



by Zelimir Obradovic

PANATHINAIKOS' OFFENSE

Zelimir Obradovic is the winningest coach in Europe. He has won 6 Euroleague (one with Partizan Belgrade, Yugoslavia, one with Badalona and one with Real Madrid, Spain, and three with Panathinaikos Athens, Greece). He also won one national and one Yugoslavian Cup with Partizan, two Saporta Cups (Real Madrid and Benetton Treviso, Italy), six Greek titles, and four Greek Cups with Panathinaikos. With the Yugoslavian, and then the Serbian National team, he won a silver medal at the 1996 Olympic Games, one gold medal and one bronze medal at the FIBA European Championships, and one gold medal at the FIBA World Championships.

I would like to introduce my starting five players, as well as thank our outstanding reserve players, who helped us to win the 2007 Euroleague.

This is how the players are numbered on the diagrams:

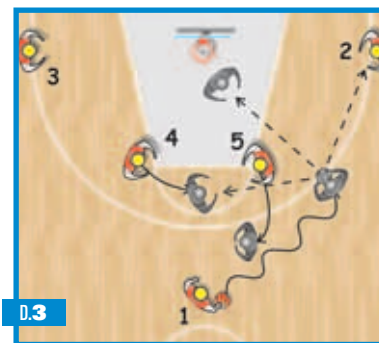
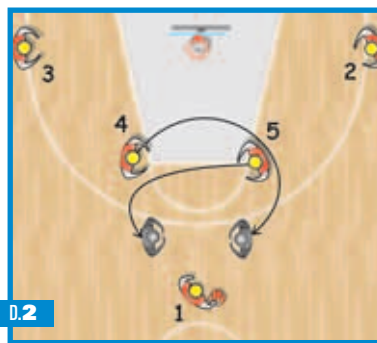
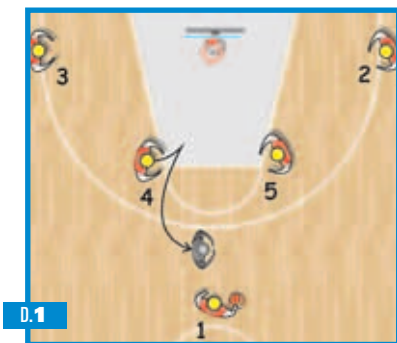
- 1- Dimitris Diamantidis, point-guard.
- 2- Sani Becirovic, guard.
- 3- Ramunas Siskauskas, forward.
- 4- Mike Batiste, power forward.
- 5- Demos Dikoudis, center.

If we cannot run in transition, we set up this half-court offense. I use this offense with all my teams. It has a lot of options for all the players and the play-makers must be able to read the situation and run the different and simple options.

The premise of this offense is to give the ball to players, who are able to effectively play one-on-one.

We set with two players low and wide, and two posts at the high post position, where I need players, who are able to score from the three-point line and also read the defense. We start the play with one of the high post players, 4 in this case, faking a cut to the basket and then screening (diagr. 1).





Another way to start is to have the two posts cross and then screen (diagr. 2). In this offense 5, the center, is the player that I normally want in the three-second lane and 4, the power forward, usually a better shooter, who can pop out and pick. This way, we create a three-on-three play, where two players, 2 and 3, our good shooters, are in corners ready to shoot. On the screen for the ball handler, there are three passing options (diagr. 3).

If the ball is passed to 4 (which keeps the defense busy), we screen on the weak side for the player in the corner (diagr. 4).

1 passes to the guard 2, and then he receives a back screen by 5. 1 cuts off 5 and goes to the low post position on the ball side after the pass, while 4 and 3 start to go in the lane (diagr. 5).

4 screens for 1, who cuts baseline on the other side of the court. 4 then receives a back screen by 3 (screen-the screener action), and goes back on the other side of the court. 2 passes the ball to 5 and follows the pass for a hand-off pass, and then he drives to the other side of the court (diagr. 6). If 2 cannot pass to 5, 5 screens for 2 and the play is run in the same way.

2 can pass to 1 in the corner or to 4 in the low-post position. If he passes the ball to 1, but 1 cannot shoot, he receives a side screen from 4, who has popped out of the low-post position, and cuts in the lane to get a pass from 1 (diagr. 7).

If, on the screen in the lane of 3 for 4 (see diagr. 6), 3's defender helps on 4, 3 then cuts high, receives a screen from 5 and pops out to receive for a two- or a three-point jump shot (diagr. 8). In this play we have set a pick on the player that screens the screener.

A mistake that usually occurs in this play is that a screener stays too long in the screen, pushing the defender. This is oftentimes called for an offensive foul. What needs to be done is to jump in front of the defender. One of my rules is that the player who screens the big man must be a shooter. After the screen, he is normally open for a shot and many of the best shooters of the teams I have coached have scored from this action. I would like to underline that on this action, if

the defender goes under the 5's screen, 3 will shoot. However, if the defender goes out aggressively, 3 will drive to the basket.

ENTRY PASS

Let's now examine the situation in the case where 1 cannot start the entry pass to the wings or the posts. Here are three different solutions.

- 1 cannot pass the ball to 2 on the wing because 2 is aggressively overplayed. 5 can flash to the high post position at the corner of the free-throw area, and receive the ball from 1, while 2 makes a back-door cut and can get the ball from 5 (diagr. 9).

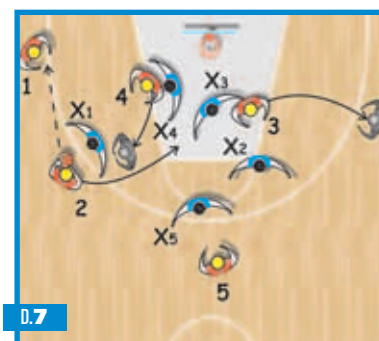
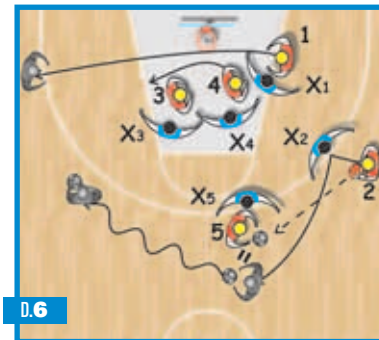
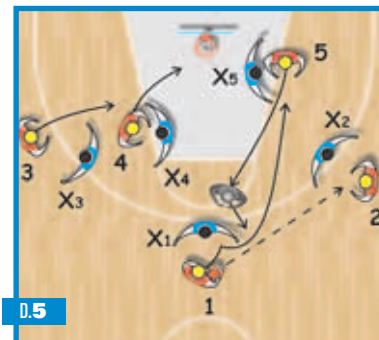
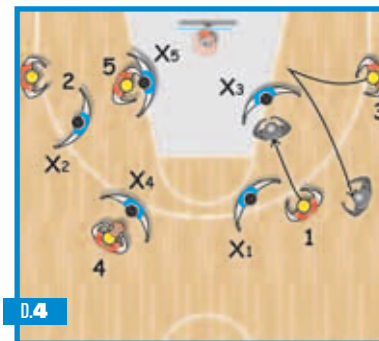
- 1 can also pass to one of the posts, 5, in this case, cut around the other post 4, and receive the ball from 5 since there is no help on the other side (diagr. 10). When the defense is punished a couple of times, in this way with two easy baskets, it will not be so aggressive anymore.

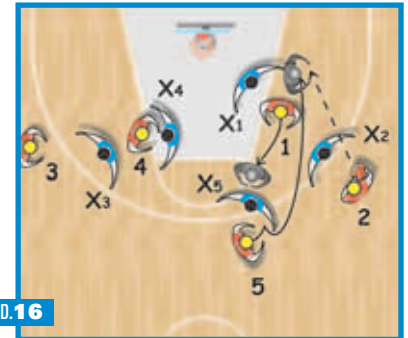
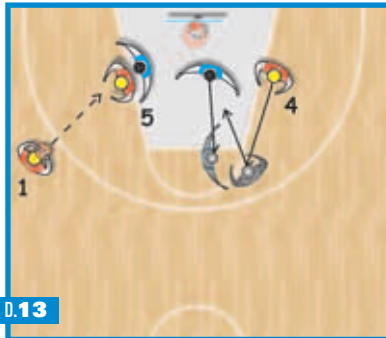
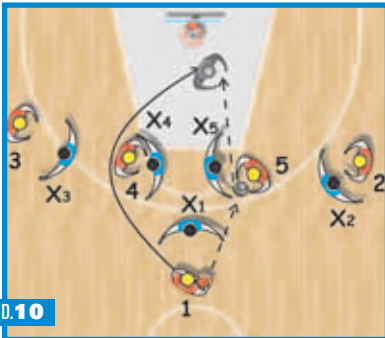
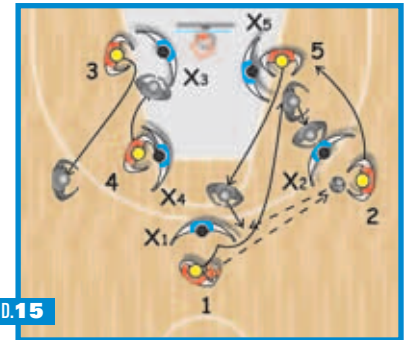
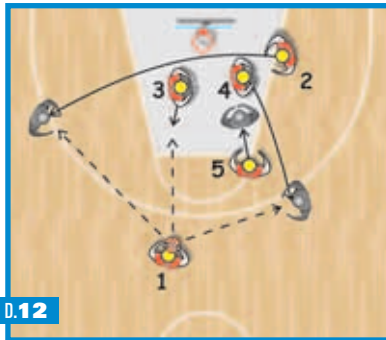
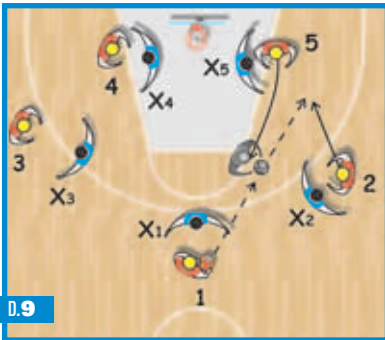
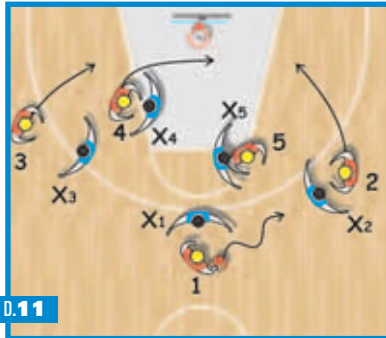
- If the ball cannot be passed to 5 at the high post, and 2 is also overplayed, 1 dribbles towards 2, who starts to cut in the lane to receive 4's screen (diagr. 11).

In these situations, the players must read what happens on the court and react to the reaction of the defense. I teach the guards that there should be no space between them and the defenders while playing pick-and-roll. After a screen and the defender pops out in front of the ball handler, the ball handler must take a step-back dribble, a difficult, but important move, and then, changing speed, drive to the basket.

Let's go back to the situation of 4, who is screened by 3. If the defense reacts to 3's screen and covers the cut back of 4, as described in diagr. 6, 4 can make a fake to cut back. He then goes high and runs off the screen of 5 (diagr. 12).

At Panathinakos (and other teams I have coached), I have many good shooters at the 4 and 5 position. Another important detail on the situation described is that when 3 sees 4, who rubs off 5's screen, he must roll quickly back to the ball to receive it in the lane. However, if he receives the ball outside, 2, screens quickly for





him right after the pass. When 5 receives the ball on the low-post position (diagr. 13), the other post, 4, goes to the high post position on the other side of the court. He keeps moving in this area to keep the defense busy, while 5 plays one-on-one in the low post.

After a hand off and the drive to the other side of the court (see diagr. 7), the ball handler has three options: pass to the corner, pass inside the lane, or pass to the weak-side teammates, who have popped out of the post's screen (diagr. 14).

Lets go back to the situation of diagr. 5. Another option, after the back screen of 5, is that 1 goes down to the low-post position, 2 passes the ball to 5, who popped out after the screen, and then 1 runs out to back screen for 2. As soon as 4 sees this screen, he down-screens for 3, who has first made a strong fake as if he were going to move into the lane (diagr. 15).

Another option is that 1, instead of back screening 2, pops out of the the low-post position, screens high for 5, who cuts off

the screen and receives the ball from 2 (diagr. 16). If the ball is not passed low to 5, but passed to 1, 4 fakes to cut in the lane and then runs high, screens for 1, and plays pick-and-roll (diagr. 17). On the pick-and-roll, the ball handler must be patient and read the defense. In addition, the screener must react to the reaction of his defender.

On this play, there are many options that your player can run. They have to be able to read and react to any defensive situation. As coach, it's your job to take care of every option and the details that go with them. I will now describe this final option. The two posts, 4 and 5, set a double screen at the free-throw area, with the ball in the hands of 2. 1 screens for 3, who goes to the low post, and then 1 runs high off the double screen of 4 and 5.

Usually the defense on the double screen stays high to the ball side to delay the pass to the screened player. Therefore, in this situation, 4 screens for 5, cuts in the lane and 5 cuts off outside the lane (diagr. 18). This option can only be run when there are at least 16 seconds remaining on the clock.

