

QUICK HITTER SERIES: 'DIVE' DESTROYS ZONE DEFENSES

BASKETBALL COACH WEEKLY

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SCORE FROM ALL ANGLES THROUGH THE HIGH POST

USE YOUR MULTI-DIMENSION FORWARD AS A HIGH SCREENER, LONG JUMPER SHOOTER

GENO AURIEMMA >
MADE ALL THE RIGHT
MOVES IN UNDEFEATED
CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON

THE BEST COACHING TIPS EVERY WEEK!

POUND THE HIGH POST, THEN RUN A BACKDOOR CUT

Bouncing Back



Basketball Coach Weekly Issue 34

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Sideline Stories

Last month I toed the starting line of the Vernonia Marathon (Ore.) with the most mileage and preparation I'd had in any of my previous four marathons. The goal? Finally break four hours and the real goal was to get under 3:45, which didn't seem crazy based on my previous half-marathon times.

What happened? I failed. Failed miserably. I didn't even finish the race. By Mile 23 I was suffering from dehydration and exhaustion as the afternoon sun continued to rise in the sky. My body locked up. My calf seized. I couldn't move forward if I wanted to and I mentally checked out.

Luckily, I wear my phone on my arm as it serves as my timer and holds all my podcasts/music. I finally got a hold of my wife, who drove with my young daughters to pick me up. I didn't get to end on the high school track where the finishing line was staged. I didn't get my medal. I didn't get to hear my family scream for me after 26.2 miles of running.

Instead, I mustered the strength to collapse into the passenger seat of our car while my daughters looked at me silently wondering what happened. Physically, it was devastating and days later my legs remained sore. Mentally, it was worse knowing I had poured months into training and preparation only to

come up short on race day.

For basketball coaches, there is a lesson in here, especially during the off-season. Most teams finished last season with a loss. Some teams may have performed admirably in defeat, while others didn't execute the game plan or simply had a bad day.

That feeling of defeat doesn't simply go away. It's May and I bet a lot of readers still think back to the little things they could have done differently in their season-ending defeat. I'm still thinking about the marathon – maybe I should have started even more slowly, maybe I didn't fuel properly leading up to the race – I may never know what happened

that day.

But, just like you, I'll pick myself up and push ahead. After five tries at the marathon,

maybe it's just not for me, which doesn't mean I'm giving up on running. I love competing at the shorter distances and actually racing those events.

It's time to start catering to my strengths, just like you need a coaching philosophy that caters to your players' strengths. Give it some extra thought this off-season and I'll see you back at the starting line hoping we both complete some unfinished business in the coming season.



Michael Austin
Michael Austin
Editor-in-chief

QUICK HITTER

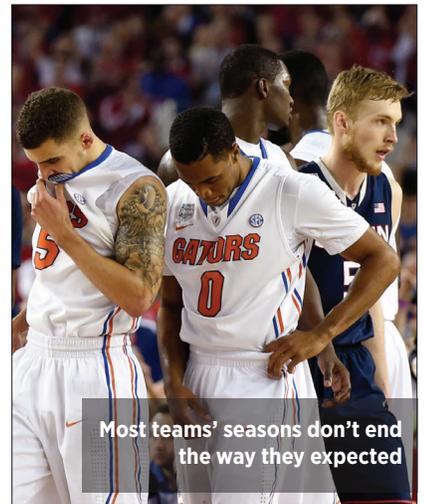
Viewing Late-Season Losses

The East Carolina University women's basketball team won 22 games last season and qualified for the WNIT in head coach Heather Macy's fourth season on the bench. While the season was seen as a success, the squad did start the year 21-3 before dropping six of its last seven games.

Now, deep into the off-season, Macy says she has a different take on those late losses than in the immediate moment.

"Those losses might prove to be a good thing for our program," Macy told me on the phone. "We had a lot of first-year players who experienced immediate, early-season success.

"Getting jolted at the end of the year shows them how hard they have to work throughout an entire



Most teams' seasons don't end the way they expected

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Connecticut's women's team dominated the basketball landscape again this season in part to a high-post offense no one could stop

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Run your offense through the high post a few times and the defense eventually overplays in that direction, which sets up a backdoor cut

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The point guard starts the action with a pass to one side, cuts through and finishes with a mid-range jumper on the other side

season to accomplish our goals."

Macy obviously isn't suggesting she wanted her team to lose, but think about how your season ended and how you are using your late-season failures or successes as building blocks for the upcoming year.

Find motivation wherever you can. Stay positive as you build to the future...even if it means looking at last season's losses in a different light. – Michael Austin

When your center can shoot, the entire offense opens up



Exploit The High Post

The UConn women did a lot of things right en route to a national title and undefeated season, including gashing opponents via passing and shooting from the high post

The University of Connecticut women's basketball coach, Geno Auriemma, had a lot of weapons at his disposal in 2013-14. Being the top coach in women's game, Auriemma knew how to take full advantage of his players' strengths and talents. The Huskies turned this winning formula into a 40-0 season and a national title.

One facet of where Auriemma excelled was running part of his offense through the high post. It's not a new concept to the coach, it's been a staple at Connecticut for quite some time, but this season Auriemma had a gifted center on his squad and he made the most of it.

Stefanie Dolson towered over most of the competition last season standing 6-foot-5. Stick her near the top of the key

and she can survey the entire court to make the best offensive decision when the ball is in her hands.

Dolson shot 56.4 percent from the field, netting 12.5 points per game and still managed to grab 9.2 boards per contest despite spending a lot of her time high in sets. The senior parlayed her talents into being selected No. 6 overall in last month's WNBA Draft.

For high school and youth coaches, when you have a talented forward or center, don't only think about using this player on the block. Sure, you have an advantage there, but if he or she has the ability to shoot and pass, then the entire offense opens leaving the defense without enough players to shut down every available option.

Check out the two plays Connecticut ran against Notre Dame in the women's championship game. Both sets ran through Dolson. The first (on page 4) occurred seconds after Connecticut secured the opening tap. The Huskies set up immediately with Dolson at the top of the key. She showed off her jump-shooting skills when the Irish left her alone and she knocked down a long shot.

The second play came several minutes later. This time Dolson moved low after starting at the elbow. She then came high, drew the defense with her (in part due to her earlier made shot) and set up a perfect backdoor cut from a wing player.

The next time you're looking to open the floor, bring your post high and see the positive results.

Words by:
Michael Austin

High Screen & Pop For Jumper

When you have a multi-faceted post player, it opens the offense - check out how UConn used Stefanie Dolson at the high post and eventually for a long-range jumper

WHY USE IT

Defenses don't have an answer for a talented post player who excels on the perimeter. Stick your post high and let that player shoot the open jumper if available.

SET UP

UConn won the opening tip in the women's national title game and immediately went into this set. The talented post (for UConn it was Stefanie Dolson) starts just above the top of the key. Place a player on each wing, one along the lane line and the point guard is at the top.

HOW TO PLAY

The point passes to the right, then runs off a high screen from the talented post player. The left wing comes high and receives a return pass at the top. The weak-side post relocates to the wing [1]. The point guard comes high off a screen from the right wing as she relocates to the opposite block. The pass goes to the point as the passer runs off another high screen from the talented post player [2]. The talented post pops after the pick, receives a pass from the point guard and shoots the open jumper [3].

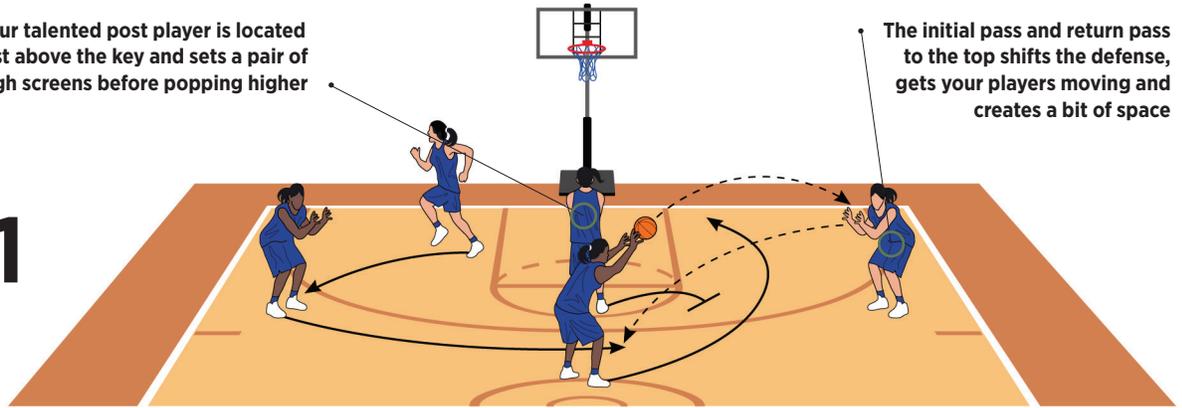
TECHNIQUE

If the defense presses the set's top, the talented post looks to the player flashing to the left wing or to the player posting on the right block.

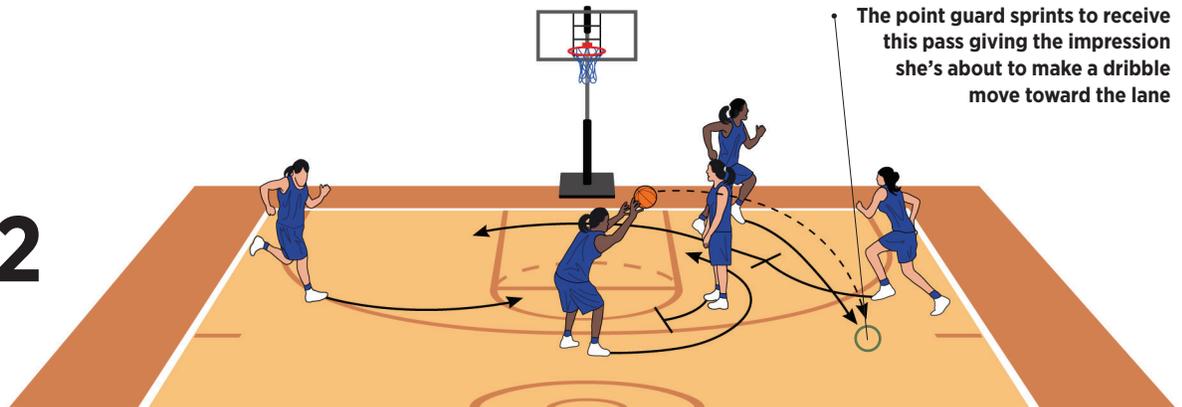
Your talented post player is located just above the key and sets a pair of high screens before popping higher

The initial pass and return pass to the top shifts the defense, gets your players moving and creates a bit of space

1



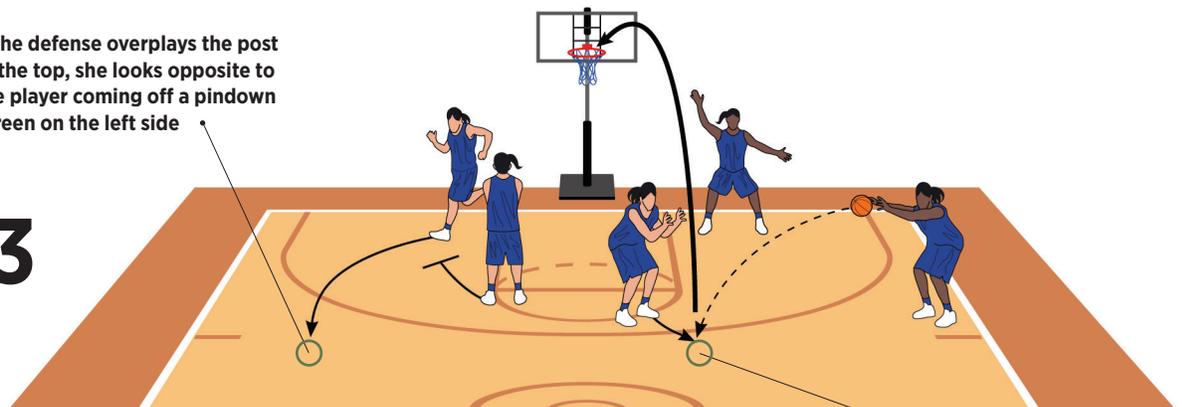
2



The point guard sprints to receive this pass giving the impression she's about to make a dribble move toward the lane

If the defense overplays the post at the top, she looks opposite to the player coming off a pindown screen on the left side

3



The post pops high, catches the pass and shoots in rhythm

Player movement → Ball movement - - - → Dribble ~~~~~ → Shot →

High Post Backdoor Pass

Once the defense expects the talented high post to shoot, run a wing backdoor and create an easy scoring opportunity near the rim

WHY USE IT

A backdoor cut against a defense overplaying the perimeter is a sure-fire way to score a layup.

SET UP

After running its offense through Stefanie Dolson in the high post early in the national championship, UConn went to her again leading 12-8. This time, however, Dolson fired a crisp backdoor pass to a cutting teammate resulting in a layup.

HOW TO PLAY

The talented post player begins at the left elbow and moves low. The player in the lane pops high as the left wing cuts to the right block moving the defense in different directions [1]. The talented post now comes just above the right elbow and receives a pass. To create space, the player occupying the right block pops to the corner. After making the pass, the passer moves left and shows she's going to screen for the left wing. The left wing takes a hard step toward the screen, then cuts backdoor [2]. The high post fires the pass to the cutter for the layup [3].

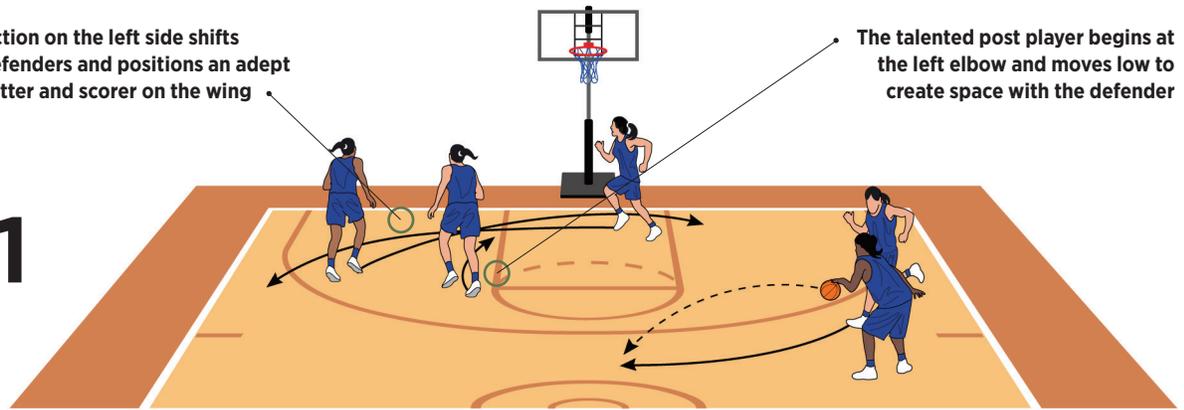
TECHNIQUE

Show the defense the high-post a few times, then send someone backdoor as defenders crowd the perimeter.

Action on the left side shifts defenders and positions an adept cutter and scorer on the wing

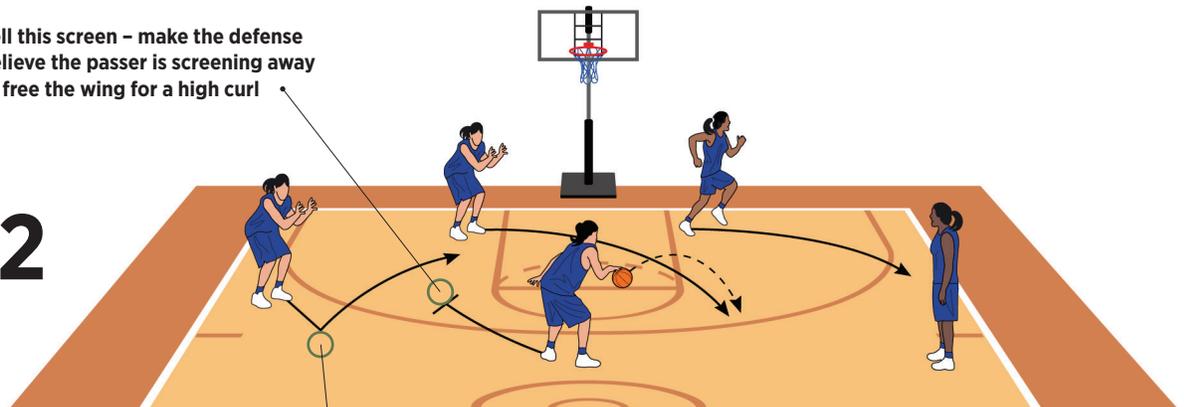
The talented post player begins at the left elbow and moves low to create space with the defender

1



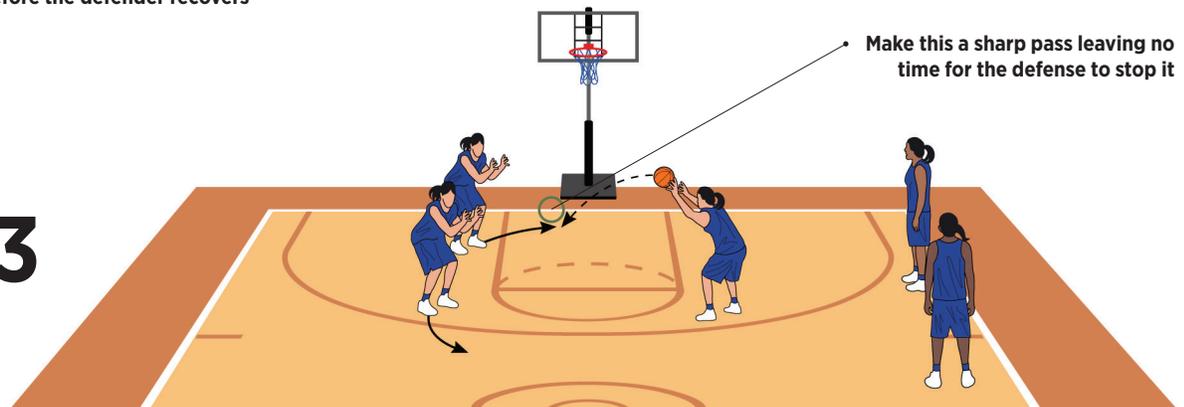
Sell this screen - make the defense believe the passer is screening away to free the wing for a high curl

2



Sell this step - it's a hard step at the screen, plant and sprint backdoor before the defender recovers

3



Make this a sharp pass leaving no time for the defense to stop it

Player movement → Ball movement - - - → Dribble ~~~~~ → Shot →

Point Guard Starts Action, Finishes With Jumper

Have your point guard pass and cut to the same side, then flash to the opposite short corner as the perimeter players reverse the ball creating an open jump-shot opportunity

WHY USE IT

When the point guard moves low into a set, zone defenses tend to forget about him or her – that hesitation creates space, which becomes compounded when running that player off a low off-ball screen.

SET UP

Set up in a 1-3-1 with a post located on the opposite side from where you want to initiate the action.

HOW TO PLAY

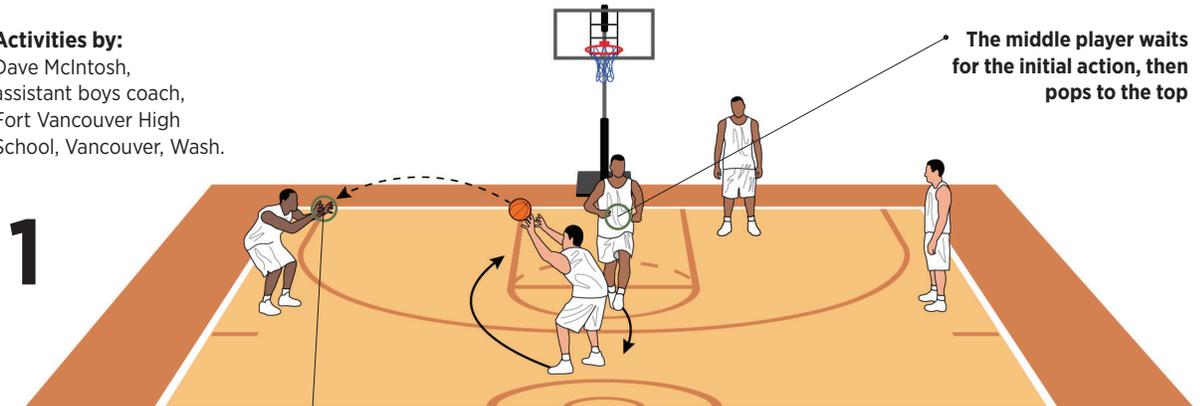
The point passes to the left wing and cuts down the left lane line. The middle player pops high [1]. The left wing gives a pass fake to the point as he cuts, then quickly reverses the ball to the top. The ball continues its reversal on a pass to the right wing. The point cuts through the lane and uses a late, low screen on the outside defender to come free [2]. The pass is made to the point who has an open jumper at the right short corner [3].

TECHNIQUE

If the low defender slips the screen, pops out and guards the point on the catch, the pass then is made into the low post. The post has the outside defender on his or her back, so is in perfect position to execute a on-the-block move for a scoring opportunity.

Activities by:

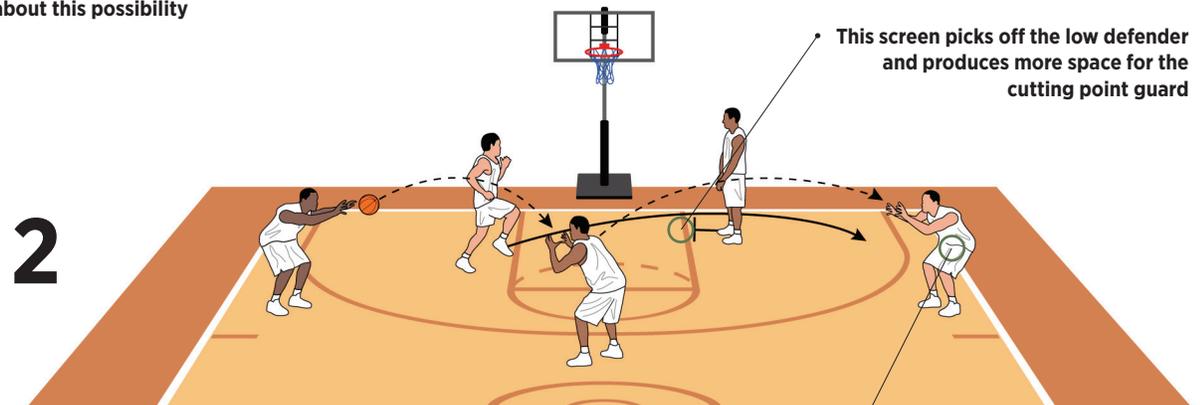
Dave McIntosh,
assistant boys coach,
Fort Vancouver High
School, Vancouver, Wash.



1

The middle player waits for the initial action, then pops to the top

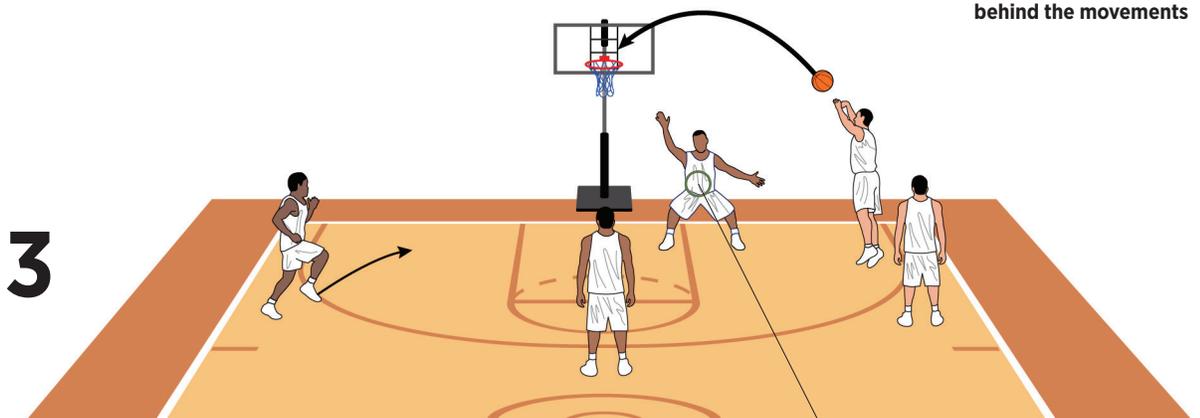
Have the wing fake a pass to the cutting point guard to place the thought in the defense's head about this possibility



2

This screen picks off the low defender and produces more space for the cutting point guard

The ball reversal is swift and quick so the defense remains half a step behind the movements



3

If the low defender slips the screen, have the point dump the ball into the post for an easy scoring opportunity



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