



AREAS OF EMPHASIS: GUIDELINES FOR COACHES

T16: Establishing a National Coaching System



For Leaders of the Basketball Coaching Community

These guidelines are paramount for the teaching of basketball in Britain



AREAS OF EMPHASIS

**GUIDELINES FOR
COACHES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
Why do we need areas of emphasis?.....	4
WHAT ARE THE AREAS OF EMPHASIS; GUIDELINES FOR COACHES?	5
What aspect needs most attention?	5
What are the key strategic points?	5
STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AREAS OF EMPHASIS	6
THE AREAS OF EMPHASIS; An overview for understanding	7
The physical	7
The technical.....	8
The tactical	9
IMPORTANT THEMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE AREAS OF EMPHASIS AND GUIDELINES	10
Improved planning for practice (and development).....	10
Enhanced teaching and coaching for understanding.....	10
What do we teach?.....	11
Exceed at developing pressure in training:.....	12
Better focus on defensive performance in games and training:.....	13
Working to a national plan.....	14
THE AREAS OF EMPHASIS GUIDELINES ARE OUR STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANS..	16
1. A well-defined Performance Pathway	16
2. British and home nations national teams development programmes.....	16
3. The British curriculum is these Areas of Emphasis guidelines and checklists.....	16
4. Glossary of basketball terms.....	16
5. Basic Skills Master Checklists.....	16
6. National Shooting Competitions.....	16
7. Areas of Emphasis National Drills.....	16
8. Checklist of concepts, principles, techniques and skills.....	16

INTRODUCTION

British Basketball's **Game On** strategy is the current guide to the immediate future of basketball in Britain.

A key group within the strategy, the Performance Management Group (PMG) has been established and set about consulting amongst the home nations and internationally to improve basketball's performance. Additionally, a Curriculum Driver Group (CDG) was also formed. Both groups have consulted widely in order to work towards a curriculum for basketball in Britain.

The consultation has involved world class coaching experts who have experience in both curriculum development in elite sport and basketball and an expert understanding of player development.

While the writing of a curriculum involves a complex consultative and collaborative approach, the need is not simply for a written document but also for an effective implementation. A comprehensive implementation through acceptance of these guidelines is most important for growth and progress in British basketball's playing and coaching standards. The Areas of Emphasis: Guidelines for Coaching is the first step in refocusing and co-ordinating basketball coaching in Britain.

It is only a part of the greater solution to better and more effective teaching and coaching in the UK. Combined with the establishment of a wider base of player development programs focused on teaching the basic skills and concepts, it will springboard British basketball to higher standards of player development and performance.

These Areas of Emphasis are the "what is important now" for basketball in this country. They are the immediate focus for coaching, teaching and development of British players for the future.

While there will be discussion, debate and further clarification of these areas of emphasis, there is no doubt that these guidelines are most important for our British players' future. At present the majority of our players have not been prepared and developed to their full potential within the UK. This is a point with which every basketball coach at any level in Britain should be most concerned. Through these guidelines and other British Basketball curriculum documents we have a great opportunity to improve playing standards at club, school and national level.

While our coaching efforts have been honourable, with good intent, they now need a sharper focus and more analysis. If we are successful the quality of both our players and our competitions will improve. Consequently our club, regional and national teams will all benefit. We could also set a collective and national goal of being a major basketball country in Europe.

Each and every coach must reflect on their coaching and set about improving their own teaching and coaching effort at all levels. If our players' learning is improved we will have all done our job well. Let's get started by using these guidelines to kick start our new teaching and coaching focus for the British game. We have a lot of work to do as part of British Basketball's Towards 2016 strategy. A good six years of improved attention to development of our players through better coaching lies ahead. Hopefully with this clearer focus from these guidelines we will be directed on a path and process to coach better-skilled British basketball players.

Warwick Cann
Head of Performance
British Basketball 2011



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY DO WE NEED AREAS OF EMPHASIS?

Ongoing consultative work from each of the home countries' basketball governing bodies has revealed agreement among the basketball community on the need for a shared set of techniques, skills, concepts, coaching philosophies and language. Together, these constitute a constantly evolving set of knowledge often referred to as a "curriculum".

A curriculum must start somewhere. It must have a focus as it highlights its "themes" and "content". A curriculum must be relevant to all levels within the British system.

The curriculum is for clubs and national league teams whose primary focus is not only to play the game but also to teach the game and the fundamentals well. Junior programs like academies and anyone responsible for, or delivering a fee for service, should take particular meaning from these guidelines. This document is the guideline for the minimum standard of teaching and coaching basketball in the UK.

Development programs within the home countries framework will by their nature be primarily concerned with the implementation of these guidelines as British Basketball has now established a strategy for the 2016 Olympic cycle, Towards 2016 (T16).

Schools have always played an important role in the development and teaching of basketball. These guidelines and curriculum package are as relevant to schools as they are to coaches.

With London 2012 and a possible post-Olympics boom, schools will be faced with increased demand and the need for guidance for our coaches will also be most important for teaching and coaching the next generation.

Key areas have now been identified as needing urgent attention and are introduced in this document.

Even our very best players have common weaknesses that if addressed would significantly improve the performance of our club teams and the quality of our competitions as well as our national teams, allowing us to compete with the best teams in FIBA Europe Division A. The Areas of Emphasis also allow us to establish international best practice in key aspects of the game, which, in time, will result in skills being taught similarly across the nation from club to school to league to country. We want to be coaching well and focusing on the key aspects.

"If we keep doing what we have always done, we will always get what we have already got!"

Simply put, we need to refocus on coaching and highlight the areas of most need of emphasis. An improvement in these areas won't just impact those playing for GB, players across the pathway from club to national team will benefit by improving their basic skills in these areas.



WHAT ARE THE AREAS OF EMPHASIS; GUIDELINES FOR COACHES?

There are Eight (8) areas deemed to need immediate emphasis. They are:

1. Physical Fitness, footwork and movement.
2. ON-BALL Defence, including footwork
3. Shooting
4. Passing and Receiving, technically and tactically
5. Use of the Dribble
6. Offence, individual and team
7. OFF-BALL Defence, position, vision, tactics
8. Point Guard Play

WHAT ASPECT NEEDS MOST ATTENTION?

- The first area (physical, movement, balance and footwork) is about reemphasis of the physical attributes needed by players. It is also about the fitness, conditioning and physical preparation of our players. Importantly it is specifically about better coaching of movement, footwork and balance (including stance and body posture) in all that we do.
- ON-BALL defence is also about reemphasising balance/stance, footwork, movement and positioning. It is also about core strength (ability to squat) and physical endurance.
- Shooting and passing are about continuing to develop offensive individual skills with an emphasis on developing our passing and receiving as members of a team.
- Team offence and off ball defensive positioning are about tactical aspects of the game which require underpinning technical and physical techniques to support the team concepts.
- Finally, point guard play is about the tactical positional aspect to be reemphasised in order for British teams to be more competitive on the international stage. It also requires certain technical and physical underpinning techniques. It suggests a review of how our point guards are currently playing and a re-education in their technical skills and game understanding.

In these eight areas there are some aspects which combine “technical *and* tactical play” or “physical *and* technical skill” - they are often inter-related and dependent on the coach’s experience and knowledge.

WHAT ARE THE KEY STRATEGIC POINTS?

For administrators and governing bodies within the British Basketball family, the production of these Areas of Emphasis and the associated strategic and operational plans is part of a desire to improve the standard of basketball in the UK.

While the intention is to establish a meaningful “curriculum” for British Basketball, this new focus needs an environment to improve the quality of players that is the centre of the Areas of Emphasis.

Simplistically, in order to improve players we must also improve coaches. Additionally any plan needs successful implementation and resourcing. Our administrators and leaders will always be faced with the challenge to continuously improve and maintain a key strategic focus and successful implementation plan for coaches. The environment for coaching and player development is currently improving yet still evolving through the Game On strategy and home nations initiatives in these areas. As such this is another important step to improve standards but one which will require further resourcing for successful implementation.

The Areas of Emphasis will lead to improvements and better quality of player performance in the short to mid term but there are longer term needs for effective strategies in coach education, development, domestic player competition levels and full-time coaching opportunities in the UK.

In particular, to improve the quality and standard of coaches in our domestic competitions and programs will need a reorganisation into progressively higher level opportunities, and the creation of a sustainable system for full-time coaching at various levels in the national system.

This may involve a review of current competition standards and opportunities for coaches and players. Competition standards are directly linked to coaching and player standards. This is not only in the game sense but also in the training and preparation phase that underpins all player and team performance.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AREAS OF EMPHASIS

- Establish a roll out strategy for follow-up activities to regions and clubs and their volunteer coaches.
- Convene coaching conferences for the various levels of coaches working in the development pathway to discuss and ensure that the Areas of Emphasis are understood and that the recommendations are adopted.
- Publish the Areas of Emphasis on the British Basketball and home nations websites so that all coaches and clubs at all levels have access to the document.
- The home nations should coordinate full-time coaches of development so that the introduction of the Areas of Emphasis can be further discussed with a view to more successful implementation.
- Encourage the home nations to review competition levels and organisation with a view to increasing the standard of coach and player performance.
- Encourage the home nations to review the existing coach education system with a view to further improvement.



THE PHYSICAL

1. Physical

1.1. Physical Fitness and Conditioning

- Better coaching and understanding of physical fitness at the Junior level
- Plan for the physical components in training sessions
 - *Cardiovascular fitness*
 - *Muscle memory (movement patterns)*
 - *Strength*
 - *Speed*
 - *Power*
 - *Endurance*
- Test the physical components of basketball
- Conduct better warm up and cool down phases for training and playing
- Emphasise nutrition and physical education
- Understand recovery and nutrition
- Use qualified professionals to assist with the physical aspects

1.2. Footwork and Movement for Basketball

- Recognise the need to coach efficient movement
- Better planning / teaching / rehearsing of good footwork and balance
- Confirm the value and advantage of the triple threat position
- Recognise that pivoting is the basis for offensive techniques

2. ON-BALL Defence, Movement and Footwork

- Change our attitude to defence, particularly ON-BALL defence
- Understand the differences and interrelatedness of “containment” and “pressing” or pressure defence
- Coach and develop a full court defensive mindset and capability
- Routinely provide more one-on-one drill situations in training sessions



3. Shooting

- Create more time in training dedicated to shooting and regular testing
- Practice shooting within game situations
- Practice under pressure
- Use the Free throw to help develop shooting form
- Develop a variety of finishing moves close to the basket

4. Passing and Receiving

- Passing as a skill and technique is a movement sequence from feet to hands (coach all the detail)
- Coach passing and receiving under game-like pressures
- Ensure players pass out of stance
- Commit to coaching a game style with better player movement without the ball
- Coach the detail of footwork for the lead
- Teach players how to move the defence with fakes

5. Use of the Dribble

- Deliberate and situational dribbling practice is needed at all junior training sessions
- Players will have to commit to additional individual dribbling practice
- Master the speed dribble technique and phase in the full court
- Master the control dribble phase and dribbling techniques in the half court
- The dribble has situational use which requires different techniques



6. Offence

- Reaffirm the concepts and principles of the British game style:
 - *Spacing*
 - *Ball Movement*
 - *Movement without the ball*
 - *Vision and Timing*
- Prepare players to execute under pressure
- Coach game context awareness
- Stress the 'ready' and 'triple threat' positions
- Teach 'sealing', 'leading' and 'receiving' as part of individual offence

7. OFF-BALL Defence

- Positioning with vision in stance
- Moving and repositioning as the ball moves
- Helping teammates to defend the ball
- Rotating and recovering to a different player

8. Point Guard Play

- Define the attributes we seek in British Point Guards
- Use these attributes as the basis for identification and development of Point Guards
- Coaches must be prepared to develop the Point Guards
- A clear understanding of offensive capability
- A clear understanding of defensive capability



IMPORTANT THEMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE AREAS OF EMPHASIS AND GUIDELINES

There are also very important themes that have emerged from the consultation and analysis of our current British playing skills:

IMPROVED PLANNING FOR PRACTICE (AND DEVELOPMENT)

Increasing the time dedicated to development – This demands increasing the proportion of team practices spent on individual skills, plus finding time and facilities outside of normal team practice.

While this normally means individual practice by our individual players working on their individual skills, as happens elsewhere in the world, there also is an additional challenge for British basketball.

This challenge is to find time in the basketball calendar for development activities to take place given facility access is limited and costly.

The ratio of playing games to training and teaching the skills becomes an important issue. While players want to play they must also be given the tools to play the game successfully at all levels. It will require junior coaches, clubs and schools to analyse their coaching and time allocation to the basic skills.

Therefore this will require not only coaches to modify their approach to training by scrutinising content in the context of this document but also the need for administrators and leaders at all levels of the British game to be creative in their planning and to create more opportunities for player and coach development without conflict with competition and scheduling.

Leaders of our game and administrators are also faced with a facility access issue of both availability and cost. Increasing the training time to implement this curriculum implies taking on increased costs.

Our challenge is to find ways to minimise this cost, especially to assist lower socio-economic and disadvantaged groups in our community, who find basketball a regular and attractive sport to play, and more importantly, to train for development.

However, for the main purpose of this document, initial improvement lies in reorganising the time that we already have and supplementing the costs for development through better planning for practice and training. This will create time to implement these guidelines in the short term.

ENHANCED TEACHING AND COACHING FOR UNDERSTANDING

We need to have a greater understanding of WHO(M) we are coaching and at what level, as well as a better teaching of the technical skills (WHAT) and knowing HOW to teach the concepts, principle, techniques and skills. In this document these terms are not to be confused with Coach Education terms of HOW (general coaching skills i.e. demonstrating, analysing, coaching methods) and WHAT (sports specific content).

This will require using varied coaching methods (HOW) at the appropriate stage of development (WHEN), most importantly teaching our players better understanding of the game and its skills.

The WHAT, HOW, WHEN and WHY are our teaching foundation for our British players to have better understanding.

The WHY and WHEN a skill is used should always be discussed and debated with players in order to increase their understanding at the junior club and school level. This is best reinforced through repetition, including better use of breakdown drills and constrained scrimmage games. Coaching for greater player understanding must include reinforcement with appropriate feedback and more review through video analysis and other off-court learning activities.

The use of “controlled”, “conditionally restrained” or modified games/drills and scrimmages leading to tactical and conceptual repetition will reinforce the WHEN and the WHY of these areas of emphasis. Showing and demonstrating team concepts through setup replay and walkthroughs are examples of the HOW.

In summary, our coaches for future generations must teach and coach the individual skills well so that players leave the programme knowing and understanding the skills and key game concepts. We will be able to measure what they *have* learned, not what they *can't* do.

- Teach the player WHY the skill is important.
- Teach the player HOW the skill is performed. How does it look? How does it feel? How do you perform the skill?
- Teach the “breakdowns” and use whole/part/whole teaching with effective coaching cues.
- Teach the player WHEN the skill is best performed and is most important.

Remember, teach doesn't always mean “tell”, and not everyone learns in the same way. Explore the use of other coaching methods to get the most out of your players.

WHAT DO WE TEACH?

- Individual skills most appropriate to a group programme or team. The recommendations in these guidelines are the curriculum map for the concepts, principles, skills and techniques. A checklist of concepts, principles, skills and techniques will be provided as part of the new curriculum, as well as the perspective offered in this Areas of Emphasis document.
- All future teaching / coaching should be referenced against the British Basketball Master Checklists of concepts, principles, skills and techniques. Additionally, the Areas of Emphasis, along with the Club Skills Guide (a stage two roll out), will provide the necessary guidance. We must also understand the need to teach offence before defence. Create it then stop it. Develop it further then refine it against increased pressure.

After establishing the detail of HOW, teach WHY the skill is important and WHEN to perform it in a game or playing situation. This will result in better game understanding by our players.



EXCEED AT DEVELOPING PRESSURE IN TRAINING:

Coping with defensive or speed and time pressure – increasing players' capacity to execute skills when under pressure, and exposing players to pressure by increasing the defensive intensity at all stages of the pathway, as well as developing pressure through better game context drills and execution.

The coaches' challenge will always be great in leading and managing training and development in training sessions at school, club, regional, and performance levels.

To create pressure at training requires good planning and even better management. Coaches must establish training standards not only in player behaviour but in terms of ethos and application.

How does a coach create more "pressure" at training? By pressure we mean intensity of effort and generating constraints through time, space and situational reaction. However, we also mean improving offence, then improving defence to in turn improve the level of offence again.

How do we improve and create more pressure at training?

- Train with intensity particularly at the specialising and investment stages. That is, mid to late teens and youth and pro levels.
- Plan challenging sessions and drills but demand proper technique and execution within the more pressurised training environment.
- Select appropriate drills but emphasise the detail of execution within all drills.
- "The drill is not the drill. The drill is how well we do the drill". It's the detail, reaction through time and space and quality of performance by the player.
- Control/constrain drills and game situations to get better outcomes (plan and analyse).
- Demand better execution: "perfect practice makes perfect".
- Use shorter sessions focusing on effort rather than longer sessions with too much talking by the coach. Measure training through better timing of drills to create maximum efforts and then allowing for recovery time.
- Measure our training, simply by counting/recording turnovers at training by the team and/or individuals. Record other effort areas like hustle plays (offensive rebounds, effective block-outs, deflections, sprinting man ahead)
- Demanding great defence always at every level. Make the defence repeat a possession to improve its execution and not just rotate through the drill without any consequence for playing poor defence.



BETTER FOCUS ON DEFENSIVE PERFORMANCE IN GAMES AND TRAINING:

Defence must always be a focus when we come together as a team or squad at all levels.

It is normally accepted that players progress from the sampling years (beginner) through the specialising years (prioritising basketball as preferred/only sport) into the investment years (20 or more hours per week). Most of this time is spent with an offensive focus. However, defence should not be neglected through these same stages. Coaches should encourage and teach offence first and then teach the same players and groups how to stop the offence. Only by improving levels of defence can we raise the level of offensive skill execution. This is the cycle of development.

- Basketball is essentially an offensively orientated game. Quick movement, limited time and space all combine to make basketball the most offensively-minded sport on the Olympic calendar. Being a team game with individual skill allowing all players to score in the normal course of a game places it above most team sports in terms of offensive action. However the key controlling aspect in competition is ultimately the ability of a team to play effective defence.
- The battle of the single ball versus a defensive team of five players is an aspect that ultimately determines standard. New moves are created and new tactics and combinations of different combinations of cuts, dribbles, passes and spacing continually reinvigorate the basic game. Defence has to learn to deal with this progress.
- Offence leads, defence follows.
- The secret is to advance defence to a level that it can neutralise and then disrupt any individual and team offence.
- The need to defend in a game of shooting or scoring percentages is obvious.
- In developing our players we must concern ourselves with defence as well as offence.

The British game needs more attention to defence in training and team preparation.

- The slide in and from stance to stop dribble penetration in the half court.
- The teaching of run-slide-run footwork and concept of positioning for full court defensive execution.
- Defensive positioning on and off ball: the flat triangle of ball-you-man to build effective half court defence.
- Player vision and the need to deny passes but also help.
- Hedging and recovering from the flat triangle position. Anticipation.
- Helping and recovering against dribble penetration, but every player being more effective in shutting down their opponent.
- Closing out (footwork and understanding). Closing out shorter to contain the dribble drive.

Attention to all these components will advance our current level of defence.

All coaches must know how to effectively teach man-to-man defence in order to improve pressure at training.

WORKING TO A NATIONAL PLAN

After use of the curriculum for planning, the link between programmes and these Areas of Emphasis and the subsequent training is most important. A curriculum is only as good as the programmes in which it is implemented. Additionally, the programme relies on the quality of the coaching.

A curriculum will work with any programme if the teaching and coaching is focused, and committed to improvement.

However it must be consistent in its emphasis and be specific and detailed when required. Once the coaches embrace British Basketball's Areas of Emphasis, the home nations will provide both the pathway and content needed to maximise the teaching of the curriculum to clubs and schools. Hopefully this will maximise player potential through their development programmes. A system of player and coach development is currently underway and must continue to grow and improve.

Much has been said about the perceived limitations that are limiting British basketball at the club level and above.

Clubs are often competing not only on the court but off it as well. Unfortunately sometimes this becomes competing not through striving to be better or maintaining focus but by demeaning the performance of others. Pulling other clubs or programmes down by criticising is not the answer. Working collaboratively for basketball will improve the success of basketball in the UK.

It can't be "us against them" (or me vs. we) at a number of club, school or academy levels.

- Understanding that basketball as a sport is competing in a national sporting landscape in the UK is more important.
- Basketball cannot compete within through negative gearing, but must collectively promote basketball against other sports such as football and netball. It is a big enough challenge without demeaning other basketball clubs or national bodies, through public criticism or through our key clients such as players and parents.
- It is setting our sport to be devalued by those who need to value it most.
- The WE is BASKETBALL, not just a single club or school team.
- Successful countries internationally have strong club competition, but have a sense of national purpose and collaboration that makes their countries' basketball superior to what we currently have.
- WE have the same potential but our focus needs to become more collaborative in a development and coaching sense in order for our players to gain from all coaches and from the best training environment for each player and family.
- Often this means sharing a player with their school, club, region or country and making sure that everyone is on the same page with the player's best interests at the forefront in any decision.
- Players will move in search of opportunity and we should not hold our emerging talent back through small-mindedness or selfishness. The player's growth and progression is all-important. Loyalty will come from quality coaching and the ability of a club or school to develop players and pass them progressively through a club pathway.
- Communication and information sharing is the cornerstone of collaboration between clubs and competitions and national bodies.

- For British basketball to improve at all levels we must become more focused on individual players' development needs and assisting the player and their parents along the performance pathway.
- The number of national team players developed through a club or school, as well as the satisfaction of all players with playing for a club or school, are measures of quality - not just the number of games won by teams.
- Any plan requires good implementation and resourcing as well as a belief in the future, not the past.
- The new generation of British coaches must leave club loyalties and egos behind as they seek better collaboration while engaging each other to learn. They will become better through improving shared knowledge opportunities, or observing opposition coaches coach and then challenging each other on and off the court with respect.



THE AREAS OF EMPHASIS GUIDELINES ARE OUR STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANS

Eight supporting resources and complimentary strategies have been identified to implement our plan to improve players.

1. A WELL-DEFINED PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

The British Basketball Performance Pathway will continue to be better defined over the next three years. This will present a great opportunity for coaches to better collaborate, creating a coaching fraternity or “community of practice”. Further clinics and opportunities for coach development will become fundamental to coach development in the UK.

2. BRITISH AND HOME NATIONS NATIONAL TEAMS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

British and home nation’s national teams and the respective development programmes will work to a specific curriculum of competencies as well as these areas of emphasis.

3. THE BRITISH CURRICULUM IS THESE AREAS OF EMPHASIS GUIDELINES AND CHECKLISTS

The British Master Checklists will provide a reference guide to the WHAT we have to teach. The National programmes will be open for all club coaches to observe and learn.

4. GLOSSARY OF BASKETBALL TERMS

The British Basketball Glossary of Terms is a unique blending of current European and World basketball terminology to help establish a common communication vocabulary.

5. MASTER CHECKLISTS OF CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLES, TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS

Checklists of skills, concepts, principles and techniques will be provided as a guide to develop the key skills and understanding in all players. This will be available to further help coaches understanding in line with these Areas of Emphasis

6. NATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION

A National Shooting Competition will be introduced highlighting the importance of shooting to young players and their coaches.

7. AREAS OF EMPHASIS NATIONAL DRILLS

A series of drills chosen by leading coaches will be offered as an additional resource. However it is not drills per se that improve players; it is the detailed teaching and emphasis within a drill’s context that improves performance.

8. A CLUB SKILLS GUIDE

A Club Skills Guide will provide a basic checklist of techniques and skills for age an stage of player development to help age group coaches’ understanding in line with these Areas of Emphasis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document would not have been possible without the essential support of many individuals and further enhanced by the work of Performance Management Groups members. The leadership and guidance of Warwick Cann, Head of Performance at British Basketball has been instrumental in the development and authoring of the these Areas of Emphasis.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the expertise of the Curriculum Advisory Group which helped create a product of sound experiential basis and superior quality, and to all the coaches involved in proofing the various draft sections.

The authors value the support of the Home Country Associations and acknowledge their commitment to implementing the recommendations suggested to enhance the execution of their performance teams on court.

The production of this report has been made possible by UK Sport's support for British Basketball.



Author: Warwick Cann

Editors: Brian Aldred
Lucy Power

Curriculum Advisory Group and Section Contributors:

Trudie Hopgood
Matt Johnson
Simon Turner

Fraser McKinney
Tony Garbelotto
Brian Aldred

Performance Management Group Founding Members:

Chris Spice
Jeff Jones
Martin Bland

Ron Wuotila
Ben Rush

The Curriculum Advisory Group would also thanks the following individuals for their valuable input:

Mike McKay, Manager, Coach Education & Development, Canada Basketball
Henrik Dettmann, Head Coach Finland Senior Men

Great Britain Coaches: Tom Maher
Chris Finch
Ken Shields



Areas of Emphasis

SECTION GUIDELINES

PHYSICAL

Physical Fitness and Conditioning

Footwork and Movement for Basketball

ON-BALL Defence, Movement and Footwork

TECHNICAL

Shooting

Passing and Receiving

Use of the Dribble

TACTICAL

Offence

OFF-BALL Defence

Point Guard Play

THE BASICS FUNDAMENTALS THAT UNDERPIN OUR AREAS OF EMPHASIS; GUIDELINES FOR COACHING

While there is an overview of the Areas of Emphasis for the physical, technical and the tactical, there are also some “basics” that all coaches at all levels should re-address.

These “Basics Fundamentals” underpin the *Areas of Emphasis; Guidelines for Coaching*.

1. **VISION**; PLAYERS NEED BETTER VISION, AT ALL TIMES WHEN PLAYING.

- Vision when playing or performing a skill is critically important for decision making.
- Having “eyes for the ball” will always help good defence. In transition defence players should keep their eyes on the ball. When running back on offence we react to both the ball and the defence. This peripheral vision (splitting vision) is an important skill or attribute which should be highlighted by coaches.
- Good vision is required equally on offence.
- Being in a defensive stance, whether open or closed, requires good vision by the player. The extension is then “splitting vision” when playing defence, with back to the basket, watching the ball and your man.
- Passing and decision making have been identified as problem areas. Once again it requires good vision, be it split or on the defender. However from an early age players must “watch the ball”.
- Better vision will result in better positional play. Vision when in the triple threat stance makes the decision, whether it is watching the defenders feet or other cues.
- “Head up” means vision of the court and all the players.

2. **PHYSICAL** DEVELOPMENT UNDERPINS SKILLS EXECUTION

- Understand that players need the physical competences to perform the technical skills in order to perform the tactical. At junior and development levels there needs to be an understanding of the ability to move and the execution of a skill.
- Skills can be improved by developing physical competencies. The easiest examples are:
 - The ability to squat to a defensive position or a shooting stance.
 - The ability to stop quickly when running into a two foot or balance stride stop position in order to make a second movement.
- The physical capability of each and all players can be developed through teaching and coaching.

3. STANCE IS OUR KEY SKILL

- Teach the “basketball stance” more effectively. Make the ready position the home base from which all controlled movement comes. Demand that players stay in stance longer (use a count). Stay lower longer in all that we do, this will result in better balance and ultimately better controlled speed and reaction within the game.

4. MOVEMENT INCLUDES FOOTWORK AND BALANCE

- More emphasis and teaching and coaching of movement, footwork and balance.
- Specifically more detail in teaching and player understanding of running/stopping (jump and stride stops); pivoting (inside foot, forward & reverse pivots); stepping (to pass/jab/crossover to drive. All of these to be performed out of the ready stance. The result will be that players will be able to move more efficiently and maximise their natural athleticism, which will lead to more controlled decision making.

5. EFFECTIVE MOVEMENT INCLUDES THE USE OF PLAYER’S HANDS

- Better coaching of the use and position of the hands (as well as feet) in all that we do.
- Teach the use of hands in all that we do in the basketball game, with fundamentals and with skills. Teach why hands are important. “Target hands” in catching the ball when running, leading or in the ready position. “Hands as targets” always. This will result in better passing and less turnovers.
- Defensive hand position - “hands up on defence”, “hand close together trace the ball”, “pistols positions” in off ball defensive positioning. Hands up to rebound, “elbows out” to take up space and be ready for anticipation of a rebound. “Hand in face” of shooter when defending the shot. Inside “dig hand” versus all crossovers back to the middle. “Hand in the passing lane” on ball vs dribble pass threat and in denial. Emphasise the use of hands in all we do. However make sure it is out of stance or in stance. The result will be better defensive players.
- Offensive hands - use “slash arm” or “swim stroke” when cutting or going body to body in a game. With an “arm bar” we will get better offensive players. “Open the window” when posting. “Ball quick” with ball in stance.
- Being “ball quick” when moving the ball in triple threat stance combined with stepping and pivoting against pressure defence, rather than just dribbling the ball into a bad situation. Shooting or triple threat “pocket to pocket”, “left to right then right to left”.

6. MORE EFFECTIVE DRIBBLE TECHNIQUE WILL UNDERPIN TACTICAL USE OF DRIBBLING

- For dribbling, coach better posture and form when speed dribbling and in the control dribble. Coach the control dribble, retreat and advance control dribble, from the “ready” stance position.
- This will result in better ball protection against pressure and better position to counter and make “passes out of dead ball” situations, with less poor decision making caused by panic or timing after a misuse of a dribble.
- Dribbling for penetration must take the ball into a *better* situation to score, not a worse one. Currently we are frequently misusing the dribble in the British game. Space and advantage need to be created through offense. The use of the dribble must create advantage.
- Better use of the dribble as an alternative to passing but minimising the misuse of the dribble in team offence.

7. PASSING IS A TEAM FUNDAMENTAL WHICH CREATES SPACE AND ADVANTAGE.

- Passing for advantage and ball reversal are fundamental team offence concepts.
- Dribbling the ball from side to side as part of team offence (to create an offensive advantage) is very limited compared to ball reversal through better passing.
- The dribble to a receiver will seldom equal the speed and time of a pass to a receiver.
- Better vision of the ball and the defence / offence at all times by the players.

8. SHOOTING, SHOOTING, AND MORE SHOOTING MAKES A GREAT PLAYER

- Coaches should follow the principles of shooting and coach good technique.
- Players should shoot the ball daily to improve this key skill.
- Coaches should encourage and provide for shooting practice for all players.
- The specialising ages from 14 to 17 years and the investment years from 18 to 22 years are about perfecting the art of shooting the basketball.
- Coaches will help but the drive of the player will determine where the player will finish and what they will achieve.
- If it is to be it's up to me. It is all about character and desire for the journey.

THE INDIVIDUAL AREAS OF EMPHASIS SECTION GUIDELINES

The following seven sections of the “Areas of Emphasis Guidelines” discuss the importance of the areas of emphasis and provide some recommendations relating to each area to coaches.

Please read and implement the re-emphasis of these areas.

Each section contains a discussion of “**why it is important**” and “**the technical aspect**” involved with each area of emphasis.

“**How we can make the biggest improvements**” is an important discussion of where the strategic advantage and focus exists.

“**The coach quotes**” alerts us to the area of emphasis and themes that are important.

Finally these are followed by some “**Recommendations for consideration and implementation**”.

The recommendations provided should be considered by all. They are broken into recommendations for the club, schools, coaches and the national system.

Good coaching from the best of British.

Warwick Cann

Head of Performance

British Basketball



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document would not have been possible without the essential support of many individuals and further enhanced by the work of Performance Management Groups members. The leadership and guidance of Warwick Cann, Head of Performance at British Basketball has been instrumental in the development and authoring of the these Areas of Emphasis.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the expertise of the Curriculum Advisory Group which helped create a product of sound experiential basis and superior quality, and to all the coaches involved in proofing the various draft sections.

The authors value the support of the Home Country Associations and acknowledge their commitment to implementing the recommendations suggested to enhance the execution of their performance teams on court.

The production of this report has been made possible by UK Sport's support for British Basketball.



Author: Warwick Cann

Editors: Brian Aldred
Lucy Power

Curriculum Advisory Group and Section Contributors:

Trudie Hoggood
Matt Johnson
Simon Turner

Fraser McKinney
Tony Garbelotto
Brian Aldred

Performance Management Group Founding Members:

Chris Spice
Jeff Jones
Martin Bland

Ron Wuotila
Ben Rush

The Curriculum Advisory Group would also thanks the following individuals for their valuable input:

Mike McKay, Manager, Coach Education & Development, Canada Basketball
Henrik Dettmann, Head Coach Finland Senior Men

Great Britain Coaches: Tom Maher
Chris Finch
Ken Shields



Areas of Emphasis

PHYSICAL FITNESS

- Better coaching and understanding of physical fitness at the junior level
- Plan for the physical components in training sessions
 - *Cardiovascular fitness*
 - *Muscle memory (movement patterns)*
 - *Strength*
 - *Speed*
 - *Power*
 - *Endurance*
- Test the physical components of basketball
- Conduct better warm up and cool down phases for training and playing
- Emphasise Nutrition and Physical Education
- Understand Recovery and Nutrition
- Use qualified professionals to assist with the physical aspects

PHYSICAL FITNESS

WHY EMPHASISE PHYSICAL FITNESS OR CONDITIONING?

Basketball was invented in the late eighteenth century as a sport involving the combination of speed, skill and strength and has changed very little in its raw components. Basketball has now developed into a sport which requires excellent physical abilities with a high degree of repetition. To obtain this ability to repeat appropriate movements requires two key factors: physical fitness and skill.

While basketball attracts and develops good athleticism one cannot assume that natural ability will be sufficient to allow players to compete at the various levels. While young players thrive on activity, they still are developing as children, adolescents or senior level basketball players. Participants in basketball need a baseline level of conditioning to allow them to maximise enjoyment, and to maximise their performance and skill output. There has perhaps been an assumption that because players are athletic that they are physically fit.

Basketball is a high impact, explosive sport which puts great stresses and strains on athletes' bodies. Due to the nature of basketball leagues around the world, most players will play more than one game a week which requires the athletes to not only be fit for the current game but also to be able to recover and be back to their best within three days.

Collectively coaches at all levels have developed certain attitudes to training and physical fitness. Some Coaches are of a mindset that we don't have enough time to improve fitness levels as we only train twice a week and play once a week. However fitness can be influenced in this amount of time. We can introduce simple processes and develop a good fitness and conditioning system for each team. This can be achieved by better warm-ups and better session planning which should include fitness. By prioritising injury prevention we are in essence optimising performance. We can also influence players in what they do away from team training. However we need to understand the training components which we wish to introduce. Individually players should recognise their need for continued dedication to personal physical improvement in order to elevate their standards over the long-term.

A well skilled player out of shape will not produce their best in a championship or league competition, even if they want to. Additionally just because a player looks like an athlete, it does not follow that that player can sprint, sprint again, change direction at speed with good mechanics or has the necessary aerobic capacity needed to play basketball at the various levels.

Coaches of players who are choosing to specialise in basketball have a greater responsibility. The coach should ensure that they consider their individual players physical needs and set longer term programs of physical development. They should also recognise that each player is individually different. It is debatable that we have this approach at present in our programmes

The standard of any physical performance needs assessment and measurement. Currently our national system is poor at measuring and assessing physical performance. It is imperative that players are able to sustain their performance level to optimise skill performance and prevent injuries. At all levels, a solid conditioning programme that develops the necessary components of the game (i.e. insert the consistent names for the training components here strength, speed, etc) will assist the players individual and team performance. Coaches who start at junior level but coach senior or youth players should ensure that they appreciate the differences in conditioning at the various levels of participation.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS

UNDERSTANDING THE PHYSICAL COMPONENTS OF BASKETBALL

Physical fitness is very specific to each sport and the demands within basketball include: cardiovascular fitness, strength, endurance, power and speed. All of these must be performed with the appropriate movement patterns for the correct skill acquisition.

These physical components can be described as:

- **Cardiovascular fitness:** offers the capacity to work and the ability to perform work for prolonged periods, and to recover quickly either between bouts of work or between training sessions.
- **Muscle memory (movement patterns):** rarely does one muscle move in isolation, rather groups of muscles work together to achieve a common goal e.g. defensive slide, shooting a ball. Learning the appropriate sequence at an early stage ensures development of a stable base to allow the basketball player to utilise their strength or power, gained through training, efficiently and appropriately with least amount of effort.
- **Strength:** strength is the ability to exert force.
- **Speed:** swiftness of action
- **Power:** is a combination of speed and strength which is the ability to exert strength quickly.
- **Endurance:** ability to sustain one-self through a period of stress

It is important to realise all these key components are rarely combined in training, rather they are usually trained as individual components. As an athlete develops each key area they should be able to control each segment of their body utilising their strength and power through varying controlled ranges of motion. This allows them to perform skills within the quickest amount of time and at their highest accuracy. You are only as strong as your weakest link in this chain of key components!

RESEARCHING THE PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Below are some facts obtained from research completed on the fitness required for basketball. They may help re-emphasise fitness and offer food for thought when planning a training session:

- On average an elite player covers 7558m in a game, 23% at high intensity
- On average an elite player covers distances of up to 114m per min
- 22% of total distance covered is sideways movement
- Percentage Heart Rate - players spent 19% of game time at >95% maxHR and 74% of game time at >85% maxHR
- It has been speculated that the percentage time spent in high intensity is correlated with performance
- Work to rest ratio is 1:3.6 (e.g. 6 seconds high to moderate intensity = 22 sec relative rest – low intensity) This relies on working a lot in the explosive anaerobic system, a system that does not use oxygen therefore only last for up to 8 to 10 seconds
- Appropriate cardiovascular fitness can reduce injury rates and specifically knee injury and ankle sprains
- Simple 5 minute progressive balance routine in warm up can lead to reducing ankle injury rates by up to half. Suggesting a possible increase in players available to train.

PLANNING

Although anaerobic fitness is probably the dominant energy system within basketball performance, the other more important aerobic system utilises oxygen to create and replace energy lost during the explosive work competed by players. Therefore the more efficient and quicker replacement of energy speeds recovery and ensures appropriate levels are available to repeat the next wave of explosive power.

This means drills that allow the players to put high intensity work in varying directions in short bursts, must allow specific rest time, as prolonging this phase could reduce the benefit of their high intensity work.

When planning your sessions it is important to be basketball specific and train quality over quantity, e.g. 10 X 100m explosive sprints at >95% heart rate is better than running 1Km at 50% maximum heart rate.

The physical game description is a game of short explosive bursts. The athlete's muscle memory of the appropriate pattern and power output will remember the feeling of running fast and therefore how to run fast.

We must plan training sessions for appropriate levels of intensity and duration. It is important to include appropriate time for warm up's, cool down's and stretching. These can be used to assist recovery, reduce injury and develop skills through teaching movement patterns, lengthening tight muscle that might be restricting movement, and slowing the heart rate correctly to optimise recovery.

TESTING

What is physical performance? How do we know if players physical output and performance have improved?

These are questions that need to be asked, tested and monitored to ensure appropriate development of young players. We should ensure we conduct progressional programs for developing players and optimise performance for all players, but particularly with elite players.

Assessment and monitoring of a basketball players athletic profile is necessary.

Assessment and monitoring of a basketball players athletic profile is necessary. The profile and assessment will be referenced against cardiovascular fitness, ability to control their body correctly (muscle memory), skill, power and speed. This will ensure we highlight areas for development to strengthen the weakest link!

Coaches and specialists can define and set standards of players key stages in development (e.g., start and end of pre-season training). They can also re-test to assess the impact of their athletic development programme and set up monitoring systems using subjective ratings and objective measurement highlighted from the profile assessment.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS?

COACHING PHYSICAL FITNESS

With junior players you are setting the foundations, making sure they are able to do the basics first. These include performing appropriate movement patterns relating to defensive or triple threat stance, shooting form (driving from foot to fingers), independent control of different body parts (e.g. running while turning upper body to catch a ball) and landing or stopping mechanics.

We can improve players basic movement patterns simply through better structured warm up drills, thus not affecting coaching time and players don't even realise that they are learning.

We should address flexibility: any restrictions to movement caused by tight muscles will reduce a basketball players ability to move that joint and the muscle to produce power. This places undue additional stress upon the joints next in the chain (e.g. tightness at the hip can often lead to additional movement at the knee and excessive stress upon the tendon's which often equal pain).

We need to introduce a basic conditioning program that includes strength and fitness development. These ideas might seem simple and often are very easy to implement into normal training sessions by drill adaptation and are extremely effective!

PLANNING

Basketball is a sport that utilises all components of a players physical ability – speed, strength lower and upper body, power, agility, anaerobic fitness and aerobic fitness. All of these should be addressed in their training to provide a well rounded player.

The first stage of planning and like any sports training coaches must consider periodisation. This means understanding volume and intensity for the coming session and relating to all sessions thereafter focusing on your goals/aims. Every session whether the focus be footwork and skill or fitness, periodising will allow a coach to determine that all components have or will be developed over a 2-8 month plan.

- **Cardiovascular fitness:** When training fitness try to be specific to the game e.g. 5-15 second bursts of high intensity sprints with 10-30 seconds recovery (recovery not being rest but lower intensity work) will mimic the game. Utilising drills such as the half court 3 man weave will provide a 6-8 second sprint and the 10-30 second lower intensity work while jogging back to the start (consider a full court there and back 3 man weave will produce 8-15 seconds sprint and a very low intensity recovery while standing). Another consideration is to remember 22% of game movements are lateral so when designing drills don't forget to introduce this.
- **Training intensity:** The intensity of our training sessions (especially at the specialised stage) whether it is 60, 90 or 120 minutes can have an effect on our conditioning. Intensity is dependent on physical ability and activity prescription. By tuning into training intensity we can help shape the player's attitude to physical development and conditioning by what we do in our basketball sessions. We can monitor intensity, a simple method is by using ratings by players, coaches and specialists such as "Rating Perceived Exertion scaling" (RPE) which can act as a monitoring tool.
- **Neurological fitness (movement pattern repetition):** Coaches must be aware of the effect of different types of training on not only the cardiovascular system but also the central nervous system and be aware of each systems limitations. High intensity running for prolonged period

will fatigue an athlete's cardiovascular system and muscles therefore reduce the muscles strength and power output for the explosive or plyometric based drills that involve the combination of muscle strength and central nervous system. To combat this, power based activities could be performed at the start of the training sessions.

- **Strength:** This has two aspects, firstly an ability to produce strong movements and secondly an ability to repeat, which is called 'endurance'. The range between these two aspects is a sliding scale, the more strength the less endurance an athlete will have and vice versa. It is key for any basketball player to get this balance right as will affect performance and importantly regardless of age, ability and skill, affect injury prevention and performance gains.
- **Flexibility:** Not everything will be tight so there is no need to stretch every muscle, meaning it does not need to take great chunks of time out of practice. Key basketball specific muscles groups should be identified by the coach or physiotherapist or strength and conditioner and targeted during training sessions. Each individual athlete should identify what their own tightness's are and what is their main limiting factor, and then work on this in their own time. This way adherence to flexibility work should be higher. Individuals should be assessed and muscle length measured to ensure progression, then re-assessed.

TESTING

Testing provides individual baselines and team benchmarks for performance that if used correctly can guide any program. While physical testing for testing sake has little purpose it should be highlighted that there are tests which can help us determine fitness and performance levels for our players. It is important to realise these are guidelines where we have selected specific examples, all of which should not be used as a complete screen, and if you wish to gain assistance or further information please consult a professional.

SCREENING THE PLAYERS

Player screening (testing for range of movement) should not be compromised, we cannot improve upon what we do not know. In all sports, business and life we are judged on performance and in basketball it should be no different. A training program cannot be judged as successful unless certified outcome measures show that there has been improvement.

- Player profiling is vital to form a base line – it can identify if a player has issues with flexibility and/or stability that could put them at risk of injury. Broadly speaking there are two types of screening and therefore would ideally be performed by a physiotherapist or strength and conditioning coach, but there are courses coaches can go on to learn a basic screening test (FMS – functional movement screening).
- A screen is only worth the information it offers. If players are going to be screened the results need to be utilised and lead to the information being implemented into player focused developmental program. Then the players should be re-tested 6-8 weeks post screen and areas of continued weakness addressed and areas of improvement progressed.
- Screening processes can highlight common sites of injury such as:
 - Knees: often due to poor landing mechanics and muscle imbalances, followed by high loading and impact patterns within training. Females are especially at risk from major limiting injuries of the knee and special considerations should be taken if a coach as any concerns. In most cases these can be addressed by an appropriately prescribed program.
 - Ankles sprains: appropriate prevention strategies have been shown to reduce their occurrence and severity by up to two thirds within one team. This can be simply implemented through a 5 minute routine performed within warm ups or targeting athletes with prescribed programs that were shown in their screen to be at risk.

- Shoulder injuries: often due to muscle imbalances directly within the shoulder joint and their co-ordination with the other muscles and joints of the body. This can be addressed through appropriately prescribed strength programs and neurological programs to teach the body to integrate all muscle groups from around the body into one smooth controlled movement. Both components of this would be clear in an quality screening process

In summary, screening allows athletes weaknesses and strengths to be identified early and therefore appropriate interventions applied, resulting in training being more specific to the needs of the player and the requirements of basketball. It also provides the athlete with tangible focused approach taken from their data to go away and work on in their own time, taking autonomy of their own development. Short, medium and long term goals can be set with the athlete and this provides the motivation for them as they are able to measure improvements in an objective rather than subjective manner.

ENSURING BETTER WARM-UP AND COOL-DOWN PHASES FOR TRAINING AND PLAYING

One immediate area for attention is the warm up and cool down phase of each training session.

In the warm up session we can also revisit footwork and movement fundamentals. This presents us with an opportunity to revise preferred movement patterns that are basketball specific. If performed correctly, these patterns will lead to an optimisation of performance and a reduction in injury rates.

By focusing on techniques and correct movement and footwork during the warm-up we are reinforcing the desired movement patterns and muscle memory, and simply allowing the players to become more aware of their body and movement.

A recent 22 week progressive balance program performed for 5 minutes in a warm up, and another 12 week neurological muscle memory training system, both added to the huge amount of scientific evidence to indicate this will reduce injury rates.

EMPHASISING NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The part that nutrition plays with training workload and the need for recovery must be fully understood at all levels, but none more important than at national squad level in order for them to be at their best to reach their goals.

Nutrition cannot be underestimated, our energy systems and our mind will not function adequately without appropriate nutrition. However this information should be passed down to athletes very carefully and in the form of information rather than rules. If athletes are not able to take ownership over their diet then they are unlikely to become successful athletes anyway regardless of what they eat or drink.

If professionals do feel adequately educated / qualified to pass on information regarding diet to athletes then they should ensure it is based on sound research and appropriate nutritional guidelines. They should also ensure they are in a position to support the athlete through the process of modifying their diet and be able to monitor and address any negative behaviours, thoughts or feelings that occur as a result and then refer on to other qualified parties for support.

UNDERSTANDING RECOVERY AND NUTRITION

- Recovery is key. Training is the stimulus for adaptation, and how the player adapts is dependent on their recovery process.
- Nutrition should also be considered as a key part of the jigsaw, players should be educated on the best forms of nutrition.
- Key areas which will have an instant impact are:

- Fluid intake: all players should enter a game fully hydrated and can use urine charts to assess in the 12 hours prior to training or competition. During games a 2% reduction in hydration leads to a large loss in performance and strength output. For accurate analysis weighing before exercise and post exercise will offer a rough guide to fluid loss. Athletes should be looking to directly consume 1.5 litres of low sugar fluid per 1kg body weight lost.
- Protein intake through milk based products within 20 minutes post hard training or high minute games should also be address to aid in recovery.
- After hard training/game a player needs to take in a protein and carbohydrate drink to aid in muscle recovery. The best form is through a whey protein mix as this has a very fast absorption rate.
- Carbohydrate is the instant fuel of the body and without sufficient levels our brain, neurological system and muscles reactions to respond to the demands of basketball are compromised. Therefore sufficient intake of carbohydrate based foods will ensure our body is ready to play basketball.
- When choosing a carbohydrate it should be complex (e.g. brown rice, whole-wheat pasta). This means it has a slow absorption rate and will give energy for longer periods, rather than a simple carbohydrate such as sugary drinks/chocolate that will give energy very quickly.
- A good guide to use when choosing which carbohydrate to have and when is the G.I. index.
- Recovery should not just be in the form of a day off. Alternatives to consider are: soft tissue work through foam rolling or stretching, longer term nutrition, ice baths and massage.
- Monitoring of athlete responses to training and competition through methods such as 'RPE', performance output such as free throws or common shooting drills to highlight both the physical, mental and psychological responses.
- If available, establish regular communication between the coaching staff and medical team. Capture, flag and communicate to key staff members quickly, and track and trend key events that occur in athlete's life.
- Streamlined and integrated injury management programmes and return to play strategies as an intervention process will speed recovery and involvement of an athlete within the team.

USING QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS

Coaching is not an easy task and your knowledge levels are not expected to include everything. By engaging external experts in the field of performance, biomechanics, injury prevention and sports medicine, and by inviting them into our programs we are making a statement that the physical monitoring and development is important.

Coaches need to understand the benefit of inviting professionals into their basketball programs and should work in conjunction with them to ensure assessment, interpretation of information, prescription, integration into training or personal player plans, and delivery are firstly, specific to basketball and secondly, each component works together for the ultimate benefit of the athlete and the team!

There are a number of skilled professionals throughout the UK who will be positioned to assist all levels of basketball players. Given basketballs specific movement patterns and nuances to the sport it is recommended that, where possible, to source and use people with basketball experience or interest.

HERE'S WHAT COACHES AND SPECIALISTS ARE SAYING:

“Introduction of simple injury prevention strategies over a season will make a difference and ensure key players are available for major games throughout the whole season.”

Dr Mark Gillet, Head of British Basketballs Sports Science and Medicine Unit

“You need the physical ability to perform the technical aspects of basketball, and you need the technical skills to perform the tactical requirements.”

Warwick Cann, British Basketball Head of Performance

“We need to develop player behaviours and an attitude that is conducive to maximising the potential of every player, through commitment to develop physically as well as through playing, no matter what part of the year they find themselves.”

Fraser McKinney British Basketball Lead Men's Physiotherapist

“Failing to plan is planning to fail, and failing to plan for the physical means your team will fail physically.”

Chris Spice, British Basketball Performance Director and Olympic Gold medal coach

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

- Establish a national information system to include Information regarding physical fitness and assessment for coaches, performance specialists and medical staff. It must be accessible, updated and taught.
- Conducting research to:
 - Determine the appropriate levels of training for different ages and abilities, rather than relying on the traditional views.
 - Determine appropriate fitness testing procedures for basketball.
 - Highlight key injury patterns and possible prevention strategies.
 - Highlight key performance factors and developmental programs to improve any common or individual areas for development.
- Develop a physical testing strategy with nationally accepted protocols for club, regional and national squads. Accept a long term view to utilise this information to establish some standard of “British Basketball” norms which will help players and coaches focus training and be aware of required levels to progress through player pathways.
- Develop a system of player profiling: this will underpin all guidelines and develop players performance recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION TO CLUBS

- Club and national team coaches must endeavour to work together for the good of the athletes and provide consistent teaching.
- Clubs at the various levels should review their practices and programs with regard to the physical fitness, preparation and education of their players.
- Annual plans should focus on the physical workload that will underpin the program. Periodisation and phasing become critical elements of seasonal and annual planning, especially if you want to be peaking at the end of the cycle.
- All national league clubs should periodise their program and plan for the physical conditioning needs for their player to perform. The older age programs will need a more consideration.

- Education sessions on nutrition, exercise and recovery are a must for the long term operation of all our clubs. Giving all players the tools for health and maximum performance is the least we can provide for club level players.
- Clubs should also seek voluntary help from schools and universities from qualified professionals to assist and advise.
- Clubs who conduct yearly programs should periodise their plans and prepare a meaningful phasing of preseason, in season, and off season work. The monitoring of recovery time is also needed.
- Clubs should also consider using practical field based physical tests (the national protocols) for their club players at U16's, U18's and senior levels.
- Establishing links with local universities that have sport science courses to work together for the good of the athletes, and provide consistent teaching.
- Periodising of programmes should include consideration of national team breaks from club competition schedules to reduce the conflict and over training and playing.
- There are options to engage varying levels of professionals to gain from their expertise at appropriate to all budgets.
- Player screening should be compulsory and conducted by qualified professionals to ensure the results are reliable and the tests conducted should follow the national basketball strategy.
- Junior clubs should be assessed on the development of the children, not the results of the season for the team. Through better monitoring and measurement this factor could be highlighted through evidence gathered from screening and performance testing of players.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COACHES

- Coaches should have expectations for physical standards and accordingly let a player know how they can improve in those areas.
- Review the intensity and demands of your training sessions. Is this progressing over the season and phased appropriately for your team? Do you train at game speed?
- Know and understand the physical demands of the game at your level and what is needed to prepare athletes physically for your level.
- Use specialists to assist you learn.
- Constantly assess your players' physical status by using the performance measures either from medical screening or through shooting drills, fitness drills or whole body output drills (i.e. push up etc)
- Plan a good pre-season phase as it is often the key to a good season.
- Provide education to your players. Increased knowledge will help with that the physical preparation and training ability.
- Understanding the skill is one thing; skill at speed is another skill level which is underpinned by physical training. The continued use of full court drilling and scrimmaging will demand physical fitness, and the activities and rules you set with drills will help conditioning and movement.
- A coach needs measurement tools or tests as well as subjective assessment. Seek out professionals or volunteers who can assist you in this area. They will help you improve your coaching attributes and your team's performance.

RECOMMENDATION TO SCHOOLS

- Schools and teachers have the ability to also help clubs in both knowledge and application of better physical training and education of our athletes.
- Identify clubs and community basketball programs that may be able to assist or form partnerships to develop players.
- Review the club recommendations for fitness in developing school players, and include basic movement principles in their sessions.
- Teach children how to run, jump and other skills effectively and efficiently. This would reduce the workload of club coaches.



Areas of Emphasis

FOOTWORK AND MOVEMENT

- Recognise the need to coach efficient movement
- Better planning, teaching and rehearsing of good footwork and balance
- Confirm the value and advantage of the triple threat position
- Recognise that pivoting is the basis for offensive footwork techniques

WHY EMPHASISE FOOTWORK AND MOVEMENT

As stated in the previous section (Physical Fitness) we need to teach and drill better footwork, running changing direction, stopping and basketball stance (balance and posture).

As part of this review, British Basketball has been inundated with descriptions of the "inabilities" and "lack of" for our players in the UK. "Decision making" was one area that became most intriguing aspect for analysis.

Why are there so many turnovers, "poor reads on offense" and why do our players fall over or have to jump to pass? All these questions have been under analysis by the curriculum driver group. Further statements like "we can't shoot the basketball", "our passing is terrible" (and catching), further beg the question "where do we start?" Furthermore, how is it that physically some of our best athletes can jump but not able to repeat sprint to an acceptable level?

The answer and the common solution to develop consistency for these skill deficiencies is through a better focus to footwork, body positioning, posture and balance.

Answering the question, are the players in control of their movement? Where are their feet placed for advantage / disadvantage? Where is their head position when these problems occur? In posing these questions we are searching for answers in terms of techniques and principles.

There is in fact a technical and physical solution to what first appears to be tactical and technical questions of inability. What physical position do our players place themselves into to make the pass or the shot? How can we beat pressure defence with our footwork? The answer is body to body positioning with the use of hands and arms as well as feet.

The coaching focus must be more on the movement fundamentals as well as an earlier recognition and development of the movement fundamentals in all young players. Correct footwork and better balance and stance at the skill acquisition and development stages are needed.

A natural athlete does not necessarily know how and where to best react with footwork or deal with contact and bumping. Assuming all movement is a natural movement is one perspective. But what is it and can we coach it? The answer is yes we can coach for and improve movement and especially footwork.

When considering national team junior players' performances at European championships, turnovers are an issue for team and individual performance. While they come in various categories they are not solely about "poor decision making". Turnovers are also about their playing fundamentals and skills.

"Travelling" is simply poor footwork.

"Bad passing" is a lot to do with footwork, stance and technique as well as reading the play (vision). If one is looking for evidence of poor footwork we simply have to look at our national squads to see the inadequacies, but also the solutions through coaching footwork and movement.

The need to move more efficiently is highlighted in current British players. Not only in the locally developed player's defensive stance, but post stance, running and stopping, and holding to set a screen are all weaknesses in our junior game. Effective cutting, through stepping, sealing and slashing arms to get a better body on body position, are also weaknesses of current British developed players at youth and senior levels.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS IN MOVEMENT FOOTWORK

Generally speaking the ability to move is enhanced or restricted by one's physical makeup. Flexibility and strength, among other aspects, affect running ability. The ability to move, run and stop correctly is specific to a basketball game experience. Footwork and movement is improved through repetition and must be coached. Running in basketball involves deceleration, agility in changing direction as well as stopping quickly before moving again. Undoubtedly training will improve movement. While running is often perceived as a leg stride action, the use of the arms and upper body play a role in how efficiently somebody runs. There is much to appreciate, learn and understand about movements that will enhance basketball performance.

- **Running technique:** Sometimes we assume that all players can run and often don't teach our young adolescents how to run. We do not have a provision or consideration for them to learn running efficiency. Running and more specifically sprinting must be assessed and developed in all our players. While running is important, equally coaching the players "how to stop quickly" through a "jump stop" or a "stride or running stop" is also equally important. These stops become part of the running continuum. They become the next most important footwork fundamental.
- **Stopping equals Stance:** Jump stops, Stride [or running] stops can be stationary, momentary waiting positions. Improving posture and stance will involve core strength. All our players must be able to get into a defensive stance and also a triple threat stance on offence. This position is closely related to the stance of a stop; therefore a common "basketball stance" needs to be taught effectively. This basketball "ready position" stance for each player is crucial for skill development. While they are only momentarily in the position as senior players, as juniors they will need to adopt it more regularly and for longer periods as they acquire their movement skills. The "basketball stance" is the first body posture or stance we will teach, it is the beginner's common position to play defence or offense. Once established it will be refined later into a more specific modified defensive stance and also the triple threat position. It involves feet should width apart, knees and feet facing same direction, head still, eyes looking ahead, shoulders back (shoulder blades pulled together) straight back, good bend at hips and knees, and hands ready for defence or offence whichever is required.
- **Balance:** In stance and stops is determined by the players head position (and vision). Whether the head is up or down affects balance. While balance can be natural for some it may not be for others, so experience in balance and basketball specific type movements must be coached, planned and experienced.
- **Combining stance with defensive slides:** Progressing the starting stance to a defensive stance, combined with slides and then running (slide /run/slide) is the basis of all defensive movement. These are somewhat unnatural movement patterns so they need to be learned for "muscle memory".
- **Changing direction when running:** There is a need to recognise agility in basketball, which involves a capability for deceleration. This is to do with physical competency. It may not come naturally to young players, so once again there is the need to coach it and practice it.
- **Coaching Hand positioning in all movement:** The hands (and arms) have a role in balance, stance and when running. Hand positioning is especially important to balance and for overall movement efficiency when a ball is involved. For example the target hands when coming off screens to catch and shoot are important aspects for the coaches' attention. The positioning of hands and feet when shooting and catching, the arm bar when defending or

dribbling, the dig hand on defence against the dribbler, the target hand in the post, hands up ready to rebound, hands up on defence are all reminders that the hands have important movements for basketball. These positioning and movement responsibilities should be coached.

- **More attention to the use of arms in all movement:** British players can use arms (and hands) for better outcomes. These are important in shooting, rebounding and defence. The effective use of arms and shoulder position is also very important in close body to body contests (i.e. 1 v 1 situations).
- **Triple threat movements:** Once the basketball stance or ready position is taught, it is then refined through teaching the triple threat position. From the triple threat position we need a correct shooting technique and an ability to raise and lower the ball through a range of motion that allows fakes for the shot, dribble or pass as well as the completion of the skill. Therefore the faking motion must be the same as the actual motion and as such must go through the same range of motion and then adapted by the player in decision making. The overhead pass should be easily converted to the shooting position as fakes are made to move the defence from the passing or driving lane. Correct position and where to start the dribble drive will include the use of a jab step and a crossover step to beat the defence. Once again these need to be broken down and coached. Additionally, the ability to be “ball quick” while in a stance is created by moving the ball from one hip to another or swinging the ball below the knees to crossover and get defender off balance. These are all movements to be coached.
- **ON-BALL defence:** Footwork and movement including closing out is covered separately in the ON-BALL defence section hereafter.

In conclusion, the major point is to re-emphasise movement and footwork. All basketball coaches need to understand and be able to coach movement, footwork, balance and stance (posture) to best perform the skills of basketball at all levels.

HOW CAN WE GAIN THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS?

- **Recognise the need to coach to efficient movement.** The need to coach footwork and movement is highlighted in current British play. Not only defensive stance but post stance, running and stopping, and holding to set a screen. These are weaknesses in our junior game. Movement is everywhere in the game and it underpins individual skills of the game. Effective cutting, through stepping, sealing and slashing arms to get a better body on body position are weaknesses of British play.

While stance in isolation maybe non dynamic and possibly seen as distant from the actual quick moving game, the reality is that players find it hard to stay in a stance on defence, pivot and step correctly against pressure defence and lack range in their shooting. Therefore footwork and stance through core stability and efficiency of movement will impact all skill areas.

We should ensure that where appropriate, change of direction is encouraged in every drill or game situation. Being hard to guard off the ball or being able to dribble crossover quickly are key change of directions.

Specifically better teaching of jump stop, stride stop, holding the position, pivoting, stepping out of stance to pass or dribble, with and without defence, will transfer to post footwork and a strong triple threat stance.

We need to understand that running stopping and stance techniques are required in setting screens. By coaching the detail of screening stance and posture (balance) we will prepare our British players to set more effective screens.

- **Plan for the teaching and rehearsing of good footwork and balance.** We can make the biggest improvements by improving practice through better planning, teaching and rehearsing good footwork.

A better understanding of movement and footwork is the key to improving basketball efficiency. With better coaching and teaching of running and sprinting, combined with correct stopping and pivoting in stance, will underpin the improvement in British player's individual skills.

Coaches should coach "detail" of movement through drills to effect mastery or create an effective environment for a player to learn the required basketball movements.

Currently footwork and movement are in danger of being the forgotten fundamentals. There is no reason why we cannot use the warm-up and cool down periods to reinforce muscle memory of good footwork and movement patterns.

- **Confirm the value and advantage of the triple threat position.** Reaffirm the "basketball position" or "ready (to play) position" for our U12's U14's and U16's and modify this into defensive stance and triple threat. This will require core stability. Confirm the value and advantage of the triple threat position in U18's and youth and senior programs for individual and team offence execution.

Ensure players can make a pass under pressure in a "dead ball" (no dribble option) starting position. I.e. no dribble to get an effective pass through a defender in all defended breakdown drills. This will encourage using pivots and steps to protect ball through using changing angle of stance and continued moving for better body to body position.

Stepping with the non pivot foot (i.e. the jab step on outside step to the side, the crossover step to lock a defender vision (head / eyes) will lead to better passing against pressure.

- **Recognise that pivoting is the basis for offensive techniques.** To enhance one on one moves we should teach the pivot effectively. The pivot is also important when combined with leading and catching against a moving defence. The pivot and the step (jab) are key movements for individual offense. The pivot progresses from the basketball stance of feet shoulder width, knees bent and bending at the hips.

Stepping and pivoting within a stance is required in posting. These post footwork movements are an extension of general footwork and should be established at U12's U14's and U16's levels. The post development and skills at U14's U16's U18's are specific adaptations of the general footwork and basic movement. Understanding that squaring up to the basket is a pivoting technique, and must be coached in detail for execution at the junior level.

The importance of understanding basketball movement patterns can be highlighted by a simple analysis of the screen and roll. The screen and roll movement is a running, stopping and pivoting movement needing efficient detail in movement to be effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

- The mastery of the triple threat or ready position is crucial to the success of our British teams at domestic and international level. It is the gateway from individual to team offense through better vision and decision-making and the key for improved shooting by British players.
- Our players have speed and are quick, but need a better platform to play from in order to see the game and improve decision making between options. The triple threat will be emphasised at U13's, U15's and U17's regional as well as at national team level.
- Generally we must emphasise and develop more efficient movement with footwork, balance and use of hands. This will come about through more attention to detail and reinforcement of the movement fundamentals in warm-ups and in all training.
- In improving practice through planning / teaching / rehearsing good footwork, coaches are required to coach "detail" through drills to enhance mastery.
- As players progress from basics at U12's and U14's to combination moves at U16's and U18's there are detail and efficiencies to be reinforced in all team and individual training. As we develop the process of motion offense (which is basically movement without the ball) we will be called upon to continually look at techniques in the junior ranks of running, stopping, changing direction, screening, cutting and posting (slash arm).
- National squad camps and development programs such as England's regional development program, Area Performance Centres and Scotland's Talent Development Programme will emphasise footwork, stance, stops and hand positioning. These will always be emphasised in all drills and coaching.
- The breakdown points and teaching cues may lead to some remediation work for players and late specialisation athletes. Footwork stance running and sliding will be practised multiple times which gives ample opportunity to reinforce and develop irrespective of stage of development.
- Attention to screening stance and running and stopping to set effective screens will be coached at U15's, U16's and U18's national team levels as well as U15's and U17's regional representative level.
- There should also be better teaching of the detail of body height when dribbling, posting, or defending.
- Better coaching of the basketball stance and the triple threat position will enhance our shooting ability by providing better balance and leg power when ultimately shooting from mid to longer range.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLUBS

- Review the basketball skills mastery checklist for footwork and stance and understand that it underpins all subsequent skill development
- Note the national system recommendations and implement where appropriate at the level.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHES

- Coaches should “scrutinise” footwork execution and drilling particularly in the “warm up” phase of individual and team training. Correct execution should be encouraged always, even in warm-ups.
- All the points made in both the national system and the club recommendations are appropriate for coaches at all levels.
- In coaching junior or youth teams, coaches will be required to continually reinforce the ready position or triple threat position in all drills, be it for pass, dribble or shot.
- More emphasises on a correct start for all drills from the triple threat position will reinforce and provide repetition in the importance of the position in all that players.
- Review players hand positioning in catching a ball (hand movement) and in shooting – to be consistently reviewed. This is a most important fundamental for U12’s U14’s and even U16’s. Ensure that players catch the ball correctly and can quickly adapt the hand position into a shooting position.
- Coaches need to continue to develop the movement base for all players throughout their coaching career. Neglecting these areas only passes on faults to the next coach and ultimately leads to player frustration with inability to correctly execute the fundamentals.
- Ensure the triple threat positioning with pivot and step from a dead ball situation is mastered by club players, especially in the pass drive options against a defender.
- Encourage motion offense as a means to improving player movement on the court.
- Coach players how to cut and lead to receive the ball. Ensure cutters have the necessary footwork to attack an opponent through body to body contact. This will include the “slash arm/swim stroke” arm movements when denied position. These hand and arm movements become equally important under the “fundamentals of movement”. This can be introduced at the U14’s level but is most important at U16’s, U18’s and youth levels.
- Ensure that all players catch the basketball with their hands in the correct position and that this can easily be rotated to the correct hand positioning for shooting.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- School basketball programs at the primary school level should ensure that footwork is taught and that players work on their footwork as a means of improving their individual skills. Teaching stance will assist a player practise and develop a shooting technique. The alternative is not to give them a platform to work from. This would be negligent.
- High school players simply want to play, but the importance of footwork, balance and the efficiency of certain movement patterns to execute all the associated skills still must be taught and learned in years 8 to 10.
- Footwork and movement underpins skill development. Basketball maybe a foreign game to some school teachers or coaches but coaching the individual skills as well as movement and

footwork are important responsibilities for any school program that not only plays the game but more importantly endeavours to coach the game to its students.

- Schools must discover fun drills and activities that encourage good basketball footwork and specific movement to basketball. The repetition of the basics in practice and the thrill of playing a game (modified or constrained) are important for student players who are sampling basketball at school. Schools with specialised programs should follow the club and national guidelines and recommendations.
- Schools should invite community based and experienced coaches into the primary schools to help teach the fundamental skills.



Areas of Emphasis

ON-BALL Defence

- Change our attitude to defence, particularly ON-BALL defence.
- Understand the differences and interrelatedness of “containment” and “pressing” defence.
- Coach and develop a full court defensive mindset and capability.
- Routinely provide more one-on-one drill situations in training sessions.
- Lateral movement technique.
- Creating effective hand pressure.

WHY EMPHASISE ON-BALL DEFENCE (STANCE POSITIONING AND MOVEMENT)

If defence is 50% of the game, and there is only one basketball then all five (ten) players must guard it and gain it. The ability to get in a position in front of the moving ball and maintain a stance for defence, then slide, step or run and then again get into a stance occurs in only a few sports. ON-BALL defence is the first defensive responsibility individually (technically) and collectively (tactically). It is unique to basketball because of the one on one marking nature of the game which is consistently repeated over the full court. Defence starts with containment and then creating pressure on the basketball.

ON-BALL defence is the skill and tactic that determines containment and the amount of pressure against the ball. Therefore it is fundamentally important that it is emphasised and coached well at all levels of British basketball. It is the first responsibility for defence which all players irrespective of their level must learn and experience through repeated practice.

Because it is a unique movement sequence it deserves special attention in order to improve it across all levels. Without effective and sustained ON-BALL defence there is no foundation for team defence. The stance is an area of emphasis with our footwork and movement and is vitally important.

ON-BALL defence is a skill that all players will be required to master as a fundamental or basic skill. With practice it is a skill and responsibility that can be performed well by all players once the unique physical movement is learned and an attitude to persist in playing defence is established. ON-BALL defence must have a higher priority in the movement and tactical pecking order.

The game has evolved and the sports sciences like Biomechanical analysis and strength and conditioning have had more influence on the coach's teaching and practice of movement and specific techniques in recent time. The Defensive Stance is one area that has always been emphasised but the actual coaching of the technique of the stance has not always been consistent. Similarly the "slide" motion and defensive footwork have been unique to basketball and have been developed over time without the continued assistance of the science of movement. Consequently, there are frequent examples of poor stance which do not aid ON-BALL defence and the associated specific movement. Currently there is no consistent methodology for coaching technique.

Agreement on positioning remains fairly consistent but the need to generate more ON-BALL pressure as well as containment within the national system particularly at national team level is evident. Deciding whether it better to press to create pressure and how do we contain better? These are always questions that a coach has to answer at each and all levels. So getting ON-BALL defence right has relevance to all levels.

Time as an indicator of containment is often overlooked at training and sometimes within coaching. It is important to note that the importance of ON-BALL defence and defence generally is because offence is time bound and therefore subject to pressure to perform in a given time. Five seconds for an individual, eight seconds in the backcourt and 24 seconds for a shot. These are opportunities for defence to get the ball. They also highlight that it doesn't have to be a steal or a missed shot on defence for a team or individual to gain the ball. Violations allow the defence to get the ball if they create the right pressure on the offence. Forcing turnovers is evidence of pressure relative to the offensive competency of the opposition. Taking the charge is also another way to obtain the ball. It is doubtful particularly at the higher levels of junior national league competition, that the standard of defence continually challenges these time limitations, obtains the optimum violations through proactive defence and ultimately give us an indication of the amount of pressure that can be created by our ON-BALL defence.

Often we do not use these measures to evaluate our defence and specifically the effectiveness of the ON-BALL defender. Therefore we as British coaches do not have a collective and a committed cultural evaluation midst for judging our ON-BALL and team effectiveness. This is especially true for the emerging national player development system. Often the final score and winning become the qualifiers of team success rather than developing the individual player specifically with these aspects and measurements for ON-BALL defence.

Few British teams develop a full court man to man mindset and play it for the majority of a game. Subsequently we do not develop a full court pressure man to man defence capability. This is evident in most leagues and certainly at the national team level. Tactically because of “time and score” situations all teams will be required to play full court man to man defence featuring good ON-BALL defence and pressure techniques. An inability to play full court man to man with effective pressure is tactically limiting our approach to playing the game.

While our players are in essence “engaged” with ON-BALL defence the quality particularly at national team level across all players is questionable. Re-emphasising position, stance, slide, step and run as part of the ON-BALL responsibility is imperative in creating better defence which in turn will drive an improvement in individual and team offence. This will improve the quality of basketball played in the home countries. Our players at all levels also deserve to be coached well in understanding how to play on ball defence.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS FOR ON-BALL DEFENCE?

There are technical, tactical, physical and mental elements to ON-BALL defence which should be understood by all British Coaches.

Technically and physically speaking; effective, deliberate and efficient physical movement is required in defending the dribble in both the full and half court. Technically and tactically defending the triple threat close to the basket is also challenging at all levels and the use of the feet and hands in movement are often overlooked for detail when coaching this situation and skill.

Physically ON-BALL defensive movement has special requirements which are specific to basketball. These should be broken down into their component parts and analysed for technical detail. Stance, slide or stepping, running and regaining a stance against the threat of the player with the ball is the essence of the technical detail involved in coaching effective ON-BALL defence movement.

Tactically and mentally; ON-BALL defensive movement includes judging spacing between the offensive player and the ON-BALL defender while moving. Players are required to learn to judge the distance that best creates pressure and containment. As such, a player on defence must “think” and anticipate movement in order to stop their opponent. Spacing and positioning is also critical for success and is not a natural instinct or technique.

Tactically; ON-BALL defence often is a fit for purpose and the spacing between the defender and the player with the ball can be situational based on the opponent’s ability, the offensive team’s intent combined with the philosophy of the defensive team coach relative to time and score.

Physically and mentally; defence is a deliberate, learned physical movement with a positive attitude. It demands application, commitment, discipline and development of character in our players. The physical capability, underpins both the technical and tactical elements while the desire and discipline mentally to persistently play defence will ultimately determine the victor in any competition. British coaches should understand the technical, physical, tactical and mental aspects of ON-BALL defence and then develop their ability to coach the detail of each element.

- **Staying low in a defensive stance.** The defensive stance is not an easy position or a comfortable movement for some. It is not natural and must be developed and conditioned. It involves balance posture and core stability as discussed in the Physical section of these Areas of Emphasis. The defensive stance is low and wider than the offensive player’s foot position. The placement of the defenders feet is wider than the defender’s shoulder width and the low stance needs to be a comfortable position with the arms and hands active and in line with the width of the stance. The defenders toes are pointing to the offensive player and hips and shoulders are square to the chest or shoulder of the offensive player depending on whether they are front on or side on. While the hands are active in applying pressure and assisting lateral movement their placement position varies. They must be able to apply pressure to the dribble, the pass the shot or the ball while it is being held. The hands are part of a disruptive mindset. “Feet (offence) outside feet (defence)”. The stance remains the same if the offence player turns side on to go in a direction towards a sideline and not directly to the

basket. The ability to bend or squat and get low in a defensive stance which is wider than the offensive triple threat is the first ON-BALL technique to be coached.

- **Balanced footwork movement is with the feet and hands.** It is important for technique and ON-BALL defence skill development that the feet and knees of the defender are pointing in the same direction at the offensive player. The shoulders and hips of the defender are “square” to the ball. As the dribbler moves so must the ON-BALL defender. They must move and maintain a low stance and the basic ON-BALL defensive position. The defender is normally encouraged to slide to cover the movement of the ball through the dribble or for any triple threat footwork such as a jab step or any movement of the attack foot. As the feet move so do the hands in trying to get the ball and also as an aid to moving the feet but never beyond their own cylinder of balance to cause overbalancing. The head position and eye level is also important in ensuring best balance and movement. Overbalancing out of stance can occur through poor footwork or moving the head and/or hands too far out of the stance and the body’s cylinder.
- **Position between the ball and the basket.** The square stance is always established between the ball and the basket. Consequently it is important to contain the dribble as it moves. The use and technique of the ON-BALL defence footwork in containing and maintaining position relative to the offence and specifically the use of a dribble is basic to coaching basketball. All offensive players will attempt to go around or to the side of the defender. This lateral movement is critical in stopping the dribble and heading off the forward threat of the offensive player. Historically this has been referred to as a slide and there have been a couple of techniques associated with coaching sliding. The national system prefers a “power step” rather than the step-slide action of pointing a toe in one direction and then sliding or shuffling the trail foot.
- **Lateral movement, stepping and positioning.** Whether facing the chest of the offensive player square on in defensive stance or facing the players side (shoulder) when dribbling the ball towards a sideline or away from the direct line to the basket. The lower defensive stance and footwork remains the same as does the position between ball and basket. As the ball moves the ON-BALL defender will be required to step or slide to maintain their stance. For the national system the low defensive stance remains consistent as does the ball and basket positioning. As the offensive player turns side on or part thereof to dribble the defender must maintain the same low stance and check their positioning as either nose to chest (for front on) or nose to shoulder for side on positioning by the offence.
- **ON-BALL defence is repetition of stance, slide or step and running into stance.** Technically and tactically ON-BALL defence is containing and pressuring the offence into slower execution or stopping it directly or indirectly through this effective containment pressure of footwork and positioning. It involves positioning, stance, sliding or stepping and hand pressure with effective talk from help defenders. Maintaining position is also important so if and when a defender is beaten they will have to sprint recover to the line of the ball. The ability to perform this task requires specific and deliberate conditioning through drills like “zig zag” conditioned defensive drills which are meant to replicate the movement action of stance and repositioning of stance.
- **ON-BALL defenders will be beaten so they must SPRINT recover and persist.** Knowing that once beaten the ON-BALL defender has a great responsibility to recover and go again or “rebuild the defence”, is a key value and requirement for the defender. Therefore once beaten, the ON-BALL defender must SPRINT (shoulder to shoulder) and recover to another ON-BALL position in front of the offence, or alternatively drop to the line of the ball to an OFF-BALL defensive position should the offence pass off once they beat the defence. As players progress through the age groups this ON-BALL assignment becomes a specialising position in the full court, but no defensive players can hide from their position responsibility and the need to repeat efforts consistently in defending on the ball.
- **Players should be able to play full court man to man defence.** British players must be able to play full court man to man defence. There will be varying time and score situations that arise in a game or during a season or championship event which will demand full court pressure man to man defence.

- **Defence is also “mental” as attitude, discipline and application by players will determine ON-BALL effectiveness.** While defence movement looks for efficiency, the movement sequence is dictated by desire and persistence to get to a position ahead of the offence. It is sprinting repeatedly. Attitude, discipline and application by players are also requirements that will need consideration and scrutiny at the club levels. Club level players should be able to get in a stance; slide and sprint recover to a new stance. This is needed at all age levels and should be practiced through the age groups.
- **Channelling a dribbler is a tactical aspect of ON-BALL defence.** Heading or influencing an offensive player in one direction is considered an aspect of containment defence. Our British style of play demands that we channel the ball towards the sidelines and baselines as our basic team strategy for defence. Funnelling is sometimes used as an interchangeable term. Some defences may base a strategy on funnelling the ball down the middle or towards help defender. However our British priority is to push the dribbler towards sideline and baseline rather than toward the middle of the court when the offence normally will have more options and be closer to the basket. This is a tactical element of ON-BALL defence.
- **Defending the dribble/drive or shot.** All players must have the ability and the competency to be able to defend the dribble and the drive to the basket. This is option number one for offence which therefore is option number one for defence practice and performance in a game. Defending the dribble/drive or shot (i.e. the triple threat) and always contesting the shot is a vitally important capability for ON-BALL defence and are technical and tactical considerations for coaches especially when drilling and scrimmaging.
- **Closing out is part of ON-BALL defence;** and should be coached well. ON-BALL defence often adjusts from an OFF-BALL position or a scramble situation, meaning that positioning in transition and closing out become a precursor for ON-BALL defence. This is a critical test of containment ability. Closing out short (to contain the triple threat) and long (the 3pt shot) and positioning are covered in the OFF-BALL section of the Area of Emphasis.
- **Creating effective “hand pressure” and placement of “active hands” is part of the responsibility for an ON-BALL defender.** ON-BALL defenders should be competent at defending the shot, dribble / drive to the basket and the pass. Defending the shot and or the pass is the next sequence of progression for ON-BALL defence movement. Arms must be bent and relaxed ready to react to any movement. The arms being too straight slows down reaction and limits whole body movement as motion requires a generation of power including arms and hands. The use of hands on balance with a “dig hand” versus dribble, or the “outside hand” in passing lane and “inside hand up” or The key objective of “active hands” is to “attack the ball” with our hands in order to pressure the offence. The arm bar is also a technique which should be understood and used by the defender. It is not solely a bent arm and forearm in the so called arm bar but a use of a straight hard arm to hold the offenders arm as in stopping the use of a crossover hand with the crossover dribble. In using the arms and hands the coach needs to understand that they help balance and movement. Overreaching will affect balance and stance.
- **Contesting the shot.** Often ON-BALL defenders are late to get to a player or misjudge space against a shooter after a close out. Defending the shooter is a tactical consideration for on ball defender. Simply defending the player for the drive or dribble will limit players as they progress through the pathway. Contesting a shot is often a part of the close out and involves active hands to pressure the shot. For ON-BALL defence “Carrying a hand” against shooters, becomes an additional key to individual defence success. The degree and intent for disrupting a shooter is open to discussion but against a very good shooter a hand up will not always be effective. Trying to worry the shooter by putting a hand in their face is one technique. Committing to get a piece of the ball as in a deflection is ultimately required to become effective. A blocked shot would be perfect!
- **Dealing with the ON-BALL screen.** ON-BALL defender will eventually have to deal with being screened. This will occur in a full (front) court and half (back) court situation. The ability and technique to “go over” or “under” a screen as well as being able to go “through” between the screener and your teammate’s position, in the case of the ON-BALL screen, is important. Our defenders must persevere and “go over” as the main option. Consequently they should be coached and encouraged to develop the necessary techniques, attitude and tenacity for going over. Anticipation, preparation, leg over and elbow pull through, as well as

forcing the dribbler up and away from being close to the screener, are techniques which must be explored. Avoiding contact with the screener through being hard to screen by presenting as little a target as possible is also a good technique. Being thin square and in the same plane presents less of a target for the screener. Alternatively if late and trailing if the defender follows close on the furthest hip of the player using the screen once again presents a less target for the screener. Ultimately we want our British player on the ball to be most familiar with the fight to get over individually without having to rely upon help or going under and using these types of techniques

- **Alternative ON-BALL screen options** are circumstantial and should be adopted only as a tactical adjustment. There are several collective ways to defend the ON-BALL screen listed in the Defence master checklist. However the fundamental requirement is for the ON-BALL defender to get over the screen. This is achieved by being aware of the position of the screen and the direction taken by the dribbler. However if the dribbler does use the screen the ON-BALL defender must make every effort in preparation to get over the top of the screen and can be helped by the screen defender using different techniques and principles discussed in the OFF-BALL defence Areas of Emphasis section.
 - The ON-BALL defender can also go through between the screener and the screen defender.
 - Alternatively the on ball defender can go under the screen defender.

The preference and success of each principle is situational. The British philosophy is for the ON-BALL defender to always prepare to go over the screen with help from both the screen defender and the help line defender. The complete ON-BALL screen system of defence including help is discussed in the OFF-BALL defence section.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS WITH ON-BALL DEFENCE?

CHANGE OUR ATTITUDE TO DEFENCE PARTICULARLY ON-BALL DEFENCE.

The discipline to coach and improve ON-BALL defence techniques, movement and tactics is a priority in the physical preparation and coaching of all our players. Every player can master defence and develop a pride of performance to be able to contribute to any team. So the first area for big improvement is a better attitude to defence with a discipline to persist in both effort and technique.

Talented players and teams are normally considered talented by being judged on their offensive skill ability. However judging a player's offensive ability against any defence that does not understand their role and/or the importance of defensive techniques, can give a false impression of one's talent or ability. This is misleading the offensive players ability as any player on offence should dominate when there is this comparative advantage.

We in the United Kingdom get a bit carried away with this comparative success. If the focus of spectators, parents and some coaches is on offence, then these same talented players develop an attitude that defence is a secondary and relatively unimportant perspective. Additionally because the focus is firstly on winning (through offence) the standard of the defence seldom attracts all the spectator and parental attention. This then again reinforces offence as more important than defence. This perspective needs challenging, defence is half the game. More players will be required to defend than score. We need an ON-BALL defensive mindset to raise the value of defence and the real comparative worth of offence at the club level. Applauding and cheering the defensive player who takes a charge should become common place to a defensively orientated team. Is there a greater defensive play that a defender can make?

Finally, with the improved skills of players in Europe, and also the preference to play a dribble drive kick style of play in the half court, it requires our defenders to be better and more rehearsed with ON-BALL defence. The ON-BALL aspect of the ON-BALL screen and roll offence also becomes crucial to

your teams' defence. Containment but more importantly pressure, at the international and higher club levels, require this aspect of ON-BALL movement and pressure to be re-emphasised.

Defence by definition must be containing or restricting, but real defence is a disruptive. It is pressure team defence that restricts or stops the opposition at crucial times and scoring situations. This is a value worth more consideration and education for players, parents and spectators. It all starts with the coach.

UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES AND INTERRELATEDNESS OF "CONTAINMENT" AND "PRESSING" DEFENCE.

Any lessened requirement for defence or expectation to play defence will send the wrong message about the importance of ON-BALL defence. A poor attitude by player and or coach to defence will result in an inability to play good ON-BALL defence. Consequently developing team defence is even harder with the absence of ON-BALL pressure and position. Often ON-BALL defence is interpreted as containing through a passive and sagging ON-BALL position. So called containment (passive) defence aims to capitalise on the offences inabilities and disorganisation. As a result "containment defence" is often defined and interpreted in this context i.e. the ineffectiveness of the offence; rather than the degree of effort and commitment of the defence.

Conversely a "pressing defender" is one who crowds and harasses the offence but still manages containment as well as pressure. Such defence or defender does not over commit or overplay to the extent that the offence penetrates and gets an advantage. There are degrees of pressure which can be created basically through position but also with effective technique and mindset. Any ON-BALL defender can simply contain their player by being in the right position and by using a good technique.

The best ON-BALL defence is one that both contains yet disrupts the offence with pressure through position, and active hands and feet. In the national system this is referred to as "UP" i.e. as up on the ball. Being close in order to limit and pressure the player.

A player can create more pressure through closing the space and position by being closer referred in the national system as "IN". Being "IN" close to the offence forces the offence into one option or pressures towards a turnover.

Finally a defender can sag OFF the ball principally because the offence is no threat. As competition levels increase this is more and less likely but there are times when this position and tactic is helpful. Through not applying pressure with the OFF position the priority is to help other players.

Containment as well as pressure must be generated out of good defensive stance by the ON-BALL defender. It will involve "quick feet" and "hand pressure". During training a coach must be concerned with progressions by increasing the levels of pressure both on the defender and on the offence. ON-BALL defence is critical in establishing defensive supremacy by a team. The ball should be firstly contained and secondly pressured or vice versa depending on your philosophy.

COACH AND DEVELOP A FULL COURT DEFENSIVE MINDSET AND CAPABILITY.

A passive approach to defence, principally due to a lack of ON-BALL defensive pressure at the lower club levels, has arisen because of a passive defence mindset. We must challenge our players in training and games with better ON-BALL defence, and in turn test the individual offensive abilities of our players particularly the use of the dribble and pass against pressure.

Better ON-BALL defence will improve our offence and our skills. By better coaching defence, particularly extending the pickup point from half to full or three quarter court, we create a more challenging environment to coach, learn and master.

ON-BALL defensive movement includes judging spacing between the offensive player and the ON-BALL defender while moving. Players are required to learn to judge the distance that best creates pressure and containment. As such, a player on defence must “think” and anticipate movement in order to stop their opponent. Spacing and positioning is also critical for success and is not a natural instinct or technique. The full court scenario and mindset helps develop this.

Practicing defence with a shot clock will encourage more effort and become more realistic regarding the level of containment and pressure. As well as using the shot clock, if we take practice or game stats through charting deflections and taking the charge, we can monitor individual defensive effort. Working breakdown drills in the full court will also increase pressure for the ON-BALL defender and increase effort and pressure to perform at the junior level.

Physically and mentally, defence is a deliberate, learned physical movement with a positive attitude. It demands application, commitment, discipline and development of character in our players and full court training will definitely challenge the physical and mental aspects that are needed for each and every player at all levels

ROUTINELY PROVIDE MORE ONE-ON-ONE DRILL SITUATIONS IN TRAINING SESSIONS.

Once dribble proficiency has been established we need to create more one-on-one scrimmage or constrained drill situation for our young players’ development. This means U12’s, U14’s and U16’s should have one-on-one situations in every training session in an effort to not only improve ON-BALL defence, but to help improve offence capability and creativity once the defence is able to contain the offence. Player at this level would be given opportunity to practice and develop the Basic skills and key offensive and defensive skills and techniques. One on One play, small number scrimmages and scrimmages generally allow players to develop through play.

In one-on-one the stance, the lateral power step, positioning, the use of the drop step, hand positioning effort, persistence, contesting the shot and rebounding are all required. These can all be assessed and feedback offered to develop best effort including technique by the defensive player. The degree of ball pressure, disruption, spacing and positioning can also be coached well in this situation. Coaches can find the best fit for each ON-BALL defender whether it’s an UP, IN or OFF spacing and positioning for the on ball defender.

LATERAL MOVEMENT TECHNIQUE

The “power step” is the national system’s preferred technique instead of a sliding action. The power step goes from big low defence stance to a bigger (but not an ineffective over stride movement) back into a low big defensive stance. It is a lateral step not a slide. It involves a push pull action with a push off the weight on the pads of the ball of the foot while the toes of the feet are facing the opponent. The pull action comes simultaneously with the push action and is essentially the upper body movement of arms and hands in aid of a quick movement much like a sprinter uses the upper body to help propulsion. Lateral defensive movement is relative to position but the back of the defender will always to the basket as the ball and basket position is maintained.

Therefore the key lateral movement for the ON-BALL defender is defensive stance, power step, and defensive stance with this push pull action. The drop step is to be avoided in the national system as we seek to optimise ON-BALL pressure.

While it is likely that players will be beaten off the dribble the defenders intent should be to always try and cut the dribbler off by stepping across rather than drop stepping and opening up the driving lane by presenting one foot higher than the other. The drop step or giving up a square position to the offence presents an opportunity for the offence to attack the high foot on the defenders backside giving the dribbler the advantage. So staying square and adjusting the defensive position relative to the offence being front on or side on is what will determine effectiveness on ball.

Spacing and proximity to the offensive player should be considered in determining the lateral slide or power step to cut off rather than the drop step. Being too close (within one step) gives the advantage

to the dribbler to turn the corner and hook the defender. If the defender is in good position but pressuring (approx 1.5 to 2 steps) then the drop step can be avoided and the power step can be used.

When sagging off (greater than 2 steps) the defender will probably be sliding or stepping and consistently drop stepping to shadow the player as they change direction. When the defender is "OFF", ball pressure is not preferred as containment would be the priority. Normally the drop step means you have given up contesting by being square and as such are most like to begin running to re-establish position for your next stance.

For the national system the defensive stance and the power step remains consistent as does the ball and basket positioning. As the offensive player turns side on or partly side on to dribble the defender must maintain the same low stance and check their positioning as either nose to chest (for front on) or nose to shoulder for side on positioning by the offence and with the correct spacing (normally 1.5 to 2 steps) that allows the defender to create pressure.

CREATING EFFECTIVE "HAND PRESSURE"

ON-BALL defenders should be competent at defending the shot, dribble / drive to the basket and the pass. Defending the shot and or the pass is the next sequence of progression for ON-BALL defence movement. When the defensive stance is the hands should be carried as an aid for movement and also to get to the ball. The hand placement on balance is with a "dig hand" versus dribble, or the "outside hand" in passing lane and "inside hand up". The key objective is to "attack the ball" with our hands in order to pressure the offence. The arm bar is also a technique which should be understood and used by the defender in certain situations.

The National system will carry the inside hand (to the split line). The inside hand will alternate between being the dig hand for crossover dribbles to the middle and also to raise and pressure the shot, The outside hand will apply pressure and contest the passing lane. The defenders Left hand covers the offensive players right hand and vice versa. As the offensive player moves the ball when being ball quick from hip to hip the defenders hands will trace and indeed follow the path of the ball. There is a secondary or opportunistic use of the hands which are specific to what the offensive player presents. This is the essence of hand pressure.

On dead ball situations the hands are gathered together so the outside hand quickly joins the inside carried hand and together they will trace the ball. Body position and space changes as the gap between the defender and the offensive player will close from UP to IN but the stance must be retained to cover the offences attack foot.

Contesting a shot is often a part of the close out and involves active hands to pressure the shot. The close out is covered in the OFF-BALL section of the Areas of Emphasis. Trying to worry the shooter by putting a hand in their face is one technique. Depending on the close out and speed for balance (long or short) a hand should be carried and once the shooter is in their action the defender should be committing to get a piece of the ball as in a deflection but block out as part of there on ball responsibility.

WHAT THE COACHES ARE SAYING

"Defence is physical movement with a positive attitude. It demands discipline and the development of character through perseverance in our British players."

Chris Finch, GB Men's Coach

"Defence by its nature must be containing, but real defence is a disruptive, pressure team defence that restricts or stops the opposition in both the time to perform and to score."

Tom Maher, GB Women's Coach

"Perfect defence is defence that doesn't require help. Each player has stopped their man, meaning the ON-BALL defender was dominant through containment and getting the stop."

Warwick Cann, British Basketball Head of Performance

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

- From a co-ordinated team defensive system standpoint, we will use the overall defensive philosophy of forcing the ball away from the danger zone i.e. the key or basket. This means we are influencing the ball away from the basket towards the sideline and baseline. We are trying to deny penetration into this area by means of good ON-BALL defensive stance and quick lateral abilities.
- The principle of “channelling” or “funnelling” the dribbler towards a sideline will be a key tactic for containment provided that pressure is ultimately applied correctly.
- Good stance, slide, run, slide needs to be emphasised and drilled for footwork and movement mastery in all development and representative teams.
- The technique of foot positioning is slightly staggered in favour of the inside foot as the higher placed foot.
- National teams and representative regional teams will practice and play full court man to man defence, extending into run and jump rotations once the concepts are understood.
- ON-BALL defence will be coached in how to recover (i.e. shoulder to shoulder) until offence can be contained for the second time, once the defender has dropped to the line of the ball (ON-BALL transition defence).
- All development programs will concentrate on coaching closing out footwork and positioning as part of ON-BALL defence (from an OFF-BALL help closeout position).
- Closing out is directed with the principle “nose to high shoulder” to cover the immediate middle penetration.
- Defending the three point shot not only demands hand pressure to “worry the shooter” but also involves a rethink on positioning with closer proximity to the perimeter shooter giving less help, more hedge and recover and only giving help when the ON-BALL defender is beaten.
- We must eliminate “over help” or “premature anticipation” which will leave the three point shooter open. There will also be a need to “close out long” against the three point shooter once the shooter commits to the shot.
- Contesting a shot is often a part of the close out and involves active hands to pressure the shot. For ON-BALL defence “Carrying a hand” against shooters becomes an additional key to individual defence success. Committing to get a piece of the ball as in a deflection is ultimately required to become effective.
- When defending the pick and roll the general rule is for the ON-BALL defender to firstly disrupt and push dribbler higher and then go OVER the screen, with the screen defender being active and disruptive against the screener and the dribbler.
- Ultimately we want our British player on the ball to be most familiar with the fight to get over individually without having to rely upon help or going under.
- Emphasising a low defensive stance and slide with a “big bigger” step or “push off the inside of the foot”. The cue for a low stance and feet positioning is “feet between feet”.
- Our ON-BALL positioning is two steps (or two arms length) off the offensive player when defending the initial drive threat. After establishing this position the defender will then close the gap to one step off (an arm and half away) from the offensive player or vice versa to achieve containment.
- When defending the baseline dribble drive (along the baseline) closing out should end in a ‘square’ stance (but with one high foot staggered slightly), limiting the ability for easy baseline penetration. This is done through shading the player to the baseline but being ready to cut the baseline drive off once the offence commits, rather than allowing middle penetration.
- In defending the “side penetration” drive (through the side of the keyway) establish stance with high foot staggered up (or foot closest the middle of the court) but square shoulders or

chest facing the ball (i.e. parallel to sideline) and tactically influencing the ball towards sideline and baseline.

- In defending the middle penetration (through the free throw line) adopt the normal defensive stance and use lateral movement to angle and influence penetration towards sideline, away from the free throw area, resulting in forcing the dribbler wider and less directly to the middle. Playing middle foot higher to influence; cutting the dribbler off and sending back to their originating side.
- Playing or scrimmaging from three quarter court rather than quarter court to specifically place the ON-BALL defender in a position where more pressure can be put on the guards dribble, and done more regularly.
- More full court drilling 1 versus 1, full court, three quarter court, half court, quarter court to emphasise positioning and movement when drilling ON-BALL defence.
- The principle of overplaying or shading the offensive player by adopting an overplay position or “nose to shoulder” position must be understood by all British junior players. Alternatively, complete denial of the dribble to one side is achieved through being in a position with “head over the ball” as a further overplay position.
- Playing a player “straight up” recognises a player has the ability to go left and right, so by playing “nose to chest” the good dribbler can be matched or neutralised by a good defender. Our British players must understand the tactic and associate positioning on the ball for “overplaying” and playing “straight up”.
- Pressure defence is defence using the time restrictions (clock) and other violations to the defence’s advantage. Use a clock when training and particularly when drilling defence. Success in stopping a team is through shot clock violations or 8 second backcourt or 5 second held ball.
- Anticipation, preparation, leg over and elbow pull through, as well as forcing the dribbler up and away from being close to the screener, are techniques which must be explored as ON-BALL defence technique against the ON-BALL screen.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLUBS

- Ensure players are taught defensive footwork and how to defend the dribbler with correct positioning of feet, body and hands, to pressure but contain.
- Refer to the basic skills checklists for the basic ON-BALL defence footwork and movement.
- Drill more in the full court to give ON-BALL defenders more practice and to highlight the competencies needed by both offence and defence.
- Rather than start half or quarter court drills around the three point line, start offences and drills over the half way or in three quarter court.
- Commit to all teams being able to play effective full court and half court man to man as their primary defence as a challenge to develop our British players ON-BALL defence capability. However pressing full court in junior levels when the margin in the game is wide is usually counterproductive. This is particularly at the U12 and U14 levels. As a general rule for when to stop with a dominant full court man to man defence which the opposition is incapable of outplaying is 20 points. Hopefully our British coaches will know when too much is too much. Full court man to man is best tested against the best teams not the worst.
- Drill and scrimmage full court man to man defence with our juniors and youth players extending into run and jump rotations.
- Playing full court man to man defence is good for team and individual development.
- ON-BALL defence is critical in establishing defensive supremacy by a team. The ball should be firstly contained and secondly pressured or vice versa depending on your philosophy.

- Attitude, discipline and application by players are also requirements that will need consideration and scrutiny at the club levels.
- Club level players should be able to get in a stance; slide and sprint recover to a new stance. This is needed at all age levels and should be practiced through the age groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHES

- Re-introduce ‘zig zag’ type drills (defending the change of direction effectively in restricted corridors of the court). Using combinations of stance, slide, run, slide etc. Extend this to more full court one on one drilling that is competitive.
- Play and drill more one on one particularly at the U12, U14 and U16 level.
- Coach and drill ON-BALL containment of the dribbler and build ON-BALL pressure through better positioning and use of the hands to create pressure. The objective is not to foul in the act of defending with our hands, so the balance between attacking and pressuring but not conceding hands fouls is crucial to ultimate team defensive pressure.
- Create a training environment where defence is important and where the first step in developing good team defence is through good coaching of ON-BALL defence movement footwork and position.
- Drill in the extended court (three quarter and full court) when working on defence.
- Start all scrimmages with a good triple threat offensive position and drive threat. Then correct ON-BALL defence stance and positioning. This will establish a more solid platform for team defence, as hedge and help and the necessary rotations and recovery can also then be explored and developed.
- Closer focus on individual spacing between the offence and the defence (i.e. being able to defend the first step in order to contain). One arms length, one and a half or two steps off the live ball offensive player who wants to dribble.
- Coach footwork and hand positioning for the ON-BALL defender.
- Understand team man to man defence and how to break it down for coaching purposes to players.
- Ensure your team plays man to man defence as its primary defence and that your team has the knowledge and capability and confidence to play full court man to man.
- Anticipation, preparation, leg over and elbow pull through, as well as forcing the dribbler up and away from being close to the screener, are techniques which must be explored as ON-BALL defence technique against the ON-BALL screen.
- Attitude, discipline and application by players are also requirements that will need consideration and scrutiny at the club levels. Club level players should be able to get in a stance, then slide or power step and sprint recover to a new stance. This is needed at all age levels and should be practiced through the age groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Play man to man defence building towards the club guidelines. Do not play zone defence as your team’s primary defence.
- Understand that full court man to man defence can be an extended defence for containment through use of the shot clock, or alternatively a pressing full court man to man defence for stops.
- Coach and encourage correct ON-BALL position and stance (refer to coaches and club recommendations).
- Encourage man to man defence rather than zone defence.



Areas of Emphasis

SHOOTING

- Create more time in training dedicated to shooting and regular testing
- Practice shooting within game situations
- Practice under pressure
- Use the Free throw to help develop shooting form
- Develop a variety of finishing moves close to the basket

WHY EMPHASISE SHOOTING?

Shooting is the key basic skill and it is an individual skill which all players of all ages and standards should master over time. Any player who is dedicated and enjoys the game craves the ability to shoot well and deserves to be shown how to shoot the ball correctly and to be successful in practicing the skill. It is also a skill where players will have some aspect of technique acquired but which often need remediation or continued development. These driving perspectives mean that how to best teach shooting as a skill should be understood.

Shooting as a skill requires coaches to be knowledgeable but effective in helping all players of all standards to shoot the ball with an effective technique. Coaches of the younger age groups are most important. Any coach who specialises in the younger age groups should become a master of teaching and coaching good shooting technique and have the ability to progress the development over a two or three year period.

The more the game grows and new clubs or teams are formed regularly in the National leagues competitions the more the demands will continue to be on coaching. Unfortunately this growth via new teams is often independent of an established club and consequently without support of experienced coaching knowledge which can assist the new entry level coach.

The lack of coaching expertise accompanying the expansion of these teams further complicates the coaching of shooting; as more players enter the pathway yet more will have poor technique and understanding. Coaches from various levels within a club maybe able to help assist or mentor the novice or inexperienced coach in teaching shooting correctly to the younger participants. However the existing club structure or national league team structure often negates the opportunity for guest coaches or coaches active in the same club or from another club to help out with coaching.

Poor Coaching and learning ultimately develops into poor shooting technique. Players also have little understanding of the basic principles that are necessary to improve and develop shooting when inevitably practicing by themselves.

Unfortunately clubs often appoint less experienced coaches to the youngest ages and as a consequence the relatively inexperienced coach doesn't have the necessary competency level to coach shooting to the level that a beginner or young player deserves. Consequently the younger player (U10, U12 or U14) does not receive the best coaching that they need at the crucial beginning stage when the acquisition of skill is most important.

Consequently coaches at the U16 and U18 level often have players joining the sport late or progressing with a poor basic skill base or a very limited training age. This then requires older junior age group coaches to also be effective coaches of shooting at a time when they may want to concentrate on preparing a team or be overly focused on winning games rather than skilling players. All coaches should become proficient in the coaching of shooting to beginners and developing players. It is the key basic skill for the lifetime of enjoyment of the game. However coaches have different challenges and consideration at each of the age levels in terms of learning style readiness and communication which means that coaches need to vary their teaching and coaching approach when teaching shooting.

Often as coaches we look at the player's inability as being the main reason for lack of success. We attribute failure to learn with the individual rather than being reflective and analytical of our own teaching

and coaching competency in aiding learning. This perspective is apparent in the current coaching of shooting in the UK.

Currently we do not have any age benchmarks for shooting to know if we are improving.

The Curriculum Driver Group has also identified that “finishing” or “close in” shooting is a weakness.

The shooting percentages of our national junior teams are lower than our competitors. For example in junior women’s basketball the winning teams at European B in 2008 and 2009 shot at a 2 point shooting average of 47.3% compared to the substantially lower 38.6 % for our home nations teams.

The top average team 2 point shooting percentage at the 2008 and 2009 Championships stood at 54.6% and 46.8% respectively with 21 teams averaging above 40% during the two tournaments. The top average team 3 point shooting percentage at the same Championships stood at 36.8 and 33.9 % compared to a significantly lower 30.9 by the home nations.

In the junior men comparison the difference is again 9% with two point shots in favour of the European champions Let’s not forget, these targets are not static. All countries will be reflecting on their performances and challenging their players to raise their standards further. The bar will continue to rise!

If we are to consider ourselves a potential Division A nation then we must pay attention to the technique, methods of practice and results of the way shooting is taught within the GB framework. Shooting and accuracy must improve.

In the modern game shooting has become critical to team success. With big, athletic players blocking the path to the hoop and clogging the key, it is imperative that teams are able to stretch the defence, forcing them to cover more territory. As the three points line moves further away from the basket from 6.25 metres to 6.75 metres, the impending FIBA rule changes will place greater value of three point shooting accuracy. Additionally, “finishing” or scoring in the key against pressure has been a weakness.

Strategically for a specialising player progressing through the pathway it is most likely that coaching shooting will involve different coaches interacting with the same player as they progress through the pathway. Making sure that the club, school national pathway coaches are all on the same page using the same progressions and key points of emphasis is important so we have not wasted the little time in coaching that we have. Minimising duplication, removing conflicting advice and improving communication all take time so in teaching shooting to our emerging talent we need to get on the same page.

It effectively is about a longer term approach to skills acquisition in developing shooting over time and prioritising a review of how we coach and develop shooting and how given our environment we encourage and establish an attitude and discipline to improve shooting with all level of players.

The reality is some players will be more driven to develop their shooting skill at an earlier age and some coaches will be better at teaching coaching and developing a players shooting at different levels. These considerations present us with challenges to address the coaching of shooting to the next generation of players towards 2016 and beyond.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS?

The scope of shooting for these Areas of Emphasis could be too wide as there is so much more to technically improving shooting than just the elements that form the technique of each players shooting.

While it is the technical skill of shooting that is a focus, it is actually the teaching and coaching of shooting that is our major area of emphasis.

Knowing the “how” of coaching layups, free throws, set shots and then jump shots from close to mid range to three point territory is what must improve in order for shooting to become better for our players, and being creative yet disciplined in our planning and training for shooting. This, rather than the science and knowledge associated with shooting, is the reason we have emphasised shooting as an Area of Emphasis. However we must confirm the technique as part of that process.

TECHNIQUE: (I.E. THE PROCEDURE, SKILL, OR ART USED IN A SPECIFIC TASK OR SKILL)

Shooting is a skill which should be coached fundamentally well for correct technique at U10, U12 and U14 levels. It is a skill which requires underpinning physical movements and principles which will require dedicated hours of extra practice. The national system needs to seek those who have the ability to coach shooting well so that other coaches can learn to expedite an improvement with shooting.

The advanced technical skills for shooting are covered under the Offense section of these Areas of Emphasis guidelines and as a part of individual offence master checklists. A further reference to the Areas of Emphasis physical and the footwork and movement sections are also related to this shooting section with regard to the technical aspects of shooting.

For our purposes in this technical discussion it is a skill which requires technique in stance and then in combination with movement and footwork as a running layup and then a catch, pivot and shot.

Technically the basic technique and the rhythm for shooting skill starts from the basis of a set shot and progresses into a jump shot. Initially this is as a stationary set shot preferably as a free throw then over time progresses to a jump shot technique, hopefully successfully from the three point range for all our players at whatever level of competition. Women and men have different physiology resulting in variations of techniques and some body mechanics. Whether it's a set shot or a jump shot technically the legs, the bend and stance (posture) are most important for power and are the key principle for generating power and trajectory.

Secondly understanding that shooting is basically a one handed shot but we use two hands to hold it will help the technical understanding of the function and action of the shot. If it's basically a one handed action then that action is best to occur to the preferred shooting hand side.

Finally an up and above the ring trajectory is required, not an out or at the basket action as so often occurs because of poor mechanics. Best trajectory comes from a good stance, bent elbow lift and lock followed with a wrist snap with one finger going through the ball as the last touch.

An efficient shoot will require

- Balance, through a good triple threat stance to start the one action movement
- Vision of the target with head and chin up in preparation of the right elevation of the shot into the ring.
- Holding the ball with hands in the correct position. The holding hand to the side of the ball and the shooting hand with a cocked wrist under the ball.
- Ensuring the ball is held to the line of the shoulder of the preferred shooting side through establishing the shooters pocket.
- Elbow positioning is under the ball and also under the wrist and culminating in a lift of the ball to above the eye line (locked elbow). This is an important lift principle when combined with a knee bend through an effective squat. This is the combined movement for power.
- A good single hand follow-through technique (as high as possible), culminating in a high hand and wrist snap with index and or middle fingers moving through the middle of the ball to create backspin and a soft release.
- The wrist snap with the elbow lock and the line of the ball to the shoulder will determine the accuracy of the line of the shot to the ring.

The shooting action is premised on correct stance and hand positioning to ensure the efficiency of the overall shooting movement as it generates from the position of feet to the last touch of the shooting hands fingers. Whilst it is initially a sequence of movement by parts of the body, the goal is to have a seamless continuous movement or action from feet to follow through. It will require correct hand positioning on the ball so that it can be held with two hands but effectively shot with one hand and on one side of the body.

Ultimately the whole action must be a single smooth movement with power generated through the legs and with a high wrist release of the ball to guarantee elevation and best chance for success.

While it is a single skill it involves the kinetic chain of the body starting from the feet, through the legs and hips, and ultimately the elbow and shoulder joints culminating with a snap of the shooting hand wrist with one main finger flicking through the ball.

This means that every joint is involved with the movement pattern of the shot. This highlights the need for understanding to establish the sequence and chain of movement that combine to determine the final technique. Understanding that this chain of shooting movement is interdependent and that each stage can be broken down for coaching or for focus for any analysis is also very important.

HOW TO TRAIN

Coaches on the performance pathway should be regularly testing and recording shooting results and their coaching. Shooting requires a '50-week' mentality; any short cuts are proved to be unsustainable and lead to lower percentages with low level performance ceilings. Coaches must encourage the involvement of every player during the process of development – allowing all players to play on the inside and the perimeter from a young age and encouraging later specialisation in positions/roles at a late stage. We must be encouraging players to shoot the ball! Particularly from the perimeter, and have a patient approach towards the relevance of success at different age groups and stages of improvement.

TIME AND PRESSURE

Shooting must be performed relatively quickly as a combined single movement from feet to follow-through and in varying circumstances which can affect judgement and timing by the shooter. So building the execution from technique without conditions to a condition of timing is an important technical and learning aspect. In coaching shooting for form a player can in effect; shoot the ball too slowly in the attempt at establishing a method. They can become too slow through the shot and lose any generation of power, in effect losing the rhythm of the shot. Players need to get a feel for the shot; this is to do with timing.

As players progress and develop their shooting technique they need to be able to shoot under pressure or in game like situations as discussed in the previous section. Once again the main technical point is that the gather on the catch of the ball needs to get the ball into the shooting pocket quickly, after good foot preparation, and then get the shot finished efficiently but effectively. We should start with a three count to establish and get a shot away at the higher levels. In the NBA reported by ESPN Ray Allen's 3pt jumps shot takes about .73 of a second. There is no doubt that there is a certain amount of time that it should take to get ready and to complete a shot and that this should become progressively quicker eliminating wasted preparation movement will improve the time taken to get a shot away but we should also recognise that the actual shot needs to be relatively quick. This can be a speed verses accuracy conflict, but all shooters continuing on the pathway should be aware and able to get a shot off quickly with good technique.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS?

Obviously the amount of time allocated to shooting and the drive and ability of each player in the pathway will determine success. Knowing all our coaches can coach shooting as a skill to all levels becomes a key driver in the rationale behind making shooting one of our Areas of Emphasis.

Turning a weakness into strength is not easy. The national system will have to be the leaders on this front but essentially club coaches face the greatest responsibility because they at least in theory of the most time throughout a year with the player. Shooting is a skill that will take time and dedication. It is a skill where confidence must be instilled to create a positive attitude to being successful through failure. The coach will also need a positive attitude to acknowledge that they may have to retrain themselves in the coaching of shooting.

Just as we suggest all players should practice shooting in their own time, we as coaches must ensure that we are well planned not wasting training time, and always creating an environment where shooting is coached well and encouraged. Quantifying the shots to be attempted and made is an important aspect of coaches planning.

While access to courts and extra individual training, player modelling and basketball culture are all considerations in the development of shooting ability, it's the inconsistency and failure to establish the basics of good shooting form or a consistent approach to help coaches that is most alarming. While these reasons maybe contributing to our possible collective failure, it does give us an opportunity to reflect on the current practices of shooting across the country, and through these areas of emphasis correct and possibly standardise a more consistent approach to coaching our youngest club level players as they set out on the pathway. It is also about recognising a coaching weakness and where we need to go back and learn or modify our coaching approach.

Improving the coach education and development system at multiple levels will also then improve coach shooting development. Personal development plans are important for coaches to develop. Shooting is

probably the one skill that is constantly in the plan. Like all coaching the skills, principles and understanding also takes time for coaches to develop this competency. It commences with education at courses and then a period of self development activities. The challenge in coaching shooting is that there are numerous but effective techniques and often there is some reluctance to modify or change the bad habits that a player may have. We should become experienced as skill coaches to know when this line should be crossed.

Finally, sometimes less is more. Shooting is one skill which can result in “paralysis by analysis” through trying to pass on too much information to the player or breaking down into parts only to never be able to put them back together successfully.

Understanding that shooting is more about the sum of the parts is one way to approach our coaching of shooting. Identifying key limiting factors to do with the one shot movement will lead to greatest improvement in the shortest amount of time.

ALL LEVEL OF COACHES BECOME MORE PROFICIENT AND COMPETENT IN COACHING SHOOTING

We must ensure that all coaches, particularly at the youngest age levels, become well versed in “how” to teach and coach shooting to beginners, to younger players aged 10 to 15 years, or late beginners and how much time to spend in a team training session on shooting.

Our tutors of our various education courses must ensure that layups and free throw technique coaching methods are well covered in the level 1 and level 2 coaching courses. While it is a theoretical exercise, if there was one of the basic skills that you would coach solely in training what would it be?

Our coaching must go from knowledge based about shooting, to establishing best practice for teaching and developing shooting technique. If our coaching course approach to educating coaches has been limited then should be reviewed to ensure that the coaching of shooting to beginners and “sampling” players is appropriate so that “continuing” and “specialising” players don’t start with bad habits.

Coaches should also seek out successful coaches of shooting and learn from the better practitioners as practice effective coaching methods for the elements of shooting. There are many possibilities on the internet for learning how to best coach shooting

Clubs with multiple age groups should organise their clubs so that the teaching of shooting is not left to novice coaches but is systematically addressed across age groups by allowing experienced or good teachers of shooting to lead and share their knowledge to all coaches in the club. Skills sessions rather than team preparation sessions should be established at a time when the senior shooting coach can attend and help the youngest. Special days for extra shooting are also another possibility for consideration. Shooting is that important that we must look at additional options and strategies to not only learn but to practice. This is very important at the U12, U14 and U16 levels.

Our APC’s (Area Performance Centres) and TDP’s (Talent Development Programmes) are our quality control mechanisms for ensuring that the how to coach shooting is available to all club level coaches should they seek it. Our National development programmes must become the home of best practice shooting. Clubs and development programmes at the U12, U13, U14 and U15 levels must become the hot bed for coaching shooting. Each of these programmes should coach shooting well, provide regular progressive drills and individual time where each and all players can shoot from the most appropriate

distance is that can best develop their technique. Coaches should always be providing encouragement and feedback and where possible use video to help the individual progress.

Encouraging players to practice the most appropriate shooting component, shot or distance is also important in that practice will be required once technique is acquired. So home shooting programmes, between programme sessions is equally important. Parents should be encouraged to put a backboard and ring on a wall or in a space at the family home if it is possible. Schools should be encouraged to allow players to shoot the basketball before after or during school time on available rings. Improved teaching of shooting technique including better technical coaching points and improved methods will result in better shooting.

PLAN FOR INDIVIDUAL SHOOTING TIME AT TEAM TRAINING SESSIONS

Understanding how to plan for shooting practice should not be underestimated in importance. Often shooting becomes a drill that the team participates in rather than an individual session where the player can progress from stage to stage in search of competency. Determine the best organisation to get maximum shots up for all players are the challenge.

How shooting is coached and taught as a skill is a different aspect to how it is trained as an individual skill or as part of a team training session. How shooting is scheduled through the season also becomes important ensuring that there is time for individual appropriate practice before during and after training become important if the coach is important to the player's progress.

Often there is an early arrival time before training commences. Convincing your players that they will be better served through practicing the shots they are most likely to get in a game is one way of maximising the players time with shooting. Having disciplined routines as an early arrival or first part of any training session can be a way of finding an extra 10 minutes for appropriate individual shooting practice.

Encouragement of all players, regardless of height or position, to develop their shooting from mid to long range is also an important in planning and providing for shooting.

Once a shooting technique is acquired the need to practice becomes self evident. Determine how much practice is need is also important. Can a player take and or make 200 shots a day? Is that enough? Some would say for a specialising player 1000 shots a day is the norm. Making shots is also the key. So a player in extra time or in team training needs to consider making between 100 and 500 shots from a designated range a day. Knowing how many shots are taken and made at training over a season will help players to become better shooters.

USE VISUAL DEMONSTRATIONS AND VIDEO FOR VISUAL FEEDBACK

The use of players who have good technique at the same age level should be used as demonstrators rather than the coach. Players will learn shooting technique through all the mediums. Hearing, but more importantly seeing, is very important. So demonstrations, taking video of the player and showing the techniques are good methods for coaching shooting. Too often we talk about the science underpinning shooting rather than show it. Players have different learning styles and a reliance on the verbal is limiting.

PLAYERS WILL NEED TO PRACTICE INDIVIDUALLY TO GET BETTER AT SHOOTING

The discipline of shooting is essentially practice. If a player is limited in the time for shooting within the team training session then they must seek other alternatives in order to get better. This needs to be reinforced for all our junior age players. Parents must also be made aware that this individual skill will not simply evolve and develop naturally without added deliberate extra practice. Players overseas have backboards in the backyards. They have playgrounds they seek out in the summer time which doubles as the off season and a great opportunity to improve shooting. We need to consider having a backboard and ring at home if possible. Access to courts for practice is important and recognising that if a young player wants to be successful they will have to seek out venues to practice.

Too often the player comes to training early, gets a ball, then heaves it from as far out as they can in the hope that luck favours them, rather than have the discipline to go in close and master the close range shot. It takes discipline to starting inside the key way with layups and basic low post moves.

USE THE FREE THROW AREA TO TEACH SHOOTING FORM

Practice of the free throw is all important. Coaches need to take advantage of free throw practice for teaching shooting form. It is a great spot to watch players shoot, observe video and provide feedback.

Solid form and repeatable technique are available to every player in the pathway from APCs, TDPs to regional development programmes. Unfortunately as coaches we often look to gimmick or part techniques to teach shooting. The trouble with shooting for the wall or onto a line or lying on a back and shooting the ball into the air are examples of breakdown drills meant to help develop shooting. While some of these have merit for beginners the reality is that shooting is an actual skill with a specific outcome which remains the best way to actually practice to improve.

The first shooting situation requiring more consistent technique is the free throw. This is a form shot with little complication. For our youngest players we should start in front of the rim and gradually work our way back towards the free throw line. Progression backwards to the free throw line must be based on success.

Once the set shot is established as a free throw or set shot, the catch to shoot is then introduced from the same ranges as success has been achieved. If the shot goes in at a good percentage then distance can be increased. As the shot is established and developed for consistency it is then combined with the dribble as part of the players individual skills tool kit. This is best recognised as triple threat start stance to dribble to jump stop into a second triple threat stance ready to shoot the ball from the successful distance. The stride stop into triple threat for balance can also be exchanged for the jump stop as development progresses.

THE SWISH IS THE OUTCOME

When we achieve a swish a number of things have been done well. The rhythm of the shot will be good if there is a consistent swish as an outcome. The kinetic chain and all the technical elements can be considered to be in sequence if the swish occurs. If we don't get the swish we can analyse why. Short, to the left, right, back left. All these outcomes help us pinpoint probable causes and possible corrections or solutions. It also demands the best quality effort in all shots from our players. Benchmarking of the swish as more important than the ball simply going in after bouncing off the rim, it gives a better clarity and focus on quality of the outcome of the shot.

Often at the earliest stage some short range shots are considered too easy for the player. By demanding that we achieve three consecutive swishes we are demanding concentration for even the perceived easiest of shots. This principle of *the swish* being an indicator of success in shooting is very important in raising the bar. It will become our new benchmark for the national system with shooting.

Hopefully it will encourage players to concentrate more with their shooting and to seek higher standards than at present.

MEASURE AND TEST SHOOTING ACCURACY TO IMPROVE PERCENTAGES

The National shooting tests have been developed to help us measure our players shooting ability. Coaches can become preoccupied with just shooting rather than the success level. Shooting demands accuracy and accuracy demands practice and accountability with discipline from the shooter. While the aim is to develop each player's shooting skill, through acquiring good technique the motivation to practice more shots is a key strategy for longer term improvement. Children want to compete or test themselves so the national shooting tests become a key stagey for judging improvement and hopefully encouraging more deliberate practice of shooting. Often the requirement for accuracy becomes lost in our desire to get shots up or to coach shooting form. Focusing on process leads to better outcomes. However shooting is one skill where a player can judge for themselves on their success. It is not coach dependent in determining success. Often the young player can become too focused on what the coach is saying and in trying to please the coach that the ultimate outcome can be forgotten. Coaches must let players discover for themselves but guide this discovery for finding a suitable shooting technique. It is no good if a shot looks good but never drops. There is food for thought for the coach in terms of feedback and analysis, but the goal is to make the basket regularly as judged by percentages and game like pressures. We must remember this.

The national shooting test has tests for layups, free throws, mid range shooting, one dribble jump shots from medium range and some there point shooting tests. Knowing which one is appropriate to the stage of development of your players is important; not only to get accurate measurement of progress, but to also instil confidence, not destroy it through requiring an inappropriate testing at level.

HERE'S WHAT COACHES ARE SAYING:

"I believe that anyone can be taught to shoot the basketball. Shooting with good form and rhythm close to the basket, and utilising the "whole - part – whole" teaching process, are critical to helping a player develop confidence in their shot. Eventually all shots must be executed at "game speed", on balance and with correct mechanics. At the GB level, we want players who can "catch and shoot" as well as "pull up" at high speed off the dribble, and these shots must come from both long range and mid range.

Ken Shields, GB Senior Women's Assistant Coach

"Perimeter shooting is an exact science. It operates on straight lines and precise trajectory. Because of the accuracy required every mechanical movement within the shot must have a particular timing, be fundamentally sound, quick to the shot and quick to the release. Each error in the design of the shot will increase the inaccuracy as the distance increases. The worse the technique, the more practice is required to correct it.

Jimmy Guymon, GB U20 Men's Assistant Coach

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHING SHOOTING:

Shooting is also a skill that requires a combination of skills. Firstly it must be taught as single individual skill before it is then combined with catching and dribbling.

SHOOTING TECHNIQUE AND FORM (INCLUDING FOOTWORK, BALANCE AND STANCE)

- **Technique (form)** – Time must be spent teaching and reinforcing technique at **every** practice. We must be utilising best practice coaching processes such as progressions from learning speed to game speed; the whole-part-whole method; peer-to-peer feedback; and the use of questioning. Using good demonstrators as guides for replication as well as filming any action and provide the player with visual feedback.
- **Footwork and early preparation** – using the stride (one-two) stop and the jump (two foot) stop (teaching the appropriate time to use each of these techniques with an emphasis on executing the skill quickly); catch and shoot – body low and providing a target hand early; off the dribble – body low and finishing a drive with one hard dribble before pulling up for the shot. Players must have the ability to take short and long steps into the shot and be quick to make adjustments of their feet so they are able to shoot from a steady platform with accuracy and power.
- **Footwork for shooting checklist**
 - The footwork (including balance, stance, and posture) and early preparation are required before shooting the ball.
 - Stepping into a shot is important for balance mechanics rhythm and power (i.e. plant left foot for right hand shooter).

- Pivoting (forward) into a shot going both directions and using inside foot is a key focus for catching and shooting.
- Pivoting (reverse) using the outside foot to create an individual offense move that will require a jump shot or drive and layup or pull up off a dribble.
- Leading (moving) with good target hands into catch to shoot with correct footwork detail (i.e. inside and outside foot going both directions).
- Once shooting technique has been acquired to a suitable refinement stage then the (triple threat) shot fake, one dribble jump shot with correct footwork (i.e. stepping and pivoting into shot) is important for individual offense.
- All individual players in the nation system should understand how to train, including training intensities, monitoring and recording.

FORM SHOOTING CAN BE A FORM OF “PARALYSIS BY ANALYSIS”

While teaching shooting technique or “form shooting” is most important, particularly at the introduction stages or within the refinement and development process, there is a need to avoid “paralysis by analysis”.

Shooting and the coaching of shooting can become too technical and counterproductive. The shooting technique is one movement action from feet to follow-through. Over working elements of the shot doesn't always transfer to an improved overall action, so be aware that coaching form as opposed to key principles can be counterproductive for the player.

“Perfect form is not as important as perfecting your shot (by practice)”.

Chris Mullin, a shooter on the original USA Olympic Dream Team

Our next generation of coaches will find a way to convert knowledge into principles that allow a framework to coach shooting without overcomplicating the development of a very refined skill.

SHOOTING FROM SHORT TO MID RANGE

- We lack distance in our shooting not solely because of the “*lift, lock and snap*” action but also because of the lack of a ready (squat) stance and use of legs (core). All these aspects are important to our shooting success. There needs to be emphasis on *stance* on the catch, knee bend (squat), ball to shooting side *in line with the shoulder* (for a better one handed action) and “high” snap, these are key to teaching players to better success with shooting.
- Getting the ball to the *shooting pocket* should be quick and from various angles. Players should be able to take the ball from different catch areas and get it quickly into the shot pocket, (line of the shoulder) ready to shoot.
- Coach Mike McKay from the Canadian Performance Centre for Basketball expressed the importance of modern players being physically and technically able to take the ball across their body and from different directions to the shot pocket and suggested that this was one of the factors separating good players from the great!
- Coaches must stress that the most effective technique is a predominantly *one handed shot* with balance and hand positioning from the support/non-dominant hand. One handed shooting practices will help to identify problems of balance, positioning, alignment and stance.

SHOOTING FROM MID TO LONG RANGE

- The technique of the upper body should remain constant throughout the shot technique, although the importance of a lower body push, shooting side of the body (lead foot, knee, hip, shoulder and fingers) in line with the basket and used to keep good balance are key requirements for shooting from greater distances.
- Greater distance shooting requires greater accuracy and therefore also requires a technique that remains linear and precise even when performed with extra speed through the shooting action. Players and Coaches should be developing one technique of shooting and have the ability to speed up the rhythm for greater distance or slow it down for free throws.

APPLIED SHOOTING

As the purpose of each coach and each player is to improve the individuals performance in games at the highest level, it is imperative that we are training the skill within the correct game context.

From an early age players must learn that technique is based on principles of hand and arm positioning alignment, stance, balance, arc and rhythm. Once shooting technique has been acquired in must be further developed in order to shoot within the various game situations:

- Shooting after a sprint. Stopping with stride and jump stops.
- Shooting after a dribble (one or two bounces).
- Shooting after various cuts (“L” cut, “V” cut, banana cut, curl cut, flare cut etc).
- Shooting after using various screens (down screen, back screen, cross screen, staggered screens).

After establishing the *basic shooting skills* and then the *individual offence skills* the athletes should be performing skills with intensity, precision and high volume. (Please refer to the individual offence master checklist.

Raising intensity during performance is paramount in the building of shooting skills as it allows the athletes to develop technical skill whilst improving mental techniques and focus. Once again this requires discipline from the player. As coaches we must continue to develop discipline to train appropriately without any short cuts.

For Coaches to introduce factors affecting pressure into training they can use many different challenges:

- Time: Players must learn to shoot with a sense of urgency against the clock and pick up a sense of how long the shot mechanics take to perform at full speed. Shooting for certain periods of time in drills (for instance 3 minute shooting drills) allows the athlete to gauge their current level and set targets to improve upon very quickly. Time and score situational drills mentioned in the Offence section would also highlight the need for what shot and when.
- Competition: All competitive athletes want to win. Coaches must always try to harness this feeling from their athletes and allow it to help them become successful in their own field. Competitive games are at the very heart of building pressure within shooting practices and should be used regularly. Individual shooting games, small sided games, and team games are all valuable tools for

the coach and will help develop basketball players that are aware that “however impressive the process, we must sometimes look at the result.” (Winston Churchill)

- Target Drills: Shooting by its very nature is a result based process where the teams that shoot with the greatest accuracy often have the most opportunities to win games. By building targets into training coaches are able to tend to the growth of team building, and also work on the cognitive behaviour and reactions associated with winning and losing. Target drills are excellent for pushing players and teams beyond their perceived limits.
- Defence: For shooting to be a truly ingrained skill it needs to be performed against aggressive defence, at game speed with as many repetitions as possible. By adding defenders into shooting practices players are able to work on the fine line judgements of having enough time and space to shoot. Conditioning the defenders at certain times (not allowed to raise their hands above shoulder level etc.) will still allow the coach to control the practice and ensure the correct repetition of the desired skill

START IN CLOSE THEN WORK YOUR WAY OUT FOR INCREASED DISTANCE

- Mastery of shooting starts with making the easy close in shot regularly at high percentage. Ironically post moves and shooting are often left till the older junior ages when in fact turning and facing inside or close to the ring is a fundamental for the youngest age groups of U12's and U14's.
- The catch off a rebound with a jump stop or from a pass are key fundamental shooting situations for our youngest. Too often it is dependent on the dribble to shoot.
- Layup practice with differentiated finishes as well as the *Mikan drill* series are vital drills and situations to encourage progression of shooting as a skill but not necessary by moving towards the three point line.

FINISHING

In every level of performance basketball the ability to finish shots around the basket with good technique and variety is a pre-requisite.

The minimum requirement for any player should be straight and angled lay-ups on either hand, baby hooks and jump hooks from stationary and on the move, reverse lay-ups and power lay-ups with either hand.

- Coaches must encourage a wide repertoire of differentiated layups and inside the key finishing. Teaching and encouraging multiple delivery styles of the layup (overhand, underhand (youth), hooks and running hooks, power, reverse/ crossover moves) are imperative to improving the physical literacy and skill levels of each player in the performance pathway. Coaches should teach the different hand positions required to create “finishing dexterity”. Players must be competent in the understanding of the effect of their hand on the ball when finishing close to the basket. Competency can only be achieved when players are able to efficiently use their hands under the ball, behind the ball and to the side of the ball.
- The GB “Skills guide for clubs” clearly shows the age for introduction, refinement and mastery of individual skills close to the basket.

GENERAL ADJUSTMENTS

Whilst the following are generalisations they are offered as considerations after observing British junior player's in the national system.

- The ball and consequently the shooting arm should come more to one side than it currently does. At present we are shooting from in front of our body/face. If we can move the ball more to the shooting shoulder side, we will free up the lift for the arc of our shooting.
- Consideration should be made to placing the ball in the *shooting pocket* on the hip (as a reminder) in a triple threat position for a freer "lift" and elbow "lock" action. Our finger/hand placement on the ball is currently poor and not only do we lack arc we lack backspin on the ball. Fingers are spread with index and or middle finger through the middle of the ball
- We also need to pay more attention to the arc of the shot in our analysis. Although It's not all about form, it's also about function and result. Potentially the ball needs to reach a maximum height in the arc of the top of the backboard
- There should ideally be a one finger release from the ball, preferably the index finger or the middle finger rotating through the ball and pointing in the direct line to the basket. This needs to be in line with the shoulder
- One of the most important aspects of the shot is the wrist "snap", keeping the fingers spread and strong to the finish.

Finally an emphasis on "leaving the shooting hand high" and releasing the ball from a "tall" body position will help get better arc on our current shooting styles. Analysis of the height of the hand at the end of the shot will indicate the amount of lift generated as well as indicating the balance and generation of power through the legs in the bend stage.

SUMMARY CHECKLISTS FOR TEACHING SHOOTING

THE SHOOTING PARTS CHECKLIST

Hand positioning and release: Hands and finger spread

1. Wrist and fingers (wrist snap should be first thing learned - first thing taught) learning through starting with the end in mind. The ball is not in the palm of the hand but held and balanced by the finger spread.
2. One finger final release point (as the middle and index finger rotate through the middle of the ball).
3. Holding the ball with hands in the correct position. The holding hand to the side of the ball and the shooting hand with a cocked wrist under the ball.
4. The shooting hand's fingers are spread across the middle of the ball with the middle and index fingers in the middle of the ball.

The lift and line of the shot: Elbow and the line of the shoulder

5. Shooter's triple threat position ball away from the face – (from hip pocket to the line of the shoulder).
6. Starting point is from the hip and in line of the (shoulder) but in the line of shooting side foot pointing to the basket. This is the line of the shot generation.
7. Ensuring the ball is held, lifted and released in the line of the shoulder (but with wrist cocked) on the preferred shooting side (away from the face and based on the shooting side foot pointing to the basket).
8. Elbow positioning is under the ball and wrist and culminates in a lift of the ball to above the eye line (locked elbow) in the line of the shoulder and shooting foot. This is an important lift principle when combined with a knee bend through a correct squat movement.
9. A good hand follow-through (as high as possible) culminates in a high hand and wrist snap with index and middle fingers moving through the ball to create backspin and a soft release.
10. The wrist snap with the elbow lock and the line of the ball to the shoulder will determine the accuracy of the line of the shot to the ring.

The base for power; Stance hips, feet and legs

11. Balance, through a good triple threat stance to start.
12. Feet and shoulders square to the basket (ten toes at the basket).
13. Shooting side foot pointing at the basket.
14. Bend with a squat by lowering the tailbone to the floor but ensure the knees and feet point in the same direction.
15. Vision of the target with head and chin up in preparation of the right elevation of the shot into the ring (head up with straight back).

THE (WHOLE) SHOOTING ACTION AND PHASE CHECKLIST

The Base to start Phase

Phase 1 Establishing the base of a good shooting stance including hand, feet, elbow and line of the shot position

- Ensuring that the shooting parts checklist is the outcome.
- The best shooting stance facing the basket to make the shot from the distance.

The Power Phase

Phase 2 The generation and sequence for power is determined by the use of Legs from a squat out of stance then phased into the elbow lift with elbow lock finishing above the line of the eyes culminating with a wrist snap and final finger touch

- This is the whole shooting action which generates the power and the arc of the shot needed for shooting from a distance.
- The time taken to get through the shooting action is a factor for power generation
- The rhythm and timing of the action is equally important to the form

The Final Check Phase

Phase 3 The final follow-through position and final body alignment is an indicator of the efficiency of the action.

- The hand is left high and the final elbow lift being above the eye line is a key indicator
- The final finger spread width of the hand on or slightly after release.
- The line of the shooting hand ,elbow and feet all pointing to the basket
- Assessment of the final result :Did it swish or land short, long and left or right
- A snapshot of final body position.

CHECKLIST FOR PLAYERS WITH ESTABLISHED TECHNIQUES SHOOTING FROM THE PERIMETER (ADAPTED FROM COACH HUBIE BROWN)

- **Step** into the shot (from a catch: left foot for right hand shooters)
- **Catch in a T**(triple threat) position
- **Reach** (high hand) into the basket

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEM:

- Display on the GB website a list of shooting tests to be done by various levels of players on the GB pathway.
- Use a current GB player (e.g. Luol Deng, Jo Leedham), a current GB U20 player, a current international from U18 Scotland/Wales/England as bench marks.
- Conduct regular testing of shooting to monitor performance at all levels of the national programme.
- Conduct a National shooting competition that can be easily replicated across playgrounds and indoor centres throughout GB.
- Publish a series of 'pro' workouts on the GB site where any player can print off a number of simple shooting and finishing programmes (AIS 2 minute drills) and record their results next to the professional players' targets/results.
- Implement the National shooting competition protocols to all levels of development and national teams programs.
- Use the national master checklists for coaching shooting including the individual offence master checklist to help plan and shooting.
- Encourage home shooting programmes for all players on the national pathway.
- Establish a national program for the further education and professional development for National system coaches regarding the teaching and coaching of shooting.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLUBS:

- Dedicate more time to practicing shooting at team training sessions through careful planning and assessment of practice plans by the Head Coaches.
- Use the Club Skills Guide and Master checklists for shooting as a guideline.
- Action these Areas of Emphasis guidelines and consider the national system recommendations.
- Support the attendance of club players to the National development programmes like APC's and TDPs.
- Test players regularly and keep relevant statistics of game and practice shooting. But encourage everyone to shoot.
- Develop league tables/ladders and competitions within training to emphasise shooting as an important individual skill.
- The teaching of footwork and the basic technique of both a preferred and non preferred layup hand must be a solid well rehearsed and performed skill at club level. Apart from the basic layup technique the footwork associated with a power layup is also not being coached with our juniors.
- All players at the U12 and U14 levels should be comfortable with shooting from close range and with a degree of pressure created through time or defence.
- The nature of the youngest ages means that the majority of shoots will in fact be in close at the end of a fast break or after a turnover. So starting shooting inside the keyway with various close in shooting pivots and footwork is a good approach to practicing shooting for the younger players at U12's and U14's.

- Create testing days across the country in age group brackets where anyone can turn up at a local park or leisure centre and have the results of their tests verified by their local coach. E.g. 10th August with a list of places where players can go to be tested. Therefore encourages them to practice throughout the summer so they are ready for the testing days.
- Encourage parents to support all players extra practice away from team sessions. Consider the purchase of a home backboard to encourage extra practice convenient to home.
- Establish open court training sessions where players can come and shoot or get extra practice and instruction possibly for coaches other than their team coach.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHES:

- Learn how to teach shooting effectively to all age levels using these key points of emphasis.
- Ensure that all players are taught and given the opportunity to practice from range. Encourage players to take the right shots in games for their development to contextualise their practices more clearly.
- Encourage taller bigger players to develop range and shooting ability from the perimeter.
- Focus on your teaching of shooting so that all players can develop sound shooting mechanics.
- Search out successful Coaches in the GB framework and make contact to observe best practice situations.
- Create a culture that encourages players to shoot the "right" shot in games and then practice making them at training.
- Teaching the underhand and overhand layup actions is the first stage of differentiated layups. The reverse layup where we cross under the basket and shoot with the baseline hand, together with the power layup, are also important. Coaches should be looking to extend the variety of layup techniques for players at U12's, U14's and U16's. Both male and female.
- Overall two point shooting percentage depends on the accuracy of finishing and layups. Much more attention is needed in this aspect. Teaching the back cut and passing the ball inside the keyway will also encourage better finishing at U12, U14 and U16 levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Note the need to be able to teach shooting including correct form and techniques.
- Adapt the Clubs Skills Guide to ensure that all shooting skills are initiated and rehearsed at the school level.
- Create availability of facility time to dedicate to shooting (open shooting sessions, fun competitions, and early bird sessions).
- Have an appropriate style of school play that encourages players to shoot the ball from various distances and move away from the "lay-up at all costs" culture.
- Consider the placement of additional backboards on walls to maximise shooting practice within a restricted space.
- Encourage players to access development programmes.



Areas of Emphasis

PASSING AND RECEIVING

- Passing as a skill and technique is a movement sequence from feet to hands (coach all the detail)
- Coach passing and receiving under game like pressures
- Ensure players pass out of stance
- Commit to coaching a game style with better player movement without the ball
- Coach the detail of footwork for the lead
- Teach players how to move the defence with fakes

WHY EMPHASISE PASSING?

Passing and receiving brings players together to play as a team. Combined they are the heart of team offence and moving the ball to challenge the defence. Passing, ball movement and better player movement will be at the heart of a new and improved British style of play.

Generally, our national teams are turning the ball over more frequently than other teams at European Championships. This is in part due to the players' lack of understanding about how to effectively pass the ball, but also how to receive a pass, when pressure defence is involved. The majority of turnovers come from the desire to pass but with ineffective execution. Some observers are calling this poor "decision making". There is little doubt that, irrespective of the reasons, our commitment to the execution of passing is not of international junior level standard.

Many passing turnovers are due to passive offensive behaviour in not knowing what to do. However, some turnovers are caused by poor leads against pressure defence. No doubt improvements in the skills of passing and receiving are crucial to winning the "possession game" i.e. minimising turnovers. At present because passing and receiving are ineffective there is pressure to dribble instead.

The dribble, drive, kick game is gaining a lot of attention as discussed in the Use of the Dribble and Offence sections of the Areas of Emphasis. While it is effective in purpose, it has led to an over reliance and created an opportunity cost, in that we are now struggling with any passing orientated offence, including the fast break and passing out of the backcourt. By practicing and prioritising dribbling we are not improving passing and receiving under pressure.

The misuse of the dribble comes at the expense of the pass. The pass creates advantage for the team. The dribble creates advantage for the individual. We cannot neglect team offence through passing particularly at the junior level, even if there is only 16 seconds of offence.

In our development system, young players will not be locked into specific positions and everyone will be taught how to pass and receive (catch) under pressure and at high speed. All players will develop a commitment to passing the ball with the intent that their teammates are able to attack the basket on the catch (i.e. catching and squaring up to front foot), after been given an advantage through timing and space.

It is the poor timing of the lead and reacting against good defence that helps cause turnovers through poor passing. While 80% of bad passes maybe the fault of the passer we cannot ignore the responsibility of the receiver to time a lead, beat the defence and catch the ball. This is why "passing and receiving" have been highlighted rather than simply passing. Successful passing is a two person exchange and contract between players of equal value. Both the passer and the receiver have responsibilities which should be taught.

Additionally, point guard play in Britain is a significant area of concern. Once players have been specialised into position, the importance and role of passing by our point guards should be given greater emphasis with our players. The point guard is the expert in both passing and dribbling. At this stage our point guards are a concern. They are very dependent on dribbling and speed as their primary strength, which in turn means the passing by the most skilled player on the court is still a concern or weakness.

Another area in which Great Britain lags behind European competition is the ability to use the penetrating pass against zones or in the fastbreak transition phase. As mentioned previously, our players must establish a proactive mindset when passing the ball in order to value the good penetrating pass. Vision of the defence and the receiver in passing and receiving is important.

Coaches should make passing and receiving a dynamic game like situation for drilling. Having the passer under pressure or the receiver moving to receive, as well as applying defence to contest the pass and catch, will bring our passing and receiving skills up to standard.

The absence of strong post play in our national leagues also leads to avoidance in making the penetrating pass to the post player. A five out offensive philosophy which for some has become too dribble orientated, has also taken us away from passing to moving targets such as the pass and cut or the back cut.

While the main area of concern is mainly in the tactical use of passing with more of a focus on receiving, there is also a concern with the power or strength and speed of our passes at a junior level.

We must make passing and receiving more dynamic rather than the normal static standing and passing, with subsequent increased attention to the catch, stance and hand position.

Consequently it is difficult to identify junior players at school, club or national level who have very good passing technique even with the basic passes.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS?

The basic techniques and principles of passing must be revisited by all coaches. Passing as a principle is situational within a game that is also constantly evolving. Irrespective of the situational nature, passing technique starts with the “hand position” for the catch and pass. Where do our players place their hands when catching the ball? How does that hand position of the catch relate or transfer to the hand position for the pass? There is detail in an answer. Our preference is for the hands to be even spaced but behind and to the side of the ball. Alternatively trapped by one target hand and gathered by the second hand which classically is on the side of the ball (like the shooting hands position). The reality is there is either a two handed catch simultaneously or a “one two” motion with the catch gathered into the triple threat position.

Power and accuracy in passing comes from the players combined technical execution of stance, hand positioning and the stepping/pivoting to pass, culminating with a wrist rotation and snap. This collectively becomes the players “passing technique”.

Similarly a lead to catch the ball includes the stop with balance, hand position and the gather to a triple threat position for preparation to shoot, dribble or pass. This sequence is collectively the new definition of better “receiving principle”.

PLAYERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE “ADVANTAGE” OF PASSING

Creating time and space through passing and “timing a lead” is becoming somewhat of a lost art (e.g. the simple man ahead principle of making a long pass to a man ahead for an easy fast break). At junior level our players must play advantage scrimmages or breakdown drills (i.e. 2v1, 3v2). At junior level in British basketball the principle of the “reversal pass” in the half court to force the defence to rotate and create an advantage is also undervalued in the dribble drive kick mentality.

Finding the “free player” requires both a responsibility of the passer and the movement of the receiver to lead. These simple advantage principles should be appreciated and understood beginning with U12’s, U14’s and U16’s. When combined with pass fakes (to add value), penetrating passes will become more prevalent. Knowing where and when to throw a pass past a defender should also become more apparent and understood by our players (i.e. passing through the defensive line and

specifically past defenders' ears or to team-mates back cut). This will significantly improve the British passing game. If we persist it will also clearly highlight the advantage of passing at the earliest junior ages at a time when all players, particularly those with good dribble skills, want to go one on one at the expense of their teammate's involvement.

Establish an athletic threatening triple threat stance (ready position) – all players must get in a proper stance in order to pass effectively. The stance sends a message to the defence that the offensive player could attack with the dribble, pass or shot - the key being that the defence cannot over commit and will get punished if they do. This will improve passing lanes. Getting on the “front foot” after a lead and a catch is part of what we are calling receiving. *Pass with the outside hand* (push pass) – using the outside hand, allows players to get a proper angle to feed the post or pass to an open perimeter player.

Fake one, make one (or “fake it to make it” mentality) – passing lanes against active defence are created by the use of ball fakes. Create a passing lane by faking to an active receiver in one position will create another position. Making the defence back off also limits anticipation by the defence.

The passer should read the defenders and trust their teammates - the passer needs to focus on the location of *all* defenders and have faith that their teammates will cut and use proper technique to secure the pass (including target hand with better body position). The passer should be comfortable passing the ball from outside of their body cylinder, particularly in the half court. In this generation where basketball is getting faster and defenders are getting longer and quicker there is demand for all players to be able to pass the ball from their sides (hip or side push pass) and from above their heads (often seen from post to perimeter delivery). Passing from within the body cylinder is now most often used in the transition phase and when passing uncontested or to a completely open player on the court. Combining good footwork technique with pass preparation and the ability to pass from either hand outside of the body will improve the repertoire of passes. Against active defence this will create an advantage for the offensive player and reduce turnovers in the front court.

RECEIVING

Timing a lead (receiving) with proper techniques is fundamental to successful passing - “Moving without the ball” is covered in the Areas of Emphasis section for Offence. However, principles like the “man ahead” position for lane runners to receive the ball in the fast break phase is a key example of a simple lead for the basketball. With a dribble first mentality this opportunity and encouragement of movement without the ball is ignored and opportunities lost. This is discouraging for receivers.

The “pass ahead” mentality is also highlighted through the absence of the “baseball pass” with our youngest juniors. Such a basic throw of this long pass technique for the fast break is lacking in our mentality from a young age. This does not help our players at later stages of their career. They do not see the potential of the pass.

The *back cut* as a key lead to receive the ball, and to challenge the defenders vision of the ball and the man, is also an important part of leading for the ball. The back cut forms the first part of the V cut to get open in the half court. The back cut lead should be considered the first part of the V- lead with our U12s and U14's automatically back cutting. At U16's and U18's we add sealing – use of the body to hold the defender out of the leading and passing lane. We then combine this with good use of target hands. Combined they are the important elements of “leading”.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS?

The following components have been identified as providing the biggest opportunity for improvement of passing and receiving.

PASSING AS A SKILL AND TECHNIQUE IS A MOVEMENT SEQUENCE FROM FEET TO HANDS.

We must ensure we coach the techniques of passing as well as the principles of passing. Once the hand position for the catch is reviewed we must then look at the hand position for the pass. The hand position may change from catch to pass with appropriate wrist rotation.

The basic two handed catch with “two target hands” and the chest pass with fingers in the “W” is one method for teaching the basics. This hand position for beginners is one technique which is at least a basis for the beginners catch and chest pass. As players become more experienced the progression to the bounce pass and the overhead pass are all two handed type pass techniques.

However we should recognise that the chest pass is most suitable in an uncontested passing position where the passer has time and or space from the defence. It is more likely that the one handed pass (but gathered and controlled with two hands) is advantageous when defence is in front of the passer.

The baseball pass is under taught and utilised at junior level particularly in recognition as an aid to the fast break opportunities. As a stand and pass position for distance the baseball pass is hard to beat. We should coach the baseball pass technique and use it more often.

The one handed push pass is convenient when picking up after a dribble as it doesn't require repositioning of the hands. We need to explore the hand position when passing and catching as it is more likely that the catch and pass hand position is closer to the shooting or triple threat hand position. Teaching the technique of the push pass or the one hand pass doesn't always guarantee timing and power. It should be recognised that power is generated from correct stance, vision and the actual passing technique. This understanding of technique means passing is a sequence of movements (stepping or pivoting to pass) with applied strength in game -like execution.

Power and accuracy in passing comes from the player's stance, the hand positioning and the stepping/pivoting to pass, culminating with a wrist rotation and snap. This collectively becomes the players “passing technique” and can undoubtedly improve through better coaching.

Similarly moving to catch the ball includes the stop, balance, hand position and the gather to a triple threat position for preparation to shoot, dribble or pass. This sequence is collectively the new definition of better “receiving technique”.

COACH PASSING AND RECEIVING UNDER GAME LIKE PRESSURES

To improve all the basic skills we need to replicate the toughest of games as a simple overload principle for our training. How to increase defensive pressure is often problematic, especially if the normal standard of defence is poor. Passing and receiving are such combination skills that simply by taking the dribble option out of the triple threat will allow passing and movement to improve naturally. Adding odd man advantage, such as restricted area (constrained) 2v1, 3v2 passing drills with the advantage given to the offence, are great tools to develop dynamic passing at the junior level. Progressing to evenly matched defence situations in breakdowns also improves the receiving aspect.

For extra intensity, and “overloading” of the passing and receiving aspect, allow 2 players to defend the ball at every opportunity i.e. 4v6, 5v7 etc. By taking away the dribble and doubling the pressure on the passer, players will learn the value of good footwork through the use of the pivot or attack foot to reduce defensive pressure on the ball.

Another way to practice in whole team and breakdown drills, is by starting a drill / offense with a “dead ball” (i.e. no dribble) versus the ON-BALL defence, rather than dribbling and penetrating to start the drill. In doing so we will force players to practice passing to pivoting, stepping, faking and passing against pressure.

Through scrimmaging in either 2v2, 3v3, 4v4 breakdowns or 5v5 games with no dribble rules (i.e. netball type game) we will improve passing and receiving or at least set up and environment in which to teach the when, where and how. This is an example of a “constrained” (i.e. no dribble) drill and scrimmage breakdown.

Encourage accuracy in every pass to hit the exact target. Passing that is “on the money”. Passing and receiving is also a situational circumstance which requires innovation and timing. Understanding that the pass is judged on how well it creates advantage and how it gets to the target will help player and coach to make assessments. Sometimes the passer leads the receiver to catch in a better situation, this needs practice. Observe and encourage improvement to passing technique in all combinations or drilling situations.

There is no doubt that where the receiving player can best use the pass against the position of the defence is a refined skill. Putting a receiver into an advantage situation demands vision and timing as well as the will of two players.

More attention by coaches, and feedback to players on the quality of the pass in hitting the best target in a situation, is what we are aspiring to coach to improve this Area of Emphasis.

ENSURE PLAYERS PASS OUT OF STANCE

The ability to pivot, step and pass while protecting the ball is a key aspect of passing. Once the technique has been acquired and developed it needs to be extended into game like situations. Therefore passing against a defender (constrained or otherwise) is key to progressing the skill. Emphasise the detail of stepping to pass or pivoting to pass.

Passing the ball when the passer gets physically past a defender (body to body) through use of the active foot (to the pivot foot) requires practice and understanding from a young age. Teaching players to use the push pass with either hand from an early stage of development, then the one-handed pass off the dribble at a later stage are extensions from passing out of a set stance. Passing out of stance (with head and eyes up) will encourage better vision to enhance decision making.

At the U16 and U18 stages a lead catch and pivot is vital to play team and individual offence. All passers have to learn how to “weight a pass” e.g. a bounce pass or a lob pass.

COMMIT TO COACHING A GAME STYLE WITH BETTER PLAYER MOVEMENT WITHOUT THE BALL

In doing so this will occupy the defenders, provided the receiver is active and knows how to lead successfully. By playing this style at junior age level we also make it easier to seal and cut or lead when an opportunity presents itself. Multiple receivers moving well without the basketball, in order to

receive the ball, will create opportunity. However coaches need to commit to a style, not simply based on what will work, so that the team wins. The real consideration is coaching our players to pass and receive very well. The team lasts a season while the player plays for a lifetime.

Take a motion offence approach to coaching team offence at U14 and U16 club level. Creating a culture of a “pass to move the defence” At all levels create more spacing mentality amongst players in which to play individual and team offense. Establish a “four out one in” offensive team balance to allow for post passing, and to change the angles of our game from a 5 out offense, dribble, drive mentality. (Better spacing angles for passing effectively).

COACH THE DETAIL OF FOOTWORK FOR THE LEAD

The running and stopping footwork, particularly the stride stop, combined with the forward or reverse pivot after catch and into the triple threat position is the key footwork sequence to be mastered by players who start to specialise in basketball. Coaches generally want outcomes. Getting open is a concept that requires breakdown skills and solution from the coach. Please refer to the “Individual Offence master checklist”.

TEACH PLAYERS HOW TO MOVE THE DEFENCE WITH FAKES

As discussed earlier in the technical components the fake is an important technique, which because of defensive pressure, must be developed. There are many techniques, but fundamentally eye contact between passer and receiver is needed, and the ability to “fake a pass to make a pass” is the tactic to move the defence and free up a passing lane.

HERE’S WHAT COACHES ARE SAYING:

“At Eurobasket the best players in Europe still made passing errors under pressure. Games often came down to players executing fundamental skills at crucial moments.”

Chris Finch, GB Men’s coach

“Passing is the heart of team basketball. Passing needs to be quick not rushed.”

Tom Maher, GB Women’s Coach

“The point guard is arguably the leader of the team and the most skilful position on the court. However the art of passing and making the players around the point guard better highlights the reliance of passing as a skill for all players.”

Warwick Cann, British Basketball Head of Performance

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEMS

- Build the player’s individual offensive base from an established “ready position” or “triple threat position”.
- Coach the value of passing principles and the techniques in game like situations.

- Power and accuracy in passing come from the player's stance, the hand positioning and the stepping/ pivoting to pass, culminating with a wrist rotation and snap. This collectively becomes the players "passing technique".
- Similarly, moving to catch the ball includes the stop, balance, hand position and the gather to a triple threat position for preparation to shoot, dribble or pass. This sequence is collectively the new definition of better "receiving technique".
- Re-emphasise running, stopping and pivoting to catch; making this a focus for coaching detail. This catching area needs to come under much closer scrutiny when coaching our youth players. Coach the detail of footwork for the lead. The running stopping footwork, particularly the stride stop, combined with the forward or reverse pivot after catch and into the triple threat position is the key footwork sequence to be mastered by players who start to specialise in basketball.
- Observe and encourage improvement to passing technique in all combinations or drilling situations.
- Check and correct the hand position as a key part of passing and catching technique.
- Encourage accuracy of every pass, to hit the exact target - "passing on the money". This is where the receiving player can best use the pass against the position of the defence. More attention to the quality of the pass in hitting an exact target. Ensure players pass out of stance. The ability to pivot, step and pass while protecting the ball is a key aspect of passing. Once technique has been acquired and developed it needs to be extended into the game like situations. Therefore passing against a defender (constrained or otherwise) is very important to progress the skill. Emphasise the detail of stepping to pass or pivoting to pass. Understand that full court fast break offense is dependent on vision (head up) and the ability to make the "man ahead" pass rather than dribble the ball by a quick player full court.
- In this regard re-emphasise the use of and the player's ability to throw the baseball pass for distance in full court situations.
- Teach players how to move the defence with fakes. The fake is an important principle against defensive pressure; the techniques must be developed to move the defence.
- Establish a "four out one in" offensive team balance to allow for post passing, and to change the angles of our game from a five out offense dribble drive mentality. Better spacing for passing back cutting or leading effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLUBS

- Establish a "four out one in" team offense balance at U16 and U18 level. This will include the post irrespective of team personal. I.e. all players must be able to post up and pass the ball to the post player.
- Re-emphasise the back cut to receive the ball away from the defence.
- Re-introduce the pass and cut offense options at U12, U14 and U16 levels.
- Encourage a passing fast break game at U12's and U14's based on a good team defensive platform.
- Passing, catching and movement form the basis of team offense and should be allocated significant amounts of training time at U12, U14 and U16 levels.
- Passing and movement (in leading) is team offense.
- Use motion offense in training as a team process to improve passing and receiving.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHES

- Creating pressure situations in practice that overload the offense with more defenders.
- Limit the dribbling options of the offense when drilling team offense.
- More time and details dedicated to teaching receiving – getting open through leading and sealing, showing targets hands and timing of cuts.
- Use the “four out one in” team offence as primary team offence in order to improve passing angles and decisions as well passing effectiveness.
- Focus on leading and receiving to catch the ball when teaching and drilling passing.
- The post passing and post catching are aspects that will need continued development particularly at U16 and U18 level.
- Reinforce quality in passing and receiving.
- Observe and encourage improvement to passing technique in all combinations or drilling situations.
- Teach correct passing technique, including hand position, for both the catch and the pass.
- Refer to the recommendations for the National system and work towards implementation.
- Establish passing with all team players as the key team skill from an early age.
- More drilling of passing commencing from a dead ball situation versus active defence, with passing to a moving team-mate who is also being actively defended. This to be common practice in drilling and emphasising passing.
- The use of modified drills and games that limit the use of the dribble, will help improve passing execution and decision making by both the passer and receiver. Getting open through better cutting (back cut) and leading.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Ensure the full court passing game, including man ahead, is understood by players at U12, U14 and U16 levels.
- Embrace the full court passing game rather than one player dribble drive. Commit to sharing the ball through passing and not over dribbling.
- Consider all the club recommendations for your school circumstance.
- Understand that passing is at the heart of the game and that any individual game played should not be dominated by dribbling.
- Find rewards for good passers at school level. Too often it is only the high scorers that are noticed. The team player who shares the ball with good passing should be praised.
- Teach correct passing technique, including hand position, for both the catch and the pass.



Areas of Emphasis

USE OF THE DRIBBLE

- Deliberate and situational dribbling practice at all junior training sessions
- Players will have to commit to additional individual dribbling practice
- Master the speed dribble technique and phase in the full court
- Master the control dribble phase and dribbling techniques in the half court
- The dribble has situational use which requires different techniques

WHY EMPHASISE THE USE OF THE DRIBBLE

Dribbling is one of the key individual fundamentals. It is a key basic skill. As an offensive concept it is important to move the ball and dribbling as a principle contributes effectively to playing of the game. While the dribble is effective in advancing or shifting the defence, there is an alternative for the individual which is to pass.

Dribbling or passing is situational in determining which is the best method to move the ball. Knowing whether to pass or dribble, along with the why, when and how, is most important for an individual player to determine. Knowing whether the *use* of the dribble is best, is an important choice in determining our style of game. The primary point is to understand that the use of dribble is not the first or only ball advancement option for offence.

Often the individual player thinks to score they will have to dribble, rather than catch and shoot. Often even in the dribble-drive-kick game we have situations where players are declining the catch and shoot, and going back into a dribble rather than take the open jump shot. This is ineffective dribbling.

Players and teams at all levels can over dribble and create problems for their own offence. This results in poor spacing and the receivers' anticipation. It also presents additional opportunities for the defence to trap or steal the ball. Poor dribblers will always be pressured. Using the dribble in wrong situations and with poor technique leads to turnovers, this is why the use of the dribble is an important area of emphasis for British basketball.

Should a team or individual set up an effective fast break by dribbling the ball full court or through passing the ball to the player ahead? Universally passing is seen as the best team skill to advance and move the basketball. The balance between passing as a principle for teamwork and dribbling as an individual skill is a concern at present and in need of additional focus from our coaches.

The dribble is the best option individually. Especially when combined with good footwork to beat a man one on one. Undoubtedly the dribble technique and footwork for the "one on one" scenario execution is also important. Dribbling is a key individual offensive skill; however it is not the primary method of moving the ball by the *team*.

Presently there is a trend to tactically play "dribble drive kick" basketball as a principle for team offence in the half court. This is leading to an over reliance on the dribble as the teams half court offense and is actually limiting the movement of all five players. This dribble focus is also creeping into the fast break game to the point of over dribbling at the junior level.

We must examine both the principle of dribbling and the associated techniques to ensure that they are both effective.



WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS ABOUT THE USE OF THE DRIBBLE

VISION WHEN DRIBBLING IS A BASIC FUNDAMENTAL

Vision is a fundamental skill. The key is being able to “see the target; see the court; feel the ball”. This is an important fundamental within dribbling for both principle and technique.

In the team game the dribble principle is used to get the fast break going and to beat a man with a change of direction. From this full court situation the dribbler goes into a controlling tempo technique, culminating with a one on one move to beat the defence for a shot or for pass as required.

As such the dribble is an important individual skill for all players but must be used correctly in game situations. The choice between dribble and pass in the team game has been further complicated by “over dribbling” in the pursuit or guise of the “dribble, drive, kick” game. Over dribbling gives the advantage to the defence and tends to stop the other offensive team players from moving while they wait for the dribblers pass, if indeed it does come.

Our British players have not currently established the necessary controlled dribbling ability that is needed to play this style of game to best effect. As a result we have developed poor dribbling habits in pursuit of the dribble, drive kick game in the half court. Additionally in the full court situation we have continued the same trend of too much dribble. We are using the dribble rather than passing as the better option to move the defence. Lack of passing the ball (speed of ball movement) out of the back court is an issue because of this over dribbling. The opportunity cost is that lane runners are not receiving the ball early enough in the open court since the dribbler is on a mission to get to the ring themselves. Consequently the lane runners are hesitant and the fast break and open court play is being missed.

Dribbling with poor technique will also lead to turnovers. Dribbling without good “heads up vision” will lead to poor decision making and poor spacing, which will impact on how other players will play and react.

Strategically it's not about coaching or emphasising the dribble, it is really about minimising the misuse of the dribble by emphasising the phases and the correct techniques.

THE DRIBBLE HAS MANY SITUATIONAL USES.

In the team game the player should push the ball with a speed dribble (of between 4 or 5 dribbles maximum). Also within the team game any player should be able to control the dribble and consequently the defensive tempo. The control dribbler should recognise and be able to use the “dribble entry” principle to team offense patterns when the ball cannot be passed. Similarly a “dribble exit” away from the baseline is often used against a zone to create space. Our players should understand and be competent with all situational uses of the dribble. This will require effective coaching of the different techniques and better understanding of the purposes of the dribble beyond going fast with the speed dribble or going one on one with little technique.

The “**control dribble**” is a technique and also a phase where contact against a defender is likely and where technique should maintain the dribble in position against the most aggressive defence. The control dribble should be developed in all our British players. The arm bar, head up, body to body positioning contact and the use of the attack foot become key techniques and are very important in this phase.

The “**one on one dribble**” phase can occur in both half court and the full court. In these situations the dribbler must be strong with both hands and work effectively on each side of the body with either hand or combinations.

A quick effective crossover is a well executed dribble from one side of the body to the other with an attack foot movement to gain an advantage of head and shoulders past the defender. In this phase the dribbling technique also includes footwork and use of the non dribbling arm and hand.

Therefore these different phases of dribbling requiring various dribble techniques of crossover dribbles at speed on the move and from a control dribble position. The various dribbling skills should be understood, developed and used effectively, but not replace the use of a pass to move the defence.

Dribbling progresses from a general “ball handling” phase, to controlling the ball in stationary positions with a controlling dribble, then progressing to dribbling and moving with the ball (walk/jog) and then finally the speed dribble phase. (See Ball Handling and Basic Skills Checklist)

The “**speed dribble**” phase challenges the dribbler to move quickly but with control. The speed dribble technique uses a different hand position (towards the top half of the ball but behind rather than on top of the ball) than the control dribble. When we are speed dribbling and are required to make a one on one move we will refer to this as “moves on the move”. Examples of this are the “onside dribble” or the various crossover moves at speed in the full court when running.

The dribble height in a speed dribble is higher than the control phase. Normally this control of the dribble through speed work is then transferred into lower controlled dribble with the one on one phase in the half court.

ENSURING THE USE OF THE NON DOMINATE HAND

Finally the use of the non-dominant hand must be encouraged more by coaches when players are dribbling in both a game (at junior levels) and definitely in training. Once the weak or non dominant hand is stronger or near the dominant hands standard, players can then freely decide to react to go in all directions and protect the ball without any limitation of skill. This will open up individual and team play opportunities and put the defence at a disadvantage.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE GREATEST IMPROVEMENTS

The use of the dribble is important both as an individual skill and also as a tactical element or principle of ball movement in determining team offence. As dribbling is a skill that may well take 10 years (or 10 000 hours) to become proficient or expert, players should develop dribbling skills not just as juniors but throughout their career. As a consideration, dribbling practice is not something that should be absent from practice at any level. This should also be part of every player’s deliberate individual training throughout their career and will demand extra individual or home practice.

DELIBERATE AND SITUATIONAL DRIBBLING PRACTICE AT ALL JUNIOR TRAINING SESSIONS

Dribbling and shooting are key individual basic skills which must be acquired, developed, refined and rehearsed. Depending on the level of the player appropriate time must be set aside for players' skill development. At the beginning stage all players will need introduction to the correct control and speed dribble techniques and players must develop the use of their non dominant hand for dribbling.

Therefore training sessions at the junior age level should always involve dribble practice and extension of the skill from "ball handling" at beginner level, through the situational phases of speed dribbling , "moves on the move", control dribble and one on one phases and techniques. Players should be proficient and try and become an expert in dribbling. This will require daily dribbling practice and extension drills for the dribble techniques.

U12's, U14's and U16's should be encouraged to do extra additional individual training. Once again by playing more "one on one" with constrained drills as well as game like situations will develop the dribble skills - provided coaches provide feedback on technique.

PLAYERS HAVE TO COMMIT TO ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL DRIBBLING PRACTICE

Players will have to commit to deliberate practice in their own time to develop their dribbling skill towards mastery. Coaches will need to coach and, effectively demonstrate and explain the technique so that it can be rehearsed correctly without supervision. When drilling at practice as an individual skill we need repetition and to challenge dribbling control at speed.

Our objective is to be effective with the appropriate dribble technique both individually and collectively. Therefore more attention at practice time and with session planning to the dribble skill and development of the techniques is required.

MASTER THE SPEED DRIBBLE TECHNIQUE IN THE FULL COURT

The speed dribble is a basic dribble technique for going into a fastbreak phase. The change of pace or hesitation dribble to delay or beat a defender is also part of the speed dribble phase. At speed the player must be able to change direction with a speed dribble with "moves on the move" or slow down to a control phase of "crossover dribble".

Once basic dribble technique and control are attained all dribblers should be moved into this full court speed dribble phase to improve their dribbling and control. That is at speed, but with control and with purpose. All junior players must practice this regularly.

MASTER THE CONTROL DRIBBLE TECHNIQUES IN THE HALF COURT

In the control phase the player must develop a "control dribble", crossover protection dribbles and a "retreat dribble". The control phase is where ball handling or controlled dribble is the major function. Head up and good vision; with an effective arm bar, become additional coaching points within the control dribble technique.

Individually players can be too dependent on the dribble to create their one on one opportunity. The use of the dribble in the one on one situation isn't necessarily about the number of dribbles nor singularly just speed to beat an opponent. It is about technique and confidence.

THE DRIBBLE HAS VARYING SITUATIONAL USES WHICH REQUIRE DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES

One on one moves need effective direct penetration principles against the defender. One on one dribbling moves should also come off the catch meaning that it should be able to be initiated from the “triple threat” position. The “dribble crossover” and effective body to body penetration will result in the dribblers head and shoulders getting past the defenders shoulder. This is the outcome we seek. Too often the player needs a dribble to set up a dribble (moves on the move). This is not always possible because of the shot clock, proactive defence and game situation. However, the dribble is the key aspect of one on one play.

The use of the dribble is also important in the half court. Apart from the one on one use to attack the defender, the screen and roll is next most common use. Therefore the correct technique, detail and use of the dribble with the screen and roll play is most important. To affect this play the dribble must be controlled and be effective in timing and in turning the corner or splitting the screen defenders. This is very important with the U16, U18, youth and senior levels. The dribble drive and kick game is premised upon great dribble technique.

In our new British game style, national team level players should minimise the misuse of the dribble (over dribbling). Highlighting the situation (by stopping and highlighting or vision analysis) where the dribble is unnecessarily killed, premature or misused is a key to learning at the younger age group levels. This should be diligently monitored by coaches at training.

DRIBBLING AS A SKILL AND A TACTIC IS A CASE WHERE “LESS IS MORE”.

- Less dribbling will make us more effective at all levels.
- Less error in dribbling will mean more possessions for the team.
- Less dribble ability means more deliberate dribble practice.
- The less dribbles taken to beat a defender the more effective the dribbler

WHAT THE COACHES ARE SAYING

“All players must be able to dribble the ball to point guard standards. The dribble is a huge part of the modern game”.

Tom Maher, GB Women's coach

“All players must use the dribble effectively. A good dribble/pass skill set for each player will minimise unforced turnovers”.

Ken Shields

“Too much dribble will kill most team's offense”.

Chris Finch, GB Men's coach and NBA D league coach of the year

“Our challenge is to develop dribbling skills and competence individually in our players but not misuse the dribble in our team game”.

Warwick Cann, British Basketball Head of Performance

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

- Players in development programmes should be encouraged and directed to regularly practice dribbling technique away from team practice. This is a most important area for U12's, U14's and U16's player development.
- All development level coaches in the national system should familiarise themselves with the various techniques and how to coach and teach them for the first time (acquisition and refinement stages) at the various levels.
- For team offense development and reading the play, "motion offence" including the use of the dribble drive situation will be taught. The dribble use will be coached in context and in line with the spirit of the Areas of Emphasis.
- The use of the dribble and point guard play will be a focus at all representative development levels.
- National team players will be taught the dribble but more importantly the phases and situations where dribbling is used and is most important.
- The speed dribble, change of pace combined with the onside (or in and away move), should be developed in all players. This should be extended to "moves on the move" at speed in the full court situations where the ball is also crossed over at speed.
- Defining the dribble height when coaching needs to be consistent. As such the general teaching cues for dribble height are; rib height for the speed dribble, hip height in the control phase and below the knee for the crossover height. Players must dribble the ball hard and quick into the floor (not bounce it), become proficient at controlling the dribble at these various heights and get used to moving quickly, stopping, and varying the heights of the dribble depending on the situation and phase they are in.
- All players at all levels should be proficient to competent with the control dribble in the half court or front court offensive situation(crossover to protect the ball), combined with the retreat dribble and the ability to pass out off a dribble or to use the hand-off with the control dribble at their age level.
- The bust out speed dribble (in the fast break/defensive stop phase) with a quick pass ahead will be encouraged in all players in the development system.
- The dribble drive kick offense will not come at the expense of effective passing out of the back court for the fast break.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLUBS

- The various dribble techniques and phases on the master checklist of skills should be used as a point of reference for all coaches. All coaches at all levels must be able to teach the dribble to beginners and also advanced players.
- Clubs should note that the preferred British style is one which is more orientated to passing than dribbling but relies on the effective use of the dribble individually.
- Encourage players to practice dribbling technique in out of team sessions at the U12, U14 and U16 levels.
- Ensure that effective situational techniques are encouraged at the U16, U18 and youth levels.
- Fun games like "dribble tag" and "cops and robbers" at U12's and U14's are used regularly in team practice.

- Provide a common training time where players from various age groups can come onto a court and practice their dribbling and shooting in addition to their team sessions. This additional training time to team practice is crucial for skill development at the junior age levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHES

- The Area of Emphasis “technical points” and “where we can make the biggest improvements” should be considered in determining your team or clubs game style and in coaching the use of the dribble during games.
- The key points identified in the national system recommendations are appropriate for all coaches. The master checklists are a guide and a reminder to diversify and progress the coaching of the dribble.
- Coaches should create an environment and sessions where all players at the junior level, and eventually where point/lead guards (when specialisation occurs) particularly, can master all the dribble techniques; especially should they seek a career or to specialise in basketball.
- These basics of “ball handling” (handling the ball in a stationary non game like situations) need to be extended into situational dribbling that is required within the game. Refer to Ball handling and Basic Skill checklist.
- Coaches should familiarise themselves with the drills and DVD’s of Pete Maravich and Gannon Baker. These are available commercially. They can be used with players of all levels.
- Dribbling should be progressive and situational. Dribbling should be scrutinised and coached progressively from stationary to dynamic to overload through constrained drills at speed. A challenge needs to be consistently set with dribbling to continually challenge the player’s development. Coaches are well placed to teach technique and situational dribbling at training. However the detail and the key points for coaching the dribble in phases and situations are required. Refer to Individual and Team offence checklists.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Consider the other recommendations and the desire to pass the ball more than dribble the ball as a team at the school competition level.
- Passing is the heart of team basketball and dribbling combined with good footwork and ability to shoot is the heart of individual offence. This is the foundation for team basketball.
- The use of the dribble in a game should be monitored and taught to all players.
- Creating an environment where the player has a “love affair with the basketball” is what we seek. This will be created by fun drills and repetition in constrained drills which challenge but encourage players to become proficient.
- Open school courts to individual or small groups of players who may want to practice their dribbling and shooting.





Areas of Emphasis

OFFENSE

- Reaffirm the concepts and principles of the British game style:
 - Spacing
 - Ball Movement
 - Movement without the ball
 - Vision and Timing
- Prepare players to execute under pressure
- Coach game context awareness
- Stress the "ready" and "triple threat" positions
- Teach "sealing", "leading" and "receiving" as part of individual offence

WHY EMPHASISE INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM OFFENCE?

Individual offence is skilled execution of techniques, whilst Team offence is decision making based on concepts and principles of play.

The essence of the game of basketball has an offensive orientation. Team offence is situational in relation to the individual and team defence at any given time, but it is also about the team plan for teamwork to out manoeuvre the opposition's defence. Whether this is prescribed or left to the players to decide will be a key consideration for all coaches. This is the reason why we need to reconsider our national approach to coaching offence and indeed why we need to re-emphasise offence as an Area of Emphasis.

Many coaches consulted for this review consistently remarked about "poor decision making" by our players on offence. In earlier sections we discussed the importance of physical preparation to improve footwork and movement to help underpin skill development, this is reinforced here knowing that individual skills underpin tactical execution.

The techniques and associated issues of passing, receiving and shooting have also been discussed prior to this section in order to improve offence. If those Areas of Emphasis have been addressed and are developed in the future we will notice that we will have different components and issues to build our team offence. Previously we also highlighted that there is a misuse of the dribble in the guise of the "dribble-drive-kick" motion offence on the back of poor dribbling technique. This misuse of the dribble in team offence is coming at the expense of the other skills of shooting and passing as discussed previously. This is creating a problem with our team offence generally.

We want British players and teams to have a level of skill and understanding that allows them to take advantage of whatever comes their way in a game at all levels of competition. This will require good skill and technique underpinning a good understanding of offensive concepts and principles. There are no shortcuts to this at the junior level and coaches must resist the temptation to focus on judging success simply by their team winning or on the athleticism of individuals.

At international junior level our teams currently turn the ball over more frequently than other teams, highlighting our current skill deficiencies. This could in part be due to the players' inability to react and make appropriate offensive decisions when faced with pressure and changing defensive systems or patterns. Unforced errors represent missed opportunities and will lead to defeat, but these turnovers are not all to do with poor decision making. They are firstly directly related to the player's skill level and secondly to the experience with these skills against pressure.

The way we teach, coach and develop offensive skills through training is an aspect on which federations and coaches are often judged. Offence is the first and foremost aspect of the game that a coach tries to develop in players and as such is important in terms of priority. However, finding the time to develop individual skill over time is a greater challenge in the UK. The general offensive skill level of British players needs to improve and the absence of skilled point guards at all levels as highlighted in the following section. It is a further reason for a review of how we coach offence in the UK.

We need to become better at the quality of our coaching of the individual and team offensive skills in the available time. Our priority, as with the other Areas of Emphasis, is not only finding more time, more training and more games, but actually eliminating the waste of poor time management and poor coaching.

In simple terms "If there is no skill then there is no need for time dedicated to tactics". However finding the balance in the available time are issues for all our coaches and the national system.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS FOR INDIVIDUAL OFFENSE?

Individually and collectively at age level national league and in senior competition, particularly on the men's side, we have a tendency to play too quick, often without seeing the opportunity on the floor. The reality is that vision and timing in team offence are poor because of the combination of playing quick and playing without the necessary skill set. Often offences popular at senior level are employed at the junior level but without the same understanding and experience. At all levels, through better vision, we must see our moving players as receiving targets. This is a fundamental skill as well as a tactical concept.

Passing and receiving (moving without the ball) with vision will lead to a greater understanding of what opportunities are developing even before they present themselves. The passing and receiving section discusses the techniques and principles for this. More attention to passing and receiving and the triple threat position will improve our players' abilities to make good decisions and execute under pressure. This will increase our offensive efficiency at domestic levels and ultimately our effectiveness at the International level.

However, good offence will not occur unless there is a good individual skill base including shooting the ball efficiently. While there maybe a factor in our players access to courts to practice individually with limited training times, a focussed approach to individual skill training of the basics and for individual skills is still possible through better organisation of our time. The national shooting tests offer this opportunity.

In dealing with offence our junior coaches often are hoping the collective athleticism will carry the day against good skill. However, only skill survives over time. Talent can be wasted if it is not skilled, specifically in offence. Using our time more effectively to teach and coach offensive skill, rather than preparing to just win games will better serve the talented athlete if they are skilled.

At times we lack effective post play so we need to re-emphasise the use of the post triangle principles of play irrespective of the size of the post. Tactically we need to understand that the post triangle is a key principle for understanding for our players. The on ball screen and the dribble-drive-kick game are also masking the fact that our players, irrespective of size, are not good at finishing and scoring inside the key. Utilising the back cut to get inside is also absent from our technique and principles of play. Stagnant team offence without the capability to pass the ball inside leads to dominant defence.

All these reasons, in combination with poor ability and skill to shoot the ball well from the perimeter, means we must reconsider what our key offence principles and techniques are and how we will improve the current situation. In re-emphasising offence we should revisit the "how" and "when" of the "what" of individual and team offence.

Coaches should reference both the British basketball *Basic skills master checklist* and the *Individual offence Master checklist* to identify the specific skills. All skills and principles will be repeated over time but not in the same basic form, as the skills are combined for game like execution.

The chain of learning from acquisition, to development, to refinement, to rehearsal in game like conditions, identifies the process of development for these skills and principles. The skills in isolation are just training activities. The skills and principles are developed over time and developed from the acquisition stage of a beginner, to be further developed for competency until they are continually refined and rehearsed to expert status or mastery. The test of mastery is the execution of the skill or principle in a game. Acquiring at a slow pace, developing at own pace, into refining at increased pace, until the rehearsal at game speed means a skill is always in progress.

The technical key to individual offense (for the player with the ball) is both the triple threat position and vision of the defence. We need to re-establish the teaching of stance on offense and highlight vision as a basic technique and concept in order to better facilitate individual offensive skill.

- **Playing from a good stance** - we progress to better footwork against pressure through effective pivoting and stepping with the attack foot against the defender. This is crucial in coping with on ball pressure.
- **Use of pass and shot fakes** - this combined with playing from good stance and the ability to use the dribble to beat your man, will lay the foundations for watching and out manoeuvring the individual defender, and more importantly the second line of defence (i.e. the helpline)
- **OFF-Ball offensive movement with vision** of the ball and the defender should not be neglected. While all individual offence and team offence is principally concerned with the use of the basketball, the nature of one ball, five players and a short time means work without the ball on offence is equally important.
- **The ability to sprint and work at speed** are fundamental to playing the game offensively. Better fundamental movement with running, stopping and the use of the slash arm technique by cutters and posts must be included in our teaching of individual offensive skills.
- **More effective use of the dribble is essential.** Dribble penetration should directly attack the basket and not use extra dribbles to go away from the defender. If challenged on the way to the basket players must have the skills and techniques necessary to make better decisions and execute against a moving defence. Footwork on offense is important, a two foot stop inside the key, as well as an ability to shoot the runner if not going deep to the basket are skills needed by all players, particularly guards.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS FOR TEAM OFFENSE?

Collectively a team that can not generate scoring opportunities against pressure defence will not produce results at a competitive level. To coach good team offence a coach has to teach and require good defence for his squad in training. Competition structures of our national leagues are also masking our real team offence ability as the frequency and intensity of games often gives a coach a false impression of where the team is at in terms of development. Just looking at score lines will not aid the assessment of team offence. We must consider skill level in team offence to help measure or improve our level of offence. As measurements we must consider attempts, percentages, turnovers and opportunity as categories for measurement of effective team offence. These combined with fast break opportunities and conversion, time used into a shot clock, assists, passing and receiving quality and game style are all indicators of the effectiveness of team offence.

Team offence has key concepts from which the principles of play for British basketball will be important. Please refer to the *British basketball team offence master checklist* for the concepts and principles. To measure and improve our team offence we need to judge against the understanding and performance of the offensive concepts and principles, as well as the individual skills techniques. These are referenced in the master checklists for both Individual and team offence.

The four key team offence concepts are:

- **Spacing**
- **Ball movement**
- **Movement without the ball**
- **Vision and timing**

From these concepts flow key principles of team offence such as the fast break, moving on offence without the basketball, motion offence (no screens for young juniors to motion with screens and dribble-drive-kick principles), zone offence, early and late offence, special situations, time and score offence tactics.

- **Team offence is built on individual offensive skills and techniques.** Dribbling and shooting skills are skills that require long hours of practice, probably more than the scope of current British club team training sessions. However all club sessions must ensure that the basic skills and the individual offensive skills are taught at training so that players understand the teaching cues for the techniques to be practiced correctly when training by themselves. Passing to a degree must be emphasised constantly in team training sessions as it is unlikely that it will be practiced individually as a skill unless it is prioritised by the coach in prescribing individual extra practice. The BASIC Skills master checklist and the individual skills Master checklist summarise the skills, techniques and principles.
- **Team offence is based on concepts and principles** and is the priority for putting the individual skill into the team context. Team offence is more than the sum of the parts. The key concepts are spacing, movement of the basketball, movement without the ball combined with the timing and vision to use these skills movement and principles. The Team offence master checklist summarises the concepts and principles for British basketball coaches
- **The modern game is played at a fast tempo** with fast break and transition play being crucial to a team's success. The first team offence is the fast break offence. It is based on principles of lane runners, man ahead passing and driving lane passing lane for dribble penetration. It is priority for all British teams but is dependent on effective team defence for its existence. Individual offence must extend to full court situations. Early passing ahead to a lane runner on offense or the "man ahead principle" is a key principle of fast break basketball. The ability to deliver long to the wings with the chest or baseball pass or over the top of the defence to a middle lane runner is an important individual offense skill.
- **Half court offense philosophies will vary but are common in terms of the principles.** There are many sets or alignments designed to try and capitalise on defensive position in and defensive principles. The national system recommends that coaches and junior teams progress team offence by continually developing the fast break and then using motion principles as a method or process for developing team offence. This can stay with the player wherever they may progress as a senior player.
- **Motion (movement) team offence with and without the ball, is the best method for coaching juniors team offence concepts and principles.** The tactical use of passing builds on the individual skill and will greatly define the quality of team offence. The use of receivers principles, together with tactical principles of use of passing such as man ahead principle, the use of the post triangle, ball reversal or changing the point of attack, and finally movement using screens are all component principles for team offence. These should be understood by coaches and specifically what is best at the junior level for the individual player to develop. Selection and deployment of these aspects ultimately determines the type of offence employed by a coach or team.
- **Keeping team offense simple.** Often coaches make the mistake of selecting set offences observed at senior professional level and then apply the same offence to junior players who have less understanding and less skill. This can be very ineffective because of the difference in the respective cumulative training hours and experience.

- **Coaches often feel that team offence has to be coach controlled** aspect of the game rather than the design or principles to which the players can utilise their individual skills naturally in playing as a team. Good team offence is not plays designed on software packages or drawn up. Observers can always see good team offence when the concepts are in evidence and principles deployed efficiently by players who clearly have good individual skills.
- There's no doubt that we want our British players to understand the how and why we play as a team and how it can be best to meet development objectives as well as team success. At the junior level the offence can sometimes be too controlled by the coach in search of winning.
- This coach controlled team offence cannot come at the expense of developing individual skill and allowing players to play and enjoy, whilst still understanding the requirements of good team offence.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS?

If the national system and development programmes establish a preferred British offensive game style, based on common concepts and principles, we will improve our ability to share best practice throughout Great Britain by being able to discuss, observe and learn how to improve.. This will help provide greater consistency in our coaching message at all junior levels and improve our coaching of offence to our players.

In coaching offence we need to understand how skills in sport are learned. There are theories and best practices for skill development which coaches should acquaint themselves with so as to not waste time in progressing learning and understanding by our players.

Each age group differs in need and ability. The acquisition and development stage of individual offensive skill (irrespective of age) is the most time demanding aspect of training and coaching. The basic skills of footwork and movement, shooting, passing, dribbling and individual defence take a life time to master, often 10 000 hrs or ten years.

The reality is that junior players, if they want to be successful and skilled, will have to commit to extra individual training of the basic skills beyond the normal club level and most likely this will happen once they decide to specialise in basketball (anywhere from ages 10 to 16). At this stage they will need to be shown how to train on their skills individually and what drills or activities they can follow to develop dribbling, ball handling and shooting. Parents as well as players should also be advised of this need. The U12, U14 and U16 age levels are crucial for this purpose. At U18 players will often commit to specialised training and increase the volume of skills training in various school basketball programmes in addition to club training. This should also be encouraged at U16 level.

Shooting is the key skill which will make the difference to an individual. Deliberate training in addition to club practices will be required for a player to become skilled in this area. Every British player has the opportunity, provided they have the support of their parents. We must be consistent with our message to parents and players at the U14 and U16 level in order that this so called extra practice is indeed a basic requirement for all players wanting to play well. The volume of shooting for members of development programmes such as regional programmes, Area Performance Centre's, Talent Development Programmes, AASE as well as schools, needs to increase and to be monitored in order to drive the offence agenda.

A player or programme working with specialist basketball players needs to be training and playing between 12 and 20 hours a week in season to become proficient. This becomes more complicated as schooling requires extra study as examinations determine student's grades.

The alternative is to use the off season for U14's, U16's and U18's to do extra work on their individual offensive skills, then to use the training hours to develop the principles and refine and rehearse the individual skills for those talented and committed players. Clubs should consider off season skills work without the worry of playing and worrying about a game.

Motion Offence often provides a tool that can be easily adapted to develop a range of tactical approaches for both man to man and zone defence. Motion Offence can be a principled process and a concept approach to learning team offence.

However, motion played with poor skill level or understanding will not be effective. Our misuse of the dribble in offence has resulted in poor spacing and indirect basketball, negating the strategic value of five out motion or dribble-drive-kick offense. Improved teaching, with greater attention to detail in the following areas, combined with constraints or conditions in drills and scrimmages will help improve individual and team offence.

- Highlight vision and spacing to increase player's awareness.
 - Players watch their team-mates to help them decide where to position themselves on the court and therefore create appropriate spacing.
 - React to dribble penetration by relocating to a new spot on the perimeter where the player can attack by shot, pass or dribble if the ball is passed to them.
- Highlight Vision and Spacing to assist in reading the defence.
 - Players to know where their defender is as they cut and receive the ball (e.g. a step behind, guarding one shoulder, or square). Awareness will lead to better decisions.
 - Player with the ball to focus on the movements of OFF-BALL defenders to determine their next move (pass, dribble or shoot). Players must be aware of the second line of defence when making decisions.
 - Players to stay "active" off the ball, watching their defender, looking to create a scoring opportunity with a flash cut or creating space for a team mate by shifting the defender from the help position.
- Re-establish the 'ready position'.
 - Re-emphasise the triple threat "ready position" in every drill. Teaching "ready position" or "stance" as a dynamic skill rather than a static body position. Focus on squaring up, pivoting in stance, being ball quick, as well as using the attacking foot to move the defence. This will reduce the pressure imposed on the offensive player and lead to better decision making and execution.
 - Offensive players have to get used to being crowded pushed and bumped. The effective use of body to body positioning to break the defender down and the ability to execute well, despite physical pressure, is an important offensive technique. This also needs to be progressed from stance, pivot, and step to pass or dribble. Offence must be able to dictate terms to the defence.

- Teach Sealing, Leading and Receiving.
 - V-Cuts and sealing the defender – players must use change of pace and direction as well as a seal when needed, to create separation from their defender and provide a lead to receive the next pass.
 - "Slash arm/Swimming action" – players must learn to gain front position and avoid being pinned or bumped off line. Players need to be capable of executing this action as part of a v-cut lead, on flash cuts and in both post offence and defence.
 - Back cut - This creates space for the dribble drive as well as presenting targets for the passer. Back cutting puts pressure on help defence to defend the basket thereby creating perimeter space for the catch and shoot. The back cut is a key off ball offense movement. It acts as both a pressure release and a counter attack against overplaying defender.

- Make Better Use of Coaching Cues.
 - Use "fake a pass to make a pass" as an important coaching cue to reinforce both vision and timing of passing to a target and away from the defender.
 - Use "shot – no shot" for the dribble / drive situation as a fundamental technical point to be coached to help the player execute appropriate decisions with correct timing and movement. Obviously fakes must be realistic to be effective against good defenders. Thus "shot - no shot" is a better indicative cue for the player.
 - Use "pass – no pass"- as a similar cue for passing.
 - "fake to drive", "if can't pass dribble" and "if can't dribble pass" are all cues which help with decision making on individual offence.

- Consider Individual Player Development Needs.
 - Empowering players to make decisions on the court by teaching them the what, why and when of skill execution in terms of principles of play.
 - Wait until a late development stage to specialise players into a position, but teaching all players to play the perimeter and post and to see where their growth and tendencies take them. Develop complete, multi skilled players.

- Establish Principles of Play.
 - Teaching "principles of play" over and above "set plays".
 - Teaching motion principles as a guide to effective half court play. Encouraging more passing options and off ball cutting, in particular the back cut.
 - Teaching effective team fast break through better passing and lane running.
 - Teaching effective advantage play using 2v1, 3v2. Making the defence commit to the ball and finding the open man.

- Build Team Offence using break down drills.
 - Utilisation of coaching methodologies such as build-up sequences (progressions or loading), whole-part-whole and the use of questioning in developing team offense and our players' understanding.
 - Building offense from 1v0, 1v1, 2v0 etc. into 3v3 in the early years and then into conditioned scrimmages to focus on particular aspects of team offense. This will lead to greater awareness and composure though skill and understanding.

- Prepare players to Perform under Pressure.
 - Emphasis must be placed on efficient execution and "effective" offence. Set up team breakdown drills and constrained (or conditioned) scrimmages focusing on the following values:
 - Value possession. Include distinction between forced and unforced errors as in Tennis.
 - Ball security and effective individual offensive skills, including pivoting and better body to body positioning, which will involve contact with the defender
 - Passing to moving targets, leading to receive.
 - Counter pressure defence. Use of dribble drive / back cut / flash post action against denying defences.
- Coach Game Context Awareness
 - Emphasis must be placed on efficient execution and "effective" offence. Set up team breakdown drills and constrained (or conditioned) scrimmages focusing on the following values:
 - Shot selection – teaching decision making / choices, playing percentages, awareness of the game context. The definition of a good shot choice changes with the circumstances of the game.
 - Time and Score awareness – players' decision making must take into account the game clock, score, foul count and recent sequence of play or momentum.
 - Utilise specific game situation scrimmages to prepare players to make the right decisions under pressure. E.g. Two minutes left on the clock, down by three, two team fouls etc
 - Utilise various scoring methods in drills to highlight score board consequences of ineffective play E.g. use of tennis scoring system where every play has a point value and subsequent change in score.

HERE'S WHAT COACHES ARE SAYING:

"Even at the Olympics, my teams run the '5-out' motion offense. It teaches the players to read the game and make the best decision at any given moment, plus it gives us the flexibility to adjust our tactics to take advantage of what the defence is giving us."

Tom Maher, GB Senior Women's Coach

"Team Success in competition depends primarily on both the individual players skill and team principles of play. How they play together, their style based on the individual quality of decision making and execution of skill - for any coach this is the holly grail in coaching a team. It simply starts with individual offense skill and continues with a clear understanding of ball and player movement principles in a game. To achieve this we need to spend hours with players learning the individual skills through repetition but also through being consistent in our planning and reinforcement of our key team concepts and principles."

Warwick Cann, British Basketball Head of Performance

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

INDIVIDUAL OFFENSE

- The triple threat stance is the key to our offensive game and should constantly be reinforced. Emphasis on this being a dynamic ready position is essential to players having an attacking mentality and coping with on-ball pressure.
- The catch to shoot with correct leading, catching and pivoting technique into the triple threat stance must be the key fundamental individual skill.
- Re-emphasis on the pivot and step as a key to individual offensive play. Players must be taught to utilise the pivot to pass or attack off the dribble and to create a new "line" to the basket or new release point for a shot. The attack foot creates the jab and shoot / drive options as well as opening passing lines.
- All players to master the use of the slash arm technique for better offence.
- Greater emphasis on breakdown drills to isolate and teach specific aspects of both team and individual offence. The whole-part-whole method of coaching team offence.
- Players should be exposed to more 1v1 drills and contests in training in full court, from the perimeter and post situations.
- Developing this further to 2v2 and 3v3 is the next stage, but there must be attention to individual skills technique for detail (coach individual offence within the team) as well as vision at all times. This will improve our understanding

TEAM OFFENCE

- Coaching the fast break basketball through advantage passing is the first priority for team offense at all levels.
- Motion team offense is the key principle of play for teaching players to play team offence. This is defined in terms of motion principles and they start in the full court situation.
- Motion concepts and principles should be used against various zone defences.
- The four out one in motion game is fundamental to movement and spacing. It includes establishing the post feed and post pass as more of an option. This is the favoured set at National level.
- The five out motion, passing, cutting or dribble drive kick offense is a secondary team offense principle which our players must also be able to play.
- Motion principles should be developed refined and rehearsed both in training through breakdown drills (up to 4 v 4) and 5 v 5 scrimmages, as well as in competitive games.
- Players should also become familiar with popular common sets and entries e.g. Horns, UCLA cut and Diamond (baseline entry).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLUBS

- Ensure your club coaches are teaching and coaching the individual offensive fundamentals.
- The master checklist of skills should be used as a point of reference for all clubs to assess.
- Distribute ball handling and dribble routines that can be practiced by young players in their time away from club practice. Establish home or extra training practice for shooting and dribbling as a requirement to develop skill level.
- U12 and U14 - five out motion, no screens, is the foundation team offence. Fast break principles also to be included in team offence.
- U16 - Four out one in Motion, with screening on and off ball to be taught and developed. Fast break principles also to be included in team offence at U16's.
- U18 - Four out one in motion. Screens are further developed with multiple screening both on ball and off ball.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHES

- The key points identified in the national system recommendations are appropriate for all coaches. The master checklists are a guide.
- The Area of Emphasis "technical points" and "where we can make the biggest improvements" should be considered in determining your team or clubs game style.

INDIVIDUAL SKILL

- Encourage ball handling and individual dribbling routines for home practice. This is crucial at U12, U14 and U16 levels.
- Avoid the catch and go dribble at the younger ages as this is leading to poor vision and decision making although it is perceived as a quick reaction movement.
- Wait until a late development stage to specialise players into particular positions.
- Develop multi skilled players. All players must be able to post up and finish inside as well as play on the perimeter. "Littles" should be taught the post and inside dynamics while "Talls" and "Bigs" should be comfortable in passing shooting and dribbling on the perimeter.
- Empower players to make decisions on the court by teaching them the what, why and when of skill execution.

TEAM OFFENCE

- Understand the level you are coaching and the need for various methods of teaching and development of team offense. It is not about selecting a good offense that will work, it is about coaching offense for understanding and skill competency.
- Use build-up sequences (progressions) 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, 4v4, whole-part-whole, 5v0, 5v5 into 2v2, 3v3 and the use of questioning in coaching team offense.
- Use slow motion replays and walkthroughs of decision making by players (leading to a poor decision or turnover or problem) e.g. press breaker offense vs zone press.
- Ensure that all players can receive inside or post up and have post technique to finish inside. The post triangle should be coached irrespective of size for U16's and U18's

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Focus on individual skill development.
- Club recommendations are appropriate considerations depending on your school situation.
- Assist players by providing facility access to practice their individual skills.



Areas of Emphasis

OFF-BALL DEFENCE

- Positioning with vision in stance
- Moving and repositioning as the ball moves
- Helping teammates to defend the ball
- Rotating and recovering to a different player

WHY EMPHASISE OFF-BALL DEFENCE

~ Awareness of your man, the ball and player movement ~

Defence is important as the best defensive teams often win the League or Championship. Most coaches throughout the world recognise the importance and the relationship between great defence and winning teams.

OFF-BALL defence is the element of team defence that separates great defensive teams from good defensive teams. These teams feature plenty of talk on defence to solve problems and to help each other when someone loses vision of their player. These teams with proactive OFF-BALL defence are normally successful since they control the game through their collective effort and organisation.

So why is OFF-BALL defence important? 80% of any team are always playing defence off or away from the ball. Most players play more time OFF-BALL defence than ON-BALL. Another reason that OFF-BALL defence needs to be emphasised is that coaches often spend a disproportionate amount of team preparation time on team offence rather than team defence. This means that time and priority for defence is often lessened. Attendance numbers at junior club level training can limit the amount of time for 5 on 5 or full team type practice; meaning team defence and specifically OFF-BALL defence is again the casualty. All this reinforces an attitude to individual junior players that defence is less important. Consequently they are reluctant to commit and play defence. This will be the norm unless the coach emphasises and prioritises defence, especially the importance of effective patience and alertness for OFF-BALL defence. As a result we currently have players who don't understand or who cannot apply themselves to playing defence with any urgency or quality.

Technically at junior level players constantly lose their player through poor vision, stance and positioning in relation to their player and the ball. Our players are over relying on help defence when it is actually their own responsibility to *contain* their player ON the ball. Finally as the player gets older they often get caught up on screens for the same reason. Players are regularly late in giving help or rotating as they do not know when and how to help (if indeed they understand the why). Defence will always be poor unless its prioritised at all levels.

Competition and lack of consistent quality of games, and hence this lack of challenge, may partly be a contributing factor to poor and ineffective OFF-BALL defence. Any coach who is overly focused on winning at junior levels may not see the defensive deficiencies, especially if their team is easily winning.

There is a perceived lack of importance for defence from the player when it is not taught or practiced regularly, let alone coached for detail. This means performance drops off and players do not improve. If OFF-BALL defence is not taught well, nor understood, then consequently it will not be performed well. This unfortunately is occurring at many levels in the UK. Most spectators and coaches make the mistake of focusing ON the ball to see the action and miss good play off the ball. OFF-BALL defence is a preventative strategy; it is a highly skilled area of application that is currently undervalued.

As a player's career develops through the various age groups to senior levels the standard of offences become more technical and tactical, typically involving more use of the various types of screens, cuts and a greater speed of movement. This demands continued defensive practice and consequently OFF-BALL defensive movement requiring attention to detail and effort. If junior players do not understand the basic concepts and principles of OFF-BALL defence (i.e. positioning, vision,

talk, help, effort, sprinting, bumping, disrupting) then as a senior player the learning curve for the talented player maybe too much for them to catch-up.

If we do improve our team defence, particularly the OFF-BALL element, combined with improved ON-BALL effectiveness, we will raise the standard of basketball in Britain. Improved defence will force standards of offence to improve as a result.

Better OFF-BALL defence means better defence and better defence means better offence. It is win-win!

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL POINTS?

Team defence is a dynamic situation requiring understanding of concepts, principles and techniques as well as the commitment and discipline by both player and coach to prioritise and develop defensive ability. OFF-BALL defence requires a discipline of performance because effort and good defensive play is not always recognised. Discipline is an attitude and behaviour, it is highlighted in the defensive part of the game and off ball defence requires a disciplined mindset to be most effective.

Good team defence features good ON-BALL defence through containment and pressure. Good team defence also features good OFF-BALL defence through good positioning, movement, help and rotation to defend players. OFF-BALL defence is an extension of desired containment and pressure.

Please note: for purposes of these Area of Emphasis guidelines, ON-BALL defence is covered separately in the physical section of these areas of emphasis as part of movement and conditioning sections. Detail regarding stance, footwork and individual player movement are also covered in that section.

OFF-BALL defence has four key concepts. These are the key drivers to help stop a score or minimise any offensive advantage. Stopping the ball as it continually moves is challenging to any defence. It is particularly more challenging the higher the skill level and higher level of competition. Coaches find it difficult to teach these concepts because they are so dynamic. Mastery of the concepts and understanding involves assessment of all five players moving and playing at any one time. Consequently it is a challenge for the coach to observe four or five players at the same time and correct and coach individually. Each of the four players (or five if we include ON-BALL defence) could be having different challenges and difficulties in performing each of the concepts.

Each concept has some underpinning principles that give a starting point for better coaching. These principles are often expressed by some as “rules”. For our purposes we will refer to them as “principles”.

POSITIONING WITH VISION IN STANCE

Vision of the ball at all times is fundamental to playing the game for the best advantage. While vision is a **basic** fundamental, the relationship to the technique of stance needs far greater attention from our coaches.

The balance of the stance is covered in the footwork, movements and ON-BALL defence found in the 'physical' section of the Area of Emphasis. However, the key fundamental concept of vision from stance is the focus for this OFF-BALL defence section.

This vision of OFF-BALL defenders requires a split vision between watching the player and the ball simultaneously. This is still the best technique despite the popularity for turning the head which can create poor stance and positioning.

Vision in this instance is dependent on the movement of the head, deflecting attention away from other details. Coaches should concern themselves with the stance, balance and the head position of each defender when coaching split vision and stance for OFF-BALL defence.

- **Losing vision and opening to the ball.** Players can and will lose sight of the ball or the player. The decision on how to deal with the situation varies, however it is inevitable that it will occur so a preferred principle and technique should be considered.

If the defender loses vision of their player they should maintain vision of the ball. This may require changing from an open stance, facing the line of the pass in the flat triangle, to further opening up by facing the ball (i.e. moving from a "chest to line of the pass" position to a "chest facing the ball" until the player is sighted and split vision is re-established). This is the principle of opening to the ball. The stance and footwork is either a reverse or forward pivot, with a preference for the reverse pivot. A defender can open to the ball from a closed stance.

If a defender is in a closed stance (denial) position and loses sight they can open to the ball through a reverse pivot or maintain the chest to the player closed stance position and turn the head quickly to the other shoulder. This is possible because the player is inevitably going in the opposite direction and behind the line of sight which requires quick turning of the head by the defender against this back cut scenario. This is sometimes referred to as "snapping your head".

The closed stance is normally a ball side tactic while help line defence is normally an open stance; whether its chest to ball or chest to the line of the pass. Players can also be required to play in a closed stance on the help line particularly if the preference is denial rather than simple containment.

It is important to recognise that vision is relative to stance. The player can adopt either of the two stances. In the open stance vision is straight ahead and in closed stance it is normally a denial position where the player looks over their shoulder and splits their vision with their chest facing the player being defended.

This principle "play the ball not the man" therefore becomes important in coaching players to deal with the dynamic situations of vision, stance, player/ball movement and losing a player on defence.

Open stance with good vision must be coached and reinforced as a fundamental concept at all times at all levels. This is especially important for coaches at the U10, U12, U14 and U16 levels. Looking ahead in the direction you are facing while in stance should be coached for detail at this level.

Once taught, the open stance is then applied to a position on the court. This position is either facing "the line of the pass" to the opponent being defended (often referred to as the pistol position) or "facing the ball".

- **Positioning and the flat triangle of ball, you, man principle.** The flat triangle principle of the ball-you-man relationship underpins the concept of positioning, helping and subsequently rotating to a different player in an ordered and systematic way.

Currently offences are increasing in ability and effectiveness in crunch situations creating 3 point shot opportunities resulting in player spacing being stretched further to take advantage of the three point line. This is testing the defenders flat triangle positioning, specifically how far up the line of the pass they move.

Over helping or over compensating from the flat triangle into a deeper triangle creates a longer close out option for the OFF-BALL defence; the defender is deeper to help and further from the player being defended. Offences may also spread the floor in 5 out or 4 out 1 in; which will require cover over longer distances on subsequent cuts to the basket, posts and the three point threat. The defender can obtain better split vision by adjusting the flat triangle by stepping further off the line of the pass to deepen the triangle. However, this is normally a help consideration for the dribble which releases pressure on the pass.

Adjustments for close outs become paramount and somewhat specific to the offence, but the understanding and use of the flat triangle of ball you man remains a key principle. To help with positioning the side where the ball is located is referred to as ball-side, and the side away from the ball is referred to as help-side.

In the flat triangle a defender can be positioned above or below the line of the ball i.e. towards the half way line rather than the basket. So a player will often be required to drop to the line of the ball as a principle or step up to the driving line of the ball; there by deepening the triangle and taking the player further from their defender, the line of the pass and leaving a greater close out distance.

The line of the ball is the imaginary line that goes from the ball horizontally across the court, when moving the defender will often be required to drop to the line of the ball or the line to the basket sometimes referred to as the driving line or lane.

Dividing the court for defensive purposes into ball above or below the free throw line will help determine who helps when and from where.

- **Denial and containment pressure.** Establishing OFF-BALL defensive position in the ball-you-man situation allows for a consideration to either deny the pass or “allow the pass, but meet the catch”, then control the dribble and one on one through effective ON-BALL defence. This is a fundamental choice out of the flat triangle. In the line of the pass or off the line of the pass? That in essence is either denial or containment through positioning.

Denial, as an all out effort, may ultimately create containment and there are degrees of pressure to be applied. So tactically a coach will determine their style preference and philosophy based on their personnel and perceived ability. In denial defence there are different techniques employed by coaches depending on their beliefs.

Denial technique is either having a head or a hand in the line of the pass, with positioning one step off the line of the pass. On ball-side defence it is normally accepted that the closed stance is the preferred technique. For the help-side it is normally an open stance. The further up the passing line that a defender plays the further it will increase the distance of the close out.

The national system preference is to develop a more effective defensive stance with good vision; the open stance or “pistols position” when playing OFF-BALL to players on the help-side. So the help-side defence is open stance with an ability to reverse pivot and open up against dribble penetration when help and rotation is required. We wish to play more towards

the line of the pass for both pass denial and for closer close out movement against the skip pass and flare cut. Generally the defender will be two steps (defensive slides) off the offensive player, with an ability to adjust to play closed denial one step off the player.

- **Defending the post.** Post defence follows the same concepts and principles for all OFF-BALL defence. However, there is closer positioning in the ball-you-man stance. Predominantly post defence is played one step off the offensive player. Good footwork and positioning is essential for effective post defence due to the encouragement of body contact to establish a position and deny any pass. Over reliance of length and strength as opposed to position should be discouraged in post defence particularly with juniors. Ultimately strength and size will be negated at higher levels so while they are important to gain an advantage positioning and outworking the post are paramount to effective post denial. It is important in remembering that the “offense wants contact, but defence wants space!”

With space being tighter, positioning is generally one arms length, with greater use of a denial stance. Positioning moves through a half front (closed stance) of the post to a momentary fully front (open stance) the post. There are techniques for defending the post that all juniors irrespective of size should be taught and experienced. Every team has the ability and desire to look for mismatches including those in the post.

Therefore it is not just about size but more about position when coaching the OFF-BALL defence of the post.

MOVING AND REPOSITIONING AS THE BALL MOVES

Move as the ball moves. The concept of maintaining vision in stance while maintaining the principle of the flat triangle, or ball-you-man situation, is the key for positioning against continual movement whilst also determining help responsibility. The further the ball is from the player being defended, the further the defender can come up the line of the pass of the flat triangle towards the ball in order to help. The ability to slide in stance up and back along the line of the pass with ability to close out to the ball and run for position are techniques which underpin movement and repositioning as the ball moves.

- **Defending dribble penetration.** Baseline penetration is the most common driving lane at junior level and the one most coaches spend the greatest amount of time in defending or simulating in the 'shell drill'. Teaching the basic rotations required from the help line is one of the primary functions of shell drill. However a redefinition of the help line as opposed to the split line is required. It is important to simultaneously defend dribble penetration and the 3 point shot within the same play phase, so the flat triangle remains a key principle in defending dribble drive situations.

While our national system will force baseline we must understand that all dribble penetration does not always occur along the baseline. There is also the incidence of side penetration (side of the keyway, i.e. mid block or higher) which requires adjusted positioning, and penetration down the middle which occurs through the foul line area. Each of these penetration areas offers options which must be defended and understood in terms of OFF-BALL defence positioning and movement.

The flat triangle and help line are adjusted for each type of penetration. Rotation is necessary to ensure that long close outs to an open shooter (who receives the penetration and kick pass) are avoided. Understanding who rotates and from where is crucial in limiting costly

over helping situations. Trusting the ON-BALL defender is also important and is discussed in rotating to a different player.

Ensuring positioning and timing to help stop dribble penetration and subsequently rotating to a new man on the perimeter with a close out is the tactical challenge for all team defence. The better the perimeter shooting of the offence the more demand will be placed on the OFF-BALL position to work well.

Ultimately minimising close out distance from long to short needs to be mastered through OFF-BALL defence positioning against dribble and pass options. The more effective the ON-BALL defence the better the penetration containment will be.

- **Defending cutting movement.** It is obvious that players don't stand still on offence when they don't have the ball. The two basic principles of moving without the basketball are exemplified in defending both the straight cut and the back cut. These basic cuts should be defended and coaches must coach the detail of how to best neutralise or stop the cutter when it occurs. When defending cuts we need to anticipate the cut; this begins with good positioning between the basket and the ball. When moving from ON the ball to an OFF-BALL defensive position players must jump to the ball arriving in the desired defensive position during the flight of the pass. Jumping to the ball creates immediate separation which enables the defender to successfully anticipate the cut and defend appropriately. Our footwork (either a defensive stance or running) needs to be able to "bump" a player away from their cut route and to take away the passing angle. Bumping not only obscures the passers decision making but also takes away the players preferred route of cut and its timing. This helps in the overall defensive possession in terms of taking time off the shot clock and the offences time to operate.

From the youngest of ages U12 and U14 players should be taught how to defend the pass and cut correctly and routinely. Coaches at this level should also ensure that the offensive movement is included in the team offence and team session breakdown drills. This sets the tone for the continued progression of OFF-BALL defence in defending other movements without the ball; including defending the flash cut from the weak side. Learning to defend these three cuts at U12 and U14's and mastering them by U16's will establish a good platform for better systematic OFF-BALL defence.

At U16 and U18 levels this then progresses or is immersed into defending teams who prefer continuity or set offence. Often cuts come off screens so teaching how to defend the 'UCLA cut', "flex cuts" or "shuffle cuts" are then logical progressions for U16 and U18 club teams.

- **Defending screens away from ball.** Another OFF-BALL principle involves the defensive movement against screens away from the ball. The player defending the user of the screen must have vision, and most importantly know where the ball is. It is also important for this player to anticipate the screen, and then read how to defend it. If they lose sight of the ball they will need the help of their teammate. Defending the screen is a multiple player assignment; reflective on individual responsibility, technique and the offensive teams desired outcome.

Players should be taught multiple ways to defend the player using the screen. Learning how to screen and use a screen correctly will actually help a player learn how to defend the screener and cutter correctly. These should be coached equally well.

This area of emphasis could almost have its own chapter in terms of detail, but it is important to build from the basics not from the advanced or higher standard tactical approaches (especially when dealing with juniors). Simple things done well will always be effective. Understand the purpose of the screener, the player using the screen and the type of threat posed, this should provide a baseline for our thinking in the tactical execution or preferred OFF-BALL defensive technique.

There are many different screens and subsequently angles relative to both the ball and the basket. We need to learn to defend both the basic screen and the more complex screen action. This is a continuing refinement and progression which remains hinged on good defensive footwork balance understanding and a team approach to OFF-BALL defence.

British coaches must learn to understand the basic screen actions which require positioning and communication by multiple defenders. To be able to defend it you will need to learn and execute it effectively with your own team. The British Basketball checklists for offence and defence are a good reference for coaching OFF-BALL defence at all levels.

In its simplest form the screeners defender has a key role to play in aiding their defensive teammate to successfully navigate the screen; whilst denying the cutter the desired offensive positioning or opportunity. The three most common defensive strategies are:

- They can show help, delay, and recover to their man.
- They can step off the screener and allow the cutters defender to come through the gap created between themselves and the screener.
- They can hug, push or squeeze the screener creating space for the cutters defender to come under the screen to close out.

HELPING TO DEFEND THE BALL

The concept of help is important as it is inevitable that offense will outmanoeuvre defence at some stage. The split line is a good beginning teaching tool for help-side positioning, however as offence develops the help line will differ to the split line as the standard of competition improves particularly with better penetration and more consistent perimeter shooting. Exclusively following the split line principle leaves long close out distances on the help-side.

To understand the concept of help we have to consider principles associated with when, where and who. The question of who is normally the 'nearest man' principle; although some situations are deemed more dangerous than others when defending and are prioritised accordingly.

The "when" is normally as the ON-BALL defender is beaten, but there is a danger in over helping or rotating and allowing an open receiver.

The depth of the triangle determined by the OFF-BALL defender affects the ability of the defender to either deny a pass and/or to close out. This occurs frequently if the player who is second or deepest in help "digs" in too deep to the split line and as a result finds them self off the line of the pass. This commonly leaves the defensive team with a longer close out distance, often creating a help dilemma in terms of timing and distance when deciding to help on the dribble and leave their player.

The initial positioning of our four OFF-BALL defenders should be situated both in terms of the split line and the quadrant of the ball-side; with the ball either above or below the free throw line. Developing

this position principle using the quadrant helps to establish the principle of the help line for help-side defenders. Sometimes this is confused with the split line itself.

The help line principle is very important for coaching when, where and which OFF-BALL defender should rotate to help. The line help is made up of defenders on the weak-side of the court opposite the ball. Normally there are two or three players considered to be in the help line depending on the offensive team alignment and position of the ball. When the ball is above the free throw line or in the middle of the court the help line is adjusted.

The defensive close out is the single most important technique for OFF-BALL defence because defenders will always have to rotate to a different player once the first rotation or commitment to help is made. It is effectively a switch on defence.

Usually the close out starts from an OFF-BALL position and translates into an ON-ball responsibility and containment movement. Therefore attention to the start of the close out position (stance, vision, footwork etc.) is another specific area of attention for coaching the OFF-BALL defenders technique. An example of this is the rotation by an OFF-BALL defender closing out from the baseline of the help line to the help-side corner 3 point shooter on a skip pass. This situation requires very good initial positioning with good anticipation and closeout technique. The longest close outs are from the basket at the base of the split line ("home" for the national system) to the help-side baseline corner or alternatively to foul line extended. Dribble and kick style offense provides a different set of obstacles for the defence. Often the dribbler effects side penetration (from the side of the key) getting past the ON-BALL defender and forcing the help to commit before making the pass to a help side shooter; again forcing an effective help and closeout technique. Effective penetration to the baseline and the subsequent rotations could lead to a longer closeout from the second rotating defender when they are on the split line and required to close out to help-side corner after the initial help defender rotates to the dribbler.

As we extend the teaching of the help-side rotations, the techniques for close outs relative to position continues to be highly important as an OFF-BALL teaching responsibility.

The help line defence can consist of two or three OFF-BALL defenders who have three key principle responsibilities; being in position to give help, rotate and defend their player. The help line, because of the relationship to the ball and the distance of the offensive player will mean that each flat triangle for each help-side receivers, will in fact be different and as a result will be a staggered line. The shape of the help line continually adjusts depending on the perceived amount of help required from the lowest player and with the top helpline defender anticipating their rotation to the next open player. When help rotation begins the second defensive player closest the basket in the help line (normally Top) must drop but also decrease the length of the potential close out on any weak-side pass. Techniques for good vision and stance are required throughout all help line rotations.

An effective strategy is required when any penetration moves through the split line. This creates one of the more difficult help rotations as we are changing the help and ball-side responsibilities. For example, in continued side penetration the original help line defenders must adjust from help to denial positions or successfully defend cutting action from their original offensive player. Whilst at the same time the defenders on the original ball-side must rotate and establish a new help line. Effective ON-BALL defence in this situation combined with correct identification of help requirements are essential in any devised strategy.

The national system has two clear communication responsibilities for the help line players; we refer to these positions as "home" and "top". All penetration, passing and cutting action is neutralised by the effectiveness of the help line to communicate and fill these positions. Home is the defender of the lowest player on the help-side and top being the second lowest player on the help side.

With the inclusion of the charge circle by FIBA it is even more important to establish effective OFF-BALL positioning. The direction of help and the reads of when to help (especially from the baseline) will need greater refinement and teaching detail to prevent "blocking" situations during rotations.

ROTATING TO A DIFFERENT PLAYER

Determining which of the four OFF-BALL defenders should help through rotation to the beaten ON-BALL defender, and deciding when to help are further key principles underpinning the help line principles.

The closest player is often the best placed to rotate and help. Dropping to the line of the ball is a fundamental OFF-BALL requirement. Some coaches prefer a type of sagging defence to contain while others recognise the importance of pressure on the passing line and the receivers. Help is given through rotating onto the ball handler; as a consequence more than one OFF-BALL defender is forced to find a new player or position. From here successive rotations to different players will occur especially when long close outs follow the initial help and the offense has maintained good weak-side spacing. Help line defenders in this instance may have to temporarily "zone" up the help-side effectively covering two defenders until recovering teammates identify a new player or the skip pass has been made.

- **Rotating from helpline with timing.** The key here is that you only come to help if help is needed! Active defence anticipates and decides early to help and recognises when the help is needed. Successful help is a combination of positioning and an effective decision of when to help. The teaching detail is in the read to give help and how to go. The cue of when to help varies with different coaches and team philosophies, but the rotation must be committed. This becomes a balance between being able to anticipate whilst not over committing to help. Equally where the help line position is itself for coaching purposes in relation to the line of help, keyway markings and split line, varies with age and standard. The key principles for understanding are the line of the ball, identifying the driving line/lane and sliding along the line of the pass towards the ball. Help defenders need to anticipate the movement of the offense, these principles for the help line will aid both movement (anticipation) and responsibility (who and when)

As expressed in the previous section the perimeter receiver is normally spaced on the three point line for any ball reversal either at the point guard, high guard or wing position. There could be any combination of point guard, high guard, wing, high post, low post or help-side corner being filled if there are two offensive players on the ball side of the defence. So the situation can be challenging but can also be specific to particular team's offence.

Positioning and help versus baseline, sideline and middle penetration vary slightly for OFF-BALL defenders. These positions are still based on the flat triangle principle consisting of between two, three and four steps (or slides) from your defensive assignment while looking to help. The principle of space between the defender and their player becomes greater as the help line or the helper adjusts towards helping. This could initially be toward the line of the ball and ultimately could end in full help to the driving line.

The help line will typically have responsibility for two offensive players (normally wing and corner positions) when there are three players on the ball side (normally a post situation) However this depends on the spacing and alignment of the offence.

In the pick and roll offense we normally see a two man game on the ball side and three on the help side, including a well spaced shooter on the three point line. This stretches the help line. Three players can be considered to be on the help line but proximity to the ball (spacing) will determine who helps or rotates.

Tactically good offensive teams will distort the line and isolate the baseline help line defender to determine their options. This ultimately means the help line will become specific at senior and youth levels with regards to rotations and help.

- **Defending the on ball screen involves help and rotation.** The increased use of dribble penetration in modern basketball necessitates effective defence both on and off the ball. It is becoming more of a tactic to set an ON-BALL screen to help aid dribble penetration.

The ON-BALL screen and its associated dribble penetration and kick require excellent defence standards; including better OFF-BALL position and understanding. Currently the use of the ON-BALL screen penetration and pass demand better defensive solutions nationally. At the international level our players need to adjust and understand the OFF-BALL responsibilities and options for help in team defence against the ON-BALL screen offence.

There are several collective ways to defend the ON-BALL screen listed in the Team defence master checklist. However the fundamental requirement is for the ON-BALL defender to get over the screen. This is achieved by being aware of the position of the screen and the direction taken by the dribbler; early communication is imperative. The preferred way to defend the ON-BALL is to send the dribbler away from the screen; however, if the dribbler does use the screen the ON-BALL the defender must make every effort in preparation to get over the top of the screen. They can be helped by the screen defender with a variety different (and player/situation specific) techniques and principles. Please also reference the ON- Ball section when determining the best technique to achieve this principle.

The ON-BALL defender can also go through the gap created between the screener and the screen defender. Alternatively the on ball defender can go under the screen defender (squeeze). The preference and success of each principle is situational. The British philosophy is for the ON-BALL defender to always prepare to go over the screen with varying amounts of help from the screen defender, along with early recognition and positioning from the help line.

- The screen defender plays an important help role for the on ball defender. Talk between team defenders is crucial. The screen defender has options which are preferential and sometimes situational.
- The screen defender can show hard and recover to delay the dribbler until the ON-BALL defender recovers.
- The screen defender can switch particularly if there is not a mismatch in speed and/or size.
- The screen defender can double/trap the dribbler allowing other help line defenders to rotate to help on the player rolling or diving to the basket.
- There are some other variations covered in the defensive checklist which would be considered tactically advanced.

The foundation to defending the screen and roll is based on the key concepts and principles explained earlier. Techniques will continue to develop as the success of the ON-BALL screen and subsequent penetration continues.

British Basketball coaches should coach the over the screen with a hard show and recover.

The switch should be explored by national teams once the over and show is mastered. All national teams must also have the ability to double/trap the dribbler and rotate effectively from the help line.

Successful defence of the ON-BALL screen will not be affected unless the initial ON-BALL defence technique is good and there is a superior understanding of the concepts and principles of the ON-BALL screen and roll or flare. Having an active and confident help line ready to anticipate any rotation will make defending the ON-BALL screen a team defensive effort rather than simply the ON-BALL defenders responsibility to get over the screen.

While defending the ON-BALL screen attention is specifically required to any subsequent dribble penetration. The initial dribble penetration and kick off the ON-BALL screen forces help and rotation and inevitably leads to a further dribble penetration option. This cycle of successive dribble penetrations is dependent on effective closeouts and limiting the number of effective dribble penetrations per possession. This must be understood and practiced at team training. Understanding of where the penetration comes from will often determine the help line responsibilities and the likely offensive receivers. The help line needs to be well positioned to defend the 3pt shot as well as help on the dribble penetration.

- **Full court, half court and transition team defence have the same basic concepts.** All OFF-BALL defensive situations are based on same fundamental OFF-BALL concepts and the principles will stay consistent. Fundamentally, whether its full court or half court team man to man defence this will be the case. The principles for full court man to man defence and OFF-BALL positioning are the same but the spacing is greater and more challenging. Ultimately OFF-BALL defence is superfluous if there is no ON-BALL defence pressure and containment. The various phases of team defence in the full court will require techniques such as run and jump and trapping to be continually developed.

Defending the fast break or fast break defence is also often referred to as transition defence. In the transition defence, containing the ball, sprinting to the line of the ball and to the basket (home) defensive position are the key drivers. Rotations are simply longer with less set position and greater ball movement options because of the space available to the offense. The ability of defence to hedge and recover to put doubt into the ball handlers mind is also more important in transition defence.

Coaches of all levels are encouraged to develop and implement an effective transition defensive strategy. Defence transition can be a controlled positional situation or simply a scramble situation. In the controlled fast break defence from a missed shot the team organisation is for players (normally three) to rebound offensively, also cover the outlet/dribble nearest player and finally to protect the basket with the first player to get back. This is normally referred to as safety. These become nominated responsibilities based on positions and they are all OFF-BALL responsibilities.

Scramble transition defence is the team defence off the ball when the fast break defence cannot be established (e.g. when there is a passing turnover). Encouraging players to recognise the importance of an immediate defensive emphasis at the point of transition is a key component for us to raise standards of all OFF-BALL defensive ability nationally. Improving this aspect will remove the ease of scoring in the open court typically seen at junior club level; the results will be improved half court offensive and subsequently OFF-BALL defence.

The national system for scramble transition defence is concerned with early ball pressure and containment with the establishment of the first help line position (home) or safety position. Transition defence principles are a crucial aspect for an effective strategy in controlling game tempo. This strategy requires junior players to come through the levels of competition with an early understanding of rotations and responsibilities to the ball you man and help line principles.

Using the full court in training can be more challenging for juniors and will require effort and technical execution of the concepts and principles; including basic adjustments for the ball you man position. The challenge initially requires better footwork, positioning and a higher intensity of effort. If the flat triangle and key principles of defence relating to spacing and movement are not understood and successfully implemented in the half court there is less likely hood that a full court man to man team defence will be successful. Ensuring that our youngest aged players at U12 and U14 experience full court defence in both man to man and in zone pressing is also encouraged rather than staying solely with a sagging man to man defence. Full court pressing is recommended as an aid to player development but should only be applied to help player development not belittle opposition teams. Full court zone pressing should not be used in an unsportsmanlike manner to games where there is a great disparity in ability levels. Shell drill can be a good training drill and can be extended into three quarter and full court man to man defensive teaching.

Creating pressure through good team defence is an important capability for any team and ON-BALL pressure is paramount to creating effective defence. However, the ability for OFF-BALL defence to maintain pressure is ultimately where the effectiveness of team defence is created. The first stage is to contain the offence individually and collectively. Pressure is then increased either for specific possessions, phases or throughout the whole game. Ultimately there is a choice of tactics to achieve a stop or lower the oppositions shooting opportunities and percentage. Tactically presses or denial can be applied and then taken off at various stages of a game. Full court and half court man to man, half court zone or full court zone presses (or derivatives thereof) are all tactical team defence options which will require a lot of planning, understanding and practice by players with a good understanding of off ball defence positioning, help and rotations to a different player.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS?

How do you control a somewhat uncontrollable dynamic with unpredictable movement associated with OFF-BALL defence?

UNDERSTAND THE BASIC CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES

- Firstly we start with the basics of what we know or have as established as key basics or principles of defence. Secondly the coach must look for patterns and situations to defend and recreate them in training and finally the good coach will attempt to simplify the complex aspects into meaningful units that are understood by the player.
- We can use breakdown drills to coach the four basic concepts and the associated principles for OFF-BALL defence. Using two player teams for (2v2) then 3 man teams for (3v3) for ball side defensive situations followed by ball side and help-side will present good learning opportunities for coaching the basic OFF-BALL concepts and key principles.

- After using two on two and three on three we should extend to four on four teams which will incorporate ball-side and help-side positioning and involving the four basic defensive concepts and followed by the specifics of each principle which will provide a good learning environment for most aspects of OFF-BALL defence and ON-BALL pressure (4v4 shell drill).
- Shell drill becomes a key teaching tool but it is the detail within the drill in terms of principle and technique execution that will determine the success of the drill. Coaches should work consistently to develop understanding in their players. “The drill is not the drill. The drill is how well you perform every aspect of the drill ”
- Ultimately 5 man teams working in “constrained”, “conditioned” or limited drills will provide a controllable framework to coach the dynamics of OFF-BALL defence (e.g. a no dribble scrimmage game concentrating on the line of the pass, denial and close outs).
- Finally defending common yet specific offensive sets through establishing positioning, responsibility, help responsibilities and confirming rotations. This will ensure our British players understand OFF-BALL and team defence.
- Coaches can refer to both the Offence concepts master checklist and the Defence master checklist for planning and understanding defensive situations, concepts principles and techniques.
- From this basic platform of concepts and principles coaches can develop their own philosophies or “must do rules” on defence and determine technique preferences. However remember that any such rules beyond the mastery of the principles are advancement or extension rather than a substitute for the concepts and principles for learning OFF-BALL defence. The national system will have its preferences which may vary to clubs because of the level of competition.
- All principles are designed to help the OFF-BALL defender understand their role and help their team, however there will continue to be an evolution of these principles and techniques specific to what is occurring with specific offence.
- For British Basketball to be successful we must be consistent in approach through firstly understanding the basics of these what’s and how’s and then coach the when and why of OFF-BALL defence. British Basketball coaches should build from these key concepts, principles and techniques as the platform to improve OFF-BALL defence.

BUILD TEAMWORK AND A POSITIVE ATTITUDE INTO OFF-BALL DEFENCE

- Attitude by players must be positive to defence. We must be proactive as coaches and clubs. Use your team defensive system (including OFF-BALL pressure) to dictate terms to the offence, force the ball towards the sideline/baseline, pressure the ball and the *line of the pass* and *bump* cutters & screeners. Generally be disruptive off the ball, stopping or disrupting the offence from doing what it plans.
- Get the ball: defence finishes when we have the ball. Defence finishes with blocking out, securing the rebound and advancing the ball in transition (if not before). All training sessions should ensure this is a competitive outcome.
- Team Talk – players off the ball will constantly inform their teammates of their position and ability to help with penetration and screens. We will always communicate more than the offense!
- Defensive teams are always working and rebuilding collectively after any forced rotation, the defence needs to “rebuild” itself. This means that even with cross match ups players must

get back into a strong team defensive formation. A big player may be now asked to guard a small player and has to have the ability to contain the penetration even if it is for a small period of time. Likewise a smaller player has to be able to fight a big man both in the post and on a flash cut.

ALL JUNIOR PLAYERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND OFF-BALL DEFENCE KEY CONCEPTS

- Vision: see the ball and your man – when in help position, each defender maintains split vision of both the ball and their specific attacker. Prioritise seeing the ball over seeing your man. The ball is what matters most.
- Move when the ball moves - all players must react to the ball by moving as the ball moves. Jumping to the ball and back to the player staying ball-side and basket-side of their attacker.
- Help (rotation) is only given when penetration has occurred (i.e. ON-BALL defence has been beaten).
- Rotating to another player requires communication, timing, and closing out techniques.

THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FLAT TRIANGLE OF BALL YOU MAN PRINCIPLE

- Effective OFF-BALL position principle is the key. Understanding the line of the pass and being able to deny through being a hand or a head in the passing lane will lead to proactive OFF-BALL defence.
- This will include good split vision between ball and man being marked.
- The defender should still be one step off the line of the pass in order to best close out to their player on any skip or reversal pass.
- Off the ball defence should be more in the line of the pass against passing teams.
- We must still continue to teach defence against both the pass and the dribble. An OFF-BALL defender must know how to defend both individually and combined.
- The baseline help defender (now for the National system called the home defender) is often digging in too deep and over committing to the split line; well before penetration against the ball defender is achieved.
- The proximity of the defender to the offensive player has changed because of the 3 point shot (from under U16's onwards) but the flat triangle and help rotations are still the critical elements of OFF-BALL defence.

THE HELP LINE PRINCIPLE

- Position: enhanced understanding of the application of the flat triangle principles is necessary.
- The flat triangle is firstly the line of the pass, secondly with the defender normally two steps up the line of the pass towards the ball and away from the receiver, and finally one step off the line of the line of the pass.
- The ability to deny the pass (through being one step off the line) is something that has not been well taught in our players. We are normally sagging to help and positioning deeper

towards the basket and off the line of the pass as we consider helping on the dribble penetration. Our defence is normally not aggressive with a consistent philosophy of being in the lanes for denial of the pass. Combined with the excessive amount of over dribbling (refer to use of the dribble) the need to defend the pass at junior level has diminished. Therefore denial of the pass with the ability still to help the dribble needs to be re-emphasised. The flat triangle position is a guide but often defenders and coaches have become lost in terms of OFF-BALL positioning in order to help.

- Pressure OFF-BALL defence demands positioning for both the denial of pass and help on dribble penetration. While some may argue that this is not possible it should be remembered that the positioning of the four OFF-BALL defenders is relative to the ball and is not the same for each. One or maybe two of the OFF-BALL defenders are in the better position to help on the dribble and against the dribble drive-kick concept we have to defend the pass anyway because that is the intent of the dribble drive kick tactic.
- The help line can have two or three defenders with the highest defender in a three man help line will normally defend the ball above the foul line.
- Determining the position of the ball determines the line of the help defenders. If the ball is to one side and there is one other player on the ball-side there will be three help-side defenders.
- Normally a team is required to defend a three or a two man situation on help-side defence creating a two or three man help line.

WHO, WHEN AND WHERE TO ROTATE AND HELP ON DRIBBLE PENETRATION

- Understanding who the first line of help is and who the second line of help is (in a two player line of help) will depend on where the ball is situated.
- For the national system the two descriptors for the positions that are the two primary rotations in help are home and top.
- The top of the help line is the player normally at the top of the keyway as effectively we are zoning in help.
- The home is the baseline help defender, typically defending the lowest offensive player on the help-side. These positions should be differentiated and understood.
- The top defender normally is matched up on foul line extended or below and has help rotation on baseline, side penetration as well as middle penetration. They will get help from the high defender if there is one or from the rotating beaten on ball defender.
- The home defender normally has a low post or corner shooter coverage as well as help on baseline and side penetration.
- Rotation is normally top to home and high to top or recovering beaten ON-BALL defender to top.
- The beaten ON ball defender should rotate to a new player unless a trap is being applied. It is most likely that it will be the top man's original matchup on the help side.
- Help and rotation on defence is only given when penetration has occurred (i.e. ON-BALL defence has been beaten).

COACH AND TEACH THE PHYSICAL MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES OF OFF-BALL DEFENCE

- The ability to hold a defensive stance while in help position and react quickly is a physical competency.
- An increased emphasis on the development of physical abilities so that players are able to hold a defensive stance and close out and contain well.
- Teaching appropriate balance footwork and movement. This will involve teaching and drilling stance and the lateral push slide (for approx three slides) continual movement from step or run into stance.
- OFF-BALL defenders should stay in stance and reposition through stepping but preferably through sliding.
- Defenders should be coached to slide in their defensive stance up and down the line of the pass in the flat triangle while the line of the pass remains the same.
- Stepping forward or backwards in a stance from the line of the pass is also a movement technique.

CORRECT AND MASTER THE CLOSEOUT TECHNIQUE.

- Establish a short close out technique as well as an adjustment for a long close out. Defending a shooter is a fundamental ON-BALL defence technique.
- Defending a shooter coming off a screen (normally at U16's, U18's and seniors) is an OFF-BALL responsibility and technique. Firstly a player can follow the shooter and force the shooter to curl. This will involve the defender of the screener also to help. Secondly a player can go under the screen and force the shooter to flair away from the screen. A player can switch with the screener's defender.
- The close out action once the screen is navigated is basically the same as the ON-BALL close out technique and ends in a good stance on the close out to a shooter the use of the hand position to contest/disrupt the shot is also important.

DEFENDING SCREENS PRINCIPLES

- Team defence and particularly OFF-BALL defence in defending screens requires team work as players look to help and rotate on penetration and also navigate and defend screens to defend cutters.
- Players should be taught multiple ways to defend the player using the screen. Learning how to screen and use a screen correctly will actually help a player learn how to defend the screener and cutter correctly. These should be coached equally well.

DISRUPT THE SCREENER PRINCIPLE

- The screen defender "pushes" the screener away and towards the sideline so that the cutter defender can go under the screen.

- Pushes screener away towards the basket from the cutter so cutter defender can go over the screen.
- Finally they can hug, push or squeeze the screener creating space for the cutter defender to come under him in closing out to the cutter.
- Effective talk or communication is essential in this form of team defence.

NAVIGATING THE SCREEN PRINCIPLE

- The screen defender has a role to play in helping the cutter defender; basically they can show help, delay or bump the cutter and recover to their man. Alternatively they can step off the screener and allow the cutter defender to come through between themselves and the screener.
- Navigating the screen as a cutter defender it is also important to understand the defensive techniques for defending a straight curl or flare cut. The “Lock and trail” technique is used for following in the footsteps of a cutter who uses a screen to “turnout” to the perimeter.
- These techniques are drilled for straight cuts, curl cuts and flare cuts with differing points of emphasis for each situation

SCREEN DEFENDER SHOWS HELP PRINCIPLE.

- The screen defender must help the cutter defender as they navigate the screen. Generally this is through a hard show where the screen defender acts as a temporary ON-BALL defender before rotating back to the screener. This must be coached for good execution of technique. All levels and age groups where screens are used (e. g U16’s upwards) should teach this principle and technique well.

SCREEN DEFENDER SWITCHES PRINCIPLE

- The screen defender has the option to help and recover or switch onto the cutter. The cutter defender switches to the screener which could result in a mismatch. The techniques for switching need to be well coached to ensure success but an aggressive switch with good ON-BALL techniques may buy time for the switch to occur effectively. All coaches should coach and drill this principle particularly at levels where there is not a significant mismatch advantage to the offence.

DEFENDING THE ON BALL SCREEN

- There are several collective ways to defend the ON-BALL screen listed in the defensive master checklist.
- The fundamental requirement is for the ON-BALL defender to get over the screen. This is achieved by being aware of the position of the screen and the direction taken by the dribbler.

- Force away from the screen. Another way to defend the ON-BALL is to send the dribbler away from the screen. However if the dribbler does use the screen the on ball defender must make every effort in preparation to get over the top of the screen.
- Navigate the ON-BALL screen. The ON-BALL defender can also go through the gap between the screener and the screen defender. Alternatively the ON-BALL defender can go under the screen defender. The preference and success of each principle is situational.
- The British Philosophy is for the ON-BALL defender to always prepare to go over the screen with help from the screen defender and also the help line.
- Disrupt and help from the screen defender. The screen defender plays an important help role for the ON-BALL defender. Talk is crucial. The screen defender has options which are preferential and sometimes situational. The screen defender can show hard and recover to delay the dribbler until the ON-BALL defender recovers. The screen defender can switch particularly if there is not a mismatch in speed and or size. The screen defender can also double/trap the dribbler allowing other help line defenders to rotate to help the player rolling or diving to the basket. There are some other variations covered in the defensive checklist which would be considered tactically advanced.
- Successful defence of the effect of the on ball will not be affected unless on ball defence technique is good and there is a good understanding of the concepts and principles of the on ball screen and roll or flare.
- The help line must help and rotate on penetration. An active and confident help line ready to anticipate any rotation will make defending the ON-BALL a team defensive effort rather than simply the ON-BALL defenders responsibility to get over the screen.
- While defending the ON-BALL screen and specifically any subsequent dribble penetration must be understood, experienced and improved. The understanding of where the penetration comes from will often determine the help responsibilities. The help line needs to be well positioned to defend the 3pt shot as well as help on the dribble penetration.
- British Basketball options:
 - Over the screen with a hard show by the screen defender. British Basketball coaches should coach the over the screen with a hard show and recover. The switch should be explored by national teams once the over and show is mastered.
 - Double/trap by the screen defender onto the dribbler (with rotations). All national teams must also have the ability to double/trap the dribbler and rotate effectively from the help line.

A REDUCED USE OF ZONE DEFENCE AT JUNIOR LEVEL

- Learn effective man to man help defence. Players can 'hide' or learn bad habits in a zone defence.
- A commitment by coaches to full court as well as half court man to man defence. So that players are forced to move anticipate and rotate with good talk.
- If and when playing Zone understand that it as a secondary team defence.
- As such we must ensure that the mentality is that we "play man to man out of zone" thereby ensuring we are working to the same defensive team principles of single on ball coverage, effective footwork for close outs and good split line vision and rotations.

HERE'S WHAT COACHES ARE SAYING:

"It is fundamental to establish the correct defensive positioning whilst the ball is moving through the air and not once it has arrived in our opponents' hands."

Ettorie Messina

"In the UK for many years we have taught help principles that have now, in the modern game, become obsolete. It is time to change our mindset and philosophy to allow our players to learn revised and new principles which will allow us to compete at the highest level."

Tony Garbelotto (BBL championship winning coach)

"Defending 5 out or 4 out penetration drive and particularly the on ball penetrate and kick game is our key defensive challenge at the international level. Getting over the ON-BALL screen, our OFF-BALL positioning, effective rotations and the technique of the close out become the key to success in defending the pick and roll."

Warwick Cann, British Basketball Head of Performance

"The pick and roll and penetrate and kick game are very popular at all league and championship levels. Defence must be more capable in defending this tactic if you want success."

Tom Maher, GB Senior Women's Coach

"Defence wins championships."

Multiple coaches!!

"The first step in order to build a good team defence is for the player to learn the correct positioning that he/she must have in front of the player he/she is defending, in relation to both the attacking players position on the court and where the ball is."

Ettorie Messina

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

- Change our mindset and equally focus our defensive principles to allow our players to learn and value team defence. This will include OFF-BALL positioning and rotation to help.
- Develop a coaching mindset that restricts opposition teams particularly at the international junior level. This will become a priority for national teams. Defence targets for each quarter will be established. This will become a team key performance indicator for success.
- Use your team defensive system (including OFF-BALL pressure) to dictate terms to the offence, force the ball towards the sideline/baseline, pressure the ball and the line of the pass and bump cutters & screeners. Generally be disruptive off the ball, stopping or disrupting the offence from doing what it plans.
- Be disruptive OFF the ball as well as ON-BALL. Encourage active hands and highlight deflections as an indicator of intensity and good team defence.

- Defensive team concepts, principles and techniques will be referenced in the team defence master checklist. These will be used for coaching for understanding and situational OFF-BALL drilling.
- A common approach to teaching the shell drill with established key principles and teaching progressions will be developed for all national development programs.
- A consistent approach in teaching the OFF-BALL defensive principles. This includes stance, help positioning, rotations, and defence against cuts and screens as they occur at junior levels. Under U16's will feature some screening while U18's and Seniors will involve multiple screening situations to be defended. Screen defence should feature as needed at the U16 level but the basic screen defence concepts must be introduced at this level and refined and rehearsed at U18 level and beyond.
- Our players need to be able to defend multiple positions and situations. Talls and Bigs need the challenge of closing out, containing and then defending OFF-BALL on the perimeter.
- All players should be able to defend the post, the cutter and post up.
- Our players need to learn to anticipate and break the timing and rhythm of opponents' offensive play through individual and team disruptive techniques. Bumping cutters, being physical and using the slash arm motion to defend both cutters and posts will be encouraged.
- Trusting and highlighting that your team mate contains their opponent especially with dribble drive or 1v1 is a key aspect of OFF-BALL decision to help.
- Not over helping by trying to give help or rotate when help is not needed or penetration has not been effected.
- Adapting shell defensive principles vs dribble drive and kick offense, and defending the ON-BALL screen with penetration kick to 3pt shooters.
- More attention to close out footwork and starting position for the close out (i.e. from help or hedge and recover to the deep 3pt shooter).
- Coach closing out shorter vs dribble drive kick game. Coach both a short close out for containment and a long close out for pressure.
- Help line not digging in to the keyway to stop the dribbler when penetration has not been effected, especially when ball is above the foul line.
- Understanding there is baseline, side and middle penetration. Each of these situations need slight different positioning and timing rotations.
- Our team defence finishes when we have the ball. Defence finishes with blocking out, securing the rebound and advancing the ball in transition.
- The national system preference is to develop a more effective defensive stance with good vision; the open stance or "pistols position" when playing OFF-BALL to players on the help-side. So the help-side defence is open stance with an ability to reverse pivot and open up against dribble penetration when help and rotation is required.
- We wish to play more towards the line of the pass for both pass denial and for closer close out movement against the skip pass and flare cut. Generally the defender will be two steps (defensive slides) off the offensive player, with an ability to adjust to play closed denial one step off the player.
- National system coaches will be required to coach effective team offense specifically off ball movement in order to then be able to coach effective OFF-BALL defence. This also applies

to coaching the post concepts and principles in order to be effective in defending it as part of OFF-BALL defence.

- While our national system will force baseline we must understand that all dribble penetration does not always occur along the baseline and as a consequence the help positioning rotation and timing will require additional attention. Side penetration (side of the keyway, i.e. mid block or higher) requires adjusted positioning and judgement of the driving line and the passing line to the weak side corner shooter. Similarly when penetration occurs down the middle (through the foul line area) the home defender has to judge and decide when to come off the passing line and dropping to the driving line and stopping the drive for the layup. Each of these penetration areas offers options which must be defended and understood in terms of OFF-BALL defence positioning and movement.
- The national system has two clear communication responsibilities for the help line players; we refer to these positions as “home” and “top”. All penetration, passing and cutting action is neutralised by the effectiveness of the help line to communicate and fill these positions. Home is the defender of the lowest player on the weak-side and top being the second lowest player.
- British Basketball coaches should coach the over the screen with a hard show and recover.
- The switch should be explored by national teams once the over and show is mastered. All national teams must also have the ability to double/trap the dribbler and rotate effectively from the help line.
- Develop a coaching mindset that restricts opposition teams particularly at the international junior level. This will become a priority for national teams; defence targets for each quarter will be established. This will become a team key performance indicator for success.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CLUBS

- An increased emphasis on the development of physical abilities so that players are able to hold a defensive stance while in help position. Players are physically capable of reacting quickly and persistently in moving and adjusting in OFF-BALL situations.
- Commit to man to man defence and particularly developing full court man to man defence for these same reasons.
- A reduced use of zone defence at youth level so that players are forced to learn effective man to man help defence and cannot “hide” or learn bad habits in a zone defence.
- Utilise a variety of man to man defensive systems (e.g. full court, pressing run and jump, sagging man to man as a tactical change up in games), rather than resorting to a stand around quarter court zone.
- If and when playing zone understand that it as a secondary team defence. As such we must ensure that the mentality is that we “play man to man out of zone”. This will ensure that we are working to the same defensive team principles of single ON-BALL coverage, effective footwork for close outs and good flat triangle and help line position and rotations.
- Clubs should ensure that shell drill is developed every season throughout the progress through the age groups. Additionally adapt the shell defensive principles to practice defending dribble drive and kick offense.

- Clubs should refer to the Team defence master list to ensure your club has a consistent approach to defence. Clubs should also develop a consistent language base with their players for improved learning by using the British Basketball glossary of terms.
- Place an emphasis on defensive targets for competition. Encourage and educate players to value defence and the effect it has on performance outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHES

- Be proactive as coaches. Use your team defensive system (including OFF-BALL pressure) to dictate terms to the offence, force the ball towards the sideline/baseline, pressure the ball and passing lane, bump cutters and screeners. Stopping or disrupting the offence from doing what it plans.
- Coaches at club, school and regional level will be challenged improve our teaching of all breakdown drills associated to OFF-BALL defence.
- We need to re-define our help positions in relation to the ball. The old definitions of help when the ball is at a certain spot on the court can no longer exist. We need to re-define where a player is in relation to the ball and their man and we must learn to limit the early commitment to help the higher the level we are coaching.
- Talking! We must improve the ability of our players to effectively communicate the game whilst playing, especially important for all OFF-BALL concepts.
- Working with young players in defensive breakdown situations to teach anticipation. Encourage ability to break up the rhythm and timing of offensive play. The ability to hedge and recover by the OFF-BALL defender without committing to rotate but putting doubt into the mind of the offense s required.
- Establish defensive breakdown drills both full court and half court 2v2, 3v3, 4v4 situations including good on ball containment and correct OFF-BALL positioning progressing through the various screening and cutting situations.
- Use shell drill and extended to improve the process of our defence and effective OFF-BALL positioning help rotate and extend into run and jump extended defensive concepts.
- Establish and rehearse team defence principles to defend the ON-BALL screen and pick and roll offense at U16 and U18 and senior level.
- Basically we go over, through or under the screens depending on the situation and the coach's preference or philosophy. As a general rule over and through are the most accepted methods.
- U16 and U18 level coaches should spend an appropriate amount of time teaching in the post and how to defend it in terms of the concepts, principles and techniques listed in the Offence and Defence Master checklists.
- From the youngest of ages of U12 and U14 players should be taught how to defend the pass and cut correctly and routinely. Coaches at this level should also ensure that the offensive movement is included in the team offence and team session breakdown drills. This sets the tone for the continued progression of OFF-BALL defence in defending other movements without the ball; including defending the flash cut from the weak side. Learning to defend these three cuts at U12 and U14 levels and mastering them by U16's will establish a good platform for better systematic OFF-BALL defence.

- At U16 and U18 levels this then progresses or is immersed into defending teams who prefer continuity or set offence. Often cuts come off screens so teaching how to defend the "UCLA cut", "flex cuts" or "shuffle cuts" are then logical progressions for U16 and U18 club teams.
- British Basketball coaches should coach and prioritise the over the screen with a hard show and recover.
- Ensuring that our youngest aged players at U12's and U14's experience full court defence in both man to man and in zone pressing is also encouraged rather than staying solely with a sagging man to man defence.
- Full court pressing is recommended as an aid and challenge to player development but should only be applied to help player development not belittle opposition teams. Full court zone pressing should not be used in an unsportsmanlike manner to games where there is a great disparity in ability levels.
- Club coaches should take the challenge to coach full court man to man pressing defence to achieve the same results as full court zone presses. This will develop read and react by our off ball defenders.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Ensure team defence including OFF-BALL positioning and responsibility is understood by all school age players.
- Teach and preach man to man defence in all school competitions. Limit the use of keyway and half court zones
- Consider the recommendations for clubs and coaches particularly a reduced use of zone defence at school level so that players are forced to learn effective man to man help defence and cannot "hide" or learn bad habits in a zone defence.



Areas of Emphasis

POINT GUARD PLAY

- Define the attributes we seek in British Point Guards
- Use these attributes as the basis for identification and development of Point Guards
- Coaches must be prepared to develop the Point Guards
- A clear understanding of offensive capability
- A clear understanding of defensive capability

WHY EMPHASISE POINT GUARD PLAY

There is a perceived absence of point guards at various levels in British national junior teams. Comparisons at the European Championship level indicate our national team point guards are not as skilled as other nations. Great Britain teams are considered to have limited choices between players in the point guard position.

The attributes of ball security (minimising turnovers) and decision making have also been identified as issues and concerns for British basketball. These concerns are expressed in the footwork, passing, use of the dribble and offence sections of these Areas of Emphasis.

There is a common view that our identification and development of point guards needs to improve. As sometimes coaches are judging and selecting point guards exclusively by physical qualities such as height and speed or simply the best athlete rather than other attributes which are essential to point guard play. Leadership, technical skill levels tactical understanding and mental skills like temperament should all be considered. The allocation of players to positions in a basketball teams is always somewhat subjective and this is especially true while there is a desire for multi skilling of all players. However we need a degree of objectivity in allocating players to a position like the point guard position.

The reality is that the point guard position role exists especially at the higher levels and is a key aspect of any team at any level particularly at the senior competition level. There is no doubt that British basketball needs very good point guards of international standard.

So there are two issues at hand regarding point guards. Firstly they must be identified and secondly the issue of turnovers, skill level and decision making need to be addressed. There is both a positional deficiency for all national teams and an aspect of technical skills and tactical improvement.

Coaches vary in their beliefs about the development of point guards. These beliefs vary between a philosophy of 'nurture' and 'nature', and even the belief that you cannot really coach and develop a point guard (as it is an art) or you can (as it is a science). Some coaches' default to a position where they believe that point guards are born not made, these coaches could subsequently be guilty of not directing or developing point guard. All coaches should discuss .support or develop the player in the point guard position. These identification and development issues should be debated at all levels. Any belief cannot restrict our attempts to coach and develop point guards however it is often easier to say a player is not good enough and then look for another to replace them rather than develop what you have. Our potential for growth and improvement in this Area of Emphasis is immense.

A worst case scenario for British basketball is if we have out of control point guards and teams who are turnover prone and are not creative in their playmaking skills. We must identify and develop the next generation of British players.

By not having skilled point guards all teams performance will be limited at all levels. The risk is significant to the standard and quality of British basketball. Improving players' skill is paramount and none more so than the point guard skills. The emergence of the point guard is crucial for our international competitiveness

While our British game style needs improving undoubtedly the role and the skill level of point guards must be at the foundation level. If we want to develop a world class development system to improve our international competitiveness then the test of development will be the emergence of point guards in the next six years.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TECHNICAL POINTS?

A Point Guard is the one who makes their teammates better

For most high performance coaches the point guard is a specialist position in a late specialisation sport. For others it's a role for multiple players who have the necessary skill level and temperament to share the position. Irrespective of whether the role is a specialist or shared there are certain attributes which are needed in performing the role.

So who is suited to become a point guard? The point guard is normally an extrovert who can smile even in the most pressured situation. They are confident and very competitive to an extent that they hate losing. The true point guard understands that successful teams are WE more than ME. They as leaders often have a strong belief in themselves and their vision or goals are to be successful. They thrive under pressure which again earns respect from teammates and coaches.

There is no doubt that a true quality Point guard is a player who makes their teammates better through leadership and engagement.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS A LEADER THROUGH ENGAGEMENT OF THEIR TEAM MATES

The role associated with a point guard requires the respect from teammates. This is normally earned through time and trust in the leader. However the point guard must first and foremost lead themselves through their own confidence before leading others.

The role also requires good communication to solve issues on the court. To do this the player must be able to successfully engage all their teammates and work with the coach particularly in pressure situations. Effective communication comes through leadership. The point guard is a player who must be followed. The point guard must be a team player and ideally a great teammate the point guard earns respect from their teammates through a High work ethic and work rate.

It is a leadership position in the team and most coaches would identify with the idea of the role being a leader or second coach on the court. Players in this position must be very coachable.

ABILITY TO DRIVE TO BASKET TO SCORE

The point guard is often operating off the dribble in both a full court and a half court situation so the player must have the ability to drive to the basket and score against bigger players and in pressure situations. A point guard who is not a threat to drive will have increased defensive pressure placed on them affecting their vision and ability to organise the team and deliver the entry pass. This is core function and attribute of a successful player in this position. Aligned with this must be the ability to make free throws because the drive to the basket will attract pressure and fouls. The goal is an ability to shoot no less than 75% from the free throw line.

ABILITY TO "SHOOT THE RUNNER" AGAINST TALL DEFENDERS

As players progress through the junior then their senior career there is an increasing need to shoot the runner as an additional skill. This is because of the pressure created by taller players who create more defensive pressure around the basket and limit the route for the player to drive to score. Therefore the position and needs both techniques of driving to score through and past the defence and the ability to shoot on the run and over the rotating defence before they get to the driver. The second alternative is for the development of a consistent mid range jump shot off a dribble.

VISION, PASSING AND DRIBBLE PENETRATION WITH PASS

While dribbling driving and scoring tend to be the most easily identified skills, the real art is a vision of the floor. The ability to organise the team particularly on offence and to collectively move the ball through passing is an important attribute of a good team. The point guard should be a leader and benchmark for this passing skill for the team

The point guard must choose how to pass. This will ultimately lead to a choice between jumping to pass or deciding to land on two feet after penetration in order to have options to pass. The preference is to teach and encourage "TWO FEET IN THE PAINT" (jump/stride stop) technique. Passing and receiving are crucial in order to initiate full court and half court game. Passing and leading for the balls are key skills to overcome denial defence. They are skill prerequisites. Technically the player should be adept at being able to push pass with either hand, off the dribble.

Tactically if we improve this passing emphasis, then the Point Guard's passing will become more of a focus so that any team is not wholly dependent on the dribble to create team offence. The point guard needs both a good pass and good dribble as options for decision making against pressure. Better movement without the ball will create more space for the offence to move so the point guard must be able to lead and get open against the best pressing defences

THE POINT GUARD IS A KNOWLEDGEABLE STUDENT WITH STRONG MENTAL SKILLS

The point guard position requires special mental attributes which can be applied when playing the game. They understand the game; they understand their team and the strategy of tempo control as well as time and score situations. They are more about WE than ME. However the player in the role knows when the pressure is on that an attitude of "if it's to be it's up to me" is helpful.

The position's responsibilities include knowing the offence (offence principles) including the counters and knowing what the best play to run is and when to run it. They must understand and recognise mismatches and be able to get the ball to that player or to who's got the hot hand. Additionally recognising who hasn't been involved in the offence or who's in foul trouble for the opposition are tactical aspects requiring thought. Finally recognising how much time is on the clock and knowing the time and score are mandatory for the player filling the role. They know their teammates and their opponents' weaknesses and strengths and are able to improvise.

Young players often try to be scorers and neglect the aspect of bringing other players into the game, they neglect the art of passing and the other attributes which help define and discern the point guard role from other positions. Disappointingly many young players believe the only way to get noticed is to score points and develop single vision and develop a degree of selfishness. The true point guard displays strong mental attributes through preparedness not be motivated with a scoring first and foremost for them self. Attitude.

The point guard must have strong team commitment and a strong will to achieve through leadership and all round team skills. They are very alert and thinking players.

ABILITY TO MAKE THE THREE POINT SHOT CONSISTENTLY

At the junior level as a player progresses from U12's to U14's and U16's the opportunity to drive and score starts to lessen. From the U16's to 18's into senior levels the size of players and the amount of space to play in limit the opportunities experienced in earlier age groups. Team and individual defence becomes more of a priority which creates more pressure especially on the point guard, as teams base their game on defence as they start matching up more effectively on individual players. As a result

the drive is taken away and help is applied where and when it is most needed often neutralising the drive as a primary option.

The point guard role traditionally concerns itself with spacing on the perimeter and often above the three point line. So when the pass is made from the ball side to back on top or reversed as part of norm good team offence the opportunity and the ability of the point guard to take and make the there point shot becomes critical for team scoring.

Defence will play off a point guard and play them for the drive and will play off the point guard if they know the point guard will not take or make the 3pt shot. The point guard must be able to capitalise on this strategy. Often this maybe simply a set 3pt shot at the junior level but more pressured with less time at senior level.

Juniors at U14's U16's must be able to take and make the open 3pt shot when it is offered. Players at the U18's youth and senior levels who play the point guard position must be proficient with the 3pt shot. The point guard certainly can't be an offensive liability and should be capable of shooting 35% from the three point line.

A VERY GOOD DEFENDER AND A DEFENSIVE REBOUNDER

Firstly the point guard must be able to contain the opposition dribbler and increase the level of ON-Ball pressure particularly the ability to deny the opposition point guard in the last 10 seconds. Secondly they must be able to get OVER the ON-Ball screen and they must generally have the ability to be disruptive on defence.

The player must have very good physical fitness and the ability to repeated play pressure full court man to man defence.

Finally they should be a defensive rebounder because their point guard matchup will be converting to defensive transition and will not offensively rebound. Therefore the opportunity exists to be a free or roaming rebounder for our teams. All point guards have opportunity to become a good rebounder irrespective of size. Our British teams will need all five players playing team defence and on the rebound.

AN EXCEPTIONAL BALL HANDLER WHO IS THE MASTER OF THE DRIBBLE

The consummate point guard should be a master of the "speed dribble", the "control dribble" "retreat dribble", the various "crossover dribbles", full court moves on moves (at speed crossovers)and counter moves in the one on one situation with each hand. These are essential. A point guard by the time they graduate the junior levels of competition should master these dribble techniques.

Using exceptional dribbling technique and control the player should be the master of the pick and roll particularly at the youth and senior level. The point guard at U16's and U18's level should be able to split the defenders or turn the corner in the on ball screen.

The player needs to be able to dribble the ball effectively with each hand; this requires an extra amount of deliberate practice to strengthen the non dominant hand when dribbling. Equally point guards are required to make a series of combination moves with each hand. They must ensure they handle the ball without error. As players progress through the age groups they will make errors in the pursuit of improvement, Coaches should support the player in a positive manner at all times to aid their development as a point guard. They seek perfection but are not perfect.

The very good point guard will be able to beat their man off the dribble. In modern basketball a point guard cannot create anything for others if they can't create for themselves. The dribble is a key tool for the point guard.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS?

DEFINE THE ATTRIBUTES WE SEEK IN OUR POINT GUARDS

Strong mental characteristics; A point guard will be more likely to be extrovert than introvert. The best point guards have a degree of extrovert about them. Undoubtedly their character and mental skills are very important. They need to enjoy the challenge and understand that basketball is a game of mistakes and success. Our British point guard will never be able to have success if they are scared of making mistakes. So confidence, resilience and determination are characteristics that sit above technical ability in our search for very good point guards

- Specific technical and tactical attributes
 - Effective communicator through engagement of teammates as a leader.
 - Ability to drive to basket to score
 - Ability to shoot or develop the runner against tall defenders
 - Good Vision and passing including dribble penetration with kick
 - Will take and make (desire to improve) the three consistently-(cannot be an offensive liability)
 - A very good defender and a defensive rebounder
 - An exceptional ball handler (master of the dribble)

USE THESE ATTRIBUTES AS THE BASIS FOR IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF POINT GUARDS

These previously listed attributes are the work plan for skill development over time. Mastery of the skills and attributes are important for development. Through paying closer attention to the role and attributes of point guards we will more likely to identify and developing world class players who can compete with the best in the world.

COACHES MUST BE PREPARED TO DEVELOP THE POINT GUARDS

The development of Point guards should be debated and compared at all levels. Whether it is closest to nature rather than nurture debate, or science more than art should not stop us from developing strategies and programmes to better coach and develop point guards.

The fact is that the skills are learned and refined and developed over a long term period. Confidence and technical ability are the first stages but what we are concerned with is the development of effective point guards in the longer term. This will take time and will take diligence from coaches in identifying talent. Some researches would say a ten year or ten thousand hours of practice is the formula for the development of an expert point guard.

It takes time to master the skills required. It's at least a ten year quest (or 10000 hrs) for competency. It is not one year or one season that a player emerges or acquires the ability and skills. Any potential point guard will be required to have the ball in the hands far more often than just at team trainings and probably more than any other player in the squad. Players wanting to be the best at a young age will need to have the ball in their hands often. This should be

encouraged through highlighting the need and secondly prescribing challenging ball handling, dribbling activities and continual opportunities for one on one play that all challenge young players to improve their competency.

Our job as a coach is to make the point guard better at each and every step along the pathway. Helping them become the “Master of 8 seconds of offence” that are required to advance the ball out of the backcourt against all pressure defences.

CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY

Technically the Point guard must be able to beat their man off the dribble. They should develop their passing skills and be able to understand when and where to pass in a game situation. Additionally they must give up the ball through making the easy pass to involve other players. At times they will need the technical ability and mental ability to hold the ball and control the tempo for the team. They should be capable of making the open shot so they must be developed and practice as perimeter shooters. They must develop their range to the three point line and not just be dribble dependent offensive players. The coach plays a major role in creating this training and learning environment. Good communication, breakdown drills and effective coaching is what is required to develop very good point guards.

Tactically the point guard should know what and how the coach is thinking or planning to win the game. Identifying the type of game style and type of offence required specifically against this opposition i.e. any plays that are of particular interest to the coach and any mismatches that are likely. They need to have a clear understanding of this game plan. Coaches need to nurture this knowledge and select situations that will encourage this dialogue between the player and coach e.g. Pregame individual meetings and numerous discussions at training during preparation should occur.

The coach can also develop the player by asking them questions after a game or at the next training session debrief. Discussion points like time remaining and knowing HOW MANY TIMEOUTS are available in tight situations are points for review and understanding. Discussion through review will help the Point Guard when they are next on the court.

At training scrimmage scenarios should be constantly assessed for decision making and execution. The Point guard will become a major focus for review with the intention of developing the player. The use of vision or performance analysis away from the session will also aid development especially when shared in a positive manner with the coach.

Inclusiveness of the point guard regarding tactical aspects through constant consultation will also help develop the point guard knowledge and understanding. Conversely the point guard should be engaging the coach in conversation for the same reasons.

As a leader the point guard should be gathering players into huddles to reinforce what is needed and constantly interacting with teammates. As coaches we may have to highlight and encourage this imitative by the point guard with the other players.

CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY

Technically the point guard cannot just be a player who contributes mainly on offence. As a minimum an average point guard should be able to hold their own as a defender. However a good point guard must be a specialist in creating pressure on the opponent and take away their opponents' penetration. This is the “natural match up” for any game point guard, playing another skilful and quick player.

The point guard should be expected to scout the opposition point guards skill level, their weaknesses and preferences

Coaches should ensure the point guard works diligently on defense at all times and that they do not limit their impact through not applying themselves on defense. Using substitutions in a game will help maintain quality rather than playing the best player all the time and tolerating poor defence.

Tactically with offence, they should be made aware of the game plan and requirements defensively against each and all opposition.

Good communication will help facilitate the necessary understanding to be a key decision maker during any game.

HERE'S WHAT COACHES ARE SAYING

“Great point guards are great passers of the ball .They have great vision and see what is happening on the floor”

Chris Finch, GB Men’s coach

“The point guard is the expert passer and ball handler who can drive to the basket, shoot the runner against bigger defenders and can make the three when needed. Defensively they can stop the other point guard full court and will rebound as the free player on the boards. Give me that technical ability and I am a happy coach. Give me that as well as a smart point guard and I become a very good coach!”

Tom Maher, GB Women’s coach

“Every team if it wants to be successful must have talented players .Every successful team must have key roles or positions filled including a solid bench who know their role. However every championship winning team relies on a great point guard “

Warwick Cann, British Basketball Head of Performance

“In modern basketball you cannot create anything for others if you can’t create for yourself. A point guard must be able to create for themselves and others”

Henrik Dettmann Finland Men’s Head coach



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

- Coaches and selectors should understand the characteristics, attributes and skills required for the position when selecting national or development squads
- Encourage all players in the development and performance pathway to do individual practice with ball handling and dribbling specifically so the set about becoming a master of the dribble.
- Coach and teach the point guard craft to all prospective lead guards in all representative level teams starting with the regional teams. Give feedback about the point guard attributes and the player's performance.
- Ensure all prospective point guards do not over dribble or over drive for scoring options. Therefore we should ensure they are encouraged to take the open three point shot at all age levels and in all point guard type situation,
- Ensure we coach and develop passing with either hand, off the dribble with either hand
- Drill and coach good decision making and skill in the full court particularly the key the fast break principle of driving lane / passing lane.
- Coach Understanding especially the W's in both half and full court
 - Who to get the ball to
 - When to get it to them
 - Where do they need to receive it
- Educate our point guards and assist their understanding tempo control and how to close out a game. Highlight it I scrimmages and breakdown games. Use vision analysis at training.
- Educate them on when to push the ball. Knowing when to not push the ball and instead running your best set to your best players
- Use time and score scenarios or scoring runs against us to coach the control phase after always after two bad possessions in a row, Use vision and circumstances in games or training to highlight the situation.
- Coach the pick and roll for understanding so that the point guard's read the situation effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CLUBS

- Recognise talent and attributes in players who may become that special point guard at senior level. Develop them systematically and don't restrict players who are small to playing the position.
- Use vision analysis to develop point guards. Show all player but particularly point guard game tape and vision on playing, spacing and decision making and use of various techniques to dribble pass and shoot
- Be prepared to invest more time into the point guard as a student of the game. The point guard will have a strong belief in them self so they should be understood and encouraged avoiding clashes of will or dismantling of these prime characteristics.
- Refer to the individual skills master checklist to ensure all dribble techniques and offensive and defensive skills are coached
- The evolution of a player in the point guard position may be trialled at junior level and, could be shared role between players within a game. The potential players will probably be emerging by the U16's level at latest.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHES

- Use breakdown drills and scrimmages to coach players to see the court and apply their skills.
- Extend and overload dribbling drills to ensure progression of dribbling skills and continually monitor the balance between over dribbling and effective ball movement for advantage. Consider prescribing different dribbling drills for the point guard through MAKE ALL their BALL HANDLING DRILLS more challenging.
- Accept errors in techniques in the effort towards eventual mastery. Encourage don't discourage effort. Monitor assist to turnover ratios as a coaching and teaching tool only.
- Consider the "use of the dribble" recommendations. A point guard should be an expert with the tools of the dribble but don't always have to use them in team offence.
- Prepare our teams and specifically our point guards to play 16 seconds of good offence with good decisions not quick decisions. Set game scenarios and evaluate for effectiveness.
- Development program coaches should review all players' skills and attributes with the intention of identifying the best potential for this position. Understand the desired attributes of the role.
- Players at the U14's level should give opportunity to multiple players in the role or during the game. Players at the U12's level should just be developing skills in all players not roles.

- Ensure decision-making practice in fastbreak drills by having number advantages (2v1, 3v2, 4v3, etc.) at the younger ages U15's, U16's ensure that dribbling and ball handling are practiced at every session for junior players.
- Refer to the use passing and receiving sections to compliment the point guard area of emphasis.
- Encourage the player to STUDY TAPE of the great point guards. Have it available.
- Allow the point guard to make decisions and then evaluate the outcome of those decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Give all and many players the opportunity to play the role of a point guard especially at the sampling and early specialising years.
- Commit to a style that encourages team passing with ball and player movement.
- Commit to a practice routine where dribbling and passing is always practised equally.
- Recognise when you have a point guard who has potential for the next level. Encourage them to practice daily while at school.
- Open up courts for daily skills practice. The emerging great player is in need of extra training time.

Basketball Glossary



Advantage play: Offensive situations (individual or team) that benefit the attacking team.

Advance step: A step in which the defender's lead foot steps toward their man, and her back foot slides forward.

Agility: ability to change direct quickly in a basketball game or drill

Assist: A pass thrown to a player who immediately scores.

Baby-Hook: A hook shot taken from close to the basket and shot over the players own body

Backcourt: The half of the court a team is defending. The opposite of the frontcourt. Also used to describe parts of a team: backcourt = all guards (front court= all forwards and centres)

Back cut: See cuts, Backdoor cut

Backdoor cut: See cuts

Back screen: See Screens

Ball fake: A sudden movement by the player with the ball intended to cause the defender to move in one direction, allowing the passer to pass in another direction. Also called "pass fake."

Ball handling (Familiarisation): Feel for the ball stationary and on the move.

Ball quick: Moving the ball from one position to another while in triple threat stance

Ball reversal: Passing the ball from one side of the court to the other.

Ball screen: See Screens

Ball side: The half of the court (if the court is split lengthwise) that the ball is on. Also called the "strong side." The opposite of the help side.

Ball side defence: Defence in the half court on the side where the ball. This is determined by the split line dissecting the court vertically.

Banana cut: See cuts

Bank shot: A shot that hits the backboard before going through the net.

Baseball pass: A one-handed pass thrown over arm from the shoulder like a baseball.

Baseline: The line that marks the playing boundary at each end of the court. Also called the "end line."

Baseline drive - a drive (see below) made close to the attacking end line of the court.

Baseline out-of-bounds play: The play used to return the ball to the court from outside the baseline along the opponent's basket.

Basketball position: another name for a general stance of feet shoulder width apart and posture in a half squat ready to play defence or the basis of the triple threat position

Basket cut: See cuts.

Blast cut: See cuts.

Blindside screen: See Back screen.

Block: (1) A violation in which a defender steps in front of a dribbler but is still moving when they collide. Also called a "blocking foul."

(2) To tip or deflect a shooter's shot, altering its flight so the shot misses.

(3) The small painted square on the floor next to the basket just outside the lane.

Block out: To make contact with an opposing player to establish rebounding position between the player and the ball. Also called "box out".

Bounce pass: A pass that is made via the floor before reaching the receiver.

Box-and-one: A combination defence in which four defenders play zone in a box formation, and the fifth defender guards one player man to- man.

Box out: See block out.

Box set: A formation in which four players align themselves as the four corners of a box. Often used for baseline out-of-bounds plays.

Bump the cutter: To step in the way of a cutter who is trying to cut to the ball for a pass.

Buttonhook: to move in one direction, turn sharply and double back. Normally a Post Up move.

Catch: the act of receiving the ball from a pass

Catch and Face: Where a player on receipt of a pass turns fully to the basket so that their face and shoulders point squarely at the basket. Facing the basket in a triple threat position.

Centre: (1) The position in which a player, usually the tallest player on the team, stays near the basket.
(2) The player who plays that position.

Centre circle: The painted circle at midcourt used for the opening jump ball.

Charge: (1) A violation when a player with the ball runs into a defender who is standing still. Also called a "charging foul."
(2) To commit that violation.

Chest pass: An air pass thrown from the passer's chest to a teammate's chest. It can be a one-handed or two-handed pass.

Chin the ball: To hold the ball with both hands under the chin, elbows out, to protect the ball.

Clear-Out Play: A set play designed to clear an area of the court of all offensive players without the ball so the player with the ball can play 1-on-1.

Closing out: When a defender sprints to guard a player who has just received a pass.

Combination defence: A defence that is part man-to-man and part zone. Also called a "junk defence."

Concept/s: the thinking framework of a relevant body of knowledge

Conditioned: Where a drill or task has particular elements removed or added to focus on a particular aspect, e.g. no dribble or within a fixed time etc

Constrained: As for the meaning of conditioned

Containment: the act of slowing and stopping the ball from moving through a dribble or pass to an intended area on the court.

Containing the dribbler: Slowing and/ or stopping the dribbler from getting past the defender

Continuity offense: A sequence of player and ball movement that repeats until a good shot is created.

Control dribble: A dribble manoeuvre in which the player keeps their body between the defender's body and the ball.

Crossover dribble: A dribble manoeuvre in which a player dribbles the ball so they can change the ball from one hand to the other.

Cross screen: A movement in which a player cuts across the lane to screen for a teammate.

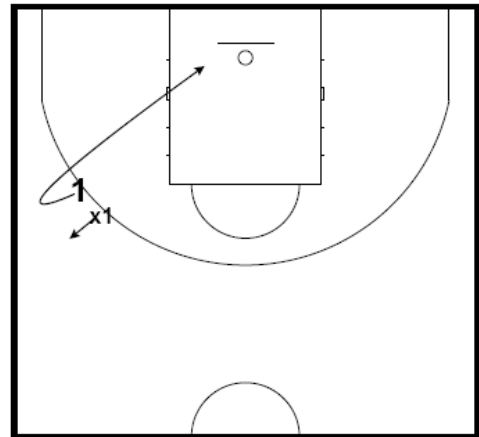
Curl: see cuts

Curl pass: A low, one-handed pass made by stepping around the defender's leg and extending the throwing arm. Also called a "hook pass."

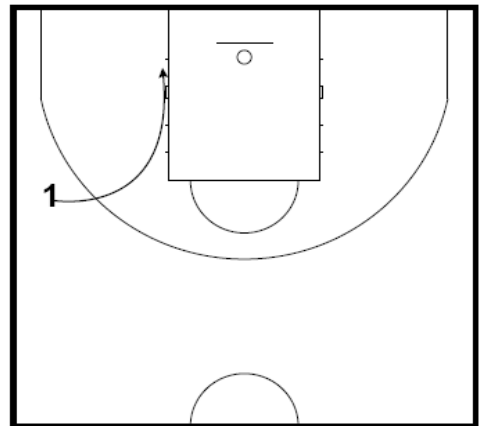
Cut: A sudden running movement to get open for a pass.

Types of Cuts: Back or backdoor cut

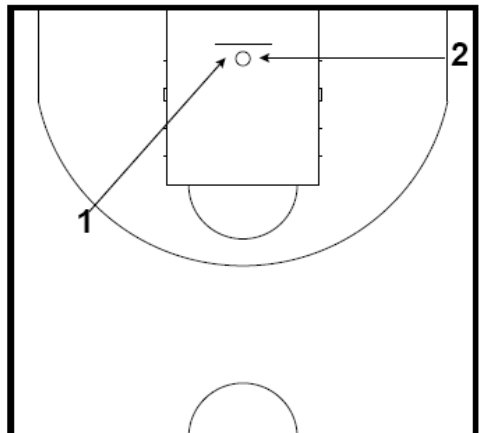
Backdoor Cut: An offensive play in which a player on the perimeter steps away from the basket, drawing the defender with them, and suddenly cuts to the basket behind the defender for a pass. The opposite of an I-cut.



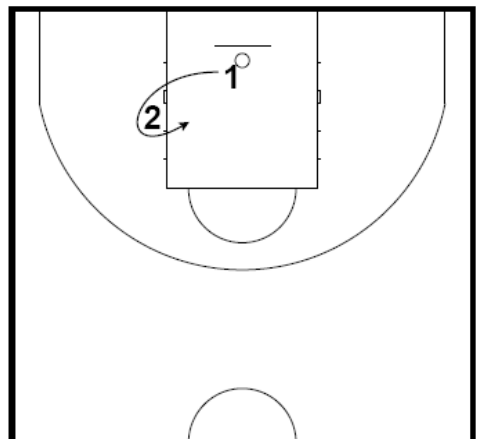
Banana Cut: A wide, curving cut, as opposed to a cut that is a straight line.



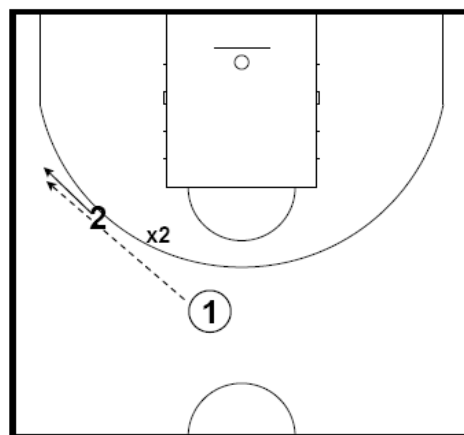
Basket Cut: A cut toward the basket.



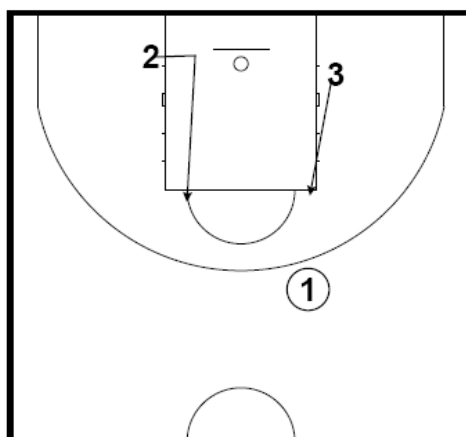
Curl Cut: A cut that takes the player around a screen toward the basket.



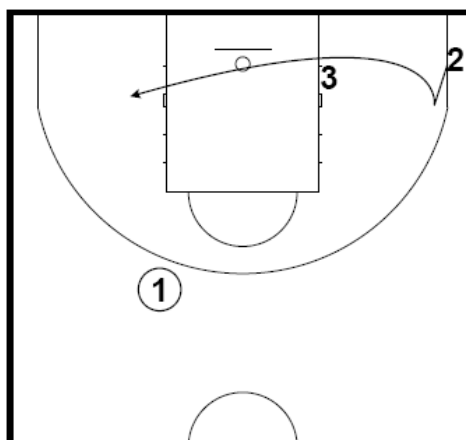
Flare Cut or Fade Cut: A cut that takes the player away from the ball. For example after using a baseline screen or on the defenders help (like shown in the graphic).



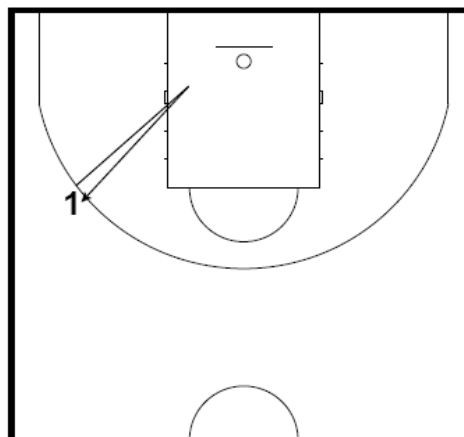
Flash Cut: A cut that takes the player from the lowpost to the highpost, or in the middle of the paint from behind the defence (mostly used to describe a cut against a zone).



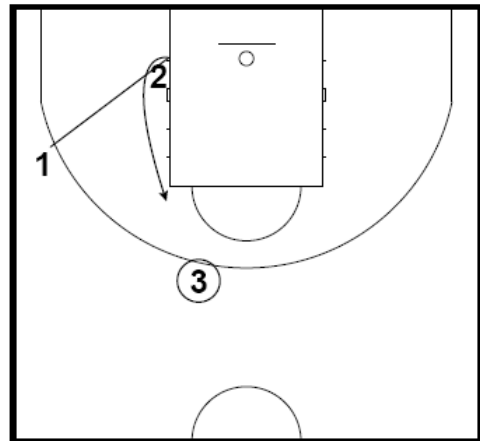
Flex Cut: A cut from the weak side corner to the ball side lowpost, using a screen at the weakside lowpost.



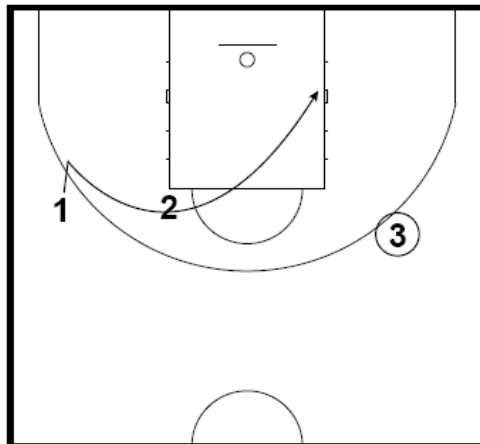
I-cut: An offensive play in which a player on the perimeter steps toward the basket, drawing the defender with them, and suddenly cuts to the perimeter for a pass. The opposite of a backdoor cut.



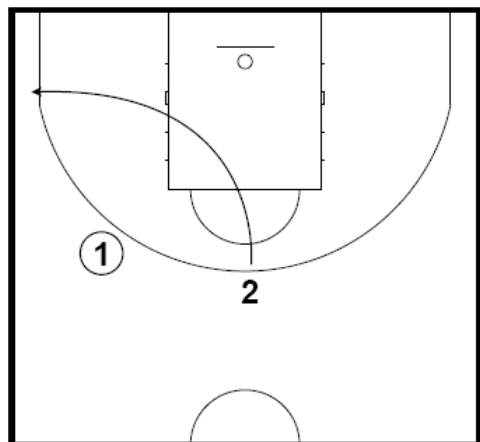
Popout Cut: A cut taken around a screen straight to the ball.



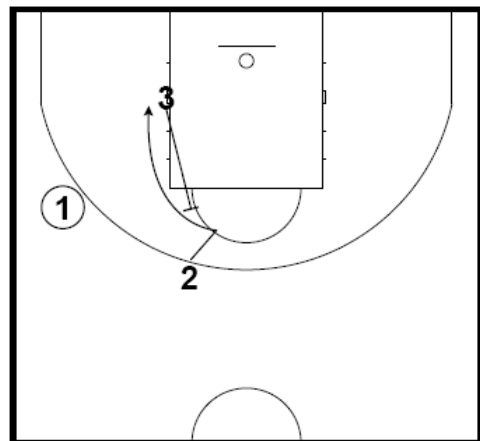
Shuffle Cut: A cut that takes a player around a screen on the Highpost to the basket.



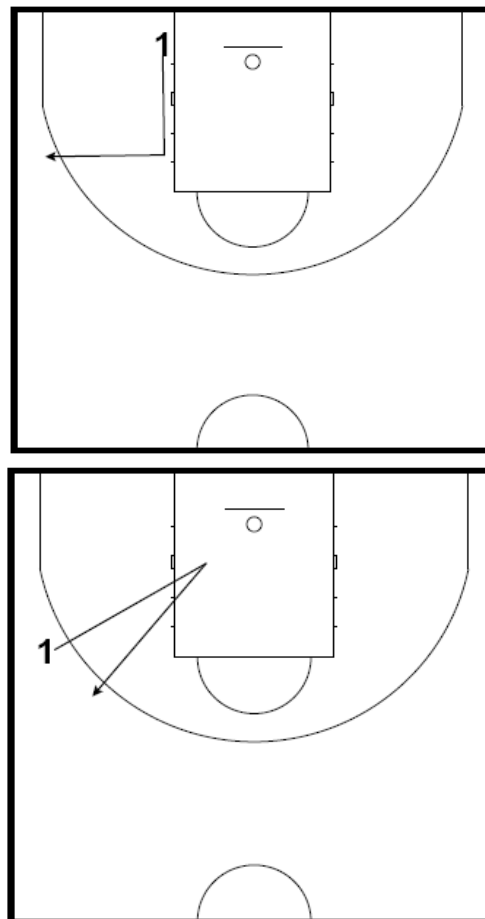
Shallow Cut: A cut from the top of the key to the ballside corner.



UCLA Cut: A cut that takes the player from the top of the key to the Lowpost over a screen at the highpost.



V-cut (or L-Cut when 90° angle): e.g. the player starts at the Lowpost and cuts to the high post, initiates contact with the defender and then cuts to the wing. It can also be executed from the wing; in this case the player cuts to the Lowpost and comes back out.



Dead: Defensive call when defending an offensive player who has used their dribble.

Deep catch: catch of the basketball in the keyway close to the basket.

Defensive rebound: A rebound made off a missed shot at the basket a team is defending.

Defensive slide: The quick "step-slide" movement a defender makes when closely guarding the dribbler.

Defensive stance: The stance used to play defence-knees bent, feet wide, arms out, etc.

Defensive stop: Gaining possession of the ball before the offensive team scores.

Defensive transition: When the team on offense suddenly gives up possession of the ball and has to convert from offense to defence.

Deflections: getting a hand or finger tips to a pass to change the flight of the ball

Delay offense: An offense used to take more time with each possession.

Denial defence: A defence in which a defender tries to prevent their man from receiving a pass.

Denial stance (position): The stance used to play denial defence-body low, knees bent, hand and foot in the passing lane.

Deny the ball: To use a denial stance to keep the offensive player from receiving a pass.

Diamond-and-one: A combination defence in which four defenders play zone in a diamond formation and the fifth defender guards a specific offensive player man-to-man.

Diamond Press: A full-court press with a 1-2-1-1 formation.

Dig hand: generally the inside hand (closest to the split line) of an on ball defender defending a dribbler

Dishing: A slang term for passing the ball to a player open for a shot, usually after dribble penetration.

Distort (the Zone): Offence team tactic to change the shape of zone

Dominant and non dominant: Mainly used to explain which hand a player uses in a drill i.e. Right Hand is a right handed persons dominant hand.

Double down: To drop from the perimeter, leaving your man or zone, to double-team a low post player.

Double low stack: When two offensive players set up at one of the blocks to run a play.

Double screen: See Screens

Double-teaming: A defence in which two defenders guard the same offensive player at the same time.

Down screen: See Screens

Dribble: (1) To advance the ball by bouncing it on the floor.

(2) The bounce of the ball caused by a player pushing the ball downward.

Dribble drive kick: The short abbreviated meaning for the game style of dribbling to beat the defence through driving to the basket to then force the defence to rotate before passing the ball to a receiver who is open

Dribble entries: The art of dribbling the ball to start an offense instead of passing. Used when a pass is not possible to a player in a continuity play

Dribble exits: dribbling the ball away from the baseline. normally occurs against a zone defence to open up the baseline bit can be used as a term when taking the ball away from an intended play.

Dribble penetration: When a dribbler is able to drive into the lane; she "penetrates" the defence.

Drive: To attack the basket by dribbling hard at it.

Driving lane /passing lane: the concept to help decision making by a player on offence who is faced with a defender ahead of him/her. If no player in front drive all the way to basket, if player comes in front then pass the ball. Timing is important

Drop step: A low post move when an offensive player with her back to the basket swings one leg around the defender and uses it as a pivot foot to gain inside position.

Elbow: The corner made by the intersection of the free throw line and the lane line. Each lane area has two elbows.

Elbow lock: Straightening the elbow joint from the bent position when shooting the basketball

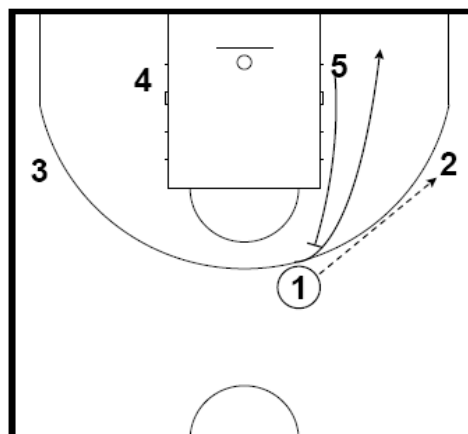
Elbow lift; lifting the elbow as part of the shooting technique

End line: See baseline.

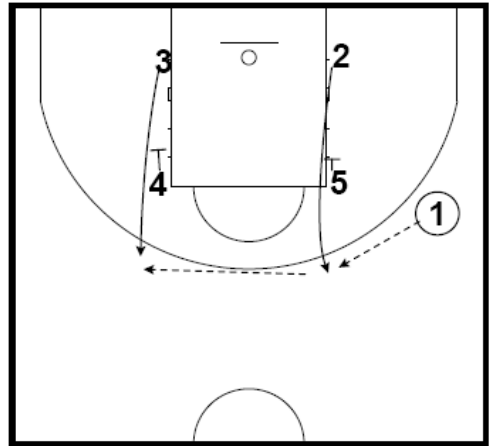
Entry: Beginning of a play. Can be used for Continuous-, Set- and Special plays.

Most popular Entries:

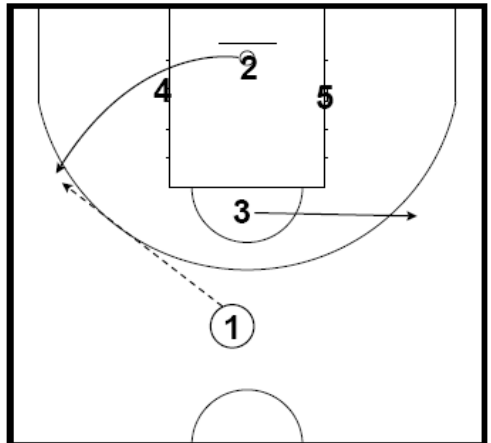
UCLA Cut



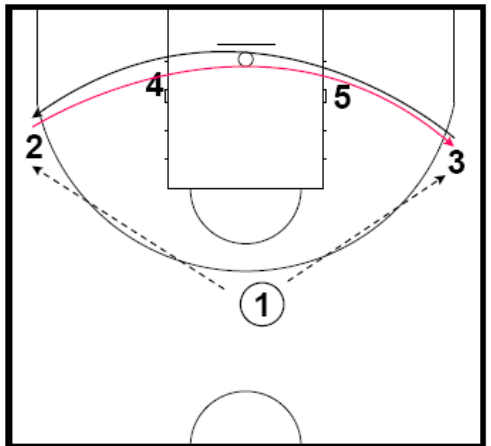
Zipper Cut



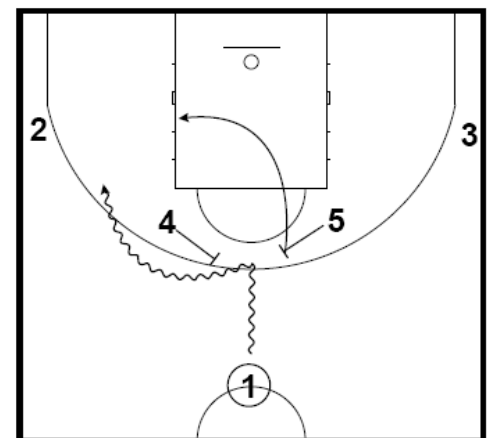
Power



Wing Exchange



Horns



Exchange: Where players swap positions on offensive in the front court

Face up: See Square up.

Fade cut: See cuts.

Fake: a movement made with the aim of deceiving an opponent.

Fan the ball: When the defence forces the ball toward the sideline.

Fake: movement made with the aim of deceiving an opponent. Can be 'Head Fake' in shooting, 'Pass Fake' (**Fake a pass to make a pass**) or any deceptive move.

Fake screen: the intention to trick the defence into thinking a screen will be set.

Fast break: A play in which a team gains possession of the ball (through a defensive rebound, steal, or made shot) and then pushes the ball toward the other basket as fast as possible, hoping to catch the other team off guard and score an easy shot.

Feed: to pass the ball to a teammate, normally used in 'Feed the Post'

Field goal: A 2-or 3-point basket.

Filling the lanes: A fast break in which players from the offensive team run up the court in the right lane, the middle lane, and the left lane.

Flare cut: See cuts.

Flare Screen: See Screens

Flash: See cuts.

Flat Triangle: the positioning of a defender who is marking a player without the ball. The three points being the ball, the offensive player and the defender. Also referred to as ball -you – man relationship when defending a player without the ball.

Flexibility: The range of motion of a joint.

Floater: A high arching shot over defenders also called a "tear drop."

Forward: A position usually played by a tall, athletic player. A "small forward" or a "3" plays on the wing, and a power forward or a "4" plays in the high or low post area.

Forward pivot: the footwork that a player uses when the pivot foot anchors a forward movement where the player's chest turns to face the basket or the ball.

Foul: A violation of the rules.

Foul line: See free throw line.

Foul shot: See free throw.

Foul trouble: (1) Player foul trouble occurs when a player accumulates three or four fouls and is in danger of fouling out.

(2) Team foul trouble occurs when a team accumulates seven or more team fouls in a half and is "in the bonus."

Free throw: An uncontested shot taken from the free throw line as a result of a foul. Also called a "foul shot." A successful (made) free throw is worth 1 point.

Free throw line: The line a player stands behind to shoot a free throw. Also called the "foul line."

Free throw line extended: An imaginary line extending from one end of the free throw line to the sidelines.

Freelance: an unstructured type of offence where players take advantage of whatever offensive opportunities arise.

Freeze dribble: A dribble which momentarily pauses the defender

Front: To guard a player by standing directly in front of him/ her and therefore between him/ her and the ball.

Front cut (Face Cut): Cutting in front of the defenders face towards the ball or basket.

Frontcourt: A team's offensive half of the court. The opposite of the backcourt. Also used to describe parts of a team: front court= all forwards and centres (backcourt = all guards)

Fronting the Post - guarding through denial the post player in close, from receiving the ball in the post area. Types of Fronting are 'Side Front' (basket side or high side) 'Fully Front' and 'Toes In'. **N.B.** playing behind the post is the 'Non Denial'

Full-court press: A man-to-man or zone defence in which the players guard the other team in the frontcourt. Also called a "press."

Funnel the ball: When the defence forces the ball toward the middle.

Give-and-go: An offensive play in which the player with the ball passes (gives) to a teammate and cuts (goes) to the basket to receive a return pass. One of the game's basic plays.

Goaltending: A violation in which a defender touches a shot as it nears the basket in a downward flight.

Good looks: the opportunities that a player has to maybe shoot or pass the ball to a player who is in a better position.

Guard: (1) A position on the perimeter. The point guard or "1" brings the ball up the court and begins the offense. The shooting guard or "2" is usually the teams best outside shooter.

(2) To defend an offensive player closely.

Guide hand: The shooter's non-shooting hand. See also shooting hand.

Half-court line: The line at the centre of the court parallel to the sidelines that divides the court in half. Also called the "midcourt line."

Hallo: the movement of hands on defence around the defenders head in anticipation of a pass past the defenders ears

Hand-check: To make hand contact with a dribbler while guarding them.

Hand in the lane: an off ball defensive denial position where the defenders hand is in the likely passing lane to the player

Hand off: A pass to a player cutting towards the ball where the cutter takes the ball out of the passers hands.

Hand pressure (on defence): the ability to generate pressure with the use of the hands (delaying the offense or working towards a steal) on the offence

Hands up: keeping players hands up in the air to be ready to rebound, defend or catch

Head in the lane: when denying a pass to a player the defender stands in the passing lane with their head directly in the passing lane.

Hedge: In a pick-and-roll, when the screener's defender steps into the path of the dribbler so the dribbler has to hesitate, giving their defender time to get around the screen.

Help and recover: A defensive move in which a defender leaves her assigned player to guard a teammate's assigned player and then goes back to guard their own player.

Help side: The half of the court (if the court is divided lengthwise) that the ball is not on. Also called the "weak side." The opposite of the ball side.

Help side defence: the side of the team defence on the opposite side to where the ball is. Players in this position are help defenders to the person marking the ball

Help-side stance: The stance used to guard a help-side offensive player. See also pistol stance.

Hesitation dribble: A dribble manoeuvre in which the dribbler hesitates, pretending to pick up their dribble, but suddenly continues to the basket. Also called a "stop-and-go dribble."

High hand: where the players shooting hand finishes as high as possible in their shooting action.

High post: The area around the free throw line.

Hook shot: A one-handed shot taken with a sweeping, windmill motion.

Inbound: To pass the ball to a teammate on the court from out-of-bounds.

Inbounder: The player who inbounds the ball.

Inside-out dribble: An advanced dribbling move, a fake crossover dribble.

Investment Stage: The stage or phase of a player or coaches involvement with basketball where they decide to spend a greater amount of time in the pursuit of becoming the best they can become. Can occur at any time but normally occurs around 17 to 23 years of age for a player and at any age for a coach.

Isolation play: An offensive play designed to have a specific player attack the basket 1-on-1. Also called "iso play."

Jab-and-cross: A play in which the offensive player makes a jab step in one direction and then follows it by driving by the defender in that direction.

Jab step: A short (6 to 8 inches) out-and-back step by an offensive player to see how the defender reacts.

Jam the cutter: When a defender steps in the way of a cutter to prevent them from cutting to the ball.

Jump ball: A procedure used to begin a game. The referee tosses up the ball in the centre circle between two opposing players, who jump up and try to tip it to a teammate. Also called the "opening tip."

Jump hook: A variation of the traditional hook shot in which the shooter takes the shot with both feet in the air.

Jump shot: A shot in which the shooter faces the basket and releases the ball after jumping into the air.

Jump stop: The action of coming to a complete stop, legs apart and knees bent, when dribbling or running; can be a one-foot or two-foot jump stop.

Jump to the ball: When a defender, after her man passes the ball, changing to a denial position so their man can't cut between her and the ball.

Junk defence: See combination defence.

Keeping hand high (shooting): when shooting the basketball ensuring that the shooters hand is held high as possible to encourage a better arc in the flight of the ball once its shot.

Lane: The rectangular painted area between the baseline, the lane lines, and the free throw line. Also called the "paint."

Laneline extended: An imaginary line from the junction baseline and laneline to the same junction on the other half of the court. (Used to describe a proper spacing in a four out offense). Sometimes called a corridor.

Layup: A shot taken next to the basket in which the shooter extends their arm, lifts their same-side knee, and aims the ball at the upper corner of the painted square on the backboard.

Lead Pass: A pass thrown ahead of the intended receiver so that they can catch the ball on the move and maintain their speed.

Leading for the Ball: The movement of a receiver, when getting open away from a defender to receive the ball, in an appropriate attacking position on the court. Can be from a man ahead or L cuts, V cuts etc.

Line of shot: The line of sight between releases of the ball from a players shooting stance to the basket

Line of sight (shooting): The line for the shooters vision from the players shooting stance to the ring

Lob pass: A pass that is passed in an arc in the air over a defender

Long close outs: Closing out to an offence player from a relatively longer way away. (The player normally has time to set for the perimeter shot)

Loose-ball foul: A foul committed when neither team has possession of the ball.

Low post: The area on one side of the basket around the block.

Man ahead: A principle of advancing the ball to a teammate in an advanced position on court.

Man offense: See man-to-man offense.

Man-to-man defence: A team defence in which each defender guards a specific player or man. Also called "player-to-player defence."

Man-to-man offense: A team offense used against man-to-man defence. Also called "man offense."

Midcourt line: See half-court line.

Middle on ball (screen): a screen on the ball set in the middle of the court above the free throw line

Mirror the ball: To follow the movement of the ball with your hands when closely guarding a player who is pivoting.

Motion Offence: a style of attacking play with no predetermined order of movement of players or the ball. The attack is based upon constant movement of all five players. Players look to use basic individual and team plays to take advantage of defensive errors. Some order may be given to the movements by the Coach introducing rules of action, for example every time a pass is made the passer looks to cut to the basket or set a screen away from the ball.

Moving pick: A violation that happens when a screener leans or moves after setting a screen.

Muscle Memory (Movement Patterns): The learning of an appropriate sequence.

Neurological Fitness: Movement pattern repetition within the brain.

Non-shooting foul: A foul committed against a player who is not in the act of shooting.

OFF-BALL screen: See Screens

Offensive rebound: A rebound at the basket a team is attacking.

Offensive transition: When the team on defence suddenly gives up possession of the ball and has to convert from defence to offense.

On-ball defence: Defence that occurs when a defender guards the player with the ball.

On-ball screen: See Screens

One-and-one: Free throws awarded to a team once its opponent has committed seven personal fouls. If the shooter's first free throw is successful, they shoot a second free throw.

One-Guard Offense: A team offense used against zones with two-guard fronts (2-3 and 2-1-2 zones).

Open stance: The stance used to play help-side defence—feet apart, body balanced, knees bent, and arms out.

Options: Alternative attacking manoeuvres that can occur in a game situation.

Out- of Bounds: the area outside the legal playing court, i.e. on or outside the boundary lines of the court. N.B. SOB = Sideline Out of Bounds; BOB = Baseline Out of Bounds are important in offensive and defensive team play.

Outlet: (1) To pass the ball after a defensive rebound to start the fast break.

(2) The player who stays in the backcourt to receive an outlet pass.

Outlet pass: An overhead pass thrown by a defender that starts the fast break.

Over Dribble: Where a player continues to dribble without a purpose.

Overhead pass: A two-handed pass thrown from above the player's head.

Overload: Outnumbering the defence. Mainly used as a Zone Offence term.

Overtime: A 5-minute extra period played when the game is tied at the end of regulation play.

Paint: See lane.

Palming: See carrying the ball.

Pass fake: See ball fake.

Passing Game – a Motion Offence with the emphasis on passing the ball with little or no use of the dribble.

Passing Lane: An imaginary line from the player with the ball to a teammate. If a defender is in the way, the passing lane is closed.

Passing Technique: Power and accuracy in passing comes from the players' stance, hand positioning and the stepping/pivoting to pass culminating with a wrist rotation and snap.

Penetrate: Attacking the basket with a pass or a dribble

Personal foul: A penalty assessed on a player who commits an illegal action.

Physical Components: See screen.

Physical Fitness: See screen.

Pick: See screen.

Pick-and-roll: A two-person play in which on offensive player sets a screen (pick) on the ball handler's defender and cuts (rolls) to the basket after the ball handler drives by the screen. Also called a "screen and roll." A common play in college and the pros.

Pistol stance: When a help-side defender is guarding their man, they point one hand at their man and one hand at the ball (as if they're holding a pistol).

Pivot: The action when the player with the ball spins on one foot and steps with their other foot to protect the ball from a defender.

Pivot foot: The foot that the offensive player spins on while pivoting.

Play/ s: a term used to describe a series of movements of players and/or the ball on court, mainly used for attacking manoeuvres.

Play Maker: A player who is adept at setting up situations that enable team-mates to have scoring opportunities. See also Guard.

Player-control foul: A non-shooting offensive foul.

Player screen: See OFF-Ball screen.

Player-to-player defence: See man-to-man defence.

Pocket (ball in the): Position of the ball in when player is in stance on offence (in triple threat) holds the ball on their hip or on their pocket.

Pocket to Pocket: Action of ball being moved from one side of body to other whilst in stance on offence. From one pocket to the other side pocket

Point guard: (1) A position played by a team's primary ball handler, the player who brings the ball up the court and begins the offense. Also called the "1."

(2) The player who plays that position.

Popout cut: See cuts.

Post: (1) A player who plays in and around the lane area. A centre or forward (a "4" or a "5").

(2) An area of the court, as in the low post or the high post.

Post Dribble: A dribble by the player playing the post position.

Post Entry: A pass to teammate in the post area

Post moves: Back-to-the-basket scoring moves made by players near the basket.

Post-up (cut): (1) An offensive move in which an offensive player (usually a forward or a centre) positions themselves close to the basket with their back toward the basket and the defender behind them so the offensive player can receive a pass.

(2) To make that move.

Post Triangle: The relationship and spacing by three players to pass and receive the ball in the post position. i.e. Post and two passers

Power: A combination of speed and strength and ability to exert quickly.

Power dribble: A strong dribble (normally only one) by the post player in the keyway.

Power forward: (1) A position played by the larger of the forwards on the floor, usually a good scorer and rebounder. Also called the "4."

(2) The player who plays that position.

Power layup: A two-footed layup.

Press(ing): A defensive attempt to force the opposing team into making some kind of error and thus lose possession of the ball. It is accomplished usually by aggressive defence, double teaming (see above) or harassing the ball handler with attempts to tie-up the ball. The press can be applied full court, half court or any other fractional part of the playing area and can be based on either man-to-man or zone (see below) principles. Can be used to describe the amount of pressure (press) on the ball in a man to man context.

Press break(er): A team offense used against a press defence. Also called "press offense."

Press offense: See press break.

Pressure man-to-man defence: Aggressive defence where defenders stay between their man and the ball.

Principle/s; the knowledge of some associated actions combined as a group in order to give meaning and understanding.

Primary break: A fast break that involves only a few players from each team.

Pump fake: See shot fake.

Push pass: A one-handed air pass.

Ready position: the general position given to beginners and juniors to get ready to play basketball offence or defence. A general teaching position and stance technique for beginners to introduce them to the triple threat position

Ready stance: The balanced position from which a player is ready to run, jump, slide, or pivot. Their knees are bent, feet are beyond shoulder width facing ahead, hands are up and out, back is straight, and head is up.

Rebound: (1) A missed shot that comes off the backboard or rim.

(2) To fight for and gain control of a missed shot that comes off the backboard or rim.

Rebound Triangle - a term used to describe the positioning of a group of three defenders who form a triangle around the basket after a shot has been attempted. The aim is to cover the probable positions of the ball should a rebound occur and prevent an opponent from gaining a good position from which to collect the rebound.

Recovery: Process of return to normal status after physical exercise.

Receiving Technique: The culmination of being on balance, stopping if required, hand position and the gather of the ball into a triple threat position, for preparation to shoot, dribble or pass.

Rejection: A blocked shot.

Replace self: Where a player cuts towards the basket and returns to where they started from. Also known as 'Pop back'.

Rescreen: a screen that is set once at one angle and then is set again on the same player from a second different angle.

Retreat step: A step in which the defender's back foot steps toward the baseline, and the lead foot slides in place.

Retreat dribble: a control dribble away from the defender

Reverse: (1) A change of direction in the flow of attacking movement, for example a change from passing down the right hand side of the court to a quick movement of the ball to the left side.

(2) A change of direction in which the attacking players endeavour to free themselves from a close marking defender. The change of direction is executed after a move towards the defender and a pivot so that the attacking player turns their back on their opponent and then moves off in the new direction. Also called a Roll or Spin move.

(3) When the ball is directed back to where it came = Ball Reversal.

Reverse pivot: the movement of a player with a pivot or anchor foot when the player turns their back away from the basket or the ball.

Rip and Go: A move made at speed where on receipt of a pass the ball is moved across the body straight into a speed dribble.

Run-slide-run: A defensive footwork technique.

Runner: A shot that the player shoots while on the run.

Running clock: When the clock in a game isn't stopped every time the referee blows the whistle to ensure that the game ends on time and the next game can begin when scheduled.

Safety: The offensive player at the top of the circle. Responsible for covering back after possession changes.

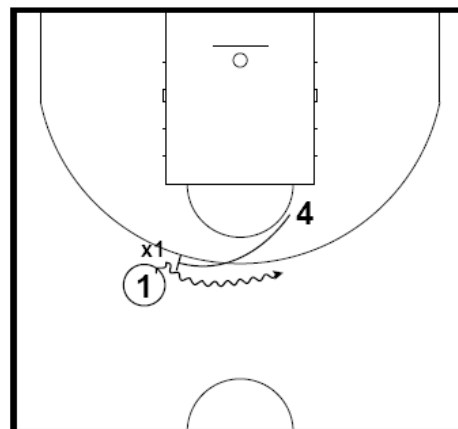
Sag: A tactic in which a defender leaves their man or zone and drops into the lane to help protect the basket.

Sagging man-to-man defence: A conservative defence in which the defenders stay between their man and the basket by moving away from their player and more to cover the basket.

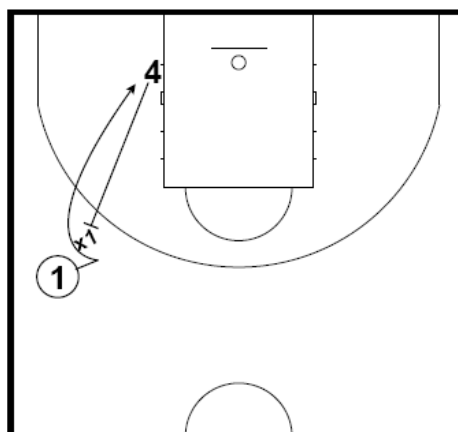
Screen: A play in which an offensive player runs over and stands in a stationary position next to a teammate's defender to free up the teammate to dribble or to receive a pass. Also called a pick.

Types of Screens:

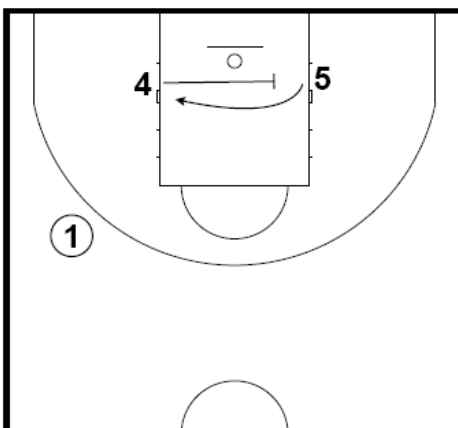
(On)Ball Screen: Screen on a defender, who is defending the ball carrier



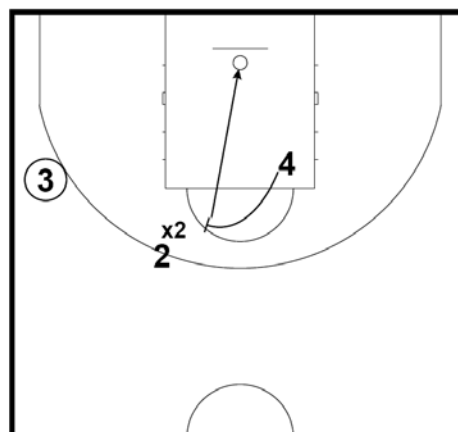
Back Screen: Screen in the back of the defender



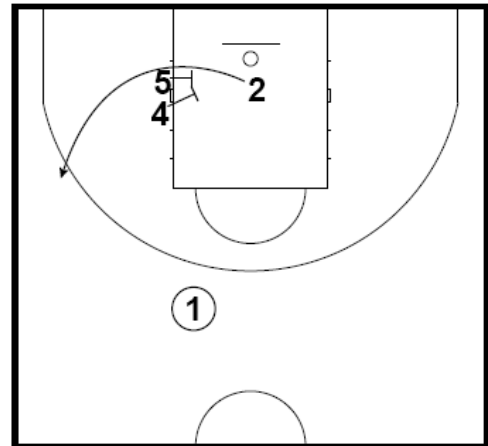
Cross (Across)Screen: Screen from one Lowpost to the opposite Lowpost



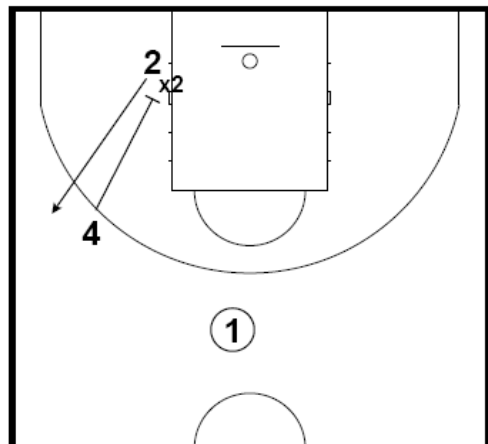
Dive Cut or/Slip screen: The action of the screener in moving directly to the basket before they set a screen. As in fake on ball screen and cut to the basket.



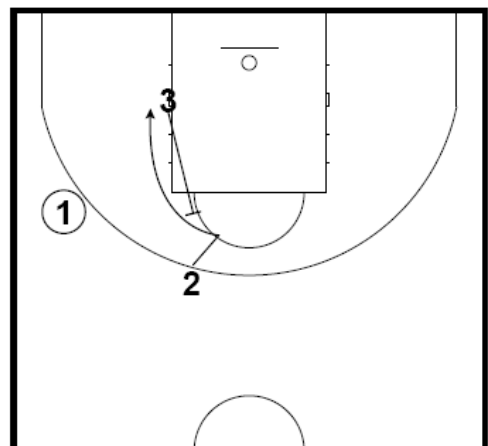
Double Screen or Parallel Screen: Screen set by two players next to each other.



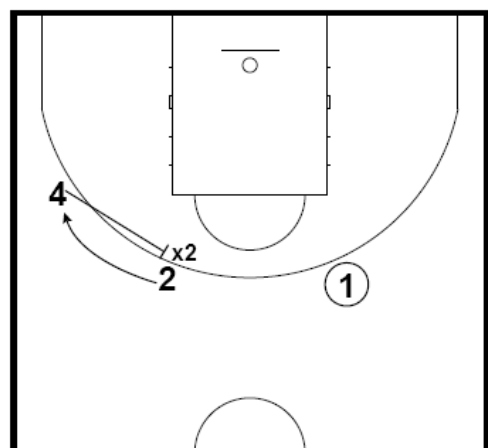
Down Screen: Screen from the wing to the Lowpost



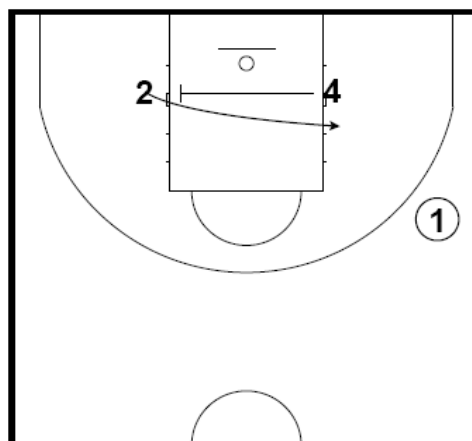
UCLA Screen or Up Screen: Screen from the Lowpost to the Top of the Key



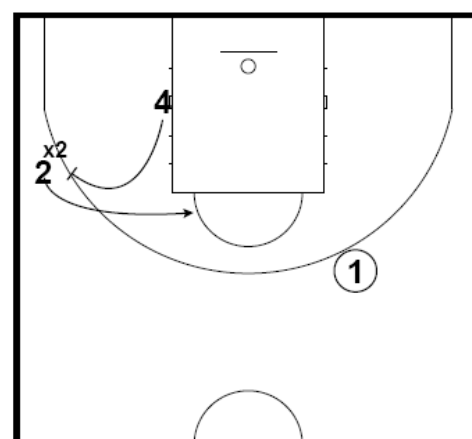
Flare Screen: Screen for a player moving away from the ball



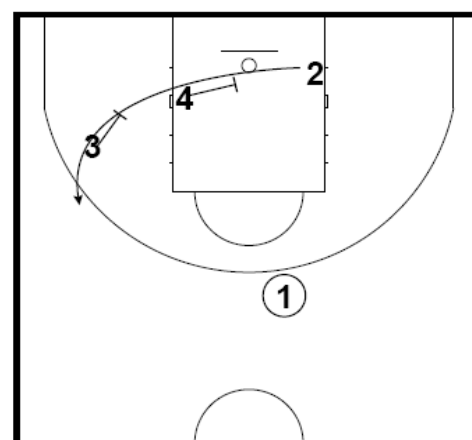
Off-Ball Screen: A screen set on a defender guarding an offensive player who doesn't have the ball.



Shot Screen: A screen set for a player to shoot the ball, mostly on the weakside



Staggered Screen: two Screens not next to each other set simultaneous for the same cutter.



Screen away: To pass in one direction and set a screen for a teammate in the opposite direction.

Screener: A player who sets a screen.

Seam: in a zone defence refers to the area of the court where the zones of responsibility of two individual defenders meet. Also called 'Gap'. Used mainly on offence against a zone in "attack or penetrate the seams".

Sealing the defender: After setting a screen, the screener reverse pivots to "seal" the defender putting the defender on their back.

Secondary break: A fast break that involves most of the players from each team.

Set play: A sequence of player and ball movement that has an end.

Shallow cut: See cuts.

Shell drills: Defensive drills designed to work on all aspects of defence.

Shift the Zone:

Shooter's roll: When a shot doesn't go through the basket cleanly, but bounces around softly before dropping through.

Shooting foul: - when a defender fouls the attacker with the ball in the act of shooting.

Shooting guard: (1) A position played by a perimeter player who is usually the team's best outside shooter. Also called the "2."
(2) The person playing this position.

Shooting hand: The hand used to shoot the ball. See also guide hand.

Short closeouts: closeout to a player from a shorter distance to minimise the offensive player's threat.

Shot clock: The clock used to limit the time allowed for a team to attempt a shot. Shot clocks are used in pro and college games, in some high school leagues, but not in middle school and youth leagues.

Shot clock violation: A violation that occurs when the team with the ball doesn't get a shot off during the allotted time. It results in a change of possession.

Shot fake: A movement in which the player with the ball acts as if they are about to shoot. It is designed to trick the defender into straightening up, allowing the player with the ball to dribble past them. Also called a "pump fake."

Sideline: The line at each side of the court that marks the boundary of the playing surface.

Sideline play: A play used by the offensive team to put the ball back in play from the sideline.

Sixth man: The first substitute who comes off the bench to replace a starter.

Skip pass: An overhead pass from one side of the court to the other over the defence.

Slash arm: an action whereby a player raises one arm and hand and then quickly moves the arm over and onto the other side of a player to gain a better position to defend or receive the ball

Slide: the defensive movement where a player from a defensive stance moves laterally to a new position to defend the dribbler

Slide run slide: the sequence on defence which requires a defender to slide on defence then run to recover position before getting into a stance and then slide again.

Slip the screen: the movement by the offensive team player who goes to screen but then decides to slip of the screen and go in another direction.

Snuggle (on defence): the close and tight denial position of a player who doesn't have the ball and who wants to be denied.

Speed dribble: A dribble manoeuvre in which the player pushes the ball ahead of her and bounces it at chest height.

Special plays: a play for a specific situation and/or a specific player.

Specialising Stage: The stage or phase of a player or coaches involvement with basketball when they decide to only or mainly play basketball and not other sports.

Spin dribble: A dribble manoeuvre in which the player does a reverse pivot while bringing the ball around them so it ends up in their other hand.

Split line: the imaginary line that divides the court vertically from baseline to baseline

Splitting the Post - occurs when two attacking players cross in front of a post player, cutting on opposite sides of the post player to basket, in an attempt to lose their defenders on the post player.

Splitting the screen: When the screener, seeing their defender hedging, gets out of their screening stance and cuts to the basket for a pass.

Splitting the trap: When a trapped player steps in between the defenders to pass the ball.

Square up: To pivot so the shoulders and feet face the basket. Also called "face up."

Stack - a situation where two or more attacking players stand close together very near to the restricted area (see above) usually in a low (see above) position.

Staggered feet: the stance of a player where one foot is in front of the other foot.

Staggered screen: When two players not next to each other set simultaneous screens for the same cutter.

Stance: The balanced position from which a player is ready to run, jump, slide, or pivot. Their knees are bent, hands are up and out, back is straight, and head is up.

Stance Slide run: same as slide/run/slide

Steal: (1) To intercept a pass and gain possession of the ball.
(2) The name for the action.

Stop-and-go dribble: See hesitation dribble.

Stop and pop: An offensive move in which a player comes to a sudden stop, picks up her dribble, and shoots the ball.

Strength: The ability to exert force.

Stride stops: Stopping in a 1 – 2 or left foot then right foot (right foot then left foot)

Strong side: See ball side. The opposite of "weak side."

Substitute: A player who comes in the game to replace another player. Also called a "sub."

Swing step: A defensive step in which the defender does a reverse pivot with one foot and stays in her on-ball stance.

Swing Wings: The exchange of a team's wing players from one side to other

Switch: A movement in which two defenders change the offensive player each is playing.

Swim stroke (arm movement): Action of a player's arm movement to remove their defender's hand in the lane to 'seal' their defender. Raising the hand elbow and then replacing it beyond the other side of a defender.

Tear Drop: see Floater.

Technical foul: A violation, such as a player or coach using profanity, which results in the other team getting free throws and possession of the ball. Also called a "T," as in "T him up."

Timing a lead: the combination of movement by a receiver to move to receive the pass at the right time (against a defender)

Tip-off: The opening jump ball at the centre circle that begins a game.

Trace the ball: as in hand pressure the use of the hands to follow the movement of the basketball when held by the offensive player

Trailer: An offensive player, usually a centre or a power forward, who trails the first wave of players on the fast break.

Training Intensity: The amount of physical activity undertaken within a session or drill.

Transition: A movement that occurs when a team changes from offense to defence (defensive transition) or from defence to offense (offensive transition).

Transition defence: the phase for team defence when the ball is moving from one end of the court to the other as a result of a shot or turnover.

Transition offence: the phase for the offence when the team is required to convert from defending to attacking as a result of a missed shot or turnover

Trap: A defensive move in which two defenders guard the player with the ball by forming a V with their bodies.

Travelling: A violation that occurs when the player with the ball takes too many steps without dribbling. This is a common occurrence with young players.

Triangle-and-two: A combination defence in which three defenders play zone in a triangle formation and two defenders guard specific players man-to-man.

Triple threat position: The bent knees stance that allows the player three options: shoot, dribble, or pass.

Turnaround jump shot: A shot by a player in the low post in which they catch the ball with their back to the basket, makes a forward pivot so they face the basket, and shoots a jump shot.

Turnouts: the lead by an offensive player when they run away from the basket in leading for the ball.

Turnover: A loss of possession of the ball caused by a steal, an offensive foul, a held ball, or a poor pass.

Two-Guard Offense: A team offense mostly used against zones with one-guard fronts (1-2-2 and 1-3-1).

UCLA Screen: See Screens

Unsportsmanlike Foul: A foul that occurs when a player makes illegal contact with an opposing player without intending to get the ball.

Up-and-under move: An advanced post move that starts out like a turnaround jump shot, but instead of shooting, the post player "pump fakes," causing the defender to rise out of their defensive stance. The post player steps by the defender and finishes with a layup.

Up screen: See UCLA Screen

V-cut: See cuts.

Weak side: See help side.

Weak side back cut: A back cut (see cuts) performed on the side away from the ball (strong side).

Weighting a pass: the timing and strength of a pass to a team mate to suit a particular situation

Wing: (1) The area on the court where the 3-point arc meets the free throw line extended.

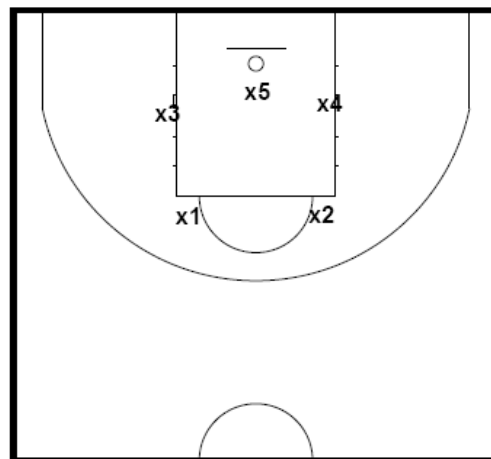
(2) The offensive player who plays in that area.

Wrist snap: the final action of the hand when shooting the ball.

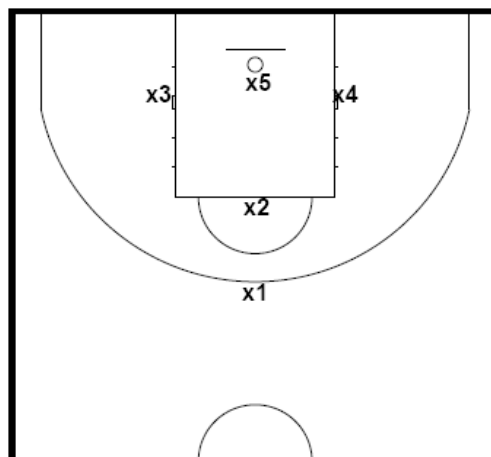
Zone defence: A team defence in which players are assigned to guard specific areas of the court, rather than layers.

Most popular zone alignments:

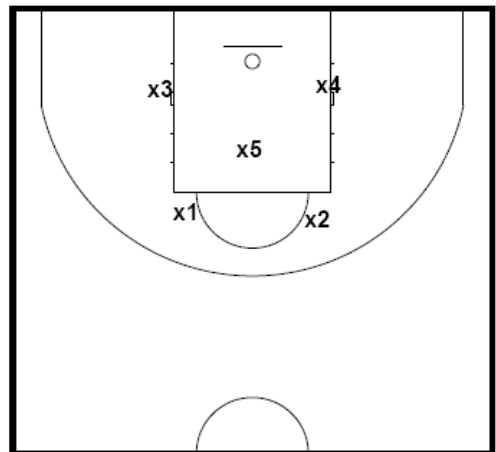
2-3



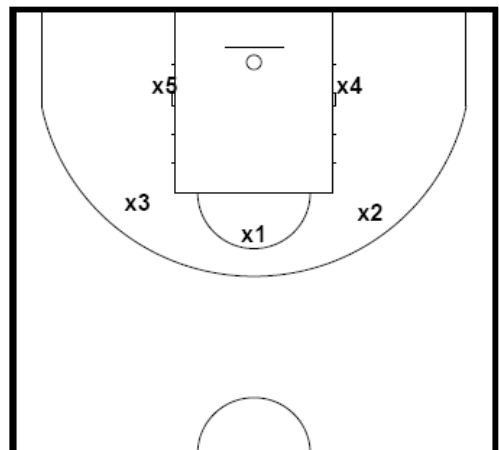
1-1-3



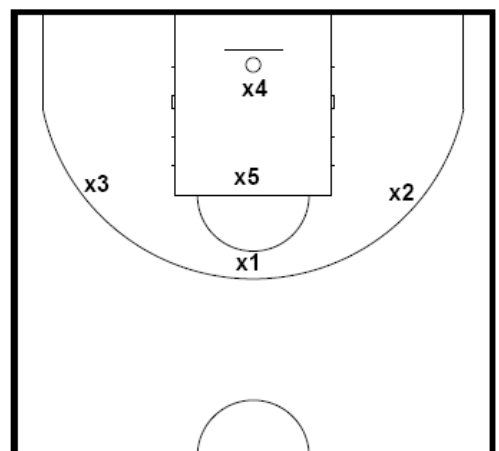
2-1-2



3-2



1-3-1

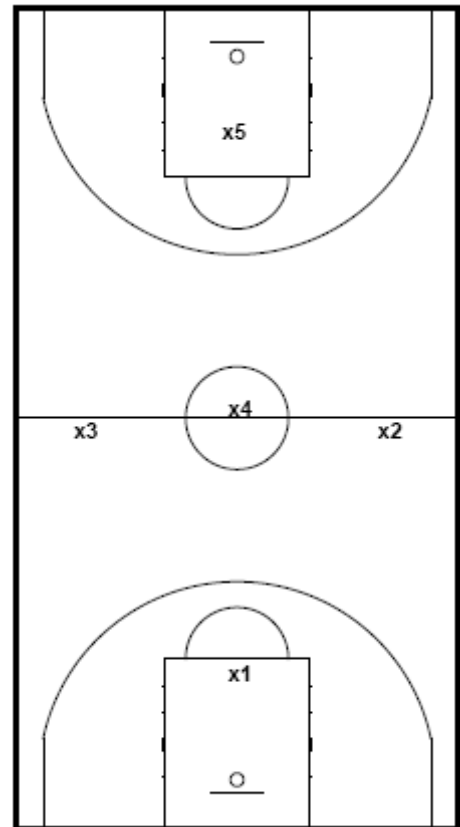


Zone offense: A team offense used against a zone defence.

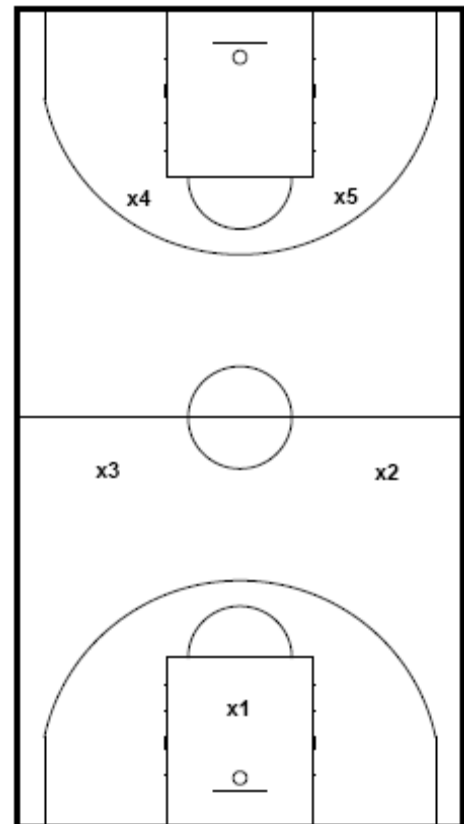
Zone press defence: Full court zone defence, mostly used to trap the ball.

Most popular alignments:

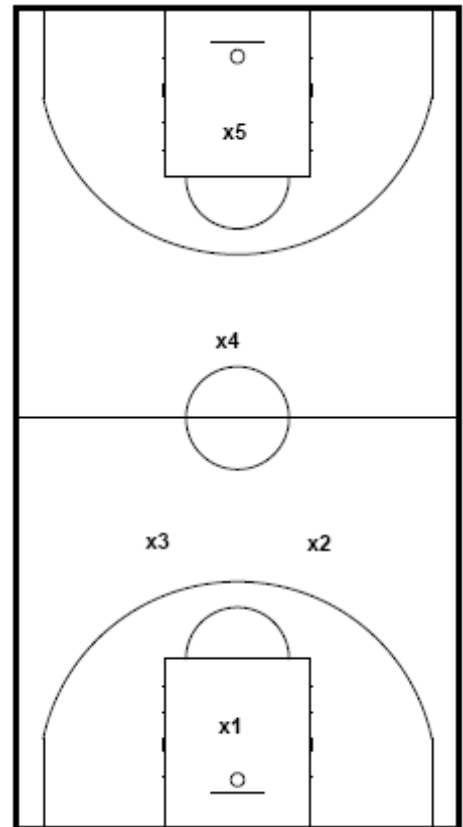
1-3-1



1-2-2



1-2-1-1 (diamond)



2-2-1

