



# ASSIST 23

FIBA ASSIST MAGAZINE FOR BASKETBALL ENTHUSIASTS EVERYWHERE NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2006



**FIBA**

We Are Basketball

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**FIBA**

We Are Basketball



by Dave Adkins

# SEASONS OF SHOOTING

Dave Adkins has worked at the Five-Star Basketball Camp, Nike All American Camp and the Nike Hoop Jamboree. He was the Associate Head Coach at Montrose Christian School in Rockville, MD, and now he is at De Matha in Hyattsville, MD, two of the best high schools in the US. He has helped develop over 30 college players including Levi Watkins (2001, played at N.C. State), Linas Kleiza (2003, played at Missouri, and now with the Denver Nuggets), and Uche Echefu (2005, playing at Florida State).

Playing basketball is no longer confined to "the season." The calendar year can be divided into three distinct seasons where a player develops. The pre-season is a time to prepare players for the upcoming season. A player is in-season when the ball goes up for his/her first official practice and concludes when the buzzer sounds at the end of the last game. Following a rest period, the player begins the post-season, where s/he seeks to refine skills and improve weaknesses.

In any successful program, individual skill development is a crucial element to team success. Shooting is a major skill that must be addressed throughout the calendar year. At Montrose Christian School, we spend a lot of time working on the shot: stressing proper shot mechanics, taking "game shots" and expanding the skill set of players.

Our workouts are designed to stress what we feel is most important for that time of year. Drills are always performed at "game speed", while taking "game shots." Our guards and big men perform each of the drills with this in mind. The different skills emphasized and shot location depend upon the player who is performing the drill.

During the pre-season, our players are forced out of their comfort zone and encouraged to stretch themselves. During the season our players work on the shots and skills needed as they pertain to the offense: the things needed to help the team win. During the post-season, our players seek

to refine their shooting mechanics or expand their skill set.

## FORM SHOOTING

We begin each shooting workout with form shooting. It is the foundation for good shot mechanics. We go through a four step process working on our shooting form. Proper shooting mechanics are essential for consistent, accurate shooting. Players begin practicing the proper form of a shot without a ball. On the command "Sit," the player sits down into proper shooting form: knees bent, butt down and back straight, with proper balance, right foot slightly in front of left (for a right handed shooter), ten toes pointing to the basket, shoulders squared to the basket and head in the center of body. On the command "Present," the player extends his hands, as if he is reaching for the ball, arms straight out, elbows locked and palms facing the passer. On the command "Shot Pocket," the player moves to the shooting position: shooting thumb at eye, his elbow and knee and toe in a straight line, forearm splitting the rim in half and focused on the middle on the basket. On the command "Shot," the player shoots, the elbow extends above eye level, the follow through is high, the wrist breaks, the player finishes on his toes and the player should imagine putting his shooting hand in the center of the rim.

We will repeat this process with a ball and then add a 1 - 2 step. When moving to the 1 - 2 step, the action changes slightly with the "Present" command. On the command "Present," the player will give themselves a self pass, step left, right (for a right handed shooter) through the ball and move through the "shot pocket" and "shot" command as before.

After concluding our form shooting process, we move to shooting power jumpers: short shots from each block and the middle of the lane. With these short shots our players have a chance to work on their shooting mechanics with actual shots at the basket. Our players are balanced as they prepare to



shoot the basketball. They call for the ball and are conditioned to have their hands ready to catch the ball from the passer. They step through the pass and shoot the ball with a high, soft arc, holding their follow through as they land.

## PRE-SEASON

During the pre-season we focus on proper shooting mechanics with an emphasis on conditioning. These drills are designed to increase players' endurance while simulating game shots. Maintaining proper shooting mechanics are critical even when fatigue begins to affect



the player. This will serve to help a player during the season specifically when fatigue plays a factor during late game situations.

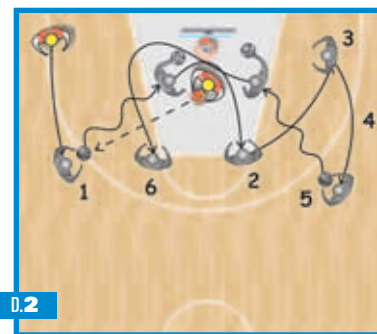
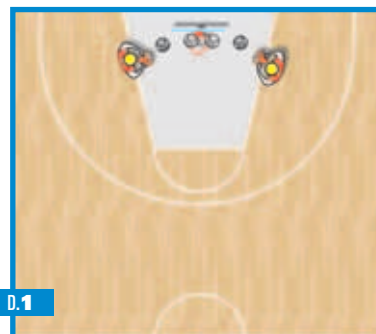
After a warm-up including our form shooting process and some light running while dribbling, we move into our attack the basket series (diagr. 1). Players begin at half court. They attack the basket at full speed keeping the ball below the waist. The player will make a series of moves at a chair placed on the 3 point line. The player gets their own rebound

and speed dribbles to half court on the opposite side of the starting point. The series of moves can include, but are not limited to: stutter step, in & out, crossover, between legs dribble, behind back dribble and double moves (exp. between legs/crossover, double crossover).

Another drill we use that emphasizes conditioning and allows the player to take various shots off several cuts is the 1/2 Court 4 Shot Drill (diagr. 2). The player begins at the hash

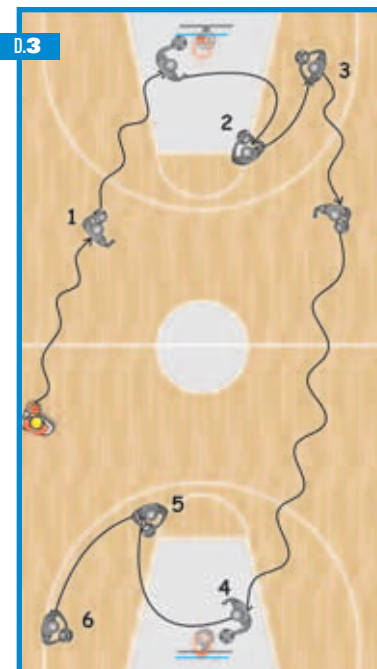
mark and attacks the basket scoring a lay up. The player then sets up for a curl at the opposite elbow. The player fades to the same side baseline for a shot, then back peddles to the same side hash mark as if transitioning back on defense, and then returns to the same side of the basket for a lay up. After scoring the lay up, the player sets up a curl at the opposite elbow and then will fade to the same side baseline for a total of four shots. This drill allows the player to work on changing his pace to set up shots off the various cuts and

pushes the player to run in transition to create scoring opportunities. The drill can be repeated for a total of 8 shots in the half court or expanded to the full court (Diagr. 3) to increase the level of conditioning. For more advanced players, different dribble moves can be added such as: 1) catch and explode into dribble jumper, 2) shot fake/shot, 3) shot fake/one dribble pull up, and 4) being creative with other one dribble or two dribble moves.



We use another drill that we call the Nate James Drill (diagr. 4). In this drill, the player works on his conditioning and absorbing contact to finish plays around the basket. The player starts the drill with a power lay up and backpedals to simulate transitioning to defense. A chair is placed at the 3 point line. When the player sees the chair in his peripheral vision he curls around it, attacking the opposi-

te elbow where he will receive a pass for a jump shot. Regardless of making or missing the shot, the player gets his rebound and finishes with a lay up without dribbling and then proceeds to backpedal continuing the drill. A coach with a blocking pad can be used providing resistance as the player finishes each power lay up. The drill ends when a certain



number of shots are taken or when a certain number of shots are made.

In this drill, the player must focus on making shots after a simulated transition element. The player must also focus on finishing lay ups with contact, despite fatigue. The chair can be moved anywhere on the 3 point line to vary the location of the shot or moved back to increase the distance of the shot taken. Various dribble moves can be implemented into this drill as well, including: 1) catch and explode into dribble jumper, 2) shot fake/shot, 3) shot fake/one dribble pull up, and 4) being creative with other one dribble or two dribble moves.

**IN-SEASON**

During the basketball season, a player must practice multiple times a week and as games begin a player's endurance and focus will be tested further. In most practices, the needs of the team supersede an individual player's need to maintain their skill set. The needed repetition to maintain proper shot mechanics throughout the season cannot be addressed with in the team's practice time. Due to this, a player must find time to work on their individual needs outside of scheduled team practices. The type of

drilling is less intensive than pre-season workouts and focuses on the repetition of shooting "game shots."

At Montrose, we have set up a time each day where players can receive the needed repetition to maintain proper shot mechanics. We call it the 7:30 club and the time has taken on its own personality. The players who regularly come each morning refresh themselves from the rigors of practice and get to shoot, something most players enjoy doing, but never get to do enough during practice and games. For 45 minutes each day before school, players are able to shoot multiple shots from various locations. Each player records makes/attempts and his percentages are tracked throughout the week. This also allows for our coaching staff to see who is most prepared to take critical shots in different game situations. We use a simple form (diagr. 5) to easily track the shots each player takes and from what spot the shots are taken from. The 7:30 Club workouts are shooting only workouts and our players will focus on shots they will most likely take during games. Average shot totals range from 750 to 1,000 shots each week.

#### POST-SEASON

At the conclusion of the season, our players are given an opportunity to rest nagging injuries and take a much needed break from the stress of the season. After relaxing and refocusing, we encourage our players to get back into the gym. The post-season provides a great opportunity to "fix" a player's shot, if his shot mechanics are "broken." At the beginning of each workout, we still stress our shooting form which allows our players to get back to the basics and focus on their shot mechanics. As we analyze our player's shooting mechanics we may also seek to increase their skill set.

For example, a stationary, spot up shooter is encouraged to develop a pull up jumper in order to be a more complete player; this will provide him with more individual scoring opportunities that in turn provides more scoring opportunities for the team. At Montrose, we will analyze each player and determine what skill the player needs to develop in order to improve as an individual, which in turn will benefit the team.

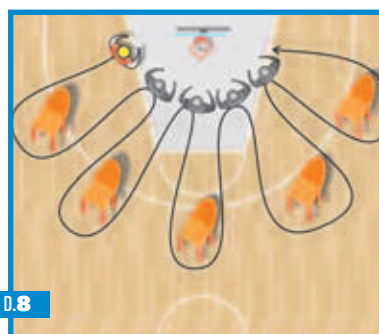
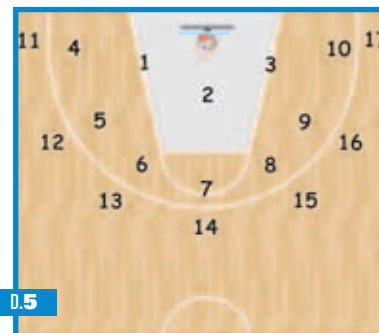
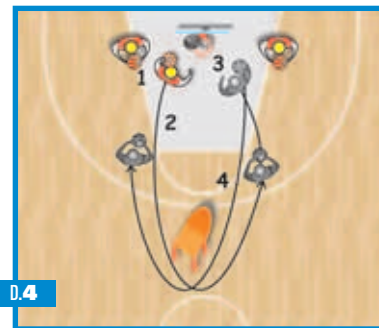
To expand a player's skill set, repetition is used with an emphasis on proper mechanics. We will look at a spot up shooter and the process he will go through to add a pull up jumper to his game. First, we will use a drill (diagr. 6) that allows the player to be comfortable shooting off the dribble. The player will have a staggered stance, left foot in front of right foot, sitting low with his arms extended and palms facing the passer. With his left

foot stationary, the player will catch the ball, step with his right foot and dribble the ball moving into his jump shot.

When the player becomes comfortable shooting the ball with a dribble, he would progress to the warrior drill (diagr. 7) to become comfortable catching the ball, dribbling and stepping 1 - 2 into his shot. The player starts at the 3 point line in the left corner with live feet. He is low, with his arms extended and palms facing the passer. When the pass is made, the player jump stops, dribbles and steps left/right into his shot to create separation from the defender. He should elevate into his jump shot, hold his follow through watching the ball go into the hoop. He will take two steps back to the 3 point line with live legs and prepare himself for the next shot. He will travel in a counterclockwise direction around the 3 point line to the opposite corner. Working his way back to the starting point, the player will jump stop, dribble and step right/left into his shot. Distance can be adjusted for the player's shooting range.

The next step is to create simulated game shots. The "Back Pedal DiPablo" drill (diagr. 8) is a great drill in the pull up jump shot progression. The player starts underneath the basket with 5 chairs spaced around the 3 point line (or anywhere on the court). After scoring a power lay up, the player back pedals up and around the 1st chair. As he curls around the chair he calls for ball, with his arms extended, palms facing the passer and prepared to shoot. He will step through the pass and using the same footwork as described in the Warrior Drill, perform a pull up jumper. The player will follow his shot and score a power lay up, regardless to making or missing the shot, and proceed to back pedal and curl around the next chair. After the player has become proficient in the pull up jumper, you may progress to: 1) shot fake/shot, 2) shot fake/one dribble pull up, and 3) being creative with other one dribble or two dribble moves.

Throughout the basketball year, we stress consistency by always working on shooting form. Without consistent shooting form and proper shot mechanics a player will never be a "great shooter." In working on different skills we try to be creative in addressing the developmental needs of our players. Throughout the pre-season and post-season our players will go through a variety of drills. Again, the pre-season drills will focus on improving stamina and conditioning. Our post-season drills are designed to improve a player's skill set. Within the season, we want our players to shoot as many shots as possible so they will have confidence with every game shot they take. At Montrose, we know when a player leaves he will have performed proper shot mechanics thousands of times.





by Panagiotis Yannakis

# GREECE'S STRATEGY IN JAPAN

**Panagiotis Yannakis is one of the few people who has won a European championship both as a player and as a coach. He started his coaching career with the Greek national team in 1997 on the bench at the FIBA European championship in Barcelona and at the 1998 FIBA World Championship in Athens. He also worked for several domestic clubs, Panionios and Marousi, where he completed last season. In 2004, Yannakis once again took the reigns of the national team and took them to a fifth place finish in the 2004 Athens Olympics. In 2005, the team beat Germany in the FIBA Eurobasket final in Belgrade, the nation's first gold medal in 18 years. With Yannakis as head coach, Greece won the silver medal at the 2006 FIBA World Championship in Japan.**

## APREMISE

Greece came to the world championship in Japan as a European champion and one of the favorites for advancing to the medal rounds. We started the tournament with group stage wins over Qatar, Lithuania, Australia, Brazil, and Turkey. In the first round of the knockout phase of the tournament, the team routed China to get in shape for the big time opponents.

As the tournament went on, we were ever more confident, looking better in every game. In addition, we saved our best performance for the biggest stage, the semifinal clash with the United States. We played a magnificent game against U.S., beating them 101-95. Not only had the U.S. advanced to the semifinals with a perfect score, winning all their games, but they also did it in an amazing fashion, winning all their games by an average of 25.8 points.

Fatigued and emotionally discharged, our players couldn't do too much damage against the undefeated team from Spain in the finals, eventually losing the game 70-47. Until that game, we averaged 80 points a game. However, we only managed 47 points in the most important title game, shooting a lowly 32.8% from the field and committing 18 turnovers (we had averaged 13.2 during the course of the tournament). The Greek team was one of the oldest in the competition, but it turned out to be a

winning combination of experienced veterans and younger stars. We were capable of adjusting to every style of play the opponents would try against us, while often changing our own tactics and style of play, both defensively and offensively.

## THE PLAYERS

We wisely used every individual skill of our players as well as their ability to play multiple positions, so it wasn't uncommon to see us attacking the opponents' zone defense with four small shooters and one big man. Our shooting guard, Dimitris Diamantidis, often scored at will in the low-post position.

We had a top defender in Diamantidis, a flamboyant point guard with Theo Papaloukas (FIBA Eurobasket 2005 Finals MVP, and 2006 Euroleague Final Four MVP, a key player in CSKA Moscow's Euroleague title), who is ready to change the rhythm and the momentum of the game at any given time. We also had one of the surprising players of the tournament in Sofoklis Schortsianitis, who backed up the dominating starting center Lazaros Papadopoulos. Also with the team was Nikos Zisis, the 2005 FIBA Europe Young Player of the Year Award winner, who had the misfortune to aggravate a major injury in a round robin game versus Brazil and appeared in only four games. We also counted on Vassilis Spanoulis, an excellent shooter (87.7% from the free throw line), who can cover both guard positions and had just come off a great season with Panathenaikos (he is now with the Houston Rockets of the NBA). Savvy veterans Antonis Fotsis, Demos Dikoudis, Nikos Hatzivrettas, Kostas Tsartsaris, and Mihalis Kakiouzis were also on the roster.

## THE STATISTICS

Statistically speaking, our team wasn't dominating in any category, a fact that only served for the story about the team spirit and commitment these players showed during the tournament in Japan. We thrived in almost every category, finishing with a high shooting percentage (48.3%), and an impressive number of steals (10.1 per game) with Diamantidis coming up big (3.33 per game) and finishing as the steals leader of the competition.





D.1

## THE DEFENSE

The most common defensive system we used during the tournament was half-court man-to-man. We often adjusted it, depending on the opponent. We started every game playing this defense, and as the first quarter was coming to a close, with Spanoulis and Papaloukas coming in from the bench, we went stronger and kept changing the defensive plays. For example, against China we played full-court pressure defense, double teamed, faked double teams, double teamed after the pick-and-roll, completely changing the momentum, and therefore the result of the game. Having three outstanding defensive players in Spanoulis, Papaloukas and Diamantidis proved to be a winning combination for our team. Those three players can do a great job pressuring the ball. They did a lot of switching following the pick-and-roll, as well as the help and recovery, and they easily made the transition from defense to offense.

In the games against France and the U.S., Greece showed another of our defensive characteristics. We almost used every dead-ball situation, especially late in the games, to change from man-to-man to a 2-3 zone defense. We took advantage of having powerful and strong players such as Schortsianitis and Papadopoulos at the low-post positions, denying the passing lanes, trying to stay in front of the opposing post player with strong help side. We changed the way we were defending the pick-and-roll every game, from sequence to sequence. In most situations, we aggressively jumped in front of the opposing players, often taking charging fouls.

Switching is what we usually did in the pick-and-roll situations on the top of the key. For example, in the game against France, after the French point guard Aymeric Jeanneau checked in the game, we pressured and aggressively double teamed him almost everywhere on the court. Another thing that was typical for Greece was the defense in the baseline out-of-bounds situations, with the switches on the player who gets the ball into play, as well as the shooter (diagr. 1).

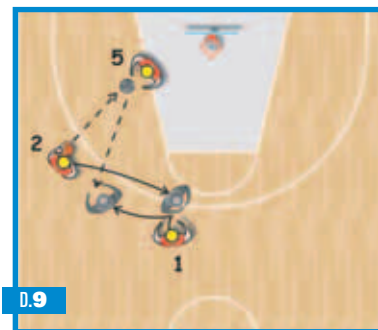
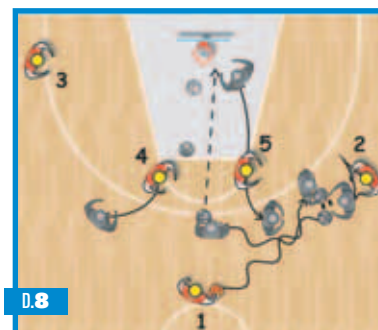
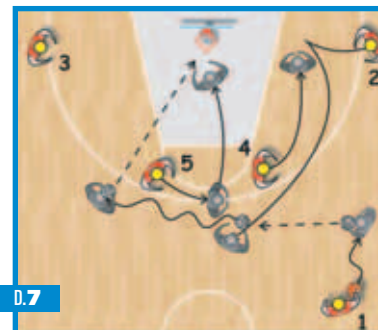
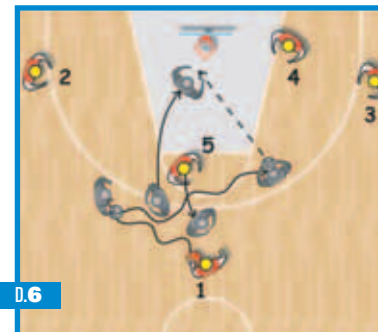
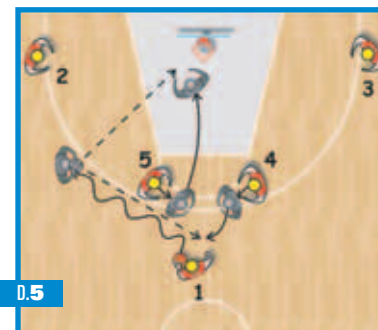
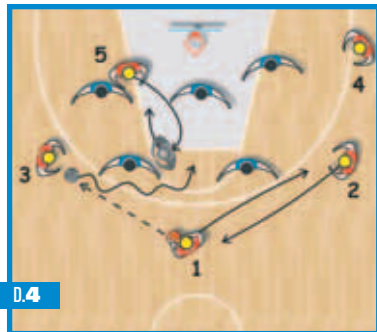
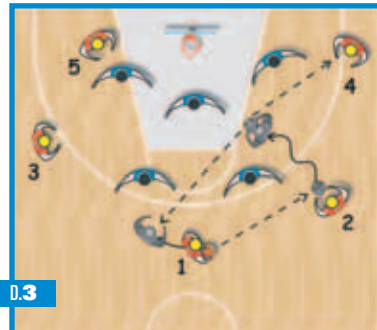
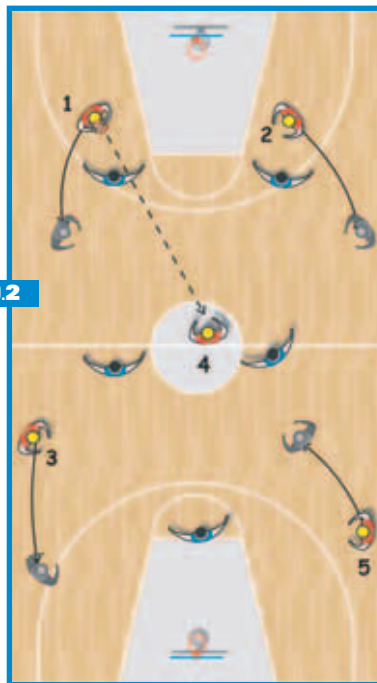
## THE OFFENSE

As the competition went on, our team improved on defense, as well as on offense. The same starting five was used every game:

1. Diamantidis
2. Hatzivrettas
3. Kakiouzis
4. Fotsis
5. Papadopoulos.

With Spanoulis, Papaloukas and Schortsianitis coming off the bench, the game tempo would rise up, becoming more dangerous for the opponent. We used at least two of our point guards (Spanoulis, Papaloukas, Diamantidis) for large stretches of time.

This strategy paid off for us playing against pressure defense (diagr. 2), which could be seen in the game against France and in the game against U.S., too. The U.S. team averaged 12.2 steals per game until the clash with our team, when they managed to steal the ball only four times. Our players were comfortable moving the ball against the opposing team when un-



der pressure. The players were well positioned with the player 4 positioned in the middle, allowing us to move the ball up the court without committing turnovers. We used a lot of players during every game and this resulted in always having a good game rhythm and a couple of go-to players every game, except for the finals. In transition game situations, the most common idea was to look for the big man, Papadopoulos, or to Schortsianitis when he was on the court. These two players executed impressively. Our transition game was even better with Papaloukas on the floor. He not only thrives in pressure situations, but he is also a great scorer.

**THE ZONE OFFENSE**

Playing against the zone defense wasn't much of a problem for us since we had good long-distance shooters, especially Fotsis, or Vasiliopoulos as the power forward in those sequences. We would call a play with four players outside and a center at the low post. In these situations, we kept it simple. After a few passes and some penetrations, with good players' movement and spacing, we would finish the play with a three-point shot (diagr. 3) or with a pass to a player in the low-post position. The other variation we used was the pick-and-roll: After a couple of passes, the center would set a screen for the player with the ball, which would be followed with a pass and, quite often, with an easy score (diagr. 4).

**THE MAN-TO-MAN OFFENSE**

One of the frequently applied plays against the man-to-man defense was called "Horns," a play typically used when Diamantidis was the point guard. After the screen was set (in most situations by Papadopoulos), the screener cuts to the three-second area, and the other frontcourt player (usually Fotsis), positioned himself at the top of the key, ready to take the open shot (diagr. 5), during which time the guards were heading to the corners. The play that was very useful to beat the North Americans was the "double" pick-and-roll at the top of the key. The U.S. players managed to defend the first one, but, after the second one, either the screener was left open in the three-second area, or the guard would have an open shot (diagr. 6). Later in the game, the Americans tried to deal with the problem using a smaller lineup and switching, but our frontcourt players easily scored on the mismatch underneath the basket.





The offensive play we called as "1" was executed after the point guard (player 1) would dribble near the sideline, opening the pass for the shooting guard (player 2) after the screen. This was followed by a quick pick-and-roll with the player 5, who was left open in the lane (diagr. 7), leaving the team with a few options (penetration, shot, pass to the low post, and pass for the outside shot).

The play we called "Head" would start with the point guard dribbling to the sideline, which would be followed with the hand-off and the pick-and-roll.

Simplicity is the word that describes our offensive systems:

reading the defensive plays of the opponent, a lot of one-on-one plays, good spacing, and a number of open shots. With a respectable inside game we had, even these simple plays were becoming rather dangerous and effective (diagr. 8).

The players on the low-post worked with the backcourt near to perfection. Almost every play called for the pass to the big man down low, followed by an up-screen (diagr. 9), and a good return pass.

The play we called "5" was used often, and consisted of the isolation for the tall players, Papadopoulos or Schortianitis, followed by a screen from a guard for a forward, and with the player 4 receiving the ball on the side during which time the diagonal screen was set for the player 5 down at the low post (diagr. 10).

#### THE BASELINE OUT-OF-BOUNDS

Baseline out-of-bounds had a couple of variations as well:

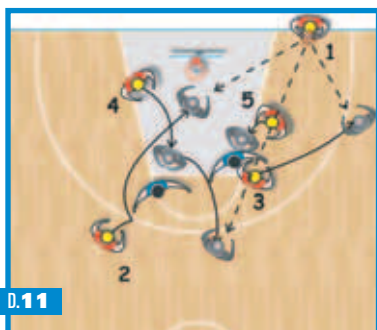
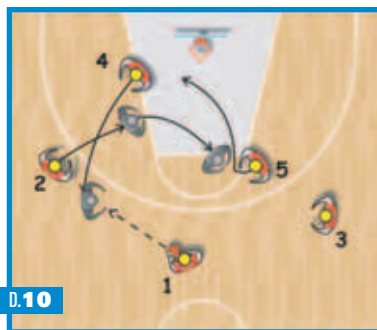
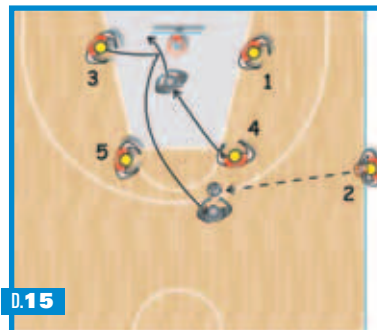
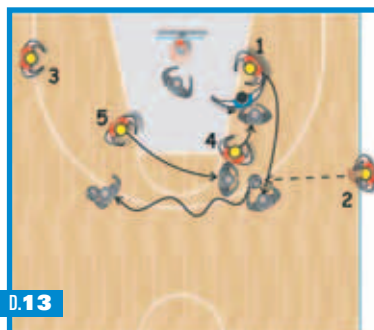
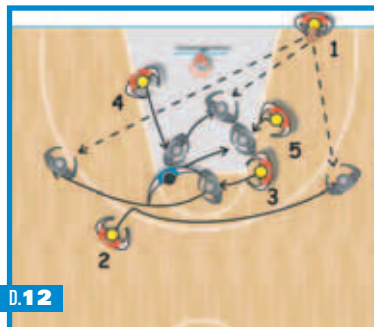
1. A back and horizontal screens were set at the same time (diagr. 11).
2. Two screens were set for the shooter 2 and the other guard 3 (diagr. 12).

#### THE SIDELINE OUT-OF-BOUNDS

Sideline out-of-bounds was almost similar to the already mentioned "1" play. After a screen for the player 2, a pick-and-roll is quickly set on the top of the key, followed by a pass to the best positioned player (diagr. 13).

#### SPECIAL SITUATION PLAYS

In special situations, player 4, Papaloukas, would penetrate immediately after receiving the ball, and look for an open teammate (diagr. 14). However, during the game versus the U.S., we changed that and set the screen for one of our outstanding shooters, Hatzivrettas, who drilled the three-pointers (diagr. 15).





by Jan Stirling

# AUSTRALIA'S OFFENSE

Jan Stirling is the coach of the Australian national team that won the 2006 FIBA World Championships played in Brazil. Leading the Opals, she also won a bronze medal at the 2002 FIBA World Championship in China, a silver medal at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, and a gold at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. At the end of the 2006 World Championships, she was re-appointed as the Opals head coach for the next two years (she was named head coach of the national team in 2001). In the past, she had led Adelaide Lightning to 12 straight Women's National Basketball League finals appearances (between 1993 and 2004), winning 4 championships.

The Australian Basketball Federation worked extremely well in the past years to improve the level of their men's and women's national teams.

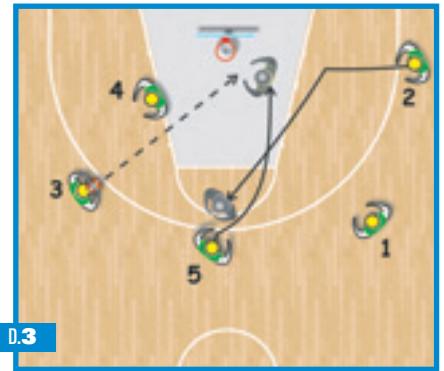
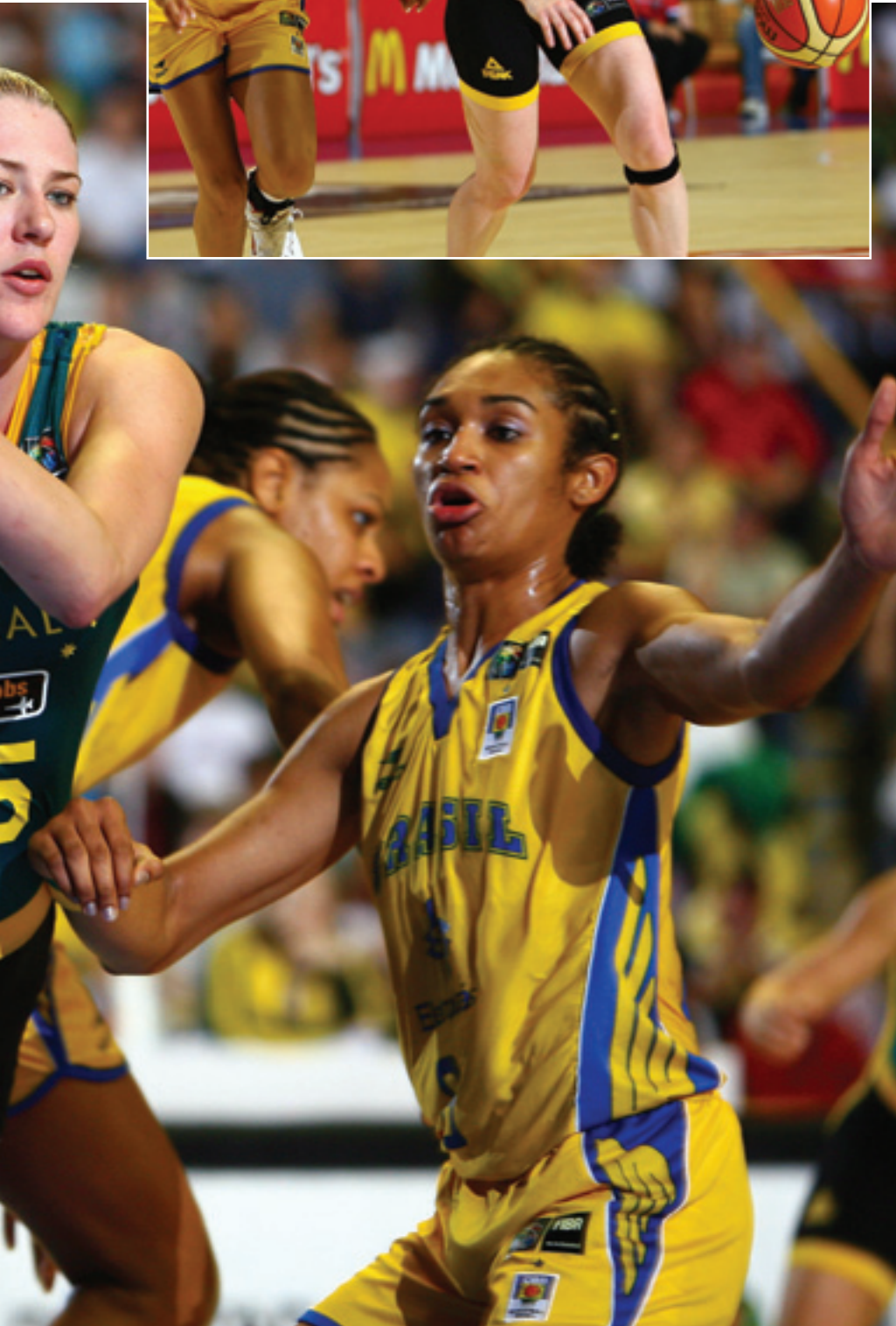
The Opals, which is the name of the Australian women's team, won the bronze medal at 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games. In 2004, they advanced to the final round and won the silver medal at the Olympic Games in Athens. They achieved their best result at the 2006 FIBA World Championship, going undefeated (8-0) on their way to the gold medal.

The team was very athletic and well balanced, and played an exceptionally good transition game, thanks to their defense and rebounding that gave them many opportunities to fast break and score easy baskets. This occurred with both the starting five and the reserves. But, we had also great shooting skills from the three-point range, and this included their forwards and centers.

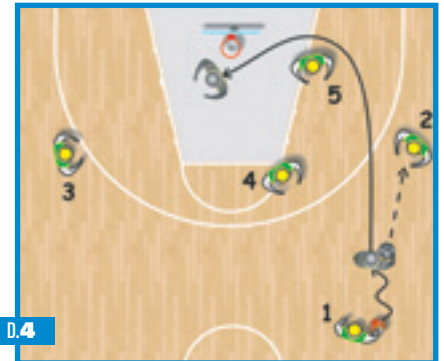
The team did not have few weaknesses, and were expertly guided by two outstanding players, Penny Taylor, the tournament MVP, and Lauren Jackson, the leading scorer of the 2006 FIBA World Championship.

Half court play was mainly oriented for these two best scorers, Taylor and Jackson, while Kristi Harrower, the point guard, created opportunities for the rest of the team. The unselfish play of these three players proved to be the important element in our gold-medal performance. Another plus was that in every

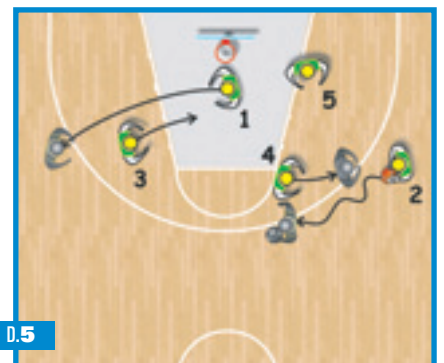




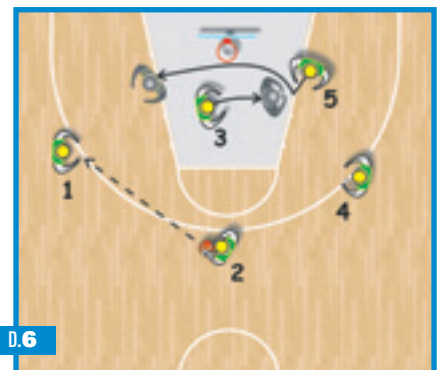
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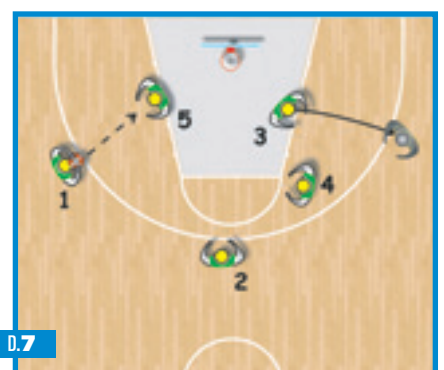
D.4



D.5



D.6



D.7



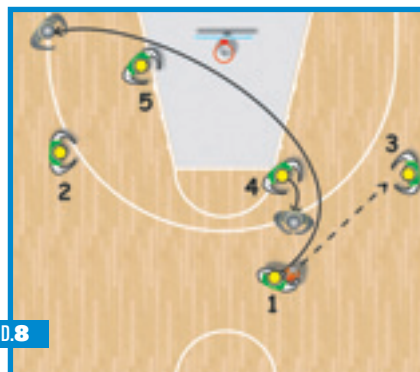
game, another teammate stepped up and provided necessary scoring at just the right moment.

**THE TRANSITION GAME**

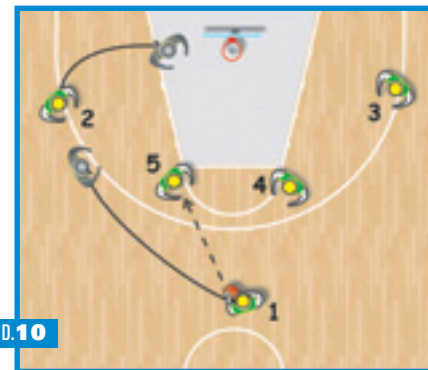
This play is run for Jackson, 5 on the diagrams. 1 dribbles on the sideline, 3 is outside of the three-point arc, 4 in the low-post position, 2 in the corner, outside of the three-point arc, while 5 is the second trailer on the top of the key. 1 passes to 5, who then looks for the pass inside to 4 for to play high-low (diagr. 1).

If 5 cannot pass to 4, she reverses the ball to 3 on the other side of the court. At the same time, 4 cuts in the lane and posts up on the low-post position (diagr. 2).

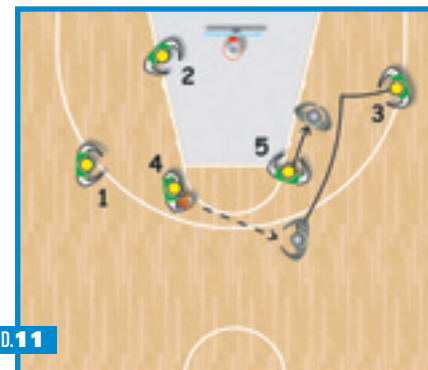
3 can try to pass to 4, while 2 comes high and back screens for 5. 3 makes a lob pass to 5 near the basket (diagr. 3).



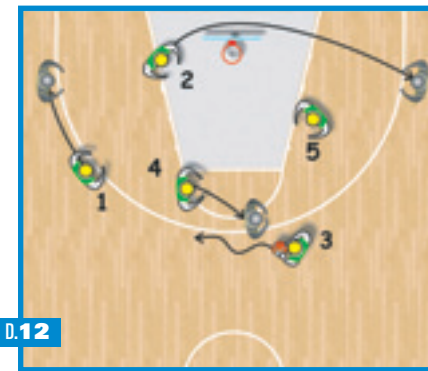
D.8



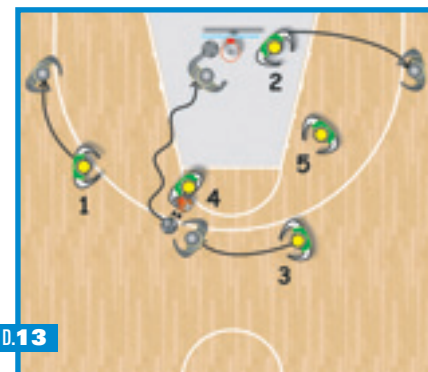
D.10



D.11



D.12



D.13

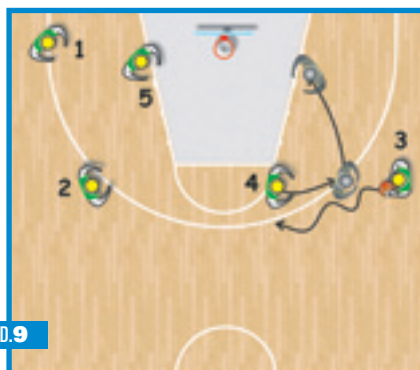
**MAN-TO-MAN SETS**

**A Play for Lauren Jackson**

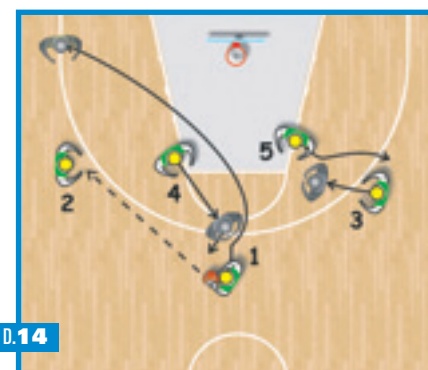
Two wings, 2 and 3, are outside the three-point arc. 4 remains on the high post and 5 on the low-post position on the same side, while 1 dribbles along the sideline. 1 passes to 2 and cuts, rubbing off the shoulder of 5 (diagr. 4).

4 sets a screen on the ball for 2, who dribbles in the middle of the floor. 1 comes out on the wing area, while 3 cuts in the three-second lane (diagr. 5).

2 passes to 1, while 3 makes a cross screen



D.9



D.14



for 5 (diagr. 6).

1 passes to 5 for a one-on-one on the low post (diagr. 7).

## TWO PLAYS FOR PENNY TAYLOR

### Play one

2 and 3 set on the wings, outside of the three-point arc, 5 on the low-post area on the left side of the court, and 4 on the high-post area on the right side, while 1 has the ball in the middle of the court. 1 passes to 3, receives a screen from 4, cuts in the three-second lane, and quickly goes out in the corner, after rubbing off the shoulder of 5 (diagr. 8).

4 pops out and screens for 3, who can shoot, make a penetration, or a pass to 4, who has rolled to the basket (diagr. 9).

### Play two

2 and 3 are on the wings, with 4 and 5 on the high post at the corner of the free-throw area. 1 sets up in the middle of the court with the ball. 1 passes the ball to 4, cuts, and fakes to receive a hand-off pass from 4, and goes outside of the three-point arc (diagr. 10).

5 screens for 3, while 4 passes to 3 for a three-point shot (diagr. 11). An option is a quick hand-off pass from 4 to 3, who can then drive to the basket (diagr. 12). Another one option is a screen on the ball for 3, who drives to the basket or else passes to 4, who rolls to

the basket (diagr. 13).

## A PLAY FOR TAYLOR AND JACKSON

1 has the ball in the middle of the floor, 2 and 3, Penny Taylor, are on the wings, with 4 on the high post on the left side of the court. 5 sets up on the mid-post on the right side of the court. 1 passes the ball to 2, receives a back screen from 4, while 3 makes a screen for 5. 1 cuts and goes on the left corner of the court (diagr. 14).

2 reverses the ball quickly to 4 and 4 then passes it to 5, while 1 cuts along the baseline and goes on the right side of the court

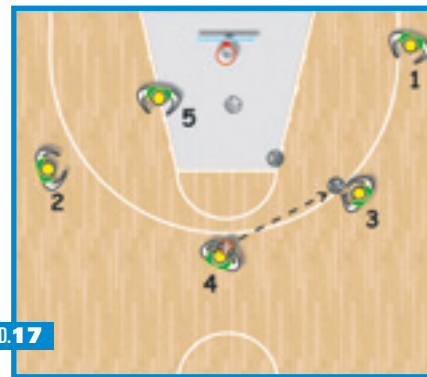
5 can pass the ball to 3 for a one-on-one (diagr. 15). If it's not possible to pass to 3, 5 passes to 4, who reverses the ball to 2. 3 makes a back screen for 5, who cuts in the lane and receives the ball from 2 (diagr. 16). If there is defensive help on the back screen, 3 pops out for a three-point shot (diagr. 17).

## ANOTHER PLAY FOR TAYLOR AND JACKSON

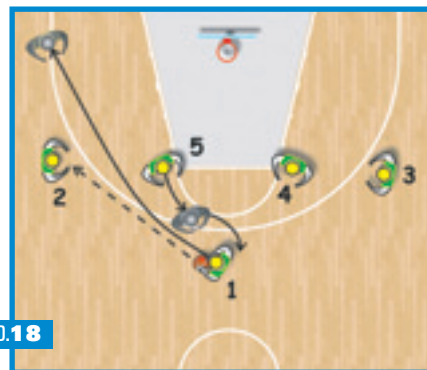
The set is one-four, with 2 and 3 on the wings, 5 and 4 on the high-post areas at the corner of the free-throw area, and 1 with the ball in the middle of the court. 1 passes to 2, receives a back screen from 5, and then cuts and goes to the corner on the ball side. In the meantime, 5 pops out after the screen (diagr. 18).

2 reverses the ball to 5, and 5 passes to 3 (diagr. 19). 3 passes the ball to 5, and 5 passes it to 2. 4 sets a back screen for 3, who cuts in the lane and posts up on the low-post area on the other side of the court (diagr. 20).

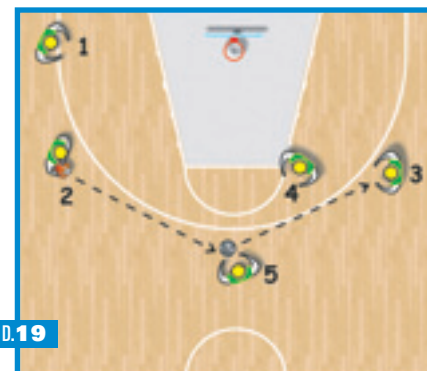
4 screens for 5, who cuts in the three-second lane. 2 can pass to 3, to 5, or to 4, who pops out after the screen for 5 (diagr. 21).



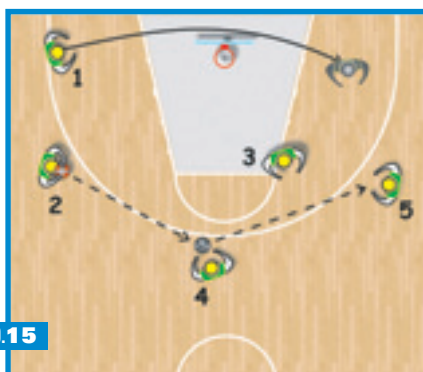
D.17



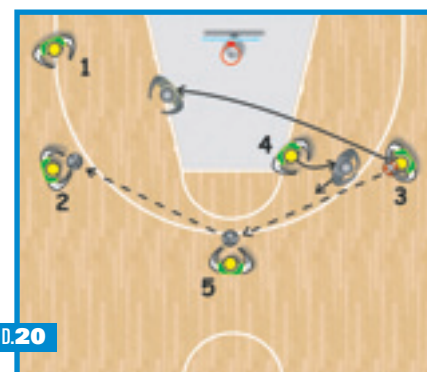
D.18



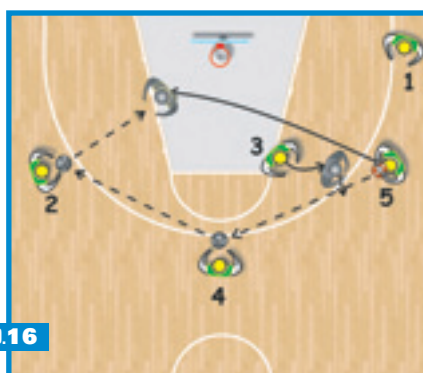
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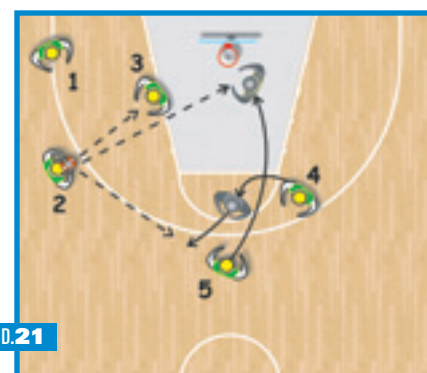
D.15



D.20



D.16



D.21



by Pat Riley



by Bob McAdoo

Pat Riley started his coaching career with the Los Angeles Lakers, first as assistant coach from 1979 to 1981, then as head coach since 1981, winning four NBA championship titles (1982, 1985, 1987, 1988). He went to the New York Knicks in 1991 and guided the team to the NBA Final in 1994. Since 1995 he has worked for the Miami Heat, eight seasons with the double role of head coach and president, and for two seasons just as president. He came back to the bench as head coach in 2005 and he won the NBA title with the team in 2006. Riley has been awarded the NBA Coach of the Year trophy three times (1990, 1993, 1997). In 1996 he was named among the Top 10 Coaches in the history of the NBA.

Bob McAdoo, who played in the NBA for thirteen seasons and was elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2000, has been part of the Miami Heat coaching staff since 1995. He works as an assistant coach and is in charge of individual player development.

Last season, the Miami Heat had the sixth best offense in the NBA, scoring 99.89 points per game. Miami's offense had its "bearing wall" in Dwyane Wade, the fourth best scorer in the NBA, with more than 28 points per game during the season and more than 34 points per game throughout the Final Series. Shaquille O'Neal and Antoine Walker opened up the opposing defenses with their inside and outside games, and Jason Williams gave even more support with his penetrations to the basket and outside shooting.

It was logical for the team to create plays providing all the best shooting options for Wade. Moreover, depending on the various defense reactions, the plays provided different calls within the same play.

# MIAMI HEAT OFFENSIVE PLAYS



The following players played the most during the season:

**STARTING FIVE**

- ▼ Jason Williams, point guard, 1.85 (6-1).
- ▼ Dwayne Wade, shooting guard, 1.93 (6-4).
- ▼ James Posey, small forward, 2.02 (6-8).
- ▼ Udonis Haslem, power forward, 2.02 (6-8).
- ▼ Shaquille O'Neal, center, 2.15 (7-1).

**OFF THE BENCH**

- ▼ Gary Payton, point guard, 1.92 (6-4).
- ▼ Antoine Walker, forward, 2.07 (6-9).
- ▼ Alonzo Mourning, center, 2.08 (6-10).

The following are just some of the plays used along the season and the playoffs. The numbers in the diagrams correspond to the following players:

- 1) Jason Williams.
- 2) Dwayne Wade.
- 3) James Posey.
- 4) Udonis Haslem.
- 5) Shaquille O'Neal.

**DRAG PUNCH**

With the word "drag punch," we called all the plays in which the ball had to go to Shaquille O'Neal. Initial set-up is with player 5 on the low post, 4 on the high post on the elbow opposite to 5, 3 on the wing and 2 in guard position on the same side of 5. 1 begins the play by dribbling on the side where is 2. 4 comes out of the lane and screens for 1, who dribbles to the opposite side and then reverses the ball, passing to 2, who is now open and has come out over the three-point line (diagr. 1).

At this point, if 2 cannot pass the ball to 5 or shoot, he gets a screen from 4 and then 4 goes on the wing. 2 has now several possibilities:

- ▼ He can shoot.
- ▼ He can pass to 5, who ducks in the lane to get free and receive the ball.
- ▼ He can pass to 1, who has gone to the corner after passing the ball to 2.
- ▼ He can pass to 3, who has come out to the three-point line.
- ▼ He can also pass to 4, who got



D.1



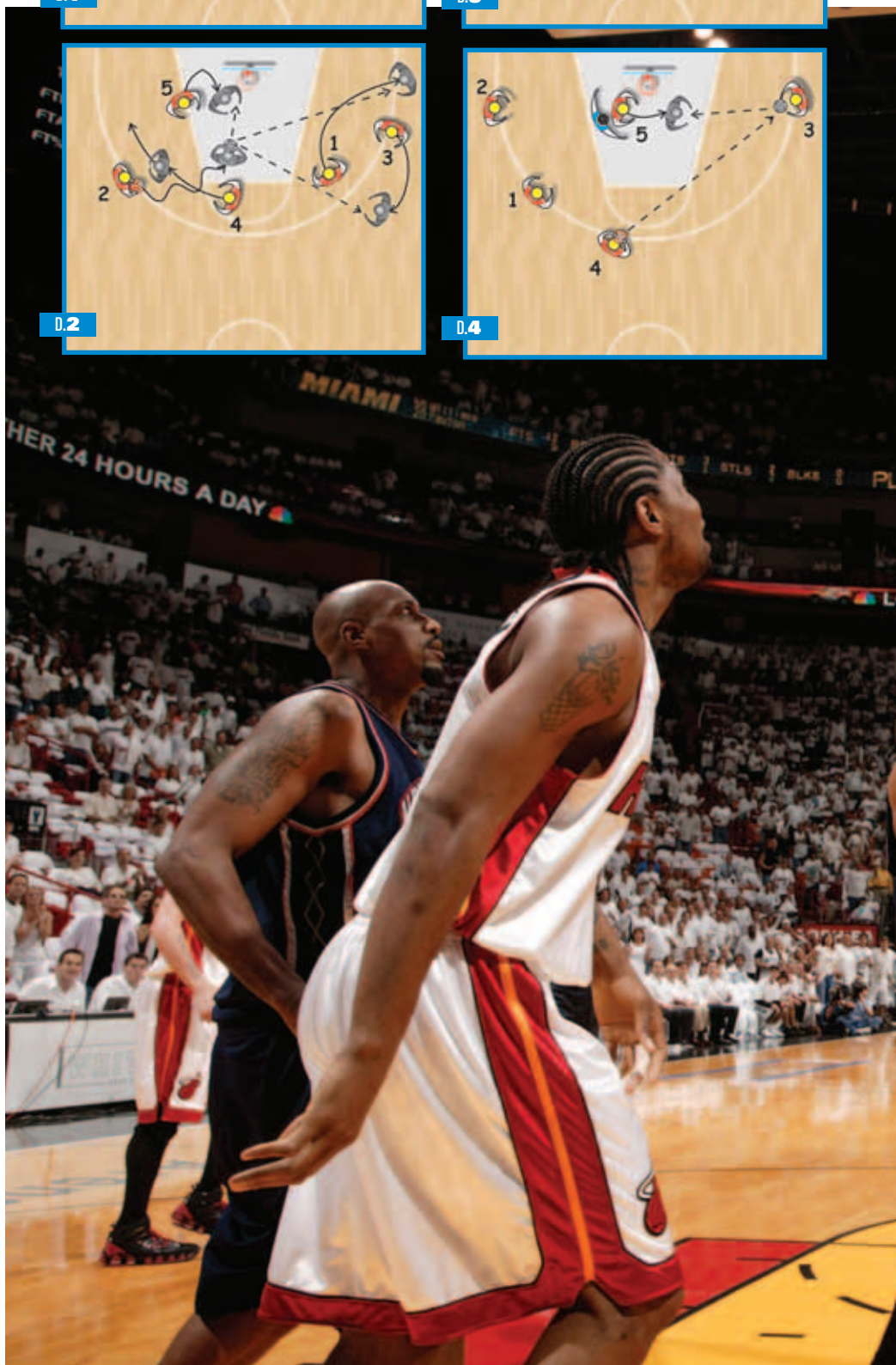
D.3



D.2



D.4



open on the wing after the screen (diagr. 2).

### WITH 5 FRONTED

We also had to prepare to play against defenses put up against Shaquille O'Neal by anticipating him with a defender playing in front of him. 1 dribbles toward 2, who has gone to the corner, and then makes a lob pass to 5, who

has kept the position against his defender and now can easily shoot near the basket or dunk (diagr. 3).

The other option, if 1 cannot pass directly to 5, there is a ball reversal to the other side: 4 goes toward 1, gets the ball from him and changes side, passing to 3, who has moved lower in the corner. 3 now passes to 5 (diagr. 4).



D.5



D.6



D.7





If it isn't possible to pass the ball to 5, either directly or with a ball reversal, 1 gets a screen by 4 and drives to the basket, opening the floor. If he can, he drives to the basket, or he passes to 2 in the left corner, to 3 in the right corner, or to 5, who gets open under the basket (diagr. 5).

**"TUGEAR THUMB"**

Initial set-up is with 4 on the high post, 3 on the wing, 5 on the low post, 2, who begins the play starting under the basket, and 1, who dribbles to the wing, on the left side. 2 cuts along the lane, gets free off the screen by 4, comes out to the three-point line and receives the ball from 1 (diagr. 6). 2 can even go out to the corner, working off the screen by 5.

If 2 cannot shoot, 5 goes to the top of the key to screen for 2. In the meantime, 4 cuts through the lane and receives the ball from 2, or else goes to the high post. 1, who drops down lower to the corner (diagr. 7). 2 can also receive a screen by 4 and:

- ▼ Shoot.
- ▼ Play pick-and-roll with 4, passing him the ball, as he rolls to the basket.
- ▼ Pass to 1 for a shot from outside.
- ▼ Pass to 3 for a shot from outside.
- ▼ Pass to 5, who is now open under the basket (diagr. 8).

**PLAY FOR WADE**

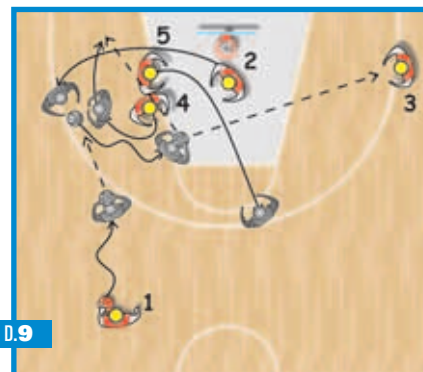
This is another play prepared for Wade. 4 and 5 play together on the low post, forming a stack, 2 starts under the basket, 3 is on the opposite corner, and 1 dribbles on the same side of 4 and 5. 2 cuts along the baseline off the screen by 5, and receives the ball from 1.

If he can't shoot, 4 screens for him and then rolls to the basket, while 5 has gone up to the free-throw line. 2 can pass to 4 or he can reverse the ball, passing to 3 (diagr. 9).

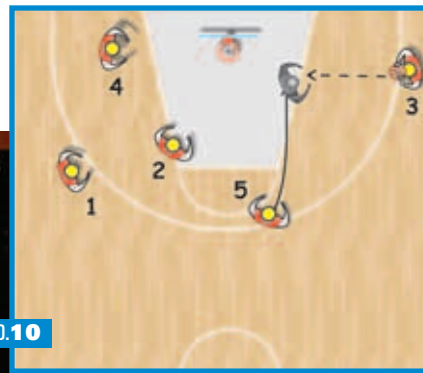
If 3 receives the ball, but cannot shoot, 5 cuts quickly to the low post on the ball side and receives the ball from 3 to play one-on-one (diagr. 10).



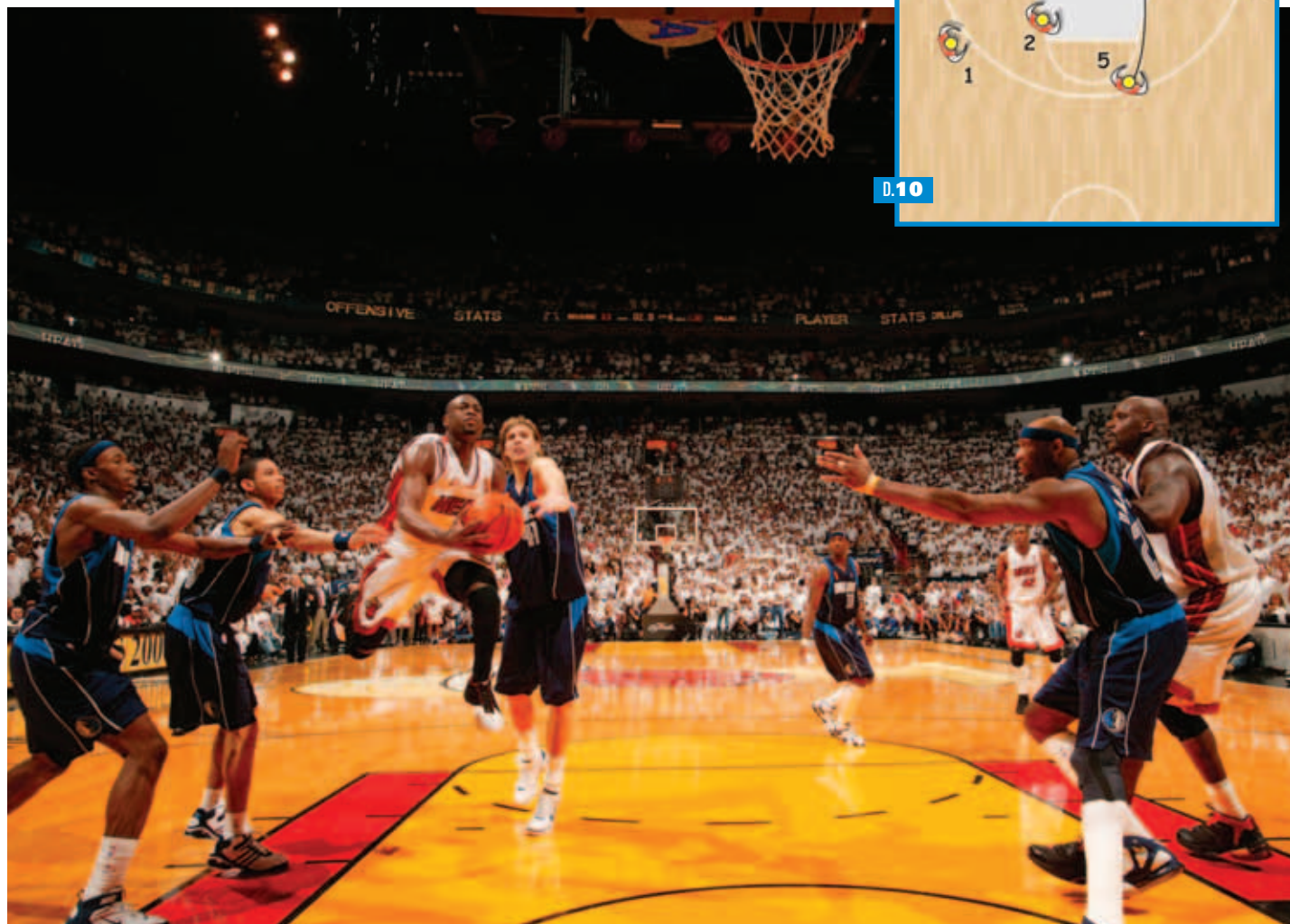
D.8



D.9



D.10





by Tom Barrise

# LOW POST DEFENSE

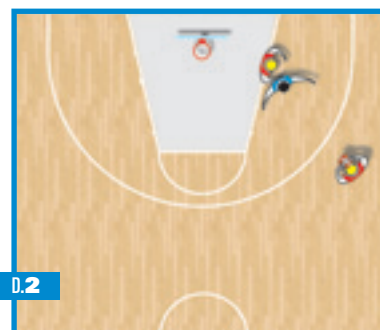
**Tom Barrise has coached several NCAA teams, before going to the NBA's New Jersey Nets ten years ago. He started as the advanced scout, and since two years ago he has become assistant coach, also helping the player personnel staff in settling the NBA Draft Day.**

Defending the low post player is critical to our defensive success. We want to front the post to prevent opposing teams from getting the ball into the post, or, at the least force the post player to catch the ball off the lane. Our verbal for a post front is "green". By fronting the post and defending the elbow area, we are trying to take away first side scoring opportunities. When the ball is up top, above the free throw line extended, we want to make sure we are above our man in order to prevent duck-ins and to be in a position to help on penetration (diagr. 1, 2, and 3). As the ball gets entered drive and kick to the wing at the free-throw line extended, we want to compete for the paint against the low post player and "hip check" him to force off the block. When we hip check, we have to step across his top leg with our inside leg and swing our elbow over his arms. After we hip check, we want to be in a butt front position (diagr. 4). When we front the post, it is crucial that we have everyone on

the same page. When fronting the post, the post defender must get low and sit on the post player's legs and drive him back while keeping his hands high. We want to force the offensive player to catch the ball outside the lane near the logo, or outside the hashmark. If the offensive player steps off the block by the hashmark/logo or pushes his defender up the lane by the logo, we will "circle" on the top side to recover in a 3/4 stance. We have done our job if we are able to get him off the box. Any time the ball is passed over the top of the post front, we want the post defender to spin middle to form a baseline trap with the weakside bottom defender or jump for a steal or deflection (diagr. 5).

## THE ON BALL WING DEFENDER

The on ball wing defender is critical to the success of our post fronts. He forms a partnership with the ballside post defender. He must pressure the ball and really get up into his man in a no-middle stance as soon as he hears "green" being called by his teammate who is fronting the post. When the ball is on the wing, the defender at the top should shade towards the elbow and be ready to close-out if the ball is reversed from the wing to the top. We must close-out with high, active hands and



pressure the ball, ready to discourage the pass from the point to the post (diagr. 6).

### BALL FROM THE WING TO THE POINT

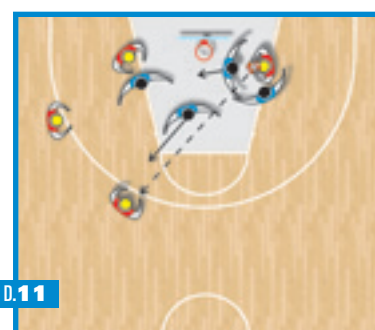
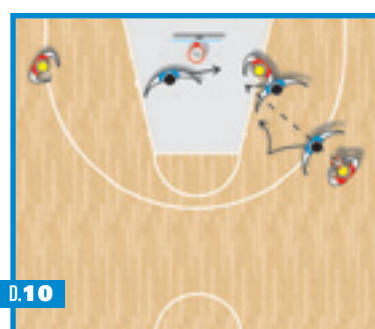
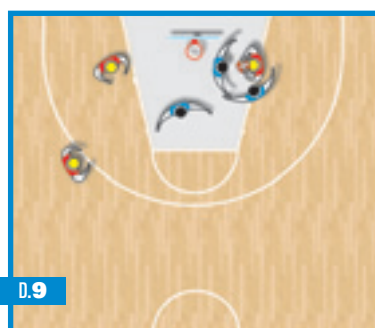
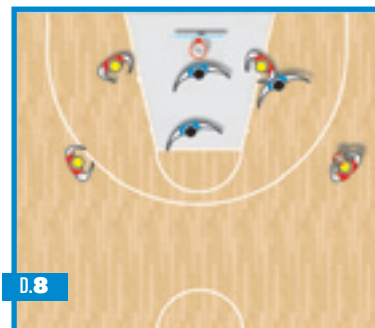
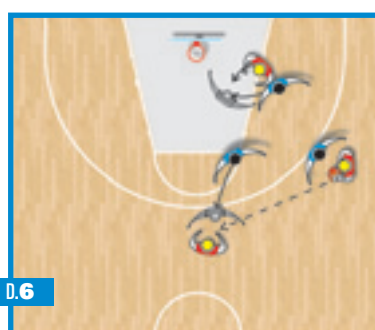
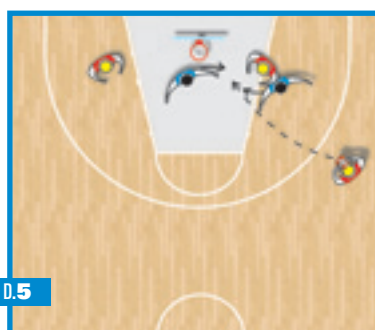
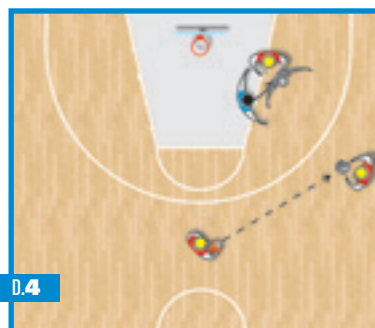
When the ball is passed from the wing to the point, we want to deny any pass back to the same side to prevent the low post player sealing on the high side. The post defender must now get on the inside of his man to prevent the point to post pass (diagr. 7). We want to go on the top side unless we are really pushed up the lane. When we front the post, the defenders on the weakside must be very active and alert, anticipating the pass over the top (diagr. 8). We want to try to invert as much as possible to keep our big people in a position to be the bottom weakside defender. As we are fronting the post, the bottom man on the weakside should give a hard stunt (3 second defensive rule) to give the appearance of help to discourage the post feed. There may be times when we "tag" the post player with the weakside bottom man to discourage a post feed. When the ball is in the air, the defender fronting the post, will spin middle and get on the offensive player's inside shoulder as the weakside bottom defender attacks the ball. We want to either form a "wall" and trap the low post player or when the opportunity presents itself go for a steal or deflection. Thus, we use the terms "2 hands to the ball" or "form a wall".

### FORM THE WALL

When we form the wall, the bottom weakside defender must get body to body with the offensive player to restrict his space (diagr. 9). We must squeeze the trap and prevent any splits. On the pass over the top, the defender on the ballside wing will get to the elbow area (diagr. 10). As we rotate to the ball with the bottom weakside defender, we must V-back from the top to the baseline ready to "hit first" and root out any offensive player around the basket. On our V-back, we want to try to straddle the top leg of the defender so we do not get sealed in the paint.

### BASELINE WALL

On our baseline wall we want to force the post player to throw a lob pass out of the double team. If the ball is passed out of the low post trap, we want the top defender in the weakside "1" to close-out to the first pass out of the trap. The trapper must sprint out of the double team to the weakside (diagr. 11). The bottom man on the weakside must read the trapper and the direction of the pass to determine whether he has to kick out and close-out on the perimeter.





by by Piero Bucchi  
and Maurizio Bartocci



# BUILDING A MAN-TO-MAN DEFENSE

**Piero Bucchi** was an assistant coach with Rimini in 1991, becoming head coach in 1995 and winning the championship that same year. He coached Benetton Treviso in 1999, where he won an Italia Cup and reached the finals of the championship. He has coached in Rome and is currently coaching the team in Naples that recently won the Italian Cup.

**Maurizio Bartocci** was assistant coach in Caserta, A1 Italian League, and then head coach. In 1998 he became head coach in Avellino, in A1 and then he became assistant coach in Naples, where he was also interim head coach in 2005.

When you organize a team defense it is very important to give clear and specific rules to the players in order to avoid doubts and take away any possible alibis. If a player does not know exactly what he has to do on the court, there is a tendency that he will become lazy and won't assume any responsibility. A strong defense entails one-on-one play, and the necessity to keep the offensive player from beating you. This requires not only technical skills but also mental toughness. I am convinced that every player can be a good defender if he puts his mind to it. He has to take pride in his efforts. Good man-to-man defense is a state of mind, not only a technical aspect of the game.

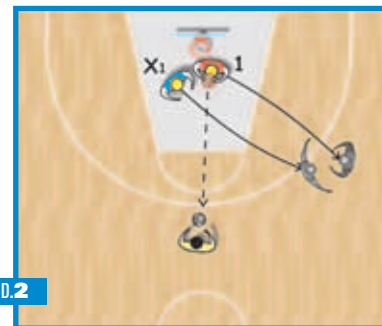
To have a good man-to-man defense, you need clear and simple rules that are understood by all the players on the team.

Here the simple rules we give to our players:

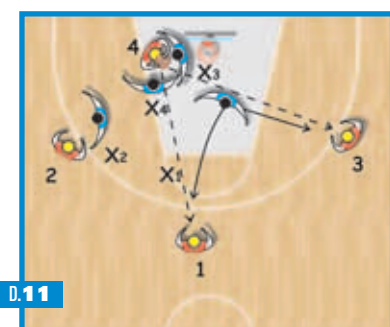
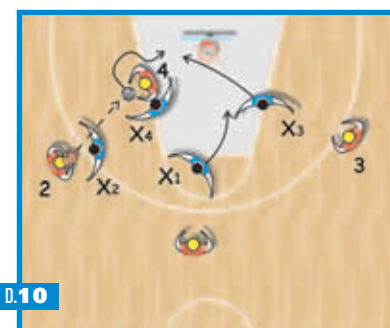
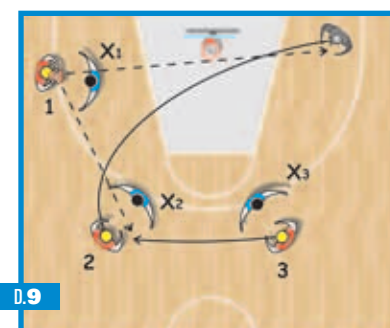
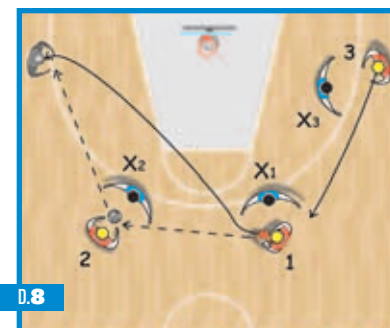
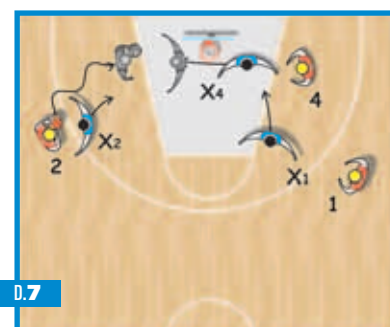
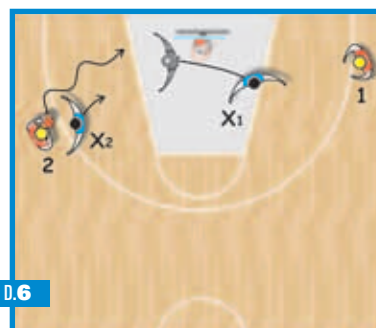
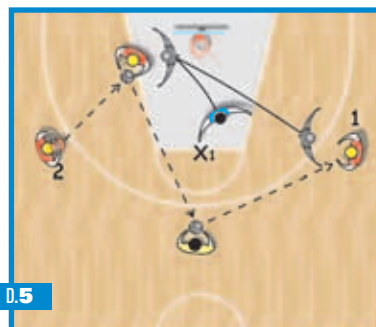
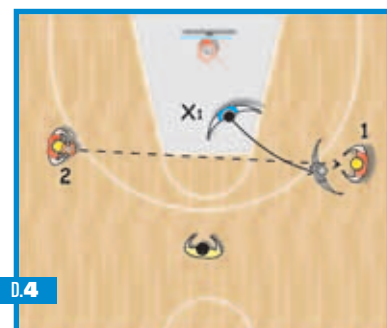
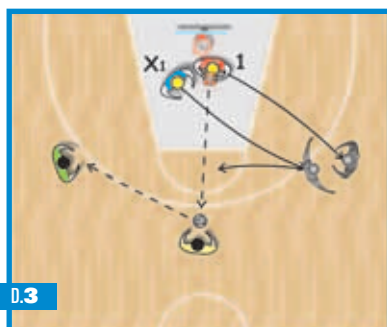
- ▼ Push the offense to the baseline and use at least three defensive slides.
- ▼ Deny the middle of the three-second lane. This means preventing all passes and dribble penetration in the three-second lane.
- ▼ Break the passing lanes.



D.1



D.2



- ▼ Break the cutting lanes.
- ▼ Push the offensive player to one side of the floor, thereby defining a strong side and a weak side for the defense.
- ▼ Understand that when you are guarding a player that your four teammates are working for you and will help you when needed. You will also help your teammates when they need help.

## DEFENSIVE DRILLS

### Pushing to the Baseline

X1 makes a handoff pass to 1, who drives to the baseline, forced by X1, who makes three hard slides like "the attack of a fencer." 1, once he has reached the baseline, does not shoot, but makes a handoff pass to 2, and becomes the defender (diagr. 1).

### Breaking the Passing Lanes

The defender lets the offensive player receive the ball a couple of feet outside the three-point line. Keeping a short distance from the offensive player, he closely watches the passing lanes. The offensive player has a teammate (or coach) to pass the ball. As the drill progresses, we add another receiver on the weakside so the offensive player now has two passing choices (diagr. 2 and 3).

On the ball reversal, we tell to the defender to attack the outside shoulder (diagr. 4).

We then add another player on the low-post position. He receives the ball, counts to two and starts the drill, driving to the lane. The defender has to stop the pene-

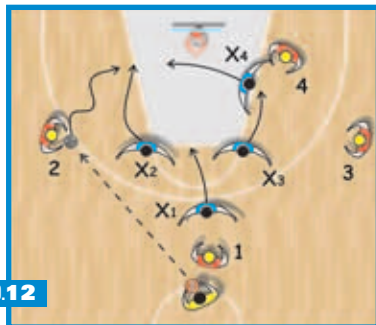
tration, and on the kick-off pass to the receiver in the middle of the court and then a pass from him to 1, 1 has to play the one-on-one (diagr. 5).

The help from the defender on the weakside has to go over the basket (not under the basket) to prevent an easy kick off. It's always difficult to find players able to stop and shoot (diagr. 6). On the rotation, 1's defender has to attack 4, trying to push him outside the three- second lane (diagr. 7).

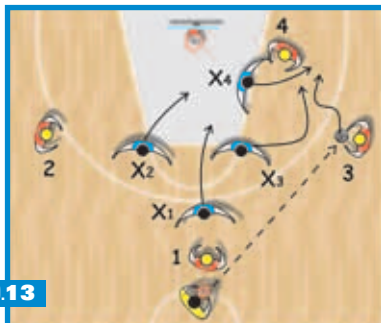
The offense moves as shown in diagrams 8 and 9; and the defenders have to work on the passing lanes. Then we run the drill on give-and-go with four players. With the low-post defense, we want in to stay within the rules and avoid a central penetration, trying to push the post player to the baseline, and taking advantage of the board in closing passing lines.

For this reason, the defender has to maintain a 3/4 stance, anticipating him in order to let him receive as possible as he can near the baseline and then guarding the one-on-one. He's got to try to send him towards the baseline where he can have the help (diagr. 10 and 11) by 3's defender, while 1's defender gets lower, ready to cover the offensive player who could receive the kick-off pass.

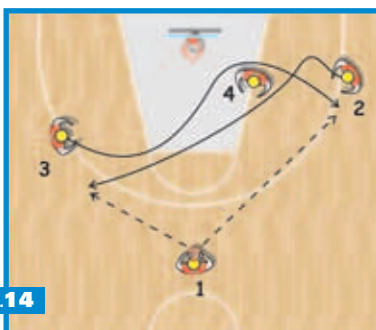
Now we have 1 in the middle of the court, 2 and 3 are the wings, 4 on the low post, and the coach with the ball in the middle of the court behind 1. The coach makes the first pass on one of the two sides of the court. The defenders of players 2 and 3 start the drill from the elbow of the free-throw area. The offensive players have an advantage on



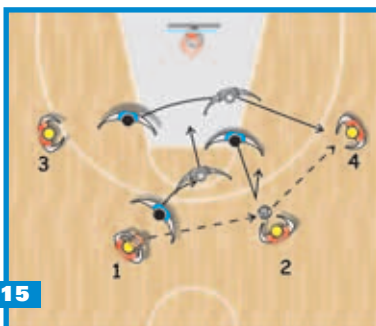
D.12



D.13



D.14



D.15

them for driving to the baseline when they receive the ball. The defender helps on the penetrations (diagr. 12 and 13).

Otherwise, we can also tell the offense to begin with a movement as shown in diagr. 14.

### Denying the Shot

4 offensive players against 3 defenders. The offensive players cannot dribble. The defenders must "fly" to deny any shot. It is important that defenders talk to each other throughout the play. Constant communication is a must in order to maintain a strong defense. (diagr. 15).



### CONCLUSIONS

These are some of the drills we use during our season, trying to create and give a defensive identity to a group of players with different basketball skill backgrounds. The idea is always to have all the players looking to the same direction, the same goal, and talking the same

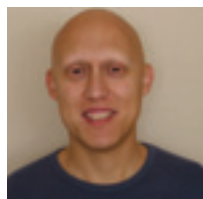
team language.

This is a very difficult job that we try to achieve through daily work on the court in our practice sessions. We provide clear and simple rules for every player and hope that they can abide by them. When they do, the results are extremely satisfying.



**FIBA**

We Are Basketball



by Nacho Coque

# STRENGTH CONDITIONING FOR THE SPANISH NATIONAL TEAM

**Nacho Coque Hernandez is the strength and conditioning coach of the Spanish National teams since 1994, as well as member of the Technical Committee of the Spanish Basketball Federation. He was part of technical staff of the Spanish National Team winning the 2006 FIBA World Championship. He is also a first level basketball and track and field coach.**

I'm going to use this article to explain some important concepts that we kept in mind at the time of preparing for the 2006 FIBA World Championship in Japan. I want to point out how we outlined our strength-training program and how we eventually incorporated it into the training of the Spanish Men's National Basketball Team.

## APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF STRENGTH TRAINING IN BASKETBALL

The training of strength is an important part in the development of a basketball player because of the power necessary for running, jumping, passing, and shooting. Many of the movements on the court are quick and explosive, and they require high levels of explosiveness, especially in the lower part of the body. The capacity to generate power in a short period of time is one of the characteristics of basketball.

Strength represents the capacity of a subject in order to win or to bear a resistance. According to Grosser and Müller (1989), it is the capacity of the neuromuscular system to overcome resistance through muscular activity (concentric work), to act against the same resistance (eccentric work), or also to maintain this one (isometric work). In much simpler terms, this means that there is a direct relationship between an athlete's performance and his strength levels, and for this reason increases in strength will improve individual performance and team performance.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRENGTH TRAINING AND TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Two are the aims of a strength training:

### 1. Maintenance of Stamina

Over time, the player must develop a strength base that will allow him to maintain high skill levels throughout the course of a competition. At the same time, the player must develop maximum aerobic power to allow him to play at the highest levels throughout the game, while also devel-

oping anaerobic strength, which will allow him to make quick bursts of movement, and quick recovery from these power bursts.



### 2. Quality of Movement

The aim of strength training is to improve a player's explosiveness, an essential quality needed for jumping, making a first step on offense, and for playing good defense. Think about the players' explosiveness in a fast-break, a final lay-up with maximum intensity to score a basket, and a one-on-one play in the final seconds of a game. Each movement is dependent on strong muscles.



## METHODS USED IN STRENGTH TRAINING TO IMPROVE SPEED

In the following analysis I will review the various forms of strength work we used with the Spanish Men's National Team to enhance specific speed and explosiveness. Exercise routines included the following:

### 1. Training of Maximum Strength with High Loads

This theory has its base in the majority hypertrophy of fibres FT, the improvement of the synchronization of motor units and the adaptation of the recruiting model, being careful as the authors say, because the excessive hypertrophy modifies the fibres' disposition in connection with their point of insertion, increasing the angle of penetration of the same ones and compromising the muscle speed contraction (Tesch and Larson, 1982).

### 2. Strength Training with Low and Medium Loads and High Intensity in Order to Improve Non-specific Speed

This type of work was used in the second and third week of pre-season training. We look for a transition of the strength from a generic base to the more explosive basketball strength, reducing the loads and generating greater speed in execution. This helps develop QUALITY OF MOVEMENT.

### 3. Strength Training with Low Loads and High Intensity in Order to Improve Specific Speed

We used this type of work as we approached the competition, trying to reproduce real game situations. We used elastic tubing of varying resistance that was looped around the player's waist. The player would then use maximum effort against the resistance of the tubing while going through a variety of typical basketball movements.

### 4. Reactive Training: Plyometrics

Developed from exercises used by coaches and athletes in the former Easter Bloc countries in the mid-1960s, plyometrics is a type of training designed to develop power characterized as "explosive." In contrast to the slow, sustained muscle actions of typical resistance exercises, plyometric power concentrates a large amount of force in a very short period of time, thereby mimicking an athlete's movement during competition. Plyometrics help in basketball since rapid acceleration of the body and change of direction are requirements.

How plyometric exercise physiologically improves strength and power is still unclear. It's thought that since tendons and muscle are elastic, plyometric drills convert the natural stretch reflex that occurs during a muscular contraction into an equal and opposite force.

Plyometric training involves exercises that produce a rapid lengthening of a muscle quickly followed by a forceful shortening. This occurs, for example, when the athlete performs a basic plyometric drill such as jumping over consecutive barrier of varying heights, or hopping, skipping, or bounding over distances of up to 100 meters.

### 5. Current Proposal of Application

In the fusion of the last two types of strength workout (strength with low loads of high intensity + plyometric) there is a high percentage of the tapering phase used in the two weeks before the World Championship, in which we realized two three sessions-cycles where the alternation of the work was organized in the following manner:

Before the pre-season practice began, players carried out personal muscular work based on the development of basal-hypertrophic strength. This type of work is the support for a

next request of the maximum strength with high loads and the explosive strength. Players carry out general drills with loads between 60% and 80% of 1 MR (maximum repetition).

To sum up, we can say that the strength work program follows the scheme:

#### A. BASAL-HYPERTROPHIC STRENGTH

#### B. MAXIMUM STRENGTH

#### C. EXPLOSIVE STRENGTH (SPEED)

In addition to this training, team members also performed resistance exercises designed to prevent injuries. These included:

#### BASAL MUSCULAR STRENGTHENING TRAINING

This type of exercise is carried out during most sessions and consists of a series of individual muscular strengthening drills that help prevent back injuries while increasing overall physical conditioning. Exercises focused on the abdominal muscles, which also translated to better jumping, sprinting, and rebounding.

#### TRAINING WITH ELECTRO STIMULATION

The possibility of carrying out training with electro stimulators has given us the following advantages:

- ▼ Carrying out compensative and preventive training with the players during the journeys.
- ▼ Carrying out drills of maximum strength for the players with articular problems with no injury risks or a relapse of significant pathology.
- ▼ Strengthen small muscular groups difficult to localize with general drills, but in some case decisive for the performance.

#### CONCLUSION

Incorporating basketball-specific heavy resistance training into their conditioning program helped to prevent injury, enhance endurance, and improve strength and explosive power. Developing a basketball-specific weight-training program can strengthen muscles and connective tissue, which may well offset the intense pounding on the legs that weeks of on-court basketball training and competition can produce. Strengthening the muscle groups of the upper body can also contribute to improved form when fatigued, and allow the athlete to maintain performance standards even at the end of a highly contested game.

