



**FIBA**

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# ASSIST37

FIBA ASSIST MAGAZINE FOR BASKETBALL ENTHUSIASTS EVERYWHERE MARCH / APRIL 2009

**WRIGHT-DONNELLY**  
VILLANOVA SPREAD OFFENSE

**ALEXEY CHUDIN**  
THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL  
PREPARATION FOR REFEREES

**SCOTT O'NEIL**  
MSG: WORLD'S MOST  
FAMOUS ARENA

**ONE-ON-ONE**  
DINO MENEGHIN

**XAVI PASCUAL  
DEFENDING  
THE DIRECT  
MIDDLE SCREEN**





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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  
23 - 25.08 FIBA Oceania  
Championship for Men in  
Melbourne (AUS) and  
Wellington (NZL)

**SEPTEMBER 2009**

- 02 - 04.09 FIBA Oceania  
Championship for Women  
in Canberra (AUS) and  
Dunedin (NZL)  
03 - 13.09 FIBA Africa Championship  
for Women (site tbd)  
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)

**COACHES****FUNDAMENTALS AND YOUTH BASKETBALL**

- Reducing Turnovers **4**  
by Jim Burson

- The Yearly Training Plan **8**  
for the Unicaja Málaga Junior Team  
by Jesús Lázaro Corral

**OFFENSE**

- Villanova Spread Offense **14**  
by Jay Wright and Jason Donnelly

**DEFENSE**

- Defending the Direct Middle Screen **20**  
by Xavi Pascual

**HOOP MARKET**

- March Madness 2009 **26**  
by Raffaele Imbrogno

**REFEREES AND GAME  
ADMINISTRATION**

- The Importance of Physical Preparation **28**  
for Referees  
by Alexey Chudin

- Right or Wrong? **32**

**SPORT MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT****EXECUTIVES AND MARKETING**

- MSG: World's Most Famous Arena **34**  
by Scott O'Neil

**DOCTORS, CONDITIONING  
COACHES AND TRAINERS****CONDITIONING COACHES**

- 5 Keys to High Performance Training **38**  
by Darryl Eto

**NEWS**

- ONE-ON-ONE **44**  
PLANET BASKETBALL **46**  
OFF-THE-COURT **50**

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We Are Basketball



by Jim Burson

# REDUCING TURNOVERS

**Jim Burson has recently ended his long career after 38 years at the guide of the Fighting Muskies (of a 41 years long career), as the most winning coach in the history of the Muskingum University with 542 wins. This record brought him in the Top 10 ever of the Division III, and in the Top 5 between the coaches in activity.**

To turn it over or not to turn it over is not the question. You will turn it over! The question is how will you and the players respond when a turnover occurs. General comments for coaches concerning the reduction of turnovers. Do not get too concerned about mistakes that are made with full effort and focus. Forget the past and get on with the next play. A lot of coaches want to beat a dead turnover.

## COACHING ADJUSTMENT

We want teams (players) to know why they made an error. We need to develop the mentality in players to know the reasons why the TO occurred and to never make excuses, but always strive for improvement. Give me reasons, and answers and suggestions, not excuses. I want players to become analysis experts, not just the player who made the TO, but all members of the team. Respond to effort and behavior and not just the turnover. Confront reactive behavior and less than all out effort. Reward effort and hustle after turnover.

## COACHING COMMENT

You should not fear making a turnover, but you should fear not hustling after or not being welcome to correction. Help players and yourself to develop a mistake mentality which allows mistakes to foster improvement. You need to avoid effort related mistakes and repeating the same mistake over and over.



## COACHING AXIOM

A coach who expects no turnovers is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle. Need to enhance a coachable spirit which allows the player to be reprimanded and disciplined so they can become reliable, trustworthy, and coachable in game situations.

## COACHING EXPLANATION

Coaches should explain the purpose of correction (criticism) as being necessary to enhance learning. The players need to be active participants in turnover analysis. They need to understand and be problem solvers. Self assessment is part of the solution.

## COACHING ASSESSMENT

A coach must realize that every player must enhance their game if they want to improve and particularly if they want to reduce the number of TO's. Mistakes are often an indication that learning is taking place. Must show mistakes to players to correct them mentally and physically. Remember, correction never ends. Continuous improvement.

## COACHING INSIGHT

The coach must stay under control and be patient and calm (avoid impatience and anger). As a coach, you need to be a leader instead of a blamer. Acknowledge the



turnover and then do everything you can to correct it.

#### COACHING PATIENCE

You can't get so upset that you destroy the players' confidence and they do not make corrections.

Are you a good coach? A lot of the evidence may be produced in how you handle turnovers. Show me the game evidence!

#### COACHING EVIDENCE

What kind of coach are you? The best coaches are not those brooding, neurotic perfectionists, who scream and rant and rave in practice and on the sidelines, but rather those individuals who advocate leadership and responsibility of their players in an atmosphere where they are encouraged to think for themselves, reach for their best, feel free to make it happen, assure that everyone is given the fundamentals of the game, the proper techniques and understanding of the priorities and basic training, conditioning and then lets the players play the game.

You must teach the players understanding of the cause of the turnover and the situation involved. Was the error physical or mental or both and proceed with a plan to correct it.

#### COACHING CORRECTION

Correct the TO - discipline the TO. Be sure everyone knows why the TO occurred. Be positive with the player and negative with the circumstances and situations. This is difficult to do as a coach. It is hard to be positive in the middle of a TO, coach must see beyond to what will be learned.

As a coach, you can have a degree of (self control) serenity even during a turnover if you know that the players know.

#### COACHING INSIGHT

Correcting performance, particularly TO's, and providing positive feedback is a never-ending task for coaches.

Happiness is not found in more or less turnovers only in understanding correction and acceptance.

#### COACHING BENEFITS

If you can hold your head up and admit you made a mistake, take positive steps to improve, then the mistake can actually be of benefit to you or your team.

Being free from turnovers is too much to expect and can result in shattered teams by a coach who is demanding and expecting perfection.





**COACHING UNDERSTANDING**

You don't want freedom from TO's - you want understanding of the reasons and causes and awareness, so that we may improve (reduce) and correct and strive toward excellence.

If you understand, the game will be just as it is. If you do not understand, the game will be just as it is. If you do understand, turnovers will occur; if you don't understand, turnovers will occur.

**COACHING CHALLENGE**

Keep your mind open to change all the time. Welcome it. Court it. Enhance it. It is only by examining and re-examining your thoughts, opinions or ideas that you can make progress.

Coaches need to free themselves from hating turnovers to loving the fact that they have transcended to understanding the cause and will attempt to correct them. And you know the players know!

**COACHING TRANSCENDENCE**

To make zero mistakes is not in the power of the team, but from these errors the wise coach and good players can learn wisdom for the next game. Your players must know you cannot beat more talented teams unless you practice more diligently, improve fundamentals and lesson TO's by awareness and understanding. If your team commits turnovers and you remain calm and understanding you will take on the appearance of a great coach.

**COACHING CALM**

There is nothing more essential to the development of a great team than the coach and players all having great character.

It's not the turnover that hurts the situation, it's the time before (situation and circumstances) and the time after (hustle and reaction) that if not addressed or understood, that is important!

**COACHING HALF**

If you have a great desire to reduce turnovers, you have mentally contributed to half of victory; if you don't, you have contributed to half of your defeat.

**I DOUBT IF I CAN PLAY**

The coach screams: "Why did you make that pass? It cost us a possession! It lead directly to a lay-up. How dumb can you be? Don't you ever listen? Go sit down-get somebody in there that knows what they are doing!"

My confidence has been shattered. I know the coach just wants me to play



smart and get better but his screaming at me shakes my confidence. I am afraid to pass it, scared to dribble and absolutely horrified about attempting a shot. He yells at me again and my doubts are overwhelming. I want to scream: A) "Help me, show me, correct me," B) "I

will do whatever you want but I don't know what you want!" As coaches, we often create more problems by the way we react. As a coach, always address the turnover and correct them, then approach the player and encourage and lift him beyond his doubts.



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by Jesús Lázaro Corral

# THE YEARLY TRAINING PLAN FOR THE UNICAJA MALAGA JUNIOR TEAM

Formerly a professional basketball player (14 seasons), Jesús Lázaro Corral is now finishing his second season as a coach. Growing up playing for the youth teams of Unicaja Málaga, he went on to win two King's Cup and two Spanish championships (ACB League) with Manresa and Unicaja. After retiring as a player, he began his coaching career as assistant coach for Clínicas Rincón Axarquía (in LEB Plata, third division in the Spanish league). He is coaching the junior and EBA teams of Unicaja Málaga.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE CLUB

The objective of our youth teams and the goals for our young players are quite simple: develop and train players who, one day, will be able to play for our first team that competes in the ACB (Spanish first division).

However, many times, we, the coaching staff, complicate this objective by making it more difficult for the players and teams than how it should be. Why do I say this? Because, especially in the Junior team, when the players seem to be ready to play with the first team, coaches look at team results rather than paying attention to the development of the players.

We have to understand that if we pay more attention to the development of the players, then, as a consequence, we will have good results with the team. The objective of the club and the objective of the coaches has to be the same. For this reason the work of the youth team coaches is very important.

Our special coaching program for young players has been in place for a decade and I think that our club has improved because of it. I will explain the sports organization of our club, Unicaja Baloncesto SAD.

As you can see from our organization chart on page 9, the club organizes its work in logical fashion so we can develop



players with solid fundamental skills. In this way, we can have a supply of talented basketball players who will be able to play for our first team (ACB) when they get older.

In 1999, officials at Unicaja Baloncesto prepared a yearly work-plan for all of the coaches of the youth teams. I will now review the work plan for our Junior team (Under 18, non-professional). While our

## FORMING ACB PLAYERS

### OBJECTIVE OF THE COACH

### OBJECTIVE OF THE CLUB

## SPORTS DIRECTION

### UNICAJA (ACB)

ACB is the first professional league in Spain. The top 4 teams in the ranking will play the Euroleague the following season.

All the players are professional.

The team is composed by 2 players from countries outside Europe, 4 Spanish players selectable for the National team and 4 players from European countries until completing 10 players list.

### YOUTHFUL TEAM DIRECTION

### CLINICAS RINCON (LEB ORO)

LEB ORO is the second professional league in Spain. The two top teams in the ranking go in the ACB.

We have players with clear expectations to play in Unicaja (ACB team).

Age average: 20 years old. The team is composed by 2 players from countries outside Europe, 1 player from a European country, and 9 Spanish players selectable for the National team.

### CIRCUITO SUB-20

This league is organized by ACB and FEB (Spanish Basketball Federation). It's been thought in order to give space to the players older than 18 and until 20. 2 players can be Under 22.

The championship is organized in four concentrations along the season. Each concentration lasts four days.

Most of the players have potential to play then in the first team of the club. Usually, it is a team composed by players of the Junior team, EBA team, LEB team, and some player who the club has let play outside of Málaga.

### UNICAJA CADETE ('93)

This team plays two leagues:

- \* Liga Cadete (Under 16): Spanish championship.
- \* Liga Nacional Senior. It is a Men's National league.

The sixth Spanish league.

The players are amateurs.

The team is composed by guys born in 1993. In this team there are 2-3 players with good potential.

### UNICAJA INFANTIL ('95)

This team plays two leagues:

- \* Liga Infantil (Under 14): Spanish championship.
- \* Liga Cadete (Under 16).

The team is composed by guys born in 1995. In this team there are 1-2 players with good potential.

### UNICAJA JUNIOR ('91-'92)

This team plays two leagues:

- \* Liga Junior (Under 18): Spanish championship.
- \* Liga EBA: It is the fourth Spanish league.

The players are semi-professional.

The team this season is composed by players born in 1991 and 1992. There are two more players born in 1990 who only plays in the EBA.

In this team there are 2-3 players with a good potential to play in the ACB team.

Moreover, 3-4 players who, without having a potential this good, have to be followed and have the possibility to play in the LEB ORO team.

### UNICAJA CADETE ('94)

This team plays two leagues:

- \* Liga Cadete (Under 16): Málaga Championship.
- \* Liga Junior (Under 18).

The team is composed by guys born in 1994. They are in their first year in this category. In this team there are 2-3 players with good potential.

### UNICAJA PRE-INFANTIL ('96)

This team plays two leagues:

- \* Liga Infantil (Under 14): Málaga Championship.
- \* Liga Cadete (Under 16).

The team is composed this year by guys born in 1996. In this team there are 1-2 players with good potential.

coaches are not obliged to follow the plan, we strongly suggest that they use it. During the season, the weekly workouts are ordered along the following model:

#### MONDAY

The team coach must have reviewed the video of the team's previous game by Monday, as well as one or two videos of the next team that his team will play.

#### Morning:

- ▼ The players with scholarships work

with the individual development coach.

- ▼ The training lasts an hour or less.
- ▼ Training is reserved for point guards, shooting guards, and small forwards.
- ▼ Training is exclusively designed for individual player development.

#### Afternoon:

- ▼ The team does specific work following the yearly plan of the club.
- ▼ The team will work on individual game concepts and team game concepts in

one-on-one, two-on-two, and three-on-three situations.

- ▼ The training lasts two hours.
- ▼ The distribution of the work on half court, half court+fastbreak, full court, and game rhythm is designed by the strength and conditioning coach:
  - 20 minutes of warm up.
  - 40 minutes on half court.
  - 10 minutes on half court+fastbreak.
  - 10 minutes on game rhythm.
  - 30 minutes of shooting.



	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
7:00 H	Individual skills for players with scholarship	Individual skills for players with scholarship	Rest	Individual skills for players with scholarship	Individual skills for players with scholarship		
18:00 H	Specific workplan of the club for this category.  Individual skills and tactic, 1-on-1, 2-on-2, 3-on-3, at most 3-on-3, at most	Specific workplan of the coach for his team  Individual skills and tactic, 1-on-1, 2-on-2 3-on-3, at most 3-on-3, at most Work about numerical superiorities, defensive rules, offensive rules Shooting.	Rest	Team training: fastbreak, defense offense with 3-on-3, 4-on-4 3-on-3, 4-on-4 and 5-on-5 tactical superiority of the team about the opponent of the weekend (Liga EBA). Shooting.	Team training: team tactic. Preparation of the games for the weekend. Shooting: volume.	Liga junior game	Liga EBA game
20:00 H	Physical training	Physical training	Rest	Physical training	Physical training		







- ▼ The coach reviews the previous game with the team and discusses and assesses the performance of individual players.
- ▼ The strength and conditioning session is organized by the strength and conditioning coach either in the gym (weight training) or on the court (quickness, footwork, jumps, bodybalance, flexibility, injury prevention).

## TUESDAY

### Morning:

- ▼ The scholarship players have individual work designed by the individual development coach.
- ▼ The training lasts one hour or less.
- ▼ Training is reserved for big men: power forwards and centers.
- ▼ Training is designed for individual development.



### Afternoon:

- ▼ The team performs specific work following the yearly plan of the team coach.
- ▼ The team works on both individual and team concepts according to the mistakes made in the last game (based on notes taken by the coach after having viewed the game video).
- ▼ Training lasts two hours.
- ▼ The distribution of the work on half court, half court + fastbreak, full court and game rhythm is designed by the strength and conditioning coach.







- ▼ Strength and conditioning work will last one hour at most.

### WEDNESDAY

Rest day.

### THURSDAY

Morning:

- ▼ Scholarship players have individual work directed by the individual development coach.
- ▼ The training lasts an hour or less.

- ▼ Training is reserved for point guards, shooting guards, and small forwards.
- ▼ Training is focused on individual development of the player.

Afternoon:

- ▼ The team performs specific work following the yearly plan of the team coach.
- ▼ Team works on team concepts (both offense and defense) according to the specific preparation for the next

game.

- ▼ Training lasts two hours.
- ▼ The distribution of the work on half court, half court + fastbreak, full court and game rhythm will be designed by the strength and conditioning coach.
- ▼ The strength and conditioning work will last one hour or less.

### FRIDAY

Morning:

- ▼ Scholarship players have individual workouts directed by the individual development coach.
- ▼ The training lasts one hour or less.
- ▼ Training is reserved only for big men: power forwards and centers.
- ▼ Training is exclusively directed at individual development.

Afternoon:

- ▼ The team performs specific work following the yearly plan of the team coach.
- ▼ The team will work on team concepts without defense in five-on-zero, five-on-five (60 minutes), and shooting (60 minutes).
- ▼ Training lasts two hours.
- ▼ Strength and conditioning work lasts one hour or less.

### SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

Game: Let's play!



### CONCLUSION

Before of the game, the team does 60 minutes of shooting (volume).

The most important questions for each player after the game are: What have I improved on today? Am I a better player this week than I was last week?

If the player feels that he has made improvements over the previous week, that means that the workouts during the week have been properly designed. If the answer is "no," more attention has to be paid in upcoming practice sessions to specific areas of individual player weakness.



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# VILLANOVA SPREAD OFFENSE



Jay Wright



by Jason Donnelly

In his seven seasons as head coach, Wright owns a 148-83 record as head coach at Villanova. Two Wildcats brought to Villanova by Wright, Randy Foye and Kyle Lowry, are now in the NBA. He also coached Team USA to the 2005 World University Games title and spent seven seasons from 1994-2001 as the head coach at Hofstra University, twice leading the Pride to the NCAA Tournament.

Jason Donnelly, a native of Colonia, N.J., is in his fourth year as a member of head coach Jay Wright's staff at Villanova University. He was elevated to assistant coach in September of 2008 after serving three seasons as the manager of basketball operations. Prior to coming to Villanova, he was an assistant coach at Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington, Virginia.

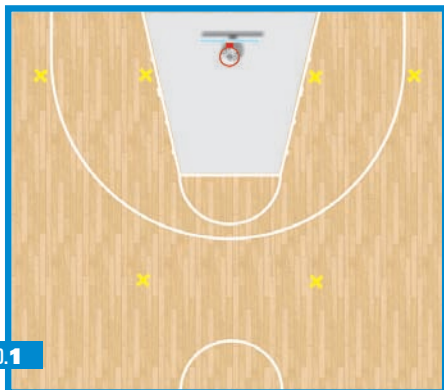
In our Spread Offense we position four players on the perimeter since this gives us great spacing for screening, cutting, post feeds, driving opportunities, and three-point shooting. Spacing along with hard cuts, proper timing, and solid skillful play is a very important part of executing within our four out, one in Spread Offense.

## POSITIONS

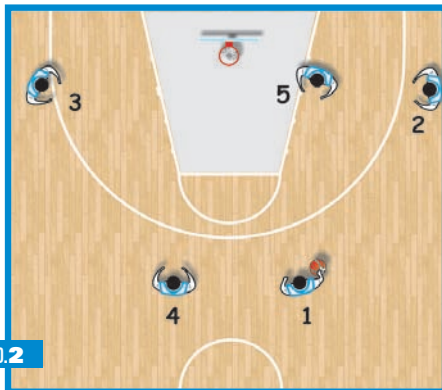
In Spread Offense we play four perimeter players and one post player although our 4



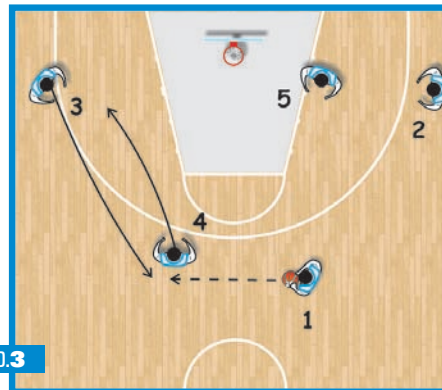




D.1



D.2



D.3



and 5 men are often interchangeable allowing us to alternate who is in the post depending on offensive match-ups.

### SPACING

We have four perimeter spread spots on offense. We mark these spots with an X taped on the floor in practice so our perimeter players understand where they need to be on offense (diagr. 1). We have two perimeter spots on both sides of the baseline directly in line with the block and two perimeter spots in the "slot" about 2 or 3 feet (1 m) outside the free-throw lane. All of these spots are a foot beyond the three-point line and about 18 feet (5,5 m) apart from each other. We feel this creates the ideal spacing for driving and passing lanes. There are two post positions which we call "Primetime". Each is located on the first marker above the block on either side of the lane (diagr. 2). We instruct our post players to straddle the first marker to enable space for them to make moves to the baseline and middle of the floor. Our post spacing also allows our perimeter players to cut, drive, and feed the post along the baseline for more scoring opportunities.

### MOVEMENT

Our four perimeter players can fill any of the four perimeter spread spots. If our guard, starting from the lineup illustrated in diagram 2, passes to the wing and makes a basket cut, our weakside perimeter players will "replace and fill" that spot (diagr. 3 and 4). If our guard dribbles to the wing our baseline perimeter player cuts along the baseline and replaces opposite while the other weakside perimeter players replace and fill open spots (diagr. 5). And on slot to slot passes our guards will automatically exchange on the wings to create weakside action.

### TEACHING POINT

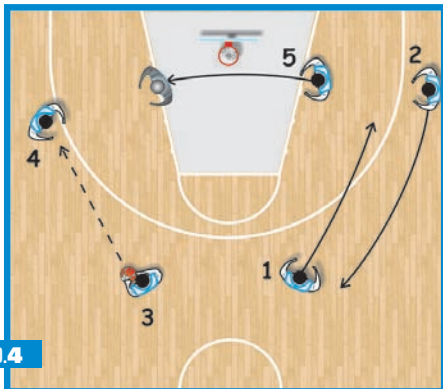
It's important that anytime our players catch the ball on the perimeter they look to catch-and-shoot first, then look to pass or drive the ball. It's important that everyone on the perimeter looks like and can function as a

shooter. Everytime we catch the ball we catch to shoot with our eyes on the rim. This encourages our players to look to score and to see passes in the post and off reversals. Within our Spread Offense we emphasize three areas in which we're looking to score: Post-and-Rip, Drive-and-Space and Screen-and-Roll.

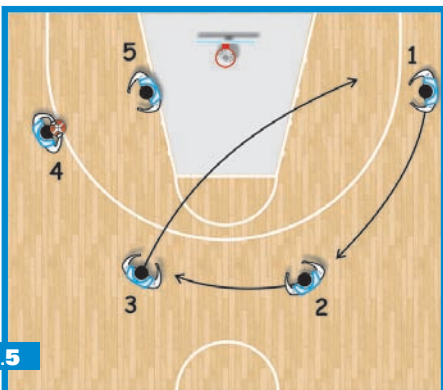
### POST-AND-RIP

Feeding the post is an important aspect of our spread offense. Our post player works for inside position depending on where the ball is on the floor. When the ball is on the baseline our post player will "H-Up" and work for seals in primetime. We instruct our post players to sit low and wide and raise their hands high and wide in the post creating a wall against their defender. If the ball is in the slot, our post player will work to "duck in" in the lane for high-low opportunities. And when the ball is on the opposite wing our post player will "V-Cut" across the lane into primetime (diagr. 6). Once the ball has been entered into the post our post players first look baseline to score and then look middle to explore (diagr. 7). The ball going into the post also initiates a series of cuts we call "post and rip". As 5 looks middle to explore our 4 automatically rips to the opposite block from where ever he is on the floor. As he rips he looks for an interior pass and positions himself for good offensive opportunities on the opposite block. As soon as 4 makes his cut, 3 will rip to the opposite elbow looking for a foul line jumper while also positioning himself for offensive rebounding opportunities (diagr. 8). While this interior action is occurring our remaining two perimeter players (our 1 and 2) will space to the top of the key and weakside wing (diagr. 9), taking away defensive double team opportunities and looking for threes's off reversal passes. When we look for the reversal pass we instruct our players to put the ball in the post, rip, then "skip" (our term for a reversal pass) the ball opposite to our shooters. If 5 isn't able to hit any of the initial cutters, we teach and instruct our players how to "second cut" and replace themselves to another position. For in-

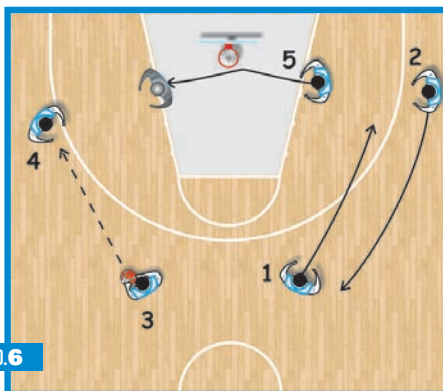




D.4



D.5



D.6

stance, 4 would now second cut to the opposite elbow, while our 3 second cuts to the opposite block. In this situation our guards will also second cut and create action by exchanging on the weakside until a pass or score is made (diagr. 10 and 11). We also teach our players to look inside for seals in the post immediately after receiving an inside-outside pass from the post to the perimeter. On a reversal pass 4, who ripped to the opposite block, can now seal his man and look for inside scoring opportunities (diagr. 12). At this point, 5 replaces him in one of our spread spots and continuity of our spread offense can continue with 4 being interchangeable in the post.

#### DRIVE-AND-SPACE

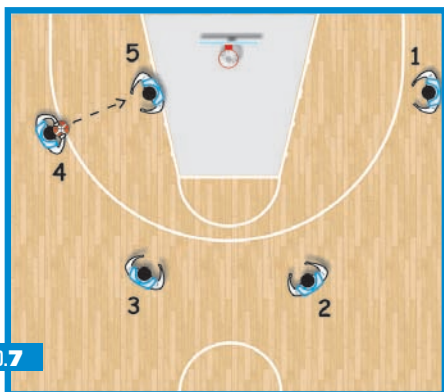
Our Spread Offense also emphasizes drive-and-space as one of the strategies we use to score. Spacing and use of dribble penetration are the most important areas for understanding the way how to attack out of



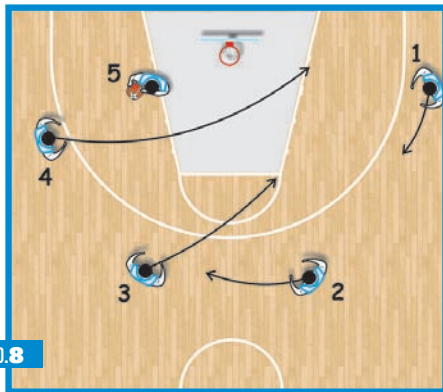
drive-and-space. We use drive-and-space as a strategy to score but also as a method to create movement on the perimeter within our Spread Offense. For instance, when the ball is in the slot, after the first pass (like in diagrams 2 and 3), our guard can dribble towards the baseline wing (diagr. 13) or opposite slot by dribbling directly at that player forcing them to make a "basket cut". As this action occurs, the three other perimeter players will replace and fill open spread spots (diagr. 14). When the ball is on the wing (diagr. 15 and 16), our perimeter players can also use their dribble to attack the baseline to score or to improve their passing angle to the post. Again, as this occurs,

the other guards will replace and fill the open spread spots from behind (diagr. 17). When a drive towards the middle of the floor occurs we will use this as a scoring opportunity similar to how we use a post and rip. We often use our drives to the basket in the same way that we would use a post feed. As a drive occurs and the ball gets to the middle of the lane, we instruct our 5 to "vacate" from primetime and fill the opposite block (diagr. 18). Or if the drive comes from the baseline we teach our post players to vacate to the middle of the lane to again allow ideal passing angles and great rebounding opportunities. As a drive occurs, we teach our three other perimeter

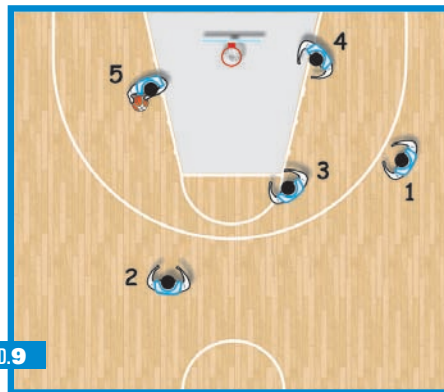




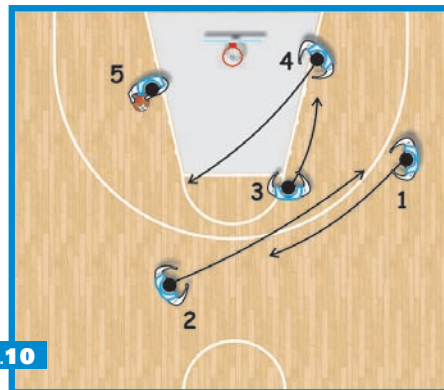
D.7



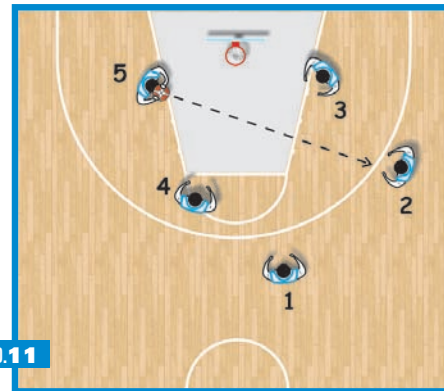
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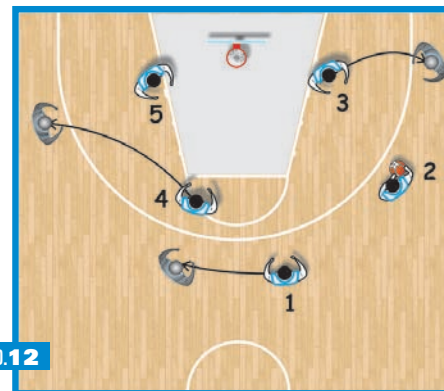
D.9



D.10



D.11

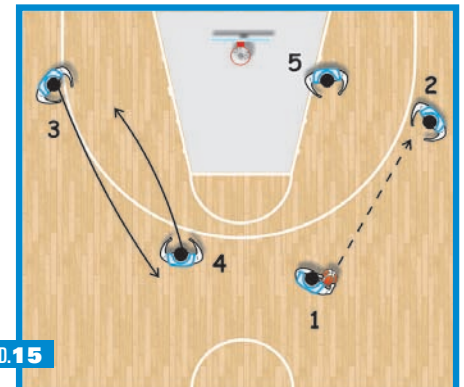
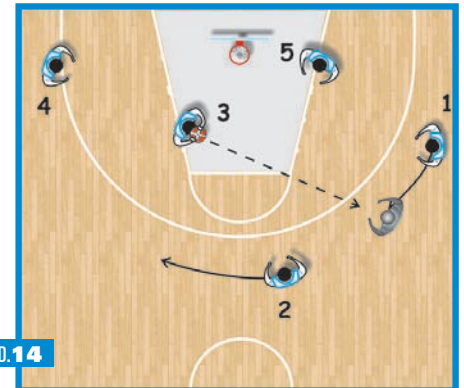
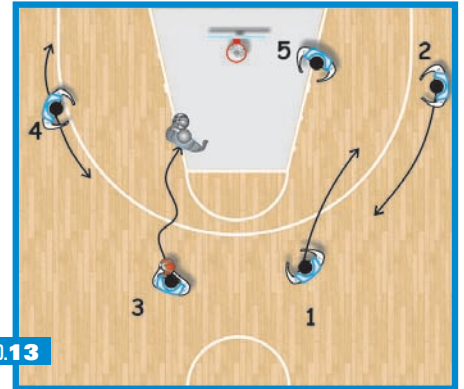


D.12

players to: 1) replace and fill from behind; 2) to get to the top of the key; 3) to find the pass ahead.

When the drive comes from the slot or wing to the middle of the floor, the opposite wing will continue to space and try to stay in the sight line of the driver for an extra pass. However, when the drive comes from the baseline, the opposite wing will look to slide



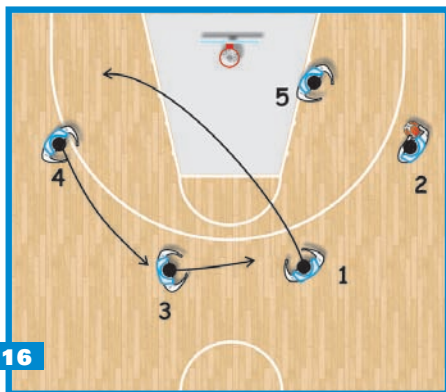


to the opposite corner for skip passes along the baseline for three's. Overall, this movement creates a vacuum effect, allowing our guards to attack the rim, shoot the ball, make passes to the post, or throw ahead or behind to our perimeter players spacing out for three's.

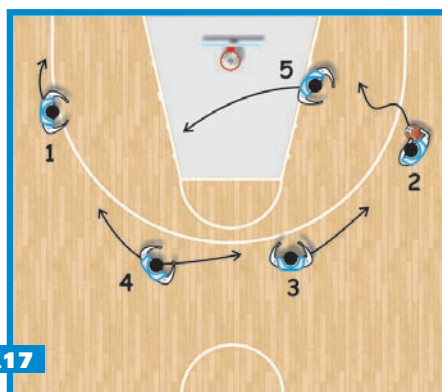
#### SCREEN-AND-ROLL

The third area that we look to score and create movement out of our Spread Offense is through the use of high ball screens. These screens will occur in either slot and can take place at the end of the shot clock or earlier, depending on time and score situations. In order to create the best mismatch in a screen-and-roll situation, we have our 5 starts in the post and sprints to either slot to set a slot ball screen (diagr. 19). We prefer to set this screen in the middle of the floor since it forces the defense to make a decision as to how they will defend this action and allows our play-

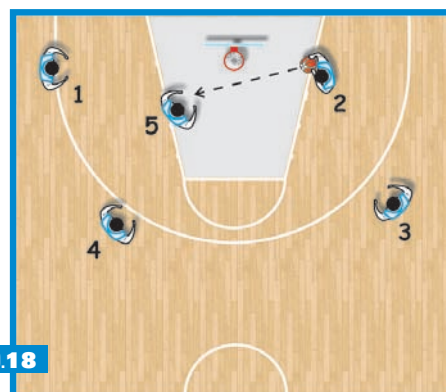




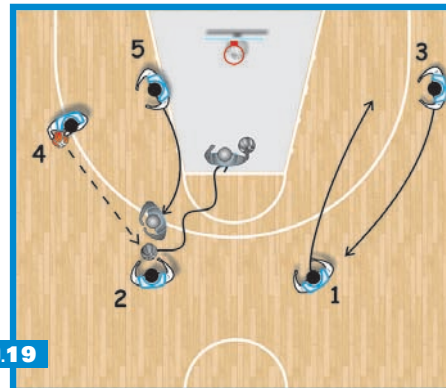
D.16



D.17



D.18



D.19

ers the most amount of space to make a scoring play. When our post player sets this ball screen, he works to angle his body so his back is parallel to the sideline, forcing both defenders to make a decision as to how they will defend the guard with the ball and post player setting the screen. We constantly drill our guards how to use this screen and attack for scoring plays. We also teach our guards how to handle double teams by practicing how to split, drag, and look for slips. Similarly we also drill our post players how to roll, slip, or pop depending on how the ball screen is defended. As this action takes place our weakside wings will exchange to create movement and occupy the weakside defenders. And similar to our drive and space and post and rip once the ball has made it to the middle of the floor a series of cuts and second cuts will occur to maximize our scoring opportunities.

#### CONCLUSION

Our Spread Offense also works hand in hand with our individual improvement program. Every skill we teach and focus upon allows our players to recognize and improve their individual scoring abilities within our offense. It also teaches our players how to play the game of basketball by improving their understanding of post and rip, drive and space, and pick-and-roll opportunities. Finally, since it is a difficult offense to defend it's also a great continuity of offense to defend against in practice.





by Xavi Pascual

Xavi Pascual is currently the head coach of AXA Barcelona. Before joining the technical staff of Barcelona, he coached C. B. Aracena in LEB 2, winning the league title in 2003. In 2005, he became the Barcelona assistant coach, and in February 2008 was promoted to the head coaching job.

Before working on the various strategies we have to defend the direct middle screen, I will first introduce our main objectives for any defense of this particular game situation. They include the following:

**1. Stop the ball**

The defender of the man with the ball has to make sure that his opponent can't play an easy one-on-one on the free side of the screen. Also, he has to be aware of the screen being set and must not be blocked in order to defend the line between his opponent and the basket.

**2. Do not allow the pass to the player rolling after the screen**

With the help the defender of the screener, or even the defender on the opposite side of the ball, we don't allow any easy passes between the two players involved in the two-on-two.

**3. Deny the passing lanes**

Especially on the side where the screen is played, unless we don't think a three-point shot will be taken by the first outside player on the ball side.

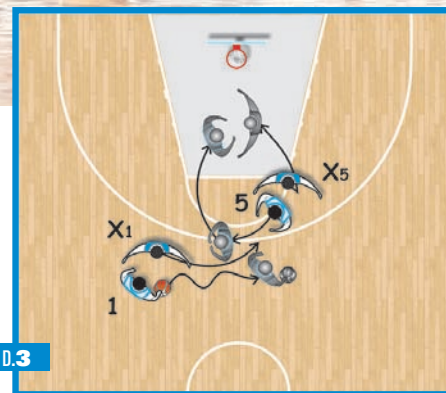
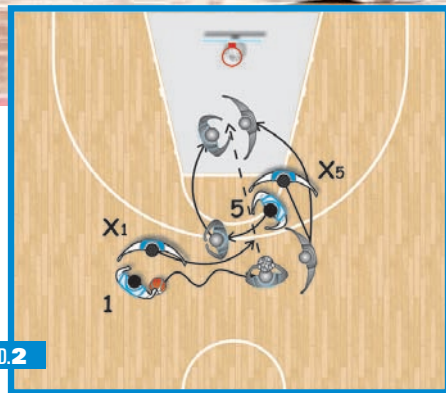
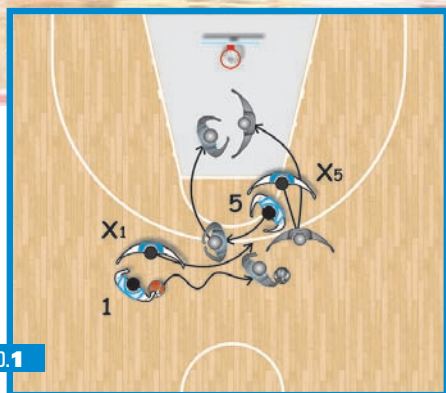
**4. Keep running until we solve our defensive problems**

Unless the offense overcomes one of our first three objectives or it makes a pass to the player we decided not to guard because of the defensive help. We work a lot on one-on-one



# DEFENDING THE DIRECT MIDDLE SCREEN







situations, after the help and recover, to then be intuitive in shot situations or immediate one-on-one.

Starting from this point, and looking at the spots on the court of the offensive players not involved in the two-on-two (and at the technical characteristics of the opponent), we'll think of the best defensive strategy to cover the direct middle screen. Once these three offensive scoring possibilities (the man with the ball, the pass to the player rolling after the screen, and the cover of the other passing lines) of the direct middle screen have been blocked, it will be important to recognize what will be the weak points of our defense.

We have five different defensive possibilities for the direct middle screen:

**1. Going out in line with the screen**

Sliding, preventing the offensive player with the ball from splitting the screen. The defender stays near the ball and attacks with hands down to stop the dribble or prevent a bounce pass. While the hands are up to stop a direct pass and/or a shot, the defender, who gets to the screen, aggressively slides above the screen. The big man recovers when the guard is ready to recover on his man (diagr. 1).

**2. Two-on-one**

The big man slides to stop the ball and the guard slides aggressively above the screen, attacking the ball and maintaining the two-on-one on the player with the ball until he makes the pass. Our big man quickly recovers his man. Our big men switch only if the player with the ball goes very far from the basket and he needs to make a long recover (diagr. 2).

**3. Baseline**

Slide to stop the first shot option, and then move backwards to stop the possible penetration. If the player with the ball drives to the basket, the big man tries to block or change the shot and switch, because the guard has to deny the pass to the screener, who rolls to the basket and then box out (diagr. 3).

**4. Attacking the ball and forcing the player to change his way to the basket**

The defender of the man with the ball goes behind his teammate. The big man recovers on his opponent if the roll after the screen is outside the three-point line. If 5 continues his movement going to the basket, our







defense switches, and the big man will defend on the roll (diagr. 4).

## 5. Switch

Be aggressive with both hands in order to stop the man with the ball. In case of the roll to the basket, the defender can put himself in front of the dribbler to deny an inside pass, or switch with the big man, staying with the offensive center who is now away from the basket (diagr. 5).

Our idea is that while playing the defensive sets explained in the defensive possibilities above (see N. 3 and N. 5), the other defenders are not involved on covering this direct middle screen. On the other hand, we know that playing the other defensive possibilities (see the N. 1, 2, and 4), we'll need the participation of more players to defend the direct middle screen. So we choose among the different defensive options based on the situations that develop on the court:

- ▶ Who is the offensive player who handles the ball in the direct middle screen: if he is a good shooter or a good driver, and his passing skills.
- ▶ The characteristics of the screener: tendency to go on the basket, or getting open, if he has the skills to play with contact or to pass.
- ▶ Position of the rest of the offensive players while a direct middle screen is being played; if there is a situation repeated by the other team and that we already know from scouting: deciding with whom to help with the roll and how to do the following rotations after the help.
- ▶ What is the position of the rest of our defenders, who do not initially cover

this two-on-two situation.

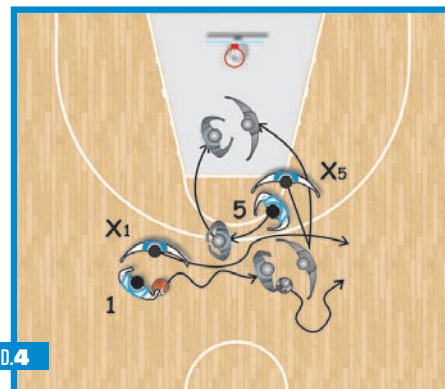
In this way, for the same game we will have different defensive answers for the direct middle screen for any of the above situations.

We'll now examine more closely our options 1, 2 and 4, and we'll build all the defensive situations in a progressive way, starting from a two-on-one and two-on-two to mechanize them, moving then to a three-on-three (with the guard defending on the weak side), four-on-four and, finally, five-on-five.

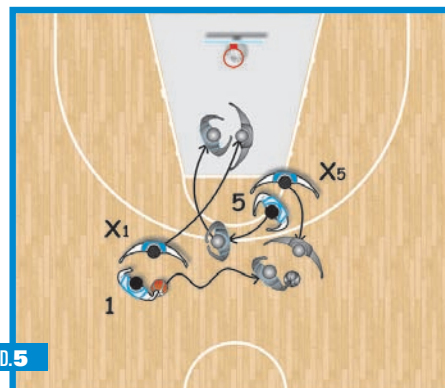
About two-on-one and one-on-one, the priority will be to pay attention to the details previously mentioned for each of the defensive options to reach our first goal: stop the scoring possibilities of the man with the ball.

In three-on-three, we'll put a perimeter player, X3, on the weak side (diagr. 6), who, while the direct middle screen is being played, leaves his man to attack the roll of 5 to the basket, spotting on the line between the offensive player and the basket and putting his arm on the passing line, looking for the offensive foul if he's late, or holding on the one-on-one until the recovery of X5.

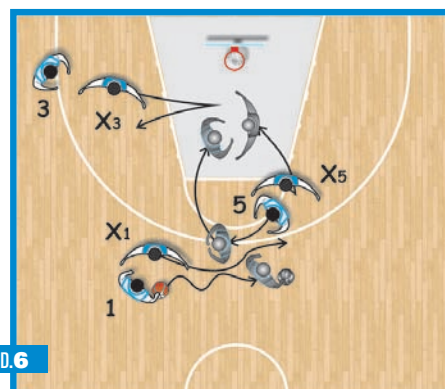
In case the defense stops both the ball and the roll (the two first goals) and the offense makes a lob pass to 3 on the weak side, X3 must sprint when the ball leaves the hands of 1, trying to steal the pass or defend the shot and the one-on-one. The other defenders will have to adjust their position to the ball, changing quickly the side to fulfill our fourth goal (in case they beat us in this one-on-one, keep running until we stop this dangerous situation for our defense).



D.4



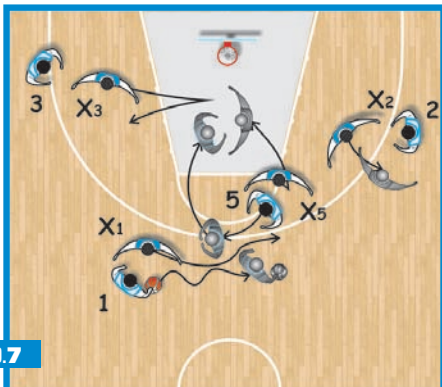
D.5



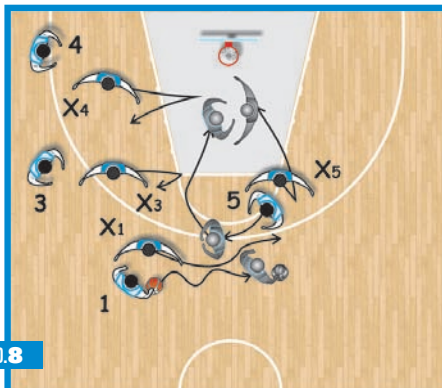
D.6

Once this concept has been assimilated, we add the fourth player. If we put him on the ball side, this will mechanize the "no help" from the strong side if 1 finds the way to the basket. At most, we'll allow our defender to fake and recover on the passing line (with the body perpendicular to the line of the possible pass from 1 to 2). Then, we'll develop the same work already done for the three-on-three, with the four-on-four (diagr. 7). However, we'll focus our work of four-on-four with two defenders on the weak side, that is from where we want to stop the direct middle screen. In diagram 8, we attack with 3 on the wing and 4 near the baseline, either outside or in the low post. While playing the direct middle screen, X3 will have to move to face 5, deny the direct pass inside, and keep him from going to the basket, until he reaches the free-throw line, and then to recover against 3 and defend this first

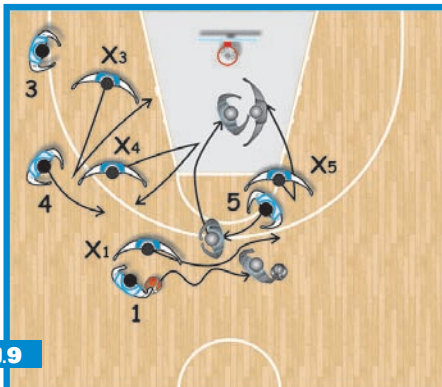




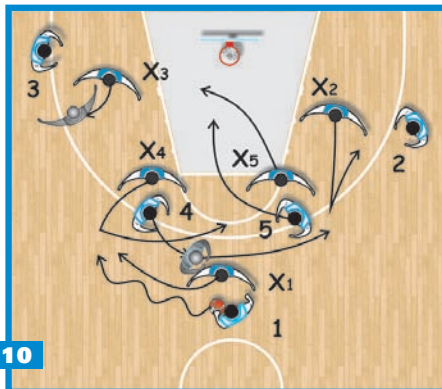
D.7



D.8



D.9



D.10

passing line. If 5 drives to the basket, it will be the other defender on the weak side, X4, who will be involved and defend against the roll of 5, trying to deny the pass or to defend one-on-one near the basket.

If the play is finishing with X4 defending on the ball, X5 will switch, boxing out 4; otherwise X5 will recover against his man 5.



In case of a different set with 4 out on the wing or with two big men starting up high, we will have a different defensive answer (diagr. 9).

X4 will be the one involved in the roll of 5 to the basket, leaving his man until X5 has recovered after having stopped the player with the ball. In this pause of the direct middle screen, X3 will be the one, who will defend against the possible pass to 4, who will keep an open position for shooting or creating a triangle with 5. X3's job will be the same as in the previous situation. In case the ball goes into his hands, we will have to react as explained before.

Also, we can find another situation with a screen set by 4, who is a player with a tendency to stay outside and play one-on-one facing the basket (diagr. 10).

In this situation, if 5 goes down to take a spot close to the basket after the direct middle screen, X4 will now have to stop the ball (following our rules, we will choose the above options N.1 or N.4) and he will recover on the flare cut after the screen of his opponent.

He will deny the passing possibility, with X2 defending on the passing line for 4, or faking and recovering with X4, if 4 is a player that we don't consider a dangerous three-point shooter.





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by Raffaele Imbrogno

# MARCH MADNESS 2009

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

*"The only true fact is that without madness, any type of pleasure couldn't exist." In Praise of Folly - Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam*

We are now in the middle of March Madness, by now a well-recognized worldwide basketball event. The 64 (plus one) American university teams are giving life to one of the most important events on the basketball calendar. This year's Final Four will be in Detroit on April 6th. The best teams arrive at their final destination, after having fought their way through the classic "stations": regional games and then the National semifinals. The Women's Final Four will be held in St. Louis on April 7th. Who will be the winner of the 2009 NCAA championship? It's hard to answer. The President of the United States, Barack Obama, as longtime basketball player and fan, predicted that the final game will be between the Louisville Cardinals and the North Carolina Tar Heels. President Obama, who recently participated in a practice session with the Tar Heels, predicted that Roy Williams' team will win the championship. What will Rick Pitino think about that? One thing is certain: March Madness and the Final Four offer spectators great basketball played by some of the best college teams in America: UNC, Louisville, UConn, Pittsburgh. And for you coaches, who are not able to see any of the games, you can experience the coaching wisdom of most of these coaches by purchasing one of their coaching DVDs that have been released by Championship Productions. Check them out.

On the left part of the 2009 NCAA bracket, we have Michigan State with its coach Tom Izzo, author of the DVD "Quick Strikes & Warm Up Drills for Winning Basketball." Coach Izzo's DVD includes 76 minutes di-

*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.*



vided in two sections. In the first section, the coach explains which concepts guide him in drawing his offensive sets (thumb down, "loop" series), and in the second section he describes, using a multipurpose drill (O'Neill drill), a summary of his defensive set. The communication between the players, the ability to make a decision, the attention focused on following offensive transitions, and conditioning are all included in one of his drills. You can order this special DVD on the Internet at

[http://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/p/Basketball/TomIzzo-Quick-Strikes-Warm-Up-Drills-for-Winning-Basketball\\_BD-03228.html](http://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/p/Basketball/TomIzzo-Quick-Strikes-Warm-Up-Drills-for-Winning-Basketball_BD-03228.html).

On the right side of the 2009 NCAA bracket, we find Gonzaga University, coached by Mark Few. If Gonzaga wins in the early round games, they will probably find themselves facing Coach Williams and the North Carolina press defense. In this case, Coach Few surely must use the





strategy he describes in his DVD "Scoring Against Pressure Defense." In 63 minutes, the Bulldogs' coach teaches the various options he uses against any

type of mid-court press defense: use of screens on the ball; leave the mid-court open for more space for drives to the basket; use of backdoor cuts; and much more. Coach Few describes how he teaches these concepts, starting from 5-on-0 and finishing with the 5-on-5. You can order this DVD on the Internet at [http://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/p/Basketball/Mark-Few-Scoring-Against-Pressure-Defense\\_BD-03224.html](http://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/p/Basketball/Mark-Few-Scoring-Against-Pressure-Defense_BD-03224.html).

I have saved two great novelties from Championship Productions for the end. These are DVD sets consisting of live filming at the training sessions of two of the most famous coaches in college basketball, both of them who happen to coach at the University of Connecticut (UConn): Geno Auriemma (women's basketball) and Jim Calhoun (men's basketball). In the first set of 4 DVDs, "All Access Practice with Geno Auriemma," which stretches to over 400 minutes, Coach

Auriemma, whose teams have won the NCAA Championship five times, helps create a rare pearl, not only for women's basketball coaches but for fans of the "triangle" offense.

In the second set of 3 DVDs, "All Access Practice with Jim Calhoun," you can see the UConn pre-season work-outs in which coach Calhoun plans his offense and defense, paying particular attention to the 2-2-1 pressing defense.

These last two videos represent a radical change in the production of technical material for coaches. Finally, we leave the hotels' halls and the clinics' courts to go directly where these coaches work "day-by-day" with great results. You can order these two DVD sets on the Internet at <http://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/p/Basketball/>

[All-Access-Practice-with-Geno-Auriemma\\_BD-03203.html](http://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/p/Basketball/All-Access-Practice-with-Geno-Auriemma_BD-03203.html);  
[http://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/p/Basketball/All-Access-Practice-with-Jim-Calhoun\\_BD-03202.html](http://www.championshipproductions.com/cgi-bin/champ/p/Basketball/All-Access-Practice-with-Jim-Calhoun_BD-03202.html).

If you have television or Internet access, enjoy the Final Four. We will see if the great Rick Pitino -who recently wrote "Rebound Rules - The Art of Success 2.0"- surprises everybody by winning it all, especially President Obama.







**FIBA**

We Are Basketball



by Alexey Chudin

**Alexey Chudin graduated from the Moscow State Academy of Physical Education and his graduate studies focused on the preparation of referees in Russia. He has been a national referee since 2001.**

Basketball is a game that is growing in popularity around the world and particularly in Russia. The previous Eurobasket, World Championship, and Olympic Games also showed the great interest in the game on the part of spectators. Today's basketball players are quicker, more explosive, and unpredictable and this has certainly captured the imagination of the spectators. The official rules are changing slightly to keep up with the modern players. Every four years FIBA approves new modifications of rules and mechanics and every year it approves new interpretations of some rules. All of this makes the job of referees ever more complicated. We need to be up to date with all changes in order to be the best officials.

One of the important aspects of basketball officiating that gets little attention is the physical preparation of a referee. Every professional basketball player knows that being physically well prepared allows him a chance to best maximize his abilities on the court. Well, the same applies to a basketball referee.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR REFEREES





Our two and three-man officiating teams have to run almost as much as the players on the court. In addition, we have to quickly take positions that allow us to see the spaces between players, and pick up on the holding and grabbing and other sorts of personal fouls being committed that may not always be visible to spectators. We also have to be the first down court on fast breaks in order to correctly analyze the situation. We are always on the move during a game. One of our most experienced ref-







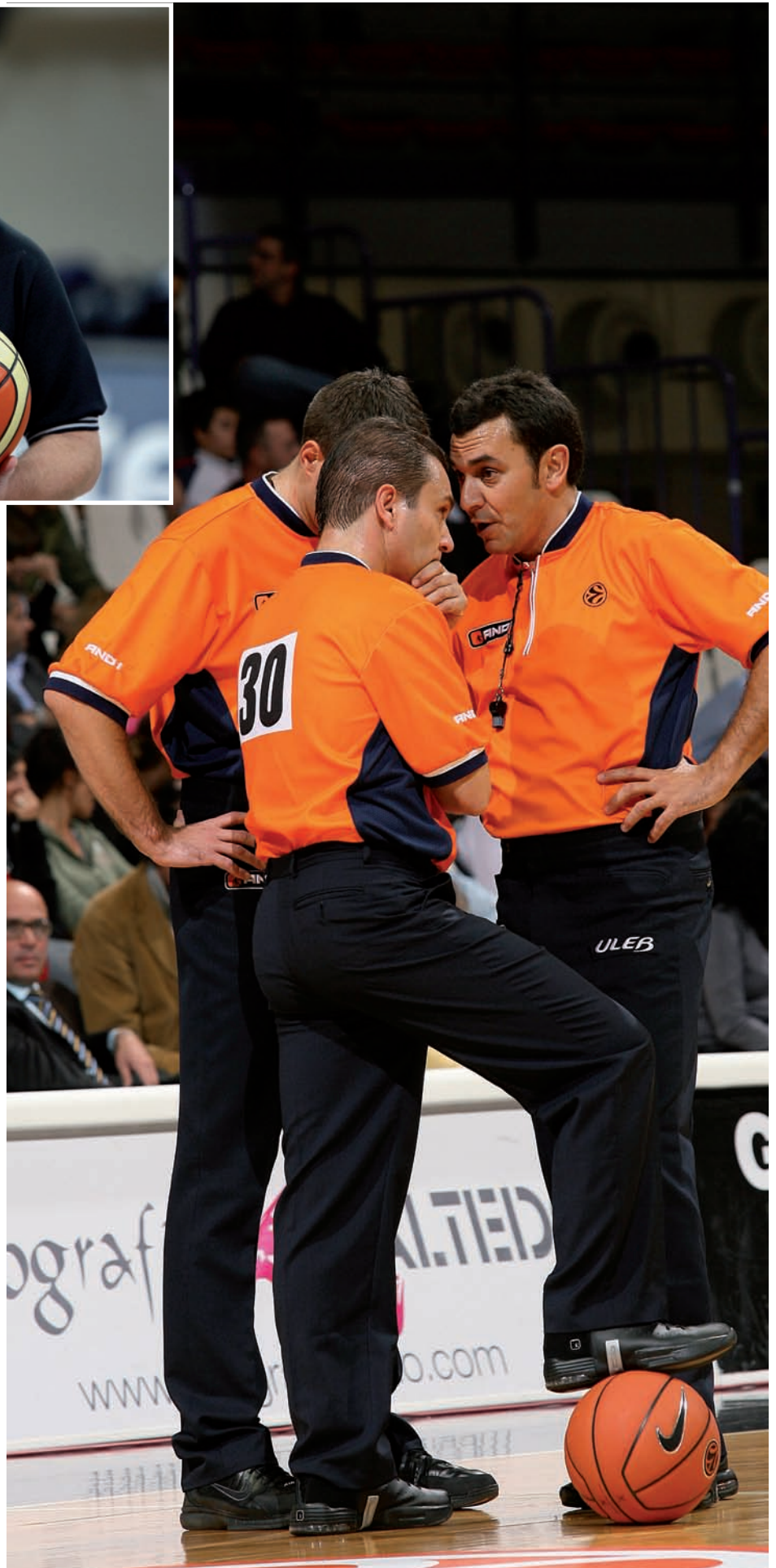
erees, Mikhail Davydov, FIBA referee and member of the FIBA World Technical Commission, once noted: "Poor feet - poor officiating." And he is correct. If you are not able to run quickly and get to your spots on the court throughout the entire game, you will never be able to officiate effectively.

In analyzing the topics at national and international basketball referees' clinics, one of the most important subjects that is always covered is the physical preparation of the referees. But, is it really that important that you improve your physical skills? Isn't it enough to have the speed and endurance achieved during the pre-season preparation?

Actually, it is not enough. There is much more to be done, and it all happens before a game begins.

Like every physical exercise that starts with warming up, the preparation before the game for a referee should also start with a good warm-up. It is very important to prepare your body for high physical stress by stretching the muscles and loosening the joints. Stretching helps to prepare muscles for lengthy physical activity and can prevent injury. This warm-up phase should be no less than 10 to 15 minutes, with 5 to 7 minutes spent running to different parts of the court at varying speeds. If possible, the referee should run 2-5 10-meter sprints just before the game starts. All the players are well warmed up, eager to start the game, and they are quick and fast. The pre-game sprints will get you ready for the fast-paced game that is just about to start.

What do many referees do while players are warming up? They stand on the court watching the players. They are





standing still, not moving. They certainly won't be ready for the first quick attack made by a team. And this is not a good start to a game for the referees, and certainly not for the players. A small research study recently carried out during the Russian Championships with 60 referees showed the importance

	NUMBER OF TIMES (AVG.)	SPEED (AVG.)
20 meters	127	4.1 sec
15 meters	21	4.3 sec
8 meters	54	3.5 sec
5 meter	18	Fast walking
One-hand gesticulation	117	
Two-hand gesticulation	71	
Heart Beating	average 170 b/s	



of physical preparation. Each referee was outfitted with a heart rate monitor to measure heart rate throughout the game. Every game was recorded and the distance covered on the court and the speed of the referees was measured.

According to the study of three-man referee teams, a referee usually runs distances of 5, 8, 15, and 20 meters. The maximum distance a referee runs is 20 meters, which he runs 127 times for an average of 4 seconds. The total distance covered is 2,540 meters for 8 minutes. The referees run 21-15 meter sprints at an average of 4.3 seconds. They covered approximately 315 meters for 90 seconds, and it basically entailed running from the court to the scorers' table to note fouls.

The 8-meter sprints were typically covered by a referee in 3.5 seconds and they did this 54 times, on average, dur-

ing a game. The 5-meter runs typically consisted of fast walking in order to get a good position on the court.

On average, every referee on court covered 2,985 meters for an elapsed time of 11 minutes. During the warm up, heart rates were 140 beats per minute on average, with heart rates that went as high as 180 beats per minute during the game. Referees also used one or both hands when officiating to show what is going on the court.

This small research study points out that the referee is on the go during a game and that being ready to move at full speed at the start of every game is necessary in order to best officiate a match.



# RIGHT OR WRONG?

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

1. A5's throw-in passes through the team B basket without having been touched by a player on the court. Shall team A now be awarded a substitute throw-in at the place of the original throw-in?
2. A5 is awarded one free-throw. While the ball is in the air on the free-throw, A2 and B2 commit a double foul. The ball does not touch the basket ring or enter the basket on the free-throw. Shall play resume with a throw-in for team B?
3. On the jump ball, A2 in the team A backcourt gains control of the legally tapped ball and accidentally scores in his team's own basket. Shall the goal be cancelled?
4. Following a B2 dribble violation, but before the ball can be awarded to team A for a throw-in, A5 commits a technical foul. Is A5's foul a team control foul?
5. A3 commits a technical foul. Additional technical fouls are then committed by coach A and then by coach B. Shall the penalties for the coach A and coach B fouls be cancelled?
6. On the jump ball, B5 commits a foul after the ball has been tossed by the referee, but before it has been legally tapped. Has B5's foul occurred during an interval of play?
7. In the last minute of the 4th period, A3 causes the ball to go out-of-bounds. Team A then is granted a time-out. Following the time-out, shall the team B throw-in be administered at the free-throw line extended, opposite the scorer's table?
8. B2 commits an unsportsmanlike foul against A2, after which team A is awarded a time-out. When play resumes, A2 is not successful in either of his free throw attempts. Before the remaining throw-in resulting from the B2 foul, coach A requests another time-out. Shall the time-out be granted?
9. During a team A time-out, A8 reports to the scorer to enter the game as a substitute for A3. Before the end of the time-out period, A3 commits a technical foul. Shall A3's foul count toward the penalty situation in that period?
10. Must an unsportsmanlike foul always involve contact with an opposing player?

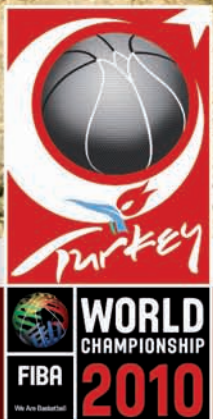
## ANSWERS

1. No (Art. 17.3.1, 17.4)
2. Yes (Art. 42)
3. No (Art. 16.2.2)
4. No (Art. 41.2.2)
5. No (Art. 42.2.3 The penalty for A3's technical foul and the penalty for the coach B technical foul shall be cancelled)
6. Yes (Art. 8.6, 12.4.8)
7. No (Art. 17.2.3, 3rd bullet)
8. Yes (Art. 18.2.43)
9. No (Art. 4.2.3)
10. Yes (Art. 36.1.1)





# 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 Scott O'Neil

# MSG: WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS ARENA

Scott O'Neil was named president, Madison Square Garden Sports on July 29, 2008 and oversees all aspects of business operations for the three sports teams, the New York Knicks, Rangers and Liberty, as well as the Sports Properties area, which includes college and high school basketball, boxing, track and field and all other sports events. He also spearheads sponsorship sales for the teams, arena and all arena events and is focused on expanding the Garden's portfolio of events, franchises and properties. Scott was previously at the National Basketball Association, where, as senior vice president, he oversaw the league's team marketing and business operations. He also oversaw the NBA's Canadian Business and the NBA Development League.

Michael Jordan once called it, "the mecca of basketball." Evander Holyfield said, "You're happy to get the opportunity to fight here... that's how you become a part of what they call history." Wayne Gretzky echoed the sentiments of many other athletes when he referred to it as "the greatest arena, with a unique energy and electricity every time you're there." And Elton John once said, "This is without a doubt the most exciting venue in the world, bar none, to play...it's a magical place."

Universally recognized as the world's most famous arena, Madison Square Garden opened its doors in 1879 and lives up to its moniker by continuing to embrace generations of fans, who come to express their pride and passion for the biggest and best known names in sports and entertainment. For marketing partners, Madison Square Garden strives to create access to powerful interactive opportunities, which combine the thrill of sporting events and the joy of entertainment with the unrivaled historic pedigree of the building itself.

In a challenging economic environment, it is important for brands to maximize marketing dollars through optimal partner-





ships. MSG is the only major sports and entertainment venue in Manhattan and we are seeing a real “flight to quality.” MSG offers one-stop-shopping for companies looking to deliver unique experiences. Located in the heart of New York City and above Penn Station, the country’s busiest transportation hub, no other venue is more easily accessible and offers as wide a range of events and distribution channels to inspire a specific demographic group or a broad array of consumers.

In 2008, Madison Square Garden hosted

four million guests and more than 250 sports and entertainment events, making it the busiest venue in the United States. With on-premises event space that includes its 19,000 seat arena, 5,600 seat WaMu Theater and 36,000 square foot Expo Center, MSG is an ideal partner for organizations that share the same values and are excited about providing powerful experiences for customers and a passionate fan-base.

In addition to the arena complex, Madison Square Garden (or MSG as it is affection-

ately called) is comprised of several properties:

▼ MSG Sports includes the New York Knicks (NBA), the NY Rangers (NHL), the NY Liberty (WNBA) and the Hartford Wolf Pack (American Hockey League). This division also encompasses college basketball, elite boxing matches, marquee track and field, and has expanded significantly the last few years. 2008 saw the return of tennis with the NetJets Showdown, a sold-out tennis match featuring Pete Sam-





pras and Roger Federer, as well as the addition of the Tyson American Cup gymnastics event and the second year of the popular Professional Bull Riders Invitational.

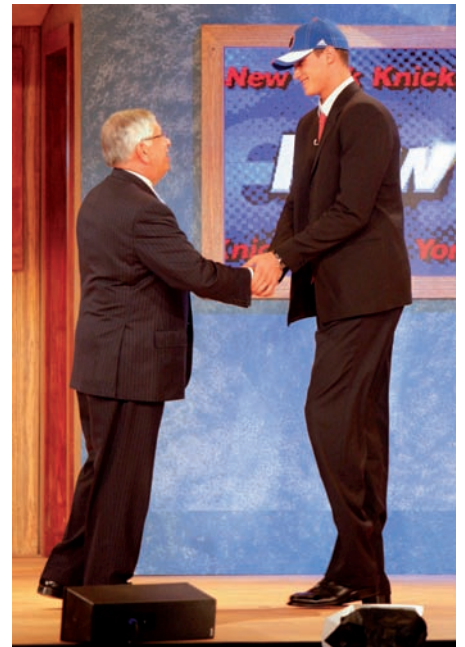
- ▼ MSG Entertainment (MSGE) includes concerts and events at the historic Radio City Music Hall, MSG, The WaMu Theater at MSG, the Beacon Theatre, and the legendary Chicago Theatre. MSGE also manages wholly-owned live entertainment properties, including the Radio City Rockettes and the Radio City Christmas Spectacular.
- ▼ MSG Media is comprised of television networks MSG, MSG Plus and Fuse, the only national music television network, as well as MSG Interactive, and it oversees all company television, wireless and online initiatives which cover the entire NY DMA of 25 million homes.

MSG events can be distributed and promoted via the two in-house television networks to expand exposure to a very large consumer base. For example, this year we introduced a new program called "The Road to MSG" that chronicled different music acts in advance of the "Jingle Ball" concert which took place at MSG. Additionally, any event that takes

place at The Garden can be promoted through MSG Media, the collection of 16 different websites, blogs and social networks reaching nearly two million unique visitors per month. MSG also offers marketers visibility on our video marquees with signage which are positioned on two New York City avenues and seen by 1.7 million people each day.

A potential partner can find a number of different options, suitable for any budget at MSG: television, radio, print, online, signage, tickets, and promotions. All partnerships are customized to fit your needs and each Garden team exhibits its own personality, energy and attitude – providing partners choices that best fit their respective brands.

- ▼ The Knicks, who drafted Danilo Gallinari in the 2008 NBA Draft, are rich in history, heritage and passion, and have an exciting future built around new coach Mike D'Antoni's fast-paced offensive style. As one of the most successful NBA coaches over the last five years, D'Antoni is also an Italian League legend as both player and coach. He was the country's premier guard for 13 years with Milan, leading them to five Italian League ti-



tles, two Cups of Europe, one Korac Cup, and one Intercontinental Cup. As head coach, D'Antoni led Benetton Treviso and Phillips Milan for eight seasons and was named Coach of the Year twice.

- ▼ The Rangers have a storied reputation built on tradition, pride and teamwork and are supported by fiercely







passionate and loyal fans. The team is currently in the midst of a sell-out streak which exceeds 135 games. In the last three seasons, the Rangers have thrilled fans with energetic hockey and returned to the Stanley Cup playoffs; the international roster includes players from Sweden, the Czech Republic, Russia, Finland, and Ukraine.

▼ The Liberty offers affordable basketball and family entertainment to a diverse and devoted fan base. The team made history last season by hosting the first professional regular season outdoor game at Arthur Ashe Stadium, which normally hosts tennis. All team members are playing in Europe during the off-season.

We are enthusiastic about working with our partners to customize marketing packages. For example, American Express provides card members with access to unique experiences in sports and entertainment at MSG through early ticket on-sales, special Membership Rewards experiences like Zamboni [the ice resurfacing machine] rides and the Ultimate Tour, a new offering that will give a group of card members the most exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of MSG with a roster of Knicks and Rangers greats.

Another example is the T-Mobile "Ultimate Fan" promotion which celebrates the passion of Knicks fans and provides a way for them to "stick together" with the team. The promotion runs in-arena and online at [www.knicksnet.com](http://www.knicksnet.com) through the end of the season. Also new this season is the T-mobile "Fave 5" ticket package, the first ever offering of any five Knicks games for \$99, with buyers receiving a fun Knicks/T-Mobile sweatshirt. This fall, Madison Square Garden is set to undergo a state-of-the-art renovation which will further enhance the building's, offerings with a new lobby, wider concourses, brand new luxury boxes, and an array of amenities that will make the building an even more powerful marketing tool. MSG is currently looking for one Marquee Partner and a few Signature Partners to share the joy and excitement of the renovation right from the beginning. The popularity of new premium seating and hospitality opportunities the last two seasons underscores the tremendous interest in a VIP association with MSG. A relationship with MSG would not be complete without understanding the importance of our charitable endeavors. Community outreach has long been a priority and we are enormously proud of our company-wide commitment

to the Garden of Dreams Foundation. Garden of Dreams showcases MSG's unique approach to philanthropy, leveraging the power, access and reach of Madison Square Garden to create unique and unforgettable activities which bring joy to children in crisis. These experiences often involve unprecedented access to MSG celebrities, events and venues, and to date 90,000 children have benefited. We believe this is one more reason why our partners take pride in the relationship. For millions of people each year, Madison Square Garden is more than a destination, sports teams, television networks, and events. It has the privilege of occupying a mythical position within the heart of the most important city in the world and is a collection of diverse and powerful sports and entertainment brands. During a time when companies are looking to get the most value from their marketing dollars, we urge them to leverage the magic of MSG and create an association with the world's most famous arena.

*For more information on becoming a Madison Square Garden partner, please contact Ron Skotarczak, SVP, Sales, at 001 (212) 465-6530 or [Ron.Skotarczak@thegarden.com](mailto:Ron.Skotarczak@thegarden.com)*

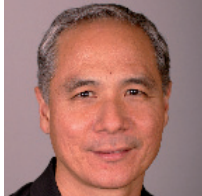




FIBA

We Are Basketball

# 5 KEYS TO HIGH PERFORMANCE TRAINING



by Darryl Eto

Darryl Eto is presently Senior Performance Specialist at Athletes' Performance, a world-class performance training company with locations in Tempe, Arizona, Los Angeles, California and Gulf Breeze, Florida. Over the course of his 25-year career, Darryl has successfully worked with developing high school athletes, collegiate All-Americans, and professionals in American football, basketball, baseball, hockey, track and field, and tennis.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last 20 years, basketball has changed. Players are bigger, stronger, faster, and more powerful. Play is much more physical. And longer seasons mean more games. No doubt, the game has evolved. But have your training programs?

At Athletes' Performance, we often see elite-level basketball players that lack decent core stability. Some athletes can jump out of the gym, but can't land without their knees caving in. While the game has become more physically demanding, the number of injuries has increased.

Proper conditioning can significantly reduce the risk of injury and improve performance, but the most critical areas and movements to develop are often the ones nobody wants to train.

What follows are five underrated elements of basketball training. Work on them consistently with your athletes to improve strength, stability, mobility, power and ultimately, their performance on the court.







1

## 1. CORE STABILITY

One of the best ways basketball players can help protect themselves from the physical punishment of the game is to focus on the core, or more importantly, the pillar. Your pillar encompasses the muscles of the hip, shoulder girdle and torso, all working together as a functional unit. The core, in the center of your pillar, is the foundation upon which all movement occurs. When the core muscles work in a smooth and synchronized manner, they help maintain correct spinal and pelvic alignment while the arms and legs are moving. Core stability also allows the body to prevent collapse and return to symmetrical balance after movement. In other words, strengthening this area can help a player develop greater body control on the court, hopefully decreasing their potential for injury.



2

**Why it's often overlooked:** Training the core is typically not something a basketball player feels will affect his game. It's not like performing plyometrics to improve jumping ability where it's easy to see how the exercise relates to performance on the court.

**How to improve it:** A common misconception is that doing sit-ups and crunches is all you need to train your core, but that only trains one portion of the core in one plane of movement. Here's a sampling of exercises that develop all muscles from the hips to shoulders:

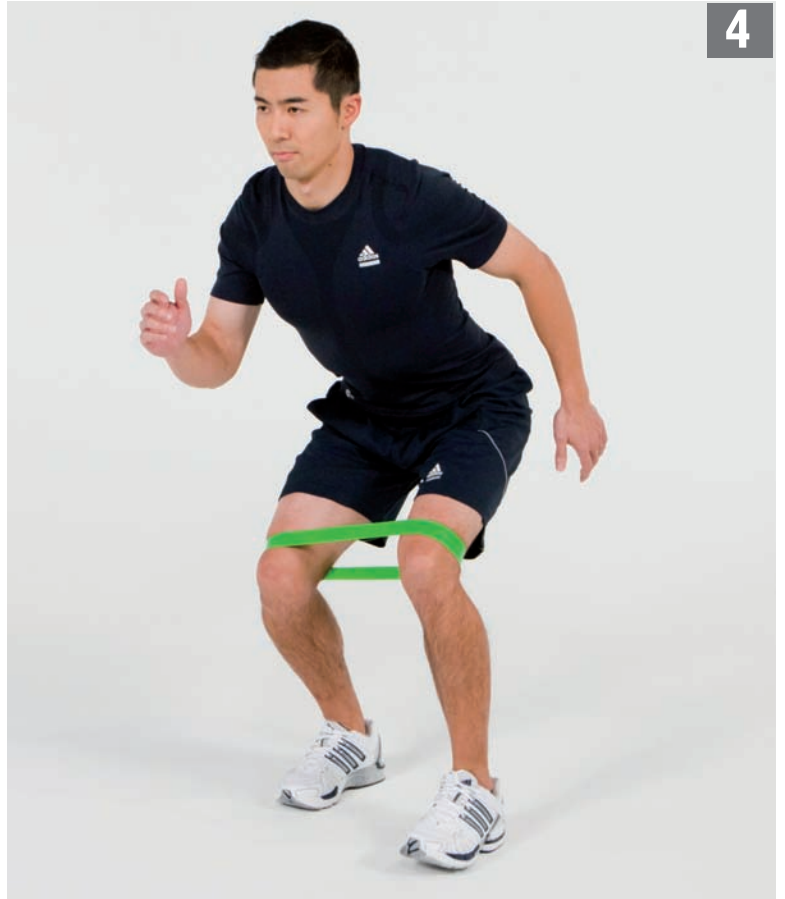
- ▼ Body weight exercise: Prone Pillar Bridge, Side Pillar Bridge (photo 1), Glute Bridge (photo 2).



3



4



5



- ▼ Loaded exercises: Stability Cable Lift, Stability Cable Chop (photo 3).
- ▼ Total-body integration: Perpendicular and parallel medicine ball throws.

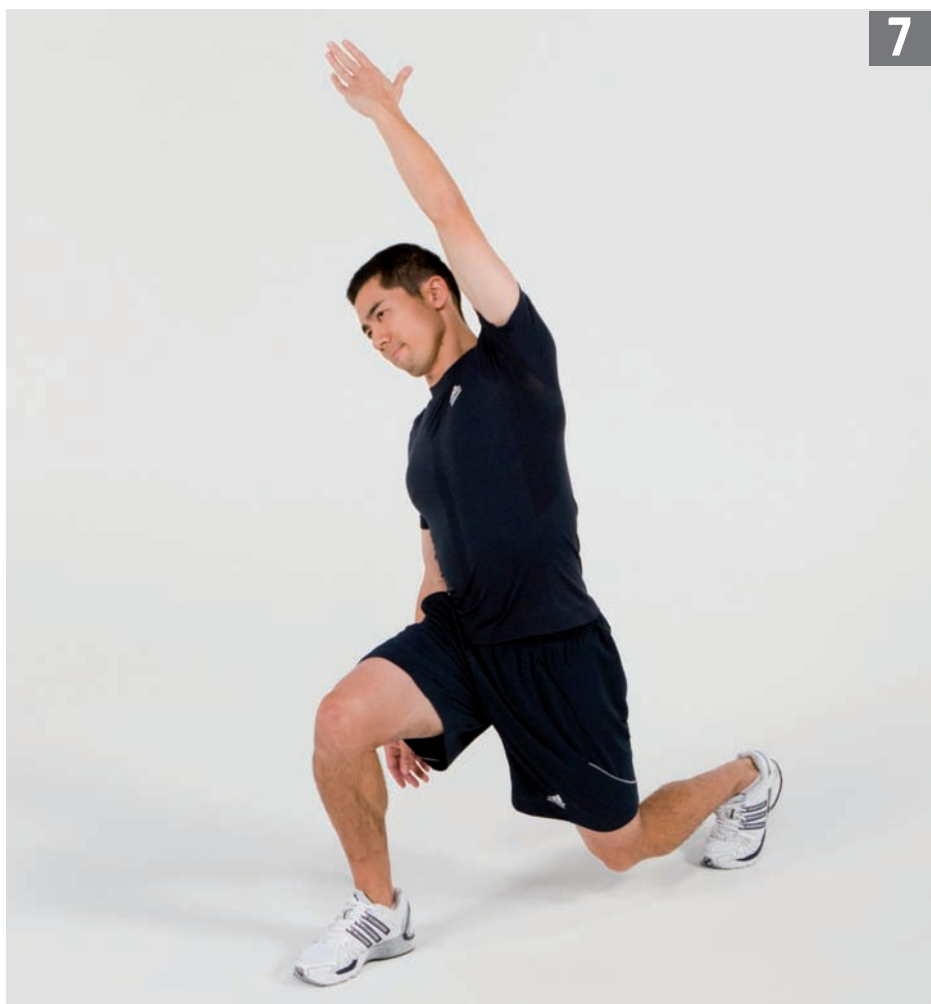
Incorporate these exercises into your program, and then apply the same principles used in the weight room to practice during movement skill drills—moving without the ball, shuffling, sprinting, and so on. That way, athletes improve awareness of proper back and hip position on the court as well.

## 2. HIP STABILITY

The constant running, jumping and change of direction in basketball places tremendous stress on the knees one reason knee tendonitis is so common. Another source of knee problems is a lack of hip stability. The muscles of the hip, especially the gluteus medius, help control the femur (upper thigh bone) and guide proper knee alignment. Each time the foot contacts the floor, whether from running, jumping or cutting, the foot, knee and hip should be aligned. But, instability through the hips, can cause the knee to misalign.

Think of it this way: If the elbow flares out during shooting, it'll affect the accuracy of the shot, right? One part of





the body disrupts another. Well, if the hip muscles don't stabilize properly, then the hip tends to jut out while the knee collapses and rotates inward with each foot contact. What's more, running, jumping and cutting can create forces of more than 3 to 5 times your bodyweight. As this happens over and over again, the patellar tendon can become irritated and inflamed, causing pain and potentially injury.

**Why it's often overlooked:** Training the hip stabilizing muscles can be tedious and challenging. The exercises require concentration to maintain proper form and alignment. They can also be uncomfortable because the muscles of the hip, when challenged through various routines, fatigue to the point of discomfort or "burn."

**How to improve it:** Here's a sampling of movements to include in your program:

- ▼ Isolation exercises: Mini Band Linear Bent Leg Walking (photo 4), Mini Band Lateral Bent Leg Walking.
- ▼ Total-body integration: Mini-Band Squat - 2 Leg and 1 Leg (photos 5 and 6).
- ▼ Stability Jumps and Hops.





### 3. HIP MOBILITY

The ability to get into a low, defensive stance is a fundamental position for basketball players. But constantly being in this defensive stance can shorten the muscles of the hip, especially the hip flexor muscles (iliopsoas, tensor fascia latae, rectus femoris), making them less flexible.

When these muscles become tight, an athlete's gluteal muscles can actually become inhibited, limiting hip extension and jumping ability, as a result. But the human body is so adroit at compensating that it will substitute other muscles to create movement. Since proper hip extension is vital for running and jumping, many times the player will use his back muscles instead of the hip or gluteal muscles to perform these movements. This can lead to spine problems because the back is not meant to perform this function.

A regular flexibility and mobility routine will help avoid these compensations from occurring and will counteract hip tightness.

**Why it's often overlooked:** Stretching in general can be tedious and sometimes uncomfortable for players. Left to their own routine, players will typically prepare for practice with light shooting and drill work. Rarely will you see ath-

letes stretching on their own without a coach overseeing their actions. In the cases when they do stretch, it's because they are sore or tight. It is rare when a specific flexibility/mobility routine is instituted as part of a preventative program.

**How to improve it:** Implement a regular flexibility and mobility routine as part of a preventative program, and include the following movements:

- ▼ Soft tissue release: Foam Roll TFL; Foam Roll IT Band.
- ▼ Flexibility: 1/2 Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch; 1/2 Kneeling Quad/Hip Flexor Stretch.
- ▼ Dynamic mobility: Back Lunge with Twist (photo 7); World's Greatest Stretch (photo 8).

### 4. ANKLE MOBILITY

Ankle sprains are very common in basketball. The ligaments of the ankle become stretched or torn, the area swells with fluid or edema, muscles that surround the ankle become weakened, balance and stability are disrupted, and ankle joint function is compromised. As the athlete heals, function begins to return, but normal range of motion, if not properly rehabilitated, can be still restricted. If ankle joint motion remains limited, the athlete will compensate to still be able to perform normal move-

ment. This compensation can occur in the form of the arch collapsing or over-pronation. Simply put, when the base of foundation of your body (foot/ankle) moves out of alignment, everything above it will follow. That's why ankle sprains can be an underlying cause in knee and Achilles problems as well as bunions.

**Why it's often overlooked:** The common response to a sprained ankle is to ice it and rest until the swelling diminishes. After a short time, the player is back on the court thinking they're fine. Unfortunately, if the player does not undergo any rehabilitative exercises, their ankle joint function will still be compromised, predisposing them to another ankle sprain. The biggest predictor of future ankle sprains is a previous ankle sprain.

**How to improve it:** Here's a sampling of movements to include in your program:

- ▼ Soft tissue release: Foam Roll or Massage Stick - Calf, Achilles, Peroneals.
- ▼ Self ankle mobilization: Dorsiflexion Stretch - 1/2 Kneeling with Dowel.
- ▼ Total-body integration: Overhead Squat - w/abduction (Heal Lift, Mini-Band, Dowel).

### 5. SINGLE-LEG STRENGTH AND POWER

Basketball players often say, "I am a one foot jumper" or "I am a two foot jumper." To be a complete player, you must be able to perform both because different situations dictate a different take-off style. Besides, running is a single-leg support activity. Each propulsive stride in filling the lane on a fast break requires a strong and powerful push, while landing from a jump can be unstable onto one leg. For this reason, single-leg strength and power is importance not just for performance, but also for staying safe on the court.

**Why it's often overlooked:** Single leg strength must be developed off the court to be integrated on the court, but most weight room exercises, such as leg extensions, leg curls, leg presses, and squats, are typically performed with two legs.

**How to improve it:** Perform single-leg exercises, such as Single-leg Balance Squats and Single-leg Romanian Deadlifts, as well as plyometrics.

*Visit [CorePerformance.com](http://CorePerformance.com) for instructional video demonstrations of the exercises featured in this article.*





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We Are Basketball



ONE-ON-ONE

# MENECHIN: "READY FOR HUGE CHALLENGE"



No player stood taller in Italian hoops for nearly three decades than the country's newly elected basketball federation (FIP) president Dino Meneghin. A towering 2.06m, Meneghin was the ultimate leader whose mere presence inspired teammates and captured the imagination of Italy as he helped drive the national team to some of its finest moments. Born in 1950, he made his debut for the Azzurri at 16 and went on to play 271 times for his country with his last appearance on Italian Division I League as a 44-year-old. He thrived on challenges as a player, and now he faces a huge one off the court as the FIP supremo. Meneghin, who had served commissioner of the FIP since September following the resignation of Fausto Maifredi as FIP president, gave this exclusive interview to FIBA.

**FIBA:** Dino, several months ago you said you didn't have the time required to be President of the Italian Basketball Federation. What made you change your mind?

**MENECHIN:** People's insistence that I was the right man for the job. My will is to do something important for Italian basketball. I have always been a man of the court, before a general manager of clubs in Italy or the national team. I am 59 years old and I believe the time had come to put my experience, my knowledge and willingness to the service of the Italian basketball movement. Despite knowing that it will be a challenge with my other job [*he runs an events and public relations company Sicom Event*], I know that with sacrifice and will, I can do it. I will not be alone in the task of running the federation as I will have counselors that will be placed in the right positions, people who want to work hard and are competent. Once that happens, my job will be made easier.

**FIBA:** What is the state of Italian basketball right now and can we be optimistic?

**MENECHIN:** I am an optimist by nature, especially when facing adversity. In difficult times you need to work hard and think positive. With regards to the national team, we have good players but we are not able to get the results at international level. Our immediate hope is to qualify for the EuroBasket this summer and from then on, understand our value. With regards to our clubs, we have good teams and players, but, yet again, we are missing important results at international level. The will to get achievements is there from everyone but we know that we face important challenges from Spain, Greece, Russia, while other eastern (European) countries are finding the resources to be competitive at the maximum level. The task of our clubs is not easy when you are competing with strong clubs that have the revenue to sign top players. We have higher taxes from the state placed on our clubs, hence, when a

player is given the same offer by two clubs, a player will choose to go to Spain or Russia rather than come to Italy because we pay more taxes. Considering the financial crisis that the world is facing, it makes it harder to find sponsors and that also makes the clubs' job harder. In terms of the youth system, we have a lot of work to do. We need to be more involved with schools, find youngsters and talent to bring closer to basketball. It's a huge task that we all must focus on, not only the federation, but also all the basketball clubs.

**FIBA:** You are a living legend in Italy. Does your name make the job easier?

**MENECHIN:** I can put the face, even if it's an ugly one! But, the will and the capacity is there. The fact is that we need to get more support from the media. Public televisions like RAI and Mediaset don't give us much contribution in terms of broadcasting news, games and results. This diminishes our sport, even if it's strong, because in the eyes of some, it seems as it doesn't exist.

**FIBA:** Italy's national team has struggled since 2004. What has been the reason for this and are you convinced that the national team can have a starring role in the near future?

**MENECHIN:** My hope is that we will. We have great players, but we have not gotten results sometimes due to injuries, other times we haven't played well and that has been the merit of our rivals. I am convinced of the strength of our basketball but we must show this on the court. I think we just need a good result to confirm the good work done by everyone. We are well aware that the competitiveness has notably increased, that our teams need to be extremely competitive and arrive to the top tournaments in the best form possible. We have a problem in that our tournament





is very long but the fact that it is a hard one means that our players are very active. Sometimes they arrive in the summer rather tired and they are not able to give what they really could. I also believe we have been unlucky at crucial times in not having certain players available through injury and that is crucial.

**FIBA:** It is strange that powerful teams like France and Italy will have to face each other for the only remaining place in the EuroBasket. How difficult is the Additional Round going to be for Italy?

**MENECHIN:** This is a Russian roulette, in the sense that we cannot afford to make a mistake. To see two historically strong teams, full of good players having to come up against each other for one spot is hard. But this goes to prove the high standard of basketball in Europe. There are no longer any easy games, they are all difficult. Therefore, you need all your players in good shape. For us, the Additional Qualifying Round against France will be extremely challenging and very difficult. I cannot deny that we are rather worried, because in a few days you play for everything. It's a challenging calendar with road games, too, and fatigue will come into it. That is why the players will need the right mentality to understand how difficult our task will be and to be fully focused and in top physical form.

**FIBA:** Will Italy coach Carlo Recalcati remain in charge of the national team even if the Azzurri fail to qualify for the EuroBasket?

**MENECHIN:** Charly Recalcati has a contract until September. After that, I will sit down with him and understand what his intentions are, based on the results and whether his wish is to continue to

guide the national team. If that is the case, we will renew his contract. Otherwise, we will go for someone else. But until then, he is not under discussion. He has all my trust and support.

**FIBA:** With the focus placed on the Additional Qualifying Round, you must be following Italy's American-based players closely. What can you tell us about the improvements made by NBA trio Andrea Bargnani, Marco Belinelli and Danilo Gallinari, as well as University of Southern California point guard Daniel Hackett?

**MENECHIN:** Marco has shown a lot of character. He proved that he wanted more playing minutes and when given the chance, he has shown what he can do in terms of defense, rebounds. He has grown in personality. As for Andrea, he still has ups and downs and needs to find continuity, but in certain games he has proved important for his team. Danilo is still recovering from a back injury but in the games he has played he has shown potential. Our hope is that he improves his physical condition and gets better primarily for New York and then for the national team. As for Daniel Hackett, he is doing very well and he could be useful for us in the Additional Qualifying Round.

**FIBA:** Will we see Italy's NBA players in action at the Additional Qualifying Round and, if successful, at the EuroBasket?

**MENECHIN:** This is a question mark. I hope that the players and the clubs they play for will allow them to come and play with the national team just as they have done in the past. Other players like Dirk Nowitzki, Tony Parker and Pau Gasol have done this for their respective

national teams. While being aware that their future in the NBA is important to them, I believe it's also crucial for them to play in the national team. If they did this, it would set a great example for the other players that play in Italy but especially, for the young players because it would inspire them as they look up to them. Regardless of the NBA or the Lega A, the most important team is the national team. That was the case for me, because it is the team of the whole of Italy. I can play and win with Milano 30 league titles and 20 Euroleagues and then the Milano fans will be happy. But, if I win a medal at the Olympics, at a EuroBasket or a World Championship, I would make 50 million Italians happy and that is somewhat different.

**FIBA:** Dino, I know you followed Italy women's Additional Round with a lot of expectation. How proud are you of Giampiero Ticchi's women who last month qualified for this year's EuroBasket in Latvia?

**MENECHIN:** I am delighted. They have shown great strength. I have followed the teams on the court and outside it and I have seen that they are a true team. They are a group of friends, who are united. I have been hit by their enthusiasm, their availability for the national team. This has been one of the reasons why this team has qualified for the EuroBasket after many years. The merit has been down to their strength and the work done by coach Giampiero Ticchi and his staff. This is a great result and I hope it can be a great example for the men's national team.

**FIBA:** Italy are among the countries short-listed to host the 2014 FIBA World Championship for men. What would it mean for Italian basketball and for the nation to host such a prestigious event?

**MENECHIN:** It would be the result of a lot of work and sacrifice. To bring to Italy such an important event after many years would be a reward for those who work in basketball and who love the sport. We hosted the EuroBasket in 1991 and ever since then, we have not hosted anything. Italy needs and wants to see the best basketball in the world played here. We know very well that (the other two candidates) China and Spain are two important realities but we are hopeful.

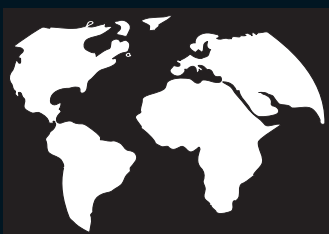
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# THE WORLD IN BRIEF



## NEW ZEALAND HOSTS FIBA U19 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Top basketball action is coming to New Zealand with 16 nations featuring some of the best talents the sport has ever seen for the FIBA U19 World Championship from July 2-12, 2009. Only players born in 1990 or after are eligible.

The Auckland region will host a tournament regarded as the third biggest in the sport. Only the FIBA men's and women's World Championships are larger. This tournament is globally recognized as the breeding ground for future global basketball stars with many of today's well known basketballers participating in past tournaments. It will feature 62 matches played at the North Shore Events Centre, Takapuna and the ASB Stadium, Kohimarama. The quarterfinals, semi finals and finals will all be held at the North Shore Events Centre.

The draw for the event took place on 2nd March in presence of many team delegations at Auckland's SkyCity Hotel.

### Group A

Angola - Greece - Lithuania - Puerto Rico.

### Group B

France - Egypt - Iran - USA.

### Group C

Australia - Canada - Spain - Syria.

### Group D

Argentina - Croatia - Kazakhstan - New Zealand.

For a precise schedule of the event and further information please go to [fiba.com](http://fiba.com).

Originally known as the FIBA Junior World Championship, the tournament was held every four years from 1979-2007. FIBA recently changed its calendar and will now hold age-based world championships every other year.

## CHINA APPOINT SUN FENGWU AS NEW WOMEN'S COACH

China have handed the reins of the women's national team to Sun Fengwu, a former captain of the men's side who

competed in three Olympics and three FIBA World Championships.

An assistant under ex-women's boss Tom Maher, Sun is determined to build on the country's impressive showing in Beijing where they reached the Semi-Finals before falling to Australia.

"I am confident I can take the team to the next level over the next few years," Sun said.

The long-term aim for Sun is to have the Chinese in peak form when the Olympics are staged in London in 2012.

He is hoping that the country's two top players last summer, Chen Nan and Miao Lijie, will be more influential after gaining experience in the WNBA where the two are expected to play next season after being given clearance by China's Basketball Administrative Center.

Chen, the big center, and shooting guard/



small forward Miao won't be available when the Chinese compete at the FIBA Asian Championship in Chinese Taipei from June 21-28.

China will warm up for that event with games against Lithuania, Australia, Canada and the United States.

Sun says his stars' absences should not hurt the team's chances of winning in Chinese Taipei.

"We will use other players," he said. "We're not really worried as we still have an advantage in Asia, even without them. Right now we have our eyes trained on 2012 because we hope both women will benefit from their time with the WNBA so as to be better positioned to do some damage in London."





#### **PENNEY BECOMES FIRST KIWI TO CAPTURE MVP HONOR IN AUSTRALIAN NBL**

New Zealand international Kirk Penney this week claimed the Andrew Gaze Trophy after being named Most Valuable Player of the Australian National Basketball League. The sweet-shooting New Zealand Breakers guard garnered 92 votes to edge Sydney Spirit big man Matthew Knight (90).

He is the first New Zealander to be voted MVP.

Penney, 28, said it was a bittersweet moment when he was told of the award because his Breakers were swept 2-0 in the ANBL play-offs by Melbourne. "We, the players and coaches, definitely had a bit of a sour taste in how we lost to the Tigers," Penney said. "We felt like we should have played better and had a chance of winning the series. I guess it is a little [bittersweet] because you want to win a championship, and they're the memories that never leave you. But, as a personal accolade, it's just a huge honour."

Penney averaged 24.2 points, 4.4 rebounds and 2.8 assists in 28 regular season games for the Breakers.

He made 45.6% of his shots from the floor, 37.3% from three-point territory and 80.4% at the free-throw line.

Voting for the MVP award is conducted following each regular season game by the coaching staffs of each team, with the player amassing the most votes at the end of the season being declared the winner.

#### **Final votes:**

Kirk Penney (Breakers) 92

Matthew Knight (Spirit) 90

Ebi Ere (Tigers) 89

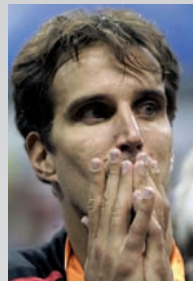
Mark Worthington (Dragons) 88

Shawn Redhage (Wildcats) 86

#### **FLAMENGO CAPTURE LIGA SUDAMERICANA TITLE**

Marcelinho turned in one of the best performances of his career on 12th March to lead Flamengo (BRA) to a thrilling victory over Quimsa (ARG) in the Liga Sudamericana title game.

The Brazil international poured in 41



points - 30 in the first half alone - and the Rio de Janeiro outfit held on for a 98-96 triumph. Marcelinho was voted MVP of the Liga Sudamericana.

Flamengo, beaten in last year's Finals by

Regatas de Corrientes, claimed the title for the first time in club history and snapped a three-year winning streak for Argentina's Liga Nacional.

Before this year's edition, Argentina clubs had captured nine out of the 13 titles in the Liga Sudamericana, which first tipped off in 1996.

Vasco de Gama (1999, 2000) and Uberlandia (2005) were the only previous winners from Brazil.

The success clinches a spot in next season's FIBA Americas League for Flamengo. Cucuta-Norte defeated Regatas 92-86 to clinch third.

Marcelinho, who is expected to represent Brazil this summer at the FIBA Americas Championship - a qualifying tournament for the 2010 FIBA World Championship in Turkey - was magnificent.

In the first half alone, he made eight of 10 shots from behind the arc and drilled all six of his free-throws as Flamengo led 49-48.

#### **MONCHO MONSALVE OPTIMISTIC AFTER TRIP TO THE USA**

Moncho Monsalve, head coach of the Brazilian National Team, spent a few days in the USA where he attended some NBA games and practices. The Spanish-



born coach traveled to the USA in order to speak to the three Brazilians playing in the NBA: Leandro Barbosa (Phoenix Suns), Nenê Hilário (Denver Nuggets) and Anderson Varejão (Cleveland Cavaliers).

Monsalve felt himself very welcomed by all teams and players. According to the coach born in Spain (in Medina del Campo, Valladolid), Barbosa, Nenê and Varejão all expressed their strong commitment to joining the Brazilian National Team at the FIBA Americas Championship, the qualifier for the 2010 FIBA World Championship that will take place in August in Mexico. "I had a wonderful conversation with all three players and I am sure that we can count on them in the National Team", stated Moncho.

In addition, Monsalve is confident that Brazil will be in the next FIBA World Championship: "Brazil has extraordinary players evolving in the NBA, Europe, the NCAA and the Brazilian National League (NBB). We can build a great team, capable of facing any opponent at the FIBA Americas Championship."

Before traveling to the USA, the Brazilian National Team coach spoke to center Tiago Splitter in Madrid, where his team, TAU Cerámica, won the Spanish Copa del Rey.

#### **FORMER BASKETBALL PLAYERS WIN IOC 2009 WOMEN AND SPORT AWARDS**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) celebrated on 5th March the International Women's Day and the 2009 Women and Sport Awards, where five





exceptional personalities in the world of sport received accolades. The 2009 winners include two former basketball players: Danira Nakic Bilic (Croatia) and Lydia Nsekera (Burundi).

The official ceremony was held at The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, where five continental trophies were presented to women who have made tremendous contributions to strengthening the participation of women and girls in sport on an international level.

The 2009 Women and Sport Awards, selected by the IOC Women and Sport Commission, went to:

- Trophy for Africa: Lydia Nsekera (Burundi).
- Trophy for the Americas: María Caridad Colón Ruenes (Cuba).
- Trophy for Asia: Arvin Dashjamts (Mongolia).
- Trophy for Europe: Danira Nakic Bilic (Croatia).
- Trophy for Oceania: Auvita Rapilla (Papua New Guinea).

Danira Nakic Bilic, born in 1969 in Sibenik (Croatia), won a silver basketball medal with Yugoslavia at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games and is a member of the NOC's Women in Sport Commission. She started her very successful athletic career in 1987 in her native Sibenik and was a professional basketball player up to 1997. In addition to the Olympic silver medal (Seoul 1988), she won one FIBA World Championship silver medal (Malaysia 1990) and two bronze medals at European championships. She was three times named Europe's Best Women's Basketball Player, and was in 1991 selected as Best Croatian Women's Athlete.

Whilst sport in Burundi has been male dominated, Lydia Nsekera, born in 1967 in Bujumbura, a former basketball player and high jumper, became the first female president of a national football federation in Africa and the second woman in the world to achieve this status.

She also pioneered with the creation of women's sports clubs in her country, including the Olympic Men's Basketball Club in 1985.

#### IVKOVIC: "PRIMARY AIM IS TO QUALIFY FOR 2010 FIBA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP"

Serbia coach Dusan Ivkovic knows there will be a very thin line between success and failure later this year when the Blues travel to Poland and attempt to qualify for the 2010 FIBA World Championship.

The Serbians, who finished ahead of Bulgaria, Italy, Finland and Hungary in their EuroBasket 2009 qualifying group, will take on world champions Spain, Slovenia and Great Britain in group play in Warsaw when the Final Round is staged in September.

Ivkovic, who was on hand to watch many of his national team players compete in the Radivoj Korac Cup final over the weekend in Nis, a game won by Partizan 80-65, said: "I have to repeat the words of our great basketball player, now the presidential candidate for the Serbian Olympic Committee, Vlade Divac, that our main goal was and still is to qualify for the World Championship in Turkey. That's quite of a task, since our team has to be fully prepared for the very first game in Poland."

Once the club season finishes and the players have had a small break, Ivkovic will gather the squad to begin the build-up to Poland.

"Our best chance is to be prepared as much it is possible," Ivkovic said. "We've already planned every single detail up to our trip to Warsaw on September 5. The only unknown is whether or not we'll participate at Borislav Stankovic Cup in China, which will be held during the first weekend of August. The final decision on that issue will be made after we create our preliminary list of candidates for the national team of Serbia."



#### FRANCE APPOINT VINCENT COLLET AS NATIONAL TEAM COACH

France have appointed ASVEL Basket boss Vincent Collet as their new national team coach. Collet, 45, an assistant on the coaching staff in 2002-03, takes the reins ahead of this summer's Additional Qualifying Round for EuroBasket 2009 with France set to take on Italy and Finland in Group B.

Should Les Bleus win that pool, they will take on the winner of Group A (Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina or Portugal) for the right to advance to the Final Round in Poland.

Collet has long been recognized as one of the top coaches in his country's top flight. While at Le Mans from the 2000-2008, he was voted French Coach of the Year three times (2001, '04 and '06). Collet will take over a French team that has underachieved in recent years in the eyes of many.

At EuroBasket 2005 in Belgrade under Claude Bergeaud, the team stunned hosts Serbia & Montenegro and made it to the Semi-Finals where they blew a huge lead against Greece in the final minute. France ultimately defeated Spain to capture the bronze medal.

At the 2006 FIBA World Championship in Japan under Bergeaud, France overcame the loss of star point guard Tony Parker shortly before the start of the tournament and managed to finish fifth. At EuroBasket 2007 in Spain, France were just seconds away from advancing to the Semi-Finals but missed crucial free throws against Russia and lost.

They eventually came in eighth place, which prevented the team from taking part in the 2008 FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Athens and also forced them to go into qualifying for EuroBasket 2009.

Last summer under Michel Gomez, France came in second place in their Division A group behind Turkey and missed out on earning a direct ticket to the Final Round in Poland.

With Parker and other talented players, however, France will be the favorites to win the Additional Qualifying Round.

#### NDONG: "IT WOULD BE SAD FOR MY CAREER IF WE DIDN'T WIN FIBA AFRICA CHAMPIONSHIP"

There is almost always a big smile draped across the face of Senegal's Boniface Ndong. The 31-year-old is, in general, a happy person.

Then there is the success that he continues to enjoy as a 2.12m center with Unicaja Malaga. Ndong is averaging almost nine points and five rebounds per game in the ACB.

The Most Valuable Player of the 2005 FIBA Africa Championship, Ndong has played at





the highest level in the game, in the NBA with the Los Angeles Clippers and in the Euroleague with Malaga.

He could end up playing for Senegal again, but organizational issues continue to dog the federation and that may prevent them from getting their big man on board for this summer when the country goes for gold at the AfroBasket in Libya. On the question if he could play for Senegal again, or if his national team career is over, he answered: "No, it's not over. I've been speaking to people and spoke to the coach recently and the general manager when we played against Olympiacos here and we still talked about coming back because I want to give it a last shot, winning the African Championship. It would be sad for my career if we didn't win it. So I hope that first of all, our federation and our government will first do something to get us a coach. I've been talking a lot to other players and we're all ready to come but we always have the same problem, organizational

problem. But if these things are met, I'll be there."

There is no doubt that Ndong is very determined to represent his country: "It was an honour me playing for my team in 2005, for my country, and to be voted MVP was very special. It was something that hadn't happened to a Senegalese player since 1997. It was good. We did great, and qualified for the (2006 FIBA) World Championship.

If all goes according to plan Senegal and Ndong could be a force at the 2009 FIBA Africa Championship in Libya and we could see Ndong at the 2010 FIBA World Championship in Turkey.

#### FERRY RECOGNIZES OLYMPIC IMPACT ON NBA

Cleveland Cavaliers general manager Danny Ferry believes last summer's Olympic title-winning experience for the United States men has had a profound impact on their careers.

Ferry, who knows what it's like to play for Team USA boss Mike Krzyzewski - his former coach at Duke University - has LeBron James on his Cavs roster. "It was like a corporate business retreat," Ferry said of the last three summers when the USA players joined together to play international basketball. "These players all got to talk the game, share ideas and see how each other was working. That's had a far greater effect on each player than I ever imagined."

USA Basketball chairman Jerry Colangelo recently spoke to FIBA about how the Olympic experience was beneficial to the NBA and he hasn't changed that opinion. Colangelo, who met with the Team USA players that were at the All-Star Weekend to gauge their interest in playing at the 2010 FIBA World Championship and the 2012 Olympics, said: "They got a big win, and they brought that culture back to their teams." Ferry agrees.

"That whole thing was really good for basketball, and really good for the NBA," he

said in a column written by cnnsi.com columnist Ian Thomsen.

"We reap the rewards here in Cleveland because LeBron's come back and continues to grow from the experience. You can go through a lot of the teams and see it was a great thing for basketball."

The structure put in place by Colangelo and the players' willingness to embrace it was crucial.

"Because it was a program," Ferry said. "It wasn't just a team. They were together and they got to know each other, and the peer pressure within at some level had to be really, really strong. It wasn't just who won or how many points I scored. It was the process. They were together the last couple of years and they all shared; this is what I do to get better, this is how hard I work. They shared it without saying it, just by doing it. And at some level it pushed them, and they had to have grown from that."



#### BANGKOK WELCOMES U19 FOR WOMEN

In cooperation with the Basketball Association of Thailand, FIBA hosted on 26th March at the Radisson Hotel in Bangkok the draw for the 2009 FIBA U19 World Championship for Women.

The 8th FIBA U19 World Championship for Women

will be played from 23rd July to 2nd August 2009 in Bangkok with 16 teams comprised of players born in 1990 or after.

#### Group A

Argentina - Australia - France - Korea

#### Group B

Brazil - Czech Republic - Lithuania - Thailand

#### Group C

Canada - Japan - Russia - Tunisia

#### Group D

P.R. of China - Mali - Spain - USA

For a precise schedule of the event and further information please go to [fiba.com](http://fiba.com).

FIBA CREATES ACADEMY FOR EXECUTIVE







OFF-THE-COURT

# THE ODD - THE FUNNY - THE UNUSUAL

## PENÉLOPE CRUZ THROWS SUPPORT BEHIND SPAIN 2014 BID

Spain received a Hollywood boost in their attempt to stage the 2014 FIBA World Championship with Oscar winner Penélope Cruz coming out in support of the country's bid.

Cruz, who recently became the first Spanish actress to win an Oscar for her supporting role in Woody Allen's film "Vicky Cristina Barcelona", was born in Alcobendas, Madrid - the home of the FIBA Hall of Fame.

"I support our candidature because, as a Spanish citizen and a basketball fan, my greatest hope is that the 2014 FIBA



World Championship will be held in Spain," Cruz said in a statement released by the Spanish Basketball Federation.

FIBA will announce at their Central Board meeting in May if Spain, Italy or China are to host the prestigious event.

## DREAM TEAM COACH DALY DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER

Chuck Daly, the coach of the 1992 United States "Dream Team" that took the sports world by storm, has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Daly led the Detroit Pistons to NBA titles in 1989 and 1990, and his fame spread around the globe when his USA national



side captured the gold medal at the Barcelona Olympic Games.

Family spokesman Matt Dobek said in a statement on the Pistons' website of the 78-year-old Daly: "Chuck is being treated for the cancer and

the family is requesting privacy.

"When he was coaching, Chuck was always known as the Prince of Pessimism, right now Chuck Daly is the King of Optimism." Daly, who was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1994, coached a Pistons team that was dubbed "Bad Boys" by the American media, and the squad thrived on the nickname.

Dennis Rodman, Bill Laimbeer, Joe Dumars, Rick Mahorn, Vinnie "The Microwave" Johnson and Isiah Thomas were some of the well-known stars on those title-winning Pistons teams. The well turned-out Daly was called "Daddy Rich" by his players.

Mahorn said in the New York Times: "I told him he was a fighter and to keep on fighting and that I'm there to help in any way I can.

I told him that he has always been in my prayers, and not just because of what he's going through.

He's been in my prayers because of what he's meant to me. He's always been a father figure to all of us."

Larry Brown, the United States' Olympic coach in Athens five years ago, said to New York Newsday: "The older we get, the more people that you admire have some difficulties. But, hopefully something will happen in a positive way, but I know a lot of people care about him."

"Chuck was one of the most accessible sports figures ever, but right now he's asking for privacy," Dobek said.

"His family is hopeful that friends, fans and the media will respect those wishes at this time."

## "ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?"

In a competition organized by the German sports newspaper "Kicker" and the German sports writers association, a basketball photo from the photographer Tilo Wiedensohler has won the first prize.

It shows China superstar Yao Ming giving one of the referees a piece of his mind during the basketball tournament of the Beijing Olympics. China won the game and reached the round of the last eight.

Tilo Wiedensohler describes the story of the shot: "On 16th August Germany plays against China in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. I sit behind the baseline and follow Yao Ming with my camera. Suddenly the 2.29 m giant makes a move towards one of the referees and expresses his disagreement with his call. The referee, who was the most resolute of the three officials, backs off for a part of a second, and looks even scared - and I catch a funny moment."



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