("Xs & Os" Vol. 5 Issue 4)

WEEK 8 Skill Focus: Team Defence - Helpside (Weakside) Defence

Coaching Points: (5 Minutes)

Cover the three basic interlocking ideas on how to play weakside defence:

- A: The flat triangle to gain a helping position while maintaining responsibility for own man
- B: Help and recover (often referred to as ‘hedging’), applying maximum pressure to stopping the ball and then recovering back to own man.
- C: Ball-You-Man to maintain help and recover principles and defend against a weakside cut.

Terminology:

“Help Left” or “Help Right” This is used when guarding a player immediately to the left or right of the defender guarding the ball.

“Split Line” Revise from previous session but also used when help side defenders get to the split line on ball movement to inform the wing or perimeter defender that there is team help at the split line.

“Pointing Pistols” The hand position of a player two passes or more away from the ball when in an open stance.

“Flat Triangle” Description of the imaginary line formed from the ball to the defender’s player and the defender himself. The defender maintains a position along the base of the triangle, pointing pistols to the ball and the offensive player for whom he is responsible.

Flat Triangle (5 Minutes)

The flat triangle aspect of man-to-man defence sees each weakside player as part of a triangle which vertices are the ball, his man and himself. The base of the triangle is a line drawn from the ball to his man with the defensive man forming the apex of the triangle by moving away from his man towards the ball.

Coaching points:

- The defender should never be more than one step off the base of the triangle (the passing lane). If he stands too far off the passing lane it gives his man too much room to make a weakside cut to the ball and increases the chance of a successful cross-court pass.
- The defender should be close enough to the ball to stop penetration by a pass or dribble. Stopping the ball is the key to this defence.
- The further the ball is from the defender’s man, the further the defender can be from his man. Hence, two or more passes away; the defender should take the line of the ball or split line help position.
- The helpside stance should be slightly open to the ball with either foot forward as long as vision on the man is maintained.
- If run correctly the flat triangle principles will allow the defence to create a five-on-three situation in the defence’s favour.

5-on-5 Half Court defensive drill (Diag. 36) (15 Minutes)

Players align in two teams with one having the defensive assignment. The offence passes the ball around to try to score but with limitations or rules added by the coach. For example, the coach may stipulate no dribbling, no post position, offence cannot move with the ball, limit of two dribbles, no inside shots, no screens etc to allow the defence to rehearse the flat triangle principles more easily.

The coach also blows his whistle occasionally at which time all players must ‘freeze’ to allow a study of defensive positions and adherence to the flat triangle rules. (Refer diagram 36)

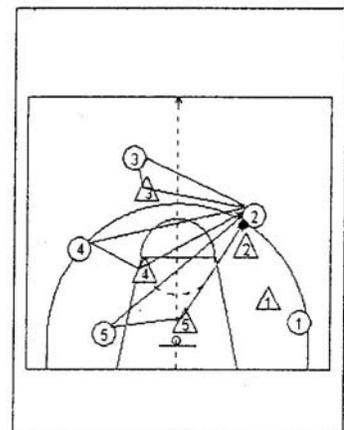


Diagram 36

As this is primarily a defensive drill, the defensive team is to remain in defence until the coach believes they have understood and can implement the principles. At this time the offensive team rotates to defence.

Help and Recover (15 Minutes)

This is dependent upon an understanding of the flat triangle positioning. The help-side man should get into a position to stop penetration of the ball and then recover back to his own man. If he stops the ball but doesn't recover back to his own man to stop him from scoring, he hasn't done his job.

Coaching points:

- When defending a guard to forward pass the man defending the forward is in a denial stance not a flat triangle (ie only one pass away).
- When the ball is below the foul line extended the weakside guard should get into a position on the strong side to jam up the lane and help out on a low or medium post player as shown in Diagram 37.
- Maintain ball and man vision at all times.

To practise this aspect use the Helpside Drill (Diag. 38)

When a ball is passed to a high post, both guards should retreat to the ball and try to force the post man to throw the ball back off to one of the guards. Guards must remember NOT to turn their backs completely on their men while harassing the post. Ball and man vision is always a consistent element of man-to-man defence.

Helpside drill (Diag. 38)

In this drill player 2 starts with one ball at his feet. Player 1 has a ball and begins passing it around the perimeter. The help side defender 1, must move as shown with respect to the ball. When player 3 throws a bounce pass into player 4, the defender should knock it away. As soon as he does player 2 throws the extra ball to player 1 who has stepped in to receive a drop pass, and the defender must recover quickly back to him. The same rules as regarding pass, driving or cutting may apply.

Ball-You-Man (5 Minutes)

This third aspect of Helpside Defence refers to the desired situation of the defensive man staying at all times between the ball and his man. This is reciprocal to the flat triangle and help and recover positioning but it also gives a better idea to players on how to defend against weakside cuts.

Diagram 37

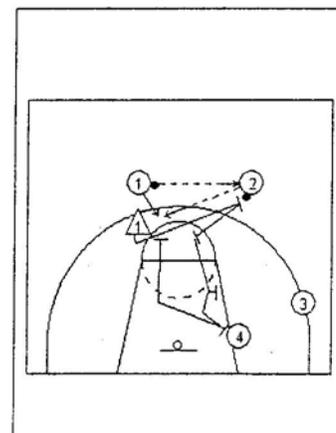
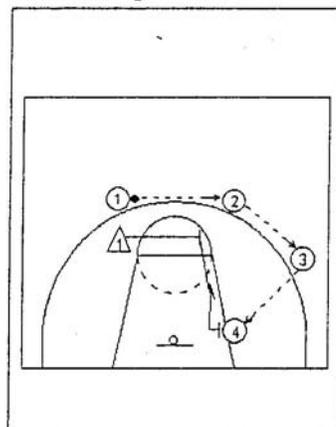


Diagram 38

Coaching Points:

- Jump toward the ball on the pass.
- Use an arm bar to bump a man cutting from the weakside and force him low, use a headsnap to maintain vision and seal him in a denial position as he moves out to the sideline.
- After denying the cutter who cuts high and then baseline, check opening the stance, then denial stance as he moves toward sideline.

Denying the weakside flash cut (Diag. 39) (10 Minutes)

Almost every offence tries to break a man into the keyway from the weakside to receive a pass. It is, therefore, very important that the weakside defender learns to beat the offensive player to that spot and actively deny the pass as he would a guard to forward pass on the ballside. If the defender has assumed his flat triangle position he should have no trouble defending against his man's move to post over the top.

If the offensive player 2 starts high and then cuts baseline, the defender should first deny the high post pass, then open to the ball as his man cuts low and stay in a fronting position as he cuts down through the key, and then go into denial position if the man keeps cutting out toward the sideline. Rotation: 1 to 2 to defence.

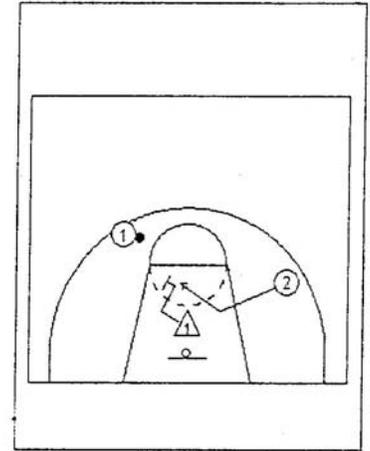


Diagram 39

Application: 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 full court (5 Minutes)

References / Acknowledgements: Basketball Australia Level 11 Basketball Coaching Manual

WEEK 9 Skill Focus: Bringing it all together

Coaching Points: (5 Minutes)

- Revision of drop step, closing out, open stance, rebounding, denying the lead, bumping, defending the post. Stress the need to 'fly with the ball' or jump to the ball while in flight. Review the aspects of flat triangle, help and recover and ball-you-man positioning.
- Communication is the key to successful defense! Coach continually rewards this with praise or harasses defenders not calling out and communicating.

Now that the team has the basics of man-to-man defence and has a clear understanding of the team's philosophy, it is important to bring the various aspects together. This forces the individuals within the team to make the rapid judgements they will need in a game situation.

Four Quadrant Drill (Diag. 40) (25 Minutes)

This 4 on 4 drill is ideal to use in working strong ball side and weak side man-to-man defence. The offensive players 1 to 4 are placed in one of the quadrants, as shown.

Stage 1. At first, they are allowed to only pass the ball around the perimeter, slowly, while the coach checks to see if the proper flat triangle positions respective to the ball and their men are assumed by the defensive players. The defenders are to assume denial positions where call for, but aren't allowed to intercept the pass. The coach at this stage should emphasise jumping towards the ball when the defender's man makes a pass.

Stage 2: Next the offensive players are allowed to position themselves in their areas such that they can shoot the ball when they receive the pass - no intercepting passes allowed yet. The defenders must recover quickly from their help positions to harass the shot. All defenders must then block out. The offensive players may rebound - if they get the ball, it is to be returned outside and balance regained (once offensive player in each quadrant).

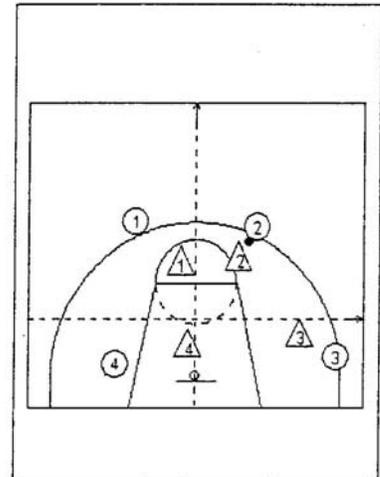


Diagram 40

Stage 3: The offensive players may drive to the basket or shoot now. This will really check and see if the defence is helping. Offensive players must return to their own area after driving. Defensive help should stop the drive and then recover back to their own player.

Stage 4: Now cutting is added as an option. At this stage the defence now tries to actively deny the passes. Offensive players may cut to receive a pass in their area, or they may cut to another area, but if they don't receive the ball they must return immediately to their own area or the other offensive players may change areas such that balance is maintained. The defence must now remember ball-you-man principles.

Stage 5: Now the offence is allowed to make vertical or horizontal screens either on or off the ball as well as cutting, driving or shooting. The offence virtually plays a passing game - the only restriction is that they must always balance up so that there is a player in each area.

Shell Drill (10 Minutes)

Coach uses 5 on 5 shell drill to provide further opportunities for competitive rehearsal of the defensive principles.

Application: 5-on-5 full court (20 Minutes)

Have the team play under match conditions in five-minute games. Coach to instruct each team to focus on specific aspects of the team's defence such as one team may trap full court, half court or at the block rehearse this aspect of defense. The other team may play tight containment on ball entry from baseline and if no intercept, fall back to the key area and then branch out to pick up defensive assignments. Other options include playing a press in the half court etc. This provides the coach to change the defensive game and see how well the team responds to instructions. It will also give clear feedback as to what aspects of the defence the coach needs to revise with the team or individual players.

References / Acknowledgements: Basketball Australia Level 11 Basketball Coaching Manual

WEEK 10 Skill Focus: Zone Defense

In my coaching philosophy, a zone is used as a variation only to man-to-man defence. It allows for a change of tactics and forces the offence to make considerable adjustments but it is unlikely to be effective for more than a few minutes.

In keeping with my philosophy of denying the middle, I am inclined to employ a 1-3-1 zone. This has the advantage of:

- Being very strong in the foul line area and really hurts any post offence.
- Neutralises the normal three-man overloading style to a great extent.
- Provides good coverage in most of the dangerous jump shot areas.

It must be acknowledged, however, that this defense has the following disadvantages:

- It is very vulnerable to good corner shooters.
- Does not cover the rebound areas as well as the 2-3 zone.
- Does not complement a fast break offence very well.
- It gives the wing men a very difficult job and may quickly tire them. Also, the centre must be very agile in order to cover the quick movement of the ball.
- Does not cover the long rebounding areas (eg. The foul line) well.

Coaching Points: (10 Minutes)

- Defensive men should move in relation to the ball.
- Do not let a man get open in your area, particularly in the middle.
- Talking is critical.
- Hands should be up at all times to reduce passing options.
- Close out and other man-to-man skills must be employed where possible.

1-3-1 Zone (Diag. 41) (5 Minutes)

Coach illustrates the 1-3-1 zone defence. Explains the various areas of the court and the respective player responsibilities.

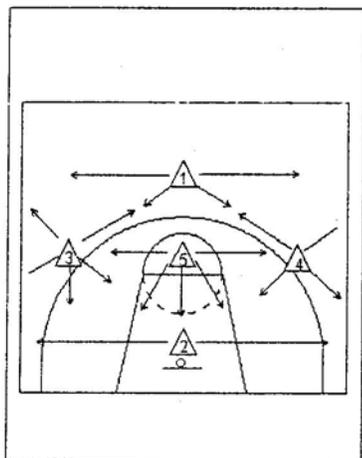


Diagram 41

Normally the guards will play in positions 1 and 2, the forwards in positions 3 and 4 and the centre in position 5. However, the quickest forward may be placed in position 2 and thus, the other guard in either positions 3 or 4.

(25 Minutes)

Process: Refer diagrams 41 through to 46.

1. Walk the players through the movements of the defensive men.
2. Place offensive players around the perimeter and move the ball around to familiarise defensive players with rotations.
3. Place men in the middle and outside to attack the zone. Often six men can be used to attack a five-man zone.

Diagram 42

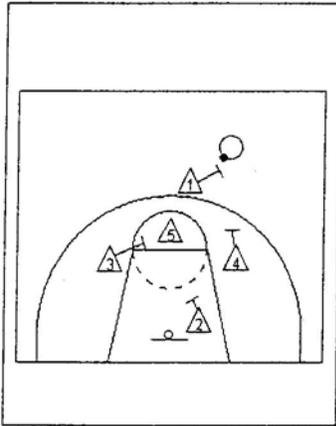


Diagram 43

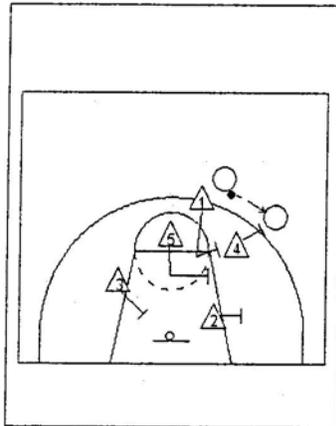
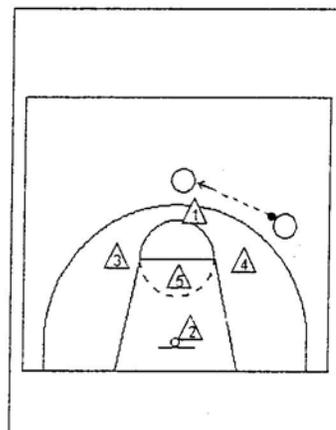
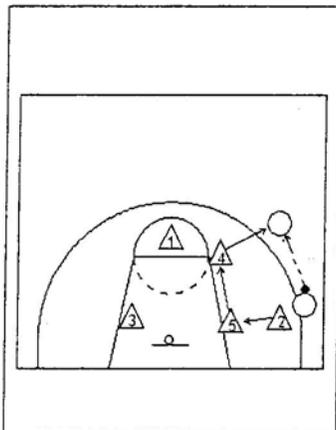
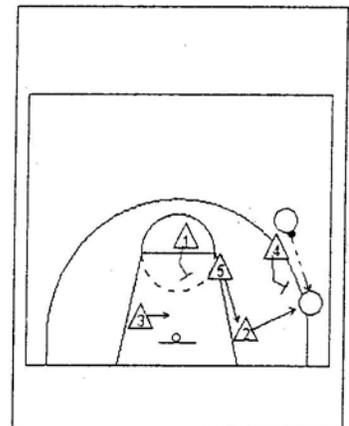


Diagram 44



Application: 4-on-5 or 5-on-5 half court then 5-on-5 full court **(20 Minutes)**

Allow the teams to play in ten-minute game situations with the coach using the breaks to refine defensive positions and to make adjustments.

References / Acknowledgements: Basketball Australia Level 11 Basketball Coaching Manual