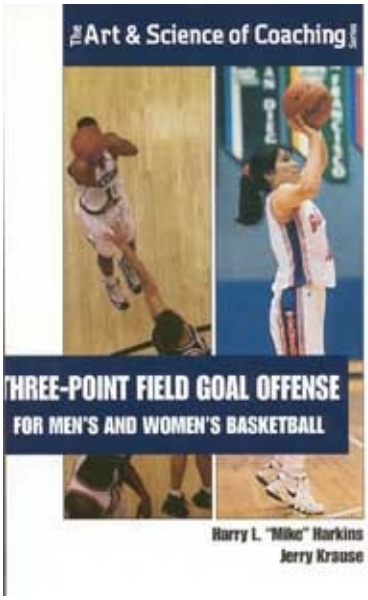

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The Art & Science of Coaching Series

Three-Point Field Goal Offense For Men's And Women's Basketball

Harry L. "Mike" Harkins
Jerry Krause

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my wife, Grace, who, along with being the love of my life, has been a working partner in the books I have written. Without her meticulous efforts on the diagrams and hours spent typing, they might never have been completed

-H.L.H.

This book is dedicated to all those who have been given unique talents to play the great game of basketball. May they acknowledge that gift by always giving something back to the game. May this basketball coaching series be a gift to basketball from the authors who have received so much from the sport.

-J.K

Acknowledgements

Grateful appreciation is expressed to the sources of my basketball knowledge, including: Russ Estey and Mike Krino, my high school coaches; Russ Beichly and Red Cochrane, my college coaches; Buck Hyser, who gave me my first coaching job; and the players who have played on my teams.

A final note of thanks goes to my childrenMike and his wife, Diane; Patti and her husband, Ric; and Jim and his wife, Jeanneand my number one fans, my grandchildren, Shellee, Jamee, Mike, Shawn, and Walker.

A special acknowledgment goes to Jerry Krause for his diligent efforts in helping me complete this book.

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Preface

These basketball coaching books for men and women coaches are a complete, comprehensive series of books designed to cover all prominent offensive and defensive techniques and strategies used in basketball, i.e., the X's and O's of the sport.

All coaches are reminded that all individual and team basketball is dependent upon individual fundamental skills. You need to ensure that your players are fundamentally sound in order to be able to execute offense and defense. Thus, fundamentals are always needed before the X's and O's of basketball.

Coaches at all levels will be able to utilize this complete series of men and women's books either as a complete package or as an integrated supplement to presently used offenses and defenses. There is something for every coach, from the novice to the most experienced basketball wizard. It is our intent to meet the needs of all coaches at all levels of playdevelop and enjoy your special approach to the X's and O's of basketball.

Introduction

How Three-Point Offensive Techniques Will Help You

The three-point field-goal line is now in effect for both high school and college basketball. In essence, rules for both state that any field goal scored from behind the 19'6" line counts for three points. Because a player's location is determined by the position of his feet, he or she must be behind the line when shooting or leaving the floor to shoot.

This book presents offensive team techniques that include opportunities to utilize this new and intriguing scoring play. You may decide to use one of these ideas in its entirety or use it to evaluate your present methods in terms of their three-point potential.

Although this book deals exclusively with offensive techniques, it will also make you aware of new defensive responsibilities. Some teams will stress the three-point play in their player-to-player offense, zone offense, fast break, early offense, zone pressure offense, last-second shot plays, and out-of-bounds plays. You will be forced to counter these new maneuvers.

This book first presents the fundamentals of a particular offensive team technique and then follows with a specific example of that technique, featuring the three-point play.

On a chapter-by chapter basis, it includes:

Chapter One, "To Three or Not to Three," explains who will use the play, how it may change the game, and the factors you, as a coach, must consider when deciding how you will use it. It also provides a suggested method of using this scoring play, presented in the form of

"tempo modes."

Chapter Two, "Player-to-Player Offense and the Three-Point Play," first presents the fundamentals of player-to-player offense and how the three-point play will affect them. Then it uses the "Lob Shuffle Offense" to show how a fundamentally sound player-to player offense may incorporate three-point plays.

Chapter Three, "Zone Offenses and the Three-Point Play," gives the fundamentals of zone offense followed by the "Zone Checker Offense" which is a specific example of a fundamentally sound play. Ideas are included that will show you how to utilize the three point play in your zone strategy.

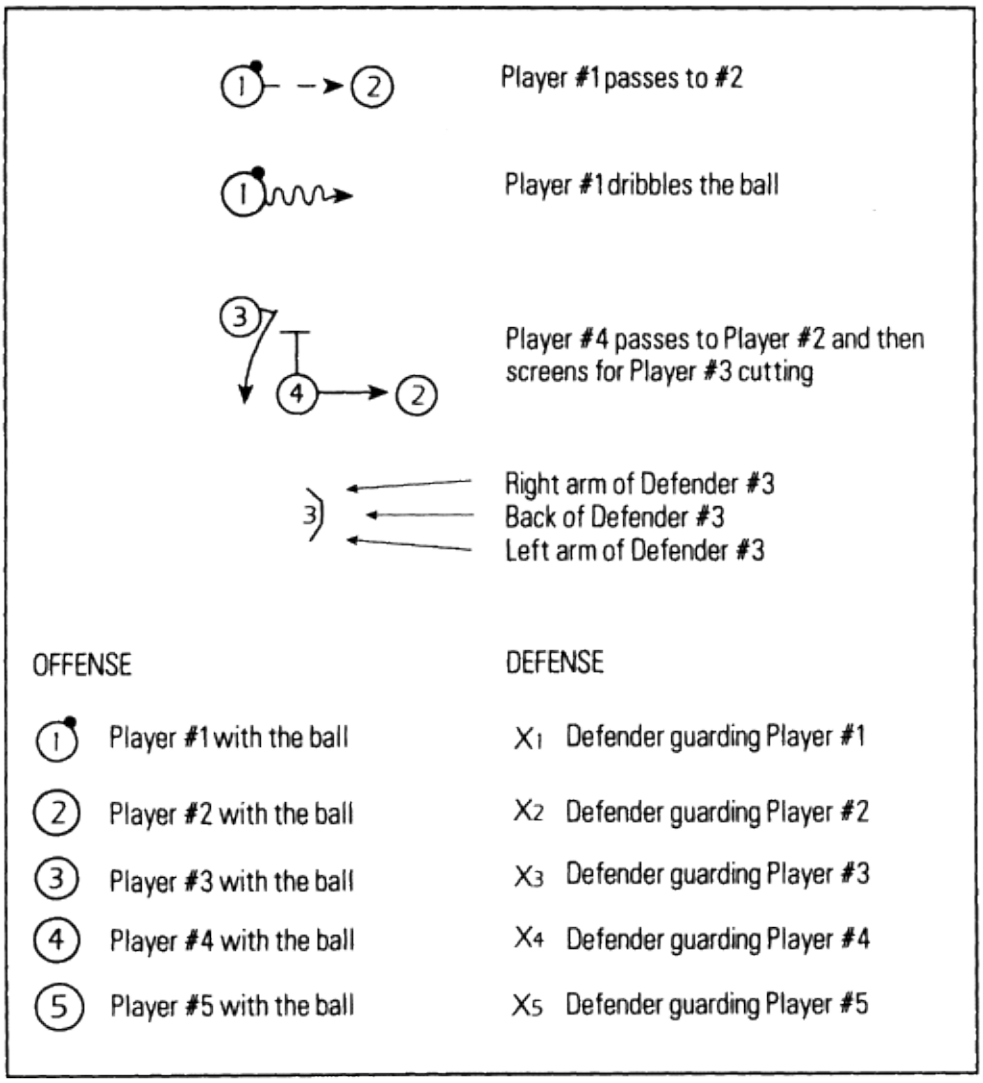
Chapter Four, "The Three-Point-Oriented Fast Break," first presents the fundamentals of fast-break basketball. They are followed by two specific fast-break patterns that feature the three-point play. The chapter concludes with "a fifteen-man, three-point fast-break drill" that may be adapted to teach either of the two patterns.

Chapter Five, "Beating Zone Pressure," starts with the fundamentals of zone pressure offense and follows with two specific zone pressure offenses. It concludes with fundamental tips for individual players.

Chapter Six, "Special Three-Point Situations," includes out-of-bounds plays under the basket and at the sideline, last-second three-point plays, the "Triple Series" versus player to-player, and the "Triple Series" versus zone defenses.

-MIKE HARKINS AND JERRY KRAUSE

Diagram Key


Player #1 passes to #2
Player #1 dribbles the ball
Player #4 passes to Player #2 and then screens for Player #3 cutting
Right arm of Defender #3
Back of Defender #3
Left arm of Defender #3
OFFENSE
DEFENSE
Player #1 with the ball
Player #2 with the ball
Player #3 with the ball
Player #4 with the ball
Player #5 with the ball
X1 Defender guarding Player #1
X2 Defender guarding Player #2
X3 Defender guarding Player #3
X4 Defender guarding Player #4
X5 Defender guarding Player #5

Chapter 1
To Three or Not to Three

Having the three-point line at the close, "makeable" 19'6" distance has resulted in changes in offensive philosophy and team techniques, and has even changed the type of athlete who will play the game. Although the full effects of this rule are not apparent at this time, most coaches are doing a thorough examination of their offensive (and defensive) plans in order to utilize (and counter) the effects of the three-point field goal. It is known that since its college adoption in 1987, the percent of total shots in a game has increased while the three-point field-goal shooting percentage has steadily fallen. It has changed the game.

How The Three-Point Rule Has Changed The Game

Providing higher scoring bursts. The emphasis on quick outside shots made via fast breaks, early offense, and offenses featuring quick shot (bang-bang) plays has led to high-scoring periods but, overall, lower scoring games. This should be a warning to all coaches that the "trey" needs to be used wisely.

Weakening the pressure-and-help player-to-player defense. This new scoring option creates many problems for the pressure-and-help player-to-player defense. The constant threat of a quick ball reversal to the opposite side of the court or even a skip pass leading to an easy three-point shot has forced the offside defensive helpers to shorten the depth of their sag. This has limited their ability to help on any penetration on the ballside. Because of this weakening of the helpside, the overplaying, pressuring, ballside defenders are forced to loosen up and play in a more conservative manner.

Forcing zone defenses to be more perimeter-oriented. In spite of their many attempts at matching the offensive perimeter, most zone teams play zone to provide a defense that is strong from the inside out. These defenses generally lack perimeter pressure and feature much defensive help. The three-point shot may force zone teams to shorten the depth of their offside sag. This, in turn, will make them more vulnerable inside. It could result in such changes as having the offside deep player of a zone play in a player-to-player position in regard to the offside offensive players. Player X3 in Diagram 1-1, the offside wing of a 1-2-2 zone, would ordinarily play between the ball and the offside comer.

However, the threat of (2) throwing a crosscourt-skip pass to (3) for a three-point shot may force (X3) to assume a player-to-player position. This would have (X3) play one step off the line between the ball and (3), and one-third of the way to the ball (see Diagram 1-2).

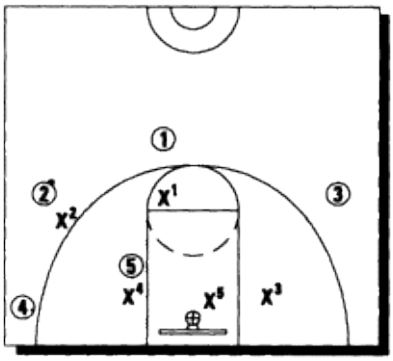


Diagram 1-1

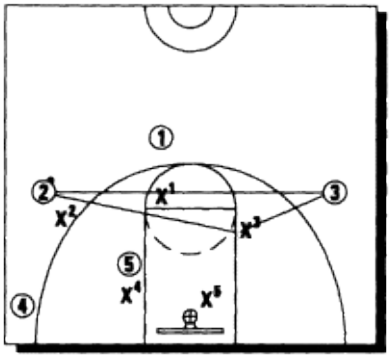


Diagram 1-2

This player-to-player-like defensive triangle would make the skip pass to (3) a risky option.

Allowing a trailing team to rally Harkins was an assistant coach in the CBA for a couple of years and was always surprised by the number of times the trailing team would "make a run" and get back in the game. He never found this to be true to such a degree during his high school and college coaching career. At that time, he attributed this phenomenon to the offensive talent of the players in this NBA developmental league, coupled with the professional rules that

shackled the opposition's ability to play team defense. Now that we have observed the three point line in college and high school games, we feel that it is the major contributor to this ability to rally. Prior to this rule change, teams resorted to deliberate fouling, and many games became free-throw shooting contests in their waning moments. This new option provides the trailing team with a more positive, additional tool in its attempt to get back in the game. It is now commonly believed that few 10-15 point leads are safe.

Having fewer fouls committed. In addition to minimizing fouls in the game's final minutes, it may result in fewer fouls throughout the game in the pivot area. Forcing the defense to be more wary of the offensive perimeter will open up the lane and cause fewer fouls to be committed on pivot plays, drive-in shots, and follow-up shots. Less fouls overall will also lead to fewer fouls that result in play-stopping out-of-bounds situations. This case helps create a more interesting, skillful, action oriented game. This theory has not come to fruition yet.

Changing the ratio of outside to inside shots taken. Many high school and college teams have resorted to an inside-oriented offensive style. This is usually done in one of two ways. Those teams with a dominant big player use the NBA philosophy of "take the fast break, but if it does not develop, set up and get the ball inside to our big player." Those without a big player often resort to a motion game that may involve ten passes before a shot (preferably inside) is taken. The new line may influence these coaches to provide a different inside-to-outside shot ratio. This trend is clear; that three-point field goal-to-total-shots ratio has increased each year the trey has been used.

Providing more opportunities for the small-to-average-size person to participate. The nature of the game has led to basketball being played almost exclusively by very large individuals with phenomenal physical ability. However, it may very well be that the best shooters are sitting on the bench, or even in the stands. This rule has put a premium on outside shooting and made room for an average-or small-size person who is willing to work to become a shooter; three-point field goal shooters are at a premium.

Resulting in more fast-break and early offensive shots. Probably the easiest time to get an unmolested outside shot is on the fast break, before the defense really gets organized. This was proven by the many long bank shots made on the fast break by John Wooden's great UCLA teams. The easy success of this shot is probably due to the fact that most coaches teach their players that, when defending against a fast break, it is wise to retreat to the lane and then move out to pick up their assigned opponent (or zone). This time interim also aids the team using an early offense component following their break and is leading to many three-point shots from the baseline corner and wing areas.

And, conversely, the previous change will result in teams retreating on defense in a different manner. Because of the rise in the number of fast

breaks and early offenses, teams will be forced to be more aware of the perimeter players when they retreat to defense. It will make picking up an assigned player as per player-to player more difficult and could lead to more zone defenses or zone transition coverages.

Restructuring the plans for the game's last few minutes. The new rule creates new coaching problems in the game's final minutes. Some examples are:

· It has led to the team with the higher score doing the fouling to take away the trailing team's three-point opportunity.

· Until this rule, many teams, when they had a substantial lead, would resort to a very tight zone defense. This may no longer be a smart move.

· Most teams play zone against out-of-bounds plays, particularly under the basket. This may no longer be functional when the time and score dictate

that a three-point shot can provide the winning points. Look for more teams to play a four-player, player-to-player perimeter (see (1), (2), (3), and (4) in Diagram 1-3) with their big player (5) acting as the shortstop or safety.

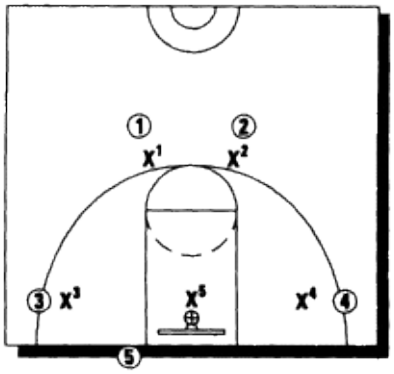


Diagram 1-3

Making the game more player-oriented and less coach-dominated. To me, this is the most promising possibility. We often feel as if we are watching an over-orchestrated concert when attending a basketball game featuring teams with an "if in doubt, don't" offensive philosophy.

The advances made in defensive strategy in the past ten years have transformed the game of basketball from a free-flowing, player-centered high-scoring game into a tight-fisted, coach-dominated, low-scoring affair. When you attend a championship game, chances are the score will be 50 to 45 and not 90 to 85. A coach called the modern multi-pass offense the "Buzzard Offense." The offensive players fly around in circles until the defense dies, and then they swoop down and pounce on them.

Personally, I (Harkins) have always been an advocate of wide-open player-centered basketball. It's often said that a referee has done an excellent job in a particular game when you did not notice his presence. I feel the same way about coaches. My love for the running

game is probably due to the fact that I played college ball for Russ Beichly at Akron University and he was a "run and gun" coach. Then when I coached college ball at Eastern Montana College, my teams were based on his teaching, and we averaged 86 points a game for a 16-year period. However, the game has changed, and I suspect that it is probably advantageous to stress defense and run a disciplined, controlled offense that stresses shot selection and involves a great many passes before a shot is taken.

This "Buzzard" style of play is reputed to have the following advantages:

- Most fouls are committed on defense. If you control the ball and make enough passes, the opposition will foul.
- When you get tired in basketball, it is usually due to playing defense. Hold the ball and the other team will be more tired in the game's often crucial closing minutes.
- Defense is being stressed. It is much easier to teach defense in combination with a "disciplined" offense.
- Rules and rule interpretations tend to favor the offensive player. Spend more time on offense and take advantage of this fact.
- When you fast break, your big player initiates your offense via the outlet pass. This person is quite often your least-skilled player. When you play control ball, your point guard, often your most-skilled player, initiates the play.
- At the end of close games, both teams will work to get high-percentage shots. Certainly this feat is easier to accomplish for a control team that has featured this style of play the entire season.
- It keeps the score close against a superior opponent. This may allow your team to pull the big upset.
- Control ball is centered around the coach (many of them are continually yelling numbers, holding up signs, and flashing hand signals). They feel this gives their team an edge over the wide-open-styled team that permits the players to make the decisions in a spontaneous fashion.

We must admit that many of these ideas are valid at this time. *However, the "makeable" three-point shot may help swing the pendulum back toward a more, free-shooting, player-oriented style of play* This is particularly true when it is used in conjunction with a shot clock.

Who Will Use The Three-Point Play?

The proper question is not who will use it, but rather "how often, and when will teams use it?" Common sense dictates that even the most conservative coach using a disciplined control offensive plan will resort to it when the time and score factors make it a necessity. So really there will be those who will use it only when forced to and those who will attempt to make it part of their basic game plan.

Using it Only When You Must

If you lack the ideal three-point shooters, or if it's against your philosophy to alter your inside-to-outside shot ratio in order to use the shot throughout the game, you must determine at what point in a losing contest you have no other alternative. The best rule I can think of in determining when you must "go for three" is the one used for many years to determine when a team should resort to a pressure defense. That

rule is: "When your scoring deficit is twice the number of minutes left on the clock." This idea is a starting point from which you can make adjustments in terms of your specific coaching situation. This offensive change of pace will make it necessary for you to develop a three-point practice drill in which you put the time and score on your scoreboard and teach your players to combine the proper amount of intentional fouling and three-point attempts. It also may involve changes in personnel. You might want to develop a three-point team and/or offense. Whatever you decide, one thing is certain and that is that you must devote parts of your practice and game plans (both offensively and defensively) to this phase of the game more than ever before.

Making it Part of Your Entire Game Plan

Once you have decided to incorporate the three-point play into your entire offensive game plan, the next question is, "Should I stress it and insist on it being taken, or just allow it to happen?" The answer, of course, is again determined by the many factors that comprise your specific coaching situation: personnel, philosophy, team techniques, opponents, and so on. The next question is, "Do we use it every game or just in particular games?" I believe in having a consistent style of play. "Be a fish or a fowl, but don't try to be both." This means that if you want to play a wide-open style and feature the three-point play, you should do it every game. However, I do feel the coach should reserve the right to "turn off" the three-pointer in certain time/score situations.

Factors To Consider When Making Your Decision

Making a correct decision on how much you will use the three-point play must be done after a thorough evaluation of your particular coaching situation. You should consider such things as your coaching

philosophy, the talent of your personnel, and the team techniques you feature, and compare them with the same elements of the teams with which you will compete.

Coaching Philosophy and Team Technique

If your philosophy doesn't leave room for you to teach the three-point scoring opportunity in a positive fashion, don't make radical changes in your team techniques to accommodate its use.

If you have had great success with an approach that is counter to using this play and see no reason why this success should not continue this season, minimize your use of this scoring option.

If you have a senior-dominated squad, and they have been trained to run an inside oriented control game, it might not be wise to make a 90-degree turn this season.

However, if you feel you cannot succeed with a rigid philosophy, and you don't have problems such as the ones listed above, approach this change in the game in an optimistic fashion as you review the talent of your team.

Talent of Your Personnel

Remember the definition of talent will change now that there is more of a premium on outside shooting. Prior to this new rule, coaches tended to refer to teams with athletes who could run and jump as being talented.

Now the factor of outside shooting ability has become an important ingredient in the talent equation. It may allow some teams to succeed against opponents who have taller, more physical personnel by using the three-point shot.

Three-Point Scoring Modes

As we pondered how to best utilize the potential of the three-point opportunity, we realized that the average coach would plan to use it, but not be willing to change his or her offensive philosophy in a radical way. The best way to make this accommodation would be to design tempo modes that would be dictated by time/ score parameters. The following tempo modes would determine when and to what degree a team will use the three-point opportunity.

Tempo Modes

The "You May" Mode (White Game)

During the major portion of the game, the coach designs a plan that might vary from an inside-oriented attack to one that features an abundance of outside shots. This would be determined by the team's offensive philosophy, the particular team techniques chosen, and the

type of defenses used in the team's league. At this point, you may use the three-point play.

The "You Should" Mode (Blue Game)

This point in the game occurs when your team's point deficit is double the number of minutes remaining in the game. For example, your team is down 14 points with 7 minutes remaining on the clock. This is the time to look for the three-point play, but still be willing to take the quick two. You might also want to use a pressing defense and/or adjust your offense to provide quick shots. This could mean minimizing your continuity offense and featuring quick shot (bang-bang type) plays. You probably *should use* the three-point play at this point.

The "You Must" Mode (Red Game)

This phase of the game is keyed when your scoring deficit is three times the minutes remaining on the clock and there are less than five minutes remaining in the game. At this point, the players must search out the three-point shot, and when they

rebound their team's missed shots, they must reset the offense and look for another "three." When they fail to obtain the rebound, they must stop the clock in a manner that does not result in a two-shot deliberate foul call by the referee. However, even a two-shot foul stops the clock and does not permit the opponent to kill time. A pressing defense and quick-shot offense are necessities at this juncture. You *must* use the three-point play at this point.

These situations should be practiced with the clock until the players understand the goals and methods of each of the three modes. The time/score parameters suggested are not sacred. They can, and probably should, be adjusted to your team's ability to shoot the three-pointer.

This close-in, makeable three-point shot will have an effect on how the game is played. It will be impossible for even the most skeptical coach to ignore it and not make it part of his or her offensive and defensive plans. So examine your particular coaching situation and make plans that will allow you to let this rule work in your team's favor. The following chapters will present three-point offensive techniques that you can use in their entirety or as an example to aid you in adapting your present plans.

Chapter 2
Player-to-Player Offense and the Three-Point Play

Because of the recent emphasis on defense in basketball, it is possible to underplay the importance and difficulty of choosing the proper player-to-player offensive plan and teaching it in a manner that nourishes it to its full potential. This involves a knowledge of the fundamentals of player-to-player offense, a thorough evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of your personnel and the ability to take this information and find the proper plan. The advent of the viable three-point shot has added another piece to this puzzle. Your basic offense must be adaptable enough to incorporate the three-point play. If it is not, you will be forced to develop additional offensive techniques in order to be prepared to reply to the time/score constraints that necessitate the three-point field goal.

This chapter starts with the fundamentals of player-to-player offense and their involvement with the three-point shot. Next, a fundamentally sound offense, the "lob shuffle," is presented, and how this plan may be adapted to provide numerous three-point opportunities is discussed. Then, although this offense is primarily a player-to-player plan, I will show how the lob shuffle can be used versus zone defenses. Three-point adaptations are also provided for this facet of the plan. The chapter concludes with auxiliary plays that can be added to give the offense more depth, or to take advantage of specific situations.

Fundamentals Of Player-To-Player Offense

This analysis of player-to-player offense gives a great deal of consideration to the impact of the three-point field goal. These fundamentals of player-to-player offense are designed to provide you with a frame of reference from which to choose the right player-to-

player offense for your particular coaching situation. Just what do you look for in a player-to-player offense? Following are some of the key elements.

1. It provides high-percentage shots. In the past, most high-percentage shots were obtained in one of four ways. These ways were: fast-break opportunities, pivot/ post plays, second shots, and 12-15 foot jump shots. However, the viable three-point shot forces the inclusion of the three-point play to this list. When designing your offense, you must include these shots whenever your personnel and offensive

philosophy will allow. Remember, a 33% three-point field goal is equivalent to a 50% two-point field goal.

2. It has a plan forgetting second shots. If you have tall, strong players who can be stationed near the free throw lane and can dominate the offensive board, a post-oriented offense will probably suffice. However, if your players are average size (or less) you may be forced to a motion game. This involves a great deal of teaching to make it clear who should "charge the boards" and how it may be best accomplished. The three-point play will make it necessary to discuss and practice the longer rebounds that result from these longer attempts.

3. *It utilizes your personnel to the fullest.* An old coaching cliché best fits our feelings about this aspect of the game. That is "if you have a cannon, you should shoot it!" Do what you do best! If you plan to feature the three-point shot, try to put the ball in the hands of your designated shooter at the point in the play where the shot will occur. Also recognize that all players cannot shoot the three-point field goal.

4. It provides for defensive balance. If you plan to include three-point opportunities in your offense, you must have a specific plan in regard to the maintenance of defensive balance. As long shots result in longer rebounds (those that bounce out farther), they are ideal to initiate fast-break plays opposition. Your players must be sure who is responsible for defensive balance and who must rebound. The plan for defensive balance may involve assigning one person to always be the first one back; a rule that insists that only one guard go inside and one must stay back; a rule that the offside and high player is back; or, as in the case of the three-point field goal try, a specific rule to cover a particular situation.

5. It has the proper amount of movement. In general, a small team must move and a big team can be less mobile and still succeed.

However, exceptions to this rule do occur through motion offenses that contain post-up opportunities, and because there are small players who can take their defenders inside and score on them. This means that the proper amount of movement is relative to both the size and individual skills your players possess. The three-point play makes it necessary to be particularly aware of the outside shooting ability of your squad and to plan the inside-outside shooting ratio of your player-to-player offense accordingly.

6. It removes (or at least occupies) the offside defensive helpers. Modern player-to player defenses are designed to create pressure on the ballside. This is done by assuring that there will be offside defensive help on any ballside penetration. The primary defensive helper is usually the offside deep player (see (X4) in Diagram 2-1).

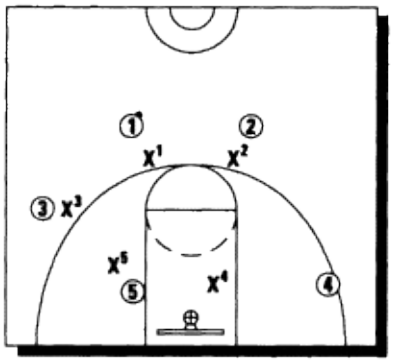


Diagram 2-1

Plays must be designed to move and/or remove the offside deep player. Two standard plays that are used to accomplish this are (A) an offside exchange (see (2) and (4) change positions in Diagram 2-2), and (B) an offside high-post cut by (4), who was being guarded by the offside deep player (X4), the primary helper (see

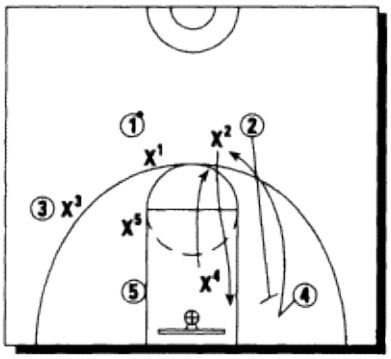


Diagram 2-2

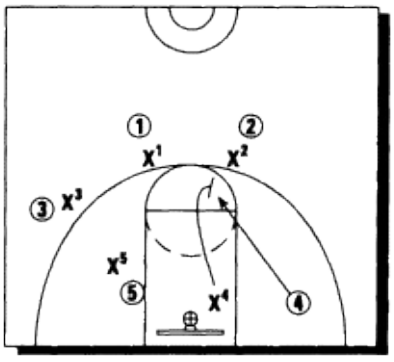


Diagram 2-3

Both of these maneuvers moved and removed the primary offside helper and made ballside penetration possible.

The three-point play adds another weapon to the offensive team's arsenal by way of the threat of a skip pass for a three-point attempt. Diagram 2-4 shows (4) breaking high and to the sideline at the 19'6" range. If (4) will make this cut early in the game and (1) will pass to (4) for a three-point score, (X4) will be forced to respect this cut from then on. This will definitely affect (X4)'s ability to help out.

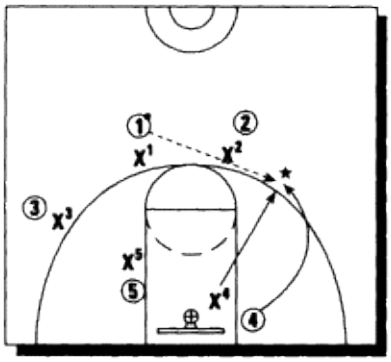


Diagram 2-4

7. It uses the proper offensive tempo. When a team has a lead against a strong opponent, a slow-hitting multiple-pass motion game is fine. However, when the proper time/score constraints are in force, it might be wise to resort to "bang-bang" plays that involve a minimum of passes and include three-point opportunities. Therefore, a well-planned player-to-player offense includes elements of both these extremes.

8. It has simple play keys that cue special options and plays. Play keys are maneuvers, hand signals, or oral signals that alert your teammates that a certain offensive option or play is about to be run. The simpler they are the better they work. The keys should be called by one player (usually the point guard) and the fewer players who must make adjustments because of them, the better the chance of success. The three-point play may be such a radical departure from standard strategy of many coaches that the best way to initiate it might be during a timeout, when the coach can state, "From here on, let's look for the three-point shot whenever we can get it, especially using our new play that gets Joe or Jane (the designated three-point shooter) the shot." In most cases, this offensive adjustment will be necessitated by time/score parameters.

9. It is adaptable to zone defenses. In this era of combination, switching, adjusting, and disguised defenses, it helps if your player-to-

player offense can be adapted to be used versus zone defenses. The skip pass for a three-point shot helps because most innovative defenses are weak on the offside perimeter and strong inside.

10. *It is adaptable to defensive pressure.* In the past, a team about to use a press usually showed its hand by setting up in a certain formation and even had the players assuming characteristic pressure defensive stances. In today's game, a double team may come at any time followed by continuing pressure. Therefore, you must have an offensive alignment that allows your team to face pressure without changing alignments. The three-point play helps here because in order for a double

team to be effective, all five defenders are usually on the same side of the court. Because of this fact, something as simple as a crosscourt-skip pass followed by an unmolested and successful three-point field goal may change your opponent's mind about using pressure.

11. *It includes three-point opportunities.* As we have mentioned, the use of the three-point play so often in the previous ten fundamentals, it might seem redundant to add it to the list of offensive fundamentals. However, we feel it is necessary to do so to stress the fact that even if you dislike the idea of such a play, chances are strong that time and score constraints of a coming game will make you wish you had included it in your plans.

Following is a player-to-player offense that is based on many of the fundamentals of player-to-player offense.

Lob Shuffle Offense

The explanation of this offense begins with the basic motion, which is followed by some possible three-point adaptations. Next it will be shown how the lob shuffle player-to-player offense can be used against zone defenses. This is followed by some possible three-point zone adaptations. The presentation of this offense concludes with auxiliary plays to be added only when and if needed.

Personnel Alignment

This offense is a continuity pattern that originates from a 1-2-2 double stack formation. Diagram 2-5 shows the wings (2) and (3) stacked under the two posts (4) and (5). The point (1) brings the ball up court and initiates the play. Players (2) and (3) should be strong shooters from as far out as the trey range and (4) and (5) should be strong inside players of sufficient size.

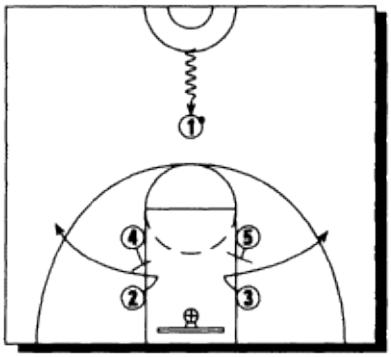


Diagram 2-5

The Basic Motion

The play begins as (4) and (5) screen down for their respective wings (2) and (3), who pop out to the free throw line extended and wide. Please note that (2) and (3) make changes of direction V-cuts before popping to the wing.

It should be mentioned that some teams are now placing the wings (2) and (3) above the posts (4) and (5) in the stack. From there, one of two options may occur. If the defenders on (2) and (3) play inside the stack, (2) and (3) pop directly out to the side (see Diagram 2-6).

This method works very well when you are seeking a three-point shot. When the small player is on top of the stack and pops to the three-point wing area, it is much closer and more difficult for the defender to react in time.

If the defenders, on (2) and (3) play outside the stack, (2) and (3) cross the lane and loop down and around the post on that side to the wing area (see Diagram 2-7).

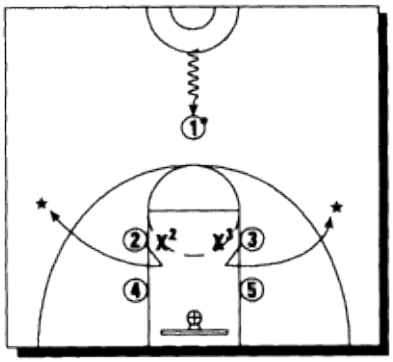


Diagram 2-6

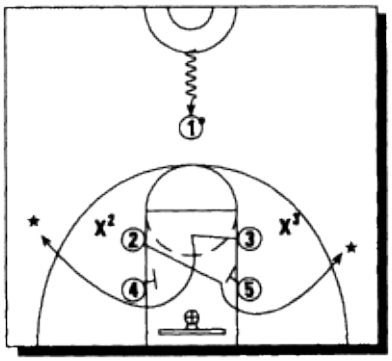


Diagram 2-7

Once (2) and (3) are at their wing positions and (1) has passed to one of them (as to (2) in Diagram 2-8), the basic motion begins. Player (2) either shoots or passes inside to post (4) who has posted up above the "block" and on the post line (straight line between passer and basket). Player (5) breaks to the high-post area as (3) dips in and then sets a backscreen on (1)'s defender. Player (1) can set up this screen by making a jab step toward (2) before cutting.

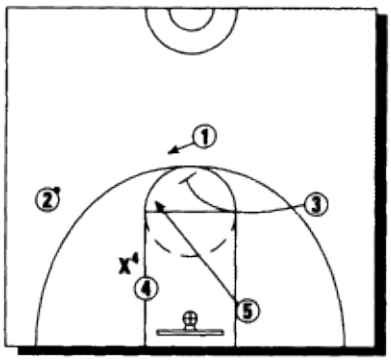


Diagram 2-8

The cuts made by (5) and (3) toward the ballside take away the defensive help and make it possible for (2) to lob to (4) if (4) is being fronted (see Diagram 2-9). If the lob pass is not possible, (2) may pass to (5), who could then pass inside to (4), who may be inside defender (X4) by "sealing" X4 (see Diagram 2-10).

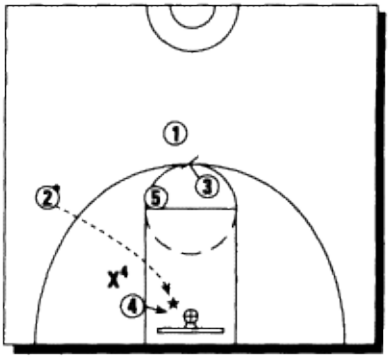


Diagram 2-9

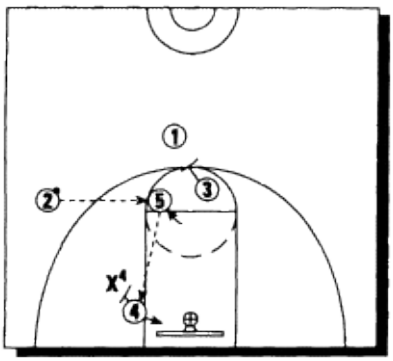


Diagram 2-10

If these inside options are not open, (2) looks for (1) cutting off (3) for a possible lob pass (see Diagram 2-11).

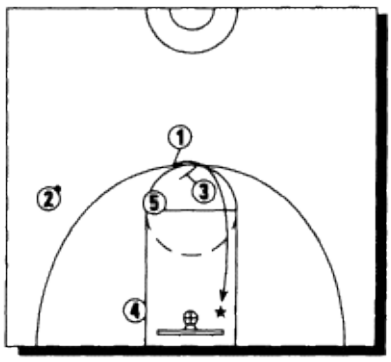


Diagram 2-11
Lob Option

When (2) throws this pass to (1), (2) should lob it at least as high as the rim and in a trajectory that would have it hit the floor inbounds if it were not caught. Too many lob passes are thrown in "line-drive" fashion and are not receivable.

If none of these options is open, (3) steps to the ballside of the point area (top of key) and receives a pass from (2). Player (3) is usually open for this pass because the defender has been taught to step out and hedge on (1)'s cut in order to make (1) swing wide and permit (X1) to get through and catch up with (1). If (1) cuts and is not open, he or she makes a V-cut to the wing area and (3) reverses the ball to (1) (see Diagram 2-12).

At this point, the shuffle cut is made with (2) making a change of direction and then cutting off (4), who stepped out to screen (see Diagram 2-13).

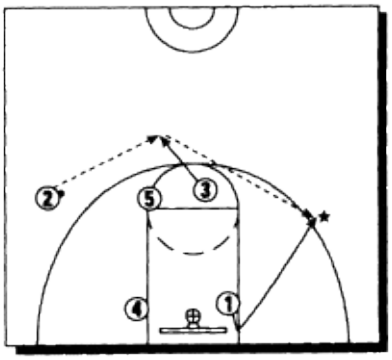


Diagram 2-12

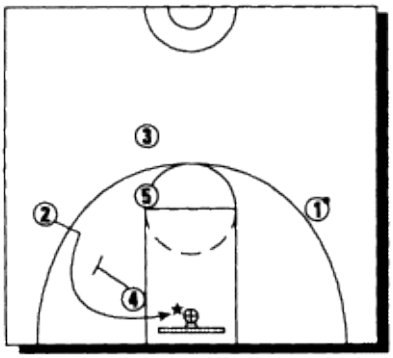


Diagram 2-13
Shuffle Option

If (2) is open, (1) should pass to (2) when (2) is directly under the basket. This provides enough time for the ball to get there, and for (2) to catch it and shoot while close to the basket.

If (2) is not open, (2) continues across the lane to the ballside low-post area on the post line. This forces (2)'s defender to front, or at least play a strong three-fourths fronting overplay. From here, (5) drops low and (4) moves to the point area to screen (see Diagram 2-14). The team can now repeat the pattern (see Diagrams 2-15 through 2-17).

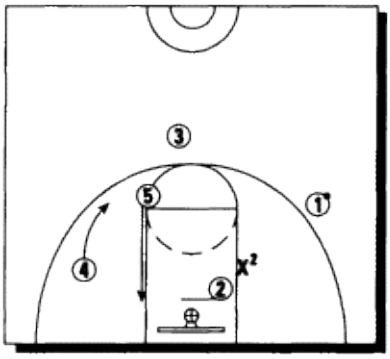


Diagram 2-14

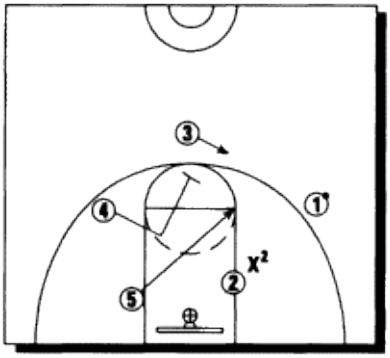


Diagram 2-15

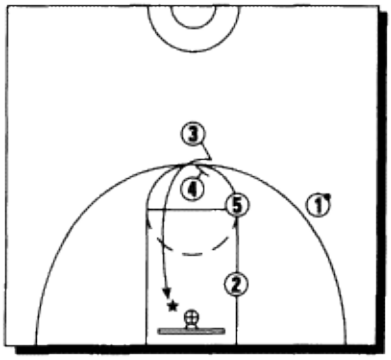


Diagram 2-16
Lob Shuffle

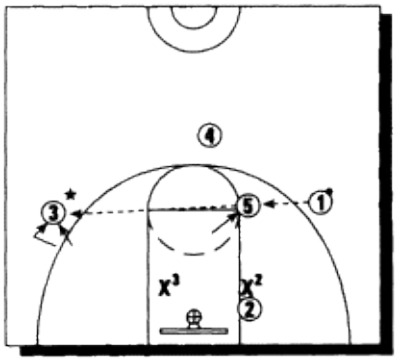


Diagram 2-18
Inside Reverse

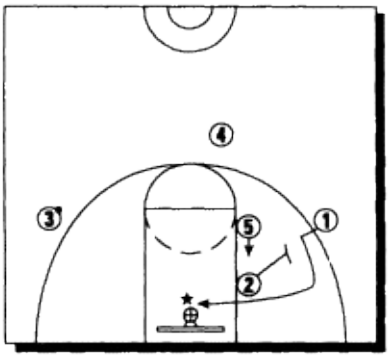


Diagram 2-19

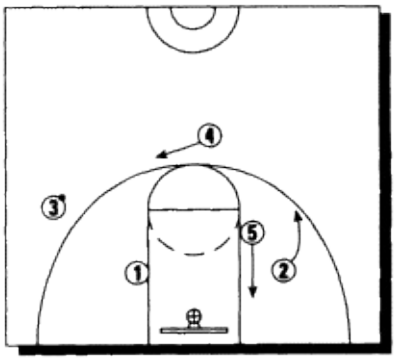


Diagram 2-20

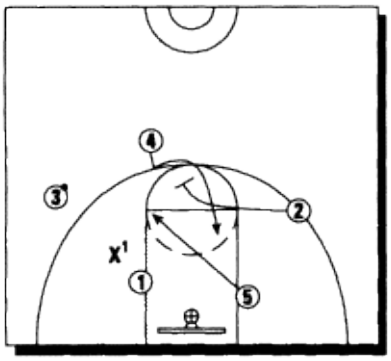


Diagram 2-21

Offside Screen Option

The offside screen option is identical to the lob play of the basic pattern except that the cutter, (4) in Diagram 2-22, rather than using the screen to cut to the basket, cuts to the offside three-point area.

Player (3) then skip passes crosscourt to (4) for a possible three-point shot (see Diagram 2-23).

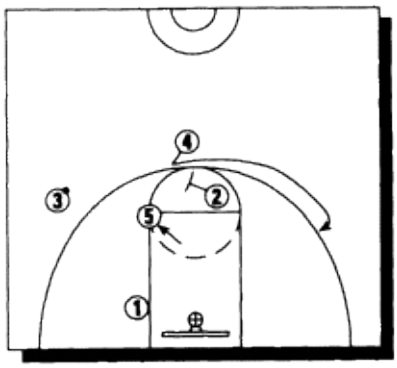


Diagram 2-22
Offside Screen

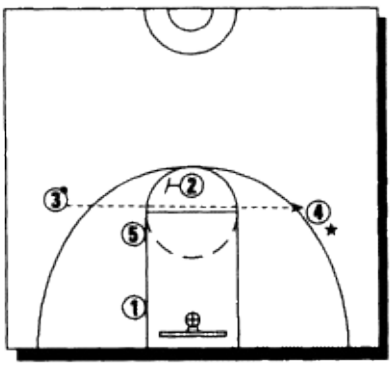


Diagram 2-23

If (4) does not take the shot, (3) cuts low off (1) to continue the pattern (see Diagram 2-24).

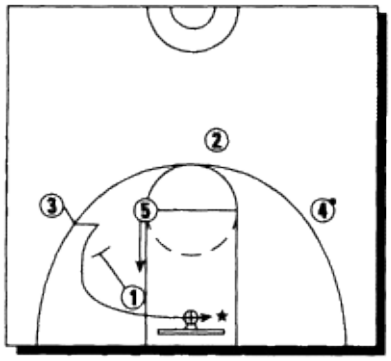


Diagram 2-24

Fake Reverse Option

This play is keyed by the point (2) in Diagram 2-25. When running the basic pattern, the strongside wing (3) is taught to pass to the point (2) and make the cut only after the ball has been reversed to the offside wing (4).

When running the fake reverse three-point option, (3) passes to (2), who, instead of passing to (4), fakes the pass or "pulls the string." This fake will cause (X3), the defender on (3) (if the player is correctly schooled in player-to-player defense), to fight over the screen in order to beat (3) to the ballside low-post area. Player (X3) also will expect (X1) to "hedge" out and impede (3)'s cut. Diagram 2-26 shows this cut being properly defended.

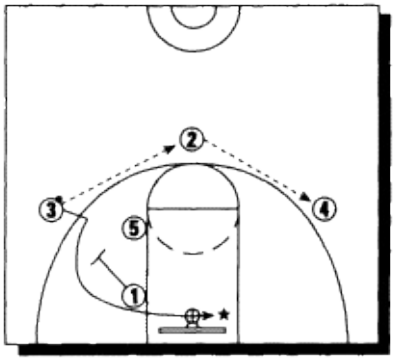


Diagram 2-25

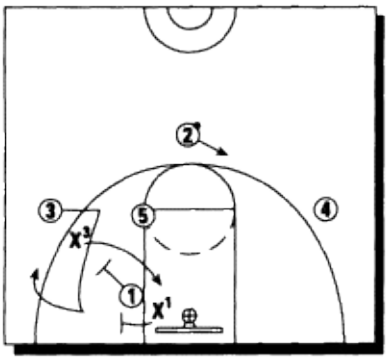


Diagram 2-26
Fake Reverse

The fake pass and reverse catches (X3) anticipating the ball reversal to (4), and fighting over (1)'s screen. This permits (3) to fake the cut, drop to the corner behind the three-point line, and receive a return pass from (2) for the three-point attempt (see Diagrams 2-27 and 2-28). Note that (5) and (1) disallowed (X3) to get back to (3) (Diagram 2-27).

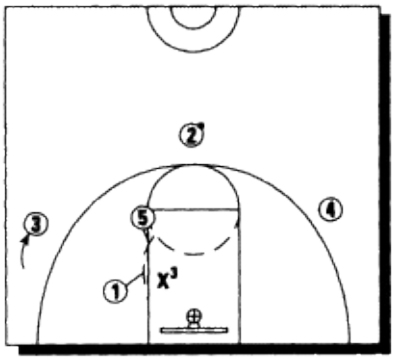


Diagram 2-27

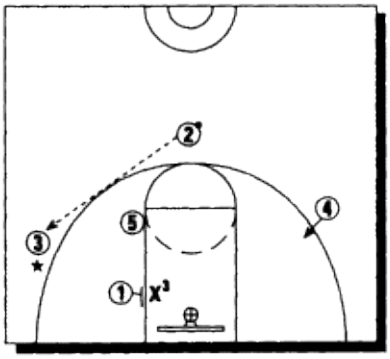


Diagram 2-28
Fake Reverse

If (3) cannot shoot, (2) screens away for (4), who comes to the point, receives a pass from (3), and reverses it to (2) to continue the pattern (see Diagrams 2-29 and 2-30).

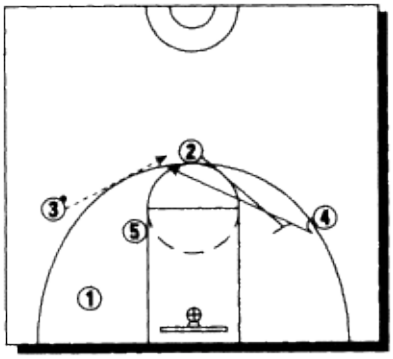


Diagram 2-29

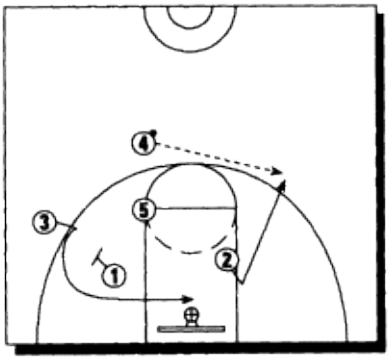


Diagram 2-30

Skip Pass Option

This play is the most basic and often used of the three-point adaptations. It is keyed by a hand or an oral signal from (1) as he or she enters the front court with the ball. This signal tells (5) not to break to the ballside once the stack unfolds, and tells (2) and (3) to pop *wide* to the three-point range.

Diagram 2-31 shows (2) and (3) pop out and (1) pass to (2). At that time, the defender on (3) will probably sag to "the paint" to help out.

Player (2) may shoot if open or throw a skip pass (à la zone offense) to (3) for an easy three-point attempt (see Diagram 2-32).

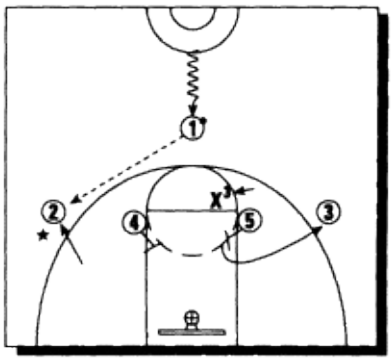


Diagram 2-31

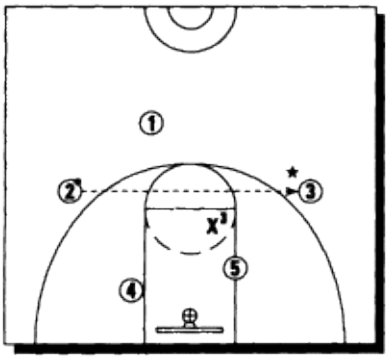


Diagram 2-32
Skip Pass

As (2) will be closely guarded by this time, (2) should be taught to throw a crisp two-hand overhead pass.

If a shot is still not available, (4) breaks high to the ballside, as (2) moves up to screen for (1), and the basic pattern continues (see Diagram 2-33).

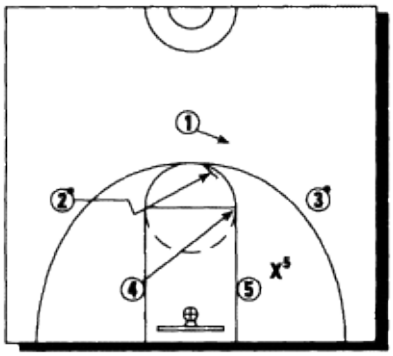


Diagram 2-33

The Lob Shuffle As A Zone Offense

With a few minor changes, the lob shuffle player-to-player offense may be run as a zone offense. Diagram 2-34 shows (1) make the original entry pass to (2). This tells the offside post (5) to break to the ballside high-post area. If (2) can pass to (5), the back middle player of the zone, (X5), may come up to cover (2). This may leave (4) wide open under the basket to receive a pass from (5) and shoot a power lay-up shot. This high-post to low-post pass is very difficult for a zone to defend.

If (2) cannot pass to (5), (2) looks for (1), who has utilized (3)'s offside screen of the zone's front to cut (versus zones) to the offside high-wing position for a possible lob pass and three-point attempt (see Diagram 2-35).

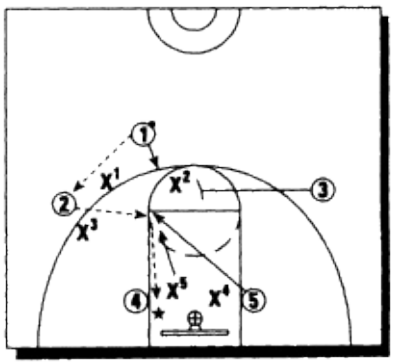


Diagram 2-34

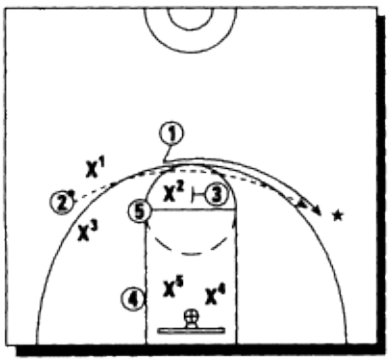


Diagram 2-35

Zone Lob

If neither of these options is open, (3) steps to the point, receives a pass from (2), and reverses the ball to (1) (see Diagram 2-36). Then, versus zones, (2) cuts high to the ballside and (5) drops low as (4) moves up to the offside wing area but close to the lane. If (1) can pass to (2), (5) may be open inside the zone (see Diagram 2-37).

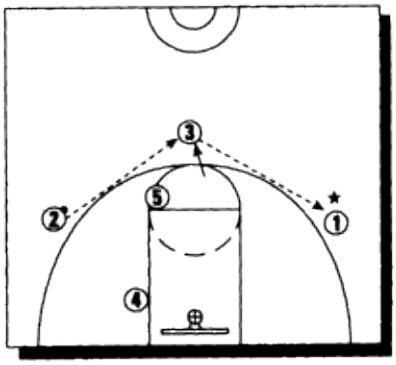


Diagram 2-36

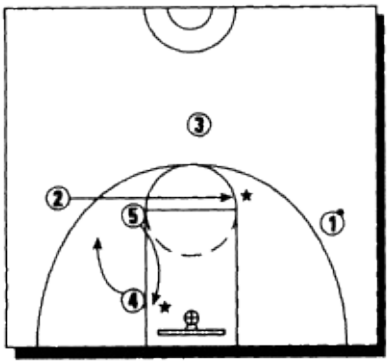


Diagram 2-37
Zone Shuffle

If (1) cannot get the ball to (2), (2) drops low and the pattern is repeated (see Diagrams 2-38 through 2-40).

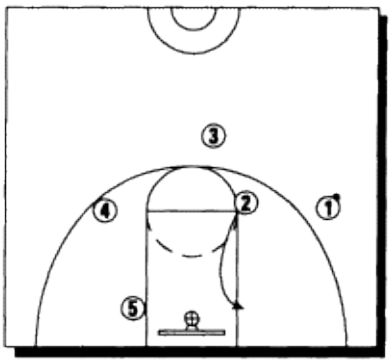


Diagram 2-38

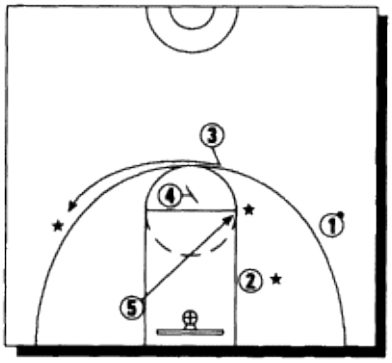


Diagram 2-39

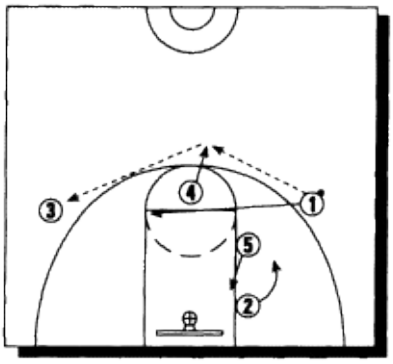


Diagram 2-40

Possible Three-Point Play Adaptations Versus Zone Defenses

The same three-point play adaptations to the offense that work versus

player-to-player defenses are even more functional versus zones. The offside screen option is part of the zone pattern and the other three are basically zone maneuvers.

Inside Reverse Option

When the ball is passed to the high post by the wing, as (1) passed to (5) in Diagram 2-41, the zone must jam the middle to prevent a subsequent pass inside to (2). This requires a deep drop by the offside zone defenders and will often leave the offside wing (3) open for a three-point try (see Diagram 2-42).

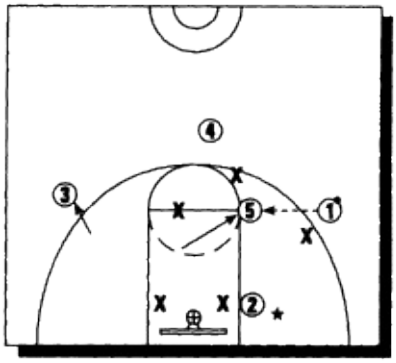


Diagram 2-41

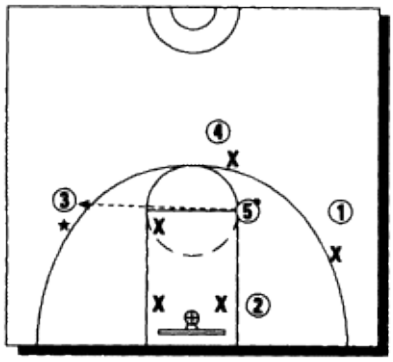


Diagram 2-42
Zone Inside Reverse

If (3) does not have a shot, (1) cuts to the middle, (5) drops low, and (2) moves out to screen (see Diagram 2-43).

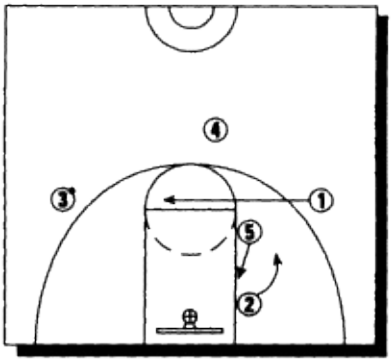


Diagram 2-43

From there, the pattern may continue.

Fake Reverse Option

The fake reverse option is keyed when the strongside wing, (3) in Diagram 2-44, passes to the point, (2), who instead of reversing the ball to the offside wing, (4), fakes the pass instead. This fake tells (3) to drop to the corner behind the three-point line rather than make the shuffle cut. Player (2) then passes to (3) for the three-point attempt (see Diagram 2-45).

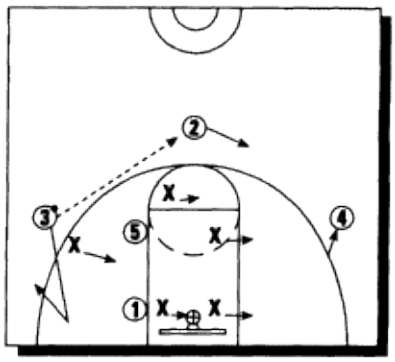


Diagram 2-44

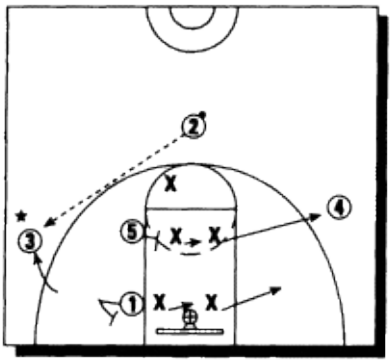


Diagram 2-45
Zone Fake Reverse

Please note that (5) and (1) screen the zone and attempt to disallow it from covering (3). Also note that (4), the outside wing, charges the board for the possible rebound.

Skip Pass Option

This play is a common zone maneuver. It works well because when (2) and (3) originally cut to their respective wing areas, they may be open due to the downscreens of (4) and (5). This could result in an easy three-point attempt (see Diagram 2-46).

In the previous diagram, (1) passed to (2) at the wing. If (1) is not open, (2) may throw a crosscourt-skip pass to (3), who may have the shot (see Diagram 2-47).

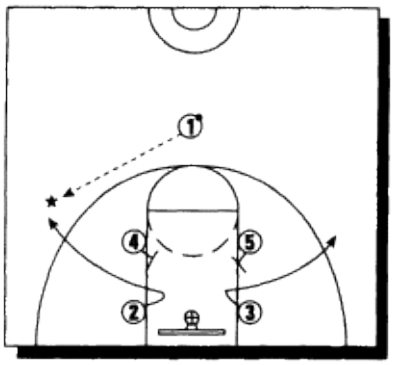


Diagram 2-46

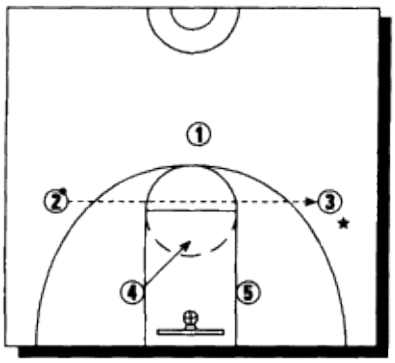


Diagram 2-47
Zone Skip Pass

It is very difficult for the zone team to fight over the downscreens and get to (2) 19'6" from the basket and then cover a crosscourt pass and shot on the opposite side of the court by (3) at a similar distance. If (3) does not have a shot, (4) breaks to the ballside high-post area and the pattern continues.

Auxiliary Plays (Versus Player-To-Player)

These plays may be added to the basic pattern if they are needed. This would be to take advantage of a specific situation or simply to give depth to the offense.

Shuffle-Cross Play

This play allows the team without a dominant point guard to use a two-player front, and still run the "lob-shuffle pattern." It was first used by Coach Garland Pinholster to initiate his pinwheel shuffle.

Diagram 2-48 shows the offense start in a two-player front with guards (1) and (2), forwards (3) and (4), and high post (5). Guard (1) passes to the forward on his or her side of the court and crosses in front of (2) to screen for (4), who cuts to the point. The guard (2) uses (1)'s cut and high post (5) to cut to the ballside-post area. Player (5) then moves to the offside low-post area. Player (3) first looks for (2), then for (1) for a possible three-point play.

Then, if (2) and (1) are not open, (5) breaks to the ballside high post area and (1) moves in and up to screen for (4). This movement starts the lob-shuffle pattern (see Diagrams 2-49 through 2-51).

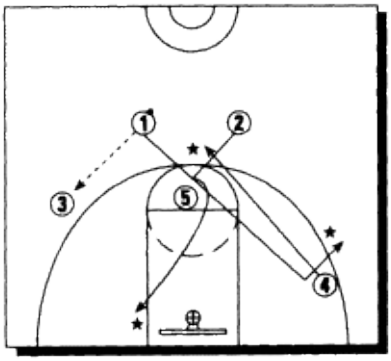


Diagram 2-48
Shuffle Cross

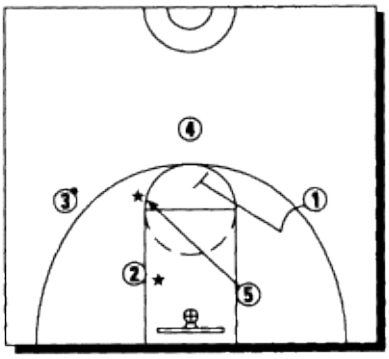


Diagram 2-49

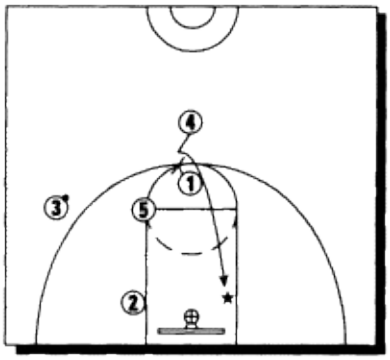


Diagram 2-50
Lob

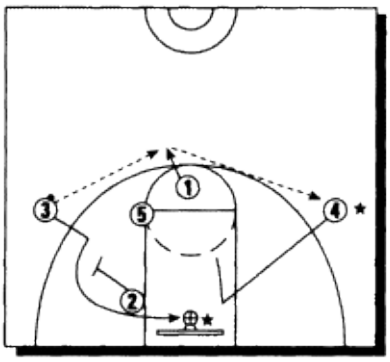


Diagram 2-51
Shuffle

Cutter's Choice Play

Another method of starting the lob shuffle from a two-player front is the cutter's choice play. Diagram 2-52 shows (3) stacked inside post (4), (5) as a lone post, and guard (1) passing to guard (2), and cutting down the lane.

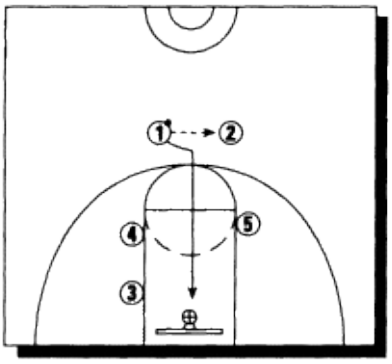


Diagram 2-52

Player (1) then has two options:

(A) Around the Stack

Guard (1) may choose to loop around the stack formed by (4) and (3). This tells (3) to go opposite (1), move across the lane, and pop to the offside wing. Then (2) may pass to either wing to start the pattern (see Diagram 2-53).

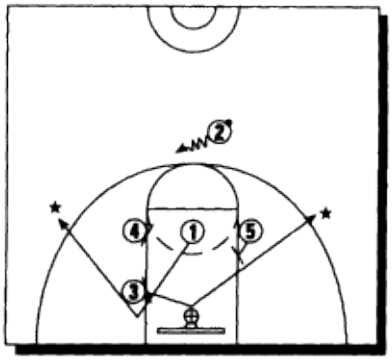


Diagram 2-53
Cutter's Choice-Double Side

(8) Around the Lone Post

This time (1) chooses to cut around lone post (5). This tells (3) to again go opposite (1) by popping to the wing on the opposite side of the court (see Diagram 2-54).

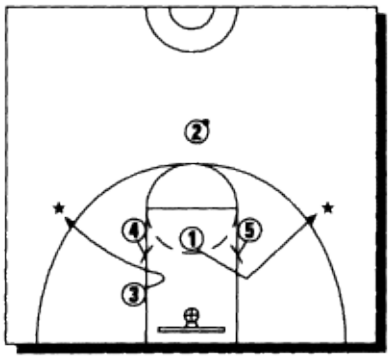


Diagram 2-54
Cutter's Choice-Single Side

Player (2) may then pass to either wing and start the lob-shuffle pattern.

Note (2) and (3) may cut behind the three-point field-goal line when they desire.

Force-a-Switch Play

When the wing defenders are denying the initial entry pass, the force-a-switch play may be run. Diagram 2-55 shows (1) trying to pass to (2), who is being denied the pass by (X2). Player (3) is also being denied the entry pass by (X3). This tells (5) to break high and receive a pass from (1).

This pass tells post (4) to step out and screen for (2). Player (2) changes direction and cuts off (4). Then (1) replaces (2) at the wing (see Diagram 2-56).

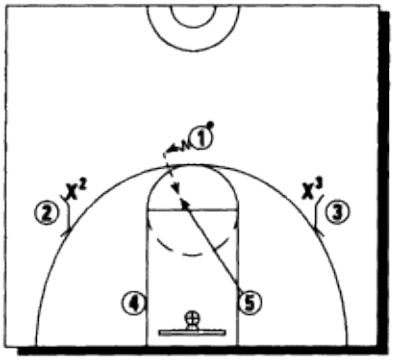


Diagram 2-55

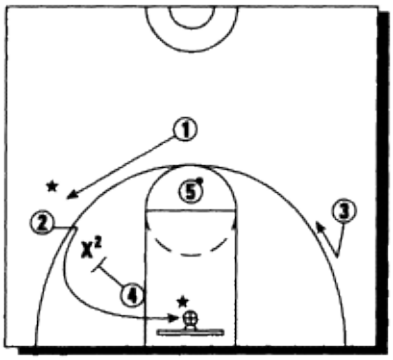


Diagram 2-56
Force a Switch

When setting the screen for (2), (4) attempts to force a switch. If (2) did not get a pass from (5), (2) cleared the lane. Ideally, (2)'s small defender is now guarding big post (4) and is in poor defensive

position to prevent a pass from (5) to (4) (see Diagram 2-57).

By now, both (1) and (3) are set for a possible shot from three-point range. Player (5)'s options are to look for (2) cutting, look inside for (4), and if neither is open, throw it to a three-point wing and screen away for the player in the offside low-post area. In Diagram 2-58, (5) passed to wing (1) and screened away for (2)'s cut to the point.

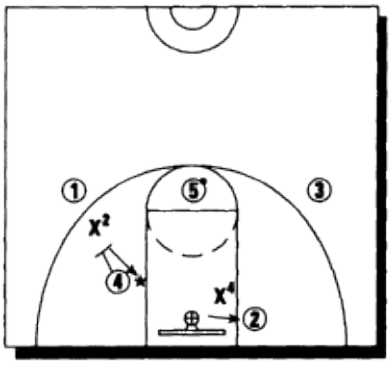


Diagram 2-57

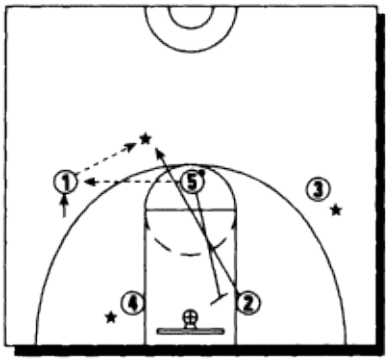


Diagram 2-58

Then (1) can shoot for three, pass crosscourt to (3) for three, pass inside to (4), or pass to (2) at the point and resume the pattern. Diagram 2-59 shows (2) starting the lob-shuffle pattern and Diagram 2-60 shows (2) starting the force-a-switch play.

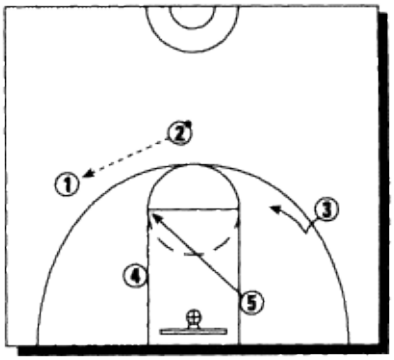


Diagram 2-59

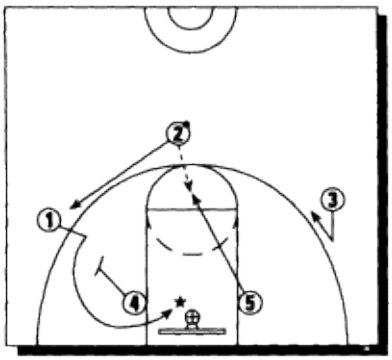


Diagram 2-60
Force a Switch

This play works very well in conjunction with the lob-shuffle pattern.

The three-point player-to-player offense is a necessity. You, as the coach, have a choice. You may adapt your basic plan to include a three-point play, or devise a separate plan to be used when you are forced to by the time and score. The lob shuffle is fundamentally sound, adapts well to three-point plays, and may also be used versus zone and unorthodox defenses.

Chapter 3
Zone Offense and the Three-Point Play

The prevalence of zone defenses at both the high school and college levels of play makes your zone offensive plan a high-priority item. This chapter will help you make your plan by first presenting the fundamentals of zone offense and how they are affected by the three-point play. This is followed by the zone checker offense, which is a fundamentally sound offense that includes three-point opportunities and may be run against player-to-player defenses. The chapter concludes with auxiliary plays.

Fundamentals Of Zone Offense

When designing your zone offensive plan, you should consider these basic ideas:

1. Teams playing zone defenses are often vulnerable to the fast break. If they retreat to a zone that jams the lane and ignores the perimeter, three-point opportunities will arise, especially on the wing or baseline corner areas.

2. Use the theory of opposites against zone defenses. If they have an even-front zone (2-3 or 2-1-2), use an odd-front offense (1-2-2 or 1-3-1). If they have an odd-front zone (1-2-2 or 1-3-1), use an even-front offense (2-3 or 2-1-2). This will lead to unmolested three-point shots.

3. Try to determine the zone's intent. If they are jamming the middle, go for three. If they are pressuring the perimeter, go inside and then out, if necessary.

4. Have a rebound plan that allows you to take your outside shots without starting a fast break for your opponent.

5. Expect to shoot outside versus zones. Develop practice drills and games that will sharpen your team's shooting from the trey range.

6. Move the ball at a planned arrhythmic tempo. Your movement should include ball falses (shot & pass) skip passes, perimeter dribbles, turnbacks, penetration passes and then passes to the perimeter, and players sliding into the holes of the zone. These maneuvers, and the fact that the zone must now expand out to cover a 19'6" perimeter, will make it very difficult for them to prevent the three-point shot.

7. Vary the offensive perimeter. If they cannot match your perimeter with any consistency, unmolested three-point shots will result. Move the ball and the offensive players.

8. Use overload formations and work that side of the zone very hard to create shots while maintaining a rebounder on the offside.

9. Attempt to catch them overshifted by reversing the ball and throwing skip passes.

10. Screen the zone to impede the slides of the zone defenders, who now must cover farther out than in the past.

11. Test the corner and the short corner. This pulls the entire zone to one side of the court and makes their return to a 19'6" range on the opposite side very difficult.

12. Test the middle of the zone. Once the ball goes to the high-post area, the zone players must jam the middle. This is a maneuver that makes them most vulnerable to a return pass to either wing, and a subsequent three-point shot.

13. Always go second side. Some zones cheat to match the first side. By moving the ball back to the opposite side, you make perimeter coverage more difficult.

14. Take advantage of the personnel match-ups. Put your designated three-point shooter in the zone area of their weak defender, and design a play that gets him or her the shot.

15. When your zone offense is not working, use your player-to-player offense as a secondary plan against the zone. But first examine its three-point and overall zone potential in practice.

16. Be adaptable to pressure. If they double team you, throw a crosscourt pass for an easy three.

17. Freeze their defensive perimeter by making a couple of passes before sending a cutter through. This tends to create problems for adjusting zones, and helps you split their adjusting perimeter.

18. Use post-to-post passes throughout the game. This makes the zone defensive team inside-oriented and makes three-point shots more

possible during your *"three-point must"* mode.

19. Dribble on the offensive perimeter. This rotates their perimeter and can create gaps in their coverage. This can be done by a "dribble chase" at another perimeter player who loops back inside the zone to replace the dribbler.

20. Overcome the fear of zones. Practice your three-point mode and treat it the same as any other practice phase. Build your players' confidence in their zone offense.

These fundamentals should be included in a comprehensive zone plan. The ones you choose to feature will be determined by the nature of your personnel, your zone offensive philosophy, and the type of zones you will face.

Zone Checker Offense

This offense is called the zone checker offense because it tests zone defenses in their vital areas, which are the high-post middle, the corner, and the three-point perimeter in general. The basic motion provides for triangle plays that force the

zone to be inside-oriented and then forces the zone to expand to a trey range through corner plays and crosscourt passes. All in all, it is a comprehensive plan that creates many problems for zone defenses.

Personnel Alignment

The basic set of this offense is a 1-2-2 alignment that starts from a double stack. The point (1) is the primary ball-handler who must bring the ball upcourt, initiate the basic motion, and maintain defensive balance. Players (2) and (3) are the wings, who should have a three-point shot range and still be able to score with their back to the basket in the low-post area. Ideally the posts, (4) and (5), are big strong rebounders, who can score inside. It is not necessary for them to have a wide variety of pivot moves, but they must be able to "power up in traffic." Note in Diagram 3-1 that the wings are positioned above the posts in the stack.

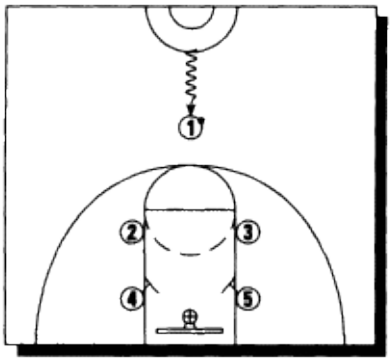


Diagram 3-1

Double Stack

This innovation, explained in chapter 2, also works well versus zones. If the defenders who will cover (2) and/or (3) are inside, (2) and (3) pop directly to the three-point area and (1) passes to one of them. It is sometimes possible for the post, (4) in Diagram 3-2, to detain the zone player long enough for (2) to get the shot.

If the defenders in the area of (2) and/or (3) are outside, (2) and (3) may cross to the opposite wings by looping around the offside post (see Diagram 3-3).

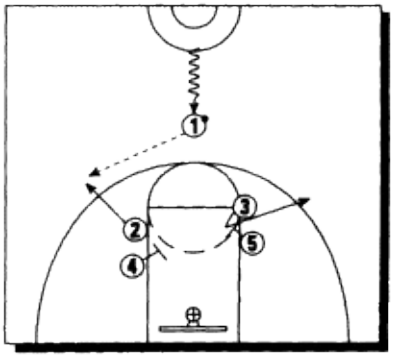


Diagram 3-2

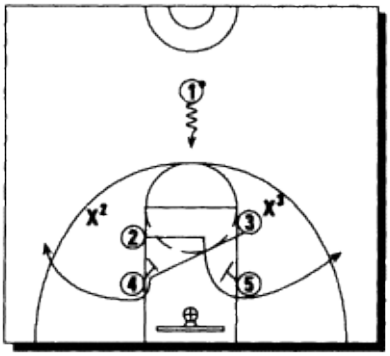


Diagram 3-3

Player (1) can also call a special from this situation (defenders outside). Player (1) can dribble away from the wing, (2) in Diagram 3-4. This tells (2) to pin the defender outside, take a pass from (1), and either shoot or pass inside to one of the big players, (4) or (5).

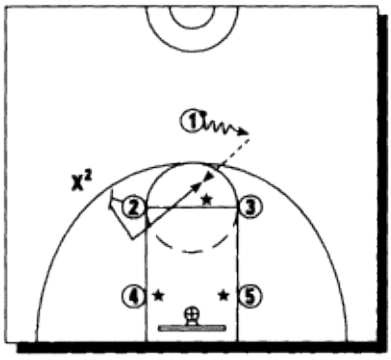


Diagram 3-4

The Basic Pattern

Triangle Option

Once the stack has broken up and (2) and (3) are at the wing areas, they may receive a pass from (1) (see (2) in Diagram 3-5). This tells the offside wing (3) to cut to the high-post area. Note that after passing to (2), (1) cuts to the offside high-wing area for a possible return pass and a three-point attempt. Player (2) first looks to (1) for a possible three-point attempt and then to (3) in the middle. If the pass is made to (3), the player squares up to the basket and may shoot or pass inside to (4) or (5). This triangle play creates a problem for the zone's middle defender, who, if they move up, may leave (4) and/or (5) open, but if not, (3) may have an easy shot. Once teams have scouted this maneuver, they usually will have the perimeter defenders sag in to help. This leaves (1) open for the trey.

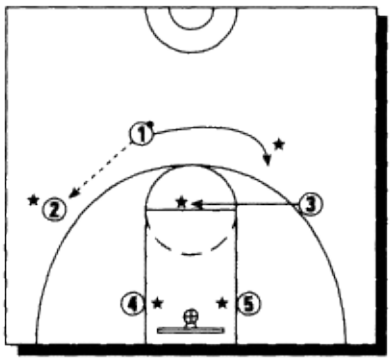


Diagram 3-5
Triangle Play

When (2) makes the crosscourt pass to (1), (3) moves toward the basket as a potential rebounder and then loops back to the original wing position. Player (1) can shoot or pass to (3) to restart the basic pattern with (2), the offside wing, cutting to the high-post area. Then (1) again cuts away from the pass (see Diagrams 3-6 and 3-7).

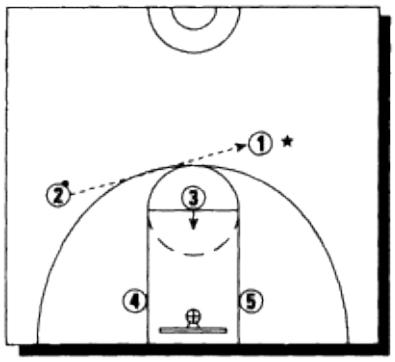


Diagram 3-6

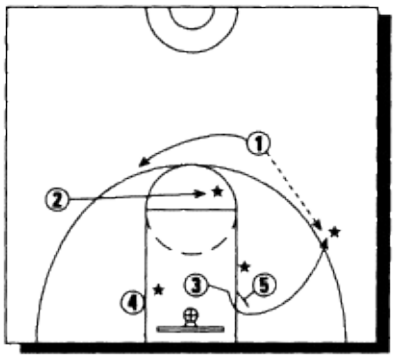


Diagram 3-7
Triangle Play

Corner Option

If (2) cannot pass to (3) or (1), (4), the ballside post, cuts to the corner or short corner (see Diagrams 3-8). Then (2) passes to (4) and (3) drops low to post up (see Diagram 3-8). Also, note that (2)'s pass to (4) keyed (1) to move back to the ballside of the lane.

From there, (2), (4), (3), and (1) utilize the passing triangles they form to move the ball and seek a good shot. Player (1) always maintains defensive balance and (5) establishes strong rebounding position on the offside (see Diagram 3-9). When in the three-point mode, (5) may at times pop to the three-point range when (2) has the ball at the ballside wing (see Diagram 3-10).

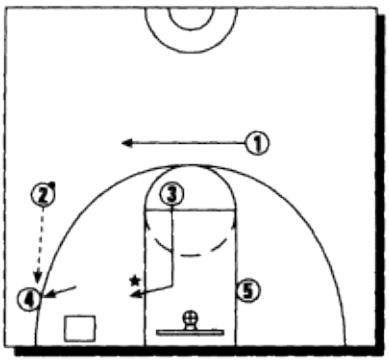


Diagram 3-8
Corner Option

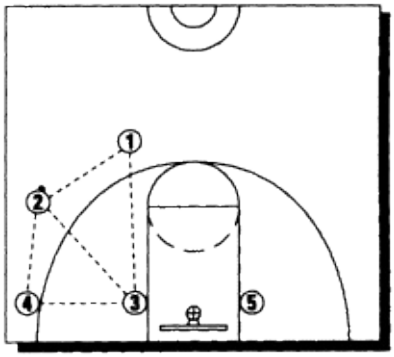


Diagram 3-9

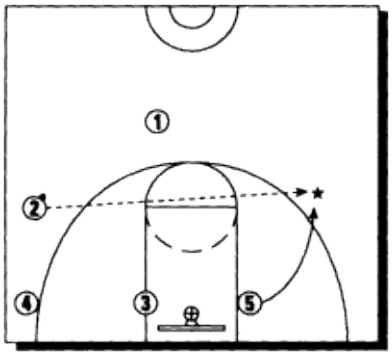


Diagram 3-10

Stack and Reset Option

If a shot does not develop, (2), the ballside wing, may key the stack and reset option by passing to point (1) and moving to screen for (3). Player (4) reads this key and joins (2) to form a double screen. The

screen is held until (1) dribbles to the other side of the lane. Player (3) then pops to the three-point wing area and the zone is trapped inside (see Diagram 3-11).

Player (1) may pass back to (3) or wait until (2) crosses the lane and loops around (5) to the three-point area. Player (5) traps the zone inside. These options test the zone's ability to cover the trey range on both sides of the court (see Diagram 3-12).

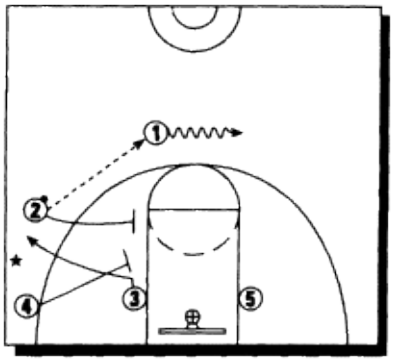


Diagram 3-11
Stack and Reset

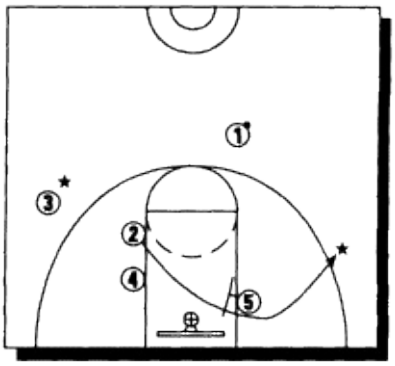


Diagram 3-12

Using The Zone Checker Play Versus A Player-To-Player Defense

Double Stack Option

If you are using this plan as a player-to-player attack, start in a double stack with (1) at the point, the wing (2) stacked under four, and the wing (3) stacked inside (5). As has been previously noted, (2) and (3) also may stack above (4) and (5) (see Diagram 3-13).

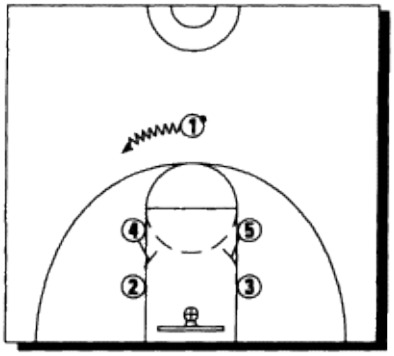


Diagram 3-13
Double Stack

Triangle Option

As (1) picks up the dribble, (2) and (3) pop out of the downscreens set by (4) and (5). In Diagram 3-14, (1) chooses to pass to (2). This tells (4) to post up. Player (2) may then shoot or pass inside to (4). If there is no shot, the offside wing (3) cuts to the ballside, high-post area; (1) cuts away to remove the defensive sagger and provide a possible three-point shot.

Then, if (4) is being fronted or defended in a strong overplay manner, (2) can pass to (3), who will have an excellent angle for the pass inside to (4) (see Diagram 3-15).

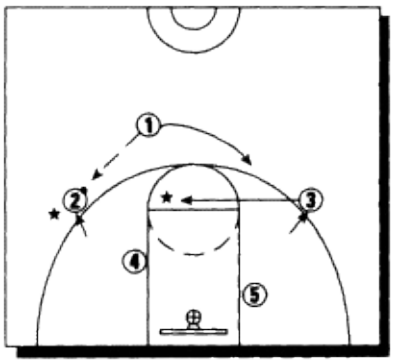


Diagram 3-14
Triangle Play

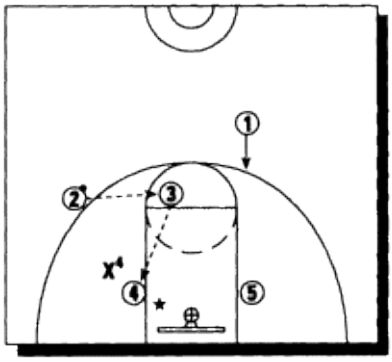


Diagram 3-15

Corner Option

If the pass cannot be made to (3), (4) clears to the ballside corner or short corner and (3) posts up after dropping to the low-post position. Then (2) passes to (4), who attempts to get the ball in to (3) (see Diagram 3-16).

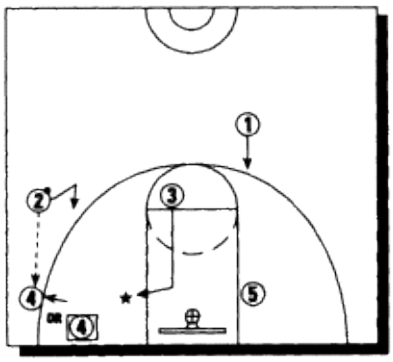


Diagram 3-16
Corner Option

High-Low Variation

If (4) cannot get the ball to (3), it is probably because (3)'s defender was denying the pass. Seeing this, (4) returns the ball to (2) and keys the high-low variation. As (2) catches the ball, (5) pops high, (2) passes to (5), and (5) passes inside to (3) (see Diagram 3-17). Note (2)'s change of direction to get open for the pass from (4).

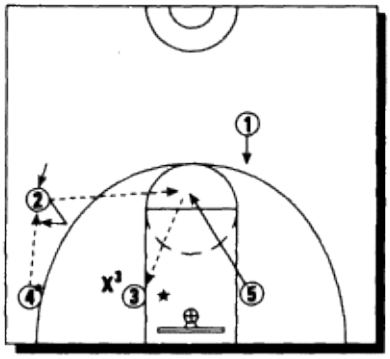


Diagram 3-17
High-Low

Stack and Reset Option

If the pass to (5) cannot be made, (1) changes direction and comes to the ballside to receive a pass from (2). Player (2) then keys the stack and reset option by cutting to screen for (3). (2) is joined by (4). Player (3) pops to the three-point wing area (see Diagram 3-18).

Then (2) continues across the lane to loop around (5). A pass to either wing would key another stack, triangle, corner, high-low sequence (see the pass to (2) in Diagram 3-19). All in all, these zone maneuvers work well against player-to-player defenses.

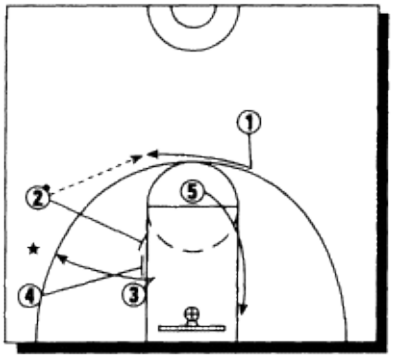


Diagram 3-18
Stack and Reset

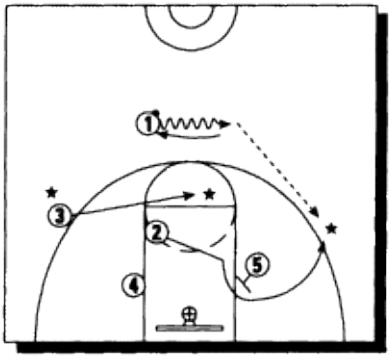


Diagram 3-19
Triangle

Quick Three Play

Diagram 3-20 shows (1) pass to wing (2), and (3), the offside wing, cut to the high-post area. At this point, the "quick three-point play" may be run. It is keyed by (1) who, instead of cutting away from (2), comes back to the ballside and receives a return pass.

Then (2) cuts down and underneath the offside post (5) as (1) dribbles to the offside of the key. Player (3) drops low to the three-point area opposite (see Diagram 3-21).

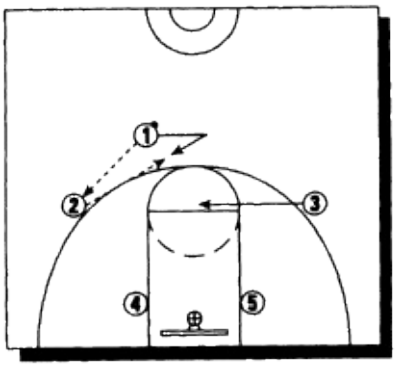


Diagram 3-20
Triangle

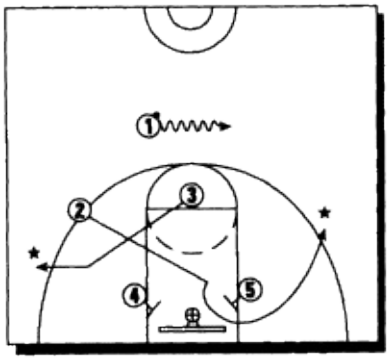


Diagram 3-21
Quick Three

Player (5) attempts to trap the zone inside and give (2) the shot. In most cases, the zone will fight hard and get out to (2) in time. However, this leaves (3) wide open in the opposite corner as (4) traps

the zone on (3)'s side (see Diagram 3-22).

If (3) receives the pass and is not open, (2) cuts to the middle and the pattern resumes (see Diagram 3-23).

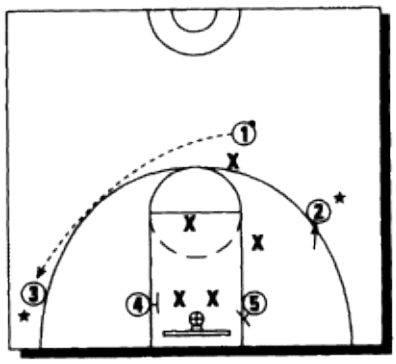


Diagram 3-22

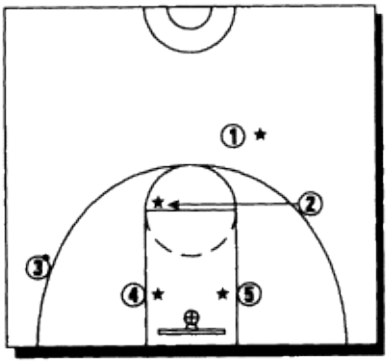


Diagram 3-23
Triangle

Last Shot Play

Once the triangle option has been completed and the offside wing has dropped from the high to low post on the ballside (see (3) in Diagram 3-24), the last shot option may be run. Player (2) again passes to point (1), and moves in with (4) to double screen for (3)'s pop out option.

This time, however, (3) cuts away and moves across the lane to loop around (5) for a possible jump shot. Player (5) screens the zone and denies the nearest defender a path to (3) (see Diagram 3-25).

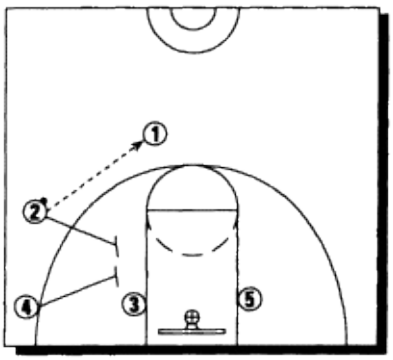


Diagram 3-24

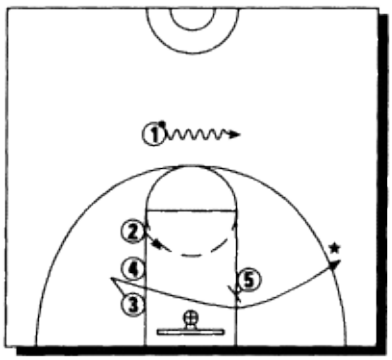


Diagram 3-25
Last Shot

Player (2) reads (3)'s cut and loops around (4) to become the second option (see Diagram 3-26). Player (4) traps the zone inside.

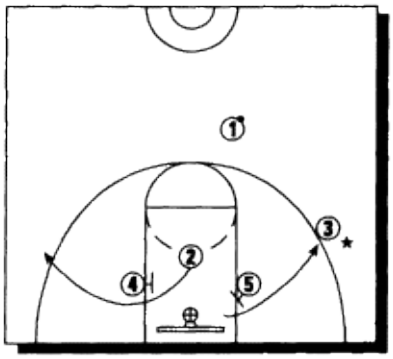


Diagram 3-26

Once a pass is made to either wing, the offside wing will cut to the middle to initiate a new triangle option.

Last Shot Lob Play

A variation of the previous play is also run from the corner option set. The triangle phase is over, (4) has cut to the corner (not the short corner), and (3) has dropped to the ballside low-post area. The onside wing, (2), keys this play by faking a pass to (4) and passing to (1) (see Diagram 3-27).

Player (2)'s fake to (4) brings a defender up on (4) and tells (3) to screen. Then (2) cuts through and loops around (5) as (1) dribbles to that side of the lane. Player (4) sets up (3)'s screen by making a change of direction toward mid-court and then cutting to the hoop. Player (1) may pass to (2), looping around (5), or lob to (4) (see Diagram 3-28).

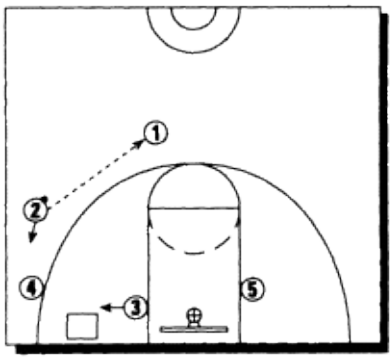


Diagram 3-27

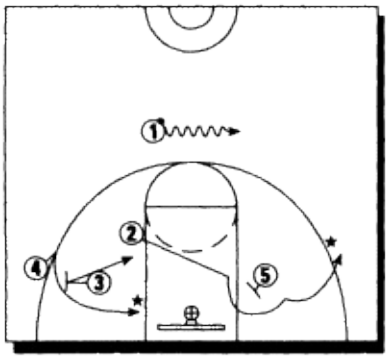


Diagram 3-28
Last Shot Lob

If the ball is lobbed to (4), (4) takes a shot. If it is not, a pass to either wing, (3) or (2), will initiate a new triangle option.

Post Clear Play

This variation begins in the same manner as the basic zone-checker play. Player (1) passes to (2) and the offside player, (3), cuts to the middle. This time, however, after the triangle option has been completed, the onside post (4) does not cut to the ballside corner, but clears away from the ball and loops around the offside post (5) (see Diagram 3-29).

This allows (3) to cut to the ballside low-post area. First (2) looks for the triangle, then for (3) dropping to the low-post area. Then (2) reverses the ball to (4) by way of (1) (see Diagram 3-30).

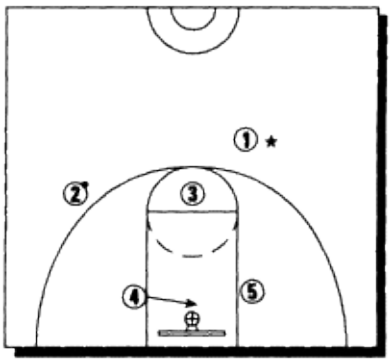


Diagram 3-29
Triangle

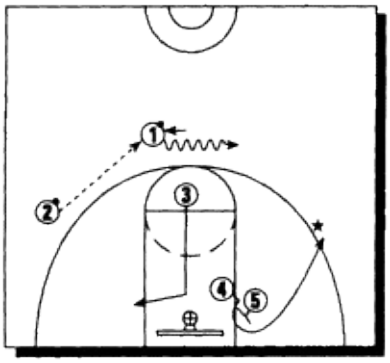


Diagram 3-30
Post Clear

The pass to (4) keys (2) to break to the high post and the same play is run on that side (see Diagrams 3-31, 3-32, and 3-33).

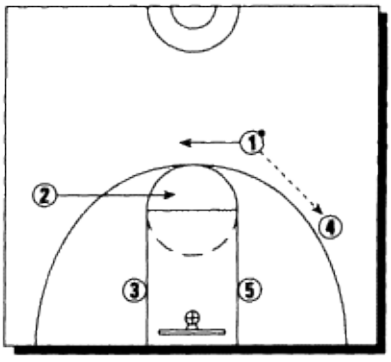


Diagram 3-31

Triangle

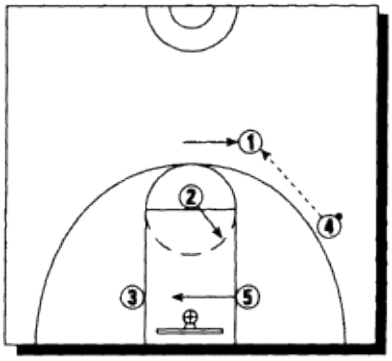


Diagram 3-32

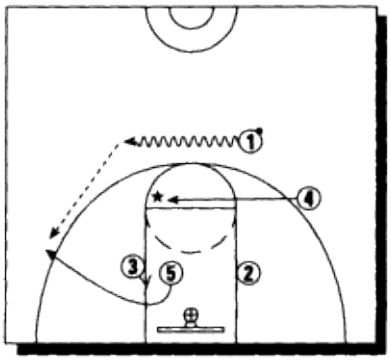


Diagram 3-33
Post Clear To Triangle

This play is designed for a team with four inside players of equal size and with good all-around ability. Players (2), (3), (4), and (5) constantly interchange as the play progresses.

Offside Double-Screen Play

This play is keyed by the offside wing (3) in Diagram 3-34, who, instead of cutting to the high-post area, cuts low and forms a double screen with (5), the offside post. This tells (2), the ballside wing, to pass to (1) at the point, and cut down the lane and around the double screen. Player (1) can time the play by dribbling to the other side before passing to (2).

If (2) is not open, (3) cuts across the lane and (4) screens the zone. Then (1) may pass to (3) (see Diagram 3-35).

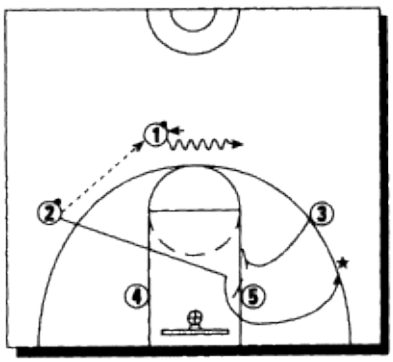


Diagram 3-34
Double Screen

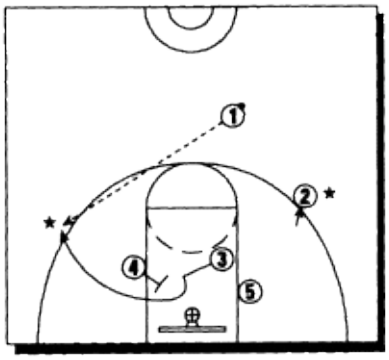


Diagram 3-35

If a pass to a wing is made, and no shot is taken, the basic pattern is resumed with the offside wing (player (2) in Diagram 3-36) cutting to the high-post area.

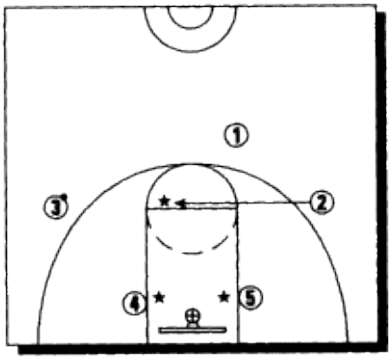


Diagram 3-36
Triangle

This zone checker offense has many attributes. Some of them are:

· It forces the zone to expand to cover the perimeter and then provides an inside threat.

· It permits the players to become specialists with (1) in charge of initiating the offense, being the designated three-point shooter, and maintaining defensive balance; (2) and (3) being the mobile outside shooters, who must also be able to post up effectively; and (4) and (5) as the rebounders who dominate the lane area. This specialization simplifies the teaching that must be done and allows the players to become comfortable and confident in their well-defined roles.

· It is easily taught by using breakdown drills that encompass each of the three phases-triangle option, corner option, and stack and reset option. This provides repetitive opportunities for the coach to stress the fundamentals involved.

· Finally, it is adaptable to player-to-player defenses. The availability of one on-one inside opportunities, plus the use of the stack formation, makes this an ideal offense in this era of changing, combination, and disguised defenses.

Chapter 4
The Three-Point-Oriented Fast Break

This chapter begins with the fundamentals of fast-break basketball, followed by two specific patterns that feature three-point opportunities. A 15-player fast-break drill is added that may be adapted to facilitate the teaching of either of the two patterns.

Fundamentals Of Fast-Break Basketball

To have a consistently strong fast-break pattern, you must stress the five phases of the break. They are the outlet play, lane organization, the initial scoring play, the trailer phase, and early offense. The three-point play becomes important during the latter two phases.

Outlet Play Phase

Rebounders must know where the outlet player will be located. In this pattern, the outlet pass is expected to be made on the rebound side of the court, at a point between the free throw line extended and the mid-court line. In order to best accomplish this pass, the rebounder ((3) in Diagram 4-1) should come down in a jump stop and turn to the outside by pivoting on his or her outside foot. The ballside guard, (1), moves to the sideline and receives the pass with shoulders parallel to the sideline and facing inside. The rebounder uses a baseball, two-hand overhead, or hook pass and aims at the receiver's jersey numbers. Receiving the ball, (1) can see the entire court as the other players run toward their assigned lanes.

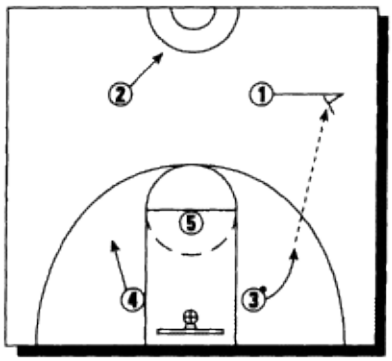


Diagram 4-1

Lane Organization Phase

This phase is determined by the specific pattern being used, but some generalizations can be made. The ball should be in the middle lane by the time it reaches mid-court. This is accomplished either by the outlet (1) dribbling there (see Diagram 4-2), or by passing to the other guard, (2) (see Diagram 4-3).

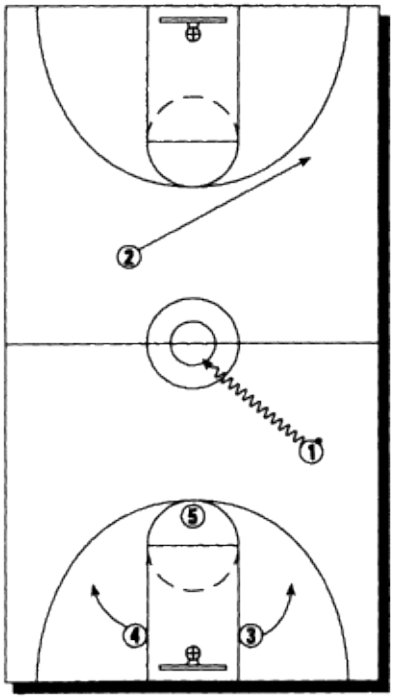


Diagram 4-2

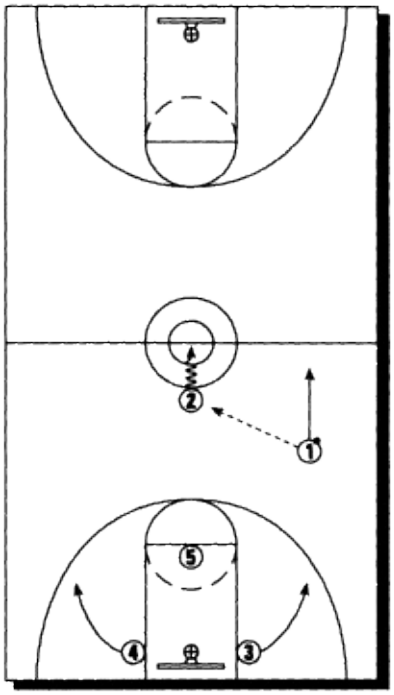


Diagram 4-3

It is always prudent to have an assigned safety for your fast break. This player will become the primary defender and be the first person back on defense in the event the ball is lost to the opposition as the team moves up court. In Diagrams 4-2 and 43, (5), the team's big player is the safety and trails the break up court. However, it is possible to devise a plan that allows all three inside players, (3), (4), and (5), to run for the outside lanes with the last to arrive becoming the safety. The physical ability of your personnel will determine the method you use. If you have a big, slow pivot you would have to use the former, but if the three inside players are similar in size and speed, the latter would be more logical.

Initial Scoring Phase

Once the ball is in the middle of the court, the players in the outside lanes must run hard to catch up with the dribbler. They must be sure they take one-third of the floor and do not crowd the dribbler. This is very important because it (A) spreads the defense, (B) allows the players in the outside lanes to remain in the dribbler's peripheral vision for a longer period of time, and (C) establishes a better angle for a cutting lay-up shooter (see Players (2) and (3) in Diagram 4-4).

Once players (2) and (3) make their cuts near the top of the free throw lane, they should "banana cut" toward the inside block with their hands ready to catch the ball and their eyes on the middle player. Player (1) uses a jump stop before the free throw line unless he or she can take it all the way to the basket. Player (1) may then jump shoot or pass to (2) or (3) (see Diagram 4-5). In certain time and score situations, (1) might stop behind the three-point line for a possible shot.

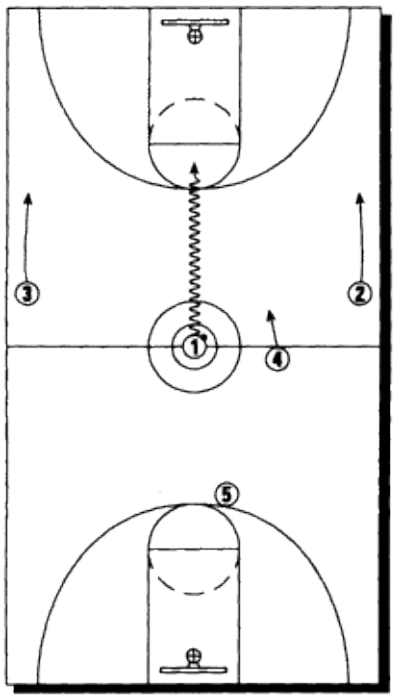


Diagram 4-4

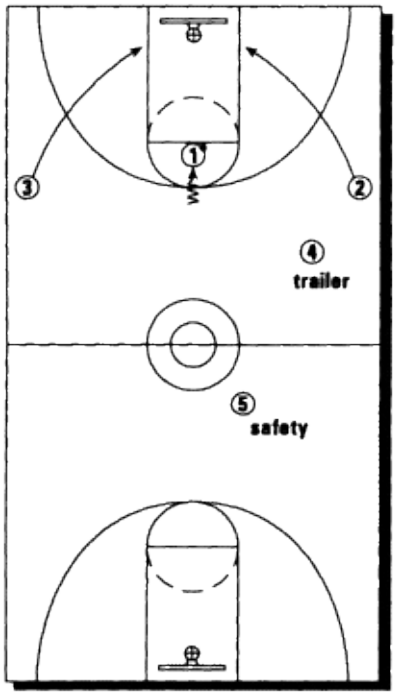


Diagram 4-5
Fast Break Completion

If a shot is not forthcoming, (2) and (3) may cross the lane (see Diagram 4-6) or V-cut to the corner on their side (see Diagram 4-7) to facilitate a trailer play and get in position for a three-point shot. If (2) and (3) are excellent three-point field goal shooters, you may have them stay wide in trey position (instead of banana cut as in 4-5) to the wing or corner and not go inside the arc.

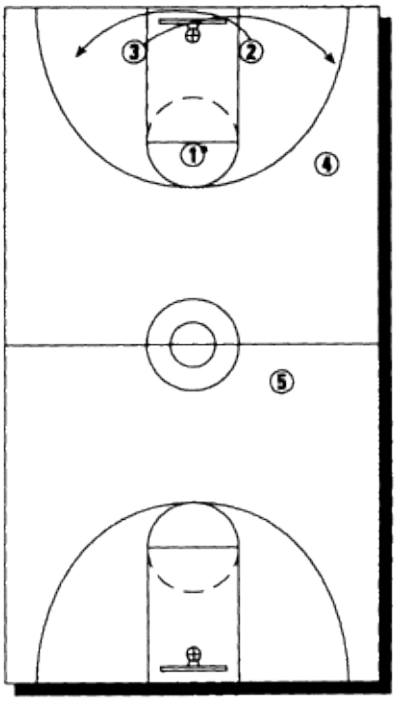


Diagram 4-6

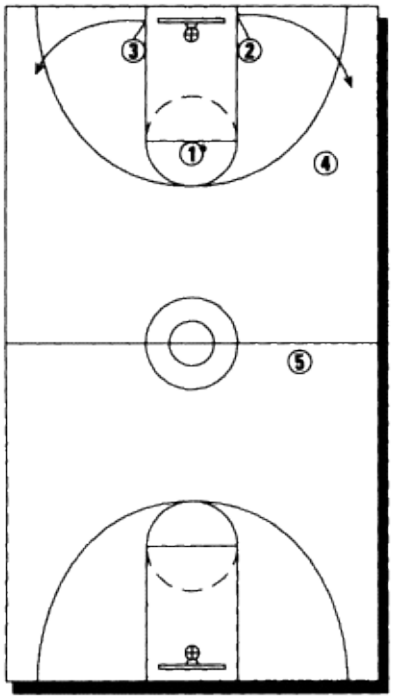


Diagram 4-7

Trailer Phase

In Diagram 4-7, neither (1), (2), nor (3) was open so (2) and (3) moved to their respective corners. From there, a trailer play is usually run in one of three ways.

(A) The Middle Trailer

Player (1) may pass to a wing (as to (2) in Diagram 4-8) and clear the middle for trailer (4) to cut through into the low-post area.

(B) The Outlet Lane Trailer

Diagram 4-9 shows the outlet pass made on the right offensive side of the court. The outlet player then takes the ball to the middle and (2) fills the right lane.

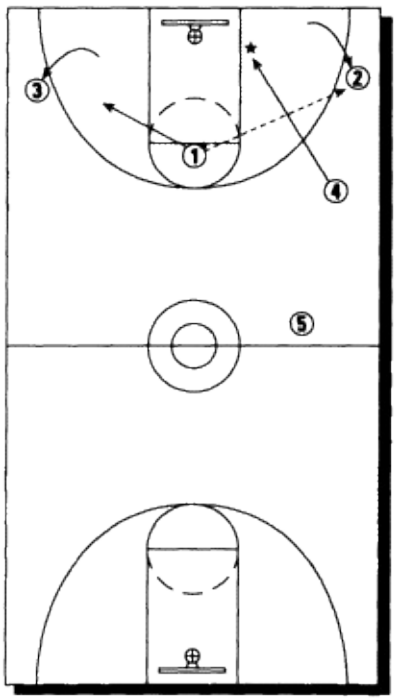


Diagram 4-8

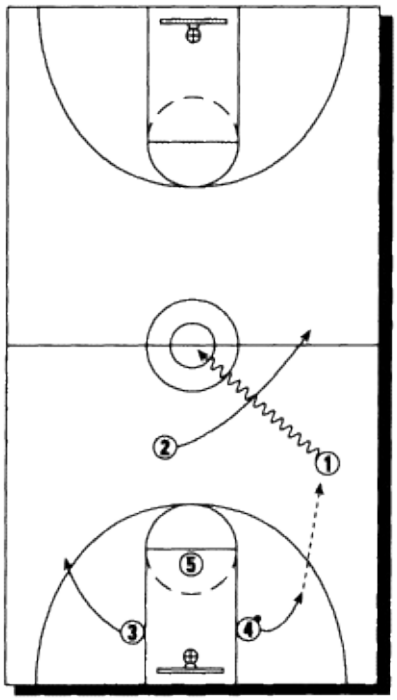


Diagram 4-9

Now (2) knows that he or she is in the outlet lane and, once the initial

scoring play is over, must cross the lane to make room for the trailer (4) (see Diagram 4-10). (4) calls a "through" and (2) moves through the lane into the opposite post area.

Player (4) runs to the lane on the side of the outlet pass to receive a pass from (1) for a lay-up (see Diagram 4-11) or (1) may pass to (3) who looks for (3) posting up.

Note that (5) stays behind the play as the safety to protect the team's defensive basket.

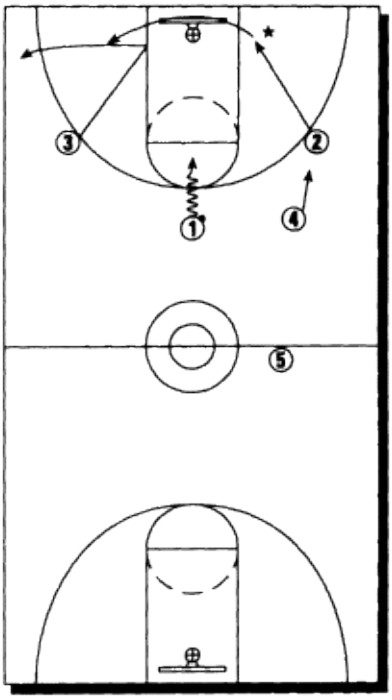


Diagram 4-10

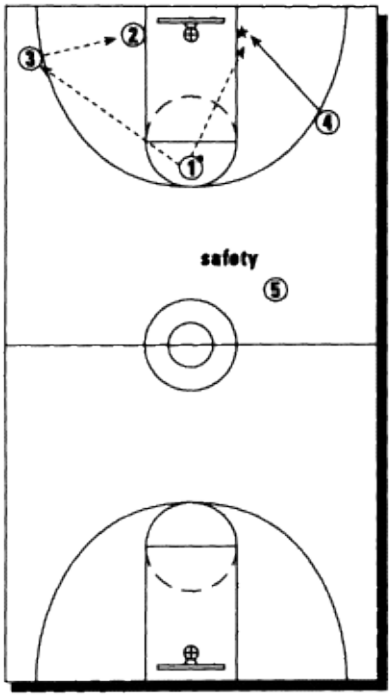


Diagram 4-11

(C) The Three-Point Shot Trailer

In order for this play to be a high-percentage option, the trailer must be a strong shooter. This maneuver may be used following most types of initial scoring plans. Diagram 4-12 shows (1) jump stop at the three-point line and (2) and (3) run a through. This forces the defense to retreat to a position inside the lane. Then (4) comes up court, finds an open area, and receives a pass for (1) for an unmolested three-point shot.

The advent of the three-point play has made this plan very attractive.

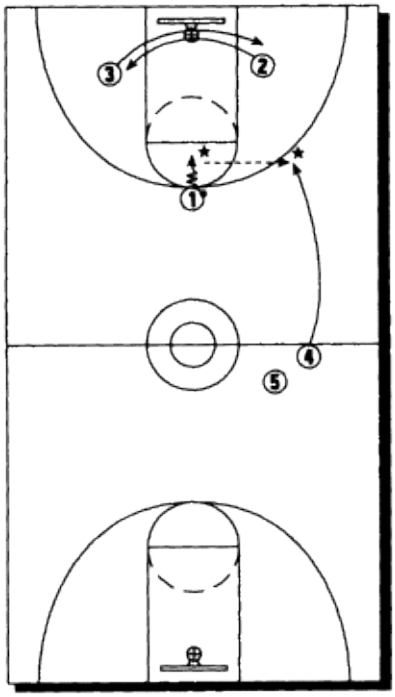


Diagram 4-12
Trailer Tray

Early Offense Play Phase

The three-point play has altered the thinking of many coaches in respect to this phase of the break. At the very least, one should consider running the break's initial scoring phase with or without a trailer and then moving the ball around the perimeter for a possible three-pointer. Diagram 4-13 shows (1) stopping at the free throw line, (2) and (3) cutting through their lanes, finding they are not open, and then clearing to their respective corners.

Trailer (4) comes up court and receives a pass behind the three-point line. Then (4) may shoot or pass to (2) or (3) behind the line. Player (5) must stay clear of the play or, if you prefer, post up and go to the offensive board (see Diagram 4-14).

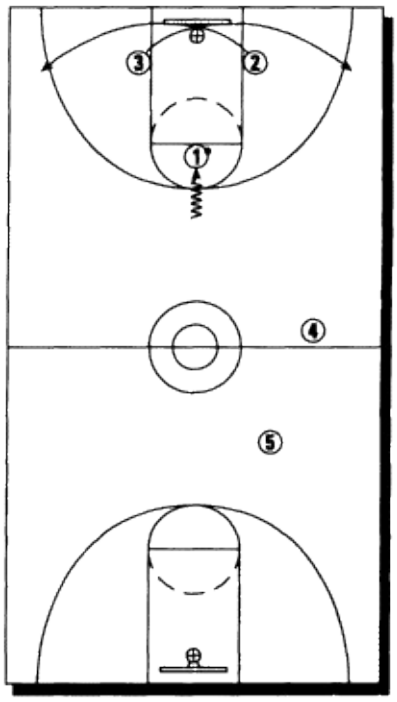


Diagram 4-13

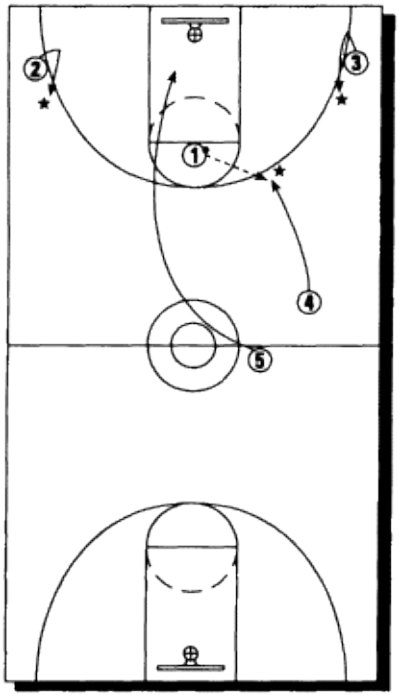


Diagram 4-14

Once the players understand the fundamentals of the five phases, drills can be developed that will make their responses automatic.

Three-Point-Oriented Fast-Break Patterns

Following are two specific fast-break patterns that conform to the fundamentals of fast-break basketball and provide an abundance of three-point shot opportunities.

Pattern #1: Forwards in Their Lane Pattern

Outlet Play

This pattern derives its name from the fact that the forwards (3) and (4) fill the lanes on their respective sides of the court. It begins as inside player (4) gets the rebound, turns to the outside and makes an outlet pass to (2), the front player or guard on (4)'s side of the court. Player (2) catches the ball with shoulders parallel to the sideline facing the inside of the court, so that a large portion of the court is visible. The offside guard (1) "flies" by running downcourt as (4) acquires the rebound (see Diagram 4-15).

In the event the opposition attempts to intercept the outlet pass and becomes vulnerable to a long pass, (4) takes a dribble and passes downcourt to (1) (see

Diagram 4-16).

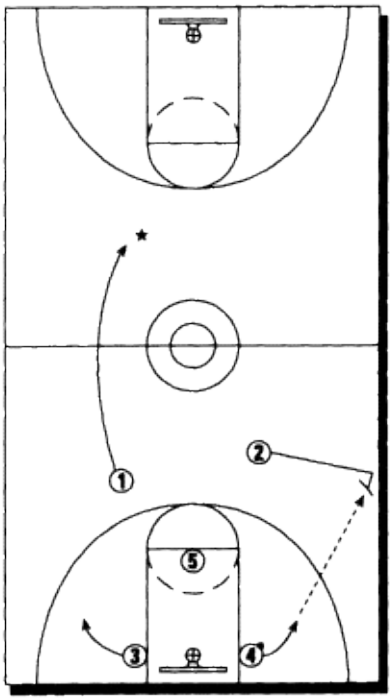


Diagram 4-15

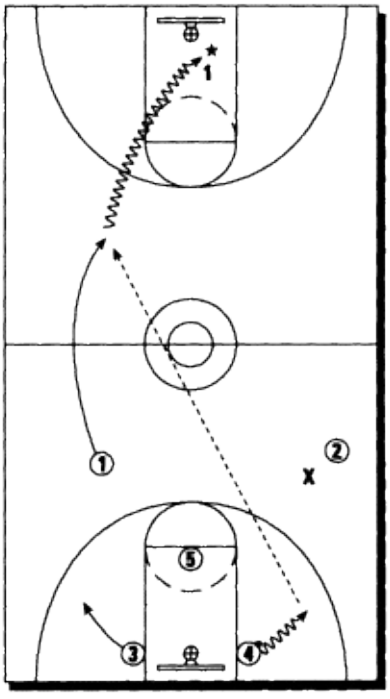


Diagram 4-16

Lane Organization

When the outlet pass is made to (2), he or she immediately dribbles to the middle and downcourt. Forwards (3) and (4) fill the lanes on their side of the court, (5) is the safety, and (1) precedes the break (see Diagram 4-17).

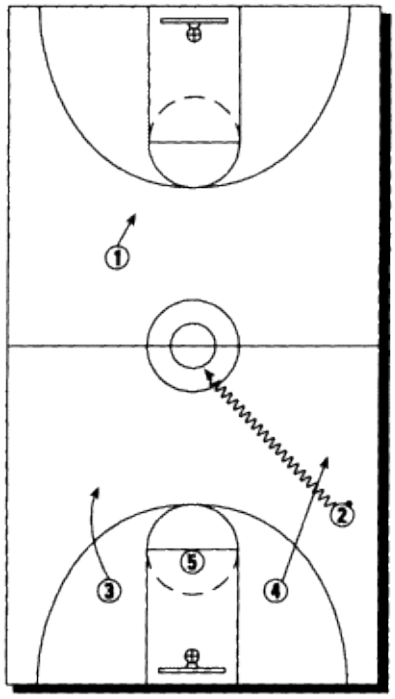


Diagram 4-17

The Initial Scoring Phase

Player (2), having reached the front court, must be aware of the time/score factors. In most cases, (2) will take the ball to the free throw line and jump stop. Then (2) may shoot, or look for (3) and (4) in their respective outside lanes. In a three-point *must* situation, (2) would stop behind the three-point line, look for the shot, and then at (3) and (4) cutting through. From there, the options would be the same. By the time (3) and (4) cut through, (1), who had preceded the break up court, had "bounced" to either corner (see Diagram 4-18).

Note that (5) is in a position to maintain defensive balance.

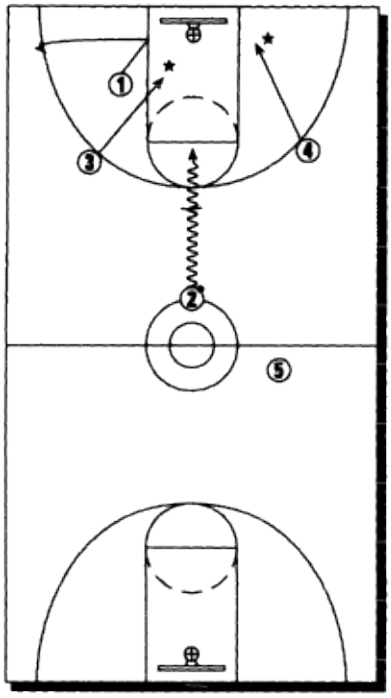


Diagram 4-18

The Early Three-Point Offense

Once the initial scoring phase options have been exhausted, (2) may choose to pass to (1) in the corner to key the early three-point offense. Players (3) and (4) have run through their lanes and are looking to the corner located in the direction they are moving.

Player (4) sees (1) in the corner so (4) stops; (3) observes that the corner is open, and cuts there using (4) as a natural screen (see Diagram 4-19).

Player (1) may shoot for three points or reverse the ball to (3) by way of (5), who, by this time, has reached a position between mid-court and the head of the key on the ballside. After (5) reverses the ball to (3) (behind (4)'s screen), he cuts off (2) for a possible lob pass (see Diagram 4-20).

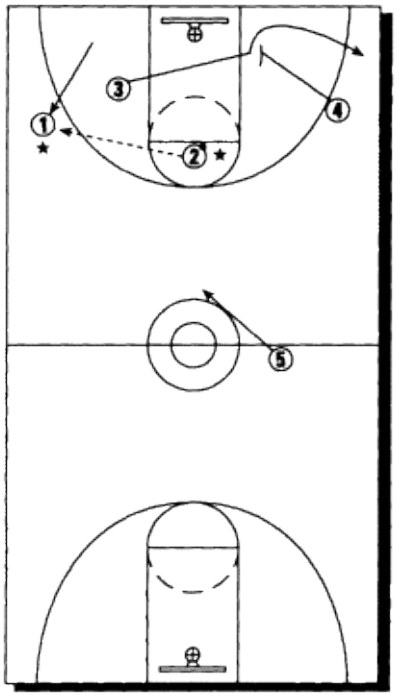


Diagram 4-19

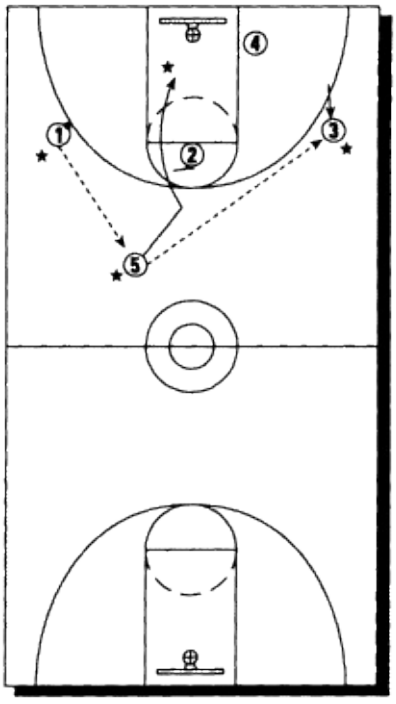


Diagram 4-20
Lob

Player (3) may shoot for three or look for the lob pass to (5) for the quick two. Player (5) is often open because the reversal of the ball from (1) to (5) to (3) tends to spread the defense and make the lane area vulnerable. Also, (5)'s cut provides a rebound triangle in the event (3) goes for the three-pointer (see Diagram 4-21).

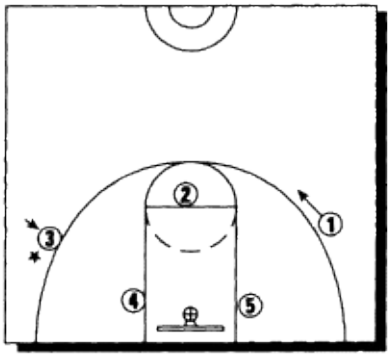


Diagram 4-21

This early offense works particularly well against teams attempting to protect a large lead. Most coaches teach their players to retreat to the lane and play defense from the inside out. This often results in the use of a tight zone or a sagging player to-player defense. This used to be a smart move, but with the advent of the three-point play, more consideration must be given to perimeter defensive coverage. Leads that were safe in the past can now disappear in a barrage of three-point shots.

Some other teaching points on the three-point portion of this break are:

· The perimeter three-point shooters must catch the ball as they are moving forward. It is very difficult and time-consuming to catch the ball and square up to shoot when one is moving away from the basket. Therefore, the passer must wait for the potential shooter to stop and move back to the ball before making the pass. The receiver should stop well back of the line and come to meet the ball and catch it with a jump stop in an all-purpose position or plant and step (swing a leg) for momentum into the shot.

· The safety, (5), who will reverse the ball, must come to the ballside, receive the ball behind the three-point line, look for a shot, and if it is not available throw a two-hand overhead pass to the offside. This pass can be thrown swiftly, and the passer (5) may change his or her mind and return it to (1) on the original side on the spur of the moment. Since the player is taller, he or she should avoid dribbling whenever possible. The loss of the ball in this vital area of the court will give the opposition an easy basket.

Pattern #2: The Outlet Lane Break

Another fast-break pattern that may be readily adapted to include three-point shots is the outlet lane break. It gets its name from the fact

that the three inside players, (3), (4), and (5), run to fill the lane when the outlet pass was made.

The Outlet Pass Phase

Diagram 4-22 shows (4) getting the rebound, turning to the outside, and making an outlet pass to (2), who is the front player on the rebound side. Player (1), the offside front, flies downcourt and (3) and (4) run for the lane on the outlet pass side of the court. Player (2) catches the ball in a position to see most of the court, and then dribbles upcourt and to the middle of the floor. The last inside player to mid-court, (5), stays back on defense. If the outlet pass to (2) is denied, (4) can take a dribble and pass to (1) "flying" downcourt (see Diagram 4-23).

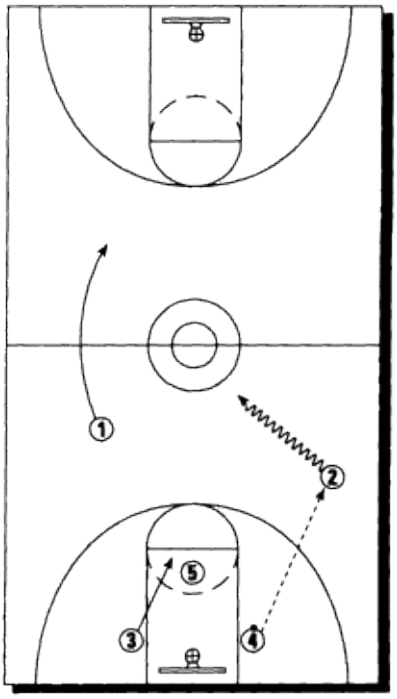


Diagram 4-22

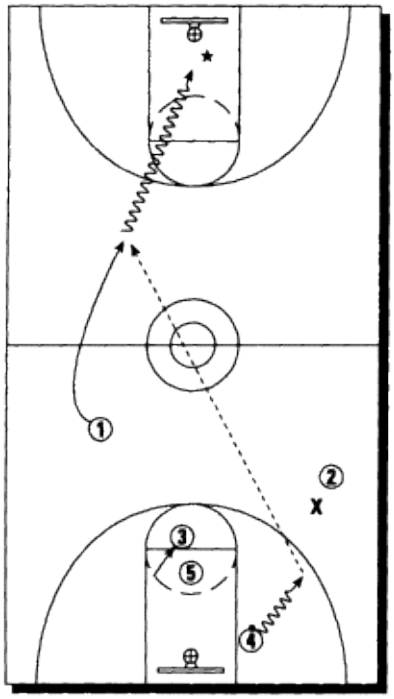


Diagram 4-23

Lane Organization

As (2) approaches mid-court, (4) fills the right lane (outlet lane) and (3) becomes the eventual trailer in that lane. Player (1) precedes the break and (5) continues to trail it as the safety (see Diagram 4-24).

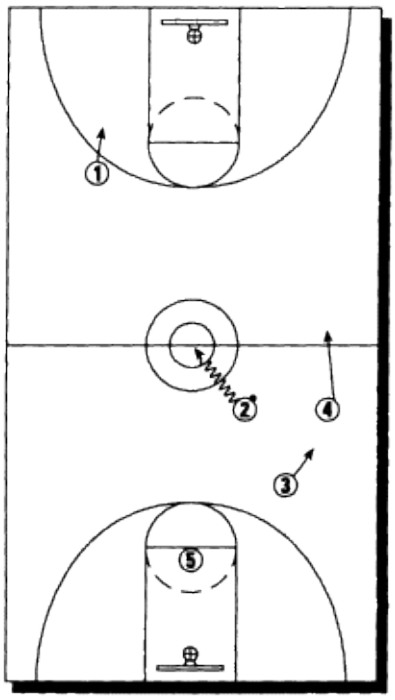


Diagram 4-24

The Initial Scoring Phase

What happens at this point may be determined by time and score parameters. In most cases, (2) will dribble to the free throw line (see Diagram 4-25). However, if a three-point shot is dictated by time and score, (2) may stop behind the three-point line (see Diagram 4-26).

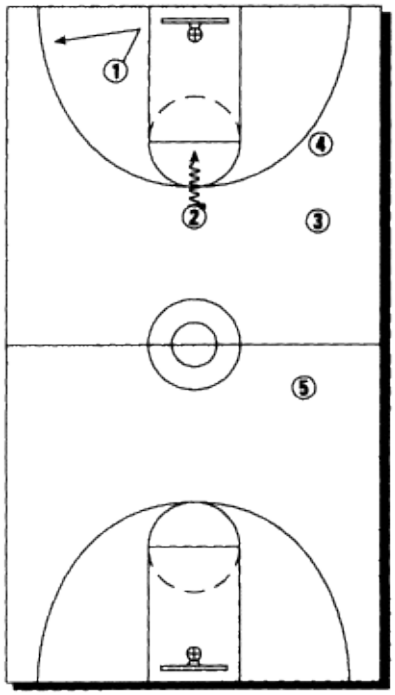


Diagram 4-25

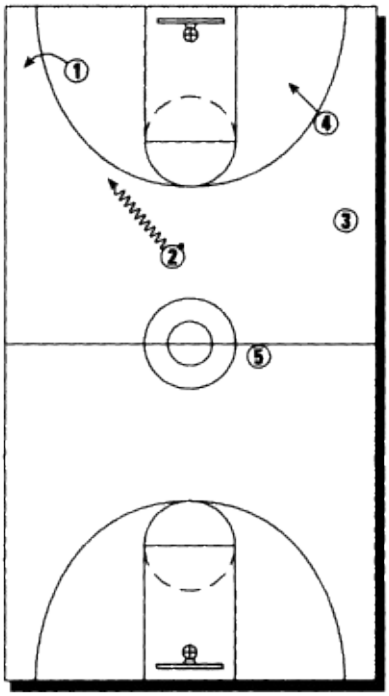


Diagram 4-26

Note in Diagrams 4-25 and 4-26 that (1), who preceded the break, bounced to the corner on that side of the court.

In either case, (4) runs through the lane and crosses to the other side, looking for a pass from (2); (3) then trails (4) through and, if (3) does not receive a pass, wings out to the corner on that side of the court (see Diagram 4-27).

Player (2) should stop in a jump stop all-purpose position, but not take the ball to the basket and "flatten the triangle" unless there is a very strong chance for a lay-up shot.

Player (2) should be ready to shoot a trey shot or pass to (4) or (3) in the right lane.

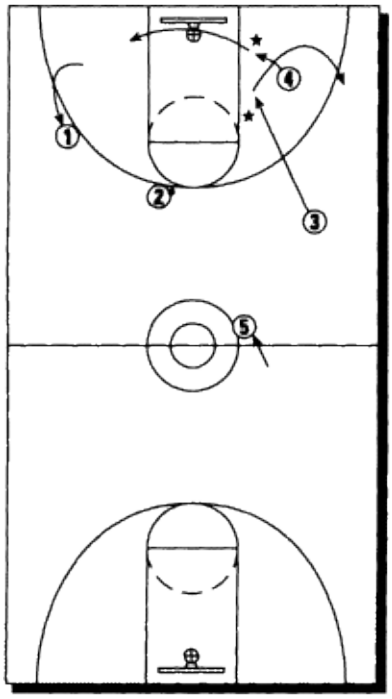


Diagram 4-27

The Three-Point Early Offense Phase

Player (2) also has the option of passing to (1), who, by now, is behind the 19' 6" line and moving back to receive the ball (see Diagram 4-28). This pass to (1) may provide a three-point play; and it also starts the three-point early offense phase of the break.

If (1) does not shoot, safety (5) moves up to a point between the head of the key and the mid-court circle, takes a jab step in (1)'s direction, and then cuts over (2) for a possible lob pass and quick two points (see Diagram 4-29).

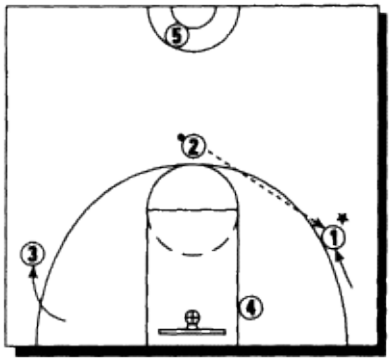


Diagram 4-28

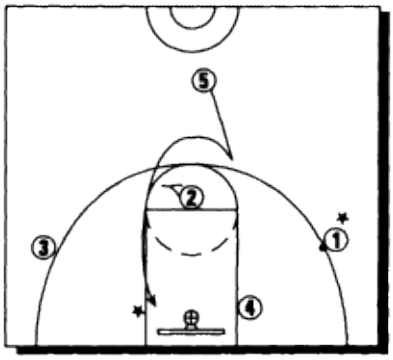


Diagram 4-29
Fast Break Lob

If (5) is not open, (2) steps out, above the line, receives the ball from (1), and may either shoot, reverse the ball to (3) (see Diagram 4-30), or fake to (3) and return the ball to (1) (see Diagram 4-31).

Player (5)'s cut tends to help create a three-point possibility by forcing the defense to drop inside the lane.

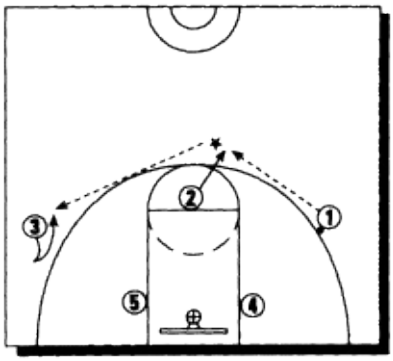


Diagram 4-30

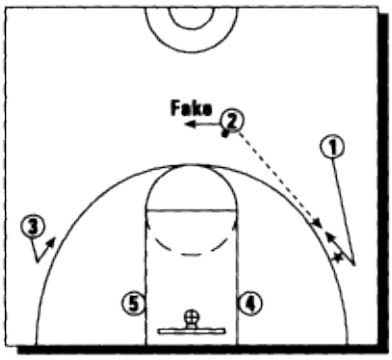


Diagram 4-31

The return pass to (1) works especially well because the defense very often anticipates the reversal to (3) and leaves (1) wide open.

Pattern #3: One Guard Lone Fast Break

This fast-break pattern utilizes one guard (1) as the outlet and designated two wing players (2) and (3) to fill specified lanes as seen in Diagram 4-32. This pattern is often called the numbered fast break as (1) is the outlet, (2) fills the right lane, (3) the left lane, (5) sprints

to the ballside block and (4) is the safety/trailer.

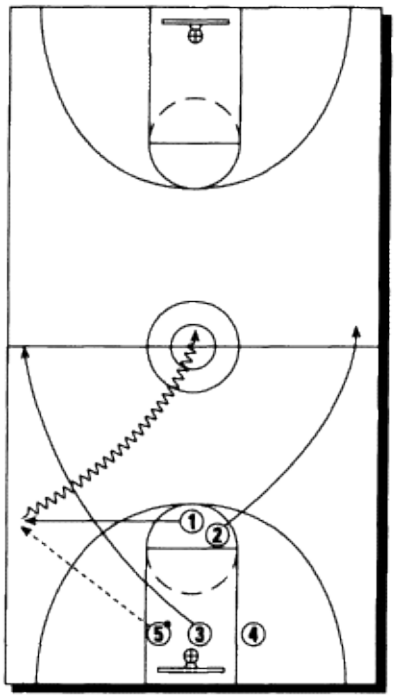


Diagram 4-32

The Initial Scoring Phase and Early Offense

(1) usually centers the ball on the dribble unless (2) or (3) is open early and outnumber the defense, 2 on 1. In that event, (1) would make the early pass to (2) or (3) and allow them to complete the fast break.

Normally, (1) will jump stop or veer dribble off center to one side; (2)'s side in Diagram 4-33. (5) has posted up on the post line, above the block, and on ballside. (4) moves into a trailing position near the arc and spaced between (1) and (3). (2) looks inside to (5), then reverses the ball through (1) to (4) or directly to (4) who looks inside for a pass to (5) from out front after (5) has sealed defender X5 (Diagram 434). The last option is to reverse the ball to (3) and have (5) post up on that side as (2) backscreens for the lob to (4) as (1) spots up for the trey (Diagram 4-35).

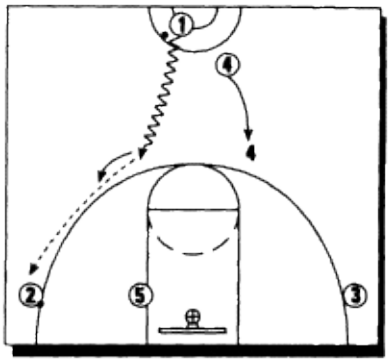


Diagram 4-33

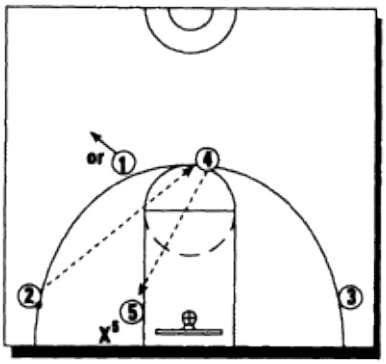


Diagram 4-34

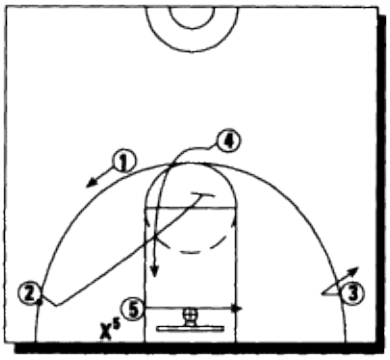


Diagram 4-35

5) Three-Point 15-Player Drill

This drill constantly repeats the desired fast-break pattern. If you will use it and, at the same time, insist that the fundamentals of fast-break basketball be properly executed, the players will learn to make the

proper responses in game situations.

Diagram 4-36 shows the A team in possession of the ball moving upcourt in the Pattern #1: Forwards in Their Lanes Fast-Break Pattern. Player (Al) is the "flyer" who "bounced" to a corner, (A2) is the middle player, (A3) and (A4) are in their respective outside lanes, and (A5) remains back as the safety. The B team is on defense with (B3) and (B4) as the primary defenders in a tandem position in the lane, (B1) and (B2) at the head of the key extended, and (B5) out-of-bounds and waiting to trail the break in the opposite direction once the B team obtains the ball. While this is occurring, the C team is setting up on defense at the far end of the court.

Once the A team reaches the head of the key extended, players (B1) and (B2) must run to the mid-court line, and then hustle back to help (B3) and (B4) on defense (see Diagram 4-37).

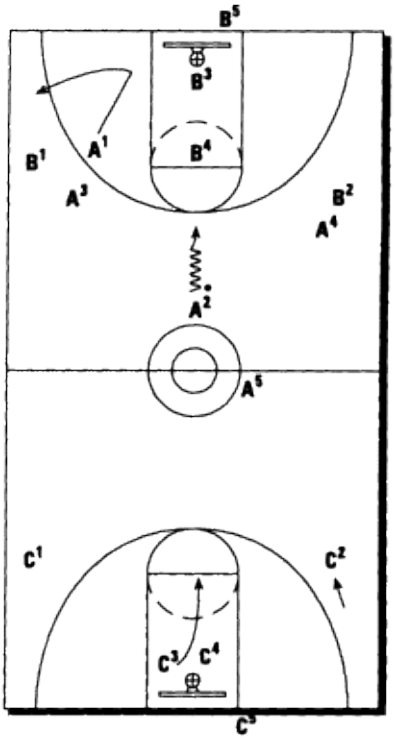

B5
B3
B1
A1
B4
A3
B2
A4
A2
A5
C1
C2
C3
C4
C5

Diagram 4-36

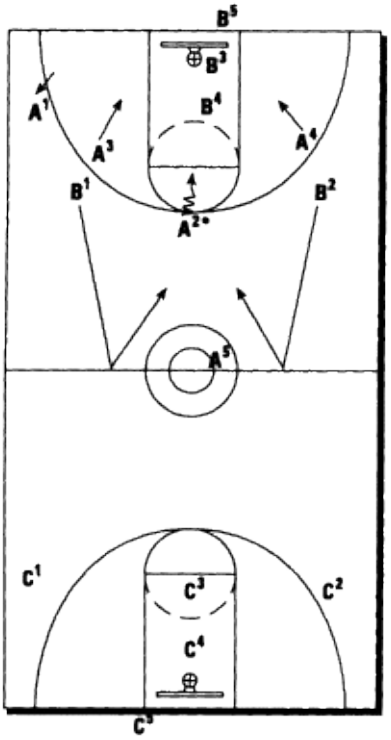

B5
B3
A1
B4
A3
A4
B1
B2
A2
A5
C1
C2
C3
C4
C5

Diagram 4-37

The A team has this time period (until (B1) and (B2) arrive) to score on the initial two-point phase of the break. They then resort to the early offense three-point phase. Diagrams 4-38 and 4-39 show (A2) keying the three-point phase by passing to (A1) in the corner. The three-point play is then executed using the reverse pass and lob options.

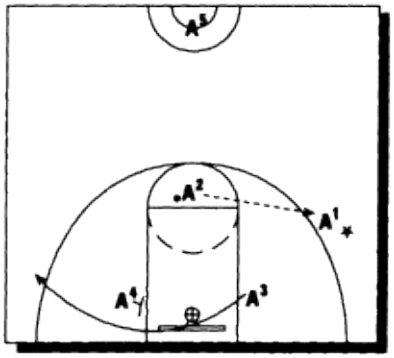


Diagram 4-38

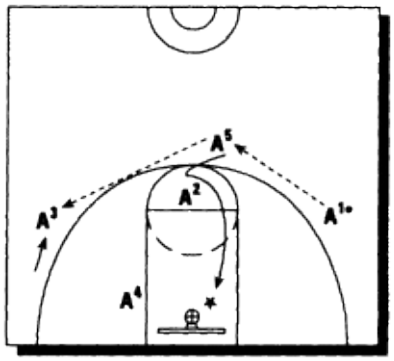


Diagram 4-39

Once the B team obtains the ball, they run the pattern against the C team at the opposite end of the court (see Diagram 4-40). After a score, the ball must be taken out before the break pattern is run. The team's big player, (B5), will inbound it (see Diagram 4-41).

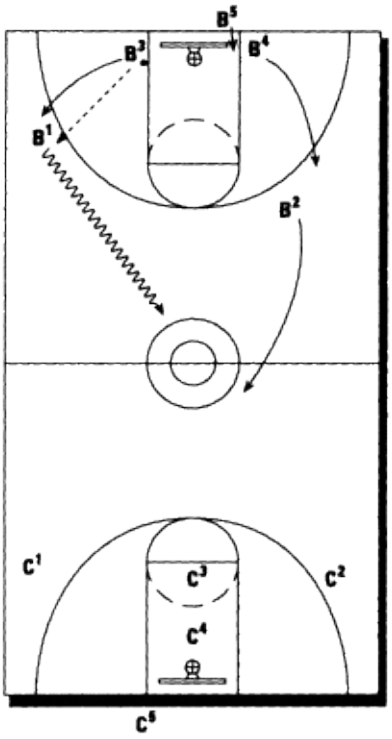


Diagram 4-40

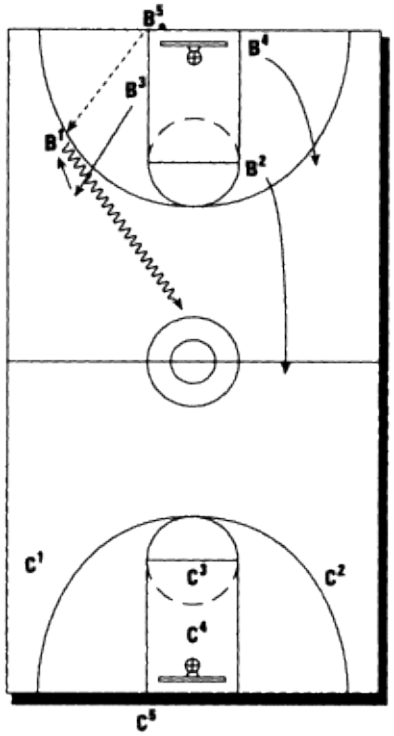


Diagram 4-41

When keeping score, we award one point for a regular basket and three points for a three-point shot. This encourages the three-point attempt. When a player is fouled, the team gets one point and they also get the ball back, going downcourt. The fouling team stays at the original end and sets up on defense. The game is 21 points and the team with the lowest score is assessed a penalty.

These two fundamentally sound fast-break patterns permit a team to take the quick two points or, when necessary, to seek out the three-point opportunity. The early offense three-point phase of each is based on simple basic play components that may further be adapted to lead into many player-to-player offenses. The use of the three-point play within the context of these patterns can be clarified by utilizing time/score modes, such as the one suggested in chapter 1. The success of these patterns can be enhanced through the use of the fundamentals of fast-break basketball that are presented earlier in the chapter. The 15-player fast-break drill that concludes this chapter is a tool that will

enable you to teach either of the patterns through thoughtful repetition.

Chapter 5
Beating Zone Pressure

Teams use zone pressure when they are behind, so it follows that the team being pressed tends to play conservatively. This statement seems to preclude the use of the three-point shot versus a zone-pressure defense. However, there are a great many exceptions to this rule. Some examples are:

· A team with great shooters may choose to use the three-point shot even when the score is close. They may plan to make it a featured part of their offensive game plan regardless of the score.

· A game situation may occur that dictates the use of the shot even though you have the lead. For instance, if you have the lead and the other team is pressing, but their top rebounder is on the bench in foul trouble, you might want to take this opportunity to "go for broke."

· Your opponent may zone press throughout the game regardless of the score.

· Some zone pressure teams may be very inside-oriented on their retreat to their standard defense after pressing. This may invite you to go for three.

These are just a few examples of why a team would resort to the three-point play when in the lead. In this chapter, most of the material on the three-point shot will be found under "making a scoring attempt during the three-point mode."

The chapter begins with the fundamentals of zone-pressure offense. It then follows with two team full-court zone pressure offenses. The chapter concludes with individual tips to players on how to play

against zone pressure.

Fundamentals Of Team Zone Pressure Offense

When making plans for a zone pressure offense, you should keep the following team fundamentals in mind.

Organize Quickly or Slowly

You must plan who will take the ball out of bounds and to whom it should be passed. The players must get to their assigned positions quickly and be ready to receive the ball or do it very slowly so every offensive player gets to his or her position and executes effectively.

Spread the Press

Many zone pressure defenses place all five defenders on one side of the court and attempt to force the ball in that direction. To counter this maneuver, the offense should force the opposition to cover the width of the backcourt. Diagram 5-1 shows a full-court zone press covering one side of the court. Diagram 5-2 shows an offensive team alignment that would force that defense to make an adjustment in order to cover the inbounds pass.

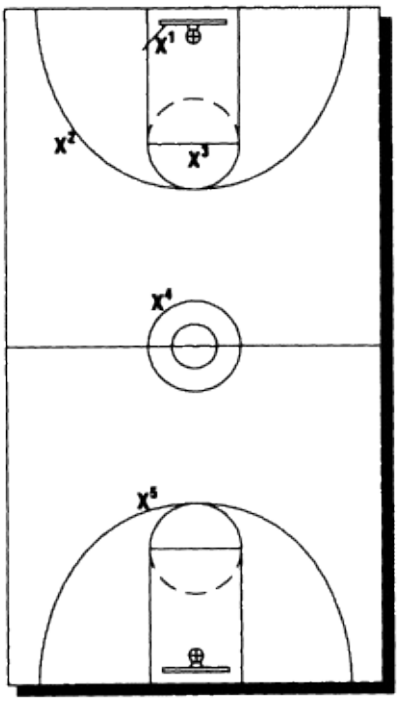


Diagram 5-1

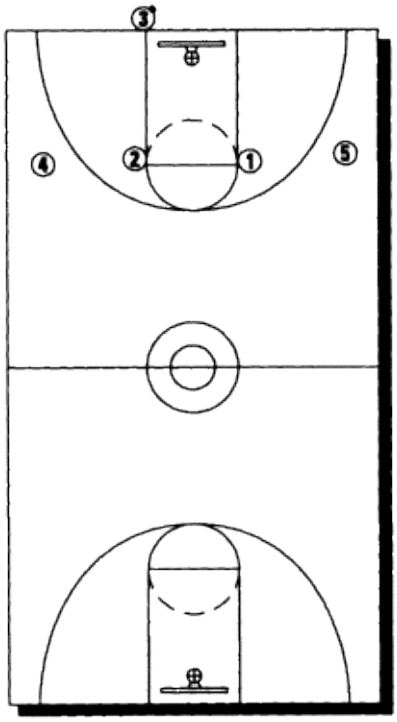


Diagram 5-2

Elongate The Press

If the offense sends a player all the way down court (see (5) in Diagram 5-3), the defense must cover that player. This results in the press being lengthened and each defender's area of coverage being larger. This should present an advantage to the offense.

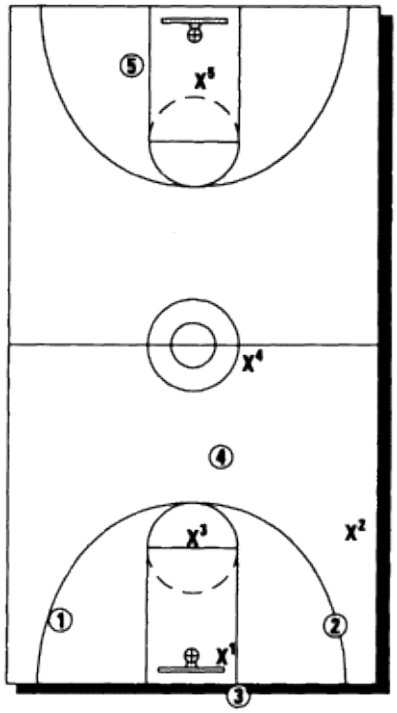


Diagram 5-3

Have an Inbounds Play

Many zone-pressure teams match-up and deny the inbounds pass. Ideally, an inbounds play should create a situation in which a good passer throws the ball to an individual who can handle pressure. It is wise to have an agile, big player located in a defensive position close to the basket, take the ball out. Also, being tall allows that player to see over the defense. The receiver, a player with strong ball-handling skills, should be moving toward the passer when the ball is thrown.

Penetrate the Zone's Middle

A strong zone press usually keeps all five defenders on the ballside of the court. Once the ball is passed into the middle of the press, it may then be passed to either side. This creates a guessing game for the defenders and they may overshift, undershift, or go in both directions and lose their effectiveness.

Reverse the Ball to the Weakside

Once the ball gets to the middle, it is wise to reverse it to the weakside, the side without any defensive players. This task has become easier in recent years with the advent of the trailing big-player formation. Player (3) is the trailing big-player in Diagram 5-4. This position gives the offense the option of passing the ball to (4) in the middle of the zone (see Diagram 5-4) or reversing the ball by way of (3) (see Diagram 5-5).

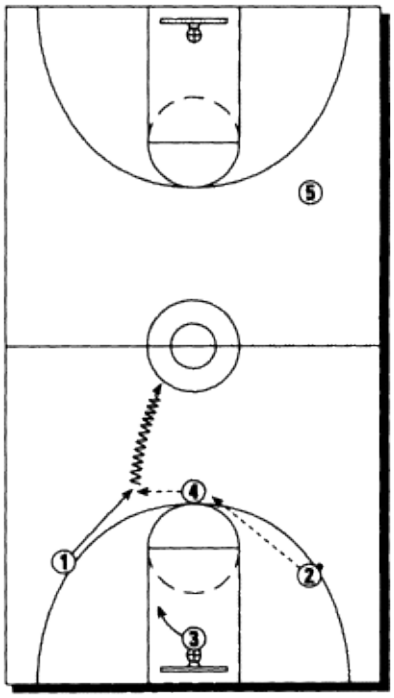


Diagram 5-4

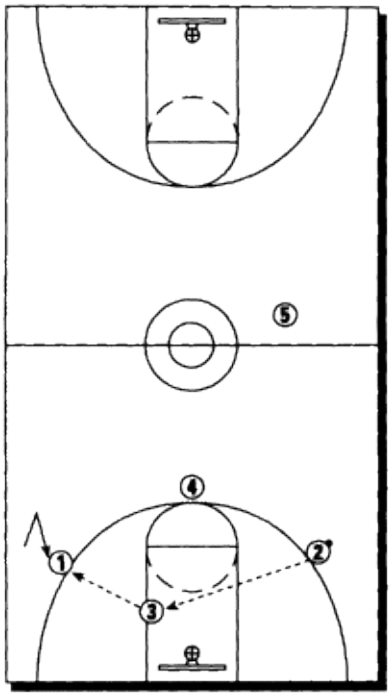


Diagram 5-5

These two methods of reversing the ball to the weakside create many

problems for the press.

Make a Scoring Attempt

The basic decision once the ball gets to mid-court is-do we set it up and run our half-court offense, take it to the basket, or go for three? This decision must be made in terms of your offensive philosophy, the personnel you have available, and the game situation.

The Three-Point Mode Scoring Attempt

The three-point play adds a new dimension to a team's scoring potential versus zone pressure. In the past, the first offensive player upcourt was usually big and not particularly adept at shooting or ball-handling. Now it might be advantageous to have your designated shooter in that position and, during the scoring phase of your pattern, have that player cut to the three-point area. Once a zone press has broken down and the defenders are retreating to their basic defense, they are usually very inside-oriented. This is necessary because they have performed their zone-pressure assignments and may be late getting back. Even a team defending against a fast break has more of a chance to defend both the inside and perimeter than does a zone-pressure team in retreat. The net result is an abundance of unmolested three-point opportunities.

2-1-2 Pattern

Personnel Requirements

The ideal players to run from this formation are two skilled, ball-handling guards (1) and (2); a talented big player (5), who plays between the two backcourt circles and slightly on the ballside; the two forwards (3) and (4), who can be average in terms of size and talent. The forwards are told to play "up" when on the ballside (see (3) in Diagram 5-6) and "down" when on the offside (see (4) in Diagram 5-6).

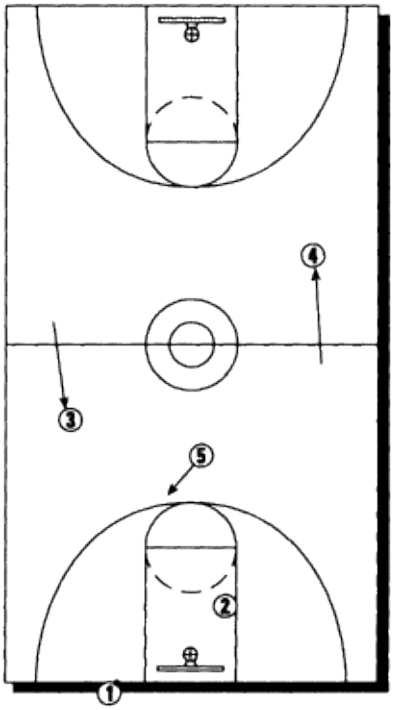


Diagram 5-6

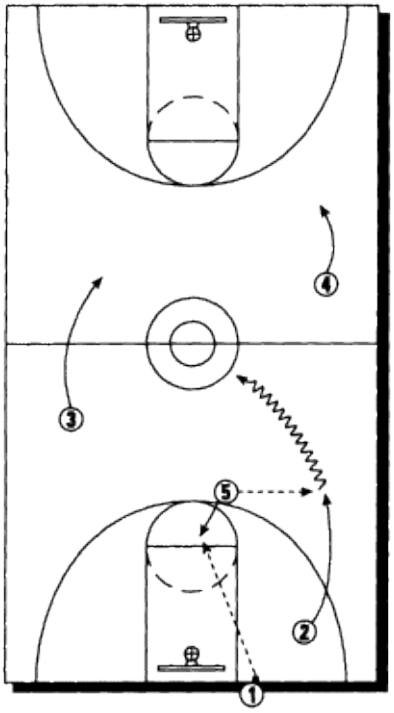


Diagram 5-7

Mechanics of the Pattern

The basic idea is to get the ball in play, then get it to (5) in the middle, who passes it to the weakside guard to bring it upcourt. Diagram 5-7 shows (1) taking the ball out of bounds. (1) should position outside the lane facing the sideline in a "baseball pass" position. The options are:

(A) Player (1) looks first long and then to (5) in the middle. If (1) passes to (5), (5) catches the ball, faces the defender and reverses the ball to (2), who brings it upcourt.

(B) If (1) cannot pass to (5), (1) looks for the "up" forward (3) on the opposite side. If this pass is made, (5) cuts toward (3), receives a pass, and reverses the ball to (2), who brings it up the weakside (see Diagram 5-8).

(C) If (1) cannot pass to either (5) or (3), (1) passes to (2). This pass makes (4) the onside forward, who moves "up." It also makes (3) the offside forward, who moves "down." Player (1) steps inbounds, (5) moves toward the ballside, and (2) now has the same three passing options that (1) had (see Diagram 5-9).

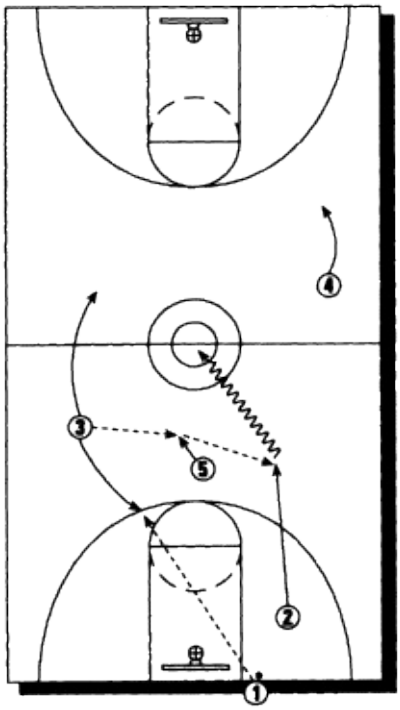


Diagram 5-8

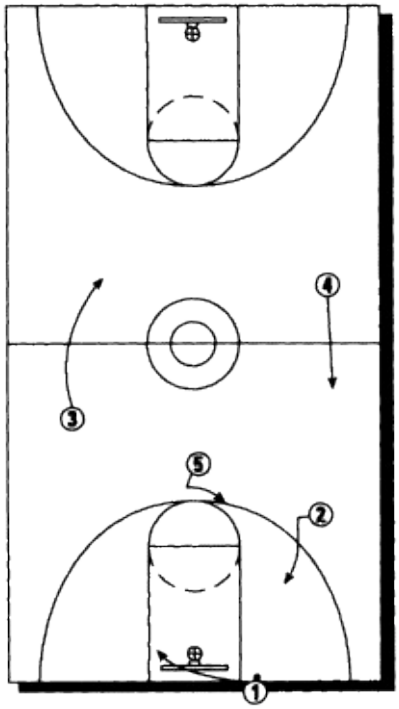


Diagram 5-9

Player (2) can pass to (5) in the middle, who would reverse it to (1); or (2) can pass to (4), who would pass to (5) for a reversal to (1); or pass to (1) and give (1) the three passing options. It must be stressed that we want to get the ball in the middle, reverse it, and bring it up the weakside.

Three-Point Scoring Mode

As has been mentioned, it might be a good idea to make a switch in personnel alignments when using a three-point scoring mode. At that time, players (3) and (4) should be your "bomb squad" (designated shooters). During the scoring attempt phase of your pattern, they can proceed to the three-point area in one of two ways. They can run through and cross, or go directly to their spots.

Run Through and Cross

Diagram 5-10 shows (1) taking the reverse to the weakside pass from (5) and dribbling to the middle and downcourt to form a three-lane

scoring formation with (3) and (4) in the outside lanes.

Player (1) then dribbles to the free-throw line and (3) and (4) run through their lanes and cross to their respective far corners in a trey position. Player (5) then acts as the trailer (see Diagram 5-11).

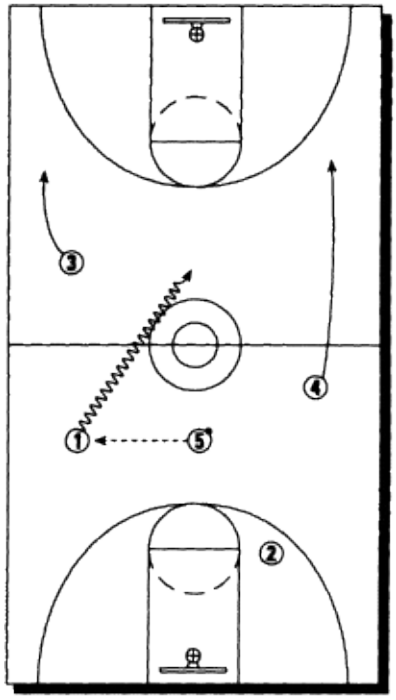


Diagram 5-10

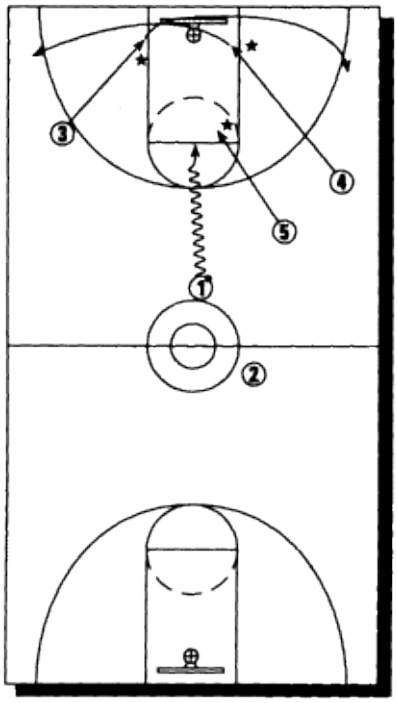


Diagram 5-11

After looking for (5), (1) may then pass to either (3) or (4) in the three-point area. Player (2) acts as the safety (see Diagram 5-12). (2) may also stop behind the arc for a possible trey.

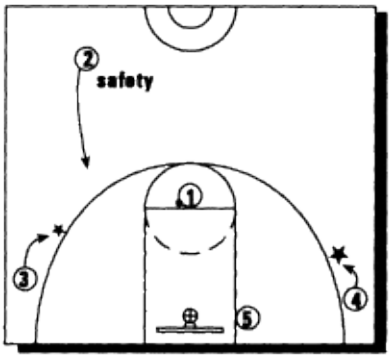


Diagram 5-12

Directly to the Spots

Diagram 5-13 shows (3) and (4) sprinting upcourt and running directly to their three-point spots. It should also be noted that when using this method, the middle player (1) stops behind the three-point line, the post player trailer (5) runs through and may post up on ballside, and the safety (2) also lines up behind the line to form a four-player perimeter (with a rebounding post (5)).

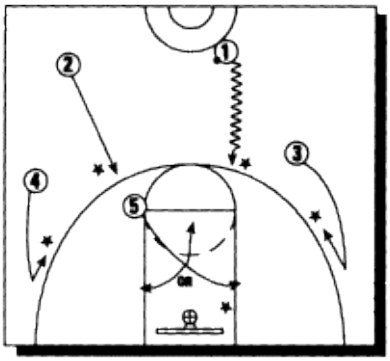


Diagram 5-13

This second method is quicker, and provides more perimeter shooters, but does not present much of a lay-up threat.

Strengths of the 2-1-2 Pattern

· Players (1) and (2) are strong ball-handlers and they make the key passes.

· Big player (5) is tall and talented and it is easy to get the ball in the middle.

· Players (3) and (4) can become your designated three-point shooters.

· This pattern is also an ideal three-fourths and half-court zone press pattern.

· Every passer has three possible passing options.

Weaknesses of the 2-1-2 Pattern

· Most zone presses have all five defenders on the ballside. This makes the inbounds pass very difficult from this formation.

· The press is not really elongated, and this permits the safety to play very high. This crowds the backcourt area.

· There is no guarantee that the second team center will be as talented as (5).

· The pass from (1) to (3) can be dangerous because it travels across the free throw lane.

· If the inbounds pass is denied, only one extremely agile person is available to pass to the other guard. This is the disadvantage of having a guard make the inbounds pass. You can have (3) or (4) take the ball out to overcome this challenge.

2-2-1 Pattern

Personnel Requirements

You run from this formation when your forwards (3) and (4) are tall and talented, and your post (5) has less talent than needed to handle the ball in the middle of the press. The guards again must be strong ball-handlers. This time, post (5) moves all the way downcourt. Players (3) and (4) are stationed at mid-court and on their respective sides. Their rule this time is "sideline" on the ballside (see (3) in Diagram 5-14) and "middle" when on the offside (see (4) in Diagram 5-14). Note that (1) is taking the ball out on the left side which is especially good if you have a left-handed player at that position.

Player (1)'s passing options are:

(A) Try to get the ball to (4) in the middle. Then (4) catches, faces up the court and reverses the ball to (2) on the weakside and (2) brings it upcourt (see Diagram 515).

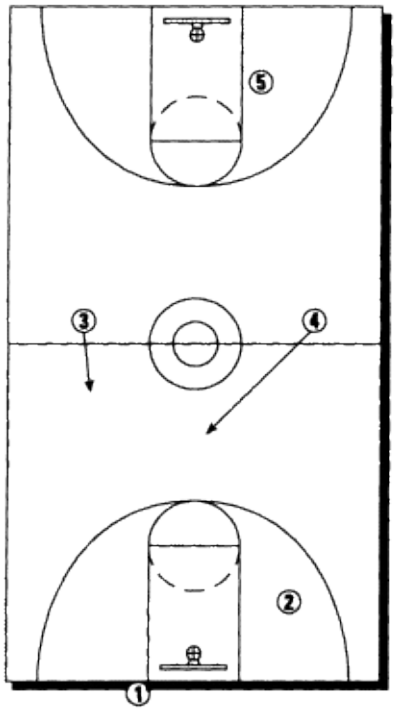


Diagram 5-14

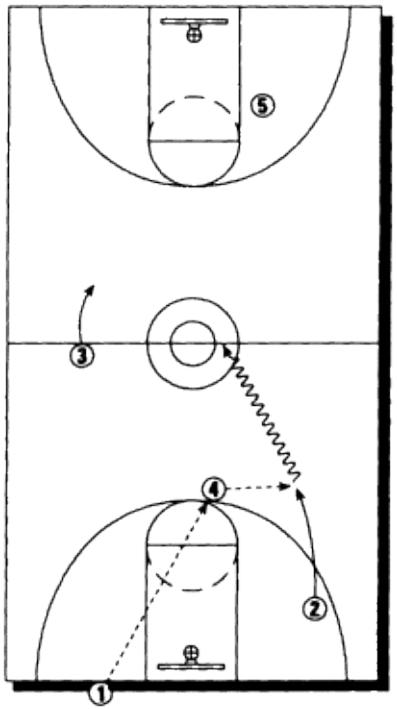


Diagram 5-15

(B) Pass to (3) on the sideline, who would pass to (4) in the middle for reversal to (2). Player (2) then brings the ball up the weakside (see Diagram 5-16).

(C) If (1) cannot make a penetration pass to (4) or (3), (1) passes to the other guard (2). This causes (4) to make a cut to the ballside and (3) to cut to the middle (see Diagram 5-17).

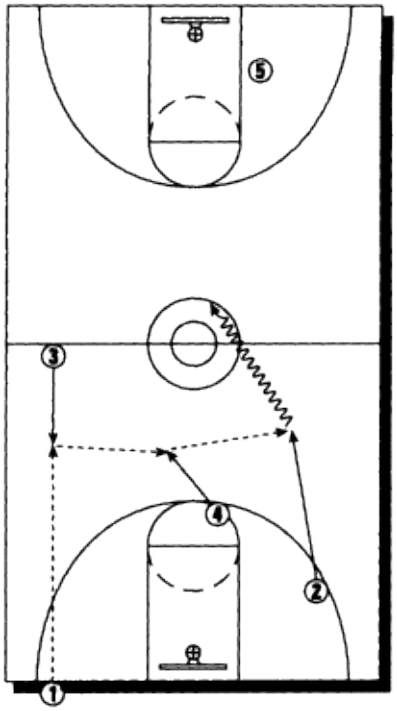


Diagram 5-16

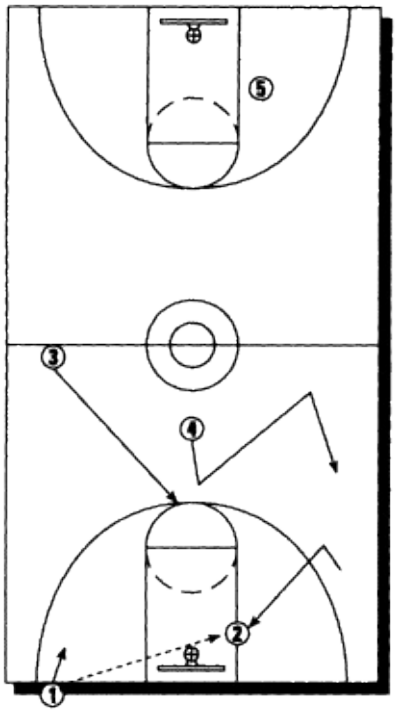


Diagram 5-17

Player (1) steps inbounds and (2) now has the same three options of passing to (3) in the middle who would reverse it to (1); passing to (4) on the sideline who would pass to (3) for reversal to (1); or pass back to (1) to provide the three options.

Three-Point Scoring Mode

Again, it would be smart to make a personnel adjustment by replacing big player (5) with the designated shooter. So in Diagram 5-18, (5) has assumed a mid-court assignment along with (4) and designated shooter (3) is the first player into the front court.

Once the ball has penetrated the middle of the press and been reversed to the weakside, (3) will move to the three-point area on that side. The dribbling guard ((1) in Diagram 5-19) will then look to (3) as he or she takes the ball to the middle of the court.

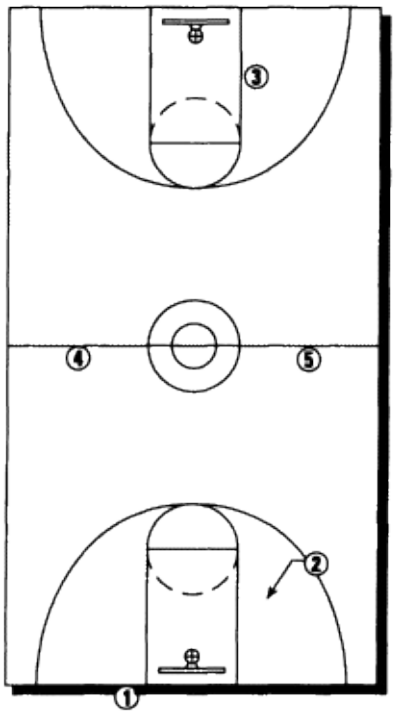


Diagram 5-18

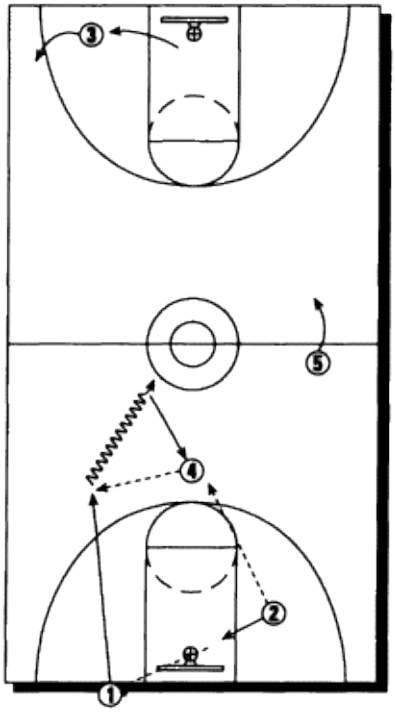


Diagram 5-19

From there, the team can go for a quick sideline three-pointer, or run a three-lane break and then look for (3).

The Quick Sideline Three-Pointer

Player (1) may pass to (3) immediately for a three-pointer. The shot would be taken with (5), (1), and (4) charging the boards in their respective lanes (see Diagram 5-20).

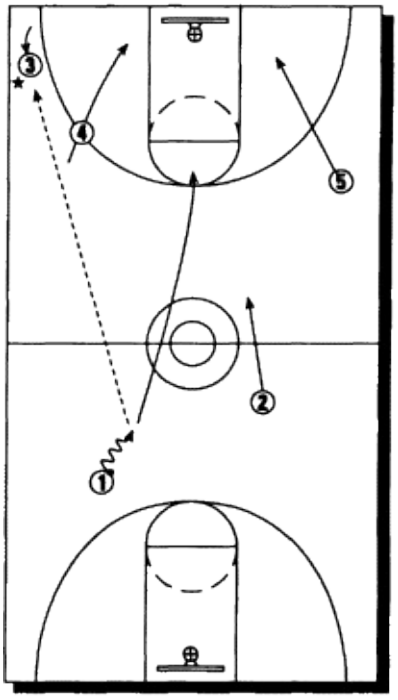


Diagram 5-20

The Three-Lane Break and then the Three-Point Shot

Diagram 5-21 shows (1) taking the ball to the free throw line, and (4) and (5) running their lanes for a possible pass and lay-up shot.

If (1) does not shoot or pass to (4) or (5), (1) can then pass to (3) or (2) for the three-pointer (see Diagram 5-22).

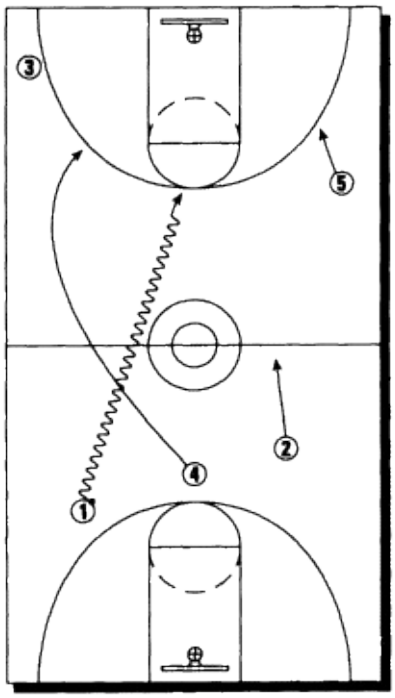


Diagram 5-21

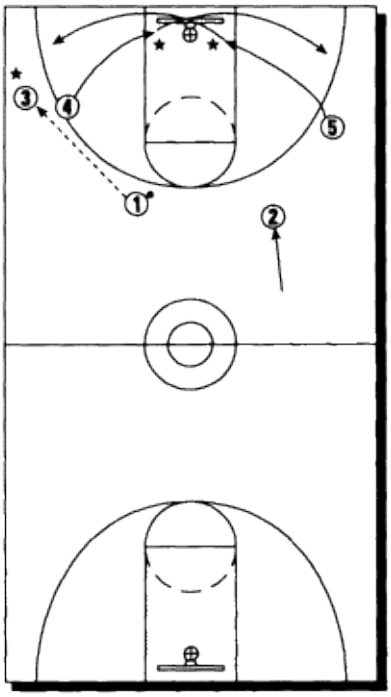


Diagram 5-22

Having both these options to cover makes it very difficult for the defense to plan a retreat that provides proper inside and perimeter coverage.

Strengths of the 2-2-1 Pattern

· It is easier to pass the ball to a cutter in the middle (as to (3) or (4) in this pattern) than to a stationary player ((5) in the 2-1-2 pattern) in the middle.

· Player (5)'s cut downcourt really elongates the press and increases the size of the defenders' area of coverage.

· Many teams are forced to start a player who is weak versus pressure. Player (5)'s position is a good place to hide this weakness.

· If the defensive safety gambles too much, (5) will get some easy baskets.

· Again, (1) and (2) are the two best ball-handlers who make the key passes.

Weaknesses of the 2-2-1 Pattern

· Again, the inbounds pass is difficult because only one of the two players with the skill to consistently get open in a denial situation is on the court. The other is passing the ball inbounds.

· This formation does not spread the defenders. It allows all five of them to play on the ballside.

· Players (3) and (4) may commit mechanical errors as they cut to the ball. They must be taught to catch the ball in a wide stance from a jump stop, and not to dribble upcourt but catch the ball and face up the court.

· Also, (3) and (4) have a long way to travel on their cuts in and out of the middle. If they get lazy, it jams the middle.

· Third option (guard to guard) leads to an easy basket for the opposition when it is intercepted.

Individual Tips To Players

Most games are won or lost by the players, and not by the plays. The following individual tips to players will make the patterns and plays much more successful. When playing against a zone pressure defense, you should:

1. Get to your original position on the court as soon as possible and be ready to catch the ball.

2. Against player-to-player pressure, get the ball to the strong ball-handler, and let that player bring it upcourt. Against zone-pressure, pass the ball and move the zone.

3. Be wary of passing the ball across the backcourt free throw lane. A mistake will cost two points.

4. Don't throw lead passes in the backcourt. Pass to a player moving toward you "on the numbers" with the ball. Insist that receivers meet every pass.

5. Be open when the player with the ball needs you.

6. Make a V-cut to get open when you are closely covered. This is especially true when receiving the inbounds pass.

7. Come to meet each pass. When you are in traffic, spread out and catch it as if it were a power rebound. Catch and face-pivot and face up the court to see the whole court.

8. Remember that ten seconds is a long time once the ball is inbounds. Be quick, but don't hurry. Maintain your balance and your poise.

9. Keep your head up and see the entire court (especially downcourt).

10. Never take your eyes off the ball, especially when catching it.

11. Attempt to get the ball into the middle of the press.

12. Remember that when you are double-teamed one of your teammates must be open.

13. Use a two-hand overhead pass when you are double-teamed. This permits you to fake or to throw long.

14. Use turnback moves. These consist of pivoting in one direction, making a fake, and turning back to pass in the opposite direction.

15. Learn to split a double team by dribbling or stepping between the two defenders.

16. In general, use the dribble sparingly against zone presses, pass first, dribble last. When you must dribble, maintain your control by staying low and assuming a wide stance.

17. Don't pick up your dribble just inside the mid-court line or on the sideline.

18. Once you get to mid-court, get the ball into the middle and treat it like a fast break.

19. If you are the last offensive player to cross mid-court and a scoring situation develops, stay back to maintain defensive balance. You are the safety.

20. Always work within the context of your team plan, your physical abilities, and the logistics of the game (score, time, foul situation, and the like).

Individual Tips For The Three-Point Scoring Mode

1. Come to meet the ball when you are the three-point shooter. Catch it in an all-purpose position and use a jump stop or plant and pivot ready to shoot.

2. Don't force the three-point shot by shooting over a defender-take an open shot.

3. If you are being denied the ball, go through or make a V-cut.

4. Remember that your feet must be behind the line when you start the shot.

5. Do not penetrate the line and jump shoot during a "three-point must situation." Take the three, or if it is not there, move the ball.

This chapter may be used to evaluate your present zone-pressure plan or to help you design a new one. Decide which of the fundamentals of team zone-pressure play must be included in your plan; design a three-point mode; take a look at the personnel you have available and utilize a plan that they can operate; and, finally, discuss the fundamentals of individual zone-pressure play with your players. This will allow you to design practice plans that provide an appropriate amount of time for the zone-pressure offensive game.

Chapter 6
Special Three-Point Situations

Well organized and properly executed special situation plays can often provide the baskets that add up to the winning edge in close games. The advent of the three-point play may even increase their importance. Following are special situation plays that include: out-of-bounds plays from under the basket and on the side; last-second three-point shot plays, and a three-point-seeking "triple" series that may be added to any player-to-player, or zone offense that is run from a 1-2-2 set.

Out-Of-Bounds Plays

Although most teams in recent years have used zone defenses against out-of-bounds plays, the three-point play may force them to a player-to-player defense during certain time/score situations. Rather than have a different offensive play for each defense and time/score situation, it makes more sense to have a fundamentally sound play that is adaptable to various game conditions. Some fundamentals to consider are:

1. Having plays that work versus either zone or player-to-player defenses. It is not always possible to read the defense and then call a play.

2. Providing a safe method of passing the ball inbounds. The presence of pass-denying player-to-player defenses will require the use of stacks, screens, and changes of direction.

3. Making sure the play fits the personnel you have on the court. Will the ball be in the hands of your designated shooter when you need a trey? Will the right players be in position to rebound? Who will

maintain defensive balance?

4. Designing the maneuvers of the play to relate well to your basic offense. If your players are accustomed to and well-schooled in particular team techniques, these skills should be utilized in your out-of-bounds plays.

5. Considering the alignment of your personnel at the conclusion of the out-of-bounds play. It helps if it flows well into your basic set and motion.

Following are some out-of-bounds plays that are based on the preceding fundamentals.

Out-Of-Bounds Plays Under The Basket

Perimeter-Oriented High-Pop Play

This play begins in a box formation with wings (2) and (3) in the low-post areas, and posts (4) and (5) in the high-post areas. Point (1) takes the ball out of bounds and may pass to either (4) or (5), cutting to their respective corners after they fake inside moves. Diagram 6-1 shows (1) pass to (4) for a possible three-point shot. Player (4) should catch the ball in an all-purpose position, using a jump stop behind the line. This permits (4) to make a quick move for a shot if it is available.

After screening for (3), (2) pops high to the head of the key on the ballside. Then (4) may shoot, pass inside to (3), or use the preferred option, which is to pass to (2) behind the three-point line (see Diagram 6-2). Player (1) moves away from the pass.

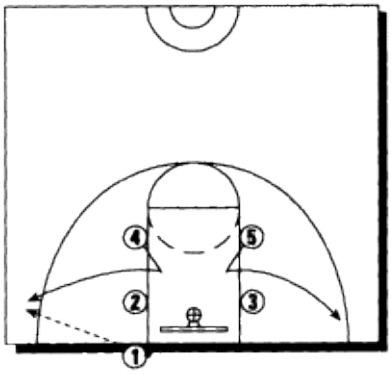


Diagram 6-1

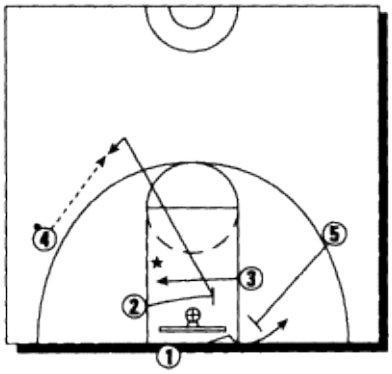


Diagram 6-2
High Pop

Then (2) may shoot, or look for (1) looping around (5)'s offside screen for a possible three-point shot. Player (4) drops low to the corner. If the opposition is playing zone, it is very difficult for them to fight through (5)'s screen, cover (1) at the 19'6" range, and still be able to defend a return pass to (4) (see Diagram 6-3).

These wide-apart options will very often spread the zone to an extent that a pass can be made from (2) into the heart of the defense (as to (5) in Diagram 6-4). In a "three-point must mode" the offense would take this quick two and then press, and/or commit a foul going for a steal at the appropriate time or place to stop the clock.

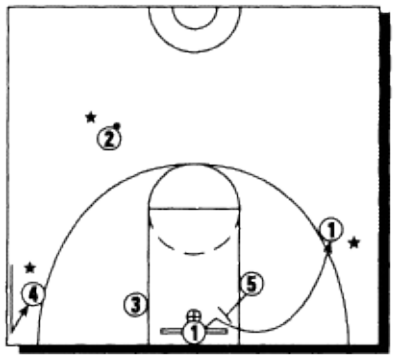


Diagram 6-3

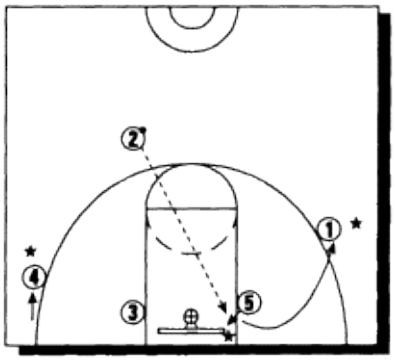


Diagram 6-4

High-Cut Variation

This version of the high-pop perimeter-oriented play begins after (4) and (5) cut to their respective corners, and (1) passes to (4). Player (2) again moves across the lane to screen for (3). This time (3), instead of cutting to the ballside low-post area, cuts to the head of the key on the ballside. This cut tells (2) to roll back to the original position (see Diagram 6-5).

Player (4) may then shoot, pass inside to (2) for a quick two, pass to (3) at the point for a trey, or throw a two-handed, overhead pass crosscourt to (1), looping around (5)'s screen for a trey (see Diagram 6-6).

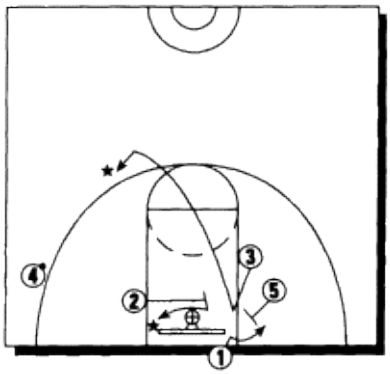


Diagram 6-5
High Cut

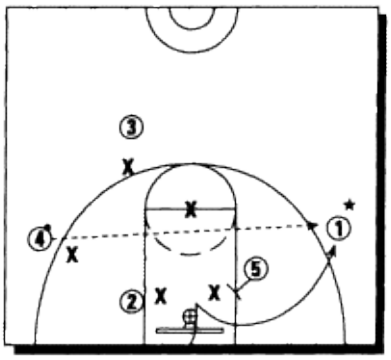


Diagram 6-6

Double Down Play

Diagram 6-7 shows (1) taking the ball out of bounds with the other players in a flattened triangle formation consisting of big players (4) and (5) at the top, and (2) and (3) inside.

The play begins as (2) moves across the lane to screen for (3), who cuts to the ballside corner and receives a pass from (1) (see Diagram 6-8).

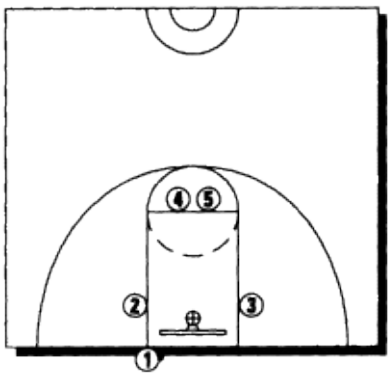


Diagram 6-7

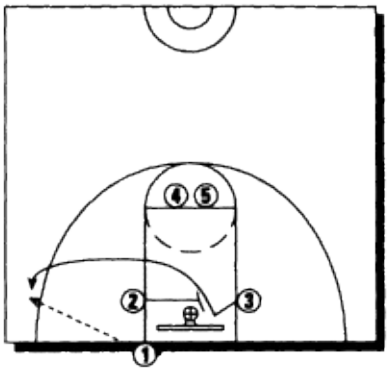


Diagram 6-8
Double Down

Once (3) has the ball, (4) and (5) move down to form a double screen for (2), who pops to the head of the key at three-point range and receives a pass (see Diagram 69).

Player (2) can shoot for three, look for (4), who looped around (5) to

the three-point area, or pass to (1), who faked a cut away and then cut off (3)'s downscreen to the 19' 6" range (see Diagram 6-10).

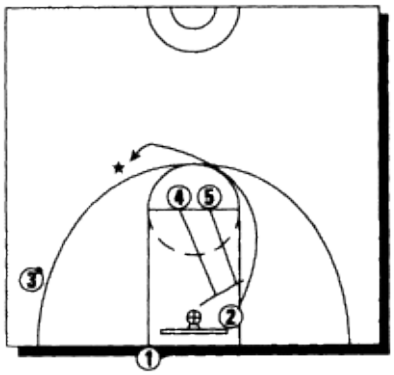


Diagram 6-9

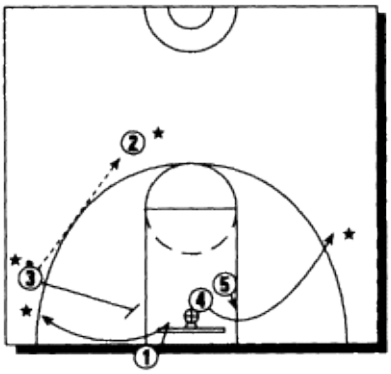


Diagram 6-10

This play would flow well into a double-stack offensive style of play.

Diagonal Screen or Screen the Screener Play

This play is run from a box formation that places both big players (4) and (5) on the ballside of the lane. Smaller players (2) and (3) are on the offside, and the point guard (1) is taking the ball out of bounds (see Diagram 6-11).

The play begins as (2), the inside player on the far side of the lane, moves diagonally across the lane to screen for the top player on the ballside, (4). Then (4) uses this screen to cut diagonally to the offside lay-up slot. This maneuver is planned primarily for use against a player-to-player defense, but if (4)s cut is sharp enough, (4) could possibly cut between two inside zone defenders. Also, (4)'s cut causes the defense to become inside oriented (see Diagram 6-12).

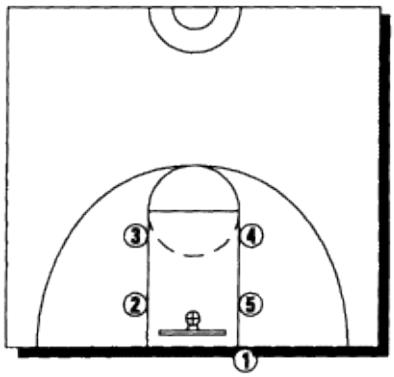


Diagram 6-11

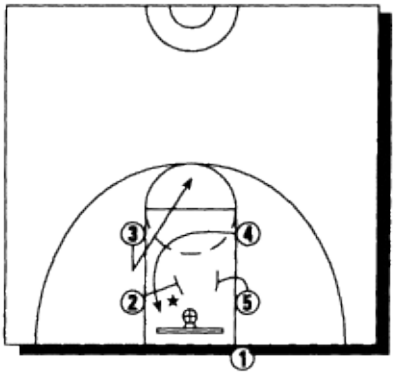


Diagram 6-12

Player (2) then continues to the ballside corner three-point area as (5) impedes the path of the defender on that side. Player (3) moves to the point as (1) passes to (2) (see Diagram 6-13).

Player (2) may then shoot for three, pass to (5) inside, or pass to (3) at the point. Player (1) starts to move away from the ballside. In Diagram 6-14, (2) chooses to pass to (3).

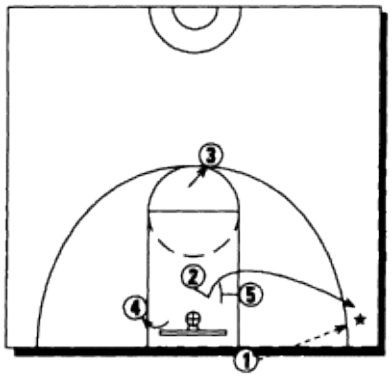


Diagram 6-13
Screen the Screener

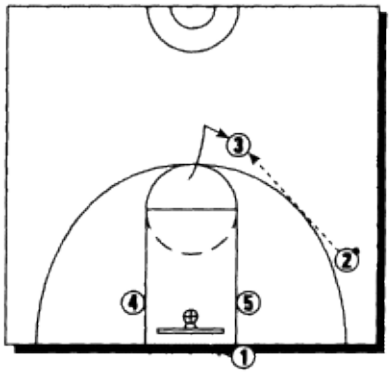


Diagram 6-14

After passing to (3), (2) pinches in to form a double screen with (5). Player (1) then has two options:

(A) cutting around (4) on the offside. This tells (2) to go opposite (1) by looping around (5) (see Diagram 6-15).

(B) coming back to use the double screen, which tells (2) to again go opposite (1) by crossing the lane and looping around (4) (see Diagram 6-16).

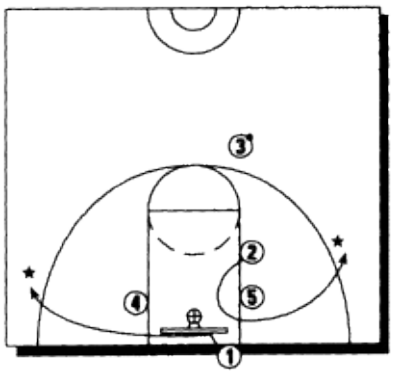


Diagram 6-15

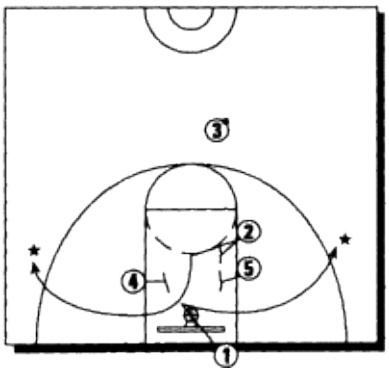


Diagram 6-16

Either option may provide a three-point shot.

In both cases, the screeners attempt to trap the defense inside.

Out-Of-Bounds Plays On The Sideline

Flex Play

Many teams play player-to-player defense against out-of-bounds plays from the side of the court.

In Diagram 6-17 player (3) takes the ball out as the guards (1) and (2) are stacked under the big players (4) and (5) on their respective sides of the lane.

Player (4) screens down for (2), who pops inside to the three-point area at the head of the key on the ballside. Then (3) passes to (2) (see Diagram 6-18).

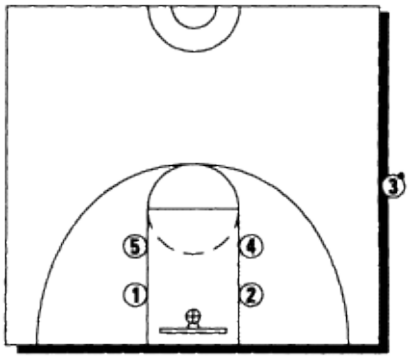


Diagram 6-17

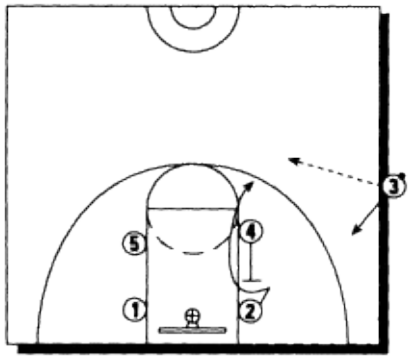


Diagram 6-18

This pass tells (5) to screen down for (1), who pops high to the head of the key on the other side (see Diagram 6-19).

Player (2) then passes to (1) for a possible three-pointer. This pass tells (5) to get wide, and (4) to step out and screen for (3), who makes the first flex cut to the lane (see Diagram 6-20).

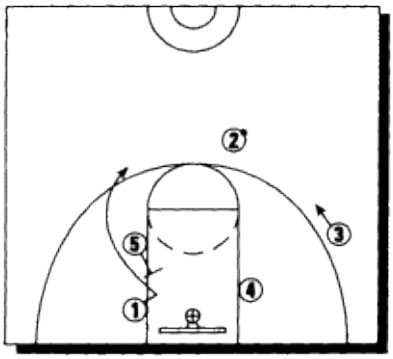


Diagram 6-19

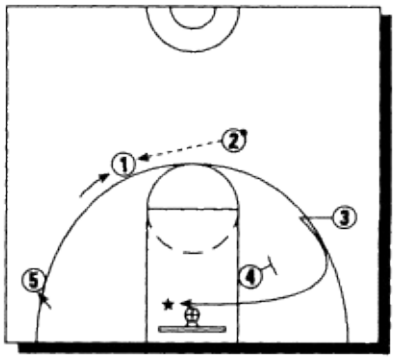


Diagram 6-20
Flex Motion

If (3) is not open, (2) screens down for (4) and the flex is in motion. Players (5) and (2) stay outside the three-point range for possible shots. These perimeter people are often open for three-point attempts during the flex motion because the defense must contract to cover the first cut (see Diagram 6-21).

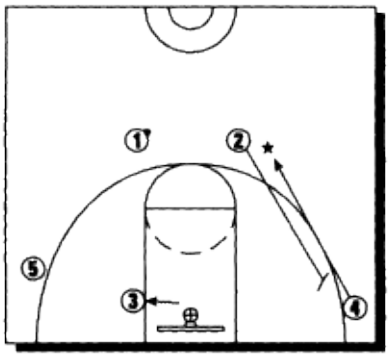


Diagram 6-21
Flex (cont.)

Lob-Shuffle Play

This same concept can be adapted to the lob-shuffle offense of chapter 2. Player (3) takes the ball out and (1) and (2) stack inside big players (4) and (5). Player (2) pops to the head of the key on the ballside and (3) passes there (see Diagram 6-22).

Player (2) then reverses the ball to (1), who popped to the wing area. From there, the lob-shuffle options may be run (see Diagrams 6-23 through 6-25).

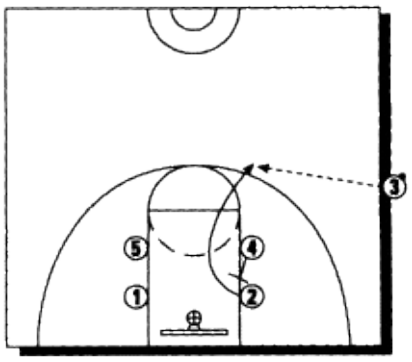


Diagram 6-22

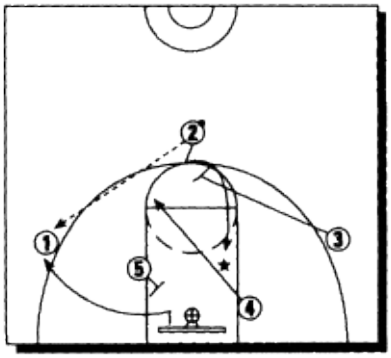


Diagram 6-23
Lob

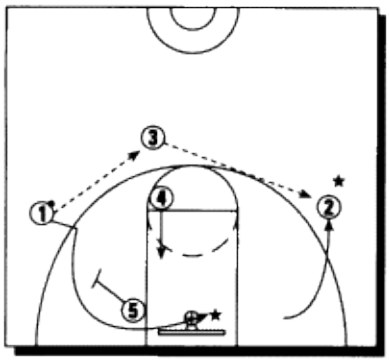


Diagram 6-24
Shuffle

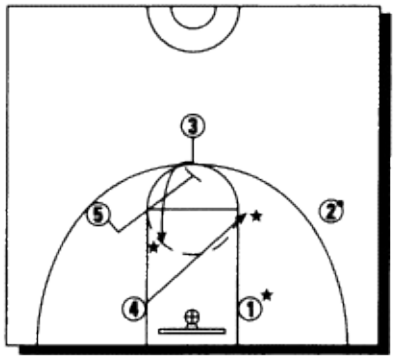


Diagram 6-25
Lob

This would be another example of an out-of-bounds play flowing well into a basic offense. During a three-point mode, the three-point plays suggested in chapter 2 could be used.

Designated Shooter's Three-Point Special (Single/Double)

Diagram 6-26 shows (2) and (3) stacked under (5) and (4) on their respective sides of the lane. As the referee hands the ball to (1) on the sideline, the inside stacker on the ballside, (2), pops inside (4)'s downscreen, and to the head of the key on the ballside. Player (1) passes to (2) and moves toward the lane to stack inside (4).

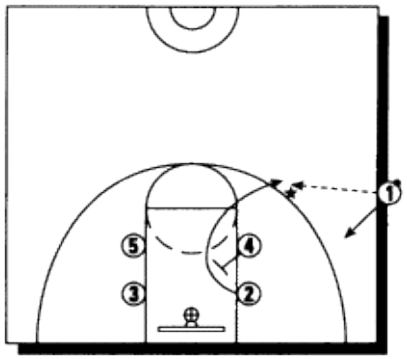


Diagram 6-26

Player (2) may shoot the three-pointer, but the designated shooter in this play is actually (3); (3) may use (5)'s downscreen to pop to the front for a three-pointer (see Diagram 6-27). Also (3) may fake the cut out front and then cut across the lane to loop around the double screen of (4) and (1) (see Diagram 6-28).

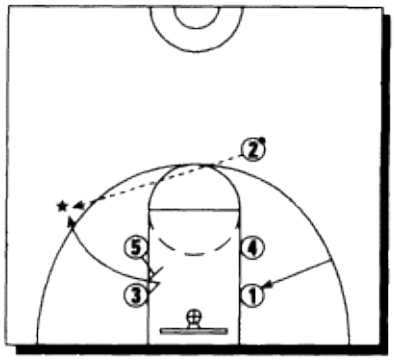


Diagram 6-27
Single

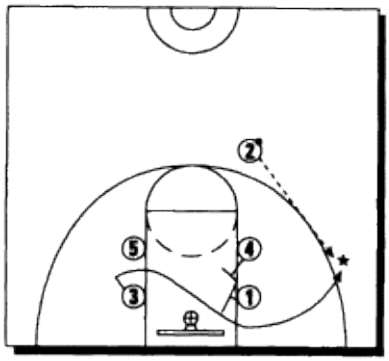


Diagram 6-28
Double

In the event that (3) cuts and is not open, (1) always cuts opposite (3). In Diagram 629, (3) cuts out front and is not open. This tells (1) to cut to the opposite wing.

In Diagram 6-30, (3) cuts around (4) and (1), and is not open. This tells (1) to go opposite (3) by crossing the lane and looping around (5)'s downscreen.

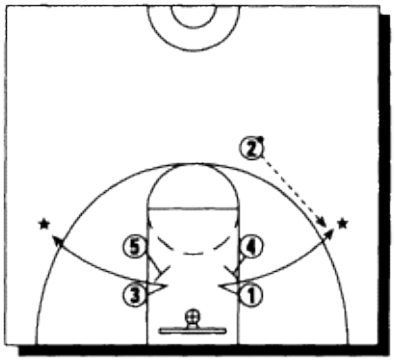


Diagram 6-29

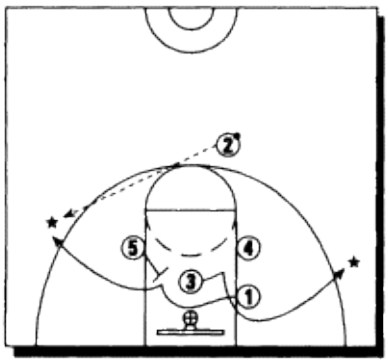


Diagram 6-30

This play may be run against player-to-player or zone and should provide the needed three-point shot.

Last-Second Shot Plays

The three-point shot has given new importance to the planned last-second shot.

The play is now designed to provide a three-point shot and may be used early in the game to provide three-pointers in order to overcome a large point deficit. In general, though, a last-second shot should:

- Provide a high-percentage shot and/or a three-point opportunity.
- Work well against zone or player-to-player defenses.
- Relate to your basic offensive plan.
- Put the ball in the hands of your best shooter.
- Have at least one secondary option.
- Provide for offensive rebounding and defensive balance.
- Consider the particular time constraint.

Following are three last-second shots that utilize these fundamental principles.

Double Loop Play

Diagram 6-31 shows (2) passing to (1), cutting down the lane and looping around forward (4). Player (2)'s cut tells (3) in the high-post area to cut down the lane and loop around (5) on the opposite side. Note that after this double loop motion, (4) pops to the head of the key. Player (1) looks first for (2) looping around (4) for a possible shot, and then dribbles to the other side of the key and looks for (3) in the three-point area.

If neither (2) nor (3) is open, (1) maintains the dribble and uses (4)'s screen to get open for another three-point possibility (see Diagram 6-32).

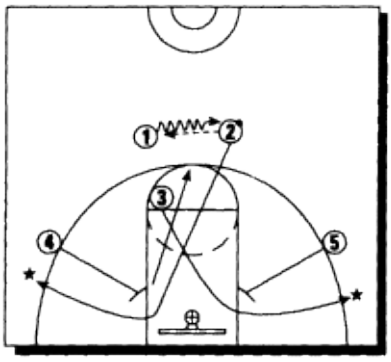


Diagram 6-31
Double Loop

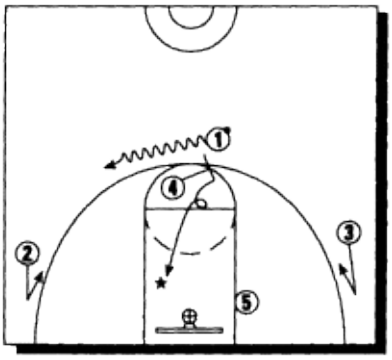


Diagram 6-32
Ball Screen

This gives the team three possible three-point shots, and concludes with (4) and (5) in rebounding position.

It works well versus zones because the downscreens of (4) and (5) tend to trap the zone inside and impede its 19'6" coverage of (2) and (3).

Double Down Play

This play is run from a one-guard (1) situation that finds the other four players in a box formation. Diagram 6-33 shows (1) dribbling to a wing position. This tells the ballside low post (3) to screen away for the offside low post (2), who makes a looping cut to the ballside three-point area.

After (3)'s screen, (4) and (5) move together and then down to form a double screen for (3), who loops to the head of the key on that side at the 19'6" range. By then, (1) has passed to (2) and cut down and around (4) and (5) to the far side of the court (see Diagram 6-34).

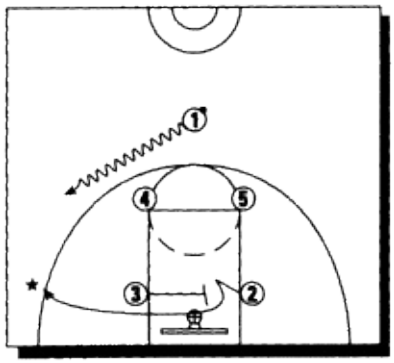


Diagram 6-33

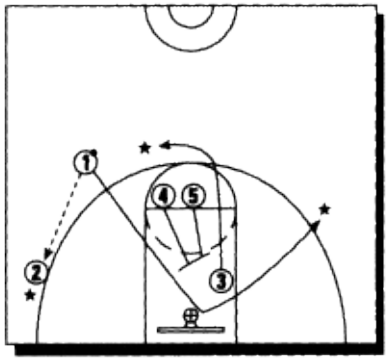


Diagram 6-34
Double Down

If (2) does not have a shot, the pass is made to (3), who may shoot, reverse the ball to (1), or fake to (1) and return the ball to (2). The latter option works very well versus zones (see Diagram 6-35).

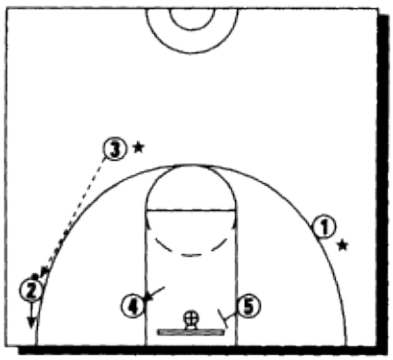


Diagram 6-35

Fake Roll Play

This play is based on a simple screen-and-roll play and the defense's predictable reaction to it. The play starts from a box formation with the two big players (4) and (5) stacked over wings (2) and (3). The point (1) (who should be a good shooter) dribbles the defender into a screen set by the stronger shooter of the two big players, (4). Player (4) moves high to set the screen (see Diagram 6-36).

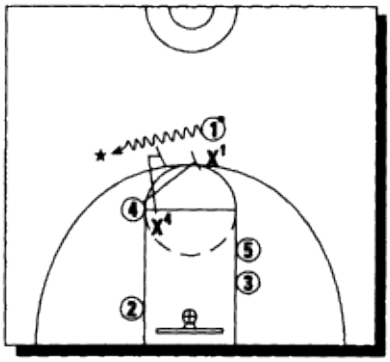


Diagram 6-36

Note that defender (X4) stepped out to help (Xl) over the screen.

Defender (X4) will then anticipate (4)'s roll to the basket. However, (4) fakes the roll, slips the screen and pops to the three-point area. At the same time, (2) moves across the lane to loop around (5) and (3)'s double screen. Player (1) may then step and shoot, or, as shown in

Diagram 6-37, pass to (4) behind the line.

Player (4) has the option of either shooting, reversing the ball to (2), or returning the ball to (1), who has dropped low to the corner in case the opposition is playing zone (see Diagram 6-38).

This play is designed to work against zone or player-to-player defenses.

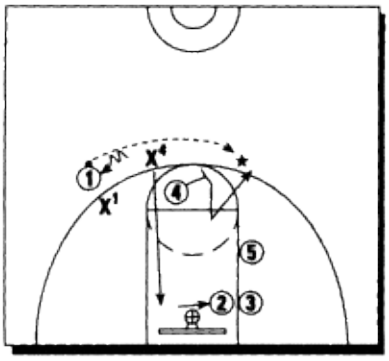


Diagram 6-37
Screener Pop

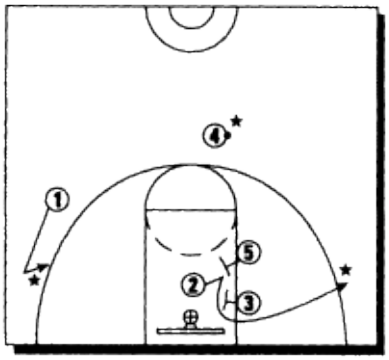


Diagram 6-38
Double Opposite

The "Triple" Series

Versus Player-to-Player Defenses

When a three-point play is necessary, the "triple" series may be run. It is keyed from a 1-2-2 set when point (1) dribbles to the side. As shown in Diagram 6-39, this pulls the offside post (4) out front and converts the offense to a four-man perimeter.

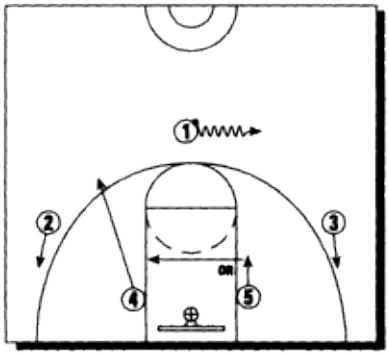


Diagram 6-39

The ball is then worked around this wide-spread perimeter, seeking an open three-point shot. The secondary goal is to pass the ball inside to single post (5), score a quick two points (with a chance of being fouled), and then to press until a designated time or area of the floor where a foul is committed.

Perimeter Shot

Moving the ball briskly around this four-player perimeter creates a lot of problems for the defenders, who have been instructed to pressure on the ballside and help on the offside. Diagrams 6-40 and 6-41 show how difficult it is for them to stop their offender's three-point shot and then help on post (5). This is especially true when skip passes are thrown, as shown in Diagram 6-42.

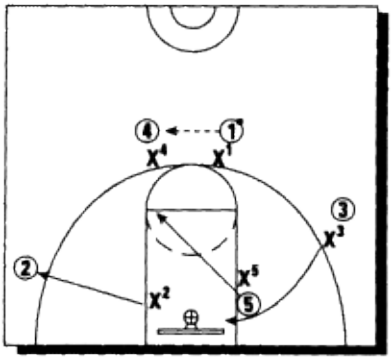


Diagram 6-40

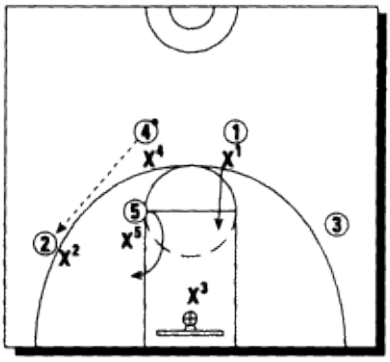


Diagram 6-41

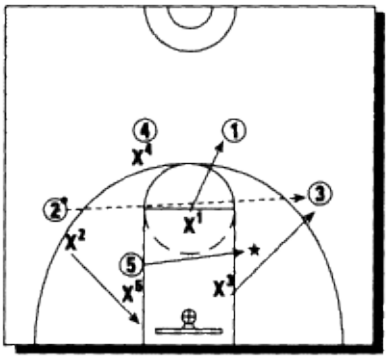


Diagram 6-42

Pressure Relievers

When the defense is doing a good job of pressuring the perimeter, the players being denied the ball may:

(A) backdoor and then fill the corner if they are not open (see

Diagrams 6-43 and 644). Other players must balance the floor.

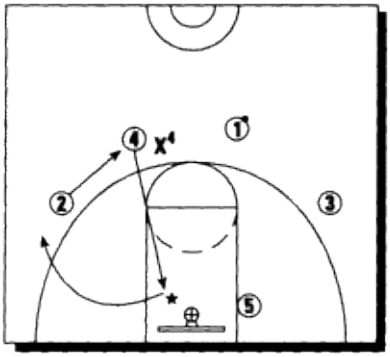


Diagram 6-43

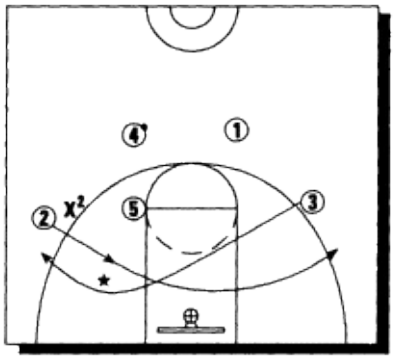


Diagram 6-44

(B) screen away for the next perimeter player as in the passing game (see Diagram 6-45).

(C) receive a screen from the next player in the rotation (see Diagram 6-46).

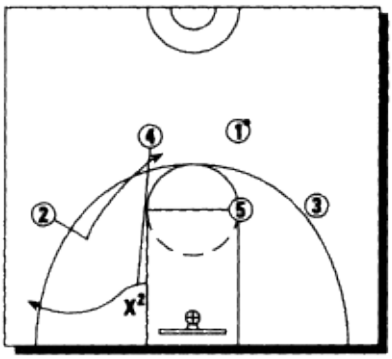


Diagram 6-45

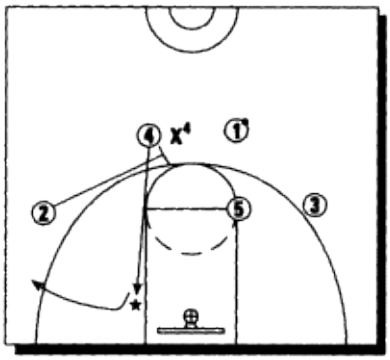


Diagram 6-46

Inside Post Play

If the ball is moved briskly around the perimeter and skip passes are thrown, it is also very difficult for (X5) to cover (5). The post is taught to assume a wide-post stance, seal the defender and then to move to the ball on each pass. Once a two-point score is made by the post (5), while in this three-point must mode, a zone press formation is used with (4) retreating to protect the basket, (5) covering the inbounds passer, and (1), (2), and (3) denying the inbounds reception, double

teaming, attempting to intercept, and finally going for the steal/fouling at a predetermined time or place (see Diagram 6-47).

The "triple series" may be run in one of two ways. You can flash from the 1-2-2 set to the four-player perimeter and then return to the 1-2-2, or you can key the 1-2-2 to four-player perimeter conversion and stay in it until you score or lose the ball.

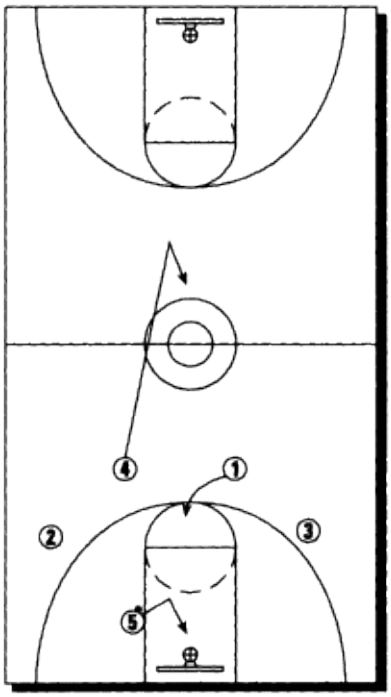


Diagram 6-47

Flash and Return Option

Diagram 6-48 shows a team running a 1-2-2 set convert to the four-player perimeter on the dribble key given by (1).

They then move the ball around the perimeter seeking a three-point shot, or to get the ball inside to (5). When the team wants to return to the 1-2-2 set, the change is keyed by a hand signal followed by a pass from (4) to (2). This tells the offside forward (3) to move out to screen for (4) as (5) moves to the ballside low-post area (see Diagram 6-49).

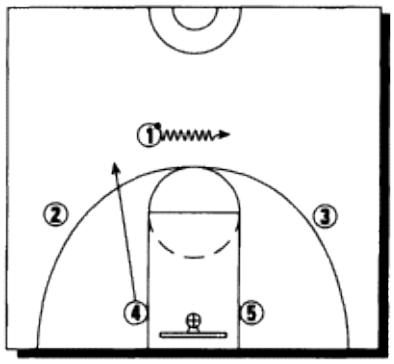


Diagram 6-48

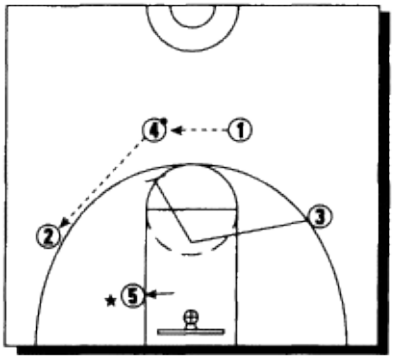


Diagram 6-49

Player (4) then cuts off (3)'s screen for a possible lob pass. If the pass is not thrown, (4) V-cuts to the wing position on that side of the court (see Diagram 6-50).

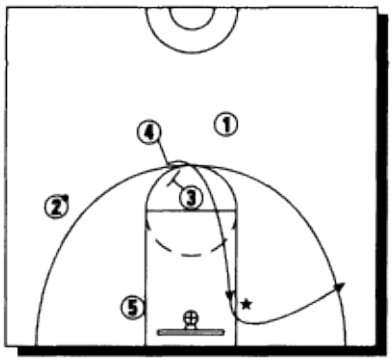


Diagram 6-50
Lob

Player (2) passes to (1), who reverses the ball to (4). This tells (5) to step out and screen for (2). Then (2) cuts to start the lob shuffle (see Diagrams 6-51 and 6-52).

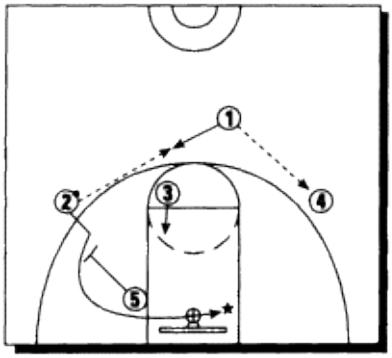


Diagram 6-51
Shuffle

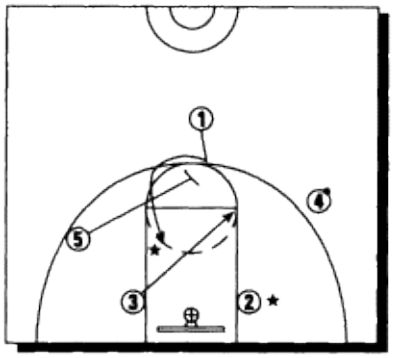


Diagram 6-52
Lob

Staying in the Four-Player, Three-Point Perimeter

Diagram 6-53 shows the ball being passed around the perimeter seeking a three-point shot or a pass to (5). Diagram 6-54 shows (3) calling the lob play by moving out front to screen for (4) as (4) passes to (2).

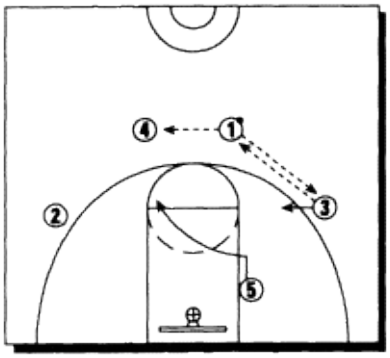


Diagram 6-53

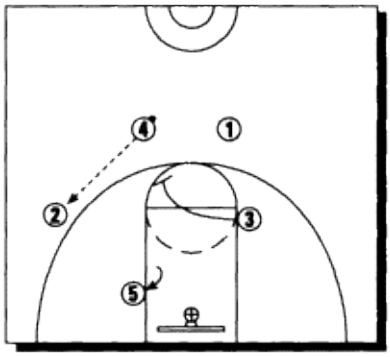


Diagram 6-54

This time, however, (4) cuts, looking for the lob pass and, if it is not there, loops to the ballside corner (see Diagram 6-55).

Player (2) passes to (3), then steps out front and fills the offside forward position as (4) moves up to replace (2). The team would then continue to seek out a three-point opportunity, post play or a lob pass (see Diagram 6-56). (2) balance the four-player perimeter.

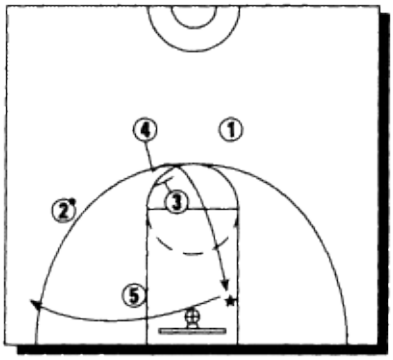


Diagram 6-55

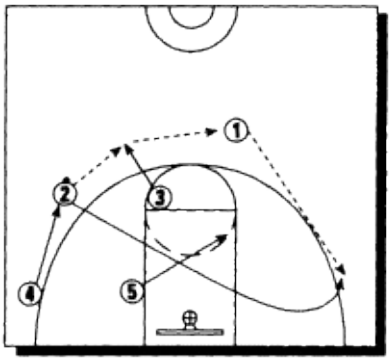


Diagram 6-56

Incorporating these two options (the Flash and Return, and the Convert and Stay In options) permits a team using the lob shuffle or any 1-2-2 set offense to use the three modes of play mentioned in chapter 1. The "you may, white mode" can be covered with the basic lob-shuffle offense that includes some possible three-point shots. Once the number of points in your scoring deficit becomes twice the number of minutes remaining on the clock, you can switch to the "you should, blue mode" by using the "Flash and Return" option. Then if things get desperate, if there are less than five minutes remaining and the point deficit number is three times the time on the clock, you can use the "Convert and Stay" option in your "you must, red mode."

Versus Zone Defenses

This same concept may be used versus zone defenses by adding the

"triple series" to the zone checker play. The original dribble key works well because it varies the offensive perimeter from an odd set (1-2-2) to an even set (2-2-1). This causes problems for zones that attempt to match the offensive perimeter. Diagrams 6-57 and 6-58 show a team using this maneuver to split a 1-2-2 zone.

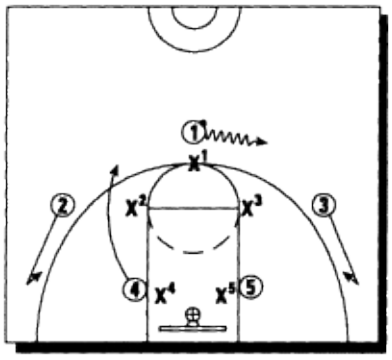


Diagram 6-57

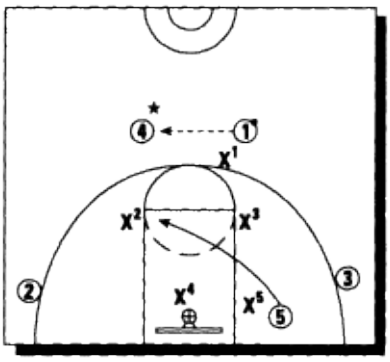


Diagram 6-58

The lob pass is still used, but this time the screener ((3) in Diagram 6-59) screens the nearest zone player to allow (2) to lob to (4).

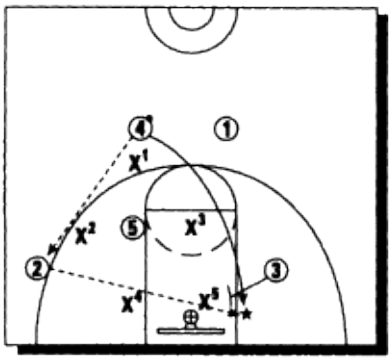


Diagram 6-59

Then if the pass is not made to (4), (3) can determine the shape of the new set by staying inside to return to the 1-2-2 zone checker set (see Diagram 6-60), or moving to the perimeter to form a 2-3 set (see Diagram 6-61).

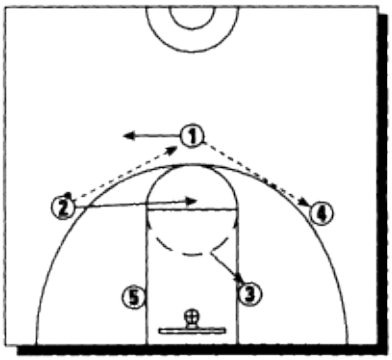


Diagram 6-60
1-2-2 Set

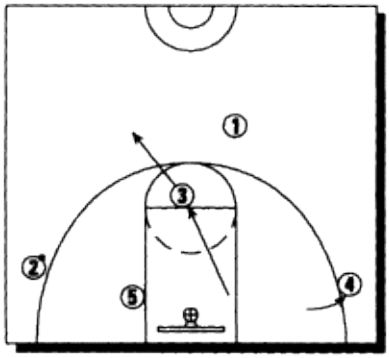


Diagram 6-61
2-3 Set

This "triple" series permits a team to utilize the three-point play to various degrees. The lob and post-up plays that are involved serve to complicate the job of the perimeter defenders by forcing them to be conscious of the inside threat. The net result is an abundance of three-point opportunities. The fact that this series may also be added to your zone plan makes it even more valuable.

These special situation plays allow a team to get those extra points that often equal victory in close contests. The fact that they are performed in a fundamentally sound manner helps to increase their chance of succeeding.