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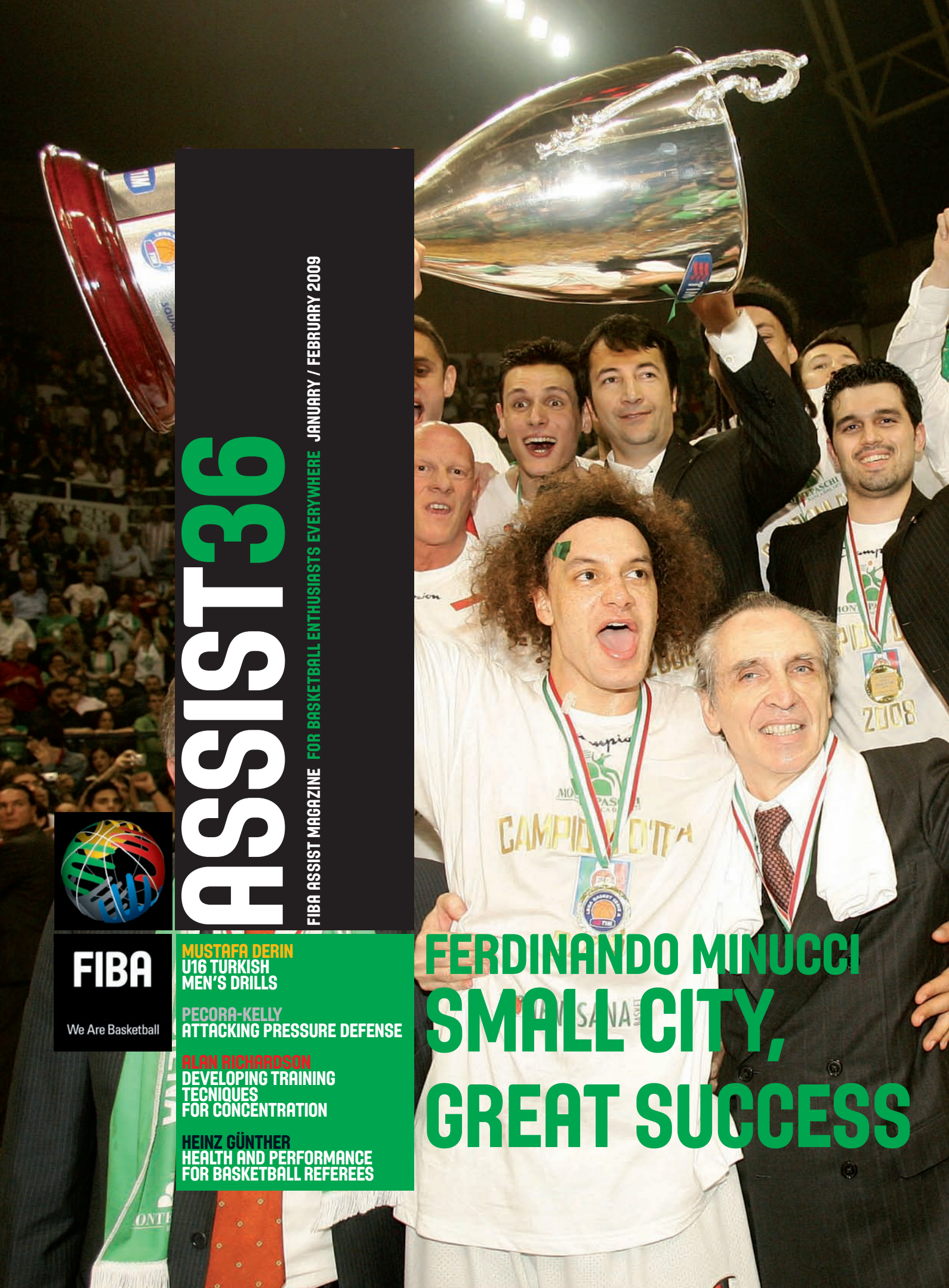
MUSTAFA DERIN
U16 TURKISH
MEN'S DRILLS

PECORA-KELLY
ATTACKING PRESSURE DEFENSE

ALAN RICHARDSON
DEVELOPING TRAINING
TECHNIQUES
FOR CONCENTRATION

HEINZ GÜNTHER
HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE
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Editor-in-Chief
Giorgio Gandolfi

Editorial Office: Edizioni Cantelli
V. Saliceto 22/E, 40013 Castel Maggiore (BO),
Italy, Tel. +39-051-6328811,
Fax +39-051 6328815
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2009-10 FIBA CALENDAR

2009

JUNE 2009

07 - 20.06 EuroBasket Women in
Latvia (Liepaja, Valmiera
and Riga)
21 - 28.06 FIBA Asia Championship
for Women in Chinese
Taipei (TPE)

JULY 2009

02 - 12.07 FIBA U19 World
Championship for Men in
Auckland (NZL)
23.07 -02.08 FIBA U19 World
Championship for Women
in Bangkok (THA)

AUGUST 2009

05 - 15.08 FIBA Africa Championship
for Men in Libya (Benghazi
and Tripoli)
06 - 16.08 FIBA Asia Championship
for Men in China, Tianjin
City
19 - 30.08 FIBA Americas
Championship for Men in
Mexico

SEPTEMBER 2009

05 - 15.09 FIBA Africa Championship
for Women in Madagascar
07 - 20.09 EuroBasket Men in Poland
(Gdansk, Poznan, Warsaw,
Wroclaw, Bydgoszcz, Lodz
and Katowice)
23 - 27.09 FIBA Americas
Championship for Women
in Mato Grosso (BRA)

2010

AUGUST 2010

28 - 12.09 FIBA World Championship
for Men in Turkey (Ankara,
Antalya, Izmir and Istanbul)

SEPTEMBER 2010

23 - 03.10 FIBA World Championship
for Women in Czech
Republic (Ostrava, Brno)

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We Are Basketball



by Mustafa Derin

U16 TURKISH MEN'S DRILLS

Mustafa Derin is the assistant coach of To-fas Bursa team (Turkish second division) and is also the head coach of U16 Turkish National Man Team. With this team he won the bronze medal in the 2008 FIBA U16 European Championship.

BOX-OUT DRILLS

These drills help the players at all levels of competition to improve an important part of their game. For the young players, this kind of drills will help them to use their full body to box-out opponents.

1-on-1 Box-Out Drill

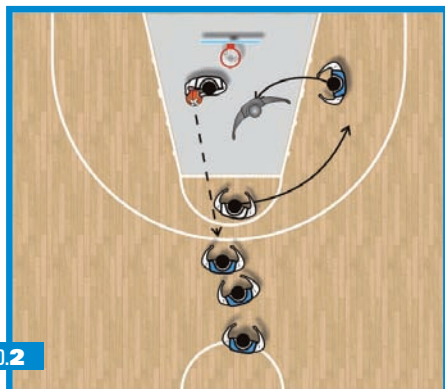
If we want improve team box-out defense, we must start with the 1-on-1 box-out. Use this drill for 6 minutes at every practice session. In this drill, one offensive player shoots the ball and another offensive player tries to get the offensive rebound. The defensive player's job is to box out the offensive player and get the ball. If the offensive player grabs an offensive rebound, the defensive player stays on defense (diagr. 1 and 2).

3-on-3 Box-out Drill

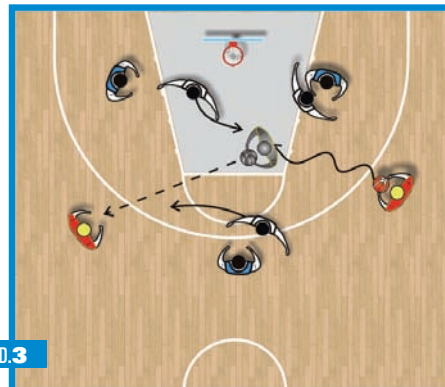
This drill is the next step in the development



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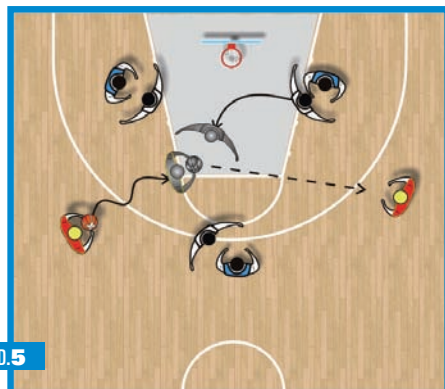


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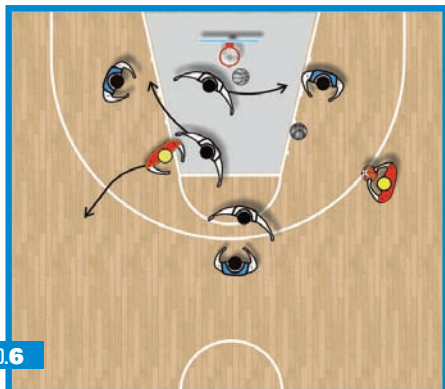




D.4



D.5



D.6

of our defensive team positioning and box out. Two coaches on the wings penetrate into the paint. Defensive players must get the best position (ball side/weak side) and must stop the penetration (step-up). After a couple of penetrations and passes, when the coach shoots the ball, the defensive players must box out and rebound. Each team must get three defensive rebounds in a row, and then get out. After 4 to 5 minutes, we rotate. We run the same drill, but this time the smaller players must box out the big players and get the rebound (diagr. 3, 4, 5, and 6).

FAST BREAK DRILLS

3-on-1/4-on-3 Fastbreak Drill

If we want to score easy baskets, we have to work on the fastbreak drills. One drill that we use is the 3-on-1/4-on-3. Three or four teams of three players set up on the court. We start first with a 3-on-1, with one dribble fastbreak. Next, the same team, plus the defender, grabs the ball and plays

a 4-on-3 fastbreak. This drill is run for 6 minutes and we count each scored basket. The losers must perform suicide drills (diagr. 7 and 8).

3-on-2 Fastbreak

For this drill, players must fill the lanes, read the reaction of the defense, and try the score. After a 3-on-2, whoever shoots the ball will run back, trying to recover, and catch the offensive players. Two defensive players must contain three offensive players and then do not give up an easy score. Blue and White teams run this drill for 6 minutes. The losers will perform suicide drills (diagr. 9).

TRANSITION DRILLS

2-on-2 Transition Drill

We work this 2-on-2-transition drill to pressure the ball and then run back on defense. Blue and White teams, formed by two players, are set at the free-throw line extended. The drill starts with a 2-on-2. The players on offense then become the defenders, and make a quick recovery with the player, who shot the ball or turned it over, then puts pressure the ball. One of players, who was on defense, grabs the ball and makes a long pass to a teammate for the fast break. A team must try to score 11 points to win the contest: a scored basket earns one point, while a turnover takes away a point. (diagr. 10 and 11).

5-on-5 Transition Defense

We run this drill to create a game-like situation. We start the drill from half court defensive positioning with two coaches. The players are numbered. The coaches pass the ball to each other a couple of times, check the defensive positions, then they shoot the ball. At the same time, a coach yells two numbers (1-4 or 2-5 etc.), and the players, who are called, run around the cones, set at the intersection of the baseline with the three-point line, recover on defense, and play a 5-on-3 fast break. The offensive player, who shoots or turns the ball over, runs over the cone and then they play 5-on-4 transition defense. We count how many defensive stops are made in 7 minutes. The transition defense is the key for the team's defense (diagr. 12 e 13).

5-on-5 Transition Defense Circle Drill

The important part of the transition defense is to find the offensive players and quickly match-up. This drill improves our 5-on-5-transition defense and a quick match-up, and prevents easy baskets from being scored. The players, divided in one Blue and one White team, run around the free-throw circle without being matched up. The coach has the ball and, after 15 to 20 seconds, he shoots and yells "Blue" or "White."



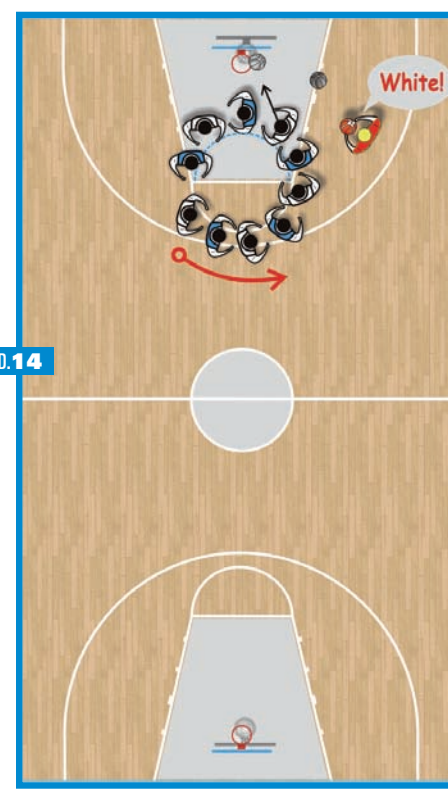
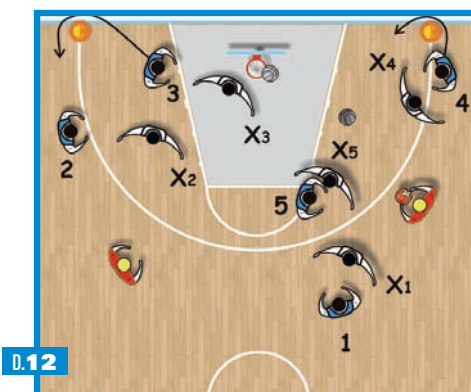
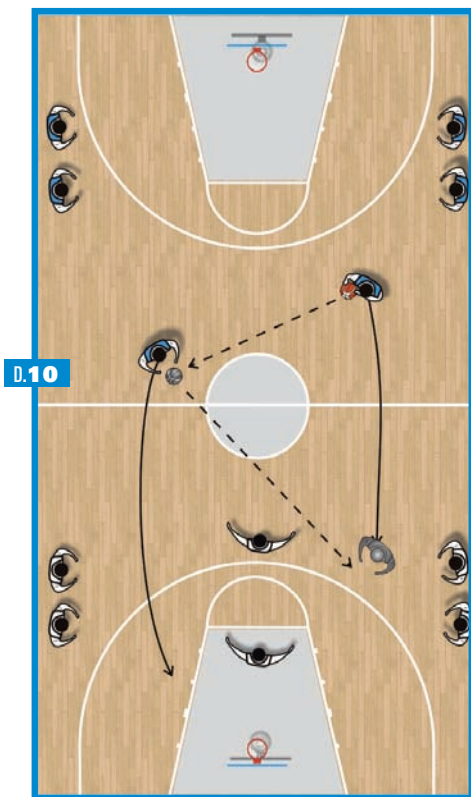
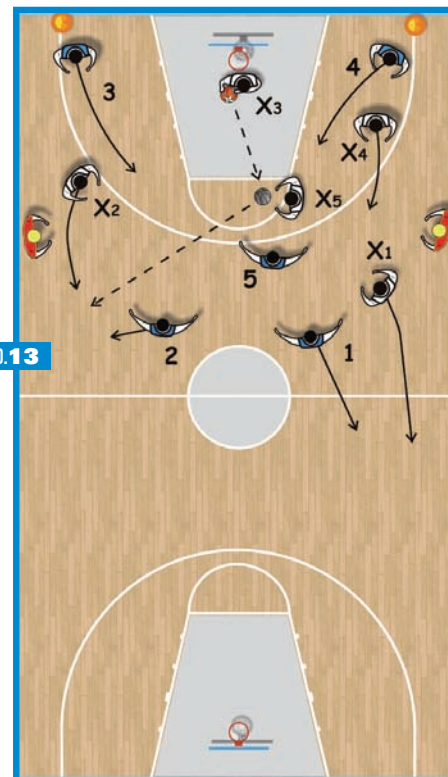
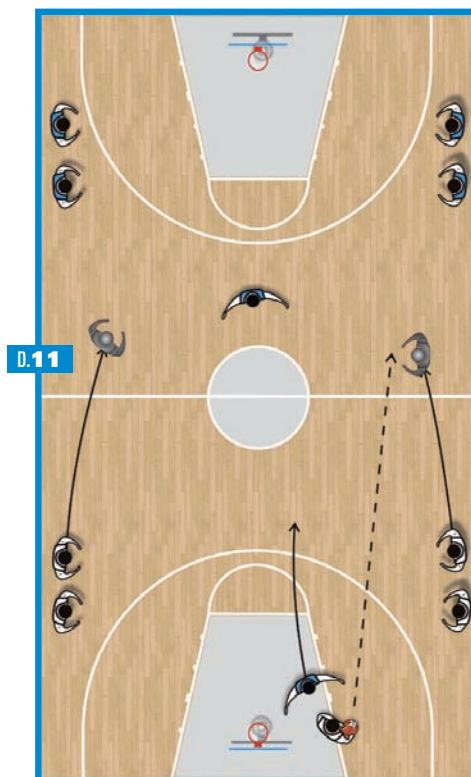
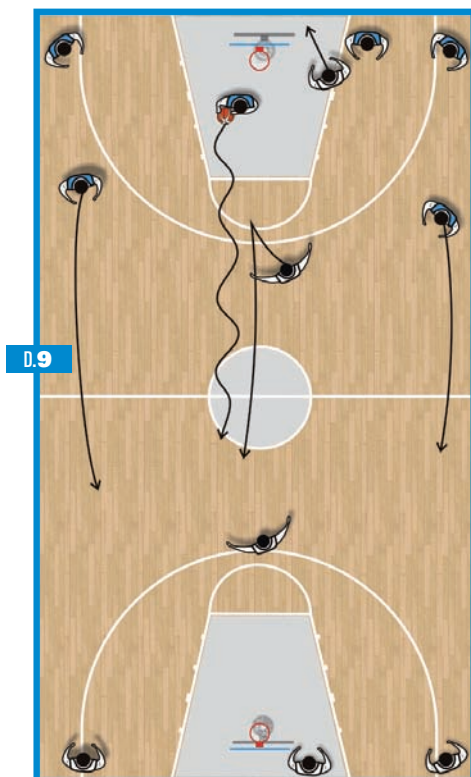
D.7



D.8

The team that is called will get the rebound and run the fastbreak. The players of the team must quickly recover, match-up, and stop the fastbreak. We count how many defensive stops are made in 6 minutes. The winners shoot free-throws, while the losers run (diagr. 14 e 15).

After this drill, we run a 5-player "Pacer drill" full court. The team needs to score six lay-ups in 32 seconds without dribbling (diagr. 16 and 17).



60s Drill

The first team of four players to hit 60 shots is the winner. The 60 shots can come from five predetermined spots on the floor and 12 shots have to be made from each spot (diagr. 18).

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT DRILLS

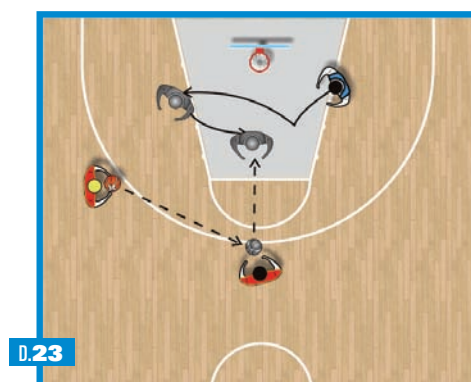
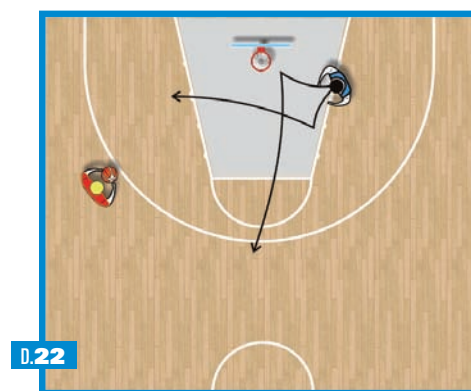
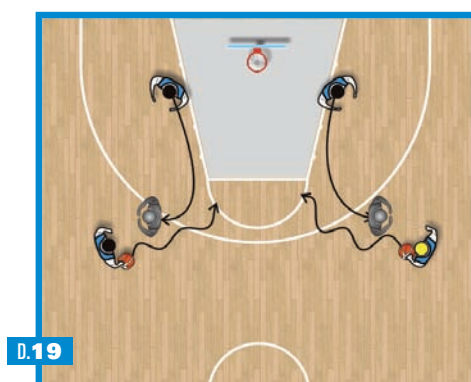
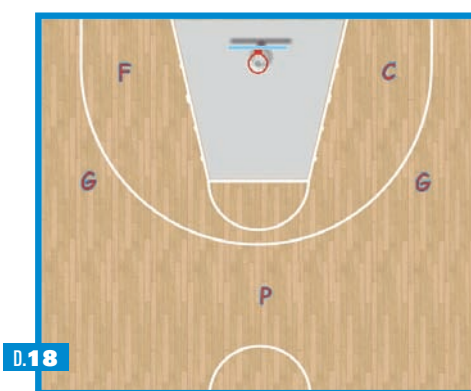
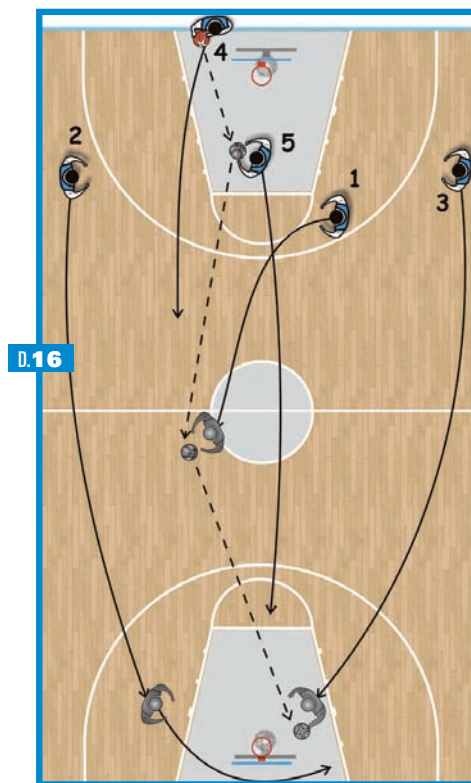
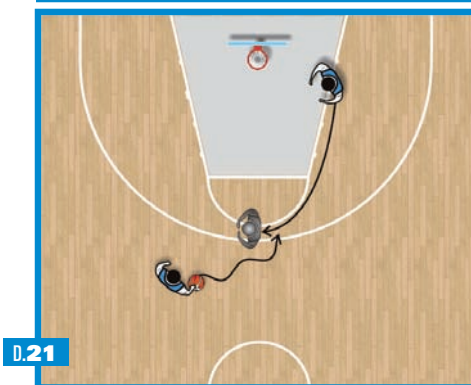
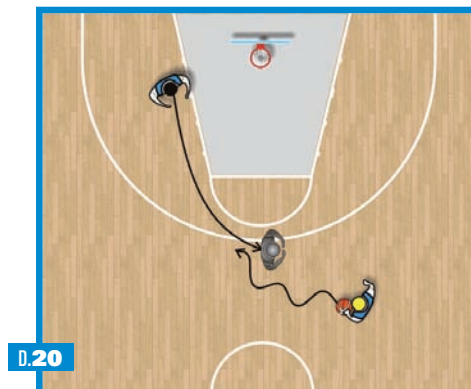
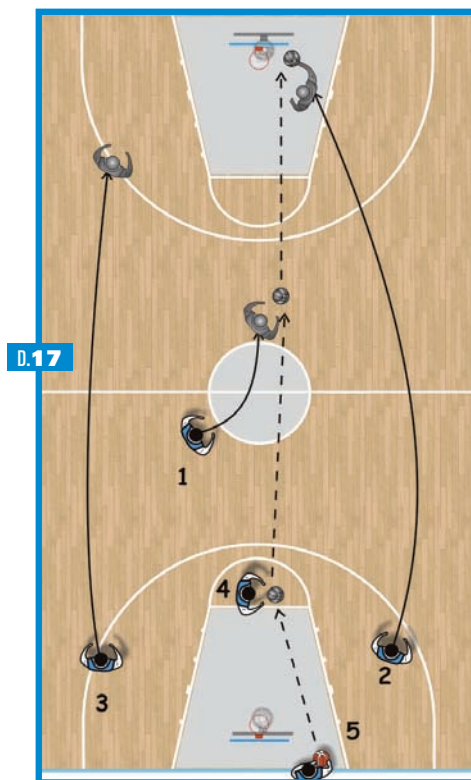
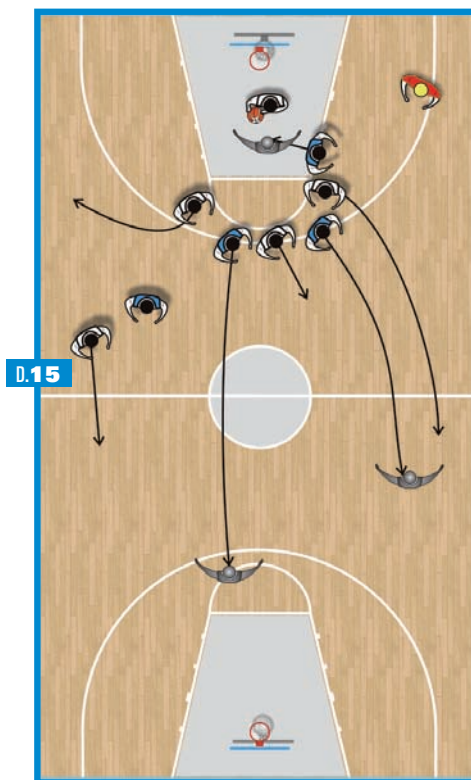
I would like to suggest some specific drills to run before the team practice that I find useful for the development of all type of



players, both short and tall.

Development for perimeter players Drill 1: Throw the ball, catch, and:

- ▶ Jab step and lay-up.
- ▶ Jab step, long step, and lay-up.
- ▶ Jab step, shot fake, and same side drive.
- ▶ Jab step, crossover, and lay-up.
- ▶ Jab step, crossover, and step back move.



Drill 2: Throw the ball, catch, and:

- ▼ One dribble left side, one count stop, and lay-up.
- ▼ One dribble right side, one-count stop, and lay-up.
- ▼ Two dribbles left side, one-count stop, and lay-up.
- ▼ Two dribbles right side, one-count stop, and lay-up.

Drill 3: Pick-and-roll

- ▼ Side screen and middle penetration.

- ▼ Side screen and side penetration (diagr. 19, 20 and 21).

Development for inside players

Drill 1: Ball handling

- ▼ Mikan Drill (with changing feet).
- ▼ Two-count stop.
- ▼ Reverse lay-up.

Drill 2: Low-post: throw the ball, catch, and:

- ▼ Baseline drop step.
- ▼ Middle jump hook.

- ▼ Baseline dribble and middle spin move.
- ▼ Middle dribble and baseline spin move.
- ▼ Up-and-under.
- ▼ Turn around jumper.

Drill 3: High Post, face up, and:

- ▼ Jab-step and shot.
- ▼ Jab-step, long step and power lay-up.
- ▼ Jab-step, crossover, and power lay-up.
- ▼ Catch and shoot.
- ▼ Catch and drive.
- ▼ Jab step, crossover, step back, shot.

Drill 4: Low post fake

- ▼ Catch and drive.
- ▼ Jump stop and move.
- ▼ Face-up and move.

Drill 5: Fake high-post

- ▼ Catch and shot.
- ▼ Catch, fake and power move (diagr. 22).

Drill 6: High-low

- ▼ Step-in.
- ▼ Coach same side pass, baseline foot-work, and power move.
- ▼ Spin move and power lay-up (diagr. 23).

Drill 7: Pick-and-roll (both sides)

The player from the low-post sets a screen and then cuts and receives the ball from the dribbler (diagr. 24 and 25).

Drill 8: Fast break

- ▼ High post jumper.
- ▼ Lay-up.
- ▼ Ball side, post up (diagr. 26 and 27).

The player from the low-post changes his position to receive the pass out from three-point line, or receive a pass from the corner. The player at the top of the key passes the

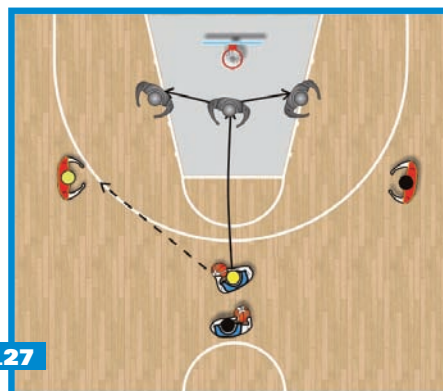
ball to the left side, cuts in the lane, and takes the position on the low-post (diagr. 28, 29, and 30). The player passes the ball to the coach on the top of the key, cuts, and receives the ball in the lane (diagr. 31 and 32).

Free-Throws Drills

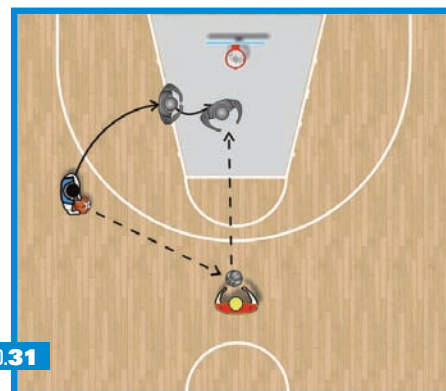
We end the practice with free-throw drills that we divide in two parts. In the first part of this drill, everybody shoots (diagr. 33). In the second part, the coach gives the fol-

lowing rules:

- ▼ Ten players make 20 free-throws, and seven players make 17.
- ▼ Each player shoots one shot at a time.
- ▼ If he misses the first one = he runs 3 times.
- ▼ If he misses the second one = he runs 2 times.
- ▼ If he makes the twos = he runs 1 time (diagr. 34).



D.27



D.31



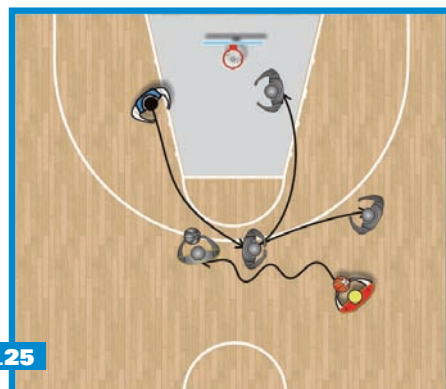
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D.28



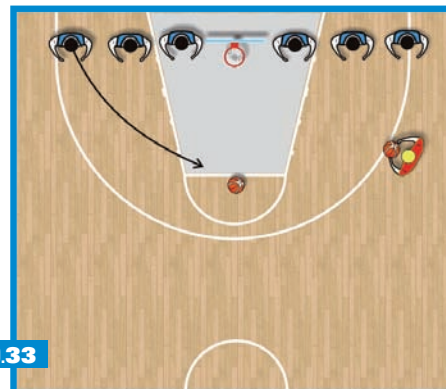
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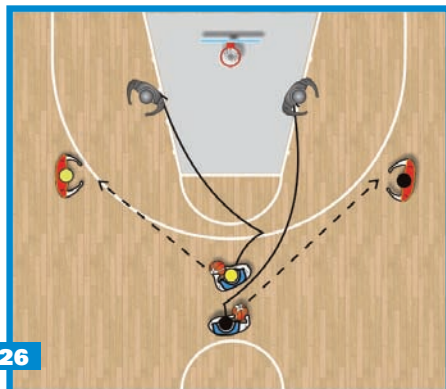
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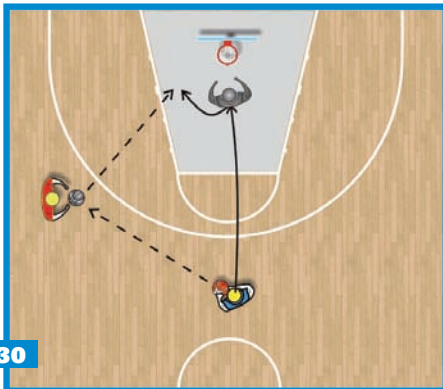
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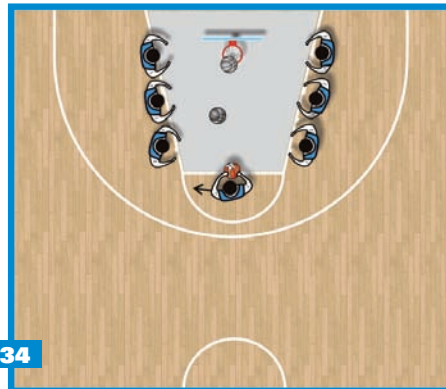
D.33



D.26



D.30



D.34

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by Tom Pecora



by Michael Kelly

ATTACKING PRESSURE DEFENSE

Tom Pecora will be entering his eighth season as the head coach of the Hofstra Men's Basketball program in 2008-09 and his 15th season at Hofstra overall. He was named the 10th head coach in Pride history on March 28, 2001 after spending the previous seven years as an assistant.

Michael Kelly, a 2005 graduate of Haverford College, is in his third season on the Pride staff after being named assistant men's basketball coach at Hofstra University in June of 2006.

TERMINOLOGY

In this article about attacking pressure defense, there are some words and phrases that you should become familiar with. They include:

Ball toughness: refers to protecting the ball when the offensive player has possession of it. It is not letting the defense knock the ball out of your hands, especially when you are being pressured.

Blitz: refers to a trap and is when two defenders pressure the offensive player with the ball.

Fake a pass to make a pass: refers to the offensive player faking a pass over the top if he wants to throw a bounce pass or faking a bounce pass if he wants to throw a pass over the top.

If he goes high, I go by: refers to when an offensive player makes a high ball fake and the defender goes for the ball fake and reaches up to try and get a deflection. The offensive player, if he is a good ball handler, must drive the ball right by the defender when this happens.

Run through the pass: refers to the offensive player having to take steps towards the ball when he is about to receive a pass so that the defense cannot intercept the pass or get a deflection.

There are six keys to attacking pressure defense and they are:

1. Teaching Progressions.
2. Be Aggressive - "Attack."
3. Play to your Strengths.
4. Timing and Spacing.
5. Have Multiple Attacks.
6. Practice Pressure Situations Daily.

TEACHING PROGRESSIONS

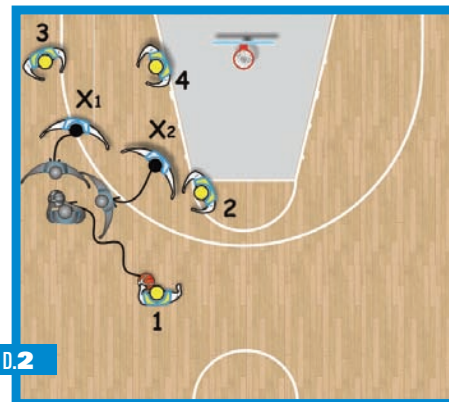
There are several fundamental drills that can be used every day or every other day within practice to simulate different kinds of defensive pressure situations. As your players begin to understand and execute the basic drills, you can then incorporate the concepts involved in these drills into more complex drills. This is where teaching progressions take place.

Our first basic drill is called Pivot Drill. The team is broken up into partners. Each group of two uses one ball. The first player pivots with the ball for four seconds, ripping the ball below his knees, tucking the ball back, and ripping the ball across his body. He then dribbles for four seconds, alternating hands, and protecting the ball. Then he picks his dribble up and pivots again for four seconds. Finally, when that last set of four seconds is finished, he steps and throws a pass to his partner. When he throws the pass to his partner he "fakes a pass to make a pass." We use the expression "fake a pass to make a pass" because we do not want the defender to have an easy time getting a deflection on the pass. By pivoting for four seconds, dribbling for four seconds, and then pivoting for four seconds, we are simulating the total amount of time an offensive player can have possession of the ball without being called for a five-second violation while being pressured by a defensive player. The partner will then repeat the same drill. We do this drill for 2-3 minutes every day.

Next, we have a drill called 3-Man/Pivot and Pass. We separate our team into groups of three. Diagram 1 shows how this drill is set up and how it is executed.

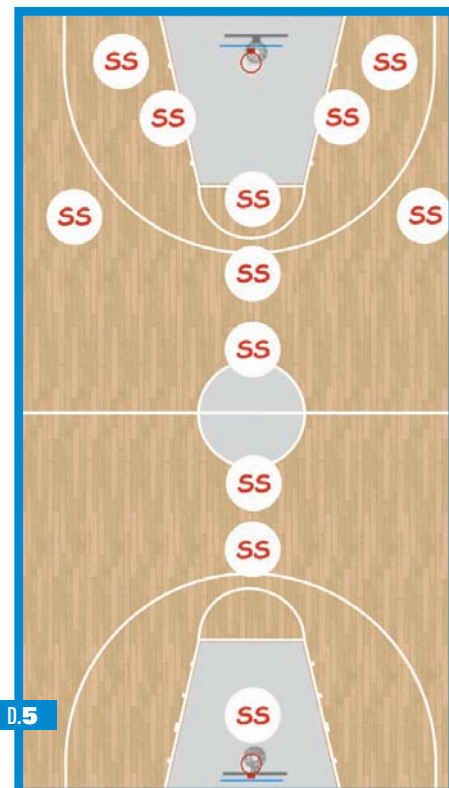
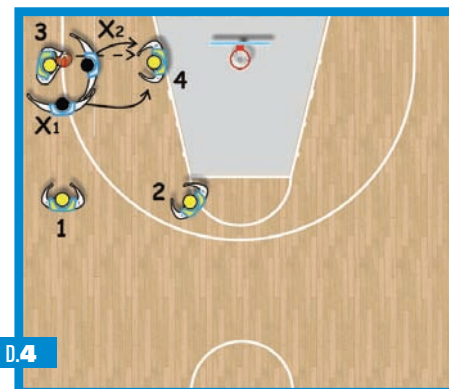
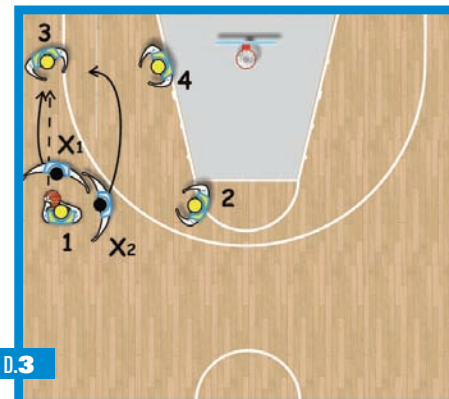


D.1



D.2

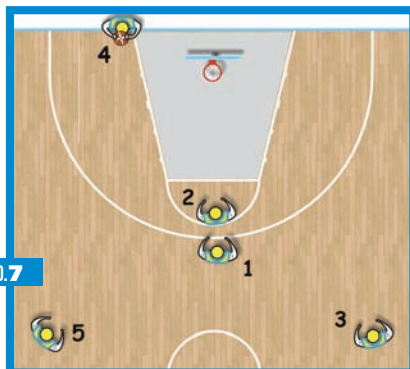
There are two offensive players that stand about 12-15 feet apart from one another. There is one defensive player that stands in between both offensive players. The goal of the offensive player is to throw a crisp pass, without any kind of deflection, to the other offensive play-



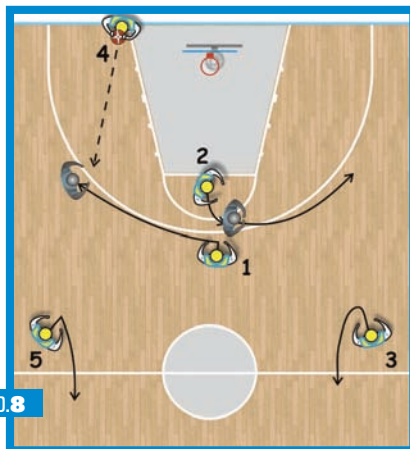
er. The defender is looking to get a deflection or a steal. If the defender gets a deflection or a steal, then the offensive player who through the pass becomes the new defender. The defender runs at the offensive player. In this drill the offensive player works on "faking a pass to make a pass", while a defensive player is running at him. The offensive player also works on creating proper passing angles



D.6



D.7



D.8

when he steps and throws around the defender. This drill simulates a pressure situation in a game where the defense looks to execute a blitz or where the defense simply looks to put pressure on the offensive player by running straight at the offensive player.

Another drill that we use in practice is called Blitz Box. There are six players involved in blitz box, so we usually have two groups of six execute this drill on op-



posite ends of the floor. Four players form a box between the lane line and the side line, and between the baseline and the free-throw line extended. Two defensive players start in the middle of the box. Diagram 2 shows how this drill is set up and then how it is executed. A coach will throw a ball to one of the four players that make up the box. The two players in the middle then sprint to the offensive player to execute a blitz. The offensive

player pivots hard for four seconds and then passes the ball to the next offensive player. The two defensive players then sprint to the next offensive player and execute another blitz (diagr. 3). Once the two defensive players have executed all four blitzes (diagr. 4), we rotate a new group of two defenders into the middle. In this drill, the offensive player is working on protecting the ball while being blitzed, and then faking a pass to make a

pass out of the blitz. The offensive player is also working on "ball toughness."

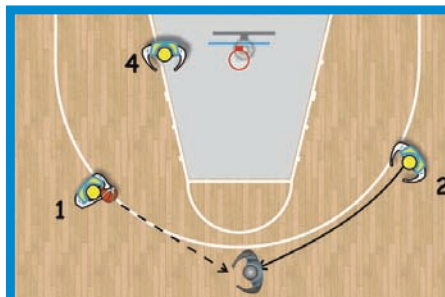
As you can see, going from pivot drill to 3 Man/ Pivot and Pass to Blitz Box shows how we use teaching progressions to simulate the pressure situations that we will have to face in games. We go from a drill that uses no defenders, to a drill with one defender and two offensive players, to a drill with two defenders and one offensive player.

BE AGGRESSIVE - "ATTACK"

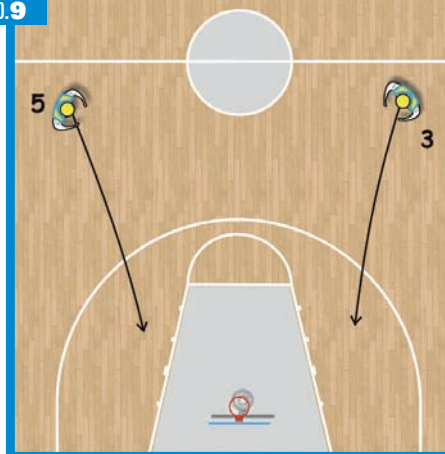
In the course of your daily practices, you are going to have certain drills that have an emphasis on offense and certain drills that have an emphasis on defense. It is important for your players to continue to work on their offense, even in drills that have an emphasis on defense. They must always think "Attack" when they are on the offensive side of the drill. The best way to beat pressure is by applying pressure yourself. Offensive players cannot be passive when faced with pressure. When the defensive player applies pressure on the offensive player with the ball, that offensive player must attack the defensive player with a hard move off the dribble or a quick pass over the top. When two defensive players blitz the offensive player, the offensive player must take one or two dribbles backwards, and then attack the outside leg of one of the defenders running at him. The offensive player can also try to split the two defenders running at him. The offensive player can make an advancing pass to a teammate that is open. The worst thing that the offensive player could do is pick up his dribble and become passive. More times than not, this will lead to a turnover or a wasted timeout.

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

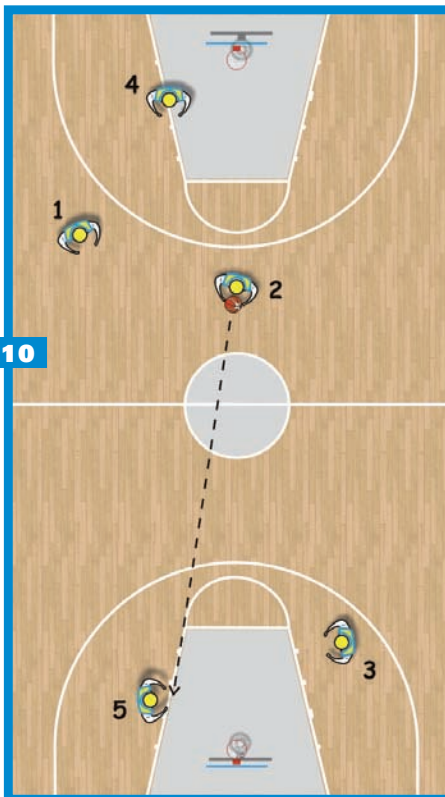
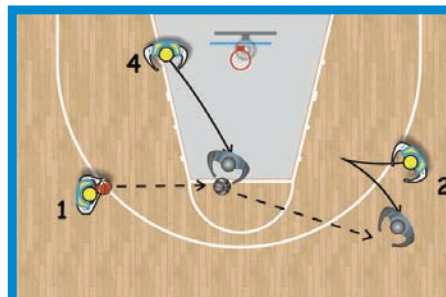
All of the players on your team must understand their roles, their strengths, and their weaknesses. When your players understand who they are as basketball players, they will be more effective in terms of their decision making and their responses in defensive pressure situations. For example, a thin, passive player should attack a blitz by making a pass over the top to an open teammate. A guard or forward, who does not dribble the ball that well should look to make a pass over the top to an open teammate when he is blitzed. A small, quick guard should try and step through the blitz and put the ball on the floor. We use the phrase, "If he goes high, then I go by." This occurs when the guard fakes a pass over the top and then drives the ball past his defender because the defender has



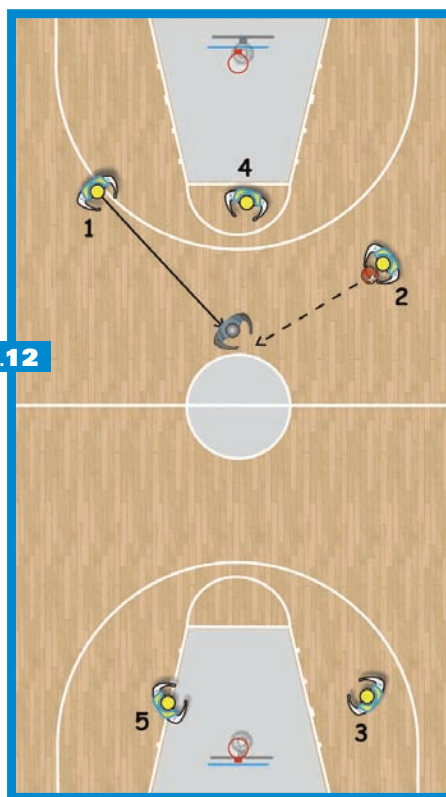
D.9



D.11



D.10



D.12

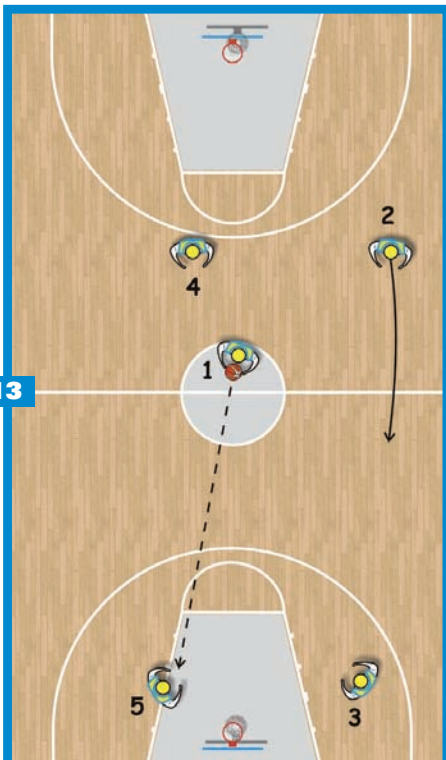
gone for the ball fake and has tried to get a deflection. A small quick guard, who is already dribbling the ball could also attack the outside leg of one of the defenders. The bottom line is that you don't want players doing things that they are uncomfortable doing, especially in pressure situations. When the defense applies pressure, each offensive player must know his strengths, and then use his

strengths to aggressively attack the defense.

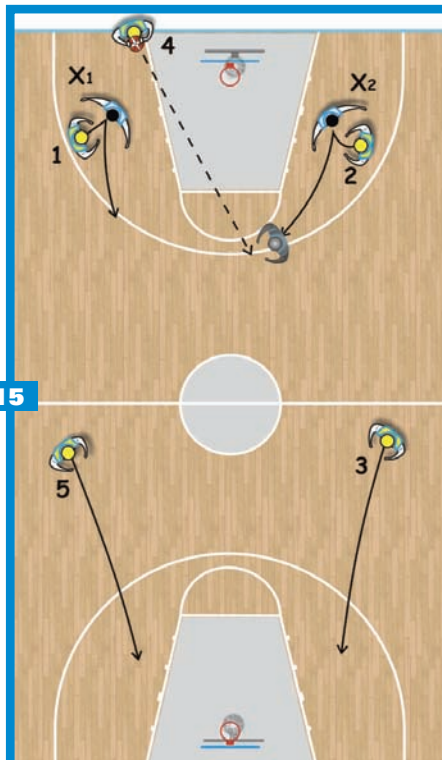
TIMING AND SPACING

When attacking defensive pressure, it is important for the offense to have appropriate spacing and to make hard cuts at the appropriate times. The offense must use the entire court. By extending the floor with proper spacing, it makes it very

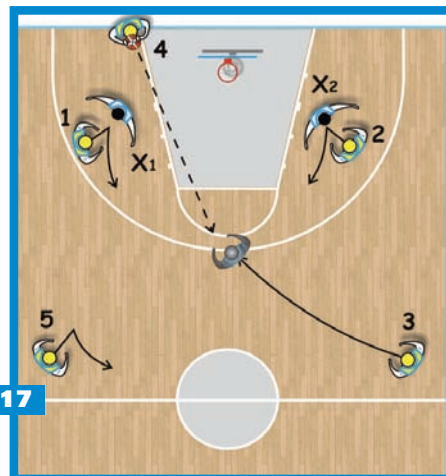
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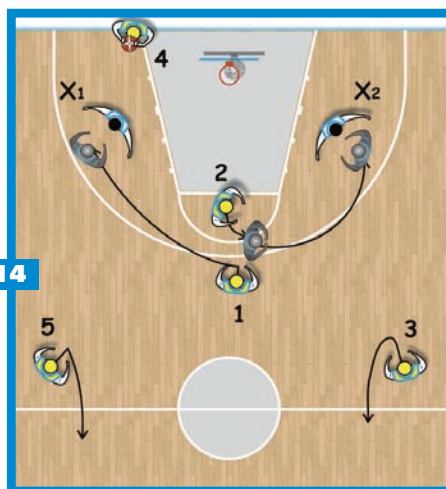
D.15



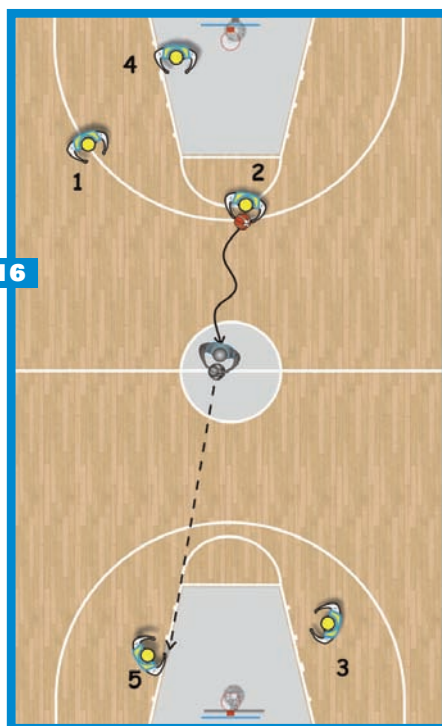
D.17



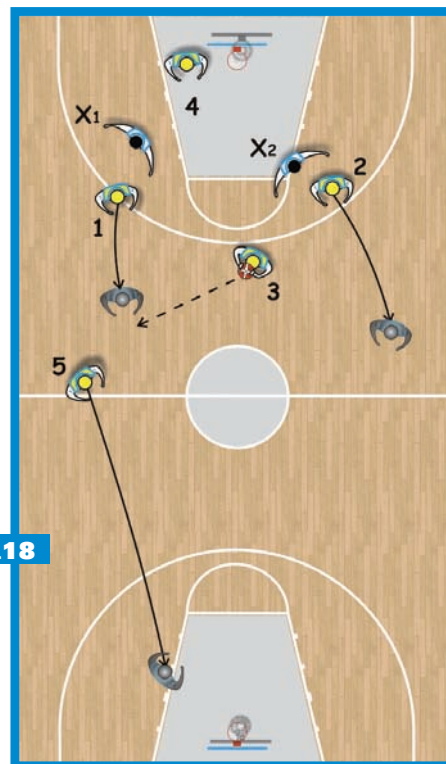
D.14



D.16



D.18



difficult for two defenders to guard one offensive player off the ball.

When we talk about timing and spacing, it is important to know where the offensive sweet spots and the defensive pressure points are located on the floor. Diagram 5 identifies offensive "sweet spots". The offensive sweet spots are the areas where we want to get the basketball in order to successfully attack defensive pressure and in order to create good scoring opportunities. Diagram 6 identifies defensive pressure points. Defensive pressure points are the areas where the defense looks to execute their blitzes or apply any kind of pressure on the offense. Also, it is important to understand the relationship between timing and spacing, in terms of attacking pressure. Let's look at diagram 9, which shows our first option in our "Blue" press offense set. We will get into the details of

this press offense set later on in the article, but let's look at the pass that 1 makes to 2. We have to make sure that 2 does not make his hard cut to the middle of the floor until 1 catches the ball. If 2 cuts before 1 catches the ball, 2 may indeed beat his defender to the middle of the floor, but then, by the time 1 catches the ball, 2's defender has a chance to recover and so we are not able to execute our attack. Also, if 2 cuts to the middle of the floor too early, by the time 1 makes his catch, the space between 1 and 2 will be too close and 1 will not be able to lead 2 with

a pass so that 2 can catch the ball on the run and then push the ball up the floor. As you can see a mis-timed cut, and in this case, an early cut, leads to the inability to hit 2 in the middle of the floor on the run. Also, the early cut leads to poor spacing for a pass to be thrown from 1 to 2. In diagrams 28 and 29, you will see how we execute our "White" press offense set. We will get into the details of this set later on in the article. Again, it is important to use the entire floor. If that same set-up is used, but with all five offensive players much closer together, it is easier for the defense to apply pressure with one or two defenders, and then recover if they get beat. If the defense decides to blitz at any point, the slides for the other defenders that are not involved in the blitz are much shorter and therefore it will be easier for them to get steals or deflections. Punish the defense

for their aggressiveness by extending the floor.

HAVE MULTIPLE ATTACKS

Well coached teams will often adjust their defensive schemes and so, in turn, you must have multiple ways to attack their pressure. We utilize several different ways to attack different kinds of pressure. In the full court, we use different press offense sets, and then have several options within each of the sets that we use, depending on how the defense guards us. We will talk about four sets that we use to run against full court pressure. We also have a set that we use to attack pressure in the half court. Finally, we will look at different ways that a team can attack when the defense blitzes dribble hand-offs, post entries, and ball screens.

Our first press offense set is called "Blue." We use "Blue" when we are being pressed, man to man, in the full court.

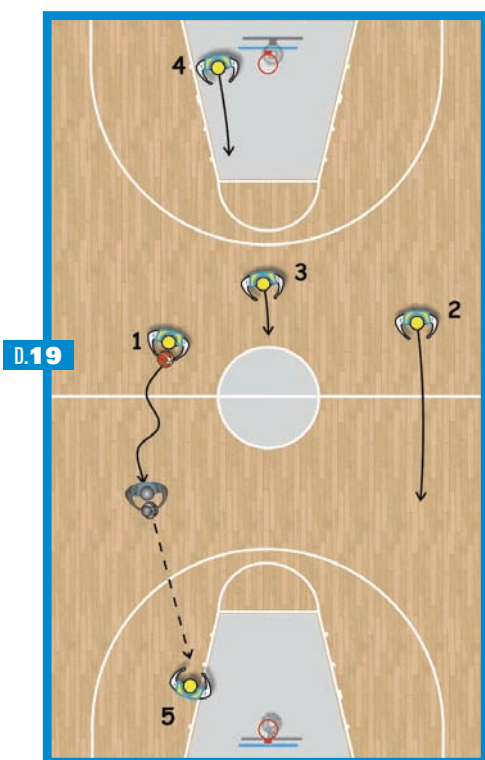
Diagram 7 shows our "Blue" press offense set-up. Our 4 always inbound the ball. Our point guard (1) and our shooting guard (2) set up in a stack at the top of the key. Our 3 begins where the half court line intersects the sideline, and is opposite the ball. Our 5 begins where the half court line intersects the sideline, on the ball-side of the floor.

Diagrams 8, 9 and 10 show our first option out of our "Blue" set. On the slap of the ball, 1 and 2 screen for each other and then make hard cuts in the opposite direction. 4 passes the ball to 1 and then steps inbound. 1 makes sure to make his catch "foul line extended." If 1 makes his catch below the foul line, it makes it easier for the defense to trap him. If 1 makes his catch foul line extended, the slide that the inbounder's defender has to make is longer, and so it is harder for the defense to establish a quick trap. 2 makes a hard cut to the middle of the floor once 1 catches the ball. 1 passes to 2 and then

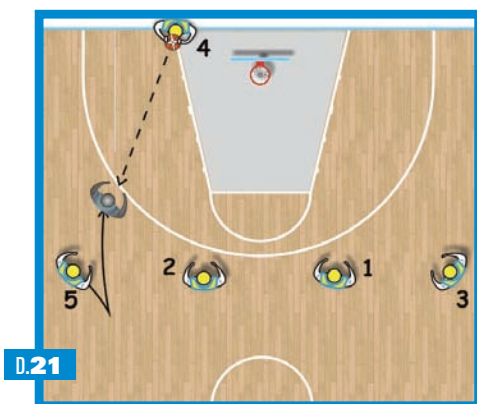
2 pushes the ball up the floor with a pass to either 3 or 5.

The second option of our "Blue" set starts like the first one, illustrated in diagram 7. We use this option when our first hard cut to the middle isn't open. On the slap of the ball, 1 and 2 screen for each other and then make hard cuts in the opposite direction. 4 passes the ball to 1 and then steps inbound. 2 makes a hard cut to the middle of the floor once 1 catches the ball. 2 is not open and so 1 reverses the ball back to 4. After 2 makes his hard cut to the middle of the floor and realizes that he is not open, he makes a hard cut straight back to the sideline. 4 passes to 2 (diagr. 11) and then 1 makes a hard cut to the middle of the floor once 2 catches the ball (diagr. 12). 2 passes to 1 and then 1 pushes the ball up the floor with a pass to either 3 or 5 (diagr. 13).

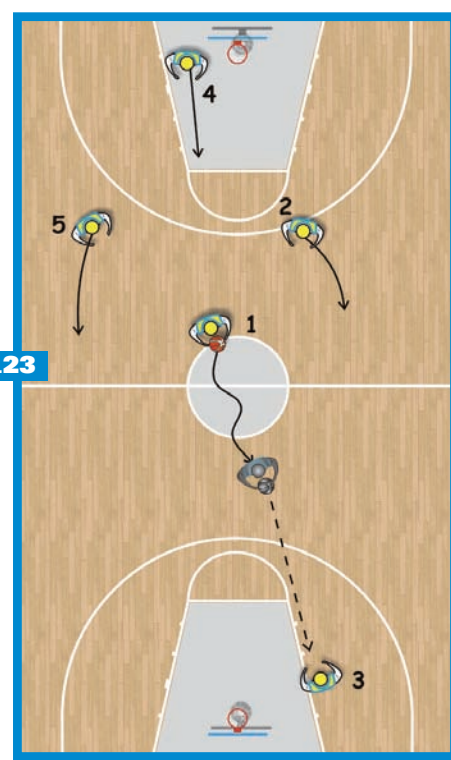
Diagram 14 shows our third option out of our "Blue" set. We use this option when both of our guards are being fronted af-



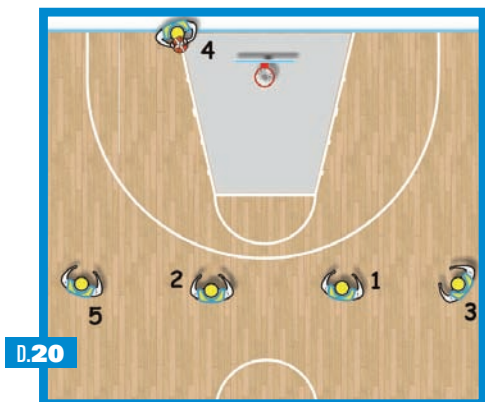
D.19



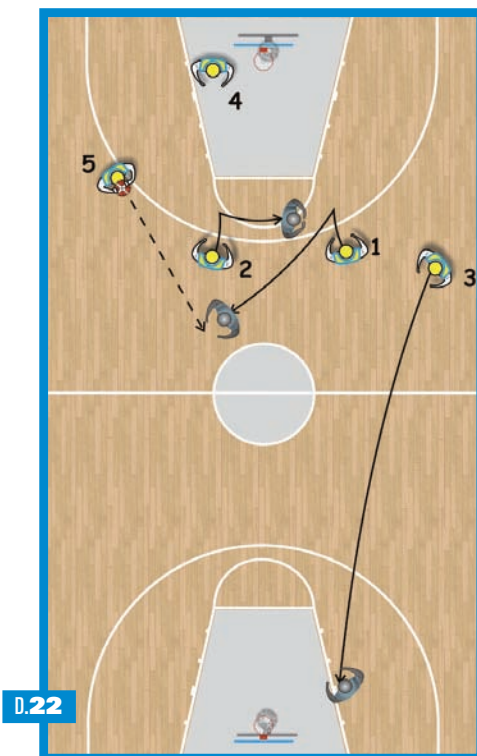
D.21



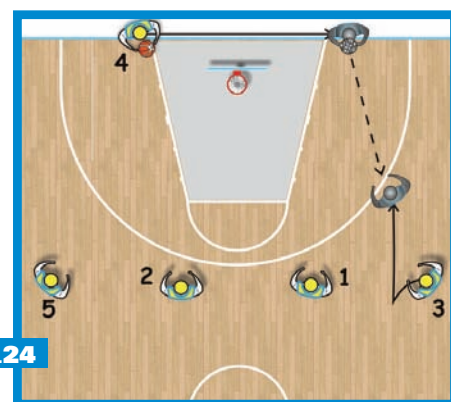
D.23



D.20



D.22



D.24

ter they make their hard cuts to free themselves. When this happens, 1 and 2 walk their men to the baseline and then reverse pivot and seal. 4 has the option to then pass the ball over the top to either of the two guards (diagr. 15). In this case, 4 passes to 2, and then 2 pushes the ball up the floor with a pass to either 3 or 5 (diagr. 16).

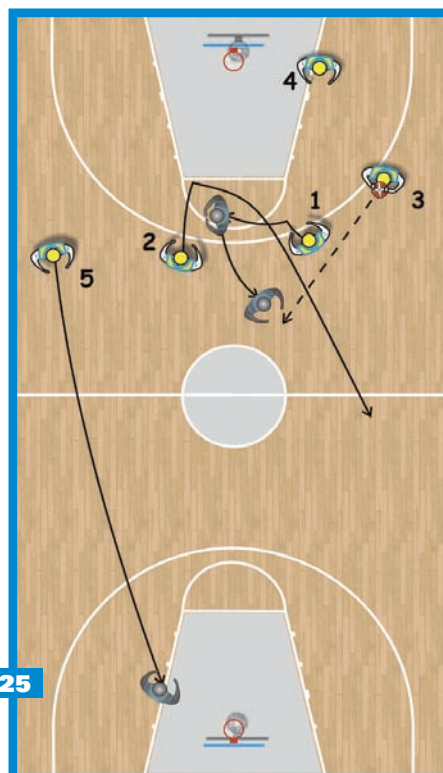
Now we talk about our fourth option out of our "Blue" set. We use this option when both of our guards are being fronted after they make their hard cuts to free themselves, but 4 is not able to get them the ball once they have walked their men to the baseline. 3 makes a hard cut back to the ball to the top of the key. 4 passes to 3 (diagr. 17). Once 3 catches the ball, 1 and 2 release from their seal and sprint up the sidelines. 3 passes to 1, and 1 then pushes the ball up the floor with a pass to 5 (diagr. 18 and 19).

Our second press offense set is called "Yellow." We use "Yellow" when we are being pressed, man-to-man, in the full court. Diagram 20 shows our "Yellow" press offense set-up. Our 4 always in-bounds the ball. Then we line the other 4 players up along the top of the key extended, with 10-12 feet between each player. Going from the ball-side to the weak-side, we have 5 first, followed by 2, followed by 1, followed by 3.

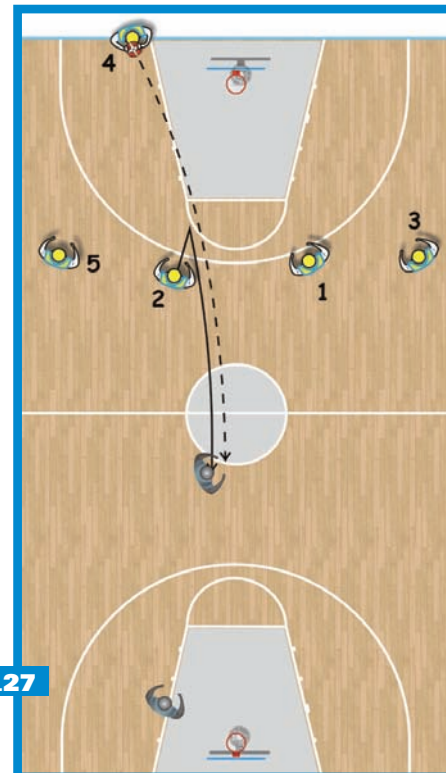
Our first option of "Yellow" set begins when, on the slap of the ball, 5 takes his man away from the ball and then makes a hard cut back to the ball. 4 passes to 5 (diagr. 21). When 5 catches the ball, 2 screens away for 1. 1 comes off the screen and 5 passes to 1 (diagr. 22). 1 pushes the ball up the floor with a pass to 3 (diagr. 23).

The second option of our "Yellow" set begins like the first one. When you are able to run the baseline, the 4 makes a hard ball fake to get his man to react and then sprints along the baseline. 3 takes his man away and then makes a hard cut back to the ball. 4 passes to 3 (diagr. 24). Once 3 makes his catch, 1 screens for 2. 2 makes a hard cut up the floor and towards the sideline. 1 then makes a hard cut up the middle of the floor (diagr. 25). 3 passes to 1 and 1 pushes the ball up the floor with a pass to 5 (diagr. 26).

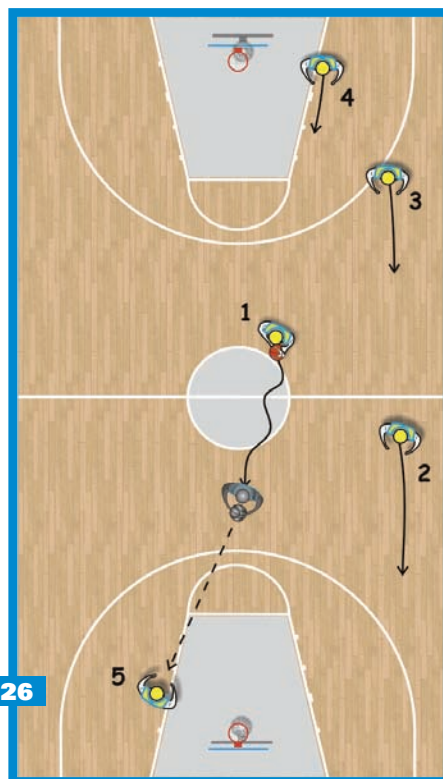
Diagram 27 shows our third option out of our "Yellow" set. We use this option when there is a defender guarding the in-bounds and when all four of the other players are being face-guarded. 4 calls out a number that corresponds to the number of the other four players on the floor. Each player takes one or two hard steps towards the ball, and then the player whose number was called sprints the



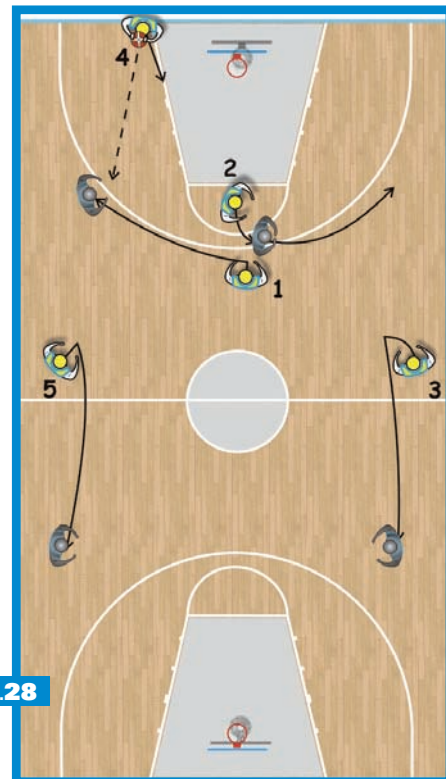
D.25



D.27



D.26

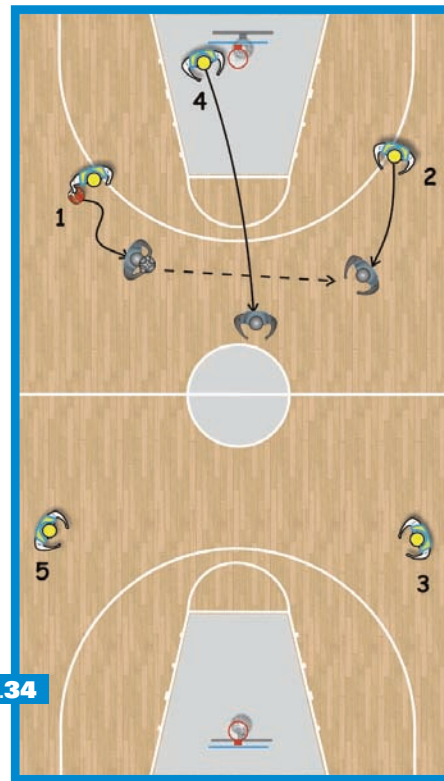
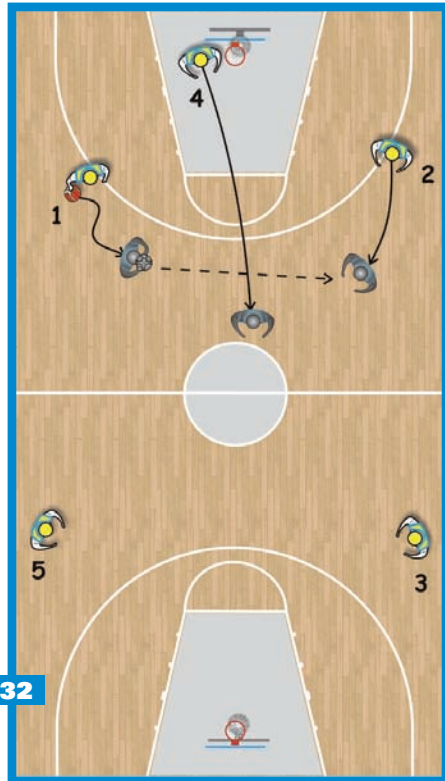
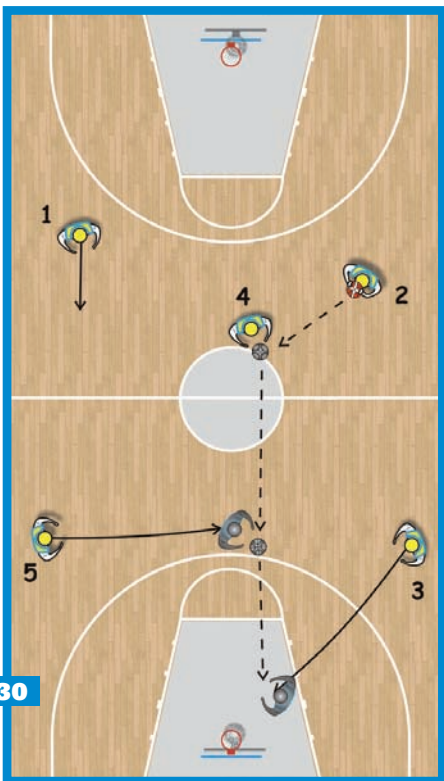
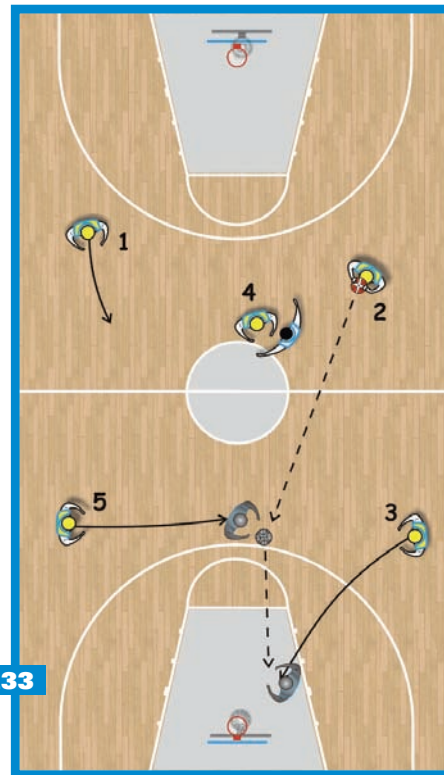
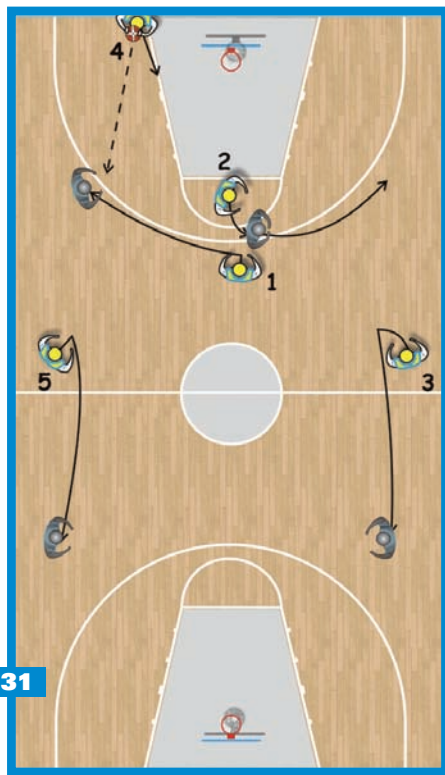
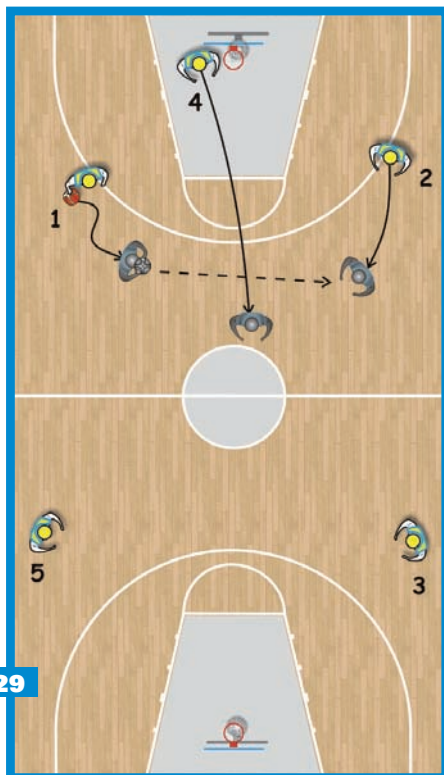


D.28

length of the floor. 4 throws a baseball pass over the top of the defense to the player whose number was called for a lay-up. In this case, 2 was the number called.

Our third press offense set is called "White." We use "White" against a full court zone press. Diagram 7 shows our white press offense set-up. The set-up for "White" is exactly the same as it is for "Blue."

Diagram 28 shows our first option out of our "White" press offense set. On the slap of the ball, 1 and 2 screen for each other and then make hard cuts in the opposite direction. 4 passes to 1. 4 then sprints to the middle of the floor at half court. 1 advances the ball with one or two dribbles and then reverses the ball back to 2 (diagr. 29). After the ball reversal to 2, 2 passes to 4 in the middle of the floor. 4 then turns and passes to 5 at the



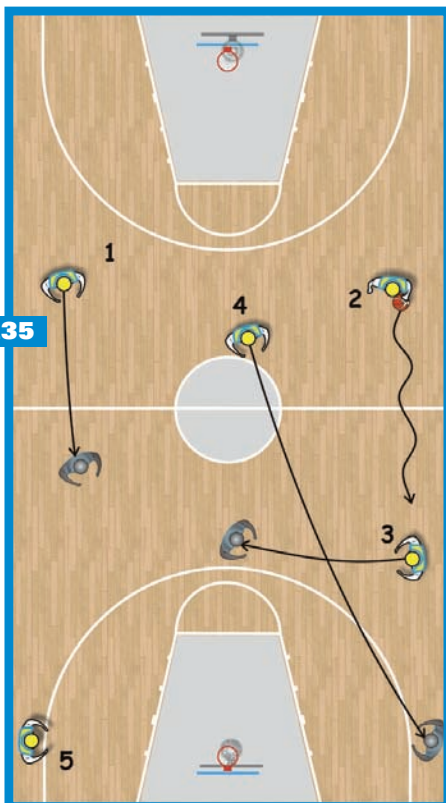
top of the key. 5 then turns and makes a bounce pass to 3 for a lay-up (diagr. 30). Diagram 31 shows our second option out of our "White" set. On the slap of the ball, 1 and 2 screen for each other and then make hard cuts in the opposite direction. 4 passes to 1 and then sprints to the middle of the floor at half court (diagr. 32). 1 advances the ball with one or two dribbles and then reverses the ball back to 2. After the ball reversal to 2, 2 throws a

skip pass to the 5-man. 5 then turns and passes to 3 for a lay-up (diagr. 33). We use this option when the defense denies the pass to the middle of the floor to the 4 man. Our third option of "White" set begins like the first one illustrated in diagram 28. We will use this option when a team shows zone pressure and then falls back into a 1-3-1 set. On the slap of the ball, 1 and 2 screen for each other and then

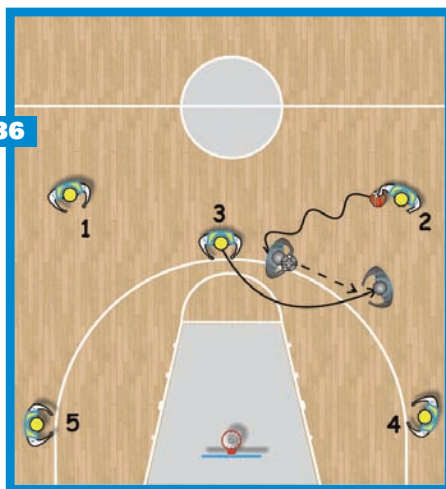
make hard cuts in the opposite direction. 4 passes to 1. 4 then sprints to the middle of the floor at half court. 1 advances the ball with one or two dribbles and then reverses the ball back to 2 (diagr. 34). As 2 advances the ball, 3 and 4 exchange positions (diagr. 35). As 2 crosses half court, he drives the ball hard at 3. 3 then spaces to the wing. 2 passes to 3 for a jump shot (diagr. 36).

Our fourth option of "White" set begins

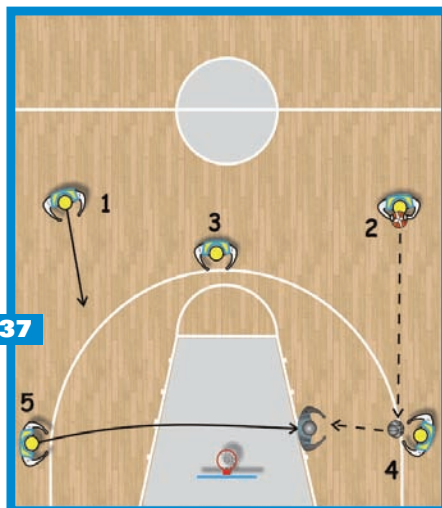
D.35



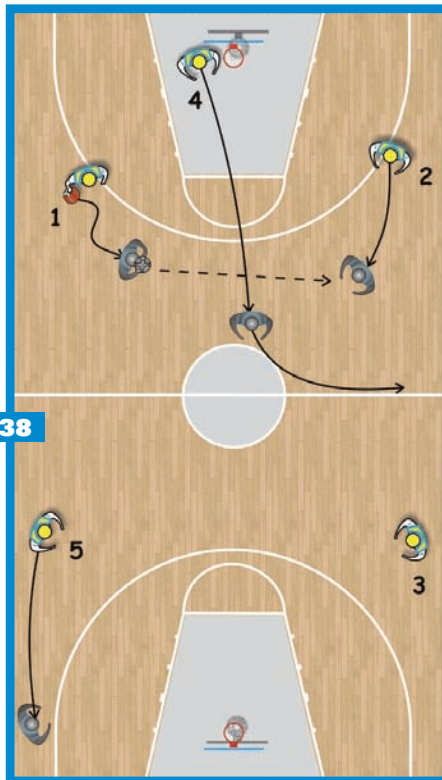
D.36



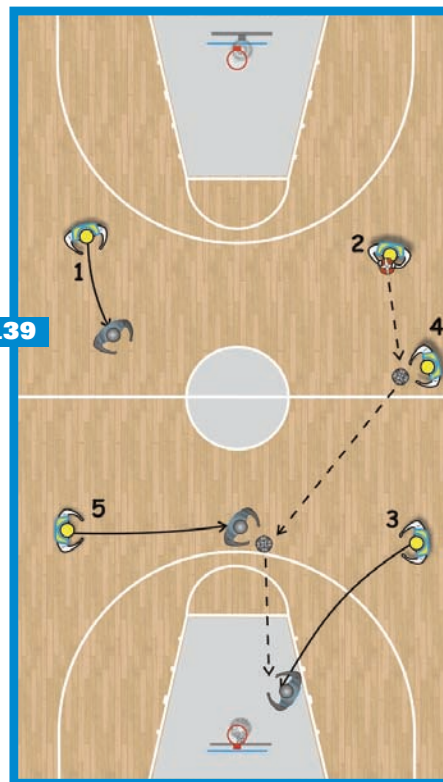
D.37



D.38



D.39



like before. We will also use this option when a team shows zone pressure and then falls back into a 1-3-1 set. On the slap of the ball, 1 and 2 screen for each other and then make hard cuts in the opposite direction. 4 passes to 1. 4 then sprints to the middle of the floor at half court. 1 advances the ball with one or two dribbles and then reverses the ball back to 2. As 2 advances the ball, 3 and 4 exchange positions. As 2 crosses half court, he passes to 4. 5 then flashes to the ball-side block. 4 passes to 5 for a lay-up (diagr. 37).

Our fourth press offense set to called "White to the Side." We use "White to the Side" against a full court zone press. Diagram 7 shows our "White to the Side" press offense set-up. The set-up for "White to the Side" is exactly the same

as it is for "Blue" and for "White."

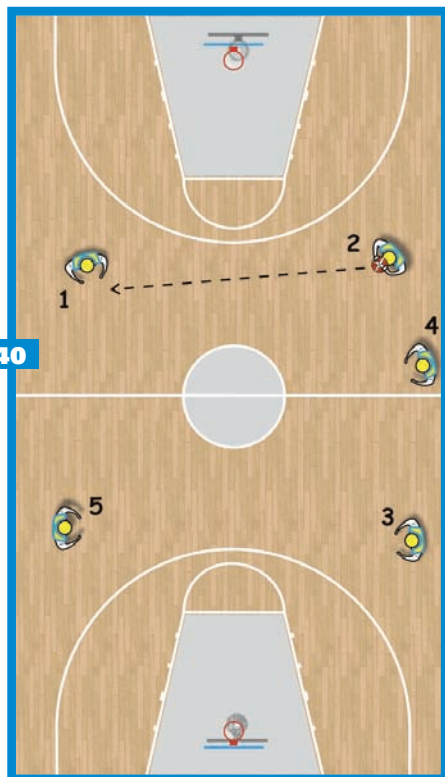
The first option out of our "White to the Side" set begins when on the slap of the ball, 1 and 2 screen for each other and then make hard cuts in the opposite direction. 4 passes to 1. 4 then sprints to the middle of the floor at half court. 1 advances the ball with one or two dribbles and then reverses the ball back to 2. When 2 makes his catch, 4 sprints directly toward the ball-side sideline (diagr. 38). 2 passes to 4. 4 turns and passes up the floor to 5 at the top of the key. 5 then turns and passes to 3 for a lay-up (diagr. 39). We use this option when the defender guarding our 4 man in the middle does not follow him to the sideline.

The second option out of our "White to the Side" set begins like before. On the slap of the ball, 1 and 2 screen for each

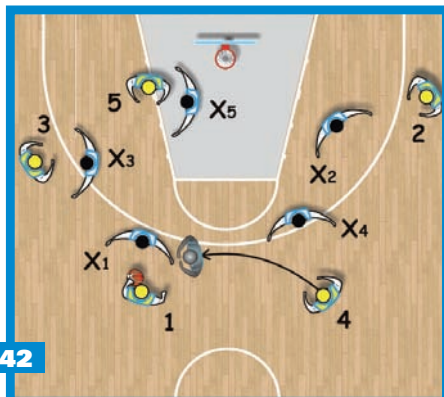
other and then make hard cuts in the opposite direction. 4 passes to 1. 4 then sprints to the middle of the floor at half court. 1 advances the ball with one or two dribbles and then reverses the ball back to 2. When 2 makes his catch, 4 sprints directly toward the ball-side sideline. 2 makes a hard ball fake up the sideline to 4, and then turns and quickly reverses the ball back to 1 (diagr. 40). 1 catches the ball, rips it across his body, and then pushes the ball up the floor with a pass to 5 for a lay-up (diagr. 41). We use this option when the defender guarding our 4 man in the middle follows our 4 man to the sideline. This creates more space to attack the press in the middle of the floor. We also have a set called "Red" that we use against half court pressure where the opposing team looks to trap. Diagrams 42, 43 and 44 and diagrams 45, 46 and 47 show our "Red" set. We get into a 1-3-1 set once pressure is applied by some sort of trap, and we look to reverse the ball as quickly as possible for either a 3-pointer, a drive to the rim, or a post-up, depending on who the ball is reversed to and on how the defense recovers. The trap, or blitz as we call it, can occur when the offense tries to execute a ball screen, a dribble hand-off, a post entry, a pass towards the sideline, or a dribble towards the sideline.

PRACTICE PRESSURE SITUATIONS DAILY

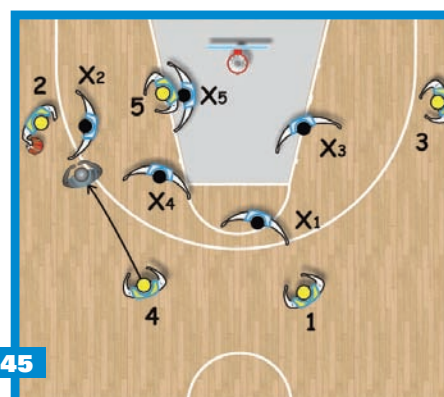
Even if your team is not a team that will look to pressure the basketball, it is important to be able to simulate that pres-



D.40



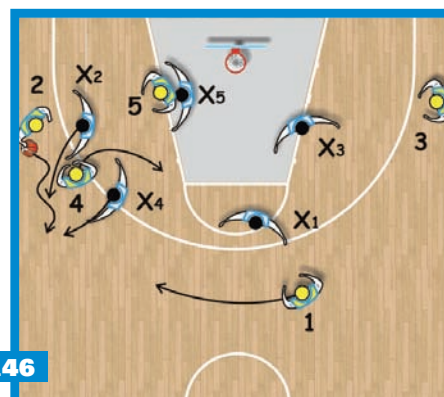
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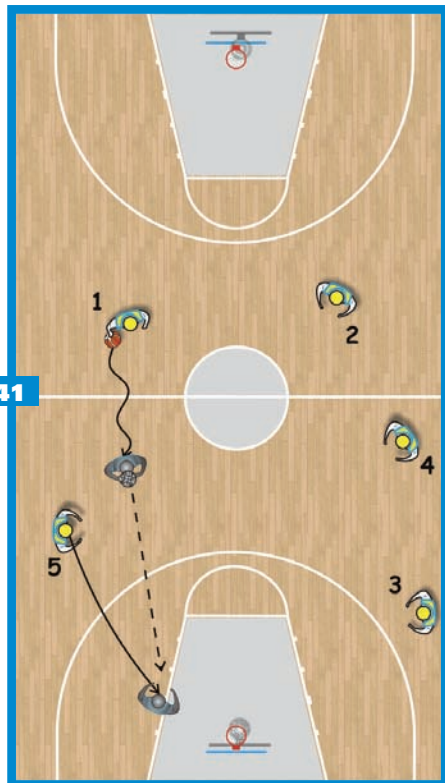
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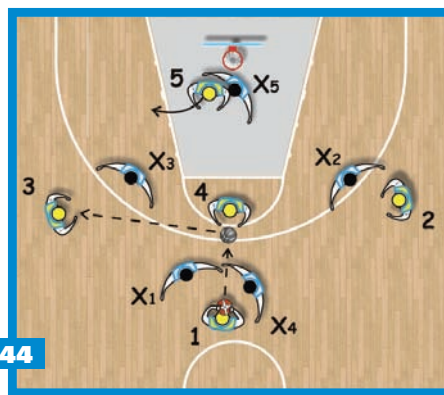
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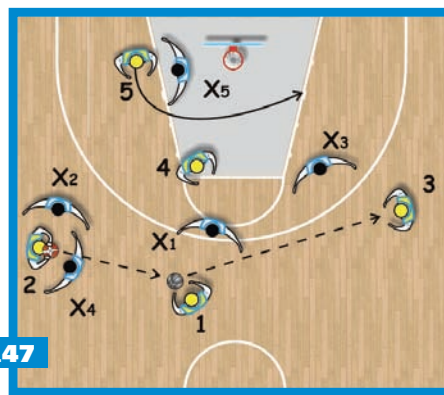
D.46



D.41



D.44



D.47

sure during practice. This simulation of pressure defense can be done by making sure that the proper players in the program are playing key positions for the defense or by adding an additional player to the team that is on defense. Within our scrimmages in our practices, we use blocks of 5 minutes to work on different kinds of pressure that we might be faced with during a game. Sometimes, we don't use blocks of time, and we will work on

simulating pressure on a particular possession without warning the defense. For example, for five minutes we will instruct the players to blitz all ball screens. For another 5 minutes, we will instruct the players to blitz all dribble hand-offs. For another 5 minute block, we will instruct the players to blitz the post, either on the catch or on the dribble. We will instruct the players to get into our full court pressure defenses for a five minute block. Sometimes, we will instruct both teams to do all of these things at once during a block of time during the scrimmage. We also simulate half court pressure in breakdown drills. Obviously, this is different from simulating pressure in our scrimmaging because we do not use all five defenders on the floor. Sometimes we use three defenders to demonstrate the blitz and then the first pass that the defense looks to take away as the blitz occurs. Other times, we use no defend-

ers, and just get the players comfortable with identifying the appropriate looks that will be open when a certain blitz occurs. This enables our offensive players to better understand where the scoring opportunities will be once they are pressured. We use the areas on the floor where we like to set our ball screens and then blitz those ball screens. We go over where the scoring opportunities will be on a blitzed ball screen. We do the same for dribble hand-offs and the same for post entries.

Attacking pressure defense begins with practicing basic fundamental drills and then incorporating those basic drills into your offensive attack. Players must understand their own strengths and weaknesses and at the same time, through continued practice, be able to rely on their strengths to be as effective as possible in any type of pressure situation.



by Cesare Pancotto

MATCH-UP ZONE DEFENSE

This year marks the 24th consecutive year of coaching a Series A team in Italy for Cesare Pancotto, who began his career in Porto San Giorgio in 1984. He then coached Reggio Emilia in 1986, Forlì, Sassari, and Pistoia. In 1993, he coached Siena, followed by Trieste. After one season in Rome, he came back to Trieste, where he coached from 2001 to 2004. He spent one season in Teramo and from 2005 to 2008 he was head coach of Snaidero Udine. He is currently the head coach of Fortitudo Bologna. Over the years, he was selected Best Coach of the Year (four times) and in 2006 he won the Reverberi Award. As a member of the Italian National Team coaching staff, he helped guide the team to win the Mediterranean Games in 2005.

The match-up zone defense is based on rules and goals. Each of these aspects must be clear, understandable, and approachable for the player. This is a tactical defense, one that combines portions of man-to-man defense with zone defense principles.

GOALS

To successfully run this defense, you must first consider the quick defensive recovery as a main setting for this kind of zone. This is very important, because you give the offense only a few seconds of offensive play by forcing them to attack against lined up defense. We must prevent the attack reads and trying to make the offense not understand which type of defense we are going to use. It is very important that the defense closes the passing lanes. This will disrupt the ability of the offense to do what they want, when they want, thereby breaking their offensive rhythm. The aggressiveness on defense directed towards their playmaker is essential in helping us achieve this goal. In this way, the playmaker is usually forced to 1-on-5 play. It is critical that every defensive player stay man-to-man in his own zone on the court, while leaving the protection of the painted area to the center, 5. If you want to use this defense, you have to work on the defensive skills of each player, and then focus attention on the ability of the team to work together defensively. One of these important defensive skills is the slide to the basket or to the ball.

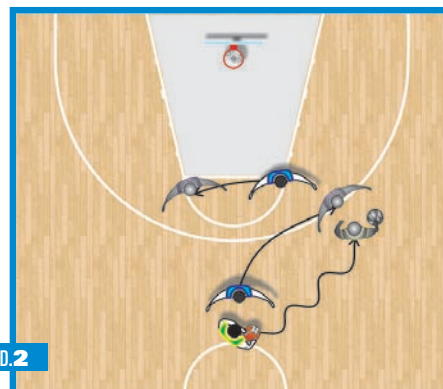




D.1



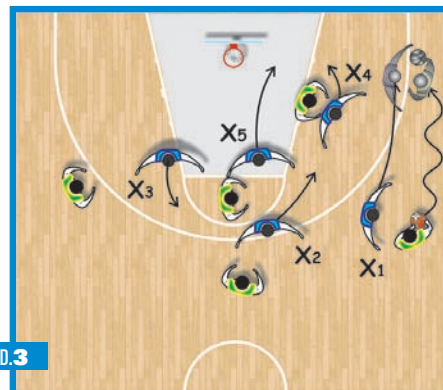
D.5



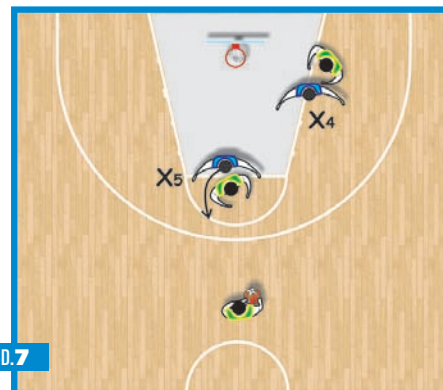
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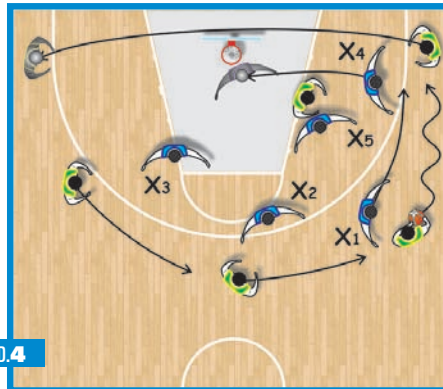
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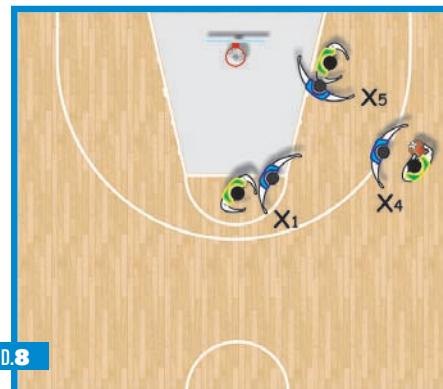
D.3



D.7



D.4



D.8

RULES

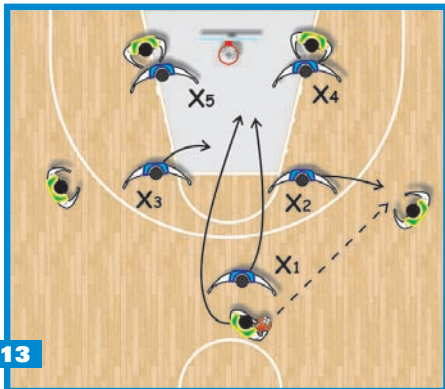
To properly execute the match-up defense, there are several important rules that need to be followed.

1. You have to stay with your man or else change your assignment if your player cuts towards the ball or towards the basket.
2. Is necessary to observe the opponents' game plan, because it's very important

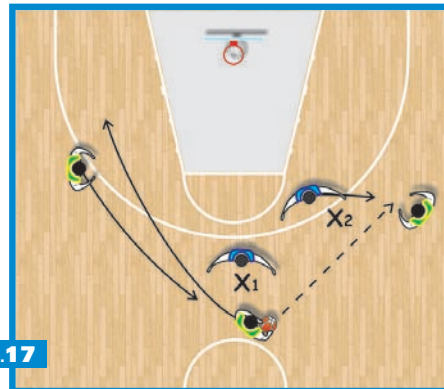
- to execute a lot of tactical adaptations.
3. Each defensive player must have an offensive player to defend against in his own defensive area. If there aren't players in this area, the defensive player will go into the paint area. If the offensive player with the ball goes inside the paint area, the defensive player must do his best to keep his opponent from scoring. However, if there is a pass between the



D.9



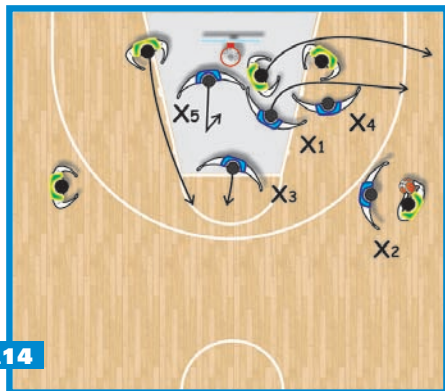
D.13



D.17



D.10



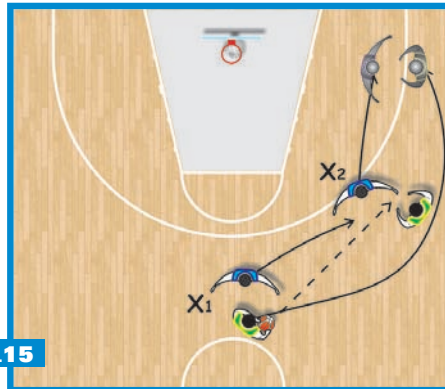
D.14



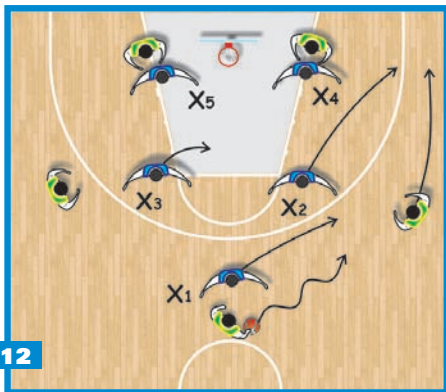
D.18



D.11



D.15



D.12



D.16

offensive player and the ball, the defensive player must anticipate him in open position. If the pass between the offensive player and the ball are two or he is on the same side of the ball, the main thing to do is to stay in the lane with both feet.

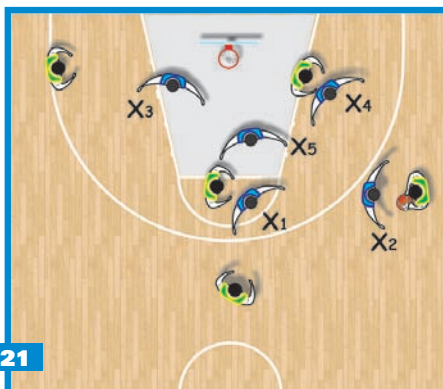
I will now focus on the defensive attitude of the perimeter players. One thing that our perimeter players must always do is follow

and press the offensive player, who is dribbling. The defender, who is defending the man with the ball, must keep him from penetrating to the basket. The defensive player will do this by guarding the area between the offensive player and the painted area (diagr. 1). If the player with the ball tries to go to one side of the court, the defensive player on that side must pick up the player (diagr. 2).





D.19



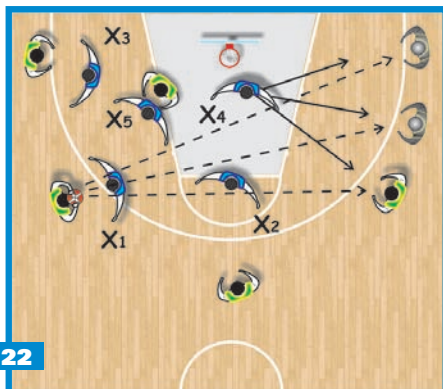
D.21



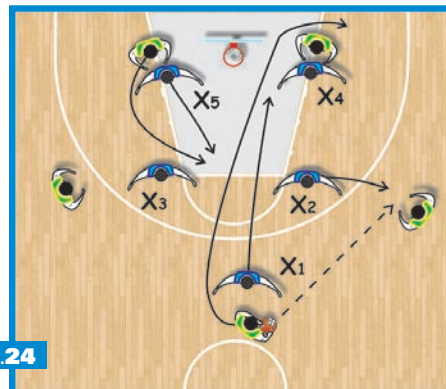
D.23



D.20



D.22



D.24



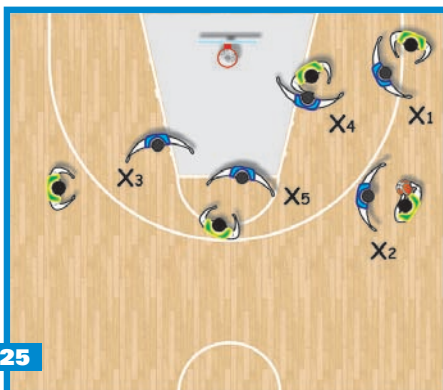
If the player with the ball tries to dribble towards an empty corner (diagr. 3), the defensive player must follow him. However, if the player dribbles towards the "full" corner (occupied by a teammate) and there is a possible cut on the opposite side of the player positioned in that zone of the court, we follow both the man with the ball and the player, who cut (diagr. 4 and 5).

In case of dribble from the guard position towards the corner, instead, we will make an adjustment and we will change the guard on all the cuts done from the low positions to the top positions. All of the high or low cuts, which are done out of the area, will be climbed towards the ball, it means slide diagonally towards the ball/basket (diagr. 6).

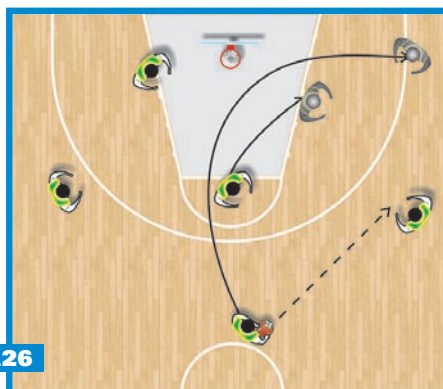
The most important thing for each defensive player to do is to communicate with teammates. For example, if there is a cut inside, the player yells, "CUT!" If the defensive player stays with his man, he yells out, "STAY!" In addition, if a defensive player wants to switch defensive assignments, he yells "CHANGE!"

The internal players collaborate with each other and protect the low-post and post-up areas. They must cover the passing line (diagr. 7, 8, 9, and 10) and anticipate the cut of the post when he goes towards the ball (diagr. 11). When you are running a match-up defense, you must consider some basic movements. These movements are usually performed by following the game situation development.

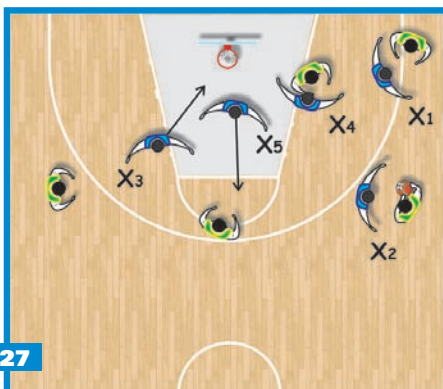
If the opposing player with the ball is mov-



D.25



D.26



D.27

ing, it will be necessary that the defensive player X1 follow the man with the ball, while X2 goes to cover in the corner (diagr. 12).

Other important displacements to consider occur after the player's pass. In this case, there are two situations to consider:

1. If there is a pass and a cut towards the basket, it is very important to follow the player who is cutting (diagr. 13 and 14).
2. If there is a pass and a cut on the same side of the court (diagr. 15) or if there is a pass and cut on the opposite side of the court, it is necessary to rotate (diagr. 16 and 17).

After a pass in the corner, the defender has to anticipate the possible cut away from the ball until the change of guard with X3 on the opposite side (diagr. 18 and 19).

The defensive player X4 will follow the cut until he changes his position with X3. This happens if the pass comes from the corner to the player on the wing side (diagr. 20 and 21). In a "skip" pass situation (a side-to-side



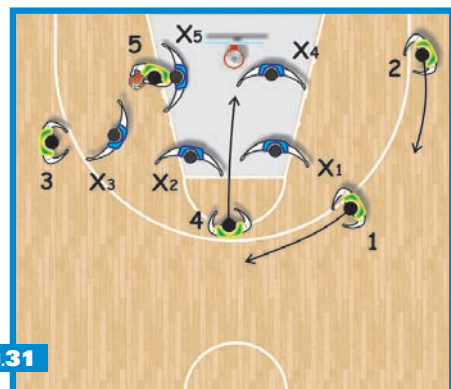
D.28



D.29



D.30

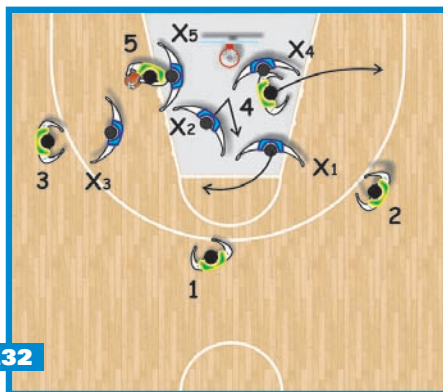


D.31

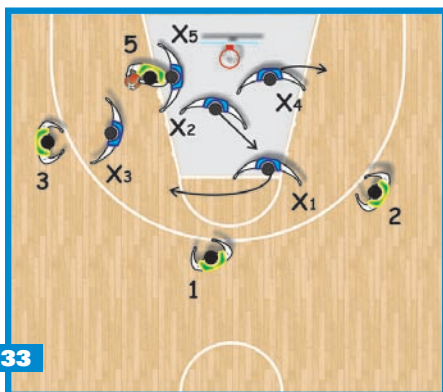
pass), the defender, who will attack the ball will be always the last defender X4 (diagr. 22 and 23). The defense must try to move contemporaneously with the opponents' movements. For instance, when there is a pass between the playmaker, 1, and the guard, and then the cut of 1 and also another cut from the low post on the opposite side to the high post (diagr. 24 and 25). Or, when after the same pass, we have a cut from the high post to the low post on the ball side and from the low post on the weak side to the high post, on the ball side (diagr. 26 and 27).

With a pass from 2 to 3 and the cuts of 1 and 5, while the defender X1 will follow the cut on the baseline, X4 will follow/anticipate the center from the low to the high post position (diagr. 28 and 29). In the situation previously described, the ability of the defenders is very important specially while they must change their own opposite players in the same positions (diagr 30).

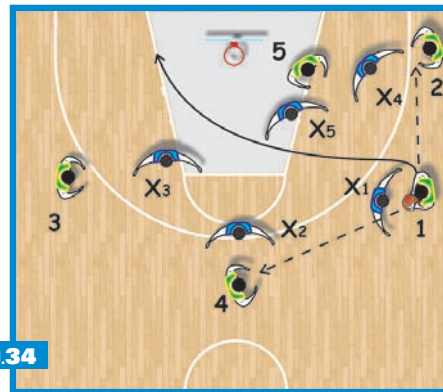
In the case of the cut of 4, with the ball in the hands of the low post, X2 will try to anticipate the cut, while X4 will ascend, be-



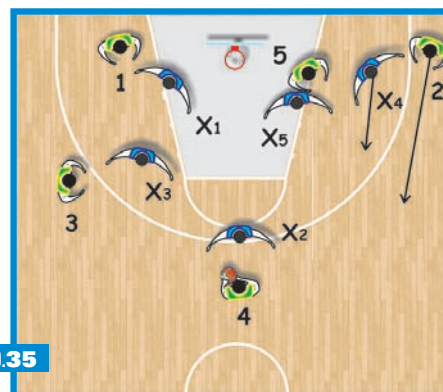
D.32



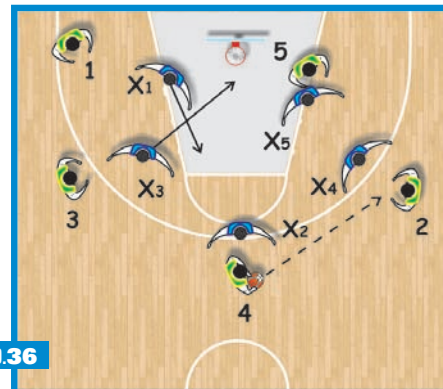
D.33



D.34



D.35



D.36

cause the cut will be on the opposite side of the ball. X1 will occupy the X2's position and X2 will occupy the X1's spot (diagr. 31, 32, and 33). Is very important to follow the 1's cut towards basket and, when the ball comes from 4 to 2, it will be necessary a X1 and X3's change (diagr. 34, 35, and 36).

After having analyzed the several options and the match-up defense rules and objectives, we could consider that this defense assets could be more evident if the opposite players will haven't lot of talent. It will be very important to run the practice by considering different situations.

First, from the middle of the court, and after by using all the recover from the breakaway.

If you want to use the match-up zone as base for the other defense options, then will be necessary to work everyday on this defense rules and options by improving the game executions every day.



by Raffaele Imbrogno

COURT SENSE

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.

A New Year has just began and all of us will try to find meaning in what we do in 2009, resolving, at least, to do better than last year's efforts. Making resolutions of this kind also applies to the basketball court. Understanding the game, especially the mental aspects, is what differentiates a good basketball player from a great one, and making progress in the mental game can yield spectacular results. It will take some work on your part, however.

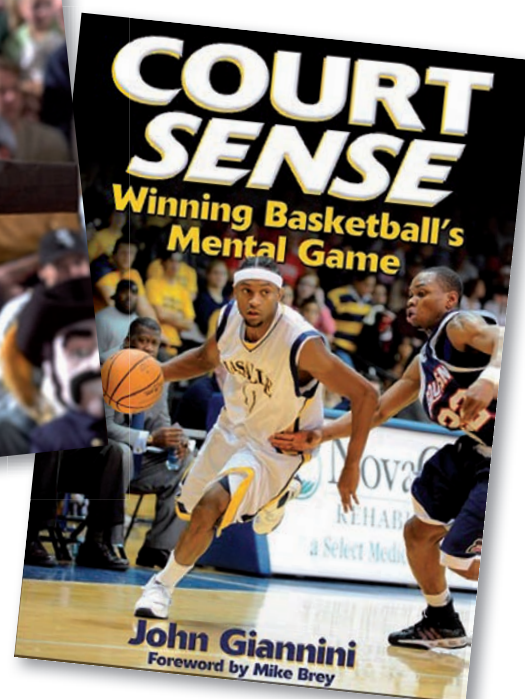
The best basketball players and coaches are known not only for their success in the sport, but also for the manner in which they display their knowledge and abilities in playing, coaching, and teaching the game. Oscar Robertson, Larry Bird, Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan, Steve Nash, Diana Taurasi, and other great players, past and present, share a special grasp of what is needed in every situation on the court and how to maximize their own effectiveness as well as that of their team. Teams coached by John Wooden, Phil Jackson, Pat Summitt, and Mike Krzyzewski have won many NCAA and NBA championships because of their coaches' amazing ability to teach, motivate, discipline, and unite players to perform to their potential individually and as a group.

"Court Sense: Winning Basketball's Mental Game" (Human Kinetics), a new book by John Giannini, currently the head coach of the La Salle University (Philadelphia) men's basketball team that plays in the NCAA Division I Atlantic Conference, highlights all those qualities that make players and teams great, and he provides practical ways to improve any mental skills that might be lacking. Playing like a winner first requires preparing like one, and Giannini, who has been a winning coach for his entire career, describes how basketball players can raise the level

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.

of their game and achieve their true potential. The first half of his book covers all the basics a player must have in place, on and off the court, in order to excel. The second half features the six Cs that are crucial to on-court performance: coachability, communication, cohesion, capacity to lead, competitiveness, and concentration. Coach Giannini brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the subject as a former collegiate player and veteran coach, who has earned a Ph.D. in sport psychology. His insights and advice are combined with real-life examples and supported by stories shared by these top coaches: Bo Ryan (University of Wisconsin-Madison head coach) on the player skills assessment; Steve Donahue (head coach of Cornell University) about the targets that need to be set by an athlete in order to grow and improve, not only as athlete but as people; John Beilein (University of Michigan head coach) describes individual motivations; Sean Miller writes about the improvement that can be made with off-season training; Joanne P. McCall, head coach of the women's team of Duke University, writes about the importance of mental training; and finally Oliver Purnell, head coach at Clemson University, writes about good habits to cultivate on and off the court.

The second part of the book has interviews with Tubby Smith, head coach at the University of Minnesota, who writes



about the responsibilities of the players; Jay Wright, the head coach at Villanova University, looks at the NBA draft as an important moment of responsibility; Sharon Versyp, head coach of the Purdue University women's team, writes of the value of proper leadership; Tom Crean, head coach at the University of Indiana, covers the development of the competitiveness; while Jamie Dixon, head coach at the University of Pittsburgh, describes the importance of concentration and focus on specific targets.

Coach Giannini has written an important book for any player or basketball coach, who wants to raise the level of his game. Use "Court Sense" to your advantage, learn the valuable lessons that are described within its pages, and you'll surely be one step closer to cutting down the nets after your championship game.



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Champion

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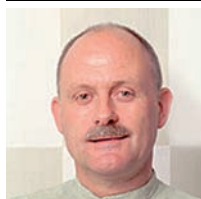
EXCLUSIVE APPAREL AND FOOTWEAR PARTNER WORLDWIDE OF FIBA



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DEVELOPING TRAINING TECHNIQUES FOR CONCENTRATION



by Alan Richardson

Alan Richardson has been a FIBA referee from 1978 to 1998. He then became Referee Clinic Instructor from 1996 to 2000. Since 2000, he is the Technical Advisor of the Referee Department of the Euroleague.

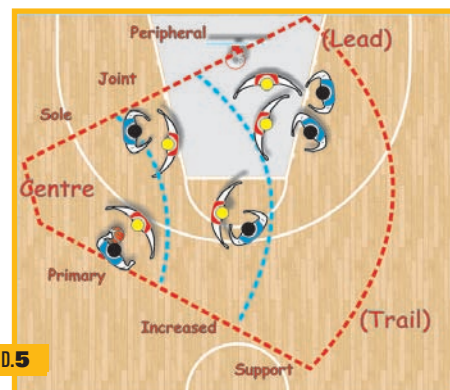
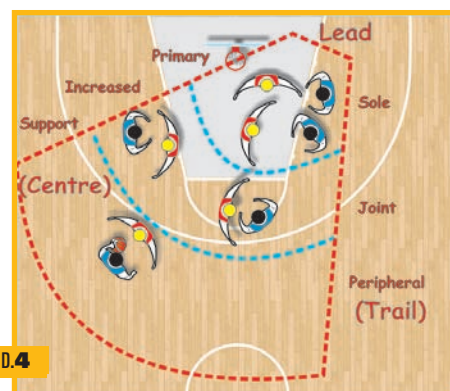
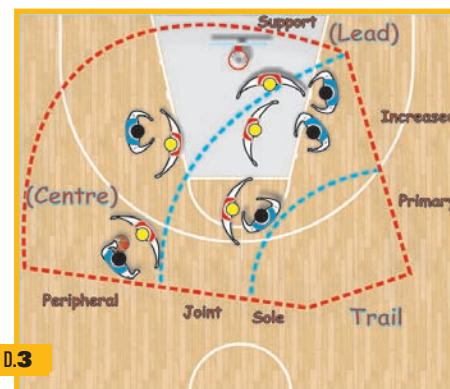
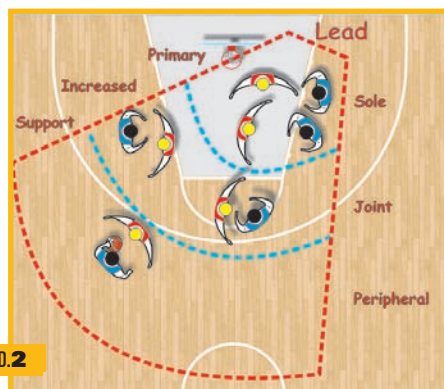
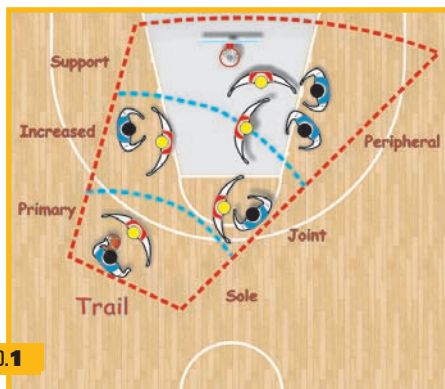
Concentration is the ability to “be able to focus attention on one aspect of performance for the time necessary to be successful.” Concentration skills are essential if officials are to be trained to deal with a transitional game of speed, variation and unfolding physical situations. They are vital if officials are to meet the challenge of complex tactical plays in games that can induce many distractions.

Officials who cannot maintain concentration are subject to several elements that can undermine good performance. These include:

- ▼ Loss of focus: failure to recognise and deal with changes in the flow of the game.
- ▼ Loss of intensity: decline in the power of focus through complacency (over confidence), choking (fear of failure) and fatigue (decline in energy).

Games played over four periods can be decided in one moment of play. Every game will contain significant situations when an official defines a moment or the moment defines an official. A lapse of concentration often determines that moment. Part of shaping officials' attitudes towards a mentally tough performance is





helping them become aware of and prepare for defining moments.

CONCENTRATION BRINGS SUCCESS

Officials must learn to recognise and make sense of the flow of the game, the continuous stream of images as players and the ball constantly change position. Each official, relative to their position on court, must learn to focus on situations developing within their area of control, whilst at the same time maintaining a peripheral view of the game without being distracted by situations that are less important and not within their area of control.

Doing this is not easy. For some officials, it proves to be a weakness that prevents them progressing, but anyone can develop the ability. Concentration is a habit, not a talent and it requires motivation and constant practice.

Officials will experience two main situa-

tions on the court that demand different levels of concentration:

- ▼ Primary responsibility - the action during the game, which IS in the official's area of the court and for which that official, has primary responsibility. This requires total (100%) concentration.
- ▼ Support responsibility - the action during the game, which is NOT in the official's area of the court but for which they can provide help and support IF necessary. This area has a relaxed concentration level for that official.

If officials can understand the concept of concentration, switching onto a narrow focus with high intensity (ON THE BALL) and then smoothly switching off to a wider view with low intensity (OFF THE BALL), then they will begin to reduce the number of mental lapses and start winning the defining moments.

In diagrams 1 and 2 we look at the primary (sole), increased (joint) and support (peripheral) responsibility of the lead and trail referees in the two man mechanics system.

In diagrams 3, 4 and 5, we look at the primary (sole), increased (joint) and support (peripheral) responsibilities of the lead, trail and centre officials in the three-man mechanics system.

Officials must learn, by reviewing the flow of the game, when to switch from "ON BALL" responsibility to "OFF BALL" responsibility. They must also be aware of the danger of allowing inner thoughts and feelings to disrupt this process.

Feelings of frustration, anger and/or fatigue can interfere with the process of concentration. The referee can find himself/herself, paying more attention to an "inner world" rather than to the "outer world" of the game. Fatigue makes cowards of all of us; causing us to concentrate on what WE, rest, rather than what the game is demanding from us. Quality practice is essential. Learning to manage focus and intensity begins in training and preparation. Only later can officials transfer it to the game situation. Officials must accept the link between training and competition and be willing to train at an intensity that can be transferred. It is no good training at 60%, when 100% is required during the game. How you practice is how you perform.

LAWS OF TRAINING

There are four laws of training to achieve focus and intensity:

1. The purpose of training is to develop technical, tactical and mental skills (habits).
2. Whatever officials need to do in a game they must first do it in training and preparation.
3. Being able to train and prepare at a consistently high level requires clear purpose, focus and intensity.
4. Consistent training and preparation leads to consistent successful performance. Developing focus and intensity in training and preparation.

FOCUS

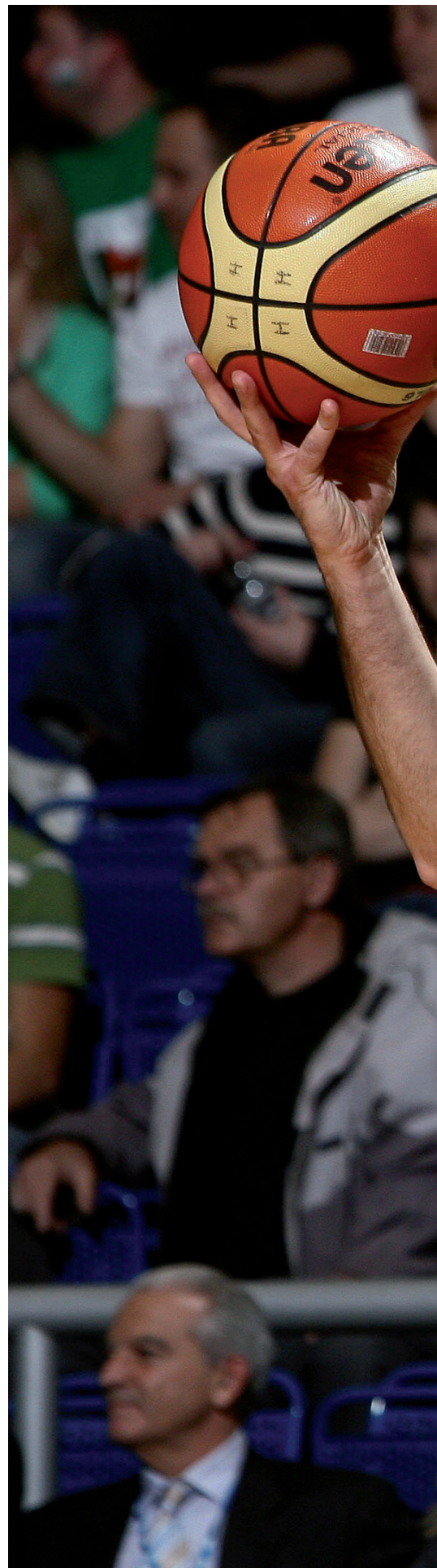
- ▼ Conducting realistic and demanding preparation - Assessing the quality of preparation.
- ▼ Preparing and teaching - Knowing what to focus on.
- ▼ Knowing when to relax - Recognising defining moments.
- ▼ Managing mistakes without loss of focus - Recovering focus after mental lapses.
- ▼ Using self-talk or physical action to activate focus - Using words or gestures that activate focus.
- ▼ Punishing loss of focus - Rewarding and reinforcing good focus.

INTENSITY

- ▼ Using prepared relaxation to build energy - Building physical and mental fitness levels to accommodate high intensity.
- ▼ Establishing control over emotional arousal - Using positive self-talk and being totally committed.
- ▼ Being prepared for and avoiding distractions - Concentrating on what can be controlled and ignoring the uncontrollables.
- ▼ Knowing when to move between active, semi-active and relaxed states of focus - Recognising when key moments require extra intensity and being able to step up.

SUMMARY

Concentration is a key element in successful officiating. It is a skill which must be practised regularly and reviewed through a variety of options. The ability of officials to know when to switch from "on ball" to "off ball", to be able to recognise changes in the flow and intensity of the game, to be able to recognise defining moments and to deal with emotional pressure, will determine which officials will progress to higher levels and maintain those levels throughout the season.





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). For additional clarifications, explanations or examples, please consult this document.

1. B3 in the team B backcourt attempts a pass to B4 in the team B frontcourt. A3 jumps from the team A frontcourt and establishes control of the ball. While still in the air, A3 passes to A4 who is in the team A backcourt. Has the ball been illegally returned to the backcourt?
2. A4 attempts a pass to A5 who fails to catch the ball, after which the ball touches the ring. Shall the 24-second operator reset the 24-second device the moment the ball touches the ring?
3. On a throw-in, shall the ball become live when it leaves the hand(s) of the thrower-in?
4. A3 has been in the opponents' restricted area for fewer than three seconds when A3 receives a pass and immediately dribbles to the team B basket to attempt a shot for a goal. Shall the official suspend the 3-second count to permit A3 to attempt the shot?
5. A2 is fouled during a successful field goal attempt. A4 then commits an unsportsmanlike foul on B4. A2 is awarded one free-throw, to be followed by two free-throws for B4 and possession of the ball for a throw-in for team B. If either team wishes to substitute, shall the substitute(s) be permitted to enter the game only after all free-throws have been administered?
6. A2 deliberately scores in the team A basket. Shall a technical foul be charged against A2?
7. Team B has committed four team fouls in a 4th period that ends with the score tied. Early in the extra period, B4 fouls A4. Shall A4 be awarded two free-throws?
8. The ball is bouncing above the ring on a shot for a field goal when a double foul is committed. The ball does not pass through the basket. Is this a jump ball situation?
9. A3 is awarded a throw-in at a sideline in the team A frontcourt. A4 jumps to receive the pass and returns to the floor

straddling the centre line. Has the ball been illegally returned to the backcourt?

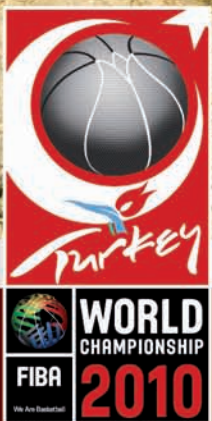
10. B3 commits a technical foul in the interval of play before the beginning of the 1st period. Two free-throws are awarded to team B before the administering of the jump ball. When the ball becomes live for the first free-throw of the technical foul, the alternating possession arrow is set to designate team B as entitled to the ball on the first jump ball situation. Is this the correct procedure?

ANSWERS

1. **Yes (30.1.2)**
2. **Yes (50.2)**
3. **No (10.2)**
4. **Yes (26.1.2)**
5. **No (19.3.9)**
6. **No (16.2.3, 38.3.1)**
7. **Yes (41.1.3)**
8. **Yes (35.2)**
9. **Yes (30.1.2)**
10. **No (12.4.3)**



THEY MISSED THE EXCITEMENT...



The Commagene sanctuary built 2000 years ago with its colossal toppled heads of Apollo, Fortuna, Zeus, Herakles, Antiochus two lions and two eagles are constructed of huge tufa stones and is 50 meters wide and 150 meters in diameter. The heads of gods which we see on the ground once stood on 8-10 meter tall statues. A spectacular sight to see!



FIBA

We Are Basketball



by Ferdinando Minucci

SMALL CITY, GREAT SUCCESS

Ferdinando Minucci began to work with Mens Sana Siena Basketball club (Italy) in 1990 as the Marketing and Advertising Director, moving up to General Director of the team in 1999. He served as Vice President of the team from 1999 to 2008 and has been team President since 2008. His team won the A2 league in 1994, and in 2004, 2007, and 2008, Mens Sana won the Italian Division I championship. The club also won the Saporta Cup in 2002 and the Italian Supercup in 2004 and 2007. At international level, Mens Sana reached three Euroleague Final Four championships in 2003, 2004, and 2008. In 2007 and 2008, Minucci won the Italian Executive of the Year award, while in 2008 he was awarded the Euroleague Executive of the Year award.

After all these years at the helm of the Mens Sana Siena (Italy) basketball club (Mens Sana is a multisport club, with a basketball section), what I mainly remember are all of the difficulties that we faced, how we overcame them, grew the team, and became better and stronger. At the beginning, the team aspect of the business was almost secondary to our other goals. In some ways we could build the team for each season, but there were always question marks: there was a chance to buy great players, but they could always trigger disillusionment if they failed to produce. The main worry was the management of the club. My biggest concern was to collect sufficient advertising monies to cover the budget and carry us through the end of the season, and then stay within that budget during the season.

To help achieve our management aims to carry us over the next five to ten years, we started the "Mens Sana Project," and assembled a core group of key people, who would serve as the foundation of the club. Olga Finetti, now Secretary General of the club and Jacopo Menghetti, Sport Director, were part of this group. Simone Pianigiani, the head coach, who had been the



coach of the youth teams that won many national titles, has always worked with me. Thanks to these people and the constant support of my wife, Rosanna, and my daughter, Federica, as well as also some friends, we have been able to achieve some pretty remarkable results in Siena.

I started to work for Mens Sana Siena, an historic and picturesque Tuscan town of only 55,000 people, during the 1992-93 season. It was a difficult situation to take on. The team was just fallen to A2 league and everyone was disappointed. Still, I had the feeling that we could grow, improve, and get back to the top league. We had tough seasons, but we continued to work hard. Our advertising agency came through for us and collected more money than the main sponsor was paying. This is not to say that I did not get rejected by many people, when I asked for their financial support. I quickly developed a thick skin. When one door was slammed in my face, I put a smile back on my face and knocked on the next door.

The good news is that our persistence paid off. Granted we initially struggled, but we held firm to our belief that we could, and

would, create a top-notch club. It was this overriding belief that carried us through the lean years and helped us to get stronger. It soon became clear to me that the path to ultimate success depended on creating a strong base of local support. This meant we had to become the team for the city of Siena and its territory. I waived my ownership, turned over my shares to the club, and began to solicit the businesses of the city of Siena and its territory to support the team and become, in effect, the team owners. In this way, we slowly, but steadily climbed the ladder, going from a local, provincial club to becoming a top European club.

A winning team is certainly the goal of any sports organization, but if proper team management is not in place, with a set plan on how to achieve and maintain success, they will not be able to sustain a winning tradition. Right after winning our first Italian title, we underwent a real attack by the most powerful European clubs and we were forced to surrender our best players to a bidding war for their services: Andersen and Vanterpool signed with CSKA Moscow, and Thornton and Kakiouzis went to Barce-

lona. We could not match the contract offers, and when players are offered such large sums, you cannot force them to stay with your team.

The loss of these key players, however, taught us a valuable lesson, and we started over again, changing direction and strategies so we would have a successful club model. We would be self-sufficient and strong, but always a micro-cosmos when compared to the powerful European clubs, which we would face on our road to reaching success.

Our "Mens Sana Project" springs from that ambitious idea created in the 1990s to take our club to the 21st century. So ambitious were our goals that many people told us we would never accomplish them. I was called a visionary by some, but I believed in this project. I was sure that I had the strong backing of the city of Siena, and I knew that the bond with the Tuscan region would be the key to open apparently armoured-plated doors. The involvement of the city government, the Province, the Monte dei Paschi Foundation, and the Mens Sana multisport club all played key roles in moving us forward. We created a "Public Company," the oldest in Italy, at that time, an innovation, a diffused property, which tied more and more the club to the city and to the people.

In short, we wanted to create a solid base on which we could work. We divided up tasks, and had well-defined roles and specific duties that had to be performed, all within a structure that had common roots. After 15 years of working on our model, now we have a complete staff, a club that has been created and is now run by people of Siena, people who have been educated and grown inside the club.

Our road to the Euroleague Final Four has been long and arduous, but thanks to the sponsorship of the Monte dei Paschi, the great bank of Siena and one of the most successful in Italy, we have been able to achieve our short and long-term goals. In 2000, when our visionary project became reality, we were able to build, thanks to the accumulated experience, a team destined for winning, but always with total attention paid to our operating budget. This has been the priority of our club.

At the Euroleague meeting last December, many people in the audience thought I was joking when I said that we had a profit of 6,000 euros for the 2007/2008 season. However, this was the truth. If, at the base you need to have a solid club, you cannot prescind from the financial aspect.

Our team and our operating philosophy is quite different from that of the rich owners, such as Olympiacos and Panathinaikos of



Greece, CSKA Moscow, but also Rome and Milan in Italy. And then there are teams with virtually unlimited budgets, including the European giants, such as Barcelona and Real Madrid in Spain, Efes Pilsen Istanbul in Turkey, and Maccabi Tel Aviv, in Israel.

The difference between us and those teams is not on the quantity of economic resources, but on how the resources are managed. Our underlying goal is to always respect our budget and stay within our means.

This is the first "must" we impose on ourselves from the beginning. We do not allow any extra budgeting during the season, something that often happens when the president is also the owner and the financier of the club, or when the budget is so huge that a club can make any moves without problem at any time during the season.

Starting from this basic premise, our players know that they will receive their money every month, at the same date, and without any problem. We are proud of this sound financial heritage, which serves as an example to other European clubs, especially during this present economic crisis.

Budgeting is critical, but certainly not the whole picture in running a successful team. The "Euroleague Gold Devotion Award," which was given to our club in recognition for having made the most investments in communication and promotion of our image in 2007/2008. This award shows how much we pride ourselves in creating fan interest throughout Italy and Europe.

Our Internet site ("<http://www.menssanabasket.it>" "www.menssanabasket.it") is the portal through which anyone can enter and become part of the "Mens Sana planet." It's possible to download and send photos, watch videos, read all the news about the team, and take part in all the events organized for the "Basketball Generation," our youth project that is enjoying great success throughout Italy. The goal is not just to collect new fans, but, why not, to discover new talent for our youth teams.

Naturally, you need to have a good team to win, because when a club is solid, wealthy, and ready to work, you must be able to achieve the results that justify the great care that has been taken. In the last few years, we not only achieved great successes, such as three Italian titles and playing in the Euroleague Final Four three times, but we built a technical staff that is among the tops in Europe. This is led by Simone Pianigiani, a young coach, who is also from Siena, a common characteristic of all the Mens Sana club members. And take a look at our players: Boots Thornton came back to Siena, after two years as a reserve in Barcelona. Last year he earned second team honors for Euroleague, and then signed a very good contract with Istanbul. Players such as Terrell McIntyre, Romain Sato, Shaun Stonerook, Rimantas Kaukenas, Benjamin Eze, and Ksistof Lavrinovic were not on the wish lists of the big European clubs before playing with us, but now they have been noted because of the great results they achieved in Siena. We will keep them, however, because we are again ready to win, always playing within our "Siena system."


FIBA

We Are Basketball



by Nazareno Notarini

PLAYING BASKETBALL IN DAILY LIFE

Notarini, President of the Brain Refresh Lab, founded a permanent training center in Sharm El Sheikh, where he offers annual seminars on motivation and behavior for managers and entrepreneurs. In addition to collaborating with athletes from a variety of sports to help maximize their mental skills, he has written several popular books on the optimal use of individual psychophysical energies.

The early part of this twenty-first century may eventually be described by historians as the "era of distraction." It seems that life is speeded up today and we constantly find ourselves trying to do several things at the same time. This is called multitasking. Unfortunately, we often become distracted, lose focus, and sometimes struggle to complete tasks.

How many times have you found yourself speaking on the phone while sending e-mails on your BlackBerry, working on a crossword, and watching both the evening news flickering? How often do you speak on a cell phone while driving your car? These are all examples of multitasking, doing more than one thing at the same time. For some, it's a way to try to get more accomplished in less time. But is it really?

Distractions can easily make a "basketball practice session" chaotic and ultimately unproductive. By having set goals and focusing solely on them for the "practice session", you will make great progress.

The big question that neuroscientists have been asking is how efficient you are as you try to tackle multiple tasks simultaneously. While many people think that they are good at their jobs when they multitask, are they really? In addition, what is going on in the brain when someone takes on more than one task at a time? Let's look a little closer at what the research has uncovered in this interesting area of neuroscience.

When you multitask, you may think you are getting a lot done, but there's a cost when the tasks compete for the same (and limited) cognitive resources (e.g., attention, working memory) and draw on the same brain cir-

cuitry. This is true, no matter how good you think you are at multitasking. There's just too much competition for the same neural circuits and what you end up with is a compromise. Neither task is performed as well as it is when performed alone. When you focus on one task, you necessarily divert attention from another. To get back up to speed when you come back to the original topic or task, you may have to go over much of the same thought processes that created the neural connections in the first place. This can take seconds, minutes, or even hours, depending on the topic, how many tasks are being juggled, and the complexity of the task.

Time-out: Which strategy do we use to overcome the mental fragmentation?

Multitasking is always counterproductive, whether in your daily activities or on the basketball court. It seems that e-mail, instant messaging, cell phones, and PDAs, which keep us all connected and allow many of us to do our jobs, can also diminish productivity. A 2007 study by Basex, Inc., a knowledge-management research firm in New York, reported that knowledge workers (people whose work output is mainly informational in nature, e.g. creating documents, reports, studies, inventions, or patents) waste an average of two hours a day in every 40-hour workweek. This is due to interruptions from e-mails, co-workers, and cell phones. Recovery time from each interruption can vary, but it comes with a stiff price tag for the American economy: \$650 billion every year.

Think about your "basketball training sessions" and find -and eliminate- the distractions that keep you from achieving your daily goals.

Time-out: What is the winning strategy?

To improve concentration, you need to have a clear idea of the ultimate goal and the focus of your attention. Nothing should distract you as you carry out your daily tasks that are designed to help you achieve your goals.

A basketball rim has a diameter of 45 cm

In the game of basketball, the word "almost" does not exist. The goal of the game is to get the most balls through the rim, which has a diameter of 45 cm, by the end of the allotted time. Often, in daily life, people don't have such precise goals and that's like having a basket with a changeable diameter that is set at a variable height. Therefore, their aspirations often sound something like this: "I want to lose weight for improving my speed and increasing my mobility."

While this seems like a goal, it's not. To be a real goal, a person needs to answer these



questions: How much weight do you want to lose? When will this goal be achieved? How often will you verify your progression? In short, in order to be real, a goal needs to be measurable, verifiable, and you need to have a timetable. Goal setting will help you end up where you want to be.

When it comes to setting goals, start with what's important to you in life. Take out a sheet of paper. Sit quietly, and on that sheet of paper, brainstorm what you want to accomplish. On another sheet of paper, write your personal goals for the next 12-month period. Now, as a third step, go back and compare the two goal lists you have made. Make sure that the items on your short-term list will, as you attain them, be helping you attain your long-term goals. It is important that what you are doing short term is taking you in the right direction toward your lifetime aspirations.

The only thing in life that is constant is the fact that everything is changing. It makes sense that our goals will change as we change. Recognize how focusing on what you do want, what you do intend to accomplish, also defines what you choose not to do. Dreams and wishes are not goals until they are written as specific results on paper.

Written specific goals provide direction and focus to your activities. They become a road map to follow.

Be sure the goals and activities that you are working for are yours and that you really want and desire to achieve them. The commitment is vital to your success in achieving them.

Targeted and constant practices

Having a precise goal is just the starting point to beat the mental fragmentation that permeates so much today. Through practice and experience, everyone of us will find his perfect kind of training. The most important thing is having the right mental approach. This approach can be condensed in two points:

1. Every time we are doing something "on the court", we must ask ourselves this question: Is what I am doing useful in helping me reach my goal?
2. Every time we are doing something "on the court", let's try to be really focused on what we are doing in that moment.

These are two simple concepts, as seemingly as easy as a dunk for LeBron James, the NBA superstar of the Cleveland Cava-

liers. However, they are tremendously hard to put into practice. Granted, in the beginning, it will be a hard work for us to remain totally focused on what we are doing. However, don't be upset: "catch" your mind and bring it back to what you should be doing. The action of noticing that your mind is wandering is a great sign that your ability to concentrate is improving!

We can be great in the application of some tactic, but we will be often find ourselves in a hostile working environment: it's like always playing away games in front of wild and boisterous fans. We have to tune out this distraction. I know that it is not easy to do, but if you are able to totally focus on the task, you will eventually achieve your goals, no matter how loud the opponent's fans are screaming.

Speaking of "team", it's very important to underline the importance of your teammates. When your "teammates" are positive, when they believe in themselves, and when they have the same goal as you-to win-then half your battle is won. Stay with positive, mentally flexible, and stimulating people and you will achieve your goals, both in basketball, as well as in the real life.




FIBA

We Are Basketball



by Heinz Günther

Heinz Günther was General Surgeon, working over 35 years in Austrian Government Hospital. In the last 10 years he was Vice Head of a big Surgical Department. He loves the game of basketball. He started as a player, winning Austrian championships. Then he was also coach, team doctor and doctor of the National Team. He is a member of the FIBA Medical Council since 1977.

INTRODUCTION

Basketball referees are responsible of controlling the behaviour of the players during competitive basketball as well as implementing the rules of the game. To do this, three referees are obliged to keep up with the playing time. Although referees are sportsmen, only some national and international federations have a medical program for them.

People from the basketball world may think:

▼ Why do referees need a doctor?

▼ How can doctors help referees?

A long time ago, sportsmen only visited a doctor when they suffered a medical problem, but the situation nowadays is different since doctors also carry out preventive medicine. In this article we try to explain what is FIBA's medical program for referees and why it's necessary. The main message is PREVENTION.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PLAYERS AND REFEREES

Referees and players are sportsmen, but there are some differences between them.

1. AGE, WEIGHT AND HEIGHT

The table 1 shows an example of FIBA Europe's and Spanish (ACB and LEB leagues) referees from different levels.

HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE FOR BASKETBALL REFEREES

OBSERVATIONS

1. Elite basketball referees usually achieve the peak of their officiating careers at an average age that is considerably older than basketball players.
2. The average Body Mass Index (BMI) in FIBA, ACB and LEB was higher than 25. For general population, the BMI is considered normal if the range is placed between 20-25. Nevertheless, if the range is situated between 25-30, it is considered overweight.
3. Referees are shorter than basketball players and height isn't important for them, but this variable is necessary to calculate the Body Mass Index ((BMI): $\text{weight(Kg)} / \text{Height}^2 \text{ (m)}$)

The table 2 shows an example from Spanish referees about different folds and fat percentage. This information is more useful for sportsmen.

In this table it is important to pay attention to the average and the minimum and maximum value in the abdominal fold and the fat %.

There is a big difference between referees. Basketball players have a different fat % depending on their position and their gender.

Referees have to be in an optimal weight and fat % in order to reach a high performance level.

2. PHYSICAL CONDITION AND PHYSIOLOGICAL DEMANDS DURING A MATCH

Until now, there were few scientific studies about the physiological effects of elite competition on basketball referees.

All of us know referees don't have physical contact, don't have to jump, throw, dribble or play defence, but they have to run all over the court with sudden movements and despite feeling fatigue, they can not be substituted during the game.

Also, referees need to be concentrated from the start to the end of the game, because their decisions are very important.

In short, why is it important to know what type of physical and physiological demands referees need during a basketball match?

TABLE 1. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS FROM REFEREES (BODY MASS INDEX (BMI): $\text{WEIGHT(KG)} / \text{HEIGHT}^2 \text{ (M)}$)

LEVEL	N.	AGE ± (YARS)	WEIGHT (KG)	HEIGHT (CM) 182,9 ± 4,8	BMI
FIBA	100	38,7	84,2	181,8	25,4
ACB	33	35,5 ± 6	84,5 ± 8,6	182,9 ± 4,8	25,53
LEB	27	31,4 ± 3	78,8 ± 8,1	179,1 ± 4,6	24,6

TABLE 2. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS IN 33 ACB REFEREES (1999)

FOLDS	AVERAGE ± SD	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
TRICEPS	14.8 ± 4.2	8	24.2
SUBSCAPULAR	17.6 ± 5.5	9.2	29.1
ABDOMINAL	32.9 ± 10.9	13.6	53
THIGH	21.7 ± 8.9	9	42.6
LEG	11.2 ± 4.2	4.8	21.3
% FAT	17.8 ± 3.4	12.2	25.6



For example:

- ▼ Type of movement.
- ▼ Distance covered and duration.
- ▼ Heart rate during the match.

It is necessary to know this information. For example, during a basketball game the average Heart Rate (HR) of a referee is 150 bpm (range 110-181 bpm). This is important to plan an appropriate training program to maintain and/or maximize their performances.

3. LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

Basketball players play either in a club or a national team. They have a coach, an assistant coach, a physical trainer, a physiotherapist, a doctor, others. They have a team plan for the entire season but this situation does not apply to the referees. Referees normally train alone, lack a personal physical trainer, a physiotherapist or a doctor. Also, they travel a lot and some times they have another job. These factors can cause several difficulties in order to follow an appropriate training program, but now the situation is different because referees have access to the necessary information to follow a individual training plan.

To be keep an optimal weight and fat % is good, but it's not enough if referees don't follow an appropriate training program to achieve and maintain an optimal performance.

4. PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS DURING A GAME

The potential sources to induce stress upon referees are: players, coaches, public, themselves, their colleagues, family, journalists, national or international referee departments, others.

There are different studies about the magnitude and perception of psychological stress by basketball referees (Raney D

AND Winterich D. 1995) (Stewart MJ y cols. 2004).

The conclusion of these studies were that referees didn't feel very stressed. In fact, only a very low percentage felt stressed during the game.

This result suggests that "Experience is a degree" (quoting an Spanish expression). FIBA's medical programs for referees Due to these and other reasons, FIBA's medical commission believes that it is necessary to give referees the same medical support as players.

The objectives of FIBA's are:

- ▼ To look after the referees health.
- ▼ To prevent illness and injuries in referees.
- ▼ To help referees reach and maintain a high performance.

HOW CAN FIBA MEDICAL COMMISSION PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE?

1. The first step is to recommend a medical examination before the season for referees. Why?

People think sports are good to stay in good health, but this is not always the case in high level sports. Unfortunately, it is frequent to hear or read about sportsmen that die during or after a basketball or football match and this could happen to referees too.

Sudden cardiac death is a rare but devastating event.

Victims are usually young and apparently healthy, but many have an underlying cardiovascular disease that it is not diagnosed until after the event.

The etiologists of sudden cardiac death associated to sports activities depend on the age of the individual.

- ▼ Under 35: Sudden cardiac death is usually due to congenital heart disease.

- ▼ Over age 35: Sudden cardiac death is most due commonly to coronary heart disease.

Different factors of risk include: family history in both of them, hypertension, high cholesterol, tobacco, overweight, stress, diabetes, stimulants.

After this situation, there are several issues that we can THINK about: could it have been avoided? Yes, in some cases. FIBA's medical commission thinks that it is necessary that all referees pass a medical examination as well as the players.

2. The second step is to design programs to prevent common illnesses and injuries in referees.

Referees usually have less injuries than players and most of them are due to overuse or recurrence of a previous injury.

Unfortunately, some injuries and illnesses happen suddenly (as you can see in an both Spanish and FIBA's referees) and it is impossible to prevent, but many of them (overuse) could be avoided if referees follow some prevention programs. It is important to avoid injuries and illnesses and feel healthy. That way, referees don't have to stop officiating and could have longer careers.

3. The third step is to give useful information to help referees improve their performance. For example, information regarding:

- ▼ Nutrition and hydratation.
- ▼ First aid.
- ▼ Physical condition programs.
- ▼ Recovery procedure.
- ▼ Jet lag.
- ▼ Others medical information interesting for them.

Some factors can improve performances, and it is very important that referees know them to follow.

4. The fourth step is to support them during their clinics, physical test, FIBA's competitions.

Referees shouldn't be alone, they need the same support as players to prevent medical problems and to find an early solution when this happen.

CONCLUSION

In order to be a good referee, having the same technical knowledge and experience will make a big difference in the physical condition, as well as their mental and Physiological health.

Referees are very important for basketball and they need the same medical support than players to achieve their maximum performance for as many seasons as possible. Also, this way, they'll finish their careers without any medical handicaps.


FIBA

We Are Basketball



by Alan Stein

IMPROVING EXPLOSIVENESS ON THE COURT

Alan Stein is the former co-owner of Elite Athlete Training Systems, Inc. and the Head Strength & Conditioning coach for the nationally renowned Montrose Christian Mustangs boy's basketball program. Alan brings a wealth of valuable experience to his training arsenal after years of extensive work with elite high school, college, and NBA players. He is a sought after lecturer at basketball camps across the country and is regularly featured in publications such as the Winning Hoops, Time Out, Dime, American Basketball Quarterly, Stack, and Men's Health.

WHAT ARE PLYOMETRICS?

Plyometrics are exercises that usually involve some form of explosive movement such as a jumping, hopping, or bounding movement for the lower body, as well as some type of swinging, pushing, and throwing for the upper body. Plyometrics are designed to increase power, coordination, balance, and quickness.

HOW DO THEY WORK?

Plyometric exercises use the force of gravity or of a weighted medicine ball to store potential in the muscles, and then immediately release this energy in the opposite direction. The energy stored, in addition to physiological responses and mechanisms in the body (myotatic reflex) during the eccentric (negative, muscle lengthening) phase of a muscle contraction, is used to produce a more powerful concentric (positive, muscle shortening) phase of muscle contraction.

ARE THEY SAFE?

If plyometric exercises are appropriately picked and supervised, than they can be a safe and productive supplemental training tool. However, the game of basketball itself is already very plyometric in nature, so adding a large volume of additional plyometric exercises can be counterproductive and produce overuse injuries including orthopedic trauma to the joints, tendons, ligaments, and bones that occur from too much impact. Unlike many other sports, today's basketball players play year round with no real off-season. It has been estimated that the average player will perform between 450 and 500 full speed jumps per week. As such, what will an additional 50 jumps from a plyometric program do? While plyometric exercises -commonly referred to as 'Plyo's'- can be implemented carefully into a program as a way to help players with their body-awareness and confidence in performing certain movements, it is imperative to pick only the safest exercises and use as soft of a surface as possible to reduce the orthopedic stress placed on the body during such exercises. It is not necessarily the jumping that could potentially cause a problem, but rather the landing. Be very cautious when having players jump off of boxes and/or performing weighted jumps.

HOW DO YOU IMPROVE EXPLOSIVENESS?

Explosiveness is an important ingredient in the game of basketball. Players and coaches are constantly in search of

ways to jump higher and run faster. After all, with all else equal, the player or team who can run faster and jump higher has a tremendous advantage over their opponent. Vast improvements can be made to a player's explosiveness by implementing a structured, progressive, and safe strength training and plyometric program, complimented by dynamic flexibility training and court conditioning drills. By improving in each of the following five areas; a basketball player will be able to run faster, jump higher, and become more explosive the court!

STRENGTH

If a player increases the strength in their legs, hips and core, they will automatically improve their ability to produce force, which results in increased explosiveness. For example, the more force a player can exert against the ground – the higher the potential to jump. As mentioned in the strength training portion of this manual, it is extremely important for a strength training program to be safe, time efficient, and productive. To reduce orthopedic stress strength training, players should work within an appropriate repetition range (8-15 reps per set) and avoid maxing out (seeing how much they can lift for one repetition). Players should aim to make every strength training workout as time efficient as possible; this is done by using a limited number of sets and exercises, thus making the workout brief, but yet very intense. This can also be accomplished by minimizing rest intervals in between sets to induce



an overall conditioning effect. A strength program should focus on training the entire body equally to ensure muscle balance, as well as having each exercise taken to the point of momentary muscular fatigue (the point at which no further reps can be achieved). Working oppos-

ing muscle groups equally will help reduce the risk of on-court injuries, while training at a high level of intensity will produce maximum results. All of this can be accomplished in two or three well planned full body workouts per week, each lasting about an hour.

POWER

As obvious as it sounds, if a player wants to be able to jump higher, he or she needs to practice jumping as high they can. Plyometric exercises such as jumping, skipping, bounding, etc. - if incorporated appropriately - provide a means for players to practice jumping with maximal effort in a controlled and safe environment. Additionally, a proper plyometric program can help train the nervous system to perform athletic movements more efficiently. Since the sport of basketball is already very plyometric in nature, these exercises and drills should be chosen carefully and be done in limited volume. Again, attempts should be made to reduce as much impact and orthopedic stress as possible. That is, try and use soft training surfaces, make sure your players are wearing proper footwear, and know that when it comes to plyometric training, more is not necessarily better.

Squat jumps, broad jumps, lateral bounds, and box jumps are some common plyometric exercises used to increase a basketball player's explosiveness. When performing box jumps, it is highly recommended that players jump onto the boxes only; they should walk down off of the boxes to eliminate as much impact as possible (see pictures on following page). It is important to note that these exercises should be performed when players' legs are fresh; they should be done before a strength training workout if both workouts are being performed one after the other.

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility is widely defined as the range of motion in a joint or group of joints. Improving flexibility in the hamstrings, ankles, lower back, and hips, can increase a player's potential to be explosive. Flexibility is best accomplished by performing all strength training movements through a full range of motion, as well as performing dynamic flexibility exercises every workout or practice. The days of sitting on the ground and static stretching are over! In addition to improving flexibility, dynamic flexibility exercises assist in developing coordination and motor ability - both of which are attributes that help improve a player's explosiveness.

SKILL PROFICIENCY

Proper skill training is the most overlooked aspect when trying to improve athletic power. Decreasing the time it takes to perform a specific basketball skill is in essence increasing the speed at which the skill is performed. Thus, increasing the

speed at which a skill is executed will result in improved explosiveness on the court. The most effective and practical way to improve skill proficiency is to perform these skills through countless hours of task-specific skill practice. Players need to practice the specific skill exactly

like it will be used in competition – or at actual game speed. For example, the more efficient a guard becomes at shooting a jump shot, the more range he or she will have. Increased proficiency means it will take less time and effort to perform the specific skill as well as perform it more

consistently. Competent coaching, studying videotape, and hours of perfect practice are the best ways to increase skill proficiency.

CONDITIONING LEVEL

A player's overall conditioning level is vital in his or her ability to become more explosive. After all, what good is improved strength and skill if it cannot be maintained for an entire game? Preventing or delaying the onset of fatigue is crucial to performance. A well-prepared and well-conditioned basketball player should be just as strong and skillful in the second half of the game as they were in the first half. Again, it is important to note that being fit and being in basketball shape are two different things. Basketball is a game of repeated high intensity efforts that are sustained for several minutes on end, with minimal rest and recovery in between. A well-designed and progressive pre-season court conditioning program should reflect this, and will make sure players are in great basketball shape. Another necessity of being in

great shape is keeping body fat at an appropriate level. Excess body fat is simply dead weight. Too much dead weight will inhibit flexibility, reduce skill proficiency, and diminish overall conditioning ability. Keeping players' body fat percentage at an appropriate level is essential for maximizing their ability to be explosive on the court. In order to maintain body fat levels, players should eat a calo-

rically appropriate diet and adhering to a year-round conditioning program. Please note that additional muscle mass is not a hindrance to improving power, but rather an asset.

In summary, if a player wants to become more explosive on the court, and therefore give themselves an advantage over their opponent, they need to become stronger through productive strength training and structured plyometric drills, while at the same time mastering the skills of shooting, ball handling, passing, defending and boxing out. This contributes to the goal of being in superior basketball shape. Again, all of this can be accomplished through a well-designed strength and conditioning program that can be implemented year-round.





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MONDO UK LTD. +44 845 362 8311
MONDO RUSSIA +7 495 792-50-68

MONDO AMERICA +1 450 967 5800
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ONE-ON-ONE

COLANGELO: "WE HAVE TO GET READY FOR THE 2010 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP"



Jerry Colangelo came up with a winning formula when he was named managing director for Team USA's men's team in 2005. He enlisted the services of numerous coaches, and gained commitments from leading players to represent the United States in international competition. Duke University's legendary boss Mike "Coach K" Krzyzewski was appointed head coach of the men's team and last summer, Colangelo was on hand as the USA went undefeated and captured the gold medal at the Olympics in Beijing after a thrilling title showdown with world champions Spain. Colangelo has since been made chairman of USA Basketball, and he gave this exclusive interview to Jeff Taylor on behalf of FIBA.

FIBA: Mr Colangelo, what is the immediate future of the senior national team? Tell us when the squad of players will be announced, and also when the announcement will be about the coach of that team as Mike Krzyzewski was uncertain after the Olympics if he would continue to lead the USA.

COLANGELO: First of all, everything was put on hold. The one big piece of information that has happened since the end of the Olympics is that I was serving as managing director of

the men's team. I'm now serving in the capacity as chairman of USA Basketball. That involves all of the teams: men, women, juniors. But I will continue with my direct involvement (with the senior USA men's team), although I don't know if I will keep the title. I don't think we'll have managing director. But I'll be responsible for the men's team because that's the passion. Coach K and I have not even had that conversation. We plan to meet sometime probably within the next month. We do not have anything we need to do except to get ready for the (FIBA) World Championship in 2010. So there is no requirement for us in '09 (FIBA Americas Championship) to do anything unless we choose to. So there is no immediate urgency of naming players, or coaches or anything like that. One of the things that I'm thinking about is having a trial for some of the best young players in the game here in the summer from which we'll take maybe the top four or five and add them to our mix and see if some of them might be able to make our team, depending on how many of our veterans are interested in coming back. I think we have a good pipeline started. I think it's a matter of servicing that pipeline.

FIBA: That's very exciting to hear you talk about the young players. We were recently in North Carolina and interviewed one of the coaches in the USA Basketball set-up, Davidson coach Bob McKillop, along with one of his star players Stephen Curry. Are you considering adding college players to your national team squad or young players who are already in the NBA?

COLANGELO: Here is the problem. It's not a black-and-white situation anymore about the college and pros. There was a time when individuals went to college for four years and then went pro. Today, some of them go to college just for one year and turn pro, so it's a grey area. We're open. The policy is, if we think there is somebody out there who has a legitimate chance to make

it, a good example is (Kevin) Durant. Durant came out of high school and I had him at our (Team USA) camp. And that's before he played in the NBA. And (Greg) Oden was invited but couldn't perform because of his injury. So would there be young players invited and have the opportunity? If we feel they're good enough, the answer is yes.

FIBA: You mentioned the 2010 FIBA World Championship. The winner will qualify directly for the London 2012. Otherwise, Team USA would have to go through the 2011 FIBA Americas Championship to reach the Olympics. Does that play into your strategy in terms of how significant the FIBA World Championship will be for the USA?

COLANGELO: My personal feeling is that it's very significant. I think it's important to win the World Championship because we haven't done that in a long time. So I think we have an incentive to give them our best. The thing I need to do is to have discussions with a number of our players when they are here for the NBA All-Star break in Phoenix. That's where the game will be played here this February. My plan is to meet with a number of guys in our roster to see how they're feeling about that. I asked for a three-year commitment last time and (now) I'm willing to take two. But that means 2010 and 2012. If we get the job done in '10, then we don't have to worry about '11. If a player says, "I don't want to give you a three-year commitment, I'll give you two", fine. I want 2010 and 2012 and shame on us if we don't win in 2010 - that's going to cost you a third year. But you've got the option to make it work.

FIBA: Everything was gold for the USA in China but even then I'm sure that you, Coach K and the players identified some areas in which the program could improve. What would that be in your opinion? Was there anything important that you think you could have done better?

COLANGELO: First of all, we concluded (after 2004) that we needed a new infrastructure. We needed a new culture. We totally fulfilled the short-term aim of turning around the program, getting people with passion who bought into the vision and we accomplished our goal and objective of winning the gold medal. Now the next piece of business is to sustain it. That's another challenge. And so, we would hope to do everything better because you are never finished. This is a work in progress. I think the infrastructure has put in a pipeline that we now have in place. The great interest that we have in our young players who now want to be a part of Team USA - we turned around that culture, too. So, we just want to get better at what we do and not take anything for granted because I do believe the competition is getting much stronger.

FIBA: We saw a focused Team USA at the Beijing Games every time the players ran onto the floor. It seemed a lot of that was down to the leadership of players like Kobe Bryant, Dwyane Wade and LeBron James. LeBron was particularly charismatic, especially in the press conference after the gold-medal game. Do you have ready-made leaders to step in if this trio decides to take a break from international basketball?

COLANGELO: First of all, leaders aren't just made. They emerge. The read that I got from our roster is that most of the guys wanted to play and do it again. Now, that may have been an immediate and emotional response. I wanted to give everyone some time away from it. That's why here in February, when we kind of convene here in Phoenix, we're just going to talk things through. I'll have a much better feel of the lay of the land. But I feel very comfortable that we'll have many players to pick from and to keep the thing rolling.

FIBA: You have mentioned that a lot of players now want to be a part of Team USA and that there is a pipeline. Do you believe that USA Basketball was successful in winning back a public that perhaps wasn't as supportive in Sydney and Athens? Do you believe that everyone is right behind USA Basketball now and is very excited?

COLANGELO: Certainly. I think we turned it. I really do. Bear in mind that when I took on the responsibility in '05, I was selling my vision for what we could become. There was a lot of buying into that along the way in terms of sponsorships, so on and so forth, so we had to go out and get the job done. And I think the way the players conducted themselves on and off the court, what we accom-

plished on the court, the way we were involved in the community in terms of supporting other teams of the United States at the Olympics, the public perception of USA Basketball took a quantum leap and so we're pleased about that. It's important to keep that going in the right direction.

FIBA: How does the national team have a positive influence on the players and the NBA as a whole?

COLANGELO: I think the NBA sees it as a tremendous value to have their players not only win, but rise in popularity, name recognition, etc, etc. That's from a league perspective. I think the individual teams whose players were involved have a winning attitude. Those are now better players who have brought the experience back to their respective teams in the USA. So the teams benefited individually as did the teams overall.

FIBA: Do you think that playing for pride gets more out of the players than playing for money?

COLANGELO: We have players who have played for money who were willing to play without pay, and were willing to perform for pride in their country, pride in the game of basketball. It just goes to show that money can't buy everything. What this experience offers is a very unique opportunity that is not in the color green.

FIBA: You have been involved in so many big games throughout your career. What was going through your mind during the gold medal game in Beijing when Spain played brilliantly and the USA had to give everything to win?

COLANGELO: I recognized first how much was at stake and how much effort and work we had put in. I was hopeful and prayerful that we would have a good conclusion to the whole thing. I will only tell you that at the moment the Star Spangled Banner was being played, when the flag was being raised and the medals were being draped around the players, there was a moment of total fulfillment.

FIBA: There has been an incredible growth in international basketball the past couple of decades. Where do you see basketball globally in 10 years? Which countries will be the major players that can challenge the USA?

COLANGELO: There is no question the game is a global one. We have some outstanding teams representing different countries. Our competitors will now continue to get better

and better. You look at Spain, they do a tremendous job and they have a lot of players. Argentina is another country with a great pipeline of players who love the game. But I think the bar has been raised all over the world. I think out of Africa will come one or two very, very good teams in the next decade - I truly believe that. And, teams in Europe - Croatia, Serbia, the perennials - they will continue to get better and better. So, I'm hopeful that the game improves in England, that France has an opportunity to become pretty good. I think in Asia - China with its incredible interest in basketball. I say this all the time: there are 300 million people living in the United States, there are 300 million people playing basketball in China. Just by sheer numbers, you know that they are going to come up with more and more players. The game will become more and more global, and more and more competitive. And I think that is exciting for basketball.

FIBA: With respect to the FIBA rule changes that will come into effect in 2010, do you believe the international game will still be different to the NBA game and if so, what will those major differences be?

COLANGELO: We can only speculate on what these changes are going to mean and what impact they will have. We can talk about how the games were different in the past. Basically, we were playing with a different ball under different rules and different types of officiating for American players. So these rules are getting closer to the American game. You might have to say that the adjustment must come from the rest of the world to the new rules because the rules are becoming more like ours.

FIBA: What would you like to achieve as chairman of USA Basketball?

COLANGELO: Raise the bar for amateur basketball in this country. We want to help develop young people, not only in the game of basketball but in the game of life. We're working on a new campus for USA Basketball in Glendale, Arizona, which will serve as kind of the clearing house for all amateur basketball. We want to develop the kind of program that has continuity through that infrastructure and pipeline that will give us very competitive teams on a worldwide basis. We just want to get better, and better, and better.

FIBA: Thanks very much for your time, Mr Colangelo.

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**PLANET
BASKETBALL**

THE WORLD IN BRIEF



ASEAN BASKETBALL LEAGUE TAKES OFF

The first international basketball league in South-East Asia will take off in September 2009.

In the presence of FIBA President, Bob Phinson and FIBA Secretary General and IOC Member Patrick Baumann, the South East Asia Basketball Association (SEABA) under the leadership of Mr Thohir and Dato Yeoh Choo Hock announced the launch of the "ASEAN Basketball League" (ABL) on 19th January. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, commonly abbreviated ASEAN, is a geo-political and economic organization of 10 countries located in Southeast Asia, which was formed on 8 August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand and has since then expanded membership to Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Following the good response from the ASEAN market to the experience of the club team "Singapore Slingers" in Singapore, SEABA has decided that the league will consist of 10 teams from about 7 ASEAN countries (e.g. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam,

Brunei, etc.).

The ABL, which will be played between September 2009 and February 2010 will have home-and-away matches. There will also be a knockout stage, culminating with the final.

Local talents will comprise the majority of players and only four imports -two non-Asians and two Asians- will be allowed to play in each team.

The Chairmanship has been taken by Tony Fernandes, Chair of the successful airline AirAsia and of the Singapore Slingers. His experience in opening new businesses and new markets as well as his abilities in the branding and licensing business will prove invaluable to the successful establishment of the League.

With the announcement, bids can be submitted to SEABA for the 10 available club franchises. Candidates will be submitted to stringent professional and economical requirements to ensure the long term success of the league.

The league will also install a salary cap to provide the necessary balance between teams.

The league aims at cementing the rela-

tionship between ASEAN countries through basketball, creating the first pan-ASEAN entertainment and sports property and developing local basketball talents, in an area that covers a population of 600 million people.

FIBA Secretary General Patrick Baumann said at the media brief in Kuala Lumpur: "The ASEAN Basketball League is the first of its kind in Asia and a welcome indication of the maturity achieved by our sport. It will further boost the popularity of basketball in this area and beyond, while creating new opportunities and dreams for the FIBA family. We look forward to seeing new talents and countries emerge in basketball in the next five years as a result of this project."

"This is a historic day," stated Tony Fernandes. "We have prepared an elaborate paper on the franchise and we are looking for people with the financial ability to last the pace," he added.

"A dream is coming true for our region," stated Dato Yeoh Choo Hock. "This is a long-term project and we want teams who can stay the distance and have the ability to improve the game in their own country. The objective is to raise the standard of the sport in our region," he said.

SCARIOLO STRONGLY LINKED WITH SPAIN NATIONAL TEAM

Former Unicaja Malaga coach Sergio Scariolo has admitted "it would be a great honor" to coach Spain's national team.

Currently at the helm of BC Khimki, Scariolo was in Italy for a EuroCup game against Benetton Treviso this week and was asked about taking the helm of the world champions.

"It would be a great honor and I would be very proud," Scariolo said to Gazzetta dello Sport. "I would be measuring myself with the strongest team I would have coached. There are no obstacles with the (Spanish) Federation. At the end of the month, there will be the meeting with Khimki that has to give the okay."

Aito Garcia Reneses led Spain last summer to a silver medal at the Beijing Olympics but left the team to replace Scariolo at Unicaja, leaving the Spain national side post vacant. Spain will take on Slovenia, Serbia and Great Britain in group play at this year's EuroBasket in Poland.

Scariolo was a big hit in Italy as a coach but he has thrived at the helm of clubs in foreign countries, too.

Scariolo first coached in Spain in 1997 at Tau Ceramica. "I spent 11 years in Spain, more than I had anticipated," he said. "A coach that wants to be at the maximum level cannot choose a country to coach or to build roots, although I personally did that."

"The experience abroad has made me become stronger because it's the hurdles that you overcome that make you jump higher."

Scariolo started with his family and a



group of friends last year the Fundacion Cesare Scariolo in Malaga, a non-profit organization to help children suffering from leukemia and their families. The foundation was set up in the memory of his father, Cesare.

"I wanted to do something for children with leukemia," Scariolo said. "If you are famous, you can get 20 times more (fund-raising) than making a contribution."

Scariolo hosts events and conferences organized by the foundation.

BULLS' GORDON HAS GREAT BRITAIN ON HIS MIND

Chicago Bulls guard Ben Gordon may finally suit up for Great Britain this summer when they play at the EuroBasket in Poland.

London-born Gordon, who grew up in the United States, has yet to represent the



country but he wants to play for Chris Finch's team when the Brits go up against world champions Spain, Slovenia and Serbia in group play later this year.

The main issue affecting his availability is that Gordon still doesn't know which NBA team he will play for next year.

"I'm just hoping this summer I'll be able to play," said Gordon from Chicago in comments published on basketball247.co.uk. "If everything goes according to plan, I will. I'm going to be an unrestricted free agent which gives me a little bit more freedom with different teams. I'm just hoping I can get my deal out of the way and move on with a clear mind in time for GB."

Gordon left England before his first birthday for New York, but returned to the country to visit family.

"I used to love going to England," Gordon said. "I used to come back and see all my cousins and relatives I hadn't seen in a while. I have really good memories. I still have a lot of relatives in England and keep in touch with all of them, they come over and visit me in the summer but I just haven't been able to go back and forth as I would like to because of my schedule. I definitely do feel a tie with Britain. My mum, and some of her customs, are very British."

She brought me up having a cup of tea every morning, and two or three times during the day, which I guess is a British thing, and lots of my family still go back regularly and bring me back tea and chocolates and things you can't get here. I talk to my relatives in England regularly and they're pumped about me playing, in fact they'd been hoping I would play the last couple of summers. Things didn't go my way to do that so I

feel I let them down a little and I haven't really spoken to them too much about it this year. I don't want to get them too excited until I know I'm playing for sure."

If Gordon does play for Britain this summer, it would give the country a quite a one-two punch with Gordon's Chicago Bulls' teammate Luol Deng already in the squad.

Deng helped Britain win promotion from Division A and then last year, they finished top of a qualifying group for EuroBasket 2009 ahead of Israel, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Czech Republic.

KOBE WANTS TO PLAY IN FIBA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Los Angeles Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant sent out a message in mid January that must have sent shivers down the spines of the leading South Americans and Europeans hoping to win a gold medal in international competition.

"The chance to represent your country, that's not even a thought-process for me," Kobe said. "If they want me to be on it, I'm all game."

In other words, for those people who figured Kobe would be one and done with the Olympics after leading Team USA to a Beijing Games gold medal last summer, well, you had better think again.

Kobe plans on being in Turkey for the 2010 FIBA World Championship, and in London for the 2012 Olympics.

Others, like guard Dwyane Wade says it's far too early to tell if he'll be in the United States squad for a third straight Olympics when the London 2012 Games are staged.



"It was an unbelievable experience," Wade said to the Florida SunSentinel. "It was probably something, with the team we had, if you do it again now, you'll never get that experience of the guys that we had."

Wearing the red, white and blue isn't what Wade is focusing on.

"I'm not even thinking about that right now," he said. "We just got done with Olympics."

When the hugely-successful Colangelo is involved with something, though, it can be hard to say no.

"Jerry's a pretty good recruiter," Wade said.

Colangelo spoke of the pipeline of players that now exists with USA Basketball. There is no shortage of interest from players wanting to represent the country in international competition.

Wade's rookie teammate with the Miami Heat, Michael Beasley, is hoping he has a chance to play for the Americans.

"I would definitely like the chance, just for the simple fact of representing your country," Beasley said.

At some point, the baton will be passed from players like Wade, Carmelo Anthony and LeBron James to a new generation of stars.

"There's a lot of young guys that are ready to step into this thing," Wade said.

"We'll have to see and judge it for the best of our careers, as well."

FORMER SOMALIA PLAYER, COACH MOHAMED DIES IN CAR CRASH

International basketball is in mourning following the death of former Somalia national team player and coach, Omar Mohamed Omar.

Mohamed, 38, was killed in a car crash in England on Christmas day. He is survived by a wife and five children.

Mohamed was a former captain of the national team. He took part in the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics last year.

A 20-year-old man driving the other car that crashed into Mohamed was arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving.



COACH BAUERMANN WANTS QUOTA FOR FOREIGNERS IN GERMAN LEAGUE

The coach of the German national team, Dirk Bauermann, is in favour of a bigger quota for German players in the German League (BBL).

Bauermann, who was coaching for many years in the German league, wants a minimum of 50% of the players of each club to be German nationals: "In my opinion it would be ideal if out of the 12 players on the score sheet, six would be Germans", he said in an interview with the German newspaper 'Berliner Morgenpost'.

Currently, the rule of the BBL only requires only 1 player on the score sheet to be a German citizen.

Bauermann is also in favour of a limitation of foreign players per club. "A maximum of six foreigners in the BBL", he said and added: "We have to get away from the thinking that everybody can play better basketball than us Germans. That is not



correct. Let the youngsters play and they will prove it on the court."

He also sees a deficit in promoting more German top coaches. "The BBL is the only top league in Europe where only very few local coaches are active. Why? There are enough high quality German coaches available in our country."

Bauermann is still hopeful that he can count on his superstar Dirk Nowitzki during the upcoming EuroBasket in Poland: "Nothing is decided yet, the EuroBasket is quite late and the season in the US is over since a long time. For the development of the younger players it would be tremendously important if he could play with them. I am optimistic that we get this done."



FIBA U19 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The FIBA U19 World Championships for Men and Women will gather again the world's top talent in Auckland, New Zealand (men) and Bangkok, Thailand (women) this summer.

Many of today's stars have made their international

debut in this competition. The talent at display will be incredible and the fans can look forward to the most exciting players, youth basketball has to offer.

15 teams have already qualified for each event:

Men: Angola, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Iran, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Spain, and USA.

Women: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Russia, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia, and USA.

FIBA will decide shortly on the 16th team for each event. The draw that will divide the 16 teams in four groups of four will be held on 26th February in Bangkok and on 2nd March in Auckland.

RUBIO AND GIGLI TARGET 2014

Spain's Ricky Rubio and Italy's Angelo Gigli have both expressed the hope that their country will be chosen to stage the 2014 FIBA World Championship.

Rubio, a current true reference in Spanish basketball, will be almost 24 years of age when the 2014 FIBA World Championship takes place. Everything seems to indicate that Ricky will not only be an undisputed member of the Spanish national team in 2014, but also one of its key pillars would be excited about the opportunity.

"The fact of playing at home always provides you with an extra motivation and a surplus of excitement," he said. "I have been fortunate to play three European Championships in Spain and I know, first hand, that playing with the support and encouragement of the fans is something absolutely fantastic which brings even more excitement to everyone involved."

Gigli played a prominent role for the Azzurri at the 2006 event in Japan and would love to see his country hosting this prestigious event.

"For sure, it would be very important,"

Gigli said. "For all the movement of the national team, for all the Italian players, we hope that Rome and Italy can reach this goal but it's not easy. We have so many years before then but we could organize it very well."

The national basketball federations of China, Italy and Spain have presented



their official bids for the 2014 FIBA World Championship on 5th December in an official ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland. FIBA has appointed an Evaluation Commission that will examine all files and will formally visit the countries and review the commitments made.

The complete bidding process will end on 23rd-24th May 2009, when the FIBA Central Board will decide the host of the 2014 World Championship for Men.

AUSTRALIA U18 TEAMS WIN GOLD

The male and female Under 18 teams from Australia won gold at the Australian Youth Olympic festival over the weekend.

Both teams went undefeated into the Final. The boys beat China 98-82 and the



girls beat Japan 91-54. In the bronze medal games New Zealand Beat Japan 86-85 (boys) and China beat New Zealand 95-64 (girls).

Australia's boys trail at halftime

A standing room only crowd at the Sydney Uni Sports Aquatic Centre witnessed an epic men's Gold Medal basketball match tonight with Australia overcoming China in the second half to take victory by 16 points.

Trailing by nine after one quarter and six at half time, Australia engineered a thrilling 49-27 second half effort and fully deserved to take home the hardware.

Tasmania's Hugh Greenwood starred for Australia with an equal game high 27 points on 12-of-20 shooting while starting point guard Jackson Aldridge ran the team well and finished with 20 points, 6 rebounds and 2 assists. Hong-fei Shi led China with 27 points on 7-of-17 three point shooting.

"At half time we just said to the guys one of our goals was forty minutes of putting our foot on their throat and to keep running out of transition," Australia's head coach Paul Goriss said.

"The score that they [China] had at half time we weren't happy with and we overran them with our transition. We came here knowing that it was going to be tough in the final against China and they came out with some different things but we got over the line."

Aussie girls trounce Japan

Australia's young women's basketball team overpowered Japan and used its superior size and speed to outgun and outrun its Japanese opponent to lead 51-18 at half time before continuing on to a 37-point victory.

Starting guard Rebecca Cole completed a first rate tournament with 17 points, 6 rebounds and 5 assists to lead Australia while crowd favourite Gretel Tippet had a fantastic all-around game to finish with 16 points, 8 rebounds, 4 assists, 4 steals

and 2 blocks. Naho Miyoshi and Aya Tsunami paced Japan with 10 points apiece.

"It was a great win and something the girls deserved," Australia's head coach Nicole Ireland said. "They've been so focused and disciplined for nearly two weeks now with the camp and then the tournament and today I think we played the best game of our tournament; just team work, inside-outside play and our defence."

"It got a bit scrappy at the end but for three quarters or even more of that game we really stuck with what we needed to do defensively. They really got up for the Gold Medal game."

FINAL STANDINGS BOYS:

Gold Medal: AUSTRALIA (4-0)

Silver Medal: CHINA (2-2)

Bronze Medal: NEW ZEALAND (2-2)

Fourth: JAPAN (0-4)

FINAL STANDINGS GIRLS:

Gold Medal: AUSTRALIA (4-0)

Silver Medal: JAPAN (2-2)

Bronze Medal: CHINA (2-2)

Fourth: NEW ZEALAND (0-4)

ANGOLA'S PRIMEIRO CAPTURED 4TH TROPHY



Defending champion, Primeiro de Agosto from Angola retain the trophy after beating Etoile du Sahel of Tunisia 57-54 in the grand final of the 23rd Africa Champions Cup for men played in Sousse, Tunisia.

Primeiro won the first quarter (15-11) but both teams ended the second 10-10 and Primeiro led 25-21 at the break. Primeiro won the third quarter (17-14) and despite Etoile du Sahel won the last (19-15), Primeiro de Agosto secured the victory and captured its fourth trophy.

Khanfir Maher of Etoile du Sahel was the best scorer of the game with 15 points while his teammate Braa Hamdi poured 11 points.

Joaquim Gomez of Primeiro who recorded 14 points and 6 rebounds, was elected best player (MVP) of the tournament.

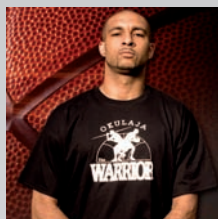


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"WARRIOR" OKULAJA FIGHTS CANCER

German power forward Ademola Okulaja, who played 172 times for the German national team and won a bronze medal at the 2002 FIBA World Championship in Indianapolis, has been diagnosed with cancer in summer of last year. Okulaja said he is doing well and is recovering from the serious illness after chemo therapy.

"Primarily I want to recover and get completely healthy", he said. "As soon as I have won the battle against the illness I definitely would like to play basketball again." Despite being currently weakened by the therapy, he feels relatively good and thinks ahead. "The illness is a challenge that I will overcome."

Okulaja had his first public appearance on 9th January after a long while at a game of his club Bamberg against the Cologne 99ers.

He initiated a charity under the slogan "The warrior will be back". With an auction of over 500 t-shirts that carry his eyes and the slogan, he hopes to raise funds for the Kinderleben e.v. (KINDERLEBEN e.V., HypoVereinsbank Berlin, account No. 609061901, BLZ 263 93 00), a private organization that is engaged in the fight against cancer and helps children that suffer from the illness.

DIVAC FOR PRESIDENT

Serbia great Vlade Divac is the official candidate of the Serbian Basketball Association (KSS) for the presidency of the country's Olympic Committee. Divac, who had a long career in Europe and in the NBA and signed off from international basketball in 2002 after helping Yugoslavia capture the gold medal at the 2002 FIBA World Championship in Indianapolis, has the full support of the KSS.

"This new way in which Serbian sport is developing means that our Olympic Committee should be very influential," said KSS

president Dragan Kapicic. "Therefore, at our executive board meeting we unanimously voted for Divac as we strongly believe that he could help our sport to be more efficient, and its functioning more successful."

Divac's plan is for the Olympic Committee of Serbia (OKS) to work "With transparency, not just among sports associations, but as well towards the nation."

"I have lot of work ahead of elections to do which must be done before February 24," Divac said.



"My first goal is to create a good program for the future functioning of OKS, and my plan is to include people with the highest experience, such as (FIBA Secretary General Emeritus) Borislav Stankovic," Divac said.

BASKETBALL TEACHES OBAMA A LESSON OF LIFE

In his 1995 memoir, "Dreams From My Father," US President Barack Obama wrote about basketball's transformative effect on his confidence and search for identity. Among the many lessons he drew from his Hawaii pickup games with "gym rats and has-beens" was that "respect came from what you did and not who your daddy was."

Now 47 and recently inaugurated as the 44th president of the United States, Obama is ready to bring the game - and its sensibilities of teamwork and spontaneity - to the White House. It is a fitting game for these times.

Basketball is an international sport, and also an egalitarian one. It is austere. A player does not have to pay a country-club fee or even own a basketball to join a pickup game at a local park. It is a meritocracy.

On the playground, the winning team stays on the court, taking on all challengers, until it loses.

As community organizer Obama knew when he was building relationships on playgrounds in the South Side of Chicago, class distinctions dissolve in the intensity of competition. Basketball is "improvisation within a discipline that I find very powerful," Obama told Bryant Gumbel on HBO last year.

Improvisation within a discipline is exactly what is needed in a White House facing the challenges of a reeling economy, a war in Iraq and a terrorism threat that has not gone away.

Obama will inherit a neglected 26-by-26-foot outdoor half-court that was installed 18 years ago for President George H.W. Bush. One of the privileges of the presidency is the ability to expand the sporting options on the White House grounds. Theodore Roosevelt had the first tennis courts built there in 1902. Bill Clinton installed a putting green on the edge of the South Lawn. Gerald Ford ordered a swimming pool and tennis courts. Richard Nixon commissioned a one-lane bowling alley, which some people have suggested could be demolished to make way for an Obama's hoops dreams.



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