

ASSIST 22

FIBA ASSIST MAGAZINE FOR BASKETBALL ENTHUSIASTS EVERYWHERE SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2006



- RAPHAEL CHILLOUS**
SUPERMAN DRILLS FOR POST PLAYERS
- ETTORE MESSINA - LELE MOLIN**
GAME PLAN FOR THE 2006 EUROLEAGUE FINAL
- CARL JUNGEBRAND**
THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTH IN OFFICIATING
- PREDRAG BOGOSAVLJEV**
WELCOME TO BASKETBALL LAND
- RICH DALATRI**
FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH TRAINING FOR BASKETBALL

SPAIN'S WINNING OFFENSE





FIBA ASSIST MAGAZINE
IS A PUBLICATION OF FIBA
International Basketball Federation
51 – 53, Avenue Louis Casai
CH-1216 Cointrin/Geneva Switzerland
Tel. +41-22-545.0000, Fax +41-22-545.0099
www.fiba.com / e-mail: info@fiba.com

IN COLLABORATION WITH Giganti-BT&M, Cantelli Editore, Italy
PARTNER WABC (World Association of Basketball Coaches), Dusan Ivkovic President



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(BO), Italy, Tel. +39-051-6328811,
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E-mail: fibaassist@cantelli.net
Printed in Italy.
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The magazine is published 6 times per year.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mirco Melloni, Corrado de Belvis, Lisa Cavallini, Gastone Marchesi, Gerald Couzens and Raffaele Imbrogno; Patrick Hunt and Mirko Ocookoljic for the article about Spain offense; Fédération Royale Belge des Sociétés de Basketball for the pictures of the article of Lucien Van Kersschaever.

2006 FIBA CALENDAR

MARCH 2007
31.03 - 02.04 NCAA Men's Final Four in Atlanta, USA

APRIL 2007
01-03.04 NCAA Women's Final Four in Cleveland, USA
tbd FIBA Asia Championship for Women in Incheon, Korea

JUNE 2007
29.06 - 08.07 FIBA U21 World Championship for Women in Moscow / Moscow Region, Russia

JULY 2007
12-22.07 FIBA U19 World Championship for Men in Vancouver, Canada
19-29.07 FIBA Asia Championship for Men in Tokushima, Japan
26.07 - 05.08 FIBA U19 World Championship for Women in Bratislava, Slovakia

AUGUST 2007
01.08 FIBA Africa Championship for Men in Angola
tbd FIBA Americas Championship for Men in Venezuela

SEPTEMBER 2007
04 - 16.09 FIBA European Championship for Men in Spain
24.09 - 07.10 FIBA European Championship for Women in Chieti, Italy
tbd FIBA Oceania Championship for Men
tbd FIBA Oceania Championship for Women
tbd FIBA Americas Championship for Women in Valdivia, Chile

OCTOBER 2007
tbd FIBA World League for Women Final Round in Russia

DECEMBER 2007
tbd FIBA Africa Championship for Women in Senegal

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(from 9 am to 1 pm Central European Time)



by Francesco Vitucci

BARGNANI: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A YOUNG BIG MAN

Francesco Vitucci started his coaching career as a coach of youth teams and then worked as an assistant coach of Reyer Venice (Italy), before becoming head coach in 1993 in the Italian A2 Division. In 1996, after winning the championship and having his team going to the A1 Division, he was elected Coach of the Year of A2 Division. He coached Imola in A2, leading the team to the A1 Division in 1998. From 2001 to 2003 he coached Scafati in A2, and then became assistant coach at the Benetton Treviso, first under Ettore Messina and currently with David Blatt. His teams have won two Italian Cups and the Italian A1 Division title in 2006.

As it was for Andrea Bargnani, the first pick of the Toronto Raptors in the 2006 NBA draft, the development work of a young big man involves special, careful, patient, and wise teamwork that cannot skip over any fundamental components. Following the directions of the head coach (in the case of Bargnani, his coaches were Ettore Messina and then David Blatt), which determines the practical use of the player on the court, it is necessary to integrate physical-athletic development with the technical development.

Andrea Bargnani (m. 2,11, kg. 108/6'11", 240 pounds) is a power forward with great skills

and an outstanding physical structure. It has been satisfying for all those, who have worked with him, to see him develop into the best young player in Italy, and, perhaps, in all of Europe. Nicknamed "Mago" (Italian for "magician"), Bargnani has the innate skills to magically create something from nothing and come up with effective solutions on the court with the maximum of simplicity. A lot of these seemingly "magical" skills came from the hours of hard work that he put in on the practice court with his coaches.

DRILLS

Control of the body and ball while running: Dynamic situation (fastbreak)

DRILL 1

The player, 4, starts with a sprint right from the mid-court line, gets the ball from the coach and, while running at maximum speed (without travelling), does the following:

1. With the receiving hand, he dribbles two times and, driving straight to the basket, dunks. Everything is performed at maximum speed (diagr. 1).
2. With the opposite hand, takes two dribbles, and dunks.

Variations

Finishing with power move or jump shot.

Progression

Introduce a change of dribbling hand at maximum speed (diagr. 2).

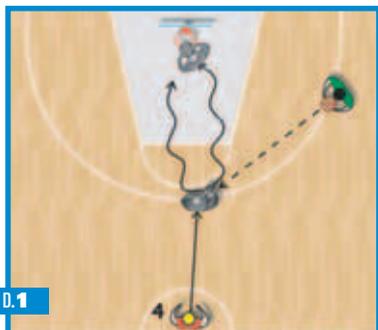
Another coach is on the court facing the player, on the other side of the court. If he raises both hands with fingers spread, this is a signal for the player that, just as the player receives the ball from one coach, he must pass the ball to other coach, receives it back, and then immediately shoots (diagr. 3). Pay attention to maintain balance, the height and control of the ball, with the eyes looking forward in all drills.

Note: We increase the quickness of the execution only when the player can master handling the ball with maximum efficiency. The drill is run on the right, center, and left lanes of the half court.

DRILL 2

The player starts with a sprint from the mid-court line, receives the ball, and stops at the three-point line. He will:

1. Shoot (diagr. 4).
2. Make a crossover dribble, drive to the basket and shoot (diagr. 5).
3. Make a crossover dribble with a change of dribbling hand in a situation of "traffic", it means to add a passive obstacle, such as a chair or a coach, and then an active obstacle, a defender.



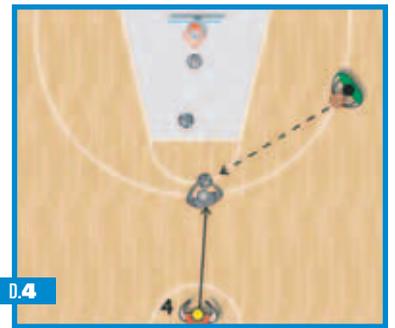
D.1



D.2



D.3



Variations

From crossover, a frontal change of the dribbling hand, to a reverse change of the dribbling hand, to a behind-the-back change of the dribbling hand (diagr. 6).

Bagnani's typical move: Crossover, a long step and a hop after the first dribble, and then an immediate lay up, alternatively with both hands. Drill to be repeated on the three lanes of the court: right, center, and left.

Progression

Add an obstacle inside the three-point line (an assistant acting as a passive defender, and, later on, a player acting as an active defender), so when the offensive player gets the ball, he must react to the move of the defender and take the right decision:

- ▼ Obstacle distant: shoot (diagr. 7).
- ▼ Obstacle closing out to the right side: drive to the left and make a lay up, and vice versa (diagr. 8).
- ▼ Obstacle anticipated: back-door cut, receive, and lay up (diagr. 9).

When, instead of an assistant, we put an active defender in the drill, the situation becomes "live" and the players play one-on-one until a basket is scored or the defender gets the ball on the rebound or a steal.

Bagnani's typical move: Crossover dribble with two strong dribbles to the left, left-right stop and fake, and shoot. Or he will fake and crossover step or half step with the right foot to the basket (diagr. 10).

Pay attention to make the stop with the balanced body. Moreover, always keep the ball protected: if a player brings the ball from one to the other side of the body, move it with a "spoon" move, either above the shoulder or under the knees, but never at the chest or the waist height (diagr. 11). The first step has to be deep and strong. The dribble is lateral, with the driving shoulder that "goes into" the opponent. The feet are aimed straight to the basket, not to the sideline.

DRILL 3

The player starts with a fast dribble from the mid-court line and moves towards an obstacle. He slows down a little bit to choose the proper solution, and goes up for a shot, for example a jump shot, if the defender steps back. Alternatively, he can change the dribbling hand, cutting in the middle of the three-second lane and then go for a shot. Otherwise, he can fake the change of the dribbling hand and, returning to the same side, finish on the baseline (diagr. 12).

Variations

Make a "V" cut without the ball, moving near or away from the ball (diagr. 13).

Progression

Add a chair (passive obstacle), the coach (pre-determined obstacle), a defender (active obstacle), who starts to defend from the baseline (diagr. 14).

SERIES OF DRILLS

Post-up play and reaction to the defensive moves in a static situation.

Receive the ball in the low-post: wide-open legs, "sit", with the ball protected and held tightly with both hands.

BASIC ONE-ON-ONE MOVES

With the defender behind, in contact: look at the opposite corner of the free-throw line to see the play development on the weak side. First dribble (slow) and drop-step to the inside to make the defender react.

The second dribble is strong, to beat the defender, and then finish with a baby-hook. Hard dribbles gives rhythm to the action (diagr. 15)

If the defender reacts and remains in the low defensive position, make a spin move to the baseline and finish at the basket with the outside hand. The player stretches, extending the arm high, and shooting above the defender (diagr. 16).

Variations

After the first dribble, make a shot fake, and crossover (up and under). The ball is moving from chest height so it is not an easy target for the defender (diagr. 17).

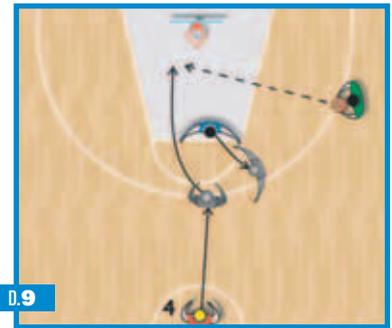
Bagnani's typical move: On the second dribble, stop, and take a step-back jump shot, moving away from inside the lane.

PROGRESSION ONE-ON-ZERO, TEACHING PHASE

The coach acts as a defender and pushes the player (we use an American football cushion and push it against the offensive player), jumping strongly in a direction to force the player to make the best decision. Otherwise, we can use a broom to force the player to stretch out and shoot over the defender in an almost straight line that goes from the tiptoes to the wrist of the shooting hand.

An assistant coach is standing outside the three-point line on the weak side. If he has his hands up while the player is dribbling, the player must make an immediate skip-pass (passing to a spot-up shooter) and maintains his position in the three-second lane to receive a pass back.

- ▼ With the defender, who anticipates on one side: The player receives the ball and immediately drop-steps, placing his foot over the defender's foot (diagr. 18) and goes straight to the basket. If the defender closes out quickly, he will spin on the opposite side.
- ▼ With the defender not making contact:



D.9



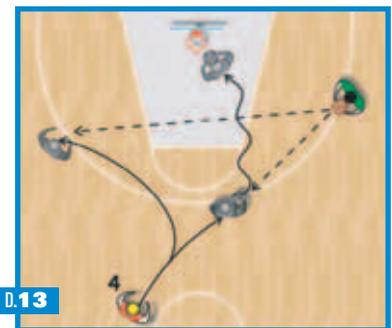
D.10



D.11



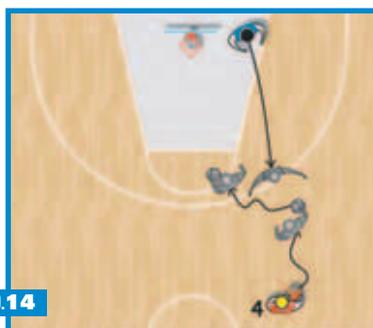
D.12



D.13

Face the basket, using the outside foot as a pivot foot, and make a back reverse. In this phase, the ball must never be a target for the defender. Keep it "outside of the cylinder" where it is protected with the shoulder and the elbow of the backing hand, acting as a shield against the defender (diagr. 19).

Bargnani's typical move: On the left side, face the basket with the right foot as a pivot foot. Crossover to the basket, right-left stop, and shot fake. Front reverse and shoot, or crossover, or half step with the left foot to earn space toward the basket.



D.14



D.15



D.16



D.17



D.18



D.19



by Raphael Chillious

SUPERMAN DRILLS FOR POST PLAYERS

Raphael Chillious is head coach and co-director of South Kent School's Sports Department. He gave a major contribution in making this high school as one of the most famous American basketball schools, sending straight to the NBA two players in the last two years, Dorell Wright and Andray Blatche. Before, he had coached West Nottingham Academy. He also works as instructor at the NIKE Skills Academy, with the best 100 USA high school players.

INTRODUCTION

The "Superman" Drills for Post Player's series is designed to give post players (4's & 5's) a skills' development workout. The goal is to increase conditioning and stamina, maximize footwork efficiency, and

establish three essential jump shot areas that are critical to the offensive game of this position. It is important to note that the most dangerous post player is the one that can score with his/her back to the basket as well as being able to face the basket and consistently knock down (m. 2-5) 8-15 foot jump shots.

PHILOSOPHY

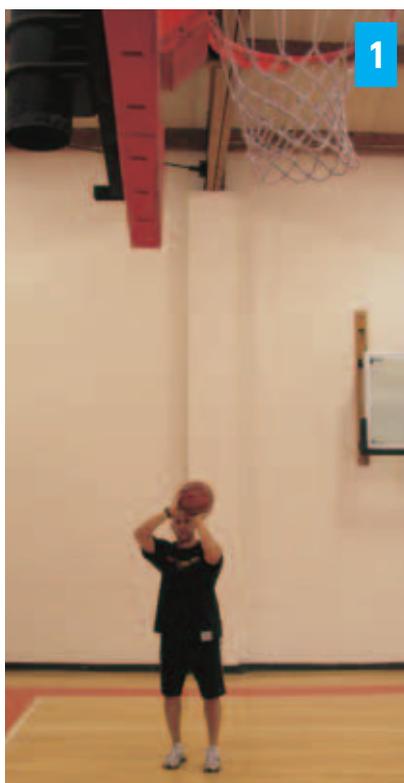
I firmly believe it is absolutely necessary for today's post players to be multi-dimensional offensive threats. The game of basketball has evolved to the point in which the "traditional" post player that plays solely with his/her back to the basket is at the mercy of well-coached defensive teams. This "traditional" post player will score his/her share of baskets in quick-hit

one-on-one post situations, but this scenario happens relatively few times during this course of a game.

This is due to the fact that coaches have done a great job of teaching their teams multiple double team schemes in an attempt to nullify the effectiveness of back-to-the-basket post players.

These double teams, along with the fact that post defenders are getting much better at preventing offensive post players from establishing good low-block position create problems to the offensive post players.

It is also my belief that offensive post players will have a tremendous advantage if they develop the necessary footwork (prior to receiving the ball) to receive post entry passes where they are most comfortable making moves,







10

as well as pin-pointing spots on the court where they are capable of being consistent shooters.

The "Superman" post series will enable post players to establish solid position on the court, because they should be able to win the "foot" game for initial post-position.

Winning the pre-post entry pass "foot" game is a vital part of a post player's offensive development that is often overlooked in the basketball coaching profession.

We tend to concentrate on moves, moves, moves, but those moves mean nothing if the post player is unable to establish proper post-position. The equation is simple: win the "foot" game and you will be in position to make good solid post moves!

The three most important jump shot areas for low-post player are:

- ▼ The short corner, about 8-12 feet along the baseline (picture 1).
- ▼ The left or right free-throw elbow (picture 2).
- ▼ The foul line (picture 3).

This is due to the fact that these are areas on the court in which post players often find themselves handling the ball in most offenses. Plus, if the defender closes-out too hard on the offensive player, he/she can take one hard dribble and be at the basket for a lay-up or dunk.

The short corner (which is about m. 2-4, 8-12 foot) shot is especially effective because it is an unusual offensive attack position (especially against zone defenses), as it is an area in which the offensive player can take a good short shot (i.e. Udonis Haslem, Miami Heat's power forward), make a quick drive before a double team can come, and coaches rarely establish double team rules from this position on the floor.

Please note that if these spots don't work for your offense, choose some other spots on the court where your post players most often catch the ball when they haven't established low-post position.

NEEDED

A folding chair situated at the pro-post on either the right or left side of the basket (picture 4).

THE "SUPERMAN" SERIES

The drill begins with the coach on the



11



12



13



14



15

wing (at right or left of free throw line extension) with the ball (picture 5).

The player will start standing on the baseline under the basket, ready to flash to the ball side pro-post (picture 6). The drill begins when the coach smacks the ball with one hand and the post player sprints towards the ball-side chair and shuffles around the top of the chair with quick feet (picture 7). The player circles back around the front of the chair where they will then receive a post-feed from the coach (the player's bottom should touch the top of the chair to ensure he is in a low and strong balanced position). The player then either drop steps to the middle (picture 8) for a dunk or jump hook with his/her left-hand (picture 9). The player gets his/her rebound and passes the ball back to the coach. The player immediately sprints and does the quick feet/shuffle action around the chair, then sprints to the short corner (m. 2-5, 8-15 feet) and receives a pass for a jump shot (picture 10, 11, and 12). The player hustles after his/her rebound, passes the ball to the coach, and immediately does the quick feet action back around the chair and sprints to the ball side elbow and receives a pass from the coach for a jump shot (picture 13). The player retrieves his/her rebound, passes the ball back to the coach, quick feet around the chair, and sprints to the free-throw line to receive a pass for another jump shot (picture 14 and 15). After passing the ball back to the coach the player finishes the series by doing the quick feet action around the chair to the short corner, free-throw line extended, and free-throw line where he/she will ball-fake, take one dribble, and drive to the basket for a lay-up or dunk. The complete series should be repeated 20-30 times on both sides of the floor (right hand dunks or jump hooks to the middle on the opposite side of the court).

Again, the purpose of the Superman Series for post player's is to increase stamina and conditioning, maximize footwork efficiency, and establish three critical jump shot areas for elite level post-players. Emphasis must be placed on the quick feet/shuffle because it teaches post players to be nimble, while trying to gain post position, as well as keeping them focused on the fact that they are going to gain optimal position in the paint with their feet and not just by using brute force.



by Ettore Messina



by Emanuele Molin

GAME PLAN FOR THE 2006 EUROLEAGUE FINAL

Ettore Messina began his career as a head coach in 1989 with Virtus Bologna, the team he led in four years to one Italian Championship, one European Cup and one Italian Cup. From 1993 to 1997 he coached the Italian National Team, winning the silver medal at the 1997 European Championship and the gold medal at the Mediterranean Games in 1993. In 1997 he went back to Virtus Bologna, staying five more seasons and winning two more Italian Championships, two Euroleague editions (besides two more finals played), and three Italian Cups. From 2002 to 2005 he coached Benetton Treviso, winning one Italian Championship, three Italian Cups, and taking part in one Euroleague Final. Since 2005 he has coached CSKA Moscow, winning the Euroleague in his first year, in addition to the Russian Championship, and the Russian Cup. He was named 2005-06 Euroleague Coach of the Year.

Emanuele Molin coached the youth teams of Mestre, Treviso, and Virtus Bologna. In 2000 he became the assistant coach of Virtus Bologna, working with Ettore Messina. He stayed in Virtus for two seasons (winning an Italian Championship, one Euroleague, and two Italian Cups), before going back to Benetton Treviso, working as assistant coach (in three years he won one Italian Championship and three Italian Cups). He went to CSKA Moscow in 2005, and his team won the Euroleague, the Russian Championship, and Russian Cup.

The first difficulty as we approached the 2006 Euroleague final was to prepare a game plan in less than 48 hours that could be used against Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel), a strong opponent that we had never played against.

We were not the favorites to win the game, but we did not want to be the runner-up in this game. We knew our skills, but even better, we knew our limits and, above all, we came to coach CSKA Moscow and win this championship game. Essential to our success was the contribution

given us by our other assistant coach, Evgeni Pashutin, who, in the previous two Final Four editions, in Tel Aviv and Moscow, had the chance to study coach Pini Gershon's Maccabi team.

DEFENSE

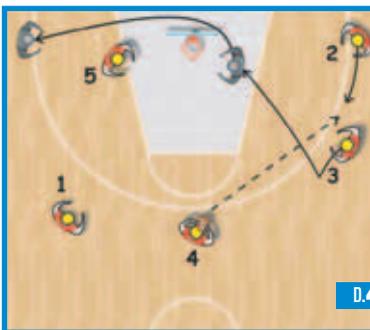
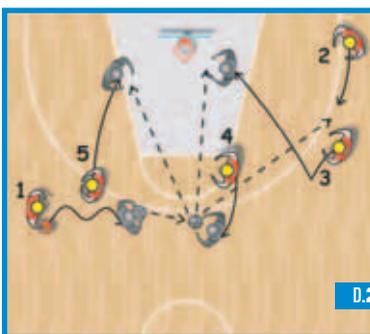
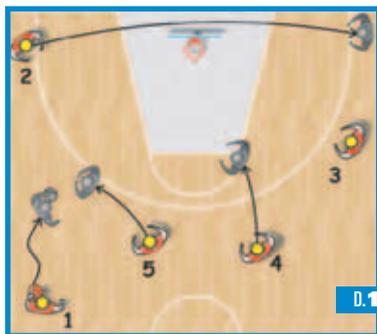
The match-ups:

- ▼ Will Solomon-JR Holden
- ▼ Tal Burstein-Trajan Langdon
- ▼ Anthony Parker-David Vanterpool
- ▼ Nikola Vujcic-Matjaz Smodis
- ▼ Maceo Baston-Alexei Savrasenko

For the defensive match-ups, we considered Vujcic, their center, as the heart of Maccabi's offensive system. Therefore Smodis (and/or Panov, his substitute) should anticipate and attack him when he moved away from the basket. Vanterpool, the guard, in our intentions, should accept the individual challenge against Parker, and would be helped by Papaloukas. For Baston's athleticism and explosiveness we had no countermeasure, if not partially, by using Van den Spiegel's dynamic skills, and for this reason we simply thought to give to Savrasenko an inside position to protect the basket, but, above all, to protect spaces in one-on-one situations and on cuts from the weak side. This, accepting that Baston could be dangerous far from the basket. The main idea was to limit their ball circulation and slow down their fluid game so they could not involve all of their players. This would help decrease the effectiveness of their less talented players. Offensive transition was Maccabi's most efficient and successful game phase. Lateral pick-and-roll (diagr. 1), played with a slow rhythm was the trigger of their offense: the aim was not to look for a basket in the first ten-seconds of possession, but, rather, to provoke the reaction of the defense. This allowed them to take a first advantage amplifying it with a quick ball circulation: Vujcic's position in high-post, his game-reading skills, and his passing skills were the keys of their system (diagr. 2).







DEFENSE AGAINST PICK-AND-ROLL

We decided not to react to their first pick-and-roll. Instead, we almost played a 'non-defense' in which the main aim was to take away space for their penetrations and, above all, not to set off defensive rotations. When 1 (Solomon) had attacked by using the pick-and-roll (diagr. 3), X5 would have to take a flat position toward the screen line, faking to help, taking care not to allow the penetration. X1 would force the screen, staying in front of the ball and pressing it as much as possible. At the same time, X4 would take an anticipating position in open guard towards the ball to discourage a quick pass to the high-post (denying offensive triangles with the big men), and collapsing to the free-throw zone to recover aggressively on the possible reception by 4.

Solomon and/or Parker would have found in front of him a defensive wall and a completely overcrowded space: the only remaining solution would have been the jump shot off the dribble, a play that did not involve his teammates.

DEFENSIVE RULES

On the pick-and-roll played after they changed the offensive side (diagr. 4 and 5), we kept our defensive rules:

1. If the pick-and-roll has been played at the beginning of the possession, with X4, help and fast recover with no rotation. We made a defensive switch any time the dribbler went to the basket and/or in the last seconds of the possession.
2. With X5, we protected the basket, directing the ball to the sideline. We switched automatically when the dribbler increased his speed and drove to the basket.

We defended in a similar way in the other pick-and-roll situations foreseen by their attacks against a set defense. For this reason, we tried to turn their offense, characterized by many passes, into a sum of isolated one-on-one situations. If the ball had come in low-post (diagr. 6), we would have disturbed Vujcic and Baston's one-on-ones with the passer's defender (diagr. 7). This way, the defenders on the weak side could concentrate on the action without the ball.

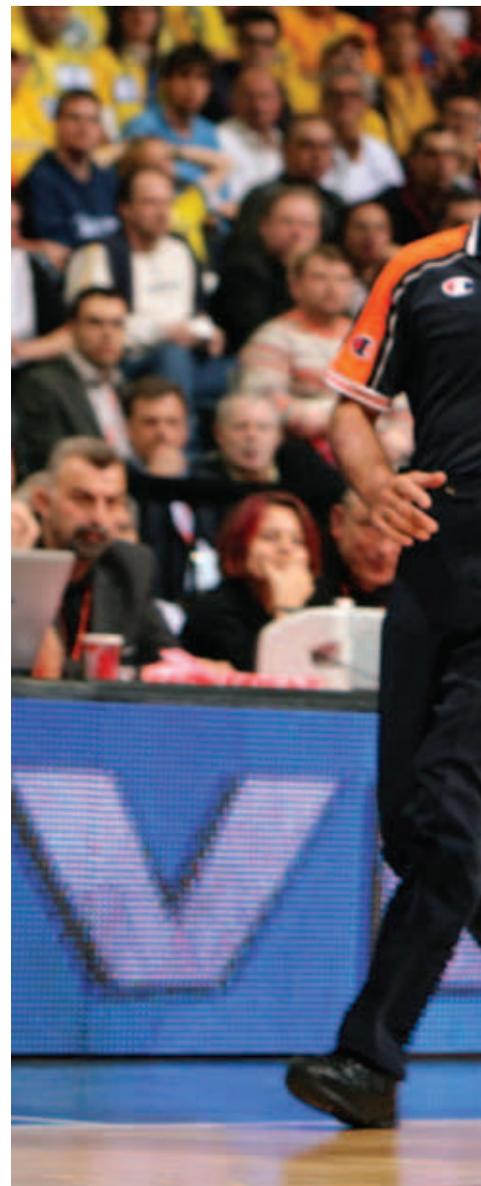
ZONE DEFENSE

Another important and pivotal choice was to use zone defense in all the sideline and baseline throw-ins, and after every free-throw. We felt - even though they were good passers and shooters - that their offense against zone defense didn't offer as many options and readings as against man-to-man defense. Indeed, their sideline and baseline throw-ins were very good. During the game, the feeling was confirmed and we used zone defense constantly in the final part of the second quarter. It was an important moment, because their difficulty playing against the zone forced them to think that the game was becoming tougher than what they believed, and that they could lose it.

OFFENSE

As important as the defensive choices were, we had many ideas on how to attack Maccabi's defense. Maccabi Tel Aviv is certainly more an offensive team than a defensive one, but experience and defensive strategies they used caused unusual problems. Match-up zone and the use of defensive switches in all the screen situations were the two most important aspects of their defense. We tried to give valid inputs for both situations to our players:

- ▼ First of all, select attacks that could be successful against match-up zone.
- ▼ Then, we underlined some offensive details we considered important to attack these kind of defense:
 1. Outside players, by using screens, must widen the spaces and look for good spacing in order to punish possible mismatches.
 2. In screen actions, big men must - after having screened - roll deeply towards the



basket, trying to offer a target for the passer right in the heart of the defense. At the same time, their presence in the paint against a smaller opponent would have been a physical advantage on offensive rebounds.

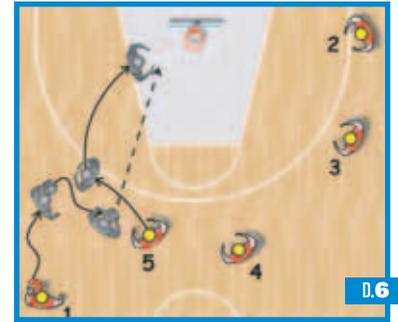
3. We decided to attack the defensive switches, taking advantage of mismatches: the guard against the center and not vice versa. First of all, the dribbler, reading the switch, must not stop the ball circulation, but has to pass it to make the defense move (diagr. 8). Faking to look for the mismatch advantage between the big man and the guard, close to the basket, we chose to give the ball back to the guard guarded by the big man. We could have had a dynamic one-on-one situation in the middle of the court, where the defense could not create a strong side (diagr. 9).
4. We wanted to attack Solomon and Sharp with Vanterpool and Papaloukas in low-post.

5. We decided to control the game rhythm when, after a basket scored by Maccabi, the arena broke out with the applause of 9,000 Israeli supporters. On this subject, Smodis told us of his past experience at the 2004 Final Four, at the Nokia Arena in Tel Aviv.

In moments like these, it was better for us to play offense for as long as possible, forcing them to play defense for the entire 24-second limit.

This way, we wouldn't allow them to increase their physical intensity and the game rhythm, using this momentum to gain an advantage over us.

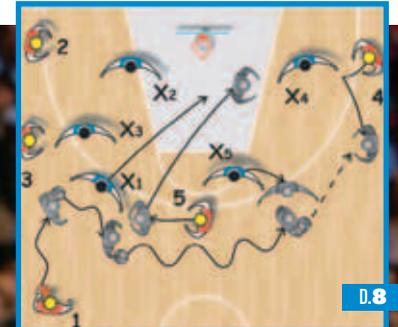
Thanks to the performance and team play of our athletes, all these strategies worked well and, and we left the arena in Prague with the Euroleague championship title, the main target of our season.



0.6



0.7



0.8



0.9





SPAIN'S WINNING OFFENSE

Jose Vicente "Pepu" Hernandez started his coaching career in 1989 as assistant coach of Estudiantes Madrid. In 1994 he became head coach and led the team to eight semifinals, one final of the championship and a King's Cup win (in 2000). In 2005 Hernandez became head coach of the Spanish men's national team and this year he won the Gold medal at the FIBA World Championship in Japan.

The first priority on offense was to use our very quick guards to dribble the ball up the floor at high speed. The guards would look to pass to the forwards sprinting ahead of the ball from all broken plays or interceptions or deflections from our 2-2-1 zone press or 3-2 zone. The point guard (or the other guard) would alternate in handling the ball with the other guard and the small forward sprinting on the sideline lanes. On the offensive transition, after a basket scored by the opponents, the ball would go:

- ▼ To the other guard or the small forward running in the sideline lanes.
- ▼ To the power forward for a catch close to the basket.
- ▼ To the center, usually the trailer, after an on-ball screen (pick-and-roll).

On the half court, a series of plays were run from the main offensive alignment of three players on the perimeter and two inside the three-second lane, either high ("horn"), low, or staggered (high-low).

Another priority was the dribble penetration for our very quick and great ball-handler guards, who could also shoot very well from the perimeter.

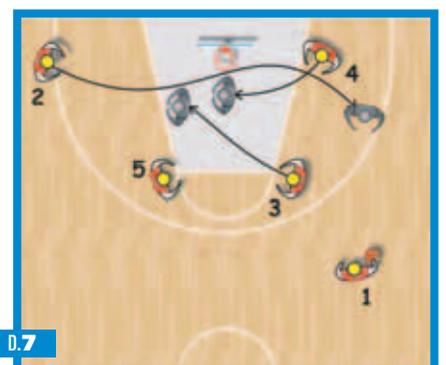
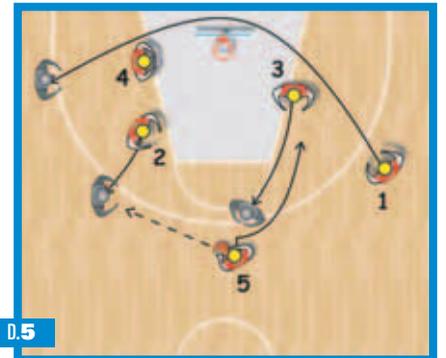
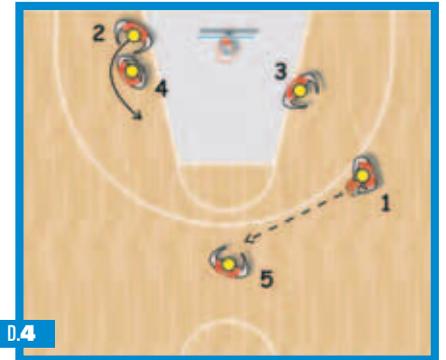
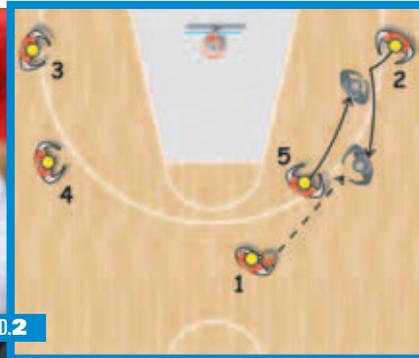
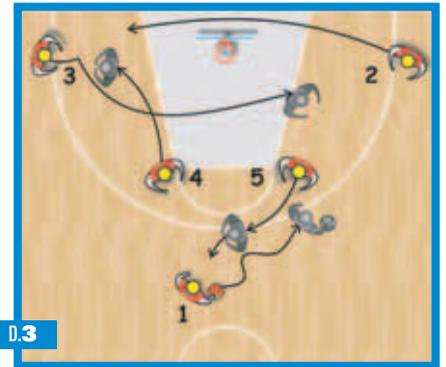
An important aspect was that many half-court plays "flowed" and began from a full-court transition.

THE PERSONNEL

THE GUARDS

The guards were very quick and they also handled the ball very well, attacking the defenders with the crossover dribble and the crossover dribble fake. They were able to penetrate very effectively and were very dangerous from the perimeter as well. Thanks to their outstanding ball-handling ability, they were able to create their own shots off the dribble.







THE FORWARDS

They could both play inside as well as outside the three-second line. All of them had good shooting ranges, also from the three-point line, with the "catch-and-shoot" jump shot, as well as the pull-up jump shot off the dribble. A prime example of this was Jorge Garbajosa, the best three-point shooter of the final.

THE CENTERS

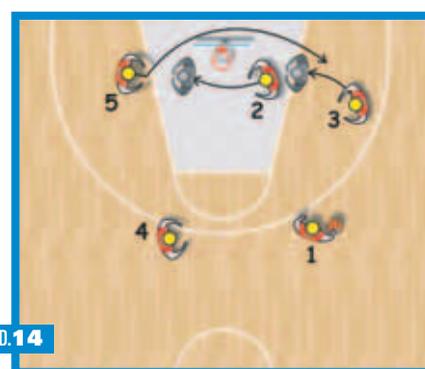
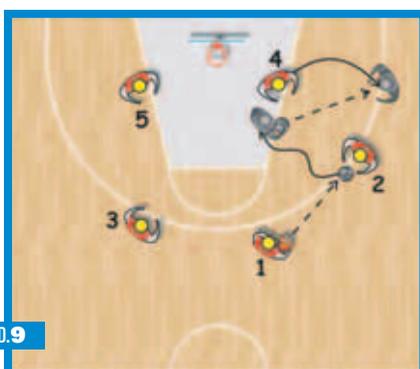
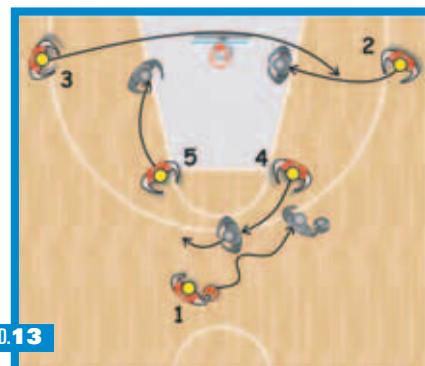
They were versatile players, with good inside moves and fine shooting touches outside the three-second line. Their main attacking moves were the "back in" dribble with a jump hook and a turn-around jump shot.

OFFENSIVE TRANSITION PLAYS

Here are the different options, based on the player involved.

OPTION FOR 2 (NAVARRO)

3 and 2 are in the corner after the primary break. 4 is on the left wing and 1 has the ball on the right side of the court, while 5 is the trailer. 5 runs a pick-and-roll for 1, who dribbles to the center of the court, and then 5 down screens for



2, who curls around 5 and receives the ball from 1 for a jump shot (diagr. 1 and 2).

OPTION FOR 1 (CALDERON)

3 and 2 are in the corners after the primary break, and 4 and 5 are set at the corners of the free-throw area. 5 screens on the ball for 1, while, at the same time, 4 sets a down screen for 3, and 2 cuts across the baseline (diagr. 3). 3 goes to the low-post position, 4 makes another screen, now for 2, and 1 passes the ball to 5 (diagr. 4). 5 passes the ball to 2, and 1 cuts off the baseline screens, first from 3, then from 4, and comes to the wing area. 3, after the screen for 1, makes a blind screen for 5, and 5 goes to the low post (diagr. 5). 2 passes to 1 for a shot, or to 4 in the low post (diagr. 6).

OPTION FOR 4 (GARBAJOSA)

3 and 4 set a staggered screen for 2, who cuts

off the two screens and comes high (diagr. 7). 5 makes a down screen for 3 (screen-the-screener), who cuts off the screen (diagr. 8). 1 passes to 2, who drives to the basket. On this move, 4 flares out to the corner to receive the ball from 2 and shoot (diagr. 9).

OPTION FOR 5 (GASOL)

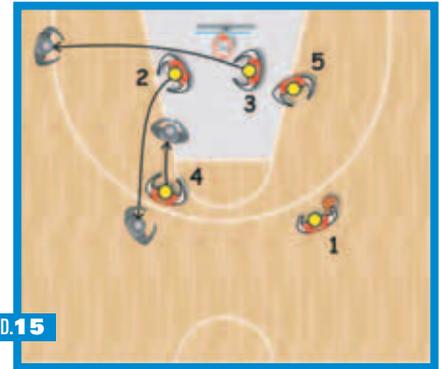
5 sets an on-ball screen for 1, and immediately after screens for 3. 3 then sets a screen (screen-the-screener) on 5's defender (diagr. 10).

1 dribbles off the 5's screen, while 3 cuts high after setting the screen on 5's defender. 5 cuts to the basket (diagr. 11). 1 passes the ball to 5 under the basket (diagr. 12).

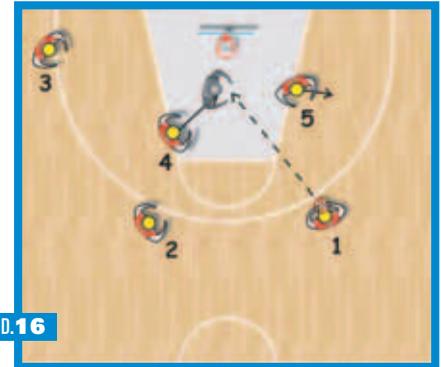
SET PLAYS

PLAY FOR 4 (GARBAJOSA)

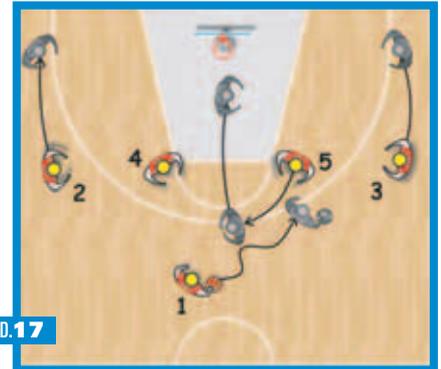
3 and 2 are in the corners, 4 and 5 are set at



D.15



D.16



D.17



D.18



D.19

the corners of the free-throw area, while 1 is in the middle of the court. 2 sets a screen for 3, who cuts along the baseline, and gets off the opposite corner, while 4 sets an on ball screen for 1 (diagr. 13). 2 continues his cut and sets a baseline screen for 5, and then 5 receives another screen from 3 (diagr. 14). 3 flares out to the corner and 2 receives a down-screen from 4, and then comes up high (diagr. 15). 4 cuts to the basket after screening for 2 and receives the ball from 1 (diagr. 16).

"HORNS": ANOTHER PLAY FOR 4 (GARBAJOSA)

The initial set is a 1-4 formation. 5 sets a screen on the ball for 1, who dribbles off 5's screen, while 2 and 3 flare to the corners (diagr. 17).

After setting the on ball screen for 1, 5 rolls to the basket, and 4 runs out from the high post position and gets the ball from 1. From this spot, he can shoot, drive to the basket, or pass to 5, 3, 2, or 1 (diagr. 18).

PLAY FOR 5 (GASOL)

4 and 5 set a staggered double screen for 3, who cuts off and sets an on-ball screen for 1, who was dribbling to the opposite side of the staggered double screen. 2 cuts across the baseline and sets himself below 4 and 5 (diagr. 19).

1 dribbles off 3's on-ball screen. Immediately after the screen, 3 rolls to the corner (diagr. 20).

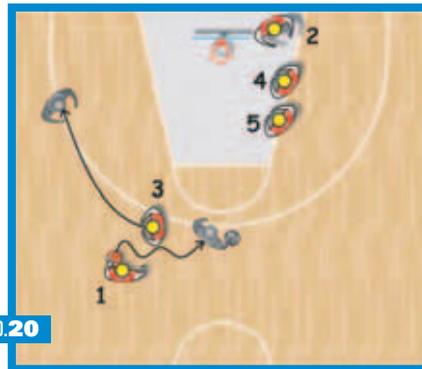
2 cuts off 4 and 5 and goes to the top of court, while 4 goes to the corner and 5 posts up on the low-post position (diagr. 21). 1 makes a skip pass from one side of the court to the opposite corner to 4 (diagr. 22). 4 passes to 5 and cuts to the opposite corner to clear out this area of the half court and let 5 play one-on-one. 3 cuts and curls back, positioning himself on the opposite block to 5, who can play one-on-one or pass to the teammates on the perimeter, 1, 2 or 4, or inside to 3 (diagr. 23).

VARIATION OF THE PLAY FOR 5 (GASOL)

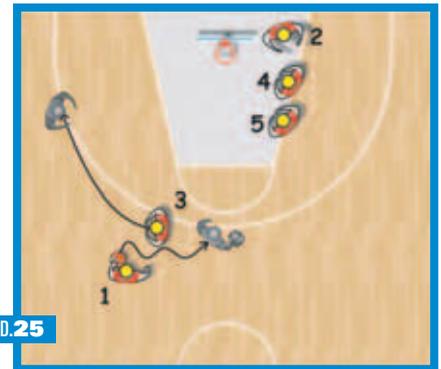
The beginning is the same: 4 and 5 set a staggered double screen for 3, who cuts off and sets an on-ball screen for 1, who was dribbling to the opposite side of the staggered double screen. 2 cuts across the baseline and sets himself below 4 and 5 (diagr. 24). 1 dribbles off the 3's on-ball screen. Immediately after the screen, 3 rolls to the corner (diagr. 25). 2 cuts off 4 and 5. 1 passes to 2 (diagr. 26). 2 drives to the middle of the three-second lane, while 4 goes to the corner and 5 cuts to the basket to receive a pass from 2. If 2 cannot pass to 5, he can kick out the ball to 4 in the corner (diagr. 27).

ANOTHER PLAY FOR 5 (GASOL)

2 cuts around 5 and 4, and then goes in the middle of the half court, while 5 flares to the corner, and 4 goes to the low-post area on the same side of the court (diagr. 28). 1 passes to 2, 5 sets an on-ball screen for 2. 2 dribbles off 5's on-ball screen, and then 5 rolls to the basket to receive the ball from 2 (diagr. 29).



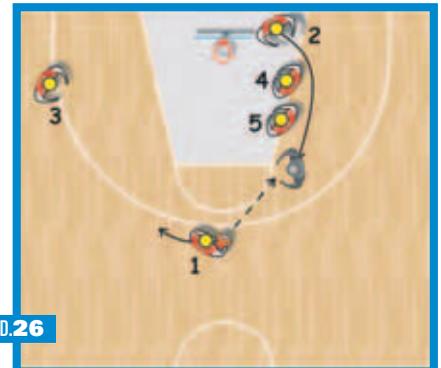
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D.25



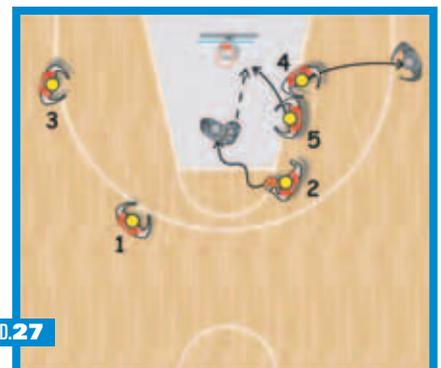
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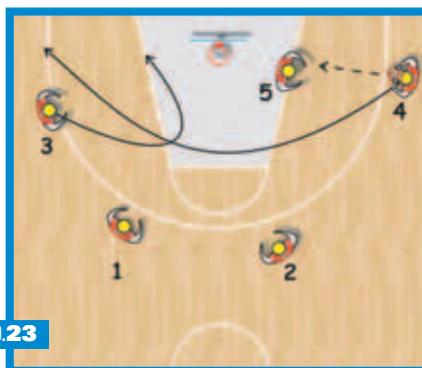
D.26



D.22



D.27



D.23



D.28



D.24



D.29



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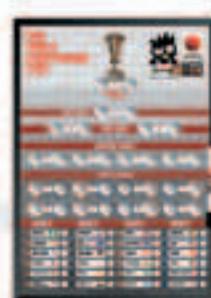
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by Lucien
Van Kersschaever

THE ZONE PRESS DEFENSE

Lucien Van Kersschaever has been the Director of the Basketball Academy in Antwerpen (Belgium) since 2005. He has been the Technical Director of Belgian Men's and Under 20 National teams. He started his coaching career as head coach of Sunair Ostende, and has coached Racing Mechelen, winning seven Belgian Division I titles and five Cups of Belgium. He has also served as head coach of Dutch Men's National team.

THREE-QUARTER ZONE PRESS

We set in a 2-2-1 formation (diagr. 1), and we run this defense after a made or missed free-throw. The aim is to change the pace of the game, forcing opponents to make mistakes, and allowing us to steal the ball. I tell my players not to gamble too much, and also this is very important, to keep their assigned positions.

SPECIFIC RULES

First Line of Defense

- ▼ Both guards must maintain proper spacing, staying about 3 meters (10 feet) away from each other.
- ▼ They do not allow a pass to be made in the middle of the court.
- ▼ They must force players to make a pass below the extension of the free-throw line.
- ▼ Once the pass is made, they must force the player with the ball to dribble.
- ▼ They must force the ball handler to dribble along the sideline.
- ▼ As long as the ball is in front of a defender, he must stay with the offensive player.
- ▼ Once the ball has crossed the half-court line, the defender must push the ball towards the corner.
- ▼ If the ball is passed over the heads of the defenders, they must sprint back toward the basket.

Second Line of Defense

- ▼ Defenders must stay one step below the mid-court line.
- ▼ The defender away from the ball must stop any opponent, who cuts in the middle of the court.
- ▼ Defenders must trap when the dribbler crosses the half court.
- ▼ The defender opposite to the trap must slide back to cover the high post.
- ▼ Defenders must rotate to open spots on the baseline.
- ▼ When the ball goes over their heads, they must sprint back to open spot at the baseline.

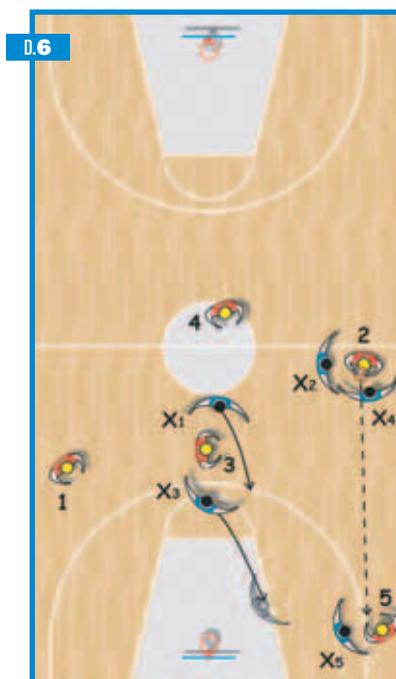
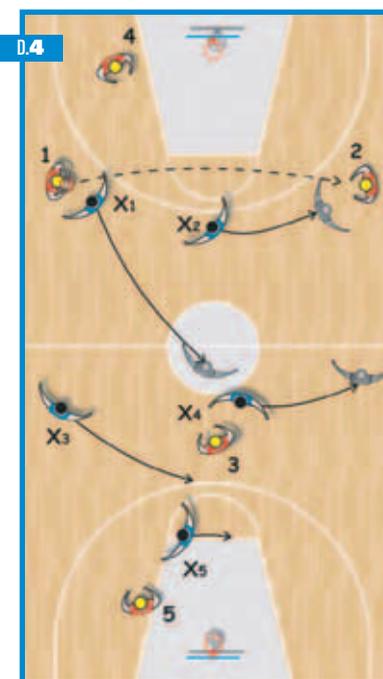
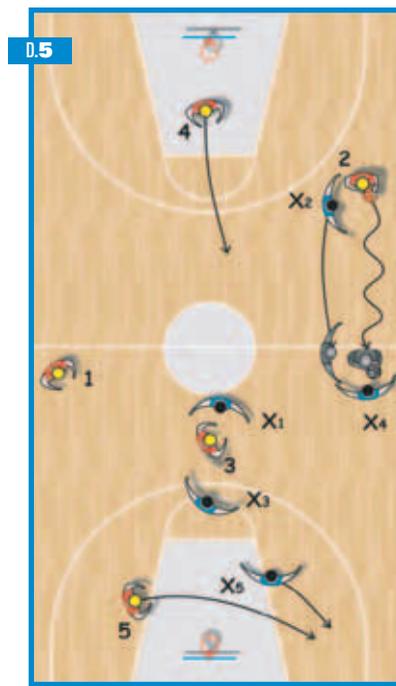
Third Line of Defense

- ▼ This player must always talk to the other defenders, because he sees all the court.
- ▼ He must take position on the ball side.
- ▼ He must stay as low as the deepest offensive player.
- ▼ He must close out if the ball is in the corner.
- ▼ He must go for the steal on the long pass.
- ▼ He must prevent any baseline drive.

GENERAL RULES

- ▼ All defenders must communicate with each other.





- ▼ Let the first pass be made, but not in the middle of the court.
- ▼ Force the first receiver to dribble along the sideline.
- ▼ Do not let any opponent make a flash cut in the middle of the court.
- ▼ Leave the position only when the ball is passed over your head.
- ▼ Whenever this happens, sprint back.
- ▼ Move when the ball is in the air, not after an opponent has received the ball.
- ▼ On a long pass to the corner, go out and aggressively cover the ball handler.

DEFENSIVE ADJUSTMENTS

Ball Inbanded on One Side of the Court

- ▼ X1 forces 1 to dribble, as soon as this player received the ball.
- ▼ X2 protects the middle of the court, and he will take over as soon as an offensive man crosses in the middle of the court.
- ▼ X3 must avoid any flash cut of 3 in the middle.
- ▼ X4 protects the middle of the court.

- ▼ X5 moves in one or the other direction based on the movements of the ball (diagr. 2).

Flash Cut in the Middle from the Backcourt

X4 denies the flash cut of 3, until X2 covers him. Then, X3 goes back on his position. X2 will deny any pass in the middle to 3 (diagr. 3).

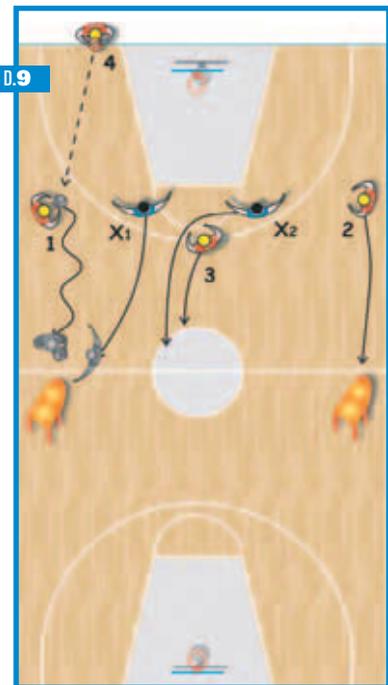
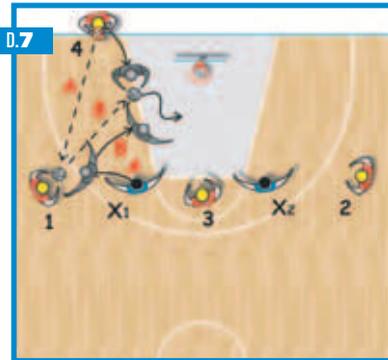
Skip Pass

On a skip pass, from one to the other side of the court, X1 and X2 must move together, while the ball is in the air.

X4 moves up for trapping, X3 protects the middle of the court, near the three-point line, X5 takes position in the 3-second lane, and X1 runs in the middle of the court, near the jump ball circle (diagr. 4).

The Dribbler Crosses the Mid Court

X2 and X4 trap, and X3 protects the lane, setting himself at the free-throw line. X1 denies the pass to 3, ready also to cover a skip pass to 1,



while X5 is responsible for guarding 5 if he cuts to the ball side (diagr. 5).

Pass to the Corner Rotations

X5 must go out aggressively on 5, X3 slides down on the ball side and toward the baseline, and covers all the cuts to the post area. In the meantime, X2 and X1 protect the elbow and free-throw line (diagr. 6).

DRILLS TO BUILD THIS DEFENSE

Frontline Responsibility Drill - First Part

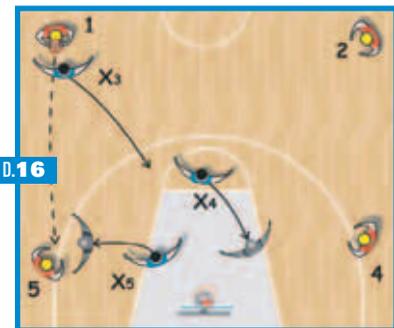
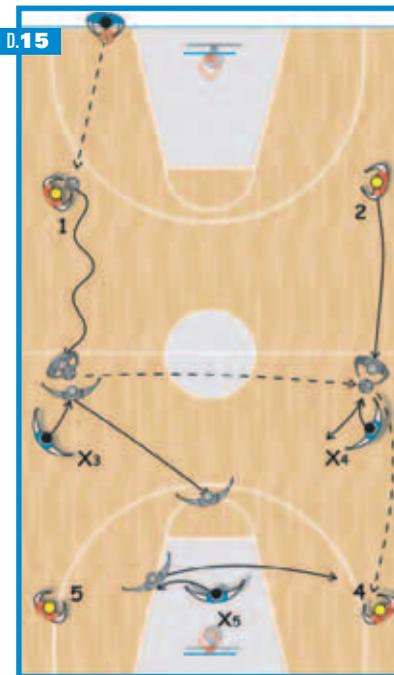
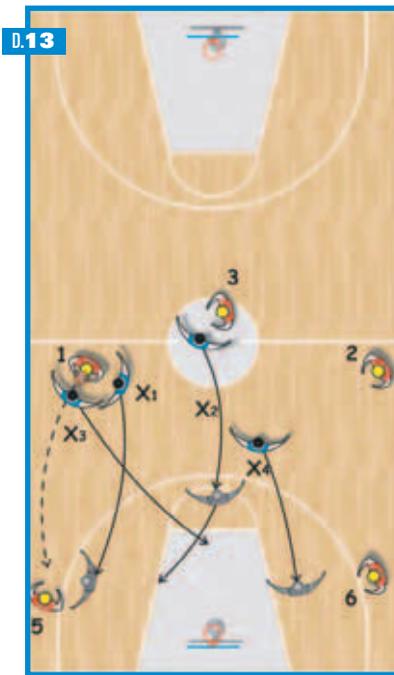
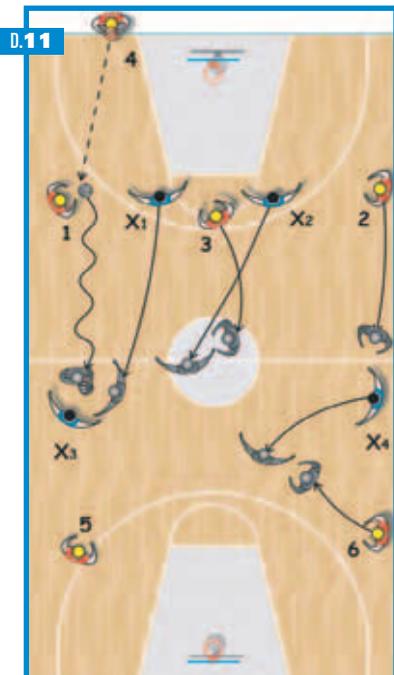
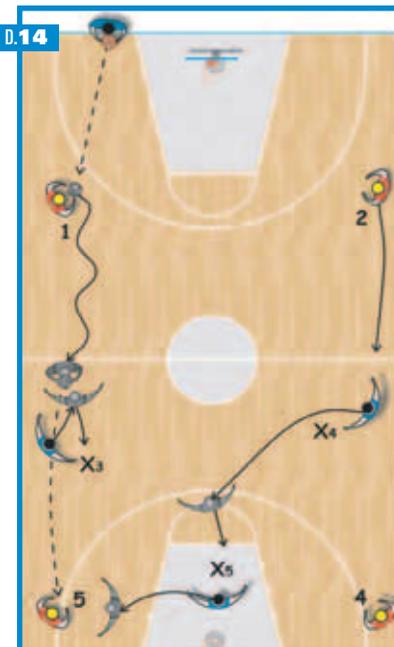
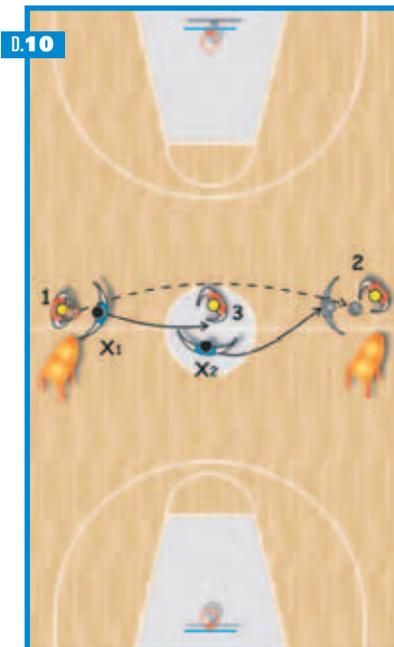
This drill is run to teach the first line of defenders how to move when the ball is inbounded. Four offensive players play versus two defenders: the two defenders, X1 and X2, must let the inbounder make the inbound pass, but not in the middle of the court, and then force the receiver to dribble. The defender of the ball handler, X1, must stay with him as long as the ball is in front of him, and, when the ball is passed back to the

offensive player, who made the inbound pass, he must get back to his original position (diagr. 7).

The offensive players pass the ball, and, after a couple of skip passes, they try to hit the teammate in the middle of the court. The two defenders, X1 and X2, must try to touch or deflect the pass (diagr. 8).

Frontline Responsibility Drill - Second Part

Now X1 forces the receiver to dribble along the sideline, but without trying to steal the ball. X1 must bring the ball handler on the trap that is run at the mid-court, while the other defensive guard, X2, must be half a step below the line of the ball. As soon as the ball is passed, he must fly with the ball and protect the middle of the court. The drill is run until the mid-court line. To simulate the other defender who traps, a chair is set at both corners of the mid-court line and near the sideline (diagr. 9). Once the ballhandler has reached the mid-court and is trapped, he



makes a skip pass to the teammate on the opposite side: X2 must fly with the ball and cover the receiver (diagr. 10).

Second Line Responsibility Drill - First Part

We now put on the court six offensive players versus four defenders. The second line defender on the ball side, X3, traps with X1. Both defenders have their hands up and "mirror" the ball, while X1 protects the middle from any flash cut (diagr. 11).

Second Line Responsibility Drill - Second Part

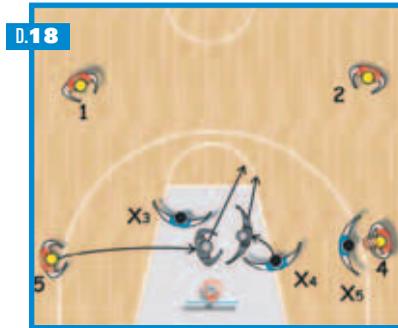
On the skip pass to the other side of the court, all the defenders must fly with the ball (diagr. 12).
On a pass to the corner, X3 must try to deflect the ball (diagr. 13).

Last Line Responsibility Drill

Four offensive players versus three defenders, plus a coach. The



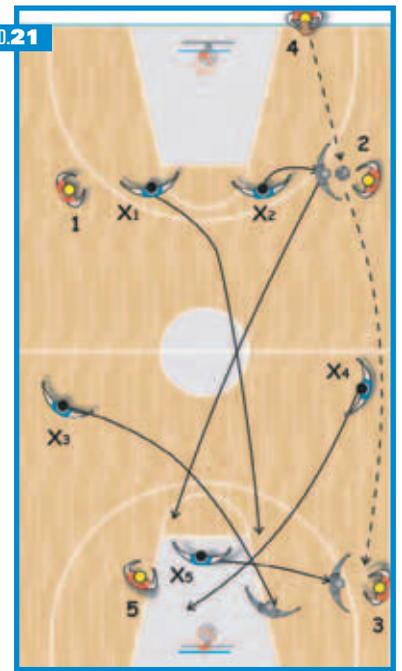
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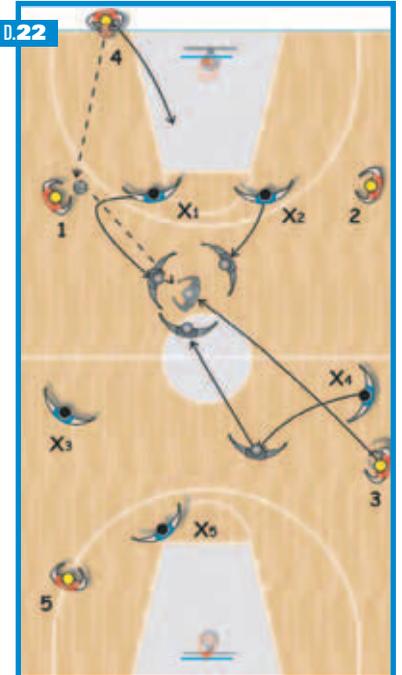
D.19



D.21



D.20



D.22

coach inbounds the ball to 1, and he immediately dribbles the ball over the mid-court line as the second line of defense creates the trap. The opposite defender, X4, protects the middle of the court, while the last line defender, X5, moves to the ball side, with a foot inside the three-second lane. When the ball is passed to the other side of the court with a skip pass, the two defenders of the second line must fly with the ball. X5 runs on the ball side, with one foot in the three-second lane (diagr. 14 and 15). **Note:** All five players must move simultaneously when the ball is in the air.

Rotation of the Second and the Last Line Drill

When the ball goes in the corner, the last line defender, X5, closes out, keeping a good and aggressive defensive position. X4 goes back and covers the middle of the three-second lane, X3 runs out of the trap and goes on the open spot opposite to the ball side. Then they play, following the zone defense rules (diagr. 16).

On a skip pass to the opposite corner (diagr. 17), all players rotate, while the ball is in the air: X5 closes out in the corner, X4 goes back and

covers the middle of the three-second lane, and X3 runs on the open spot opposite to the ball (diagr. 18).

Low Post Cut Drill

If the low post player opposite to the ball, cuts along the baseline, from block to block, the defender in the middle of the lane, X4, covers the flash cut and fronts him. However, if the low post player moves up to the high post position, X3 will cover his flash cut, and then he will exchange with X4. The same happens if a forward makes a flash cut to the ball: as usual, we do not let any ball to go in the middle (diagr. 18).

Five-on-Five Drill

Finally, we put together all the previous drills. We play five-on-five after we shoot a free-throw, and we run this defense on a made or missed free-throw (diagr. 19, 20, 21).

If the ball goes in the middle, we might trap, depending on the offensive players involved and the situation (diagr. 22).



Draft some real all stars

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by Raffaele Imbrogno

PRINCETON OFFENSE

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

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

The offense that today is defined as "poetry in action" is commonly used at all basketball levels, from high school to the NBA, from the lower Division to Euroleague. It's called the "Princeton Offense," and is named after the offense used by Princeton University, when Pete Carril coached the team to national prominence.

Even though Carril eventually left Princeton after 20 years to join his former player Geoff Petrie, the general manager of the Sacramento Kings, the following NBA and college teams use the "Princeton Offense" in their offensive system: New Jersey Nets, Sacramento Kings, New Orleans-Oklahoma City Hornets, Washington Wizards, Georgetown University, University of Utah, Air Force Academy, Northwestern, University of Richmond, and North Carolina State University.



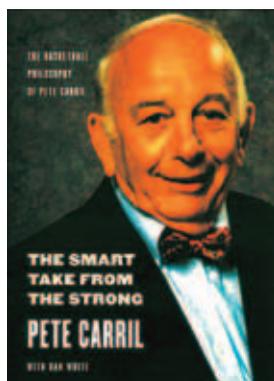
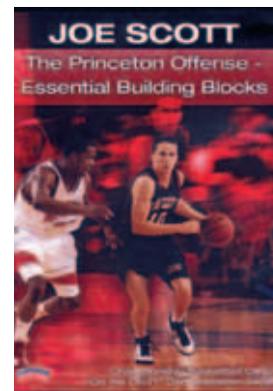
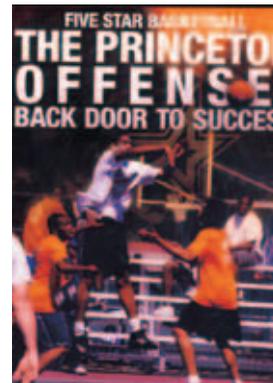
Carril, who coached at Princeton from 1967 to 1997, conceived the "Princeton Offense," battling nationally-ranked teams with student-athletes (Princeton is one of the few teams in the U.S. that does not offer athletic scholarships). Princeton is remembered for their victory against UCLA, the national title-holder,

in one of the most unexpected upsets in the history of college basketball. The offense is based on non-stop player movement without the ball, with the goal of getting a three-pointer or a backdoor cut. Among the advantages of the offense is the ability to neutralize physical and technical mismatches.

This is a very important aspect for a team like Princeton's because it is an elite university where students are admitted for academic excellence, not for basketball skills. The Princeton game involves a "Zen" philosophy, a system that takes force from the opponent's force. This special vision of the world was explained very clearly by Pete Carril in his recent book *"The Smart take from the*

Strong: the Basketball Philosophy of Pete Carril", published in 2004 by the University of Nebraska Press. The book, written with the collaboration of Dan White (introduction by Bobby Knight), offers more than three hundred pages of collected thoughts of this great coach, who was an All-American at the college level and spent 29 years coaching at in Princeton before becoming assistant coach of the Sacramento Kings.

Let's go back talking about back-door offense. As we said, the "virus" of this offense is really widespread today. Four American university coaches, in particular, are adept at this game: Bill Carmody (Northwestern), John Thompson III (Georgetown), Chris Mooney (University of Richmond), and Joe Scott (Princeton). All of them played or coached at Princeton under the direction of Pete Carril. Here they had the chance to learn this basic game system. Joe Scott recently released *"The Princeton Offense - Essential Building Blocks"* a 75-minute DVD from Championship Productions. Actually, the DVD is a long discussion about offensive concepts of the game, with a few demonstrations of the game itself.



An even better DVD is from Kevin Pigott, the head coach of Fordham Prep, a high school in New York. *"The Princeton Offense, Backdoor to Success"* is the title of the 127-minute DVD (Championship Productions) that expertly analyzes the Princeton game. Even though he brings his ideas in, Pigott remains faithful to the original system of Pete Carril's play. Moreover, the fact that Pigott teaches at high school level shows how this system easily suits under-18 players. Pigott also indicates how to use the game even in presence of a zone defence.

There is also the original work produced by Pete Carril, the one who invented the Princeton system. Fever River Sports Productions has four videotapes by Carril and recently produced a double DVD entitled, *"Princeton Backdoor Offense"* which includes the material from the videos. If you want to really understand the Princeton offense, you need these DVDs. If you want to amuse yourself on the Internet, here are some choice sites where you can find information on the "Princeton Offense":

- ▶ <http://www.princetonoffense.com/>
- ▶ <http://www.cybersportsusa.com/hooptactics/princetonoffense.asp>
- ▶ <http://espn.go.com/ncb/2003/0304/1517990.html>
- ▶ <http://espn.go.com/ncb/2003/0312/1522592.html>
- ▶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princeton_offense

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTH IN OFFICIATING

by Carl Jungebrand

Carl Jungebrand is international referee since 1986. He officiated at four Olympic Games, three World Men's Championships, three European Men's Championship finals, nine European Final Fours (and five final games), and in more than 900 international games.

When referees are asked to name the most valuable characteristics of a good official, they often compile a long list of different skills needed to successfully officiate a game. Having been asked this same question at numerous officiating events, across a number of different sports, the answers are almost always the same, about 90% of the time. Basically, this means that most officials consider these traits required and universal.

The most common answers include decision-making, control of the situation, bravery, objectivity, psychological perspective, physical strength, non-verbal communication, understanding and command of regulations, honesty, stress management, athleticism...

When dividing the characteristics into psychological and physical categories, between 70% and 90% of all answers fall into the psychological category. There are also characteristics that can be placed into both categories. When asking the same question to anyone in sports, the answers, in my opinion, tend to be similar. This leads me to believe that the base for successful officiating is 70% to 90% psychological and 10% to 30% physical.

For this reason, I'd like to ask the following provocative question: "How does the training of officials compare to the required characteristics?" (Think for a minute before continuing).

When examining the training of officials, usually the percentages are exactly the opposite. Most often, 70% of training focuses on physical and technical factors, while only 30% focuses on psychological factors. I've often wondered why this is. There are many potential answers, but the most common reasons have to do with the difficulty of the subject matter for the instructor, and the challenge of compiling (let alone understanding) the training materials. The big question we are then left with is how do we make it all relevant to the officials?

LOOKING FOR THE WINNERS

We often run into a situation where there aren't enough referees to work the number of games scheduled. On the local level, this is even more typical. If the base of the pyramid isn't stable, it will restrict our ability to identify future top officials, because there aren't as many potential candidates. I think we should approach the recruitment of officials with a different plan of action.

I honestly believe that winners - regardless of their category of employment - can be identified by certain characteristics, decision-making, and

operating styles.

Oftentimes, top officials are talented winners, who reach the top because of their attitude and choices. Some also have a little luck, because they were at the right place at the right time.

Why aren't potential officials - especially when moving to the higher ranks of officiating tested with the same model that employers use when hiring top executives? This would help us determine each candidate's strengths and weaknesses and allow us to find the tools to help refine them. The use of professionals in these types of evaluations is definitely welcome.

RELYING ON NATURAL ABILITY

In top-level sport (and top-level activity, anywhere), the base of success is built on constant, systematic development. You must have goals, a plan to achieve those goals, monitoring and analysis of progress, and a new plan to put into place. An official is in the thankless position of rarely having a true coach. There are instructors and educational events, but development most often happens during the game on the court. And if that is actually guided, the results are often better. The process is the same as learning to drive a car. You get the basics in driving school, but you don't really learn until you are out in traffic. In most sports you have instructors for officials, but the practical training and

coaching is missing. This part requires a lot of manpower, time, and financial resources.

Even without systematic training, in every sport there are occasional officiating "stars" that appear. Where do these "stars" come from? Often they are the talented individuals, whose personality traits are strong in just those areas that are required in officiating. A successful official's self-description could look like this:

"I'm a natural leader, who doesn't forget to take others into consideration. I have to make decision - often difficult ones - that are critical for the operations. Despite all of this, I realize that my role is to observe from the side. I get along with people, but I also know how to keep my distance from people when necessary as to not cloud my judgement. I work well under pressure, I understand that others have high expectations for my performance, and the results often reflect others' opinion of my success."

Just as with players, there are officials who are skilled in certain areas more than others. For some, all you have to do is hand them a whistle and a ball and say "Take care of business." Then, there are others you have to teach how to walk before they can run.

CONTROL YOURSELF

Each of us has strengths and weaknesses. The line between genius and insanity is very thin. In other words, our strengths can turn against ourselves, if we don't identify and control them. Here are a couple of examples: the ability to work independently is a strength, but being a loner and not recognizing the work of others is a weakness. On the other hand, being goal-oriented is a strength, but stubbornness makes operating that much more difficult.

I was speaking with my father recently, and I said, "You older people are really hard-headed. You never know when to let up." His answer got me thinking: "Why is it that in us older people it's seen as a negative, while in younger people this same characteristic is considered a positive, as in goal-oriented?"

In the end, the fact is that the problem is over-doing something, which turns it



from a positive to a negative. This is why it's critical to know your own strengths and weaknesses. By recognizing them, you're able to control and guide them. A good thing to remember is that even if you repress your weaknesses, they're never gone forever. When you lose control at some moment, they will rise to the top again.

WHAT IS OFFICIATING?

Try first to define the term "officiating" in as simple terms as possible (when you have your answer, move on).

People often make the mistake of turning small issues into overly big and important things. At many officiating events we talk about how many factors are part of officiating and how difficult an official's job is. Sometimes officiating is turned into a weird science that includes so many factors that it would realistically be impossible to manage all of them successfully. There are also many explanations for failure, but most often the reason is that the official wasn't psychologically or physically ready for a situation.

Based on that assumption, I say that officiating is nothing but:

1. Knowing how to anticipate what will happen.
2. Understanding what is happening now.
3. Reacting correctly to what has happened.

Understanding the food chain of basketball will also help one to assume an official's role. As an example: a player develops something new for his game (a new move, jumping higher, new shooting style), then the coach assimilates this new ability into his game plan, and then the official, after seeing the new situation, adjusts his officiating so that this new element is within his controlled environment. I doubt that a coach or an official can create something that a player hasn't already done. This is good to remember when thinking of why we are on the court, and what our role truly is in the grand scheme of things.

MEMORY BANK

How can we strengthen our psychological attributes so that we can control the action on the court? I believe that failure strengthens our mode of





operation, if we understand that it's a part of our regular business, and we know how to accept it. Naturally, the first step in development is to admit our deficiencies and be ready to correct them. It's not always easy because officials have strong personalities, just as players and coaches do. This is top-level athletics we're talking about.

Most "failure" situations we've learned the hard way-through experience. Another less painful way is to learn through others' mistakes. I don't know how many things I've learned from watching other officials in action. I've always tried to assimilate good attributes from other officials, while not forgetting that we are all individuals and we have our own personalities, and we can't forget that (whether or not we want to or not). This means that someone else's good traits may not be suited for you! Sometimes you see young officials trying to copy everything from other officials-even their bad attributes.

But, we can't always be in the stands watching a game. That's why audiovisual material is a good additional tool that should be used whenever possible. It's important to build a memory bank of situations that you might face as an official. By strengthening your memory bank, regularly adding to it, you can also increase your likelihood of making the right decision under pressure. Top athletes often use this same technique to improve their own performance.

EXPECTATIONS

Another thing that helps us understand people's reactions towards an official's performance is that they each have their own expectations for any product, service, or performance. If the expected and the actual meet, a person is usually satisfied with the result.

So, what are peoples' expectations towards officiating? It's almost always unreasonable. Most sports fanatics expect officials to be 100% correct. If this happens, it's deemed normal. This is why we only hear about officials failing, not succeeding. In a normal game, however, the officials will make about 100 calls. One can ask, if 20 of the calls were obviously wrong - which would mean some sort of catastrophe every two minutes or so - what would a spectator's opinion be? Most often the answer is, "The officiating is bad." In my

mind, the public's opinion would actually be much more critical: "Total failure." Still, on average, the official would have been correct in 80% of the calls.

In a normal game, there are usually two to five calls that are clearly wrong. Using the previous scale, this means a success rate of 95% to 98%. For a player, that percentage would mean a (exceptional) great game. For officials, you also have to consider the times you don't blow the whistle, meaning there are actually 200 to 250 decisions to be made.

A SUCCESSFUL OFFICIAL IS PROACTIVE

To close, I'd like to stop and consider the role of proactivity as a part of a successful official's operations. Proactive means taking initiative and being active. Basically it means that an individual should make decisions based on his own choices instead of outside factors. Proactive people guide their lives based on their own decisions and don't follow outside influences. Sometimes in officiating we meet similar situations, such as when a certain game didn't meet expectations. To say "They played dirty and acted in an unsportsmanlike manner" are normal words to hear from an official sometimes after the game. What the official really is trying to do is pass along responsibility for his or her own failure to others. A proactive response would be "Why did you let them play dirty?" A healthy dose of self-criticism is key to development. Look in the mirror before trying to find external reasons for failure.

Proactivity in officiating could be an official trying to guide the game's flow towards the nature of the game. By anticipating situations or immediately correcting bad developments will greatly factor into the flow of the game. Most players appreciate this type of official. In all honesty, proactivity is much more taxing and tiring than just observing and ruling from the side as a heavy hammer. But this proactive effort will always lead to results that will keep all parties happy. Winners always take initiative and actively affect their own environment at any level. They are winners because they - and not the actions - control what will happen next.

A saying that winners can always use: "Others are doing well. What can I do to achieve the same?"

RIGHT OR WRONG?

1. A4 is injured. The assistant coach of team A comes onto the playing court, but does not assist A4. A4 recovers and insists he is able to continue participating. Must A4 leave the game and be replaced by a substitute?
2. On the last free throw by A5, the ball fails to touch the rim or enter the basket. Shall the resulting team B throw-in be administered at the endline, but not directly behind the backboard?
3. At the end of the third period, team A is entitled to the next alternating possession throw-in. In the following interval of play, technical fouls are committed by B2 and then by A2. Shall the fourth period still begin with the alternating possession throw-in by team A?
4. During the first period, B8 is waiting at the scorer's table to enter the game as a substitute. Team A then scores a field goal. Shall B8 now be permitted to enter the game?
5. During a time-out, A8 wants to enter the game as a substitute. For the substitution to be legal, must A8 report to both the scorer and an official?
6. While A3 is dribbling the ball in the team A frontcourt near the centerline, a 3-second violation is committed by A5. Shall the resulting throw-in be administered at the endline, but not directly behind the backboard?
7. During the last two minutes of the fourth period, A4 commits an offensive interference during a shot at the basket. Coach A now requests a timeout. Shall the timeout be granted?
8. After a violation has been committed for illegally returning the ball to the backcourt, shall the resulting throw-in always be administered in the frontcourt of the team awarded the throw-in?
9. A5 is awarded one free throw. After the ball has been placed at the disposal of A5, but before the ball has been released of the free-throw attempt, A3 fouls B3. This is the fifth team A player foul in that period. Shall B3 be awarded two free-throws?
10. During the last two minutes of play, team A is awarded a throw-in in the team A backcourt, after which the referee interrupts the game because of water on the floor. Following the interruption, shall play resume with a team A throw-in at the centerline extended, opposite the scorer's table?



ANSWERS

1. Yes (Art. 5.3; FIBA Interpretation)
2. No. (Art. 43.3.1)
3. Yes. (Art. 42.2.7)
4. No. (Art. 19.2.2; The game clock has not stopped)
5. No. (Art. 19.3.7)
6. Yes. (Art. 22.2)
7. No. (Art. 18.4.2; A field goal was scored by team A)
8. Yes. Art.22.2; Such a violation will

- always occur in the violating team's backcourt, which would be the receiving team's frontcourt)
9. No. (Art. 41.2.2); The foul by A3 is considered a team control foul. The players will not line up for the rebound on the last free-throw. Whether the last free-throw is made or not, the ball goes to team B for a throw-in from the endline.
10. No. (Art. 17.2.3)



by Predrag Bogosavljev

WELCOME TO BASKETBALL LAND



Predrag Bogosavljev has been a player of the Serbian first league, with Kikinda, Red Star Belgrade and BC Belgrade, and also member of the Yugoslavian national team from 1982 to 1985. Then, he has been member of the board of the Basketball Federation of Serbia, member of the 2005 European Championship Organizing Committee. Since 2000, he's been member of the FIBA European Competitions Commission. He was Secretary General of Basketball Federation of Serbia and then of Basketball Federation of Yugoslavia. He was the General Director of "EP 2005", the company that organized Eurobasket 2005. Since last April, he has been FIBA Event Manager.

The motto for EuroBasket 2005 - "Welcome to Basketball Land" - was an invitation to all basketball fans to come and experience this great competition in a basketball-filled environment. At the same time, the slogan imposed an obligation on the host country to make sure that all the EuroBasket 2005 participants and guests really felt as if they were in a country in

which basketball was much more than just a game, and where they were very welcome as guests and sport friends.

When bidding for EuroBasket 2005, the Serbia and Montenegro Basketball Federation (SMBF) set forth the following objectives:

- ▼ We wanted our country to be back on the international scene as organizers of major international competitions.
- ▼ The construction of the Belgrade Arena, as the strategic sports facility for Belgrade and our country, was started so we could be involved in the 1994 World Basketball Championship for men (event which, due to the war in Yugoslavia, was then assigned to Canada). In our opinion, it was only basketball with an important international competition that had power to accelerate the construction of this magnificent facility.
- ▼ The successful organization of Eurobasket, including the development of the related infrastructure and ade-

quate training of personnel through such an organization, was critical for obtaining a major sporting event, and would serve as the based for the further development of basketball in terms of both organization/administration and funding.

- ▼ Win a medal at EuroBasket. We had at our disposal all necessary preconditions to achieve the objective.

Considering the above specified objectives and the fact that we were adequately supported by our Government and FIBA Europe, we succeeded in meeting all conditions required for obtaining the organization of EuroBasket 2005.

Although it had initially been planned to organize the Championship only in Belgrade, we found out that it was much better to build appropriate sporting infrastructure and to stage EuroBasket in four cities. The decision resulted in a much bigger investment and an increased involvement of the government and host cities' authorities in the construction and

rehabilitation of sports facilities, hotels, and roads, as well as the accompanying infrastructures in Belgrade, Podgorica, Novi Sad, and Vrsac. In this way, basketball has launched and speeded up numerous investments of outmost importance for the development of sport and the social welfare. In the long run, it has positively influenced and contributed to the quality of life in our country and has repeatedly shown its power and positive social impact.

In all the cities, additional 5 to 10 million euros have been invested in infrastructure (roads, parking lots, park rehabilitation, public outdoor surfaces, and other communal infrastructures).

ORGANIZATION

We considered including in the organization the representatives of the following institutions:

- ▼ State government, which guaranteed all conditions required for the organization of the championship.
- ▼ Host cities, which were responsible for the supplying complete infrastructure and local organization.
- ▼ Basketball Federation (SMBF), as the institution to which the organization of this event has been assigned.

Bearing in mind all the above-mentioned and knowing that each host city should have its own organizing committee capable of managing the competition, the following organizational structure was then established:

1. The Organizing Committee chaired by the Serbian Prime Minister, which was, at the same time, the Local Organizing Committee for Belgrade.
2. Local Organizing Committees in the Preliminary Round host cities of Podgorica, Novi Sad, and Vrsac, chaired by the mayors of the respective cities.
3. The Organizing Company, created by the SMBF and authorized by the main Organizing Committee to carry out all operations related to the preparation and organization of the Championship, as well as to coordinate and supervise the operations of all Local Organizing Committees.
4. The companies created in Vrsac and Novi Sad and the Secretariat of Sport of the city of Podgorica, which were in charge of all EuroBasket-related operations in their respective cities.

Upon the decision of the main Organizing Committee, the agreements defining all their rights and obligations have been entered into with all host cities. The cities were obliged to provide all necessary conditions (accommodation, local transports, training and competition arenas, and others) defined by FIBA regulations and to partially participate in financing the operations of the Organizing Company. In return, they were entitled to keep all revenues obtained from the local ticket sales, as well as to the part of marketing rights available to the Organizer. Such cooperation with LOCs proved to have been stimulating and efficient, as the cities completed their job at an outstanding level, fulfilled all their financial obligations, and, according to the final financial report, earned the revenue that has been allocated to support the local development of sports.

An important precondition for later successful organization of EuroBasket was the organization of the respective test competitions/tournaments in all host cities and all venues in which EuroBasket was to be later played. Among them are FIBA Diamond Ball tournament held in Belgrade in 2004 and U18 European Championship for Men, organized two months before the beginning of the senior competition. Other cities hosted strong international tournaments one month prior to EuroBasket to test whether all conditions for EuroBasket were provided.

Over 1,000 people were directly involved in the organization of EuroBasket through LOCs and companies. Over 800 volunteers were recruited and trained. However, judging by the number of issued accreditations (around 5,000) of which 1,500 were issued to the participating teams, journalists, and FIBA World and FIBA Europe officials, we can conclude that around 3,500 people were involved in the organization this way or the other, directly or indirectly.

BUDGET

Eurobasket 2005 has been organized in a very complex situation. The Organizer could not expect any financial support from the government or cities as they had already allocated considerable funds for the construction and preparation of facilities (hotels, venues, equipment). On the other hand, the economic situation in the country asked for relatively lower prices of tickets and spon-

sorship packages that were supposed to be the major source of revenues. That is why, with a maximum reduction in the organization budget and by engaging a minimal number of professional staff, the budget was 5 million euros. This is far below a realistic budget for the organization of such a competition in any other country.

When speaking about revenue, 60% of the total revenue was derived from sponsors, 35% from the sale of tickets, and only 5% from other sources.

TICKETS

Tickets were one of the main sources of the Eurobasket Organizer's revenue and that is why it was necessary to look closely at ticket prices and the method of selling them in order to ensure maximum attendance in all the venues on the one hand, and maximum revenue on the other hand. Printing the tickets, selling techniques, and overall security for the event were all jobs for the Organizer.

We decided to stimulate ticket sales, trying to have as many tickets pre-sold before the event as possible. By doing so, we could also group the fans coming from various countries, as well as create a database that included all ticket buyers. An agency was engaged to create the software for selling, printing, and control of tickets at the entrance of all venues. Following our instructions and requests, the agency did their job successfully. Almost 90% of the tickets were sold in a pre-sale period. All tickets were sold out (except for games determining for fifth and six place in the tournament), and our plan was fully realized.

PROMOTION

The promotional activities related to EuroBasket 2005 began in mid-2003. Official FIBA World and FIBA Europe events and competitions, such as FIBA Europe Congress, 2003 EuroBasket in Sweden, FIBA Diamond Ball tournament, Qualifying Round, and EuroBasket 2005 Draw and similar events were used for international promotion. Our assessment was that there was no justification for major investments in the promotion in other countries, as it was evident from the practice that interested federations had already promoted the competition they were to participate in. That is why we considered it sufficient for us to attract foreign guests and basketball fans by distributing the information to the par-



ticipating federations and by preparing an adequate Web presentation. For their part, FIBA Europe contributed to the international promotion of the event through their activities, resulting in over 10,000 foreign fans coming to the EuroBasket 2005 finals in the Belgrade Arena.

Contrary to the international promotion, the local promotion was much more extensive, versatile, and aggressive. Although some activities had been started in 2003, the real campaign with a variety of materials, intensive media exposure, outdoor activities, and other kinds of promotion began in January 2005. To avoid in-depth analysis of the campaign, its phases, target groups, and applied methods, it is more instructive to present some figures that can illustrate its scope.

The campaign included two promotional movies and ten TV spots, which were produced in the period between October 2004 and September 2005 and run over 10,000 times on the national and regional TV stations. In addition to that, over 30 special sport entertainment TV programs were produced and run in the top hours on national TV and subsequently rerun on local TV stations.

Two months before the start of EuroBasket 2005, the national TV started to broadcast in late afternoons an animated 3D interactive game for children called Macho Superstar, with EuroBasket mascot Macho playing the leading role. It's needless to say how much this TV game especially targeting the youngest population, contributed the promotion of basketball.

The outdoor campaign included over 200 billboards on the most attractive locations in the various cities. Announcements were periodically published in daily newspapers with the highest circulations. If we add several magazines, which got involved in the campaign for free, it brings the total number of published announcements to over 100.

As our wish was EuroBasket 2005 to be present not in the host cities alone, but in each corner of our country, we launched a Basketball Caravan, which toured 23 of the largest cities in the country. Each city hosted a day-long basketball festival, which also included various cultural and musical events along with the basketball competition, in which 64 U18 teams di-

vided into four age categories took part. This festival included over 9,000 children and more than 100,000 spectators at major squares of our cities throughout the country.

To get a clear picture of the campaign, which by its scope and power made the whole country live basketball and become eager to experience the EuroBasket 2005 tip-off in September, we should also add that promotion also included tens of thousands of print materials, including brochures, information papers, leaflets, posters and placards, as well as thousands of shirts, caps, balls and other specially designed gifts, along with a range of activities locally organized by host cities' LOC.

ACCOMODATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Fourteen hotels were booked to accommodate guests, media, technical staff, and participants. All of them were provided transfers and local transportation. For that purpose, we engaged 25 buses, 50 cars, and 10 vans.

Accommodation was the greatest problem. Even in Belgrade, there were not enough rooms available in the top hotels to accommodate all foreign guests and basketball fans. However, by the rational usage and adaptation of the existing capacities, the requirements prescribed by FIBA regulations were met and all the problems were successfully resolved, thanks to the great understanding of our guests and huge effort of local organizers. This situation resulted in relatively high prices for hotel rooms, a situation that we were unable to correct due to the lack of an alternative in the market.

MEDIA

We had the highest media coverage compared to all previous FIBA competitions. Over 1,100 journalists from 50 countries were accredited. TV coverage was provided in 72 countries worldwide, as well as live Internet broadcast of all the games. Thanks to the journalists engaged in the preparation of attractive news and other content, the EuroBasket 2005 Web site was extremely informative and visited (over 1,200,000 visits throughout the tournament).

SPONSORS

Compared to previous FIBA competitions, EuroBasket 2005 set a record for the number of sponsors. The Organizing Committee provided 16 sponsors in all

sponsorship categories, whereas the LOCs secured 18 local sponsors. Such a huge interest of sponsors in basketball is a good indicator for future basketball competitions, but it would be useful to consider the possibility of reducing the number of sponsorship packages in order to enable adequate exposure and promotion for those sponsors willing to make huge investments.

SIDE EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Having built on the experience from previous competitions and the Athens Olympic Games, the organizers engaged the top dance groups and artists to entertain the spectators between and during the games. The Red Foxes dance troupe and the Frogs acrobat group, along with a few local dancing groups and singers, provided an excellent atmosphere in the arena and were greatly appreciated by the spectators.

A day before the beginning of the Championship, an exhibition dedicated to the history of European Championships was open to the public. That evening, the Opening Ceremony took place and it included a rich artistic program staged at the Kalemegdan fortress, the Symbol of Belgrade, and the place where Serbian Basketball was born.

Several top-level seminars were held during the Championship: the International Clinic for Coaches, International Symposium in Sports Medicine, and the International Seminar for Sports Journalists.

Throughout the Championship, books were promoted by Radomir Shaper and Nebojsa Popovic, two legendary figures in Yugoslav basketball history. Other cultural events included the unveiling of a special sculpture dedicated to basketball in front of the Belgrade Arena, a gala concert featuring the ethno group Balkanika,

and a Farewell Party held on the last day of the tournament.

EFFECTS

Based on the above information, it could be concluded that EuroBasket 2005 was as much important for the host country and local organizers as it was for FIBA Europe and the overall basketball community in the world.

Serbia and Montenegro as the host country and Belgrade, Podgorica, Novi Sad and Vrsac as the host cities, have all gained an exceptional international promotion. At the same time, there remains a renewed or newly built infrastructure as the legacy of EuroBasket 2005, whereby the conditions have been secured for the continued development of sport and higher living standard of all citizens.

When it comes to security, it was at the highest level throughout EuroBasket 2005. The fact that over 10,000 foreign fans watched the final match, and that no slightest incident was reported either at the final game or during the entire tournament, says it all. In these days, when security is becoming one of the key issues in all international events, the Organizers and FIBA Europe have proved that they are prepared and capable of meeting the most strict security standards.

Finally, new standards have been set regarding the event promotion, branding, positioning and treatment of sponsors, IT, TV production, working conditions for the media, security, as well as the preparation of facilities, local organizing structure and the like. The EuroBasket 2005 experience will have a huge impact on the organization of major basketball competitions and further increase in the level of their quality in the days and years to come.





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BASKETBALLS FOR EVERYBODY, EVERYWHERE

Basketball, the second most popular participant sport in the world after football, is continuing to grow, as are the many companies eager to produce high-quality balls for the millions of players around the world. We would like to introduce the Company, which are the FIBA Study Centre Partners and whose products meet the highest quality standards, helping athletes the world over maintain the highest level of play possible.

BADEN SPORTS: "PASSION FOR A BETTER GAME"

Baden is a company that believes the athlete should determine the outcome of the game, not the equipment. This is the premise behind their entire line of Perfection Game Balls: "The ball that lets athletes perform to their highest levels."

Baden's Perfection Elite basketball, with its patented symmetrical design and balanced panel widths, eliminates the lumpy, uneven channel cluster found on other balls. These clusters lead to inconsistent play. By spreading out and balancing the channels, Perfection's design provides 48% less channel material in the critical channel crossing areas, ensuring the athlete a consistent feel and bounce. Perfection's patented Stealth Soft-Valve System and Cushion Control Technology has dramatically changed the way basketballs are made. In addition, the Stealth Soft-Valve System, another area associated with bad bounces and inconsistent play, was solved by softening the entire valve panel, making it undetecta-



ble to the athlete. These features, along with Perfection's exclusive ultra microfiber cover, provide the best basketball "feel" and truest performance in the game.

www.badensports.com

7 STEPS TO PERFECTION™

THE ONLY BASKETBALL WITH A CONSISTENT 360° FEEL

1. SYMMETRICAL DESIGN
perfect passing

Perfection's symmetrical design gives you a perfectly balanced ball. Unlike any other basketball, the two halves of the ball are identical. This means greater consistency in shooting, passing, catching, rebounding and ball handling.

2. BALANCED PANEL WIDTHS
perfect passing

By spreading out the channels, Perfection's balanced panel design provides ultra-wide channel material than other basketballs in the channel-crossing area shown to the left. Perfection's balanced panel widths give you the best feel, the best balance, and the best performance in basketball.

3. ELIMINATION OF CHANNEL CLUSTER
perfect passing

Perfection eliminates the lumpy, uneven channel cluster that causes inconsistent bounce and forces players to rotate the ball before passing or shooting.

4. EXCLUSIVE VALVE SYSTEM
perfect passing

Perfection's exclusive valve system features a hidden valve which eliminates bad bounces. It also provides special cushioning surrounding the valve to maintain a consistent 360° feel around the ball.

5. CUSHION CONTROL TECHNOLOGY
perfect passing

Baden's patented Cushion Control Technology™ forever changed the way basketballs are made. CCT consists of thousands of tiny air cells that form a "cushioned" core, CCT provides a softer feel and gives the ball a true bounce and longer life.

6. COVER MATERIAL & SUREGRIP™ GRAPHICS

Baden's exclusive ultra microfiber cover creates the best feeling basketball on the market. It does NOT absorb moisture, does NOT get lousy and does NOT get torn.

Baden's exclusive SureGrip™ graphics on the ball provide a tacky feel paddle surface that maintains your grip and contributes the 360° feel.

7. CHANNEL DEFINITION

Perfection's rounded panels and patented reinforced seams eliminate pinching and sagging. The unique channel design also provides the optimal channel width, depth and transition from the cover material to the channel. This results in the best feel for ball handling and shooting.

NIKE APPROVED



CONTI: "QUALITY PRODUCTS & UNPARALLELED CUSTOMER SERVICE"

Dedicated to ball production for more than 35 years, Conti is among the top ball manufacturers, making the highest quality products with the most advanced technologies in order to achieve the best performance in a variety of sports. The company's strict quality control system enables them to supply products that meet the highest standards. The Conti philosophy of "Quality products & unparalleled customer service" is the cornerstone of the company and remains the most reliable guaranty for every consumer. The company's synthetic leather basketballs are made from premium top-quality composite PU leather, with a micro-fiber backing specially developed to meet the demands of the world's best players.

The patented honeycomb rubber outer layer gives the ball a soft and feather-like feel, while the patented deep pebble channel allows players to easily grip the ball and shoot. www.contisports.com

GALA: "TOUCH OF VICTORY"

Gala, with more than a half century tradition of quality and service, is a reliable supplier of superior sports products, balls, and other products. Gala is certified by international sports federations, including FIBA and FIVB. The company produces sports balls and uniforms. Their quality uniforms carry the Gala trademark, but the company also produces customized and other made-to-order products for its clients. www.gala.cz



MESUCA: "ENRICHING LIVES"

Wah Hing Creation (WHC) Corporation was established in Hong Kong in 1969. The company focus was on the sales of soccer balls and various sports equipment throughout Southeast Asia. However, as China opened its door for investors, WHC set up the GFTZ MESUCA Development Co. Ltd. in Guangzhou in 1996, looking forward to being a part of the growing international sports industry.



The Company established a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Zhao Qing, China in 2002. The spacious 66,000 square meter factory features the latest technology and is fully equipped to fulfill the largest orders. MESUCA specializes in the manufacture of balls, including hand-sewn, stitched, and laminated basketballs, in addition to their line of soccer and volleyball balls, as well as other sport items and accessories. The motto of the company is "Enriching lives." With annual production capacity well over 2.5 million pieces, the company certainly does just that. www.mesuca.com

VEGA: CUSTOMER SERVICE A KEY STRATEGY

Vega Balls Manufacturing Co., Ltd. was founded in 1988 through the joint venture of Grand Sports (Thai Partners) and Yuan Chi Overseas Ltd. (Taiwanese Partners). Soon after, the factory base was moved from Taiwan to Thailand. Since then, Vega is well recognized as one of the leading manufacturer of inflatable balls (with over 4.5 million balls capacity), serving global brands as well as marketing its own "Vega" line of balls. The company is committed to supplying the highest quality products, striving to continually improve efficiency, effectiveness, and utilization of resources so it remains highly competitive in the global marketplace.

Customer service is a key company attribute and company officials work closely with clients in new development, formulating innovative ideas for graphic designs, and specialized mold designs. Speedy service is a hallmark of the company. Vega Balls Manufacturing has been a part of the FIBA Approval Program and the company is proud to help promote the game of basketball in Thailand, China, Vietnam, Eastern Europe, and in other parts of the World. www.vegaball.com





FIBA

We Are Basketball



by Rich Dalatri

FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH TRAINING FOR BASKETBALL

Rich Dalatri returned for his second stint with the New Jersey Nets in 1997, having served in a similar capacity from 1987-92. He was the first full-time strength and conditioning coach in the NBA. He worked for the Cleveland Cavaliers, as well as in the Italian Division I League, for Caserta and Fortitudo Bologna. In 2001, he was named as the athletic coach for the Italian Men's National Team, who won the bronze medal at the 2003 European Championships, and the silver medal at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece.

Functional strength is becoming a way to train athletes in a way specific to the sport played. Functional strength is what I call exercises that are exact movements of our competition, but in an overloaded situation for a certain number of repetitions, and then immediately followed by repeating the movement in an overloaded state. By taking movements directly from game situations and replicating them in an overloaded state, you enhance that exact skill of the sport.

To train an exercise of functional strength you take the skill you want to work on and overload it with a medicine ball, elastic band, or weighted vest. You overload this movement for a series of 2-4 repetitions. These loaded repetitions are immediately followed by 1-2 repetitions of the skill in a regular unloaded state. By loading the muscles you elicit a much higher stimu-

lation to the neuromuscular system. The contraction of the muscle must be stronger and more muscle fibers must be recruited to complete the task.

When you immediately unload the muscles they are ready to fight again the overload and deliver the same strong contraction, only now with no overload the movement is much faster and explosive than before. By training the muscles to this stronger more explosive response, they will adapt to moving at a higher level after the training effect takes place. You usually see results from this type of training in only a few weeks. You can train 2-4 times per week in this mode. We usually do 2 exercises per training session, with 8-12 repetitions per exercise.



PHOTO 1

This training is usually done during the off-season. If you do it during the competitive season, your repetitions must be reduced and I would do it 2 times per week.

Functional strength differs from the more traditional strength training, because you duplicate an exact movement from the sport.

In the weight room it is more development of absolute strength.

You are in a fixed movement pattern trying to go from point A to point B using as much weight as possible. Functional strength will develop athleticism and athletic ability to a higher level, because of the many factors involved in each exercise. First, the skill is improved, in addition, coordination of movement, strength, balance, and a heightened concentration to detail are also increased.

These exercises give you a good blend of all the qualities of athleticism, and can be done easily by all levels of athletes. The complexity of the exercise is what would change from an inexperienced athlete to an experienced athlete.

The key in this type of training is to not fatigue the muscle too much with the loaded reps, so, when it is unloaded, it can elicit a strong forceful repetition at higher speeds than the previous reps. Usually, I use:

- ▼ 2-4 loaded reps, followed by
- ▼ 1-2 unloaded.

This is very high quality work, which you do not want lactic acid build up in the muscles to slow the actions down.

EXAMPLES OF WORK

An example of this type of work is to put a player under the rim with a medicine ball of 12-16 pounds (5-7 kilograms). The player with outstretched arms taps the backboard 3-5 times, jumping as fast and high as possible. After the last tap, the medicine ball is immediately replaced with a regular basketball and it is dunked or shot from under the rim, as explosively as possible.

A drill can be as simple as running a short distance (10



yards, m. 3) being resisted by a strap and then released to run normally. An exercise that is of a higher level would be resisting a player doing a closeout and cutoff in a defensive situation in basketball (photo 1, 2, and 3).

Another example of this type of work is to put an elastic band around a player's waist. He starts at the elbow facing the basket with a ball. The player drives to the basket and dribbles with the resistance of the elastic. He returns back to the start as quickly as possible and repeats it 2 more times. On the 4th repetition the elastic is removed and he drives to the basket at top speed and lays the ball in.

Another positive of this training is that it is done on the same court that you play. You do not need any other space or facility.



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ONE-ON-ONE

JIMENEZ: "THIS IS A GREAT MOMENT FOR SPANISH BASKETBALL"

Carlos Jimenez held the James Naismith Cup with pride after Spain claimed their first FIBA World Championship title on 3rd September in Tokyo.

The emphatic 70-47 triumph over Greece in Sunday's final is the biggest team sporting achievement in the country's history. Pepu Hernandez's men had warned this was going to be their summer and they kept their word. Once the undefeated Spaniards had beaten Argentina to reach the title game against Greece, there was no stopping them - even without injured superstar Pau Gasol. Jimenez was terrific in the final, battling the Greek frontline and finishing with 11 rebounds. The veteran forward, along with Felipe Reyes and Marc Gasol, were awesome on defense and made up for the absence of Pau, who watched from the bench. The Spanish captain spoke to FIBA's correspondent Cindy Garcia-Bennett after his team's famous win.



FIBA: *Congratulations Carlos, what's the trophy like?*

JIMENEZ: It's beautiful and heavy, but I don't mind, I don't want to let go of it. Finally, I can enjoy it.

FIBA: *Without Pau Gasol for the final, few people gave Spain a chance to win the tournament. There was no better stage to prove that Spain is not a one-man team than in this final.*

JIMENEZ: I'm really proud to be the captain of this national team, it's one of the biggest satisfactions of my life and no-one can take this away from me. We knew we had to do something great. We had gone into the final with a bittersweet taste after Pau's injury (against Argentina). We knew that what happened had benefited us as we went into the game as the underdogs and this passed the pressure onto Greece. Greece had everything going for them, they are the European champions, they beat Team USA in the semi-final and they were playing against a Spain side without their reference player. But from the start, we made things difficult for them.

FIBA: *What were your tactics for this game?*

JIMENEZ: It wasn't any different from our previous games in the sense that Pepu (Spanish head coach 'Pepu' Hernandez) gave us the same talk prior to walking out on the court. He tried to take a little bit of the tension away from us, he told us that the good news was that on Monday we could finally rest. It was important to be calm because if you think about the fact that you are playing in a final that can really block you.

FIBA: *Coach Hernandez has certainly done a great job since taking over the national team after last year's EuroBasket*



bronze medal game defeat with Spain yet to lose a game. What is he like?

JIMENEZ: Pepu expects his players to do what they are best at, he doesn't expect anything else from you. I think this has been the key to our success. We have all contributed, every player has brought out his best and if you achieve this in a team, then there's no way your rivals can counter it. We had several alternatives practiced but at times we had situations we had not prepared, but people responded well.

FIBA: *It's been a great summer for you, Carlos. You became a father and you recently signed a contract to play for Spanish champions Unicaja Malaga and you now won the greatest honour in international basketball.*

JIMENEZ: I dedicate it to my son Pablo

and my wife and for those who respected the decision to come here despite the situation (traveling to Japan after just becoming a father) but fortunately, everything went okay.

FIBA: *When did it sink in that you were going to be world champions?*

JIMENEZ: I have always been very realistic, I'm not a big dreamer, so I have never

believed in things until I haven't got them. That's the kind of person I am. It wasn't until two or three minutes before the end of this game that it began to sink in.

FIBA: *What next for you and Spain? Next year will be a big one since Spain is staging the EuroBasket.*

JIMENEZ: I hope that I can continue to play with this national team. We will go

step by step. I hope that we don't go mad. This is a very important achievement, but we have to be cautious of how we've gotten here. We cannot relax, we have to continue to work. A lot more can be achieved but we have to keep our feet firmly on the ground. We have to enjoy things but not go overboard. We have a great moment for basketball and we must now know how to take advantage of it.

HINRICH: "...WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PLAY BETTER FIBA BASKETBALL"

Kirk Hinrich's final game at the FIBA World Championship may have been special not only because Team USA took a bronze medal, but also because he did so against a side that included his NBA teammate Andres Nocioni. Hinrich was brought into the team by USA head coach Mike Krzyzewski to fill in the need at the point guard position where the Chicago Bulls playmaker split the duties with Chris Paul. But the 25-year-old also helped address a shortage of good, consistent outside shooters and he showed he filled that void by going 12 of 26 from three-point range over the course of the tournament. In fact, hadn't it been for Hinrich's four efforts from long range, who knows if America would have even had a chance to come within four points of the European champions Greece in Friday's semi-final. FIBA correspondent Simon Wilkinson talked to Hinrich after Team USA beat Argentina.

FIBA: *Finishing with a medal even if it's just a bronze is still a good way to finish the tournament.*

HINRICH: Yeah. I mean what happened against Greece obviously wasn't what we wanted. But Argentina is a great team, so we're happy to win. Our performance was good especially since it's very hard to play a consolation game. But the bottom line is that we're representing our country and we're still working to win gold at the Olympic Games in two years time, so we're happy to win this medal.

FIBA: *Some might say that you lost against Greece because you underestimated them. What are your thoughts on that?*



HINRICH: They played well but we just didn't do well defensively. We were really bad. We couldn't guard their pick and roll and we really didn't guard them at all.

FIBA: *All in all, there are some positives for Team USA to take out of this tournament.*

HINRICH: We played well for the most part. We had a couple of stretches where we didn't perform as well and it cost us. As I said, Greece did really great and we didn't play up to our ability. We



have to play a lot better than that down the road.

FIBA: *It's been said that maybe you weren't tested enough on your way to the semi-finals, that your bracket was too easy.*

HINRICH: Well we couldn't really control who they put in front of us. Everybody thought that Slovenia and Italy were going to do better in the medal round and they didn't. But at the end of the day when we played against Greece we didn't play our best.

FIBA: *Argentina point guard Pepe Sanchez was talking about how today they were trying to get you to play FIBA type basketball. Do you feel Team USA was playing NBA basketball?*

HINRICH: It's an adjustment for all of us. The international game is very different from the way we play during the season over in America. As we build towards the Olympics, we're going to have to play better FIBA basketball.

FIBA: *Did you have any problem with the rules, the shorter three-point line and the other differences?*

HINRICH: No not really that was all fine. It's just that the international game is more based on team play and ball movement and in the NBA a lot of the guys that we have are used to the illegal defense rule. So they use the isolation to make plays. It's definitely a very different game.

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**PLANET
BASKETBALL**

THE WORLD IN BRIEF

BOB ELPHINSTON ELECTED NEW FIBA PRESIDENT

Bob Elphinston has been elected new FIBA President for the 2006 - 2010 term of office. The election took place during the FIBA World Congress in the Tokyo Prince Hotel Park Tower, where the assembly of the 212 national federations of FIBA took place. A total of 104 national federations were present at the Congress.

The 64-year old native of Lithgow, Australia, was excited about this new challenge: "I am enormously proud to be elected as President of FIBA and to be only the third Australian ever to be President of an International Olympic Sports Federation." "Basketball is at an exciting level as the second most played team sport in the world today behind football and my role as President gives me the chance to directly assist a great sport



CENTRAL BOARD 2006 - 2010

The World Congress has also ratified the composition of the FIBA Central Board for the 2006 - 2010 term of office. The Central Board is the highest executive body of FIBA and meets twice a year. The Central Board will be comprised as follows:

Mr. Robert Elphinston, AUS, President
 Mr. George Vassilakopoulos, GRE, FIBA Europe, Vice-President
 Mr. Patrick Baumann, SUI, Secretary General
 Mr. Manfred Ströher, GER, Treasurer
 Mr. Alain Ekra, CIV, FIBA Africa, Member
 Mr. Alphonse Bilé, CIV, FIBA Africa, Member
 Ms. Maïga Salamatou, MLI, FIBA Africa, Member
 Mr. Julio Subero, DOM, FIBA Americas, Member
 Mr. Jenaro Marchand, PUR, FIBA Americas, Member
 Mr. Horacio Muratore, ARG, FIBA Americas, Member
 Ms. Valerie Ackerman, USA, FIBA Americas, Member
 Mr. Zaiqing Yu, CHI, FIBA Asia, Member
 Sheik Fahad Al-Ahmad Alsabab Talal, KUW, FIBA Asia, Member
 Ms. Mabel Mun Wai Ching, HKG, FIBA Asia, Member
 Mr. Yvan Mainini, FRA, FIBA Europe, Member
 Mr. Jose Luis Saez Regalado, ESP, FIBA Europe, Member
 Ms. Marion Grethen, LUX, FIBA Europe, Member
 Ms. Barbara Wheadon, NZL, FIBA Oceania, Member
 Mr. Steve Smith, AUS, FIBA Oceania, Member
 Mr. William Kelderman, PLW, FIBA Oceania, Member

NEW COMMISSION PRESIDENTS

The World Congress also ratified the Presidents and members of FIBA Commission Presidents and members for the 2006 -2010 term of office:

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS COMMISSION

President: Mr. Ruben Rabano (ARG)

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COMMISSION

President: Mrs. Lorraine Landon (AUS)

YOUTH BASKETBALL COMMISSION

President: Mr. Ingo Weiss (GER)

COMMONWEALTH BASKETBALL COMMISSION

President: Mr. Harish Sharma (IND)

ETHICS COMMISSION

President: Mr. George Killian (USA)

LEGAL COMMISSION

President: Mr. Antonio Mizzi (MLT)

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

President: Mr. Valdu Suurkask (EST)

MEDICAL COMMISSION

President: Dr. Constantinos Parisi (GRE)

APPEALS' COMMISSION

President: Mr. Olafur Rafnsson (ISL)

FINANCE COMMISSION

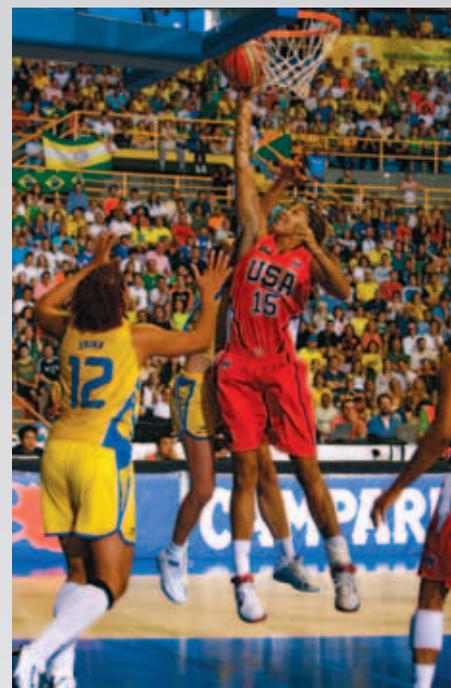
President: Mr. Manfred Ströher (GER)

grow even more," Elphinston said. Elphinston also sees a splendid future for the sport: "FIBA looks forward to an exciting Olympic Games in Beijing 2008, increased commercial opportunities and player development with the emphasis of further developing strong leagues in all 212 member federations." "We look forward to the cooperation with Bob Elphinston", said FIBA Secretary General Patrick Baumann. "We are very glad to have a President with such a high reputation in the world of sports. We will certainly profit from his experience and expertise. At the same time I would like to thank our outgoing President Carl Men Ky Ching for his outstanding contribution to the growth of basketball in the past four years." Bob Elphinston is recognised as one of the most respected sports administrators in the world, with a long involvement in basketball since 1961 and international sport since 1991. Bob was one of the founding directors of the Australian National Basketball League (NBL) and managed the Australian Men's basketball team at the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games. He has visited more than 35 countries with teams from Australia. He was the founding President of the Australian Basketball Coaches Association.

In 1991, Bob was appointed General Manager for the Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid Company, reporting directly to Chief Executive Rod McGeoch. His work was ultimately rewarded in 1993 when Sydney won the right to host the 2000 Olympic Games. As SOCOG's General Manager-Sport, Bob was directly responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the 28 sports at the Olympic Games including the sports competition, the sports schedule, sport services, sport presentation, sport policy and operations, medical services, doping control, IOC relations and protocol, National Olympic Committees services and language services. During his 10 years of Olympic involvement, Bob has developed a close working relationship with FIBA. In recognition of his significant contribution in bidding for and staging the "best Games ever", the IOC appointed him to the IOC Sports Program Commission and the IOC Evaluation Commission for the selection of the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games. In addition, due to his vast experience, he is Sports Consultant to the Organizing Committees of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (BOCOG) in Beijing, P.R. of China and the London Olympic Games 2012 (LOCOG) and also consults the International Olympic Committee. In October 2000, he was awarded the Olympic Order by the President of the IOC.

A BROKEN DYNASTY: AUSTRALIA WINS FIRST WOMEN'S WORLD TITLE

Since the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta the USA was dominating women's basketball, and no one came even close over the past 10 years to challenge them for a gold medal in top international competition. During the first phase of the FIBA World Championship for Women in Sao Paulo, this story seemed to be continued. But that impression only lasted until the Semi-final round, where USA lost with 75 - 68 against Russia. That loss halted the USA's FIBA World Championship winning streak, which dated to the 1994 World Championship bronze medal game, at 26 games and the USA's string of victories ended at 50 overall in the Olympics and Worlds. Australia's women clinched their first world title on 23rd September with 91-74 thumping of Russia. Just when Igor Grudin's players believed had cleared their biggest hurdle with a semi-final upset of the United States,



they ran into a buzz saw from Down Under. Beaten finalists at the last two Olympic Games by the United States, the Opals traveled to Brazil determined to snatch gold and they accomplished the feat in style against Russia with Penny Taylor exploding for 28 points. Australia's glorious run at the FIBA Women Championship for Women had a little bit of everything. They started with a win after a forfeit by Lithuania, who had trouble gaining entry to Brazil from French Guyana, and the Opals survived close calls against Spain in the second group stage and Brazil in the semi-final before achieving the ultimate with a surprisingly easily, 17-point triumph over Russia to capture gold. Taylor was sensational from start to finish in Brazil, with her efforts in the last two games

FINAL STANDINGS

1. Australia
2. Russia
3. USA
4. Brazil
5. France
6. Lithuania
7. Czech Republic
8. Spain
9. Argentina
10. Canada
11. Cuba
12. China
13. Korea
14. Chinese Taipei
15. Senegal
16. Nigeria

making her the obvious choice for the tournament's Most Valuable Player award. The United States demolished Brazil earlier in the day to secure the bronze medal at the FIBA World Championship for Women.

Favourites to win their third successive title, the US were brushed aside by Russia in their semi-final, but Anne Donovan's team put the disappointment behind them with a ruthless display against the tournament hosts.

Diana Taurasi led the way with 28 points, including 10 of the North Americans' first 14.

Taurasi, who played on the USA's gold medal winning side at the Olympics two years ago, ended up six of seven from three-point range in the contest while the Americans were 11 of 20 as a team. It was a major letdown for Brazil, who had led Australia by four points early in the fourth quarter of their semi-final. Hopes were high at that point of a gold medal, but, instead, they finished with nothing.

Janeth, who played on their gold medal winning side in 1994, paced the Brazilians with 16 points. The championship final was televised live in 23 countries, in total there were over 100 countries which broadcasted the games from Brazil. 200 journalists from over 30 countries were covering the event at site.

BEST EVER FIBA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2006 IN JAPAN

Spain reigned at the FIBA World Championship in Japan this summer in the biggest and most competitive international basketball event ever staged. With the field increased from 16 to 24 teams, six European sides made it to last eight and Spain ultimately won over Greece to capture the gold medal. "We saw that the level of basketball in Europe is very high," said Greece's legendary player and current national team boss, Panagiotis Yannakis. There were great moments for all the continents. African giants Angola and Nigeria reached the knockout stage, with the latter falling by a single point to Dirk Nowitzki and Germany.

Oceania's two representatives, Australia and New Zealand, also made it to the last 16.

Yao Ming and FIBA Asian champions China advanced from Group D to the final 16 while the Americas had the United States and Argentina in the last four. Basketball won new fans in Asia as FIBA took the sport to a new frontier.

RECORD ATTENDANCE

The event set a new spectator record for FIBA World Championships as over 75% of available tickets were sold. 225,000 people watched the games in fantastic arenas in Saitama, Hamamatsu, Sendai, Hiroshima and Sapporo. The old record dates back to



Toronto in 1994 where 215,000 fans followed the action.

MEDIA COVERAGE

A record 2,500 media representatives registered for the event and guaranteed an record coverage on print media, television and websites. Fiba.com exceeded more than 150 times the traffic it generated during the Athens 2004 Olympic basketball tournaments.

The games were broadcasted to more than 150 countries with television ratings setting records in many countries. For the first time the television coverage included all African countries and fans were able to watch on fiba.com through broadband streaming.

FIERCE COMPETITION

The tournament demonstrated the tremendous balance in the game, with Spain capturing their first world title over

a Greek team that came from behind to beat the Team USA in the semi-final.

Many group games, particularly in Hamamatsu, went to the wire.

Turkey, a wild card entrant in Japan like Italy, Puerto Rico and Serbia & Montenegro, did not lose until they were edged out by Greece in a fight for Group C supremacy. Contests involving Lithuania, Australia and Brazil were not decided until the closing seconds. The most remarkable game in Group C had to be Greece's 72-69 triumph over Australia. Antonis Fotsis pulled the Greeks level with a three-pointer just nine seconds from the end, and after an Australian turnover, Nikos Zisis clinched victory with a three-ball at the buzzer. "The players and coach of the Greek national team believe that we can try until the last second of every game," said star guard Dimitris Diamantidis.

There were great games at the other venues,





FINAL STANDINGS

1. Spain
2. Greece
3. USA
4. Argentina
5. France
6. Turkey
7. Lithuania
8. Germany
9. Angola
- Australia
- China
- Italy
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Serbia & Montenegro
- Slovenia
17. Brazil
- Japan
- Lebanon
- Puerto Rico
21. Panama
- Qatar
- Senegal
- Venezuela

with Angola losing to Germany in triple overtime in Group B, Lebanon upsetting France in Group A and China beating Slovenia with a three-pointer at the death to advance to the knockout round from Group D. Friday, September 1, was semi-finals day and those games won't soon be forgotten.

Team USA, Greece, Argentina and Spain all ran onto court with undefeated records, fully expecting to reach the title game.

More than 17,000 fans in the sold-out Saitama Super Arena saw the United States fall 101-95 to Greece. Yannakis' Greeks, trailing by 12 points, changed from a slower pace to an up-tempo style which utilised the great passing skills of guard Theo Papaloukas and involved reserve center Sofoklis Shortsianitis. Greece fought back to lead at half-time and win the game, and fans poured into the streets of Athens. Argentina, the Olympic champions from Greece, fell to Spain and Pau Gasol in the other semi-final. Andres Nocioni missed an open three-pointer in the final seconds as Argentina lost 75-74, but the Spanish were deserving winners. Spain, without Pau after he broke the fifth metatarsal in his left foot near the end of the

victory over the Argentinians, still won convincingly over Greece in the final. Pau's presence on the bench clearly galvanised his team-mates. They wore T-shirts which read "Pau tambien juega" (Pau is also playing) as a symbol of unity and inspiration before the game and then played at a 100 miles per hour, especially on defense, in rolling to a 70-47 victory.

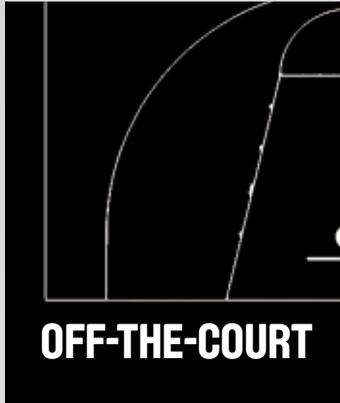
Spain got huge performances from captain Carlos Jimenez, Marc Gasol (Pau's brother), Felipe Reyes and Jorge Garbajosa. Whether it was battling for rebounds (Jimenez had 11), or double-teaming Sofo, or pressuring the Greek guards - Spain won every battle. "They had us hand-cuffed," said Papaloukas. "They wanted the game more. And for me, they really deserved the win." Pepu Hernandez, the Spain coach, deserved so much credit, and not just for his tactics. He had to cope with the passing of his father, with the news having been delivered to him just hours before tip-off. "We've come out with so much emotion on the court and we are world champions," said Hernandez. Pau, who averaged better than 21 points and nine rebounds before the injury, was I voted Most

Valuable Player of event. "The pain (in the foot) has gone now," Pau said after receiving his gold medal. Jose Luis Saez, the President of the Spanish Basketball Federation, said of Spain's performance: "It's a lesson of pride, rage and team effort." Manu Ginobili, Papaloukas, Carmelo Anthony and Garbajosa were, along with Pau, all-tournament selections. Team USA won bronze by defeating Argentina, 96-81. USA forward Anthony put on a brave face and said: "We're happy with the progress we've made. Unfortunately, we couldn't do what we came here to do, which was win the gold." Winning gold is no easy feat for any country anymore.

MONTENEGRO BECOMES 213TH FIBA MEMBER

The FIBA World Congress ratified today the affiliation of the Basketball Federation of Montenegro as its 213th member federation. The membership came into force on 4th September 2006 after the FIBA World Championship has been concluded. "I feel great about the decision by FIBA," said the Basketball Federation of Montenegro President Danilo Mitrovic. "It's wonderful for Montenegrin basketball and I am looking forward to the future as a member of the FIBA family." The Basketball Federation of Serbia will retain the place of the former Basketball Federation of Serbia and Montenegro as a FIBA member.

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THE ODD - THE FUNNY - THE UNUSUAL

"ROUND MOUND OF REBOUND" GETTING POLITICAL

US Dream Team member Charles Barkley has confirmed his intention to run for governor of Alabama in the future. The Alabama-born 43-year-old is looking at the prospect of running for the post in 2014 as he first needs to move back to his birth-state from his home in the Valley, Arizona. "You have to live there seven years, so I'm looking for a house there as we speak," said Barkley, who has been inducted in the Basketball Hall of Fame recently. "I want to speak for people who can't speak for themselves. America discriminates against poor people. America is divided by economics. If you're born poor white, black or Hispanic you're going to be in a bad neighborhood. You're going to go to a bad school. That's not right. "Just living in this world you see the discrepancy between the rich and the poor. "It's not getting closer. It's just getting wider every year. It's very frustrating for me as a person who started there (poor). I said to myself, 'Man, if I couldn't have played basketball that would have been me.' You just can't sit back and let that happen. I'm going to keep doing that, speaking out. I think I've been really blessed in my life. If I was just to be rich and famous and have a big house and a big car and live happily every after, I think I'd let the big fella down who gave me the gift to get to the Hall of Fame. I truly believe that."

With regards to his political affiliation, Barkley added: "I'm an independent. I think Republicans are full of it and Democrats are a little less full of it."

Barkley, nicknamed "Round Mound of Rebound" during his playing days, retired from the NBA in 2000 having played 16 seasons with the Philadelphia 76ers, Phoenix Suns and Houston Rockets.



MUTOMBO STEPS UP HOSPITAL APPEAL

Dikembe Mutombo has launched an appeal to raise millions of dollars needed to complete and operate a new hospital in his home city of Kinshasa, Congo. The 15-year NBA veteran has already pumped \$15 million of his own money - almost seven times his current salary - into the project, but needs a further \$7 million to complete construction before finding an annual budget. The 300-bed Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital - named after Dikembe's mother - had the ceremonial opening on September 2, and begun to receive patients a few weeks later subject to the delivery of a steriliser. However, the need to find further funding remains, which is why the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation is seeking to recruit 100,000 donors who will pledge \$10 a month to the project for a year. "With this we can reach even the (lower income levels) of the American public," he said in USA Today. "People in my country are dying and I want to save them." Mutombo is well known for his extensive charity work both in America and Africa, but the hospital is his biggest single project, beginning back in 1997. When the hospital opened, the emergency room, operating room, intensive care unit, outpatient care and internal medicine department were the first to open their doors. It is expected to take up to two years to get all departments open. Congo's ambassador to the United States, Faida Mitifu, is convinced it will be worth the wait.

"This hospital is definitely a godsend for the people of Kinshasa," Mitifu said.

MULTI-TALENTED NASH IMPRESSES ON THE PITCH

As a two-time NBA MVP and an Olympian with his country Canada, Steve Nash's ability with a basketball is unquestionable. What came as something of a surprise was his ability with a soccer ball. The point guard, who lives in New York during the off-season, trained with the New York Red Bulls of Major League Soccer, and did rather well. Nash did not look out of place among the Red Bulls squad, and even managed to get in a number of shots on goal. Former USA World Cup coach Bruce Arena, now with Red Bulls, was impressed by what he saw. "I think (Nash) could probably play in this league," he told the club's website. "Obviously, he's a superbly conditioned athlete. The way you watch him play in the NBA, he's a point guard that probably plays over 40 minutes a game and you see his fitness level is good on the soccer field as well." However, Nash himself was not entirely fooled by his own performance with the New York squad, recognising he wasn't put to the full test. "They just were great," Nash said. "They really made it easy for me, they made it a lot of fun for me. They're lucky, they have a great group of guys. They seem to have a good time, but are very focused and I think that's probably comes down to Bruce a lot." The players had good reason not to challenge Nash. They were under strict orders from the coach.

"My biggest concern was him getting hurt," Arena said. "A friend of mine is one of the assistants at Phoenix so I don't want to send back the MVP of the NBA in an ambulance."



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