



**FIBA**

We Are Basketball

# ASSIST 42

FIBA ASSIST MAGAZINE FOR BASKETBALL ENTHUSIASTS EVERYWHERE JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2010

**MICAH LANCASTER**  
THE DROP AND REACT

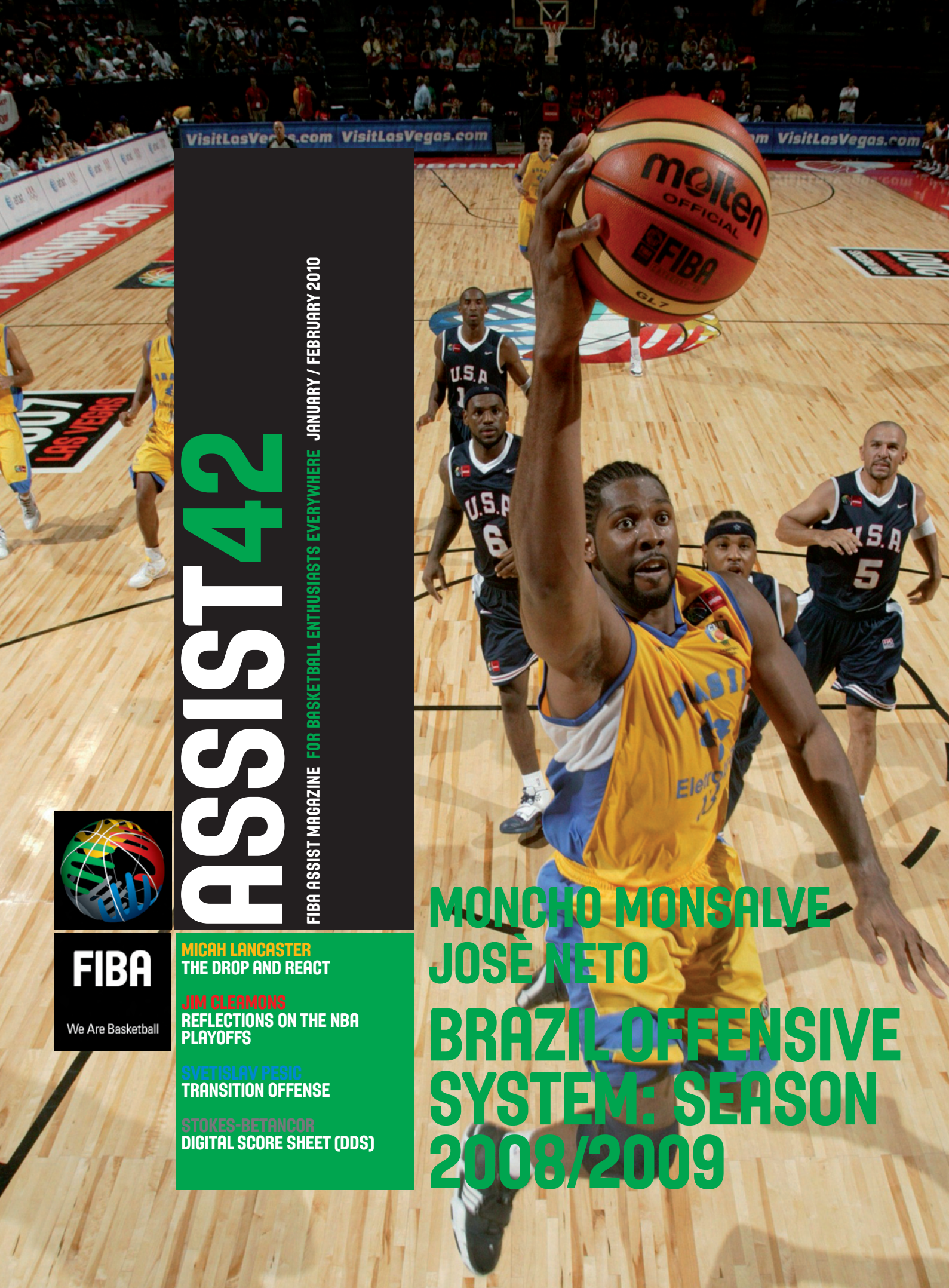
**JIM CLERMONS**  
REFLECTIONS ON THE NBA  
PLAYOFFS

**SVETISLAV PESIC**  
TRANSITION OFFENSE

**STOKES-BETANCOR**  
DIGITAL SCORE SHEET (DDS)

**MONCHO MONSALVE**  
**JOSÉ NETO**

**BRAZIL OFFENSIVE  
SYSTEM: SEASON  
2008/2009**









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## FIBA ASSIST MAGAZINE

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## 2010 FIBA CALENDAR

### 2010

#### APRIL 2010

03 -06.04 NCAA Men's and Women's  
Final Four in Indianapolis  
(USA)

#### JULY 2010

02 -11.07 FIBA U17 World  
Championship for Men in  
Hamburg (GER)

16 -25.07 FIBA U17 World  
Championship for Women  
in Rodez and Toulouse  
(FRA)

#### AUGUST 2010

03 -08.08 Commonwealth Games,  
basketball tournament for  
Men in Delhi (IND)

14 -26.08 Youth Olympic Games, 3on3  
basketball tournaments for  
boys and girls in Singapore

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

#### SEPTEMBER 2010

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

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by Micah Lancaster

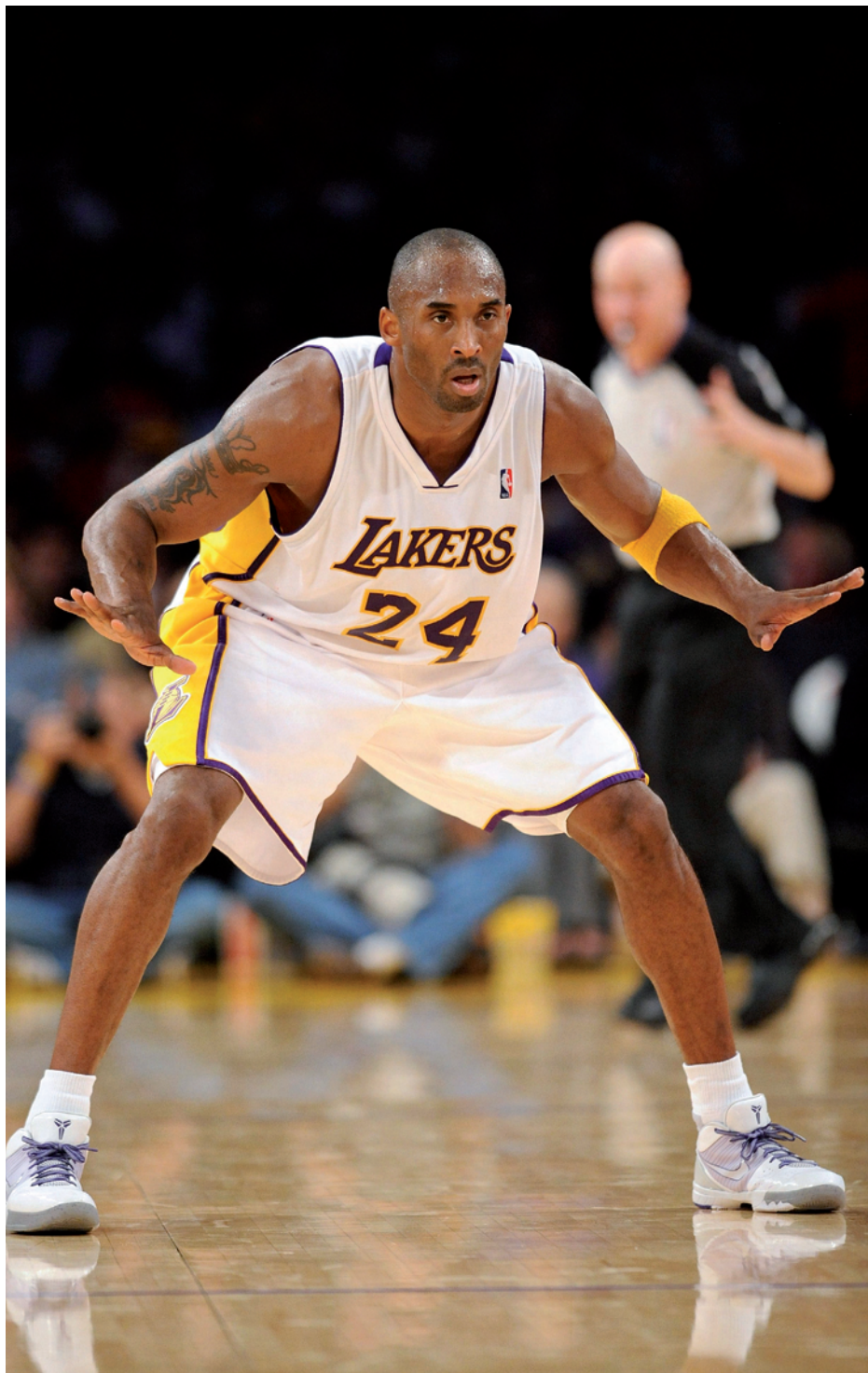
# THE DROP AND REACT

**Micah Lancaster is the lead trainer of Nike sponsored Ganon Baker Basketball Services and the Executive Director of Basketball Training at elite training academy, Hoops City U. Famous for his innovative creativity inventing and enhancing training methods and breaking down and teaching offensive moves. He is widely sought after as a skill development trainer, camp clinician, and motivational speaker across the US and Internationally.**

Defense is a guessing game. To every offensive move, a defender has three basic guesses. The offensive player can drive right, drive left, or shoot. That means a defender virtually has only a 33% chance of guessing correctly right from the start. Most offensive players will take those odds. Only the player with the ball decides when to start, when to stop, when to shoot, and when to drive. Here's the game within the game. If a defender can learn the tendencies and habits of the offensive player, they no longer have to guess quite as much. They can start to predict and even manipulate the offensive player into action. In that case their odds of success go up. Great defenders know how to take the guessing out of it.

On the other hand, the same can be said concerning the offensive player. If they can not only make their defender guess, but then make a decision based on the defender's reaction, their odds of success go up as well. They are able to make the defense guess one way, so they can go the other way. As the saying goes, "The only thing that can beat great defense is better offense."

It's not accurate to think that a great defender is beat by a greater move. In fact, the greater the defender the less "moves" actually matter. The real secret to beating the best defenders is found in the "moments" - Timing, unpredictability, and reaction. Today I will introduce a se-





ries of step by step movements that the best offensive players use to win the 1-on-1 battle with any defender!

### THE DROP

Many of the great scorers within the game of basketball have one "move" in common. It's not the move that is generally noticed in the highlight reels. It tends to be covered up by a monster dunk, an acrobatic finish at the basket, the popular Euro Step or by a flashier crossover or spin. It's simply an action of dropping the hips.

It seems most basketball players don't understand this simple concept. When a player steps forward, their hips lean forward as well. In order to get low, they basically have to do a lunge on the move. There are problems with this. First, since the player's hips are forward, it will be very difficult to shoot without dribbling forward or stepping back. Second, since the player is getting low as they attempt to drive past, a physical defender can simply knock them off their path. It's widely known in sports that the lower a player's hips are, the more explosive they will be, but too often we fail to discuss when and how to get low. While most players get low as they drive, the best players get low before they drive. They literally drop.

This is how it can be performed. When a player is attacking right, they lead with their right foot. Instead of stepping forward, however, they simply move their right foot forward and move their left foot back causing their body and their

hips to drop straight down. Gravity pulls their body into an explosive position, so they can attack ready and low (photo 1 and 2).

This driving position is the key. If a player can master this simple drop, the game opens to a whole new level. If the defender does not react to the drop, the offensive player has the green light to drive. After a player has shown the ability to drop and drive, they begin to demand attention whenever they do so. Their drop becomes a foundation in which they have many options.

The drop, while seemingly simple, can be tough for young players to learn and even some pros. To learn quickly and effectively, direct the players to stand on a line (photo 3). On command, they must slide their lead foot forward and the other foot back as quickly as possible. The line will hold them accountable, as their feet must be staggered, and their hips straight above it. After several repetitions, they can drop and explode as quickly as possible as if driving. If they can master this drop, they are ready for the second step.







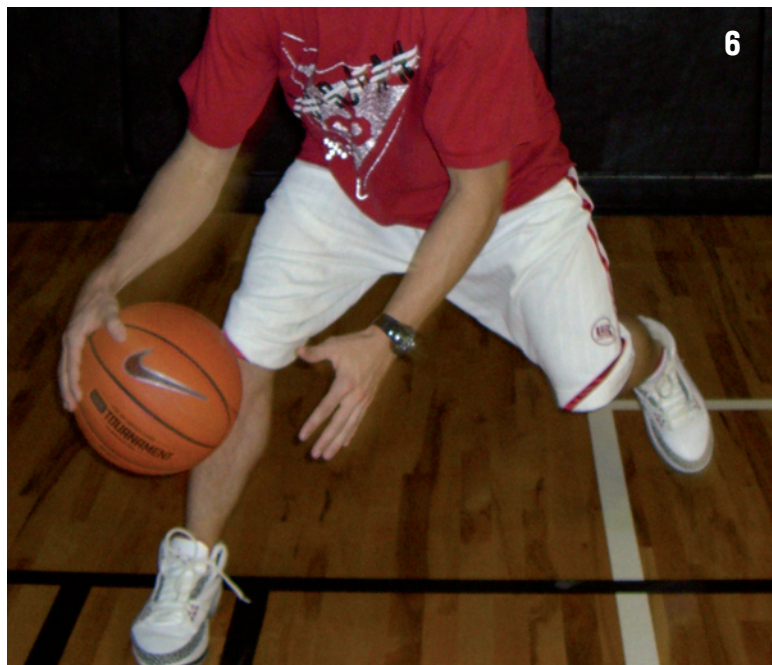
### THE CROSS

The natural counter to any drive is a crossover. Defenders know that as well as anybody. Yet if a player has a great first step explosion out of the drop and the right footwork to perform a crossover dribble from that position, there is very little a defender can do.

The beauty of the drop is in the footwork. As a player's hips go down, their lead foot shoots forward. A great defender does not allow the offensive player's foot to beat their own feet. They must react or they are already beaten. As soon as the defender reacts to the drop, a crossover can be used against their reaction. The offensive player controls the reactions of the defender and at that point, that defender can only guess.

It's important to note that most players are not effective using the crossover dribble to get a quick shot. Many athletes either take the ball all the way to the basket or need two dribbles to get their shot out of their hand. That is why the footwork is crucial. There are two important fundamentals here. When a player crosses the ball over, their back foot, in this case the left foot, must step even with the right (photo 4, 5, 6 and 7). This opens up the opportunity that the second key offers; the ball and the left foot must hit the floor at the same time. This way if the defense was shaken loose by the crossover, two steps can be used such as a 1,2 step, otherwise known as a stride step, to separate for a quick shot. The only way to create space efficiently and with only two steps is to perform the footwork properly.





### DROP AND SHOOT

In order for any move to be effective, it must have a counter. Whenever a counter involves the possibility of taking a shot, the move is strengthened. Therefore, once the drop and drive and the drop and cross are threats, the offensive player always has the option to simply drop and step into their shot, otherwise known as an NBA stutter.

If you notice the photo 8, the offensive players hand is under the ball. While we know this would be called a carry if dribbled again, the defensive player must respect this dribble. No defender can bet on the officials making the call. This is also the offense's advantage.

Therefore, when the player drops and reads that the defender is guessing crossover, the ball can be ripped across the body as if a crossover is being performed (photo 9). With the same footwork being executed as with the crossover, not only does this shot appear to be the start of a crossover, but the player is also stepping right into an unpredictable and extremely quick shot. It's an unstoppable series of moves, and that's why the best players always have it in their arsenal.

### MAKING IT WORK

Whether at the end of the shot clock, or in the flow of the game, a simple drop of the hips demands a reaction. That's why I consider this move the most essential move in today's game. With just a little fundamental footwork, a player can get off a shot at any time.

But don't be fooled. The Drop and React is simple in theory but difficult to mas-



8



9



ter. Only the best players seem to be able to make it a weapon each and every game. Why? Players are often in such a hurry to beat their defender that they forget to drop. They lunge forward, leading with their head and off balance. At that point everything is broken down.

Remember, in order for any counter to work, the main move must be perfect. That means for any player to make this series effective, they must master the drop first. Whether they drop and drive, drop and cross, or drop and shoot, the drop itself must look and feel the same.

Then it's all about timing and reaction. However the defender reacts should point the way to a solution. While they know the offense has only three choices, they can't do anything about it. All they can do is guess. And that's right where any player wants their defender.



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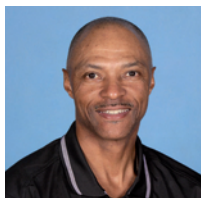
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By Jim Clemons

# REFLECTIONS ON THE NBA PLAYOFFS

**Jim Clemons has been an assistant under head coach Phil Jackson with both the Chicago Bulls and the Los Angeles Lakers, winning 8 NBA Championships. He was also the head coach of the Dallas Mavericks for slightly over one year, from 1996 to 1997. Clemons was then the head coach of the Chicago Condors, and he has served as an assistant coach for the Chicago Bulls, Los Angeles Lakers, and New Orleans/Oklahoma City Hornets. He came back to the Lakers as assistant coach in the 2006.**

The 2008/2009 playoff series presented different challenges, each team Utah, Houston, Denver and Orlando had quality players. In order to win a championship you must see yourself worthy of winning and achieving the goal. Talent alone will not get the job done. There are certain traits which are required, some more than others, but to name a few: leadership, mental toughness, you need a happy community – good chemistry among the team, and you need to be able to make adjustments in order to accomplish the task.

Each team has its own style of play, Utah executes very well at the half court offense, they run well in transition and they are a sound fundamental defensive basketball team. The Houston Rockets, with a healthy Yao Ming and Ron Artest, and Luis Scola provided a strong front court and two small quick guards in Aaron Brooks and Kyle Lowry, with Battier and Landry giving plenty of support. So it goes in playoff basketball, to win you

must first know who you are playing personnel-wise and knowledge of their talent and ability within the team concept. The secret to winning is realizing that you will not stop them, but how can you slow them down that you can win the series and move on.

In playoff basketball, it is truly win or go home. Each team and player alike have to raise his level of play – to win and to be a member of a championship team. However, to raise your level of play does not mean scoring points. Knowledge of how to play is critical in order to win a championship. Players who win championships buy into the system and what they have to do in order to win. Players who win championship accept coaching and they realize that it's about "we" and not "me." The mental attitude that develops in the social setting around championship caliber teams is that is not how I act, but more important is how I react to the challenges that are before me.

Each playoff series presented matchups that created multiple problems - for example with players such as Deron Williams, Carlos Boozer, Millsap, Okur and Kyle Korver in Utah - where is the strengths and weakness of the team and personnel that you are playing? This is the question that must be dealt with before each playoff starts and sometimes before and after each game – if things are not working out. If you are losing in a series you question everything that you are doing and why you are doing it. Not being successful breeds and ques-









tions – on the only hand success breeds confidence and momentum. Lack of success drains your energy – where success keeps you energized. It is all a mindset – championship teams can talk themselves up and turn things around and teams that do not have the mental toughness to overcome fall to the way-side along the championship journey. Teams that will win championships will have players that usually will embrace their roles on the team in order to win. Acceptance to the place you are “right now” is a mature look at life, it does not mean you are going to be at the same place tomorrow or the next day but this is what you need to do now in order to continue to move ahead. Championship teams see the big picture, you need workers to support and believe in the task. Willing workers and passionate people drive the marketplace to successful teams. Over the years, defense has always been a major part of our success as a basketball team. There are seven defensive principles:

1. Work at being a good defensive player, be ready, anticipate and work hard.







2. Apply pressure on the ball.
3. Limit penetration – stop the ball.
4. Limit post passes.
5. Seal the lane.
6. Contest shots.
7. Limit second shots.

These seven principles are what we talk about in order to prepare for games. In each series the questions are basically the same – the answers will vary. Some match-ups will not be in your favor, speed, quickness, athletic ability, size but a plan must be in place to deal with limiting the production (not always stopping) to win the series so that we can move on. In order to understand the plan of attack, strength versus strength, the team must see the larger picture and give of themselves to get the job done, not "me," but "we" mentality. The process is based upon "risk" and "reward" values. Our defensive schemes are designed to bend, but not break – when teams get to playoff basketball they are usually sound (good players and teachers) at both ends of the floor. At some level this team is going to score points, what we try to do is limit, damage control the offense. The same can be said with unfavorable match-ups. This goes back to the first



principle: defense is at times hard work. Defense will get broken down and teammates must be ready, willing and able to give help. Knowing how, when and where to rotate and support each other is paramount for defensive-minded teams to have success. Defensive execution is knowing personnel, contesting passes and shots, being active (quick), challenge the offense without committing fouls. Being aggressive without crossing the line. Offensive execution is built around spacing, player and ball movement and the ability to make shots. The Magic offense that we saw in the finals had a very good transition offense which put points on the board with lay-ups and 3-point baskets and a post player who could dominate the lane area at both ends of the floor. By following our

principles one through seven, we were able to defeat the Magic. Take away their transition points opportunities, limit the points. Solid pressure on the ball – make them earn shots behind the arc, no gifts. Fight the post passes and touches (lane catches and dunks). Limit dribble penetration, contest shots without fouling and limit their offensive rebounds and second chance opportunities. Like most things in basketball, sounds very easy and simple things to do. Championships are won because of trust, individuals come together and they commit to each other. In the end, there is but one goal, who shoots and scores does not really matter. To win a championship, it is the ability to get a stop! In the end, defense will win championships.




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# BRAZIL OFFENSIVE SYSTEM: SEASON 2008/2009



by Moncho Monsalve and José Neto

**Josè Manuel "Moncho" Monsalve**, former head coach of the Brazilian men's national team, guided his team to the gold medal at the 2009 FIBA Americas Championships. In the past, he has coached several ACB teams in the first division Spanish league, and also Mestre in Italy and Monaco in France. He was also head coach of the Moroccan men's national team.

**José Neto** is the assistant coach of the Brazilian men's national team. He was also the head coach of the Brazilian U19 men's team, which participated in the 2007 FIBA World Championships.

Since the Olympic qualifying tournament for Athens 2008, the Brazilian men's national team has worked to implement an offense that focused on a greater involvement of all the players. We'll start right off by describing the basic concept of our offense. When the ball is passed to the low post, we want our perimeter players to execute this play: when there are two outside players on the ball side, one player makes a screen away from the ball. Based on the reaction of the defense, we now have two options. The screener can roll to the basket and the screened player then replaces the screener (diagr. 1). Secondly, the screened player can cut to the basket and the screener repositions himself at the same spot from where he has moved (diagr. 2). We like to have four players on the perimeter (rectangular structure) (diagr. 3), instead of three (triangular structure) (diagr. 4). We do this because there is more space on the court, we can make horizontal and vertical moves and cuts, and it's more difficult





for the defense to rotate and help. This is particularly true during the final minutes of a game.

### OFFENSIVE ROTATION FROM THE DRIVE

With the physical improvements that players have made over the years and the implementation of more sophisticated defenses combined with technology that now allows us to analyze individual and team offensive moves, the offense is challenged to the extreme. For these reasons, players with or without the ball cannot stand still. They must always be on the move. On our offense we stress

the one-on-one and the drive to the basket, but the penetrator must have also passing options if his path to the basket is stopped by the defense.

Let's examine three different dribble penetrations with two players involved:

- ▼ Drive to the corner: a teammate nearest to the driver spots up behind the driver to receive the ball and shoots if he is open or else acts as a safety (diagr. 5).
- ▼ Drive to the middle of the lane: the teammate opposite from the driver cuts and spots up to the opposite corner (diagr. 6).

- ▼ Drive to the baseline: the opposite wing cuts and spots up in the opposite corner (diagr. 7).

Now let's now examine the concepts we apply when three or four players are involved. With a baseline dribble penetration by 1, 3 will cut and spot up in the opposite corner to receive the ball from 1, while at the same time the low post 4 will cut behind 1 under the basket. This will give 1 another passing lane (diagr. 8). If nothing happens, 3 will drive out from the corner to the wing spot, while 1 will end his cut to the corner (diagr. 9). In this way, 3 has a chance to pass the ball to 1 or to 2 on the opposite wing (diagr. 10). Based on these concepts, we build our offense.

### "HORN" PLAY

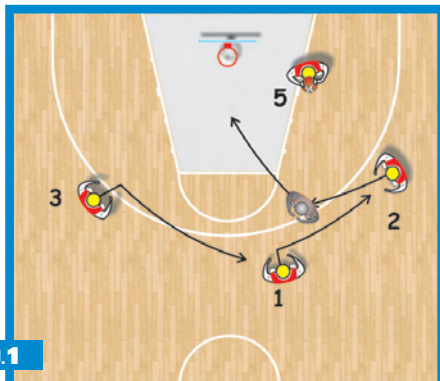
Starting from a one-four set, 4 pops out for a ball screen on 1, while at the same time 2 cuts baseline and makes a back screen for 5, who cuts in the lane and seals his defender under the basket (diagr. 11). Player 1 can pass the ball to 5 under the basket. If that's not possible, he can pass to 4, and then 4 can quickly pass to 2, who has popped out after the screen, while 3 posts down low (diagr. 12). Right after the pass from 4 to 2, if 3 cannot receive the ball, he makes a baseline screen for 5, and 4 screens away from the ball for 1. Player 2 tries to pass to 5 under the basket (diagr. 13). If 2 cannot pass to 3 or 5, he reverses the ball to 1, while 4 has screened down for 3. Player 1 passes to 3, who comes out from the screen of 4 (diagr. 14), and 3 shoots or passes the ball to 4, who has rolled to the basket and has sealed his defender on the low post. Right after 4 has received the ball, the other players on the perimeter spot up as they did in diagram 15 and they offer 4 several passing lanes: to 5 in the high post, to 2 in the corner, or to 1 at the wing. This is a great movement that has as its main objective to play with the center in the low post (Tiago Splitter, Anderson Varejão, and JP Batista). It also focuses on ball rotation and the spotting up of players without the ball.

### PLAY "5"

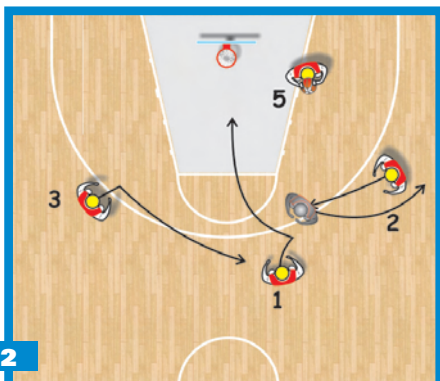
We start this play with three outside and two inside players. Player 1 drives to wing opposite to the high post 5, while 2 cuts in the lane on the baseline and sets up in the opposite corner. Player 5 then makes a back screen for 3, who cuts in the lane and receives the ball from 1 (diagr. 16). If he cannot receive the ball, 5 screens again, making a vertical screen



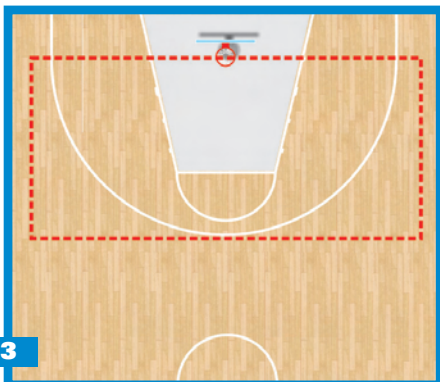




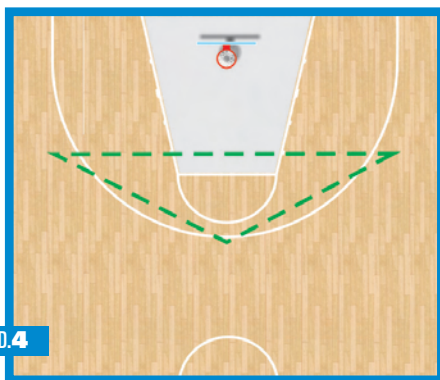
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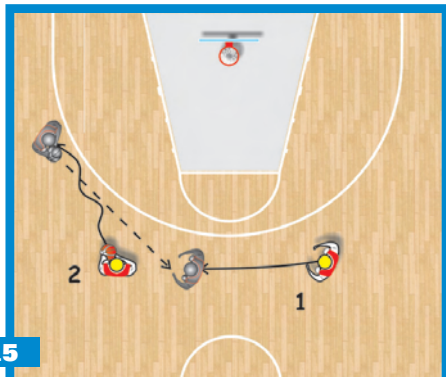
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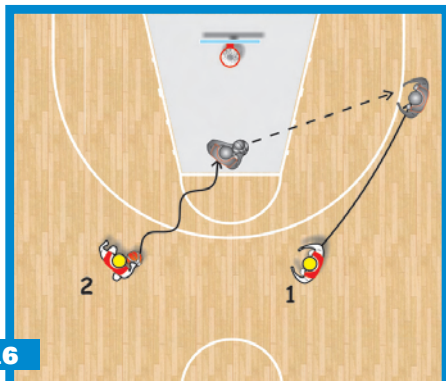
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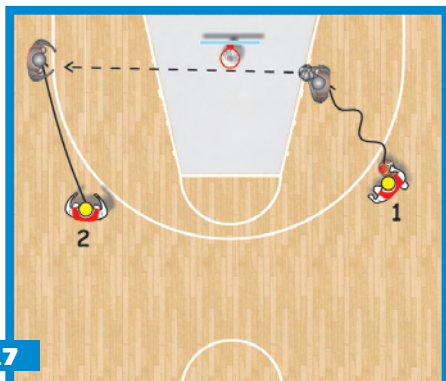
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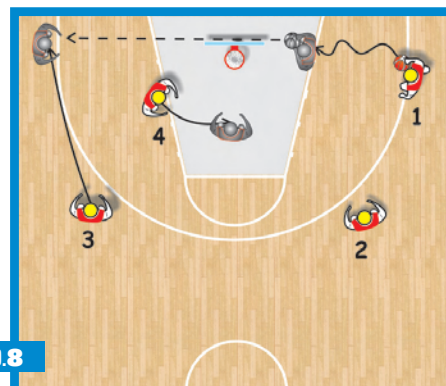
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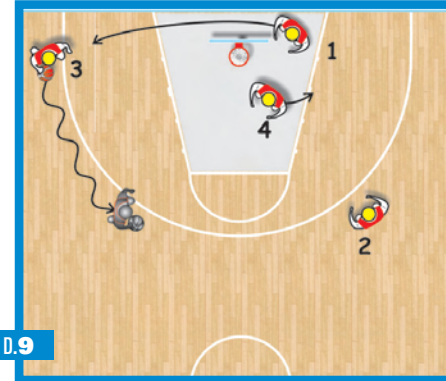
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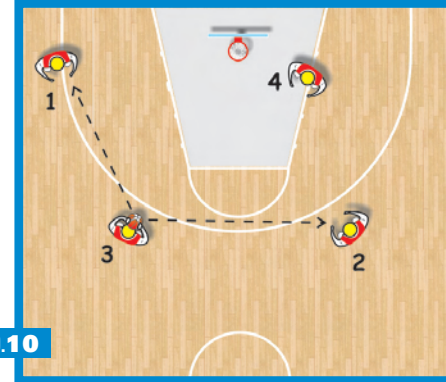
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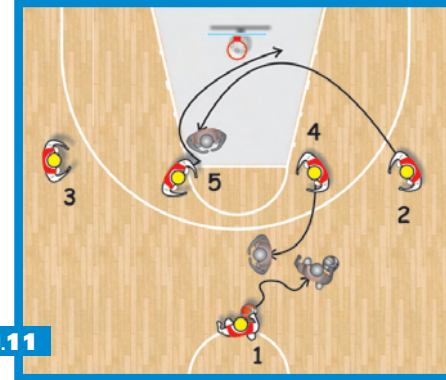
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D.9



D.10

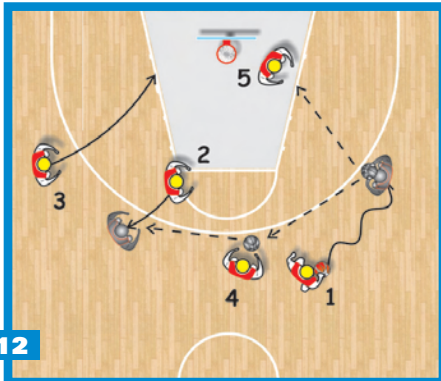


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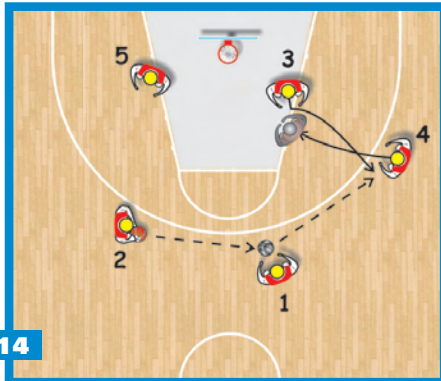
for 4; at the same time, 2 comes high to the wing spot, and 3 pops out of the lane, sprinting to the corner as 1 passes to 4 (diagr. 17). If 4 cannot shoot, he has two choices: play high-low with 5, who has ducked in the lane, or else pass to 2 (diagr. 18). If there is no solution, 2 can try to pass to 5 in the low post. If he cannot shoot, 5 can pass outside to 3, who has received a vertical screen from 4, or to 1, who has made a flash cut in the lane (di-

agr. 19). In this play, we also want to take advantage of our big men, our center and power forwards, who are playing in the low post or work to complete a high-low play. These players include Splitter, Varejão, JP Batista, Carlos Alexandre, and Giovannoni. If we rotate well, we can also shoot from the opposite side with great efficiency, thanks to the perimeter players who have medium- and long-range shooting skills. These players in-

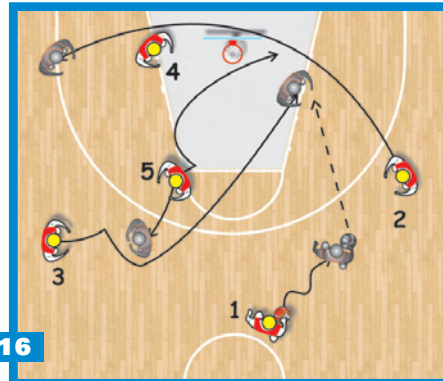




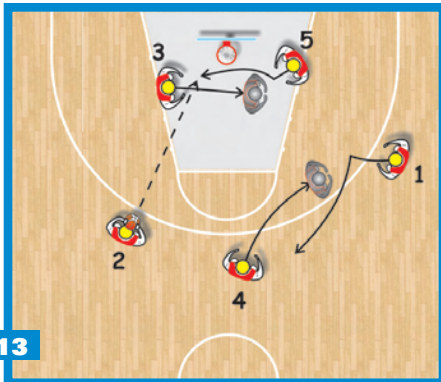
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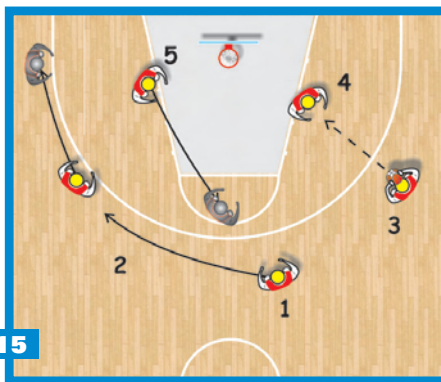
D.14



D.16



D.13



D.15

clude Leandro Barbosa, Alex Garcia, Marcelo Machado, Marcelo Huertas, Jonathan Tavernari, Diego Pinheiro, and Eduardo Machado.

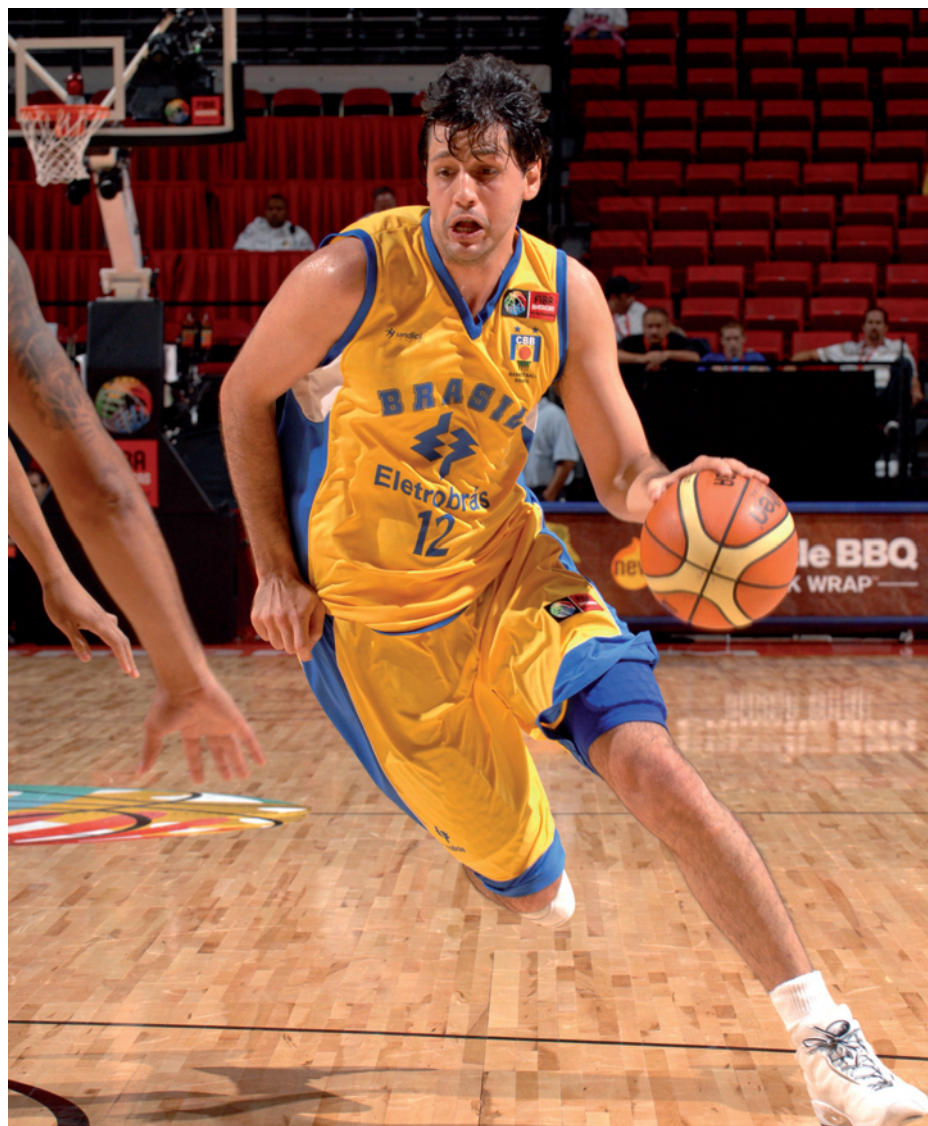
#### "HANDLE" PLAY

This is another offensive set based on the rotation of the perimeter players. It uses a pick-and-pop out and ends with a pass to the center, who is positioned under the basket. In this case, the center, 5, is set outside of the lane on the perimeter, with 2 and 4 on the two low-post spots. Player 4 is screened by 2 and then he sprints out of the lane and screens for 2. After the screen on the ball, 4 pops out to the corner (diagr. 20). Right after 2 is moving to screen 4, 5 starts to move to screen 2 (screen the screener), who gets out of the lane, receives the ball from 1, and shoots as 3 spots up in the corner (diagr. 21). If 2 can't shoot, he passes to 5 under the basket, or to 3, who passes to 5 (diagr. 22). If 5 cannot shoot, he can skip the ball back to one of the perimeter players.

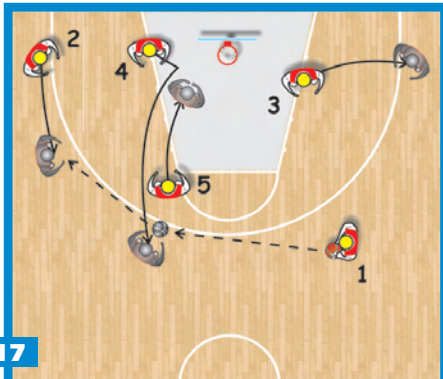
#### TRANSITION

Here is how we play in transition. We apply the concept of two screens in succession (staggered screens) and also screen the screener. This allows us to take advantage of the fact that the defense is not yet set. Player 1 brings the ball up near the sideline on the low-post side and passes to 2. He then changes his position with 5 (diagr. 23). Player 2 receives a back screen from 4, who has popped out of the low-post spot, and then another screen

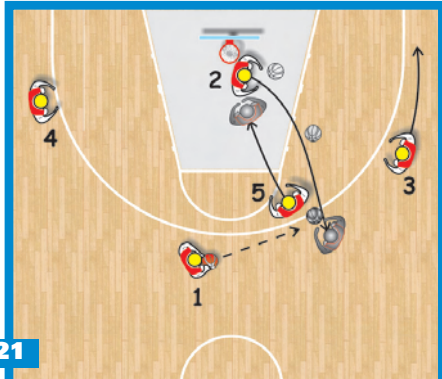
from 3 (staggered screen), while the ball is reversed from 2 to 5, from 5 to 1, and finally from 1 to 2, who has come out from the opposite corner after the two screens (diagr. 24). If 2 cannot shoot, 3 makes another screen, this time for 4, who cuts on the opposite side of the court, while 3 is screened by 5. In short, we make a staggered screen, and two consecutive screen-the-screener actions (diagr. 25). Player 1 passes to 3 for a shot, or if 3 cannot shoot, he passes to 5 in the post (diagr. 26).



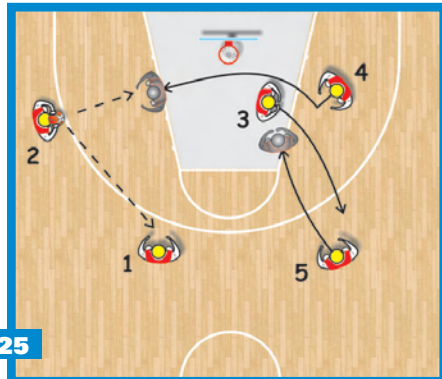




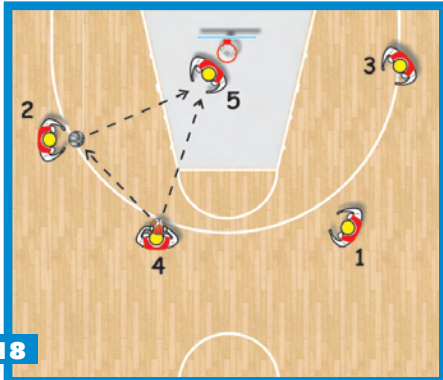
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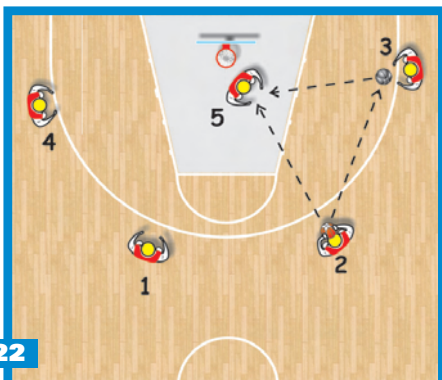
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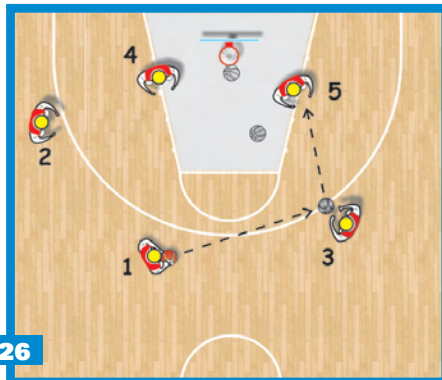
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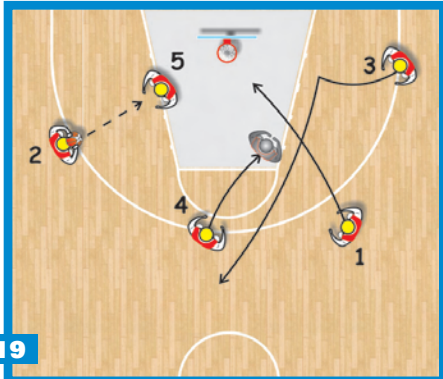
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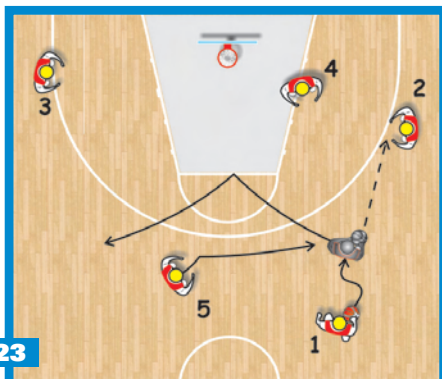
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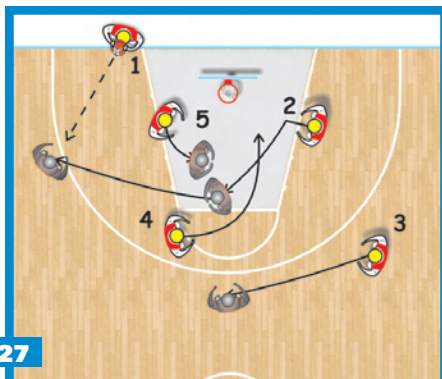
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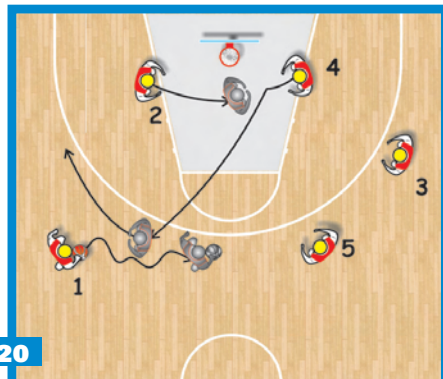
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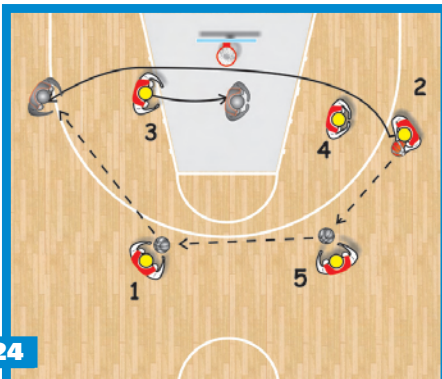
D.23



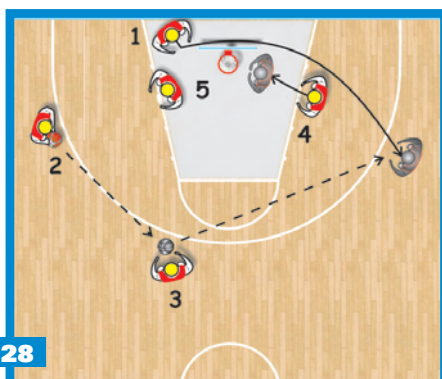
D.27



D.20



D.24



D.28

### OUT-OF-BOUNDS PLAY

The out-of-bounds play also applies the concept of screen-the-screener. Player 1 has the ball for the inbound pass. 2 screens for 4, who cuts in the lane to receive the ball. If 4 cannot receive the ball, then 2 is screened by 5 (screen-the-screener) and quickly pops out to receive the ball from 4 after he gets free (diagr. 27). If 2 doesn't shoot, he can pass to 3, who makes a reverse pass to 1, who

crossed to the opposite side, using the screen from 4 (diagr. 28).

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have focused on offense in this article, but our main weapon is actually our team defense. I primarily use a man-to-man with some variations. This defense worked best at last year's FIBA Americas Championship and was a major reason why we won. The success of our

offense depended on our strong defense that created many fastbreaks. If we couldn't score off the fastbreak, we immediately went into our secondary break offense, and finally the set offense that utilized the basic concepts that we have already explained: get the ball inside, and if a scoring opportunity isn't available, then the ball is kicked outside to create shooting possibilities on the perimeter.





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We Are Basketball



by Svetislav Pesic

Svetislav Pesic started his career coaching Bosna Sarajevo (Yugoslavia) in 1982. He then coached Alba Berlin and Cologne (Germany), Barcelona (Spain), Rome (Italy), Girona (Spain), Dynamo Moscow (Russia), and Red Star Belgrade (Serbia). He won one Yugoslavian title and one Yugoslavian Cup; with Berlin four German titles and two German Cups, as well as one Korac Cup; one Euroleague championship, one King's Cup, and two Spanish titles with Barcelona, and one FIBA Eurocup with Girona. With the Yugoslavian National Cadets team he won one FIBA European championship, while with the Junior team he won one FIBA European and one World title. At the helm of the Yugoslavia men's team he won one FIBA European title, while coaching the German men's national team, he won one FIBA European championship.

When FIBA introduced the three-point line for the first time - at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles - this interesting rule changed basketball offense and defense. After the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, FIBA once again changed the rules and introduced the 24-second and 8-second rules. The season 2009/2010 will be the tenth season of playing by the new rules. No questions about it. Some changes have had a positive influence on the game's subsequent development:

- ▼ Play in all phases of offense and defense has been speeded up.
- ▼ Organization in transition offense has improved, especially with the use of the first and the second trailer. These are frequently the big men.
- ▼ Quick and short passes dominate and

# TRANSITION OFFENSE





the dribble becomes more like an “auxiliary means” (except coast-to-coast dribble) to move the ball.

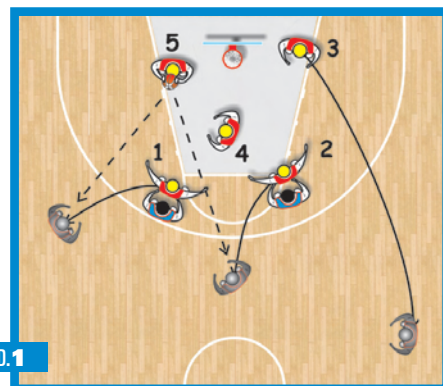
- ▼ Moving without ball improved.
- ▼ Three-point shooting has been used more frequently in primary and secondary breaks.
- ▼ Perimeter players are often used for low-post play and big players are asked to make face-to-basket plays (especially to take shots in transition after various kinds of passes and dribbles).

The 24 and 8-second rules confirm once again that basketball isn’t the same game

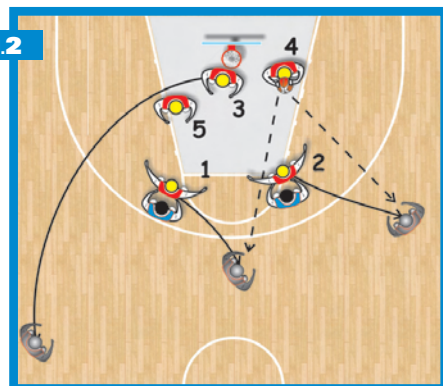
that was played on the half court. The way we use 24 seconds, how we change the rhythm in offense when we use the early fast break, the secondary fast break, and a set offense substantially affects the quality of one team’s play, as well as the result.

We split the 24 seconds (the duration of the offense) into three distinct phases: early or secondary fast break phase, set play phase, and the execution phase:

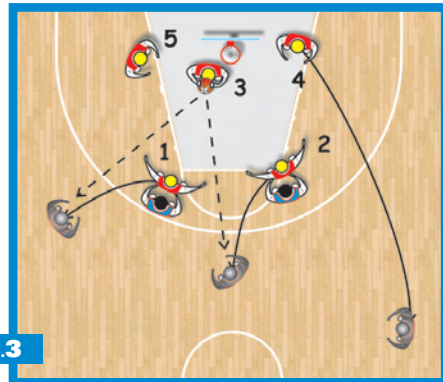
- ▼ The first 8 seconds are used for early or secondary fast break.
- ▼ Within the second 8-second phase, we make preparations and change the rhythm of the offense between



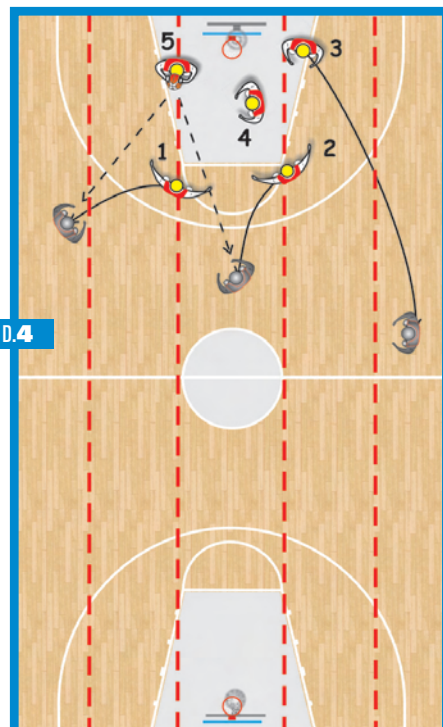
D.1



D.2



D.3



D.4





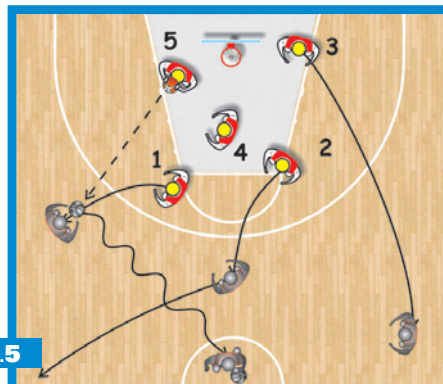
transition and set offense.

- ▼ We execute the offense in the final 8 seconds.

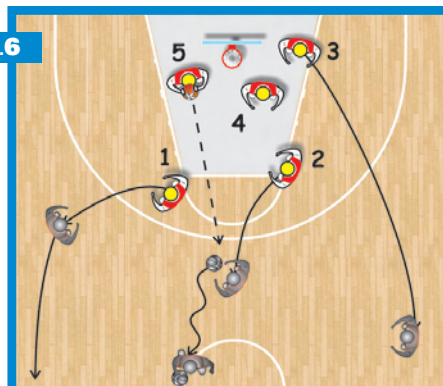
### FAST BREAK PHASE

After every defensive rebound our aim is to play the fast break phase within the first 8 seconds. We want to take advantage of our defensive rebound since the other team is not well organized to stop us. The usual (and old) theory of transition offense stated that the secondary fast break starts at the very moment the fourth offensive player is ready to participate. In a game dominated by speed and strength, I don't think this is true anymore. After introducing the 24-second and 8-second rule, and in a game where the defense is well organized, it isn't possible anymore to run a fast break using two or three offensive players. Fast breaks now typically involve four players.

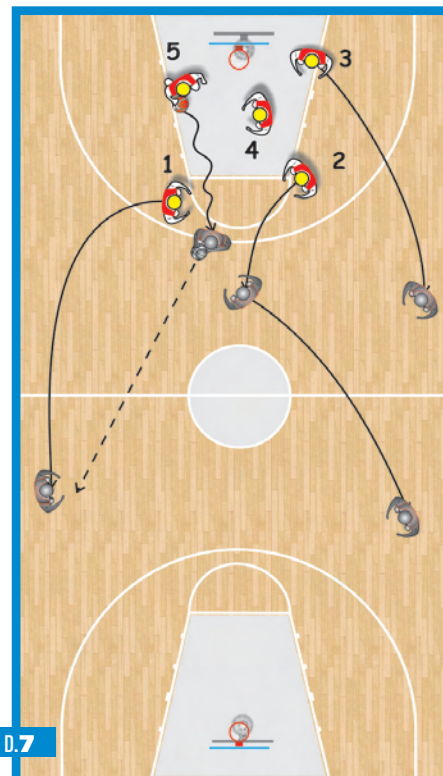
When talking of the initial phase of transition offense, I want to stress the importance of the outlet pass (the first pass), and the catching of that pass. As I have already mentioned, due to the huge progress made in defensive basketball (various types of help, rotations, switching, and double teaming) and having many players, who can play at least two positions in offense and defense, and when almost all players hustle to grab the defensive rebound, it's rather important to teach players how to make an outlet pass and find ways to outnumber the defense on fast breaks. There are several ways to receive an outlet pass, but there are two that are most commonly used. In the first play, the aim is to get the ball into the hands of the point guard, while in the second play, the object is to get the ball to the point guard, shooting guard, or small forward. This is illustrated here following a defensive rebound grabbed on the right side of the court (diagr. 1), on the left side of the half court (diagr. 2), or if the small forward has grabbed the rebound (diagr. 3). It's important to note that before getting open to receive the ball, 1 and 2 must first make contact with their defenders before popping out to receive the outlet pass.



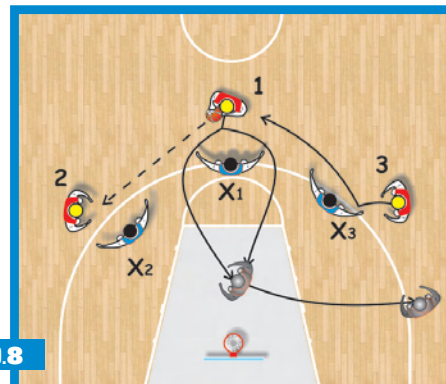
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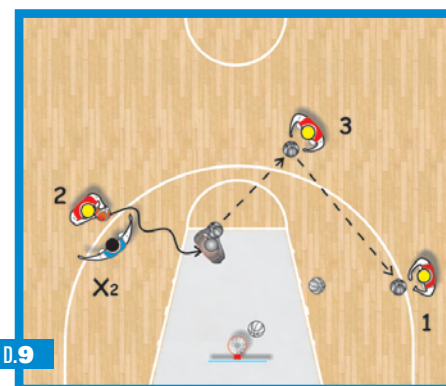
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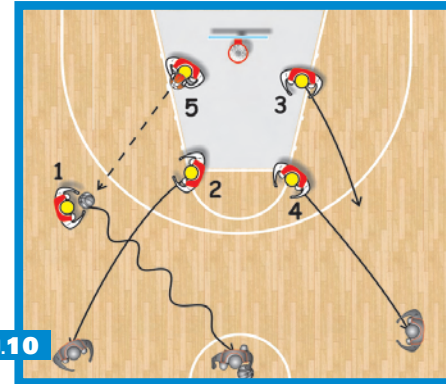
D.7



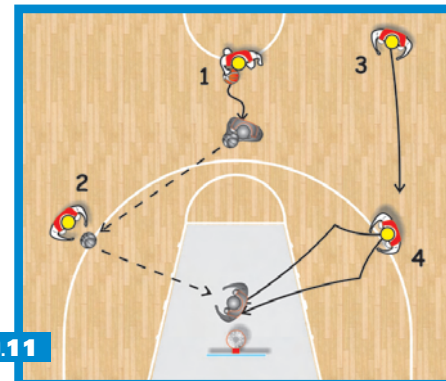
D.8



D.9



D.10



D.11

### Fast Break "Speed up" Principle

The most important player in this phase is the player on the weak side. He must sprint to the middle court line (maximum time of 2 to 2.5 seconds) and speed up the offense by becoming the first option for scoring on the fast break.

### Filling the Lanes Principle

We divide the court in five rectangular lanes, so in each of the lane there should

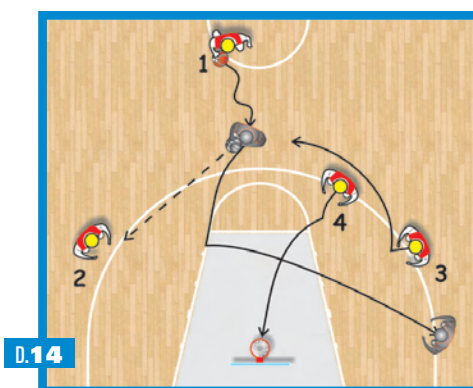
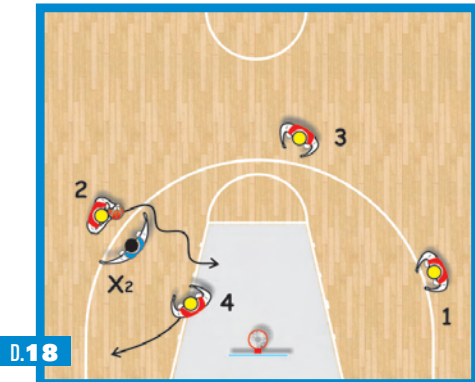
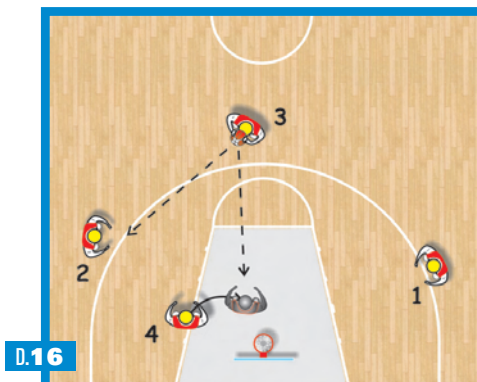
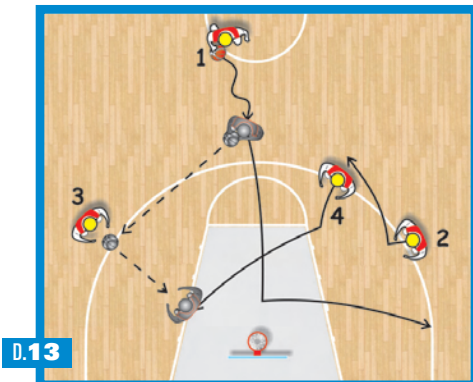
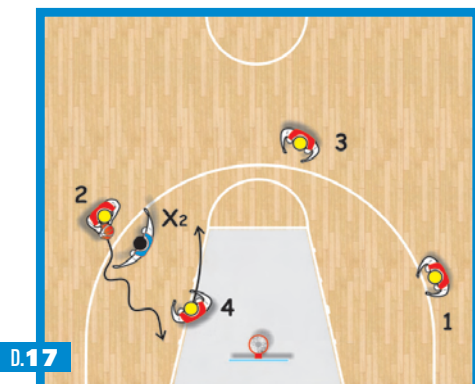
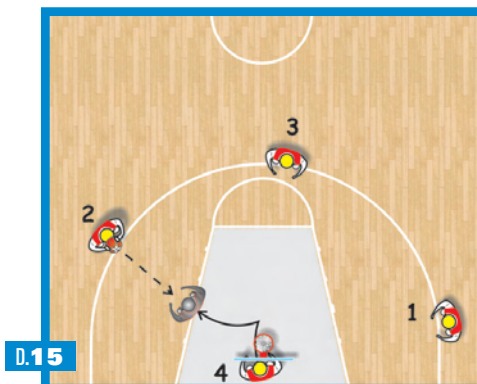
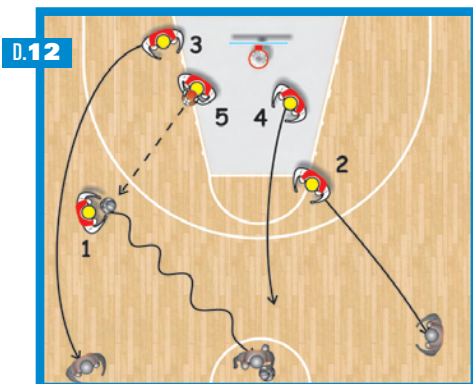
be only one offensive player. He fills the lane with the good spacing between him and his teammates (diagr. 4). How fast, simply, and efficiently we get out of the back court depends not only on the outlet pass, but on several other rules.

It is a mandatory to receive the outlet pass (the first pass) at about 8 meters (approximately 25 feet), near the sideline, and far from the three-point line.

If defenders cover 1 or 2 closely, they

never come back to the ball. Instead, they fake to come back and then make a back-door play so they can receive the outlet pass. After receiving the first pass, we follow the rule: "Pass to the side, dribble in the middle." The final part of the fast break recipe says: "Two short and simple passes are better than one long pass." We have three options for the fastest transition from backcourt to the front-court:

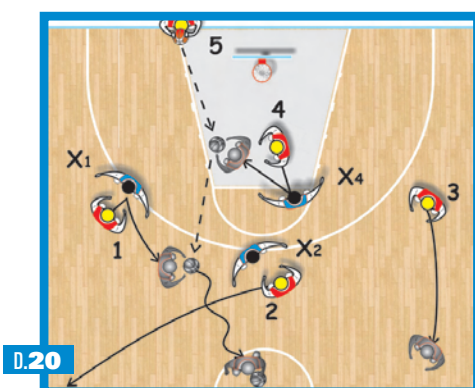
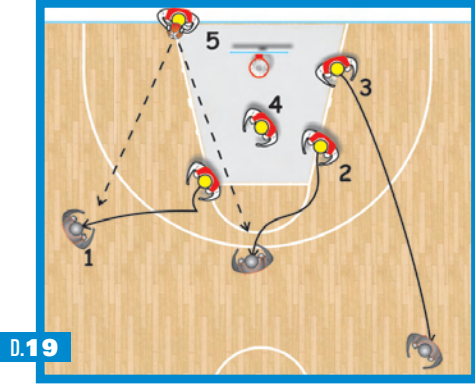




ate potential situations of three-on-two and three-on-three. Just looking at the statistics, if the backboard is used for a shot and the ball does not go in, in 80% of cases the ball drops out to the middle of the lane. In 70% of cases, if there is a side shot without the use of the board, the ball goes to the other side of the basket or else right back to the shooter.

**Three-on-Two:** In this situation, our first option is to score a lay up or to make an uncontested jump shot, either from medium range or from the three-point line.

**Three-on-Three:** The goal is to make this play before the defense can get set. The player in the middle, 1, passes the ball to the wing, 2, and cuts over or behind his defender to create an isolation for the player with the ball so he can play one-on-one. In the meantime, the other wing, 3, replaces the passer (diagr. 8). Player 2 can drive to the basket, but if he can't shoot, he will reverse the ball to 3 who will pass to 1 for a shot (diagr. 9).



- ▼ A dribble to the middle lane by the first receiver 1 (diagr. 5).
- ▼ The outlet pass from 5 to 2, who dribbles in the middle lane (diagr. 6).
- ▼ A couple of very quick dribbles by the rebounder 5 and the outlet pass to 1 (diagr. 7).

Every player, who grabs a defensive rebound, should be able to make an outlet pass with or without defensive pressure, and all players, regardless of their position should be able to escape from the defense with a dribble and then make the outlet pass. I have found that when players 3, 4, or 5 are especially skilled, they can grab the rebound, get the ball quickly out of the three-second lane, using a few dribbles if necessary, and then get the ball to 1 or 2 for an open shot or lay-up.

### THREE-ON-TWO AND THREE-ON-THREE SITUATIONS

The majority of defensive rebounds cre-

### FAST BREAK IN THE FIRST 8 SECONDS WITH THE FOURTH PLAYER

The fourth player used in the first 8-second phase of the fast break can be 4 or 5, depending on who gets the defensive rebound. Since we demand that the player in the middle (usually the point guard, 1, after making a lateral pass) must cut to the basket, the fifth player (4 or 5, who reaches the front court latest) becomes the safety to cover the opponent's potential fast break.

If the players on the wings, 2 and 3, don't receive the pass in three-on-two and three-on-three situations to make a jump shot or lay-up, they move toward the baseline, and based on the opponent's reaction, they must decide to make:

- ▼ A switch with the player on the opposite side.
- ▼ Physical contact with the defender and then pop out to receive the ball.



## FOUR-ON-THREE AND FOUR-ON-FOUR SITUATIONS

**Four-on-Three:** If it is 4 that sprints on the right wing instead of 3 (diagr. 10), he makes a backdoor or a front cut to the basket to receive the ball from 2 (diagr. 11).

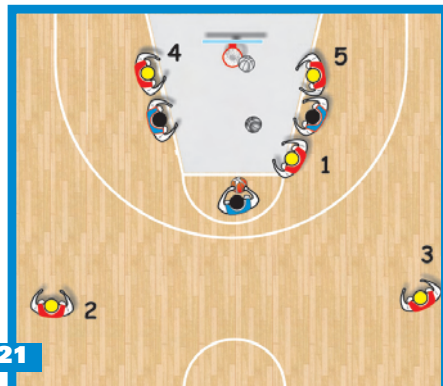
Instead, if 4 is the first trailer (diagr. 12), he sprints to the three-point line, watches where the ball is positioned, and then cuts to the middle-low post position to receive the ball from 2 (diagr. 13).

**Four-on Four:** In this situation where we do not have a numeric advantage over the defense, we do not stop the flow of our offense, but try to take advantage from the ball possession. Player 1 cuts in the lane and then in the corner, while 4 cuts and stops briefly under the basket, hiding behind the defense (diagr. 14). He waits to see if the defense helps on the ball, then ducks in, seals his defender, and opens up to the ball at the middle low-post position to get the ball from 2 (diagr. 15). If 4 cannot receive the ball, 2 kicks the ball to 3 for a high-low play with 4, who has ducked in the lane to get the ball (diagr. 16).

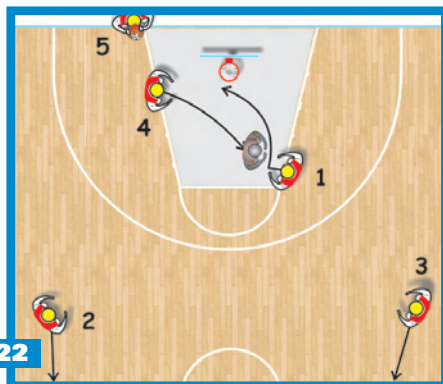
If the player with the ball, 2, drives to the baseline, 4 makes a flash cut out of the lane to take away the help (diagr. 17). However, if 2 drives to the middle, 4 pops out in the short corner (diagr. 18). Precision, speed of cuts with and without the ball, patience, and getting open in the shot zone will provide us with other opportunities for scoring within the 8-second time frame.

## SECONDARY BREAK PHASE

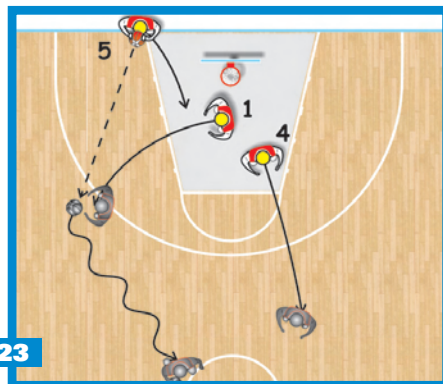
We use the secondary break after a basket is scored by the opponent, after a free-throw, or a sideline out-of-bound on our backcourt or after a timeout. While the basic aim in the fast break phase is having the perimeter players sprint past the opponent's perimeter defensive players, quickly passing the ball and creating an overload situation, in the secondary break the aim is to have the big men run past the opponent's defensive big players and create an overload. All players have to understand that once the opponent has scored from anywhere on the court, we don't let the ball hit the ground. We grab it as quickly as possible and inbound it. The secondary break is played within the first 8 seconds of the offense and lasts until the defense is completely set. Again, it should be very clear that we do not want to turn our fast break or secondary break into a set offense. Our goal is to "change the rhythm of the offense."



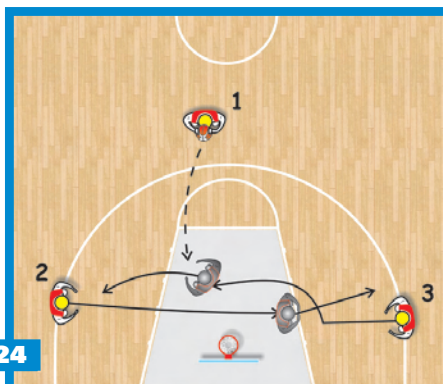
D.21



D.22



D.23

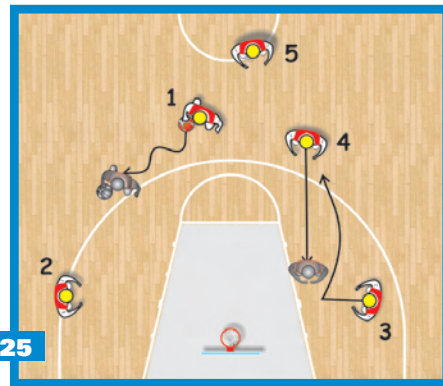


D.24

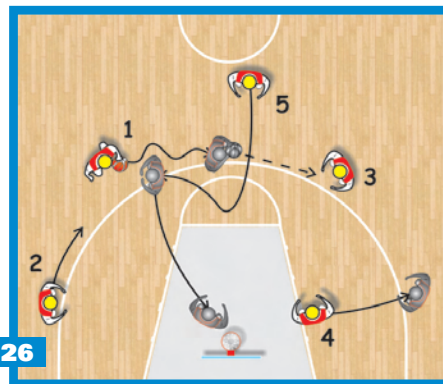
When we cannot score on the previously described phases, we bring the ball near the lane to begin the second phase of our offense where we set the offense, saving the last 8 seconds for creating other shooting possibilities.

## CATCHING THE BALL AFTER THE SCORED BASKET AND THE OUTLET PASS

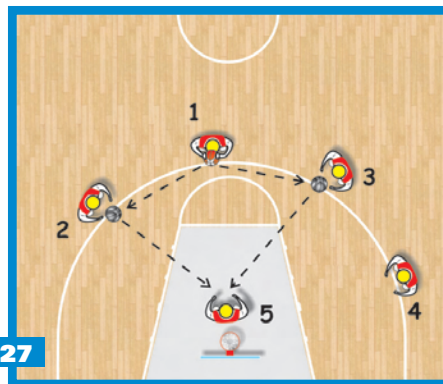
It should be predetermined who will inbound the ball after the opponent's bas-



D.25



D.26



D.27

ket. This could be the closest big man to the basket, or another big man who has been given the job. It should always be a big man. In our philosophy, 5 catches the ball right after it gets out of the net and before touching the floor. He must set himself in a way that he can see the entire floor, his teammates, and the defenders. He wants to get the ball to 1 or 2 in the passing lanes. Player 1 tries to get open laterally to receive the outlet pass, while the player on the opposite side, 2, sets himself as the second receiver of the inbound pass if 1 is guarded (diagr. 19). In the meantime, player 3 sprints on the weak side and reaches the mid court in less than 2.5 seconds. Other ways to start the fast break are the same that I described following a defensive rebound.

If 1 or 2 cannot receive the inbound pass from 5, 4 makes a V-cut to receive the ball, while 1 makes a backdoor cut to receive the ball from 4. In the meantime,





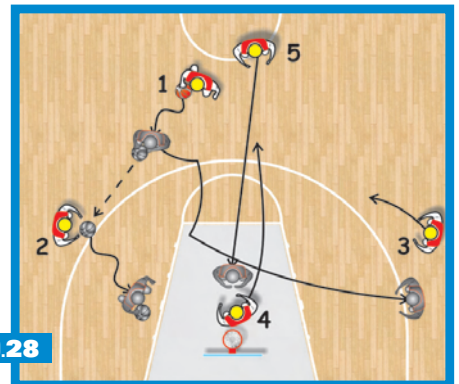
2 sprints down near one of the sidelines, to the left or right, based by the move of 3 (diagr. 20). After receiving the ball, 1 drives quickly to the middle of the court, and he is responsible for running the fast break first, and then the secondary break.

#### SECONDARY BREAK AFTER A FREE-THROW OR PRESSING

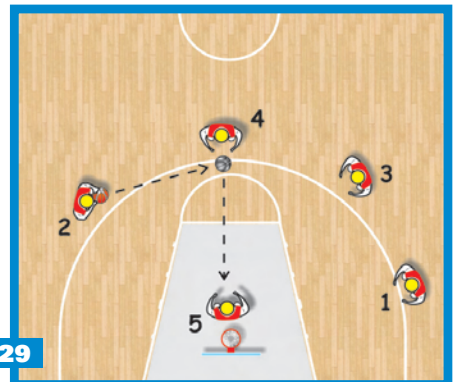
Before a free-throw, the players are set as shown in diagr. 21. After a made free-throw, 5 grabs the ball and makes an outlet pass to 1, who was previously screened by 4. Simultaneously, 2 and 3 sprint out to the two sidelines, on the left and right (diagr. 22). From this situation, there are different options for creating and finishing the secondary break. For example: 1 gets the inbound pass from 5 and drives hard to the middle of the court (diagr. 23), while 2 and 3 sprint down the court. The player on the ball side (2 in this case) screens for 3 on the

weak side, so 3 can receive the ball from 1 (diagr. 24).

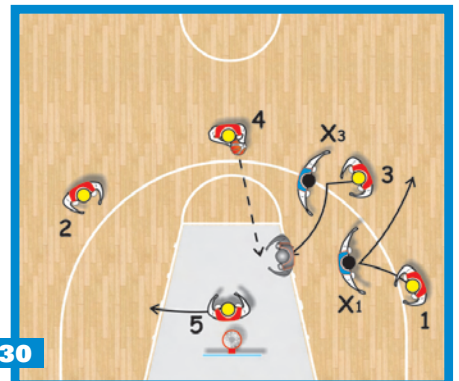
After screening for 1, 4 continues to run, fills in as the first trailer, and sets the vertical screen for 3 (diagr. 25). Player 5 sprints down as the second trailer, changes direction, and sets the pick for the player with the ball, 1 (diagr. 26). Player 5 then rolls to the basket. The ball can be passed to 5 by 2 or 3, after one of these players has received it from 1 (diagr. 27). The goal of this secondary break is to bring 5 inside the lane, because the defense is not yet set and more concerned with the perimeter players. We'll now show several options with the secondary break that can be used against all kinds of defenses, from man-to-man and zone defense, to combined zones and match-ups. With all of these options, the first aim is to create some scoring possibilities inside the lane and shooting opportunities for other players on the perimeter.



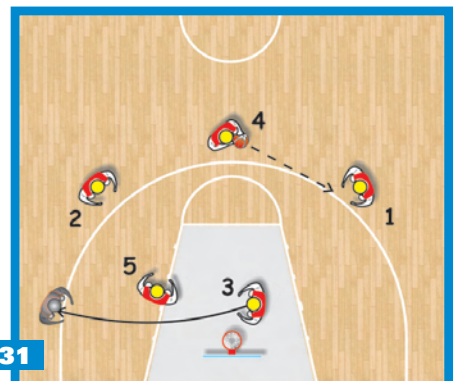
D.28



D.29



D.30

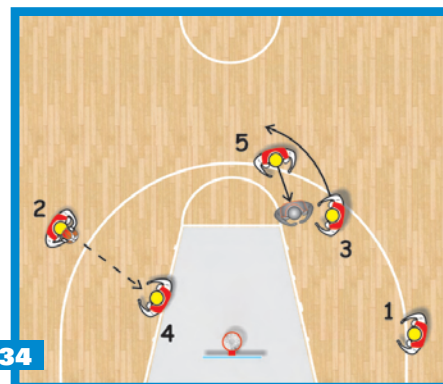
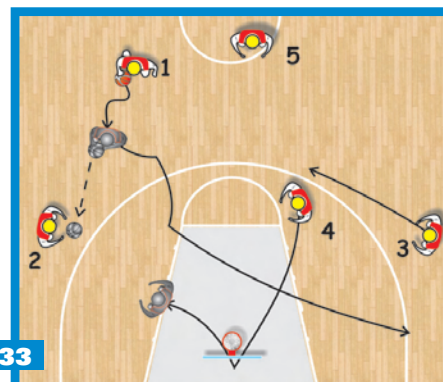
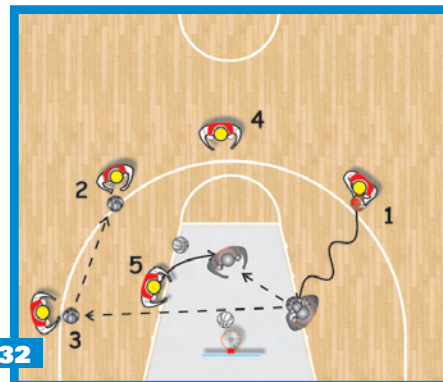


D.31

**We request that our players follow these principles:**

- ▼ They must be spaced 5 meters (about 15 feet) from each other as they run or drive down the court to the offensive basket.
- ▼ The first trailer runs on the opposite side from the player with the ball, while the second trailer (the fifth man in the secondary break) acts as the "safety" to cover the eventual





fast break of the opponent.

- ▼ Only one player in each of the five lanes.
- ▼ Every player should be ready to receive the ball. Players must provide a target with their hands, away from the defender.

**We use different entries on the secondary break:**

- ▼ A pass to the wing.
- ▼ A pass into the lane to the first trailer.
- ▼ A pass to the second trailer.
- ▼ A pass to the high post.
- ▼ A pass to the wing, after the second trailer screens for him.
- ▼ The dribble for the entry into the secondary break.

#### FIRST OPTION

After receiving the ball, 2 drives to the basket (diagr. 28), while 5 sets a down screen for the first trailer, 4. If 2 he cannot shoot, he passes to 4, who popped



out from the lane after the screen from 5. Player 4 plays high-low with 5, who has turned to the ball after the screen, and seals his defender under the basket so he can get the ball from 4 (diagr. 29).

If it's impossible for high-low play, the player with the ball, 4, tries to pass to 3 on his backdoor cut, an effective play especially when the defense doesn't anticipate the pass or is not yet set (diagr. 30). At the same time, 1 makes contact with his defender, ready for a pass from 4, if he cannot pass to 3 on the backdoor (diagr. 31).

After receiving the ball, 1 drives to the basket and he can make an inside pass to 5, or a pass to 3, who can shoot (also from the three-point line), or make an extra pass so 2 can shoot (diagr. 32).

## SECOND OPTION

Player 1 passes to the wing 2 and 2 passes to 4, the first trailer, who cuts under the basket and posts himself in the middle or low-post position (diagr. 33).

As the pass is being made from 2 to 4, 5, the second trailer, screens for 3 on the weak side (diagr. 34).

After passing to 4, 2 fakes to cut towards 4, then changes the pace and direction and screens for 3 for a split move. Player 4 is now isolated and can play one-on-one. After the screen, 2 rolls to the basket and can receive a backdoor pass from 4 (diagr. 35).

Another option is the pass to 1 in the middle of the court, which is made after 1 has been screened down by 5 (diagr. 36.)

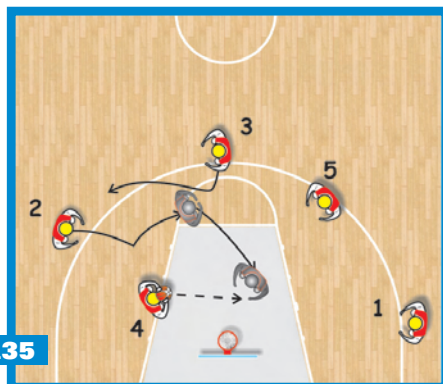
Player 1 can shoot or pass inside to 5, who rolls to the basket after the screen. Alternatively, the pass can be made to 4, who ducks in the lane (diagr. 37).

On the diagr. 38 the option if 2 swings the ball on the opposite side to 3, who pops out from the screen of 5.

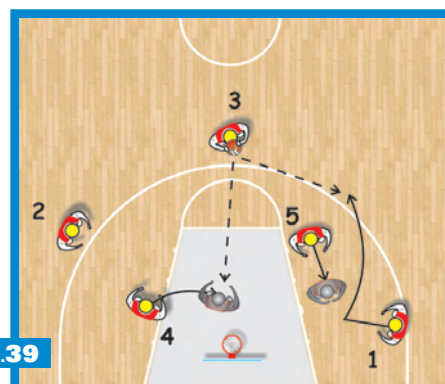
Player 3 can play high-low with 4, or pass to 1, who has been screened by 5: in short, 5 makes two screens, one for 3 and another for 1 (diagr. 39). Another option is to create an inside play in the final part of secondary break. This is made with a screen of 3, after the pass of 1 to 4. Player 1 can pass to 3 near the basket, or to 5 on the mid post (diagr. 40). Player 1 can also pass to 4, and 4 to 5, who cuts in the lane for a high-low play (diagr. 41).

## THIRD OPTION

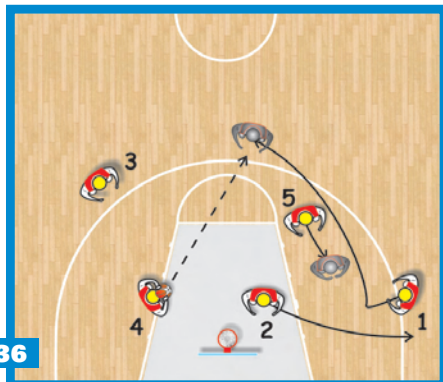
Player 1 can also start the secondary break by passing to the wing 2, and then cut to the corner on the ball side, the so-called "strong side entry." In the meantime, 4 flashes to the mid post position



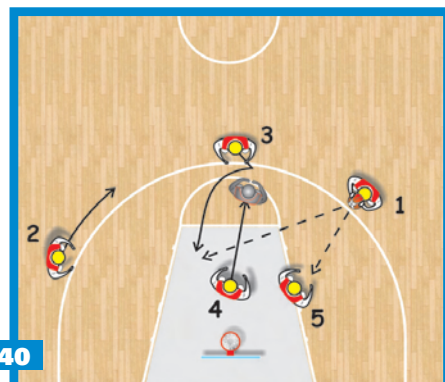
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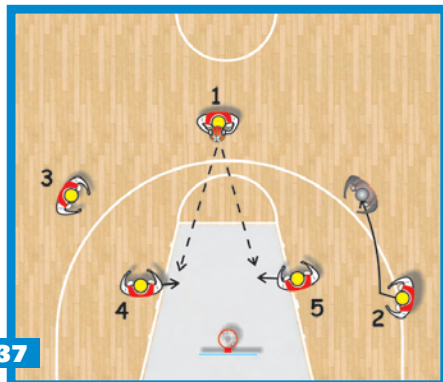
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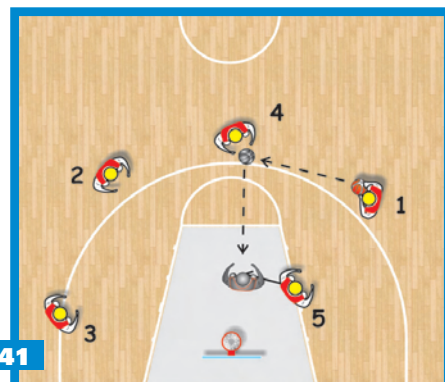
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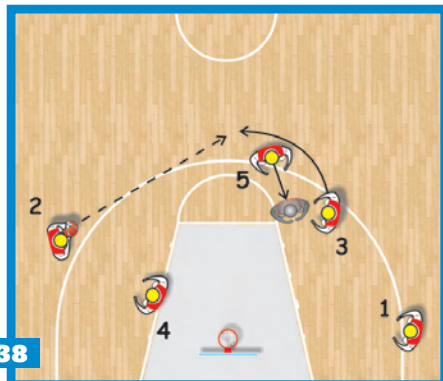
D.40



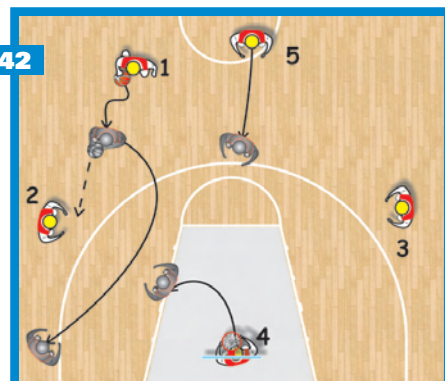
D.37



D.41



D.38



D.42

from under the basket (diagr. 42).

Player 2 can pass to 4, or can pass to 3 in the middle of the court, who pops out from a screen set by 5 (diagr. 43). It must be remembered that there is also the option of the split move between 3 and 2, as shown previously (see diagr. 34).

Player 3 can play high-low with 4 or high-low with 5, after the vertical screen of 5 for 4 (diagr. 44).

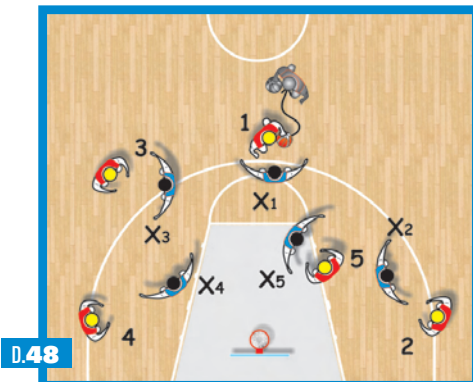
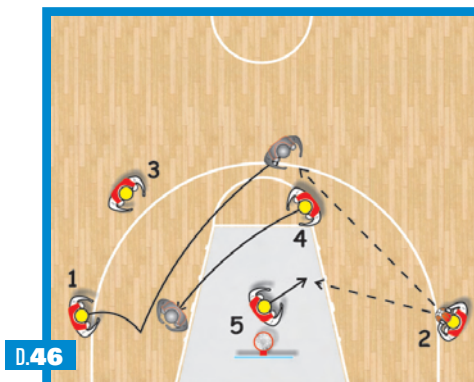
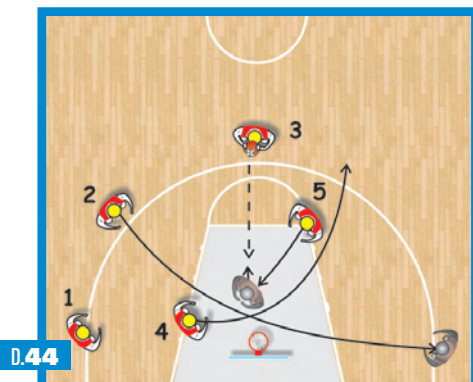
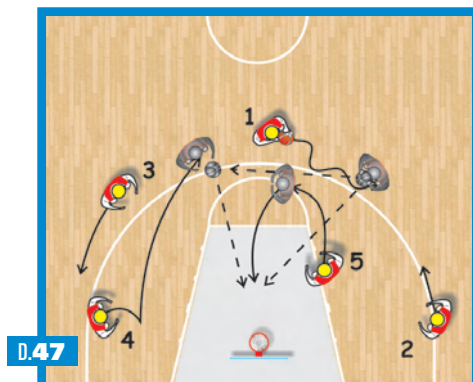
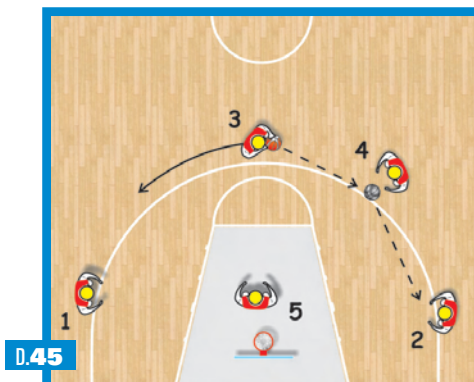
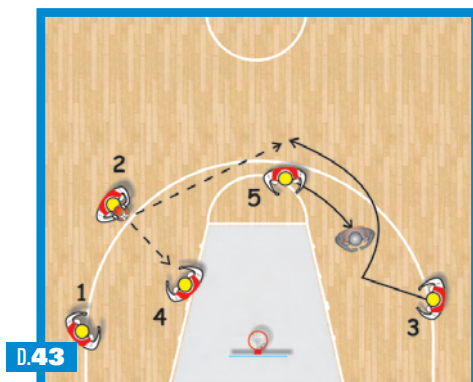
Another possibility is the pass from 3 to

4 and from 4 to 2 in the corner. As this is going on, 3 spots up opposite to 4 (diagr. 45).

Another possibility: After the pass to 2, 4 makes a diagonal screen for 1 on the other corner of the half court. Player 2 can pass to 1 in the middle of the court, or to 5, who pops out at the mid-low post position (diagr. 46).

If 2, instead passing to 5, passes to 1, and if 1 cannot shoot, 1 then has some





decisions to make: he will be screened by 5 for a pick-and-roll with him or make a pass to 2, who has faked to cut in the lane and then flashed high outside of the three-point line (diagr. 47).

Player 1 can also decide to change the rhythm and call a set play (diagr. 48). Which type of set offense will be run with 8 to 16 seconds? Based on the type of the defense we

face and on the team's offensive philosophy, we have different options, including motion, a passing game, quick hitter plays inside or outside, and various options with a two- or three-man game.







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by Raffaele Imbrogno

# A "SENSE" FOR BASKETBALL

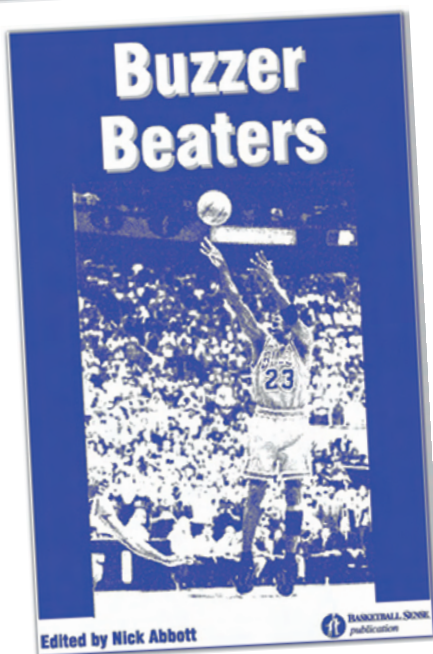
Raffaele Imbrogno has been coaching since 1980. He is an Instructor for the Italian National Coaches Committee of the Federation and has been Director of the Italian Basketball Federation Study Center. Imbrogno is also the author of several technical basketball publications.

These days, where there seems to be more interest in fancy basketball where play often consists of dunks, elaborate passes, jumping, and sprinting up and down the court, oftentimes without any reason, the fundamentals of the game are often forgotten. But, it is basketball fundamentals, the real strength and beauty of the game, that remains the foundation of this beautiful game, and we need to return to this important core.

In the United States, there is a coach and a company that produces books and DVDs that stress basketball fundamentals. In the past few years, coach Lason Perkins and the Basketball Sense company have produced articles, books, and DVDs designed to improve the teaching of basketball, bringing back the inherent beauty of the game at the same time. Coach Perkins has not only worked on improving the fundamentals "inside" the borders of the U.S., but has taken a detailed look at basketball the world over.

Coach Perkins and Basketball Sense released more than twenty DVDs on the basics of the game, including what he considers to be the top basketball plays every coach should know when setting up an effective offense. An example of this is "Great Scoring Plays from Around the Word," a 65-minute DVD where he showcases plays that take advantage of a great shooter, maximize the presence of a good post player, and describe in great detail how to utilize the pick-and-

*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.*



roll, and incorporate effective out-of-bounds plays.

In another well-regarded DVD, "Secrets of International Basketball," coach Perkins analyzes Euroleague games, pointing out the nuances of the drive-and-pick, the pick-and-pop, the dribble hand-off weave, and many other plays that rely on basketball fundamentals.

With "The A-Set Offense," Basketball Sense also offers a close-up look at the most popular offenses used in international basketball. This successful basketball offense utilizes on-ball screens, drive-and-kick principles, with great stress placed on spacing on the court. Again, Coach Perkins shows coaches how to take advantage of their team's offensive strengths and key personnel, while forcing the defense to constantly figure out how to effectively guard the basket. For additional information on building a successful offense, Coach Perkins has also produced DVDs on other offensive sets, including "Open Post Offense" and "How to Win at the End," a two-volume compendium filled with plays designed to guarantee victory for your team.

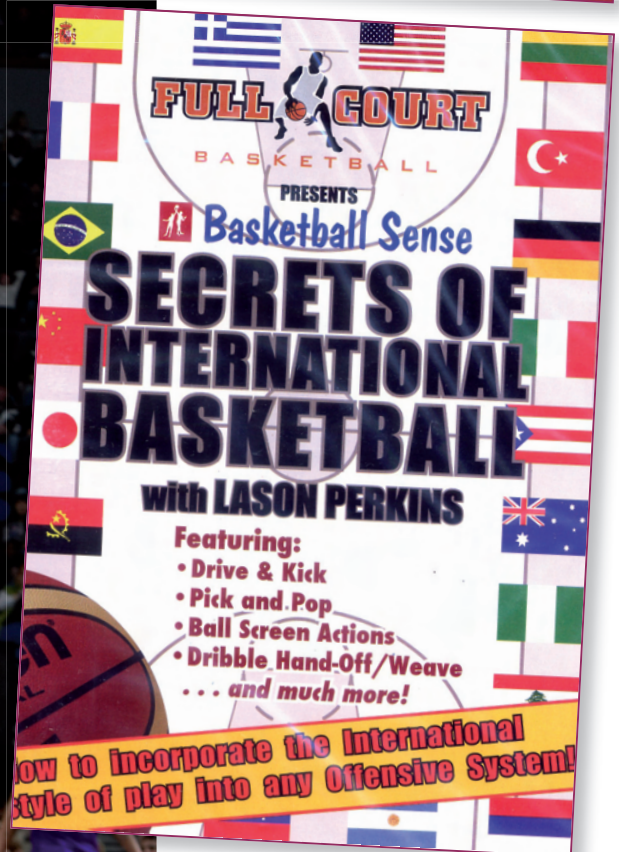
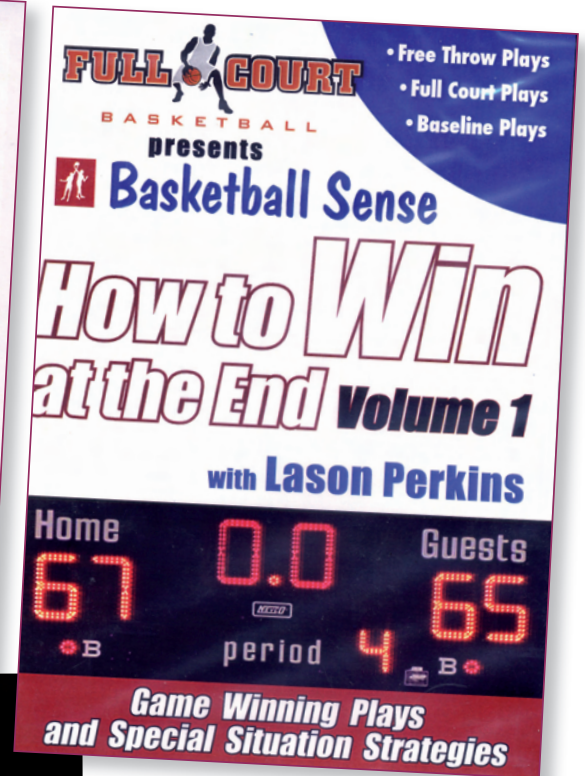
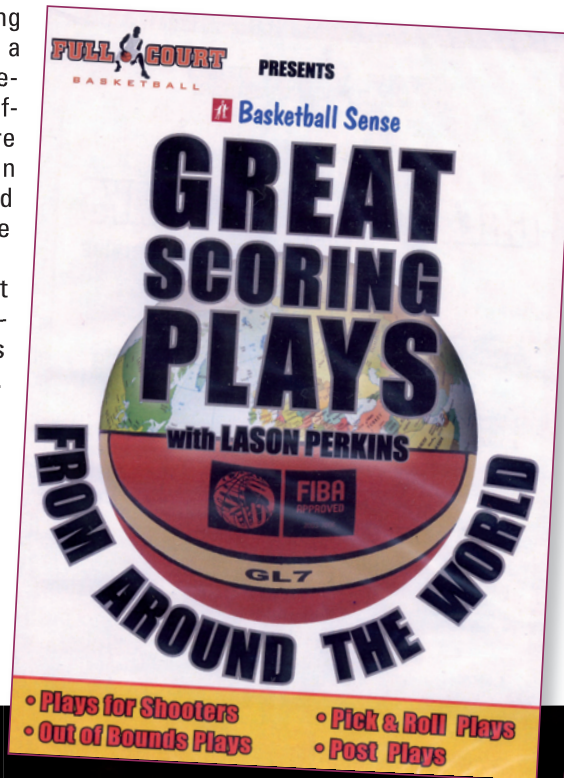
Basketball Sense has also released several other very interesting DVDs you should consider. Ganon Baker, one of the best teachers and demonstrators of basketball fundamentals, Ed Schilling, an expert on offensive moves at the wing and post, and Herb Welling, who describes the famous offensive set now used by coach John Calipari at the University of Kentucky, all have DVDs you will want in your collection.

In addition to the many DVDs at the Basketball Sense Internet site (<http://www.basketballsense.com/Books/books.aspx>), there are many books on basketball technique that cover all aspects of creating a successful basket-



ball offense, from developing the 1-4 set to go against a man-to-man and zone defense to effective out-of-bounds plays that are designed to get the ball in the right player's hands and lead to a score before the buzzer goes off.

For those of you who want more basketball information, Basketball Sense has a regular blog (<http://www.basketballsense.com/blog/>), where you can learn about the latest tactics and technique employed by other coaches. It's extremely informative and a great resource for any coach looking to take his team to the next level.







**FIBA**

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by Richard Stokes



by Miguel Betancor

# DIGITAL SCORE SHEET (DSS)

**Richard Stokes became a FIBA referee in 1993 when he was 25. He officiated in all European competitions until 2005 when he joined FIBA Europe's Competitions and Referee department and is currently an instructor and clinician in Europe.**

**Miguel Betancor was recognised as one of the top FIBA referees in the world and has officiated over 400 international games, including the 1996 Olympic Games, 2 World Championships (1994 and 1998), 3 European Championships (1993, 1999 and 2003), 4 Tournaments of the Americas, 2 EuroLeague Final Fours, 4 Korac Cup Finals and 2 Ronchetti Cup Finals. In December 2003 he became Referee Department Co-ordinator for FIBA Europe.**

In the last EuroBasket and EuroBasket Women's competitions in 2007 and also in 2009, FIBA Europe used a new form of technology to assist the officials and the teams in their preparation and subsequent review of the games that were played.

The concept of the Digital Score Sheet (DSS), began in 1999 at the EuroBasket in France. In one of the most important games in the competition, the host France was drawn against Yugoslavia. In a close game, an incident occurred during the final minutes that could have made a huge impact on the game and affected which team went through to the semi-final. One of the referees in this game, Miguel Betancor from Spain was forced to use his game management skills to the maximum, as he sought to find the correct outcome.

With a few minutes remaining in quarter final game, one of the leading players for one of the teams committed a foul. The table officials informed the referees that this was in fact his 5th foul. Immediately there were protests from the bench of the player who had fouled out. The bench who believed that he had only committed 4 fouls began to strongly complain and protest. Betancor found himself in a position, where common sense told him something



was wrong. For an important player to be playing on 4 fouls when there was still a long time to play and for such an experienced coach to leave the player in the game in this position, didn't make sense. Whilst the protests continued, he quickly asked the statistician on the opposing team bench how many fouls he thought the player had. He replied "only 4". A show of honesty and great sportsmanship gave Betancor confirmation of what he believed to be true, that there had been an error in communicating a previous foul to the table. Maybe the referee had signaled the wrong number, maybe the table official had marked a foul against the wrong player, but it was clear that human error was to blame. The player stayed in the game, and played an important part in his team winning the game. Although Betancor's actions in get-





ting the information were not exactly "according to the rules", there was complete acceptance in his final decision. However, this situation gave focus and thought as to how human error could be eliminated quickly during a game. In considering this aspect and in trying to find a solution, it would also be possible to provide other tools for the training of officials and more importantly to enable the referees to review their decisions during the game if required or allowed.

As a result, the concept of a DSS began to take form and over the next 3 years a model was produced in co-operation with the University of Las Palmas Gran Canaria and Maxosystem SL, that was tried and tested in the EuroBasket competitions in 2003 and again in 2005, as well as a number of other

events. The principle of this software that was developed, was that it should run in conjunction with the video or television feed that may be available at any game, especially as it is this feed that referees finally use to review the games. It is also the same medium used by teams to review their tactics, or scout other teams.

The DSS takes the signal from any camera in the arena and through an interface records it onto a hard drive. Many different actions can then be recorded and then located within the video of the game. In a similar way to "live-scores", which can be found on many websites today, each action has a record very similar to those that you find in recording statistics. This means that each action can be located in the game, by the

point in time that it happened. A computer based version of the score sheet is available on a laptop, and the scores, fouls PLUS many other actions are recorded, in a combination of scorer's duties and statisticians duties as well.

However, this in itself was nothing new, knowing the time is one thing, but quickly locating it is another. So the designers also included the ability to locate any play via an action recorded in the score sheet, so as to eliminate the kind of error that Betanacor experienced. As an example, if the same situation arose with the DSS in operation, a simple click on the 4 fouls recorded in the score sheet for this player would immediately take you to the video of that play. You could then see not only the foul, but also the signal of the referee in



most cases, which could establish whether any mistake had been made.

The ability to do this is not yet possible according to the official rules, but the great leap that this project made enabled a number of other pieces of information to be used from this recording. For the referees, the DSS provided a means to quickly review certain plays in their post-game analysis. Instead of scanning through almost two hours of video, by clicking on individual fouls or shots, or by even entering the actual game time, they could quickly go to exactly that play to review what they had done. Another important aspect is that the project also allows the user to jump backwards or forwards in 5, 10 or 15 second steps. This allows for example, a foul not only to be reviewed, but also the play leading up to the foul.

In a similar way, this project can also be used to enhance the coach's review of the game. By clicking on any individual player and filtering his actions (e.g., fouls, or points scored), the coaching staff can look at the fouls the player committed, or the points scored and how they were created. This also gives the opportunity for coaches to scout other teams when the DSS is used, as well as their own.

In 2009 in the EuroBasket and EuroBasket Women, the 16 participating teams were given copies of the DSS DVD, in each of the games where the DSS was used. In Poland, the teams were also briefed for the first time on the possible uses of the DSS and a user manual was produced to fully explain the different aspects of the programme. One of the great things about the DSS, is that no drivers or special software has to be installed on the user's computer. Everything that is needed to run the programme is included within the DVD.

So far, the feedback from the referees, who have used this tool, has been excellent. In both EuroBasket competitions in 2009, all of the debriefings after each game and all of the referee meetings each day, utilised clips that had been captured from the DSS. The observers and instructors no longer needed to spend many hours cutting video clips to use. Most of the plays that they needed could be easily found and used via the DSS. After each game in Poland, the referees and teams received a copy of the DVD, normally within 30-60 minutes of the finish of the game and this became the main tool for reviewing any



aspect of the game for the referees and teams.

Although in the EuroBasket the television feed was used, the DSS can also be used with a simple video recorder for lower level games. Only the quality and position of the camera will determine what can be seen and what information can be used effectively.

Outside of Europe, FIBA Americas have also piloted the use of this software in a number of tournaments and it is intended that this will become an integral part of their main competitions, in the same way that it is used in Europe. Javier Ortero, IT Manager for FIBA Americas, said: "This

tool is very simple to use, but has many great possibilities to enhance and help the job of the teams and those people working with the referees, as well as the referees themselves".

FIBA Europe has also used the DSS as a form of instant replay. As it takes the same signal from the television, the referee who goes to the table to review any play according to the Official basketball Rules has direct and quick access to the play, by working with the computer operator at the table.

There is no need for the delay associated with communication with a TV director or outside broadcast unit. Betancor states: "Our next goal for the future generation of





this software is to also capture the 5, 6, 7 or 8 different camera angles on each play and have these stored for review, giving referees and teams many different views from which to review a play or game. There are also many other applications that could help the referees, such as ensuring the right free-throw shooter goes to the line, that could reduce or eliminate the need for correctable errors. If we can reduce or eliminate this, we can ensure the game is clearer, with less confusion and in the example of my game in 1999, with less protest and human error in administrative aspects of the rules. This program was not conceived to check judgment decisions such as contact, it was conceived initially to ensure that an administrative error did not decide or influence a game. In addressing this, we have created a much bigger and more useful tool to be used outside of the four quarters of play. From both of our top competitions, we have been able to collect over 1,000 clips that we will now use in our 2010 teaching materials”.

***For further information on the DSS you can contact:***

**FIBA Europe - Richard Stokes at [stokes@fibaeurope.com](mailto:stokes@fibaeurope.com)**

**Maxosystem SL – [info@maxosystem.com](mailto:info@maxosystem.com)**

**University of Las Palmas Gran Canaria – Miguel Betancor at [betancor@fibaeurope.com](mailto:betancor@fibaeurope.com)**



# 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. Dribbler A3 commits an unsportsmanlike foul against B4. This is the 3rd team foul for team A in that period. Shall free-throws be awarded to B4?
2. During the pre-game warm-up, a technical foul is committed by a team A player. Shall this foul count as one of the fouls leading to the penalty situation in the 1st period?
3. A shot for a field goal by A1 is in the air when the 24-second signal sounds. The ball then fails to touch the ring or enter the basket, after which it is immediately controlled by a team B player. Shall the officials disregard

the signal and allow play to continue without interruption?

4. A4, within the two-point area, attempts a pass to A5. The ball is above the ring when B5 reaches through the basket from below and touches the ball. Shall A4 be awarded two points?
5. While dribbling, A4 has one foot on either side of the centre line. As he is closely guarded by B4 and B5 he stops his dribble. Is the ball now considered to be in the team A frontcourt?
6. Close to the end of a period B4 inadvertently taps the ball towards his own basket. The ball enters the basket clearly after the signal sounds to end that period. Shall the basket count?
7. After a three-second violation without the ball having been entered the basket, shall the following throw-in be administered from the sideline at the free-throw line extended?
8. Team A has been in control of the ball in the team A backcourt for five seconds when the game is stopped due to an injury of A4. When play resumes shall team A now have only three seconds to advance the ball to the frontcourt?
9. On a pass the ball is deflected from a player's shoulder and then touches the ring. Is the 24-second operator correct when he stops and resets his 24-second device?
10. On a rebound A4 grasps the ring with one hand and dunks the ball with his other hand. Shall the basket count?



## ANSWERS

1. Yes (Art. 36.2.2)
2. Yes (Art. 41.1.2)
3. Yes (Art. 29.1.2)
4. Yes (Art. 31.3.2)
5. Yes (Art. 28.1.3)
6. No (Art. 10.4)
7. No (Art. 22.2)
8. Yes (Art. 28.2.2)
9. Yes (Art. 50.2)
10. No (Art. 31.2.4)





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# BODY CONTROL FOR THE INDIVIDUAL FUNDAMENTALS



by Luigi Sepulcri

**Luigi Sepulcri has been the strength and conditioning coach of the Italian men's basketball team since 2006. He previously held the same job with Udine, Virtus Bologna, and Gorizia in the Italian Division 1. In addition to serving as a professor of Theory and Methodology of team sport at Udine University, he teaches strength and conditioning courses for the Italian Basketball Federation.**

## PREMISE

Basketball is a game of skill and athletic ability. The best players are those who move quickly, have great endurance, and are able to keep their balance on both offense and defense. High-level basketball demands that players be able to switch between forward, backward, lateral, and vertical movements. Balance is a must. Optimal balance depends on building the core muscles of the body. Core strength training aims to target all the muscle groups that stabilize the spine and pelvis. The core region consists of more

than just the abdominal muscles. These muscle groups are critical for the transfer of energy from large to small body parts during basketball. The muscles of the trunk and torso stabilize the spine, pelvis, and shoulder. From this solid, balanced base the legs can be moved powerfully and under control. Core strength training differs from many traditional weight-training routines by working both the lower back and abdominals in unison. The same is true for the upper and lower body. All athletic movements incorporate the core in some way. Very few muscle groups are isolated. Instead the whole body works as a unit and core strength training replicates this. What are the benefits of core strength training to the basketball player?

- ▼ Greater efficiency of movement.
- ▼ Improved body control and balance.
- ▼ Increased power output from both the core musculature and peripheral muscles such as the shoulders, arms, and legs.







- ▼ Reduced risk of injury (the core muscles act as shock absorbers after jumps and rebounds)
- ▼ Improved balance and stability.
- ▼ Improved basketball performance.

Since the muscles of the trunk and torso stabilize the spine from the pelvis to the neck and shoulder, they allow the transfer of powerful movements of the arms and legs. All powerful movements originate from the center of the body out, and never from the limbs alone. Before any powerful, rapid muscle contractions can occur in the limbs, the spine must be solid and stable and the more stable the core, the most powerful the extremities can contract.

Training the muscles of the core also corrects postural imbalances that can lead to injuries.

Core strengthening exercises are most effective when the torso works as a solid unit and both front and back muscles contract at the same time, multi-joint movements are performed, and stabilization of the spine is monitored. The drills I will describe must be very intense and with a degree of difficulty equal to or greater than one requested in a game. The first step on this work is to learn the proper stance for receiving the ball, shooting, passing, defending, dribbling, speeding up, changing pace and direction, and blocking out.

#### Methodology

- ▼ The length of the drill must be short (longer practice creates loss of quality). The total length must be no more than 10-15 minutes.
- ▼ The drill, after the activation, in the

first part of the practice and/or as preparation for the work with weights (the neuromuscular system is at the top).

- ▼ Use different angles of work and different speeds of muscular contraction (different widths and speeds of movements).
- ▼ Focus on a main movement (use more muscles for balance, with quick corrective feedback).
- ▼ The postural, dynamic control must involve moves on every side, following the criteria of the gradualness and the progression of the workload.

Here is a sample progression that starts with easy exercise, 1, and progresses to the most difficult, 10:

1. Bi-podalic support.
2. Mono-podalic support.



3. Squat.
4. Lateral lunges.
5. Mono-podalic squat.
6. Split jump.
7. Mono-podalic proprioceptive items.
8. Bi-podalic proprioceptive table.
9. Dynamic moves on proprioceptive table.
10. Combination of exercises on a proprioceptive table with extra weights (elastic bands, heavy balls, dumbbells).

Variables to consider:

- ▼ Types of instability (foam pad, Disc'o' Sit, core balance, Bosu, fit ball).
- ▼ Degree of instability (support, requested speed).
- ▼ Eventual overload.
- ▼ Number of drills.
- ▼ Length of the drills (series and repetitions).
- ▼ Recover.

#### WHAT WE ASK TO PERFORM AT DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS

Here is a list of what we ask players based on their age:

##### Under 13

Be able to maintain balance on the basic stance with simple dynamic movements (shifting in all the directions).

##### Under 15

Be able to maintain functional balance, also after external stimulation. Be able to control the body in dynamic situations (from the run, to the slide, to help and recover, to speed up and come back). Be able to correctly use the artificial overloads in bi-podalic support (dumbbells, elastic bands, heavy balls, cables, etc.). Practice the functional core stability.

##### Under 17

Have the control of the basic stance in all the situations, even after being pushed by a coach or when overload situations are created with elastic bands. Be able to correctly use the artificial overloads in a mono-podalic support (dumbbells, elastic band, heavy balls, cables, etc.). To have good postural control on jumping exercises. To practice functional core stability.

##### Under 19

Have the control of the basic stance, also after functional resistances and in a mono-podalic support. Be able to correctly use artificial overloads, also on mono-podalic support in different combinations (torsions, pulls and pushes in a unbalanced











19



20



21



22



23



24

situation, fit ball, throws, etc.). To individualize the work.

#### DRILL 1

**Aim:** Postural body control.

**What we ask:** Maintain balance in a bipodalic support on unstable items.

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Length: from 10" to 30".
- ▼ Series: 3-5.
- ▼ Recover: 30".

**Suggestions:** Maintain active dorsal muscles, keep the shoulders and the knees on line with the front of the toes (photo 1).

#### DRILL 2

**Aim:** Postural body control while moving

**What we ask:** While in a bi- and monopodalic support on an unstable item, handle an unbalanced stimulus created by small plastic semi-spheres 30 cm. (1 foot) apart, while stepping laterally to the right and left.

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Repetitions: stepping on 8/10 semi-spheres.
- ▼ Series: 2-4.
- ▼ Recover: 30".

**Suggestions:** Move the feet, stepping on each semi-sphere, and twisting the hips, rotating the pelvis, but not the shoulders.

#### Progression

1. Set the semi-spheres on two straight lines 50 cm. (20 inches) apart.
2. Move forward, alternating the right and left foot.

#### DRILL 3

**Aim:** Maintaining postural body control with an external stimulus.

**What we ask:** Grip an elastic band and pull it toward the body. Variable: alternate the pull, first with one hand, then with the other.

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Repetitions: 10-20.
- ▼ Series: 2-3.
- ▼ Recover: 1 minute.

**Suggestions:** To activate the dorsal muscles and control the elastic band, always maintain proper positioning (photos 2 and 3).

#### DRILL 4

**Aim:** Maintain balance.

**What we ask:** Grip two elastic bands

and move the feet in all the directions. These are the movements of help and recover.

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Repetitions: 10-20.
- ▼ Series: 2-3.
- ▼ Recover: 1 minute.

**Suggestions:** to verify the position to get against his own opponent, based on the basket or the ball (photo 4).

#### DRILL 5

**Aim:** Maintain balance while executing dynamic movements.

**What we ask:** Adequate room based on the opponent's movements.

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Length: 8"-10".
- ▼ Series: 2-3.
- ▼ Recover: 30".

**Suggestions:** Use the arms and chest following the ball without losing balance (photo 5).

#### DRILL 6

**Aim:** Functional power.

**What we ask:** Draw an imaginary "8" with a heavy ball (2 to 7 kilograms; 4 to 28 lbs), based on the age and skills of the





players.

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Repetitions: 10-12.
- ▼ Series: 3-5.
- ▼ Recover: 1 minute.

**Suggestions:** Activate the dorsal and lumbar muscles while maintaining balance (photo 6).

#### DRILL 7

**Aim:** Stability and strength.

**What we ask:** Maintain position while keeping a straight line with the body (photo 7).

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Length: 20" - 40".
- ▼ Series: 1-2.
- ▼ Recover: 1 minute.

**Suggestions:** Keep the head in line with the spine.

#### Progression

1. Raise one leg and the opposite arm, maintaining this position for 2" before alternating leg and arm. (photo 8).
2. On one side, raise the pelvis and keep the alignment (photo 9).
3. On one side, raise the pelvis and raise



one leg, and keep the alignment (photo 10).

4. On one side raise the pelvis, bend the leg nearest to the floor (photo 11), forming a 90-degree angle between the thigh and chest.

#### DRILL 8

**Aim:** Develop stability and strength on the back part of the body.

**What we ask:** While changing the positions on the ball, keep chest and legs aligned (photo 12, 13, 14, and 15).

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Length: 10" - 20" for each position.
- ▼ Series: 1-2.
- ▼ Recover: 1 minute.

**Suggestions:** Contract the gluteus muscles and keep the arms raised and aligned.

#### DRILL 9

**Aim:** Develop stability, strength, and activation of the muscular patterns.

**What we ask:** From the starting position (photo 16), raise dumbbells upward (photo 17).

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Repetitions: 6-10.
- ▼ Series: 3-4.
- ▼ Recover: 2 minutes.

**Suggestions:** Stabilize the abdominal and lumbar regions.

1. Alternate the stretch of the arms (photo 18).
2. Work in a mono-podalic support (photo 19).

#### DRILL 10

**Aim:** Develop strength and activate the muscles of the back.

**What we ask:** Grip the dumbbells; bend forward from the chest (photo 20). Bring the dumbbell to the chest (photo 21).

#### Methodology:



▼ Repetitions: 6 for every side.

▼ Series: 2 for every side.

▼ Recover: 2 minutes.

**Suggestions:** Stabilize the leg that is supported, and keep the other leg aligned with the bust.

#### DRILL 11

**Aim:** Develop strength and activate muscles in specific patterns.

**What we ask:** Bend and extend the legs while maintaining proper posture (photo 22 and 23).

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Repetitions: 6-8.
- ▼ Series: 3-4.
- ▼ Recover: 2-3 minutes.

**Suggestions:** Activate the lumbar zone and feel the load evenly distributed on both legs.

#### DRILL 12

**Aim:** Develop strength.

**What we ask:** "Rotations." Photo 24 is the starting position and ends with photo 25.

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Repetitions: 4-6.
- ▼ Series: 3-4.
- ▼ Recover: 2-3 minutes.

**Suggestions:** Be explosive but maintain posture.

#### DRILL 13

**Aim:** Develop the reactive strength in specific muscular patterns.

**What we ask:** Maintain the proper defensive position.

#### Methodology:

- ▼ Repetitions: 6-8.
- ▼ Series: 3-4.
- ▼ Recover: 2 minutes.

**Suggestions:** Draw an "X" on the floor, rotate the hips, not the shoulders (photo 26 and 27).





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ONE-ON-ONE

# CZECH WOMEN'S COACH: "PRESSURE WON'T GET TO US"

Czech Republic head coach Lubor Blažek accepted a tough draw for the 16th FIBA World Championship for Women with humility.

Lubor Blažek is well aware of how strong the opposition (Russia, Argentina, and Japan) in Group C is and his respect for those opponents remains extremely high even after the Czechs' strong run of form in recent times, which has seen them beat all their group opponents in major competitions.

"I thought our competitors would be even stronger, but it cannot be said that this group is in any way easy," he said after the draw was held.

Blažek considers the Russian team to be the strongest competitor as they are the traditional rivals. "It is a team that usually makes it to the final." He added before



warning his players against other teams. "Japan knows how to surprise and we are not used to the Asian style of play. The South Americans also have a good team. I don't want to judge now whether the draw has been favourable.

We will be able to say that and you will see

us smile, only when we succeed in our group."

His team will be playing in front of an expectant home crowd, Blažek is not afraid of any great pressure. Instead, he firmly believes the home side can deal with the fans' expectations. "I am convinced that the pressure coming from the public will be fair and motivating. Playing in your own country must be an advantage," Blažek insisted. Furthermore, the names of eight players, who will definitely be participating in the FIBA World Championship for Women were announced. They are Petra Kulichová, Katerina Elhotová, Marketa Bednářová, Hana Horáková, Eva Vítecková, Jana Veselá, Ivana Vecerová and Ilona Burgrová. Blažek thinks that announcing a part of the nominated players in advance is a good move from a psychological point of view.

## RUBIO AND SAEZ EXPECT USA CLASH

The two sides met in arguably the greatest ever Olympic final in 2008, and it's what basketball fans from Vigo to Valencia on the Iberian peninsula want to see happen at the 2010 FIBA World Championship. And that includes Spain's exciting young point guard Ricky Rubio.

"You always want to face the best and more so against Team USA, who beat us at the Olympics," said the 19-year-old Spaniard. "Whenever you lose against a team, you always want to avenge that defeat, especially when it happened in a final." A lot of things must happen for Team USA and Spain to meet in another glamorous gold-medal game. In fact, in a 24-team tournament, it's unlikely to happen because there are so many hurdles to clear to reach the final. The Spaniards struggled early on at last year's EuroBasket in Poland, when they lost to Serbia and Turkey before eventually steadying the ship and going on to win the gold medal, and Rubio

knows that thinking about a podium finish with the FIBA World Championship still several months away is the last thing he and his teammates should be doing. The most important thing for Spain is to focus on their Group D opponents. "A World Championship is difficult and we know there are teams of a great level, but if we want to be champions, we have to beat all of them," Rubio rationalised. "Lithuania and France are familiar teams that are very good. Against France, in last year's EuroBasket, we knew we had to give our best as we were playing for everything. It would be a mistake for us to think of winning a medal because we know how complicated the tournament is. This was the case in Poland last summer where we were thinking about gold and we took our time to get on our feet after the defeats to Serbia and Turkey." The Basketball Federation President Jose Luis Saez was at the draw for this year's FIBA World Championship in Istanbul and offered some thoughts

about the draw. "It is probably inevitable that the World Championship group draw in Istanbul has been from the perspective of a hypothetical confrontation between Spain and the United States. The memory of the unforgettable Olympic final is still very much alive in the world of our sport. But, as we have done in all previous championships, we look no further than the first matches, with respect to all our competitors and trust in our own possibilities."





# AUSTRALIA RESPECTFUL, BUT ALSO AMBITIOUS AFTER DRAW



Australia's chances of a podium finish at the last FIBA World Championship in 2006 were severely dented when they played in a Preliminary Round 'Group of Death'. Now led by Brett Brown, the Aussies have again ended up in a very tough group for the 2010 FIBA World Championship, though it is perhaps not as brutal as the one they were in four years ago in Hamamatsu when they faced Greece, Turkey, Lithuania, Brazil and Qatar. This time around, Australia will face Serbia, Germany, Argentina, Angola and Jordan in Group A. Similar to the other three groups, there appears to be tremendous balance.

Australia did manage to avoid the United States – the team that hammered them at the quarter-final stage at the Beijing Games – and defending world champions Spain.

"I don't know if happy is the word," Brown said of how to describe the draw for the Boomers. "Each of the pools has different positives and negatives and overall the draw just gives you more clarity on how to prepare."

Brown signed out Germany and Serbia as games that will be particularly intriguing to him as a coach. As an assistant coach with the San Antonio Spurs, he is accustomed to competing against German star Dirk Nowitzki, the marquee player for the Spurs' Texan rivals Dallas Mavericks.

"Any team that has an NBA MVP on the floor is dangerous and Dirk Nowitzki is as difficult a player to guard as we face here

in the NBA," he said. "I put him in the same category as a Kobe Bryant or LeBron James; he's a very unusual defensive assignment because of his seven-foot frame and his skill package that goes along with it, highlighted by his shooting ability which really is remarkable for a man of his size."

"And when you have somebody who is that good, it tends to do a few things. It's a weapon for an up-and-coming country obviously and it produces a confidence level amongst the other players when you have that type of a team-mate on the floor. So Germany are extremely dangerous because they are good in their own right and then you add Dirk. It really changes the landscape when somebody of that talent can come into the group," Brown added.

Australia's head coach is also fully aware of counterpart Dusan Ivkovic and his past achievements, which include perhaps the best coaching job he has ever done with Serbia, having led a relatively young and inexperienced side to a silver-medal finish at last year's EuroBasket in Poland.

"Coach Ivkovic is a European coaching legend and that country, when it started to be on the decline from the level that they had been used to, reached out to him and really sought his advice on how to fix it," Brown said. "A year and a half ago they opted to go with youth and with people that truly wanted to be there. They were not influenced by NBA resumes and they streamlined their approach with a youthful team that really had a passion for being part of the world stage again."

Before they meet in Turkey, Australia and Serbia look set to clash off the court. Both nations are after Aleks Maric, a 25-year-old of Serbian parentage heritage who learned his basketball Down Under [at the Australian Institute of Sport] and even played for the Aussies at junior level. The 2.11m center is now at Partizan Belgrade and has had two jaw-dropping Euroleague games that have all but put his name in flashing lights in Europe, which saw him being named Euroleague MVP for the month of December.

Ivkovic was in attendance at the draw for the FIBA World Championship and has since indicated he wants Maric to play for Serbia. Wayne Cooper, a former

Boomers shooting guard who is now the general manager for high performance for Basketball Australia – and was also at the draw in Istanbul – indicated that Maric was very much a part of his country's plans.

And the battle for Maric belongs to a broader new approach that Serbia is taking, in which Brown sees Ivkovic as the key proponent. "They have rebuilt their programme and their results in Europe recently confirm that their decision was an accurate one and an intelligent one. He (Ivkovic) is a hell of a coach that has put together that programme. They're on the up and up. To have achieved that success in Europe with a very, very young group in the infant stages of a new philosophy is extremely impressive, so you have to expect that team to continue to get better."

But Brown will be aware that it won't all be about focusing on one player, whether it's Nowitzki or Maric. And, of course, Angola and Jordan aren't exactly basketball lightweights either. Then there's the small matter of taking on Argentina, the team ranked top in the world. Brown's clarity on how to prepare will indeed be put to the test, as of 28th August 2010.

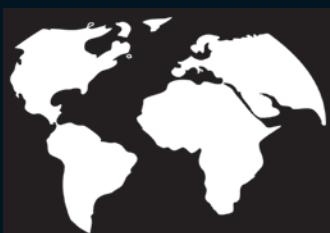


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# THE WORLD IN BRIEF

## NO EASY GAMES IN TURKEY

The draw for the 2010 FIBA World Championship, which took place on 15th December 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey, resulted in what is expected to be one of the most competitive first rounds in the tournament's history. Each and every single result will count for all the teams concerned and some upsets or shock results are very much on the cards. Here is a look at what to expect.

**Group A: Angola, Argentina, Australia, Germany, Jordan, Serbia.**

Group A, which includes Argentina, the No 1 team in the FIBA World Rankings, will be based in Kayseri.

Dirk Nowitzki and Chris Kaman may return and bolster Dirk Bauermann's team, which impressed with a young group of players at the EuroBasket but needed a wild card to play next year. "We could not have asked for a more complicated group," said Bauermann.

"You can't have influence on the results of the draw," said Serbia legendary coach Dusan Ivkovic, who received a lot of plaudits for guiding his team to a silver medal in Poland last summer. "But I can say that our group is probably the strongest one."

**Group B: Brazil, Croatia, Iran, Slovenia, Tunisia, USA.**

Group B, which will see all its games played in Istanbul, includes a USA team that will go into the tournament as Olympic gold medallists and favourites to take top honours. Slovenia team captain Matjaz Smodis called on his team not to be too confident, but, at the same time, to believe in itself: "I think other teams are within our range and we should not fear them, even though no side can be underestimated. We have to play at our maximum in every game and see where that takes us."

Tiago Splitter stressed team unity as the biggest key for Brazil: "USA, Croatia and Slovenia are the most difficult games, but I believe in the strength of our team."

**Group C: China, Greece, Ivory Coast, Puerto Rico, Russia, Turkey.**

All eyes will be on Ankara, where hosts



Turkey go up against rivals Greece. The latter edged the former 76-75 in overtime in an epic EuroBasket 2009 quarter-final before going on to capture the bronze medal. And Jonas Kazlauskas's side could be stronger with the possible return of Theo Papaloukas, Panagiotis Vasilopoulos and Konstantinos Tsartsaris. Papaloukas and Tsartsaris rested last summer while Vasilopoulos recovered from injury. "Of course I always intend to have the strongest possible team," Kazlauskas said at the draw, though he admitted it was too early to tell if the aforementioned trio would be in his squad.

Star guard Vasileios Spanoulis knows the hosts are a side to be reckoned with, not least because of the home court advantage. "The presence of Turkey in the group makes the path hard as they are the host nation and will play in front of their own fans," he said.

The draw wasn't to everyone's liking as China Basketball Association vice director Hu Jiashi said in the China Daily newspaper: "I don't share the opinion of the media, which considers it a great draw. At the 1996 Atlanta Games and the 2004 Athens Games, we were in the so-called 'Group of Death,' but we advanced. However, when we have been in some 'good positions' we have lost."

**Group D: Canada, France, Lithuania, Lebanon, New Zealand, Spain.**

Defending champions Spain have some mouth-watering clashes with fellow European stalwarts France and Lithuania in a group that also includes Lebanon and New Zealand.

"We respect all of our rivals that have quality," said Spain head coach Sergio Scariolo, who guided his side to EuroBasket gold in Poland last summer. "Lithuania is the most complicated rival."

The Lithuanians underachieved at last year's European Championships and needed a wild card to qualify. "Our group is not a bad one," said head coach Kestutis Kemzura. "Spanish are clear favourites, but their slow start at EuroBasket 2009 showed that sometimes they also face problems. France has lots of talent. They have NBA players and are very athletic, but they have some weaknesses. I don't know much about the others."

## PAULASKAS LEAVES LITHUANIA WOMEN

Rutenis Paulauskas has decided to step down as coach of the Lithuania women's national team in addition to leaving EuroLeague Women outfit TEO Vilnius.

Lithuania's Basketball Federation have announced they are looking for a new coach to lead the women, who took part in last





year's EuroBasket Women in Latvia and failed to reach the quarter-finals. Paulauskas parted ways with TEO after their fourth consecutive setback in the EuroLeague Women, a home defeat at the hands of strugglers TTT Riga. Arvydas Tamasauskas, who is the TEO supremo, is also in charge of the women's national team and Paulauskas felt it best to leave both posts. He now plans to work in men's basketball.

#### PIANIGIANI TAKES OVER FROM RECALCATI AS ITALY COACH

Italy recently appointed Montepaschi Siena boss Simone Pianigiani to replace Carlo Recalcati as the new coach of the men's national team. During his eight years in charge, Recalcati

guided Italy to a bronze medal at EuroBasket 2003 in Sweden, and a silver medal at the Olympic Games the following year. However, Italy's failure to qualify for the Olympic tournament in Beijing and their absence from the field of the upcoming FIBA World Championship in Turkey left the Italian Federation searching for a replacement and the 64-year-old coach paid the price. Pianigiani has reportedly signed a two-year contract extension and will combine his role with that of head coach of Montepaschi Siena. He has led the Italian club to the last three Lega A titles and turned them into a European powerhouse. He was unveiled to the media on 22nd December 2009, with his first major task being to qualify Italy for the 2011 EuroBasket in Lithuania.

#### CHINA DISPATCH KOREA TO CLAIM ASIA U16 CROWN

Malaysian town Johor Bahru hosted the first ever FIBA Asia U16 Championship for Men, which culminated with China seeing off Korea 104-69 to grab gold and finish the tournament unbeaten. In the semi-finals, China beat the Philippines 85-66



while Korea progressed after edging out Iran 82-81. In the bronze medal game, the Iranians needed overtime to see off the Philippines 83-73 and secure third place. The game was tied at 70 at the end of regulation, but the Iranians dominated the extra period. The final was a one-sided affair. Leading from start to finish, China gradu-

ally pulled away and never looked back. As had been the case in all seven of China's previous wins, Guo Ailun led the way, scoring 12 of his 19 points in the opening quarter, for a 28-21 advantage. China led 51-41 at the break and pushed their advantage to 75-60 as they entered the final frame. They outscored Korea 39-9 over the last 10 minutes to secure the inaugural FIBA Asia U16 Championship.

#### Final Standings:

1. China
2. Korea
3. Iran
4. Philippines
5. Chinese Taipei
6. Japan
7. Syria
8. Jordan
9. Kazakhstan
10. India
11. Malaysia
12. Bahrain
13. Kuwait
14. Singapore
15. Saudi Arabia
16. Thailand



#### FIELD FOR U17 CHAMPIONSHIP IN HAMBURG COMPLETE IN TIME FOR DRAW

In winning their semi-finals at the inaugural FIBA Asia U16 Championship last November, China and Korea grabbed the last two tickets to Germany, completing the line-up for the 2010 U17 Championship in Hamburg.

The draw for the event will be held in Hamburg on 10th February, 13:00 CET at the Hamburg University Sports Hall.

Here is an overview of all participating nations.

**FIBA Americas:** USA, Argentina, Canada.

**FIBA Oceania:** Australia.

**FIBA Europe:** Spain, Lithuania, Serbia, Poland and host Germany.

**FIBA Africa:** Egypt.

**FIBA Asia:** China and Korea.

Tickets for the Championship, held in Hamburg between July 2 and July 11 are already on sale. They can be purchased from the event website [www.hamburg2010.fiba.com](http://www.hamburg2010.fiba.com).

#### VRANKOVIC MOVES INTO CROATIA HOT SEAT

Josip Vrankovic will lead Croatia at the 2010 FIBA World Championship after being appointed as the replacement for







Jasmin Repesa.

A former member of the national team, Vrankovic had been working as head coach of the Croatia B team since 2008. He takes over a team that underachieved last summer. After reaching the quarter-finals at the Olympic Games in Beijing, the Croatians disappointed at the 2009 EuroBasket in Poland by getting knocked out by Slovenia in the last eight.

As a coach, the 41-year-old former guard led Siroki to the title in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007, but left for Cibona, only to part ways with the club in the middle of the season. He returned to coach Siroki and was also appointed boss of the Croatia B side.

#### BULGARIA SAYS FAREWELL TO GERSHON

After Pini Gershon guided Bulgaria to a surprise appearance at EuroBasket 2009 in Poland, the country is now looking for a new coach.

Bulgaria's Basketball Federation announced that the Israeli boss, who also coaches Maccabi Tel Aviv, is no longer in charge of the national team.

Gershon, whose grandfather was born in Bulgaria, had wanted to stay involved with Bulgaria with the aim of having another prominent coach help him. While the federation attempted to accommodate him, the right solution could not be agreed upon as a string of high-profile candidates were dismissed one by one.

Bulgaria's Basketball Federation president Mihail Mihov said: "We worked for two years very well with Mr. Gershon." Gershon told National Darik Radio: "Thanks to all the people that helped me these two years in Bulgaria; thanks to the people that helped to bring success there. I love them, now I know – I have a real family in Bulgaria, real friends. I wish all the best for Bulgarian basketball."



#### FIVE COUNTRIES BID FOR 2011 FIBA AMERICAS CHAMPIONSHIP

Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico have all expressed interest in hosting the 2011 FIBA Americas Championship.



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The president of the Brazilian Basketball Confederation, Carlos Nunes, has stated his intent to organise the Championship: "We are ready to meet the requirements of the FIBA Americas for the completion of the Pre-Olympic tournament."

As for the Canadians, they have also submitted the required letter of interest. The executive director and CEO for Canada Basketball, Wayne Parrish, said: "We plan to work diligently with private and public sector partners over the next few months to submit a viable and vibrant bid package to FIBA Americas that is reflective of our unique diverse nation."

#### CHINESE GIRLS FOLLOW ON FROM BOYS TO WIN ASIA U16

The Indian city of Pune was the setting for the first ever FIBA Asia U16 Championship for Women, which saw China overcome Japan 99-86 in the final.

South-east Asia dominated the tournament as China, Korea, Japan and Chinese Taipei made it to the last four. As well as booking a place to battle it out for gold in the championship game, the two teams who came out on top in the semi-finals also received automatic qualification for the FIBA U17 Championship in Toulouse.

China outclassed Korea with an inspired 110-79 win while Japan dispatched Chinese Taipei 79-49. In the bronze medal game, Chinese Taipei left it late to edge out Korea 66-63.

Spectators were treated to a great final, in which China used a strong fourth quarter to pull away and overcome underdogs Japan. The game was close through the first three periods, with the score tied at the end of the first (22-22) and at the half (55-55) and China held the smallest of leads, 81-80, as they entered the final frame.

They used a 14-0 spurt in the fourth period to distance themselves and that proved to be enough. As the buzzer sounded, China clinched the gold medal and celebrated the FIBA Asia U16 double.

#### Final Standings:

1. China
2. Japan

onship. FIBA Americas have confirmed that each of the country's basketball governing bodies submitted letters to declare their interest in staging the event.

Brazil held last year's FIBA Americas Championship for Women and were also named as hosts of the 2016 Olympic Games.

3. Chinese Taipei
4. Korea
5. Thailand
6. India
7. Philippines
8. Malaysia
9. Hong Kong
10. Kazakhstan
11. Singapore
12. Sri Lanka



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#### NIGERIA STEPS UP BID FOR 2011 AFROBASKET

Nigeria is stepping up a gear in its bid to host the 2011 African Basketball Championship for Men. President of Nigeria Basketball Federation Malam Tijjani Umar said: "FIBA Africa has welcomed our bid to host the 2011 Africa Championship due to the

fact that Nigeria has never hosted the event despite our rising profile in basketball and pedigree."

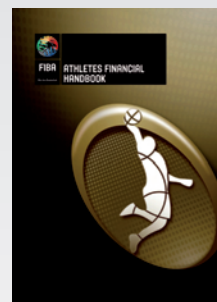
Nigeria will face some stiff competition from West African neighbours Cote d'Ivoire as well as Madagascar, who hosted the 2009 FIBA Africa Championship for Women. FIBA Africa received bids during their January 23rd Central Board meeting in Cairo and will announce its decision in February.

#### FIBA PUBLISHES ATHLETES' FINANCIAL HANDBOOK

In an effort to provide professional athletes with a reliable and trustworthy source of basic advice specifically tailored to their needs, FIBA has published the "Athletes Financial Handbook."

This short guide addresses many of the issues that can easily escape the mind of athletes, in a language that can be understood by those of us who have little or no knowledge of business and finance. Packed with useful advice, it introduces many of the key aspects of planning for and working towards a healthy financial situation.

The "Athletes Financial Handbook" is available on [fiba.com](http://fiba.com).



#### WOMEN'S DRAW HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

The draw for the FIBA World Championship for Women, which took place in Kar-





lovly Vary, Czech Republic on 24th November 2009, resulted in a number of mouth-watering fixtures. And, while many will be looking forward to witnessing giants colliding, there are strong chances that some of the smaller basketball nations may well provide some real upsets. Here is a look at the four groups.

**Group A: Australia, Belarus, Canada, China.**

Defending champions Australia will have a tough time overcoming FIBA Asia Champions China in a group that also includes Belarus and Canada.

Ms Xu Lan of the Chinese Basketball Federation said: "We have all had a chance to play against those teams in the past – at the Olympic Games as well as at the 2006 World Championship. All the teams know each other quite well, so I believe we will have a chance to see some interesting games."

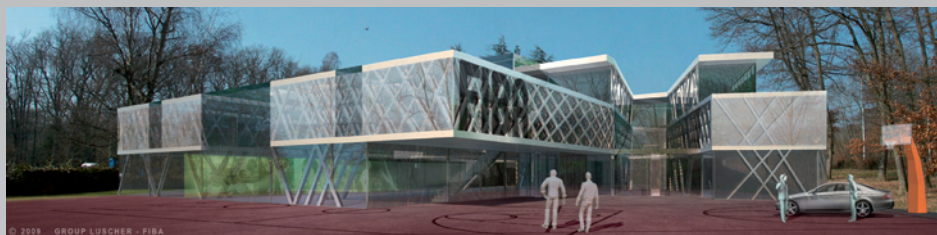
Lorraine Landon, head of the International Basketball Federation's Women's Commission and also a former Australian national team player said: "Our team has some of the strongest competitors in the group. I would like to say that we are all looking forward to meeting them again at the World Championship in September."

**Group B: France, Greece, Senegal, USA.**

Group B will see more big teams facing off, with heavyweights and Olympic champions USA taking on EuroBasket winners France in a game that many expect to be decisive.

But as USA Basketball team manager Carol Callan says, beware of upsets: "Even though we now have some predictions and expectations about the matches, anything can change when the games start and we may see some real surprises."

Mr Patrick Beesley, Callan's French team counterpart, commented: "Our goal is to be one of the six best teams. The draw put us in a very strong group, but I hope that everything will end in the best way possible for our team." Senegal and first time



participants Greece complete the line-up in Group B. The Greeks are relishing the prospect of what will be their first World Championship appearance and head coach Kostas Missas is looking for his team to at least make it beyond the first round.

**Group C: Brazil, Korea, Mali, Spain.**

Group C is expected to be a wide open affair. With all four teams having made it to the final of their respective Continental Championships (Brazil and Spain won theirs, while Mali and Korea finished runners-up), this pool seems difficult to predict.

As such, Spanish Basketball Federation José Luis Saez has had cautious words. "We are very satisfied with the draw but you never know what may happen. We certainly want to succeed, but the competitors must always be respected," he said.

**Group D: Argentina, Czech Republic, Japan, Russia.**

Taking a quick glimpse at Group D, there is one tie nobody will want to miss. Playing in front of a home crowd, the Czechs will face arch rivals Russia in one of the most anticipated games of the tournament.

Speaking on behalf of the Russian national team, Ms Sokolova said: "Our group includes the host team of the Czech Republic. It is always harder to play against the host team."

Czech Republic coach Lubor Blažek already has his mind set on this much-awaited clash: "It (Russia) is a team that usually makes it to the finals. It is a basketball superpower".

Japan and Argentina round out the group and he isn't taking anything for granted. As for playing in their own county, Blažek reckons his players will be able to overcome the pressures and sees having a home crowd as a distinct advantage.

**HOUSE OF BASKETBALL TO BECOME FIBA HEADQUARTERS IN 2012**

FIBA will make a very important step in its history when it opens a new 8,000 square meter headquarters in Mies, Switzerland, at the end of 2012. The new building, which was the result of an architectural competition, was revealed to the media during a press conference in December 2009.

Seen from the air, the new building will be shaped like the hands that make up FIBA's logo, while the facades will include structural elements that strongly resemble a basketball net.

Patrick Baumann, FIBA Secretary General and IOC member, stressed the importance of the eventual move to Mies. "The 'FIBA House of Basketball' will be where this great global sport will live and grow," he said. "This new home will enable FIBA to best serve the international basketball community, our national federations and zones, and all our partners."

**BECIROVIC TAKES CHARGE OF SLOVENIA FOLLOWING ZDOVC'S RESIGNATION**

For many, celebrating the New Year is all about fresh starts. And that is exactly what the Slovenian men's national team got when Memi Becirovic was appointed as its new head coach following the resignation of Jure Zdovc in December.

Becirovic, who will remain in charge of Belgian side Oostende, will take on the



tough challenge of qualifying Slovenia for the Eight Finals of the World Championships from Group B which includes USA, Brazil, Croatia, Iran and Tunisia.

And he is confident he can deliver: "I expect us to continue the successes that Ales Pipan and Jure Zdovc had before me. I understand the responsibilities, and I feel able to lead Slovenia at the World Championship in Turkey to the place that it certainly deserves."

Filling the shoes of his predecessor Zdovc will be no light task. The latter will now fully commit to club side Union Olimpija of Ljubljana. The two men are not entirely unfamiliar with one another as one of Zdovc's players at Union Olimpija is Sani Becirovic, the son of Memi, who could be reunited with his father in Turkey.

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## OVERSEAS PLAYERS SHARE TIPS FOR TACKLING HOMESICKNESS

While emigrating abroad to play basketball in the NBA is the dream of many young players, those who have left family and friends behind to pursue their ambitions will occasionally experience homesickness. Each player has his own way of dealing with it, but there are certain

common remedies as we discovered when talking to Danilo Gallinari and Matt Nielsen. Gallinari left his Italy to play with New York, who selected him with the sixth overall pick in the 2008 NBA Draft. He is averaging close to 15 points and five rebounds per game for the Knicks, who have endured a torrid start to the season. For the 21-year-old, music is one of the ways he can get through the tough times and feel reconnected with his homeland. "I have 2,000 songs on my iPod," Gallinari says. "I like hip-hop and techno music, but I also listen to many Italian singers like Adriano Celentano." Whether it's an Italian in the USA or an Australian in Spain, the story is very much the same. Matt Nielsen, who plays his basketball in the beautiful city of Valencia for ACB, also enjoys his music. "I love rock music," Nielsen points out, "especially Australian rock, like Gyroscope." Rock solid is a good way to describe the play of the 31-year-old center who captained the Boomers at the Beijing Olympics and will suit up for his national team later this year at the 2010 FIBA World Championship. For now though, Nielsen is happy playing his trade in Spain and enjoys every minute of it. "My family has adapted well to Valencia," he says. "We feel very happy here. The boys go to a great school and life is great. I am very happy to be here." And when he's feeling a little uprooted, it's not hard to get into the Australian spirit because in addition to the music, there is also the recourse of cyberspace. "I love sports and my favourite is Australian football, which is not well known

here, but I spend my time watching games on the internet. Go Dockers." There is no doubt that the Internet has made keeping in touch with friends and family much easier and Gallinari happily resorts to available technology. He has plenty of friends, most of them in Italy. However, he keeps in touch with all of them. "I speak to my friends on the phone or on Skype," he said. Gallinari admits to being a tad homesick and there's no substitute for seeing people in the flesh. Fortunately for him, his family also often comes to visit him. "My parents take turns," he explained. "They come and go from Italy. I miss them and I miss my friends. I miss Italy."

## CHINESE BASKETBALL AWAITING NEW GENERATION OF GIANTS?

It was recently announced that China star player Yao Ming will become a father for the first time later this year. Nothing unusual about that it would seem, but the offspring of Yao and his wife Ye Li – who played for China's women's national team – could have everything on their side to match the sporting excellence of their parents, providing China with another generation of basketball talent. With parents reaching a combined height of 4.17 metres-13 feet 9 inches (Yao is 2.29m, 7-6, tall, while Ye Li stands at 1.88m, 6-2), excitement has been growing throughout China about the son or daughter to be, with polls and forums dealing with everything from likely names for the child to guessing the offspring's eventual height. We will provide an update to this story somewhere around the FIBA World Championship of...2030!



## THAT'S ONE COOL MAS-CAT

Most star attractions at FIBA World Championships run up and down the floor. Some split defenses with inch-perfect passes, some bury timely three-pointers or others soar through the heavens for rim-rocking slam-dunks. One megastar that will be on the prowl at the games in Turkey has something extra special: he is the mascot for the 2010 FIBA World Championship.

The inspiration for the mascot is the much-loved Van Cat, a kitty that is like no other. The breed originates from the Lake Van area of southeastern Turkey and is distinctive by its un-feline-like love for water, which is why some call it the "swimming cat."

Normally with a coat of white fur and blue eyes, the Van Cat is perhaps most distinctive because it sometimes acts like a dog! Another unlikely trait shared by many Van Cats is that they have two different coloured eyes – as is the case with the mascot for the 2010 FIBA World Championship.

It's not so much that there's more growl than meow, but rather that, like canines, Van Cats are known for retrieving particular objects of interest. And so, with the Van Cat due to feature prominently at the FIBA World Championship, one shouldn't be surprised to hear announcers use some word-play along the lines of: "They won the game by a whisker!" and "Boy, did they claw back that deficit!"

The name of this mascot will be revealed to the public on the official tournament website, [turkey2010.fiba.com](http://turkey2010.fiba.com).

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