



# USA BASKETBALL, PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM



# ADVANCED LEVEL



# ADVANCED LEVEL

## BALL HANDLING & DRIBBLING



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Ball-handling and dribbling are of paramount importance. These two skills allow the basketball to be advanced legally throughout the court of play. At the Advanced Level, players will begin to refine and master the skills already learned and progress toward a high level of ball-handling and dribbling. Again, most of the stationary ball-handling drills will not be replicated in a game situation, but the importance is beginning to develop a relationship with the basketball where the player does not have to think while the basketball is in the hands. The motions become muscle memory, as the basketball has touched the hand in every possible way and angle during training. The stationary ball-handling skills are challenging and will push for mastery in familiarity with the basketball. The dribbling skills on the move will progress toward the application and efficiency of the skill in a game-like situation, in particular, performed under duress. The skill should be used for a reason, not just to use it!

### SKILL 1

#### STATIONARY BALL-HANDLING: ONE BASKETBALL

It is encouraged to continue working on speed, consistency, efficiency and overall mastery for the previously introduced ball-handling skills. Repetition is critical in learning how to become an effective ball-handler. Below are additional skills coaches can introduce to continue challenging players with the basketball.

## DRILL 1: ONE BASKETBALL, ONE TENNIS BALL

Each player will have one basketball and one tennis ball, beginning in a balanced defensive stance. Staying stationary, the player will work on a ball-handling skill, such as a crossover, while also working with a tennis ball simultaneously.

- Begin with the basketball in the right hand and the tennis ball in the left hand. The rhythm of the drill is easiest to learn as, “toss, dribble, catch.”
- With the tennis ball in the left hand, the player will toss it in the air to the right hand side. Immediately after the toss, the player will perform a crossover dribble from the right hand to the left hand. With the vacant right hand, the player will catch the tennis ball, prior to it hitting the floor, with an overhand catch. The player will then continue the drill using the opposite hands.
- When players first learn this drill, they may use multiple dribbles between crossovers. Encourage players to eliminate as many dribbles as possible, eventually working to complete the drill without any extra dribbles. Once players are comfortable with crossover dribbles, challenge them to dribble between the legs in both directions and then behind the back.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Balanced defensive stance.
- Keep eyes on tennis ball.
- Catch tennis ball overhand.
- Pound dribble.
- Work toward zero extra dribbles.



### SPIDER

The spider is a skill that focuses on improving hand speed and control of the basketball. It begins with the player in a solid defensive stance. The pattern of the hands tapping the basketball is as follows: right hand tap in front, left hand tap in front, right hand tap in back, left hand tap in back. Ideally, the basketball will remain in the center of the legs, directly below the head, requiring the player to sit their rear end back and maintain a true defensive stance with the head up. Once the skill is learned, encourage the increase in hand speed, a low dribble and head up.

- Solid low defensive stance.
- Quick hands.
- Basketball maintaining the same location on the floor to gain efficiency.
- Head up.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Once the skill is learned, coaches can progress the player to slowly, slight step-by-step, move forward, backward and sideways while completing the spider. This continues to teaches players the importance of hand positioning on the basketball, understanding the role of motion, as slight as it is in this case.

### PHILADELPHIA

This skill involves coordination, movement and timing with both hands and feet of the player, simultaneously. The basketball will travel in the following pattern (for description purposes, the basketball will begin in the right hand): right hand, crossover dribble to left hand, between the legs dribble from left hand to right hand, behind the back dribble from right hand to left hand, between the legs dribble from left hand to right hand. Once the basketball arrives back to the right hand, the pattern repeats. The pattern of the footwork is just as important. Again, assuming the basketball begins in the right hand, the foot that always leads is the right foot. Starting with both feet on home base, the pattern begins with the right foot stepping directly backwards, with the left foot following. This initial footwork will be complete after the first crossover and the first between the legs. Next, the right foot will step directly forward back to home base, again, with the left foot following. While this is happening, the second crossover (behind the back) and the second between the legs will occur. At this point, the basketball should be back to the right hand with both feet on home base. From this point, the pattern will reoccur from the beginning.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Establish proper timing first between hands and feet.
- Learn skill first, then gain speed with hands and feet.
- Head up.
- Efficient footwork.
- Sharp dribble lines for speed.



## STATIONARY BALL-HANDLING: TWO BASKETBALLS

### DRIBBLING TWO BASKETBALLS

Dribbling two basketballs simultaneously can be a fun, challenging way to continue progressing eye hand coordination and confidence in a ball-handler. Begin with a balanced defensive stance, holding both basketballs. The player will begin dribbling both basketballs at the same time, preferably at waist level. Encourage players to pound the basketball evenly with both hands while keeping the head up. After working on this skill, coaches can progress players to alternate hands, with one basketball hitting the ground, while the other is at waist level. Again, encourage pounding the basketball evenly with the head up. Coaches can also begin altering the height of the basketballs, making the dribbles lower at the knee or ankle levels.

Further, coaches can challenge players to dribble one basketball (low) at ankle level and the other basketball (high) at waist level. Being able to complete two different skills at the same is challenging and continues to work on building a solid comfort level with the basketball in the hands.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Balanced defensive stance, no bobbing.
- Pound basketball with finger pads.
- Head up.
- Control of the basketball.



#### PENDULUM

Progressing from pendulum dribbles with one basketball, players can begin to move to two basketballs. Beginning in the front, players will dribble both basketballs at the same time in the same direction, from knee to knee. Once this skill is learned, players can dribble the basketballs at and away from each other in front, with the middle of the body being the meeting point before moving the basketballs away from each other. Control of the basketball, especially at the mid-point is critical to assure the basketballs do not collide. Next, players can dribble the basketballs in the same direction, at the same time on

the side in the pendulum motion. Once players become comfortable with this skill, the side pendulum motion can be alternating, with one basketball in front of the body, while the other basketball is behind the body. Turning the hands over is important, while continuing to encourage head up.



#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Balanced defensive stance.
- Pound basketball with finger pads.
- Head up.
- Turn hands over.
- Control skill, then progress for speed.



FIGURE 8

There are several ways to challenge players using two basketballs, using the figure-8 motion. Below are three examples.

**PARTNER PASS:** With two players facing one another, in a balanced defensive stance, holding the basketball in the right hand, players will begin the figure-8 motion through the front door, without using a dribble. Once the basketball circles back to the right hand, coming out of the back door, both players will pass the basketball from the right knee to the other players left knee at the same time. The players will catch the pass and begin the pattern again. This requires players to work together to complete the drill, while pushing one another to increase speed.

**FOLLOW THE LEADER:** The player will again begin in a balanced defensive stance dribbling both basketballs simultaneously. Beginning through the back door, dribble the first basketball through the legs, with the second basketball following. Once both basketballs have cleared one leg, move to the second leg, first with one basketball, following with the second basketball. Essentially, one basketball follows the other throughout the pattern.

One basketball stays in front: This version of the figure-8 will be completed with one basketball completing the motion, while the other basketball remains in front and active. Again, when first learning the skill it is easiest to begin dribbling through the back door, progressing to the front door.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Balanced defensive stance, no bobbing.
- Finger pad control.
- Head up.
- Control, then speed.



### BETWEEN THE LEGS

Both of the skills below will begin with the player in a comfortable balanced shoulder width stance, with a slight knee bend. It is easiest to begin by learning the skill one hand at a time before dribbling both basketballs at the same time.

**ONE DRIBBLE:** With the basketball in the right hand, the player will cup the basketball and bounce the basketball between the legs, going through the back door, catching the basketball in front of the body with the same hand, in this case, right hand. The basketball will stay in the right hand throughout the entire skill. Once the player feels comfortable with the right hand, move to the left hand only. The same dribble will be utilized, with the player only using one dribble to circle the basketball around half of the body. The player will begin to gain confidence in using both hands; this is when it is appropriate to have the player use both hands simultaneously, completing the same dribbles, just alternating hands. Players can then progress to taking small steps forward and backward, traveling at a slow pace while performing the skill.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Slight knee bend.
- Cup the basketball to bring backward (similar to behind the back dribble).
- Efficiency with basketball – tight to body, dribble directly between legs.
- Head up.



**TWO DRIBBLES:** For this skill, the player will use two dribbles to circle half of the body. Beginning with the basketball in the right hand, one dribble will occur next to the right foot, the other between the legs. The hand positioning on the basketball will help create efficient quick

dribbles. Again, it is easiest to teach the skill through the back door to begin. Once the right hand has picked up the skill, switch the left hand. After both hands develop a solid comfort level, use both hands simultaneously, but in opposite directions. For example, if the right hand is dribbling the basketball next to the right foot, the left hand is dribbling the basketball between the legs. The coach can progress the player to walking forward and backward, after the player becomes comfortable with the stationary position.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Slight knee bend.
- Hand positioning on the basketball depending on the angle of the next dribble.
- Control basketball, tight to body.
- Pound basketball.
- Head up.



### SKILL 3

## DRIBBLING ON THE MOVE: ONE BASKETBALL

Being able to dribble the basketball, on the move, in a game-like situation under duress is critical by the time a player reaches this level. The players that excel at handling the basketball effectively are able to develop from just being able to complete the skill, to understanding why and when to use each dribble. Developing an understanding and awareness of the defenders tendencies, footwork, ability, etc. will help determine appropriate moves to use and when. When offensive players begin to understand what makes defenders uncomfortable, or what makes an offensive player difficult to defend, they are able to elevate each skill to a higher level. For example, if an offensive player “attacks” the feet of the defensive player with their own footwork and body control in a crossover, chances are, the defensive player will shift their momentum in that direction. This will allow the offensive player to make a quick and effective crossover in the opposite direction. Further, if a defender crosses their feet every time they slide, a change of direction move at the exact time the defender crosses their feet will be highly effective. These little nuances of the game can help develop a player from an average ball-handler to a very good ball-handler. It is encouraged to continue developing all of the skills introduced in the previous levels, with a

live defender, both in the open court and in the half court setting. This piece is potentially more important than any of the new skills listed below.

Below are a few additional skills to work on to keep the players engaged and challenged.

### WARM-UP TEAM DRIBBLING

This particular skill is a good warm-up for a team, working on overall ball-handling skills, in addition to overall court awareness. Each player will have a basketball. Line half of the players up on the baseline with the other half lined up at half court. The players will dribble toward each other, continuing to move from the baseline to half court and back, only using half of the basketball floor. Players will have to keep their head up in order not to collide with another teammate. Coaches can have players working on one particular dribbling move or allow players to be creative using several. Encourage the use of both hands and overall court awareness. Once the skill is learned, coaches can tinker with speed, having players use combination moves, insert coaches to swipe at the basketball as the players dribble by, etc. Be creative!

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Court awareness – head up.
- Stay low while making moves.
- Make several types of moves, namely ones more uncomfortable with.



### IN-AND-OUT

The in-and-out dribble is a counter move for the crossover dribble. Teaching the in-and-out dribble in a progression seems to produce a more fluid overall move upon completion. The progression is listed below:

With the player straddling a painted line on the basketball court with their feet and basketball in right hand, for example:

- Dribble the basketball on the outside (right side) of the line twice, then inside (left side) of the line twice – see basketball travel over the line.



- Progress to dribbling once on outside, once on inside – see basketball travel over the line.
- Dribble basketball on outside, see basketball travel over line (take out dribble on inside), dribble on outside – this is the in and out motion.
- Include shoulder and head motion as basketball travels over line.
- Include left jab step with shoulder/head motion and basketball traveling over line.
- Same as 5, but travel up the court, staying on the line, using proper footwork, shoulder/head motion and in and out motion with basketball.
- Move up the court completing dribble without defender.
- Move up the court completing dribble with defender.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- All motions working together – basketball motion/footwork/shoulder/head.
- Basketball tight to body through move.
- Stay low during move, explode out.
- Efficient footwork coming out of move.
- Keep hand on top of the basketball – basketball should travel over line or mid-line of body.



### COMBINATION MOVES

It is appropriate and necessary to begin working on developing a comfort level with dribbling moves used in combination. For example, if a player begins to attack a defensive player by using an in and out dribble and the defensive player anticipates the move and jumps to the strong side, denying the move, the offensive player would be well served to then use a crossover as a counter. Defensive players will begin to anticipate moves based on personnel or based on previous possessions, it is important that offensive players adjust appropriately. This can be accomplished through the use of dribbling moves in combination. Coaches can begin teaching this by dictating the moves to use in combination, such as in and out crossover, between the legs hesitation, etc. It is best to get to a point where the players are being creative on their own, reacting to the defense and their positioning. This can all be achieved through full court dribbling as well as half court scoring sceneries. It is good to progress from moves without defense to adding live defense.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- React to defense.
- Be patient through moves.
- Head up.
- Low into moves, explode out.
- Basketball tight to body.



## SKILL 4

### DRIBBLING ON THE MOVE: TWO BASKETBALLS

Dribbling full court with two basketballs on the move is a way to continue challenging players and the overall comfort level of handling the basketball. The more players can progress to a level of comfort, where the basketball becomes an extension of the hand, rather than a constant thought in the brain, the less players will have to think during a live basketball game. Handling two basketballs at the same time on the move will challenge players to reach this type of comfort level.

#### SPEED DRIBBLE

Sprinting from baseline to baseline, players will work on the speed dribble while dribbling two basketballs simultaneously. Begin by having the player dribble the basketballs, hitting the floor, at the same time. Encourage head up, even pounding of the basketballs, speed with the run, etc. Then progress to the player alternating the dribble, with one basketball hitting the ground while the other is at waist level. Coaches can have players move forward, backward, execute jump stops, pivots, etc. Again, be creative!

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Waist level dribble.
- Control, pound, finger pads with basketball.
- Head up.
- Speed with control.



#### CROSSOVER

Performing a crossover while handling two basketballs at the same time should be done in a zigzag pattern, similar to performing the

crossover with one basketball. The side that is working on the crossover should be dribbling closest to the body, to alleviate creating potential bad habits. For example, if moving toward the right, the player should cross over with the right hand, keeping the basketball close to the body.

The basketball in the left hand performs a lighter version of a crossover, almost leaving the basketball in the middle of the body, on the outside of the other basketball. The player will change hands and begin moving in the left direction. The player would then cross over with the left hand, keeping that basketball closest to the body.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Zigzag motion.
- Control and proper footwork, then speed.
- Crossover side keeps basketball closest to the body.
- Head up.



#### BEHIND THE BACK AND BETWEEN THE LEGS

To complete these two skills using two basketballs simultaneously, the player will again move in a zigzag type motion. If moving to the right, the actual skill will be completed by the right hand. For example, if moving to the right, the player would complete the behind the back dribble with the right hand. The basketball that is in the left hand would be left out in front of the body, allowing the player to switch hands and basketballs. The player would then proceed toward the left, completing the skill with the left hand.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Zigzag motion.
- Control and proper footwork, then speed.
- Head up.



#### DRIBBLING TO PASSING TO STATIONARY TARGET

Players will line up on one baseline, with two basketballs. Progressing toward the opposite baseline, the dribbling moves above will be executed. At the opposite free-throw line; the player will pass with

one hand to the stationary target, while keeping the basketball in the other hand alive. Coaches can have players work on various moves down the court, leading to the pass, using both hands.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Zigzag motion.
- Control and proper footwork, then speed.
- Head up.
- Proper passing, keep other basketball alive with the dribble.



## DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *At the Advanced Level, it is appropriate and necessary to continue developing and mastering skills for a player to successfully and efficiently defend the basketball. On-ball defense is critical to learn, for personal success, but also because of the importance of the role within a player-to-player team defensive scheme. Players at this level will begin to develop a greater understanding of team defense and how their role directly impacts the other four teammates on the floor. Further, great on-ball defenders begin to study and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the opponent, and constantly adjust and counter accordingly. Taking away an offensive opponents greatest strength, or being able to dictate a certain direction or movement at a certain time, is a goal at this level. To move from being completely reactive to proactive on the basketball is ideal.*

*In addition to continuing to master previous on-ball skills, below are several skills to help challenge on-ball defenders to elevate this aspect of their defensive game.*

## SKILL 1

### CLOSEOUTS: UNDERSTANDING TEAM DEFENSE AND PERSONNEL



Closeouts will begin to take on different forms, based on team defense philosophies and individual players being defended. Below are two examples to consider:

#### TOP FOOT (TEAM DEFENSE)

Based on the team defensive philosophy that the middle of the floor is problematic, teams will focus on pushing offensive players and teams toward the baseline, not allowing middle penetration. Consequently, closing out to an offensive player, straddling or even with the top foot becomes important. Closing out to an offensive player on the top foot makes middle penetration more challenging to the offensive player, influences baseline penetration (into the teams established help) and allows the defensive player to anticipate the first dribble of the ball-handler toward the baseline. If the offensive player does attempt to penetrate middle, the proper footwork is in the same line toward half court, rather than a drop step allowing the middle action. This will likely cause some contact, it is important to take the offensive player on the chest, with both hands up.

Setting up breakdown drills or live play to create and establish this habit is best served from a wing or baseline position, in order to establish one side of the floor.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Closeout technique from previous level.
- Footwork leading to body splitting or even top foot of offensive player.
- Force baseline, be careful not to open up with bottom foot allowing direct drive to basket.
- If attempted middle penetration, take offensive player on chest and show hands.
- Progress from footwork and technique focus to live play.



## SHORT VS. LONG (PERSONNEL)

Understanding offensive personnel can be advantageous to the defender if executed properly. From a closeout standpoint, it is critical to understand if the offensive player receiving the basketball is a three-point threat or if dribble penetration is preferred. If the offensive player is more of a three-point shooter, a long closeout is necessary. A long closeout requires the defender to sprint the majority of the distance traveled because arriving on the catch, with a hand up to deter the shot, is critical. As an on-ball defender, you have won if you can chase a three-point shooter off the three-point line by making them use a dribble or pass the basketball. Conversely, if the offensive player prefers to penetrate, a short closeout is more effective. A short closeout is to sprint then close out just short of the offensive player, allowing more of a cushion to contain immediate penetration.

When setting up breakdown drills, or live play to illustrate these concepts, put players in a situation where they have to think quickly, make a decision and react accordingly.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Closeout technique from previous level.
- Long – chase three-point shooter off three-point line.
- Short – stop short allowing cushion to contain.



## SKILL 2

### PLAYER CONTROL OPPORTUNITIES

There are opportunities to establish position for player control, or better known as taking a charge, all over the court, including while defending on the basketball. A few optimal situations are described below:

#### TAKING AWAY MIDDLE PENETRATION

When closing out on the top foot, as described above, a great opportunity to take a charge exists if the offensive player chooses to penetrate middle. With the proper footwork, back toward half court, beating the offensive player to the spot and establishing position can lead to a player control foul. The defender is creating the opportunity through the positioning on the closeout.

## TAKING AWAY TENDENCY

Another great opportunity to take a charge on a ball-handler is by taking away a commonly used move for that offensive player. For example, if a player continually uses a left hand hesitation move in the open court, a high level defender will make the adjustment, beat the offensive player to the left side, establish planted solid positioning, absorb the contact and take a charge.



### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Beat offensive player to spot and establish planted positioning, no leaning.
- Position to match numbers with numbers.
- Arms low to make sure no pushing off.
- Absorb contact, no flopping.
- Head up on fall.



## SKILL 3

### FULL COURT ZIGZAG FOR A PURPOSE

To progress from completing a skill to making it applicable and beneficial for a team, defenders will need a further understanding of the team philosophy and location on the basketball floor. As an on-ball defender, it is beneficial to turn the offensive player as often as possible in the backcourt. The defender can be more aggressive in the backcourt because there is ample time to recover. Once the offensive player crosses half court, push the basketball to one side of the floor or the other, depending on the team defensive philosophy. By establishing a side of the floor with the ball-handler, it allows the other four teammates on the floor to anticipate the positioning, namely, establishing players on the backside into a help side position

Using the previously mentioned zigzag skill, progress to having players complete the zigzag with a purpose; turn in the backcourt, establish a side in the frontcourt. This can also be accomplished through live play.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- On-ball techniques and concepts introduced previously.
- Frontcourt - turn offensive player as often as possible, create havoc, more aggressive.
- Backcourt – establish one side, more disciplined.



### SKILL 4

## ON BALL DEFENSE: BASED ON PERSONNEL AND GAME SITUATION

Coaches will never be able to give a player every scenario possible. Players have to figure it out and make quick decisions. Below are some concepts to challenge players to increase basketball IQ while becoming a stronger on-ball defender.

### STRONG SIDE VS. WEAK SIDE

Understanding an offensive players weak hand and effectively pushing that direction can assist the entire team for that possession. It makes the individual player uncomfortable and potentially pushes a team to a side not as familiar or comfortable. Further, some teams are more effective offensively on a certain side of the floor, an on-ball defender can push the offensive player to the other side.

### DISRUPTING OFFENSE

Disrupting a natural flow of an offense by dictating a direction on the ball-handler can also make a big impact. For example, if a team runs a 1-4 high set and tends to experience success penetrating baseline, making help side difficult for teams; it would be beneficial to push the offensive player on the wing toward the middle (even though this goes against team defensive concepts) because this is where the help side is located.

### IN FOUL TROUBLE

An on-ball defender who does not have any personal fouls will pressure the basketball differently than an on-ball defender with four fouls. If a player is not in foul trouble, the player can pressure more,

be more aggressive with the hands, turn the offensive player more, etc. If the defensive player is in foul trouble, maintain more space, hands visible, create better angles, and take fewer chances.

### TIME AND SCORE SITUATIONS

Late in the game, it is important for the player to understand the time and score situation. If the team is up late in the game, it would be beneficial to shadow the player in the backcourt, making sure they are using time off of the clock, then play contain on-ball defense to make sure the team is not scrambling to help on penetration. If a team is down late in the game, it would be beneficial to pressure the basketball all over the court, making the offense make decisions and work.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Enable players to make decisions and think about the game of basketball.
- Teach through practice and game situations.



# ADVANCED LEVEL

## FOOTWORK AND BODY CONTROL



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Footwork and body control are important at all levels, and the Advanced Level continues to develop these skills. Footwork and body control now involves more game speed action with quick change of directions. This level builds on what was taught in the Introductory and Foundational levels. This level will emphasize the “triple-threat” position, or basketball position, from which all offensive moves should be made. From this ready position, the offensive player can perform any offensive skill – shooting, running, passing, dribbling, screening, pivoting or jumping – in a very efficient manner because the player is ready to move quickly in any direction.

### SKILL 1

#### PIVOTING

This skill advances the footwork and body control of the pivot for the player.

- At this level, coaches should continue to emphasize proper mechanics and technique of making a pivot turn. This includes ensuring that players maintain proper basketball positioning with the knees bent and hands above the waist, regardless of whether they are completing a front or reverse pivot.
- Players with the basketball may use a pivot to perform a crossover dribble, while players without the basketball may use pivots to make a v-cut in an attempt to get open for a pass.
- Remind players that pivots may be used when they are running or when they are stationary.



- Coaches should begin instructing players on when pivots may be valuable during a game. For example, pivots help players protect the basketball from defenders, make passes to teammates, and move effectively toward the basket.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Proper basketball position.
- Keep chin up.
- Pivot when running and when stationary.
- Use front and reverse pivots.



## SKILL 2

### BODY CONTROL WHEN CHANGING DIRECTION/SPEED

- At this level, coaches should encourage the use of cuts to change direction quickly.
- A cut allows players to create space while still maintaining their balance. This is crucial when players are working to separate themselves from a defender in order to get open for passes or shots.
- To change direction using a cut, plant one foot on the court at the end of a slightly shortened stride. Then, push off of that foot to begin traveling in another direction. Make sure players' knees are slightly bent, and their heads stay over their feet.
- Instruct players to push off of the foot opposite the direction they wish to travel. For example, if players want to cut to the right, they should plant and push off of the left foot. In this scenario, the right foot and both shoulders should be turned to the right.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Keep knees bent and the head over the feet.
- Push off the foot opposite the desired direction.
- Turn shoulders and foot in desired direction.
- Change speed when changing direction.



## DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES



### GENERAL OVERVIEW: Defensive Principles

*General Overview: At this level, the focus will be on defensive stance as well as body movement. It is important for defenders to be able to slide their feet when guarding opponents, while remaining at an arm's-length distance. When opponents are attempting to drive or cut to the basket, the defender should move the leg nearest to the intended direction of travel first, then slide the other foot until the feet are close again. At the end of the movement, the feet should be shoulder width apart.*

## SKILL 1

### PROPER STANCE

Instructing the proper defensive stance should start at the Introductory Level with continued progression in the Foundational and Advanced Levels.

- Feet should be wider than the shoulders, hands above the waist, chin up with the head in a position that is above the knees and not leaning forward. This will give the defender the ability to move and pivot in all directions.
- When guarding an opponent with the basketball, the defensive player should maintain the defensive stance with one hand down to prevent the crossover dribble and the other hand up to deflect a pass attempt.
- The defender should keep both eyes on the ball-handler's midsection.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- The back should be straight with the chin up.
- Feet should be wider than the shoulders.
- One hand low and one hand high.
- Move the leg in the desired direction of travel first.



## 360-DEGREE MOVEMENT

On defense, players should stay in basketball position, push off the top foot, slide in direction of the offensive player, and remain an arm's length distance from the offensive player.

- Many times the defender needs to guide an offensive player that is dribbling around the basketball court. In this case the defender's foot positioning will change.
- The player must position the foot closest to the rim ahead of the other foot and arm's length from the dribbler. The foot closest to the rim must be inside the dribbler's foot to force a baseline dribble.
- If it is necessary to change direction, defenders should use a pivot to do so. This is called a drop step.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Knees slightly bent with hands above the waist.
- Push off the top foot to move in any of 360-degree movements.
- Top foot should be on the inside of the offensive players foot to force baseline.
- Head must stay over the feet for great balance.

ADVANCED LEVEL  
PASSING AND RECEIVING

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *Passing and receiving are important abilities to develop. As with ball-handling and dribbling, these two skills allow the basketball to be advanced legally throughout the court of play. At the Advanced Level, passing and receiving continues to work toward mastery of each skill previously introduced, while transitioning the focus to game application. Further, beginning to gain an understanding of how best to incorporate other skills of the game, such as use of the dribble or pivot to obtain a better passing angle, will elevate the efficiency of the use of the pass.*

## SKILL 1

## STATIONARY PASSING

Two-ball partner passing is a great warm-up skill for players to continue developing accuracy and confidence in passing. Partners will line up across from one another, each with a basketball, completing the following types of passing:

## DRILL 1: HAND CHEST AND BOUNCE PASS

- Simultaneously, both players will complete a right hand chest pass. Both players will aim for the left hand of the opposite player to make sure the basketballs do not collide in flight. Accuracy with the placement of the basketball is critical. Work to develop a faster tempo once the skill is learned. Make sure to switch hands and progress to the bounce pass, as the players get comfortable with the skill.

**ALTERNATE TWO HAND CHEST AND BOUNCE PASS:** The players will alternate, one player chest passing and the other bounce passing. Encourage players to concentrate on crisp passes and location accuracy. Coaches can have players switch directions on the whistle to make the skill more challenging.

**ABOVE SHOULDER PASSING:** This skill will help develop ball control using one hand. Keeping the basketballs at, or just above shoulder level, using one hand and keeping the basketballs on one side, players will pass the basketballs back and forth to one another. It is important to deliver the basketball to the teammate at or above shoulder level or the one hand catch will be quite challenging. Once players learn the skill, encourage them to make the pass on more of a straight line, as players tend to lob this type of pass to begin.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Continue to reinforce concepts from previous levels.
- Crisp passing.
- Accuracy of location – hit target.
- Gain speed as skill is learned.



## SKILL 2

### ENTRY PASSING

#### PASSING OFF THE DRIBBLE AND AWAY FROM THE DEFENSE

These two skills are important details to learn within the confines of passing in a game situation. Both are outlined below:

**PASSING OFF THE DRIBBLE:** This skill is important to learn for all positions, not just the point guard. Players will find themselves in a situation where another teammate is open while the dribble is being used and will need to react immediately before the passing lane is gone. To begin learning this skill, players can pass to one another or use a wall. Have the player dribble one time then immediately make a two-hand chest pass, working on a quick transition from dribble to pass. Work on both hands, including bounce passes and one-hand passes (utilizing the guide hand). Once this is comfortable, put the player in motion, passing to both a stationary and moving target. Finally, although this type of pass should be used in a specialty situation, work on passing off the dribble with one hand, without the guide hand. Many times players find themselves in a position where they cannot get the guide hand to the basketball quick enough, having to pass the basketball with one hand. With this type of pass, it is important the player adjusts the hand to position directly behind

the basketball, to gain strength in the pass but also control of the basketball. Work through the same progression above.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Quick transition from dribble to pass.
- Head up.
- Accuracy hitting target.
- Crisp passes.
- Work on all types of passes off of dribble (two hands).
- Work on all types of passes off of dribble (one hand) – used for special situations.



**PASSING AWAY FROM THE DEFENSE:** Placement of the pass, away from the defense, is a critical skill to learn. This is especially important when making entry passes, either to perimeter or post players. For a perimeter entry pass, the basketball should be placed in the teammates outside hand, out away from the body. If the basketball is delivered at the chest, the defender will likely be able to get a hand on the basketball. Same concept for post entry passes applies. The basketball should be delivered away from the defensive player, either high or low, depending on positioning and where the teammate gives a target to receive.

This concept can be worked on and reinforced in any drill that includes passing. It can be developed through specific drills, such as entry passing against live defense or even within the confines of team centered drills, such as 5 on 0 offensive review. Incorporate everywhere possible to create the habit.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Pass to outside hand of teammate.
- Hit target.
- Place where defender cannot get deflection.
- Every drill, think about where defender is likely at, pass away from that spot.



## PERIMETER ENTRY

Although there are many types of perimeter entries and passing, the most challenging can be the initial wing entry pass to begin an

offense, as the defense can expect this type of pass at that time. If making a perimeter entry pass with access to a live dribble, it is best to use the dribble to take the defender one way, then quickly change directions, allowing for a passing lane to open. If making the pass from the top of the key to the wing, the player will want to break the plane of the free-throw lane closest to the wing to allow for a short enough pass for a successful completion. Using the two skills above will be helpful, passing off the dribble and away from the defender. The most important concept, especially the higher talent level of defenders, is to create a passing lane by changing directions or creating the appropriate space at the right time with the use of the dribble to be able to deliver the pass. Further, timing with the teammate is imperative; one player must be in a position to pass while the other is in a position to receive, simultaneously.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Create a passing lane at the right time (change of direction or create space with dribble).
- Pass off of the dribble (two hands if possible).
- Pass away from defender.
- Crisp pass.



## POST ENTRY

Just as with perimeter entry passes, it is important to create the appropriate passing lane at the exact time the post player is ready to receive the basketball. When making a post entry pass, it is typically most useful to fake a pass to make a pass, creating the passing lane. One trick of the trade that can be helpful is to make passes by the defenders ear, as arms naturally raise outside of the body leaving time for a pass by the ears to travel by it before it is possible for arms to be there to deflect the pass. Further, once the passing lane is created, players should deliver the pass when the post player is on balance and ready to receive. The basketball should be placed away from the defender and in some cases lead directly to a score.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Use ball fakes to create passing lane.
- Use pivots, step through to create passing lane.
- Pass by the ear if delivering high.
- Deliver when post has a balanced seal.
- Pass away from defender, lead to score if possible.
- Crisp passes.
- Hit target.



## SKILL 3

### USE OF PIVOTS TO CREATE PASSING LANES

The use of pivots can many times be just as effective as use of a dribble or pass fake to create a passing lane. If a player finds they are in need of reversing the basketball, many times a front pivot will provide a controlled way to do that under duress. For explanation purposes, if the player is on the right side of the floor trying to reverse the basketball toward the middle, the player will rip the basketball from the right hip to the left hip, either over the head or below the knees. The left foot will be the pivot foot for the player to complete a front pivot, stepping through with the right foot. This will put the defender on the back of the offensive player, creating a passing lane back toward the middle, passing with the left hand. One important emphasis, complete a front pivot rather than a reverse pivot as to not turn the back on the basketball floor in case a defensive player jumps in the passing lane.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Front pivot.
- Hip to hip with basketball (high or low).
- Use body to create passing lane on step through.
- Pass with outside hand.
- Crisp passes.
- Hit target.



## SKILL 4

### ZONE PASSING

Passing against a zone can be highly effective in combination with movement, spacing and use of screens. Quick and efficient passing against a zone can be challenging to defend. Below are a few concepts to consider:

**EFFECTIVE PASS FAKES:** Defenses are taught to move on the flight of the basketball, making pass fakes effective, especially against zone defenses that fly around on rotations. If used properly, a ball fake will shift the zone one way, allowing for an open passing lane or penetration the other. On ball-reversal, or any time a defender is rotating toward the basketball, a pass fake is effective to keep movement in a certain direction.

**PENETRATE AND KICK:** Being able to penetrate the gaps of a zone and kick the basketball to an open teammate as a result is a skill needed at this level. An opportune time to penetrate a gap is on ball-reversal because the gaps tend to be larger as the defense is rotating and not completely set. Further, penetrating a gap typically requires two defenders to stop, possibly creating an open opportunity for a teammate, whether on the perimeter or in the post.

**GARDEN SPOT:** Being able to pass to the garden spot against a zone will open up many sealing and three point opportunities within a zone offense. If the basketball is either on the right block or the right short corner, the garden spot is the left wing. Typically, when a zone is flattened out or collapsed, the opposite wing is open for a quick skip pass, putting the zone in a tough position. This pass is best served overhead, using a front or a reverse pivot, depending if space is needed to create the passing lane to complete the pass.

**UNDERSTANDING TEAM OFFENSE:** Understanding and anticipating openings within the team offense will help the player make more advanced passes. For example, understanding when a post player is sealing and where the defender likely will be, will help the delivery of the pass from a timing and location standpoint. Further, understanding where and when teammates are cutting will allow a passer to anticipate openings that can be exploited by the pass or dribble. Without this understanding, many players will put teammates in tough situations, rather than situations to be able to catch and score.

All four of these skills can be drilled in breakdown drills as well as encouraged within the confines of the team offense.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Pass fake to shift zone.
- Penetrate gaps and kick.
- Garden spot.
- Anticipate cuts/seals to deliver better passes.



## SKILL 5

### UNDERSTANDING PERSONNEL

#### AND HOW TO DELIVER PASSES TO TEAMMATES

When delivering a pass to a teammate, it is important to understand the personnel and how a pass will impact a teammates ability to be effective on the catch. Two examples are listed below.

**POST VS. GUARD:** Know your teammates! Understand who is receiving the pass and the offensive strengths with which they have upon the catch. For example, it would not be the best situation to pass the basketball to a 5'5 point guard under the basket with two 6'5 players defending. Likewise, it can be challenging for a 6'5 post player to catch the basketball in transition having to put the basketball on the floor with two 5'5 guards surrounding them. Deliver passes to teammates in a position to experience success upon the catch. For the two examples above, wait for the 5'5 guard to pop out for a jumper and wait for the 6'5 post player to seal at the rim. Waiting two extra seconds can get a teammate into a situation that is positive for them, rather than challenging. These concepts can be addressed in skill work (i.e. have a guard wave off a post in an outlet line and instead run the lane), but more than likely will be addressed in live game action.

**SHOOTERS PASS:** The type of pass a shooter receives matters. If the pass is delivered at the knees, or the shooter has to move sideways to catch the basketball, it will impact the mechanics of the shooter. In a perfect world, shooters love to receive the basketball in the shooting pocket, off of a crisp pass in the air, with the laces up. As a passer, strive to make all of these ideals occur every time the basketball is delivered. This can become especially important late in

a game, especially when a shooter has to get the shot off quickly. A good pass can help a shooter get the shot off much more quickly.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Know your teammates.
- Deliver the basketball appropriate to position and situation.
- Lead teammates into position to be successful.
- Strive for perfect shooters pass.



## RECEIVING

### SKILL 1

## GIVE UP POSITION TO GAIN POSSESSION

It is important to establish proper positioning to receive the basketball. It is also equally important to understand when one must give up the earned positioning in order to gain possession of the basketball. For example, a post player has established a seal for a high low look, the teammate passes the basketball behind the player sealing. Is it more beneficial to maintain the seal, or give up the positioning and go grab the basketball? Of course, give up the positioning to go grab the basketball and maintain the possession for the better of the team. This is a fine line and players will need to work through the process of understanding when and when not to give up the positioning earned. The thing to remember is, the basketball is the most important thing in the game to possess!

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Provide feedback to players (practice and games) to get a better feel of decision making.
- Basketball is most important – pursue basketball if positioning is given up.



### SKILL 2

## IMPORTANCE OF TARGETS

Coaches constantly encourage players to communicate to one another, vocally, on the basketball court. When receiving the basketball, providing a hand target, is a form of non-verbal communication, which can make a difference between a score and a turnover. Both skills should be reinforced in breakdown work and in games. Below are two types of targets to consider.

**PERIMETER TARGETS:** Providing a target on the perimeter is important to communicate with the passer, so they know where the cut is headed. For example, if a player is simply making a V cut and would like to receive the basketball on the wing, while making the cut, place the outside hand (open) directly out, essentially telling the passer to deliver the basketball to that hand. If that same player is being overplayed by the defender, consequently, making a backdoor cut a great option, the player will cut to the three point line with a fist (closed) on the outside hand, signaling to the passer a backdoor cut is to follow. This simple non-verbal communication can lead to a wide-open layup, rather than a potential turnover. Lastly, if a perimeter player is making a cut and feels is open for a shot, give the passer a target with both hands, signaling for the pass to deliver the basketball to your shooting pocket. In combination with this non-verbal cue, it is also good to verbally call for the basketball as well.

**POST TARGETS:** Providing a target while posting up is important not only for the passer to know where to deliver the basketball, but also for the passer to know when the post player is on balance and ready to receive the basketball. If the post player is ready to receive the basketball without the need for an additional pass, provide an open hand where the basketball should be delivered. Depending on the placement of the defense, the delivery may need to be low or high, toward the middle or toward the baseline. Make sure the positioning is established so the defender cannot get a hand on the pass, where being asked for. If the post has a player sealed on the top side for example, with the basketball on the wing, do the work early and push the post player up the lane, while pointing to the top of the key and communicating “top” to the teammates. Once the basketball is passed to the top, complete the appropriate seal, now using an open hand as the target for basketball placement. Do not be afraid, as a post player, to guide and direct where the basketball should



go, by pointing, using an open hand and verbally communicating to teammates.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Open hand vs. closed hand.
- Shooting pocket.
- High or low.
- Direct entry vs. reverse for seal (open hand vs. pointing).
- Verbally call for basketball.



## DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *The majority of the time spent playing defense off of the basketball far exceeds the time spent on the basketball, making denial defense imperative. At the Advanced Level, in addition to continuing to develop more efficient denial skills, progress toward game application while introducing how to defend cuts and transitioning in and out of denial defense to strengthen the collective team defense, ultimately interfering with the flow of the offensive team. Further, in addition to progressing through physical skills, encourage players to communicate throughout the defensive possession.*

### SKILL 1

## DEFENDING THE BACKDOOR CUT

Depending on the defensive players strengths, the philosophy of the team defense and the opposing teams offensive strengths, the following two methods may be used to defend the backdoor cut and pass.

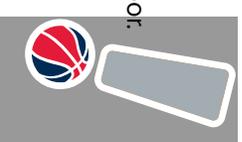


**OPEN UP:** If there is not a concern with the quickness of the offensive player, or concern about the ball-handler penetrating, or the preference is for players not to lose sight of the basketball momentarily, coaches should consider opening up as the method of defending the backdoor cut. As effective as this method is, the potential negative to be aware of is the defensive player will lose contact and sight of the offensive player while opening up. As the offensive player cuts backdoor, the defensive player will slide as far as possible toward the hoop without getting beat. Once the defender feels they are beat backdoor, open up by completing a reverse pivot, seeing the basketball with hands up. Once recovered, assuming the defender remains one pass away from the basketball, return to a denial position, up the line toward the basketball.

**FLIP HEAD:** If there is a concern about the speed of the offensive player cutting, the offensive team attempts many backdoor passes, or the preference is for the defensive player changing positioning too much, coaches should consider flipping the head to defend the backdoor cut. A potential negative with this method is the defensive player will lose sight of the basketball momentarily, which could lead to the basketball passing the defender, or could give the ball-handler an opening to penetrate without timely help side from the defender denying. As the offensive player begins the cut backdoor, again, the defender should slide maintaining the proper positioning as long as possible without getting beat. Once the defender feels the offensive player has beat the defender, flip the head from one shoulder to the other, immediately switching hands denying with. Immediately look for the basketball while maintaining contact with the offensive player. Once the defender has established positioning on the bottom side of the offensive player, flip the head and hand to establish proper denial positioning; assuming the basketball remains one pass away.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Do not open up or flip head if not beaten backdoor.
- Attempt to maintain proper denial positioning.
- Open up/flip head urgently and immediately look for basketball.
- Arm positioning.
- Once recovered to low side of offensive player, establish proper denial positioning.



## SKILL 2

### PERIMETER STEAL

Once players begin to learn and execute the correct denial positioning and angles, up the line toward the basketball, the ability to steal the basketball becomes more prevalent. There are many positives that can come with this, along with a possible tendency to get out of position going for a steal. For example, if a player is denying a perimeter player, with the right hand leading. The player may see the pass being thrown to their player, causing them to react if in reach of the pass. If the player maintains a disciplined position and reaches with the correct hand, in this case, the right hand, even if they do not steal the basketball, the defensive player will remain in position to become an immediate on-ball defender. However, if a player reaches with the incorrect hand, or left in this case, and the player does not secure the steal, the result is an out of position defender (back facing the offensive player) that will not be able to defend a live dribble. Behind the defender, the team will likely face a 5 on 4 situation until that defender can recover. Depending on the team defense strategies for that game or player, this could provide a significant disadvantage for the team. This is a subtle detail that can make a big difference in a game, allowing a denial defender to stay in the play should the basketball not get stolen.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Disciplined in the stance (right hand starts forward, reach with right hand).
- Stay in the play.
- Reminder: if steal is not completed, offensive player is a live ball-handler.
- Tip basketball with hand (if complete catch cannot occur), then go get.



## SKILL 3

### BUMPING CUTTERS FROM DENIAL

One offensive maneuver that can be troublesome to defend without proper defensive technique is cutting to the basket, especially face cutting the defensive player. This type of cut occurs often after a pass is made, meaning the defender will need to move from on-ball

defense, quickly into denial in order to bump the cutter.

Teaching the technique in a progression can be helpful for the player to pick up the skill quickly. To begin, have the defender play on-ball defense on a wing offensive player. If on the right wing, the right foot should be high, forcing to the right baseline. If the pass is made from the wing to the top of the key, the defender should immediately jump up the line to establish a denial position, with the right hand in the passing lane. Once this positioning is established, have the offensive player take one to two steps toward the pass, simulating an attempted face cut toward the basket. The defender in denial will maintain the same positioning as the denial with the back to the offensive player, using the bottom arm, in this case the left, to bump the cutter with the arm bar on the offensive players bottom side. If the player is bumped on the high side, it will open the offensive player up for a backdoor cut. Bumping on the low side will deter this cut and influence a high cut, rather than a backdoor. Once the defender bumps the cutter, the offensive player can retreat to the wing starting the skill over. Progressing in the skill, the defender will bump the cutter, and then stay with the offensive player through the cut. If the cut ends up toward the basket, the player will flip the head, switching the hand used for denial, maintaining the proper denial positioning through the cut. If the cut ends up high, maintain the proper denial originally established, up the line toward the basketball. Once the skill is learned, play live defense against a live offensive player, with the offensive player trying to successfully complete a face cut. Once this is learned, progress the player to a pass from the wing to the baseline, followed by an attempted face cut. This is more challenging because of the on-ball positioning on the top foot of the offensive player. It is critical the defensive player move on the flight of the pass so the denial position is established on the catch, making the bump realistic.

These skills can be learned through breakdown drills, in shell type drills and progress to live play. The key is jumping to the basketball, transitioning from on-ball defense to denial defense as quickly as possible.

Once the skill is learned as described above, progress the players to learn how to bump a cutter from a help side position. This can be more challenging, as many defenders tend to lose sight of the offensive player while in help side. If the basketball is on the left wing and the defender in help side is defending the offensive player on the right wing, the defender should be established in a help side position



at mid-line. Once the offensive player attempts to make a cut, the right foot should immediately move to a high position, simulating a denial position. Again, the bump should occur with the low arm on the low hip of the offensive player. The principles of the bump described above apply. Once the perimeter bump is learned, progress to bumping from the post position using the same principles.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Immediately jump toward basketball on flight of pass.
- Bump with bottom side arm bar on bottom hip of offensive player.
- No face cuts.
- After bump continue into proper defensive positioning.



## SKILL 4

### POST DENIAL

Denying the post can be more complicated than perimeter denial, depending on where the basketball is located and where it is headed. Below are several passing options and the resultant steps for proper denial. These skills should be drilled through breakdowns, 2on2/3on3/4on4 scenarios and live play.

For purposes of explanation, the post play described will occur on the right block.

**TOP OF KEY TO WING:** with the basketball at the top of the key, post denial is similar to perimeter denial in that the post can take a step up the line toward the basketball making the floor look small to the offensive team. The space also allows the defensive player to make future movements more freely than if tangled up with an offensive player attempting to establish positioning. Once the basketball moves to the right wing, on the flight of the basketball, the defender will immediately straddle the offensive players top foot, establishing a denial position with the right foot and arm high, deterring an immediate post entry pass. At this time, it is appropriate to establish contact in the post. As much as possible, it is best to deny with the offensive player in the block area and maintain a low position for the offense if possible. If the defensive player finds they are pushed out too far, a denial position will not benefit the team defense, as the

entry pass on a lob or a seal is likely to occur. In this situation, if significantly pushed out, let go of positioning and play behind, continuing to push the offensive player out toward the perimeter.

**WING TO BASELINE/BASELINE TO WING – X-STEP:** from a proper denial position with the basketball on the wing, many coaches prefer an x-step on the flight from wing to baseline. This strategy allows the defender to see the basketball the entire time, while maintaining contact with the offensive player. Once the basketball is passed from wing to baseline, the defender will take the bottom foot, left in this situation, and move it high, with the right foot following behind to establish a denial position on the low side of the offensive player. If there were paint on the feet, the motion of the steps would make an “X,” hence the name of the skill. Once the player picks up the skill, work on speed and efficiency along with providing different types of physicality looks from an offensive player. For a pass from baseline to wing, reverse the steps. This type of footwork can nicely coincide with the perimeter defenders opening up on a backdoor cut, if the goal is to keep principles and philosophy similar from position to position for the team defensive strategies.

**WING TO BASELINE/BASELINE TO WING – BEAR HUG:** from a proper denial position with the basketball on the wing, many coaches prefer a bear hug on the flight from wing to baseline. This strategy allows the defender to maintain contact with the offensive player the entire time, while allowing the defender a possibility of holding a low position for the offensive player. Once the basketball is passed from wing to baseline, the defender will maintain contact and face the offensive player through the entire movement. Ideally, the player will require two defensive slides with the right foot leading to get from high side to low side denial position switching arms and flipping the head halfway through finding the basketball. Once the player picks up the skill, work on speed and efficiency along with providing different types of physicality looks from an offensive player. For a pass from baseline to wing, reverse the steps. This type of footwork can nicely coincide with the perimeter defenders flipping the head on a backdoor cut, if the goal is to keep principles and philosophy similar from position to position for the team defensive strategies.

**BASELINE TO TOP OF KEY:** with the basketball on the baseline the defender will be playing low side denial defense. If the basketball is skipped to the top of the key, the defender will immediately move



low side of the offensive player to establish a denial position up the line toward the basketball. The reason for moving on the low side is to prevent any type of seal the offensive player would be able to establish if the movements were to be on the high side. In order to travel low side of the offensive player, the defender will take the high foot and x step through toward the middle with the low foot following to become the high foot. Once the defender has successfully maneuvered around the offensive player, move up the line into proper denial positioning with the basketball located at the top of the key.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Up the line if basketball is at top of key.
- Proper footwork.
- Be in position on the catch – urgent movements.
- Proper side based on location of basketball.
- Proper hand high, head on proper shoulder.
- Keep offensive player low – if get pushed out move to behind.



## SKILL 5

### TRANSITIONING: DENIAL/HELP-SIDE

As with all defense, the importance of quick and efficient transitions from one position to the next is critical for personal and team success on the defensive end. For explanation purposes, the defensive player will be defending the offensive player on the right wing.

**FROM HELP SIDE TO DENIAL:** with the basketball on the left wing the defender will be in a help side position at mid-line. It is important to close the triangle while in help side so the distance to travel to the defenders player will be shorter. As the basketball is passed from the wing to the top of the key, the defender will throw the right arm and foot to create momentum in the direction up the line toward the basketball, rather than toward the offensive player. Up the line is a shorter distance, allowing the defender to be in position more quickly while also being in position to help on any dribble penetration. On the catch, the defender should be in proper denial position.

**FROM DENIAL TO HELP SIDE:** with the basketball at the top of the key the defender will be in proper denial defense. It is important to be up the line in order to arrive in proper help side more quickly. As the basketball is passed to the opposite wing, the defender will swing the

right arm and foot, creating momentum toward mid-line. Maintain a closed triangle position in help side in order to efficiently rotate to the next position required. The goal is to be in position on the catch.

Both of these transitions can be drilled through two-on-two breakdown, shell defense breakdowns and reinforced through live five-on-five play.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Efficient first steps, no negative steps.
- Throw arm and foot to create momentum.
- Stay low through movements.
- Transition to appropriate position location (up the line or closed triangle).





# ADVANCED LEVEL REBOUNDING

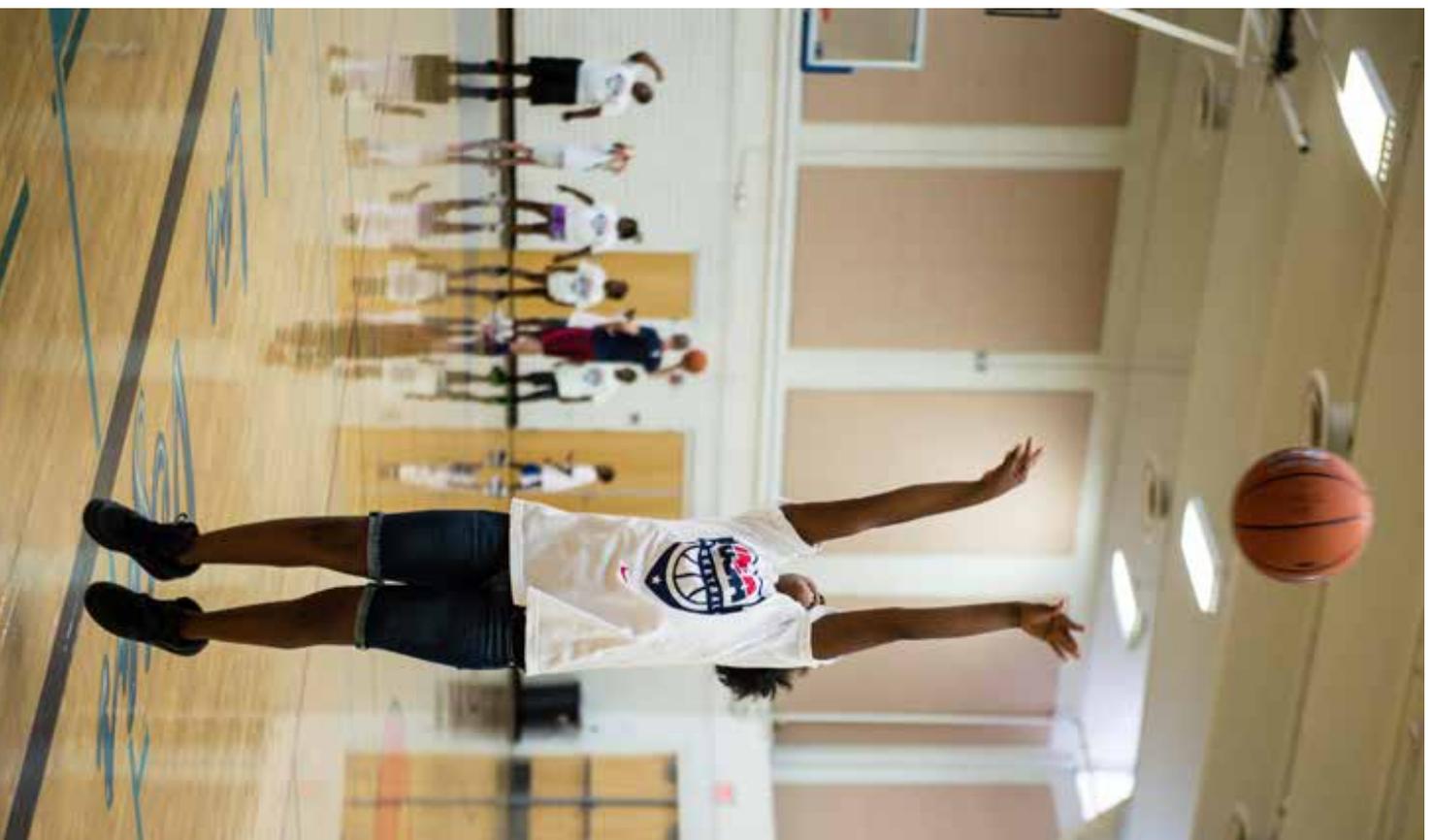
## OFFENSIVE REBOUNDING

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *Rebounding - both offensive and defensive - is a fundamental skill that should be taught. Possession of the basketball comes more often from missed shots than any other way. More than any other basic basketball skill, the success of offensive rebounding relies largely on players' desire and courage. In this level, it is important to introduce and teach understanding of the angles of missed shots. The offensive rebounder must be careful of charging over the top of the defensive man and must be especially careful about keeping the hands at shoulder height. Using the body with the hands up is not observed or called to the extent that it is when the hands are used.*

### SKILL 1

#### UNDERSTANDING ANGLES OF THE REBOUND

When preparing to rebound a basketball, the offensive player should be in the ready position with hands above the shoulder and knees slightly bent so that he can achieve maximum height on the jump to go after the basketball. For rebounding shots from the side, offensive players should be aware the basketball is likely to rebound to the opposite side of the basket. Players should not watch the basketball in flight but they should look for an opening on the opposite side so that they can position themselves for the rebound. Offensive rebounding for shots taken from the front will usually rebound straight out from the rim. The same tactics to get the offensive rebound from a side shot will be used to get the rebound from the front.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Knees bent for maximum height on jump.
- Know where the shot was taken on the court.
- Hands above the shoulders.
- Move to the correct angle for a rebound.
- Work to time your jump as the basketball comes off the rim.



## SKILL 2

### MOVEMENT FOR OFFENSIVE REBOUNDS

Movement for offensive rebounds is a key to getting the basketball from missed shots. The offensive player can get into offensive rebound position by taking a V cut - which has been discussed earlier – toward the baseline in order to get inside position on the defender. The player can also use a pivot – also discussed earlier – to make a spin move or a swim move to go around the defender for an offensive rebound. A step through move which is basically a crossover move to the side of the defensive rebounder is another method to get around the defender for an offensive rebound. The key for any offensive rebounder is to keep moving which will make it much more difficult for the defender to screen out his offensive player.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Movement as the shot is taken is a key to rebounding.
- Make a v-cut toward the baseline in order to get inside position on the defender.
- A swim move is made with the inside arm moving over the top of the defender to get inside position.
- When contact is made by the defender to screen out the offensive player a 360-degree pivot can be done to gain an advantage.



## DEFENSIVE REBOUNDING



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *General Overview: In this level, the defender continues to make progress with the box out position. As players get stronger, it is important for the defensive rebounder to perform three main areas of defensive rebounding to aid them in boxing out the offensive player. First, get the players to assume every shot will be missed and aggressively rebound their area. The players need to understand that repeated efforts are extremely important to obtain possession. Secondly, getting players to automatically bring their hands to shoulder height with the fingers pointed to the ceiling and palms facing the basket as soon as the shot is attempted. Thirdly, getting the defensive players to play the basketball rather than the opponent when the shot is attempted is crucial to defensive rebounding. The main concentration should be on getting the rebound rather than keeping our opponent from getting it. This is considered positive rebounding rather than negative rebounding.*

## SKILL 1

### FACE-TO-FACE DEFENSIVE REBOUNDING

There are times when the defense will play against a very skilled and aggressive offensive rebounder. The traditional box out method may not work against this type of offensive rebounder. If this is the case, we are not concerned so much with the defender getting the rebound as we are with the offensive player not being able to get to the missed shot. A Dennis Rodman type of offensive rebounder needs more than a box out to keep them from getting the offensive rebound. A face to face defensive box out may be used on this type of rebounder. As the shot goes up, the defender does not pivot put will face the offensive player at all times during the flight of the basketball to keep him from getting the rebound. The defender does not watch the flight of the basketball but only the offensive player he is face guarding to keep him from getting the basketball.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- The first movement is to see where your offensive player is on the court.
- Instead of making a pivot, face guard your opponent as if you were playing defense on him.
- Do not let your opponent get to the missed shot.
- Stay low in basketball position.



### SKILL 2

## HELP-SIDE BLOCK OUTS

Help side block outs are more difficult to execute unless the defensive rebounder has great awareness about where the shot is taken and the location of his opponent. If you are a help side defender and the basketball is shot by someone other than the player you are guarding chances are you are positioned in the lane area. The first movement is to attack your opponent outside the lane area. If the shot is taken from the 3-point line, the rebound will likely be long on the opposite side of where the shot was taken. This means the defender goes outside the lane to make contact with a pivot to keep your offensive player from getting the rebound.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Be aware of where your man is when the shot goes up.
- If you are a weakside defender in the lane you must step outside the lane to make contact with your offensive player.
- Know where the shot was taken which will give you an idea of where to go for rebounding the missed shot.
- Must stay in great basketball position as you go meet your offensive player to box him out.



### SKILL 3

## BLOCKING OUT IN ROTATION

There are situations in games where the defensive players must rotate to stop an offensive player from driving to the basket, to double team or to pick up a player that has beat his defender off the dribble.

When this type of rotation occurs, the defenders must rotate to the basketball which may cause the defenders to box out someone other than the player they were originally guarding. For an example, the basketball is driven to the baseline and the helpside wing must move off his man to stop the driver. In a normal defensive rotation, the guard would need to drop into the lane area and cover the helper's man. By doing so, this guard could be blocking out a player stronger and bigger.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Be aware of the player who needs to be blocked out as the defensive rotation takes place.
- Stay low as you will probably be blocking out a bigger opponent in the rotation.
- Make contact outside the lane if possible.
- After the pivot is made, be aggressive in going for the missed shot with the hands above the shoulders.



### SKILL 4

## DISADVANTAGE BLOCKING OUT

At the advanced level, disadvantage block out needs to be addressed as this happens at times during the game. Disadvantage block out occurs when there is more offensive players to box out than just the player that you were guarding. This may happen due to scramble defense, defensive rotations, double teams or missed defensive assignments. Knowing your opponent is crucial in this case as well – who is the best rebounder and the angle the shot may come off the rim. If the defender is in a disadvantage situation, block out the offensive player closest to where the basketball may come off the rim on a miss. At the very least, make sure to block out one offensive players when at a disadvantage.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Be aware of where the shot is taken.
- Box out the offensive player where the basketball will most likely be missed.
- Box out one of the offensive players for sure.
- Stay low and go get the basketball off the miss after the box out.





# ADVANCED LEVEL SCREENING

## OFFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Screening for the Advanced Level expands to setting screens on the basketball as well as off the basketball. The main purpose of the screen is to get a teammate open for a shot or at very least a pass. A screen also will make the defenders make a decision on how to defend the pick and roll and the off-ball screen. *By creating indecision, the offensive players can take advantage of the defenders to score.*

### SKILL 1

#### SETTING AND USING OFF-BALL SCREENS BASED ON THE DEFENSE

The setting and using of screens is influenced by the defenders.

- The screener must be alert to where the defenders are located so he can seek out the defender to screen.
- The screener should try to make contact with the defender as the screen is set making it difficult for the defender to get over the screen. Too much room on the screen will allow the defender to get over the top.
- When using the screen the offensive player needs to stay low with the shoulder to hip of the screener.
- Before using the screen the offensive player needs to take a step in the opposite direction that he wants to use the screen.
- Run to set the screen to make it difficult for the defender on the screener to switch or hedge.
- The offensive player using the screen should not watch the basketball but keep an eye on the defender which will determine the cut.





- When using the screen, the offensive player will curl cut if the defender tries to go over the top of the screen. The screener will “pop” back to the basketball.
- A screen will be rejected which will result in a basket cut if the defender will not allow the curl cut.
- The straight cut will occur when the screen is set for the offensive player to cut to the wing to receive a pass. Most often occurs as a down screen.
- A flare cut is completed if the defender is on the ball-side of the screen which will allow the offensive player to “flare” out and not use the screen.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Offensive player must not watch the basketball but watch his defender so the proper cut is made off the screen.
- Stay low coming off the screen – shoulder to hip.
- Have hands ready to catch the pass when cutting off the screen.
- The screener must “hunt” the defender to screen and make contact with the defender.



### SKILL 2

## TECHNIQUES OF USING SCREENS

Screens on the basketball will take a much different look than off-ball screens for both the screener and the ball-handler.

- The screener should run to set the screen on the basketball so his defender has a difficult time to hedge or double team on the screen.
- Set a screen with the knees slightly bent, feet wider than the shoulders, elbows inside the body and head and chin up.
- The screener needs to make contact with the defender guarding the basketball. This will allow the dribbler to run his defender into the screen with more ease and create indecision as to how to guard the screen and roll.
- The dribbler should stay low as he dribbles off the screen with his shoulder at the hip of the screener. This will help in rising into his shot if open off the screen.

- The head and eyes should be looking at the net in order to see any cutters open as well as the screener rolling to the basket.
- The dribbler will take two dribbles after using the screen. This allows good part of the defenders.
- The dribbler will try to get his shoulders turned to face the basket so he is squared away for a shot or a pass to the screener.
- As soon as the dribbler clears the screener, the screener will pivot to see the dribbler and roll to the basket looking for a pass.
- Most of the time the bounce pass will be the choice for the dribbler to get the basketball to the screener.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Dribbler takes two dribbles past the screener for proper spacing.
- Head and shoulders must be turned to the basket.
- The dribbler should look to make a bounce pass to the screener on the roll.
- The dribbler must stay low, shoulder to hip.



### SKILL 3

## SPACING OF PLAYERS

The spacing of the players not involved in the screen is crucial to good team offense. The spacing creates open shots or drives to the basket.

- The most important concept about spacing is that the players should be 12-15 feet apart to alleviate double teams and defensive help.
- As the dribbler comes off the screen the player closest to the dribbler must create space so his man goes to help on the dribbler, he is open for a shot.
- It is best to have one offensive player in each corner properly spaced from the basketball – again, to take away the possibilities of a double team.
- The dribbler must know where the players are located on the court as he drives off the screen.

- If a player makes a cut he must clear out quickly for the screener on the roll to the basket
- If the dribbler drives to the baseline, two places must be occupied for a possible pass – in the middle of the lane and the opposite baseline.
- A reminder for players – spacing is an offense.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- All players must be 12-15 feet from the screener and dribbler.
- If your defender goes to help on the dribbler get your feet ready to catch the basketball and shoot.
- On-ball screens will create help from defenders not guarding the basketball or the screener, so the offensive players must have an awareness of what his defender may do.
- Offensive players should be on each baseline to stretch the defense.

## DEFENDING SCREENS

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *Defending screens creates indecision for the defenders as there are several ways to defend the screen depending on personnel. The burden of responsibility in defending the various types of screens is upon the man guarding the screener. However, every defender must be aware for the possibility of a screen being used against him whenever the man he is guarding is in a position where a screen might make him a scoring threat.*

### SKILL 1

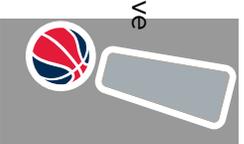
## DEFENDING OFF-BALL SCREENS

The key term for defending off-ball screens is awareness. The defender should be aware of the possibility that he could be screened.



- The man guarding the screener must always clearly warn a teammate of a potential screen
- The defender that is in a vulnerable position to a screen should always feel with one hand toward the direction from which a screener is most likely to come.
- The defenders must always be in help-side position so that the screen cannot be easily made on the defender.
- An option is for the defender to go under the screen. In this case, the defender on the screener must step back to create a window or gap for the defender being screened to go through. The defender should not go under both the screener and his teammate who is guarding the screener.
- The defender may chase the offensive player around the screen. When this happens the defender on the screener must step up to take away the curl cut.
- A switch may take place between the two defenders – the one guarding the screener and the one guarding the player using the screen. Both players will need to communicate the switch with the first player that sees the necessity of the switch to call it loudly and clearly.
- The defender guarding the screen may also bump the screener so the defender on the offensive player will go under both the screener and the defender. The bump takes place so the screener cannot roll to get the basketball.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- If the defenders are in proper help-side defensive position this makes the screen much more difficult to execute.
- Communication is the key for both the defenders. The defender on the screener must let his teammate know that a screen may occur.
- The defender must be aware of the possibility that he could be screened especially if his offensive player goes away from the basketball.
- The defenders need to stay in a basketball position to be ready to move quickly to avoid the screen.

## DEFENDING ON-BALL SCREENS

When defending an on-ball screen, communication by the defender guarding the screener should let his teammate know of the screen approaching. The defender guarding the basketball then can have an awareness where the screen is coming from and can make adjustments to guard the basketball.

- A switch with the defenders is one method to defend the on-ball screen. The defender on the screener will call out screen and communicate the switch. The switch should take place as the dribbler comes off the screen so the dribbler cannot turn the corner to the basket. The defender that switches to the screener should try to get on the basketball-side of the screener to defend a pass.
- The defender guarding the screener may also step back to create a gap or a window for the defender on the basketball to go through under the screener. The defender on the dribbler will defend him as he goes through the gap or window.
- The on-ball defender at times may need to get over the top to defend the dribbler if he is a good shooter. The defender will get the lead foot on top of the screener and bring his rear in so the defender can slip by the screener to stay with the dribbler. The defender on the screener can help this by stepping up to show himself to the dribbler.
- A trap may occur as the dribbler uses the screen by the two defenders. The defender on the screener will quickly show himself to the dribbler, and then form a trap with the dribbler's defender. Both defenders must get the hands up and move the feet to set a good trap.
- One way to slow the dribbler or keep him from getting to the basket is to hedge. A hedge is stepping up from behind the screen to show himself to the dribbler. This will not allow the dribbler to turn the corner to the basket. As the hedge occurs the defender on the dribbler will chase the dribbler and continue to guard him. The hedge defender will then go back to cover the screener.

- The final method to guard the screen and roll is to push up the screener by the defender. In this case, the defender on the dribbler goes under both the screener and the defender to meet the dribbler after he uses the screen. The defender on the screener must keep his hands high to discourage a shot by the dribbler from behind the screen.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- The defender on the screener must communicate to teammates that a screen is possible.
- When a switch occurs, the defenders must stay with the offensive players until they have an opportunity to switch back to original players.
- On a hedge, the defender on the screener should “show his number” to the dribbler and then slide back on the screener after his teammate catches up to the dribbler.
- The defenders not guarding the screener or the dribbler must be aware of the screen and be in help position to create great team defense.
- The defenders must not have indecision as to how to cover the screener and the dribbler.





# ADVANCED LEVEL

## SHOOTING



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *Shooting is a necessary fundamental to learn in the game of basketball. This level will continue to emphasize the correct skills and mechanics necessary for a solid fundamental shot, which is important to developing players' shooting consistency.*

### SKILL 1

#### LAYUPS: FINGER ROLL

Building off of the overhand layups outlined in the Foundational Level, the next progression is a finger roll, or underhand layup. This type of layup allows players to extend beyond or under a defensive player's reach. It also offers a quicker and softer release, which increases the potential for the basketball to spin off of the backboard more easily. It helps players be more creative in the lane with different types of finishes.

- To begin learning the underhand layup, the mechanics and footwork remain the same as an overhand layup; the difference is how the basketball comes off of the hand.
- The player will extend upward with the basketball in both hands, with the shooting hand underneath the basketball.
- As the player extends the arm, the basketball will roll off of the fingertips, with the palm of the hand remaining upward and the fingers extending toward the square on the backboard.
- Much like a follow-through for a jump shot, the basketball will last touch the middle finger on its way to the basket.
- The player will develop a feel for how the basketball comes off of the hand and what type of spin the backboard requires, depending on the angle of the layup being shot. Once the player gets comfortable with the strong side (shooting hand), move to the weak side.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Same footwork and mechanics as overhand layup.
- Extend shooting arm (do not short arm).
- Follow-through with palm facing upward.
- Learn needed spin on backboard based on angle of layup.



## SKILL 2

### LAYUPS: REVERSE LAYUP

A reverse layup is similar to the underhand layup discussed above. The difference is the angle of the approach from underneath the rim. Typically, this type of layup is used when a defender is coming from behind. This type of layup allows the offensive player to cut the defensive player off, extend beyond the defense while using the rim as a means of protection.

- There are two ways to complete a reverse layup: one with the back facing the middle of the court, and the second with the back facing the baseline.
- The preferred method is with the back facing the middle of the court, as this allows the offensive player to protect the basketball with the body. Regardless, it is best to learn both methods to be able to apply either based on a game situation.
- The footwork of a reverse layup is the same, as far as two steps are taken prior to the shot.
- Both the arm and knee on the shooting side of the body will rise at the same time.
- The shot itself will most likely be shot underhand, with the proper spin placed on the basketball so that it spins back toward the rim once it hits the backboard. The spin is critical from this angle to be able to make the layup.
- If the player's back remains facing toward the middle of the floor, the player should use this positioning to protect the basketball and create space. This will help get the layup off by extending the arms outward and away from the body.
- If the back is facing the baseline, the principles remain the same; the difference is the spin on the basketball. In this instance, the player will need to put the appropriate spin on the basketball such that it bounces back toward the rim.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Proper footwork and mechanics of a layup.
- Underhand layup.
- Develop understanding of appropriate spin direction.
- Extend arm fully.
- Use body when able.



### DRILL 1: LAYUPS; THREE-WAY MIKAN

The Mikan drill, named after hall of famer George Mikan, is a drill that works on the footwork and different types of finishes under the basket. The drill involves continuous, alternating shots on each side of the rim. To define when the drill is finished, many coaches do one of the following:

- Put a time limit on the drill.
- Limit the number of shots players can take.
- Provide a target number of made shots for each player to reach.

The different types of finishes include:

- Overhand layup (tight, from shoulder); back facing middle of court.
- Overhead layup (out wide, away from shoulder; similar to baby hook); back facing middle of court.
- Underhand layup (out wide, away from shoulder); back facing baseline.

The footwork remains the same with the knee and shooting hand rising simultaneously.

- As the player learns the continuous footwork, the key to increasing speed is to get the feet moving while the basketball is coming through the net.
- If the feet are already moving once the basketball is caught through the net, the next layup can be shot immediately.
- Also, it is important to keep the basketball high through the entire drill, never bringing it down. This helps to increase speed and to create a habit of keeping the basketball high on layups.

- The player can be challenged within the confines of this drill by increasing goals for number of made shots in a certain amount of time based on the player's ability and the type of finish. It is important the player works to master all types of finishes because any one of them may be needed during the course of a game.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Proper, quick, efficient footwork.
- Jump up, not out; control momentum and body.
- Move while basketball is in air for speed.
- Correct type of finish with proper spin.
- Extended arm.
- Finish off of backboard.



### SKILL 3

## LAYUPS: FINISHING WITH CONTACT

During the course of a game, the likelihood of shooting an uncontested layup decreases as the level of play increases. Therefore, it is imperative to learn how to finish layups while receiving contact from a defender.

- One of the safest and easiest ways to begin learning this is to have a coach hold a blocking pad to apply the contact. Be careful to apply the contact on the shoulders and body rather than the knee area or the head area.
- Many players are visual learners, making the use of lines painted on the basketball floor invaluable. With this thought in mind, begin teaching players how to use their body against contact by using the free throw lane.
- Start the player at the elbow. Have the player take two dribbles down the lane line toward the rim.
- Once the player gets to the block, the player will change direction and move directly toward the rim instead of toward the baseline. This will create a 90° angle.
- At the moment the player changes directions, the player will plant the outside foot and push off of that foot toward the rim, allowing the direction change off of two feet.
- The shoulders should stay parallel to the baseline, allowing the player to lead with the shoulder so the body is protecting the basketball from the defender.



- The leading shoulder will absorb the contact, which leaves the basketball on the outside shoulder, and creates space to execute the overhand layup.
- During a game, if a defender takes the shooter's inside hand away, ideally the shooting player will still be able to finish the layup using the outside hand. This is how many players are able to finish the layup while being fouled, sending them to the free throw line.
- Develop the ability to finish on both sides of the court while absorbing contact.
- Mix up the timing of when the player experiences the contact and from which angle, again, being careful to stay away from the head and knee areas. Also challenge the player to finish from different angles using different types of finishes.
- Ideally, a player will develop a love for contact and an ability to finish regardless of whether foul calls are made.
- It is important for the player to finish through, but not anticipate the contact. Being able to maintain momentum, body control, and proper footwork will help a player develop in this area.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- A coach should hold the pad for safety.
- Use body to absorb contact, keep basketball away.
- Finish on outside of body; extend arm.
- Take off of two feet; change direction to absorb contact.
- Don't anticipate contact; be able to finish if not hit.
- Embrace contact.



### SKILL 4

## SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE: HOP

The hop can be more challenging for players than a one-two step pattern due to the difficulty in controlling momentum. However, if learned and implemented properly, the footwork can allow a player to get a shot off more quickly by using the hop.

- For ease of learning, begin with the player at the top of the key. Take one dribble toward the elbow of the shooting hand, end on a subtle two-foot hop, landing square to the rim.

- From this squared, low positioning, rise up tall into the shot as outlined throughout previous levels.
- It is critical that the player remain low through the hop, and be ready to rise directly up immediately so there is not any wasted or negative motion to decrease strength.
- It is also important to control the momentum of the movement, landing at or just in front of where the player took off for the shot.
- The player should not fade to either side or fade backward. This will take strength and accuracy away from the shooter.
- Once the player is comfortable with the footwork dribbling toward the shooting hand, introduce the weak hand. Again, the player will need to get the basketball from the weak hand to the shooting hand without a crossover dribble.
- A hard, powerful dribble right before the basketball is picked up will help transfer the basketball from the weak hand to the shooting hand, quickly through the air close to the body. This transfer may need to be practiced before adding the footwork, and then put the remaining concepts together.
- To continue challenging the player, have the player penetrate from more difficult angles, requiring a concentrated square up to the rim. Vary distances and number of dribbles used. Be creative in developing this skill once the player becomes comfortable.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Square to rim.
- Control momentum.
- Get basketball from dribble to shooting hand quickly and efficiently.
- Land hop positioned low and ready to rise.
- Reinforce proper shooting mechanics from start to finish.



## SKILL 5

### SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE: ONE-TWO STEP PATTERN (HALF COURT VS OPEN FLOOR)

Once the skills are developed for shooting a jump shot off of the inside foot or one-two step pattern, it is important to understand the difference between using this skill in the open floor, like in transition,

as opposed to in the half court when players are being heavily pressured by the defense. How the skill is used in these situations varies greatly, and thus should be practiced differently.

## OPEN COURT

- When in an open court situation, the player will most likely be utilizing a speed dribble, or sprinting the wing to receive a pass in transition, for example. The speed with which the player will be approaching the jump shot off the dribble is fast in this environment.
- When in this situation, the player will need to corral the energy moving forward and transition it to an upward motion to elevate into the jump shot. This momentum change is drastic and should be drilled at full speed to simulate game speed.
- The placement of the basketball does not necessarily have to be as precise since the player is in the open court, but it certainly should be under control and moved quickly from the dribble to the shooting hand. Be quick with the feet, but not quick with the shot. Encourage players to finish tall.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Practice at full, game like speed.
- Control speed/momentum of movement.
- Hard dribble before picking up: get basketball from dribble to shooting hand quickly.
- Quick with feet, not with shot.
- Finish tall.
- Reinforce proper shooting mechanics from start to finish.



## HALF COURT

- When being pressured in the half court, the one-two step into a jump shot is a very different approach. The important concept is that offensive players will need to force defensive players onto their heels, allowing for an opening to take a jump shot with an immediate stop and pull up.
- The offensive player will force this type of reaction from a defensive player with a strong, quick, convincing dribble (or two) at the rim, getting the defensive player to react to this urgent penetration with a retreat, drop step, or slide.



- Once this has occurred, the offensive player has the advantage if the rest of the jump shot is completed correctly. In addition to this urgent dribble, the offensive player will want to be in a lower position than in the open court, almost placing the inside shoulder into the belly of the offensive player. (Please note this is for visual purposes only; players should not shoulder defenders.)
- At this point in time, with the natural inside foot (one-two step pattern) footwear, a quick rise and the offensive player will be able to get the jump shot off before the defensive player can recover.
- The footwear has to be natural and quick. The basketball will need to transfer from the outside of the body on the dribble quickly and efficiently to the shooting pocket and immediately rise up into the shot, finishing tall.
- Work on different angles and number of dribbles against various types of defenders to help the player develop an understanding of how to use the dribble when being pressured to create an opening for a jump shot.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Urgent dribble to rim; make it believable.
- Low forceful body movements on penetration.
- Force defender to retreat.
- Natural/quick/efficient inside foot (quick feet, not quick shot).
- Protect basketball on outside of body.
- Get basketball from dribble to shooting hand quickly/efficiently.
- Rise up on a dime.
- Control momentum.
- Reinforce proper shooting mechanics from start to finish.



## SKILL 6

### PERIMETER: THREE-POINT SHOOTING

In addition to developing an attacking game off the dribble as a perimeter player, it is important to begin working on extending consistency from the three-point line in order to create a well-rounded offensive threat that is challenging to defend. As the player begins working on extending range, it is important not to jeopardize proper shooting mechanics just to shoot further back. With the use of the

legs in conjunction with the upper body, it is possible to extend range without altering mechanics, especially at this level.

- As alluded to above, the important concept when moving further back to shoot is using the legs more in the shot. If there was a video taken of the player shooting from both the free-throw line and from behind the three-point line, the only difference that should be seen is that the legs will be utilized more from behind the three-point line. Because of the importance of the legs, it is critical to receive the basketball low and ready to rise into the shot immediately. Being squared up and having the entire body working together to provide the needed strength for a three-point shot is critical.
- It is best to begin learning the skill of the three-point shot by remaining stationary. Begin to develop the skill without having to deal with momentum and movement.
- Once this becomes comfortable from all areas on the floor, begin working on catching the basketball off of a pass, while moving into the three-point shot.
- It is best to begin with a one-two step before moving to a hop, due to ease of controlling the movement.
- Move on to shooting three-point shots off of the dribble, beginning with a one-two step, then moving to a hop.
- It is also worth noting that a true three-point shooter should also work on consistency and range beyond the actual three-point line painted on the floor. Extend the range beyond so that if the player catches the basketball one step off of the three point line in a game, there is no thought or a need to take one dribble to get the shot off.
- Extending beyond the three-point line will allow for more flexibility in a fluid game situation.
- Lastly, as a player improves with all of the above concepts, it is also important as a coach to have the player to practice shooting under duress. Use of a broom to contest and distract the shooter can help create a sense of extraordinary focus. Do not block the shot, but use the broom to create a more challenging look than what the player will see in a game.
- Continue to challenge the player to make more shots each time. Be creative with how these challenges are placed on the player. Vary distance, how the pass is received, types of cuts and, angles, etc.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Do not jeopardize proper shooting mechanics just to move back.
- Use of legs.
- Begin stationary, then off pass, then off dribble.
- Extend consistency in range beyond three-point line.
- Contest shots as players improve.



## SKILL 7

### PERIMETER: SHOOTING OFF OF SCREENS

Anytime a player is using a screen, they should be thinking and preparing for a scoring opportunity upon receipt of the basketball. The player should set the defender up and use the screen as discussed in the Screening section.

- At the point of the screen, the player should note where the defender is in order to understand the proper cut and footwork needed to execute a shot. Once the cut is determined, the preparation leading up to the shot is critical for a shooter.
- An explosive cut out of the screen is important, but so is the angle with which it is executed. This allows for the spacing to execute a shot.
- As the player is approaching the basketball, step into the path of a potential defender, cutting them off. Many times, use a one-two step pattern, or inside foot, to create space and momentum toward the rim in order to shoot a strong, balanced shot.
- In addition to taking the proper angle and using efficient footwork, it is critical to communicate with the passer verbally and physically. Players may use a hand target to indicate where they desire to receive the basketball.
- With talented defenders, this can mean the difference between getting a shot off or not. As the basketball is delivered, efficient and quick footwork will be important to lead directly into the jump shot.
- It is important to have players practice this at full speed. Remind them to pay attention to the following details, especially: how the screen is being used, which cut to use based on the defender's position, the communication made with the passer, and the proper footwork leading into the shot off of the pass.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- At point of screen, read cut that should be made based on defense.
- Communicate with passer.
- Prepare on approach with target and proper angle and footwork.
- Rise immediately into jump shot.
- Reinforce all shooting mechanics outlined previously.
- Game speed cuts, approach and shot.



### DRILL 1: PERIMETER; SHOOTING OFF OF FLARE SCREENS

The footwork and approach off of a flare screen is much different than the cuts outlined above.

- As the shooter approaches the screener, the defender jumps the screen or slides underneath in anticipation of a straight cut. The shooter will immediately change directions, in many cases back to where they came from or at a slightly different angle.
- Typically at this point, the momentum of the shooter is heading in the complete opposite direction of the basket, making this type of cut one of the most difficult for a shooter to be consistent with.
- The player needs to understand on a flare that the momentum is headed in the opposite direction, making the catch and the footwork imperative.
- As the basketball is received, players will need to gather their feet underneath them, stopping the fading motion, and redirecting the momentum toward the rim.
- It is easiest to learn by using a one-two step to maintain a low position as the basketball is received. In this case, it can take longer to execute a shot using a one-two step because of the awkward angle of a flare. This makes a hop a good option, but again, the importance of directing the momentum positively toward the rim needs to be developed.
- Develop this at game speed and from various angles and directions on the floor.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- At point of screen, read cut that should be made based on defender.
- Communicate with passer.
- Provide target for passer to hit.
- Redirect momentum toward rim to gain strength to complete shot.
- Learn one-two step and hop; catch low in order to gather properly.
- Reinforce proper shooting mechanics from beginning to end.



## SKILL 8

### POST PLAYERS: SHOOTING OFF A PASS

It is important for a post player to develop a dual threat offensively to make the player more challenging to defend. Common outside shots that post players get in game situations include those from the high post and from the short corner, especially against zone defenses. It is valuable for a post player to learn several different types of footwork to square up with, as outlined below.

#### ONE-TWO STEP/INSIDE FOOT

- Just as with perimeter play, posts can utilize the inside foot or one-two step footwork to square up, allowing all of the strength and momentum of the shot naturally heading toward the rim.
- A post player would execute the inside footwork as outlined above and in previous sections.
- If there are other areas of the floor from which the player will receive the basketball on a regular basis, have the player work in those areas, as well.
- Remind players to use the “ball in the air, feet in the air,” technique to square and rise up to take the shot.
- It is important for the post players to square this way, even if they do not end up taking the shot. Maintaining this proper positioning makes the defense respect the possibility of a shot attempt, thus opening up other areas of the offense. Anytime the basketball is caught, the player should be a threat.

## REVERSE PIVOT

- The use of a reverse pivot (outside foot is pivot foot) on the perimeter can be useful for a post player because it allows enough space to be created to get a jump shot off prior to the defender reacting. This can be especially effective if the post catches and keeps the basketball high while reverse pivoting.
- If this occurs, as soon as the front foot touches the floor and the body is squared, the shot can be taken. These steps can be completed quickly allowing for a jump shot to be taken prior to a defender reacting in many cases.
- It is important to control the momentum of a reverse pivot, as the natural movement would send a player backward. The player will need to gather and redirect momentum straight up or just slightly ahead of where the player initially takes off.
- Game speed repetition in practice will help the player gain confidence in this skill.



#### HOP

- It is less likely that a post player will use a hop on the perimeter, but it is still best to work on all types of footwork to increase the number of options a player will have during a game.
- As the basketball is in the air, the post will receive it on a quick hop, catch it squared, and ready for the immediate shot. Again, controlling momentum from the cut is important to make sure strength is put into the shot.
- Have the post player cut from various angles and speeds, simulating team offensive strategies. Also ensure that the player catches the basketball using the various types of footwork to complete the jump shot.
- Challenge the player to understand when to use each type of footwork, while developing consistency in finishing shots taken.
- Further, challenge the post player to finish jump shots under duress and distractions.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Do work early, “ball in air, feet in air!”
- Understand why to use each type of footwork.
- Catch ready to shoot.
- Control momentum to put all energy into shot.
- Reinforce proper shooting mechanics from start to finish.

### SKILL 9

## POST PLAYERS: MOVE PROGRESSION (DIFFERENT TYPES OF FINISHES)

Post players should learn to love and embrace contact on the low block. It is hard work to gain positioning in order to receive the basketball in the post.

- Instruct post players to position themselves low, but above the block. Once the basketball is received, a post should be able to score based on the positioning of the defender.
- On the catch, the player should quickly work through the three C's: Catch, Chin, Check.
- Catch the basketball with two hands;
- Secure the basketball by bringing it to the chin;
- Check where the defender is located.
- Players must check where the defender is located so they can identify which move may be utilized next.
- The following is a progression of moves and countermoves to have post players work through the low block. It requires the player to develop different types of footwork using both feet. Players are also challenged to finish with both hands using several different types of finishes at the rim.
- As players improve, they should be able to read the defense and make the appropriate moves and countermoves.

Use Front Pivots (drop step baseline, pivots middle):

- a) **DROP STEP**  
D high side, point toe to rim, seal D on rear, up strong both hands off glass.

- b) **TURN AROUND JUMP SHOT/HALF HOOK**  
D high side or behind, fake drop step baseline, pivot away from D, finish high.

- c) **UP & UNDER**  
Same steps as (b), then shot fake middle, D jumps, use body to seal, protect basketball on outside, finish glass.

- d) **MIDDLE DRIVE**  
If D high or behind fake base, if low pivot middle, shot fake, drive across lane, protect basketball with body.

- e) **MIDDLE DRIVE SPIN BACK**  
Same steps as (d), if D cuts off middle drive spin back, whip base leg for seal with live dribble, finish high off glass.

Repeat a-e (using drop step middle, pivots baseline)

Use Reverse Pivots (reverse pivot middle, middle foot pivot foot):

- a) **JUMP SHOT**  
D low side or behind, create space with reverse pivot, basketball high, square shoulders, finish high.

- b) **DRIVE MIDDLE, FINISH OPPOSITE SIDE LAYUP**  
Same (a), shot fake D opens giving middle, protect basketball with body, finish glass.

- c) **DRIVE MIDDLE, SPIN BACK**  
Same (b), D jumps middle drive, whip leg to seal, keep basketball close to body, finish high off glass.

- d) **DRIVE MIDDLE, FAKE SPIN, JUMP SHOT MIDDLE**  
Same (c), D jumps drive then jumps spin, finish high with jump shot.

- e) **DRIVE MIDDLE, SPIN/JUMP SHOT, UP & UNDER**  
Same (d), D jumps shot middle, step through up & under, keep pivot foot down, protect basketball, finish high.



Repeat a-e (using reverse pivot baseline, baseline foot pivot foot)

- As the player begins to develop the footwork and an understanding of when to use the moves, along with the gain confidence in finishing, begin to focus on the details.
- Keep the basketball high through the move, use clean and efficient footwork, seal and use the body, finish soft off of the glass or with touch on the jump shot.
- Any missed shots should be followed up with a made one. All movements should be at game speed with a high amount of repetition.
- Begin to add contact and contest shots as the player improves. Lastly, add a live defender to work on reading the defense, making moves, and finishing against a live body.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Three C's: Catch, Chin, Check.
- Love and embrace contact.
- Catch with low center of gravity.
- Read defense to make move and countermoves.
- Proper footwork without traveling.
- Securing basketball throughout all moves; keep high.
- Finish high.

## SKILL 10

### FREE THROWS: GOLF

In addition to proper shooting mechanics and a consistent routine, it is important to begin developing a higher level of focus and concentration from the free throw line to prepare players for pressure situations. One drill that can help develop some of these components is called "Golf:"

- Players may use this game to create individual challenges against themselves, or they may choose to compete against others.
- A player will shoot 18 shots, just as a game of golf consists of 18 holes. The object of the game is to score the fewest points, preferably under par. Here, "par" is zero.



- Each shot will count in the following manner:
  - Missed Free Throw = +1
  - Made Free Throw (not clean, make contact with rim) = 0
  - Made Free Throw (clean, does not touch rim) = -1
- If a player makes all 18 free throws and never touches the rim with the basketball, the player has achieved the best score, which is (-18). If a player misses every free throw, the score is (+18).
- Remind players to make the game competitive, regardless of whether they are "golfing" alone, or with teammates.
- The scoring of the game helps puts pressure on the shooter, which requires a different level of focus and concentration.
- Coaches can be creative in making the game more challenging, or simulate more game-like scenarios. For example, players could sprint the length of the floor in between free throws to improve conditioning and develop an ability to shoot free throws while tired.
- Coaches could also have players compete in one game of golf that continues throughout an entire practice. Shooting one or two free throws between drills requires stamina and the ability to constantly regain composure, focus, and concentration for a longer period of time.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Provides pressure situation.
- Reinforce focus and concentration.
- Assist with any shooting mechanics issues.



# ADVANCED LEVEL

## TEAM DEFENSIVE CONCEPTS



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Level 3 defensive team concepts take the level 2 team defensive concepts and progress or advance these team concepts. At this level the half court defense adds situations such as on ball screens, post and perimeter defense, run and jump situations, trapping defenses, zone defenses, time and score situations involving team defense, press defenses, defending inbound plays and transition defense with scramble situations.

### SKILL 1

#### ON-BALL SCREENS

- On ball screens create indecision for the defenders. In order to defend on ball screens the defenders must stay in a stance, communicate with each other and have an awareness of where the screen is being set.
- The defender on the dribbler at times will need to get over the top of the screen as he is guarding a very good shooter
- As the screen is being set, the defender guarding the screen must call out “screen left” or “screen right” as the screener approaches the on ball defender to let him know where the screen will be set.
- The defender on the screener will “hedge” on the screen which simply is stepping up and showing his number to the dribbler.
- The hedge makes the dribbler go wide off the screen and flattens out the dribbler so the defender guarding the dribbler can get over the screen to stay with the dribbler
- The switch on the ball screen may also be an option when the dribbler uses the screen. As the dribbler uses the screen, the defender that is guarding the screen will call out “switch” and will guard the dribbler

- The defender on the dribbler will switch to the screener as the dribbler uses the screen.
- The defender on the dribbler can also go underneath the screen. To make this happen the defender on the screen will step back to allow the defender on the dribbler to go behind the screen and stay with the dribbler. This creates a “window” for the defender to go through to stay with the dribbler.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The hedge must be aggressive but be able to get back to defending the screener and being aware of the slip by the screener.
- When switching the screen, the defender that switches to guard the screener must get in front of the player to stop the pass as he rolls to the basket.
- Using the switching defense works best if the defenders are of the same size and quickness.
- When creating a window for the defender on the dribbler the defender on the screener must take one step back to allow the dribble defender to go under the screen.

### SKILL 2

## POST DEFENSE

- Post defense will include playing defense on any offensive player that is in a position with his back to the basket usually in the block area but can be at the high post.
- Post defense can vary depending on where the ball is located. Defending the post on the ball side is important to stop the ball from easily entering the post area.
- If the ball is above the free throw line the post defender takes a position to the side of the offensive post player so that his chest is in the shoulder of the offensive post.
- The outside hand is high with the palm open to the ball so passes into the post are discouraged.
- The off arm is an arm bar that is placed on the offensive post player so to create a space between the defender and the offensive post player.
- When the ball is passed or dribbled below the free throw line the defender must keep his chest to the offensive post player and move around front to stop the pass.



- As the ball is passed or dribbled to the baseline the defender now quickly goes from the high side defensive stance to the low side defensive stance by moving his feet and “hugging” the offensive post player keeping the arm high.
- Another method to guard the post as the ball is moving from top to wing to baseline is by the step through. This allows the defender to keep an eye on the ball at all times rather than turn his back to the ball when he is “hugging” the offensive post player.
- By using the approach of the step through, the defender will swing his back foot in front of the offensive post player to a total fronting position as the ball is dribbled or passed to the baseline.
- The defender then uses his pivot foot to drop to the baseline side of the offensive post player so to make an X pattern which allows for keeping sight on the ball.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The arm bar of the defender is placed on the offensive post player at about shoulder level.
- The defender is in a position to deny the pass to the offensive post player by having his body and arm in the passing lane.
- By “hugging” the offensive post player the defender can get from side to side when the ball goes from wing to baseline.
- By playing defense on the side of the offensive post player the defender must be aware to not give up the angle for the pass and easy basket.
- If the ball does enter the post, the defender must be quick to get between the post player and the basket so an easy drop step does not lead to a basket.
- The rebounding angle is more difficult when the defender is playing the offensive post player in a deny position and a shot is taken. The defender must be quick to get in front of the post player to get a rebound.

## PERIMETER DEFENSE

- Perimeter defense occurs when guarding an offensive player facing the basket any place on the floor.
- The most important part of perimeter defense is the correct stance – feet wider than the shoulders, arm length from the offensive player, eyes on the midsection of the offensive player and the hands and arms above the waist.
- As the offensive player moves with the ball the defender must move the foot/leg first in the direction he must go to stop the dribble.
- The movement of the defender is a big step in the direction of the dribbler with a hard push with the opposite foot.
- A drill to work on this is the sideline drill. The players line up on the sideline with the outside foot on the sideline facing straight ahead. On command by the coach the players will step first with the inside foot and push with the sideline foot.
- The players will continue in this manner to the opposite sideline making sure the big step is taken in the direction of the opposite sideline.
- The players will progress to sliding then turning to run to the opposite sideline when they reach the lane line.
- A further progression will take place by the players sliding to the lane line then turning to sprint the lane and ending up sliding to the sideline.
- The zig zag full court drill is a good one to defend the on ball dribbler. The offensive player starts on the baseline and will use one third of the full court to zig zag dribble to the opposite baseline.
- The defender will be in a good stance and stay in front of the dribbler using slides and drop steps to stay in front. The offense starts at half speed in order for the defender to have proper footwork.
- The cone drill works on game like one on one situations. A cone is placed at half court about ten feet in from the sideline. Another cone is placed about ten feet inside the first cone and five feet from the half court line. The two player are on the baseline facing the cones with the dribbler on the outside. On command the dribbler dribbles hard around the cone at the half court line while the defender runs around the cone to the inside.

- The dribbler will dribble around his cone and attack the basket while the defender will sprint around his cone to defend the dribbler.
- The dribbler must dribble around his cone and go between the cones to attack the basket while the defender works to stop the dribbler from scoring.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The head of the defender should be lower than the shoulders of the offensive player – defense should be played low to high as the low man, whether on offense or defense, usually wins.
- If the offensive player dribbles the ball to his left the defender must move his right foot first in a big step to stay between the ball and the basket.
- The movement of the first one or two steps of the defender will determine if he will be able to properly stay in good position and stop the dribbler from getting to the basket.
- The feet of the defender should not cross or come closer than shoulder width apart unless the dribbler gets ahead of the defender in which case the defender must turn and run to catch up with the dribbler.
- The drop step occurs anytime the dribbler changes direction with the ball. The defender must drop his top foot at a 45 degree angle in order to contain the dribbler and keep in him front. Too much of a drop step – 180 drop – will allow the dribbler to go by the defender.
- During the cone drill the dribbler should stay on his half of the court and not cross the rim line. A good rule is to limit the dribbles to 2 or 3 once around the cone.

## SKILL 4

## RUN AND JUMP DEFENSE

- Run and jump defense is usually performed in a full court defensive setting and includes a surprise element for the offensive players.
- This is also called run and switch defense.
- This involves switching defenders as the ball is dribbled up the court. The defender guarding a player that is in close proximity to the dribbler will leave his man and run to guard the dribbler.

- The defender that is guarding the dribbler will leave the dribbler and sprint to the offensive player that is left open by the defender running to guard the dribbler.
- The element of surprise will dictate the success of the run and jump – if the run and jump can come when the dribbler has his head down or if the dribbler is out of control the defense has an opportunity for success.
- The best method to teach the run and jump is to have both defenders at the free throw line in a full court setting and two offensive players working to advance the ball down court.
- As one of the offensive players dribbles to the middle of the court the help defender runs to cover the dribbler while the original defender guarding the dribbler jumps to cover the open offensive player.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The run comes when the defender runs to the dribbler and the jump refers to the defender on the dribbler switching to guard the open offensive player.
- The defender that runs to the dribbler will need to sprint and get hands up as he approaches the dribbler to discourage a high pass.
- The defender running to the dribbler must call out switch – this initiates the run and jump defense.

## SKILL 5

### TRAPPING DEFENSES

- Trapping defenses are used to cause disruption to the offensive team and take advantage of a poor passing offensive team.
- Good trapping defenders will keep the hands up so the offensive player has a difficult time throwing the ball over the trap.
- Trapping defenses occur when the ball is forced up the sideline or when the offensive player with the ball stops his dribble in the corners.
- The two defenders that make the trap form the L trap with one defender with shoulders perpendicular to the sideline and the other defender has shoulders parallel to the sideline.



- The feet form the letter L therefore the name L trap – the defenders must not let the offensive player step between the defenders to make the pass or to make the dribble.
- To teach the trapping defenses start with an offensive player with the ball on the baseline who dribbles toward a defender on the sideline. The defender guarding the ball will make a trap with the defender on the sideline.
- The offensive player will pivot and pass the ball to the other offensive player who is a step behind the offensive player with the ball and on the ball side of the rim line.
- The player with the ball now dribbles to the opposite sideline while the two trapping defenders now turn and sprint to trap the new offensive player with the ball at the other sideline.
- The original player with the ball will be the new receiver for the offensive player in the trap by staying a step behind the ball and on the ball side of the rim line. This continues for four traps the length of the floor.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The defenders trapping will probably not steal the ball from trapping the offensive players but the steal or turnover will occur when the ball is passed out of the trap.
- Most traps are made in a full court pressing defense set up by a made basket or dead ball situation.
- The offensive player without the ball in the trap drill must stay a step behind the ball so that the pass can be made out of the trap. the offensive player must also stay on the ball side of the rim line – which is the imaginary line going from rim to rim.
- The traps should occur on a dribbler out of control or a dribbler who turns his back to the defender coming to trap.

## SKILL 6

### ZONE DEFENSES

- Zone defenses are when defenders guard any players in an area as opposed to guarding a specific player.
- Zone defenses can take the form of many different looks – a 2-3 zone with 2 defenders at the free throw line and 3 defenders closer to the baseline.

- A 1-3-1 zone with a defender at the top of the key, 3 defenders stretched across the free throw line and wing areas and 1 defender in the lane.
- A 1-2-2 zone with one defender at the top of the key, 2 defenders at the free throw line corners or wings and 2 defenders at the block areas of the free throw lane.
- A 3-2 zone with 3 defenders across the free throw line wing areas and 2 defenders at the block of the free throw lane.
- Each of these zone defenses can be very effective in defending a team with a strength at that area – for example, if the offensive team is big a 2-3 zone may be most effective to defend the bigger offensive players inside the lane and make the offensive team shoot from the perimeter.
- If the offensive team is a good perimeter shooting team, a 1-3-1 or a 3-2 zone may be the best to defend the perimeter shooters.
- A key point to any zone defense is that when the offensive team has the ball on the baseline, all zones – no matter what type of zone the defensive team started in – will look like a 2-3 zone with a baseline defender guarding the ball, a player in the post area and a player on the help side with a guard defender at the ball side free throw line corner and the other guard defender at the opposite free throw line corner.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- A zone defense must be well coached in man principles so the defenders understand guarding a player that is in the area of the zone.
- The zone defense can cover up weaknesses in a team such as lack of height or quickness to cover the opponent in a man for man defense.
- All five defenders must move when the ball is in the air so they are in good defensive rotation with the zone as the ball is received.
- Zone defenses lend to trapping defenses as the offensive players try to attack the gaps in the zone.
- Communication is a key to playing good zone defense as the offense may have 2 players in the same area of the zone defense with one defender.
- The defenders in the zone defense should keep their hands and arms high and wide to distort the passing lanes.

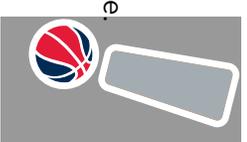
## SKILL 7

### TIME AND SCORE SITUATIONS



- The defenders must be aware at all times of the score and time during the game so adjustments can be made.
- If the offensive team is leading late in the game, the defensive team should know if they have fouls to give before the offensive team gets into a bonus.
- The defensive team needs to be aware of the offensive player that should be fouled late in the game – the player with the worst percentage from the free throw line.
- A defensive team is ahead late in the game by 3 points – the defenders should know if a foul should be made against the offensive team to put them at the free throw line taking away the 3 point shot.
- On inbounds plays with the clock less than one second, the defensive team needs to be aware if the shot must be tipped by the offensive team or can it be a catch and shoot play.
- Switching defenses depending on the score and time – switch from man to zone to better rebound the ball late in the game.
- Use of the press if behind to potentially steal the ball or make the offensive team take quicker shots.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Communication is very important so all players understand the situation and the options available.
- The defenders must be ready to scramble on defense due to trapping the offensive players.
- Be sure to foul before the shot is taken when intentionally trying to foul an offensive player.

## SKILL 8

### PRESS DEFENSES

- Pressing defenses must fit the personnel of the defensive team as well as the basic philosophy of the team.
- The trapping skills will be very valuable when using the press defenses as the trap is a vital part of the press.
- Pressing defenses may occur at full or  $\frac{3}{4}$  court with different areas of pressure for the traps.

- The press defense may take the form of a man for man pressing defense or a zone pressing defense.
- The man for man pressing defense requires the defenders to guard an offensive player in a full or  $\frac{3}{4}$  court set with the opportunity to run and jump – run and switch – or trap.
- A full court zone defense is the 1-2-1-1 with a bigger player guarding the inbounder, two guards starting at the free throw line area, the point guard in the middle with the center in the back of the press.
- A trap is made when the ball is thrown to the corner with the inbound defender and the closest guard with the opposite guard coming to ball side lane elbow and “reading” the next pass.
- The point guard takes the passing lane straight up the sideline and the center comes up to the center line to defend the offensive player in the middle.
- The 2-2-1 is a more “passive” press with the two guards at the free throw line, two forwards at the center line and the center back at the top of the key.
- The offensive team is encouraged to try to bring the ball up the sideline where a trap may occur. All defenders will shift so the middle is covered, the sideline pass is covered and the basket is protected.
- The 1-2-2 press can be either a full or  $\frac{3}{4}$  court press with the defender on top of the key and two players at the center line and two players at the free throw line area in the back.
- The 1-3-1 press  $\frac{3}{4}$  court has three players across the mid line to take away the middle offensive area.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- This is a gambling defense and requires continued effort and patience if it is to pay dividends.
- The biggest value of the press defense will probably come from demoralizing the offensive team and upsetting their game.
- The press defense can speed up the game and take the offensive team out of their normal style of play.
- The press defense should force the offensive player with the ball to the sideline or to the corner in order to trap or run and jump.
- A press does not necessarily need to create a turnover but to make the offensive team work to get the ball up the court.
- The key to the man for man press defense is the ability to put pressure on the offensive player with the ball.
- A good rule for the press is the further the ball is from the man you are guarding the further the defender can be from the offensive player.
- Try to permit only lob or bounce passes forward. Passes back toward your offensive basket will not hurt the defensive team but the crisp passes forward cause the press defense trouble.
- Use tight man for man principles if the man in your zone has the ball and floating man for man principles depending upon how far from the ball your man is in the other areas.
- As soon as the ball passes your individual line of defense, turn and sprint toward your defensive basket and pick up the most dangerous open man. The strong side players may have a chance to tip the ball from behind or trap while the weak side players may have a chance to intercept the pass.

## SKILL 8

### DEFENDING INBOUND PLAYS

- Defending inbound plays starts with recognizing and being aware of where the best offensive players are located in the inbound set.
- The defense of the inbound plays can be either a zone defense or a man defense or a combination of the two such as the triangle zone with two defenders guarding a man.

- The paint area – area in the lane – should be well defended and not give an easy basket in the paint area.
- If the defenders are in a man for man set, the screens must be communicated and either switched or the defender must get over the screen to stop an easy basket.
- A zone defense is common against the inbound play to stop easy baskets around the basket and also cover the perimeter shot.
- The defense can have a player guarding the inbounder to add pressure to getting the ball inbounds.
- The defenders must set up the defense quickly and be ready to guard as soon as the ball is handed to the inbound passer by the official.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- The defenders must know where the best shooters are located in the inbounds set.
- If playing a man for man the defenders must communicate and be aware of the roll man in the offense after setting the screen.
- The zone defense usually takes the form of a 2-3 zone with the three players across the baseline.



### SKILL 9

## TRANSITION DEFENSE WITH SCRAMBLE SITUATIONS

- Transition defense involves sprinting back to cover the offensive basket as quickly as possible and matching up with the offensive players in a zone or man defense.
- The first defensive player back – usually the point guard – will work to stop the ball first and then sprint back to the lane area. He will guard the first pass to the wing leaving the lane area.
- The second defender back will go to the top of the 3 point line and then cover the basket when the offensive pass is made to the wing.
- The real scramble situation for transition occurs when the ball is stopped and the remaining defenders are sprinting back to the offensive end.
- Once the ball is stopped, the defenders then cover the ball side post and weak side wing areas.

- The “Laker Drill” is one very good drill for the transition and scramble situations.
- Two teams are on each baseline in three lines.
- The drill starts with 4 on 4 play.
- When the ball is shot, the defensive team screens out to get the rebound. The defender that gets the rebound is the one defender to transition to offense vs the four offensive players who were just on offense.
- Three new players will be added to the rebounder and will transition as the offensive team vs the four defenders.
- The new offensive players will try to score and the defender who gets the rebound will transition to offense with three new players from the baseline.
- Made baskets will be played as a missed basket in the drill so the defender that gets the ball out of the net will stay as one of the offensive transition players with three new players added to the drill.
- The drill can be played with a time or score limit.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Communication in the form of talking and pointing is needed for great defensive transition.
- The ball must be stopped first in transition or at least slowed down in order to allow time to get more defensive help.
- The key is to sprint the court and be able to recognize where the open offensive players are located.
- Tipping the ball from behind by the defenders as they sprint back on defense should be an option.
- The Laker Drill defensive transition uses communication, sprinting to get back, stopping the ball and then scrambling to cover the offensive players.



# ADVANCED LEVEL

## TEAM OFFENSIVE CONCEPTS



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Team offensive concepts for this level will build on the concepts introduced in the Foundational Level. Many of the concepts in this level will be based on team play and making good decisions in the framework of team play. The players must be put in many situations that will cause them to make quick and accurate decisions on the floor in order for the player to improve.

### SKILL 1

#### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TRANSITION

- In this level, the secondary transition is as important as the primary transition. The better the defensive team, the harder it is to get a primary transition basket so the offensive transition depends more on the secondary break.
- The fast break should be attempted to follow the same basic idea regardless of how the possession occurred - by defensive rebound, made basket, interception, jump ball, back court out of bounds.
- There must be different options to advance the basketball quickly to the desired area as continuation of any one method could soon completely be blocked by a good defensive team.
- The players must be drilled thoroughly so they will react quickly when possession is gained.
- The fast break opportunities are almost always made in the backcourt by quick reaction immediately upon gaining possession of the basketball.
- Drilling the secondary as well as the primary break should start with a five-player break against no defenders to make sure the players know how to fill the lanes.



- There should always be outside lanes filled along with the middle lane where the basketball should be passed or dribbled as quickly as possible. A trailer who is usually the bigger player and the player who takes the basketball out of bounds who stays a step or two behind the player with the basketball for a reversal of the basketball. The post runs the rim line as quickly as possible.
- Possible finishes for the fast break include: layup by the cutter on either side, jump shot off the glass by one of the cutters, jump shot by middle man after the cutter passes the basketball to the middle man at the free-throw line elbow, middle player shot or layup off the dribble, trailer for jump shot, pass to post for shot on the primary break or from the cutter.
- Drill the fast break opportunities going from a five-on-zero to a five-on-five scenario so the players know positions.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- As soon as possession is gained the players must instinctively be able to fill the lanes with the basketball getting to the middle of the court.
- If the players hesitate to think about what to do, they have not been drilled enough and opportunities may be lost.
- Encourage the post player to run in a straight line from rim to rim which can result in a quick primary break basket.
- Cuts should be made in sharp angles when cutting to the basket and not arcs.
- Constantly emphasize keeping the head and eyes up and getting the basketball down the floor to the man in the most advantageous position as quickly as possible.
- The player with the basketball should look to pass the basketball quickly and safely to a man down the floor or drive it hard on the dribble if there is no one open.

## SKILL 2

### UNDERSTANDING ADVANTAGE/DISADVANTAGE

- This is a continuation of the fast break situations where the players need to recognize if there is an advantage for their team or a disadvantage.

- The best drill to recognize advantage opportunities is the Continuous Three-on-Two Drill. Two teams line up on the sidelines with the first player in each line at the half court line.
- The drill starts with an advantage of three offensive players against two defenders but soon becomes a disadvantage if the offensive team does not score.
- The drill starts with three players in the backcourt with the basketball in the middle. Two defenders are in the front court waiting for the basketball to be advanced and creating a three-on-two situation.
- As the basketball crosses the half court line a third defender runs in to touch the half court circle. This will then make the situation a three-on-three game if the offense does not score before the third defender gets into the action.
- At the same time the third defender runs to touch the circle, two players from the offensive team sideline run to touch the circle and go to the opposite end to be the two defenders
- The offensive team will go to the end of their sideline line after a shot or turnover. The three defenders will now go on offense and attack the two defenders in a fast break situation. Every time the basketball crosses the half court line the third defender runs to touch the circle to make the drill three-on-three.
- The offensive team may advance the basketball across half court by the dribble or with a pass to the outside lane player which puts pressure on the two defenders.
- If there is not a three-on-two advantage the offense must now perform offensive skills such as screening, cutting and moving without the basketball in a three-on-three situation to try and score.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- As the basketball crosses half court the players should be filling the lanes to make it difficult for the defenders to guard all three offensive players.
- The basketball needs to get to the middle of the court either by the dribble or with a pass as soon as possible.
- Keep score so there is a winner for the drill. Play to a certain number of points or time.
- The defensive team does not need to take the basketball out of bounds after a made basket but just takes the basketball and starts the fast break *(continued next page)*

- On a turnover, the drill continues with the defenders that just turned offense attacking the two new defenders at the other end.
- The first option is a layup or a jump shot from the outside cutters. The secondary option is ball reversal against the three defensive players.

### SKILL 3

## HALF-COURT SPACING AND MOTION

This was covered in the Introductory and Foundational levels, but now we have half-court spacing in relation to trying an offense.

- There is no predetermined movement with the players but depends on spacing and how and where the defenders are located.
- Look to screen the passer's man as this will always give your team a backscreen which is basic for the motion offense.
- Work with a partner – one player has the basketball and the other four will pair up and set screens.
- Never run by or bypass a player when screening but rather set a screen for the nearest teammate and continue screening.
- Run to screen but walk to set up the screen. Cutters should be late rather than early using the screen.
- On down screens – the screeners back should face the basketball and on backscreens the screeners back should facing the basket.
- After a pass the following options are available by the passer – basket cut, screen, fill a vacant spot or wait to use a screen which sets up the backscreen.
- After setting the screen the following options are available – continue to screen to the baseline when starting at the point position, rescreen which is a backscreen to a downscreen, slip the screen, step back to the basketball or fill a space on the court.
- After receiving a screen the following options are available – accept the screen or reject the screen with a back cut or a flair.
- The cutthroat drill previously described in the Foundational Level is one of the best to teach the motion game and half court spacing.

- Breakdown drills include two-on-zero with the player starting the drill by passing the basketball to the coach and then setting a screen for a teammate who has the options described above.
- Progress to two-on-two so the players now can read the defender and perform the proper cuts after passing to the coach.
- From two-on-two, progress to three-on-three with the pass being made to a teammate being defended.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- When using the screen, watch the defender and not the basketball.
- After setting a screen the screener will react and go opposite of his teammate so if the player makes a curl cut around the screen, the screener steps out.
- Usually the screener is the player that will be open for a pass so they must step toward the basketball after the screen.
- Change of speed and direction will help the cutter get open for a pass.
- The player using the screen should be low – shoulder to hip of screener which will make it much more difficult for the defender to get between the screen and cutter.
- A slip screen occurs when the screener attempts the screen but at the last second will cut to the rim which occurs when the defender hedges or a double-team occurs.
- The spacing must occur after a screen away from the basketball so always be aware of filling a spot on the floor if needed.



### SKILL 4

## SPECIFIC SETS BASED ON PERSONNEL OR ADVANTAGE OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON OPPONENT

- When two teams match up many times there is an advantage for one team based on size, speed or experience and the team should take advantage of these opportunities either on defense or offense.

## SKILL 5

### ZONE CONCEPTS



There are some basic zone offensive concepts that any specific zone offense should implement. These concepts may be taught against any of the zone defenses whether an odd front or an even front zone defense.

- All zones look alike when the basketball goes to the baseline. The defense will take a look at the 2-3 zone defense no matter what the zone started out as when the basketball was at the top of the key. There must be a defender guarding the basketball on the baseline, defender in the post and defender on the help-side with the two defenders at the top.
  - Must use a dribble in the gaps of a zone to cause some indecision with the defense as to who will cover the dribbler.
  - Screen the zone which creates indecision for the defenders just as the screen causes indecision against a man defense. The screen can either be set high or low
  - Advance the basketball quickly to create an advantage for the offense in a two-on-one or a three-on-two situation.
  - The dribbler must make a great effort to get the basketball to the paint – lane area – to open up the perimeter.
  - The stack can be two players at the free-throw line, lane line on either side or the block area.
  - There are four vulnerable areas against any zone defense – gaps – which is the area between two zone defenders; Box area – area on the free-throw line blocks; 12-foot short-corner area on baseline and the rebound areas which are both blocks and the area in front of the free-throw line.
  - Offensive rebounding will increase due to the defenders not screening out a player, but they are all responsible for an area.
- POINTS OF EMPHASIS**
- The position of the players must be in the gaps of the zone. This is easily viewed by using cones or chairs as the zone defenders.
  - Either the basketball must move or players must move on offense to attack a zone defense regardless of the type of zone used. *(continued next page)*



*(continued next page)*

- Keep in mind that one team may have an advantage on offense but that same team may have a disadvantage on defense.
- If the offensive team has a mismatch based on size this should be taken advantage of in the post area by passing the basketball into the post where the size can make the difference.
- When a team switches the screens, this may cause a bigger and slower defender guarding a smaller and quicker defender. The offensive player should immediately try to get to the basket around the slower defender.
- A quicker and smaller team may try to double team the bigger post player when he receives the basketball. If this occurs the passer should cut through to the opposite side of the court and get good spacing for a pass if the basketball is reversed to him.
- An advantage will occur if the defensive team hedges hard on the ball screens. The offensive team must reverse the basketball quickly to a player who looks for the screener. Since the screeners defender hedged, the screener should be open at the basket.
- The best method to take advantage of two big post players is placing one on each block and cross-screen when the basketball is passed to the wing. The post screener must open up to the basketball after the screen is set.
- The smaller quicker lineup should set less screens and make more basket cuts against the slower bigger defenders.
- Spread the court with proper spacing for a smaller quicker offensive team attacking a bigger slower team.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- If a size advantage is evident, run the offensive player in the post and swing the basketball to the player in the post.
- Spacing is important when a defensive team traps the post player. The players properly spaced will be open for a shot when the basketball gets passed quickly. Players must recognize size, speed, quickness differences and take advantage of these differences in game situations by making sure there is always proper spacing.
- Quick ball reversal will eliminate defensive double-teams and hedges on the ball screens.
- Offensive players should make hard direct cuts to the basket and not cut in an arc.

- The basketball must cross the rim line – imaginary line which divides the court sideways running from rim to rim – to get an advantage on offense.
- When advancing the basketball against a zone the primary break leading to a layup will probably not be available. The offense must look for the secondary break ending in jump shots from the wing.
- Skip passes from one wing to the other wing or wing to baseline are effective to get a shot against a zone.
- The best method to reverse the basketball is through the low, mid or high post area. The post turns opposite and passes the basketball to the open area.
- Players should move to the gaps as the basketball is being passed so they can set their feet for shooting as they receive the basketball.

## SKILL 6

### FREE-THROW SITUATIONS

There are some free-throw situations that the players should be aware of from the offensive standpoint

- The offensive players should line up in their designated area on the free-throw line as far away from the defender as possible. By doing this it will make it harder to get a good block out by the defender.
- The best offensive rebounder should line up on the right hand side of the lane as you look at the basket as studies have shown that majority of the misses will be to this side.
- The offensive rebounders should step hard and quick to the opposite block when the basketball touches the rim to avoid the double-team block out squeeze by the defenders.
- The offensive player on one side may roll baseline on contact by the defender in order to get a rebound.
- If the offensive rebounder cannot grasp the basketball with both hands the player should tip the basketball to the free-throw line area where the player that shot the free throw will be located.
- The offensive rebounders may try to cross the lane as the basketball hits the rim which will make them more difficult to block out by the defenders.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The offensive rebounder cannot allow the defender to have their elbow and forearm on top.
- The offensive rebounder should start with the hands above the shoulders to avoid the arms from being pinned down.
- The free-throw shooter should stay at the free-throw line area after the basketball hits the rim to get any long rebounds or tip rebounds by teammates.
- The offensive rebounders should move as soon as the basketball hits the rim to be harder to block out.

## SKILL 7

### PRESS-BREAK CONCEPTS

- Try to keep the floor spread without getting bunched and give and go a lot looking for the return pass.
- A good dribbler should be given some room to work especially against a man for man press.
- There should be very little dribbling against a zone press. Be sure not to waste your dribble against a zone press. Look the situation over before you ever put the basketball on the floor and try to get a quick pass forward.
- Put your center or another taller player at the center circle and then break back to form an outlet in the middle of the floor.
- There should always be three players in position to catch the basketball against a press – one player in the middle, one player a step behind the basketball and one player on the strong side at the half line. This gives the player with the basketball always three options to pass the basketball.
- When the basketball gets to the middle of the floor or is reversed to the player behind the basketball, the next pass should be to the opposite side of the floor.
- If playing against a passive press such as a two-two-one three-quarter court press, stretch the defense by having your best shooter on the baseline at your offensive end.
- Against good pressure to get the basketball inbounded, start with two players in a stack formation at the free-throw line area. One player will break in one direction and the other player will break in the other direction to get the pass from the inbounder.

- Screens may also be set to get the basketball inbounded. One player starts at each free-throw line elbow with the screener on ball-side setting the screen for the other player. The screener will roll back to the basketball for the pass after the teammate has made a cut to the basketball off the screen.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- After a made basket, the inbouncer may run the baseline which provides some relief against a good trapping press.
- Try to keep the basketball out of the corners when facing a trapping zone press as this is the area the press is most effective.
- When receiving the basketball in the middle of the floor, look opposite or down the court to attack the press.
- Once the offense has an advantage such as a three-on-two situation, the offense must try to score.
- A good dribbler must read the defense and not pick the basketball up in trapping areas but should be able to back the basketball up to relieve the pressure.
- Rebounding areas are more vulnerable against a press so offensive players should attack the glass on a missed shot.
- Inbound the basketball as quickly as possible to attack the press before it has a chance to set up.

## SKILL 8

### INBOUNDS CONCEPTS FROM UNDER THE BASKET AND SIDELINE

- The player taking the basketball out of bounds must take a time getting to the basketball while the other four are hurrying to the positions that they should take according to the play that has been called.
- As the players get their position, the play starts on a signal by the player with the basketball.
- The signal may be given orally calling out a name or number, by slapping the basketball or by raising the basketball above the head to initiate the movement for the play.
- The player inbounding the basketball must stand about three feet back of the boundary line and must keep perfect balance without leaning.

- Generally, the best shooter is the first option. He can come off a screen or two. The second look is for the screener rolling back to the basketball.
- Plays should be run for both man and zone defense and a play that can be used against either defense.
- A box set is a good formation to run play from out of bounds either from the baseline or from the sideline.
- A specific set must be available to use from any out of bounds position against a defense late in the game that will pressure the pass and the offensive players. A four man stack is good against this type of pressure.
- A good secondary pass would be to the player – usually the post or big man – who has set the screen and is rolling back to the basketball.
- Be aware that many times the inbouncer stepping onto the playing court is the player who will be open for a shot.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Make sure to practice the inbounds plays from both sides of the court.
- The player selected to handle the basketball for the throw in must be most alert and have a lot of poise.
- The number one priority for inbounding the basketball is to get the basketball inbounded and then look to score.
- The player taking the basketball out of bounds may not move from that spot or a traveling call will occur. The player may only move after a made basket.
- Out of bounds plays against a zone defense should have an overload on the ball-side – three players in the zone area of two defenders.
- The players should know the time out situation and if needed must call time out before the official gets to the four count. It is better to take a five second count than to throw the basketball inbounded and have it intercepted. At least with the five second count, the team has a chance to set its defense instead of the interception leading to an easy basket.

## SKILL 9

### JUMP-BALL SITUATIONS

- Obviously, there are not many jump-ball situations, but to start the game and in any overtime periods the jump ball possession can give your team an extra possession. Jump balls become a team affair and all five players must be alert.
- The player jumping the basketball must time himself with the basketball. The player must neither jump too soon nor be caught waiting.
- The player must go straight up and extend the tipping arm to its full length.
- The basketball must not be slapped or batted but tipped with a flick of the wrist and the fingers.
- If the opponent will have the advantage, try to cover every man except one in front or to the side of their player jumping the basketball. The tip is encouraged then to tip to the open player and one of our players from behind the jumper can time himself to step in front of the open player to steal the tip.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Different players jumping the basketball have different stances, but each one should do what feels most comfortable as long as he is getting the maximum height on his jump.
- Crowd the opposing player jumping the basketball as much as possible if it appears likely that he will get the tip. Prevent from being crowded if it appears that the control will be ours or about even.
- Players jumping the basketball should land in good balance with the hands up and be alert to move into the play offensively and defensively.
- Do not foul your opponent on the jump but be sure to protect the area that belongs to you.



## SKILL 10

### TIME AND SCORE SITUATIONS

- All players must be alert to the time and the score throughout the game which will allow for a good play during the last seconds of the game.



- Two thoughts on the situation of being ahead by three in the closing seconds of a game – make a non-shooting foul which will allow the player to shoot only two free throws or not fouling and make the other team hit a guarded three-point shot to, at best, tie the game.
- The dribbler may use as many dribbles as there are seconds on the clock – four seconds to go means four dribbles and a shot.
- The advantage for the offensive team if behind in the closing seconds of the game is that the defensive team will not want to foul. This allows the offensive team to be the more aggressive team when trying to score.
- Try to run the best three-point shooter off a staggered double screen to get a late three-point shot.
- If the offense sets a ball-screen the player who set the screen should step back after setting the screen and this player may be open for a shot.
- Extend the game by fouling but try to foul the most ineffective free-throw shooter. Do not allow the best free-throw shooter to receive the pass.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Shoot the basketball with a few seconds to go so there may be a chance for an offensive rebound and put back.
- In the closing seconds all five offensive players should crash the boards for an offensive rebound if the offensive team is behind. Rarely do officials call fouls in this situation.
- When attacking the basket in the closing seconds, the goal is to get the basketball to the lane and then take a balanced shot.
- A time out may be called after the offensive team has made a basket. This will help to set up the defense.



## SKILL 11

### TEAM REBOUNDING

- Offensive team rebounding may involve some special situations for the offensive rebounding team to gain an advantage.

- One of the best methods to gain an advantage for an offensive team is to assign areas for each offensive player – the post to the area in front of the rim, a player goes to the block area on one side with a player going to the block area on the other side of the rim. One guard goes to the free-throw line area and the other guard sprints back in defensive transition.
- By going to specific areas this will make the offensive players move to that area on the shot and be much more difficult to screen off.
- The offensive player can do several moves to give a better opportunity to get the rebound – a crossover swim move, a spin move and inside-out move.
- Players must know where is the most likely place for the basketball to come off the rim if the shot is missed. The basketball usually goes opposite of the shooter off the rim on a miss.
- The players should be aware of the distance of the shot. The longer shot will become a longer rebound.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- A crossover swim move is one in which the offensive player will step across the defender and try to get his elbow above the elbow of the defender.
- A spin move is a full pivot upon contact by the defender to make it difficult to be screened out.
- The inside out move is a hard step to the baseline and a move in front of the defender who is trying to screen out. This is a V cut for the offensive player with the cut to baseline first.
- The hands must go above the shoulders as the offensive player is moving to get the offensive rebound.
- If the offensive player cannot grab the rebound with both hands the basketball can be tipped to the free-throw line area where the guards can get the long rebound.

## SKILL 12

### TRAPPING CONCEPTS

- Handling a trap situation requires offensive skills that are found throughout this level.

- Whenever a dribbler is aware of two defenders coming to trap, the player must keep his dribble and not pick the basketball up.
- As the defenders come at the dribbler the basketball must be on the back hip away from the defenders and the other forearm up to protect the basketball.
- The dribbler takes several dribbles straight back with the basketball on the back hip and forearm up to release the defensive pressure in order for the dribbler to make a pass.
- As the defenders approach the offensive player to double team, the dribbler may recognize the opportunity to split the double-team with the dribble which will cause the defense into a scramble situation.
- The offensive player must not stop the dribble and put the basketball above the head as the double-team approaches.
- As the dribbler comes off a ball-screen, the player must know where the screener will locate so the basketball can be passed to the screener.
- The double-team may come before the offensive player has had a chance to dribble the basketball such as on a full court press. When this occurs, the offensive player must have awareness of his teammates and try to pass the basketball before the double-team is made.
- The offensive team should look to make the extra pass once the basketball is passed out of the double-team to get an easy score against the scramble defense.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- As the dribbler keeps the basketball alive with the dribble, the chin must be up and the eyes are searching to find the open teammate.
- The dribbler must stay low as he continues to dribble – his head must be lower than the defender's shoulders.
- The offensive player after picking up his dribble must pass the basketball quickly to an open teammate rather than hold the basketball to find an open teammate.
- The on-ball screener must see the possible double-team approaching as the dribbler comes off the screen and then roll to the open area and call for the basketball verbally and with hands up. *(continued on next page)*

- When a double-team comes before the offensive player dribbles, the offensive player must protect the basketball and make a quick pass to a teammate.
- A key to breaking the double-team by the offensive team is to try to score quickly after passing the basketball out of the double-team.



# USA BASKETBALL PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM



# PERFORMANCE LEVEL



# PERFORMANCE LEVEL BALL HANDLING & DRIBBLING



## OFFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Ball-handling and dribbling are of paramount importance. These two skills allow the basketball to be advanced legally throughout the court of play. At the Performance Level, players will continue to work on mastery of ball-handling and dribbling, especially while performing the skills against intense pressure from defenses. Application to challenging, high-level game situations, without thought or hesitation is the desired goal. Further, being able to use the skills to create better angles for teammates, split double teams, remove unnecessary use of the dribble, incorporate and combine all offensive skills to better the overall team offensive schemes is a sign of mastering this skill at the Performance Level.

Although there are drills listed below, to continue to challenge and engage players, the Performance Level moves further away from mastering a specific drill. Instead, the mastery idea takes form through application in stressful game situations. Understanding the situation, making a solid quick decision and reacting, at a high efficient level over and over. Teaching at this level may revolve more around game environments than drill work, although, a healthy combination is always recommended.

## SKILL 1

### STATIONARY BALL-HANDLING: ONE BASKETBALL

#### DRILL 1: ONE BASKETBALL, ONE TENNIS BALL

Once players are able to eliminate unnecessary dribbles from the skills presented in the previous level, coaches can progress players to completing double moves. Instead of one crossover, the player will complete a double crossover. The pattern of “toss, dribble, catch” remains the same. The difference is the same hand that tosses the tennis ball will catch, still in an overhand position, allowing for the basketball to travel from the right to the left, finishing in the right following the double crossover. Again, players will complete double dribbles using crossovers, between the legs and behind the back. Once players develop this skill, slow controlled movement forward and backward can be added.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Balanced defensive stance.
- Keep eyes on tennis ball.
- Catch tennis ball overhand, same hand that tosses.
- Pound dribbles.
- Work toward zero extra dribbles.



#### DRILL 2: HAND SPEED

Developing hand speed is advantageous for many areas of basketball, offensively and defensively. One way to improve hand speed can be through ball-handling. Players can partner up with one another, or line up with a coach. One player has the basketball, standing in a balanced defensive stance, facing the partner. While working on a specific skill, such as a crossover, the partner, facing the ball-handler will put up one of their hands, indicating to the ball-handler to quickly tap that hand, while continuing the ball-handling skill. Coaches can designate which hand to tap with, same side, opposite side, etc. They can also alter the height of the spot to tap, the pattern at which they tap, the skill of the ball-handler, etc. Keep the ball-handler reactionary while completing ball-handling skills, truly working on reacting with quick hand speed.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Maintain solid stance, no bobbing.
- Head up.
- Pound dribble and keep alive while tapping.
- Quick hand speed, tap with appropriate hand.



## SKILL 2

### STATIONARY BALL-HANDLING: TWO BASKETBALLS

#### FIGURE 8

Below are two more variations of the figure-8 dribble to continue challenging eye hand coordination and efficiency with the basketball.

**DRILL – THROUGH DOOR AT SAME TIME:** This skill is challenging in that there is a small margin for error in order to complete successfully. Beginning in a solid defensive stance, the player will dribble both basketballs through the back door at the same time to complete the Figure 8. This will require the player to be precise with the basketballs, especially at the center of the legs and just outside the legs in order to complete the skill. Progress to the front door at the same time as the skill is learned.

**DRILL – FRONT DOOR/BACK DOOR:** In the same stance, the player will have one basketball entering through the back door, while the other is entered through the front door, simultaneously. Essentially one basketball is traveling clockwise, while the other is traveling counterclockwise. Switch directions once the skill is learned.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Balanced defensive stance, no bobbing.
- Finger pad control.
- Head up.
- Control then speed.



## DRIBBLING ON THE MOVE: ONE BASKETBALL

### POSITION-APPROPRIATE SCORING; DRIBBLE MOVES OUT OF TEAM OFFENSE

At this level, application to a game scenario is what separates players and teams. It is beneficial for a players overall game to learn every move possible because all situations cannot be predicted when it comes to such a dynamic game. However, there is also great value in understanding the situations one will find themselves in, within the scope of the teams offense and how to best take advantage of those catches. For example, if a team runs a set that vacates one side of the floor for a split second prior to another player cutting to that area, it is imperative to not only understand that split second of opportunity, but also where the defense is coming from and which type of move would most effectively get you there at the appropriate time. When working on moves to score, put players in a position they will likely find themselves in the game. Elevate their understanding and comprehension within the skill work to increase their awareness of everyone on the floor. Encourage players to execute the moves at game intensity and speed. Breakdown the offense to incorporate 2 or 3 players, have all players catching the basketball at some point during the skill work and making the appropriate move to score.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Make moves applicable to game situations based on offense.
- Game intensity and speed.
- Read defense within offense.
- Drill in practice, application in games – multidimensional learning/teaching.



### RELIEVING PRESSURE AT THE RIGHT TIME

There is an art to relieving heavy defensive pressure with the use of the dribble. It is a necessary skill to learn in order to avoid five-second calls, make entry passes or tough angle passes within the confines of the offense. Not only is the skill an art, but the best players know

exactly how to relieve pressure at the right time, setting themselves and teammates up to complete plays.



**AVOID FIVE-SECOND CALLS:** In addition to late game situations, players can find themselves in a situation where they are supposed to reverse the basketball, but the teammate is not open. While dribbling, the official is counting if being closely guarded. This is a situation where this type of dribble is needed, to relieve pressure and reset the count. This can be accomplished by taking a hard dribble or two toward the basket, simulating a legitimate drive, then pull back abruptly, allowing the momentum of the defender to travel backwards, while the offensive player separates creating space. Regardless of the count, this can be an effective way to keep the defensive player off guard.

**USE OF DRIBBLE TO CREATE PASSING LANE:** As players progress through the game of basketball, you always hear discussion about how difficult it is to make a simple entry pass to the wing. Defensive players continue to get bigger, stronger and faster as the game is played at a higher level, making the entry pass more challenging and dependent upon timing. An experienced ball-handler will take the defender to one side of the floor, change directions quickly, creating space in the opposite direction in order to deliver the wing entry pass in stride with the teammate. This is fairly common and an obvious place to work on the use of the dribble. To take it to a higher level, think about the difficult pass that has to be made for a back door layup, for example. If the offensive player does not use a dribble to create space between themselves and the defender, the pass remains difficult. When the dribble is used, most of the time toward the offensive player cutting, creating space, the pass can be completed at a much higher rate of success. Understanding the offense and anticipating two or three cuts ahead of actual occurrence will allow for this type of high-level ball-handling.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Understand and exploit momentum of defender.
- Understand offense and where next pass is likely to occur.
- Create space at correct time and angle.
- Use dribble for purpose.



## SPLITTING DOUBLE-TEAM

Splitting the double-team with the use of the dribble can be tricky and should be used in the correct situation. As an observant and reactive offensive player, the right moment will present itself when the two defenders double teaming are not quite in sync, working together to seal the middle of the trap, or are late arriving at the trap. A creative ball-handler will get one of the two defenders going in one direction, usually with a jab or shoulder movement, then be able to perform a crossover through the trap, accelerating out of it. Common uses are in the backcourt against teams that press, and in on-ball screen situations against teams that hard hedge defensively. Coaches can recreate these situations in training through breakdown skills or via live game situations.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Read when opportunity is open.
- Use momentum against one defender.
- Quick, low dribble in middle of trap.
- Explode out of trap.



#### SLICING THE FLOOR – TRANSITION:

### ADVANTAGE SITUATIONS AND SECONDARY

**ADVANTAGE SITUATIONS:** The dribble can be used to create an advantage situation that might not otherwise be there. For example, if a player has the basketball running the right lane, with one defender back in the lane and one teammate in the same right lane ahead of the basketball, this is an opportunity for the ball-handler to slice the floor, creating a 2 on 1 advantage situation. If the ball-handler does not slice the floor, the lone defensive player can defend two players at once, taking away any type of advantage for the offense. Slicing the floor with the use of the dribble will create the advantage situation, forcing the defender to make a decision and create a viable scoring opportunity. It also creates a great passing lane back against the grain, which can be challenging to defend.

**SECONDARY – TRANSITION:** It is true, passing the basketball is always faster than using a dribble. However, dribbling the basketball can create situations that are challenging to defend as well, if used properly. In secondary transition, slicing the floor as a ball-handler from one side of the floor to the other can be difficult to defend. For

example, if the post player that is running to the rim has a defender on the ball-side, slicing the floor quickly with a dribble may allow the post player to seal the defender on the back, creating a great angle for a layup. Also, slicing the floor on the dribble may create a 2 on 1 on the backside, many times creating a three-point opportunity for a teammate by penetrating and kicking. Slicing the floor with the dribble should be done with a purpose, to take advantage of the opponents transition defense.



### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Use for a purpose, create an advantage or better angle.
- Complete quickly, or lose advantage/angle.
- Be aware of players coming from behind in transition.



#### SKILL 4

### DRIBBLING ON THE MOVE: TWO BASKETBALLS

### FULL COURT COMBINATION MOVES

Progressing from designated dribbling moves in the full court with two basketballs, it is appropriate to mix up the dribbling moves within the same skill work. Allow players to be creative as they move up the basketball floor, reading the defense to make the appropriate move. Encourage players to pound the basketball and use both hands to make all moves while changing speed and direction.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Pound basketball.
- Stay low into move, explode out of move.
- Head up.
- Use both hands equally.



### DRIBBLING TO A PASS (MOVING TARGET) TO MOVE

This is a challenging skill that incorporates many facets of offensive skills into one drill. Coaches should feel free to be creative in setting

up various scenarios around the court to enhance team offense or specific player improvement.

The skill will involve two individuals, one with two basketballs standing just behind half court, the other player standing on the block. The player with the two basketballs will prepare to make an entry pass by dribbling the opposite direction of the individual on the block, making a move to change directions, heading back toward the individual on the block. The player on the block will put their head under the rim in preparation of a V cut or an L cut. Working on timing together, the player with the basketballs will break the free-throw line plain on the same side as the cut prior to making the entry pass. The player making the cut will hold the cut until the ball-handler is in a position to be able to make the entry. Using the outside hand, the player will make an entry pass to the outside hand of the cutter, ideally at the free-throw line extended three point line, or the wing. Keeping the second basketball alive, the player will then make a move at the top of the key to score at the rim or a pull-up jump shot. The player that caught the basketball on the wing will also make a move off of the dribble to score. Coaches can challenge players to make different moves with two basketballs, different moves with one basketball, use an on-ball screen, etc. Further, coaches can challenge players to make different types of entry passes, such as V cuts, L cuts, post entry passes, etc. Progress players to make correct reads based on how defenders play.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Variation of moves with two basketballs and one basketball.
- Keep second basketball alive while making the entry pass.
- Pound basketball.
- Stay low going into moves, explode coming out, change of pace.
- Pass to outside hand of cutters.



## DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *At the Performance Level, it is imperative to strive for mastery while training with the goal of applying the mastery in live game situations, with*

*as little game slippage as possible. Players will need to understand scouting reports and execute them as designed. Further, players will need to have the ability to make adjustments on the fly through own personal basketball IQ, but also through instruction from a coach during live play and in timeout situations. Players, at this level, that can take this type of instruction and implement immediately can have a huge impact on the outcome of the game.*

*In addition to mastering previously introduced on-ball defensive skills, below are a few additional skills to impart. There are a million drills that can be set up to reinforce these concepts, but the true indicator is application in live play.*

### SKILL 1

## CHANGING FEET

Being able to change the angle of the feet, forcing an offensive player a direction, mid-play is a high level and necessary skill to learn. This is most commonly seen while defending an on-ball screen. For example, on the closeout, the defender will close out to the top foot based on team principles. If an on-ball screen is set from the middle of the floor, depending on how the team is defending on-ball screens, the on-ball defender will likely need to switch the angle of the feet, forcing the offensive player to use the on-ball screen heading toward the middle of the floor. This mid-play adjustment will allow teammates to position correctly based on the game plan.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Teammates communicate to on-ball defender so they know to switch feet.
- Maintain spacing or belly up on offensive player while switching feet, based on game plan.
- After direction is dictated, urgent movements back to ball-handler.
- Once recovered to ball-handler, back to team defensive principles.



## SKILL 2

### PERSONAL STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES VS. OPPONENTS STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES

Understanding personal strengths and weaknesses defensively can be just as important, if not more important, than understanding an opponent's offensive strengths and weaknesses. Can a player that is not overly quick laterally defend a lightning quick penetrator? Yes, but only if the defender understands their own skill set and limitations and uses angles and teammates to defend the offensive player, rather than rely on pure speed. Coaches should work with players to understand strengths and weaknesses and how to counter balance those with opponents offensive skill sets, personnel and tendencies. Players ideally should develop defensive skills and concepts to defend all types of offensive players, counter balancing personal strengths and weaknesses.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Make sure players understand personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Make sure players understand how to use skill set to offset offensive strength.
- Players should defend all types of offensive player in preparation.



#### DISCIPLINE

Staying disciplined on the defensive end is imperative for a solid team defensive scheme and this starts with the defender on the basketball. On-ball defenders that are not disciplined in their stance and positioning at this level will get burned by good teams, which will create a disadvantage for the entire team. For example, when an offensive player shoots the basketball, it is important for the defender to contest the shot, with the outside hand (same side as shooter), while staying on the floor. Defenders that are undisciplined and jump in the air to contest, many times finds themselves either fouling the shooter or being blown by as a result of a shot fake. Further, defenders that are defending on the basketball that constantly reach at the ball-handler, at this level, will be exposed by a good team, resulting in a foul or being beat off the dribble. Consequently, this puts the defensive team at a disadvantage, many times playing 4 on 5. At this level, steals typically occur on the backside of defenses out of help side, not on the basketball. Stay disciplined, influence the basketball in a certain direction and allow the team defense to take shape.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Discipline positioning of feet, body, hands.
- Do not leave feet to contest shot.
- Contest with outside hand to alleviate foul calls across the offensive players body.



## SKILL 3

### IN-GAME ADJUSTMENTS

Basketball can become a chess match at the Performance Level, between two teams on both ends of the court. Defensively, a team may begin the game pushing the offensive player to the baseline with an extended help side system to cover penetration. It may work for four possessions; the offensive team will likely make an adjustment to counter the defense. At this point in time, a coach will mid game make an adjustment to push the ball-handler in a different direction, or be more conservative in help side, just as an example. This adjustment will require players to quickly change the mindset they went into the game with. Players and teams that can successfully make these types of adjustments will impact the outcome of the game. Players should also be able to make adjustments in mid game without the coach having to provide all of the answers. For example, if an on-ball defender gets scored on by an offensive player catching and shooting a three pointer on ball-reversal, the defensive player should adjust how far away they are in help side and execute a long closeout on the offensive player chasing them off of the three point line. Players should understand how they are scored on and make appropriate adjustments. Many times coaches cannot get instruction out to players, especially when the defense is on the other end of the floor. This is where the player needs to be able to make an in game adjustment to influence the game. Empower your players to make adjustments!

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Clarity of priority for team defense scheme – empower players to make decisions.
- Precise instruction in timeouts for adjustments.
- Understand players comprehension and instruct accordingly.
- Big picture understanding for players for team defense.



# PERFORMANCE LEVEL

## FOOTWORK AND BODY CONTROL



### OFFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Footwork and body control are important at all levels, and the Performance Level continues to develop these skills. Footwork and body control now involves more game speed action with quick change of directions. This level builds on what was taught in the Introductory, Foundational, and Advanced levels. This is essential for a player to be able to execute a fundamental successfully most of the time. The coach must realize that what is poor footwork and body control for one player on a particular fundamental might not be poor for another. The coach must take this into consideration at this level when continuing to teach footwork and body control.

#### SKILL 1

#### PIVOTING

This skill advances the footwork and body control of the pivot for the player. A pivot takes place when one foot is lifted off the floor while the other foot is used to turn the body. When players receive the basketball, they can use either a front or a reverse pivot to protect the basketball from the defense, to pass to a teammate, or to make a move to the basket. A pivot can be made while on the run with or without the basketball, for example, when performing a crossover dribble or a v-cut. A pivot can also be made when a player is stationary, such as when a player uses it to gain an advantage. In this level, we now use the pivot in team offensive work such as 2 on 2, 3 on 3 and 4 on 4. The pivot now involves use at the different positions – post play, after receiving the basketball at the wing and at the guard position.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Pivot on one foot using a front pivot which is turning the body forward 180 degrees on the pivot.
- Pivot on one foot using a reverse pivot which is turning the body backwards 180 degrees on the pivot.
- When attacking after a pivot is made stay low and push off to go to the basket.
- Keep the basketball close to the body and keep the body between the basketball the defensive man.
- Keep low with feet spread, knees bent and rear end down but keep the chin, head and eyes up.
- If you let the head get forward or sideward as you make your stop, you are likely to lose your balance.



## CHANGING DIRECTION/SPEED AND BODY CONTROL

### SKILL 2

Offensive players use cuts to change direction quickly while staying in balance in order to create space between them and the defender to get open for passes or shots. Change of pace and change of direction with and without the basketball are two of the best assets a player can have but must be performed with quickness. Making changes in angles rather than arcs is very important to improving the individual game. The length of the step may vary with the player and the game situation but generally short, choppy steps are better to attain quickness. At this level, the change of direction is now emphasized with quickness and speed.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Make change of directions in angles and not arcs.
- Push off the foot in the opposite direction you want to go.
- Turn shoulders and feet in the direction you want to go.
- Head should stay over the feet.
- Short choppy steps will help increase quickness.
- A change of pace should be taught with a hesitation, maybe a head fake up and a quick push off with the back foot.



## DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *In this level, the defense will be working on stance along with movement. A defender must be able to slide his feet and maintain an arm's length distance from an opponent who is attempting to drive or cut to the basket. The player should move the leg nearest the intended direction about two feet to that side and then slide the other foot until the feet are once again shoulder width apart.*

### SKILL 1

## PROPER STANCE

The proper defensive stance should be introduced at the Introductory level with continued progression in the Foundational, Advanced, and Performance levels. Feet should be wider than the shoulders, hands above the waist, chin up with the head in a position that is above the knees and not leaning forward. This will give the defender the ability to move in all directions and making pivots in order to be a good defender. When guarding an opponent with the basketball, the defensive player should maintain the defensive stance with one hand down to help prevent against the crossover dribble and the other hand up in the passing lane to deflect a pass attempt.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- The weight should be evenly distributed on both feet with the feet a little wider than the shoulders.
- Do not cross your legs, except when trying to catch up but slide and glide with the feet.
- Keep head at the same height without permitting it either to bob up and down or to get forward or backward of the midpoint between the two feet.
- Judge the distance you should be away from your player according to how far the player is from the basketball and the basket.
- Fake hand and front foot but do not lean.



## SKILL 2

### 360-DEGREE MOVEMENTS

The footwork involved with movement on defense is staying in the basketball position, pushing off the top foot, sliding in direction of the offensive player and staying arms distance from the offensive player. Many times the defender must turn the offensive player such as when the offensive player is working to dribble the basketball up the court. In this case the defender's foot positioning will change. The player must position the foot closest to the rim line which is the imaginary center line running from rim to rim ahead of the other foot and arm's length from the dribbler. The foot closest to the rim line must be inside the dribbler's foot to force a baseline dribble. This will also involve moving and playing defense when your man does not have the basketball. Work hard to maintain and increase your peripheral vision so that you may keep both your man and the basketball within your sight at all times. To help defensive movements keep one hand pointing toward the basketball and the other hand pointing toward your man whenever one of his teammates has the basketball.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Knees slightly bent with hands above the waist.
- Pivot to change directions called drop steps.
- Push off the top foot to move in any of 360 degree movements.
- Keep moving and anticipating. Never get caught standing still or standing straight up.
- Try to keep the head level when moving and not bob up and down.



# PERFORMANCE LEVEL

## PASSING AND RECEIVING



### OFFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *Passing and receiving are necessary skills in the game of basketball to legally advance the basketball throughout the court of play. At the Performance Level, passing and receiving focuses on mastery within game application incorporating all skills of the game. Understanding personnel, own team tendencies and opponents tendencies will allow for a higher level of decision making, improving and allowing for precise passing.*

#### SKILL 1

### PASSING OUT OF THE DOUBLE-TEAM

Developing an understanding of how to pass out of a double-team can be challenging as there are many variables to consider, such as timing and location of defender, location on the floor, by which defenders, where offensive players are spaced on the floor, time and score of the game, etc. A few examples are discussed below, by position.

**PERIMETER:** Double-teams most commonly come in the backcourt or in a half-court trap or run-and-jump situations for perimeter players. Consequently, many times the double-team is coming from the backside of the offensive player. For purposes of explanation, in this scenario the trap is occurring on the sideline with the individual forcing the trap coming from the middle of the floor.

- A few things to consider while passing out of a double-team are timing of the trap, location on the floor and location of offensive players.

- If the individual forcing the trap is late, passing off of the dribble immediately out of the double-team to an open player, in the middle of the floor, can be most effective. If spacing and timing is proper, there will likely be no need for a ball fake but rather a quick pass off of the dribble, splitting the double-team.
- By drawing two defenders, offensive players can create an advantage situation if spacing is correct with quick movement of the basketball out of the trap.
- Another effective move to create a passing angle out of a double-team, in particular toward the middle of the floor, is to ball fake sideline or back toward the middle. With a convincing ball fake the defender will likely jump in the air attempting to block the pass, creating an opportunity to pivot in between the two defenders opening a passing lane to a teammate.
- A quick pivot through the double-team with a crisp pass is necessary in order to take advantage of a small window of opportunity.
- Another effective move to pass out of a double-team is the use of a pivot around one of the defenders. If the double-team is coming from the middle with momentum heading toward the sideline, it can be highly effective to use a front pivot, stepping completely around the defender, using the body to protect the basketball and making a one-hand chest pass back to the offensive player. This type of pivot allows the offensive player to place the body between the basketball and the defender creating a passing lane back to the teammate. A front pivot is preferred to allow vision of the rotating defenders. If a reverse pivot is used, a defender can rotate to steal the pass without being seen.
- Patience and poise is always a necessary component while passing out of a double-team.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Awareness of where and when double-team is coming.
- Vision of defenders and teammates – make early pass if possible.
- Drawing two defenders will create advantage to attack out of if pass is completed properly.



- Use of appropriate ball fakes and pivots to create passing lanes and protect basketball.
- Complete crisp pass out of double-team.
- Patience & poise.

**POST:** At this level, double-teams will occur in various ways, on the catch, once a dribble is made, from the middle of the floor, from the top of the floor, out of man or zone defense, etc. To determine where the double-team is coming from initially, the fundamental principles to utilize are the 3 C's: Catch, Chin, and Check:

- Feel where the post defender is located, this will indicate which direction the double-team may be coming from or, at the very least, which direction to make a post move toward.
- For purposes of this explanation, the double-team is coming from the top of the key, with the ball-side denial defenders staying home.
- In this scenario, the individual creating the double-team typically has some space to cover if the entry pass into the post is not anticipated, making a quick move toward the direction of the double-team potentially effective.
- If the defender is not late arriving, then it is imperative to protect the basketball while surveying the court to see the rotating defenders on the floor.
- In many cases, the use of a reverse pivot can buy time as well as create space to make an effective pass out of the double-team. It is important to remember in many cases, the opposite wing ("garden spot") is open after all of the rotations.
- If the double-team is coming from the top, a quick pass to the top before the rotation could also be effective. Vision of the defenders rotating is critical.
- Use of a pivot, ball fake or in some rare cases a dribble, can help create space to complete an appropriate overhead pass out of the double-team, allowing the offensive team to attack on the backside of the defense.
- Just as with perimeter play, patience and poise is a necessary component to completing effective passes out of any double-team.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Catch, Chin, Check.
- Vision of where the double-team is coming from, arriving late or not.
- Vision of the defenders rotating.
- Use pivot, ball fake, or rare dribble to create space to complete overhead pass to attack on backside.
- Patience & poise.



## ATTACK DEFENSE BASED ON TEAM/PERSONNEL TENDENCIES

### SKILL 2

Having a comprehensive understanding of how both an individual defender and a team tends to play on the defensive end can help an offensive player and team execute the offense using different types of passes to score. For example, if a team plays an over-aggressive style, denying every catch, an offensive team may clear a side out to set up a backdoor cut. Knowing this as a passer will allow the player to establish the appropriate angle to make a bounce pass off of the defenders back side, arriving at the appropriate time. Without creating this angle at the right time, selling the entry pass to allow for an open backdoor cut, the pass will likely be unsuccessful at this level.

- In addition to understanding team tendencies, a great passer will understand individual defensive tendencies to create opportunities on the offensive end.
- For example, if a post defender in a low side denial position with the basketball located in the ball-side corner continually does not adjust positioning on the basket side with ball reversal, then a high-low seal would make sense.
- At this level, the player at the top of the key should recognize opportunity prior to it occurring in addition to the baseline player recognizing the basketball needs to be reversed to seal, allowing for a quick, efficient and appropriate pass into the post player sealing.
- If the player does not recognize the opportunity, the passing lane will likely close quicker than a pass can be made.

- Another great example is recognizing that a defender routinely neglects to position in help-side, which would allow for a post job or back door cut. These are opportunities that should be recognized on the floor, in live play, and used for an offensive advantage.

Establish these situations in practice to help players develop strong decision making based on how defenders position. Continue to enforce the concepts during games, when appropriate through adjustments and reinforce them in post-game reflections and/or film sessions. The goal is for players to recognize advantage situations, passes ahead of the offensive possession and execute accordingly.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Observe defenses and defenders tendencies during live game play – attack accordingly.
- Create passing angles to take advantage of out of position defenders/defenses.
- Recognize where the basketball needs to be passed to in order to take advantage of how defenders position.



### SKILL 3

## ART OF NO-LOOK PASS

Many coaches prefer for players to have vision of where passes are being made, but at this level, it can be appropriate to master the art of a no look pass. A no-look pass requires complete awareness of the basketball court, including an understanding of speed and location of the teammate passing to in order to successfully complete such a pass. Many times, an ideal situation for a no-look pass comes in an advantage situation, such as in transition. By looking one direction and getting the defender to think and freeze or even move in that direction, it opens a passing lane in the opposite direction. Many times a believable no-look pass can lead directly to a layup if performed properly in the advantage situation.

The actual no-look pass will require the offensive player to make it appear they are really passing to a specific player. Eyes will be on the target, body language and momentum traveling toward this direction. Once the player opposite becomes open (seen out of the



peripheral), a crisp pass across the body will be made to the newly open teammate. Just as with all passing, lead the teammate to the open spot, completing a crisp pass that leads directly to the shot.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Complete floor awareness.
- Sell the defender in one direction with eyes, body and momentum.
- Crisp pass back across body leading directly to shot.



## TIMING AND PRECISION PASSING

### SKILL 4

At this level, defenders are quicker, bigger, and stronger and adapt to situations and personnel at a much higher level. Consequently, passing has to be completed with exact timing and precision without much room for error. Below are few examples by position.

**PERIMETER:** Throughout the passing section, post entry and back door passing and the importance of, has been alluded to. Another example that is often neglected is the precision involved in passing in transition or advantage situations. For example, let's take a situation of a ball-handler having an offensive teammate out in front and a defender picking up the basketball. Add in another defender running along side of the ball handler but slightly behind the teammate that is running at full speed. What type of pass would be appropriate in this situation? Many would say a lob pass, but this pass is highly difficult not only to complete, but also to catch and finish without a turnover. In this case, a long bounce pass splitting the two defenders would be more effective. This type of pass requires a great deal of timing and precision. The basketball will likely be thrown with one hand, splitting the two defenders, with the bounce occurring close to the defender in order to keep hands out of the way. It should hit the offensive player at the waist in stride, leading directly to a layup.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Take advantage of small window of opportunity to complete precise pass, little room for error.
- Transition, bounce pass easier to complete and handle than lob.
- Pass with one hand, bounce at defenders feet.
- Hit teammate in stride at waist level leading directly to shot.



**POST:** Making a high low pass can require a great deal of timing and precision and should be mastered at this level. Part of becoming a successful high low passer is to know the teammates playing with. For example, one teammate may clear the lane allowing more room for error on the pass. Another teammate may give up a seal on the left side, while tending to hold a better seal on the right side. Knowing these elements can assist on where and when to deliver a high low pass. In general, on the catch, say at the high post, teammates should always look for their partner sealing. Squaring up and creating an attack presence so the defense cannot anticipate such a pass is necessary. The actual pass should have some touch on it, between a crisp chest pass and a lob with too much air under it. Many times the pass will need to travel over the defenders out stretched hand and drop into the hands of the teammate without traveling out of bounds or too far under the basket to complete the layup. It is important to have vision of the entire floor, understanding where help-side might be rotating from. The basketball should be delivered to the target hand, possibly leading the player, away from the help-side defender. The timing and precise delivery can be challenging to master, but can be a nightmare to defender if completed properly.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Know teammates tendencies.
- Square up in attack mode.
- Vision of the entire floor.
- Put some air under pass, but not too much – over defenders hand but not out of bounds.
- Hit target hand and lead where is open.



## DECISION MAKING AND PASSING USING ON-BALL SCREEN

The golden rule coming off of an on-ball screen as a ball-handler, the first thought should be to score. The momentum and actions coming off the on-ball screen should also make the defenders believe this is the first intention, regardless if there is another offensive option preferred at that moment in time. The ball handler should also be aware of the defenders defending the screens in addition to the rest of the floor to understand how help-side is rotating.

Below are different options to attack using the pass, which, as mentioned above are secondary options for the ball-handler that is first looking or indicating an intention to score.

**OPTION – HIT ROLLER:** As a ball-handler, the decision making process begins at the point where shoulders are met with the screener. From this point, how the defenders play the screen will determine next steps. In this case, the defenders switch the screen, allowing the screener to roll to the basket sealing a smaller defender behind. The ball-handler must come off of the screen hard and immediately create spacing and an angle to complete this pass, most times, using a bounce pass. Vision of the entire court is imperative once the determination of how the defenders involved in the screens are playing the screen. The bounce pass will travel between the two defenders, so the angle needs to be opened at the correct time, which is the job of the ball-handler, moving the basketball from one side of the body to the other to complete the pass. Delivering the pass on the run leading to an immediate shot is preferred to cut down on the chances of help-side rotating in time.

**OPTION – HIT POP:** This option opens up when attacking off of the screen; both defenders go with the ball-handler, either trapping, hedging or through miscommunication. In this scenario, the individual that sets the screen will recognize this advantage and pop, creating space and an angle from the ball-handler to receive a pass in order to make an immediate jump shot or attack the basket on the catch. The ball-handler must attack the two defenders and help with creating this space, also buying time for the screener to pop and get their feet set to receive the basketball. Many times, this pass has to be made off of the dribble using a crisp overhead pass to allow the individual

popping to get a shot off before help-side rotates. In other instances, mainly if being trapped, a pivot back toward the popper may be necessary to protect the basketball and provide a controlled pass that can be received ready to score or attack.

**OPTION – PENETRATE KICK TO TEAMMATE BEHIND ROLLER:** a situation such as this requires the ball-handler to see the next defender (besides the two involved in the screens) in order to make the correct decision. While using the on-ball screen, the two defenders switch, allowing the individual setting the screen to roll, sealing the switching defender. The individual defending the offensive player in the corner recognizes the disadvantage this creates and slides into help-side taking away the roller. In this scenario, the offensive player in the corner should relocate toward the ball-handler, making the run for that defender to recover much longer. The ball-handler should recognize a situation like this and find the open teammate rotating out of the corner. Again, the actual pass many times will be directly off of the dribble, but could be off of a pivot if necessary. As always, delivery of the pass should be received leading to a scoring opportunity without adjustment.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Decision making process begins at screen.
- Awareness of defenders involved in screen and in help-side rotating – floor vision.
- Immediately create space and angles to complete successful next pass.



### SKILL 6

## RECEIVING: TYPES OF SQUARE UP BASED ON SITUATION

The use of pivots seem to be underutilized, yet at this level, can be used effectively to create space for scoring and/or passing opportunities. Being able to understand situations and defenders while using both feet in both directions on receipt of a pass should be utilized at this level. Below are a few examples per position.

**PERIMETER:** while receiving the basketball on the wing, an offensive player many times will use a front pivot, or inside foot, in order to



establish they are in attack mode to the defender. This allows the offensive player to create momentum to the basket while forcing the defender on their heels. It also leads the offensive player into a position to make multiple moves through jab steps or off of the dribble, while also allowing for a clear vision of the court in front of them. If an offensive player would square up using a reverse pivot, if the defender is not completely overplaying, then the defender would have an opportunity to jam the offensive player, making the offensive player the reactor with the defender dictating the action. An example where an offensive player would want to use a reverse pivot while receiving the basketball on the perimeter, would be if the defensive player is overplaying on the denial, getting out of position allowing an opportunity to attack the basket. In this case, the offensive player would receive the basketball with the shoulders facing the passer, catching the basketball most likely on the outside of the body. On the catch, the offensive player would make a reverse pivot a full 180 degrees heading in a straight line to the basket. The pivot allows the offensive player to protect the basketball and take advantage of how the defender is playing the pass.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Be in attack mode as often as possible on offense, which typically means front pivot.
- Use pivot into jab steps, moves off the dribble and to create vision of the court.
- Denial defender overplays, opportunity to use reverse pivot to attack rim.
- Reverse pivot should be used to create space without being out of attack mode.



**POST:** use of the pivot is critical in post play and is dependent on the 3 c's; catch, chin, check and overall feel of where the defender is located. In the low block, a reverse pivot can be used to establish space from the defender, in many cases allowing for a quick turnaround jump shot. This type of pivot can be especially effective if a front pivot is used with success several times. At this time, a defender may be anticipating the front pivot. Use of the reverse pivot will give a different look and create space for a scoring or passing opportunity. A reverse pivot in the low block may also be utilized to buy time away from an arriving double-team, creating an extra second to make an appropriate pass, or even create a scoring opportunity in

the opposite direction prior to the double-team arriving. In addition to low block play, receiving the basketball at the high post, short corner or anywhere outside of the lane is critical. If a defender is playing the lane, a front pivot into a short jump shot is highly effective. The front pivot allows the momentum to be going toward the basket squaring up for a scoring opportunity while allowing vision of the floor looking for a higher percentage or advantage opportunity. Whether in the low block or at the high post, reading and feeling where the defender is located is imperative to creating solid offensive opportunities at this level.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Catch, chin, check.
- Feel where the defense is, understand how playing and what they are trying to take away.
- Use appropriate pivot to create space from defender for shot or passing opportunity.



## OFFENSIVE PASSING AND REBOUNDS

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *The amount of time spent playing defense off the basketball far exceeds the time spent playing on-ball defense, making denial defense imperative. At the Performance Level, teaching game application of denial defense, to impact the outcome of the basketball game is desired, by understanding the opposing teams offensive and personnel tendencies and how to use denial concepts within the team defensive philosophies. Application through strategy is key.*

### SKILL 1

## USING DENIAL TO DISRUPT OFFENSIVE FLOW

The use of denial defense can accomplish far more than just resulting in a steal. It is important, at this level, to understand how the offensive team is comfortable scoring; from where on the floor, from which

player, where the passes come from, etc. For example, a team may be highly effective once the basketball is reversed through the high post. Denying the high post, not allowing ball reversal, will take away the offensive teams first option, potentially creating a far more challenging offensive flow. The denial did not necessarily create a turnover, but it could create a bad shot being taken from an offensive player that is not comfortable with the shot. In many scenarios, this is just as impactful as a steal. Another example, an offensive team may be highly effective when they catch the basketball on the wing at the three-point line, allowing for screening action and good angles to make difficult timing passes. If a defender can make the catch two steps off of the three-point line, those timing passes become much more difficult to complete. Another example to consider is against a highly effective dribble penetrating team. In this case, a team may choose to deny further up the line toward the basketball, making the floor look small with few gaps to be able to penetrate into to get to the rim. This type of defense forces jump shots or outside shots, which can be advantageous to a defensive team if the offensive teams strength is dribble penetration to the rim.

It is important to remember, many times the nuances of the game that do not show up directly on a stat sheet can change the outcome of games, at this level.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Understand how the opposing team is comfortable scoring – use denial to alter this comfort level.
- Use denial to extend the offense beyond “normal” spacing or throw off offensive timing.



### SKILL 2

## DENIAL BASED ON OFFENSIVE PERSONNEL

Similar to using denial defense to disrupt offensive flow, the same concepts hold true for specific player personnel. A player for example, may be most comfortable catching the basketball at a certain position on the floor, scoring at a high percentage when this occurs. The use of strategic denial defense can deter the catch at this position, making an effective scorer do so out of the comfort zone. This could result in several fewer points in the game, directly impacting the game. Below are examples specific to position:

**PERIMETER:** If there is an offensive player that is the leading scorer that can penetrate and shoot a three-point shot, and the entire offense revolves around this player, it might make sense to adjust by having the defender in an all out denial position essentially face guarding, not allowing a catch or making every catch as difficult as possible. This can be highly frustrating to the offensive player and can impact the point production of an individual player and team. Further, a denial position may look different based on if the offensive player is a three-point threat or more of a penetrator. If the player is a three-point shooter, an all out overplaying denial position would be appropriate. If the player is a penetrator, more of a soft denial might make sense, allowing for a cushion on the catch to defend the penetration.

**POST:** If there is an offensive player that scores efficiently on the right block turning over the left shoulder, a strategic adjustment may be to deny on the low side, making a catch difficult on the players preferred side. Further, establishing position on the low side will allow the defender to sit on the left shoulder on the catch should the offensive player receive the basketball. A defensive player can also use the denial position to make the catch one step off of the block. This can result in a post player that is comfortable with the back to the basket, face up, throwing off the rhythm of the player.

The more a defensive player understands personnel, the more strategic denial positions can disrupt offensive possessions and scoring opportunities for certain players.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Denial principles are necessary for team defense. Adjusting and altering from the principles based on the opposing teams player personnel can impact a game at this level.
- Overall understanding of how individual players score and overall tendencies, adjusting accordingly to disrupt the rhythm.



### SKILL 3

## DENYING PERIMETER L-CUT

If executed properly, an L-cut can be much more challenging to defend than a standard V-cut, due to the offensive players ability to get into the body of the defender closer to the spot of the catch, assuming the catch is on the wing. The goal of the offensive player on this type of cut is to establish a foot higher than the top foot of the defender and to physically get into the body of the defender in order to change directions effectively, creating an opening for an entry pass. Because of this, positioning of the defender denying the basketball is critical. The defender must do their work early, establishing position up the line toward the passer, creating some space from the cutter in order to maintain the positioning at the most critical point, not allowing the offensive player to win the top foot positioning. If this positioning is established and maintained, it makes it difficult for the offensive player to gain an advantage, which is ideal in defending this cut, either resulting in a steal, impacting timing or pushing the catch further out than desired, etc.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Do work early.
- Establish position and maintain space from cutter.
- Do not allow offensive player to win top foot positioning at pinnacle of cut.



### SKILL 5

## IN-GAME ADJUSTMENTS

In-game adjustments at this level can be critical to a team and players success. Being able to quickly communicate adjustments to an individual and team is important to the success of any team defense, and players should be trained accordingly to be able to understand and quickly react to such adjustments. It is encouraged to prepare for these types of adjustments through training so the adjustments and/or terminology are not new during the heat of the game. Further, teams will begin to excel when players can recognize and make in game adjustments without a coaches word. Coaches are encouraged to empower players to make quick decisions based on personnel and how teams are effectively scoring. This trust is established in practice

and through game situations and post-game reflections over time. Empower players to think and understand the game of basketball, understanding situations and reacting according to team defensive philosophies to impact the outcome of the game.



### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Communicate effectively on all in game adjustments – this should be practiced, not new during a game.
- Prepare for such situations in practice and discuss adjustments that could have been made in game.
- Establish trust in practice/game situations/post-game reflections with players – empower players as coaches cannot always get messages into a fast paced game and special situations.
- Create an environment for players to think and understand the game of basketball.



# PERFORMANCE LEVEL REBOUNDING



## OFFENSIVE REBOUNDING

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Rebounding – both offensive and defensive – is a fundamental skill that should be taught. Possession of the basketball comes more often from missed shots than any other way. More than any other basic basketball skill, the success of offensive rebounding relies largely on players' desire and courage. In this level, the skills are defined by tactical positioning for offensive rebounding. Tipping the ball, getting the ball out of your area and designated offensive rebounding areas are examples of tactical rebounding work.

### SKILL 1

#### TIPPING THE BASKETBALL

Offensive rebounders may tip the basketball away from the board for possession at times when they are not in position to get either an offensive tip or clear possession. Offensive rebounders should learn to use their wrists and fingers for tipping and not to bat at the basketball. They should also keep the palms of the hands toward the basket in order to have better tipping control. The offensive rebounder must always be alive to give the second and third effort. Many offensive baskets have been made simply because the rebounder refused to give up and kept giving the extra effort until the basket was made.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Use wrist and fingers to tip the basketball.
- Use the tip to keep the basketball alive if the basketball cannot be grasped with both hands.
- Must be ready to jump several times to tip the basketball in the basket or to a teammate.
- Jump quickly to tip the basketball.



### SKILL 2

## GETTING THE BASKETBALL OUT OF THE AREA

Movement for offensive rebounds is a key to getting the basketball from missed shots out of your area. This is a great skill but one that few master as this skill needs determination, desire to get the basketball, quickness to the basketball and a keen understanding of the angles for missed shots as previously talked about in the previous level. A player who constantly moves and keeps the hands above the shoulders has a good chance to rebound the basketball when it goes out of your area.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Movement as the shot is taken is a key to rebounding.
- Know the angle of the missed shots – opposite and long for long shots.
- Be quick to react to the missed shot and jump to get the basketball.
- If you cannot grab the basketball with both hands tip the basketball to a teammate or to the basket.



### SKILL 3

## DESIGNATED OFFENSIVE REBOUNDING AREAS

This skill is only done at the level 4 as it takes time and mature basketball players to mentally get to offensive rebounding areas. This involves the offensive players to get to a spot when the shot is taken by a teammate. While the offensive rebounders may not get to that spot, they will be moving to get in that spot which makes it much

more difficult to block them out. There are not any special positions on the court for the players but designated spots for the post, forward and wing can be assigned.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- As the shot is released, the offensive players move to the designated spots on the court for rebounds.
- Hands should be above the shoulders.
- Eyes try to remain on the basketball to watch the angle of the rebound.
- Stay low in the ready basketball position in order to jump for the missed shot.



## DEFENSIVE REBOUNDING

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *Tactical positioning for defensive rebounding may include many of the defensive rebounding skills we discussed in level 2 and level 3 with more emphasis on these same skills in order for the defensive rebounder to overcome better offensive rebounders. Strength is an obvious part of this level of rebounding. Going up between several players to get a rebound is crucial. Strong wrists, hands and fingers all are necessary when discussing skills at level 4.*

### SKILL 1

#### WAR

This drill is one in which there are three players in the lane area that try to get the missed shot and score. The coach will shoot the basketball and the players will fight for the rebound. The player who gets the basketball will go up and try to score while being fouled by the other two players. If the basketball hits the floor or goes outside the lane, the basketball is considered dead and the coach will shoot it again. Play to 3 baskets and then a new player will come into the drill. Play a made basket as a missed shot.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Must be very aggressive to get the missed shot.
- The player must be able to get the basketball in traffic using good basketball position.
- The players who do not get the basketball try to stop the shot of the offensive player.
- Must be able to catch the basketball cleanly and shoot.



## SKILL 2

### RED-WHITE REBOUNDED

This is a very aggressive rebounding drill to develop block out skill at the highest level. Two lines each at the elbows and the baseline corner of the lane. The basketball is tossed by one of the baseline players to either of the players at the elbow who shoots the basketball. The shot made or missed is rebounded and put back in by the player who gets the basketball. The two losers go to the top and the two winners go to the bottom lines. If the block out is done correctly each time, those two players should always be the ones that go to the bottom lines.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Stay low so you can absorb the contact from the offensive rebounders.
- Hands need to be above the shoulders.
- Knees bent in order to get the best height on rebounding to get the basketball.
- Use the rear end to block out the legs of the opponent so the offensive player has a difficult time to jump.



# PERFORMANCE LEVEL SCREENING



## OFFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *The screen at the Performance Level now includes much more tactical use of the screen and using the screen. The purpose of the offensive screen is to create indecision by the defenders which will allow a shot or a pass for a shot. With every screen set, the defenders must decide how to defend the screen. At this level, misdirection can also be used before the screen is set so the defenders have a hard time communicating the screen.*

## SKILL 1

### TACTICAL USE OF OFF-BALL SCREENS

The advanced use of off-ball screens includes the combination of both the screener and the player using the screen. These two players work together to create indecision by the defenders which can lead to easy baskets.

- As the screener sets the screen away from the basketball his eyes are on the defender and his teammate which will determine his movement. If his teammate makes a curl cut around his screen, the screener will then go opposite of the curl cut or step up to receive a pass.
- If the defender on the screen is anticipating the screen and is out of defensive help position, the screener plants the top foot and makes a hard basket cut looking for the basketball on his cut. This is called “slipping” the screen.
- As the defender on the screener reads the cut of the offensive player using the screen and hedges, the screener will “slip” to the basket.

- The screener will set up a flare cut if the defender on the offensive player using the screen is caught on the ball-side of the screener. The screener turns and sets the screen on the outside of the defender so the pass will go over the top of the screener to the offensive player for a shot. Usually the flare cut is set up by the offensive player faking the curl cut.
- The screener may also use a “rescreen” which involves a second screen for the offensive player. This could be a down screen first followed by a back screen for the same offensive player.
- Anytime there is a screen across the lane such as a post to post screen, the screener will turn back to the basketball in the opposite direction of the cutter. If the cutter goes low off the screen, the screener will roll back high to the basketball.
- The screener may look for more than one player to screen. For example, the player may set a down-screen and then a cross-screen across the lane.
- There may be also more than one off-ball screen. This is referred to as screening the screener. In this case, the screen may occur such as a down screen with another screener then screening. This causes a great deal of indecision on the part of the defenders as to defending this action.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The offensive player should not watch the basketball as he uses the screen but should keep his eyes on his defender so he can make the proper decision based on what his defender does with the screen.
- The screener will plant the top foot and cut straight to the basket when the defender anticipates the screen and attempts to cheat by playing over the top of it.
- When using the flare screen, the screener pivots toward the basketball to screen the defender who is caught on ball-side of the screener. The offensive player steps back from an attempted curl cut to use the screen.
- Spacing becomes important after the screen is set. The offensive player using the screen must clear from the screen to allow proper spacing for the screener to pivot back to the basketball.
- Communication by the two offensive players is just as important as the communication for the two defenders. The screener must let his teammate know that he is setting the screen for him to use — either by voice or hand signal.

## SKILL 2

### TACTICAL USE OF ON-BALL SCREENS



As play advances to higher levels and better defenders, on-ball screens are very useful to create indecision for the defenders which leads to more efficient offense. Setting screens on the basketball create scramble situations for the defenders which leads to easy baskets for the offensive team.

- A “slip” can be used on the basketball as well as off the screens. As the screener runs to set the screen for his teammate that has the basketball, he will get within two steps and then plant his front foot and make a quick change of direction to the basket with the hand up calling for the basketball. The key for the screener is when he sees his defender starting to hedge then the slip occurs.
- An option for the screener on side screens — screens set at the wing — is to roll baseline if the dribbler is double teamed or the screen defender hedges.
- As the dribbler comes off the screen, the defender on the screener may hedge or flatten out so the dribbler does not turn the corner. In this instance, the dribbler may be able to split the defenders on the dribble.
- The screener may be able to re-screen the dribbler — set one screen and then turn to set another screen for the dribbler as he reverses direction. This can be called the “twist.”

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The screener needs to run to set the screen as this will make it more difficult for the defender to hedge or double team the dribbler.
- On side screens the screener needs to read the defenders and either pop back or roll to the baseline.
- When the dribbler attempts to split the defenders on the dribble, the dribble and the dribbler must be kept low to split the defenders while going to the basket.
- A re-screen is a good option when the defender on the dribbler gets over the top of the screen. The dribbler can change direction and use the same screen again.

# DEFENDING SCREENS



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** A team must have one general method to cover screens whether it be switching, hedging, double teaming the screens, or getting over the top of screens. The offensive match ups will then determine if the defense will change for a particular offensive player. The general objective of defending screens is to keep the defense in tack and not go into a scramble situation.

## SKILL 1

### DEFENDING OFFENSIVE PLAYER MOVEMENT AWAY FROM BASKETBALL

- The defender guarding the offensive player moving away from the basketball must immediately be alert for a cutback – slipping the screen
- The defender must warn teammates in the direction your man is moving to be alert for a screen
- As the offensive player moves away from the basketball, the defender will stay in a position to help on the basketball and be ready for any screens away from the basketball.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Defender must communicate a possible screen for teammate.
- Stay in good help-side position so the off-ball screen is much more difficult to set on the defenders.
- The defenders must be in a flat stance so the defender can see the basketball and his offensive man.
- This type of screen away from the basketball is a comparatively easy switch.



## SKILL 2

### DEFENDING A SCREENER ADVANCING FROM SIDE

- The defender being screened should open up toward the possible screener and move one step toward the opposite side of your man.
- By moving over and opening up toward the potential screener will enable you to avoid the screen
- Opening up will also make possible an easy switch by placing you in a better position to prevent the screener from getting open on a roll if you cannot stay with your man
- The step away prevents your man from playing a possible switch and cutting by you on the opposite side.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Must have an awareness of the possibility of being screened if you are guarding the offensive player with the basketball.
- As the defender on the basketball anticipates a screen he must open up to the side of the screener – drop the foot closest to the screener back.
- Communication should take place between both defenders as the screener comes closer to the defender.
- Defenders must stay in a stance with the head up and the hands and arms above the waist.



## SKILL 3

### DEFENDING THE BLIND SCREEN

- The defender must open up by dropping the baseline foot back as soon as your teammate warns you of the approaching screen.
- By opening up, the defender can see the basketball and react to the pass.
- It is much more difficult to screen a man when his body and shoulders are in perpendicular position to the screener.
- Try to drive the offensive player that wants to use the screen toward the congested area where you have some other defenders in help position.

- On specific offensive players, it may be necessary to “tag” him as he tries to use the screen so the defender will get on the offensive player’s hip and go with him off the screen

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- As the blind screen is set, the defender on the screener must loudly call out the screen to his teammate that will be screened.
- A quick pivot by the defender receiving the screen will allow him to open up and see the basketball and slide with the offensive player.
- The defender should work to go on the ball-side of the blind screen which will prevent a direct pass to the offensive player.
- By keeping the hands high, this will prevent a pass to the offensive player using the blind screen.

### SKILL 4

## ROTATIONS WHEN DEFENDING PICK AND ROLLS

- Defending screens involves all five defenders with the defenders not directly guarding the screen or the screener in a position to help on the screening action.
- On a hedge by the screeners defender, the weak side player will drop off and defend the roll by the screener who will be open for a short time because of the hedge
- On a hedge, the screener’s defender must hedge and then scramble back to the screener who has rolled or popped to the open area.
- If a side screen takes place and the screener rolls to the baseline on a hedge, the weak side post player must cover the screener and the screener’s defender who hedged will quickly cover the weak side post.
- Baseline defenders when a middle screen is the action, must be open to the basketball and in a position to help stop the penetrating dribble if the basketball is advanced on the dribble to the basket.

- Any time a screen takes place on the court, the three defenders not involved in the screening action, must be ready to rotate to the basketball when the dribbler uses the screen.
- On a guard to guard screen or a post to post screen, a switch is easy to execute as the players are the same position.
- On a post to post screen, a general rule for this type of screen is switch if the post using the screen goes under the screen and stay if the offensive post goes over the top. The help side wing should be in a position to help on a post who rolls to high post.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Defenders not directly involved in the screens, must be in help side position to help stop the dribbler or the screener rolling to the basket.
- Hands and head of the help side defenders are up and eyes on the basketball and the offensive player they are guarding.
- If action requires a switch, all five defenders must be in position to be ready to rotate to the basketball in the event the switch does not stop the basketball.
- The main responsibility of the defenders is to not get caught up in a scramble situation but to stop the screening action with as little of rotation as possible.





# PERFORMANCE LEVEL

## SHOOTING

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Shooting is a necessary fundamental to learn in the game of basketball, as the object of the game is to score the basketball. Although it is important to always revisit proper shooting mechanics to maintain muscle memory, this level will focus elsewhere. At this stage of player development, the focus should be on the mentality of a shooter, decision-making abilities, making shots with consistency, and developing creativity with the basketball to increase scoring potential.

### SKILL 1

#### LAYUPS: FLOATER

A floater can be a necessary skill to have. It is often useful when a player is penetrating the lane and a defender slides into help who is either taller or a talented shot blocker. In this situation, shooting a typical layup will likely result in a blocked shot, making a floater an effective option.

- The footwork for a floater is the same as a normal layup. Players take off of one foot and rise with the knee on the same side as the shooting hand.
- The upper body movement, however, differs. Players must extend the shooting hand straight up and shoot an overhand layup that arcs high over a defender's hand. The basketball will travel significantly higher than a typical layup, as it must travel over a defender's arm that is extended and at the peak of a jump.
- This shot requires a different type of touch, as the basketball will likely fall directly through the hoop as a result of its high-arcing trajectory. This isn't always the case, but it is most common.



- This type of shot should be practiced with the dominant and nondominant hand. Players should also practice attacking the rim from different angles, and allow defenders to step in to help at various times from various angles.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Typical layup footwork: elevate and extend straight up.
- Overhand shot.
- High-arcing shot over defender.
- Work on timing and shot with both hands.



### SKILL 2

## LAYUPS: CRAFTY FINISHES

The higher the level of play, the less likely it is for a player to shoot an uncontested layup. Players will be forced to be more creative and crafty around the rim in order to get a layup off. There are countless ways to execute a shot around the rim. Below are a few examples:

- **STEP-THROUGH**
  - Many times, a defender will cut off the offensive player attacking the rim and will be anticipating a shot. With these two elements in play, the offensive player can take advantage of this by using a step-through to finish the layup.
  - Once the defender cuts the offensive player off, the player will pick the basketball up and shot fake the anticipating defender. Once the player leaves the floor, the offensive player will use a front pivot to step through the defender, creating a seal with the rear end. Then, the player can elevate up for a layup.
  - Protect the basketball with the body, and keep it high in order to take the layup quickly. This particular move can be used in a congested lane with much success.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Shot fake at the rim; lift eyes and basketball.
- Quick step through using front pivot.
- Seal defender on rear end.
- Protect basketball with body and keep high.
- Elevate quickly into layup.



## SPIN

- Just as above, many defenders will attempt to cut off an attacking offensive player. If the lane is less congested, a spin move could be a good skill to go to should the defender make a definitive move to cut the attacking offensive player off.
- As the defender cuts the dribble off, many times placing the hand on the basketball, the offensive player will quickly jump stop making one additional hard dribble, pivoting quickly on the inside foot, keeping the basketball tight to the body.
- The tighter the offensive player can spin, the better. This will prevent the defender from recovering or moving to the help side to adjust.
- Coming out of the spin, players should find the rim with their eyes and elevate quickly into a layup.



## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Survey lane prior to move.
- Jump stop combined with hard dribble to start spin.
- Keep basketball tight to body to protect.
- Spin as tight as possible.
- Immediately find the rim with eyes.
- Elevate up for layup; control momentum.



## DOUBLE-PUMP/CLUTCH

- A double-pump/clutch can be used to create opportunities while in the air that may not have been there when first elevating. It can be used to completely change directions to dodge a defender. It may also help to absorb contact from a defender in midair.
- To use a double-pump to change directions, the offensive player will elevate into the air, first. While this happens, a defender may come from the help side and try to contest the layup.
- As this occurs, the offensive player can pull the basketball back to the shoulder while still in the air, and adjust the positioning of the basketball and the body to get a clean layup attempt.

- This takes significant practice in order to understand the skill, how to incorporate the needed strength, and to become comfortable with midair adjustments. Further, this skill requires great court vision and a creative mind to make these decisions so quickly before implementing.
- Using a double-pump to absorb contact and then create a second opportunity to get the shot off also requires a great deal of skill and creative ability. As the defender comes from the help side to contest the layup midair, the offensive player will need to absorb the contact with the inside shoulder in order to reserve enough strength to complete the double-pump.
- The offensive player will show the basketball making the contest even more encouraging for the defender. Once the contact is absorbed in the air, the player will again bring the basketball back to the shoulder, allowing time for the defender to descend.
- As this occurs, the player will raise the basketball from the shoulder to shoot the layup. Many times, the actual shot will occur while the offensive player is on the way down. The body should protect the basketball if the offensive player absorbs the contact on the inside shoulder, allowing for space to get the shot off successfully, even if it is on the way down.
- Again, this takes a great deal of practice.
- Both of these examples should be practiced attacking the rim from different angles with help side coming from different angles and with different timing.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Court vision prior to elevating into the layup.
- Attack from various angles.
- Use body to advantage, either changing directions or absorbing contact.
- Protect basketball.
- Finish the layup even if fouled.
- Be creative.



## SKILL 3

### MINDSET OF A SHOOTER

So much of being a great shooter is a mindset, a mentality.

Shooters truly believe that any shot they take, from anywhere in the gym, will go in, no matter if they have missed or made the last 20 shots.



- This sense of confidence does not waiver and is built from watching the basketball go in day after day in practice. Players earn this confidence and begin to trust themselves. Additionally, great shooters have a short memory, which enables them to step up and hit a shot late in the game regardless of whether they have 30 or three points in the game.
- Being able to block out everything up to the point of taking a critical shot is imperative, and is a skill that is also developed over time. Confidence and poise under pressure is developed and earned, much like the physical mechanics of a shot.
- As a coach, it is important to understand the mentality the player has, and either build on what is already established, or help build a stronger and more confident mindset. This can be done through conversation, drill work in practice, and even verbal praise to that player directly, if need be. Pushing the right buttons to help a shooter is an important art for a coach.
- This mentality that a shooter will develop may not always be a positive for the team. For example, a player may be struggling with their shot in a game and may still be shooting every time they touch the basketball. At this point, it is important to help the player out of this “slump” while also not jeopardizing the team in that particular game.
- This can be a slippery slope. Many times a shooter just needs to see the basketball go through the hoop, even if it’s a layup or a free throw.
- Encourage players in this position to get to the rim, or give them a defensive assignment so they see some success on the basketball court. This will help get their mind off of the poor shooting and provide them an opportunity to positively impact the team.
- Something as small as this can help a shooter get back on track. Again, it is important to understand the mentality of the players in order to help put them in a position to be successfully individually, while producing for the team at large.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Help develop a shooter's mentality through work in practice.
- Provide an environment where a player can gain confidence while still pushing to be better.
- Instill trust in players.
- Understand the mentality, reinforce existing mentality or help develop a stronger one.

## SHOOTING OFF THE DRIBBLE: STEP BACK

### SKILL 4

Using a step-back off of the dribble can be an effective way to get a shot off against a defender pressuring the basketball.

- The key, just as with getting a jump shot off in the half court off of the dribble, is to get the defender moving backwards. The offensive player will take a hard dribble (or two) at the rim, getting the defender to react with a drop step.
- As this happens, the offensive player puts the inside shoulder into the chest of the defender, plant the inside foot, and push hard backward, creating the step-back. The more space that is created at this moment, the easier it will be to get the shot off prior to the defender recovering.
- On the step-back, it is easiest to gather on a hop. Pay attention to controlling the movement that is created going backward. It will be important to gather this momentum and rise up into the shot straight up or slightly in front of where the player took off.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Hard urgent dribble at the rim to get defender on heels.
- Plant inside foot and urgent push back off of that foot.
- Gather on hop.
- Control momentum.
- Rise into shot; proper shooting mechanics.

### SKILL 5

## UNDERSTAND GOOD SHOTS



Part of being a great shooter or scorer is establishing an understanding of the difference between a good shot and a forced shot. There is no way to document or go through every situation that will present itself in a game situation and declare what is a good shot and what is not.

- To a certain extent this is a “feel” that a player will develop on the floor, through the guidance, conversation, experience, and review of the coach, as well as the team the player plays for.
- At this level, this can be a constant evaluation and review with the player to help generate a trust and understanding between the player and the coach to enable the player to make positive decisions in a game environment that fits within the confines of the team offensive goals.
- Below are a few general examples to consider in starting the thought process:
  - FLOW OF OFFENSE
    - The best shooters tend to understand all of the nuances of the entire team offense; understanding where the basketball is, the timing of teammates' cuts and screens, and consequently understands where possible shots may arise for themselves. This understanding also allows a shooter to take shots that will occur within the flow of the offense.
    - For example, when attempting to break a zone offense, if a shooter is open on the first pass, they likely will be more open and catch the basketball in the flow on the seventh pass. Shooting with the defense rotating and in the flow of the offense allows for a better shot. It also helps the entire offense be ready to grab an offensive rebound.
    - Additionally, the more patient the offense is, the harder the defense works.
  - PERSONNEL STRENGTHS
    - Players on a team must understand the strengths of each teammate on the floor. For example, imagine if there are two players. One is at the top of the key, and one is on the wing. If both are wide open on ball-reversal for a three-point shot, it is critical to understand who is a better three-point shooter.

- If the player at the top of the key is most productive off of the dribble and the player on the wing is a pure three-point shooter, the player at the top of the key should make the extra pass to the player on the wing for the shot.
- It is not to say that both players cannot make a three-point shot; but rather, the team is playing to the strengths of the personnel that are on the basketball floor.
- This is the beauty and puzzle of a team: being able to utilize the strengths of 12 players and put them to the test of an opposing team's strengths.

#### – WHO IS HOT?

- High level players keep track in their mind of who is making things happen on both sides of the floor throughout the course of a game. Specifically, they pay attention to who is scoring effectively.
- Many times in a game, certain players will find themselves in what many people call “the zone,” where they feel like they can take any type of shot from anywhere on the floor and it will go in.
- As a team, if a teammate gets into this type of zone, it would make sense to feed that player the ball in a scoring position as many times as possible. It is amazing how many times an opportunity such as this goes unutilized, due to players simply being unaware.
- This really means two things: (1) get the basketball to the player who is hot, and (2) if the player that is hot has an open opportunity to shoot, take it.

#### – DEFENSIVE TENDENCIES

- Great shooters can outline the defensive tendencies of the players/teams who play them better than the actual defenders can.
- For example, if a certain player tends to over help on dribble penetration, this should be and noted by all players on the floor. If that particular player gets matched up on a shooter in transition, dribble-penetrating toward that defender might make sense in order to free up a shooter for a three-point attempt.



- Another example is if there are defenders that tend to turn their heads on the backside of a zone on an inbounds play. Here, a shooter may sneak down to the three-point line on the opposite side for an open look. These types of tendencies can lead to an easy shot attempt that has the potential to change a game, especially when games can come down to one possession.

#### – TIME AND SCORE

- Coaches should be able to stop play at any moment in time, and any player in the gym should be able to state the time on the clock and the score. This knowledge is critical at this level.
- Further, shot selection and decision-making should reflect time and score situations as well, especially late in a game. Aside from obvious situations, such as shooting a three-point shot when a team is down by three points with seconds to go, there are other situations that need to be considered.
- For example, if a team is up by 15 points late in the game and the opponent scores six unanswered points quickly, it would make sense to work the shot clock rather than shoot the first open shot. Working the clock in this example is far more important than taking an open three-point shot early in the possession.
- Again, every situation cannot be outlined here, but it is important as a shooter and as a basketball player in general, to understand time and score situations.

### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Constant conversation to increase knowledge and understanding of in-game situations.
- Empower and build trust with players.
- Drill various situations in practice often.



## SKILL 4

### SHOOTING OFF THE PASS: DEVELOPING QUICKER RELEASE

As defenders get better, it is important, as a shooter, to be able to adjust accordingly.

- One way is to get the shot off more quickly. Some of this can be achieved by understanding angles and spacing, which makes the defenders cover more space when recovering to a shooter. Even if a player can make the defender take one additional step, this will buy one valuable second that can help get the shot off.
- Another way to help buy another second is to develop a quicker release. Much of this can be accomplished by doing the work prior to actually catching the basketball. This includes quick footwork, catching the basketball low, and being ready to shoot immediately after catching the basketball.
- If all of this is already complete prior to receiving the basketball, all the player has to do is rise up into the shot, which makes for an extremely efficient and quick shot. It is important to understand there is a difference between being quick in preparation and footwork, but not quick in the actual shot. The player does not want to rush the actual shot; it's the preparation leading into the shot that can be quick.
- This skill is one that must be practiced at game speed, and repeated very often.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Quick preparation.
- Efficient/quick movements leading to actual shot.
- Once into shot, do not rush.
- Practice at game speed.



## SKILL 7

### BECOME A MARKER RATHER THAN A SHOOTER DEVELOPING QUICKER RELEASE

The mindset and expectation for a player at this level is to make shots consistently, rather than just attempt shots. This has to be developed in practice and carried over into the game environment.



- From a practice standpoint, every drill and repetition should be competitive. Constantly trying to shoot a perfect shot, beat a previous record, or reach a new goal prior to moving on is important.
- Putting pressure on the player at game speed is necessary in order to increase consistency through the repetition. The goal should be to increase consistency throughout a season at every type of shot. In order to shoot a high percentage in a game, the expectation and desire is to shoot a much higher percentage in practice, due to game slippage.
- Further, on shooting drills that require less movement, the shooting percentages should be even higher. Continually push the player to be better and expect more on every drill and shot.
- Lastly, put the player into high-pressure situations in practice, such as taking the game-winning shot. This will help the player become more comfortable with wanting to take the shot and also gain confidence as they have already been in such a situation.

#### POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Document makes/misses; everything should be competitive with self or team.
- Game speed.
- High repetitions; gain consistency within reps.
- Strive for much higher percentage in practice to account for game slippage.



## SKILL 8

### FREE THROWS: PRESSURE SITUATIONS (MENTALITY: WANTING GAME WINNER)

An interesting statistic to keep in basketball would be a players free throw percentage in the last 2 minutes of the game with a close score. This type of situation presents a great deal of pressure, many times players rise to the challenge and many times players do not. What is it that makes the difference between these two players?

This is a million dollar question, without any direct answer! It is likely a combination of things that culminate together into that one moment,

standing at the free throw line trying to win a game. First, does the player actually want to be the individual taking that key free throw? So much of shooting free throws is a mentality, a calm confidence and trust in the preparation, and flat out wanting to take the shot. This mentality may be more important than the physical act of shooting a free throw. It is critical to put the player into situations like this, a high pressure situation with a consequence if the shot goes in or not, prior to it happening in the game. This can be drilled in situations in practice, through drills, moments standing in front of the team having to make a free throw, while tired, while fresh; countless ways. The player will likely miss some of the free throws in this situation, help them recover and gain confidence to want and take the shot again until they are successful. Through time, the player will gain confidence in the situations, which could culminate to a high-pressure situation in a game.

In addition to developing a mentality, it is critical that free throws are drilled and taken everyday. Muscle memory and correct shooting form should continue to be a focus at high repetition. Many times, free throws are neglected at this level in order to cover other elements of team play, but the importance of a free throw in a game will always be important. Fit them in!

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Drill situations; high pressure within practice.
- Help players develop calm confidence mentality.
- Continue to focus on shooting mechanics from free throw line.
- Repetitions are always important.



# PERFORMANCE LEVEL

## TEAM DEFENSIVE CONCEPTS



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *Team defensive concepts in level four are advanced due to the constant practice of team defense. There are not many new concepts offered in level four that were not already explained in level 3. With more practice and more experience the concepts discussed in level three are now more defined and more easily performed by players.*

### SKILL 1

#### HELP THE HELPER SITUATIONS

- In defensive rotation situations the first part is to be in help position when playing off the ball
- The second part of the rotation is to play off your man when the offensive player with the ball gets by his defender and is attacking the basket. This will allow the defender to take a charge or be in a position that the offensive player must give up the ball
- The third part of the rotation is to cover the offensive player that is left open due to the rotation which is referred to as helping the helper. If all the defenders are in proper position on each pass helping the helper should not be a big problem
- Three on three drill will drill this help the helper situation – start with three offensive players – one at each wing and one at the top of the key
- When the ball is passed to the wing from the top, the defenders will move to the proper position to the pass.
- If the defender is beat the opposite wing defender must cover the drive to the basket
- The defender at the top of the key now must be in position to help the helper and drop down to cover the opposite wing left open by the defender helping on the driver

- The post defender will often times be the defender who helps. In the case of the post player helping on defense, the help the helper situation comes into play.
- As the post player steps out to help stop the drive on the perimeter, a perimeter defender must rotate to help on the offensive post player which many times causes a size mismatch

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- All the defenders must move on pass air time – when the ball is in the air so they are in proper position when the pass is completed.
- The defenders should have an awareness of what could happen with each pass and be ready to help stop the ball if needed.
- Communication is extremely important when rotations occur on defense.

## SKILL 2

### FULL COURT DEFENSIVE SITUATION

- There are several full court situations that may be helpful as the team and players get more advanced physically and mentally
- A full court zone press 1-2-1-1 is a basic press that can be used to create turnovers and trapping situations
- The normal press 1-2-1-1 traps the ball in the corner on the first pass with the middle player taking the first pass down the sideline with the opposite defender guarding the ball side elbow. The back defender comes to the half line to play the middle offensive player
- Several adjustments to this press can cause some problem for the offensive players – instead of trapping immediately in the corner the press can “rotate” to a 2-2-1 press. The defender on the ball will drop to the free throw line area with the defender at the free throw line dropping back to the half line. The middle defender goes to ball side sideline just as in the regular trapping press. The back defender stays back to cover the long pass.



- The press can also take a different look when the defender on the ball will stay with the inbounds and not allow this player to receive the ball back. Instead of trapping he “stays” with the inbounds to the free throw line and then stays to form the 2-2-1 press
- The press may also cover the inbounds with the opposite defender who will come over and defend the inbounds while the trap is set in the corner
- The press can be a “one and done” press with one trap in the corner and then retreating to a half court man for man defense or a zone defense
- The press can stay the same but have different points of attack – drop the players back so the defender on the inbounds now starts at the free throw line and the two wing defenders drop back to the half court line with the middle defender dropping back in the half court circle. Now the trapping area is at the half court sideline area instead of in the corner of the full court
- A third type of attack is dropping the press back to the half court line with the top defender starting at the half court circle area and the other defenders dropping back to the defensive end with the same 1-2-1-1 set on the half court. The trapping area now is on the offensive end of the half court so as the offense crosses the half court line a trap will occur.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The different press defenses all have the same set of 1-2-1-1 with different points of attack – can be easily named so the press can be changed quickly and easily.
- The players in a press must all move as the pass is in the air so the proper coverage occurs as the pass is completed.
- The fundamental of trapping is very important and needs to be practiced repeatedly to insure proper technique.



# PERFORMANCE LEVEL

## TEAM OFFENSIVE CONCEPTS



**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** *These concepts at the Performance Level include some situations introduced at the Advanced Level and deal more with the understanding of the game. This understanding of the game includes making your teammates better players, overall awareness of where every player is on the court, thinking two to three passes ahead of the present situation and making an extra pass within the offensive structure. The Performance Level also includes the players making wise choices within the offense to get open or to get your teammate open for a shot.*

### SKILL 1

#### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TRANSITION

- The secondary transition is more likely to lead to a basket than the primary break at this level due to the defender's ability to stop the layup initially.
- In the secondary transition, the basketball should find the open man when the offense is spaced appropriately.
- If the offense attacks the right hand side of the court the players on the left hand side of the court should be in position to receive the basketball and shoot when the basketball is reversed across the rim line to them.
- Often times the offense needs to make one more pass to an open teammate as the defense closes out to the basketball.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The basketball must be centered in the middle of the floor between the free-throw lane lines as soon as possible.
- Use the rim line as the point of reference – an imaginary line that goes from basket to basket down the middle of the court dividing the court into two sides.
- One more pass is usually needed as the defense can defend the first pass that crosses the rim line but not the second pass – ex. Making four passes from one baseline to the opposite baseline.

### SKILL 2

## UNDERSTANDING ADVANTAGE/DISADVANTAGE

- Advantage/disadvantage in the Performance Level now gets more complicated as the players are bigger, stronger and faster. Offensive decisions must come quicker and more reactive as well and the overall awareness must increase with the offensive players
- One of the best drills for this higher level offensive awareness is called the Laker Drill which starts with two evenly divided teams lined up under each baseline in three lines
- The drill starts with four on four at one end of the court with the team that is on the baseline at that end starting on defense.
- The offensive players attack the four defenders and try to score. The offensive team will transition to defense on any change of possession – made field goal, rebound or turnover
- One of the four defenders will either get the basketball from a rebound, a made field goal, or a turnover. This player will attack in offensive transition along with three new players that are waiting on the baseline. The other three defenders now go to the end of the lines on the baseline with their teammates
- The player who got the basketball along with the three new players now transition to offense and attack the four offensive players who are now on defense
- The decisions now must be made quickly while being able to be aware of the defenders sprinting back in transition.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- The basketball needs to get to the middle of the court either by the dribble or with a pass as soon as possible.
- Keep score so there is a winner for the drill. Play to a certain number of points or time.
- The defensive team does not need to take the basketball out of bounds after a made basket but just takes the basketball and starts the fast break.
- The rotation is always offense to defense then out to the lines on the baseline except for one defender who gets the basketball and stays in with the three new players entering the drill from the baseline.
- The offense must have awareness of where the basketball and teammates are on the court and then try to think two passes ahead which would lead to an easy jump shot.

### SKILL 3

## OFFENSIVE WEAK-SIDE PLAY

- The offensive players on the weak side are very important when attacking the defense. They must have overall awareness of what may take place and be cognizant of what will take place two or three passes ahead of the basketball
- The weak-side offensive player should keep the defenders busy so they are not as quick to help stop the basketball. This can be done by movement or by properly spacing out to receive a pass for a shot
- Weak-side players try to make your defender turn their back to the basketball to keep them from helping on the offensive player with the basketball. This will also help you to get open if your defender finds it difficult to divide his attention
- When making a pass look to make a cut and if the basketball is not passed go opposite the basketball so now the cutter is on the weak side.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- The act of cutting to the basketball or at least making the defender think you are going to make a cut to the basketball when on the weak side is overall awareness.
- Use your teammates for screens whenever they cut into your territory. If you do not get the basketball, make yourself available as a screen for a teammate.



### SKILL 4

## SCRIMMAGING

- Scrimmaging both half and full court must be considered as a vital part of the practice program at this level.
- Half court scrimmaging is necessary for the development of: regular team offenses and defenses, floor balance and timing, special offensive and defensive plays and set up.
- Full court scrimmaging is necessary for the development of: physical conditioning, quick reaction from offense to defense and defense to offense, adjusting to all changing situations and meeting game conditions.
- It is through scrimmaging that the best opportunity for developing teamwork can be emphasized which needs to be done continually during practice
- During full court scrimmages opportunities are presented for the development of: self-control, reacting positively to officials calls, acknowledging a good pass from a teammate, complimenting a good play to a teammate, adjustment to rules, adjusting to rare or unusual game situations and showing restraint from criticism from a teammate or coach.
- A good half court scrimmage game is to have one team stay on offense until they have lost the basketball five times then have the defensive team take the basketball for five times. Keep score – a score does not constitute a lost possession. A defensive foul give a point to the offense without causing a lost possession. An offensive foul will count as a lost possession.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Although both offense and defense is worked on in scrimmage situations, special emphasis is placed on offense one day and defense the following day.
- The top eight players should spend the most time on offense if offense is emphasized that day and on defense if that is the emphasis.
- The mental and emotional adjustments are as necessary for a player to approach his maximum potential as are the physical adjustments.
- Full court scrimmaging should be done almost every day for the first couple of weeks then twice a week until your first several games are completed. Very rarely after this but a good scrimmage for the players who did not play much in the previous game.



### SKILL 5

## COMPETITIVE WARM-UP

- Adding competition to warm-ups each day in practice will add some pressure to execute the warm-up correctly and quickly
- Competition can be done in the form of Keeping score or using time or both
- Full court layups – two lines with a line starting under the basket at each end with the first three in line at each end with a basketball. The players speed dribble full court and make a layup at the other end. Players stay at the end they shoot the layup and the next player in line without a basketball grabs the made layup out of the net and dribbles to the other end for a layup. Goal of 50 made layups in one minute.
- Full court jump shots – one line in each corner of the court with the first two players in opposite corners with a basketball. The basketball is passed straight down the court to the first player in the line that does not have a basketball. The passer runs to receive a pass from the player he just passed to for a jump shot. Shooter stays in the line he passed to and the passer is the rebounder and rotates to the line in the corner after passing the basketball to the player in that line. Goal of 22 made field goals in one minute

- Five-ball shooting – same four corners as previous drill with the basketball in the front of both lines at one end and the second player in both lines at the other end. Start with a middle man who passes to one corner that does not have a basketball as they are running to the opposite end. The corner player who received the pass will pass to the other corner for a layup. The middle player then goes behind the corner player he passed the basketball to receive a pass from the player in the opposite corner for a jump shot. The player who passed for a layup will go behind and receive the basketball for a jump shot from the other corner. The player who just made a layup will now be the middle man going the other direction. The shooters stay in lines after they rebound their own shot and pass the basketball to the corner player in front. The players who just passed the basketball for the jump shots will now be running in the opposite direction receiving and passing the basketball for a layup and jump shot. Goal of 25 baskets in one minute.

- Perfect layup drill – three lines at one end with the first two players on one side with a basketball. The basketball is passed to the middle and then to the same side, back to the middle, then to the opposite side for a layup. The second basketball is started when the first basketball gets to half court so that the drill becomes a continuous drill. The middle man is the outlet on the same side as the layup, the opposite player from the layup gets the basketball out of the basket and makes a two handed overhead pass to the outlet as he is standing next to the sideline. The outlet makes a baseball pass to the next player in line at the other end in the corner who now starts the drill from the other side. As soon as the basketball pass is completed the passing starts to the middle. The layup is scored with two points for the basketball not touching the rim and one point for the basketball touching the rim and going in and zero points for the missed layup. Goal – 25 points in one minute.

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Do the drills several days before making them competitive so the players know the skills involved and the rotation for the drills.



- On the full court layups use right handed dribbling and layups one day and use left handed dribbling and layups the other day.
- On full court jump shots, two points may be counted for made three-point shots.
- Emphasize running hard in the five-ball drill with the player laying up the basketball turning around immediately to get the basketball out of the net to be the middle player going the opposite direction.
- Two points may be counted for made three-point shot in the five-ball drill.
- In the perfect layup drill, make the players touch the baseline before they get back in line for the drill.
- These drills build a sense of accomplishment for the players and they will encourage one another while the drill is going to complete the goal.

## SKILL 6

### STRATEGY

- The coach who believes he can consistently out smart his opponents or that he is the master strategist and can depend on strategy to win is only fooling himself
- There is no substitute for three essentials – proper execution of the fundamentals, good condition and great team spirit
- A strategy starts with tactics that the coach think is necessary to have his team be competitive and have a chance to win. Fast break or half-court offense, man to man or zone defense, press or half-court defense are examples of strategies used
- Strategies for using a pressing defense against: a big slow team, a mechanical team that wants to use a ball-control type of offense and go through specific patterns, a team not well conditioned, a zone press against teams that like to advance the basketball by dribbling, a team with inexperienced or poor ball-handling guards.
- Using a specific set play following a timeout and after every intermission from play
- Use screening attack more against a close guarding or tight man for man defense
- Zoning a man in the key area against a strong post attack
- Floating deep against the teams that want to drive and tight on those teams that prefer to shoot from the outside.

- “Hawking” a star scorer all over the floor
- Playing the strong points of the individual players as well as the team
- Changing defense occasionally for a few minutes to some other type and occasionally using a different set offensively

## POINTS OF EMPHASIS



- Play a style of game to which the players are best adapted, providing everyone is comfortable with this style
- May need to play a slow, deliberate, and controlled game in an effort to slow the tempo and control over the fast break
- Double team the defensive rebounder to slow the outlet pass and the fast break of a team if needed
- Play at least two players back on defense to stop transition
- Many of the strategies will deal with the scouting of the team and players and may change as the season progresses





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