

Coaching Induction Module “Tactical Development”

This resource will help you with:

- Understanding playing positions and their roles
- Understanding the concept of ball movement
- Utilising effective spacing
- Defending the ball
- Defending the basket

Basketball specific areas covered in this resource;

- ✓ *Defensive stance.*
- ✓ *Contesting shots.*
- ✓ *Bumping cutters.*
- ✓ *Dribble penetration.*
- ✓ *Inside / outside passing.*



PLAYING POSITIONS

The rules of the game don't restrict any player who takes the court from executing any skill or moving anywhere on the court. For this reason it is not necessary to allocate players into specialised positions until they reach performance level.

Probably the first position to establish at an early age is the point guard. Once opponents start to apply reasonable pressure, you'll need one or two players who are capable of dribbling the ball up the court and passing ahead to team mates. When very young players don't have this skill it may be necessary to modify the rules to allow a team to advance the ball towards their basket (for example defenders are only allowed to pressure the ball once it has been moved over the half court line).

The law of averages suggests that most developing teams consist of guards, that is not many players of significant height. When a taller player comes along it is important not to restrict that player's development, just because they are the tallest in the team. A tall boy, at primary school, may grow to 6'3" having potential as a point guard at an elite level.

A 6'8" player may tower over opponents in a local competition, but may only be big enough to play a small forward in international competition. When developing young players, give them the opportunity to develop all aspects of their game such as ball handling, perimeter shooting, and posting up.



PLAYER ROLES

As players develop they can start to focus on roles they are likely to fill. The listings that follow, outline the basic roles expected of each playing position.

Point guard

- Primary option to bring the ball up the court, on the pass or the dribble.
- Should be able to confidently handle the ball on the dribble, with either hand and under defensive pressure.
- Should maintain good court vision and able to advance the ball with accurate passing.
- Knows the team patterns and structure well, sets the tempo of the game.
- Directs the play to the strengths of the team.
- Should be able to create scoring opportunities, especially off dribble penetration when needed.

Shooting Guard (off guard / defensive guard)

- Usually a primary perimeter scoring threat, however some off guards are there as a specialist defender.
- Should be able to back up point guard in bringing the ball up the court.
- Consistently make perimeter shots.
- Run the fastbreak lanes, finishing scoring opportunities at speed.
- Penetrate off the dribble, able to pass off as defense collapses.

Small Forward

- Consistently make perimeter shots.
- Run the fastbreak lanes, finishing scoring opportunities at speed.
- Penetrate off the dribble, able to pass off as defense collapses
- Contest the offensive rebounds.

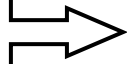
Power Forward

- Strong rebounding presence at both ends of the floor.
- Ability to hold a post up position around the keyhole.
- Create scoring opportunities inside the keyhole.
- Consistently make mid range shots.

Centre

- Genuine size.
- Primary post up option inside the keyhole.
- Strong rebounding presence at both ends of the floor.
- Create scoring opportunities inside the keyhole.
- Consistently make mid range shots.
- Vision and passing skills out of the post.

Coaching Tip



“Find your best ball handlers.”

The most important role to fill, is that of the point guard.

- Establish your two best options for bringing the ball up the court.
- Within the participation and development communities, players can share all of the other roles.

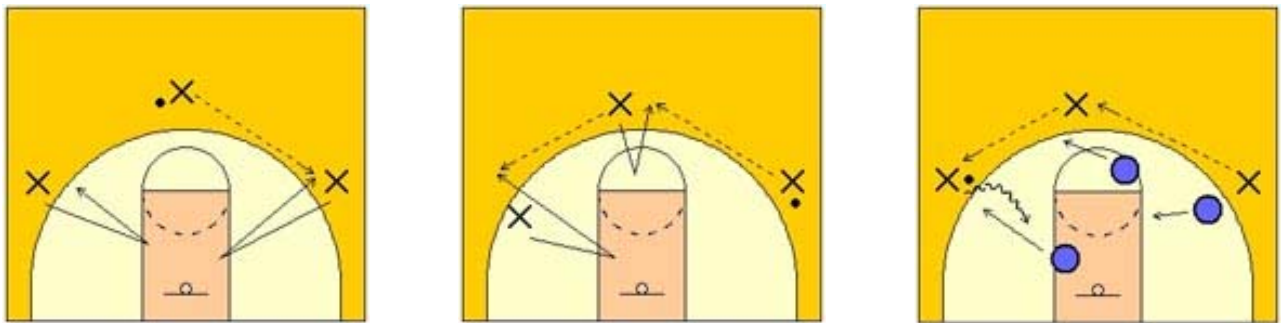


BALL MOVEMENT

Teaching the concept of ball movement may require frequent attention. Players need to understand that passing the ball is the fastest way to move the ball and combined with good positioning a pass will beat a defenders movement every time.

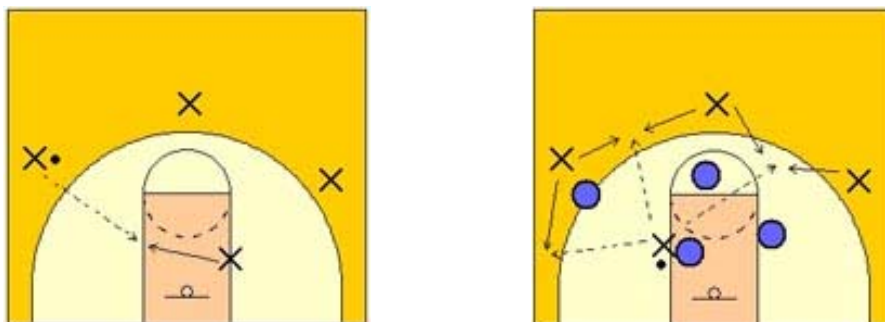
Poor ball movement is seen when a beginner dribbles with their head down, the result is they don't see a pass to their team mate who is unmarked. Poor ball movement can also relate to a talented athlete, who holds on to the ball for too long, when the pass is received. By focusing solely on breaking down the defender marking them, the rest of the defenders have a chance to adjust, cutting down the options of one against one.

After players understanding the concept of quick passing, they should learn to use the width of the court to shift defenders. By quickly reversing the ball from one side to the other, you stretch the defense, forcing them to adjust. Weakside defenders must close out to the ball, strongside defenders must adjust to a weakside position. Defenders changing positions can expose themselves with poor positioning that can be exploited by the offensive team.



Reversing the ball to force a defensive adjustment. Dribble penetration on the defender closing out.

Another ball movement concept to develop is the classic "inside / outside" action. A ball that is passed into the keyhole or post area, tends to collapse the defense. This opens up opportunities to pass back out to the perimeter for an open shot. The key here is the person who catches the ball in the keyhole must be a threat to score, to draw the attention of the defenders. Likewise if the players on the perimeter can shoot the ball well, the defenders will come out which then creates passing options into the keyhole.



Passing inside to the post position, creating a number of passing opportunities back out to the perimeter.



SPACING

Teaching spacing is hard work in any ball sport that involves opposing teams with unrestricted movement. Initially there will be a tendency to rush towards the ball because if you don't have the ball – “how can I pass, dribble or shoot?” The result is a mass of bodies gravitating to the ball, with little resemblance to the game of basketball.

A fundamental concept for players to learn is ‘one defender can't mark two players’ provided they are spread apart. A simple drill of two players trying to dribble and pass the ball past one defender will help players understand this concept. The players will get in trouble if they don't spread out, if they don't commit the defender to marking the ball or if they are too slow with the pass or pick up the dribble at the wrong time.

Spacing alone however, doesn't always mean easy passing. Teach players to move into space by working away from the ball. Bring their defender into the keyhole (committing them to defend the basket), then run back out to create a passing opportunity.

When a team is using the whole width of the court to get free, it opens up the court for cutting action into the keyhole. Timing then becomes an issue, making sure everybody doesn't cut to the same gap at the same time. Use the basic rule, if somebody gets there before you do, stay out of the way.

Using court markings, rubber floor dots or chalk is an effective way to re-enforce good spacing.



DEFENDING THE BALL

Points can only be scored, with the ball going through the basket. Therefore, an important defensive concept is to place a defender between the ball and the basket. This defender has to be concerned about defending three primary offensive actions; shooting to score, passing to a team mate in a position to score, driving closer to the basket on the dribble.

The defender should be close enough to a ball handler, who is within shooting range, to contest a shot attempt. Contesting the shot means putting the shooter under pressure by closing up to them with an arm and hand straight up in the air (must be vertical). The ball may be touched by the defender, however discourage players from constantly jumping to block a shot. This often results in a foul against the defender, or the shooter giving a shot fake and driving past the defender. Contest the shot by closing up to the shooter with bent knees and a vertical arm.



Defending the triple threat position, to contesting the shot

Protecting the drive

When defending a ball handler who has yet to dribble, players should be aware of their foot placements and the distance they are away from their opponent. Generally speaking if the defender faces the ball handler with feet apart and parallel, the ball handler needs to dribble around the defender. If the defender stands more side on, it opens up a dribbling lane for the ball handler. Also the high foot becomes vulnerable if the ball handler decides to dribble that side, as dropping that foot backwards to stay in front can be a slow movement.

Players should learn to adjust the distance between them and the ball handler based on relative quickness. A slow defender trying to mark a quick opponent on the dribble, should give them more space, in order to stay in front. This will create a problem though, if the ball handler is able to make the perimeter shot when the defender backs off them.



Defending the ball with a squared up stance, defending the ball with a side on stance.

Pressure on the pass

Putting pressure on the pass can play a huge part in a team defensive structure. The object is not necessarily to steal the ball, but to make it difficult for the passer to complete the pass they want to make.

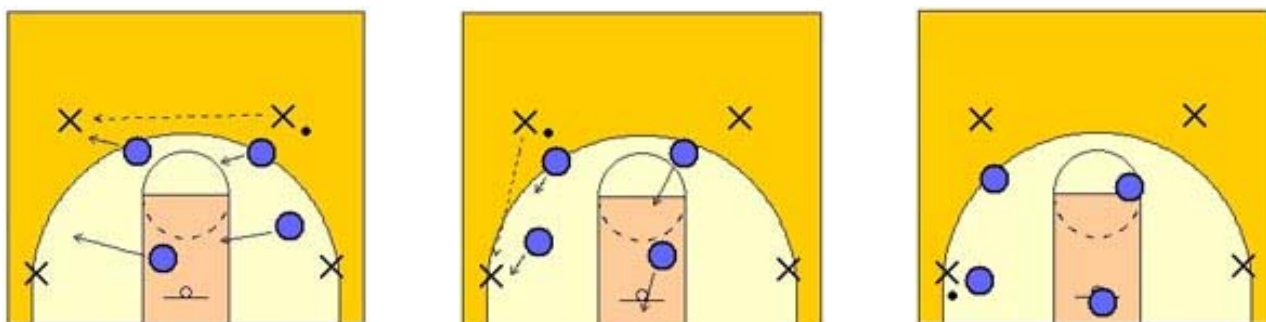
The defender may touch the ball, but care must be taken to avoid reaching movements. Once contact is made on the arm, body or leg of the ball handler, you run the risk of being called for a foul violation. Quick adjusting foot movements, with active hands tracing the ball should keep the defender out of trouble. This is really effective when the opponent has picked up the dribble and only has the options to pass or shoot. Teach your players that an opponent with the ball who is "being pressured" only has five seconds to pass, dribble or shoot, otherwise the defending team gets possession of the ball. Often a defender plays great defensive pressure, only to reach in, getting called for a foul after four seconds! A good defensive team doesn't always have to make the great defensive play, pressure your opponent and let them make the mistakes.

DEFENDING THE BASKET

Aside from defending the ball the biggest defensive concept is to protecting the basket. If only two defenders find themselves trying to stop more opposition, one goes for the ball, the other defends the basket, making sure that any close shot taken is pressured.

It is accepted in this country that all young developing players are required to play a man to man defense. That is, each defender matches up to defend one player in the opposing team. These match ups may change at any stage, provided each defender positions themselves relative to an opposing player. A simple way to do this is to teach players to face the player they are marking.

When a defender is marking an opponent who does not have the ball, they create a triangle relationship to protect the basket. The triangle is formed by; the defender, the player they are marking and the ball. The further away from the ball the defender is, the bigger the triangle. The tricky thing is not only teaching the positioning, players need to be able to adjust that positioning as their opponents are moving.



Defenders adjusting their position, as the ball is passed around the perimeter

Players who are now adjusting their triangle positioning are ready to contest penetrating passes. A penetrating pass is any pass that is getting closer to the basket, therefore giving the opponent a better opportunity to score. Passes into the keyhole and towards the baseline are regarded as penetrating passes. To contest such a pass, players generally hold up a hand in or close to the passing lane (line between the ball and where the opponent wants to catch it). Contesting passes into the keyhole can get a little physical with incidental body contact. Because of limited space to move in, the defender tries to beat the opponent to the spot they are running to. This limited contact is generally accepted within the rules of the game, provided the defense is getting their feet set in front of the opponent. Holding back an opponent with arms or legs is likely to result in a foul called against the defender.



A defender adjusting to deny the pass to a cutter, who is flashing to the ball side