



FIBA

We Are Basketball



by Vance Walberg

THE "DRIBBLE, DRIVE, MOTION" OFFENSE

Vance Walberg is the assistant basketball coach of the University of Massachusetts, and the creator of "Dribble, Drive, Motion" offense, a great and unique attack that has been adopted by many teams in the United States. He was formerly the head coach at Clovis West High School (Fresno, California) for 17 years. As head coach at Fresno State City College, his team won the 2005 California State Community College title. From 2006 to 2008, he was head coach at Pepperdine University.

A PREMISE

No matter what you like to call it, the "Attack-Attack-Skip-Attack-Attack" (AASAA) or the "Dribble Drive Motion" (DDM) offense has skyrocketed to the top of the basketball world since its creation in 1997. Just ask the NCAA finalist Memphis Tigers or the World Champions Boston Celtics, who have incorporated parts of the offense. The offense offers very few ball screens, along with very little play calling. There is nothing like this offensive set in the basketball world. The offense certainly seems a little radical, since it goes against what has been thought to be the right way to run an offense. Instead, this offense leads to plenty of dunks, lay-ups, three-point shots, and just trying to flat out beat your man off the dribble. Players love to run the offense, coaches love to teach it, fans love to watch it, and every basketball fan should enjoy this breath of fresh air in the game of basketball.

HOW THIS OFFENSE GOT ITS START

How did this offense get its start? That question can be traced back to 1997 when I was a high school coach at Clovis West High School in Fresno, California. There, I had a problem on my hands that all coaches would love to have. I had two explosive point guards in Chris Hernandez and Tyrone Jackson, two players, who could get to the rim anytime they wanted. The problem was that with traditional offenses, there was too much congestion in the paint and it made it difficult for them to get to the rim. Like all major breakthroughs, I had to think "outside the box" and come up with something that really went against the grain. Spacing would

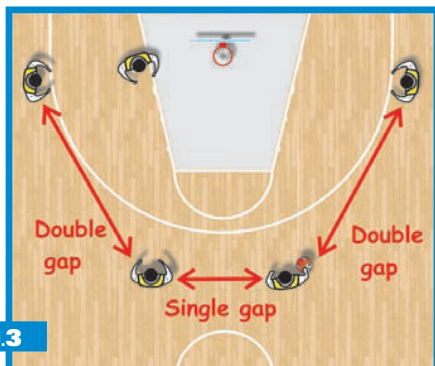
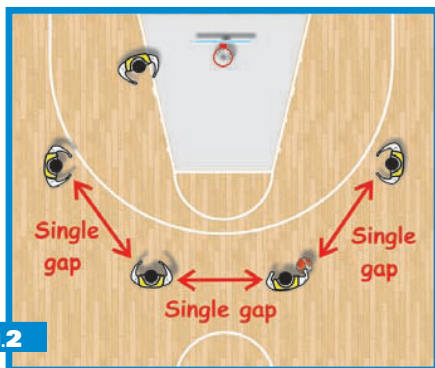
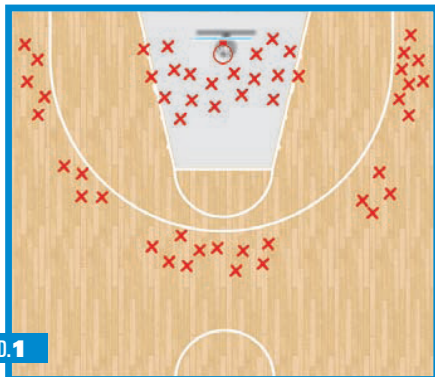
be the secret to solving this problem, and the first step was moving the post man to the weak side block. With the post man on the opposite side of the lane, it really gave Chris and Tyrone the chance to blow by their defenders and get to the rim without having to deal with sagging defenders. Next step, if either of the guards were picked up by the post defender, he would throw a simple pass to the post man for an easy lay-up. If one of the guards did not have the lay-up and the post man was not open, he would kick the pass out to a teammate for the three-point shot. If the player didn't have this shot, he would attack again, never giving the defense a chance to rest. "AASAA" is not a fancy name, but it flat out describes the offense best.

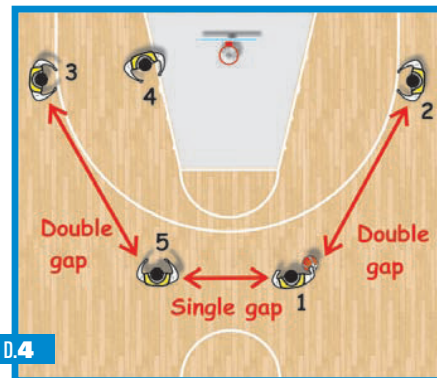
"WE LIKE 3-POINTERS, BUT WE LOVE LAY-UPS"

This slogan is attached to every high school or college team that I have coached. For me, a perfect shot chart would have every single shot taken from right around the rim or a three-point shot (see the shot chart). Mid-range shots and long two's have no place in this offense. The goal for any team that runs the offense should be to spread the defense out and relentlessly attack the gaps. This is not a gimmick offense, but one that has been thought through to give your team the best advantage possible, especially mathematically. Imagine you are coaching with 7 seconds left, you have the ball, and you are down one point. What would you tell your team? Most coaches would say get to the basket and try to draw a foul or make something happen. Well, this offense takes that same strategy for the full 32 minutes in high school and the full 40 minutes in college.

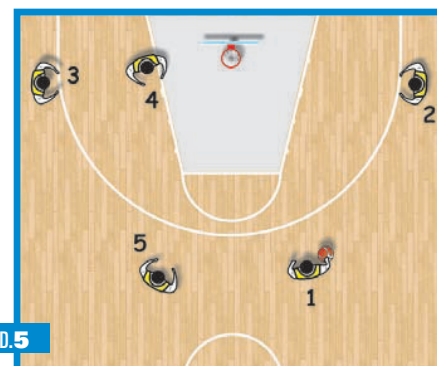
POINT PER POSSESSION CHART

To fully comprehend this offense, you need to understand what "Points per Possession" (PPP) mean. PPP means how many points you score on each possession that you have during the game. A possession is once you have the ball and either score or lose it to the other team. Good teams will score at a clip of 1.1 PPP. Now, to understand this, we actually break down what your team shoots





0.4



0.5

from each shot. Most people would say that the inside shot (lay-ups, offensive put backs, steals for lay-ups, drives) would be the best. Most teams shoot approximately 60% from this area so that would put you at a 1.2 PPP for lay-ups ($60\% \times 2 \text{ points} = 1.2$). Next, the three-point shot could be a high one if you can hit 40% of your three-point as this would put you at 1.2 PPP ($40\% \times 3 \text{ points} = 1.2$). Realistically, most teams are around 35%, so this means that the three pointer is now worth 1.5 ($35\% \times 3 \text{ points} = 1.5$). Anything above 1 is good and the three-point shot falls into that range. The best shot though is the free-throw. Teams usually shoot 70% from there and that would put you at 1.4 PPP ($70\% \times 2 \text{ FT's} = 1.4$). Think about it: the two highest PPP are the free-throw and the inside shot. These go hand in hand. To get to the free-throw line you have to attack the rim, so doesn't it make sense to come up with an offense that gives your players the best chance to succeed in this area? A very interesting side note is that Coach John Calipari from Memphis charted for two consecutive years (2005-2007) what his team shot from mid range (13 to 19 feet) and it was 28%. This would put mid-range shots at a .56 PPP. Most teams usually shoot 35% from this area and that still only gives you a 0.70 PPP. The only worse PPP would be the turnover, which is obviously 0 PPP (diagr. 1).

THE GAPS CHART

The goal for any team that runs this offense should be to spread the defense out and re-

lently attack the gaps. I will now explain the difference between single, double, and triple gaps and, obviously, the bigger the gap, the easier it is to succeed. (diagr. 2, 3, 4, and 5). To make this as easy as possible, the adjustment was made to have four perimeter players and one interior player always on the weak side block. Another difference for me is the way I number my players. My 1 is the traditional point guard and my 5 is another penetrating guard (hopefully, taller). The 1 and 5 are penetrators first, outside shooters second. These two are the bookends of the offense. They are constantly attacking the rim. I originally had the big player take it out, but when teams would double the point and the ball went back to the big, it slowed down the offense way too much. This is why my second point plays the 5. My 2 runs the right lane and the 3 runs the left lane (like most people). I hope that your 2 and 3 are shooters first, drivers second. If you play a second big, you can put him at the 3. The big man is

called the 4 and this is the rim runner. Think about it: what do most 5's want to be? Usually, they want to be called a 4, so in this offense we make them feel good and call them a 4, but they are still staying inside (diagr. 6).

THE "BIG THREE"

There is a countless series of actions that can occur off this set and it all depends on where the ball is on the court and how the opponent is playing defense. However, when it all comes down to it, the offense is about getting to the rim every time down the floor and spacing properly.

The "Big Three" of the offense would then be:

- ▼ Mentality to get to the basket.
- ▼ Open the gaps.
- ▼ Keep great spacing.

To help run this offense, the court is broken up into different zones that are called the "Rack, Drop, and Drag Zones" (diagr. 7). If you stop in the "Drop Zone," certain action

should happen, and if you got deep in the "Drag Zone" then you would look for that option. The beauty of the offense is that wherever you drive, you will know where your teammates will be, and the spacing helps this.

THE PLAYERS HAVE THE CONTROL

Control is something that all coaches like to have, but with this offense, some of that control is transferred directly to the players. Instead of coaches calling out set plays every time down the floor and seeing players run through the motions like robots, the players just play the game and react. If you walked into any gym during a pick up game you will not see players calling plays and running through the motions, you will see them trying to penetrate and really show what they have on offense. There are countless stories where great players struggle with teams because they can't run the offense or feel held back by the offense; in the "AASAA" offense, that is not the case. My philosophy is to teach players how to play basketball, not how to run plays.

COACH CALIPARI AND THE "DRIBBLE, DRIVE, MOTION"

Taking a step back and really thinking about what is at the core of the offense, it is easy to see why so many teams run the offense today. The offense spread around the California area as each coach saw how well it worked and how difficult it was to stop. Soon, coaches all over the country were aware of the "AASAA" and its effect on the game of basketball was apparent. It was not until 2005 that the offense was really catapulted on the national scene. John Calipari the coach of the Division I powerhouse University of Memphis had just lost an Elite 8 NCAA game running this offense and much was made of the offense. Coach Calipari was very gracious in letting people know that it was created by a Junior College coach like me in California, who actually came out to see his Memphis team along with the Memphis Grizzlies practice for a week back in 2003. I would take a yearly trek (19 years doing this) to visit a different college coach for the first week of practice to try to learn more about the game. Coach Calipari went to dinner with me during the visit and asked him what I do. My response was you really don't want to know as it is a little off the wall. We spent hours talking about my offense system and the wheels started to turn for Coach Calipari. Over the next few years, John devoted hours of time trying to learn every in and out of the offense. John Calipari has been a tremendously successful college and NBA

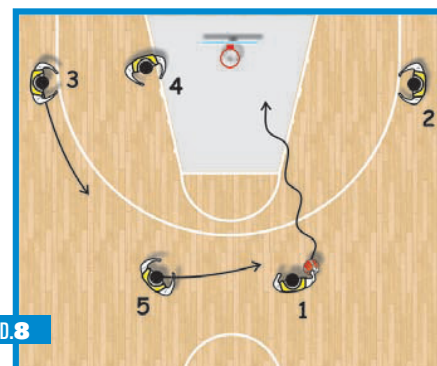




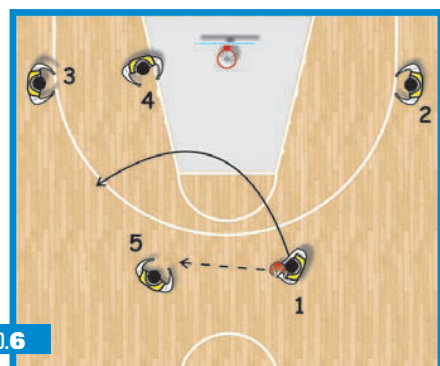
coach and for him to completely change his coaching philosophy was a big step. At first, many people questioned his decisions, but he took a page out of my playbook and thought outside the box. By year three of studying the offense and spending a lot of time with me, Coach Calipari installed the offense into his 2005-06 team and the rest is history. Along the way, the offense (AASAA) picked up a new name, the “Dribble Drive Motion,” or as John would say, “Princeton on Steroids.” No matter what it was called, one could say that Coach Calipari’s risk paid off as his University of Memphis team had the most wins in NCAA history (for a three-year span) with 108 wins, including two Elite 8’s, and one very tough national NCAA runner-up title.

IN SHORT

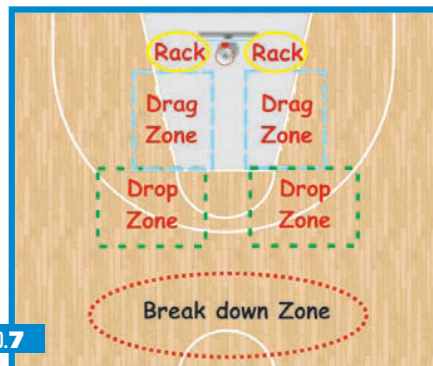
You won’t see me or Coach Calipari barking out set plays every time down the floor and that means we both have to do even more teaching in practice to make sure that the players really understand the offense. Every single drill that is done during my practices serves as a building block for this offense. Teams play the way they practice and that is exactly why my drills are all done at a high intensity level and at a high level of speed. One key of the “DDM” is to wear down the opponent by constantly attacking, so it only makes sense that the majority my drills are fast break transition drills. One of my most famous drills is the 3-on-2 Scramble drill. It is a continuous high intensity 3-on-2 fast break drill where the principles



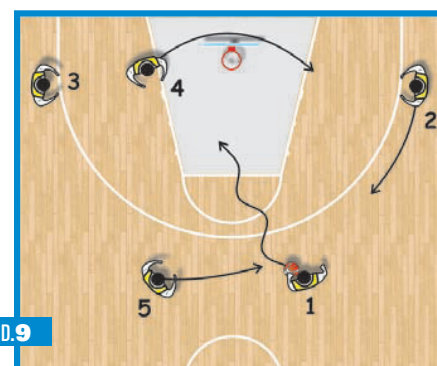
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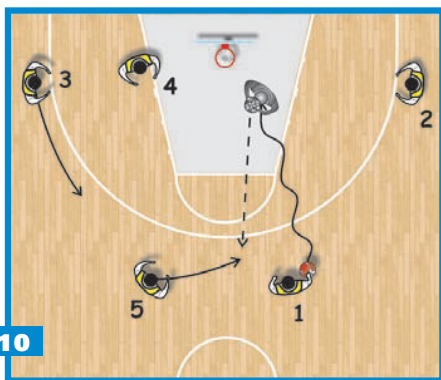


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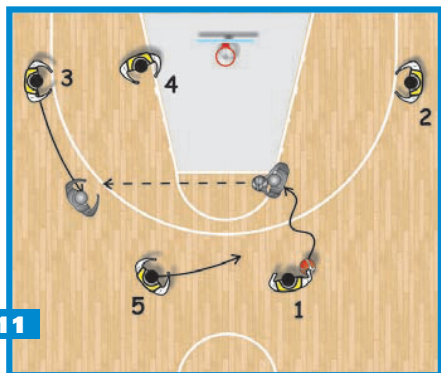


D.9

of the offense begin to get instilled into the players. Each of these drills is done with a purpose and when the players know this, it takes their competitiveness to a new level. Speaking of new levels, that's exactly where the "DDM" is headed for in the near future. There are many high school teams all over America that run the "AASAA," including some of the best teams in the country. In New Jersey, coach Bob Hurley helped make his high school team, St. Anthony's, to the best in the country running the "AASAA". On the college ranks, the University of Memphis Tigers used "AASAA" to take them all the way to the national title game. In the NBA, there are elements of the offense that have found their way to many teams, including the world championship Boston Celtics. New Jersey Nets head coach, Lawrence Franks, has spent many hours with me and is intrigued with it. Running the offense does not appear to be just a passing trend or phase, but instead, it looks like its impact on the game is going to be felt for years to come. Now I want to go into further detail and explain some of the options the offense presents. What occurs in the "Dribble Drive Motion" is largely based on where the ball is on the court. I break the court down into different zones (as showed in the diagr. 7). The "Breakdown" Zone is where the offensive player realizes how far he can get whether it be the ultimate goal of the "Rack Zone" or either the "Drop" or "Drag Zone." Every time possible, we want to get to the "Rack Zone."



D.10



D.11

This is where you get a chance for the two highest Points per Possession (PPP) in the lay-ups and free-throws. If you can't get to the "Rack Zone" then you should stop in the "Drop Zone," which is the area on the floor that really sets in motion a large piece of the offense. I would rather have a player pick up his dribble in the "Drop Zone" than the "Drag Zone." The "Drag Zone" is the area of the floor where a player is stopped and looks to pass the ball out to the perimeter for a shot. If the pass is thrown to 3 early in the "Drag Zone," we call this a "Drag 3." If you get deep in the "Drag Zone," then you are looking to go back to 5, who dragged behind 1 once he passed the "Drop Zone" (called "Drag 5"). Remember, the goal is to have the mentality to get to the "Rack Zone" for a lay-up every time.

BASIC POSITIONING IN HALF COURT

1 is the point guard who sets everything in motion. He has to constantly attack his man and be able to get in the lane. If he can not

get all the way to the rim, his goal is to get to the "Drop Zone." 5 is your second point guard or a taller "racker." 1 and 5 are thinking: drive first, 3 second. 2 and 3 are shooters first and "rackers" second. They will hopefully stretch the defense out. I usually like my better shooter at the 2 and if they both shoot the same, then my better driver is at the 2. 4 is your rim runner and is the biggest key for the offense to be successful. He has to constantly sprint the floor to set up the guards to pass the ball up the court to the wings. 4 is also the one who has to really understand the offense and to know when to "clean-up," "T-up," and "relocate" (diagr. 6).

RACK IT!

Previously, I talked about the three most important parts of the offense, which I call the "Big 3." One has to remember the entire game that the goal every time down the court is to "rack it" and get a lay-up or foul. I always want my teams to be relentless



getting to the rim. Here is what happens, depending on where the penetration starts:

LANE PENETRATION

With lane penetration (this is when you penetrate the lane and the post is on the opposite side), the first and best option would be for 1 to get a lay-up, but, if this is not the case, he has a few different options. If 4's defender came to help on the penetration, 1 could throw a lob or dump pass to 4 for a lay-up. Once 1 penetrates past the "Drop Zone," 4 goes into a "clean-up" mode and is awaiting a pass from 1 or cleans up his miss, if X4 challenges his shot. Another option would be if 2's defender helped early on the drive, to kick the pass to 2 for the three-point shot. Once 1 passes the "Drop Zone," 2 has to be patient in his corner and not elevate up. Once 1 passes the "Drop Zone," 3 now "drags" and finds the open window to receive the pass from 1 (we call this "Drag 3"). This is usually done early in the "Drag Zone." At the same time that 3 is dragging up, 5 is dragging behind 1 and, if 1 stops deep in the "Drop Zone," then he is looking to reverse pivot and hit 5 out top ("Drag 5"), and then move out under 4's screen. Now 5 has the ability to penetrate any way he wants (diagr. 8).

MIDDLE PENETRATION

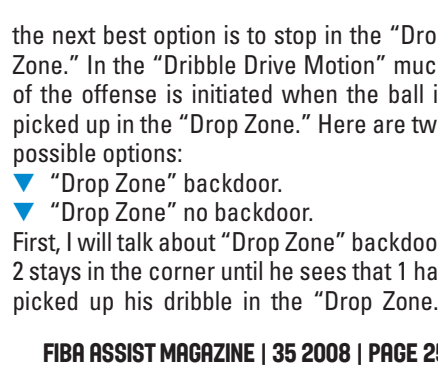
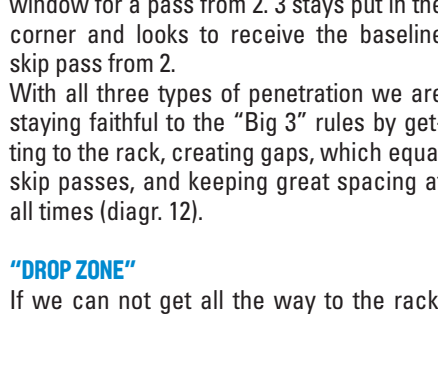
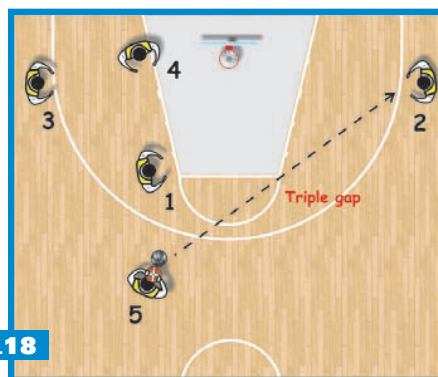
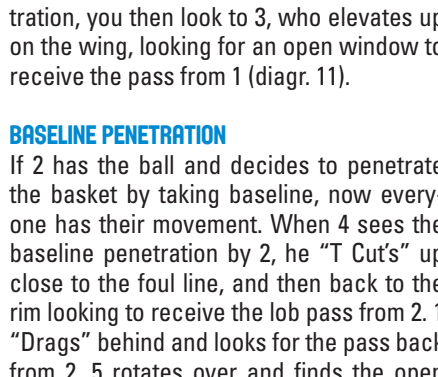
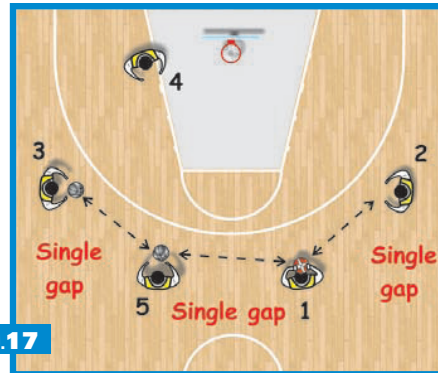
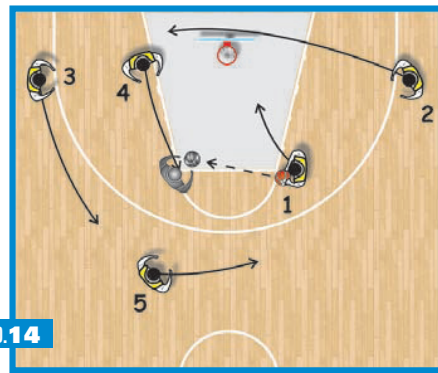
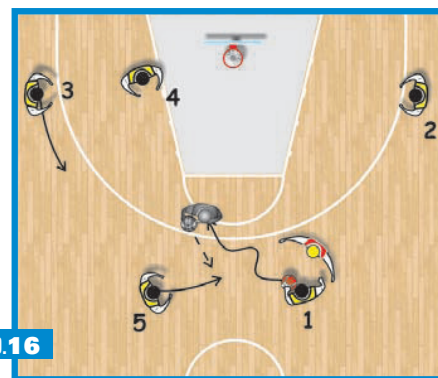
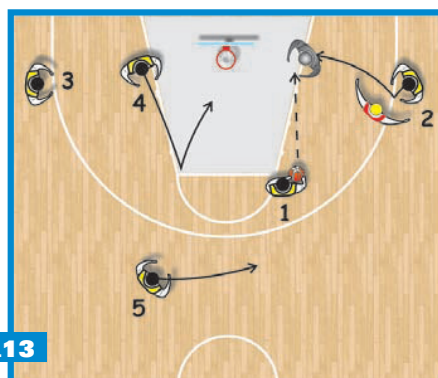
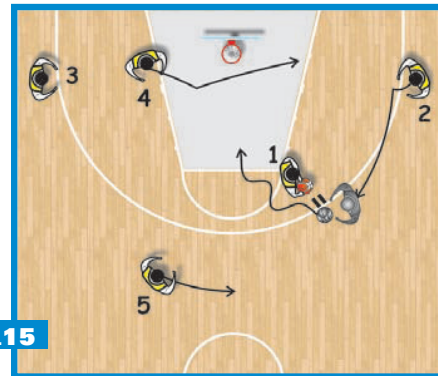
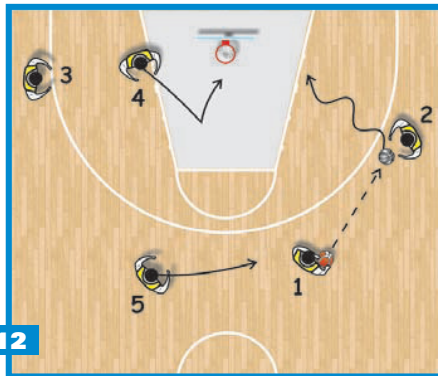
"Middle Penetration" (we call this anytime there is penetration to the post side) also creates a few very different situations. When 4 sees that 1 is penetrating the middle, he immediately relocates to the opposite block looking for the lob or clean-up. 2 goes up and is looking for the open window (just like 3 would on lane penetration) to receive a skip pass out from 1. 3 stays put in the corner (like 2 does on lane penetration) and is looking to receive the pass from 1 for a three-point shot. 5 is dragging behind looking for the pass back from 1 if 1 gets too deep and can't get the shot (diagr. 9).

"DRAG 5"

Whenever 1 penetrates past the "Drop Zone" and into the lane, 5 should always be what we like to call "Dragging" behind. If 1 cannot get a good shot up or pass to 4, he will always have another option, which is the pass to 5 for the 3-point shot. This will always be open since defenses are taught to collapse on penetration (diagr. 10).

"DRAG 3"

This is a "Drag 3," where 1 gets past the "Drop Zone" and early in the "Drag" skips it across to 3. His first look is always to rack it, the second look is to 4, if his man elevates, and then, if X3 comes in on the pene-



tration, you then look to 3, who elevates up on the wing, looking for an open window to receive the pass from 1 (diagr. 11).

BASELINE PENETRATION

If 2 has the ball and decides to penetrate the basket by taking baseline, now everyone has their movement. When 4 sees the baseline penetration by 2, he "T Cut's" up close to the foul line, and then back to the rim looking to receive the lob pass from 2. 1 "Drags" behind and looks for the pass back from 2. 5 rotates over and finds the open window for a pass from 2. 3 stays put in the corner and looks to receive the baseline skip pass from 2. With all three types of penetration we are staying faithful to the "Big 3" rules by getting to the rack, creating gaps, which equal skip passes, and keeping great spacing at all times (diagr. 12).

"DROP ZONE"

If we can not get all the way to the rack,

the next best option is to stop in the "Drop Zone." In the "Dribble Drive Motion" much of the offense is initiated when the ball is picked up in the "Drop Zone." Here are two possible options:

- ▼ "Drop Zone" backdoor.
- ▼ "Drop Zone" no backdoor.

First, I will talk about "Drop Zone" backdoor. 2 stays in the corner until he sees that 1 has picked up his dribble in the "Drop Zone."

Once he sees this, 2 takes one hard step towards the ball and calls for the ball. He then cuts backdoor. When 4 recognizes that 1 stopped in the "Drop Zone," he flashes high to the opposite elbow calling for the ball. This will clear out the middle and create space for the backdoor pass. 1 passes to 2 cutting backdoor and then 4 cuts to the rim looking for the lob pass. 3 stays in the corner looking for the baseline skip pass. 5 rotates over, trying to find that open window (diagr. 13). The "Drop Zone" no backdoor occurs when 1 stops in the "Drop Zone," but the back door is not there. If 2 does not get the backdoor pass, he continues and goes out to the 3's corner. 1 now hits 4 and does a give-and-go cut. If that is not open, then you have a quick clear out for 4 (diagr. 14).

KICK UP, KICK BACK

Once the defense starts looking for the backdoor, we have to adjust and we will run a "Kick-Up" or "Kick-Back." In the "Kick-Up," once 1 stops in the "Drop Zone" it becomes a two-man game with 1 and 2. I mentioned already what happen when 2 goes backdoor. Now he comes up because they are overplaying the backdoor. This is what we call a "Kick-Up" (diagr. 15). Once 1 hits 2, 2 is looking to go to the basket. 1 will fill 2's corner and when 2 goes middle penetration, 4 relocates, 3 stays patient in his corner, and 5 does a kick back. The "Kick-Back" is used when the defense is jamming 1 or forcing him in the middle. 1 dribbles left and 5 comes in behind. 1 passes to 5, and this is not a handoff. 5 then "racks it" and tries to get to the rim. 2 stays put in the corner and looks for the pass out for the 3-point shot or they run a "Drop 2." 4 seals off his man to get the rebound or get a pass from 5's penetration if he racks it. 1 "drags" behind 5, if he goes past the "Drop Zone" looking for the pass back for a three-point shot. 3 elevates up looking for the window to receive the skip pass (diagr. 16).

GAPS AND SPACING

Along with getting to the rack, having proper spacing and creating gaps is the key. With this offense, it does give players freedom to create on their own. Players always have to remember to keep spacing no matter what is occurring on the court at any given time. The reason for having four perimeter players and only one interior player in the half court positions is indeed to create spacing and to open gaps. It is very important that 2 and 3 start in the corners and do not cheat up until someone stops in their "Drop Zone." If they do cheat up a single gap is created between 1 and 2 and 5 and 3, as seen below.

The way we start there is already 2 double gaps created between 1 and 2 and 5 and 3. What this offense really wants to create are situations where there is a triple gap. When a triple gap is created, the chance of scoring goes way up (diagr. 17 and 18).

CREATING THE OFFENSE

Now that you have basic understanding of what we want to do and accomplish, then you can set up your plays to the way it fits your team. You really don't have to call any plays once you master all of the offense, as it flows right into one another.

We really want to teach our players how to play basketball and not how to run plays. The combination of spacing and gaps along with the drops, drags, kick-ups, and kick-backs are the building blocks of the offense.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

I am a firm believer that every drill that is done in practice should be done for a purpose and to be competitive. The majority of drills we run in practice are direct build-ups to our offense.

We spend most of time running high-intensity fast break drills because this is the way we want to play during games. In addition, at the beginning of each practice the players know which of the teams they are on. In most of the drills, these teams go head-to-head against each other with the losing team having to run and the winning team "validating" their win.

This creates a very competitive atmosphere and makes the players go hard with everything they do. I also like to get as much shooting drills in as possible as this offense should lead to plenty of three-point shots and solid drives.

My philosophy is "we like 3's, but we love lay-ups!" but I have included the "5-Spot Shooting Drill" which is something my teams do everyday. One of the reasons I like this drill is that it is scored and the players should want to better themselves every practice.

Another drill that I included is the "Blood 22," which is a very important drill and helps the players understand the principles of the offense.

5-SPOT SHOOTING DRILL

Purpose

This is an excellent warm-up and conditioning drill and it is beneficial for three-point shooting.

Instructions

- ▼ 4 minutes on clock.
- ▼ 3 players, 2 balls per basket.
- ▼ 5-spots: wing-corner-corner-wing-top of the key.

- ▼ Must make 10 baskets at each spot to move on (do not have to be consecutive).
- ▼ Once 10 baskets are made at all 5 spots (50 total makes), the group continues at the top of the key to get as many baskets in the remaining time.

Scoring

- ▼ 3 players per hoop (could use 4 if needed- still only 2 balls).
- ▼ Each basket is ranked from 1 (best shooters) to 5 (challenged shooters) for added competition (if 5 groups of 3).
- ▼ To move up a basket:
- ▼ Beat the team in front of you by 10 or more that day or
- ▼ Beat the team in front of you two days in a row. Your minimum team goal should be above even (even=50 makes).

Example:

- ▼ Group N.1- completes 4 spots and has made 7 baskets on the fifth spot (top of the key). Group N.1= -3
- ▼ Group N.2- completes all 5 spots and makes 5 more three's (at the top of the key). Group N.2= +5
- ▼ Group N.3- completes all 5 spots, but makes no extra three's.
- ▼ Group N.3= even.
- ▼ As a team (add up all scores). Team Total= +2

Players involved

All or all, but big men (they can work on individual drills at this time).

Tips

- ▼ Shooter must hustle after their own rebound.
- ▼ High Schools- Make 8 baskets at each spot for a total of 40.
- ▼ Overall, team should be above even.
- ▼ My teams highest ever: +34 for one group (76 made 3's in 4 minutes); +42 as a team (diagr. 19).

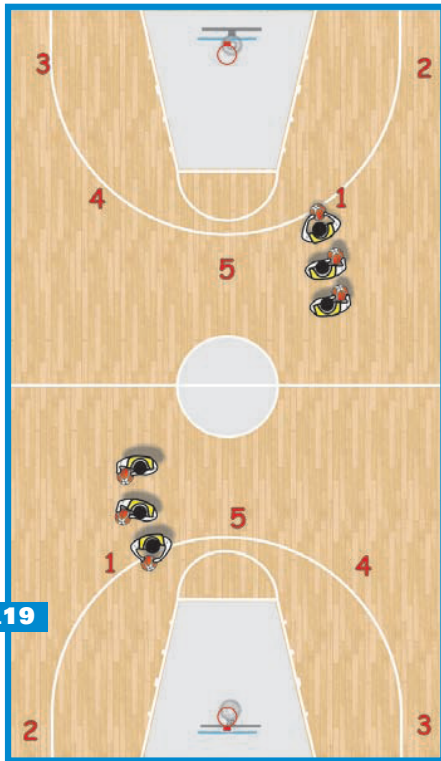
BLOOD SERIES

Purpose

These "Blood" drills are the essence of our offense. This is a simple breakdown of the principles of what we run. Another continuous fast paced drill to also help in conditioning.

Instructions

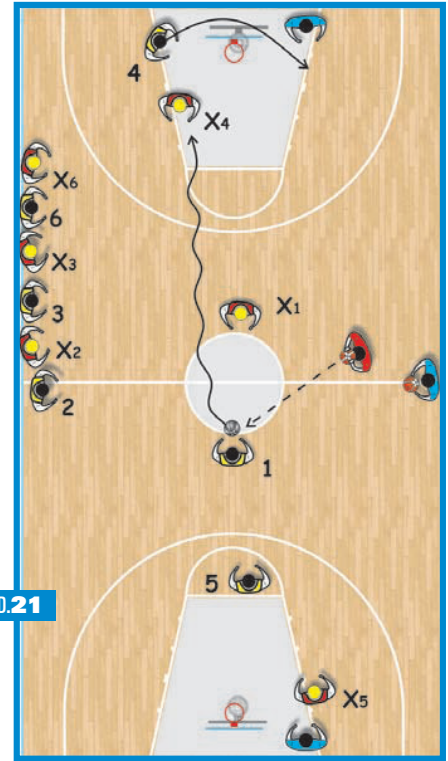
- ▼ Team X starts on offense, attacks team O, and this then becomes a continuous drill.
- ▼ Coach has a ball and will hit X who will attack from other side of half court as shown in examples.
- ▼ The manager will have another ball and be ready to give this to the coach each time.
- ▼ Each team will now run what happens whenever the guard hits the "Rack Zone", "Drag Zone", or "Drop Zone."



D.19



D.20



D.21

Scoring

- ▶ Teams for the day should already be decided at the beginning of practice.
- ▶ All games are played to 8; 2-pointer worth 2; 3-pointer worth 3.
- ▶ "Blood 22" only allows one shot and a tip.
- ▶ On "Blood 32, 33, 44" you can get the rebound and continue play until you score or the defense gets the stop.

Players involved

- ▶ Everyone is involved in these drills.
- ▶ Players will play more to their position in these "Blood Drills."
- ▶ All players on "Blood 22" get to play out front as a guard with the exception of the 4's.

Tips

Need 2 managers and 2 balls to run this drill efficiently. Guards get a great amount of ball handling and learning on how to "clip the hip." Guards have to get back on defense as soon as possible (diagr. 20).

BLOOD 22 SET-UP

Coach throws the ball to X1, who then blows by 1 "clip the hip." 1 has to stay in the circle until X1 gets there and can not retreat until X1 hits half-court. We now play following all principles from the offense. Offense only gets 1 shot and a tip, then the ball goes to the defense. "Blood 22" should be a "Rack" game mostly and sometimes a quick "Drop" (diagr. 21).

BLOOD 22 CONTINUATION

After 2-on-2 attack, the coach throws the

ball to 1, who is now going the other way (manager continually hands coach the ball). X2 comes in at half court and is now a defender; X1 gets back in line. Now it's 1 and 4 on offense attacking. You run the offense at a continuous pace until one team scores 8 (diagr. 22).

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

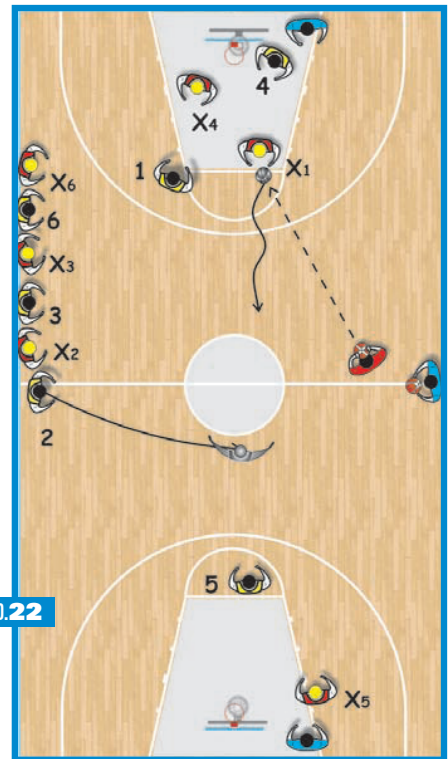
"Attack, Attack, Attack." You should not forget these three important words whenever you are running this offense. Remember that the goal at all times is to get to the rim. If you can break your man down off the dribble, go for it.

We want this offense to unleash players, not hold them back. Something else to remember is the importance of shot selection. It is necessary for the players to understand this and what type of shots we consider "good" shots.

We do not want long twos with our feet just inside the line and we do not want mid-range shots. Instead, we want mostly lay-ups and three pointers, which goes along with the "Points Per Possession" that I described before.

Free-throw shooting is also a significant piece of the offense. If the team plays as aggressively as they are supposed to and are constantly attacking, they should be getting to the free-throw line at a high rate.

With the "Dribble Drive Motion" it does take players some time to really understand the offense, but once they do it should come natural to them. They will



D.22

not have to call anything out instead they will just "play" and everything will flow for them. This offense is one style of play and is not for every coach, especially the ones who like to call plays every time down the court (which I used to do for many years). My last words will be to get working on your zone offense as you will start to see a lot more zones once you master the "Dribble Drive Motion."