

SET STANDARDS, DON'T WAVER WHEN ENTERING A NEW COACHING SITUATION

BASKETBALL COACH WEEKLY

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PENETRATE THE LANE

FOR HIGH-PERCENTAGE SHOTS

ATTACK A ZONE'S WEAKNESS - LOOK LOW

ASSESS YOUR FEEDER PROGRAM FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

MAKE THE MEDIA WORK FOR YOUR PROGRAM



< WISCONSIN EXECUTED A PERFECT OUTSIDE-IN OFFENSE EN ROUTE TO THE FINAL FOUR

THE BEST COACHING TIPS EVERY WEEK!

FACING A 1-3-1 IN A SIDE-INBOUND SITUATION? MAKE THE FIRST PASS TO THE SHORT CORNER

The Media Is Your Friend



Basketball Coach Weekly Issue 36

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Sideline Stories

League MVP. Four-time scoring champ. Five-time All-Star. Rookie of the Year. “Mr. Unreliable”?

Apparently, Oklahoma City’s Kevin Durant is all these things according to the *Oklahoman* newspaper, which ran the “Mr. Unreliable” headline May 1, the morning of the Thunder’s Game 6 match-up with Memphis (which, of course, Oklahoma City won and Game 7 as well, behind 36 and 33 points respectively from Durant).

The same day, the *Oklahoman* distanced itself from the headline and publicly apologized.

Even at the highest levels of basketball, the media and the team need to play nice to a degree. At your level, it’s much different as “playing nice” (on both sides) should be the norm.

I used to be a high-school game reporter for local newspapers. On game nights, the players who made the difference were featured. But, during those times when I needed a feature story or wanted to explore a different type of topic (I remember once doing a piece on why there were so many male coaches of female teams in our area), I routinely went to the coaches who treated me with respect and as someone who had a job to do, just like them.

It’s important for you to develop a

healthy relationship with the local media. It makes players feel good to see their names in the paper or online. Get your program in front of an audience and it can create excitement around your team. More people may attend games. It also instills good will with the athletic director who always wants to see his or her teams portrayed in the best light. Think about going into your year-end job review with a bunch of positive clippings in your hand.

The best way to gain the media’s interest is to respond to reporters’ requests. Sure, you can’t do every interview asked but think about how a courtesy return phone call or email, even if it’s declining the offer, goes a long way.

After a game, if a reporter took the time to attend your contest, grant him or her a few minutes for

questions after you address your team. Trust me, the local reporter has a lot of teams to cover, so it is special when he or she is on hand.

And, even when the reporter isn’t there – call in your scores. Post through the local media’s online service if they have one. Do it win or lose.

Remember, you’re not doing it for yourself, but for the players ... and their overly proud parents who want to ask everyone, “Did you see my kid in the paper?”



Michael Austin
Michael Austin
Editor-in-chief



Develop a good relationship with local media and maybe you can avoid a Kevin Durant situation

In this issue...

3 POKE HOLES IN ZONES
Attack a zone’s lower areas so the defense doesn’t grind your offense to a halt - take a couple pages out of Wisconsin’s playbook.

4 POST FEED VS. ZONE
When you have a strong post presence, use crisp perimeter ball movement to open a low-post passing lane.

5 SIDE INBOUND VS. ZONE
When facing a 1-3-1 in a side out-of-bounds situation, attack the short corner then send a cutter through the lane for a high-percentage shot.

6 SET 3 NON-NEGOTIABLE STANDARDS
If you are about to enter a new coaching situation, set and stick by your standards, then watch everything else fall into place.

QUICK HITTER

Assess Your Feeder Program

When Mark Fitzgerald took over the Aurora Central Catholic (Ill.) the team had one winning season in its previous 34. The previous coach didn’t show up to the team’s last game, which culminated a 1-26 campaign. Things were ugly.

Add in that despite Aurora is the second-largest city in Illinois, Central Catholic was getting one, maybe two talented players to enroll each year. This number startled Fitzgerald and made him immediately look at the feeder program. He found one didn’t exist.

“I put together a feeder team program for our students,” he says. “Previously, if a player was good at

basketball, she attended one of the other public or private high schools.”

As students come through the lower levels, they never considered Central Catholic because the school wasn’t represented at this level of play. Fitzgerald changed that. He now has more than 70 players in his feeder program and the high school squad has posted four winning seasons under Fitzgerald.

Wisconsin attacked the lane last season, which led to more points per game



Poke Holes In Zone Defenses

The 2013-14 season was an anomaly for Wisconsin – the team possessed a potent offense – especially using an outside-in philosophy vs. zones

The University of Wisconsin men's basketball team historically has won games with its defense. Just one season ago in 2012-13 the team played in three games where neither team cracked the 50-point barrier. When the Badgers find a way to win, it's typically by stopping the other team.

This past season, however, the Badgers rode a hot offense into head coach Bo Ryan's first Final Four appearance. Netting almost 74 points per game, Wisconsin scored eight more points per game than it did in 2012-13 and just about 10 more than the year before that.

Helping the Badgers' cause was a formidable inside-outside game with skilled players at all positions. Wisconsin,

much like many teams out there, maybe didn't have the most talent on the floor game-in, game-out but the squad played to its strengths.

In the NCAA Tournament, those strengths shone brighter with victories over American, Oregon, Baylor and No. 1 seed, Arizona. The next two pages feature a pair of plays from the Baylor game.

The Bears entered the game red-hot as winners of eight of its last nine behind a suffocating zone defense.

Wisconsin had the answer.

Led by the inside presence of Frank Kaminsky (19 points) and the outside shooting of Ben Brust (three 3-pointers), the Badgers ripped Baylor, 69-52. The plays on the next two pages show how

Ryan shredded the zone with perimeter passing to set up high-percentage baskets in the lane.

The first got the ball in Kaminsky's hands and let him go to work on the block. The initial perimeter passing shifts the defense, which opens a clear passing lane from wing to post. By that point, the zone is at the post player's mercy.

The second is a sideline out-of-bounds play. Staring down a 1-3-1, Ryan smartly designed a play getting the ball to the short corner. That forced the defense to double-team the ball and left the lane's middle wide open.

Both of these lane-attacking sets are perfect for any level team's zone-offense playbook.

Words by:
Michael Austin

Post Feed Vs. Zone

Wisconsin had a marked size advantage last season and used it to create easy scoring opportunities – just like this successful zone post feed vs. Baylor

WHY USE IT

Attack a perimeter-orientated zone by pounding the post. Keep the ball moving on the perimeter to shift the defense and create an in-close advantage prior to the post entry.

SET UP

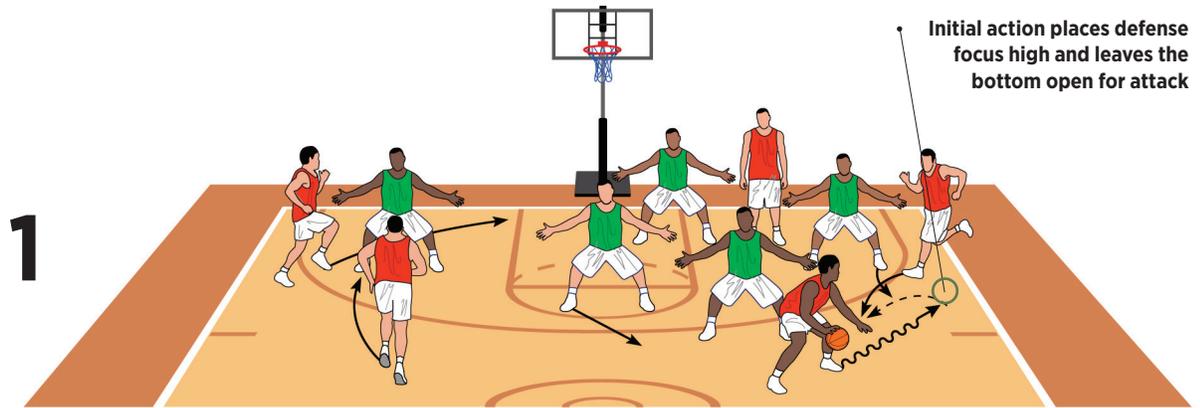
Move action toward the right wing as the post eventually seals the bottom zone defender.

HOW TO PLAY

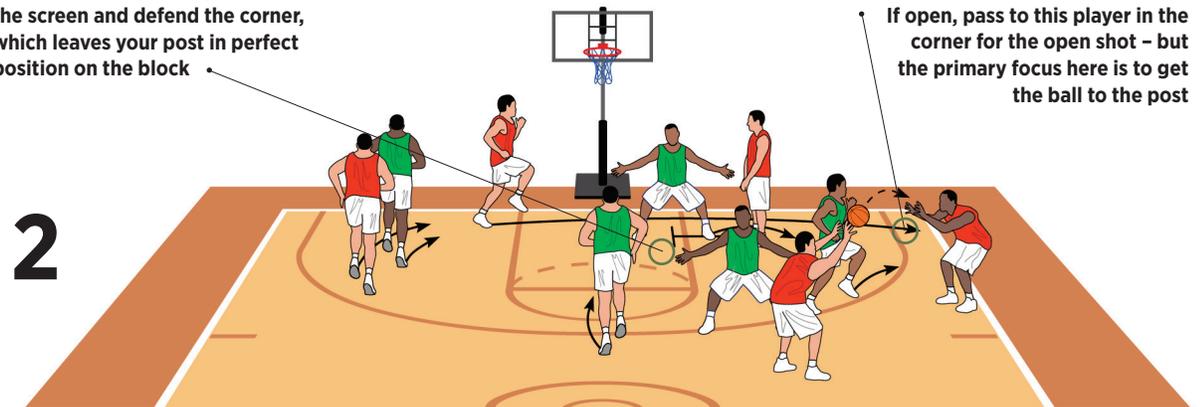
The initial ball handler and the right-wing player switch positions on the dribble entry. The pass then is made to the right wing as he settles higher in the set. Your featured post is on the right block [1]. A pass is made back to the wing as the weak-side players move into position – the lower one sprints to the strong-side corner as the higher one moves toward the block. The featured post seals the inside zone defender [2]. More passing between the top two players shifts the zone and a quick look at the corner opens a passing lane to the post. Make the pass and let this talented big man go to work. Have the weak-side block come to the strong elbow to create more space [3].

TECHNIQUE

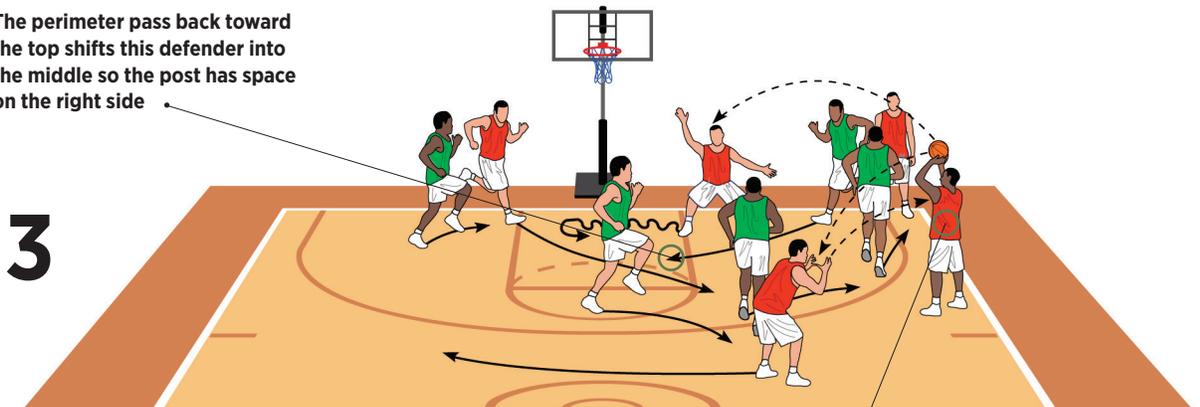
The look at the corner is key. Use a fake too to move defenders.



The defender fights to get around the screen and defend the corner, which leaves your post in perfect position on the block



The perimeter pass back toward the top shifts this defender into the middle so the post has space on the right side



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

Side Inbound Vs. Zone

When facing a 1-3-1 in a side out-of-bounds situation, attack the short corner then send a cutter through the lane for a high-percentage shot

WHY USE IT

The weakness in a 1-3-1 zone is the short corner – the area below the three-across defenders but away from the lone low defender. Get the ball to this area and watch the court open.

SET UP

With the ball on the side, place a player in the strong-side short corner, another as the safety at the top, one on the weak side and another below the top defender.

HOW TO PLAY

The pass immediately is made to the short-corner player, which draws the attention of two defenders [1]. On the catch, the player just below the top defender cuts hard through the middle of the lane, which is open. The pass is made from the short corner to the cutter [2]. The low defender jumps to stop the layup but the cutter shoots an open, high-percentage floater over him [3]. No other defenders are close to stopping this shot. If the play breaks down, looks to the perimeter and the inbounder coming into play.

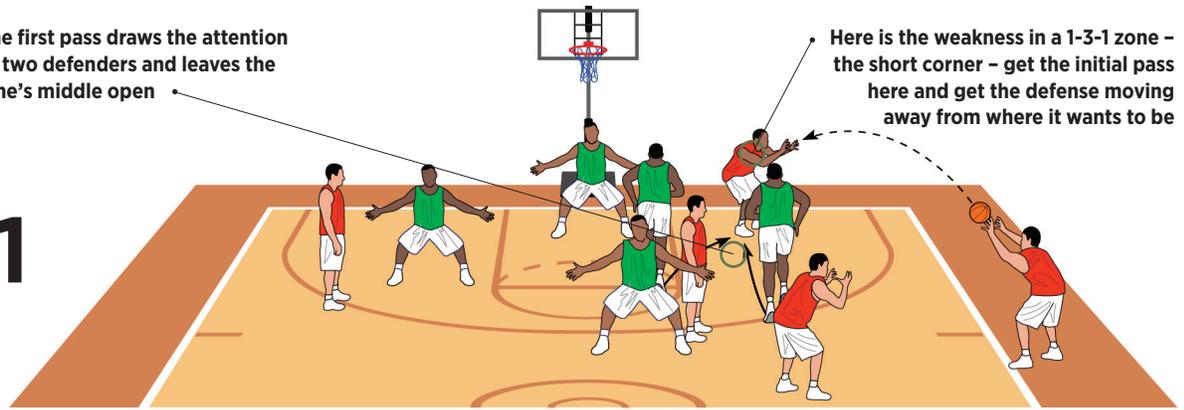
TECHNIQUE

The cutter can attack the rim if he or she has the confidence to take the ball at the defender. But, the floater is a nice option as it's relatively uncontested based on the defense's positioning.

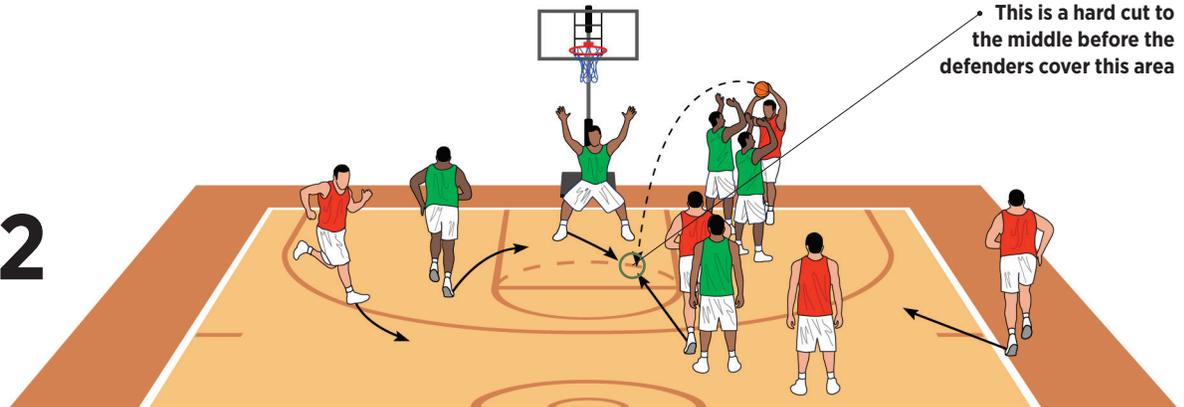
The first pass draws the attention of two defenders and leaves the lane's middle open

Here is the weakness in a 1-3-1 zone – the short corner – get the initial pass here and get the defense moving away from where it wants to be

1



2



3



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

Stick to your standards and success will come, suggests East Carolina's Heather Macy



Set 3 Non-Negotiable Standards

If you are about to enter a new coaching situation, set and stick by your standards, then watch everything else fall into place

When Heather Macy took over the East Carolina University women's team four seasons ago, her first order of business was to set "non-negotiable standards."

"The first thing we discussed as a team were our standards," Macy told me by phone. "Those standards were discipline, hard work and exceeding expectations. I expect those standards to be a part of everything we do within the program"

1. DISCIPLINE. Macy quickly found out how disciplined her team was upon embarking on an eight-week training cycle in which the goal was to "build physical and mental strength," she says. Undisciplined players simply wouldn't

survive the training cycle, so it set the bar on how players need to act for success.

2. HARD WORK. Working hard means the sweat poured into every effort, but it also requires players not to complain. Macy explains she plans to push players hard. It's not going to be easy but they will be better for it. "Attaining success isn't easy. I tell my players I want them to embrace hard work and not be afraid of it."

3. EXCEED EXPECTATIONS. Macy made it clear expectations aren't just on the basketball court. "We want to excel athletically and academically," she explains. "Whatever it is, we want to do more. That has to be the attitude from Day 1."

Macy adds that simply paying lip service to these standards is not enough. Players model their behaviors after their mentors, which means they are watching you.

"We work hard. The players see that first-hand in practice but also know we are doing our work after hours based on our level of preparation," Macy says. "You can't set non-negotiable standards then not follow them yourself."

For Macy and her coaching staff, it has paid off. Her squad is coming off back-to-back 22-win seasons and consecutive trips to the WNIT.

Success has led to higher expectations... and now Macy is preparing her team to exceed them once again.

Words by:
Michael Austin

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