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# ASSIST 28

FIBA ASSIST MAGAZINE FOR BASKETBALL ENTHUSIASTS EVERYWHERE / OCTOBER 2007

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FREE-THROW PERCENTAGE

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## 2007-08 FIBA CALENDAR

## OCTOBER

- 01 - 07.10 South American U16 Championship for Men in Misiones, Argentina
- 18.10 Start of FIBA Eurocup Women
- 22 - 27.10 FIBA Women's World League in Ekaterinburg, Russia
- 26 - 27.10 FIBA Commission for Women's Basketball in Ekaterinburg, Russia
- 30.10 Start of FIBA Eurocup Men

## NOVEMBER 2007

- 01.11 Start of South American League for Women's Clubs
- 07.11 Start of FIBA Euroleague Women
- 12 - 13.11 FIBA Commission for Legal Matters in Geneva, Switzerland
- 19 - 20.11 FIBA Commission for International Competitions in Geneva, Switzerland
- 19 - 20.11 FIBA Commission for Youth Basketball in Geneva, Switzerland

## DECEMBER 2007

- 06 - 15.12 South East Asian Games in Bangkok, Thailand
- 07 - 09.12 FIBA Central Board in Chicago, USA

## JANUARY 2008

- 18 - 19.01 FIBA Technical Commission in New York, USA

## FEBRUARY 2008

- 01.02 Start of South American League For Men

## APRIL 2008

- 25 - 27.04 FIBA Central Board in Beijing, P.R. of China

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# DRILLS TO IMPROVE FREE-THROW PERCENTAGE



by Stan Doherty

**Stan Jones coached at the Miami University from 1995 to 2000, going for three times to the NCAA tournament. In 2000-01 season, Jones was assistant coach for the Washington Wizards in the NBA and the following year he went back to college basketball, leading Mississippi State to the NCAA tournament. Since 2002, he is part of the technical staff of Florida State as associate head coach.**

Early in my career as a high school coach, an old-school coach said to me, "Show me a team that shoots free-throws well, and I'll show you a lazy practice coach." Being a respectful, impressionable young coach, trying to learn my craft, I wanted to give that statement some merit, due to that coach's status, but I just couldn't accept that. I kept hearing my college coach pound into us as player's: "That making free-throws and lay-ups win games!" Even with the advent of the 3-point shot as an offensive weapon, I have grown deeper in the belief of my college coach and moved further away from the lazy coach statement to a point of total disagreement.

I heard the legendary Detroit Pistons head coach, Chuck Daly, talk about how the Pistons became champions once they learned how to use the free-throw line as an offensive weapon. By getting to the foul line, they increased their scoring efficiency, foul trouble for their opponents enhanced match-up problems, and they always had their defense set when shooting free-throws and defensive transition was less of a concern. Having been fortunate now to coach many years at a high level in college basketball and as an assistant in the NBA, it has been a constant that when our teams have shot well from the free-throw line and had significant more attempts than our opponents, we have had some of our best year's record wise. The year we went to the





Sweet 16 at the University of Miami, we had the ninth best team free-throw percentage in the country. At Mississippi State, we had the best record in school history and made the seventh most free-throws in a season in the school record book that year. And in 2006-07 at Florida State University, we had the fifth best

team free throw percentage in the country while reaching the quarterfinals of the National Invitational Tournament. I truly consider the teaching and development of great free throw shooting as a critical asset to the ultimate success of a basketball team. To improve our team free-throw shoot-

ing, there are two phases of development that we emphasize. First, we spend considerable amount of time teaching the proper mechanics of shooting and then incorporating those skills into shooting free-throws. Fundamentals of shooting we stress include; 1) set up and alignment to shoot the free throw, 2) establishing a rhythm to the shooter's routine, and 3) correct hand position on the ball, release off the correct finger pads and finishing the shot with a complete follow through. Second, we develop a progression of drills to acquire instinctive muscle memory through volume repetition and to challenge the psychological development of the free-throw shooter in pressure situations. We want every free-throw to feel the same, whether shooting in practice or with no time on the clock in the championship game. Positive mental development should include; emotional stability, success visualization and that "killer instinct" that finishes an opponent in end-game situations. Our free-throw shooting drills are a three-fold process. Our pre-season individual improvement drills have a heavy emphasis on correct shooting mechanics and one-on-one instruction. As we get closer to pre-season practice, we move into high volume repetition drills where we look to transfer the correct shooting form into muscle memory along with using positive self-expectancy through visualization. Finally, as we get into our playing season, we concentrate on shooting in simulated game situations. Here are 10 drills, five in individual work, and five in whole team involvement, that have been super in my career in helping our team improve dramatically at the free throw line:

#### **INDIVIDUAL DRILLS (1-3 PLAYERS AT A BASKET)**

1. 100 in 7. Drill needs: 2 balls, 7 minutes on the clock, passer and rebounder. This is a great drill for anytime in a workout or even in practice if you have the manpower. This is a version of the 2-ball rapid-fire jump shooting drill that we all use but it is adapted to shooting free throws. The objective of the drill is on the mechanics of the shooting stroke. We want the volume of shots and the constant pace to allow the shooter to really get the muscle memory feel for his

shot. To begin the drill the shooter will take his normal routine to shoot the first free throw and this starts the clock. I am a big believer that great free throw shooter's have an obvious stop in their routine after their movements once the ball has been placed in their possession to when they start their motion to release the shot to the basket. Thusly, the passer will be standing on the shooting side of the player with the ball held in front of the shooter where that pause takes place. The shooter will continuously finish his shot then return to that pause position to receive the ball and shoot another shot from that position. There is no emphasis on speed in this drill. It's all about tempo and finish with the correct form and follow through. Most shooters will complete 100 shots in seven minutes, but don't make that the main objective. The goal is to see how many shots can be replicated correctly for 100 straight shots. Coaching point: after the first shot, there are no more dribbles until the drill is complete. Challenge each player with his own high score, the high score for the team that season or the score for the best ever with your program.

2. 10 in a row. This has always been one of our best drills to finish a workout or practice. You can adjust the consecutive made shots based on the skill level of your team or the individual. Ten has always been a positive number for an average to above average shooter to finish practice with. We divide into our shooting groups based on the number of players we have on our team and available baskets. Each player shoots until he misses, then rotates out if did not make ten in a row. If he hits ten in a row, he is done for the practice. This drill creates two psychological pressures on the free throw shooter; 1) to complete the drill successfully, the shooter must concentrate on every shot, and 2) the shooter must deal with the increasing internal pressure (which can come from both negative and positive thoughts) as he approaches the tenth make. You can do some neat team-building competitions with this drill, i.e. - let players continue a streak until they miss and have a team record board for personal best, put a limit on the total number of shots they can take to get to ten consecutive makes or face some punishment, etc.
3. 3 or 2. This is a really good free-throw shooting drill to start practice with as







part of your warm-up period. Just as the drill before, divide your team into shooting groups at available baskets, 2-3 players are best. Each shooter continues to shoot at the foul line until he hits three free throws in a row, misses two free throws in a row, or misses the third consecutive free throw the second time he has the opportunity to hit three in a row. The objective of this drill is to get each shooter to re-focus after a miss and to stay focused after a make. When the

player hits three shots in a row, the players rotate at the basket. If he misses two in a row or misses the third make on the second chance, he immediately performs whatever physical conditioning contingency we have given the team for that day. Coaching point: the players waiting to shoot always line up in the free throw lane spaces to simulate what a shooter will see during a game.

4. Back Tap Drill. Here's where we

think out of the coaching box for this free throw shooting drill. In teaching correct shooting mechanics, we emphasize with our players to focus on a small target point. With that in mind, the objective of this shooting drill is to get each shooter to focus on a target spot that if they hit will force a missed shot to come off in a certain area in the lane and to practice back tapping out to an area as part of our game situations for short clock needed shots. We will instruct our players as to the target to hit, how we want the potential rebounders to move into the lane and what direction to back tap the miss to where shooters will be moving in to position to receive the tap. With 3 players at each basket, 2 players line up in the second position on the lane line spaces and they work on executing the actions we have in place to jump and tap the ball out to an area. If you want to put a player in the drill to work on moving to the back tap spot and shooting that is a great addition to the drill. It has been my experience that after practicing misses the focus on the spot we have worked on to correctly make a free-throw becomes more acutely aware to the shooter and his success rate goes up.

5. The Jordan Drill. One more different thinking drill we use, especially in individual workouts but can be incorporated into team practice as well. We created this drill after seeing an old film clip of Michael Jordan shooting a free-throw with his eyes closed to impress a heckler in a NBA crowd. The objective of this drill is to incorporate mental visualization and to enhance the physical senses of the body shooting a proper free throw. After shooting some volume of free throws correctly with a proper set-up routine, we then finish the drill by charting the number of free throws the player can make with his eyes completely shut. The progression of the drill has the player complete his set-up and routine then as he concentrates on his target point, we ask the player to close his eyes and see that target point in his mind. Once he sees that target, we challenge him to then see the ball going into the net per-

fectly as he starts his shooting motion. You will see a tremendous growth in the player's confidence as he begins to feel the proper mechanics and the ball goes into the basket. We have had players who have made as many as 22 out of 25 blindfolded free-throws and as you can expect they had great percentages with their eyes open.

#### TEAM DRILLS (GAME SITUATIONS, COMPETITIVE)

1. 1-and-1's. This is a great drill for our team following physically demanding segments of practice. When the drill segment ends, the squad breaks up to the main baskets usually in the team color's assigned for that practice. We line up along the lane line spaces with a manager or coach acting as the referee who will put the free-throw in play to the shooter. The shooter has a bonus free throw. He makes the first then he gets a second shot. Just as in a game. If he misses either shot, he turns to his left and completes the assigned conditioner for that day while the next player rotates into the shooting position. If the shooter makes both, the squad rotates to the next shooter and the original shooter rests until his next turn. We continue the rotation for a certain amount of time, until a designated player makes two in a row, until the squad makes a certain number of consecutive free throws or a certain number of total makes by the group.
2. 1-and-1's to 21. This is a great drill when the season is beginning to get a little long and you want to inject some competitive fun into that day's practice. We line the team up around the lane alternating colors. The coach can decide the squads or you can let the guys draft their teams. Each player then shoots a 1-and-1-bonus situation with someone keeping score. If they miss, the team rotates. If he hits the first shot then he gets a second shot. I really believe this helps players learn to get comfortable into their mechanics for the first shot in a game situation, so that is why we put the 1-and-1 into play. We play first team to a certain number wins, usually to 21 with the loser's having to run. As the game comes down the wire the players really have fun challenging each other and force each shooter
3. 1-on-1 Competitive. This drill is probably more like an individual drill, but we like to use it two ways: 1) to finish practice with one teammate challenging another to make the competition enhance each player's practice focus, or 2) to make it like a "king of the hill" competition where you have to earn your way from basket to basket to play at the championship basket. Either way the drill starts with one player shooting free throws until he misses. Let's say he hits eight. So the score is eight to nothing as his teammate begins to shoot. Let's say that player hits seven. The score is now eight to seven after one round. The rounds continue until one player reaches the designated score for that practice. Normally if it's just 1-on-1 to finish practice, we will play to 50. If it's "king of the hill", the number will be much lower and we will continue to rotate for a certain length of time with the two players at the designated championship basket shooting for the right to not run that day when the clock runs down. This is another great drill during the season to keep concentration up through friendly competition and boredom down.
4. Streaks. This is a great drill to use on game day walk through practices. It takes no energy out of your team but encourages them to concentrate for the team and to build some good camaraderie, as you get ready for that night's competition. We split up into even numbers at both baskets. Players will shoot and rotate to the left with non-shooters in lane line spaces. We will shoot a segment of two shots and rotate. Then switch ends and shoot one shot and rotate. The non-shooters will clap in unison the number of consecutive number of makes for that team. We will shoot for time and the team with the most makes wins. We keep a record for the season of most consecutive makes and remind the players before we start at the next game day practice. This drill sets a good mind-set for the team especially on the road and creates good positive energy getting ready for that day's competition.







5. 4-minute Drills. I truly believe this drill teaches your team how to close out games when you have a lead. In pre-season practice, we will do this drill two to three times a week. Once the season starts, we try to do this drill almost every practice. We start the drill with different times on the clock that could be after our last media time-out that occurs under the four-minute mark. We incorporate as many different situations as we can for our team in regards to time and score, shot clock time remaining, strategy, etc. We sometimes have real game officials or coaches and/or staff will officiate the game as close as they can. We want to work on fouling situations when we are behind and we challenge our players on the team that is ahead to dominate their opponents from the free-throw line giving their opponent no chance to catch up and win the game. Looking back over my career, we have had our best records in close games when we have challenged our players in practice to make this part of practice as much like a game as possible. And we have also been much better in terms of winning the end game when we have not sacrificed this part of practice do to whatever reason. I challenge you as a coach to put a great deal of emphasis in this area and I believe the emphasis on shooting free throws under these scenario's we make your team a far more confident foul shooting team in all situations.

In conclusion, we have spent this article giving you ideas on how to put free-throw shooting into your team's practice. None of these drills will improve your team's free throw percentage much unless as you put in the work you continue to reinforce and instruct the proper shooting fundamentals with each of your players. Many coaches are afraid to teach shooting and change mechanical flaws in their players' shots. But, if the great Tiger Woods, after terrific accomplishments in his golfing career, has twice totally recreated his swing, we should challenge our players to not settle for less than their best from the free throw line. I take great pride in seeing my team shoot free throws and learning to use the free throw line as an offensive weapon. Remember my old college coach, "Making free throws and lay-ups win games!"



by Nikos Keramefs

# UNDER 18 GREEK OFFENSE

**Nikos Keramefs** started his coaching career with the youth teams of Aris Salonica, Greece, winning five national titles with cadet and junior teams. He was also head coach of the MENT Salonica, a second division Greek team, and assistant coach of the Aris first division team. Since 1998, he has worked with the Greek Basketball Federation. In 1999, he was head coach of the national cadet team that won a silver medal. His young men's team that won a gold medal in 2002 and a silver medal in 2007 with the Under 18 team at the FIBA European Championships.

The main offense that we worked on for the forty days of practices for the 2007 FIBA Under 18 European Championship was the motion offense, with a box-and-one formation. Four perimeter players and one big man inside was how this offense worked. I tailored this offense based on the talents of my players.

Ten days before the opening game of the European Championship U-18 Kostas Koufos 2,13 (7'1") arrived from the United States, where he played in the high school, and was added to our roster. His imposing presence forced us to adjust our offensive game. We continued with our motion offense, but with a different aim. Taking advantage of Koufos' size and skills, we wanted to give the ball to him down on the post and close to the basket, setting the other players on the perimeter, creating difficulty for the player guarding Koufos. Happily for us, Koufos was elected MVP of the championship.

With the short time we had at our disposal after his arrival, we prepared some plays with our main aim to take advantage of him. In this way, we enhanced the value of the rest of our players and their ability to adjust offensively.

In the eight games that we played, we used the plays that I will describe shortly, trying to accomplish two goals. Our first goal was to succeed in passing the ball to

the post player in different ways and with different sets. Our second goal, due to the scouting of our opponents that focused on the presence of Koufos, was to make small changes to our plays from game to game in order to surprise our opponents. What we achieved was great because, after the arrival of Koufos and before the start of the Championship, he participated only in six practice sessions and five exhibition games.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the excellent collaboration and participation I had from all the other players of the team, as well as my assistant coaches, and the administrative staff of the Hellenic Basketball Federation.

I would like now to describe the following characteristics of our team.

- ▼ Our 5 player was Koufos.
- ▼ In the position of the power forward, 4, we were lucky to have both tall and short players.
- ▼ Our three point guards were all left handed.

We tried to take advantage of the above characteristics while planning for our games.

## UCLA CUT 1

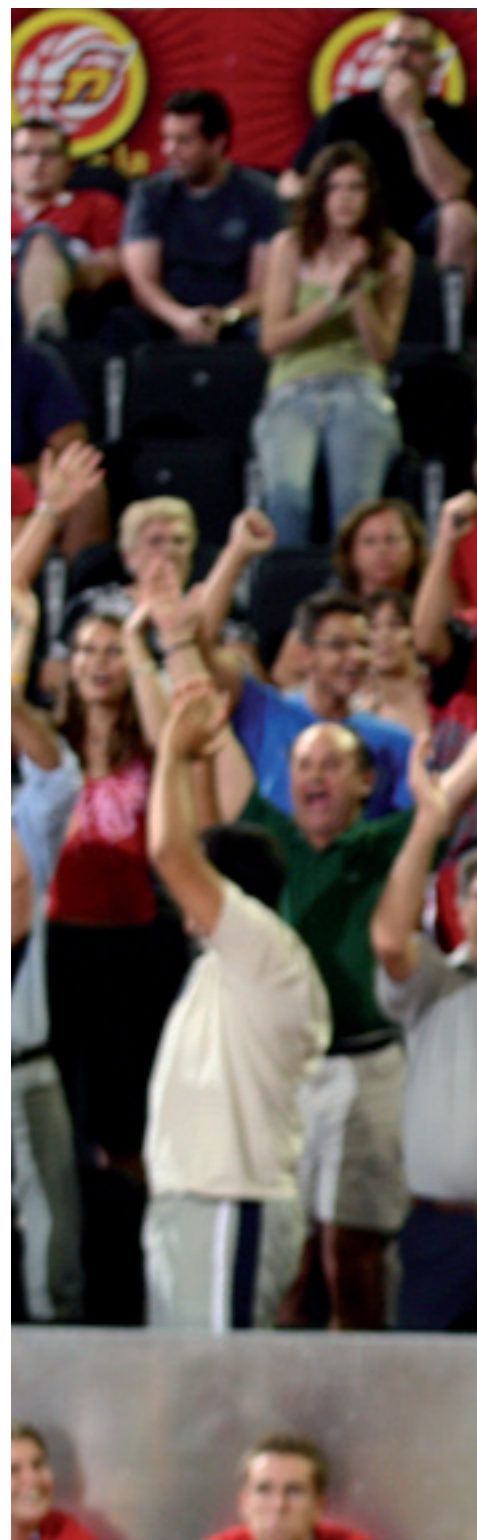
### High-Low Play

4 sets a screen for 1. 1 goes around the screen of 4 and cuts inside or outside, depending on how the defender plays. 2 looks for a pass to 1. If he cannot pass to 1, he passes to 4, who opens outside. 1 posts down low in the lane (diagr. 1)

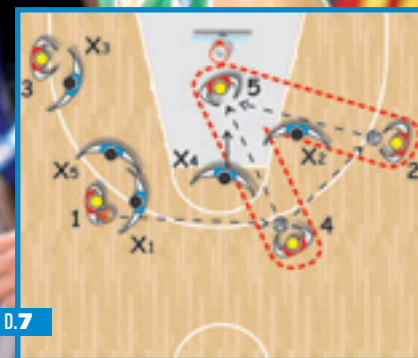
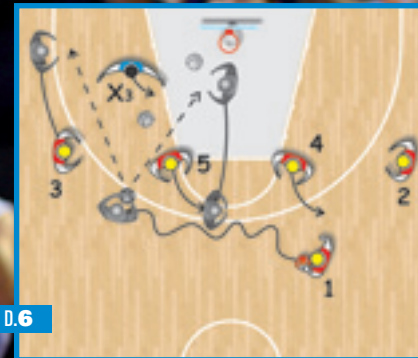
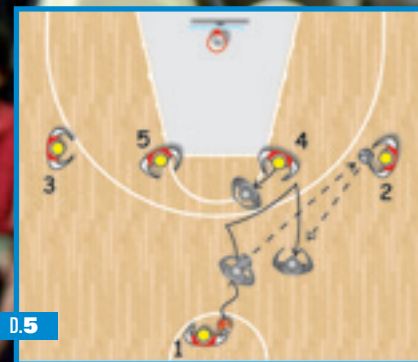
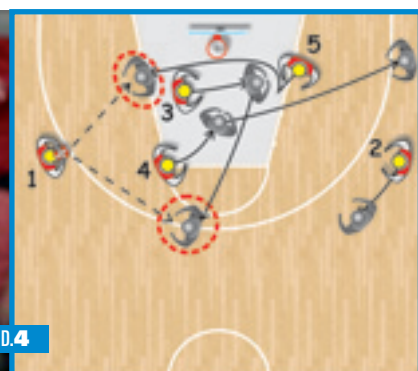
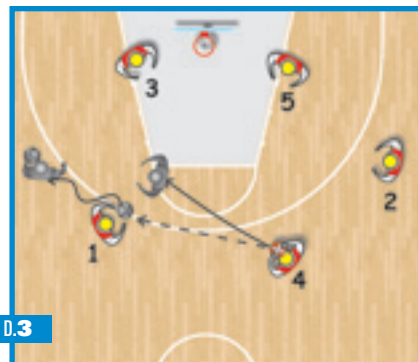
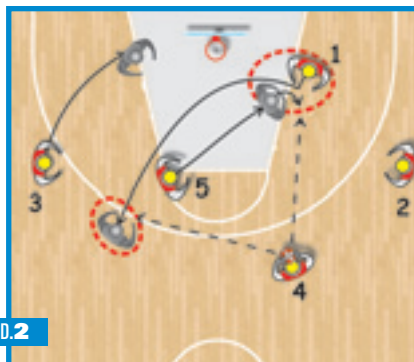
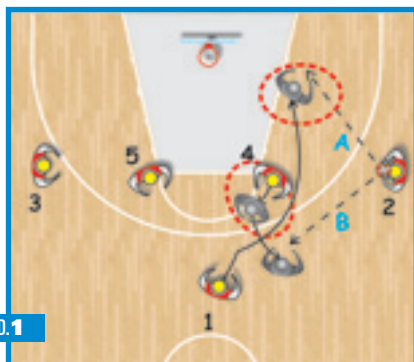
### Cross screen and isolation at mid post

5 sets a screen for 1. Before using the screen, 1 must set his defender up to draw him into the screen and then cut the baseline. If the defender of 5 body checks, 5 is free for a moment and can receive the ball from 4. If 5 is not free, 4 passes the ball to 1, while 3 clears out the wing position spot by going to the mid post (diagr. 2).

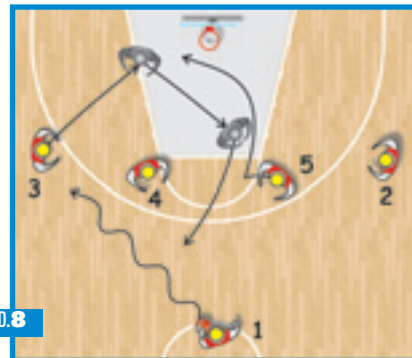
When 1 receives the ball, he dribbles toward the free-throw line extension and 4



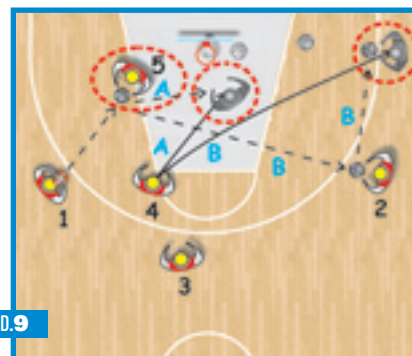




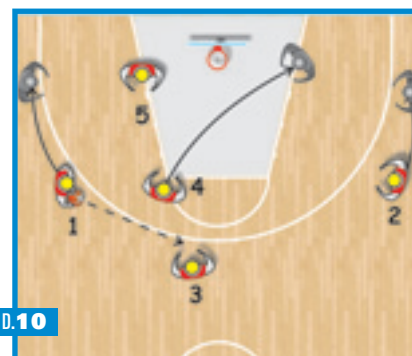




D.8



D.9



D.10

goes to the corner of the free-throw area, ready to set a screen (diagr. 3).

3 makes a cross screen for 5 and 4 sets a screen for 3 (screen-the-screener) and then moves to the corner to clear out for 5, while 2 moves to the weak side for defensive balance. 1 can pass to 5 or to 3 (diagr. 4).

### UCLA CUT 2

#### Pick-and-roll

1 passes to 2 and receives a screen from 4. If 1 cannot cut in the lane, he comes back to the initial position and receives the ball back from 2 (diagr. 5).

1 is screened by 5, and then rolls outside after the screen to have a better angle for the pass and to read the defense. 1 can:

- ▶ Take the shot.
- ▶ Look for a pass to 5, who rolls to the basket.
- ▶ If X3 helps on 5, then the ball goes to 3, who is open (diagr. 6).





## HI - LOW

If X4 helps on 5, then 1 looks to pass on the weak side. 1 can pass to 4 for a shot, and there is a chance of a high-low play between 4 and 5. 1 can also pass to 2 and 2 looks to pass to 5 (diagr. 7).

## ISOLATIONS

### Point Guard Isolation

1 dribbles to the foul line extension and keeps the dribble alive, while 3 clears out the wing spot, leaving 1 playing one-on-one with his defender. If 1 cannot beat his defender, 3 sets a screen for 5, who sets himself at the mid post spot, ready to receive a pass (diagr. 8).

### Post Isolation

5 receives the ball from 1 and can go one-on-one. If there is a trap run by the other big man defender, 5 passes to 4, who dives to the basket, or, if 4 cannot receive the ball, he goes to the corner. If the trap is run by a guard, 5 reads the defensive rotation and passes to 2 on the perimeter, and 2 passes to 4 in the corner (diagr. 9).

### Shooting Guard Isolation

If the defense does not let 5 receive the ball, 1 passes to 3, and, at the same time, 4 goes at the mid post spot, and 2 and 1 move towards the baseline (diagr. 10).

At this point, 3 has the option to play one-on-one (driving to the right or to the left) at the top of the lane without any defensive help.

If 3 drives to the basket, 1 and 2 create passing lanes, 4 and 5 clear out by moving to the opposite direction from the drive. This offers 3 the chance to have two passing lanes (diagr. 11).

## FIST

### Quick High Low Play

We set with two high posts at the corners of the free-throw area and two wings lower than the posts.

1 gets a screen from 4, and goes around the screen, forcing X4 to help. At the same time, 5 screens for 4, creating an option for 4 to get open on the weak side

with this flare screen (diagr. 12).

If the defense switches, which often happens, 5, after screening, rolls to the basket, trying to lock X4 on his back to create a high-low play, with 4, who can pass the ball to 5.

The three perimeter players must keep moving to keep their defenders busy and not let them help (diagr. 13).

## FIST SIDE

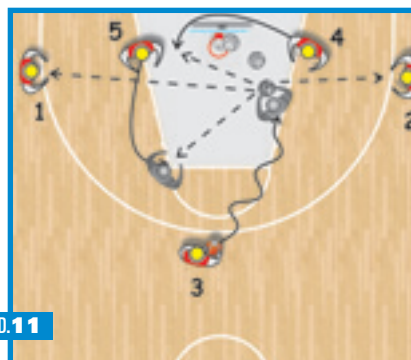
### Pick-and-roll and back pick to feed the post man

Out of a one-four set at the free-throw extension, 1 dribbles to the foul line extension, keeping the dribble alive and, at the same time 2 moves to the mid post on the strong side (diagr. 14).

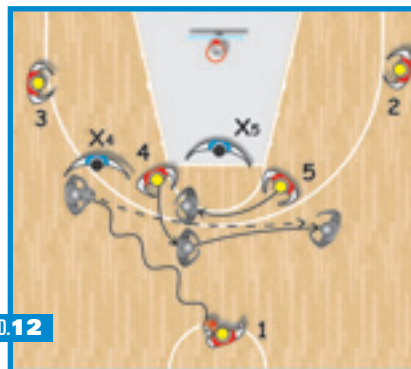
5 sets side a pick on the ball for 1, who drives to the lane and attracts the help of X.

2 sets a back pick on X5. If the pick is successful or if there is a switch, 5 will receive the ball close to the basket, taking an advantage of the mismatch. After the pick, 2 rolls to the wing and 4 goes outside of the lane (diagr. 15).

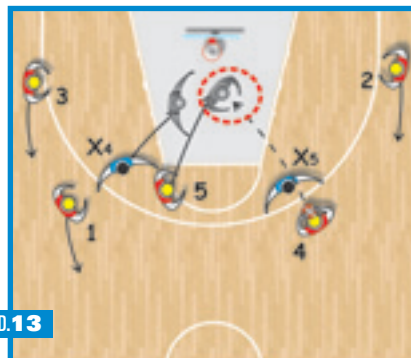
If the ball cannot be passed directly to 5, 1 passes to 2, who opens up at the foul line extension. From there, he can feed the ball to the 5 from a better passing angle.



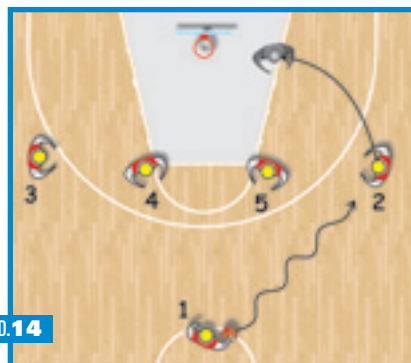
D.11



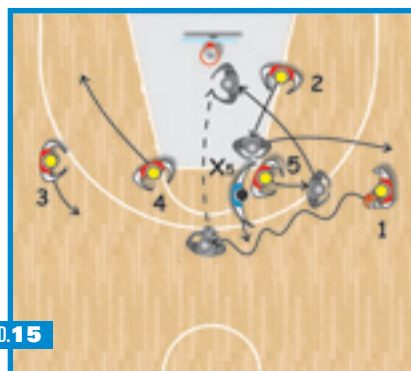
D.12



D.13



D.14



D.15



by Simone Pianigiani



by Luca Banchi

# THE 1-4 OFFENSE AGAINST MAN-TO-MAN DEFENSE

**Simone Pianigiani** was 18 years old when he first started coaching the Montepaschi Siena (Italy) youth teams. From 1995 to 2006, he was assistant coach of the men's team and the coordinator of the youth teams. He won five Italian titles with youth teams. As assistant coach, his team won the 2002 FIBA Saporta Cup and the 2004 Italian title. Since 2006, he has been the Montepaschi Siena head coach. In his first season, his team won the Italian title and he was named the "Serie A Coach of the Year." He also won the 2007-08 Italian Supercup.

**Luca Banchi** began coaching the Don Bosco Livorno youth team in 1995, winning three consecutive Italian Junior titles. Then he coached the Livorno and Trieste Serie A teams. He also coached the Italian men's national B team, winning the bronze medal at the 2001 Mediterranean Games. Since 2006, he has been the assistant coach of Montepaschi Siena, a team that won the 2006-07 Serie A Italian title.

In our 2006-07 season, we decided to create a 1-4 offense against a man-to-man, a set that could fit our personnel. We did not have dominating big men, but dynamic players in the paint. In addition, our perimeter players could easily switch their roles, going from point guard, shooting guard, and small forward. This was also the offense that could quickly solve scoring problems or bad ball circulation. That can be effective against zone and match-up defenses, too. This offense (we called it "Horn") had different entries, depending on what the defense allowed our guards and on what we wanted to create immediately as a threat to the opponent's defense. The point guard 1 begins dribbling to one side of the court, starting the offensive play. He tries to make a back-door cut in order to make the defense work and, in case of not receiving the ball, to steal the position in the low post (diagr. 1). Then, the big man 4, who is set on the elbow on the ball side, sets a vertical screen for 2, who can cut inside, outside, or pop out away, depending on the defender's position (diagr. 2).

The offense can also begin with an entry pass to the wing and, with 1 cutting, using the blind screen of the high post player 4 (diagr. 3). It can also begin with a pass-and-follow the pass and then a screen between the perimeter player and the post (diagr. 4). As the ball is passed from the top of

the key to the weak side, from 1 to 2, a vertical screen is made between 5 and 3 to open the lane. The screened player, 3, must go to the top of the key, and receive the ball for a jump shot or a drive to the hoop. He can also kick the ball out (diagr. 5). After the ball is reversed to the other side of the court, 1, cutting in the lane, receives a staggered screen by 4 and 5 and goes to the other corner to receive the ball from 3 (diagr. 6). 3 can also swing the ball to the weak side to 2, who has received a flare screen from 4 (diagr. 7).

At the end of the offense, we always try to create a side pick-and-roll coming from the weak side, between 4 and 1, if we decide to give the ball to the shooter coming off the corner (diagr. 8). A side screen off the strong side between 2 and 4 can also be made (diagr. 9).

## BUILDING THE OFFENSE

For building this basic offense, we divide all moves and options in order to see all the geometric solutions, making every option automatic for our players when they face every defensive adjustments.

## BALL SIDE

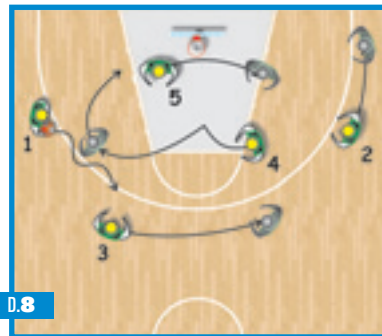
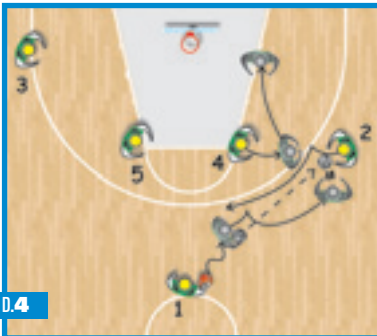
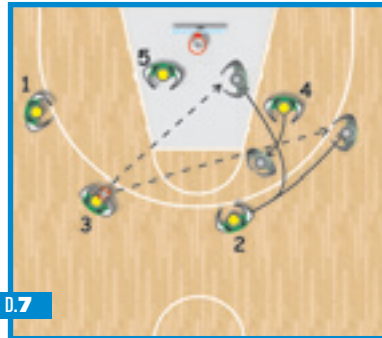
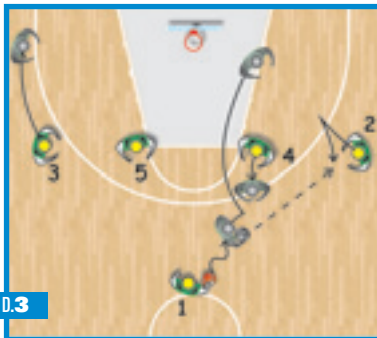
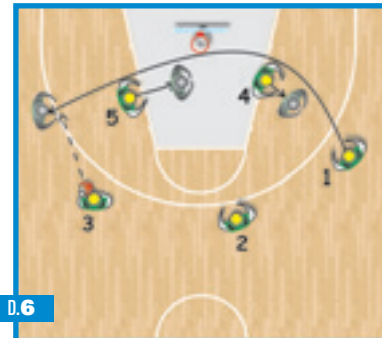
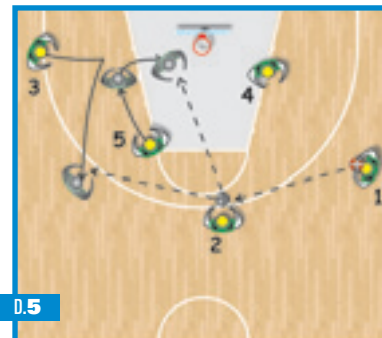
Three against zero: The point guard, 1, dribbling to one side of the court, passes the ball to the cutter, 2, who is going back door. 2, alternatively, will drive to the hoop (diagr. 10) or he will pass the ball to the post player 5, who will cut in the opposite direction of 2's drive. He is guarded by an assistant coach (diagr. 11). If, after attempting the cut, and 2 doesn't receive the ball, he will try to get the best low-post position to receive the ball and play one-on-one (diagr. 12) or pass inside the lane to 5 (diagr. 13). The high-post player, 5, will move now in order to set a screen against the guard's defender. The guard must be aware of the high-post player's position and move. He must decide if he's going to use option: A) use the screen passing over; option B) passing under; or option C) popping back to the same corner (diagr. 14).

## ENTRY PASS

1, the point guard, must decide if it's better to cut by using the post's 5 blind screen to go in the low post (option A); or if it's better to let 5 receive the ball (option B) (diagr. 15); or if it's better to go back to the top of the key, if he cannot receive the ball in the low post (diagr. 16). If 1 makes a pass-and-follow play for a hand-off pass, 2 will decide how to use 5's



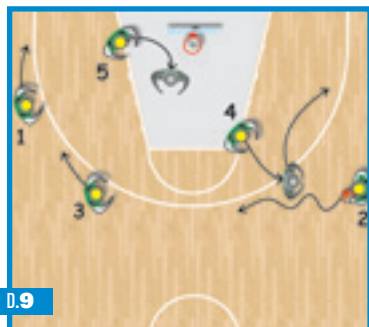




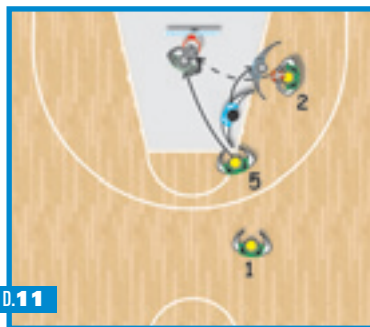
screen (diagr. 17), or if he will pick for 5, allowing him to receive a pass in the low post (diagr. 18).

### THREE-ON-ZERO WITH A COACH OR TEAMMATE

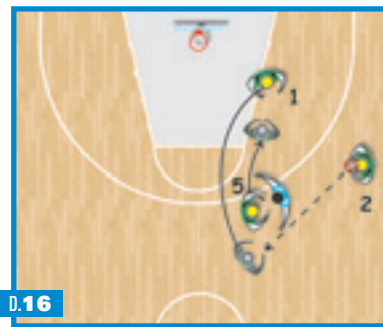
After reversing the ball to the coach or a teammate on other side of the court, 5 will screen first for 1, who cuts along the baseline (option A), and then for 2 (option B), who can curl, make a back-door, or screen-the-screener (diagr. 19). While screening on the ball in the final part of the offensive play, we need to take care about the execution, timing, and spacing to react correctly to the defensive adjustments. The defense could double-team (diagr. 20), switch (diagr. 21), or jam in the lane (diagr. 22). The offensive abilities of the posts and power forwards convinced us to look for rolls to the basket rather than cuts to the perimeter. This way, we can "split" the screens and avoid any possible defensive adjustment (diagr. 23). If 1 chooses



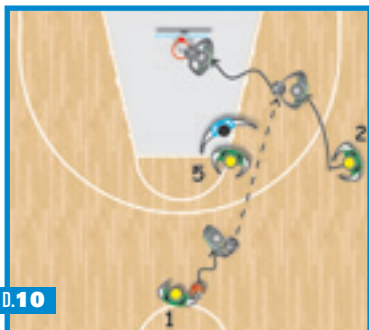
D.9



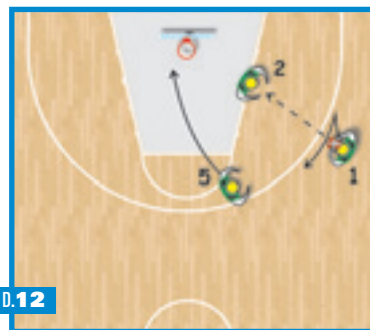
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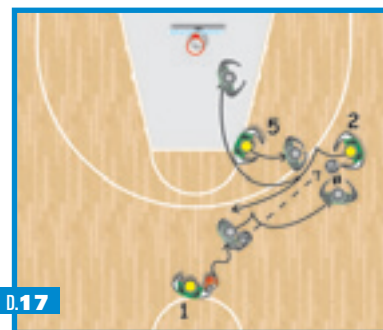
D.16



D.10



D.12



D.17

to cut on the blind screen of 5 (diagr. 24), the other offensive players will adapt their positions, creating a sort of "screens' box" set (diagr. 25). They must then decide if they are going to use the lateral pick-and-roll or a new screen on the ball (diagr. 26 and 27).

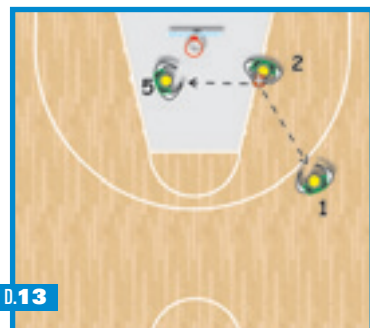
#### WEAK SIDE

We take care of the vertical screen on the weak side to change our offensive side and use our guards' skills to attack the basket. The shooter sets the screen by opening the court, faking to move to the corner, forcing his defender to follow him on the screen, which is set at a 45-degree angle. This particular screen will allow the player to attack the lane's elbow as the first option, or, if he doesn't get the ball, he then goes out to the three-point line (diagr. 28). If the defender tries to stop the exit with a body-check, the picker must change the screen's angle, making it "flat." The screened player will receive the ball out of the three-point line, rather than on a cut inside the lane (diagr. 29). The following screen must be set with both feet inside the lane. The screener will decide if he should cut to the opposite elbow in a pick-and-roll action, or move away from the ball, waiting to take advantage of an eventual defensive help or rotation (diagr. 30).

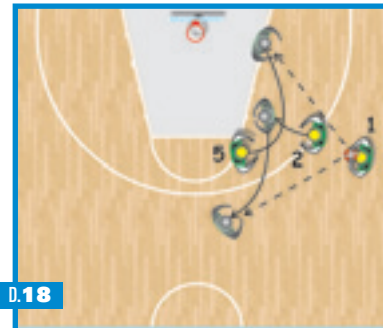
#### FOUR-ON-ZERO

It's possible to run this drill in two ways: with three guards and a big man, or with two guards and two big men. This drill allows us to coordinate the moves of several players at the same time, reducing their own spaces so they can better understand how to collaborate with each other and which adjustments to make, especially in the last seconds of an offensive possession (diagr 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35).

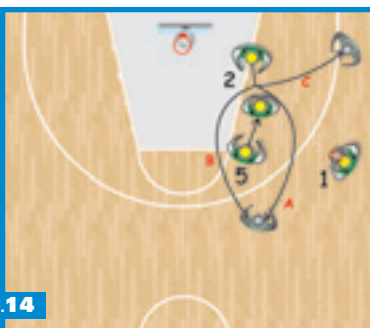
Each one of these collaborations will be tried against the defense because once the players have learned the automatic moves, it is necessary that they be able to develop different solutions based on the reactions of the defenders. As we said in the introduction, this offensive set, once improved upon thanks to daily work in practice sessions, should also be effective even against special zones, using both screens and the ability to attack the basket with drives and cuts, while always respecting spacing and teammates' roles.



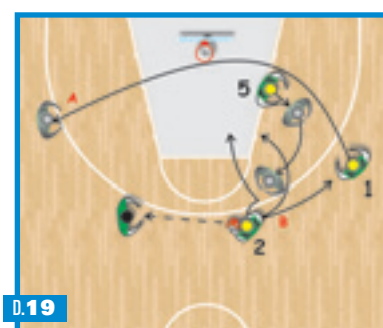
D.13



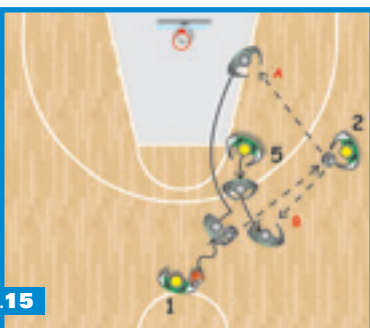
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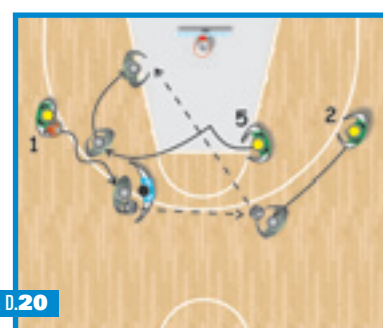
D.14



D.19

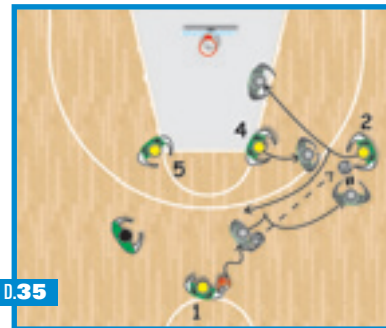
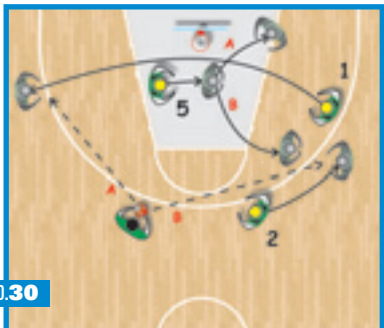
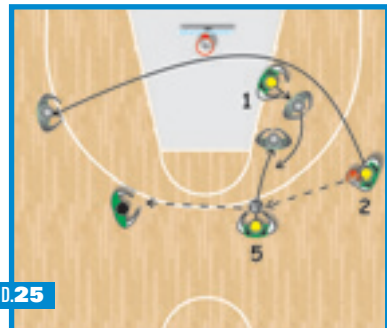
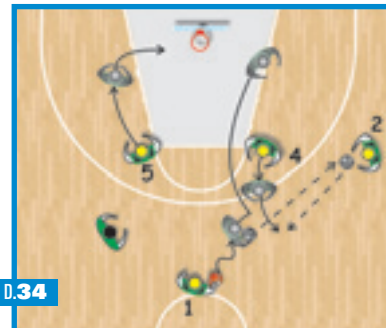
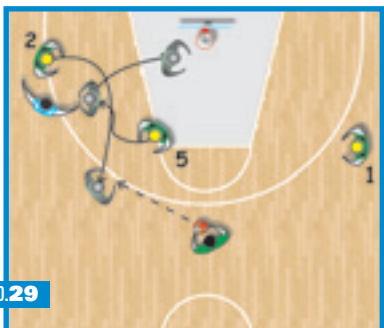
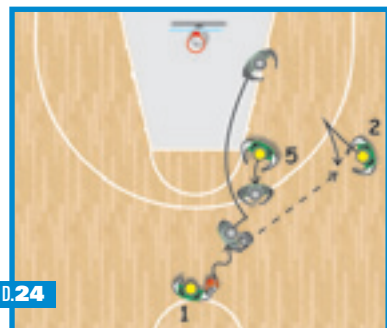
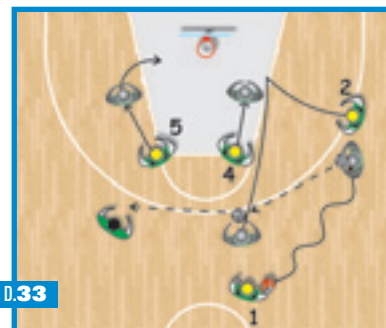
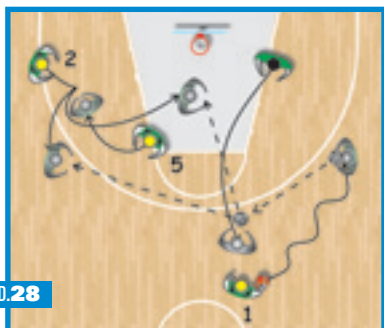
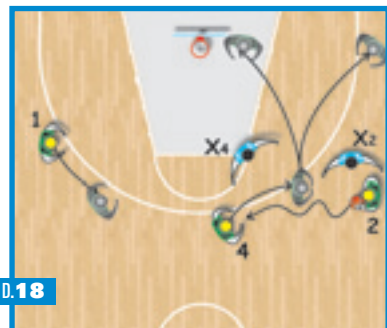
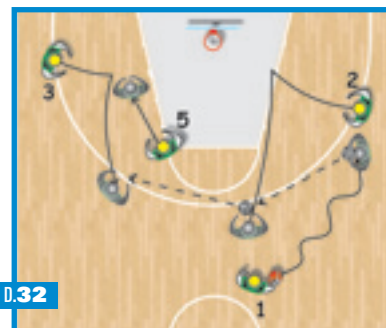
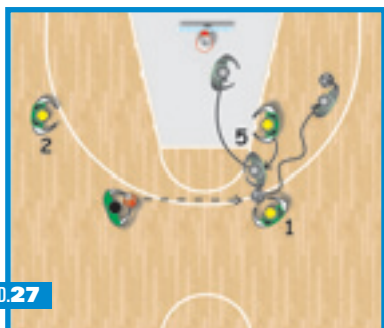
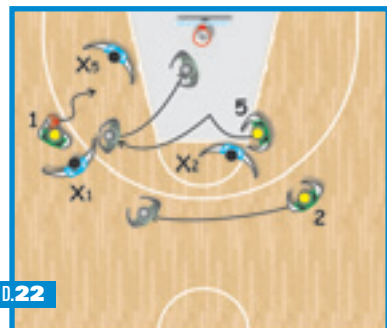
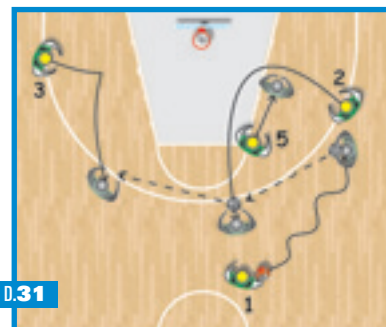
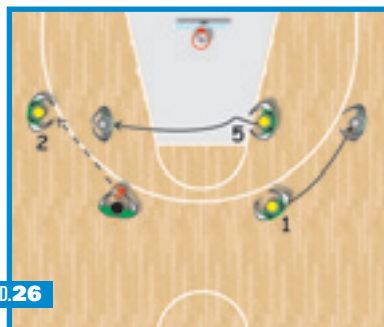
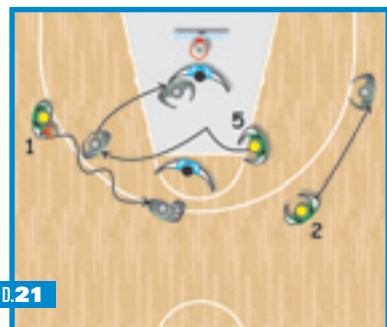


D.15



D.20







by Brian Goorjian

# AUSTRALIA OFFENSIVE SETS

**Brian Goorjian, American born, was named in 2003 as the greatest coach in the first 25 years of the Australian National Basketball League. He started his coaching career as assistant coach of Geelong in 1985, later becoming coach of the Melbourne Tigers and winning two championships. He then coached Sydney, winning three titles in a row from 2003 to 2005. He was named NBL Coach of the Year four times. Since 2001 he has been head coach of the Australian men's national team, coaching them at the 2004 Olympic Games and 2006 FIBA World Championships.**

## OFFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

Our first priority at the 2006 FIBA World Championship was to move the ball very quickly down the court with the point guards handling the ball. The wing players sprinted ahead of the ball to keep pressure on the defense. We also took advantage of our agile power forwards, who sprinted to the offensive basket and looked to receive the ball as close to the basket as possible. In addition, our quick ball reversal was one of our best offensive assets, combined with the dribble penetration of our guards and small forwards.

If we did not have an opportunity for a full court transition, our guards started to control the offensive play. Here a list of our offensive sets strategies:

- ▼ On ball screens.
- ▼ Entries through our 4 and 5 players, flashing at the elbow of the free-throw area.

▼ Turn out actions from our 2 and 3 players.

▼ Effective use of screens from little players to big players.

Our main offensive alignment was to have four perimeter players and one inside player, or else use three perimeter players and two inside players. When there were just a few seconds left on the shot clock, we relied on ball screens, quick ball movement, and dribble penetration. I am proud to say that we had a good awareness of the offensive tempo and a good judgement of which plays were required depending on the time left in the game and the score.

## PLAYER POSITIONS AND SKILLS

### Guards

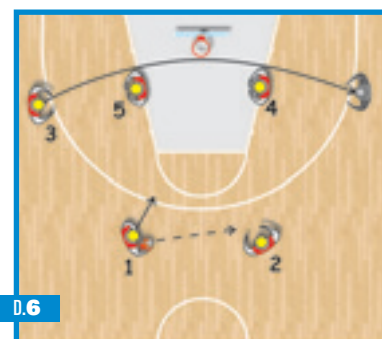
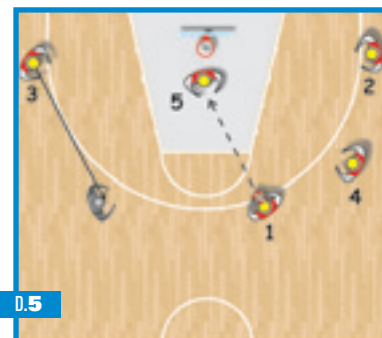
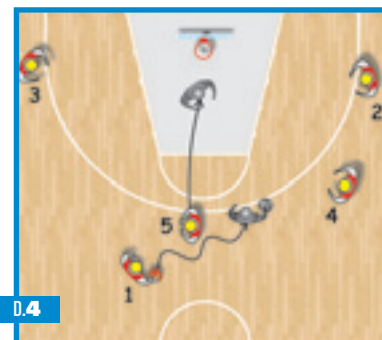
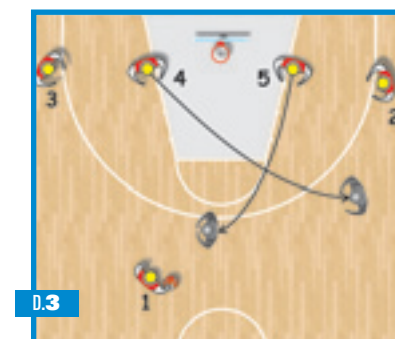
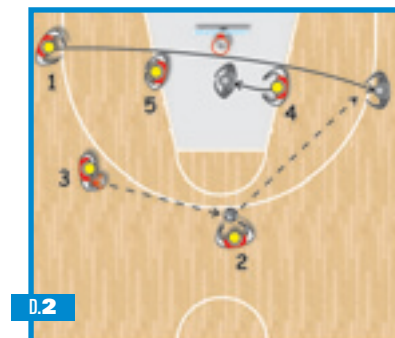
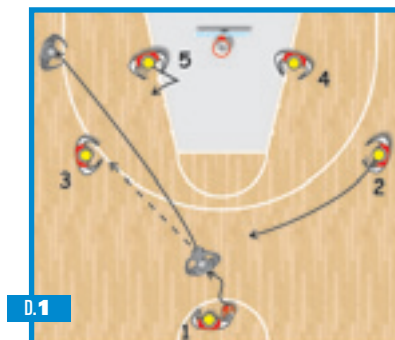
Our guards handled the ball and were able to control the tempo very well. They had a good range of shooting from the perimeter and penetrated with the ball through quick dribbling off the ball movement. They passed well to the cutters and post players who were flash cutting to the elbows of the free-throw area. Their main attacking moves were the crossover and the speed dribbles.

### Forwards

Our forwards ran the court very well in offensive transition and the power forwards were very agile and quick to post up strongly. The small forwards had good shooting range. They were effective with the catch-and-shoot jump shot and penetrating with the ball inside the three-second lane. They also passed well to teammates cutting off screens.







### Centers

Our centers passed to the cutters very well. Their main offensive moves were the jump hook from a "back in" move and turn-around jump shot. They also had strong and effective counter moves from the low post position, combined with a medium shooting range. They screened well on the ball screens and created effective scoring threats from these offensive plays.

### THE TEAM

These were the players who played the most minutes and we designed plays to take advantage of their skills:

**C. J. Bruton, point guard**  
**Jason Smith, guard**  
**Sam McKinnon, forward**  
**Luke Kendall, forward**  
**Andrew Bogut, center**  
**Mark Worthington, forward**  
**Brad Newley, forward**

The following plays are some of the quick plays we used at the FIBA 2006 World Championship.

### PLAYS OFF THE TRANSITION

#### Play for the point guard, Bruton

Out of the three-two set, with two low posts, 4 and 5, 2 and 3 on the wings with 1 (Bruton) with the ball at the middle of the floor, 1 passes the ball to 3 and runs to the corner, while 4 and 5 start to run a staggered screen (diagr. 1).

2 moves toward 3, receives the ball from 3 and passes it to 1, who gets off the baseline from the staggered screen of 5 and 4 (diagr. 2).

#### Play for the center, Bogut

Here a play from a one-four set, with two wings: 2 and 3 in the corners, and 4 and 5 are at the low post positions. 1 has the ball on one side of the court, 4 runs out of the lane and sets himself near the side-line, while 5 screens on the ball for 1 (diagr. 4).

1 drives off the 5's screen, while 5 rolls to the basket and freezes his defender near the basket (diagr. 5).

1 drives to the opposite side of the court from where he received the screen, and passes the ball to 5 under the basket (diagr. 6).

#### PLAYS VS. MAN-TO-MAN SET DEFENSE

##### Plays for Bruton or Bogut

Out of set with three perimeter players and two inside players, 1 (Bruton) passes to 2 and 3 runs along the baseline and cuts off the screens of 5 (Bogut) and 4.

Right after the pass to 2, 1 curls around 5, goes back to the same position and receives the ball back from 2 (diagr. 7).

5 gets out of the lane and plays pick-and-roll with 1, who can shoot, drive to the basket, or pass to 5 on the roll. While 5 screens for 1, 4 screens for 2 (diagr. 8).

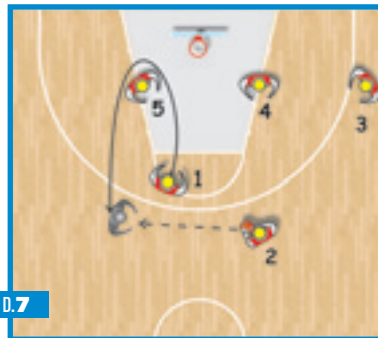
##### Play for Kendall

Using a set with three perimeter players and two inside players: 2 (Kendall) passes to 3 and cuts to

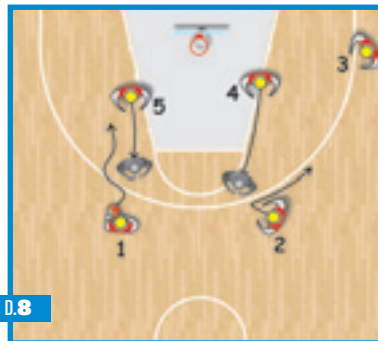
baseline around 5 and goes in the corner (diagr. 9).

5 sprints out of the lane and screens for 3 (diagr. 10).

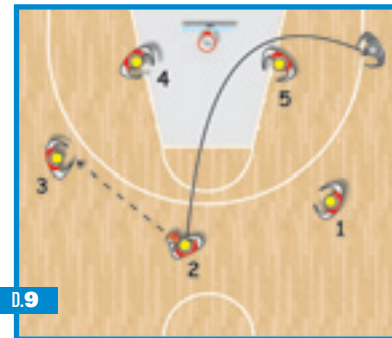
3 drives off 5's screen and drives to the basket. If the defender of 2 tries



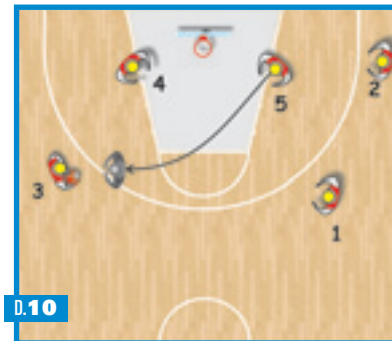
D.7



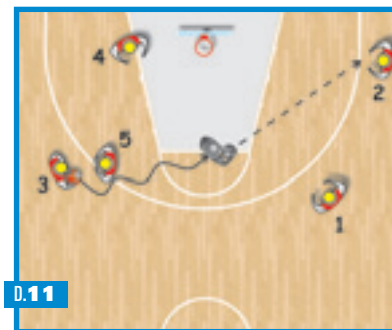
D.8



D.9



D.10



D.11

to help, 3 passes the ball out to 2 in the corner for a jump shot (diagr. 11).

##### Play for Newley

With two players on the corners, 3 (Newley) and 2, 5 at the left elbow of the free-throw area, 1 with the ball on the right wing, and 4 out of the top of the key, 4 screens for 1 (diagr. 12).

Right after 4's screen and 1's drive off the screen, 2 back screens 4 (screen-the-screener action). 4 cuts to the baseline and then on to the low post on the same side (diagr. 13).

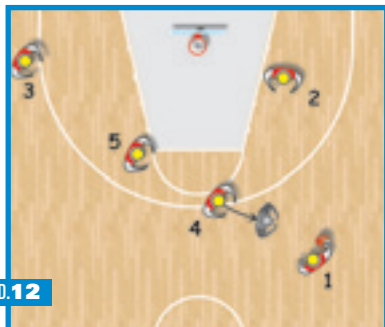
Right after setting the back screen for 4, 2 runs to the baseline on the wing position and 1 passes the ball to 5. 3 cuts to the baseline, receives a screen from 4, and 5 passes to 3 for a shot, while 2 goes in the corner (diagr. 14).

##### Play for Worthington

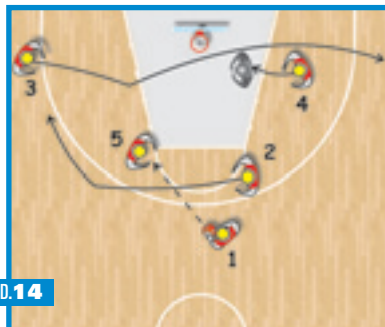
Out of a set with three players outside and two players inside: 3 (Worthing-



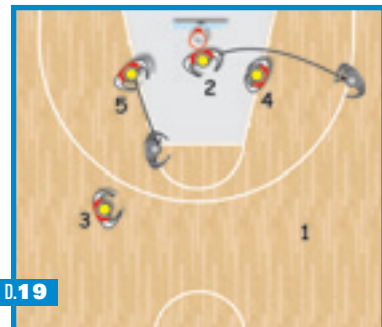




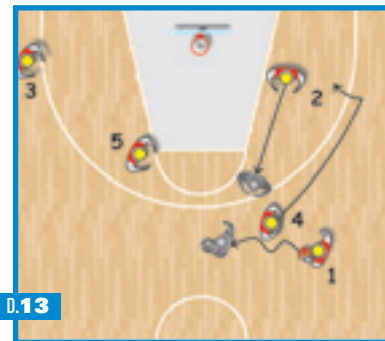
D.12



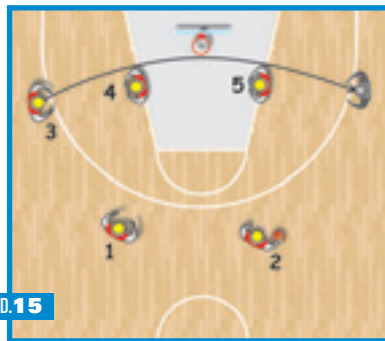
D.14



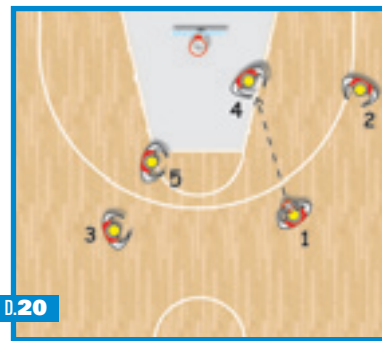
D.19



D.13



D.15



D.20

ton) cuts along the baseline and gets off the screens of 4 and 5 and sets himself on the wing (diagr. 15).

2 passes to 3 and then down screens for 4, while 1 relocates on the wing, and 5 pops out of lane and goes to the corner (diagr. 16).

3 passes to 5, cuts to the basket, and 5 passes the ball to 3 (diagr. 17).

### Play for McKinnon

The initial set is the same, with 1 with the ball: 2 cuts down in the middle of the lane and waits for a second under the basket, and 3 replaces 2 (diagr. 18).

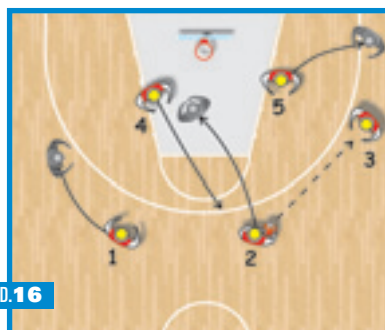
2 runs off 4 (McKinnon) and goes in the corner, while 5 goes to the elbow on the same side (diagr. 19).

Right after the cut of 2, 4 cuts to the lane and receives the ball from 1 (diagr. 20).

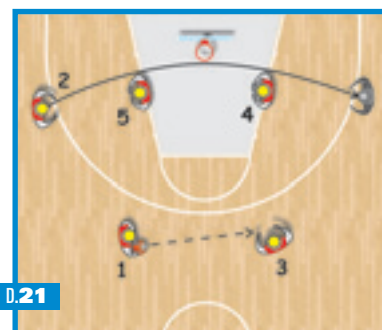
### Play for Bogut

The initial set is the same, with 1 with the ball: 2 cuts along the baseline and off the screens of 4 and 5 (Bogut) screens, while 1 passes the ball to 3 (diagr. 21).

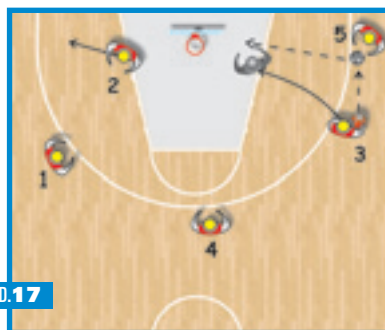
5 flashes to the elbow and 1 cuts to the corner to take away the defensive help. 3 passes to 5, who plays one-on-one (diagr. 22).



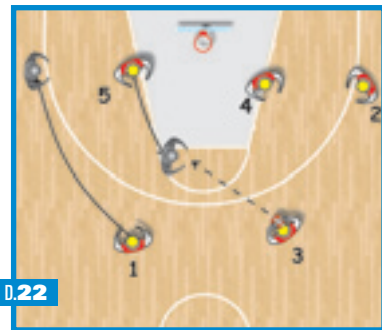
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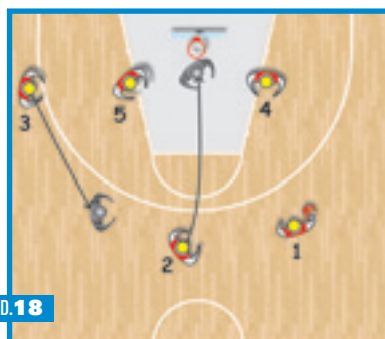
D.21



D.17



D.22



D.18



by Miroslav Nikolic

# SERBIA UNDER 19 DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

**Miroslav Nikolic won the 2007 FIBA Under 19 World Championship title with Serbia. He coached Beocin, Partizan Belgrade, Buducnost Podgorica (in two different occasions with one Yugoslavian title), Red Star Belgrade on two different occasions, Radnicki Belgrade, and Hemofarm Vrsac, all Yugoslavian and later Serbian First Division teams. He also coached Apollon Patras, the Greek Division I team. He was also assistant coach for the Men's Yugoslavian national team from 1996 to 2000, winning a FIBA European Championship in 1997. In 2006, he was head coach of the Serbia and Montenegro national team, which won the FIBA Under 20 European Championship.**

I would like to talk about the zone press, 1-2-1-1, with the transition to a combined 3-2 zone defense. Let's start with the principles of the 1-2-1-1 zone press.

My philosophy is to establish the 1-2-1-1 zone press with the defenders set at the three-quarter-court mark (diagr. 1). We invite the opponent to inbound the ball with a short pass at the free-throw line level. At that moment, the defenders start applying the following defensive principles of this zone press.

The first line defender X1, (usually our playmaker), does not immediately attack the player with the ball, but directs him towards the corner of the side line and the mid-court line, always remembering that all horizontal passes are allowed, but not vertical pass to the middle of the court.

Our main idea is NOT to steal the ball, but to slow down the offense, stealing the opponent's precious seconds.

The two defenders of the second line, X2 and X4, stand along the sideline, about at the level of the half-court line, faking to trap the player with the ball, with X1, our defender of the first line of the zone press. Their main







task is to prevent long passes, which are very dangerous for the zone press. They move backwards, especially X2, the second line defender, who is on the ball side. X4, the second line defender on the weak side, must go deeper towards the central part of the court, taking a position that will allow him to play aggressively the offensive player on this spot of the floor. His job is to prevent him from receiving the ball: it is crucial to keep the ball away from the center of the floor, where the offense can move the ball to the left or the right of the half court (diagr. 2).

From these two previous diagrams, it is possible to clearly understand one more principle of our zone press: it is X4, who is setting a trap on the three-quarter of the court with X1, the defender of the first defensive line. At the beginning of this defense, X5, the last line defender of our zone press, is responsible for the offensive player on his side, as well as preventing any long pass toward our basket (diagr. 3).

Now that I have described the basic principles of this zone press, the individual tasks of all the defenders, our rule of allowing the ball to be passed horizontally, let's review the case where the ball reaches the offensive player 2: we try to control the ball deep along the court and, possibly, to make one more trap on the other side with X3 and X1, while X4 covers the middle of the floor (diagr. 4).

We can say that this defense is considered successful if we make one effective trap and "steal" approximately 7 seconds from the opponent's offense.

Let's now say that the offense has overcome all our traps of the zone press, the ball is on our half court, and the opponent is now able to organize their offense. In this situation, our players withdraw to a 1-2-2 zone defense, which is considered temporary, with the purpose of confusing the playmaker, leading him (hopefully) to make a wrong decision.

X4 is positioned as the first defender in the zone, two defenders X2 and X1 are on his left and right, while at the last defensive line await our center and small forward, X5 and X3 (diagr. 5).

It is of the utmost importance to have the offensive playmaker thinking that this is our definitive defensive alignment. We achieve this by standing, for a second, in a slightly narrower defensive set, emphasizing our new line-up, the 1-2-2 (diagr. 6).

But, this is not the definitive defense because our ultimate goal is something else: a combined defense with three defenders on zone and two defenders on man-to-man, where our three players X5, X3 and X4, form a defensive triangle, while X1 and X2 guard the individual players they are in charge of (diagr.7)

Before we begin with the explanation of new principles of this combined defense, I wish to point out some specific details.

This type of defense may be played against the team that does not have more than two outstanding outside jump shooters on the court. We usually chose to aim maximum concentration of our defense on such two players and then apply what I call "band aids."

The remaining three players, who play the zone form a strong defensive triangle, pointed in the direction of the ball, which moves itself according to the principles I shall explain later.

It is also necessary to point out that this type of defense may be played only when the team you coach shows affinity for such types of defense and possesses high physical and mental characteristics. As far as physical characteristics are concerned, the small forward X3 is a tall and strong player, who can defend the low-post position and get defensive rebounds. Then, the two defenders who play man-to-man, covering the opponent's best or the most dangerous players, must be extremely good at individual defense, since they will be often in a situation to defend one-on-one.

As for X4, normally our power forward, we pay the most of our attention to his play since he is the "brain" of this defense. This player has the most difficult and responsible role. In addition to his physical qualities (speed, mobility, jumping ability), he must have court intelligence, which means that he must be able to make quick and correct decisions, but also be able to play this position.

#### PRINCIPLES OF THE COMBINED ZONE DEFENSE

We can discuss now the basic principles of this defense. Since we have decided to play man-to-man with X2 and X1, they must cover their assigned offensive players in a very aggressive way, following the rules of the man-to-man defense. This means overplaying them when they are on the ball side, and being in a defensive triangle when they are on the weak side of the court (diagr. 8).

X5 and X3, our center and the small forward, have very similar, almost identical tasks. The principles of their defense are the same, but



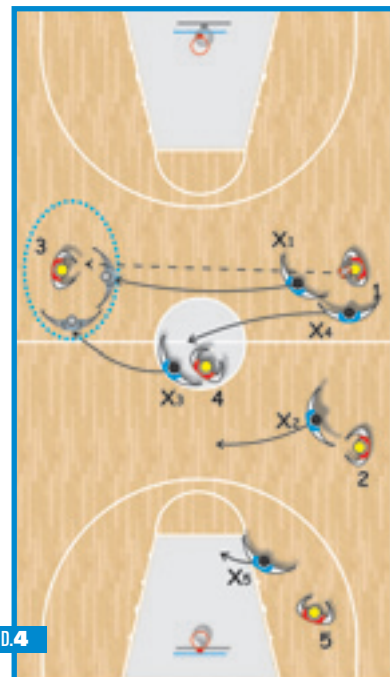
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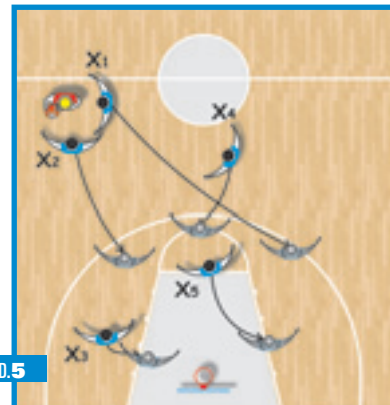
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D.2



D.4

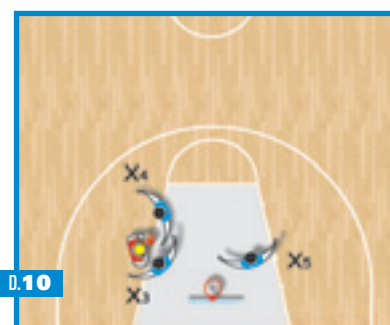
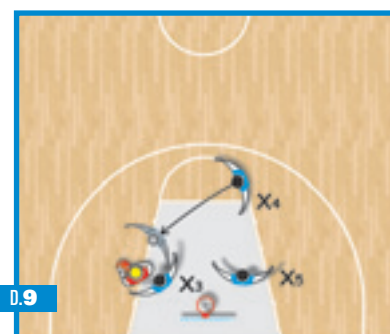
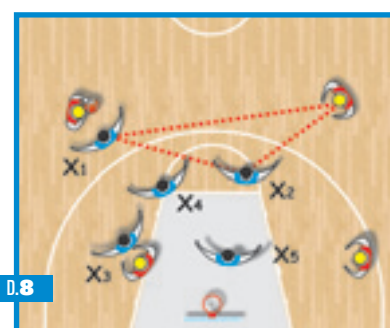
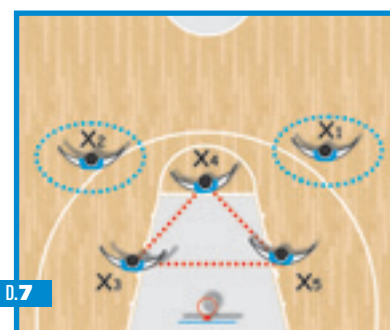
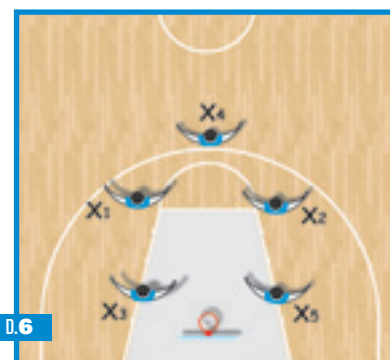


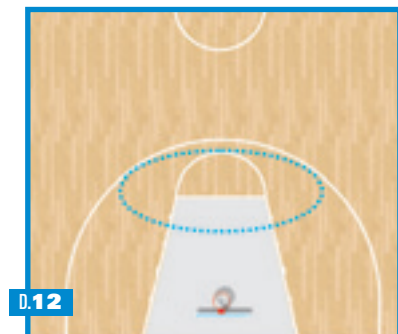
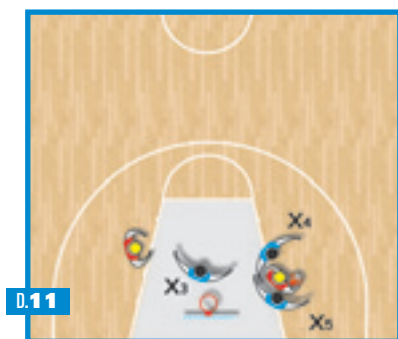
D.5

the difference is in giving to X3, the small forward (due to his characteristics), the task of playing defense in a wider area, allowing him to go farther from the basket.

These are their common responsibilities. When the ball is on their side, their duty is to play defense in front of the players in the area that they must cover, while the opposite defensive teammate must guard the back of his partner from the rear defense line, while avoiding lob passes. If the offensive player in this area receives the ball, and then tries to attack the rim, facing or with his back to the basket, X5 and X3 will direct him to the middle of the three-second lane. They can receive help from X4, who, coming from







the top of the lane, will trap the offensive player (diagr. 9)

As we have said, the tasks of X4 are the most difficult and demanding. He is in charge of the widest area, and he has to stop the penetration of the offensive players, who are covered man-to-man, helping and recovering. He also has to make traps on the offensive low post, both on the right or the left side of the half court, trapping them with X3 or X5 (diagr. 10 and 11).

Besides, he must also cover the pick-and roll play, which are run in his assigned area. These are the basic principles of this defense, which evolves in different ways. In the first stage, we have the 1-2-1-1 zone press on three quarters of the court, which is adjusted to have an adequate line-up for going to the 1-2-2 zone defense. This is only to confuse the opponent's playmaker and push him to call for an offense against the regular zone defense. The last part of this defense is a transformation into a combined defense with three defenders, X3, X4, and X5, who form a defensive triangle playing the zone, and two defenders X1 and X2, playing man-to-man. I would now like to review some additional principles of this tactical, special defense.

In case of any pick-and-roll play involving the defenders X1 and X2, who are playing man-to-man in the area covered by X4 (diagr. 12), there has to be a change of assignment. The defender, X1 or X2, whose assigned player plays pick-and-roll, will exchange places with X4, now playing zone, at the top of the three-second lane. X4 has to jump out



aggressively and now guard the player with the ball, following the rules of the man-to-man defense.

We have another defensive scenario when the offensive player covered man-to-man cuts in the lane to overload one side of the half court after passing to the small forward 3. Then, X1, or X2, takes the position of X3 and continues to play defense in the zone

triangle. X3 aggressively follows the player, who runs through the lane and takes over the role of the defender, who is in charge of playing man-to-man defense.

I hope that this brief explanation of this particular defense has attracted your attention. This defensive philosophy has given me much satisfaction, many important victories, and has influenced the course of my coaching career.





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by Raffaele Imbrogno

# ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

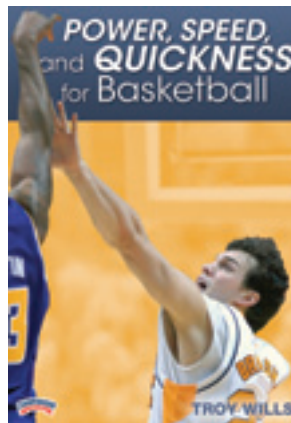
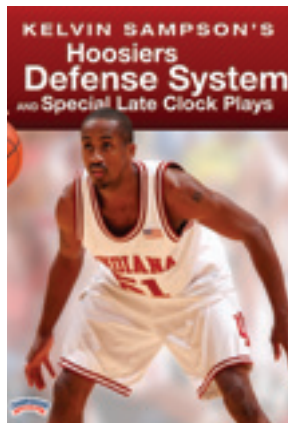
**Raffaele Imbrogno has been coaching since 1980. He is an Instructor for the Italian National Coaches Committee of the Federation and has been Director of the Italian Basketball Federation Study Center. Imbrogno is also the author of several technical basketball publications.**

*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.*

In this article I will review some of the newest DVDs released by Championship Productions. Let's start with the new DVDs of coach Kelvin Sampson of Indiana University. They were filmed at the Nike Championship Clinics, the most famous basketball clinics in U.S., which for many years is run by Ed Janka. With these words, "Accepting the challenge," Kelvin Sampson introduced himself a year ago as the new head coach of Indiana. Coach Sampson began his career in 1979 as assistant coach at Michigan State University and then at Montana Tech, Washington State University, and Oklahoma University. With a 60 percent winning percentage, Coach Sampson is now directing one of the most prestigious and demanding college basketball programs in United States, one that was once guided by the legendary Bobby Knight.

To all his teams, Coach Sampson has always given a strong defensive identity, with full- and half-court defenses, played with a great aggressiveness and intensity. This was always matched with a well-balanced offensive system. The first DVD, titled "Kelvin Sampson's Hoosiers Defense System and Special Late Clock Plays" shows in 74 minutes the building of Sampson's defensive philosophy and system. He demonstrates how to create the defensive transition, on which Coach Sampson puts a lot of emphasis. He demonstrates how he runs the offensive situations that will overload the defense, from the three-on-two and four-on-three, to the five-on-four situation. The first step to building a defense, he says, is by not letting the offense score easy baskets on transition.

In the second part of the DVD, Coach Sampson analyzes and explains the different plays used to score a basket from the side and base line out-of-bounds when there are only a few seconds left on the clock. One play, "One Down," has the ball going to the low post, the second one, "Post Shake," isolates the low post and gives him the



chance to play one-on-one. "Show and Go" is based on a series of back picks.

The second DVD, titled "Hoosiers Multiple Option Box Set" lasts 82 minutes, and Sampson introduces a continuity offense. The offensive system is first presented globally, underlining

the different choices to create isolations and quick reversals of the ball. He then explains the essential parts of this offense, such as screens, cuts, high-low plays, the screen-the screener situations, and the details of the isolation plays.

Another top American college coach is Phil Martelli, who directs the basketball program at St. Joseph's University. In his new DVD "One-on-One Drills" he analyzes this basic fundamental, both from an offensive and defensive aspect. It's a great addition to your DVD collection.

Finally, I want to make you aware of some very interesting DVDs on strength and conditioning work. The first one is the DVD from Alan Stein, the strength and conditioning coach of the famous Montrose High School. "Off Season Workouts for a Championship Basketball Program" introduces a working plan where a basketball player can exercise by himself to improve his agility, quickness, and speed. He also describes a variety of stretching drills to improve total body flexibility.

"Power, Speed, and Quickness for Basketball" by Troy Willis, the strength coach of the University of Tennessee basketball team, is 90 minutes of special exercises for improving balance and core strength for basketball players. Willis focuses on the quads and hips when preparing athletes in the warm-up phase. In the weight room, the goal is power, strength, and explosiveness. Vertical power is a big part of the game. The broad jump, single leg step-ups, and other exercises are demonstrated and are key for developing vertical power. The lateral speed and agility portion of this program allows athletes to move quickly and efficiently. Hops, one leg hops and lateral shifts are executed with the use of ropes. For any coach who wants stronger and faster players with more endurance, this DVDs provide the training program to achieve those results.



Available **Now** on **DVD**

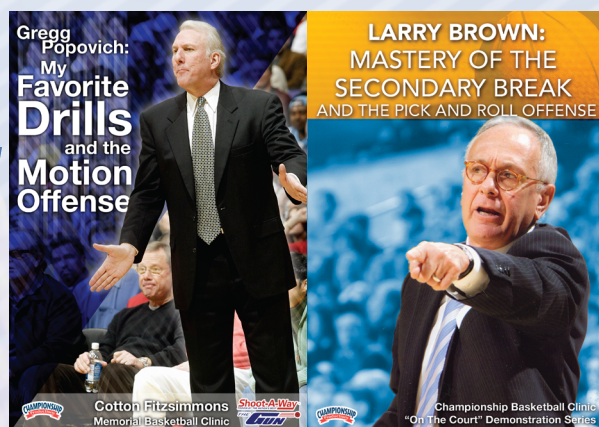
# Instruction created by **Champions**

Coach K (Olympic Head Coach)



BD-2478(A-F)-FIBA19

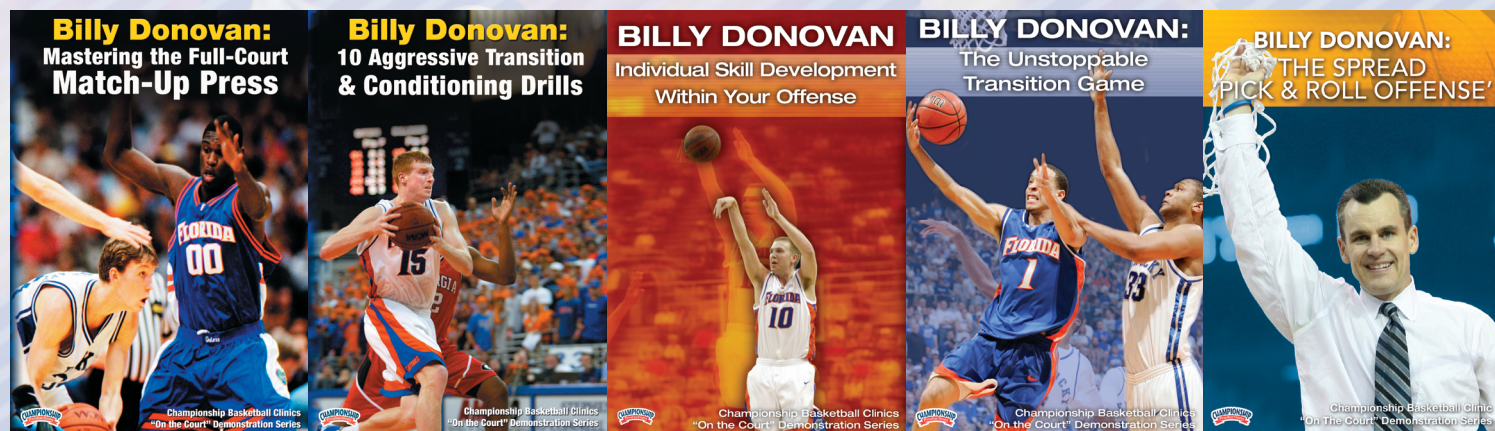
Larry Brown  
and Gregg Popovich  
(NBA Champions)



BD-2688-FIBA19

BD-2811-FIBA19

and Billy Donovan  
(Back-to-Back NCAA Champions)



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by Jaime Andreu

# THE DIFFICULT JOB OF A REFEREES' OBSERVER

**Jaime Andreu first started to referee in the Spanish First Division at the age of 23. He was FIBA technical Commissioner, as well as member of the FIBA European Technical Commission. He was also instructor in several clinics for FIBA International Referees in Europe and Africa.**

I have had the privilege and responsibility to be an observer of, and trainer for, referees at all levels, from regional to international. This is a facet of officiating that has always fascinated me. I consider it the duty of all experienced referees to transmit to the younger generation the accumulated expertise they received from their predecessors. The chain of teaching never stops.

Coaching new referees has never been an easy job. Just the opposite: it is one of the most delicate, difficult and thankless duties in a referee's work. No one likes to enter the referees' dressing room to give a critical analysis of their performance when they have just been through a physically and mentally exhausting game. But, if they are to improve their skills, the new referees need the insights provided by veteran observers. Without a systematic monitoring of their performances in matches, it would be impossible to properly manage the human resources of the referees' corps.

The FIBA Technical Commission has often discussed the way to observe and to evaluate referees, so as to rank them in as objective way as possible.

It is difficult to harmonize the widely divergent views on this issue. Every time, the winning theory is the tam-tam theory, whereby an unofficial pecking order is established spontaneously by word of mouth, along the lines of: "...the other day, I saw a game officiated by a very promising young referee whom I can recommend...". How should the observers manage the difficult debriefing of their less experienced referee colleagues after matches? The following list of Top Ten Tips could help:

- ▼ Tip 1: Do not rush to the changing room directly after the match, but take the time to rank your ideas before addressing the referees. When the game is over, ask yourself the three following questions: did the best team on the court win the game? Have the referees presided wisely over the game? Did the game take place without major incidents? If the answers are positive, then there is room for improvement; if the answer is negative, then you must activate the warning lights.
- ▼ Tip 2: Try to begin and end the debriefing with a positive message. The two or three persons who officiate at a game deserve our respect and our consideration. As bad as their performance may have been, the observer should not come to "put down" the referees, by demoralizing or discouraging them. The observer's purpose is to build up, not to destroy. It is occa-

sionally very difficult to find the right balance, but it does exist.

- ▼ Tip 3: Begin the debriefing with an overall evaluation of performance before going into details. During this phase it is necessary to be honest and not to hide the truth. For example, never speak about good performance and then to give a poor notation. It is also appropriate to find the precise words, which, while being truthful, are not destructive.
- ▼ Tip 4: Leave the doors open for dialogue. The observer is not in possession of absolute truth. It is therefore advisable to use formulas such as "In my opinion...", "From my position in the tribune...", "According to my criterion..." Let the referees exercise their right to defend themselves, perhaps to release any pent-up frustrations they may have. In this context, it is important to keep personal considerations out of the picture. Friendships or personal dislikes should not affect the report on the referees' performance. Observers must be persons with the appropriate technical training, complemented by good communication skills. They are dealing with persons, after all, not with objects or robots.
- ▼ Tip 5: Use language appropriate to your audience. The tone needed when addressing a junior or senior referee is completely different.





The first needs more affection and information on basic elements; the second asks for more explanations on the management of the match, more than questions concerning mechanics or signals.

- ▼ Tip 6: Try to correct the mechanics used, so as to improve the management of the match. Referees are not on the court to apply game mechanics by rote, but to manage a sports game: basketball. The observer has therefore to tolerate the individual particularities and character of each referee, which affect their manner of moving on the ground and of noticing faults. With this in mind, it is important to work with the junior referees so that they succeed in employing good mechanics as a reflex, and as close as possible to the indications

of the Referee's Manual. In contrast, certain small idiosyncrasies of the senior referees are a part of their personality but may become an example for the young referees to follow. For those of my generation, the names of Blanchard, Kassai, Arabadjan, Righetto, or Richardson (the American referee who came to officiate the EUROBASKET event in Barcelona in 1973) have achieved almost legendary status. Every one of us is the outcome of several characteristics observed from others; we copy, we recycle. For my part, I can tell you that in spite of my age and my experience, I always try to assimilate small details that I sometimes find among my younger colleagues. In other words, we never stop learning! This is a reminder for referees that game mechanics are meant to be at

their service, not the other way around. And, please, be very strict with those tricky referees that decide not to call an infraction because of the mechanics: "It was off my zone..."

- ▼ Tip 7: The best referee is the one who keeps the game under control with as few decisions as possible. Each game requires a different performance. There are no two equal games, and each one requires its own approach. The quality of the referee is determined by his capacity to adapt to the characteristics of the game, letting it flow in a spontaneous manner. The referee does not have to create dams to prevent the game from flowing, but to set up bridges under which the game can run without breaking the banks. A



small detail which proves if the referee has understood the game is this: At the end of the game, look if the participants - coaches and players - shake each other's hands, including those of the referees. If this is the case, it proves that they were satisfied. When a team, or both, end the game complaining, something negative happened. The observer has to monitor these details and to judge whether the referees had grasped the spirit of the match at hand, rather than act as if they had been officiating at a match entirely of their own imagination. Referees often accuse the observers of tak-

ing refuge behind the expression "the criteria for contacts were not suitable." This is an unfair accusation because the quality of a referee's performance depends fundamentally on the quality of the judgement of contacts. Contacts account for two thirds of the calls done by referees. Therefore, it is logical that if their appraisal of the contact situations was poor, the result will be poor management of the match.

▼ Tip 8: Resist the temptation to evaluate a performance by counting the number of wrong decisions. When I initiated myself in these tasks of

control, an experienced colleague advised me: "You note when the referee whistles an occurrence badly, and afterwards you point out whenever the referee repeats the same error." This was bad or obsolete advice... I now know that the observer has to appreciate the overall performance, and not one specific error. An excellent performance for 39 minutes 59 seconds can be destroyed, if the referee makes a wrong final decision. This may have been only one error, certainly, but it may have been the one that decided the game! On the other hand, despite some specific





errors, a referee can achieve good, or even very good overall performance, because his or her style and manner were accepted by the participants. This is also what makes the difference between evaluating a performance recorded on DVD and evaluating one live. A DVD makes it possible to appreciate a special situation, but this has a tendency to be taken out of context. By contrast, the same situation viewed on the floor of the arena can be perceived in that particular context and judged in a different way. DVD images tend to truncate reality, and only a person present in the tribune can get a

feeling for what has taken place on the ground.

- ▼ Tip 9: Prepare a final summary by beginning with actions to be avoided, and actions to be maintained. It is important to conclude with a positive message. A good debriefing ends with a summary of the comments, while beginning with the aspects to be avoided and/or improved at subsequent games. It has to end with positive points to be pursued in the career of the referee. Each referee has qualities which deserve to be underlined and appreciated. It also is advisable

to speak to the referees about their teamwork (performance is the result of symbiosis, and not of the simple accumulation of whistle blows) and of their behavior before and after the meeting. The referee is a referee at all times during the match, and he cannot allow himself certain attitudes in the presence of the other match participants. In essence, he or she must appear like a swan, which, when seen above the water, appears to glide along gracefully and without effort, but below water and hidden from view is a hive of strenuous activity.

- ▼ Tip 10: Always keep a positive attitude. The observer has to act more like a coach, who encourages and advises, and not like a simple machine to allocate points. The observer has to adopt an open and cordial, flexible but confident attitude in the face of the arguments that the referees will use to try to hide their failures. This is human nature. After forty minutes of tension, alone on the court, under the pressure of both teams and the spectators, referees need a friend and not an executioner. The observer has to be sincere and honest without hiding the truth. He or she should be able to tactfully inform the referee about the points to be improved. This dialogue can even be accompanied by a minimum of fuss, since "everything flows and nothing is left unchanged", as Heraclites once stated.

Here is therefore a small Decalogue written for the corps of observers. The relationship between observer and referee has to be based on mutual confidence. The progression and improvement of basketball and its referees depends very much on the quality of the work of the observers. Referees must accept that they will be judged. Observers have to watch for the good qualities of the referees. And all have to accept that only a very small number among them will arrive at the top ... which should not prevent each one from being able to play an important role in basketball at whatever level they happen to be.

# RIGHT OR WRONG?

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

## QUESTIONS

1. A shot for a field goal is in the air when the game clock signals to end the period. While the ball is still live after the signal has sounded, a foul is committed by A2. Shall A2's foul be considered to have happened during the interval of play?
2. During a throw-in, shall the ball become live when it touches or is touched by a player on the court?
3. While A2 is in the act of shooting for a field goal, B4 commits an unsportsmanlike foul on A4, after which B5 commits interference on A2's shot for goal. A technical foul is then committed by coach A. Shall play resume with a throw-in at the endline for team B?
4. While A3 is in control of the ball with 10 seconds remaining in the 24-second period, unsportsmanlike fouls are committed by A2 and B2. Shall play resume with a team A throw-in and 10 seconds remaining in the 24-second period?
5. During an unsuccessful last or only one free-throw, both A4 and B4 in their free-throw rebound places commit a violation. Is this a jump ball situation?
6. During the alternating possession throw-in that begins a period, A5 has the ball at his disposal at the throw-in spot when a foul is committed by B3. Has B3's foul occurred during an interval of play?
7. A game ends with the score team A 76, team B 75. Before the referee has signed the scoresheet, the scorer realizes that a field goal scored by team B has been erroneously credited to team A. Shall the score be changed to correct the error?
8. A shot for a field goal by A3 is in the air when the 24-second signal sounds. The ball touches the backboard, but fails to enter the basket or touch the rim and

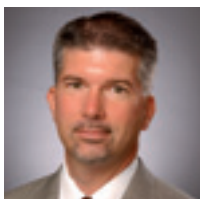


- team B does not gain immediate and clear control of the ball. Shall a throw-in be awarded to team B at that endline but not directly behind the backboard?
9. At approximately the same time, A2 and B2 commit technical fouls by verbally abusing each other. Have A2 and B2 committed a double foul?
10. Offensive interference is committed by A4. Shall play resume with a team B throw-in at that endline but not directly behind the backboard?

## ANSWERS

1. Yes; Art. 9.8
2. No; Art.10.2
3. Yes; Art. 42.2.7, 1st bullet
4. Yes; Art. 50.4, 5th bullet
5. Yes; Art. 12.3, 3rd bullet
6. No; Art. 12.4.8, 2nd bullet
7. Yes; Art. 48.4, 2nd bullet
8. Yes; Art. 29.3
9. No; Art. 35.1.1
10. No; Art. 31.3.1





by John Walker

# BUILDING A CRM CULTURE: THE PHOENIX SUNS APPROACH

**John Walker begins his eight season with the Suns organization, and his third as senior vice president of business development. He currently oversees ticket operations, ticket sales, suite sales, customer retention programs and the Suns website, as well as all customer relationship management (CRM) initiatives for the Suns, Phoenix Mercury, Phoenix Roadrunners, US Airways Center and Dodge Theatre. Walker joined the organization as vice president of ticket operations and sales in 2000, and was named vice president of business development in 2004. He received his masters' degree in sports management in 1995.**

Over the last five years, professional sports teams in the United States have taken varying approaches towards managing customer data and maximizing new technology to grow revenues. The National Basketball Association's league office has challenged all of its teams to develop in this once deficient area, and many have risen to that challenge. One such team is the Phoenix Suns, who have taken a very strategic approach towards creating more than a system, but a "CRM (Customer Relationship Management) culture". The Suns (owned and operated by Suns Legacy Partners) are currently operating in their 39th season as a franchise in the National Basketball Association, and are the oldest professional sports franchise in one of the fastest growing markets in the United States. Under new ownership since June, 2004, the Suns have experienced tremendous success on and off the court in recent years, including advancing to the NBA's Western Conference Finals the last two seasons.

When the Suns moved from the Veterans Memorial Coliseum into the America West Arena (re-named the US Airways Center in 2005) in 1992-93, success on the court and sold out games were the norm for six consecutive seasons. A waitlist for season tickets was established and organization-





ally there was little thought given to what might happen if the successes on the court stopped. Following the strike-shortened season in 1998-99, and despite their 11th straight playoff appearance, the Suns began to see declining season ticket renewal rates and within two years the waitlist was fully exhausted. During that time period, a boom of increased competition began - the Arizona Diamondbacks (1997), the Phoenix Coyotes (2004) and the Arizona Cardinals (2006) all have built new sports and entertainment venues in the Phoenix area over the last 10 years.

Internally, a failing contact management system was used by the Suns ticket sales department. Customer records in the ticketing system and the contact management system were not in sync, duplicate records existed in both systems, other lists and data sources in the organization existed on excel spreadsheets, on hard drives and in hard copy. As a result of these factors, Suns sales campaigns were often untargeted and some prospects were contacted multiple times with the same offer. Customer service efforts were limited to receiving in-bound calls only, as there were no tools or business processes in place to manage "proactive" service.

Suns senior management recognized the need for and the potential of a consolidated database, including the ability to streamline business processes and utilize new technologies to attract new customers and retain existing customers. A commitment to improving the fan experience was identified as a guiding principle for the organization - and the Suns began their journey towards creating a "CRM culture."

#### THE PROCESS

Prior to engaging software companies and implementation specialists to pitch the latest and greatest in CRM technologies, the Suns identified an internal project lead to drive the project from a business perspective. The Suns felt that having someone in that role from the business side (sales and marketing), versus from the IT department, would increase the probability of project success. Next, members of the Suns management team representing multiple business units were assembled and a list of business needs was discussed and prioritized. From that, a short list of key success factors and project benchmarks were developed.

Of primary importance to the organization were the following:

1. Data consolidation.

2. Measuring the success of cold-calling, direct mail and e-marketing campaigns.
3. Improving employee efficiency, i.e., the "close ratio" for the ticket sales staff.
4. Maximizing the use of technology while increasing personal touch points with customers.

Traditional CRM thinking would have you believe that one database is the ultimate goal for any organization...everyone wants a CRM "system". Over the last three years, the Suns have developed their CRM strategy by taking advantage of a variety of tools to accomplish different tasks. The ticketing system, Ticketmaster's Archtics, acts as the inventory management and accounting system for all ticket buyers. Mail Manager, another Ticketmaster product, is used to deploy e-mail marketing messages to a database of more than 250,000 subscribers. Microsoft CRM is the user interface for all sales and service personnel, and has been customized for different workgroups in order to streamline keystrokes and page views. Also in Microsoft CRM, sales efforts of every sales representative are monitored and the results of all outbound sales campaigns are measured in terms of their ROI







(Return Of Investment). The Suns website, [www.suns.com](http://www.suns.com), was recently named the No.1 website in the NBA and is used for a variety of data collection and fan surveying initiatives, as well as hosts a variety of content that is exclusive to different customer segments (i.e., season ticket holders, group ticket buyers, sponsors, etc.). Unique customer identifiers are assigned in every data source which allows for overall strategic management of customer records through multiple tools.

#### **INFLUENCING A CULTURAL CHANGE**

Software acquisition alone does not constitute having a CRM system. In fact, software only acts as an enabler for what is otherwise the way that everyone in your organization interacts with your customers. The Suns have introduced several new customer-centric initiatives as a part of their overall shift towards developing a "CRM culture".

First, the Suns have built a CRM group that is focused on integrating best practices in database management and segmentation, e-marketing, web technology and customer research for all of the sports properties and venues under Suns Legacy Partners (Phoenix Suns, Phoenix Mercury (WNBA), Phoenix Roadrunners (ECHL) and the US Airways Cen-

ter). The goal of this team is to develop new fans and retain existing fans through strategic initiatives and different technologies.

Next, what had previously been a four person customer service phone room that handled in-bound calls only from season ticket holders has been converted into a team of eight. "Account experience specialists" are charged with increasing lines of communication with every Sixth Man

Member (season ticket accounts). Sixth Man Members receive at least six touch points with an account experience specialist annually (a program now managed on Microsoft CRM), are invited to several exclusive events throughout the year, and are treated to surprise "Slam Dunk Moments" at Suns games without warning. Account experience team members are compensated based on the percentage renewal for their account base and the Suns have realized over 90% renewal





rates in each of the last three seasons.

In e-marketing, Downtown Live is the e-newsletter for all e-marketing communications, and is used to drive business for all of the properties that fall under the Suns Legacy Partners, LLC. Downtown Live-Red Carpet Rewards is an online subscription based loyalty program that rewards fans for buying multiple events across several entertainment properties during a specific 60-day enrolment period. Like most subscription models, a minimum of 3 events purchased is required to enter this "loyalty rewards" program. Based on the membership level achieved through multiple event purchase, members are eligible to receive "rewards" throughout their membership term that are applicable to their membership level, as well as their areas of interest. Rewards include "meet and greets", merchandise, concession discounts and opportunities to attend VIP pre-event functions. Members are encouraged to purchase more events to achieve greater rewards.

Finally, the Suns have appended over 200,000 customer records with marketing segmentation clusters and rely on that data for every cold-calling and direct mail campaign that is launched. Utilizing data segmentation strategies to identify prospects for different product lines is new for the sales department, and has proven to be more efficient and effective than previously targeted lists. The Suns have sold out every game for the 2006-07 season, and have increased ticket revenue every year since the 2003-04 season. Also, the sponsorship department is now reliant on the same type of customer segmentation analysis for sales efforts with potential new marketing partners who are increasingly focused on who they will reach when advertising with the Suns.

## CONCLUSION

The on-court successes over the last few years coupled with a more holistic approach towards managing customer data (the Suns CRM culture) have led to more than 100% growth in ticket revenues and three consecutive seasons of a 90%+ renewal rate for season ticket holders. Equally as important, the Suns have now developed systems and a "CRM culture" that will enable them to continue to maximize opportunities and maintain strong and profitable relationships with their best customers for years to come - regardless of team performance.

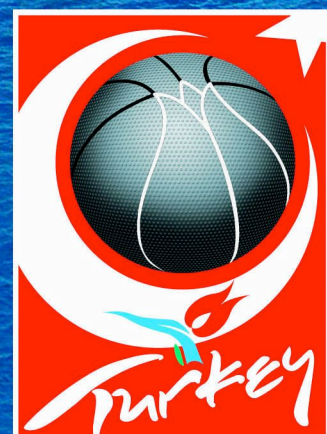






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# CHEERING FROM YOUR SEAT

We continue to introduce you to the partners of FIBA Study Centre. The following companies manufacture the comfortable seats found in the leading sports halls and stadiums around the world.

## BERTELE'

Bertelè is a diversified company with a division that specializes in the production of spectator seating for outdoor and indoor stadiums and sports halls. Most of the main European



basketball arenas and soccer stadiums have Bertelè seats. These are comfortable, sturdy, durable, and highly resistant to atmospheric agents. Bertelè recently replaced all of the seats in the stadium used for the Copa America.

## OMSI

OMSI is one of the leaders in plastic products, and this includes comfortable seats for sports arenas. Their sport seats are now installed in many of the most important stadiums in Italy and around the world. Among the most well known: Olympic Stadium in Turin and Ice Palace in Pinerolo (Winter Olympics 2006); Meazza Stadium San Siro, Milan; Roland Garros, Paris; Budapest Stadium; and Qatar Sports Club Doha/Qatar.



STADIO "OLIMPICO TORINO 2006" TORINO - ITALIA  
"OLIMPIC STADIUM" TORINO - ITALY



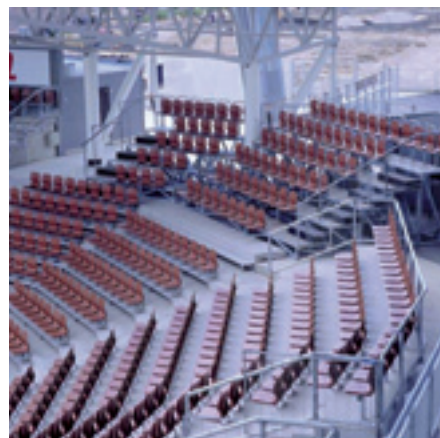
## DAPLAST

The Spanish based company DAPLAST, S.A., one of the leading manufacturers of stadium and arena seats and dismountable stands in Europe, supplied all the seats for the FIBA Eurobasket 2007, held in Spain. Other DAPLAST seats will be found in the "Centro de Tecnificacion in Alicante" and the new "Palma Arena" in Palma de Mallorca. At the Alicante venue, special dismountable stands were built to increase spectator and press capacity, while in the Palma Arena, recently opened for the 2007 UCI World Championships for track cycling, 5,000 tip-up seats were installed. DAPLAST seats are found in arenas and stadiums all over the world.



## MONDOSEAT

MONDO, one of largest manufacturers of sport flooring, has offices not only throughout Europe but also in over 140 countries worldwide. The company has showcased its products in many prestigious sports events, such as World Championships and Olympic Games. MONDOSEAT is the Official Supplier for all seating needs for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.



## SCHELDE

SCHELDE SPORTS, in its capacity of total solution provider for sports facilities, has a Seating Division that is capable of working out the most suitable solutions for accommodating spectators in outdoor stadiums as well as indoor arenas and sports venues. The combination of proper models and those of specialist partners enables this Company to propose customized seating solutions in terms of fixed as well as telescopic seating, with a variety of shapes and models of seats (fixed, or folding; one piece shell or back with tip-up seat; seats for VIP; press seats, business seats, skybox seats, royal box seats, etc.). The Company, formerly called Schelde International, (founded in 1892) has 115 years of experience. Its focus is on the design and manufacture of institutional equipment for sports venues: equipment for competition sports, for physical education, for athletics; spectator accommodation; divider curtains and protection nets; scoreboards and timing equipment. From school gym up to Olympic Games, this Company have acquired the reputation of a supplier of innovative and highly reliable equipment and service. Project references in more than 100 countries world-wide. Recent seating projects in the past 3 months include the National Sports Centre in Tbilisi, Georgia (spectator seats and VIP seats), Al Udeid Military Camp, Qatar (indoor and outdoor seats and VIP seats), Sport Oase, Tongeren, Belgium (telescopic seating with fixed and folding seats).





by Vittorio Mattioli

# APPLICATION OF THE ZONE DIET TO BASKETBALL

**Vittorio Mattioli has been strength and conditioning coach of Fortitudo Bologna, the Italian Division 1 basketball team. He served as the strength and conditioning coach for the Italian national men's team, which won the silver medal at 2004 Olympic Games. He was one of first to apply the Zone Diet to sports in Italy. He is member of the technical committee of the Italian Basketball Strength and Conditioning Association (AFAIP).**

The basketball player can be considered like a racing car, where the food that he eats is considered his fuel. The "Zone Diet," which was developed by Barry Sears, Ph.D., is a new way of thinking about food, athletic performance, and overall health.

"The Zone" is Dr. Sears' term for proper hormone balance. When insulin levels are neither too high nor too low, and glucagon levels are not too high, then specific anti-inflammatory chemicals called eicosanoids are released, which have similar effects to aspirin, but without downsides such as gastric bleeding. Sears claims that a 30:40 ratio of protein to carbohydrates triggers this effect, and this is called "The Zone" Sears claims that these natural anti-inflammatories are heart and health friendly.

## **The Zone is based on four pillars:**

- ▼ Nutrition program omega zone
- ▼ Supplements with fish oil
- ▼ Physical activity
- ▼ Modulation techniques of energy and relaxation.

Dr. Sears believes that food can alter hormonal mechanisms, and in particular:

### **INSULIN**

This important hormone, produced by the pancreas, is involved in maintaining the glucose level of the blood by decreasing it when needed.

### **GLUCAGON**

Glucagon, another hormone produced by the pancreas, raises the glucose level of the blood when necessary.

### **EICOSANOIDS**

These are very powerful hormones produced by all the cells of the body and have a very short half-life.

Hormones play an important role in controlling athletic performance and must be perfectly balanced. The hormonal system influences:

- ▼ Stress and how it is handled
- ▼ Nutrition
- ▼ Training
- ▼ Integration
- ▼ Rest

Dr. Sears believes that by eating the right combination of foods to reduce insulin, coupled with adequate levels of omega-3 fatty acids (EPA and DHA) that the body cannot make and are seldom found in the average diet, the athlete can better control insulin levels and help the cells perform maximally within 30 days. The foods you eat are essential to your success at stabilizing insulin and decreasing inflammation. Inflammatory eicosanoids and elevated insulin levels increase with age and must be normalized to help control this delicate hormonal balance.

## **Zone favorable foods include:**

- ▼ Low-fat protein (chicken breast or skinless turkey breast, egg whites, most seafood, mushrooms, soy products)
- ▼ Carbohydrates from vegetables and fruit

**ZONE DIET = THERAPEUTIC ZONE OF FOOD**



**FOOD CONSUMPTION IN THE RIGHT QUANTITIES  
FOOD CONSUMPTION AT THE RIGHT MOMENT**



**THIS OPTIMIZES HORMONAL PRODUCTION  
AND PERMITS THE BODY TO REACH HIGH  
AND STEADY PERFORMANCE LEVEL.**



▼ Monosaturated fats that have a high HDL cholesterol level and low LDL.  
Unfavorable means not forbidden, but not recommended. For

example, the Zone Diet does not tell you not to eat pasta or rice, but to think of them as “condiments.” If you eat one meal out of the Zone, this does not mean that your previous efforts are wasted. The next 40-30-30 ratio meal will bring you back “in the zone.”

There are some well-known medical reasons which encourage the Zone approach to food.

Type II diabetes risk is higher if you eat high glycemic foods (potatoes or high processed foods: white bread, pasta, rice, sugar). Cardiovascular diseases are likely when LDL cholesterol level in the blood (known as “bad cholesterol”) is much higher than HDL cholesterol level (also named “good cholesterol”). This difference is caused by a diet in which we frequently ingest saturated and polysaturated fats, with high LDL level.

By following the Zone diet, many athletes will find that their energy levels are much higher, they recover quicker from practice sessions and competitions, and their performance increases as well.

## GENERAL RULES OF ZONE NUTRITION

- ▼ **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACRONUTRIENTS: CARBOHYDRATES 40%, PROTEINS 30%, AND LIPIDS 30% AT EVERY MEAL**
- ▼ **EATING AT LEAST 5 TIMES PER DAY, AMONG INCLUDING MAIN MEALS AND SNACKS**
- ▼ **EAT A LITTLE SNACK BEFORE ANY TRAINING AND JUST AFTER YOU ARE FINISHED**
- ▼ **DRINK A LOT OF WATER; AVOID DRINKS WITH SUGARS**

## TOTAL OF 20 DAILY BLOCKS WITH 1 PRACTICE

<b>BREAKFAST</b> 6	6 (MINI BLOCKS) PROTEINS: PROTEIN POWDER 7 GRAMS X 4 = 28 GRAMS + 480 GRAMS SOY MILK (2 MINI BLOCK) 6 CARBOHYDRATES: WHOLEMEAL BREAD 20GRAMS X 2 = 40GRAMS + JAM 30 GRAMS (2) 6 LIPIDS: ALMONDS 3 X 6 = 18
<b>LUNCH</b> 5	5 PROTEINS: CHICKEN (CHEST) 30GRAMS X 5 = 150GRAMS 5 CARBOHYDRATES: BROCCOLI 580GRAMS (2) + APPLES 180 (2) + 20G WHOLE MEAL BREAD 5 LIPIDS: 1 SPOON OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
<b>DINNER</b> 5	5 PROTEINS: SALMON 40GRAMS X 5 = 200GRAMS 5 CARBOHYDRATES: TOMATOES 320GRAMS X 2 = 640GRAMS + PINEAPPLE 270GRAMS (3) 5 LIPIDS: 1 SPOON 1 SPOON OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
<b>SNACK</b> 1	1 200GRAMS WHITE LOW FAT YOGURT 1 1 SNACK BAR (ENERZONA OR SIMILAR) 1 200 GRAMS PARTIALLY SKIM MILK



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ONE-ON-ONE

# FOR BLATT ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

Any coach can take over a new team and change the X's and O's, the style of play, teach a new defense or pick new players. The big challenge isn't to be able to change the team tactically, but to change the mentality, the character. When you find a coach, who can do that, you know you've found something special. David Blatt has led a Russian team to the 2007 EuroBasket finals for the first time since 1993 and in the process has changed the public's perception of them and their perception of themselves. It's a story about a connection in many layers that starts in basketball but goes beyond it. Blatt's brilliant game plan worked perfectly in the semi-finals against Lithuania, but it took more than that. Russia's spirit didn't break for one second, not even when Lithuania came back from 19 down to tie the score in the third quarter.

Even in Russia very few believed they had a chance to do something special in EuroBasket 2007.

Media and even people in the Russian federation didn't have high expectations coming to this tournament and there was good reason. For the past 10 years the team has failed to advance out of the quarter-finals match, and as time went by the common attribute to the Russian team was – a team who can't handle the pressure. In the past whenever things got rough, the team play disappeared and every player tried to save "mother Russia" from a loss. Now we see a different story, but the change didn't start today. In the qualifications for EuroBasket Russia lost their second game on the road to Belgium. Once again once things got tough and that was the moment which changed everything.

"After that loss I walked inside the locker room and went crazy, threw things around and told the players that now I understand why everybody, including myself, thought that Russia is a loser team," confessed Blatt at the press conference after making it to the finals.



"After that game, a lot of people back home said, this is the same old thing. They were saying Russia is just losers, but since that game everything has changed." Blatt was born and raised in the USA and got his education at Princeton University, where he also played college hoops. In the early 80's, he moved to Israel where he found his new home, built a family with four children and lived until 2004.

Then, after winning the Euroleague with Maccabi Tel Aviv as an assistant coach, he took on a big challenge – build the new team formed from almost scratch at Dynamo St. Petersburg. That's when his romance with Russia started. He led Dynamo to an amazing season in the FIBA Europe EuroCup as the team didn't drop a single game during the entire season and easily won a historical cup.

Winning wasn't anything new to Blatt, and hasn't changed after. Since joining the Maccabi Tel Aviv coaching staff, first as an assistant and later as head coach, he was a full-time partner in winning five national championships, five national cups, one Euroleague and another Suproleague title, in addition to two more

Euroleague Final Four appearances. After the romance with Dynamo he joined Italian power house Benetton Treviso. There he won in a span of two seasons every possible domestic title - the Italian cup, the Italian super-cup and despite a debut season full of injuries also the Italian championship. His next destination, starting tomorrow, is Turkish side Efes Pilsen. For many people it doesn't pass unnoticed the fact that of all nationalities in the world, the one who marched Russia to a new era is an American-Israeli one. Diplomacy, a field Blatt is fascinated by, is playing a big part as well in his new role bridging the gap between the historical rivals. Fate also has a share in this story. Three years ago Blatt was presented as the head coach of the Israeli national team, and was supposed to stand on the lines in EuroBasket 2007 as the coach of Israel. According to the law in Israel in order to coach in any sports, you must have a coaching certificate, which Blatt doesn't have. Several attempts to solve the absurd situation failed, and a furious Blatt decided to resign before holding even one practice session. His



next stop was Russia, and on his way to the finals he beat Israel by 34 points – the biggest margin in EuroBasket 2007 so far. In a few years from now when people will look back and talk about EuroBasket 2007 they will remember the fall of Serbia, the amazing team of Spain and an unforget-

table comeback by Greece in the quarter-finals, but be sure Russia and Blatt will get their own place in history. EuroBasket 2007 is when Russia re-joined the elite of European Basketball, right where it belongs, but don't be fooled— even by winning the EuroBasket title tonight and

shocking Europe Blatt's wishes and ambitions won't stop. EuroBasket 2007 isn't where Blatt made his way to the top, it's where he made another big push towards reaching that top.

By Yarone Arbel for fiba.com

# KIRILENKO ADORES BLATT

Andrei Kirilenko has paid a glowing tribute to Russia coach David Blatt for helping him rekindle his love for basketball and realize his dream of capturing a gold medal at the EuroBasket in Madrid. The tournament MVP has also revealed, though, he wants to leave the Utah Jazz, saying he "doesn't want to be a robot in [Utah coach Jerry] Sloan's system". Kirilenko has made the comments in a blog posted on the Russian website Sport Today, with the blog translated by the Salt Lake City Tribune.

"Obviously, Sloan is a legendary coach," Kirilenko wrote. "He's had great experience. He grew a number of great players and many times he has taken Utah to the NBA Finals. But for me, his style and his system are not quite fitting. Thanks to Sloan, he gave me a chance to realize myself as an NBA player. Thanks to him, I became an All-Star in 2004 and I think he did a lot to help me to sign this huge contract."

"Blatt, in turn, helped me to realize a dream, to become a champion with a Russian team. That's worth a lot to me. You wouldn't believe how happy I feel to win games for my own country. For this, I'm deeply grateful to Blatt." Russia went unbeaten in their group with wins over Greece, Serbia and Israel, and lost just one qualifying round game against Spain. However, they upset the world champions and EuroBasket hosts on Sunday, with Kirilenko pouring in a game-high 17 points.

"I respect and value him for his ability to organize the players so the strongest qualities of each are used 100%," Kirilenko continued his blog. "He is able to motivate a team using a positive approach even though he could be strict enough without using psychological pressure."

"He gives everybody a chance to feel that he is very important and the result of the team depends on each player. That actually helps players to feel confident. There are 12 basketball players on a team and each of them needs an individual approach. That's just the only way a player can demonstrate 100% result because a coach is not just an organiz-

er, he is a psychologist."

"So thanks to Blatt who after the bad NBA season, he still believed in me and he created conditions in the team for me that I can demonstrate the highest quality playing and bring the most to the team. In other words, for Russia and under Blatt, I'm ready to play and I love to do that."

Kirilenko averaged a career-worst 8.3 points and 4.7 rebounds per game last season in Utah.

"In a week, I need to join the Utah Jazz again but quite frankly, I'm not really happy about that," he wrote.

"The past season was bad for me and I was really disappointed. I've thought about it a lot and I came to a decision. I want to leave Utah Jazz. The European championships that just ended became sort of a test for me and now I think I know what I want to do. Coach Sloan is one of the reasons. It's not the only reason. In the six years I spent in NBA, I definitely have great experience. It's quite clear that NBA is the strongest, most powerful basketball league in the world and every game makes you better as a player just because there is a challenge. Those conditions make you stronger."

"All those words would be correct as far as I'm concerned, but there is an exception - the two past seasons. [Sloan's] main method to motivate players is to create a feeling of guilt. Our wages, our errors in games and whatever we do beyond playing for the Jazz is also an excuse to criticize us. I want to play basketball. I want to be happy playing basketball, but I don't want to be a robot in Sloan's system. Therefore I don't really see any future in Utah Jazz for myself. Yes, I have a huge and expensive contract, but I'm sure that I've never been insincere toward the fans of Jazz."



"I feel great gratitude to them for their love and support. They have helped me from the very first minute in Salt Lake City. I have no doubt they will understand the motives that move me. I have never told it to anybody but a few weeks ago, I talked to the general manager of Utah, Kevin O'Connor. I told him that I don't see myself in the team and want to leave. Quite clearly, Utah and me see my place and role in the team differently."

"I don't want myself and my contract to be a burden for the club. I want the club to continue in its own direction. It's their choice. I have only one request. Let me, myself, go in the direction I want to go."

"I don't want to be there and mechanically fulfill a contract. Unfortunately, it's been more than a week, but I haven't heard from the Jazz leadership. There's no response negative or positive and this silence is just one more evidence of the way they treat me."

"Nevertheless, I'm really hopeful that Utah Jazz leadership will realize that our relationship is over and it's time for us to part ways."

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# THE WORLD IN BRIEF



## GOLD FOR RUSSIA AT EUROBASKET

Russia upset hosts and FIBA World Champions Spain 60-59 on 16th September to win the EuroBasket gold medal. JR Holden's jump shot with less than three seconds remaining bounced off the rim and backboard before falling through for the winning points.

Spain called timeout and inbounded the ball from midcourt when play resumed to Pau Gasol just to the left of the free throw line. Gasol's shot hit the backboard, then the rim but stayed out as the buzzer sounded.

Andrei Kirilenko, who was voted MVP of the EuroBasket, said: "This is the number one moment of my career. Spain was a great team, but we put them under pressure. This has been a team effort."

Kirilenko scored a game-high 17 points on 5-of-10 shooting, grabbed five rebounds, dished out two assists, blocked one shot and came up with one steal.

"You must understand that it's a sad night for us," said Gasol. "I haven't had a good game tonight. I admit it on the last ball, I really saw it going in. I guess I could have taken a step closer. But we have to congratulate Russia. They have played a

really good game and we have to be proud of what we have achieved, which is a silver medal."

Kirilenko was joined on the all-tournament team by Dirk Nowitzki from Germany, Jose Manuel Calderon, Gasol (both from Spain) and Ramunas Siskauskas from Lithuania. Lithuania wanted gold, but they're happy with bronze after beating Greece 78-69, a result that qualifies the Baltic country for the Beijing Olympics. Unbeaten in the EuroBasket until their semifinal defeat to Russia on Saturday, Sarunas Jasikevicius and a tenacious Lithuanian defense clinched the country's first medal since the EuroBasket 2003 title won in Sweden. Jasikevicius was MVP of that tournament, and he has been an inspirational figure in this team after taking two years off to try and establish a successful NBA career. The point guard scored 11 points, making 3-of-5 shots from 3-point range - the last with 17 seconds remaining to kill off Greece's hopes of another miracle comeback.

"I'm very happy for the medal," said Jasikevicius. "It's very important for me to keep the Lithuania tradition going. I'm not sure whether to be happy about the

medal, or about having several weeks off next summer."

Panagiotis Yannakis, the Greek coach, said: "Congratulations to Lithuania. They played better. My team tried with heart and soul, but we didn't have a fresh mind. "It was a very hard tournament. It's true that we could have had a better result, but we could also have had a worse finish. We have the opportunity to go to the next the next Olympics, and at each tournament, we will improve."

Jaka Lakovic and Slovenia went on a 24-6 tear in the fourth quarter to beat France 88-74 and claim the final place on offer for next year's pre-Olympic qualifying tournament. The Slovenians, just 2-of-15 from 3-point range in the first three quarters, went into the final period trailing 57-51. They made 7-of-9 from the arc during that game-winning run with Lakovic, who led Slovenia with 26 points, making 4-of-4 from long range in that stretch. They finished 8-of-10 from 3-point range in the fourth quarter.

Nowitzki said good-bye to the EuroBasket by pouring in a game-high 31 points to lead Germany to an 80-71 victory over Croatia. The result means that Germany finished fifth in the EuroBasket and Croatia sixth.

Both teams lost their quarter-final games but prevailed in classification matches on Saturday to clinch spots in next year's pre-Olympic qualifying tournament.

## FINAL STANDINGS

- |              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. Russia    | 9. Portugal        |
| 2. Spain     | 11. Israel         |
| 3. Lithuania | 11. Turkey         |
| 4. Greece    | 13. Czech Republic |
| 5. Germany   | 13. Latvia         |
| 6. Croatia   | 13. Poland         |
| 7. Slovenia  | 13. Serbia         |
| 8. France    |                    |
| 9. Italy     |                    |



## NINE TEAMS BOOK THEIR PLACE FOR BEIJING 2008

With the completion of the EuroBasket 2007, Russia and Lithuania join Spain (already qualified as 2006 World Champion) as the representatives from the Old Continent in the next Olympic Basketball Tournament for Men that will take place in Beijing, China, from 9th to 24th August 2008.

The following 12 teams are entitled to take part in the Olympic Tournament for Men in 2008.

### 2 teams directly qualified:

China (host nation)

Spain (FIBA World Champion)

### 7 teams directly qualified through the FIBA Zone Championships:

Angola

USA

Argentina

Iran

Russia

Lithuania

Australia

### 3 teams qualified through the FIBA World Olympic Qualifying Tournament for Men with the following teams qualified:

Cameroon

Cape Verde

Puerto Rico

Brazil

Canada

Lebanon

Korea

Greece

Germany

Croatia

Slovenia

New Zealand

The World Olympic Qualifying Tournament for Men will be played in mid-July 2008, in a place to be determined, and will decide the final three berths for Beijing 2008. The twelve teams are the best placed from the five FIBA Zone Championships. Should any of the above-mentioned qualified team(s) not accept the invitation, the next best non-qualified team(s) from the same Zone will be entitled to participate.

The 12-team tournament which will be played in four (4) groups of three (3) teams each. The two (2) best placed teams will qualify for the Quarter-Finals, Semi-Finals and Finals that will be played in knock out system.

The organizer and venue of the World Olympic Qualifying Tournament for Men will be decided amongst the candidatures received from the 12 participant teams



during the Central Board meeting that will take place in Chicago (USA) on 8th and 9th December 2007. The bidding process to stage the World Olympic Qualifying Tournament for Men started as of Sept. 17.

### ANGOLA WIN FIBA AFRICA CHAMPIONSHIP

Angola won a ninth FIBA Africa Championship to earn a place at the Beijing Olympics with an 86-72 triumph over Cameroon in the final at Cidadela Desportiva Arena. Forward Eduardo Mingas led the way for the hosts, pouring in 18 points and grabbing four rebounds to lead his side to the gold medal.

Angola finished the 24th FIBA Africa Championship with an unbeaten 6-0 record, inflicting Cameroon's first defeat of the competition to leave them with a 5-1 record. With a double-double Cameroon's Brice Vounang poured in 18 points and grabbed 10 points. The 6ft 8in power-forward was supported by Patric Bouli and Gaston Essengue, who contributed with 16 and 14 points, respectively.

It was an even contest which saw both teams tied at 10 points all at the end of first period, but Cameroon surprised the partisan crowd by taking a 33-31 at the half-time interval, a scoreline rarely seen at the FIBA Africa Championship, in which Angola have cruised to the final against low-ranked opponents.

Angola fought off a young and ambitious Cameroon team by launching their most lethal weapon, the three-pointer. Angola established a 20-point gap at one stage with veteran Victor Carvalho coming off the bench to hit two three-pointers out of four attempts and Mingas contributing with two out of three from the outside.

That was the solution for the hosts who were unable to stop the Cameroonian towers who dominated the rebounds battle with a clear difference 20-34, limiting Angola to just three offensive rebounds. Angola's Joaquim Gomes who poured in 13 points and grabbed

five rebounds was elected Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

In the Bronze medal game underdog Cabo Verde won in beating Egypt with 53 - 51. That historic Bronze medal gave them the right to

### FINAL STANDINGS

- |                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Angola                   | 9. Senegal        |
| 2. Cameroon                 | 10. Morocco       |
| 3. Cape Verde               | 11. Mali          |
| 4. Egypt                    | 12. Rwanda        |
| 5. Nigeria                  | 13. South Africa  |
| 6. Tunisia                  | 14. Mozambique    |
| 7. Central African Republic | 15. D.R. of Congo |
| 8. Ivory Coast              | 16. Liberia       |

participate together with Cameroon in the FIBA World Olympic Qualifier.

### AMERICAS: USA GOLD - ARGENTINA SILVER

LeBron James and the rest of the United States squad made sure that what happens in Vegas doesn't stay in Vegas with a 118-81 throttling of Argentina in the gold medal game of the FIBA Americas Championship at Thomas & Mack Center.

James scored a game-high 31 points including eight three-pointers as the U.S. continued its torrid shooting in the tournament by making 20-of-41 triples to Argentina's 9-of-27. The U.S. got off to a fast start leading 35-14 after the first quarter and never looked back with their biggest lead climbing to 38 points for the game.

Dwight Howard's 20 points and four blocked shots combined with Carmelo Anthony's 16 points and game-high eight rebounds helped the U.S. overpower Argentina 40-24 in the



paint.

Luis Scola, named the tournament's Most Valuable Player, led the Argentinean squad

### FINAL STANDINGS

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. USA         | 6. Uruguay         |
| 2. Argentina   | 7. Mexico          |
| 3. Puerto Rico | 8. Venezuela       |
| 4. Brazil      | 9. Panama          |
| 5. Canada      | 10. Virgin Islands |

with 23 points, while teammate Leonardo Gutierrez chipped in 11 points.

Bronze medal winner Puerto Rico, as well as Canada and Brazil earned a spot at the FIBA World Olympic Qualifying Tournament.

### INDUCTION CEREMONY OF THE FIBA HALL OF FAME'S 2007 CLASS

The Induction Ceremony of the FIBA Hall of Fame's 2007 Class took place on 12th September 2007 in Alcobendas (Madrid, Spain).

The induction ceremony that was staged during the EuroBasket 2007 in Spain drew a large crowd of officials, spectators and the media to the "La Esfera" hall in Alcobendas. With the exception of Mrs. Alexeeva and Mrs. Semjonova and the late "Kanela" Soares, all inductees were present personally to take their honors.

PLAYERS:

Mr. Sergei BELOV (RUS)

Mr. Dra\_en DALIPAGIC (SRB)  
Mr. Ivo DANEU (SLO)  
Mr. Oscar FURLONG (ARG)  
Mr. Nikos GALIS (GRE)  
Ms. Hortência MARCARI (BRA)  
Mr. Pierluigi MARZORATI (ITA)  
Ms. Ann MEYERS (USA)  
Mr. Amaury PASOS (BRA)  
Mr. Emiliano RODRÍGUEZ (ESP)  
Mr. Bill RUSSELL (USA)  
Ms. Uljana SEMJONOVA (LAT)

COACHES:

Ms. Lidia ALEXEEVA (RUS)  
Mr. Dean SMITH (USA)  
Mr. Togo Renan SOARES, "Kanela" (posthumous) (BRA)  
Mr. Ranko ZERAVICA (SRB)

TECHNICAL OFFICIALS:

Mr. Mario HOPENHAYM (URU)  
Mr. Ervin KASSAI (HUN)  
Mr. Allen RAE (CAN)

CONTRIBUTOR:

Mr. Borislav STANKOVIC (SRB)

The complete biographical sketches of the 20 above-mentioned inductees into the FIBA Hall of Fame can be found on [www.halloffame.fiba.com](http://www.halloffame.fiba.com).

The gala, followed by a cocktail luncheon in the FIBA Hall of Fame in presence of the inductees themselves, was a great success. Many personalities such as the Mayor of Alcobendas, Mr. Ignacio García de Vinuesa, the Spanish Secretary of State for Sports, Mr. Jaime Lissavetzky, the President of the Spanish Basketball Federation and FIBA Central Board member, Mr. José Luis Sáez, FIBA's President, Mr. Bob Elphinston, FIBA's Secretary General and IOC member, Mr. Patrick Baumann, and Mr. Pedro Ferrándiz joined the celebrations.

### ABOUT THE FIBA HALL OF FAME

The primary goal of the FIBA Hall of Fame is to reflect the history of the sport and its protagonists. The key criterion for selection into the FIBA Hall of Fame is outstanding achievement, at the international level, to the development and status of the sport of basketball.

Inductees into the FIBA Hall of Fame are divided into four categories: PLAYERS (they must have been retired from international competition for a minimum of five years), COACHES, TECHNICAL OFFICIALS (REFEREES AND COMMISSIONERS) and CONTRIBUTORS.

After the induction of the 2007 Class has taken place, enshrinement ceremonies into the FIBA Hall of Fame will take place every two years and will be limited to a maximum of six inductees per year.

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### IRAN CLAIM GOLD AT FIBA ASIA CHAMPIONSHIP

An inspired Iran raised their game a couple of notches up to douse a red-hot Lebanon 74-69 in the final. Iran's triumph in Asia's first ever all-West Asian title contest booked their ticket to the Beijing Olympics 2008, while Lebanon were consigned to playing the FIBA Olympic qualifiers. Iran also became only the fourth team to win the Championship overall. Only China, Korea and Philippines have won the Championship before. Iran, of







course, were playing their maiden final. Lebanon, who became the first West Asian nation to play the final in 2001, thus had to be content with the runners-up slot for the third time. Lebanon had also lost the 2005 final, going down to China both times.

The tautness of tension was almost visible on the face of the knowledgeable who had gathered at the Asty as two West Asian powerhouses indulged in a no-holds barred contest. High on stakes was the battle of wits between what arguably are the two brainiest coaches to have trained teams in the Championship history.

Dragan Raca, of course had the Lebanese strength and system to depend upon, and Toroman Rajkov rode on Iranian inspiration as the two gave no quarter nor sought any for the entire duration of the high-voltage encounter.

Hamed Ehadadi's incredible long ranger from the center-line, probably the play of the tournament, which almost coincided with the half-time hooter was classic example for Iran's inspiration.

The 218cm center, who top scored the game with 31 points, was the tallest player on court final, apart from in the literal sense. And deservingly, the Paykan Tehran player also sealed the issue in his favor triggering roars of celebration among his bench as well as the bunch of fans who had traveled all the way across the continent.

Not that Lebanon were any less in intensity. But with Joseph Vogel concentrating more on defense and Fadi El-Khatib playing in an unusual point-guard position,

#### FINAL STANDINGS

- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Iran           | 9. Philippines           |
| 2. Lebanon        | 10. China                |
| 3. Korea          | 11. Syria                |
| 4. Kazakhstan     | 12. Indonesia            |
| 5. Jordan         | 13. Hong Kong            |
| 6. Chinese Taipei | 14. Kuwait               |
| 7. Qatar          | 15. India                |
| 8. Japan          | 16. United Arab Emirates |

Lebanon did a lot of running. Only that their efforts could end merely in rebounds. Rony Fahed top scored for Lebanon with 23 points.

#### AUSTRALIA WON THE FIBA OCEANIA CHAMPIONSHIP

Australia steamrollered New Zealand in the second half on 22nd August en route to a 93-67 victory to clinch a place at next year's Beijing Olympics and to win the series with 2-1 against the Kiwis.

Captain Sam Mackinnon had 18 points and six rebounds for Australia, and emerging star Pat Mills, the country's top player at the Under-19 World Championship in Novi Sad in July, scored 17.

The win has given the Boomers an unassailable 2-0 lead in the best-of-three FIBA Oceania Championship series after the 79-67 win in Melbourne. In the third game of the series, 3,500 people turned up at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre to watch the New Zealand Tall Blacks salvage some pride with a 67 to 58 win over the Australian Boomers. New Zealand are eligible to compete in the 2008 FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournament.

#### All games results at a glance:

**AUS - NZL 79 - 67**

**AUS - NZL 93 - 67**

**AUS - NZL 58 - 67**



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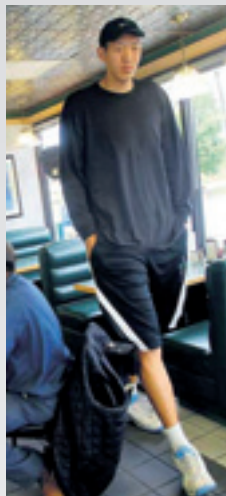
## MOM CHEERS ON BARBOSA

Leandro Barbosa has won a lot of admirers for his dazzling play for both the Phoenix Suns and Brazil, but there is no disputing who is number one fan is. That's his mother, Ivete Barbosa.

Ivete is in Las Vegas along with her son, whose team competed at the FIBA Americas Championship. Ivete takes her role seriously. "To be a mother is not enough," she said. "You have to participate. I'm Leandro's No.1 fan. I lost my voice because I could not stop supporting him and the team."

"I'm totally proud of him," she added to GloboEsporte.com. I thank God every day for the talent he gave to my son."

Ivete has been following Leandro since 2003, when he started playing in the NBA, and she insisted that "being healthy, I'm going wherever he goes".



## SUN ON THE RISE IN MEXICO

Sun Ming Ming is raising eyebrows whenever he runs onto the court for Mexican LNBP side Fuerza Regia. He is, after all, 2.40m (7ft 9in) in height - the tallest basketball player in the world. The 24-year-old Sun will also be catch the attention of those who go to watch

Rush Hour 3, a movie that has recently been released. The movie stars Chris Tucker and Jackie Chan, and Sun described it as "a very funny" experience. "They needed a quite-tall man for the movie and called my agent," Sun said. "That's all. Chris is a very funny guy and Jackie is Chinese, so I had no problems. On the contrary, I had a great time when filming." Sun could end up in the NBA one day but for now, he is enjoying life south of the border. "Mexican people have treated me very well," Sun said. "They are good people, and I love Mexican food, especially the tacos." Sun told the LNBP's official web-site that both Mexican and Chinese cultures have some things in common. "Both have the base in the family, in living with the parents until a certain age and battling together as a family," he said. On the court, Sun believes he is having a good experience. "The level of the league is good," he said, "quite competitive. I think I started a bit slow, but improved recently. Monterrey people are counting on me to help them reach high positions and I'm working very hard to achieve that. If we play as a team, we can do a lot of things. We have to fight all together to achieve what we want. I cannot say we'll be champions, but I can assure you we give our all to do so."

## GINOBILI LANDS TOP UNICEF JOB

Manu Ginobili was appointed UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. The Argentina guard will commit himself to "contribute with enthusiasm and his ability" to develop and cooperate with the institution's job, according to a statement released by UNICEF.

Manu, who won the Olympic gold medal in 2004 and three NBA titles with the Spurs, will help in the "research of solutions to different problems that affect Argentinean children."

The institution goes on to explain that the 30-year-old player was selected "because of his commitment to children, the job his own foundation has done and the development of activities to promote the good of children."

Ginobili told Argentinian TV station Todo Noticias: "One possibility was to not do it, but I said to myself 'Why not? I have to learn a lot as ambassador. I'll improve through the years and we can do very important things. I will take profits from companies that approach me so they can help this project too. Around 50% of Argentinian children are poor, so they cannot study or practise sports properly. That is one of the reasons why a lot of children cannot aim high in sports."



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